

University of Adelaide

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I doubt if anyone on the editorial committee of this publication in 1979 imagined that it would flourish for ten years. I remember the enthusiasm that we all had as we put together the first issue, which coincided with the acquisition of the Barr Smith Library's millionth volume. Looking back at those early numbers, while I was compiling the ten-year index, it struck me how far the Library has progressed along the technological track. Library News was typed out and literally cut and pasted up for printing. Now it is word processed and electronically composed on a microcomputer. In 1979 we were using card catalogues; ten years later we are considering the acquisition of a new computerised catalogue to replace BIBLION which has served us for more than seven years.

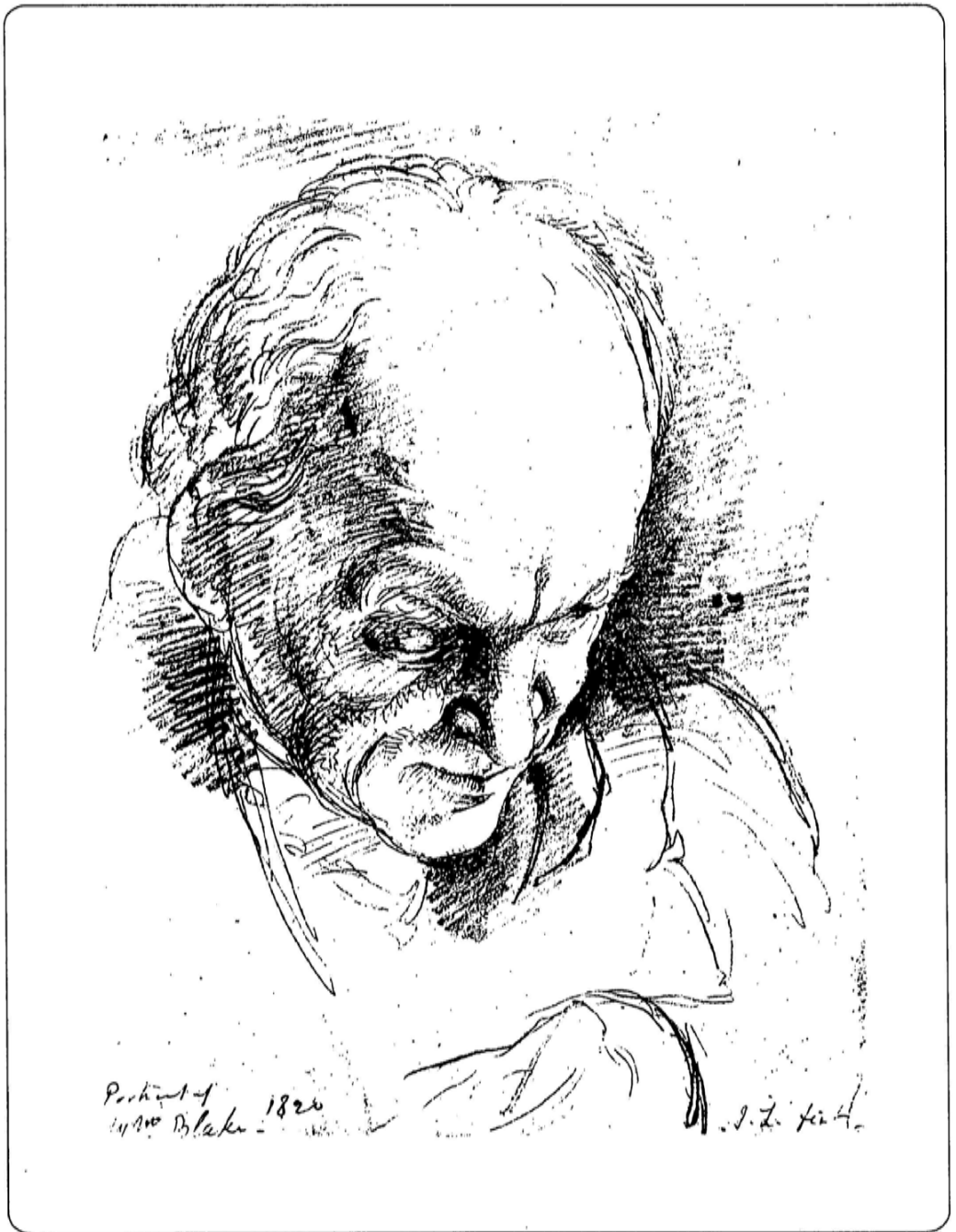
This issue is devoted almost entirely to William Blake; we are very fortunate to be able to publish Michael Tolley's article on the Barr Smith Library's latest Blake acquisition, Thornton's Virgil, at a time when our new Ira Raymond Exhibition Room will be used for a lecture by a visiting Blake scholar, and my co-editor, Elizabeth Lee's Catalogue of Blake Material in the Barr Smith Library appears. The Library will also be exhibiting Blake material in the Special Collections area and in the Exhibition Room.

Also in this issue is an article from Jane Price who spent six months with us last year as an exchange librarian from the University of British Columbia. Her comparisons between that library system and our own make interesting reading.

Inserted in this issue is a ten-year index to articles that have appeared in University of Adelaide Library News. This turned out to be a real labour of love as I remembered various articles and their authors, but the thing that struck me most was the wide variety of articles that we have published.

I trust that the next ten years will produce as good a crop of articles for University of Adelaide Library News – certainly there is no lack of enthusiasm for the task.

Alan Keig 



Portrait of William Blake by John Linnell. 1820.

Thornton's *Virgil*

by Elizabeth Lee

The Library has recently acquired, through funds bequeathed to it for the purchase of rare and valuable items, a copy of:

The Pastorals of Virgil, with a Course of English Reading, adapted for Schools: in which all the proper facilities are given, enabling youth to acquire the Latin language, in the shortest period of time. Illustrated by 230 engravings, by Robert John Thornton. 3rd ed. London, Published by F.C. and J. Rivingtons [and 16 others], 1821. 2v. 18cm.

The volumes are extensively illustrated, including two woodcut frontispieces, three maps and six full-page plates engraved on copper, and 226 woodcuts on 118 pages.

Complete copies of Thornton's *Virgil* have long been among the most elusive and sought-after of Blake's illustrated works.

The 1821 edition was the first to include Blake's illustrations, which consist of six full-page engravings, designed and executed by Blake, twenty woodcuts designed by him, of which seventeen were also cut by him, and one full-page design "from a famous picture by Poussin" designed by Blake and cut by another engraver.

These are the only woodcuts known to have been produced by Blake, and the Thornton's *Virgil* is a valuable addition to the Library's Blake collection. Moreover, as this edition also includes illustrations by other contemporary artists and engravers, it reflects the Library's strong interest in nineteenth century material.

In the following article, Michael J. Tolley of the Department of English Language and Literature, provides a new interpretation of Thornton's attitude towards Blake's woodcuts, with additional notes on each woodcut. Dr. Tolley joined the University in 1965 and has infected many generations of students (and librarians) with his enthusiasm for Blake and his work. He is co-editor, with John E. Grant and Edward J. Rose, of *William Blake's Designs for Edward Young's Night Thoughts: a complete edition*. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980).

Thornton's Blake edition

by Michael J. Tolley

I sat down with Mr. Blake's Thornton's *Virgil* woodcuts before me, thinking to give to their merits my feeble testimony. I happened first to think of their sentiment. They are visions of little dells, and nooks, and corners of Paradise; models of the exquisitest pitch of intense poetry. I thought of their light and shade, and looking upon them I found no word to describe it. Intense depth, solemnity, and vivid brilliancy only coldly and partially describe them. There is in all such a mystic and dreamy glimmer as penetrates and kindles the inmost soul, and gives complete and unreserved delight, unlike the gaudy daylight of this world. They are like all that wonderful artist's works the drawing aside of the fleshly curtain, and the glimpse which all the most holy, studious saints and sages have enjoyed, of that rest which remaineth to the people of God. The figures of Mr. Blake have that intense, soul-evidencing attitude and action, and that elastic, nervous spring which belongs to uncaged immortal spirits.

— Samuel Palmer, in A.H. Palmer, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Palmer*, London, 1892, pp. 15-16.

Samuel Palmer's words are those of a Romantic landscape artist who had studied the Blake woodcuts he describes deeply; he had copied and imitated them (as did others of the young "Ancients", such as Edward Calvert and John Linnell, who were inspired by Blake in his late years); they stimulated his own imagination profoundly. The works Palmer produced under this beneficent influence are now greatly admired and perhaps even better known than the small Blake woodcuts — the only woodcuts Blake ever produced, to our knowledge — he so eloquently describes. Thus we have a most interesting progression of inspiring forces: Virgil's first Eclogue is imitated by Ambrose Philips, the neoclassical poet mocked by Pope (albeit for other, more experimental verses than those in question here), who in turn is illustrated by Blake, one of the great seminal Romanticists, who enkindles the luminous landscapes of Palmer's Felpham period.

The fortunate recent acquisition by the University of Adelaide's Barr Smith Library of a copy of the book in which Blake's astonishing woodcuts first appeared has enabled me to see, what was not clear from the various factual accounts of the book that I have read, how emphatically Blake's

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authorship is stamped on the book. It is immeasurably valuable to see the Blake prints, which include etchings as well as woodcuts, in their full context, instead of as detached illustrations in editions and studies of Blake. It is not only that we can see at once the difference between genius and fashionable mediocrity by setting Blake's works against, even the "big-name" prints that accompany his, let alone the scores of anonymous prints. It is also evident that Thornton expected his readers to notice the difference, too, that he had pinned his enterprise on the success or failure of Blake's innovatory works of printing. Indeed, there is every indication that what Thornton wanted in his book was more Blake, not less.

This intuition goes against received opinion, which has been that Thornton was so nervous of the public reception of the Blake woodcuts that he apologized for them. The words Thornton uses, however, to praise Blake (and so vindicate his own taste) are rather carefully chosen. Below the frontispiece woodcut facing page 12 of Volume I, it is noted that:

The Illustrations of this English Pastoral are by the famous BLAKE, the illustrator of *Young's Night Thoughts*, and *Blair's Grave*; who designed and engraved them himself. This is mentioned, as they display less of art than genius, and are much admired by some eminent painters.

It should be noticed that, in one light, what Thornton is asserting is not that Blake's work lacks art but that it shows more genius (even) than it shows art. This is the only occasion on which any critical comment is offered on an illustrator in the book, except for some remarks in the prefatory "Address to School-Masters & Parents" on pp. v-vi:

In order to render this work worthy, as much as possible, of public patronage, and the distinguished honor conferred upon it, by the approbation of the learned, Messrs. *Thurston, Craig, Cruickshanks, Blake* and *Varley*, with others of great merit, have been selected for the *designs*; whilst the most eminent engravers on wood have been employed, as *Nesbit, Clennell, Branston, Bewick, Thomson, Hughes, Byfield, Williams, Lee, Mackenzie, and Sears*, for the *Cuts*, so that *Boys* will now learn Latin with greater *facility* and *pleasure* to themselves, *deeper impressions* be made, and *ideas*, as well as *words*, be acquired.

Thornton expected his readers to pay close attention to the prints in his edition. The above remarks build upon the experience, it seems, of his

own childhood reading:

Every person must recollect, from his childhood, what an impression even the *bad* woodcuts to the Fables in Dilworth's Spelling-Book created, especially where the Waggoner is seen praying to Hercules for help, or where the Huntsman is beating his old faithful Dog.

To make the point, what I presume to be facsimilies of the "*bad* woodcuts" in question are reproduced facing page v. The modern viewer is likely to consider that, bad as they are, these two woodcuts are not so very much worse than the general run of illustrations in Thornton's volumes, and that nothing could be less like Blake's work in the medium. On the contrary, a man so deeply interested in book-illustration as Thornton was, would have met in Blake's work precisely the effect he desiderated, of a "deeper" impression. Thornton is still well-known for his *Temple of Flora* (1812), with its magnificent colour plates. (These are conveniently reproduced in *The Temple of Flora by Robert Thornton*, introduction by Ronald King, Boston, New York Graphic Society, 1981.) Blake, who would have known this work, may be considered to be attempting to please his patron by providing, in the miniature form of the woodcut, an approximation to the atmospheric effects of W. Ward's mezzotint after Abraham Pether, *The Snowdrop*, or of Dunkarton's mezzotint after Pether and Philip Reinagle, *The Night-Blowing Cereus*.

"Atmosphere", indeed, a quality less associated with Blake than with Turner and Constable, is what Blake's woodcuts have and what all the other prints in Thornton's *Virgil* conspicuously lack. It is not inexperience with the medium that caused Blake to render his skies so deeply grooved, his shadows so deep. He was aiming deliberately at chiaroscuro effects, most obviously in the moonlit scenes, more subtly in the twilight scene of the traveller on the London road, whether the sun rises or sets or radiates energy in the crackling morning sky. Blake had a great liking for overdark effects, as we see from his writing about his experiments (as we should see, indeed, from some of his temperas, even without the unintended darkening they have acquired by age). He must have seen this as one of the possibilities of wood-engraving; there are few signs of them in his preliminary drawings.

In this connection, it is interesting to observe what has been done (presumably within the Linnell household) in the coloured impressions of some of the plates, recently discovered. (See G. Ingham, "Blake's woodcuts, plain and coloured", *TLS* 18 May 1973; "Blake's Woodcuts Illuminated", *Apollo* 99, March 1974, pp. 194-95.) The impressions are

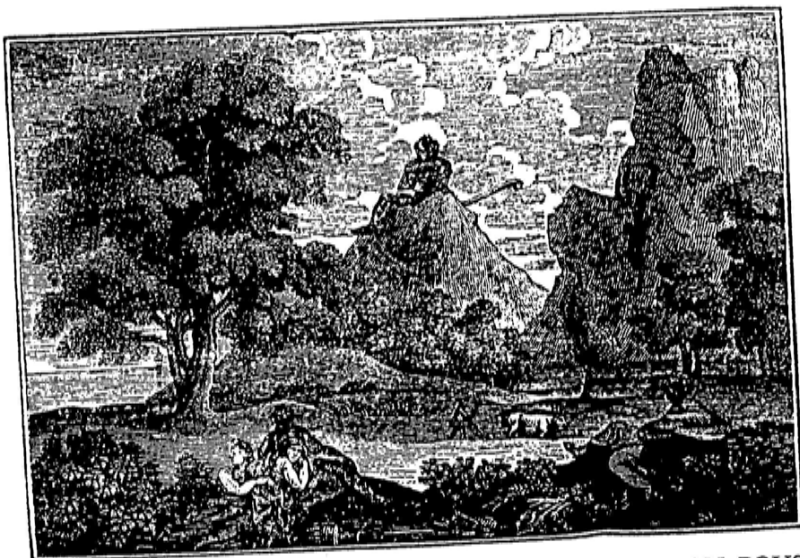
very light ones, worked up by hand, with the daylight skies left almost clear. These alterations are not insensitive, as the use of colour allows effects different from those Blake attempted in his monochrome prints, if perhaps more facile.

This experiment with rendering the woodcuts into colour might also suggest to us a more positive way of interpreting the attempt made, we gather by a professional wood-engraver, to rework one of Blake's prints (see *The Athenaeum*, 21 January 1843). It is usually assumed, following Gilchrist's report of contemporary ridicule of Blake's prints by some skilled craftsmen (which derives from the article by Henry Cole in *The Athenaeum* and so came to him at second hand, as hearsay evidence), that the attempt was made to better Blake's work by conventional methods, using his third plate (the first to be marked "THENOT.") for the experiment. The attempt failed, as is acknowledged by Cole. This is Gilchrist's account (ch. xxx of his *Life of William Blake*, quoted from the 1880 edition, p. 319):

One of the designs, engraved by Blake, was re-cut among the engravers, who scrupled not, by way of showing what it ought to have been, to smooth down and conventionalize the design itself; reducing a poetic, typical composition to mere commonplace, 'to meet the public taste.' This as an earnest of what had been contemplated for the whole series. The amendment was not adopted by Thornton. Both versions may be seen in the *Athenaeum* for January 21st, 1843; where, in the course of a very intelligent article on the true principles of wood-engraving, they are introduced, with other cuts from Holbein, &c., to illustrate the writer's just argument: that 'amid all drawbacks there exists a power in the work of the man of genius which no one but himself can utter fully;' and that 'there is an authentic manifestation of feeling in an author's own work, which endears it to all who can sympathize with art, and reconciles all its defects. Blake's rude work,' adds the critic, 'utterly without pretension, too, as an engraving, the merest attempt of a fresh apprentice, is a work of genius; whilst the latter' – the doctored cut – 'is but a piece of smooth, tame mechanism.'

Some more begs to be said about this, in the context of the inclusion within Thornton's edition of a page of three woodcuts that were designed by Blake but executed anonymously. That Blake was really a novice at wood-engraving strikes me as utterly improbable. Blake was not only an admirer but also a student of the work of Albrecht Dürer. He would not have engaged previously in commercial wood-engraving, I presume, only because it no longer had the status Blake associated with artistic

endeavour. (For one thing, it lacked what Thornton also complains about – see further below – “perpetuity”.) Blake, I believe, laboured with his admittedly difficult medium to produce deliberately primitivist effects, by which I mean that he wished to illustrate Philips not merely as a writer of neo-Augustan pastoral verse, but as an imitator of Virgil; Blake wished to communicate the flavour of antiquity in his woodcuts: this is one reason why Palmer and others respond to them as if they were glimpses of a world beyond the familiar veil which limits the modern vision of landscape. The affinity between such an endeavour and Wordsworth’s in the diction of his rural poetry need be no more than noticed to perceive its essential justness.



THE GIANT POLYPHEME, FROM A FAMOUS PICTURE BY N. POUSSIN.

It might therefore be, that the reason there is an incomplete set of Blake woodcuts for the Philips imitation is that Blake took umbrage at some ignorant criticism of his work. We have, indeed, other possible signs that Blake left his original contract unfulfilled. Whereas Blake is credited with making the drawing after Poussin’s picture of “The Giant Polypheme” which was engraved, indifferently, by Byfield in Volume I, facing page 21, a parallel instance (there is no other of the same kind in the edition) in Volume II, facing page 390, is copied by Linnell from Poussin’s “The Deluge” and engraved by Hughes. No other work in the book is credited to Linnell (who is, however, supposed to have introduced Blake to Thornton and who was very likely instrumental in obtaining the commission for Blake – see the letter of 15 September, 1820, from Thornton to Linnell, quoted in G.E. Bentley, Jr., *Blake Records*, Oxford,

Clarendon Press, 1969, pp. 266-67) and it seems possible that Blake passed it on to the younger artist. Furthermore, in view of the extensive use already made of Blake's work in relation to the first Eclogue, it seems possible that Blake was commissioned originally not merely to copy Poussin's "Polyphemus" design but also to engrave it. Thornton would surely have preferred this procedure for two reasons: firstly, he could be sure thereby that he got a good result; secondly, Blake was very likely cheaper than other noted artists.

Bentley seems to have misunderstood some references made by Thornton in the letter just mentioned, taking them to mean that he "was dissatisfied with the woodcuts Blake had produced and was suggesting that they be re-engraved as lithographs. The portrait of Virgil appears to have been so altered". What Thornton actually wrote, according to A.H. Palmer's transcription, was this:

Enclosed you see, what Blake's Augustus - produces in the usual mode of Printing - How much better will be the Stone - provided it turns out well - it will amalgamate with Wood - and not injure by comparison - I long to see your Virgil transferred upon the Stone - It has one great advantage - Authority - for the Drawing. - superior execution - & cheap printing - and perpetuity - Permit me to thank you for your kind exertions. It should be a common cause to get me out a Virgil worthy of the nation - for the benefit of the rising generation - & to inspire them with a love for the arts[.]

It is, I submit, impossible to make out from this any criticism of Blake's woodcuts; on the contrary, it is possible to read the letter as holding no reference to Blake's woodcuts whatever. "Blake's Augustus" refers, presumably, to the copperplate etching of "Octavius Augustus Caesar" which would appear, dated 1821 like the other copperplates executed by Blake for Thornton, between pages 4 and 5. Thornton was obviously excited by the possibilities of lithography, which were only just beginning to be exploited in England; he may have been considering lithography as the medium employed throughout his forthcoming Virgil edition, although in the event he used it only for some maps. What is meant by "your Virgil" is impossible to say: it could be that the reference is to the etched portrait which would appear (as both drawn and engraved by Blake) facing page 4, or to some projected wood engraving work by Linnell, whether of Virgil or in illustration of Virgil's eclogues; it is not likely to refer to "your acquisition of Blake as wood-engraver of the Philips Virgil imitation", as this seems altogether too elliptical a mode of reference. Whether, indeed, Thornton had had the opportunity even of seeing a Blake woodcut at this stage seems doubtful.

Another possibility for the failure of Blake to meet his contract with Thornton may simply have been that he ran out of time. In this connection it is noteworthy that one of the designs drawn for the series, showing Colinet and Thenot standing close together, with sheep behind them, remained unused. (For these preliminary drawings, see Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1981, Cat. 769, plates 999-1014.)

Although in his "Address" Thornton rather ungenerously sets Blake's name as one only of five selected artists, not even mentioning here his place as an engraver, the impression made by reading the work itself speaks more loudly the truth of the matter, that the third edition of Thornton's *Virgil Eclogues* was utterly reliant, for its distinctive tone as marking it off from the previous edition, on the Blake factor. After the frontispiece portrait of Virgil, engraved on wood by Hughes after Canova (a fine enough piece of work), and the bad examples from Dilworth, Blake dominates the early pages, first as providing the signed portraits of Theocritus, Virgil, Augustus and a composite design "From Antique Coins" showing Agrippa framed by Pollio, Gallus, Varus and Mecaenas, then as furnishing the signed woodcut illustrations to Philips. In between these are only crude unsigned cuts in general and particular illustration of the first Eclogue and its "Moral", and a map executed by Wyld. Thereafter, in Volume I, the next signed piece (facing page 21) is again by Blake, as providing the drawing for the Polyphemus picture by Poussin, for which Byfield did the engraving. After that the next signed illustration faces page 56, the only one attributed to Thurston (engraved by Thompson), of two vases (probably the pair were responsible also for the unsigned vase on the next page). Facing page 61, incidentally, is the same coin head of Pollio as that used by Blake earlier, but from a notably inferior hand. Facing page 64 is another signed illustration, by the engraver Hughes, of "Fame", a poor piece of work. There is no other signed piece of work whatever in Volume I.

In Volume II, the frontispiece, showing the assassination of Julius Caesar, is the solitary work allotted to Cruikshanks, whose engraver was Byfield. The next signed engraving, which faced page 229, is by Blake, an etched portrait of Caius Julius Caesar, once again the first signed plate within the text itself. Facing page 309 is a moderate piece, the single one attributed to Craig, engraved by J. Berryman, of "Lamentation". The next signed plate, a portrait of Epicurus, is again by Blake, facing page 360. Facing page 390 is the second Poussin piece, already mentioned, here of "The Deluge", copied by Linnell and engraved by Hughes. There are only three other signed plates in the work: facing page 392 is "Hercules Seeking Hylas", signed (on the picture area) by Sears; facing page 398 is

"Atalanta", signed bottom right "M.B." (? Branston); facing page 577 is "OMNIA VINCIT AMOR", from a painting by R.A. Cosway of the child Cupid with a couchant lion, engraved by Miss Byfield. Varley, Nesbit, Clennell, Williams, Lee and Mackenzie, though mentioned in the "Address", do not appear by name in the body of the book. Bewick's celebrated name also is unattached to any plate, although I suppose it would not be difficult to find his handiwork there; it has even been admired by someone more discerning than myself.

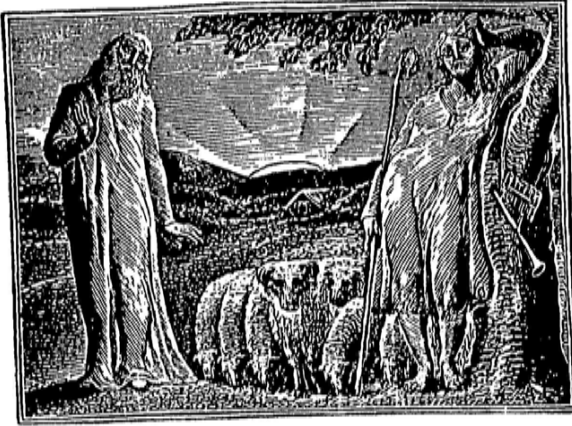
My conclusion is that, far from being embarrassed by the presence in his book of an artless unskilled worker, Thornton had gone out of his way to promote Blake in his new edition of an already successful school text. Thornton used other named artists as backing, but it was to Blake that he gave the lion's share of the significant new graphic illustrations. It was a clever piece of exploitation or entrepreneurship. Linnell may have introduced Thornton to Blake, but Thornton was under no obligation to use Blake's talents to such a disproportionate extent. I think that Thornton recognised Blake's genius, though not as fully as Linnell had done or Palmer would.

Edward Calvert, who was undoubtedly a master wood-engraver, may be allowed to criticize Blake's technique, though when he says that the woodcuts are done "as if by a child", we may suppose that Blake would have considered the words to be ones of praise. He was writing to his son Samuel (see *A Memoir of Edward Calvert Artist*, London, 1893, p.19):

Some small woodcuts of Blake are in your possession, they are only illustrations of a little pastoral poem by Phillips. They are done as if by a child; several of them are careless and incorrect, yet there is a spirit in them, humble enough and of force enough to move simple souls to tears.

Note: Although I wrote this article without drawing directly upon Robert N. Essick's chapter 17, "Virgil", in his excellent book, *William Blake Printmaker*, Princeton U.P., 1980; I should like to mention it here as the place to go for expert technical commentary on Blake's woodcuts. Essick places them more fully in their aesthetic historical context than I have done, quoting Graham Sutherland as a recent admirer of Blake's woodcuts, but he is at one with other commentators in believing Thornton to have been blind to Blake's merits.

Notes to Blake's Woodcut Illustrations
to Ambrose Philips for Thornton's *Virgil*



FRONTISPIECE.
THENOT AND
COLINET.

One reason for the strikingly unusual appearance of Blake's woodcuts is his use of a white-line technique, which, as Robert Essick explains in *William Blake Printmaker* (Princeton U.P., 1980, p.226), goes against the usual method of his day of "cutting wood from around the blank lines delineating clothing and lineaments"; instead, "Blake defines forms by cutting lines that print white against a black field." Essick also draws attention to Blake's energy of line. His liking for close-fitting garments as drapes for the human form enables him to suggest "the ripple of cloth flowing over the body". This frontispiece illustrates the two speakers, whose dialogue forms the eclogue, Thenot (the older man) and Colinet (the discontented young shepherd). More specifically, it may be taken to illustrate the first stanza of the poem, a speech by Thenot; although Blake does not show Colinet literally having his arms folded as he leans against the tree. The fact that Colinet's musical instruments (straight pipe and panpipes) hang unused on the tree, though not directly mentioned in the poem, is a characteristic Blakean inference from the reference by Thenot to singing birds:

Or hear'st thou not lark and linnet jointly sing,
their notes blithe-warbling to salute the [spring]?

Cf. Illustration I to Blake's *Job* series. The motif derives from Psalm 137:1-2, for which Blake has provided a watercolour illustration:

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept,
when we remembered Zion.
We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

2. COLINET.



Blake's illustration is very like that of the frontispiece and, as it adds nothing to that, we may presume that the frontispiece was the later work. Here there are no musical instruments on Colinet's tree. This is one of the engravings crudely cut down to fit the edition (an act of vandalism in the eyes of most critics). The dog sniffing at Thenot's ankles is a whimsical detail; we would have to call it a lurcher.

3. THENOT.



This is the design tamely imitated by another engraver in an attempt, apparently, to improve it; surprisingly, the copy is reversed. Essick has remarked that "All the journeyman's care ... cannot retain the vigor and intensity of Blake's work. The harder he tries - if he tries at all - the farther he removes himself from original composition." For Henry Cole in *The Athenaeum*, No. 795 (Jan. 21, 1843), Blake's "rude work ... is a work of genius; whilst the [other] is but a piece of smooth tame mechanism." It is, indeed, scarcely even that, for the face of Thenot is weak, the right arm flaccid and, as if conscious of an inability in this line, the imitator has not even drawn Colinet's face. The diminution of the sun is

particularly infelicitous in the imitation and shows how strongly this central detail exerts an influence on Blake's scene. The fruit refers to the following lines in Philips:

Yet though with years my body downward tend,
 as trees beneath their fruit in autumn bend,
 spite of my snowy head and icy veins,
 my mind a cheerful temper still retains.

4. COLINET
 AND THENOT.



Blake refers to an exchange, in which Colinet says that Thenot's "ewes will wander", causing distress to the lambs, if he takes time to listen to the young shepherd's complaint, and Thenot in reply points to "Lightfoot", who "shall tend them close". Blake's illustration of Lightfoot against the horizon has been compared with that of the running messengers in Blake's fourth Job illustration.

5. COLINET.



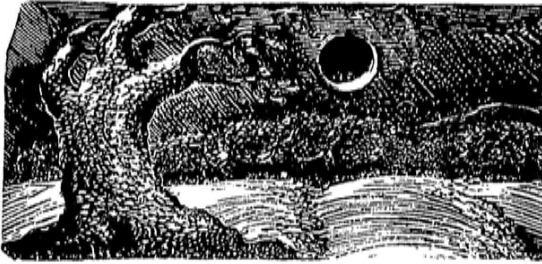
The principal feature of this design is the tree struck by lightning, illustrating Colinet's idea of his own state:

My piteous plight in yonder naked tree,
 which bears the thunder-scar too plain, I see:
 quite destitute it stands of shelter kind,

the mark of storms, and sport of every wind:
the riven trunk feels not the approach of spring;
nor birds among the leafless branches sing[.]

A charming background detail is the lamb taking milk from the ewe, perhaps suggested by the lines of Colinet's previous speech; it establishes the springtime setting against which the leafless tree is projected.

6. *THENOT.*



This striking conception shows a more powerful storm-swept tree projected against a moon partially eclipsed in a rainy sky and against flattened wheat in a field. The wheat is reminiscent of that in *America 9* (which employs striking use of white-line engraving with etching on copperplate), in which is set an apparently dead child. Essick comments helpfully on the technical aspects of Blake's woodcut:

The storm-tossed scene in the sixth cut ..., one of Blake's few designs devoid of the human form [but cf. also no. 8], is a particularly successful marriage of dynamic subject with an equally exuberant graphic style. Here Blake has joined his long lines with the sort of flick work he was beginning to employ in his intaglio graphics during this same period Professional wood engravers added what they called "tone" to their work by cutting fine, closely spaced parallel lines. Blake, however, uses seemingly careless flicks – actually placed with great skill – to capture the play of light and shadow on the rough bark of the tree. Samuel Palmer wrote to Gilchrist that Blake admired some of Claude Lorrain's paintings, "and [Blake] mentioned, as a peculiar charm, that in these, when minutely examined, there were, upon the focal lights of the foliage, small specks of pure white which made them appear to be glittering with dew which the morning sun had not yet dried up" [Here] and elsewhere in the Virgil cuts, Blake uses a graphic equivalent of Claude's flecks of glittering light with great success.

The text illustrated is as follows:

Sure thou in hapless hour of time wast born,
When blightning mildews spoil the rising corn,
or blasting winds o'er blossom'd hedge-rows pass,
to kill the promis'd fruits, and scorch the grass;
or when the moon, by wizard charm'd, foreshows,
blood-stain'd in foul eclipse, impending woes.

Blake harmonizes all to one autumnal scene; although Philips might have influenced him earlier in *Europe*, plate 9, in which two energetic nude figures literally blast (from trumpets) ears of corn or barley, it is more likely that Blake took the image from Philips' own source in Virgil's first eclogue: "And blasting mildews blackened all his grain" (Dryden's translation).

7. THENOT.



Blake illustrates the evils against which a good shepherd may guard his flock: the fox, wolf and diseased sheep of Philips' lines are vigorously depicted in a night-time scene:

Nor fox, nor wolf, nor rot among our sheep:
from these good shepherd's care his flock may keep:
against ill luck, alas! all forecast fails;
nor toil by day, nor watch by night, avails.

8. COLINET.



Philips uses Milton's personification, "Sabrina fair" (*Comus*, line 859), to refer to the river Severn, the "silv'ry flood" on the "flow'ry banks" of which Colinet used to keep his sheep. Blake suggests the "silv'ry" effect by darkening the banks under an evening sky and using bold white lines (which run both with and across the current and include the widest white areas in the design) on the river's surface. He also includes the detail of the shepherd's homely hut:

When shall I see my hut, the small abode
myself did raise and cover o'er with sod?--
Small though it be, a mean and humble cell,
yet is there room for peace and me to dwell.

Essick notes a possible reminiscence of Blake's loved cottage at Felpham.

9. COLINET.



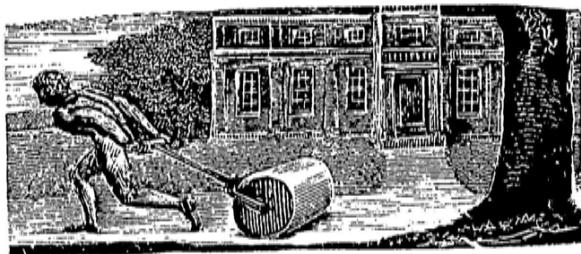
This illustrates Colinet's travels when

With wand'ring feet unblest, and fond of fame,
I sought I know not what besides a name.

The milestone gives a distance of 62 miles from London, which seems a

pointed reference to Blake's one known absence from his home city, at Felpham in Sussex near Chichester, some twenty years before the date of the woodcuts. Essick notes that Chichester is 63 miles from London. Blake might well have felt in retrospect that he went to Felpham, at the invitation of his patron William Hayley, with similar half-formed ambitions to those described by Philips, though he was not a young man.

10. *THENOT.*



Philips quotes the familiar proverb, "A rolling stone is ever bare of moss", in the old man's speech deploring the search for gain by travel. Whimsically, Blake interprets the image literally as a lawn roller, employed before a large Georgian house. The mansion represents the illusory gain sought by the young shepherd; the hand-drawn roller the barren labour required to maintain the wealthy style of life.

11. *COLINET.*



A quintessentially Romantic pastoral scene comprises the characteristic ingredients of Gothic building, moonlight, river, shepherd with flock and interesting woodland. However, the scene is in context far from idyllic, for the shepherd has strayed from the Severn to "distant Cam", a seat of learning denied to such as himself (it has been suggested that the

building across the Cam represents King's College chapel). Like the mansion in the previous design, the college building shows a form of upper class life that the mere peasant may not enjoy; both buildings are in pointed contrast to the little hut by the Severn in the eighth woodcut, though one evokes the landed gentry, the other the learned professions. Colinet reclining under the tree draws upon these lines of lamentation:

My sheep quite spent through travel and ill fare,
and like their keeper ragged grown and bare,
the damp cold green sward for my nightly bed,
and some slaunt willow's trunk to rest my head.

12. COLINET.



Colinet goes on to identify calumny as the worst evil he has had to endure. (Philips has perhaps remembered the song in *As You Like It* Act II, scene vii: "Blow, blow, thou winter wind".) Blake illustrates the scene of mockery Philips describes:

Untoward lads, the wanton imps of spite
make mock of all the ditties I endite.—
In vain, O COLINET, thy pipe, so shrill,
charms every vale, and gladdens every hill:
in vain thou seek'st the coverings of the grove,
in the cool shade to sing the pains of live:
sing what thou wilt, ill-nature will prevail;
and every elf hath skill enough to rail.

Nevertheless, Blake shows by contrast with the frontispiece, in which Colinet's musical instruments hang neglected on the tree, that a transformation has taken place within him comparable to that effected in Job and his family in Blake's great series of engravings (which were made, like the woodcuts, towards the end of Blake's own life); cf. Job Illustration 21. (This theme returns more positively in the penultimate illustration, no. 19 and perhaps we might rather see the present one only in relation to

no. 10: "The Just Upright Man is laughed to scorn".) Once again, Blake would have identified strongly with the sentiments expressed by Philips:

But yet, though poor and artless be my vein,
MENALCAS seems to like my simple strain:
and while that he delighteth in my song,
which to the good MENALCAS doth belong,
nor night nor day shall my rude music cease;
I ask no more, so I MENALCAS please.

We almost catch here in Philips a pre-echo of that dauntless spirit in the great hymn of Blake's Preface to *Milton*:

I will not cease from Mental Fight
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand[.]

Blake himself was all the more likely to notice the resemblance in that he too had felt the mockery of "wanton imps of spite".

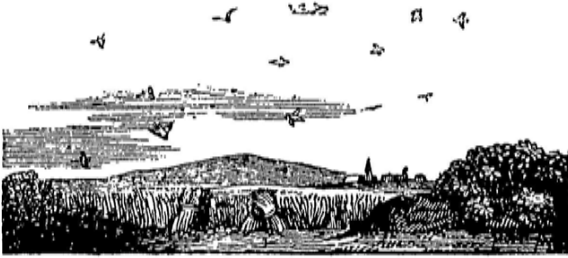
13. *THENOT.*



Essick has drawn attention to the lightening of Blake's woodcut style in this illustration as a response to the brightening of Philips' text. Thenot offers a gloss on Menalcas, "lord of these fair fertile plains", and says it is for him that "our yearly wakes and feasts we hold". This design seems to harmonize or resolve the dissonances of the previous ones, showing rustic music and dancing being enjoyed in the garden of a Georgian mansion which, with its portico, appears more opulent than that which is emblematic of ambition in no. 10. Whether the seated musicians, the woman with the lyre and the man with the violin, represent Menalcas and his wife (thus harmonizing the social classes), is not clear; their instruments are not the simple ones of Colinet and the elaborate befeathered hat of the lyrist, in particular, suggests that she might be the lady of the manor. It would be strange if Menalcas should be considered wholly absent from this illustration – or present only in the form of his

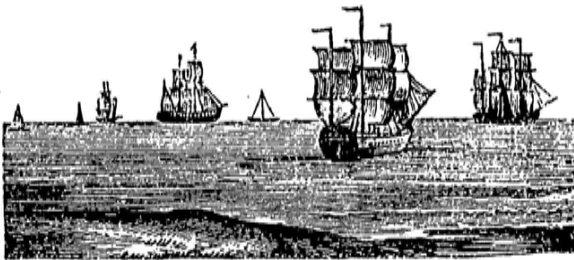
house! Essick notes that "Blake bathes [this cut] in light by engraving away most of the block's surface to leave delicate black lines against a white background."

**14. FIRST
COMPARISON.**



"First then shall lightsome birds forget to fly". This is the first of three illustrations for which Blake provided the designs but another hand produced the woodcuts, in a notably different style. In the present design Blake had continued the celebratory mood of the previous illustration by filling the sky with rejoicing amorous birds, particularly the two central ones, an effect which has been ruined by reducing the central birds in size so much that one would have to be a curious scholar indeed to scrutinize them so closely as to work out what they are doing!

**15. SECOND
COMPARISON.**



"the briny ocean turn to pastures dry". Blake is not noted for maritime subjects and it would have been most interesting to see a woodcut from his hand on this subject. The drawing again promises more than the woodcut performs.

16. *THIRD
COMPARISON.*



“and every rapid river cease to flow”. Blake’s river is more in the nature of an estuary and the raft does not suggest rapidity. Once again it is unfortunate that we have been deprived of an unusual Blake print.

17. *THENOT.
To illustrate
lines 1, 2.*



The last four woodcuts in the series illustrate particular lines from the final speech in the poem, which is given to Thenot, who invites his young friend to share the comfort of his rustic home. This illustration presents a sheepfold similar to that in no. 7 and combines it with a hut like that in no. 8, to illustrate this couplet:

This night thy care with me forget, and fold
thy flock with mine, to ward th’injurious cold.

The sun, seen rising in the first designs, next in springtime splendour, then absent and replaced by a moon, even an eclipsed moon, in the darker passages, here sets for the first of three occasions. The sunset is appropriate to Thenot’s (the older man’s) valedictory speech, whereas it was fitting for the younger man’s to end with the expansive vistas of the three comparisons, following his vindication of his artistic and pastoral values.

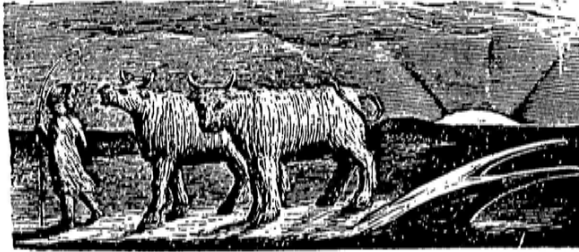
18. 3, 4, 5, 6.



This is a scene of rustic hospitality, presented in the "cutaway" form which shows the interior of a simple home by removing the fourth wall (a variation on the common theatrical convention, which reminds the viewers of their position as observers of another world from their own). Blake uses this technique elsewhere in his work, for instance in scenes of the Nativity. The lines illustrated are as follows:

New milk, and clouted cream, mild cheese and curd,
with some remaining fruit of last year's hoard,
shall be our ev'ning fare; and, for the night,
sweet herbs and moss, which gentle sleep invite[.]

19. 7, 8, 9.



Although it is the end of day, it is a time of happiness for the rural workers, who sing and play, with the horn or pipe, like that of the piper in the frontispiece to *Songs of Innocence*, and the panpipes, and anticipate the pleasures of home, as the oxen are unyoked (in anticipation of the final design) and the plowshare is left idle. On this positive note, in pointed contrast to that of the frontispiece, see above under no. 12. The

lines in Philips are:

and now behold the sun's departing ray,
o'er yonder hill, the sign of ebbing day:
with songs the jovial hinds return from plow[.]

20. 10.



This final design seems to celebrate more directly the freedom of the animals, companions in the peasants' toil, now unyoked and ready to walk away from the plow (which is an analogue to the roller of no. 10). One of the oxen lifts its head as if in the act of lowing its satisfaction, its contribution to the general song, illustrating the final line of Philips' Imitation:

and unyok'd heifers, loitering homeward, low.

*

These notes have taken Essick's observations, for which I am most grateful, a little further, particularly in suggesting that there is a deeper and closer parallel to be drawn between the woodcut series and the set of Job Illustrations, which (though very much more elaborate) is of similar length. The personal allusions within the Thornton woodcuts enable us to trace more securely, perhaps, than otherwise we might a comparable association between the sorrows (and the triumph) of Job and those of the poet-artist who strayed in middle life only to find new patrons and some more cheerful forms of song in his old age. It is also interesting to see

how Blake is able to find this same set of associations within Ambrose Philips. He remained less happy with Virgil, commenting on his annotations to Thornton's *New Translation of the Lord's Prayer* (1827) – as Essick has noticed – that Caesar is “Virgil's only God – See Eclogue i”. Blake's feeling of exclusion from the world of those who boasted of a classical education very likely fuels the bitterness of his illustrations of Colinet's experience by the river Cam and of being mocked by “the wanton imps of fate”.

Michael Tolley



Blake Lecture

Martin Butlin, Keeper of the British Collection at the Tate Gallery, London, will be giving a lecture in the Ira Raymond Exhibition Room, Barr Smith Library, on 19 October at 7.30pm. His topic is ‘The Physicality of William Blake: the colour prints of 1795.’

Dr. Butlin is a leading authority on the work of William Blake, and is in Australia on a visit organised by the National Gallery of Victoria. He is the author of *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1981.

The occasion has been arranged by The Art Gallery of South Australia in conjunction with the Centre for British Studies at The University of Adelaide, and the Friends of the Special Collections of the Barr Smith Library. It will be attended by the British High Commissioner, His Excellency Mr. A.J. Coles, CMG. In a short ceremony, the Vice-Chancellor of The University of Adelaide, Professor Kevin Marjoribanks, will officially hand over our newest Blake acquisition, Thornton's *Virgil*, to the Acting University Librarian, Mr. Patrick Condon.

To coincide with Dr. Butlin's lecture, the Library has arranged an exhibition of Blake material, including the Thornton *Virgil* and related material, the 1797 edition of Young's *Night Thoughts* lent by the State Library of South Australia, and the 1825 edition of the *Illustrations of the Book of Job*.

The exhibition will be displayed in the Special Collections area on Level 4 South, and in the Ira Raymond Exhibition Room, opposite the Library entrance on Level 3.

Library publishes Blake Catalogue

The Barr Smith Library has recently published *A Catalogue of Blake Material in the Special Collections of the Barr Smith Library*, compiled by Elizabeth Lee, the Subject Librarian for English.

Although we do not hold any original Blake drawings or illuminated works, the Library has a good collection of facsimiles, including several Muir facsimiles, and a growing collection of works with illustrations designed or engraved by Blake.

We are fortunate in having a complete set of the Trianon Press facsimiles, including the facsimile of the 116 illustrations which make up *William Blake's Watercolour Designs for the Poems of Thomas Gray*, and the three volume set of the *Illustrations of the Book of Job* which includes facsimiles of the drawings from the Riches sketchbook, the engravings, and three colour versions, being the New Zealand and Collins sets, and the Fitzwilliam plates.

In addition, our collection includes several early editions of Blair's *The Grave*, including an 1813 folio edition with remaindered first state plates from the 1808 edition, the 1813 quarto edition, and the 1870 typographic facsimile issued by John Camden Hotten. We also hold the 1874 issue of the 1825 edition of the *Illustrations of the Book of Job*, and a copy of the 1821 edition of Thornton's *Virgil*, for which Blake designed twenty woodcuts, seventeen of which he cut himself. These are the only woodcuts ever designed by Blake, making this a unique and valuable edition.

The *Catalogue* has 146 entries in two main sections: 'Works by Blake' and 'Other Works Illustrated by Blake', with an appendix of collections and selections of his illustrations and writings. Reference numbers to entries in the main Blake bibliographies, including Bentley's *Blake Books*, Keynes' *Bibliography of William Blake*, Keynes and Wolf's *William Blake's Illuminated Books: a census*, and Butlin's *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake*, are given to enable users to readily identify different copies for comparison. In the case of facsimiles, the number of plates reproduced is indicated.

The following is a sample entry from the *Catalogue*:

16. Blake, William.

Europe: a prophecy. Clairvaux, Jura: Trianon Press for The William Blake Trust, London, 1969. 17 col. plates.

Limited edition of 526 copies, of which this is number 94.

Facsimile of Plates 2, 6, 13-15, 17-18 from the copy owned by Lord Cunliffe (Bentley 33, Copy B; Keynes-Wolf Copy B); Plates 1, 4-5, 7-12, 16 from the copy owned by Mrs. Landon Thorne (Bentley 33, Copy G; Keynes 41, Copy C; Keynes-Wolf Copy G); Plate 3 from the copy in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (Bentley 33, Copy K; Keynes 41, Copy I; Keynes-Wolf Copy K).

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Michael J. Tolley, the well-known Blake scholar, who is a Reader in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Adelaide, has written an introduction to the *Catalogue*.

Copies of the *Catalogue* are available at a cost of \$2.50. Enquiries should be directed to the Special Collections Librarian on Level 4 South of the Barr Smith Library.

Elizabeth Lee

Musings of an Itinerant Medical Librarian

by Jane Price

One of the penalties of taking a six-month workstudy leave at another university is collegial curiosity, on both sides of the ocean, about the experience. As a visiting medical subject specialist at the Barr Smith Library, what were my observations about the University of Adelaide and my home institution, the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada?

Well, size is a conspicuous difference. Compare the compact campus of the University of Adelaide with one where undergraduates use bicycles, skateboards or rollerskates to facilitate their dash across campus to make their next class within the ten-minute break. The University of British Columbia (UBC) is one of the largest universities in North America. Over 38,000 students are enrolled in the twelve faculties of study (1986/87). Approximately 7,000 faculty and staff are employed by the university. The university library is the second largest research library in Canada with a collection of over 2.5 million books and almost 35,000 journal subscriptions. Unlike the Barr Smith Library, UBC's library operates on a decentralised branch system with twenty-one branches and service divisions, including three off-campus, serving the six teaching and research hospitals. But, apart from size, I found that the two universities and the two libraries have much in common and share many of the same problems.

Resources

Both universities depend primarily upon government support. Both universities are finding the days of flush funding a thing of the past. (I see that we keep fine company as even venerable old Oxford has entered into a five year retrenchment plan). Over the past few years both libraries have experienced cuts in their budgets. Coupled with an unfavourable rate of exchange, both library administrations have faced the quandary of how to stretch fewer dollars to maintain collections, to cope with increasing demands and to keep abreast of new technologies.

Collections

Both Australia and Canada have experienced a decline in the purchasing power of their dollar. At the same time, the cost of books and journal subscriptions has escalated. The Barr Smith Library has already undergone a series of journal cancellations. In 1986, UBC discontinued 900 titles with further cancellations anticipated this year as journal prices have increased by 19%. Even with careful selection of titles, cancellation has a huge impact on a research library by creating gaps in the collection which often cannot be filled later when or if funds become available.

Staffing

Both libraries have found it necessary to reduce staff positions. UBC has eliminated fifty positions since 1980. Yet annual reports from both university librarians show an increased demand for library services. At UBC, library processing services have been hardest hit by staff cutbacks. There have been no layoffs as staff are reassigned to other locations within the Library. Positions have disappeared through attrition. Prior to filling any vacancy, the position must be rationalised to the university administration.

Technology

It is in the development of library systems that a major dissimilarity between institutions was found. Possibly collection size was the largest determining factor in establishing the priorities for automation of library operations. The Barr Smith Library took the approach of automating public service functions first while UBC attacked the technical services processes. How I miss the ease of using BIBLION to check library holdings! Projected implementation of an online public access catalogue at UBC is scheduled for the end of 1990 (though internally, staff may access an online catalogue of titles received since 1978). Meanwhile, library holdings are checked by squinting at microfiche for post-1978 acquisitions, the card catalogue for pre-1978 items or an online in process file for new receipts or material on order. A reversion project for pre - 1978 material continues at UBC as time permits.

On the other hand, delightful as these people are, I do not miss having to phone the journal processing division each time someone asks if the

Library has received an issue of a journal. UBC's online serials system will give me current receipts and binding information or anything else I might wish to know about the subscription. This is a tremendous boon in medicine where the emphasis is on current journal information. To ease the serials processing, the system also automatically notifies of possible subscription gaps and prints claim forms.

In the Acquisitions division, all functions except the printing of money are automated.

As at the Barr Smith Library, much of the cataloguing information for new books is shared among networks of libraries using bibliographic 'utilities' databases similar to the Australian Bibliographic Network.

Automation of processing has permitted the UBC library to save staff costs in technical services so as to prevent even more drastic erosion of the collections budget and to maintain staffing in public services areas such as circulation (with the exception of unbound journal circulation, an operation which is also automated but not yet barcoded) and information services.

Information Services

It was reassuring for me to discover the familiar in the Barr Smith Library. The same major indices, the same bibliographic databases and the same journal abbreviations as used in Canada. Even many of the requests for information were familiar, just asked with a different accent. This gave me the confidence to suggest to a physician who was frustrated by library systems in both Australia and North America – "give me half an hour to show you how and you should be able to locate information in any medical library of the English-speaking world."

I was also able to make sympathetic utterings to those unfamiliar with the layout of the Barr Smith Library. A friend once accused librarians of hiding things and I often think he's right. At UBC we hide them in a plethora of catalogues; the Barr Smith hides them in a physical maze. (Reminds me of our Main Library at UBC which is of similar vintage.) The first few days I was quite lost. Then, when I had finally oriented myself, I had to remember the separate shelving sequence for books and journals. I understand that the Barr Smith is planning to implement a single shelving sequence. We did that in the Biomedical Library a few years ago and the "I can't find this call number" questions at the



Jane Price at the Barr Smith

Information Desk were reduced dramatically.

At the Barr Smith I enjoyed the close association with some of the departments in my subject area. Again, this is probably facilitated by size but liaising on the purchase of subject materials also contributes. At UBC, a subject bibliographer handles all ordering (they do welcome suggestions for purchase though) and all cataloguing is centralized. This means that subject librarians, like library users, must make a special point to peruse the new book shelf in the Library.

Because UBC's medical libraries serve the faculty and staff of six teaching hospitals, the librarians must be ready to provide medical information for clinical emergencies at any time. These always seem to occur the first day back from holidays. Mine came the second day back from Australia. Most of my medical/dental interactions in Adelaide were research oriented. Although I enjoyed the depth and the respite from urgency, I found I had forgotten that surge of adrenalin and the serendipitous nature of these emergency requests.

Back once again on the familiar turf of Canada I must remember to check under *pédiatrie* as well as *pediatric* and *paediatric* but I can usually understand the words when someone asks a question. The six-month exchange was over much too soon.

Professionally, it was beneficial to learn of the approaches taken by a different country and a different institution. As Canada moves toward a new copyright law (anticipated this northern spring) I think of working within Australia's legislation.

As UBC implements copycard (at this very moment) or continues to design an online public access catalogue system (news item as I write - funding has been received for computer upgrading and public terminals

so the future may be sooner than anticipated) or begs for barcoding, I remember my experiences at the Barr Smith Library. Personally, both Ellen Randva and I voted the exchange to be a great success and plot how we might continue on six-month rotations.

For me, it was a bonza experience at a fair dinkum uni. Thanks, mates! "The mind is glad with many memories." *

* John Masefield 'Australia' in *Poems* (London, Heinemann, 1946). stanza 11, line 5.