

Baron of Books

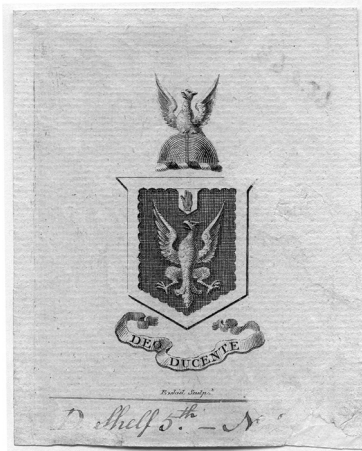
THIS BOOKPLATE WAS MADE for Sir Lawrence Palk (1766–1813), the son of Sir Robert Palk and Anne Vansittart. Palk was born in Madras, India, where his father was governor. Robert Palk was elevated to baronet in 1782 in recognition of his service in securing Britain's control of India. The younger Palk inherited his title in 1798 upon the death of his father.

The family seat was Haldon House, near Exeter, though Palk had previously served as a member of Parliament for Ashburton and Wareham. Of Robert Palk's four children, only Lawrence survived long into adulthood.

Taking after his father, Palk attended Christ Church, Oxford, and was first member of Parliament for Ashburton (1787–96) and second member of Parliament for Devon, between 1796 and 1812. Palk was named for his godfather, Major Stringer Lawrence, a good friend of his father's. Lawrence is credited with creating India's army and came to know Palk during their time in India.

The engraver of this bookplate, Ezekiel Abraham Ezekiel (1757–1806), was born in Exeter to Abraham and Sarah Ezekiel, members of the city's Jewish community. He served Exeter as an engraver, optician, goldsmith and print seller. Ezekiel sold microscopes and telescopes along with glasses, and his engravings include portraits, trade engravings and at least 19 bookplates. Most of his bookplates are rare, but this plate is one of his two more common works.

Ezekiel never married, instead living with his brother and two sisters until his death from drowsy. His obituary in the *Flying Post* described his engraving work as "unequalled outside London." Some of Ezekiel's later engraved bookplates are of a lower quality and skill level. Their lesser quality has been attributed either to his illness or to the work of his aforementioned



sisters, who advertised as engravers and opticians after Ezekiel's death.

Due to the dates of Ezekiel's professionally active years, the plate may be dated to sometime between the start of his apprenticeship in 1772 and his death in 1806, and almost certainly toward the end of this range, presuming both that the bookplate wasn't made for a child and that Ezekiel had progressed through his

apprenticeship before completing the engraving.

The bookplate measures 7.3 by 9.2 cm. The plate mark from the printing process is visible around the engraving, as are the laid lines from the production of the paper. In heraldic terms, the bookplate may be described as sable, an argent eagle displayed, an argent bordure engrailed; at the precise middle chief, the inescutcheon of a baronet (argent, a hand gules); surmounted by a wreath of argent and sable, the crest a "semi-terrestrial globe of the northern hemisphere," an eagle rousant, wings displayed and elevated. The motto on the banner is Latin for *God is my guide*, while the small text below the banner is a standard Latin abbreviation for *Ezekiel engraved it*. A reworked version of this bookplate also exists in collections without the attribution to Ezekiel. For further information, see Brian North Lee, "The Bookplates of Ezekiel Abraham Ezekiel of Exeter," *The Bookplate Journal* 9 (March 1991): 16–36.

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The Rare Books and Special Collections Bookplate Collection can be accessed from the UBC Library Digital Collections and Services site, <http://digitalcollections.library.ubc.ca>.