

Eighteenth century editions of Barclay's *Apology*

There can be no doubt that Barclay's *Apology* ranks amongst the handful of the most influential of all Quaker Books. It is not so clear today how much this book, so formidable to most modern readers, was actually read by Friends or others. From its printing history it is clear that it was widely available but that could simply have been because the Society corporately thought that it should be widely read. It was certainly much reprinted and much translated in the eighteenth century. It was certainly much reprinted and much translated in the eighteenth century. There seem to me to be three important questions, here I address only the third in basic detail and this is the simplest of them to begin to attempt to answer. The questions are:

- 1 How widely read was the *Apology* and can its influence on eighteenth century Friends be assessed?
- 2 Did the text change, accidentally or as a result of conscious editing? (one of the main authorities referred to here is Joseph Smith's *A Descriptive Catalogue of Friends' Books*, two volumes, 1867. There is an interesting note on page 184 of volume 1 about a printing error in Barclay's proposition eight).
3. What editions were available in the eighteenth century? In thinking about this third question there is no suggestion that it is the most important but I do suggest that the studies I think are needed of the first two will be helped by a reasonably accurate answer to the third. Rufus Jones considers that 'The *Apology* is beyond question the primary influence which made Friends quietistic' (*The Later Periods of Quakerism*, volume 1, page 60, 1921). Jones goes no further there in evaluating the influence of the *Apology*. D. Elton Trueblood in his *Robert Barclay* (pages 8-9, New York, 1968) describes briefly the distribution of the *Apology* as a means of evangelism and its use by and influence on prominent Friends such as William Savery, Thomas Shillitoe, John Woolman, Samuel Scott and Samuel Crisp.

Some seventeenth century versions would have been in meeting or private libraries in the eighteenth century. The *Apology* first appeared

in Latin in Amsterdam in 1676. It was published in English in both Aberdeen and London in 1678 and then in German in 1684. The text appears in the collected edition of Barclay's works *Truth Triumphant* in 1692. Listing the eighteenth century printings might appear to be an entirely straightforward matter which would simply show how available the text was (though printing figures would be essential to really fill out that picture). But when one comes to look at the various sources and to try to establish when the *Apology* was printed there is some conflicting information. Not every book printed in the eighteenth century actually survives in even one copy today but I suggest that some of the editions listed in earlier sources never did exist. They may appear to as a result of imperfect information available to Joseph Smith or simple errors of one digit in date in library catalogues. The table that follows should make this argument clearer. While Smith is generally quite reliable he does list books that he had not seen, particularly American printings that were unlikely to be systematically imported into England. I have not been able to check with a number of American libraries whether or not some other doubtful editions are present in their collections and it may be that American readers can supply further information as notes to the *Journal*.

A more comprehensive account would add material about the printing and publishing history of each version. While that is awaited it does seem worth adding as notes to the list what information is readily available. Some of this come from Norman Penney's manuscript notes on editions of the *Apology* in the Library at Friends' House. The printing figures seem high for their period when they can be provided but it must be remembered that quantities of copies were wanted for free distribution outside the Society. On that point it is illuminating to read the proposal by John Bellers in 1697 that 10,000 copies should be printed to be given away to 'all the Parliament-Men, Ministers of State, and the Magistrates, &c. in the Nation' (this can be found most conveniently on pages 267-9 of *John Bellers*, edited by George Clarke, 1987).

The table lists only English language editions. Those in other languages do not seem to present any problem. For the eighteenth century they seem to have been: Danish 1738; Dutch 1757; German 1740, 1776 (Germantown, Pennsylvania); French 1702, 1797 (different translations); Latin 1729; Spanish 1710.

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Printing	Year	Place	Sources
A	1701	London	Smith LSF BL ESTC NUC
B	1702	London	NUC
C	1703	London	Smith LSF BL ESTC NUC
D	1717	London	see note
E	1723	Newport, Rhode Island	NUC
F	1726	London	NUC
G	1728	America	Smith
H	1729	Newport, Rhode Island	Smith ESTC NUC
I	1736	London	Smith LSF BL ESTC NUC
J	1737	Dublin	Smith LSF BL ESTC NUC
K	1756	no place	NUC
L	1757	Dublin	NUC
M	1765	London	Smith LSF BL ESTC NUC
N	1765	Birmingham	Smith LSF BL ESTC NUC
O	1774	America	Smith
P	1775	Philadelphia	Smith LSF BL ESTC NUC
Q	1780	Philadelphia	Smith
R	1780	Dublin	Smith LSF BL ESTC NUC
S	1780	London	Smith LSF BL ESTC NUC
T	1789	Philadelphia	Smith LSF ESTC NUC
U	1800	Dublin	Smith LSF BL ESTC NUC

Sources

Smith: Joseph Smith, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Friends' Books*, two volumes, 1867; Supplement, 1893.

LSF: Friends House Library.

BL: British Library, printed catalogue.

ESTC: *Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue*, now part of the *English Short Title Catalogue* and available on-line.

NUC: *National Union Catalogue*, volume 35, 1968.

NOTES

- A Penney's notes observe that 7,000 copies were to be printed.
- B As with E, F, K and L there is no other evidence for the existence of this printing at present. Further investigation is needed.
- D This is the second volume of the three volume reprint of Barclay's *Truth Triumphant* and would not have been separately listed by the sources used. LSF has a copy. The other two volumes seem more commonly met with.
- E Printing seems to have begun in Newport in 1727, see *Rhode Island Imprints 1727-1800*, Providence R.I., 1915.
- F See B above.
- G Possibly in fact H; Smith had not seen a copy. He describes it as 'An edition printed under the sanction of the Yearly Meeting of Friends in New England'.
- H In Smith's *Supplement*, not the original edition. According to Penney's notes 1,000 copies printed. According to J.W. Frost, *The Quaker Family in Colonial America*, New York, 1973, p. 224, Rhode Island Quakers subscribed to 500 copies. NUC differentiates two issues, with the same imprint.
- I Penney notes that Yearly Meeting authorised the printing of 6,000 copies; 4,000 on small paper and 2,000 on large.
- K See B above.
- L See B above. The date is probably a simple transcription error for 1737 as the printer, Mary Fuller, died in 1737.
- M Penney notes a printing of 3,000 copies; 2,000 octavo and 1,000 quarto. He says that in 1773 about 800 copies in sheets remained at Devonshire House.
- N Dr John Fothergill was involved in the production of this finely printed version.
- O Smith had not seen a copy.
- P Frost, *op. cit.* notes that New England Yearly Meeting ordered 600 copies.
- Q Not seen by Smith but listed as item 3985 in Charles R. Hildeburn, *The Issues of the Press in Philadelphia, 1685-1784*, 2 volumes, Philadelphia, 1885.
- S Issued on both small and large paper.