

Cut is the branch: *Faustus's* C-Text

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After Christopher Marlowe's death in 1593, his reputation endured due to the scandalous nature of his death as well as the publication and reprinting of his works. Some works were more popular in print than others. *Doctor Faustus*, for example, was published in nine editions from 1604 to 1631. Then, like much drama from the 1580s and 1590s, *Doctor Faustus* seems to have fallen out of favour with book-buyers, and, therefore, stationers. It was not published again until 1663, long after the closure of the theatres and three years after the Restoration of the monarchy. That *Faustus* was resurrected, if not restored, at all makes it an interesting case study. Between the 1631 and 1663 editions, the text underwent substantive revisions. More work can and should be done to explain and identify the entire range of textual variations, both substantive and incidental. This article aims to provide an analytical account of the textual and material differences between the 1631 and 1663 editions. Specifically, it attempts to account for the large-scale textual revisions as well as the paratextual differences between the editions, both of which help explain the play's return to print, as well as the likely financial incentives behind its publication. How, it asks, was Restoration-era England engaging with *Faustus* in 1663, what possible performance alterations were made to the text between its penultimate and ultimate seventeenth century publications, and moreover what motivations were there to publish *Faustus* in 1663 during what was otherwise a drought period in the publication of plays from the "golden age"¹ of English drama? The answers start with the fact that the 1663 version of *Faustus* must have been believed, at least by its publisher, to have been revised in such a way that it might be well-received enough to again restart its history of profitability.

That *Faustus* had not been published for thirty-two years cannot be easily blamed on it having become topically irrelevant—stories about overreach and ambition rarely go out of style, and this was the time of both Charles I and Oliver Cromwell. But thematic applicability is not chief among the reasons why any given early modern drama was published. Much

¹ Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, "Canons and Classics: Publishing Drama in Caroline England," in *Localizing Caroline Drama: Politics and Economics of the Early Modern English Stage, 1625–1642*, ed. Adam Zucker and Alan B. Farmer (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 30–31. I adopt the term "golden age" from their analysis in reference to the period between roughly 1590 and 1610.

more significant were economic concerns, both financial and social. Peter Blayney has argued that the publication of plays was generally a riskier investment than the publication of non-dramatic works.² The modern assumption of demand for their publication—how could anyone not have wanted to publish *Faustus*?—is more confirmation bias than critical assessment. Much of early modern English printing was under severe regulation between 1631 and 1663; the English government was more actively engaged in censorship, and the Company of Stationers monopolized the presses.³ Playhouses were forcibly shut between 1642 and 1660.⁴ In combination with the tumult of the English Civil War, this was a period in which the publication of playbooks reached its lowest point in the seventeenth century,⁵ though the reasons publication habits changed during this time are not yet fully understood.⁶ The period between the last B-text and only C-text, between 1631 and 1663, was a time of conflict and widespread social change, and it is perhaps unsurprisingly a time during which the majority of publications were dedicated to news pamphlets and broadsides with fewer dramatic works published.⁷

In 1660, the newly-restored Charles II commissioned by royal grant two theatrical producers, Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant, to “peruse all plays that have been

² Peter Blayney, “The Publication of Playbooks,” in *A New History of English Drama*, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 383–422. For a response to this piece, and Blayney’s counter-response, see Alan Farmer and Zachary Lesser, “The Popularity of Playbooks Revisited,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (2005): 1–32 and, in the same issue of the same journal, Blayney, “The Alleged Popularity of Playbooks” (33–50).

³ Blayney, “The Publication of Playbooks,” 398. Blayney notes that the Company’s and censors’ interests sometimes aligned, as too many licenses given by the Company to publications found offensive by the censors could cause the censors to hold the Company accountable in addition to the unscrupulous publisher(s).

⁴ David Scott Kastan, “Performances and Playbooks: the Closing of the Theatres and the Politics of Drama,” in *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 174.

⁵ Records from the *Database of Early English Playbooks*, which contains data on all playbooks printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland up through 1660, indicate that between 1642 and 1660, the eighteen years in which the playhouses were closed, 425 playbooks were published, an average of ~23.6 a year; however, between 1623 and 1641, the eighteen years preceding the closure of the playhouses, 663 playbooks were published, averaging ~36.8 a year; compare this against the century’s average prior to the closure, between 1600 and 1641, during which 1,174 playbooks were published, averaging ~28.6 a year. It’s important to note that, during the English Civil War specifically (1642–1651), 154 playbooks were published, averaging ~17.1 a year, and that, during the Interregnum specifically (1649–1660), 319 playbooks were published, averaging 29 a year. See *DEEP: Database of Early English Playbooks*, ed. Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser (2007), Accessed 11 March 2024. <http://deep.sas.upenn.edu>. This means that during the period in which the playhouses were closed, which spanned both the Civil War and Interregnum, the dearth of playbook publications occurred primarily during the former; the latter had an average publication rate largely in keeping with the rest of the century prior to the houses’ closures.

⁶ Heidi C. Craig, “Missing Shakespeare, 1642–1660,” *English Literary Renaissance* 49, no. 1 (2019): 134..

⁷ See Henry R. Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Booksellers and Printers Who Were At Work In England, Scotland and Ireland From 1641 to 1667* (London: Blades, East & Blades, 1907), xvii. It is also noteworthy that during this period only one other Marlovian play is known to have been published, *The Jew of Malta* (1633). The *English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC)* notes it is the play’s first surviving edition, but not its first publication.

formerly written and . . . expunge all prophanesse and scurrility from the same before that they be represented or acted.”⁸ Later that year, Charles gave a separate theatre patent to George Jolly, another producer whom he’d met on the continent years prior, and with the condition that Jolly “doe not at any time hereafter cause to be acted or represented any Play, Enterlude or Opera containing any matter of profanation, scurrility or obscenity.”⁹ The version of *Faustus* to be reprinted shortly thereafter would bear evidence of such censorship.

The 1663 edition of *Faustus* has been referred to as a “C-text,” and to do so is to make a critical assertion that it is substantively distinct from both the play’s A-text (1604, 1609, 1611) and B-text (1616, 1619, 1620, 1624, 1628, 1631), which vary significantly from each other.¹⁰ Though bold, the assertion does seem appropriate, due to extensive textual revisions in the 1663 text, some of which appear to have directly resulted from historical events and legal procedures preceding the play’s reproduction and publication. There are two main types of revisions: those which are relatively minor, such as the removal of oaths, e.g., “zounds,” “sbloud,” and “Good Lord,” and those which are more structural, e.g., supplanting the papal court scene with a Babylonian court scene, expanding a role, and adding a musical-comedy side-narrative.

These changes are catalogued in Tucker Brooke’s 1910 critical edition of *Doctor Faustus*, with text, annotations, and an appendix encompassing the A-, B-, and what is being called here the C-text. In his edition, Brooke observes that “lines and phrases alluding to the deity, to eternal punishment, or to religious scepticism” in the B-text were generally removed in the C-text, and he posits that the text was altered for performance by strolling companies prior to the Restoration.¹¹ Seymour M. Pitcher, writing in 1941, believed the changes were made to appease Charles II, and suggested that George Jolly, one of the three theatrical producers given specific grant by Charles II to “not at any time hereafter cause to be acted or represented any . . . profanation, scurrility or obscenity,” could be the person who revised the

⁸ Frank Fowell and Frank Palmer, *Censorship in England* (London: Frank Palmer, 1913), 87. The quotation is taken from “The Royal Grant to Thomas Killigrew,” August 21, 1660.

⁹ Leslie J. Hotson, “George Jolly, Actor-Manager: New Light on the Restoration Stage,” *Studies in Philology* 20, no. 4 (1923): 432. There was a feud between the producers which Hotson discusses in detail, with Killigrew and Davenant on one side and Jolly on the other, resulting in the pair effectively stealing Jolly’s patent for themselves. Regarding the feud, see also Heidi Craig, *Theatre Closure and the Paradoxical Rise of English Renaissance Drama in the Civil Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 164–165.

¹⁰ For other uses of the term “C-text” in reference to the 1663 edition of *Faustus*, see Catherine Clifford and Martin Wiggins, “A Chronology of Marlowe’s Life and Works,” in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. Emily C. Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), xv–xxvii; and Douglas Brooks’s review of Leah S. Marcus’s *Unediting the Renaissance*, published in *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 28, no. 2 (1997): 639–41.

¹¹ Christopher Marlowe, *The Works of Christopher Marlowe*, ed. C. F. Tucker Brooke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), 141.

B-text into the C-text. Pitcher's argument is that Jolly had wanted to revive *Faustus*, but first needed to create a theatrical production agreeable to Charles II's Catholic inclinations, per his grant, and therefore Jolly removed or heavily altered much of *Faustus*'s religiously derived language and tension. Pitcher connects Jolly's theatrical company to one of only two known productions of "*Dr. Fostus*" in 1662, and connects Jolly again to the play by one of the "Several New Scenes" mentioned on the title page.¹² The new scene in question includes music, and Pitcher notes that Jolly was a pioneer in such stage representation at that time, as he had been advertising, since at least 1654, "beautiful English music and skilful women" to sell performances to audiences.¹³ Because of those three connections between Jolly and *Faustus*—Jolly's likely performance of the play, the C-text's new musical scene, as well as Jolly's being specifically given theatrical grant by Charles II during the reestablishment of the newly refurbished dramatic stationing industry¹⁴—Pitcher's assertion that Jolly was probably the revisor of the B-text into the C-text is credible. If Jolly was indeed working both as an operative of the crown and a theatrical producer, it seems likely he rewrote the play specifically with intention to receive production permission, as he apparently had license to perform it.¹⁵ However, it is important to note that license to perform was not license to publish, and at the time Jolly would have been performing *Faustus*, the ownership of the play's copy belonged to the "W. Gilbertson" noted on the C-text's title page.¹⁶ In the *Dictionary of Stationers (1641–1667)*, the authors note that Gilbertson received "copyrights of miscellaneous literature" in 1655, eight years prior to the C-text's publication.¹⁷ That miscellany included those rights to publish *Faustus*, as noted in the transcripts of the

¹² Seymour M. Pitcher, "Some Observations on the 1663 Edition of *Faustus*," *Modern Language Notes* 56, no. 8 (1941): 589. Dr Edward Browne saw a production of the play in 1662. Of the three known performing companies, one was performing elsewhere, while Dr Browne referred to another by its initials. Because Dr Browne refers to the performers he saw as "Licens: Players," Pitcher believes this indicates it was a company with whom he was unfamiliar—Jolly's company. *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB)* also notes that Jolly is known to have been active at the time and location indicated by Dr Browne, the Cockpit in Drury Lane c. ~1662. See John H. Astington, "Jolly, George (bap. 1613, d. in or before 1683), Actor and Theatre Manager," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004). Accessed 11 March 2024. <https://www-oxforddnb-com.liverpool.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-67778>.

¹³ Pitcher, "Some Observations," 592. Quotation taken from Leslie Hotson, *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1928), 171.

¹⁴ For the likely reasons behind Jolly's reception of a grant, as well as Jolly's activities on the continent from 1648 until the Restoration and his return to England, see Hotson, "George Jolly, Actor-Manager," 423–30.

¹⁵ Astington, "Jolly, George."

¹⁶ Blayney, "The Publication of Playbooks," 397. Blayney notes that ownership of copy is sometimes misunderstood as being equivalent to modern copyright, but only granted the Company license to publish the work, not a wider as-of-then-anachronous intellectual ownership of any other medium of its reproduction (398).

¹⁷ Henry R. Plomer, "Gilbertson, *alias* Derricke (William)," in *Dictionary*, 82.

Stationer's Register.¹⁸ Not much is known about Gilbertson's private life, but Zachary Lesser has argued that in his public life as a stationer Gilbertson was primarily interested in publishing works "that had already proved their worth," and Adam Hooks has written that, although Gilbertson's partner, John Stafford, had royalist sympathies, Gilbertson himself "had no discernible political commitments."¹⁹ Put another way, his motivations appear primarily financial. With the addition of Gilbertson, there are now two individuals invested in the success of the *Faustus* C-text at various points: Jolly, who would have been incentivized to make a proto-C-text for dramatic production, and Gilbertson, who would have been incentivized to license a revised copy of the play with the Company for publication.

There is no known connection between Gilbertson and Jolly prior to 1663 and the publication of the C-text. Jolly was not active in England until 1660, having been performing abroad prior to his return and elevation in station by Charles II's royal grant.²⁰ After Jolly's return to England, little is known about his repertoire of plays, other than it included *Faustus*—likely performed, as noted by Pitcher, in 1662, just a year before the C-text's publication. Between Jolly's return to England and the C-text's publication, Gilbertson published only one other play, *Ignoramus: A Comedy* (1662), the title page of which specifically mentions it was being published as it was acted before King James, decades prior, and which makes no mention of Jolly or any troupe with which he might have been newly associated.²¹ In short, there is no reason to suspect the two men knew each other prior to the C-text's publication. It is plausible that Gilbertson was incentivized to cash in on a play in performance.

For a better sense of when the C-text's revisions were made, and thus greater evidence for who is likely to have made them, it is helpful to examine some of the more

¹⁸ Eyre, *Transcript of the registers of the Worshipful Company of Stationers from 1640–1708 A.D.*, 470. The transcript indicates on 4 April, 1655, "Master Wm. Gilbertson" received "by vertue of an assignmt und the hand & seale of Edward Wright, the sevall bookes or copies" including "A play called, *The Tragicall history of the life & death of Doctor Faustus*."

¹⁹ Lesser, "Typographic Nostalgia: Play-Reading, Popularity and the Meanings of Black Letter," in *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. Marta Straznicky (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 109–110; Adam Hooks, "Royalist Shakespeare: Publishers, Politics and the Appropriation of *The Rape of Lucrece* (1655)," in *Canonising Shakespeare: Stationers and the Book Trade, 1640–1740*, ed. Emma Deplege and Peter Kirwan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 35.

²⁰ Astington, "Jolly, George."

²¹ George Ruggle, *Ignoramus a Comedy* (London: 1662), Wing R2212.

<https://www.proquest.com/books/ignoramus-comedy-as-was-several-times-acted-with/docview/2240849514/seq-2>, accessed 11 March 2024. Gilbertson did publish another play in 1663, *Caradoc the Great*, but its title page also indicates no connection between Gilbertson and Jolly, and moreover it may have been published after the *Faustus* C-text. See R. A., *The Valiant Welshman. Or, The True Chronicle History of the Life and Valiant Deeds of Caradoc the Great* (London: 1663), Wing A3698. <https://www.proquest.com/eebo/books/valiant-welshman-true-chronicle-history-life/docview/2248550582/sem-2>, accessed 11 March 2024.

substantive textual changes. As described by Pitcher, significant revisions include the removal of many religiously volatile lines, as well as the previously mentioned “Several New Scenes” promised by the title page.²² There are two such new scenes included in the C-text, which might better be described as heavily revised versions of previous scenes than entirely new inventions. The first of these is a scene which supplants Faustus’s overtly cruel, even lethal, pranks at the papal court for less severe pranks at the court of the Sultan of Babylon;²³ the second is a musical scene with the landlady at an inn near Wittenberg.²⁴ While there are distinct parallels—each references the town of Trier/Tyre (B: D1r & C: D1r) and the Ponto Angelo (B: D1v & C: D1r), for instance—it is immediately noticeable the text has been altered significantly. The B-text focuses more broadly, and for longer, on the places visited by Faustus and Mephostophilis, and introduces them as having arrived at the Vatican (D1r–D1v). The C-text merely references them having been to Rome; it does not directly refer to the Vatican, and after mentioning Rome it quickly pivots its attention to “the Sultans Court, and what / Delight great Babylon affords” (C: D1r–D1v). Another parallel which confirms that the C-text’s scene is a reworking of the B-text, and not a wholly new invention, is that both have Mephostophilis bestowing invisibility on Faustus with much the same language:

Whilst on thy head I lay my hand,
And charme thee with this Magicke wand,
First weare this girdle, then appeare
Inuisible to all are here :
The Planets seuen, the gloomy aire,
Hell and the Furies forked haire,
Pluto’s blew fire, and Hecat’s tree,
With Magicke spels so compasse thee,
That no eye may thy body see.
(B: D4r. The invisibility “spell.”)

Whilst on thy head I lay my hand,
And charm thee with this Magick wand,
Take this girdle, thou shalt appeser [sic]
Invisible to all are here ;
The Planets seven, and the gloomy Air,
Hell, and the furies forked haer,
Pluto’s blew fire, and *Heccats* tree,
VVith Magick charmes so compasse thee,
That no eye may thy body see.
(C: D2r. The invisibility “charm.”)

²² Pitcher, “Some Observations,” 591. Removed lines include one in which Lucifer was “most dearly lov’d of God”; one which indicates God hates Faustus; one which describes a Black Mass; one which indicates Faustus’s Good Angel as a vehicle of Grace; one in which the Good Angel advises Faustus to read scripture; as well as the removal of “almost all allusions to the Deity, the soul the body and soul, blood, and damnation . . . and with them went such oaths as ‘zounds,’ ‘sbloud,’ and ‘Good Lord.’”

²³ I say “less severe” here in the sense that Faustus gets no one killed at the Babylonian court, but acknowledge that his actions toward the Empress are also a form of violence.

²⁴ The respective scenes appear on sigs D1r–E1v in the 1616 B-text and sigs D1r–D4v in the 1663 C-text. For the B-text see Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* (London: 1616), STC (2nd ed.) 17432. Available at *Early English Books Online*: <https://www.proquest.com/eebo/books/tragical-history-life-death-doctor-faustus/docview/2240884184/sem-2>, accessed 15 March 2024. For the C-text see Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* (London: 1663), STC R221553, sig. F3v. Available at The University of Texas at Austin’s Harry Ransom Center. <https://hrc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15878coll17/id/10951/>, accessed 11 March 2024. All subsequent quotations from these texts, which will be marked ‘B’ or ‘C’ accordingly, refer to these online reproductions.

However, the spell/charm appears in different parts of the scenes; it does not occur until much later in the B-text than it does in the C-text, until after Faustus has seen the Pope/Solomaine. As the typographical error in the shared invisibility spell may suggest, there are other careless errors in the C-text's Babylonian court scene, some of which are noted by Pitcher. For instance, the C-text confuses "Mustapha" for "Mephostophilis" (C: D2r), an error which Pitcher assumes arose from the compositors, perhaps here working from scribbled manuscript instead of a marked-up printed copy of the B-text. Pitcher also notes some lines "plagiarized" from another of Marlowe's works, *The Jew of Malta*.²⁵ I include much of the relevant passage below, which is almost immediately recognizable in the Marlovian canon:

Let us here the story of *Malta's* siege.

...

A moneth we granted [sic], in which time
They seis'd on half the Estates of all
The Jews amongst them ;
The time for truce allotted, scarce expir'd,
Arriv'd *Martine Belbosco* out of *Spaine*, who
With great promises of his Masters aid,
Incourag'd those of *Malta* not to render
Their promis'd tribute, but defend themselves :
They follow'd his edvice, and made him general,
Who with those *Malta* Knights and lusty Seamen,
So valiantly the Sea and Coast defended,
That all our force in vain had been employ'd,
Had not an unexpected chance reliev'd us ;

...

Mus. One morning as our scouts reliev'd our watch,
Hard by the City walls they found a body
Senseless, and speechless, yet gave some sign
Of life remaining in it : after some time
Spent in recovering to himself, he did
Confesse he was a Jew o'th town, who
to revenge some wrongs done him by
The Christians, would shew us how to
Enter to the town, and in short time
Make us masters of it : he therefore led our
Stote through a vault, and rose with them in the

²⁵ Pitcher, "Some Observations," 593. Pitcher uses Brooke's editions of *Doctor Faustus* and *The Jew of Malta* as they appear in Brooke's *The Works of Christopher Marlowe*, and makes the following notes to which I've added the lines themselves in quotations: line 877 "Demanded the ten months tribute left" (199) derives from line 236 "*Calim.* The ten years tribute that remains vnpaid." (247); lines 877-78 "Demanded the ten months tribute left / Vnpaid : they desir'd time to make collection" (199) derive from lines 247-48 "*Gov.* Thus : Since your hard conditions are such / That you will needs haue ten years tribute past," (247); line 880 "A moneth we granted, in which time" (199) derives from line 258 "*Caly.* We grant a month, but see you keep your promise." (248); line 881 "They seis'd on half the Estates of all" (199) from line[s] 302[-303] "be leuyed amongst the *Jewes*, and each of them to pay / one Halfe of his estate." (249).

Middle of the town, open'd the gates for us to
Enter in, and by that means the place
Became our own.

(C: D2r–D2v)

Pitcher argues that Jolly was attempting a form of dramatic irony with this inclusion²⁶—what we might, in modern parlance, call a “shared universe”—but most significantly he believes that the changes were made in support of Charles II’s expurgatory grant. More recently, Leah S. Marcus has suggested that those same changes noted by Pitcher were made not primarily in deference to Charles II, but to refocus the original tensions of the text from England’s overplayed puritanical fears to the early 1660s fears of the Turks, emphasizing the contemporary impact of inserting *The Jew of Malta*’s city-siege narrative into *Faustus*.²⁷ Both possibilities, which are not exclusive, imply that the C-text was revised from the B-text in the early 1660s, and align with Pitcher’s hypothesis that the revisions were made specifically for Jolly’s 1662 performance(s), and not before.

Further evidence for the text’s revision in the early 1660s specifically for dramatic production exists in the latter of the added scenes, with the musical additions, which more directly constitute manuscript insertions for the creation of the new printed text. The scene takes place at an inn, and begins the same in both versions. The divergence occurs when, in the B-text, those present at the inn resolve to wait for Faustus’s arrival, ending the scene; however, in the C-text, they instead engage in comedy with the hostess “lan[d]lady,” of whom they request a song but to whom the clown owes money, before the scene ends. The song they request is given two competing names, “a Swallow’s nest” and “The Chimney high,” and a few lines of the song are given below:

Cart[er]. Good sweet Hostess sing my song.
Host[ess]. What’s that?
Cart[er]. The Chimney high.
Dick. No, no, a Swallows nest. (nest.
Host[ess]. All you that will look for a Swallows nest, a Swallows
Must look in the Chimney high.
Dick. Now pray Hostess Sing my song too.
Host[ess]. Prethee what is’t?
Dick. You know, the song you sung when we were last here.
Clow[n]. Now Hostess you know *She sings again.*
(C: F3v)

²⁶ Pitcher, 593.

²⁷ Leah S. Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (London: Routledge, 1996), 62–64.

The song's inclusion implies the theatre-going audience would have likely been familiar with it, and so would have brought their own associations with the song to the play, relying on those associations to help bridge the gap between the original tragic B-text and the tragicomedy the C-text was attempting to be.²⁸ The inclusion of the named song also gives further evidence as to when the text was likely written. As opposed to what presumably existed in the collective memories of the audiences, in print the "Swallows nest" lyrics did not appear elsewhere for another six years, in Charles Sackville Dorset's *The New academy of complements*, under a section titled "A Drinking Catch, or Song 117."²⁹ Because the song was not widely published prior to 1669, or indeed after, I assume that it was a relatively new song. If that is so, it is also reasonable to assume that its inclusion may indicate, like the change of the papal court to a Babylonian court, that the C-text and the performances upon which it was based were penned recently before its publication—closer to 1663 than, say, 1631, or even 1655—further evidence that the C-text's revisions likely occurred in service of creating a 1662 rendition by Jolly's troupe, and not much before.

Although such substantive textual revisions are of obvious importance, important too are the paratextual revisions between the B- and C-texts, which also help inform why and how the C-text came to be. For an example of *Faustus*'s paratext, consider the woodblock print on the title page of the 1616 B-text (fig. 1). Paratexts are multiform, and multipurpose, ranging from a text's writing (e.g., font) to writings about a text (e.g., advertisements).³⁰ Claire M. L. Bourne has recently argued that it is in part because of the "rich paratextual materials" of the 1590 octavo of *Tamburlaine the Great*, specifically "the design features of the playtext itself ... [including] readerly affordances of typographical division in making 'scenes' legible" which may have enabled the octavo's successful publication.³¹ It seems unlikely, however,

²⁸ Meghan C. Andrews, "The 1663 *Doctor Faustus* and the Royalist Marlowe," *Marlowe Studies* 1 (2011): 42, 57. Andrews argues that, in a time when tragicomedy had largely replaced tragedies, Gilbertson's *Faustus* was something resembling a Royalist publication (42), and moreover that—despite the prevalent view of Marlowe as subversive—it's possible that sixteenth and seventeenth-century audiences interpreted Marlowe as politically or culturally orthodox (57).

²⁹ The statement is true at least insofar as to what searches I completed of digitally transcribed early modern texts made available for such purposes. For these results, a search was completed of Northwestern University and Washington University in St. Louis's *EarlyPrint* database, which contains digitized early English print records from 1473 to the early 1700s, including those available through *Early English Books Online-Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP)*, which indicated only one record during that time contained the lyrics used in the *Faustus* C-text, Charles Sackville Dorset's *The New academy of complements* (1669).

³⁰ Roswitha Skare defines paratext as "a text that relates (or mediates) to another text (the main work) in a way that enables the work to be complete and to be offered to its readers and, more generally, to the public." See "Paratext," *Knowledge Organisation* 47, no. 6 (2020): 511. For an analysis of paratextual materials in early modern English drama, see Thomas L. Berger and Sonia Massai, *Paratexts in English Printed Drama to 1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

³¹ Claire M. L. Bourne, *Typographies of Performance in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 164.

that all potential buyers were persuaded to purchase a playbook because of scene divisions, as this would require them to leaf through the book before buying. More prominent types of paratexts, such as title pages, would be much more effective in drawing buyer attention. Put another way, with paratext, sometimes a book really does want to be judged by its cover.

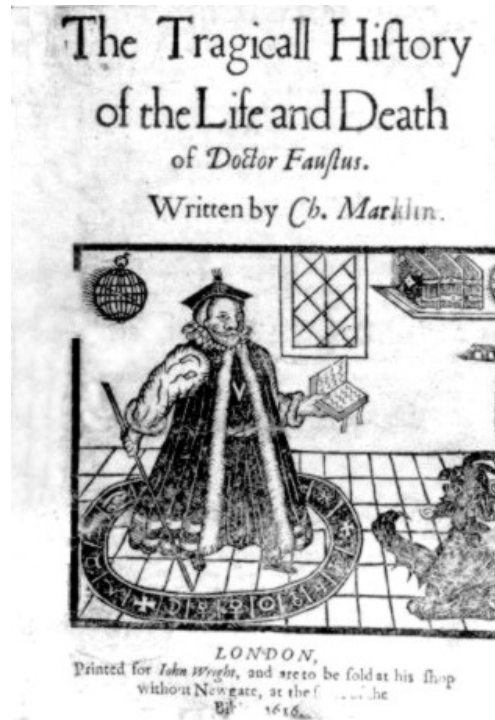


Figure 1: The title page and woodblock print from the 1616 B-Text. Wikimedia Commons.

Taxonomically, paratexts have two defining types which are not wholly distinct from each other. “[A]ffordances of typographical division” would fall into the first category: peritexts, originating from the Greek *περι-*, meaning “around” or “close to.” Peritexts are generally those elements closely physically related to a given text, supplementary materials like prologues and epilogues, or a book’s choice of typesetting, or typographical divisions, or title pages like that in figure 1, as it was included along with the text of the play to give better context to the reader. The second paratextual category is epitext, originating from the Greek *ἐπι-* and meaning “upon,” “at,” or “in addition.” Epitexts are those elements which have been derived from the author or their work, such as book reviews, interviews, letters, even wholly non-textual manifestations, which I would argue include, in addition to an author’s reputation, also cultural associations within and surrounding a text, as well as what has been

discussed about a text and remains in the collective consciousness.³² For example, it is because of epitext that I can refer, at least in academic circles, to *The Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* as simply *Faustus* with little being lost. Seymour Pitcher's and Leah Marcus's theories about why the papal court scene was replaced with a Babylonian court scene each revolve around epitextual revisions to the play, as each relies upon cultural connections and connotations informing the revision. Similarly, the inclusion of the "Swallows nest" song in the revised inn scene is another example of the revisor utilising epitext, relying on elements outside of the text itself (i.e., audience familiarity and positive associations) to mediate the text's reception. The 1616 title page is also an example of an epitext because, in addition to informing readers of what is to come, it also informs present day readers how its contemporary public engaged with the text, or at least how the woodblock's creator perceived or wanted the public to engage with the text. It is noteworthy that, even as a paratext and presumably created by another author than that of the revisions to the C-text, the 1663 woodblock print mirrors some of the textual revisions introduced in the C-text. Such alterations are best foregrounded by visual comparison of the B-text's and C-text's (fig. 2) woodblock prints.

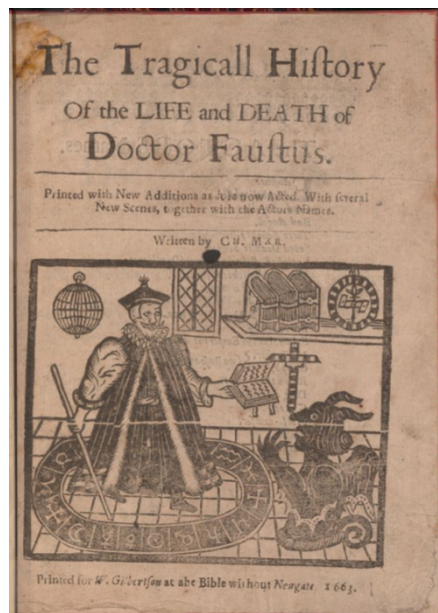


Figure 2: The title page and wood-block print from the 1663 C-Text. Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin

³² When describing the characteristic components of paratexts as outlined by Gérard Genette, who coined the term in 1979, Skare writes that “[m]ost of the paratextual elements explored by Genette are textual elements. But he mentions also non-textual manifestations: iconic (such as illustrations), material (for instance typography, format, binding, paper quality) and factual (the author’s gender and age, her reputation, awards etc.).” “Paratext,” 512.

It is likely that the original woodblock, which was in use until 1631, was lost, as it would have been pointlessly expensive to commission another otherwise.³³ The stationers' loss is our gain, presenting a unique perspective from which to compare the B- and C-texts. Given that the C-text was produced after Charles II's 1660 charge to "expunge all prophanesse and scurrility" from previously acted plays, certain changes between the C-text's and B-text's woodblock prints emerge as particularly relevant. For example, the cross in the C-text's woodblock print (which barely figures in the B-text) has been positioned directly between the demon and doctor, implying a literal centrality of Christianity in the thematic content of the play—a centrality also reflected in the censored language and removal of the papal court from Faustus's harassment.³⁴ Furthermore, though not pictured, the C-text marks the first time *Faustus* was put into roman typeset instead of its previous blackletter. The change in typography, in keeping with the broader printing trend towards roman type, may have aimed to make the play more approachable to a wider audience, perhaps by disassociating it from the ecclesiastic, as Marcus speculates.³⁵ It is also noteworthy that, as Blayney observes, roman type had largely supplanted blackletter by the turn of the seventeenth century, and that therefore *Faustus*'s previous editions all being in blackletter up through 1631 may have been an attempt to superficially "confer a kind of antiquarian dignity" on it as "serious and conservative"; "superficial" because the book trade associated roman type with greater literacy and education and moreover publishers of roman type plays were usually aiming at an audience of middle class consumers.³⁶ This means that while the change from blackletter to roman type may have been simply due to modernization, roman having become mostly standard, it may also have been an attempt to retarget the play toward a different type of audience—possibly a less ecclesiastical one, or a literary middle class, or both. In any event, these changes to the C-text—the revised artistry of the woodblock print, as well as the updated roman typeset—enabled the work to be more uniformly offered to its

³³ For more on how woodblock prints mediate their texts, see Diane Jakacki, "'Canst paint a doleful cry?': Promotion and Performance in the *Spanish Tragedy*," *Early Theatre* 13, no. 1 (2010): 13–36, and Sonia Massai, "Shakespeare, Text and Paratext," In *Shakespeare Survey 62: Close Encounters with Shakespeare's Text*, ed. Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1–11.

³⁴ My thanks to Gwendoline Guy for her observation about the cross's placement during the 2022 Marlowe Festival. Other changes of note: the omission of the symbols for Gemini and Cancer following those for Aries and Taurus on the left side of the runic ring—possibly because the C-text woodblock's artist ran out of space, and attempted to make up for it by including the previously omitted symbol for Aquarius on the top right side of the ring; additionally, the C-text's print shows a portion of a larger image than the 1616-text's woodblock—note how the cross is largely occluded in the B-text—which is as the image appears in all six other editions of the B-text. My thanks also to Rob Carson (Hobart and William Smith Colleges), editor of the Marlowe Census website, for his observation about the incompleteness of the 1616-text's image, given at the same conference.

³⁵ Marcus, *Unediting the Renaissance*, 62.

³⁶ Blayney, "The Publication of Playbooks," 414–15.

prospective readers, censors and consumers alike, as the paratextual content of the C-text more closely resembles the revised textual content of the C-text, rather than the B-text. Interestingly, the recreation of the B-text's woodblock print parallels in ways the process of revising the B-text into the C-text more broadly: the second woodblock was created as a clear, but false, equivalent of the first, with the differences coming from somewhere between pragmatism and politics.

At this point I will offer a scenario for the creation of the C-text which I believe is plausible. Gilbertson, after acquiring the rights to publish *Faustus* in 1655, had not done so for unknown reasons. Perhaps it was because the playhouses were still closed, which he perceived to lessen demand, or perhaps because he had been observing his peers—in the year prior, dramatic publications had been below their averages for that century, and well below their peak³⁷—or perhaps both, or something else. Whatever his rationale,³⁸ Gilbertson apparently believed that the potential rewards for publishing *Faustus* at that time did not outweigh the definite risks. I reiterate Blayney's argument that, compared to nondramatic works (sermons, bibles, broadsides, etc.), the publishing of dramatic works may have been generally understood to be a riskier undertaking for a publisher.³⁹ Gilbertson ostensibly agreed, having primarily published nondramatic works.⁴⁰ However, he did not exclusively publish nondramatic works; later in his career, between 1653 and 1664, he opted to publish nine dramatic works. Of those plays, six were explicitly comedies, one was marketed as a “true chronical history of the life and valiant deeds of Caradoc the Great,” another was marketed as “[t]he tragical history, admirable achievements and various events of Guy Earl of Warwick,” a popular English hero, and the last was the *Faustus* C-text.⁴¹ Records from the

³⁷ Records from *DEEP* indicate that in 1654 only 23 playbooks were published, approximately 10% fewer than the seventeenth century's yearly average (between 1600 and 1653, 1,387 playbooks were published, averaging ~25.7 a year), and approximately 37.5% fewer than the high point previously mentioned: those eighteen years immediately preceding the English Civil War, during which ~36.8 playbooks were being published a year.

³⁸ See Craig's “Missing Shakespeare, 1642–1660,” 140, for more on Gilbertson's publishing habits.

³⁹ Blayney, “The Publication of Playbooks,” 389. Blayney writes that a publisher acting as bookseller too “would normally have to sell about 60 percent of a first edition to break even,” and that, for plays published between 1583 until the theatres closed in 1642, only about one-in-five would have made a profit within its first five years after publication, and only one-in-twenty would have made a profit within its first year. However, I also reiterate Farmer and Lesser's argument in “The Popularity of Playbooks Revisited” that, in comparison to other types of books, playbooks may have been more lucrative than Blayney suggests.

⁴⁰ The *ESTC* has 288 records with which Gilbertson is affiliated as publisher, including ballads, broadsides, songs, sermons, elegies, histories, and other types. Of those 288 records, only 9 are dramatic works.

⁴¹ The plays referred to are *Wily Beguiled*, anonymously authored, originally produced in 1602, originally published in 1606, and published by Gilbertson in ~1653; *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, anonymously authored, originally produced between 1599–1604, originally published in 1608, and published by Gilbertson in 1655; *The Shoemaker's Holiday, or The Gentle Craft*, authored by Thomas Dekker, originally produced in 1599, originally published in 1600, and published by Gilbertson in 1657; and *Lady Alimony, or The Alimony Lady*, anonymously authored, originally produced in 1659, and originally published, by Gilbertson, in 1659; *The*

Database of Early English Playbooks (DEEP) indicate that, between 1640 and 1660, there are approximately one-and-a-half times as many plays with title pages that marketed themselves as “comedies” or “comic” than there are plays with title pages which marketed themselves as “tragedies” or “tragic.”⁴² It suggests that plays in the tragic genre were, unsurprisingly, unpopular investments during the ravages of, and aftermath to, the English Civil War. Moreover, although the era had a proclivity toward the comic,⁴³ perhaps also due to anxieties related to governmental turmoil and censorship, and the performance of tragedy (most notably, those including scenes of regicide), Gilbertson was even more inclined toward comedy than the average of his contemporaries. Six of his nine produced plays were explicitly comedies. Complicating things further in determining a publisher’s motivations, Marta Straznicky notes that some dramatic publications at the time “seem not to have been even commercially motivated.”⁴⁴ In such circumstances, Gilbertson’s decision to publish a politico-religiously fraught drama, even if a defanged one, could have been particularly risky; and yet it is not my impression that Gilbertson was a publisher much in the habit of taking risks, and—given the time between when he acquired the rights to *Faustus* and that he only eventually published it after it had been performed—I similarly do not get the impression he saw republishing *Faustus* as a civic duty.

Instead, I suspect his primary reason for delay was to offset financial risk. Had Gilbertson opted to publish *Faustus* immediately after acquiring rights to it in 1655, it would have required the costs of new authority and license, as well as any costs and difficulties of revising the play to achieve them.⁴⁵ And so, instead, he tabled it, being able to hold the

tragic history, admirable achievements and various events of Guy Earl of Warwick, authored by “B. J.,” perhaps Ben Jonson, original date of production unknown, only surviving publication, by Gilbertson, in 1661; *Ignoramus: A Comedy*, authored by George Ruggles, originally produced in 1615, originally published in 1630, and published by Gilbertson in 1662; *The Valiant Welshman (Caradoc the Great)*, authored by A. R., originally produced in 1612, originally published in 1615, and published by Gilbertson in 1663; *Knavery In All Trades*, authored by John Tatham, original date of production unknown, originally published, by Gilbertson, in 1664. Data for these entries was provided and corroborated by *DEEP*, the *ESTC*, and Boolean searches of *EEBO*.

⁴² Records from *DEEP* indicate that there are 100 entries for plays between 1640 and 1660 with a title-page attributive genre of “comedy” or “comic(al)” and only 67 entries for plays between 1640 and 1660 with a title-page attributive genre of “tragedy” or “tragic(al),” or, in sum, approximately 60% of the plays reviewed were comedies, and 40% tragedies. Gilbertson, by contrast, published six comedies (75%) and two tragedies (25%) when taking no account of *Caradoc the Great*’s genre.

⁴³ For more on the popularity of dramatic genre (especially tragicomedy) during the Civil War, Interregnum, and Restoration, see Nancy Klein Maguire’s *Regicide and Restoration: English Tragicomedy, 1660–1671*.

⁴⁴ Marta Straznicky, “Introduction: What Is a Stationer?,” in *Shakespeare’s Stationers: Studies in Cultural Bibliography*, ed. by Straznicky (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 7.

⁴⁵ Blayney, “The Publication of Playbooks,” 412. He notes that a large benefit for publishers in achieving a second edition is that the costs of printing would no longer include the costs of the manuscript, authority, license, or registration. This suggests Gilbertson, having known about *Faustus*’s republication successes, may have hoped it might again achieve multiple editions.

license without publication. However, after hearing of a production of *Faustus* in 1662, even if it was not a particularly good production, Gilbertson endeavoured to acquire a copy of the text from which he might achieve publication.⁴⁶ Whether he acquired the copy from Jolly himself, or from another player involved in the production, is less important than that the copy was likely derived from or originally Jolly's copy; that it was essentially *of* Jolly. Whatever its specific origins were, I suspect it was a B-text edition of *Faustus* with mark-up, up until the "Several New Scenes," at which point it became less legible, perhaps handwritten manuscript. My evidence for this theoretical underlying copy is that, while doing my own line-by-line analysis of changes between the B-text and C-text, I noted an increase in errors from the "Several New Scenes" onward.⁴⁷ While it is possible that the printing house changed practices or personnel precisely at the "New Scenes" point, thus increasing their error rate, I suspect a contributing factor is that the printers had less clarity in their source material.⁴⁸ Like Pitcher, I am more inclined to blame the increased typographical and content errors from the new scenes onward, such as confusing Mustapha for Mephostophilis, on issues arising from the nature of the manuscript from which the compositors were working, rather than their typesetting aptitude alone. (Certainly, however, the content error observed is not suggestive of the compositors' careful attention to the play's narrative.) More work is required in both cataloguing and explaining the textual changes made between the B- and C-texts, but suffice it to note here that the C-text was likely created through a revision of the B-text by Jolly, that this revision likely occurred after the playhouses reopened in 1660 and before a production of *Faustus* occurred in 1662, and that this theorized proto-C-text was a superficially more approachable version of *Faustus*, which Gilbertson must have hoped might start again upon a string of lucrative editions.

⁴⁶ Pitcher includes a note from Samuel Pepys about having seen a production of *Faustus* on 26 May, 1662, and describing it as "so wretchedly done that we were sick of it." Pitcher, "Some Observations," 589, which borrows from F. S. Boas, "Introduction", in Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, ed. Boas (London: Methuen, 1932), 49–50.

⁴⁷ Examples of these errors include the following: a comma is used to end a stage direction ("*Enter Conjurer*," C: D4r); one page ends noting the next should start with "Ye a" but it instead starts with "Ye all" (C: D3r, D3v); a "t" is flipped upside down in "a moneth we gran^ded" (C: D2v); similarly, an "n" is flipped upside down in "*Faustus staud by*" (C: D3v), and an "f" is confused for an "i" in "carry hfm away" (C: D3v). There are also issues with the recurring header. C: F2r adds a space and unnecessary italicization to the header, "*o f Doctor Faustus*."; C: G1r adds an unnecessary space to its header, and prints "of Do ctor *Faustus*."; and, toward the end of the play, on C: G4v–H1r, there are two identical headers on side-by-side pages, each saying "The Tragical History," and for the remainder of the text the headers are flipped, with the left page reading "of Doctor *Faustus*" and the right page reading "The Tragical History." This list is by no means comprehensive, and I am currently engaged in a complete collation of the B- and C-texts.

⁴⁸ Blayney notes that "It is rarely appropriate to hold the [copying] machine responsible for the supposed origins of the text it reproduced." "The Publication of Playbooks," 389. Though he was specifically referring to the publication of censored material, I find it also at least somewhat appropriate as a possible justification for issues with a text. As the old programming axiom goes: garbage in, garbage out.

However, even such substantive thematic and textual changes as were made to *Faustus* to change the B-text into the C-text were only the bare minimum insofar as the economic venture of reprinting *Faustus* required. They may have assured the play's ability to be published by the government and Company, but not its ability to be lucrative in the process. And so I finally imagine that the play's paratextual changes were made to, or appeared already to, serve that latter purpose, attempting to dissolve any remaining barriers between Gilbertson and successful publication, those between the work and the greater public. The Christ-centered images from the title page's woodblock print, the addition of familiar drinking songs, the updated and crowd pleasing connotations involved with attacking the Turks in lieu of the Pope, the changing of the font from ecclesiastic blackletter to legible roman, perhaps even the reference to *The Jew of Malta* for those great fans or collectors of Marlowe's works—all these changes seemingly made the play more publicly palatable (while appeasing the censors), and therefore, as Gilbertson must have hoped, financially viable. However, the changes, para- and textual, were apparently not enough to reignite *Faustus*'s spark. The C-text is the last of the seventeenth century editions. Whether that was because it had been off bookseller shelves for too long, or perhaps had lost vendibility in its revision, or that Gilbertson had simply mis-estimated dramatic demand at that time, or perhaps some legal problem after his death in 1665 and the transfer of his "copyrights" to Robert White in 1666,⁴⁹ I cannot say. It warrants further investigation beyond the scope of this article. I submit only that Restoration-era England engaged with Marlowe's iconic *Faustus* through a doppelganger: the "now acted," tragicomic, politico-religiously neutered C-text—conceived by George Jolly for production and procured by William Gilbertson for publication—which relied on multiplex paratext to better connect with its audiences, if not with its own textual history, but even so was, apparently, ultimately financially unsuccessful, perhaps even culturally unwelcome, and so ended its series of seventeenth century publications. Or, to borrow a line, "Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight."

⁴⁹ See Plomer, "Dictionary," 82.

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