

Written Exercise on Early Textual History and Performance

Doctor Faustus by Christopher Marlowe

The Title Page

The | Tragical | History of D. Faustus. | *as it hath bene Acted by the Right | Honourable the Earle of Nottingham his seruants.* | Written by Ch. Marl. | LONDON | Printed by V.S. for Thomas Buthell. 1604. ¹

The Format

The earliest that doctor Faustus was printed was in 1604 and was constructed as a quarto. This print was known as the A text.

Research

A significant complication of Doctor Faustus is validating the most reliable text to the original play. Doctor Faustus appears multiple times in 'A Bibliography of the English printed Drama to the Restoration'. It includes entries from the Stationer's Register for December 18th 1592 and January 7th 1601. It is believed that the entry in 1592 refers to the prose text rather than Marlowe's play. Greg states that three separate types of Doctor Faustus can be recognised. The first can be found in the first quarto, printed in 1604 and by Valentine Simmes for Thomas Bushell. This version was reprinted in 1609 by George Eld for John Wright and again reprinted in 1611.² The B text had 676 additional lines, which added comedic and dark interludes. One significant difference regarding texts A and B is the question of if Faustus can or will beg for forgiveness.³

The second type was printed in 1616 for John Wright at his shop in London. This version was different from the ones before as it is textually longer. It relies on a different manuscript origin; it seems that either the 1616 version was created from an amended version of the 1609 version or the 1611 version, or at least one of these was at minimum conferred in the process as mistakes and corrections are in the old version and the new version. There were more copies in 1619, 1620, 1624, 1628, and 1631. The third type was printed in 1663 using the 1631 edition but making changes to eliminate any

¹ Christopher Marlowe, *Early English Books Online*, 1604, <<https://www.proquest.com/eebo/docview/2240937580/99855372/9DC1AE7C0F8A49CEPQ/16?accountid=130472>> [accessed 18th January 2023].

² *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, ed. by W.W. Greg, IV vols (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1939), I, p.327.

³ Ed Simon, *The Paris Review* (2016) <<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2016/12/15/one-devil-too-many/>> [23rd January 2023]

profanity and to make additions.⁴ It is unknown who printed the 1616 copy for John Wright; however, there is a strong argument for the printer being Nicholas Oakes. Professor Peter Blayney, the paramount authority on Nicholas Oakes and his works, firmly concludes he is the printer.⁵

Valentine Simmes was the printer for the 1604 quarto. He is recorded in 'A Transcript of the Stationers' Registers' as 'V.Simmes'. The Register lists his Date of Freedom as the 8th of March 1585 and his First Registered Publication as the 6th of December 1594.⁶ In the same Stationers Register, it is recorded that Thomas Bushell registered his copy of the play of Doctor Faustus to Doctor Barlowe and the wardens on the 7th of January, 1600.⁷ On the 13th of September 1610, Thomas Bushell signed over the copy of Doctor Faustus to John Wright.⁸

Thomas Bushell is recorded in 'A Dictionary Of Printers And Booksellers in England, Scotland And Ireland, And Of Foreign Printers Of English Books 1557 - 1640.' The book states that Bushell was a bookseller in London between 1599 to 1617. It says that he was located at 'The North Door of St. Paul's and that his father was a tailor named Robert Bushell, who hailed from Norwich. Bushell worked as an apprentice to Nicholas Ling, a stationer of London, for eight years beginning on the 1st of February 1590/1. He was accepted the freedom on February 3rd, 1598/9, and the final book he registered was on the 13th of December 1617.⁹

Valentine Simmes is also recorded in 'A Dictionary Of Printers and Booksellers in England, Scotland and Ireland' as a printer in London. They state that he was printing between 1585 and 1622; his printing location was firstly in The White Swan in Addle or Addling Hill; and afterwards in White Friars close to the Mulberry Tree in 1610. His father was Richard Symmes, who hailed from Adderbury in Oxford. Simmes worked as an apprentice to Henry Sutton, a stationer of London, for eight years starting from Christmas of 1576. Sutton was a bookseller, and Simmes left Sutton to join a printer

⁴ *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, I, p.327.

⁵ The Malone Society, *Doctor Faustus 1616: A Bibliographical Mystery Solved* (2019) <<https://malonesociety.com/news/doctor-faustus-1616-a-bibliographical-mystery-solved/>> [accessed 24th January 2023]

⁶ *A Transcript Of The Stationers' Register: 1554-1640*, ed. by Edward Arber, V vols (Massachusetts: Smith, 1967), III, p.30.

⁷ *ibid* p.67.

⁸ *ibid*, III, p.199b

⁹ *A dictionary Of Printers And Booksellers In England, Scotland And Ireland, And Of Foreign Printers Of English Books 1557-1640*, ed. by Ronald Brunlees McKerrow, V vols (Oxford: The Bibliographical Society, 1968), I, p.58.

named Henry Bynneman; he passed away in 1584. In 1585 Simmes received his freedom to publish, which was given to him by Joane Sutton, the wife of the late Henry Sutton.¹⁰

From the beginning of Simmes' career, he was regularly caught up with the authorities for printing works that went against the authorities or work that belonged to other writers. This led to Simmes getting arrested for being a compositor of the Martin Marprelate press. 'A Dictionary Of Printers and Booksellers' states that 'In 1595 he was caught printing the "Grammar and Accidence" and his press was seized, his type melted and he was compelled to transfer his apprentice to James Roberts, being forbidden to take another until that one was out of his time'. This caused more chaos with the authorities. Simmes got into more trouble in 1599 when his name was on a list of fourteen printers that were stringently prohibited from printing 'satyres or epigrams' and would have to pay a shilling as a fine. On one occurrence, Simmes was found printing a ballad criticising Sir Walter Raleigh when Bishop Bancroft cautioned him that Bancroft had the ability to hang him long ago if he had wanted to do it.¹¹

Simmes was banned from having a job as a master printer by order of the High Commissioners in 1622 and was permitted a pension worth £4 a year given by the Company of Stationers. The press that belonged to Simmes was exceptional as the press was used to print Shakespeare's books.¹²

The 'Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers' lists the history of Simmes's printing career, starting with the first quarto of *Richard the second* and the first quarto of *Richard the thirde* for Andrew Wise in 1597. In 1600, he printed the *second part of Henrie the fourth* as well as the original quarto of *Much Ado about Nothing*. In 1604 Simmes produced the second edition of the *First Part of King Henry the Fourth*. It is believed that by 1610 Simmes was working in Whitefriars due to his name being listed in the imprint of a small volume called *Syrophenissa or the Canaanitish Woman's conflicts*, in which the title-page is conserved at the British Museum. Simmes transferred over his copyrights to Edward Griffin in December of 1619.¹³

The title-page image details are recorded in 'Printers' and Publishers' Devices in England and Scotland'. The device consists of 'A boy with wings

¹⁰ McKerrow, I, p.245

¹¹ *ibid*, p.245

¹² *ibid*, p.245

¹³ *ibid*, p.246

upon his right arm and with his left hand holding, or fastened to, a weight.’¹⁴ This symbol indicates a gift kept from arising from the oppression of poverty. The image measures 44 millimetres by 54 millimetres.

The device was employed as a device by printer Barthélemy Berton. This device was passed down through multiple people until it was passed from William Howe to Valentine Simmes at an undisclosed time. Simmes used that device three times: first in 1597 for ‘*The Tragedy of King Richard the Second*’, second in 1604 for *Doctor Faustus*, and third for ‘*A Succint... Declaration of... Clymacterial Years*.’¹⁵

Doctor Faustus was performed by the Admiral’s Men starting on the 30th of September in 1594. It premiered at Southwark’s Rose Theatre; surrounding it were public houses, houses of ill repute, and bear and dog fighting dens. The Admiral’s Men performed the play twelve times; Edward Alleyn starred as the lead in *Doctor Faustus*. The early run of the play was infamous for its connections with the devil. Several people in the audience asserted that they spotted the master of Mephistopheles amongst the audience. William Prynne, a strong Puritan political figure, claimed that the audience and players had a ‘visible apparition of the Devil on the stage.’¹⁶

In this research exercise, I have researched *Doctor Faustus* to discover a range of information. This includes when it was first performed, when the play was published, the many subsequent versions of the play, and the changes made to it throughout the years. I took an in-depth view into the life and works of the printer and publisher of the 1604 *Doctor Faustus*: Valentine Simmes and Thomas Bushell. I looked through several books to find this information, including ‘A bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration’, ‘Printers’ and Publishers’ Devices in England and Scotland’, ‘A Transcript of the Stationers’ Registers, as well as online research.

¹⁴ *Printers’ and Publishers’ Devices in England and Scotland 1485-1640*, ed. by Ronald McKerrow, (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1949) p.51.

¹⁵ McKerrow, p.51-52.

¹⁶ Ed Simon, *The Paris Review* (2016) <<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2016/12/15/one-devil-too-many/>> [23rd January 2023]

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10. McKerrow, I, p.245
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