



# Blake

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AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY

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VOLUME 26      NUMBER 1 SUMMER 1992

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**Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly** is published under the sponsorship of the Department of English, University of Rochester.

**Subscriptions** are \$50 for institutions, \$25 for individuals. All subscriptions are by the volume (1 year, 4 issues) and begin with the summer issue. Subscription payments received after the summer issue will be applied to the 4 issues of the current volume. Foreign addresses (except Canada and Mexico) require a \$8 per volume postal surcharge for surface mail, a \$18 per volume surcharge for air mail delivery. U.S. currency or international money order necessary. Make checks payable to *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*. Address all subscription orders and related communications to Patricia Neill, *Blake*, Department of English, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627.

Many **back issues** are available at a reduced price. Address Patricia Neill for a list of issues and prices.

**Manuscripts** are welcome. Send two copies, typed and documented according to the forms suggested in *The MLA Style Manual*, to either of the editors: Morris Eaves, Dept. of English, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627; Morton D. Paley, Dept. of English, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720. Only one copy will be returned to authors.

**International Standard Serial Number:** 0160-628x. *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly* is **indexed** in the Modern Language Association's International Bibliography, the Modern Humanities Research Association's Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature, *The Romantic Movement: A Selective and Critical Bibliography* (ed. David V. Erdman et al.), American Humanities Index, the Arts and Humanities Citation Index, and Current Contents.

## The Sickness of Blake's Rose

by Michael Srigley

Blake's poem, *The Sick Rose* is probably one of the best-known, best-loved and yet, as I hope to show, least understood poems in the English language. Its popularity is due to its apparent simplicity and to its generous ambiguity. When students are asked to give their own impressions of the poem, their responses are usually vague and various. It is about love or beauty undergoing corruption; it is about the frailty of goodness or the destructive power of time. All the interpretations have in common a general sense of something beautiful being defiled or desecrated. A similar variety of interpretation within the same limits is found in literary criticism. One of the most elaborate interpretations is offered by Kathleen Raine. She suggests that the key to the poem is to be found in the tale of Psyche and Eros in Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*, which Blake is known to have admired.<sup>1</sup> The mysterious "invisible worm" of the poem is traced to Eros as the invisible winged serpent whom Psyche will marry according to the Oracle of Apollo. David Erdman approaches the meaning of the poem through Blake's illustrations to it, and finds both markedly erotic.<sup>2</sup> In one illustration, a worm "extends a curved phallic body out from the flower centre and about the human form of the Rose." The girl's face "registers desperation and we see the sharp proboscis of the worm turning out from below her dress as about to attack her." Despite the phallic imagery and the suggestions of incipient rape, Erdman interprets both the etchings and the poem as basically optimistic; their message, he concludes, is that "life is mortal." He also finds a sign of hope in the upraised arms of one of the girls: it indicates that "a worm hidden in secret may be reborn as a boy or girl."

It is not my purpose to criticize or dismiss such interpretations of *The Sick Rose*; each of them in its own way throws some light on the poem's 'intention,' to use the Renaissance term. Rather, I wish to suggest that there is an alternative approach to a lyric such as this, one that concentrates on the details of the poem and seeks to elucidate them.<sup>3</sup> As various, more recent studies of Blake's deceptively simple poems have shown, they are often richly complex and repay close analysis. *The Sick Rose* belongs to this category. Kathleen Raine has written that

Blake's obscurities are never vague; they are hard, precise, and insoluble until we have the key to their meaning; then they vanish altogether.<sup>4</sup>

I believe this is true in particular of certain obscurities in *The Sick Rose*, not least the nature of the nocturnal "invisible worm" which causes the sickness of the Rose.

First the poem itself:

O Rose, thou art sick!  
The invisible worm  
That flies in the night,  
In the howling storm,  
Has found out thy bed  
Of crimson joy:  
And his dark secret love  
Does thy life destroy.

In a draft of this poem, the 'his' of the penultimate line is replaced by 'her.' This indicates that in Blake's mind the invisible worm could be of either sex. Further information about the worm can be gleaned from the poem. It is invisible, it flies by night in a howling storm, and it seeks out the Rose as the object of its "dark secret love." Its love is in some way surreptitious; as the imagery of the poem suggests it is sexual; and as we learn from the final line it is destructive. It causes the Rose to become sick. Let us look more closely at the various meanings of the word *worm*.

### *The Worm*

Among the more normal meanings of this word listed in the Oxford English Dictionary, there are two figurative ones that might throw some light on Blake's "invisible worm." According to one (II.1) it is "a grief or passion that preys stealthily on a man's heart or torments his conscience (like a worm in a dead body or a maggot in food)," with examples from 900 A.D. onwards. Alternatively (II.b), it is defined as "a whim or 'maggot' in the brain; a perverse fancy or desire; a streak of madness or insanity, often *wild worm*." This figurative worm is the embodiment of some powerful human feeling that preys stealthily on the mind and causes a form of abnormality. Behind these figurative meanings lies a long tradition of various nocturnal worm-like spirits that can travel to a human being and induce some form of abnormal state. It is to this tradition that Blake's "invisible worm" belongs. These invisible spirits, known as *lares* or *larvae*, are mentioned by St. Augustine in his *Civitas Dei* (ix. ix. Loeb ed.) and became part of the demonic lore inherited by the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Boccaccio in his influential iconographical work, *De deis gentium* (1472, p. 295a) states that these spirits were created by Morpheus, the deity of dreams, as phantasms which according to popular belief "invade the sleeping and weigh down on them, pressing and oppressing the senses." In the form of incubi and succubi they visited sleeping persons, causing them to have vivid erotic dreams. In the 12th Book of *Orlando Furioso*, Orlando is described as being pursued by a phantom copy of his Angelica. This phantom is called "notturme larve," a nocturnal ghost or spirit that haunts lovers. A similar incident occurs in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (I.i.34 ff) when Archimago employs two magical flies to

deceive the Red Cross Knight. One fly is sent to procure a lascivious dream from Morpheus, while the other becomes a phantom copy of Una which attempts to seduce the Knight and arouse him sexually. These nocturnal spirits travel to men or women and cause them to have erotic dreams that can result in orgasm. In a learned commentary on Genesis published in 1601, Benedictus Pererius gave the standard view of what are today called 'wet dreams':

when men are polluted by nocturnal seed, a succubus-demon is there, acting through a body of air in the form of a woman.<sup>5</sup>

We can now understand why Blake could vacillate about the gender of the "invisible worm." If it was visiting a man it would be the female succubus, and a male incubus if visiting a woman. We can therefore deduce that the Rose in the final version of the poem stands for a young woman being visited by a male incubus in the form of an "invisible worm."

The idea of the "wild worm" infecting the mind of a person and a nocturnal *larva* fused in the seventeenth century, when the meaning of *larva* as ghost, skeleton, or mask, was extended by biologists to include grub or maggot, a meaning which the word "worm" also once had (O.E.D. under "worm," 5). To obtain some idea of how Blake may have visualized the "worm / That flies by night," let us now consider a seventeenth-century engraving found in a work that Blake almost certainly knew. This is the *Lumen de lumine* (1652), the alchemical allegory written by Thomas Vaughan, brother of the metaphysical poet, Henry Vaughan. As Raine has suggested, this allegorical vision of Thalia revealing the secrets of alchemy to an adept in the depths of the earth is a major inspiration of Blake's *The Book of Thel*. Blake would certainly have been interested in the emblematic engraving which opens *Lumen de lumine*, as well as in the commentary on it in the main text. The central panel of the engraving shows an oval of illuminated ground surrounded by

darkness. In the center is an altar with a candle on it signifying *Lumen Naturae*, the Light of Nature. An Angel with raised sword and a ball of thread is seen to the left, while to the right a blindfolded man is groping his way towards the surrounding darkness designated *Regio Phantastica*, the Region of Fantasy. Awaiting to seize him there are various winged creatures including basilisks and winged serpents or worms with coiled tails. As we learn from Vaughan's commentary on this scene, the blindfolded figure being initiated into the mysteries of alchemy will stray into the monstrous region of fantasy unless he accepts the protection of the Angel and uses the thread of Ariadne to guide him through the labyrinth of the alchemical *opus*. His goal is both above and below him. Above is the *Mons Magorum Invisibilis*, the Invisible Mountain of the Magicians. Below is a large winged dragon with its tail in its mouth, the alchemical *ourobouros* enclosing a heap of gold on which a child is sitting and the inscription *Non nisi parvulis*, intimating that only as children can we enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Concerning the basilisks and winged worms that infest the Region of Fantasy, Vaughan has this to say: in gaining access to the caverns of the Invisible Mountain where the secrets of alchemy are to be discovered, great care must be taken because

they are very dangerous places after Night, for they are haunted with Fires, and other strange Apparitions, occasion'd (as I am told by the Magi) by certaine spirits, which dabble lasciviously with the sperm of the world, and imprint their Imaginations on it, producing many times fantastic, and monstrous Generations.<sup>6</sup>

It is these monstrous productions of sexual imagination that are shown flying in the dark as basilisks and worms or snakes, seeking to waylay the candidate during his maze-like initiation into *the Mysteries of this my <Thalia's> Schoole*.<sup>7</sup> As the alchemists repeatedly claimed, sexual abstinence was a prime requirement for accomplishing the Work; the basilisks and winged worms therefore represent

erotic temptation to the practitioner of alchemy. As we shall see, these nocturnal spirits were believed to be created from a special sperm created during erotic dreams or imaginings.

It has been necessary to investigate this highly taboo area of human belief in order to discover the lost context of a poem like *The Sick Rose*. It was precisely such an investigation into the taboos surrounding sex in his own age that Blake undertook. It is well-known that he regarded the Pauline Christian attitude towards sex as unhealthy and as the cause of much abnormality. It warped the natural sexuality of young men and women; it corrupted family life; and it led to prostitution and venereal disease. Through enforced celibacy it was also the cause of much sexual prurience in the Church itself. In his poetry, Blake frequently attempted to expose this diseased attitude to sex, and some of the key passages will be cited later. The point I wish to make here is that *The Sick Rose*, far from being a vaguely romantic evocation of the susceptibility of beauty to corruption, is in fact a detailed analysis of the causes of the sexual malady of Blake's times. Its general diagnosis can now be summarized. The "invisible worm" is the embodiment of the sexually heated fantasies of a male, traveling by night through the "howling storm" of erotic passion to the woman being imagined and desired by the solitary lover. To understand this strange idea of what can be called telepathic sexual intercourse between a man and a woman who are physically apart, we must now consider the writings of someone who inspired both Vaughan and Blake. This is the sixteenth-century physician and alchemist, Paracelsus.

#### *Paracelsus and Invisible Illnesses*

Blake left it on record that the two figures to whom he was most indebted were the mystic, Jakob Boehme, and the physician, Paracelsus. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, he claims that "any man of mechanical talents may from the writings of Paracelsus or Jacob Behmen produce ten thousand

volumes of equal value with Swedenborg's."<sup>8</sup> In a verse letter to John Flaxman of 1800 he again mentions Paracelsus and Boehme as sources of inspiration, claiming that they have actually appeared to him.<sup>9</sup> Discussing the influence of Paracelsus on Blake, S. Foster Damon has suggested that the paramount importance given by Blake to the human imagination derives ultimately from Paracelsus.<sup>10</sup> This is true also of the negative power of the human imagination when uncontrolled or distorted by wrong desire. What a man imagines, he becomes, declared Paracelsus in his *Archidoxis*, which would have been available to Blake in the English translation of 1656.<sup>11</sup> This applies both to the use of the creative imagination and of a diseased imagination. Paracelsus' fullest treatment of uncontrolled imagination as the cause of various psychological or physical diseases is his *De Causis et Origine Morborum Invisibilium*, originally published in German in 1565 in *Opera Omnia*, and reissued in Geneva in 1658 in Latin translation.<sup>12</sup> Leaving aside for the moment the question of whether Blake was acquainted with this work, I shall first give an account of its relevant portions.

As the title of the book indicates, it deals with the causes and origin of invisible diseases. Among these Paracelsus includes diseases born of the imagination, and these he covers in Book III of *De Origine*. When uncontrolled the human imagination was shameless and obstinate and gave rise to many human ills.<sup>13</sup> This was particularly so in illnesses deriving from an overactive sexual fantasy. It is this fantasy that creates a false sperm from which incubi and succubi are produced. More particularly, this false sperm or "corrupted salt" is

born of the imagination in Amor Heroes <solitary sex>. What is this love? It is none other than when someone creates a woman in his mind through the power of fantasy, and making love with her satisfies his love. From this act results the ejaculation of a useless, feeble sperm incapable of generating children. From this sperm, however, incubi and succubi are created. (*Jam vero sperma hoc, ita productum, ex*

*imaginatione in amore Herois natum est. Quid vero iste amor est? Nihil aliud, quam quod sibi aliquis per phantasmam in animo foeminam fingit, & cum hac re habendo, amorem suum exsatiat. Unde surdi quoque fatui spermatis exitus est, quod ad liberorum generationem ineptum est. Ex illo tamen spermate Incubus & Succubus gignuntur*).<sup>14</sup>

The adulterated sperm produced by the erotic imagination is carried off by nocturnal spirits (*per nocturnos spiritus*), and "hatched into serpents, worms (*vermes*), toads and similar impure creatures," including as Paracelsus also says basilisks. They pass from the heated imagination of one person to the person being imagined. This can explain acts of black magic. For example,

if a man has a strong and evil imagination, and wishes to injure another, such beings are always ready to hand to lend a helping hand for the accomplishment of his purpose.<sup>15</sup>

The *larvae* used for such a transmission can only act upon men if the latter make room for them in their minds. A healthy mind is a castle that cannot be invaded without the will of its master; but if they are allowed to enter, they excite the passions of men and women, they create cravings in them, they produce bad thoughts which act injuriously upon the brain; they sharpen the animal instinct and suffocate the moral sense.<sup>16</sup>

In a passage from *Philosophia Saqax*, Paracelsus describes how this transmission takes place:

Spirits desire to act upon <a person's imagination>, and they therefore often make use of his dreams for the purpose of acting upon him. During sleep the sidereal man may by the power of the imagination be sent out of the physical form, at a distance to act for some purpose. No place is too far for the imagination to go, and the imagination of one man may impress that of another, wherever it reaches.<sup>17</sup>

The same idea is found in another passage:

One man may communicate his thoughts to another with whom he is in sympathy, at any distance however great it may be, or he may act upon the spirit of another person in such a manner as to influence his actions after the latter awakens from his sleep, and in this way he may even injure the health of the latter, and upon this law

of Nature is based the possibility of witchcraft and sorcery.<sup>18</sup>

In these various excerpts from the writings of Paracelsus are to be found, I believe, either the main source of or a striking analogue to ideas used by Blake in *The Sick Rose*. The poem is essentially a distillation of the Paracelsian teaching concerning the transmission at a distance of passionate imaginings from one person to another, as found primarily in *De Origine morborum invisibilium* but also referred to in other works by Paracelsus. The sickness of the Rose has been caused by the fantasizing of a lonely young man as he conjures up an image of a woman and imagines making love to her. From the ethereal sperm produced by this act of erotic imagination, an "invisible worm" is created which flies through the tempestuous night from the lover to the beloved. As an expression of his "dark secret love" it carries out an act of violation on the young woman. It is for this reason that Blake speaks of this form of love as destructive.

The role of the young lover in the drama evoked in *The Sick Rose* is concealed, but it comes out clearly in a passage in *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, describing the erotic experiences of a young girl and youth as each lies alone in bed:

The moment of desire! The moment of desire! The virgin  
That pines for man shall awaken to enormous joys  
In the secret shadows of her chamber:  
the youth shut up from  
The lustful joy shall forget to generate  
and create an amorous image  
In the shadows of his curtains and in the folds of his silent pillow.<sup>19</sup>

The girl is awakening from a powerful erotic dream, while the young man, deprived of natural "lustful joy," conjures up in his solitude "an amorous image" of the desired woman. The two halves of the passage are joined by a colon, perhaps suggesting that the sexual climax of the girl and the erotic imaginings of the young man are interrelated and simultaneous. Her pining for a man travels to him as "an amorous

image"; his longing for her travels to the girl to become her partner in the sexual dream. As in *The Sick Rose* with its "dark secret love," their loves are conceived in "secret shadows" and in "the shadows of his curtains." Here for Blake lies the unnatural character and essential sickness of their love. It is also unnatural in that the youth "shall forget to generate." This may echo the observation of Paracelsus that erotic imaginings lead to a form of sterile sperm that is incapable of producing children. The young man, condemned by the Christian norms of society to living in unnatural celibacy, is compelled to create "a woman in his mind through the power of fantasy," as Paracelsus wrote.

The sickness in the love of the boy and girl is traced by Blake to religion. In lines that immediately follow those we have just discussed, Blake writes in fierce irony about monastic celibacy and its effects:

Are not these the palaces of religion, the  
rewards of continence;  
The self-enjoyings of self-denial? why  
dost thou seek religion?  
Is it because acts are not lovely that thou  
seekest solitude  
Where the horrible darkness is  
impressed with reflections of desire?<sup>20</sup>

Enforced continence leads to sexual sickness in the form of narcissistic "self-enjoyings of self-denial" in darkness and solitude. This abuse of sexuality is seen by Blake as epidemic in quality and as spreading almost as a viral infection to all young love. Here again his conception of the "self-enjoyings of self-denials" found at the heart of the celibate Church is remarkably close to Paracelsus' view. In his treatise on plagues, *De pestilente*, Paracelsus draws attention to the dangers of convents, monasteries, and houses of prostitution, because in such places a lascivious and evil imagination is especially active, and great quantities of sperm are there collected by evil spirits, and that sperm contains a powerful *Mumia* which may be extracted, and transformed into evil things.<sup>21</sup>

From the revulsion towards sexuality inculcated by the Church arises a psychic pestilence that is destroying the Garden of Love. Its victims are named in *The Sunflower*:

Youth pined away with desire,  
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow.<sup>22</sup>

As William J. Keith has rightly suggested, the individuals in this poem and in *Vision of the Daughters of Albion* are varieties of Ovid's Narcissus, but it is important to stress that for Blake their self-consuming, sickly narcissism was imposed on them by the puritanical norms of a superficially Christian society.<sup>23</sup>

This interpretation of *The Sick Rose* and of related poems by Blake rests on the assumption that Blake was conversant with Paracelsus's strange ideas concerning invisible diseases and telepathic infection. As we have seen, Blake himself claimed to have been in direct contact with the spirits of Paracelsus, Boehme, Milton and other discarnate entities, but such a claim is treated today with skepticism. Eliminating then direct communication with the spirit of Paracelsus as the source of Blake's information about invisible diseases, there is the possibility that Blake read *De Origine* in the Latin of the 1658 edition. It is known that by 1803 Blake could read both Latin and Greek, and that his Greek was as fluent as that of "an Oxford scholar."<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, it is not known when Blake began learning these languages. There remains the possibility that Blake could have learnt Paracelsus's teachings about invisible diseases from people in his circle of friends who were interested in such matters. In her forthcoming work entitled *Men of Desire: Swedenborg, Blake and Illuminist Freemasonry*, Marsha Keith Schuchard investigates, among other things, the keen interest in Paracelsus, Swedenborg and in Cabalism in the circles that Blake frequented. She has generously allowed me to make use of some of her findings.<sup>25</sup>

### *Paracelsus in the Late Eighteenth Century*

In the *Catalogue of Ancient and Modern Books* (1787) listed as available in the London bookshop of John Denis, Dr. Schuchard notes the following items:

# 4945 Auriolus Phillipus Theophrastus, his five Books of the Causes of Invisible Diseases, manuscript, fairly wrote

# 4927 Paracelsi Opera Omnia (1662)

# 5241 Paracelsus bis Archidoxes (1660)

John Denis was the English agent for the distribution of Swedenborg's works in England. Schuchard has also examined a handlist "Catalogue of the Library of Richard Cosway," now in the Huntington Library. Cosway, painter and mystic, was a lifelong friend of Blake's. The Catalogue contains the following works by Paracelsus in English translation: *On the Nature of Things* (1650 and 1674); *New Light of Alchemy* (1674); *The Supreme Mysteries of Nature* (1656); *Philosophy Reformed* (1657). The catalogue does not list Cosway's collection of occult manuscripts. A catalogue of the library of the artist, Philippe Jacques de Louterbourg, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, includes under item 136 a number of books by Paracelsus. Like Cosway, de Louterbourg was a Freemason and a follower of Swedenborg, and probably known to Blake. Schuchard points out that interest in Paracelsus was also widespread in a wider circle of Swedenborgian Freemasons. Such figures as Manoah and Ebenezer Sibly, General Charles Rainford and Dr. Sigismund Bacstrom all possessed private libraries of occult literature, and refer to Paracelsus in their published writings and manuscripts.

It is clear then that in the final decades of the eighteenth century Paracelsus continued to be read and studied and that his teachings interested the members of the occult circles that Blake frequented. The printed works of Paracelsus were still available in private libraries and for sale in John Denis's bookshop in and about the year 1787. It is of particular interest that

in that year Denis had for sale a manuscript English translation of Paracelsus's *De Origine morborum invisibilium*, the very work which, as I claim, Blake was influenced by when he came to write *The Sick Rose* only a few years later. Blake and his wife joined the Swedenborgian Society in 1789, and it is reasonable to assume that Blake frequented John Denis's bookshop. The copies of Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* and *Divine Providence* in English translation which Blake procured in 1789 and 1790 were published by John Denis.<sup>26</sup> Even if Blake had not read the English translation of Paracelsus's *De Origine* available in Denis's bookshop, there were a number of Swedenborgians and other esotericists close to Blake who were interested in Paracelsus, as Schuchard has documented, and who could have supplied him with the requisite information about its ideas.

In whatever exact way Blake may have acquired knowledge of Paracelsus's *De Origine*, it seems to me clear this work played a significant part in the genesis of *The Sick Rose* and that an awareness of its ideas illuminates the central drama of the poem. It enables us to understand more exactly the nature of the invisible worm that flies by night, the urge that drives it through the storm, and why its love is destructive. It also throws light on one of Blake's major preoccupations: the blighting effect on young people of the Church's condemnation of sexuality as sinful by nature. Because of this condemnation, sexual attraction does not lead to sexual union, nor does it result in generation. It leads only to solitary, imagined sex which Blake sees as enfeebling and as sick and sterile. The

poem is therefore an expression in a powerfully compressed and suggestive form of Blake's conviction that the Church's condemnation of sexuality as intrinsically shameful has caused a widespread social and psychological sickness. It leads to the breaking of the marriage bond, to prostitution, to venereal disease, and to a fevered eroticism that is essentially unhealthy. It manifests as a destructive "dark secret love" instead of Oothoon's "lovely copulation" in bright daylight. It is furtive instead of open. *The Sick Rose* not only forms an integral part of Blake's attack on negative Christian attitudes towards human sexuality, but it is remarkable for its specific diagnosis of the illness that this attitude has brought about. Using traditional demonic lore but above all the ideas of Paracelsus, Blake suggests that the human imagination when unregulated is able to create a strange psychic cloud of pollution hovering over society and infested by the weird creatures of erotic longing. It is these in the form of the "invisible worm," the spectral *vermis* of Paracelsus's *De Origine*, that travel telepathically from person to person bearing erotic infection. As Blake wrote "He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kathleen Raine, *Blake and Tradition*, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1968) 2: 199-201.

<sup>2</sup> *The Illuminated Blake*, annotated by David V. Erdman (Garden City, NJ: Anchor P/Doubleday, 1975) 81-82.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Robinson, "What Psychology Won't Explain" in *Michigan Quarterly Review* (1980): 45-46.

<sup>4</sup> Kathleen Raine, *Blake and Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1977) 12.

<sup>5</sup> Pererius, *Commentarium et Dusopulationem in Genesim* (1601), v. I, p. 387, col. b, para. 64.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Vaughan, *Lumen de Lumine* in *The Works of Thomas Vaughan*, ed. Alan Rudrum (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984) 317, 643-48.

<sup>7</sup> Vaughn 310, 435-36.

<sup>8</sup> *Complete Writings of William Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London; New York, Toronto: Oxford UP, 1966) 158.

<sup>9</sup> Keynes 799

<sup>10</sup> See *A Blake Dictionary* (1979), ed. by S. Foster Damon, under "Paracelsus." See also Morton D. Paley, *Energy and the Imagination: A Study of the Development of Blake's Thought* (Oxford, 1970) passim, for parallels between the thought of Paracelsus and Blake.

<sup>11</sup> *The Archidoxes of Magic by Paracelsus*, transl. by R. Turner (London, 1656); 2nd ed. 1975 (London: Askin Publishers, 1975) introd. by Stephen Skinner.

<sup>12</sup> All quotations are from the ed. of 1656.

<sup>13</sup> *De Causis* 128, in *Opera Omnia*.

<sup>14</sup> *De Causis* 120.

<sup>15</sup> Franz Hartmann, *Paracelsus: Life and Prophecies* (New York: Rudolph Steiner Publications, 1973) 92.

<sup>16</sup> Hartmann 93.

<sup>17</sup> Hartmann 112.

<sup>18</sup> Hartmann 213-14.

<sup>19</sup> Keynes 194.

<sup>20</sup> Keynes 194.

<sup>21</sup> Hartmann 124.

<sup>22</sup> Keynes 215.

<sup>23</sup> William J. Keith, "The Complexities of Blake's Sunflower: An Archetypal Speculation," in *Blake: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Northrop Frye (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966) 58.

<sup>24</sup> Keynes 821.

<sup>25</sup> The information and quotations contained in the following paragraph documenting the interest in Paracelsus in the eighteenth century were kindly supplied to me by Dr. Schuchard.

<sup>26</sup> Information about Denis's role in the publication of these two works of Swedenborg was kindly supplied by Dr. Schuchard.

<sup>27</sup> Keynes 151.

## “Undisturbed above once in a Lustre”: Francis Douce, George Cumberland and William Blake at the Bodleian Library and Ashmolean Museum

by Joan K. Stemmler

When Francis Douce died on 5 April 1834, he bequeathed to the Bodleian Library almost all the printed books, coins, prints, and manuscripts he had collected.<sup>1</sup> Sir Frederic Madden believed that in “leaving them to the Bodleian he consigns them to neglect and oblivion!” where they would “sleep on . . . undisturbed above once in a lustre by some prying individual of antiquarian celebrity.”<sup>2</sup> On the 150th anniversary of the bequest, an exhibition and catalogue celebrated the rich deposit, now divided between the Bodleian Library and the Ashmolean Museum. Through Douce’s antiquarian activities, he met and corresponded with a number of similarly-minded individuals; the letters were bequeathed to the British Museum and in 1930 given to the Bodleian Library.<sup>3</sup> Of interest to this art historian was a pattern revealed in these sources of direct and indirect contacts between Douce and the life-long friends, George Cumberland and William Blake. Although I was well acquainted with Cumberland<sup>4</sup> and Blake, Douce’s connections with these men were only marginally known to me<sup>5</sup> until I explored selected sections of the Bodleian catalogues, Douce’s collected letters, his notebooks, especially his “Collecta,” his portfolios and his lists and notes relating to proposed publications in the archives at the Ashmolean Museum.<sup>6</sup>

This paper will show when and how these three individuals, first only loosely connected through location and developing common interests, finally came into closer contact by the 1800s. Though we know that in Douce’s collection at his death there were two books of illuminated printing by Blake,

*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* Copy B with the separate plate, “Our End is come,” and *The Book of Thel* Copy I, plus the *Descriptive Catalogue* Copy H and a third state of the *Canterbury Pilgrims*,<sup>7</sup> a 1794 purchase which will be discussed below has not been previously noted, Blake’s *For Children: the Gates of Paradise*. Douce likewise collected some of Cumberland’s books, but more important is the revelation of the way Douce used Cumberland as one of his resources for information about the visual arts. Campbell Dodgson called Douce a bibliophile and collector of woodcuts of advanced taste.<sup>8</sup> I suggest that Cumberland, in his appreciation of early woodcuts and the work of Giulio di Antonio Bonasone<sup>9</sup> and in his advocacy of Blake, both personally and through his books, played a role in forming that taste. This essay also offers corroborating information to that recently published by Joseph Viscomi.<sup>10</sup> With his suggestion that Isaac D’Israeli, a close friend and correspondent of Douce, bought in 1834 part of George Romney’s collection of books in illuminated printing by Blake, Viscomi focuses interest on new ways of understanding how Blake’s books were produced and collected, illuminating the “tenuousness of our assumptions regarding patronage and the earliest modes by which illuminated books were produced and disseminated.”<sup>11</sup> In the Douce bequest, a hitherto unpublished network of relationships reveals more information about practices of selling and collecting books and prints during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Douce and Blake were both born in 1757, Cumberland three years earlier.<sup>12</sup>

Socially, Douce’s family was more highly placed than that of the middle-class Cumberland or the artisan Blake. All three were younger sons, a position affecting their education and income: in the 1770s, Douce was admitted as an attorney of the King’s Bench, Cumberland worked at the Royal Exchange Assurance Office in London, finally earning £60 per annum,<sup>13</sup> and Blake served his apprenticeship with James Basire, the engraver for the Society of Antiquaries. Cumberland was admitted as a student at the Royal Academy in 1772, an expression of his true interests.<sup>14</sup> In their third decade, the three men approached the world of books and prints from different directions. Douce was said to have made his first purchase of an antique coin at age 10.<sup>15</sup> Elected as a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries by 1779, he tried to devote himself to literary and antiquarian pursuits as much as possible. Blake was said to have frequented print-shops and auction sales as a boy. He aspired to be a painter and poet: his first exhibition at the Royal Academy was reviewed by Cumberland. Upon the death of his father in 1784, he went into a brief partnership with James Parker as an engraver and printseller, after which he began to make his own books and reproductive engravings for others.

Cumberland had an omnivorous interest in learning and in writing; by 1780 he reported to his brother that he had met some “Geniuses and Men of Science.”<sup>16</sup> By 1784, he knew and wrote on behalf of the sculptor, Thomas Banks, and through him met Richard Cosway, and, later, Thomas Johnes and Horne Tooke.<sup>17</sup> In 1784, Cumberland came into a £300 inheritance, releasing him from his fourteen years of “ser-

vitute" at the Royal Exchange.<sup>18</sup> Devoting himself to experiments in printing and practical ways of self-publishing, he probably shared this knowledge with Blake. Traveling several times to the continent, Cumberland met Baron de Murr in Nuremberg and the librarian of the Grand Duke of Tuscany in Florence, experiences he later recorded in his book *Thoughts on Outline* of 1796.<sup>19</sup> Settling in Italy by 1788, away from the "cold weather and cold receptions" given to his unorthodox family in England,<sup>20</sup> he cultivated friends like John Irvine in that "school of real students in sculpture and painting" in Rome.<sup>21</sup> He established lifelong relationships with dealers and gem-cutters of Rome, collecting gems, books, prints and information.

Douce began in 1779 a correspondence with Richard Twiss, a wealthy older fellow antiquary, traveler and miscellaneous writer, from which we gain an insight into Douce's early concern with collecting.<sup>22</sup> Twiss mentions in 1788 Mr. Edwards, Mr. Raspe, Mr. Marchand, bookseller, cataloguer and gem-cutter respectively,<sup>23</sup> as men in whom Douce would take an interest. The Edwards brothers, James and John, opened their Pall Mall book-shop in 1784. Jean Hagstrum suggests that Blake probably knew the shop and that he may have seen there medieval prayer books, like the Bedford Book of Hours.<sup>24</sup> In 1788, Blake is said to have discovered how to print illuminated books using relief-etched plates.<sup>25</sup> In the same year Douce makes one of his major purchases, an illuminated book of hours printed in Paris in 1505.<sup>26</sup> No connection is claimed between Douce and the two others at this time, but all express from different perspectives their interest in similar fields.

The French Revolution causes Cumberland to return to England in 1790, settling first in Lyndhurst, near Southampton, and then moving to Bishopsgate near Windsor Great Park by 1794.<sup>27</sup> Cumberland has the Edwards' shop bind his books; Douce also patronizes the Edwards in 1790, buying printed books and two manuscripts

from the catalogue.<sup>28</sup> Blake, working in London all this time, publishes in 1789 *The Songs of Innocence* and *The Book of Thel*; by 1790, his imagination fired by the Revolution, he finishes some plates of his *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. By 1795 he makes eight more books, prints color-prints, and does much reproductive engraving. In the same year, Richard Edwards, the younger brother of the booksellers, asks Blake to make drawings and engravings for an edition of Young's *Night Thoughts*.

Cumberland also publishes three books:<sup>29</sup> he mentions on 17 January 1792 that he has laid his work before "one of our first rate London Collectors, a Dignitary of high literary character who unites to a great fortune great knowledge in all that is worth knowing or having" and has had it approved.<sup>30</sup> The work, *Some Anecdotes of the life of Julio Bonasoni*, published by 17 February 1793,<sup>31</sup> is dedicated to Sir William Hamilton who may have been the "London Collector." By 6 March over half these books were sold.<sup>32</sup> Douce purchases Cumberland's *Bonasoni* by November 1793, as we know from a letter of thanks from Andrew Lumisden, who borrowed the book of Douce: "I return you, with many thanks, Cumberland's anecdotes of the life of Bonasoni."<sup>33</sup> Cumberland visits Johnes, a patron of Banks and Stothard, between May and July 1794, and dedicates in 1796 a "really beautiful book," *An Attempt to Describe Hafod*, describing the residence in Wales.<sup>34</sup> Johnes uses the Edwards' Pall Mall bookshop for more than antiquarian purchases: he sends Cumberland a halibut in care of Edwards.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, Cumberland and Blake are in very close touch as Blake engraves for Cumberland eight plates dated 1794 and 1795 for *Thoughts on Outline*.<sup>36</sup> Two preserved letters from Blake to Cumberland in 1795 and 1796 show the strength and familiarity of this relationship.<sup>37</sup> Cumberland's *Thoughts on Outline* was inventoried in Douce's bequest but he did not purchase it until 1818.<sup>38</sup>

By 6 August 1792, Twiss is in Paris buying for Douce.<sup>39</sup> However, in a hastily scrawled letter of 25 August 1792, Twiss recounts his relief at his escape from Paris, with his head still affixed to his body and not on a pike: "The Lord have mercy on the two thousand English now in Paris!"<sup>40</sup> Blake's close associates, the Swiss artist, Henry Fuseli, and Joseph Johnson, the publisher and bookseller, plan to go to France as well in the same year, but are deterred by the events of the Terror. The name Fuseli is mentioned in connection with another facet of Douce's interest in natural science: Twiss had begun sending to Douce unhatched pupae, describing in detail the butterflies which would emerge, including information on mounting the specimens. Among the books about which he tells Douce is one by Fuseli's brother, "Fuesleis [sic] les insectes de la Suisse", 4<sup>to</sup>, with 55 Col.<sup>d</sup> plates.<sup>41</sup> On 2 September 1794, Twiss mentions "the book of directions for insects from Johnson" at St. Paul's Churchyard, indicating that Douce already has it.<sup>42</sup>

Despite these indications that Douce had a marginal knowledge of Fuseli and Johnson, figures well known to Blake, the first mention of the name of Blake in connection with that of Douce occurs in a letter from Twiss to Douce on 13 September 1794.<sup>43</sup> Blake had printed *For Children: Gates of Paradise*, "Published by William Blake #13 Hercules Building Lambeth and J. Johnson St. Paul's Churchyard" by 1793.<sup>44</sup> In a letter to Douce whose first two paragraphs deal with exchanges of books and with entomology, Twiss mentions the book in the third paragraph.

... a lady here has just shown me ... two curious works of Blake No. 13 Hercules Build[ing] Lambeth. One "the gates of Paradise", 16 etchings. 2 A<sup>mo</sup> the other "Songs of innocence" printed [crossed out] colours. I suppose the man to be mad, but he draws very well. have [you] anything by him?<sup>45</sup>

Douce underlines this last question in red ink, a habit he had initiated in the 1780s to emphasize passages which

interested him in letters he received. Douce must have commissioned Twiss to obtain the mentioned books, because in Twiss's next letter, we find underlined in red ink *Saturday, next, 27th*.

On Saturday, next, 27th, any time after 12 o'clock, if you will be so good as to send to the Black Bull Holborn, you will find there ready, your Barbuth, Monffot, 3 [?impastein] Donovans insects! [?Jere] Taylors, Mandeville on Stews, & my Curtis insects & Blakes Paradise, and also a very curious *Caterpillars*, which will produce next May Linnaeus *Phalena Pudebunda*.<sup>46</sup>

This hitherto unnoted and unmentioned copy of *For Children: Gates of Paradise* must not have been kept by Douce as it does not appear to be in the Bodleian Library now.<sup>47</sup>

Cumberland makes contacts with other collectors, noting in the *Anecdotes of Bonasoni* that he knows the exquisite collection of the Rev. Mr. Cracherode.

I lately, saw in the portfolios of Mr. Cracherode, a print of a battle of naked men, ten or twelve figures, in folio, well preserved, with a label, on which was written, Antonio Pollojolo [sic] opus.<sup>48</sup>

Clayton Mordaunt Cracherode, the reclusive London collector who bequeathes his collection to the British Museum in 1799,<sup>49</sup> has interests similar to those of Douce. On 12 May 1795, Douce receives this invitation, "Mr. Cracherode presents his complements to Mr. Douce, and will be very happy to see him on Thursday next, at any time that may be convenient to him from eleven to two o'clock."<sup>50</sup> In a Douce manuscript of unknown date, the "Curiosities of Engraving or Anecdotes of Prints," he mentions Cracherode's copy of "Cupid and Psyche by A Venetian & Cumberland's opinion of it."<sup>51</sup> Thus, while there is no hard evidence that Douce knows Cumberland and Blake personally, their paths are certainly parallel and perhaps touch.

By 1793 D'Israeli and Douce were on friendly terms, D'Israeli writing to Douce from Exeter. D'Israeli, preparing a new addition of the second volume

of *Curiosities of Literature*, asks Douce on 24 July for corrections and improvements.<sup>52</sup> On 2 September 1794, D'Israeli mentions Dyer's catalogue which is "pretty bulky;" it has 300 pages and consists of 1186 works.<sup>53</sup> As of 14 September 1793, Douce apparently does not yet own the catalogue.<sup>54</sup> Again on 25 June 1796, D'Israeli reminds Douce that "Dyer is preparing a rich and voluminous Catalogue."<sup>55</sup>

In Exeter by 1783, Gilbert Dyer advertised a catalogue of his library, an example of the beginning of circulating libraries; by 1811, Dyer was selling libraries as large as 2600 items for several thousand pounds.<sup>56</sup> This method of sales from "Retailers of libraries by Marked Catalogues," as well as from "Sellers of books by the Hammer" was prevalent at the time.<sup>57</sup> Dyer's importance here is in connection with a sale of a Blake book to Douce, as we shall see below.

Twiss gossips with Douce in a letter of 17 April 1797 that "Caleb Wms is married to the Rights of Woman for sure," referring of course to William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft.<sup>58</sup> He mentions that he expects at his home Thomas Holcroft and his daughter who plays the piano well.<sup>59</sup> With these references, Twiss displays his knowledge of the radical circle with which Blake was connected and, at the same time, indicates that Douce would be interested in learning about them.<sup>60</sup> Douce's politics and religion are summarized in the Bodleian catalogue: a Deist, he was "A Radical in politics, his watchwords were Liberty and Justice, and his hero was Napoleon."<sup>61</sup>

In 1799, at the death of both his father and mother, Douce has £3000 settled on him, expanding his ability to purchase books, prints, manuscripts, and coins.<sup>62</sup> The artist James Barry, a familiar of Godwin and Holcroft, is known to Douce by 1800: D'Israeli invites Douce to dine, proposing also to ask Barry and "Dr. Grant, a friend of Fuseli."<sup>63</sup> Douce records that in 1800 and 1801 he bought from Barry his letters to the "dilettanti society" and to the "society of arts"; he also lent books

to Barry during the same period.<sup>64</sup> In April 1807, Douce bought drawings by Barry at his sale.<sup>65</sup> Blake, by 1800 in Felpham for three years, also indicated a renewed interest in Barry at this time, recording in outrage that "While Sr Joshua was rolling in Riches Barry was Poor & unemployd except by his own Energy."<sup>66</sup>

A closer connection between Cumberland and Douce emerges in 1798, when Cumberland prints *The Captive of the Castle of Sennaar: An African Tale*, a disguised satire critical of the Pitt administration, a book of which Mr. Erskine "deemed it dangerous, under Mr. Pitt's maladministration, to publish."<sup>67</sup> Keynes names Mr. Horne Tooke and Mr. Douce as Cumberland's supporters, Tooke having made Cumberland read the Manuscript through the whole way in one sitting,<sup>68</sup> and Douce buying the book.<sup>69</sup> Johnes, friend of Cumberland and patron of Stothard and Banks, sends Douce digitalis seeds before 1805.<sup>70</sup> The names of Stothard, Westall and Flaxman, mutual acquaintances of Cumberland and Blake, appear frequently in Douce's writings.

By the middle of 1801 Cumberland has to leave the London area in search of a less expensive place to live; moving to Sussex, he leaves his possessions in the care of his old friend, the sculptor Banks, with instructions to sell over 1120 prints and 195 books through Mr. Thomas Philipe.<sup>71</sup> Thomas Dodd, whose name will appear in Douce's book of purchases, is one of the purchasers of some of Cumberland's collection at the sale which took place before 14 August 1802.<sup>72</sup> In the matter of collecting prints, Dodd, who began issuing sale catalogues in 1806,<sup>73</sup> would seem to be important in a new kind of acquisition on the part of Douce. Douce begins in 1803 to keep the "Collecta" and Dodd's name begins to show up with increasing frequency as a source for prints in Douce's list of acquisitions.<sup>74</sup> For instance, Douce purchases from Dodd in March 1805 anonymous woodprints of a "man drawing a woman sleeping,"

and "Women bathing": the first seems related to an Albrecht Dürer woodcut and the second to a rare reproduction of a Dürer drawing.<sup>75</sup> Dürer's name appears in June 1805, with the purchase of "Alb. Durer's triumph of Maximilian compleat."<sup>76</sup>

From 1807 to 1811, Douce serves as Keeper of the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum. Unlike Cumberland, who wrote and published several books, Douce published, in addition to many submissions to the Society of Antiquaries, only one important book, his 1807 *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, with one section on the Morris Dance, and, in 1833, the study on *The Dance of Death*.<sup>77</sup>

Cumberland's sons, George Jr. and Sydney, move to London in 1808; their father recommends that they look up well-placed men, including in his list of names that of Mr. Douce.<sup>78</sup> The young men, also liaisons to Blake, stay briefly at the home of Robert Cromek, who in 1807 employs Blake to draw the illustrations for Blair's *Grave*.<sup>79</sup> Douce's present and future friends are interested in the book: Dawson Turner, whose correspondence with Douce begins in 1821, mentions the "1st edition of Blake's Blair's Grave" which he wants.<sup>80</sup> Among Dodd's papers is Cromek's Prospectus for *The Grave*, along with a brief biography of Blake.<sup>81</sup> Douce, however, appears not to have purchased *The Grave*.

Douce's bequest to the Bodleian Library also includes the *Descriptive Catalogue* of 1809 accompanying Blake's exhibition.<sup>82</sup> Bentley says that the catalogues were "issued in unlabelled greyish-Blue wrappers . . . to the 'Fit audience . . . tho few' who paid 2s.6d. to see Blake's exhibition in 1809-10." Different from the undistributed ones, two mistakes in those issued catalogues are corrected by Blake's hand, leading Bentley to conjecture that its possessors must have seen the exhibit in person. There is, however, no mention in Douce's "Collecta" of Blake in 1809-10: even though Douce owned a corrected catalogue,

whether he was one of the few who saw the exhibition is unknown.

Cumberland's name begins to appear as one of Douce's sources of information in his small, but undated, note-book of queries.<sup>83</sup> The first letter from Cumberland in the Douce correspondence is from Culver Street, Bristol, where Cumberland finally settles in 1807. Between 1809 and 1834, Douce receives from Cumberland at least 52 letters, touching not only on artistic matters, but on radical political ones as well.<sup>84</sup> On 17 April 1809, Cumberland sends to Douce a mold of an Egyptian Torso, the first of several gifts.<sup>85</sup>

Cumberland writes often to Blake about publishing his new method of engraving without ever persuading him, and in 1810 Cumberland jots in his notebook: "communicated to Douce my Plans of engraving [omitted] publish them in Nicholson."<sup>86</sup> Continuing to keep in touch with Douce, he gives Douce some prints of old little Masters.<sup>87</sup> After selling his Bonasone prints to the British Museum,<sup>88</sup> he replies to a Douce letter with information relative to Cennino Cennini and Baron de Murr, topics mentioned in the *Thoughts on Outline*: in the same letter he thanks Douce for his *Morris Dance*.<sup>89</sup> The following year, Douce buys a Bonasone print of *Elysium*, perhaps spurred by Cumberland's own interest in this artist.<sup>90</sup> Systematically, although with inaccurate orthography, Douce recorded in 1811 and 1812 purchases and exchanges of books dealing with the history of art and prints, including "Winckelman sur les arts. In exchange Priestley," "De Murr hist des graveurs. Deboffe," and "Bartch's [sic] 'Peintre graveur' of Deboffe."<sup>91</sup> There is a rhythmic sequence between the letters and the note-books: Douce asks questions of Cumberland, Cumberland responds, Douce underlines significant passages in red ink and subsequently purchases the referenced object, recording it in the "Collecta." The implication is that Douce gains information from Cumberland and follows up on his advice. In July

1812, Cumberland writes mentioning the loss of Horne Tooke, their mutual friend.<sup>92</sup> Although Cumberland uses phrases suggesting person to person contact with Douce—"when we meet" or "we will talk over," other letters indicate that he fails to see Douce on visits made to London.<sup>93</sup> In the next year, Cumberland calls on Blake, Cosway and Stothard.<sup>94</sup>

In January 1813, Cumberland answers a question regarding an edition of Boccaccio in English of 1634;<sup>95</sup> by spring, Cumberland sends Douce his "Tales."<sup>96</sup> In the "Collecta," Douce enters: "Mr. Cumberland gave me two curious Engl. editions of Boccaccio and of the Q. of Navarre's tales."<sup>97</sup> By April, Douce appears to have bought the *Tales*.<sup>98</sup> Cumberland mentions to Douce his plans for a publication and his trust in the print-seller Colnaghi.<sup>99</sup> Douce seems to have offered his help, as Cumberland says he will be guided entirely by Douce's advice in regard to a publisher.<sup>100</sup> This letter ends: "God bless you & keep you from Despotism," one of several allusions to their mutual aversion to the present political state. In Douce's "Curiosities of Engraving," Cumberland is mentioned twice in connection with prints by Bonasone: there are references "to Cumberland's letter to me of the 10th April 1813" and to a page number in Cumberland's *Bonasoni*.<sup>101</sup>

This relationship becomes more intense in 1814. Cumberland must have sent his manuscript to Douce, because he writes a letter apologizing for careless errors in it due to hasty writing; the errors have been corrected by Douce's exacting scholarship.<sup>102</sup> In the same letter, Cumberland begins to renew his descriptions of his collection of instructional prints, incorrectly called "the Tarocchi Cards of Mantegna."<sup>103</sup> These were owned by other Englishmen of the period, including Douce; Cumberland's is one of the earliest extant sets. Cumberland mentions specific ones, describing his "ancient plates" of the "Prima Causa" and "an old half naked man and a dog."<sup>104</sup> Douce, interested in playing cards, soon sees

Cumberland's collection, copying into his "Curiosities of Engraving"

Some Account of the 8<sup>o</sup> volume containing 50 prints by Boticello [sic] or Maldivi mentioned in p. 43, and now, June 1814, in the collection of Geo. Cumberland Esq. who lent me the book.<sup>105</sup>

Douce goes on to describe the book in great detail.

The "Curiosities of Engraving" contains extensive notes and plans for a book treating the subject of prints, but Douce's painstaking efforts never came to fruition, as his work was already superseded by the now standard reference book on prints, Bartsch's *Le Peintre-Graveur*.<sup>106</sup> Revelatory of Douce's careful method of research and annotation are notes on the back of a duplicate of a Bonasone print still in the Bodleian Portfolio, *The Triumph of Love*.<sup>107</sup> The Bodleian print bears the following notations on its verso: "Bartsch XV.141, No. 106, See Cumberland p. 75 No 200 The Elysium of Lovers, Felsina Pittrice di Malvasia, 1st vol, p. 75."

A poignant and uncharacteristic self-pity breaks from Cumberland in a letter in December 1814. The previous May, Cumberland had written: "If you get the Bartsch book I would like to see it when I get to town."<sup>108</sup> Finally, in December, evidently having tried to obtain the book of Colnaghi, he asks for the loan of Douce's Bartsch since he has no answer from the book-dealer.

[Y]ou have a thousand choice things to amuse you with, and live in the midst of everything you want, while I am chained to a Rock among Savages.<sup>109</sup>

By Christmas, the Bristol exile thanks Douce for finding the 4 volumes of the Italian Schools by Bartsch, saying that George Junior will pay him.<sup>110</sup> Cumberland received his Bartsch in January and in a point by point refutation justifies in a letter to Douce his own 1793 *Bonasoni*, denying this egotistical German's account of the beginning of printing.<sup>111</sup>

Cumberland also advises Douce, this time about Giambattista della Porta.

[I] think if you ever do find him he will be a fragment—for no other reason will people part with such singular things— & these sort of books of Physiognomy I have generally found mutilated.<sup>112</sup>

In September 1815, Douce finds and buys "Porta's physiognomia"<sup>113</sup> and, in April 1816, buys from Smith "Bonasoni's Gods."<sup>114</sup> The last entry in December 1818 includes "Cumberl. outlines" indicating that Douce finally purchased Cumberland's *Thoughts on Outline*.<sup>115</sup>

Although one surviving letter indicates continuing contact, correspondence between Cumberland and Douce falls off somewhat between 1815 and 1821, as Cumberland readies his book for publication.<sup>116</sup> He says "I dread the [illeg.] of printing" and notes that "[t]ruth speaking is a dangerous habit here." Not until 1827 will the book, *An Essay on the utility of collecting the best works of the ancient engravers of the Italian School*, be published.<sup>117</sup>

Financial necessity leads Cumberland to dispose of his other Italian engravings, including the Tarocchi Cards, to the Royal Academy.<sup>118</sup> In July 1820, Douce notes that "Smith gave me cast of Cumberland's (now his) hermaphrodite."<sup>119</sup> Yet, in the midst of his own need, one of Cumberland's more endearing but aggravating traits, his ceaseless intercession on behalf of his friends and relatives, is revealed.<sup>120</sup> In an undated letter,<sup>121</sup> he asks Douce to recommend his son's *Spanish Lives*; Douce scratches in the margin, "Nothing but self, self & c from all my worthy friends." George Jr. had returned to London from Lisbon in 1815; *Views in Spain and Portugal* was published by 1820.<sup>122</sup>

Dawson Turner writes to Douce in the spring of 1821.<sup>123</sup> Turner had earlier directly contacted Blake; on 9 June 1818, Blake sent him a price list for some illuminated books.<sup>124</sup> D'Israeli too is interested in Blake: on 7 January 1819, he writes to Dyer that "M<sup>r</sup>. D'Israeli wants as soon as possible a copy of Blake's Young."<sup>125</sup> T. F. Dibdin, a Douce correspondent,<sup>126</sup> whose *Reminiscen-*

ces provide recollections of Douce, recalled that Blake visited him in the summer of 1816 to talk about the minor poems of Milton; he subsequently purchases from Blake a copy of the *Songs of Innocence*.<sup>127</sup> Dibdin too was aware of Dyer's library, commenting in 1810 on a catalogue, saying that it contains twenty thousand volumes.<sup>128</sup> Blake had become famous enough to be included in *A Biographical Dictionary of the Living Authors of Great Britain and Ireland*.<sup>129</sup> Despite this fame and evidence of direct and indirect contacts between Blake and Douce's friends, Douce and Blake do not seem to have met after the possible contact at Blake's exhibit.

Blake too had to sell his collection of prints about the same time, Colnaghi handling the sale.<sup>130</sup> In April 1821 Douce records the purchase of "Blake's marr of heaven & hell Dyer,"<sup>131</sup> referring to Copy B of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* now at the Bodleian Library.<sup>132</sup> That by "Dyer" is meant Gilbert Dyer, the bookseller to Dibdin and D'Israeli, seems certain.<sup>133</sup>

Correspondence from "G. Dyer" to Douce begins in 1805, with a note in which Dyer thanks Douce for a favorable account of his book's principles.<sup>134</sup> From Dyer's description of how he had to trace the names of our Rivers, Hills, Vallies and Towns in an etymological search, the book must be *A restoration of the ancient modes of bestowing names on the rivers, hills, vallies, plains, and settlements of Britain; recorded by no ancient, nor explored by any modern author . . .*, Exeter, printed for G. Dyer, 1805.<sup>135</sup> Dyer also encloses "the set of Adam," indicating that Douce was now making purchases of him. In September 1808, Douce had dealings with Dyer; his name continues to appear yearly in Douce's note-book of purchases.<sup>136</sup> Dyer, like other Exeter booksellers, probably had agents in London so that he could conveniently make purchases there;<sup>137</sup> dealing with him would have been easy. It is not far-fetched to suppose that Dyer may have purchased Blake books at the Colnaghi sale,

given that he knew that collectors like Douce, D'Israeli and Dibdin were interested in the artist. This adds to our information regarding the wide-ranging practices of bookselling and collecting proposed by Viscomi.

Seven letters and a gift come from Cumberland in 1824, as Douce enters in the "Collecta," "Mr. Cumberland gave me 3 antique pastes."<sup>138</sup> The name of the gem-maker Tassie, whom Cumberland first championed in *Thoughts on Outline*, occurs in Douce's list of acquisitions in 1805. Cumberland considered Tassie a preminent gem-maker of ancient and modern copies: Tassie had made molds and paste reproductions of some of Cumberland's and Cracherode's collection.<sup>139</sup> In 1824, Cumberland, responding to a question from Douce about Tassie's processes, tells Douce to make inquiries of Tassie as to how he makes his gems: "He will show you as he showed me." Cumberland ends with "God send you a speedy Settlement."<sup>140</sup> This last wish may indicate the reason for Cumberland's renewed interest in Douce. Douce was involved at the time in negotiations related to settling the estate of Nollekens from which Douce eventually inherited enough money to enable him to collect on a greater scale than before.

The next month, Cumberland, visiting his sick brother, Richard, at Driffield, writes a long letter to Douce, referring to the disposition of his print collection, which he says are "out to good pasture in the Academy and the Museum."<sup>141</sup> Noting that he received from Irvine in Rome a copy of the book of Cennino Cennini's *Treatise on Painting* published at Rome 1821 by G. Tambroni, he tells Douce that the first notice about it appeared in his *Thoughts on Outline*.<sup>142</sup> Douce also owns Cennino's *Treatise*,<sup>143</sup> and the subject of priority of knowledge becomes a disputed topic, as Cumberland shows by a querulous comment.

You say you had Cennino di Cennini before I wrote about him—that is news, as I believe and know he was never printed till very lately—perhaps you have a copy of the Manuscript which De Murr of Augus-

burg [sic], the Jesuit, told me 40 yrs ago he never saw and gave me the clue to find it? . . .<sup>144</sup>

The next year, Cumberland tries unsuccessfully to see Douce three times.

In 1824 or 1825, Douce purchases Blake's print of *Canterbury Pilgrims* from Hurst and Robinson for £3/3/2.<sup>145</sup> It is a third state, made between 1810 and 1820, now deposited in the Ashmolean Museum.<sup>146</sup> A steady correspondence about Cumberland's Runic ring which he sent to Douce results in the publication in *Archaeologia* in 1827 by Douce of a "Dissertation on the Runic Jasper Ring belonging to George Cumberland, Esq. of Bristol."<sup>147</sup>

Blake's name appears in a letter to Douce not sent by George Cumberland, but by his son, George Cumberland Jr. Taking on his father's role as advocate, the younger Cumberland writes on 14 June 1826:

If you call upon Mr Blake The Artist you will see a very fine work of his just published but not in the Shops. I mention it for that reason if you can recommend it to notice you will oblige.

Yours very truly  
G. Cumberland Jr.<sup>148</sup>

Of interest is the fact that George Junior assumes a knowledge by Douce of the address of Blake which may suggest that the two had met face to face. The elder Cumberland follows up on this subject in January 1827. Referring to "a great original," he continues:

. . . and so is Blake who has lately published a strange and clever book of Job in 22 plates all line engravings as ever I saw—but I think it a bad education not to say I [illeg.] to represent as he has done, the Creator as an old man with a long beard whether by Rafael or him.<sup>149</sup>

Blake writes a grateful letter to Cumberland on 12 April 1827, in which he mentions the tiny copper card plate Cumberland had given him to ornament.<sup>150</sup> After Blake's death on 12 August 1827, Cumberland writes to his widow Catherine that "latterly I have not only been unable to continue Collecting but have even sold all I had Collected—yet still preserving all I

possessed of his graver."<sup>151</sup> Douce, in contrast, seems not to have valued the later work of Cumberland or Blake, since he purchases neither Cumberland's *Essay* nor Blake's *Job*. In 1827, Douce notes that "R. Stothard gave me a cast of a compartment of a sculptured chest in G. Cumberland's possn (or fragments of one)," an indication of the value to Douce of Cumberland's scattered former possessions.<sup>152</sup> Continuing to purchase books and prints brought to his attention by Cumberland, he acquires by 1829 DeMurr's own copy of "Nuremb. library" and at the sale of the collection of Sir Thomas Lawrence buys more prints by Bonasone.<sup>153</sup>

At Douce's death in 1834, Cumberland, along with D'Israeli, Turner and others, is remembered in Douce's will with a ring, valued at five guineas.<sup>154</sup> The printed portraits of Cowper, Cumberland, Holcroft, Tooke, Barry, Bewick, Cosway, Fuseli and Richard Brothers, are among the 634 which Douce assembled during his lifetime.<sup>155</sup> However, there is no representation among either the portraits of painters and engravers or those of remarkable characters, of the one whose work is now the most famous, William Blake.

Thomas Dodd, the now retired print-seller and auctioneer, was given the task of writing the catalogue of Douce's prints.<sup>156</sup> In 1835, commenting on the pages in *Thoughts on Outline* where Cumberland praised Blake for his "facsimiles of my originals," Dodd said "Mr Cumberland's inventions in outline as far as his hand hath been concerned in them is not in unison with his ideas— . . . However, some few of the accompanying pieces are etch'd by W. Blake, which are decidedly more correct than those produced by the author."<sup>157</sup> Of Cumberland's Bonasone catalogue, it was the opinion of Dodd that the author possessed only the "slightest knowledge of engravings by early italian artists" and that his catalogue of old prints was "vague, erroneous and ridiculous."<sup>158</sup>

In the same year, the remainder of Cumberland's collection was sold by auction in London at Christie & Man-

son: among the books listed were DeMurr's *Bibliothèque de Peinture*, Malvasia's *Felsina Pittrice*, Tambroni's *Trattato*, Bartsch's *Italian School*, and Vasari's *Vite di Pittori*, books from which he liberally dispensed information to his fellow antiquarians and friends.<sup>159</sup> Sadly, he was forced to sell too the productions of his old friend, William Blake. Living frugally in Bristol, Cumberland died at age 94, still writing letters exploring his new interests and supporting friends to the end.<sup>160</sup>

The Bodleian Library's body of archival material bequeathed by Douce deserves more than the quinquennial wakening predicted for it by Sir Frederic Madden when he said it would be disturbed but once in a lustre. Lustre reverberates with lustrous, a term we might apply to Douce's bequest, for its reflected light shines into darker corners of other histories, illuminating them. My sympathies for Cumberland, a good-hearted and expansive gentleman, and my particular interest in Blake, led me to concentrate on them. Thus additional information about Blake's *Gates of Paradise* was uncovered, the way in which Douce drew upon Cumberland's knowledge was brought to light, and three new letters in which Blake is mentioned were found. Other of Douce's letters from his wide circle of friends which I "disturbed" are equally fascinating and informative. Douce's careful annotations, scrupulous scholarship, meticulous cataloguing, and most of all, concern for what we today call cultural history,<sup>161</sup> make his legacy to us particularly useful in discovering more about interactions among persons of learning in the eighteenth century.

<sup>1</sup> For his history, Last Will and Testament, and the start and history of the development of his manuscript collection, see *The Douce Legacy, An exhibition to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the bequest of Francis Douce (1757-1834)* (Bodleian Library, Oxford, 1984) vii-xiii, 13, 15, 130-139, hereafter cited as *DL* with the page number.

<sup>2</sup> *DL* 15, 17, 18 for Madden's *Journal* and a letter to Sir Thomas Phillipps.

<sup>3</sup> *DL* 130.

<sup>4</sup> In initial research, I relied on Clementina Black, ed., *The Cumberland Letters, Being the Correspondence of Richard Denison Cumberland and George Cumberland between the Years 1771 and 1784* (London: M. Secker, 1912); C. F. Bell, ed., *Annals of Thomas Banks, Sculptor, Royal Academician* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1938), hereafter cited as *Annals*; Geoffrey Keynes, "Some Uncollected Authors XLIV. George Cumberland, 1754-1848," *The Book Collector* 19 (1970): 32-65, hereafter cited as "Uncollected Authors"; Gerald E. Bentley, Jr., *A Bibliography of George Cumberland* (New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1975), hereafter cited as *Bibliography*; Gerald E. Bentley Jr., *Blake Records* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), hereafter cited as *BR* with the page number. Also consulted was the Cumberland correspondence, formerly in the British Museum where it was cited in the literature as British Museum Additional Manuscripts, B.M. Add. MSS. 36,495 - 36,497, June 1785-94, and now in the British Library, hereafter cited as B.L. Add. MSS with number. I wish to thank the British Library for their kind permission to quote from these manuscripts.

<sup>5</sup> In "Uncollected Authors" 35-36, Douce is mentioned briefly in connection with the Cumberland correspondence now in the British Library. In Bentley's valuable bibliographies and records published in regard to Blake and Cumberland the name Douce is also mentioned.

<sup>6</sup> Preliminary lists of the bequest were made by A. C. Madan, "Rough Catalog of Douce Prints and Summary Guide," Vol. I, 1915-16; G. R. Scott, "A Catalogue of the Collections in Portfolio of Engravings . . ." Vol. II, Feb-July 1916 [R.6.260]. A printed catalogue was made by [H. O. Coxe, with Henry Symonds, Arthur Brown], *Catalogue of the Printed Books and Manuscripts bequeathed by Francis Douce Esq. to the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1840 [R.6.92]), hereafter cited as 1840 *Catalogue*. The correspondence, MSS. Douce d. 20-29, d. 32, d. 39, extending from 1788 to 1834 was consulted. Three small notebooks of purchases, the "Collecta," MS. Douce e. 66, 1803-1810; e. 67, 1811-1823; e. 68, 1824-1834, the so-called "Diary of Antiquarian Purchases"

were consulted, along with the typed transcript [R.6.91], hereafter cited as TS. "Collecta." I wish to thank the Bodleian Library for their permission to publish material from these sources. I owe thanks to the librarians in Duke Humphrey's Library at the Bodleian Library for their attentive help, and especially to Clive Hurst, Head of Special Collections at the Bodleian Library, who confirmed and corrected where necessary some of my readings of the passages in the "Collecta" and in the typescript by comparing my citations with the original notebooks. The Ashmolean holdings are of prints and manuscripts formerly at the Bodleian Library which, judged to be primarily of artistic rather than literary interest, were transferred to the University Galleries in 1863; in 1915, another exchange occurred, so that more fine prints and drawings came to the Department of Prints and Drawings at the Ashmolean. In the Ashmolean Archives are notebooks, manuscripts and miscellaneous material on art, the Douce Bequest, The Bell Bookcase, 3 Boxes. I would like to thank the Ashmolean Museum for their permission to publish material from this source. My thanks also go to the Assistant Keepers in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the Ashmolean Museum, Dr. John Whiteley and Dr. Catherine Whistler and to the Print Room Supervisor, Dr. Bernadette Nelson, for their patient and generous help.

<sup>7</sup> Douce B. 790, Arch. A. d. 22, *The Book of Thel*, ?1786-1803; Douce MM. 834, Arch. G. d. 53, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, 1790-93, as in *DL* 89-90. For information on these holdings, see G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books: Annotated Catalogues of William Blake's Writings . . .* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) 57, 118-128, 133-138, 285-298, hereafter cited as *BB* with page number. See *BB* 658, #553, for the Douce 1840 *Catalogue* 32, where only *Thel*, the *Descriptive Catalogue* and Hayley's *Bal-lads* are listed, and to which the other books should be added. For the impression, 1A, "Our End is come," bound in with *Marriage*, see Robert N. Essick, *The Separate Plates of William Blake: A Catalogue* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1983) 30, hereafter cited as *SP*. For *Canterbury Pilgrims*, see Essick *SP* 63, impression 3D.

<sup>8</sup> *Woodcuts of the Fifteenth Century in the Ashmolean Museum, with notes of similar prints at the Bodleian*, ed. Campbell Dodgson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929) 6.

<sup>9</sup> The first catalogue of Bonasone (fl. 1531-74) was written by Cumberland (see note 30 below). Cumberland and his contemporaries spelled Bonasone with a terminal *i* which I retain for their writings.

<sup>10</sup> "The Myth of Commissioned Illuminated Books: George Romney, Isaac D'Israeli, and "ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY designs . . . of Blake's," *Blake* 23 (1989): 48-74.

<sup>11</sup> Visconti 65.

<sup>12</sup> Unless otherwise noted, I draw the following material on Douce and Blake from the "Introduction" in *DL* and from *BR*.

<sup>13</sup> Black (see note 4 above) 24, 85.

<sup>14</sup> *Bibliography* 49, according to the MS. list of Students Admitted to the Royal Academy.

<sup>15</sup> *DL* 22, #34.

<sup>16</sup> Black 267.

<sup>17</sup> *Annals* 25, 56, 57; Black 307. For a full account of Johnes and his connections with Cumberland and Blake, see Morton D. Paley, "Thomas Johnes, 'Ancient Guardian of Wales,'" *Blake Newsletter* 2 (1969): 65-67, hereafter cited as "Johnes."

<sup>18</sup> B.L. Add. MSS. 36,494, fol. 225, as cited in "Uncollected Authors" 32.

<sup>19</sup> *Thoughts on Outline, Sculpture, and the System that guided the ancient artists in composing their figures and groupes. Accompanied with free remarks on the practice of the moderns, and liberal hints cordially intended for their advantage. To which are annexed twenty-four designs of classical subjects invented on the principles recommended in the essay by George Cumberland* (London, 1796) 27, hereafter cited as *Thoughts*.

<sup>20</sup> B.L. Add. MSS. 36,496, fols. 16, 17, 31 July 1788, to his Mother. Cumberland went to Italy with the abused wife and children of his former landlord, making a monetary settlement arranged by John Flaxman with her former husband. B.L. Add. MSS. 36,495, fol. 372, 10 May 1788, from Mrs. E. Cumberland, "I am now your own for you have paid dearly for me."

<sup>21</sup> *Thoughts* 10; George Cumberland, *Outlines from the Antients, exhibiting their principles of composition in figures and basso-relievos taken chiefly from inedited monuments of Greek and Roman sculpture*. With an introductory essay (London, 1829) iv.

<sup>22</sup> MS. Douce d. 39, Bushhill, Edmonton and other addresses, 1779-1806; *DL* 122, #179; *Dictionary of National Bibliography*.

<sup>23</sup> MS. Douce d. 39, fol. 3, 18 October 1788; fol. 7, 26 November 1788; fol. 8, 7 December 1788. Douce also corresponds with Ritson, Steevens, and Edwards in this period, and later was in frequent contact with the Cosways.

<sup>24</sup> *William Blake: Poet and Painter* (Chicago: University of Chicago P, 1964) 31-33; David V. Erdman, *Blake: Prophet Against Empire: A poet's interpretation of the history of his own times*. 3rd rev. ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1977) 130, 507.

<sup>25</sup> For a full explanation of Blake's process of relief-etching, see Robert N. Essick, *William Blake, Printmaker* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1980) chapter 3.

<sup>26</sup> The purchase was made at the sale of Thomas Pearson in April of 1788. Douce CC 290(3), *DL* 135.

<sup>27</sup> B.L. Add. MSS. 36,496, fols. 184, 199; B.L. Add. MSS. 36,497, fols. 298, 299, 12 May 1794, Bishopsgate.

<sup>28</sup> B.L. Add. MSS. 36,497, fols. 59, 60, 19 October 1791; *DL* 136.

<sup>29</sup> See "Uncollected Authors" 57-65, for the complete bibliography, to which information from *Bibliography* 3-36, and G. E. Bentley, Jr., "Cumberland Bibliography Addenda," *Blake* 11 (1977): 128 should be added.

<sup>30</sup> B.L. Add. MSS. 36,497, fols. 109, 110, 27 January 1792.

<sup>31</sup> *Some Anecdotes of the life of Julio Bonasoni, a Bolognese artist, who followed the styles of the best schools in the sixteenth century. Accompanied by a catalogue of the engravings, with their measures, of the works of that tasteful composer. And remarks on the general character of his rare and exquisite performances. To which is prefixed, a plan for the improvement of the Arts in England* (London, 1793), hereafter cited as Bonasoni; B.L. Add. MSS. 36,497, fols. 234, 235, 17 Feb. 1793, Richard Cumberland to George Cumberland; fol. 236, 27 Feb. 1793, Charles Long to Cumberland.

<sup>32</sup> In a letter from Cumberland's bookseller, W. Lucas, B.L. Add. MSS. 36,497, fol. 241, 11 March 1793.

<sup>33</sup> MS. Douce d. 20, fol. 52, 30 November 1793.

<sup>34</sup> B.L. Add. MSS. 36,497, fols. 300, 301, ?29 May 1794, and 318, 28 July 1794, from Johnes to Cumberland. A. C. Coxhead, *Thomas Stothard, R.A.* (London: 1906) 12, notes that Stothard decorated the library of Hafod. See also *Annals* 120; "Johnes" 66-67; "Uncollected Authors" 58.

<sup>35</sup> B.L. Add. MSS. 36,497, fol. 318, 28 July 1794.

<sup>36</sup> *Bibliography* 15-17.

<sup>37</sup> *The Letters of William Blake with related Documents*, 3rd ed., ed. Geoffrey Keynes (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1980) 5, 6; 6 December 1795 and 23 December 1796.

<sup>38</sup> 1840 *Catalogue* (note 6 above), where it is listed as C. subt. 180; see *Bibliography* 17 for Cumberland's withdrawal of the book from the market and his subsequent public sales of it between 1804 and 1815. See note 115 below for details.

<sup>39</sup> MS. Douce d. 39, fol. 44.

<sup>40</sup> MS. Douce d. 39, fol. 45.

<sup>41</sup> MS. Douce d. 33, fol. 55, 9 April [August] 1794. See Eudo Mason, *The Mind of Henry Fuseli: Selections from his Writings with an Introductory Study* (London: Rout-

ledge & Kegan Paul, 1951) 358, for a listing of Johan H. Fuseli's review of his translation of a book by his brother, J. C. Fuseli, in the *Analytical Review* 21 (May 1795): 523. Mason mistakenly gives the title as *Archives of Etymology*, but it should be Fuessly's *Archives of Entomology, containing the History, or ascertaining the Characters and Classes of Insects not hitherto described, imperfectly known, or erroneously classified* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1795) 523-24. The original designs were by Schellenberg.

<sup>42</sup> MS. Douce d. 39, fols. 68, 69, 2 September 1794.

<sup>43</sup> MS. Douce d. 39, fol. 70<sup>r</sup>. In April of 1991, when I did my research at the Bodleian Library, Mr. J. A. Brister kindly offered help to me by showing me his corrected transcript of the "Collecta" and by mentioning to me his remembrance of a reference to Blake in the Douce correspondence. His sharing of this recollection led me to look for and find the Blake material mentioned in this paper. Mr. Brister's death in June marks not only a personal deprivation for his colleagues but a loss for scholars in this area.

<sup>44</sup> See *BB* 185-193, for details about *Gates*.

<sup>45</sup> MS. Douce d. 39, 13 September 1794, fol. 70<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> MS. Douce d. 39, 25 September 1794, fol. 72<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> This book is not listed in the un-referenced 1840 *Catalogue*. See Gerald E. Bentley Jr., *Blake Records Supplement: Being New Materials Relating to the Life of William Blake Discovered Since the Publication of Blake Records* (1969) (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1988) 85, hereafter cited as *BR Supp.*, where five copies, none in the Bodleian, are listed. Copy A, now in the Library of Congress, Lessing G. Rosenwald Collection, is the only known proof copy. While in the hands of W. E. Moss, six copies of Copy A were printed in perhaps 1942 of photographic reproductions; I infer one of these is the one mentioned as at the Bodleian Library (*BB* 185, 192, 193).

<sup>48</sup> *Bonasoni* 34, 66, referring to what is probably a copy of Anthonio Pollaiuolo, *Battle of the Nudes*, B.001.

<sup>49</sup> *Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>50</sup> MS. Douce d. 20, fol. 61, 12 May 1795, Queen's Square.

<sup>51</sup> "The Curiosities of Engraving or Anecdotes of Prints," 103, Box 2, Bell Bookcase, Douce Bequest 1834, Department of Prints and Drawings, Ashmolean Museum, hereafter cited as "Curiosities."

<sup>52</sup> MS. Douce d. 33, fols. 1, 2.

<sup>53</sup> MS. Douce d. 33, fols. 3, 4.

<sup>54</sup> MS. Douce d. 33, fols. 5, 6.

<sup>55</sup> MS. Douce d. 33, fols. 22, 23.

<sup>56</sup> For Dyer, 1743-1820, see Ian Maxted, "4 rotten cornbags and some old books: The Impact of the Printed Word in Devon," in Robin Myers and Michael Harris, eds. *Sale and Distribution of Books, from 1700* (Oxford: Oxford Polytechnic Press, 1982) 66, 69n74.

<sup>57</sup> See Gwyn Walters, "Early Sale Catalogues: Problems and Perspectives," in Myers and Harris 118 (note 56 above), quoting Richard Gough (1735-1809), "Father of British Antiquity."

<sup>58</sup> MS. Douce d. 39, fol. 96.

<sup>59</sup> MS. Douce d. 39, fol. 97<sup>v</sup>, 8 January 1796.

<sup>60</sup> Erdman *Propbet* 38-39, 154, 156, 159, describes this circle, mentioning in particular the friendship among James Barry, Thomas Holcroft and William Godwin. He notes the dinners in Johnson's rooms where Fuseli, Godwin, Holcroft, and Blake were present, and he is certain Blake must have been acquainted with the Society for Constitutional Information, revived by Hollis and Tooke, who in turn is Cumberland's friend. According to William St. Clair, *The Godwins and the Shelleys: The Biography of a Family* (London: Faber & Faber, 1989) 163, Godwin was introduced to Blake 26 May 1796.

<sup>61</sup> As cited in *DL* 8, 9.

<sup>62</sup> *DL* ix.

<sup>63</sup> For Barry, see *DL* 3-5, which cites MS. Douce d. 33, fol. 152.

<sup>64</sup> MS. Douce e. 69, fols. 4, 5; Douce e. 74, 1800.

<sup>65</sup> TS. "Collecta" 21, #5 (MS. Douce e. 66, fol. 20<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>66</sup> In Blake's Annotations to *The Works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, ed. Edward Malone (London, 1798), as in David V. Erdman, ed., *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, newly rev. ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1988) 636.

<sup>67</sup> "Uncollected Authors" 60-61. See also *Annals* 126-27, for Banks's introduction to Erskine in 1798. Thomas Erskine (1750-1823), Lord Chancellor of England, defended Thomas Paine in 1792 and John Home Tooke in 1794.

<sup>68</sup> "Uncollected Authors" 60-61.

<sup>69</sup> 1840 *Catalogue* where it is listed as C.476.

<sup>70</sup> MS. Douce d. 21, fol. 12.

<sup>71</sup> *Annals* 140-42. Bell identified the print and book-seller Thomas Philipe in Frits Lugt, *Les Marques de Collections de Dessins & D'estampes* (Amsterdam, 1921) 457, #2451. For Philipe, see also Walters 121 (note 57 above).

<sup>72</sup> For the sale and the vicissitudes surrounding it, see *Annals* 151, 153, 171. Another sale by Cumberland is recorded by Frits Lugt, *Repertoire des Catalogues des Ventes Publiques, 1660-1825* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1938) in 1803, #6616, 28

May 1803, London "A Gentleman Leaving Town to reside in the Country," conducted by Phillips.

<sup>73</sup> Walters 121.

<sup>74</sup> TS. "Collecta" 5, December 1803; 8 May 1804, 10 October 1804 (MS. Douce e. 66, fol. 3<sup>r</sup>, 5<sup>r</sup>, 7<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>75</sup> TS. "Collecta" 12 (MS. Douce e. 66, 9<sup>v</sup>). This probably refers to the woodcut B.149 (160), *Draftsman Drawing a Nude in the Manual of Measurement*, as in Walter E. Strauss, ed. *Wood-Cuts and Wood Blocks of Albrecht Dürer* (New York: Abaris, 1980) [SW 204]. The drawing, *Women's Bath*, reproduced in *The Complete Drawings of Albrecht Dürer*, vol. I, ed. Walter E. Strauss (New York: Abaris, 1974) 142 [SD 1493/4], was copied. See Campbell Dodgson, "Rare Woodcuts in the Ashmolean Museum—I," *The Burlington Magazine* 63 (1930): 21-24, who notes among Douce's collection of Dürer and copies of Dürer in the Ashmolean the "rare *Women's Bath*, reproducing in reverse Dürer's drawing of 1496," but does not mention the *Draughtsman*.

<sup>76</sup> TS. "Collecta" 13, June 1805 (MS. Douce e. 66, fol. 10<sup>v</sup>), perhaps referring to what is listed by Bartsch as *The Triumph of Emperor Maximilian*, B. 139 (154), *The Great Triumphant Car*, 1522, [SW 188]. See Dodgson 21, for the "not very early (seventeenth century?) copy of the portraits of Maximilian I" in the Douce collection.

<sup>77</sup> *DL* 65; *Illustrations of Shakspeare, and of ancient manners: with dissertations on the clowns and fools of Shakspeare; on the collection of popular tales entitled Gesta Romanorum; and on the English morris dance*, 2 vols. (London: Longman, 1807).

<sup>78</sup> BR 209.

<sup>79</sup> BR 209. For Blair's *Grave* and Blake's involvement, see Robert N. Essick and Morton Paley, *Robert Blair's "The Grave": A study with facsimile* (London: Scolar Press, 1982).

<sup>80</sup> *DL* 5; BR *Supp.* 72.

<sup>81</sup> A favorable comment on the *Grave* is quoted by Bentley from the microfilm of B.L. Add. MS. 33,402, fol. 153, the papers of Thomas Dodd (BR 171n4). The Prospectus from B.L. Add. MS. 33,397, fol. 144, is reproduced in BR *Supp.* 35, 36.

<sup>82</sup> BB 134-136, Copy H.

<sup>83</sup> MSS. Douce e. 62, 22<sup>v</sup>; e. 63, 9<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>84</sup> MS. Douce d. 21, 1; d. 22, 14; d. 23, 1; d. 24, 7; d. 25, 8; d. 26, 8; d. 27 11; d. 32, 3. See below for one collected letter in MS. Douce d. 25 actually from George Cumberland, Jr., not George Cumberland, Sr.

<sup>85</sup> MS. Douce d. 21, fol. 221.

<sup>86</sup> For this correspondence see Gerald E. Bentley Jr. and Martin Nurmi, *A Blake Bibliography* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1964) 63, citing Cumberland's *Notebook* for 1810, B.L. Add. MSS. 36,520A, fols. 14-16. William Nicholson's *Journal of*

*Natural Philosophy, Chemistry and the Arts* was the intended publication.

<sup>87</sup> TS. "Collecta" 45, February 1811, #3 (MS. Douce e. 67, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>88</sup> Lugt, *D'estampes* 55 (note 71 above), says the sale was 1811.

<sup>89</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fol. 45, 8 April 1811.

<sup>90</sup> TS. "Collecta" 49, June 1812, #7 (MS. Douce e. 67, 5<sup>v</sup>). This print is probably the one now in the Ashmolean: D.IT 10.Roy., B.xv.139.101, *Love caught in the Elysian Fields and bound to a tree*, 1563, Giulio Bonasone, inventore.

<sup>91</sup> TS. "Collecta" 47, December 1811, #5; 49, June 1812, #10; 50, July 1812, #12, (MS. Douce e. 67, fols. 3<sup>v</sup>, 6<sup>r</sup>, 6<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>92</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fol. 100, 15 July 1812.

<sup>93</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fol. 46<sup>r</sup>, 8 April 1811; MS. Douce d. 22, fol. 82<sup>r</sup>, 10 February 1812; fol. 142, 26 December 1813.

<sup>94</sup> "Uncollected Authors" 46.

<sup>95</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fol. 110<sup>r</sup>, 19 January 1813.

<sup>96</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fols. 117, 118, 28 March 1813.

<sup>97</sup> TS. "Collecta" 53, March 1813, #8 (MS. Douce e. 67, fol. 9<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>98</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fol. 119<sup>v</sup>, 20 April 1813.

<sup>99</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fols. 117, 118, 28 March 1813.

<sup>100</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fol. 120<sup>r</sup>, 12 April 1813.

<sup>101</sup> "Curiosities" 23, 71 (note 51 above).

<sup>102</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fol. 162, 8 May 1814.

<sup>103</sup> See Arthur M. Hind, *Early Italian Engraving*, Vol. I (London: Quaritch Ltd., 1938) 221-40 for "Tarocchi cards"; Cumberland's set at the Royal Academy is the E Series. For illustrations of Cumberland's prints, including the *Prima Causa*, see Jay Levenson, Konrad Oberhuber, and Jacquelyn L. Sheehan, *Early Italian Engravings from the National Gallery of Art*, Exh. Cat., Washington, 1973, 81-157, esp. #66.

<sup>104</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fol. 163<sup>v</sup>, 8 May 1814.

<sup>105</sup> "Curiosities" 47-57.

<sup>106</sup> I thank Dr. John Whiteley for this observation. Adam von Bartsch, [1757-1821], *Le Peintre-Graveur*, 21 vols., Vienna: 1803-1821; see now *The Illustrated Bartsch*, ed. Walter L. Strauss (New York: Abaris Books, 1980).

<sup>107</sup> Douce Portfolio, W.2.3c.70, *The Triumph of Love*. A better version of the same print, also from Douce's collection, now is in the Ashmolean Museum, D.IT 10.Roy., B.xv.141.106, *The Triumph of Love*, 1545, "Bonahso."

<sup>108</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fol. 161, 1 May 1814.

<sup>109</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fol. 180<sup>v</sup>, 18 December 1814.

<sup>110</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fol. 183<sup>r</sup>, 25 December 1814.

<sup>111</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fols. 186, 187, 5 January 1815.

<sup>112</sup> MS. Douce d. 22, fol. 183<sup>v</sup>, 25 December 1814, referring to the Italian physiognomist who wrote *De humana physiognomonica* in 1586.

<sup>113</sup> TS. "Collecta" 63, #4 (MS. Douce e. 67, fol. 20<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>114</sup> TS. "Collecta" 66, #17 (MS. Douce e. 67, fol. 24<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>115</sup> TS. "Collecta" 76, #14 (MS. Douce e. 67, fol. 32<sup>v</sup>). My thanks to Mr. Hurst for confirming this reading in the original MS. fol. 32<sup>v</sup>. Cumberland's *Outlines of the Ancients* (see note 21 above) was not published until 1829 so the entry must refer to his earlier book, *Thoughts on Outline*.

<sup>116</sup> MS. Douce d. 23, fol. 82, 6 May 1818.

<sup>117</sup> See "Uncollected Authors" 49-50, for details of the negotiations with Robert Triphook as publisher and that it was finally sold in 1827 by three other booksellers, including Colnaghi. *An Essay on the utility of collecting the best works of the ancient engravers of the Italian School, accompanied by A Critical Catalogue, with interesting anecdotes of the engravers, of a chronological series of rare and valuable prints, from the earliest practice of the art in Italy to the year 1549, now deposited in the British Museum and Royal Academy* (London, 1827).

<sup>118</sup> *Annals* 58.

<sup>119</sup> TS. "Collecta" 82, #16 (MS. Douce e. 67, 38<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>120</sup> Instances showing this abound in his correspondence. Francis Greenacre, *The Bristol School of Artists: Francis Danby and Painting in Bristol, 1810-1840*, Exh. Cat., City Art Gallery, Bristol, 4 September-10 November 1973, no. 98-99, 250, alludes to this trait, noting that Sir Thomas Lawrence and Stothard were the main contacts through whom Cumberland, after moving to Bristol, helped almost every English artist.

<sup>121</sup> MS. Douce d. 29, n.d., fol. 190<sup>r</sup>, addressed to Kensington Square, where Douce lived from 1821 to 1825, proposed here as written probably shortly after 1821.

<sup>122</sup> See "Uncollected Authors" 48.

<sup>123</sup> MS. Douce d. 23, fol. 240, 3 April 1821.

<sup>124</sup> *BB* 118-120.

<sup>125</sup> *BR Supp.* 73, quoted from a photocopy of the MS in Pierpont Morgan Library.

<sup>126</sup> See MS. Douce d. 32, from 1808 to after 1832 for these letters.

<sup>127</sup> *BR* 242-243; Viscomi, citing *Reminiscences of a Literary Life* (London, 1836) 2: 787.

<sup>128</sup> Maxted 66n74 (see note 56 above).

<sup>129</sup> *BR* 244.

<sup>130</sup> *BR* 276, 395. Records about the sale have been lost.

<sup>131</sup> TS. "Collecta" 86, #4 (MS. Douce e. 67, fol. 40<sup>v</sup>); *BB* 289.

<sup>132</sup> See note 7 above.

<sup>133</sup> See Viscomi 56n29 for "Bentley has not identified Dyer, other than to suggest "(George?) Dyer," by which he probably means the poet (1755-1841) (*BB* 289). Perhaps "Dyer" was the "honest, worthy, painstaking bookseller, the brother of the late Rev. Mr. Dwyer," whom Dibdin mentions in *Reminiscences* (1: 194). Essick suggests Charles George Dyer, a London printseller, noting that Bentley withdraws his tentative earlier suggestion that the seller may have been the author George Dyer (*SP* 30). Bentley notes there is no London bookseller by the name of Dyer and speculates correctly that D'Israeli's Dyer is Douce's Dyer (*BR Supp.* 73n3).

<sup>134</sup> MS. Douce d. 21, 15 December 1805, fol. 60.

<sup>135</sup> As determined from the *National Union Catalog*.

<sup>136</sup> TS. "Collecta" 28, Sept. 1808, between #9 and #10 (MS. Douce e. 66, fol. 28<sup>v</sup>). Thereafter, between 1808 and 1821, Dyer's name appears 22 times at least one a year.

<sup>137</sup> Maxted 66.

<sup>138</sup> TS. "Collecta" 95, January 1824 (MS. Douce e. 68, fol. 1<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>139</sup> *Thoughts* 25, 29. At the Scottish National Portrait Gallery there is a unique copy of a "Manuscript Catalogue" by Tassie called "Tassie Gems MS. Supplement to Raspe." Filled with 2889 entries of gems, it lists multiple examples of reproductions by Tassie of gems taken from Cumberland's collection and at least one from Cracherode's, #550. My thanks to Miss Helen Watson who kindly assisted me.

<sup>140</sup> MS. Douce d. 24, fols. 210, 211, 20 January 1824.

<sup>141</sup> MS. Douce d. 24, fol. 315, 3 December 1824.

<sup>142</sup> For Cennino, see Joan K. Stemmler, "Cennino, Cumberland, Blake and Early Painting Techniques," *Blake* 17 (1984): 145-48.

<sup>143</sup> See 1840 *Catalogue*, C. 548, Cennini, Trattato, Giuseppi Tambroni, 8<sup>o</sup>, Roma, 1821.

<sup>144</sup> MS. Douce d. 25, fol. 41<sup>v</sup>, 9 March 1825.

<sup>145</sup> It is listed twice in TS. "Collecta" 97, November 1824, (Douce MS. e. 68, fol. 2<sup>v</sup>),

"Blake's print of Canterbury pilgrimage. Hurst," and TS. "Collecta" 98, March 1825, #6 (Douce MS. e. 68, fol. 3<sup>v</sup>), "Blake's Canterbury Pilgr. Hurst & Robins." This is probably a double entry, as there is but one state in the Ashmolean Museum. Douce had noted in TS. "Collecta" 91, April 1822 (MS. Douce e. 67, fol. 45<sup>r</sup>) that he now bought of Hurst & Robinson, formerly Woodburne. The price is in pencil on the verso.

<sup>146</sup> See *SP* 60-89, especially 63 for Canterbury Pilgrims, Ashmolean impression numbered 3D.

<sup>147</sup> MS. Douce d. 29, n.d., fol. 191. This letter should be given a t.a.q. of 20 January 1824 because it logically precedes MS. Douce d. 24, fol. 210, 20 January 1824 in its subject. See also *Bibliography* 5 (*Archaeologia* 21 [1827]: 119-27); "Uncollected Authors" 36, for the information that Stothard broke the ring.

<sup>148</sup> MS. Douce d. 25, fol. 194, Glo'ster Cottage, Old Brompton.

<sup>149</sup> MS. Douce d. 26, fols. 8<sup>r</sup>, 21 January 1827.

<sup>150</sup> "Uncollected Authors" 51.

<sup>151</sup> "Uncollected Authors" 53; Keynes 172, 25 November 1827 (see note 37 above).

<sup>152</sup> TS. "Collecta" 103, January 1827, #6 (MS. Douce e. 68, fol. 7<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>153</sup> TS. "Collecta" 110, June 1829, #4; 113, May 1830, #3 (MS. Douce e. 68, fol. 13<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>154</sup> *DL* 13, 14.

<sup>155</sup> As listed in Scott, Vol. II, fols. 76-96 ff. (note 6 above) and found in Portfolios, PO. 135, New Bodleian, Room 132, numbered 43, 44, 87, 176, 204, 211, 230, 246, 479.

<sup>156</sup> *DL* 17. Found inadequate and never printed, Dodd's handwritten Catalogue of the Prints & Drawings, c. 1836-40, the "Fair Copy" of the catalogue with notes and indexes by Douce, is now in the Douce Room at the Ashmolean Museum as Mr. John Whiteley kindly showed me.

<sup>157</sup> Cited in *BR* 56 and *BR Supp.* 12, from British Library, Add. MS. 33,398, fol. 257.

<sup>158</sup> *Bibliography* 12.

<sup>159</sup> *A Catalogue of the Collection of Books on Art, Antique Bronzes, Terra Cottas, and Coins, the property of George Cumberland, Esq., Christie & Manson, St. James's Square, London, 1835.*

<sup>160</sup> For the Bristol years, see Greenacre (note 120 above).

<sup>161</sup> *DL* 64.

## MINUTE PARTICULARS

### A New Color Print from the Small Book of Designs

Martin Butlin

A hitherto unrecorded color-printed copy of the design on plate 20 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* has turned up in a British private collection.<sup>1</sup> The new discovery can be shown to have come from the second copy of the so-called "Small Book of Designs" and confirms recent discoveries made about the color-printed designs by Robert Essick and Joseph Viscomi. It will perhaps be helpful to draw these discoveries together and examine their implications.

In the first place it is clear that the new print is a second pull of the parallel design in the first copy of the Small Book of Designs in the British Museum.<sup>2</sup> The coloring is identical though somewhat thinner, with the tone of the uncovered paper showing through in places. Essick has shown that, in the case of the Large Book of Designs, three of the duplicates are second pulls from the first copy in the British Museum, B262: *Albion Rose*, *The Accusers of Theft, Adultery, Murder and Joseph of Arimathea Preaching to the Inhabitants of Britain*, B284, 285, and 286.<sup>3</sup> To these Viscomi has added *A Dream of Thirialtha*, B267, and the frontispiece to *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, B264, and Ted Gott has added *Urizen* plate 21, B281.<sup>4</sup> It is not always easy to

make such assertions; at best most comparisons have to be made between a good color reproduction and an original. However, in the case of the Large Book of Designs it seems that, in fact, every case in which there is a duplicate, in other words every design except for plate 14 from *Urizen*, is a repeated pull from the same coloring.<sup>5</sup>

Viscomi has also demonstrated that the design from plate 5 of *Urizen* in the second copy of the Small Book of Designs was from the same printing as that in the first. To this can be added the new discovery and, almost certainly, the second pull of plate 3 of *Urizen* (c.f., B260 9 and B261 4). As Viscomi (72n38) also points out, even a partial



1. "O Revolving Serpent," Plate 20 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, 1796. Color-printed relief etching finished in pen and water color, 5.6 x 10.3 cm. Private collection, Great Britain.

duplication in the color printing means that both copies of the Large Book of Designs and of the Small Book of Designs must have been basically prepared at the same time, whenever the final finishing in pen and water color may have been done.

This conclusion, so obvious once made, makes my suggestion that the two Small Books of Designs were printed in 1794 and 1796 respectively invalid. Moreover, if one can accept the date 1796 for the second copy of the Small Book of Designs, this invalidates my suggestion that the books of designs were intermediary between the use of color printing in Blake's illuminated books and the totally inde-

pendent large color-printed designs of "1795."<sup>6</sup> This theory made some sense in the conceptual and technical development of Blake's use of color printing but is certainly not essential for Blake's development; indeed, the experiments in the books would have been sufficient to produce the independent large prints. Whether one can rely on Blake's dates with regard to his color prints is another question. It has already been shown that a number of the "1795" prints were actually executed in 1804 or 1805.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, Viscomi suggests that the 1796 date, created by altering the "1794" on the title page of *Urizen* (B260 1 and B261 1) was done late in Blake's career,

when he added the framing lines and verses characteristic of the second copy of the Small Book of Designs. By this time Blake could well have wished to establish an "ideal" date for the separate designs.

The framing lines and verses characteristic of the second copy of the Small Book of Designs are also a feature of the newly discovered print. The design has been cut out of the original sheet of paper, leaving no margins, but by good fortune

much of the original sheet remains, cut up but stuck to the sheet of cardboard onto which the design is also stuck. From these fragments it can be seen that, like most of the other designs identified as coming from the second copy of the Small Books of Designs, there were two pen-drawn framing lines and a text, similarly inscribed with double inverted commas at the beginning and end of each line as follows:

"O revolving serpent"  
"O the Ocean of Time and Space"

I leave it to other scholars to explain the significance of the second line and its relevance, if appropriate, to the

Arlington Court picture, B803. It is generally assumed that Blake himself added these inscriptions when he issued the second copy of the Small Book of Designs. They seem to be in the same ink as the framing lines, which, as Viscomi points out, are very close to those added to *All Religions are One* Copy A, and *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* Copy R, presumably at the time that they were sold to John Linnell.<sup>8</sup>

Another characteristic of some of the designs from the second copy of the Small Book of Designs is a small page number in the top right-hand corner. These are found on B261 3, 6, 7, and 9. A similar number, in this case "16," is found on the newly discovered design. The other numbers so far discovered are "9," "13," "20" and "22." This suggests that there may be ten more designs still awaiting rediscovery, a very exciting prospect. There are, of course, 23 designs in the first copy of the Small Book of Designs but the two books cannot have been identical: three designs from the second copy, B261 9, 10, and 11, are of subjects not found in the first copy.

The possibility of missing designs is reinforced by the fact that four of the designs from the second copy show stab holes from a former binding, B261 2, 5, 6 and 8;<sup>9</sup> the absence of such stab holes on other designs can be accounted for by the trimming of the paper. This binding must have been done before the second copy was dispersed. The early history of some of the designs is not known but B261 1 was given by Mrs. Blake (who died in 1831) to Frederick Tatham, B261 5 belonged to Samuel Palmer's cousin John Giles, while B261 3 seems to have belonged to John Varley who, as will be shown, also owned the newly discovered design.

Other inscriptions, not by Blake, give the early provenance of this work. There are two references, apparently in the same hand, reading "Drawing of Blake's given to A White by M<sup>rs</sup> Varley March 31 1856" and "Original Drawing by Blake/See Rossettis "Life and

Works of Blake" (the inscription lacks the closing quotation mark for "Life and Works of Blake"). After the first of these two inscriptions but in a different hand are the words "evidently printed in oil and touched with colour afterwards." There is also the number "8623."

A. White is presumably the Adam White who, according to inscriptions on the back of a counterproof of the Visionary Head of *Wat Tyler* (B740), was given that drawing by J. W. Lowry; the drawing had originally "belonged to Varley the artist whose wife was Miss Lowry." White also owned a number of other Visionary Heads (B711, 712, 718, 736, and 760), one of which, *Pindar and Lais the Courtesan*, now in the Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston (B711) is inscribed, in similar fashion to the new color print, "Adam White from M<sup>r</sup> [or more likely "M<sup>rs</sup>"] Varley." In addition one copy of the fourth state of the engraving by Blake and John Linnell after Linnell's portrait drawing of Wilson Lowry is inscribed "To Adam White with J.W. Lowry's regards 1854."<sup>10</sup>

The Miss Lowry who married Varley was his second wife, Delvalle (born c. 1797-1800), the daughter of Varley's friend Wilson Lowry (1762-1824) and his second wife Rebecca Delvalle (1761-1848) whom he married in 1796. Delvalle married Varley in 1825. The Blake connection was strengthened by the fact that Wilson Lowry had engraved a number of the plates for Abraham Rees' *The Cyclopaedia*, 1820, for which Blake also executed seven plates, one page being made up of engravings by both artists.<sup>11</sup>

The mid nineteenth-century owner of this design was Sir Joseph Noël Paton, RSA (1821-1901); it was probably he who added the inscription about the technique of the print. Through his father he became an admirer of Blake's work, both his poetry and his designs, at an early age, and some of this influence remained with him throughout his life. As he said, his father taught him to "put the *thought before the thing*, and encouraged me

in perpetual scribblings at *subjects*, instead of obliging me to copy *objects*." Even a late work like *Ezekiel* of 1889-91 still reflects the influence of Blake both in the pose, close to that of the *Dance of Albion*, and in the bearded old man type used for *Ezekiel*.<sup>12</sup> In 1845 Paton won a premium for the competition for the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament and in 1847 and 1849 came his two large pictures of fairy subjects, the works for which he is probably best known, *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania* and *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*, both now in the National Gallery of Scotland. He also painted such subjects as *The Spirit of Religion* (for the Houses of Parliament) and the *Pursuit of Pleasure* of 1855. He became an Associate of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1847 and a full member in 1850. He was appointed Her Majesty's Limner for Scotland in 1865 and was knighted in 1867. He also published two volumes of verse. He knew Millais (an associate of the Rossettis in Prerafaelite days), Ruskin and the brothers David and William Bell Scott, these being further links with the circle of Blake admirers in the middle of the nineteenth century. It is nice to be able to identify at least one work by Blake that he owned.

<sup>1</sup> Henry Wemyss of Sotheby's, London, kindly informed me about this work, allowed me to inspect it, and supplied the photograph.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1981) 134, no. 260 6. References to this catalogue in the rest of this article will be given in the form "B260 6."

<sup>3</sup> Robert N. Essick, *The Separate Plates of William Blake* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1983) 25 no. 1B, 32 no. 2E, and 44 no. 1B, respectively.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Viscomi, "The Myth of Commissioned Illuminated Books: George Romney, Isaac D'Israeli, and 'ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY designs . . . of Blake's,'" *Blake* 23 (1989): 72n38; Martin Butlin and Ted Gott, *William Blake in the Collection of the National Gallery of Victoria* (National Gallery of Victoria, 1989) 110-11, both works reproduced in color.

<sup>5</sup> There is an old color reproduction of 262 4 in Laurence Binyon, *The Engraved*

*Designs of William Blake* (London and New York: Benn Press, 1926) pl. 49, which can be compared with B265 in the Tate Gallery, or the color reproduction of B265 (pl. 338) can be compared with B262 4 in the British Museum.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Butlin, "The Evolution of Blake's Large Color Prints of 1795," in Alvin H. Rosenfeld, ed., *William Blake; Essays for S. Foster Damon* (Providence, RI: Brown UP, 1969) 114-15.

<sup>7</sup> Martin Butlin, "A Newly Discovered Watermark and a Visionary's Way with his Dates," *Blake* 15 (1982): 101-03; Martin Butlin, "Paintings and Drawings of William Blake: Some Minor Additions," *Blake* 17 (1984): 159; Martin Butlin, *Tate Gallery Collections: Volume Five: William Blake 1757-1827* (London: Tate Gallery, 1990) 83, 90 no. 28, and 92 no. 29.

<sup>8</sup> G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1977) 85-86 and 420. In addition, Viscomi has kindly let me know of his conclusions concerning these copies, to be set out in his forthcoming book. Incidentally, the two designs from the second copy of the Large Book of Designs in the Tate Gallery, B264 and 265, also have framing lines similar to those that characterize the second copy of the Small Book of Designs.

<sup>9</sup> Bentley 357.

<sup>10</sup> Essick 204, no. 4M.

<sup>11</sup> Essick 207-08. For help in unravelling the family relationships of the Varleys and the Lowrys I am indebted to my former colleague Anne Lyles; see also C. M. Kauffman, *John Varley (1778-1842)* (London: Batsford and Victoria and Albert Museum, 1984) 58 and 132.

<sup>12</sup> For this particular work, and Sir Nöel Paton in general, see David and Francina Irwin, *Scottish Painting at Home and Abroad 1700-1900* (London: Faber, 1975) 288-95; see also the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

## Two Newly Identified Sketches for Thomas Commin's *An Elegy* and Further Rediscovered Drawings of the 1780s

Martin Butlin



1. Frontispiece to Thomas Commin's *An Elegy*, 1786. Hand-tinted etching and engraving, 17.3 x 13.8 cm., British Museum, London.

Three typical pen and wash drawings of the 1780's, two on one sheet of paper, have turned up in the United States. Two seem to be related to Thomas Commin's *An Elegy*, while the other appears to be an independent composition.<sup>1</sup>

In my catalogue I listed, as number 98, a "Sketch for Thomas Commin's 'An Elegy,'" the only evidence for which was the fact that it was in possession of Messrs. Robson in 1913.<sup>2</sup> The newly identified sheet of drawings may be this work, but the two drawings are different enough from Blake's finished engraving for the identification to have been easily missed in 1913; if so, there is a further drawing waiting to be discovered.

Blake designed and engraved the frontispiece for Commin's *Elegy*, published in 1786. The engraving itself is inscribed "W. Blake del: & sculp!" (the identification of the final raised letter

is not altogether clear). Below the design are four lines of verse, arranged in two columns:

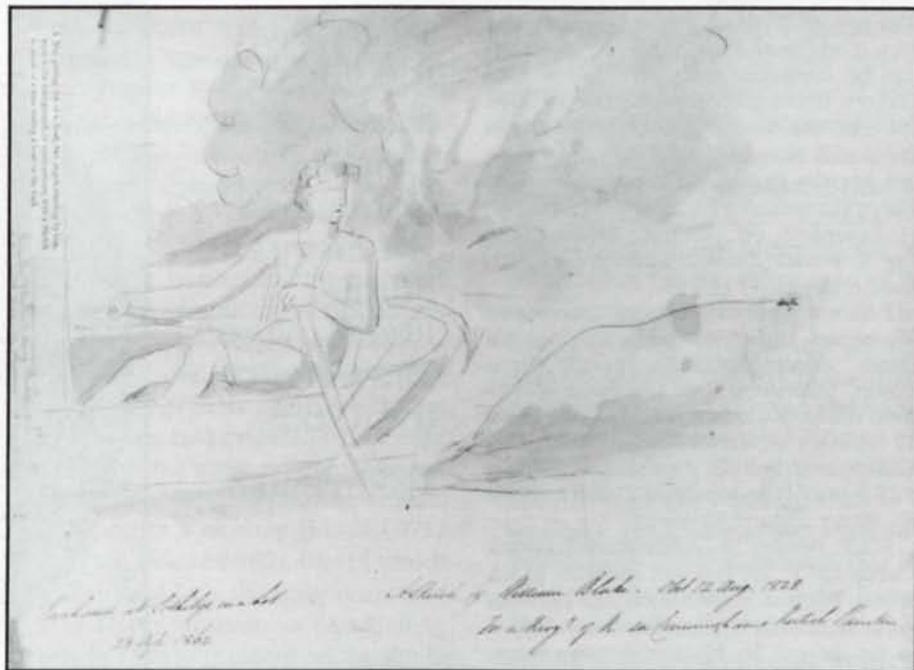
The shatter'd bark from adverse winds  
Rest in this peaceful haven finds  
And when the storms of life are past  
Hope drops her anchor here at last.

Below is the publisher's imprint: "Published July 1. 1786 by J. Fentum N<sup>o</sup>. 78 Corner of Salisbury Street, Strand" (on the British Museum copy the final word is almost lost through the wearing of the paper; it is reconstructed here on the basis of the imprint at the head of the music itself).

The engraved design shows a young man leaping out of an anchored boat towards a young woman and child, presumably his family, awaiting him on the shore; behind are trees and what appears to be a cliff (illus. 1). The design is framed by a border of palm fronds, forming an upright oval. (The British Museum copy is colored by



2. Alternative design for Commins's *Elegy* c. 1786. Pen and wash over pencil on paper, cut irregularly, approx 34.0 x 26.5cm. Private collection, U.S.A.



3. Sketch for Commins's *Elegy*, c. 1786 (verso of illus. 2). Pen and wash over pencil on paper, cut irregularly, approx 26.5 x 34.0 cm. Private collection, U.S.A.

hand, but a relative lack of subtlety, and in particular the way in which the color runs over the edges of the forms in the framing oval, suggests the work of an amateur, not Blake himself.)

The full title of Commins's *Elegy*, at the head of the first of five pages of music (printed on three sheets of paper), is "AN ELEGY/ set to Music by/ THO<sup>s</sup> Commins,/ Organist of Penzance, Cornwall./ LONDON./ Printed & sold by J. Fentum, N<sup>o</sup> 78, corner Salisbury S<sup>t</sup>., Strand." The verses accompanying the music run (with a long "s" used whenever appropriate):

Sigh not ye winds as passing o'er the  
Chambers of the dead ye fly,  
Weep not ye dews for these no more  
shall ever weep, shall ever sigh.  
Why mourn the throbbing heart at rest  
How still it lies within the breast  
Why mourn since death presents us  
peace,  
And in the grave our sorrows cease.

[The last two lines are repeated, followed by the first two lines]

The shatter'd Bark from adverse winds  
Rest in this peaceful Heaven finds  
And when the storms of Life are past  
Hope drops her Anchor here at last.

[The last two lines are repeated].

It is noticeable that in the song text the "shatter'd Bark" finds rest in a peaceful "Heaven" whereas in the lines below the frontispiece rest is found in a peaceful "Haven"; this last is closer to what Blake illustrates in his engraving.

The recto of the rediscovered sheet of drawings shows a much varied version of the engraved design, in reverse (illus. 2). An older, bearded man gets out of the boat in a considerably less agile fashion, looking apprehensively over his shoulder the while; two angels await him on the shore, and there are trees behind. The composition is again an upright oval, within a roughly drawn outline. The presence of the angels gives a greater feeling of Heaven than in the engraving.

This however is absent from the drawing on the reverse, in which a young man has just finished rowing his boat into a small creek or haven (illus. 3). There are no figures on the shore. Again there are trees behind but of a totally different kind. The composition is an oblong. In the lower right-hand quarter of the drawing there is what may be the beginnings of an oval composition which would have continued to the right over the cut edge of the

existing paper. This drawing presumably preceded the one on the recto, before even the format of the final engraving had been determined.

Another rediscovered drawing in the same American collection, and apparently sharing the same provenance, is similar in style and, like the two drawings here related to Commins's *Elegy*, datable to the early or mid seven eighties (illus. 4). It shows three groups of figures in what seems to be Heaven. Three bearded men float in the air just to the left of center, facing the spectator, and another group of three figures, one old, two young, float on the right facing two middle-aged dark-bearded men who soar up from the left. In general character, and in the long flowing robes ending in scroll-like folds, the drawing resembles the group of pen and ink drawings illustrating scenes from the Old Testament, B112-4 in my catalogue.

Various inscriptions together with an attached piece of paper bearing a printed title on the back of the first drawing indicate that it comes from the collection of Henry Cunliffe "of the South Kensington Museum." Two inscriptions in ink are similar in hand-

writing and in the mistakes they embody to inscriptions on other drawings that belonged to Henry Cunliffe, B69, 113, 119<sup>A</sup>, 144, 190 and 650. The inscription to the right reads "A Sketch by William Blake. Obit 12 Aug. 1828/For a Biog<sup>y</sup> of B. see Cunninghams British Painters." The reference is to Allan Cunningham's *Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, first published in 1830 and again, with a more balanced account of Blake, the same year; this is the source for the mistaken date of Blake's death (actually 1827). The inscription to the left reads "Purchased at Sothebys in a Lot/28 Ap. 1862." Again there is a mistake: the anonymous sale, but one long identified as being of works from the collection of Frederick Tatham, took place on the 29th of April.

A further inscription, in pencil and running along the left-hand side of the drawing, reads "From the Collection of Henry Cunliffe/of the South Kensington Museum." To the left of this is a printed title, "A Man getting out of a Boat, two angels standing by him,/trees in the background, *in water-colours*, with a Sketch/in pencil of a man rowing a boat on the back." This can be identified as coming from the catalogue of the sale at Sotheby's on 11 May 1895 of, inter alia, ". . . A Series of Drawings by W. Blake, The Property of the Late Henry Cunliffe, Esq. . ."; the title is that of lot 105, bought by Keppel for sixteen shillings.

The works from the Cunliffe collection in the 1895 sale comprise, as well as four lots by other artists, 10 lots containing works attributed to Blake, numbers 96 to 105 (plus an india proof impression of the portrait by Linnell of Blake), but none of the more important illuminated books that passed to Henry Cunliffe's nephew Walter, grandfather of the present Lord Cunliffe. With the reappearance of these two sheets of drawings it seems that one can now identify all the drawings in the 1895 sale and, in turn, those purchased by Henry Cunliffe in 1862.



4. "An Encounter in Heaven," c. 1780-85. Pen and wash over pencil on paper, approx 30.5 x 40.5 cm. Private collection, U.S.A.

The 10 lots containing Blakes consist of 13 works in all, 12 drawings and one print, although not every individual work is described and even those that are described are often described in fairly vague terms. Certain lots can be identified straightaway: 96, "A Group of Five Figures (one on Horseback), a town in the background with mountains in the distance, the man and woman in the centre are supposed to represent Blake and his Wife, *a highly finished drawing in indian ink, apparently intended to illustrate some story*" is the finished drawing finally identified in 1978 as an illustration to Robert Bage's *Hermsprong* (B682); 97, "PESTILENCE. An allegorical design in water colours of five figures and corpses" is B190, the version of the much repeated composition later, like the *Hermsprong* illustration, in the collections of William and George Bateson; 100, "The Canterbury Pilgrims, the original drawing by Blake from the picture to reduce the subject to the size of his plate, *in pencil*" is B654, which was bought in at the 1895 sale, eventually passed to the Hon. Merlin Cunliffe and now belongs to the British Museum; 101, "Jane Shore doing Pen-

ance, *highly finished in watercolours, varnished*" is B69, now in the Tate Gallery; 102, "Queen Emma walking over the red hot plough-shares," similarly described, is B59, in a private collection; 103, "The Witch of Endor raising Samuel, *spirited drawing in water-colours*" is B144, now in the New York Public Library; 104, "Good and Evil Spirits contending for the possession of a Child, *an allegorical subject in water-colours*" is, despite the medium given in the catalogue, the version of the large color print of "1795" formerly in the collection of Mr. & Mrs. John Hay Whitney, B324.

This leaves lots 98 and 99, which together with lots 103 and the rediscovered lot 105 were bought by Keppel, apparently the New York dealer Frederick Keppel, whose son David gave B119A, a drawing of *Goliath cursing David*, to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 1914; Frederick himself had bequeathed an impression of *The Accusers* to the same museum in October 1913.<sup>3</sup> The only other recorded purchase of a Blake by Keppel apart from those at this sale was at Sotheby's on 8 July 1895 when he bought lot 125, *Death on a Pale Horse*,

now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (B517). In addition, in about 1919-20 his firm owned the separate color-printed design from plate 12 of *Urizen* now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York (B261 10), and also a copy of the title-page to *Europe*.<sup>4</sup>

Lot 98 is described as "A Sketch in sepia of Angels with spirits of women approaching them; and two other Sketches." Lot 99 was "A Group of Six Greek Warriors, *in pen and ink*, and a fine impression of the Child of Nature, after C. Borckhardt, by W. Blake, *fastened together at the corners*." It is tempting to identify the drawing of eight airborne figures, which seems to have the same provenance as lot 105, definitely bought by Keppel, as the main work in lot 98, the "Sketch in sepia of Angels with the spirits of women approaching them." This allows for the habitual inaccuracy of descriptions in sale catalogues, particularly from as long ago as 1895: at a very quick look two of the figures on the right just could be women!

Two further drawings with typical Cunliffe inscriptions on the back are otherwise unaccounted for in the 1895 sale: B113, *The Elders of Israel receiving the Ten Commandments (?)*, and B119A, *Goliath cursing David*, already mentioned as having belonged to David Keppel. This last, again allowing for a fair laxity in description, could, given the round shields carried by three of its six figures, be the "Group of Six Greek Warriors" of lot 99. Assuming one of the undescribed drawings in lot 98 to be B113, *The Elders of Israel . . .*, one further work remains to be discovered and, conveniently, one of the drawings reported in my last article on rediscovered Blakes seems to fit the gap.<sup>5</sup> This is the sketch for *Joseph's Brethren bowing before him* discovered by David Bindman in Berlin which also, David Bindman tells me, bears the typical Cunliffe inscription "Purchased in a Lot at Sothebys 28 April 1862 HC" together with "A Sketch by William Blake Obit 12 August 1828./In Cunninghams Lives of British Painters Ch.1 Blake"; there is

also an inscription matching the pencil inscription on the drawing for Commins's *Elegy*; "From the collection of Henry Cunliffe of the South Kensington Museum."

It is of course tempting to equate any known drawing one can find with those that one knows to be missing, but at least the total number of works now matches up and, although I have been caught out making similar identifications in the past that have subsequently proved to be inaccurate, it is at least for the present a working hypothesis that we now have all the drawings sold by Henry Cunliffe in 1895. One can also venture further and see how these 12 drawings fit with the only 12 works to have been bought by Toovey in the Frederick Tatham sale held at Sotheby's on 29 April 1862, some of which can quite definitely be shown to have been in Henry Cunliffe's collection. The lots bought by Toovey were as follows: 161, "The Original reduced Drawing of the Canterbury Pilgrimage, from which he [Blake] engraved his plate," lot 100 in 1895, B654; 170, "A Pestilence, and other designs, *in indian ink*," six works in all, of which the named work was lot 97 in 1895, B190; 171, "Queen Emma walking over the red hot Ploughshares, and Jane Shore doing Penance, *both highly finished in colours*," lots 102 and 101 respectively in 1895, B59 and 69; 175, "The Witch of Endor raising the Spirit of Samuel, *in colours*," lot 103 in 1895, B144; 182, "An Allegorical Subject - A Man holding a Child, with a chained demon issuing from a fiery abyss, *highly finished in colours*," lot 104 in 1895, B324; and 184, "A Design, apparently intended in illustration of a tale, *highly finished in indian ink*," lot 96 in 1895, B682. Lot 195 was also bought by Toovey, "Another set" of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* "wanting three plates," the posthumous Copy i still in the Cunliffe collection. The five unidentified works in lot 170, all described as being "*in indian ink*," can therefore be equated with the following five works sold in 1895: 98, "A

Sketch in sepia of Angels . . . and two other Sketches," three works in all; 99, "A Group of Six Greek Warriors, *in pen and ink*," sold with the print of the "Child of Nature"; and 105, "A Man getting out of a Boat . . . *in water-colours*, with a Sketch in pencil of a man rowing a boat on the back." Q.E.D.!

After all this supposition it should be easy enough to say something about "Henry Cunliffe of the South Kensington Museum." But, despite the helpfulness of the present Lord Cunliffe and of Ronald Parkinson and his colleagues at the Victoria and Albert Museum, as the South Kensington Museum is now known, there seems to be very little information. The present Lord Cunliffe's great-great-uncle Henry Cunliffe was born in 1827 and died in 1883, apparently in Germany; he is buried in the family plot at Headly in Surrey. He was, typically for a number of mid nineteenth-century Blake collectors, primarily a bibliophile and left his collection of books to his favorite nephew Walter Cunliffe. Unfortunately, there is no record of a Henry Cunliffe at the V & A either in the diaries of Sir Henry Cole, the famous director from its beginnings until 1873 (but there is mention of an Edward Cunliffe), nor is he mentioned in the *Precis and Board Minutes* between 1863 and 1877. (Just to confuse matters, Sir Francis Philip Cunliffe-Owen, who lived from 1828 until 1894, did work at the Victoria & Albert Museum, having owed his first post in the Science & Art Department to the recommendation of his elder brother Lieutenant Colonel Henry Charles Cunliffe-Owen [1821-67] who, in the course of a mainly military career had been connected with the Great Exhibition of 1851 and was also inspector of Art Schools under the Board of Trade; in 1857 Francis Cunliffe-Owen became deputy general-superintendent at the South Kensington Museum under Sir Henry Cole, in 1860 assistant director, and in 1873, in succession to Cole, full director. In the 1850s and 1860s the Cunliffe-Owens

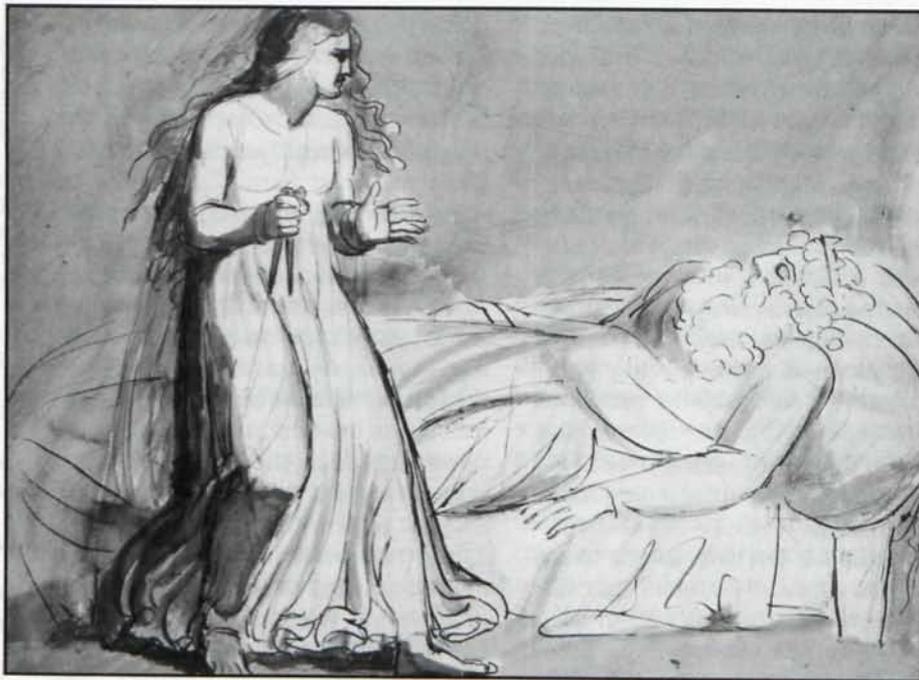
called themselves Owen, which further distinguishes them from our Henry Cunliffe.<sup>6</sup>)

Two further pen and wash drawings of the 1780s, listed in my catalogue as untraced and not reproduced there, have turned up recently. B139, called *The Bed of Death* and cataloged as untraced since the sale at Christie's on 15 July 1957, has re-emerged and been reproduced in the catalogue for the Christie's sale of 9 July 1991, Lot 86. This has been reproduced and discussed by Robert N. Essick in the last issue of *Blake* 25 (1992) 148, fig. 4. Whether the drawing really shows a death bed seems unlikely, and it is certainly not related, *pace* my catalogue entry, to my numbers B137 verso and 138. (The 1991 Christie's catalogue also reproduces, at lot 85, the Visionary Head of *Jonathan* in its present state; it was previously reproduced, unrestored, in *Blake* following its sale at Christie's on 9 July 1985.<sup>7</sup>)

The other rediscovered drawing, *Lady Macbeth approaching the Sleeping Duncan* (illus. 5) is much more exciting.<sup>8</sup> Its position in my catalogue, as B249, is too late; rather, as hinted at in my entry, it should be placed earlier as one of the pen and wash drawings of about 1785. The full medium is pen and wash over pencil on laid paper watermarked "JWHATMAN." As well as the usual grey wash there is some brown along the draperies down the back of Lady Macbeth and below her left hand. The paper seems to have been trimmed all round, cutting the inscription "Blake," perhaps a signature, in the lower right-hand corner. The drawing illustrates the passage from act II, scene ii of *Macbeth*, where Lady Macbeth describes how

I laid their daggers ready,  
He could not miss 'em. Had he not  
resembled  
My father as he slept, I had done't

This is in fulfillment of Macbeth's suggestion, in act I, scene vii, that he should use the daggers belonging to Duncan's two chamberlains, made drunk by Lady Macbeth, so that it would look as if they had committed



5. "Lady Macbeth and the Sleeping Duncan," c.1785. Pen and grey and brown washes over pencil, on paper, trimmed, 32.7 x 42.6 cm. Thos. Agnew & Sons, Ltd, London.



6. Verso of "Lady Macbeth and the Sleeping Duncan," c. 1785. Pencil with some brown wash on paper, trimmed, 32.7 x 42.6 cm. Thos. Agnew & Sons, Ltd, London.

the deed. Blake shows Lady Macbeth with the daggers standing over the sleeping Duncan, who has gone to bed with his crown on.

On the reverse there is a variant in pencil alone of the same composition, inscribed, again in the lower right-hand corner, "Lady Macbeth/King Duncan" (illus. 6). Also on the reverse, with the paper to be seen as an upright with the left-hand edge at the bottom, is a slightly inclined profile facing right, just possibly a study for the profile of Lady Macbeth. On the reverse she stands on the right, leaning over Duncan in a much more threatening manner than on the recto; he lies as before except that his left arm seems to lie across his chest. Pentimenti on the recto show that Lady Macbeth was originally in the same stooping position as on the verso; Blake also drew her in an intermediary position before finally adopting the present upright stance. The drawings therefore are a particularly interesting example of how Blake improvised his compositions. Some of the forms of the recto have

come out on the verso, perhaps because it was drawn with the paper laid on a dirty surface, and some of the brownish wash also appears on the reverse, presumably as the result of an accident.

The drawing, which is listed by William Rossetti as indicated in my entry, seems to be one of the items in lot 165 in the Tatham sale at Sotheby's on 29 April 1862, "Lady Macbeth and Duncan, Angels conducting the Souls of the Just to Paradise, &c. *in indian ink*," four items in all, bought by Palser for thirteen shillings; the lot comes among other drawings that can be identified as pen and wash drawings of the 1780s. The recent history of the drawing is no clearer than was indicated in my entry; all that can be said is that it has recently turned up in the trade. Rossetti's dismissive description, "Not carried far beyond the outline. Ordinary" seems far from the mark. In fact the drawing is one of the most dramatic and boldly drawn of this whole group.

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Henry Wemyss of Sotheby's, London, for letting me know of the existence of the drawings in the United States and for letting me have photographs.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1981) 38 no. 98, the engraving repr. pl. 103. In the rest of this article references to my catalogue are given in the form "B98."

<sup>3</sup> Robert N. Essick, *The Separate Plates of William Blake* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1983) 33 no. 3D.

<sup>4</sup> G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1977) 162.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Butlin, "Six New Early Drawings by William Blake and a Reattribution," *Blake* 23 (1989) 110-11, repr. fig. 6.

<sup>6</sup> For the Cunliffe-Owens see the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>7</sup> Robert N. Essick, "Blake in the Marketplace 1985," *Blake* 20 (1986) repr. p. 16, fig. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Wyld of Thos. Agnew & Sons, Ltd, told me about the drawing in London, let me examine it and, again, supplied photographs. I am most grateful to my friends among art dealers and auctioneers in keeping me informed about works by Blake as they turn up.

## "Empire is no More": Odin and Orc in *America*

Julia M. Wright

Orc appears in a number of Blake's poems, but his character in *America* (1793) is uniquely drawn. A howling, flaming figure in *Europe* (1794) and a chained infant in *The [First] Book of Urizen* (1794), the Orc of *America* is described in a wealth of detail that is matched only by *The Four Zoas* (1797).<sup>1</sup> The details that are provided, however, differ. In both *The Four Zoas* and *America*, for instance, Orc claims that his spirit can leave his chained body, but the Orc of *The Four Zoas* represents his spirit as "A Worm compell'd" (80.31), while that of *America* chooses figures of power:

on high my spirit soars;  
Sometimes an eagle screaming in the  
sky, sometimes a lion,  
Stalking upon the mountains, &  
sometimes a whale I lash  
The raging fathomless abyss, anon a  
serpent . . .  
On the Canadian wilds I fold. (1.12-17)

These figures have been associated with various sets of symbols of power, as Rodney M. Baine suggests that the shapes are all images of regal power over nature (130), while David V. Erdman identifies some of the animals as revolutionary emblems (259). Although the female later claims that Orc courts her in these shapes, they are quite violent in Orc's speech: the shapes are "screaming," "stalking," "lashing," and, by "folding," encircle and bind, like the serpent of Blake's *Laocoön*. The Orc of *America* thus chooses a diversity of shapes that are not only unbound but associated with aggressive power. This characterization of Orc is reinforced and elaborated through

allusions to Norse mythology that can be used to explore the complexity of this revolutionary figure as he is constructed in *America*.

In his discussion of the first quarter of the Preludium, Harold Bloom writes that "The mythic world suggested is the Northern one of Odin and Thor, the Eddic literature known to Blake through Mallet's *Northern Antiquities* . . . and the poems and translations of Thomas Gray" (118). Bloom emphasizes the references to iron, and his identification of the female as the daughter of a Thor-like smith (118-19), while Erdman finds in the action of the poem an allusion to Paul Henri Mallet's explanation of human sacrifice "as a harvest rite" (251). Both *America* and Blake's notes for his designs for the 1790 edition of Gray's *Poems* indicate a knowledge of Gray's free translation of an Icelandic lay, *The Descent of Odin*, and a familiarity with Norse mythology that extends beyond

that poem. Blake's notes, for instance, refer to "The Serpent who girds the Earth" (680), which is not mentioned in Gray's poem, as well as "The Serpent & the Wolvish Dog. two terrors in the Northern mythology" (680), which recall Orc's form as a serpent and the "eternal Wolf" (9.2). Orc, moreover, like Lok in Gray's *Descent*, is riveted by a "tenfold chain" (1.12; Gray 65), as has been noted by Mark Schorer (406n) and Erdman (262n).<sup>2</sup> While critics have indicated the Norse background for this poem and others by Blake, however, there are close correspondences between *America's* Orc and Odin that have not been addressed.

In asserting that he can transform his spirit into the shapes of a whale, a serpent, an eagle, and a lion, Orc evokes a distinguishing feature of Odin. In the *Ynglinga Saga*, Snorre Sturlason writes that Odin "could transform his shape: his body would lie as if dead, or asleep; but then he would be in shape of a fish, a worm, a bird, or beast" (11), the four categories of Orc's avatars.<sup>3</sup> The *Heimskringla*, of which the *Ynglinga Saga* is the first part, was not published in an English translation until 1844, although the closeness of Sturlason's description of Odin's transformative abilities to Orc's description of his metamorphic powers invites speculation that Blake had access to unpublished or as yet unidentified information. Through Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*, however, which "is almost certainly Blake's source for Norse mythology" (Bloom 441), Blake would have had access to a more general knowledge of the saga, since it is both discussed and paraphrased in that work. Bishop Percy's translation of Mallet's text was published in 1770, and it notes Odin's ability to transform his shape and to travel widely: "[Odin] persuaded his followers that he could run over the world in the twinkling of an eye, that he had the direction of the air and tempests, that he could transform himself into all sorts of shapes" (83). Like Mallet's Odin, Orc merely claims such abilities; there is no nar-

ratorial authority for Orc's transformations in *America*, as there is in *The Four Zoas*. In eighteenth-century antiquarian discourse, Odin is persistently constructed as a confidence-man rather than a god, a human being whose rhetorical and poetic abilities allowed him to convince his followers, through speech alone, that he was a god.<sup>4</sup> *America* is the only poem of the early 1790s in which Orc is articulate, and he not only speaks, but speaks eloquently in a voice that "shook the temple" (5.7) and "In thunders ends" (7.1). In Odin and *America's* Orc, then, we have two compelling orators who claim to have the ability to change their shape and travel widely. There are, however, even closer correspondences between the language with which Mallet describes Odin and that with which Blake describes Orc in *America*.

Odin is the "God of War" (Mallet 91), and it is as such that he excites "terror" (Mallet 84) and bears the epithet, "The terrible and severe God" (Mallet 91), recalling the persistence with which Orc is associated with forms of the word "terror," and his appearance "like the planet red" (5.2), which is named for the Roman god of war, Mars.<sup>5</sup> Odin, as a martial deity, is called upon by his devotees to embolden them in battle, and Percy's translation of Mallet makes this point in language that appears in *America*, noting that "[Odin] often descended to intermix in the conflict himself, to inflame the fury of the combatants" (92). Orc's inspiration of the American rebels is repeatedly described in terms of flame: "And the flame folded roaring fierce within the pitchy night / Before the Demon red, who burnt towards America . . . gathering thick / In flames as of a furnace on the land from North to South" (12.8-9, 12.11-12). This depiction of Orc as flaming appears elsewhere in Blake's works, but other details regarding Orc's non-inflammatory participation in the revolution do not. In paraphrasing the *Ynglinga Saga*, Mallet writes that Odin was a great warrior who "inspired his enemies with such terror, that they could not describe it better,

than by saying he rendered them blind and deaf; that he would appear like a wolf all desperate" (84). Mallet's combination of "terror," battle, a wolf, blindness, and difficulty with hearing, occurs in the reaction of Albion's Angel to Orc's speech: "Loud howls the Eternal Wolf! . . . / America is darkned; and my punishing Demons terrified . . . clouds obscure my aged sight" (9.2-3, 9.12).

In *America*, Blake constructs an Orc that specifically recalls the Norse god: both are associated with the shape of a wolf during war, "inflame" warriors, blind opponents, have remarkable oratorical abilities, and claim to possess extraordinary powers that allow them to change shape and journey extensively. Why, then, does *America* have an Orc who echoes Mallet's Odin in so many specifics while, for instance, the contemporaneous *Europe* does not? The answer, I would argue, lies in the difference between the political situations that are represented. Unlike *Europe* and the other poems in which Orc appears, *America* is concerned specifically with oppression as imperial rule—and so is Mallet's discussion of Odin. Mallet indicates that Odin was considered a nationalist hero in material available to him:

Several learned men have supposed that a desire of being revenged on the Romans was the ruling principle of his whole conduct. . . . He had no other view, according to them, in running through so many distant kingdoms, and in establishing with so much zeal his sanguinary doctrines, but to spirit up all nations against so formidable and odious a power. This leaven, which he left in the bosoms of the northern people, fermented a long time in secret; but the signal, they add, once given, they all fell as it were by common consent upon this unhappy empire; and after many repeated shocks, entirely overturned it. (82-83)

"Stiff shudderings shook the heav'nly thrones" (16.16): Odin inspires rebels to overthrow the Roman Empire, the "enemies of universal liberty" (Mallet 82), while Orc inspires rebels to overthrow the British Empire, crying, "Empire is no more" (6.15).

A poet who inflamed the rebels that freed Northern Europe from Roman

rule, Odin appears to be an ideal figure with which to affiliate the articulate Orc who inflames the rebels that free the American colonies from British rule. Mallet's Odin, however, is more complex than this. According to eighteenth-century antiquarians, Odin was not a Norse god, nor even a Northern European, but an exile from Asia (Warton xx; Bell 233) who escaped into Northern Europe after participating in a failed Scythian revolt against the Romans (Mallet 79). Mallet maintains that Odin's real name was Sigge, and vilifies him for imposing a violent religious and political system on Northern Europeans through deceit and violence: Sigge assumed the name of the deity Odin, "a title so proper to procure him respect among the people he meant to subject," and "marched towards the north and west of Europe, subduing, we are told, all the people he found in his passage" (80). "[A]mbitious" (80), Mallet's Odin is not only a catalyst for the expulsion of the Roman Empire from Northern Europe, but a conqueror of Northern Europe himself, and Mallet only offers the characterization of Odin as an anti-imperialist hero in order to refute it.

Blake's allusions to Mallet's Odin, an anti-imperial conqueror, can thus provide a schema through which to address two questions raised by *America*: why is the champion of the oppressed in the Prophecy depicted raping the female in the Preludium? And why are indigenous Americans so thoroughly removed from the Prophecy's conflict? (By "Prophecy," I mean the text within *America* that is labelled as such, rather than the whole work.) While critics have legitimated the rape, and so sustained Orc's status as the poem's hero, Blake's language suggests both violence and illicit conquest: "[Orc] siez'd the panting struggling womb" (2.3).<sup>6</sup> While the female is not explicitly identified with Amerindians, she declares herself to be the proprietor of American land (2.10),<sup>7</sup> and Erdman suggests that, in the illustration for plate 1, she "appears in her American Indian form" (259). Viewing this "daughter" (1.1) as

a representative of the aboriginal peoples would, moreover, be consistent with the iconography of loyalist engravings, in which, as Stephen C. Behrendt points out, Britannia is represented as a matriarch and her "daughter" [is] the emblematic American Indian" (32). The evidence linking the female with the Amerindians is tenuous, but it is congruous with a parallel between the female and this elided group to which I wish to draw attention. There exists, I would suggest, a homomorphism between the situations of the American revolutionaries, Orc, and Mallet's Odin, in terms of their relationships to martial power, a homomorphism in which the female occupies the same position as the Amerindians, and the Northern Europeans, in being the object of violence and conquest for a revolutionary figure who fights on behalf of the oppressed. Wars between the colonists and the first nations began before the American Revolution, and continued in the context of the Revolution, since most of the aboriginal peoples of the northeast, including the Iroquois Confederacy and the Delaware, sided with the British. The revolutionaries were thus in the ideologically contradictory position of trying to conquer one group while crying for liberty from another. Orc is placed in a similarly contradictory position, identifying himself with animals engaged in violent activities and seizing another against her will, and then speaking on behalf of the oppressed Americans of European descent.

In *America*, through the figure of Odin, Blake narrows the scope of his rebel to anti-imperial rebellion, a focus that is not especially relevant to the other works in which Orc appears. Like Odin, Orc's colonists liberate a nation from imperial rule, but it is a nation that they have themselves "siez'd." Thus, in his celebration of the American Revolution, Blake, like Mallet, does not elide the investment of the revolutionaries in violence and conquest, the violence and conquest through which they, like Mallet's Odin,

gained the ground from which they fought against their own subjugation to imperial rule. Orc's violence does not erode the legitimacy of the rebellion, against Urthona or Albion's Angel, and need not be legitimized as a means to that end, but stands as a reminder that to engage the struggle for power is to be contaminated by the means of that struggle.

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All quotations of Blake's writings are taken from Erdman's edition, and will be from *America* unless otherwise noted; quotations of the poetry will be cited by plate and line number, and references to the prose will be cited by page number.

<sup>1</sup> I cite the dates on Blake's title pages rather than rehearse bibliographical debates regarding the dating of these texts.

<sup>2</sup> See Erdman (262n) and Schorer (405-06n) for other correspondences between Gray's translation and Blake's poetry.

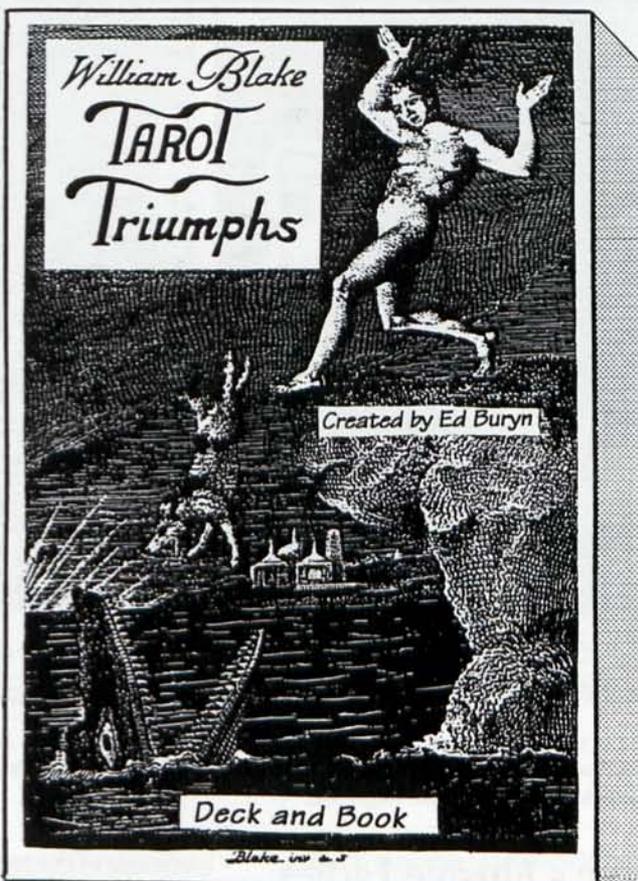
<sup>3</sup> In eighteenth-century terms, these classifications are legitimate: the whale was referred to as a fish well into the nineteenth century.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Lemprière and Mallet. Odin is identified as a poet by Lemprière (417) and Mallet (83), the inventor of poetry by Mallet (83), and the inventor of writing by both Warton (xx) and Mallet (83).

<sup>5</sup> It is the martial Odin that appears in Blake's other works by name (*Song of Los* 3.30; *Milton* 25.52-53; *Jerusalem* 83.19). Sotha, linked to Odin in *The Song of Los* (1795), also appears in a canceled plate for *America* (b.21). This additional connection between Odin and *America* is suspect, however, because of the question of dating, since *The Song of Los* was printed two years after *America*, and the date of the canceled plate is unknown.

<sup>6</sup> The rape has been described as "desire fulfilling itself" (Doskow 176), "patriots . . . making love to good earth" (Erdman 261), and Orc's attempt to "give his voice, and his passion, to silent nature" (Bloom 120). More recently, Michael Ferber has acknowledged the problem of "identifying the actions of the American colonists . . . with a violent act" (95), but resolves it by characterizing the rape as "a reclamation of the usurped land by those who deserve her" (96). This reclaimed "land," however, complains at the end of the Preludium of "eternal death" (2.17), "limb rending pains" (2.15), "howling pains" (2.16), and "torment" (2.17), and the bard of the canceled lines echoes her "cry" (2.6) with "sick & drear lamentings" (2.21). The only reference to joy is limited to the womb—"It joy'd" (2.4), not "she," or "he" for that matter. Even if the rape has positive consequences, as fertilization or as the release of the female's voice, the act itself is one of violence and conquest, and the final lines of the Preludium draw attention to the negative implications of that violence, not a justification of it.

<sup>7</sup> The phrase, "my American plains" (2.10), could be used to identify the female as a personification of those plains (see, e.g., Doskow and Erdman), but the detail that concerns me is the word "my": whether the plains are external to her body or are topologically equated with it, she asserts that they are hers.



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*A Lady in the full Dress, & another in the most fashionable Undress now worn.*

*The Morning Amusements of her Royal Highness the Princess Royal & her 4 Sisters.*  
Published by J. Johnson, St. Pauls Church Yard, Nov. 1782.

1. Blake's engravings of Stothard's designs for *The Ladies New and Polite Pocket Memorandum-Book* (1782), in the British Museum (reproduced from the photograph supplied by Robert N. Essick and used in his *Separate Plates of William Blake* [1983]). Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

## Blake's Elusive Ladies

E. B. Bentley

The angels keep their ancient places  
 Turn but a stone, and start a wing!  
 'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces  
 That miss the many-splendored thing.<sup>1</sup>

Two engravings executed on one plate by William Blake in 1782 have long been known and mentioned and speculated about, but the book for which they were intended has never been clearly identified. It has even been suggested that the book was never published. The engravings I am dealing with are inscribed "A Lady in the full Dress, & another in the most fashionable Undress now worn" and "The Morning Amusements of her Royal Highness the Princess Royal & her 4 Sisters" (illus 1). These two designs after Thomas Stothard are to be found in the British Museum Print Room. A copy of the book in which the engravings appeared has not been discovered, but I believe that a small

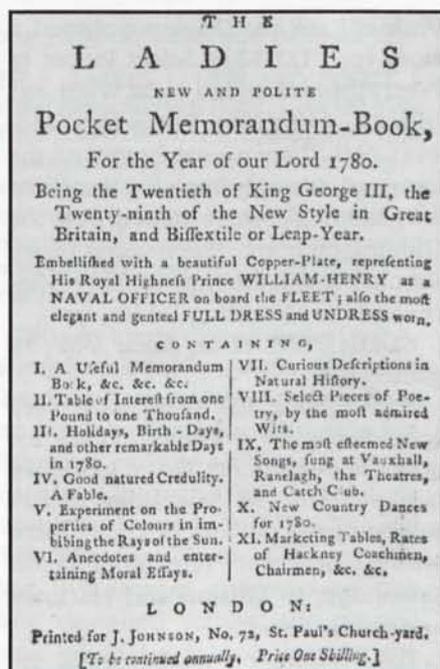
volume in the Huntington Library provides very clear indications of what we should seek and therefore increases the likelihood of turning up a copy of the ephemeral book in which the prints were published.

Those who search for Blake engravings have long known from Gilchrist's biography of the existence of engravings after Thomas Stothard of "two frontispieces to Dodsley's *Lady's Pocket Book*—'The morning amusements of H.R.H. the Princess Royal and her four sisters' (1782), and 'A Lady in full-dress' with another 'in the most fashionable undress now worn' (1783)."<sup>2</sup> Gilchrist does not specify where he had noticed these illustrations, and the reference to "1783" would appear to be an error. In *Thomas Stothard, R.A.*, A. C. Coxhead said the prints were designed by Stothard for *The Lady's Magazine*, but he does not name any engraver. He based his list on the designs by Stothard which were to be found in the Print Room of the British Museum but confessed that he had not been able to find any copy of the magazine with all the plates intact and

implied that he had not found Stothard's designs of either "Morning Amusements" or "A Lady in full dress" in *The Lady's Magazine*.<sup>3</sup>

In 1912, Archibald G. B. Russell listed the two Stothard designs with Blake named as the engraver and joined Gilchrist in attributing them to *The Lady's Pocket Book* (edited by Dodsley), repeated Gilchrist's 1782 and 1783 dates, and declared that "The numbers for 1782 and 1783 contain frontispieces engraved in line by Blake after Stothard." This last assertion was simply taken from Gilchrist and was not based on the discovery of these "numbers." He added that the two plates printed side by side on a single sheet were in the Robert Balmanno collection of Stothard's works in the Print Room of the British Museum and noted that the periodical "is not to be found in the British Museum and the writer has been unable to meet with it elsewhere."<sup>4</sup>

Geoffrey Keynes in his 1921 bibliography of Blake also located the elusive ladies in the publication named by Gilchrist, *The Lady's Pocket Book*, and added the imprint information in-



2. Title page of *The Ladies New and Polite Pocket Memorandum-Book* for 1780 (1779), courtesy of the Henry E. Huntington Library.



3. The two facing prints in *The Ladies New and Polite Pocket Memorandum-Book* for 1780 (1779), courtesy of the Huntington Library.

scribed on the engraving: "*The Morning Amusements of her Royal Highness the Princess Royal & her 4 Sisters. Published by J. Johnson . . . Nov<sup>r</sup> I, 1782 Stothard del Blake Sc.*"<sup>5</sup> Keynes tried to solve the problem introduced by the Johnson imprint for the design intended for a Dodsley publication by supposing that the publication was "Edited by Dodsley for J. Johnson 1782," but he confessed that he had never been able to find the elusive "volume." He did not say why he thought it was edited by [James] Dodsley for Johnson.

Upon becoming a reader at the Bodleian Library (1953) and the British Museum [Library] (1958), my first tasks were prolonged by fruitless searches for *The Ladies/Lady's Pocket Book* and variations upon the title. When Bentley and Nurmi published their bibliography, they reviewed previous findings about the Pocket Book, added that the Rosenwald collection contained a proof impression of "The Morning Amusements" design, speculated that the publication may have been a descendant of Robert Dodsley's *The Ladies New Memorandum Book*

for 1758, and suggested that Gilchrist's Dodsley must have been Robert's (1703-64) brother James (1724-97).<sup>6</sup>

*Blake Books*, the descendent of *A Blake Bibliography*, lists the work as "UNTRACED." The entry offers as "prime evidence [that the *Pocket Book* existed] the two plates on one leaf in the BMPR":

1. '*The Morning amusements of her Royal Highness the Princess Royal & her 4 Sisters.*' 'Stothard del.', 'Blake sc.', 'Published by J. Johnson St Paul's Church Yard, Nov<sup>r</sup> I. 1782'. (Design size: 12.6 x 9.6cm). (Proofs are also in the Royal Academy [before title] and the Rosenwald Collection.)

2. '*A Lady in the full Dress, & another in the most fashionable Undress now worn.*' 'T.S. del', 'W.B. sc' (design size: 6.5 x 9.6 cm). (A proof with only Blake's name is in the Royal Academy.)<sup>7</sup>

*Blake Books* lists nine works with variations of the Gilchrist title which had proved not to be the book with the plates engraved by Blake after Stothard or to contain illustrations which might fit the titles given on those in the Print Room, and also comments: "The title was casually used, and Stothard signed a receipt of 11 April 1795 for

'sixteen guineas [for] two drawings for Lady's [Pocket Book del] Maggazien.'<sup>8</sup>

Robert N. Essick has not only diligently joined in the search but also has assisted searchers to identify what they were seeking by his meticulous descriptions of the impressions in the Royal Academy, the British Museum and the Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. and by reproductions of the two designs which have proved so elusive.<sup>9</sup> Like Coxhead, he looked vainly in *The Lady's Magazine*, and he notes the paradox of placing an engraving bearing a Johnson imprint in a magazine published by G. G. J. and J. Robinson.

I cannot claim that the hunt was strongly publicized. When Shelley M. Bennett published *Thomas Stothard: The Mechanisms of Art Patronage in England Circa 1800*, she cited Coxhead's descriptions of our elusive ladies in relation to the *Monthly Magazine*. She also cited Bentley and Essick and said Essick doubts the book was ever published and Bentley lists the book as "untraced."<sup>10</sup>

Many librarians are amused by my searches and others try to remind me that this is a search for very "ephemeral stuff." I have long realized that it would probably be by serendipity if the book with Blake's and Stothard's illustrations were ever found, but I have clung to my conviction that it would turn up some time, some where. Over the years I have looked for a *Lady's Pocket Book* in collections in India, China, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Guatemala, Algeria, Austria, France, Germany, England, Canada, the United States, and elsewhere. At the Bodleian in July 1991, I checked the microfiche copy of the *Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue* without success. In the late autumn I looked for the title at the Lilly Library in Bloomington, Indiana, and the Spencer Library in Lawrence, Kansas. The librarians were eager to help find a *Ladies Pocket Book*, and there was even a lead or two to follow. Alas, the ladies continued to be elusive.

Recently, at the Huntington, I was looking for a book entitled *My Ladies Casket*, and that put me in mind of the old quest. In the card catalogue there was an entry which aroused a flicker of hope, so I called up the book.

This is the title of the book which came to my trembling hand:

THE | LADIES | NEW AND POLITE |  
Pocket Memorandum-Book, | For the  
Year of our Lord 1780. | Being the Twen-  
tieth of King George III, the | Twen-  
tyninth of the New Style in Great | Britain,  
and Bissextile or Leap-Year. | Embellished  
with a beautiful Copper-Plate, representing  
| His Royal Highness Prince WILLIAM-  
HENRY as a | NAVAL OFFICER on board  
the FLEET; also the most | elegant and  
genteel FULL DRESS and UNDRRESS worn.  
| CONTAINING, | [2 columns: column 1:]  
I. A Useful Memorandum | Book, &c. &c.  
&c. | II. Table of Interest from one |  
Pound to one Thousand. | III. Holidays,  
Birth-Days, | and other remarkable Days  
in 1780. | IV. Good natured Credulity. | A  
Fable. | V. Experiment on the Pro- |  
perties of Colours in im- | bibing the Rays of  
the Sun. | VI. Anecdotes and enter- |  
taining Moral Essays. [Column 2:] VII. Curious  
Descriptions in | Natural History. | VIII.  
Select Pieces of Poe- | try, by the most  
admired | Wits. | IX. The most esteemed  
New | Songs, sung at Vauxhall, | Ranelagh,

the Theatres, | and Catch Club. | X. New  
Country Dances | for 1780. | XI. Market-  
ing Tables, Rates | of Hackney Coachmen, |  
Chairmen, &c. &c. [End of columns.]  
| LONDON: | Printed for J. JOHNSON,  
No. 72, St. Paul's Church-yard. | [To be  
continued annually. Price One Shilling.]  
<Huntington: 429524> (illus. 2)

This publication is an excellent candidate for what has been so long sought. The title of the second print in it, 'a Lady in the newest full Dress, and another in the most fashionable Undress,' is remarkably similar to Blake's 'A Lady in the full Dress, and another in the most fashionable Undress now worn.' The style of the lettering is also remarkably similar. J. Johnson is the publisher for both the Blake engraving and this "1780" edition. The format of the fashion images is the same in both plates, with the 'full Dress' figure on the right and the 'Undress' figure on the left. The size of Blake's plate for the "1783" edition and that for "1780" is the same, while the royal scenes are the same height and clearly intended to be folded when bound into the book.

It is a very small book (12.2 high x 7.6 cm wide) with tattered boards only barely hanging on, and the engravings are very close in size to the Blake prints in the British Museum.

There are two anonymous plates engraved by Page, the platemarks are invisible (frame for the images 9.5 x 6.5 and 9.5 x 6.5), the first of "A Lady in the newest full Dress, and | another in the most fashionable Undress" and the other of "His Royal Highness Prince William Henry, | Their MAJESTY'S Third Son, in his naval Uni- | form, on board the Prince George, attended | by Admiral Digby" (illus. 3).

CONTENTS; Titlepage (p. 1); Simple Interest at 5 l. per Cent. from 1 Pound to 1000 (p. 2); Laws at Quadrille (pp. 3-4); Good Natured Credulity. A Fable (pp. 4-6); Entertainment [experiments, anecdotes, &c] (pp. 6-11); Rules to be observed respecting Hackney Coachmen (p. 12); Memorandums for the beginning of the Year 1780 [largely blank, to be filled in] (pp. [13-15]); Memorandum pages for January 1780-December 1780 (pp. [15-120]); The

Pride of Rank and Opulence abased, a story (pp. 121-126); Select Pieces of Poetry [from Sheridan, Isaac Watts, &c] (pp. 127-140); New Songs (pp. 140-144). N.B. There is a catchword on the last page, strongly implying that there is a gathering or more missing from the Huntington copy. The missing pages should contain the New Country Dances and the Marketing Tables, &c.

COLLATION: 12° in sixes: A-M<sup>6</sup>; 12 gatherings.

This volume has been used very sporadically by a contemporary for notes, appointments, &c., e.g., Friday January 28th: "M<sup>r</sup> Sawbridge and F. Sawbridge set out for Hackney"; there are repeated other references to Mr. Sawbridge, to Weston and Hackney and Portland Place.

The Huntington pocket book arrived in 1973 with 50 similar items. There must be many others still in existence. The nature of the publication strongly suggests that there were issues for other years, and other copies for this and other years must be extant.

Having found a book which fits with the Johnson name, the illustration of "FULL DRESS and UNDRRESS now worn," I'm convinced we have found the correct series. *The National Union Catalog* and the British Library catalogue supplements were rapidly consulted with no new discoveries. Searches in the various computer listings were followed eagerly. Through RLIN, the on-line Research Libraries Information Network, I located and saw at the Folger Shakespeare Library

THE | LADIES | NEW AND POLITE |  
Pocket Memorandum-Book, | For the  
Year of our Lord 1778. | ... | Embellished  
with a beautiful Copper-Plate, repre-  
senting the NINE LIVING MUSES of  
GREAT BRITAIN, | in the Temple of Apo-  
llo, viz. Miss Carter, Mrs. | Barbauld, Mrs.  
Montagu, Mrs. Angelica Kauffman, | Mrs.  
Macauley, Miss More, Mrs. Lenox, Mrs.  
Grif- | fiths, and Mrs. Sheridan. | Also the  
MOST ELEGANT | and GENTEEL FULL  
DRESS and UNDRRESS worn. | ... | LON-  
DON: | Printed for J. JOHNSON, No. 72,  
St. Paul's Church-yard [1777]. | [To be con-  
tinued annually. Price One Shilling]

And the on-line ESTC (1992) directed me to an edition for 1789 in the

John Johnson Collection in Bodley:

THE | LADIES | NEW AND POLITE |  
Pocket Memorandum-Book, | For the Year  
of our Lord 1789. | ... | Embellished with  
a beautiful Copper-Plate, representing |  
two Ladies in the most fashionable Dresses  
now worn; | also an elegant Engraving of  
Somerset-Place from the | Water [missing  
in the Bodley copy]. | ... | LONDON: |  
Printed for J. JOHNSON, ... [1788].

We now know that an annual publication entitled *The Ladies New and Complete Pocket Memorandum-Book* was published by Joseph Johnson beginning as early as 1777 and continuing at least through 1788. Of the three copies now located, for 1778, 1780, and 1789, those for 1778 and 1780 certainly have two images engraved on one plate designed so that the printed sheet could be folded, leaving the prints to face one another, like Blake's, and that for 1789 apparently did so (the second engraving announced on the title page is missing from the Bodley copy). Each of the three editions offers fashion illustration, two of them using the same wording as in Blake's engravings: "Full Dress and Undress worn." The two illustrations of royalty (1780, 1783) and the one of the muses of Apollo (1778) show a related interest in elegant subjects.

Now we know we should be looking for a copy of the memorandum book for the year 1783, since presumably such annuals were published before the new year so that they could be sold in time for use on 1 January. The November 1782 date in the imprint of Blake's plate fits such a pattern. I am convinced that copies will turn up and will continue my pursuit.

What we should expect to find is this:

THE | LADIES | NEW AND POLITE  
| Pocket Memorandum-Book, | For the  
Year of our Lord 1783. | Being the Twenty-  
third of King George III, and the | Thirty-  
second of the New Style in Great Britain. |  
Embellished with a beautiful Copper-Plate,  
representing The Morning Amusements of  
Her Royal Highness | the Princess Royal &  
Her 4 Sisters; also a Lady | in the FULL  
DRESS & another in the Most Fashionable  
UNDRESS now worn. | CONTAINING,  
| [2 columns: column 1:] I. A Useful Memo-  
randum | Book, &c. &c. &c. II. Table of  
Interest . . . [End of columns.] LONDON:  
| Printed for J. JOHNSON, No. 72, St.  
Paul's Church-yard [1782]. | [To be con-  
tinued annually. Price One Shilling.]

COLLATION: 12° in sixes: A-N<sup>6</sup>; 12.2 x 7.6 cm.

There has to be a *Ladies New and Polite Pocket Memorandum-Book* . . . for 1783 . . . Printed for J. JOHNSON waiting for us somewhere.

<sup>1</sup> Francis Thomson, "The Kingdom of God," stanza 4.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake, "Pictor Ignotus,"* 2 vols. (London and Cambridge: Macmillan and Co., 1863) 1: 51 and 2: 259.

<sup>3</sup> A. C. Coxhead, *Thomas Stotbard, R.A.* (London: Bullen, 1906) 42-47.

<sup>4</sup> Archibald G. B. Russell, *The Engravings of William Blake* (London: Grant Richards, Ltd., 1912) 142.

<sup>5</sup> Geoffrey Keynes, *A Bibliography of William Blake* (New York: The Grolier Club, 1921) 226.

<sup>6</sup> G. E. Bentley, Jr., & Martin K. Nurmi, *A Blake Bibliography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1964) 136.

<sup>7</sup> G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Books* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) 591.

<sup>8</sup> The receipt is in Princeton University Library (*Blake Books* 592).

<sup>9</sup> Robert N. Essick, *The Separate Plates of William Blake* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) 239-41 and figures 108-09. They are omitted from his *William Blake's Commercial Book Illustrations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), because he excludes "plates probably executed for publication in books but known only through separate impressions" (vi).

<sup>10</sup> Shelley M. Bennett, *Thomas Stotbard* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1988) 65-66. The "1778 volume" of "*The Ladies Complete Pocket Book*" which she locates in the "British Library (P.P. 2469 cl [I])" is, according to the British Library Catalogue, for 1769, not "1778."

## Corrections for the Blake Trust *Jerusalem*

Morton D. Paley



### Corrections in the transcription of Blake's text:

P. 250, 72:50. There should not be a gap between the sixth and seventh words of text, which should read:

South Fenelon

The first part of the inscription in the design (transcribed on the second line of commentary) should read:

Continually Building. Continually Decaying

P. 295, 98: 45: the Coventet of Jehovah should read:

the Coventet Jehovah

### Corrections in editorial matter:

Page/line	now reads	should read
9, 19 down	have been existed	have existed
14, 2 up	41 [46]	46 [41]
15, 15 down	34 [48]	38 [34]
126, 15 up	Hammer	Hammer'
127, 2 up	<i>Jerusalem</i>	<i>Jerusalemi</i>
130, 8 up	<i>Raine</i>	( <i>Raine</i>
131, 11 down	end	and
142, 9 down	Circumcising	'Circumcising
147, top	[plate no. missing]	12
150, 3 up	<i>Raine, Blake</i>	<i>Raine (Blake</i>
164, 11 up	21	20
168, 23 down	constrasts	contrasts
173, 5 up	<i>betewen</i>	<i>between</i>
193, 22 down	47: 7-11	48: 7-11
194, 7 down	41 [47]	41 [37]
195, 12 down	Gray	Grey
204, 22 up	36 [40]	40 [36]
207, 6 down	<i>Symbols</i>	<i>Symbols</i> 454)
210, 5 up	Liberty', <i>MHH</i>	Liberty' ( <i>MHH</i>
211, 13 down	<i>Death</i>	Death
217, 22 up	They	'They
219, 19 up	(69: 43).	(69: 43.)
231, 3 up	Mesrach	Meshach
11 up	I shall	shall I
239, 10 down	345	345)
240, 4 down	superstitions	superstitions
255, 5 up	3	5
256, bottom	Church.	Church'
256, bottom	Beer, <i>Blake's</i>	Beer ( <i>Blake's</i>
269, 13 up	Bath-Rabbin	Bath-rabbim
274, 10 up	86: 22	86: 32
281, 22 down	40	41
291, 6 down	Night and Ninth	Night the Ninth
293, 16 down	99	97
295, 8 up	wihch	which
299, 18 up	<i>Jerusalem.</i>	<i>Jerusalem.'</i>
300, 8 up	Manuscript.	Manuscript.'

### Corrections to the placement or line references of notes:

P. 193: n. to 40 [36]: 20 refers to line 21

P. 200: n. to 43 [38]: 55 refers to line 54

P. 204: n. to line 15 belongs on p. 181, after the first sentence of the note to 32 [46]: 15 there

P. 227: n. to 60: 17 refers to line 18

P. 245: n. to 69: 29 refers to lines 28-9

P. 246: n. to 69: 31-2 refers to lines 30-1

P. 246: n. to 69: 39 ought to precede n. to line 41

P. 255: n. to 74: 51-3 ought to precede n. to line 55

P. 280: n. to 80: 1 refers to 80: 1-3

P. 281: n. to 89: 47 refers to lines 46-7

n. to 89: 23-4 refers to lines 24-7

P. 288: n. to 93: 10 refers to 1-18, and in line 5 of the note reference is to line 18, not line 17, of text

P. 292: n. to 96: 9 refers to lines 8-9 and 17

P. 293: n. to 97: 14 should precede n. to line 15

P. 295: n. to 98: 45 should precede n. to lines 46-53

Three books to which reference is made in the editorial apparatus should be added to the list of *Works Cited*:

David Fuller. *Blake's Heroic Argument*. London: Croom Helm, 1988.

Morton D. Paley. *Energy and the Imagination*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

Joanne Witke. *William Blake and Human Imagination*. London: Croom Helm, 1986.

For their contributions to this list of corrections, I am indebted to Dr. David Fuller (University of Durham), Professor John E. Grant (University of Iowa), Professor Terence Hoagwood (Texas A & M University), and Mr. Thomas L. van der Voort (Alexandria, Virginia).

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**NEWSLETTER**


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### *Satan Arousing the Rebel Angels*

Blake's 1808 watercolor, *Satan Arousing the Rebel Angels*, from the series of *Paradise Lost* illustrations commissioned by Butts, has been reproduced by dust-grain gravure, a rarely used continuous-tone process similar to aquatint, by Hugh Stoneman at the Print Centre, London. Dust-grain gravure was developed in the nineteenth century for monochromatic printing. This is the first time it has been used to produce a print in color, requiring three plates. Each print is extensively colored by hand after printing.

Blake's *Satan* is being issued in the Victoria & Albert Museum's Masterprints series, which also includes several other reproductions, by various media, of works from the National Collection of British Watercolours in the V&A. The prints are issued in certified, hand-numbered editions of 575 and range in price from \$300 to \$475. *Satan Arousing the Rebel Angels* (image size 20.5 inches x 15.5 inches, on a sheet approx. 30.5 by 24.5 inches) is listed at \$475. It is being made available to *Blake's* subscribers for \$425, including shipping. Send orders to V&A Masterprints, 48 South Molton Street, London W1Y2JU; telephone 071-499-5582; fax 071-491-9985.

### *Blake's Subscription Rates Rise*

Due to the rising production and postage costs, *Blake* is raising its subscription rates. For individuals, the rate increase begins with volume 26, 1992-93. Institution rates will rise for volume 27, 1993-94. The new rates are as follows:

Individuals:	\$25/year
Institutions:	\$50/year
Postal surcharges:	Surface: \$8 Airmail: \$18

#### New advertising rates:

Half-page ad:	\$100
Full-page ad:	\$140
Inserts:	\$125

