

Reading *Jerusalem*: The Horizon of Expectations

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1 **D**ESPITE Blake’s belief that *Jerusalem* fulfilled its purpose, its readers have found it puzzling, if not incomprehensible.¹ This disparity between his intention and their

1. In a letter to George Cumberland (12 April 1827), Blake says he considers *Jerusalem* to be “Finishd” (E 784). (All Blake citations are to the Erdman edition, abbreviated E; unless indicated otherwise, all Blake quotations are from *Jerusalem*.) In “*Jerusalem* and Blake’s Final Works,” Essick initiates twenty-first-century criticism with the observation, “To plunge into *Jerusalem* is to confront a profoundly unsettling experience” (251). More recently, the focus has shifted from Blake’s intention to reader’s response. In the most extensive studies, Yoder’s *The Narrative Structure of William Blake’s Poem Jerusalem* approaches the poem “as a combination of narrative and drama” (15), while Sklar’s *Blake’s Jerusalem as Visionary Theatre* interprets it as “visionary theatre” (3). Both provide good surveys of the earlier critical context (Yoder 4-21, Sklar 8-15). It should be noted that while Essick,

response reflects a hermeneutical dysfunction: attempts to reconcile the conventional horizon of expectations with the prophecy have proved unsuccessful. Although the tendency has been to blame Blake for not conforming to his audience’s preconceptions, the opposite is the case: their horizon of expectations is predicated on two generally unexamined, inappropriate premises. First, despite Blake’s assertion that he created his own system, readers have consistently approached *Jerusalem* as though it were predicated on the conventional Western exoteric myth, which is polarized around the duality of good and evil. The second assumption is that the myth remains consistent throughout Blake’s corpus, a supposition that has led to a kind of anachronism in which interpretations of earlier works have been imposed on texts written sometimes decades later, or, conversely, in which later works have been used to back-read earlier texts. These two assumptions constitute the primary obstacles to understanding *Jerusalem*.

- 2 As a corrective, this paper seeks to generate an alternative horizon of expectations, predicated on an esoteric, as opposed to exoteric, approach.² This is not an arbitrary choice; as I demonstrate in my companion volumes “*Glorious incomprehensible*”: *The Development of Blake’s Kabbalistic Language* and “*Wonders Divine*”: *The Development of Blake’s Kabbalistic Myth*, Blake gradually incorporated aspects of the kabbalistic attitude toward language and elements of the kabbalistic myth into his composite art, culminating in *Jerusalem*.³ In those studies, I explored what Blake had done; here, I consider how and why he did it. Based on and designed only for *Jerusalem*, the following horizon of expectations is meant to provide the foundation for more coherent readings of Blake’s final prophecy.
- 3 Reduced to the basics, narrative revolves around four elements: 1) purpose; 2) point of view; 3) myth; and 4) theme. Governing all choices is purpose. Unlike conventional literature, which is said either to imitate an action or to express

Yoder, Sklar, and I frequently arrive at the same conclusions, our assumptions and procedures differ.

2. For purposes of clarity, I oversimplify “esoteric” to signify that which is limited to a privileged inner circle, and “exoteric” that which is designed for public consumption. For a historical overview, see Hanegraaff, “Esotericism.” von Stuckrad discusses the intellectual implications in “Conceptualizing the Study of Esoteric Discourse,” the third chapter of *Locations of Knowledge in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (43-64). Finally, I follow Frye’s lead in *Anatomy of Criticism* (133) and merge classical and Christian archetypes into an amalgamated Western myth, which I describe with the phrase “exoteric Christian.”

3. The historical, cultural, and textual justifications for most of my assertions can be found in these two books. Rather than repeat myself, I include parenthetical references to indicate where more information is located, using the abbreviations *GI* for “*Glorious incomprehensible*” and *WD* for “*Wonders Divine*.”

an emotion, the esoteric text is intended to elevate consciousness so that readers can experience vision for themselves. This alternative purpose yields an entirely new approach to point of view. As the source of the narrative, point of view is usually interpreted in terms of a consolidated ego whose knowledge, bias, and psychological state all determine how the story is told. The esoteric narrator, in contrast, situates himself as a mediating secretary, attempting to annihilate the selfhood so that he can translate the divine vision into comprehensible language, as structured by the culture's dominating myth. In the West, exoteric Christianity provides the basis for interpreting the setting, characters, and plot sequence. Through the esoteric myth, Blake replaces the corporeal world of time and space with the fourfold kabbalistic cosmos. Characters, no longer lining up along the moral axis of good and evil, aggregate around the three main figures: Jerusalem, the eponymous heroine; Los, the macrocosm; and Albion, the microcosm. Finally, the plot conforms to the cycle of exile and return. Together, these formal elements produce an allegory articulating *Jerusalem's* theme, the *prisca theologia*: belief that there existed a pure form of Christianity historically suppressed by the organized church. Obviously heretical, the theme helps explain why Blake felt the need for an esoteric—that is, private—as opposed to an exoteric—public—horizon of expectations.

I. Purpose

- 4 The purpose of *Jerusalem* is transformative (*GI* 27-33, 151-63). Basic communication, though necessary, is self-limiting, implying that anything beyond its bounds is irrelevant, if not nonexistent. The fundamental flaw in empirical logic is its failure to acknowledge that the supposedly objective mode of thought is essentially subjective: "If Perceptive Organs vary: Objects of Perception seem to vary: / If the Perceptive Organs close: their Objects seem to close also" (30 [34].55-56, E 177). Basically, as Los points out, it is impossible for the physical senses to perceive anything not amenable to the physical senses. This does not mean that nothing else can exist, only that empiricism is incapable of processing anything beyond its circumscribed capabilities.
- 5 *Jerusalem* encourages the development of what Blake had earlier called the "Poetic Genius," the innate gnostic extrarational faculty that apprehends spiritual realms beyond the range of empiricism.⁴ On plate 4, Albion initiates the crisis when, choosing demonstration over faith, he denies

4. Though apparently unaware of scholarship on the subject, Sklar, in describing the "visionary theatre" (3), and Yoder, in explaining the "rhetoric of discontinuity" (*The Narrative Structure* 97), both approximate the transformative mode of thought.

the possibility of alternative modes of knowing. The ensuing prophecy depicts how to transgress those newly imposed boundaries, by recognizing and developing the gnostic faculty, identified as "a Gate of precious stones and gold / Seen only by Emanations, by vegetations viewless" (34 [38].55-56, E 181). While it still exists—"There is a Grain of Sand in Lambeth that Satan cannot find"—that faculty has been diminished, if not obscured, by organized religion: "But should the Watch Fiends find it, they would call it Sin / And lay its Heavens & their inhabitants in blood of punishment" (37 [41].15, 19-20, E 183). Although condemned, the gnostic faculty, as Los realizes at the climax of chapter 4, endows man with the ability to apprehend higher spiritual realms: "When in Eternity Man converses with Man they enter / Into each others Bosom (which are Universes of delight)" (88.3-4, E 246). Finally, at the end of the prophecy, everyone "conversed together in Visionary forms dramatic" (98.28, E 257).⁵

- 6 In order to fulfill his purpose of enabling his audience to emulate Los's example, Blake developed a radical form of defamiliarization. More than simply presenting the ordinary in an extraordinary manner, he shatters the expected relationships among the various formal and thematic elements of narrative by substituting esoteric for exoteric archetypes. Preventing the audience from automatically processing the content, Blake encourages them, instead, to reflect on the mode of presentation, so that they can then reconnect with their own innate gnostic faculties. In this way, he accomplishes his "great task! / To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes / Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought: into Eternity" (5.17-19, E 147).

II. Point of View

- 7 Interpretation hinges on point of view, the consciousness through which a narrative is filtered. In the kabbalistic system, there is a hierarchy of four modes of interpretation—literal, allegorical, moral, and mystical:

[Literal], the "simple" interpretation of the Scriptures, approaching it by all the ways available to elementary reasoning; [allegorical], "allusion" to the many meanings hidden in every phrase, every letter, sign and point of the Torah; [moral], the "homiletic exposition" of doctrinal truths, including all possible interpretations of the Torah; [mystical], "mystery," initiation into ... the divine wisdom concealed in the Scriptures and called, insofar as it is a teaching, ... the esoteric "wisdom of the tradition." (Schaya 18)

5. Coming from an exoteric direction, Easson derives basically the same conclusion, that Blake "sacrificed those vegetable traits we call beauty for another order of beauty altogether" (327).

KABBALISTIC AND BLAKEAN CORRESPONDENCES

Kabbalistic Archetypes

Soul	Cosmic Plane	Level of Exegesis	Macrocosm	Microcosm	Divine Presence
			<i>Adam Kadmon</i>	<i>Adam Rishon</i>	<i>Shekhinah</i>
One Soul	Primordial Chaos		Ancient of Days		
Immortal Soul	Emanation	Mystical	Father	Head	
Spiritual Soul	Prototypical Creation	Moral	Mother	Heart	
Rational Soul	Archetypal Formation	Allegorical	Son	Loins	
Animal Soul	Fact	Literal	Daughter	Feet	

Blakean Equivalents

Zoa/Emanation	Realm	Point of View	Macrocosm	Microcosm	Divine Presence
			Urthona/Los	Albion	Jerusalem
			Urthona		
Urthona/ Enitharmon	Eden	Visualizer	Los	Head	
Luvah/ Vala	Beulah	<i>Blake</i>	Enitharmon	Heart	
Urizen/ Ahania	Ulro	Prose Speaker	Orc	Loins	
Tharmas/ Enion	Generation	Biographical Blake	Shadowy Female	Feet	

1. Correspondences in *Jerusalem*: kabbalistic archetypes and Blakean equivalents. Chart by the author.

The four levels of exegesis are manifested, in *Jerusalem*, by four distinct voices. The most basic, the biographical Blake, corresponds to the literal presentation of the vision. Next, the analytical voice of the prose plates provides the explanation for “every letter, sign and point” of the text. Third,

the recipient of the vision (the italicized *Blake*) conveys the moral implication of his vision (*GI* 156-59). Finally, what might be called the “visualizer” coordinates between the visual and verbal to convey the esoteric “wisdom” of *Jerusalem*.

8 The poem as a whole is grounded by references to the biographical Blake, who “write[s] in South Molton Street, what I both see and hear” (34 [38].42, E 180). Like a videographer, Blake introduces references to European and Middle-Eastern geography, recent history, current events, and personal experiences in order to correlate the spiritual vision with human experience in the corporeal world.⁶ In this way, he also exemplifies the individual who develops his gnostic faculty to apprehend higher spiritual matters. As the recipient of supernatural dictation, he encourages himself at the end of chapter 2: “Shudder not, but Write, & the hand of God will assist you! / Therefore I write” (47.17-18, E 196).

9 On the second level, the speaker of the prose plates explains how he has “produced a variety in every line, both of cadences & number of syllables. Every word and every letter is studied and put into its fit place” (pl. 3, E 146).⁷ Specifically, as prefaces, the four prose plates trace the history of religion, culminating in Blake’s version of true Christianity, the *prisca theologia*. The first, “To the Public,” introduces both the poem as a whole and chapter 1 in particular, placing *Jerusalem* within a nonsectarian Christian context: “I also hope the Reader will be with me, wholly One in Jesus our Lord, who is the God [of Fire] and Lord [of Love] to whom the Ancients look’d and saw his day afar off, with trembling & amazement” (pl. 3, E 145). Next, he appeals “To the Jews,” whom he approaches philo-Semiticly, like pre-Christians who share the same values: “If Humility is Christianity; you O Jews are the true Christians” (pl. 27, E 174).⁸ Third, “To the Deists” condemns natural religion for denying the visionary faculty: “But your Greek Philosophy (which is a remnant of Druidism) teaches that Man is Righteous in his Vegetated Spectre: an Opinion of fatal & accursed consequence to Man” (pl. 52, E 200). Finally, “To the Christians” advocates the true version of Christianity: “I know of no other Christianity and of no other Gospel than the liberty both of body & mind to exercise the Divine Arts of Imagination” (pl. 77, E 231).

10 The third level of exegesis is provided by the italicized *Blake*. Unlike the conventional creative consciousness, which either imitates an action or expresses an emotion, the narrator *Blake* assumes the role of secretary (*GI* 156-57):

6. As Clark notes, “*Jerusalem* should be read not as the culmination of a self-enclosed mythic system, aloof from and disdainful of contemporary history, but ... as a text specifically of the 1820s” (“*Jerusalem* as Imperial Prophecy” 181).

7. See my “Kabbalistic Reading of *Jerusalem*’s Prose Plates.”

8. Lincoln associates “To the Jews” with “the disingenuous ecumenical gestures of the evangelical mission to the Jews” (159).

This theme calls me in sleep night after night, & ev’ry morn
Awakes me at sun-rise, then I see the Saviour over me
Spreading his beams of love, & dictating the words of this mild song. (4.3-5, E 146)

He fulfills that function by subordinating his own ego. In praying to “Annihilate the Selfhood in me” (5.22, E 147), *Blake* seeks to make himself a transparent recipient of the divine vision: “So spake the Vision of Albion & in him so spake in my hearing / The Universal Father” (97.5-6, E 256).

11 Finally, the mystical level is provided by the visualizer, the implicit level of consciousness that coordinates the verbal and visual components into coherent image acts, the bimodal counterpart to the conventional speech act.⁹ Unlike the conventional relationship between a verbal text and its visual illustration, in *Jerusalem* the mediums are complementary in the sense that each fulfills its own function, the term visualizer referring to the level of consciousness that determines which to use and how to organize their interrelationship. From this perspective, each plate can be viewed as a discrete image act, while in its totality the succession of 100 plates reflects the choices made by the visualizer as the means of conveying “the divine wisdom concealed in” Blake’s vision.

III. Myth

12 Myth provides the structuring principle for intentionality, determining the kind of relationship the mind establishes with externality (*WD* 19, 177n1). Thus, myth controls thought, validating and prioritizing ideas in terms of how well they conform to preexisting archetypes. In the West, the exoteric Christian myth provides the basis for most of the fundamental elements of fiction, including setting, characterization, and plot. By the time Blake worked on *Jerusalem* he had substituted the Christianized form of Kabbalism for the exoteric myth, to liberate himself from the preexisting system that threatened to enslave him.¹⁰

9. The term image act was coined by Liza Bakewell, who argues that “images, rather than re-present reality and therefore be largely descriptive, are more accurately categorized as actions. ... Furthermore, a theory of speech, together with a theory of images, must also compose a significant part of a theory of human communication: communication as action” (22). Although Bakewell does not refer to Blake, her conclusion gestures toward his composite art: “Therefore, a proper theory of speech acts should incorporate images, in the same way that a proper theory of image acts should incorporate language. These two systems of communication, as different as they are in practice, as separate and apart they often seem, are, in fact, in cahoots” (30).

10. Adams intuits the influence of Western esotericism, inferring “some prior ur-myth,” though concluding, erroneously, “that myth never existed as such” (628).

Setting

- 13 Kabbalists view our world as one of a series of cycles of existence that originated in and will revert to a primordial chaos. Temporally, *Jerusalem* depicts a seven-thousand-year cycle that works itself out in the first six thousand—“And all that has existed in the space of six thousand years: / Permanent, & not lost” (13.59-60, E 157)—then reverts to the state of chaos in the last thousand, in preparation for the next cycle. Spacially, the cosmos consists of four planes, governed by four souls (see *illus. 1*; *WD 19*): 1) the highest, the World of Emanation, corresponding to the godhead’s original idea to create and governed by the Immortal Soul; 2) the World of Prototypical Creation, where the idea is actualized on the spiritual plane by the Spiritual Soul; 3) the World of Archetypal Formation, where the idea is given form by the Rational Soul; and 4) the World of Fact, where the form is implemented by the Animal Soul.
- 14 All four planes were originally intended to be purely spiritual; however, the primordial error resulted in a cosmic crisis. Although the highest world remained unaffected, it became isolated from the others, which collectively became known as the World of Separation. Each of these was lowered a degree, and the last, our World of Fact, became corporeal. Now the goal is to reconnect all four.
- 15 The souls were divided in a corresponding manner, the lower three being separated from the Immortal Soul. In the now-corporeal World of Fact, the Animal Soul is tasked with providing for physical subsistence. The Rational Soul is to organize the rules by which survival can be perpetuated. On the third level, the Spiritual Soul is to analyze the process by which the rules are organized so that the three of them can reunite with the Immortal Soul and all can merge with the undifferentiated reality of the One Soul. The impediment to the process is caused by the Rational Soul, which, misperceiving itself as the height of all things, prevents, rather than facilitates, reunification. Only when reason accepts its role as passive mediator, whose function is to facilitate apprehension of higher spiritual matters, can restoration occur. Blake explores the conflict among the souls in *The Four Zoas*; in *Jerusalem*, however, they are treated collectively (see *Zoas* in the section on *Characterization*).
- 16 The setting for *Jerusalem*, “the Sleep of Ulro” (4.1, E 146), is the cycle initiated when Albion “turns down the valleys dark” (4.22), thereby causing the cosmic crisis: “the ancient porches of Albion are / Darken’d! they are drawn thro’ unbounded space, scatter’d upon / The Void in incoherent despair!” (5.1-3, E 147). The cycle ends when “The Breath Divine went forth over the morning hills Albion rose” (95.5, E 255). In the interim, the three lower planes remain isolat-

ed from the highest, Blake’s Eden, whose point “is walled up, till time of renovation” (12.52, E 156). Beulah, Blake’s World of Prototypical Creation, contains the actualization of the idea on the spiritual plane, as the Saviour says: “Ye are my members O ye sleepers of Beulah, land of shades!” (4.21, E 146). The third plane is “this dark Ulro & voidness” (23.38, E 169), the site where the archetypes are distorted; they are then implemented in Blake’s Generation, the arena in which regeneration can occur: “the all tremendous unfathomable Non Ens / Of Death was seen in regenerations terrific or complacent” (98.33-34, E 258). Not the penalty of Adam, corporeality is the site where—once the archetypal forms have been corrected—mortality can be transformed into immortality: “of the passage through / Eternal Death! and of the awaking to Eternal Life” (4.1-2, E 146).

- 17 Supplementing the kabbalistic myth, Los re-forms the archetypes in Golgonooza. While “Around Golgonooza lies the land of death eternal” (13.30, E 157), within the city is “A wondrous golden Building immense with ornaments sublime” (59.24, E 209). The archetype for regeneration is the Mundane Shell: “In all the Twenty-seven Heavens, numberd from Adam to Luther; / From the blue Mundane Shell, reaching to the Vegetative Earth” (13.32-33, E 157).¹¹ At the end of chapter 3, the form is complete:

And above Albions Land was seen the Heavenly Canaan
As the Substance is to the Shadow: and above Albions
Twelve Sons
Were seen Jerusalems Sons: and all the Twelve Tribes
spreading
Over Albion. As the Soul is to the Body, so Jerusalems
Sons,
Are to the Sons of Albion: and Jerusalem is Albions Emanation. (71.1-5, E 224)

Finally, in chapter 4, the archetype is actualized and unity is restored: “Driving outward the Body of Death in an Eternal Death & Resurrection / Awaking it to Life among the Flow-ers of Beulah rejoicing in Unity” (98.20-21, E 257).

Characterization

- 18 Conventionally, characters line up moralistically, as symbolic representatives of Christ and Satan. In *Jerusalem*, Blake denigrates this mode of thought as nothing more than “the manner of the Sons of Albion”:

in their strength
They take the Two Contraries which are calld Qualities,
with which

11. On the significance of twenty-seven, as well as other numerological patterns, see my “Numerological Analysis of *Jerusalem*.”

Every Substance is clothed, they name them Good & Evil
From them they make an Abstract, which is a Negation
Not only of the Substance from which it is derived
A murderer of its own Body: but also a murderer
Of every Divine Member. (10.7-13, E 152-53)

Blake replaces this duality with an internal conflict between what the figure was intended to be and what it now appears to be: “Names anciently rememberd, but now contemn’d as fictions!” (5.38, E 148). This paradigm revolves around three main figures: Jerusalem, the eponymous heroine; Los, the macrocosm; and Albion, the microcosm. The others are either their components or manifestations on various cosmic planes. This section explains the basic archetypal identities of the figures; the significance of their interactions is indicated in the section on plot. (Bold print indicates names with their own entry.)

Jerusalem

Jerusalem is Blake’s version of the *Shekhinah*, the kabbalistic divine presence (WD 110, 140-41, 145). She has no active role in the myth, having gone into exile at the initial fault, to be redeemed at the end of the cycle. However, she serves as the touchstone for the action. Her initial existence indicates that there was originally to have been an immanent relationship between the creator and his creation, and her subsequent exile identifies the loss of that relationship. **Albion’s** rejection of the Saviour is merged with his repudiation of Jerusalem: “Jerusalem is not! her daughters are indefinite: / By demonstration, man alone can live, and not by faith” (4.27-28, E 147). The prophecy begins with Albion’s denial of Jerusalem and ends with his call for her return: “Awake! Awake Jerusalem! O lovely Emanation of Albion / Awake and overspread all Nations as in Ancient Time” (97.1-2, E 256).

Kabbalistically, the exile of the *Shekhinah* is symbolized by her relationship with *Adam Kadmon* (primordial man), identified by Christians as the Saviour. In a radical mythic reversal, each time *Adam Rishon* (created man) couples with his wife, he is said to help facilitate the reunification of *Adam Kadmon* and the *Shekhinah*. Thus, the microcosm actively assists in the restoration of the macrocosm. In *Jerusalem*, Blake projects the reunification of the *Shekhinah*/Jerusalem and *Adam Kadmon*/Los through their **ungenerated sons**—Rintrah, Palamabron, Theotormon, and Bromion. Intellectualizing the myth, he does not have *Adam Rishon*/Albion sexually facilitate the reunification of Jerusalem and Los, but, instead, teaches him to differentiate between the **shadow**, **Vala**, and the essential reality of Jerusalem: “Vala is but thy Shadow, O thou loveliest among women! / A shadow animated by thy tears O mournful Jerusalem!” (11.24-25, E 154).

Los

Described as a manifestation of the Saviour, Los conforms to the kabbalistic *Adam Kadmon*, as opposed to the exoteric version of Christ (GI 159-63, WD 141-42). In the kabbalistic myth, *Adam Kadmon*—primordial man, the first completed entity—was intended to serve as the passive model for *Adam Rishon*—created or first man—to emulate. After the initial fault, *Adam Kadmon* was forced to assume an active role in cosmic restoration; to that end, he was fragmented into a series of physiognomies, corresponding to the souls and planes. From top to bottom, these are the Ancient of Days, the Father, the Mother, the Son, and the Daughter. The “Son,” as the active manifestation of *Adam Kadmon*, was the most important; not surprisingly, he was associated by Christian kabbalists with their Saviour. Mythically, the ultimate goal is the reunification of *Adam Kadmon* and the *Shekhinah*, his female counterpart.

As *Adam Kadmon*, Los “enterd the Door of Death for Albions sake Inspired” (1.9, E 144) and labors at his furnace to complete the archetypes of restoration. In earlier iterations of the myth, Blake had experimented with the physiognomies, associating Los with the Father, Enitharmon the Mother, Orc the “Son,” and the Shadowy Female the Daughter. However, by the time he worked on *Jerusalem*, he had abandoned those specific associations in favor of Los as “the Vehicular Form of strong Urthona” (53.1, E 202)—that is, the active manifestation of the Immortal Soul. At the end, **Albion** learns from Jesus that Los has fulfilled the true Christological function: “I see thee in the likeness & similitude of Los my Friend” (96.22, E 256).

Albion

Comparable to the biblical Adam—his name signifying the individual, the race, and the land—Albion conforms to the kabbalistic *Adam Rishon*, first or created man (GI 159, WD 142-45, 150). Before the initial fault, Adam is said to have been of enormous stature, extending through the four cosmic planes and containing within himself all of the souls. At the initial fault, his stature was reduced and the souls were separated from him. Some were unaffected and rose back to their source; others were contaminated and need to be purified. To that end, they undergo a series of revolutions (see **Reuben**), and when all are purified, the cosmos will be restored. Within this context, the biblical Adam’s disobedience is subordinated to the level of a secondary cause. Had he not eaten the forbidden fruit, the cosmos would have immediately reverted to its originally intended form; because he did, the entire cycle must be traversed.

As *Adam Rishon*, Albion’s initial fault is to reject the Saviour and deny the existence of **Jerusalem**, immanence. To compensate, he must experience the entire cycle of existence so he can differentiate between physical death and spiritual annihilation—“O that Death & Annihilation were

the same!” (23.40, E 169)—and understand the true meaning of grace: self-sacrifice for the sake of others.

- 19 The other figures in the prophecy aggregate around these three. An alphabetical list of the major players follows, with brief indications of who they are and how they relate to the central conflict.

Ahania

See **Emanation**.

Bath

Bath is religion, a concept that, depending on the power structure, can be used either positively or negatively: “Bath who is Legions: he is the Seventh, the physician and / The poisoner: the best and worst in Heaven and Hell” (37 [41].1-2, E 183). In chapter 2, before the institutionalization of religion, Bath’s positive spiritual associations are emphasized: “Bath, mild Physician of Eternity, mysterious power / Whose springs are unsearchable & knowledg infinite” (41 [46].1-2, E 188). In chapter 3, the city is co-opted by exoteric Christianity: “They vote the death of Luvah, & they naild him to Albions Tree in Bath” (65.8, E 216). Finally, by the end of the chapter, Bath has degenerated into an instrument of natural religion: “Bath stood upon the Severn with Merlin & Bladud & Arthur / The Cup of Rahab in his hand” (75.2-3, E 230).

Bromion

See **Ungenerated sons of Los and Jerusalem**.

Dinah

As “the youthful form of Erin,” Dinah appears at the end of chapter 3 to foreshadow the rebirth of the female will (*GI* 153, *WD* 141, 156): “I see a Feminine Form arise from the Four terrible Zoas / Beautiful but terrible struggling to take a form of beauty” (74.52-54, E 230). Underscoring her mythic function, her name is the feminine form of *Din*, Hebrew for the rigorous form of judgment governing the left side of the *Sefirotic* Tree (see **Emanation**, and below under **Plot**).

Emanation

Blake’s concept of emanation is tangentially related to the kabbalistic myth, where creation is effected through a process in which the godhead is said to have emanated from himself a series of *Sefirot*¹²—hypostases, commonly referred to as emanations—that perform the work of creation. The *Sefirot* assumed a number of different configurations, the most significant being that of the *Sefirotic* Tree

12. *Sefirah* (sing.), *Sefirot* (pl.). To avoid confusion with Blake’s entirely different use of the term emanation, I refer to the kabbalistic emanations with their Hebrew designation.

(see *illus.* 2-5). Horizontally, the tree corresponds to the four cosmic planes; vertically, the three columns represent the hermaphroditic split: a right side of pity, a left side of rigor, and the mediating Central Column. At the primordial fault, the sides were said to have separated, leaving each to tend toward the extreme of its nature. Now, the goal of the cosmic cycle is for the Central Column to restore balance between male and female, pity and rigor.

Iconographically, the *Sefirotic* Tree has been used to symbolize virtually all aspects of creation, including the macro- and microcosm, the cosmic planes, the souls, names of God, colors, planets, and body parts, to name a few (see *illus.* 4). While Blake does not explicitly refer to the *Sefirotic* Tree, beginning with the Butts tempera series he began organizing his visual art in terms of the three-columned structure.¹³ Verbally, Blake frequently uses the human correspondences of the Central Column—head, heart, loins, and feet—to signify the state of the individual. He introduces the concept on plate 14:

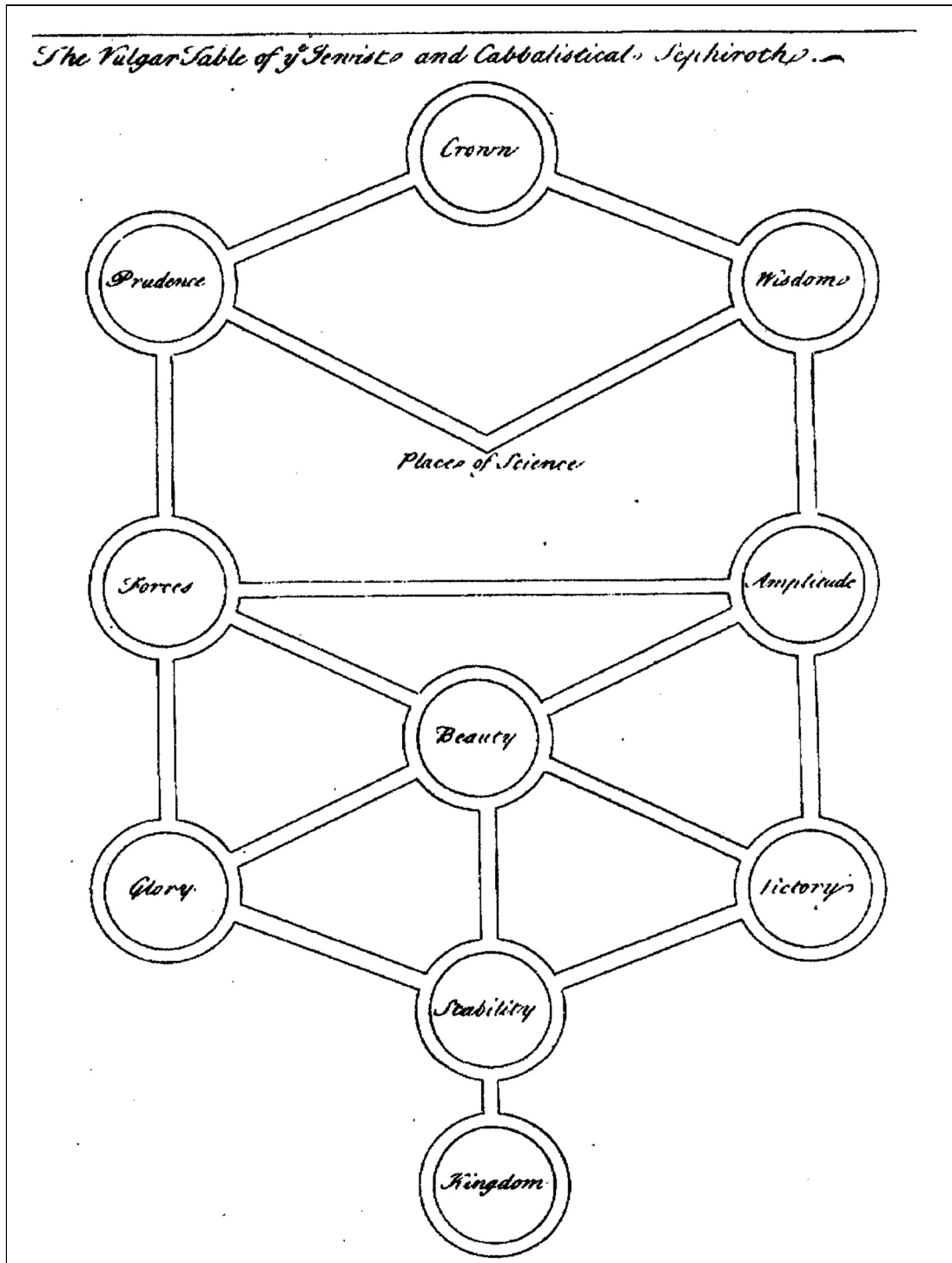
Los beheld his Sons, and he beheld his Daughters:
Every one a translucent Wonder: a Universe within,
Increasing inwards, into length and breadth, and heighth:
Starry & glorious: and they every one in their bright *loins*:
Have a beautiful golden gate which opens into the vegetative world:
And every one a gate of rubies & all sorts of precious stones
In their translucent *hearts*, which opens into the vegetative world:
And every one a gate of iron dreadful and wonderful,
In their translucent *heads*, which opens into the vegetative world. (14.16-24, E 158; emphasis mine)

In this instance, the feet are omitted because the children are as yet ungenerated in “the vegetative world,” the World of Fact.

Extensions of the concept of the hermaphroditic split, Blake’s emanations are female counterparts to specific *Zoas*, Blake’s name for the souls (see *illus.* 1). **Enitharmon** is the emanation of **Urthona**, **Vala** of **Luvah**, **Ahania** of **Urizen**, and **Enion** of **Tharmas**. Only Enitharmon and Vala play significant roles in *Jerusalem*. Finally, as **Los** explains, in order for restoration to occur, “Sexes must vanish & cease / To be” (92.13-14, E 252); emanations and *Zoas* must merge into the Central Column, as depicted on plate 99 (see *illus.* 14).

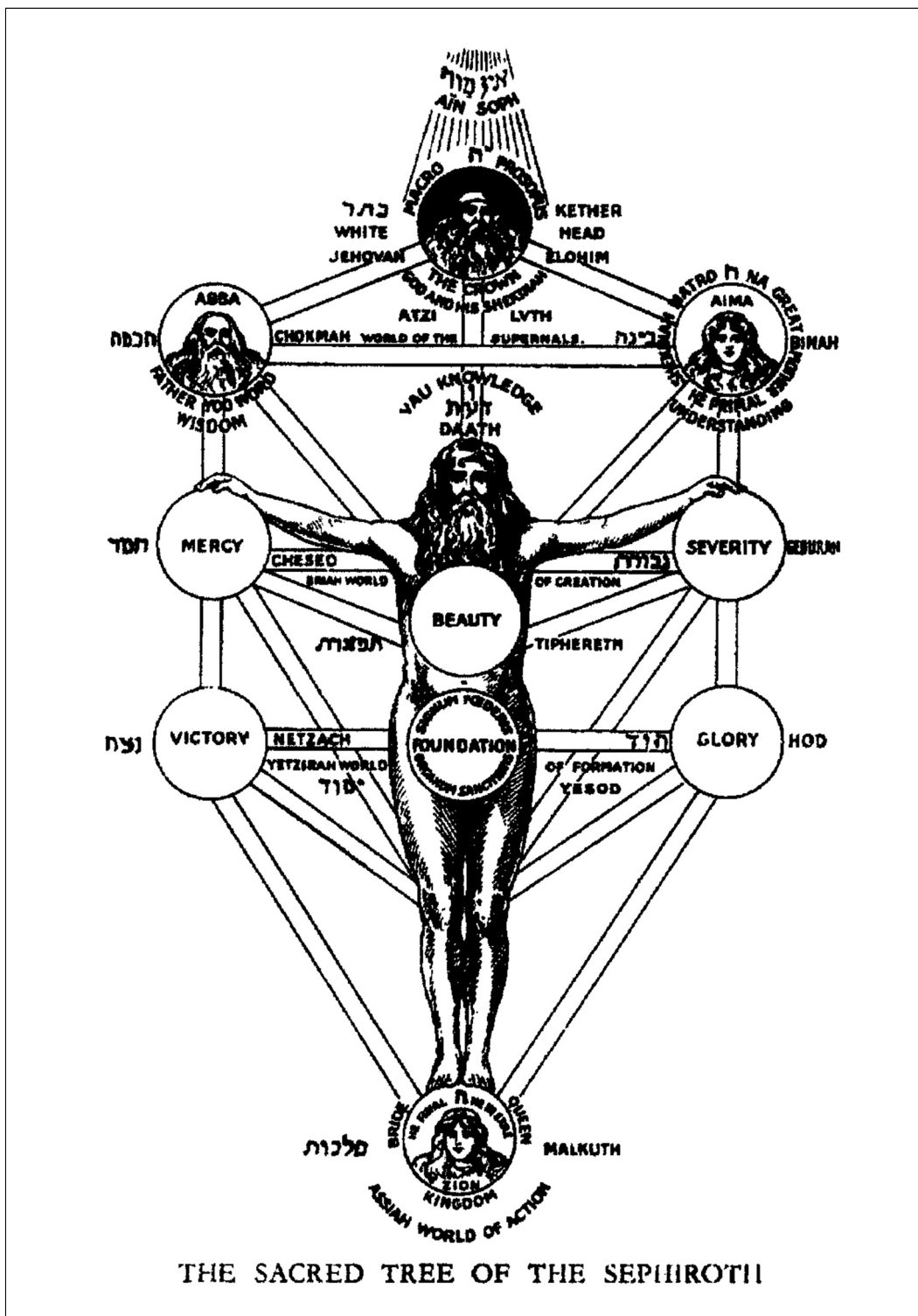
13. Bindman, though not knowing its source, notes the tendency: “Even so there are signs also in the Butts tempera series of distinctive compositional modes, less easily explained in terms of such outside influences. There is a tendency towards centralization in some of the paintings, which is achieved by placing the central figure firmly on the main vertical axis. . . . In some cases Blake goes further and relates figures on opposite sides of the picture to each other” (128).

The following illustrations are included to indicate the plenitude of the *Sefirotic* Tree as an archetypal symbol.



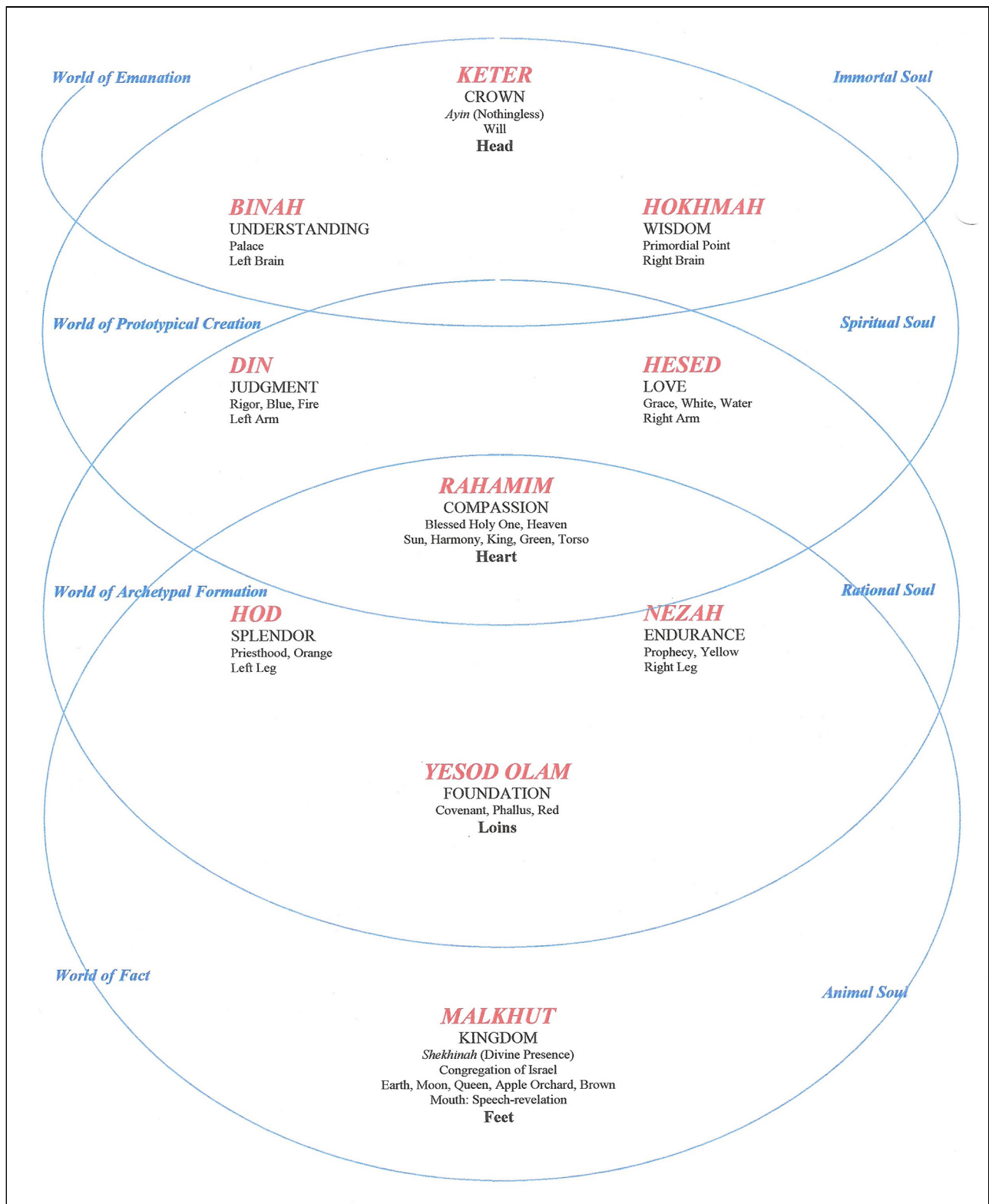
2. The *Sefirotic* Tree. R. Casway, *A Miscellaneous Metaphysical Essay* (London, 1748), between pp. 358 and 359.

This is the basic *Sefirotic* Tree, showing the positions of the emanations along the three columns, all linked through a series of canals. Of special note is the "Place of Science," the projected eleventh *Sefirah*: *Da'at* (knowledge), a necessary prerequisite for reuniting the World of Separation and the World of Emanation.



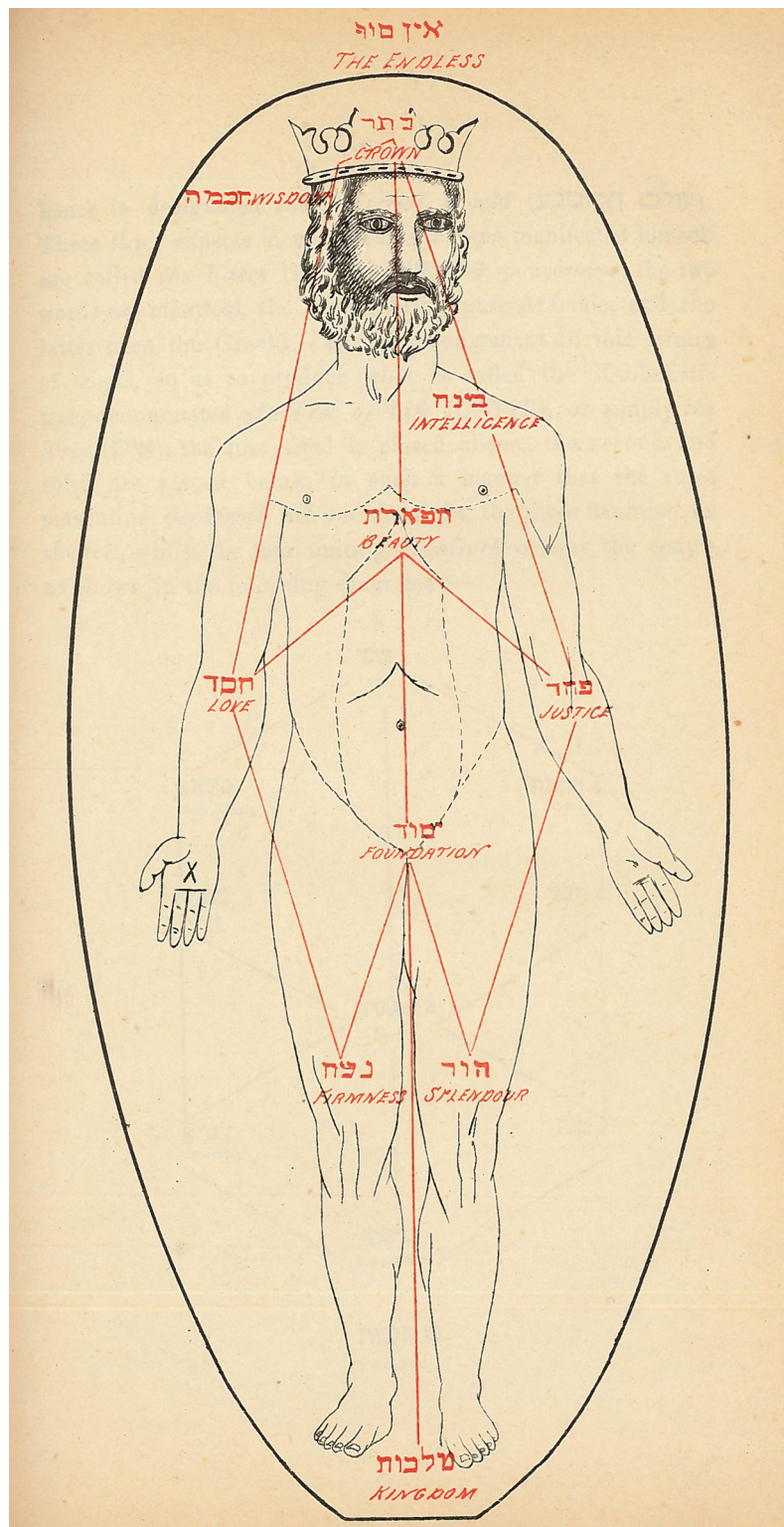
3. The *Sefirot* and their cosmic correspondences. Arthur Edward Waite, *The Secret Doctrine in Israel: A Study of the Zohar and Its Connections* (London: William Rider & Son, 1913), frontispiece.

This illustration portrays the relationship between the physiognomies that *Adam Kadmon* fragmented into and the divine emanations. The head at the top is the Ancient of Days; to his right and left are Father and Mother; the full figure beneath *Da'at* is the "Son"; and at the bottom is the head of the Daughter.



4. Multiple significations of the *Sefirot*. Chart by the author.

The chart suggests the comprehensiveness of the *Sefirotic Tree*. In addition to the cosmic planes and their governing souls, the emanations are associated with divine potencies, names of God, colors, and body parts, among other things.



5. Human configuration of the *Sefirot*. Christian D. Ginsburg, *The Kabbalah: Its Doctrines, Development, and Literature* (1863; London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1865), between pp. 16 and 17.

In this illustration, the *Sefirotic* Tree is the structural basis for what Blake called the human form divine. The x in the figure's right palm, symbolizing the stigmata, associates him with the Christian Saviour.

Enion
See **Emanation**.

Enitharmon
The role of Enitharmon as an **emanation** is complicated by her male counterpart, **Los**, identified as “the Vehicular Form of strong Urthona” (53.1, E 202), making him the active manifestation of *Adam Kadmon*. In earlier works, Blake had experimented with the kabbalistic physiognomies, making Los the Father and Enitharmon the mother (see above under **Los**). Although by *Jerusalem* he had abandoned that concept, he still retained the relationship between Los and Enitharmon, identifying her as “a vegetated mortal Wife of Los” (14.13, E 158), who labors at her loom to effect restoration. However, given the relationship between Los and **Urthona**, she is also the emanation of the Immortal Soul, one of “two Immortal forms” who “alone are escaped” (43 [29].28-29, E 191). They are identified as

the Emanation of Los & his
Spectre: for wherever the Emanation goes, the Spectre
Attends her as her Guard, & Los’s Emanation is named
Enitharmon, & his Spectre is named Urthona.
(44 [30].1-4, E 193)

The spectre Urthona is the oxymoronic manifestation of immortality in the corporeal cosmos (see below under **Spectre**); in this context, Enitharmon is his female counterpart.

Erin
Expanding Erin’s signification beyond the traditional name of Ireland, Blake includes the Hebrew cognate *aron*, which could mean either “ark” or “tomb,” to create a symbol for the regenerated cosmos (*GI* 153, *WD* 141): “And the Spaces of Erin reach’d from the starry heighth, to the starry depth” (11.12, E 154).¹⁴

Luvah
Luvah represents the Spiritual Soul (*GI* 131, *WD* 107), being “cast into the Furnaces of affliction and sealed” (7.30, E 150). As **Albion** laments, “The footsteps of the Lamb of God were there: but now no more / No more shall I behold him, he is closd in Luvahs Sepulcher” (24.50-51, E 170). In chapter 3, Luvah is depicted in terms of the exoteric Christ, whose crucifixion is voted on (65.8, E 216). Allegorically, the exoteric church scapegoated spirituality for the sake of its own hegemony (see **Theme**, below). See also **Zoas**.

14. On the political implications of Erin, see Essick, “Erin, Ireland, and the Emanation in Blake’s *Jerusalem*.”

Palamabron
See **Ungenerated sons of Los and Jerusalem**.

Rahab
A Blakean construct, Rahab, whose name is based partly on the Hebrew root for breadth, signifies space in the corporeal cosmos (*GI* 134-36, 182n11). As daughters of **Vala**, whose association with **Urizen** consolidated a material form of religion, Rahab and **Tirzah** together constitute its coordinates, “weaving the deaths of the Mighty into a Tabernacle” (67.33, E 220).

Reuben
Reuben symbolizes the reincarnated soul: “Reuben slept in the Cave of Adam, and Los folded his Tongue / Between Lips of mire & clay, then sent him forth over Jordan” (32 [36].5-6, E 178) (*GI* 151-53, *WD* 149-50).

Rintra
See **Ungenerated sons of Los and Jerusalem**.

Satan
In characterizing Satan, Blake exploits the Hebrew etymology of the name, “the adversary.” In exoteric Christianity, where obedience is postulated as the greatest good, its antithesis is defined as disobedience. By analogy, when the greatest good is redefined as self-annihilation, its antithesis—the consolidation of the selfhood—becomes the referent signified by the name Satan: “the Great Selfhood / Satan: Worshipd as God by the Mighty Ones of the Earth” (29 [33].17-18, E 175). As an antithetical value, Satan has no independent existence except within the framework of a binary opposition: he is a “Body of Doubt that Seems but Is Not” (93.20, E 253).

Sefirotic Tree
See **Emanation**.

Shadow
An adaptation of the kabbalistic *zel*, “shadow” is the projection of an inner identity (*WD* 110, 145):

When all their Crimes, their Punishments their Accusa-
tions of Sin:
All their Jealousies Revenges. Murders. hidings of Cruelty
in Deceit
Appear only in the Outward Spheres of Visionary Space
and Time. (92.15-17, E 252)

When consolidated, the inner identity becomes a **spectre**.

Spectre
The spectre is a Blakean adaptation of the kabbalistic *zelem*, “the principle of individuality with which every single hu-

man being is endowed, the spiritual configuration or essence that is unique to him and to him alone" (Scholem 158). In the kabbalistic myth, "the [Animal, Rational, and Spiritual Souls] were each assigned a *zelem* of their own which made it possible for them to function in the human body. Without the *zelem* the soul would burn the body up with its fierce radiance" (159). In *Jerusalem*, the spectres are consolidated manifestations of individual figures (*WD* 110, 145): "An Abstract objecting power, that Negatives every thing / This is the Spectre of Man" (10.14-15, E 153). The most important is **Los's** spectre. Once consolidated, he articulates the doubts Los has about his entire enterprise, though at the end, after "Los alterd his Spectre & every Ratio of his Reason" (91.50, E 252), restoration occurs. See also **Urthona**.

Tharmas

Introduced as "the Vegetated Tongue even the Devouring Tongue" (14.4, E 158), Tharmas represents the Animal Soul, physical existence in the corporeal cosmos (*GI* 136-37, *WD* 108, 111): "**Luvah** slew Tharmas the Angel of the Tongue & **Albion** brought him / To Justice in his own City of Paris, denying the Resurrection" (63.5-6, E 214). See also **Zoas**.

Theotormon

See **Ungenerated sons of Los and Jerusalem**.

Tirzah

Her name deriving from the seventh commandment, *lo tirzah* ("Thou shalt not kill"), Tirzah signifies the mortality of time: "Tirzah sits weeping to hear the shrieks of the dying: her Knife / Of flint is in her hand" (67.24-25, E 220) (*GI* 134-36). Together, Tirzah and her sister **Rahab** constitute time and space, coordinates of the corporeal cosmos, the world of Generation that will be transformed into regeneration: "Other Daughters Weave on the Cushion & Pillow, Network fine / That Rahab & Tirzah may exist & live & breathe & love" (59.42-43, E 209).

Ungenerated sons of Los and Jerusalem

A Blakean innovation, the collective use of Bromion, Theotormon, Palamabron, and Rintrah in **Los** is analogous to the four **Zoas** in **Albion** (*WD* 158). In the kabbalistic myth, the reunification of *Adam Kadmon* and the *Shekhinah* signifies cosmic restoration; in *Jerusalem*, the sons remain mostly ungenerated, their labor signifying the process through which restoration will be achieved: "these Four remain to guard the Four Walls of Jerusalem" (72.13, E 226).

Urizen

Urizen represents the Rational Soul, the intellectual faculty intended to organize the rules by which the Animal Soul

survives (*GI* 131, 157).¹⁵ In earlier works, Blake focused on the Rational Soul's responsibility for causing the initial fault; in *Jerusalem*, though, Urizen actually does what he is supposed to do, "delivering Form out of confusion" (58.22, E 207). See also **Zoas**.

Urthona

Three mythemes converge in the figure of Urthona. The first two are kabbalistic—the Immortal Soul (*GI* 132) and *Adam Kadmon/Los*. As Los comforts himself: "I know I am Urthona keeper of the Gates of Heaven, / And that I can at will expatiate in the Gardens of bliss" (82.81-82, E 241). Finally, as the active manifestation of Urthona, Los represents the true Christological function: "the Divine Appearance was the likeness & similitude of Los" (96.7, E 255). See also **Zoas**.

Vala

Vala's identity is a combination of two distinct archetypes: the **emanation of Luvah** and the **shadow of Jerusalem** (*GI* 138-39, 153, 183n16-17, *WD* 145-46). As the former, Vala is the rigorous manifestation of spirituality. At the initial conflagration, she feeds Luvah into the furnace, eliminating the merciful right side and leaving the judgmental form of religion, as manifested through two of her daughters, **Rahab** and **Tirzah**. As the shadow of Jerusalem, immanence, she is by implication transcendence. As Jerusalem reminds Vala: "The Lamb of God reciev'd me in his arms he smil'd upon us: / He made me his Bride & Wife: he gave thee to **Albion**" (20.39-40, E 165-66). Vala should be to **Albion** as Jerusalem is to the Lamb. However, the shadow has consolidated into the emanation who fed Luvah into the furnace, rejecting her intended function.

Zoas

Collectively, the four Zoas represent the four souls: **Urthona**, **Luvah**, **Urizen**, and **Tharmas** (*GI* 138). In the macrocosm, they govern the four cosmic planes, Eden, Beulah, Ulro, and Generation respectively. In the microcosm, they constitute the intellectual faculties whose interactions reflect **Albion's** state of mind: "the Four Zoas who are the Four Eternal Senses of Man" (32 [36].31, E 178). Collectively, their state is used as a touchstone for evaluating **Albion's** progress: in chapter 2, "the Four Zoas clouded rage" (32 [36].25, E 178); in chapter 3, "The Four Zoas rush around on all sides in dire ruin" (58.47, E 208); and immediately before **Albion** rises in chapter 4, "The Four Zoas in all their faded majesty burst out in fury / And fire" (88.55-56, E 247).

15. For a detailed analysis of the name Urizen, see my "The Reasons for 'Urizen.'"

Plot

- 20 In the West, plot, organized around the conflict between good and evil, usually conforms to a linear six-part structure: exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. In contrast, the Christian kabbalistic myth, replicating the cycle of exile and return, expands the three-part Jewish prototype into four: Primordial Institution, State of Destitution, Modern Constitution, and Supreme Restitution (*WD* 40-46). The first phase depicts creation through a process of emanation in which the god-head produced a series of ten hypostases (for different representations, see *illus.* 2-5). These divine lights were placed in vessels made of dross, intended to restrain their natural effulgence. The initial fault occurred when, during the emanative process, the fifth divine light, *Din* (judgment), overestimating its potency, drew the other lights into its own vessel, which, proving too weak, shattered. The result was the State of Destitution. While some of the lights, remaining unaffected, were able to return to the World of Emanation, others were contaminated by the shards and drawn down to the lower worlds, with the lowest becoming corporeal. In the Modern Constitution, it is necessary to separate out the shards of dross so that the lights can return to their original locations. The process is to be accomplished through the efforts of both the macro- and microcosm. On the macrocosmic level, *Adam Kadmon* fragments into a series of physiognomies, the most significant being the “Son,” whose function is to perform the actual separation. On the microcosmic level, *Adam Rishon* is to purify the soul. Because the task cannot be completed in a single lifetime, each soul must undergo a series of revolutions. Supreme Restitution will occur when all of the shards have been separated and all of the souls purified. At that point, the cosmos will return to the primordial state, in preparation for the next cycle of existence. Christians identify *Adam Kadmon* as Christ, associating the final phase with the Saviour’s ultimate defeat of Satan.¹⁶
- 21 Blake adapts the Christian kabbalistic archetype to structure his four-part story, each chapter depicting a particular phase of Jerusalem’s exile and return: chapter 1, the Primordial Institution, is devoted to the initial crisis; chapter 2, the State of Destitution, to the aftermath of that crisis; chapter 3, the Modern Constitution, to the compensation for the crisis; and chapter 4, Supreme Restitution, to cosmic restoration.¹⁷ Within each chapter, the non-linear structure

16. This is the structure found in van Helmont, *Sketch of Christian Kabbalism*.

17. For earlier attempts to explain the four-part structure of *Jerusalem*, see *WD* 189n30. More recently, Sklar has argued that the “characters’ overlapping stories create a tale of Albion’s fall and Jerusalem’s banishment (in Chapter One), a series of rescue attempts (in Chapter

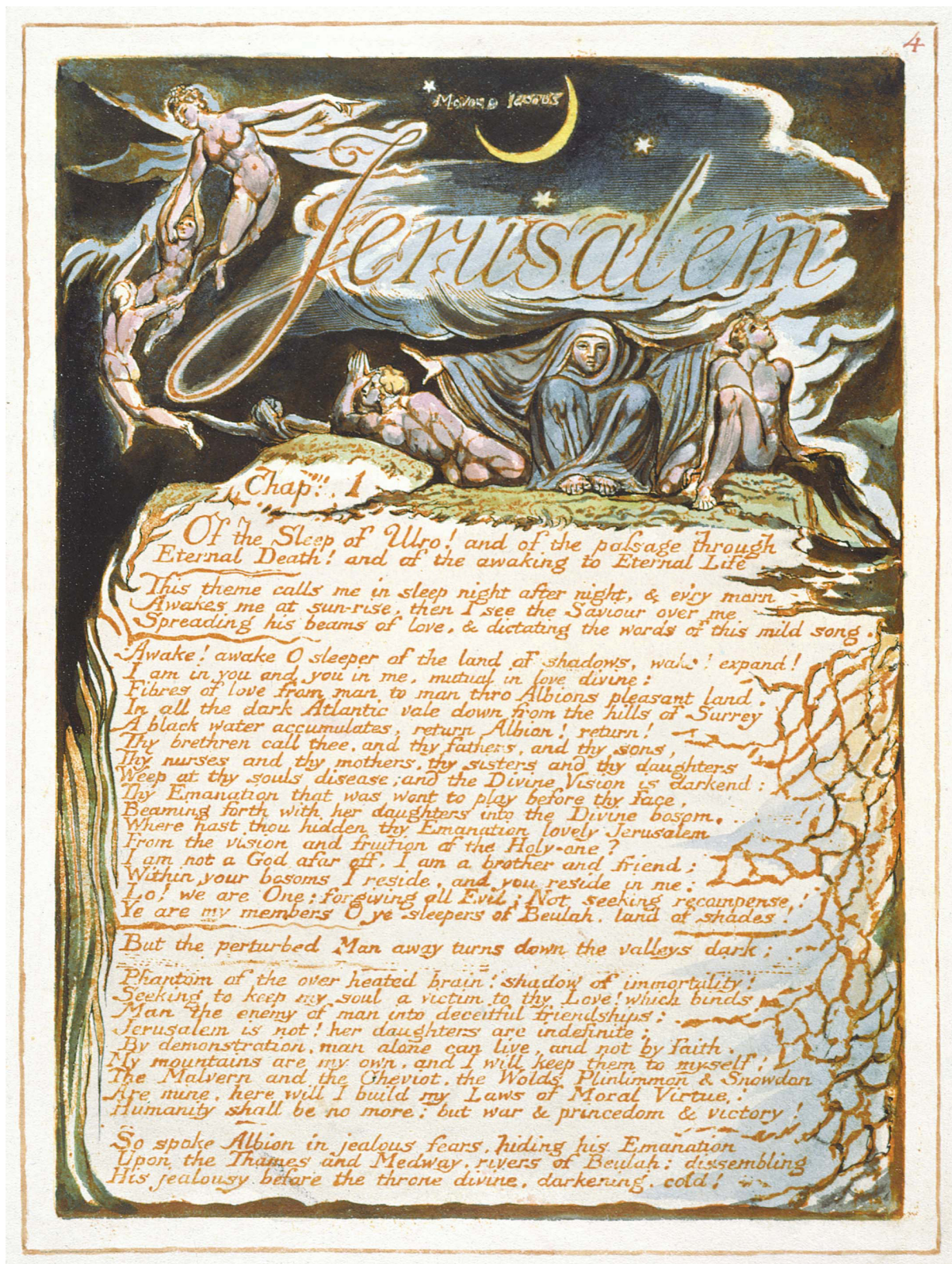
is neither synchronic nor diachronic, in the causal sense.¹⁸ Rather, analogous to the relationship between Blake’s painting *The Last Judgment* and his Notebook description of “A Vision of the Last Judgment,” each chapter depicts a panoramic vision of a particular state, comprising a series of vignettes that constitute the vision.¹⁹ Within that context, the plot is sequential in the sense that the four chapters depict the stages that must be experienced. As a discrete phase, each chapter is introduced emblematically by a partial-plate design, complemented by a verbal passage. At the conclusion of each, a full-plate design encapsulates the progress to that point.

- 22 Albion initiates the cycle by denying Jerusalem’s existence. The chapter opens on plate 4, with a bimodal image act in which the top third visualizes the ensuing conflict between the divine presence and her shadow (*illus.* 6). At the bottom of the design, Vala perverts the function of the Central Column, separating two figures. To the side, Jerusalem leads some souls through the cycle of reincarnation. The motto at the top says “Jesus only.” This is the lesson to be learned: Albion’s choice of demonstration over faith is equivalent to the exile of the *Shekhinah*.
- 23 From that point on, the entire cosmos is affected. On the macrocosmic level, *Adam Kadmon/Los*, who is fragmented into his spectre and emanation, begins to organize the spaces of Erin into the World of Separation so that he will be able to form the archetypes of restoration at his furnaces, located in Golgonooza, where he will counteract the damage done in Ulro. On the microcosmic level, *Adam Rishon/Albion*, having chosen demonstration over faith, can no longer apprehend the *Shekhinah/Jerusalem*, and erroneously embraces Vala, her shadow. The chapter ends with a prayer: “Descend O Lamb of God & take away the imputation of Sin / By the Creation of States & the deliverance of Individuals” (25.12-13, E 170). In the last five lines of the chapter, Blake calls for a complete revision of thought, in which the concept of sin is revealed to be but a component of the larger cycle of existence. By removing sin from the causal framework

Two), a chaotic crescendo of violence and war (in Chapter Three), and finally, humanity’s great awakening in Jerusalem, a woman-city embodying forgiveness and liberty (in Chapter Four)” (145). In contrast, Yoder “offer[s] an outline of the poem ... to identify the major narrative episodes and to suggest the lines of narrative continuity that unify them” (*The Narrative Structure* 56-57).

18. In “The Problems of Synchrony,” the first chapter of *The Narrative Structure*, Yoder surveys the critical controversy over whether *Jerusalem* is synchronic or diachronic (23-54).

19. This process can be seen most clearly in chapter 2, where Blake shifted around the order of several vignettes. While there is no discernible causal effect, the changed order does alter the reader’s perception of the chapter. For a detailed analysis of the two sequences, see Yoder, “What Happens When.”



6. Jerusalem copy E, plate 4. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1992.8.1(4). Image courtesy of the William Blake Archive.

of action and reaction, he implies a kind of cyclical determinism, making sin but a state to be passed through.

- 24 Encapsulating the plot of chapter 1, the full-page design on plate 26 (illus. 7) depicts the exile of the *Shekhinah*, a visual counterpart of the design on plate 4. Although the initial crisis occurred during the creation process, Adam's sin is said to have extended the cycle. In the picture, the focal point is Hand, Albion's eldest son, metonymically mortal man. He is engulfed in the iconography of the exoteric myth—surrounded by hell fires and with a serpent woven around his arms, which are stretched out in cruciform. Though looking back at Jerusalem, he walks away from her, thus replicating Albion's original error of rejecting faith. He also remains oblivious to the verbal messages. Between him and Jerusalem is the notation that "JERUSALEM IS NAMED LIBERTY." Also, looking back, he misses the motto inscribed along the left margin of the plate: "SUCH VISIONS HAVE APPEARED TO ME / AS I MY ORDER RACE HAVE RUN."

SIONS HAVE / APPEARED TO ME / AS I MY ORDER RACE HAVE RUN." Visually alluding to Daniel 5, the message indicates that all is part of the succession of states—"ORDER RACE"—to be traversed.

- 25 In chapter 2, corresponding to the State of Destitution, the World of Separation is consolidated simultaneously on both the macro- and microcosmic levels. Blake's theme, the postlapsarian state of the cosmos, is depicted on plate 28 (illus. 8) by the Edenic couple embracing, followed by the verbalized perversion of that state:

Every ornament of perfection, and every labour of love,
In all the Garden of Eden, & in all the golden mountains
Was become an envied horror, and a remembrance of jealousy:

And every Act a Crime, and Albion the punisher & judge.
(28.1-4, E 174)



7. Jerusalem copy E, plate 26. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1992.8.1(26). Image courtesy of the William Blake Archive.



8. Jerusalem copy E, plate 28. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1992.8.1(28). Image courtesy of the William Blake Archive.

On the macrocosmic level, *Adam Kadmon/Los* begins his labor of forming the archetype of restoration, to be actualized at the end of the prophecy. As his primary labor, he sends Reuben over the Jordan, tracing the cycle of reincarnation through which the souls can then be purified. With his own faith sorely tested, Los attempts to pull Albion backwards through the furnace, though he is prevented because “the Will must not be bended but in the day of Divine / Power” (39 [44].18-19, E 186).

26 On the microcosmic level, *Adam Rishon/Albion*, now in the corporeal world of time and space, becomes subject to empirical reasoning, defined as “the Great Selfhood / Satan: Worshipd as God by the Mighty Ones of the Earth” (29 [33].17-18, E 175). Albion is traduced by the superficial glamour of Vala, the shadow: “the Divine Vision / Is as nothing before thee” (29 [33].33-34, E 175). Having lost his

faith, he calls for ransom: “Will none accompany me in my death? or be a Ransom for me” (35 [39].19, E 181). The result of Albion’s choice is despair: “Hope is banish’d from me” (47.18, E 196).

27 As the low point of the cycle, this is also the turning point of the action. On the next plate, the Saviour “Reciev’d him, in the arms of tender mercy” (48.2, E 196) and gives him the Bible (48.8-11, E 196).²⁰ Immediately after that, “From this sweet Place Maternal Love awoke Jerusalem” (48.18). The chapter ends with the commencement of Albion’s return, the Daughters of Beulah calling for the Lamb to “take away the remembrance of Sin” (50.30, E 200).

20. The list of books corresponds to those Swedenborg believed to have been divinely inspired (see Paley’s edition of *Jerusalem*, 207).



9. *Jerusalem* copy E, plate 51. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1992.8.1(51). Image courtesy of the *William Blake Archive*.

- 28 Plate 51 (illus. 9) balances the introduction on plate 28, where Blake depicted a prelapsarian couple embracing. Here, he visualizes Albion's state of despair in terms of the hermaphroditic split. In the design, a male crouches with his head between his knees, as the off-center Central Column. To one side is the female emanation, sitting in defeat, and to the other is the male selfhood, in flames and enchained.²¹ While Albion may not yet realize it, the audience has been given a visual indication that this is but a state to be passed through, and that reunification will occur.
- 29 Corresponding to the Modern Constitution, in which the shards of negation are separated from the lights of purity, chapter 3 reveals the error underlying Albion's choice of reason over faith; simultaneously, Los completes the Mundane Shell, the means by which that error will be compensated for. The theme is introduced on plate 53 (illus. 10), where the picture of Vala, surrounded by gaudy icons of organized religion, is balanced by the verbal introduction of Los as "the Vehicular Form of strong Urthona" (53.1, E 202), the manifestation of the Immortal Soul in the World of Separation. He is *Adam Kadmon*, the Saviour, though at this point his function is "incomprehensible / To the Vegetated Mortal Eye's perverted & single vision" (53.10-11, E 202). Sharply differentiated from the exoteric version of Christ, who will be scapegoated on plate 65, Los builds Golgonooza, the archetype of restoration, "the Spiritual Fourfold / London" (53.18-19, E 203).
- 30 The chapter depicts human history in the corporeal cosmos, when "Albion fled beneath the Plow / Till he came to the Rock of Ages. & he took his Seat upon the Rock" (57.15-16, E 207). While Albion sits, Los constructs "The Habitation of the Spectres of the Dead & the Place / Of Redemption & of awaking again into Eternity" (59.8-9, E 208). Within that context, the exoteric myth of the crucifixion is presented in the middle of the chapter as one component of the larger divine plan: "In ignorance to view a small portion & think that All" (65.27, E 216). Luvah's crucifixion exposes Vala as the shadow, the dark reflection of true spirituality, "weaving the deaths of the Mighty into a Tabernacle / For Rahab & Tirzah; till the Great Polypus of Generation covered the Earth" (67.33-34, E 220). Counteracting the shapeless polypus, Los forms the archetypal Mundane Shell in preparation for the consolidation of true Christianity.
- 31 Balancing the introductory image of Vala's religion, a full-plate depiction of true Christianity concludes the chapter: a picture of the crucified Saviour at the top, facing forward, with light emanating from his head (illus. 11). Opposite him is the human reflection, standing at the bottom, his back to the viewer, looking up at Christ. This is *Adam Kadmon* mirroring for *Adam Rishon* the true goal of separating the shards.
- 32 In contrast to the agon that concludes exoteric narrative, the esoteric resolves when the shards of negation have been removed so that the lights of purity can rise. In the final chapter, Vala's falsehood, which threatens to obliterate Jerusalem's truth, is exposed so that restoration, foreshadowed by the image on plate 76, can occur. The theme is introduced on plate 78 (illus. 12), with Albion sitting on the rock of ages, his bird's head possibly a symbol of regeneration.²² The text below the design explains how Albion's intellect will be restored: Los, as *Adam Kadmon*, will separate the shards, much as "the Potter breaks the potsherds" (78.5, E 233).
- 33 In the first half of the chapter, the error is consolidated so that, in the second, it can be put off. The chapter opens with a description of Jerusalem in ruins, followed by her lament over the unintended consequences of Vala's usurpation, that right/male and left/female have not only separated from each other, but each has moved toward its own extreme: "outside appears / Thy Masculine from thy Feminine hardening against the heavens / To devour the Human!" (79.70-72, E 236). Gwendolen, representing the extreme left side, fears the loss of female power and lies: "Forgetting that Falshood is prophetic" (82.20, E 239), she claims to have "heard Enitharmon say to Los: Let the Daughters of Albion / Be scatterd abroad and let the name of Albion be forgotten" (82.22-23). She then forms the infant Hyle (whose Greek etymology means "matter") into a material counterpart of the Lamb, intended to perpetuate her hegemony. However, as the embodiment of her lie, he grows into the anti-Christ, the consolidation of the error: "A Vegetated Christ & a Virgin Eve, are the Hermaphroditic / Blasphemy" (90.34-35, E 250). At the climax of the poem, Los puts off the error:

Thus Los alterd his Spectre & every Ratio of his Reason
 He alterd time after time, with dire pain & many tears
 Till he had completely divided him into a separate space.
 (91.50-52, E 252)

21. Paley's edition of *Jerusalem* contains discussion of an early proof that identifies the three figures as Vala, Hyle, and Skofeld (211). The elimination of the names expands the focus from the microcosm to the macrocosm.

22. For possible interpretations of the bird's head, see Paley's edition of *Jerusalem*, 261.



But Los, who is the Vehicular Form of strong Urthona
 Wept vehemently o'er Albion where Thames currents spring
 From the rivers of Beulah; Lusciant river! soft, mild, parent stream
 And the roots of Albions tree enterd the Soul of Los
 As he sat before his Furnaces clothed in sackcloth of hair
 In gnawing pain dividing him from his Emanation;
 Inclosing all the Children of Los time after time.
 Their Giant forms condensing into Nations & Peoples & Tongues
 Translucent the Furnaces, of Beryll & Emerald immortal
 And Seven-fold each within other; incomprehensible
 To the Vegetated Mortal Eyes perverted & single vision
 The Bellows are the Animal Lungs, the Hammers, the Animal Heart
 The Furnaces, the Stomach for Digestion, terrible their fury
 Like seven burning heavens rang'd from South to North

Here on the banks of the Thames. Los builded Golgonooza.
 Outside of the Gates of the Human Heart beneath Beulah
 In the midst of the rocks of the Algurs of Albion. In tears
 He builded it, in rage & in fury. It is the Spiritual Fourfold
 London; continually building & continually decaying desolate.
 In eternal labours; loud the Furnaces & loud the Anvils
 Of Death thunder incessant around the flaming Couches of
 The Twentyfour Friends of Albion and round the awful Four
 For the protection of the Twelve Emanations of Albions Sons
 The Mystic Union of the Emanation in the Lord; Because
 Man divided from his Emanation is a dark Spectre
 His Emanation is an ever-weeping melancholy Shadow
 But she is made receptive of Generation thro' mercy
 In the Potters Furnace, among the Funeral Urns of Beulah
 From Surrey hills, thro' Italy & Greece, to Hianoms vale.

10. Jerusalem copy E, plate 53. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1992.8.1(53). Image courtesy of the William Blake Archive.



11. *Jerusalem* copy E, plate 76. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1992.8.1(76). Image courtesy of the William Blake Archive.



The Spectres of Albions Twelve Sons revolve mightily
 Over the Lamb & over the Body: crawling to devour
 The Sleeping Humanity. Los with his mace of iron
 Walks round: loud his threats loud his blows fall
 On the rocky Spectres, as the Potter breaks the potters;
 Dashing in pieces, Self-righteousnesses: driving them from Albions
 Cuts: dividing them into Male & female forms, in his Furnaces
 And on his Anvils: lest they destroy the Feminine Attractions
 They are broken. Loud howl the Spectres in his iron Furnace

While Los laments at his dire labours, viewing Jerusalem,
 Sighing before his Furnaces clothed in sackcloth of hair;
 Albions Twelve Sons surround the Forty-two Gates of Erius,
 In terrible armour, raging against the Lamb & against Jerusalem,
 Surrounding them with armies to destroy the Lamb of God:
 They took their Mother Vala, and they crown'd her with gold:
 They nam'd her Rahab, & gave her power over the Earth,
 The Concave Earth round Golgotha in Erius's Benytkon.
 Even to the stars exalting her Throne, to build beyond the Throne
 Of God and the Lamb, to destroy the Lamb & usurp the Throne of God
 Drawing their Ulro Voidness round the Four-fold Humanity

Naked Jerusalem lay before the Gates upon Mount Zion,
 The Hill of Giants, all her foundations level'd with the dust:

Her Twelve Gates thrown down; her children carried into captivity
 Herself in chains: this from within was seen in a dismal sight
 Outside, unknown before in Beulah, & the twelve gates were fill'd
 With blood; from Japan eastward to the Giants causeway, west
 In Erius's Continent: and Jerusalem wept upon Euphrates' banks
 Desorganiz'd: an evanescent shade, scarce seen or heard among
 Her childrens Druid Temples dropping with blood wander'd weeping!
 And thus her voice went forth in the darkness of Philistea.

My brother & my father are no more! God hath forsaken me
 The arrows of the Almighty pour upon me & my children
 I have sinned and am on a bidest from the Divine Presence;

12. Jerusalem copy E, plate 78. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1992.8.1(78). Image courtesy of the William Blake Archive.

What do I see? The Briton Saxon Roman Norman amalgamating
 In my Furnaces into One Nation the English: & taking Refuge
 In the Loins of Albion. The Canaanite united with the fugitive
 Hebrew, whom she divided into Twelve. & sold into Egypt
 Then scatterd the Egyptian & Hebrew to the four Winds:
 Thus sinful Nation Created in our Furnaces & Looms. is Albion
 So Los spoke. Enitharmon answerd in great terror in Lambeths Vale
 The Poets Song draws to its period & Enitharmon is no more.
 For if he be that Albion I can never weave him in my Looms
 But when he touches the first fibrous thread. like silmy dew



My Looms will be no more & I annihilate vanish for ever
 Then thou wilt Create another Female according to thy Will.
 Los answerd swift as the shuttle of gold. Sexes must vanish & cease
 To be. when Albion arises from his drowsid repose O lovely Enitharmon:
 When all their Crimes their Punishments their Accusations of Sin:
 All their Jealousies Revenges Murders hidings of Cruelty in Deceit
 Appear only in the Outward Spheres of Visionary Space and Time
 In the shadows of Possibility by Mutual Forgiveness forevermore
 And in the Vision & in the Prophecy that we may Foresee & Avoid
 The terrors of Creation & Redemption & Judgement. Beholding them
 Displayd in the Emanative Visions of Canaan in Jerusalem & in Shiloh
 And in the Shailows of Remembrance. & in the Chaos of the Spectre
 Amalek. Edom. Egypt. Moab. Ammon. Ashur. Philistea. around Jerusalem
 Where the Druids reard their Rocky Circles to make permanent Remembrance
 Of Sin. & the Tree of Good & Evil sprang from the Rocky Circle & Snake
 Of the Druid. along the Valley of Rephaim from Cumberwell to Gog. the
 And framed the Mundane Shell Cavernous in Length British & Highth

13. Jerusalem copy E, plate 92. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1992.8.1(92). Image courtesy of the William Blake Archive.



14. *Jerusalem* copy E, plate 99. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1992.8.1(99). Image courtesy of the William Blake Archive.



15. *Jerusalem* copy E, plate 100. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1992.8.1(100). Image courtesy of the William Blake Archive.

Significantly, he does not eliminate his adversary in the exoteric sense, but alters his spectre, whom he then relegates “into a separate space.” Once Los’s task of separating the shards is complete, Jerusalem can return on plate 92 (illus. 13) and Albion can rise, recognize Jesus “in the likeness & similitude of Los [his] Friend” (96.22, E 256), annihilate his selfhood, and restore the cosmos. With only five lines of text, most of plate 99 is devoted to the visual reunification of the sexes into the Central Column (illus. 14). This is followed by the final image on plate 100 (illus. 15), a response to the low point of the action that had been depicted on plate 51 (illus. 9). Here, instead of a distorted *Sefirotic* Tree, with a crouching figure flanked by his defeated emanation and flaming selfhood, Los now stands leaning on his hammer and tongs, the instruments he used to re-form the cosmos; he is flanked by his emanation and spectre.

34 As this brief summary suggests, the four chapters collectively constitute a panorama of the four states of existence. Within each chapter, the action consists of a series of simul-

taneously coexisting bimodal image acts, each of which is designed to illuminate some aspect of that state. According to Blake, “These are States Permanently Fixed by the Divine Power” (32 [36].38, E 178). Therefore, they cannot be explained in terms of material causality; rather, “Iniquity must be imputed only / To the State [souls] are entered into that they may be delivered” (49.65-66, E 199). In other words, the plot traces “the passage through / Eternal Death! and ... the awaking to Eternal Life” (4.1-2, E 146).

IV. Theme

35 *Jerusalem* is an allegory whose vehicle, the esoteric kabbalistic myth, conveys the theme of the *prisca theologia*. Generally, *prisca theologia* refers to the traditional belief in an originally pure form of religion.²³ In the Renaissance, the

23. *GI* 41, *WD* 30, 33. On the *prisca theologia*, see Hanegraaff, “Tradition.” Because my focus is strictly on *Jerusalem*, I ignore aspects of the

concept was Christianized to signify what adherents identified as the true form of Christianity, said to have existed in the first few centuries of the common era—between Paul and Constantine, in Blake’s twenty-seven heavens—before the organized church erased traces of its existence. What made the *prisca theologia* both distinct and threatening was its assertion that there exists an extrarational gnostic faculty that endows people with the ability to apprehend the spiritual realm directly, without the need for any institutional intercession. Blake apparently alludes to the *prisca theologia* in *Milton* when he refers to “an old Prophecy in Eden recorded” (20 [22].57, E 115; 23 [25].35, E 119). Then, in *Jerusalem*, he develops that reference, using the exile of the *Shekhinah* to symbolize the usurpation of true Christianity.²⁴

36 Key to the allegory is the combination of Vala’s two identities: the emanation of Luvah and the shadow of Jerusalem. As an emanation, she signifies generally the left, rigorous column of the *Sefirotic* Tree, and as Luvah’s in particular, she embodies the judgmental component of spirituality. When, at the initial conflict, she feeds Luvah into the furnace, she eliminates the right side, mercy. The result, as seen in chapter 2, is a rationalized form of religion in which “Vala, builded by the Reasoning power in Man” (39 [44].40, E 187), forms “a pretence of Religion to destroy Religion” (38 [43].36, E 185). This is followed, in chapter 3, by the politicization of religion: “Are not Religion & Politics the Same Thing?” (57.10, E 207). In this chapter, Vala consolidates the institution by crucifying spirituality—“They vote the death of Luvah” (65.8, E 216)—to create a realm of spiritual death: “And all the Arts of Life. they changd into the Arts of Death in Albion” (65.16). The result is the oxymoronic corporealization of spirituality, when “The Twelve Daughters in Rahab & Tirzah have circumscribd the Brain / Beneath & pierced it thro the midst with a golden pin” (67.41-42, E 220). In other words, exoteric Christianity survives by lobotomizing its adherents. Finally, she degenerates into the antithesis of spirituality, intending “to destroy the Lamb & usurp the Throne of God” (78.19, E 234). Her entire system is constructed around her delusion (lie?) that “Luvah orderd me in night / To murder Albion the King of Men” (80.17-18, E 236).

prisca theologia not directly relevant to this paper. For the relationship of the *prisca theologia* to the seventeenth-century origins of freethinking, see Champion, especially chapter 5, “*Prisca theologia*” (133-69).

24. While I agree with the first part of Kroeber’s assertion in “Delivering *Jerusalem*” that “the purpose of *Jerusalem* is to attack this foundation of institutionalized religion,” I reject the second, “which Blake represents as Druidism” (366). Blake seems as opposed to the institutionalization of Christianity as he is to any other system whose effect is to deny liberty.

37 The second component of Vala’s identity is the shadow. If Vala, in distorting her intended function, degenerates into a destructive, militaristic form of organized religion, then Jerusalem must be the *prisca theologia*, the true form of Christianity. In the beginning, Albion chooses Vala over Jerusalem, and the poem traces the disastrous consequences of that choice. At the end, when Los restores the cosmos, “Jerusalem took the Cup which foamd in Vala’s hand” (88.56, E 247). By removing the communion cup from Vala’s possession, Jerusalem restores the *prisca theologia*. Fittingly, this is the last reference to Vala in the prophecy, and the beginning of Jerusalem’s restoration.

Conclusion

38 Technically, readers of *Jerusalem* have engaged not in analysis, but in dissection, the process of breaking something down into its component parts. This can be seen most obviously in *A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake*, where Damon painstakingly describes virtually every component of the corpus. More recently, Sklar has applied the same process: “I begin by separating and dissecting *Jerusalem*’s components; then I discuss how they interrelate, both sequentially and holistically,” that is, “without time constraints” (4, 251). Missing has been the other constituent of analysis, the principle of structure, the organizing rationale for how the various components interrelate in terms of a unified whole.²⁵ Hermeneutically, this is the function of the horizon of expectations, upon which the reading process hinges. Minus a principle of structure, a text, at worst, is unintelligible, as Karen Swann describes her students’ response to *Jerusalem*: “The whole chapter was just mud to them” (398). Her own reception is more complex:

As I returned to the text again and in subsequent years of teaching, I would often have the experience of coming across a passage that I had once seized upon as the lynchpin to a reading of the whole work but which now felt dead to the point where I couldn’t even reconstruct what I had seen in it. (And, conversely, passages I barely remembered from previous readings would leap into prominence.) (399)

Swann’s protean response traces her own growth as a reader; her personal horizon of expectations was altered by exposure to other texts in the interim, between encounters with *Jerusalem*. As Los says, in a line quoted earlier, “If Perceptive Organs vary: Objects of Perception seem to vary.”

25. This distinction between dissection and formal analysis is clarified in Brooks and Warren: “An analysis cannot take place except in accordance with the principle of the structure of the thing being analyzed.” That principle explains “the relation among the parts” (95).

39 Swann's example illustrates the basic assumption with which I began: there has existed no viable horizon of expectations for *Jerusalem*. For this reason, my intention is not to present a unique, much less definitive, interpretation. Rather, I have returned to the fundamental premises upon which the reading process is predicated, in order to configure a more consistent and appropriate horizon of expectations. I believe that the kabbalistic myth provides a viable principle of structure, and that the esoteric approach will enable future readers to generate more fruitful, provocative interpretations of *Jerusalem*, the book that Blake considered "Finishd."

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