

A bibliophile
of little means
is likely
to suffer often.

Books don't
slip from
his hands
but fly past
him through the air,
high as birds,
high as prices.

PABLO NERUDA

From the Guest Editor's Desk

The Alcuin Society, I have discovered, is something of a wonder. Founded forty years ago by men who readily admit that had they known what they were getting themselves into, they would never have been able to do it, the Society has successfully navigated financial difficulty, editorial differences and a technological revolution to become a successful and unique organization that gives neophyte and veteran bibliophiles a forum to explore their passion.

This special edition of *Amphora* is intended to both commemorate the history of the Society and to introduce new members, many of whom live outside the Greater Vancouver area, to the full range of the Society's activities. As a relatively new member myself, I have appreciated the opportunity that working on the fortieth-anniversary project has afforded me to learn about programs the Society has put on over the years, publications it has produced, and the many ways in which the Society supports fine publishing. Additionally, I have been honoured to meet and work with some of the men and women who have contributed so much to the Society over the past four decades. I have discovered that at various times the Society has been home to eccentric characters, dynamic movers and shakers, publishing powerhouses, and those just caught up in the momentum of it all.

I myself am one of those who have been caught up in the Alcuin Society's momentum: last November I received a call from Ralph Stanton, UBC Rare Books and Special Collections librarian and Alcuin Society board member, asking me to come and meet him to discuss working on an anniversary project. So it came about that the next day I met both Ralph and Howard Greaves, the Society's chairman, and before I knew what had hit me, I was editing the issue of *Amphora* you now hold in your hands. The oddity of this situation became apparent when I, a recent graduate from the Master of Library and Information Studies program at UBC, met with the committee members overseeing the project, including the Society's chairman, two past chairmen, and other seasoned board members. I began to wonder why I had been given the task of editor when there were so many better qualified individuals at hand.

I discovered that the Alcuin Society is open and welcoming to new members and that there is the opportunity for all members, new and old, to

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contribute. Indeed, the advice and guidance I received from the committee members, as well as others, has solidified both my natural bibliophilic tendencies and my appreciation of the Society and its works. I encourage everyone who can to attend Society functions such as the annual general meeting and the Wayzgoose. Likewise, all members have the opportunity to submit to *Amphora* and share their work and ideas with other like-minded Society members. As Society founder Geoffrey Spencer pointed out to me, computer technology allows us an unprecedented opportunity to share the printed word with each other, whether we are in New Westminster or New York.

I'd like to thank Ralph Stanton for inviting me to be part of this project, Richard Hopkins for his encouragement and support, Jim Rainer for his dedication and organization, Howard Greaves for his trust and encouragement, Robert Reid for his creativity, Naomi Pauls for her attention to detail, and Geoffrey Spencer for his willingness to share his knowledge. It should also be noted that the typographical design of the quotations throughout this issue of *Amphora* was done by Robert Reid.

N. B. Articles beginning on pages 37, 53 and 57 are reprinted from the twentieth-anniversary issue of *Amphora* (Issue 62, December 1985). Those beginning on page 63 and 67 are reprinted from the thirtieth-anniversary issue, *Amphora* 100 (December 1995).