

newspapers, a catalogue of eighteenth-century English books in Australian libraries. In the end, because Cameron was already at McMaster University and could spare only two months for the work, he became the chief editor of the catalogue and much of the cataloguing was done by his collaborator, Diana Carroll of the National Library of Australia. Prudently, the scope of the two-volume 1966 catalogue was restricted to libraries of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) [1:643b]. With characteristic forcefulness Cameron included a survey and estimate of the number of volumes in Australian libraries outside the ACT. He personally checked every collection that had reported owning more than 250 eighteenth-century books and concluded that there were about 19,100 volumes beyond the 8389 in the ACT catalogue. The ACT holdings were extended to 10,824 volumes in a supplement compiled by Ivan Page in 1970 [1:643bc] but that seems to have been the end of it.

The Australian scholar Harold Love noted that Cameron was the first person to draw attention to the 'large accumulation of books of the hand-press era' in Australian libraries, describing Cameron's 1962 catalogue as 'the essential tool for scholars of [his] own generation working here, not only for what it listed but also for the clues it provided as to where books outside the Wing period might be sought. Even more importantly, it was a rallying cry for what might be achieved in Australia'.¹¹ In this same period Cameron suggested the formation of an Australian and New Zealand bibliographical society and then moved on to Canada; the society (in which Brian McMullin was a considerable force) was not established until 1969.

It was in 1961, I believe, that Bill Cameron and I clashed over a principle that continued to be effective in all his bibliographical work. He maintained (in Brian McMullin's words) that 'the pursuit of completeness and exactness was not always appropriate, that an incomplete bibliography might still be useful and might indeed prompt others to work towards its completion'.¹² Contrarily, I argued with the confidence of someone who had not done anything that, because man is imperfect, any bibliography will be imperfect, even one for which the compiler strove diligently for completeness and exactness; if he did not, the catalogue would be much worse. He of course was arguing from the basis of experience (often in two months' bursts of hectic bibliographical activity) and he was right in his terms. I, however, am not so confident as to publish incomplete work, and have followed another path. McMullin, who came to accept Cameron's principle, nevertheless harboured a 'residual suspicion [...] that by mere publication the imperfect may inhibit the more nearly perfect'. I agree an imperfect catalogue almost always inhibits the preparation of a better one, if only because funding agencies are averse to allotting money to tasks that they believe have been accomplished and from which no sufficiently substantial scholarly gain can be expected. But, as I have