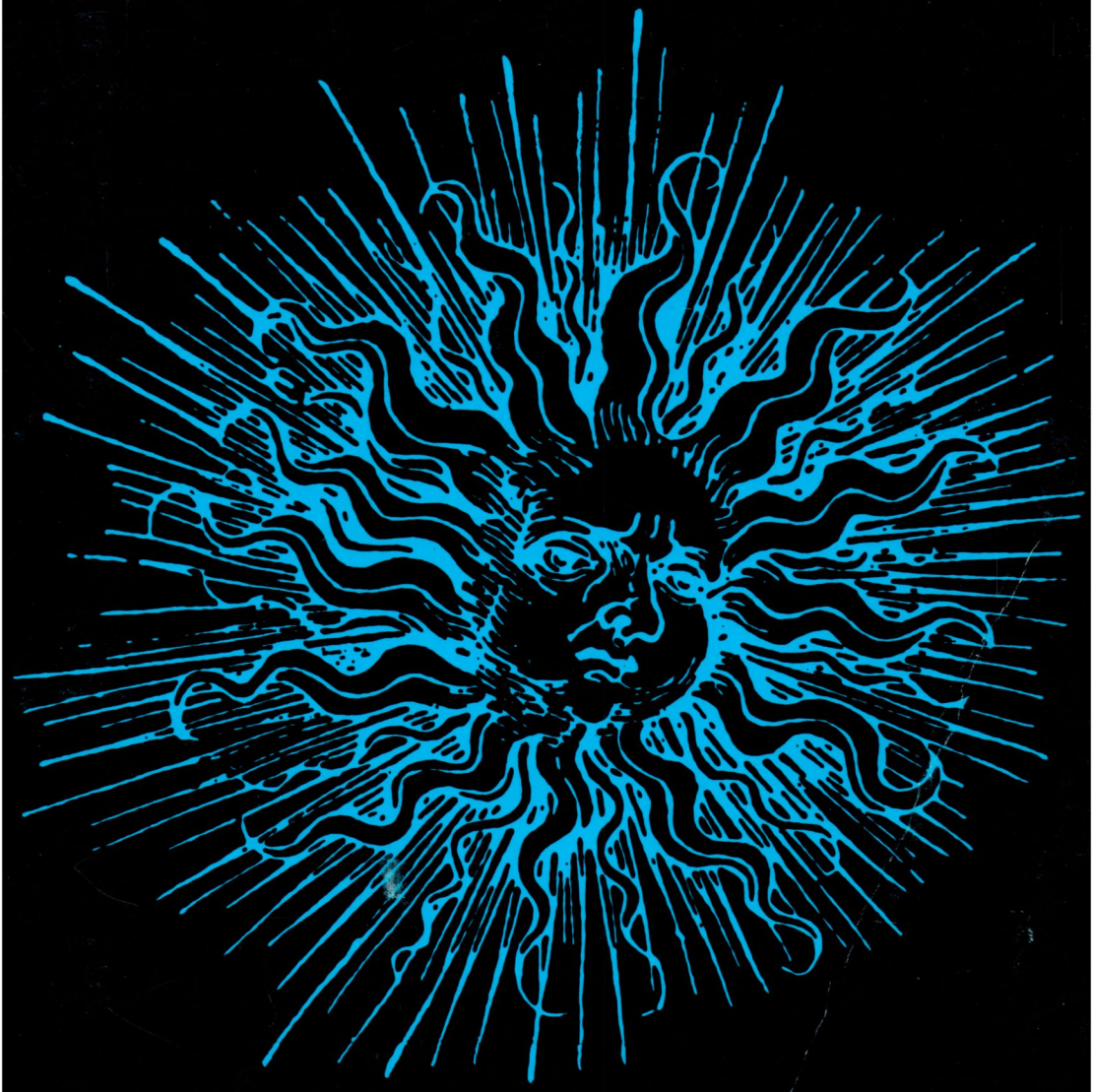

PHOEBUS 1

A JOURNAL OF ART HISTORY

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Preface

Phoebus has been three years in the making. Its founders proudly present this first edition of the only art history journal in the state of Arizona. Enthusiastic plans are well underway for the second and succeeding issues.

Because of its nature, a local emphasis is inevitable. This does not mean, however, that *Phoebus* will deal only with local materials. In fact, its coverage will be less concerned with art being made in the state than with art maintained and collected throughout the state. Nor does it intend to discriminate among subject matter or fields within the discipline, so long as they fall within the interest of the contributing Arizona art historians. These could well be traditional Western, contemporary Eastern, Islamic, Pre-Columbian, North- or Southwestern Indian, etc.

The editorial policy of *Phoebus* is twofold:

1) To publish and publicize selected works of art from the public and private collections within the state, and

2) To serve as a rallying point for art historians, museums, art centers, and other institutions in the state, encouraging as well as providing a channel for research and publication.

Policy No. 1 aims particularly at the unfortunate predicament in Arizona that, in spite of the unsuspected richness and importance of its art collections, national recognition is slow in coming. It is hoped that through "Arizona Portfolio," in a regular series of articles and reviews, our modern effort can in some way remedy the existing situation.

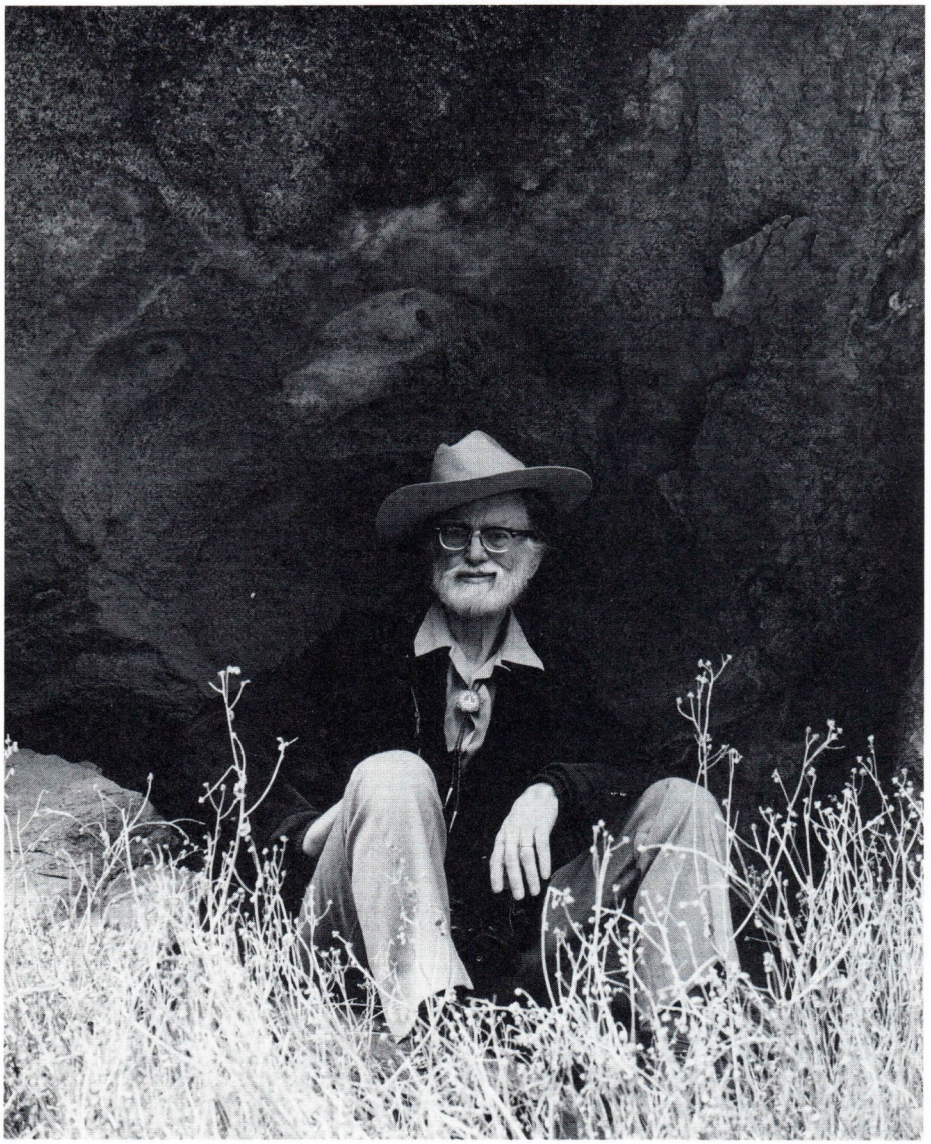
Policy No. 2 may belie the current "departmental" nature of this journal. All contributors of this issue either are or were associated with the Department of Art, Arizona State University. However, the intention is to invite future cooperation and participation of individuals and institutions in the state, thereby augmenting its scope to a regional publication.

We are grateful to the successive chairmen of the Department of Art,

Arizona State University, namely Professors Clyde Watson and Leonard Lehrer. Without their encouragement and support, the journal may never have become a reality. Credit must be given to Professor Anthony Lacy Gully for the choice of *Phoebus* as the title of the journal; its solar allusion befits a publication emerging from the Valley of the Sun. To our excellent designer, Mr. Chip Kettering, who generously donated his effort and time, this journal owes its appearance. Thanks must also be given to David Sparks, who, with his fine eye for detail, was able to bring this journal within the bounds of modern technical scholarship.

Finally, it is to Harry Wood, Professor Emeritus and chairman of the Department of Art from 1955 to 1966, that we dedicate this first issue of *Phoebus*.

Ju-hsi Chou
Editor-in-chief



Harry Wood, Professor Emeritus
Photo by Robert Gilge, 1974

Dedication

This inaugural issue of *Phoebus* signals the hopeful beginning of an effort to publish and make available to a wide audience the researches of art historians and others acquainted with the artistic riches of Arizona, which are to be discovered in its colleges and universities, its museums and galleries, and its various other collections, private as well as public.

At the same time, this first issue must also be recognized as the culmination of a long and sometimes arduous effort to stir an awareness of Arizona treasures meriting recognition, but largely unknown and too often inadequately appreciated.

If there is a single individual who has worked harder than others to achieve this goal, it is Harry Wood who, in 1955, was invited to assume the chairmanship of the Art Department. The art curriculum which he found upon his arrival in Arizona was a simple one, in which art history surveys were subordinated to other courses. Indeed, there were no art historians, strictly speaking. But today, two decades later and largely because of an ideal he nourished, there is a faculty of ten full-time art historians representing at least as many areas of specialization. There are undergraduate and graduate programs in art history where there had been none. And now, finally, there is an art history publication which has the capability of reaching beyond the walls of the university and even farther, well beyond the borders of the state.

Acknowledging his imaginative vision of art history for Arizona State University, and his unrelenting energetic efforts to realize it, an appreciative faculty salutes Harry Wood and with genuine affection, dedicates this first issue of *Phoebus* to him.

Style and Symbolism in the Awatobi Kiva Mural Paintings

Marvin Cohodas

Awatobi, a Hopi pueblo on Antelope Mesa in Arizona, was a prosperous and populous town from the thirteenth century until the massacre of its population by other Hopi in 1700. During the Pueblo IV period, approximately A.D. 1300-1600, the art of mural painting in kivas and other ceremonial chambers was developed at Awatobi as well as in contemporary pueblos in northern New Mexico. These mural paintings, recovered in excavation, provide a unique insight into the continuity of prehistoric and modern Hopi worship and religious symbolism.

The Awatobi Kivas[1] which were 4-6 meters long and 2½-4 meters wide, were entered through a roof hatchway and had a raised platform at one end. The excavations show that these chambers were constantly repainted. They may have been whitewashed after the conclusion of a ceremony, and then at a yearly rite of renewal a new mural painting would be applied. Mineral pigments, with the addition of carbon black, were mixed with saliva and painted on dry plaster, probably by male ritualists. The colors were applied flatly, with no shading, and a black outline was added last. Due to the consistently poor preservation of these chambers, mural painting fragments usually survive only from the lower and middle sections of the walls.

In 1952, Watson Smith published his analysis of the murals from Awatobi and from the neighboring and contemporary site of Kawaika-a. The major interpretive sections of Smith's analysis concern a division of the excavated fragments into four types which Smith calls "layout groups."[2] These layout groups are defined according to the relationships between figure, field, and frame. For example, in layout group IV, figures are dispersed on the field and there is no frames. 3 By contrast, layout group III consists of paintings with integrated, all-over designs, on a solid color field and with a thin framing line. Often the

designs are executed in the style of the contemporary Sikyatki ceramics (fig. 1).

Layout groups I and II boast the most complex and sophisticated paintings. According to Smith's analysis, group II is distinguished by dynamic figures dispersed through the field, either with no frame or a thin framing line.[4] In group I, the usually static figures are symmetrically placed, and a wide band decorated with blossom designs forms the bottom of the frame (fig. 2). This paper will be concerned primarily with the superior murals of groups I and II.

Smith employs these four mural types, or layout groups, along with ceramic remains in the painted rooms, to suggest a chronology for Awatobi mural painting. He suggests a three-phase chronology for the murals from Awatobi and Kawaika-a.[5] The early phase consists of the group IV murals, which are found in association with the earliest ceramic assemblage of the mural painting period. The second or middle phase is much more important,

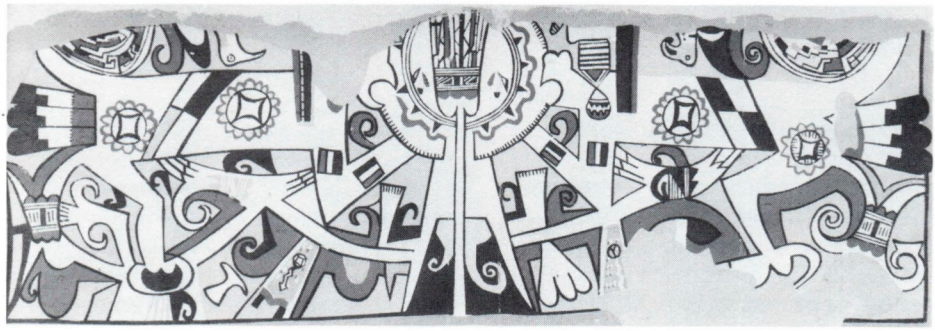


Fig. 1. Awatobi, Test 14, Room 3, Design 11. Antelope Mesa, Arizona. Photo: Hillel Burger; Courtesy of Peabody Museum, Harvard University.

Fig. 2. Awatobi, Room 788. Antelope Mesa, Arizona. Photo: Hillel Burger; Courtesy of Peabody Museum, Harvard University.

as it sees the contemporaneity of murals of layout groups I, II, and III. These murals are found in kivas and rooms with an intermediary ceramic assemblage. The final or late phase consists of murals associated with the latest pre-contact ceramics. According to Smith, only murals of layout group I were painted in this phase. This three-phase chronology thus suggests a plausible development of Awatobi paintings from the crude and scattered forms of group IV in the early phase, to the highly organized and complex murals of group I in the late phase.

While Smith's sequence is certainly correct in its outline form, it may be possible to suggest some more detailed aspects of the development and to clarify its course. Since the murals of group IV appear unrelated to the more consistent development that occurs in the middle and late phases, they will not be discussed further. The following discussion will thus emphasize the changes in style and form between the middle and late phases of Awatobi mural painting.

It may be suggested that the murals of the middle phase (which consists primarily of Awatobi Test 14, Rooms 2 and 3, and of Kawaika-a Test 4, Room 4, and Kawaika-a Test 5, Rooms 2 and 6) all share a simplicity and monumentality of form, and a lack of extraneous detail (fig. 3). There is no consistent spacial environment suggested and figures are not related in a natural way to the ground line. Compositions are limited to three anthropomorphic figures or a repetition of animals and inanimate objects. Within this general style phase, three basic types of format may be distinguished. The first is an asymmetric format which corresponds to Smith's layout group II (fig. 3). The second format employs bilateral symmetry in a framework that emphasizes central and flanking forms. This format occurs both in the typical mural style of group I and in the Sikyatki-ceramic style of group III (fig. 1), as well as in a combination of the two.[6] The third format employs serial repetition and alternation in an equally symmetric effect.[7] Compositions employing this format often emphasize a band inhabited with water creatures and an unidentifiable quadruped. Both the bilaterial and serial formats are considered by Smith to belong to group I although the distinctive blossom band has not yet appeared. To summarize, the middle period of prehistoric Hopi mural painting is distinguished by monumentality, simplicity, and an unspecified environment, with formats employing asymmetry, bilateral symmetry, and serial repetition.

The murals which belong to the late phase of Awatobi painting (Awatobi Rooms 528, 529, 788, and probably Kawaika-a Test 5, Room 4) seem to be more consistent among themselves than those of the middle period. The blossom band (fig. 2) which forms a bottom frame or panel division, is nearly ubiquitous, so Smith suggests that all late murals are of layout group I. The compositions of the late phase are more complex, employing larger numbers of figures and inanimate objects with much more precise, miniaturist detail. The environment is more clearly specified by the relationship of figures and objects to the ground line. The use of more rigidly defined formats, detailed and pictorial compositions, thus differentiates the late phase murals from the monumental and simpler murals of the middle phase. Although most

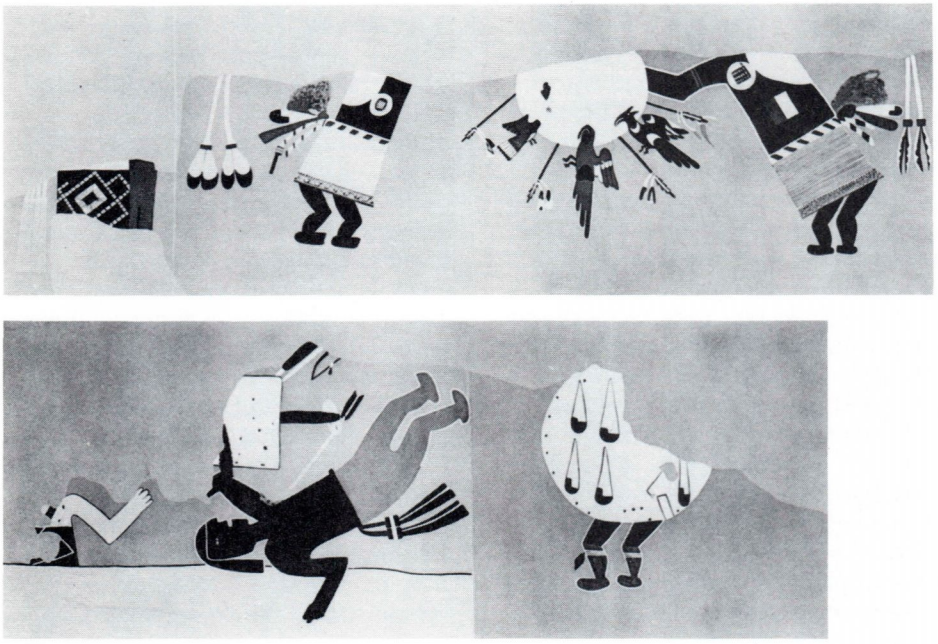


Fig. 3. Top: Awatobi, Test 14, Room 3, Front Wall B Design 2; Antelope Mesa, Arizona. Bottom: Kawaika-a, Test 4, Room 4, Right and Back Walls Design 2; Antelope Mesa, Arizona. Photo: Hillel Burger; Courtesy of Peabody Museum, Harvard University.

murals are arranged in bilateral symmetry (fig. 2), some asymmetric compositions remain (fig. 4). The Sikyatki style, or layout group III, and the serial formats of the middle period no longer occur. It may be noted that both the symmetric and asymmetric compositions occur with the group I blossom band, so that the distinction between these two formats is not as well defined as in the middle period. To summarize, the late period of Awatobi painting is defined by complex and rigidly organized paintings with a suggestion of pictorial space, large numbers of figures, animals and objects, and with an attention to miniaturistic detail.

While the middle and late phases of Awatobi mural painting may be differentiated according to style, they may be compared in terms of similar contrasts in compositional formats. The asymmetric and dynamic compositions, which are typed as group II in the middle period, actually continue into the late phase (fig. 4). In both phases, these asymmetric compositions contrast with paintings that are more symmetric and static, and which Smith types as group I (fig. 2). Since both the asymmetric and symmetric formats occur contemporaneously in the stylistically differentiated middle and late painting phases, it would appear that this contrast in format exists

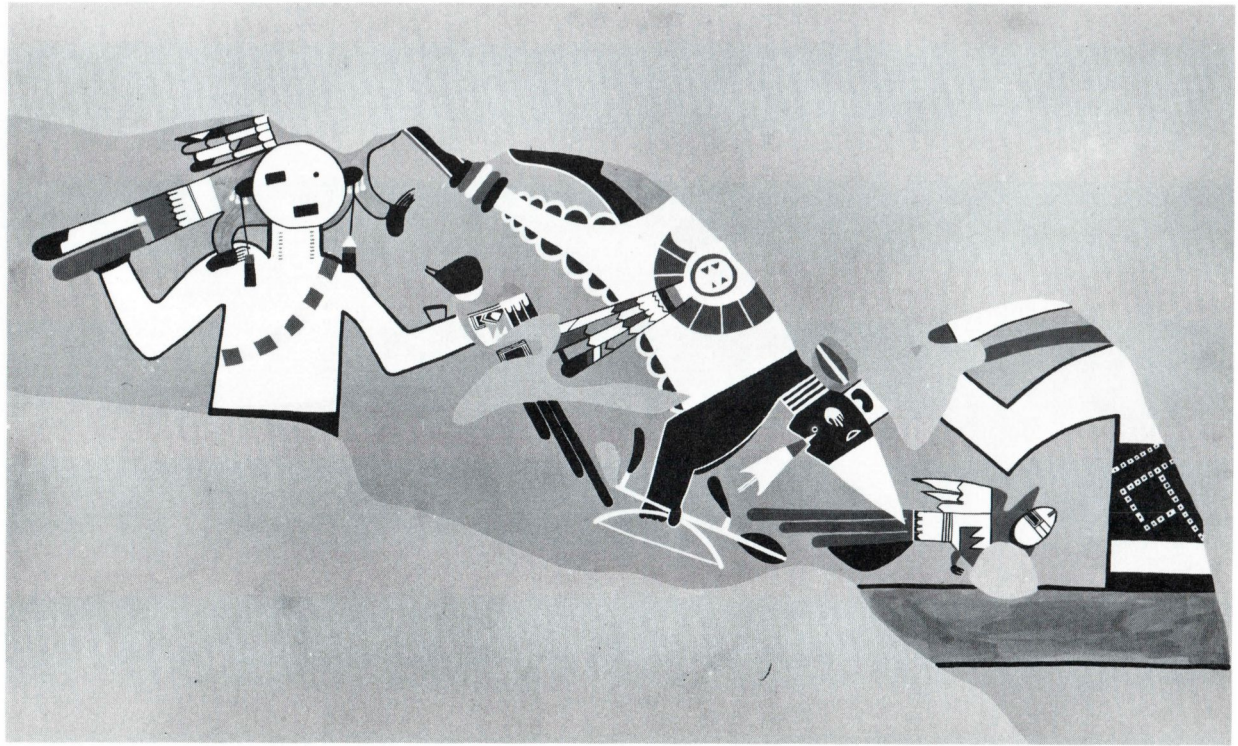


Fig. 4. Awatobi, Test 14, Room 2, Right Wall Design 6. Antelope Mesa, Arizona. Photo: Hillel Burger; Courtesy of Peabody Museum, Harvard University.

independently of the stylistic development.

In the following analysis, it will be suggested that these contrasting types of composition, the asymmetric and symmetric, are expressions of opposing symbolic themes in the Awatobi murals. For the purposes of this discussion, the asymmetric compositions will be referred to as group II, even though later examples include the blossom band; and the symmetric compositions will be referred to as group I. It will be shown that these two groups of mural paintings illustrate opposing symbolic themes in contrasting types of composition.

The murals of group II (figs. 3 and 4) are distinguished not only by dynamic and asymmetric compositions with undeveloped frames, but also by some consistent symbolic images. Almost all fragments of group II murals appear to be parts of a consistently repeated scene. This scene comprises the battle between two warriors. One of the warriors holds a large shield from which eagle feathers, birds, or prayer sticks radiate like a sunburst. The second warrior may be shown during the attack, or afterward, vanquished and supine. Watching this scene from the sidelines is a female who is only shown above the waist. This female, surely a deity, has yellow painted skin and wears a black skirt with a design of negative dotted squares exactly like older Hopi ceramic designs from the thirteenth century. A Hopi informant identified these scenes as the mock battle which accompanies the Soyal ceremonies of the winter solstice, and which Stephens interprets as the battle to turn the sun back on its path to the north.[8] In addition, one of the vanquished warriors (fig. 4) was identified as a Hopi war god.[9] On the basis of the visual images and the informants' interpretations, it would appear that the Group II murals represent battles associated with solar imagery.

The murals of group I (fig. 2) may be distinguished by many features other than the blossom band which forms the lower frame in late examples. In fact, these murals, in composition and motifs, represent a complete contrast to the group II murals. Whereas the group II murals are dynamic and asymmetric, those of group I are static and symmetric. Whereas the group II murals emphasize battle, weapons, and solar symbolism, the murals of group I emphasize plants, water animals, and rain symbols. Finally, the female deity who is relegated to the sidelines in the group II battle scenes becomes the central focus in many murals of group I. This deity holds a netted gourd in the group I murals which is still associated with rain-bringing rituals in modern Hopi worship. The murals of group I thus emphasize themes of fertility, represented by water, vegetation, and the earth, as opposed to the martial themes and solar symbolism of the group II murals.

To summarize, two groups of prehistoric mural paintings at Awatobi are distinguished by Smith according to the relationships between the figures and the frame. Further analysis shows that these two groups of murals may be contrasted in other ways. The murals of group II emphasize the theme of battle, associated with the sun, using feathered shields and warriors as the primary motifs, and associated with the compositional qualities of asymmetry and dynamism. The murals of group I emphasize the theme of fertility associated with the female deity, using priests and symbols of rain

and vegetation as the primary motifs, and stressing the compositional qualities of stasis and symmetry. The clarity of the thematic opposition between these two groups of paintings appears to suggest that the compositional qualities are not related to stylistic differences on a chronological scale, but that they are employed to express the differences in symbolic intent between the murals of groups I and II. In the following sections, several aspects of modern Hopi ritual will be analyzed in terms of a similar thematic opposition, in order to explain the nature and meaning of the contrasts of both composition and symbolism in the Awatobi murals.

Modern Hopi ritual centers around a season of Kachina dances, running from the winter solstice until shortly after the summer solstice. This period may be divided into two phases: the winter and the spring. These two phases will be related respectively to the symbolism of battle and death in the Awatobi murals of group II, and the symbolism of fertility and growth in the murals of group I.

During the winter season, Hopi kachina dances are held primarily in the kivas, at night. The kiva was a subterranean chamber in prehistoric pueblos, and it still retains this underworld association through the symbolic underworld entrance, the *sipapu* hole in its floor. The dances of this winter period emphasize warriors: the mock battles of the winter solstice ceremony have been mentioned above in reference to the battle scenes of the group II murals. Animals and hunting themes are also emphasized, and the dances are controlled by the clan of the badger, a hunting animal. The kachinas which dominate the winter or night dances (fig. 5) are violent and

Fig. 5. Cliff Bahnimptewa, *Wuyak Kuita* ("Angry Kachina"). Courtesy of Northland Press, Flagstaff, Arizona.

aggressive kachinas: they have beards, toothy grins, horns, and snouts; they are associated with animals and war; they carry weapons or yucca whips; and they often wear skins or anglo clothing. The night dances are aggressive and disordered, and are enacted by motley assemblages of these spirit beings. The best example of such a kachina performance is the Soyoko ceremony in February, in which a group of monstrous devouring demons terrorize the children.[10] To summarize, the winter season in the Hopi ceremonial calendar is dominated by

aggressive, violent, and disordered kachinas who dance primarily at night and in the kivas. The winter season in Hopi ritual is related to the group II murals at Awatobi through the emphasis on action, warriors, and mock battles.

The second season of kachina dances occurs in the spring and is associated with the renewal of fertility. With the melting of the snow, kachina dances may be performed out in the plazas, in the daytime. These plaza dances still include some winter-type kachinas, but they emphasize a completely different type of kachina and performance. The dominant kachinas in the spring plaza dances are beneficent rain-bringing kachinas (fig. 6). In place of the snouts and bearded grins, they wear cylindrical masks with tubular mouths. They wear ceremonial kilts, sashes, and belts rather than skin kilts or anglo clothing. They hold rattles and branches of fir trees rather than whips or weapons. In addition, the graphic designs which are painted on their masks, body, and costume symbolize rain, fertility, and vegetation.

Fig. 6. Cliff Bahnimptewa, *Nuyak'china* ("Snow Kachina"). Courtesy of Northland Press, Flagstaff, Arizona.

These beneficent, rain-bringing kachinas most often appear in line dances. In these dances, a large number of identically costumed kachinas sing verses of songs to a stately step, as they line up on each side of the plaza in turn. These kachinas are never violent or aggressive. They act, sing, and move in a stately unison, and they arrange themselves symmetrically.[11] The spring season in Hopi ritual is thus distinguished by daytime plaza dances which emphasize line dances of identically costumed, passive and beneficent kachinas. These spring dances would relate to the murals of group I at Awatobi because of the symbols of fertility and the qualities of quasi-stasis and symmetry in ritual movement. It would appear that the prehistoric Awatobi murals and modern Hopi ritual share an opposition of death or martial themes with fertility themes, and express this opposition through the contrasts of dynamism with stasis and asymmetry with symmetry.

The same opposition may be expressed, in part, in the appearances of two major Hopi deities in the form of kachina dancers. These deities, a sun god and a fertility goddess, may be shown to express the opposition of death and fertility in Hopi ritual.

The sun deity appears as a kachina

under various names, depending upon the clan that sponsors his appearance. The most important of these, Ahul (fig. 7), may serve as an example. Ahul and the other sun gods are distinguished by a round basketry mask with a bird beak and a crest of eagle feathers, suggesting that they are related to the eagle. The stars, represented by crosses, which are painted on Ahul's face, suggest nighttime. The upper face is divided into fields of yellow and blue, both colors associated with the west in Hopi direction symbolism. The black in the area beneath is the symbolic color of the nadir, and by extension of the underworld.[12] Ahul appears to be associated with the eagle, the west, and the underworld and night. Ahul appears in the winter season, primarily at Soyal when he opens the kivas, and in the warrior ceremony when he mimes the nightly journey of the sun. Ahul appears to represent the sun descending into and in the underworld, and to be related to the nighttime kiva dances of the winter season. Finally, Ahul is the kachina with the clearest precedent in the Awatobi mural paintings.[13]

The Hopi fertility goddess is most often represented as the Butterfly Maiden, or Pahlik Mana (fig. 8). The Butterfly Maiden appears regularly in the Plaza dances grinding corn. Corn-grinding is a specifically female task, and so this deity is set off from all other Hopi kachinas, male or female, by being the only one actually performed by a woman.[14] The Butterfly Maiden is clearly associated with fertility, the growth and harvesting of corn, and with female activity.

The costume of the Butterfly Maiden suggests a clear contrast with the costume of the sun deities such as Ahul. While the sun deities wear a round basket-mask, the Butterfly Maiden wears a naturally-shaped face mask. While Ahul wears a crest of eagle feathers, the Butterfly Maiden wears a headdress of wooden slats called a tableta. This tableta, which must be associated with fertility since it is also worn in the women's harvest dances in summer, appears to represent a butterfly. Color symbolism provides further contrast: Ahul's colors, yellow and blue, are related to the west, while

Fig. 7. Cliff Bahnimptewa, *Ahul or Ahöla Kachina*. Courtesy of Northland Press, Flagstaff, Arizona.

Fig. 8. Cliff Bahnimptewa, *Pahlik Mana* ("Butterfly Maiden"). Courtesy of Northland Press, Flagstaff, Arizona.

the Butterfly Maiden's colors red and white are related to the east. Black, the underworld color on Ahul's mask, is contrasted to all-colors, the upperworld or zenith color which appears on the Butterfly Maiden's mask and tableta.[15] The graphic symbols on Ahul's mask represent stars, associated with night, while rain, blossoms, and corn, associated with fertility, appear on the Butterfly Maiden's tableta.[16] The Butterfly Maiden, who appears only in the spring season, appears to symbolize the renewal of fertility associated with this season in North America.

To summarize, Ahul is a male sun god who is associated with death and martial themes, night, the underworld, the west, the eagle, and the winter season. By contrast, the Butterfly Maiden is a female fertility goddess who is associated with growth and fertility themes, daytime, the upperworld, the east, the butterfly, and the spring season. Like Ahul, the Butterfly Maiden appears to have a precedent in the prehistoric Hopi murals[17] as well as in contemporary murals from northern New Mexico.[18] The representation of these deity-kachinas in the prehistoric murals provides the most direct evidence for a continuity between the ancient and modern Hopi. Further conclusions on the nature of the Awatobi murals will be based on this evidence of continuity through time.

The reason for the opposition of themes of death and fertility may be explained with reference to the Hopi ceremonial calendar. The theme of death and war is expressed by dances in winter, when the earth's vegetation dies and is covered by a blanket of snow. Hunting dances are also prominent, since hunting is an important enterprise in winter months when farming is impossible. Fertility themes are associated with the spring season when rain-bringing and corn-grinding ceremonies accompany the growth of new vegetation and the resumption of agricultural activity. This new growth is not merely a birth of vegetation and fertility, but it is a rebirth which follows death as immutably as spring follows winter. Hopi rituals express the seasonal cycle of death and rebirth in the change from the ritual dances of war and hunting to those of benevolence and fertility. This change is also represented by the change from an emphasis on male activities of war and hunting, with a male sun god, to female activities of harvesting and food preparation with a female fertility goddess. The same contrast may be seen in the Awatobi murals, where the female deity who is a subordinate figure in the battle scenes of group II moves to the central position in the murals of group I. It would appear that the Awatobi murals parallel modern Hopi ritual in the expression of the cycle of death and rebirth through the contrast of martial with fertility themes, and of male with female qualities.

The change from the winter season and death to the spring season and rebirth is also expressed in Hopi ritual by the change from the underground kiva dances at night, to the daytime plaza dances. This upward movement into the light parallels and reenacts the major event in the origin myth of the Hopi and other pueblo peoples. In this myth, the first people lived in the underworld, which was totally dark and therefore a place of utter confusion, disharmony, and discontent. The emergence of these people onto the surface of the earth through the *sipapu*,

and their acceptance of agriculture and settled community life, marks the establishment of the present order. In the Hopi myth, the emergence of man from the underworld also appears to parallel the growth of vegetation in the earth's yearly rebirth of fertility. This cycle of death and rebirth is thus expressed in Hopi myth through a movement from lower to upper, from darkness to light, and from chaos to order. Exactly the same transformation occurs in the Hopi kachina season, in the change from the winter dances, which occur at night and in the kivas, and which feature violent and aggressive kachinas, to the spring dances which occur in daylight, in the plaza, and which emphasize stately line dances. It appears that the death of vegetation in the winter is associated with the entrance of the sun into the underworld through violent battle, plunging the cosmos into a chaotic state. This condition is reversed when life is reborn from the earth goddess and order is restored.

With this information, a last comparison may be attempted between Hopi ritual and the Awatobi murals. It has been shown that both represent the yearly cycle and renewal of fertility through the opposing themes of death and rebirth, as expressed through the contrast of martial and fertility symbolism. In addition, it would appear that types of movement are employed in both cases for their symbolic value. The ritual motion of masked dancers in Hopi dances, and the visual motion of compositional arrangement in the Awatobi murals, both contrast dynamism and stasis, asymmetry and symmetry, to emphasize the change from chaos to order which underlies the death and rebirth cycle.

It has been shown that the most important of the prehistoric Awatobi mural paintings may be divided into two groups, which emphasize the contrast of martial and fertility themes. Through a comparison of these mural paintings with modern Hopi ritual, it has been possible to suggest that the murals depict the opposition of death in the winter, to rebirth in the spring. It is further suggested that the contrast in qualities of composition between the two groups of mural paintings may be interpreted as an expression of symbolic intent rather than as a chronological difference.

NOTES

[1] Watson Smith, "Kiva Mural Decorations at Awatovi and Kawaika-a," *Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University*, XXXVII (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1952), 13-32.

[2] Ibid., pp. 107-112.

[3] Ibid., fig. 43.

[4] Ibid., fig. 59.

[5] Ibid., pp. 315-317.

[6] Ibid., fig. 59.

[7] Ibid., fig. 60.

[8] Ibid., pp. 312-313.

[9] Ibid., p. 302.

[10] Barton Wright, *Kachinas: A Hopi Artist's Documentary* (Flagstaff, 1973), p. 73.

[11] Harold S. Colton, *Hopi Kachina Dolls, with a Key to Their Identification* (Albuquerque, 1959), pp. 3-4.

[12] Ibid., p. 13.

[13] Smith, p. 303.

[14] Wright, p. 106.

[15] Colton, p. 13.

[16] Ibid., p. 18.

[17] Smith, p. 308.

[18] Frank C. Hibben, *Kiva Art of the Anasazi* (Las Vegas, 1975), figs. 64-65.

Mr. B. and the Cherubim: A Critical Examination of William Blake's A Descriptive Catalogue of 1809

Anthony Lacy Gully

It is ironically prophetic that William Blake (1757-1827) should have selected Milton's phrase, "Fit audience find tho' few" as an appropriate quotation for the advertisement for his only one-man show that was held in his brother James's hosiery shop in 1809.[1] For, indeed, Blake attracted few visitors to his exhibition and no sympathetic response to the arguments he launched in the accompanying guide book, *A Descriptive Catalogue*.[2] Blake's *Catalogue* provides us with the artist's most extensive writings on art. On the following pages is an assessment of the *Catalogue* and its relation to the sixteen works in the exhibition.

Many arguments have been offered on what impelled Blake to organize an exhibition which failed so totally to arouse the support he wanted for his approach to aesthetics and subject matter.[3] My reading of the text and analyses of the works indicate that Blake conceived of the exhibit and its *Catalogue* as a public forum from which to state his basic artistic premise that style and content could not be divorced, that only the successful union of these two elements, coupled with visionary insight, could produce truthful art. All of the works Blake selected for exhibition may be classified as history paintings; that is, they portray some significant human event. In Blake's time the history painting was considered the consummate achievement of the painter. Only the most gifted could portray these lofty and complicated themes. Though antagonistic toward the Royal Academy and its aesthetic theories, Blake nonetheless was aware of this tradition and elected to present his visions of "historical reality" in the most prestigious and respected format available to him.

Blake's self-proclaimed role as prophet is apparent in his art, in both painting and poetry, for the two are inextricably bound together. He hoped to edify mankind, much as the medieval carvers whose work at

Westminster Abbey he had admired so passionately as a young man had used their art as didactic devices. Blake's prophecies, written and visual, though often dismayingly perplexing, are based on a highly personal view of history, a mixture of his own revelations and contemporary, antiquarian theories about the origins of civilization, especially in Britain. In reading the text of the *Catalogue* one is struck by the desperate sincerity of the language with which Blake attempts to persuade mankind of the truth of his "historical inventions." The arguments launched with such volatile power in the *Catalogue* and the unorthodox novelty of his paintings and drawings were lost on his contemporaries. The exhibition was a financial and critical disaster. [4] Robert Hunt scathingly derided the exhibition in the show's only lengthy review. [5] Blake intended his art to fill a void, aesthetic and pedagogical. To him the art works he saw about him were but empty exercises in an "abominable style," failing totally to reveal any of the great, hidden truths of human existence, the *raison d'être* for art itself. He announces in the *Catalogue* that "the times require that everyone should speak out boldly; England expects that every man should do his duty in Arts, as well in Arms, or in the Senate."[6] One must not forget that the exhibition took place during the Napoleonic Wars, and, though Blake violently objected to war as a perversion of energy, his hatred for Napoleon whom he envisioned almost as an anti-Christ incited this call to arms. It is not accidental that the arts lead this list of civic responsibilities. For Blake, art was the signal sign of civilization. Had Blake not seen, in visions, "The Cherubim," the great lost works of art created by the Biblical patriarchs?[7] "The Cherubim" mirrored spiritual truth and reflected the high state of man's existence before his Fall and divorce from the single essence of divine energy. During that brief interlude of peace between France and England in 1801, Blake had written to John Flaxman: "The Kingdoms of this World are now become the Kingdoms of God & his Christ, & we shall reign with him for ever & ever. The Reign of Literature & the Arts Commences. Blessed are those who are found studious of Literature & Humane & polite accomplishments. . . ."[8] These inflated notions of the artist's role are even more explicitly stated in his *Public Address*, ca. 1810, in which Blake proclaims, "Let us teach Bonaparte, and whomsoever else it may concern, That it is not Arts that follow & attends upon Empire, but Empire that attends upon & follows the Arts." [9]

Blake felt keenly his artistic isolation, often producing a strident language that smacks of paranoia. His inability to attract support for his singular notions colored his assessment of the state of art. Several times in the *Catalogue* he complains of sinister forces which are actively working against him. In his entry for Number VI, *A Subject from Shakspeare* [sic], he writes that the work has been molested by "blotting and blurring demons,"[10] and in Number IX, *Satan calling up his Legions, from Milton*, he notes that the effects he was seeking were perverted because of the interference of Venetian and Flemish painterly approaches. Blake accuses fictional demons, Old Masters and his contemporaries, such as Stothard and Reynolds, of attempting to deprive mankind of his artistic and spiritual lessons. In the advertisement for the exhibition Blake

states, "There cannot be more than two or three great Painters or Poets in any Age or Country; and these, in a corrupt state of Society, are easily excluded, but not so easily obstructed."[11]

Blake pleads in the preface to the *Catalogue* with the public to be wary of the perfidity and sterility of ideas emanating from the Royal Academy. He "appeals to the Public, from the judgment of those narrow blinking eyes, that have too long governed art in a dark corner."[12] The tone throughout the *Catalogue* is aggressive and assertive. Blake felt that with his exhibit he had provided fuel for those who thought him mad and, more importantly, that he had vanquished all opposition. In his *Notebook* there appears a short apology for the *Catalogue* which reads in part:

> Who cries, 'all art is fraud,
> and genius a trick,
> And Blake is an unfortuante
> Lunatic?'
> I've given great provision to
> my Foes,
> And now I'll lead my false
> friends
> By the nose.[13]

The essential quality which separates Blake's art from that generally produced in Britain, with the exception of a few artists like Fuseli, is its visionary character. Six years before the exhibition, Blake explained in a letter to Thomas Butts, one of his few patrons, the spiritual basis of his art:

> Now I may say to you, what
> perhaps I should not dare to
> say to anyone else; That I can
> alone carry on my visionary
> studies in London unannoy'd,
> & that I may converse with
> my friends in Eternity, See
> Visions, Dream Dreams &
> prophecy and speak Parables
> unobserv'd and at liberty
> from the Doubts of other
> Mortals. . . .[14]

It is this fusion of artistic inspiration and prophetic mission which gives such vitality to Blake's writings and art. In his *Annotations to the 'Poems' of Wordsworth* (1826), he observes: "One Power alone makes a Poet . . . Imagination, The Divine Vision."[15] The visionary artist alone can perceive the true nature of things and events. In his *Public Address* Blake makes a distinction between invention (or vision) and imitation. Imitation is worthless; copiers of nature, he names Rembrandt and Reynolds, cannot hope to capture truth which resides as much in the world of spirit as in revealed nature. He goes on to say, "Imagination is My World; this world of Dross is beneath my Notice & Beneath the Notice of the Public."[16]

Blake's belief that the artist is the unique receptacle of truth is perhaps most extravagantly stated in his annotations to a print of the *Laocoön* (ca. 1820): "Jesus & His Apostles & Disciples were all Artists. Their Works were destroy'd by the Seven Angels of the Seven Churches in Asia, Antichrist Science" and elsewhere, "A Poet, a Painter, a Musician, an Architect: the Man Or Woman who is not one of these is not a Christian. You must leave Fathers & Mothers & Houses & Lands if they stand in the way of Art."[17]

Blake clearly felt that his gifts for revelation were unique and gave to his work a power denied most of his colleagues. In a letter to John Flaxman in 1800 he stated his conviction that he had enjoyed a spiritual pre-existence which allowed him to recall the past with utter clarity; it is this past which he illustrated in the exhibition. He says

that his mind is filled with ". . . books & pictures of old, which I wrote & painted in ages of Eternity before my mortal life. . . ."[18] And five years later he repeats much the same idea to William Hayley, adding what he hopes to accomplish with his visions:

> I speak of Spiritual Things,
> Not of Natural; Of Things
> known only to Myself & to
> Spirits of Good & Evil, but
> Not known to Men on Earth.
> . . . It will not be long before
> I shall be able to present the
> full history of my Spiritual
> Sufferings to the Dwellers
> upon the Earth & of the
> Spiritual Victories obtain'd
> for me by my Friends.[19]

In the *Catalogue* Blake calls the works he selected for exhibition "Historical Inventions" and these were intended to reveal partially his visionary concept of history and art. How do these visions manifest themselves? In his entry for Number IV, *The Bard, From Gray*, he describes the concrete images from the spiritual realm which haunt his mind: "A Spirit and a Vision are not, as modern philosophy supposes, a cloudy vapour, or a nothing: they are organized and minutely articulated beyond all that mortal and perishing nature can produce."[20] The clarity of Blake's vision is reflected in his drawings with their emphasis upon delineated contours and precise description of parts.

Blake intentionally excluded portraiture from his exhibition. The Pitt and Nelson paintings, Numbers I and II in the *Catalogue*, are elaborate historical allegories, and in his work, *The Bramins — A Drawing*, Number X, he illustrated Sir Charles Wilkins (?1749-1836), translating the *Bhagavadgītā*, not as a contemporary, antiquarian scholar but as a nude prophet, akin in spirit to the Patriarchs who inhabit Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling. Blake had little use for portrait painters; he dismisses them with a terse, "Of what consequence is it to the Arts what a Portrait Painter does?" in his *Marginalia* on Sir Joshua Reynolds's *Discourses on Art*. Blake's low opinion of Reynolds and others who based their fame on taking fashionable likenesses is two-fold. On the one hand he found reprehensible artists who were "applauded & rewarded by the Rich & Great."[21] Blake's pronounced democratic viewpoint was repulsed by the elitist character of such patronage. In addition, the subject matter was not significant enough for Blake. He writes to his brother, James, in 1803, complaining about the commission to execute a series of small, historical portraits for William Hayley. Blake struggled long on these works and the letter expresses his bitterness about the energy and time expended on the series. "The truth is, As a Poet he is frighten'd at me & as a Painter his views & mine are opposite; he thinks to turn me into a Portrait Painter as he did Poor Romney, but this he nor all the devils in hell will never do."[22]

Those strange visions thrust upon the public in 1809, to be analyzed below, fall into several distinct categories. Five focus on Biblical history. This is revealed human history; the subjects are well known, sanctified by time and tradition, and they require no elaborate explanation by the artist. His hope in showing so many Biblical themes, almost a third of the total number, is explained in his entry for Number XIV, *The Angels hovering over the Body of Jesus in the Sepulchre — A Drawing*, in which Blake says he wishes to awaken the

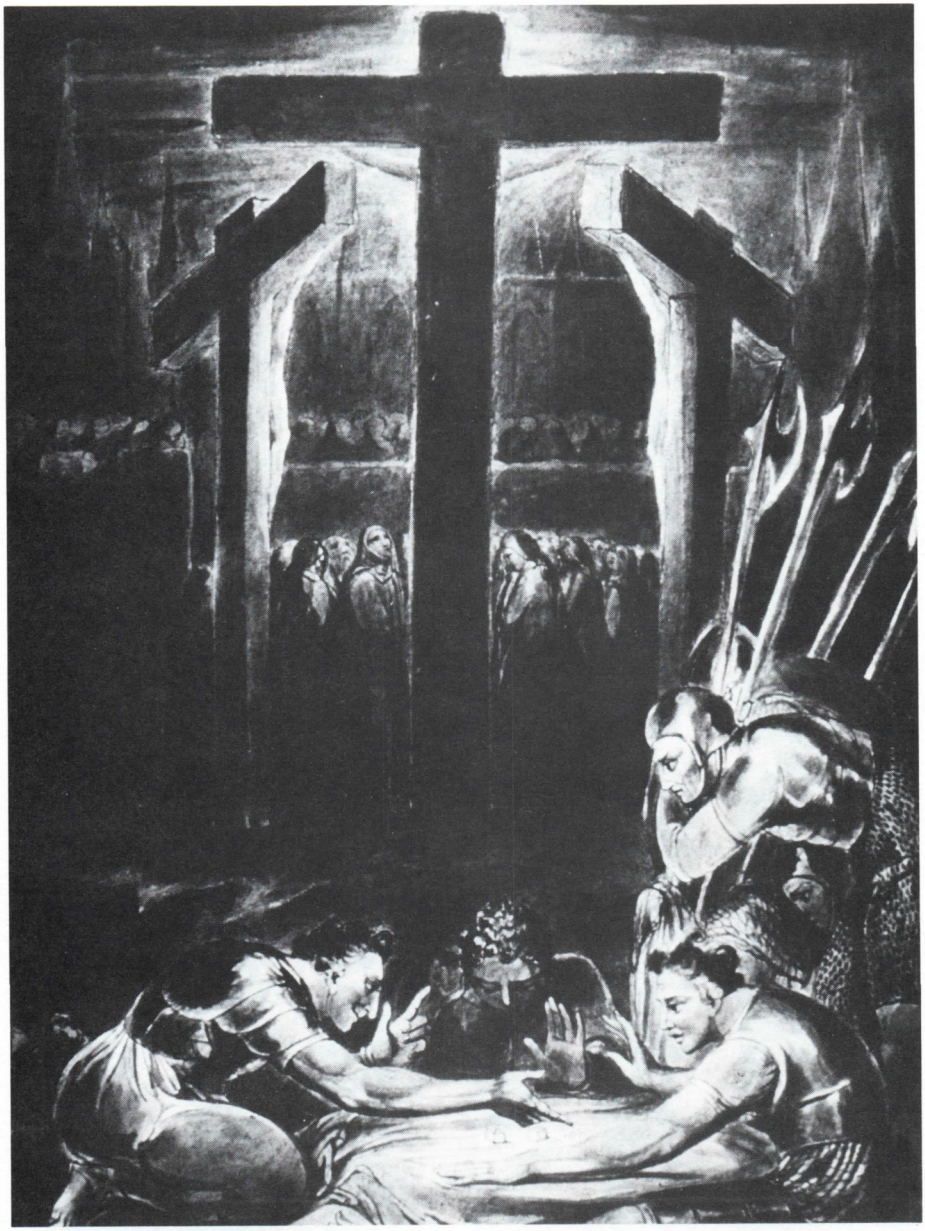


Fig. 1. William Blake, *Soldiers casting Lots for Christ's Garment*. Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

British to the paucity of monumental, religious art, compared to religious monuments in Italy. He hoped his works would be enlarged to ornament the altars of England.

Choosing to analyze the Biblical themes as they are presented in the *Catalogue*, the first is Number XI, *The Body of Abel found by Adam and Eve; Cain Fleeing away who was about to bury it, fleeing from the face of his Parents — A Drawing*. The original displayed by Blake has been lost. A finished tempera drawing most likely based on this lost design is in the Tate Gallery and is dated around 1825. A preparatory sketch for this later version is in the Geoffrey Keynes Collection.[23] Number XII, *The Soldiers casting Lots for Christ's Garment — A Drawing*, has survived (fig. 1). This watercolor with grey ink wash is in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, measuring 16-1/2 x 12-5/16 inches. It is signed with the artist's initials and a date of 1800. David Bindman has suggested that the composition appears to be derived from Poussin's *Crucifixion* (1645-1646), now in the Wadsworth Atheneum. Blake may have seen the original when it went on the block at Christies in May of 1794 or may have known the 1762 Bonzonnet-Stella engraving.[24] Perhaps it is equally important to note the unusual interpretation of this event, for Christ and the two thieves are seen from the rear and the foreground space is filled with the gambling soldiers. Before Christ are His mourners facing us and beyond them a great mass of citizens peer over the walls of Jerusalem, the city indicated by a strange forest of gothic spires! Number XIII, *Jacob's Ladder* (fig. 2) has no explanatory text in the *Catalogue*. The watercolor is in the British Museum, measuring 14-5/8 x 11-1/2 inches. Though undated it most likely was executed in 1800 as it parallels imagery found in a poem addressed to Anna Flaxman, wife of John Flaxman; the drawing was in her possession at the time of her death. It was exhibited in 1808 at the Royal Academy, the last time Blake attempted to combat the official style with his own inventions. Angelic figures accompanied by innocent children drift up and down a spiral staircase. This motif is unique and prompted Anthony Blunt to suggest that Blake may have seized the motif from Francesco Salviati's *Bathsheba* fresco of the mid-sixteenth century in the Palazzo Sacchetti, Florence. Blake may well have seen a print or a drawn copy after the Salviati design or may have alighted on the solution independently, for he never ventured to the Continent, feeling it totally unnecessary for his artistic education. Number XIV, *Angels hovering over the Body of Jesus in the Sepulchre — A Drawing* (fig. 3) formerly in the Sidney Morse Collection, is a watercolor measuring 16¼ x 11¾ inches. The symmetrical, restrained composition is powerful, the hovering angels forming a pointed arch over the recumbant figure of Christ. The general arrangement recalls Plate II of Blake's illuminated poem *Europe, A Prophecy* (1794) and Blake's preparatory pencil sketch and watercolor drawing of *Four and Twenty Elders Casting Their Crowns Before the Divine Throne* (1804) in the Tate Gallery. Number XV, *Ruth — A Drawing* (fig. 4) is a watercolor illustrating that touching moment when Ruth abandons her homeland to follow and serve her mother-in-law, Naomi. The drawing is in the Southampton Art Gallery and

Fig. 2. William Blake, *Jacob's Ladder*. Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum, London.

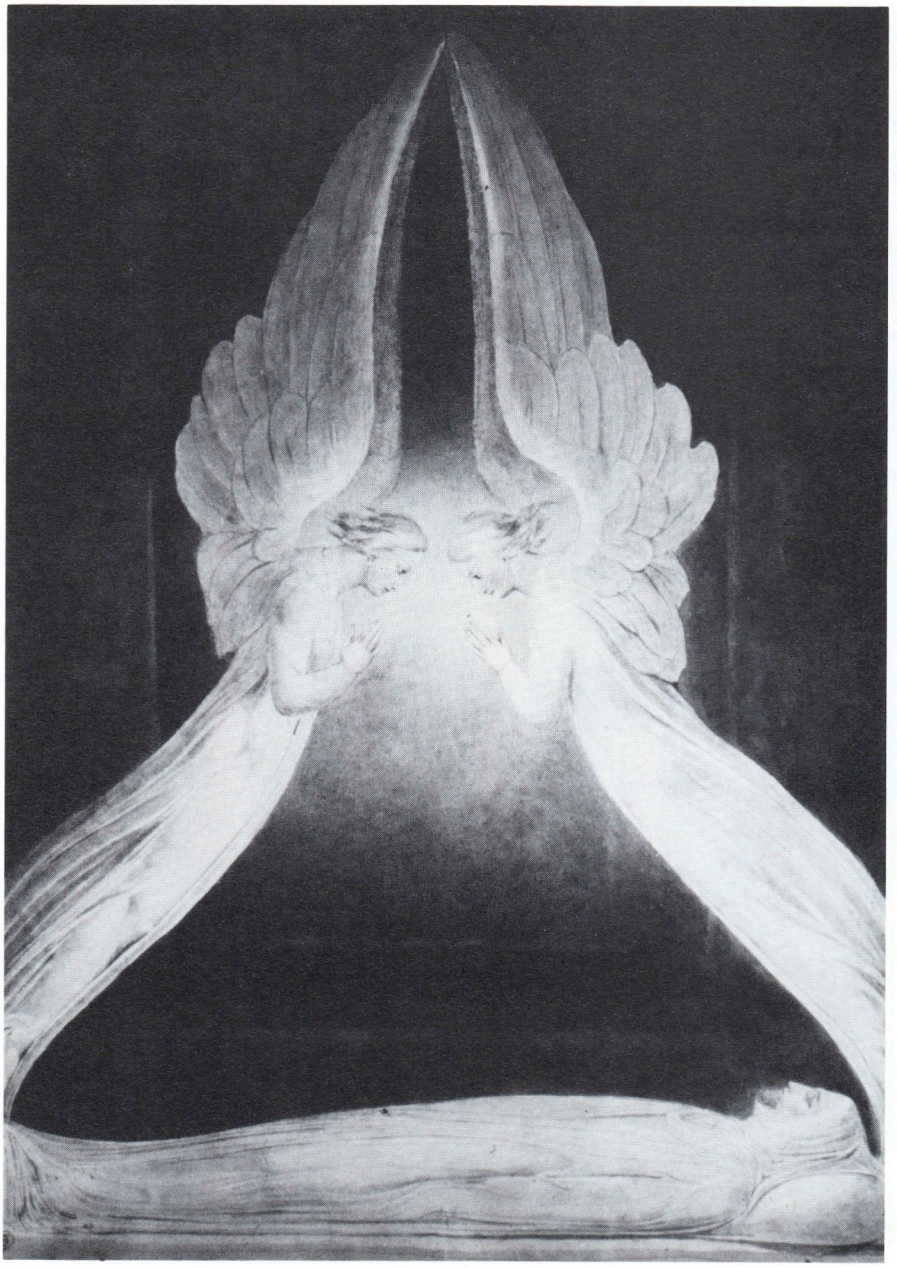


Fig. 3. William Blake, *Angels hovering over the Body of Jesus in the Sepulchre*. Location unknown, formerly Sidney Morse Collection.

Fig. 4. William Blake, *Ruth — A Drawing.*
Reproduced with kind permission of
Southampton Art Gallery, Southampton,
England.

measures 14 x 12½ inches. It is signed and dated 1803. Colored prints of this design have survived and have often been confused with the drawing, certainly the work exhibited by Blake in 1809. The artist reserves the entry of this work to castigate practitioners of oil painting. He is especially vehement about the Venetians and Rembrandt, and full of praise for the drawings of Dürer, Michelangelo and Raphael who agree with his "great and golden rule of art, as well as of life is this: That the more distinct, sharp and wirey the bounding line, the more perfect the work of art."[25] This statement requires comment. Though Blake's linearity is formally related to the neoclassic style of the late eighteenth century, he imbues line with a symbolic charge. The clarity and purity of line is in direct proportion to the clarity and truthfulness of the idea illustrated. Earlier, describing James Barry's *Satan Sin and Death*, he commends Barry's "hard and wirey line of rectitude, with its depiction of the ineffable figure of Death. . . ."[26] It is doubtful that Barry would have comprehended Blake's mystic definition of line, but it is central to the understanding of Blake's art to see the inseparability of his style and content.

Five of the paintings exhibited are tributes to poetic visionaries like himself who have illuminated man's history. The first of these is Geoffrey Chaucer, whom Blake characterizes as a "great poetical observer of men, who in every age is born to record and eternalize its [mankind's] acts."[27] Number III, *The Canterbury Pilgrims from Chaucer* (fig. 5) is at Pollok House, Glasgow. Blake's animosity toward the London publisher R. H. Cromeck and the artist Thomas Stothard, whom Blake jointly accused

Fig. 5. William Blake, *The Canterbury Pilgrims, from Chaucer.* Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of Pollok House (Stirling Maxwell Collection), Glasgow, Scotland.

of stealing and publishing his Chaucer design, is the main thrust of this entry. He dismisses Stothard's work with "All is misconceived, and its mis-execution is equal to its misconception."[28] Blake's sensitive critique of Chaucer's tale has been long accepted by scholars but its perceptiveness is no more exceptional than the parallels Blake is able to draw between his own art and that of Chaucer. Suggesting the universal lesson to be learned from truthful art, Blake describes Chaucer's tale thus:

> The characters of Chaucer's Pilgrims are the characters which compose all ages and nations; as one age falls: another rises, different to mortal sight, but to immortals only the same; for we see the same characters repeated again and again. . . .[29]

Blake and Chaucer are among those

gifted to see and understand more than most mortal men, to comprehend the great schemes of the Divine. In Blake's writing and art we find that his personal visions find expression in the form of the epic. He freely uses events of history (particularly those of the British people) as materials for his parables on the human predicament. Relying on visions and his personal conception of history, he magnifies his experiences into an original cosmology. History, like human nature, is explained in symbolic language, corresponding to the various states of universal generation which have their counterparts in the temporal stages of human life. The great cycle begins with total oneness with God or the divine agent and is then marked by the Fall. The separation from the single essence has characterized most of human history; man has existed in a state of chaos and cultural inertia. The Fall, however, has not been absolute nor continual, for throughout history prophets or seers, such as Chaucer and Blake, have provided mankind with glimmerings of the lost truth.

The second poet/visionary to whom Blake pays tribute is Shakespeare. In Number VI of the *Catalogue, A Subject from Shakspeare* [sic]: *A Spirit vaulting from a Cloud to turn and wind a Fiery Pegasus,* has been lost. Blake takes the subject from an obscure passage of Act IV, *Henry IV: Part One.* He extends the title in explanation of his interpretation: "The Horse of Intellect is leaping from the Cliffs of Memory and Reasoning; it is a barren Rock: it is also called the Barren Waste of Locke and Newton." The work, like so much of Blake's verse, communicates his hatred for rational thought inherent in much of the writings of these two seventeenth century thinkers and subsequent eighteenth-century enlightenment writers.

Fig. 6. William Blake, *Satan calling up his Legions, from Milton.* Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery, London.

Another figure who stimulated Blake's admiration is that highly original illuminator, John Milton. The largeness and brilliance of Milton's visions profoundly affected Blake's poetry and art.[30] Number IX, *Satan calling up his Legions, from Milton* (fig. 6) is dedicated to the seventeenth-century poet. He calls it an "experimental picture"; it is tempera with varnish on canvas and measures 24¼ x 16½ inches, unsigned and undated. The work is in very poor condition; it is barely possible to detect Satan atop a molten pinnacle, his body highlighted with gold. The composition recalls Number II, *The Spiritual Form of Pitt guiding the Behemoth* (fig. 7), and other of Blake's apocalyptic designs such as *The Last Judgment* or *The Spiritual Condition of Man*; all seem roughly organized in imitation of Michelangelo's Sistine *Last Judgment*. Another affinity exists between the Milton painting and the Pitt allegory for both are among several works in the exhibiton which are very hard to read; the confused and deteriorated "experimental" character of these works seems to refute Blake's arguments for clarity. Though obviously proud of his "portable frescoes" with his newly-devised techniques, Blake asserts that several have suffered from the work of demons who have blotted his imagery.

Two remaining works pay tribute to more recent visionaries. The Swedish mystic Emmanuel Swedenborg's *True Christian Religion* inspired Number VIII, *The Spiritual Perceptor*, no longer extant. Swedenborg's belief in a universal mythology appealed to Blake. The complicated cryptograms employed by Swedenborg in his critique of the Old Testament to describe Christ's mental history prior to His actual birth accorded with Blake's belief that the Bible was but one source of recorded history. Blake firmly believed that non-Christian writings possessed lost truths, a notion he found attractively expressed in Jacob Boehme's *Mysterium Magnum* (1623). Blake also believed, as did Boehme, that the memory of every man's acts followed him into eternity and there formed a reservoir of all human knowledge which could be tapped by those with mystical insight. Blake differs, however, from both Swedenborg and Boehme in that he is non-sectarian. He is not concerned with rectifying the ills of the Christian church, but with a broader philosophical concept. Seeking truth outside traditional European writings drew Blake to contemporaries like Sir Charles Wilkins, who is the subject of Number X, *The Bramins — A Drawing*, noted earlier. Blake's interest in Hindu creation myths and other facets of exotic Indian culture is not unique.[31]

Thematically linked with the above is Number IV, *The Bard, from Gray*.[32] In this vision the ancient Welsh bard is seen as the last survivor of his kind, his brethren having been willfully slaughtered by Kind Edward I. Unquestionably, Blake felt a kinship with the bards, for like them he was capable of understanding the past and the future and had been persecuted by the evil and the unknowing. *The Bard, from Gray* seems, however, more closely allied with the remaining five works of the exhibition, all of which deal with Britain's history.

Absolutely central to Blake's conception of history is the primacy of the British people in the origins of human civilization. Captain Wilford in 1799 published his *Chronology*

Fig. 7. William Blake, *The Spiritual Form of Pitt guiding the Behemoth.* Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery, London.

of the Hindoos [sic] which offered an explanation essentially identical to Blake's. Wilford maintained that all civilized life came from Britain after the Deluge. Similarly, Sir Charles Wilkins in the *Asiatic Record* asserted that the Hindus knew of Britain as the home of the Pitris, the fathers of the human race. Clearly Blake was not alone in his bizarre notions of history. This kinship with other writers is even more pronounced when one examines contemporary antiquarian reconstructions of England's Druidic past. Blake's fascination with Druids was keen; two of the works in the exhibition were based upon Blake's visions of England's prehistory: *The Bard, from Gray* and Number VI, *The Ancient Britons* (since lost). The latter work is extraordinary in Blake's *oeuvre* because of its sheer size; it measured ten by fourteen feet, far larger than any known work by the artist. The monumental scale of this painting reminds one of Blake's remarks in his entry for the Pitt allegory (Number II), in which he comments, "The Artist wishes it were now the fashion to make such monuments, and then he should not doubt of having a national commission to execute these two Pictures [the Nelson and Pitt allegories] on a scale that is suitable to the grandeur of the nation."[33] Blake's projected monuments, he tells us, were to be one-hundred feet high, duplicating the majesty of the "Cherubim", those lost colossal works of art created by the Biblical Patriarchs that Blake had seen in visions. This intention of creating a gigantic public art must not be ignored; one associates Blake with his modest watercolors and book illuminations. Clearly he imagined an entirely different kind of art as well. It is easy to sympathize with those few visitors at the exhibition who stood in amazement before Blake's visions and tried to imagine them on such a colossal scale.[34]

Both the *Bard, from Gray* and *The Ancient Britons* owe much to the Welsh triads, collections of verse reputed to have been composed in England's druidic past.[35] Blake's actual sources remain obscure but he may well have been inspired by such works as Edward Williams's *Poems: Lyrical and Pastoral*, published in 1794. In his catalogue entry for *The Ancient Britons* Blake tells us that he has in his hands authentic ancient British poems. Blake may have been referring to Williams's work, a collection of poems which Williams claimed to have found in a sixteenth-century manuscript compiled by Llewelyn Sion, a Welsh bard; or Blake may have been alluding to any of the similar collections then in circulation. These miscellanies, believed to contain the products of a rich oral poetic tradition, recall the popular "forgeries" of MacPherson and Chatterton which greatly excited Blake's admiration.

In the same year of Blake's exhibition, Edward Davies published his *Celtic Researches: Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*. Like Blake, Davies believed in a lost universal society and maintained that the original seat of all human learning was Britain. Another contemporary who shared many of Blake's beliefs was Jacob Bryant, to whom Blake pays tribute in the *Catalogue*.[36] Between 1774 and 1776 Bryant published his three-volume study, *A New System, or an Analysis of Ancient Mythology wherein an attempt is made to Divest Tradition of Fable, and Reduce the Truth to Original Purity*. (How that

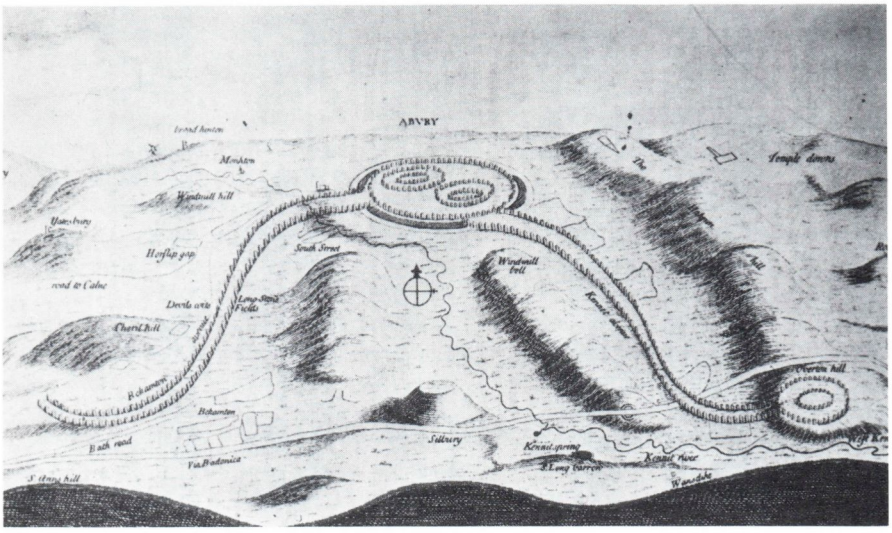


Fig. 8. William Stukeley, Plate from *Abury, A Temple of the British Druids*, published 1743.

title must have appealed to Blake.) All three writers would argue that Adam and Noah were Druids.[37]

In an effort to lend historical verisimilitude to his Druidic theme in *The Ancient Britons*, Blake describes the scene of the battle thus: "The dead and dying, Britons naked, mingled with armed Romans, strew the field beneath. . . . Distant among the mountains are Druid Temples, similar to Stone Henge."[38] Visions of Stonehenge occur repeatedly in Blake's art. Undoubtedly Blake was aware of William Stukeley, who more than anyone else encouraged interest in these ancient monuments. Stukeley had read John Aubrey's manuscript, *Monumenta Britannica*, 1659, and was especially struck with a chapter entitled "Templa Druidium." It was Aubrey who first associated Stonehenge, Avebury, and other sites with Druidic rites. Stukeley did archeological field work between 1716 and 1723, and in 1740 published *Stonehenge, A Temple Restor'd to the British Druids*, followed in 1743 by *Abury, A Temple of the British Druids*. A plate taken from the latter (fig. 8), shows Stukeley's reconstruction of the entire temple complex in the form of a giant serpent. This serpentine vision is used by Blake in his last plate of *Jerusalem*, 1804-1820 (fig. 9). Another plate from *Jerusalem* illustrates the "Mythological Trilithon" (fig. 10). This print also suggests Stonehenge. The three small figures which have been identified by some Blake scholars as Bacon, Newton and Locke suggest the poetic time continuum, or "poetic vigor", to use Blake's own phrase, which characterizes so much of his art, the unexpected juxtaposition or blending of historical personages and events.

To interpret precisely the meaning of

Fig. 9. William Blake, Plate from *Jerusalem*.

The Bard, from Gray or *The Ancient Britons* seems impossible, for they, like so much of Blake's verse, are composed of a constantly shifting cast of characters whose symbolic relationships and roles vary. The three ancient Britons are identified in the *Catalogue* as the Beautiful, the Ugly and the Strong, interpreted by Frye as equivalents to his mythical heroes, Orc, Urizen and Tharmas.[39]

The Druids are described in antiquarian literature in one of two ways. They may be seen as brutal savages, engaging in loathsome, sacrificial, often cannibalistic rites, or they may be seen as a gentle race of forest-dwelling poets, or bards as in the previously mentioned work by Williams, or in narratives such as John Ogilivie's *The Fane of the Druid* (1787). The benign interpretation is seen in Blake's *The Bard, from Gray*, but elsewhere in Blake's writings one finds him describing the Druids as an alien, destructive force.

Blake's firm conviction that England had once been the fountainhead of all knowledge contributed to his disdain for and suspicion of classical art. In the *Catalogue* he explicitly refers to the inferiority of Greek and Roman art when compared to the lost splendors of "The Cherubim." Writers such as Davies argued that the classical writers and philosophers like Pythagoras and Diogenes Laertius referred to the Druids as the teachers of mankind. This may help explain Blake's observation in *Jerusalem* in which he claims that Greek philosophy is only a remnant of Druidic culture.

All of the above histories, as well as Blake's *Catalogue*, have one thing in common; all are attempting to accomodate the ever-growing body of historical knowledge, regardless of its accuracy, to that suggested by the

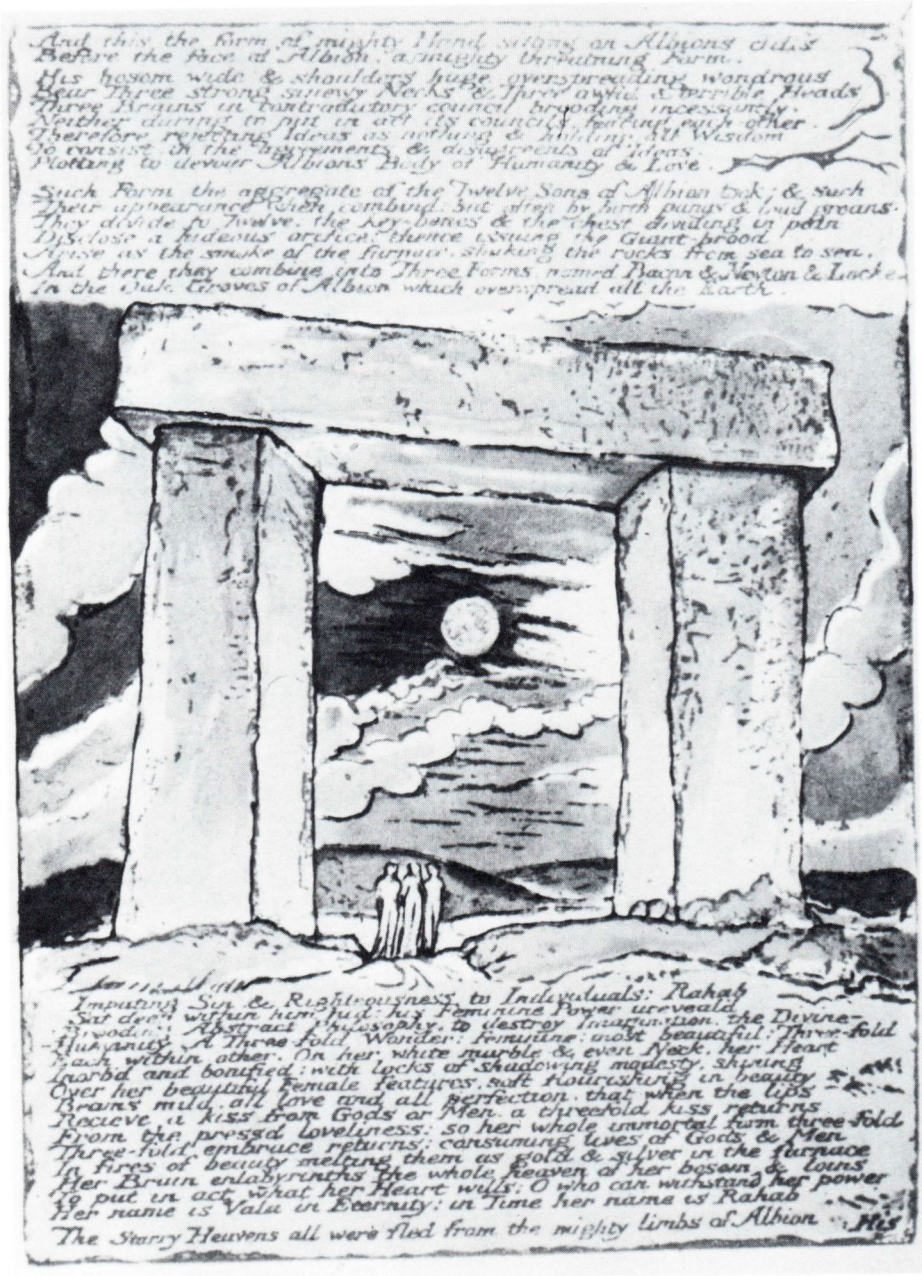


Fig. 10. William Blake, *The Mythological Trilithon*, from *Jerusalem*.

Patriarchal writers of Jewish history. The practice seems associated with two types of writers: those who, under the influence of the Enlightenment, tried rationally and scientifically to explain man's past and to put legend, Biblical and otherwise, in proper perspective, and romantics like Blake, who sensed in exotic or lost civilizations the inherent mystery and chaos of the universe.

Medieval art and literature fascinated Blake. He saw the period as one steeped in faith and imagination. Two of the works in the exhibition deal with England in the Middle Ages: *The Canterbury Pilgrims* which has been discussed above and, Number XVI, *The Penance of Jane Shore in St. Paul's Cathedral,* a poignant tale which attracted several artists. Blake's *Penance of Jane Shore* is a pen and ink with watercolor wash drawing in the Tate Gallery, measuring 9-5/8 x 11-5/8 inches. This early work, dating from Blake's student days (ca. 1778-1780), has a delicacy and sweetness which is foreign to the bold, mystic character of his mature style. The scene is not simply the public humiliation of Jane Shore, the mistress of Edward IV who was forced to do public penance by Richard III, but suggests Blake's distaste for the sexual hypocrisy which he saw in society. The subject has been correctly linked to Nicholas Rowe's drama of the same subject first performed in 1774. Interestingly, in 1773, Reynolds exhibited *Mrs. Harteley as Jane Shore* at the Royal Academy.

Lastly, the first two paintings described in the *Catalogue* chronicle in symbolic language Blake's own time and foreshadow the future. Both works are in the Tate Gallery. Number I, *The Spiritual Form of Nelson guiding the Leviathan* (fig. 11), is varnished tempera on canvas, measuring 30 x 24-5/8 inches. The work was begun around 1805 and finished shortly before the exhibition. Number II, *Pitt guiding the Behemoth* (fig. 7), is painted in the same technique, measures 29-1/8 x 23-3/4 inches and is dated 1805. These works have been variously interpreted as entirely symbolic or as apocalyptic visions meant to describe recent events in mythical terms. Given the thrust of Blake's arguments in the *Catalogue*, his constant attempt to relate the past to the present and the meaningful readings given to Blake's verse by scholars such as Erdman, Keynes and Frye, the latter would seem most probable. It was surely not accidental that these were the first two works in Blake's *Catalogue*. Even Blake's contemporaries sensed he was saying something about the conduct of the war and the guiding roles of the Prime Minister and Admiral Nelson. Hunt accused Blake of "whitewashing the war policy associated with Pitt and Nelson."[40] Nothing could be further from the truth. Blake, a confirmed political radical, had long opposed England's war with France, as he had opposed Great Britain's repressive campaigns against the American colonies. Though repulsed by the tyranny of Napoleon, Blake continued to support the republican ideals formulated by Paine and by the American and French revolutionaries. The Nelson and Pitt paintings are visualizations of the libertarian themes found in his prophetic books. Bronowski observes that Blake shrewdly judged the temper of the times and realized his radical views were in direct conflict with the increasingly repressive and chauvinistic patriotism of wartime England. From

Fig. 11. William Blake, *The Spiritual Form of Nelson guiding the Leviathan*. Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery, London.

1791 when Blake and his publisher, Joseph Johnson, decided not to print his *French Revolution*, Blake increasingly shifted from the relatively straightforward language of his earlier works to the mystical obscurities of his written and visual prophecies late in his career. Blake could continue to attack those forces which he felt stifled the positive forces of imagination and energy, the equivalents of personal and political liberty.[41] Northrup Frye's definition of evil as Blake would have understood it would seem to describe what we see in the Nelson and Pitt allegories. Evil is "self-restraint or the restraint of others — evil arises from passivity, the negative refusal to perform a creative act which results in frustrating either one's own development or that of others."[42] The passive figures of Nelson and Pitt directing the governmental and military machinery of war are surrounded by a cyclonic field filled with chaos and confusion. These allegories, like *America* and *Europe*, demand the banishment of war and repression. Pitt is seen in oriental garb, with a Buddhist halo, singular imagery which transports the contemporary reference into a larger realm, suitable for Blake's parable of evil at work. Blake tells us that these works "are compositions of a mythological cast, similar to those Apotheoses of Persian, Hindoo [sic], and Egyptian Antiquity, which are still preserved on rude monuments, being copies of some stupendous originals now lost or perhaps buried till some happier age."[43] Implicit in this statement is the existence of a lost art ("The Cherubim"), which will remain unknown until man has achieved a level of purity. Until then he will be denied access to Beauty and Truth.

Blake's hostility to the notable historians of the period was acute. In his entry for *The Ancient Britons* Blake condemns Hume, Gibbon, and Voltaire as "twisters of causes and consequences." He proclaims that their penchant for reason has blinded them to real truth. Their works are false, personal opinions that have no correspondence to the actual historical cycle. Blake exhorts, "Away with your reasoning and your rubbish!" He warns his readers that those who ignore the spiritual agency, the improbable, because it does not fit within their organized systems, are fools. Twice in the *Catalogue* warnings are issued to his fellow artists. In the entry for Number VIII, *The Spiritual Perceptor*, he writes that any artist who mistakenly shuts "the doors of mind and of thought by placing Learning above Inspiration. O Artist! you may disbelieve all this, but it shall be at your own peril."[44] In the following entry, *Satan calling up his Legions, from Milton*, he again states that if duped into accepting the loathsome preachings of the academicians young artists will be in jeopardy for their very souls. The continuous argument of these two passages is further evidence that the *Catalogue* was conceived as a single argument. Each painting or drawing with its accompanying text adds to the cumulative lesson. For those sympathetic to his arguments Blake reveals significant moral, historical and artistic truths. In the last lines of the *Catalogue*, Blake confidently informs his readers that his arguments are unassailable and that he can retire to bed confident of the utter veracity of his art.

NOTES

[1] See Geoffrey Keynes, *Blake Studies: Essays on His Life and Work* (Oxford, 1971). See especially Chapter 8, pp. 66-73, where Keynes cites all known extant copies of the *Catalogue* and the several advertisements connected with the 1809 exhibition.

[2] William Blake, *A Descriptive Catalogue*, (London, 1809), p. 61. The author wishes to thank the Beinecke Library staff of Yale University for its assistance. The so-called "Copy F: Beckford-Hamilton Palace Copy", at Yale was used for the preparation of this article.

[3] Many have argued that Blake's pique at R. Cromek and T. Stothard's "theft" of his design for *The Canterbury Pilgrims, from Chaucer* sparked Blake's decision. Mona Wilson, *The Life of William Blake* (London, 1927), p. 207, contends that the *Catalogue* is an artistic manifesto eulogizing Raphael and Michelangelo at the expense of Rembrandt, Rubens and the Venetians. Northrup Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton, 1958), pp. 409-10, suggests seven motivations, all of which are valid: (1) demonstration of the success of his fresco technique, (2) the need for public art in Britain, (3) the disadvantages of working in oil, (4) insights into the political events of his time, (5) an outline of the British archetypal myth, (6) elaborate criticism of Chaucer and English poetry, and (7) the bringing of Swedenborg and the *Bhagavadgita* to the public's attention.

[4] The exhibition opened in mid-May on the ground floor of his brother's shop at 28 Broad Street, Golden Square, London. Though scheduled to close on September 29, it remained open for an extended period.

[5] Hunt's review appeared in *The Examiner* on September 17, 1809, and reads in part:

> If beside the stupid and mad-brained political projects of their rulers, the sane part of the people of England required fresh proof of the alarming increase of the efforts of insanity, they will be too well convinced from its having been lately spread into the hitherto sober regions of art — When the ebullitions of a distempered brain, are mistaken for the sallies of genius, by those whose works are exhibited as the soundest thinking in art, the malady has indeed attained a pernicious height, and it becomes a duty to endeavor to arrest its progress. Such is the case with the productions of WILLIAM BLAKE.

For the complete review and a collection of responses to the exhibition see Alexander Gilchrist, *Life of William Blake*, I, II (London, 1880).

[6] William Blake, *The Complete Writings of William Blake with Variant Readings*, ed., Geoffrey Keynes (London, 1966), p. 584.

[7] Blake, *Complete Writings*, p. 565. Here Blake explains how he has been taken in visions to "the ancient republics, monarchies, and patriarchates of Asia" where he had seen the colossal, lost works of art created by these lost civilizations.

[8] Blake, *Complete Writings*, p. 810.

[9] William Blake, *The Notebook of William Blake Called the Rossetti Manuscript*, ed., Geoffrey Keynes (London, 1935), p. 102.

[10] Blake, *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 51.

[11] Blake, *Complete Writings*, p. 561.

[12] Blake, *Descriptive Catalogue*, iii.

[13] Blake, *Notebook*, pp. 86-87.

[14] William Blake, *The Letters of William Blake*, ed., Geoffrey Keynes (London, 1956), p. 84. The letter written from Felpham is dated April 25, 1803.

[15] Blake, *Complete Writings*, p. 782.

[16] Ibid, p. 600.

[17] Ibid, p. 776.

[18] The letter is dated September 21, 1800. See Blake, *Complete Writings*, p. 802.

[19] Ibid, 862.

[20] Blake, *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 37.

[21] Blake, *Complete Writings*, p. 445.

[22] The letter is dated January 30, 1803; Blake, *Complete Writings*, p. 819.

[23] Geoffrey Keynes, *Pencil Drawings by William Blake* (London, 1956). The author illustrates the sepia pencil preparatory sketch in his collection.

[24] David Bindman, *William Blake, Catalogue of the Collection of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 23.

[25]Blake, *Descriptive Catalogue*, pp. 63-64.

[26]Robert Wark, "A Note on James Barry and Edmund Burke," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, XVIII (London, 1954), pp. 382-385.

[27]Blake, *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 14.

[28]Ibid, p. 34.

[29]Ibid, p. 9.

[30]Blake's enthusiasm for Milton was shared by many of his contemporaries; for a discussion of this see C. H. Collins Baker, "Some Illustrators of Milton's *Paradise Lost*," *The Library* (June and September 1948).

[31]Any number of publications about Indian antiquities appear in the late eighteenth century; most notable are: Alexander Dow's *History of Hindostan* (London, 1768); Theodore Maurice's seven volume study, *Indian Antiquities* (London, 1793-1800); and Edward Moore's *Hindo Pantheon* (London, 1810). Indicative of Blake's fascination with exotic societies is Number VII in the exhibition *The Goats, an Experimental Picture*. Blake merely states that the subject is taken from the *Missionary Voyage*. Blake's picture was inspired in fact by James Wilson's *A Missionary Voyage to the South Pacific in the Years 1796, 1797, 1798 in the Ship Duff* (London, 1799). The specific passage illustrated by Blake can be found on pp. 129-130, where the nude island girls climb aboard the ship, are given skirts of leaves which are eaten by the goats, soon after the ship has arrived at Resolution Bay in the Marquesas.

[32]The tempera painting is in the Tate Gallery. A pencil preparatory sketch exists in the Philadelphia Museum of Art; both the verso and recto surfaces have Bard sketches.

[33]Blake, *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 5.

[34]Keynes, *Blake Studies*, p. 80. Keynes quotes Robert Southey's criticism which appeared in *The Doctor* written long after the exhibition. For a good summary of nineteenth-century reactions to Blake's *Catalogue* see Deborah Dorfman, *Blake in the Nineteenth Century, His Reputation from Gilchrist to Yeats* (New Haven, 1969), pp. 14-15, 103, 259-260.

[35]Northrup Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, pp. 172-173. Here Frye nicely characterizes Blake's enthusiasm for Bardic literature. He writes:

> Thus in various ways an immense expansion of literary interests was bringing to the attention of poets much that had been left outside the direct line of development from Homer to Pope. The Arthurian and Eddic myths, which we have seen to be integral to Blake's symbolism, were discovered or re-habilitated. The whole poetic scene was filled with Welsh and Scandanavian translations and adaptations, not wholly out of fashion even when Blake opened his *Descriptive Catalogue* in 1809 with an imitation of Welsh triads.

[36]Blake, *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 43.

[37]Other writers sharing this idea are David Jones in his translation of Paul-Yves Perzon's *The Antiquity of Nations*; Rowland Jones's *The Origins of Language and Nation* (London, 1764) and James MacPherson's *History of Great Britain* (London, 1773).

[38]Blake, *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 50.

[39]Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, p. 272. For an analysis of the many facets of romantic enthusiasm for Druidic literature and culture, see Stuart Piggott, *The Druids* (New York, 1975).

[40]Dorfman, *Blake, Nineteenth Century*, p. 14.

[41]J. Bronowski, *William Blake and the Age of Revolution* (New York, 1965), pp. 69-85.

[42]Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, p. 293.

[43]Blake, *Descriptive Catalogue*, p. 2.

[44]Ibid, p. 53.

THE ARIZONA PORTFOLIO

LA MUSE DE GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE (The Muse of Guillaume Apollinaire)

Marie Laurencin (1885-1956), the painter and mistress of Guillaume Apollinaire, is the subject of this painting by the early twentieth century naive painter, Henri Rousseau. The title of the work is derived from two double portraits Rousseau completed in 1909 of Apollinaire and Laurencin, Le poète et sa muse, *in which Laurencin, dressed in a long pleated, blue robe and flowery wreath, acts as a muse of inspiration. The Phoenix Art Museum's painting, also from 1909, is most likely a tribute by Rousseau to Laurencin's artistic genius. She is receiving inspiration from a blond angelic figure at the right, identical to the figure of Liberty in Rousseau's 1906* Liberty inviting the Artists to the Twenty-second Exhibition of the Independents *(Private Collection, Zurich). The Phoenix Art Museum work must have been painted after the first version of* Le poète et sa muse *and possibly after the second version because of the symbolic attributes for artistic genius.*

In 1909 Apollinaire, one of the few individuals to be attracted to Rousseau's "primitive" style, commissioned the artist to execute his portrait. Rousseau worked diligently and sent Apollinaire a flood of letters pleading for adequate sittings and for some advance payment. Rousseau was displeased with the finished work, the first version of Le poète et sa muse *(Pushkin Museum, Moscow, 131 x 97 cm.], and he immediately began the second version (Kunstmuseum, Basle, 147 x 97 cm.). It is the latter version which Rousseau exhibited at the Salon des Independents in 1909. Both paintings are in most points identical except for the wreath on Laurencin's head, her gesture of inspiration, and the type of flower in the foreground. In the first version Rousseau had painted gillyflowers. Rousseau rejected the painting because he thought the gillyflowers inappropriate for his subject. In the second version he substituted* l'oeillet de poète, *poet's carnation or sweet william. Rousseau decorated the foreground of the Phoenix Art Museum painting with the small and delicate blooms of the poet's carnation. The inclusion of this row of flowers in* La muse de Guillaume Apollinaire *is an intentional symbolic reference to the missing poet and suggests that the Phoenix Art Museum work was painted after the first version of* Le poète et sa muse.

Rousseau writes proudly at this time of his invention of the "portrait paysage," the portrait landscape. Rousseau's landscapes are not merely decorative backdrops for his figural studies but meticulously described visions. The lack of atmosphere and the strangely sensuous silhouettes of foliage and figures produce a magical sensation. The Phoenix painting differs from the two double portraits in that the depiction of the landscape space is deep. The two stylized trees which enframe the figure in the Phoenix painting

are similar to those found in the double portraits, particularly the second version. Rousseau often reuses motifs, not out of lack of inventiveness but because every detail is charged with special meaning to him.

If Rousseau's landscapes are haunting they are no less compelling than his portraits. Marie Laurencin is seen frontally, dressed in severe black, holding a small bouquet, the favored formula used by this artist for his female portraits. Laurencin's rigid pose and penetrating gaze recall Picasso's remarks about the first work he purchased of Rousseau's Mlle. M., *which he found in Père Soulier's junk shop in 1908. Picasso genuinely admired the primitive clarity and directness of Rousseau's vision. He writes:*

> *Rousseau was not an accident. He represents the perfection of the central order of thought. The first work of his I happened to acquire produced an astonishing effect on me. . . . It is one of the most beautiful of all French psychological portraits.*

Though we may perhaps take issue with the suggestion that Rousseau's portraits are penetrating psychological studies, like the works of Degas or Picasso's own portraits, there is no denying the powerful impression produced by his enigmatical and immovable personages. We know from letters that for the double portrait Rousseau took elaborate measurements of Apollinaire's features; this procedure may have been employed for his interpretation of Marie Laurencin as well. Apollinaire was shocked with the portrait and reportedly very displeased with those who, upon viewing Rousseau's Le poète et sa muse, *recognized him. Marie Laurencin may have been equally surprised at her painted visage. Her slight frame and delicate features, noted by such contemporaries as Gertrude Stein and Picasso's mistress, Fernande Olivier, are not to be seen. The broad, impassive face of the Phoenix painting is similar to all of Rousseau's portraits of women.* La muse de Guillaume Apollinaire *and the two double portraits which most likely precede it, confirm Rousseau's unusual approach to portrait painting. The quiet figures who stand in a strangely mute world are visionary tributes to those he loved and respected.*

Anthony Lacy Gully

La Muse de Guillaume Apollinaire

BY HENRI ROUSSEAU

Phoenix Art Museum
Accession Number 62-101
Gift of Clare Boothe Luce
60.9 cm. x 38.7 cm.
oil on canvas


Henri Rousseau

WILD GEESE, FLOWERING PLANTS, AND TALL REEDS

The subject is wild geese and their habitat. The season is predictably autumn. The style is courtly and elegant. Thus one may describe the impressive chung-t'ang *(a large scroll for a reception hall) in the Phoenix Art Museum Collection, which is unquestionably one of the finest paintings in this genre from the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).*

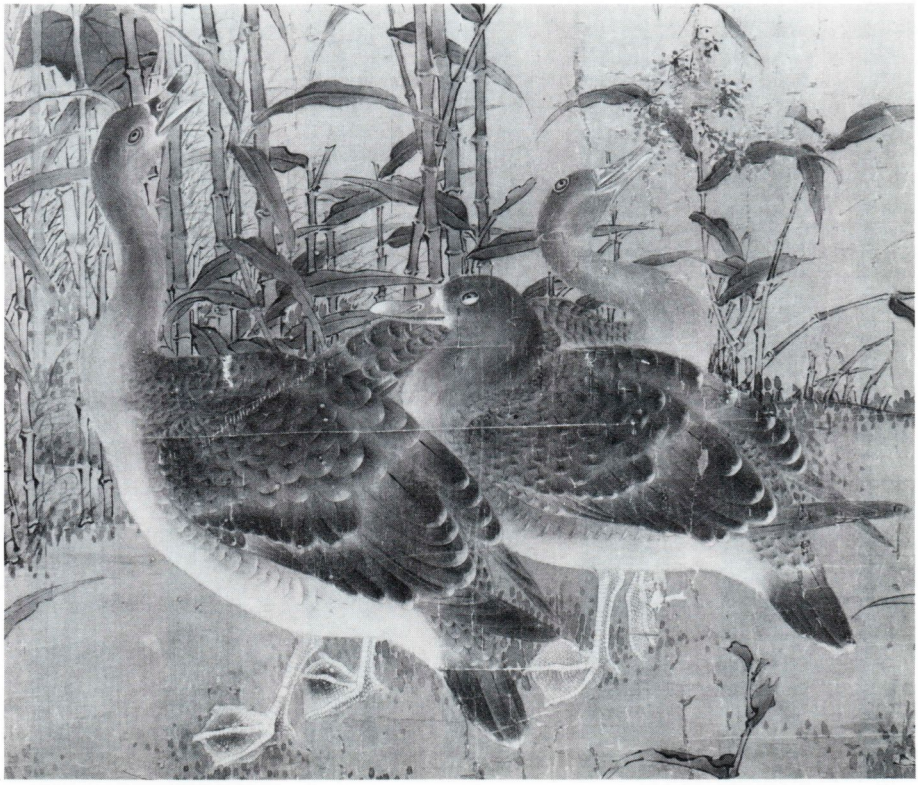
In the painting, three wild geese rest on the bank of a river. At least two of them are aware of the descent, from the top right, of another, whose wings are spread, neck stretched, and feet readied for landing. Behind them, to the left, is a cluster of tall reeds, through which flowering peonies can be seen. The autumnal mood is pervasive, not only because the theme of migrating wild geese traditionally lends itself to seasonal evocation; but the withering tips of the leaves of the reeds, the timely bloom of the flowers, and the interspersing of brownish hues amidst greens are equally telling. In this respect, even the tone of the silk, now mellowed to a rich shade of gold, is ideal as a backdrop.

The composition itself is masterly. Between plants and plants, birds and birds, and birds and plants, the interplay is intricate and subtle. Its stately rhythm, taut orchestration and counterpoint indicate the hand of a master. So do the ever-varying brushstrokes, which can be incisive and steely at one moment, then soften to undulating waves at another. It is noteworthy to mention that its sonorous and crystal tone is unlike the misty banality into which Ming treatment of this genre frequently — and unfortunately — falls. Remarkable, too, is the condition of this painting which, in spite of its nearly four hundred year existence, has not suffered much loss. Even the retouching has been minimal and self-effacing.

In view of the size, quality and condition of the work, one cannot help but lament the absence of a signature that could link it unequivocally to a known artist. The Phoenix Art Museum staff has attributed it to Lin Liang (active 1455-1500), but the stylistic framework and refined brushstrokes tend to point to his equally renowned contemporary, that is, Lü Chi.

Lü Chi was active around 1500 and enjoyed the patronage of the Ming Emperor, Hung-chih (1488-1506). He was a prolific painter and the probable head of an atelier. Works attributed to Lü Chi are often divergent in style and uneven in quality. The Phoenix Art Museum chung-t'ang, *however, can be compared to the very best of them and it may well be a prime example of either the hand of Lü Chi or of his school.*

Ju-hsi Chou



WILD GEESE, FLOWERING PLANTS, AND
TALL REEDS

Anonymous, Ming Dynasty

Phoenix Art Museum
Accession Number 58-100
Gift of Elsie Sackler
204.8 cm. x 107.2 cm.
ink and color on silk

TING

The "savage elegance" of the ting, *formerly on loan to the Phoenix Art Museum, presents another aspect of ancient Chinese art. The* ting *is a key vessel in the ancient rituals of the Shang and Chou periods (respectively 1523-1027 B.C., and 1027-256 B.C.), where offerings and libations were made to ancestors and deities. The* ting *was a food container.*

The style is mature Shang, around eleventh century B.C., and its origin has been suspected to be the capital city of An-yang. Like most of the tings *with this provenance, the form of the vessel is strong and simple, whereas the decor is complex and zoomorphic. The usual configurations are present: marked by strong axial flanges, treated in high relief and backed by the meandering* lei-wen *(thundercloud pattern), the* t'ao-t'ieh *or the "glutton mask" takes on a classic, menacing appearance. Indeed, so well integrated is the mask with the vessel that, when viewed from the proper angle, the former virtually transformed the latter into a living, mysterious organism.*

As a matter of fact, of this particular ting, *it is the very* t'ao-t'ieh *itself that proves to be the most interesting. Unlike the majority of* t'ao-t'iehs, *its horns metamorphose into a pair of fantastic animals which evoke aquatic associations. In addition, the motif of the pointed ear, which is common, is extended to the treatment of the aquatic creatures, which is uncommon.*

In short, if it has been attested time and again that each Shang ritual vessel is individually conceived while falling into a generic pattern, the ting *in the Henry Luce III Collection is but one more confirmation.*

Ju-hsi Chou

TING

Shang Dynasty

Henry Luce III Collection
H: 25 cm.; d. 19.23 cm.
Bronze

HOMAGE TO WATTEAU

In March, 1860 upon a return visit from Rome to his native city of Valenciennes, the French sculptor Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux (1827-1875) began to formulate plans for a monument to commemorate the genius of the city's most illustrious artist, the eighteenth-century painter, Antoine Watteau. In an extant letter to the mayor, M. Bracq, Carpeaux offered to erect the monument at his own expense, asking only for the cost of the necessary bronze. The commission was granted, and for the next fifteen years until his death, Carpeaux worked on the project. It was realized in three versions: the Phoenix Art Museum model reveals the artist's final conception.

Carpeaux's first project, completed sometime before the spring of 1860, took the form of an isolated figure of Watteau. Carpeaux then favored marble for the monument and insisted that the work be placed in the center of the city's La Grande Place. These demands resulted in frequent disputes between the artist and members of the Municipal Council. A second version was completed in 1867. According to the memoirs of Carpeaux's daughter, the second version was based on a now lost pastel portrait of Watteau. A model of this version exists in the Musee des Beaux-Arts, Valenciennes. It stands 27 cm. high and shows Watteau, palette in hand, surrounded by attributes of the Commedia dell'Arte.

Although Carpeaux exhibited in 1870 a statue of Watteau based on the 1867 version, he seems to have simultaneously realized that the isolated figure of Watteau would be completely overpowered by the monument's future location; the Municipal Council was adamant that the work was to be placed against a building at the extremity of La Grande Place. Thus, Carpeaux amplified his conception. The image of Watteau now surmounted a two-tiered fountain designed in Louis XV style. The double pedestal was adorned with four figures from the Commedia dell'Arte, and they in turn were reflected in a white marble basin in which swans, the symbol of Valenciennes, were depicted as well. The panels on this lower tier were decorated with bas-relief designs based on paintings by Watteau.

Representative of this third, and final, design is the Phoenix Art Museum's Homage to Watteau. *The attribution of the Phoenix cast, distinguished by its mold markings, is complicated by the fact that the completed monument was not dedicated until October 12, 1884, the bicentennial anniversary of Watteau's birth, nine years after the artist's death. The final project was carried out by the sculptor, Eugène Hiolle, and three architects appointed by the Municipal Council. According to Claude Souviron, curator of the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Valenciennes, Hiolle executed*

several casts from Carpeaux's original model of the fountain. Generally, Carpeaux worked from simplified designs in his models to final conceptions notable for their intricate detailing. Both the Phoenix Art Museum cast, and one in the Louvre, are distinguished by their relative simplicity, and are stylistically related to the artist's first conception of the third version; they are unlike the more involved surface incisions and modelling on the pedestals of a third model in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Valenciennes. Moreover, the Phoenix and Louvre versions are dominated by the figure of Watteau, which was ultimately cast from Carpeaux's 1870 statue, and neither the Phoenix nor Louvre versions exhibit the complexities of the figures on the lower registers as completed by Hiolle.

Whether the Phoenix Art Museum version was cast by Carpeaux, his atelier or Hiolle is hardly relevant, since Carpeaux, like so many nineteenth-century sculptors, produced multiple versions and editions of his major projects. The delicate, almost rococo, plaster cast in the Phoenix Art Museum beautifully exemplifies Carpeaux's style at its best, and serves as a poetic tribute to his fellow countryman, Antoine Watteau.

Robin Dowden

Homage to Watteau

ATTRIBUTED TO
JEAN-BAPTISTE CARPEAUX

Phoenix Art Museum
Accession Number 64-79
Gift of F. M. Hinkhouse
H.: 76.92 cm.
Plaster

A Note On A Letter From Roger Hilton To Terry Frost

Jack Breckenridge

The accompanying letter is from the English painter Roger Hilton (1911-1975) written to his countryman and fellow painter Terry Frost who has kindly made this copy available.

Hilton was one of that generation of British painters whose development was delayed by the Second World War.[1] He, along with Frost, Peter Lanyon, Patrick Heron, Alan Davie, Adrian Heath, William Scott, and others, reached artistic maturity in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The London gallery dealer, Leslie Waddington, called them the "Middle Generation," a name that stuck.[2] These painters participated in the international art scene in the two decades after the war to an extent unknown in British art heretofore.

Hilton was represented in the Thirty-second Venice Biennale and Documenta II in Kassel and numerous other international exhibitions from New York to Tokyo. So his recollections contained in this letter, written late in his life, represent the views of one who had "been there."

Hilton was a student at the Académie Ranson in Paris before the war where he worked with Roger Bissière. His knowledge of modern French painting was equalled in his own generation probably only by William Scott who had also studied in France in the late 1930s. This experience gave Hilton a unique perspective on the European art scene in the years immediately after the war.

In looking at English, French, and American painting of this century, it is apparent that World War II produced a kind of "watershed" in art. There was an art before the war and a different art after the war. One gets the feeling that everything was open for the young British painter at this time. This generation rejected the Neo-Romanticism of war-time British painting; Sutherland and Vaughan are Hilton's examples. France, Hilton makes clear, was "stuck in the doldrums." The School of Paris no longer had the power to intimidate

British painting as had been the case in the pre-war years.

Hilton knew what was going on in Parisian studios in the first years after the war. Terry Frost has described to this writer his trips to Paris with Hilton where they visited artists like Soulages and Manessier.[3]

It is also clear that in those years Hilton knew nothing of the work of the Abstract Expressionists then painting in New York. As he points out: "At that time none of us had seen any American painting except Scott and Davie." This is perhaps the most important point in Hilton's letter. This fact, too often, has been overlooked by American and, surprisingly, British critics. For example, the American critic Gene Baro, in *Studio International* in October 1967, discussing American influence on some young British painters of the 1960s called them "less derivative and imitative" than their predecessors. [4] Presumably, then, Baro means that the preceding generation, the "Middle Generation," was more derivative and imitative. Even an Englishman, Edward Lucie-Smith, in his book *Late Modern*, first published in 1969, has written: "An especially important event in the struggle for primacy between Paris and New York was the triumph of Abstract Expressionism in Europe during the late 1940s. . . ."[5] The word "Europe," one supposes, includes England. He certainly does not make an exception of England. Both of these writers have contributed to the erroneous notion that British post-war art, "Middle Generation" art, was shaped by the influence of American Abstract Expressionism reaching out across the Atlantic.

Hilton's letter is clear evidence that Baro and Lucie-Smith are mistaken. This has been confirmed to this writer in interviews with other "Middle Generation" artists.

The first exhibition of modern American art in post-war Britain, apart from some small Pollocks, was an exhibition entitled "Modern Art in the United States" shown at the Tate Gallery in 1956. This was a heterogeneous collection of paintings, both figurative and abstract. The New York Abstract Expressionists actually were only a small part of this exhibition; only one room of the five or six rooms alloted to the show in the Tate.[6] It can be surmised that this is the exhibition to which Hilton refers in the first paragraph of his letter when he mentions how it was hung. William Scott remembers that at that exhibition, "Roger Hilton complained that I had misled him — I had given them [the American Abstract Expressionists] too high marks — they were not 'painters,' they were 'stainers.' "[7] Abstract Expressionists from New York were also exhibited in a show circulated in Europe in 1958 and 1959 called "The New American Painting." Whichever exhibition Hilton is referring to, one must remember that by 1956 British painters of Hilton's generation had begun exhibiting in New York. Peter Lanyon exhibited at the Catherine Viviano gallery in New York, January 1956, with extremely favorable reviews in both *Art News* and *Arts* magazines.

The key to the myth of American influence on both British and French painting before 1956 may be in Hilton's statement in the letter: "One had perhaps arrived at similar conclusions to some of them [the Americans] by different routes (via Mondrian, for example)." Historians are going to have to learn that the years from 1945

to 1955 are not a time of American artistic colonization of Western Europe, but rather a time when artists were working in parallel directions with only fragmentary reports of what was being done elsewhere.

Hilton's description in this letter of the New York art scene is indicative of this. His remarks on New York artists also illuminate the decidedly outspoken personality that all who knew Roger Hilton remember. But the last part of the letter remains as rather poignant evidence of a commitment to his work by an artist who for the final eighteen months of his life was confined to his bed and yet continued to turn out an immense amount of work.

NOTES

[1] Information on Roger Hilton's life is most readily available in the exhibition catalog, *Roger Hilton* (London, 1974).

[2] Unpublished taped interview with Patrick Heron at Zennor, Cornwall, England, March 1977.

[3] Unpublished taped interview with Terry Frost at Newlyn, Cornwall, England, April 1977.

[4] Gene Baro, "British Painting: The Post-War Generation," *Studio International*, CLXXIV, No. 893 (October, 1967), 133.

[5] Edward Lucie-Smith, *Late Modern: The Visual Arts Since 1945* (New York, 1969), p. 18.

[6] Patrick Heron, untitled article, *The Guardian* (London, October 11, 1974), p. 10.

[7] Alan Bowness, *William Scott: Paintings Drawings and Gouaches, 1938-1971* (London, 1972), p. 72.

TRANSCRIPTION OF ROGER HILTON'S LETTER TO TERRY FROST FROM A XEROX OF THE ORIGINAL

Les Masseries, July 24 [, 1963][8]

I have never taken any notice of composition. I don't quite know what you mean by a "sense of scale". Do you mean the painting looking right for the size of canvas, or a sense of bigness or that the painting at least shouldn't make the canvas look smaller or what? American pictures tend to be and look big because things are on a bigger scale there. Everything is small in England, fields, trains etc. The american spirit way of life etc comes through their painting & the French through theirs & one hopes something comes through ours. If you don't like it painting wise that's just too bad. You can't turn yourself into an American overnight. If the American show had been hung like ours with the paintings practically touching each other, I think you'd have received a very different impression.

We as Britishers were at the outset I suppose trying to do something different to the accepted British painters such as Keith Vaughan Sutherland Merlyn Evans & so on. At the same time French painting got stuck in the doldrums so we appeared to be a bit more exciting. (page two) At that time none of us had seen any American painting except Scott & Davie. One had perhaps arrived at similar conclusions to some of them by different routes (via Mondrian for example[)]. It still strikes me that most Americans are amateur & inexpert blunderers. They are riddled with idealism & philosophical ideas rather than starting with the paint. Even then as you say the scale was different. A man like Still had the courage of his ignorance. But I think he certainly exploits one idea. So did Pollock and Tomlin. When Pollock tried desperately to move on he killed himself. Tomlin died anyway before he got around to trying. As for old Mr pure souled bloody Newman he has kept on harping on his one string for around 80 years. As I say we had our sights directed on the established British art of the time & in our vague way and with little knowledge of what was done in America but with some knowledge of French painting, we were trying to make a sort of painting which hadn't been seen in Britain. The younger boys are taking direct from America & I don't know that that's so marvellous [sic]. Americans got a lot from some very bad European established artists who happened to go over during the war & mostly from a hysterical German called Hoffman [presumably Hans Hofmann] who had picked up a few superficial ideas a la Andre Lhote about painting (page three) during his unsuccessful journey across Europe. The Americans are very gullible culture wise & when Hoffman [sic] spoke they thought they were getting the real thing straight from the fount. Likewise they swallowed Mas-

son & Matta. And of course they were all helped periodically by our old friend Bill Hayter on his trips to New York with some of the smell of Picasso & Braque still clinging to him. Our artists are just as good as the French or American[.] What is missing is the build up & the money & the critics. You feel insecure & unsure of yourself because you haven't got the build up. You haven't got the booklets on you that in your position you'd have had automatically in Paris. In New York you'd be in the museum with your biggest & best picture. In general there is not enough intellectual ferment in London. Nobody cares really & nobody is really going to stick his neck out. Critics don't meet critics & painters rarely meet painters. The strength of the so called St Ives school was that for the first time there were a few painters with similar outlook who actually met each other & there is no doubt that Patrick [Heron] played a great role in this. Whatever else he was a critic with some fervour & integrity. All this had gone now. That is natural. In Paris groups are constantly forming & then reforming. In England it only happens very rarely. (page four) There are not enough of us & there isn't the intensive art industry around us. Perhaps it's just as well.

Still as for exploring, of course one has to explore. At the moment I am not so concerned with the physical aspects of painting as the the [sic] moral ones. What are we supposed to be doing. The mechanism of painting has to be harnessed to some idea. You have to be in other words representing something. Now we can expose a totally blank canvas & hardly an eyebrow will be raised. You can't go further than that. So we have to start again & paint something. What? It is the old question that led to nonrepresentational painting in the first instance. What a relief one didn't have to paint anything. The main stumbling block was got over. Well we have had a lovely splash with it. But can we go on splashing blithely for ever. Some time there must be a meaning or a message. Greenberg in a letter to me said Rothko kept on talking about a message and how this irritated him, Greenberg. You've got to have something to hang your hat on. We have leaned heavily on various things but it doesn't seem adequate. It's the old story. Once you have learned to paint you've got to find something to paint about. On the contrary the pure abstraction I can do, that is why I seldom do it any more. One can't spend one's days turning out things like Ellsworth Kelly, or if you like 1955 Roger Hiltons. One hopes eventually to make a synthesis between the pure abstract & the personal quality of my drawing show for instance, but this will take time.

R.

[8] In a letter to Jack Breckenridge, received January 1978, as this went to publication, Terry Frost wrote that though Roger Hilton went to Les Masseries on more than one occasion, he believed this letter was written in 1963.

Les Mesnuls. July 24.

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Ming Idealism and Landscape Painting

Ju-hsi Chou

From the outset, the reader would do well to heed the warning that most of the ideas presented below are tentative at best. The aim here is to explore and to provoke, not to reach for definite conclusions. In point of fact, there are far too many unresolved problems to hope for certainty. Chief among these problems is the lack of consensus regarding Ming style in landscape painting. So far, few have agreed on either the characteristics or the range of this style, let alone its philosophical implications. For the time being, however, these considerations will have to be put aside; mainly, it will be this author's idea of Ming style that will count here.[1]

Having so qualified the issue, we can now proceed to the topic of "Ming Idealism and Landscape Painting." With respect to the first half of this topic, namely, Ming idealism, those who are familiar with the intellectual tradition of Ming China (1368-1644) would instantly point to Wang Yang-ming (1472-1528), easily the most influential thinker of the time. In fact, this article will begin with the thought of Wang Yang-ming, though in no way does it wish to suggest that Wang Yang-ming is the *cause* of Ming style in landscape painting. A simple point to keep in mind is that he is roughly contemporaneous with Wen Cheng-ming (1470-1559), but later than Shen Chou (1427-1509) and Tai Chin (active 1420-1450),[2] at whose time the generic Ming style was already evident. Even though Wang Yang-ming did exert a measurable degree of impact on art after his thought had attained wide acceptance, the chronology alone should lead us away from the simplistic notion that all Ming painters did was to paint his "ideas." Instead, one must consider the alternative that, since Wang Yang-ming came *after* the onset of the Ming style, he was in all probability expressing, as well as sharpening, a point of view which these painters, e.g., Shen Chou and Tai Chin, had already shared — and voiced — to some degree.[3] We may

indeed have to characterize him as a thinker who articulated the sentiment of the time even though he also contributed enormously to it.

Notwithstanding the priority — in time, not in significance — of art over philosophy, we may still opt to begin with the latter, for it communicates so much more readily and explicitly. The following passage, which is cited from "recorded sayings" by this Ming thinker, may serve as a convenient point of departure:

> The Teacher was roaming in Nan-chen. A friend (a disciple)[4] pointed to the flowering trees on a cliff and said, "You said there is nothing under heaven external to the mind. These flowering trees on the high mountain blossom and drop their blossoms of themselves. What have they to do with my mind?"
>
> The Teacher said, "Before you look at these flowers, they and your mind are in the silent vacancy. As you come to look at them, their colors at once show up clearly. From this you can know that these flowers are not external to your mind.

The "Teacher" mentioned above is of course Wang Yang-ming himself, who was being taken to task by one of his disciples. The latter, it is evident, had not fully succumbed to the force of Wang's thought, and was questioning him by referring to something near at hand. What indeed have the flowering trees on the high cliff — trees that "blossom" and "drop their blossoms" by themselves — to do with one's mind? Do they not exist independently of it?

In more than one way, this stands as a typical — and classic — confrontation between a realist and an idealist. The realist has posed a problem, and the idealist "subverts" it to suit his own mode of thought. The conclusion Wang Yang-ming reaches here, "that these flowers are not external to your mind" is less a conclusion drawn from a commonly agreed set of facts than an affirmation, or confirmation, of his own beliefs. The general train of thought here is that, to him, reality is nothing but mind's reality, and that the mind and reality are co-extensive. "Before you look at these flowers," he said, "they and your mind are in silent vacancy. As you come to look at them, their colors at once show up clearly." This is a virtual rejection of the time-honored dichotomy of subject-object, perceiver-perceived, upon which most of the theories about perception and cognition stand and for which, in this instance at least, the disciple acts as its spokesman. For Wang Yang-ming, however, the flowering trees and the mind have never been apart: they are one. Perception occurs when the mind decides to single out, focus upon, or illuminate a given section of that "silent vacancy," and brings the flowering trees out of the original dimness. It is not unlike a journey into the unconscious, where the unknown and the alien are not really unknown and alien at all, but are there all the time.

To sum up then, it is clear that, to this Ming thinker, perception *is* introspection. One looks outward, but sees the image within; the characteristics and appearance of the image are as much a property of the object as they are of the mind. This is the quintessential Wang Yang-ming, who,

as it is well known, advocates that the mind is the sole source of reason and that things by themselves are devoid of such, except when they come into contact with the mind. It is the mind that imparts its reality to them, infuses its own essence into them and, for all practical purposes, supplies them with their *raison d'être*.

To put it in another way, it is tantamount to a declaration of the victory of spirit over matter, and mind over Nature. Matter, or Nature, is inert and neutral, without principle and essence of its own, a state which Wang Yang-ming was wont to call, "beyond good and evil." The spirit, or the mind, however, can activate it, bring it out of its inertia and neutrality, as well as bestow upon it — momentarily at least — with a sense of order and coherence, which is not inherent. In the end, all forms of understanding, all forms of cognition, must revert back to a primeval intelligence, an intelligence which is known in Wang Yang-ming's doctrine as *liang-chih* 良知 and which is variously rendered as "intuition," "conscience" or "clear intelligence."

Substituting "mountain-water" for "flowering trees," the pattern should remain intact. The next questions then become: Can we discern the same mind-supremacy at work in landscape painting of the Ming period? Or alternatively, is it possible to find there a receptive Nature, one which is without principles of her own, but is given principles? Insomuch that these questions run contrary to the conventional ideas about Chinese landscape painting, which hold that Nature is supreme and that man desires only to be in communion with her, we must examine the problem with extra care.

Indeed, the evidence is encouraging. Art theory supplies one clue, that very medium between art and philosophy, where, from the mid-fourteenth century onward, few treatises of painting would, as those in the Five Dynasties (907-960) and Sung-Yuan time (960-1279, 1280-1368 respectively), endeavor to treat Nature and her "order."[5] The silence here is conspicuous as it testifies for changing priorities. The only consistent and innovative efforts in theoretical realm lie in the emergence of *ch'ü* 趣 as a key concept in art,[6] which, as it pertains to a subjective state, a state of subtle excitement and exhilaration caused possibly by external stimuli, fits quite well into the context. As for the other major current, namely Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's (1555-1636) Ch'an analogy and mimetic theory of painting, it is so patently under the influence of Wang Yang-ming's thought that we need not concern ourselves here.[7]

Paintings also exhibit traits from which we may infer a similar, subjective bent. Especially after the sixteenth century, the instances where painters indulged themselves in willful transformation, distortion, not to say refinement of Nature, are too numerous to recount in full. A random selection should suffice for the time being:

Item: In *Old Trees and Cold Stream*, Wen Cheng-ming, the master from Suchou, visualizes a highly restricted vista within the tall and narrow frame so typical of the Ming period. While depriving trees and rocks of much of their volume and mass, he also reduces their intervals to such an extent that they are pressed closely to each other, so closely as to be, one might say, "unnatural.'[8]

Item: Shao Mi, a late Ming painter (active 1620-1640), conjures up a landscape which is noted for its velvety

Fig. 1. Shao Mi, *Album of Landscapes and Figures,* Leaf d. Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taiwan, Republic of China.

and lush texture, a transparency of tone, and a curious silence that is made almost tangible. One is tempted to describe this painting by a term derived from Western art, that is, "surreal" (fig. 1).

Item: Wu Pin's (ca. 1568-1626) mountainscape shows seasaw ridges and curious perforations that are cut less by natural forces than by the artist's own will. So persistent is his style that he has often been described as "manneristic."[9]

Item: Wen Chia (1501-1583), the son of Wen Cheng-ming, takes his point of departure from two lines of Tu Fu's verse and arrives at an image that is as unique as it is, for want of a better term, elegant (fig. 2). Aside from his "archaic" mode of rendering trees and peaks, Wen Chia purposefully mismatches the two halves of the painting by means of a discrepancy in levels and grades. In this way, the left side is made to illustrate: "Blue water flows from afar and falls in a thousand torrents" and the right side pictorializes: "Jade mountians stand in a lofty array, cold on their summits."[10]

There is no doubt that the above selections, particularly the last, will lend substantial support to the theme of Mind-over-Nature in Ming landscape painting. However, this author will willingly acknowledge that the above approach cannot but be regarded as haphazard and fragmented. An inquisitive reader may wish to ask: 1) Is there not a similar symptom, or symptoms, in periods other than the Ming? Could the Sung and Yuan painters, of whom so little are known, have done the same? 2) Even if the painters discussed above indulged in the transformation of Nature, are they not perhaps unusual cases, singled out of many more who did not share the same beliefs and same attitudes?

To the first question, our answer is: even though there could be painters of a similar bent in the Five Dynasties, Sung and Yuan periods, they would not find themselves in the mainstream. The categories of excellence, such as, say, those postulated by Ching Hao 荊浩 (ca. 900-60), specifically "down-grade" these painters.[11] They cannot, therefore, belong to the *shen* 神 or "divine class," where the master-painter is said to accomplish his task without deliberation, act without action, but, akin to the creative forces of Nature, "follow the flow to evoke images."[12] Nor will they be grouped under the *miao* 妙 or "wondrous" category, the criterion for which reads: "His thought penetrates heaven and earth as well as the sentiment and disposition of myriad things."[13] They may fall into the level of *ch'i* 奇 or the "distinctive," whose art embodies the unexpected and the unusual and is often contrary to "true sceneries," so stated Ching Hao. And he sums up this group by saying that while they "may possess the skill of brushwork, but are lacking in thought."[14] The lowest, of course, is the *ch'iao* 巧 class, the "precious," which is precious but without truth and which twists the pictorial composition in order to augment atmosphere and movement.[15] It is not the purpose here to intimate that the Ming painters discussed above belong to the inferior classes. On the contrary, the salient fact that emerges from this discussion is that Ming painting has changed markedly from its predecessors in attitude and in orientation. Moreover, it is important to stress that if the kind of pictorial phenomena we witnessed above had not been in the mainstream in the earlier periods, it clearly became

Fig. 2. Wen Chia, *Landscape Illustrating Tu Fu's Verse*. Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taiwan, Republic of China.

so in the fifteenth , sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This is true with respect to Wen Cheng-ming and Wen Chia, who are the pivotal figures in the Wu school, and therefore the very backbone of Ming painting.

To the second question, our answer will be: While these painters do seem to have gone on to a degree of subjectivity that was rare even among contemporaries, one can nevertheless suggest that Ming painting in general — that is, the developed Ming painting from the fifteenth century onward — inheres an idealistic core and its generic structure indeed is analogous to that of Wang Yang-ming's philosophy. In short, while we accentuated the extreme tendencies, we did not do so at the expense of other, less radical expressions, which after all would have been the norm. Indeed, with few exceptions, the evidence points to an ordering intelligence at work, one which exerts its will over a receptive Nature.

How could this be substantiated? The answer, first of all, is that the Ming style *is* unique, as it sets its own pattern and its own modality. It was first developed, as far as we can ascertain, in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, around or shortly before the time of Tai Chin, the so-called "founder" of the Che school, and continued into the seventeenth-century before its expiration. The Wu school also adhered to it, though with significant variances in lineage and tradition. Thus, it followed initially the art of the Yuan masters and then extended itself into the T'ang and Sung models; whereas the Che, the earlier of the two schools, revived the Southern Sung academic tradition. Regardless, the two schools are fundamentally alike, and a comparative study between Tai Chin's *Homeward Bound in a Storm* (fig. 3) and the Wu master, Shen Chou's *Landscape in the style of Ni Tsan* (fig. 4) will bring out their kinship. Fortuitous it is not, for there is in both works the same diagonal movement or recession into depth, the same arrangement of planes along a steep grade, and the same inexorable flow across the surface. Between these examples, it is apparent that the two schools, however different they are in style, outlook, or even social status,[16] could at times speak with a common voice and partake in the same generic structure in one of its manifestations.

Secondly, what is this generic structure? Broadly speaking, the Ming style, as we have seen in our comparison above, is "planar." That is to say, it organizes its motifs along a series of planes which, by and large, are parallel to the picture surface. In this sense and in this sense only, Ming painting displays a fundamental kinship to other phases of Chinese painting. The Sung, for example, has its parallel planes.[17] The Yuan and sometimes the Ch'ing (1644-1911), too, have their parallel planes. However, the Ming planes differ from those above in that they are much more insistent, much more forceful, and much more compelling. At times they are not only seen as inherent in given landscape motifs, say a mountain or a peak, but tend to supplant them and reduce them from their former, corporeal state to "paper-thinness" (fig. 3). In addition, unlike all other planar systems used in pre- or post-Ming time, the Ming planes can at times be actually described as "serial," with regulated intervals and a strong sense of direction. The Sung planes, for instance, are unpredictable: they may shift to the left or to the right,

Fig. 3. Tai Chin, *Homeward Bound in a Storm*. Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taiwan, Republic of China.

Fig. 4. Shen Chou, *Landscape in the Style of Ni Tsan*. Saito Collection, Sumiyoshi, Japan (?)

Fig. 5. Wen Cheng-ming, *Resting in the Sound of the Pines*. Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taiwan, Republic of China.

sometimes oppose one another, and frequently change between major and minor steps and/or grades.[18] In comparison, the Ming system plots the planes along at an even pace, which, though falling short of mathematical exactitude, does manage to take on a reasonable and foreseeable momentum, plus a directional thrust that can, as in Tai Chin's case, anchor the diffused presentation of landscape elements. In that sense, the Ming style is "structured," and this structure, seemingly simple enough, could yield a fairly wide range of variations.

In point of fact, the range is quite impressive indeed. It can, as Tai Chin and Shen Chou have already demonstrated, pursue a diagonal recession. It can, as Li Tsai (Early 15th-century) has done in his *Landscape*, plan a frontal assault.[19] It can also make a high to low movement, so that the distant mountains or hills sink below the "horizon."[20] It can also build up height by piling forms on top of one another, the only sustaining factor being its consistency and continuity (fig. 5). This is different from the Yuan version, where it is the internal flow and flux, the serpentine winding of the peaks and pinnacles themselves that are salient.[21] Meanwhile, the series of planes can augment in number, or be reduced to one or two (fig. 6); and their intervals can lengthen as well as shorten. Sometimes, dictated either by whim or by some other considerations, a painter might intentionally defy the paralleling structure and install, in the foreground, a series of angular movements (fig. 7). However, as one will find out, all of these are of short duration; soon they will be reinstated within the ordered sequence as parallelism wins out in the end.

Whatever the case, the key is this: this structure is not the structure derived from Nature. Nothing in Nature proceeds along so smoothly, so measuredly, and so intelligibly. The tall format compresses the landscape, its tallness substitutes for the height of the mountain, which is illusory (fig. 5). The planes and intervals introduce "thin" and "emaciated" shapes and at times, induce conflict of "space" and "volume."[22] And in one case at least, the distant hill moves in line with the determined direction of the serial structure, so much so that it too begins to turn upward and upward until it is in a ludicrous position for not being able to descend at all.[23] In all of these instances, the Ming planar system exercises its own logic, above and superseding physical laws, and is willful, arbitrary, but nonetheless, orderly and coherent. By extension, it also makes Nature orderly and coherent.

If this structure is not inherent in Nature, then whence does it come? The conclusion is easy to draw: it must be inherent in the collective psyche of Ming painters, who semi-consciously or unconsciously — as this structure has never been articulated — pave the sequence and instill reason during the creative act. As a matter of fact, even as late as Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, at the time when the gradual transition away from Wang Yang-ming's thought had already begun, the pattern remained intact for that artist.[24] Parenthetically, as this structure always presumes a directional emphasis, which might be interpreted to be away from a given source, a given position, or a given point of view, it also implies an in-

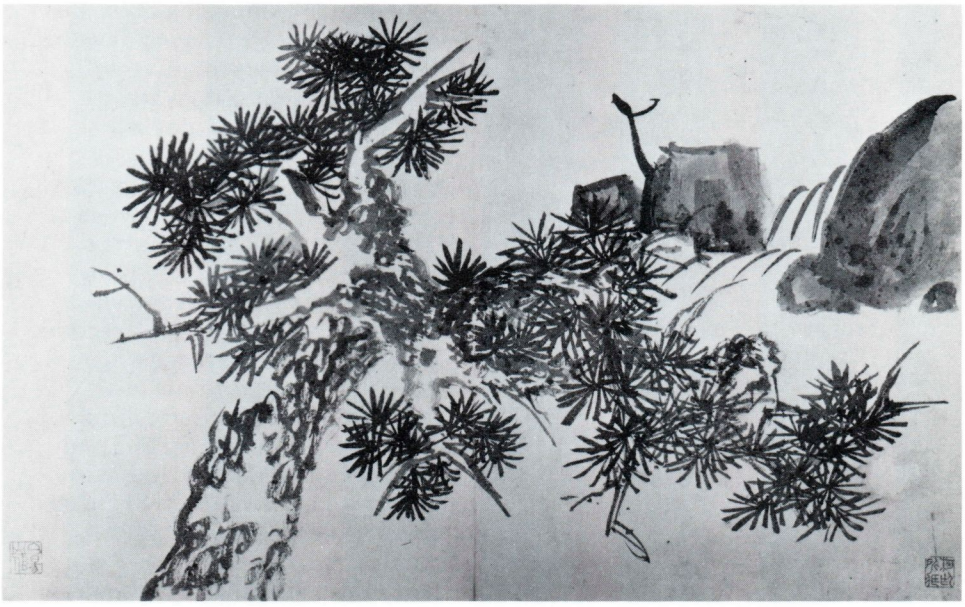


Fig. 6. Ch'en Shun, *Landscape Album*, Leaf n. Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taiwan, Republic of China.

Fig. 7. Wen Cheng-ming, *Spring Trees after the Rain*. Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taiwan, Republic of China.

telligence that coordinates the network of planes and regulates its rhythm. This further strengthens our argument for the mind's embodiment of landscape — a segment of Nature, of which it has become aware.

In a curious way, particularly when a frontal or diagonal recession is shown, there is an unmistakable resemblance between this structure and the perspectival system of the West. The latter, of course, entails such features as vanishing point, ground plane, geometrical precision and exactitude. The Ming system has none of these. Like Western perspective, however, its aim is also to measure, to ascertain, and to represent landscape/Nature along an intelligible line. Their differences — and these being differences of a cultural origin — lie, on the one hand, in the extended perception of the Ming system vis-à-vis the isolation or elimination of the time element in the perspective; and on the other, in the former's intuitive, rather than scientific approach, which is effective not in a visual, but in a spiritual sense.

So the Mind has won — at the expense of Nature, and only so when a given segment of Nature is seen or evoked. The continuum here is the continuum of the Mind, from which Nature accepts its dictates and receives its order, which then becomes her order.

Having concluded the structural analogy between Ming idealism and landscape painting, we can perhaps begin to explain some of the noted or notable phenomena in the latter sphere:

First, it concerns the impressionistic flavor in some of the Ming paintings, in part or in whole.[25] These *are* "impressions," marked not by solidity,

but by transiency, not by permanence, but by a sense of immediacy. That this should be a salient feature of Ming painting is perfectly logical, since it lays stress less on eternal verity than on the "instantaneous" response of the mind to a given situation and the quality associated thereof.

Second, we may point to the general surge of interest, particularly in the Wu school, for ethereal landscape, landscape of fantasy, or landscape of mythical origin.[26] We refer to the presentation of such themes as the "Peach-blossom Spring," the "Immortal Isles," etc., which had enjoyed vogue and was enjoying it all over again at this time. Indeed, in no other periods can we observe such a perfect wedding between form and content, representation and presentation, insomuch that the Ming style is inherently cerebral and immaterial. Could it be because the Ming painters seized upon these subjects as a way of fitting the content to form? One wonders. However, there is no doubt that, in the context of Ming idealism, which reduces things to mental phenomena, the distinction between the real and the imaginary is tenuous at best. The inverse is also true, for frequently the "real" landscape can be as imaginary as the imaginary landscapes.

Third, in line with the above, the Ming painters, again particularly those of the Wu school, were partial toward a poetic approach in the art of painting. Once more, this was not new, and T'ang (618-907) as well as pre-T'ang verses had served as inspiration for painters for centuries. However, in their espousal of this poetic tendency, the Ming painters, as in the case of the aforementioned Wen Chia, went so far that poetic sentiment virtually took precedence over other, presumably more logical, considerations (fig. 2). Gone is the desire merely to elicit poetry from a given scene, or to maintain an equipoise between lyricism on the one hand and "natural laws" on the other. Here is none but an "inner vision," in which mountain-water is no longer the subject matter, but a metaphor. The same artist's treatment of Pai Chü-i's *The Song of P'i-p'a* is equally suggestive: from the landscape itself, we are led, through a process of transformation and sublimation and through the filter of a subtle and ineffable mind, to a world which is archaic, untrammelled, unreal, and therefore, all the more poignant and memorable.[27]

Lastly, the Ming period witnessed archaistic survivals and revivals to a degree that was unusual when the dynastic and cultural heritage was so firmly set in the hand of the natives. Unlike the preceeding Yuan dynasty or succeeding Ch'ing period, where archaism carried with it an urgency underscored, as it were, by the alien threats, the Ming archaism seemingly was little more than an expression of traditional leaning. Thus the Che school revived the Southern Sung style and the Wu school revived the Yuan and the T'ang-Sung. The key to remember is this: archaism, however it is practiced, represents a state of mind. If, indeed, as we have demonstrated above, there is little distinction between a real and an imagined landscape, then there is also very little distinction between a real and a painted landscape — painted, that is, by a past master. Why therefore should an artist not begin his creative venture with an imagined, or even painted, landscape rather than a real landscape, since it is not so much the

landscape per se, but the mind's contemplation of it, which gives substance to the painting. This is exactly what the last great Ming master, Tung Ch'i-Ch'ang, has advocated. By resorting to a continual process of imitation, or *fang* 仿, which demands that, in each and every instance, the artist contemplates either the works or schemata of past masters and then brings the weight of his "intuition" to bear on them.[28] In this way, as Tung Ch'i-ch'ang believes, the mind will create and recreate in an intensified pitch and confers upon the resultant work with its own luminous presence. Between imitation and non-imitation, the Ming archaism accepts both while denying none.

Meanwhile, landscape, or Nature herself, was not to remain suppressed for long, but ready to make a comeback. This she did, at the beginning of the Ch'ing dynasty, when a new style was born, a new consciousness was fashioned, one which operated under the assumption that Nature indeed can exist independently of our mind, that she herself indeed has her own law, her own order. Ironically enough, in painting this belief was first found among Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's disciples who, while retaining the *fang* practice, helped in other ways to dismantle the basis of their master's conviction, which is Ming idealism and Ming style.

NOTES

[1] There are two reasons for the lack of consensus among art historians with respect to the Ming style: (1) A dearth of documented works, and (2) a profusion of forgeries. Their combined impact renders uncertain the data situation, so much so that we cannot assume that a painting, if so attributed, would be definitely Ming in date. Deprived of a sound basis for scholarly inquiry, art historians have been led to express their opinions and preferences, which remain nothing more than just opinions and preferences. In my own case, I arrive at the Ming style through a process of elimination, which begins with a careful consideration of Ch'ing painting and Ch'ing style. By screening out Ch'ing fakes from the corpus of works known to be Ming, chances are that we can define the boundary of Ming painting in a more precise and objective way. See my unpublished article, "Methodology of Reversal in the Study of Wen Cheng-ming," which I delivered orally at the University of Michigan Symposium on Wen Cheng-ming, January 31, 1976.

[2] For readers who are unfamiliar with the history of Chinese painting, Shen Chou and Wen Cheng-ming were co-founders of the Wu school of painting, located in the famous city of Suchou. Tai Chin is generally thought to be the originator of the Che school, so named because his native place is in the province of Chekiang. These two schools, plus the later Sung-chiang school of painting, which revolved around Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555-1636), span nearly four-fifths of the Ming period.

[3] We could, of course, bring up the case of Ch'en Hsien-chang (1428-1500), who, as a forerunner of Wang, could help to establish a better symmetry in the parallelism between Ming art and philosophy.

[4] Parentheses mine. The "friend" mentioned here refers to the friend of Wang's disciple who helped to record the master's sayings and compiled them under the title of *Ch'uan-hsi Lu* 傳習錄, from which this passage is taken. See Chan Wing-tsit, *Instructions for Practical Living and Other Neo-Confucian Writings by Wang Yang-ming* (New York and London, 1963), sec. 275.

[5] The exception perhaps is Wang Li's 王履 treatise on painting; see Yü Chien-hua 俞劍華, *Chung-kuo Hua-lun Lei-pien* 中國畫論類編 (Peking, 1957), II, 703-704. Wang Li however was born in 1332, and he is too early for our purpose. See below, p. 81, where I consider the onset of the Ming style in painting as from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century.

[6] The most consistent, and the most thorough treatment of *chü* can be seen in Kao Lien 高濂, *Yen-hsien Ch'ing-shang Chien* 燕閒清賞箋, included in Yang Chia-lo 楊家駱 ed., *I-shu Ts'ung-pien* 藝術叢編 (Taipei, 1967), Vol. XXVII. It is possible that the concept of ch'ü, as is contained there, emanated from the center of the Wu school, namely the group of painters surrounding the master, Wen Cheng-ming.

[7] See my article, "The Cycle of *Fang*: Tung Ch'i-ch'ang's Mimetic Cult and Its Legacy," to be published in the coming issue of *Wen-lin* (Madison, Wisconsin).

[8] This painting, which is dated in the year 1549, is an acclaimed masterpiece by Wen Cheng-ming. It has been published several times in the last decades, e.g., James Cahill, *Chinese Painting* (New York, 1960), p. 130; *Chinese Art Treasures* (New York and Washington, 1961). Pl. 98 and backcover; and Ann Clapp, *Wen Cheng-ming: The Ming Artist and Antiquity* (Ascona, 1975), fig. 35.

[9] See Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles* (New York, 1956-1958), Vol. VI, Pl. 298.

[10] Translated by James Cahill, *Chinese Painting*, p. 134.

[11] For the sake of convenience, I use Ching Hao's *Pi-fa-chi* 筆法記 ("Notes on Brushwork") as an example of art theory in the Five Dynasties and Sung periods. See Yü Chien-hua, *Chung-kuo Hua-lun Lei-pien*, I, 605-612 for the text; also Kiyohiko Munakata, *Ching Hao's Pi-fa-chi* (Ascona, 1974).

[12] Yü Chien-hua, I, 606; and Munakata, pp. 12-13. The original Chinese passage reads: "任運成象."

[13] The original Chinese passage reads: "思經天地萬類性情." See Yü Chien-hua, ibid.

[14] Ibid. The Chinese passage reads: "有筆意思."

[15] I am paraphrasing the Chinese text, which reads: "經寫之草增邈真象."

[16]Painters of the Che school are, generally speaking, professional artists; those of the Wu school tend to be scholars.

[17]See for instance Li Kung-nien's *Landscape* in the collection of the Princeton University Museum. For reproduction, see George Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting* (Princeton, 1959), Pl. 19.

[18]See Li Kung-nien's *Landscape* cited in n. 17 above.

[19]Sirén, *Chinese Painting*, Vol. VI, Pl. 126.

[20]As an example, we may cite the well-known leaf from the album by Shen Chou in the collection of the Nelson Gallery of Art. See Richard Edwards, ed., *The Art of Wen Cheng-ming* (Ann Arbor, 1976). Pl. II-B.

[21]See Wang Meng's *Elegant Gathering in Forest and Stream*, Pl. 24 in Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting*. The tall and narrow format, as far as we can ascertain, began in the Yuan period, with Wang Meng as a noted exponent. Then it remained relatively conservative, with an optimum ratio of 1:3 for the width and height. The Ming version went much further and ratios of 1:4 and 1:5 were not unknown. This format compels the landscape to follow its dictate, rather than allowing the latter to freely "move about" within the frame. Often, the appearance of height in the mountains is due to the format itself, presenting a contrast with, say, Fan K'uan's famous *Travellers in Mountains and Ravines* (*Chinese Art Treasures*, Pl. 18), where the height of the mountains is real and unmistakable.

[22]In Leaf *n* of his *Landscape Album* (fig. 6), Ch'en Shun typically hangs the rocks and waterfall on the pine branch. Similarly, Chang Lu's *Old Fisherman* (Siren, *Chinese Painting*, Vol. VI, Pl. 158) is a study in paradox, where the fisherman is depicted volumetrically, but not the net; the boat is depicted volumetrically, but not the cliff in front of it. To a Sung or Yuan painter, this sort of spatial ambiguity and distortion is a glaring fault in representation. See Jao Tzu-jan's 饒自然 recounting of ten faults in landscape art, in Yü Chien-hua, II, 692.

[23]See Ch'iu Ying's *T'ao-li Villa*, Pl. 8 in Tanaka Ichimatsu et al., *Toyo Bijutsu* 東洋美術, Vol. II (Tokyo, 1968).

[24]See Tung Ch'i-ch'ang, *In the Shade of Summer Trees*, *Chinese Art Treasures*, Pl. 104. Precisely because of this, Tung Ch'i-ch'ang must be considered as a conservative since other late Ming painters were in the process of evolving into the new tendency of stressing volume over plane, and internal growth over serial extension.

[25]See Chang Lu's *Old Fisherman*, cited above in n. 22, where the fleeting touches of the brush contribute to a sense of transiency in the treatment of the foliage.

[26]An example — and a fine one at that — is Wen Chia's *Immortals on the Island of Immortality* in the National Palace Museum, Taipei (MV 183). It is reproduced in *Ku-kung Min-hua* 故宮名畫 (Taipei, 1968), Vol. VIII, Pl. 19.

[27]See Pl. 215A in Sirén, *Chinese Painting*, Vol. VI.

[28]See my article, "The Cycle of *Fang* in Later Chinese Painting" cited in n. 7 above.

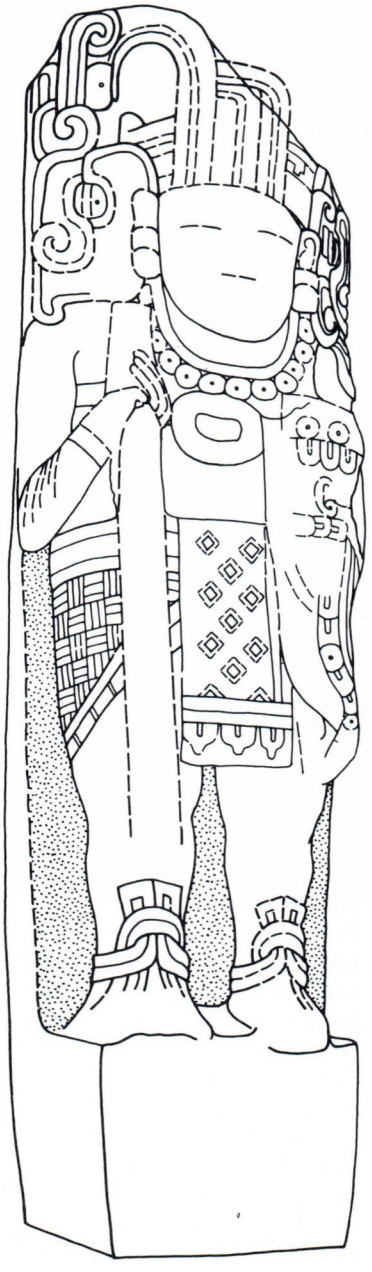
Classic Maya Elements in the Iconography of Rulership at El Tajin, Veracruz, Mexico

Michael Edwin Kampen

Classic Veracruz sculptures include portable yokes, palmas, hachas, plaques and monumental sculptures mainly from El Tajin, Veracruz, Mexico, the metropolitan center of the Classic Veracruz art style (c. A.D. 250-1000).[1] Classic stone sculpture in Mesoamerica is predominately a lowland tradition shared by the Maya and their northern neighbors in Veracruz. While Maya art has been studied by a large number of scholars for over a century, Classic Veracruz sculpture has received relatively little attention by comparison, and the interrelationships between these two lowland Classic styles has not been discussed in the existing literature. Evidence exists, however, to show that the artists and rulers at Tajin were heavily influenced in their thinking and workmanship by representations of rulers in Maya art. Such Maya influences are most evident in the sculptures decorating the Temple of the Niches, the major architectural monument in Tajin. The Temple and carved relief sculptures on its upper walls date from the beginning of the Late Classic period, c. A.D. 600. Conjectural restorations of the Temple place the panels and friezes on the upper half of the exterior walls above a row of deep stone niches. This wall, and many of the niches, have been destroyed and none of the sculptures remain *in situ*. A pair of statues set on the platform above the balustrades flanked the entry way to the Temple. This study focuses on one extant piece from this pair, Sculpture 1, and Panel 1 from the Temple wall (figs. 1 and 2), and attempts to show how the Tajin artists borrowed forms and ideas from the Maya to represent Tajin rulers associated with this Temple.

Panel 1 is a badly weathered relief depicting an earth monster, feline, skeleton, cacao tree and two men in an architectural setting. The central picture area is surrounded by two thin, lateral borders of interlocked scrolls, a much thicker lower border illustrating a large grotesque head, and an upper

Fig. 1. El Tajin, Temple of the Niches, Sculpture 1. Veracruz, Mexico. Drawing by the author.



border which is now missing. Directly above the grotesque, a second monster with open jaws and a human arm breaks through the earth to enter the ritual scene. A tall cacao tree grows from the monster's back as the beast

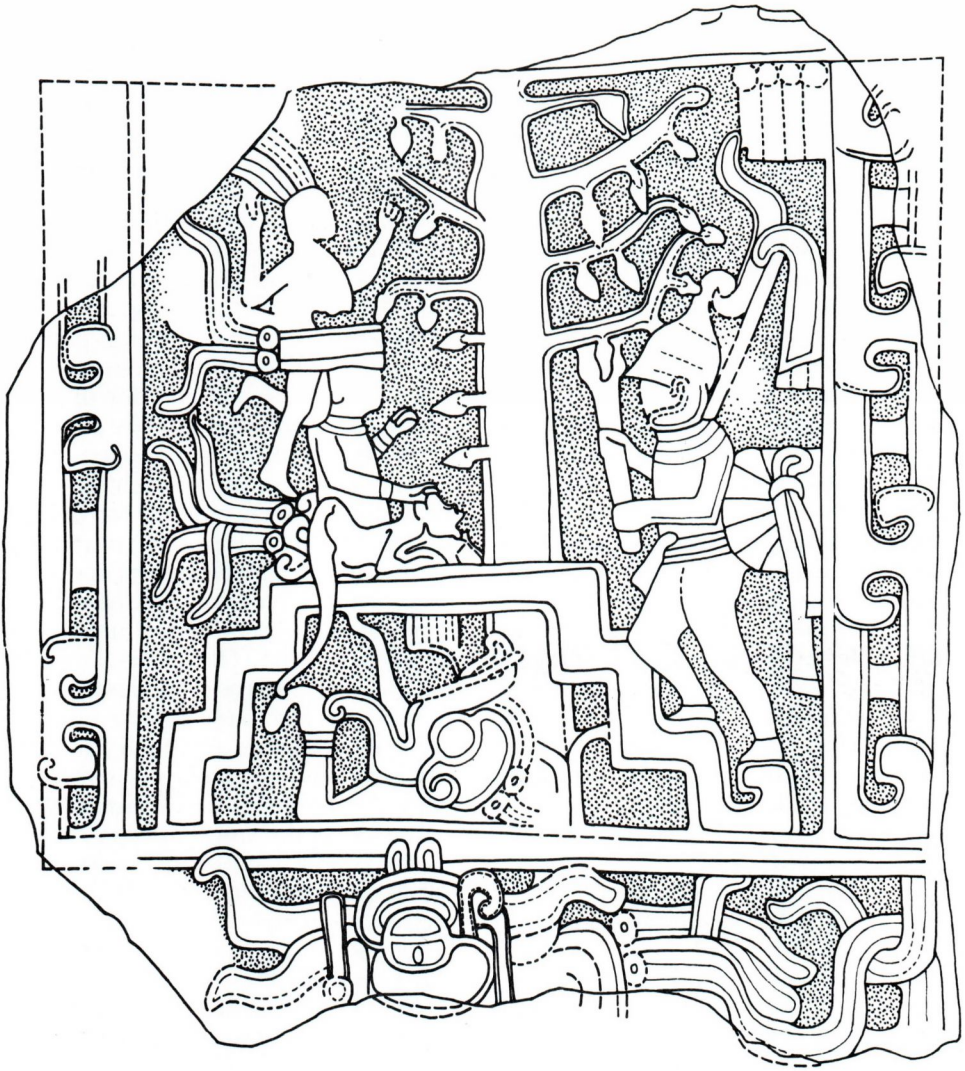


Fig. 2. El Tajin, Temple of the Niches, Panel 1. Veracruz, Mexico. Drawing by the author.

licks the bottom of the stepped platform with his long tongue and raises a limp wrist to touch the tail of a feline beast crouching on the platform. A man resting one hand on the head of the feline wears a human skeleton in his headdress. The skeleton in turn places one hand near a pod on the cacao tree. A second man, without a skirt or kilt, wears his loin cloth on a staff inserted in his headdress as he marches up the side of the stepped scroll form. A scroll resting on the head of this second man also touches the three feathers at the top of the panel. His waist band is worn very low to expose his penis as he ascends the

steps to present items to the man seated on the summit.

Panel 1 is a portrait of a Tajin ruler surrounded by badges of authority and signs of wealth. Supernatural forces are represented by the grotesque head of the saurian god in the frieze below the picture and by a second aspect of the god equipped with jaws and an arm as it appears within the picture area. This earth monster, represented in more grotesque forms than any other Veracruz god, has multiple aspects and is the Veracruz counterpart to the great saurian of the Maya, Itzam, a favorite god of the Maya rulers. A humanoid version of the saurian god appears within the outline of the stepped scroll-form platform, a place sign for Tajin. By its context on the Temple, the architectural form refers to the Temple of the Niches as the prototype of the place sign for Tajin and the seat of Tajin leadership.

The feline may be a jaguar, a common Mesoamerican sign for regal authority. Military leaders in Tajin, ushering captives to the sacrificial platforms, wear jaguar vestments in the fashion of the Maya leaders illustrated in the famous murals at Bonampak. This Tajin ruler wears a distinctive scroll-formed grotesque at the rear of his waist: an unorthodox position for this sign in Tajin art. It is the grotesque form associated with the rabbit deity of the pulque cult which became very important in Tajin by the Late Classic period. Pulque, a holy intoxicant made from the fermented juice of maguey plants, was drunk by participants in ritual sacrifices. The skeleton in the ruler's headdress, with outstretched arms and one bent leg, holds the pose of sacrificial victims. Vultures, representatives of the sky gods, have accepted this sacrificial offering and picked the bones clean.

The man ascending the steps of the Temple is also associated with the pulque cult illustrated in other Tajin sculptures. Figures in the building columns at Tajin, affiliated with rabbit and pulque symbolism, have similar staffs set in their hair on head bands. A priest of the pulque cult, Panel 5, South Ball Court (fig. 3), passes a rod through his penis as part of a pulque and sacrificial ceremony. Panel 1 may be a representation of a pulque priest who has already performed this act of ritual blood letting. The conspicuous way in which he drapes his sex organ over the top of his waist band demonstrates the wound of his sacrificial ritual. He carries one or two cylinders similar to those held by figures attending sacrificial rituals elsewhere in Tajin. The scroll rising from his head and touching three feathers attached to the upper corner of the panel repeats an artistic device that also appears with ball players in the nearby South Ball Court. Priests of the pulque cult in this Court have sashes attached to the rear of their waists and looped over their forearms, while the priest in the temple panel, moving up the long staircase, has tied his sash in a large bow knot.

The skeleton in a sacrificial position touching one hand to the cacao tree, juxtaposes themes of life and death, illustrating another aspect of the ancient Mesoamerican concern with the principle of duality. But the tree growing from the earth monster symbolizes more than fertility — it is a cacao tree and cacao pods were a form of money among the later Aztecs. They had none of it growing in the Valley of Mexico and had to import it from southern Mexico and Veracruz. It is possible that cacao is represented here

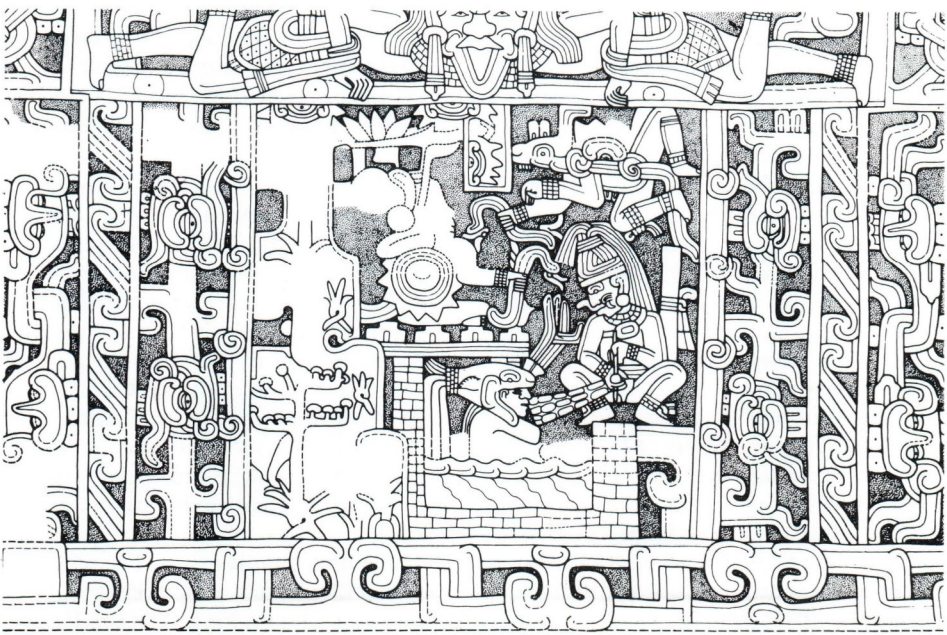
because, like pulque, it is a form of drink, but it is more likely that cacao is illustrated in this context because it is a form of currency and a valuable export crop.

All the signs agree: the ruler of Tajin was a man of power. The great earth monster pays homage to his regal jaguar sign. The ruler is director of the rituals of the pulque cult where he offers human sacrifices that are acceptable to the gods. In his fertile lands above the Tecolutla River, a cacao tree grows from the body of the earth monster. Money even grows on trees in the wealthy land of this ruler: he is king of men and beasts and is rich as Croesus.

Panel 1 belongs to the Classic Veracruz style but it does not represent themes and present them in patterns derived from earlier Veracruz arts. The strong interest in the iconography of leadership and the representation of the cross-legged ruler seated in an elevated position, closely parallels the representation of inaugural scenes in the art of the Maya in such well-known centers as Piedras Negras. This incorporation of Maya ideas of representation within the Veracruz art style is made much more evident in a later addition to the sculptural program of the Temple as a pair of sculptures with obvious Maya affinities are set near the temple stairway.

A pair of statues, or stelae, almost certainly bearing portraits of other Tajin rulers, was added to the Temple sometime around the end of the eigth century A.D. Sculpture 1 (fig. 1) is a single figure holding a long sash or string of beads and a plumed bag. The

Fig. 3. El Tajin, South Ball Court, Panel 5. Veracruz, Mexico. Drawing by the author.



stocky man wears a short skirt with a loin cloth, a waist band, an oval on his chest, a necklace and a double grotesque headdress. The legs and body are carved in heavy three-dimensional masses while the shoulders and headdress are rendered in low relief and blend into the prismatic background support. Much of the headdress is missing and many of the sculptural details are very badly weathered and chipped, as if the face and the ornaments held in either hand were deliberately destroyed when the Temple was razed.

Although this sculpture, which will also be called the Tajin Stela, was erected in Tajin, the metropolitan home of the Classic Veracruz style, it is related to Late Classic Maya sculptures carved in three-dimensional masses, commonly called stelae.[2] The majority of Maya stelae are prismatic slabs carved with low reliefs representing single figures or relatively simple figural compositions with little or no indication of pictorial setting. Poses tend to be static while the iconographic associations of dress and decoration are elaborate. By the Late Classic Period, sculptors in some Maya cities were carving stelae in high relief. The best known examples come from Copan where boldly carved figures with massive, well rounded legs are encrusted with elaborate dressings. Copan figures cradle serpent bars with their arms, leaving their hands empty. Serpent bar symbolism, representing the powerful god Itzam, a favorite of the Maya leaders, appears throughout the Copan stelae, even in the headdresses. Likewise, the Tajin Stela is a massive figure with well rounded legs wearing decorative vestments which include serpentine heads and holding symbolic attributes. This stela format, associated with the Maya at Copan, and to a lesser degree, illustrated in a limited number of other Maya cities, appears out of its normal Maya context at Tajin. The stela format and figural pose, used at Tajin, are taken from Copan prototypes, but as we might suspect, the Maya format was used to illustrate a Tajin person, most likely a ruler in typical Tajin dress. To illustrate a Tajin ruler, certain details of the Copan sculptural prototype had to be changed: the Tajin Stela is stripped of all Maya vestments and attributes, and totally redressed according to the standards of Tajin fashion for ritual performers. The parquet patterns and diagonal hem line of the skirt, the lozenge of lattice decoration on the loin cloth, the attributes over the chest and grotesque forms in the headdress are all proper items of ritual dress in Tajin, illustrated in other reliefs associated with the major Tajin structures.

The figural pose in general, and specifically, the position of the hands, with the open and cupped palms resting on the chest, repeat the gesture of Maya figures at Copan cradling serpent bars. Serpentine symbolism is also popular in the headdresses of Copan figures. Since there is no serpent bar in Tajin iconography, the bar was not borrowed along with the arm arrangement that carried it. However, the serpentine symbolism does appear in the headdress of the Tajin Stela. This particular version of the grotesque used in the headdress of the Tajin Stela, with an asymmetrical supraorbital scroll, is another version of the saurian creature in Panel 1 of the Temple.

The empty hands of this Tajin figure are used like hooks or hangers to display a sash or a long string of badly

damaged beads (right hand) and a plumed bag. Sashes are carried by priests dedicated to the pulque cult, the holy intoxicant consumed during many Tajin rituals, including rituals of human sacrifice. There is also a constant association of beaded strings and sacrificial rituals in the art of Tajin. Beads are draped over beaks of large birds near sacrificial victims, held in the hands of sacrificial attendants and placed over the shoulders of sacrificial victims. The beads appear to identify figures with the act and the moment of human sacrifice.

The Stela figure also holds a U-shaped, plumed bag in his left hand. Similar bags appear in the hands of many ritual performers in other Tajin sculptures. A plumed bag in the frieze on the north wall of the North Ball Court is attached to a round shield penetrated by entwined spears. A pair of large spears is superimposed over the bag, as if to emphasize the association of bags with weapons and military power. The grotesque head to the right of the bag is a saurian monster comparable to those in the headdress of the Stela figure. A fanged grotesque monster with a plumed bag clenched in his sharp teeth appears on one of the vertical friezes bordering panels on the Temple (fig. 4). This diving figure appears to be delivering the bag from the sky. The Stela figure displays his plumed bag to demonstrate that he possesses this important symbol of military power and ritual authority that came as a gift from the grotesques in the Tajin sky.

The third conspicuous symbol on the Tajin Stela is a pair of concentric ovals secured on a strap over the chest. The oval motifs have a sufficiently wide distribution in Tajin art for us to interpret their meaning via contextual

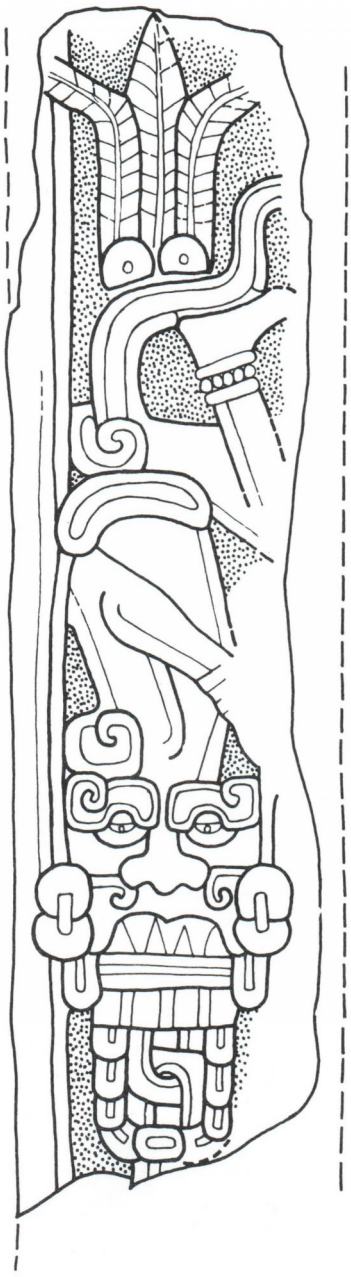


Fig. 4. El Tajin, Temple of the Niches, Vertical Panel Divider. Veracruz, Mexico. Drawing by the author.

relationships. A man seated on the left, Panel 1, South Ball Court (fig. 5), presenting spears to the figure standing in front of him, wears the concentric ovals over his forehead, impersonating grotesque that display this motif in the same position in yet other sculptures. Ovals are prominently displayed in the center of the forehead by several varieties of grotesque heads, including that of the vampirish character that delivers the spears and plumed bag from the sky. While the subtle innuendos of meaning attached to the ovals, plumed bag, beads and sash are not clear from the remaining visual documents, these items are generally associated with a common set of ritual ideas in Tajin art and work in concert to identify the figure on the Tajin Stela as a major figure in the religious activities of the city. Despite the fact that the basic form of the Tajin Stela has Maya or Mayoid characteristics borrowed specifically from the art of Copan, the iconographic details are clearly of Tajin origin: each of the symbols would have been recognized by a Tajin audience observing the sculpture as it stood on the Temple of the Niches.

But why did the sculptors at Tajin use this foreign, Maya format for a major monument when they already had a highly developed sculptural style

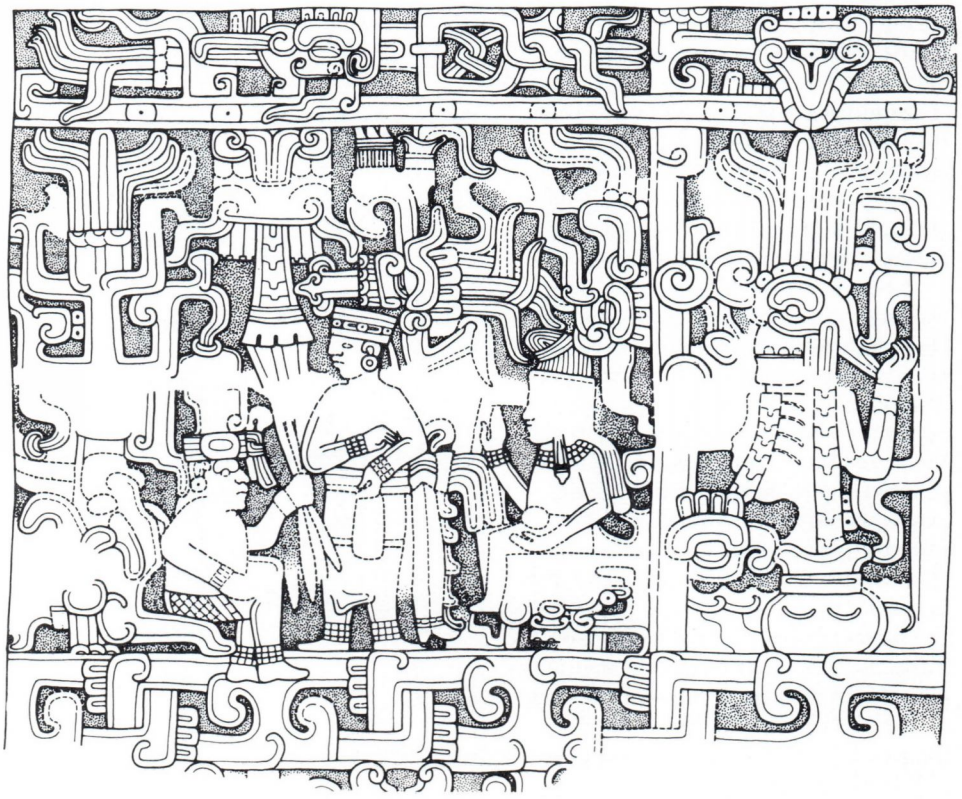


Fig. 5. El Tajin, South Ball Court, Panel 1. Veracruz, Mexico. Drawing by the author.

of their own in use on the Temple? The sculptured reliefs forming the upper portion of the Temple walls, including the ruler portrait on Panel 1, present detailed accounts of the Veracruz leaders. Some of the twentieth-century delight in Maya sculpture may be no more than a reflection of the tastes of this historical period, a relative judgment filled with prejudices that another time period and civilization might not appreciate. But the leaders at Tajin were obviously aware that the large, three-dimensional Maya sculptures had expressive possibilities that the Classic Veracruz sculptures lacked. The existence of the Tajin Stela suggests that the Tajin artists found the monumental scale and massive forms of Maya sculpture better fitted to the task of portraying royal personages and expressing themes of monumental importance than their own very detailed and shallow reliefs designed to carry complicated iconographic messages.

The iconoclasts that laid their hands on these Mayoid stelae at Tajin were anxious to erase the identity of the man or men represented on the Stela and its companion piece. The face of the Stela is smashed and not one feature remains to identify the man; the symbols of ritual authority were literally knocked out of his hands and the statue was tumbled from its important position within the major Temple at Tajin. The companion piece received even worse treatment: only the feet and ankles remain to tell us that a second image of a ruler at Tajin formed a pair with the Stela and worked in concert with the iconography of Panel 1 to document a major contact between Maya and Veracruz art taking place at El Tajin.

NOTES

[1] T. Proskouriakoff has illustrated the portable sculptures available for study in "Varieties of Classic Central Veracruz Sculpture," Carnegie Institution of Washington, *Contributions to American Anthropology and History*, No. 58 (Washington, D.C., 1954) and M. Kampen has published drawings of the architectural sculptures at El Tajin in *The Sculptures of El Tajin, Veracruz, Mexico* (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1972). The following bibliography may be helpful: G.F. Ekholm, "A Pyrite Mirror from Queretaro, Mexico," Carnegie Institution of Washington, *Notes on Middle American Archaeology and Ethnology*, No. 53 (Washington, D.C., 1954); "The Probable Use of Mexican Stone Yokes," *American Anthropologist*, N.S., XLVIII (Menasha, Wisconsin, 1946), 593-606; "Palmate Stones and Thin Stone Heads: Suggestions on Their Possible Use," *American Antiquity*, XV (1949), 1-9; Jose Garcia Payon, *Los Enigmas de El Tajin* (Mexico City, 1973); T. Proskouriakoff, *A Study of Classic Maya Sculpture* (Washington, D.C., 1950); and J. Eric S. Thompson, *Maya History and Religion* (Norman, Oklahoma, 197;).

[2] Proskouriakoff has discussed and illustrated related examples of stelae in "Varieties of Classic Central Veracruz Sculpture," pp. 85-86; and *A Study of Classic Maya Sculpture*, pp. 178 and 195.

Review

Anne De Coursey Clapp, *Wen Cheng-ming: The Ming Artist and Antiquity*. Publisher: Artibus Asiae (Ascona, Switzerland, 1975)

The scholarly interest in Wen Cheng-ming has been on the upswing for some time. In the late 60s and early 70s, it was Chiang Chao-shen who opened the way with a thorough research of Wen's life.[1] Concurrently, the Harvard thesis of Anne Clapp was being written, which eventually saw publication under the aegis of *Artibus Asiae* in 1975. Still more recently, the exhibition of, and symposium on, the Wu Master, took place in Ann Arbor; organized by Richard Edwards, they rendered Wen an unprecedented homage. This reviewer, it may be added, was a participant in that symposium and presented a paper dealing with the methodological aspect of Wen Cheng-ming studies.[2]

It is not my purpose to review the exhibition or the catalogue that goes with it. My purpose is to review, with the advantage of having seen the exhibition, Anne Clapp's *Wen Cheng-ming: The Ming Artist and Antiquity*. Indeed, having seen the exhibition, the content of which overlaps the book, and having also savored areas of controversy brought to light by symposium participants, it does make the task of reviewing Professor Clapp's book so much easier. It is almost as if we are seeing it through hindsight.

Thematically, *Wen Cheng-ming: The Ming Artist and Antiquity* presents a well-articulated idea about Wen Cheng-ming's art and its sources. The nine chapters, which touch on Wen's life, his artistic evolution, and his indebtedness to various masters, e.g., Shen Chou, Chao Meng-fu, Huang Kung-wang, Tung Yuan, Li Ch'eng, etc., follow a logical order. They piece together a train of evidence which leaves little doubt with respect to the "eclectic" tendency of sixteenth-century Ming painting in general and the Wu master in particular. Indeed, with a knowledge of more than 400 paintings and attributions by this master, one would feel a sense of confidence in trusting the author and her treatment of the problem.[3]

At the same time, it may be important to point out that, as Chinese painting scholarship goes, every book written is always less than definitive. "Provocation" perhaps is the only attainable aim. Anne Clapp's *Wen Cheng-ming* is no exception. While the "eclectic" tendency of Wen Cheng-ming is demonstrable, perhaps incontrovertible, the selection of works to demonstrate these borrowings could be extensively argued. *No two Wen Cheng-ming scholars would select the same group of works as his oeuvres:* this is simply an unavoidable condition, due to the fact that none of his paintings is documented with a degree of satisfaction that can insure and assure authenticity. As a result, scholar *A* may choose paintings *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, and *e*, while scholar *B* may reject *c*, but add to the corpus *f* and *g*. Scholar *C* may then come along and say that only *h* and *j* are reliable;

the others, including *a, b, c, d, e, f,* and *g,* are all questionable. Intolerable as it may seem, this situation is not without remedy. At present, however, this reviewer will only point to several key works reproduced in the book as highly dubious attributions. In doing so, this reviewer acknowledges that he too is participating in the same game as every other Chinese painting historian; he is however more interested in highlighting the areas of controversy, and does not intend this as a criticism of Professor Clapp.

Fig. 17: *Brewing Tea on a Spring Evening.* This painting is included in the exhibition catalogue, R. Edwards, ed., *The Art of Wen Cheng-ming,* No. XXVII.[4] In both silk and painting style, it is much too recent for the Ming date. Ming silk can be found in abundance in the Palace Museum paintings, and none of them even comes close to the bright, raw lustre of the *Brewing* scroll. Its style is also contrary to the planar structure and patterned seriality of the sixteenth century and must therefore post-date Wen Cheng-ming by a considerable margin. A comparison with the *Old Trees and Cold Streams* can be easily made (Clapp, fig. 35), with telling consequences.

Fig. 20: *After Wang Meng's "Mountain Dwellings".*[5] The landscape presentation here recalls the Ch'ing concept of *lung-mo* ("dragon vein"), and therefore a seventeenth or post-seventeenth century date would be more appropriate. Its style also has little to do with Wen Cheng-ming, but stems, in all probability, from painters like Kuan Ssu (act. 1590-1630). One may indeed wish to attribute it to a Ch'ing follower of that artist.

Fig. 24: *Washing the Feet in the Green Waves.* Density and palpability of form, not to say a heavy handed handling of brush and ink, preclude it from being an acceptable Wen Cheng-ming. Again, a later, Ch'ing date would be more likely.

Fig. 25: *Landscape.* The Michigan scroll, which is also included in the Ann Arbor exhibition (*Catalogue,* No. XV) cannot have been a genuine Wen Cheng-ming at all, contrary to the opinions of Professors Max Loehr, Edwards, and Clapp.[6] I would regard its uniformity of brushwork — and consequently the lack of strength and vitality thereof — as a telltale sign of its being a tracing copy. In contrast, the Ku-kung *Resting under Pine Trees* is a great masterpiece in the same genre, which Anne Clapp only cursorily mentioned in her text, but did not bother to reproduce.[7]

Fig. 26: *Landscape after Wang Meng.* So admired by many and accepted without question, this painting is in my opinion the work of a late Ming painter, done around or shortly after the time of Wu Pin (1573-1620). Its restless surface and its bizarre effect bears little relationship to Wen's own works, or even to his disciples', but was to invade their corpus later on due to such factors as faking and mis-attribution. In addition, the loosely straying brushwork is also atypical for the Ming master.

Fig. 28: *A Thousand Cliffs Vying in Splendor.* Magnificent composition but weak execution reduces this to a close copy at best.

Fig. 32: *The Seven Junipers of Ch'ang-sha.* In the Wen Cheng-ming symposium, Marshall Wu argued convincingly that this was a work of dubious origin.[8]

Fig. 46: *Old Trees and Cold Streams.* The presence of two hands in this otherwise fine scroll (*Catalogue,* No. L) may place it as the handiwork of a disciple, with possibly the master himself adding the final touch — to wit, the dark dry twigs at the left end of the scroll — and, of course, the inscription. (This will not invalidate Professor Clapp's thesis, but merely add a qualification.) By comparison, fig. 47, *Two scholars under a Cypress* (*Catalogue,* No. LVII), is no better than a tracing copy, and an inferior one at that.

There are a number of other works which this reviewer would also consider as debatable, e.g., figs. 1, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 30, 36, 40, 41, and 44. Once again, it is a matter of opinion, and conceivably, it is the reviewer's own subjectivity, not to mention his attitude of distrust, that has taken hold of him in reaching these conclusions.

With equal subjectivity, this reviewer will submit two critical comments vis-à-vis *Wen Cheng-ming: The Ming Artist and Antiquity*:

1). That while Professor Clapp attends to the problem of influences and sources, she has not shown equal sensitivity toward Wen Cheng-ming's own artistic personality. We come away with the feeling that Wen only did imitation or improvisation after this or that ancient master. Even though Professor Clapp does suggest repeatedly that Wen Cheng-ming appropriated the ancient sources to his own style and to his own syntax, exactly what his style and syntax are, is never clearly set forth to this reviewer's satisfaction. We sorely need a further definition of the core of Wen Cheng-ming's art, so that eclecticism — if it was indeed his avenue to creative height — could

proceed from this core, as well as enriching this core. Without knowing something about Wen Cheng-ming first, we cannot adequately explain how he operates vis-à-vis the ancient heritage.

2). That Professor Clapp seems to have shared with many of the interested scholars a feeling of uncertainty as to the validity of the Wu school paintings. This is not always apparent in her treatment of Wen Cheng-ming and his disciples, but the selection of works attributed to these masters are frequently telling in the sense that so many of them are inferior in quality. This is not surprising, in view of the astonishing assertions that were privately circulated among participants in the symposium, who regarded Wen Cheng-ming as no more than a "competent" artist. To this reviewer, however, Wen Cheng-ming *is* a great master, who, at his peak, was insurmountable and irrepressible,[9] and even at his low ebb, would not have produced works that match the gift of a third rate forger.[10] Even Wen Po-jen (1502-1575) and Wen Chia (1501-1583) are painters of skill and originality: to wit, the two handscrolls in the Palace Museum, *Spring Dawn at Tan-t'ai*, *The White-Deer Spring Retreat at She-shan*, and the hanging scroll, *The Immortals on the Islands of Immortality*.[11] They put to shame those paintings that are normally attributed to their name.[12]

It is a compliment to Professor Clapp that her translation of Chinese passages are generally excellent, with but two exceptions:

On page 3, Professor Clapp cites Wang Shih-chen's comment on Wen Cheng-ming's poetry: "其如小閣疎窗位置都佳眼界尚新." Her translation reads: "It is like a small pavilion with rustic windows; the building is placed to perfection so that the view may be fully enjoyed." Wang Shih-chen, however, was not being so favorable, for he intended to say: "It is like a small pavilion with rustic windows, elegantly put together in every way. However, the view from there is easily exhaustible."

On page 82, Professor Clapp erroneously translates the colophon by Wen as: "Because Li Tzu-ch'eng is related to me through my wife, he did me the honor to come several hundred *li* to condole with me at Wu-men. . . ." The original passage simply states that: "Because Li Tzu-ch'eng knew about my wife's death, he came several hundred *li* to condole with me at Wu-men. . . ." "戚" here does not denote kinship, but sorrow over death in the family.

Ju-hsi Chou

NOTES

[1]"The Life of Wen Cheng-ming and the School of Suchou Painting in the Middle and Late Ming," **Palace Museum Quarterly**, V, No. 4 (Summer, 1971), 27ff; VI, No. 1 (Autumn, 1971), 17ff; No. 2 (Winter, 1971), 23ff; No. 3 (Spring, 1972), 15ff; No. 4 (Summer, 1972), 23ff; VII, No. 1 (Autumn, 1972), 49ff. This has since appeared as a monograph, **Wen Cheng-ming yü Su-chou Hua-t'ai** (Taipei, 1976).

[2]"The Methodology of Reversal in the Study of Wen Cheng-ming," presented on January 31, 1976 at the University of Michigan Symposium on Wen Cheng-ming.

[3]See the **catalogue raisonné** in her thesis (Harvard, 1971).

[4](Ann Arbor, 1976). For convenience sake, this will be designated as **Catalogue** below.

[5]This painting is available only in reproduction; neither Professor Clapp nor I have been able to examine the actual work itself.

[6]See Max Loehr, "A Landscape Attributed to Wen Cheng-ming," **Artibus Asiae**, XXII (1959), 143-152.

[7]See Clapp, p. 62, n. 13.

[8]This painting is included in the Ann Arbor exhibition (**Catalogue**, No. XXX). Marshall Wu's lecture is entitled "The Honolulu Academy of Arts **Seven Junipers of Ch'ang-shu Scroll**."

[9]For example, Clapp, figs. 22 and 35; see also **Catalogue**, No. XII, XXIX and LVI. Great masterpieces of the Wu master congregate in the Palace Museum, e.g., **Snow in the Mountain Passes**, **Resting under Pine Trees**, etc.

[10]Clapp, figs. 14, 24 and 47.

[11]E. g., MH 32, MH 33 and MV 183 in the Palace Museum collection, Taipei.

[12]See Clapp, fig. 30 and p. 64.

"7 + 5 Sculptors in the 1950s": An Exhibition at the Phoenix Art Museum March 5-April 11, 1976

A collection of some fifty pieces of sculpture, sixteen drawings, and two prints, which comprises the Phoenix Art Museum's "Sculptors in the 1950s" exhibition, offers a rare opportunity to examine a pivotal decade in twentieth-century sculpture. The exhibition has a small but interesting sample of European art, but it is dominated by works of Americans which is only fair considering the importance of the Fifties to American sculpture. The American post-World War II generation is well represented by artists David Smith, Herbert Ferber, Ibram Lassaw, Isamu Noguchi, Richard Stankiewicz, John Chamberlain, and Louise Nevelson. The Europeans, Giacomo Manzù, Eduardo Chillida, Alberto Giacometti, Lynn Chadwick, and Jean Tinguely, serve as a kind of a counterpoint to the Americans. Special to Phoenix is the inclusion of the Henry Moore bronze, *King and Queen*, on loan to the museum from Norton Simon.

"Sculptors in the 1950s," originating at the University of California, Santa Barbara, was organized by Phyllis Plous who also wrote the catalog. Plous urges us in the catalog introduction to consider this exhibition as the works of ". . . sculptors working in the decade of the fifties who commanded serious attention by means of their accomplishments." She specifically abjures any intention to create a detailed survey of the period. She argues that stylistic links among these artists are hard to find. Perhaps she is too cautious. There are links which unite these works in various ways and it is not uninstructive to examine these if only to try to understand why there is about this exhibition a "period-piece" look, a "Fiftyish" look if you will.

This is not meant to suggest that this "Fiftyish" look has not worn well; on the contrary, the exhibition is a particularly strong one. What is meant is that this show looks very different from a show that one might have seen in the 1930s — the exhibitions at either of the two World's Fairs in 1930-1940, for example. It also looks very different from exhibitions of sculpture one would have seen in the 1960s — more on that later.

To make sure that one's memory is not playing tricks, go back to old art magazines and recapture the look of those World's Fairs at San Francisco and New York or look at a book like Martha Chandler Cheney's *Modern American Art* published in 1939. It was the carver and the modeler who dominated the sculpture of those years. Direct carving, which Wayne Craven says Robert Laurent introduced into American sculpture in the 1920s, was the *avant-garde* of American sculpture of that period between the two world wars. "Sculptors in the 1950s" demonstrates that this technique has been overthrown in the 1950s. None of those massive stones of Zorach or the carved tree

trunks of Chaim Gross are in this exhibition. This exhibition makes it clear that the sculpture of the 1950s has a unique character all its own. It is not to be confused with what went before nor with what was to come after. Of the more than fifty pieces of sculpture in this exhibition, nothing is carved. With the exception of Nevelson's four assemblage pieces in wood and a single small terra cotta by Noguchi, all the sculpture is metal — either cast or welded. All of the American works are nonrepresentational. Only Moore, Manzù, and Giacometti use recognizable, figurative, subject matter.

This exhibition can give some clues to the historical development of sculpture during the 1950s. For this purpose one may divide these artists into three groups. Call them "the Early New Yorkers," "the Later Assemblagists," and "the European Mélange."

The "Early New Yorkers" consist of Americans whose age and artistic development parallel the likes of Pollock or de Kooning. These sculptors matured as artists in New York in the 1940s and the early 1950s for the most part. This group includes Smith, Lassaw, and Ferber certainly, and possibly the young Stankiewicz, even though his earliest work in this exhibition is dated 1957. He was using the welding torch in the early 1950s and it is the oxyacetylene welding torch that is the common denominator of this group; that, and the abstract shapes the torch can cut and attach. Smith is usually credited with developing the torch as an artistic tool in America after seeing illustrations of Julio Gonzales' work in the early 1930s. Smith's accomplishments led several other New Yorkers in the 1940s to explore the possibilities of this technique. In the 1950s sculpture students in various parts of the country eagerly seized upon the technique. Their instructors, usually carvers and modelers, watched, often with mixed feelings.

I recall in 1954 one of my instructors, a skilled wood carver, saying in front of a particularly linear piece of welded sculpture in the Art Institute of Chicago, "But it just isn't sculpture." He had difficulty coming to grips with the way the work rejected the tradition of sculpture as mass. He was not ready to accept as sculpture a work that became a kind of drawing in space. In this exhibition, appropriately, one of the earliest works is a David Smith gouache drawing dated 1951. The drawing is essentially a horizontal form — all twists and spike-pointed endings, balanced on a vertical strut, an anticipation of the *Agricola* series.

If Smith's gouache reminds one of a Franz Kline painting, it is helpful to be reminded of this affinity between painters and sculptors in New York in the late Forties and early Fifties. It is commonplace today when discussing the sculpture of the 1950s to warn of the dangers of confusing the aims of Abstract-Expressionist painters with those of sculptors like this group here which I have designated "Early New Yorkers." Plous's catalog makes the obligatory cautions. But one must not forget that the painters and sculptors were contemporaries and in many cases good friends. David Smith *was* an important figure in the New York art world. His name is invoked on page one of Dore Ashton's book *The New York School* and many times subsequently. The famous "Club" was organized in Ibram Lassaw's studio, a *sculptor's* studio, which served as its first regular meeting place. Herbert Ferber, as early as 1943, was a member of the Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors in the company of painters Adolph Gottlieb and Mark Rothko, among others.

These sculptors shared the same milieu as the painters. They shared the memories of the Depression and World War II; they shared in rejecting nationalism in art ("middle western art," Gottlieb described it to me); and they shared a sense of their own increasing importance as artists, coupled with a growing realization of how much events of the 1940s had freed them of dependency on School of Paris syntax.

In this exhibition each of the "Early New Yorkers" is represented by first rate works. Especially impressive is David Smith's *Tank Totem VI*. It combines so much of what this group represents. It is welded metal, industrial scrap transformed, with an additional element that so many of these "Early New Yorkers" works contain — the implication of the figure. There is the connection to the base, leg-like; the vertical middle, the torso; and some sort of conclusion at the top, the head. During the Fifties this did not impress itself on viewers as it does today. Viewers then were more attracted by the new materials and new techniques, together with the rejection of imitative details. All this obscured the implicit homage to the anthropomorphic element traditional in sculpture since pre-history.

The passage of two decades has made this anthropomorphism more apparent. It runs as

a motif through so many of the "Early New Yorkers" works in this exhibition. Lassaw's vertical pieces in the show have the same implicit reference to the figure. Not in the exhibition, but in the museum's permanent gallery on the floor above, is Seymour Lipton's work *The Knight*. For all its textured leaf-like shapes, it has the same figural connotations. It should be added, as a kind of footnote, that Smith's later work in the exhibition, like *Sentinel III* of 1957, is evidence of the direction his 1960s work was to take — away from anthropomorphism.

The group referred to above as the "Later Assemblagists" is a chronological successor to the "Early New Yorkers." In this group I place Nevelson, Chamberlain, Tinguely, and possibly Stankiewicz with his use of manufactured materials. This grouping has nothing to do with actual age. Nevelson was born before any of the previous group. Chamberlain and Tinguely are much younger. Assemblage pieces, as defined by William Seitz, make use of pre-formed materials originally intended for some other purpose. The materials in the works in this exhibition representing these artists do not totally lose that original identity. Even Nevelson's wood constructions retain a piece-by-piece process of building toward a whole.

Two works by Chamberlain in the exhibition make an interesting correlation between painting and sculpture of the late 1950s. One is a crayon drawing and the other is an enameled steel piece called *Swannano*. The drawing is a typical second-generation Abstract-Expressionist work with colored shapes jostling each other for a place in the drawing. The sculpture piece, though uncharacteristically subdued in color, has a look not unlike the drawing. The metal, apparently auto body scrap, is crumpled and twisted to produce accidental shapes and abrupt spatial transitions in a very Abstract-Expressionist manner.

The French assemblagist Jean Tinguely's work is the most discordant note in the whole exhibition. One wonders why he is included. Only one of his works in the exhibition is dated as early as the 1950s. More than that, there are other features about his work which are uncharacteristic of the other works in the exhibition. First of all, they move, being motor driven. In the 1950s, movement was associated with Calder. His pieces at that time moved with the random motion of the wind, a surreal sort of movement, very much in harmony with their metal shapes. Tinguely's work in the exhibition moves in a clanky, predestined pattern very much at odds with the biomorphic shapes and evolving structures of most of the rest of the exhibition. He has another quality not found in the rest of the exhibition. His work has a mordant Dada humor. The very slap-dash assemblage appearance of the pieces is a parody of the power and polish usually associated with machinery. The pieces lurch through their patterns accomplishing nothing. Perhaps this humor is the most uncharacteristic thing about the 1950s. There is a seriousness about New York art in the 1950s. The New Yorkers may have been personally witty, but they were very serious about their art. Clement Greenberg has used the term "high art" to describe the kind of art in which he places great stock. One gets the sense of a religious vocation from the way he uses the term. Harold Rosenberg called the work of the Pop group in the early 1960s "Gag art," implying that those artists were not properly serious. Tinguely's attitudes and his art seem more related to the Sixties than the Fifties.

The other Europeans, in this review called the "European Mélange," are simply that — a collection of artists that apparently were readily available to the organizer. There seems to be no reason why these particular artists were chosen as opposed to others who could have been chosen.

Certainly, they are all able sculptors. Chillida's work has a resemblance of sorts to the Americans, but it is a resemblance on the same level as a comparison of Manessier to de Kooning. Why particularly Chillida? There seems to be no compelling reason. Kricke, Consagra, or Stahly, for example, could have served as well.

It is true Lynn Chadwick does represent the "New Iron Age," as British sculpture of the 1950s was sometimes called. There is in his work that abstract figuration discussed above. He has the advantage also of having been frequently exhibited on the international scene from the early 1950s at the same time as most of the other artists here. Manzù, Giacometti, and the special Phoenix inclusion, Moore, make almost traditional use of the human figure — traditional in the context of this exhibition. The installation in Phoenix places Moore's *King and Queen* near an over-life size standing female nude by Manzù in a very happy juxtaposition. The positioning of the

two sculptures could serve as a symbolic positioning of Moore in the European tradition. Moore, the radical of the 1930s, here fits very well into the line of tradition descending from Donatello. Score a point for the Phoenix Art Museum.

The only artist who does not fit neatly into my exercise in "linkages" is Noguchi. His works in this exhibition are of such a varied nature and are so original in their inspiration that they call for a reconsideration of this often overlooked artist. Perhaps he has been taken too much for granted for several reasons: he spent part of the Fifties in Japan somewhat out of sight of the art press; he has been active for so long — in the 1920s he worked as an assistant first to Gutzon Borglum and then Constantine Brancusi — and in this long career he has never been fashionably modern. His works in this exhibition range from a small terra cotta of 1953 to a large sheet steel piece begun in 1959 and only finished in 1973. In the impressive array of talent gathered for this exhibition, Noguchi proves himself to be a very strong sculptor.

With the wealth of material in the exhibition, it is perhaps unfair to speculate as to who could have been added to make the exhibition even more representative of the Fifties. Plous seems to challenge us to do this in her catalog introduction when she speaks of ". . . a diversity too wild and extensive . . . to be neatly organized. . . ."

Who is missing? One might opt for the inclusion of another wood sculptor, Gabriel Kohn, for instance. Not quite an assembler in the Nevelson manner, he was rather a fabricator using pieces of lumberyard stock. Kohn, though generally better known in the 1960s than in the 1950s, was well enough known to be chosen one of the U.S. finalists in the International Unknown Political Prisoner Competition in the early 1950s.

Surprisingly absent, given the preponderantly male representation, is Lee Bontecou. Her striking metal ribbed reliefs, covered with stretched pieces of canvas, were frequently exhibited in the late 1950s.

If any one thing is missed in this exhibition, it is the potent imagery of Robert Rauschenberg. One needs to be reminded occasionally that some of Rauschenberg's major three-dimensional works like *Monogram* and *Oblisque* are very much the product of the middle and late 1950s. In that decade of metal welding something quite different was taking shape in his studio. It is in Rauschenberg's work, after all, that we may get clues to both the painting and sculpture of the next decade.

One of the most obvious differences between sculpture in the 1950s and what was to come in the 1960s is color. A decade or more has conditioned the viewer to expect a clash of colors in any large contemporary sculpture exhibition. Sculpture in the 1950s as this exhibition demonstrates tended toward the drab, the monotone of metal or flat paint. Sprayed acrylic lacquer colors or impregnated plastics are not to be found in this exhibition. It is worth remembering that the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's "American Sculpture of the Sixties" with its veritable flower garden of colors was gathered not many years after the works in this exhibition had been completed. There is little in "Sculptors in the 1950s" which prepares us for this change in attitude toward color. This sudden interest in polychrome sculpture in the 1960s is an area for art historians to explore.

An exhibition like this reminds us that developments in art are not linear — where we are today does not predict where we will be in a decade. Phyllis Plous is to be commended for recreating a period so recent and yet so completely gone.

Jack Breckenridge

List of Contributors

Jack Breckenridge, is a Professor of Art at Arizona State University. He studied with Hans Hofmann in New York in 1952, the Saugatuck Summer School and has degrees from the University of Wisconsin and the University of Iowa (MFA), where he was a Woodrow Wilson fellow. His current interests are American and European painting after World War II.

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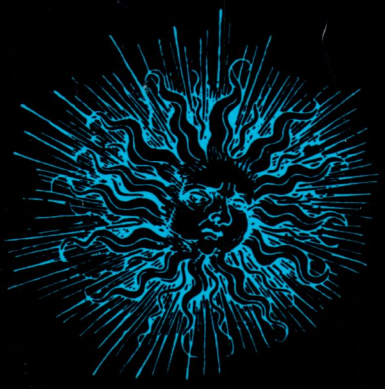

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