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.

Membership of the Society is open to anyone interested in William Beckford who wishes to further its objectives. There is a minimum annual subscription of ten pounds. Applications for membership should be sent to:

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Articles for inclusion in *The Beckford Journal* should be submitted to the Editor (email: richard.a.allen@ntlworld.com) by 1 April 2007.

ISSN 1359-8503

The Beckford Journal

Volume 12. Spring 2006

EDITED BY RICHARD ALLEN

Fonthill Abbey: A View and a Poem

STEPHEN CLARKE

Some of the most familiar watercolour views of Fonthill Abbey are those commissioned by Beckford in 1799 from Turner, and exhibited by Turner at the Royal Academy in 1800. They show the unfinished Abbey – as yet without its north or east wings – in five distant views, taken from different directions at different times of day. One of these, *South View of the Gothic Abbey (Evening) now Building at Fonthill*, is currently at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. It featured in the 2001/2002 Beckford Exhibition as item 78, and is illustrated at page 353 of the splendid catalogue of that exhibition published by Yale University Press.[1] Although the watercolour is now faded, it is still an evocative image of the Abbey, framed between groups of trees with a stream running between rocks in the glade to the left, and the Abbey tower in the centre of the horizon, isolated above its wooded landscape. A. J. Finberg, in his *Life* of Turner, describes how Turner inserted the two as yet unbuilt upper storeys of the tower from Wyatt's drawings, and chose distant viewpoints because of the unfinished state of the 'wilful and pretentious' building, which 'had no visible relation to its surroundings,' a view dramatically at odds with subsequent research on Beckford's landscape – though in fairness, in 1799 the landscape was perhaps as much unfinished as the Abbey. Nonetheless it is mildly surprising that he should describe this and the accompanying landscapes as 'rather tame.'[2]

Some 26 years later, this image was engraved for *The Anniversary; or, Poetry and Prose for 1829*, edited by Allan Cunningham, a miscellaneous writer, and published by John Sharpe. *The Anniversary* is a gift book miscellany of verse and prose, illustrated by engravings, most of them illustrating poems.[3] The Fonthill plate was engraved by T. Crostick after Turner, and

will be known to many Beckfordians from the central section of it having been reproduced on the front cover of the catalogue of the 1976 Beckford exhibition at Salisbury and Bath. It is a generally faithful reproduction of the Turner, the architectural detail of the Abbey if anything somewhat more clearly visible, and the stony nature of the foreground hillside more apparent.

Fonthill Abbey: engraved by T. Crostick after Turner

A further version of this image of the Abbey has now surfaced. It is a watercolour, by appearances of amateur rather than professional quality, with a pencil note beneath it in an apparently nineteenth century hand, reading 'Fenhoutel del Fonthill Abbey'. Jon Millington's sharp eyes immediately recognized that the picture was related to the engraving in *The Anniversary*. It is currently at Vassar College, in New York State, as part of the Magoon collection of British topographical and architectural watercolours. This collection, whose assemblage has been

described by Francesca Consagra, was acquired by the Reverend Elias Lyman Magoon, a Baptist minister who, in the late 1850s, a British antiquarian's cabinet full of arms and armor, coins, artefacts, stained glass, oil paintings, hundreds of art books, and over 3,700 works on paper.'[4] These included over two thousand British drawings and watercolours, a considerable number of them purchased from the then elderly antiquarian John Britton. More than thirty years after Britton had published his *Graphical and Literary Illustrations of Fonthill Abbey, Wiltshire* in 1823, he was in much reduced circumstances – no longer a publisher, but a miscellaneous writer for the booksellers. He had already by 1839 offered for sale three sections of his own library, including original artwork for the fine engraved illustrations to his architectural publications.

Magoon, inspired by the idea of a collection of art based 'around the mother thought of Christianity Illustrated by its Monuments,' and fired by the romances of Sir Walter Scott and the writings of John Ruskin, spent in a period of about six years up to a third of his salary collecting architectural watercolours. Assisted by the then depressed state of the market, he bought extensively from Britton, who still retained original artwork from many of the roll-call of eminent artists that had worked for him in earlier, happier days – including Samuel Prout, Frederick Nash, John Sell Cotman, and Frederick Mackenzie. Another of Britton's former artists, John Le Keux, also acted as Magoon's agent in acquiring works. The Fonthill view was one of Magoon's purchases, though the identity of the artist remains untraced, perhaps because of his or her amateur status. By the early 1860s, the value of his collections (by then including modern American paintings) had risen, and Magoon decided to sell, in 1864 agreeing terms with Matthew Vassar. Vassar had made a fortune in brewing in New York, and had determined to found and endow a properly equipped college for young women that would offer them what Yale and Harvard offered young men. When Vassar

College opened its doors in the following year, it was provided with its own art gallery, and with watercolours that could be displayed or used as teaching aids – among them, Fenhoutel's view of Fonthill.

Fonthill Abbey: watercolour by Fenhoutel
(Reproduced by kind permission of the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, NY)

The watercolour is undated but is infinitely more likely to have been copied from the Crostick engraving than from the Turner watercolour – in which case it would have been painted sometime after 1 October 1828, the date of the engraving, and nearly three years after the date on which the tower collapsed. It shows the Abbey in the same relationship to the landscape, seen in the distance and framed by groups of trees. It lacks the sheep visible

in the middle ground of the Turner and of the engraving, and the detailing of the trees to the right (and particularly the left) is significantly different, while the rocks that strew the foreground and the bed of the stream to the left are more casually sketched in, but more substantial. There is no attempt to draw the detail of the Abbey tower or south range, nor the stony foreground, with its vegetation and foliage. This presumably reflects the artist's level of ability, though given these differences and the slightly different angle of the path that runs between the framing trees and towards the viewer, it is conceivable that this is a different view taken from a virtually identical viewpoint, a little to the left of the Turner and the engraving, in which case it could have been painted any time before the collapse of the tower in December 1825. It must, however, remain the more likely scenario that the untraced Fenhoutel was simply copying the readily accessible engraving from *The Anniversary*, so far as his or her abilities allowed.

If this is so, the artist was responding to the burgeoning myth of the now fatally damaged Abbey – as indeed was the poem 'Fonthill' that accompanies the engraving. It is unsigned, though it may have been composed by Allan Cunningham as the editor of *The Anniversary*. The text of the poem, which is printed in full in Robert Gemmett's *Beckford's Fonthill*, is on the face of it a commonplace reverie on the futility of human ambition:

> Man and his works! words writ on snow
> Are emblem of them both below:
> Stars dropt from heaven to darkness thrown,
> A moment light – and all is gone.[5]

On examination, however, what is striking about the poem is its extraordinary inaccuracy. Fonthill is described as the place

> Where, like a saint embalmed and shrined,
> Long worshiped Beckford dozed and dined;

Strayed through that wood, strolled by that brook
Ate much – thought little – wrote a book;
Tattled with titled dames and sighed
In state like any prince, and died.

A few lines after this description of Beckford as an unthinking gourmand who peopled the Abbey with aristocratic ladies (surprising enough) and a deceased one at that (even more surprising, given that he had another sixteen years to live), is an account of the revelries of Fonthill about as accurate as contemporary accounts of the revelries of Medmenham Abbey:

No longer, through the lighted hall,
Its lord at midnight leads the ball;
Nor, dancing 'mid its dazzling rooms,
Young jewelled beauty shakes her plumes;

A few lines later, a passage of six lines opens with perhaps the only factually accurate couplet in the poem –

The tower that rose so proud and fair,
Hath left its station in mid air;
While in its place the sunbeam flings
Its glory down – the skylark sings:
O'er the wide space usurped by vain
Man, Nature hath resumed her reign.

– an echo of Pope's vision of the destruction of Timon's villa in the *Epistle to Lord Burlington.*

Another age shall see the golden Ear
Imbrown the Slope, and nod on the Parterre.
Deep harvests bury all his pride has plann'd,
And laughing Ceres re-assume the land.[6]

The poem then concludes with trite reflections and uncertain scansion that

> The dust which we shake from our shoe,
> Once breathed and lived and loved. Adieu!

The final irony is that the Hamilton Palace sale catalogue of Beckford's library of 1882-1883 contains as lot 270 in the first day's sale a large paper copy of *The Anniversary*, with India proof plates, half red morocco, top edge gilt – what sounds a typically fine Beckfordian copy of an unexceptional book. What Beckford might have thought of the poem and its popularisation of fantastical myths of the Abbey, printed when the dust had in a sense scarcely settled from the tower's collapse, one can but wonder.

1. Derek E. Ostergard (ed.) *William Beckford, 1760-1844: An Eye for the Magnificent* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001).
2. A. J. Finberg, *The Life of J. M. W. Turner, R. A.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd edn., 1961), 67-68 and 464 (where Turner's painting is listed as item 65).
3. For an entry on *The Anniversary*, see Frederick W. Faxon, *Literary Annuals and Gift Books: A Bibliography 1823-1903. Reprinted with supplementary essays by Eleanore Jamieson and Iain Bain* (Pinner: Private Libraries Association, 1973), 83.
4. Francesca Consagra, 'The "Ever Growing Elm": The Formation of Elias Lyman Magoon's Collection of British Drawings, 1854-1860', in *Landscapes of Retrospection: The Magoon Collection of British Drawings and Prints 1739-1860* (Poughkeepsie: Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center Vassar College, 1999), 85-124, but particularly 85-90, 98, and 117-118.
5. Robert J. Gemmett, *Beckford's Fonthill: The Rise of a Romantic Icon* (Norwich: Michael Russell, 2003), 428-430.
6. Alexander Pope, 'Epistle to Richard Boyle Earl of Burlington', lines 173-176, in the Twickenham edition of *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (London and New Haven: Methuen & Co Ltd and Yale University Press, second edition, 1961), 154.

Redding's Recollections of Beckford 1844-1866

JERRY NOLAN

'I have been behind the scenes in the play of life … I have … watched the actions and motives of the players from the back of the stage, as well as from the front of the house.'

(Fifty Years' Recollections, Literary and Personal, with Observations of Men and Things, 1858, vol. 3, p. 379)

Cyrus Redding (1785-1870) is remembered mainly, if at all, as a prolific nineteenth-century journalist who was prone to regurgitate his memories of William Beckford over a period of some twenty years after the death of the author of *Vathek*. Redding's stream of 'recollections' consisted of a sustained, at times repetitive, attempt to draw public attention to his great enthusiasm for Beckford as one of the most admirable celebrities among the nineteenth-century figures whom he met and wrote about.[1] Many Beckfordians over the years have felt little gratitude towards Redding for his recollections of Beckford which quite a few have summarily dismissed as confused, misleading and artless.[2] The challenge for a twenty-first-century Beckfordian on the whole question of the relevance of Redding in ongoing Beckford Studies is to attempt to read patiently, and to focus closely on, Redding's extremely scattered recollections, which might well lead them to a reasonably informed and sympathetic view of the relationship between the old and the younger man. Redding was the younger man by some twenty-four years, being in his early fifties when he began his conversations with Beckford in 1835; and then Redding himself lived on into relative obscurity in St. John's Wood, London, before he died at the advanced age of eighty-five.[3]

In 1863, Redding explained the background to Henry Colburn's commission of a Beckford biography. Colburn was the publisher of the *New Monthly Magazine* and had been much impressed by Redding's various pieces published in the magazine immediately after Beckford's death:

> 'As far as I was concerned with the topic it had closed for ever … One day requesting to see me, I called in Great Marlborough Street, and Colburn asked me whether I could not, with what materials I possessed and might procure, be able to give him a small biography of Mr. Beckford; a couple of small volumes would be all he wished, because he thought there would not be materials for more.'[4]

Redding completed the manuscript 'with not a word that could be obnoxious to any one in connection with the subject of it.' However, in spite of his repeated enquiries about its fate when nothing was ever published, Redding allowed the whole matter to drop. Redding sketched in the general background to the disappearance of his manuscript, touching on the rumours about the forthcoming appearance of 'a fictitious and scurrilous life of the deceased gentleman' and on the temptation for interested parties to make 'a bargain for the manuscript'. He did not directly accuse Colburn and he did not ascribe the 'worries' directly to the Duchess of Hamiliton, 'an amiable and excellent lady, for whom I have great respect'. In retrospect, it seems unlikely that Redding ever guessed that his manuscript had somehow passed into the possession of the Duchess; and indeed even today it is still not fully clear to Beckfordian researchers how it ended up in the Beckford Papers at Hamilton Palace. After Colburn's death in 1855, Redding returned to the subject of Beckford with a vengeance, at about the same time that he decided to celebrate another great hero of his, Thomas Campbell, the contemporary Scottish poet and close friend who was in the 1820s the nominal editor of the *New Monthly Magazine* which had Redding as the

acting editor for a few years.[5] Eventually Redding compiled his 'biography' of Beckford without the original manuscript to help him. In 1863 he confessed to having taken the very short-term precaution of not affixing his name to the work for fear that any line might cause 'an annoyance to the Duchess', who coincidentally died a short time after the publication of the *Memoirs of William Beckford* in 1859.

On reading the Redding manuscript in the Beckford Papers, three things immediately strike the reader: firstly, the variations in handwriting which at times borders on copperplate and at times plunges into illegible scribble; secondly, the inconsistencies and repetitions in presentation; thirdly, Redding's frantic effort to try to fit his miscellaneous recollections of Beckford into some kind of chronological order. The first two chapters of the manuscript sketched Beckfordian pre-history: Chapter 1 outlined the *possible* aristocratic origins of the Beckford family in English history around the time of Richard III of England and, after a gap of over two hundred years, the spectacular emergence of the Beckfords in Jamaica as sugar planters and colonial leaders, as well as the family origin of Beckford's father who came to London, first as a pupil at Westminster School and later as one of the great Lord Mayors of London; Chapter 2 celebrated the Alderman as champion of the Whig cause in constitutional clashes with George III which led Redding, an inveterate Whig himself, to include extensive quotations from the Alderman's fiery anti-establishment speeches. Chapter 3 began the life of William Beckford with his birth and life up to the age of fifteen briefly chronicled (1760-1775). The remaining chapters in Volume 1 included key details, derived from conversations with Beckford and from reading his books, which covered the periods of Beckford's life as follows: Chapter 4: 1776-1777; Chapter 5: 1777-1778; Chapter 6: 1775-1780; Chapter 7: 1780-1782; Chapter 9 (sic): 1782-1793. In Volume 2 (1790-1844), eight chapters were compiled to chronicle Beckford's life from 1790:

Chapter 1: 1790-1796; Chapter 2: 1797-1800; Chapter 3: 1801-1822; Chapter 4: 1822-1839; Chapter 5: 1839-1840; Chapter 6: 1840-1844; Chapter 7: 1840-1844; Chapter 8: 1844. The manuscript concluded with two chapters by way of an epilogue which included very legible transcripts of Redding's treasured face-to-face conversations with Beckford in Lansdown, Bath, and in Park Lane, London.

On closer scrutiny, the main thrust of the published Beckford Memoirs seems not all that different to the manuscript. The absence of dates in the titles of the chapters indicated a somewhat looser approach to the chronology of Beckford's life. The other striking thing which arises from a detailed comparison is that, as Redding was dependent on reconstruction from memory of the manuscript, the published biography is much more heavily reliant on Beckford's published work and Redding's own previously published pieces. In the published Memoirs, Volume I contained nine chapters: the first two chapters are a rewriting of the manuscript account of the Beckford family and the emergence of the Alderman, with inevitable changes in the wording; and the remaining seven chapters chronicle Beckford's life from birth to his encounter in Portugal with the Grand Prior and the Legend of the Holy Crow in connection with St. Vincent. Volume II included ten chapters which began with a description of Beckford's relations with the Marialva family (Chapter I). As he began to proceed through the second volume, Redding's focus began to meander; he described Beckford's further travels to Madrid, Paris and Portugal, and sketched in the background to the design and construction of Fonthill Abbey. Then in Chapter VI there appeared a diversion on Beckford as a Swiftian satirist – with much on the two burlesque novels – yet for Redding such a diversion had become central to his interpretation of Beckford by leading him on to explore Beckford as a political pundit while remaining a Baghdad Lansdown recluse for the last twenty one years of his retired life in Bath. Redding summed up Beckford's

character in Chapter VIII, but then became unnecessarily distracted by minor matters, describing sightseeing excursions at Lansdown before ending, rather anticlimactically, with much on Beckford's correspondence with his agents in the world of art sales. In the appendices which follow, Redding appended a very brief note on the bad management of the Beckford estates in Jamaica, the text of Redding's poem in response to Raphael's picture of St. Katherine – a poem which was commissioned by Beckford, and the full text of Redding's previously published review of Beckford's *Letters From Italy*.

Similar patterns are to be found throughout Redding's use of his sources, which he never mastered as a scholar, in both the unpublished manuscript and the published Memoirs: notes of conversations which obviously included briefings by Beckford, some potted background to Beckford's recurring favourite topics, summaries and extensive quotations from Beckford's published works and from published reviews of Beckford's works, and accounts of Beckford's life, generally by Redding himself. The central acclaim for *Vathek* as a masterpiece on the same literary level as Milton and Dante was very strongly expressed in both versions. Certainly phrasing and incidental detail differ in the two works but only the fifty-seven pages devoted to extracts from *Modern Novel Writing* and *Azemia* in Volume II stands out as a striking new departure, probably because Redding saw great significance in the two utterly neglected burlesque novels which he had discovered during his meetings with Beckford.

Beckford's biographer Boyd Alexander made extensive use of the Redding manuscript, with some forty-six references to it and only some six references to the published Memoirs, which led Alexander to proclaim: 'It is also pleasant to pay tribute to the work of Beckford's first biographer, Redding, after a century of denigration.'[6] However Alexander could not resist still sniping at Redding by suggesting that the Duchess of Hamilton had been so upset by the depiction of her father in the manuscript that she

'presumably' bought it off Redding to ensure its suppression. Both Redding's own account of the disappearance of the manuscript from his view and the survival of the manuscript in the Beckford Papers suggests that Alexander in this instance was wrong in his conclusion. Again Alexander made the observation that the manuscript 'is quite different from the later printed book.' These differences are to be found only in the incidental detail of personalities and events.[7] In fact, Alexander did not concern himself directly at any point in his narrative with Redding's portrait of Beckford. As to those 'worries' which he ascribed to the Duchess of Hamilton about the characterisation of her father in Redding's account, in reality there is no fundamental difference in the view of Beckford in the two works, apart from the fact that Redding made a somewhat better attempt, while still severely limited by his approach to scattered sources, at suggesting cultural depth to the depiction of Beckford in the published account which now reads as the portrait of a friend.

Redding failed to liberate himself from his prolific lifetime journalistic practices which continued unabated into old age, with a relentless flow of recollections about the long chorus line of celebrities whom he had met.[8] However, Redding did publish a few ideas about the nature of writing a biography. In the introduction to the biography of Beckford, Redding touched on the motivation of the biographer to rescue from oblivion the trait of character or peculiarity which characterised the remarkable life of the dead individual by quoting a distinguished writer: 'for the incidents which which give excellence to biography are of a volatile and evanescent kind, such as soon escape the memory, and are rarely transmitted by tradition … it cannot, therefore, be deemed uninteresting to present to the public all the information it is likely to receive regarding a name so celebrated.'[9] In the introduction to the biography of his close friend the Scottish poet Thomas Campbell (1777-1844), there was an acknowledgement of the ultimate need for the emergence of 'impartiality': 'Time

must lessen the tendency to panegyric or censure, before impartiality can be maintained, and the future writer selects from the different personal statements which he finds transmitted to his hands, those facts upon which he can deliver to the world the final biography, which shall stand the test of impartial criticism'.[10] Redding saw his biographical work as having relevance to future biographers: 'This work then is contributive to the labour of the future biographer, communicating incidents and characteristics available from no other source.'[11] The opening sentence of the Campbell biography revealed Redding's basic approach not only to his biography of Campbell but also to his biography of Beckford: 'The biography of literary men must be sought in their works' which Redding took as a justification for massive summary and quotation.[12] Given his approach to biography, nowadays Redding seems to modern scholars to be utterly naïve and moribund, and a relic of an approach to biography long since abandoned by its modernising liberators. Certainly in the instance of Beckford, Redding curiously seemed to lack any awareness of the possible survival of anything like the very extensive Beckford Papers preserved by the Duchess of Hamilton, and any inkling of the fact that Beckford had not put *all* the jigsaw pieces of his complicated life on the table for Redding's inspection during their brief yet memorable encounters.[13] Later biographers of Beckford have felt the instinctive need to undervalue, distort, even dismiss, Redding's contribution largely because as biographers they want to distance themselves themselves from Redding's outmoded *ad hoc* biographical practices. Yet I feel strongly that Redding made an *unique* contribution to Beckford studies, but this contribution becomes crystal clear only when his writing about Beckford is understood as an aspect of his own autobiography. The two areas which desperately need to be explored, then, in Redding studies are the whys of Redding's overall view of Beckford as a cultural hero and the wherefores of Redding's recording of how Beckford

and he briefly found themselves on a common ground as ambitious fellow writers.

After Colburn's death, Redding looked at the Beckford jigsaw pieces scattered on his table, and formed a view of Beckford which he then pieced together. The first jigsaw piece was Beckford's distinctive place in his own family history. The figure of the Alderman, much admired by Redding, became the political spokesman for the Whigs convinced of the injustice of taxing the American colonies and a great opponent of George III's corrupt patronage. Redding drew the contrast between the equally admired figure of the Alderman's even wealthier son who, like his father, never settled for a life of luxury and idleness, but unlike his father would develop forms of cultural rebellion other than his father's party political role in the city of London.[14] Redding traced the roots of that rebellion back to the adolescent Beckford when he ridiculed the memoirs and criticism of certain Dutch painters in *Vies des Peintres Flamands* and discovered that he derived inordinate pleasure from mischievously identifying with the housekeeper who guided visitors ignorantly through his father's collection of art at Fonthill Splendens: 'At that early age he had an inclination for a little mischief whenever an absurdity came in his way that deserved the lash; and his tendency grew with his years … He was thus sarcastic, harmlessly malicious, deeply observant, and sound in judgment to a degree rarely before witnessed in one so young'[15]: indeed, Redding traces back Beckford's propensity to satire to early sarcastic remarks made during a visit to the Duke of Queensberry. Redding sensed that Beckford's development as an intellectual had to be tracked back to his time in Switzerland for the contrast between his tutor's unsuccessful attempt to introduce Beckford to abstract science at experimental physics sessions conducted by M. d'Espinasse at the Château of the Baron Prangins, and Beckford's genuinely enthusiastic response during his visit to the Grande Chartreuse, set in a landscape of dashing torrents and towering rocks.[16] For

Redding, there was a part of Beckford which continued to function as the maverick politician with strong views on what was going wrong in English society, yet aware of the impossibility of putting any of his many ideas into practice. Redding concluded that Beckford had 'too much intellect and genius, and not craft enough, nor a front sufficiently unblushing to adapt him to public life, being incapable of justifying everything by an equivocal or crooked policy'; and as an old man, Beckford seemed to agree with Redding's conclusion, 'I am no solitary, heaven knows, but I would rather live in hermit solitude, than in the turmoil of faction and political intrigue.'[17]

Redding saw Beckford as greatly attracted towards the Orient from an early age. In spite of the Alderman's penchant for the decorative Turkish Room in Fonthill Splendens, the boy's interest in the Orient was pounced on by Beckord's mentors, in particular by Lord Chatham, one of his guardians, who saw it as a danger signal which meant that the Alderman's only legitimate son had to be rescued from a path which would most certainly not lead to a seat in the House of Commons and beyond. According to Redding's opinion, Beckford as a writer never surpassed the magnificent orientalism of *Vathek*; and Redding was happy to report that on one of his visits to Lansdown, he found the old man reading Hindu dramas in translation.[18] Beckford the happily married man became a recurring topic in the Memoirs with Redding reporting that the old man 'could never speak of his wife without deep emotion. It was the cause of his reveries, of his abstraction – sometimes in the midst of lively scenes; and of his feeling of solitude, at times when his feelings were full of that which he would fain conceal in society.'[19] Beckford as the admirable creator and patron of Fonthill Abbey and Lansdown Tower inevitably fascinated Redding who agreed with Beckford's criticisms of Wyatt, architect of Fonthill Abbey.[20] Beckford's passion as a lifelong enthusiast for heraldry struck Redding as somewhat ambiguous because Beckford 'with one class of

persons, could speak of heraldry as a thing of importance … to others he would make a jest of them … spoken of as idle vanities' and of course, Beckford was the man who wrote *Liber Veritatis*, with its devastating exposure of the new honours system.[21] Redding was much impressed by Beckford the scholar who continued to read very widely and annotate his many books relentlessly throughout his long life – 'an accomplished mind in the midst of treasures of art and nature'.[22] Beckford the instant wit was remembered with some amusement by Redding who recalled examples, one of which was what Beckford said when told that Farquhar had been thinking of bequeathing him the ruins of Fonthill: 'It would have falsified the old proverb, "You can't eat your cake, and have it too" '; however, the more discreet Redding had to admit: 'Mr. Beckford related some anecdotes of the King to Mr. Cyrus Redding, too coarse to put into print.'[23]

Whatever the obvious shortcomings of Redding's much decried biographical methodology, a close reading of *Memoirs of William Beckford* still conveys a vivid impression of Beckford. Redding lacked the advantage of having access to so much hidden evidence; yet he managed to evoke a range of intriguing qualities in the extraordinary man, from which example Beckford's subsequent more orderly and better organised biographers *might* have learned much![24]

At the heart of Redding's obsession with Beckford is the fact that they related very well to each other, in their brief encounters, as two fellow writers who were yet to achieve their full potential. In an article for *The Beckford Journal* (2004), I tried to describe and analyse Redding's early unrealised ambitions as a poet and his account of the two occasions when Beckford responded enthusiastically to his poetry: 'Gabrielle, a Tale of the Swiss Mountains' and the Redding poem, reproduced in *Memoirs of William Beckford*, which was a response, commissioned by Beckford, to Raphael's picture of St. Catherine, at the time of composition still on display in the Lansdown collection of art.[25]

The relationship between Beckford and Redding still remains pretty marginal to Beckford Studies, for the various reasons which I have suggested.[26] Should the unpublished Redding manuscript in the Beckford Papers be published? Of course, if an enthusiastic and patient editor can be found; but the publication would not utterly transform our view of Beckford, though it would add depth to the portrait by filling in some more fascinating detail – for example, on the Lettice connection, which so fascinated Boyd Alexander. Should a scholarly index be compiled of the Beckford references throughout all of Redding's work through the twenty-two-year period? Yes, such an overview would present in schematic form the multi-faceted aspects embedded in Redding's recollections. What needs most of all to be recovered is the sense of the meeting of imaginations between Beckford and Redding. As an extremely busy journalist, interviewing the period's many celebrities, Redding imagined himself as behind the scenes, watching from the back of the stage, watching from the front of house. Actually the most positive way to recreate Redding's encounter with Beckford is to imagine Redding *onstage* with his hero. The evidence to reconstruct their vivid encounters at Lansdown and Park Lane for a stage performance by two actors has lain dormant for over one hundred and sixty years in Redding's two-part record 'Recollections of the Author of "Vathek" ', which was his best written piece about Beckford, probably because it was written down spontaneously on hearing about the death of a friend. [27]

1. The following is a list of Redding's published recollections of Beckford: 'Recollections of the Author of "Vathek" ', two articles in *New Monthly Magazine* 71 (June & July 1844), 143-158, 302-319; *Fifty Years' Recollections, Literary and Personal, with Observations of Men and Things*, 3 vols. (London; C. J. Skeet, 1858), iii. 87-124; *Memoirs of William Beckford of Fonthill. Author of "Vathek"*, 2 vols,(London: C. J. Skeet, 1859); *Yesterday and Today*, 3 vols. (London: T. Cautley Newby, 1863), iii. 33-35; *Past Celebrities Whom I Have Known*, 2 vols. (London: C.J. Skeet, 1866), ii. 87-124. The unpublished 1846 recollections of

Redding, compiled for immediate publication but subsequently mislaid, are among the MSS of the Beckford Papers in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (MSS. Beckford c.85-6).

2. See Jon Millington, 'Cyrus Redding: Beckford's First Biographer' in *The Beckford Journal* 2 (1996), 26-33, for a good summary of the reception over the years of Redding's recollections of Beckford and for acute comment on how rumour and muddle have contributed to a distorted view of Redding among Beckfordians.
3. See the entry for Redding in *Oxford DNB* by Thomas Secombe, revised by Roy Boston (Oxford: OUP, 2004-5).
4. Redding, *Yesterday and Today*, iii. 33-35.
5. Redding, *Literary Reminiscences and Memoirs of Thomas Campbell*, 2 vols. (London: Skeet, 1860).
6. Boyd Alexander, *England's Wealthiest Son* (London: Centaur, 1962), 4.
7. All forty-six quotations included in Alexander's text refer to minor details. Alexander is particularly interested in those details which Redding may well have found in a MS diary kept by Beckford's tutor Lettice up to 1786. Lettice was also the tutor to Beckford's daughters. By 1859 Redding had forgotten many of these details. Alexander regrets the fact that, unlike the Redding MS, Lettice's diary did not survive in the Beckford Papers.
8. See *Past Celebrities* for Redding's spirited recollections of the 'great men' whom he had met and who had deeply interested him: (among others) George Canning, J. M. W. Turner, William Hazlitt, A. W. Schlegel, Daniel O'Connell, Richard Cobden and John Clare. In 1866, at eighty-one years of age, Redding confessed that his recollections were random records and that he much regretted that the records were not fuller with a reliable order of dates ('To the Reader', v-vi).
9. *Memoirs of William Beckford*, vol. i, pp. i-ii.
10. Redding, *Literary Reminiscences and Memoirs of Thomas Campbell,* 2 vols.(London: Skeet, 1860), vol. i, p. iii.
11. Ibid., vol. i, p. vi.
12. Ibid., i. 1.
13. The most significant missing jigsaw piece was Chevalier Franchi, identified in passing as 'an eminent musical performer, who superintended his household' (*Memoirs of William Beckford*, i. 89). Redding's view of Beckford omits all reference to his bisexuality, presumably because the ageing Beckford himself chose to ignore it in their exchanges and to emphasise his deep love of Margaret his wife. *Memoirs of William Beckford* raises a key question of just how relatively important to the interpretation of Beckford is his bisexuality. The other important area

which Beckford did not reveal to Redding was that of his early unpublished writings, although he did read 'without spectacles' the *Episodes* to Redding in the Park Lane House (*Fifty Years' Recollections*, iii. 106-8).

14. *Memoirs of William Beckford*, i. 64 ff.
15. Ibid., i. 96-98 and ii. 291-2.
16. Ibid., i. 132-140 (where Redding has the spellings 'D'Epinasse' and 'Prangin').
17. Ibid., i. 240-1 and ii. 160.
18. Ibid., i. 87-88 and ii. 339.
19. Ibid., i. 349.
20. Ibid., ii. Chapter IV and Chapter VII.
21. Ibid., ii. 149 and ii. 341.
22. Ibid., ii. 226.
23. Ibid., ii. 258 and ii. 221.
24. Some of Beckford's recollections were fantasies which roused no suspicion in his guest. One of the best examples of his teasing tendency is Beckford's revelation of the circumstances of his writing *Vathek*: 'I wrote it in one sitting, and in French. It cost me three days and two nights of hard labour. I never took my clothes off the whole time. This severe application made me very ill.' (*Memoirs of William Beckford*, i. 243).
25. See my article 'Redding's Alps and Beckford's Pencillings' in *The Beckford Journal* 10 (Spring 2004), 61-70. For the text of the Redding poem 'Lines on the Picture of St. Katharine, by Raphael, at Lansdown, now in the National Gallery', see *Memoirs of William Beckford*, ii. 394-395.
26. Dick Claésson's decision a few years ago to begin putting the opening chapters of *Memoirs of William Beckford* onto his William Beckford website (http://beckford.c18.net/) was perhaps an encouraging sign of a slowly growing awareness of the importance of Redding's testimony in Beckford studies.
27. *New Monthly Magazine* 71 (June & July 1844), 143-158, 302-319.

A Cultural Eruption in the East, Or, The Caliph of Wörlitz's Volcano Re-Commissioned

KEVIN L. COPE

Beckfordians tend to value the gothic over the sublime, the rare over the abundant, the refined over the robust, and the ornamental over the accidental. They dream of mild ocean mists caressing Wiltshire castles rather than of seismic tidal waves slamming Neapolitan coasts; they relish the planning of abbeys but excuse their favorite author for never hewing stone in a quarry; they applaud landscape imagery but favor cathedral arches over mountain ridges. Beckford sets his most sublime scenes – even the igneous damnation of Vathek and his traveling companions – in interiors, whether underground chasms or soaring towers or visionary palaces, allowing his readers to forget about the role of the outdoors in his life and work. Beckford's greatest architectural and financial folly, the building (and collapse) of Fonthill Abbey, can, after all, be understood as both an outdoor and an indoor event: as an attempt to raise the exterior façade of inner desire up against the elements, to hoist up into panoramic view the exterior carapace of a gothic, historical, and ultimately psychological drama.

Beckford's exposure to the outdoors went beyond his daily horseback tours around his grounds. He also enjoyed a vicarious outdoor life when consorting with his distant relative, Sir William Hamilton, possibly the most outdoorsy aristocrat in the long eighteenth century. True, the period offers many adventurers who covered more ground or who spent more time in the fresh air than did Sir William, a collector of ancient artifacts and connoisseur of topography as well as a long-serving ambassador to Naples. Nevertheless, Hamilton's habit of throwing himself into the literal line of geological fire – of walking or riding directly into

the path of the many volcanic eruptions that pummeled the Italian eighteenth century – places him in the first rank of those ready to meet nature on its own open territory. When Beckford first visited the Hamiltons in Naples in 1780, the telluric ambassador had already spent over a decade studying, describing, and sketching the adjoining volcanic region. Hamilton's lavishly illustrated *Campi Phlegræi* (replete with fifty-four hand-illuminated illustrations by Peter Sandby) had appeared in 1776 to rave reviews from the scientific community. One may easily imagine Hamilton and Beckford reflectively turning its pages after a day rambling on eruptive Neapolitan slopes.

One outflow from the Hamilton-Beckford-Vesuvius collaboration has lately meandered into view following a long period of dormancy. That bit of high-culture ejectamenta is the 'Stein' or artificial volcano in the 'Gartenreich' ('Garden Kingdom') in Wörlitz, near Dessau, Germany. One of western Europe's least-known UNESCO 'world heritage' monuments, the Gartenreich was the most ambitious project of Friedrich Franz von Anhalt-Dessau (Duke Leopold III). A votary of English landscape gardening theories as well as a social reformer and modernizer, Duke Franz combined aristocratic grandeur with artistic sensibility as well as with an aversion for the aggressive social and artistic policies of his Prussian liege, Frederick II of Prussia (Frederick the Great). Franz had more than a little in common with William Beckford, including an admiration for Sir William Hamilton's classicizing tastes and geological interests. The heir to one of the wealthiest estates in the German-speaking world and more culturally fluent than his gruff father, the young Franz befriended architect and landscape planner Friedrich Wilhelm von Erdmannsdorff, who would later implement the young duke's artistic and landscaping ambitions by designing the Gartenreich along with the majority of the monumental and ornamental structures in it. Franz, like Beckford an early and somewhat visionary traveler, knew England well, having early on

completed a grand tour that included a visit to British as well as to the usual continental Mediterranean cultural sites.

The Hamilton Villa at Wörlitz

The Gartenreich could be described as a composite or even ‘meta-garden’. It freely and usually adeptly combines a wide range of elements and ideas borrowed from many other garden

estates. Unlike Sanssouci, the nearby rococo-style summer estate of Franz's competitor Frederick II, the Gartenreich evidences a high degree of decentralization. It downplays and decentralizes its central manor house while offering a highly eclectic, highly dispersed selection of buildings and installations: a 'Gothic House' modeled after Strawberry Hill; a renovated gothic church; a neoclassical Temple of Venus; assorted shrines; a rural villa for the Duchess; a grotto; a vast array of picturesque bridges in assorted oriental, English, industrial-progressive, and rustic styles. Numerous novelty statues such as that of a youth extracting a thorn from his foot dot the walking trails. So abundant are these diversions that ramblers can easily overlook the garden itself, which abounds with an equally diverse selection of plant material from Italy, England, and occasionally even from Germany. Like the impulsive Beckford or for that matter like Horace Walpole, Duke Franz creates the mixed sense of maxed-out cosmopolitanism and apparent natural ease that characterized the eighteenth-century English landscape garden.

Amidst this quietly dazzling garden development, the 'Stein' or artificial volcano on the 'Felseninsel' or rock island rises as the chief attraction. An artificially constructed stone island in the middle of a stream diverted from the river Elbe, the Felseninsel is comprised of two elements: the 'Villa Hamilton' and the 'Stein' or artificial volcano per se. A charming three-room cottage in a Georgian style, the Villa Hamilton mimics Sir William Hamilton's summer house in Posillipo. Its maroon red walls with playful white trim rise out of the artificial island as if in whimsically civilized extrapolation from the rougher earth tones of the artificial island. The freshly renovated interior of the Villa Hamilton contains roughly 120 of the nearly 200 art works that originally graced the cottage. These works include paintings on archaeological, Pompeiian, and antique-ruin subjects, themes, and motifs. Sitting like a cookie jar on a granite countertop, the Villa Hamilton bemusedly stands guard over the appropriately named

Erdmannsdorf's wondrous geological folly, a working model of the world's most famous volcano, Mount Vesuvius.

The 'Stein' and the Hamilton Villa

The communist regime in the old east Germany allowed the entire Gartenreich to fall into disrepair, having erroneously regarded Duke Franz's homage to English social and artistic progressivism as a monument to social inequity and consumerism. For the last several years, the sprawling Gartenreich has been under continuous restoration, with the greatest effort being applied to the Hamiltonian volcano. On September 9, 2005, the Gartenreich Foundation staged a gala re-opening of the 'Stein' and its attached villa. That opening was not for the faint-hearted: the restoration revived not only the exterior of the miniature Vesuvius but also, to the degree of authenticity that extant documentation allowed, the artificial vulcanological mechanisms within it. The opening evening culminated in a planned eruption – the first in 200 years – carried out through the

generous deployment of cunning pyrotechnical technology, as if in imitation of the narrative, storytelling fireworks of Hamilton's bygone day. The authorities of the Gartenreich could not have publicized the event in a more Beckfordian idiom: 'Werden sie zur blauen Stunde geschehen, wo die Sonne des Tages mit ihrer letzten Kraft den Horizont in besonderen Farben zeichnet oder werden Eruptionen mit einem Lichtspiel des Feuers in die schwarze Nacht gesetzt?' ['Will it occur at azure hours, when, with its last bit of strength, the sun of the passing day washes the horizon in singular colors, or will the eruption be set in the black of night amidst the fiery play of light?']. With its main combustion chamber, its three auxiliary combustion chambers, its pumping apparatus, and its team of experts, the 'Stein' is now able to deliver volcanic recreations on demand. It can even simulate lava flows and the spewing of coastal waters incident on Vesuvian eruptions. The Gartenreich website (www.gartenreich.com) has been accessorized with assorted eighteenth-century prints and paintings portraying earlier 'eruptions' of the 'Stein' as well as of the original Italian Vesuvius. Future multimedia events involving the integration of volcanic eruptions with music, dance, and art are planned.

For any true Beckfordian, a visit to the Gartenreich is well worth the effort. Effort will certainly be required: Dessau and Wörlitz are off the beaten track even in populous Germany; hotel and catering facilities in the old eastern zone are at best unpredictable in character and quality (the allegedly four-star hotel in which the author stayed seemed to have been take over by a cult group that had replaced the restaurant menu with strange combinations of putatively synergistic foods); the Gartenreich itself remains, after years of renovation, in varying degrees of repair or disrepair. Some structures are spotless, some loiter in scaffolding, and some seem to be getting worse rather than better owing to under-informed post-socialist projects at 'renovation'. Underpaid guides manage a brisk Prussian minimalism with

respect to etiquette. Still, the magnificence of Duke Franz's 'English' project reasserts itself even despite rough treatment during the last two centuries. Visitors unaccustomed to the rigors of eastern Germany might do well to stay in the better-appointed hotels in nearby Potsdam, combining the journey into the Gartenreich with a visit to Sanssouci and related sites from the time of Frederick the Great or with an exploration of the museums pertaining to the much later Bauhaus movement. Those who have the good fortune to enjoy an official evening 'eruption' will get a glimpse into the artful night-time world of the Hamiltons, the Fuselis, the Cozenses, the Loutherbourgs, and, best of all, the Beckfords.

A Swiss Excursion

SIDNEY BLACKMORE

For Chaucer's pilgrims April was the month for setting out on a journey, but for members of the Beckford Society the final days of May and the first days of June 2005 were chosen for an excursion to Switzerland in the footsteps of William Beckford.

The shores of Lake Geneva held a very special place in Beckford's affections. He made various sojourns in this landscape beginning with a youthful visit in 1777-1778 – almost a European education – when he stayed with his kinsman Edward Hamilton. As William Hauptman has written, Beckford's Swiss visits gave respite between trips to other lands and provided 'stable points within his peripatetic existence'.[1]

We stayed at the Hotel Aulac on the shore at Lausanne. Our first visit was to explore the old town set on steep slopes with views across the roof tops to the lake and the Savoy Alps beyond. We visited the great gothic cathedral, consecrated in 1275, and

the Musée Historique with its fine displays illustrating the history of the city. Then we crossed the lake by a gracious old-world ferry to Evian, for decades a place of gentle leisure and for Beckford 'that romantic Village amongst forests of Chesnut … where I have enjoyed many a peaceful hour'.[2] Bottles of Evian water now bring its name and fame to tables around the world.

The next day was spent in Geneva and its surrounding countryside. En route for the city we called at the charming eighteenth-century château of Mme de Staël at Coppet. Here she spent the period of her exile from Paris receiving friends and admirers. For once Swiss efficiency failed when in Geneva we found the Voltaire Museum closed, but it allowed a more relaxed lunch. Like Beckford we climbed to the 'lofty summit' of Mount Salève with its views over the city and the lake. Our ascent, unlike Beckford's, was by cable car which smoothly and swiftly carried us to the 1100-metre summit. Salève was one of Beckford's favourite places from which to peer down on the world. 'From whence do you think I date this Letter?', he wrote. 'Not from a neat precise Study, with a mahogany inlaid table, nicely lined with baze … This very sheet of paper … is cast carelessly on a rugged fragment, mouldered from the peak of the Mountain'.[3]

One day was spent travelling eastward from Lausanne to the Château of Chillon, a thirteenth-century fortress, with its associations with Byron and Shelley. Close to Vevey, a town made fashionable by Rousseau, who described it in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, we visited the Château de La Tour-de-Peilz to which Beckford and Lady Margaret retreated in 1785.[4] It was in this modest château with its tall corner towers – to eighteenth-century eyes a melancholy castle – that Lady Margaret died in May 1786 shortly after the birth of the Beckfords' younger child Susan Euphemia. The château is now the home of the Swiss Museum of Games (Musée Suisse du Jeu). In Vevey we explored the Musée Historique where the curator kindly brought out of storage the

watercolour of Beckford's château by Michel-Vincent Brandoin painted in about 1782. We were also pleased to discover a large stove with decorative tiles that had come from the château.

At the Château de La Tour-de-Peilz

Our final morning was spent travelling south into France to La Grande Chartreuse, the monastery founded by St Bruno. Unlike Horace Walpole, Beckford and other Grand Tourists (even, it is said, Queen Victoria) we were unable to visit the famous monastery but experienced the majesty of its landscape of forests and mountain streams. A smaller monastery, La Correrie, once the house of the lay brothers – almost at the gates of the upper monastery – is now a museum illustrating the history of La Grande Chartreuse and the Carthusian order. Beckford had been warmly received by the monks on his visit in 1778 on account of his ownership of Witham Friary. 'The place exceeded my

expectations; it is more wonderfully wild than I can describe', he wrote.[5] As a remembrance of Beckford's own visit, I left a copy of Michael McGarvie's history of Witham Friary for the monastery's library.

At times, I wondered what Beckford himself would have made of our attempts to follow in his footsteps. Then I remembered his own visit to Petrarch's house at Arquà Petrarca near Padua where with the poet's poems in his pocket he 'ran over every room' and even sat in Petrarch's chair.[6] Through such excursions we pay homage to our heroes and by making a shared journey with fellow enthusiasts often form friendships and strike up new interests.

Many memories remain from the Swiss excursion, not least the beauty of the lake and its surrounding mountains. We were blessed with Doris Ruprecht the perfect guide who looked after us with Swiss professionalism, kindness, good humour and infinite knowledge. It was a tour fit to delight Chaucer's pilgrims and even Beckford's companions on that celebrated excursion to Portuguese monasteries. One question remains. Where next?

1. The most comprehensive account of Beckford and Switzerland is William Hauptman, 'Clinging Fast "To My Tutelary Mountains": Beckford in Helvetia', in Derek E. Ostergard (ed), *William Beckford, 1760-1844: An Eye for the Magnificent* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 73-87.
2. William Beckford, July 28 1783, in Lewis Melville, *The Life and Letters of William Beckford* (London: Heinemann, 1910), 167.
3. William Beckford, 13 Sept 1777, ibid., 30.
4. George Sand famously declared that 'It is not so much a question of travelling as of getting away; which of us has not some pain to dull, or some yoke to cast off?' See *A Winter in Majorca,* author's note and Chapter 4.
5. For Beckford's visit, see J. C. M. Nolan, 'Beckford's Excursion to the Grande Chartreuse Revisited', in *The Beckford Journal* 5 (1999), 33-42.
6. For Beckford's account of the visit to Arquà, see 'Letter XII', *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents,* ed. Robert J. Gemmett (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1971), 139-142.

An Eye for the Beautiful and the Sublime: Beckford and Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics

MIRELLA BILLI

'I assure myself,' wrote the Reverend John Lettice to Lord Chatham, Beckford's godfather, 'that it will give your Lordship pleasure to be informed that about a month ago, *that splendid heap of Oriental drawings* […] which filled a large table at Burton, has been sacrificed at the shrine of *good taste*. Mr. Beckford had firmness enough to burn them with his own hand. I hope that as *his judgment* grows maturer, it will give me an opportunity of acquainting your Lordship with other sacrifices to the same power.'[1] (My italics)

When this happened, Beckford was about thirteen years old; extremely gifted and sensitive, he was taught Latin and Greek by such a refined classicist as Lettice, who made him read Homer, Livy, Cicero and Horace in their original languages, and communicated to his pupil indubitable admiration for classical art and literature, in his opinion superior to any other, and perfect examples of 'good taste' – according to the early eighteenth-century meaning given to this term – and therefore the only ones that 'judgement' could properly appreciate.

Undoubtedly Lettice's teachings and the study of the classics – which gradually included also the works of Italian authors such as Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto and Tasso, equally read in the original language – were fundamental for Beckford, whose works are indeed permeated by reminiscences of the classic authors, but the burning of the precious Oriental drawings (even Lettice describes them as 'splendid'), far from destroying in supposedly purifying flames Beckford's fascination for the Orient and what it meant to him – grandeur, splendour, mystery, the realm of imagination – seems to have increased his passion for all things Oriental, according to his imaginative and passionate personality, which

Lettice himself defined as 'vivid' and 'compounded of the elements of *air* and *fire*'.[2] Such passionate nature and temper were confirmed in a letter by Beckford in which he identified himself with Alexander Cozens, officially his drawing master, actually an extremely powerful influence on his whole life and works: 'Could I have imagined any person so penetrated with the same rays as you are with those that transfix me? Strange, very strange, that such perfect conformity should subsist. All your letters were deposited in a drawer lined with blue, the colour of Aether.'[3] It is obvious that Cozens fascinated young Beckford with his irresistible personality, his adventurous life, his Arab, Persian and Indian stories, and taught him to appreciate a new taste and a new sensibility, and that he stimulated, encouraged and enhanced his young disciple's curious, ardent, imaginative and transgressive nature, to which not only a natural disposition, but extraordinary economic conditions and status strongly contributed. 'England's wealthiest son', as Byron called him, at his father's death in 1770, when he was only nine, inherited an impressive fortune in money and properties. The legacy included lucrative Jamaican estates and the magnificent neo-Palladian mansion called Fonthill Splendens, the seat of the family in Wiltshire, set in an extensive park and furnished by the most famous artists of the time. Such a wonderful place, its library and its collections of books and paintings, could only fire the imagination of an already naturally talented and sensitive young person.

Timothy Mowl, Beckford's latest biographer, defines Beckford in the following terms: 'He was, by his taste and by his flamboyant lifestyle, the ice-breaker in the frozen sea of eighteenth-century English classicism and the morning star of the English Romantic movement. As a boy of seventeen he was already writing like a Firbankian angel. At eighteen in Protestant Geneva he had grasped the spirit of Goethe's emotional intensity'.[4] Though Mowl compares him to the Great Romantics,

Beckford's progress is in many ways different from theirs – as were his life and his cultural background – and is determined by a series of personal experiences and encounters, of readings and influences. However, if Mowl may exaggerate his similarities to the Great Romantics, it must be acknowledged that Beckford can certainly be identified with the Spirit of Romanticism, shaped by the elaboration of all the developments and the transformations of eighteenth-century culture. In his literary works, as well as in his architectural enterprises and in his collectionism, it is possible to retrace the birth and progress of the new aesthetics, which, through an intense debate, and the creation of a system for the understanding, the interpretation and the evaluation of art works, became in this century a recognized subject within the practice of philosophy.[5]

The library of Fonthill Splendens offered Beckford an immense and extremely various collection of books,[6] from all the classics to the works of contemporary writers, from travel narrative and memoirs to popular fiction, from music scores to art publications, engravings, reproductions and catalogues. If the Oriental drawings had been sacrificed (but 'other sacrifices' were never repeated!), the library contained all the Eastern literature translated into English, *The Arabian Nights, Turkish Tales,* entire collections of Chinese stories, the *Mogul Tales* and the *Tartarian Tales*, and D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale.* In the extraordinary and typical eighteenth-century variety of the library, Hamilton's volumes on Etruscan and Grecian Antiquities could be found together with Michelangelo's works, with Claude's, Poussin's and Rosa's engravings, with Gilpin's writings on the Picturesque, with the librettos of Italian operas. Beckford read there the masterpieces of the world's literatures, Shakespeare and Dante, Virgil and Petrarch, Milton, Ariosto and Tasso, Voltaire's *Œuvres*, but also much contemporary poetry and narrative, including Gothic fiction, even that of the despised

'female romancers'. Addison's *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy*, with the description of Rome and its glorious ruins, and the complete collection of *The Spectator*, were to have a special and lasting influence on his aesthetics.

Fonthill Splendens itself was for Beckford the first inspiring example of the new taste: a mixture of Palladian symmetry and neo-classical harmony, with its Oriental-inspired furnishings, its 'Roman' Temple with a Tuscan façade,[7] and the pagoda and grottoes built in the garden landscaped in the Picturesque manner, it played a significant role in the shaping of Beckford's artistic personality. The furnishings and the opulent interiors of Fonthill Splendens conformed with the changing contemporary taste in their extraordinary blending of styles, from the Rococo to the Oriental, an example of which was the Turkish Room, greatly admired by the Prince of Wales and his entourage in 1794, but already described in 1768 by Elizabeth Marsh, Beckford's half sister, in enthusiastic terms. In 1799 Ann Rushout was enchanted by the room, with its looking glass down to the ground, its drapery, the hangings of a bright orange colour, the Persian carpet, the beautiful cabinets and all the ornaments painted 'in the most exquisite style.'[8]

In John Britton's *Beauties of Wiltshire* (1801), there is a detailed description of the Turkish Room, admired precisely for its conformity to a taste that had become predominant in England in the second half of the eighteenth century:

> Adjoining the library [is] an apartment called the Turkish Room, as splendid and sumptuous as those magical recesses of enchanted palaces we read of in the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*. The ground of the vaulted ceiling is entirely gold […] The whole room is hung round with ample *curtains of the richest orange satin*, with deep fringes of silk and gold. Between the folds of this drapery, mirrors of uncommon size appear as openings leading to other appartments […] *The windows are screened by blinds of orange silk*, admitting a warm *glow of*

> *summer light*. […] Candelabra, vases of japan, cassolets, and *piles of cushions are distributed about the appartment*. […] The space is not large […] but the whole is managed, by the aid of mirrors, *as to appear boundless, and to seize most powerfully on the imagination*.[9] (My italics)

The 'golden glow' of the room, enhanced by the orange silk curtains, is also stressed in the comment of a German visitor to the Turkish Room:

> All the surroundings have the object of giving the whole the glow of Asian magnificence improved by European taste.[10]

The fashion for Eastern objects and images in eighteenth-century British life and culture and the exotic mania for *turquerie* and *chinoiserie* was later to continue into the nineteenth century and beyond. In the visual and decorative arts, in architecture, manufacture and many other areas of art and knowledge, the Orient was a proliferating presence, so deep engraved as to become an integral component of the Romantic period, and to develop into a complex intersection of 'texts and objects […] increasingly pervasive within British culture.'[11]

The Turkish Room represents a spectacular and highly refined example of the fashion for the material Orient, which undoubtedly fascinated Beckford, though the material and the discursive, the experienced and the written Orients were, in him, never separated, but, on the contrary, interwoven and reconciled.

Beckford admired, as is obvious from his collections of Eastern objects, and the decorations in the Turkish style of the central room in the Quinta of Ramalhão in Portugal, the material and 'real' Orient, and was highly impressed by its magnificence, as is evident from his description of the Turkish Ambassador he met in Madrid, a powerful figure who seems to have represented for him the physical embodiment of the Orient:

> Never was I more delighted than upon entering a stately saloon, spread with the richest carpets and perfumed with the fragrance of wood and aloes. In a corner of the apartment sat the Ambassador, wrapped up in a pelisse of the most precious sables, playing with a light cane he held in his hand, and every now and then passing it under the noses of some tall slaves who were standing in a row before him.[12]

However, material objects and fictional discourse, together with literary allusions, constantly intersect in Beckford's experience and expression of the East; the 'real' Orient is always filtered in his work through Western culture and eighteenth-century taste, to be finally transformed and transfigured by the imagination and assume the fabulous or disquieting dimensions of dreams.

This is clear in *Vathek,* in which the Oriental fantasies, but also the factual knowledge of the East, are combined with Gothic nightmarish and grotesque elements, both influenced by the literary orientalism of the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*, and derived from the teaching and works of Alexander Cozens and Beckford's own idiosyncratic reading. In one of the most fascinating pages of *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents*, the colours and the glowing light illuminating the fantastic tabernacle inspired by the vision of St. Peter's dome are similar to those in the Turkish Room, but the 'real', material Orient, is transformed into the palace of a Chinese Emperor, and finally into a new world with its own artificial firmament, and is so recreated and transfigured by the subject's emotion and imagination into a vision.

> It was a clear morning; I mounted up to the roof of the house and sat under a set of open pavilions, surveying the vast group of stately buildings below; then repaired […] to St. Peter's, which even exceeded the heighth of my expectations. I could hardly quit it. I wished his Holiness would allow me to erect a little tabernacle under the dome, I should desire no other prospect

during the winter; no other sky, than the vast arches *glowing with golden ornaments* […] At night I should wish for a constellation of lamps dispersed about in clusters […] The windows I should shade with *transparent curtains of yellow silk,* to admit *the glow of perpetual summer*. *Lanterns, as many as you please, of all forms and sizes; they would remind us of China,* and, depending from the roofs of the palace, bring before us that of the Emperor Ki; which was twice as large as St.Peter's (if we may credit the grand annals) and lighted alone by tapers; for, his imperial majesty, being tired of the sun, would absolutely have *a new firmament of his own creation, and an artificial day*. […] For my part, I should like of all things to immure myself, after his example, with those I love; forget the divisions of time, have a moon at command, and a theatrical sun to rise and set, at pleasure. [13] (My italics)

In this vision, in which the author enjoys a total identification with the Absolute, the subjective element is predominant. From a vertiginous height the whole world is dominated by the viewer, and even the moon and the stars themselves are transformed into artificial objects created by his imagination.[14]

Such a subjective vision is connected with a new idea of Beauty, which, in the eighteenth century, is no longer considered a property inherent in the object itself, but one 'causing delight in the eye of the beholder'. The definition is found for the first time in Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), and the concept was developed throughout the century in the complex aesthetic debate which resulted in the creation of the philosophical system later known under the name of Aesthetics, used for the first time by the German philosopher Alexander G. Baumgarten in 1739. The idea of Beauty identified with subjective reaction and personal emotion contradicted neo-classical aesthetics, for which Beauty was inherent in things, and made the human perceiver the centre of the aesthetic process.

In the passage from *Dreams…* Michelangelo's supreme work of art, the symbol of greatness, of faith, and of the spiritual power

of Rome, is obliterated in the imaginary process of the writer's Self, which expands itself to the point of incorporating it. St.Peter's is totally subsumed into Beckford's vision and transformed, recreated and transferred by his emotion and imagination into a new imaginary world.

The new idea of Beauty is connected with the emerging concepts of subjectivity and individuality interwoven with the great intellectual and artistic movements of the eighteenth century, an epoch when the subject re-conceptualized itself and its relations to others, and articulated the complexities of emotional and affective experiences. Along with this idea, that of the freedom of the Imagination emerged, which implied the absence of any determination or control on the subject's imagination, according to the idea of 'disinterestedness' introduced by Shaftesbury into aesthetic discourse, and reaffirmed by Addison, who saw the Imagination as a positive power enabling the subject to enjoy and to create images of freedom.[15]

Addison's eleven essays on the Pleasures of the Imagination in the *Spectator*,[16] published from June 21 to July 3, 1712, express principles and concepts extremely important for eighteenth-century aesthetics and particularly relevant for Beckford. By 'Pleasures of the Imagination' Addison means 'such pleasures as arise originally from sight'; if the 'primary pleasures […] entirely proceed from such objects as are before our eyes', the 'secondary pleasures […] flow from the ideas of visible objects, *when the objects are not actually before the eyes, but are called up into our memories, or formed into agreeable visions of things that are either absent or fictitious.*'[17] (My italics)

Beckford wrote *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incident*s after he had returned to England from his Grand Tour: the beauties of Italy were 'recollected' and recreated through the writer's memories, not only of the real places, but of the emotions and sensations they had provoked in him, in the form – derived from

Rousseau – of the *reverie*, an intermediate state of consciousness in which the real and the unreal merge, and it is possible to express the succession of events and the flowing of sensations in a timeless dimension.

Addison's 'Pleasures of the Imagination' include, besides all forms of literature – which employ verbal means to call up visual imagery – painting, sculpture, architecture, and landscape gardening. To these various arts, Beckford, unlike Addison, adds music, one of the greatest pleasures of his life and on which he wrote extensively: the least referential of the arts, but capable of giving deep emotions and extraordinary pleasure.[18]

In *The Spectator* 412(6) Addison refers to a 'second kind of beauty that we find in the several products or art and nature', consisting in 'either the gayety or variety of colours, in the symmetry and proportion of parts, or in just a mixture and concurrence of all together […] predominant both in nature and art, and which can be best expressed by verbal rather than visual media.' As far as *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents* was concerned, Beckford wanted many of his emotional descriptions of places and natural events, his visionary landscapes, to have a visual correspondent in the watercolours by John Robert Cozens, Alexander's son,[19] in a sort of complementary relationship between literature and painting in order to make the emotions – and the pleasures – more intense. Beckford's description of a storm over Padua ('such a peal of thunder reverberated through the vaults and cupolas, as I expected would have shaken them to their foundations. The principal dome appeared invested with a sheet of fire'[20]) has a visual parallel in Cozens's impressive *Storm over Padua*, where a white flash of lightning against a livid sky seems to fall onto to the dome of the Church.

Some of Beckford's descriptions were in turn influenced by Cozens's pictorial technique, admirably suited for capturing transient and fleeting moments of a landscape. Particularly in the works painted after his second visit to Italy, he created

extraordinary effects of light with careful gradations of tones by which every feature of the scene becomes transfigured, as in his *Colosseum*, transformed into an unreal and indeed dreamy image suspended in the air. Such effects are typical of Beckford's 'literary picturesque' in the descriptions of scenes pervaded by a melancholy and elegiac sensibility, calling forth feelings of serenity and tranquillity, or sheer pleasure and joy, as in the following passage, in which he recollects the emotion of entering Italy, his 'long-desired' country:

> […] a picturesque valley, overgrown with juniper, and strewed with fragments of rock, precipitated, long since, from the surrounding eminences, blooming with cyclamens. I clambered up several of these crags,
>
> fra gli odoriferi ginepri,
>
> to gather the flowers […] and found them deliciously scented. Fratillarias, and the most gorgeous flies […] were fluttering about, and expanding their wings to the sun. There is no describing the numbers I beheld, nor their gayly varied colouring. I could not find in my heart to destroy their felicity […] I left them imbibing the dews of heaven.[21]

All the formal characteristics of the Picturesque are present in this description, its dynamic quality, conveyed by the contrasts in colour, the sudden changes from the objective to the subjective comment, the variety of the elements, all intended to intensify the expression of the emotional response.

Literature and painting, 'the verbal and the visual media', are expressly reconciled and made complementary in Beckford's passage on his gradual approach to Venice:

> […] an azure expanse of sea opened to our view, the domes and towers of Venice rising from its bosom. Now we began to distinguish Murano, St. Michele, St. Giorgio in Alga, and several

other islands, detached from the grand cluster, which I hailed as old acquaintance; *innumerable prints and drawings having long since made their shapes familiar.*[22] (My italics)

As in the description of the storm over Padua, the 'Sublime effects of Cozens's paintings are 'translated' into Beckford's language, to express an even more intense emotion. To the enchanted paradise admired on entering Italy is juxtaposed the description of the terrifying pass over the river Brenta:

The pass is rocky and tremendous, guarded by a fortress […] and only fit […] to be inhabited by […] eagles. There is no attaining this exhalted hold, but by the means of a cord let down many fathoms by the soldiers, who live in dens and caverns […] A black vapour, tinging their entrance, compleated the *terror* of the prospect, *which I* shall *never forget*. For two or three leagues, it continued much in the same style; cliffs, nearly perpendicular, on both sides, and the Brenta foaming and thundering below.[23] (My italics)

The pass is described and its effect recreated with the language and the accents of the Sublime. The scene has a frightening and disturbing quality, and evokes fear and terror, but also a sort of fascination associated with pleasure. Delight and Terror together inspire a strong – 'tremendous' – feeling of greatness and power, 'delightful horror being', as Burke writes, 'the most genuine effect, and the truest test of the Sublime'.[24]

Addison's recognition of *Greatness* or *Grandeur* as one of the Primary Pleasures of the Imagination anticipates almost all later eighteenth-century theories under the name of the Sublime, and particularly Burke's *Enquiry*. Even the words Addison uses in his account of such Pleasure as 'afforded by prospects of an open campaign country, a vast uncultivated desert, huge heaps of mountains, high rocks and precipices, unbounded views, or a wide expanse of water [by which] we are flung into a pleasing

astonishment' are similar to those employed by Burke in his treatise. By saying that 'a spacious horizon is an image of liberty',[25] and comparing the effect of wide and undetermined prospects to the speculation of eternity and infinitude to the human understanding,[26] Addison identifies the experience of the Sublime with a form of cognition, and positively implies the capacity of the Sublime to represent the idea and the possibility of freedom itself. In stressing what is regarded as typifying *Greatness*, moreover, he points out the importance of breaking from 'restraint' and 'confinement', in contrast with neo-classical aesthetic values and with the eighteenth-century tendency to establish limitations.

Addison's idea of *Greatness*, in all its implications, was extremely relevant for Beckford, particularly for his own elaborations of the ideas of the Self's identification with the total freedom of the Imagination, and of a superior form of cognition connected with it. His anticipations were, however, developed by Beckford into an idea of the Sublime like that expressed in Burke's *Enquiry*, and interwoven with other aesthetic categories and literary and artistic influences.

Written when Beckford was only seventeen, *Biographical Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters* is already revealing of his aesthetic principles and his exceptional artistic critical maturity. It was again Fonthill Splendens that was the source of inspiration of the book, and particularly its extraordinary collection of paintings of famous artists, from the Flemish painters to the Grand Style masters, from Hogarth to Claude Lorrain. Originated as a parody of the Fonthill Splendens housekeeper's blunders when she acted as a guide showing the collection to visitors, the book became a satirical attack against some schools of painting (particularly Dutch and Flemish) and some biographical and critical studies on the lives of artists, such as Jean-Baptiste Descamps's *La Vie des Peintres Flamands, Allemands et Hollandais.* In the delightful

book Beckford expresses not only his strongly anti-realistic taste, but his obvious admiration – though sometimes mitigated by irony – for the Romantic painters, like the fictitious Og of Basan, ('who would now walk by moonlight through the lonely galleries [of Rome], and revolve in his mind the instability of human grandeur'), the painter of Sublime and Gothic settings, backgrounds to tragic stories of love and guilt, in which, as a critic writes, 'The hard light of reason yielded inevitably to the soft deluding power of imagination.'[27]

A Gothic Sublime atmosphere pervades Beckford's document of personal and cultural initiation, which he defined, in a letter of November 24, 1777, as 'my Centrical History', later entitled *The Vision* by one of his earlier biographers, Guy Chapman. This 'history' of his complex 'rite of passage' was significantly dedicated by Beckford to Alexander Cozens, whose approbation 'is all I desire and all I seek for in venturing to commit to writing the inspirations of my Fancy, those pleasing Dreams in which perhaps consist the happiest moments of [my] Life'.[28] In it, with extraordinary foresight, Beckford anticipates – through the metaphoric journey of the protagonist – the different stages of his aesthetic process leading to the complex texture of his mature works and artistic choices in all fields.

The Vision opens with the description of a nocturnal landscape, onto which the narrator 'accidentally' opens his casement:

> […] the moon shone bright in the clear sky illuminating the mountains […] before a dark grey cloud fleeting from the north veiled the moon and obscured the light which conducted me. What could I do! The steps were too steep, too precarious, too irregular, to descend in darkness; besides, tho' darkness may prevail for a moment light will soon return; I must not despair; so folding my arms I sat patiently on a stone which time had smoothed with moss.[29]

The nocturnal image is identifiable with the narrator and his solitary, meditative mood. The inner landscape ('I happened accidentally to open my casement') instils itself in the image of a place, where the serenity of the Picturesque fades into the murky grandeur of the Sublime, called forth by the mountains seen in the background. The uncertain condition of the Self is expressed through the difficulty of climbing and descending a dangerous staircase in the dark, and is resolved through a patient wait in nature's solitude. It will be only within the dream dimension that the young man finds his way, undertakes and completes his journey – and his quest. The 'real' places through which he proceeds take on dream-like traits and succeed one another in continually changing, unpredictable visions, sometimes disturbed and anguished. Alternations of the two dimensions between which the journey moves – vertiginous and abysmal – typical of the Gothic, and expressing deep anxiety and even terror, then resolved in the exaltation of the Sublime, recall an ever impending bewilderment of the Self caused by the danger of whatever is associated with the practical, the rational and the materialistic, and the difficult but attainable triumph of the Imagination and of a freedom that can only be absolute. As later in *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents*, in *The Vision* the main role of the Sublime is to reaffirm the sense and a new understanding of the Self also as an originating subject, and becomes therefore connected with original creativity.[30]

The highest and most elaborate example of the Burkean Sublime is to be found in Beckford's Oriental and Gothic tale, *Vathek.* On to the Caliph's hallucinatory journey, from the pleasures and the high towers of his fabulous palace to the despair of the Depths of the Hall of Eblis, towards his unredeemable fate of eternal suffering, Beckford projects all his most extreme fantasies and nightmares.

The real and the fantastic, the known and the unknown, are made to coincide: the cultural topography of Beckford's world (English, Christian, familiar) overlaid by that of the Orient (Arab, Islamic, mysterious), loses its contours and becomes itself a labyrinthine and inconclusive world. Vathek's vain attempts to decipher the hieroglyphics of sabres and through them unveil the past, or to follow the convolutions of the Islamic architecture and of the arabesque curves, in order to find a way out of the labyrinth, suggest the indeed Sublime immensity and infinity of the finally unrepresentable. In its boundlessness and timelessness – both architectural and narrative[31] – the Oriental Hell, dominated by the 'vast ruins of Istakhar […] gloomy watchtowers, whose number *could not be counted*' (my italics), where no end of the journey is to be seen, nor that of the punishment, where every chamber within the immense structure of the subterranean palace discloses itself as 'without bounds or limit', represents an horizontal, open-ended, boundless and uncontrollable world, which obliterates the vertical, finite, end-directed, rationalistic western culture.

The spatial Sublime, in all its implications, has a correspondence in the characters, in Vathek's excessive hunger and thirst, and in his sexual voracity, never satisfied and, in the Episodes,[32] in the violent passions embodied in Firouz, in the Sadean and Faustian Barkiarokh, in the impious Emir of 'The History of Princess Zulkaïs and the Prince Kalilah', which ends with the descriptions of a Gothic labyrinth bordered by wells full of 'reptiles with human faces', and paved with marble marked 'as with the veins and arteries of the human body'. The language in which these episodes are narrated is dominated by the hyperbole, consistently expressing excess, and suggesting boundlessness and infinitude. Also the references and allusions to Western and Oriental literature – to the Latin classics, as well as to Dante's *Inferno*, Milton's Satan, Marlowe's and Goethe's Faust, the narrative poems of Ariosto and Tasso, and to the Eastern stories

Beckford knew so well, to the Quran, to a daemonic Zoroastrianism (actually quite different from the benevolent religion of Persian kings in the pre-Islamic era) – are practically unlimited, and unlimitedly interwoven, transformed and transfigured into a composite text in which the whole culture and taste of the eighteenth century is intriguingly expressed.

1. Guy Chapman, *Beckford* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), 38-39.
2. Ibid., 39.
3. Ibid.
4. T. Mowl, 'William Beckford:A Biographical Perspective', in Derek E. Ostergard (ed.), *An Eye for the Magnificent* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 17.
5. See P. Kivy (ed.), *Aesthetics* (Oxford : Blackwell, 2000).
6. A. Hobson, 'William Beckford's Library', *Connoisseur*, 191 (April 1976), 298-305.
7. In 1745, new changes were made in the 'Roman' manner of Inigo Jones, who derived the ideal of classical forms from Palladio: see Giles Worsley, *Classical Architecture in Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).
8. P. Hewat-Jaboor, 'Fonthill House: "One of the Most Princely Edifices in the Kingdom" ', in *An Eye for the Magnificent*, 63.
9. Ibid.
10. C. A. G. Goede, *England, Wales and Ireland*, vol. 5 (Dresden, 1805), p.116 (see Hewat-Jaboor, art. cit., 63).
11. D.Saglia, 'William Beckford's "Sparks of Orientalism" and the material-discursive Orient of British Romanticism', in *Textual Practice*, 16/1 (2002), 75. See also J. M. Mackenzie, *Orientalism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 1995.
12. *The Journal of William Beckford in Portugal and Spain 1787-1788*, ed. Boyd Alexander (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1954), 291.
13. William Beckford, *Dreams,Waking Thoughts and Incidents*, ed. R. J. Gemmett (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1971), 192-193.
14. See M. Billi, 'Beckford's Visionary Landscapes', in K. W. Graham and K. Berland (eds.) *William Beckford and the New Millennium* (New York: AMS Press, 2004).
15. See: P. Guyer, 'The Origins of Modern Aesthetics', in P. Kivy, (ed.) *Aesthetics*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); and P. Kivy, *The Seventh Sense* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1976).

16. Joseph Addison, *The Spectator*, ed. D. F. Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965).
17. Ibid., 411(6).
18. Du Bos's *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting and Music* was widely circulated in Britain long before its translation into English in 1748, and was probably known to Beckford.
19. W. Hauptman 'Beckford and Cozens', in *An Eye for the Magnificent*, 308-311.
20. William Beckford, *Italy; with Sketches of Spain and Portugal,* 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1845), ii. 159.
21. *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents*, 106-107. The Italian in the text is from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso.*
22. Ibid., 110.
23. Ibid., 107.
24. For 'delightful horror' see Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, ed. James T. Boulton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul,and New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), *passim.* On Burke's *Enquiry*, see T. Furniss, *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993).
25. Addison, op. cit., 412(6).
26. Ibid.
27. R. J. Gemmett, *William Beckford* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1977), 63.
28. Ibid., 40.
29. William Beckford, *Vathek and Other Stories,* ed. Malcolm Jack (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995), 3.
30. T. Furniss, op. cit., 30-31.
31. As J. Garrett remarks in his essay 'Ending in Infinity: William Beckford's Arabian Tale', in *Eighteenth Century Fiction,* Vol.5, No.1, Oct.1992, the stories in *The Arabian Nights* are significantly a thousand *and one*, where the one indicates the indefinite expansion of an already indefinite large number.
32. K. W. Graham, 'Introduction', in *Vathek with the Episodes of Vathek*, ed. K. W. Graham (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2001).

Beckford's Final Resting Place

ANDREW FLETCHER

William Beckford died on 2 May 1844, aged 83, and his funeral procession was watched, we are told, by some 20,000 onlookers in Bath who had been somewhat mystified by this brilliant recluse who had lived in their midst for nearly 20 years in Lansdown Crescent. Jerom Murch, one-time mayor of Bath and local historian, tells us that Beckford 'wished to lie under the shade of his tower near a favourite dog, but the dog being there and the ground unconsecrated the interment took place at the Abbey Cemetery'.[1] Indeed Beckford's magnificent pink granite sarcophagus, which he designed himself for interment at Lansdown, was one of the first tombs to be located in the new Lyncombe Vale Cemetery, surrounded at his instructions by the finest wrought-iron railings. Thus in May 1847 it was a local inn-keeper who acquired the Tower and surrounding land for £1,000 with a view to establishing a tea garden. Appalled at this prospect, within five months Beckford's daughter the Duchess of Hamilton re-purchased the Tower and land and presented them to Her Majesty's Commissioners for Building New Churches to be a new cemetery.[2]

Three documents from the Diocesan Registry in Wells give some idea of events in the months leading up to the consecration. The first is the Deed conveying the Tower and surrounding land from the Duke and Duchess of Hamilton to Her Majesty's Commissioners for Building New Churches so that they could be devoted to ecclesiastical purposes when consecrated. Containing some 800 words the Deed, dated 6 January 1848, does not express any wish that Beckford's body be reburied at Lansdown. The second, some 200 words longer, is a Petition dated 17 April 1848 from the Rector of Walcot, the Revd Sidney Henry Widdrington, to the Bishop of Bath and Wells, asking for the

Tower and land to be consecrated, and stating that the Tower had been furnished for burial services and the land fenced and laid out as a cemetery. The third, 200 words longer than the second, is a Sentence of Consecration from the Bishop of Bath and Wells accepting the Petition. This is dated 28 April 1848. In all three documents most of the wording is the same.

The *Bath Chronicle* of Thursday 4 May 1848 records the consecration of the Lansdown Cemetery by the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells as on the previous Friday, which would have been 28 April 1848. The account of the ceremony delightfully reflects the benign journalism of the day:

> The road to the spot presented quite an animated appearance; and those of our fellow citizens who, on the occasion, mounted, whether on foot or otherwise, the steep hill leading to Lansdown had the enjoyment of a most cheerful aspect of the surrounding scenery, which lay bathed in brilliant sunshine, setting forth the various charms of our exquisite landscapes to high advantage; while the freshness of the air, and the gushing song of the lark over-head, shed abroad a joyousness of feeling which appeared to find its way to every heart.

The Lord Bishop arrived, and in the company of local clergy and children from the local 'public schools' prayers were said and the consecration took place. The *Chronicle* article continues to describe the new entrance to the Cemetery with its imposing architecture, 'executed in Byzantine style' and designed by H. E. Goodridge Esq. The writer comments on the harmonious marriage of the original Tower and the new structure with its central archway and accompanying porches, largely achieved by the incorporation in the adjacent wall of the wrought-iron screen (furnished by the Coalbrook Dale Company) which had originally surrounded Beckford's sarcophagus at Lyncombe. The writer comments that Goodridge 'has achieved his object without committing the slightest incongruity, and he has thus added a most charming feature to the architectural beauties of our

neighbourhood'. He concludes in his final paragraph that 'the cemetery is laid out with great taste. When completed, it will be a most beautiful spot'.

All this raises one of those puzzles which historians like to ponder. Bath Abbey Archives holds the faculty which enabled the descendants of Beckford to remove the body from Lyncombe and to re-locate them to the new Lansdown Cemetery. The date of this faculty is 28 April 1848, the very day that the Cemetery was consecrated! Had Beckford's body and tomb already been moved before the consecration? The wrought-iron railings would seemingly have already been moved as they are warmly applauded by the *Chronicle* writer. Moreover the Duchess of Hamilton attended the consecration ceremony on 28 April, and it is reasonable to ask whether she would have done so if her father's tomb had still been at Lyncombe Vale. If on the other hand this were not so, then it would seem that the removal had been in anticipation of the faculty rather than after it.

Possibly an answer will emerge in the coming years, just as Beckford was able to express his own aspiration for enlightenment on his final resting-place:

> Eternal Power !
> Grant me through obvious clouds one transient gleam
> Of thy bright essence in my dying hour.

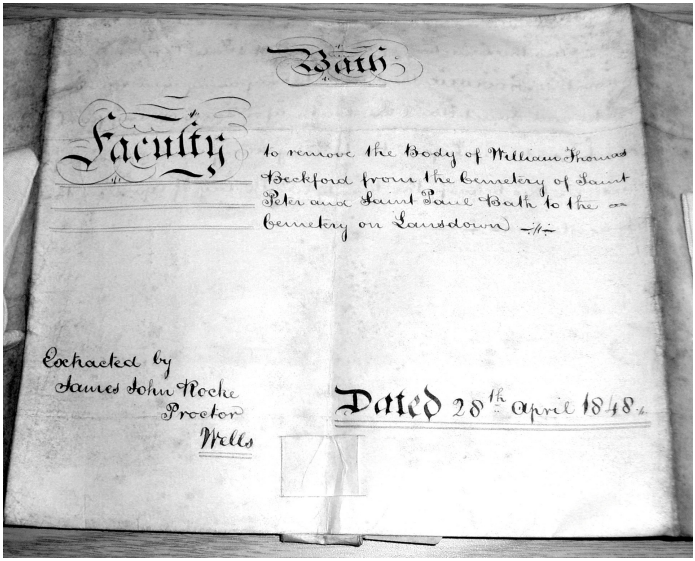
- - - - - - - - - - -

My thanks to Bath Reference Library, to Dr Lucy Rutherford, Bath Abbey Archivist, and to Jon Millington for their help.

1. Jerom Murch, *Biographical Sketches of Bath Celebrities* (London: Isaac Pitman, 1893), 308.
2. Peter Summers and Philippa Bishop, *William Beckford. Some notes on his life in Bath 1822-1844 and a catalogue of the exhibition in the Holburne of Menstrie Museum* (Bath: Privately printed, 1966), 12.

Appendix 1

[Faculty to remove the body of William Beckford from the Abbey Cemetery at Lyncombe to Lansdown Cemetery. Transcribed by kind permission of Bath Abbey Archives.]


Bath

Faculty

to remove the Body of William Thomas Beckford from the Cemetery of Saint Peter and Saint Paul Bath to the Cemetery on Lansdown

Extracted by
James John Rocke
Proctor
Wells

Dated 28th April 1848

Bath

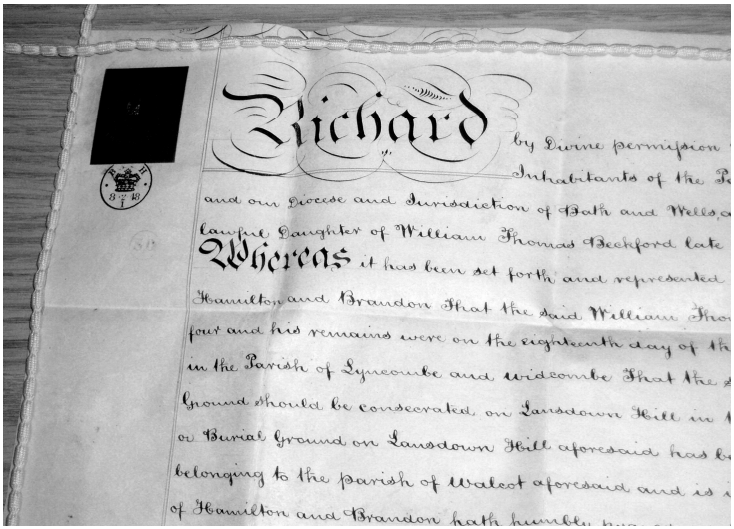
Faculty to remove the Body of William Thomas Beckford from the Cemetery of Saint Peter and Saint Paul Bath to the Cemetery on Lansdown

Extracted by
James John Rocke
Proctor
Wells

Dated 28th April 1848

- - - - - - - - - - - -

Richard by Divine permission Bishop of Bath and Wells To the Rector Vicar or Curate Churchwardens Parishioners and Inhabitants of the Parish and Parish Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Bath in the County of Somerset and our Diocese and Jurisdiction of Bath and Wells and also The Most Noble Susanna Euphemia Duchess of Hamilton and Brandon the lawful Daughter of William Thomas Beckford late of the Parish of Walcot in the said County Esquire deceased **Greeting** –


Richard by Divine permission
Inhabitants of the P
and our Diocese and Jurisdiction of Bath and Wells,
lawful Daughter of William Thomas Beckford late
Whereas it has been set forth and represented
Hamilton and Brandon That the said William Tho
four and his remains were on the eighteenth day of th
in the Parish of Lyncombe and Widcombe That the
Ground should be consecrated on Lansdown Hill in
or Burial Ground on Lansdown Hill aforesaid has
belonging to the parish of Walcot aforesaid and is
of Hamilton and Brandon hath humbly

Whereas it has been set forth and represented unto us in and by the petition of the said Most Noble Susanna Euphemia Duchess of Hamilton and Brandon That the said William Thomas Beckford died on the second day of May one thousand eight hundred and forty four and his remains were on the eighteenth day of the same month deposited in the Cemetery of Saint Peter and Saint Paul aforesaid situate in the Parish of Lyncombe and Widcombe That the said William Thomas Beckford in his lifetime expressed a wish that if a Burial Ground should be consecrated on Lansdown Hill in the Parish of Walcot aforesaid

that his remains should be deposited there. That a Cemetery or Burial Ground on Lansdown Hill aforesaid has been appropriated laid out and prepared as and for a Cemetery or place of Burial of and belonging to the Parish of Walcot aforesaid and is intended shortly to be consecrated and the said Most Noble Susanna Euphemia Duchess of Hamilton and Brandon hath humbly prayed us that we would be graciously pleased to grant to her and to the Rector Churchwardens Parishioners and Inhabitants of the Parish of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Bath aforesaid our Licence or Faculty to take away and remove the Body of the said William Thomas Beckford from the place where the same is now interred in the Cemetery of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Bath aforesaid and to deposit the same in the Cemetery of the Parish of Walcot situate on Lansdown aforesaid as soon as the last mentioned Cemetery shall have been consecrated **We therefore** the Bishop aforesaid do by these presents give grant and commit unto you the said Most Noble Susanna Euphemia Duchess of Hamilton and Brandon to the Rector Vicar or Curate Churchwardens Parishioners and Inhabitants of the Parish and Parish Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Bath aforesaid this our Licence or Faculty to take away and remove the Body of the said William Thomas Beckford from the place where the same is now interred in the Cemetery of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Bath aforesaid and to deposit the same in the Cemetery of the Parish of Walcot situate on Lansdown Hill aforesaid as soon as the said last mentioned Cemetery shall have been consecrated **Provided** that in so taking away and removing the Body of the said William Thomas Beckford you do in no wise hurt the Cemetery of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Bath aforesaid or any part thereof but that you cause the same to be left in as good plight and condition in every respect as it was before the taking away and removing the Body therefrom **Given** under the Seal of our Vicar General and official principal (which we use in this behalf) the twenty eighth

day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty eight and in the third year of our Translation.

(signed) John Parfitt

Appendix 2

From: Thomas Gordon Hake, *Memoirs of Eighty Years*, (London: Bentley, 1892), 237-238.

A medical friend of Mr. Beckford's told me some curious details respecting that gentleman's will. He had sunk his remaining property in an annuity, with the exception of a unique collection of pictures and statues valued at £100,000, destined for Hamilton Palace, his daughter's home. The result is one of many instances which show how little influence the dead exercise over the living.

There was an insuperable difficulty in the dead being buried in his own beautiful cemetery, which was unconsecrated ground, so the heir, the then Duke of Hamilton, had the sarcophagus deposited in the cemetery on the opposite side of the river. The grounds of the one laid out with so much loving care by the deceased, with their tower and exquisitely carved gateway and their finely wrought palings, the porphyry of the tower alone having been brought from Egypt at an expense of £50,000, were sold for £1,500, and were about to be converted into a tea-garden for the Lansdown races held hard by.

These preliminaries got through, of course by the duke's agents, preparations were made for the removal of the pictures and sculptures, but the executors of the will stepped in, and announced that those treasures were not to be given up until Mr. Beckford's cemetery held his remains.

This was a cruel dilemma, for the property had to be repurchased at an enormous advance on the price paid; but it was done, and the terms of the bishop to consecrate the soil,

previously declined, were acceded to. These were that the cemetery should become the property of the Church!

The game was thus cleverly won and profitably; the cemetery is fashionable, people pay high prices for being buried in such good company. Every one visits Beckford's tomb, and the Church, in acquiring the freehold, will be thought by many to have done well for religion.

Post Mortem – Some Notes

BET McLEOD

Beckford's funeral and interment(s) have been well published.[1] Additional information relating to these subjects has been found in the Hamilton muniments. Account books, written in ink in an unknown hand, dealing with the settlement of the Beckford estate and affairs, list some of the expenses relating to Beckford's funeral and his first interment in Lyncombe Vale Cemetery in 1844.

The first, poignant account refers to the care of his remains after death: a care that is baldly and professionally noted.

NRA (S) 2177, Volume 1224, p. 11[2]

1844, September 12

Paid Messrs. English & Son on Account of Bill for Mr Beckford's Funeral
£150

ditto, p. 19

1845, September 6

Paid Jane Marks (Nurse) for laying out and attendance on Mr Beckford's remains, nearly 3 weeks
£6.8.0.

The second, equally poignant account relates to the supply of differing types of mourning jewellery. The variation in cost and complexity of the jewellery is shown by detailing those rings suitable for male or female recipients, and those rings which were fitted with 'secret tops for Hair'. It would be traditional for those in receipt of rings containing the deceased's hair to be family relatives, and one can speculate as to who these four particular ladies might have been. Beckford's daughter Susan, Duchess of Hamilton, is likely to have been one recipient, and possibly his granddaughter another. The two rings 'not for hair' would traditionally have been given to house staff. The fourteen hoop rings would have been distributed to the male relatives and male members of his staff. The single ring would appear to have been a cameo, and may well have been for the Duke of Hamilton, Beckford's son-in-law, although it might also have been for his beloved grandson and godson, the Marquess of Douglas. The present-day whereabouts of these rings remains unknown to this author.

NRA (S) 2177, Volume 1223, p. 13

1844, November 5

Mr Alfred Short (Jeweller – Bristol)

For 21 Mourning Rings with Inscriptions and Cases viz & 4 Black Enamelled Standard Gold Hoop Rings for Ladies with

secret tops for Hair 68 s / each
£13.12

2 Do Do Do not for hair 65s / each
£6.10.0

14 Do Do Tablet Hoop Rings for Gentlemen with old English letters outside 63 s / each
£44.2.0

1 Fine Onyx Head Ring King James's Pattern Setting @ 63 s / each
£3.3.0

Engraving 21 Inscriptions on the above 1/6 each
£1.11.6

21 Morocco Ring Cases for the same 1/6 each
£1.11.6

Listings of expenses for the tomb and tomb furniture shed new light on the minutiae of design, modelling, manufacture and transport of material for Beckford's resting place. These may well prove a valuable resource for the present generation concerned with the repair and refurbishment of Lansdown Cemetery, and for generations to come.

NRA (S) 2177, Volume 1223, p. 23

1846, March 16

H.E. Goodridge Bill

Attending at Ironworks Inspecting Models & directing alterations (3 days)
£9.9.0

Expenses thereon
£5.12.0

Making Contracts & Specifications at 5 percent
£31.0.0.

Expenses of Models postage & parcels
£1.17.6

James Tuck for Iron Hurdles and Copper Line and fixing for Temporary Inclosure of Tomb
£3.11.0

Cr [Credit] By Sale of the Hurdles
£1.10.0

NRA (S) 2177, Volume 1224, p. 18

1845, June 11

Paid the following Bills viz.

Messrs Whitfield & Co. for Modelling Arms & Inscriptions for Coffins (17th June 1844)
£43.4.0

Ditto for Modelling Arms & Inscriptions for Sarcophagus (17th June 1844)
£60.19.2

ditto p.18

1845, July 3

Paid H. E. Goodridge (Architect)

Bill for Journies as to place of burial – Drawings for Tomb – Journies to get Arms & Inscriptions Cast and Carriage of the Casts
Attendances as to purchase of Cemetery ground & Plans thereof and superintending removal of Tomb to the Cemetery
£61.9.9

ditto p. 20

1845, December 11

Paid Mr John Vaughan (Mason) Bill for removing and fixing the Tomb at the Cemetery in June 1844
£37.0.3

ditto p. 22

1845, December 26

Paid through Mr H. E. Goodridge (Architect) the following Bills and Accounts for the Inclosure of the Tomb at Bath Abbey Cemetery viz:

Messrs McDonald & Lester's Bill of 5 April 1845 for Granite Base & other necessaries for the Iron Plates
£92.3.6

The Coalbrook Dale Company for Iron Plate Railings as per contract
£218.10.0

Additional ditto and models
£30.0.0

Burning ditto in Oil & Bronzing
£22.0.0

33 Strong Boxes for carriage of the Bronze Railing
£38.18.0

Messrs. Stothert & Co. (of Bath) for Cast Iron Caps and Railing Heads
£3.1.1

Men's time modelling, fitting & fixing and Carriage etc.
£10.5.6

Cr [Credit] By Sale of 16 Old Caps
£0.3.7

John Vaughan Mason's Bill for working and fixing Inclosure per contract
£185.0.0

Carriage of Granite from Paddington
£5.15.6

Hauling Iron from Wharf
£1.0.0.

Disallowed by Mr Goodridge as payable by the Coalbrook Dale Company
£1.0.0.

Lowering ground per contract
£8.0.0.

Oiling Granite Base
£3.10.6

Mr H. E. Goodridge for Preparing Designs and obtaining Tenders
£26.5.0

3 Sets of working Drawings for Granite
£15.5.0

1. See particularly: S. Blackmore, 'The Bath Years: 1822-44', in Derek E. Ostergard (ed.) *William Beckford: An Eye for the Magnificent* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 263-269 and footnotes; J. Millington, 'The Railings for Beckford's Tomb', *Beckford Tower Trust Newsletter*, 2 (Spring 1980); J. Lees-Milne, *William Beckford* (Tisbury: Compton Russell, 1976), railings ill. p. 119.
2. National Register Of Archives (Scotland) 2177. By kind permission of the Duke of Hamilton, and with grateful thanks to John Mutch for his generous assistance in arranging access to the muniments housed at Lennoxlove.

Millennium Beckford

MALCOLM JACK

Kenneth W. Graham and Kevin Berland (eds.), *William Beckford and the New Millennium* (AMS Studies in the Eighteenth Century; New York: AMS Press, 2004. ISBN 0404635474)

A friend of the Portuguese poet, Fernando Pessoa, used to say that when they parted he never turned round to look in case Pessoa had disappeared into thin air. Something of a similar anxiety still hovers over Beckford studies despite the fact that a generation of scholars has now had access to the full archive of his papers at the Bodleian library. Kenneth Graham says in the introduction to *William Beckford and the New Millennium* (another welcome volume in the valuable AMS series of studies in the eighteenth century) that the essays aim to locate Beckford 'at the point of intersection between the apocalyptic and the ephemeral.' Somehow Beckford still remains elusive, a vanishing and ghostly figure who avoids clear definition. The essays follow a rough chronology of Beckford's artistic life, dividing into four groups. Three 'threshold' studies cover the early years from 1776 to 1783; they are followed by another three on 'mature fiction,' two further essays deal with his stays in Portugal, the remaining cluster consider aspects of the Fonthill and Bath years from 1796 to 1844. A last essay reads millennium meanings into the whole project.

The unifying theme of the 'threshold' essays, which sensitively capture the dreamy mood of Rousseauesque reverie that hovers over the young Beckford, is the notion of 'fancy'. John Beynon finds the key to Beckford's artistry in an abiding fantasy with perpetual boyhood; Mirella Billi, for her part, follows his escapades into travel, real and imaginary. While Beynon looks inward drawing on the gay metaphor of the

'closet', Billi expands outwards into the nightmarish and grotesque world of darkness and menacing forces into which William must wander. Their pieces are followed by a comparison of the notions of fancy and reflection in Beckford with the concepts of sensation and reflection in Locke by Dick Claésson, whose close knowledge of Beckford manuscripts adds authority to his cogent analysis.

In certain respects Beckford himself never really matured as a character. The next section of the book struggles to convince us that he did so as an artist. John Garrett, in a subtle and original piece, draws attention to the lack of moral direction of Beckfordian protagonists ('uncouth characters'), and guides the reader through layers of complexity and ambiguity in their treatment. Didier Girard, known for his pioneering editorial work, insists, in perhaps too shrill a tone, on a strict return to the text. While he is right to draw attention to poor editing of Beckford in the past (he is especially harsh on Melville), merely establishing the authenticity of texts will not in itself raise the literary reputation of a writer. Kenneth Graham widens the horizons again exposing the difficult interplay between Enlightenment and Gothic elements in Beckford's fiction and he provides good, historical context for reading Beckford's entire œuvre.

Beckford's time in Portugal is treated in two essays. Paulo Mugayar Kühl concentrates on the specifically musical connections and casts interesting light on the 'modinhas' or folk songs of Brazil, so much loved by Beckford for their languor and exotic moodiness. He also establishes a link between Beckford and the librettist Gaetano Martinelli. Laura Pires brings interesting new slants on how the Portuguese have seen Beckford over the ages but her approach can be too insistent on recording every detail of the mutual 'love affair' between the man and the country he adopted. Nevertheless, for this lusophile reviewer it is always a pleasure to revisit Beckford in Portugal.

In the last section of the book we turn to Beckford in Fonthill Abbey and in Bath in his later years. Both Stephen Clarke and Laurent Châtel succeed in placing the Abbey and its landscaping among Beckford's finest artistic achievement. Both identify this phase of his life as an introspective one, thus taking us back to the inward looking mood of the young William. Clarke shows how seclusion fuelled wild rumours about the 'Abbot' of Fonthill and drew a huge invasion of the curious in 1822 when the Abbey was put up for sale. Châtel links the physical landscaping to the earlier, 'fabulist' writing of Beckford. According to him the utopian impulses we can read in his 'juvenilia' find expression in the Abbot's quest for the *hortus conclusus*; self-enclosure demarcates a sacred space where we may yet discover Beckford's ghost. George Haggerty, whose previous placing of Beckford in the context of a developing homosexual sub-culture of the late eighteenth century was illuminating and original, here shows that even in old age Beckford's creativity and inventiveness continued in his collecting and architectural projects at Bath.

In a final burst of pyrotechnic display, Kevin Cope finds the thread of Beckfordism in the pursuit of incidents, which draw the author and reader alike up and down hills and dales, along byways and straight into enigma. This 'incidentalism' may be reactionary as well as radical, an observation that deftly explains the considerable difficulty previous critics have had in integrating Beckford's political views with his artistic inclinations. But be it impulsive or rational, incidentalism is the key by which we may open the door to Beckford's originality and his quality of millennium survivability. It is a bold theme on which to leave our protagonist on his long and tireless pilgrimage.

Adventurous Spirit and Grand Designs: The Architecture of Henry Edmund Goodridge (1797-1864)

AMY FROST

It is with a sense of imbalance that the relationships between William Beckford and the artists and architects he employs are frequently regarded. Beckford is the dominant force, commissioning the item, artwork or building, determining the style and directing production, while the employee is left to execute the commission, with only as much of their natural talent emerging as the specific brief allows. It is an accepted formula that is not surprisingly applied when considering the relationship between Beckford and his architect in Bath, Henry Edmund Goodridge.[1] Yet closer study of Goodridge's work illustrates a different picture, one where Beckford, rather than defining the architect's career, provides it with added inspiration. This article aims to give a brief outline of Goodridge's career, and introduce some of the key projects that characterise the development of his architecture.

The son of a successful Bath builder, Goodridge was born in 1797 and by 1814 had been articled to James Lowder, the City of Bath Architect. His early works, and his determination to master his profession, owe a great deal to the experience he gained not only in Lowder's office, but also from his own father who was occupied on developments in Bathwick for the Pulteney estate. An attentive student, Goodridge was constantly busy while articled to Lowder, 'making many elaborate drawings of ancient and modern buildings', providing him with a sound knowledge of architectural styles and sources.[2]

The first ten years in practice were a period of further education for Goodridge, as he continued to develop his knowledge and combine it with his own natural talent and

confidence. In the early 1820s his work mainly comprised alterations and enlargements to existing buildings, most significantly at Downside Abbey in Somerset where he also designed a chapel and lodge house in 1822-3. It was during this period that Goodridge began work on two projects that, though very different in style, are equally important to the development of his career. In 1821 he was commissioned to undertake some alterations to the Argyle Congregational Chapel in Laura Place, Bath, that included the building of a new façade. The resulting Ionic design introduced into Goodridge's work an appreciation and understanding of the forms of classical architecture, and an acknowledgement of the developments in the architectural climate both in Bath and in Britain at that time. The Greek Revival significantly grew in strength during the 1820s, and when designing the Argyle Chapel, and later the Toll Houses on Cleveland Bridge in 1827, Goodridge would have been influenced by its early examples in Bath, in particular J. M. Gandy's Doric House on Sion Hill (c.1805) and William Wilkins's Lower Assembly Rooms (1808-9) and Freemasons Hall, York Street (1817).[3]

In 1824 Goodridge completed Christ Church in Rode Hill, Somerset, which, like the Argyle Chapel façade, was his fist major statement in a specific style, although this time it is the Gothic not the Greek. Throughout his career Goodridge would use Gothic forms for his church designs; however, Rode Hill is unlike any of the churches that he would produce in the future. The entrance front has a central bay flanked by decorated towers crowned with stepped turrets and extravagant pinnacles. Despite Pevsner referring to it as 'independent of Gothic precedent, wilful, and entirely lacking in grace', the Rode Hill church is essential to understanding Goodridge's development as an architect.[4] Goodridge's forms at Rode Hill appear to lack any reasoning and contribute to him being labelled an eccentric by many critics, yet the building displays a striking confidence for

someone so early in his career. It is a confidence his son refers to as a 'speculative and adventurous spirit, which took pleasure in

Christ Church, Rode Hill, Somerset

devising new schemes and carrying out grand designs'. [5]Both the Argyle Chapel and the church at Rode Hill introduce the balance between controlled sources and experimentation with forms that

Goodridge would develop to great effect, particularly during his next major project, Lansdown Tower, built for William Beckford in 1825.

As outlined at the start of this article, the influence of Beckford on Goodridge and his work has been frequently misunderstood. Unlike his dealings with the volatile Wyatt, it appears that from the very beginning Beckford and Goodridge had a far more satisfactory and mutually beneficial working relationship. Alfred Samuel Goodridge in his *Memoir* of his father establishes the reason for this when describing the initial process of finding an architect for Lansdown Tower. Beckford selected Goodridge because, 'Mr Beckford – who could not get on with any one who was not in this respect like himself – was impressed with his great quickness and readiness of manner'.[6] It is Goodridge's quickness and professionalism that no doubt appealed to Beckford after his slightly unstable experiences with Wyatt, and resulted in a creative partnership that benefited and inspired both parties.

It is far too easy to consider Lansdown Tower as solely the product of Beckford's aesthetic ideas. The Italianate base is a response to his travels in Italy, while the Lantern is based on the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates, a source previously employed by John Soane for Beckford in his design for the State Bed at Fonthill Splendens.[7] To dismiss Goodridge's input in the design, however, is to discredit his career as an architect and the work undertaken independent of Beckford. Greek forms had featured in Goodridge's work long before his acquaintance with Beckford, and as early as 1817 Goodridge produced a design for a monument to Queen Charlotte based on the Choragic monument.[8] Assessing Goodridge's work undertaken before his association with Beckford illustrates how Lansdown Tower is the product of two minds working together. Beckford must have benefited from Goodridge's confident and energetic ideas as much as the

architect benefited from his client's experience and refined aesthetic knowledge.

Goodridge would also have benefited greatly from Beckford's extensive and valuable library, which included a first edition of Palladio's *Quattro Libri,* copies of Piranesi's *Vedute di Roma*, Adam's *Ruins of the Palace of Diocletian at Spalatro* and Stuart and Revett's *Antiquities of Athens*, as well as early copies of Vitruvius's *De Architectura*.[9] How much access Goodridge was allowed to Beckford's book collection during his client's lifetime is unknown, but he must have had first-hand knowledge of the books, if not when Beckford was alive then certainly when he undertook the design for a new library to house them at Hamilton Palace in 1845.

By the end of the 1820's Goodridge's experience and the extra knowledge gained by working with Beckford was added to when in 1829 he embarked on his first trip to Italy. The exact places he visited and his reactions to them are unrecorded, but it is easy to believe that destinations would have been added to his itinerary following recommendations from Beckford and even possibly Soane whom he had met earlier in the year. The trip to Italy provided Goodridge with first hand knowledge of the buildings and settings that would contribute to his work, in particular the picturesque villas he would build on Bathwick Hill. Montebello, the villa Goodridge built for himself in 1828, did not gain its distinctive belvedere tower until after the architect had returned from Italy.

On his return from Italy Goodridge entered the most productive decade of his career, when his earlier exuberance began to mature and his place within his profession was confirmed. During the 1830s Goodridge's knowledge of classical architecture and his experimentation with its forms saw him produce the 'grand designs' that his son referred to in his *Memoir*. In 1831 he designed a column at Butleigh in Somerset as a monument to Admiral Hood, and in 1834 he produced the

unexecuted designs for a domed chapel at Prior Park in Bath at the same time as designs for a Greek Corinthian Cathedral in Bristol. It was also during this period that Goodridge took on as his pupil Harvey Lonsdale Elmes. Elmes worked in Goodridge's office in 1834, and though his career was very short (he died in 1847 at the age of 34), he is regarded as one of the great exponents of the Greek Revival.[10] Goodridge no doubt benefited from having such an innovative mind working with him, while Elmes informed Goodridge's son that it was the advantages of his father's office that made him 'so well grounded in the first principles of classic architecture'.[11]

St Michael and St George, Lyme Regis, Dorset

During the same period when Goodridge was creating grand classical designs, he also built five Gothic churches and was employed as an agent for Brunel and the Great Western Railway.[12] However, it is one unrealised building, the drawings

of which are now lost, that is the most significant project Goodridge embarked upon in this period, his competition designs for the new Houses of Parliament. The scheme Goodridge submitted included an octagonal House of Commons, decorated with works by great national artists to keep alive 'the pride of Englishmen', and the House of Lords was a Baronial Hall with a minstrel's gallery and allegorical figures of strength and justice flanking the throne.[13] Goodridge was one of the competitors elected to sit on the committee responsible for the exhibition of the competition designs, and his entry was displayed in the first room of that exhibition alongside those of Cockerell, Wilkins and the winning scheme by Barry. How involved Beckford was with these designs is unknown, although Goodridge is certain to have shown them to his client, and the Baronial hall, decorated to show the development of the peerage, is reminiscent of Beckford's decorative schemes for the St Michael's and King Edward's Galleries in Fonthill Abbey. What is perhaps more important is that by entering such a high-profile architectural completion, Goodridge was displaying the confidence in his work that had been present since the start of his career, and in so doing, claiming his place as an architect of not just regional, but National standards.

The 1840s were a decade during which Goodridge took the experimentation of the 1820s and the grand ambitions of the 1830s and refined them to produce both pleasantly picturesque and lavishly monumental schemes. In 1840 he designed Devizes Castle, and he continued to work at Prior Park designing the Gymnasium in 1841, the same year he built a Synagogue in Corn Street, Bath. It is the houses ascending Bathwick Hill built in 1846-8 that are the most famous products of this period. Fiesole, built for himself, and the semi-detached villas of La Casetta and Casa Bianca illustrate Goodridge's grasp of the picturesque, an idea that he had begun developing at both Lansdown Tower and Montebello twenty years earlier.[14] However, as in the previous

decade, it is an unexecuted project that fully illustrates the heights that Goodridge's adventurous spirit and love of grand design could reach.

Since 1840 Beckford's son-in-law, the tenth Duke of Hamilton, had employed Goodridge to undertake interior alterations to Hamilton Palace in Scotland, and his alteration schemes were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1842. When David Hamilton, the architect commissioned with the exterior alterations and the design of the Hamilton Mausoleum, had to stop work due to ill health, the commissions passed to Goodridge. His first schemes for the Mausoleum appeared in 1841, with a second set of variant designs dated 1846. They illustrate a large structure with a square base and circular drum and dome. In the 1841 design giant Corinthian columns support a drum decorated by figurative sculptures crowned by a dome. The Corinthian order is carried over to the first of the 1846 designs, where a Corinthian portico and a frieze above the central doorway dominate a much squatter building. It is the second, 1846, variant that is the more interesting. A much simpler yet taller structure, the base is articulated only by heavy rustication, but above the unadorned dome sits a cupola or lantern where eight sculpted figures appear to be supporting the roof and finial. It is yet another interpretation of the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates.[15]

Although Goodridge's designs for the mausoleum remained unexecuted, and relations with the Duke of Hamilton became strained, it was another commission for the Hamiltons that introduced the final stage of Goodridge's career. The gateway to Lansdown Cemetery, executed in 1848 following the Duchess of Hamilton's re-purchase of the Tower and its grounds, and her gift of it to the Parish of Walcot, is one of the simplest yet most intense of all Goodridge's works. Echoing the basic pattern of the entrance façades of his Gothic churches from the 1830s, the Lansdown gateway is a basic screen with three doorways, but it is the experimentation with Romanesque forms and the detail of the

decoration that give this structure its force. The neighbouring Tower from 1825 is stark in its severe simplicity compared to the

Lansdown Cemetery Gateway, Bath

rich complexity of the gateway's decoration. Yet the two structures sit harmoniously beside each other in the picturesque landscape garden Beckford had created.

Between 1849 and 1854 there is a lost period in Goodridge's career, in which any projects he may have worked on are as yet undocumented. It is also during this period that his son Alfred Samuel began working with his father, and by 1856 the practice is operating as H. E. Goodridge & Son. Just as Goodridge's partnership with Beckford, and then later with his pupil Elmes, benefited the architect both personally and professionally, working with his son appears to have further encouraged the use of Romanesque forms that were so intensely applied to the Lansdown gateway. The last major project of Goodridge's career was the Percy Chapel, Charlotte Street, Bath, designed with his son in 1854.

It is appropriate that the two structures that bookend the height of Goodridge's career stand beside each other. Lansdown Tower introduced the Greco-Italian forms of an architect maturing in experience and knowledge, while twenty years later the Lansdown gateway illustrated where his natural confidence and desire to evolve those forms had led him. It is the spectre of Beckford overshadowing these same two structures that has perhaps led to the remainder of Goodridge's body of work, and the grand designs he envisaged, being neglected. Beckford's presence, however strong, never overrides the fact that Goodridge was an architect whose natural talent was reinforced by an unfailing professionalism and by the highest regard for his chosen career.

1. Christopher Woodward in his article 'William Beckford and Fonthill Splendens: Early Works by Soane and Goodridge', (*Apollo*, February 1998, 33-40) refers to Goodridge as Beckford's 'executive' architect, a term first applied by John Wilton-Ely when referring to Beckford's relationship with Wyatt. More damning of Goodridge's career is Timothy Mowl's description of Goodridge as Beckford's 'young, biddable architect', ('William Beckford: A Biographical Perspective', in Derek E. Ostergard, (ed.) *William Beckford, 1760-1844: An Eye for the Magnificent* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 29.

2. Alfred Samuel Goodridge, *Brief Memoir of the late Henry Edmund Goodridge*, RIBA Sessional Papers, 1864-5, extra page 3-5.
3. For an outline of the Greek Revival in Bath see Neil Jackson, *Nineteenth century Bath Architects and Architecture,* (Bath: Ashgrove Press, 1991).
4. N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: North Somerset and Bristol* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1958), 251.
5. A. S. Goodridge, *Memoir.*
6. Ibid.
7. See Christopher Woodward, art. cit.
8. The design for a monument to Queen Charlotte is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, prints and drawing collection, E. 954-196, ss13.
9. See the catalogue of the Beckford Library from the Hamilton Palace sale, Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, June 1882, for the full contents of Beckford's library.
10. Joseph Mordaunt Crook in his work *The Greek Revival* (London: RIBA, 1968), refers to Elmes as the great genius of the Greek Revival and considers his St. George's Hall and Assize Courts (1839-40) in Liverpool as one of the greatest classical buildings in England.
11. A. S. Goodridge, *Memoir.*
12. Goodridge was involved with the surveying and purchasing of land and properties between Twerton and Bathampton.
13. The design drawings for this scheme are now lost, but Goodridge's description of his designs can be found in the *Catalogue of the Designs offered for the New Houses of Parliament*, 7th edn., 25 June, 1836.
14. See Christopher Woodward, 'H. E. Goodridge in Bath: The End of the Terrace and the Rise of the Villa', in Dana Arnold (ed.), *The Picturesque in England* (London: The Georgian Group, 1994), 57-75, for an assessment of Goodridge's villas in Bath.
15. The archives relating to Goodridge's work at Hamilton Palace, including the Mausoleum, are shared between the National Monuments Record of Scotland and the Hamilton Archives at Lennoxlove.

William Beckford's Last Literary Work: Recollections of an Excursion

ERIC DARTON

Considered to be one of William Beckford's best works, *Recollections of an Excursion to the Monasteries of Alcobaça and Batalha*, first published in 1835, was the last book published in Beckford's lifetime. In the 'Advertisement' he refers to some 'slight notes' of the journey, which form the basis of the work. These notes on sheets of notepaper, boards and flyleaves of books were found among the Beckford papers and are undoubtedly contemporary with the excursion.

There are some discrepancies between the notes and the finished work and some have argued that the work written forty years after the event has been 'added to, altered, faked up here and there'[1] and that there is no twelfth day in the original notes. While some of the criticism may be valid, it should not detract from the value of 'a book which, though small in compass, is one of the most finished travel sketches in the English language and the peer of many more-trumpeted volumes.'[2]

The Monastery of St. Bernard at Alcobaça was founded by Afonso Henriques (the first king of Portugal) to celebrate the victory over the Moorish stronghold of Santarem in 1147. Founded in 1152, building began in 1178 and completion was in 1253. It was 'recognized by the Pope as the ruling seat' of the Cistercian Order. 'By hard work and generous Royal grants' the Order became extremely wealthy, 'until the abbot had full judicial authority over an area which included thirteen market towns and three sea ports … Inside Alcobaça has an almost Lutheran austerity … and the 350-foot-long central nave … is aesthetically impressive and spiritually rather chilling.'[3]

'The Monastery of Our Lady of Victory … at Batalha is fairly generally regarded as Portugal's greatest architectural

masterpiece.' It was founded like Alcobaça as an act of thanksgiving; in this case for the victory against the Spanish at Aljubarrota on the 14th August 1385. The Portuguese were assisted by the troops of the Earl of Cambridge and 500 English archers, whose deadly fire assured the victory.[4] The monastery was begun by the Dominican Order in 1388. The 260-foot nave is impressive, as is the octagonal chapel of the founder, King John of Avis, built between 1420 and 1434. While the side chapels are roofed, the central octagon roof was never completed.[5] 'The first version of Fonthill Abbey … owed something to the spire of the mausoleum of King Joao I at Batalha '.[6]

The excursion lasting twelve days, from the 3rd to the 14th June 1794, was at the desire of the Prince Regent. The Grand Prior of Aviz and the Prior of St Vincent's were to be Beckford's 'conductors and companions', though the excursion was made 'for reasons with which [he] was never entirely acquainted.' The whole book gives a sense of exuberance and enjoyment, from the commencement of the journey from Beckford's quinta at San José where a collection of vehicles, 'favourite quadrupeds … [and] … usual followers … formed a caravan which … would have cut no despicable figure even on the route of Mecca or Mesched-Ali!'[7] All was good-humoured and relaxed, '… and nothing left behind but Care and Sorrow' (5-6).

The first night was spent at the quinta of the convent of St. Vincent's, on the way passing Bemfica, Nossa Senhora de Luz and Lumiares (8-9). Next day Beckford admired the crops on the Convent land, '… well-cultivated vegetables, fields of Indian wheat … and the most extensive orchards of oranges, apricots, and other fruit trees, perhaps in Portugal' (12-13). Before their departure to Cadafiz, another St. Vincent property, the Prior of St. Vincent's confidential attendant was overheard addressing the Grand Prior's Secretary, ' "You know … that we have business of urgency at Alcobaça, and the Prince Regent's command to perform it with the less delay the better." ' (19).

At the approach to Carregado, Beckford was impressed with the crops, '… unlimited fields of Turkish corn, fine barley and black Sicilian wheat' (28). That night in his apartment Beckford considered, 'How often, contrasting my present situation with the horrid disturbed state of almost every part of the Continent, did I bless the hour when my steps were directed to Portugal!' (30).

The journey continued, visiting the Caldas and then 'boldly and resolutely to Alcobaça' (32). They arrived at the 'huge domineering bulk of the conventual buildings' and 'the well-wooded and well-watered village.' The whole community 'at least four hundred strong … At their head the Abbot himself, in his costume of High Almoner of Portugal' welcomed them. The party was conducted into 'the spacious, massive and somewhat austere Saxon-looking church' where 'All was gloom,' except for 'lamps burning before the high altar (inferior twinkles from side chapels and chantries are not worth mentioning)'. Mass was celebrated to the accompaniment 'of several stately organs' and the choir. Later Beckford visited the 'sepulchral chapel' of 'Pedro the Just and his beloved Inez' (35-36).

Then in came the Grand Priors. ' "To the kitchen," said they.' The three prelates led the way 'to, I verily believe, the most distinguished temple of gluttony in all Europe.' A multitude of fish were held in reservoirs formed in the rivulets which flowed through the building, with ample quantities of game, venison, fruit and other foodstuffs in quantity. ' "There," said the Lord Abbot,—"we shall not starve:" '(37-39). After an impressive banquet, which contained as well as 'the usual fare, … rarities and delicacies of past seasons and distant countries', they were entertained by 'A crowd of clarionet and guitar players' and 'the most decorous and tiresome minuets' (41-42).

After breakfast the following day, before setting out for Batalha, Beckford was shown fourteenth-century manuscripts, the sacristy, copes and vestments, golden reliquaries and the rock crystal candlesticks and cross from the King of Castile's portable

chapel (46-49). Batalha proved to be a smaller and poorer community than that at Alcobaça, and 'Fourteen or fifteen sleek well-fed mules, laden with paniers of neat wicker work' were part of the caravan to provide for the brothers (59). The journey took them through Aljubarrota, scene of the Spanish defeat and, after some refreshment of the local wine, 'The highest exhilaration prevailed …' (64).

It was dark when they arrived at Batalha, '… the great church, with its rich cluster of abbatial buildings, buttresses and pinnacles, and fretted spires'. The whole community waited to receive them. The poor monks looked enviously on as the sumpter mules were unloaded and the hampers taken in. 'The Batalha Prior and his attendants looked quite astounded' as beds, a 'coverlid', and basins and other silver utensils were carried in (66-67). There was much excited gossip, 'endless compliments, still longer litanies and an enormous supper' (68). Eventually, after further reminiscences, Beckford was able to retire to his chamber.

Next day, after breakfast in a 'large shady apartment' (80), Mass was celebrated in the Abbey church, which reminded Beckford 'of Winchester in form of arches and mouldings, and of Amiens in loftiness … golden and ruby light … streamed forth from the long series of stained windows' (83). They visited the mausoleum of John the First and Philippa, and the Regent Pedro Duke of Coimbra. Beckford would have spent more time in the chapel, but the Lord High Almoner expected them back to dinner at Alcobaça. They therefore hurried through the cloisters, and the Chapter house with the tombs of Alfonso the Fifth, his grandson, and his grandson's newly-married consort, the Infanta of Castile (85-86).

On their return to Alcobaça, they enjoyed a meal prepared by Simon, Beckford's French cook, '*omelette à la provençale* … a macedoine, worthy of Alexander the Great' (93-94). The evening concluded with a performance of 'the excruciating tragedy of

Donna Inez de Castro, and the cruel murder of that lovely lady and her two innocent royal infants' (99-100). The latter being untrue, but infanticide included for effect. The performance was aptly funereal, accompanied by an orchestra of 'half-a-dozen sharp-toned fiddles, a growling bass, two overgrown mandolines, (lutes I suppose I ought to style them), and a pair of flutes'. 'The Lady Inez' was played by 'one of the most ungain [sic] hobbledehoys I ever met with' (106-108) whose voice at times showed signs of 'becoming a grand baritone' when it was not a semi-soprano.

By the eighth day Beckford had had enough of the 'perpetual gormandizing — the fumes of banquets and incense … the splendour of illuminated altars and saints and madonnas … My soul longed for an opener expanse …' Leaving Ehrhart, Franchi and the Priors to their own devices and Simon 'at my Lord Almoner's uninterrupted disposal' (118-119), Beckford set off on his Arabian for Batalha. The Prior welcoming them on his arrival asked, ' "To what lucky chance … are we indebted for the renewal of a visit …?" ' Beckford explained that in particular he had a wish ' "to examine the mausoleum of Don Emanuel, which I totally neglected in the hurry of yesterday—" ' (129-130). Returning to Alcobaça Beckford was greeted by the Lord Abbot; ' "your great Simon has surpassed even my expectations … now to supper" ' (140).

Before the departure from Alcobaça on the ninth day, the Grand Prior of Aviz advised Beckford that 'he still had a few words of great importance in store for my Lord Almoner'. Overhearing 'a loud storm of indistinct but angry words approaching to tempest', the journey's purpose began to be apparent to Beckford. Later he learnt from 'one of the Prior of St. Vincent's confidants, that they related to certain mysteries … certain grotto-like communications, between this sacred asylum and another … tenanted by … the daughters of prayer and penitence' (143-144).

On the return journey, where previously had been a rutted road, ‘an immense body of well-clothed peasants’ had smoothed out the whole way to Pedraneira (147). Beckford and his companions remarked on the prosperity and contentment of ‘The peasantry, comfortably clad in substantial garments ... their granaries amply stored, their flocks numerous and healthy, and their landlords, the rich monks of Alcobaça, neither griping nor tyrannical’. They had taught them to till the land and to raise cattle; ‘few communities ever conferred more solid benefits … to all their dependants’ (164-165).

After a stay for refreshment, a magnificent banquet of fish, at Pedraneira, a ‘most opulent farm-mansion, the capital of the conventual domain in these quarters’ (168), they continued to the Caldas, their night’s stop, which however ‘wore a sickly unprepossessing aspect … every third or fourth person you met was … [an] apothecary … and every tenth or twelfth, a rheumatic or palsied invalid’ (170-171). Dr Ehrhart was enthusiastically received by his fellow practitioners and was able to inspect the patients, with whose treatment he violently disagreed. Beckford was not amused.

Their stay next night was ‘At Cadafaiz … that most comfortable of rustic manorial mansions.’ There they were able to relax. ‘Franchi unpacked his piano-forte’, and ‘the Caldas and all its apothecaries’ were forgotten in the ‘calm and cleanliness of this retired abode’ (180). Early next morning an excursion was made to a Franciscan monastery at the summit of a nearby hill, where a grand Mass was celebrated in honour of St. Anthony. At the conclusion a solemn benediction was given by the Prior of Aviz to the assembled multitude of sincere and devoted country people. After the length of the service and the procession, the ‘Grand Prior was experiencing an almost total exhaustion.’ After some mishaps, the party arrived at last at their ‘cool shady apartment, as brown as mummies, and as dry as cinders’ (192-193).

They were met by two special couriers ‘with a written mandate from the Prince, summoning the two Priors to an audience tomorrow in the Palace of Queluz, precisely at three.’ Beckford received an ‘invitation from the Marquis of Anjeja (then lord in waiting) to dine with him at the same hour.’ The priors were most put out; ‘we did not expect a summons to communicate observations … so soon,—on our way home, too, God bless us!’ That evening they ‘partook of a delicious repast … delicate dishes and iced sherbets’. The day concluded with ‘a stroll in the long-bowered alleys … music, also, from Franchi, accompanied on the guitar by two novices … and then a dance … performed by … morisco-dressed processionists … from the convent on the hill’ (193-195).

The twelfth and last day saw their return, as Beckford on his Arabian ‘traversed the wide expanse of country between Cadafaiz and Queluz’. Exactly to time he arrived at the Palace. ‘The chaises belonging to the Priors of Aviz and St. Vincent’s were waiting before the royal entrance, for both prelates were still closeted with the Prince Regent.’ As arranged, Beckford joined ‘the Marquis of Anjeja and his son the Conde de Villaverde … and immediately dinner was served up’ (197-199). The Marquis intimated to Beckford that later the Prince Regent would grant him an audience. After spending time in the gardens, viewing a pavilion, running races with the companions of the Infanta Donna Carlotta and a reunion with Don Pedro the young Marquis of Marialva, Beckford was eventually ushered into the royal presence.

The Prince Regent, who had been closeted with his mother, whose mental state was well known, ‘was standing alone in a vast room, thoughtful … and abstracted.’ He seemed to brighten at Beckford’s approach. He discussed the visits to the monasteries, joked about the Lord Abbot having ‘ “become most gloriously corpulent” ’, and referred to the entertainment they had received. Then to the international situation: ‘ “Every despatch from France

brings us such frightful intelligence … the ship of state in every country in Europe is labouring under a heavy torment,—God alone can tell upon what shore we shall be all drifted!" ' (211-213).

Leaving the Prince, Beckford returned through various rooms to rejoin the Marquis. 'I was tired of close conferences in close apartments; I longed for the refreshing sea-breezes of my quinta on the banks of the Tagus' (218). But Anjeja delayed him to tell him of the Queen's mental agony. As Beckford was about to leave he heard 'the most terrible, the most agonizing shrieks – shrieks such as I hardly conceived possible … "Ai Jesous! Ai Jesous!" did she exclaim … in the bitterness of agony.' Beckford expressed his concern. The Marquis, far from displeased, conducted him to his carriage, 'nor did he cease gazing … upon the carriage … till … even the torches which were borne before it became invisible' (223-224).

And so to the end of the excursion. The 'brief notes' have been given substance, and the narrative a plot and a conclusion. An account of a journey which, apart from the last day (perhaps not entirely true), was one of pleasure and enjoyment. Enjoyment of the country, its people and the company: 'what travel writing before or since has been so high-spirited, so poetical, or so entertaining?'[8]

1. Rose Macaulay, *They Went to Portugal* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1946), 136.
2. Guy Chapman, *Beckford* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), 251.
3. Cedric Salter, *Portugal* (London: Batsford, 1970), 145-146.
4. Ibid., 132-133.
5. Ibid., 135-136.
6. Brian Fothergill, *Beckford of Fonthill* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 233.
7. William Beckford, *Recollections of an Excursion to the Monasteries of Alcobaça and Batalha*, ed. Boyd Alexander (Fontwell: Centaur Press, 1972), 1-3. Subsequent page references are to this edition.
8. James Lees-Milne, *William Beckford* (Tisbury: Compton Russell, 1976), 40.

2007 ISECS Roundtable on Beckford: A Preliminary Description

KEVIN L. COPE

Beckfordians around the world are grateful to Kenneth Graham for his many years of service to Beckford studies and in particular for his organizing of quadrennial 'Beckford Roundtables' at ISECS (International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies) meetings in such exotic locales as Budapest, Bristol, Muenster, Dublin, and most recently Los Angeles. Although Professor Graham has now retired from his professorship at the University of Guelph, he nevertheless remains 'in service' as the presiding spirit of Beckford studies, in which capacity he has asked me to perpetuate the Beckford roundtables. I am therefore pleased to announce that I have received a preliminary go-ahead from the organizing committee of the next ISECS meeting, scheduled for July 8 through July 15, 2007, in Montpellier, France. For further details, see the website: (http://www.congreslumieres2007.org/fr/index_fr.htm).

Although the Beckford Roundtable traditionally welcomes all pertinent contributions, the theme for the 2007 event will be 'William Beckford: Good-Humored, Bad-Humored, Humorous, or Possibly Comic?' The non-exclusive focus of the roundtable will be the question of Beckford's handling of the various piquant states, stimuli, and objects that we associate with 'humor.' This topic may be approached from any of the dozens of disciplines with which Beckford associated himself. Beckford's literature, for example, often leaves its audience laughing while nervously frowning or disapproving or feeling awkward. It leaves critics wondering whether they have misunderstood what counts as 'humorous' during the period, whether Beckford is a jokester or an irritable and crabby nuisance, whether the events that happen are 'funny' in all, some, or no contexts, whether he styles himself as a 'humorous' man in the old tradition of Ben Jonson or the new tradition of William Hayley, and whether 'the humorous' and 'the comic' are objective,

changeless phenomena or susceptible of the kind of warping and twisting that Beckford brings to most everything else that he confronts. In the areas of architecture, landscape design, and landscape painting, likewise, we see a similar instability of tone in which the ridiculous, the grandiose, the sublime, the comic, and the wondrous all flicker in and out of one another. With regard to personal record-keeping (diaries, notes, commonplace books) we likewise find Beckford wavering between irascibility, wittiness, sharpness, and occasional lovability. With regard to connoisseurship, we see Beckford alternately amused with and contemptuous of his collectibles. With regard to human relationships, we see an alternation of rage, humor, and compassion. All too often, these and many other instabilities and periodicities in Beckford's tone lead to an all too easy application of adjectives such as 'elusive' or 'inscrutable' or 'enigmatic' or even 'frivolous' to the life and work of this remarkable author.

The goal of this roundtable will be to redeem Beckford from the charge of inscrutability by setting his most inscrutable characteristic – his admittedly uneven or hard-to-understand humorousness – in the spotlight. Papers on all aspects of Beckford's career and on all arts and disciplines in which Beckford worked are most welcome. Likewise, papers evaluating Beckford's social, family, and artistic contexts – including the relation of his works to those of his predecessors and contemporaries – would be most welcome.

Candidate participants are invited to get in touch with the panel chair, Professor Kevin L. Cope. E-mail proposals may be sent to ENCOPE@LSU.EDU. Telephone inquiries may be directed to Kevin at his office telephone (with 24-hour answering machine), USA + 225-578-2864. Proposals may also be posted to Prof. Kevin L. Cope, Department of English, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70803, USA. Proposing a paper need not be a burdensome undertaking: simply provide your name, your institutional affiliation (if any – independent scholars are welcome), and a two-to-three-sentence description of your proposed paper.

Notes on Contributors

Mirella Billi is Professor of English Literature at the University of Viterbo in Italy. Her main field of research is eighteenth-century literature. She has published volumes on Henry Fielding, the Gothic novel, Jane Austen, and the novel of sensibility, and a number of critical studies on the Grand Tour, the relationship between art and literature, women's poetry, women's magazines, and Beckford, whose *Biographical Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters* and *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents* she has edited and translated into Italian. Her other field of research is the twentieth century (particularly Modernist and Post-modernist literature). She is at present editing a volume on the literary canon, and is completing a book on Seduction and Libertinism in eighteenth-century literature.

Sidney Blackmore was a Foundation Trustee of the Beckford Tower Trust and is a member of the Tower's Council of Management. An independent lecturer and writer with particular interests in Italy, the Grand Tour and the influence of Classical art and architecture on later styles and tastes, he has organised exhibitions on Neo-classicism, the eighteenth-century Gothic revival, and the planned townscape. He regularly leads study tours to Italy.

Stephen Clarke is a London lawyer and the joint author of a bibliography of R. W. Ketton-Cremer, the historian and literary biographer. He has published papers on Beckford, Walpole, Sterne and on architecture and landscape gardening issues in the novels of Jane Austen, and has a particular interest in the early Gothic revival. He has recently been elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries.

Kevin L. Cope is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. He is the editor of numerous collections of essays as well as of the annual journal *1650-1850: Ideas, Aesthetics, and Inquiries in the Early Modern Era* and of *ECCB: The Eighteenth-Century Current Bibliography*. His work on Beckford includes five appearances on the international Beckford Roundtable at the quadrennial ISECS meetings (which roundtable he will chair beginning in 2007 – see the article in this volume), the presentation of the annual lecture of the Beckford Society for the year 2000, and an assortment of journal articles touching upon various aspects of Beckford's career and influence. He is currently at work on a book on underground environments and subterranean experiences in the 'long' eighteenth century.

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, since enhanced by studying Beckford's writings, conversations with James Lees-Milne and Leslie Hilliard, and visits to Fonthill. Jon Millington introduced him to additional aspects of Beckford and encouraged him to write about them.

Andrew Fletcher taught history and politics in a Bath secondary school, and his interest in Beckford arose from voluntary work at the Holburne Museum in Bath. He sang in Bath Abbey Choir for over 20 years and is involved in a number of musical organisations, as well as being a voluntary steward at Lansdown Tower.

Amy Frost has been the Administrator of Beckford's Tower & Museum in Bath since 2002. Her interest in Beckford began while studying for an M.Phil. in Architectural History that specialised in the Gothic Revival. In 2004 she curated the exhibition *John Wood and the Creation of Georgian Bath* at the Building of Bath Museum and is currently researching for her Ph.D. on the life and work of Henry Edmund Goodridge, the architect of Beckford's Tower.

Malcolm Jack's book on the cultural history of Lisbon (*Lisbon: City of the Sea*) will be published by I. B. Tauris in 2007. His books on Beckford include *Vathek and Other Stories* (1993), *The Episodes of Vathek* (1994) and *William Beckford: An English Fidalgo* (1997). He is chairman of the Beckford Society.

Bet McLeod has long been interested in collectors and their collections of decorative arts. She has undertaken extensive research on Horace Walpole and William Beckford, publishing and lecturing widely on these subjects. She is a Curator in the Department of Prehistory and Europe, The British Museum, and is presently working on the refurbishment and redisplay of the Medieval Collections. She continues her researches into collecting.

Jerry Nolan is a freelance writer who mainly lectures and publishes essays on various aspect of the Irish Cultural Revival during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Recently he has published *The Tulira Trilogy of Edward Martyn (1859-1923), Irish Symbolist Dramatist* and *Six Essays on Edward Martyn (1859-1923), Irish Cultural Nationalist* in the Edwin Mellen Press Series of Irish Studies, nos. 10 & 11 (Lewiston/Lampeter, 2003-4). His present contribution is the tenth successive research article on Beckford which has been published since 1997 in *The Beckford Journal.*