“New” Blake Engravings After Blake’s Designs, 1837, 1859, 1861

G. E. Bentley, Jr.

his thematic anagram prior to his selection of suitable, properly lettered names from Ossian or elsewhere. Furthermore, the word play seems to indicate the presence of an eighteenth-century wit in Blake, even as he dealt with the most Romantic of themes.

3 Bloom, p. 102.
4 Bloom, p. 17.
6 Bloom, p. 157.

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Comparatively few printings of Blake’s designs are known between his death in 1827 and the revival of interest in him by Gilchrist’s biography in 1863, and it may therefore be worth recording several new printings here.

The first is:


This is evidently just a re-issue of Hamilton’s English School (1830-32), misleadingly retitled, without advertisement or explanatory matter other than for the designs, with the same number of plates (288) and the same Blake plates and descriptions of "Death’s Door" "La Porte du Tombeau" (No. 181) and "Death of the Strong Wicked Man" "Mort d’un Réprouvé" (No. 271) and explanations as before, arranged in alphabetical order.

The second is:


Plate X (12.1 x 20.8 cm) is "Death’s-door" after W. Blake. There is no accompanying text. The same plate, with the inscription altered, appeared in John Jackson & William A. Chatto. A Treatise on Wood Engraving, Historical and Practical (1861), as the frontispiece (in the Bodley copy) or "at p. 632" (according to the text, p. 591*), "inserted" "by the kindness of the Council" of the Art Union, in whose "Volume of 1859 [sic]" "it was first published". (I am sorry to say that Blake Books [1977] does not indicate that Jackson’s book had a Blake plate.) Linton went on to make "Facsimile" illustrations "from Blake’s Own Works" for Gilchrist’s "Pictor Ignotus" of 1863 and to write and illuminate Blake-like poems himself after he had settled in North America.