

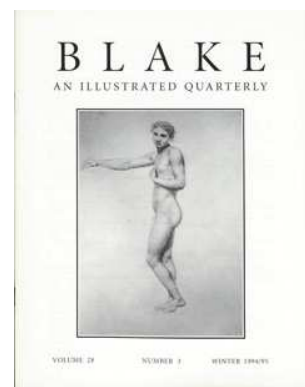
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R E V I E W

Robert N. Essick, *William Blake's Commercial Book Illustrations: A Catalogue and Study of the Plates Engraved by Blake after Designs by Other Artists*

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Robert N. Essick. *William Blake's Commercial Book Illustrations: A Catalogue and Study of the Plates Engraved by Blake after Designs by Other Artists*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991. [xv] + 138 pp. 295 illus. on unnumbered pp. at end. £60.00/\$115.00 cloth.

Reviewed by D.W. DÖRRBECKER

Does anybody actually need a full-blown catalogue of this particular sort of material, illustrated with no less than 295 high-quality reproductions? Or is its publication just another ritual move in the process of Blake's canonization as a hero of late eighteenth-century British culture? In order to understand Blake's "original" works, his poetry and his creative art, does one have to care, really, about "copy" engravings such as his frontispieces after Saverio Dalla Rosa's drawings of the statues of Catullus and his friend, Cornelius Nepos (#XXX, 66)? With the author of the book under review, I should like to argue that the answer to these and similar questions concerning the scholarly legitimation of the production of this catalogue very definitely has to be in the affirmative. Due to some classicist notions that still define what is to be considered an "original" work of art, and what is "merely" a "reproduction"—ideological norms and concepts that as yet await deconstruction—Blake's work as a commercial engraver remains the least known aspect of his output. This alone would justify the publication of Robert N. Essick's latest book. In addition there are some other very good reasons for supplanting the earlier bibliographical checklists of Blake's commercial engravings with a complete chalcographical catalogue raisonné of the book illustrations, reasons I hope to suggest in what follows.¹

At the very beginning of his introduction Robert Essick reminds his readers that the

modern aesthetic, one that Blake helped to initiate, emphasizes original print-making and devalues reproductive prints. Consequently, Blake's translations on to copperplates of images first executed in other media by other

¹ For a list of earlier catalogues of Blake's reproductive engravings, see Essick's "Abbreviations and Works Frequently Cited" (xv).

artists are given short shrift and their multifaceted importance to his life is overlooked. It would be foolish to claim for these copy plates artistic equivalence with *Songs of Innocence* or the illustrations to *The Book of Job*, but an understanding of the economic and graphic matrix in which Blake created these visual and verbal masterpieces requires some attention to the lesser productions of his etching needle and graver. (1)

This much one may learn simply by looking at the dates inscribed on the prints catalogued in the present publication, and by comparing them with the chronology of Blake's dated paintings and the printings of his own illuminated books. Evidently a considerable amount of the work which went into the production of Blake's poetry and of what is today considered his "original" drawings, paintings, and engravings was financed—and thus made possible—only by Blake's commissions for commercial "reproductive" engravings after designs by other artists.²

Both the "original" works and the "reproductive" engravings were often executed with the same tools and at the same working table. This much granted, it is more than reasonable to assume that there are also technical, formal, and iconographical characteristics shared by the products of both of these realms of the poet-artist's activities. For the very first time, Essick's catalogue allows for a systematic investigation of such cross-currents. Also, it seems more than likely that, much as Blake's imagery would have absorbed a considerable number of motifs from his commercial engravings after the designs of others (and the entries in the catalogue under review are full of suggestive comparisons between the book illustrations and Blake's other works), so his ideas about the generic functioning of printed images would have been shaped in part by his work as a reproductive engraver. For example, the peculiarities in the production and "marketing" of Blake's illuminated books are, I think, best understood if seen in connection with that of the engraved galleries of pictures rather than that of late eighteenth-century books of poetry.³

² In his introductory study, Essick comments on the "crucial financial support for Blake's first efforts in relief etching" (7) that may have been provided by the fee the engraver had received for the large plate after Hogarth (#XX), first published in 1788.

³ Similar observations and closely related matters are also discussed in detail in Joseph Viscomi's *Blake and the Idea of the Book* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1993).

In 1987-88, the Huntington Library and Art Gallery presented an exhibition devoted to *William Blake and His Contemporaries and Followers*. The works on show had been selected "from the Collection of Robert N. Essick," arguably the finest and, in any case, for the scholar the most interesting collection of Blake's works currently in private hands. In the introduction to the exhibition catalogue, the collector and author of *Blake's Commercial Book Illustrations* (hereafter abbreviated as *CBI*) gave a brief account of "the shape of [his] Blake collection and the principles by which it was assembled." While still "a graduate student of English literature in the late sixties," Essick set for himself "the modest goal of acquiring the standard texts and works of criticism on William Blake's poetry and art as a reference library to assist [his] own early attempts at becoming a scholar." He unquestionably succeeded, and any subscriber to *Blake* is certainly well aware of his prolific output of books and articles devoted to the study of Blake and his contemporaries.

As a collector Essick was soon to find that "no one bitten by the bibliomania bug can limit himself to merely practical needs." Because availability and cost "are important in any collecting," he decided "in the early seventies, to acquire books containing Blake's commercial illustrations—the one area of his activities as an artist and craftsman not already well mined by dealers and collectors. Thus, almost by default," the author of *CBI* has been able to bring together (and only *inter alia*, to be sure) what now probably is "the largest collection of editions containing Blake's engravings (the British Library is second)."⁴ At the same time, and starting with his groundbreaking study of the iconography of graphic styles in "Blake and the Traditions of Reproductive Engraving,"⁵ the scholar-collector began to demonstrate the "research interest" of the materials he collected. Following the example of the late Sir Geoffrey Keynes, Essick developed "the habit of combining scholarship and collecting,"⁶ a habit from which all read-

ers of his book on Blake's printmaking processes, of his catalogue raisonné of Blake's separate plates, and now of *CBI* may profit enormously.⁷

This study of Blake's commercial engravings begins with Essick's account of the relationship between the new catalogue and some earlier surveys of some of the same material, especially the extant two of the three volumes planned as a bibliographical and chalcographical account of *William Blake: Book Illustrator*. These he himself coauthored with Roger R. Easson, and the two volumes were published in 1972 and 1979. "The present catalogue is not a revision of Easson and Essick, but it is intended to replace the print catalogue and reproductions in the second volume and treat most of the materials intended for the absent third" (v). The preface then outlines the purpose of *CBI*:

I have taken as my first responsibility the recording of facts about Blake's reproductive book illustrations—their sizes, inscriptions, progressive states, locations of preliminary drawings, and the quotation or summary of all documents relating to their production. I have supplemented this basic information with discussions of graphic techniques and styles, Blake's revisions of preliminary designs, his borrowings of motifs for his own compositions, the relationships of illustrations with their texts, and the role major commissions played in Blake's life and the shaping of his ideas. (v)

The second part of the book's preface details "a few guidelines" (vi) to the use of the catalogue entries. It establishes the meaning of certain technical terms in Essick's text, introduces the conventions employed in the measurements of prints, the recording of signatures, titles, and imprints, and explains the author's use of cross-references and the coverage of the index.

Like the catalogue entries themselves, Essick's introductory study of "Blake's Reproductive Book Illustrations" is organized chronologically, following Blake's career as a professional reproductive engraver from the years of his apprenticeship to Basire up to his late book illustrations after Flaxman. This arrangement not only offers a chance to view the plates Blake executed for the book publishers in historical perspective, it also leaves enough room for the author's interpolation of a systematic discussion of some key issues con-

⁴ Robert N. Essick, "Introduction," *William Blake and His Contemporaries and Followers: Selected Works from the Collection of Robert N. Essick*, exh. cat. (San Marino, CA: Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1987) 3.

⁵ See *Blake Studies* 5.1 (1972): 59-103. Similarly important essays that are of relevance in the present context are Essick's "William Blake, William Hamilton, and the Materials of Graphic Meaning," *ELH* 52 (1985): 833-72, and his "[Blake and the Profession of Printmaking]," in Gert Schiff, et al., *William Blake*, exh. cat. (Tokyo, Jap.: Nihon Keizai Shimbun, for the National Museum of Western Art, 1990) 23-32 [in Japanese].

⁶ See Essick 1987 (n. 4) 6.

⁷ See Robert N. Essick, *William Blake, Printmaker* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1980) and *The Separate Plates of William Blake: A Catalogue* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1983).

nected with the artist's commercial engravings. Thus, it allows Essick to define clearly what he thinks is the "multifaceted importance" of Blake's work as a reproductive engraver and to describe "the multiple interactions between art and commerce, graphic execution and literary conception, that shaped Blake's life and works" (1, 15).

As a synopsis, or as the *summa*, of many of his earlier studies of Blake's printmaking processes, Essick's introduction by necessity returns to some of the subjects he has previously treated in his publications. However, the new vantage-point supplied by the book illustrations results in a considerable shift of focus. Essick provides an account of the "characteristics of Basire's shop practices [which] influenced Blake's later career and aesthetic concepts" (2; see also 6), and he explains "the basic systems for the production of intaglio copperplate book illustrations in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" (2), stressing the decisive role played by the publisher in these systems (see 2-3). He then briefly glances at the more important of the techniques that were employed in the engraver's workshop, and next turns to the economics of the trade in general and, in particular, to the fees paid to the copy engravers (see 3-4). One learns of the division of labor between the engraver of the pictorial image, the professional writing engraver and the copperplate printer (see 4-5). The function of working proofs and of published proofs in pre-publication states is explained, as is the reason for the succession of the various published states of a copperplate engraving (see 3 and 5).

At this point, a less restricted discussion of some of the problems of attribution that are involved might have been in place. In discriminating between a first and a second state of any of Blake's separate plates one takes it for granted—usually without a moment's hesitation—that it was no one other than the *peintre-graveur* himself who was responsible for the "purposeful changes . . . on the copperplate" (5n7) which transformed the earlier into the later state. In this respect, there is no difference whatsoever between the chalcographical examination of the three states of "The Accusers of Theft Adultery Murder" (1793-c. 1810 or later), of the five states of "Chaucers Canterbury Pilgrims" (1810-c. 1823 or later),⁸ or of the dramatic changes between the first and the eighth state of Rembrandt's "Christ Presented to the People"

(dated 1655 in its seventh state).⁹ But with an engraving that serves as a book illustration, and with the plate usually owned by the publisher, not the engraver (see 4), the situation is slightly different. Can the original engraver be identified with the engraver who reworks a plate for use in a later edition? Or does one have to speculate that at least occasionally a publisher would employ someone else to restore a set of worn copperplates?

Essick tells his readers this much: "It seems to have been common practice to hire the original engraver to rework plates whenever possible, but this of course would become increasingly less likely as the time since first execution lengthened" (5). He thus hints at the possibility that some of the later states of Blake's commercial book illustrations which are recorded in his catalogue may in fact have to be attributed to anonymous journeyman engravers, yet he does not enlarge on the subject. If, however, one thinks of the 1811 and 1818 editions of Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*, published by C. Cooke and T. Kelly respectively and illustrated with impressions from the plates Blake had engraved for *The Novelist's Magazine* (#X1[6-8], 32-33), one might feel tempted to suspect that the engravings Blake did for Harrison & Co. in 1783 have been "substantially reworked" (32) for their third and fourth states by some other engraver(s). The reworked states recorded for Blake's plates in later issues of Wedgwood's catalogue of earthenware and porcelain (#L) present another, even more obvious case in point. At the same time, Blake may himself have been employed occasionally to rework plates that had originally been engraved by one of his colleagues, and he may thus have added to his income. Here then is a field that might offer some interesting research opportunities, though since it has not been singled out as particularly promising by Essick, the evidence available from publishers' account books and other period documents may well be all too scanty to allow for convincing results.

While the variety of stylistic modes of representation available to the artist-artisan are of course well-characterized in the introduction, Essick also underscores the fact that "reproductive engraving was dependent upon a rigorous division of labour and the subordination of individual expression to uniformity and repeatability" (5). This phenomenon and its effects are described by reference to Blake's early commissions and his "graphic involvement

⁸ See Essick 1983 (n. 7) 30-37 (#VIII) and 61-89 (#XVI).

⁹ For a descriptive analysis of this etching (B. 76) and its states see, e.g., Christopher White, *Rembrandt as an Etcher: A Study of the Artist at Work* (London: A. Zwemmer, 1969) i: 87-92.

with Stothard" (6) and with the William Walker circle of engravers working after Stothard's designs in the 1780s and 1790s. The problems encountered when attempting to distinguish the graphic vocabulary and syntax used by James Heath in one of his plates after Stothard from that employed by Blake in a reproduction of another of the same artist's designs signify "the inevitable interweaving of economic exigencies and aesthetic norms that shaped eighteenth-century reproductive graphics" (6). At the same time, such pertinent observations help the reader to understand why the attribution of an unsigned book illustration to Blake (or any other of his colleagues) can seldom be based entirely on stylistic considerations.¹⁰

The introductory study to the catalogue also pays considerable attention to the examination of some representative working relations between Blake and one of his publishers, with an author of some of the texts he engraved for, and with two of his fellow artists whose designs he translated onto copperplates. In fairly detailed discussions, one learns of Blake's business relationships with Joseph Johnson and with Henry Fuseli as one of Johnson's favorite illustrators (see 7-9),¹¹ with William Hayley (see 9-11), and with John Flaxman (see 11-12). Essick's keen and experienced eyes enable him to observe how, in Blake's plates for Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories*, the "graphic syntax . . . begins to emerge above the threshold of the visual apprehension and become self-referential. As we view such images, we are given both the illusion of three-dimensional objects in space and an awareness of the medium in which that illusion is created." This in turn allows for a demonstration of "how experiments in original graphics influenced reproductive styles" (8)—and *vice versa*. The introduction offers many similarly stimulating comments, for example

¹⁰ See Essick's discussion of this matter in the book's two appendices (especially 115-17 [#C] and 121).

¹¹ Following a suggestion first made by the late Ruthven Todd, Essick had previously discussed the case of Blake's engravings after Fuseli—and what there appears to be "an unusual amount of responsibility for the completion of the design, not merely its translation to copper" (7)—in Essick 1980 (n. 7) 51-52. While I am still not entirely convinced of this hypothesis (especially because Fuseli is known to have been hard for any other reproductive engraver to satisfy), I wish to stress that *CBI* is characterized by an exemplary scholarly open-mindedness that invites, rather than suffocates, such differences of opinion. Essick himself points out alternatives to his preferred reading of the evidence, and in a proviso he alerts his readers to the possibility that here as elsewhere Blake may have "worked from a far more detailed preliminary drawing, of the type conventionally supplied by an artist to a copy engraver" (#XVIII, 41).

on "the conceptual implications of stippled lines" (12) as used in Blake's engravings after Flaxman's Hesiod compositions, before Essick summarizes the influence of Blake's career as a copy engraver on the formation of those of the artist's ideas that were given expression in his "more private and more important endeavours" (13).

At the end of his introductory study Essick turns to the research opportunities offered by the material described in his catalogue. Discussing "the conventions of text-design relationships" of Blake's times, and drawing on examples from Blake's engravings after Stothard, Fuseli, and his own inventions, Essick finds that ultimately what Blake learned "from his contemporaries about illustrative strategies by engraving their work, and the way in which he both incorporates and diverges from their practices, are more important than his occasional borrowings of specific motifs from their designs" (15).¹² While he describes many of these "occasional borrowings" in the catalogue entries, Essick ends this study with a brief discussion of the possibility that "the texts for which Blake engraved plates [might] have been read by him and [thus might have] influenced his ideas" (15).

Seen as a whole, the introduction successfully documents the "multifaceted" interdependence of "original" art and "reproductive" engraving in Blake's career; and, at the very same time, it effectively clears away the ignorance of those who still do not want to see to what an extent the profession of the commercial reproductive engraver actually "established Blake's social position for the majority of his contemporaries, placing him in the class of urban artisans" (1), a social affiliation that is of major importance for a proper understanding of Blake's peculiar stance in a variety of discourse-systems of his times. With the author, one hopes that in the interpretation of Blake's works, such insights regarding the manifold impact Blake's "low" art had on the "grand style" of his "high" art productions will now be more generally put into action. *CBI* supplies all the information necessary in order to do so.

In the catalogue itself (19-114), each entry begins with a short-title reference to the book in which Blake's commercial engravings can be found and, wherever that is called for, to its various printings and editions. A typical entry reports in an intro-

¹² For a more detailed discussion of these questions see Essick's recent study of "Visual/Verbal Relationships in Book Illustration," *British Art 1740-1820: Essays in Honor of Robert R. Wark*, ed. Guillard Sutherland (San Marino, CA: Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1992) 169-204.

ductory note the total number of illustrations included in the respective book, Blake's own contributions and, if necessary, the history of their attribution to the poet-artist (see, e.g., #XXIII), and the designer(s) of the plates engraved by Blake; in addition, it supplies information regarding preliminary sketches and preparatory drawings for the engravings whenever the current whereabouts of these are known, working proofs and proofs before (some or all) letters, documents relating to the commission, the author of the text, its publisher(s), and reviews that make mention of the plates discussed.¹³ This is followed by the catalogue proper of the book's prints with documentation of the measurements, all the inscriptions, the sequence of the published states, and then a generally short annotation commenting on iconography, related drawings, and the possible significance of motifs that Blake may have borrowed for his "original" inventions. A list of the earlier secondary literature on Blake's engravings in the book catalogued marks the end of each main entry.

In order to check the accuracy of Essick's measurements, of his transcriptions of signatures, titles, and imprints, and of the descriptive commentaries on the images themselves, I reexamined impressions from 165 of the 271 engraved plates that are detailed under the 53 main entries in the catalogue. Though I was trying hard to find some substantial errors in Essick's descriptions of the prints, the results of the endeavor cannot be summarized in any other way than by stating that this catalogue raisonné deserves the highest possible praise for its reliability. Essick's descriptive prose is precise—for example, he discriminates between a "proof before letters" and a "proof before signatures" (#XVI, 38)—unimpassioned, and admirably economical. Though there is always some general reference to the graphic mode employed by the artist-artisan in a given engraving (such as "outline" or "stipple"), Essick describes the particulars of the hatching patterns, of burnishing and the like only where there is the need to distinguish a second or third state from the first published version that is illustrated. This need, however, exists in many more cases than may have been expected, largely

¹³ Where appropriate, and arguing from the perspective offered by only one of the books illustrated, Essick has inserted in the entries a few remarks that also apply to more general issues. E.g., his effort to prevent readers from overinterpreting the "differences between Blake's plates and their prototypes" is strongly in evidence if the next sentence emphasizes that some of "the plates by other engravers show an equal range of variation from their sources" (62).

because the author has discovered numerous previously unrecorded states of Blake's plates. For example, even where in 1979 Eason and Essick had already recorded no less than three states for Blake's large plate after Hogarth's "Beggar's Opera" painting, the 1991 publication more than doubles this with a list of no fewer than seven states (see #XX, 43); and where one may have expected two states at most for the two 1803 printings of Hayley's *The Life, and Posthumous Writings, of William Cowper*, Essick confronts his readers with no less than four published states of Blake's "Weather-House" engraving (#XLIV[4], 88-89).

In 1979 Eason and Essick still included some of the plates in Bryant's *New System*, in Ayloffe's *Ancient Monuments*, and in Gough's *Sepulchral Monuments* in the main sequence of their catalogue of the commercial book illustrations attributed to Blake as the engraver. In the present publication Essick has decided in favor of a more cautious approach to "Blake's Apprentice Engravings." Lacking a "solid basis for attribution" (117), these plates have now been relegated in their entirety to the first of Essick's appendices (see 115-20). This may not be pleasing, and yet it will be hard to contradict the author's statement that "for published engravings, we can hardly expect the work of an apprentice to diverge in any clear way from the house style taught by his master" (115).¹⁴ In a second appendix (see 121-27) Essick presents a list of 37 "False and Conjectural Attributions." Whereas some of the plates that during the 1770s came from the workshop of James Basire may or may not have been engraved by Blake under the supervision of his master, most of the engravings referred to in Appendix ii were clearly executed by someone other than the poet-artist. A few of these more than "doubtful" ascriptions date back to the nineteenth century, but Essick's list ought to prevent dealers and curators from perpetuating them "innocently" (121) in the future.

Though mostly consisting of proper names, the index (see 129-38) seems to be perfectly sufficient for all reference purposes. It is particularly welcome (and entirely in keeping with the author's

¹⁴ The case of Blake's apprentice engravings is, in this respect, similar to the problems of attribution presented by many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century "academies," drawings from the antique or from life that were executed at the Royal Academy Schools. The attribution of such academical studies to William Blake, his brother, or any other pupil at the Academy Schools should, I think, be treated with the same exemplary reservation that Essick suggests for the attribution of engravings from the Basire workshop to Blake or any of his fellow apprentices.

approach to his material) that besides the names of the artists and authors among Blake's contemporaries, and those of the "owners, past and present, of drawings and pre-publication proofs" (vi), the index includes the names of the publishers of the books illustrated. It thus allows readers to search the catalogue for references to Blake's business connections with, say, the firm of Harrison & Co. There are few misprints in this book, and scarcely any of them merit ceremonious correction; those I have spotted (such as the typos in the transcription of a German title on page 50) in no way impair the intelligibility of the text (see the appendix, below).

The author and his publisher are also to be congratulated on the near-300 reproductions which illustrate all the engravings discussed as well as some of the preliminary drawings from which Blake worked. Not only do these "Figures" make it easy to use the book as a visual encyclopaedia of Blake's commercial book illustrations—and to follow some of the lines for future investigations that are suggested by Essick's catalogue and study—; they are also of the highest possible quality and as such successfully "replace" (v) the sadly inadequate reproductions in volume 2 of *William Blake: Book Illustrator*. To give an idea just how good the reproductions are, it seems sufficient to refer to the author's own caveat concerning a "very small signature" which he thought would "probably not [be] visible in the reproduction" (#XIX[1], 42). Turning to figure 61, one finds that it actually is visible, regardless of Essick's concern.

No doubt, as a work of reference this catalogue raisonné will unquestionably (and for a long time to come) function as the definite and standard source of information on Blake's reproductive book engravings. If this is high praise, it still is not enough for the book under review. Though definitive in the material descriptions of Blake's copy engravings, Essick has succeeded not in closing down his subject, but in efficiently opening up a new field of investigation. While answering almost any question of interest to the collector, *CBI* also intriguingly challenges Blake scholarship with a new set of questions that deserve to be examined in greater detail. For all these reasons, the acquisition of this volume can only be highly recommended. Serious students as well as all collectors of Blake's works will want to have a copy ready at hand, if not on their own shelves then at least on those of their preferred research library.

In trying to think of any negative aspect of the publication of *CBI*, only one thing comes to mind. Besides the collectors and scholars that are inter-

ested in a fuller understanding of Blake's work, there are also the dealers and auctioneers whose interest in Blake is likely to be informed primarily by economic considerations. With its easily accessible information on all the various states of Blake's reproductive engravings and with its references to particularly scarce printings of some of these plates, Essick's catalogue will probably cause a further increase in the prices asked for the books illustrated with the artist-poet's commercial engravings. Yet this is in the nature of the production of any catalogue raisonné and none of the author's fault. Therefore, even its possibly disastrous effect on the market for Blake's lesser productions as a graphic artist can in no way detract from the gratitude we owe the author for sharing his intimate knowledge of the subject. In any case, there can be little doubt about the justice of Essick's own claim that the material presented in *CBI*, "along with the introductory survey of Blake's career as a commercial book engraver and research opportunities in the field, gives this volume a larger interpretive and critical dimension than that offered by most print catalogues" (v-vi).

Appendix

Robert Essick has himself gathered some "substantive additions or corrections" to *Blake's Commercial Book Illustrations* in the appendices published with his 1990 and 1991 "Marketplace" reports.¹⁵ The following list—in addition to a couple of mostly negligible corrections of the few typographical errors—offers a number of supplementary observations pertaining to individual entries in the catalogue; however, none of these *addenda et corrigenda* claim to be of a "substantive" nature.

pp. 4 and 137: for "William Sharpe" read "William Sharp"; the spelling of the engraver's name is not the same as that of the publisher, John Sharpe.

p. 13n28: for "Joachim Moller" read "Joachim Möller" (which, in most library catalogues, will be translated as "Moeller").

p. 14n29: I entirely agree with Essick's rebuke to Hodnett's criticisms concerning Fuseli's illustrations for Chalmers's 1805 edition of *The Plays of Shakspeare*; however, readers who are interested in Hodnett's arguments will want to examine "The Fuseli Shakespeare (1805)," a chapter in Edward Hodnett, *Image and Text: Studies in the Illustration*

¹⁵ See the "Appendix: New Information on Blake's Engravings" in Robert N. Essick, "Blake in the Marketplace," *Blake* 24 (1990-91): 141; and 25 (1991-92): 164-67.

tion of English Literature (London: Scolar P, 1982) 69-76, rather than the potted version contained in the same author's *Five Centuries of English Book Illustration* that is cited by Essick.

p. 25: Essick's catalogue entries discuss many of Blake's possible borrowings of specific motifs from the book illustrations he was commissioned to engrave. Looking at #V(3) one feels tempted to suggest an additional, non-iconographic connection between Blake's work as a professional "copy" engraver and the compositional treatment of his own, "original" designs. Here, in Conrad Martin [?] Metz's design for "The Fugitive Shechemites" (Fig. 14) the relation between the actual two-dimensional picture plane and the illusion of pictorial space is, I think, reminiscent of the same relation in a considerable number of Blake's compositions that use the vertical axis for sequencing both narrative time and pictorial space (see, e.g., "The Descent of Man into the Vale of Death," the related plate among the *Grave* illustrations, or the "Epitome for James Hervey's *Meditations among the Tombs*").

p. 31: #XI(4), the plate after Stothard for *David Simple*, may have been the eidetic image at the back of Blake's mind when he was drawing the figure of the nurse for plate 2 of "A Cradle Song" in *Innocence*.

p. 42: commenting on #XIX(2), the plate after Rubens's "Democritus," Essick suggests that "Blake may have based his plate on the engraving of the portrait by Lucas Vorsterman"; there is nothing to be said against such a possibility, and yet it seems more likely to me that (in Blake's case just as elsewhere) the full-page illustrations in the earlier German and French editions of Lavater's *Essays* served as models for the British engravers.

p. 48: Essick's measurements for #XXI(11) read "8.7 x 10.6 cm."; this appears to be a typo for "8.7 x 16.6 cm."

p. 50: capitalize "Zeichnungen," and read "gestochen" for "gestocken" in the German title of Chodowiecki's illustrations to Salzmann's *Elementarbuch*.

p. 54: capitalize "Years" in the citation of the title inscription for #XXIII(17); this minor change is certainly open to debate, but compare "Want" in the title quoted for #XXIII(20).

p. 60: in the reference to Windle's 1988 Wollstonecraft bibliography, read "no. 17" for "no. 3" (the latter is Windle's entry for *Original Stories*).

p. 66: in the signatures of the two plates that were engraved by Blake and that are here catalogued as #XXX(1-2), a "Xaverius Della Rosa" is credited as the artist who "evidently made [the] drawings of

[the] statues" in Verona. Though Essick could "find no information" about this draughtsman, the latter is probably to be identified with the Veronese painter and etcher Saverio Dalla Rosa (1745-1821). Dalla Rosa is not a complete unknown in the history of Italian eighteenth-century art and art theory, and a brief biographical account is easily accessible in volume 28 of the *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (ed. Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker).

p. 69: for the reference to "(Bentley 1969, p. 12)" read "(. . . , p. 56 n. 1)."

p. 75: in his entry for Blake's engraved portrait of "The Late Mr. Wright of Derby," Essick states that he has "not been able to trace the drawing, painting, or print on which Blake's plate is based." It seems very likely, though, that Blake's model was—a copy of or the original drawing for?—a drypoint etching, presumably executed by the painter himself. This scarce print, a copy of which was in the collection of George Cumberland, is included in Tim Clayton's "Catalogue of the Engraved Works of Joseph Wright of Derby."¹⁶

p. 83: in the title quoted for #XLII (as well as in the index [137]) read "George Steevens" for "George Stevens." The measurements for #XLII(1) in *CBI* read "16.5 x 25.5 cm." On my ruler, however, I read "16.5 (or 16.6) x 23.5 cm.," a discrepancy that is too large to be accounted for by paper shrinkage and similar effects.

p. 84: similarly, the measurements cited by Essick for #XLII(2) read "10 x 7.9 cm.," whereas I found the actual height of the image in this plate to be 10.5 cm.

p. 85: the publishers' names in the imprint for #XLIII(4) have been transcribed as "Cadell & Davies' Strand," and, in fact, this is what the letters look like at first sight. However, if one compares the "s" in "Davies" in this engraving with the same letter in the same position in #XLIII(1-3 and 6) or with Blake's scratched inscriptions in other plates of the Felpham period such as the "Weather-House" tailpiece for Hayley's *Life of Cowper* (#XLIV[4]), it becomes clear, I think, that the small vertical stroke at the end of "Davies" in the fourth plate Blake executed for the 1803 edition of Hayley's *Triumphs of Temper* was, at the very least, not intended to be read as an apostrophe, but simply to be part of the lower case letter "s." If one insists on reading "Davies" in the imprint for #XLIII(4), then

¹⁶ See Judy Egerton, et al., *Wright of Derby*, exh. cat. (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1990) 254 (#P38). The print is reproduced and Blake's copy engraving is mentioned by Clayton.

one may as well read "Caclell" for "Cadell" in #XXXIX(3).

p. 87: for "D. Heins, . . . active . . . c. 1725-56" read "Dirck [John Theodore] Heins, Sr. (1697-1756)."¹⁷

p. 88: following ". . . Church Yard," insert a period at the end of the imprint line that is quoted for #XLIV(4).

p. 89: Essick refers to "an untraced drawing by Francis Stone (dates unknown)" as the model for #XLIV(5). The designer was probably Francis Stone (1775-1834), an architect, draughtsman and lithographer active in Norwich.¹⁸ The width of the engraving after Flaxman recorded as #XLIV(6) is, including the vertical shading lines, nearer to 15.0 cm. than to Essick's "14.5 cm."

p. 104: for "vials," read "Justice's vial, pl. 13" in the entry for #LI(16).

p. 105: from Essick's preface readers learn that measurements are supplied according to art historical conventions, i.e., "height followed by width," and "are of the pictorial image exclusive of frames, borders, and inscriptions unless noted otherwise" (vi). In theory this method of reference may seem both simple and unequivocal enough; in practice, at least occasionally, even measurements involve an act of interpretation and may therefore cause some vexation.¹⁹ Here is an appropriate example. The measurements Essick supplies for #LI(20), "15.3 x 23.9 cm.," are exactly the same as my own, if, that is, one measures the framing lines of the pictorial image on the right and at the top. If, however, one measures the same engraving on the left and at the bottom framing line, one ends up with only "15.1 x 23.4 cm." Similar discrepancies between left and right as well as top and bottom measurements can be observed in many other plates (see, e.g., #LI[27 or 30]), and ideally the author would have told his readers precisely *where* the height and width of the printed images were measured. And yet this may well be asking too much. Essick, no doubt, is well aware of such possible discrepancies. However, with engravings that have been bound in a book it is often difficult to measure at the inner margin (which, in approximately 50% of all cases) may happen to be the margin that the rule would call for. Therefore, users of *CBI* (as

in the case of any other print catalogue I have used extensively) will have to live with a few of these occasionally irritating measurements. I cannot possibly end this note, however, without emphasizing that I was as much impressed by the accuracy of the measurements cited in *CBI* as by all the other data supplied for each print. As a reviewer I assumed an obligation to search *CBI* for factual mistakes of this kind; after having measured for myself more than 60% of the 271 prints described in the new catalogue, I can only say that I was thoroughly frustrated in this attempt.

p. 123: at the end of the entry for #11 in the book's second appendix read "James Neagle" instead of "John Neagle." I return to this correction, previously noted in Essick's own "New Information on Blake's Engravings,"²⁰ merely in order to point out that the decisive evidence for the correct version of Neagle's Christian name comes neither from the *DNB* nor any other standard reference work.²¹ Rather, such evidence is provided by the signatures on quite a few of the plates executed by this engraver. Many of Neagle's engravings have been signed with only the artist's second name, or as engraved by "J. Neagle." However, there are also quite a few of his plates with a "Ja^s. Neagle" inscription, and I know of at least one plate that is signed by "James Neagle," whereas I have never seen a single plate the execution of which has been attributed by the artist himself or by some writing engraver to a "John Neagle."

²⁰ See *Blake* 25 (1991-92): 167.

²¹ However, and thinking of printed references, one may note that the engraver's name is also cited as "James Neagle" in the *Memoirs and Recollections of the Late Abraham Raimbach, Esq., Engraver*, ed. M. T. S. Raimbach (London: Frederick Shoberl, 1843) 36n57.

¹⁷ See Ellis Waterhouse, *The Dictionary of British 18th Century Painters in Oils and Crayons* (Woodbridge, Suff.: Antique Collectors' Club, 1981) 167.

¹⁸ See Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840* (London: John Murray, 1978) 785.

¹⁹ This is particularly true, and very obviously so, where an oval engraving or an irregularly shaped pictorial image has to be measured.