
Doctor Faustus

CHRISTOPHER
MARLOWE



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DOCTOR FAUSTUS

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Doctor Faustus

by Christopher Marlowe

Edited by

JOHN D.JUMP



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Preface

The text of *Doctor Faustus* printed here reproduces exactly that printed in my 'Revels' edition of the play, published by Methuen in 1962. But, in view of the special needs of the readers for whom the present volume is intended, the editorial apparatus of introduction, notes, etc. is very largely new.

All textual notes have been omitted; so, too, have the alternative versions of five scenes which differ too widely from the accepted versions for their variants to be digestible into textual notes and which were therefore printed in full in an appendix to the 'Revels' edition. The long textual sections of the earlier introduction have been replaced by a very brief account of the characteristic features of my text of the play.

For [section 8](#) of the present introduction, I have borrowed at length from my critical discussion and interpretation of *Doctor Faustus* in [section 9](#) of its predecessor and have expanded what I have borrowed. Otherwise, the present introduction owes little to the earlier one. It incorporates a modern-spelling version of the passages from the source-book which were previously given, with the original spelling and punctuation, in an appendix.

The notes have been greatly increased in bulk, despite the omission from them of all discussions of merely textual points and nearly all literary, historical, and other materials not serving a directly elucidatory purpose. In deciding which of them should be printed as footnotes and which should appear at the end of the volume, I have tried to bear in mind the reader's convenience. The footnotes contain brief explanations of most of the single words and short phrases that seem likely to cause difficulty. Words and phrases that call for fuller explanation than is suitable in a footnote, longer phrases, and all proper names are dealt with in the notes that follow the text of the play. In these more discursive notes, I have also elucidated various historical references and allusions to special bodies of knowledge, commented occasionally upon grammatical and stylistic features of the dialogue, and related the action of the play to the theatre in which it was originally performed.

In preparing this edition, I have incurred debts which it is a pleasure to acknowledge. Mr John Prudhoe of the Department of Drama in the University of Manchester very kindly read what I had written about Marlowe's theatre and gave me the benefit of his criticism and advice; Dr R.F.Leslie of the Department

of English in the same university read what I had written about the morality plays and discussed a number of points of Elizabethan grammar with me in an equally helpful spirit; and Miss Tatiana A.Wolff of the Loughton County High School very generously allowed me to reproduce the time-chart which she had compiled for her edition of *Tamburlaine* and to revise it slightly in order to relate it more closely to *Doctor Faustus*. I am most grateful to all of them.

JOHN D.JUMP

Manchester, 1964

Chronology of Marlowe's Life and Works

(Adapted from a time-chart compiled by Tatiana A. Wolff)

- 1564 Christopher Marlowe born in Canterbury. His father, John, was a shoemaker, a member of the shoemakers' and tanners' guild. *Shakespeare and Galileo born; Michelangelo and Calvin died.*
- 1570 *The Pope excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I.*
- 1571 *Battle of Lepanto.*
- 1572 *Massacre of St Bartholomew.*
- 1576 *The Theatre, later re-erected as the Globe (1599), built in Holywell, Shoreditch, by James Burbage. The Lord Admiral's company of players already in existence.*
- 1577 *Two new theatres opened: the Blackfriars and the Curtain in Shoreditch.*
- 1579 Marlowe recorded as receiving a grant of £1 a quarter at the King's School, Canterbury.
- 1580 Marlowe entered Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He is recorded in his first week to have paid the sum of 1d. at the buttry.
Drake returned from his voyage round the world. Spenser was appointed secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, who was going to Ireland as Lord Deputy.
- 1581 *Raleigh returned to England from Ireland and rose to favour at court.*
- 1582 *Plague in London. Hakluyt's Divers Voyages touching the Discovery of America published.*
- 1583 *Queen's company of players formed.*
- 1584 Marlowe took his B.A. degree.
Raleigh organized expedition to explore Virginia.
- 1585 *Expedition to the Netherlands under Leicester. Parma captured Antwerp after a long siege.*
- 1586 *Battle of Zutphen, at which Sir Philip Sidney was killed.*

- 1587 Marlowe took his M.A. degree. *Tamburlaine the Great*, Parts I and II, performed in London.
Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots. Drake's expedition to Cadiz. Raleigh made captain of the Queen's guard. The Rose theatre built in Southwark. Kyd's Spanish Tragedy performed about this time. The German Faust-Book published.
- 1588 *Defeat of the Spanish Armada.*
- 1589 *The few of Malta* performed. Marlowe imprisoned in New-gate for taking part in a street fight. Tried at the Old Bailey and discharged.
Hakluyt's Principal Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation published. Raleigh in Ireland, met Spenser and persuaded him to bring his manuscript of The Faerie Queene to London.
- 1590 *Tamburlaine the Great*, Parts I and II, published.
Spenser's Faerie Queene, Books I-III, published.
- 1591 *Shakespeare's Henry VI, Parts II and III, performed.*
- 1592 *Edward II* performed. *Doctor Faustus* performed (probably 1592-3; but 1588 and 1589 are also possible).
Siege of Rouen, in which the English helped the Protestants against the Catholic League. Plague in London; theatres closed. Raleigh imprisoned in the Tower on account of his secret marriage to Elizabeth Throckmorton. Shakespeare's Henry VI, Part I, performed. P.F.'s translation of the German Faust-Book published.
- 1593 *The Massacre at Paris* performed. *Hero and Leander* written. *Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis published. Churchgoing enforced in England on pain of banishment; fresh disabilities imposed on recusants. Plague in London; theatres closed from February.*
- 12 May Thomas Kyd arrested. Under torture he later said that certain heretical documents denying the divinity of Christ, which had been found in his possession, belonged to Marlowe, with whom he had shared a room two years earlier.
- 18 May Warrant issued for Marlowe's arrest.
- 30 May Marlowe stabbed to death in a tavern brawl at Deptford. He and Ingram Frizer, who killed him, had quarrelled about the payment of the reckoning.
- 1 June Christopher Marlowe buried, in the churchyard of St Nicholas at Deptford.

- 1594 *The Tragedy of Dido, Queen of Carthage*, written in collaboration with Thomas Nashe, published. *Edward II* published.
- 1595 *The Swan theatre built.*
- 1598 *Hero and Leander* published in two editions, one incomplete as Marlowe left the poem, the other finished by George Chapman.
- 1599 ‘The Passionate Shepherd to his Love’ published in an anthology, *The Passionate Pilgrim*, falsely attributed to Shakespeare. Printed copies of Marlowe’s translations from Ovid’s *Amores* publicly burnt by order of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, on the ground of their licentiousness.
The opening of the Globe theatre on the Bankside, built from the timbers of the demolished Theatre.
- 1600 Marlowe’s translation of Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, Book I, published.
The Fortune theatre in Cripplegate opened by Henslowe and Alleyn.
- 1604 *Doctor Faustus* published in a shortened form (the A-version).
- 1616 *Doctor Faustus* published in a fuller form (the B-version).

(Owing to a lack of evidence, many events in Elizabethan literary and theatrical history cannot be dated with certainty. In such instances, the dates given above are those which seem likeliest in the present state of our knowledge.)

Introduction

1.

ORIGINS OF THE FAUSTUS LEGEND

During the first millennium of the Christian era, a number of stories developed concerning men who were supposed to have acquired supernatural gifts or powers by making agreements with the Devil. One of the earliest and most widespread of these legends told of a bishop's seneschal named Theophilus who, in the reign of the Emperor Justinian, was wrongfully dismissed from his office. In his resentment, he sealed a contract renouncing Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary and acknowledging Satan as his lord. His restoration to his office followed immediately. But Theophilus soon became terrified at what he had done. For forty nights he fasted and prayed to the Virgin; at last she appeared and listened to his plea. Reassured of the divine mercy, he made a public confession of his sin and proclaimed the miracle of his preservation. The contract was burned, and Theophilus shortly afterwards died in a state of grace, becoming known as Theophilus the Penitent. His story is representative of many, for interest in the theme persisted throughout the Middle Ages.

In the sixteenth century, a new leading character emerged, who was to become more famous than Theophilus or any other of his predecessors. The age was that of the wandering scholars, the disseminators of the New Learning, men who were masters and practitioners of many arts and who were often popularly suspected of sorcery. Belief in magic and witchcraft seems to have infected the very air of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Conditions were such that one of these strolling scholars, a German, became the nucleus around which there crystallized a whole body of legend and folk-lore related to the notion of a compact with the Evil One.

The historical George or John Faustus seems to have been an itinerant scholar and fortune-teller. Documents alluding to his activities bear dates from 1507 to the later 1530's. Another dated 1545 mentions that he had died not long before. These documents do not compose a very attractive portrait. One of them tells us that as a schoolmaster Faustus had been guilty of the grossest immorality and that

he had had to take flight from punishment; two of them refer to his arrogance and boastfulness.

A work published by a Protestant theologian in 1548 was the first to ascribe to him a definite association with the supernatural powers of evil and a death at the hands of the Devil. A fuller description of this terrible death followed in 1562. During the subsequent quarter-century, the legend underwent further elaboration. In 1572, a translation of a work which had been published two years earlier on the Continent made Faustus' name known to English readers. Then, in 1587, there appeared the first full and consecutive narrative of the legendary life and death of this new leading character in the old tale of the compact with Satan.

This, the work of an anonymous Protestant, was published in Frankfurt-on-Main as the *Histria von D.Iohañ Fausten* and may be conveniently referred to as the German Faust-Book. A translation of its title-page will give a very fair idea of its scope and tendency: 'History of Dr. John Faust, the celebrated conjuror and master of black magic: How he sold himself to the Devil with effect from an appointed time: What in the meanwhile were the strange adventures he witnessed, himself initiated, and conducted, until at last he received his well-deserved reward. Mostly collected and printed from his own writings which he left behind him, as a terrifying instance and horrible example, and as a friendly warning to all arrogant, insolent-minded, and godless men.' The motto is taken from James iv, 7: 'Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.'

The German Faust-Book aims above all at edification. It shows the awful consequences of a sinner's deliberate commitment of himself to evil with a view to gratifying his pride, ambition, and lust. At the same time, the historical Faustus had been a wandering scholar, and even his moralistic biographer was affected by the characteristic influences of his time. So the German Faust-Book allows its hero some slight touches of the Renaissance intellectual curiosity. The century was also that of the Reformation. So it was easy enough for the legend to acquire a markedly anti-papal bias.

2.

THE FIRST ENGLISH BIOGRAPHY OF FAUSTUS

A translation into English followed within five years. It bore the title, *The History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus*; its author was a 'gentleman' known to us by his initials alone, P.F. Elizabethan translators normally took appreciable liberties with their originals, and P.F. was no exception. His independence is strikingly evident in his chapter xxii, which corresponds with chapter xxvi in the German Faust-Book. In each version, this chapter describes Faustus' world-wide travels. But the *Damnable Life's* narrative contains details which do not occur in the German Faust-Book's. The German makes no mention of Virgil's tomb, but P.F. says, 'There saw he the tomb of Virgil, and the highway that he cut through that mighty hill of stone in one night,

the whole length of an English mile.’ After following his original in referring to the famous Piazza in Venice, P.F. on his own responsibility describes ‘the sumptuous church standing therein, called St Mark’s; how all the pavement was set with coloured stones, and all the rood or loft of the church double gilded over’. In the same way, he amplifies the account of Rome by introducing the four bridges over the Tiber, upon one of which ‘is the castle of St Angelo, wherein are so many great cast pieces as there are days in a year’.

The insertions quoted here are of particular interest because each of them is unquestionably the source of a passage in Marlowe’s play. Reviewing his travels, Faustus says in viii, 13–20:

There saw we learned Maro’s golden tomb,
 The way he cut, an English mile in length,
 Thorough a rock of stone in one night’s space.
 From thence to Venice, Padua, and the rest,
 In midst of which a sumptuous temple stands,
 That threatens the stars with her aspiring top,
 Whose frame is pav’d with sundry colour’d stones
 And roof’d aloft with curious work in gold.

Describing Rome, where they have just arrived, Mephostophilis speaks of the Tiber in viii, 37–44:

Over the which four stately bridges lean,
 That make safe passage to each part of Rome.
 Upon the bridge call’d Ponte Angelo
 Erected is a castle passing strong,
 Where thou shall see such store of ordinance
 As that the double cannons forg’d of brass
 Do match the number of the days contain’d
 Within the compass of one complete year.

This perfunctory versifying does not represent Marlowe at his best; but it is of importance here because his close adherence to the very wording of the *Damnable Life* in places where P.F. had no German original proves that he used P.F.’s translation in writing *Doctor Faustus*. Nor is other evidence hard to find. The articles of Faustus’ compact with Lucifer as given in scene v of the play agree with P.F.’s version in that the fourth of them represents a conflation of the fourth and fifth articles of the German original; whereas the German author makes Faustus blow in the Pope’s face, the playwright in scene ix follows P.F. in making him smite the Pope on the face; and in the same scene the playwright takes over from P.F. the addition to the Pope’s curse of ‘bell, book, and candle’.

Did he perhaps use the German version as well as P.F.’s? There is no need to suppose so. Not one significant instance has been found of the play’s agreeing with the German version when the English translation disagrees with it. We may

safely assume that *Doctor Faustus* derives from the *Damn able Life*, and that everything that it owes to the German Faust-Book has reached it through the agency of P.F.

P.F.'s own contribution to the legend went beyond the supplying of additional detail to the record of Faustus' sightseeing. He also gave a distinctly stronger emphasis to the intellectual ardour of his hero. We must be careful not to exaggerate here. P.F. was, after all, a translator, and the tale he tells is in the main that told in his original. But the German gave him no authority, for example, for allowing Faustus in chapter xxii to describe himself as 'the unsatiable speculator'. By touches of this kind, P.F. was contributing to Faustus' development into the representative Renaissance figure that he was to become in Marlowe's play.

The use made in the play of the materials taken from the *Damn able Life* varied widely from place to place. Occasionally, a few words sufficed to suggest a whole episode, such as Faustus' conference with Valdes and Cornelius in scene i; at other times, as when Faustus meets the Duke and Duchess of Vanholt in scene xvii, the very phrases of P.F. are faithfully echoed. Only a few scenes of clownage, and the passages concerning the rivalry of Pope Adrian and the antipope, Bruno, appear to owe nothing to this source. A scene-by-scene presentation of the passages which appear to have contributed to the composition of *Doctor Faustus* will help to make this varying relationship clear.

3.

EXTRACTS FROM THE *Damn able Life*

Doctor Faustus, Prologue, 11–27. (A narrative of Faustus' life up to the time when the play opens.)

Damn able Life, i. John Faustus, born in the town of Rhode, lying in the province of Weimar in Germany, his father a poor husband-man and not able well to bring him up; but having an uncle at Wittenberg, a rich man and without issue, took this J.Faustus from his father and made him his heir; insomuch that his father was no more troubled with him, for he remained with his uncle at Wittenoerg, where he was kept at the university in the same city to study divinity. But Faustus, being of a naughty mind and otherwise addicted, applied not his studies but took himself to other exercises.... He gave himself secretly to study necromancy and conjuration, insomuch that few or none could perceive his profession.

But to the purpose: Faustus continued at study in the university and was by the rectors and sixteen masters afterwards examined how he had profited in his studies; and being found by them that none for his time were 'able to argue with him in divinity, or for the excellency of his wisdom to compare with him, with one consent they made him Doctor of Divinity.