

THE NEW STC

A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475–1640. First compiled by A.W. Pollard & G.R. Redgrave. Second Edition, Revised & Enlarged, begun by W.A. Jackson & F.S. Ferguson, completed by Katharine F. Pantzer. Volume 2, I – Z. London, The Bibliographical Society, 1976. Bibliographical Society Publication for the years 1973, 1974, and 1975. pp. xi + 494. £40 net.

Riches indeed, and a reviewer is hard put to it to know what to say or where to begin! Obviously the final word cannot be said until the appearance of Volume 1 (A – H) in 1980 and the final volume, with an index of printers and booksellers two years after that; or, indeed, until all three volumes have been in use for a considerable period of time. One can be reasonably sure that already, in various parts of the world, bibliographers are eagerly consulting their own card indexes and personal collections, and already compiling material for a further revision – when the Bibliographical Society can afford it! Miss Pantzer already has just over five pages of Addenda and Corrigenda at the end of the present volume, and Volume 1 will doubtless contain more. The task of the sorcerer's apprentice fades into insignificance against that of editors and revisers of STC!

The work's 50 years of existence recalls to mind a veritable honours roll of scholars and bibliographers. Pollard and Redgrave themselves, as pioneers; Jackson and Ferguson, who began the revision over 25 years ago, the former not only a brilliant and painstaking scholar but also a generous and genial host to hundreds of visiting scholars, while it was said of the latter that 'in matters pertaining to bibliography he would not take the word of the Archangel Gabriel on trust'; among my own friends and acquaintances Sir Walter Greg, John Carter, Graham Pollard, Sir Frank Francis, F.P. Wilson, Howard Nixon, Desmond Neill, John Oates, all of whom in their own ways helped towards making this revision the truly great work that it is. Nor, of course, can one forget John Crow, of whom it was said (rightly or wrongly I know not, though it was certainly believed by a lot of people) that he had read all the works in the original STC, and who travelled a great deal from library to library, particularly in America, and usually by Greyhound coaches, his rucksack containing, apart from spare shirts and socks, an interleaved copy of STC in which he meticulously noted all additions, errors, and variants which he came across in his travels. Some of these men are, alas, no longer with us, but all will receive their due acknowledgement, we are assured, in Volume 1.

Now the work is in the hands of Miss Pantzer, who took it over on the death of Jackson in 1964. Let it be said at once that she and the Council of the Bibliographical Society have proceeded in a most business-like way in making the results of many years' work available to scholars as quickly as possible – though I shall never forgive them for beginning with the letter 'I' when the particular cross I have to bear at the moment is Thomas Heywood! The minimum of preliminary matter has been attached to the present volume to make it as easily consulted as possible – and as far as I have been able to test this, it works – and we are promised fuller details, of conventions of

transcription and description, of reference books used and alluded to in the text, and the like, in Volume 1.

Some idea of the enormous advance in knowledge of early printed material embodied in the new STC is given by the modest reference to the fact that it will add some 10,000 new entries to the original's 26,000. One might elaborate by pointing out that while the original ran to 609 pages, the second volume of the revision alone runs to 494 larger pages. There has been, thankfully, a much wider spread of libraries covered: Oxford in the original was represented by 17 institutions, and has now risen to 48; Cambridge has risen from 16 to 26; Edinburgh from 7 to 13, and London from 25 to 49; and similar figures could be quoted from elsewhere in the world. Municipal and Cathedral libraries quite properly make a better showing than they did in the original. Scholars in the Antipodes will be pleased to note that while their collections were unrecognised in the original, they are now represented by the State Library of Victoria, the National Library of Australia, Otago University, Sydney University, and the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington. As I am a very willing exile to Australia, and have no axe to grind, I could ask what happened to Melbourne University Library and the State Library of South Australia? They both have STC books in their collections, and since, compared with the big libraries of England and America, we have comparatively few out here, it would have been useful to have as complete a coverage as possible. The answer may lie in the section of the volume headed 'Locations'. 'In the entries the Atlantic Ocean is represented by a semicolon. Up to five locations on each side have been listed with a view to geographical distribution. In STC geography Australian and New Zealand libraries appear on the American side' (p.vii). What price the Pacific now?

A number of old friends have disappeared, apparently without trace. As a young student I always wanted to know more about J.L. Clawson, William Cowan, and W.M. Voynich, and now, I suppose, I never shall. The Earl of Crawford has also gone, Ferguson himself, along with Gosse, Greg, and Dyson Perrins. A number of other libraries are still included, but marked 'dispersed', with no further details. It is admittedly difficult to keep track of these things, especially where a collection has not been kept intact, but one hopes that in Volume 1 we shall be told, as far as humanly possible, just what has happened to these. It is indeed a sad note under 'Collection of William Jaggard': 'Dispersed; some unique items reported in the 1926 STC cannot be traced, nor their previous existence verified'. *Sic transit gloria mundi!* On the other hand it is heartening to note that many of the old vanished favourites have been replaced by a number of new private collectors and book-sellers, and that scholars who wish to make enquiries about their holdings should contact them via the Honorary Secretary of the Bibliographical Society. Finally under this heading one cannot but give a warm welcome to the New York Racket and Tennis Club (NY¹⁰).

All in all, then, a magnificent volume – well bound, well presented, well printed, and, above all, a first class piece of scholarship which should keep bibliographers happy for many years to come. We shall all pray fervently to be spared until the work's completion!

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