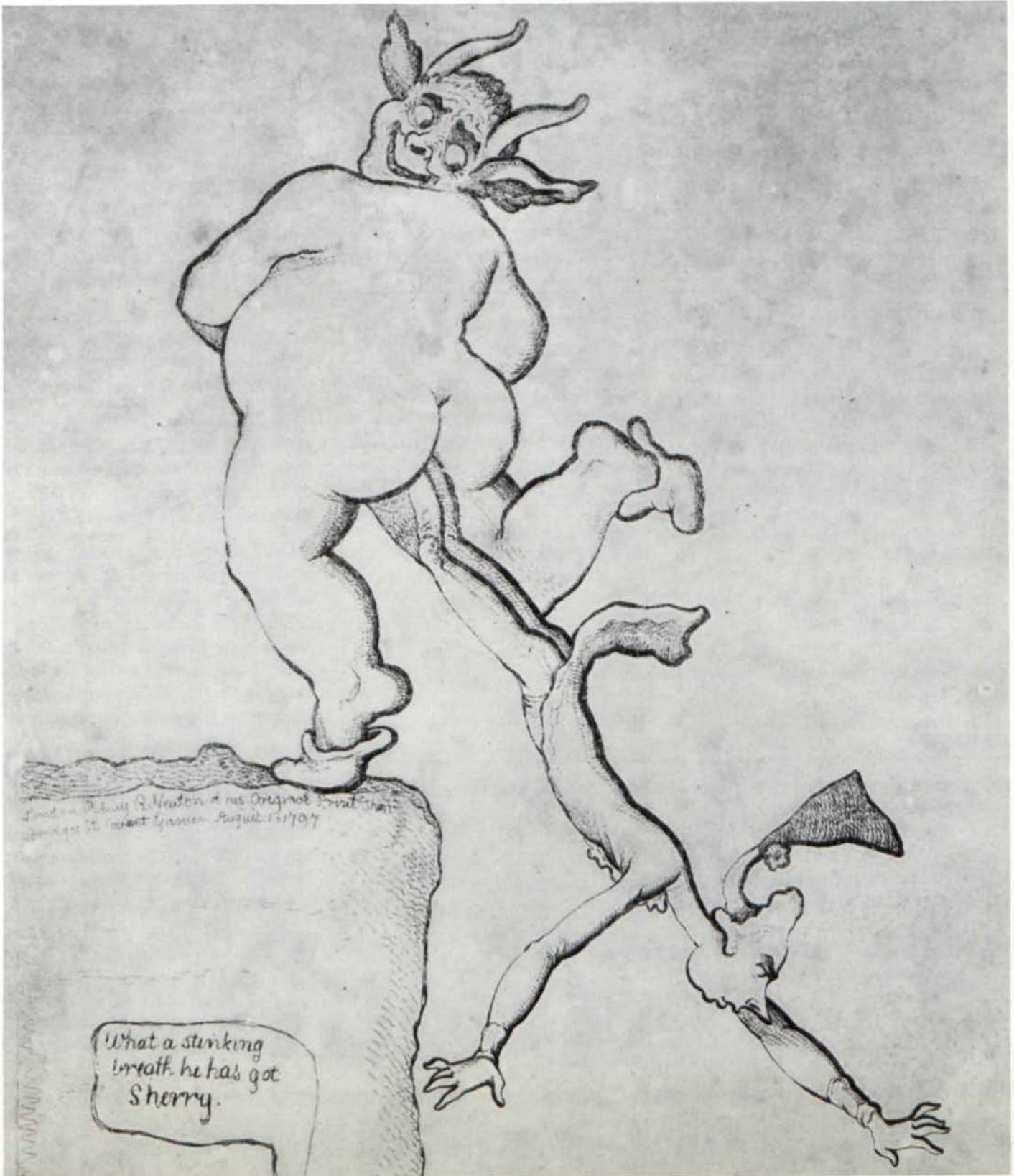


Blake

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VOLUME 24 NUMBER 1 SUMMER 1990



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Compositional elements of Newton's "The Birth of Billy Bugaboo" (left) and Blake's "The Dog" (right); see page 247.

Blake in the Marketplace, 1989, Including a Report on the Recently Discovered Blake-Varley Sketchbook

by Robert N. Essick

The Blake market roared ahead at a high level of activity throughout 1989. More illuminated books were sold than in any year since 1958, some stratospheric price records were set, and an important notebook of drawings was discovered. Three auctions and one private sale deserve particular attention.

The long-awaited sale of Blakes from the Edward Laurence Doheny Memorial Library finally arrived in Christie's New York rooms on 21 February. The first Blake to be offered, copy N of *Songs of Innocence* (illus. 3-6), was quickly pushed by several bidders well beyond the estimate range of \$80,000-100,000 printed in the catalogue. Action slowed in the neighborhood of \$225,000, and then battle resumed between just two combatants, the New York (formerly London) dealer Donald A. Heald and the London dealer Libby Howie (acting for an American private collector). The latter made the winning bid of \$300,000 (not including the 10% purchaser's premium). This is about the same amount fetched by the entire Graham Robertson collection of Blake's drawings and water colors sold in 90 lots in 1949.

Stephen Massey, head of Christie's Book Department and the auctioneer for this sale, proceeded through five unspectacular Blake lots to reach a remarkable set of the Dante engravings, printed directly on laid paper rather than the usual India paper backed by wove. Heald bought these foxed but very fine impressions at \$55,000 "hammer price" (i.e., the actual amount bid, not including the buyer's premium), thereby setting a new



1. Blake. *The Book of Thel*, copy A, title page. Relief etching, 16.1 x 10.1 cm. on sheet 26.4 x 18.2 cm., printed in golden-brown ink and hand colored in blue, rose, pale green, and pale yellow. Photo courtesy of Sotheby's New York.

record for any Dante suite. Two insignificant lots followed, leading the audience of about 100 to Blake's letter to John Linnell of 2 July 1826 (illus. 16). An auctioneer's rule of thumb is to offer the most important lots by a single author or artist first so that unsuccessful bidders on the big-ticket items can assuage their frustrations by paying too much for lesser materials. Christie's violated this custom by offering the letter before a splendid water color. As a result, the letter brought a \$20,000 hammer price, only 33% above the high estimate. The lot would have been bid up by at least another \$5000 if sold after the drawing.

The last Blake lot was *Infant Jesus Saying His Prayers* (illus. 15), estimated at \$50,000-100,000. Although somewhat faded in the yellows and blues, and with pigment (lead?) decay in the darker colors at the top, this was still the finest Blake water color to be offered for sale since 1973, when Paul Mellon bought *The Magdalene at the Sepulchre* at Christie's in London for £23,100. Bidding was exceptionally spirited, with participation from several art dealers as well as booksellers. As the price zoomed above \$200,000 and the audience murmured in surprise, it became difficult to determine who was still in the hunt. The final two bids seemed to be either on the telephone or "at the desk" (i.e., handled by Christie's for a client), but the water color fell at \$320,000 to the same American collector who had purchased the *Songs of Innocence* a few minutes earlier. Both works join *America* copy R (see Blake 21 [1988]: 138-42), a hand-colored copy of *Little Tom the Sailor*, and several leaves from illuminated books in what is now arguably one of the two finest (although certainly not the largest) Blake collections in private hands. The collector insists on anonymity.

The price realized by *Infant Jesus* set a new record for a Blake water color and for any work by him sold at auction. Of more significance is the fact that this water color fetched more than the *Songs of Innocence* in the same sale. Clearly, the art world is waking up to Blake. Proceeds from the sale of the Doheny Library will be used by the Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles for the recruitment and training of priests.

At a time unknown to me, late in 1988 or early in 1989, a gentleman brought to the Drawings Department at Christie's in London a shabby notebook of 68 leaves, 25.4 x 20.3 cm., some with an 1804 watermark. The first 18 leaves bear landscape and architectural drawings by John Varley. But suddenly, beginning with the verso of a leaf numbered 18, Christie's drawing expert came upon a series of stunning Visionary Heads by Blake (illus. 10-14). There are 52 leaves of drawings by Blake, a few with more than one portrait, plus 4 counterproofs of other Visionary Heads. (A counterproof of a pencil drawing is made by placing it face down against a dampened sheet of paper and rubbing or applying pressure to the back of the drawing. Graphite is transferred to the dampened sheet to create a reversed copy of the original.) All the drawings are in pencil, with the larger portraits worked up in considerable physiognomic detail, some heightened with black chalk. Most of the drawings bear brief inscriptions, apparently by Varley, identifying the characters. Varley foliated all the leaves consecutively on the top right corner of their rectos and used the book for his own drawings on a sketching tour in 1808, as the date inscribed on the first leaf indicates. In October 1819, the date inscribed on leaves 83 and 89, Varley lent the sketchbook to Blake, who turned it upside down and began to fill the leaves with his own drawings, working back to front, mostly on versos.

Christie's, believing they had been brought a considerable treasure for sale, devoted an entire catalogue to the sketchbook, with reproductions of all but one of Blake's drawings (leaf 25 recto—see the list below). No estimate was printed in the catalogue, but upon inquiry one was told that the auction house expected the book to fetch half a million pounds. At the sale on 21 March, there was not a single bid in the room. As is customary in such situations, the house ran up the asking bids

to a respectable buy-in price—a practice often called "bouncing it off the wall." At some time after the sale, a consortium of three dealers, including two Americans, made a substantial offer, eagerly accepted by Christie's and the sketchbook's owner. Upon application for an export license, the government put a 4 month hold on the sale. During that time, any British institution could acquire the sketchbook by meeting the selling price. The British Museum had expressed interest, but it could not raise sufficient funds, and the consortium fell asunder in January 1990. The sketchbook remains on deposit at Christie's, but will be in the Blake Exhibition at the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo, in September 1990. The fact that several leaves bearing Blake's drawings were removed from the sketchbook early in its history might provide an excuse for breaking it up and selling each leaf individually. This was the fate of the previously known



2. Blake. *Europe*, copy c, pl. 4. Relief etching and white-line engraving, third state of three, 23.6 x 17.1 cm. on sheet 25 x 18.5 cm. mounted to a backing sheet within pen and ink framing lines. Printed in brick red ink, probably by Frederick Tatham, c. 1830-32. Essick collection.

Blake-Varley sketchbook (Butlin #692), sold leaf by leaf at Christie's in 1971.

Although I have not seen this new and "larger" Blake-Varley sketchbook (the smaller book has leaves measuring 15.5 x 20.5 cm.), the very thorough auction catalogue and information supplied by David Bindman allow me to make this preliminary report. I list below, in the probable order of their execution, all of Blake's drawings. The leaf numbers follow Varley's enumeration, and thus run in reverse. All quotations are of Varley's inscriptions in the sketchbook unless noted otherwise. Drawings that were once in this sketchbook and other Visionary Heads of the same or related characters are referred to by Butlin numbers.

89 recto. A draft of Varley's list of Visionary Heads (see 85 verso) with a slight sketch of a head, "possibly Varley by Blake" (according to the auction catalogue). This portrait is not part of the main sequence. Not the same head as Butlin #689.

88-86. Missing. Perhaps with portraits, removed for counterproofing.

85 verso. "List of Portraits Drawn by W^m Blake from visions / which appeared to him & Remain^d. while he completed them / Some of which are in other Books[.] In Varley's hand. The "other Books" would presumably include the smaller Blake-Varley sketchbook, but could also include the "large book filled with drawings" of Visionary Heads that Allan Cunningham was shown by Varley (Cunningham, *The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, 2nd ed. [London: Murray, 1830] 172). This group, perhaps of loose drawings inserted in a folder, included Pindar, Lais, and the "task-master whom Moses slew," and thus cannot be identified with either extant sketchbook.

84. Missing. Perhaps this leaf bore a portrait, like others removed for counterproofing.

83 recto. "Cassibelane the British Chief," cut out and pasted to the stub of leaf 82. Same image as Butlin #716 (a strengthened counterproof from this drawing?). Cassivellanus, chief of the Catuvellani, resisted Julius Caesar's invasion of Britain in 54 B.C.

82. Missing; possibly Butlin #716 (see 83 recto).

81 verso. Counterproof of Cassibelane from 83 recto, strengthened by another hand (Varley?).

80 verso. Blank—see 69.

80 recto. "Merlin," counterproof of Butlin #757 (therein provisionally identified as "A Welsh Bard, Job or Moses?").

79-72. Missing. These leaves included Butlin #722 ("Canute," a strengthened counterproof, still bearing Varley's leaf number "77" upside down on the reverse), probably its untraced original, and perhaps Butlin #731-33 (King John, 1167-1216, and two counterproofs).

71. Blank.

70. Removed. The counterproof (Butlin #725) of 69, still bearing Varley's leaf number upside down on the reverse.

69. "Empress Maud," also known as Matilda (1102-67), daughter of Henry I and wife of Emperor Henry V. Removed and attached to leaf 80 verso. Three full-length drawings in the smaller sketchbook show Maud standing in a gothic apse, in bed, and without surrounding motifs (Butlin #692.23, 25, 27).

68. Removed. Counterproof (Butlin #741) of 67, still bearing Varley's leaf number upside down on the reverse.

67 verso, loose but present. "Wat Tylers Daughter / Striving to get loose from the Tax gatherer." Face and shoulders of the daughter only; see also 65.

66. Removed. Counterproof (Butlin #737) of 65, still bearing Varley's leaf number upside down on the reverse.

65. "Wat Tyler / in the act of striking the Tax Gatherer." Tyler's grimacing face only, with two details of his mouth. Removed and attached to the stub of leaf 70. The subjects of this and 67 verso may have been influenced by Fuseli's design, showing Wat Tyler, his fleeing daughter, and the fallen tax-gatherer, engraved by Blake for Charles Allen, *A New and Improved History of England*, 1798. This legendary incident resulted from a confusion between Wat Tyler, who with Jack Straw rebelled against Richard II, and John Tyler, a blacksmith who killed a tax-gatherer for attacking his daughter.

64 and 63. Removed.

62. Removed. Counterproof (Butlin #730) of 61, still bearing Varley's leaf number upside down on the reverse.

61 verso. "The Bastard Faulconberg"—either the illegitimate son of Richard I, or the Earl of Kent, natural son of Sir William Neville. There are two profiles and a standing figure of Faulconberg in the smaller sketchbook (Butlin #692.38, 57).

60 verso. "Hotspur" (Sir Henry Percy, 1364-1403). Butlin #745 is probably a strengthened counterproof of this original. Varley inscribed "Hotspur . . ." on a page in the smaller sketchbook (Butlin #692.53), but this does not seem to be related to the two figures (one winged, one with a halo) roughly sketched above. Hotspur is also mentioned in Varley's notes near the end of the smaller book (Butlin #692.131).

59 verso. "[Al, ~~deleted~~ Owen Glendower" (1359?-1416?), leader of the Welsh rebellion against Henry IV. Butlin #743-44 are probably counterproofs of this original. The fragmentary "Al" may be the beginning of "Alexander"—see 58 verso.

58 verso. "Alexander the Great." Butlin #698 may be a counterproof, inscribed (by John Linnell?) "David." See also 21 verso.

57 verso (illus. 10). "Henry the 5th" (1387-1422).

56 verso. "the Black Prince" (Edward, Prince of Wales, 1330-76). For an earlier portrayal, c. 1793, see *Edward III Presenting the Black Prince to the Barons* (Butlin #66).

55 verso. "Robin Hood."

54 verso. "Pharoah who knew Joseph." For Blake's designs based on the story of Joseph, exhibited in 1785, see Butlin #155-57.

53 verso. "Josephs Mistress." This profile is similar to the wife's in Blake's water color of c. 1803-05, *Joseph and Potipbar's Wife* (Butlin #439).

52 verso. "Perkin Warbeck" (1474-99, pretender to the throne of Henry VII).

51 verso. "Vortigern" (betrayer of the British cause, c. 450, out of love for Rowena—see 49-50 verso).

50 verso (illus. 11). "Rowenna" (see 51 verso).

49 verso. "Rowenna" (basically the same portrait as 50 verso, but showing the woman's breasts).

48 verso. "Felton the assasinat / of the Duke of Buckingham" (John Felton, 1595?-1628).

47 verso. "Milton when a Boy" (John Milton, 1608-74). Probably influenced by Cor-



3. Blake. "The Divine Image" from *Songs of Innocence*, copy N. Relief etching and white-line engraving, 11.2 x 7 cm. on sheet 19.8 x 12.8 cm., printed in brown ink, hand colored. Photo courtesy of Christie's New York.

nelius Johnson's portrait, engraved by John Baptist Cipriani in 1760 and published in *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis* (1780). For Blake's comments to Henry Crabb Robinson and Samuel Palmer about the Milton portraits in Hollis, see G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969) 317n1, 543, and Bentley, "A Portrait of Milton Engraved by William Blake 'When Three Years of Age? A Speculation by Samuel Palmer," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 51 (1981): 28-35.

46 verso. "Milton when young." A much fuller face than Cipriani's engraving in Hollis (see 47 verso) showing Milton at about the same age. For an older, blind Milton, see Blake's tempera in his "Heads of the Poets" series of c. 1800-03 (Butlin #343.11). There is a portrait of Milton's first wife in the smaller Blake-Varley sketchbook (Butlin #692.96), sold 14 Nov. 1989 to Christopher Powney.

45 verso (illus. 12). "Charlemagne" (first Holy Roman Emperor).

44 verso. "Miltons youngest daughter."

43 verso. "Miltons elder [inserted above] daughter."



4. Blake. "Infant Joy" from *Songs of Innocence*, copy N. Relief etching, 11.1 x 6.8 cm., printed in brown ink, hand colored. Photo courtesy of Christie's New York.

42 verso. "Bertand de Gourdon who wounded / Richard Coeur de Lion with an Arrow."

41 verso. "The Captain to Richard the first / who Flayd Bertand de Gourdon alive." For the Visionary Head of Richard I, see Butlin #729.

40 verso. "Jack Shepherd / under the Gallows." The gallows are not pictured. John Shepherd (1702-24) escaped hanging twice but was not so lucky the third time.

39 verso. "Colonel Blood who attempted / to Steal the Crown." Thomas Blood (1618?-80) was pardoned by Charles II for his crime.

38 verso (illus. 13). "The Great Earl of Warwick / Brother to Ed^{wd}. the 4th / Drawn by W^m Blake." Richard Neville, "The Kingmaker," 1428-71.

37 verso. "Queen Isabella wife to Ed^{wd} the 2^d. & mother to Ed^{wd} the 3^d." Queen Isabella of France (1292-1358) married Edward II in 1308 and deposed him in favor of her son in 1327.

36 verso. "Robert Bruce King of Scotland." Bruce (1274-1329) was crowned King of the Scots in 1306.

35 verso. "Geofrey of Monmouth" (1100-54, author of the *Historia Britonum*).

34 verso. "Ossian" (the legendary Gaelic bard made famous by James Macpherson's "translations"). Blake comments approvingly on Macpherson and Ossian in his 1826 annotations to Wordsworth's *Poems* (see *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, rev. ed. [Berkeley: U of California Press, 1982] 665-66).

34 recto. A continuation of the landscape on 33 verso.

33 verso. "Ossian" (see 34 verso), full length, with his harp and standing on a hill before an enormous tree, mountains in the background.

32 verso. Sketches of 7 heads, inscribed "Mother / Brownrigg" (murderess, hanged 1767), "Miss Blandy / who poisoned / her father" (hanged 1752), "Pope Joan" (the mythical female Pope of the 9th century), "Cornelius Agrippa" (occult philosopher, 1486-1535), "Eloisa" (Abelard's beloved, died 1164), "Abelard" (theologian, 1079-1142), "Countess of Essex who / Poisoned Overbury" (Sir Thomas Overbury the poet, 1581-1613). A face very similar to Brownrigg's appears in the smaller sketchbook (Butlin #692.72, "perhaps by Blake"); Mary Blandy's features resemble Queen Isabella's (37 verso).

31 verso. "Catherine Hayes / Burnt for the Murder / of her Husband" in 1736.

31 recto. A bishop's mitre, no doubt linked to the bare-headed bishop on 30 verso.

30 verso (illus. 14). An archbishop, possibly Thomas à Becket, murdered in 1170 (see 29 verso).

29 verso. "a Becket Preaching," full length with mitre and crozier standing on a gothic pulpit. With another standing figure, holding a book; a baby's head; three fragments of gothic ornament (details for the archbishop's costume or pulpit); head of an old man; 2 heads of women; and a figure standing in a gothic niche, perhaps a detail for one of the 5 (carved?) figures in niches on the pulpit.

28 verso. "Mary Queen of Scots" (1542-87).

28 recto. A continuation of the battlements on 27 verso.

27 verso. "Bothwell" (James Hepburn, 4th Earl of Bothwell, 1536-78, and Queen

Mary's husband—see 28 verso). Behind this bust are some battlements.

26 verso. "Tom Nixon the Idiot / the author of several Prophecies." Robert (or "Tom") Nixon, the seventeenth-century prophet of Cheshire.

25 verso. "Pisistratus" (561-27 B.C.), the tyrant of Athens.

25 recto. Sketches for the throne of Pisistratus on 24 verso.

24 verso. "Pisistratus" (see 25 verso) seated on a monumental throne, apparently constructed of stone blocks.

24 recto. A prisoner in profile, with a chain descending from his right wrist, standing between two guards in classical garb and holding spears. Perhaps related to the Pisistratus drawings, leaves 24-25.

23 verso. "a daughter of Shakespeare" (either Susanna, born 1583, or Judith, 1585-1662). See also 20 verso.

22 verso. "Xantippe / wife of Socrates." Blake sketched two visionary heads of Xantippe's husband, Butlin #713-14.

21 verso. "Olympia." Perhaps Olympias, mother of Alexander the Great (see 58 verso).

20 verso. "Shakespeare's Wife" (Anne Hathaway, 1556-1623). See also 23 verso.

19 verso. "Savage the Poet" (Richard Savage, died 1743, was found guilty of murder in 1727 but was pardoned), and two counterproofs of a young man in profile (the original untraced).

18 verso. "Sir Robert Lucy. Shakespeares Persecutor." Lucy (1532-1600), who may have prosecuted Shakespeare for poaching c. 1585, has been suggested as the model for Justice Shallow in *Henry IV, Part II*.

Even this bare list of subjects encourages a little speculation. The principle of order lurking behind the potpourri of sketches is taxonomic and categorical, not chronological, as one would expect on the basis of Varley's physiognomic predilections (and perhaps Blake's). Several clusters of character types emerge, although none runs as an uninterrupted sequence. For the student of Blake's poetry, perhaps the most interesting group is the poets and other visionaries: Merlin, Ossian, Cornelius



5. Blake. "The Lamb" from *Songs of Innocence*, copy N. Relief etching, 11.9 x 7.7 cm., printed in brown ink, hand colored. Photo courtesy of Christie's New York.

Agrippa, Milton, Tom Nixon, and even Savage (whose longest poem, "The Wanderer," is sub-titled "A Vision"). The last figure supplies a transition to a larger group of murderers and, more surprisingly, murderesses. Varley may have been seeking for the physiognomic traces of criminal personality of the sort Blake apparently tried to express in the visages of his would-be assassins in *Europe* pl. 4 (illus. 2) and the *Malevolence* water color of 1799 (Butlin #341). Victims seem under-represented in the sketchbook, although one of the ecclesiastics portrayed, Thomas à Becket, was a famous martyr. Some of these characters resist any attempt to place them in rigid, moralistic categories: Mary Queen of Scots was both criminal and victim, while Robin Hood and Jack Shepherd are remembered as folk heroes more than criminals.

The small-scale killers, generally executed for their efforts, lead us to

military leaders (large-scale killers honored for their efforts), and then to a class of paired opposites: assassins, traitors, and rebels vs. monarchs of church and state. Were Blake and Varley searching for connections between victim and victimizer, rebel and tyrant, signified in their visages? Physiognomy must have played a major role in leading the two artists to the mothers, wives, and children of famous men—the daughters of Milton and Shakespeare, the latter's wife, the mother of Alexander the Great. But some of these family pairs can also remind us of Blake's Zoas and their Emanations, a system of union and differentiation not incompatible with physiognomic paradigms. Similarly, the murderesses and characters such as Pope Joan and Isabella of France recall Blake's declarations against the Female Will. For other thoughts on the contents of the sketchbook, see David Bindman's essay in *Christie's International Magazine* 6 (March-April 1989): 2-4.

The relationship between the new sketchbook and other Visionary Heads bears consideration. The unsigned introductory essay in Christie's March 1989 auction catalogue suggests that drawings sketched during seance-like sessions at night in the smaller book were transferred to the larger for finishing, but I can find no convincing evidence for this as a regular practice. The only character who appears as a facial portrait in both sketchbooks, Faulconberg, is recognizably the same person, but he is pictured in profile in the smaller book and in three-quarter perspective in the larger. The smaller book is certainly in a lesser state of finish, but its larger companion seems also to have been used for primary sketches. Many of these were subsequently worked up with pencil and black chalk, while the latter was never used in the smaller sketchbook. The next stage was to remove leaves for counterproofing, but this progressed in the larger book only through the first twenty or so leaves

used by Blake. It must be remembered that the entire project was a corporate activity involving three professional artists of considerable ability—Blake, Varley, and John Linnell (at least in later stages of production). The second and third may have had a hand in the black-chalk additions on some sketches.

The discovery of the larger sketchbook allows us to disentangle the provenance of the smaller. The artist William Mulready, a close friend of both Varley and Linnell, sold at Christie's on 28 April 1864, lot 86, "a volume containing 49 heads in pencil, from visions which appeared to Blake . . . ; at the other end of the book are 16 landscapes by Varley" (£5.5s. to "Kempton"). In a note to Frederic George Stephens, c. 1872, Samuel Palmer refers to the sale of this "volume containing forty-nine heads in pencil from visions which appeared to Blake" (untraced, but printed in Stephens, *Memorials of William Mulready* [London: Sampson Low, 1890] 41). Having no other candidates to fit these descriptions, Butlin took them to be rather inaccurate references to the smaller sketchbook, even though it contains more than 16 sketches by Varley. As presently constituted, the smaller book includes only 21 "heads" by Blake, and it is difficult to conceive how the missing leaves could contain another 28. We can now identify Mulready's volume as the larger sketchbook, for it has 16 drawings by Varley and 49 by Blake (if we count only the major "heads"). This second number is doubly significant, for it supports the supposition that all the missing leaves were removed prior to 1864 for counterproofing. The smaller book apparently passed from Varley to his friend William Christian Selle, then to Selle's daughter who married H. Buxton Forman, who gave the sketchbook to William Bell Scott in 1870. After its sale in 1864, the larger volume passed by inheritance to the man who still owns it, in spite of Christie's best efforts.

Who would have thought that the records set at the Doheny sale would last only eight months? On 9 and 10 November, Sotheby's New York sold in 308 lots a collection of fine books and manuscripts, the property of "The Garden Ltd." This collection had been formed in recent years by Haven O'More, an admirer of Blake and of Sir Geoffrey Keynes, and for a brief spell an Associate Trustee of the Blake Trust. The catalogue will itself become a collector's item, both for its many fine illustrations and for O'More's literary contributions—a prefatory essay "On the Mystery of the Book" and an autobiographical note couched in the third person. Both are glorious compounds of ersatz mysticism and soaring egotism. The catalogue ends with a modest note that someone named "Michael Davis" provided "the funding for The Garden's Collection" and was its sole owner.

Copy D of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (illus. 7-9) was the first



6. Blake. "Spring," first plate, from *Songs of Innocence*, copy N. Relief etching, perhaps with touches of white-line engraving, 11.6 x 7.7 cm., printed in brown ink, hand colored. Photo courtesy of Christie's New York.

Blake lot offered from the Garden/O'More/Davis collection. A splendid copy in every way, it commanded an estimate of \$300,000-400,000. Spirited bidding from several quarters brushed by these figures quickly. One of three remaining bidders dropped out at \$800,000, leaving the field to the New York dealer Martin Breslauer and an agent acting for a private collector. The latter won his or her prize at \$1.2 million (\$1.32 million with the buyer's premium)—a new record for any work by Blake, and I believe a record for any single work of English literature. The book's new owner has not responded to my letter passed on to him or her by Sotheby's.

The room, suffering from sticker-shock, paid little attention to the next lot, copy A of *The Book of Thel* (illus. 1), one of only two remaining in private hands. The book fell to Donald Heald, acting for a private client, at a mere \$130,000 on an estimate of \$70,000-100,000. At that point, a Sotheby's employee claimed that she had been distracted by the hubbub over the *Songs* and had failed to bid, as instructed, for a client. In spite of Heald's protests, bidding was resumed, and the lot fell at \$145,000 to Sotheby's client. I have not yet been able to discover this collector's identity. As a minor-league epilogue, the Blake lots ended with two posthumously-printed plates from *Europe* (to Heald for Essick—see illus. 2) and a set of the Dante engravings (also to Heald).

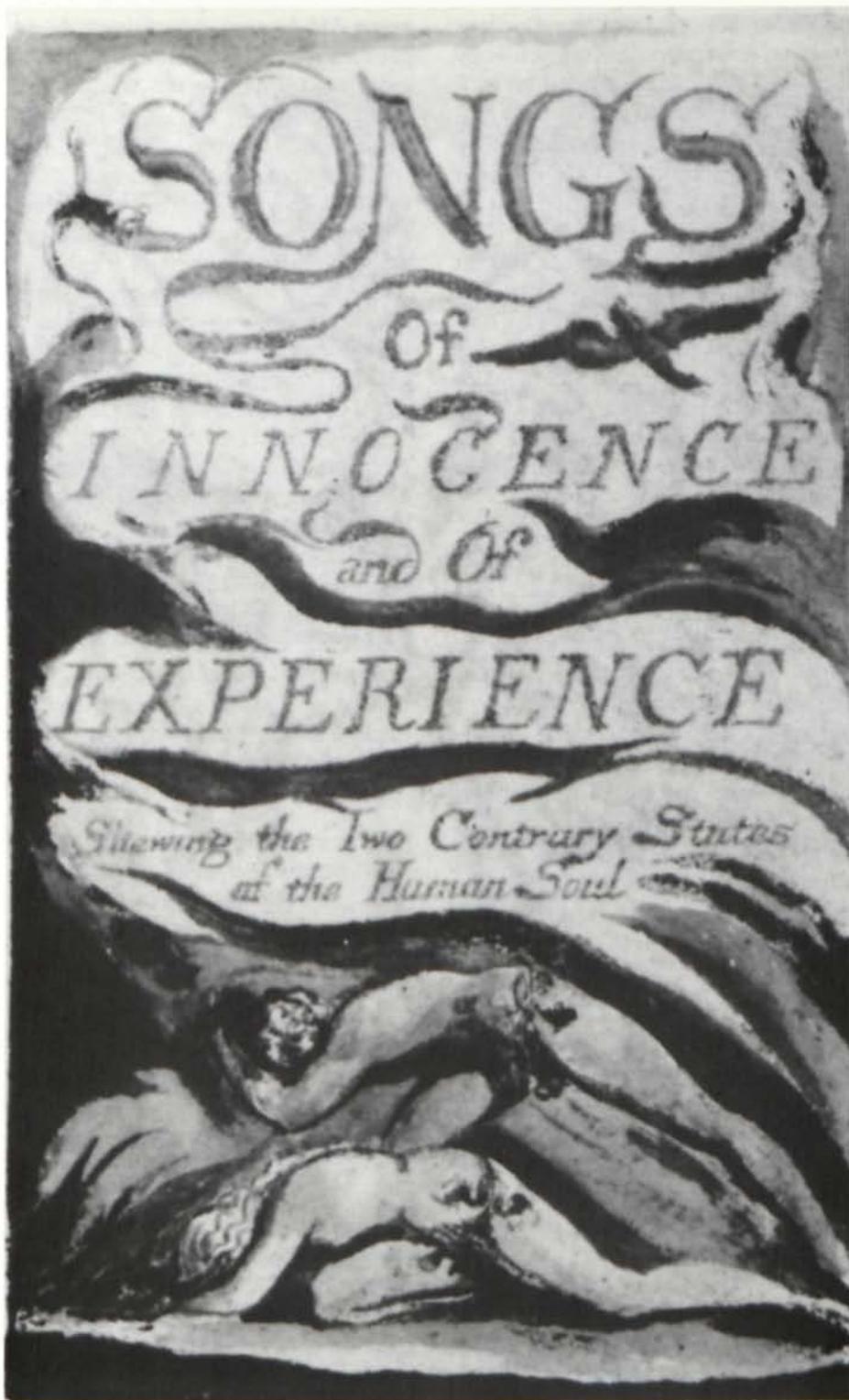
Edwin Wolf 2nd is known to Blake enthusiasts principally as the co-author, with Geoffrey Keynes, of the *Census* of Blake's illuminated books published by the Grolier Club in 1953. But Wolf is also a discriminating collector who built a fine working library of Blake editions, criticism, and books containing Blake's commercial engravings. This last category included copies of the 1825 and 1826 issues of *Remember Me!*, both considerable rarities. Wolf sold his collection of

some 350 books and offprints to an American dealer early in 1989. In June 1990 the collection was available from James Burmester and another British dealer acting in partnership.

The year of all sales and catalogues in the following lists is 1989 unless indicated otherwise. The auction houses add their purchaser's surcharge to the hammer price in their price lists. These net amounts are given here, following the official price lists. Late 1989 sales will be covered in the 1990 review. Copy designations and plate numbers for the illuminated books follow G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). I am grateful for help in compiling this review to David Bindman, Martin Butlin, Scot Campbell of Hindman Auctioneers, Chris Coover and Stephen Massey of Christie's, William Dailey, Jay Dillon of Sotheby's, Detlef Dörrbecker, Paul Grinke of Quaritch, Donald Heald, Justin Schiller, David Weinglass, and especially Thomas V. Lange.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| BBA | Bloomsbury Book Auctions, London |
| Butlin | Martin Butlin, <i>The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake</i> , 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale UP, 1981) |
| cat. | catalogue or sales list issued by a dealer (usually followed by a number or letter designation) or auction house (followed by the day and month of sale) |
| CL | Christie's, London |
| CNY | Christie's, New York |
| illus. | the item or part thereof is reproduced in the catalogue |
| pl(s). | plate(s) |
| SL | Sotheby's, London |
| SNY | Sotheby's, New York |
| st. | state of an engraving, etching, or lithograph |
| Swann | Swann Galleries, auctioneers, New York |
| # | auction lot or catalogue item number |



7. Blake. *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, copy D, general title page. Relief etching with touches of white-line engraving, 11.2 x 7 cm., printed in golden-brown ink, color printed in rust brown and black, hand tinted in black, light blue, pink, and red. Photo courtesy of Sotheby's New York.

ILLUMINATED BOOKS

The Book of Thel, copy A. 8 pls. on 8 leaves, printed in golden-brown, 6 pls. delicately hand colored. Unbound, matted, in a modern morocco folding case. SNY, 10 Nov., #166, title page illus. color (\$159,500 to a Sotheby's employee acting for a client). See illus. 1.

Europe, pls. 4 and 5 only on 2 leaves from posthumous copy c. SNY, 10 Nov., #167, both pls. illus. color (\$17,600 to D. Heald for R. Essick on an estimate of \$5000-8000). See illus. 2.

"Night," pl. 1, from *Songs of Innocence*. Clipping of the final 9 lines of text and lower design only, 3.1 x 6.4 cm., printed in brown and hand colored in blue, green, and rose, with outlining and shading in dark brown. Verso, lower design only from "Night" pl. 2, hand colored and outlined as on the recto. Acquired April from David Bindman by R. Essick. Both sides illus. color, Lott & Gernish, June 1986 cat., p. 2.

Songs of Innocence, copy N. 27 pls. on 27 leaves, printed in dark brown and hand colored. CNY, 21 Feb., #1706, title page and "The Lamb" illus. color (\$330,000 to the London dealer Libby Howie acting for an American private collector). See illus. 3-6.

Songs of Innocence and of Experience, copy BB. 55 pls. on 55 leaves, printed in black and hand tinted in black and gray washes. Now (June 1990) the property of Randolph Schlegel, Ltd., but available for sale.

Songs of Innocence and of Experience, copy D. 54 pls. on 30 leaves, printed in 2 shades of brown, touches of color printing, hand colored. Bound in contemporary morocco with two fly-leaves watermarked 1796. SNY, 10 Nov., #165, general title page, frontispiece to *Innocence*, and "The Tyger" illus. color (\$1,320,000). The cat. description incorrectly claims that this copy contains "A Divine Image," apparently as a result of confusing that pl.

with the tailpiece to the *Songs*, which is present. See illus. 7-9.

DRAWINGS AND PAINTINGS

The larger Blake-Varley sketchbook of 1819. CL, 21 March, only lot (numbered 184), 62 leaves illus. (not sold). See the introductory list of contents, discussion, and illus. 10-14.

Complaint of Job (recto), *Standing Figure* (verso). Pen and India ink, c. 1785, recto 33.2 x 47.1 cm. Butlin #163. This drawing, untraced since 1928, came into the possession of Thomas Gibson Fine Art Ltd., summer 1989, which sold it to a California private collector (not I, alas). Recto and verso illus. and described in Martin Butlin, "Six New Early Drawings by William Blake and a Reattribution," *Blake* 23 (1989): 107-12.

Head of a King in Profile. Pencil, 8 x 6 1/2 in., from the smaller Blake-Varley sketchbook. Butlin #692.88. CL, 14 Nov., #154, illus. (£1210 to Christopher Powney). Butlin suggests that this drawing may represent "King John," but the auction cat. notes that it is indistinctly inscribed by Varley, "Robert" or "Richard."

Infant Jesus Saying His Prayers. Water color, Butlin #473. CNY, 21 Feb., #1716, illus. color (\$352,000 on an estimate of \$50,000-100,000 to a dealer bidding on behalf of an American private collector). See illus. 15.

Milton's First Wife. Pencil, 8 x 6 1/8 in., from the smaller Blake-Varley sketchbook. Butlin #692.96. CL, 14 Nov., #153, illus. (£1650 to Christopher Powney).

Moses with the Tablets of the Law. Pencil, 20.8 x 14.6 cm., c. 1780-85. Not in Butlin. Agnew's, Sept. private offer (£11,000). For illus., see Martin Butlin, "Six New Early Drawings by William Blake and a Reattribution," *Blake* 23 (1989): 107-12.

Queen Constance and Her Son. Pen and ink with wash, 20.9 x 24.9 cm., c. 1785, pencil sketch of a foot on verso.

Butlin #151. Spencer A. Samuels & Co., Feb. private offer (\$45,000). Previously sold CL, 10 July 1984, #85, illus. (Spink & Son, £3780). For illus. of recto and verso, see *Blake* 19 (1985): 29.

A Richly Attired Prince, Perhaps Edward VI. Pencil, 8 x 6 1/8 in., from the smaller Blake-Varley sketchbook. Butlin #692.108. CL, 14 Nov., #151, illus. (£11,000 to an anonymous bidder on the telephone).

A Royal Couple (verso) and *Detailed Drawings* (by Blake and Varley?) for the *Man Who Built the Pyramids* (recto). Pencil, 8 x 6 1/8 in., from the smaller Blake-Varley sketchbook. Butlin #692.103-04. CL, 14 Nov., #152, verso illus. (£6050 to Christopher Powney).

St. Paul Shaking Off the Viper. Water color, 39 x 30 cm., Butlin #509. Sold c. 1987 by Barry Friedman, Ltd., to another New York dealer, who sold it c. 1988 to a private New York collector.

A Vision: The Inspiration of the Poet. Grey washes over pencil, 17.1 x 17.8 cm., c. 1819-20(?). Butlin #756. Acquired late 1989 by the Tate Gallery, London, from David C. Preston. For illus., see *Blake* 23 (spring 1990): cover and p. 213.

MANUSCRIPTS

Letter by Blake to John Linnell, postmarked 2 July 1826. 1 p., tear on right side. CNY, 21 Feb., #1715, illus. (\$22,000 to an American private collector). See illus. 16.

SEPARATE PLATES & PLATES IN SERIES, INCLUDING PLATES EXTRACTED FROM LETTERPRESS BOOKS

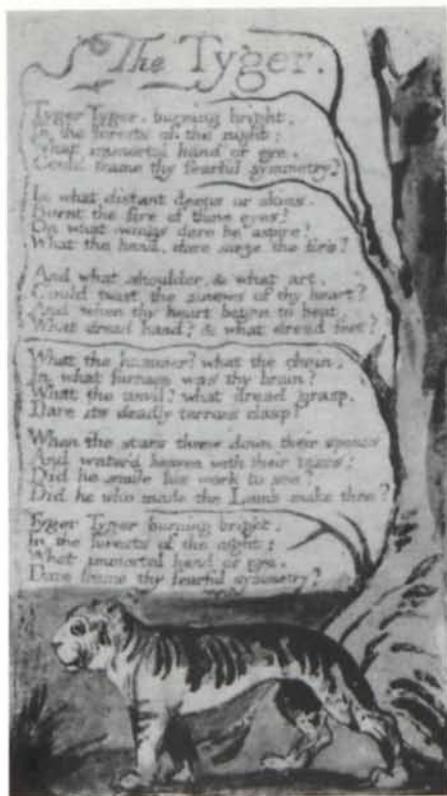
"Beggar's Opera, Act III," after Hogarth. Christopher Mendez, Sept. private offer, 4th st., cut to platemark, washed, lower right corner repaired (£300). Sanders, Sept. private offer, 7th st. (£50). This plate is usually described as existing in 4 or 5 states, but there are at least 9.



8. Blake. *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, copy D, frontispiece to *Experience*. Relief etching, first state of two, 11 x 7 cm., printed in golden-brown ink perhaps with touches of color printing in black, hand colored. Photo courtesy of Sotheby's New York.

"Chaucers Canterbury Pilgrims." Leslie Hindman auction, Chicago, 14 May, #302, illus. (\$5500 to a California collector/dealer who gave it to the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo).

Dante engravings. CNY, 21 Feb., #1713, 7 pls. complete, very fine impressions on laid paper, probably pulled before the first recorded printing on India of 1838, foxed, 1 pl. illus. (D. Heald, \$60,500). Jeremy Norman & Co., May cat. 19, #110, the deluxe issue of the Blake Trust Dante facsimile, 1978, with a modern restrike of pl. 5 (\$1500). SL, 27 June, #226, complete set on laid India, 1 support sheet with a "J. Whatman Turkey Mill watermark," pl. 2 foxed, "otherwise in excellent fresh and unhandled condition," 2 pls. illus., sold the "Property of a Member of the Linnell Family" (£38,500). CL, 29 June, #13, pls. 1-3, 5-7 only, pl. 1 on laid India, the remainder printed directly



9. Blake. "The Tyger" from *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, copy D. Relief etching, 11 x 6.3 cm., printed in golden-brown ink perhaps with touches of color printing in black, hand colored in blue, brown, gray, olive green, and brick red. Photo courtesy of Sotheby's New York.

on "thickish laid paper" (see first Dante entry above), pls. 6-7 "with part of a watermark A & D," all but pl. 1 "very fine, rich impressions," some foxing, 1 pl. illus. (Weston Gallery, £24,200); impressions on laid paper cleaned and offered by Weston, Dec. London Print Fair, £9000 each. SNY, 10 Nov., #168, complete set on laid India, traces of illegible watermark (letters?) on 2 pls., with letterpress label, morocco folding case, from the collection of Moncure Biddle (D. Heald, \$41,250). An essay on the printings of the Dante plates is forthcoming in *Blake*.

"Fertilization of Egypt" after Fuseli, from Darwin, *Botanic Garden*, 1791. C. & J. Goodfriend, Aug. private offer (\$450).

"George Cumberland's Card." Jeremy Norman & Co., May cat. 19, #7, illus. (\$300). This impression in black on laid paper, from the collection of K. Garth Huston and now in the private collection of Paul Grinke, London, is described in *Blake* 17 (1984): 142.

Job engravings. CNY, 21 Feb., complete set, 1874 printing on India laid on heavy wove, pl. 4 illus. (\$16,500). Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #115, pl. 6 only, "Proof" on "French" wove paper, full margins; #116, pl. 7 only, published "Proof" on laid India, full margins, both illus. (\$1925 each). CL, 12 April, #37, pl. 9 only, published "Proof" on laid India, illus. (£715). SNY, 11 May, #7, "complete set of twenty [sic?] plus title plate," 1874 printing, foxed, pls. 3 and 5 illus. (\$13,750). SL, 27 June, #227, complete set, 1874 printing on laid India, some foxing, pls. 15 and 20 illus. (not sold; estimate £15,000-20,000); #228, pl. 4 only, published "Proof" on laid India (not sold); #229, pl. 19 only, 1874 printing on laid India (£880); #230, pl. 2 only, published "Proof" on wove (not sold). Simon Finch, Nov. cat. 7, #115, regular issue of 1826 on Whatman paper, original wrappers bound in, pl. 3 illus. (£25,000)—the Thomas Gaisford/S. H. Pease copy, previously sold SL, 23 April 1890, #194 (Galway, £19.10s.), and CL, 7 Dec. 1988, #122 (Finch, £15,400). In comparison to Blake's other late intaglio masterpiece, the Dante engravings, the Job illustrations are considerably undervalued.

"John Caspar Lavater," 3rd st. CL, 29 June, #11, with "Wilson Lowry" (Blake and Linnell after Linnell), 4th st., and "Romeo and Juliet" after Opie for Boydell's Shakespeare ed. (not sold).

Virgil wood engravings. CNY, 21 Feb., #1710, 10 cuts only, Linnell reprints bound in a modern album, heavily inked and printed, 4 cuts illus. (\$3850). Agnew's, July print cat., #30, all 17 cuts from the 1821 ed., 1st cut (a very fine impression) illus. (\$10,500).

LETTERPRESS BOOKS WITH ENGRAVINGS BY & AFTER BLAKE

Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*. Robert Clark, Nov. 1988 cat. 14, #140, 1791 ed. (£75). Jeff Weber Books, Jan. cat. 2, #150, 1799 ed., 5 vols., some foxing (\$250). Jeffrey Stern, April cat. 7, #169, 1783 ed., 5 vols., fancy binding (£300). James Burmester, April cat. 9, #214, 1791 ed. (£60). Ximenes, Aug. cat. 85, #15, 1791 ed. (\$250). Hartfield, Oct. cat. 37, #A-1, 1799 ed., "very tall" (\$795).

Blair, *Grave*. Heritage Book Shop, Jan. cat. 173, #16, 1813 quarto, contemporary morocco rebacked, pls. "lightly foxed" (\$750). Robert Clark, Feb. cat. 15, #193, 1813 quarto, later reissue in blue blind-stamped cloth, ownership inscription dated Jan. 1864, foxed (£280). CNY, 21 Feb., #1709, 1808 quarto, rebound but original cover label preserved, top edge gilt, others uncut (\$1320). Bertram Rota, May cat. 250, #25, 1808 quarto, lacking advert. for Stothard's "Canterbury Pilgrims," ownership signature of the sculptor Francis Chantrey (1781-1842), who purchased a set of Blake's Job engravings and, according to Gilchrist, a copy of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (£400). CNY, 17 May, #21, 1808 quarto (\$1100). Ben Abraham Books, June cat. 10, #20, 1808 quarto, some foxing (\$1500). BBA, 8 June, #91, pls. loose in cloth portfolio as issued 1870, with a Rowlandson vol. (S. Heneage, £99). Ursus Books, Aug. cat. 134, #89, 1808 quarto, fancy binding, engraved title page illus. (\$2500). Rota, Sept. private offer, 1808 quarto (£350). Traylen, Sept. cat. 105, #762, 1808 quarto (£475). Wm. Reese Co., Oct. cat. 79, #171, 1808 quarto, original boards rebacked, cover label, uncut, some foxing (\$1400).

Bryant, *New System*, 2nd ed., 1775-76. Bickersteth, Nov. cat. 108, #12, 3 vols., "an exceptionally fine, clean, large-margined copy" (£385).

Chaucer, *Poetical Works*, in Bell's British Poets, 1777-82. Kraus, June cat.

181, #13, complete set of Bell's *Poets in* 109 vols. in 2 fine leather boxes, no indication as to whether or not Blake's pl. is present (\$15,000).

Cumberland, *Outlines from the Antients*, 1829. Quaritch, Sept. private offer, folio issue, from the library of Lord Clark of Saltwood (\$450). The existence of a large-paper (36.6 x 26 cm. in this copy) folio issue has been previously noted only in Quaritch's May 1988 cat. 1087, #25 (where I overlooked it). This copy is on paper, with an 1825 watermark, thicker than the stock used for the quarto issue.

Darwin, *Botanic Garden*. Sims, Reed, March 1988 cat. 91, #221, 1791 ed. (£260). Walford, Sept. 1988 cat. H/153, #227, 1794-95 ed., with the "Tornado" pl. (£300). Marlborough, Jan. cat. 39, #22, 1st ed. of Pt. 1, 2nd of Pt. 2, "with one extra plate" (but apparently not by Blake), worn, foxed (£350). Traylen, April cat. 104, #525, 1st ed. of Pt. 1, 3rd of Pt. 2, fancy binding (£420). BBA, 27 July, #265, 3rd ed., worn (Ginnan, £198); 28 Sept., #370, 1st ed. of Pt. 1,

2nd of Pt. 2, foxed, trimmed, shabby (Kunkler, £104).

Enfield, *Speaker*, 1797. SL, 13 July, #1097, "1793" ed. (but this turned out to be the 1797 ed. with the final st. of Blake's pl.), with 8 unrelated works (Maggs, £88).

Flaxman, *Hesiod*, 1817. H. D. Lyon, Sept. private offer, early printing with pl. 20 misnumbered "37" (£300). See also illus. 18-19 for Hesiod drawings.

Flaxman, *Iliad*, 1805. James Cummins, Dec. cat. 25, #20, with Flaxman's *Odyssey*, 1805 (\$225).

Fuseli, *Lectures on Painting*, 1801. Quaritch, May cat. 1105, #40, rebaked (£350).

Gay, *Fables*, 1793. Edward Nudelman, Jan. cat. 13, #84, worn (\$350); same copy?, Sept. cat. 14, #208, described as having "12 woodcut [sic] engravings" by Blake (same price). Wm. Reese, May cat. 77, #82, contemporary calf, some foxing, "first printing" (\$275). Argonaut Book Shop, May cat. 104, #420, contemporary calf, some foxing, "large and thick paper copy" with "all tissue guards," good impressions (\$425). Robert Clark, May cat. 16, #121, 2 vols. bound in 1, some foxing (£100). Phillip Pirages, June cat., #20, 1st ed. (\$600). In Our Time, Aug. cat. 238, #40, 1st ed. (\$750). Shapiro, Sept. private offer, 1st ed. (£170). Hobbyhorse Books, Sept. cat. 14, #88, ed. not identified, some browning (\$350). BBA, 28 Sept., #372, foxed, some tears, trimmed (Baker, £104); 23 Nov., #277, cropped, rubbed (Tamura-Shoten, £132).

Hartley, *Observations on Man*, 1791. Thoemmes Books, March cat. 35, #55, modern binding (£475).

Hayley, *Ballads*, 1805. CNY, 21 Feb., #1708, with comma after Blake on title page, second st. of pls. 1-3, fancy binding rebaked (\$1210); same copy, Ursus Books, Aug. cat. 134, #90 (\$2250). A record auction price, and a record asking price from a dealer.

Hayley, *Life of Cowper*, 1803-04. Blackwell's, summer 1988 cat. "Edgar," #10, 2nd ed. (£175). Shapiro, Sept. private offer, 1st ed. (£185). Heritage, Nov. cat. 176, #113, 1st ed. (\$450).

Hayley, *Life of Romney*, 1809. Rainsford, Dec. 1988 cat. A47/Pt. 2, #874 (£175).

Hayley, *Triumphs of Temper*, 1803. Lawson, Dec. cat. 243, #26, small paper issue (£210).

Hogarth, *Works*. Zisska, 3-5 May 1988 auction, #1189, "ca. 1835" (DM 1500). Swann, 2 March, #131, Baldwin and Cradock ed., "c. 1835-37" (\$1430); 19 Oct., #119, Baldwin and Cradock ed., "c. 1835" (\$2860).

Hunter, *Historical Journal*, 1793. Traylen, April cat. 104, #358, quarto (£3300). SL, 14 April, #521, quarto, slight staining, rebaked (Shapero, £770). Maggs, July cat. 1097, #411, quarto, new binding in old full leather (£2200).

Josephus, *Whole Genuine and Complete Works*, c. 1787-88? BBA, 20 Oct., #134, worn (Heath, £134).

Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*. SL, 6 Feb., #616, 1789-98 ed., 3 vols. in 5, spotted (Hannas, £715); #617, 1810 ed., 3 vols. in 5, worn (Russell, £132). Charles Wood, March cat. 67, #133, 1789-98 ed., 3 vols. in 5, with Luffman, *Physiognomical Sketches*, c. 1802 (\$750). BBA, 13 April, #439, 1789-98 ed., 3 vols. in 5, spotted, covers detached (Axe, £280). Hartung & Karl auction, 27 April, #2276, 1810 ed., 3 vols. in 5 (estimate DM 1000). Jeffrey Stern, April cat. 7, #185, 1792 issue, 3 vols. in 5, fancy binding rebaked (£675). CL, 24 May, #127, 1789-98 ed., 3 vols. in 5, light spotting, rebaked (Traylen, £198). Traylen, Sept. cat. 105, #806, 1792 ed., 3 vols. in 5, rebaked (£350).

Malkin, *Father's Memoirs of His Child*, 1806. Chelsea Rare Books, Sept. private offer, copy once owned by Edward Fitzgerald (poet and trans-



10. Blake. "Henry V," leaf 57 verso from the larger Blake-Varley sketchbook, 1819. Pencil heightened with black chalk on leaf 25.4 x 20.3 cm., inscribed "Henry the 5th" by Varley below the framing line. Photo courtesy of Christie's London.

lator, 1809-83), a student of Malkin's (£600).

Rees, *Cyclopaedia*, 1820. Sotheran's, summer 1988 cat. 1003, #112, "46" (i.e., 45?) vols., rebaked, some joints split (£2400). BBA, 26 Oct., #141, 26 vols. of text only, vol. 1 of pls. only, worn (B. Bailey, £44).

Ritson, *Select Collection of English Songs*, 1783. Pickering & Chatto, Jan. cat., #44, 3 vols., lacking a fly-title in vol. 2 (\$750); Feb. cat. 101, #11, same copy and price. James Burmester, April cat. 9, #386, 3 vols. bound in 2 (£250).

Salzmann, *Elements of Morality*, 1792. Robert Clark, Feb. cat. 15, #110, lacking a few text pages at the end but with all pls. (£85). I have seen several copies with the last few pages missing, probably excised by Victorian adults unwilling to allow children in their charge to read about the death of the mother in Salzmann's story.



11. Blake. "Rowena," the Saxon beauty for whom Vortigern betrayed the British cause, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Britonum*. Leaf 50 verso from the larger Blake-Varley sketchbook, 1819. Pencil on leaf 25.4 x 20.3 cm., inscribed lower right by Varley, "Rowenna." Another version of the portrait is on leaf 49 verso. Photo courtesy of Christie's London.

Scott, *Poetical Works*, 1782. Brick Row Book Shop, April cat. 17, #11, hinges cracked (\$250).

Shakespeare, *Dramatic Works*, 9 vols., 1802. Walford, Feb. 1988 cat. A/326, #198, with Blake's pl. (£500). Blackwell's, March 1988 cat. A90, perhaps the copy earlier in their stock lacking Blake's pl. (£2700). Pickering & Chatto, April cat. 102, #44, lacking 3 pls. (including Blake's), fancy binding (\$10,000). Clearly, this work increases in value as the number of pls. diminishes.

Stedman, *Narrative*, 1813. Walford, May 1988 cat. H/152, #321, pls. hand colored (£975); same copy and price, Aug. 1988 cat. A/328, #83.

Stuart and Revett, *Antiquities of Athens*. Charles Wood, June cat. 68, #407, 5 vols., 1762-1830, "light blind-stamp in blank margin of each plate" (\$7500). Marlborough, Sept. cat. 135, #33, 4 vols., 1762-1816, internally very clean (£4000).

Varley, *Treatise on Zodiacal Physiology*, 1828. Quaritch, May cat. 1104, #12, stitched without binding, uncut, washed, some margins repaired, top half of pl. 3 ("Ghost of a Flea") illus. (\$4500).

Young, *Night Thoughts*, 1797, uncolored. CNY, 21 Feb., #1707, top edge gilt, others uncut, few stains, lacking the explanation leaf, p. 24 illus. (\$4950). Traylen, April cat. 104, #591, with the explanation leaf, edges trimmed and gilt (with some loss of imprints and design margins?), fancy binding (£4500). CNY, 17 May, #20, top edge gilt, others uncut, some foxing, p. 55 with repaired tear, with the explanation leaf (\$5280 on an estimate of \$1500-2000); same copy, Bromer Booksellers, July cat. 55, #8, p. 80 illus. (\$8500). Chelsea Rare Books, Sept. private offer, lacking the explanation leaf, rare 1st published st. of the title page to *Night the First* (£2000).

Young, *Night Thoughts*, 1797, colored. SL, 1 June, #208, lacking the explanation



12. Blake. "Charlemagne" (so inscribed at the top by Varley), leaf 45 verso from the larger Blake-Varley sketchbook, 1819. Pencil heightened with black chalk on leaf 25.4 x 20.3 cm. Photo courtesy of Christie's London.

tion leaf, portrait of Blake from Blair's *Grave* (1808) bound as a frontispiece, some short tears at foot of 8 leaves, "contemporary marbled calf, gilt borders, worn, rebaked, covers loose, uncut," fly-title to *Night the Third* illus. color on front cover of cat., fly-title to *Night the Fourth* illus. (£33,000 to Gall of Victoria for The National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne). Provenance: inscribed in the nineteenth century by Benjamin(?) Hines to William à Beckett (appointed solicitor general of New South Wales 1841, returned to England 1863). Pencil notes suggest that the vol. was acquired in 1904 from the Felton collection; bookplate of Robert Carl and Marion Oak Sticht dated 1909. The book was acquired by the National Gallery of Victoria with the assistance of the Felton Bequest. For a complete(!) color reproduction of the pls., see Martin Butlin and Ted Gott, *William Blake in the Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1989). The title page to *Night the Second* is in the rare 1st published st.

INTERESTING BLAKEANA

Chaucer, *Works*, ed. Speght, 1687. Heritage Book Shop, Nov. private offer, rebaked (\$1250). For a cogent argument that this was the ed. used by Blake, see A. S. Gourlay, "What Was Blake's Chaucer?" *Studies in Bibliography* 42 (1989): 272-83.

Chapman, trans., *Iliads*, c. 1611, and *Odysseys*, c. 1614, of Homer. CL, 24 May, #163 (Maggs for Essick, £1430). See illus. 17 and its caption for an explanation of why this book is listed here.

Gilchrist, *Life of Blake*, 2 vols., 1880. Pickering and Chatto, Nov. cat. 678, #164, with light blue-green dust wrappers bearing Frederic Shields's adaptation of Robert Blake's design also gilt stamped on the cloth covers (\$850). This is the first notice I can recall indicating that the 1880 Gilchrist was issued with pictorial dust wrappers. For the Shields design, see *Blake Newsletter* 8 (summer-fall 1974): front and back covers.

Hayley, auction cat. of his library, Evans, 13 Feb. 1821 and 12 following days. BBA, 2 Feb., #389 (Burmester, £374 on an estimate of £50-75); same copy, Ximenes, Aug. cat. 85, #21 (\$1250); acquired Sept. by J. La Belle. Apparently the only known copy fully annotated with prices and purchasers.

Keynes, autograph notebook, 2 vols., 152 pp., c. 1945-50, including comments on Blake's illuminated books and the founding of the Blake Trust. Jeremy Norman, May cat. 19, #273, 1 p. illus. (\$1250). This Norman cat. of materials from the collection of K. Garth Huston offered a considerable amount of Keynesiana, including a bronze head of Sir Geoffrey by Nigel Booham (#307, illus., with a smaller bronze bust, \$14,500).

Yeats, autograph manuscript journal, 11 July 1898-31 March 1902, including a brief entry describing a dream about a book that "contained lost poems by Blake" (from the journal, as quoted in the auction catalogue). CNY, 10 Nov., #201, 2 pp. illus. (not sold).



13. Blake. "The Earl of Warwick," leaf 38 verso from the larger Blake-Varley sketchbook, 1819. Pencil on leaf 25.4 x 20.3 cm. Inscribed lower right by Varley, "The Great Earl of Warwick / Brother to Ed^{wd}. the 4th / Drawn by W^m Blake." Photo courtesy of Christie's London.

BLAKE'S CIRCLE & FOLLOWERS

Works are listed under artists' names in the following order: untitled paintings and drawings sold in groups, single paintings and drawings, letters and manuscripts, separate plates, books by (or with plates by or after) the artist.

BARRY, JAMES

"King Lear," lithograph, 1803. Garton European Prints, Sept. cat., #6, with the aquatint border, illus. (£7500).

A Letter to the Dilettanti Society, 1799. Sanders, Feb. cat. 114, #25, extra-illus. with 3 pls., rebaked (£150).

BASIRE, JAMES

Archaeologia. BBA, 26 Oct., #251, vols. 1-107, 1770-1982, a complete run, worn (Princeton Rare Books, £1540).

CALVERT, EDWARD

"The Brook," wood engraving. Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #127, from the *Memoir*, illus. (\$745).

"Cyder Feast," wood engraving. Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #126, from the *Memoir*, illus. (\$1180).

"The Ploughman," wood engraving. Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #125, from



14. Blake. An archbishop, possibly Thomas à Becket, leaf 30 verso from the larger Blake-Varley sketchbook, 1819. Pencil heightened with black chalk on leaf 25.4 x 20.3 cm. Photo courtesy of Christie's London.

the *Memoir*, illus. (\$1180).

"Return Home," wood engraving. Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #128, from the *Memoir*, illus. (\$745). SL, 20 April, #111, trimmed to image, from the *Memoir* (not sold).

CUMBERLAND, GEORGE

A large collection of his drawings and water colors, CL, 11 July, #22-48, 18 illus., 2 in color (£396-2200, several lots not sold). All are landscapes without Blakean qualities in design or execution.

FLAXMAN, JOHN

See also Flaxman under Letterpress Books, above.

Angels Gathered around a Book. Pen and gray wash over pencil, 32.5 x 40.5 cm. Acquired in recent years as a Flaxman drawing from a German collection by Heim Gallery and Christopher Powney; sold by Powney as a Flaxman to Colnaghi's London; offered Feb. by Colnaghi's New York as a Blake drawing (\$50,000). Illus., attributed to Blake,

and dated c. 1785 in Martin Butlin, "Six New Early Drawings by William Blake and a Reattribution," *Blake 23* (1989): 107-12. I believe that this drawing is by Flaxman. It is too accomplished, in its sweet and delicate evocation of Renaissance face and figure types, to be by Blake. Detlef Dörrbecker has suggested that William Young Ottley might be the author of this or some of the other "Blake" drawings listed here under Flaxman.

Cypress Trees on Monte Mario, attributed to Flaxman. Pen and ink, 17.5 x 10.8 cm. Agnew's, Feb.-March cat. of water colors, #27 (£550).

Design for a Monument: A Seated Youth Clasping a Tablet. Pen and wash over pencil, 13.6 x 14.5 cm. Sold as a Flaxman, CL, 17 Nov. 1987, #2, with *Three Children round a Fire* (see below), also attributed to Flaxman (Christopher Powney, £220). Sold as a Flaxman in 1988 by Powney to a British private collector. Illus., attributed to Blake, and dated c. 1785 in Martin Butlin, "Six New Early Drawings by William Blake and a Reattribution," *Blake 23* (1989): 107-12. This drawing seems to me altogether typical of Flaxman's work.

Hesiod designs, pl. 32, a drawing for. Acquired March by R. Essick from Christopher Powney. See illus. 18.

Pleiades. CL, 11 July, #16 (Christopher Powney, £176). Acquired Sept. from Powney by R. Essick, who gave it to J. La Belle in Nov. See illus. 19.

Roman Family. Pen and gray ink, gray wash, 23.5 x 14.8 cm. Acquired March by R. Essick from Christopher Powney.

Study for a Monument to a Judge. Pencil, pen and gray ink, gray wash, 8 1/2 x 5 3/4 in. CL, 11 July, #97 (£418).

Study of a Man Seated, Embracing Children, and Study of a Woman Holding a Baby. Pencil, pen and gray ink, wash, 7 3/8 x 5 7/8 in. and 6 1/4 x 3 1/8 in. CL, 11 July, #17 (£550).

Three Children round a Fire. Ink and gray wash over pencil, 14.4 x 19.1 cm. From the collection of Maria Denman, Flaxman's sister-in-law, acquired 1987 by Christopher Powney (see *Design for a Monument*, above) and sold by him to Agnew's as a Flaxman drawing. Offered Agnew's, Feb.-March cat. of water colors, #22, attributed to Blake, illus. (£16,000). Acquired Feb. by an English lord. Illus., and again attributed to Blake and dated c. 1785, in Martin Butlin, "Six New Early Drawings by William Blake and a Reattribution," *Blake 23* (1989): 107-12. Nothing in this loose drawing suggests Blake's hand to me. The face of the central boy is particularly uncharacteristic. I believe that this drawing is probably, but not certainly, by Flaxman.

Wilson Lowry. Portrait sketch, pencil, 6 1/2 x 5 3/4 in. Christopher Powney, Oct. private offer (\$1300).

Aeschylus illustrations, 1795. Book Press, Dec. cat. 48, #240, original wrappers (\$300).

Anatomical Studies, 1833. Walford, Dec. 1988 cat. A/330, #189 (£110). Swann, 2 Feb., #112, foxed, worn (\$110). Michael Phelps, Feb. cat. 33, #68, original cloth worn (£195).

Dante illustrations. Zisska, 3-5 May 1988 auction, #1660, Rome 1802 ed. (DM 460). Robert Clark, Feb. cat. 15, #224, London 1807 ed., some browning (£90).

Hesiod illustrations. Erasmushaus, April cat. 858, #81, with the *Aeschylus* designs, both pub. del Vecchio, n.d. (SwF 650).

Iliad illustrations, Rome, 1793. Erasmushaus, April cat. 858, #80 (SwF 380).

Lectures on Sculpture. Dawson, Feb. cat. 28, #489, 1838 ed., contemporary calf (£140); same copy and price, Oct. cat. 29, #152. Swann, 2 Feb., #114, 1829 ed., foxed (\$77). Robert Clark, May cat. 16, #203, 1838 ed., original cloth (£60). BBA, 8 June, #333, 1829 ed., pls. spotted (Galton, £22). Philadelphia Rare Books, Nov. cat. 5, #90, 1829 ed., modern binding, lacking

frontispiece (\$200—rather dear for an incomplete copy).

Milton, *Latin and Italian Poems*. Blackwell's, summer 1988 cat. "Edgar," #31, 1808 ed. (£135). BBA, 23 Nov., #181, 1801 ed., with 3 unrelated works (Axe, £38).

Odyssey illustrations. Swann, Feb. 2, #113, with the *Aeschylus* illustrations, both with Italian text, n.d. (\$77).

FUSELI, HENRY

Agave, Ino and Autonoe Emerge from their Dionysian Rapture and Are In-

formed of the Slaughter of Pentheus. Pen, pencil, and gray washes, inscribed "Roma [17]74. May," 26 x 22 cm. SL, 13 July, #30, illus. color (£8250). Advertised by Cummings Fine Arts, *Burlington Magazine* (Nov. 1989): xxxii, illus. (not priced).

Birth of Sin. Oil, 142 x 117.2 cm. A recently rediscovered painting from Fuseli's Milton Gallery of 1799. CL, 14 April, #90, illus. color (not sold on a brave estimate of £100,000-120,000).

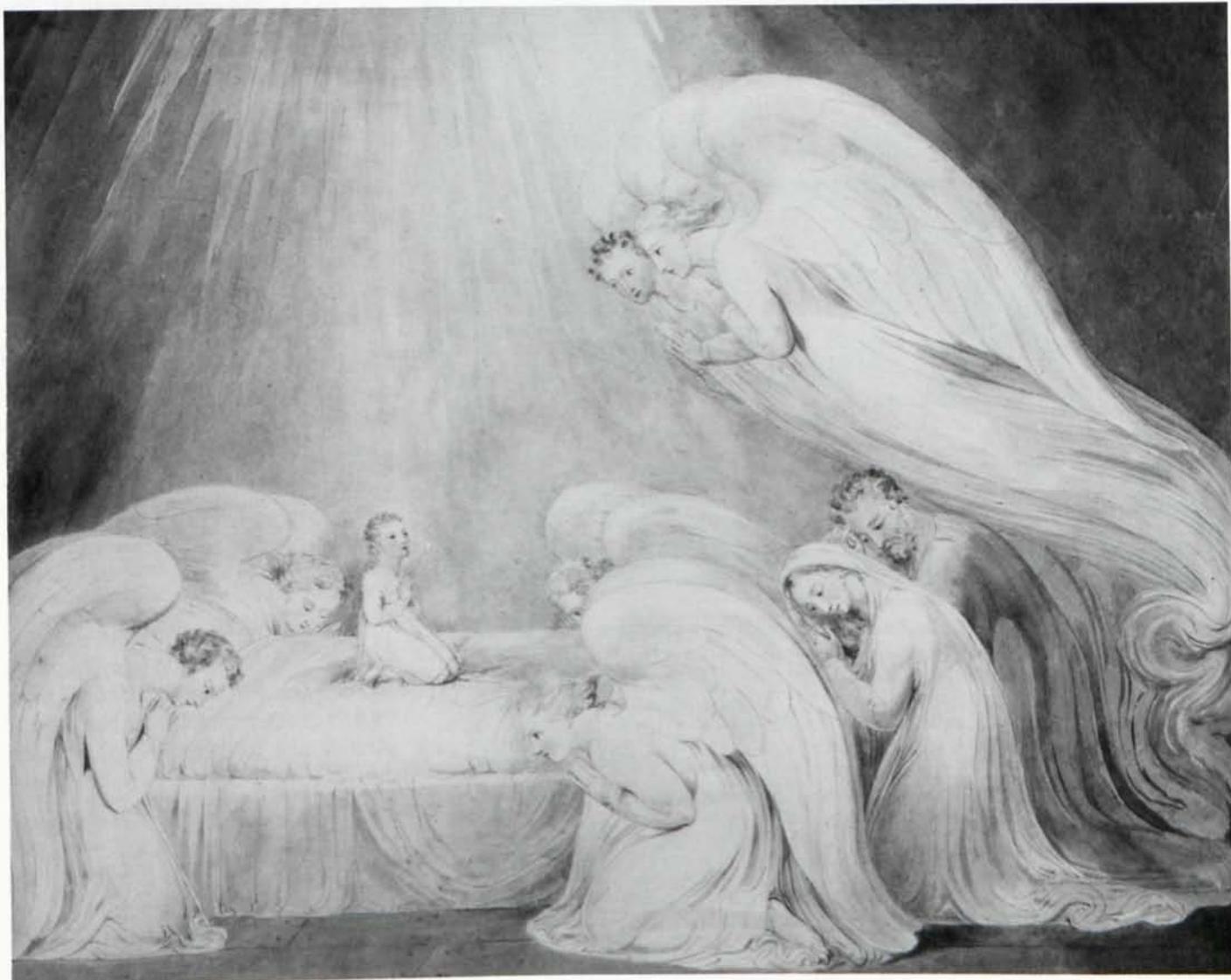
Prince Arthur's Vision, drawing after Fuseli by Peltro William Tomkins in preparation for his engraving. Pencil

with red chalk, 43.5 x 34.5 cm. SL, 13 July, #26 (not sold).

Study of a Nude Male. Pen and ink, 19 x 13 cm., c. 1795. SL, 9 March, #32, illus. (not sold; estimate £6000-8000).

Study of Mrs. Fuseli Wearing an Elaborate Hat. Pen, pencil, gray wash, 21.5 x 13.5 cm. SL, 13 July, #85, illus. (£7700).

A collection of c. 100 autograph letters by artists, including Fuseli, Flaxman, Linnell, Richmond, Boydell about his Shakespeare Gallery, and Opie on Barry's lectures. SL, 20 July, #454 (Rye, £3410).



15. Blake. *Infant Jesus Saying His Prayers*. Water color over pencil, 31.6 x 34 cm., signed with Blake's monogram lower right, c. 1805. Photo courtesy of Christie's New York.

Receipt signed, 20 April 1805, part payment for his illustrations to Sotheby's *Oberon*, pub. by Cadell and Davies, 1805. BBA, 22 June, #300 (Weinglass, £187).

20 engravings after Fuseli, C. & J. Goodfriend, Aug. private offer. Prices ranged from \$3000 for the pair of *Midsummer Night's Dream* illustrations from Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery to \$75 for book illustrations. The group included a fine impression of J. R. Smith's mezzotint of "Lear and Cordelia" (\$950) and several separate pls. engraved by Moses Haughton: "Nursery of Shakespeare" (\$400), "Dismission of Adam and Eve from Paradise" (\$850), "Adam Resolved to Share the Fate of Eve" (\$850), and "Sin Pursued by Death," marginal tear and stains (\$500).

"O Evening thou Bringest All," lithograph, 1802. Garton European Prints, Sept. cat., #5, 1st st. with the aquatint border, illus. (£12,500—a record asking price).

"Sleeping Woman with a Cupid," drypoint, c. 1780-90. Christopher Mendez, Sept. private offer, printed in brown, scuffed and laid down, with the collection stamp of Sir Thomas Lawrence (£500).

Boothby, *Sorrow*, 1796. Swann, 25 May, #60 (\$154).

Boydell, *Collection of Prints . . . Illustrating . . . Shakspeare*, 1803. CL, 16 May, #128, 2 Fuseli pls. only, illustrating *Midsummer Night's Dream*, marginal repairs (£308); #129, 4 Fuseli pls. only (*Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Henry V*, *Tempest*), minor repairs (£418).

Cowper, *Poems*, 1808. Phillip Pirages, June cat. 15, #442, fancy binding (\$300).

Lectures on Painting. Quaritch, May cat. 1105, #39, second series, 1830 (\$200); #41, 1820 ed. (\$200).

Gray, *Poems*, 1801. Simon Finch, March cat. 5, #118, uncut in original boards, soiled (£45).

Homer, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Claude Cox, Jan. cat. 70, #20, *Iliad* only, 1813, 3 vols., some pls. browned, fancy binding (£35). Ursus Books, Nov. cat., #55, *Iliad*, 1813, with *Odyssey*, a mixed set of the 1806 small paper issue and 1813, all with the pls. in the 2nd st., 12 vols., contemporary red morocco (\$1500).

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 2 vols., 1802. W. & V. Dailey, Nov. private offer, damaged, spines broken and covered with decayed cello tape, 2 covers loose, cello tape repairs of a few pages, pls. badly foxed and ink-stained in the margins, otherwise fine (\$50).

Pope, *Rape of the Lock*, 1801. James Burmester, April cat. 9, #382, lacking half-title (£38).

Winkelmann, *Reflections*, trans. Fuseli, 1765. Quaritch, May cat. 1105, #115 (\$650). Marlborough, July cat. 41, #218, worn, some foxing (£175).

Young, *Catalogue of the Celebrated Collection of . . . Angerstein*, 1829. BBA, 11 May, #315, with Young, *Catalogue of the Pictures . . . in the Possession of . . . Leicester*, 1825, and 3 unrelated vols. (Barker, £88).

My dear friend
The sudden & weather has cut up all my hopes by the
roots. Every one who knows of our intended flight into your
delightful country. comes in saying do not venture till
summer appears again. I am not at all disposed to
do so. I am not at all as yet to let up legs the weather
at a time when I feel the cold too much to see venturing
my present prospects. — My heartiest thanks for your
many accommodations & the trouble you will be at to
But I get better & stronger every day the weather is much
a better than I expected. — As to the prospect of
it is all plain & bright at this time. — My heartiest
like as well as you. — But think of the expense & how it may
be paid. I have no mind to appear
I intend to bring with me besides our necessary things
of apparel. Only my Book of Dreams from which I will
take what I wish to take. All will go very well in the
Coach which at present waits in a stable. I have heard not
go there. — So that I can bid another Week must pass
before I can venture upon what is evidently from the
young you with your happy family once you are that
rich longer period than I had ever expected in my health
full hours. — Saml Taylor Coleridge
I am most gratefully
Wth rem^{ts} to you

16. Blake. Letter to John Linnell, postmarked 2 July 1826. Photo courtesy of Christie's New York.

LINNELL, JOHN

See illus. 17.

Changing Pastures. Water color, 12.5 x 19 cm., signed. SL, 9 March, #112, illus. (£1045).

Country Road. Oil, 70 x 99 cm., signed and dated 1864. CL, 14 April, #50, illus. color (not sold on an optimistic estimate of £20,000-25,000).

David and the Lion. Oil, 139.7 x 218.4 cm., signed and dated 1850. CL, 17 Nov., #126, illus. color (not sold; estimate £6000-8000).

Figures by a River Bank. Pen and brown ink, 16.5 x 20.5 cm., initialed. SL, 25 Jan., #107, illus. (£550).

Portrait of Frederick Tatham. Pencil, size not recorded. Acquired 1987 by the Fitzwilliam Museum, gift of R. M. M. Pryor. Illus. in *Annual Report of the Syndicate and Friends of the Fitzwilliam* (1987), pl. 7.

Portrait of John Davies Gilbert. Oil, 44.5 x 35.5 cm., signed and dated 1834. SL, 15 Feb., #297, illus. (£2200).

Shepherd's Love Song. Oil, 76 x 102 cm., signed and dated 1827. SL, 22 March, #160, illus. (£2750).

Sketch of Sunset. Water color, 6 1/4 x 9 1/4 in., signed. Martyn Gregory, Oct. cat. 54, #80, illus. (£1600).

Study of Sky and Clouds. Water color, 9 x 11 1/4 in., signed and dated "Augt 29/[18]63." Martyn Gregory, Oct. cat. 54, #79, illus. (£1450).

Wooded Landscape with Windmill. Oil, 17.6 x 28.5 cm. CL, 26 May, #54 (£1100).

"Sheep at Noon," etching. SL, 27 June, #231, on thin Japan, illus. (not sold on an estimate of £800-1200).

MORTIMER, JOHN HAMILTON

Group Portrait of Sargeant-at-Arms Bonfoy, His Son, and J. Clemenston. Oil, 101.6 x 127 cm. CL, 17 Nov., #17,

illus. color (£55,000—a record for a work by Mortimer?).

Studies of Architectural Decorations. Pencil, pen, gray ink and gray wash, sheet 6 1/2 x 4 3/8 in. CL, 11 July, #18, illus. (£1100).

Study for the Presentation of the Magna Carta to King John. Pen and ink, gray washes, 20.5 x 26 cm. SL, 13 July, #21 (not sold).

Etchings Dedicated to Reynolds, 1778-80. Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #30, "Musical Monster," #31, "Enraged Monster," #32, "Revengeful Monster," #33, "Sleeping Monster," all 1816 printings, all illus. (\$220 each).

Shakespeare Characters, etchings. Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #27, 1st (1775) series of 6 pls., 1816 printing, all illus. (\$1750); #28, "Cassandra," and #29, "Shylock," from the 2nd (1776) series, both illus. (\$265 each).

Camoens, *Luciad*, 1778 (frontispiece by Mortimer). Christopher Mendez, Sept. private offer (£50).

PALMER, SAMUEL

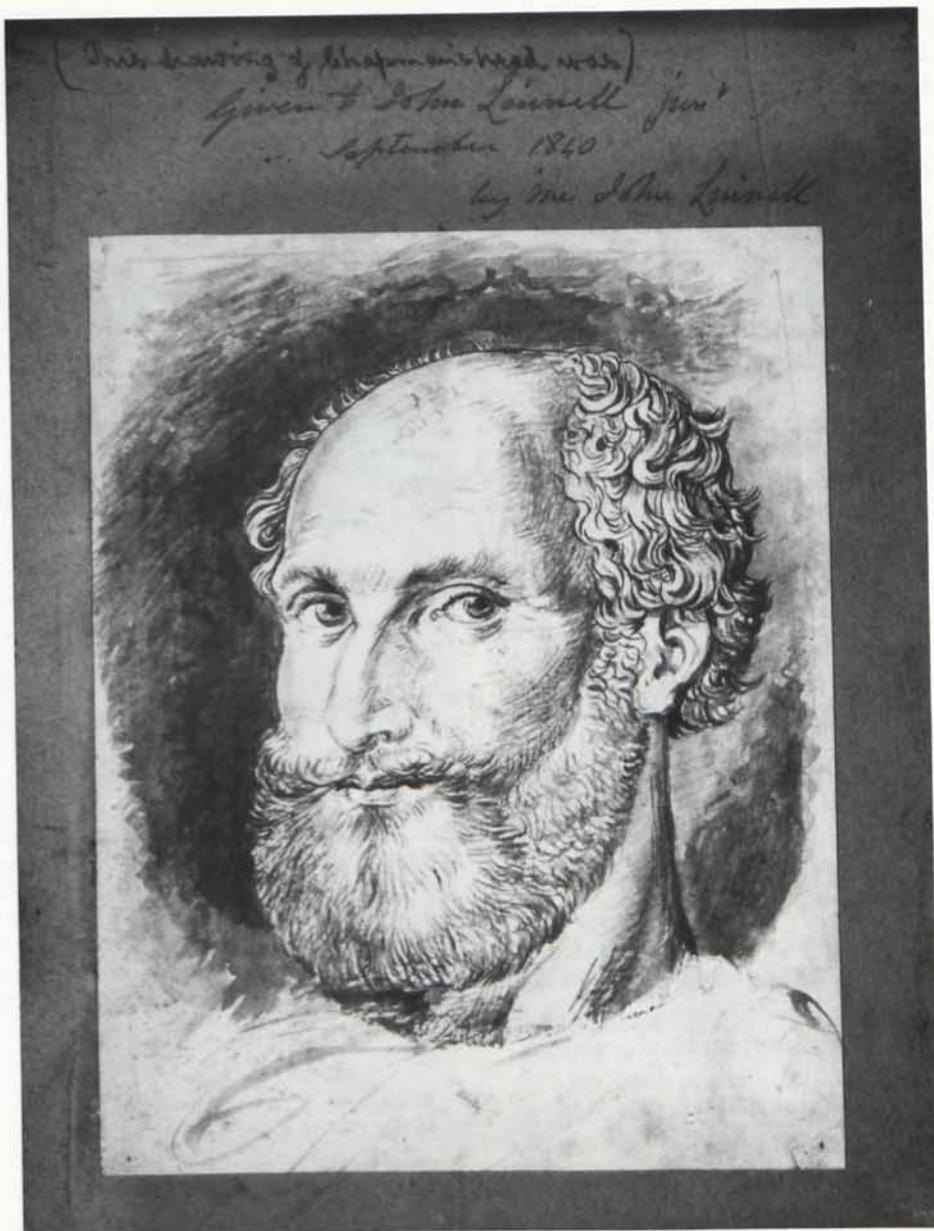
The Brothers, Guided by the Attendant Spirit, Discover the Palace and Bowers of Comus. Water color, 53 x 75 cm., exhibited 1856. Leslie Hindman auction, Chicago, 14 Oct., #10, from the William J. Stoecker collection, illus. color (Donald Heald, \$170,000). Previously sold SL, 19 Nov. 1987, #144 (£55,000).

Florence and the Val d'Arno from the Cypress Grove of San Miniato. Water color, 12 5/8 x 21 3/8 in., signed. CL, 14 Nov., #150, illus. color (not sold on an estimate of £25,000-35,000). A previously untraced work first exhibited in 1845.

Landscape with Sheep in Kent. Oil, 19.2 x 41.6 cm. CL, 17 Nov., #24, illus. color (£77,000).

"Bellman," etching. CL, 12 April, #357, 7th st., illus. (£1540).

"Cypress Grove," etching. Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #122, final st., illus. (\$315).



17. John Linnell. Portrait of George Chapman based on the engraving published in *The Whole Works of Homer*, trans. Chapman, c. 1616. Pen and gray ink on sheet 17 x 13.3 cm. pasted to the inside front cover of Chapman's translation of the *Iliads*, c. 1611, bound with his *Odyssees*, c. 1614. Above the drawing, written on the gray endpaper of the volume, is a presentation inscription in pencil: "Given to John Linnell Junr / September 1840 / by me [possibly "Mr"] John Linnell." The inscription above Linnell's—" (This drawing of Chapman's head was)"—added by a later hand. Linnell purchased Blake's copy of Chapman's Homer from Mrs. Blake in 1829. Might this be the same copy? An article addressing this question appears in *English Language Notes* 27 (1990): 27-30. Essick collection.

"Early Ploughman," etching. Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #121, 5th st., illus. (\$1050). CL, 12 April, #356, 4th st., with 3 pls. by other artists (£275).

"Herdsmen's Cottage," etching. Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #118, 2nd st., illus. (\$875).

"Moeris and Galatea," etching. Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #124, final st., illus. (\$220).

"Opening the Fold," etching. SL, 27 June, #249, between 4th and 5th st., pencil signature, illus. (£1210).

"Rising Moon," etching. Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #120, 7th st., illus. (\$1485).

"Sepulchre," etching. Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #123, final st., illus. (\$200).

"Skylark," etching. Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #117, 7th st., illus. (\$1750).

"Sleeping Shepherd," etching. Garton & Co., April cat. 46, #24, 4th st., good impression, illus. (£1100). Weston Gallery, April cat. 2, #119, 4th st., illus. (\$1925).

Dickens, *Pictures from Italy*, 1846. Traylen, Sept. cat. 105, #785, original cloth (£120).

Hamerton, *Etching & Etchers*, 1868. Swann, 14 Sept. #142, lacking 3 pls., but apparently with Palmer's etching, "Early Ploughman," 4th st. (\$468).

Milton, *Shorter Poems*, 1889. Maggs, Jan. cat. 1091, #561, small paper, original cloth, pls. foxed in margins (£200). Phillip Pirages, June cat. 15, #724, small paper, original cloth (\$300); same copy and price, Nov. cat. 16, #368.

Virgil, *Eclogues*, trans. Palmer. Chaucer Head Books, June cat. 10, #526, 1884 ed., "contemporary—probably publisher's presentation—vellum" (£550). Phillip Pirages, June cat. 15, #725, 1883 small paper ed., original cloth, foxed (\$1400).

ROMNEY, GEORGE (excluding most portrait paintings)

Anger, Envy and Fear personified. Pen and brown ink, 7 1/2 x 11 in. CL, 14 Nov., #61, illus. (£550).

Portrait of Emma Hamilton as Sensibility. Oil, 150 x 121.5 cm., painted c. 1786 and acquired by William Hayley (see his *Life of Romney* [1809] 120-21). SL, 8 March, #50, illus. color (£30,800).

Studies for Sisters Contemplating on Mortality. 6 drawings, pencil and/or pen and brown ink, 6 x 8 1/8 in. and smaller. CL, 11 July, #11 (not sold).



18. John Flaxman. Variant design for Flaxman's *Hesiod* illustrations, pl. 32, "Infant Jupiter" (his mother, Rhea, giving him to her mother, Gaea, to hide him from Saturn). Pencil, pen and ink, gray wash, 9.5 x 11.8 cm., on laid paper. Sold in lot 376 from the collection of Maria Denman, Flaxman's sister-in-law, Christie's, 10 April 1862. Since Blake engraved the *Hesiod* illustrations in line and stippled line, there would have been no reason for Flaxman to add washes to preliminary drawings for the series. Apparently this example, as well as three other *Hesiod* drawings with washes, was produced with the expectation of publication in some medium capable of reproducing continuous tones, such as aquatint, used for Flaxman's *Acts of Mercy*, 1831. Essick collection.

Studies for Tancred and Erminia. 6 pen and brown ink drawings, 7 3/4 x 6 1/4 in. CL, 11 July, #9 (£220).

Woman Kneeling at a Fountain, a Child Standing Beside Her. Pencil, pen and ink, brown wash 12 5/8 x 9 7/8 in. CL, 14 Nov., #60, illus. (£3850).

SHERMAN, WELBY

"Shepherd," engraving after Palmer, 1828. CL, 12 April, #395, on laid India, slightly foxed, surface dirt, but only the 4th known impression, illus. (£2860 on an estimate of £800-1200). Same impression, Garton European Prints, Sept. cat., #9, illus. ("Sold").

STOTHARD, THOMAS

Alfred Disguised as a Harper and 11 other drawings, including studies for *Pilgrim's Progress*. Pencil or pen and ink, 4 with wash, 7 1/4 x 9 7/8 in. and smaller. CL, 11 July, #15 (£286).

"The Lost Apple," lithograph, 1803. Garton European Prints, Sept. cat., #2, 2nd st., with aquatint border, illus. (£2000).

Aesop, *Fables*, 1793. Sotheran's, summer 1988 cat. 1003, #2, 2 vols. (£425).

Bijou, 1828. Claude Cox, Nov. cat. 75, #182a, original boards, rubbed (£30); #182b, another copy, lacking 1 (non-Stothard) pl. (£15).

Bray, *Life of Stothard*, 1851, extra-illus. copies only. SL, 13 July, #845, with 97 added pls., 2 vols. (Montague, £198).

Byron, *Works*, 2 vols., 1815. Simon Finch, May cat. 6, #83, 10 (of 12) pls., fancy binding illus. (£475).

Catullus, *Tibullus et Propertius*, 1801. Sanders, Jan. 1988 cat. 113, #467 (£25).

Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, 1801. Claude Cox, Jan. cat. 70, #68, 4 vols., fancy binding (£120).

Cowper, *Poems*, 1800. Deighton, Bell, Sept. private offer, large paper, contemporary calf (£175).

Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, 1790. Heritage Book Shop, Jan. cat. 173, #33, the

14 pls. of 1790 inserted in a 1785 ed. (\$450).

Dryden, *Fables*, 1806. W. & V. Dailey, Oct. private offer (\$75).

Fenelon, *Adventures of Telemachus*, 1795. Ann Creed Books, Feb. cat. 1, #319, 2 vols., rubbed, some foxing (£125). Vanbrugh Books, Sept. private offer, clean copy (£75).

Gessner, *Works*, 1802. Jarndyce, April cat. 62, #84, 3 vols. (£48).

Hayley, *Triumphs of Temper*, 1788. James Burmester, April cat. 9, #365 (£38). Blackwell's, Oct. English Literature cat., #30 (£30).

Literary Souvenir, 1828. Rota, Sept. private offer (£30).

Pinkerton, *Rimes*, 1782. Ximenes, Aug. cat. 85, #325 (\$150).

Rogers, *Italy*. Phillip Pirages, June cat. 15, #449, 1859 ed., fancy binding (\$150). Quaritch, Sept. private offer, eds. of 1824 (pt. 1) and 1828 (pt. 2) in 1 vol., presentation inscription by Rogers, with a letter by Rogers and a portrait sketch of him inserted (\$250)—the presence of 6 of Luke Clennell's wood engravings after Stothard in these 2 eds. has not been previously noted. Sanders, Sept. private offer, 1830 ed., original boards, cloth folding case (£85). Bickersteth, Nov. cat. 108, #217, 1830 ed. (£35).

Rogers, *Pleasures of Memory*, 1801. Rota, Sept. private offer (£25).

Rogers, *Poems*. BBA, 22 June, #388, 1834 ed. (not sold); 13 July, #145, 1814 ed. (Whetman, £22). Sanders, Sept. private offers, 1827 ed. (with Clennell's wood engravings), original boards (£8.50); 1834 ed., original boards, cloth folding case (£85). Claude Cox, Nov. cat. 75, #13, 1812 ed. (£28). Bickersteth, Nov. cat. 108, #216, 1834 ed. (£35).

Sterne, *Works*, 10 vols., 1798. Walford, Nov. cat. H/159, #85 (£195).

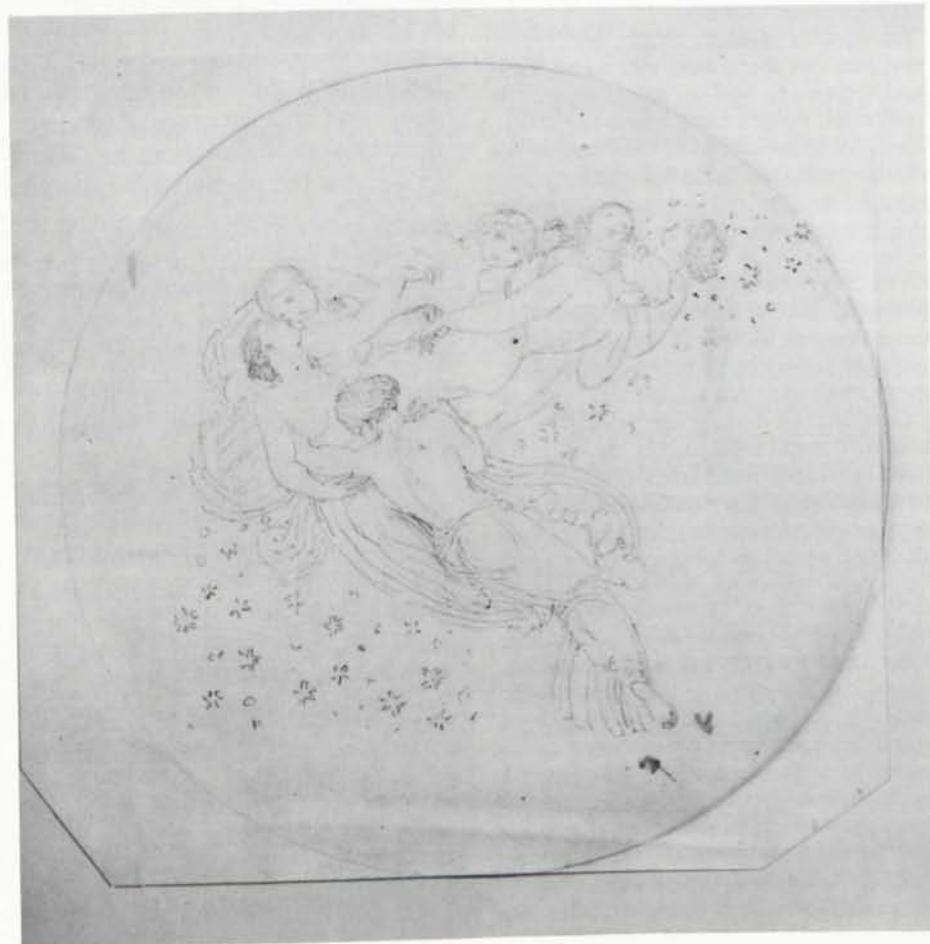
Tasso, *Jerusalem Delivered*, 1797. Chelsea Rare Books, Sept. private offer, 2 vols., contemporary calf (£70).

Thomson, *Seasons*, 1793. Claude Cox, Jan. cat. 70, #34, fancy binding (£165).

Walton, *Complete Angler*, 1836. Sanders, Jan. 1988 cat. 113, #477, 478 (£48 each). Claude Cox, March cat. 71, #138, 2 vols. large paper (£110).

Walton, *Lives of Donne*, et al, 1827. Sanders, Jan. 1988 cat. 113, #475 (£30); #476, hinge repaired (£18).

Young, *Night Thoughts*, 1798. Claude Cox, Jan. cat. 70, #278, marginal browning (£40). Phillip Pirages, June cat. 15, #406, fancy binding (\$450). Chelsea Rare Books, Sept. private offer (£95).



19. John Flaxman. *The Pleiades*, a preliminary drawing for the *Hesiod* illustrations, pl. 18. Pencil, pen and gray ink, 14.4 x 17.4 cm. on a wove sheet with an 1809 watermark. Probably in lot 13 of the Denman sale (see illus. 18). The drawing varies slightly from the published engraving in the positions of the women's heads at the top. Collection of Jenijoy La Belle.

Blake's Tiger and the Discourse of Natural History

by Colin Pedley

Blake's poem "The Tyger," though its dating has always been a little uncertain, is likely to have been completed by 10 October 1793, when Blake advertised the separate *Songs of Experience* in his prospectus.¹ This article discusses some of the discourses concerning the tiger which were available to Blake, concentrating primarily on the discourse of natural history.

A useful starting point, which serves as a focus for various elements in the discourse, is an incident widely reported in the newspapers: the announcement of the death of a son of Sir Hector Munro. On Wednesday, 3 July 1793, the *Times* carried a short paragraph:

A son of Sir Hector Munro has been killed on passage to India. He went ashore with a party at an island where they had put in to water; and reclining with his companions under some trees a tiger sprang from an adjoining thicket, and seizing him in his mouth, tore the unfortunate young man to pieces.

A more detailed report was published the next day in the *St. James's Chronicle* 2-4 July 1793, and again in the *Star* 5 July 1793, reproducing part of an eyewitness account in a letter written by one of Munro's companions, which had been published in the *Calcutta Gazette* 1 January 1793, and had now reached London on a ship from India. The event itself had taken place about 22 December 1792. The text of one of the letters from an eyewitness follows:

To describe the awful, horrid, and lamentable accident I have been an eyewitness of, is impossible. Yesterday morning Mr Downey, of the Company's troops, Lieut. Pyefinch, poor Mr Munro (son of Sir Hector) and myself, went on shore on Saugur Island to shoot deer. We saw innumerable tracks of tigers and deer, but still we were induced to pursue our sport, and did the whole day. About half past three we sat down on the edge of the

jungle, to eat some cold meat sent us from the ship, and had just commenced our meal, when Mr Pyefinch and a black servant told us there was a fine deer within six yards of us. Mr Downey and myself immediately jumped up to take our guns; mine was the nearest, and I had just laid hold of it when I heard a roar, like thunder, and saw an immense royal tiger spring on the unfortunate Munro, who was sitting down. In a moment his head was in the beast's mouth, and he rushed into the jungle with him, with as much ease as I could lift a kitten, tearing him through the thickest bushes and trees, every thing yielding to his monstrous strength.

The agonies of horror, regret, and, I must say, fear (for there were two tigers, male and female) rushed on me at once. The only effort I could make was to fire at him, though the poor youth was still in his mouth. I relied partly on Providence, partly on my own aim, and fired a musket. I saw the tiger stagger and agitated, and cried out so immediately. Mr Downey then fired two shots, and I one more. We retired from the jungle, and, a few minutes after, Mr Munro came up to us, all over blood, and fell. We took him on our backs to the boat, and got every medical assistance for him from the Valentine East India-man, which lay at anchor near the island, but in vain. He lived 24 hours in the extreme of torture; his head and skull were torn, and broke to pieces, and he was wounded by the claws all over his neck and shoulders; but it was better to take him away, though irrecoverable, than leave him to be devoured limb by limb. We have just read the funeral service over the body, and committed it to the deep. He was an amiable and promising youth. I must observe, there was a large fire blazing close to us, composed of ten or a dozen whole trees; I made it myself, on purpose to keep the tigers off, as I had always heard it would. There were eight or ten natives about us; many shots had been fired at the place, and much noise and laughing at the time; but this ferocious animal disregarded all. The human mind cannot form an idea of the scene; it turned my very soul within me. The beast was about four and a half feet high, and nine long. His head appeared as large as an ox's, his eyes darting fire, and his roar, when he first seized his prey, will

never be out of my recollection. We had scarcely pushed our boats from that cursed shore when the tigress made her appearance, raging mad almost, and remained on the sand as long as the distance would allow me to see her.²

The provincial newspapers repeated the story. For instance, the *York Herald* 6 July 1793 on one page reproduced the *Times's* brief account, though its final sentence (imitating the more sensational version in the *Oracle* 4 July 1793 and the *Whitehall Evening Post* 2-4 July 1793) replaced "tore the unfortunate young man to pieces" with "tore out the heart of the unfortunate young man"; and on a later page it reprinted the complete account from the *Calcutta Gazette*. The *Northampton Mercury* 6 July 1793 settled for reprinting the greater part of the letter in the *Calcutta Gazette*, while the *Reading Mercury* 8 July 1793 printed the whole of it. In contrast, the *Bath Chronicle* 11 July 1793 mixed extract and summary in an edited narration of what it called "this marvellous story."

The event was clearly felt to be newsworthy in 1793, since in addition to the newspapers, both London and provincial, it found a place in a number of other publications. It featured in the summary of the year's chief happenings in the *Annual Register* of both Dodsley, and Rivington, and in the *New Annual Register*, all three quoting extensively from the eyewitness letter.³ The extent of the widespread interest was demonstrated by the range of periodical publications that felt it worth reproducing for their readers. The *Universal Magazine*, the *European Magazine*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and the *Scots Magazine* among the established magazines all featured very similar accounts,⁴ all in their July issues which appeared about the be-

ginning of August 1793. The *Lady's Magazine* did not report the incident, but many less well known magazines did. The *Wonderful Magazine*, new in 1793,⁵ included it among its "Marvelous Chronicle of extraordinary productions, events, and occurrences, in Nature and Art."⁶ The *Thespian Magazine* (begun in 1792) in its August 1793 issue included it under its "Monthly chronicle—domestic occurrences."⁷ Another new magazine, the *Sporting Magazine* (begun in November 1792), went further in two respects, including extensive comment about tigers and their habits, and accompanying the text with a full page engraving of the tiger seizing Munro.⁸ The painting was by Richard Corbould, and the engraving by Thomas Cook (illus. 1). Engravings were intended as a selling point for the magazine, and featured prominently in the advertisement placed in the *Morning Chronicle* 1 August 1793, under the headline, DEATH OF MUNRO.⁹ The *Sporting Magazine* also included a second eyewitness letter from the *Calcutta Gazette*, which contributed to the authenticity of the account, but added nothing of substance. From these references we can conclude that, at least in London, news of the event had wide currency, and its description was widely available. Even outside London, the news was widely disseminated.

No doubt some of the interest shown in this gruesome event was due to the celebrity of Sir Hector Munro, the victim's father. He was a soldier whose reputation had been made in India. In October 1764 he had been in command of forces which routed the confederated princes of Hindostan at Buxar, in Bihar, and rendered the Nawabs of Bengal and Oudh powerless. This battle was ranked by some as among the most decisive ever fought, and brought enormous prize money to the victors. In 1778 he captured Pondicherry from the French. He was a member of Parliament, and had been a general from 1782. He became a Lieutenant-General in 1793, and died



1. "The Attack of Mr Munro," from *The Sporting Magazine* 2 (1793): 199, Vet.A5.e.875/2. Courtesy of The Bodleian Library.

in 1805.¹⁰ But the engraving in the *Sporting Magazine* supports the more obvious suggestion that the interest which editors exploited so completely was not so much in Munro, as in the tiger. And, indeed, a close examination of the article in the *Sporting Magazine* reveals much that is of interest in establishing current attitudes to and knowledge about the tiger which illuminates the discourse available to Blake.

The *Sporting Magazine* article introduced the letters from the companions of Munro by first presenting material describing the ferocious characteristics of the tiger and supplementing this with an account of commonly held beliefs about the supposed effect of fire on the animal. The opening paragraph stressed the tiger's ferocity:

The tiger is allowed to be the most rapacious and destructive of all carnivorous animals. Fierce without provocation, and cruel without necessity, his thirst for blood is insatiable: though glutted with slaughter, he continues his carnage. He fears neither the sight nor the opposition of man, whom he frequently makes his prey, and it is generally supposed that he prefers human flesh to that of any other animal. The tiger is, indeed, one of the few animals whose ferocity can never be subdued.¹¹

There is no acknowledgment, but this is taken, with only a few minor alterations, from *A General History of Quadrupeds* by Thomas Bewick, published in 1790. Some of Bewick's material was omitted immediately before the last sentence here quoted; since it stressed the animal's thirst for blood, it might have been judged inappropriate and insensitive when the victim described in the article was a human being. It read:

The strength of the animal is so great, that, when it has killed an animal, whether it be a Horse, a Buffalo, or a Deer, it carries it off with such ease, that it seems no impediment to its flight. If it be undisturbed, it plunges its head into the body of the animal up to its very eyes, as if to satiate itself with blood.¹²

Of the greatest interest in Bewick's book are his engravings, and that of the tiger, he notes, was taken from life, from a tiger exhibited in Newcastle in 1787 (illus. 2). His text was taken in much of its substance and even its phraseology¹³ from the English translation and abridgment by William Smellie of Buffon's *Natural History, General and Particular*, which first appeared in 1780. This is confirmed by Bewick in his autobiographical

Memoir,¹⁴ which also reveals that the text was compiled for the most part by Ralph Beilby, the engraver he had been apprenticed to in Newcastle. Indeed, one of the main reasons for beginning this exploration of tigers in the discourse of natural history with the accounts of the death of Munro is that their detailed examination reveals the layered intertextuality in the accounts and highlights the extensive ways by which that discourse was mediated. A discourse that originates in largely specialist publications is seen to have been diffused and to appear in outlets much less technical.

Buffon's work is of central importance in an examination of the discourse about tigers that we are investigating. Georges Le Clerc, Comte de Buffon (together with others) published his *Histoire naturelle* in forty-four volumes between 1749 and 1804 (though he himself died in 1788). The part of the work we are concerned with had been completed in fifteen volumes by 1767, with a supplement in seven volumes appearing between 1774 and 1789. I have used the seven volumes of the *History of Quadrupeds* dated 1775, with two volumes of additions dated 1777. There were a number of English translations, both of parts and selections. For our purposes, we can note that a translation by W. Kenrick came out in three volumes in 1775, as *Natural History of Animals, Vegetables and Minerals*, while W. Smellie's translation was published in 1780 by William Creech of Edinburgh, and in nine volumes by Strahan and Cadell in London in 1785. Kearsley published the *Natural History Abridged* in 1791 (the year of Smellie's third edition), while an alternative version appeared as *Barr's Buffon* in a translation by J. S. Barr in 1792. The popularity of Buffon's work is not in any doubt, if the continuing ventures of eager publishers are any indication. That this continued up to the year we are discussing, 1793, is shown by the advertisement in December 1793 of an abridged version

of Smellie's translation to be issued cheaply in thirty-four weekly numbers, each with four plates.¹⁵

Buffon's work was also the basis of another popular work, known to Bewick, and used by him as a source, Thomas Pennant's *History of Quadrupeds*. Indeed, Pennant's work, first issued as *Synopsis of Quadrupeds* (published by J. Monk, Chester) in 1771, had originally been intended "for private amusement, and as an Index, for the more ready turning to any particular animal in the voluminous history of quadrupeds by the late Comte de Buffon" (preface). His longer *History of Quadrupeds* was published by W. White in London in 1781, and had reached a third edition, in two volumes, in 1793.¹⁶ The close relationship between Pennant and Buffon (in Smellie's translation) can be seen if we compare the following passages. Pennant writes of tigers:

If they are undisturbed they plunge their head into the body of the animal up to their very eyes, as if it were to satiate themselves with blood, which they exhaust the corpse of before they tear it to pieces. There is a sort of cruelty in their devastations, unknown to the generous lion; as well as a poltrony in their sudden retreat on any disappointment.¹⁷

The opening part of this quotation is, as we have already seen, also the same in Bewick. Buffon's description of the tiger's hunting habits beside rivers used by other animals as drinking places is the source of material for both Bewick and Pennant. Smellie's translation reads:

Here they procure their prey, or rather multiply their massacres; for they often leave the creatures they have recently killed to devour others. They delight in blood, and glut themselves with it till they are intoxicated. They tear the body for no other purpose than to plunge their head into it, and to drink large draughts of blood, the sources of which are generally exhausted before their thirst is appeased.¹⁸

Buffon characterizes the tiger's lust for blood in terms of a perpetual rage, as can be seen in a number of examples.

The tiger . . . though satiated with carnage, seems to be perpetually thirsting for blood. His fury has no intervals, but during the time he is obliged to lie in ambush for prey at the sides of rivers. He seizes and tears to pieces a fresh animal with the same rage that he exerted in devouring the first.¹⁹

Or: "He has no instinct but perpetual rage, a blind and undistinguishing ferocity, which often impells him to devour his young, and to tear in pieces their mother, when she attempts to defend them."²⁰ Or again (in a passage from which Pennant, and Bewick [and the *Sporting Magazine*] have copied):

The tiger is perhaps the only animal whose violence cannot be subdued. Neither violence nor restraint have any effect in softening his temper. He is equally irritated with gentle or rough treatment. The mild influence of society makes no impression on the obduracy of his nature. Time, instead of mollifying the ferociousness of his humour, only exasperates his rage. With equal wrath he tears the hand which feeds him, as that which is lifted up to strike him. He roars at the sight of everything that lives. Every object appears to him as a fresh prey, which he devours before hand with the avidity of his eyes, menaces with frightful groans, and the grinding of his teeth, and often darts upon it, without regarding his chains which only restrain, but cannot calm his fury.²¹

Rage is the keyword, as shown in the repeated use of the word itself, together with "fury" and "wrath."

To the material which originated from Buffon, the writer of the article on the death of Munro in the *Sporting Magazine* for July 1793 added details about the general belief that a fire would be protection against a tiger. This had an immediate relevance since the hunting party with Munro had built such a fire "composed of ten or a dozen whole trees . . . —on purpose to keep the tigers off." The author continued:

We shall not give a decisive judgment either for or against the security which a fire may ensure to any persons who wander in Asiatic forests, against the depredations of ferocious animals; but I think I may venture to assert, that a fire *in the day-time* (when the youth in question became the prey of the tiger) can be of little use. Fire, or fireworks in broad daylight,

lose much of their effect, and in some instances are hardly visible; but in the night, when darkness and a blaze of light are strongly contrasted, it cannot be a matter of surprise that the fiercest of animals, unaccustomed to such an illumination, should flee from its tremendous aspect.²²

This was followed by the first letter with its eyewitness account, in which fire has become associated with the tiger itself rather than with any protection against it. The shocked observer wrote: "His head appeared as large as an ox's, his eyes darting fire, and his roar, when he first seized his prey, will never be out of my recollection."²³

There are many elements in the material described which are recognizable in Blake's poem "The Tyger." All the works discussed would have been readily available to him in 1793; and his professional interest in them might have been stimulated by the engravings which they contained. Without speculating as to whether Blake knew any of these accounts, they are evidence of the existence of a variety of discourses available for Blake to draw on. What we can be certain of is that between 1791 and 1793 Blake was engaged in engravings of illustrations, originally made by the author, for J. G. Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition, against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam in Guiana, on the Wild Coast of South America; from the Year 1772 to 1777*, which was eventually published in 1796. Three of Blake's engravings are dated 1 December 1792, and the remainder 2 December 1793. Stedman refers to Buffon's assertion that there are "no tygers in America, but animals resembling them, which go by that name"²⁴ in his discussion of the jaguar. Goldsmith also spoke of jaguars as "tygers." Stedman's subsequent discussion highlights elements already headlined in the discourse about the tiger; the jaguar also kills for the sake of blood "with which this ferocious animal is never glutted."²⁵ Like the tiger "its savage nature and thirst after blood is such that it cannot be tamed: it will on

the contrary, bite the very hand that feeds it, and very often devours its own offspring."²⁶ Stedman also refers to fire as something "tygers" are afraid of.²⁷

The forms of discourse additionally in evidence here in a text we are certain Blake knew may well lead us to conclude that they are the same discursive practices we see him using and transforming as they interlock in his poem. This seems all the more likely when we consider the poem in its two early drafts. The first draft, in lines later deleted, echoes Buffon's stress on the animal's wanton cruelty. Blake was already considering "The cruel fire of thine eyes" as an alternative to "Burnt the fire of thine eyes" (Notebook 109),²⁸ while the wholly deleted lines contained, "In what clay and in what mould / Were thy eyes of fury roll'd," which made no reappearance later. Blake seems in the second draft to have attempted to retain the connection of the eyes with both fire and cruelty by transposing "Burnt" to line 5: "Burnt in distant deeps or skies / The cruel fire of thine eyes?" (Notebook 108). The tiger's rage, expressed by "thy eyes of fury" in the first draft, is associated in the deleted passage with a line, "In the well of sanguine woe," which may stress its bloodthirstiness, though it may refer instead to the tiger's being dipped in the temporal and finite, the fallen world of blood and woe.²⁹

There is even a glimmer of the restraining chains Buffon mentions in "Where the Chain?" in the first draft, which eventually became "What the chain?" in line 13 of the final version. The changes Blake made show him taking up the ideas of rage and cruelty and impatience of restraint in the discourse of natural history in contemporary works, and moving away from any kind of signification determined by this discourse alone, or at least minimizing it as the chief point of focus. Nurmi's explanation of the poem's evolution through its drafts in terms of the resolution by Blake of a dialectical

struggle to bring into a "fearful symmetry" its "deadly terrors" and its divinely created origin is subtle, but lays unnecessary stress on the historical events possibly reflected in the drafts as a means of establishing their date.³⁰ Allusive reference back is in any case an alternative explanation. Recognition of the existing discourses and their transformation releases the drafts from dependence on the date of their possible historical analogues.

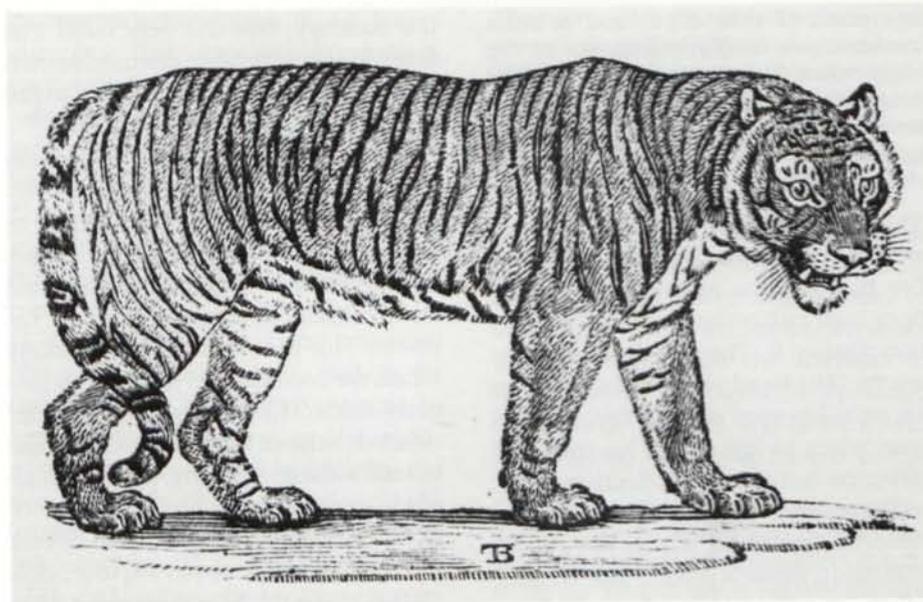
It may be that the intense journalistic exposure of the incident of the death of Munro acted as a catalyst to fuse elements in these discourses, even to provide, not the occasion of the poem, but an impulse in the process of its composition. The eyewitness accounts and the surrounding comment bring into focus traditions of the tiger and fire, and his springing from the dark forest. The contrast between fire and darkness is also explicit, but the fire now burns bright not only in the tiger's eyes ("Burnt the fire of thine eyes"), though they "dart fire" as when the tiger seized Munro, but in his whole wrathful demeanor.³¹ Perhaps even the foreignness of the tiger, known by most only in books of natural history or from journalistic accounts of accidents in distant and exotic places,³² is drawn on in the poem's first conception in the "distant deeps or skies," a phrase present from the earliest draft.

To the discourses we have been examining should be added those of the biblical tradition, and in particular its accounts of creation,³³ and those political discourses which were readily associating revolutionary France with the wrathful tiger.³⁴ These both contribute substantially to the force of Blake's poem, and are leading elements in determining how we should read it. The discourses of natural history are fused with elements from these other discursive practices. It is worth noting that Buffon's work, and not only aspects of the biblical tradition, bring lamb and tiger into close association, the sheep

and lamb seen as almost wholly dependent on man for survival and the most helpless of creatures, the tiger the least susceptible to his domination.³⁵

For Blake, as for Bewick in 1787, there would have been the occasional opportunity to see a live tiger in captivity. He is likely to have visited Pidcock's menagerie in the Strand, where Stubbs studied the rhinoceros in 1772 and from which source he reputedly obtained the tiger studied in his *Comparative Anatomical Exposition*.³⁶ In June 1798 three tiger cubs were born in the menagerie, the first reported birth of this kind in captivity in England (*Morning Chronicle* 20 July 1798). This was sufficiently remarkable to be reported in the French press (*Le Moniteur universel* 28 July 1798; 10 Thermidor). A tiger, in the possession of the Duke of Marlborough, died in the Tower, and might have been seen by Blake. It was painted by Stubbs; an engraving by John Dixon was made in 1772, and Stubbs's own engraving was issued in 1788. Stubbs's painting was exhibited in Somerset Street at the Society of Artists of Great Britain in 1769, in the building where Pars's drawing school was held; at that time, Blake was in his second year as a pupil.³⁷ It must be said, however, that Stubbs's painting shows a noble beast in repose, rather than one resembling the "fearful symmetry" of Blake's poem. Goldsmith commented that the tiger in the Tower "appears the most good natured and harmless creature in the world; its physiognomy is far from fierce and angry," yet despite its "gentle placid air," it was "fierce and savage beyond measure; neither correction can terrify it, nor indulgence can tame."³⁸ After Blake's poem was completed, Stubbs began work in 1795 on a *Comparative Anatomical Exposition of the Structure of the Human Body with That of a Tiger and a Common Fowl*. He completed 126 drawings, but published only 15 plates for this work before his death.³⁹

Other painters showed interest in the tiger, for instance, James North-



2. "The Tiger," from Bewick's *General History of Quadrupeds* (1790), Douce.B.756.P171. Courtesy of The Bodleian Library.

cote.⁴⁰ In pictures such as Northcote's, or the tiger hunt in India in 1788 painted by John Zoffany, which showed the hunting party on elephants surrounding a tiger wounded and at bay, the attraction seems to be the glimpse of sublimity in the revelation of the tiger's energy and power, and the sense of reassurance in dwelling on occasions when the tiger, the animal least capable of control by man, is shown at a moment of submission.⁴¹ Man is seen in control of his universe. Blake would also have had access to information about India from Thomas Banks, who exhibited Indian subjects at the Royal Academy in 1789, 1792, and 1800. India was frequently in the news, especially because of the trial of Warren Hastings, which lasted from 1788 to 1795. This in no way either explains or devalues Blake's poem, but does show what a great poet can make of those materials rendered available in the variety of interlocking discourses which make up any cultural ambience and out of which texts are constructed. The materials of the poem lay ready to hand, ready to be taken up and reshaped.

That Blake did reshape these materials is clear if we highlight those features in the discourse which he does not take up as a point of focus. Buffon emphasizes the tiger's lack of proportion, and makes this the basis of moral disparagement.

The too great length of the body of the tyger, and his disproportionately short limbs, his naked head, his haggard eyes and his blood-coloured tongue which always lolls out of his mouth, are marks of ignoble malice and insatiable cruelty.⁴²

(This point is not borne out by the engraving in Buffon's volume of 1775 [illus. 3], though Corbould's picture of the death of Munro [see illus. 1] shows the tiger's tongue lolling out of its mouth, and also has it facing left. There is, however, a similarity of pose between the tigers of Buffon and Bewick, and that of Blake, despite their facing the opposite way, which may relate to the conventions of anatomical display.) With a rhetorical flourish, Buffon hopes that the tiger's occasional practice of devouring its own young will eventually lead to the extinction of the species. ("May this excessive thirst for blood never be allayed, till he has

destroyed the whole race of monsters which he produces."⁴³) Comparison with the lion is always to the tiger's detriment. It is fierce and cruel without the lion's attendant "clemency and generosity."⁴⁴ Goldsmith, who confesses to using Buffon as an authority, is in this inconsistent, attributing the greatest beauty among quadrupeds to both the tiger and the horse.⁴⁵ He stresses the beauty of the tiger's coloring, and then speaks of "an extremely elegant form, much larger indeed than that of the leopard, but more slender, more delicate, and bespeaking the most extreme swiftness and agility."⁴⁶ But its beauty of form is matched with the mischievousness of the animal's disposition, "as if Providence was willing to shew the small value of beauty by bestowing it on the most noxious of quadrupeds."⁴⁷ The tiger is, within a page, both the most beautiful and the most noxious of quadrupeds.

Other features are highlighted to the tiger's discredit. Pennant speaks of the tiger's cowardice, and accuses him of "poltrony" in his "sudden retreat on any disappointment."⁴⁸ Buffon, followed by others, emphasizes the greed of the animal, and how it becomes drunk with blood, and suffers from blind rage. Indeed, we find incorporated into this discourse of natural history discursive practices more common in moral and theological contexts. Buffon uses the language of disapproval for those characteristics which show reason not in control. The tiger is the animal least subject to submission to man's rational superiority. Man stands at the center of Buffon's universe, and all creatures are seen in relation to man, with reason controlling the instinctual passions. Animals such as sheep, were they not useful to man and given his protection, would soon be annihilated. "Wherever man has not the dominion, the lion, the tiger, and the wolf reign by the laws of force and cruelty."⁴⁹ There are similarities here with the position of Bishop Butler.

There are several brute creatures of equal, and several of superior strength, to that of men; and possibly the sum of the whole strength of brutes may be greater than that of mankind: but reason gives us the advantage and superiority over them; and thus man is the acknowledged governing animal upon earth. Nor is this superiority considered by any as accidental; but as what reason has a tendency, in the nature of the thing, to obtain.⁵⁰

This tradition of natural theology is one Blake rejects, as he does the implications of much of Buffon's discourse. In contrast, he concentrates on the sublime power and ferocious energy of the tiger, on the tiger's untamable quality. Blake makes the tiger awesome without moral disparagement, giving value to energy and attributing it to the divine Creator. This is the true implication of his "fearful symmetry," in contrast to Buffon's attribution to the tiger of disproportion. For Blake the tiger is certainly fearful, but retains his symmetry.

In a whole variety of eighteenth century texts, "symmetry" is the mark of that orderliness and pattern that reflects the mind of the Creator. This is most obvious in texts of instruction designed for children. In 1793, Thomas Bewick provided designs and woodcuts for such a work, *The Blossoms of Morality*, translated by W. D. Cooper from the French of Armand Berquin. An early section of this, entitled "The Book of Nature," teaches how the Creator may be seen in his works; "we ought to study nature in every thing that presents itself to our view, and therein trace out the handy works of the great Creator."⁵¹ This is evident even in plants. "What appears to us mean and despicable, often affords wherewith to astonish the sublimest minds. Not a single leaf is neglected by Nature; order and symmetry are obvious in every part of it."⁵² The same sort of point is implied in Goldsmith, when he presents the horse as "the most perfectly formed" of quadrupeds; his perfection is exhibited in "the exact symmetry of his shape."⁵³

A poem of Henry Needler from 1728, which in its description of the creation of man uses the same kind of rhetorical questions that are a mark of Blake's poem, makes a similar point.

By what artful Hand
Was the nice Fabrick made? Who plac'd
the Bones
In such a well-knit Frame, and with such
skill
And Symmetry contriv'd?

The poem provides its own answer to the question; such symmetry is the work of "an Infinite Almighty God."⁵⁴

Akenside's *The Pleasures of Imagination* (1744) claims that the "charm of animated things" is a pledge of "The integrity and order of their frame,"⁵⁵ and he lists the "varied symmetry of parts" among the hierarchy of nature's charms.⁵⁶ The highest form of beauty is when it reveals "the high expression of a mind," leading us from the created object to the Creator:

By steps conducting our enraptur'd
search
To that eternal origin, whose power,
Through all the unbounded symmetry of
things,
Like rays effulging from the parent sun,
This endless mixture of her charms
diffus'd.⁵⁷

Symmetry is evidence of the Creative Mind.

Apart from "The Tyger," the only other occasion when Blake used the word "symmetry" was in the annotations to Reynolds, of about 1808. Commenting on Reynolds's remark in the Third Discourse that: "There is, likewise, a kind of symmetry, or proportion, which may properly be said to belong to deformity," Blake wrote: "The Symmetry of Deformity is a Pretty Foolery" (E 648). In the next annotation, he rejected any thought that symmetry might be an abstract idea, applicable to beauty and deformity alike, and to Reynolds's remark: "When the Artist has by diligent attention acquired a clear and distinct idea of

beauty and symmetry; when he has reduced the variety of nature to the abstract idea . . . ,” Blake snorted, “What Folly!” (E 649).

From all this we may conclude that the “fearful symmetry” of “The Tyger” is much more than the “natural symmetry of ferocity and beauty” which Nurmi suggests.⁵⁸ Symmetry is inherent in the idea of beauty, but to speak of “fearful symmetry” implies a creature which, despite its wrathful aspect, is no less an expression of the divine mind of the Creator. It is not just the symbol of an idea, but the realization in a particular beast and superficial form of the divine energy available only to the eye of the imagination. Awareness of the discourses which intersect in the poem forces consideration of more than its internal tensions. The text is to be interpreted in relation to those discourses.

The existence of such discourses may also contribute something to our understanding of the Proverb of Hell, “The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction.”⁵⁹ Buffon treats the tiger as the animal least capable of being subdued; his nature resists all efforts at control. Buffon’s French text is more explicit here than Smellie’s translation: “Le tigre est peut-être le seul de tous les animaux dont on ne puisse fléchir le naturel; ni la force, ni la contrainte, ni la violence ne peuvent le dompter.”⁶⁰ Buffon presents the horse as the animal whose nature has been conquered by man, who has become docile: “il fléchit sous la main de celui qui le guide”;⁶¹ “C’est un créature qui renonce à son être pour n’exister que par la volonté d’un autre.”⁶²

A later sentence reads significantly: “C’est par la perte de sa liberté que commence son éducation, & par la contrainte qu’elle s’achève.”⁶³ Tiger and horse are contrasted in Buffon’s system as those animals who are least subject and most subject to the constraining will of man. Ready to hand in the available discourse about these animals are the significations that

Blake is to use and develop in terms of “the tygers of wrath” and “the horses of instruction.” The tiger impatient of constraint, not to be subdued, is aligned with energy and with freedom; the horse, docile, subdued, and responsive, is aligned with reason, and freedom’s constraint. Buffon concludes that “the manners of a horse originate entirely from his education,”⁶⁴ and the implication of an earlier comment, namely, that “in animated beings, liberty of movement constitutes the perfection of their existence,”⁶⁵ serves to confirm Blake’s attribution of greater “wisdom” to the creature whose nature is most unconstrained. The same point is borne out in Buffon’s earlier and more general discussion of domestic animals, where he points out that the naturalist needs to distinguish “those facts which depend solely on instinct, from those that originate from education,” and “never to confound the animal with the slave, the beast of burden with the creature of God.”⁶⁶

The transformation of “that noble beast the Tyger” in *An Island in the Moon*, in 1784, to “the tygers of wrath” by 1793 in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* seems to point to Blake’s awareness of the discourse made available by Smellie’s 1785 translation of Buffon. Whether or not Blake knew it, he certainly absorbed its substance,⁶⁷ which by 1793 underwent further transformation, possibly under the impulse of the account of the death of Munro.

¹ G. E. Bentley, Jr., ed. *William Blake’s Writings*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1978) 1: 682.

² The text of this letter is the same in *Sporting Magazine* 2 (July 1793): 200-01, and *Gentleman’s Magazine* 63 (July 1793): 671.

³ *Annual Register* (Dodsley) 35 (1793): 31-32 [not published till 1796]; *Annual Register* (Rivington) 35 (1793) [not published till 1806]; *New Annual Register* 14 (1793): 24-25.

⁴ *Universal Magazine* 93 (July 1793): 73-74; *European Magazine* 24 (July 1793): 72-73; *Gentleman’s Magazine* 63 (July

1793): 671; *Scots Magazine* 55 (July 1793): 360.

⁵ The *Wonderful Magazine* began in January 1793 as a monthly, but quickly became a weekly, and was completed in 60 numbers.

⁶ *Wonderful Magazine* 2 (1793): 116-17.

⁷ *Thespian Magazine* 2 (August 1793): 167.

⁸ *Sporting Magazine* 2 (July 1793): 199-202.

⁹ “This day is published, embellished with a most expressive Representation of the Unfortunate Death of Mr. Munro, Son of Sir Hector Munro, who was killed by a Royal Tyger, whilst on a Hunting Party on the Island of Sauger, in the East Indies. And a beautiful Portrait of a famous Running Horse, from a Drawing by SARTORIOUS, No. X of the Sporting Magazine.” The *St. James’s Chronicle* 3-5 September 1793, along with an advertisement for *Sporting Magazine*, number 11, listed back numbers and specified the plates they contained, including “Death of Munro,” as did the *Star* 6 September 1793.

¹⁰ Mildred Archer, *India and British Portraiture 1770-1825* (London and New York: Sotheby Parke Bernet Publications, 1979) 442n19, reports that a full-length portrait of Sir Hector Munro, ascribed to George Willison, and painted when he was in India c. 1780, is in the possession of his descendants (but is not reproduced in the book).

¹¹ *Sporting Magazine* 2 (July 1793): 199.

¹² Thomas Bewick, *A General History of Quadrupeds* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1790) 172.

¹³ For example, “Cruel without necessity” is taken from Smellie’s Buffon (William Smellie, trans., *Natural History, General and Particular*, 3rd edition [1793] 4: 153), while “He fears neither the sight nor the opposition of man” is an alternative translation of what Smellie renders as “the aspect nor the arms of man” (Smellie 5: 154).

¹⁴ *A Memoir of Thomas Bewick, Written by Himself* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne and London, 1862) 145. (“Such animals as I knew, I drew from memory on the wood; others which I did not know were copied from ‘Dr. Smellie’s Abridgement of Buffon,’ and other naturalists, and also from the animals which were from time to time exhibited in itinerant collections.”) Rodney M. Baine, with Mary R. Baine, *The Scattered Portions: William Blake’s Biological Symbolism* (Athens: University of Georgia, 1986) 5, points out that twenty-seven volumes of the illustrated *Histoire naturelle* (Paris, 1749-89) by Buffon and others, were in the Library of the Royal Academy where Blake could have seen them.

¹⁵ Advertisement in the *St. James's Chronicle* 7-10 December 1793. Millar's edition of "Buffon's Natural History, with additions and improvements from Dr. Goldsmith, Messrs. Pennant Linnaeus, Hill &c" was advertised for publication in 60 weekly parts, beginning on 25 February 1792, in the *York Herald* 18 February 1792.

¹⁶ It is advertised in the *St. James's Chronicle* 26-29 October, 1793.

¹⁷ Thomas Pennant, *History of Quadrupeds*, 2nd ed. (1781) 1: 258; 3rd ed. (1793) 1: 278-79.

¹⁸ Smellie 5: 156. The translation from the French is very close; only one section is worth noting in the original: "il semble qu'il cherche à goûter de leur sang, il le savoure, il s'en enivre" (Buffon, *Histoire des Animaux Quadrupèdes*, 44 vols. [Paris, 1775] 3: 243).

¹⁹ Smellie 5: 154. The translation here is rather halting. The French reads: "Sa fureur n'a d'autre intervalle que ceux du temps qu'il faut pour dresser des embûches" (Buffon 3: 240).

²⁰ Smellie 5: 155. Again Smellie's "a blind and undistinguishing ferocity" has done less than justice to Buffon's "une fureur aveugle, qui ne connoît, qui ne distingue rien"; Buffon stresses rage once more (Buffon 3: 241).

²¹ Smellie 5: 159-60. Smellie translates as "the obduracy of his nature" Buffon's "cette nature de fer." This is interesting in the light of Blake's imagery of the forge. Buffon also in "malgré les chaînes & les grilles" (Smellie has "without regarding his chains"), gives a stronger sense of an animal held in permanent captivity (Buffon 3: 248, 249). In adapting Buffon, Goldsmith seems closer than Smellie to the flavor of the French text; he has "their heart of iron," and "bars and chains" (*History of the Earth, and Animated Nature* [London, 1774] 3: 238).

²² *Sporting Magazine* 2 (July 1793): 200.

²³ *Sporting Magazine* 2 (July 1793): 201; cf. *St. James's Chronicle* 2-4 July 1793; *Star* 5 July 1793; *Wonderful Magazine* 2 (1793): 116-17; *Universal Magazine* 93 (July 1793): 73-74; *Scots Magazine* 55 (July 1793): 360; *European Magazine* 24 (July 1793): 72-73; *Gentleman's Magazine* 63 (July 1793): 671.

²⁴ *Stedman* 2: 48-49.

²⁵ *Stedman* 2: 50.

²⁶ *Stedman* 2: 50.

²⁷ *Stedman* 2: 51.

²⁸ Blake references are to *The Notebook of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, rev. ed. (Readex Books, 1977), or to *Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, rev. ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles; U of California P, 1982).

²⁹ This would then be an anticipation of Yeats's line "The fury and the mire of human veins" ("Byzantium," line 8).

³⁰ Martin K. Nurmi, "Blake's Revisions of 'The Tyger,'" *PMLA* 71 (1956): 669-85. The point is well made in Rodney M. Baine "Blake's 'Tyger': The Nature of the Beast," *PQ* 46 (1967): 491n12. Rejecting Nurmi's explanation of the changes in the drafts as Blake changing his mind as the pattern of events unfolded in France, he commented: "There is no cogent evidence to show that Blake's revisions in 'The Tyger' were anything but the sensitive and perceptive strengthening of the poem as by selecting apter imagery and repressing adjectives and some details, the poet made his Tyger more shocking, more mysterious, more effective." I would not make the point in this way, preferring to stress Blake's movement away from certain elements in the available discourse, and espousal of others.

³¹ *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (E 51, pl. 8), also from 1793, speaks of "the glowing tiger."

³² The *Gentleman's Magazine* reported two other such incidents: one in the news from Calcutta from November 1789 when a tiger seized a man (*Gentleman's Magazine* 9 [May 1790]: 462); and again an incident in December 1794, when a native was killed by a tiger, which was then hunted by a group of men on elephants, and eventually pinned to the ground. Its ferocity was remarked: "Nor were they long in finding out the ferocious animal, who was weltering in gore when they came up with him" (*Gentleman's Magazine* 65 [August 1795]: 693). Pennant (1: 259) describes a similar incident: "Another party had not the same good fortune: a tiger darted among them while they were at dinner, seized on one gentleman, and carried him off, and he never was more heard of."

³³ See Morton D. Paley, *Energy and the Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1970) 30-60.

³⁴ I have commented on both in "Blake, France and the Tiger," *N&Q* 35 (1988): 303-05, and in the forthcoming "Blake's Tyger and Contemporary Journalism," *British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*. Stewart Crehan, in "Blake's Tyger and the 'Tygerish Multitude,'" *Literature and History* 6 (1980): 155, and in *Blake in Context* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1984) 128-29, points out that the *Times* 26 July 1793 said of the assassinated Marat: "His eyes resembled those of the tyger cat, and there was a kind of ferociousness in his looks that corresponded with the savage fierceness of that animal." This passage (which was repeated in the *Whitehall Evening Post* 25-27 July 1793) is also cited



3. "Le Tigre," from Buffon's *Oeuvres Completes* (1775) 3: 258, pl. 7, RSL.CR.Q.34/3. Courtesy of The Bodleian Library.

in Ronald Paulson "Blake's Lamb-Tiger," *Representations of Revolution (1789-1820)* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1983) 97. This report follows within three weeks of the account of the death of Munro. To this we might add the earlier report printed in the *York Herald* and the *Northampton Mercury* 15 September 1792, which spoke of Madame de Lamballe, at the time of the September Massacres, being brought before "the tribunal of tigers," condemned, and butchered.

³⁵ Smellie 3: 462-63.

³⁶ Basil Taylor, *Stubbs* (London: Phaidon Press, 1971) 30; Judy Egerton, *George Stubbs 1724-1806* (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1984) 183. Taylor reproduces Stubbs's picture of a recumbent tiger on plate 40.

³⁷ Kathleen Raine, *Blake and Tradition*, Bollingen Series 35, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1968) 2: 4. Paul Miner, in "The Tyger: Genesis and Evolution in the Poetry of William Blake," *Criticism* 4 (1962): 61, lists some tigers exhibited in London in the late eighteenth century.

³⁸ In *An Island in the Moon* (E 465), Quid the Cynic tells a lady her face is "like that noble beast the Tyger"; Goldsmith 3: 234. Pennant (1: 283) reports a black leopard

also in the Tower brought to London from Bengal by Warren Hastings.

³⁹ Judy Egerton, *British Sporting and Animal Paintings 1655-1867* (London: Tate Gallery for Yale Centre for British Art, 1978) 65; also Egerton, *Stubbs* 183-216, plates 154-58 reproduce tiger studies from this work.

⁴⁰ Northcote's "Tiger and Crocodile" (painted 1797-99) was among his animal subjects engraved (Egerton, *Paintings* 139); Taylor reproduced a mezzotint of this by C. Turner in fig. 16 entitled, "Tiger Attacked by a Crocodile." He exhibited "Tiger Hunting" at the Royal Academy in 1804, and "A Tiger's Den" in 1817.

⁴¹ Zoffany's picture, "Tiger Hunting in the East Indies" was painted in 1795. An engraving of this by Earlom from 1802 is reproduced in Archer 169, plate 107.

⁴² Smellie 5: 155.

⁴³ Smellie 5: 155.

⁴⁴ Goldsmith 3: 235.

⁴⁵ Goldsmith 3: 233; 2: 342.

⁴⁶ Goldsmith 3: 233.

⁴⁷ Goldsmith 3: 233-34.

⁴⁸ Pennant 1: 258.

⁴⁹ Smellie 3: 463.

⁵⁰ Joseph Butler, *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature* (1736) 1: iii (London: George Bell & Son, 1897 ed., 122).

⁵¹ Berquin, *The Blossoms of Morality*, trans. W. D. Cooper, 2nd ed. (London, 1796) 24.

⁵² Berquin 24.

⁵³ Goldsmith 2: 342.

⁵⁴ Cited in F. M. J. Doherty, "Blake's 'The Tyger' and Henry Needler," *PQ* 46 (1967): 566-67.

⁵⁵ Mark Akenside, *The Pleasures of Imagination*, book 1, lines 368, 370.

⁵⁶ Akenside, book 1, l. 453.

⁵⁷ Akenside, book 1, ll. 476-80.

⁵⁸ Nurmi 669; cf. Baine, "Tyger" 491.

⁵⁹ *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (E 37, pl. 9).

⁶⁰ Buffon 3: 248; for English translation, see Smellie 5: 160.

⁶¹ Buffon 1: 9; Smellie's translation has repeated stress on repression; "repress," "groan," "check" are the verbs he uses, as against "natural vivacity, and fire" (Smellie 3: 306-07). The echo in the French text between tiger and horse is focused on the negation of the positive use of *fléchir*.

⁶² Buffon 1: 9; for English translation, see Smellie 3: 307.

⁶³ Buffon 1: 10; Smellie 3: 307.

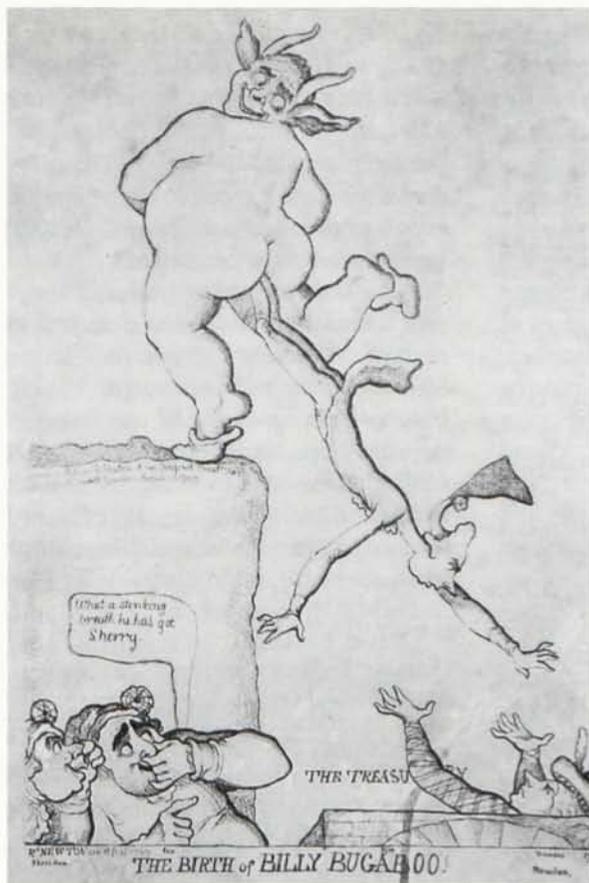
⁶⁴ Smellie 3: 313.

⁶⁵ Smellie 3: 308.

⁶⁶ Smellie 3: 301-02.

⁶⁷ Coleman O. Parsons, "Tygers before Blake," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 8 (1968): 573-92, discusses some of the material examined here from natural history, showing that "Blake did not create in a void" (589). His conclusions about the significance of "fearful symmetry," and the implied answer to the poem's final ques-

tion, are, however, different from mine. He also underestimates the extent to which Goldsmith is heavily dependent on Buffon. It is worth pointing out, however, that the third edition of Goldsmith's work was advertised in 1793 (*York Herald* 4 May, 18 May, 3 August 1793). Goldsmith's indebtedness to Buffon is also not commented on by Baine, who concludes that virtually all Blake's "biological symbolism is traditional" (*Biological Symbolism* 169), and also points to the influence of Ripa *Iconologia*, especially in Richardson's translation of 1777-79, holding that "the natural historians . . . often accepted and perpetuated many of the traditional conventions concerning animals; and Richardson, in turn, seems sometimes to have paraphrased the contemporary naturalists in his *Iconologia*" (10-11). Baine also claims that the left-facing pose of Blake's tiger has sinister implications relating to the iconographic tradition (19), but this does not explain the opposite pose in Buffon and Bewick. John E. Grant, in "This is Not Blake's 'The Tyger' (With Apologies to Rene Magritte)" *The Iowa Review* 19 (1989): 112-55, claims "that Blake provided a coordinated rather than a commensurate poem-with-picture" and that "all of Blake's versions of this picture declare, without apology: This is not the Tyger imagined in the poem" (113).



1. Richard Newton, "The Birth of Billy Bugaboo," 13 August 1797. Courtesy of the British Museum.



2. William Blake, "The Dog," from Hayley's *Ballads*, 1805. Courtesy of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery.

MINUTE PARTICULARS

A Caricature Source for One of Blake's Illustrations to Hayley's *Ballads*

Marcus Wood

It has become increasingly apparent that sources for Blake's designs may be located in various areas of the popular print market. David Bindman

has shown that certain images used by Blake may be related to eighteenth-century children's emblem books, to seventeenth-century anti-papal engravings, and to eighteenth-century hieroglyphic prints.¹ David Erdman has demonstrated that the political satires of James Gillray exerted an influence on some of Blake's work.² Gillray was, however, by far the best trained and most talented of the political caricaturists working in London from the late eighteenth century until the onset of his insanity in 1810. His work stands above the technically inferior prints of lesser contemporaries such as Isaac Cruikshank, George Moutard Woodward, and Richard Newton. Up to this point the cruder types of political etching have not been put forward as an influence on the work of Blake. The striking parallels be-

tween a print of Newton's entitled "The Birth of Billy Bugaboo" (illus. 1), which came out on 13 August 1797, and Blake's illustration "The Dog" (illus. 2), which was the first plate in the 1805 edition of Hayley's *Ballads*, suggest that in this instance Blake was influenced by a very coarse political print of the day.³

The parallel is particularly interesting because Nicholas Warner has already suggested two other "visual analogues" for this particular Blake print.⁴ The second of Warner's examples, Gillray's "The Republican Rattlesnake Fascinating the Bedford Squirrel" came out on 16 November 1795.⁵ The Gillray has enough similarities with the Newton print to suggest that Newton may have adapted major compositional elements from the earlier print. The Newton print does, however, anticipate both the com-

position and imagery of the Blake illustration much more precisely than the Gillray.

"The Birth of Billy Bugaboo" is an example of the scatological extremes that were permitted in the print satire of the late eighteenth century. Its formal control and clarity of line is typical of the print satires which Newton executed just before his death at the surprisingly early age of twenty-one. A devil standing on the brink of a sheer cliff, naked except for a pair of slippers, gleefully excretes an absurdly elongated figure of Pitt into mid air. He flies down towards the open and extended arms of Henry Dundas, which reach up from the treasury roof. The heads and upper bodies of Sheridan and Fox are visible in the bottom left hand corner. They hold their noses and gaze at the obscene birth as Fox exclaims, "What a stinking breath he has got Sherry." The print attacks Pitt's policies of taxation. It is a visual actualization of the phrase, "Hell born Minister," the inscription on an earlier placard that enjoyed great popularity.⁶ Both these satires were directed at the title of "Heaven born Minister" which had been bestowed on Pitt by his supporters.

Every major element in this print, with the exception of the figures of Fox and Sheridan, found its way into Blake's design. Blake appears to have reversed the composition, the diagonal thrust moving from top left to bottom right. It should be remembered, however, that the printing process reversed the imagery, so that Blake's actual engraving on the plate would have fol-

lowed the arrangement of the earlier print. The devil runs away from the edge of the cliff, not towards it, but the position of his legs, his tilted head, and his nudity all reappear in the figure of Edward, the young man, in Blake's print. The gesture of Edward's arms extended in horror has been transferred from the figure of Pitt. Blake adapted Dundas's open arms into the jaws of the crocodile, and the horizontal treasury roof has been changed into the ocean. The dog flying headlong downwards, with open mouth and spread forelegs, takes the place of Pitt. The sheer cliff face, which extends to half way up the earlier design, has also been maintained by Blake, who has given it a dramatic overhang.

Critical responses to the illustration are revealing in the light of this source. Blake's plate was singled out for ridicule by Robert Southey in his generally dismissive review of the 1805 edition of Hayley's *Ballads*:

Mediocrity as all the world knows, is forbidden to poets and to punsters; but the punster has a privilege peculiar to himself,—the exceeding badness of his puns is imputed a merit. This privilege may be fairly extended to Mr. Hayley: his present volume is so incomparably absurd that no merit within his reach could have amused us half so much . . . The poet has had the singular good fortune to meet with a painter capable of doing full justice to his conceptions; and in fact when we look at the delectable frontispiece to this volume which represents Edward starting back, fido volant, and the crocodile rampant, with a mouth open like a boot-jack to receive him, we know not whether most to admire the genius of Mr. William Blake or of Mr. William Hayley.⁷

The designs were considered more enthusiastically by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, when he wrote to his friend William Allingham in 1856, yet he also singled out the plate for "The Dog": "The only drawing where the comic element riots almost unrebuked is the one of the dog jumping down the crocodile."⁸

It is fascinating that both Southey and Rossetti should have detected a note of comic absurdity in this plate. Although they were not aware that its composition came out of an obscene popular print, their reactions perhaps indicate the extent to which the satirical fervor and outrageous fantasy of Newton's work were absorbed, consciously or otherwise, into Blake's design.

¹ David Bindman, "William Blake and Popular Religious Imagery," *Burlington Magazine* 128 (1986): 712-18.

² D. V. Erdman, "William Blake's Debt to James Gillray," *Art Quarterly* 12 (1949): 165-70. See also Erdman, *Prophet Against Empire*, 2nd rev. ed. (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1969) 203-05, 218-19. And see N. Bogan, "Blake's Debt to Gillray," *American Notes and Queries* 6 (1967): 35-38.

³ M. D. George, *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires: Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum* (London: British Museum 1949-52) vol. 7, print. No. 9029. Hereafter cited as George with catalogue number.

⁴ Nicholas Warner, "Visual Analogues to Blake's 'The Dog,'" *Blake* 18 (1984-85): 140-43.

⁵ George 8864.

⁶ See George's discussion of the background to print 9029.

⁷ *Annual Review* 4 (1806): 575.

⁸ Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 8 Jan. 1856, Letter 227 of *Letters of D. G. Rossetti*, ed. O. Doughty and J. R. Wahl, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1969) 1: 279.

Blake and Wedgwood

G. E. Bentley, Jr.

William Blake is known to have made engravings for Wedgwood's catalogue of earthenware and porcelain in 1815-16,¹ but he is not known to have had an earlier contact with the firm or the man, though he did engrave the Wedgwood copy of the Portland vase in illustration of Erasmus Darwin's *The Botanic Garden* in 1791. Indeed, it is commonly believed that "William Blake did not begin his connections with the Wedgwood firm until late in his career, probably from 1815 to 1816."²

However, Blake must have known of Wedgwood from very early in his career, not only because of his work on the Wedgwood copy of the Portland vase and the growing fame of the firm, but because his friend John Flaxman did a great deal of work for Wedgwood in the 1780s.³ Flaxman not only designed pottery for Wedgwood but also decorated his very ambitious house called Etruria Hall in Staffordshire. And it seems likely that Flaxman managed to get Blake to assist him in this work.

The account book for Etruria Hall, shows that Wedgwood paid Flaxman in itemized amounts for his work (see box).

The fact that this "Blake" is a painter suggests that he is Flaxman's friend the painter William Blake. That the payment came through Flaxman rather than to Blake directly and that there is no expense money for travel to Staffordshire, etc., suggests that Blake's work was done in London—perhaps he was painting on canvas or on an early version of his own fresco invention which was shipped to Staffordshire and affixed to the ceiling. The facts that he was "painting on Ceiling pictures" and that Flaxman had already been paid for "Drawings for Ceiling" suggest that Blake was carrying out Flaxman's designs, perhaps transferring sketches to the surface to be put up on the ceiling—Blake was particularly skillful at transferring designs from paper to copper, and, years later, the master-engraver John Linnell employed Blake to help him by laying in the outlines of designs.⁵ The context, at any rate, suggests that the designs are Flaxman's and that Blake is primarily concerned with transferring Flaxman's "Drawings" into "painting[s] on Ceiling."

The design is described in Flaxman's letter to Wedgwood of 5 February 1784:

I was last night honored by Mr. Byerley with your enquiry concerning the pictures you employed me to paint for the drawing-room ceiling. The four divinities heads for the corners have been nearly finished, and the allegory for the centre has had the effect roughly laid in some time since, but that I waited for your opinion on them, as you were expected in town almost daily

for some time since. However, I have now sent two of the corners and the centre, accompanied with the difficulties I am under, for your contemplation and decision. I think, when you have fastened them with pins in their places and considered the effect, you will find either the heads are too large for the centre, or that the figures in the centre are disproportionately small for the heads. If you think the heads have a proper effect, and are not too large when seen in their proper places, I must reduce the number of figures in the centre and replace them upright in the long way of the oval, retaining the allegory, or make them genii children telling the same story; by which means also the whole will have a better proportion. If you think the figures in the centre of a proper height and the heads too large and heavy, I will alter the corner to whole figures of children (genii) sitting with the same attitude the heads have now; and in this case I shall reduce the number of figures in the centre to show the outlines more distinctly, like paintings on the Etruscan vases, as this manner has the best effect. When you have determined these matters and sent back the paintings, they shall be finished with all possible despatch.⁶

In his reply of 20 February, Wedgwood said of "the paintings for my drawing-room ceiling," that "The two heads of divinities and a sketch of the allegory for the centre came to my hands last night. I have hastily looked them over, but am obliged to put them by for the present. . . ."⁷

The date of Blake's work must be between February 1784 and 10 December 1785, when Flaxman was paid, or at least when this account was entered in the ledger.

| 1785 | | [£] | [s] | [d] |
|--|-----|------|------|----------------|
| Dec. ^r 10 . . . | 44 | 19.. | 12.. | 3½ |
| To John Flaxman Acc ^t for Mantles in 1781 & Jaumbs of Marble—& designs | | | | |
| To—D ^o —Drawings for Saloon in 1782 | 44 | 1.. | 8.. | — |
| To—D ^o —Drawings for Ceiling &c | 67— | 4.. | 6.. | 6 |
| To—D ^o —Chimney piece in Saloon | 67— | 29.. | 4.. | 4 |
| To—D ^o —Blake for painting on Ceiling pictures | 67 | 3.. | 17.. | — |
| To—D ^o —his own work | 67 | 5.. | 5.. | — ⁴ |

The paintings for the ceiling are now not in Etruria Hall, and no other record of them is known.⁸

Blake thus worked for two generations of the Wedgwoods. Blake's disciple Frederick Tatham noted that "Mr Flaxman introduced Blake to Mr Wedgwood" in the context of "The Designs of the Pottery," and the introduction has therefore been dated to 1815.⁹ But these new records of work by Blake for Etruria Hall make it virtually certain that the elder Josiah Wedgwood knew Blake's work and saw it as early as 1785.

But note that in each case Blake is employed not as an original artist, making or copying his own designs, but as a reproductive craftsman, transferring the genius of other men to copper or canvas. There is no evidence that either Wedgwood knew of Blake as an original artist.¹⁰ Considering that the younger Josiah Wedgwood later provided an annuity to Coleridge, so that his genius would not need to waste itself in mundane tasks, the lost opportunity to Blake—and to posterity—for such potential patronage is indeed striking.

Flaxman's sponsorship of Blake is quite in keeping with what is known already. He frequently introduced Blake to potential patrons, and he solicited commissions for Blake widely. Naturally he endeavored to get Blake commissions first for modest and inexpensive work, such as drawings and engravings, rather than for finished tempera paintings or Blake's own books in illuminated printing. Blake's own style was so unusual, not to say eccentric, that patrons had to be introduced to it gradually.¹¹ In most cases, such as this with Josiah Wedg-

wood, the commission was either not repeated at all or was succeeded only by requests for more journeyman labor. Blake was a superb craftsman, intensely proud of his craft. He did not repine at such reproductive labor. But what he wished for most dearly was commissions for large paintings, for suites of paintings such as Thomas Butts gave him, even for suites of large frescoes to decorate churches. But most of his patrons, like Josiah Wedgwood, were content to employ him—once—as a reproductive craftsman. It is not so much that they did not appreciate his genius as that it probably never occurred to them to consider him in the light of a genius at all.

¹ *Blake Books* (1977) 631-32.

² Shelley Bennett, *Thomas Stothard: The Mechanisms of Art Patronage in England circa 1800* (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1988) 6.

³ "Flaxman principally subsisted through his employment for the firm of Wedgwood & Company" in 1775-87, according to Samuel Smiles, *Josiah Wedgwood, F. R. S.: His Personal History* (New York, 1895) 224.

⁴ Quoted from a reproduction of Wedgwood Ledger D (1779-87) 69, in Keel University Library (on deposit from the Wedgwood Museum Trust). Christine Fyfe, Keel University Library Archivist, tells me that the figures "44" and "67" (before the sums paid) are apparently cross-references to other ledgers which do not survive with the Wedgwood materials in Keel University Library.

The role of "Mr Blake" in this commission is mentioned without connecting him to the poet in Bruce Tattersall, "Flaxman and Wedgwood," *John Flaxman* [catalogue of the Flaxman exhibition at the Royal Academy 26 Oct.-9 Dec. 1979], ed. David Bindman (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979) 47.

⁵ *Blake Records* (1969) 256.

⁶ Smiles 229-30.

⁷ Smiles 232.

⁸ They are not mentioned in Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1981).

According to Smiles (222n), the "ceilings were ornamented by drawings in oil by Angelica Kauffman. They were removed by the agents of the Duchy of Lancaster, to whom the place belongs, to one of their offices in the north, probably in Yorkshire." (Such easily removable drawings were probably painted elsewhere and affixed to the ceilings.) If this is so, there were evidently ceiling paintings in Etruria Hall by both Angelica Kauffman and by Flaxman-Blake. Perhaps the Flaxman-Blake paintings suffered the same fate as Angelica Kauffman's.

The Duchy of Lancaster acquired Etruria Hall in the late nineteenth century, but the printed "Particulars" of the sale (generously provided to me by the agents of the Duchy of Lancaster) under Lot 1 detailed merely "A handsome, convenient, and well-built MANSION, called 'ETRURIA HALL,' in good repair, comprising 34 Rooms, besides Entrance . . . , plus 44 acres with cottages, crofts, outbuildings, and a pool, with no reference to ceiling paintings at all. There appears to be no record with the Duchy of Lancaster of what became of the ceiling paintings.

⁹ *Blake Records* 239.

¹⁰ I presume that the last entry in the Wedgwood letter quoted here (£5.5.0 "To—D°—his own work") refers to original work by Flaxman, not by Blake, for the money is paid to Flaxman with no indication that the work for which it paid was performed by anyone else than the payee.

¹¹ For the explosive results when a conventional patron was introduced too abruptly to Blake's idiosyncratic style, see the correspondence between Blake and the Rev. Dr. Trusler in August 1799.

Blake, *The Grave*, And Edinburgh Literary Society

David Groves

When R. H. Cromek's edition of *The Grave* with Blake's illustrations was published in London in August 1808, its printed title page identified the firm of Archibald Constable as the distributor for the book in Edinburgh. The volume also included a list of subscribers indicating that "12 copies" had been reserved in advance by "Messrs. Constable and Co."¹ Of the sixteen subscribers in Edinburgh, Constable was the only one to order multiple copies of *The Grave*; of over 500 subscribers throughout Britain, none reserved more copies than Constable.

Robert Cromek enjoyed a profitable association with Constable. As a "well-known engraver," he had "done much work" in illustrating books published by the Constable firm.² Writing to Constable after a visit to the Scottish capital in 1807, Cromek informed him that "*The Grave* is going on very well. I shall soon write to [the Edinburgh printer James] Ballantyne [a partner and friend of Constable], about printing it." "I got," Cromek added enthusiastically, "72 Subscribers to *the Grave* at Manchester in less than 3 weeks."³

A review of *The Grave* then appeared in Constable's *Scots Magazine* of November 1808. It does not seem to have been cited by any of Blake's critics or bibliographers. In the table of contents for the November issue (801), the review is listed under the title, "*Blake's Illustrations of Blair's Grave*." After a brief introduction praising the volume as a whole, the reviewer devotes most of his space to a discussion of Blake's contribution. He names eleven of Blake's twelve designs for the volume, leaving out only the figure of the trumpeter on the engraved title page. The article is generally approv-

ing, and at least does Blake the favor of taking his designs seriously. However, the critic raises one objection (which probably derives from his religious beliefs) concerning "the representation of the soul in a bodily form." This anonymous review is now reprinted in full for the first time:

II. *The Grave*, a Poem; by Robert Blair: Illustrated by Twelve Engravings, from Original Designs, by William Blake; engraved by Schiavonetti. 4to. 2l. 12s. boards.

ALTHO' this work, strictly speaking, belongs rather to the fine arts, than to literature, yet as it is employed to illustrate one of the most admired of our Scottish poems, and, from its peculiar nature, has drawn a considerable share of interest, we think a short notice cannot be judged superfluous. We do not recollect to have any where seen so much genius united with so much eccentricity. The author shews throughout a turn of mind altogether his own. A solemn and mystic character, a habit of mind continually dwelling upon the abodes of death and the invisible world, an intimate familiarity with those ideas, which, to common minds, appear the most distant and visionary, appear to fit him peculiarly for the singular task he has here undertaken; and have enabled him to produce a work, altogether *unique*, and possessing high claims to admiration. The strength of the expression, and the lively representation of the different attitudes, have perhaps seldom been equalled. The accuracy of the design, the faithful representation of the different parts of the human form, according to the various postures in which they are placed, are also, we understand, highly admired by connoisseurs. The subject is awful, yet attractive; it is one in which all must feel a deep interest; and though man be a being naturally so bent on pleasure, there is yet a region of mystic gloom, thro' which, in other moments he delights to expatiate.

There is just one circumstance, which runs through many of these pieces, and which we cannot quite go along with; this is the representation of the soul in a bodily form. Such an idea we think is great-

ly too bold; nor is there any thing in the manner which can atone for the defect in the original conception. We could conceive that by representing only those parts of the body in which the soul speaks, as it were, and by giving to these a certain degree of faintness and exility, something might be produced, approaching to our idea of an incorporeal substance. But nothing can be more remote from such an idea, than the round, entire, and thriving figures, by which it is here represented. It would even have been tolerable had the soul been introduced by itself, without its bodily companion, for this the mind might have conceived by a single effort; instead of which they are invariably introduced together; and the body being generally worn down by disease, the soul exhibits often a much more bulky and corpulent appearance.

The following are those which appear to us peculiarly striking and beautiful: "The meeting of a family in heaven—the death of the strong wicked man—the descent of man into the vale of death—the soul exploring the recesses of the grave—the death of the good old man." The "day of judgment" displays great powers, but the multitude and variety of figures on so small a space produce a degree of confusion. The "reunion of the soul and body;" and "the soul hovering over the body reluctantly parting with life," do not, for a reason above illustrated, please in proportion to the genius displayed in them. There are also—Christ descending into the Grave—The Counsellor, King, Warrior, Mother, and Child, in the tomb,—and death's door.

Upon the whole, we think this is a work which can be contemplated by no artist, or man of taste, without extreme interest. We are glad to see that the list of subscribers is numerous and respectable, tho' we observe with mortification that, of these, Edinburgh has furnished a very small proportion indeed.⁴

It was probably Cromek's name, more than William Blake's, which spurred most of the interest in this edition of *The Grave* in Edinburgh. As well as his association with Constable, Cromek was rapidly gaining a reputa-

tion for his editions of Scots poetry. In the same year, he published a well-received and important edition of *The Reliques of Robert Burns*, which contained new information about Burns, and new poems by him.⁵ *The Grave* was itself a Scottish poem, and in 1810 Cromek would also publish a collection of *Select Scottish Songs* (with commentaries by Burns), as well as a collection of Scottish verse (mainly written by Allan Cunningham) entitled *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*.⁶ Yet according to Walter Scott in 1809, Cromek was "a perfect Brain-sucker living upon the labours of others."⁷ On the other hand an Edinburgh writer in the 1850s could remember Cromek as being "much esteemed" in the city for the "enthusiastic attachment to the Fine Arts," which he displayed by publishing his "large and splendid edition of Blair's *Grave*, with original designs by Blake."⁸

At least one of the contributors to Constable's *Scots Magazine* had a "mania for Blake" which lasted many years. Robert Scott (1777-1841) was an engraver whose illustrations of Scottish architecture, scenery, and persons regularly appeared as frontispieces to that journal from 1804 to 1817. His name appears in the Edinburgh section of the list of subscribers to the 1808 *Grave*. Apparently Scott frequently tried to impart his high estimate of Blake's designs to others in Edinburgh. The editions of "Blair's *Grave* and Young's *Night Thoughts*" containing Blake's designs were "the only two books" Robert Scott "seemed to know," according to a later recollection by his son: "the most important of all the illustrated books" in Robert Scott's library "was perhaps *The Grave*, with Blake's inventions admirably engraved by Sciavonetti." Blake's designs for *The Grave*

had impressed the paternal mind in the profoundest way: the breath of the spirit blown through the judgment trump on the title-page seemed to have roused him as well as the skeleton there represented. The parting of soul and body after the latter is laid on the bier; the meeting of a family in heaven—indeed nearly every one of the prints he looked upon as almost sacred, and we all followed him in this, if in little else. . . . Would it not be really thus after death?

Robert Scott's son could still recall, in later life, the "raptures" he experienced when his father showed him "Blake's Designs for 'The Grave,'" with their "Dread truths" and "Inspiration."⁹

One other Edinburgh writer entertained a high opinion of Blake and his work for *The Grave*. Thomas De Quincey frequently paid extended visits to the city from 1814, often in connection with his work for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, and his friendship with its editor John Wilson. From 1827 until his death in 1859, De Quincey lived almost entirely in the Edinburgh area. He probably knew of Blake from at least 1821 through his "special interest" in Allan Cunningham, and his knowledge of Cunningham's links with "Mr. Cromek."¹⁰ In 1840, De Quincey was quoting from Blake's poetic dedication to *The Grave* when he described death as being, "in the words of that fine mystic, Blake the artist, 'a golden gate.'"¹¹

¹ The two title pages and the list of subscribers are unpaginated. See Robert N. Essick and Morton D. Paley, *Robert Blair's The Grave, Illustrated by William Blake; A Study with Facsimile* (London: Scolar, 1982), and G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977) 525-34, for relevant information on *The Grave*. The present article was made possible by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

² Thomas Constable, *Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents*, 3

vols. (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1873) 2: 419. Archibald Constable is mainly remembered today for publishing his major journal, the *Edinburgh Review*, and as the friend and publisher of Sir Walter Scott and James Hogg.

³ Letter, 17 Nov. 1807, National Library of Scotland MS 670, ff 635-36. Cited by kind permission of the Trustees of the NLS.

⁴ *Scots Magazine, and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany* 70 (1808): 839-40.

⁵ Substantial extracts from Cromek's *Reliques of Burns* appeared in the January 1809 *Scots Magazine* (30-33), and a laudatory review in the March issue (198-203).

⁶ See Dennis M. Read, "Cromek, Cunningham, and *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song*: A Case of Literary Duplication" (*Studies in Bibliography* 40 [1987]: 175-87). Further new information on the publisher will be found in Aileen Ward, "Canterbury Revisited: The Blake-Cromek Controversy" (*Blake* 22 [1988-89]: 80-92).

⁷ Letter to John Murray, 3 Dec. 1810, printed in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. H. J. C. Grierson, 12 vols. (London: Constable, 1932-37) 2: 409.

⁸ William Stenhouse, appendix to *The Scots Musical Museum*, ed. James Johnston, 4 vols. (rev., Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1853) 4: 456-57.

⁹ See *Autobiographical Notes of the Life of William Bell Scott*, ed. W. Minto, 2 vols. (London: Osgood, McIlvaine, 1892) 1: 21-24 and 68-69. See also the *Dictionary of National Biography* for information on Robert Scott. His design "Cawdor Castle" appears in the same issue of the *Scots Magazine* as the review of *The Grave*.

¹⁰ See "London Reminiscences," *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, December 1840, rpt. in *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. D. Masson, 14 vols. (Edinburgh: Black, 1889-90) 3: 146. The Scottish poet Cunningham knew Blake, and discussed his poetry and designs in his *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, 6 vols. (London: Murray, 1829-33).

¹¹ "Society of the Lakes," *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, March 1840, rpt. in *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey* 2: 400.

REVIEWS

John Gabriel Stedman.
*Narrative of a Five Years
Expedition against the Re-
volted Negroes of Surinam.*
Transcribed for the First
Time from the Original
1790 Manuscript. Edited,
and with an Introduction
and Notes, by Richard Price
and Sally Price. Baltimore
& London: Johns Hopkins
University Press, 1988.
xcviii + 708 pp. 94 plates.
\$95.00.

Reviewed by
G. E. Bentley, Jr.

I had a *Je ne say quoy* about me, of the fascinating kind, which attracted the girls as the eyes of the Rattlesnake attracts Squirrels, and unaccountably persuades them to submission. [XVIII]

This is a fascinating and wonderfully enjoyable book. It is a tale of martial and amatory adventure in the tropics, with fierce rebels hiding in the jungle, nubile maidens bathing in pellucid streams, "tygers" and "vampiers" attacking the camp at night, and white soldiers dying of disease in droves with never a sight of their black enemies. It is a romantic and tragic tale, with the hero falling passionately in love with a 15-year-old slave girl, Joanna, whom he cannot free. It is a tale of the decadence and barbarity of Europeans, torturing their slaves for pleasure, and of the simple nobility of the African and Indian slaves whom the hero learns to love. It is a self-portrait of a fascinatingly self-contradictory

character: tender as a child yet killing beasts to see what they taste like; ferociously challenging his comrades to duels, thrice in one day on one occasion (197), yet, the only time when he saw the enemy, closing his eyes so that, if he should chance to kill one of these abused, noble savages, it would be by accident; expecting the sexual services of slaves, yet creating a love story which tore the heartstrings of Europe for a century. It is one of the most vivid and detailed pictures ever made of plantation life with its savage slave economy and its squalor and luxury, and it is a mine of firsthand observation of flora and fauna which may still be seen in Surinam, and of customs and expectations which have, on the whole fortunately, long been dead. The verbal and visual pictures of European barbarity, systematically breaking the bones of a Negro with an iron bar as he is chained to the ground, walling an ancient slave in his hut to die because he was too old to work—these aroused the passionate sympathy and indignation of readers and fanned the flames of abolitionist sentiment, though Stedman himself was a slaveowner, and he believed in the slave trade and the slave system. It is a work full of wonderfully vivid scenes and wonderfully vivid contradictions.

The history of the text is intricate. Stedman recorded at the time the events in Surinam of 1772-1777, wrote them up in 1790, and sent the manuscript to Joseph Johnson the publisher in London in February 1791. The engravings were begun that year, but the text was probably scarcely looked at for some time. Perhaps about 1794 Johnson asked the medical midwife William Thomson to revise or in fact to ghost-write it, which he did very thoroughly and high-handedly. This version was printed and shown to Stedman, who was furious and required that all 2,000 copies should be destroyed (L), and a compromise text was evolved and published in 1796.

Joseph Johnson's investment in it must have been heavy; according to Stedman's diary, Johnson promised £500 to Stedman for the first edition with the prospect of £500 more from the profits (XXXVII), and he must have had to pay at least £10 apiece for the 80 plates (or £800), plus the cost of paper, composition, printing, etc. James Edwards, who appears with Joseph Johnson as publisher on the titlepage, was probably "a largely silent partner" (XXXVIII), and perhaps his role was chiefly the provision of capital. What the Prices have presented is the 1790 manuscript version which recently turned up in the University of Minnesota Library and which differs considerably from the version published in 1796.

The differences between the 1790 MS and the 1796 publication may be seen in the accounts of Stedman's reaction when he found out that Joanna is to be transferred to a new plantation (see box on following page).



1. *The skinning of the Aboma Snake*, J. G. Stedman, *Narrative* (1796), plate designed by Stedman and engraved by Blake of the skinning of the still-living giant Aboma snake, which grew from 18 feet long in Stedman's diary to over 22 feet in the 1790 text and still "a young one, come to about its half-Growth."

1790 MS

at the mercy of some rascally Overseer—Good God; I flew to the Spot in Search of poor Joanna and found her bathing with her Companions in the Garden.

But lo! with graceful Motion there she Swims
Gently removing each Ambitious Wave
The crowded waves transported Clasp her Limbs
When, When, oh when shall I such freedoms have
In vain ye envious Streams So fast ye flow
To hide her from a lovers ardent Gaze
From every touch you more transparent grow
And all revealed the beautiful Wanton plays

But perceiving me She darted from my presence like a Shot, when I returned to [her owner] Mrs. Demelly and declared without the least hesitation . . . that it was my intention (if such could be) to Purchase & to Educate & to make even my lawfull Wife in Europe, the individual Mulatto Maid Joanna. . . .

1796 publication

Good God!—I flew to the spot in search of poor Joanna: I found her bathed in tears.—She gave me such a look—ah! such a look!—From that moment I determined to be her protector against every insult. [LXI]

The contrasts between Joanna bathing in lascivious waves and bathing in tears of sensibility and between Stedman buying her and protecting her are symptomatic of the genteel alterations made between the 1790 manuscript and the 1796 publication.

One of the inadvertent delights of the book is the grammar. Stedman is the Mr. Malaprop of Martial Sensibility, and the text illustrates some of the wilder shores of diction. Even though Stedman's text was transcribed by two young amanuenses, his own gift for the telling travesty shines through.¹

When Stedman learned, erroneously as it turns out, that his sergeant had "offered violence to this virtuous woman," i.e., to Joanna, "Heaven and Earth, I Swore immediate destruction to the villain, and having ordered a Negro to Cut 12 bamboe Canes, I retired like one enraged Swearing to assassinate him, inch by inch" (158). In the tropics, wounds rapidly became infected, so that "some lost their limbs and others might have lost even their Lives, without a temporary amputation did take place" (222). The Surinam jungle really is an amazing place if amputations there can be merely "temporary."² Among the Negroes, "Simple incontinence is among Actions Subjected to the Divine Anathema" (293)—

does he mean "incontinence"? The colonel's servant accidentally freed one of his pet parrots, at which "The Poor Valet Stood perfectly Putrified" (342). When the Surinam rattlesnake shakes his tail, he makes a sound "much Like a Rattle from which it Derides its name" (470). There is as much innocent pleasure to be derided from Stedman's talents as a wordsmith as from any other aspect of the book.

Stedman is a heady, impetuous writer, but to call him merely an impetuous character would be tampering with the truth. He cultivated an eccentricity which his superior officers often called madness, and they were not always wrong. Stedman went barefoot in the jungle rather than wear regulation boots; when the "military rot" set in, Stedman's feet did not putrefy, but those of his men and his fellow officers did. (In the frontispiece he is shown barefoot with a slain black rebel.)

I have been . . . cald mad in Scotland, mased in England, fou by the namurois [i.e., Belgians], gek or dol [crazy or mad] by the Dutch, and law [insane in Sranan, the language of Surinam] by the negros in Surinam, owing intirely to my studying to be singular in as much as can be. . . . [XX]

He is always opinionated, but when opposed or frustrated he not infrequently becomes frenzied. Once, in rain and misery

I lost all decorum, indeed grew perfectly distracted . . . [and] damming the cause of my Misfortune [i.e., his Colonel³] . . . I step half a dozen of Pases back, and to forget my distress I all at once ran my head against a large *eta* tree till I fell in a Swoon covered over with blood. (223)

It is little wonder that "at last it was agreed on that I was certainly *insane*, [he was arrested] and a boat ordered to row me emediately down to Paramaribo" (160). The wonder is that his Colonel, whom he openly despised and defied, did not ship him home at the first opportunity.

Stedman seems to have been not so much willing as eager to smell a fault, and he showed an extraordinary eagerness to wipe out a slight in blood.

Next getting tipsy with some of my Companions my irascible temper involved me in Another Despute—Out I & one of Them marched again to the Savannah where nearly under the Gallows we drew our Swords & fought in our Shirts, when I was Deservedly run through the Right Arm & which Ended the fracas. (600)

Even on the voyage home, he quarreled with a shipmate and agreed to fight him with pistols across a table, but their friends discovered the plot and separated them, and they became bosom buddies. And in a final flourish, he offers to fight all comers: "while I have the Severity to unmask vice & folly I at the Same time possess the Generosity to give ev'ry Gentleman that Satisfaction to which I reasonably think he stands intitled" (617). He was clearly a dangerous man to have about the house.

But at the same time he was a man of extraordinary sensibility. He was as easily moved to tears as to rage, and when he finally had to leave Joanna he was prostrate with grief, but "in a few days Reason so far Prevail'd again as almost to make me Ashamed of my too Great Sensibility (*not of my love*)."⁴ He wrote a poem "dictated only by Sensibility & Affection" (624), and in his pages his mistress Joanna speaks the very language of sensibility. When he gave her "a present of different Articles

to the value of above 20 Guineas," she sold them back to the vendors next day and returned the money to him:

"your generous intentions allone Sir (Said she) are sufficient But allow me to tell you that any Superfluous expence on my Account—I will look on as deminishing that good Opinion which I hope you have, and will ever entertain of my disinterestedness, and upon which I shall ever put the greatest value—" Such was the genuine Speech of a Slave who had simple nature for her only education—and the purity of whose refined Sentiments stand in need of no Comment. (101)

One may perhaps accept the genuineness of these refined Sentiments while suspecting the accuracy of the exalted diction in which they are expressed by a 15-year-old slave girl in the Dutch colony of Paramaribo. If she really talked like that, she must have been a great novel-reader.

Stedman was certainly a great novel-reader, he is lavish in quotation,⁵ and he consciously formed both his character and his literary style upon novels of sensibility. He deeply admired "Joseph Andrews, tom Jones, and Roderick Random which heroes I resolved to take for my models. . . . R. Random I liked best and in imitation of he [i.e., him, I] emediately fell in Love at the Dancing assembly with a Miss diana Bennet whom I shall call narcissa," after the heroine of *Roderick Random* (XIX). When he finally has to fight the rebel Negroes, "my Sensibility Got so much the Better of my Duty, And my Pity for these poor miserable, ill-treated People Was such, that I Was rather induced to fire with Eyes Shut, like *Gill Blas* when he was amongst the Robbers, than to take a Proper Aim. . . ."⁶

However, it is often Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* in search of the heart's affections which Stedman's *Narrative* brings most irresistibly to mind. In his preface, Stedman defies the conventional critics in a very Sterne way:

I am going to be told that my Narrative . . . has neither stile, orthography, order, or Connection . . . that some of my Paintings are rather unfinish'd—That my plants fully prove I am nothing of a Botanist—And that the History of Joana deserves no place at all in this Narrative—Guilty . . . & now for my defence—D—n order, D—n matter of fact, D—n ev'rything I am above you all. (7)

And elsewhere he asserts: "I neither wryte for profit nor applause—purely following the dictates of nature, & equally hating a made up man and made up story" (XX). He speaks of "Johanna in whose Eye was started the precious pearl of Simpathy" (90), and he says of himself: "far from Glorifying in any one of my private Actions, I only State them to expose the weakness of human nature, and as a guide for others, in like Circumstances (in some Measure) to rule their Conduct with more Propriety" (161). Except for that astonishing "Propriety," the sentence, like the sentiment, might have come straight from Sterne. He hopes that "the Inditious [Judicious] few" who read him sympathetically may "at intervals throw down the Book—and with a Sigh exclaim in the Language of [Sterne's] Eugenious—Alas poor Stedman" (11). And when he parts from Joanna, he alludes explicitly to the *Sentimental Journey*: "the unfortunate Joanna . . . look'd a thousand times more dejected than *Sterns Maria*" (604).

The danger posed by such a model for character and for writing is that the stereotype is likely to overcome and control the man and the facts. Despite his penchant for casual killing of animals and personal enemies, Stedman clearly thought of himself as a paragon of sensibility, his complaint about his enemies such as Colonel Fourgeoud is usually that they lack sensibility, and those he admires, such as the slaves in general and Joanna in particular, are chiefly admirable for their native delicacy of sentiment; there are lots of Noble Savages in his book but very few Civilized Noblemen.

And our suspicion that soldiers and slaves don't usually talk in such high-



2. William Blake, "The Little Girl Found," (*Songs* copy c, pl. 35), courtesy of Mrs. William Drysdale.

falutin' sentiments and diction is multiplied when we discover that Stedman systematically falsified this aspect of his text when he was writing up his on-the-spot diary "founded on facts allone" (XXVII) into the manuscript for his book. Some of the alterations of fact are simply a traveler's way of dramatizing his experiences; an anaconda he saw was 18 feet long in his diary but grew to "22 feet and some inches" in the 1790 text, and was still "but a young one, come to about its half-Growth" (illus. 1), and, where the diary says that "the air was Poisoned by mosketos," the 1790 *Narrative* says: "So very thick were the Musquitoes now that by Clapping my two hands against each other I have kill'd in one Stroke to the number of 38 upon my honour" (LXXXVII). Perhaps it is chiefly naturalists who will be dismayed by such alterations, but some of the changes are more fundamental in their effect upon most readers.

The love story of Stedman and Joanna caught the imagination of readers of sensibility,⁷ and it was repeated in novels, plays, and poems throughout Europe for many years.⁸ The central features are the hero of sensibility who falls in love with the 15-year-old quadroon slave girl, who is a paragon of beauty and sensibility. (The nubile *Female Quadroon Slave of Surinam* in the transparent skirt who has apparently forgotten her under-garments in Stedman's plate is probably Joanna herself.) They cannot marry because she is a slave, he tries unsuccessfully to buy her freedom, and after five years he returns in despair to Europe, leaving behind his octoroon son and his love. It is indeed a pretty and a tragic tale, and Joanna may well have been a paragon of sensibility, but the facts are a good deal more complicated than this, not to say more sordid.

The hero of sensibility should always be in love, but he will rarely do more than hint at sex—though if he is a hero of the Sterne mold he will hint quite a lot. But Stedman was a conscious lady killer; he “attracted the girls as the eye of a Rattlesnake attracts Squirrels, and unaccountably persuades them to submission” (XVIII), and when he stayed with friends in Paramaribo he expected the handsomest or at least the handiest slave girl to hop into bed with him—and he was rarely disappointed. In his diary he identified his bedmates (sometimes more than one at a time) only by initials, and he said quite unambiguously that he “f—d” them.⁹ He remarked that the slaves were not permitted to be either christened or married but that there was a form of “Surinam marriage” in which a European bought the services of a slave woman for the period of his residence in Surinam, whether or not he was already married. The practice was widespread, with clearly defined obligations on both sides. These features of the diary were blurred in Stedman's 1790 *Narrative* and almost completely obscured in the ghostwrit-

ten text printed in 1796. The social facts of Surinam life are different in the diary, the 1790 *Narrative*, and the 1796 publication, and the first version is almost certainly the most accurate of the three.

More important, perhaps, is Stedman's deliberate and consistent alteration in his accounts of his relationship with Joanna. In the 1790 *Narrative* and the 1796 book, he falls in love with a beautiful slave girl, tries to buy her freedom, wins her love, persuades her to live with him, and is eventually parted from her by the brutal facts of a slave economy. But the facts are not so simple. Stedman first met Joanna when her mother brought her to him to offer her services for a price, an offer which he accepted enthusiastically. He went through a Surinam marriage with her, but of course this did not entail either a “Christian” marriage or her freedom, and any offspring were naturally slaves of Joanna's owner. He referred to her in his diary only by her initials, like the rest of his casual bedmates, and it was only in writing up his diary of the 1770s ten years later, in 1786, that he gave her a name and the character of a heroine, as opposed to that of a lover. There seems to be no reason to doubt that Stedman loved her in his fashion, a fashion not controlled by confinement to one sexual partner, or that Joanna loved him, but their separation was *not* controlled by the facts of a slave economy. When an extraordinarily generous Surinam friend of Stedman offered to lend him the enormous sum to buy Joanna's freedom, Stedman accepted joyfully, but “Joana was unmoveable even up to Heroism, no Persuasion making the Smallest impression on her till She said we should be Able to Redeem her by Paying the Last farthing that we owed” (507). There is also some evidence that she was alarmed by the prospect of living as a half-caste quadroon wife in Europe where she knew she would be looked down upon at least until her husband could get out of debt and

provide an “independence” for her, and she preferred to remain a slave. Mind you, she was a very comfortable slave, living in a house built for her in the garden of her patroness, with servants (slaves) of her own to wait on her. In worldly terms, Joanna was surely right to stay in Paramaribo.

At any rate, the grounds of the initial relationship between Stedman and Joanna were simply commercial and sexual, and the reason she did not leave with him was not simply because she was a slave but because she did not choose to become free under terms which required her lover to assume a heavy load of debt.

One of those said to have been influenced by Stedman's *Narrative* is his friend William Blake,¹⁰ particularly in his *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* with its “parallels between Theotomon's love for the gentle [Enslav'd] Oothoon, whom he is unable to set free, and Stedman's love for the enslaved Joanna.”¹¹ But comparing Stedman's war diary with the text which he prepared for the press and with the bowdlerized version which was in fact published, Richard and Sally Price have discovered that the truth was far different from this.

Stedman has deliberately romanticized the history of his relationship with the child Joanna, it was this romantic picture which captivated the world, and it was this romantic notion of an innocent maiden exploited by a brutal slave society which is said to have influenced Blake in his creation of Oothoon and the *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* in 1793. But if Blake knew Stedman well, as we know he did from Stedman's diaries and as he must have if he used the story of Stedman and Joanna in 1793, three years before Stedman's *Narrative* was published, is he not likely to have known as well that the romantic story in Stedman's *Narrative* is partly fiction and not fact? And is Blake, who passionately opposed all forms of slavery, likely to have derived his ideas on slavery from a man like

Stedman who was not only a slave-owner but who consistently defended the institution of slavery? Stedman's defence of slavery is not nearly so plain in the published version of his *Narrative* as it is in the manuscript submitted to the publisher, but it must have been plain in his conversation. The important relationship between Blake and Stedman can now for the first time be examined in useful detail because of the new Stedman materials which have just been brought to light. And the victimized innocent Joanna-Oothoon is not so easy to recognize in the real Joanna who was offered by her mother as a bedmate to Stedman and who refused to be freed.

One of the features of his text upon which Stedman prided himself, and upon which Richard and Sally Price have expended enormous pains, is the description of flora and fauna. Whenever he sees a new bird or beast, he shoots it, describes it, and eats it. And remote though these beasts seem from William Blake taking his ease at Lambeth beneath the poplar trees, some of them may well be important in understanding his poetry. One night Stedman was "Bit by the *Vampier* or *Spectre* of *Guiana*"; "Between the Tips of the Wings [of another vampire-bat] I found to be 32 inches and a Half, While some are Above 3 Feet" (428, 429). This may well be the origin of Blake's depiction of the spectre as a vampire in his later prophecies.¹²

Yet more important to most of us is his account of "tygers" which may well be related to Blake's "The Tyger."¹³ In the first place, in the eighteenth century a "tiger" meant not the enormous feline of Asia to whom we confine the term but almost any large wild cat.

The Count *De Buffon* Asserts that there are *no* Tygers in America but . . . I shall Describe them from *Occular Demonstration*, as I found them, and Leave to the Reader to Determine Whether they are Tygars or Not . . . [He begins with the jaguar, whose] Shape is in Every sense . . . like that of the *African* Tygers. . . Another of the Same Species is the *Tiger-Cat* [i.e., an ocelot], Which is Extremely Beautiful, this is not

Much Larger than I have seen some Cats in England. . . The Tiger-Cat is a Very Lively Animal, With its Eyes Emitting flashes of Lightning;—but Ferocious, Mischievous, And not Tameable Like the Rest. . . And the Tiger Cat I Present the Reader With a Drawing . . . (357-59)

Blake's etched beast for "The Tyger" and "The Little Girl Found" (see illus. 2), which looks remarkably docile, may not be "Much Larger than I have seen some Cats in England."

More important, the Tyger was believed to be not only insatiably ferocious but to live on blood; they

Tear and Mangle . . . [their prey] in A Dreadful Manner, only for the Sake of the Blood, of Which this Ferocious Animal is Never Glutted . . . Whose Savageness and Thirst After Blood is such that it Cannot be Tamed . . . All these Animals . . . having Murdered they Drink the Blood Warm. (358-59)

However remote this may be from the truth, it was certainly a basic part of European belief about the tyger, and it is fairly plainly the belief of the speaker of Blake's "Tyger." The fearful ferocity



3. J. G. Stedman, *Narrative* (1796), plate designed by Stedman and engraved by Blake, depicting a Negro hung by the ribs from a gibbet. Note that Stedman was not a witness of this scene, which happened years before his arrival in Surinam, and he drew it only from hearsay.

of the beast in "The Tyger," the basic contradiction between the life of the beast and the life of the speaker, were commonplaces of European belief, as they were in Stedman's book. But of course it is only the idea of the tyger which has terrified the speaker of Blake's poem; he is in mental bondage to a myth, and the reality may be seen in the docile creature of Blake's design—or in the ocelots "not Much Larger than . . . some Cats in England" in Stedman's design.

Stedman's book provided welcome ammunition for the abolitionists, though the extensive brutality of the 1790 *Narrative* was much mitigated in the 1796 published text.¹⁴ The details of treatment of slaves he gives are horrifying. For instance, in 1730

One Man was hanged alive with an Iron hook struck through his Ribs upon a Gibbet—and two others being chain'd to Stakes were burnt to death by Slow fire—Six women were broke alive on the rack—and two Girls were decapitated—through which Tortures—they went without uttering a Sigh. (67)

Indeed, the Negro hung by the ribs to a gibbet was the subject of a sensational picture by Stedman which was engraved by William Blake and has frequently been reproduced as a representation of the characteristic barbarity of the institution of slavery (illus. 3).

But note that Stedman never saw what he depicts here—it happened forty years before he reached Surinam—and that Stedman himself was far from being an abolitionist. He was a slave-owner himself, and, though he attacked the excesses of slave-owners, he defended the institution of slavery. He admired the Negroes greatly—a slave who showed sympathy for a white man he was ordered to flog "almost had induced me to decide between the Europeans and African in this Colony—that the first were the greatest barbarians of the two" (103), and he speaks of "the african Negroe (whom in every respect I look on as my brother)" (144)—but he does not think it inappropriate

that his brother should be his slave. And he says that, under a well-regulated slavery in Surinam, the Negroes would be better off than they had been in Africa:

the greatest number of . . . [Negro Slaves of Guinea] under a well regulated Government, may live happier in the West Indies, than they ever did in the Forests of Africa. . . . Besides, I cannot help thinking it ungenerous thus wishing to deprive the West India Planters of their Property, by a Sudden abolition of the Slave Trade . . . (171)

Hail; thou Happy People, Who under the Name of Slavery enjoy often the Purest Bliss . . . [when they] have the Good Fortune to be Under a Master Who is Really a man, Enjoy that State of Felicity, that is Superior to most, & even inferior to none. (541-42)

Indeed, slavery is essential to a great empire:

if we really wish to keep our remaining antiatlantick possessions that lay between the Tropicks, I in that Case do maintain, that they can never be cultivated but by Negroes alone Neither the fair European, or the American Indian, being adequate to the task—then the Grand Question that remains to be solved is—are these Negroes to be Slaves or a free People—to which I answer without hesitation—*dependent*, & under proper restrictions. . . . (172)

Here we might find Blake agreeing with him, that empire is indeed built upon slavery. However commonplace Stedman's sentiments and however inconsequential his arguments, they were clearly deeply felt and freely expressed. There is no doubt that Stedman admired Blake and depended on his friendship, as his diary tells us, but it is difficult to understand how Blake can have been so accommodating to such a conventional bigot or how he can have based the "free love" and fundamental anti-slavery aspects of the *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* upon such a man as Stedman.

Stedman was a good artist whose work was admired by Sir Joshua Reynolds (10, 392). Unfortunately, though the Prices discovered the diary of the 1770s and the 1790 manuscript text, they did not find Stedman's draw-



4. William Blake, *America* (1793), plate 11, with a snake "with similar neck harness and straddling figures and the same overall contours" as Stedman's anaconda (see illus. 1). Courtesy of the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

ings which were engraved by Blake and others. They did, however, find enough other drawings to demonstrate his general competence, and Erdman's suggestion that "Blake must have taken liberties [in engraving the plates] with Stedman's intentions, . . . clever as it is, seems wide of the mark." Indeed, some of the improvements to Stedman's drawings were certainly commissioned by Stedman himself. For instance, in 1790, before the book had even been submitted to the publisher, the Royal Academician John Francis Rigaud wrote that he had painted

A small oval portrait of Mr. Stedman, formerly a Major in the Scotch brigade in Holland, now on half pay in England; he having, with several others, thrown up his commission in Holland, when they would have made them alter their oaths. This little portrait is intended to direct the engraver in regard to his likeness and expression, in a frontispiece to his book, descriptive of the Dutch Settlement at Surinam, and the history of the war against the Negroes. I only did the head; but the figure, drawn by

himself, represents him, after having killed a Negro in war, leaning upon his gun.¹⁵

Further, what Erdman calls "slave bracelets" on the black and red women in the engraving of "Europe Supported by Africa and America" are colored gold in the colored copies, and what he calls "pearls" on the European woman are colored as "simple blue beads" (XLI). This indicates some of the dangers of generalizing on incomplete evidence. Stedman's 1790 text often refers to the colors of the plates, but apparently it was only the large paper copies which were colored.

A comparison of his original watercolor for plate 73 [top] with contemporary hand-colored examples suggests that either Stedman or a master colorist with access to Stedman's original watercolors made the specimens that the other colorists used as models. For there is a remarkably close correspondence between the colors of the original and the engravings, which would have been unlikely without direct copying; in both, for example, Stedman's lapels are precisely the same shade of pink, his jacket the same blue, and his trousers the same gray. [XLVIII]

Can William or Catherine Blake have been among the colorists? It is odd that the subscription list does not indicate which buyers had paid for large paper colored copies. The present text reproduces all the 1796 plates save the two titlepages.

The edition is in almost every respect as admirable in its editing as it is exciting in its contents. Sally and Richard Price have bridged admirably the disciplines of botany, zoology, ethnology (their own field), literature, and history. The text seems reliable, they have pursued all the leads I can think of with vigor, learning, and imagination, and they have produced a remarkably satisfactory book. My only complaints are that there is no table of reproductions and no general index—an astonishing omission—and that the binding is distressing, which is scarcely their fault. Their edition of Stedman's original narrative is a formidable accomplishment and has put all those concerned with Surinam, Stedman,

Blake, social history, and stimulating scholarship deeply in their debt. I hope that many may take the same pleasure in the work that I have.

¹ We know that the verbal grotesqueries of the *Narrative* text are his, for they are paralleled in his manuscript journal in his own hand, though they were all masked in the genteel prose of his ghostwriter in the 1796 edition and all subsequent ones.

² Should it be "timely"?

³ "Stedman's sharpest personal criticisms in the 1790 manuscript were reserved for his commanding officer, Colonel Fourgeoud, and it is here that the 1796 publication was most extensively edited" (LVIII).

⁴ Page 606. The 1988 text reproduces the slash (/) that Stedman used for a parenthesis, but I have normalized this peculiarity.

⁵ "Interlarding . . . with a few Quotations from better Writers," as he calls it (8); this is one of the elements extensively purged in the 1796 edition.

⁶ Page 405. But note that during four years in Surinam he was only in battle once, so elusive and skillful at guerrilla warfare were the runaway slaves.

⁷ He depended upon having a "Reader who Possesses Sensibility" (508).

⁸ A review in *The British Critic* Nov. 1796: 539, concluded that "The tale in particular of Joanna, and of the author's attachment to her, is highly honourable to both parties" (*Narrative* LXI).

⁹ Sally and Richard Price remark that in the only previous printing of these diary

references in 1962, "Thompson took Stedman's characteristic and unambiguous diary references to having 'F—d' one or another woman (or having been 'F—d' by same) and printed them as 'fooled'" (XXX).

¹⁰ See D. V. Erdman, "Blake's Vision of Slavery," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 15 (1952): 242-52, and Geoffrey Keynes, "William Blake and John Gabriel Stedman," *Times Literary Supplement* 20 May 1965: 400.

George Cumberland may have modeled the hero of his *Captive of the Castle of Sennaar* (part 1 printed in 1789; part 2 in MS of c. 1800; the whole to be published by McGill-Queens University Press in ? 1990/91) on Stedman's character.

¹¹ XLII; the Prices do not note in this context that Joanna could have been free had she chosen. Here the parallel breaks down fundamentally, I believe, unless we conclude that Oothoon is in chains not to male chauvinists or white slavers but to herself.

¹² See James Bogan, "Vampire Bats and Blake's Spectre," *Blake Newsletter* 10 (1976): 32-33.

¹³ Richard and Sally Price remark: "Blake's famous 'Tyger! Tyger! burning bright / In the forests of the night' and its accompanying illustration . . . may well be related to Stedman's 'Tiger-Cat . . . its Eyes Emitting flashes of Lightning' . . . or his 'Red Tiger . . . Eyes prominent and Sparkling Like Stars'" (XLII). The chronological difficulty ("The Tyger" was published in 1794 with *Songs of Experience* and Stedman's text is 1796) is surmounted by the hypothesis that either Blake saw the

text in the course of making his engravings for the book or that he was told these details by Stedman himself, who clearly knew Blake quite well.

The Prices remark profitably (XLII) that "The snake that three figures sit astride in Blake's *America* (1793, [pl.] 11 [illus. 4]) seems to be an imaginative ninety-degree transposition of the anaconda he engraved that same year for Stedman's plate 19—with similar neck harness and straddling figures and the same overall contours." However, their endorsement of Erdman's suggestion that Blake "shrank from signing his engraving of this bloody document, 'The Execution of Breaking on the Rack,'" ignores the fact that it was normally the writing-engraver rather than the design-engraver who added the inscriptions to the plates.

¹⁴ For instance, in place of Stedman's consistent praise of the morals and persons of Negroes, "the 'national character of [the African] people' was now described as being 'perfectly savage' . . . Stedman at one point credited the rebel Negroes with what he called 'humanity' for sparing the lives of his own men, but by 1796 the editor had completely altered his intentions by simply changing the word to 'hurry'" (LXIII). The ghostwriter, William Thomson, was himself writing pro-slavery tracts at the time (LXIV-LXV).

¹⁵ Stephen Francis Dutilh Rigaud, "Facts and Recollections of the XVIIIth Century in a Memoir of John Francis Rigaud Esq. R. A.," ed. William L. Pressly, *Walpole Society* 50 (1985): 82, a reference not in the new edition of Stedman which was generously drawn to my attention by Richard Price.

The Franklin Library *Reproduction of Songs* U, Princeton University Library: *Songs Of Innocence and Of Experience*. Franklin Center, PA: Franklin Library, 1980.

Reviewed by Alexander S. Gourlay and John E. Grant

Although it will probably be difficult to find, this very good reproduction of one of the great copies of Blake's *Songs* may occasionally appear in used-book stores; because it was marketed as a collectible object rather than published as an ordinary book, it has so far escaped the attention of Blake's bibliographers. Superficially, the volume manages to be pretentious but not prepossessing. It is bound in brown leather and features yellow watered-silk endpapers, a marking ribbon, a hubbed spine, gilt edges all around, a frontispiece of the Linnell portrait of Blake from the Fitzwilliam, and ungraceful gilt stamping on the cover and spine. The leaves—of appropriately heavy (but not avowedly acid-free) matte paper—are practically the same size as those of the original (21.5 x 14 cm.).¹ Issued in April 1980, it was the sixty-eighth of a variously sized and bound series of collectible editions of "The Hundred Greatest Books of All Time" from the Franklin Library (an affiliate of the Franklin Mint, purveyors of such collectibles as Elvis commemorative plates). When telephoned, the Franklin Library was at first reluctant to answer inquiries about itself, the scope of its offerings, or this volume, but eventually revealed that the reproduction of *Songs* was never available except as part of the complete set of one hundred



Songs, copy U, general title page. Franklin Library reproduction.

books, which cost about \$4000, and that it is long out of print.

In spite of such unpromising auspices, and the general inferiority of the other volumes in this series, this reproduction of *Songs* copy U is of high quality—someone (the Franklin Library's representative suggested that the person departed long ago) lavished considerable thoughtful attention upon its production. Scholars, libraries, and collectors of Blakeana should all wish to acquire it. Most readers of this journal are familiar with the various reproductions of the Rosenwald-Library of Congress copy of *Songs* copy Z, which range in quality from the magnificent Blake Trust collotype and stencil facsimile (1955) to the Orion/Oxford six- and eight-color offset reproduction (1967/1970) to the blurry but inexpensive Dover edition (*Experience* only, 1984). In contrast, copy U of *Songs* has been reproduced as a whole only once before, not very well, by Quaritch in 1893, and since then only single pages from it have appeared in print: in

Erdman's *Illuminated Blake* (general titlepage and "Introduction" to *Innocence*), Johnson and Grant (general titlepage, in color), and accompanying Grant ("The Tyger," in color).²

Copy U itself is a beautiful copy, comparable in degree and quality of finishing to the better-known, probably later, beautifully colored copies Z and AA (at the Fitzwilliam). Most pages bear extensive delicate outlining in ink, and its general titlepage contains unique variants; some of these are discussed by Erdman (42, 386). The arrival of the book at Princeton in 1967 was heralded by Morton D. Paley in this journal, and its general character has been well described by Ryskamp, following Keynes and Wolf: "54 plates on 54 leaves. Watermark [RUSE & TURNERS] 1815. Printed in red-brown; 'elaborately and brilliantly painted with watercolours and opaque pigments, heightened with silver and gold; each plate within a single framing line. Foliated by Blake 1-54'" (38).

The Franklin Library edition is not a scholarly reproduction, and it has some characteristics that might mislead one expecting it to be exactly like copy U.³ The color quality, of course, varies, and the register is sometimes appreciably off, especially in those plates that use black ink: for example, plates 1, 2, 20, 29, 40, and 44 are all too dark, and 40 is seriously out of register in the copy we have examined. Grant's notes on the original indicate other discrepancies as well, but it would not be useful to report these until the reproductions and the original have been compared side-by-side. What is more notable is that the plate sizes in the reproduction vary from the originals by as much as a centimeter (vertically). More deliberately, Blake's foliation, written at the upper right hand corner of each design (within the framing line), has been silently removed, even though the numbers accurately indicate the page sequence and would not really compete with the alternative pagination in conventional printing. The

edition also provides a transcription of the text on the verso facing each plate page; the punctuation has been normalized more or less as Keynes did in the Orion/Oxford facsimile (e.g., line 16 of "The Tyger" has a question mark rather than Blake's printed exclamation point).

As offset reproductions of illuminated books go, however, this is a decided success. On the average it is somewhat less muddy in color and sharper than the Orion/Oxford facsimile of copy Z, partly because Blake's delicate outlining of details comes off well. It is not possible to reproduce Blake's most elaborately colored pages (such as these) by offset lithography without some murkiness and flatness in the colors, and this edition has its share of dead spots and infelicities. Yet all the images are at least plausible, even though no more than four ink colors were used in printing, and most of these reproductions are about as good a job as ordinary offset can manage. The printing inks themselves are transparent, but the presence of "opaque pigments" mentioned by



Songs, copy U, *Innocence* title page. Franklin Library reproduction.



Detail, *Songs*, copy U, "The Divine Image." Franklin Library reproduction.

Keynes and Wolf is sometimes easily discernible, as on plates 13 and 18, where a pale blue-white suspension has been used to create halo effects; the metallic silver and gold they also mention are, of course, not in evidence.

Finding a copy of this edition will require haunting rare book stores, though for now one will probably do best at the least pretentious places. Several other large series have been offered by the Franklin Library in similar bindings, but a book dealer who has one volume from this set may have more or know where to get them. Some purchasers of "The Hundred Greatest Books of All Time" are selling individual volumes (or the whole set) for a fraction of their cost, and used-book dealers in the Midwest are asking twenty to thirty dollars apiece. On the other hand, the very impressiveness of this particular book might make a collector who was otherwise disenchanted with Western Civilization according to the Franklin Library more likely to hold on to it alone.

1 *Notes from the Editors*, a somewhat dizzy 22-page promotional pamphlet for this volume that was discovered and brought to our attention by Robert N. Es-sick, describes the paper as "70-pound Franklin Library Vellum White" (22).

2 For more complete information on reproductions of the *Songs* see Grant and Johnson, and Wilkie.

3 See Tanselle for a review of some problems presented even by serious scholarly facsimiles.

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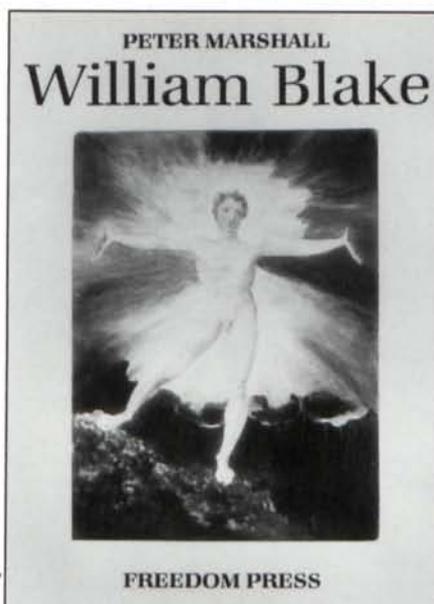
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Peter Marshall, *William Blake: Visionary Anarchist*. London: Freedom Press, 1988. 69 pp. 7 illus. £2.00.

Reviewed by
Michael Ferber

Freedom Press has been in existence since October 1886, when a small group of British anarchists, with the inspiration and support of Peter Kropotkin, began publishing their journal *Freedom*. *Freedom* still appears regularly, along with occasional other journals and dozens of reprints of anarchist classics by Kropotkin, Bakunin, Proudhon, Malatesta, Goldman, and others. Having discovered the Freedom Group's monthly journal *Anarchy* when I was in high school, I visited their office in 1966 on my first trip to London, in Angel Alley, Whitechapel High Street. There I was delighted to meet an elderly woman who kindly answered all my questions and told me stories about the origin of the group. She remembered sitting on Kropotkin's knee.

So it is pleasing to report that Freedom Press has published an attractive little book on Blake. Once I saw it, in fact, I wondered why such a book had not come out long ago, for the anarchists certainly have as good a claim to Blake as anyone else, and better than that of Marxists, Jungians, or gnostics. It is easy to show that Blake's many denunciations of kingship, tyranny, law, taxation, war, and the draft are tantamount to an anarchist stance,



though it is hard to find general statements of the case like William Godwin's. Peter Marshall, author of a major scholarly study of Godwin (Yale UP, 1984), knows his anarchism well, and clearly brings out Blake's opinions on the relevant topics—politics, the state, the church, "existing society," and the like—quoting extensively from poems and letters throughout his life. There is nothing new here, but little to quarrel with, given the length and purpose of the book.

But there are also some problems. It is not enough for Marshall that Blake (with Godwin) was "a founding father of British anarchism": Blake must be an "ecological" anarchist of the best modern sort, like Murray Bookchin. We hear that Blake believed in a society "in harmony with nature" and adopted a "holistic approach" to nature. Who among us is not guilty of assimilating Blake to our own cherished beliefs? But this is too easy. Similarly we hear a lot about Blake's dialectic and synthesis of contraries, as if he were Hegel.

And we are told we can discover "the key to his mythology," though we are not told what it is.

There are also a surprising number of mistakes or long-superseded legends, such as that Blake "allegedly helped Tom Paine escape to France" (in 1782), Britain declared war on France in 1794, and Blake and Mary Wollstonecraft were "close friends." Marshall has Blake echoing Wollstonecraft rather than Jesus when he writes, "In Eternity they neither marry nor are given in marriage." A caption to the Nebuchadnezzar water color in the Tate, reproduced as plate 5, reads, "Nebuchadnezzar, symbol of reason, authority and oppression, being banned from Jerusalem." Kathleen Raine is Kathleen once and Mary once. "Soul" gets printed "soil" (though Blake might have liked that one).

Nonetheless this book will probably do more good than harm to those who first meet Blake in its pages, if that is conceivable. It makes Blake sound wonderful, and it places him historically in a stream of thought still flowing today. Blake would have liked Kropotkin and his modern successors. Maybe Angel Alley will change its name to Devil Alley in Blake's honor.

CORRECTION

The original copy of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* used for the Swedish edition reviewed in *Blake* 23 (1990): 209-10, should have been identified as copy H, which was also used for the Oxford University Press edition of 1975.

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