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Book producers' comments on text-organisation in early 16th-century English printed paratexts

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Abstract

This chapter focuses on book producers' metadiscourse related to text-organisation in 16th-century English printed paratexts. Paratexts offered authors, translators, and printers a convenient space for instructing the reader in navigating the contents of the book at hand. Choices related to text-organisation were occasionally highlighted on the title-page and described in more detail in prefaces or letters to the reader. In this chapter, I examine title-pages and prefaces to find out how book producers justified and clarified their methods of structuring text and information and whether text-organisation was used as a selling point in the early period of print in England.

Keywords:

Early Modern English, paratext, metadiscourse, book history, text-organisation

1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on text producers' metadiscourse in English books printed during the early 16th century, a period when the shift from manuscript to print as a primary medium for book production was still very much ongoing. Scholars studying a period of media shift commonly observe both changes and continuities in patterns of text production. The technological differences between media as well as the social and cultural context of writing, reading, and using texts may offer explanations for these changes and continuities. The existing and new media may differ in terms of the production process or audience, and such differences can influence the resulting product in various ways. Book producers may follow established conventions, but also figure out new solutions for producing and framing texts.

The *paratext* – the text surrounding and presenting the main work(s) in a book – can be used to explain and justify the text producers' decisions related to the presentation of the main text of the book, or to advise the readers on how to use the book and access its contents (on paratext, see e.g. Genette, 1997a, Genette, 1997b). Paratextual spaces such as title-pages and prefaces are therefore a fruitful source of information for textual scholars and book historians interested in the patterns of book production and use. Prefaces and prefatory materials themselves have been described as "metadiscursive by definition in relation to their main texts" (Taavitsainen, 2006, 440). However,

in this study, my focus is more specifically on explicit metadiscursive comments situated within paratextual elements.

In what follows, I shall investigate early 16th-century English title-pages and prefaces to shed light on the processes of text production and organisation of information during this period of media shift. My focus is on comments related to text-organisation: book producers' descriptions of their text-organisational work and their advice to the readers on how to access the text and information contained in the book. Some of the book producers' comments can be expected to be simply descriptive and instructive, helping the reader find their way around the book and its contents. However, book producers may also promise something to the reader, or appeal to them. I shall also consider the role of text-organisation in terms of marketing books: were text-organisational features used as a selling point in the mainly speculative context of early print?

In the following section, I shall provide an overview of previous work on metadiscourse in paratextual communication. I will then briefly contextualise my study in terms of 16th-century print production before describing the methods and materials of the present study. Finally, I shall respectively examine (1) comments found on title-pages (a paratextual element in constant development throughout the 16th century) and (2) comments in prefaces (an element that was very conventional by the 16th century) before offering some concluding remarks based on my data.

2. Metadiscourse and paratext

Ken Hyland begins his recent state-of-the-art survey of the concept of metadiscourse by defining it simply as "the commentary on a text made by its producer in the course of speaking or writing" (2017, 16). This simple and broad definition guides the analysis in the present chapter. Hyland notes that metadiscourse can be viewed as a "recipient design filter" that acts as a bridge between the writer/speaker and the reader/hearer, helping the audience understand the message in the way intended by the writer/speaker (2017, 17). Since paratext largely shares the overall function of persuading the reader to approach the message in a desired manner, it is not surprising that paratextual matter is an abundant source of metadiscursive content. In what follows, I shall briefly discuss the intersection of metadiscourse and paratext and introduce previous studies approaching paratext from the perspective of metadiscourse.

The roles of paratext and metadiscourse in framing text have been described in rather similar terms. According to Genette, paratext creates a transitional and transactional zone for authorial commentary that encourages specific ways of reading and receiving the text (1997b, 2), whereas Hyland notes that metadiscourse "signals the presence of a text-organising and content-evaluating author" (2017, 18). Both perspectives thus emphasise the authorial, mediating voice that aims at inviting a certain kind of response from

the audience. While much of the previous work on metadiscourse has focused on the authorial perspective, in my data, other text producers (printers and translators) are more prominently present.

Both paratext and metadiscourse are categories with fuzzy boundaries and with a wide range of definitions and potential classifications. The border between text and paratext is not easily established. Genette defines paratext as a threshold, "without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or the outward side (turned toward the world's discourse about the text)" (1997b, 1f.). While Genette notes that paratext is "made up of a heterogeneous group of practices and discourses of all kinds" (1997b, 2), his focus, as that of the present study, is primarily on *textual* paratext (1997b, 7). Established categories of textual paratext, such as titles, prefaces, and tables of contents, are often visually flagged for instance through layout and typography. They are also commonly located at the edges of text: before or after the main text, or corresponding to major divisions within the text. These conventions facilitate the collection of paratext data, but less conventionally marked paratextual passages may prove elusive to such materially and visually informed search criteria. Furthermore, the role of visual elements in paratextual communication is still being negotiated (see e.g. Ruokkeinen & Liira, 2017).

A similar difficulty applies to identifying metadiscourse. A distinction is usually made between propositional content and metadiscourse, but the boundary between the two is not clear-cut (Hyland, 2017, 17f.). To find

instances of metadiscourse, researchers often search a text corpus for specific surface features, such as the use of first- and second-person pronouns, hedges, or text-organising phrases. However, these surface features typically act as a starting point, and quantitative results are balanced by close reading of examples in their context (Hyland, 2017, 18). Hyland points out that metadiscourse is formally heterogeneous: metadiscursive strategies used by text producers may take very different forms, and the same linguistic form may have different functions in different contexts (2017, 18). For this reason, he calls for a contextually informed approach to studying metadiscourse (Hyland, 2017, 19).

Many previous studies classify individual instances of metadiscourse based on their perceived functions. However, Hyland (2017, 20) notes that text-organisational and interactional features are commonly intertwined and should thus be considered together. Taavitsainen also finds overlap between the textual and interpersonal functions of metadiscursive passages in late medieval and early 16th-century medical writing (2000, 193). The interpersonal model of metadiscourse, described in Hyland (2005) and building on Thompson (2001), accordingly approaches texts from the point of view of *interactive* and *interactional* resources. Summarising based on Hyland (2017, 20), interactive resources are related to the "writer's management of the information flow to guide readers through a text", such as transition and frame markers (*in addition, finally*) and endophoric markers (*seen above, in Chapter 1*). Interactional resources comprise the writer's

"interventions to comment on material" such as hedges, attitude markers, and explicit references to self (Hyland, 2017, 20).

The different levels of metadiscourse are often referred to as *macrolevel* and *microlevel* metadiscourse. Paratextual elements such as prefaces might be considered macrolevel metadiscourse, whereas lower-level items (e.g. transition and attitude markers) would be situated on the micro level of metadiscourse. Prefatory matter has been identified in previous research as an important site for analysing both the macro and micro levels of metadiscourse. In her study on audience guidance in medieval medical writing, Taavitsainen treats prefaces and other prefatory matter as macrolevel metadiscourse (2006, 440f.). She then specifies some microlevel metadiscursive features that commonly occur in prefatory matter, including the use of first- and second-person pronouns, interpersonal pleas or promises to the reader or dedicatee, and metatextual information and guidance related to the structure of the main text (Taavitsainen, 2006, f.). Chaemsaithong's analysis of English witchcraft pamphlets also focuses on prefaces, arguing that as an interactional and persuasive space, "the preface necessarily embodies linguistic resources to negotiate intended meanings with readers", or, metadiscourse (2013, 170). Domínguez-Rodríguez and Rodríguez-Álvarez (2015) examine metadiscursive features in prefaces of 18th-century English grammars, finding paratexts to be fruitful sources for their close analysis of authorial metacomments. Prefatory elements such as abstracts and introductions are also commonly analysed in metadiscourse research focusing

on present-day English (Hyland, 2017, 25). The present chapter similarly proceeds from the premise that prefatory matter offers a good starting point for a study on text producers' metadiscursive descriptions of text-organisational strategies. Before presenting my research design in more detail, I will first briefly introduce the context in which the primary materials of this study were produced.

3. Text-organisation in 16th-century print

Printing presses were established in England from the late 15th century onwards. 16th-century printers still commonly reproduced medieval works, and they continued to frame these texts with paratextual devices that were already familiar to many readers, for example various types of prefatory texts (e.g. prefaces, prologues, dedications, and letters to the reader). When reproducing the text of an earlier work, printers and translators could also adopt an editorial role in rendering their source text more user-friendly. This could be done, for instance, by reorganising the contents of the work to be printed. The main text of a book can be organised in a variety of ways. The contents may follow a chronological order, as for example in chronicles and diaries. Items or entries can also be arranged in alphabetical order, as in dictionaries and concordances. The contents may also be organised thematically, or they may follow some kind of a specific, conventional

scheme. In addition to reorganising the main text of the work, book producers could also add in the edition paratextual tools for information retrieval, for example tables and indices (see e.g. Blair, 2010, 48f.).

This kind of editorial and cumulative approach to text-organisational work predates print. Malcolm Parkes begins his influential essay on the development of text-organisation in the medieval period by noting that "[i]t is a truism of palaeography that most works copied in and before the twelfth century were better organized in copies produced in the thirteenth century, and even better organized in those produced in the fourteenth" (1991, 35). This was achieved for example by modifying the layout of the text on the page or inserting various kinds of finding aids in the book. Such work was often undertaken by scribes. Keiser points out that late medieval scribes of practical books regularly added finding aids, sometimes "superimposing them in books previously copied without such devices" (1999, 475f.). However, finding aids were also added by manuscript owners and compilers.

According to Scase, scholarship on finding aids has shown that they are "a particularly sensitive index of ways in which codicological developments can be shaped by intellectual and social change" (2017, 288). An analysis of these elements may thus reveal a lot about how books were created, read, and used. The development of navigational aids in the medieval period has most commonly been discussed in the context of scholastic reading practices, but Scase (2017) argues that the needs of not only professional but also *inexperienced* readers influenced the development of navigational

paratext. As printed books were marketed to both learned and less experienced readers, one might expect to find different strategies and different levels of detail in book producers' descriptions of text-organisation and finding aids.

The gradual shift from manuscript to print as the primary medium of commercial text production has some implications for the development of navigational paratextual devices. Manuscript books are unique in terms of their combination of contents and physical structure, while the copies of a printed edition typically share the same contents. Michael Twyman divides print production into two stages: *origination*, "the organization and production of the marks to be printed", and *multiplication*, "the production of more or less identical copies of an item in the form of a print run" (1998, 8-15). The contents of the copies of a print edition are distributed in the same manner over a number of sheets, leaves, and pages, since a single composition (arrangement of type) can be printed multiple times to produce multiple copies. In manuscript production, each instance of origination is simultaneously an instance of multiplication: the organisation and production of written marks on the physical page of a new copy of the text. In different manuscript copies, the text of the same work could comprise a different number of leaves, and one physical codex could contain copies of several different works. This, in turn, led to different options for elements such as tables of contents and indices.

It was possible to devise a table of contents for a whole manuscript codex, so that the entries in the table covered all items in the physical book. Scase calls tables tied to specific physical codices *codex-specific tables* (2017, 291). Alternatively, a table could be linked to an individual work rather than a physical codex (Scase's *non-codex-specific tables*, 2017, 291). While non-codex-specific tables can be linked to scholastic practices (cf. Parkes, 1991), codex-specific tables form a very varied group in terms of their comprehensiveness and referencing system (Scase, 2017, 292-294). Depending on its type and rationale, a table of contents may refer to parts of the work (books, chapters, or subsections) or to parts of the physical codex (pages or leaves). Navigational devices referring to units of textual content, such as chapters, could be copied from one codex to another, but devices referring to physical units – pages or leaves – had to be adapted to their new physical environment when the text was copied to ensure that the references were useful. Paratextual elements such as navigational devices and prefaces could be produced as codicologically distinct units, they were sometimes inserted into previously existing volumes, and they occasionally circulated independently of the main text (see e.g. Rouse & Rouse, 2011, 406; Peikola, 2015, 49; Scase, 2017, 298f.).

In early printed texts, much of the text-organisational work took place on the edition level. For example, the same chapter generally took up the same page range in each copy of an edition. Once the contents of the work had been mapped onto the physical support (sheets, leaves, and pages), print allowed

for the production of navigational paratextual devices for the whole edition. The table of contents, for instance, could be efficiently multiplied for a number of copies. Modifications to the work and its paratext could be made before printing the next edition of the same work (or even during the print run), and each individual copy of a printed edition is obviously a unique material object. Copies of print editions were commonly bound together with other texts in the 16th century (see e.g. Knight, 2013). On the copy-specific level, such multi-text volumes thus share some text-organisational practices with manuscript codices. The focus of this chapter, however, is on the production stage of printed editions and the kind of text-organisational work undertaken before the books were printed.

While the paratextual apparatus of 16th-century printed books contains many traces of medieval patterns of text-organisation, such as the continued use of prefaces and navigational aids, one paratextual element that mainly developed in the context of printing is the title-page. It was initially an identifying label for the printed book, but gradually gained a promotional function (Smith, 2000, 22f.). This shift is related to the production modes typical of manuscript and print. In the medieval period, manuscripts were primarily produced in the bespoke mode. Briefly put, texts were copied when they were needed. When scribes were commissioned to copy specific works or materials, the customers typically knew in advance what they would receive when the product was finished. The production of printed books, in turn, was mainly speculative. Early printers took financial risks in producing

hundreds of copies of a work, hoping to find enough buyers for their edition to make a profit. The title-pages, and the titles themselves, became tools for both identifying and advertising the merchandise (Shevlin, 1999, 45-48; Smith, 2000, 22f.).

The relationship between the two media and the two modes of book production is obviously more complex than the description above can express (see e.g. McKitterick, 2003; Boffey, 2012). Nevertheless, the number of printing presses and the production of printed books in England increased throughout the 16th century, from only a few printers in the early years to approximately twenty printing houses and fifty presses at the end of the century (as estimated by Raven, 2007, 47). Printers had to find ways of promoting their products to new audiences. In addition, they could make a profit by reselling previously published works in the form of revised editions, which sometimes meant that the paratextual framework underwent more changes than the main text of the work (see e.g. Olson, 2016). Text-organisational strategies and navigational devices could be used to improve upon previous editions (or manuscript versions) of a work, and evidence for such choices may be expected to appear in prefatory matter.

4. The present study

My analysis focuses on two different categories of prefatory paratext. Firstly, I examine title-pages, a category that largely developed in conjunction with printing and that was ideally placed to attract the attention of a prospective reader. Since the title-page consisted of a single page and often contained elements of visual interest alongside text (e.g. borders, decoration, text in different fonts), there were spatial constraints in place for the amount of text that the book producers could fit on the page. This may have influenced their metadiscursive strategies: were text-organisational choices important or persuasive enough to be highlighted on the title-page?

Secondly, I investigate prefaces, a persistent category of paratext that has been shown to contain metadiscursive features across historical periods and in various media of text production. The spatial limitations on prefaces are generally less strict than those on title-pages, and prefaces may thus be expected to contain longer passages explaining or justifying decisions made by book producers. Such passages might be situated on a 'meso' level of metadiscourse, between the macrolevel of whole paratextual elements such as prefaces and the microlevel of individual intratextual devices such as hedges or references to self.

Methodologically, my analysis draws on corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS). Approaches combining computer-assisted searches with close reading have been previously successfully applied to the study of metadiscourse in the history of English. For example, Taavitsainen describes her method as "qualitative reading aided and supported by computerised

searches" in an electronic corpus (2006, 439). Brownlees's investigation of editorial metadiscourse in 17th-century English news proceeds from vocabulary searches based on his existing knowledge of the genre and modified based on the initial results (2015, 7).

My data were gathered from the *Early English Books Online (EEBO)* database, which contains digital images of most 16th-century English editions and full-text versions of many of the titles. To find relevant examples of metadiscourse in prefaces, I conducted full-text searches through the *EEBO* interface (limiting full-text keywords within 'Prefaces', 'Dedications', and 'To the Reader'). For the title-page searches, I used an in-house dataset of title-page metadata collected from *EEBO*. This dataset comprises entries containing title-page information (title, printer, and year of publication) for all editions in *EEBO* up to the year 1600, including editions for which full-text versions are not yet available. I have focused my searches on the part of the dataset covering the early years, up to 1550. I have also consulted *EEBO* images for close reading of examples in their textual and visual context. However, the scope of this chapter does not allow for a full bibliographical and historical contextualisation of the editions and works mentioned here.

In choosing items for initial searches, I used my previous knowledge of early English paratexts as a starting point and modified the list of search terms as my work progressed (similarly to Brownlees, 2015). I searched for vocabulary related to the topic of text-organisation: terms describing the physical volume or the abstract work or their constituent parts (e.g. *book*,

chapter, *table*) and vocabulary denoting textual work (e.g. *add*, *gather*, *order*, *set forth*). These searches yielded a number of relevant instances, but not enough to merit a quantitative survey. For example, for the word *order* (verb or noun), which proved to be a fruitful search term for the purposes of this paper, I found 18 relevant instances from title-pages and 50 relevant instances from prefaces, dedications, and letters to the reader in 1473-1550. The word *table*, as a reference to a paratextual device, appears on 62 title-pages in 1473-1550. For comparison, the total number of title-pages in English in *EEBO* from 1500 to 1550 is nearly 2,500 (see e.g. Varila 2018, 31-32). There is thus some evidence of book producers commenting on and advertising their text-organisational practices on title-pages and in prefatory matter, but such comments are not very common in relation to the size of the whole corpus of printed English books up to 1550 (on title-page vocabulary describing textual processes and products, see also Varila & Peikola 2019). The initial stage of vocabulary searches was complemented by close reading of relevant examples in their context, which enabled me to locate lsonger passages of metadiscourse related to text-organisation.

To accommodate for the intertwining and overlapping of various functions in instances of metadiscourse found in my data, I have decided not to structure my analysis below according to functions. Instead, my discussion is presented in two sections based on the type of paratextual element. The first section focuses on metadiscursive comments related to text-organisation found on title-pages, and the second section examines comments found in

prefatory matter. The discussion below will demonstrate, however, that relevant mentions on title-pages often reference other paratextual matter within the edition. My focus in what follows is on comments that specifically mention, highlight, or justify text-organisational decisions, and as shall be seen below, these comments come in various forms, including declarations, promises, and instructions.

5. Text-organisation on title-pages

Selling books is sometimes simple: a customer needs a specific text and subsequently purchases a book containing the text. However, sometimes the need or desire to buy a copy has to be created, for example through using various linguistic and/or visual persuasive strategies. Early printers devised ways of using the paratextual space to market their editions. Especially the title-page quickly developed into an important promotional and informational space that could draw the potential reader's attention with both its visual and verbal content. As Smith notes, even if we cannot be certain exactly how potential customers first encountered early printed books, "it is plausible that the first verbal indicator [the customer] would encounter was whatever fell on the book's first physical page, whether it was ready bound or in quires" – that is, the title-page (2000, 145f.).

Shevlin points out that the audience of the title of a work is larger than the audience of the work itself (1999, 43). Similarly, the readership of an early printed title-page may have been much wider than the readership of the text of the book. A prospective customer could also have seen a copy of the title-page outside the book. Shevlin presents evidence for early modern title-pages having been used as advertising flyers or posters, noting that such a title-page "bore the responsibility first of attracting passersby via its visual appeal and then of conjuring up the absent work and inculcating a desire for its presence" (1999, 48-49; see also Saenger, 2006, 38-39). The examples cited by Shevlin and Saenger mostly date from the late 16th and the 17th centuries, but this dual use has some implications for the treatment of early title-pages in terms of paratext theory.

Genette divides paratext into two basic categories: *peritext*, located within the same physical volume as the text itself (e.g. preface), and *epitext*, at least initially located outside the physical volume (e.g. author interview) (1997b, 4f.). If the text of a 16th-century title-page was included within the physical volume and also circulated as a detached advertisement, it could act as peritext or epitext depending on the reader and the context. Unsold copies could also be made more attractive by substituting a new, revised title-page for the original one (see e.g. Bowers, [1949] 1994, 80). This further stresses the importance of the title-page as a promotional space.

Although prefatory matter is by definition found at the beginning of the book, it was commonly printed last, as can be deduced from

bibliographical evidence (see e.g. Gaskell, [1972] 1995, 52, 108). This enabled the book producers to produce some of the paratextual matter after the main text had been printed, and to look back on their decisions related to the production process. Book producers arguably placed in the prefatory space elements that they wished the reader to read or notice before reading the main text of the work. In addition to the title-page, the reader may also have encountered, browsed, or read prefaces, dedications, tables of contents, or indices in this space.

16th-century title-pages often advertised the main text and highlighted the quality of the production process – as Smith notes, title-pages announced "not only the text but also its producer" (2000, 143). The quality and novelty of the edition could be stressed by stating that the text had been *diligently corrected,* or that the edition was *newly printed*. Such claims were already made on title-pages in the beginning of the 16th century (Smith, 2000, 106), and they continued to be made throughout the early modern period. Claims of novelty could also be used to sell reprints, as demonstrated by Olson (2016). Conversely, the venerable age of the work or the credentials of its author could also be highlighted (see e.g. Varila & Peikola, 2019, 83).

5.1 References to the organisation of the main text

Text-organisation is occasionally mentioned on early 16th-century title-pages, although it is not as common a selling point as the quality or novelty of the

text or the work. One typical promotional theme occurring on title-pages is the usefulness of the main text to the reader. In terms of text-organisation, the accessibility of the main text may be similarly stressed. Book producers may simply highlight the logical organisation of the contents of the book in relatively general terms.

For example, the title-page of Richard Pynson's edition of *Natura brevium* (STC 18388, 1518) states that additions have been "put in theyr places moste conuenient". John Byddell's edition of biblical commonplaces (STC 21752.5, [1538]) claims to be "ordrely and after a co[m]pendious forme of teachyng set forth with no litle labour, to the gret profit and help of all such studentes in Gods worde as haue not had longe exercyse in the same". This book is explicitly directed at inexperienced readers of the Bible, which is perhaps why the orderliness or clarity of the text is emphasised in the title. In the above cases, the details of the organisation scheme are not specified on the title-page. The book producers simply promise that the contents are presented in a logical manner. However, including such comments on the title-page suggests that the quality of text-organisation could be highlighted to tempt customers.

One way to help the reader navigate the contents was to organise the main text itself according to a recognisable pattern or scheme. Title-pages occasionally mention such structuring principles. For example, the title-page of a Bible concordance printed by Richard Grafton (STC 17300, 1550) promises that in this work, "by the ordre of the letters of the A.B.C. ye maie

redely finde any worde conteigned in the whole Bible, so often as it is there expressed or mencioned". Grafton's title-page informs the reader of both the genre and the organisational structure of the book. A biblical concordance, itself a finding aid for another text, would not typically have been read linearly. It would have been consulted according to the reader's current needs and interests, and thus it was important to make the contents easy to navigate. The title-page promises the reader that it will be easy to find and access information within the alphabetically organised book.

Another way of organising the text according to a recognisable scheme was to use some sort of conventionalised pattern. For example, religious material could be organised according to a conventional order, in turn dependent on the daily or yearly cycle. The title-page of STC 2999 (Edward Whitchurch, [1547]) promises that the contents have been "gathered and set in suche order, as may be vsed for dayly meditacions". STC 5806 ([Reynold Wolfe], 1550), in turn, is described on the title-page as "A postill or collection of moste godly doctrine vpon every gospell through the yeare aswell for holye dayes as Sondayes, dygested in suche order, as they bee appoynted and set forthe in the booke of Common Prayer". Both titles instruct the reader on how to find their way around the text and how the contents might be used throughout the day or year.

Like religious texts, early scientific texts employ conventional schemes of organising information. In William Copland's 1550 edition of *The treasurie of healthe* (STC 14651.5), some of the additional contents have been

"redacted to a certayne order according to the membres of mans body". The conventional order of presenting medical information related to the human body was to progress from the head to the feet. This also mirrored the cycle of the twelve astrological signs, as Aries was associated with the head and Pisces with the feet. This pattern of organisation, from head to feet, would have been easy to navigate for someone familiar with the conventions of medical and scientific writing.

5.2 References to paratext

In addition to describing the organisation scheme of the main text, 16th-century book producers occasionally mention various other paratextual elements on the title-page, for example prefaces and finding aids. Prefaces typically consist of one or more pages of text placed after the title-page and before the main text. Finding aids may comprise one or more pages or leaves, and they may be located before or after the main text or be interspersed with the main text. Some finding aids mirror the organisation of the main text, presenting a condensed view of the contents in the form of a table or summary, while others follow an organisational scheme different from that of the main text, for example an alphabetical index containing page or chapter references.

The title-page of John Weyland's primer (book of hours) from 1539 (STC 16009) declares that by consulting the "prologe next after the

kale[n]der" the reader shall "sone perceaue, and there in shall se brefly the order of the whole boke". The title-page is followed by a dedication, a prologue to the calendar, the calendar itself, and, finally, the prologue mentioned in the title. On ᵡA4v (the eighth leaf of the book, as signature A is duplicated), there is indeed a "prologe to the whole worke" which summarises the contents of each part of the book and explains the rationale of what has been included in the edition and why. The title-page of STC 4412 [1548?], a translation of Jean Calvin's *Petit traict'e de la Saincte cene*, advertises a preface by the translator Miles Coverdale, who "hath set before this litle booke an Epistle to the reader much more effectuous then in the fyrst edicion". The references on these title-pages direct the reader's attention to the prefatory materials within the books, and the latter one promises to improve on the previous edition.

The title-page of STC 19907, a 1550 edition of *Piers Plowman*, describes the organisation of the main text and a related summary:

> in the begynning is set a brefe summe of all the principal matters spoken of in the boke. And as the boke is deuided into twenty partes called Passus: so is the summary diuided**,** for euery parte hys summarie, rehearsynge the matters spoken of in euery parte. euen in suche order as they stande there.

A summary or a table of contents is essentially an abridgment of the contents. It provides the reader with an overall view of what the book contains, which may help a prospective customer or reader decide whether they want to purchase or read the book. A summary or table simultaneously works as a

finding aid for a reader consulting or rereading the book later, and it was faster to use compared to browsing the full work.

Although statements related to text-organisation are not exceedingly common on early 16th-century title-pages, the examples above show that book producers did occasionally use text-organisation as a selling point. This could be done in a summary manner, stating that the book is "orderly" or that everything is in its proper place. But book producers could also be more specific, declaring that the main text is arranged in alphabetical or conventional order, or advertising a new or improved preface or finding aid in the volume. Such cross-references to prefaces and finding aids invited the reader to engage with the book beyond its title-page, and perhaps encouraged the customer to purchase a revised edition of a work to which they already had access.

6. Text-organisation in prefaces

In addition to the title-page, book producers addressed text-organisation in other front matter, such as different kinds of prefaces or letters to the reader. Text-organisational comments in prefaces might be expected to functionally differ from those found on title-pages. Given that the text of a 16th-century preface is typically longer than that of a title-page, and not as readily accessible to a potential customer, the immediate promotional value of

prefaces may be somewhat lesser than that of title-pages. However, metadiscursive promotion in a preface may certainly influence the opinion of a reader already engaged with the book. A preface can potentially offer much more detailed help in terms of navigating the book than a title-page. It can also be used to justify the decisions of the book producers and present them in a positive light, anticipating potential criticisms towards their product. Prefaces may also reveal editorial or text-critical approaches to text-organisation, or an appeal to the reader that they use text-organisation as a tool for critical reading. In the following, I will examine in more detail some examples of comments related to text-organisation found in prefatory matter.

6.1. Developing the paratextual frame

Richard Grafton's editions of the so-called *Hall's Chronicle* (STC 12721-3a) present a printer willing to take on editorial duties and improve the paratextual frame of a work gradually. *Hall's Chronicle* is a massive volume, comprising over a thousand pages. In the end of the first iteration of Grafton's preface, he tells the reader that "so sone as my leasure wil serve, for thine ease & ready fyndyng of any thyng herein conteyned I purpose to gather an exact table of the whole woorke" (STC 12721, [hedera]3v). The preface suggests that although the edition is now published, Grafton will continue working on the text. The readers can thus expect at least a new finding aid, and potentially an improved edition of the whole work to be made available in the near future.

The work may have been already underway; the bibliographical evidence for the process of printing this work is complex and suggests ongoing work in 1547–1550, and some copies combine sheets from different stages of the work by different printers (see Blayney, [2013] 2015, 724-725, and *English Short Title Catalogue* entries for STC numbers 12721-3a).

However, instead of directly *promising* the reader to gather a table of the work, Grafton *purposes* to do it – this hedge fashions the comment into a statement of intention rather than a promise. Grafton's comment can also be understood in the wider context of paratextual communication in early books. According to Shevlin (1999), titles of books gradually developed a contractual function in the early modern period, not only in the legal sense but also in terms of how accurately they represent the contents of the main text. Book producers could make offers or promises to the reader in paratextual spaces, thereby seeking to interact with their audience and, perhaps, to enter into a kind of contractual relationship with them.

Grafton fulfills his tentative promise later. In the revised preface, Grafton states: "wher I promysed for the ready fynding of suche thinges as are herin conteygned to gather an exact table, I haue now performed my promes herin and haue (after my best maner, and so diligently as I can) deuysed for the history of euery seueral kyng, a seuerall table" (STC 12723, 1550, A3v). Somewhat more confidently, Grafton now declares to have "performed his promise". He adds a paratextual layer that helps the reader navigate the long work. He places alphabetical indices after all the major

sections of the work and explains how the indices – or, in Grafton's words, tables – are organised. References in the tables are given by the leaf, side of leaf, and line number, and the margins of the main text are equipped with roman numerals for every ten lines.

In such a massive volume, these indices must have been laborious to create, but potentially very useful to the reader. This important addition is also announced on the title-page of the edition, which shows how different paratextual elements could work together to frame the text. The 1550 title-page employs a different visual design than that of the earlier edition, but the text of the title proper is substantially the same as in the previous edition. However, after the title, in smaller type, the revised title-page reads: "Whereunto is added to every king a several table". The new navigational paratextual element is thus prominently advertised on the title-page, perhaps to entice not only new customers but also those who already owned a copy without the indices. The reference to the indices on the title-page increases the visibility of the new navigational device situated within the book, inviting the customer to browse the edition further and, ideally, purchase a copy. The different visual design might also have made the edition appear new and different. Similar strategies are still in use today. For example, the cover of a new edition of a popular textbook might carry a prominently placed edition statement and a revised visual design.

6.2 Text-critical comments

In some instances, albeit rare, the preface encourages the reader to use text-organisation as a point of reference for *identifying* a specific version or edition of a work, for ensuring that the text is *authentic*, or that it is the version *intended* to be circulated by the book producers. These purposes share a text-critical dimension. Two different examples of such commentary are discussed below.

My first example comes from an English translation of the work known as the *Meditations of Saint Bernard* printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1496 (STC 1916). According to the colophon, the anonymous translator of the work is a "deuoute Student of the vnyuersytee of Cambrydge" (E5v). In the (untitled) preface, the translator complains that an earlier version of the translation, not yet "duely correcte & ordred", had been "by deuoute persones transumpte & copied" against his will (A1v). The translator therefore proceeded to correct the text and provide the printer with a new version (dating this to 12th September, 1495, on A1v). The translator then appeals to the reader, urging them to dispose of their copies of the earlier translation and choose the present edition instead: "leue them as doubtfull & Ieoperdous: And take this more dyligently ordred & corrected" (A2r). The title-page of this edition only contains the title, "Medytacions of saynt Bernarde", and a woodcut illustration of the saint. But the phrase *duly/diligently ordered and corrected,* here used in the preface, is very similar to promotional formulae used on 16th-century title-pages.

However, the translator does not simply mention the fact that different translations exist, but continues by explicitly instructing the reader on how to distinguish between the two versions by comparing the patterns of text-organisation:

> It is not harde to knowe the one fro the other. For they dyfferre bothe in nombre of chapyters & in rubryshes of the same. The vncorrected was diuyded in to .xxv. chapyters. Wherof the fyrste had noo specyall rubryshe. The seconde chapytre of the same began thus. ¶Our mynde sothly is the ymage of god or elles thus ¶The mynde sothly is the ymage of god. And his rubryshe was this. ¶That the mynde of man is called the ymage of god. / But this that is corected more dylygently is deuyded & parted in to .xviij. chapiters only. whereof the rubryshes folowe here in ordre. (STC 1916, A2r)

This example illustrates the kinds of text-organisational work that book producers may have undertaken before an edition was printed. The translator asserts to have produced two versions of the translation, reordering and correcting the text in the second version. Furthermore, the alternative readings given for the beginning of the second chapter in the example above suggest that the manuscript copies of the earlier translation had developed some minor variants. The reader is informed that a simple comparison of the chapter division and rubrication will reveal which version of the text they are consulting. The preface invites the reader to read critically and choose the more reliable, corrected and improved text.

A reader buying de Worde's edition would obviously have received the "more diligently ordered and corrected" text, which perhaps begs the question of whether this detailed explanation of the differences between the

two versions was worth including in the edition. However, as the earlier version was circulated in manuscript, a prospective reader might already have owned or had access to a manuscript copy of the less polished translation. The customer might have been persuaded by the preface to acquire the new, reorganised and corrected text. The detailed text-critical description of the differences could be used to identify the two versions. The description is instructive, but simultaneously advertises the present book as the better option. Bearing in mind that this edition has a very simple title-page (A1r), the preface on the following opening (A1v-A2r) was probably the ideal textual site for promotional and persuasive moves. The preface is even reprinted in substantially similar form and in the same location in de Worde's two later editions of the work (STC 1917, 1499; STC 1918, [1525]).

Text-organisation might also have mattered beyond the level of a single work. In the 16th century, it was common to bind together copies of different editions, or have the texts bound together by a bookbinder. Such compilations could, for example, comprise texts by a specific author or addressing the same theme. 16th-century book producers did not have control over what the buyers and readers did after buying an unbound copy of a work. However, in one instance a translator motivates the inclusion of paratextual material by referring to such practices. In the preface to STC 25420 [1541], printed by William Middleton, the translator Richard Whitford (identified on the title-page as "a late brother of Syon") notes:

> I am compelled not onely to setforth my name, but also to ioyne therunto this cataloge and wryttynge of the contentes (by noumber) of this volume. And that I do: charitably to gyue you warnyng to serche well / and suerly that none suche other workes, be put amonge them: that myght deceyue you. For (of a certente) I founde nowe but very late: a worke: ioyned and bounde with my pore labours & vnder the contentes of the same volume / and one of my workes that was named in the same contentes: lefte out, in sted wherof: was put this other worke that was not myne. For the tytle of myne, was, thus. A dayly excercyse, & experience of death. An the other worke hathe no name of any auctour and all such workes in thys tyme be euer to be suspected. (STC 25420, A1v)

The translator tells the reader a story about a volume of his works, where one of his texts was taken out and replaced by an anonymous, and therefore suspicious, work. This swapping of texts could only be detected by carefully consulting the list of contents of the volume and comparing it to the contents. The translator continues by warning the reader about anonymous works, circulated without the name of the author or translator, as they may be heretical. He advises the reader: "Knowe what you rede, and what you suffre your chyldren to lerne. Specially (after my pore aduise) medle not with the workes of nameles & vnknowne auctours I haue shewed you why" (A2r). This advice echoes Henry VIII's 1538 proclamation which declares that no person "shall from henseforthe prynte any boke of translations in the englyshe tonge, oneles the playne name of the translatour therof be conteyned in the saide boke, or elles that the prynter wyll answere for the same as for his owne priuie dede and acte" (STC 7790; see also Blayney, [2013] 2015, 488).

This preface suggests that in addition to giving a condensed view of a work and acting as a finding aid, a table of contents may have had yet another

function. By inserting a list or table of contents in their product, book producers could try to mitigate the risk of dangerous texts being hidden and circulated within a volume of texts otherwise considered appropriate. The reader is encouraged to "search well and surely" that there are no substitutions in the volume. In other words, they should cross-check the number and titles of the texts in a volume against the list of contents. The list of contents could thus be used to ensure the authenticity of the text.

7. Conclusion

This chapter set out to examine how 16th-century book producers described and promoted their strategies of text-organisation in paratextual spaces. As expected on the basis of previous research, paratextual elements provided fruitful material for an analysis of metadiscursive practices. In this study, the focus was specifically on title-pages and prefaces, both of which were shown to contain descriptions of text-organisation and mentions of text-organisational paratextual devices. Importantly, a close reading of the examples in context shed light on the interplay between different paratextual elements: navigational aids are sometimes both advertised on the title-page and described in the preface. Furthermore, the examples discussed here highlight the metadiscursive practices of the various categories of text-

producers active in early 16th-century print trade – not only authors, but also translators and printer-editors.

Based on the examples analysed, 16th-century book producers' metadiscursive comments related to text-organisation performed a variety of tasks. Firstly, and unsurprisingly, comments related to text-organisation could guide the reading process in various ways. Comments on the title-page could be used to draw the reader's attention to the structure of the main text or the finding aids provided within the book and encourage them to browse or read the book beyond the title-page.

Secondly, comments on text-organisation were also used as part of the larger toolkit for advertising the quality of the edition and the book production process. Book producers could note that the book is well ordered, or highlight a newly added preface or finding aid. In the context of print, the title-page offered a suitable space for such promotion. Even when the potential buyer already had access to a given work, the book producers could entice them into buying the new version by stressing the added value of a revised structure and better navigational tools.

Finally, comments related to text-organisation could be used to show the reader how to ensure the authenticity or superiority of the present text by using text-organisation as a point of reference for comparing the different versions of a work or different editions. Such editorial or text-critical strategies were perhaps considered useful in the context of speculative production of printed books, as they could be used to convince the reader that

they need a specific, or revised, version of a certain work. The book producers could also use paratext as a form of insurance, advising the reader to access a particular version and thus pre-empting potential problems resulting from their audience consulting dangerous or otherwise deficient texts.

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All STC numbers are 2nd ed.

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