

Work in Progress: Different Editions of the Great Testimony

In the following report we explain what we have been able to find out about various editions of the Great Testimony in English and in the translations authorized by the Catholic Apostolic Church. We hope that some of our readers can add to these observations; if there is a wish to do so, we shall provide a platform for the exchange of information.¹

All early editions of the Testimony appeared without any indication of the year of publication. In most cases, however, information about the printer is provided.

English language editions

We have already pointed out that we have in our keeping an octavo edition that was reprinted without alterations in 1888.² The octavo edition provides numbered paragraphs, and this numbering is also given in the extracts which Apostle Cardale published in 1843 as a “Manual” for the ministers in England, his sphere of work.³ Thus we can assume that the octavo edition was published before 1843.

A comparison of all quarto editions that we could so far see led to the conclusion that there were at least three different Catholic Apostolic printings of the complete quarto edition. These differ in small details.

In addition, we have in our keeping a shortened version of 76 pages of the quarto edition. In this edition the last part is left out; this is indicated by grey shading in the synopsis we published on this website in September. A document from Apostle Drummond’s archives provides strong indications that it was this apostle who had this edition printed.⁴ Unfortunately,

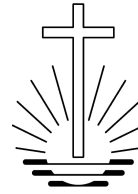
¹ Once again, the authors would like to thank Dr. Tim Grass of Horsham, West Sussex, for his help in checking the English version of this article for linguistic and stylistic accuracy.

² Walter Drave and Manfred Henke, [“Das ‘Große Testimonium’ – Ein zentrales Dokument der Katholisch-apostolischen Kirche \(Teil 1\), Unsere Familie 18/2006](#), p. 30. (An annotated English version appeared on this website on 19-09-2006.)

³ Walter Drave und Manfred Henke, [“Der Umgang mit dem Großen Testimonium in der Katholisch-apostolischen Kirche“](#), *Unsere Familie* 22/2006, p. 32 f. (An annotated English version is due to appear on this website after 20 November 2006.)

⁴ The Duke of Northumberland’s Archives, Alnwick Castle, Alnwick, Northumberland, Drummond Papers, C/13/16. Microfilms of the documents referring to the Catholic Apostolic Church can be consulted at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, MSS. 1606-9 (Photographic Order Number WM 4192). Jean Agnew and Richard Palmer, “Report on the papers of Henry Drummond of Albury (1786 – 1860) and Members of his Family 1670 – 1885, the property of His Grace the Duke of Northumberland, KG”, Historical Manuscripts Commission, London 1977 provides a full handlist of the Drummond Papers. (Scholars can obtain photocopies of this list from the National Archives, Kew, Richmons, Surrey, TW9 4DU, UK; e-mail: enquiry@nationalarchives.gov.uk.)

The title originally intended to be used was: “Extract from an Essay on the actual Condition of Christendom both in Church & State”. In its unpublished state, the text of the first three pages of the document was heavily edited by Drummond, pages 4-75 were left unaltered, and the final part accords with the text of the shorter version. We think that the original plan for an “Essay” was dropped and a short version of the testimony was printed instead. The short version is characterized by the fact that all references to the special work done by apostles have been deleted. This is possibly due to the re-orientation considered necessary when in 1840 the twelvefold unity of the apostleship was lost. For



the document cannot be dated. In this connection it may appear significant that Henry Drummond also published a heavily edited version of the Great Testimony in which he replaced the final part, which is left out in the shorter version of the testimony, with a final part of his own, which diverges considerably from the original ending.⁵

If we take it that the version in which most corrections are needed is the earliest, we can conclude that the first version to be printed appeared as a quarto edition. Later a list of errata was added on different paper. Some of the changes demanded in that list affect the meaning of the text.⁶ Looking at the first page, we can identify this text by the fact, that the marks of the church, when enumerated, are divided by full stops, whereas all other editions we know use semicolons.

In 1840 a certain Rheinwald, who cannot be associated with the Catholic Apostolic movement, reprinted the Great Testimony in English. His collections of church historical documents appeared in Hamburg and assigned the Testimony to 1837.⁷ In this edition the semicolons have replaced the full stops, but otherwise, the text remains uncorrected. So we have to assume that there may have been an otherwise unknown edition of the Testimony which Rheinwald used.

Apparently, the octavo edition was the next to be printed. Here most alterations demanded in the list of errata have been made. However, one passage in paragraph 35 (p. 22 of the quarto edition) has not been corrected.⁸ If we combine this observation with the fact that this passage was corrected in the Latin translation, we can assume that this octavo edition appeared before the Latin translation – and thus before the end of 1837, if we believe Boase's statements concerning the Latin translation.

Next, we have to refer to three editions in which the text was changed as directed by the list of errata.

We first refer to the shorter version of the Great Testimony. The documents from Drummond's archives show us that he tore up a copy of the edition which we consider the earliest, in order to provide a text for the intended printing. We can assume that the first alterations to the original plates were made when the shorter version was printed, so that all the errata could be corrected.⁹

The Boase Collection in the British Library contains a corrected version which is quite obviously based on the shorter version, but to which the final part was added again.¹⁰ The only

some more observations on this time of crisis see the article "Changing Uses made of the Great Testimony in the Catholic Apostolic Church" published on this website.

⁵ Drave and Henke, "Der Umgang mit dem Großen Testimonium in der Katholisch-apostolischen Kirche", p. 31f.

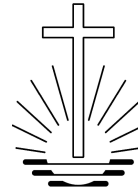
⁶ Printer: "C. Morgan, 31 Henry Street, Pentonville, London". There are two copies of this edition in the Library of the New Apostolic Church in North Germany, Hamburg.

⁷ Rheinwald, George F. H., Hrsg., *Acta historico-ecclesiastica seculi XIX*, Jahrgang 1837, Hamburg 1840, pp. 793-867

⁸ A quotation, supposedly from Ephesians 4.8, is ascribed to "the apostle" [Paul], but the text is quoted as in Psalm 68.18 [AV] Christ has "received" gifts changed to "given") The note belonging to this part of the text only refers to Ephesians 4.11. This edition was printed by "Moyes and Barclay, Castle Street, Leicester Square, London".

⁹ Cf. the documents referred to in n. 4 above.

¹⁰ British Library shelfmark 764 n.15 (3).



change which was forgotten was the re-insertion of the few words on page 3 which had been left out in the shorter version and in which the apostles appeal to their divine commission.

Finally, we have to mention a printing of which Weber added photocopies to his doctoral thesis.¹¹ In this edition all mistakes have been corrected and even the words left out on page 3 have been re-inserted. Where the setup of a page differed from the (hypothetical) first edition in the shorter version, the same differences appear in the version reproduced by Weber. So we may assume that the original plates were used once again with the alterations made necessary by the corrections.¹²

We have found some indications that there may have been further variants of the text.¹³

We now offer some instances of the use of the shorter version of the Great Testimony.

Firstly, Miller, who sympathized with the Tractarians within the Church of England, explains the history and doctrine of the CAC from a high Anglican point of view, trying to warn his co-religionists against sympathizing too much with the Catholic Apostolic Church. He reprints the shortened version of the Testimony.¹⁴ He did not seem to know that part of the original remained unknown to him. Among the writers we have consulted it is only Flegg who noticed that the text Miller reprinted is shorter than others, but in spite of his descent from a Catholic Apostolic family he did not realize that there was an authentic master copy for this reprint.¹⁵

Secondly, when Robert Norton¹⁶ in his history of the Catholic Apostolic Church quoted “the concluding paragraph” of the Great Testimony, he quoted the final passages of the shortened version.¹⁷

¹¹ Albrecht Weber, *Die katholisch-apostolischen Gemeinden. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung ihrer charismatischen Erfahrung und Theologie*, Dissertation Marburg 1977. The thesis was printed without the photocopied documents originally annexed to it. The photocopies can be consulted in the library of Fachbereich Evangelische Theologie der Philipps-Universität Universität Marburg, shelfmark Ö VIII C kap 82

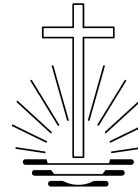
¹² Compare pp. 9f., 17, 22, 24, 33-39, 49-51, 58f., 66-70. In the very last part, which, we think was annexed to the pages printed off the plates for the shorter version, the layout from p. 84 onwards differs from the earliest version.

¹³ Cf. *The English Review*, September 1850, pp. 124ff Like us, the anonymous author distinguishes (on p. 124, note 3) between an early quarto edition and a later octavo edition. He then quotes (on p. 124) the opening words with the punctuation of the early quarto edition, but with the paragraph numbers of the octavo edition. He also claims that comments had been added to the octavo edition. This would make us think of Cardale's *Manual* of 1843 if the author did not quote passages that are not contained in the *Manual*. The sources of the quotations from various liturgies are (on p. 145) quoted as printed in the quarto editions, thus differing from the octavo edition available to us. So possibly there is another octavo edition still unknown to us.

¹⁴ Miller, *The History and Doctrines of Irvingism*, London 1878, vol. 1, S. 347-436. For Miller's sympathies with the Oxford Movement cf. Flegg, *'Gathered Under Apostles'. A Study of the Catholic Apostolic Church*, Oxford 1992, S. 2, Anm. 4.

¹⁵ Flegg, *'Gathered Under Apostles'*, p. 343, n.101. On p. 73, n.74 Flegg mistakenly writes that Miller gives the complete text.

¹⁶ Robert Norton (? – 1883) is a somewhat enigmatic supporter of the Catholic Apostolic Church. He was brother-in-law to the MacDonald brothers, and in his *Memoirs of James and George MacDonald of Port Glasgow*, London 1840, he pleaded for their views and rejected the apostles of the Catholic Apostolic Church. According to Seraphim Newman-Norton, “A Biographical Index of Those Associated with the Lord's Work,” London 1971, p. 82, he was “Minister of Holbeach, Leeds” from 1846-1854 or rather, as is shown by his pamphlet, *The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets in the Catholic Apostolic Church. A letter to The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Ripon*, London 1854, p. 16, (Anglican) in-



Translations

There is no convincing answer to the question when exactly and by whom the official translations were done. According to Boase,¹⁸ the Latin translation¹⁹ was finished before the end of 1837. There was also an early French translation. This translation was felt to need revising in later years. In many places it was corrected by pasting printed alterations into the original copies and also by additional handwritten corrections.²⁰ A comparison shows us that many of these corrections were meant to take account of the errata noted in the list added to the first English version. Obviously, the French translation was based on this early uncorrected version – proof that this was a really early translation.

So we might conclude from what Boase tells us about the date of the Latin version that this, too was based on the uncorrected English version. But this hypothesis is easily disproved: all alterations demanded in the list of errata have been incorporated in the original Latin text.²¹ Possibly, in doing the Latin version, the translator realized that the English text had to be revised.

There is no satisfactory answer to the question when the Great Testimony was translated into German. According to Catholic Apostolic tradition it should have been done in 1837. But it seems that it was only translated after the “work” in Germany had really started in 1848. We observe that Rheinwald printed the document in English in 1840 although he provides German translations of shorter documents (not referring to the Catholic Apostolic Church) that were originally published in English. He would scarcely have done so if there had been a German version. We also notice that Professor Heinrich W.J. Thiersch, when the evangelist William Rennie Caird presented him with a copy of the Great Testimony at Easter 1842, “became acquainted with the English language for the first time” in order to “thoroughly study” the copy he had been given.²² Finally, we can interpret an entry made by Ernst Ludwig von Gerlach in his diary after Apostle Carlyle had written a letter to the Prussian king Frederick William IV. as meaning that the Evangelist Charles J.T. Böhm had presented him with the Great Testimony in English.²³ In 1850 we first learn that the Testimony was available in Ger-

cumbent of Holbeck parsonage. His publications in favour of Catholic Apostolic doctrines appeared from 1852 onward. In 1857 he was awarded an M.D. From 1857-1862 he lived at Albury and served as a Catholic Apostolic minister there. In 1862 he moved to London. Cf. the publications listed in Copinger, “A Bibliography by H. B. Copinger (Begun Easter 1908)” [typewritten Manuscript], p. 51.

¹⁷ [Robert Norton], *The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Catholic Apostolic Church*, London 1861, pp. 154-156.

¹⁸ Charles William Boase, *The Elijah Ministry to the Christian Church [Supplement]*, Edinburgh 1868., p. 829.

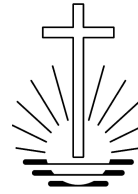
¹⁹ “Londini: Ex typis Robson, Levey, et Franklyn, 46 St. Martin’s Lane.”

²⁰ « Londres : Imprimé par Schulze et Cie., 13, Poland Street. » There are two copies in the New Apostolic Church library in Hamburg.

²¹ The Latin translation, together with the English and French versions, is contained in a leather-bound volume kept in the NAC library in Hamburg.

²² Paul Wigand, ed., *Heinrich W.J. Thierschs Leben (zum Teil von ihm selbst erzählt)*, Basel 1888, pp. 48f.

²³ Jakob von Gerlach, ed., *Ernst Ludwig von Gerlach. Aufzeichnungen aus seinem Leben und Wirken, 1795-1877*, Schwerin 1903, p. 469, cf. *ibid.*, p. 465. The diary entry can also be found quoted in Johannes Albrecht Schröter, *Die Katholisch-apostolischen Gemeinden in Deutschland und der “Fall Geyer”*, Marburg ²1998 pp. 442f., p. 456. Cf. a reference *ibid.*, p. 410. To interpret this passage we referred to a letter written by Apostle Carlyle to Frederick William IV. of 18-2-1847, that was translated into German by W. Walger in April 1930 and distributed in Catholic Apostolic churches in Germany.



man. In that year ecclesiastical authorities and individual ministers in Berlin and Brandenburg were presented with German copies of the Testimony. A search in the Berlin archives has provided the evidence that the ecclesiastical authorities received a quarto edition of 89 pages printed in London in roman type by the printer who had already printed the French edition.²⁴ This seems to have been the earliest German edition. The New Apostolic Church library in Hamburg contains a copy completely set up in Gothic type. It does not contain any information about the place of publication or the printer. We presume that it was printed in Germany after the London edition had been distributed.

We cannot completely reject the possibility that there also was a shortened version of the German edition. Perhaps, Albrecht Weber can be interpreted as hinting at such an edition. Unfortunately, he does not explain clearly why he, as he wrote,²⁵ combined photocopies of an incomplete edition printed in Gothic type with a final part of the version printed in roman type which we found was delivered in 1850. So we might at least speculate, if there was a shortened version of the German edition which (as the English short version) ended after page 77. In that case Weber might have copied the shortened German version until page 76, where the page conveniently ends with a paragraph, and added the final part of a complete German version in roman letters. Alas – we do not know for sure.²⁶

This translation has also been reprinted by Reiner Friedemann Edel, *Auf dem Weg zur Vollendung der Kirche Christi, Die oekumenische Sendung der katholisch-apostolischen Gemeinden an die Gesamtkirche Jesu Christ dargestellt in Leben und Wirken des Prof. Dr. Heinrich W. J. Thiersch*, Marburg 1971, pp. 305-313. Schröter, *Die katholisch-apostolischen Gemeinden*, pp. 455f quotes the English text. As to the distribution in 1850, cf. *ibid.*, p. 44, where Schröter apart from quoting from generally available sources, refers to secret Catholic Apostolic writings which he refuses to identify.

²⁴ The German translation of the Great Testimony in roman letters was found in Evangelisches Zentrarchiv (EZA), 7/3458 (Microfiche edition, frames 59-102). The Boase Collection in the British Library holds the same edition, British Library shelfmark 764.n.15. (7). "Gedruckt bei Schulze und Co., 13, Poland Street".

²⁵ This is written on a sheet of paper inserted into the copy by Weber .

²⁶ Regrettably, we have not yet received the answer to our questions which Dr. Weber promised to give.