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J. A. D. Ingres: The Apotheosis of Flaxman

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had been prepared together in Rome during the years 1792 and 1793. Yet only Girodet, not Gros, could have known them at first hand. One is forced to conclude that if Girodet did not have the books themselves with him in Genoa, Gros's interest in the works nonetheless postdate Girodet's own. The pattern of coincidences clearly points once again to Girodet's active influence.

The final question concerning Gros's anglicisms lies in the realm of landscape, a genre of which his friend Girodet was exceedingly fond.³² Could it have been Girodet, who sketched the mountains on his way through the Alps, that inspired Gros to do the large number of landscape sketches in his albums when he travelled South to Rome and its countryside?³³ If the early compositional design for Girodet's *Scène de déluge*, which Gros saw, was in some way related to pictures like Richard Wilson's famous *Niobe and her Children*, then once again the stimulus of English art, in this case heroic landscape, mediated through Girodet, found a response in Gros's early work. Moreover, English taste for the eighteenth-century descendants of Claude, such as Joseph Vernet, is well known.³⁴ Could it possibly have affected the classical character of so many of the more finished landscape compositions in Gros's albums (Fig.41)? Might there exist as yet unidentified and unrecorded landscape paintings by Gros?

Of course at present there is hardly solid proof for these purely speculative suggestions. What is clear, however, is that the rôle of Girodet's relation to English art was paramount in the introduction of early romantic themes and styles to France. Gros's *Sappho* (Fig.48) sums up the point quite nicely. The gesture of the heroine is derived from a Fuseliesque sketchbook composition that Gros drew in a Flaxman-like linear style (Fig.47), some of the sharpness of which was carried over into the painting. The scene's luminism is obviously inspired by Girodet, and the emotional correspondence between the natural setting and the tragic literary subject suggest the principles of the romantic version of heroic landscape.

³² On Girodet's views on landscape painting, see COUPIN, *op. cit.*, pp. ix-x.

³³ On these sketches and some landscape paintings by Girodet, see GEORGE LEVITINE: 'Quelques aspects peu connus de Girodet', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* [April, 1965], pp.238-242.

³⁴ On English taste for landscape painting, see ELIZABETH MANWARING: *Italian Landscape in Eighteenth Century England* [1925], London [1965], esp. pp.68-74 on imitators of Claude. On Vernet, see Paris, Musée de la Marine, Exh. Cat. *Joseph Vernet, 1714-1789* [1976-1977].

J.A.D. Ingres: the apotheosis of Flaxman *

BY SARAH SYMMONS

SIX published works by the English sculptor, John Flaxman, are preserved in the library of J. A. D. Ingres in the Musée Ingres at Montauban. At least one of these is a collector's item: the rare first edition of Flaxman's outline illustrations to Homer's *Odyssey*,¹ reputedly thrown into the sea by the French

*I would like to thank the British Academy for a generous research grant towards the completion of this work; I must also acknowledge the kindness and help of Pierre Barousse, Director of the Musée Ingres, Montauban.

¹ DANIEL TERNOIS: *Inventaire de la Collection Ingres* (unpublished ms. n.p. n.d.) Musée Ingres, Item No.C.I.534.

during a naval skirmish in 1794.² The Montauban inventory also lists another first edition of 1793, the illustrations to Homer's *Iliad*,³ and two copies of the outlines to Dante's *Divine Comedy*: an 1802 Roman edition engraved by Thomas Piroli,⁴ and an incomplete French set published by Reveil in 1836 with a text analysing Dante's poem and a biographical note on Flaxman.⁵ A copy of the sculptor's illustrations to the tragedies of Aeschylus, engraved by Piroli but undated, is also in the painter's existing library;⁶ and, finally, a first edition of Flaxman's *Illustrations to the Lord's Prayer*, with stone engravings after the original designs by Richard Lane, published in 1835.⁷

This collection of Flaxman's best-known works must be among the largest and most discerning assembled by an artist in the nineteenth century. Many French painters collected Flaxman's outlines⁸ but the enthusiasm of Ingres went deeper. His tribute to Flaxman and his work took the form of a highly finished drawing, *Homère Déifié* (c. 1840-1865), with a portrait of the English sculptor in the bottom right-hand corner (Fig.55). The frieze on the temple is composed of plates from the outline illustrations to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The existence of this drawing confirms that Ingres admired Flaxman for some sixty years, since his earliest admiration for the sculptor's work was expressed in the early 1800s. Evidence derived from many of the French painter's private drawings reveals too that Flaxman's imagery became for Ingres a useful source of inspiration.

As a young student in David's studio, Ingres studied Gothic and Antique art. Early Italian and early British styles also inspired him⁹ while his passionate admiration for Homer was equalled by his attachment to Ossian. He copied the Gothic tombs in A. W. Millin's *Antiquités Nationales*¹⁰ and, on an unrecorded occasion, acquired Giroux's *Statues Tombales Anglaises*.¹¹ The accompaniment of this attraction to austere, ancient forms was a fanatical desire to found a new 'purified' art: *Oui, l'art aurait bien besoin qu'on le réforme et je voudrais bien être ce révolutionnaire-là*, he wrote in 1806.¹² Such lofty aspirations towards technical austerity reflect the obsession with moral purity which Flaxman himself had tried to articulate in sculpture and drawings. And Flaxman too is known to have reciprocated the professional esteem of his French admirer. During a visit to Paris in 1802 the sculptor openly expressed his liking for *The Ambassadors of Agamemnon*,¹³ a painting for which Ingres was awarded the Prix de Rome. The two artists had mutual acquaintances: both knew the architect and designer, Charles Percier. After his French visit, Flaxman sent copies of his outline illustrations to Paris and Percier obligingly distributed them to influential people. To A. W. Millin and Alexandre Lenoir he gave the Homer and Aeschylus designs,¹⁴ at a time when Ingres, as a French government *pensionnaire*, was studying works of art in Lenoir's *Musée des Monuments Français*.

² E. CROFT-MURRAY: 'An Account Book of John Flaxman R.A.', *Walpole Society*, Vol.28 [1939-1940], pp.51-101.

³ TERNOIS; *op. cit.*, Item No.C.I.535.

⁴ Item No.C.I.14.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Item No.C.I.533.

⁷ Item No.C.I.13.

⁸ SARAH SYMMONS: French Copies after Flaxman's Outlines, *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE*, CXV, 846 [September 1973], pp.591-595.

⁹ MARIE-CLAUDE CHAUDONNET: 'Fleury Richard et le passé national; ses sources à travers quelques carnets de croquis.' *Acte du Colloque International; Ingres et le Néo-Classicisme*, Montauban [October 1975], pp.11-19.

¹⁰ Paris, An VIII, CHAUDONNET, *op. cit.* p.12.

¹¹ TERNOIS, *op. cit.*, Item No.C.I.586.

¹² PIERRE BAROUSSE: "'L'Idée" chez Monsieur Ingres,' *Acte du Colloque International; Ingres et le Néo-Classicisme*, Montauban [October 1975], p.159.

¹³ HENRI DELABORDE: *Ingres, sa vie, ses travaux, sa doctrine*, Paris [1870], pp.212-213, No.37. Pierre Barousse suggests that this painting by Ingres also shows the influence of Flaxman, BAROUSSE, *ibid.*

¹⁴ Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Flaxman Letter-book, f.49: Flaxman to Charles Percier, 2nd November 1802.

Flaxman also gave away drawings to foreign friends and, according to one source, Ingres himself was thought to own an authentic Flaxman drawing.¹⁵ No such work survives at Montauban nor is there any record of it in the collection but there is evidence to suggest that Ingres studied Flaxman's drawings at first hand.

One undated sketch by Ingres, of a woman and two children, is inscribed by the artist: *De Flaxman chez Mr Percier* (Fig.64). The drawing is not a copy after Flaxman's outlines but may be a transcription of one of the sculptor's memorial reliefs. Between 1816 and 1819 Flaxman designed a monument to the Countess Spencer, erected in Great Brington Church, Northamptonshire. The figure of Charity which decorates the monument is similar to the drawing by Ingres (Fig.65). But this sentimental image of maternal affection comprises several strands of Flaxmanesque subject matter on which the sculptor worked for years. During his visit to Italy (1787–1794), Flaxman made many such studies of mothers and children which subsequently became the raw material of bas-reliefs, especially the small relief plaques made in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

In a letter to William Hayley, dated 1805, Flaxman's wife described how these subjects had become the fruit of many years' labour. She saw the private reliefs Flaxman produced at this time as essentially Antique in inspiration: '... the bold conception of a Phidias united to the high finished graces of a Praxiteles. . . .'¹⁶ This, despite the fact that Flaxman's relief plaques of 1805 illustrated lines from the Lord's Prayer: *Lead Us Not into Temptation and Deliver Us from Evil*. The edition of engravings after these designs in the library at Montauban suggests how interested Ingres could have been in the style of Flaxman's moral images. And, although Flaxman enjoyed depicting edifying Christian themes while Ingres cherished classical antiquity above all other sources of inspiration, the French artist also treated religious subjects, often with clear, hard colours and figures set in a flattened, box-like perspective.¹⁷ Occasionally he contemplated religious works which he never painted, constructing only sketches executed in a spare, linear style analogous to Flaxman's outline method. One sketch, probably drawn in Rome in 1836 and entitled *Dieu le Père jetant le Démon dans les ténèbres* (Fig.56)¹⁸ is compositionally related to an illustration from Dante's *Inferno*, Canto 4, which Flaxman had drawn in 1792–3 (Fig.58). Here, Flaxman's odd, uneven perspective and colourless figures with their inflated gestures, obviously fascinated Ingres, just as they had fascinated him thirty years earlier. In 1806 he had sketched *Antiochus and Stratonice* (Fig.57) rearranging yet another Flaxmanesque composition and exaggerating the perspectival irregularities, until the work assumed an entirely different effect. The figures of a seated man, bashful, hesitant girl, older man with staff and suit of armour, echo the basic scheme of Flaxman's *Iliad* plate *Achilles and Briseis* (Fig.67). And, in further compositions which possess tenuous links with Flaxman, Ingres would seem to have pursued similar technical obsessions.

Many drawings by Ingres reveal the thoroughness of his professional practice. He preserved the slightest sketches in which he openly displayed enjoyment in planning a finished picture, identifying figures and writing down the meanings of colours and gestures. It is often at this point in a picture's

evolution that Ingres refers to other artists or to pictorial source material. References to Flaxman are few but significant. The part that the sculptor's graphic work might have played in the construction of certain paintings was not necessarily limited to that of providing the visual vocabulary.

For *Jupiter and Thetis*, exhibited at the Salon of 1811 (Fig.61) Ingres used many visual sources. However, between his earliest conceptions of the subject, taken from Bitaubé's translation of Homer's *Iliad*¹⁹ and the completion of the painting, Ingres probably acquired a copy of Flaxman's outline illustrations to the *Iliad*, specifically the enlarged edition, printed in London in 1805. Depictions of Thetis subjects from Book 1 of the *Iliad* were fairly common among British artists of Flaxman's generation but the goddess's entreaty of Jupiter on behalf of her son was not included in Flaxman's first edition (1793) of the Homer illustrations. Only in the later edition, where the sculptor added five new designs to the set, does the scene appear (Fig.59). For his own model Flaxman may have referred to a small sketch made by George Romney (Fig.60) in the mid 1770s. A drawing by Ingres at Montauban reveals that the French painter could have adopted the same formal pattern from Flaxman's plate (Fig.62). All three designs by Romney, Flaxman and Ingres concentrate on the arrangement of the nude goddess suppliant before Jupiter. Ingres became so absorbed in this image that he jotted notes on some of his drawings. He stated that the visual contrast between the soft, sinuous Thetis and the muscular Jupiter inspired his choice of subject, constituting for him the most expressive element of the story. The French artist also noted down his decisions about the development of the goddess's appearance: *La beauté s'associe à la jeunesse . . . La gorge des déesses . . .²⁰ . . . la nature de dessin pour blanc. . . .²¹* On another preparatory sketch Ingres wrote: *'La beauté dans les ouvrages de l'art est la première chose [,] elle doit dominer sur tout [,] la couleur blanche est adoptée comme la plus belle pour les anciens [,]'*²²

Perhaps the French artist's study of Flaxman's illustrations, where black and white figures seem to float in a white void, enabled him to develop these new techniques, laying-in hard edges and consistent tones where the English artist had drawn fine, toneless lines.

When making the compositional choice for *Jupiter and Thetis*, Ingres was evidently struck by Flaxman's arrangement of the seated Jupiter in plates such as *The Council of the Gods* (Fig.68). This whole plate was recast by Ingres in the water-colour, *Le Songe d'Ossian* (Fig.63). Here Ingres used both the outline technique and the specific figures offered by Flaxman, but, again, his pictorial solution evolved quite differently from that of the prototype. The figures are dispersed, the outline appears to be more flowing and flexible; Flaxman's Olympian scene is transformed into a Celtic fantasy. Jupiter changes into Starno; Ossian, dreaming on his harp, replaces the Genius of Olympus, set in the foreground of Flaxman's plate; the spiky elbows and folded arms of the Muses, floating in an extended row behind Jupiter, form the basis of some of the embracing figures floating above Ossian. Even the stars and clouds of the water-colour resemble those in the original, schematic outline. Yet Ingres could well have used this same Flaxman plate again for his composition of *L'Apothéose d'Homère* and *Homère Déifié* (Fig.55) where the figures of Jupiter and Hebe may have provided a convenient pattern for Homer and his Muse.

Ingres and Flaxman were the subject of a comparison in the periodical *l'Artiste* in 1833 where the approximation between

¹⁵ JEANNE DOIN: 'John Flaxman', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 4me période, V [1911], p.335, n.5.

¹⁶ Unpublished letter, Westfield College Library, Mrs Flaxman to William Hayley, 3rd July 1805.

¹⁷ E.g. *Christ Among the Doctors*. Montauban, Musée Ingres.

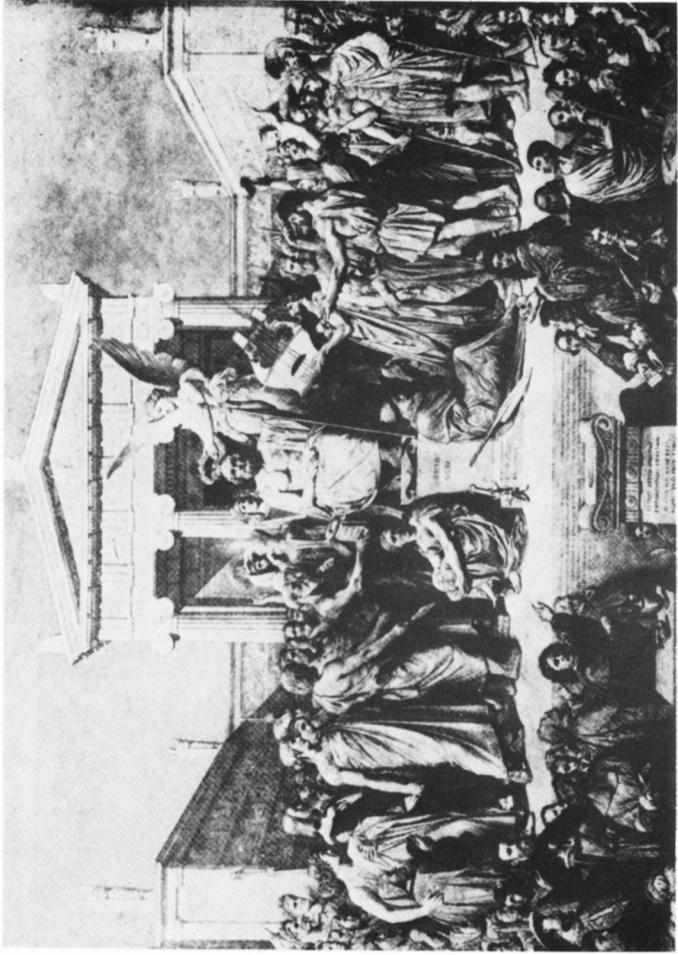
¹⁸ Dated by DANIEL TERNOIS, unpublished *catalogue raisonné* (card index) of the drawings at Montauban. A smudged inscription on this drawing may be 'job lectures', suggesting the scene from the end of the Book of Job. Chassériau copied the demon figure and transformed it into an oil sketch of a negro, at Montauban.

¹⁹ HENRY LAPAUZE: *Le Roman d'Amour de M. Ingres*, Paris [1910], p.73.

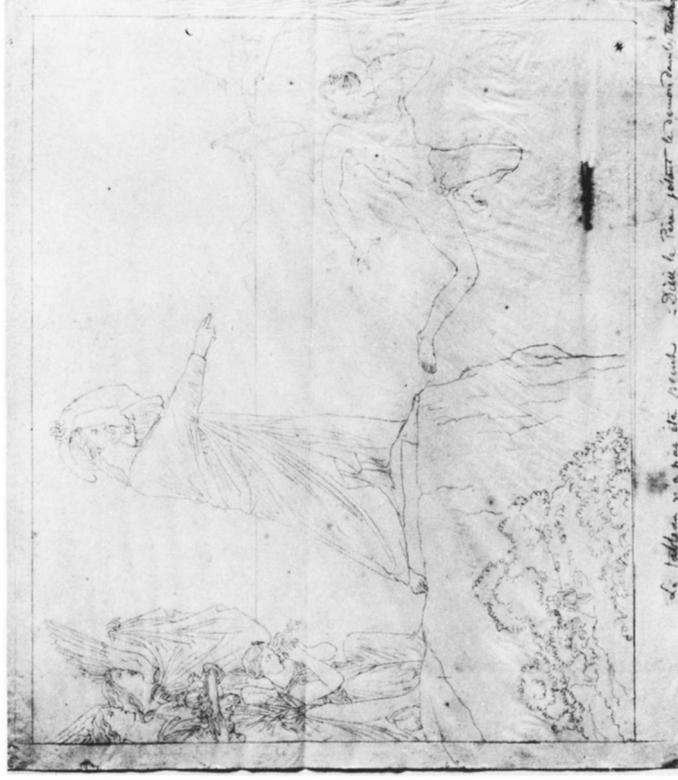
²⁰ Quoted by DANIEL TERNOIS: *Ingres*, Petit Palais, Paris [1967–1968], p.76, No.51.

²¹ Montauban, Musée Ingres, Inv. No.8671786.

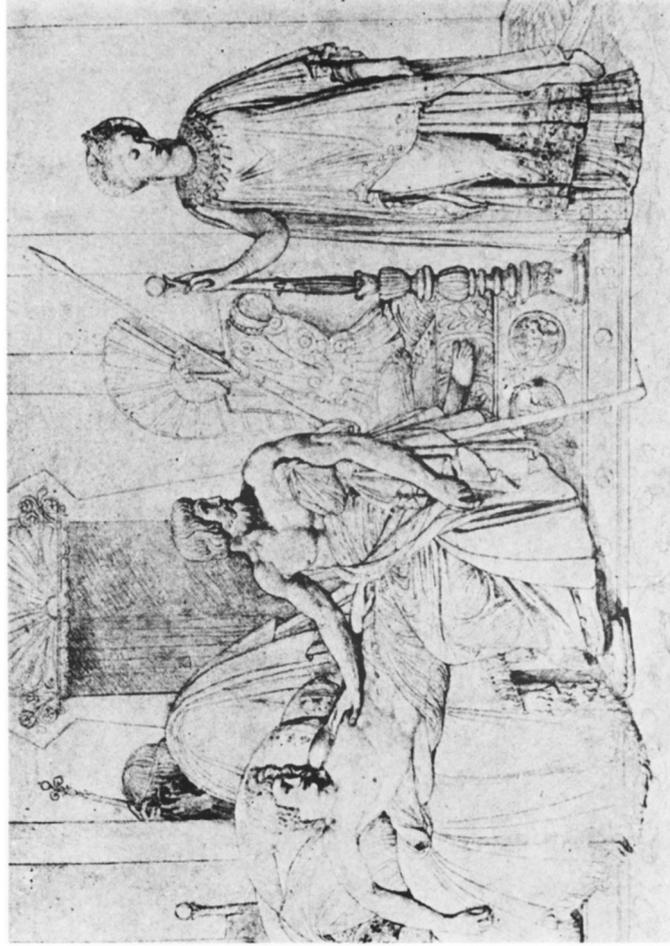
²² Montauban, Musée Ingres, Inv. No.8671793.



55. *Homère Déifié*, by Ingres. Signed. Black chalk, pen and ink wash, 21 by 31 cm. (Musée du Louvre, Paris).



56. *Dieu le Père jetant le démon dans les ténèbres*, by Ingres. Pencil, 38.7 by 44.5 cm. (Musée Ingres, Montauban).



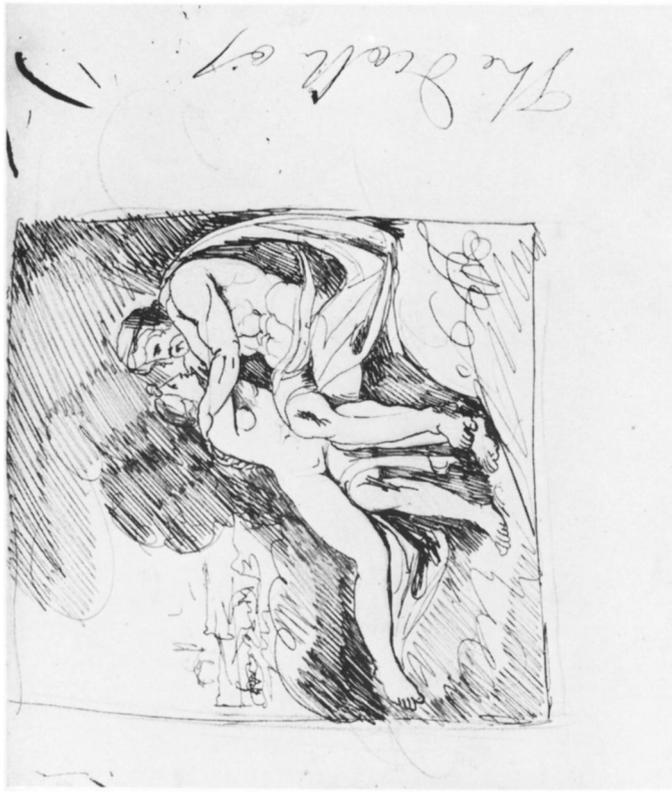
57. *Antiochus and Stratonice*, by Ingres. Pencil and brown wash, 29 by 40 cm. (Musée du Louvre, Paris).



58. Illustration to Canto 4 of Dante's *Inferno*, by John Flaxman. Engraving.



59. *Jupiter and Thetis*, illustration to Homer's *Iliad*, by John Flaxman. Engraving



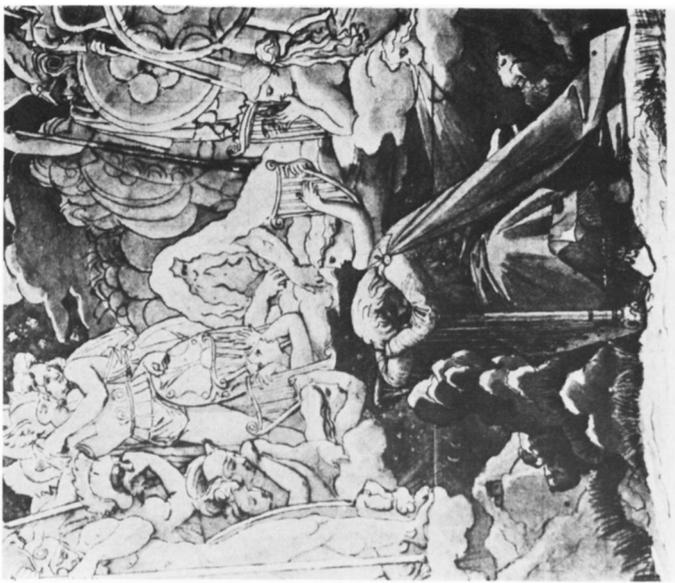
60. *Jupiter and Thetis*, by George Romney. Pen and ink over pencil, 20.5 by 23.8 cm. (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge).



61. *Jupiter and Thetis*, by Ingres. Signed and dated 1811. 327 by 260 cm. (Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence).



62. *Jupiter and Thetis*, by Ingres. Pencil, 32.5 by 24.2 cm. (Musée Ingres, Montauban).



63. *The Dream of Osian*, by Ingres. Pen and water-colour, 28.2 by 23.8 cm. (Private collection, Montauban).

Flaxman's use of line and the French painter's colour was noted, rather to the painter's detriment: '*Ingres, dont le génie n'est pas sans de nombreux rapports avec le sien, a compris aussi de même qu'il n'avait rien à démêler avec la couleur; mais il n'a pas eu le bon instinct, comme Flaxman, de renoncer à la peinture et de s'en tenir au dessin, au bas-relief, à la statuaire.*'²³

The occasion for this comment was the publication of Flaxman's Complete Works in 1833, engraved by Reveil. *L'Artiste* presented the English artist as *L'homme le plus pauvre, le plus humble, le plus modeste, vivant en dehors du monde dans la plus profonde retraite.*²⁴ Although Reveil included engravings made after Flaxman's most famous funerary reliefs, the reviewer in *l'Artiste* was especially enthusiastic about the outline illustrations, particularly the Dante, Homer and Aeschylus, copied from the enlarged edition of 1805. They were praised as possessing: '*. . . une grande pureté; une grande finesse, une très-grande soin. Nul dessin plus que celui de Flaxman n'exige absolument toutes ces qualités; la sévérité des lignes, la simplicité des contours font le grand caractère de ses compositions; la moindre altération de ces graves et purs profils en ferait de ridicules silhouettes d'ombres chinoises.*'²⁵

The writer says that Flaxman's outlines are: '*. . . toute pleines également de simplicité et de tranquillité.*'²⁶ Another article in *l'Artiste* called the designs '*si naïves*' and concluded: '*N'est ce pas une merveille que Flaxman, l'artiste antique, le statuaire païen, l'homme mythologue par étude, par coutume, par goût, ait trouvé si miraculeusement des figures si évangeliques, des figures si pures de paganisme.*'²⁷

Flaxman's linear clarity made classical stories comprehensible and one reviewer lamented that since so few people read Dante, Flaxman's illustrations to the *Divine Comedy* might encourage a new public interest in the masterpiece. In the same volume, however, *L'Apothéose d'Homère* was criticised, partly because of its classical restraint: '*Dans le tableau de M. Ingres, Homère est beau, pur, divin mais calme; les figures sont belles, pures, mais calmes. . .*'²⁸

Paradoxically, few paintings by Ingres could have been more in spirit with Flaxman's own artistic aspirations. One of the English sculptor's most popular works was a relief copied from a calyx krater, made for Wedgwood and known as 'The Apotheosis of Homer'. The relief was famous in antiquarian circles in Italy at the end of the eighteenth century.²⁹ Although Flaxman did not choose to illustrate Homer, his interest in the poet was profound. For Ingres, as for Flaxman, the superiority of Homer could confront modernity as a perfect and valuable model for contemporary artists. Drawings for *l'Apothéose d'Homère* often bear inscriptions which imply that for Ingres the moral content of such a painting almost outweighed stylistic considerations.³⁰ One such early sketch includes Flaxman's name among the elect around Homer.³¹ 1826, the year in which Ingres received the commission of *L'Apothéose d'Homère* was also the year in which Flaxman died. The sculptor's inclusion, contemplated in the painting, may have seemed an appropriate tribute. But Ingres did not, finally, paint Flaxman in the finished work. He reserved the sculptor's

portrait for the later drawing of *Homère Déifié* (Fig.55), made years later, in which copies of Flaxman's outlines also appear. In this work, the emphasis is on both modern and antique worlds paying their tribute to Homer. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Flaxman's portrait is placed among figures such as Madame Dacier, Poussin and the Abbé Barthélemy. The selection of personalities from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is very precise. Ingres chooses people whose contribution to Homer's immortality is that of popularisation; the painter who established famous pictorial conventions for the representation of Homeric subjects, the translator of Homer and the writer whose 'antique' novel was popular middle-class reading. As the final example, Ingres chooses Flaxman's outlines, the first set of Homer illustrations to win world-wide acclaim.

Ingres and Flaxman shared an implicit belief in the divine nature of great art. *L'Apothéose d'Homère* and *Homère Déifié* were moral, didactic works, and Flaxman, in private work, devoted himself to promoting a moral message through his art. Unlike Flaxman, Ingres did not concern himself with a specifically Christian morality, but a morality of art. And Flaxman too was convinced that all great masterpieces should have a moral purpose. Works created to improve the minds of those who saw them share a fundamental need for formal clarity. Ingres may have felt confirmed in his own artistic idealism after his discovery of Flaxman; even *l'Artiste* was prepared to equate Flaxman's simplicity of style with a simple goodness and modesty of spirit. In *Homère Déifié* the outline illustrations to Homer adorn the poet's own temple, forming the only visual reference to a specific work of art (Fig.66). For Ingres these images may well have seemed sacred, lifted far beyond the humbler ambitions of their original creator.

*An unknown funerary relief by Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux**

BY ANNE M. WAGNER

IN 1882 Prince Georges Stirbey, Carpeaux's protector during his final illness, presented most of the thousands of drawings left in his possession at the sculptor's death in October 1875 to three institutions, the Musée du Louvre and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Valenciennes. Among them were two studies of a draped female figure standing in a niche framed at its corners by four *putti*.¹ The more elaborate of the two (Fig.53), now in the Cabinet des Dessins, Louvre, includes a cartouche inscribed 'ELEONORE BLUM.'; on this basis the drawing was

²³ Oeuvre Complet de John Flaxman, *L'Artiste*, Tome V, 21^e livraison [1833], p.260.

²⁴ *op. cit.* pp.259–60.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *L'Artiste*, VI, 18^e livraison [1833], p.289. Signed 'P.B.'

²⁸ *L'Artiste*, V, 8^e livraison [1833], p.94.

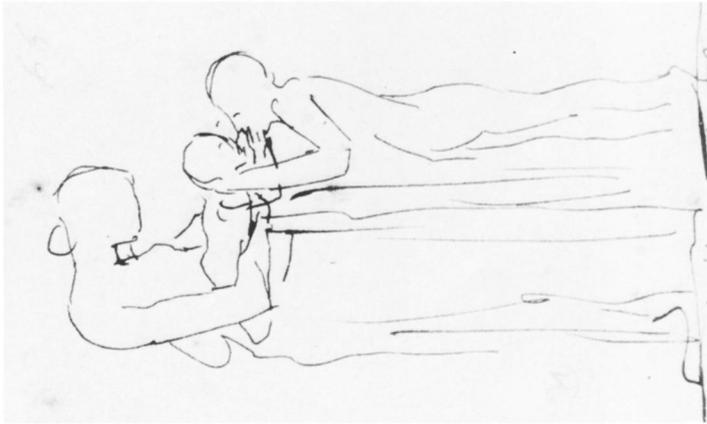
²⁹ V. SCHEIDEMANTEL: 'The Apotheosis of Homer, A Wedgwood and Bentley Plaque', *Festschrift Ulrich Middeldorf*, Berlin [1968], pp.517–522, plates CCXXIV–CCXXV.

³⁰ Musée Ingres, Inv.No.867867, Côte A. On the verso of this drawing Ingres has scribbled various remarks, including this: *danger et corruption de l'art entre les florentins manières dans le dessins et Rubens par la couleur . . . Que tous les peintres ne sont propres à faire la loi d'enseignement et sont même dangereux* (.)

³¹ Musée Ingres, Inv.No.867883. Daniel Ternois suggests that this drawing is probably preparatory for the painting *L'Apothéose d'Homère* and not the drawing *Homère Déifié*.

* I am grateful for the support of the National Gallery of Art, Washington and the Samuel H. Kress Foundation New York, and for the aid of Monsignor Lestocquoy, Rome and Gerhard Fries, Paris.

¹ *Projet de Tombeau* (?), here called *Study for the Monument to Eléonore Blount*, red crayon and ink wash, heightened with white gouache, on heavy grey wove paper, H. 19.7 by 13.7 cm, Cabinet des Dessins, Musée du Louvre, R.F. 1223; see GUIFFREY and MARCEL: *Inventaire général des dessins du Musée du Louvre et du Musée de Versailles. Ecole Française*, III, Paris [1909], p.27, No.1996, repr. *Study for the Monument to Eléonore Blount*, black crayon on heavy grey wove paper with a green thread, 15.4 by 16.6 cm, *Verso*: two crouching figures supporting an architectural form, black crayon. Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, Album Stirbey II, No.562.



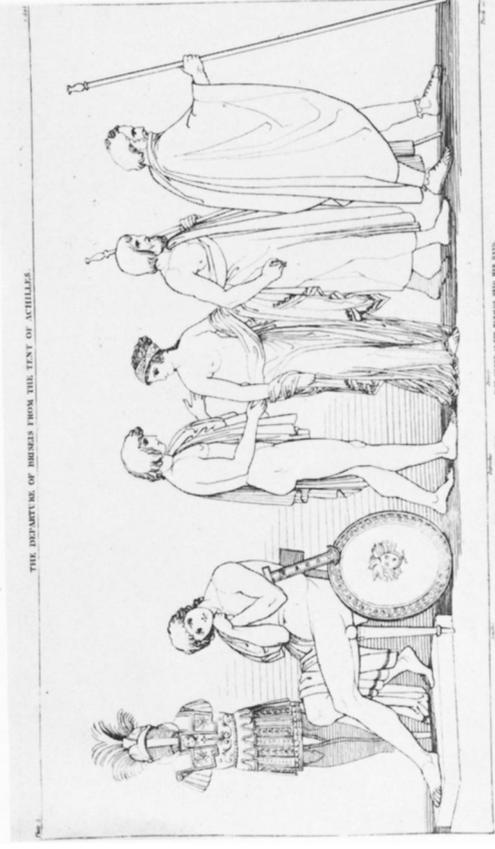
64. *Woman and two Children*, by Ingres. Pen and pencil, 12.2 by 7.1 cm. (Musée Ingres, Montauban).



65. *Drawing for Countess Spencer Monument, figure of Charity*, by John Flaxman. Pen and brown wash, 19 by 14 cm. (Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, Calif.).



66. *Study for the frieze on the temple of Homère Déifié*, by Ingres. Pencil, 38 by 52 cm. (Musée Ingres, Montauban).



67. *Achilles and Brisis*, illustration to Homer's *Iliad*, by John Flaxman. Engraving.



68. *The Council of the Gods*, illustration to Homer's *Iliad*, by John Flaxman. Engraving.