

Clement Barksdale's Translations of Richard Crashaw's Epigrams

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An English translation of epigrams and verses selected from Richard Crashaw's Latin epigrams was published anonymously in 1682 under the title "*Epigrammata Sacra Selecta, cum Anglica Versione. Sacred Epigrams Englished*." London, Printed for John Barksdale, Book-seller in Cirencester, 1682.¹ The anonymous translator of the 42 selections has been reasonably supposed by A. B. Grosart to be Clement Barksdale, an acknowledged admirer of the "Poet and Saint."²

Clement Barksdale (1609-1687), educated at Merton and Worcester Colleges, took orders sometime before 1637. After holding several different livings during the Civil War, he established himself after the Restoration in Naunton and Stow-on-the-Wold where he remained until his death. His publications were numerous, but his best known are his *Nympha Lybethris, or The Cotswold Muse* (1651) and his *Noctes Hibernae: Winter Nights' Exercise* (1653). He was a relative of unknown degree to John

¹Donald Wing, *RSTC*; copies at the Bodleian and at the Huntington Library (MS corrections).

²*The Complete Works of Richard Crashaw*, ed. A. B. Grosart (Privately Printed 1872, 1873), II, 4. I have found no earlier or other attribution. Grosart prints (II, 101) Barksdale's translation (40) of "the only [original] not by Crashaw in the volume"; the original is by Crashaw, however, and Grosart prints it on p. 139.

Barksdale, from 1674 to 1680 book-seller and book-binder in London; John Barksdale issued in 1675-1678 some of his relative's translations from Grotius, and in the latter year he moved to Cirencester and became the first book-seller there.³

Clement Barksdale's interest in Crashaw dates at least from 1651, for he included in his *Cotswold Muse* this tribute to the poet:

When into *Herbert's Temple* I ascend
By *Crashaw's Steps*, I do resolve to mend
My lighter Verse, and my low notes to raise,
And in high Accent sing my *Maker's* praise.
Mean while these *sacred Poems* in my Sight
I place, and *read*, that I may learn to *write*.⁴

Barksdale's appreciation of Crashaw took concrete shape in the translations of the epigrams. Nineteen of Crashaw's Latin elegiac quatrains were translated intact by Barksdale into English iambic pentameter quatrains (rhyming *aabb*); miscellaneous couplets selected from longer poems of Crashaw's were translated into rhyming couplets. Crashaw's Latin precedes immediately each translation. No traces of Crashaw's own translations of these verses which appeared in his *Steps to the Temple* (1646, 1648—which Barksdale knew as he alludes to it in the lines just quoted) are evident in Barksdale's versions.

Crashaw's *Epigrammata* appeared first in 1634, *Epigrammatum Sacrorum Liber* (Cambridge [Ex Academiae typographeo.]); the edition is clean, though not free of printer's errors, and may have been seen through the press by Crashaw himself. A second edition

³*DNB* (the account is by "A. B. G."—i.e., Grosart); Henry R. Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Printers and Booksellers . . . from 1668 to 1625* (Oxford, 1922), "John Barksdale" (pp. 20-21); Herbert E. Norris, "Cirencester Booksellers and Printers," *Notes and Queries*, Ser. IX, xi, 141.

⁴[Clement Barksdale], *Nympha Lybethris, or The Cotswold Muse* (London, 1651), "Herbert and Crashaw," pp. 93-4. "[*S*]acred Poems" is admittedly a general term, but, here italicized, it is the subtitle of both Herbert's *Temple* and Crashaw's *Steps*.

appeared in 1670, following the original with extreme fidelity even in such accidentals as capitals, punctuation, and distinguishing types. A 1674 "edition" is merely a reissue with a new title page of the sheets remaining from the 1670 printing.⁵ In the verses selected for translation by Barksdale there are only two substantive variants between the editions of 1634 and 1670/74: In epigram 16 (Barksdale's numbering) *oculus* is corrected in 1670/74 to *oculos*, and in epigram 17 the heading 'Matth. 6' is corrected to 'Matth 4'. Neither of these emendations, both of which occur in Barksdale, is beyond the ability of an attentive reader.

Though two manuscript versions of Crashaw's Epigrams are known to have survived, there is no substantive evidence that Barksdale was following either of them;⁶ and as two freshly printed collections of the poems were readily available in the 1670's, one would suppose that Barksdale consulted one of them. The sequence of poems follows that of the printed editions and at least one of the manuscripts. What is clear is that Barksdale copied out the Crashaw verses from his source, adding his English translations just below each in its place. The compositorial misreadings in accidentals in the 1682 print are numerous (perhaps 18 in the Latin, 5 in the English), but there are so many substantive variants between Barksdale's Latin and the Latin of the prints and manuscripts that one is forced to conclude, surprisingly, that Barksdale made his holograph copy from a manuscript now lost. These variants occur in the citations of Scripture in the headings and in textual readings. One could not suppose that Barksdale would himself change Crashaw's original text to suit his own interests.

⁵This may be proved by a glance at the defective initials in both issues. It is not to be imagined that the original type was left standing.

⁶British Museum, Add. MS. 40176 (Martin, pp. liv-vii, No. 10); Trinity College, Dublin, MS. F. 4. 28 (659) (Martin, pp. lvii-lviii, No. 11). I depend on the collations of L. C. Martin, ed. *The Poems English Latin and Greek of Richard Crashaw* (Oxford, 1927, 1957).

The major substantive variants between Crashaw and Barksdale:

Epigram	Crashaw	Barksdale
1	tendit	ridens
2	haud alibi tam	hac villa cum
3	Mane	Maria
4	fovebit	foras it
5	Pedes	Prandium
17	vobis	votis
23	male	mente
24	ulla salutis?	nulla Salutis:
34	qui	quam

As Barksdale does not translate the Latin headings, the variants in 3, 5, 23 are not useful in determining authority, but the notable feature in these variants is that Barksdale's English in 1, 4, 17, 24, 34 translates Crashaw's original Latin not Barksdale's version of Crashaw's Latin (about 2 one cannot be specific). For example:

17	English trans.:	to you safety brought ⁷
24	English trans.:	what hope have I ?
34	English trans.:	Happy the man who

(It may be worth noting that in the Huntington Library copy a contemporary hand has changed ten errors in Barksdale's Latin by reference to readings found in the printed editions and five errors in Barksdale's English (one of which is significantly substantive) as well as the number "28" misprinted for "18." That corrector missed a significant misprint in Epigram 2, noted by Grosart (*bleſſ'd* for *bled*).

The topics that Barksdale chose to translate share the same general distribution with those of Crashaw, not surprisingly, with the exception of passages from Mark's Gospel, which constitute eight percent of Crashaw's texts, and only five percent of Barksdale's choices—two citations, with 15 from Matthew, 14

⁷The compositor has set "your" for "you" (corrected in the CSMH copy).

from Luke, seven from John, and three from Acts. (One of Barksdale's choices, 36, is not Scriptural.) Barksdale has given no attention to the many epigrams that stress the mariolatrous in Christian worship or the mammary; he tends to have emphasized the events in Christ's life rather than, for example, the parables or the miracles.

Among the various translations of the Latin poems in his edition of Crashaw's *Complete Works*, Grosart included some 25 of Barksdale's translations. He repaid his translator with this compliment:

His translations are usually paraphrastic and inelegant. . . . His only approach to poetic faculty is in his verse-translations of some of Crashaw's Latin epigrams. Otherwise he was a mere book-maker.⁸

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⁸"Clement Barksdale," in *DNB*.