

D. H. LAWRENCE'S LAST POEMS:  
ROBERTS' MS. E192 AND ETRUSCAN PLACES

---

A Thesis

Presented to

the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English  
University of Houston

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirement for the Degree  
Master of Arts

---

by  
Michael L. Burke  
August, 1975

## FOREWORD

I would like to thank Dr. George Y. Trail without whose assistance this thesis could not have been written. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Sally Leach of the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin for her assistance with the Lawrence collection.

D. H. LAWRENCE'S LAST POEMS:  
ROBERTS' MS. E192 AND ETRUSCAN PLACES

---

An Abstract of a Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty of the Department of English  
University of Houston

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

---

by  
Michael L. Burke  
August, 1975

D. H. LAWRENCE'S LAST POEMS:  
ROBERTS' MS. E192 AND ETRUSCAN PLACES

D. H. Lawrence's last manuscript of poetry, Roberts' Ms. E192, contains the culmination of his religious thought. Published posthumously as Last Poems (1932), the manuscript presents a quest, a multifaceted journey toward the expression of his religious vision. However, the manuscript has been incorrectly published. By compensating for the editorial errors which persist in the 1971 Pinto and Roberts The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence, one can reconstruct Lawrence's struggle for expression, and upon examination, one finds the religious vision is the principle element which gives the manuscript its continuity, clarity and intensity.

The comprehension of this religious poetry is greatly facilitated by the volume, Etruscan Places (1932). Many of the religious themes expressed in Etruscan Places become the themes of the poetry which was written thereafter, and an examination of the symbolism and the religious ideas present in Etruscan Places informs much of the poetry of the manuscript. Finally, Lawrence's conception of his own role as poet is examined in Etruscan Places and he reveals a new awareness which influences the poetry in this manuscript.

## CONTENTS

	Page
FOREWORD . . . . .	iii
I. THE MANUSCRIPT. . . . .	1
II. THE ORGANIC CONNECTION. . . . .	23
III. THE ETRUSCAN CONNECTION . . . . .	56
NOTES . . . . .	94
BIBLIOGRAPHY. . . . .	101

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE MANUSCRIPT: ROBERTS' MS. E192

#### I

Since their publication in 1932, the two holograph notebooks of poems which D. H. Lawrence left among his papers at his death have not received the amount of critical attention due posthumous poetry. Edited by Richard Aldington and Guiseppe Orioli, these two notebooks reached the public under the title Last Poems and were internally divided into two sections labelled "Last Poems" and "More Pansies." These sections were printed with alterations from Ms. A and Ms. B respectively, with a critical and editorial introduction by Aldington. Since the publication of this introduction, little concern has been focused on the accuracy of the editing of this volume, nor upon the validity of Aldington's opinion of the interrelationship of the manuscripts. Although Pinto and Roberts' 1971 The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence is a commendable edition of the poetry, there persists in this edition an inaccuracy in the editorial representation of the manuscripts which is much larger than any of the Pinto and

Roberts edition's typographical problems. The fabric of the manuscripts themselves has been disrupted, distorting any attempt at a unified reading of the over three hundred poems involved. The concluding sentences of Aldington's discussion of the manuscripts in his introduction read:

"Thus I have tried to treat these Lawrence MSS. with the utmost respect. I have not imposed my own ideas, but have set out to give these poems exactly as he wrote them."<sup>1</sup>

Although Aldington did attempt to accurately render the words of the manuscripts, he misrepresented the interrelationship of the two notebooks, disrupting them by his order of publication, an order which has not been significantly altered since 1932.

The dimensions of Aldington's mistakes are made clear by a comparison of his opinion of the manuscripts, found in "Introduction to 'Last Poems' and 'More Pansies'," and the manuscripts as they exist at present in the Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin. From the beginning of his introduction, Aldington sees the manuscripts as two separate entities, one a book of penseés, thoughts presented as poems, and the other, a volume of poems. The manuscripts were given the titles B and A respectively, representative of Aldington's consideration of their significance (A being more important than B), and not of their chronology. Indeed, it is their chronology,

their consecutive relationship one to another, and not necessarily their significance which is the point of discussion here. Aldington's position is explicit:

From merely internal evidence, I think it can be said that MS. "B" was used as a first jotting-book, mostly for "occasional pieces" of the type of Pansies. There are very many alterations and rewritings, and in some cases whole poems have been crossed out. The differences between these drafts and the published versions (of the poems in Pansies and Nettles) show that Lawrence either had another "final draft" book or revised drastically when typing them out. The poems in MSS "A" are of a different character, more pondered and soignes. In the earlier part, the poems are considerably re-worked, but afterwards page after page has scarcely a correction. This makes me think that MS. "A" must have been used first as a draft-book for more serious poems, and then for fair copies. Finally, although at the very end of MS. "B" there are early drafts of a few of the more serious poems, I believe these two MSS. represent two different books, one a continuation of Pansies, the other a new series leading up to the death poems, for which Lawrence had not found a general title. The two books must also have been in progress simultaneously.<sup>2</sup>

Aldington's speculations about Lawrence's procedures guided him in his editing of the two holograph manuscripts, and were considered valid enough to be adopted by Pinto and Roberts. It is my contention that these judgments and procedures represent several mistakes, primary among them that the manuscripts are separate and simultaneously created entities. A close, first-hand examination of the manuscripts reveals that they are a single document, one volume of poems written consecutively into two notebooks. Ms. A, then, is inseparable from Ms. B, for together they represent



a continuity of thought which overflowed from one filled notebook into a second. Hence, Aldington's previous distinction between A and B, poems and pensees, I submit is a mistake which has been initiated by the original publication of Last Poems in two distinct sections, "Last Poems" and "More Pansies," and which has not been altered for over forty years.

Aldington's methods must first be examined, for he makes several statements which are not substantiated by a thorough examination of the manuscripts. He finds Ms. B functions as a "first jotting book" for poems similar to those in Pansies, and since this notebook is also titled "Pensees" he concludes that Lawrence meant Ms. B to be a continuance of his last volume of poetry. Also, Ms. B represents for Aldington the draft manuscripts for some of the later poems of Pansies, nearly all for Nettles, and all those included in the Imagist Anthology of 1930. He points out that these poems culled out for publication in these three locations have been struck through in the manuscript and that the remainder of the unpublished material numbers two hundred and three poems.

Ms. A, however, is quite a different matter for Aldington. He finds the poems there to be "of a different character, more pondered and soignes" and he points to the

early revision work in Ms. A and the lack of such later in the notebook to support his conclusion that it was at first a draft-book and was later used for fair-copies. Despite his own awareness of varying drafts of a few of the more serious poems which appear in both Ms. B and Ms. A, he concludes that Ms. B represents a book of pensees meant to be a continuation of Pansies and Ms. A represents "a new series" leading up to the death poems. Finally, he adds that Ms. B and Ms. A progressed simultaneously.

Keith Sagar's chronology included in The Art of D. H. Lawrence (1966) is the first to implicitly contradict Aldington's judgment that the manuscripts were progressing simultaneously in the last year of Lawrence's life. Sagar dates the earliest poems in Ms. B from January--February, 1929, rather than the date inside the notebook, 23, November, 1928, which Aldington mentions.<sup>3</sup> Sagar asserts that the poems withdrawn from the manuscript for publications as Nettles date from mid-August, 1929, and he states that the remainder of the notebook, the poems from "Let There Be Light" (681) to "Prayer" (684), was written by early September, 1929.<sup>4</sup> Most importantly, Sagar dates Ms. A after early September, 1929, in contradiction to the judgment that the manuscripts were composed simultaneously. He dates the poems from the "The Greeks are Coming" (687) to

"The Ship of Death" (716) from late September--October, 1929, and the poems from "Difficult Death" (720) to "Phoenix" (728) from November--December, 1929.<sup>5</sup> Thus, Sagar inverts the original ordering of the notebooks which placed Ms. A before Ms. B and initiates an undercurrent of thought which questions the validity of Aldington's editing procedures.

Sandra Gilbert, in her Acts of Attention: The Poems of D. H. Lawrence (1972) is also skeptical of many of Aldington's editorial judgments; however, she relegates her comments to a rather lengthy footnote. She clarifies that Ms. "A" and Ms. "B" refer to significance (for Aldington), not the chronological progression of the poems, and she denies that these notebooks were simultaneously written:

Precisely because Ms. B contains "prefigurations" of Ms. A, however, I think it possible that it may have been at least partly completed before B [it is inevitable that this is a simple confusion; Gilbert means A not B] was begun, in which case some of the "later" poems in More Pansies can be regarded as transitional works bridging the gap between the slangy doggerel of Pansies and the more serious music of Last Poems. Certainly "pansies" like "The God! The Gods!" and "There are Not Gods" seem to foreshadow such last poems as "Middle of the World" and "Maximus." But, since many of them are quite as "pondered and soignés" as Last Poems, it is hard to think them unsuccessful drafts of poems being re-worked in Ms. A.<sup>6</sup>

Her criticism is well taken and she aims at the overt problems with Aldington's approach. First, Aldington admits that he chooses to see the notebooks as separate series,

despite his own awareness of the duplication of such poems as "The Ship of Death" and "Song of Death" in both manuscripts (which would deny the possibility that the notebooks were mutually exclusive series). She concludes that Ms. B was "at least partially completed" before Ms. A was started, if not completely finished. Also, she makes the point that Aldington's separation of the manuscripts on the basis of content, one a book of pensees, the other a new series of death poems, is unsubstantiated and misleading. She asserts that many of the Ms. B poems are as "pondered and soignes" as Ms. A, thus denying that they are early unsuccessful drafts later reworked in Ms. A. Another attack on Aldington's admittedly difficult editorial task comes from T. A. Smailes, who in his Some Comments on the Verse of D. H. Lawrence insists that a simultaneous reading of the two manuscripts is impossible:

It is at this point that we should examine the validity of Aldington's assumption that MS Book B and Book A progressed simultaneously, the latter being "a new series leading up to the death poems." If one is to persist in believing this, one has to do so in spite of all the evidence, which seems to indicate fairly conclusively that Lawrence started writing in Book A when he had all but filled Book B.<sup>7</sup>

More importantly, Smailes presents thematic reasons as well as textual support for his conclusion that Ms. B and Ms. A represent a single series of poems:

While it is true that some poems (viz. "Butterfly," "Glory of Darkness," "The Ship of Death," and "Song of Death," all in the last eight pages of Book B) were later reworked in Book A, this seems to have been the exception rather than the rule. I feel that Aldington was mistaken in maintaining that the the two books progressed simultaneously. If one accepts that they were written in sequence, rather than in parallel the poems represent, in the face of imminent death, a steady progress from the relatively trivial to the sublime.<sup>8</sup>

Although Smailes' essay on the manuscripts is essential to the understanding of this conflict, a closer examination of the notebooks is mandatory before the opinions of Sagar, Gilbert, and Smailes can be more than "fairly conclusive" about this new relationship of the manuscripts.

## II

I shall begin my discussion of the holograph manuscripts in possession of the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, with Ms. B. As Aldington points out, the notebook is inscribed "D. H. Lawrence, Bandol, Var, France, 23rd Nov. 1928." The title Pensees appears on the first line of the first page and the poems appear on both sides of the page from the first to the penultimate page, leaving one empty page at the back. Within these pages are contained 246 separate entries, all but three of which are titled, and all but the last nine

written in blue ink.

The first nineteen poems present a considerable problem. From the first poem, "The Salt of the Earth" to the nineteenth, "Sick," are drafts of poems which were removed from the notebook and printed in the volume, Pansies, with emendation. Smailes points out that five of these poems which appear in this manuscript never reached the public, neither in Pansies, More Pansies, Nettles nor The Complete Poems. These poems, entitled "Amphibian," "Salt Licks," "Widdershins," "War," and "The Malficient Triangle," are printed accurately in Appendix I of Smailes' volume.<sup>9</sup> The remainder of this first group was removed from this manuscript and printed in Pansies: "The Salt of the Earth" (495), "Fresh Water" (495), "Glory" (496), "Fight for Life" (497), "Woe is over the World" (496), "Attila" (497), "Choice" (498), "To be Rich" (498), "To be Poor" (498), "To be Noble" (499), "I am well off" (499), "Intolerance" (499), "Compari" (499), and "Sick" (500). These poems are little revised, although the manuscript titles may vary slightly from those titles given them in Pansies. Most importantly, all of these nineteen poems were struck through with a single diagonal line left to right in pen, presumably because Lawrence wanted to indicate which poems had been removed for publication.

At this point there appears a considerable shift in handwriting which persists throughout the notebook and which may indicate that Lawrence left the manuscript to prepare Pansies. The next group of poems are those seventeen which run from "Image-making Love" (601) the first poem after the handwriting shift (and also the first poem of Aldington's "More Pansies"), to the thirty-seventh poem of the manuscript, "Behavior" (608). What is most unusual about this group is the considerable revision of the poems, not in pen as before, but in pencil. The poems "Desire" (602), "To a Certain Friend" (602), "The Emotional Friend" (603), "The Egoist" (603), and "Ultimate Reality" (604) all exhibit extensive revision in pencil. Many of the remaining poems, up to and including "Behavior" (608), tend to be revised in pen, although less extensively as before.

Beginning with "The Hostile Sun" (608), the thirty-eighth poem of the manuscript, and ending with "Belief" (622), are forty-eight poems which have little revision or none whatsoever. The only revision present here is the replacement of one word with another, probably as the poem was composed. Within these forty-eight poems there are fewer than one dozen words changed. However, beginning with "Modern Prayer" (584), which follows "Belief" in the

manuscript, one is confronted with the early versions of poems which were lifted from the manuscript, crossed out as before, and printed in the volume, Nettles which appeared posthumously in 1930. These prototypes are scattered throughout the remainder of the volume, the last of which, "Songs I Learned at School" (574), appears in the manuscript directly following "Self Sacrifice" (679).

The poems from "Belief" to "Songs I Taught in School" correspond to The Complete Poems, pp. 601-679, with the omission of the score of poems published in Nettles. However, it is after these poems that the manuscript undergoes significant changes. Beginning with "Gross, Coarse, Hideous" (680), the 236th of the 246 poems, obvious reworking appears in black ink. Next, ["Mr. Squire"] (680) is rewritten in black ink. With "Let there Be Light" (681), the remainder of the manuscript is written entirely in black ink, a fact which has as yet been overlooked even though Ms. A is written entirely in black ink.

From this point on, as Aldington states, "a bit of a puzzle begins."<sup>10</sup> However, he does not mention nor print the two versions of a poem entitled "Butterfly" which appear between "God is Born" (682) and "The White Horse" (683). The poem in both versions had to wait until 1970 to be printed in Smailes' volume; however, Smailes fails



to publish it correctly. His version reads as follows:

The sight of the ocean  
or of a huge waterfalls  
or of vast furnaces pouring forth fire

does not impress me as one butterfly does  
when it settles by chance on my shoe.

5

When I see its veined wings lifted  
as it sips at the dirt on my shoe  
my soul says at once  
God is born!

Suddenly, out of nowhere  
a butterfly alights on my shoe  
lifts its veined wings, lifts them  
and sips at the dirt on my shoe.

10

And suddenly, out of nowhere,  
wonder radiates round the world again  
As a white and black butterfly lifts its wings,  
lifts them  
And sips at the dirt on my shoe.<sup>11</sup>

15

Although Smailes' version makes an attractive appearance on the page, it misrepresents the poetry. In the manuscript, the first nine lines appear on the left half of the page, and the last eight lines appear on the right half of the page, side by side. Both are "under" the single title, "Butterfly" and both are crossed out with the familiar left to right diagonal slash across the text. The manuscript presents two very similar drafts of the same poem, two approaches to a single expression. Smailes' attack on the poem's "not particularly effective repetition" should be seen as initiated by his own inaccurate printing of the poem.<sup>12</sup> There is no precedent

in the volume for assuming, as Smailes apparently has, that the poems are to be read as one poem, the last line of the left-hand column followed by the first line of the right-hand column. In fact, "Glory of Darkness" (958-959) consists also of two similar, adjacent versions under a single title, and Smailes, as well as Pinto and Roberts assumes correctly that they are two versions of a single poem.

Next appears "The White Horse" (683) which is almost entirely rewritten. The original version, still visible, reads as follows:

The youth walks up to the white horse, to put its  
                   halter on  
 and something in the still, sure pride of the lad  
                   makes me say  
 God is born.<sup>13</sup>

Following this appear the two versions of the single poem "Glory of Darkness" (958-59), now well-known as a prototype of a "Bavarian Gentians." The different versions of this poem, whose original title "The State of Grace" was crossed out, appear in ink on the left side of the page and in pencil on the right side. The poem spans the recto and verso sides of a single page, and the later pencil version appears beside the ink one, paralleling it from the sixth line and following, apparently meant to replace the ink version from that point on. The general

appearance of the two versions, particularly the pencil one, is haphazard. Most likely both these versions, like those of "Butterfly" were unsatisfactory for Lawrence, although they were not crossed out.

Following "Flowers and Men" (683), there appears the early version of "The Ship of Death" (961-964) and "Song of Death" (965), now relegated to Appendix IV of the Pinto and Roberts' The Complete Poems. Aldington omits these versions in preference to the later versions in Ms. A and concludes Ms. B with "Prayer" (684), which he feels is the last poem Lawrence wrote for "some reason" ("some reason" which is not further elucidated in the "Introduction" nor in his biography of Lawrence).

I feel it is crucial to the single volume reading of the manuscripts that one notices that there is only a single blank page at the end of Ms. B, indicating that the second notebook, Ms. A, was begun when and only when Ms. B was, for all purposes, filled. Moreover, the black ink in which the last dozen poems of Ms. B are written continues into Ms. A, which is completely written in black ink. Further, Ms. A is untitled and it is difficult to imagine Lawrence at a loss for a title for his supposed "new series" as Aldington suggests unless it was actually a continuation of the titled Ms. B and not a separate

volume.<sup>14</sup> All of evidence points to the conclusion that Aldington's assumption of the simultaneity of composition is a mistake.

Ms. A is better represented in The Complete Poems than is Ms. B. Except for the unfortunate omission of a second version of "Bavarian Gentians" (960) appearing between the first version and "Lucifer" (697), Pinto and Roberts' Complete Poems, pp. 687-728, is faithful to the notebook. In his "Introduction," Aldington writes:

Whenever, as sometimes happens, words or phrases or lines are duplicated--i.e. one version written above another without either being crossed out--I have always taken that written above as being the preferred one.<sup>15</sup>

The same logic dictates that he should have published the second version of "Bavarian Gentians" (960), now appearing in Appendix IV of The Complete Poems, because it represents the later composition, written immediately after "Bavarian Gentians" (697). Actually, since neither was crossed out the second version should be "the preferred one" if the procedures had been followed in this instance.

The notebook contains sixty-eight poems, including both versions of "Bavarian Gentians," and all are written in black ink. As Smailes notes the first poems can be dated approximately around October 4, 1929, when Lawrence moved to Villa Beau Soleil on the Mediterranean. He also

dates "All Souls Day" (721) and "After All Saints' Day" (723) in early November, 1929 because of their obvious composition around that holiday.<sup>16</sup> Both dates indicate this manuscript could not have progressed simultaneously with Ms. B.

The first score of poems are the most heavily revised in the notebook, although there is nothing to indicate that they were reworked at a date later than their composition. All revision is neatly done in the same hand and the same ink. After the first twenty poems there is little revision of any consequence in the manuscript. This is not to infer as Aldington does that the volume is composed of fair copies, originally composed elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> Almost all of these poems have alterations of a single word or two, apparently changed in the course of composition, but many exhibit a clarity of poetic intensity which requires no revision. The manuscript ends with what I believe to be Lawrence's last poem "Phoenix" (728) which he spent much of his life writing.

### III

Besides the textual details discussed which substantiate the need for a new edition of these two notebooks, substantial thematic evidence further supports the conten-

tion that Ms. B and Ms. A represent a single volume of poetry disrupted by the form in which it has been published. An examination of the poems which exist in various states of revision in the two manuscripts will show that the several versions of the poems under examination do not, as Aldington contends, represent various drafts of poems in Ms. B which are being simultaneously reworked in Ms. A. The growth from the early drafts of such duplicate poems as "Butterfly" in Ms. B to "Butterfly" in Ms. A will be shown to be not a synthesis of earlier drafts into a single later draft; instead, the Ms. A version of these poems which have prototypes in Ms. B will be shown to be entirely new poems written by a poet who has grown by the process of writing the intervening poetry. Aldington's contention of simultaneous notebooks will be shown to deny the synthesis and the constant poetic informing from which Lawrence creates.

One such poem which exists in two different versions is "Butterfly." Unfortunately, Aldington, as well as Pinto and Roberts, has chosen not to print the Ms. B version of the poem, which is now only available inaccurately in Smailes' volume. As previously stated, Smailes combines the two drafts of the poem into one poem when they must be seen as two separate poems divided after Smailes' ninth line. The two drafts lie side by side

in the manuscript and both are crossed out by Lawrence; however, unlike the other crossed-out poems which were printed in Nettles, these poems were not published by Lawrence, and apparently he crossed them out because he found them unsatisfactory. The poems occupy a crucial location, after "God is Born" (682) and before "The White Horse" (683), in that last section of the manuscript written in black ink. It is difficult to comprehend why such a poem, much more clearly written than "Glory of Darkness" (958-959), and not that different in form does not appear in an appendix and should remain unpublished until 1970. Aldington's reasoning for such an omission would depend upon the early drafts being seen as conflated into one poem in Ms. A and subsequently crossed out in Ms. B since it was not crossed out for publication in Pansies or Nettles. However, this is not the case. These two drafts were left as unsatisfactory, and the theme was later returned to in a second notebook and was invested with a new significance gained from the poetry written in the interim.

In the Ms. A version, the previous seventeen lines of poetry have been revised into fifteen full lines which are considerably difficult in subject matter:

Butterfly, the wind blows sea-ward, strong beyond  
the garden wall!  
Butterfly, why do you settle on my shoe, and sip  
the dirt on my shoe,

Lifting your veined wings, lifting them? big white  
 butterfly!  
 Already it is October, and the wind blows strong to  
 the sea  
 from the hills where snow must have fallen, the wind  
 is polished with snow.  
 Here in the garden, with red geraniums, it is warm,  
 it is warm  
 but the wind blows strong to sea-ward, white butterfly,  
 content on my shoe!

Will you go, will you go from my warm house?  
 Will you climb on your big soft wings, black-dotted,  
 as up an invisible rainbow, an arch  
 till the wind slides you sheer from the arch-crest  
 and in a strange level fluttering you go out to sea-  
 ward, white speck!

Farewell, farewell, lost soul!  
 you have melted in the crystalline distance,  
 it is enough! I saw you vanish into air.

(696)

Whereas the first two versions plainly describe the manifestation of God when a butterfly lands on Lawrence's shoe, the third version develops a more personal religious theme. As Smailes asserts, the later version develops the "correspondence between himself (Lawrence) and the butterfly, both in a state of precarious security."<sup>18</sup> It is obvious that the butterfly which is to "go from my warm house" and "vanish into air" at death is a symbol for Lawrence's soul. Smailes continues:

The invisible rainbow . . . is at best a delusion, for no myth can serve the departing soul which is blown out over the flood and vanishes, becoming one with the breath of life. The element of doubt survives the expression of hope.<sup>19</sup>

The point Smailes fails to make, probably because he too



sees the third version as a new revision, is that the introduction of this theme of doubt and the subsequent correspondence of the butterfly and soul is due to the fact that Lawrence had written the Ms. B draft of "The Ship of Death" (961) in the interim. "The Ship of Death" in Ms. B is responsible for this considerable growth in "Butterfly" because of its journey motif, its concern with the soul, and its element of doubt which pervades the penultimate stanza:

oh lovely last, last lapse of death, into pure  
oblivion  
at the end of the longest journey,  
peace, complete peace---!  
But can it be that also it can be procreation?

(964)

All of the intervening poetry, in particular the death poems, are responsible for the new concerns of the final version of "Butterfly." The Ms. A version of the poem is not a mere revision or conflation of the two Ms. B poems; it represents a return to a previous, unsatisfactorily rendered image and a creation of a new poem in Ms. A whose genesis is dependent upon those poems which appear in the manuscripts between the two versions.

Similarly, the various drafts of what becomes "Bavarian Gentians" (960) support a consecutive rather than simultaneous reading of the manuscripts. The initial concern with the gentians appears in the two poems under

the single title "Glory of Darkness" which follow "The White Horse" (683). Both versions are printed in Pinto and Roberts' Appendix III, pp. 958-959. It appears that the later pencil version was meant to be read as incorporating the first lines of the ink version and then replacing the remainder of it. Physical description predominates here, with only the barest hint of the journey motif in the ink version which is supplemented in the pencil version. However, neither have the power of evocation of the later two drafts in Ms. A. Both of these early versions are awkward, although as Smailes suggests, the pencil version succeeds in removing some of the ink version's ambiguity.

As with the final version of "Butterfly," the first and second version of "Bavarian Gentians" are such a decided improvement over "Glory of Darkness" because a journey "into pure oblivion" has been taken by the poet in the interim; that is, the Ms. B version of "The Ship of Death" (961) has been composed. The subsequent products, the two versions of "Bavarian Gentians," succeed because of Lawrence's conception of the journey motif has intensified since the composition "Glory of Darkness." The versions present in Ms. A are not the product of reworking the Ms. B drafts of "Glory of Darkness." To argue such would deny that the poems are products informed by the poetic con-

sciousness responsible for the early version of "The Ship of Death" and "Song of Death." They are not a synthesis of the meager and haphazard pencil and ink version of "Glory of Darkness;" rather, they are entirely new poems that re-emphasize the journey of the poet into oblivion.

Finally, although several other similar examples could be used to prove that the concluding poems of Ms. B and the body of poems in Ms. A are a continuous, single artistic unit, from the thematic evidence above as well as the previous textual evidence, it should be obvious that Aldington's contentions that the various drafts of poems represent the simultaneous reworking of the manuscripts can no longer be held as tenable.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ORGANIC CONNECTION

#### I

Of the many critics who concern themselves with D. H. Lawrence, few are willing to recognize the many theological themes present in much of his fiction and poetry. Ms. E192, contains the culmination of Lawrence's religious thought which is present in much of the writing of his later years. Moreover, within these poems there exists a quest, a continuous, many-faceted journey toward the expression of his own religious vision which is unparalleled in English poetry since the works of William Blake.

In his article "The Burning Bush: D. H. Lawrence as Religious Poet," Vivian de Sola Pinto asserts that Lawrence ranks as "the first great major writer powerfully gifted with the religious vision after the great Romantic poets."<sup>1</sup> de Sola Pinto focuses upon Lawrence's early novel The Rainbow as the birth of this quest as Anna rejects the spell of Christian tradition, represented by Lincoln Cathedral:

There was a great joy and verity in it. But even in the dazed swoon of the cathedral, she claimed another right. The alter was barren, its lights gone out. God no longer burned in that bush. It was dead matter lying there. She claimed the right to freedom above her, higher than the roof.<sup>2</sup>

As de Sola Pinto states, the remainder of the novel is "the story of Ursula's painful quest for a bush where God does burn, the quest of the modern spirit for deliverance from the terror of a meaningless universe."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the journey has begun by the close of The Rainbow and it continues to be a major consideration in all of Lawrence's work from that point on.

Nowhere else is his struggle to express his religious vision more evident than in the two holograph manuscripts previously discussed. Last Poems represents a single document whose principle purpose and overriding concern is the formulation of a personal religious vision. As de Sola Pinto writes of Lawrence, "at his death, he seemed to be on the point of producing for the first time in England since Blake and Wordsworth a poetry of religious vision on a grand scale, in which Romanticism would have come of age."<sup>4</sup> These two notebooks represent a single document which places Lawrence in the mainstream of the English tradition of religious poetry.

Many critics are willing to see in Ms. A, "Last

Poems," Lawrence's struggle with theological themes, and many are equally willing to confer upon Ms. A the distinction of religious poetry whose clarity of vision is accompanied by metrical smoothness and organic form. However, there is only an obligatory extension of this distinction to "some of his later 'pansies'." <sup>5</sup> Few if any of the poems comprising Ms. B are found to be of any lasting significance. Usually called poetry of nervous exasperation, the poems of Ms. B, printed as "More Pansies," are dismissed along with the late volume of poems, Nettles (1930), which was gleaned from Ms. B, in order to scrutinize "Last Poems" as a final, poignant expression of the dying artist. Aldington's pronouncement is clearly deprecatory.

It seems to me that nearly all these Pansies and Nettles came out of Lawrence's nerves, and not out of his real self. They are a long hammer, hammer, hammer of exasperation. Sometimes they are like the utterances of a little Whitman, but without Walt's calm sostenuto quality; and sometimes they are like a little Blake raving, but without the fiery vision. Yet it is always Lawrence speaking, even in the most disconcertingly trivial or spiteful, but to me at least very much the Lawrence of off days, the Lawrence one could most easily do without. I don't say this of all the Pansies, but of a good many, and certainly of all the Nettles. <sup>6</sup>

Aldington's other principle reference to "More Pansies" by name is only to say that within the section "the

irritability of the consumptive [is] breaking out all the time."<sup>7</sup> Following this remark he turns to "Last Poems" and its "soaring upwards" which he finds a relief from "More Pansies."<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, although sympathetic in her opinion of More Pansies, Sandra Gilbert concludes in her Acts of Attention: The Poems of D. H. Lawrence, that "More Pansies" is a disintegration of the "sonorous vers libre of Birds, Beasts and Flowers" into "journalistic doggerel":

"Cypresses," "Fish," "Snake," all have the substance and the aesthetic integrity of little essays. The "pansies," on the other hand, are consistently the shortest poems Lawrence ever wrote. On two sides of a typical page in More Pansies (Complete Poems, pp. 653-654), for instance, the editors have printed eleven brief poems which, if they had been carefully shaped, might have seemed like eleven splenetic haiku, but which, instead, could be more properly characterized as bits: bits of epigrammatic doggerel.<sup>9</sup>

Very little is said by Gilbert of "More Pansies" in the way of praise except where it contains a prefiguration of an Ms. A version of a poem, which further relegates "More Pansies" to a scratch pad of little or no significance.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, T. A. Smailes pauses to investigate the pansies as "competent poetic statements."<sup>11</sup> Moreover, he identifies an element within the two notebooks, Ms. B and Ms. A, which makes Ms. B particularly significant in

its relationship to Ms. A:

I feel that Aldington was mistaken in maintaining that the two books progressed simultaneously. If one accepts that they were written in sequence rather than in parallel the poems represent, in the face of imminent death, a steady progress from the relatively trivial to the sublime.<sup>12</sup>

The progression from "triviality" to sublimity which Smailes refers to is the principle element which gives these manuscripts their continuity, and the religious vision embodied in the meditative and incantory poems and prayers reaches a clarity and intensity in the last few pages of Ms. A. It is the progression of this religious vision which this chapter shall explore.

## II

Following Lawrence's religious quest through these poems is a difficult task, for it is not in any well-organized progression, but rather a sporadic flurry of concentration interrupted by poems of a socio-political orientation. The poems exploring his religious vision, usually found in groups of concentrated effort, are distinguishable because of their concern with dogmatic statement, usually without the aim of social reform or personal attack. Others lack any persona and revolve around



the "I" readily recognizable as Lawrence. The poems deal with gods, God, mysteries. Interrupting these at irregular intervals are the more caustic poems which won the notebook the title "More Pansies." Frequently, they are an attack, political or social, aimed at the reading public. Thus, any examination of Lawrence's religious poetry requires that one isolate and withdraw the poems from the context of the less concentrated, more public poetry.

As has been previously noted, many of the poems which begin Ms. B were removed from their context at a later date by Lawrence for publication as Pansies and Nettles. In doing so, he purged the manuscript of much of its satiric, public poetry, leaving behind poems overtly dealing with religious concerns. Amid the early, public-oriented poems of Ms. B, it is striking to find the series, "Image-Making Love," "People," and "Desire," which repeatedly expresses Lawrence's plea for solitude:

And now  
the best of all  
is to be alone, to possess one's soul in silence.

Nakedly to be alone, unseen  
is better than anything else in the world,  
a relief like death.<sup>13</sup>

("Image-Making Love")

The contents of these poems, their plea for solitude and withdrawal, runs contrary to the very nature of the "pansies"

and Nettles which are predominantly didactic and which presuppose an audience. These poems, I assert, are the beginning of an undercurrent of religious concentration and meditation and a subsequent, gradual withdrawal from his public stance. It is here that the withdrawal begins, an increasing abandonment of the public for the private, and with this internalization comes religious poetry written in probably Lawrence's freest lines. Early in "More Pansies" Lawrence expresses the personal necessity of withdrawal, perhaps a self-willed alienation from the social consciousness, and he subsequently begins creating poetry of a personal religious vision divorced from the anger and curtness of his Pansies.

The next series of religious poems, beginning with "The Hostile Sun" (608) and ending with "Free Will" (617), encompasses thirty consecutive entries, all of which exhibit the Whitmanic long line running from margin to margin with little revision present in the manuscripts. These are poems of Lawrence's last year, frequently calling for a knowledge of his Etruscan Places, Apocalypse and other late works. For example, "The Hostile Sun" relates to the dualism between the sun and moon explicitly established as early as Fantasia of the Unconscious and repeated in Apocalypse. "The Church" (609) speaks of

resurrection and the risen man, both subjects in such late works as "The Man Who Died" and "The Risen Man." Beginning with "The Protestant Churches" (609), a significant religious theme is explicitly introduced: "we have to go back to the Creative Godhead / which overshadows the other / and which we have lost." This "other" godhead, Christianity, is no longer an alternative for the twentieth century or the modern spirit. This begins the quest proper, the journey toward an "organic connection" with this "Creative Godhead" from which Lawrence feels Christianity has severed the Western world. This is probably the most significant and fundamental theme of the manuscripts and it is to be returned to frequently.

Also accentuated in this series is what Lawrence calls the "mystery of touch" or the "resurrection into touch." First explored in Etruscan Places, the "mystery of touch" carries almost mystic connotations similar to Whitman's "I merely stir, press, feel with my fingers, and am happy, / To touch my person to someone else's is about as much as I can stand."<sup>14</sup> This democracy of touch, of communication via the flesh adumbrates Lawrence's later reflections on the gods he sees in other persons around him, all part of the harmonious relationship with the cosmos which he envisions.

To poetically embody his conception of this organic connection between man and the cosmos, Lawrence employs the metaphor of a leaf's relationship to a tree. In the poems such as "The Mills of God" (614) and "Multitudes" (614), those individuals who have fallen out of the organic connection with the tree of life become grist for the mills of God. Furthermore, the fall from the organic into the mechanical connection introduces the principle of evil as the resultant state of such a dislocation. The process expressed in this series is directly stated in "Fatality" (617):

Death alone, through the long processes of disintegration  
can melt the detached life back  
through the dark Hades at the root of the tree  
into the circulating sap, once more, of the tree  
of life.

Here begins the cyclic process in which Lawrence is to participate and through which he must work poetically in these manuscripts. His is a quest for a reconnection with the tree of life and he travels it himself, drawing it into his consciousness by means of his poetry.

This series of poems (pp. 608-617) constitutes a major concentrated effort at expressing his religious vision, much more concentrated than most of Ms. A despite Gilbert's labelling this type of poem doggerel. Moreover, the series terminates with the decision Lawrence feels

faces humanity:

either to stay connected with the tree of life,  
     and submit  
 the human will to the flush of the vaster impulses  
     of the tree;  
 or else to sever the connection, to become self-  
     centered, self-willed, self-motivated  
 And subject, really, to the draught of every motor  
     car or the kicking tread of every passer-by.

("Free Will")

The alternatives are presented here as Lawrence strives consciously and artistically for such a reconnection as he assumes he too is fallen and must submit to death and the winds of change.

The series breaks off with Lawrence's trip to Spain in April 7, 1929 and he returns to the consciously-posed poems typical of Pansies and the early section of Ms. B.<sup>15</sup> However, in the midst of these more public-oriented poems appears a brief, three poem series, "En Masse," "God and the Holy Ghost," and "Humility," pp. 620-621, which explores a new conception of the Holy Ghost. He uses this conventional religious term to define "the deepest part of our own consciousness." For Lawrence, it is something that has been sinned against; it represents a responsibility which modern man has shirked, denying himself "salvation" and achieving non-entity. Moreover, it should be noted that the terminology here such as "Holy Ghost" is increasingly closer to that of religious orthodoxy, making

the comprehension of the personal religious meaning less exclusive, a trend which will continue.

This concern with the redefinition of the Holy Ghost is followed by a long section of poetry of anger. England and the English people become the target of one satiric poem after another as Lawrence attacks their submission to mechanization in nearly one dozen pages. What was previously expressed as merely the "mechanical connection" is now portrayed in specifics:

And now, the iron has entered into the soul  
and the machine has entangled the brain and got it  
fast,  
and steel has twisted the loins of man, and elec-  
tricity has exploded the heart  
and out of the lips of people jerk strange mechani-  
cal noises in place of steel.

("Dark Satanic Mills")

And:

When I am in a great city, I know what I despair.  
I know there is no hope for us, death waits, it is  
useless to care

For oh the people, that are of my flesh,  
I that am flesh of their flesh,  
When I see the iron hooked into their faces  
their poor, their fearful faces  
I scream in my soul, for I know I cannot  
take the iron hook out of their faces, that makes  
them so drawn.

("City Life")

As Gilbert writes concerning the subsequent change in voice from private to public in these poems, "the emotion

confessed is no longer a private feeling; here it becomes a public emotion, a Whitmanesque transcendence of the smaller self in favor of a larger, more social and emphatic self--a Self."<sup>16</sup> Central to much of this poetry of anger is "the extinction of the self-aware and self-limited private personality" along with a predominant concern with the specifics of the mechanical connection.<sup>17</sup>

This is not to say that other theological themes are dropped in this section of Ms. B; on the contrary, numerous poems draw the reader back to these concerns, such as "Belief" (622), "The Sight of God" (638), and "Men Like Gods" (640). However, very little of the previous sustained thought appears in these poems; little of the intensity and meditative calmness is present. Instead, the poems of this section tend toward painful exasperation as they attack the mechanical connection as the source of evil.

Similar to the earlier poems on the theme of aloneness and self-willed isolation, the poem "Lonely, Lonesome, Lonely - O!" (646) marks the reemergence of the undercurrent of confessional, didactic and meditative poetry which is to follow throughout the volume, connecting it directly with the second notebook. In this poem, Lawrence attacks the social organism for its grating intrusion into his existence. Moreover, isolation and alienation from the society that

surrounds him is the only means of maintaining psychic health:

Be alone and feel the trees silently growing  
 Be alone, and see the moonlight outside, white and  
     busy and silent.  
 Be quite alone, and feel the living cosmos softly  
     rocking soothing and restoring and healing.

("Lonely, Lonesome, Lonely - O!")

In the poems to follow, Lawrence slowly achieves, through withdrawal and isolation from the social context, a smoothness of form and an exclusively religious orientation.

Next, the series of poems from "Worship" (649) to "There Are No Gods" (651) is a variation of a theme, expressing Lawrence's wish for a hierarchial social arrangement at the apex of which is located those persons who "look into the eyes of the gods." Repeated in many of the poems of this section is the absolute reverence which should be extended to those who are in contact with these "gods." Epiphanies are recorded in several of the poems, such as "The Gods! The Gods!" (651) and "Name the Gods!" (651). The last poem of the series, "There Are No Gods" (651), asserts Lawrence's own membership in the priesthood of those who communicate with the gods:

I tell you, it is no woman, it is no man, for I am  
     alone  
 And I fall asleep with the gods, the gods  
 That are not and are  
 according to the soul's desire  
 like a pool into which we plunge, or do not plunge.



This prefigures much of the early poetry in Ms. A, such as "Maximus" (692), with its private, personal confession of an epiphany in which Lawrence feels he participates.

This sense of participation permeates much of the remainder of Ms. B, creating a strong thematic link to the epiphanies which begin Ms. A. The poems "Cabbage Roses" (655) and "Cold Blood" (655) state these epiphanies not only in terms of sight, but also in terms of smell and touch. The communication with the gods becomes a profoundly sensual experience, in touch at once with all of Lawrence's being. There is little ecstatic rejoicing here; instead, there is only the language of simple prose and calm solitude, much like the serenity of Ms. A.

Following the interceding politically-oriented poems, from "Portraits" (657) to "If You Are a Man" (666), appears "Terra Incognita" (666), another meditation on man's role in the cosmos, and the need for man to establish an "organic connection." With flowing free verse, Lawrence urges an awareness of the living cosmos and the potential within man once he is free of the mechanical connection:

When at last we escape the barbed-wire enclosure  
of Know Thyself, knowing we can never know,  
we can but touch, and wonder, and ponder, and make  
our effort  
and dangle in a last fastidious fire delight  
as the fuchsia does, dangling her reckless drop  
of purple after so much putting forth  
and slow mounting marvel of a little tree.

("Terra Incognita")

In the next poem "Climbing Down" (667), Lawrence urges an escape from the mechanical to the organic:

Become aware as leaves are aware  
 and fine as flowers are fine  
 and fierce as fire is fierce  
 and subtle, silvery, tinkling, and rippling  
 as rain-water  
 and still be a man,  
 but a man reborn from the rigidity of fixed ideas  
 resurrected from the death of mechanical motion and  
 emotion.

The declarative nature of these poems, their plea for an abandonment of the present mechanical connection for a new relationship to the living cosmos is present in much of the poetry in the remainder of this manuscript.

After several interrupting attacks on the British public, Lawrence returns to the theme of gods manifesting in the flesh of those persons, who by their natural actions and spontaneity, are god-like. Also, poems such as "All Sorts of Gods" (671), "For a Moment" (672), and "Conceit" (674) alter the previous sense of god-to-man communication present in a hierarchial arrangement which places God above, removed from the human plane. Now, the gods are seen as ever-present in the flesh and in the life about man:

The gods are all things, and so are we  
 The gods are only ourselves, as we are in our  
 moments of pure manifestation.

(["The Gods"])

And:

When your flame flickers up, and you flicker forth in  
 sheer purity  
 for a moment pure from all conceit of yourself, and  
 all afterthought  
 you are for that moment one of the gods, Jesus or  
 Fafair or Priapus or Siva.

("Be It So")

By this point in the manuscript, Lawrence's religious vision has progressed from an almost orthodox, hierarchial arrangement where man looks into the eyes of the gods with reverence to a Romantic assertion that man is, or has the capacity to be god in his "moments of pure manifestation" when, as Gilbert asserts, he paradoxically relinquishes his individual identity in order to become fully himself, a god.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, much of the significant embodiment of Lawrence's religious vision appears in the last few pages of Ms. B. One of the last twenty poems, "So Let Me Live," (676) introduces the theme of "Ars Moriendi--the art of dying."<sup>19</sup>

So let me live that I may die  
 eagerly passing over from the entanglement of life  
 to the adventure of death, in eagerness  
 turning to death, as I turn to beauty  
 to the breath, that is, of new beauty unfolding in  
 death.

This poem and its companion piece, "Gladness of Death" (676), initiate the poet's meditations on death, a theme of increasing importance in the remainder of Ms. B and much

of Ms. A because of Lawrence's attempt "to absorb the fact of death into the mode of consciousness."<sup>20</sup> The eager willingness of the adventurer is excitingly poignant and the immediacy of his own death brings this theme into poetic expression in several other poems at the close of this notebook. The two versions of "Butterfly" which will later become a meditation on the fate of his soul, the two drafts of what will become "Bavarian Gentians" (960), and the version of "The Ship of Death" (961) and "Song of Death" (965) which appear in this Ms. all reinforce what Smailes terms the increasing preoccupation with the art of dying.<sup>21</sup> Although Aldington uses the early drafts of these poems to argue for the simultaneous origins of the manuscripts, it is clear that Lawrence returned with increasing frequency to the theme of death, reworking these poems at a later date, improving and developing them by drawing upon the intervening poetry and the ideas therein expressed.

Also, at the close of the manuscript, amid the poems of death, appear two poems which are important because they are direct links to the beginning of Ms. A. In the poems "Let There Be Light" (681) and "God is Born" (682), Lawrence insists upon becoming, the coming into materiality as being the birth of God. The conclusion is simply

stated in "God Is Born":

And so we see, God is not  
until he is born  
and also we see  
there is no end to the birth of God.

and in "Let There Be Light":

All we can honestly imagine in the beginning  
is the incomprehensible plasm of life of creation  
struggling  
and becoming light.

This theme of becoming, first pointed out by Aldington in his "Introduction" to "Last Poems" and "More Pansies," is investigated repeatedly in Ms. A.<sup>22</sup> The previous movement from reverence of the gods to the body of man being god has now progressed to the point that God is dependent upon materiality for existence. This progression is to be of immediate concern early in Ms. A.

The manuscript is brought to a confusing close following "God Is Born" (682). First appear the two versions of "Butterfly" written side by side in the manuscript. The left hand draft of the poem concerns itself with the birth of God in the actions of the butterfly:

When I see its veined wings lifted  
As it sips at the dirt on my shoe  
My soul says at once:  
God is born!

("Butterfly")

as does the crossed-out draft of "The White Horse."

The youth walks up to the white horse, to put its  
 halter on  
 and something in the still, sure pride of the lade  
 makes me say  
 God is born!<sup>23</sup>

Next appear the two haphazard drafts of "Glory of Darkness" (958), originally titled "State of Grace," which have been previously discussed. The manuscript closes with "Flowers and Men" (683), a reiteration of the gentian theme, followed by the first version of "The Ship of Death" (961), now relegated to Appendix III of The Complete Poems. Next is "Song of Death" (965), also in Appendix III, followed by "Prayer" (684), a poem whose imagery is to reappear in the second poem of Ms. A, another thematic link unifying the two manuscripts. Since the themes of many of these poems are returned to and reworked by the time they reappear in Ms. A, their relationship to Lawrence's religious vision will be dealt with in the discussion of their counterpart in Ms. A.

### III

The poems which comprise Ms. A were probably begun in late September or early October, 1929, "during the very early part of his stay at Villa Beau Soleil" on the Mediterranean.<sup>24</sup> The notebook tends to fall into patterns

or series in much the same manner as Ms. B; however, Ms. A lacks the many public-oriented poems which fragment the religious intensity of Ms. B. The poems in each of these series all revolve around a central idea, frequently as variations on a theme. Moreover, the focus of each series is invariably a religious theme, similar to those in Ms. B, but which undergo considerable development, and in the process, achieve a new clarity of expression.

The first four poems constitute one such series. These poems, "The Greeks Are Coming" (687), "The Argonauts" (687), "Middle of the World" (688), and "For the Heroes are Dipped in Scarlet" (688), all revolve around the Greek mythos. The juxtaposition of the pre-Christian Greek world with the present occurs throughout the poems, glorifying the pre-Socratic Greeks in much the same way, and for much the same reasons, as the Etruscans. Dionysus, Odysseus and the Old Testament Samson become heroes by their ability to live naturally and act with "the glowing as of god."<sup>25</sup>

The poems beginning with "Demiurge" (689), and ending with "Whales Weep Not" (692) comprise an important series of meditations upon the nature of God and his incarnation, a theme dealt with late in the Ms. B poem, "God is Born" (682). As Gilbert asserts, these are the most openly didactic and metaphysical of Lawrence's later poems, and

their lack of heavy manuscript revision is a product of this didactic aim.<sup>26</sup> Almost entirely prose, the poems rework the earlier abstractness of "God is Born" into a frequently comic but always concrete expression of Lawrence's belief that God is the principle of natural beauty which has come to pass in materiality:

There is no god  
 apart from poppies and flying fish  
 and men singing songs and women brushing their hair  
                   in the sun.  
 The lovely things are god that has come to pass, like  
                   Jesus came.

("The Body of God")

The comedy of "Red Geranium and Godly Mignonette" (690) and the plainness of "Bodiless God" (691) both insist upon a redefinition of God. In these poems, God becomes the "urge to incarnation," the "great Creative urge," as well as the "lovely things" which have come to pass, revealing the presence of God in them. As Gilbert expresses this dual identity, God becomes "the incarnation and the urge to incarnation, the product and the process."<sup>27</sup>

Even the sensuousness of "The Man of Tyre" (692) and "Whales Weep Not" (694) reflects Lawrence's ubiquitous religious concentration throughout this manuscript. The beauty of the woman in "The Man of Tyre," like the flying fish and poppies of "Demiurge," is accentuated for its



mystic revelation of God coming into flesh. By the close of the poem, she is Aphrodite, a manifestation of the sacred in its urge to incarnation. Similarly, "Maximus" (692) is another such manifestation. While the poem described a translation of a man of the present into a god, the accent is upon the awareness of a god who is physically present, in the flesh.

Next in the manuscript is a series of poems all of which have their genesis in earlier drafts in Ms. B. As a general observation, the content and form of these poems have been vastly improved and their theological implications have been greatly enlarged. First, "Invocation to the Moon" (695) seems to be a reworking of "Prayer" (684), if indeed it could be called such in the face of its extensive improvement. It remains a prayer, though, addressing the moon for acceptance and psychic health:

Lady, lady of the last house, down the long, long  
street of the stars  
be good to me now, as I beg you, as you've always  
been good to men who begged of you and gave  
you homage  
and watched for your glistening feet down the garden  
path.

("Invocation to the Moon")

As Gilbert asserts, this poem represents "the first real prayer in this collection of sermons" and Lawrence "did not abandon his quest for God, but he did focus on an

aspect of God - the spiritual, and the insubstantial - which he had not clearly defined."<sup>28</sup> In this prayer the moon appears as the principle of spiritual consciousness to which Lawrence must attempt to make some manner of reconciliation.

Next, the final draft of "Butterfly" (696) makes the direct connection between the butterfly and the soul which was not implied in the earlier drafts:

Will you go, will you go from my warm house?  
Will you climb on your big soft wings, black-dotted  
as up an invisible rainbow, an arch  
till the wind slides you sheer from the arch crest  
and in a strange level fluttering you go out to sea,  
white speck!

The movement is no longer the upward yearning of "Invocation to the Moon;" instead the poem describes merely a going "out to sea-ward" and to death which is directly dealt with in the next two poems, "Bavarian Gentians" (the version on p. 697 and the final draft on p. 960 follow directly after "Butterfly" in the manuscript). As Gilbert points out, these drafts of the poem, reworked considerably since "Glory of Darkness" (958), are overtly concerned with death:

Its reference to Pluto, rather than its use of "blue darkness" makes "Bavarian Gentians" most clearly a poem about death. Indeed, while both "Invocation" and "Butterfly" dealt indirectly with death, "Bavarian Gentians" is the first poem in the

series, even the first poem in the volume, to deal with it overtly . . . he is plainly enacting a ritual of entrance into that final realm of what Ursula, in Women in Love, calls "pure inhuman otherness."<sup>29</sup>

Although Lawrence has dealt with the theme of death earlier in the first draft of "The Ship of Death" (961), her point is well taken. This new dimension in Lawrence's poetry, this ritual of entrance and its focus on death will permeate much of the remainder of the manuscript.

Following "Lucifer" (697), a reworked version of the poem by the same title in Ms. B, a new series begins with "The Breath of Life" (698). The title suggests the earlier series in Ms. B concerned with the organic and mechanical connections and the corresponding breath of life and winds of change. However, a new element has been added, the element of death: "The breath of life is in the sharp winds of change / mingled with the breath of destruction."<sup>30</sup> This element of destruction and implied death is important because it influences other poems of this series, poems which in their prosy, sermon-like language discuss man's fall. However, it is no longer merely a fall from the organic to the mechanical; it has become a fall from any means of attaining the sacred. It becomes a fall from the hands of God along with the fear of the state of estrangement from "the

living God." Omitting the enigmatic "Silence" (698), the poems "The Hands of God" (699), "Pax" (700), "Abyssmal Immortality" (700), and "Only Man" (701) deal with the fall from the god-head into nullity and extinction. These poems, taken together, read as one poem, a single meditation on the nature of man's precarious relationship to the sacred.

Several of these poems are concerned with the cause and the result of such a fall. In each case, the fall is caused by knowledge, and paradoxically it is a fall into knowledge. First, it is possible to separate oneself by knowledge:

And still through knowledge and will, he can break  
                   away,  
 man can break away, and fall from the hands of God  
 into himself alone, down the Godless plunge of the  
                   abyss  
 a god-lost creature turning upon himself

("Abyssmal Immortality")

but the result is a new awareness:

That awful and sickening endless sinking, sinking  
 through the slow, corruptive levels of disintegra-  
                   tive knowledge  
 when the self has fallen from the hands of God,  
 and sinks, seething and sinking, corrupt  
 and sinking still, in depth after depth of disin-  
                   tegrative consciousness  
 sinking in the endless undoing, the awful katabolism  
                   into the abyss.

("The Hands of God")

This note of disintegration is important, for it foreshadows much of the poetry of "katabolism" which culminates in "The Ship of Death" (716). In many respects, the poems embrace the horrors of disjunction from the god-head, and the exhaustive, extinguishing horror of the fall into the bottomless abyss of the self here portrayed as a new, almost surrealistic expression of what had previously been a mere falling of leaves from a tree. The immediacy of death seems to have forced Lawrence into a search for such vivid, surrealistic details with which to reinforce the emotion behind this loss.

Following "Only Man" (701), there appears a marked change in the content of the poetry. The fourteen poems beginning with "Return of Returns" (702) and concluding with "When Satan Fell" (710) are the most impenetrable of the manuscript, poems whose religious meanings are private at best, and which require an awareness of outside sources responsible for their genesis. The understanding of many of these poems is dependent upon knowledge of Lawrence's Apocalypse and the works he read in preparation for that volume, such as Burnet's Early Greek Philosophers and Murray's Five Stages of Greek Religion.<sup>31</sup> For example, the influence of Herakleitos is explicitly visible in

"Kissing and Horrid Strife" (709); the influence of Empedocles is present in "Salt" (705), "The Four" (706) and "The Boundary Stone" (706); Apocalypse informs such poems as "Return of Returns" (702) and "Walk Warily" (707).<sup>32</sup> Although these poems are directly informed by specific external materials, they lack much of the clarity of previous poems and rely on private symbolism which is not made explicit in the poetry.

The next discernible series in the manuscript focuses on the nature of evil, and as should be expected, mechanism is evil. The first poem of this group, "Doors" (710), which was originally titled "What is Evil" in the manuscript, focuses immediately on evil as "a third thing" which Lawrence feels he has overlooked between heaven and hell. In the next poem, he uses the most vivid images in the manuscript to characterize evil:

But evil  
 evil has no dwelling-place  
 the grey vulture, the grey hyena, corpse-eaters  
 they dwell in the outskirt fringes of nowhere  
 Where the grey twilight of evil sets in.

Evil is finally negation of life, non-entity:

and men that sit in machines  
 among spinning wheels, in apotheosis of wheels  
 sit in the grey mist of movement which moves not  
 and going which goes not  
 and doing which does not  
 and being which is not

("Evil is Homeless")

The language in these poems, the concreteness and vividness of the poetic message is striking when compared to the poems of Ms. B dealing with the same problem of evil. In Ms. B, the poems which deal with evil are overtly political, attacking the British public, the bourgeois, or the bolshevists. However, in Ms. A, there is a new depth of religious concentration, and subsequently a more concentrated focus upon evil without a nationality, evil as an abstraction dealt with in concrete yet universal terms.

The "principle of evil" becomes the focus in Ms. A and the politics of Ms. B are eschewed for a final statement about evil. The idea of mechanism as evil is left behind as Lawrence moves to the ego as that which parthenogenetically give birth to evil:

When the mind makes a wheel which turns on the hub  
     of the ego  
 and the wheel, the living dynamo, gives the motion  
     and the speed  
 and the wheel of the conscious self spins on in  
     absolution, absolute  
 absolute, absolved from the sun and the earth and  
     the moon  
 absolute self-awareness, absolved from the meddling  
     of creation  
 absolute freedom, absolved from the great necessities  
     of being  
 then we will see evil, pure evil.

("What Then is Evil?")

and

and everyman who has become a detached and self-  
 activated ego  
 is evil, evil, part of the evil world-soul  
 which wishes to blaspheme the world into greyness,  
 into evil neutrality, into mechanism

("Evil World-Soul")

Finally in the most desparate and didactic moments in the  
 manuscript, Lawrence attacks any form of abstraction from  
 life as the principle of evil:

All forms of abstraction are evil  
 finance is a great evil abstraction  
 science has now become an evil abstraction  
 education is an evil abstraction.

Jazz and film and wireless  
 are all evil abstractions from life.

And politics, now, are an evil abstraction from  
 life.

Evil is upon us and has got hold of us.  
 Men must depart from it, or all is lost.  
 We must depart from it, or all is lost.  
 We must make an isle impregnable  
 against evil.

Although his plea for help went unheard, these poems succeed  
 in their breathless, exasperated communication of his  
 hatred for the evil which Lawrence found surrounding him.  
 Abstraction, then, and not merely mechanization, becomes  
 that which precludes the establishment of any organic  
 connection between man and the cosmos.



It is appropriate that the last of the poems on evil, "Departure" (715), should be followed by "The Ship of Death" (716), whose opening lines embody the journey motif, the leaving off of one mode of existence and the beginning of another. Along with "Bavarian Gentians" (960), this is probably the best known of Lawrence's death poems and as such has attracted extensive criticism, which tends to destroy what Smailes terms "its frailty, its delicate, tentative interpretation of the unknown in terms of the known."<sup>33</sup> The transformation of the Ms. B version to the Ms. A version is important because several significant alterations take place.

First, the Ms. B version is less exclusive in its focus; that is, it explores not only Lawrence's individual soul-journey, but also the fate of the souls which cannot take the journey "towards the great goal of oblivion":

Pity, oh pity the poor dead that are only ousted  
                     from life  
 and crowd there on the grey mud beaches of the  
                     margins,  
 gaunt and horrible  
 waiting and waiting till at last the ancient boatman  
                     with the common barge  
 shall take them abroad, towards the great goal of  
                     oblivion.

("Ms. B version")

However, this concern with the journey of others is consistent with the whole of Ms. B which is much more public-

oriented than Ms. A. The Ms. B version stands as a didactic warning, like "Departure," to those who have sacrificed themselves to the mechanical connection. There is less of this concern for the souls of others in the final version. As Smailes observes, Lawrence devotes the Ms. A version fully to "the adventure of the soul, singular,"<sup>34</sup> and concerns himself with the souls of the unfortunate in "All Soul's Day" (721), "The Houseless Dead" (722), and "Beware the Unhappy Dead" (722), which follow "The Ship of Death" in Ms. A.

It is not until the sixteenth stanza of the Ms. B version that the poem begins to focus upon the individual soul and the actual ship of death. However, much of the poem is given over to an almost allegorical depiction of the hazardous journey:

Over the sea, over the farthest sea,  
on the longest journey,  
past the jutting rocks of shadow,  
past the lurking octopus arms of agonized memory,  
past the strange whirlpools of remembered greed,  
through the dead weed of a life-time's falsity,  
slow, slow my soul, in its little ship  
on the most soundless of all seas  
taking the longest journey.

("Ms. B version")

The poem loses much of its uniqueness and vitality by this mechanical employment of a Whitmanesque catalogue, and Lawrence frees the final version from much of this.

Besides the new narrowness of focus upon the individual soul, the Ms. A version has a significantly different conclusion. The earlier version has a very tentative hope for the possibility of rebirth from the oblivion of death:

oh lovely last, last lapse of death into pure  
 oblivion  
 at the end of the longest journey,  
 peace, complete peace --!  
 But can it be that also it is procreation?

("Ms. B version")

The question is left unanswered; the association of the darkness of death with the womb of rebirth is abandoned until the Ms. A version:

Ah, wait, wait, for there's the dawn,  
 the cruel dawn of coming back to life  
 out of oblivion.

Wait, wait, the little ship  
 drifting, beneath the deathly ashy grey  
 of a Flood-dawn.

Wait, wait! even so, a flush of yellow  
 and strangely, O chilled wan soul, a flush of  
 rose.

A flush of rose, and the whole thing starts again.

("Ms. A version")

As Smailes points out this faith in his own renewal lacks much of the bravado of "Bavarian Gentian" and when "confronted with dissolution Lawrence is quiet and apprehensive enough to make faith and courage meaningful."<sup>35</sup>

The significance of the addition of this dawn of rebirth

to the Ms. A version cannot be underestimated. The calm assurance of his own renewal flows through the remaining poems. The poems from "Difficult Death" (720) to "Phoenix" (728) all focus on much the same concerns as both versions of "The Ship of Death", in particular the fate of the "houseless dead" who cannot take the journey to oblivion. The journey motif and concern with the goal of oblivion predominates in this section to such a degree as to become obsessive. Finally, Lawrence's last poem, "Phoenix" (728), adapts the appropriate symbol for such a process:

The phoenix renews her youth  
only when she is burnt alive, burnt down  
to hot and flocculent ash.  
Then the small stirrings of a new small bub in the  
nest  
with strands of down like floating ash  
shows that she is renewing her youth like the eagle  
immortal bird.

The discovery of his own immortality ends the quest for expression of his religious vision in assurance and serenity.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE ETRUSCAN CONNECTION

#### I

It is difficult to gauge the complex influences that the Etruscan civilization had on D. H. Lawrence's later poetry. In his walking trips with the American painter, Earl Brewster, in 1927, beneath the hills of northcentral Italy into the empty tombs of the Etruscans, Lawrence found a remnant of a culture, a mode of existence completely separate from the modern European world yet very close to his own religious vision. The principle theme running throughout the essays which posthumously became Etruscan Places is the religious dimension represented in the Etruscan mode of existence, and he never wanders far from the religious implications of all he sees, even though he is, after all, writing a travel book. Within the framework of this travel book lies a submerged document, a statement of Lawrence's own religious vision given material support; the book exists as another expression of his own religious quest gone underground into the tombs of Etruria

in search of a means to translate his religious vision.

It is unfortunate that such a religious document is published as a travel book, for as such it is not accorded the same critical attention as his novels and poetry. In fact, Etruscan Places is too often ignored, despite its being central to any comprehensive study of the poetry written after Lawrence's walking trips in March--April, 1972. The four sketches compiled as Etruscan Places possess an explicit relationship to the two manuscripts of poetry previously examined, all three emerging from the same theological concerns. Moreover, Lawrence's journey into these Etruscan tombs can be seen as the culmination of an around-the-world pilgrimage by a dying man in search of a mode of existence present in the physical world sometime in pre-history. As Hassall asserts, the quest nears its end in Etruscan Places as Lawrence excavates his religious vision from beneath centuries of history:

In his travels over the globe (and in March, 1927 he had just got back from Mexico) he had, as I have said, searched in vain for a community which was still managing to remain immune from the evils of industrial civilization. He never found it on the face of the earth, flourishing in the present day. Instead, he discovered it in the remote past no more than hinted at in the tombs of Etruria, but it was enough. There were the unmistakable clues. Among the fragmentary relics of death, he found the wholeness of life he had

been seeking--"the natural flowering of life" was his phrase--and by exercise of his sympathetic imagination he lifted it into the present in the descriptive pages of his book. Etruscan Places is the record of a spiritual act of excavation. Among the treasures he exhumed there was something of his own essential being.<sup>1</sup>

Both Etruscan Places and Ms. A and Ms. B are steeped in this awareness of a lost capacity in man which Lawrence feels existed prior to any Roman or Christian culture. Lawrence's quest is the excavation of this lost sense of being, an attempt to establish both in poetry and prose the dimensions of this vital religion which died with the Etruscan civilization.

Vivian de Sola Pinto, in his "The Burning Bush: D. H. Lawrence as Religious Poet," (1967) also asserts the undeniable influence exerted by the Etruscan experience on the genesis of the poems from Pansies to the posthumously published manuscripts:

There is certainly a close connection between the story ("The Escaped Cock"), the essays which grew out of his visit to Etruria, and the Last Poems. They may be said to be all parts of the dying Lawrence's great, final apocalypse or vision of death and resurrection. . . . His exploration of the tombs was no mere piece of archeological sight seeing, but a sort of ritual act of initiation into the experience of a death which is also a resurrection into a world of wonder and beauty.<sup>2</sup>

A spiritual act of excavation, a sort of ritual act of initiation. The description of Etruscan Places in such

religious terminology is unavoidable. Also, de Sola Pinto points out that one is not compelled to believe Lawrence's view of the Etruscans. It can be argued that so little is known of the Etruscans that any conclusion is merely a supposition. Moreover, Lawrence, a writer of fiction, can be easily disqualified in some circles as a reliable guide. However, de Sola Pinto recognizes the scientific unreliability of Lawrence's view of the Etruscans, but argues there is no doubt that it provided him with a myth of deep religious significance.<sup>3</sup>

More importantly, de Sola Pinto asserts that while Etruscan Places is a travel book, it contains eruptions of prose-poetry similar to the free verse poems contained in the posthumous manuscripts:

The essays from which the passage is quoted, published after his death, under the title Etruscan Places, have the form of a travel book, but everywhere they break into a poetry full of the vision of a free and happy life, the opposite of the robot existence of modern industrial society. . . . The poetry which always seems to be bursting through the mold of these prose works finds its purest expression in the poems which Lawrence was writing in the last months of his life.<sup>4</sup>

While justifiably more concerned with the poems, Pinto recognizes the transition this travel book represents between the novels and the poems as a vehicle for Lawrence's religious vision.<sup>5</sup> This chapter shall examine



the interrelationship between the Etruscan Places essays and the posthumous manuscripts, focusing on the genesis of the religious ideas later expressed in the poems.

Furthermore, I shall suggest a means of unifying these two volumes, one a travel-book and the other a book of poems, by a new redefinition of Lawrence's intention in the poetry written after the Etruscan experience. Further examination of Etruscan Places and the theosophy therein makes clear that Lawrence saw himself and his role as poet very differently after emerging from the tombs of Etruria. Specifically, he emerged as the "Lucomo," the religious prince. He feels he alone has excavated the religious secrets of the old physical world which he is to present later in his poetry, poetry which frequently is no longer vitiated with sarcasm, but which is didactic and explicitly religious in its orientation. The significant religious poetry stems not from any fear of his own approaching death; instead, after this experience in Etruria in 1927, he emerged with a new purpose only briefly hinted at in Etruscan Places, but which can be substantiated by the previous examination of the poems of Ms. B and Ms. A.

## II

The initial religious theme to be examined in Etruscan Places is the interconnected ideas of the incarnation of God and the presence of God in man. Present in Ms. B as early as "The Gods! The Gods!" (651), this theme ranges the entire length of Etruscan Places and is the locus for the vitality of the Etruscan religion as Lawrence perceives it. The first hint of the nature of the religious archeology appears early in the first chapter "Cerveterei," when Lawrence confronts a shepherd and the present is invaded by a manifestation of the sacred:

Into the cavern swaggers a spurred shepherd wearing goat-skin trousers with the long rusty brown goat's hair hanging shaggy from his legs. He grins and drinks wine, and immediately one sees again the shaggy-legged faun. His face is a faun-face, not deadened by morals. . . . Probably when I go south again he will have disappeared. They cannot survive, the faun-faced men, with their pure outlines and their strange non-moral calm. Only the de-flowered faces survive.

As with the poems on the same theme from "Name the Gods" (651) in Ms. B to "Maximus" in Ms. A, the mutability of time and space is important here as the present is transmuted and the shepherd is a faun. No simile is employed. Lawrence perceives a presence, a representative

of a past from which man has been severed. Moreover, as in the poems, the focus is on the physical body, the part-animal quality of the shepard which becomes directly linked to the religious vitality of the Etruscans. Also pertinent is the "non-moral calm," consciousness which is not steeped in spiritual concerns. Rather than moral or spiritual qualities, Lawrence focuses on the calm physical consciousness.

This calm bears considerable importance for Lawrence because a certain serenity is one of the principle qualities he notes in and around the tombs:

There is a stillness and a softness in these great grassy mounds with their ancient stone girdles, and down the central walk there lingers still a kind of loneliness and happiness. True, it is a still and sunny afternoon in April, and larks rose from the soft grass of the tombs. But there was a stillness and a soothingness in all the air, in that sunken place, and a feeling that it was good for one's soul to be there.<sup>7</sup>

which is associated with death:

And death, to the Etruscan, was a pleasant continuance of life, with jewels and wine and flutes playing a dance. It was neither an ecstasy of bliss, a heaven, nor a purgatory of torment. It was just a natural continuance of the fullness of life. Everything was in terms of life, of living.<sup>8</sup>

Lawrence's feelings that "it was good for one's soul to be there" in a tomb may seem somewhat incongruous. However, such a feeling is continuous with the Etruscan's

vital approach to both life and death. As George Panichas asserts in his "Voyage to Oblivion: The Meaning of D. H. Lawrence's Death Poems" (1961), Lawrence saw in the Etruscan view of death "what he failed to see in the traditional and established religious faiths. It was the depiction of death as a further sojourn in the 'living continuum' that primarily attracted him."<sup>9</sup> Also, Panichas feels that the result of such an attraction to the Etruscan view of death can be seen overtly in the death poems of Ms. A and Ms. B:

The Etruscan concept of death as a journey and sojourn in the after-life so impressed Lawrence that in "The Ship of Death" (the Ms. A version) he was to think of death almost exactly in these terms. The actual Etruscan death-scene, which is repeated and even becomes the central motif in the poem, is clearly described by Lawrence in his essay "Cerveteri."<sup>10</sup>

However, Lawrence's conclusion about the Etruscan approach to death should seem too neat a summing up of the enigmatic Etruscans, had not Lawrence continued on his quest to unearth the support for such a conclusion: the whole of the Etruscan religion including its symbols, its God, its cosmos and man's relationship to it.

The examination of the life and death polarity begins early in the volume to support such a view of the Etruscan religion. Indeed, the relationship of life and death is

as pervasive and as inescapable as the landscape:

Lying thus opposite to Targuina's long hill, a companion across a suave little swing of valley, one feels at once that, if this is the hill, where the living Tarquinians had their gay wooden houses, then that is the hill where the dead lie buried and quick, as seeds, in their painted houses underground. The two hills are as inseparable as life and death, even now, on the sunny green-filled April morning with the breeze blowing in from the sea. And the land beyond seems as mysterious and fresh as if it were still the morning of Time.<sup>11</sup>

The two hills become the poles between which Lawrence is to find some resolution drawn from the clues of a now-extinct culture. The exhilaration and the sense of transportation back to the dawn of time express his almost overdramatic attempt to convey the eternality of the problem rather than describing the quaintness of the scenery for a travel book.

What most impresses Lawrence, however, is the ubiquity of the phallic symbol on and around the necropolis:

Here it is in stone, unmistakable, and everywhere, around these tombs. Here it is big and little, standing by the doors, or inserted, quite small into the rock: the phallic stone. . . . B. puts the phallic stone back into the socket, where it was placed, probably five or six hundred years before Christ was born.<sup>12</sup>

Ignored by scholarship, the Etruscan employment of the phallic symbol unites with the arx, a womb-symbol, "in which lies the mystery of eternal life, the mana and the

mysteries," which is equally displayed in and around the tombs of Cerveteri.<sup>13</sup> The hills become symbols of death as life; they become "the great mounds of fruition for the dead with the tall phallic cone rising from the summit."<sup>14</sup>

The two symbols become for Lawrence the core of the Etruscan consciousness as well as the dominant symbols of the "old physical world" whose religious impulses gravitate to the worship of such procreative forces. He concludes that the aborigines of southern Etruria participated in "some vast old religion of the prehistoric world:"

From the shadow of the prehistoric world emerge dying religions that have not yet invented gods and goddesses, but live by the mystery of the elemental powers in the Universe, the complex vitalities of what we feebly call Nature. And the Etruscan religion was certainly one of these. The gods and goddesses don't seem to have emerged in any sharp definiteness.<sup>15</sup>

Here as elsewhere, he rejects any tendency to anthropomorphism in the Etruscan religion; personal gods are a decay-ing of an older cosmic religion.

The Etruscan religion, surely, was never anthropomorphic: that is, whatever gods it contained were not beings, but symbols of elemental powers, just symbols: as was the case earlier in Egypt. The individual Godhead, if we can call it such was symbolized by the mundum, the plasm-cell with its nucleus: that which is the very beginning.<sup>16</sup>

From the previous focus upon the phallus-womb symbolism,

Lawrence moves to a broader focus on the awkwardly termed Nature, the mystery of the elemental powers. Next, he attempts to elucidate that which is at the center of these elemental powers which the Etruscans worshipped. He finds such in the paetra:

It stands for the plasm, also, of the living cell, with its nucleus, which is the indivisible God of the beginning, and which remains alive and unbroken to the end, the eternal quick of all things, which yet divides and subdivides, so that it becomes the sun of the firmament and the lotus of the water under the earth and the rose of all existence upon the earth. . . . so within each man is the quick of him, when he is a baby, and when he is old, the same quick; some spark some unborn and undying vivid life-electron. And this is what is symbolized in the paetra, which may be made to flower like a rose or like the sun, but which remains the same, the germ central within the living plasm.

And this paetra, this symbol is almost invariably found in the hand of a dead man.<sup>17</sup>

What is essential here is the godhead established. While previously denying any anthropomorphism, Lawrence still chooses to use the term God and the characteristics are crucial.

First, this godhead is "indivisible God of the beginning, and which remains alive and unbroken in the end;" God is that from which creation begins and to which material returns. It is ubiquitous in coporeal existence, leaving the reservoir, becoming body and returning. The

similarity with the process described in the poems "God is Born" (682), "Demiurge" (689) and the "Body of God" (691), as well as the epiphanies of the early drafts of "Butterfly" and "The White Horse" should by now be familiar. Moreover, the process is explicitly employed in "Let There be Light!" (681):

All we can honestly imagine in the beginning  
is the incomprehensible plasm of life, of creation  
struggling  
and becoming light

However, the only gesture Lawrence makes toward any further definition is "the quick" or "a spark." While remaining undefinable, the paetra is found in the dead man's hand, linking the knowledge of death with the life force. As in the death poetry to follow, death becomes not merely a continuance of life as previously stated; it becomes a direct doorway to the exploration of the sacred.

The body, then, becomes a manifestation of the sacred, the "god that has come to pass" of "The Body of God" (691). With this acceptance of life comes the acceptance of materiality as an extension of the godhead. The creative force becoming material throughout much of Ms. A is for Lawrence the incarnation of the sacred "spark of life:"

God is the great urge that has not yet found a  
body  
but urges towards incarnation with the great creative  
urge.



And becomes at last a clove carnation: lo! that is  
 god!  
 and becomes at last Helen, or Ninon: any lovely  
 and generous woman  
 at her best and her most beautiful, being god, made  
 manifest,  
 any clear and fearless man being god, very god.

("The Body of God")

Further, Lawrence saw represented in the Etruscans the  
 veneration of the flesh made scarlet as this man-become-god.  
 The significance of this scarlet is crucial:

It is deeper even than magic. Vermillion is the  
 color of this sacred or potent or god body. Appar-  
 ently it was so in all the ancient world. Man all  
 scarlet was his bodily godly self. We know the  
 kings of Ancient Rome, who were probably Etruscan,  
 appeared in public with their faces painted vermil-  
 lion.<sup>18</sup>

As in the early poems of Ms. A, in particular "For the  
 Heroes are Dipped in Scarlet" (688) the inner significance  
 of red is undeniable for Lawrence, and the ruddiness as  
 symbol of god-in-the-body intensified his religious con-  
 ception of incarnation:

Oh, and their faces scarlet, like the dolphin's  
 blood!  
 Lo! the loveliest is red all over, rippling ver-  
 million  
 as he ripples upward!  
 laughing in his black beard!

They are dancing! they return, as they went, dancing!  
 For the thing that is done without the glowing as  
 of god, vermillion  
 were best not done at all.  
 How glistening red they are!

Also, the wild activity of the many figures finally becomes clear for Lawrence as a visual expression of "the old dictum, that everybody, and of the anima shall know religion and be in touch with the gods:"<sup>19</sup>

Once it was all bright and dancing: the delight of the underworld; honouring the dead with wine, and flutes playing for a dance, and limbs whirling and pressing. And it was deep and sincere honour rendered to the dead and to the mysteries. It is contrary to our ideas; but the ancients had their own philosophy for it. As the pagan old writer says: "For no part of us nor of our bodies shall be, which doth not feel religion: and let there be no lack of singing for the soul, no lack of leaping and dancing for the knees and heart; for all these know the gods."<sup>20</sup>

The knowledge of the godhead which the Etruscans themselves represent, a respect and veneration of the life force responsible for material existence is that dimension of the old world consciousness which has been lost, which was as incapable of surviving the Roman Empire as the Etruscan were.

It is at this point that Lawrence perceives an additional responsibility of the Etruscans in their relationship to the cosmos. Acknowledging the existence of a godhead whose energy animates all creation and makes man part of the incarnation, the Etruscans were obligated to this sacramental cosmos. Not only was the cosmos alive with the body of God, but man had to establish

connections with the external elements in order to maintain and increase his vitality:

To the Etruscan all was alive; the whole universe lived; and the business of man was himself to live amid it all. He had to draw life into himself, out of the wandering huge vitalities of the world. The cosmos was alive, like a vast creature.<sup>21</sup>

The entire business of men is to "live in the depth of their capacity" involved in that total connection with the cosmos. Thus, Lawrence sees the role of the religious consciousness not as simply a glorification of man-as-god, nor as a simple perception of god as the animating force of life. Instead, man-as-god must draw his own definition from the vitality of the other forms of god which have come to pass around him:

We see evidence of one underlying religious idea: the conception of the vitality of the cosmos, the myriad vitalities in wild confusion which still is held in some sort of array: and man, amid all the glowing welter, adventuring, struggling, striving for one thing, life, vitality, more vitality: to get into himself more and more of the gleaming vitality of the cosmos. That is the treasure. The active religious idea was that man by vivid attention and subtlety and exerting all his strength could draw more life into himself, more life, more and more glistening vitality, till he becomes shining like the morning blazing like a god.<sup>22</sup>

In this crucial quote, man by a supreme act of attention should come to know the god around him in materiality, and thus increase his own religious consciousness, swell-

ling himself with the god which is the cosmos.

This process for Lawrence becomes the Etruscan's act of worship, the act by which he continually redefines his own connection to the sacred, becoming part of god's body, "visibly red and utterly vivid." Is-ness is divinity; then, and all is oneness forming an unbroken, flowing circle of anima, world-soul:

All emerges out of the unbroken circle with its nucleus, the germ, the One, the god, if you like to call it so. And man, with his soul and his personality, emerges in eternal connection with all the rest.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, the significance of this entire journey for Lawrence is the final conclusion to be drawn from the Etruscan's celebration of death, a conclusion which obviously informs much of Ms. A, particularly those poems beginning with "The Ship of Death" (716). Moving from the juxtaposition of life and death early in Etruscan Places to the culminating vision of man's responsibility to the cosmos, Lawrence expresses his awareness that for the Etruscans death as well as life meant the further communion with God in his body, the cosmos.

## III

In many parts of Etruscan Places Lawrence's spiritual excavation focuses upon images and symbols found in the tombs which he employs to express that which separates the old world consciousness from his contemporary culture. These symbols, used to explain the basis of the Etruscan religion, are later used in Ms. A and Ms. B. However, they cannot convey their full symbolic meaning when divorced from their significance in Etruscan Places. Although the manuscripts are comprehensible without knowledge of Lawrence's writings on the Etruscans, the complexity of the symbolism employed in the poetry is increasingly more significant and more understandable when informed by Etruscan Places.

As Graham Hough has stated, Lawrence's consciousness is inherently dualistic, and this sense of dualism permeates all of the travel-sketches.<sup>24</sup> In much the same manner as the pre-Socratic philosophers whom he admired, Lawrence attempts to discover basic principles of orientation for man, the creation of a cosmos from chaos. In doing so, Lawrence always expresses such principles as a polarity, similar in construction to the previous juxtaposition of life and death. Any sense of homogeneity in

existence for Lawrence is an illusion perpetuated by post-Etruscan civilizations, and this uniformity must give way to chaos. As Lawrence writes, "To get any idea of the pre-Roman past we must break up the conception of oneness and uniformity, and see an endless confusion of differences."<sup>25</sup> However, the chaos generated by this disruption of created uniformity must always become polarized. For Lawrence, a dualism of unreconcilable opposites becomes the smallest division; all creation gravitates around two poles which are transformed variously throughout Etruscan Places as Lawrence disrupts the occluded vision which belongs to Western civilization in an attempt to excavate the basic principles of the Etruscan consciousness.

The entirety of Etruscan Places revolves around one such implicit dualism: the polarity between Lawrence and the Etruscans as representatives of their respective cultures, the new and the old world. For Lawrence, this old world, physical consciousness contrasts sharply with that of modern man:

On the whole, here all is plain, simple, usually with no decoration, and with those easy, natural proportions whose beauty one hardly notices, they come so naturally, physically. It is the natural beauty of proportion of the phallic consciousness, contrasted with the more studied or estatic proportion of the mental and spiritual Consciousness we are accustomed to.<sup>26</sup>

This first statement of the dualism, contrasting the physical with the mental and spiritual, is to lead Lawrence in search for that which has failed modern civilization and severed it from the Etruscan consciousness.

The dualism is next restated as the opposition of fire and water as Lawrence strives for a clearer expression of the problem which has buried the Etruscan vitality:

The universe, which was a single aliveness with a single soul, instantly changed, the moment you thought of it, and became a dual creature with two souls, fiery and watery, for ever mingling and rushing apart, and held by the great aliveness of the universe in an ultimate equilibrium. . . . And everything was dual, or contained its own duality.<sup>27</sup>

In this passage, the two forces are unreconcilable; yet the implication of these symbols is still unclear and the conclusions about the severance from the old world vitality are not made. However, Lawrence continues, attempting metaphorically to explain how this dualism of fire and water accounts for the lack of vitality in modern culture:

The sea is that vast primordial creature that has a soul also, whose inwardness is womb of all things, out of which all things emerged, and into which they are devoured back. Balancing the sea is the earth of inner fire, of after-life and before-life.<sup>28</sup>

The sea metaphorically becomes the womb, the tendency to inwardness and cerebration as well as the matter which becomes life. The fire becomes the balancing principle

73  
existing at both ends of the spectrum of life, both before and after life, similar to the previous explanation of the godhead.

Finding this an insufficient explanation, Lawrence attempts to express the dualism of life in terms of bird and fish symbolism:

The fish is the anima, or animate life, the very clue to the vast sea, the watery element of the first submission. For this reason Jesus was represented in the first Christian centuries as a fish, in Italy especially, where the people still thought in Etruscan symbols. Jesus was the anima of the vast, moist ever-yielding element which was the opposite and the counterpart of the red flame the Pharoahs and the kings of the East had sought to invest themselves with.

But the duck had no such subaqueous nature as the fish, it swims upon the water, and is hot-blooded, belonging to the red flame of the animal body of life. But it dives under water, and preens itself upon the flood. So it became, to man, that part of himself which delights in the water, and dives in, and rises up and shakes its wings. It is the symbol of man's own phallus and phallic life.<sup>29</sup>

This fantastic passage is the most complete expression of dualism as Lawrence focuses upon the modern dissassociation from the Etruscan old world religion. On one hand, the duck, emblematic with the Etruscans, swims upon the water, is associated with the red flame of kings, and symbolizes the animal body of life. As Lawrence explains, the Etruscans used the duck as well as the dolphin and the whale as symbols of the phallic life. In contrast, the fish



is associated with several interconnected ideas: the watery element of the womb, submission, Jesus, and the "ever-yielding element" opposed to the fire of the hot-blooded animate life expressed most explicitly in "Whales Weep Note" (694):

They say the sea is cold, but the sea contains  
the hottest blood of all, and the wildest, the most  
urgent.

All the whales in the wider deeps, hot are they,  
as they urge  
on and on, and dive beneath the icebergs.  
The right whales, the sperm whales, the hammer-heads,  
the killers  
there they blow, there they blow, hot wild breath  
out of the sea!

The interconnection of this passage to almost the whole of Lawrence's philosophical thought should make clear the intensity of association felt for the Etruscan symbols. Moreover, the poems such as the early "Swan" (435), "Leda" (436) and the later "Middle of the World" (688) are explicitly related to this symbolism; flowing throughout the remainder of Lawrence's poetry after early 1927, with the possible exception of Nettles (1930), is the undercurrent of symbolic expression whose nature is not wholly explicit from the poems.

The rather insignificant-looking reference to Jesus is crucial. Throughout the volume, the Etruscan tombs

frequently dated in terms of centuries before Christ, a point of demarcation for Lawrence. Repeatedly Christ is related to that period in history responsible for the annihilation of the Etruscans. Now, Jesus is linked to a religion of submission and "ever-yielding" which moves from the physical to the spiritual consciousness, accounting for modern man's disassociation from the physical consciousness. Moreover, Lawrence feels that Christianity cannot survive, since it denies the opposing forces of physical creation which balance each other creating a necessary equilibrium. Referring to the symbols of the deer, goat and cow employed in Etruscan art, Lawrence writes:

These are the creatures of prolific boundless procreation, the beasts of peace and increase. So even Jesus is a Lamb. And the endless gendering of these creatures will fill all the earth with cattle till herds rub flanks all over the world, and hardly a tree can rise between.

But this must not be so, since they are only half, even of the animal creation. Balance must be kept.<sup>30</sup>

Lawrence insists upon balance and dualism in opposition to the Christian insistence that the meek shall inherit:

The goat says let me breed for ever, till the world is one reeking goat. But the lion roars from the other blood-stream which is also in man, and he lifts his paw to strike, in the passion of the other wisdom.<sup>31</sup>

For Lawrence, the carvings and paintings in the Etruscan tomb express symbolically the eternal opposition that constitutes physical existence. As in the last stanza of "Demiurge" (689)

Religion knows that Jesus was never Jesus  
till he was born from the womb, and ate soup and  
bread  
and grew up, and became, in the wonder of creation,  
Jesus,  
with a body and with needs, and a lovely spirit.

he denies any priority of the spiritual consciousness over the physical and feels the advent of Christianity is that point in history which began the gradual loss of man's connection to the religious vitality found in the "old world physical consciousness." Christianity's denial of the polarity expressed in the lamb and lion symbolism initiates the disassociation from the physical consciousness which, for Lawrence account for the modern European world's lack of religious depth.

However, the unreconcilable opposition is not important in itself. Rather, this conflict of opposing principles is important for its molding of the "soul," the individual consciousness:

The Etruscan religion is concerned with all those physical and creative powers and forces which go to the building up and the destroying of the soul: the soul, the personality, being that which gradually is produced out of chaos, like a flower, only to dis-

appear again into chaos, or the underworld. We, on the contrary, say: In the beginning was the Word--and deny the physical universe true existence. We exist only in the Word, which is beaten out then to cover, gild, and hide all things.<sup>32</sup>

Again, Lawrence denies the spiritual consciousness any absolute primacy, and finds it an evasion of true existence to do such. Instead, the spiritual consciousness comes to resemble the outer skin of reality, for "in the beginning was not the Word, but a chirrup."<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, the soul becomes the item of supreme importance in the struggle with the physical and creative powers. Through the clash inherent in the duality, a balance is established, a point of equilibrium which becomes the soul:

The treasure of treasures is the soul, which, in every creature, in every tree or pool, means that mysterious conscious point of balance or equilibrium between the two halves of the duality, the fiery and the watery. . . . And in death it does not disappear, but is stored in the egg, or in the jar, or even in the tree which brings it forth again.<sup>34</sup>

For Lawrence, man in possession of this point of balance, a result of the awareness of unreconcilable opposition of spirit and body, participates with the entire universe in its pulse of opposites, which is his obligation to the cosmos.

To conclude, Lawrence's excavation of the Etruscan

symbolism leads to an undeniable tension which resolves itself in the creation of the soul, which is part of the godhead repeatedly returning to materiality. The conflict represented in the poetry of Ms. A, such as "Kissing and Horrid Strife" (709) is crucial:

Life is for kissing and for horrid strife.  
 Life is for the angels and the Sunderers.  
 Life is for the daimons and the demons,  
 those that put honey on our lips, and those that  
     put salt.  
 But life is not  
 for the dead vanity of knowing better, nor the  
     bland  
 cold comfort of superiority, nor silly  
 conceit of being immune,  
 not puerility of contradictions  
 like saying snow is black, or desire is evil.

This conflict becomes part of the religious vision Lawrence is expressing, a vision opposed to Christianity, opposed to its insistence upon the Word, and its rejection of the dualism upon which the Etruscans insisted. The Etruscans, with their representation of phallus and arx, lion and deer, duck and fish, were in touch with a sacramental cosmos, and with the awareness Lawrence excavates from the walls of the Etruscan tombs, the poetry of Ms. A achieves a new, fuller significance.

## IV

As has been previously discussed, one of the basic theological themes present in both Ms. A and Ms. B is the nature of evil and its origins in what Lawrence sees as a sacramental world where God is continually incarnate. In the previous section of this chapter, Lawrence's difficulty in finding language for his experience should be apparent. By the employment of metaphorical expression and unusually symbolic language, Lawrence attempts to translate into words that which he sees in the Etruscan necropolis. However, when he turns to the question of evil amid the vital, surging universe of prehistory, his prose is clear, direct and unequivocating. There is no need for symbols, and although the point to be made is similar to that which is found in his introduction to Harry Crosby's Chariots of the Sun, there is little of its calm narration. Lawrence aims his attack at what he finds to be responsible for the annihilation of the Etruscan's religious orientation, and by implication he attacks the principle cause for the modern disassociation from the "old world physical consciousness."

As previously noted, the Etruscans represented an old world religion whose worship of procreative forces is evident in their tombs. Their annihilation represented the stroke of severance from any return to the primitive, religious consciousness by Western Europe. For Lawrence, the force behind their annihilation was the Roman and Christian culture, both representing a world-view he saw as perverse.

However, he does not resign himself to an assault on all that is Roman or Christian. Instead, he focuses on the principle of evil represented in the Christian religion and the Roman culture: stasis, mass without motion, dogma, creeds and all other obstructions to the inherent fluidity of existence:

Myself, I like to think of the little wooden temples of the early Greeks and of the Etruscans: small, dainty, fragile, and evanescent as flowers. We have reached the stage when we are weary of huge stone erections, and we begin to realize that it is better to keep life fluid and changing than to try to hold it fast down in heavy monuments. Burdens on the fact of the earth are man's ponderous erections.

In a moment of pure, preaching, a moment of anger quite unique in Etruscan Places, but as didactic as much of the poetry in Ms. A such as "Departure" (715), Lawrence attacks Michelangelo for his burdensome, obstructive presence:

Why has mankind had such a craving to be imposed upon? Why this lust after imposing creeds, imposing deeds, imposing buildings, imposing language, imposing

works of art. The thing becomes a weariness at last. Give us things that are alive and flexible, which won't last too long and become an obstruction and a weariness. Even Michelangelo becomes at last a lump and a burden and a bore. It is so hard to see past him.<sup>36</sup>

Directly related to numerous poems in Ms. B and Ms. A, this statement should not be seen as merely an arbitrary attack by Lawrence on tradition; rather, Lawrence perceives in the stasis of convention an error of immense dimensions, an opinion which manifests itself frequently in the poetry written after his visits to Etruria, from the early "Attila" (497) which applauds his annihilation of the "old Roman lies," to "Future War" (612) from Ms. B which preaches variety:

The heart of man, in so far as it is budding, is  
budding warless  
and budding towards infinite variety, variegation  
and where there is infinite variety, there is no  
interest in war  
Oneness makes war, and the obsession of oneness.

to the final attack upon stasis as an abstraction from a flowing universe in "Departure" (715) in Ms. A:

All forms of abstraction are evil:  
finance is a great evil abstraction  
science has now become an evil abstraction  
education is an evil abstraction.

Convention not only represents an obstruction to change and flexibility, it expresses an unwillingness to perceive the chaos as well as the vitality of the universe.



Opposed to the convention of the Romans and Michelangelo stand the Etruscans. Lawrence valued their art and their culture primarily for their deviation from traditional modes of thinking, and for the fact that their cities disappeared and their buildings crumbled before becoming an obstruction:

But get over the strange desire we have for elegant convention, and the vases and dishes of the Etruscans, especailly the black bucchero ware, begins to open out like strange flowers, black flowers, with all the softness and rebellion of life against convention. . . . It is useless to look in the Etruscan things for "uplift." If you want uplift, go the the Greek or to the Gothic. If you want mass, go to the Romans. But if you love the odd spontaneous forms that are never to be standardized, go to the Etruscans.<sup>37</sup>

Spontaneity, naturalness, oddness and originality represent for Lawrence vital, positive values. Anything else in art or life is evil; anything standardized becomes obstructive, denying a fresh, ever-changing connection with life. Evil, then, stems from "the concept of oneness and uniformity,"<sup>38</sup> which acts as a simalacrum and a deception. In this final step, to be made also in Ms. A, Lawrence states that all such conventions and solidarity are evil because of their denial of the basic fluidity of life. In the poetry to follow the Etruscan Places essays, any abstraction from life, any alteration of life from its fluid state to an abstraction becomes the root of evil.

However, Lawrence is confronted with the fact that the Etruscans were indeed annihilated. The worship of the old physical world's procreative forces was blotted out and replaced by the much-admired Roman Empire and the Christian religion. Lawrence goes contrary to prevalent historical opinion and represents both of them as epitomes of evil, lacking any redeeming values:

It seems as if the power of resistance to life, self-assertion and over-bearing, such as the Romans knew: a power which must needs be moral, or carry morality with it, as a cloak for its inner ugliness: would always succeed in destroying the natural flowering of life.<sup>39</sup>

Inner ugliness wins. The natural vitality of the Etruscans with their religion of life could not survive. For Lawrence, the Romans and the Christians represent a resistance to life, who by conquest glorify themselves and hide their illness. And the Roman-Christian illness, whose raison d'etre was "expansion with a big 'E'"<sup>40</sup> has infected the Western World, disassociating it from the primitive past:

The old religion of the profound attempt of man to harmonize himself with nature and hold his own and come to flower in the great seething of life, changed with the Greeks and the Romans into a desire to resist nature, to produce a mental cunning and a mechanical force that would outwit Nature and chain her down completely, completely, till at last there should be nothing free in Nature at all, all should be controlled, domesticated for man's

meaner uses.<sup>41</sup>

It has gone as far as to infect even the view of after-life:

To the people of the great natural religions the after-life was a continuing of the world journey of life. To the people of the Idea the after-life is hell or purgatory, or nothingness, and paradise an inadequate fiction.<sup>42</sup>

The disgust with which Lawrence views this, and the depravity he sees there is apparent. The destruction of the natural world by man's will and the subsequent destruction of man's ability to respond to the natural world are all part of the process of civilization of the Western world which ruins not only man but which makes his view of death and the after-life depraved.

Resigned to the acceptance of this loss, Lawrence can only muster a frail attack of this evil represented by the Roman brute force and mechanism and the Christian denial of life:

Brute force crushes many plants. Yet the plants rise again. The Pyramids will not last a moment compared to the daisy. And before Budda or Jesus spoke the nightingale sang, and long after the words of Jesus and Budda are gone into oblivion the nightingale will still sing. . . . Because a fool kills a nightingale with a stone is he therefore greater than the nightingale? Because the Roman took the life out of the Etruscan, was he therefore greater than the Etruscan? Not he! . . . The Etruscan element is like the grass of the field and the sprouting of corn, in Italy: it will always be so. Why try to revert to the Latin-Roman mechanism and suppression?<sup>43</sup>

Hoping for an eventual return to the old world consciousness, and believing that the unnatural world-view of the present cannot survive, Lawrence attempts to relocate the religious values of modern man. The people of the Idea and of brute force become the "houseless dead" of his last poems, lost in their disassociation from the physical consciousness:

Oh pity the dead that were ousted out of life  
 All unequipped to take the long, long voyage  
 Gaunt, gaunt they crowd the grey mud-beaches of  
     shadow  
 that intervene between the final sea  
 and the white shores of life.

The poor gaunt dead that cannot die  
 into the distance with receding oars  
 but must roam like outcast dogs on the margins of  
     life.

("The Houseless Dead")

## V

To conclude, the pilgrimage ends for Lawrence with his trip into the Etruscan tombs as he emerges with a new responsibility, a new self-definition, and a new role to implement by means of his poetry. The correspondence between the Lucomo, the religious prince of the Etruscan civilization and the poet of Ms. B and A is implicit, and its existence goes far in explaining the predominance of religious poetry after 1927, its didactic, prophetic quality,

as well as the role Lawrence assumes in writing "The Risen Man" and Apocalypse.

The principle element present in Lawrence's exploration is the flexibility of time and space. With the repeated descent into the tombs, Lawrence comes to lose the distinction between past and present, art and life:

The walls of this little tomb are a dance of real delight. The rooms seem inhabited still by the Etruscans of the sixth century before Christ, a vivid, life-accepting people, who must have lived with real fullness. On come the dancers and the music players, moving in a broad frieze towards the front wall of the tomb, the wall facing us as we enter from the dark stairs, and where the banquet is going on in all its glory. . . . So that all is colour, and we do not seem to be underground at all, but in some gay chamber of the past.<sup>44</sup>

and

This sense of vigorous, strong bodied liveliness is characteristic of the Etruscans, and is somehow beyond art. You cannot think of art, but only of life itself, as if this were the very life of the Etruscans, dancing in their coloured wraps with massive yet exuberant naked limbs, ruddy from the air and the seelight, dancing and fluting along through the little olive trees, out in the fresh day.<sup>45</sup>

The transportation from the present to the past and the movement of the tempera paintings are both indicative of the movement of Lawrence's imagination which eliminates the stricture of time and space in order to come into direct contact with the underground world of the Etruscans:

But still we see, on the end wall, a strange wondering dancer out of the mists of time carrying his zither, and beyond him, beyond the little tree, a man of the dim ancient world, a man with a short beard, strong and mysteriously male, is reaching for a wild archaic maiden who throws up her hands and turns back to him her excited, subtle face. It is wonderful, the strength and mystery of old life that comes out of these faded figures. The Etruscans are still there, upon the wall.

Although it may appear that Lawrence is merely being figurative in his evocation of the mood inspired by the paintings, I perceive an innate honesty to feeling here, an absolute fidelity to instinct and emotion. The previous qualification of "seeming" to be in the past is now avoided for a direct statement that the present is the past, and art is life.

Lawrence also indicates not only are the Etruscans present, but "the mystery of old life" is visible in the tombs. The key to this mystery is the Lucomo, who one meets early in the volume when Lawrence descends into the tombs of Cerveteri:

Facing the door goes the stone bed on which was laid, presumably, the Lucomo and the sacred treasures of the dead, the little bronze ship of death that should bear him over to the other world, the vase of jewels for his arraying, the vases of small dishes, the little bronze statuettes and tools, the weapons, the armor: all the amazing impedimenta of the important dead.

The juxtaposition of the Lucomo and the ship of death is significant. The Lucomos, variously described as the

"prince-magistrates," "religious seers," and "the living clue to the pure fire, to the cosmic vitality" are juxtaposed to the ship of death which is to be later employed symbolically as part of Lawrence's, apocalyptic vision, as well as the art form which expresses that vision. There is a real ship of death, the Lucomo's as well as the art form constructed and utilized by the poet. This indicates an intermingling of the art, Lawrence's poetically-built ship of death, with the reality, the actual ship of the Lucomo, and as the reality and art converge, as time and space disappear, the role of the Lucomo is assumed by the artist, Lawrence.

It is this Lucomo that Lawrence feels the sacred mysteries are invested:

Behind all of the Etruscan liveliness was a religion of life, which the chief men were seriously responsible for. Behind all the dancing was a vision, and even a science of life, a conception of the universe, and man's place in the universe, which made men live to the depth of their capacity.<sup>48</sup>

As has been stated, the Lucomo was the chief man who possessed the secrets of man's religious connection to the cosmos, a connection which is examined in great depth in Ms. B in particular. Furthermore, the Lucomos are the only individuals knowledgeable of the religious vision; they represent the "life-bringers," the persons who give man

a connection to the vitality of existence, and they represent the "death-guides" who lead man back to the godhead:

They are the living clue to the pure fire, to the cosmic vitality. They are the vivid key of life. They in their own body, unlock the vast treasure-house of the cosmos for the people, and bring out life, and show the way into the dark of death, which is the blue burning of one fire. They in their own bodies, are the life-bringers and the death-guides, leading ahead in the dark, and coming out in the day with more than sunlight in their body.<sup>49</sup>

This passage is one of the most crucial of the volume. It requires no leap of fancy to see that Lawrence is now perceiving himself in terms of the Lucomo's role. The "blue burning" which foreshadows "Bavarian Gentians" clearly turns that poem into an expression of the ritual initiation and redefinition that Lawrence feels he has undergone in his descent into the tombs with, as Smailes indicates, the acetylene lamp replacing the gentian.<sup>50</sup> The dualism of the life-bringer and the death-guide represents the roles which Lawrence has assumed and which are responsible for the poetry of Ms. B and M. Lawrence feels he left the tombs of Etruria with the mystery of the old life, the mystery of the cosmic vitality which he alone unearthed, and because of this he feels he must assume the role of the religious seer, the Lucomo.

Finally, Lawrence discusses the means of sharing



the knowledge of the sacred mysteries, shedding light on his new conception of his role as poet:

Only a few are initiated into the mystery of the bath of life, and the bath of death: the pool within pool, wherein, when a man is dipped, he becomes darker than blood with death, and brighter than fire, with life. . . . The people are not initiated into the cosmic ideas, nor into the awakened throb of more vivid consciousness. . . . They cannot be more than a little aware. So you must give them symbols, ritual and gesture, which will fill their bodies with life up to their own full measure. Any more is fatal. And so the actual knowledge must be guarded from them, lest knowing the formulae, without undergoing at all the experience that corresponds, they may become insolent and impious, thinking they have all, when they have only an empty monkey-chatter.<sup>51</sup>

Lawrence, in complete identification with the role of Lucretius at this point, proceeds to express in his poetry by means of "symbol, ritual and gesture" the mystery of the old world vitality which he feels he unearthed in the Etruscan tombs.

Thus, his final poems become increasingly didactic as well as enigmatic because of the use of symbols and terms whose meaning are clear enough on the literal level, but whose significance is beyond full comprehension by the reader who has not undergone the same initiation as Lawrence. His poems become finally esoteric to the uninitiated and will remain so "since knowledge is an experience, not a formulae."<sup>52</sup> His penultimate poem, "Change"

(727) exhibits the type of gesture at expression which fails to fully express:

Do you think it is easy to change?  
 Ah, it is very hard to change and be different.  
 It means passing through the waters of oblivion.

Its meaning is at once overt and yet problematic, and the problem lies in the language which cannot fully render all the significance of the experience which initiated Lawrence and cannot express the knowledge he gained by that experience. Finally, Lawrence can only write in "The Ship of Death" (716):

oh build your ship of death, oh build it  
 for you will need it  
 For the voyage to oblivion awaits you.

The poet as life-bringer and death-guide, as one who has been initiated into the mystery of the cosmic vitality, can only give the symbols, the rituals, and the gestures of one who possesses the esoteric knowledge. As Lucomo, the religious seer, he can give no formula and can offer only gesture as communication, the gesture whose language must, finally, fail to express.

## NOTES

### Chapter I

<sup>1</sup> Richard Aldington, "Introduction to 'Last Poems' and 'More Pansies'," Richard Aldington and Guiseppe Drioli, eds., Last Poems (Florence: G. Orioli, 1932) as reprinted in Vivian de Sola Pinto and F. Warren Roberts, eds., The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 593.

<sup>2</sup> Aldington, p. 592.

<sup>3</sup> Keith Sagar, The Art of D. H. Lawrence (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1966), pp. 202-3.

<sup>4</sup> Sagar, pp. 203, 229. The numerals in parenthesis following the title of the poems indicate the page in Vivian de Sola Pinto and R. Warren Roberts, eds., The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence (New York: Viking Press, 1971), on which the poem appears. This procedure is followed throughout this text. When a title and page number do not appear in the text prior to any quotation of a poem, the title will follow in parenthesis.

<sup>5</sup> Sagar, p. 229.

<sup>6</sup> Sandra Gilbert, Acts of Attention: The Poems of D. H. Lawrence (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 266.

<sup>7</sup> T. A. Smailes, Some Comments on the Verse of D. H. Lawrence (Post Elizabeth, University of Port Elizabeth, 1970), p. 100.

<sup>8</sup> Smailes, p. 102.

<sup>9</sup> Smailes, pp. 73-75.

<sup>10</sup> Aldington, p. 592.

<sup>11</sup> Smailes, p. 61.

<sup>12</sup> Smailes, p. 62.

<sup>13</sup> From Ms. B, Roberts' MS. El92 in the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin

<sup>14</sup> Aldington, p. 592.

<sup>15</sup> Aldington, p. 593.

<sup>16</sup> Smailes, p. 102.

<sup>17</sup> Aldington, p. 592.

<sup>18</sup> Smailes, p. 62.

<sup>19</sup> Smailes, p. 62.

<sup>20</sup> Smailes, p. 64.

## Chapter II

<sup>1</sup> Vivian de Sola Pinto, "The Burning Bush: D. H. Lawrence as Religious Poet," in Mansions of the Spirit, ed. George A. Panichas (New York: Hawthorne, 1967), p. 219.

<sup>2</sup> D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow (New York: Viking Press, 1961), p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> Pinto, p.223.

<sup>4</sup> Pinto, p. 235.

<sup>5</sup> Aldington, p.595.

<sup>6</sup> Aldington, p. 595.

<sup>7</sup> Aldington, p. 595.

<sup>8</sup> Aldington, pp. 595-6.

<sup>9</sup> Gilbert, p. 252.

<sup>10</sup> Gilbert, p. 266.

<sup>11</sup> Smailes, p. 52.

<sup>12</sup> Smailes, p. 52.

<sup>13</sup> Vivian de Sola Pinto and F. Warren Roberts, Eds., The Complete Poems of D. H. Lawrence (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 601. All poetry quotations will come from this source with titles or page numbers indicated in parenthesis, unless otherwise noted, in the text, prior to quotation.

<sup>14</sup> James Miller, Ed. The Selected Prose and Complete Poems of Walt Whitman (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), p. 45.

<sup>15</sup> Harry T. Moore, Poste Restante (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1956), p. 91.

- 16 Gilbert, p. 228.
- 17 Gilbert, p. 228.
- 18 Gilbert, p. 196.
- 19 Smailes, p. 100.
- 20 Graham Hough, The Dark Sun (London: Duckworth & Co., 1956), p. 211.
- 21 Smailes, p. 100.
- 22 Aldington, p. 593.
- 23 From the MS. Roberts' E192, in the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.
- 24 Smailes, p. 100.
- 25 Pinto and Roberts, Eds., Complete Poems, p. 688.
- 26 Gilbert, p. 274.
- 27 Gilbert, p. 278.
- 28 Gilbert, p. 284.
- 29 Gilbert, p. 294.
- 30 Pinto and Roberts, Ed., Complete Poems, p. 688.
- 31 See in particular John Burnet, Early Greek Philosophy fourth ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1948), Chapter III through Chapter VI.
- 32 See Burnet's Early Greek Philosophy, Chapters III and V, and D. H. Lawrence's Apocalypse (New York: Viking Press, 1960).

33 Smailes, p. 69.

34 Smailes, p. 68.

35 Smailes, p. 71.

### Chapter III

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Hassall, "D. H. Lawrence and the Etruscan" in Essays by Divers Hands, XXXI, 1962, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> Vivian de Sola Pinto, "The Burning Bush: D. H. Lawrence as a Religious Poet," in Mansions of the Spirit, ed. George Panichas (New York: Hawthorne, 1972), p. 230.

<sup>3</sup> Pinto, p. 231.

<sup>4</sup> Pinto, p. 231.

<sup>5</sup> Pinto, p. 231.

<sup>6</sup> D. H. Lawrence, Etruscan Places (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Etruscan Places, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Etruscan Places, p. 12.

<sup>9</sup> George Panichas, "Voyage of Oblivion: The Meaning of D. H. Lawrence's Death Poems," English Miscellany, XII, 1961, p. 156.

<sup>10</sup> Panichas, p. 156.

<sup>11</sup> Etruscan Places, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> Etruscan Places, p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Etruscan Places, p. 14.

- 14 Etruscan Places, p. 15.
- 15 Etruscan Places, p. 20.
- 16 Etruscan Places, p. 66.
- 17 Etruscan Places, p. 20.
- 18 Etruscan Places, p. 42.
- 19 Etruscan Places, p. 41.
- 20 Etruscan Places, pp. 46-47.
- 21 Etruscan Places, p. 49.
- 22 Etruscan Places, p. 50.
- 23 Etruscan Places, p. 69.
- 24 Graham Hough, The Dark Sun (London: Duckworth & Co.,  
1956), p. 224.
- 25 Etruscan Places, p. 38.
- 26 Etruscan Places, p. 10.
- 27 Etruscan Places, pp. 49-50.
- 28 Etruscan Places, p. 53.
- 29 Etruscan Places, pp. 53-54.
- 30 Etruscan Places, p. 57.
- 31 Etruscan Places, p. 69.
- 32 Etruscan Places, p. 67.
- 33 Etruscan Places, p. 29
- 34 Etruscan Places, p. 56.
- 35 Etruscan Places, p. 25.



- 36 Etruscan Places, p. 36.
- 37 Etruscan Places, p. 32.
- 38 Etruscan Places, p. 38.
- 39 Etruscan Places, p. 49.
- 40 Etruscan Places, p. 1.
- 41 Etruscan Places, p. 75.
- 42 Etruscan Places p. 76.
- 43 Etruscan Places, p. 29.
- 44 Etruscan Places, p. 38.
- 45 Etruscan Places, p. 39.
- 46 Etruscan Places, p. 44.
- 47 Etruscan Places, pp. 10-11.
- 48 Etruscan Places, p. 49.
- 49 Etruscan Places, p. 51.
- 50 Etruscan Places, p. 64.
- 51 Etruscan Places, p. 51.
- 52 Etruscan Places, p. 51.

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alvarez, A. "D. H. Lawrence: The Single State of Man," in The Shaping Spirit. London: Chatto and Windus, 1967, pp. 140-161.
- Blackmur, R. P. "D. H. Lawrence and Expressive Form," in Language as Gesture: Essays in Poetry. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1952, pp. 286-300.
- Cavitch, David B. "Solipsism and Death in D. H. Lawrence's Late Works," Massachusetts Review, VII, (Summer, 1966), pp. 495-508.
- Cipolla, Elizabeth. "The Last Poems of D. H. Lawrence," The D. H. Lawrence Review, II, (No. 2, 1969), pp. 103-119.
- Daleski, H. M. The Forked Flame: A Study of D. H. Lawrence. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965.
- Fairchild, H. N. Religious Trends in English Poetry. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968.
- Gilbert, Sandra. Acts of Attention: The Poems of D. H. Lawrence. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972.
- Harvey, R. W. "On Lawrence's 'Bavarian Gentians'," Wascana Review, I (No. 1, 1966), 74-86.
- Hassall, Christopher. "D. H. Lawrence and the Etruscans," in Essays by Divers Hands, XXXI, 1962, pp. 61-78.
- Hough, Graham. The Dark Sun: A Study of D. H. Lawrence. London: Duckworth, 1956.
- Jarrett-Kerr, Martin, D. H. Lawrence and Human Existence. London: SCM Press, 1961.
- Kenmare, Dallas. Firebird. London: Barrie, 1951.

Oates, Joyce Carol. "The Hostile Sun: The Poetry of D. H. Lawrence," Massachusetts Review, XIII (Autumn, 1972), pp. 639-656.

Panichas, George A. Adventures in Consciousness: The Meaning of D. H. Lawrence's Religious Quest. The Hague: Mouton, 1964.

Pinto, Vivian de Sola. "The Burning Bush: D. H. Lawrence as Religious Poet," in Mansions of the Spirit. New York: Hawthorne, 1967, pp. 213-235.

\_\_\_\_\_. 'Poet Without a Mask,' Critical Quarterly III (Spring, 1961), pp. 5-17.

Sagar, Keith. The Art of D. H. Lawrence. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966.

Smailes, T. A. Some Comments of the Verse of D. H. Lawrence. Port Elizabeth: University of Port Elizabeth Press, 1970.