Case 1: Songs of Innocence

William Blake (1757-1827). *Songs of Innocence and of Experience: shewing the two contrary states of the human soul.* Frederick Tatham, c.1832.

1. *Infant Sorrow* (Plate 25)
2. *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* Title Page (Plate 1)
3. *Little Girl Sweet and Small* (Plate 22)

After Blake’s death in 1827, his widow Catherine went to live with the painter and engraver John Linnell and then with Blake’s friend Frederick Tatham. After Catherine’s death in 1831, Tatham reprinted the combined *Songs* with Blake’s copperplates and issued sets of the work with varying numbers of plates. These plates are referred to as copy I of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. (Bentley, *Blake Books*)

Case 2

   
   Etched in relief, color printed and hand coloured by Blake. Trimmed to the design only, it is 1 of only 3 plates from *Innocence* with colour printing. This is the only Blake etching known which
has been cut along a design element, a vine, to create a decorative frame. Blake may have printed the 3 designs only, and masked the texts of these 3 plates as part of, or as an experiment, leading up to his Small Book of Designs of 1796.

2. **William Blake (1757-1827). Songs of Innocence. The Lamb (Plate 8) 1800-03.**

Relief etching printed between 1800-1803, somewhat unevenly in grayish-black ink and strengthened in “shell gold”, with extensive hand-colouring in watercolour. The plate is from copy Y (Bentley, Blake Books) of Songs of Innocence. Plates from this copy are unusual in being subtly highlighted throughout with what was referred to as “shell gold,” a powdered gold leaf in a liquid suspension. In "The Lamb" the "shell gold" is evident in the corners and highlights the vine on the right-side of the plate and parts of the cottage roof.

*Purchased with the assistance of The Friends of Victoria University Library.*

**Case 3**


1. *The Blossom* (Plate 11)
2. *Songs of Innocence* Title Page (Plate 3)
3. *A Dream* (Plate 26)

The leaves are from copy W of Blake's Songs of Innocence, as listed in Bentley's Blake Books. It is believed to be the first printing, first issue of Blake's first extant attempt at illuminated printing. It is thought to have been printed in tandem with copy U (at the Houghton Library, Harvard) in 1789 by Blake with the help of his wife Catherine.

**Case 4**

1. **A Cradle Song (Plates 16-17)**
   
   Purchased with assistance from the Friends of Victoria University Library and from a private donor.

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**Case 5**

1. **William Blake (1757-1827).** *An angel, arms upraised, with another figure*. 1819-25.
   
   The drawing is from what is known as the Small Blake-Varley sketchbook. Inscribed on verso in the hand of John Varley "it is allways [sic] to keep yourself collected".

   According to Blake's first biographer, Alexander Gilchrist, visions of angels formed part of the experience of the young Blake who described seeing “angelic figures walking” in a field among workers as they gathered in the hay. Such visions remained with Blake as he grew older and are reflected in his work.

   **Purchased with the assistance of The Friends of Victoria University Library.**


   *I found him beneath a tree by W. Blake (Plate 3). 17 May 1793 [possibly 1825].*

   Plate 3 is identified by G.E. Bentley as part of copy n. The incomplete set of plates from copy N are believed to have been printed during Blake's lifetime. *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise* was an extensive revision of Blake's *For Children: The Gates of Paradise* (1793) but was left unfinished at Blake's death.

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**Case 6**

1. **John Gabriel Stedman (1744-1797).** *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition Against the Revolting Negroes of Surinam, in Guiana.* London: J. Johnson, 1796.
The name of Blake (Mr. Wm.) London is on page [viii] in the list of "Subscribers Names".

2. **William Blake (1757-1827). Unpublished proof of an engraved vignette, oval device enclosing ships at sea, surround with anchor, cannon, flags and banner with motto 'cuncta mea mecum'. [1791].**

A previously unrecorded engraving by William Blake of an original drawing by J. G. Stedman. In 1791, William Blake was commissioned to complete a number of engravings to accompany Stedman's *Narrative*. This vignette was designed for use on the title pages of Stedman's *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition Against the Revoited Negroes of Surinam in Guiana*.

The vignette, as it appears in the book, varies in a number of ways from this print: an additional flag has been added to the mast of each ship, the clouds have been amended and Blake's signature was removed.

*Acquired with the assistance of the Friends of Victoria University Library.*

**Case 7**

2. **The Wit's Magazine, or, Library of Momus : being a compleat repository of mirth, humour, and entertainment. London, 1784-1785.**

Each monthly number has a fold-out frontispiece illustrating one of the issue's articles or poems.

Plates in the first five numbers, and the item displayed, are engraved by William Blake.

**Case 8: Early Studies and Biographical Material**

1. **Bo Lindberg. [William Blake's workshop] [art original]**

The artist's vision of what William Blake's studio would look like, open for the viewer to see what is taking place inside. A river is in the background. Superimposed in the sky is a reproduction of Blake's Job illustration for "When the morning Stars sang together & all the Sons of God shouted for joy" surrounded by a Blakean Sun. Produced by the artist for Beth & Jerry Bentley.

2. **Alexander Gilchrist (1828-1861). Life of William Blake: with selections from his**
Subtitled “Pictor Ignotus” (the unknown painter), Gilchrist’s biography, published thirty years after Blake’s death, was written with the intent to pull Blake’s art and writing out of obscurity.

Gift of Dr. Robert C. Brandeis.


Among the subscribers listed are William Blake, R.H. Cromek, John Flaxman and Henry Fuseli.

Case 9: Catalogues & Exhibitions


Exhibition created by Prague Castle Administration, The British Museum and The British Council.


5. The William Blake Gallery from John Windle, Antiquarian Bookseller. “Announcing the first exhibition space dedicated to the iconic artist in over 200 years.” Invitation to the opening on October 14, 2016.

A booklet published to accompany an exhibition held at the Wordsworth Trust, Dove Cottage, Grasmere from 15 August to 18 November 2007.

Victoria University Library contributed two items to this exhibition: London (Plate 46) of Songs of Innocence and of Experience and Song of Liberty (Plates 25-27) from copy M of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.


The catalogue is open to the inside cover to show copy M of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, belonging to Victoria University Library's Bentley Blake Collection.

Case 10: Editions of Blake’s works

Victoria University Library copy is in contemporary binding with an original plate from the Songs as a frontispiece. The plate is no. 39, Introduction to Songs of Experience. It is a previously unrecorded posthumous impression in gray-black ink on wove paper without a watermark.

All the images in this book made and printed by Linda Anne Landers at Spoon Print Press, London. Victoria University Library copy is number 5 of 20 signed and numbered copies.

Victoria University Library copy is Paul Nash's inscribed presentation copy to Rod Cave.

Victoria University Library copy is number 31 of 375 copies.

"The copper plates ... were made by Michael Phillips from original William Blake impressions. The plates were inked, using hand mixed pure pigment, lead sulphate and stand oil, and printed by Dennis Ahearn at Flying Horse Editions. The paper was hand made by Gangolf Ulbricht."

"This facsimile edition is the first to produce examples from Blake's illuminated books as he made them, at every stage exactly emulating his method and materials" (from booklet accompanying the publication)


One of 100 copies printed by Ralph Thatcher and Ed Grabhorn.

**Case 11: Secondary Studies**


## Case 12: Inspired by Blake


   An allegorical interpretation of William Blake's poem "The Tyger."

   Victoria University Library copy is signed on the title page by the author.


   A folded leaflet celebrating the 200th anniversary of William Blake's birth; it consists of five poems by various authors and a wood engraving by Peter Dunbar.


12. William Blake (1757-1827). *Songs of Innocence*; music and illustrations by Ellen


*Please see the South Wall of the Library for the Bentley Blake Collection of posters on display.*
Sources and Credits


Organized by Carmen Socknat and Lisa Sherlock with the assistance of Erin Siegel, Paul Wilson, Abe Lam, Sarah Gough and Halyna Kozar.

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