

RICHARD PRICE'S *TWO TRACTS* (1778)

RICHARD PRICE INTENDED *Two Tracts* to be the definitive presentation of his *Observations* and *Additional Observations* on Civil Liberty, first published in 1776 and 1777. To the texts of the two pamphlets, both somewhat revised, was added a *General Introduction and Supplement*, which was also published separately. The simplicity of the intention, however, was compromised by the fact that it was decided not to reset the text of *Additional Observations* but instead to re-issue the sheets of the 1777 edition, which were still available in quantity. The textual revisions that Price wished to make had therefore to be incorporated by cancellation. When the work first appeared two sheets and four single leaves had been cancelled. At a later stage further cancellations were made. It should not therefore be a matter for surprise that copies of *Two Tracts* vary in their make-up nor that many of them fail to reflect Price's intentions. Few who are familiar with it would dispute that this is one of the more complex books of the eighteenth century.¹

Three 'editions' of *Additional Observations* appeared in 1777, all of them substantially re-issues of the same sheets. The first two collate A-M⁸ and paginate xvi + 176. In the third 'edition' the first sheet is altered, with the effect that the Introduction is extended: this collates A⁸ a⁴(-a⁴) B-M⁸ and paginates xxii + 176. In the additional matter Price had amended opinions expressed in the body of the work on government spending.² Cancellation was resorted to therefore at the relevant points in the text when *Additional Observations* was re-issued as part of *Two Tracts*. First two sheets were cancelled: in sheet H the revised text was shorter, ending at page 110 rather than 112, leaving the final leaf H8 blank. In sheet M, on the other hand, the revised text was longer, ending, with the sheet, on page 176 instead of, as before, on page 170, with the remaining leaves taken up by a 'Postscript'. This therefore was reprinted, in an amended and shortened form, as a bifolium N² paginated 177-180. Three leaves in sheet L were cancelled: L6,7 contained the passages that Price had sought to revise in the Introduction to the third 'edition' of *Additional Observations*;³ L4 was cancelled because Price wished to tone down a reference to Turgot. A fourth cancellation occurs in the first sheet, where the introduction is shortened. The cancellans A7 reproduces the first paragraph only of its predecessor without any change. Hence the Introduction ends on page xiii instead of page xvi, as in the first two 'editions', whilst A8 is excised altogether.⁴ A subsidiary complication is the appearance of the *General Introduction and Supplement* as a separate pamphlet. This is usually found in the following form:

π1 A⁸ a⁴ b1 O-P⁸ Q², Folding table.

Contents: π1^r title; π1^v blank; A1^r-a4^v 'General Introduction' (pp.[i] ii-xxiv); b1^r-v 'Account of the Customs' (pp.xxv-xxvi); Q1^r-2^v 'Supplement' (pp.181-216).

The awkward collation is explained by the fact that $\pi 1$, a^4 , $b1$ and Q^2 were imposed together. The reason for this doubtless was that the rest of the pamphlet could then be printed in the same press run as *Two Tracts* — an evident saving of labour. The pamphlet also appeared in another form, collating:

$\pi 1 A^8 a^4 b1 D-E^8 F^2$.

The contents are the same as in the other issue except that the pagination of the Supplement becomes 1–36. It was doubtless easier to unlock the formes and change pagination and signatures than to reimpose the entire pamphlet.⁵

II

Two Tracts therefore first appeared in the following form:

$\pi^2 A^8 a^8 B-H^8 {}^2A^8(\pm A7, -A8) B-G^8 H^8(\pm) I-K^8 L^8(\pm L4,6,7)$
 $M^8(\pm) N^2 O-P^8 Q^2$.

Contents: $\pi 1^r$ blank; $\pi 1^v$ Advertisements; $\pi 2^r$ title; $\pi 2^v$ blank; $A1^r$ – $a4^v$ General Introduction (pp.[i] ii–xxiv); $a5^r$ – v Account of the Customs (pp.xxv–xxvi); $a6^r$ *Observations* title page; $a6^v$ blank; $a7^r$ Preface to first edition; $a7^v$ – 8^r Preface to fifth edition; $a8^v$ Contents; $B1^r$ – $H8^v$ Text of *Observations* (pp.[1] 2–212); ${}^2A1^r$ *Additional Observations* title page; ${}^2A1^v$ ‘Entered at Stationers’ Hall’; ${}^2A2^r$ Dedication; ${}^2A2^v$ blank; ${}^2A3^r$ Contents; ${}^2A3^v$ Publisher’s Advertisements; ${}^2A4^r$ – $M8^v$ text of *Additional Observations* (pp.vii–176); ${}^2N1^r$ – 2^v Postscript (pp.177–180); ${}^2O1^r$ – $Q2^v$ Supplement (pp.181–216).

The title page of *Observations on Civil Liberty* describes it as the eighth edition: this is a reprint, with a number of textual changes, of the seventh edition of 1776, which, like this, bore the imprint of Thomas Cadell. The title page of *Additional Observations* is that of the second edition, dated 1777. This was later replaced by a cancellans fly title bearing no edition statement or date. This, if it be the earliest form in which the work was issued, has a total of four cancelled leaves and two sheets. The range for error in collating the sheets was substantial and was to be increased by subsequent events.

The first of these occurred in February 1778, the month after *Two Tracts* appeared. This was the publication of a posthumous edition of David Hume’s *History of England* which included the final corrections that Hume had sent to Thomas Cadell shortly before his death.⁷ Price decided to insert a quotation from it relating to the National Debt, as ‘a kind of dying warning from Mr Hume to this kingdom. . .’. This was achieved by means of a second cancellans $A7$ replacing the previous one, which, as has been noted, merely abbreviated the text. It seems likely that the cancellans fly title to *Additional Observations* was inserted at the same time: this would have made it possible to use the sheets of the third edition of *Additional Observations* which had an otherwise redundant reference to ‘additions’ on the title page.

The second change came in June 1778, when a second edition of the *General Introduction* was published. In this Price made an addition to the 'Preface' dated April 24. Otherwise the pamphlet was a new setting, with a few corrections and different pagination, of the first edition and does not here concern us. The additions to the 'Preface' were, however, incorporated into *Two Tracts* by further cancellation. Two leaves (a4.5) were cancelled and replaced by an unsigned half sheet quired within, paginated xxiii-xxx, making the sheet collate a⁸ (-a4.5, + χ^4). The order of priority is proved by a textual change: 'righteous judgement', three lines before the end of the text, is replaced in *Two Tracts* alone by 'just retribution'.⁸

III

In its final form then *Two Tracts* has five cancelled leaves (one of them in two forms), two leaves cancelled and replaced by a half sheet, and two cancellans sheets. These complications were largely a consequence of the decision to reissue the sheets of *Additional Observations*. In the warehouse they would already have been collated and stored: the cancellans sheets would have been stored separately. Consequently *each time* a batch of *Two Tracts* was removed from the warehouse the cancellans sheets would have to be incorporated in their proper place. This process, already complex enough, was made more difficult by two factors. First *Two Tracts* remained in print for a considerable period, at least until 1789. Secondly the cancellans sheets had no indication of what they were, and the only cancellans leaf that was signed was L4, but there was nothing — such as an asterisk — to make it obviously distinguishable from the cancellandum.⁹

It is not surprising then that the copies of *Two Tracts* so far examined fall into groups depending on the cancellations that they do or do not have. Given below are data on thirteen copies so far examined: they fall into five groups, of which three are properly collated (i.e. with sheets H and M cancelled). It is not possible on the evidence presently available to postulate a chronology of issue: the order here given starts with 'perfect' copies in a logical (not necessarily actual) sequence followed by 'imperfect' (i.e. nonsensical) copies.

- (1) *General Introduction* 1st issue; sheets H and M cancelled; L4,6,7 cancelled; A7 'short' cancel.
Copies: John Stephens; Bristol University Library.
- (2) *General Introduction* 1st issue; sheets H and M cancelled; L4,6,7 cancelled; A7 'Hume' cancel; *Additional Observations* fly title.
Copies: Dr. Williams's Library; London University Library (Goldsmith's Library).¹⁰
- (3) *General Introduction* 1st issue; sheets H and M cancelled; L4,6,7 cancelled; *Additional Observations* present in sheets of the third edition.
Copies: Manchester College, Oxford; British Library of Political Science.

- (4) *General Introduction* 2nd issue (i.e. with the inserted half sheet); sheets H and M not cancelled; L4,6,7 not cancelled; fly title to *Additional Observations*; 'Hume' cancel.
Copies: British Library; National Library of Wales; University Library, Cambridge; Manchester Public Library.¹¹
- (5) *General Introduction* 2nd issue; sheets H and M not cancelled; L4,6,7 not cancelled; fly title to *Additional Observations*.
Copies: John Stephens; John Rylands University Library, Manchester; London University Library (Grote copy).¹²

It is remarkable that not a single copy with the second issue of the Introduction is perfect. Logic would suggest the possibility of copies identical to Group (2) incorporating the extra half sheet and thus having a full complement of cancelled leaves: further investigation may discover such a copy. The only definite date in any of the copies seen is in the copy at Manchester College, Oxford, which was presented to the college by Sidney Hollis Foy in 1779. In group (5) my copy (the only one of the three in a contemporary binding) has 16 pages of advertisements datable to the early 1780s.¹³ It seems likely that the limitations of the evidence will always preclude greater precision.

IV

The foundation of much of the argument here set out — and also the easiest way of determining the make-up of any given copy — lies in the record of press figures. This note therefore concludes with that record, and some comments thereon.

- (1) *General Introduction*: ii-4 xiii-4 xviii-3 xx-7 182-4 184-4 198-4 204-6. The figures in the pamphlet issue are identical, except that sheet a is figured xx-3. In the 'second issue' an additional figure, xxvi-3, is found on χ^2 .
- (2) *Observations on Civil Liberty*: 13-7 14-7 18-4 28-4 44-2 46-2 57-3 59-3 73-7 79-7 94-7 107-4 108-4. No variants noted in the copies examined.
- (3) *Additional Observations*: The case here is a little more complex in that the various 'editions' of the work themselves disclose variant press figures. There is, however, no evidence of any resetting or even of stop-press variants. The comparative figures for sheets A to M (i.e. the sheets of the original text) are as follows. Figures for the Supplement are noted under (1) above. The bifolium N² (found in all copies) is figured 178-5. The 'Hume' cancel is figured xiv-1.

Additional Observations

	I	II	III	<i>Two Tracts</i>
A	xi-7		x-1	xi-7
	xii-3		xii-3	xii-3
B	2-5			
	12-3			
C	20-7			
	30-3			
D	45-7	45-7		45-7
	46-7	46-5		46-7
E	63-7			54-5
	64-7			64-7
F	75-3			75-3
	76-7			76-5
G	88-5			
	90-3			
H	100-5	100-7		98-4
	102-5	102-7		108-4
I	114-3			
	116-2			
K	130-3			
	137-7			
L	152-3	152-7		155-4
	159-5	155-1		
M	162-5			173-4
	173-3			174-4

The convention followed in this table is that the figure given in the left hand column remains the same unless a change is indicated. Some of the variations are of

course directly due to the process of resetting. Thus in sheet A the text was reimposed for the third edition of *Additional Observations*, but in most copies of *Two Tracts* the original sheets were used with cancellations. Sheets H and M disclose variant figures on account of their having been reset, and the same is true of sheet L: press figures originally appeared on L4^v and L6^v, both of which were cancelled. The figure in *Two Tracts* occurs on the cancellans L4.¹⁴

These figures raise curious questions. The *Two Tracts* figures in Sheet D are the same as those found in the first edition of *Additional Observations*. Moreover, some copies of that edition have the same figures as *Two Tracts* in sheets D E and F.¹⁵ How is this to be explained? I have argued that all the 'editions' of *Additional Observations* derive from the same press run: the press figures make that clear for the most part, and when they *do* change there is no evidence of resetting. As I have also noted, whilst the first edition of *Additional Observations* has press figures in common with later editions a minority of copies have press figures common to themselves, to *Two Tracts*, and to some copies of the third 'edition' of *Additional Observations* (so far noted only as part of *Two Tracts* group (3)).¹⁶ Secondly the title page of the second 'edition' of *Additional Observations* is not, as one might perhaps expect, a cancel: it would seem to have been the result of a stop-press adjustment to alter the edition statement on the title page, which is doubtless why the press figures remain the same. Further, this sheet would have been printed after the rest of the pamphlet. This would have been normal practice, and that this holds in this instance is suggested by the fact that the title given to the pamphlet on page 1 of the text (B1^r) is *Supplemental Observations*, Price's original title for the pamphlet when he discussed it in a letter to Cadell in January 1777.¹⁷

What follows is a hypothesis which seems to explain all this and also one curious aberration not hitherto noted. When *Additional Observations* was collated the sheets consisted of B–M only. A is added later and the sheets at the top of the pile become the first edition. Sales are not good, so a second 'edition' is prepared — from the evidence I have cited at a very early stage in the pamphlet's production. (The use of cancel titles with later edition statements is commonplace: this may well be a more sophisticated version of the same technique.) Once the second 'edition' is prepared the warehouseman retains the collated sheets of the first 'edition'. The third 'edition' appears; the sheets for this are supplied from the remaining stock of the first edition. As a result all copies of the pamphlet receive the preliminary matter of the third edition. However, copies of the second-edition sheet A also remain in store. These are used for *Two Tracts*. Hence the *Additional Observations* sheets for *Two Tracts* were originally part of the third edition. The crucial piece of evidence for this is the Bristol University Library copy, which, along with the second edition sheet A, contains the sheet a⁴(–a⁴) found only in the *third* edition. Where else could it have come from? This would also explain the presence of third-edition sheets, or adaptations thereof, in other copies of *Two Tracts*.

Two Tracts hence calls into question the assumption that press figures constitute an infallible guide to the existence of a re-imposition or resetting. Secondly it is a remarkable case study of the way in which the storage of the sheets can easily make havoc of the collation of a book. Other cases are known of earlier sheets appearing in later issues of a book. None perhaps is quite so splendidly perverse.

John Stephens,
Oxford.

NOTES

¹ I am indebted to various earlier attempts to sort out the problems of *Two Tracts*. They are W. Bernard Peach, *Richard Price and the Ethical Foundations of the American Revolution* (Durham, N.C., 1979), 41-43; P.A.L. Jones and D.O. Thomas, 'A Checklist of the published writings of Richard Price', *Price-Priestley Newsletter* 3(1979); T.R. Adams, *The American Controversy* (Providence, R.I., 1980), II 583. None of these was able to examine as many copies as the present writer.

² In fact Price concluded the 'Introduction' after the first paragraph of page xiii, as in *Two Tracts*: this was followed by an 'Addition to the Third Section of the Second Part' of *Additional Observations*, which was also issued separately. The doubts expressed by Adams (I 523) about the circumstances of issue are settled by the advertisement in the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* for 20 May 1777, which indicates that it was to be given away to purchasers of previous editions. Besides the single copy noted by Adams there is one bound with the Grote copy of *Two Tracts* (London University Library).

³ Price outlined the extent of the additions in *Two Tracts*, page i. It follows that the number of the remaining sheets of *Additional Observations* constitutes the maximum possible run of *Two Tracts*. There is no record of either print run. *Additional Observations* was not advertised once *Two Tracts* had appeared.

⁴ Adams, II 582, notes only the cancellation of L4. For the dispute with Turgot see Peach, 215ff.

⁵ This issue is noted by Adams, II 582.

⁶ *Two Tracts* was advertised in the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* on 24 January 1778 and in *Lloyds Evening Post* 23-26 January 1778, priced at 5/-. The *General Introduction* was noted in the *Gentleman's Magazine* XLVIII(1778) 82 (February).

⁷ This was announced in the *London Chronicle* of February 17-19, 1778, repeated February 24-26. For the background to Price's interest in Hume see John Stephens, 'When did David Hume meet Richard Price?', *Price-Priestley Newsletter* 4(1980) 30-39, and J.G.A. Pocock, 'Hume and the American Revolution', in D.F. Norton (ed.), *McGill Hume Studies* (San Diego, 1979), 325-423.

⁸ Both the second edition of the *General Introduction* and what was described as a 'new edition' of *Two Tracts* were advertised in the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* 10 June 1778. The price remained at 5/-, not 5/6 as stated by Adams, II 585.

⁹ It is advertised in the second edition of Price's *Discourse on the Love of Country* (London, 1789) at the increased price of 6/-. For the manner in which cancellans leaves might be distinguished see R.W. Chapman, *Cancels* (London, 1930), 23ff.

¹⁰ Both these copies are figured x-1 xii-3, suggesting that sheet A derives from the third 'edition'.

¹¹ The Manchester Public Library copy is the only certain presentation copy. It is inscribed in Price's hand on π1^v 'For Dr Gordon / from Dr Price'. This is presumably William Gordon (1728-1807), a dissenting minister who lived in America from 1770 to 1786 and was a correspondent of Price at this period — see Richard Price, *The Correspondence* ... Vol.1 ... , edited by D.O. Thomas and W. Bernard Peach (Cardiff, 1984). All the copies in this group are figured x-1 xii-3 in sheet A, again suggesting the use of third-edition sheets.

¹² The Grote copy is a hybrid. It has the title page of the third 'edition' of *Additional Observations*, in addition to the fly title. For reasons noted above (Note 2), which are confirmed by inspection, this leaf is inserted. This copy also has inserted the title page only of the 9th Dilly and Cadell edition of *Observations on Civil Liberty* (1776). This curious feature is also found in the Manchester College copy of *Two Tracts* and in a volume of tracts by Price (including the 7th Cadell *Observations on Civil Liberty*) in London University (Goldsmith's Library). These two latter, bound in calf, have the Thomas Hollis 'owl sejant' tool on the cover and the 'cap of liberty' on the spine. The Grote copy has been rebound but may originally have had a similar binding. A sugar-paper wrapper, bound in, bears (in Price's hand) the words 'From the author/with best regards', docketed 'Dr Price 1783'. Apart from one item noted above (Note 2), the volume contains only Price's *Observations on the American Revolution* (London, 1785). Hence the inscription *could* relate to *Two Tracts*, though the fact that it is on such paper suggests further tampering.

¹³ It includes the third (1781) but no later volume of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, but the second (1778) rather than the third (1784) edition of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.

¹⁴ The following copies of *Additional Observations* were examined:

(i) First Edition, Bodleian Library, Oxford; British Library (2); Bristol University Library (3); Manchester Public Library; John Rylands University Library, Manchester (2); Dr Williams's Library; John Stephens (2).

(ii) Second Edition. British Library; Bristol University Library; London University Library; Congregational Library; Manchester Public Library; John Stephens.

(iii) British Library; London University Library (Goldsmith's Library).

¹⁵ These are Dr Williams's Library; John Rylands University Library, Manchester; Manchester Public Library; John Stephens.

¹⁶ In that group the Manchester College copy has the same figures as *Additional Observations*, second edition, whilst the British Library of Political Science copy has the same figures as *Two Tracts*.

¹⁷ Price to Cadell, January 16 1777. Price, *Correspondence*, I 251-252.

¹⁸ I am enormously grateful to all the libraries cited here. I am especially grateful to Graham Moss of the John Rylands University Library, Manchester; to David McKitterick of Cambridge University Library (who examined that copy for me); to T.R. Adams; and to D.O. Thomas, who gave me details of the copy in the National Library of Wales and also showed me his own work on *Two Tracts*, detailed consideration of which was a tremendous help in grappling with the difficulties of this book.

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