

WILLIAM JAMES LINTON – A LIFE IN THE COLLECTIONS

On the Formations of Political Art and Wood Engraving

“Linton – A Life in the collections” can count as the probably most comprehensive monographic source related to the history of political art in the 19th century. She comprises more than two hundred articles and commentaries divided into four parts.

II THE BRANTWOOD YEARS

In 1849 Linton moved to the picturesque Lake District. His ramshackle house in Brantwood not only accommodated his large family – the seven children were educated in an anti-authoritarian, Rousseauian manner – but also a number of varying Republican refugees. In 1854 he established his first private press there with the help of a small group of enthusiastic allies. A few months after the death of his second partner Emily Wade in December 1856, he left this residency, partly staying with his new spouse Eliza Lynn in Hastings, but most of the time in London. After having met increasing problems to find work, he emigrated in 1866 to North America. Temporarily, the Brantwood estate had been rented to the Chartist poet Gerald Massey, but finally Linton sold it to John Ruskin in order to finance his new American private press. The famous art historian made extensive alterations, which turned the neat proportions of the feral house into an awe-inspiring manor. The republican mottoes *God and the people* and *Ora e Sempre* which had decorated the walls were erased during these renovations. Ruskin had projected that Brantwood should become a museum after his death, a plan that could only be realised as late as in 1951.

-, ed.: **The English Republic. Leeds – London-Brantwood. 1850-55 (4 series)**

Complete sets of the “English Republic” had always been very rare. In his foreword of the abridged edition of 1891, the editor Kineton Parkes admits that he wasn’t able “to obtain a copy for the purposes of this edition in spite of much advertising.” The set of all four volumes, which is kept in the Linton-Archive seems to be the only existing one with all four hand coloured cover pages. This unbound and untrimmed set had been Linton’s private copy. He took it with him when he emigrated to America in 1866 and kept it in his desk in his home in Hamden, CT. Vol. I is also at hand in a bound version with a bookplate of the “Workingmens Reading Room, Johns Street, Caldewgate.”

In December 1850, close to two years after the revolutionary hopes of a democratic change had been buried Europe-wide below a mantle of resignation and depression, Linton began to proclaim his forceful vision of a democratic *English Republic*. In his characteristic overheated diction, he exhorted his fellow countrymen to renew the ancient republican ideals of the English Revolution by establishing a strong national party which would be able to put the basic republican principles into practice: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. In the following five years, he would amplify and equip his vision of a direct democracy in a flood of articles that poured out of his pen into his newly founded *auteur* journal.

The English Republic was issued at first in the form of weekly tracts and later continued as a monthly. At first it was printed at Leeds, “in the hope of there taking up some of the subscribers to the *Present Age*, a serious, liberal magazine edited by Dr. F. R. Lees, the head of the Temperance agitation. The expected advantage on both sides not arriving, the *Present Age* was discontinued and I went on with my own venture, still printing at Leeds, my publisher in London my old friend James Watson. (...) In 1852 and 1853 the *Republic* was issued in four-page weekly tracts, bound together for monthly parts, still printed at Leeds. In the spring of 1852 I removed to Brantwood, and in 1854 resumed the monthly issue, by then having printing press and types, and registering myself as a printer, without which my printing material was liable to seizure and confiscation by the authorities. At Brantwood I had the assistance of three young men from Cheltenham, who came across the country to offer themselves at my service, at any wage that I could afford them. Two were printers, and the third was a gardener. They were zealous and efficient helpers.” (Memories)

The nearly one thousand pages in close type comprise an outline of a new society which consists of four interacting circles of community: the family, the local parish, the republic nation and the world federation of democratic nations forming the *Universal Republic*. Linton’s call for the nationalization of land owes a lot to the early agrarian communism of the Levellers and of Thomas Spence. One of the central postulations of the *English Republic* is the national regulation of the economy. Linton advocated a nationalization of the banking system: “It is one Business of the Government to be the nation’s banker, to furnish each individual with the material means, the capital for work, at all times and under all circumstances.” Francis Barrymore Smith has characterized Linton’s vision of republic as “an open programme to be worked for rather than an obsessively detailed final plan.” Already in 1973 he could grasp as a strong point of the scheme that it would be “still a creative, stimulating project when most other utopias are dead.”

Linton’s vision of republic was in no account an isolated nationalistic one. He was a follower of Guiseppe Mazzini’s ideal of a union of democratic European republics, and the core of his journal is

a map of a projected Republican Europe, which resets all the arrangements of the Restoration. In the pre-revolutionary phase, he had strove to join the international republican networks and throughout 1851 he had been busy organizing relief and employment for a large number of republican refugees who came from all over Europe. Beside Mazzini himself, some of the most prominent ideologists of the revolutions of '48 belonged to his friends and contributed to the journal: Alexander Herzen, the Russian philosopher, wrote on Russian Socialism and on his friend Bakounin, Karl Stolzman, the emigrant from Warsaw on the Polish fight for liberty and Wendell Philipps from Boston on American abolitionism. Another prominent contributor was the noted republican poet and critic Walter Savage Landor. Besides, there are translations of the *Chatiments* of Victor Hugo, which were executed by the editor himself, and excerpts of pamphlets by Milton, Lamennais and Ledru-Rollin. For Francis Barrymore Smith, *The English Republic* represents "the fullest and most venturesome transposition of European republicanism into English."

In artistic terms, Linton's new journal can be considered as a consistent realization of the aesthetics of Guiseppe Mazzini, who had proclaimed that political art should represent a perfect unity of theory and action. Former editorial concepts of Linton and his circle with generalized headings like *Repository* or *Library* were addressed to a limited public, to a certain class and a certain nation. The *English Republic*, though spatially much more specific in its heading, was addressed to the whole of humanity. In its nationalist presumption of an ideological English hegemony, it reflects that stage of enhanced imperialism which had filled the ideological gaps after the failure of '48. More particularly it can stand for a traditional drive towards expansiveness of English Puritanism with its intrinsic promise of universal salvation. *Internationalism* in its original Benthamite sense had meant first and foremost the true shaping of national English interests. What Bentham had meant exclusively in economic respects was in Mazzini's and Linton's view even more relevant in ideological and spiritual terms. Their expanded utilitarianism was no longer pragmatically concerned with national interdependence and processuality but was targeted at a final eschatological entity. After the international re-establishment of autocracy by the *Congress of Vienna*, the emotional sum of national interests could no longer result in a stately association of reasoned interests. Although the crucial concept of a *Univeral Republic* had been founded decades earlier in the writings of Kant and Bentham on a rather abstract level, it was due to the visions of Mazzini and Linton that it became a pressing and more physical kind of shaping. As soon as the English would revive their ancient communitarian spirit, so the suggestions of Linton's journal, they would ignite as a natural avant-garde the realisation of that global state of egalitarianism which had been conceived by Lamennais as the true embodiment of God.

Linton had broken off this project in frustration. He hadn't met his objective to encourage the foundation of a progressive *Young England* movement as a republican alternative to highbrow Social Toryism. Also in commercial respect *The English Republic* was just another failure in a long list of debacles. Only thirty years later, it had reached a wider audience in the condensed form of a popular compilation by Kineton Parkes, at a time when the *Socialist International* had already been founded and radical utopianism had become an essential element of the *Aesthetic Movement*. Parkes, the young co-editor of the journal of the *Ruskin-Society* could easily recognize the present significance of the work of the old Chartist and its function as a blueprint for the socialist schemes of his mentor Ruskin and of William Morris, who had been artistically inspired by the example of Linton's work. But also at the time when the original edition was published, the *English Republic* had played a role

as a transmitter in the history of British radicalism that should not be underestimated as “it supplied a social democratic programme, a focus for egalitarian fervour (...) that kept alive the ‘moral force’ Chartist ideology through the period of Chartist demoralization.” (F.B. Smith)

In contrast to the expressive imagery of *The National*, Linton here had preferred a graphic concept of stringent relevance and purity according to his intention to update ancient puritan virtues. He tolerated only very few images, and these rare ones had to serve the “Cause” in a pointed way: The colours of the illuminated republican flag, which crowned the front pages, were of such symbolic significance that it subsequently became the emblem of the *National Republican Conference* of 1872; the illuminated map of Republican Europe was printed as a foldout, so it could be pinned to the wall for demonstration purposes; a small number of heroic portraits of major exponents of the English Revolution is contrasted with caricatures of the villains of Restoration and Imperialism to point out the crucial difference.

Vol. I (378 pages, Leeds / London 1851) includes some of Linton’s most effective interventionist poetry. *The Gathering of the People (A Storm Song)* was written in 1839. The communitarian hymn about the power of accumulation was reprinted several times. In 1849 it had been performed on the occasion of a Chartist celebration in London with a quartet and choir to the music of Beethoven. The cycle *Rhymes and Reasons against Landlordism* consisting of forty-six poems, was published as a sequel running through nine issues of *The English Republic*. It was introduced by an essay on *The Land Question and the Irish Tenant-League*. Sixteen years later, an enlarged edition with a new preface (*On Fenianism and Republicanism*) and four additional poems was issued in New York under the title: *Ireland for the Irish*.

Vol. II (396 pages, Leeds / London / Brantwood 1852-53) The heading *Words and Meanings* collects a group of republican teaching pieces by Linton, whom Stefanie Kuduk Weiner refers to as *definitional poems*: Concise, lexical verses, which “delineate the meaning of the noun they take as their title, sometimes straightforwardly, sometimes more obliquely through metaphor, image or vignette. Sometimes, these poems embed definitions within a short ode to a virtue, and sometimes (...) Linton’s emphasis shifts from forwarding a definition to interrogating (...) the processes of signification itself. For Linton, thus, the definitional poem serves several purposes. It seeks both to offer a definition and also to inspire his readers to weave the republican virtue in question to their own lives. (...) Not evidently sophisticated or innovative, it is only when seen as a group (...) that these poems are revealed in their complexity as definitional poems and therefore poems about language and poetry itself. His experiments with definition knitted his poems together into a sustained meditation on poetic meaning-making, on the relation between poetic lexis and the everyday language that is the medium of poetry and that poetry in turn transmutes through compression, figures, and form. The definitional poems analyze political struggles over rhetoric, highlight gaps between authoritative utterances and the plain-speaking of common folk, and in the process which explores how poetry participates in political speech.” (Stefanie Kuduk Weiner) A preliminary prose form of lexical poetry is included in Vol. I of *The English Republic* where Linton grouped a series of short prose definitions together under the heading *A Republican Catechism*. Kuduk Weiner also counts major parts of the lyrical cycles *Hymns for the Unenfranchised* (1839) and *Rhymes and Reasons against Landlordism* (1849) among this category.

Vol. III. (498 pages, Brantwood 1854) The volume largely consists of a wide range of international contributions, among them articles by Alexander Herzen, Arnold Ruge, Theodore Parker, Charles Stolzman and Giuseppe Mazzini. Of central interest is the a hand coloured map of a visionary Republican Europe, and also a lengthy excerpt from Blomfield's *History of Norwich* (ca. 1737) that gives an account of a revolt of the "lower order" during the reign of Edward VI. This record of a powerful peasants' rebellion in the early 14th century, which was led by Kett, a tanner of Wymondham, once more provides evidence of Linton's interest in the construction of history. The subtitle of this sequel, which ran through five issues of the journal, was *A Chapter of the Suppressed History of England*. It was the generation of '48 – in Germany, Wilhelm Zimmermann, Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx - that had discovered the medieval peasant rebellions as the historic predecessors of the contemporary socialist movements.

Vol. IV (108 pages, Brantwood 1855) The few final issues are mainly dedicated to topics of the Crimean War and the conclusions that should be drawn from its emerging results. Matters of pressing importance such as the national independences of Italy, Hungary and Poland would remain unsolved. Linton took the view that the next campaign that has to be fought out, "the beginning of the revolution," would take place at home.

-, The English Republic. Every month. Price Six-Pence. (Subscribers page) – A Prayer for War. by Spartacus. (backpage). London 1850

One-page leaflet. The forefront of the promotion leaflet announces the publishing of "The English Republic" and is decorated with the hand coloured masthead of the journal, the republican flag. The backside has a poem titled "A Prayer for War," signed: Spartacus. (From a descendant's estate).

Linton was a decided advocate for military interventions against autocratic systems. The prayer is to be interpreted as a call for the support of Italian, Polish, Hungarian and Russian republicans.

-, Our Country. Special print from "The English Republic" Vol. II. n.d. / n.p. (1853)

The one-page leaflet was published anonymously.

Linton wrote this short patriotic hymn on the occasion of the beginning of the Crimean War, which was connected with the prospects of the republicans of an abolition of the Czarist regime. The poem was published in *The English Republic* under the title: "Let us serve our country"

**-, Good Lord deliver us! – From the "The English Republic"
Offprint from Vol. III. n.d. / n.p. (1854)**

One-page leaflet, signed: Spartacus

A prime example of Linton's favourite poetic genre, the secular hymn; a prayer for the re-erection of the broken republican self-confidence. - "to be used in and out of all Churches and Chapels in this Empire."

**George Julian Harney ed.: The Red Republican & The Friend of the People 1850-1851.
London, 1967**

In the collection: the two-volume reprint with an introduction by John Saville. London 1967

George Julian Harney was an early follower of the physical force Chartism of Feargus O'Connor

and connected to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. In 1850 he finally broke with O'Connor because of his support of anti-republican elements among the European exiles and came "to share Linton's belief that the Chartists needed a vision of republican fraternity and a sense of self-respect if they were to remain staunch in the struggle for the suffrage." (F.B. Smith) In June 1850, Harney began with *The Red Republican*, a magazine still known today for having published the first English translation of Marx' *Communist Manifesto*. Linton designed and cut the pithy masthead of the journal and contributed under his favourite pennames "Spartacus" and "Armand Carrel" lots of essays, poems and songs and also translations of pamphlets by Mazzini.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning: Casa Guidi Windows. A Poem.

London 1851

140 pages, first and only separate edition.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning became famous for her inwardly poetry, but most of her late publications were criticised for their evident emancipatory political contents. Two of them, *Casa Guidi Windows* (1848-51) and *Poems Before Congress* (1860), especially deal with various stages of the *Risorgimento*. The former reflects proceedings of the Florentine revolution in the form of outlooks from her residency's windows. "Of the two parts of this Poem," the author states in her preface, "the first was written nearly three years ago, while the second resumes the actual situation of 1851. The discrepancy between the two parts is a sufficient guarantee to the public of the truthfulness of the writer, who, though she certainly escaped the epidemic 'falling sickness' of enthusiasm of Pio Nono (*Pope Pius IX*), takes shame upon herself that she believed (...) some royal oaths, and lost sight of the probable consequences of some obvious popular defects." The royal oaths she refers to were those of "the false Duke Leopold", who at first had agreed to the *Constituent Assembly* in Rome in 1848 only to occupy the Tuscany three years later with Austrian troops.

According to the noted Victorian literary critic and bibliographer Harry Buxton Forman, *Casa Guidi Windows* could not have been written without the example of Linton's poem *Dirge of the Nations*. It remains unclear if Barrett Browning actually knew Linton's revolutionary hymns, but she was friends with Walter Savage Landor and had exchanged views with him long before she and her husband Robert gave him asylum from his familial conflicts in the *Casa Guidi*. It therefore appears to be more obvious to assume an influence by Landor's *Italics* cycle, whose traces can also be found in Linton's poetry, than to consider Linton's example behind this extraordinary piece of political poetry. But Barrett Browning's views were more moderate and, in her monarchical tendencies, partly opposed to those of Landor and Linton. Before she became completely disappointed by the results of the *Treaty of Villafranca* - a topic she deals with in her *Poems Before Congress* - she had been a supporter of the Italian politics of Napoleon III. Mazzini in her opinion was an "extreme theorist" whose radicalness she held for being rather dangerous to the Italian cause. Linton doesn't mention Barrett Browning in his recollections. In 1870 he executed the graver-work for an illustrated edition of *Lady Geraldine's Courtship*, a very popular example of her early sentimental lyrics.

-, anon.: The Plaint of Freedom.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1852

57 pages, limited to 300 copies. Title page design by the author. The pages are decorated with hand-

coloured initials.

Linton published this large poem for private circulation anonymously. “Why so it would be hard to say, unless it was that I doubted my own ability for writing so serious a work.” (Memories) The author laments the present demoralized state of England and seeks to mobilize the traditional rebellious virtues. The poem is dedicated to the memory of Milton, the bard of the Puritan Republic and advocate for regicide. In a series of poetical portraits, it generates a gallery of the representatives of the revolt of the English people against authoritarian arbitrariness. It starts with the legendary chieftain Caractacus, who tried to resist the Roman occupation and continues with John Wycliff, Wat Tyler, Oliver Cromwell to Tom Paine. Again, Linton’s ambition to construct an anti-feudalistic *History of England* shows through. By establishing a nativistic myth of the republican virtues, Linton apparently tried to emplace England as a leading force in a future *Europe of United Republican Nations* or in an even more expanded sense of *The Universal Republic*. Together with his two preceding hymns from 1848 - *To the Future* and *Dirge of the Nations* – this mythological poem forms an extensive corpus of the revolutionary imagery of this crucial period. The late Walter Savage Landor was a fervent fan of Linton’s patriotic republican verse.

Walter Savage Landor: The Last Fruit Off an Old Tree.

London 1853

This very stimulating miscellany of the 78-year-old poet includes essays, letters, epigrams, dramatic scenes, and various kinds of poetry. Among them are those seven revolutionary hymns, which he had grouped together in 1848 in a small private edition under the title *The Italics*. Included is also the last section of his famous work in progress, *The Imaginary Conversations*, a genre of his own, which he had created the mid-1820s. It had been modelled on Cicero’s Tusculanae Disputationes and the Baroque tradition of contemplative *Dialogues of the Dead*, and consists of a total of 144 dialogues written in a period of close to forty years. These fictitious discussions allowed him to go on a time travel and, in projecting his views onto an imaginary past, he could express his notorious aversions against rigid power structures in a rather unrestrained manner. Some of the conversations of this final section address events of the recent past, e.g. the conversations between King Louis Philippe and Guizot, Thiers and Lamartine or Garibaldi and Mazzini.

Landor’s classically inspired work formed an important intersection between the official Victorian literary system and the political radicalism at the fringes. It represents a solitary cultural bridge between the early phase of British Jacobinism with its references to ancient Roman republicanism – Landor had published his first cycle of radical poetry in 1795 - and the politics of democratic nationalism in the mid 19th century. Unlike his contemporaries, the Romantic poets and theorists Wordsworth and Coleridge, Landor never abandoned his early radical commitment. Nietzsche regarded him, along with Ralph Waldo Emerson, as the only contemporary master of prose in the Anglo-Saxon world, and Ezra Pound praised him for a certain characteristic “hardness” of style. Although they never met in person, there was a connection between Landor and Linton in the latter’s second wife Eliza Lynn, who was Landor’s late muse from 1846 on. Linton kept a copy of the *Last Fruits* in his home in Hamden, CT, together with a letter and an inserted manuscript poem by Landor, which was dedicated to Linton as the anonymous *Author of The Plaint of Freedom*. Landor had published this praise a few years later in his penultimate miscellany *Dry Sticks, Fagoted*.

- , Help For Poland, Brantwood, Coniston, Windermere, 1854

One-leaf pamphlet, signed and dated by Linton, Brantwood, April 1854,

“Subscriptions should be sent to Messrs. Worcell etc.” This pamphlet is addressed to the British people, to support the right Polish party; not the monarchical one, which was backed by the English government, but the republican one in exile with its accredited leaders. In the early forties, “Mazzini introduced me to two Polish friends, refugees and exiles like himself, Stanislas Worcell and Karl Stolzman. Worcell had been the owner of large estates, which he forfeited on account of his prominent share in the Polish insurrection of 1830. He raised a troop on his own lands, fought his way into Warsaw, and sat there in the Polish Senate. He was of noble presence, and of most remarkable culture and intelligence, the chief of the Democratic party in the Polish Emigration. (...) He was Mazzini’s closest friend. Stolzman was an old soldier, who in his youth had served under Napoleon. (...) Meeting with Mazzini in Switzerland, he aided in the formation of the Society of *Young Europe*, founded by Mazzini to bring together the Republicans of the different countries. In 1844, letters from abroad to Mazzini and Stolzman were opened at the English General Post-Office in London. Of course they were in correspondence with Italian and Polish patriots.” (Memories)

Linton refers here to the notorious *Mazzini – Letters scandal*, in which the English home secretary James Graham had been involved. Linton had earned wide reputation among the radicals through his substantial contributions to the detection of this Victorian *Watergate*.

- , The Descent from the Cross after Rembrandt, from: The Illustrated London News.

London 1854

Single sheet, taken from the ILN

Also after the *Illustrated London News* had ended the collaboration with his workshop at the end of 1847, Linton continued to provide them rather regularly with engravings, mainly reproductions of paintings. The engraving after Rembrandt demonstrates how the expressive mode of interpretation, which became characteristic of him, took shape.

John Ruskin: On the Nature of Gothic Architecture: and herein of the True Functions of the Workman in Art. Reprinted from the Sixth Chapter of the Second Volume of Mr. Ruskin’s “Stones of Venice”.

London 1854

50-page pamphlet with an inserted folding plate and wood engravings in text. This revised and supplemented second edition followed the first within three weeks.

The cheap working man’s edition was the first separate printing of Ruskin’s essay. It had been taken from the second volume of *The Stone of Venice* (1853) and would become the foundation charter of the *arts & crafts* movement, when it was reprinted decades later by William Morris’ Kelmscott Press. In the preface it is noted that the publication was issued for the benefit of the newly established *Working Men’s College*, where Ruskin was engaged to teach ‘Elementary and Landscape Drawing’. The college had been founded by Frederick Maurice, an Anglican clergyman, in order “to make our working people understand that they are Persons and not Things.” Maurice was a follower of Robert Owen’s Cooperative-movement and inspired by Coleridge’s and Carlyle’s variations of *German Romanticism*. It was he who had coined the term *Christian Socialism* in 1848 in order to support the

Chartist's cause from the ecclesiastic side.

Linton rejected the idealization of the "savage" Gothic workshop, who in Ruskin's view represented a state of free collaborative expression. Ruskin had assiduously tuned into Carlyle's cultural pessimistic tirades, when he set the products of a fabulous medieval time against a rotten state of modern industrial artisanship, in whose drive for perfection he scrutinized "signs of a slavery (...) a thousand times more bitter and more degrading than that of a scourged African, or a helot Greek." Using the example of woodcut, Linton sought to demonstrate that also medieval art represented only a spoiled and often very rude level of hierarchic mechanisation. When Linton, in his *Practical Hints on Wood Engraving*, referred to "the purists" that went "into ecstasies" over medieval woodcuts and "do but ignorantly rave and imagine a vain thing", he in fact meant Ruskin and his followers.

Although they barely met, there was a relation of mutual influence between Linton and Ruskin, seven years his junior. It is known that apprentices of Linton such as the Canadian engraver Frederick Brigden used to attend Ruskin's classes at the *Working Men's College*. His plea for artisan creativity helped Linton shape his assertiveness as an artist-engraver and equipped him with ammunition in his polemics against photoxylography; whereas Ruskin could find valuable inspiration in Linton's political writings concerning his own conception of *social economy*. He was well aware of the fact that the editing of his *Fors Clavigera*, a journal addressed to "the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain", which he started in 1871 in Brantwood, had been a continuation of Linton's radical pamphleteering in the same location.

Linton's aloofness against Ruskin was quite comprehensible, as the prominent art historian, who had always persisted in his elitist Tory views, was going to popularize a range of former radical Chartist positions. Finally, Ruskin had not only shared Linton's spatial positions, but also his ideological ones of being the modern *Spartacus*, the liberator of the contemporary artisan, who provides the workmen of the 19th century with fresh arguments and a new kind of rhetoric.

William James Linton / Daniel Morin: A tinted Advertising Sheet for "Pen and Pencil. An Illustrated Family Newspaper".

publ. by Joseph Clayton, London 1855

In February 1855, Linton launched a new journal, which was co-funded by the well known French wood engraver Daniel Morin, a friend of Linton's brother Henry. "The journal's mixture was the unusual one, with political editorial, news, and finely engraved illustrations, art criticism, and two new features (...) The editorials were toned down for the family market." (E.B. Smith) After about eight numbers, *Pen and Pencil* succumbed to scarcity of capital. This failure also contributed to the decline of *The English Republic*, which ceased to exist in April.

-, Carmen Triumphale. For the General Rejoicing ordered on May 29, 1856. n.d. / n.p. (probably Brantwood, 1856)

4-page pamphlet, published anonymously.

Linton's poem is a caustic satire on the Nativity Story connected to the birth of Napoléon Eugène Louis Bonaparte. The only son of the French Imperial couple was baptized during the *Treaty of Paris*, the celebrations marking the end of the Crimean War. Decades later Linton would publish another

pamphlet on the occasion of the death of the *Prince Imperial* as a soldier of the British army in the Zulu War.

Alfred Tennyson: Poems.

London 1857 / 1864

New edition, the seventh one.

It is said that the troubles with the artists of this edition of Tennyson's poems, that turned out to become the most popular example of the Pre-Raphaelite's book illustrations, took a heavy toll on the health of its publisher Edward Moxon and finally caused his early death. Moxon, a poet himself, had won considerable recognition among radical circles by issuing the first complete edition of Shelley's work in 1839. For some blasphemous passages, he had served a prison sentence in 1841. About half of the fifty-four illustrations came from the young members of the Pre-Raphaelites group, the rest by already noted artists such as Clarkeson Stanfield or Callcott Horsley.

Most of the engravings were executed by the Dalziel Brothers, by John Thomson and Linton. Rossetti felt that the engravers were mucking his images up and wrote a biting poem on the subject, titled *Address to Dalziel Brothers*: "O woodman spare that block,/ O gash not anyhow!/ It took ten days by clock,/ I'd fain protect it now. Chorus: Wild laughter from Dalziels' Workshop." In a letter to his friend, the poet William Allingham explicated his criticism: "These engravers! What ministers of wrath! (...) I took more pains with one block lately than I had done with anything for a long while. It came back to me on paper, the other day, with Dalziel performing his cannibal jig in the corner, and I have really felt like an invalid ever since. As yet, I fare best with W. J. Linton. He keeps stomach aches for you, but Dalziel deals with fevers and agues." By comparison, it had not been Linton's rather loose and sketchy mode of engraving that conveyed the best impressions of the catchy outline style of Hunt, Millais and Rossetti, but the reproductions of John Thomson. Yet through his relatively true engraving work, Linton offered his services for a future project, in which Rossetti was involved, the illustrated biography of William Blake.

Harriet Martineau: The English Lakes.

London - Windermere. 1858

Subheading: "Illustrated with steel engravings, woodcuts by W. J. Linton. Outlines of the Mountains, and a Map coloured geologically, by John Ruthven. To which is added an appendix containing the Meteorology of the Lake District; an Account of its Flowering Plants, Ferns, and Mosses; an outline of its Geology and Mineralogy; and a table of the heights of the Mountains."

Harriet Martineau had moved to the Lake District in 1845 and lived nearby Linton's residency in Brantwood. She had started her career as a journalist with articles for the Unitarian *Monthly Repository* and had become famous for her committed writings and social analyses advocating Poor Law reform and Abolitionism. Linton engraved forty-five plates for Martineau's domestic travelogue. They were sumptuously printed on India paper. "These richly textured, loving evocations of the picturesque are among the finest engravings he ever made. They abide as memorials to the tenderness of the Linton's life at Brantwood." (F.B. Smith)

It was the extraordinary intensity of his landscape depictions and the graphic freedom that he allowed himself to this end that had laid the foundations for Linton's reputation as a leading proponent

of artistic xylography in the 19th century. This first series of Lake engravings focuses entirely on the graphic power of an often extremely reduced lineament, in contrast to the more painterly steel engravings and chromolithographs of the Martineau book. It was the direct translation of impressions of nature that later made Linton's Lake engravings much sought-after study objects for a young generation of Impressionist xylographers. As John P. Davis conceded in his article in the *Century Magazine* in 1889, they "meant art to us, and the lines he cut were, in lieu of nature, our wonder and study." Many of the Lake engravings, especially when comparing them to the xylographic standard of the times, indeed convey the impression as if they were cut directly before the motif.

Lady Shelley ed.: Shelley Memorials: From Authentic Sources. To which is added an Essay on Christianity by Percy Bysshe Shelley.

London 1859

The volume, consists of a short biography of the influential poet, who died in Italy in 1822, and of excerpts of his correspondence. It was edited by his widow, the famous novelist Mary Shelley. The frontispiece depicts Shelley's tomb in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome. It was engraved by Linton after a sketch by the English painter Arthur John Strutt.

Tom Hughes / Richard Doyle: The Scouring of the White Horse.

London 1859

The subject of this historical Dickensian novel by Thomas Hughes is the famous prehistoric geoglyph of Uffington in the county of Oxfordshire depicting a white horse. Main parts of the book deal with legends, which connect the monumental pictogram to the era of the Anglo-Saxon King Alfred. The stories are illustrated by the noted Punch cartoonist Richard Doyle. Linton's engravings translate his childish and vivid drawings in a most congenial way.

Walter Savage Landor: Dry Sticks, Fagoted.

Edinburgh 1858

This penultimate miscellany of political epigrams and poems that Landor had brought forth is dedicated to Lajos Kossuth, the regent-president of Hungary in exile. The title is ambiguous. As an image of a bundle of pieces that burn and give heat, it works as a metaphor of the collection of poems itself. But the terms also refer to the Roman *fascis lictoriae*, the symbol of republican power and authority, which later became notorious as the eponym of the Fascist movement. The collection includes some poems referring to the *Mazzini – Letters scandal*, in whose detection Linton had been involved, and also Landor's hymn to Linton as the anonymous author of the *Plaint of Freedom* (stick No. 241): "Praiser of Milton! worthy of his praise! / How shall I name thee? Art thou yet unnamed? / While verses flourish hanging overhead / In looser tendrils than stern husbandry / May well approve, on thee shall none descend? / At Milton's hallowed name thy hymn august / Sounds as the largest bell from minster-tower. / I ponder; and in time may dare to praise. / Milton had done it; Milton would have graspt / Thy hand amid his darkness, and with more / Impatient pertinacity because / He heard the voice and could not see the face."

Dinah Maria Mulock aka The Author of "John Halifax, Gentleman": Our Year – a Child's Book, in Prose and Verse.

London 1860

The twelve full-page illustrations of this children's yearbook were made by Clarence Dobell, a close friend of the novelist and poet Dinah Maria Craik. The engraving work is rather moderate. It was executed in blackline facsimile manner, probably by apprentices of Linton's workshop.

-, Thirty Pictures by deceased British Artists engraved expressly for the Art Union of London by W. J. Linton.

London 1860

"At Brantwood, my literary work being unremunerative, I continued my engraving, fortunate in being engaged by the *Art Union of London* to execute a series of cuts after the works of *Deceased British Painters*, some from my own drawings." (Memories) This series of reproductions after pictures of Constable, Reynolds, Turner, Gainsborough, Fuseli, Blake and others helped to consolidate a confident position of the engraver as a creative interpreter, shortly before it was called into question by new means of photographic reproduction. A comparison between Linton's interpretations and those which were executed based on the same motifs decades later by xylographers of the *New School* reveal the astonishing freedom of translation which Linton availed himself of. Whereas later xylographers used to render the exposure of the photographic image, the process of translation in Linton's case had been a twofold one, as it had been an interpreting drawing, which stood between the original and the executed engraving. Accordingly, the book also lists the names of the transferring draughtsmen beside those of the painters. In the case of William Blake's *Death Door* it had been Linton himself who had executed this first stage of interpretation. This image by Blake became iconic in the course of the 19th century and a kind of trademark of Linton himself. He would repeatedly reuse it in different contexts during the following decades.

William Bell Scott: Half Hour Lectures on the History and Practice of the fine and ornamental Arts, London 1861–1867–1874

The third, revised edition.

Linton added fifty rough and sketchy illustrations to this collection of nineteen short lectures on arts and crafts, which his close friend, the painter-poet William Bell Scott, had held in the *School of Design in Newcastle*, where he was employed as a chief organizer from the early forties till 1864. The series of lectures starts with the Christian Roman era and extends to the contemporary applied arts and the different schools of historical painting. Lecture 10 is on wood and copper engraving with an emphasis on the crucial role of Thomas Bewick, the famous xylographer from Newcastle who had revolutionized the printing world. According to Bell Scott, it was in Bewick's animal histories that "for the first time perhaps, the designer and the engraver were combined in the same person." It was only three years later that John Ruskin became concerned with Bewick's engravings and only in the early seventies did he start promoting Bewick's fame by taking him in his *Six lectures on wood and metal engraving* as a kind of forerunner of the *arts & craft* attitude.

John R. Wise: Shakespeare: His Birthplace and its Neighbourhood.

London 1861

The numerous head-and tailpieces, which depict Shakespeare-related landscapes and cottages, are fine examples of Linton's art of illustration. It was the first contract work that he executed for the local researcher John Richard de Capel Wise. For a second one, which followed two years later, he only executed the graver work. The drawings were made by his former apprentice Walter Crane.

Div.: Poems & Songs by Robert Burns.

London 1861

This songbook of the legendary people's poet is but a further example of a hasty and bland mass product for an inflationary Victorian bookmarket with lots of cheesy landscapes by Birket Forster and the likes. Among the long list of illustrators and engravers is also Linton and his assistant William Lusson Thomas, who later became the founder of the popular illustrated weekly *The Graphic*. Another engraver involved was Thomas Bolton. His contribution had been an ordinary one, though at that time he was experimenting with a new technology.

John Jackson / W.A. Chatto / G. Bohn: A Treatise on Wood Engraving (with a new chapter on the artists of the present day).

London 1838 / 1861

The revised and supplemented second edition.

In this revised edition of the classic wood engraving history, which first had been published in 1838, Linton's work is prominently represented. Henry Bohn, who revised the edition, made use of Linton's interpretation of William Blake's "Death Door" as frontispiece and mentioned him in the appended chapter about the contemporary state of the art. Nearly thirty years later, Linton would eclipse Chatto & Jackson's historiography of surface printing with his *Masters of Wood Engraving* not only in matters of size and reproduction qualities, but also in editorial respect by dividing the old tradition of woodcutting from the new process of wood engraving in a much more distinctive way. The supplemented new chapter of Bohn's revised edition also introduced a fresh invention of Linton's colleague Thomas Bolton, which would revolutionize the whole business in the following years, photoxylography. It is assumed that it had inspired Linton to create his own method of transferring images, a technique which he called *Kerography*. Similar to Blake's relief etching, this process anticipated the mechanical *line block* or *zinco*, which came into common use in the late seventies and made the *facsimile - engraving* definitely dispensable.

-, Specimens of a New Process Of Engraving for Surface-Printing.

London 1861

16-page prospectus, untrimmed. (From a descendant's estate)

Rossetti was very sceptical about its announced advantages, Thackeray was eager to see a result and Walter Crane reports that Ruskin had tried to get in contact with Linton unavailingly to learn more about his new technical achievement. With his advertising of *A New Process Of Engraving for Surface-Printing*, Linton had caused a big stir. His main intention was to free the art of wood engraving from the "slavery" of facsimile work by offering a mechanical possibility of reproduction. The prospectus displays a number of images which were reproduced with this new technique, examples "of very

various styles and degrees of excellence”, among them an “experimental drawing” by Thackeray and the sketch of a dog, which had been executed by Linton’s apprentice Walter Crane. By using the *New Process*, the text states, “the artist is no longer at the mercy of the engraver. An engraving by the new process is necessarily an exact facsimile, even to the minute touch, of the draftsman’s work, where an artist’s manner is of any value, the new process, therefore, is infinitely superior to engraving on wood; capable also of giving greater delicacy, and very much more minuteness and elaborations.” *Kerography* would also be capable of doing “every thing which can be etched on steel or copper. The only limit to its use is the capability of surface-printing. For whatever can be printed from block in relief, with type or separately, by hand-press or by steam, the new process is available”. Its advantages over lithography would be: “Cheapness in printing, greater delicacy and sharpness of line, greater certainty and regularity of impression.”

In his *Reminiscences*, Crane takes great pain to explain the new procedure: A copper plate is overlaid with an ordinary black etching ground and coated with a layer of white wax, onto which the tracing is transferred. The design is incised through the wax and ground with an etching needle, “bitten in by acid in the same way as an etching, and then a cast taken from it, which would give the lines in relief, and this cast would be produced in hard metal, and probably electrotyped to print from in the ordinary way.”

Alfred Wehnert: Andersen’s Tales for Children, with One Hundred and Five Illustrations.

London 1861

The preface makes it plain that the illustrations of this book, “which may be called electrographs, have not been made in the usual way, by means of wood engraving, but the artist’s own drawings, upon prepared metal plates, have been electrotyped, recently discovered by Mr. W.J. Linton, which bids fair to be of much service in book-decoration.” But only the full-page designs by Linton’s close friend Alfred Wehnert had been reproduced by this *New Process*, the smaller text – illustrations, which had been drawn by Linton’s assistant William Luson Thomas, were engraved in the conventional way. Luson Thomas would play a leading role in the future promotion of Linton’s vision of a more artistic use of xylography.

John Bunyan: The Pilgrim’s Progress from this World to that which is to come. With notes by the Rev. Robert Maguire, M.A. Illustrated by H.C. Selous, Esq., and M. Paolo Priolo.

London / New York. n.d. (ca. 1862)

John Bunyan’s imaginative allegory about a Puritan process of enlightenment and purification had always been a favourite reference work for radical writers such as William Blake, Thomas Cooper or Thomas Doubleday. But to Linton and his disciple William Luson Thomas, who engraved the predominant part of the rather uninspired illustrations by Henry Courtney Selous and Paolo Priolo, the hasty and wooden-looking graver work for Robert Macguire’s commented edition of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* seems to have meant nothing more than a casual job.

Joseph Mazzini: The Duties of Man.

London 1862

The first book edition of this bible of 19th-century communitarism.

The predominant part of Mazzini's best-known publication consists of a series of articles, which he had written in the early forties for his journal *L'Apostolato popolare*. He had published it in London in Italian language to enhance the solidarity of his newly founded *Association of Italian workmen*. An English version of the initial four tracts appeared in 1851 in the first volume of Linton's *English Republic*. Linton recommended their reading to all "who care to work for the Republic. Study well these lessons, and learn what is expected from you, in the life-task, that lies before you."

Linton didn't think much of the subsequent translation by Emily Venturi, who was a dedicated follower and early biographer of the Italian revolutionary. There were Swiss and English editions of *The Duties of Man* in the sixties, "since when over a hundred editions have appeared, including translations in over twenty languages, even one in Esperanto. Addressed to the working class in Italy, this booklet was at first suppressed by the Piedmontese government because of its authorship and because in simple language it aimed at reaching the masses with opinions that sometimes challenged conventional orthodoxy. (...) So strongly did Mazzini advocate duty, association and corporate feeling that he continued to be criticised as a collectivist who rejected the essentials of liberalism and overestimated the need for authority." (Denis M. Smith)

-,: Lake Country Sketchbook.

June 23 to July 18, 1863

The small pocket-sketchbook measures 13 x 8 cm. The three hundred pages consist of pencil drawings and some watercolours.

Two sketchbooks by Linton with landscape views of the Lake District have come down to us. One is in the collection of *Yale University*, another in the *Linton-Archive* of the *Melton Prior Institute*. The latter contains watercolours and drawings made during hikes in the North East of the Lakes along a route between Lake Ullswater and the Helvellyn from June 23 to July 18, 1863. Both sketchbooks served to prepare a series of one hundred wood engravings which he made for a literary travel guide of his wife, the writer Eliza Lynn. It was published in an extravagant edition under the title *The Lake Country* in 1864. Five years earlier, he had already made forty-five further engravings with Lake motifs for Harriet Martineau's illustrated guidebook *The English Lakes*.

Although many of the Lake engravings, especially when comparing them to the xylographic standard of the times, convey the impression as if they were cut directly before the motif, the sketchbooks prove that many preparatory studies were required to achieve a topographically more or less exact impression of nature on the reversive print image. However, it was mostly just the defining contour lines of mountain ranges that he took from the notes he drew in a shorthand way, to then immerse in the intuition of the moment and his eidetic memory while cutting. The latter then often gave him an intensified, dramatizing impression of the sceneries.

Alexander Gilchrist: Life of William Blake, "Pictor Ignotus" 2 Vol.

London 1863

This copy has an elaborate bookplate by Henry Roughton Hogg, depicting a scholar's room. On the table one can see a binocular microscope and on the floor a long refractor telescope, on whose upper end a very minute spider can be detected. Hogg was arachnologist, a suitable profession for someone who owns such a book

After the death of the author, his widow and former peer Anne Gilchrist managed to accomplish the editing of this two-volume biography that rescued its subject from obscurity and made it accessible to a broader audience. She was supported by the counsels of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his brother William, who recommended taking Linton on board to be responsible for the pictorial selection and the reproductions of the graphics. Blake's paintings and watercolours were reproduced as photolithographs, whereas nearly all of his drawings were transferred and interpreted by Linton himself. Most of them were reproduced by *Kerography*, the relief printing technique that Linton had developed especially for the transfer of line drawings. Some of the most vivid images in the biography such as *Plague* (p.55), which could be easily held for reproductions of Blake's originals, are actually ingenious montages by Linton, which he had compiled from heterogeneous material. It is worth taking note that the first public encounter with Blake's imagery took place through the agency of Linton's lively translations. The overall impression of this variation of Blake is a less solemn and hieratical one than those provided by the original. But even a close disciple of Blake such as Samuel Palmer praised the result effusively: "Surely never a book has been put forth more lovingly: the dear Author and the Editor,--Mr. Linton, the Publisher, and Printer, seem all to have laboured at a labour of love: --and instead of being sparingly illustrated, as I understood it was to be, it is, both in quantity and unrivalled quality, the richest Book of all illustrated ones that I have ever seen."

One cannot deny that Linton's art of visual poetry had benefited in the long run considerably from the close examination of Blake's graphics, but the habit of Blake scholars to treat him as a kind of minor satellite doesn't do justice to the complexity. There are some striking instances of overlapping in their mindsets, for instance in their anthropomorphic conceptions of social interrelations, but the gap between Linton's enlightened scepticism and Blake's revealed animism remains irreconcilable. Though Linton had admittedly admired Blake's ability to create powerful moral images, it remains evident that his reclusive mysticism could not be of crucial relevance for someone who strove to express himself in a politically most effective way. In contrast to comparable poets like Burns or Shelley, Blake played no role in the formation of working class culture, and his reputation was confined to small highbrow circles. Accordingly, Blake's impact on Linton's work was, in literary as well as in pictorial respects, only one among many. From today's point of view, with the political aspects of Blake's work having become more visible, it may be appropriate to conceive both, Blake and Linton, as representing two different stages of contrastable complexity in the progress of the formation of a radical democratic art.

In his "Memories", Linton gives an account of his first encounter with a set of Blake's originals, which were kept in the possession of the painter John Linnell: "One Sunday I went with Gilchrist to see Linnell at his house near Red Hill (...) after dinner we were shown his Blake treasures. (...) The Dante designs were drawn in a large book, which Linnell had given to Blake that he might make use of it in his last sickness, during which Linnell had provided for him. It had the look of a speculation, a purpose of being repaid for services to the poor friend; but it did not appear that Linnell had ever attempted to make a profit of them, but kept them as valued mementos only. A strange, dry, withered old man was the painter, quaint in speech, with strange utterance of strange opinions, a man who might have admired Blake as much for his literary incoherences as for his artistic imagination."

-, The Spirit of Konarski, n.p. / n.d. (ca.1863)

One-leaf pamphlet, unsigned, undated.

This poem is a prayer to God, to upbuild “to thy martyr’s memory (...) the Nations freedom.” Linton was well informed of the Polish cause through the reports of his friends, the exiles Worcell and Stolzman. Beside the admired poet Adam Bernard Mickiewicz, it was most notably the Polish revolutionary Szymon Konarski, who had been executed by the Russians in 1839, in whom he recognized an arch-symbol of the Polish fight for liberty. He wrote extensively about him in Vol I. and IV of *The English Republic* and dedicated a chapter of his book *European Republican (1893)* to him. The pamphlet seems to have been published in the context of the Polish uprising against the Russian Empire in January 1863. Linton had immediately called a meeting in London to express the sympathy of the English republicans.

Walter Savage Landor: Heroic Idyls.

London 1863

The loose mix of short theatrical sketches and dialogues in Landor’s last book, which was published shortly before his death in his eighty-eighth year, had a considerable influence on the conceptions of the miscellanies, which Linton would bring forth by his American private press. Besides a section of classical scenes and Latin verse, the *Heroic Idylls* also include remarks on Charles Dickens and Victor Hugo, odes to the Scottish poets Robert Burns and James BV Thompson and poetic responses to Lajos Kossuth and Napoleon III.

John R. Wise: The New Forest: Its History and its Scenery.

London 1863 / 1867

The second edition.

By generously handing this second commission of the local researcher John Richard de Capel Wise on to his former apprentice Walter Crane, Linton gave the initial impetus for his career as one of the most influential illustrators of the era. All of the sixty-three sketches of the *New Forest*, this extensive woodland between Southhampton Water and the Avon, which Crane had executed, were engraved by Linton himself.

Div.: The Poems and Dramas of Lord Byron. (The Illustrated Byron)

London 1864 / New York York 1879

With a total of twenty illustrations, this late New York edition of 1879 includes only a small number of the more than two hundred engravings of the original version. Besides John Gilbert, Birket Foster, Henry Dalziel, Kenny Meadows and Hablot K. Browne, Linton is also mentioned as one of the authors of the unsigned illustrations. The edition itself is superior, complete with all original notes and can meet scholarly demands.

Although his republicanism had been an outspoken one in his parliamentary and revolutionary activities as well as in his writings, George Gordon Byron’s reputation among the British radicals had been low, quite in contrast to those of his friend and part-time collaborator Shelley. It was Byron’s capricious aristocratic appeal and his scandalous promiscuity that had by far outshined his political commitment. Even Walter Savage Landor who had resided in Italy at the same time sought to avoid

him. Linton never refers to him, although he had been one of the first prominent foreign supporters of the *Risorgimento*. Like the young Mazzini, Byron was a member of the *Carbonari*, the legendary secret revolutionary society. Mazzini's ideal of political art as the unification of theory and action had been prefigured by the "dangerous" Baron's poetical and material campaigns for Italian and Greece independence in a most significant and popular way. It is not an exaggeration to speak of Mazzini's concept of political culture in terms of a Byronic heritage. And in a wider scope it may be appropriate to detect in modern art's appetite for revolutionary activity the traces of the sexually connoted *Byron cult*, which had established high society's yearning for *radical chic* already in the early 19th century. Byron's acceptance in highbrow culture tabooed him in Chartist circles, whereas the upper class' disdainful neglect of Shelley's political ambitions had caused the opposite.

"The day will come when Democracy will remember all that it owes to Byron. England too, will, I hope, one day remember the mission, which Byron fulfilled on the Continent; the European role given by him to English literature, and the appreciation and sympathy for England, which he awaked amongst us. (...) It is since Byron that we Continentalists have learned to study Shakespeare and other English writers. From him dates the sympathy of all the true-hearted amongst us for this land of liberty, whose true vocation he so worthily represented among the oppressed." (Giuseppe Mazzini, 1839)

Eliza Lynn Linton: The Lake Country.

London 1864

Six years after Harriet Martineau's picturesque account, the Linton couple published its Lake Country book. In her preface, Eliza Lynn states that there had been two traditions of describing this area, the dramatized one by the Picturesque School and the dry factitious mode of the guide-books. "Now that theses have served their turn, it seemed to my husband and myself that a pleasant book could be made by treating the Lake Country with the love and knowledge – artistic and local – belonging of right to natives and old inhabitants." William James not only contributed small one-block engravings, as had been the case in Martineau's *English Lakes*, but also large full-page illustrations.

Although the motifs partially overlap, the two series differ significantly in regard to the graphic approach. While the engravings for the Martineau book focus entirely on the graphic power of an often extremely reduced lineament, in the equally sketchy depictions of the subsequent work, Linton plays out the painterly qualities of the tonal engravings in an orchestration rich in variations. With its great graphic diversity and the surprising freshness of impressions of nature, the large complex of Linton's Lake engravings mark a peak in 19th-century landscape art, which has remained unsurpassed in the area of graphic reproductions. There are several reasons for the fact that Linton saw himself challenged to his most outstanding graphic achievements precisely in the field of travel guides. On the one hand, they had to do with his feeling politically and artistically obliged to establish a republican iconography. There is hardly another publication form that would have allowed the permanently indebted xylographer to finance such a time-consuming and elaborate landscape project in the middle of the century. On the other hand, this was a supreme discipline in regard to illustration, for the genre of the Lake guidebook had already become the exemplary case of picturesque art in the 1770s through the illustrated traveller's tales of William Gilpin and been raised to the status of high literature decades later by William Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* (1810).

Already the exterior frame in which Linton had developed the Lake engravings made it clear that they did not refer to the industrialised standard of the time, but to the early days of xylography, to the still popular graphics of the early Bewick school. As Thomas Bewick's famous animal encyclopaedia illustrations, many of Linton's landscape depictions were single block engravings, which on the white of the paper preferably opened up in the form of an edgeless oval, comparable with the pinhole photographs of early cameras. Although the vignettes of the Bewick school, especially the highly imaginative tailpieces, usually depict lively sceneries full of action, they are characterised by the impression of a distance to time and of static that they convey. Tom Lubbock regards the Bewickian vignette depictions as "the opposite of a glimpse: a fixated vision." (Tom Lubbock: *Defining the Vignette*, in: Jonathan Watkins ed.: *Thomas Bewick. Tale-Pieces*. Birmingham 2009) Linton's landscape engravings, on the other hand, do not want to open up distant, frozen, miniature worlds of the sort of Bewick's snow dome universe. Here, the oval shape of a scenery does not define a stabilising prospect but a moveable, ocular field of vision. As opposed to Bewick's depictions, the impression of transitoriness plays a crucial role in Linton's landscape art. His vignettes are ephemeral, atmospheric units, graphical spots that transport the freshness of the first impression.

In the direct dealing with the lexical illustrations of the Bewick school, the complex of Linton's *Lake Country* engravings marks an artistic paradigm shift comparable to the one that took place when the *Barbizon* school and the *Macchiaioli*, this Florentine group of artistic followers of Mazzini, replaced the painting traditions of late classicism and the Biedermeier. As opposed to the retinal revolution of the Impressionists, which was still a decade in coming and represented an apotheosis of bourgeois escapism, these early sketch revolts were explicitly politically motivated and founded in a partisan way. As the American art historian Albert Boime stresses, these artists were "self-professed 'outlaw-sketchers' – a term the Impressionists, bent on achieving social legitimation, could never have accepted for themselves." (Albert Boime: *The Art of the Macchia and the Risorgimento*, Chicago 1993)

- , *The Ferns of the English Lake Country*,

London 1865

A surprising document of Linton's botanical interests. The book is based on Thomas Moore's *Nature printed Ferns* and lists thirty-five species of regional ferns, all depicted in engravings, which were made in "lieu of nature".

- , *Claribel and Other Poems*,

London 1865

266 pages, hand signed with a dedication: "Harvey Orrin Smith from his old friend W.J. Linton." Harvey Orrin Smith was the eldest son of Linton's business partner and fellow engraver John Orrin Smith. After his death, Linton re-established the engraving firm together with Smith's son at a new location. Harvey Orrin Smith was friends with the coeval apprentice Walter Crane.

Linton had dedicated his first book of poetry to his old friend "William Bell Scott, painter and poet." It had been edited in Brantwood, printed in Leeds and distributed in London. "1865 is the middle of his literary life, and henceforth we find him more time given to poetry and engraving than to politics and society. The strenuous efforts of his earlier years were succeeded by a calmer period, though not

a less prolific one.” (Kineton Parkes) The selection comprises Linton’s lyrical production of the last twenty-five years, the earliest being *Song of the Streams*, an excerpt of the *Bob- Thin or Poorhouse Fugitive* poem. Examples of the cycle *Rhymes and Reasons against Landlordism* are to be found, as well as other poems and songs which he had created for *The Nation*, *The Red Republican* and *The English Republic*. The literary critic Arthur Henry Bullen preferred Linton’s lyrical efforts to his political ones: “Among the more noticeable poems are, *Grenville’s Last Fight*, an unadorned but impressive narrative, in blank verse, of the glorious exploit which Tennyson celebrated many years afterwards in his ballad of *The Revenge*; *Harry Marten’s Dungeon Thoughts*; *Eurydice*, a fervid and passionate lament; and *Iphigenia at Aulis*, which seems to have been inspired by Landor’s Hellenics.” The opening title poem is a verse dramatization of a poem by the enigmatic Charles Jeremiah Wells. Some of the latest poems reflect his depressing familial situation. After the successive deaths of his two partners, the Wade sisters, the marriage with the writer Eliza Lynn proved to be a debacle.

The volume has dozens of small vignette engravings, “making it probably the first book of poetry since Blake to be wholly written and decorated by its author.” (F.B. Smith) William Bell Scott would follow him in this ambition only ten years later. The elaborate head and tailpieces meant much more than the usual decoration, which he decried in his preface as “printer’s furniture and the slave work, grind of illustration.” They represent autonomous works of art, which can be conceived as a genre of its own, a kind of *pictorial poetry*, which combines the indigenous charm of Bewick’s tailpieces with the refined grace of the works of a Luke Clennell or Charlton Nesbit. The degree of sensibility and inventiveness, which Linton had achieved here, was never matched again in the history of xylography. He used these blocks as a pictorial base stock for all his later poetical compilations.

- , Promotion Leaflet: Claribel and other poems, by W.J. Linton. n.p. / n.d. (1865?)

(From a descendant’s estate)

This prospectus shows an example of the illustrations.

- , Three Original Blocks with vignette illustrations for “Claribel and other Poems”

(From a descendant’s estate)

- Lily (*Boxwood* 0,6 x 0,6 x 2,5cm) - Grove (*Boxwood* 2,5 x 2,5 0,5): printed in “Claribel” p. 50, “The Apples of Hesperus” p. 60 - Semper fidelis (*Boxwood* 2,5 x 2,5 x 2,5 cm): This engraving is reminiscent of a medieval seal. The Latin motto “Always Faithful” was widely used in medieval Europe, in Great Britain mainly by Irish and Scottish tribes. Its use here in the form of a coat of arms is possibly connected with Linton’s Scottish ancestry. It was printed in “Claribel” p. 94. and was reused to decorate the last page of *Broadway Ballads* (1876) and the back of a late brochure-edition of his poems *To the Future / The Dirge of Nations*.

- , Petition Against French Intervention In Italy.

Brantwood 1866

The single manuscript correction suggests the possibility that this oblong printed sheet served as a proof for publication in another format.

During the Third Independence War against the Austrian empire, Italy was in serious danger of being

invaded by Napoleon III, until fortuitously saved by a Prussian victory against the Austrian army in the north. In mid 1866 Linton privately besought John Stuart Mill, the famous utilitarian philosopher and influential campaigner for civil rights, to speak as a Member of Parliament against the impending French intervention. He handed a petition over to Mill, which was signed and privately printed by him on his press in Brantwood. In Linton's opinion an interference of France "would alter altogether the character of the war, would make it no longer a quarrel between Italy and her ancient enemy and between Prussia and her rival, but would make of it an European war in which England would be bound for her own sake as well as for the sake of such duties as she owes to Europe to take some action, whether diplomatic or other." The petition is introduced with the remark, that it "was presented to the House of Commons, on the 22nd of this month, by John Stuart Mill." But, as Linton's biographer Francis Barrymore Smith points out, Mill is not recorded as having spoken during the debate in question.