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THE BECKFORD SOCIETY

The Society, founded in 1995, has the following aims:

1. To promote an interest in the life and works of William Beckford and his circle.
2. To encourage Beckford studies and scholarship through exhibitions and publications, including an annual Journal and occasional Newsletters.
3. To hold an annual Beckford lecture or symposium.
4. To support the preservation of Beckford's Tower, Bath, and other buildings, gardens, landscapes and objects associated with William Beckford and his circle.

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Composing for Mozart

MALCOLM JACK

Timothy Mowl's idiosyncratic biography, *William Beckford: Composing for Mozart* (John Murray, 1998), begins with an imaginative flourish. On 21 August 1838, an aspiring young artist, Henry Venn Lansdown managed, through the good offices of his friend, the architect Henry Goodridge, to gain an audience with the great man himself, now aged seventy-seven. Dr Mowl amusingly re-creates this occasion at Lansdown Crescent and his portrait of a Beckford, by turns charming and prickly, who was 'small, slender...very agile and quick moving, as ready to leap over a stool as to step around it' (p. 9) is very convincing.

What Dr Mowl manages to capture in this introduction is Beckford's extraordinary vitality and mental pertness and although he never denies these qualities in the rest of the book, the reader should enjoy, even relish this opening scene since from here on it will be downhill all the way. For the rest of the book will be a demolition job, a sustained exercise in reducing Beckford's reputation in every area in which he has been said to excel – as writer, as landscape architect, as collector – to precious little for, as Dr Mowl remarks, Beckford had 'the sensibility to enjoy a perfect creation but not the genius to achieve it'. (p. 24)

Dr Mowl sets about his iconoclastic task with such venom that we have to wonder what grudge he has against Beckford and indeed his previous biographers. Of course I am not suggesting that biography should be mere hagiography. The study of an individual who does not please the biographer, who is not his friend, is very fashionable – witness Ian Gibson's 'shameful' life of Salvador Dali. But to make the main object of biography the relentless pursuit of fraudulent posturing – indicated by Dr Mowl's subtitle *Composing for Mozart* – shifts attention from the

psychology of the subject to the psychology of the biographer.

This intention of playing the old satirist's game of *épater les borgeois* would be harmless enough, indeed it was a sport that young Beckford himself enjoyed, were it not for Dr Mowl's strident dismissal of almost everything previously written about Beckford. Ironically it is that predilection which leads him to his own 'composing for Mozart'. Many of his observations – about grottoes and their influence, about Beckford's pre-Romanticism, about his Rousseauist tendencies, about the Swiss connections, about the influence of Batalha on Fonthill, etc etc – have all been clearly and accurately spelt out by previous Beckfordians, the despised gaggle he almost always curtly and collectively dismisses.

These shortcomings are a great pity for there is enough in this book to suggest that Dr Mowl *might* have written an important work on Beckford. He has a thorough knowledge of the Bodleian Papers (though his refusal to note sources is ungenerous to future scholars); he is acute on a number of facets of Beckford's character (particularly on the subject of his insecurity) and he makes valuable re-assessments of the role of Lettice and Louisa in Beckford's life.

But these observations are never satisfactorily brought together in a convincing, full portrait. Dr Mowl suggests the complexity of Beckford's character – something all the Caliph's biographers have been familiar with – but he does not make the connection between the imaginative and the created elements in Beckford's literary art. He is, of course, unwilling to do so because the demolition job must go on – the cloyingly floweriness of the prose, the perverted taste of Fonthill, a homosexual's theatricality in collecting tastes (!) – all must be exposed by a biographer gripped by a destructive urge. This hasty passion also leads to slips along the way but Dr Mowl is an impatient traveller who is determined not to make himself or his reader at home with Beckford.

An English Fidalgo

William Beckford: An English Fidalgo. By Malcolm Jack. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1997. $55

ROBERT DRAKE

I think the first thing I ever learned about William Beckford – about the time I was a college sophomore – was that he had written a very daring novel called *Vathek*, compounded of equal parts of Lord Byron and Mary Shelley, full of incense and palm trees and I know not what else – mostly exotica erotica, I suppose.

But at that point I declined to read it because I had some years previously had a disappointing experience with William Faulkner's *Sanctuary*, which was supposed to be a very improper book but which, in due course, I found duller than all get-out. So I left *Vathek* on the back burner and went on to Mrs Radcliffe but, even better still, *Northanger Abbey*. And naturally, as an American, I gave pride of place to Edgar Allan Poe but always took care to remember that therein his 'bottom line' was always 'My terror is not from Germany but of the soul.' (No moans and groans in the cellar for *him*, but more like the destruction that wasteth at noonday. And of course that's why he frightens us still.)

But now in Malcolm Jack's volume, we see – and learn – much more about Beckford than what may have been his predilection for the Gothic. We learn about his sketches, his recollections, many of them naturally of his 'second home', Portugal, and quite genuinely romantic and inspiring. And perhaps the whole rationale of the book is in the subtitle – *An English Fidalgo*, the sense of which is, connotatively, something foreign and yet domestic, rare but somehow ordinary, strange yet familiar: an *English* fidalgo, which here would imply something

of the down-to-earth, light-of-common-day English coupled with something mysterious and enchanting – and of course aristocratic. And, in a sense, all of it comprising both Beckford's strengths and weaknesses.

Born to great wealth and blue blood, he seemed to have the best of both worlds, yet in some way these qualities cancelled each other out – talent and gifts aplenty yet confusion and frustration of mind and soul – about sexual preferences, matters of taste, even matters political and social. Always in love with his adopted Portugal, he longed in vain for some sort of official recognition, some sort of position back home, always drawn back to England by its 'safety', its many securities – a difficult state of mind, a painful sort of 'endurance contest' at best. And increasingly as he grew older, these things did not become any easier for him. And before the end he even sold Fonthill Abbey and retired to Bath, and the ball was over.

Are all the English, for all their cosmopolitanism, finally reluctant to make that ultimate break with 'home'? I'm certainly not brave enough to pursue that question here, but by way of implicit argument I might quote the observation of some Anglican divine who said the ordinary Englishman always likes for the established Church to be there – so he can stay away from it.

Dr Jack, who has been Clerk to more than one committee in the House of Commons as well as Chairman of the Beckford Society, a scholar who has written on Bernard Mandeville and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu among others, has done a very creditable job here – not attempting yet another *life* of Beckford but a distillation of his early and middle years, when the world for him was fresh and new, opportunities seemed perhaps limitless, and while the evil days had come not.

'Sinking Apace into the Bosom of Delusions' William Beckford's Earliest Narrative of Travel
An introduction to *Fragments of an English Tour*

DICK CLAÉSSON

William Beckford embarked on his English tour late in the Summer of 1779.[1] He had spent six months at home since his return from Switzerland, and was now expected to familiarize himself with his native land. He left for the West of England, accompanied by his tutor John Lettice, and arrived in Plymouth in late August. The two travellers had arrived at an opportune moment. Off the coast lay more than sixty ships of the line and 'an equal number of frigates and smaller vessels'[2] – the combined enemy fleets of France and Spain – and the town was, for a brief moment in time, at the center of everyone's attention. Beckford and his tutor studied the town and its military encampments perhaps too closely and were 'seized as spies, for taking observations on behalf of the enemy'.[3] As Beckford had already made his presence known to the Governor of Plymouth, Sir John Lindsay, the matter was soon set right and the journey could continue.

The sublime outline of Mount Edgecumbe impressed Beckford more than the city of Plymouth – the mountain no doubt suited his romantic inclinations better – yet it too would soon pale in remembrance as the party arrived at Powderham Castle, near Exeter. Though Beckford's biographer Cyrus Redding talks of Lord Courtenay's 'lofty tower...which commanded one of the finest and most extensive views in the kingdom'[4] it was hardly the architecture that made Beckford linger. Brian Fothergill vividly describes the 'curious household' into which Beckford descended:[5]

> At the head of it was Viscount Courtenay, a merry but trivial–

> minded man who had considered it no disgrace to one of the most ancient lineages in Europe to take in marriage the hand of a Wallingford tavern-owner's daughter who had duly presented him with twelve daughters before producing an heir to his name and title. In this almost exclusively feminine nursery it is not surprising that the sole male inhabitant, named William after his father, was somewhat pampered and effeminate with the rather girlish good looks that did not quarrel with the nick–name of 'Kitty' that was soon to be bestowed upon him. The boy's mother, almost constantly in some stage of pregnancy, was in no position to dominate her household or family, and many of the wifely duties had devolved upon Lord Courtenay's sister Charlotte, then still unmarried. No sooner had Beckford set eyes on the young William Courtenay than he fell in love with him, while the boy's aunt Charlotte found much to admire in the undoubted attractions of their visitor. To be in love with the nephew and not to be unaware of the admiration of the aunt was a situation very much to Beckford's taste.

After leaving Powderham (reluctantly, no doubt) other mansions and nobles passed at a rapid but less heart-consuming pace. The two travellers visited Lord Lisburne, Sir G. Yonge, Mr Bamfylde, Sir Charles Tynte, Sir Philip Hale and Lord Egmont; explored 'Glastonbury Tor, Thorn, ruined abbey, and the cathedral of Wells,'[6] and went on to Bath to visit Beckford's 'holy uncle,'[7] Charles Hamilton, and dine with Lady Bathurst. The city of Gloucester came next, and 'Worcester, Hagley, the Leasowes, and Birmingham, with Bolton and Watt's manufactory, and a visit to the theatre'[8] followed. The sights of England were quickly taken in, as is evident from the laconic tone of Redding's continued account:[9]

> The youth and his tutor now travelled by Lichfield to Derby, and visited Lord Scarsdale. Then they proceeded to Ashbourne, Okam, Ilam, Dove-dale, and Matlock. At the last place a number of amusing parties were made up, for it was a fashionable haunt. Chatsworth, Haddon Hall, the Peak, and

> Buxton followed. Manchester was visited. The Duke of Bridgwater's subterranean canal was explored for nearly a mile, by young Beckford and a party of ladies who had come on in his company from Matlock. Warrington Academy, and the Presbyterian establishment for students were explained, as to its arrangements and vacations, and young Beckford was surprised to find the students were only allowed three months' vacation in the year. Glass-making strongly attracted his attention. The sight of Liverpool, with its buildings, and a number of French and Spanish prizes which lay there, setting the town in high spirits, seemed to make no impression upon his mind. Not so Lancaster. He was delighted with the river Lune from John o'Gaunt's castle, and at once reverted to Eton-Brea, and to his old ancestral notions.

Redding is even less verbal on Beckford's tour of the Lake District – possibly because Beckford left him very little material to work with – yet the manuscript version of the *Memoirs* allows Beckford's voice to be heard as he and Lettice cross the sands to Ulverston: [10]

> 'It was ebb for the sands are flat as an oriental desert but hard, wet and trackless. The distant mountains of Westmoreland and Cumberland rose before us with their heads in some places veiled in mist in others rising in an infinite variety of forms colors and magnitudes. From the lower elevations they ascended in fine gradation until they were lost to the vision, while before us stretched an immense plain of sand crossed by shallow streams that reached only[?] to the axles of our carriage wheels. Guides on horseback preceded us, for the passage was only practicable at certain times of the tide. There was nothing wanting to complete noble landscape scenery, the land bordering upon the sands consisted of corn fields, green enclosures, and woods, while churches, villages and romantic old castles, were well dispersed over the picture. Sometimes we saw fine woods of oak and beech descending almost to the sands and sloping upwards to the mountain. Here a group of

> rocks frowned over some pretty bay within which green islands shot up continually varying their forms as we proceeded. We passed close to reefs and shoals, dark, jagged, and fully exposed by the recession of the tide. Now we crossed the estuaries of tidal rivers by which were seen flocks of sea mews, and other acquatic birds, stately herons and dark shags. Some were swimming, others on the wing, and vast numbers grouped and motionless. As we approached the opposite shore the scene was enlivened by passengers some on foot and some on horseback or in carriages hurrying forward with the guides to reach the opposite shore before the flowing of the tide. Parties of fishermen too were setting their nets. The morning was fine, we had left Lancaster early and by ten o'clock had reached Ulverston in Furness. The sea came in quickly after we had crossed, it soon closed upon us, and converted the vast plain of sand we had just before passed over into an ocean. We felt as if we were suddenly pent up in another world.'

'Ulverston being headquarters,' Redding continues in the published version, 'the lakes in this part of Furness were explored in turn'.[11] Beckford appears to have appreciated especially Furness Abbey (situated in the ominously named Valley of the Deadly Nightshade) but left brief fragments of observations only from such places as Coniston Water, Pooley Bridge, Dunmallard Hill, Ullswater and Derwentwater, allowing the modern reader to reconstruct only the barest outline of his tour of the Lakes.

Beckford and Lettice continued to York and to Ripon, admiring the sacred sublimity of York Cathedral and the rural sublimity of the scenery at Hackfall, near Ripon. Having travelled through a large part of England in less than six weeks, they began their journey home, arriving at Beckford's London house in Wimpole Street in October. In December Beckford was back at Fonthill, free to reminisce about the one lasting impression of his English tour: the fond memories of William at Powderham.

While an account of Beckford's and Lettice's movements reads as a frenzied, six-week act of socialising and sightseeing in high society, we find little or no trace of this in the journal which Beckford composed.[12] It is of course less an account of actual events than it is an exploration of various aesthetic responses to picturesque and sublime scenery, and it is perhaps this very quality that defines the text as truly 'Beckfordian.' We are reminded of *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents* (1783), which though showing Beckford as a more skilled and more mature author still fondly retains many of the characteristic moods and sentiments drafted in the *English Tour*. In this earlier and much shorter work, Beckford – or 'Beckford,' for it is as a fictional character in the vein of Goethe's *Werther* that the 'I' of the *English Tour* is to be construed – emerges as a less caustic observer. Very few remarks dwell on mundane matters. The settings may be real (and shift with pleasing variety as the narrative moves from place to place), yet focus is never on the place itself but on the feelings and sentiments it evokes. The traveller – 'Beckford' – is at the heart of the narrative. Encompassing all manners of sensory reactions (carefully expressed in sensuous sentences) he is the literary equivalent of the Claude Glass: framing the tinted landscape whilst recording – through the medium of a subject – the *idea* of the place.

Beckford's use of various literary sources, classical as well as contemporary, is well known. The footnotes to *Vathek*, for instance, shows to an admittedly extreme degree his debt to the literary and scientific accomplishments of many illustrious names. In the *English Tour*, a much shorter manuscript, the references and allusions may seem few by comparison, yet a list of the works invoked would include classical authors and contemporary travel writers, philosophers and poets as varied as Homer, Theocritus, Ovid, West, Hutchinson, Rousseau, Spenser and Collins. Beckford's use of these works range from direct quotation to oblique allusion. Classical themes may be put to

work in a context that deals, on one obvious level, with the outwards movements of a traveller exploring the picturesque and sublime sceneries of England, but focuses, on a deeper level, on the emotional ecstasy of the traveller as he travels *inwards*. It is perhaps surprising that though this was a period of intense artistic and personal activity on Beckford's part, the *English Tour* remains remarkably silent on biographical matters. This was, after all, the trip on which he met the young William Courtenay - an event which most biographers consider crucial to Beckford's development and later life. This was also the trip on which he and Lettice were thought to be spies and very nearly arrested. Yet nothing of this is actually mentioned in the *English Tour*. A few remarks may possibly be attributed to his new-found love – if one is inclined towards biography – but nothing conclusive regarding Beckford can be deduced using the *English Tour* as the sole basis for deductions.[13] *Beckford is absent*, but he has created a narrator who conducts a constant soliloquy to a devoted audience of one. The narratee – or, if we read the notes as letters, the *addressee* – appears in close spiritual contact with the narrator. Beckford used this ideal companion often in his texts, creating him (or her) as a mirror reflection of the 'I,' reflecting, as he once wrote, his ideas 'as clearly as the Lake its shores,' completely understanding 'my whole train of ideas and sensations: I might at present write my fancies in mystic signs with the certainty of their not being concealed.'[14]

Beckford tells us very little of his factual experiences. Had he intended the *English Tour* to be an accurate account of his English travels he would certainly have written it differently. We are presented with the rough outline of a *romantic excursion*. Moving rapidly from Plymouth to York (in words if not in action), Beckford's narrator embarks on a journey that is spiritual as well as sensual: 'But it grows late my Eyes are overpowered with Sleep and I am sinking apace into the Bosom of Delusions.'

A brief note on the manuscript. *The manuscript has been transcribed with as much precision as possible. Variants and substantial manuscript revisions have – along with elusive allusions and references – been accounted for in the footnotes. The version reproduced is fols. 10-18, with the fragments fols 1-9, MS. Beckford d.3. I wish to express my gratitude to the Bodleian Library for the kind permission to publish this manuscript, as well as for the permission to quote freely from other manuscripts in their holdings.*

The original pagination is indicated within square brackets. Where Beckford underlined words I feel that italics were intended, and have used them here.

[1] All accounts, including the present, of Beckford's English tour are heavily indebted to Cyrus Redding's *Memoirs of William Beckford of Fonthill, Author of "Vathek."*, London 1859, vol. 1, pp. 145-151. The extant manuscript notes on the tour (Bodleian shelfmark MS. Beckford d.3) comprises some four thousand words in all. This short manuscript is divided into two main parts: first, a fair copy in the hand of an amanuensis (and with alterations by Beckford) of some sixteen pages of notes, dated between August 24 and September 29, 1779. Whilst making up the bulk of the manuscript, this first part only covers events on four different days, in Plymouth and in York (the version chosen for publication here is fols. 10-18; the fragments are fols. 1-9). The second part is a small collection of fragments in Beckford's own hand – rough sketches outlining moods, events and ideas. There are eight fragments

catalogued by the Bodleian as belonging to this collection, but there may well have been others (cf. note 10). They are probably the earliest extant drafts of the *English Tour*. Though none of them was expanded for use in the sixteen page fair copy, they outline events taking place *in between* the visits to Plymouth and York, during a tour of the Lake District.

[2] Robert Scott, *History of England, During the Reign of George the Third*, London 1824, vol. 2, p. 291.

[3] Redding (1859), *Beckford*, vol. 1, p. 146.

[4] Redding, p. 147.

[5] Brian Fothergill, *Beckford of Fonthill*, London 1979, pp. 69-70.

[6] Redding (1859), *Beckford*, pp. 147-148.

[7] Beckford, in a letter dated July 14, 1781; quoted from Lewis Melville, *The Life and Letters of William Beckford of Fonthill (Author of "Vathek")*, London 1910, p. 116.

[8] Redding (1859), *Beckford*, p. 149.

[9] Redding, pp. 149-150.

[10] Cf. Cyrus Redding's manuscript *Memoirs of William Beckford*, MS. Beckford c. 85/2, vol. i, p. 100. Redding appears to quote from Beckford's own words, but it is impossible to deduce whether this indicates the existence of another diary (in which case this is now lost), or if it is simply a 'transcript' of a piece of conversation between Redding and Beckford.

[11] Redding (1859), *Beckford*, pp. 150-151.

[12] I have retained for want of a better the use of the term 'journal' which tradition has associated with the manuscript; it is however, to some considerable extent, a misleading descriptor of the nature of the manuscript which is fictional rather than factual. I have renamed the manuscript, at the suggestion of Laurent Châtel, *Fragments of an English Tour*. Châtel has described these fragments, 'with no apparent link or transition' (a conclusion with which I am not wholly in agreement) as falling into 'a typically Beckfordian pattern of literary fragmentation'. Cf. also Laurent Châtel, 'Kaleidoscopic senses: Landscape writing and the art of chiaroscuro in William Beckford (1760-1844)', in *Interfaces. Image Texte Langage*, no 9, Février 1996, p. 108, footnote 3.

[13] Boyd Alexander described these remarks as 'the earliest reference I have seen to his perverted friendships, which evidently began in Switzerland in 1777 or 1778.' Cf. Boyd Alexander, *Beckfordiana or Journals, Journal Jottings and Early Compositions of William Beckford of Fonthill* [MS. Eng. misc. d.1289], p. 26 [fol. 33].

[14] Cf. William Beckford, *The Transport of Pleasure*, Göteborg 1996, p. 31.

Fragments of an English Tour

WILLIAM BECKFORD

[1] Plymouth August 24th 1779

If you had been with me to night we should have walked together on the Cliffs and mutually delighted in the Moon which illuminated them. The Sky was serene and I lay peaceably beneath its expanse on a smooth Down sloping towards the Sea.

There were but few Ships in the Port, a circumstance which to say truth I rejoiced in. Except a small fishing Boat that danced on the Waves immediately below me, no vessel interrupted the solitude of the Ocean. I was all attention to the murmur of the Tide flowing over the base of the Precipices and listened to the hum of distant Voices.

At intervals a strange melancholy Tune which came from the Boat passed with the Winds by my Ear.

The Turf was so full of Herbs and Fragrance that I could willingly have reposed the whole Night upon its Bosom and should have seen wondrous things "Dreaming by Night under the open Sky";[1] but so many recollections of Achs and Rheumatisms poured in upon me that I arose not without reluctance and wished myself in some Country remote from Europe with the Worshippers of the Moon – How I lamented – how often I lamented that you or some such Lunatic was not leaning on a Rock by my side, enjoying the Moonshine that rested on the Hills, on the Woods of *Mount Edgecumbe* on the Waters beneath.

Never can I behold a lovelier Scene – It reminds me of former Moonlights. Just such a sky and such a Moon hung over the Groves of *Evian* where my Hours glided so smoothly along. It was on an Evening like this that I crossed the Lake from *Vevay* and coasted the Shores of Savoy filled with a succession of ever [2] new and ever Youthful Ideas. Can I forget the sensations I

experienced when the Sun sinking behind the *Jura* tinged the Rock of *Meillerie* and all the Labyrinth of Woods and hanging Meadows above with his softest and most affecting Rays? – now the ensueing Twilight during which the sad Scenes of the Heloise glowing with Rousseau's impassioned eloquence passed in succession before me?[2] Shall I live and not remember that moment when the Thickets above the Castle of Blonay began to glimmer and the Moon rising cast her serene light on the most interesting of countenances – absorbed in the contemplation of that blest vision, twas then I tasted happiness & gave myself freely up to the enjoyment of the Scene expressing every Idea, however wild and singular, which it suggested with an unbounded Confidence. My supreme pleasure is now to recollect those departed hours, & to dwell on the minutest circumstance connected with them – My Imagination delights in haunting the woody hills and Vallies which lie concealed and sheltered at the feet of the Alps. – There every Night do I seem to wander the instant my eyes are closed and fancy I hear the same Springs which were used to lull me and think myself listening to that voice, whose thrilling accents sunk with such pleasing pain – such melancholy tenderness into the inmost recesses of my existence. –

And even when light begins to dawn I seem listening to former Songs and past conversations are repeated, nay even the Forms of those I so tenderly loved appear faintly around me and stretching out my hands towards them I often awake in Tears. What would I not give to transport them hither or rather to transport myself to them; for at this Period or indeed at any period England is not the Island they would admire. Few that I have met with in this phlegmatic [3] Region comprehend the wild & strange delight arising from new and singular Situations. To strike boldly into any untrodden path is in this Country, a mighty Trespass and every thing like Originality either in Taste or Conversation is always thrown, by the English World into the

Tub of Whimsies a most contemptible Situation in their Eyes, of course an eligible one in mine. Probably we have been both sent there before now, and it is best to be reconciled to ones Fate.

To morrow I expect *Mount Edgecumbe* and the Ocean to appear in great Splendor; for the Sunset was cloudless and the brightness of the Moon promises a delightful Day. –

I am quite impatient to walk on the Promontories and cast an eager Look over the Plains of Sea. But it grows late my Eyes are overpowered with Sleep and I am sinking apace into the Bosom of Delusions. –

> ..... des Nuits la noire Deité
> Du haut d'un Char d'Ebene marqueté
> Repand sur nous les Pavots et les Songes
> Et nous endort dans le Sein des Mensonges[3]

Plymouth August 25th 1779

It is a lovely Morning and the Sun smiles upon the Sea.

I long to be out of this noisy Town whose Inhabitants are all in Confusion, filled with alarms and suspicions staring about with rusty guns in one hand and Telescopes in the other. –

Well wish me joy the Carriage is at the Door and I shall soon take refuge in the Groves of *Mount Edgecumbe*. – : – : – : –

[4] After passing Streets, Lanes and Alleys all equally dirty and disagreeable we arrived, thro' Clouds of Dust, at the Dock which like other Docks was crowded with buzy Faces. – From hence we made the best of our way to the Ferry where a Boat waited to carry us over an arm of the Sea which separates *Plymouth* and all its impertinences from the more tranquil Shores of *Mount Edgecumbe*.

My Spirits grew lighter when I found myself on the Waves and I need not say t'was without regret that I left the Dust, the Mob and the Politicians behind me. – In about a quarter of an Hour we were landed beneath an ascent covered with tall Trees under which we proceeded, mounting higher and higher till we

reached an irregular Glade; delightfully green, shaded by Spanish Chestnuts and fanned by breezes which played amongst their foliage. – Here I rested beneath a weeping Willow for several moments, admiring the variety of Ground which appeared on all sides and catching, the Groves moving with the Wind, glimpses of blue Sea between their Branches. After this short repose we looked up several Terraces to the House whose Porches, Turrets and Battlements were thrown into an agreeable Confusion and reminded me at the first glance, of those airy Palaces and Castles which Spencer so often discribes. However we did not *recoinoitre* this Edifice which pleased me so much at a Distance; but kept aloof and heard a Voice singing in one of the Towers, as we passed the Slopes beneath.

The Sun was powerful and we gladly ascended a Terrace of the finest Turf shaded by a Row of Oaks and commanding an uninterrupted prospect of the *Dock*, the *Citadel* and *Port* – Building above Building and a rising [5] Country striped with white Walls and dotted with the Tents of an Encampment beyond.

This was not exactly the View I coveted and I turned from it with pleasure to contemplate the woods and verdure which encircled me.

Their Charms were enhanced by Contrast and it was with peculiar Satisfaction I plunged into a deep impenetrable Grove of Beech Chesnuts and Acacias hanging wildly on the Brow of the Mountain, Sea below and green pasture above fed by Deer. –

A winding Path led us thro' the Grove to some retired mossy Seats on all which severally we reposed and enjoyed the fragrance of the Woods and heard the Waves yet unseen,[4] murmuring beneath. – From these Seats our Path brought us to other shady Declivities where we wandered till a spring we perceived issuing from beneath a rugged Cove inclined us to halt by its margin. –:–:–[5]

The perfume of the Flowers that sprang wildly from every

crevice in the Rocks and the soft Sea Air breathed such Inspiration that I persuaded myself I was no longer in England. The [6] more I advanced along the Mountainside, the more every Object conspired to favour this Idea. – Emerging from the Woods I found myself on a vast Lawn suspended above the Ocean, which I crossed swiftly to enter other thickets composed of Beeches and Walnuts. To these succeeded a truly Sicilian Vegetation, of Laurel and Arbutus cloathing the romantic Steeps of the Mountain with the utmost Luxuriance. Here and there large Rocks peeped from amongst the bright greens of the Shrubbery, some rough and exposed, others covered with a blooming variety of Heaths. –:– Behind these masses and high above the Paths several Pines and Cypresses spired up into the Sky and waved with the breezes.

When gazing at the vast expanse of Ocean, to all appearance surrounding this enchanted Spot I could not help imagining myself suddenly conveyed to some fortunate Island and when I looked up to the Pines and Cypresses waving on the Cliffs – I believed this divine Abode inhabited by no less a Personage than Calypso herself whose Grotto I was every Instant in expectation of discovering. Surely said I to myself there are the promontories where she used to walk disconsolately with Eyes fixed on the Ocean and under that Ilex she has often wept the departure of Ulysses. Having indulged for a while these fancies and blessed the Prospects which revived some of Homer's descriptions in my mind I prepared to explore the mazes of the Thickets fringing the Steeps, above, below and on every Side. Descending some Steps shaped rudely in the Rock I came to another Labyrinth hanging directly above the Shore over which the intermingled branches of the Pine and Arbutus cast a refreshing Shade. –:–:–:–

[7] Spots of the smoothest Turf often occurred in these cool Alleys where I sat down amidst Plants and Flowers. All vegetation thrives in these Recesses cherished by a happy exposure and screened from the Northern Winds by Woods rising

one above the other, terminated by pointed Rocks and Pines that flourish on their very extremities. –

After passing many moments in the pleasing gloom of these retirements I ascended another series of rugged steps, oerhung by arching Shrubs, which brought me suddenly to the edge of a Precipice from which I started back dazzled by the Sun beaming in full Splendor on the Ocean. A deep recess in the Cliffs presented itself as I turned from the glittering Sea where I retired and cast myself on a little Ledge of Rock defended from the Sun by clusters of Ivy. There I caught every gale that blew and whilst carelessly reclined in the Shade contemplated the shining Plains and bright sky that lay stretched out in full prospect before me. –

It was Mid-day and the Winds fell – the surrounding Woods grew still, the Cypresses no longer waved on the Rocks and the Ocean calming by degrees assumed such transparent cærulean Colours as Words cannot describe. No Sail appeared on the Horizon, and from my Recess no point of Land was visible. My Eyes lifted upwards roved in the blue Æther – cast down they wandered without interruption over an expanse of azure Sea.

To the right of my rustic Couch a huge Rock projected into the Waves with a Path stealing along its Summit that Polypheme would have chosen for his airy walk. – You know how he loved situations which commanded Galatea's Element and Pinnacles high above [8] the waves where he might waste whole Hours in fond Complaints and vain Invitations.[6]

I too should have soothed myself somewhat in a similar manner with Poetry and Song, but I feared to raise my Voice. Theocritus has taught me to venerate the mighty Pan who always slumbers at Noon and I knew not how near the Thicket might be which concealed him. – Fearing then to intrude upon this Sacred repose I quitted my retreat and paced in silence along a narrow track amongst the Shrubs. This Track led me after mounting and descending in a very irregular manner to a round of Turf inclosed by the Cypress & the Ilex. – The whole Air I breathed in this spot

impregnated with the perfume of Myrtles convinced me it was the beloved haunt of a Deity: Nor was I surprized at discovering amongst these elegant plants an Altar inscribed to the *Sea-born Venus.*[7] How happily could I have passed my Hours within this Circle of Cypresses had you or some one of those, with whom I lived on the banks of the Lake, been present. – How would that Friend I have so frequently described to you have felt the elegance of this simple and sequestered Scene! Not one of its beauties would have passed unregarded. To Day no one was near to notice them or collect the Myrtle Blossoms which whitened the Ground. Their delicate Fragrance was lavished upon me alone and I had no more a Companion capable of lingering with me in these Paths till the close of Day. – These Solitudes this soft Light let in thro' the Woods which surround them, the noise of the distant Surges all reminded me of delightful moments passed in similar situations. Every Leaf that [9] stirred, every Insect that buzzed in the Air affected me. – The glimpses I caught of the Sea beneath the Shades, that vast expanse which separated me from the Companions of my happiest Hours filled me with melancholy Sensations and the sad Idea of having perhaps beheld the fair Forms for the last time haunted me whilst I leaned on the Altar. Should I even in some future period again behold them how may they be changed! – The Scenes from which we caught our purest pleasures remain unalterable whilst we experience a thousand Vicissitudes. Every Spring restores to them their Blossoms and their Foliage; but the bloom of youthful Ideas passes swiftly away – alas too swiftly; for it passes never to return. –:–:–

Reluctantly quitting the Altar and ascending the Steeps I soon left the pendent Woods and Shrubberies below me and found myself amongst Pines on the loftiest Region of the Mount, where I paused an instant to cast still one more look on the azure Sea. Then moving forwards I reached a green plain on the brow of these Eminences where I accosted several Herds of Deer that as you may suppose returned no answer, but running wildly over the

Lawn left me in entire Solitude.

A little path led across the Plain which I pursued and attained but too speedily the Boundary of these affecting Scenes.–:–:–:–

A.C.[8]

[10] York September 27th 1779 8 o'Clock Eve

There was no object I reckoned more upon seeing during the whole Course of my Journey than the Cathedral of York. The moment I entered I was seized with admiration scarcely knowing which way to turn myself. Lost in the immensity and variety of the Structure, I remained several moments motionless at the grand Entrance of the Cross aile gazing at the long perspectives of clustered Columns rising on every side, the rich Windows between and the vast expansion of the Arches above.

The Evening was drawing on and the Sun gleaming thro' the western Windows cast the Shadows of their Paintings on the Pavement beneath.

Innumerable reds and purples in the liveliest tints shone all around me.[9]

Recovering by degrees from my first surprize I advanced slowly towards the Center of the Edifice and pausing under the great Tower began to notice the beautiful Design and Symmetry of the whole. Twas in vain however to examine every Nitch, every Tabernacle, every slender pillar or canopy of elaborate carved work and I was soon bewildered in the attempt; but the more I looked the more I discovered and the more I was astonished.[10] Whilst I was contemplating the Nave and admiring its magnificent Arches, the Service began and soon the [11] Organ breathed such lofty and solemn Airs as lifted me above myself and banished all worldly thoughts from my Mind.[11] Never was I more solemnly affected than upon this Occasion; but I should tell you I was not in the Choir – I saw no singing Men and had a right to imagine (and I beg you you will not doubt) that the Sounds proceeded from some Sanctuary beyond the groups of

Pillars, some holy place into which it was not lawful to penetrate. Half an Hour passed away I believe whilst I leaned against one of the great Columns which support the Tower, absorbed in a train of legendary Ideas and quite transported by the Harmony which filled the Place to those Regions inhabited by the Saints whose Images appeared glowing between every Arch and terminating every Aile. –:–:–:–

The Music ended and the Voices died away amongst the Arches before I left my Column to enter the Choir, which was now deserted. No one remained but a Verger who after repeating his daily Histories of Monuments and Epitaphs quitted me conduct some other more attentive Personage. –:–:–

I was now alone in the Choir and ascending several flights of Steps examined the Screen above the Altar which consists of eight Arches enriched with delicate Sculpture and adorned with pinnacles of the lightest Workmanship. The openings are now glazed with plate glass and admit a partial prospect of one of the noblest Windows in the Universe rising nearly from the base to the very summit of the Edifice, filled up with exquisite Tracery and displaying the most vivid Paintings. Not content with viewing them [12] thro' the medium of the glass I descended the Steps and leaving the Choir walked along an Isle[12] rich with fret work and imagery to the eastern extremity of the Building, where this great Window appears in full majesty and again fixed my attention.

But what suggested a finer idea of Vision and Miracle[13] than anything I ever beheld was (upon my turning round) its reflection on the glazed work of the Screen which as I advanced all the way communicating my own motion, spread wider and wider and rose every step I took till the whole in all its varied Hues and splendid Colouring hung suspended in the Air. –:–:–

This apparition held me in astonishment till the Sun disappeared and the Twilight increasing it faded away. I now retreated,[14] and moving slowly along reached my old station

beneath the Tower. Happily no People were passing thro' the Ailes, the stilness, the Solitude of the vast space around me was uninterrupted except by the warblings of a few Red-Breasts in the Cloisters and hanging Galleries high above the Arcades. – A solemn Evening Light admitted thro' the mosaic of the Windows was spread over the Tower under which I stood whilst the extremities of the Ailes and recesses of the Cloisters were already in deep Shade. –

Twas impossible in such a Situation not to be affected with the most religious Sensations. For my own part I was filled with Awe and looked up to the Range of Cloisters dimly seen above the Arches with peculiar Veneration. – There was some thing so strange and mysterious in these Galleries that I almost imagined the holy Spirits of the Founders of the [13] Pile still loved to linger in their Recesses. Impressed with this Idea I remained a long while beneath the Tower wishing every Instant some Form might look over the Parapet of the Galleries or some Voice be heard calling to me from their Shades. But alas I received no admonitions – no intelligence was imparted to me from that dark Country to which so many great and venerable Fathers are retired. All was gloom and Silence and they reigned profoundly throughout the whole Structure. – Awed by the solemnity of the Scene, under some sense of unworthiness I retired from the consecrated Walls and casting one more Look on the Tombs of their revered Founders left them to sleep in peace.

[14] September 29th 1779

We left York on a sunny Evening and I was sorry when the Towers of its Cathedral began to lessen on my sight.

It was late before we reached Rippon and the next Morning I rode eight Miles thro common Lanes and every day inclosures to Hackfall, a deep rocky Valley[15] rapt up in Groves and Thickets. I heard the trickling of Rills in the Woodlands before I entered

their Shade and listened with pleasure to the distant Song of the Birds which inhabit them. The Solitary Air and unexpected wildness of the Prospect inspired a sentiment of serenity and freedom which I did not find lessened on descending amongst Steeps and Copses that looked quite detached from the World. A Rivulet flows rapidly down these Declivities and covering every Rock, or mossy Root which opposes its passage with the clearest Waters forms a succession of romantic Falls which glimmer amongst impending Groves and Fragments. A Path is conducted on the edge of the Stream and follows all its Descents and Windings till it opens to a Glen with a Seat where I rested, soothed with the tranquility of this Sylvan Region. – It was a mild autumnal Day and the Sun cast a [15] gleam on the Woods lighting up their Foliage and gilding the Springs that ran murmuring beneath. Before me rose a lofty Rock almost concealed by a thick Vegetation of bushy Oaks and Hazels from under whose Stems a transparent Stream issued and hurrying along a ledge intirely mossed over cast itself from the Steep into the Rivulet below. – Beds of Moss carpet the edge of the Waters softer and more delicious than any I think ever rivulet enjoyed. I need not tell you that I reposed upon them, poring over the Brook according to my old Custom and prying into the Copse where it lost itself in depths and hollows and gurgled unseen. These are truly Haunts for rural Powers – Springs and Fountains over which the Naids need not blush to preside.

I could have passed the whole Day in this Glen, slumbering by the bubbling Waters and harkening to the whispers of an ancient Oak, whose appearance was perfectly oracular; but a Desire of exploring what lay beyond amongst the Woods, urged me forwards. – After roving a while thro' the thickets which skirt the extremity of the Glen, I came to a second opening surrounded by hanging Woods and Cliffs with Ruins on their craggy Summits, a River rolling beneath, precipices on every Side and Streams precipitating themselves from their Declivities.

A Rude Temple rises in this central point where the murmur of the Woods and Waters is heard in perfection. –

This must have been the Throne of Melancholy, "*the wild sequestered Seat*" where she sat retired as Collins found her.[16] From hence [16] a shady Alley led me to another Glade of Greensward, tall Oaks and Ashes rising irregularly from the Turf between whose Branches other distant Wilds and Steeps were discovered. In Front a vast Theatre of Woods crowned by ruined Arches and the remains of an aweful Temple just such as Gasper delighted in painting. – [17] to the left a venerable Cell, mantled with Ivy, probably the abode of an Anchoret who often meditates on the mossy Stones scattered thro' this Glade. I suppose he shunned me and sought the Depths of the Thickets. Unwilling to intrude upon his Concealments I clambered up a rugged Eminence amongst clusters of Fern and having attained its Summit walked along this wild Terrace which overlooks all the mazes of the Woods and the windings of the River till I came to a Spot darkly shaded by Oaks overgrown with Ivy and Misletoe, strewed with dry leaves and so strangely hemmed in by misshapen Roots that I could not help thinking I was entering the Domain of a Wizard. The Rustling of my footsteps amongst decayed leaves disturbed the devotions of a solemn Owl (perhaps the Wizard himself) who sat moping in the hollow of an Oak. –:–

He opened a very suspicious Eye upon my approach and sailing away over the Vale beneath hid himself in the distant Solitudes. I pursued my Rout without meeting with any further indications of Sorcery and reaching the extremity of the Groves got into the Carriage which waited there and was driven to *Studley Park*.

Addenda to the *English Tour*

[FIRST *fragment*]

A dark solemn Hall of a strange mysterious architecture. – the

sages & magi around the Monarch. – Daniel kneeling – his whole figure illuminated by the glow of an immense opal or carbuncle which forms the chief ornament of the throne. – The Sages pale with wonder. the Monarch in dreadful suspense nothing can be imagined so sacred & apalling as the Light – the whole proceeding from the gem. – the velvets & draperys the carpet all tinged with this mystic radiance – –

Picture by Rembrandt at Keddleston –[18]

[SECOND *fragment*]

At length I am arrived within sight of the Mountains: Canals, flat country, manufacturing Towns &c &c are left behind & I shall soon breathe a purer air amongst Lakes & wildernesses. – My expectations are not very warm. I shall see no Glacieres, no Carthusian deserts, no cataracts like those of the Valorsine. but I think I may reasonably look for arid Landscapes & rocky Scenery, the miniatures of these I have been acostomed to behold. – – – If these Prospects do but in the least remind me of those in Savoy, I shall be fully satisfied with my journey & readily chime in with all the glorious descriptions Messrs West & Hutchinson have so minutely given of these till then unknown Lakes & neglected Mountains. –[19]

[THIRD *fragment*]

a dreary Mountain's side specled with withering fern & blasted yews – All down the Steeps appeared trunks of decayed trees – of the strangest shapes imaginable – whose appearance this misty & showery weather was almost formidable – they seemed to me like Spectres, frowning upon the pass below. – Under one of the Yews lay three black Heifers that looked portentous & odd – as if they belonged to somebody I fear to name

– – Upon the shore under swelling Mountains & wrapped up in the thickest Wood lies Koniston Hall a ruinated place as my

Driver told me & inhabited by a very antient Man. –[20]

[FOURTH *fragment*]

Koniston Lake

a wildness – a variety of irregular forms here sweet copses stealing along the shore, there savage rocky cliffs – of a brown uncommon hue that look as if they produced potent herbs such as one might reap by moonlight with a brazen sicle. –[21]

Whilst I stand & write – waters bubble around me & I scent the furze in blossom – Forth from a shady creek sails an odd indian looking bark – the only one visible on the Lake – & I almost imagine it will cast anchor to night before some Wigwam in these wildernesses.–

[FIFTH *fragment*]

[1] Crossed Poley Bridge. cast a glance on the Lake as I passed over it & came immediatly under the woody Hill of Dunmallert, devided by an avenue bordered by Pines & fir trees whose dark colouring appeared to advantage backed by the lighter greens of Beech & Hazel. – – – –

This avenue led quite to the summit of the Hill & the Sun breaking forth – lighted up the Lake & cast the warmest tints on a plain between several round & beautifully swelling Hills – – green paths stealing amongst Beds of Fern which autumn had already tinged with a glowing brown. beyond[?] Mountains of the deepest blue closed the scene.

I remained at least half [2] an hour on the brow of the Hill basking in the Sun – the greens of the Landscape growing more & more vivid & the Lake bluer & bluer every instant. – On the gentle slope of the Mountains are spread out many inclosures framed in by little copses & woods of the deepest verdure – & low points advancing into the Lake fringed with trees to their very extremities –

Descending between[?] the steep I hung a few minutes quite over the Lake & began the more I gazed to distinguish little rural cots & comfortable Farm Houses some quite on its margin, others higher on the Hills & embosomed in wood. – Here & there broad tracts of pasture intervened dotted by sheep. –

A long grassy walk & many young light elegant trees hanging over [3] the water, where I walked joyously along – boughs trembling above my head & the Lake glittering & murmuring below.

From hence turned into another shady alley & looked up amongst light spreading trees quite to the summit where I had enjoyed such pleasant moments. –

This brought me soon to the foot of the great avenue, where I lay down on some mossy roots & had it been night should probably have seen something more than boughs glancing across it. –

From hence I returned in the Evening Sun to a Cottage almost opposite & fed upon Honey butter & delicious Bread.[22]

[SIXTH *fragment*]

The clear Torrent streams rapidly down a declivity foaming over many rocks – on each side rising ground, overspread with copse wood – branching oaks impending above the floods & large cluster of fern springing from every cleft in the rocks. –

The Reeds, & many aquatic plants on the brink of the stream, together with the variety of shrubs & mosses above on the crags exibit rich groups of vegetation.

To the right strange roofs & black wheels casting around them a perpetual rain – The hollow wind in the woods mixed with the rushing of waters, whilst the forges thundred in my ear. – To the left a black quaking Bridge leading to other Wilds. – Within a glowing furnace machines hammering huge bars of redhot iron, which at intervals cast a bright light & innumerable sparks thro' the gloom. Several boughs fixed on a beam above, shook & trembled with the strokes.–[23]

[SEVENTH *fragment*]

I never see such Rocks but like the cornish Miners I wish to burrough in them & make unto myself a den.

I should love to lead a wild & savage Life in these primæval Regions & fish for Sustenance. – M^r^ L too, exclaimed I should like to lead a Life of three Moons amongst the Lakes.[24]

[EIGHTH *fragment*]

M^r^ L has much sagacity in finding out chapels & Churches – he pointed at several I s^d^ never have discovered or thought of so snugly were they mantled in Wood or hid by eminences. – –

The head of the Lake ravished us beyond expression – loosing itself in green meads & flowery pastures rising one above the other till they toutch the base of rugged rocky mountains.

These are Scenes truly arcadian The white Cottages peeping here & there from amongst oaks & Hollies added not a little to the Landscape. Close to almost every one, a spring tricled along – conducted from the rock by a trough to supply little natural basons scooped out of the living rock. – on the edge of which I noticed several bright jugs of earthern ware that reminded me of patriarchal times & made me venerate these fountains.[25]

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[1] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book 3, lines 510-515: 'The Stairs were such as whereon *Jacob* saw / Angels ascending and descending, bands / Of Guardians bright, when he from *Esua* fled / To *Padan-Aram* in the field of Luz, / Dreaming by night under the open Skie, / And waking cri'd, *This is the Gate of Heav'n.*' *The Complete Poetry of John Milton*, ed. John T. Shawcross, New York 1971, p. 311.

[2] This of course refers to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's epistolary novel *Julie ou la nouvelle Héloïse: Lettres de deux amants, habitants d'une petite ville au pied des Alpes* (1761), translated into English by William Kenrick the same year and published in numerous editions. Since Kenrick renamed Julie Eloise, Beckford uses Heloise instead of Julie. Beckford may also refer to the tragic story of Abelard and Héloïse (to which Rousseau also alluded), a story that had great impact in eighteenth century Europe.

[3] I have not been able to attribute these verses; most likely they are not of

Beckford's own conception.

[4] This word has replaced the deleted 'undiscovered.'

[5] A deleted passage following this deserves recognition, incorporating verses of Beckford's own conception:

> Lulled by Insects humming about the Bank and under the Covert of impending Pines I fell imperceptibly into a Slumber during whose gentle influence the God Pan seemed whispering these Verses in my ear
>
> Rest here beneath my shady Pine reclined
> Whose tall top sweetly murmurs to the Wind
> Here too a Brook mellifluous flows along
> And woos me with its ever gurgling Song
> Here on my solitary Pipe I play
> Or sweetly sleep the tranquil hours away
>
> When I awoke

Strongly influenced by Theocritus' *Idylls*, these verses involve the narrator in a classical context.

[6] The figures of Polypheme and Galatea, as they appear in Beckford's text, evokes Theocritus eleventh idyll, 'The Cyclops:' 'He wooed her, not with apples and roses and lovelocks, / but with so fine a frenzy that all beside seemed pointless. / Often enough his sheep had to find their own way home / to the fold from the green pastures, while he sang of Galatea, / sitting alone on the beach amid the sea wrack, languishing / from daybreak, with a deadly wound which mighty Cypris / dealt him with her arrow, fixing it under his heart. / Nevertheless, he found the cure, and seated high on a rock, / looking out to sea, this is how he would sing. [...]'. Cf. *The Poems of Theocritus*, translated with an introduction by Anna Rist, Chapel Hill 1978; XI, lines 10-18, p. 106. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* may be an even more important source: 'There juts into the sea a wedge-shaped point, / Washed by the ocean waves on either side. / Here Cyclops climbed and at the top sat down, / His sheep untended trailing after him. / Before him at his feet he laid his staff, / A pine, fit for the mainmast of a ship, / And took his pipe, made of a hundred reeds. / His pastoral whistles ran among the cliffs / And over the waves...'. Cf. *Metamorphoses*, translated by A.D. Melville, Oxford 1998, book XIII, lines 778-788, pp. 318-319.

[7] A deleted sentence was originally intended to follow upon this: 'To these Shades, I am confident, she sometimes resorts by Moonlight and leaves her Couch gleaming below on the Shore.'

[8] These initials may, as Boyd Alexander suggested, indicate Alexander Cozens, Beckford's drawing-master and friend, reinvented by Beckford in letters and essays as his (the narrator's) closest confidant – 'Cozens.' If so, it provides us with a possible – and one might add not unexpected – 'addressee.' Cf. also

Boyd Alexander, *England's Wealthiest Son. A Study of William Beckford*, London 1962, p. 273 (note 18): 'B. indicated this by writing Cozens' initials A.C. at the end of some of his compositions, e.g. *Fonthill Foreshadowed* [publ. in 1996 as *The Transport of Pleasure], Dome of the Setting Sun* and *English Journal*.'

[9] Originally followed by the phrase: 'and I could hardly persuade myself that I was not under the influence of Enchantment.'

[10] A sentence, since deleted, was to follow: 'What Artist said I to myself could conceive and what Workman execute so prodigious a Structure!'

[11] Beckford has chosen to delete the following remark: 'You may suppose how truly sacred this Music was when I say Kamidge was the Author of it whose compositions we have so often listened to in the twilight at Fonthill.' Beckford refers to John Camidge the elder (1735-1803), organist of York Minster between 1756 and 1799. Camidge, who was considered a brilliant performer, was renowned not only for his extempore performances but also for being the first cathedral organist in England to introduce selections from Handel's oratorios as anthems in the service at a time when Handel's music was considered too secular and unfit for the church.

[12] This should, of course, read 'Aile.' Beckford's amanuensis had constant difficulties in spelling this word and most times Beckford found the time to correct the mistakes; here however, it remains uncorrected.

[13] Replaces the previous choice of word: 'Enchantment'.

[14] Deleted: 'as yet scarcely crediting what I had seen'.

[15] The following was deleted by Beckford: 'you would delight in – it is so'.

[16] A slight misquotation. Cf. William Collins, 'The Passions. An Ode for Music': 'With eyes up-rais'd, as one inspir'd, / Pale Melancholy sat retir'd; / And, from her wild sequester'd seat, / In notes by distance made more sweet, / Pour'd through the mellow horn her pensive soul: / And, dashing soft from rocks around, / Bubbling runnels join'd the sound; / Through glades and glooms the mingled measure stole, / Or, o'er some haunted stream, with fond delay, / Round an holy calm diffusing, / Love of peace, and lonely musing, / In hollow murmurs died away.' *The Poetical Works of William Collins*, London 1808, p. 40.

[17] This is Gaspard Dughet, also known as Gaspard Poussin (1615-1675); whose paintings of Roman landscapes provided a source of inspiration for the design of landscape gardens and parks in England during the 18th century. Cf. Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque. Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800*, Aldershot 1990, primarily pp. 24-38 where Dughet's influence is discussed in some detail.

[18] Boyd Alexander identified this as a picture by Philips de Koninck (1619-1688) at Lord Scarsdale's. Koninck's work was often confused with Rembrandt's, whose pupil he was believed to have been. Cf. Alexander, *Beckfordiana, op. cit.*, p. 33 [fol. 40].

[19] Cf. Thomas West, *A Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire*, London 1778, and William Hutchinson, *An Excursion to the Lakes in Westmoreland and Cumberland*, August, 1773, London 1774. Beckford was probably well acquainted with these works – there were others, too, discussing the Lake District, although West and Hutchinson were two of the most important. Had Beckford expanded these fragments on the Lake District, he would certainly – as did others – have used as a model Thomas Gray's influential letter to Dr Wharton (Oct. 18, 1769) wherein the poet describes his 'journey towards the North of England' (*The Poems of Mr. Gray. To Which are Prefixed Memoirs of his Life and Writings by W. Mason, M.A.*, London 1775, second ed., p. 350). Gray's account (which covers pp. 350-380) ranges from the prosaic to the poetic, and contains several passages that became, as Ian Ousby puts it, examples of a *locus classicus*, 'quoted, adapted and elaborated often enough to assure that later travellers came prepared to see the Jaws of Borrowdale through Gray's eyes and re-enact his own trembling pleasure.' Cf. Ian Ousby, *The Englishman's England. Taste, Travel and the Rise of Tourism*, Cambridge 1990, p. 147.

[20] This is Coniston Old Hall – the third and the fourth fragments are both observations on Coniston.

[21] The conclusion of this sentence brings to mind part of a note inserted by Beckford at the end of the MS. of *L'Esplendente* (c. 1779): 'Sophocle puts a brazen hook into the hands of Medea & Dido's [?] Priestess reaps potent Herbs by moonlight with a sicle of the same metal.' MS. Beckford d.11, fol. 138.

[22] This is Pooley Bridge and Dunmallard Hill (which Thomas Gray described as 'a fine-pointed hill covered with wood'; cf. Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 353) near Ullswater.

[23] Fragments 6-8 are, in MS., divided over several scraps of papers which makes the 'narrative' very difficult to follow. They are presented here in a slightly edited shape, probably in the order in which they were intended to be read.

[24] 'M^{r} L' – Rev. John Lettice (1737-1832), Beckford's tutor and travel companion.

[25] Alexander believed this to be Derwent Water (cf. Alexander, *Beckfordiana, op. cit.*, p. 37 [fol. 44]). The fragment is preceded by a note, apparently unconnected with it: 'in a dialect which passes all understanding'.

Beckford's Excursion to the Grande Chartreuse Revised

J.C.M. NOLAN

When Beckford revisited, in 1834, the published 1783 account of his 1778 excursion to the Grande Chartreuse, he made some revisions to the first account. This had been written under the supervision of his guardian tutor, the Reverend John Lettice, while Beckford was being privately educated in Switzerland.[1] It seems very unlikely that the seventy-three year old was remembering more accurately the experiences of his eighteen year old self. What Beckford was probably doing was reflecting, with the benefit of long hindsight, on adolescent experiences which remained profoundly attractive. A discussion of these revisions might also provide some notes for the biographer concerned with how the older Beckford rewrote texts in order to redefine aspects of himself for posterity and (I would suggest) in this instance to understand his own motives more clearly.[2]

The most obvious literary change was the division of the first continuous account into five letters. Each letter now highlighted a dominant theme. In Letter 1, Pilgrimage; in Letter 2, Memory of the Carthusian Monastery of Witham; in Letter 3, Hero worship of St Bruno; in Letter 4, Benevolence of the Hermit; in Letter 5, Grandeur of remote Mountains.

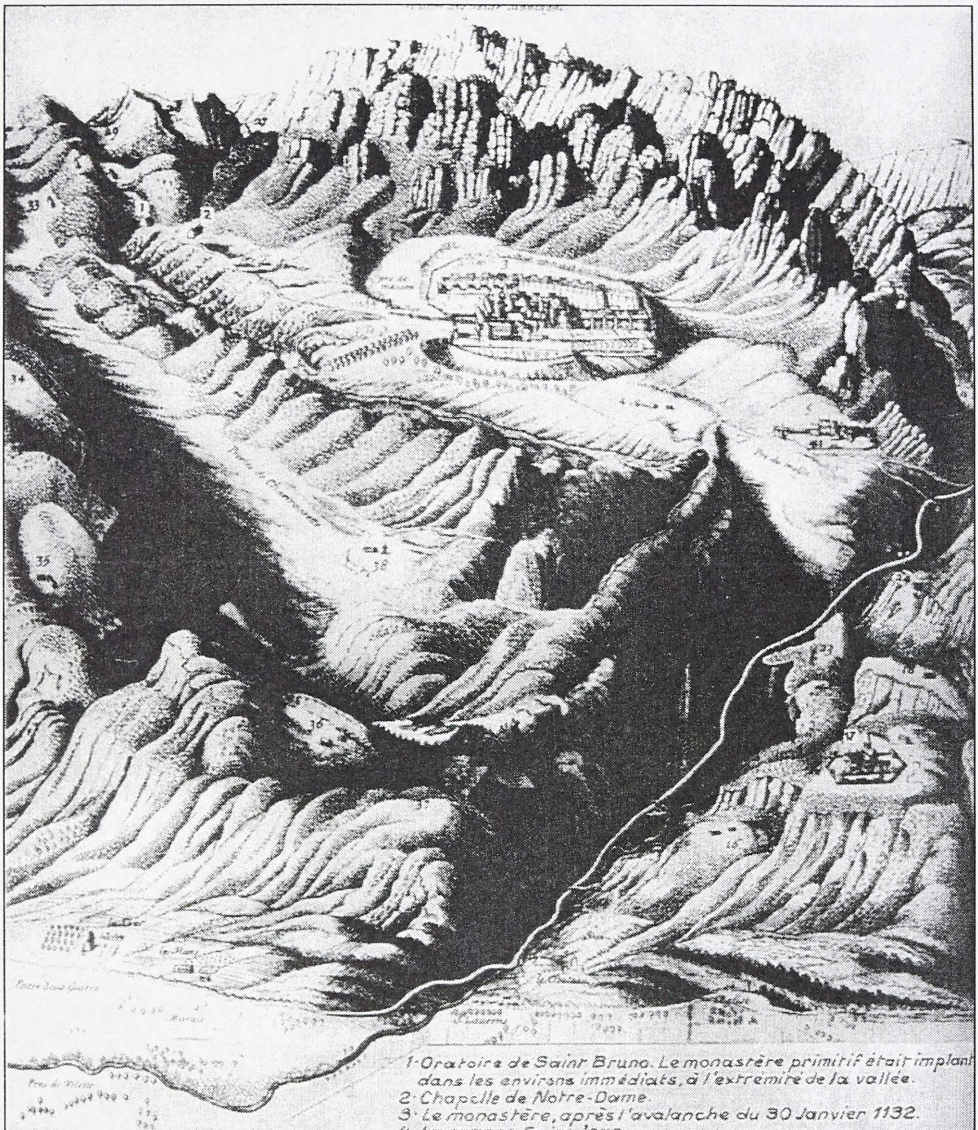
In Letter 1, Beckford cut and rewrote to establish himself unmistakably as a pilgrim. What he cut were the distracting details of the picturesque approach 'through a succession of valleys, between innumerable mountains', vignettes of the swimming dirty boys 'as copper-coloured as the natives of Bengal' and of the incredible road building of 'Charles Emanuel the Second, of Sardinia, Cyprus and Jerusalem' in the mountain region. A detail, unmentioned in 1783, was introduced to clarify further the terms of reference: 'the habitation of the too indulgent

Madame de Warens (held so holy by Rousseau's worshippers)'. Thus it was the task of the mature Beckford to suggest a perspective which put a measured distance between Rousseau and the intense romantic longings of his younger self: 'All these points of attraction so interesting to general travellers, were lost upon me, so totally was I absorbed in the anticipation of the pilgrimage I had undertaken.' The role of Lettice in the excursion was clarified; both were said to share an admiration for Thomas Gray's exploration of the region, a level of admiration so important as to be trumpeted in the 1834 opening sentence of the revised account of the excursion: 'Gray's sublime Ode on the Grande Chartreuse had sunk so deeply into my spirit that I could not rest in peace on the banks of the Leman Lake till I had visited from whence he caught inspiration.' There had been no mention of Gray in the letter to his half-sister, Mrs Elizabeth Hervey, dated 5 June 1778, from Aix en Savoy, although the prospect of pilgrimage had been put very much to the fore:

> Have you ever read the Lives of the Fathers of the Deserts?...St. Bruno's in particular made a very deep impression on me and I solemnly vowed after reading it again and again, to visit the Spot he consecrated to religious Tranquility, where he raised the Monastery of the *Grande Chartreuse* so long and so deservedly famous. My View was shortly put into execution and to-day I set out on my Pilgrimage.[3]

The description of the arduous ascent of the mountain remained unchanged. The sightings of the two solitary crosses amidst the rocks – one with the inscription VIA COELI, the other with the inscription O SPES UNICA – climaxed the first letter with a fine dramatic emphasis on the spiritual consolation being eagerly sought by pupil and tutor.

Opposite: 'The Mountains and Monastery of Chartreuse' from André Ravier, *Saint Bruno* (Paris, 1967)



1. Oratoire de Saint Bruno. Le monastère primitif était implanté dans les environs immédiats, à l'extrémité de la vallée.
2. Chapelle de Notre-Dame.
3. Le monastère, après l'avalanche du 30 Janvier 1132.
4. La grange Saint Jean.
5. La Correrie. Entre la Correrie et le monastère primitif, il y a environ 3,3 km. de distance et 300 m. de différence d'altitude.
6. La porte d'entrée du côté de Grenoble. C'est par là qu'arrivèrent l'évêque Hugues, Bruno et ses six premiers compagnons.
7. Le monastère de Currière. - 34. Arpison. - 38. La grange de Chartrousette.

In Letter 2, much remained unrevised. The first sighting of the monastery occurred after Beckford and Lettice had emerged from 'another gloomy grove' into the glare of sunlight and glimpsed across a green valley 'the revered turrets of the Carthusians, which extend in a long line on the brow of the hill; beyond them a woody amphitheatre majestically presents itself, terminated by spires of rock and promontories lost amongst the clouds.' During an early meeting with the Carthusians at which the various locations of Carthusian monasteries throughout Europe were mentioned, Beckford seized on a mention of Witham as an opportunity to say that the ruins on his property were of the first Carthusian monastery in England founded by Henry II in 1188. This revelation prompted an appeal to Beckford to revere 'these consecrated edifices, and to preserve their remains'. The monks where so delighted with Beckford's declared enthusiasm for St Bruno (founder of the order) and St Hugo (one-time prior of Witham) that they begged him to 'remain some days with them.' A great disappointment for Beckford was the fact that while views of different convents in different places like Venice and Rome had survived in their gallery, views of the English monasteries (including Witham) had been destroyed by fire. To highlight the importance of Witham, Beckford cut an enthusiastic paragraph on St Bruno in order to return to a revised, profounder, version of the theme in Letter 3. Beckford deleted the earlier mention of the fact that the Grande Chartreuse had voluminous records of Witham and chose to ignore his own memories of what had really happened to Witham.

One can explain Beckford's failure to tell the truth about Witham to the Carthusians as a spontaneous tactic to ingratiate himself with them during his brief visit. His failure to include anything of the true history in the revised account might suggest that he did not want to spoil a good story. Yet the story of Witham provides an essential perspective to Beckford's ultimate response to the Carthusian spirit. When Beckford's father bought

the Witham estate from Lord Egremont in 1763, it had been the home of the Hopton and Wyndham families for over two hundred years after the dissolution of the Carthusian monastery.[4] The Alderman seems to have been mainly impressed by the panoramic view from the knoll and soon commissioned a new house from the young Robert Adam which would be on an even more palatial scale than the recently completed Fonthill Splendens.[5] By 1770 when the Alderman died, the Adam mansion may well have been partly built. The grand house was not to be completed and was to remain abandoned by the heir. Indeed, even the completed Fonthill Splendens was not to survive. In 1812, after felling the forests of pine at Witham for profit, Beckford was happy to sell off the estate to land speculators who sold it almost immediately at a handsome profit to the Duke of Somerset.[6] Beckford's eventual tribute to the spirit of St Bruno was to have nothing to do with his father's project at Witham but to be utterly absorbed into his own building urge to create the great Fonthill Abbey, which on one level he may have envisaged as following the example of Henry II, the founder of the original Witham Abbey.

In Letter 3, Beckford's revised account of the life of St Bruno is crucial in any discussion of Beckford's distinctive understanding of the original Carthusian spirit. In the first version, Beckford referred to 'My saint (for Bruno has succeeded Thomas of Canterbury)'. Only in the later version did he reveal his identification with the Bruno who had been a wealthy descendant of noble family, a university scholar and a friend of a pope:

> Though it appears that a very cheering degree of public approbation, and all the blandishments of a society highly polished for the period, contributed, not unprofitably one should think, to fill up his time, always singular, always visionary, he began early in life to loathe the world, and sigh after retirement.

Surely the phrases 'Always singular, always visionary' could serve as one of Beckford's own mottoes?

In Letter 4, Beckford revised virtually nothing of his youthful description of the encounter with the benevolent monk returning from some distant hermitage. What Beckford was celebrating both in youth and old age was that moment of loving encounter, as if it were a memorable meeting of a father and son:

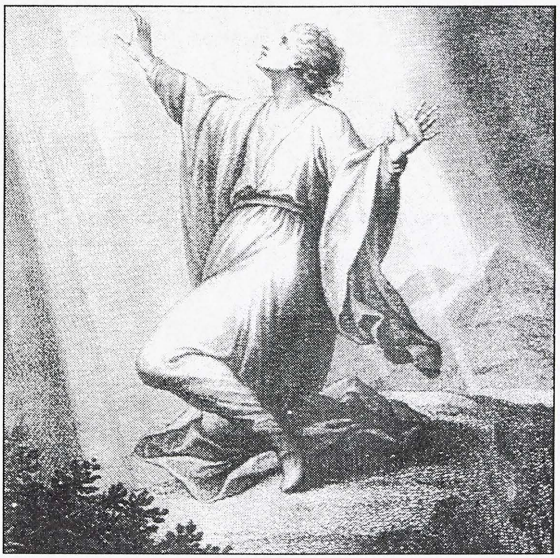
> The good old man, expressing by his gestures that he wished me to recover myself in quiet on the bench, hastened, with as much alacrity as his age permitted, to a cottage adjoining the shed... presented me some water in a wooden bowl, into which he let fall several drops of an elixir composed of innumerable herbs... signified to me by a look, in which benevolence, compassion, and perhaps some little remains of curiosity were strongly painted.

In Letter 5, Beckford left unaltered the way in which he expressed the close association formed in his mind between the grandeur of the natural scenery of the Grande Chartreuse and of the pervading spirit of St Bruno:

> I followed some impulse, which drove me to the summit of the mountains before me; and there, casting a look on the whole extent of wild woods and romantic precipices, thought of the days of St. Bruno. I eagerly contemplated every rock that formerly might have met his eyes; drank of the spring which tradition says he was wont to drink of; and ran to every pine... beneath which, perhaps, the saint had reposed himself, when worn with vigils, or possessed with the sacred spirit of his institutions.

The great cut in Letter 5 is the Ode, written in the visitors' album at the Grande Chartreuse, doubtless under the influence of Lettice. The ode had reduced St Bruno to being merely 'A saintly figure, pale, in pensive mood... (Half sighed, half smiled his long farewell) / He turn'd, and vanish'd in the bright'ning dell.'

Gray's Alcaic Ode in Latin, written when he revisited the Grande Chartreuse on his way back for Italy to England in 1740, without Walpole, retained its appeal for Beckford, probably because Gray's Ode expressed a great longing for seclusion and escape as he drew nearer to the difficulties and responsibilities awaiting him in England – sentiments with which Beckford could passionately identify.[7] The image, at the close of Letter 5, could not have been improved upon: the adolescent Beckford ascending briefly to the proud position above the vapours, flashing lightning and dark clouds to look down on the neat roofs and glittering spires of the convent in moonlight.



St Bruno
engraved by
F. Bartolozzi
after
G.B. Cipriani

The dominant theme in the 1780s and the 1830s remained the celebration of nature's wilderness as a place of retreat; but only in the 1834 version did St Bruno shine forth as the supreme model for the solitary in the wilderness – a view which revealed Beckford's limited interest in the ascetic rule of the traditional followers of the Saint.[8] In the first version there was much

youthful ardour for St Bruno; in the second the ardour was still there but now much more intellectually shaped and argued.[9]

Boyd Alexander concluded that the excursion to the Grande Chartreuse 'was a turning-point in Beckford's life It inspired his dream of a secluded Abbey set in Alpine scenery, which materialised twenty years later at Fonthill.'[10] However, as Boyd Alexander himself had already noted, Beckford wrote an essay-letter to Alexander Cozens in 1777-8, with intimations of Fonthill Abbey, before his visit to the Grande Chartreuse:

> ...we shall ascend a lofty hill, which till lately was a mountain in my eyes. There I hope to erect a Tower dedicated to meditation, on whose summit we will take our station and survey the vast range of countries beneath.[11]

The symbolism of the Tower was at the heart of Beckford's Fonthill enterprise. There were many influences, including Arthurian and oriental stories, in the early stages of the long gestation period of Fonthill Abbey in its creator's imagination. What the Grande Chartreuse specifically contributed to the ferment was not so much the idea of a 'secluded Abbey set in Alpine scenery' as an attractive vision of a withdrawal from a loathsome world in the spirit of St Bruno. That vision first beckoned in the invitation of the monks offered to the young Beckford as he departed with his tutor:

> ...nor would they leave me till I was an hundred paces from the convent; and then, laying their hands on their breasts, declared that if ever I was disgusted with the world, here was an asylum. I was in a melancholy mood when I traced back all the windings of my road, and when I found myself beyond the last gate in the midst of the wide world again, it increased.

By the late 1780s (after his wife's death), Beckford was planting vast quantities of trees and toying with the plan of a ruined hermitage on a hill within the estate. In 1793 the

symbolical and physical act of withdrawal from the loathsome world was taken when Beckford began to build his 'wall of China', twelve feet high, which would finally enclose some 1900 acres of his property. Within that enclosure, Fonthill Abbey was built. The sole Grande Chartreuse dimension was its lonely situation and the wildness of the park which removed it and concealed it from outsiders. The solitary life of Beckford as a recluse created not the conditions for the emergence of a Carthusian life style in any true sense but the physical setting for the flowering of a wealthy genius who not only build the greatest of all gothic follies (too soon destined to become a gothic ruin) but assembled within the building incomparable collections of the beautiful in so many different and beguiling forms.[12]

If St Anthony can be best described as the Beckford saint who was invoked during all seasons and enthroned like an oriental deity in sanctuaries, St Bruno can be most accurately described as the inspiration at the personal heart of Fonthill Abbey. St Bruno was not often invoked and enthroned but he was remembered by Beckford as a kindred spirit, perhaps a kind of benevolent father figure (more inspiring than the Alderman), who spoke simply and quietly to him from another historical period, inspiring Beckford to create for himself the asylum so longed for at the Grande Chartreuse.

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[1] See Robert J. Gemmett, ed., *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents* (New Jersey, 1971) for the 1783 text 'An Excursion to the Grand Chartreuse', pp. 263-284 and for the revisions (without critical comment) as published in *Italy; with Sketches of Spain and Portugal*, vol. 1, under the new title 'Grande Chartreuse', pp. 309-313.

[2] See Timothy Mowl, *William Beckford: Composing for Mozart*,(London, 1998), the most recent biography, for a general attempt to interpret the older Beckford's 'revisions' in terms of elegant lies and half-truths. However the biographer found it too difficult to sympathise with Beckford's 'posturings' in the Grande Chartreuse text to comment on the revisions there, pp. 72-74.

[3] See Lewis Melville, *The Life and Letters of William Beckford of Fonthill* (London, 1910), p. 51. Also the Beckford Papers (Bodleian Library, Oxford),

MS. Beckford 28, fol. 118.

[4] See David Knowles, *Bare Ruined Choirs: the Dissolution of the English Monasteries* (Cambridge, 1976), for a historian's verdict on the dissolution of Witham, four years after the Carthusian martyrs at Tyburn: 'Witham, the cradle of the province, showed no trace of the spirit of St. Hugh...who had spoken his mind to Henry II. The monks...surrendered easily enough in 1539.' Also Joseph Clayton, *St. Hugh of Lincoln* (London, 1931) for Chapter VII, 'Prior of Witham', pp. 49-66.

[5] The original Adam plans for the Witham mansion are in Sir John Soane's Museum and were engraved and printed in the fifth volume of *Vitruvius Britannicus* by Woolfe & Gandon in 1771.

[6] For further information on Beckfordian connections with the Witham estate, see Michael McGarvie, 'The Beckford Family and Witham Friary', *Beckford Tower Trust Newsletter*, Spring 1982, pp. 2-4, and Robert Wilson-North, 'Witham: from Carthusian Monastery to Country House', *Current Archaeology*, June 1996, pp. 151-156.

[7] See R.W. Ketton-Cremer, *Thomas Gray* (London, 1935), pp. 20-29. The final lines of Gray's *Ode* are: 'Saltem remoto des, Pater, angulo / Horas senectae ducere liberas; / Tutumque vulgari tumultu / Surripias, hominumque curis.' See Thomas Gray, *Poems, Letters, and Essays*, with Introduction by John Drinkwater (London, 1937), p. 71. In contrast to Gray and Beckford, Horace Walpole regarded his visit to the Grande Chartreuse as one of his 'transmigrations': 'Yesterday I was a shepherd of Dauphiné; today an Alpine savage; tomorrow a Carthusian monk; and Friday a Swiss Calvinist.' (Letter to Richard West, 18 June 1739 in *The Letters of Horace Walpole*, edited by Mrs Paget Toynbee (Oxford, 1943), vol. 1, 1732-1743, p. 37.

[8] See H.E.G. Rope, 'William Beckford and the Faith', *The Month*, 176 (Sept 1940), for a traditional Catholic view of Beckford's interest in the Grande Chartreuse: 'It does not seem to have occurred to Beckford for a moment that he might have come nearer to St. Bruno's spirit at Mass and in choir than in moonlight rambles', p. 162.

[9] See Robert J. Gemmett, *William Beckford* (Boston, 1977) for an overall view of Beckford's revision of the text of *Dreams*: 'the 1834 volume became cooler in tone, more Classical in character, exhibiting greater restraint of imagination and propriety of expression and a more formal decorum throughout.', p. 131.

[10] Boyd Alexander, *England's Wealthiest Son* (London, 1962), p. 64.

[11] Alexander, p. 153.

[12] See Christopher Thacker, *The Wildness Pleases* (London, 1983) for his most interesting interpretation of Fonthill Abbey as 'asylum', pp. 187-192, 197-212.

William Beckford and Music
7. The Singers

ERIC DARTON

After the coming of age celebrations at Fonthill, William Beckford wrote, 'Pacchierotti, Tenducci, and Rauzzini, sang like superior beings in a little opera composed upon the occasion'.[1] The three singers were, in fact, castrati, as were many of the important singers of the eighteenth century. It is of interest to consider what kind of men they were, and the circumstances that produced them.

In the late sixteenth century, as a result of an injunction from the Church of Rome, women were not only forbidden from speaking in church but from singing also. The 'church extended the prohibition to the theater, too: and this latter restriction continued in Rome, at least, well into the eighteenth century'. While church music was relatively simple there was no problem, but the coming of the 'complexity of multi-voiced song' and counterpoint 'created a problem susceptible only of a surgical solution. The boys' voices were not strong enough to hold up the treble parts'. Neither did they have the necessary musicality.[2] Falsettists proved unsatisfactory, 'But in 1599 two Italian castrati...Foglinato and...Rossini, were admitted to the Sistine Chapel...and the age of the castrati was born with the new century.'[3]

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mainly in Italy and usually from the poorer families, promising boy singers were castrated between the ages of seven and twelve. The operations were carried out in considerable numbers by surgeons or barber surgeons, though never officially sanctioned and remaining illegal. If asked, the boy's condition was explained as the result of an accident – a fall from a horse or an attack by a wild animal.[4]

The most promising of these young eunuchs, as they were known, were enrolled in conservatoires, particularly in Naples and Rome, where they received a rigorous training in song, breathing techniques, and in playing the harpsichord and other instruments. The term of study lasted up to ten years, depending on the age on admission. While at the conservatoires they would take part in church services, give recitals and concerts and help out at the opera. By the time the successful castrati made their professional debut their musical ability was far in advance of other singers. 'The staggering technique of the castrati in fact obliged all other Italian singers to...constantly reassess themselves'.[5]

The castrati were first used in female roles in the theatre, but such was the quality of their voices and their stage presence (most castrati were above average height) that they were soon playing heroic male characters. Castrati were known as *musicus* and in principle roles as *primo uomo*. The last castrato to appear on the operatic stage was Velluti in 1830.[6]

The most famous castrato was Farinelli, born Carlo Broschi in Andria, near Bari, in 1705. He 'was brought to Naples so early in his childhood that he always claimed this as his birthplace.' He received his musical education 'first from his father and his brother Riccardo, who was later to write several of his compelling showpieces, and subsequently from Porpora. He made his debut in Naples in 1720 in a serenata by Porpora, to a text by Metastasio'.[7] Two years later he was in Rome with Porpora appearing in one of his operas.

Farinelli made a sensational debut in London in 1734. In 1737 he entered the service of King Philip V of Spain. The King 'had reached an acute level of exhaustion and depression'[8] and Farinelli was engaged to relieve his melancholy by singing to him nightly. The 'treatment' was so successful that Farinelli became the King's confidant, his musical director, and director of the theatre, producing operas there. In 1759, after serving Philip and

his successor Ferdinand VI, Farinelli retired to Bologna where he died in 1782.

Beckford wrote on 17 December 1780, 'This morning I passed with Farinelli...He happened luckily to be pleased with a certain style of singing and accompanying of myself...and all of a sudden I heard that famous voice...His modulation is still delightful and some of those thrilling tunes which raised such raptures in the year '35 have not yet entirely deserted him.'[9]

A worthy successor to Farinelli 'was Gasparo Pacchierotti, who was born near Ancona in 1740. He studied under Bertoni at St Mark's in Venice and was principal soloist in San Marco in 1765-1768. From 1769 he sang at all the principal Italian theaters.'[10] In 1778 Pacchierotti sang at the opening of La Scala, Milan, and in the same year came to London with Bertoni to feature in his opera *Quinto Fabio*. His voice was described as 'an extensive soprano, full and sweet in the highest degree...he was so thorough a musician that nothing came amiss to him'.[11] Beckford wrote of his London performances, 'Every one speaks in raptures of music and Pacchierotti'.[12]

Beckford was introduced to the singer in London by the Burneys, and he renewed his acquaintance with Pacchierotti in Lucca in 1780, attending the opera and, to the consternation of the locals, spending days in the mountains with him. After one such outing Beckford wrote, 'Between nine and ten we entered the gates of Lucca. Pacchierotti coughed, and half its inhabitants wished us at the devil'.[13]

Pacchierotti was again in England in 1781-4, not only taking part in the cantata *Il Tributi*, composed by Rauzzini at the coming-of-age celebrations, but also the Christmas festivities, when were heard, 'concerted pieces – in which three of the greatest singers thin in Europe – Pacchierotti, Tenducci, and Rauzzini – for a wonder of wonders – most amicably joined'.[14] In April 1782 Lady Craven's *Pastoral* with music by Beckford was performed at Lord Queensberry's mansion. 'Barthélemon,

Bertoni, Henderson, Burton, even the great and good-humoured Pacchierotti, were all laid under Beckford's spell'.[15]

In 1791 Pacchierotti came to England for the last time, when he 'so brilliantly launched Haydn's cantata *Arianna a Naxos*'[16] during Haydn's stay in this country. Pacchierotti's 'last public appearance was at the opening of the Fenice in Venice in 1792.'[17] He retired to Padua in 1793, where he died in 1821.

Giusto Ferdinando Tenducci was born in Sienna in 1736 and died in Genoa in 1790. He came to England in 1758 and 'led the Handel Festival from 1784 until his departure for Italy in 1789'. He was associated with J.C. Bach and Mozart, who wrote an aria for him. He wrote songs, a treatise on singing and 'composed music for a comic opera, *The Campaign*, produced in London in 1784'.[18] Tenducci is unfortunately better remembered by some for his extra-musical activities.

Castrati were forbidden to marry, but this did not prevent them proving attractive to women. One recalls Pacchierotti and Lady Mary Duncan who was 'more preciously fond of him than a she-bear of its suckling.'[19] Tenducci 'eloped with an Irish Protestant and married her at a Catholic ceremony in Cork'.[20] The girl (a sixteen year old pupil) produced a child, claiming Tenducci as the father. He dismissed this with "one single discerning remark: 'Faithless women, you can see that the child is not mine, since I cannot give to anyone what I do not possess myself'."[21] The marriage was annulled in 1775.

Venanzio Rauzzini was born in Camerino in 1746. He was a successful soprano castrato who composed operas and played the harpsichord. He served at the court in Munich from 1766 to 1772 and presented two operas there. Mozart heard Rauzzini in Vienna and offered him the principal role in his opera *Lucio Silla*, produced in Milan in December 1772. The following year Mozart wrote for him the motet *Exsultate jubilate*. 'In 1774 he settled in England. Besides singing at the King's Theatre, London...he composed new operas, revised earlier ones and

contributed to pasticcios.'[22]

From 1777 Rauzzini lived in Bath at 17 Queen Square and at Woodbine Cottage, Perrymead. In 1780 he became director of the Assembly Rooms, promoting concerts, Tenducci being one of the soloists. Haydn visited Rauzzini at Perrymead in August 1794 and stayed three days. He wrote, 'I lived at the house of Herr Rauzzini, a *Musicus* who is very famous, and who in his time was one of the greatest singers. He...supports himself by the Subscription Concerts which are given in the Winter, and by giving lessons'.[23] Rauzzini was greatly esteemed in Bath and when he died in 1810 he was buried in the Abbey with some ceremony.

There are various references in Beckford's writings to his own singing. In 1784 at Madame Necker's party he sung accompanied by Piccini, whose only remark was, 'I perceive you have heard Pacchierotti'.[24] While in Portugal in 1787 Beckford wrote, 'I...sung the *Serene tornate pupille vezzose* of Sacchini in its native key, with so clear a voice that I half believe Mrs. Staits suspects me to border at least upon a soprano'.[25] On another occasion he sang scenes from Lima's opera *Aeneas in Thrace*, 'Never in my life did I sing with more expression.'[26]

Beckford appears to have always sung what were essentially castrato arias in their original keys. To do this he must have been a falsettist, or in today's parlance a counter-tenor. His voice must have been remarkable and he must have learnt much from the singers he heard and particularly from 'singing *Notturnos* with Pacchierotti'[27] and his friendship with, and patronage of, this great singer.

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[1] Lewis Melville, *The Life and Letters of William Beckford*. London, 1910. p. 121.

[2] Henry Pleasants, *The Great Singers*. 1983. p. 37.

[3] Pleasants, p. 38.

[4] Patrick Barbier, *The World of the Castrati*, 1998. pp. 23-25.

[5] Barbier, p. 190.

[6] Barbier, p. 235.
[7] Pleasants, pp. 68-71.
[8] Barbier, p. 203.
[9] J.W. Oliver, *The Life of William Beckford*. Oxford, 1932. p. 53.
[10] Nicholas Slonimsky, ed., *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 7th edn., 1984. p. 1699.
[11] Pleasants, p. 85.
[12] Melville, p. 112.
[13] William Beckford, *Italy; With Sketches of Spain and Portugal*. London, 1834. Vol 1, p. 191.
[14] Oliver, p. 90.
[15] Guy Chapman, *Beckford*. London, 1937. p. 124.
[16] H.C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn, Chronicle and Works*. Vol 3, 'Haydn in England 1791-1795'. London, 1976. p. 28.
[17] Pleasants, p. 86.
[18] Slonimsky, p. 2292.
[19] Chapman, p. 96.
[20] Pleasants, p. 45.
[21] Barbier, pp. 142-143.
[22] Stanley Sadie, Ed., *The Grove Concise Dictionary of Music*, Vol 15, 1988. p. 614.
[23] Robbins Landon, p. 266.
[24] Oliver, p. 187.
[25] Boyd Alexander, ed., *The Journal of William Beckford in Portugal and Spain 1787-1788*, London, 1954. p. 197.
[26] Alexander, p. 200.
[27] Melville, p. 123.

Beckford's Marginalia

JON MILLINGTON

Anyone looking through the catalogue of the Margadale sale at Christie's in April 1975 might be forgiven for getting the impression that notes by Beckford are to be found in most of his books, since they occur in all but three of the fifty-two lots. A

study of other sale catalogues makes it clear that Lord Margadale's books, formerly in the collection of Alfred Morrison, were exceptional in this respect, and it is my purpose here to investigate briefly to what extent Beckford annotated his books, and how he went about doing so.

In recent times by far the largest collection of books from Beckford's library to appear in the sale room was Lord Rosebery's, which was sold by Sotheby's in October, 1975. Of the 517 lots, mostly finely bound, about half contained Beckford's notes. A pointer to the likelihood that this is still a high proportion is the Clements five day sale at Sotheby's in July, 1966. There were 343 lots of books from Beckford's library, but only one fifth have any notes. Half of these have just a few lines in Beckford's hand, so this leaves about one tenth with a page or more of notes.

Since nearly all the Beckford books in these three sales were bought at the Hamilton Palace sale of Beckford's library at Sotheby's from June 1882 to November 1883, it might seem that the catalogue of this sale of almost 10 000 lots is the obvious one to consult. In many ways it is, since it is an indispensable record of the books that Beckford owned at the time of his death. However, there are numerous lots where the cataloguer failed to mention the presence of notes.

Reading through the first two thousand lots, 'MS. Notes by Mr. Beckford' occurs in 201 of them, roughly one tenth. Of these, nearly half were on perhaps his favourite subject, travel, and not surprisingly it is these works which tend to have the most pages of notes. Next in order of popularity is history (including biography) which accounts for about a third of all the books containing notes. The remaining one sixth is mainly literature, art & architecture and theology. If we consider all his books, with or without notes, a different picture emerges, because there were very roughly equal numbers of travel, history and literature in his library.

The vast majority of Beckford's notes are simply quotations, sometimes rewritten slightly. Many are not particularly interesting, but they do confirm that he read his books carefully, as well as just collecting them. Less frequent are his own observations, and the caustic comments for which he is well known are rarer still. His spelling, punctuation and use of capitals were capricious.

'Notes' rather than 'Maginalia' might have been more appropriate in the title of this essay, since Beckford very rarely wrote on the pages of his books. Usually he would make notes on sheets of paper which were often of inferior quality to that of the book he was reading. Then he would send the book off to his binder with instructions for the notes to be bound in at the front. Occasionally he misjudged, and so they had to be folded at the bottom to fit. In a few instances the paper was too wide and had to be folded along a vertical line.

Almost invariably Beckford wrote his notes in pencil. This could be quite faint, and if he felt they needed to be more distinct he went over them to make them darker. Their legibility varies greatly, perhaps depending on how much haste he was in to write them down; sometimes they are easy to read, but it is often necessary to turn to the page he is commenting on to be able to make any sense of them. Some notes are closely written, making them very hard to decipher.

One unsolved mystery that would shed additional light on Beckford's annotations is the present whereabouts of Lot 735 in Part 1 of the Beckford Library Sale in 1882. The catalogue entry reads, 'BECKFORDIANA. Transcripts from the autograph Notes written by Mr. Beckford on the fly-leaves of various works in his Library, 7 vol. MANUSCRIPT, *very distinctly written, russia 7 vol folio*'. These large volumes were bought by Quaritch for £156, quite a high price considering that most lots sold for less than £10. Presumably they are languishing unappreciated in a library somewhere.

A Tour through some parts of France, Switzerland, Savoy, Germany and Belgium during the Summer and Autumn of 1814 by Hon. Richard Boyle Bernard (London, 1815) is in many ways a quintessential Beckford book. As well as being a 'Fonthill' binding by Charles Lewis, one of his favourite binders, it contains over three pages of notes; these are transcribed below. Most are just extracts, sometimes reworded, which caught Beckford's eye; only the entries in italics are his actual comments:

33 The mode of numbering Houses at Paris differs from that used with us, all the odd numbers being on one side the street, & the even numbers on the other –

36 Buonaparte had the entire of the Louvre scratched so as to give it quite a new appearance

73 Extract from the prospectus of "Mon^{r} Delacroix Mecanicien Bandagiste pour redresser les defauts de la Nature particulierement chez les femmes" –

Novel & interesting Information

25 The cathartic qualities of the water at Paris have been experienced by most Travellers – the French never drink this water without mixing in it a proportion of sugar & then call it Eau sucré –

28 All the Jews of the Nation lodge in the quartier du Marais – all the Sharpers, Cheats, Loungers and Idle people of all descriptions in that of the

30 Palais Royal – which consists of six squares, the chief of which is large & handsomely built on piazzas. – – – – The Venus from the coll^{n}

42 of the Medici family was sculptured by Clomene – Apollo Belvidere was found among the ruins of Antrum – Card^{l} Bembos ranting Epitaph upon Raphael runs thus "Hic ille est Raphael" – At the

43 Luxemburg are statues of Bacchus & Ariadne –

44 The royal Library Rue Richelieu contains the Library of Petrarch which alone would render it an object of curiosity. —— [end of page]

45 In point of Architecture & the general appearance of the exterior, Notre Dame yields to any of the Cathedrals & to very many of the Parish Churches of England – the interior is mean in the extreme (the High Altar only excepted) the body of the Church being filled with the commonest rush bottomed chairs – –

46 S[t] Sulpice is striking *(come –)* & the Pantheon not very different as to its general appearance from the last mentioned church — *indeed! – I rather thought the appearance of an Edifice with one Dome & another with two very distinct towers rather dissimilar* – – –

57 The Town House is a large but tasteless gothic Edifice —

82 What pleased M[r] Bernard most at Versailles was the great number of large Orange and Lemon Trees – *As for Ponds, vistas & waterworks he cares nothing about them – nor could he discover any grandeur or architectural effect in those vast flights of steps which lead up from the Orangerie in those superb terraces which adorn this truly royal residence*

102 M[r] Bernard informs us that the Tombs of the Dukes of Burgundy are still to be seen at the Chartreuse near Dijon – *begging M[r] B's pardon neither Tombs nor Chartreuse are to be seen any longer – etiam perierunt ruinæ – the very ruins themselves were scarcely visible at the period our traveller must have passed by them* [end of page]

121 Our traveller's bill at Salenche was extravagant beyond any precedent in the annals of extorsion –

148 The Country of the Valais is remarkable for the number of people it contains affected with the Goitres & also of Idiots —

163 *M[r] Bernard, who is not more distinguished by the elegance & perspicacity of his style than by the accuracy of his information (witness the Tombs near Dijon) &c acquaints his readers that near the Church at Lausanne is shewn the residence of Gibbon the Historian and his Library is now the property of a Gentleman of this Town, who purchased it in England – With all deference to our well informed Traveller, I beg leave to observe that the Gibbon Library is the property of M[r] Beckford who purchased it many years ago in Switzerland* ——

164 A Council was held at Lausanne in 1448 when Pope Felix V resigned the Tiara & retired to Ripaille. This remarkable Character died in 1451 at Geneva ætat. 69. He was buried with a Bible under his head with this inscription the application of which *says M[r] Bernard* I do not exactly understand – – "La ville de Genèva est situee au milieu des montaignes, son territoire est sablonneux, très peu etendu et les habitants sont curieux de nouveautés" –

165 Rows of Glens! [end of page]

210 Neufchâtel perhaps the only Country in Europe exempt from taxes – –

266 The table at which an Elector palatine & his jester sat toping at the rate of 18 bottles per day is still shewn at Heidelberg –

The Mole, the Bat, and the Fairy or the Sublime Grottoes of 'Fonthill Splendens'

A Brief Study of Beckford's Contribution to *Subterranea Britannica*[1]

LAURENT CHÂTEL

Once upon a time, down the river Nadder, at its Font by the Hill, a Mole dug underground and wound its way in and out of small grottoes. On seeing a Bat, it stopped; on seeing another, it stopped again. In fact, hundreds appeared – it was the largest hide-out for bats in the Kingdom.[2] *No time was wasted on imagining the story these cool recesses might tell. The mole retreated, went through the long tunnel under Church Road – that detestable 'gutter at the foot of the hill' between Fonthill Bishop and Tisbury. Disappointed, even bitter, it crawled back to its friends and carped away at the Beckfordian grottoes. William knew better. 'Long inured to such expeditions' underground,*[3] *he knew that Bats could well be Fairies in hiding, as he once reported from Switzerland: 'I was journeying to the grotto of the Fairies, whether to consult them or to collect portions of stalactite, I knew not directly; so willing to be informed I turned towards my guide and, looking more at an opening in the cliffs above where I expect the grotto was situated rather than at him, demanded in a very silly stare I believe, where are the Fairies – changed into Bats long ago, and pray why – a good riddance I promise you, quoth the Clown; these were the most mischievous set of Beings in the Universe'.*[4]

As the fabulists Perrault or La Fontaine would tell you, the Mole was not wise, for after all it had merely scratched the surface of these beautiful caves.

> [...] Enter in,
> O stranger, undismayed. Nor bat, nor toad
> Here lurks: and, if thy breast of blameless thoughts
> Approve thee, not unwelcome shalt thou tread
> My quiet mansion [...] [5]

The rôle of William Beckford in the design of the Fonthill grottoes has recently been cast into doubt. Using a fable hardly seems the appropriate way to shed serious light on another dark episode of Beckfordian creativity; yet this tongue-in-cheek approach to the subject should not offend or repel readers for it is meant to please the master himself, who was very keen on Tales of Mother Goose[6]:

> Nor need the statesman or the scholar despise the occasional relaxation of light reading. When Jupiter and the great deities are represented by Homer as retiring from scenes of havoc and carnage to visit the blameless and quiet Ethiopians, who were the farthest removed of all nations, the Lord knows whither, at the very extremities of the ocean, – would they have given ear to manifestos or protocols? No, they would much rather have listened to the Tales of Mother Goose. (*Italy; with Sketches of Spain and Portugal* (1834), preface.)

Beckford never issued a guide or 'manière de montrer les jardins de Fonthill' in the way that Louis XIV had done for Versailles. The paucity of material relating to Fonthill in the Bodleian and Yale archives has meant that biographers have relied on a number of indirect primary sources documenting the estate, such as diaries by contemporaries who actually saw Fonthill. But on this basis alone, it would be folly to pretend that one can piece up everything together and thus understand the layout both of Splendens and of the 'Abbey area'. The fragmentary state of the archives available has meant that Beckford's contribution to the history of gardens, and more generally his poetry of space, has rarely been acknowledged, a profound misunderstanding of the character of one whose achievements as a verbal and visual creator of landscapes were considerable.[7] Robert Gemmett's thesis on Fonthill as an exponent of the Picturesque broke new ground in 1966, but it has passed largely unnoticed, although a synopsis in the *Gazette des*

Beaux Arts in 1972 made some amends. Despite the main architectural emphasis laid on Fonthill in the 1970s and 1980s, Christopher Thacker succeeded in highlighting the beauty and importance of the park. It would be pretentious today to claim original research or even attempt to retrace the chronology of works at Splendens between 1769 and 1794 since so little material sheds light on the matter. It is precisely because the dating of the grottoes cannot be resolved adequately that it is fairly surprising to read that 'Twentieth-century garden historians, dazzled by his son's reputation, have not generally realised that much of what survives today in the park at Fonthill is of the Alderman's time.' (Mowl, 37) In fact, if anything, the 'fantastic, multi-caverned playground' probably did not exist in the 1770s. It is more than likely that the only subterranean feature at Fonthill in those days prior to 1770 was an ice-house – surprisingly as yet never mentioned by scholars:

> The path now leads through Rookery Wood, in the centre of which is a capacious Ice House, forming a Knoll, round which are various spiral paths, gradually reaching the top, from whence between the trees is seen the extensive Kitchen gardens, with their lengthened front of Hot Houses.[8]

Maybe Rutter remarked on this structure because of the spirallic path round it, which may have reminded him of the preposterous rumours circulated in 1796 about a tower with a spiral staircase to its top.[9] Moreover, it is also exaggerated to present Beckford's subterranean exploration as proto-Picturesque or 'rococo-Gothick park, crossed with the bizarre Eastern mysticism [...] a cultural hang-over from those years (the 1730s and 1740s) when the Prince of Wales was the francophile Frederick Louis, and French rococo fashions were infiltrating the forms of English Palladianism'. Why attribute to the French the English taste for 'rugged work' when clearly grottoes had been indigenous to Italy in the sixteenth century and to England since the end of the

seventeenth century? Lord Shaftesbury's apology of 'rude Rocks, mossy Caverns, the irregular unwrought Grotto's'[10] as well Pope's celebrated grotto and its attendant collection of rocks/crystals had paved the way for an idosyncratically English tradition of small *subterrreanana* as opposed to rather more impressive continental counterparts.

This is why it seemed rather urgent to correct misleading interpretations and notably to re-attribute the subterranean features to young Beckford. To this end this short article proposes to draw attention to the relevant literary, historical and archaeological evidence pertaining to the grottoes; I deal more extensively with Splendens as well as with the interpretation of the meaning and value of the grottoes between 1770 and 1794 elsewhere.[11]

Until now two different attitudes have prevailed about Fonthill. On the one hand, some have chosen to undermine Beckford's rôle and have bound together the improperly named 'Inigo Jones' Gateway, the Boat House, the New Landing Stage and most features on both banks along the river, dating them from the Alderman's time. They believe that Beckford the younger was not responsible for the landscaping and cared little for Splendens, relying on Cyrus Redding who wrote that 'The east bank was ornamented with rocks, caverns, baths, and grottoes in the taste of the earlier part of the century'.[12] Yet it is hard to detect scorn or indifference in that statement, let alone a denial of his being the designer of the features.[13] It simply is a recognition that this type of design belonged to the eighteenth-century, which must have already seemed quite far away by the time Beckford spoke to Redding. Now to claim that the Alderman had landscaped it all by 1770 is rather rash in view of his own attachment to Witham, Somerset, in the years preceding his sudden death. Admittedly Redding had also pointed out that:

> The elder Beckford had the whole thickly planted with firs of

different kinds, and other forest wood, to conceal [mistake for 'prevent'?] the chasm made from being seen from the windows of the house.[14]

But although it is well-known that in 1769 the Alderman obtained a premium award (gold medal) from the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) for planting some 61,000 Scotch pines, it is not often pointed out that on Jan. 2nd 1769 the minutes of the Committee of Agriculture of the RSA reporting on Beckford's plantations listed *first* the Somerset estate of Witham and *then* Fonthill.[15] Thus the extent to which he had landscaped Splendens is not at all clear.

In fact, the evidence available from three early visitors to Splendens indicates there was very little landscaping indeed (for sources, see tables I and II below). In 1769, on his gardening and agricultural tour round England, the Irishman John Parnell (P1) stopped at Fonthill and wrote down in his logbook that the setting of the house was most absurd since the valley in which the palace was ensconced was narrow and the clumps of Scots fir planted around so very young and puny. He was obviously referring to the plantations that had just earned the Alderman a medal. At the sight of the bridge, he recoiled in disgust and he certainly made no mention of a Cythera-like island across a lake, which, in view of his phrase 'artificial stretch of water', must have been pretty small. William Gilpin (P2) went to Fonthill around 1775-1778 and although he also mentioned the bridge (which he found too ornate), no grottoes lured him across to the east or even to the west bank of the river. And yet in 1765 on his trip to Painshill he had explored the grottoes and commented on them. Had Gilpin returned to Fonthill in 1798, when his remarks were published, he would have found a different picture altogether, as Britton pointed out rather bitterly in 1801, obviously acting as spokesman for Beckford:

> I am sorry, extremely sorry, that *many mistakes and errors*, in Mr. Gilpin's last work, should provoke these reflections; some of which are very apparent in the description of this place. He mentions the water at Fonthill, as being decorated by a sumptuous bridge, which, if more simple, would have been more pleasing; after looking in vain for this bridge, I was informed it had been removed twenty years ago. As Fonthill is within thirty miles of Mr. Gilpin's residence, how easily might *this error in particular*, and many others, which have crept into his description of the house, pictures, and furniture, have been corrected. (P14, 248)

Finally, when Robert Sulivan (P5) came to Fonthill c.1778 he saw no Alpine garden, which suggests it was not even conceived of as yet, even if one may assume that after 1775 in the wake of his father Beckford had had pines and other trees planted on the east side of the stream with his mother's permission.

On the other hand, others have felt that the east bank creation is of a much later date and is associated with the Rev. John Lettice. To support this idea, they generally adduce to two or three pieces of evidence. First, in his *Memoirs,* Redding (P19) linked the creation of the Alpine Garden with Beckford's return from Aranjuez, and omitted to make it clear whether he meant in 1789 or 1796:

> Soon after Mr Beckford's return from seeing Aranjuez, his old tutor was at Fonthill, instructing the Misses Beckford, and he suggested that walks should be made of nearly a mile in extent, in order to render that wild spot pleasanter for the ladies, who seemed to have a partiality for it.[16]

Furthermore, a roundel sighted on the grottoes with the inscription 'J.L 1794' (P11) implies that Lettice or Lane (two options) saw to the completion of these cool recesses after 1790. And finally, there is the fact that Beckford's 1796 publication *Modern Novel Writing* (P12) contains a description of grottoes

which eerily look similar to the Fonthill features – an ingenious find made by Christopher Thacker:

> The paths became more numerous and intricate, till they brought you to some irregular steps cut in the rock; the light stole insensibly upon you as you descended; and at the foot of the steps you found the entrance of a spacious cave. All here was hushed and silent, save that the trickling drops of a purling rill struck your ear, while it softly bent its way toward the parent stream. A broken arch opened to your view the broad clear expanse of the lake, covered with numerous aquatic fowl, and weeping willows adorning its banks. Round this cave no gaudy flowers were ever permitted to bloom; this spot was sacred to pale lilies and violets. An outlet, at first scarcely perceived in the cave, carried you through a winding passage to an immense amphitheatre, formed by a multitude of irregular rocks; some bold and abrupt, others covered with ivy, periwinkles, and wall-flowers. One of these grottoes was destined for a bath, and ornamented with branches of coral, brilliant spars, and curious shells. A lucid spring filled a marble bason in the centre, and then losing itself for a moment under ground, came dashing and sparkling forth at the extremity of the cave, and took its course over some shining pebbles to the lake below.[17]

However, a critical examination of the arguments mentioned above and a recourse to other sources help demonstrate that in fact the artificial grottoes (as opposed to the quarry caves) were pre-1795. First of all, Cyrus Redding's description of a post 1795 Alpine Garden is unconvincing since visitors to Fonthill had already seen them by 1793 (the Dutch Baron Johan Frederick Willem van Spaen van Biljoen and the Swiss Henri Meister) (P9, P10). What Redding must have meant about Beckford's return from Aranjuez is *not* that the Alpine Garden was created but that new walks were made to enhance the somehow overgrown area around the grottoes and the other features (huts, 'pagliaro', seats, Fairies' lawn, ha-ha etc). In 1801, John Britton (P14) specified

that there had been at least three stages in the design of the Alpine garden: 1770-1780, early planting on a bare piece of ground; 1780-1785, 'walks and scenes of lawn, rocks, &c. were opened in several parts [...] These first walks'; and 1795-1801 ('When the wood had reached about five and twenty years growth'), 'many new walks were added, and other improvements executed [...] walks and openings have lately been made, exhibiting a variety of scenes of different impressions and effect.' (P14, 242-244) As for associating the Fonthill grottoes with the date of the publication of *Modern Novel Writing*, it can now be proved wrong for the description of the grotto actually dates from 1788. Indeed, the description above, which appeared in *Modern Novel Writing,* was taken *word for word* from Elizabeth Hervey's *Melissa and Mercia* published in 1788 (P8). The often-quoted story about Elizabeth exclaiming to her brother 'Oh, I vow and protest, here is my Grotto' is true.[18] Beckford simply lifted the description of the Fonthill grottoes literally out of his half-sister's novel. It provides us with some explanation for the irritation Beckford felt for his sister, which up till now has remained unexplained by biographers. But more to the point it informs us – provided one is willing to accept that the fictional description is based on real grottoes – that the lakeside grotto was already there by 1788.

This careful reconstruction of the facts therefore makes it clear that the subterranean features were not there before 1778 but that they probably did exist after 1788. It now remains to be seen whether a yet more precise dating can be obtained. What most evidently confirms the absence of grottoes at Fonthill before 1780 is that they do not appear in young Beckford's letters to his half-sister or in those to Alexander Cozens (P3). After his Swiss stay and his 1779 tour round England (see *Fragments of an English Tour*), he stayed at Fonthill throughout the summer and winter. Now if grottoes truly existed then, one may assume they

would have featured in the epistles, albeit merely as a starting point for fictional transports. Beckford wrote off his solitude and nostalgia for his late father, his Swiss friends and Cozens in imaginary voyages triggered off by the topography of Fonthill or by the architecture and décor of Splendens. In the only long, direct evocation of Fonthill in his own hand, the prose poem 'Satyr's Range' (1779) (P6), it refers once to a grot in relation to imaginary Naiads but it is more likely to be purely metaphorical, although it could possibly refer to the 'Boat House'.[19] As for the occurrence of 'Cell' in many letters dated 1779-1780 (P3), it is misleading because it refers to an interior room, the Tartarean Chamber, inside the 'Peaceful Palace' of Splendens:

> At Night we will retire to the Cell and consult our Arabians penetrate into remote countries and fancy we discover the high Mountains of Gabel-al-Comar. [...] sometimes we shall inhabit our Huts on the borders of the Lake and sometimes our vast range of solemn subterraneous Chambers visible by the glow of Lamps and filled with Cabalistic Images.[20]

> I walk to and fro! in my Cell and fancy myself in the Caverns of Chehabeddin where every volume contained a spirit.[21]

T. Mowl seems to think erroneously that the Cabalistic images were inside grottoes.[22] Even the mention of a 'distant Waterfall'[23] or the sound of 'the lapse of distant Rills trickling down its craggy promontories'[24] is unconnected to grottoes. In fact, there are only three occurrences of subterranean structures to be found in his letters, and even then, he referred to 'caves', which undoubtedly must be a reference to the quarry caves. In *The Sanctuary*, also known as 'Fonthill Foreshadowed'(P4), he wrote: 'In these [sic] my native wildernesses is a Cave dark as the grot of a Sybil and shadowed by a mysterious elm'.[25] Two other occurrences of a subterranean structure at Fonthill appear in letters addressed to Cozens dated March 1780:

> One Evening as I took my solitary Ramble over the Hills, sad and pensive, mourning the absence of those I love, the Sunset grew inconceivably splendid – the Caves of the sleepers were illuminated with the liveliest Red I ever beheld and the Country far around partook of the Refulgence.[26]
> I stray disconsolately on the Rocks by the Caves of the Sleepers scarcely knowing which way to bend my steps. I look around and all is a perfect void. Those Scenes which were wont to amuse me delight no more.[27]

These two epistles to Cozens are, to say the least, topographically vague but the fact that the Caves are surrounded by Rocks and that they face the setting sun means that they are most likely to be the quarry caves on the east side of the lake. Although Redding remarked on the Alderman's efforts to hide these quarries, Britton implied they were still visible at a distance when he stated that 'white cavities of [these] quarries are remembered to have yawned full in front of the house in a manner offensive to all persons of taste' until the early years of Beckford's minority, thus until the mid 1770s. Beckford's understated allusion is to the Cave of the Seven Sleepers at Ephesus. Such a literary or poetic reading of space was obviously encouraged by the presence of Alexander Cozens on site; Cozens was very attached to the hilly and rocky part on the east side and in keeping with contemporary ideas of sentimental gardening put forward by Pope, Lord Lyttelton and his friend William Shenstone (1714-1763),[28] Beckford planned to pay homage to Cozens' memory by erecting an 'urn or sarcophagus'. (P14, 245) Prone to symbols and allegories Cozens would have taught young Beckford how to improve a place with poetic genius, as one put it in eighteenth century parlance, so as to transform a view of a paltry land into a vision of a romantic landscape. This explains why the epistles are littered with unexplained nick-names and appellations, privy to the correspondents who had at leisure invested some of the spots at Fonthill with a fable and named

them (Satyr's Range on the east side, Caves of the Sleepers, Rookery Wood on the west side). At that time, therefore, the *subterraneanana* were mere mental images, not real ones.

How the poetic experience of the place actually materialised into an extended practice of landscape gardening can be gauged from Beckford's correspondence with James Wyatt and the Rev. Samuel Henley (P7). Plans for a bridge across the river Nadder, as well as for a fishing seat, seem to have been the very first works commissioned by Beckford from Wyatt. Although John Harris had shown that Wyatt, Soane, Boileau and Moore were employed by Beckford and his mother in 1787-8, Wyatt's work for Beckford from 1782 onwards both in London and at Fonthill has received little shrift.[29] It is interesting to point out that it is also as a landscape designer that Wyatt was first employed at Fonthill. Beckford referred to workmen busy at Fonthill in 1780-1781, although he did not specify if it was both inside and outside Splendens; it was deafening enough for him to decide to go to Witham, '& exploring its deep glades and branching oaks with Mrs P. Beckford'.[30] The Yale archives contain a drawing of a bridge with a note from Beckford to Wyatt at the back[31] and the Oxford papers contain a superb watercolour drawing of the lake with plans to improve the lake and ways to prevent public access through the main gateway. Clearly this project must date from 1780-1783 while Beckford was still a regular resident at 12, Wimpole Street (he moved to Portman Square in spring 1782).[32] Since no bridge was to be seen after the early 1780s, one must assume that they abandoned the idea of a bridge, and compromised over the public access to the road facing Splendens. Beckford chose to build a tunnel under the road instead, thereby keeping the whole of the east bank for private seclusion. On this basis, the hermitage and tunnel could then be dated from the early 1780s as well; as for the 'cromlech' described by Rutter in 1823 (P16),[33] it still stands there, although, in its dilapidated state, even more cromlechian than

ever. Tim Mowl has argued that 'cromlech' was a mistaken interpretation on the part of Britton (he meant Rutter) for what must in fact have been a rococo viewing tower meant to provide a plunging view across the river onto the east bank. The source behind such a statement is Henri Meister who visited Fonthill not in 1799, as Mowl says, but in 1792 or 1793 when Lady Craven paraded a number of émigrés round Fonthill (P10):

> the owner of this spot pays more attention to the remains of an ancient ruined tower, which has two caves of the most romantic appearance.[34]

It is unfortunate though that Mr Mowl consulted the English translation, for the French original tells quite a different story; what Meister in fact said was that Beckford was more particularly attached to an old ruined tower (obviously the Alderman's Stop Beacon triangular tower) and *also* to two romantic-looking caves – two different features, grammatically separated by a comma:

> le maître de ces lieux s'occupe avec plus de complaisance, avec plus d'intérêt des débris d'une très ancienne tour, de deux cavernes de l'aspect le plus romantique;[35]

So the pile or tumble of stone and vegetation, be it a *cromlech* or not, must in fact have been for Beckford a reminder of foreign sites such as these huge masses of rocks in the Tyrol ('the summit of a rock covered with spurge-laurel, and worn by the course of torrents into innumerable craggy forms'[36]) or Virgil's grotto drawn by John Robert Cozens ('bay and ches[t]nut conceal the tomb of Virgil, placed on the summit of a cliff, which impends over the opening of the grotto, and is fringed with a florid vegetation'[37]).

That the river and rivulets of Nadder were transformed into a lake, and the stones moved about into some designed shape, is what comes out from the correspondence with Henley (P7),

where we learn that by May 1784 improvements had taken place:

> If you are to visit D[evonshire] this summer I trust you will not pass by Fonthill without casting an eye upon my rocks and water, which is wonderfully expanded.[38]

What he then went on to call 'my new creation of wood & water'[39] in July seems to have provoked in him great excitement and the works did not end there, since in October he wrote from Fonthill :

> M[r] Lane is rockifying, not on the high places, but in a snug copse by the river side, where I spend many an hour in dreaming ab[t] my unfortunate princes (Vathec's companions), & contriving reasonable ways & means of sending them to the Devil.[40]

With so little topographical information, it is difficult to identify where exactly Josiah Lane was working in 1784: the 'high places' could be a reference to the quarry area (east bank) or the site of the hermitage-cum-cromlech-cum tunnel area (west bank). But since the 'snug copse' is obviously the lakeside grotto (the entrance of which is still washed today by the waters of the river) and since Beckford did not feel the need to give more directions, one may infer from this that Lane was busy transforming the east side of the lake. That biographers or garden historians – excepting Christopher Thacker – have been puzzled as to the identity of the designer of the Fonthill grottoes can be appreciated from John Britton's or indeed Richard Warner's own confusion in 1801 (P15). Neither seem to know whether they mean Joseph Lane (1717-1784) or his son Josiah (1753-1833):

> Mr. Lane, who exhibited the earliest specimen of his talents in the construction of a grotto, on a very small scale, at Fonthill. (P15, 211)
> the work of the well known Lane, a native of Fonthill, by whom the celebrated grottoes of Pain's Hill, and Oatlands, were constructed. (P14, 247)

John Claudius Loudon (P18) clarified the matter in 1833 when he wrote his 'Notes of a Gardening Tour' (two small entries relate to Fonthill), published in 1836 in the *Gardener's Magazine*:

> Near the ruins is an extensive piece of grotto scenery, put up by the same individual who executed the grotto at Fonthill and that at Oatlands. His name was Josiah Lane, and he was a native of the adjoining parish of Tisbury, in the workhouse of which he died last year, at a great age!

By then, in 1833, the grottoes were a safety hazard and had to be protected with railings – which shows that before none of the grottoes had an 'iron grated door'[41]:

> This house [Fonthill Pavilion] is badly placed, and it does not appear to us to be much improved by some immense clumps which Mr. Farquhar's nephew had planted near it. The same individual had the beautiful mosaic flooring of the cave taken up, and, in slaying it, placed a large mariner's compass of black and white marble in the centre. The orifice in the roof of this cave, by which it is lighted, is unprotected by any fence or grating, and may be considered as a trap for the destruction of men or other animals. We very nearly fell into it, and in consequence wrote to Mr Morrison, who has since informed us that he immediately afterwards surrounded the opening by a fence.

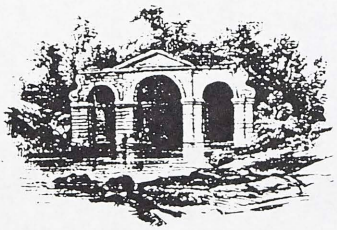
Today the caves are well protected by bars and railings – quite a different picture from what Beckford had enjoyed. Still the recollection of the mosaic floor, of the mystic rays of lights through the shafts and the intermittent refulgence of the water at a distance on the lake can bring back the feelings once experienced. That the west bank grottoes were consecrated for pagan or esoteric rites, we know from Meister:

> destinée aux mystères les plus sublimes de la sagesse ou du

génie des Fées. Cependant je ne puis décider encore, si ces mystères doivent être heureux ou terribles.

Be it fairies or devils, Beckford's subterranean religion is not known. But it is the frisson that Beckford playfully liked to inflict on himself that matters. And going round the lake to the shady once Pan-inhabited east bank, one can still indeed try to picture Beckford's symbolic views: Splendens as the valley of Tempe, bordered by a dark, impending, perhaps satanic, certainly Satyric, wood, with rocks standing like 'sepulchral remains' in the Roman Campagna. There is no denying that the practice of subterranean gardening was the embodiment of a visual imagination keen on the Sublime and of a taste for Piranesi and Cozens, the two leading geniuses of the grotto. Beckford had seen some of John Robert Cozens's watercolours before he even went to Italy. Could it be that the *Caverns in the Campagna,* 1778, now in the V & A, London, once belonged to Beckford and inspired Lane to 'rockify'?[42] With these watercolours in his mind's eye, and his direct experience of grottoes abroad, it is not surprising Beckford wished to create spots at Fonthill where reality was suffused with sublimity and the visible world invaded by invisibility.

'Unknown modes of being. In my thoughts, there was darkness'.
(*The Prelude*, I, 420-421)



The Boat House.

The Underground Spaces at Fonthill

Part I: Primary sources

P1: The Irishman John Parnell's visit to Fonthill in Sept. 1769 (manuscript diary in the British Library of Political and Economic Science, London).
P2: Gilpin's visit c. 1775-1778 in *Observations on the Western Parts of England relative chiefly to picturesque beauty to which are added a few picturesque beauties of the Isle of Wight* (London, 1798), section IX, 116.
P3: Epistles to Cozens (c.1778-1782) [MS. Beckford e.1].
P4: 'The Sanctuary', also known as 'Fonthill Foreshadowed' (c. 1777-1780) [MS. Beckford d.10].
P5: Sir Richard Joseph Sulivan, see *Observations made during a Tour through parts of England, Scotland and Wales, in a series of letters* (London, 1780; 2nd ed., 1785) [tour made in 1778; information given by W.F. Mavor in *The British Tourists or traveller's pocket companion* (London, 1798) to which Lettice had subscribed].
P6: 'Satyr's Range, Fonthill, Aug. 1779' [MS. Beckford c.47].
P7: Letters from Beckford to Henley dated May, July & October 1784 in *The Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Documents formed by Alfred Morrison* (Second Series 1882-1893) vol. 1, 1893, Letters 32-35, 191-193.
P8: Description of a grotto in Elizabeth Hervey's *Melissa and Mercia* (1788).
P9: the Dutch Baron Johan Frederick Willem van Spaen van Biljoen's visit to Fonthill, 1791 (*Garden History*, vol 2, n°1, 1982).
P10: The Swiss Henri Meister's visit to Fonthill with Lady Craven between 1792 and 1793 in *Lettres* (1795) (The French original is better than its misleading English translation).
P11: Inscription 'J.L 1794': roundel on a grotto on the eastern side (generally attributed to Josiah Lane but John Lettice is another option).
P12: Plagiarisation of Elizabeth Hervey's grotto in *Modern Novel Writing* (1796).
P13: John Lettice's poems, 'Written in the Grotto' and 'Verses written in an arbour of the Alpine Garden, fronting the Lake' signed 'J.L', dated August 4th and 6th 1800 [MS. Beckford c.33].
P14: Britton, *The Beauties of Wiltshire, displayed in statistical, historical, and descriptive sketches* (London, 1801) 248.
P15: Richard Warner, *Excursions from Bath* (1801) 120.
P16: Rutter, guidebooks to Fonthill (1822 and 1823).
P17: Rutter's vignettes in his *Delineations* (1823) – the sole visual contemporary record of the grottoes and caves.
P18: John Claudius Loudon's descriptions in 1833 in 'Fonthill Pavilion' and

'Wardour Castle', 'Notes of a Gardening Tour in 1833' in *Gardener's Magazine* (1836) XII, 503-6.
P19: Redding's *Memoirs*, 1859, vol. 2: 'A grotto was made by a workman named Lane, in imitation of one constructed many years before for Mrs Beckford's uncle, the Hon. Charles Hamilton, of Pains' Hill, Surrey.' 81.

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Robert J. Gemmett (1966) 'William Beckford and the Picturesque: A Study of Fonthill', Ph.D thesis (New York, Syracuse Univ.,): Ch. IV ('The creation of Fonthill, 1. The early landscape experiments');
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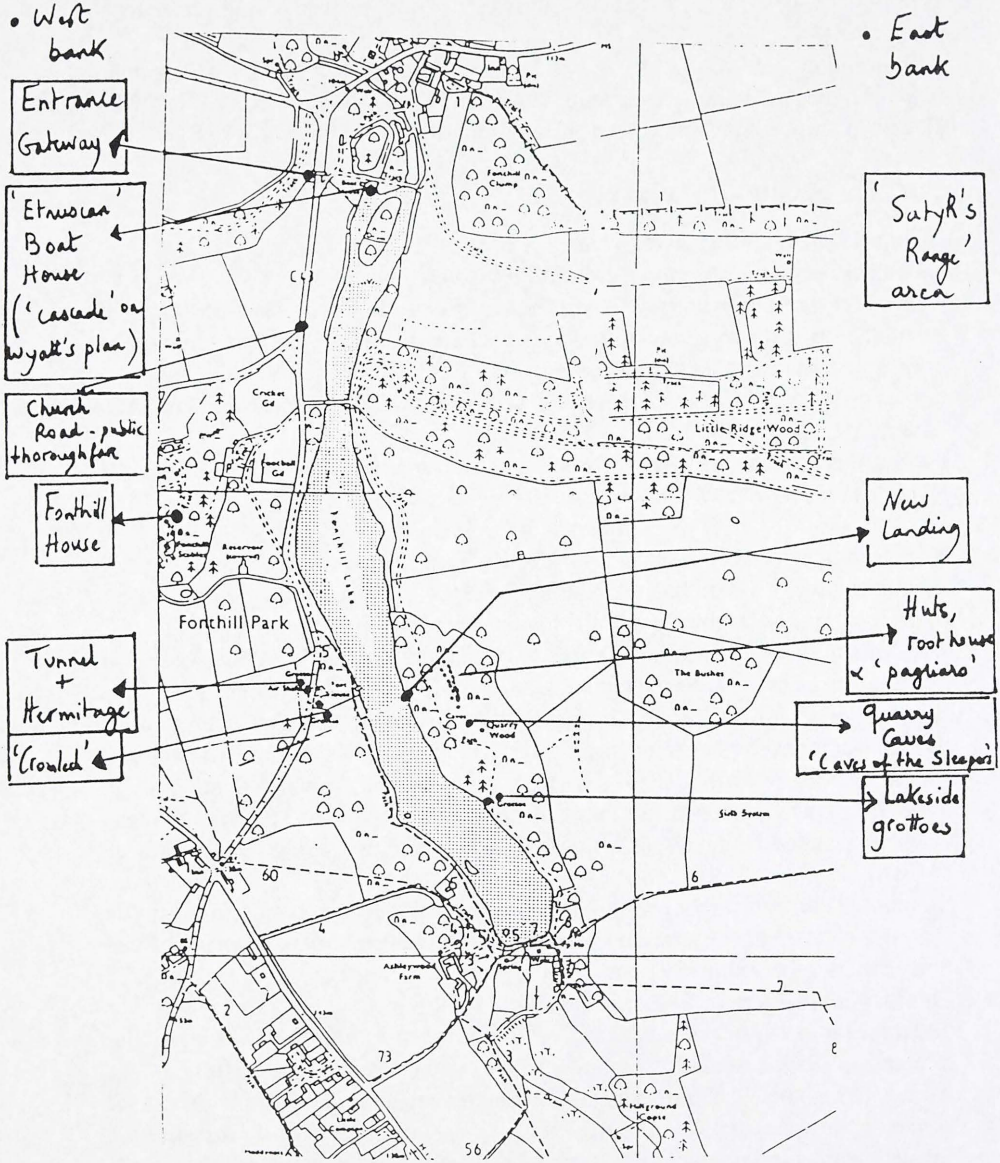
English Nature, 'Site of Scientific Interest', 1994.
Malcolm Jack (1996) *William Beckford: An English Fidalgo* (New York): 'the mysterious and the occult [...] influenced his taste in architecture' (105).
Adrian Craft (1997) 'Subterranean Enlightenment at Fonthill', *The Beckford Journal*: 'these features [...] represent an extension of Beckford's passion for subterranean entertainment during the 1780/1790s' (30, my emphasis).
L. Châtel (1998) 'Grottoes and Grotesques', *The Beckford Journal*
Timothy Mowl (1998) *William Beckford: 'Composing for Mozart'* (London) 33-36, 61-62, 80-83, 96 + plates 5,6 & 7.



The Splendens features round Fonthill Lake

[1] ** This article was written thanks to a Lavoisier Research Grant at the Maison Française, Oxford; it is a synopsis in English of part III, chapter II of my doctoral dissertation, Université de La Sorbonne-Nouvelle, Paris III 'Utopies paysagères : vues et visions de William Beckford – de la mise en fable à la mise en scène d'espaces' ('Landscaping Utopias : William Beckford's Views and Visions – From the Writing to the Staging of Space'). To promote Beckford's landscaping activities, it is hoped a longer and illustrated version of this piece will appear in one of the journals of garden history. I thank Sylvia Beamon for her enlightening introduction to the Society and publications of *Subterranea Britannica*.

[2] *English Nature* (Wiltshire County Council) has recorded seven species of bats, including the rare *Myotis bechsteini* and numbered 207 of them, which makes it the sixth hibernaculum count in Britain; see *English Nature*, 'Fonthill Grottoes–Site of Special Scientific Interest', 14 Oct. 1994.

[3] Letter from Beckford to Elizabeth Hervey, dated 'Feterne, 1778' in MS. Beckford c.32, fols 108-9. Printed in Melville, 55-58.

[4] Letter from Beckford to Elizabeth Hervey, op.cit. This letter is partly quoted by Mowl in *William Beckford: 'Composing for Mozart'* (1998) 74 which is surprising since it contradicts his assertion on page 61 that the Alps do not provide underground pleasures [despite Parreaux's well-researched section on such explorations in *William Beckford, auteur de Vathek* (1960) 111-113]; he claims that the only possible inspiration for the 'Long Story' or the 'Centrical Story', which he dates 1777, must be grottoes at Fonthill (hence necessarily an Aldermanic construction). Now the letter quoted above clearly shows that for the 'Long Story' Beckford drew heavily from his excursions in Alpine caves and second that there might not *necessarily* have been grottoes at Fonthill *then*. 'When he was surrounded by glorious Alpine scenery, it was perverse to begin a story in which all the events took place underground. He was still so fascinated by the grottoes and quarries of Fonthill that for his interminable descriptive passages he relied upon his memories of Joseph Lane's decorative devices and his imagination, rather than the cliffs of the Salève and the snows of Mont Blanc'.

[5] Mark Akenside, *Inscription for a Grotto* (1772).

[6] 'Tales of Mother Goose' or *'contes de ma mère l'oie'* as Charles Perrault had named his fairy tales in 1696, were a favourite reading of Beckford's, as is confirmed by the Hamilton Palace Library Sale Catalogues.

[7] I will not obviously dwell on this link between literary and aesthetic creativity since I have touched on this elsewhere already; see 'Beckford Society Lecture n° 1 for 'The Paul Mellon Centre for British Art (London), 1998'.

[8] The ice-house only appears in Rutter's *New Descriptive Guide to Fonthill Abbey* (1823) 81-82 but curiously in neither the 1822 *Description of Fonthill Abbey* nor the more luxurious *Delineations* (1823).

[9] 'It is to be furnished as an observatory, and, notwithstanding its immense height, is to be so constructed as that a coach and six may be driven with ease and safety from the base to the top, and down again' in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Sept 1796.

[10] Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, *The Moralists* (1709), quoted in J. Dixon-Hunt & Willis, *The Genius of the Place* (1976) 124.

[11] See footnote 1.

[12] C. Redding, *Memoirs of William Beckford* (1859), vol. 2, 97.

[13] It is worth pointing out that Boyd Alexander did not attribute the features round the Lake to Alderman Beckford even though he stated rather categorically that Beckford 'claimed no credit for features outside the Barrier – the grotto [...]; the Alpine Garden formed from a stone quarry under Lettice's supervision; the Great Terrace, the hermitage, the caverns, the old lake in front of Splendens, and similar 'picturesque' features.'; see Alexander (1962) 172-173. Robert Gemmett was not convinced that Beckford had such a dim view of his achievements round Splendens as Alexander claims he had; see Gemmett (1972) footnote 5.

[14] Redding, *Memoirs* (1859) vol. 2, 80.

[15] 'A certificate of William Beckford's Esq. having planted in the Parishes of Witham Somerset and of Fonthill Wilts Sixty One Thousand eight Hundred Scotch Firs upon One Hundred and Seventy Five Acres of Land, was read. Resolved that the Certificates sent by Mr Beckford are satisfactory. Resolved that Mr Beckford is intitled to the first premium of a Gold Medal offered by the Society for that Article', archives of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce (1754).

[16] Redding, *Memoirs* (1859) vol. 2, 81.

[17] Beckford, *Modern Novel Writing* (1796) vol. 2, 69-71.

[18] *Memoirs, Journals and Correspondence of Thomas Moore* (London, 1853), vol. 2, 197-198: 'Talked of Beckford's two mock novels 'Azemia' and the 'Elegant enthusiast', which he wrote to ridicule the novels written by his sister, Mrs Harvey (I think), who read these parodies on herself quite innocently, and only now and then suspecting that they were meant to laugh at her, saying, 'Why, I vow and protest, here is my grotto,' etc etc'

[19] 'The Suns increasing warmth & my intrusion has driven them to their secure cool ~~grot~~ grottos' in MS. Beckford c.47.

[20] Epistle/Reverie to A. Cozens, dated 'Naples, Nov. 16th 1780' in Red Copy Book, n° 33; printed in Melville (1910) 96.

[21] Epistle/Reverie to A. Cozens, dated 'Fonthill, Friday 8 o'clock Dec. 3rd 1779' in Red Copy Book, n° 10; printed in Melville (1910) 75.
[22] 'The quarries with their broken statues, the 'Cabalistic Images', still exist to prove the very earliest origins of those Halls of Eblis that haunt Beckford's writing.' Mowl (1998) 96.
[23] Epistle/Reverie from Beckford to A. Cozens (?) dated 'Fonthill, 6 Feb. 1780' in Red Copy Book, MS. Beckford e.1, n° 13; printed in Melville (1910) 79.
[24] Epistle/Reverie from Beckford to A. Cozens (?) dated 'Fonthill, March 1780' in Red Copy Book, MS. Beckford e.1, n° 8; printed in Melville (1910) 80-81.
[25] This long, undated and untitled epistle to Cozens remains unpublished in standard Beckford editions. Rather than highlight its prophetic value (which is what the title given by Boyd Alexander does), I chose to call it *Le Sanctuaire/ The Sanctuary*, for it is clearly a utopian quest for a pure and pleasurable temple of repose *within* a garden of Eden. Note that Marie-Lise Tosi produced a French translation (*L'épître de la Haute Tour*) and that an edition of this prose poem is available in Sweden as a separate booklet; see Dick Claésson ed., *The Transport of Pleasure* (Göteborg University Press, 1997).
[26] Epistle/Reverie from Beckford to A. Cozens (?) dated 'Fonthill, March 1780' in Red Copy Book, MS. Beckford e.1, n° 8; printed in Melville (1910) 80.
[27] Epistle/Reverie from Beckford to A. Cozens (?) dated 'Fonthill, March - 1780' in Red Copy Book, MS. Beckford e.1, n° 9; printed in Melville (1910) 82.
[28] Pope initiated this sentimental outlook on the garden which John Dixon Hunt has called the 'Landscape of Introspection'; he wrote of his Twickenham creation in relation to his memories of friends. 'There, my Retreat the best Companions grace' [for friendship and gardening in Pope, see John Dixon Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape* (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976; rep.1989) 78].
[29] 'So Banks, Flaxman and Bacon, Soane and Wyatt are intermingled around 1788' in J. Harris 'Fonthill, Wiltshire I – Alderman Beckford' Houses', J. Harris, *Country Life* (Nov. 24 1966) 1370-1374; see more recently Christopher Woodward, 'William Beckford and Fonthill Splendens' *Apollo* (Feb. 1998) 31-40.
[30] Letter to Lettice at Highwood Hill, dated 'Fonthill Aug. 31st 1781' in Red Copy Book, n° 49: 'We have a mighty bustle here & a beastly confusion of workmen, from which the Lord deliver me'.

[31] ' Mr Beckfords' comp.[ts] / Mr Wyatt should be very happy to see him tomorrow Morn at eleven o'clock/ N 12 Wimpole Street' Gen MSS 102 Box 6, Folder 111.

[32] See the letters transcribed in 1835 about the London season of 1782, printed and discussed by Oliver (1932) 106.

[33] 'Passing between the Keeper's Lodge and the lake, we reach a rude erection in imitation of a Cromlech; and here again the prospect is very pleasing. We descend to a building called the Hermitage' in Rutter, *Delineations* (1823) 95.

[34] H. Meister, *Letters Written during a Residence in England, trans. from the French of Henri Meister together with a letter from the Margravine of Anspach* (London, 1799) 300-302. Mowl's interpretation reads thus: 'An oak tree grew from the roof of the Hermitage, and immediately behind it was a rough Gothic tower with steps to an upper room looking out across the lake to Cythera [...] The two caves of the Hermitage by 'the remains of an ancient tower' had, according to Meister, a dual function' in Mowl (1998) 37.

[35] Anon. *Voyages en Angleterre*, (Zurich, 1795) vol. 2, 246. [B.L 792.a.4]

[36] *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents* (1783), Letter VIII, in *The Travel Diaries*, ed. G. Chapman (Cambridge, 1928) vol 1, 64; henceforth, *Dreams*.

[37] *Dreams*, Letter XXII, 203.

[38] Beckford's letter to Henley, 'Portman Square, May 19th, 1784'; see P7, Letter 33. For the recurrence of 'snug' in Beckford's prose, see Jack (1996) 151 n. 45.

[39] Beckford's letter to Henley, 'Fonthill, July 10th, 1784'; see P7, Letter 34.

[40] Beckford's letter to Henley, dated 'Fonthill, October 13th 1784'; see P7, Letter 35.

[41] Mowl (1998) 62 thinks the source for the mention of iron grated doors in the *Long Story* is at Fonthill ('both iron gratings and colossal statues still feature in the Lane's quarry grottoes').

[42] In the sale catalogue of 94 watercolour drawings Beckford sold in 1805 one cannot trace any views of grottoes such as those Cozens produced on his trip with Richard Payne Knight [see plates in Sloan (1986)]. But before going to Italy, one knows Beckford had seen and acquired some of John Robert Cozens's watercolours (see letter to A. Cozens, dated 6 Feb. 1780), probably when the latter came to live in Bath between 1779 and 1782 [see Sloan (1986) 137] ; E.S. Shaffer also referred to this early interest in John Robert in ' 'To remind us of China' – William Beckford, Mental Traveller on the Grand Tour', *Transports: Travel, Pleasure & Imaginative Geography 1600-1830*, ed. Chloe Chard & Helen Langdon (London & New Haven: YUP for the Paul Mellon Centre, 1996) footnotes 31, 32 & 33.

Notes on Contributors

Laurent Châtel, who teaches at the Université de la Sorbonne-Nouvelle, is currently writing his doctoral dissertation on Beckford and the aesthetics of landscape. He has published a few articles on Beckford (his use of colour, his literary art of portraiture, his perception of Hazlitt [forthcoming]) and is preparing two projects: an edition of extracts from Beckford's French correspondence and a catalogue + assessment of his collection of paintings.

Dick Claésson, Department of Comparative Literature, Göteborg University, Sweden, is writing a dissertation on Beckford's early aesthetics, up to and including *Vathek* (1786). The dissertation focuses on Beckford's texts, and the ways in which they display various literary-rhetorical strategies. He published in 1995 *William Beckford av Fonthill, Wilts., 1760-1844, En forskningsöversikt* and in 1996 Beckford's manuscript *The Transport of Pleasure* which he edited.

Eric Darton is interested in music, art and literature, particularly relating to the eighteenth century. His first visit to Lansdown Tower in 1978 aroused an interest in William Beckford. Study of Beckford's writings, conversations with James Lees-Milne and Leslie Hilliard and visits to Fonthill stimulated further interest. Jon Millington introduced him to additional aspects of Beckford and encouraged him to write about them.

Robert Drake is Professor of English at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. He is well-known as a writer of short stories based on the fictional Southern town of Woodville, a place not unlike his own home town of Ripley, Tennessee. In addition to critical works on many aspects of English literature,

Robert Drake has published six collections of stories, the latest being *What Will you do for an Encore?* (1996).

Malcolm Jack's books on William Beckford include *Vathek and Other Stories* (1993), *The Episodes of Vathek* (1994) and *William Beckford: An English Fidalgo* (1996). He has written widely on Enlightenment subjects and reviews books on Portuguese history and fiction. He has been commissioned to write a book on Sintra. Chairman of the Beckford Society since 1995, he is now also Secretary of the Johnson Club.

Jon Millington is on the Council of Management of the Beckford Tower Trust and wrote the guide to the Tower. For the 1976 Beckford Exhibition he produced the slide show and contributed to the catalogue the essays, 'Man of Letters' and 'Bibliophile Extraordinary'. He edited the *Beckford Tower Trust Newsletter* (1980-1994). To mark the 150th anniversary of Beckford's death he devised the exhibition *Souvenirs of Fonthill Abbey*.

J.C.M. Nolan, a freelance writer, has lectured on and published essays about the cultural aspects of the Irish Revival earlier this century. He is now at work on a definitive biography of Edward Martyn (1859-1923), the Irish writer and patron of the Arts who lived in Tulira Castle, County Galway. A growing interest in Beckford is related to a study of Beckford's religious impulses which, he feels, have been sometimes ignored and often misunderstood.

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