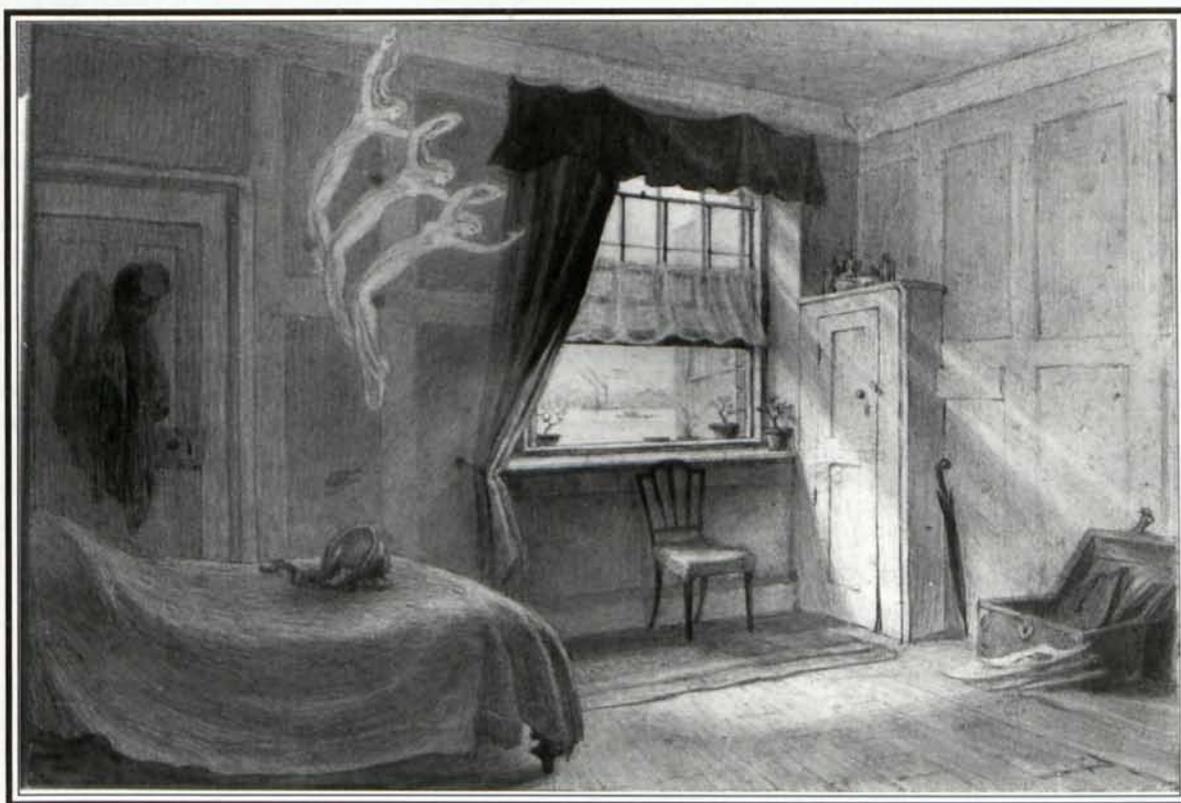


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COVER ILLUSTRATION: Frederic Shields, *Blake's Work-Room and Death-Room*, monochrome was drawing, c. 1880-1890. Collection of Robert N. Essick

Blake's Death

BY LANE ROBSON AND JOSEPH VISCOMI

But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul, is to be expunged; this I shall do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid.

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, plate 14

Between the spring of 1824 and July 1827, the month before he died, William Blake regularly visited John Linnell and his family at their cottage, Collins Farm, in Hampstead, missing the visits only when ill, which was an increasing problem during his last year.¹ On Tuesday, 3 July 1827, Blake thanked Linnell "for the Ten Pounds" he had just sent and informed him that his "journey to Hampstead on Sunday brought on a relapse which is lasted till now. I find I am not so well as I thought I must not go on in a youthful Style—however I am upon the mending hand to day & hope soon to look as I did for I have been yellow accompanied by all the old Symptoms."² This news would not have surprised Linnell; he knew that Blake often blamed the Hampstead air for bringing about his "old Symptoms," which included fever and stomach pains (*BR* 306; *E* 775). And, no doubt, since Blake's health was the subject of 17 of his 19 extant personal letters to Linnell over the last 29 months (Keynes 156-70), Linnell was accustomed to Blake's optimistic and reassuring diagnoses. But Linnell must have suspected the worst.³ Indeed, from the summer of 1818, when the two artists met, to early 1825, there is no record of personal letters, only business transactions, because they met regularly, going to exhibitions, galleries, plays, and various social gatherings (*BR* 256-310). The letters were occasioned by Blake's illness, and when read together they reveal a pattern of illness waxing and waning and a man

We would like to thank Aileen Ward, Morton Paley, and G. E. Bentley Jr. for reading earlier versions of this paper and for their helpful suggestions.

¹ Linnell moved his family to Hampstead on 6 March 1824; Blake's first recorded visit is 18 May 1824. A. H. Palmer said that his father Samuel and Blake "often walked up to the village together" (Bentley, *Blake Records* 286, 292; hereafter cited as *BR*).

² Erdman, David V., ed. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (New York: Doubleday, 1988) 785. Hereafter cited as *E*.

³ In addition to these 19 letters and notices, Blake wrote in his last two years two short notes to Mrs. Linnell, one to Maria Denman, another to Mrs. Aders excusing himself from one of her salons due to illness, and a long letter to Cumberland (*E* 774, 776, 781, 783). The only full-length study of Blake's letters, by David Wells, virtually ignores the last letters, spending only three paragraphs on them (120-21).

Based on extant letters, Blake's epistolary efforts during his last years

more anxious about his work being disrupted than his life ending. Linnell had already expressed serious concern about Blake's health by the summer of 1826, when he had hoped to move Blake to Hampstead so that he would be nearby (*BR* 338; Gilchrist 1: 350), and he did so again on 7 February 1827, when he encouraged Blake to live at Cirencester Place (*BR* 338), an idea that Blake refused after much anxious reflection (*E* 782).⁴ Now, with this new letter of 3 July 1827, despite Blake's optimism and good cheer, Linnell must have been alarmed, for the "old Symptoms" were accompanied by something new and frightening: the yellowing of Blake's skin.

The letter was Blake's last; he died six weeks later. The yellow skin signified jaundice, a yellowish discoloration of tissue and bodily fluids with bile pigment, which is caused by a variety of pathological conditions that interfere with the normal processing of bile—the liquid secreted by the liver and stored in the gallbladder. J. T. Smith and Frederick Tatham both attributed Blake's death to "gall [i.e., bile] mixing with the blood" (*BR* 475, 528); Mona Wilson attributed it to "gall-stones" (297); and Sir Geoffrey Keynes, the esteemed Blake scholar who was also a respected fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of London, attributed it to "gallstones and inflammation of the gallbladder" (156n1). Most recently, Aileen Ward attributed Blake's death to "a ruptured gallbladder with attendant peritonitis" (15). The latter part of her diagnosis, as we argue here, is probably incorrect, whereas the less detailed diagnoses about the gallbladder are nearer the truth, in that they attribute Blake's death to a problem in the liver and bile ducts. Recent improvements in our understanding of the diseases of the biliary tract, however, allow a more precise speculation regarding the cause of Blake's death. A modern and more

were slight compared to those exerted during the period of 1800 to 1805, which includes 54 letters, but they were more extensive than those for the periods of 1791 to 1799 and 1806 to 1819, which includes only six and nine letters respectively (excluding receipts to Butts and including two letters to magazines). Letters from 1800 to 1805 reveal a Blake either "Emit[ting] sparks of fire" (*E* 709) or entering "a Deep pit of Melancholy, Melancholy without any real reason for it, a disease which God keep you from and all good men" (2 July 1800, *E* 706). Blake was aware of depression's effect on his work and wife, and, though puzzled over its cause, always prescribed work as the antidote (*E* 706, 719-20, 724, 756, 767). From these letters comes the speculation that Blake's artistic and spiritual crises were forms of depression, filled with anxiety and self-doubt (Wells 82-85, Jamison 92-95).

⁴ Linnell wrote in his journal: "February 7. To Mr Blake to speak to him @ living at C[irencester] P[lace]." But Cirencester Place was the name of a street near Fitzroy Square, where Blake's brother James lived and where Linnell had his London studio/residence. As Bentley explains, the "reference does not make clear whether the Blakes were to move into Linnell's studio, into independent lodgings, or into the building where Blake's brother James lived" (*BR* 338 and n3). Given that Linnell's objective appears to have been to keep a closer eye on Blake, it seems reasonable to assume that he hoped to move Blake closer to him and other of his friends in that neighborhood, which included Flaxman and Thomas Butts.

specific description of the cause might be liver failure due to biliary cirrhosis. Cirrhosis is an irreversible alteration of the liver architecture consisting of hepatic fibrosis and areas of nodular regeneration (Wynngaarden, Smith, and Bennett 786). A variety of disease processes can lead to cirrhosis. When it develops due to obstruction in the biliary system, it is called biliary cirrhosis. A review of the available information on Blake's illness and a close reading of Blake's and his contemporaries' descriptions of his illness suggests that among the currently recognized causes of biliary cirrhosis the most likely is sclerosing cholangitis.

Ascertaining the probable cause of Blake's death, while of significant biographical importance in itself, can provide relevant information about the man as well as his biographers, for it enables us to assess Frederick Tatham's account of Blake's final illness being accompanied with "agonies of pain" and Ward's recent challenge to the legend that Blake burst into song on his deathbed (14-15). It also provides a clearer picture of when and how Blake managed to produce his last paintings and illuminated books despite a recurring illness that kept him bedridden for days at a time. Of significant interest are reports that sclerosing cholangitis might be caused or aggravated by chronic copper intoxication (LaRusso 901, Weisner 204-05, Gross 277), raising the possibility that Blake died from a lifetime exposure to copper, or, more specifically, to the fumes from the chemical reaction of nitric acid and copper—the "corrosives" of his own "infernal method."

Sclerosing cholangitis occurs most commonly in individuals with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), a chronic diarrheal disease (Sherlock 249, Shorter 311). Alexander Gilchrist, Blake's first biographer, states that Blake "was a perpetual sufferer from intermittent attacks of cold and dysentery" (1: 347). The modern interpretation of a "cold" is an upper respiratory infection, "an inflammatory condition of the mucous membranes of the respiratory organs, accompanied by catarrh, hoarseness, and cough" (OED). In the eighteenth century, however, the term was more flexible, referring also to "an indisposition of the body caused by exposure to cold" (OED). Blake appears to have used the term in both these senses. In a letter sent on 30 January 1803 from Felpham to his brother James, Blake says: "I have no Ague but have had a Cold this Winter"; he also claimed that "the air tho warm is unhealthy" and acknowledged that "I was really very ill when I wrote [Butts] the last time" (i.e., 10 January 1803). When he returned to London, he wrote Hayley of his "violent cold which confind me to my bed 3 days & to my chamber a week" (E 725-26, 740). But in a letter to John Linnell on 1 February 1826, Blake referred to a "cold in my stomach" (E 775), indicating a gastrointestinal illness. Gastrointestinal "colds" and dysentery are consistent with the speculation that Blake had IBD, a chronic (Gilchrist's "perpetual") diarrheal disease characterized by exacerbations and remissions (Gilchrist's "intermittent").

Unfortunately, with only nine known letters between 1 July 1806 and March 1825 (and only four or five of these could be called personal), the documentary evidence necessary to trace a pattern in his health during these years is absent. However, to Henry Crabb Robinson, apparently on their first visit at the Aders on 10 December 1825, Blake spoke of "a bowel complaint which nearly killed him." The cause, according to Blake, was Wordsworth's "preface to the Excursion" (BR 325).⁵ When Blake read the *Excursion*, published in 1814, is not known, but Flaxman had been similarly offended by the same passage, as he told Robinson on 19 December 1814. As Bentley surmises, "it would not be surprising if Flaxman and Blake had talked about the offensive passage" (BR 312n3). If so, then Blake's IBD may have been present this early. Blake himself, though, seems to admit that his stomach colds were present even earlier, while he was "young," and that they had been precipitated not by literature but by all points north of London. In his 1 February 1826 letter, he tells Linnell:

I am forced to write because . . . I am again laid up by a cold in my stomach the Hampstead Air as it always did. so I fear it always will do . . . I believe my Constitution to be a good one but it has many peculiarities that no one but myself can know. When I was young Hampstead Highgate Hornsea Muswell Hill & even Islington & all places North of London always laid me up the day after & sometimes two or three days with precisely the same Complaint & the same torment of the Stomach. Easily removed but excruciating while it lasts & enfeebling for some time after . . . (E 775)⁶

What the 68 year-old Blake means by "young" is uncertain, but a reasonable guess would be his twenties and thirties, that is, in the 1780s and 1790s. This would be consis-

⁵ In his diary, Robinson records Blake as saying that "he had been much pained by readg the introduction to the excursion It brought on a fit of illness" (BR 312); in his *Reminiscences*, he states that "The Preface to the Excursion especially the Verses quoted from book I. of the Recluse, so troubled him as to bring on a fit of illness" (BR 545); but to Dorothy Wordsworth he identified the illness as a "bowel complaint." The offending passage expressed the idea of passing Jehovah "unalarmed."

⁶ In response to Mrs. Linnell's statement that Hampstead was a healthy place, Blake asserted: "It is a lie! It is no such thing" (BR 306). Perhaps Gilchrist had this response and letter in mind when he said that Blake "cherished a wilful dislike to Hampstead, and to all the northern suburbs of London" (1: 353).

The subject of Blake's compass symbolism is too complex to pursue here, but note that Urizen was banished to the north by the eternals and that Blake describes bowels negatively ("To Klopstock") and positively. Bowlahoola, in *Milton*, puns on bowels and corresponds to stomach, heart, and lungs; as it houses Los and the imagination, it is the positive side to the fourth stage of humanity, which is Or-Ulro, situated in "the Stomach and Intestines, terrible, deadly, unutterable" (E 134) Further study of Blake's health may provide surer grounds for such biological and anatomical passages.

tent with Tatham's statement that Blake "and his Wife" went on very long walks "in his youth" (BR 527). Blake's walks to villages north of London may have continued to at least 1808, when Thomas Butts appears to have moved from a house in Dalston to Fitzroy Square (Viscomi "Green House" 12).

When signs of IBD first began to reveal themselves is not known, but they appear to have been chronic or "perpetual," as Gilchrist says. If Blake suffered from IBD in his "youth," then it was probably still present at the end of his life, which would be consistent with Blake's behavior, for, while he regularly speaks of his health improving and of his ability to continue working, he also says he dare not leave the house. That it was intermittent is evinced by Linnell's journal, which records his and Blake's going to Lahee's, the City, and an exhibition in March, April, and May 1825 (BR 301).

If Blake had IBD complicated by sclerosing cholangitis, the final stages of his illness began about 29 months before his death, as indicated by Blake's undated letter to Linnell, which appears to have been written in early March 1825, making it the first extant personal letter to Linnell:

A return of the old Shivering Fit came on this Morning as soon as I awaked & I am now in Bed—Better & as I think almost well If I can possibly I will be at Mr Lahees tomorrow Morning. these attacks are too serious at the time to permit me to be out of Bed. but they go off by rest which seems to be All that I want . . . (E 773)⁷

A shivering fit is the nineteenth-century description of fever and chills (Elliotson 140), symptoms that can occur in individuals with IBD and particularly in those with sclerosing cholangitis (Wyndgaarden, Smith, and Bennett 701,

⁷ This letter was written on "12 O Clock Wednesday," which may have been 2 March 1825. The letter informs Linnell that Blake will try but may miss the appointment with Lahee, the printer of the *Illustrations of the Book of Job*. Linnell records a meeting with Lahee and Blake for Saturday 5 March 1825 (BR 300), which suggests that Blake's letter was written 2 March and the meeting was put off for two more days due to Blake's illness. Erdman dates the letter "March" (773) while Keynes merely places it before the next letter, dated 7 June 1825 (156). Both editors, though, consider it the first known letter to Linnell. It is also Blake's first extant letter since 11 October 1819; all correspondence between these dates consists of receipts and the contract with Linnell for *Job*. The unaddressed letter of 11 October 1819 may have been to Linnell, as Erdman and Keynes speculate, but this seems unlikely, given its tone and a provenance in which Linnell or Samuel Palmer (Linnell's son-in-law) do not figure (there is only one Linnell document of 32 that fits this description; see Keynes 225 #173). In October of 1819, Blake was frequently seeing John Varley, of Visionary Heads fame (BR 259), and in the letter he mentions meeting up with the engraver and watercolorist Thomas Heaphy, who in 1807 became a member of the Old Watercolor Society, of which Varley was a founding member. The two men must have known one another, whereas there is no evidence that Heaphy and Linnell were friends. Whoever the recipient, though, the letter is of interest regarding Blake's health, for Blake ends it with: "hoping that I may meet you again in perfect Health & Happiness." Is Blake alluding to his health or that of the addressee?

Schiff 1312). Chills and fever develop in about fifty percent of individuals with sclerosing cholangitis (Schiff 1312). That the "old" symptoms "returned" suggests that Blake experienced similar problems for some time, reconfirming the chronic and intermittent nature of the illness.

In his second letter to Linnell, Blake described his problem as "ague." On 7 June 1825, he wrote that

on account of this abominable Ague or whatever it is I am in Bed & at Work my health I cannot speak of for if it was not for Cold weather I think I should soon get about again . . . I can draw as well a Bed as Up & perhaps better but I cannot Engrave I am going on with Dante & please myself . . . (E 773-74)⁸

In the nineteenth century, "ague" was a term used to describe a feverish illness with chills and sweating (Clutterbuck 756, Elliotson 140-41).⁹ If Catherine Blake's ague during the Felpham years is any evidence, this could be a debilitating condition; nevertheless, Blake characteristically refused to be disrupted and actually found work therapeutic.¹⁰

Blake may have spent much of the summer of 1825 in bed; there are no documents extant from July 1825 to prove or disprove this, but on 6 August 1825, Linnell received a letter from Edward Thomas Daniell, who stated: "I am sorry to hear poor Mr Blake is so unwell but hope he may recover, again to use [h]is pencil and graver" (BR 301). Daniell got his wish, for Linnell and Blake visited the Aders on that day. Clearly, the illness continued to come and go, raising

⁸ The 102 Dante drawings, in varying degrees of completion, and the seven unfinished engravings figure prominently in Blake's last letters, between March 1825 and July 1827. They apparently overlapped with other work, like late temperas, watercolors, the *Laocoön* engraving, the unfinished *Pilgrim's Progress* drawings, and reprints of the *Songs* (copies U, X, Y, W, Z, AA), *Marriage* (copy I), and *Jerusalem* (copy F) (see Butlin 1: 481, 775-77, 798-802, 805-07, 811, 812.1-102, 813-26, 827.1-5, 828.1-11, 829.1-29, 830-34; Essick and Viscomi 240-43; Viscomi, *Blake* chap. 35). The 102 drawings were not, in other words, completed in a fortnight in October of 1824, while Blake was in bed due to a scalded foot, as Palmer recalled many years later (BR 291). Indeed, if Blake had begun the Dante drawings that early, then they overlapped with the *Job* engravings. If so, perhaps this is another sign of Blake's intermittent illness, which placed him in bed and prevented him from engraving the *Job*. Linnell did not begin paying for the Dante by name until 28 January 1825 (Keynes 152), but perhaps he had been paying for it "on acct" since 2 February 1824 (Keynes 148).

⁹ According to the OED, "ague" refers now "more usually to the cold or shivering stage" of a fever, but initially it referred to "the burning or feverish stage."

¹⁰ Blake's complaints about his and Catherine's health seem genuine and not designed either to elicit sympathy from his brother James or justify to Hayley his leaving Felpham. Catherine was especially bothered there, suffering from "Agues & Rheumatisms" apparently during most of her stay and the fall of 1803 back in London (E 725, 738). Catherine remained sick through January 1804: "My poor wife has been near the Gates of Death" (E 740). Little wonder that Blake believed that "if sickness comes all is unpleasant," and "only illness makes all uncomfortable & this we must prevent by every means in our power" (E 726-27).

Blake's hopes only to disappoint him with further relapses. In September, he may have visited Palmer in Shoreham (BR 302 and n2); in October, he visited the Linnells at Hampstead at least twice. He wrote Mrs. Linnell on 11 October to say "I hope to see you on Sunday morning as usual," and he did so, on 16 October, as her journal for 18 October records: "Mr Blake came as usual" (BR 305). But on 10 November, Blake wrote Linnell that

I cannot get Well & am now in Bed but seem as if I should be better tomorrow rest does me good—Pray take care of your health this wet weather & tho I write do not venture out on such days as today has been. I hope a few more days will bring us to a conclusion . . . (E 774-75)

By December, Blake's health appears to have improved substantially. On 10 December, he attended a dinner party at the Aders, where he met Robinson, who paid him long visits on 17 and 24 December and 6 January 1826. But, as noted, Blake told Linnell on 1 February 1826 that he was "again laid up by a cold in [his] stomach," supposedly because of "the Hampstead Air" (E 775). Seventeen days later, Blake received Robinson for a morning chat (BR 321), and though Robinson makes no mention of Blake's health, it seems that it was deteriorating. On 31 March 1826, Blake described his condition:

I have been very ill since I saw you but am again well enough to go on with my work but not well enough to venture out. the Chill of the weather soon drives me back into that shivering fit which must be avoided till the Cold is gone . . . if the weather should be warm I will endeavour to come to you before Tuesday but much fear that my present tottering state will hold me some time yet. (E 776)

Blake sounds much as he did exactly one year earlier, when he first described his condition as a "return of the old Shivering Fit," but now he compounds his description with the phrase "tottering state," which reveals Blake's awareness of himself as significantly weakening.

The illness continued to wax and wane, but through it all Blake continued to work. In April, he wrote Linnell: "I am still far from recoverd & dare not get out in the cold air. Yet I lose nothing by it Dante goes on the better which is all I care about" (E 777).¹¹ On 12 May, Blake attended a party at Robinson's, but on 19 May, he wrote Linnell to cancel his upcoming Sunday visit to Hampstead because of the "shivering fits." This time, though, he also described "forcing sweats," a nineteenth-century treatment for fever (Clutterbuck 760):

¹¹ Keynes mistakenly dates this letter April 1827 (168). It can be dated a year earlier because Blake mentions that "Mr. Butts is to have a Proof Copy for Three Guineas," which Linnell duly recorded in his cash account book for 29 April 1826 (Keynes 148).

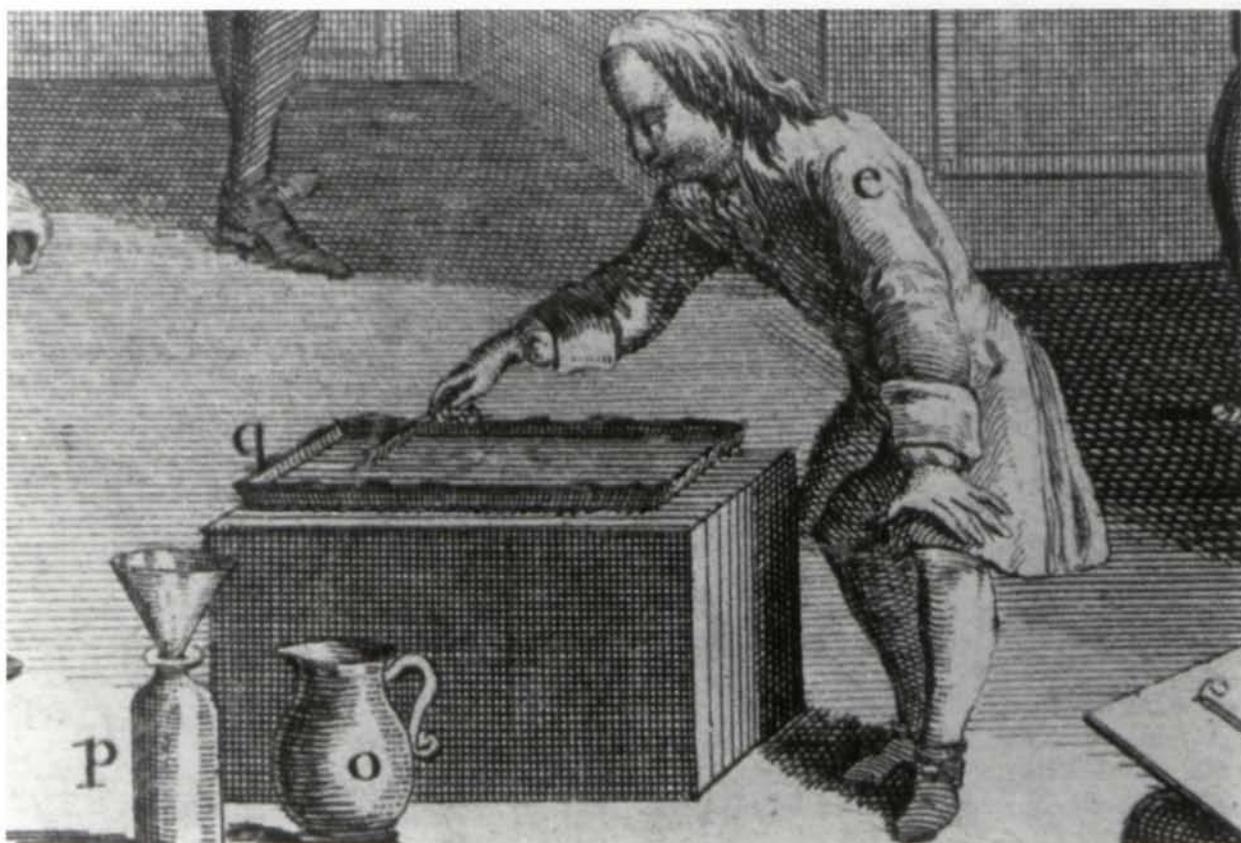


1 Etching the copper plate in a trough; detail. *Encyclopedie*, 1767.

I have had another desperate Shivering Fit. it came on yesterday afternoon after as good a morning as I ever experienced. It began by a gnawing Pain in the Stomach & soon spread. a deathly feel all over the limbs which brings on the shivering fit when I am forced to go to bed where I contrive to get into a little Perspiration which takes it quite away. It was night when it left me so I did not get up but just as I was going to rise this morning the shivering fit attackd me again & the pain with its accompanying deathly feel I got again into a perspiration & was well but so much weakend that I am still in bed. (E 777)

There are no letters from June, but Robinson paid Blake a visit on the 13th and found him "as wild as ever" and contending that "wives should be in common" (BR 548). The rest of the summer, though, was miserable, as Blake's letters clearly reveal. On 2 July 1826, Blake described progressive symptoms and signs of weakness:

I also feel Myself weaker than I was aware, being not able as yet to sit up longer than six hours at a time. & also feel the Cold too much to dare venture beyond my present precincts. . . . But I get better & stronger every day, tho weaker in muscle & bone than I supposed. . . . I intend to bring . . . My Book of Drawings from Dante & one Plate shut up in the Book . . . [but]



2 Etching the copper plate diked in wax and feathering away gas bubbles; detail. *Encyclopédie*, 1751-52.

I fear I could not go thro [the coach's "rumble"] So . . . conclude another Week must pass before I dare Venture upon what I ardently desire—the seeing you with your happy Family once again & that for a longer Period than I had ever hoped in my health full hours. (E 778)

A letter written three days later, on 5 July 1826, describes a remission:

I am getting better every hour my Plan is diet only & if the Machine is capable of it shall make an old man yet: I go on Just as If perfectly well which indeed I am except in those paroxysms which I now believe will never more return. (E 778)¹²

The illness, which appeared to be in remission for at least 11 days, left him weaker but hopeful. He writes on 14 July: "I am so much better that I have hopes of fulfilling my expectation & desire of Visiting Hampstead I am nevertheless very considerably weakend by the last severe attacks"

¹² By "Machine," Blake seems ironically to mean his body, in the sense that "whatever enters . . . the Ulro" or material world, "Becomes Sexual, & is Created, and Vegetated, and Born . . . the Spectrous Uncircumcised Vegetation. / Forming a Sexual Machine: an Aged Virgin Form" (*Jerusalem* 44: 21-25, E 186-87).

(E 778). The relentless nature of his illness led Blake, though hopeful, to obtain new medical advice, but his letter from 16 July 1826 is the only mention of a specific therapy for his illness apart from diet, rest, and forcing sweats:

I have been ever since taking Dr Youngs Addition to Mr Finchams Practise with me ([It] <The Addition> is dandelion) In a Species of Delireum, & in Pain too much for Thought It is now passed as I hope. . . . (E 779)¹³

Dandelion is a folk remedy used to stimulate the liver or to treat gallstones. The medicinal use of dandelion suggests that a liver or biliary problem might have been diagnosed as the cause of Blake's symptoms prior to the development of the jaundice.

¹³ On 29 April 1826, Linnell sold a copy of the *Job* engravings to "Mr George Young, surgeon brother of [Charles Mayne] Young the actor" (BR 600). But George is probably not the Young of the letter, since he is a surgeon and the designation "Doctor" suggests a physician, as is still customary. The Young who treated Blake was probably Dr. James Forbes Young, a physician living in Lambeth, about 30 years old at the time of Blake's death. He was also a licensed apothecary and an eminent botanist, which is consistent with a prescription of dandelion, as well as a print collector (*Medical Times & Gazette* 46). Fincham was probably Mr. George Fincham, a surgeon who worked at Bartholomew's Hospi-

Blake's hopes for a visit were soon dashed by a new affliction. On 29 July 1826—about one year before his death—he described the new symptom:

Just as I had become Well. that is subdued the disease. tho not its Effects Weakness &c Comes Another to hinder my Progress call'd The Piles which when to the degree I have had them are a most sore plague & on a Weak Body truly afflictive. These Piles have now also as I hope run their Period. & I begin to again feel returning Strength. on these accounts I cannot yet tell when I can start for Hampstead like a young Lark without feathers. Two or Three days may be sufficient or not, all now will depend on my bones & sinews Muscle I have none but a few days may do & have done miracles in the Case of a Convalescent who prepares himself ardently for his return to Life & its Business among his Friends. (E 780)

The development of hemorrhoids (piles) suggests that the sclerosing cholangitis has progressed to biliary cirrhosis.¹⁴

Blake's optimistic diagnosis notwithstanding, he would never again return to his old vigorous self. He did, however, feel strong enough to visit the Linnells the following week. On 1 August, he informs Linnell that he will set out on Thursday (3 August) in a

Cabriolet. for tho getting better & stronger I am still incapable of riding in the Stage & shall be I fear for some time being only bones & sinews All strings & bobbins like a Weavers Loom. Walking to & from the Stage would be to me impossible tho I seem well being entirely free from both pain & from that Sickness to which there is no name. Thank God I feel no more of it & have great hopes that the Disease is Gone. (E 780-81)

It wasn't. But even with his illness in remission, Blake had lost much weight and was left significantly weakened in body, though not in mind or inspiration. He brought the Dante drawings and continued to work on them (BR

tal and later Westminster Hospital (*The London and Provincial Medical Directory* 134). In a postscript to his letter, Blake identifies him as a "Pupil of Abernathy's," which gave him "great pleasure" (E 780). John Abernathy was a prominent surgeon of the time at St. Bartholomew's Hospital and wrote a variety of books on surgery.

A report in the *Lancet* recommends copper sulphate for the treatment of dysentery (vol. 11, 524-25), which raises the possibility that Blake may have been treated with copper sulphate, since this treatment was current during the final years of his life.

¹⁴ One of the consequences of cirrhosis is obstruction to the flow of blood through the liver. This leads to increased pressure and enlargement of the veins that drain into the liver. Because the hemorrhoidal veins drain into the liver, hemorrhoids are common in cirrhosis (Wynngaarden 792).



3 *Marriage* plate 10 executed as an etching, 15.3 x 10.1 cm; the design cut through the ground with a needle.

333). The use of a cabriolet—a two-wheeled, one-horse carriage with two seats and a folding top—was certainly out of character, but apparently necessary because it could provide door-to-door delivery and perhaps a more comfortable ride than the "rumble" and bouncing of the larger stage he so feared. In light of these concerns and his condition, the speculation that Blake visited Edward Calvert in Brixton the following month (BR 333) ought to give pause—or did Blake make similar arrangements for transportation?

By his own account, in letters and to Robinson on 7 December, Blake had been "very ill during the Summer" of 1826, and when Robinson told him of Flaxman's recent death, Blake said: "I thought I should have gone first" (BR 337). The fall held no improvement. No letters or documents from the fall of 1826 (September, October, and November) are extant, but a letter to Linnell from Edward Denny on 20 November regarding the *Job* engravings acknowledges Linnell's concern for Blake's health: "I am very sorry to hear that Mr Blake has been in danger, and sincerely hope that he is now in perfect health" (Keynes 165). The serious deterioration of Blake's health was now apparent to himself and his friends. Indeed, the last year of his illness was a great physical challenge for Blake. Tatham writes:

About a year before he died he was seized with a species of Ague, (as it was then termed[]), of which he was alternately better & worse. He was at times very ill but rallied and all had hopes of him, indeed such was his energy that even then, tho' sometimes confined to his Bed, he sat up Drawing his most stupendous Works. (BR 527)

Gilchrist comments that during the last year of his illness, Blake was "suffering from diarrhoea, or, perhaps, dysentery" (1: 353). As noted, Blake described himself as emaciated—"only bones and sinews All strings and bobbins like a Weavers Loom"—in his letter to Linnell on 1 August 1826, one year before he died. Emaciation is a feature of sclerosing cholangitis, and weight loss develops in up to seventy-nine percent of individuals with this disease (Sherlock 250).

The long, final illness seems to have offered Blake little respite. To an invitation from Mrs. Aders, Blake responded on 29 December 1826:

... the least thing brings on the symptoms of the original complaint. he does not dare to leave his room by any means. he had another desperate attack of the Aguish trembling last night & is certain that at present any venture to go out must be of bad perhaps of fatal consequence. (E 781)

Although his body was broken, his spirit never flagged. In response to Linnell's request (on 7 February 1827) that he move to Cirencester Place, Blake wrote that he was

getting better every Morning but slowly. as I am still feeble & tottering. tho all the Symptoms of my complaint seem almost gone as the fine weather is very beneficial & comfortable to me I go on as I think improving my Engavings of Dante more & more & shall soon get Proofs. . . .

I have Thought & Thought of the Removal. & cannot get my Mind out of a State of terrible fear at such a step. the more I think the more I feel terror at what I wishd at first & thought it a thing of benefit & Good hope you will attribute it to its right Cause Intellectual Peculiarity that must be Myself alone shut up in Myself or Reduced to Nothing (E 782)

In refusing to move nearer Linnell, Blake seems more anxious about his work than his health. He also seems to want to reassure Linnell. A few days later, he walked to Cirencester Place carrying four large Dante plates, ostensibly "to prevent the trouble of [Linnell's] Coming thro Curiosity to see what I was about," and stated that he was "getting better or [he] could not have Come at all" (E 782). The next letter, on 15 March, notes that he had received a letter from Cumberland, that Tatham senior paid him a visit, and that he was "getting on with the [Dante] Engravings," but it does not mention his health (E 782).

He did not respond to Cumberland, who evidently posted his letter 5 March (BR 340), until 12 April 1827, writing his longest extant letter in over 20 years, one which reflects remarkably Blake's awareness of his mortality and his tenacious belief in the imagination:

I have been very near the Gates of Death & have returned very weak & an Old Man feeble and tottering, but not in Spirit & Life not in The Real Man The Imagination which Liveth for Ever. In that I am stronger & stronger as this Foolish Body decays. (E 783)

During these days, Blake "was frequently bolstered up in his bed" to work (Gilchrist 1: 359). But he must have had relatively long periods out of bed as well, since engraving the Dante plates required a table or workbench, as did Cumberland's calling card, which he assured Cumberland he would "do as soon as Possible," using his poor health as an excuse for the delay: "when you Consider that I have been reduced to a Skeleton from which I am slowly recovering you will I hope have Patience with me" (E 784).

And Blake continued to print a few illuminated books. As he told Cumberland: "I am now Printing a Set of the Songs of Innocence & Experience for a Friend at Ten Guineas which I cannot do under Six Months consistent with my other Work, so that I have little hope of doing any more of such things" (E 784). Nevertheless, Blake enclosed a list of books he was willing to reprint and their prices. The copy of *Songs* was probably copy X, which Thomas G. Wainwright had ordered in February 1827 through Linnell (BR 339). Blake was working on it "consistent with . . . other work," which probably included copy I of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, also for Wainwright, and the Dante drawings and engravings. Blake did not list *Marriage* or mention the Dante engravings, but he mentioned *Jerusalem*, "the Last Work [he] produced," observing that to print and finish it like the one he had (i.e., *Jerusalem* copy E) would "Cost [in] Time the amount of Twenty Guineas" (E 784). Though "reduced to a Skeleton," Blake visited the connoisseur and collector William Young Ottley with Linnell five days after writing Cumberland, on 17 April, in the hope of securing a commission. The following week, on 25 April, he thanked Linnell "for the prospect of Mr Ottleys advantageous acquaintance," and assured him that he is "going on better Every day . . . in hea[l]th & in Work," but also admits that he goes

on without daring to count on Futurity. which I cannot do without Doubt & Fear that ruins Activity & are the greatest hurt to an Artist such as I am I am too much attachd to Dante to think much of any thing else . . . [and] count myself sufficiently Paid If I live as I now do & only fear that I may be unlucky to my friends (E 784)

Ottley came through, commissioning copy F of *Jerusalem*, a monochrome copy for which he paid £5 5s.0d. Linnell records receiving this payment and giving the money to Mrs. Blake on 11 August (Keynes 149, BR 594)—one day before Blake died, and one day after Linnell had visited Blake and recorded in his journal that he was “Not expected to live” (BR 341). Apparently, Blake was either too weak or perhaps not awake to make the business transaction, as he normally did.¹⁵

There are no extant letters from Blake in May and June, and perhaps that is a good sign, pointing to the period in which he printed *Jerusalem* and finished Wainwright’s commissions. He did feel healthy enough to visit Hampstead at the end of June—the visit that Blake believed “brought on a relapse” and the jaundice that he described on 3 July 1827. Blake was bedridden during his last days. According to Tatham, “In August he gradually grew worse & required much more of his Wife’s attention, indeed he was decaying fast; his patience during his agonies of pain is described to have been exemplary” (BR 528). By 10 August, he was completely bedridden. According to Gilchrist, “his illness was not violent, but a gradual and gentle failure of physical powers, which no wise affected the mind. The speedy end was not foreseen by his friends.” When it came, on 12 August, Blake “lay chaunting Songs to Melodies, both the inspiration of the moment. . . . To the pious Songs followed, about six in the summer evening, a calm and painless withdrawal of breath; the exact moment almost unperceived by his wife, who sat by his side (Gilchrist 1: 360-61). The first obituary, published on 18 August 1827 in the *Literary Gazette* (and republished five times with minor variations; see BR 350n1), reported that Blake “died as he had lived, piously, cheerfully, talking calmly, and finally resigning himself to his eternal rest like an infant to its sleep” (BR 355).¹⁶

¹⁵ Linnell always insisted on payment before the delivery of goods, which in this case may have proved especially fortuitous, because £5 5s. combined with the £5 Mrs. Blake borrowed from Linnell on the day Blake died (BR 606) would have covered almost all of the £10 18s. cost of Blake’s funeral (BR 343). Linnell records giving Mrs. Blake this sum on 26 January 1828 for the funeral (BR 595), but it is not clear if he is reimbursing her or paying the bill over five months after services were rendered. There is no evidence that the bill was deferred by the undertaker, though that is certainly plausible, nor is it clear why Linnell would pay such a bill indirectly and thereby require Mrs. Blake to play messenger.

Linnell retrieved *Jerusalem* copy F only partially numbered but clearly in *Jerusalem*’s “first order,” and he proceeded to order its 100 unbound leaves according to his copy (C), which was in the “second order.” Preparing the copy for Ottley required Linnell to erase and change some of Blake’s numbers as well as add those missing, thereby inadvertently altering Blake’s intentions (Viscomi, *Blake* chap. 34).

¹⁶ Three days after Blake died, Richmond related a slightly different account of his last moments to Samuel Palmer: “Just before he died His countenance became fair—His eyes Brighten’d and He burst out in singing of the things he saw in Heaven” (Keynes 165).



4 Biting the facsimile etching of *Marriage* plate 10 in nitric acid and feathering away gas bubbles.

Needless to say, these various accounts of Blake’s last days raise more questions than they answer. Was Blake’s final illness as nonviolent and its culmination as peaceful as Gilchrist and the obituary notice suggest, or was it, as Tatham states, accompanied with “agonies of pain,” with only the last hours peaceful, when his “spirit departed like the sighing of a gentle breeze” (BR 528)? Did he find the energy and inspiration one last time to compose and sing melodies just before dying?

Tatham’s and Gilchrist’s descriptions are probably both correct, though they are of different stages of the illness. And both biographers are almost certainly incorrect about the deathbed scene. As noted, Linnell visited Blake two days before he died and knew that he was “Not expected to live.” From this journal entry and her belief that Blake died from a ruptured gallbladder (15), Ward infers that Blake was probably in a semi-comatose state (14). If correct—and we think it is, though not for the reasons Ward gives—that condition alone casts suspicion on the legend that Blake burst into song on his deathbed. In a provocative article examining the effect that stereotypes and archetypes of artists and heroes have had on Blake biographers (including Carlyle’s idea of the artist-as-hero on his disciple, Gilchrist), Ward argues that the legend is a version of the “myth of the death of the hero” (14). She traces its various forms—through Richmond, Smith, Cunningham, Tatham, and Gilchrist—to the same source, Catherine Blake, who, Ward argues, may have been the only witness, despite Richmond’s description of an unidentified person standing by (14 and n28). Ward is particularly suspicious of Tatham, as a person and biographer. At a full page, Tatham’s conflation of other deathbed accounts “pulled out all the stops,” with Blake coloring a print of the *Ancient of Days*, then sketching a portrait of Catherine, then singing hallelujahs and songs of joy “loudly & with true extatic energy” (BR 528), and then suggesting to Catherine that Tatham ought to manage her affairs, to which Ward responds: “This of a man

dying of a ruptured gallbladder with attendant peritonitis!" (15).

While her skepticism of Tatham's account for medical reasons is justified, Ward's unreferenced diagnosis is mistaken and actually contradicts her claim that Blake was semi-comatose during his last few days. After the gall bladder ruptures, the bacteria in the gall bladder spill out into the abdominal cavity and cause peritonitis (the inflammation or infection of the membrane lining the walls of the abdominal cavity). Neither a ruptured gallbladder nor peritonitis accounts for the piles or the emaciation, but both would be very painful. Untreated, the patient develops septic shock, blood pressure falls, blood perfusion to the brain decreases, and unconsciousness (coma) intervenes for several hours, not days, prior to death.

Blake likely died of complications due to biliary cirrhosis possibly caused by sclerosing cholangitis, and not a ruptured gallbladder with peritonitis. If we return to the obituary notice, we can discern a few important but overlooked clues about Blake's final illness supporting this hypothesis. The notice states that Blake's

. . . . ankles frightfully swelled, his chest [was] disordered, old age striding on, his wants increased, but not his miserable means and appliances: even yet was his eye undimmed, the fire of his imagination unquenched, and the preternatural never-resting activity of his mind unflagging. (BR 349)

The swollen ankles and the disordered chest were likely due to fluid retention in the legs and lungs, respectively, a common terminal event which occurs in individuals with liver failure from any cause. The disordered chest suggests breathing difficulties likely due to pulmonary edema. Blake was 69 years old with old coronary arteries and old lungs (perhaps abnormal from the etching fumes), and he probably developed the pulmonary edema slowly over weeks or months, likely adjusting his activities and sleeping position to accommodate the fluid accumulating in his lungs. A semi-comatose state is consistent with this diagnosis, and it would likely have set in a day or two before Blake died, which is also consistent with Linnell's comments on 10 August. If this were Blake's condition, then it is unlikely that he awoke in his last hours with the energy to color, draw, sing, and talk. Far more likely, he entered "his eternal rest like an infant to its sleep," and, while asleep, experienced "a calm and painless withdrawal of breath." A believable scenario is that Blake went to sleep, his breathing slowed, an episode of apnea developed, and he never breathed again. Alternatively, Blake went to sleep, his breathing slowed, his blood oxygen level decreased, he experienced a heart attack, and he never woke up.

Hence, Gilchrist's description of a peaceful death is probably accurate, whereas Tatham's phrase "agonies of pain" describes not the last days but much of the last year of Blake's

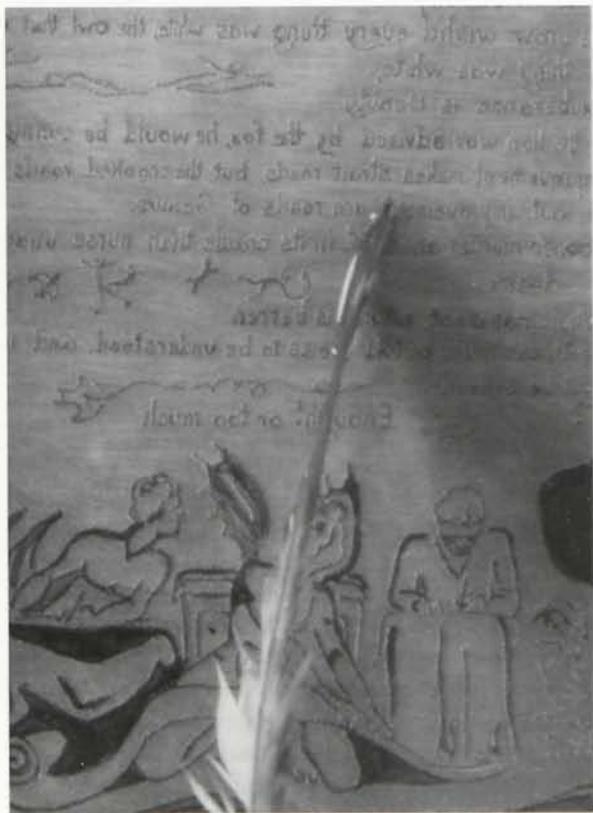


5 Facsimile of *Marriage* plate 10 as relief etching, 15.2 x 10 cm; pouring acid onto the diked plate.

life, particularly the weeks and months leading to the final days. Blake's "gnawing Pain in the Stomach" (19 May 1826), "paroxysms" (5 July 1826), "Species of Delireum," and "Pain too much for Thought" (16 July 1826) are not what killed him; they are the "old Symptoms" he talks about six months before he died and which accompany IBD or sclerosing cholangitis, or both (see Table).

Pulmonary edema was probably the final or absolute cause of death, but it resulted from liver failure due to biliary cirrhosis, itself probably caused by sclerosing cholangitis. But what caused the sclerosing cholangitis?

As we have seen, with the exception of Wordsworth's offending passages, Blake appears consistently to have blamed his poor health, both in youth and old age, on the northern air. But Tatham gave another, even more peculiar, cause. He states that "it has been supposed that [Blake's] Excessive labour without the exercise he used formerly to take, (having relinquished the habit of taking very long Walks) brought on the complaint which afterwards consumed him" (BR 527). Tatham appears to confuse effects with cause, since Blake postponed his relatively long walk to Hampstead only when physically incapable of making it. Moreover, what Tatham means by "very long Walks" is not clear. He states that



6 Facsimile of *Marriage* plate 10 as relief etching; feathering the plate in the nitric acid bath to remove gas bubbles; detail.

in his youth [Blake] and his Wife would start in the Morning early, & walk out 20 miles & dine at some pretty & sequestered Inn & would return the same day home having travelled 40 miles. Mrs Blake would do this without excessive fatigue. Blake has been known to walk 50 Miles in the day, but being told by some Physician, that such long walks were injurious, he discontinued them, & went so far to the other extreme, that it has been said he remained in the House, so long that [it] was considered far from extraordinary his days were shortened. (BR 527)

As noted, by "youth" Tatham seems to refer to the same period Blake spoke of in 1826, when Blake recalled that "When [he] was young Hampstead Highgate Hornsea Muswell Hill & even Islington & all places North of London always laid me up the day after . . . [with] the same Complaint & the same torment of the Stomach." All of these locales, though, are well within a 20-mile radius of Blake's home. While it is apparent that he enjoyed long walks for most of his life, it seems unlikely that Blake, who boasted that he "never suspended his Labours on Copper for a single day" (E 568), would have ever made a "habit" of walking 40 or more miles in a day, which translates, minimally, into

10 to 14 hours of hiking. Even the young Wordsworth, an exceptionally strong walker, covered 20-25 miles per day on his Tintern Abbey tour (Hayden 78). Tatham probably exaggerates the length, if not also the frequency, of Blake's hikes, exaggerating perhaps not as much as in the death-bed scene but for the same reason, to present Blake as transcending normal physical as well as mental limitations.

Tatham's implication that Blake had discontinued long walks late in his life is clearly refuted by Blake's trips to Hampstead. So is his implication that Blake "remained in the House, so long that [it] was considered far from extraordinary his days were shortened." Tatham clearly places Blake's housebound period close to his death, which suggests that he may have wanted to hide the fact that Blake regularly visited Linnell, from whom Tatham was estranged. Smith is presumably referring to the same period in Blake's life, though he does not date it, when he states: "so steadfastly attentive was he to his beloved tasks, that for the space of two years he had never once been out of his house; and his application was often so incessant, that in the middle of the night, he would, after thinking deeply upon a particular subject, leap from his bed and write for two hours or more" (BR 475). The idea of Blake staying indoors for two years is, as Bentley notes, an unconfirmed "extraordinary story," which, if true, may have occurred in "1813-14, when almost nothing is known about Blake" (BR 475n2). But it seems more plausible that Smith is alluding to the same period that Tatham describes. Smith's description of Blake's writing process echoes Blake's own version of it as told to Robinson, 18 February 1826 (BR 322), and this too suggests that he had old Blake in mind. If so, Smith uncharacteristically exaggerated, or perhaps merely misunderstood Mrs. Blake's summary of Blake's last two years, when long walks to Hampstead were seriously curtailed but work was not. To a widowed care-taker and a biographer, perhaps Blake appeared housebound relative to his earlier peripatetic and social self.

As causes of Blake's illness, we can rule out the air of London's northern villages and the combination of excessive work and lack of exercise. We cannot rule out Blake's profession as an engraver, however, because of the theoretical connection between sclerosing cholangitis and copper intoxication. As noted, Blake confirmed his considerable exposure to copper, stating in 1809 that he had never, "during a Period of Forty Years . . . suspended his Labours on Copper for a single day" (E 568). This claim is somewhat hyperbolic, since Blake did not take up engraving until 1772 and appears to have had a hiatus in 1799 (E 704). But given that some of the *Jerusalem* plates may be as late as c. 1820 and that the 22 plates of the *Book of Job*, the *Laocoön*, and the seven incomplete Dante engravings were executed between 1823 and 1827, it is no exaggeration to say that Blake was exposed to copper for 55 of his 69 years. But surely, other engravers were exposed to copper for exten-

sive periods as well. In the absence of epidemiological studies on nineteenth-century engravers and data on their livers and deaths, is this theoretical connection worth pursuing? We believe it is, because it will provide the grounds for further research on Blake's death and because it will illuminate where and how Blake differed from his fellow engravers.¹⁷

On 4 August 1772, at 14 years of age, Blake began his seven year apprenticeship to the engraver James Basire (*BR* 9).¹⁸ Like all others of his craft, he learned all the stages of engraving and, because during this period original and reproductive engravings began as etchings, executed in a technique known as "mixed-method," Blake learned all the steps of etching as well. He learned to draw for the printmakers, to cut plates out of sheets of copper, prepare the plates to accept etching grounds, to transfer drawings onto plates, to make inks and stop-out varnishes, to use and sharpen diversely shaped burins and needles, to prepare paper for printing, and to use a rolling press. And he learned how to mix, dilute, and use nitric acid. By the time he invented relief-etching in 1788, he had over 16 years of experience in engraving and etching. This means 16 years of handling copper and being exposed to the fumes from the chemical reaction of nitric acid and copper. Other engravers were exposed to these fumes as well, and in normal etching—if done correctly—the fumes were weak. Their potential for harm, however, increased substantially with relief etching.

In standard practice, the hand-hammered copper plate is prepared for engraving by being first planed to a smooth surface with water and charcoal, pumice stones, and metal burnishers. It is then polished with a tightly rolled piece of felt using oil as the lubricant. The plate is then cleaned of

¹⁷ It is controversial whether chronic copper intoxication can cause or aggravate sclerosing cholangitis. Although a recent review does not mention the role of copper in the pathogenesis of sclerosing cholangitis, there are numerous reports of excess copper in the livers of patients with this disease and several authors who speculate that excess copper might at least aggravate the condition. To our knowledge, there is no data to prove or disprove the possible role of copper in sclerosing cholangitis. There is data to support the role of chronic copper ingestion as the cause of Indian Childhood Cirrhosis, a cause of liver failure in Indian children believed to be acquired by drinking water from inadequately tinned copper vessels. Cirrhosis develops in patients with Vineyard Sprayer's Disease, which is considered to be due to the inhalation of copper salts in fungicides. There are several animal models of liver failure that develop due to chronic exposure to copper, including sheep and Bedlington Terriers.

There are numerous reports of acute copper intoxication due to the inhalation of copper. Metal fume fever is caused by the inhalation of copper by welders and presents itself with fever, chills, nausea, vomiting, cough, muscular pain, headache, weakness, and a metallic taste. The symptoms usually abate in 24 to 72 hours (Armstrong). An early report describes Brass Founders' Ague, using the same terminology Blake used to describe his "old symptoms" or "original complaint" (Burststein).

¹⁸ For information about Blake's apprenticeship and the techniques of engraving, etching, and relief etching, see Essick, *William Blake, Printmaker* (3-38) and Viscomi, *Blake* chaps. 1-15.

oily residue by being thoroughly rubbed with whiting or breadcrumbs mixed with water. The "degreased" plate can now accept an etching ground, an acid-resistant mixture of wax and resins melted onto the plate and spread into a thin film. The design's outline is transferred onto this covering ground and then scratched through with a needle. The metal beneath the ground is now exposed and can be etched with acid. The purpose of the etch is to place the lines lightly into the plate to facilitate the engraver's burin. In the seventeenth-century, the ground was very hard and the acid was vinegar-based, and the needle used to cut lines had an oval tip that could cut lines that swelled like those cut with burins. The plate was etched by being placed on an easel or trough and having acid poured over it (illus. 1). These materials and etching technique, however, were long out of fashion when Blake began to learn the trade. They were replaced with a softer, more supple ground and pointed etching needles, with true nitric acid, and with a new way of applying the acid. Plates were diked with wax to hold acid, which was poured on its surface (illus. 2). This new method required that the plate be watched carefully while being etched, because nitric acid cuts laterally as well as vertically, which means that it can cut under lines and thereby ruin fine line work or hatching. Nitric acid can also ruin the design by coursening lines or pitting or lifting ("foulbiting") parts of the etching ground. To prevent these effects, an etcher or assistant passed a feather over the design to release the gas bubbles or "the froth or scum, which gather upon . . . strokes of hatchings whilst the water performs its operation" (*Sculptura* 91; Faithorne 35). Even in pure etchings, like caricature prints or aquatints, the amount of copper exposed to nitric acid was relatively minimal (illus. 3, 4), and the acid was diluted at least three to one and carefully regulated. Depending on the acid's strength and the etcher's objective, the plate would have remained in the acid continuously for 15 to 40 minutes.

Like his contemporaries, Blake would have been exposed to copper particles and dust that were released into the air by cutting plates from sheets and from preparing plates by planing, burnishing, and polishing. These amounts, like those from etching plates in the normal manner, were probably negligible. Blake's exposure to copper dust and fumes, however, as well as to nitric oxide and dioxide, increased enormously when he etched plates in relief. Blake's technique required a stronger acid and a much longer bite, upwards of eight hours or more, while still requiring a fairly constant check. Furthermore, because only the lines of the design are covered in an acid-resistant ground, the amount of copper exposed to the acid was many times that of normal etching (illus. 5, 6). The more metal acid bites, the hotter and more active it becomes and thus the greater the chance of foulbiting. Blake's "corrosives," or "corroding fire," lay on the walled-in plate about "half a finger's breadth all over" (Faithorne 33), turned blue, and bubbled along

the relief lines. This kind of active bite would have prevented the plate "from being seen" (Dossie 2: 166). Given the amount of metal exposed, the bite must have been very active, probably enough to have become cloudy and emitted much higher than usual amounts of nitric oxide and dioxide, "which in hell" may be "salutary and medicinal," but on earth are potentially hazardous. Blake may be alluding to such fiery biting when he asserts that "melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid" characterized "printing in the infernal method" (E 39). To prevent his plates from being pockmarked by the strong acid, Blake may have added sal ammoniac to his nitric, which "has the peculiar property of causing the aquafortis to bite more directly downwards and less laterally" (Fielding 212). Nitric diluted with sulphuric acid ("oil of vitriol") 10 parts to one, and then five parts water to two parts acid, makes "an aquafortis that will consume the copper more keenly and cleanly than a purer spirit of nitre, without leaving any roughness or frosted appearance in the lines" (Dossie 2: 150). But none of these additives eliminates the need to feather the plate while it is being etched. Blake appears to allude to feathering plates in the "Printing house in Hell," where this stage—and, metonymically, etching—occurs in the third chamber: "Eagles with wings and feathers of air . . . caused the inside of the cave to be infinite" (E 40). But a constant watch and careful feathering could also have been disadvantageous to Blake's health, for it meant inhaling noxious fumes for hours at a time (illus. 2).

That Blake singled out the etching stage of his new technique in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* suggests that he knew he was working without precedent. He certainly was working in homes with poor ventilation (see illustrations in BR 560 and 562, and Keynes plate 23). His plates required a new kind of etch, which Blake could have perfected only through trial and error, learning "what is enough" by knowing "what is more than enough" (*Marriage* plate 9). Blake's "infernal method" assured excessive exposure to the noxious fumes produced by the chemical reaction between nitric acid and copper. This exposure was not continuous, but it was intense for brief periods; hence, supposing that it may have weakened his immune system and contributed to his IBD seems reasonable.¹⁹

Between 1788 and 1790, Blake etched *All Religions are One*, *There is No Natural Religion*, *Songs of Innocence*, *The Book of Thel*, and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* plus

¹⁹ We hope to supplement the current study with data drawn from testing air samples from the various stages in the etching and relief etching processes for copper dust and fumes and nitric oxide and dioxide. We intend to compare these samples with those established by environmental agencies like EPA and thereby refute or confirm scientifically our supposition that Blake inhaled dangerous amounts of copper dust and fumes and nitric dioxide.

Table: Blake's symptoms and the various diseases to which they are related.

Disease	Blake's Symptoms	Comment
Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)	Abdominal pain, diarrhea, weight loss, occasionally can cause fever	
Sclerosing cholangitis (SC)	Abdominal pain, chills and fever, weight loss, emaciation, jaundice	develops commonly in patients with IBD
Biliary cirrhosis	Piles, jaundice	develops commonly in patients with SC

three or four separate plates for a total of about 100 plates.²⁰ After a two-year hiatus, Blake executed *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, *America*, *a Prophecy*, *Europe*, *a Prophecy*, *The Book of Urizen*, and *The Song of Los* between 1793 and 1795 for a total of 84 mostly large plates.²¹ Blake appears to have etched plates in batches; he did not have to wait till all the plates of a book were executed, nor did he need to etch one plate at a time as soon as it was executed (Viscomi, "Evolution," forthcoming). Etching plates in groups greatly increased Blake's exposure to the copper and noxious fumes released by a strong and long etch.

During the first period of illuminated book production Blake was 31-33 years old, and during the second he was 36-38. Is this, the Blake of the late 1780s and early 1790s, the "young" Blake who regularly experienced "the same Complaint & the same torment of the Stomach" as the 68-year-old man reflecting on 1 February 1826? Perhaps to an old man it is, and Tatham's account of Blake's long walks with his wife supports that hypothesis. There is no documentary evidence to prove it, though. Neither of the two personal letters extant before 1797 (E 699-700) mentions his health, and Blake claims on 11 December 1805 that he "was alive & in health & with the same Talents" in the 1790s, "the time of Boydell's Macklins Boyers & other Great Works" (E 766-67). On the other hand, "in health" must be read in light of his saying that his "Constitution" was "a good one" despite its having "many peculiarities," like stomach cramps, that no one" but himself could know (E 775).

²⁰ The separate plates include *The Approach of Doom* and possibly *Joseph Preaching to the Inhabitants of Britain* (both c. 1788); "The Divine Image" and possibly "To Tirzah" both c. 1790 (Viscomi, "Evolution" n17).

²¹ This number includes the four rejected plates of *America* but counts *Song of Los* as six instead of eight plates, because its plates 3 and 4 were the left and right sides of an uncut oblong folio-size plate, as were plates 6 and 7 (Viscomi, *Blake* 414n25).

Blake may have experienced episodes of acute copper intoxication after intense periods of etching, and some of Blake's symptoms—"the same Complaint & the same torment of the Stomach" that laid him up "the day after & sometimes [for] two or three days"—could fit with the delayed effects of acute copper intoxication (see n17). It is tempting to speculate that Blake's walks to the villages north of London were prompted by his need for fresh air after etching plates in strong acid all day long for a week or more. It is tempting because the symptoms of acute copper intoxication include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, blood in the urine, and jaundice. Some of the symptoms (nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain) develop in the first day, but others develop after one (diarrhea, blood in the urine) or even several days (jaundice).

Blake took a long rest before etching relief plates again. The next two projects, *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, contain between them 50 mid-size and 100 large plates, but they were done over a number of years. Both are dated 1804, but the former was probably not finished until c. 1811 and the latter not until c. 1820 (Viscomi, *Blake* chap. 32, 34). Cumberland, however, reported in the summer of 1807 that Blake had "engd 60 Plates of a new Prophecy!" (BR 187). Is he referring to *Jerusalem* or a mixture of the two books? Apparently, Blake had etched at least 60 plates of one or both works in three years, which would have been a period of etching as sustained as the previous two. After that, he appears not to have been in any hurry to finish *Jerusalem*.

The relatively vast amounts of copper exposed to acid in illuminated plates differentiates Blake's technique from all others and subjected Blake to more noxious fumes than any of his contemporary printmakers. Another difference between Blake and other engravers is his late engraving style. The 22 plates to *Job* and the seven Dante plates are pure engravings, which means that Blake worked directly into the metal without the aid of preliminary etching. The *Job* plates, contracted in March 1823 and finished in March 1826 (BR 277, 327), are all extensively engraved, providing Blake with his most extended and sustained exposure to copper in his last years and probably in more than a dozen years. Is it mere coincidence that Blake's health began to decline while he was engraving them? Could they have exacerbated the illness that had lain dormant for years? Or were the *Job* and Dante engravings executed as pure engravings, without preliminary etching, because Blake had made a connection between the noxious fumes and his "old symptoms"? Was the choice of technique, in other words, determined by Blake's desire to avoid etching or to emulate the style of the "ancient" engravers whom he was then re-examining with Linnell?²²

²² Essick has argued in *William Blake, Printmaker* that Blake's late style of pure engraving was influenced by his and Linnell's study of early Italian and German engravings (219 passim). In private correspondence, he raises the possibility of the choice being driven by health.

On 27 January 1804, Blake predicted to William Hayley that "if God blesses me with health [I] doubt not yet to make a Figure in the Great Dance of Life that shall amuse the Spectators in the Sky" (E 741). That he has done, and would have even if all he produced were those "stupendous Works" of his last years, when his health had significantly declined. The available evidence suggests that Blake might have had IBD, a condition that commonly precedes sclerosing cholangitis, and that he probably died from biliary cirrhosis caused by sclerosing cholangitis. Chronic copper intoxication is a theoretical cause or aggravating factor in the pathogenesis of sclerosing cholangitis, raising the possibility that Blake died due to a disease acquired during his years of relief-etching.

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MINUTE PARTICULARS

The Death of Blake's Partner James Parker

BY G. E. BENTLEY, JR.

James Parker was a good friend to William Blake all his life; the two men served their apprenticeships together, they were arrested together on a sailing expedition about 1780, they were in partnership in 1784-85 and lived over the shop in Broad Street together, and in the last years of Parker's life Blake was still consulting him about professional matters.¹ However, very little is known of Parker's domestic circumstances except that he was married to Ann Serjeantson in the same month that Blake was married to Catherine Boucher, in August 1782, and that he died suddenly on 16 May 1805.

A significant amount of information about James Parker's life may be derived from his Will² which has recently been noticed in the Public Record Office in Chancery Lane, London. This indicates that Parker's sister Sarah Parker kept house for him 1787 to 1805 and implies that his wife was dead by then. Perhaps the break-up of the Blake-Parker printshop was related to the ill-health and death of Ann Serjeantson Parker.

The Will was made in somewhat curious circumstances. Apparently Parker discovered suddenly in April 1805 that he had a disease which was likely to prove quickly fatal, and he made his will somewhat casually and perhaps hastily, writing in pencil, omitting the date beyond "April 1805," and neglecting to have it witnessed, though he did show it to his sister Sarah in the presence of this apprentice Richard Golding, who was then about 20. Though Parker lived another month, he made no effort to give the Will a more official cast, and when the Will came to be proved, a good

¹ See "The Journeyman and the Genius: James Parker and His Partner William Blake with a List of Parker's Engravings," *Studies in Bibliography* 59 (1996): 208-23. Parker's Will was discovered just as this essay was going through the press but too late to be included in it.

² PROB 11 14333, 342-43, transcribed from the Public Record Office microfilm of the original. At the end of a page, there is often a duplication of one or more words with the beginning of the next page, though the to-be-repeated words at the foot of the page are not dropped, as in ordinary catch-words. This duplication is ignored in the transcription above.

Wills were probably rather unusual among Parker's class; at any rate, no Will has been traced for Blake's father James Blake (d. 1784), his mother Catherine Blake (d. 1792), for his brother James Blake (d. 1827), for the poet himself (d. 1827) or his wife Catherine (d. 1831), for Henry Fuseli (d. 1825), for John Flaxman (d. 1826), or for Thomas Stothard (d. 1834), though Thomas Armitage, the first husband of the poet's mother, did leave a will (1746), as did Blake's patron Thomas Butts (1845).

deal of testimony was required from Sarah Parker, from Richard Golding, and from the servant Ann Pickering to demonstrate its authenticity.

According to the Will, which was made in April 1805 and proved six months later on 6 November,

In the Name of God Amen. I James Parker of Spring Place Ken[tish]. Town in the parish of Pancras and County of Middlesex Engraver being in perfect health and in full possession of the faculties it has pleased God to bless me with do make and write with my own hand this my last will and Testament in the following Manner[:] I give and bequeath my household Goods Prints Debts Mortgages to my dear Sister Sarah whose unremitted Care Love and Attention I have received through Life[.] I also devise give and bequeath to my said Sister my freehold Cottage and Land on the west Side of Highgate Hill in the said County late in the occupation of M.^{rs} Mary Rust[.] I also give and bequeath to my said Sister my freehold property in Little Drury Lane and occupied by M.^r Astly and Williamson and my Will Intention and Devise is that my Sister Sarah may enjoy through her Life the Profits of my before-mentioned freehold and copyhold Estates without the Let or hindrance of any person whatever but that after her decease they shall be equally divided between the children of my late Sister Mary late the wife of Thomas Nixon now or late of Betterwell in the County of Leicester Carpenters and Joiners and finally I institute and appoint my said Sister Sarah the sole Executrix of this my last Will and Testament made and written in perfect health and with my own hand and also signed by me the [space] day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and five James Parker.

On 5 July 1805 it was proved by:

Sarah Parker of Spring Place Kentish Town in the County of Middlesex Spinster Ann Pickering Servant of the same place Spinster and Richard Golding of Saint Bartholomews Hospital London Engraver . . . Sarah Parker . . . is the natural and lawful Sister and only next of kin of James Parker . . . who departed this Life on the sixteenth Day of May now last past a Batchelor without a parent leaving her the deponent and also Ann Nixon Lavinia Nixon and Mary Nixon Spinsters his lawful heirs by a Second Sister the only persons intitled in the distribution of his personal Estate . . . and this deponent saith that she lived and resided with her said Brother for upward of eighteen years before and to the time of his death and managed his household Concerns and that on Tuesday Morning [14 May] preceding his Death he the said deceased produced and read to this deponent in his Garden the paper writing now hereto annexed written in pencil and bearing date the [blank] Day of April one thousand eight hundred and five and which paper he then declared to be his will and she further saith that on the Morning of the day of the deceaseds death but

previous thereto she this Deponent on looking in her deceased's Brothers pocket found the said will therein and saith that the said paper is now in the same plight and condition as when read by the deceased to her the Deponent as aforesaid And the said Ann Pickering Servant for herself saith that she knew and was well acquainted with the said James Parker for upwards of nine years before and up to the Time of his death which happened on Thursday the sixteenth day of May now last past and that during all that time the said Sarah Parker Spinster his Sister resided with him and this deponent saith that the said deceased did not tell his Bod[?] of the Illness whereof he died until the afternoon of the day preceding his death and saith that on the Morning of Thursday the day on which the said deceased told the deponent that he was verily sensible he was dying and begged[?] deponent not to weep that she the deponent thereupon asked him if he had settled his affairs to which he replied "I have made my will my Sister is every Thing to me[?]" or he then expressed himself in words precisely to that Effect and was then of perfect sound Mind and Capacity And this deponent Richard Golding for himself saith that he knew and was well acquainted with the said James Parker for upwards of Eight Months before and up to the Time of his Death living both with him the said James Parker during that period as a pupil in the Business of an Engraver And this deponent saith that he the said deceased was in the constant habit of using his Black Lead pencil for almost every Purpose even to the Keeping of his Accounts and this Deponent saith that on the Morning of Tuesday the fourteenth Day of May he saw the said deceased in his Garden with his Sister Sarah Parker and he this said deceased was then reading a paper to his said Sister and adjourned therewith into the Summer House and this deponent further saith that on the Morning of Thursday being the day on which the deceased died But before his death the said Sarah Parker showed the deponent the Will of the said deceased now hereunto annexed bearing date the [blank] day of April one thousand eight hundred and five and which had the appearance of being and which was as he verily believes the very paper he so saw the said deceased reading to his said Sister and which paper she the said Sarah Parker then informed the said deponent she had taken out of the [said deceased's del] [word illeg] Brothers pocket and this deponent Ann Pickering Servant and Richard Golding jointly and severally say and depone that they have several times seen the said deceased write and also [word illeg] his name and particularly so with his pencil and having now carefully viewed and perused the paper writing hereunto annexed purporting to be and contain the last Will and Testament of the said deceased beginning thus "In the Name of God Amen I James Parker of Spring Place" and ending thus "and with my own hand and also sealed by me the [blank] day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and five" and has subscribed "James Parker" and being written in pencil they the sd[?] Deponents do say they verily and in their Consciences

believe the whole Body Series[?] and Contents thereof to be all of the proper hand writing and Subscription of the said James Parker deceased / Sarah Parker Hse[?] Servant Richard Golding The same day the said Sarah Parker Spinster Ann Pickering Servant Spinster and Richard Golding were duly sworn to the Truth of this affidavit before me S Parson Surrogate pros.³ Geo: Bogg Not. Pub.

This Will was proved at London on the nineteenth Day of November in the Year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and five before the worshipful [three names illeg] Doctor of Laws Surrogate of the Right Honourable Sir William Eyres Knight Doctor of Laws Master [word illeg] Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury lawfully instituted by the oath of Sarah Parker Spinster the Sister of the Deceased and his sole Executrix named in the Said Will to whom administration of all and singular the Goods Chattels and Credits of the deceased was granted she having before first sworn duly to administer.

The Will demonstrates that James Parker was a man of some substance (unlike his sometime partner William Blake), with two rental properties plus his house in Spring Place, Kentish Town, with a Summer House. He apparently had no wife or children surviving, his married sister Mary Nixon was dead, and his only relatives were his spinster sister Sarah Parker and his nieces Ann, Lavinia, and Mary Nixon. And he was sufficiently prosperous to have a servant, Ann Pickering, who was with him for nine years. (William and Catherine Blake had a servant when they lived in Lambeth but soon gave her up.)

Notice, however, that among his "household Goods Prints Debts Mortgages" specified in the Will there is no reference to a rolling press. William Blake certainly had a rolling press on which he printed his own engravings, and it has been supposed that he acquired it by the time that he and Parker set up their print-selling business in 1784.³ Blake was apparently unusual in owning his own rolling press.

Parker's Numerous Assemblage of Prints, together with his Coins and Medals, were sold at auction by Thomas Dodd on 18 February 1807.

It is likely that Blake visited Parker and his sister Sarah at their home in Spring Place, Kentish Town, and it is pleasant to think that Blake may have accompanied the Governors of the society of Engravers to the grave in St Clement Danes⁴ when James Parker was buried.

James Parker's Will throws a good deal of domestic light upon a man who was very important in the life of William Blake.

³ *Blake Records* (1969) 29.

⁴ Obituary of James Parker in *The Gentleman's Magazine* 75 (June 1805) 586.

William Blake, Jacob Ilive, and the Book of Jasher

BY MORTON D. PALEY

William Blake was, as we know, very interested in research on and speculation about the Bible, including matters such as Hebrew prosody, theories of composition, and the constitution of texts.¹ He was also, aware of the tradition that there were lost books of the Bible as is shown in plate 12 of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*;² as well as by his eagerness to illustrate the Book of Enoch after its publication in 1821.³ In Swedenborg's *True Christian Religion*, Blake would have read that one of these, the Book of Jasher, was extant "amongst the People who live in Great Tartary."⁴ Blake did not, of course, respond to ideas on such subjects as a scholar but rather as a poet and artist, placing himself in relation to new knowledge by assimilating it. The fact that a work purporting to be the lost book of Jasher (or Jashar) had been published in his own century must have been known to him, especially as it had been produced by a man well known in the printing profession, one whose heterodox religious ideas had some common ground with his own. The fact that this work was widely considered a forgery would hardly have deterred Blake, whose characteristic view was that not the literal fact of production but the inner meaning of a work determines its authenticity. As he wrote in his annotations to Bishop Watson's *Apology for the Bible*, "I cannot conceive the Divinity of the <books in the> Bible to consist either in who they were written by or at what time or in the historical evidence which may be all false in the eyes of one man & true in the eyes of another but in the Sentiments & Examples which whether true or Parabolic are Equally useful . . ." (E 618). In the 1751 *Book of Jasher* Blake may well have found useful sentiments and examples, as well as a model for the layout of part of his own Bible of Hell, *The [First] Book of Urizen*.

The Book of Jasher is considered a lost source for parts of other books in which it is named, including Joshua 10-

¹ See Leslie Tannenbaum, *Biblical Tradition in Blake's Early Prophecies* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1982) 25-54; Morton D. Paley, *The Continuing City* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1983) 45-48; and Jerome J. McGann, *Social Values and Poetic Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988) 152-72.

² *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, rev. ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1988) 39, hereafter cited as *E* followed by the page number.

³ See Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1981) 1: 595.

⁴ See my "A New Heaven Is Begun": Blake and Swedenborgianism," *Blake* 13 (1979): 80.

¶ The Book of JASHER.¹

¹ Heb. The Upright.

CHAP. I.

¹ The formation of the world; ³ the light shineth; ⁷ the earth is productive; ¹¹ the creation of man; ¹³ the birth of Cain and Abel; ¹⁷ of Enock; ²³ the death of Adam.

A. M.

¹ I.
² Heb. the prime.
³ Heb. the desert.
⁴ Heb. the atoms.
⁵ Heb. confused mass of matter.

⁶ Heb. the flame; Or. burning.
⁷ Heb. the bottomless pit.



ALL that it was the beginning: darkness overspread the face of nature.

² And the æther moved: upon the surface of the⁵ chaos.

³ And it came to pass, that a great light shone forth from the firmament: and enlightened the abyss.

⁴ And the abyss fled before the face of the light: and divided between the light and the darkness.

⁵ So that the face of nature was formed: a second time.

⁶ And behold there appeared in the firmament two great lights: the one to rule the light, and the other to rule the darkness.

⁷ And the ground brought forth grass: the herb yielding food, and the fruit-tree after his kind.

⁸ And every beast after his kind: and every thing that creepeth after their kind.

⁹ And the waters brought forth the moving creature after their kind.

¹⁰ And the æther brought forth every winged fowl after his kind.

¹¹ ¶ And when all these things were⁸ fulfilled: behold¹ JEHOVAH appeared in² Eden, and created man, and made him to be an³ image of his own eternity.

¹² And to him was given power and⁴ lordship over all living creatures: and over every herb, and over every tree of the field.

¹³ And it came to pass, in process of time, that the man conceived, and brought forth⁵ Cain: and he conceived again and brought forth his brother⁶ Abel.

¹⁴ And Cain was the first man who tilled the ground:
B

¹⁵ And

A. M.

¹ Heb. the earth; Or. nature.

⁸ Heb. finished.

¹ Heb. I am

that I am

² Heb. delighted.

³ Heb. likeness.

⁴ Heb. rule.

⁵ Heb. the possessed.

⁶ Heb. the feeder.

1 *The Book of Jasher* [by Jacob Ilive]. British Library.

13, 2 Samuel 1:18, and the Septuagint version of 1 Kings 8: 53.⁵ In 1751, a printer named Joseph Ilive published what he claimed was an English version by the monk Alcuin: *The Book of Jasher, with Testimonies and Notes explanatory of the Text*. Ilive himself is a figure of some interest. The son of a printer, he set up a letter-foundry in Aldersgate c. 1730.⁶ In 1733 he gave an oration at Joyner's Hall in Thames Street, pursuant to the will of his late mother, Jane Ilive, who may have been one of the Philadelphian circle around Jane Leade. In this discourse, which he published that same year, he maintained four principal theses:

⁵ "Book of Jasher," *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. Geoffrey Wigoder (New York and Oxford: Facts on File, 7th ed., 1992), s.v. "Jasher" is not a name (as is sometimes supposed) but Hebrew for "the upright one."

⁶ H. R. Plomer, in *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers Who Were At Work in England[,] Scotland[,] and Ireland from 1726 to 1775* (Oxford: Printed for the Bibliographical Society at the Oxford University Press, 1932 [for 1930]) 136.

- I The Plurality of Worlds
- II That this Earth is Hell.
- III That the Souls of Men are Apostate Angels. And
- IV That the fire which will punish those who shall be confined to this Globe after the Day of Judgment will be immaterial.⁷

In 1750, addressing his fellow master printers, he said "It may with Great Veracity be affirmed, that there is no Art, Science, or Profession in the World, but what owes its *Origin*, at least its Progress and present *Perfection*, to the free Exercise of the *Art of Printing*," and he went on to defend "the *Liberty of the Press*."⁸ Prosecuted in 1756 for printing his own *Modest Remarks upon the Discourses of the Bishop of*

⁷ *The Oration Spoke at Joyners hall in Thames Street on Monday, Sept. 24, 1733*, t.p.

⁸ *The Speech of Mr. Jacob Ilive to His Brethren the Master-Printers* (1750).

London (Dr. Sherlock),⁹ Ilive was imprisoned for over a year, during which he took the opportunity to write and publish *Reasons offered for the Reformation of the House of Correction in Clerkenwell* (1757). We may well imagine that William Blake would have found Ilive's story of some interest.

The Book of Jasher was recognized as a forgery from the first. *The Monthly Review* declared it was "a palpable piece of contrivance intended to impose on the credulous, and the ignorant, and to sap the credit of the books of Moses, and blacken the character of Moses himself."¹⁰ The circumstances of the hoax were recounted in 1778 by Edward Rowe-Mores, in his *Dissertation Upon English Typographical Founders and Foundries*:

... Of the publication we can say from the information of the Only-One who is capable of informing us, because the business was a secret between the Two: Mr. Ilive in the night-time had constantly an Hebr. bible before him (*sed. q. de hoc*) and cases in his closet. He produced the copy for *Jasher*, and it was composed in private, and the forms worked off in a private press-room by these Two after the men of the printing-house had left their work. (65)

That this exposure did not cause *The Book of Jasher* to disappear entirely from view is shown by the republication of Ilive's text in 1829.¹¹ Blake, with his interest in biblical antiquities and his connections with the printing trade, would have had ample opportunity to know the first edition. It is interesting to consider what distinctive features might have interested him most.

In *Jasher* 3: 19 Abraham is talked out of sacrificing Isaac by Sarah, who says "The holy voice hath not so spoken." As a result, "Abraham repented him of the evil he purposed to do unto his son: his only son Isaac." The Egyptians do not pursue the Hebrews into the Red Sea but go home instead (10: 24). Moses is frequently depicted as acting tyrannically. When Miriam opposes his appointing of judges, Moses hides her for seven days until she is released by the demand of the congregation, who prefer her view to his; but after Miriam's death Moses appoints 70 elders to rule the people (15). In the course of establishing the priesthood of the Levites, Moses has 250 who oppose him killed (22). When Shelomith protests against the laws Aaron gives to the people, he is stoned to death by order of Moses. Achan too

⁹ *The History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches and Meeting Houses, in London, Westminster, and Southward*, 4 vols. (London, 1808) 2: 290-92.

¹⁰ 5 (December 1751): 520.

¹¹ See Thomas Hartwell Hone, B.D., *Bibliographical Notes on the Book of Jasher* (London, 1833). S. T. Coleridge, commenting on this edition, thought it was based on one of the "slovenly Eutropius-like Abridgements of the Pentateuch & the books of Joshua & Judges by some ignorant Monk" (*The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. E. L. Griggs [Oxford: Oxford UP, 1956-72] 6: 900).



2 William Blake, *The [First] Book of Urizen*. Copy C. Plate 3. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection.

is stoned to death, not because of his sin in appropriating part of the spoil of Jericho devoted to God (as in Joshua 7) but because he challenged the giving of the spoils to the tribe of Levi (28: 20-23). At the end of the book, Joshua makes peace with the kings of Canaan. This altered narrative, emphasizing humanitarian values, casting Moses as an authoritarian power-figure, and endorsing rebellion against tyrannical law, would have found a sympathetic reader in Blake. Of course not all of Ilive's recasting of biblical material is of this nature. For example, his account of the parting of the Red Sea is rationalistic: Moses says, "It is now midnight, and by the time of the cock-crow the Red Sea will be dried up: and peradventure we may cross over dry-shod into the wilderness" (10: 24). Blake preferred miracles, but that did not prevent him from defending the deist Thomas Paine against Bishop Watson. In such instances he was more conscious of similarities than of differences.

A further point of comparison may be made between the format of *The Book of Jasher* and that of *The [First] Book of Urizen*. Both works, as can be seen in the illustrations (illus. 1 and 2), exploit the familiar layout of the Authorized Version and some other English Bibles: a double-columned page divided into chapters and verses. Of course Blake is

unique in his combination of design and calligraphic text; Ilive's decorated initial capital is his only gesture in this direction. Nevertheless, both play upon the reader's experience of opening a conventional Bible, only to present a text subversive of such a Bible. Finally, just as *Jasher* concludes after its last verse (37: 32) "*The End of the Book of Jasher*," *Urizen* concludes "The End of the [first] book of Urizen" (E 83), both in imitation of colophons in medieval texts. Did Blake recognize Ilive's private press-room as a forerunner of his own Printing House in Hell?

R E V I E W S

William Blake, *The Continental Prophecies: America: a Prophecy; Europe: a Prophecy; The Song of Los*. Edited with Introductions and Notes by D. W. Dörrbecker. Princeton: William Blake Trust/Princeton University Press, 1997. Blake's Illuminated Books Volume 4. General Editor David Bindman. 367 pp. \$75.

Reviewed by MICHAEL J. TOLLEY

This series of Blake's Illuminated Books is a noble one, and as I have read carefully through Detlef Dörrbecker's book I have felt like somebody reading a kind of variorum edition. Many viewpoints are presented from a number of leading critics, and particularly of recent writers, though also with representation of the major earlier studies. In his establishment of the historical background to the text, new works have aided the editor considerably, as they have also aided his insistence on a free, open, but well-advised approach to the reading of the numerous difficulties. Individual scholars will retain the liberty in studying these libertarian works to develop their own researches, but they will do so on the basis of some sound counsel.

"Continental Prophecies" is not a familiar phrase, but this division of the Lambeth books is most helpful. In particular, it draws attention to *The Song of Los* as a considerable work in the threefold scheme. The works are discussed together (11-24) in a prefatory essay, and then each is presented in turn, first by means of a discussion of the text, then by a study of the designs, then by the illustrations with the printed text, some supplementary illustrations, and some notes to Blake's text. This division means that the reader has to do some flipping backwards and forwards, but the editor has explained his pattern of work in "A Note on Citations, Abbreviations, Texts, and Variants" and also his brief system of annotation through simple references to the

"Works Cited." The reader will doubtless have a problem in laying hands on each item in the thorough bibliography which Dörrbecker has had the benefit of studying through his work at *Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly*, but the problem is like every problem in Blake studies—all you need is intelligence, time, money and access to a superb library!

That major themes in each poem are discussed first, before the plates themselves and the textual footnotes, necessarily involves some repetition (chasing after, say, the nameless shadowy female or Albion's 'Angel'). This was presumably considered worthwhile, but readers should be warned. It seems that most of the significant matters of theme and context get considered somewhere or other in the discussions.

Some decisions are bound to be a little irritating. Quite sensibly, in his own terms, the editor has decided to ignore changes in the text from, say, roman to italic type. When one reads, say, the titlepage to "AMERICA / a / PROPHECY," one expects the last word to be in italics, but it is not. This demands a note when the page is discussed, but in the note we are told that the same kind of titlepage in *Europe* reverses the order—"EUROPE / a / PROPHECY." However, as soon as one looks at the pages, one sees that more is going on in the *Europe* titlepage than this, even with the lettering. One thing which is not noticed, though perhaps worth noticing, is the way in which the final Y looks like a tree in *Europe* and almost like a tree in *America*. However, there is so much to notice in the Michelangesque figures of *America's* frontispiece and titlepage—which are described as a diptych (48)—that one is hardly likely to worry about the putative decorative or illustrative gesture on each single word. The editor is wise to suggest that the reader should not think of Abdiel and Abdias when looking at the wailing mother in the frontispiece and the reading "sibyl" (if that is what she is) in the titlepage. The context must change the significance of a figure which may nevertheless come from a classic design—and this is equally true in many of the textual allusions. Accordingly, I would not say that "[l]ike Milton's Messiah in *Paradise Lost*" the Guardian Prince is "armed with diseases . . . to rage bacteriological war." The Messiah's plagues are mental blows, not merely "mythic plagues," and I would rather say that the Guardian Prince is "Unlike Milton's Messiah." Nevertheless, one has to acknowledge the Miltonic reference before worrying about the difference between the Prince and the Son of God. It is no wonder that art historians and students of intertextuality find the previous scholarly work of identification of a "source" with a text enough to have achieved. Blake was some way ahead of modern scholars and critics in his narrative insights.

In *America*, the chained figure that squats, though winged, in the breach of the wall in the frontispiece should perhaps have been related by Dörrbecker to biblical passages of which he seems aware in his note on the text (134 on

America 16:20), but perhaps he was put off by Tannenbaum, who sees the breach as that between man and God but identifies the angel as Orc, who fails to achieve Christ's mediating power. This figure in the breach is recognized as Moses in Psalm 106.23, who "stood before [God] in the breach, to turn away his wrath." Dörrbecker refers to a text in Ezekiel 22.31, about the idea of having a biblical source for such plagues which befall those who have sent them; Exodus 22.30 is parallel to Psalm 106.23, but fascinatingly ironic, because no Moses type (or Abraham type, as in Genesis 18) will appear to save the Jews from the "day of indignation": "And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none."

Whether this fascinating material is indeed relevant, I do not know, but it would tend to identify the angel as a "Guardian" figure, which could well associate his posture with despair. The terms "Guardian" and "Albion's Angel" are being placed under unusual ironic stress in *America*, and these terms should perhaps be considered, I suppose, more fully. We obviously should see an ironically pictured "Guardian" in the warder of *Europe* 15(16). At the same time, bearing in mind the remarks I make later on *The Song of Los* 4, fallen and protective figures must be distinguished. The idea of the "Covering Cherub," which Dörrbecker also considers, is related to these; when one draws or presents an image of despair, one is not thereby making clear the truth.

The way current scholarship presents some of the newly discovered effects in the Blakean manifold text is to suggest a narrative scheme which is closer to a series of inter-related cartoons (after the manner of Hogarth and Gillray) than to epics in the free narratives of Virgil and Milton. At the same time, the students of the epic or the classic tragedy or folk narrative must find more and more significance in particular details than had previously troubled them. Blake himself must have thought he was following the particular effects of writers rather than of innovating them.

Sometimes the intellectual facilities and political programs underlying many of our recent and even older critics get the better of them, as is nowhere found more obviously than in the notes to *America* 8 and 9 (58f). The former shows a resurrecting young man, emerging from the ground (he is more supercharged in the *Glad Day/Albion Rose* group of drawings and engravings). The creatures at the bottom of the plate are thus described:

The animals and plants depicted at the bottom of the plate, Damon saw as 'the symbols of misdirected humanity' (*Philosophy and Symbols* 340), while Baine recognized in them the threat of 'a poisoned future' (*Scattered Portions* 154). However, the lizard, the frog, and the small serpent may as well be emblematic references to the republics of France and the United States . . . ; the plant between these animals either rep-

resents a thistle, Blake's 'general emblem for tyranny' which here 'bends toward the ground, symbolically subdued by the figure above it' (Carretta 200)—or the 'harmless knapweed' (Erdman, *Illuminated Blake* 144). In a political context, the thistle (and the rose) was a conventional emblem associated with the British crown (see Bindman, *Shadow of the Guillotine* 156, no. 145). It has also been argued that as an emblem of Scotland, the thistle may here refer to George III and the 'Scotch politics' of his tyrannical rule. (Carretta 200)

These creatures should rather be compared with the spiders, frogs and snakes that festoon so many of the pages in *Europe*. They belong to the marsh and the earth from which the man arises and their place is with the grave and its skull from which he comes; they are graveyard creatures absurdly preoccupied with corporeal life and death. Individually, they are not symbols of republics, Scotch politics, George III and a poisoned future, except insofar as anything else from the swamps might be.

In discussing plate 9, the sharp difference between the text which sets out Albion's Angel's idea that Orc is a "Blasphemous Demon" and the illustration showing a ram and children sleeping in a peaceful sylvan landscape should, common sense suggests, be discussed in terms of the story in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, in which an Angel's lurid fancy about Leviathan is exchanged for an alternative vision: "this appearance was no more, but I found myself sitting on a pleasant bank beside a river by moon light hearing a harper who sung to the harp. & his theme was, The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, & breeds reptiles of the mind" (pl. 19, E 41-42).

As is explained so often in Blake, when one is asleep, one has nightmares about "reptiles of the mind"; like Samson, one is a slave at the mill. Common sense explains that a vision about America is a dream, and what we see on these two plates shows exactly the narrative progression at work. The illustrations show us what we would see if our senses were not asleep. This remark is simple but an editor should not forget to make it when placing critical insights in perspective.

The effect of spiritual and material inversion must also be applied to *America* 11, as the white on black illustration suggests that an internal sense is being shown. Thus the prostrated wheat is at odds with the growing weeds or flowers, as Erdman has noted in *Blake's Illuminated Books* (for plate 9); Erdman identifies these as poppies, though he admits that this does not conform fully to the whole form of the plants. Dörrbecker relates the poppies to "a symbol of death," citing Baine, *Scattered Portions* 153; but their connotation with sleep seems more appropriate, following my own reading. If Urizen (pl. 10) represents the birth of waters (as in Blake's borrowing from the engraving he performed after Fuseli of the *Birth of the Nile*), then the birth of a child, whether called Orc or not, is one that occurs in a

storm. This birth is seen as unprotected, because it is one that occurs in the post-Atlantic world of America, rather than guarded as in *America* 8, where the plants of the marsh are wilted. However, sometimes the baby is not dead but pink-fleshed, a more optimistic vision, which is allowable because Urizen cannot enforce his own mental rules directly: his nightmare may be seen as a mere dream.

Dörrbecker's notes on the text (127-38) are not, for obvious reasons, sufficient, though they are helpful. He seems to be somewhat impressed by the influence on the poem of Erasmus Darwin, influenced by another of the editors to this series (for volume 6: "The Urizen Books"), David Worrall. As I was reading through the notes, Dörrbecker had me wondering if the account of the moon, in the alternative plate *b*: 4-7, is not so different from the one in Darwin (because the motion described is of the earth descending below the moon, rather than of the moon ascending from the Pacific), that we should be more wary in supposing a relationship. Dörrbecker is aware of some of the biblical references in the text, and I think he adds a Miltonic one which seems plausible (for 12:1-3), but he is not always accurate about which previous commentator came first in publishing a note on an allusion (I have read widely in this field and I would feel hesitant about who came first). Thus (see 131), on 9: 3-4, Damon, *Philosophy and Symbols*, 336 came before Paley; and, on 10: 8, Stevenson, *The Complete Poems* 196 comes before Ostriker.

The discussion of *Europe* seems to me to be the fullest account I have read, and it is strange to me to see this work presented as a subject of major interest. I wrote an article on *Europe* 25 years ago, when it seemed a vague intuition of mine that *Europe* is a great work. My own readings of those times seem to stand now as valuable, but in relation to all the more recent studies they appear as minute particulars in a much larger world, if not to say a void. I am particularly pleased by Dörrbecker's preference for open readings, which suits my own attempts to discern significances in, for instance, the *Night Thoughts* designs and the *Songs* or *Marriage*. Some of his readings could, however, be quietly left unexposed to the modern reader's view, such as the importance of the seven apertures to a woman (278) as an understanding of Leutha's seven churches. Also, references to Proust and Dr. Spock seem to be undue acts of accommodation to modern readers. It need not be expected that someone like myself shall always agree with the editor's references to certain critics I have attacked, such as Tannenbaum; or that I shall wonder about some omissions and must, occasionally, be puzzled by some of his own personal choices. I will not elaborate on all of these.

Sometimes, the editor's sound habit of registering priorities of printed references to background texts cannot match my own records. For instance, I get credit, on 267, for listing imagery found in *Job* 38 and *Milton*, but my own

index cards show that I received these suggestions from Dennis Douglas, who had written a thesis on Blake and Boehme (he also mentioned Luke 2.7 to me). We both thought we were doing something unusual when we gave papers on *Europe* in Melbourne in those days, but now there is nothing strange about selecting *Europe* for particular study. Donald Moore's own 1972 thesis, an annotated edition of *Europe*, is one I have not seen. He will be as aware as I am that questions relating to the characters and episodes in *Europe* remain unduly obscure, even by Blake's standards.

The use of copy B for printing a reproduction is highly admirable, and it enables the editor to select the preface (additional plate 3) and confine discussion to an appendix. This may be a copout, but nevertheless, Dörrbecker's isolation of the Fairy's plate tends to emphasize the importance for Blake of the elemental figure, which is surely not a mere "lyric afterthought," as Erdman once described it.

With *The Song of Los*, the editor does his best to make what he can of what currently still seems an unhelpful critical assessment, in order to present the work as a serious if laconic part of Blake's survey of the four continents. I continue to wonder why Blake bothered so much as he did, not with the few remarkable large illustrations in the work as with the unusually opaque text. The text almost seems a sort of paralipomena, about which Margaret Hood has made the excellent remark that "Blake having presented *America* and *Europe* seems to have realised that he had wanted to SING of Revolution." She goes on to make some highly suggestive, though brief, annotations on the phonemic structure of the songs of Africa and Asia. (See Margaret Anne Hood, "The Voice of Song: A Prosodic and Phonological Approach to William Blake," M.A. thesis, Department of English, University of Adelaide, Dec. 1980, 175-84; this item is not in Dörrbecker's list of texts consulted.) I make a few brief notes in addition to those isolated by Dörrbecker.

Actually, one realizes the shakiness of the ground even in such a statement (290), as "Because it was 'in Ethiopia that the Angels were supposed to have fallen' (Beer *Humanism* 134); see Genesis 6.2 and *The Song of Los* 4: 20)." Beer's unsupported remark probably comes from his work with Coleridge, but if one looks to Genesis 6.2, one may find that the orthodox Christian view was that the Sons of God were not fallen angels, because angels were not given a sex. Furthermore, the angels fall to the earth in Revelation 12, not Genesis. *The Song of Los* 4:20 refers to African "deserts," but not to Ethiopia: Blake's reference is more likely to Egypt and the Sahara. Dörrbecker's words preface a denial that Blake's eternal view of the world's history had much to do with the biblical creation and fall myth or antediluvian, postdiluvian and covenant-law-grace myth; but this suggestion that views expressed in *The Song of Los* could ever have been extra-marginal or cometary flights of the spirit for Blake complicates discussion considerably. Blake con-

tradicted biblical history but I think it oversimplifies the issue to state that these matters "apparently meant very little to Blake."

Similarly, one has doubts about the reading of the full-figure plates. I am not convinced that the globe in plate 1 is a "light-consuming luminary body"; to me, it looks as if the globe gives out light but is obscured by dark patterns on its surface. I am surprised that Dörrbecker does not consider the globe as the worshipping figure's head or, rather, brain or intelligence. This is not a plate to which I have given a lot of study, but I would like to consider that the worship is given to a detached part of the praying figure. Thus, if the plate is a counterpart to the frontispiece to Europe, and both the human figures are Urizen, one forming a horizon, the other worshipping it, we do at least move towards some sense that there is a kind of inclusive Blakean design at work. This sense would continue into plate 2, where the old man and the skull may be readily related to *Elohim Creating Adam*.

Dörrbecker has a lengthy discussion of plate 5, the king and queen on a lily, relating them to Oberon and Titania. I would have thought that the biblical lily reference would tend to associate the king with Solomon and therefore, perhaps, the queen with Sheba; brilliantly dwarfed by the terms of Matthew 6.27-29, which deals with adding cubits to one's stature, taking thought for raiment, and not being arrayed like a lily-flower; the Song of Solomon idea of feeding amongst the lilies would also be appropriate in this context, following such a highly metaphoric reading. Dörrbecker sees "a faint echo" of the biblical text (314), but I would rather see this text as the major source. Nevertheless, Dörrbecker's lengthy account of this plate is a helpful contribution and it may seem a little facile for a reviewer to add or emphasize further suggestions.

Recently, the editor has revealed that he is worried by the misprints in the book, but I was surprised to find how few of those he listed for the benefit of people who use computers (the Ogs on the road to enlightenment) are ones I noted myself. It did not occur to me to worry about such a misspelling as "faceted"; surely, I thought, even Americans would read this without trouble. The Web list has been sent me by Peter Otto, although parts were illegible by the time they got to my university machine. I add some notes of my own (and some of the mistakes are strange and could not be allowed by a word-check, if one was employed).

p. 8, ll. 27f: I am not at all sure what D. means by his reference to the textual note for *The Song of Los* 3:1-5, in relation to distinctions between roman and italic lettering. I assume that the reference is to p. 347.

7 lines from bottom: spell "multiple"

p. 15, l. 7: there's a missing apostrophe for the second quotation

p. 17, l. 18: read "Blake's model ... is"

p. 18, ll. 25-26: delete the second "such"

p. 19, l. 24: spell "status"

p. 28, l. 8: spell "gaoler's"

p. 31: 14 lines from bottom (ignoring here as elsewhere, the footnote): instead of "much" read "many"

p. 38, l. 3: spell "sovereignty"

l. 16: I would have thought it better to read "Unlike Milton's Messiah"

p. 48: 12 lines from bottom: (not a plural) read "be read"

p. 57, l. 19 spell "Notebook"

p. 60, 5 lines from bottom: spell "trilogy"

p. 69, 7 lines from bottom: spell "artist-poet"

p. 129, 15 lines from bottom: spell "Isaiah"

p. 130, 8 lines from bottom: make it "Genesis 28.12, 18"

p. 133, l. 20: the note should indicate that the Angel "burns outstretchd ..."

p. 157, note 13, 3 lines from bottom to the bottom line, try: "With Tolley and Tannenbaum all that these studies have in common is that Blake is seen as critically revising and 'revisioning' Milton's celebratory hymn, a view that has been contradicted by Wittreich alone (see *Angel of Apocalypse* 90)."

p. 160, 13 lines from bottom: spell "contradictory"

p. 161, l. 19 spell "worthwhile"

p. 179, 17 to 16 lines from bottom: it seems redundant to have all that "falling ... fall ... fallen" repetition

p. 185, l. 23: spell "Rintrah's"

p. 194, l. 9: spell "acrobats"

p. 196, l. 15: spell "De Groot"

p. 199, l. 17: the last word is "be"

p. 203, 12 lines from bottom: spell "led"

p. 214, l. 24: read "11[13]"

p. 266 [for *Plate 3(4)*, l. 8], line 3: delete "to"

p. 274, four lines from bottom: read "Howard has suggested that we identify"

p. 275, 15 lines from bottom: spell "institutions"

p. 276, 4 lines from bottom: read "Colonies remain"

p. 282, l. 2: spell "dystopian"

p. 296, 2 lines from bottom: spell "which"

p. 298, 8 lines from bottom: spell "eighteenth century"

p. 304, l. 1: spell "compositional"

p. 348, l. 16: spell "philosophers"

p. 357, 3 lines from bottom: spell "Darwin"

p. 366, 18 lines from bottom: spell "Webster, Brenda S."

Peter Ackroyd, *Blake*. London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1995. 399 pp. + illustrations. \$35.

Reviewed by MORTON D. PALEY

Peter Ackroyd is a writer deeply interested in the atmosphere of London at various phases of its history, as manifested by novels like *Chatterton*, *Hawksmoor*, and *The House of Dr. Dee*, books in which the feel of the past is brilliantly recreated. Given, too, the prominent role of the uncanny in his work, one can see why he would be drawn to Blake as a subject. We would expect from him a strongly plotted life of Blake, with memorable evocations of Blake's city. His *Blake* gives us these, but it also presents problems that in the end threaten the reader's—or at least *this* reader's—confidence in the biography he has written.

The sense of Blake in his time is there, certainly, in passages like this one:

If we consider the possibility of a unique urban sensibility, it will be one intimately connected with 'An Island in the Moon' and Blake's subsequent poetry—it embodies an art that is preoccupied by light and darkness in a city that is built in the shadows of money and power, an art entranced by the scenic and the spectacular in a city that is filled with the energetic display of people and institutions. Blake tends instinctively towards those great London forms, spectacle and melodrama, and is often preoccupied with the movement of crowds and assemblies; he has a sense of energy and splendour, of ritual and display, which may have little to do with the exigencies of individual moral life. But if Blake understood the energy and variety of London, he was continually aware of its symbolic existence through time: in his epic poetry, and the vast concourse of figures who flow through it, we find the pity and mystery of existence in a city he described as 'a Human awful wonder of God!' (92)

Furthermore, Ackroyd does not depend solely on an imaginative re-creation of Blake and his world. He has obviously done considerable reading about Blake, including some of the most important recent studies. At first I hoped this would result in a synthesis of what we know about Blake with an imaginative re-creation of Blake's life. But as I read on, I felt increasingly uneasy about, to put it bluntly, the basis in reality for many of Ackroyd's statements.

Sometimes this is obviously a matter of mistakes. The "Great Terror" of 1795, which marked the climacteric of the [French] Revolution" (181) should read "of 1793-94." *The Book of Ahania* and *The Book of Los* were not "printed on the back of each other" (179); perhaps what is meant is that the versos of the copper plates of one were used for etching the other, but according to Joseph Viscomi the six *Ahania* designs were etched back to back on three plates.

(*William Blake and the Art of the Book*, Princeton: Princeton UP, 287). Blake's *Newton* is not a "painting" (194); it is a color-printed drawing. The works of Boehme cannot have "been highly influential during all the religious disputations of the mid-sixteenth century" (149), as Boehme was born in 1575. When Blake said that the engravings for the "Law edition" of Boehme were so beautiful that Michelangelo could not have done better, he did not single out the frontispiece (149). "A copy [of the 1797 *Night Thoughts*] printed on vellum" (203) was not exhibited and is not otherwise known to have existed, though a single *Night Thoughts* illustration on vellum does exist and may have been used for promotional purposes. Blake cannot have been executing engravings for the Wedgwood catalogue at the time that he was writing *Milton*; *Milton* was written by 1810, and the Wedgwood engravings date from 1819. For the same reason the illustrations to *Milton's L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, some of which bear 1816 watermarks, cannot have been executed "while [he was] working on *Milton* itself" (310). Charles and Elizabeth Aders were not "a German couple" (341); Charles (Karl) was indeed German, but Elizabeth was English, the daughter of the well-known engraver Raphael Smith. Sometimes I found myself wondering whether what I was reading was a new discovery that Ackroyd hadn't bothered to document or a simple error. Could one of Blake's engravings have been printed in *The Conjuror's Magazine* (194)? Was there really an "Ellesmere edition" of Chaucer's *Caunterbury Tales* with "illustrations of the pilgrims in the margins" that R. H. Cromek could have come upon in Halifax, giving him the idea of proposing the subject to Thomas Stothard (271)? Which writings of Paracelsus were "readily available" (147) in the 1790s? They would have had to be available in English if they were going to help Blake at this time, and it would be very useful to know what they were. How do we know that Blake's accuser John Scofield "had been a fustian cutter in Manchester" (244)?

A word also needs to be said about the illustrations and their captions. The reproductions vary from good to poor, but the captions are at times uninformative or even misleading. Some of the plates are given designations like "Plate from *The Book of Urizen*," "Plate from *Europe*," and "Plate from *Milton*," without plate numbers or copy designations. A page from *Vala* is designated as "plate from *Night the Third*," while plate 99 of *Jerusalem* is captioned "*The last page of Jerusalem*." What can explain such extraordinary indifference to detail?

The "source notes" for the book are squeezed, three columns to a page, into pages 372-82. Sometimes the information is sparse. If you want to know who wrote the article cited as "Blake and Cromek" in *Modern Philology*, 344" (379, col. 3, n. 50), or the year or the volume number, you're going to have to do some research. This is true for a number of other notes. "All quotations taken from Wagenknecht, *Visionary Poetics*, 39, 41, and 46" reads note

72 on col. 2, 381; but the author of *Visionary Poetics* is correctly identified in the Bibliography as Joseph A. Wittreich. Even when citations are ample, doubt may persist. Much of the biographical annotation cites G. E. Bentley, Jr.'s *Blake Records* and *Blake Records Supplement* so as to make it seem as if the information there is presented as being entirely authentic. Of course *Blake Records* is so very useful because the editor has not screened out statements that he may disagree with, although he may sometimes express his disagreement. For example, Ackroyd presents the well-known story, attributed to Thomas Butts, that

Mr. Butts calling one day found Mr. and Mrs. Blake sitting in this summer-house, freed from 'those troublesome disguises' which have prevailed since the Fall. 'Come in!' cried Blake; it's only Adam and Eve, you know! (154)

Ackroyd comments that "Thomas Butts . . . is highly unlikely to have invented or even conceived such a story," but the question is whether or not he told it at all. It is one of the numerous undocumented anecdotes printed by Alexander Gilchrist. Ackroyd reports neither Bentley's dismissal of the story nor his noting that according to Butts's grandson Thomas Butts said there was no truth in it (*Blake Records*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969, 154). Similarly doubtful is the account of Blake's falling upon a wife beater "with such counter violence of reckless and raging rebuke . . . that he recoiled and collapsed" (155). This story originates with A. C. Swinburne, who does not tell where he got it.

Unfortunately, such questionable statements pervade Ackroyd's *Blake*. The view that Blake did not advertise the prints "Albion Rose," "Our End is Come," and "Lucifer and the Pope in Hell" because of "their implicit political references" (168) is hard to sustain, as contemporary purchasers would hardly be in a position to guess what those references might be. And why would Robert Southey need to be stimulated by Blake's *Spiritual form of Nelson* (149) to write his *Life of Nelson*? There is also a tendency to present the merely speculative as true without any attempt at proof. Some major examples concern *Vala*, *Milton*, and *Jerusalem*. Ackroyd believes that Blake wrote out "the first thirty-six pages [of *Vala*] in an elegant copperplate hand" while still living in Lambeth (236) and continued work in Felpham, where, in the summer of 1802 "he decided to transcribe a fair copy. . . . The verses would be printed in conventional letterpress, and, as with the [Hayley] *Ballads*, an engraving would be placed at the end of each 'book' or 'chapter'" (237). It might be possible to present evidence for this view, and perhaps to account for why pages of such great size would be needed for printer's copy, but all we have here is mere assertion. (The *Ballads* analogy alone will not do—*Jerusalem* has a design at the end of each chapter, yet no one argues that it was meant for letterpress). Of *Milton* and

Jerusalem we are told: "in fact they were not necessarily 'written' at all, unless Blake jotted down first drafts on pieces of paper, but created with quill and graver on the copper plate itself" (294). In other words these works were either first written in manuscript—for what else is writing a draft on paper?—or they weren't. What evidence exists for the latter? We have Blake's assertion that the verses were dictated, but the principal Blake manuscripts we have—the Notebook and *The Four Zoas*—show ample evidence of revision, and it may be that in this instance as in so many others Blake was making figurative use of a Miltonic tradition. It's clear that Ackroyd prefers one alternative, for a paragraph later he envisions Blake as "no doubt falling upon the copper in 'the Heat of my Spirits.'"

In his conception of Blake's character Ackroyd wisely avoids the over-idealization of Blake embraced by some of his early biographers. His Blake is a figure of opposition, as capable of alienating his friends as of opposing injustice. This is a psychologically convincing view, but there are times when Ackroyd's views of Blake's quarrels seem one-sided. We've learned to think of what Hayley's side of the story would have been, but it seems a bit much to say "he was princely in his patronage" (221), especially as Hayley was more employer than patron. We have also learned that Cromek's side should be taken more seriously than it once was, but few would endorse, as Ackroyd does, Cromek's letter refusing to pay Blake to engrave the dedicatory design "To the Queen." Cromek's statement that the dedication would be to Blake's advantage and not his own is certainly untrue, as is shown by Cromek's putting the Queen at the head of his list of subscribers. Cromek alone was in a position to profit by this, Blake having no share in the sales of *The Grave*. In general, however, Ackroyd's conception of Blake's character seems to me a just one, as, for example, expressed in this analysis of the correspondence with Hayley:

There are occasions when it seems he has almost lost control over his personality or, rather, that its various aspects jostle for attention—the visionary and the tradesman, the poet and the fantasist, the prophet and the hypocrite, the passive servant and the self-righteous autodidact. All these various selves seem then to strive for mastery, and it is possible to see even here in the chaos of Blake's despair one of the sources for the drama of his Prophetic Books, where various faculties and aptitudes are engaged in a constant battle for supremacy. In moments of vision, however, all is reconciled—just as in his life the bewildering complexities of his behaviour can be transformed in an epiphany and, for a moment, all is healed. (256)

Also valuable is Ackroyd's relating Blake to a certain English tradition of eccentricity, in no reductive sense. At moments one senses that this could have been a different kind of book, focussing on Blake's character rather than

attempting to be a study of both life and works. Yet this would be to concede that the works are too difficult in their detail to form part of a general biography, which would be a dismal conclusion in any case but especially dismal for someone who never travelled further from London than Sussex and whose life was *in* his works to such a great degree. I still resist such a conclusion and can only say that despite its impressive literary qualities, psychological insight, and sense of the period, Peter Ackroyd's *Blake* is a disappointment.

Eugenie R. Freed, "A Portion of His Life": *William Blake's Miltonic Vision of Woman*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press; London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1994. \$60.

Reviewed by SHEILA A. SPECTOR

In his essay, "Persecution and the Art of Writing," Leo Strauss theorizes that during periods of political oppression, when "some political or other orthodoxy was enforced by law or custom" (32), iconoclastic writers developed a mode of exoteric composition, "writing between the lines," as a means of circumventing censorship.¹ In these Straussian texts, the surface argument would appear to be quite conventional, often even bland, to satisfy the more casual or careless readers. However, these writers would also employ specific structural and stylistic techniques by which the more persistent and intelligent readers could discern "the truth about all crucial things" (25). Although ours is not a period of overt governmental repression, still, as many on both sides of the political spectrum have argued, the numerous cultural *isms* dominating today's critical discourse have had the effect of enforcing orthodoxy through custom, if not law, to the point that writers often impose some form of self-censorship in order to avoid being labeled ideologically impure.² Such is apparently the case with "A Portion of His Life": *William Blake's Miltonic Vision of Woman*.

¹ Originally published in *Social Research* (November 1941): 488-504, "Persecution and the Art of Writing" was reprinted as the first essay of a book by the same title ([Glencoe, IL.: Free Press, 1952], 22-37).

² This is hardly an original observation. For example, Phillip E. Johnson, professor of law at the University of California, Berkeley, notes in a recent issue of *Academe*, "the principle threat to academic freedom these days comes not from ministers, or trustees, or university administrators, but from the dominant ideologies among students and faculty" ("What [If Anything] Hath God Wrought: Academic Freedom and the Religious Professor" in *Academe: Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors* 81.5 (1995): 19).

Instead of presenting an explicit exposition of her revisionist interpretation of the female in Blake, Eugenie R. Freed seems to have placed "the truth about all crucial things" between the lines. While on the surface hers appears to be a conventional analysis of Miltonic influences on four major female characters in Blake's myth, in fact, formal and stylistic characteristics suggest that Freed's true purpose can be found only "between the lines," or, to be more exact, in the last seven pages of her text.

"A Portion of His Life" reads like a traditional study of the ways in which Blake absorbed and adapted Miltonic elements to create Thel, Enitharmon, Ololon and Jerusalem, major female characters in his myth. In the first chapter, "Blake's Miltonic Vision," Freed establishes the biographical, cultural and literary evidence for her belief that "Milton's poetry is not 'backdrop' alone, but *also* provides much of the raw material of Blake's" (19). As she notes, Blake did not passively incorporate the source material into his prophecies but, rather, "collapses Milton's universe into one of his own, which he has fabricated by the fusion of apparently conflicting Miltonic elements" (25). By transcending Milton's polarity of good and evil, Blake is able to focus on emotional and imaginative levels which supercede the conventional moral duality. As a result, while Thel, Enitharmon, Ololon and Jerusalem are obviously derived, respectively, from the Lady of *Comus*, Eve, Sin and Nature, their characterizations are based "even more on the *substance* of Milton's works, the transmitted words, phrases, images and ideas that had embedded themselves in the matrix of Blake's own imagination" (34). But in contrast to Milton, who subordinates women, Blake considers the "female portion" to be "an essential part of [man's] spiritual being" (31).

In the ensuing six chapters, Freed explores the Miltonic dimensions of these specific women. Chapter 2 is devoted to an analysis of the ways Thel can be viewed as laying the negative foundation for Blake's vision of woman. As a criticism of the idealized concept of chastity found in *Comus*, *The Book of Thel* provides the first example of the Female Will, a woman who erroneously withholds her sexuality. Thus, she is used ultimately to affirm a positive attitude towards sexuality as a necessary commitment to life on earth. Freed believes that "Thel, inspired by Blake's complex response to Milton's treatment of what appeared to Blake as obdurate chastity in *Comus*, deplores the loss of Paradise. And she rejects the only alternative offered to man: coming to terms with experience, which includes procreation and generation, in the fallen world" (43).

Next, Freed turns to Enitharmon as a woman who actualizes the choices rejected by Thel. Chapter 3 analyzes Enitharmon's birth, presenting her relationship with Los as a kind of "material matrix" for Los's own creativity. That is, as his female counterpart, she is essential for his artistic functioning, a necessary element to the androgynous union

required for any mode of human creativity. But when she is separated from Los or the Spectre of Urthona, she becomes like Milton's Sin, a function of the moral polarity governing the fallen universe. From this perspective, Enitharmon's union with her son Orc—comparable to Sin's with her son Death—takes us to the abyss of chaos, as discussed in chapter 4, "The Winds of Enitharmon." When she becomes a consolidated selfhood, Enitharmon personifies the malevolent Female Will, the impulse to dominate, and hence negate, rather than complement Los's creativity. Ultimately, she parallels Milton's Eve, whose attempt to establish dominion also yielded a disastrous train of events; and Los, like Adam before him, is forced to participate in what is tantamount to an act of anticreation.

After Enitharmon, Freed discusses Ololon. The first of the two chapters devoted to Milton's emanation takes a biographical approach, speculating that Blake attributed Milton's depiction of women and their relationships with men to his own problems in reconciling the demands of personal relationships with his artistic, intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. Freed also considers the possibility that Blake blamed these domestic problems for inhibiting or distorting Milton's creativity, just as at critical periods in his own life, problems with Catherine may have affected Blake's. Chapter 6, "Ololon II," deals with Ololon's epiphany as she realizes that only by leaving Beulah can she actualize her role as Milton's contrary. Yet, to do so she must herself become Milton's personification of Sin in *Paradise Lost*, for once they enter the vegetative world of time and space, they assume earthly human sexuality, become mortal and, perforce, embrace death. But by becoming "Sin," Ololon is able to shed the negation of the hypocritical virgin and become Milton's full partner, enabling the two of them to realize their full humanity.

Blake's Miltonic vision of woman culminates in the figure Jerusalem. Following the lead of St. John of Patmos, and later John Milton, Blake transcends his historical situation by depicting his beleaguered intellectual paradise as both a city and a woman. Like the phoenix, which is associated with divine wisdom and illumination, holiness and love, Jerusalem is emblematic of unconditional love, remaining faithful to Albion throughout his ordeal. As such, in contrast to Milton's Eve, Jerusalem inspires awe, for she is the essence of Divine Humanity, being predicated on a humanized ideal rather than a moral standard of redemption: "The divinity and beauty of *humanity* is Jerusalem's 'sublime ornament'" (120).

To this point, Freed's analysis comprises the painstaking research of a conventional source study, demonstrating how Blake adapted Miltonic materials to produce the part of his myth dealing with these four major female characters. However, the analysis leads Freed away from literary antecedents and towards modern criticism, with the iconoclastic conclusion that, contrary to the assertions of feminist crit-

ics like Alicia Ostriker, Anne K. Mellor, Susan Fox and Brenda Webster, Blake's myth does project a true androgyny. Inverting scholarly convention, Freed only here provides the kind of disclaimer normally found in the preface to this kind of monograph—that "I alone must be held culpable for the views expressed here" (148n1)—but, then again, it is only here, in her "Conclusion: Albion's Bow," that she articulates her own critical stance (121-27).

While noting that "Blake's treatment of femininity and of females in the course of the unfolding of his myth has, on the whole, displeased feminist critics," Freed still believes that "The female counter-part provides the male not only with 'the food of life,' but with the indispensable matrix without which there can be no creative conception, and hence no meaningfully *human* life at all." After explicitly expressing the "great respect genuinely due to Anne Mellor," Freed asserts that "There is nevertheless . . . evidence that Blake did attempt to develop 'an image of human perfection that was completely gender free' in the visual aspect of his work, as critical dispute over the sex of some of the angelic and 'regenerated' human figures in his designs attests." Acknowledging that feminist critics have generally been displeased with Blake's treatment of femininity and of females, she contends, "It would seem that critics who approach Blake's work with a feminist ideological agenda risk being blinkered by their indignation so as to see only gross deficiencies in his treatment of the female in his mythmaking."

Instead, she feels, Blake should be given credit "for a concept of gender that was remarkable for its time in its sensitivity to female sexuality, and its breaking down of sexual stereotypes, notwithstanding that Blake had only in part succeeded in freeing himself from the handicap of the culturally ingrained attitudes of his time."

Even though "*A Portion of His Life*": *William Blake's Miltonic Vision of Woman* was not published during a period of political persecution, it still embodies two basic characteristics of texts written between the lines. Probably the more significant, Freed's organization reflects an "obscurity of the plan." In the opening chapter, she does announce her basic approach, and each chapter does unify around a specific topic. But she withholds an explicit statement of purpose as well as the argument for each chapter, not to mention her own critical stance. Under the circumstances, readers must infer for themselves the underlying principle of structure which determined why she organized the study the way she did: why, for instance, two chapters each for Enitharmon and Ololon, but only one for Jerusalem?

So, too, with style. According to Strauss, texts written between the lines are for the most part "quiet" and "unspectacular": "Only when [a writer] reached the core of the argument would he write three or four sentences in that terse and lively style which is apt to arrest the attention of young

men who love to think" (24). Similarly, most of Freed's analysis is written in a subdued and gracious prose. Like many Blake critics, she supplements her ideas with a generous number of quotations—from Blake and Milton, as well as other source materials—which she often uses to make her point for her. Somewhat puzzlingly, she rejects parenthetical citations in favor of endnotes, averaging about a hundred per chapter. But quite refreshingly, she relies primarily on plain English, rather than the critical jargon that has become so fashionable of late. Finally, she very generously acknowledges published and private sources which furthered her argument, though when appropriate, she does not hesitate to express respectful disagreement, but without any hint of hostile confrontation. Yet, as with the Straussian text, when, in the conclusion, Freed presents the essence of her position, her language is both direct and explicit, clearly designed "to arrest the attention of [all] who love to think."

If used by novice writers, these techniques can prove quite maddening; indeed, in his essay, Strauss warns that only carefully written texts merit the kind of attention required for reading between the lines. However, on the whole, Freed's book is provocative, relevant, learned, erudite, well documented, and painstakingly designed—with illustrations not only attractively but strategically located. Therefore, her structural and stylistic peculiarities, like those of Straussian texts, appear to be deliberate, and consequently indicate a larger problem in academia. It would seem that the power of various ideological camps dominating the academy are perceived as having grown so powerful that at least some scholars believe it necessary to bury opposing viewpoints between the lines. If this is so, then regardless of our own political or ideological predilections, we should all be seriously concerned about how critical debate is being curtailed, if not actually stifled, to the detriment of scholarship as a whole.

E R R A T A

This section of Robert N. Essick's "Blake in the Marketplace, 1995, Including a Survey of Blakes in Private Ownership," was inadvertently omitted from the spring 1996 issue. The omitted section began at the bottom of page 117 and should have carried over to page 118.

Hayley, *Life of Romney*, 1809. Heritage Book Shop, Feb. private offer, small-paper issue slightly trimmed, Blake's pl. thinly printed but clean, full calf by R. De Coverly (\$1350). Adam Mills, March cat. 32, #117, contemporary ink signature of "William Bayly, Junr," and a later pencil note ("a friend of Blake's—and Johnson Cowper's editor"), some pls. spotted or stained in margins, contemporary half calf, joints cracking (£500); same copy and price, July cat. 33, #23, Oct. cat. 34, #20. I can find no other reference to Blake having a friend named "Bayly," but a "William Bayley" was a member of the jury that found Blake innocent of sedition and assault on 11 Jan. 1804 (G. E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records* [Oxford: Clarendon P, 1969] 140). Did Blake have a "friend" on the jury? I can find no record of Bayly/Bayley having been involved in editing Cowper. Perhaps whoever wrote the reference to Blake was confusing "William Bayly" with William Hayley, Blake's patron and the author/editor of *The Life, and Posthumous Writings, of William Cowper*, published by Joseph Johnson in 1803-04. The Antique & Book Collector, July cat., #24, Blake's pl. only extracted (£225). CE, 27 Sept., #138, some soiling, 19th-century half morocco worn (\$58). John Windle, Dec. cat. 26, #43, half calf, hinges repaired, from the Joseph Holland collection (\$450).

Hayley, *Little Tom the Sailor*. Broadside, printed in black. John Windle, Dec. cat. 26, #3, from the Joseph Holland collection, headpiece, tailpiece, and colophon illus. (price on inquiry; acquired by R. Essick). See illus. 6.

Hayley, *Triumphs of Temper*, 1803. James Burmester, Feb. cat. 27, #34, apparently small paper, contemporary calf rebaked (£300). Robert Clark, March cat. 39, #200, some foxing, contemporary calf rebaked (£285). John Windle, April cat. 24, #43, large paper, fine impressions, uncut in original blue boards, lower part of backstrip worn away, slight spotting in some margins (\$1975). E. M. Lawson, April cat. 272, #64, apparently small paper, contemporary calf rebaked (£220). Quaritch, June cat. 1208, #18, large paper, contemporary calf (£1200). John Windle, July "Summer" cat., #31, small paper, lacking the half title, some foxing and offsetting from the pls., calf rebaked, joints repaired (\$475); same copy and price, Dec. cat. 26, #206. The Antique & Book Collector, July cat., #20-23, 4 unidentified pls. extracted and sold individually (£125 each). Simon Finch, Oct. cat. 26, #70, small paper, contemporary calf worn, front joint restored (£380); same copy and price, Dec. "Occasional List" 13, #43. Wilsey Rare Books, Nov. private offer, small-paper issue in original boards uncut, "HAYLEY." neatly written in pen and ink on the spine, the

price ("6/-") in pen and ink on the front cover top left (\$650). John Windle, Dec. cat. 26, #37, small paper, with the half title, full calf rebaked, joints crudely repaired, from the Joseph Holland collection (\$475).

Henry, *Memoirs of Albert de Haller*, 1783. James Burmester, Nov. cat. 30, #123, contemporary calf (a bargain at £75).

Hoare, *An Inquiry*, 1806. John Windle, Dec. cat. 26, #207, uncut in modern calf (\$850).

Hogarth, *The Beggar's Opera by Hogarth and Blake*, 1965, with a restrike from Blake's original copperplate. John Windle, Dec. cat. 26, #208, original folding case slightly worn (\$975).

Hogarth, *Works*. CSK, 10 Feb., #100, undated Baldwin & Cradock issue, 158 pls. on 116 leaves, some pls. torn or stained, contemporary half morocco worn (£880). The Antique & Book Collector, July cat., #3, Blake's pl. of "Beggar's Opera, Act III," only, "fourth and final state"—i.e., anything between the 2nd and 7th published sts. (£450). CSK, 8 Sept., #38, undated Baldwin & Cradock issue, 152 pls. on 113 leaves, some leaves torn, half roan very worn (£618.75); #39, 1822 issue, 155 pls. on 120 leaves, some soiling, contemporary calf worn (£787.50); #40, 1822 issue, 155 pls. on 120 leaves, some tears and soiling, contemporary calf worn (£675). CL, 25 Oct., #129, 1822 ed., 2 vols., 151 pls. on 118 leaves, contemporary calf rubbed (£1265).

Hunter, *Historical Journal*, 1793. E. M. Lawson, April cat. 272, #40, quarto issue, imprint on title shaved (as often), contemporary half calf rebaked (£1850). James Fenning, Oct. cat. 138, #194, octavo issue, recent quarto calf (£850). The 19th Century Shop, Nov. cat. 42, #65, quarto issue, imprint on title present, some staining, early calf rehinged (\$4800). Charles Traylen, Dec. cat. 118, #80, quarto issue, contemporary calf, hinges repaired (£3300).

Josephus, *Works*, c. 1795? Adam Mills, March cat. 32, #150, a few tears, contemporary calf rebaked (£250; acquired by D. W. Dörrbecker). According to information supplied by the new owner, it would seem that this is an unrecorded issue between B and C in Bentley: the title page has "By the King's Royal License and Authority" at the top, as in C, but retains from B "to which is now first added" and (as the final line) "And sold by all other Booksellers in Great Britain." BBA, 6 July, #197, dated to "1792" in the auction cat. but no date appears on the title page, with "Whole" in the title as in Bentley's issues B-E, some spotting, contemporary calf rebaked (Trotter, £115).

Lavater, *Aphorisms on Man*. Robert Clark, June cat. 40, #185, 1789 ed., later quarter roan worn (£160). Quaritch, June cat. 1208, #19, 1788 ed., slight spotting, half calf (£600). Jarndyce, July cat. 106, #1624, 1789 ed., contemporary half calf rebaked (£200). Quaritch, Oct. cat. of "New Acquisitions," #28, 1788 ed., "annotated throughout in ink by an early owner and in pencil, transcribing Blake's own notes, by the collector and publisher Roger Senhouse," the earlier owner identified by

Quaritch as "Thomas S. Butt" (could this possibly be Blake's patron, Thomas Butts?), this "Butt" further identified by Senhouse as "Muster Master General," whose annotations include "such symbols as b, B, %, etc.," with an analysis of these "notes and markings" by Senhouse on the front endleaves, old half cloth (£600).

Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*. Weissert, Jan. cat. 59, #40 1789-98 ed., 3 vols. in 5 (DM3200). Robert Frew, Jan. cat. 4, #23, 1810 ed., 3 vols. in 5, lacking half titles, slight spotting, contemporary russa (£1500); same copy and price, April cat. 5, #33; same copy, Oct. Santa Monica Book Fair (£1250); same copy, Nov. cat. 6, #40 (£1500). Rulon-Miller, Feb. cat. 47, #31, 1789-98 ed., 3 vols. in 5, contemporary calf rubbed, library marks (\$2800). Ursus Rare Books, March private offer, 1792 ed., 3 vols. in 5, contemporary roan (\$7500). Edward Bayntun-Coward (for George Bayntun), June cat. 3, #34, 1789-98 ed., 3 vols. in 5, contemporary half goatskin, marbled boards rubbed, slight repairs (£1600). CE, 14 June, #460, "1789-93" (?) ed., 3 vols. in 5, contemporary calf rebaked (\$138); #461, 1792 ed., 3 vols. in 5, contemporary morocco (\$978). The Antique & Book Collector, July cat., #1, pl. 2 extracted from the 1st ed. (£150); #2, pl. 3 extracted from the 1st ed. (£60). Pacific Book Auction Galleries, San Francisco, 30 Nov., #213, "1789-1792" (actually the 1789-98 ed.), uncut in later morocco over marbled boards (\$500 to John Windle).

Malkin, *A Father's Memoirs*, 1806. John Windle, Aug. private offer, frontispiece only, engraved by Cromeck, a working proof before all letters and lacking much work in the design, same st. as the British Museum proof reproduced in David Bindman, *The Complete Graphic Works of William Blake* ([London]: Thames and Hudson, 1978) pl. 410, on wove paper, sheet 28.3 x 22.2 cm., showing fragments of an 1804 watermark, the impression once laid into A. E. Newton's copy of Geoffrey Keynes, *A Bibliography of William Blake* (1921)—see the Newton sale cat., Parke-Bernet, 16 April 1941, #173 (\$75)—and later in the Joseph Holland collection (acquired by R. Essick).

Faint, illegible text in the left column, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.

Faint, illegible text in the right column, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.