

lawyer Nicholas Fazakerley and is to pass on something else, 'these', probably engravings, to Kent. It is highly likely that while Burlington was helping Pope protect himself from prosecution, Kent was illustrating his book. A letter from the same period suggests that the Burlingtons had pre-publication knowledge of the frontispiece, Pope interpreting it as a representation not of the King but of himself: 'I beg my Lady Burlington's Patronage of the Ass & the Dunciad, me and my burden.'<sup>25</sup> When the three lords (Burlington, Oxford, and Bathurst) protected Pope by temporarily buying the copyright to the *Variorum*, a later assignment makes it clear that Burlington was the leading figure, while Kent was one of the witnesses.<sup>26</sup>

In the centre of the *Dunciad Variorum* headpiece, later used in the *Works*, where an action of the *Odyssey* might be depicted, is the head of an owl, crowned with a jester's cap; his supporters are two asses; the foliage that customarily links the design consists of thistles. J. Paul Hunter points to the proximity of the asses' ears to the 'Ear of Kings' in the *Dunciad Variorum* just below the headpiece, in the second line of the poem. A multivalent indication of Pope's attitude lies in the motto 'Nemo me impune lacessit': no one attacks me with impunity. The motto is that of the Order of the Thistle. Pope had shown an interest in the thistle as a symbol in his first Pastoral, in a riddle that marked the union of Scotland and England, the thistle having replaced the French lily in the first and fourth quarters of the national shield.<sup>27</sup> Pope's riddle was possibly designed to honour Queen Anne, who had revived the Order of the Thistle in 1703, but she was only repeating the more significant revival of her father, James II of England and VII of Scotland, in 1687. This was inescapably a Scottish and, in origin, a Stuart order. Mengel notes the suitability of the thistle as an emblem for satire and suggests possible connection with ideas of Scottish stupidity, but the motto fits as uncomfortably with George II as it does with the owl dunce, both of whom were being attacked with impunity. Pope claimed in the *Works* that the *Dunciad Variorum* had been presented to the King: 'We are willing to acquaint posterity that this Poem (as it here stands) was presented to King George the Second and his Queen, by the hands of Sir R. Walpole, on the 12th of March 1728/9' (*Works* II, *Dunciad*, 87). William Kupersmith points to Erasmus 'Similes habent labra lactusas', which is equivalent to the English 'A thistle is a fat salad for an ass's mouth'.<sup>28</sup> A bad patron (including the King) and bad writers go together.

25. *Correspondence*, 1:532-3 and 2:4.

26. BL MS Egerton 951, f. 7; Rogers, *Major Satires*, 116. Pope had himself assigned the copy to Lords Burlington, Oxford, and Bathurst. It strikes me that Burlington's later resignation of his court offices, in May 1733, may have been connected with Pope's breach with the court over the response to *To Burlington* and the *First Satire of the Second Book of Horace Imitated* in February of that year.

27. 'Spring', lines 89-90, *Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism*, ed. E. Audra and Aubrey Williams (London: Methuen, 1961), *Twickenham*, 1:69.

28. William Kupersmith, 'Asses, Adages, and the Illustrations to Pope's *Dunciad*', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 8:2 (1974-5), 206-11.