1 What Are Publication and the Press?

We aim to sidestep the dominance of the printed word in the study of human culture and society by examining other media used before, alongside, and after print. We aim to question the assumptions that self-expression, political community, and intellectual progress are best forged by printing. To do so, we range across unprinted media from inscriptions, handwriting, speech, and song into typewriting and AI-assisted composition. Through detailed examples, we consider how methods of publication work beyond the press.

Our book is not primarily about emergent new media – they are just one phenomenon among many, upsetting the focus on the present in many discussions of publication – we look more widely across 2,500 years of history and two continents in geography. But one of our hopes is that thinking about past modes of publication can help us to think about future ones. And the time is ripe to explore communication in media other than print. In the twenty-first century, print competes with digital communication; political movements start on social media; novels are often read on screen; and digital formats allow would-be writers to self-publish more readily.[2] In light of these new perspectives, and as we remember the long history of speech, handwriting, and carving, print publication looks like a mere interlude or local curiosity – in one historical model, a 'Gutenberg Parenthesis'. In this phrase, popularized by Jeff Jarvis, digital communication in the future will be 'a mirror image' of handwritten communication in the past, operating 'symmetrically'.[3] We do not think that the correlations are so neat, for the particularity and diversity of the examples in our book reveal no single or simple image to be the 'mirror' of digital media. But the transformation from printed to digital publishing – in news, book publishing, and self-promotion on social media – does help us to recognize that

[2] N. S. Baron, *Words Onscreen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); A. Phillips, *Turning the Page: The Evolution of the Book* (London: Routledge, 2014), 120–3.

[3] J. Jarvis, *The Gutenberg Parenthesis* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2023), 5, 13.

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particularity and diversity without measuring acts of publication only by their likeness to print.

The connection between printing and publishing was never exclusive, for the press has not been limited to what is conventionally considered publication. It was also used for jobbing printing (from the earliest moments, in 'pardons' made by Johann Gutenberg or William Caxton themselves), lined notepaper, and forms to fill in, the unliterary productions of all sorts of ephemera.[4] Conversely, there was a variety of modes of publishing in other media even *alongside* print, during that so-called Parenthesis, as manuscript scholars have long shown.[5] After all, some countries, subcultures, or traditions only adopted the press several centuries after it became predominant for book publication in western Europe – even in neighbouring Iceland or the Ottoman empire, for example (as in one of our case studies). And even where books tended to be printed, other kinds of texts continued to circulate unprinted, sometimes in relation to print but complementing or contrasting it (as in other case studies on German manuscripts or English theatre). So we look at publishing beyond the press: before it, alongside it, and after it.

The question is whether, and if so how, the ways of sharing texts examined here can be considered as publishing. Is it an anachronistic term? Its suitability for unprinted communication has been questioned most carefully by medievalists: Samu Niskanen, who does adopt the term, has noted that other medievalists avoided calling the circulation of texts in manuscript *publication*, implicitly judging the term inappropriate. He suggested that for many 'the idea of publication is so thoroughly associated with the rapid multiplication of copies by the printing press, it is perceived as foreign to the realities of the circulation of books in

[4] For the examples, see P. Needham, *The Printer and the Pardoner* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1986); L. Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014); K. D. Murphy and S. O'Driscoll, eds., *Studies in Ephemera: Text and Image in Eighteenth-Century Print* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2013).

[5] See e.g. H. Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

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manuscript'.[6] Likewise, William A. Johnson comments on the 'creeping anachronism' of terms such as *book trade* or *bookseller* in studies of Greek and Latin papyri.[7] We must ask whether *publication* is, therefore, a fitting term. The first chapter of our book does that by examining three traditions with different degrees of connection to print – none at all, loose relations, and dependency. Jaakko Tahkokallio, noting the same 'ontological and epistemological insecurities' about referring to unprinted media as *publication*, suggests that rather than seek a strict definition, we can more happily observe different practices within a looser cluster of comparable phenomena. He suggests that:

> the most fruitful approach to the topic is not theoretical or categorical but configurational. In other words, we should study those concrete processes by which works were published in a manuscript context, with publishing by necessity remaining to some extent an open concept. We should probably simply be happy with the term "publishing" as a somewhat metaphorical concept; we have brought it in from a context in which it means the joint releasing and disseminating of content.[8]

We might evoke the way that the history of art encompasses phenomena not understood as 'art' at the time (religious artefacts, folk art) but that can be meaningfully compared for having shared properties or functions, whatever people at the time called them.

[6] S. Niskanen, 'Introduction', in S. Niskanen and V. Rovere, eds., *The Art of Publication from the Ninth to the Sixteenth Century* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), 12. For debate by medievalists, see e.g. D. Hobbins, *Authorship and Publicity before Print: Jean Gerson and the Transformation of Late Medieval Learning* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 153–4; L. Tether, *Publishing the Grail in Medieval and Renaissance France* (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2017), 2–4.

[7] W. A. Johnson, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 159.

[8] J. Tahkokallio, 'Theories, Categories, Configurations', in S. Niskanen and V. Rovere, eds., *The Art of Publication from the Ninth to the Sixteenth Century* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), 377.

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This non-categorizing mode of understanding *publication* is the one we adopt in this book: we leave the concept flexible and instead explore multiple 'concrete processes'. Comparing different processes has led us not to any central theoretical definitions or categorizations; it has led us to appreciate the usefulness of the concept *publication* to draw together for comparison a variety of ways that people share texts with others. We emphasize the need to focus on that diversity and particularity, which are easier to see in any one instance when that instance is laid alongside others under one heading. With a loose definition, seemingly disparate examples disrupt the category of *publication*, as much as they decentre the importance of print. Tahkokallio suggested that, for instance, 'manuscript publishing is not as neat and self-evident a concept as print publishing is, or, at least, is commonly assumed to be'.[9] Nor, we would add, is any kind of publishing neatly defined and self-evident in the *what*, *how*, and *with what effect* that the three chapters of our book explore.

It is, nonetheless, interesting – perhaps reassuring – to remember that the word *publish* has a long history in English and in cognate forms in related languages and has equivalents that do similar work in other languages. For making texts public, Classical Latin employs, for instance, *edere* 'give out', *emittere* 'send out', and *divulgare* 'distribute among the people' (from *vulgus* 'crowd'). Similarly, in Classical Greek some of the relevant terms are *ekdídōmi* 'give out or away' (also used in the sense of giving away one's daughter in marriage), *diadídōmi* 'distribute', and *ekférō* 'bring out'. In Classical Latin, *publicare* is only attested in reference to books as late as the first century CE, and is more commonly used in the sense 'to make something public property'. The same applies to the Ancient Greek *dēmosióō* (from *dēmos*, 'the people'), with a similar meaning: its first clear use for literary works comes from the third century CE. In medieval Latin, *edere* is commonly employed as well as *publicare*.[10] What is interesting is the emphasis, etymologically, on movement, outwards or away from somebody

[9] Tahkokallio, 'Theories', 371.

[10] See quotations from medieval Latin by e.g. Tether, *Publishing the Grail*, 18; Niskanen, 'Introduction', 13; Hobbins, *Authorship*, 153; and P. Bourgain, 'La naissance officielle de l'œuvre: l'expression métaphorique de la mise au jour', in

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(*ex*); in only some of the terms is there a connection to a wider 'public' as in *dēmosióō* or *divulgare*. As we note (in Chapter 3), a process might be compared to publishing without needing to address a wide 'public'. When the verb *publicare* moved through French into Middle English as *publish* in the 1400s, it could mean 'making public', for instance, in proclamations – and it certainly had nothing to do with, and preceded, the first printing press in Europe. However, from those earliest times *publish* had more varied meanings, and it was not an oxymoron in some uses in Middle English to refer to private publishing. An early attested instance urged people not to 'publish, en priue ne appert', any criticism of the authorities: the Middle English words mean that publishing should be neither 'in private nor public'.[11] Being public was not taken for granted. In Samuel Johnson's great dictionary of English in the 1700s, to *publish* could mean both 'to make generally and openly known' or 'to put forth a book into the world' – a physical process of disseminating.[12] There are similar varieties of uses in other, less closely related languages. For instance, in some early Tibetan written records, such as the inscriptions on the Zhol pillar from the mid eighth century CE, we find the term *kalung* (*bka' lung*) or *kashok* (*bka' shog*) for proclamations or official written documents in circulation, composed of the words 'speech'/'instruction' (*bka'*) and 'scripture'/'statement' (*lung*) or 'paper' (*shog*). Since the twelfth century at the latest, we also see a different and more figurative term *drildak* (*dril bsgrags*), composed of the noun 'scroll' ([*shog*] *dril*) and the transitive verb *drak* (*bsgrags*), 'to proclaim something', but also in the sense of 'to read out (publicly, before all assembled)'. In historical texts, *drildak* can therefore be translated as 'to proclaim [the contents of] a scroll'. From the middle of the twentieth century, *drildak* took on a further meaning and was used to translate Chinese *xuanchuan* or 'propaganda' into Tibetan but is also used to express

O. Weijers, ed., *Vocabulaire du livre et de l'écriture au Moyen Age* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1989), 195–205.

[11] R. W. Chambers and M. Daunt, eds., *A Book of London English, 1384–1425* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), 93 (line 5).

[12] S. Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London: Knapton, 1755), s.v. 'To PUBLISH'.

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'advertisement'. In addition, the Tibetan language has long used the verb and noun *par* to denote an actual impression, print, photograph, picture, and such like. Around the same time, modern terms such as *pardrem* (*par 'grems*) 'publishing, publication', composed of print (*par*) and the verb 'spread, display' (*'grems pa*) or the *trünkhang* (*skrun khang*) 'publishing house', have entered the modern Tibetan vocabulary. In Arabic, the verb 'to publish' (*nashara*) is based more generally on the act of spreading, unfolding, or extending an object, such as a piece of fabric or parchment. It could also refer to the spread of news and, similar to Tibetan, its proclamation before a group of people. Strikingly, the root of the verb *nashara* also has life-giving connotations: the act of plants producing leaves and, in a religious context, divine resurrection of the dead (*nushūr*).[13]

So many cultures do have equivalents of the word *publication* or *to publish*, but they have diverse connotations, often related to different media and material technologies of communication, and alluding to different degrees to a wider public, but sometimes without one or other of those implications. The shared set of equivalent terms makes it possible to compare different kinds of communication under the umbrella terms *publication* or *publishing* but also alerts us to the fact – central to our argument – that such a comparison only makes sense if we recognize the diversity of such publication, and do not try to find likenesses with late modern western uses of printing. The diverse periods and cultures that use terms equivalent to *publish* do so in a wider range of ways than any comparison to the contemporary print publishing industry might suggest. Inspired by such differences, in this book we do not simply rethink other media in comparison with modern print publishing. Instead, the variety of languages, cultures, periods and media brought together – in their jumbled diversity and vexing particularity – suggest that we expand the notion of publishing and cease to use late modern capitalist industrial book production to define it. That mode of publishing is only one among many possible.

To start unveiling the possibilities, in this first chapter, we begin by looking at some activities that are most readily comparable with the late

[13] E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 8 vols. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863–93), i, 2793–4.

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modern printed publishing industry – cultures with known authors, an informed readership, libraries, professional makers of texts, and a reliance on writing and reading (albeit, in at least two of the case studies, in a complex relationship to orality). One tradition had all those ingredients of publishing but no printing; the other two interact with the printing industry to varying degrees. Throughout our book, each of these and the other cultural traditions that we consider is in other respects quite different from the world of printing and suggests that we decentre print from the study of publication. Some of them combine print with manuscript circulation: this happened for a long time after the introduction of printing not only in late fifteenth-century Germany (in our first chapter) but also, for instance, in the persistence of handwriting as a preliminary to printing, in authors' manuscripts, as in Samuel Beckett's archives (the final case study in our book). Other cultures used printing to support or document performance or rely on oral culture, as in the world of eighteenth-century London theatre or in Tibet in the same period (explored in Chapter 3).[14] Such cases show that there is not a firm divide between publication by printed and unprinted media, whether manuscript or performed. What about a culture that did not have any notion of printed publication to build on, such as the literary production on papyri in classical Greek and Roman antiquity: how does publication work entirely without printing?

[14] See also D. Wojahn, 'Inherited Stories, Timeless Wisdom: Intertextuality and Proverbs in the Aché Lhamo Namthar', *Journal of Tibetan Literature*, 3 (2024), 45–69.

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Publication in Ancient Greece and Rome: No Print in Sight, by Daria Kohler

How much does a book published in Rome in the year 2024 CE differ from another book, also published in Rome, but 2,000 years earlier? This question brings us, first and foremost, to the material aspect of book production. A modern book is usually characterized by the codex format – that is, it is made of sheets that had been folded a number of times, gathered and stitched or glued together, and covered by writing on both sides. In Rome in the year 24 CE, it would look quite different: the codex format had not yet fully claimed its place, and what was understood as a book was a roll: a long sheet produced by gluing single sheets of papyrus to each other until the necessary length was reached, with the writing placed in columns running down the shorter side, its back blank (Figure 1).[15]

The process itself brings out an even more important difference: in the pre-print era, trained scribes copied a text by hand, which meant that each copy was an individual artefact; no two books were completely identical. There was still an expectation of a certain format: for example, prose texts would be 'justified' in their columns, to use a modern term, while poetry was 'flush-left'.[16] Usually, literary texts would be copied in a type of handwriting scholars now call 'a book hand', while letters and documents were penned in a variety of cursive; yet this is not a hard divide, but rather a strong tendency.[17] The level of professionalism of the copyists differed as well. Moreover, nothing stopped one from copying a literary text themselves if they wished (even if we do not have many such cases) and while ancient literature knows some famous editors – that is, scholars who worked with what were already older texts – as well as a few famous booksellers, there was no equivalent of modern publishing houses.[18]

[15] The latest monograph on the ancient book, its history and material realisation is L. Del Corso, *Il libro nel mondo antico. Archeologia e storia (secoli VII a.C.- IV d.C.)* (Roma: Carocci, 2022).

[16] Johnson, *Bookrolls*, 101.

[17] The famous papyrus of *Constitution of the Athenians* (London: British Library, inv.131v) is copied by four scribes, and none of them uses a book hand: Johnson, *Bookrolls*, 157.

[18] E.g. A. Dortmund, *Römisches Buchwesen um die Zeitenwende: War T. Pomponius Atticus (110–32 v. Chr.) Verleger?* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001).

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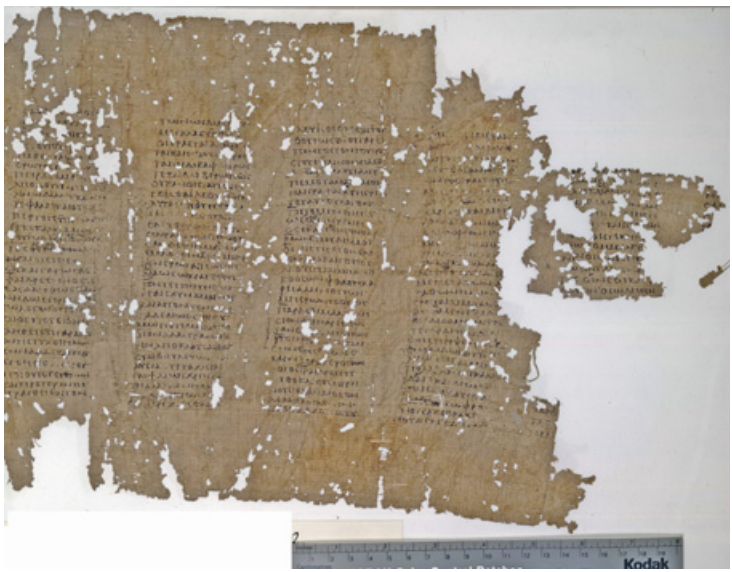


Figure 1 A papyrus with Plato's *Phaedrus* from Oxyrhynchus (modern El-Bahnasa, Egypt), dated to the late second century CE (P.Oxy XVII 2102; fragment). The preserved part of the roll carries nine columns of text. © Egypt Exploration Society. Courtesy of The Egypt Exploration Society and the Faculty of Classics, University of Oxford.

Before moving on to the publication of books, we need to situate the papyrus roll in the literary context of its time: as in other cultures and other periods, texts could very well be created and made public without the use of writing. Many of the genres of what we now call ancient Greek and Latin literature were chiefly oral: epic poetry, speeches, hymns and odes, and tragedies and comedies did not first reach their audiences on a papyrus roll but were listened to in courts, at festivals, or in the theatre. Yet we also see books, both in the written record and in the archaeological finds. One of the earliest Greek literary papyri is of the lyric poet Timotheos, whose main activity would be performing at poetic competitions; it has multiple features of a book roll, starting with the script, paratextual

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signs such as the *coronis* (a mark indicating the end of the narrative part), and a side note that could have been added by a reader or copyist.[19] Another among the oldest surviving Greek book fragments, the famous Derveni papyrus, preserved due to the carbonization process brought about by a funeral pyre, carries a commentary on an Orphic poem, more likely to be needed for study and not for performance.[20] The two modes of publication, written and oral, are not mutually exclusive.

Books could be given as a gift; copied on request; bought at a bookseller's shop in a city, or from a travelling bookseller coming to a market; they could also be read in private and public libraries. In all of these situations, the book in question can probably be considered published. However, the oral dimension does not stop complicating the picture. In addition to a variety of ways to make sure their books reached the relevant audiences, authors often gave readings, which could constitute the first public appearance of the text or contribute to improving a work still in progress; readings of the former type filled an important niche in the cultural life of the Roman literary-minded public.[21] It is certain that, at least for some authors and some texts, such 'performances' played an important role in making their work public. In this context, it may seem that the very term *publication* is either inapplicable or should be extended to include oral performances as well.

If we look at the extant papyri, the closest one can get to the real books, we can see a whole world of literary activity going on. There are copies with large margins and wide spaces between columns and those with lines crammed on top of each other; there are annotations and marginalia;

[19] Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, P.Berol. inv. 9875 (https://berlpap.smb.museum/02776/). The papyrus was first edited by U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Timotheos, Die Perser* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1903). See also J. H. Hordern, *The Fragments of Timotheus of Miletus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[20] Recent edition: M. E. Kotwick, *Der Papyrus von Derveni* (Berlin: De Gryuter, 2017).

[21] G. Binder, 'Öffentliche Autorenlesungen: Zur Kommunikation zwischen Römischen Autoren und ihrem Publikum', in G. Binder and K. Ehlich, eds., *Kommunikation durch Zeichen und Wort* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1995), 265–332. For various ways of publication, see also T. Kleberg, 'Commercio librario ed editoria nel mondo antico', in G. Cavallo, *Libri, editori e pubblico nel mondo antico* (Roma: Laterza, 1975), 43–5.

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there are papyri that bear traces of composition, potential and confirmed authorial drafts, and many more papyri with signs of corrections made to a known text; finally, there is evidence of the practice of anthologizing: creating new textual collections on the basis of existing texts.

What exactly is, then, ancient book publication? Was it a recognizable concept for authors and readers of papyrus rolls? While both Greek and Latin employ an array of verbs and expressions that mean something along the lines of 'making public' (*edere* 'give out'; *in medium dare* 'put into the open'; *dēmosióō* 'give to public use'; *eis tò fõs ekférō* 'bring to light'), none of them are restricted in their meaning to the more technical 'putting a book into wider circulation'; this is also the case for other languages (as has just been shown). *Edere* and its synonyms can designate any action resulting in the text becoming available to a wide(r) audience, not only one initiated by its author. In the absence of the printing press, the lack of specific vocabulary, and the importance of oral transmission, it is alluring to claim that there was no such thing as ancient publishing, and that papyrus rolls, produced in smaller quantities and sometimes used to facilitate an oral performance of a text, played a comparatively insignificant role in the literary landscape of their time. This claim does not hold ground on both counts; publication, meaning the process in which a text reaches its audience, was a matter of considerable importance, and the bookroll did play a significant role in it.

Greek and Roman authors were well aware of the difference between published and unpublished. In Plato's dialogue *Parmenides*, the philosopher Zeno replies to Socrates' criticism of his work as follows:

> It is because of such a great zeal for rivalry that I wrote it when I was young, and someone stole the writing, so that I did not even have the chance to decide whether it should be brought to light or not. Thus, Socrates, it escapes you that it was written by a young man out of competitiveness, not by an old man out of ambition.[22]

[22] Translation my own. See Plato, *Cratylus. Parmenides. Greater Hippias. Lesser Hippias*, ed. H. N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), *Parmenides*, 128d–e.

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In the broader setting of the dialogue Zeno and Parmenides, his teacher, come to Athens and bring along Zeno's works, which attracts to their place of stay the interested philosophers, including Socrates. Zeno is reading aloud, and Socrates asks him to repeat a passage before commenting. It is during this reading – an oral performance – that Socrates and the others hear the work for the first time. However, the explanation about the context of its composition introduces an alternative way of distribution, unauthorized and irreversible. In Zeno's defence, he claims that he was deprived of the possibility of deciding to make his written work public – to *publish* it?

When a book starts to circulate, there is no way of stopping it. Comments and complaints about the work 'escaping' the author without their permission or even against their will are common in Greek and Latin literature. While in our example, one can question the importance of the written copy, in many of Cicero's letters, there is no doubt that he is concerned with working on a *book*. A famous passage from his correspondence is an outburst against his friend Atticus, who, it seems, allowed a common acquaintance to make a copy of a book that would be dedicated to someone else. Cicero states clearly that this is out of order: 'Do you find it right to give it to someone else before Brutus, to whom I'm dedicating it on your advice?'[23] The dedicatee is the person who should receive the new book first, something that Atticus endangered: if the lending and copying continued, the book would have been 'out' too early.

Along with the impossibility of restricting the reach of a book's readership comes the near impossibility of changing its text. In Latin literature, and especially in Latin poetry, the author's decision to publish and its irreversibility became commonplace. Horace's famous line *nescit vox missa reverti* – 'the word sent out cannot return' – is now often used as a proverb referring to taking back what one has said, but in its original context it is a comment on the inability of a writer to conceal anything they have created.[24] If a text is already out there, all that remains for the author is 'damage control': issuing comments and corrections where possible. So the

[23] Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, ed. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, 4 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), letter 327 (XIII.21a).

[24] Horace, *Satires, Epistles, The Art of Poetry*, ed. H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), *Art of Poetry*, line 390.

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Greek historian Diodorus (of the first century BCE) says in the preface to his *Historical Library* that some books were stolen while he worked on the whole and started circulating before they were corrected, and that he should not be held responsible for the errors found therein.[25]

While introducing changes was largely out of the question – though authors could try to do so – copying by hand also meant that nothing was error-proof.[26] The further away from the 'original', the more changes could have occurred. Looking for a copy with a good, reliable text was important for educated readers, and Cicero complained in a letter to his brother about the low quality of the Greek books available on offer.[27] This feature lent the first copy a special value: unlike, perhaps, the collectors' interest in the first editions, the first copy of a Greek or Latin literary work was simply better, by definition. The existence of such copies was claimed by ancient scholars who refer to them when looking for the support of authority.[28] And we may even encounter cases of author–reader engagement that illustrate the same. One such example is Pliny's letter in which he responds to a request from a reader to 'inspect and correct' (*recognoscere* and *emendare*) his own books.[29] In asking the still-living author to 'proofread' their copy, readers attempt to bring it closer to the ideal.

The moment of publication in antiquity thus joins something irreversible – the availability of a text to a public beyond the author's influence – with something fleeting: namely, the unstable text that will keep changing on a smaller or larger scale as it is passed down from copy to copy.

[25] Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, ed. F. R. Walton et al., 12 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963–71), Book 40, fr. 8.

[26] On authorial variants, see e.g. G. Pasquali, *Storia della tradizione e critica del testo* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1934), 396–465.

[27] Cicero, *Letters to Quintus and Brutus*, ed. D. R. Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), letter 24 (III.4).

[28] In Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, ed. J. C. Rolfe, 3 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1946–52), Book 13, 21.4, a grammarian supports his claim regarding Vergil's use of the forms *urbis* or *urbes* by saying that he saw a book 'corrected in his own hand'.

[29] Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, ed. B. Radice, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), Book 4, letter 26.

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Manuscripts in Germany in Response to Print, by Natascha Domeisen

While handwritten text production has seen its fair share of changes in format and material in various writing cultures, the advent of moveable type has been historically viewed as a watershed, a dramatic turning point in the history of writing and consequently, publication. It is easy to imagine manuscripts disappearing, unable to withstand the competition. The development of printing in the West, however, also gave rise to a diverse range of transitional book-objects that hovered between the manuscript and the printed book. Manuscripts, as well as other forms of textual production, such as inscription and performance (as the next case study will show), were not obliterated, taking on new functions instead.

Technical developments in printing throughout the late Middle Ages produced a diverse multimedia landscape, particularly across manuscripts and printed books. Although manuscripts and printed books in western Europe shared the codex form, they were, by nature of their manual application of script or technical application of print, different media. From their production process, both manuscripts and printed books possess inherent and medium-specific regularities and conventions that formed and became established through a continuous exchange between book users and makers.

Early printed books first mirrored and followed conventions established by manuscripts, beginning with the use of parchment or vellum before the switch to paper. Adhering to a well-trodden path was not a simple imitation game but rather made books created with a new technology accessible to readers familiar with an older medium. This is evident in early printed editions of German vernacular texts, such as the heroic tale of the giant *Sigenot* or the fairytale-like story of *Melusine*, which in their content, script, layout, and image placement followed manuscript conventions.[30] The books printed in Europe before 1501 (known as incunabula) and even in subsequent decades referred back to manuscripts in their aesthetics. The

[30] H. Lähnemann and T. Kröner, 'Die Überlieferung des Sigenot: Bildkonzeptionen im Vergleich von Handschrift, Wandmalerei und Frühdrucken', *Jahrbuch der Oswald von Wolkenstein-Gesellschaft*, 14 (2004), 175–88.

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individual elements of a book, through their complex interplay, worked together to form a complete and 'readable' book-object.

With the shift from courtly to urban book production in the late Middle Ages, and the flourishing of printing presses in cities such as Mainz, Strasbourg, and Frankfurt, the printed book started to carve out its own niche in the quickly changing media landscape of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Europe. The development of the printed book slowly started to diverge from manuscript-making and established its own conventions born of its specific technicalities of production. These print-specific developments included features such as title pages, page numbering, and new types of quire signatures to facilitate cooperation within the workshop. In a continuous exchange, the makers of printed books and their audience started to establish new rules for their use. Publishers and printers tried to capture movements in the market, adjusting their new products to the needs and interests of a growing audience.

The diverging developments of the two media meant that the printed book and manuscript started to fulfil differing purposes and offered new ways of usage. The German Emperor Elect Maximilian I (1459–1519) always carried a copy of *Sigenot* on his person during his travels, a cheapish printed octavo edition.[31] (This format was a full-sized sheet of paper folded three times, giving sixteen leaves roughly 15 to 21 cm high and 10 to 12 cm wide.) He was immortalized as having accumulated one of the most renowned and costly manuscript collections in the world, which included various luxury copies of vernacular works, including another copy of *Sigenot*. Cheaply produced prints with high print-runs and numerous editions, such as pamphlets or single-leaf prints, were literally read to bits as a means of edification and entertainment. On the other hand, expensive illuminated manuscripts fulfilled additional functions, among others guiding the daily religious practices of affluent lay persons and religious communities.

While decorated manuscripts were out of reach for most of the population, printed books became an attainable product to an extent, while still being able to cater to the top end of the market through their text selection, high-quality woodcuts, and other decorative elements. Despite the emphasis by later commentators on the divergence of the two media, they were

[31] Lähnemann and Kröner, 'Überlieferung', 183.

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never opposed but rather complemented each other. This is demonstrated by the fact that skills needed to produce one or the other were often transferable, and in the early era of printing, scribes, miniaturists, and artists often worked on both products, switching between the scriptorium and the print workshop.[32] This is just another example of exchange in the late Middle Ages, a flourishing multi-media age in which materials were transposed from literary texts into tapestry, ivory carvings, woodwork, coins, and stained glass. Artists were used to adapting materials to the limitations of a particular medium and for the use of a specific audience.

While the move from manuscript to printed book seems intuitive, it was not irreversible. On the contrary, printed books and materials were sometimes transcribed back into manuscript. The various reasons are often difficult to establish exactly, but personal preference for one medium above the other seems to have been a determining factor. This preference can be observed in late medieval aristocratic commissions of manuscripts instead of printed books. The term *copying* does not capture how much was changed when a printer transferred a manuscript copy-text into type. In the moment of copying, the scribe or printer-publisher undertook a media transfer whose multi-layered processes can no longer be grasped, and which transformed both the details of the text being transcribed and its value and significance.

A great example of the media transfer between printed book and manuscript can be found in the collection of Princess Margaret of Savoy (1420–79).[33] She was a keen bibliophile who had grown up surrounded by renowned patrons, among them the famous duke of Berry. During Margaret's third and final marriage, to Duke Ulrich V of Württemberg, she commissioned a series of vernacular German manuscripts between 1470 and her death in 1479. Eleven manuscripts are still extant (at Heidelberg University Library) and tell the

[32] H. Lähnemann, 'From Print to Manuscript: The Case of a Workshop in Stuttgart around 1475', in M. C. Fischer and W. A. Kelly, eds., *The Book in Germany* (Edinburgh: Merchiston, 2010), 17–34; N. H. Ott, 'Die Handschriften-Tradition im 15. Jahrhundert', in B. Tiemann, ed., *Die Buchkultur im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg: Maximilian-Gesellschaft, 1995), 47–124.

[33] P. Rückert, K. Oschema, and A. Thaller, *Die Tochter des Papstes: Margarethe von Savoyen* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2020).

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fascinating story of their patroness and her literary interests.[34] Most of the texts in her collection either were already available in print, such as *Sigenot* (mentioned earlier) or *Pontus und Sidonie*, a courtly romance, or went on to become bestsellers in printed form such as *Herpin*, a medieval prose epos. All three were vernacular stories available in a variety of European languages and in wide circulation in Germany and France. Despite their evident availability in print and their affordability, Margaret commissioned the so-called Henfflin workshop, named after the only identifiable scribe, with the creation of manuscript copies.[35] The workshop, most likely an ad hoc consortium made up of German craftsmen and artists, had been assembled especially for the commission by the princess.[36]

As the basis for the manuscripts of vernacular German, the Henfflin workshop used printed editions whose influences are tangible not only in the texts but also in their layout. However, there are changes too: while later German printed editions of *Sigenot*, *Herpin*, and *Pontus und Sidonia* included only a limited number of woodcuts, the manuscripts were often decorated with one illustration per page, conveying her particular understanding of what could be the distinctive offering of courtly manuscripts even in a time of print. The need for an illustration on every page creates a unique object, drawing on print but employing manuscript to cater to a courtly audience. While luxury printed books, such as *Theuerdank*, commissioned by the aforementioned Maximilian I, did exist, they were eclipsed by the sheer number of elaborate manuscript Books of Hours produced for patrons in Flanders, France, Italy, and elsewhere until the late sixteenth century. The manuscript was still the medium of choice, at least for the nobility, when it came to their daily liturgical offices, private devotion and entertainment.

[34] H. Lähnemann, 'Margarethe von Savoyen in ihren literarischen Beziehungen', in *Encomia-Deutsch*, 2 (2002), 159–73.

[35] Named from a colophon in Heidelberg, University Library, MS cpg 67, f. 102r. See U. Spyra and M. Effinger, 'Schwäbische Werkstatt Des Ludwig Henfflin', Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg: Bibliotheca Palatina online, https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/de/bpd/glanzlichter/oberdeutsche/henfflin.html.

[36] P. Rudolph, 'Buchkunst im Zeitalter des Medienwandels. Die deutschsprachigen Bibelcodices der Henfflin-Werkstatt vor dem Hintergrund der spätmittelalterlichen Ikonographie' (MA thesis, KU Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, 2008), 25–6.

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Printed books were transferred into manuscript form even in the case of substantial literary works, such as the fantastic and satirical *Mörin*, which consists of more than 6,000 lines of verse. The work was initially written in 1453 by the German knight and poet Hermann of Sachsenheim and dedicated to the Duchess Mechthild von der Pfalz. Manuscript copies of *Mörin* remain simple and mostly unadorned. In turn, multiple printed editions of the text were created between 1512 and 1565; but in 1538 the text of the first printed edition of 1512 was copied by hand into a manuscript. The lavish decoration of the printed edition was not included, and the text stripped down to its textual bones, as it was originally composed by the author in 1453. This renewed media transfer clearly contrasted with the luxurious nature of the printed editions of *Mörin*, which included twenty-two opulent and high-quality woodcuts. The divergence between the manuscript and printed tradition of *Mörin* hints at different audiences and specific uses of each medium.

The examples of the Henfflin manuscripts and *Mörin* show that while printed products were readily available, manuscript and print existed side by side in a fruitful and beneficial relationship. Both media profited from each other and adapted and absorbed developments from the other medium to suit the varying habits of particular late medieval audiences. Print similarly interacted in this way with non-textual media such as dramatic performance (as in the case studies of eighteenth-century theatre below). Despite the rise of printed books, manuscripts would not lose their status as the default medium for the first few decades after the introduction of printing with movable type. Their continued hegemony and heritage is underlined by the fact that incunabula and early printed books still followed their conventions, despite heralding a fundamental change in the media landscape.

The use of manuscript might seem like a turn away from publication to a more private use of the text; but it continues to expand the text's dissemination, rather than to contract it, albeit at a slower pace than printing could. Manuscript was the initial medium of the poet of *Mörin*, Hermann of Sachsenheim. And even when printed editions were copied 'back' into manuscripts, those manuscripts transmitted the text to a different audience with different financial means, taste or intellectual requirements. Like the papyri of Greek and Latin literature, such manuscripts are clearly doing similar work, each for different, specific circumstances – both before and after printing was introduced.

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Performance as Publication in the Eighteenth Century, by Katie Noble

It is, then, easy to identify instances of textual dissemination that are clearly comparable with – albeit always subtly different in intention and effect from – printed publication; the makers of papyri and manuscripts, even the ones copied from printed books, circulate texts in physical form, but to different audiences. Such has been a standard part of the expanded sense of 'publication' in recent scholarship. Can we move beyond physical media and consider theatrical and other forms of performance as modes of publication? Such an expansion would make sense in the twenty-first century when various media, notably video embedded in social media and other platforms, allow people to circulate recordings of their words that might once have been shared in writing. Forms of performance, such as song and spoken announcements (in later sections of this book), might similarly challenge publication as exclusively relating to written dissemination.

In the eighteenth century, publication was not limited to printing or manuscript. According to Samuel Johnson's 1755 *Dictionary of the English Language*, to publish is simply to make something 'generally and openly known'. For example, preaching, a primarily oral tradition is defined by Johnson as 'to proclaim or publish'.[37] Dramatic performance was similarly linked to concepts of publication.[38] One such case can be seen in the backlash against the Licensing Act of 1737 in Britain. The 1737 Licensing Act introduced a process of censorship to the publication of new stage dramas. Resulting from heightened political unrest at the turn of the century, this piece of legislation, enacted under King George II and Britain's first prime minister Robert Walpole, required all new plays to be submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's office for approval. Politician and author of letters Phillip Dormer Stanhope, the fourth earl of Chesterfield, made a speech to Parliament against the introduction of the act. In his speech, Lord Chesterfield argued that the proposed Licensing Act was

[37] Johnson, *Dictionary*, s.v. 'To PUBLISH' and 'To PREACH'.

[38] J. Wessel, *Owning Performance | Performing Ownership: Literary Property and the Eighteenth-Century British Stage* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2022), 38.

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unnecessary as the government already had recourse to deal with libellous or overly critical plays through legislation aimed at print, stating there is 'no Difficulty to prove who is the *Publisher* of it, the *Player* himself is the *Publisher*'.[39] Chesterfield identified the stage performer as an active participant in publication; in speaking the words on the stage, it is the performer who makes them public.

In her investigation of performance and literary ownership, Jane Wessel endorses a definition of publication that avoids an exclusive association with print. She instead invokes publication 'in its broadest sense of making ideas public', in which 'performance function[s] as a way of producing knowledge'.[40] In this book, we take a similar view of publication in which it is deliberately unmoored from the printed page. As examples from eighteenth-century theatre show, performance can be considered a type of publication, subjected to the same kinds of censorship that have attempted to stifle its ability to disseminate knowledge and ideas to the public, especially those critical of the state.

Throughout the early eighteenth century in Britain, the state and Crown had growing concerns about potentially dangerous political liberty during a time of significant unrest. The threat of further Jacobite rebellion was looming, and Walpole feared the theatre as a potential avenue through which perilous criticism and even violent opposition could spread.[41] Indeed, political satire was a common sight on the eighteenth-century London stage. And even before the passing of the Licensing Act in 1737, the government had reacted to this potential risk with censorship. This was the case with John Gay's play *Polly*, the intended sequel to his highly successful *The Beggar's Opera* (1728). *The Beggar's Opera* is considered to be one the century's most successful plays, offering comment on both the contemporary vogue for Italian opera and Walpole's corrupt government.

[39] Quoted in *A New Miscellany for the Year 1737* (London: Osborn, 1737), 18, original emphasis.

[40] Wessel, *Owning Performance*, 5.

[41] D. Thomas, 'The 1737 Licensing Act and its Impact', in J. Swindells and D. F. Taylor, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre 1737–1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 93–5.

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In December 1728, *Polly* was banned from rehearsal. In his preface for the 1729 printed edition, Gay explains how:

> After Mr. *Rich* and I were agreed upon terms and conditions for bringing this Piece on the Stage, and that every Thing was ready for a Rehearsal; The Lord Chamberlain sent an order from the Country to prohibit Mr. *Rich* to suffer any Play to be rehears'd upon his Stage till it had been first of all supervis'd by his Grace.[42]

Gay had previously been identified as being associated with the political opposition and so it was in the state's interest to confirm whether his new play contained any inflammatory content before allowing it to be performed. Gay later heard that his play would not be allowed, the decision being delivered 'without any reasons assign'd'.[43] However, the censorship faced by *Polly* became the subject of public intrigue, and, sensing an opportunity, Gay contracted his printer to produce 10,500 copies of the play. Luckily for Gay, the Licensing Act only applied to the *performance* of plays, not their printing. And so, despite *Polly*'s controversy, the 1729 edition of the printed play was incredibly popular, and Gay made significant profit from it.[44] The differing treatment of the play's two forms suggests that performance was considered as a potentially damning form of publication, just as dangerous as the pen or printing press.[45]

The censorship heralded by Gay's *Polly* was later codified by the 1737 Licensing Act. Not only did the act require all new plays to be submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's office at least fourteen days prior to their first performance, but also all new playhouses were required to seek approval

[42] J. Gay, *Polly; an Opera: Being the Second Part of The Beggar's Opera* (London: no. pub., 1729), i, original emphasis.

[43] Gay, *Polly*, iv.

[44] C. Winton, *John Gay and the London Theatre* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993), 131–5.

[45] The play was eventually performed at the Haymarket in June 1777, long after Gay's death.

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from the office, greatly hindering the opening of new theatrical venues. Any unlicensed playhouse found to be staging performances would find its manager charged a then-hefty fine of £50 per offence. The effects of the Licensing Act were swift and far-reaching. Theatre historian David Thomas notes, 'Almost overnight, the managers of London's unlicensed playhouses were deprived of their livelihood.' Precedence was given to London's two patent theatres, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, effectively establishing a monopoly that was fiercely defended by the two theatres' managers over the ensuing years.[46] Understandably, it also had a significant effect on the writing of new dramas and entertainments. It has been estimated that, during the management of David Garrick at Drury Lane, only around two new mainpiece plays were staged each season.[47] It was safer to restage old favourites or otherwise mount revivals of Shakespeare which could abate the risk of censorship. Despite the fact that many older plays, including Shakespeare, contained potentially challenging ideas, it seems that the main concern was for contemporary new writing that might address the current political moment and encourage criticism.

If we understand publication, then, as making something public to some audience or other, then indeed the theatre had potential for the widespread publication of such ideas. After the Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660, which had followed a period of Puritan republican government, there had been a reactionary antitheatrical movement against the stage as encouraging blasphemous and otherwise distasteful behaviour The passing of the Licensing Act, at least in part, responded to such commentary and by the end of the eighteenth century, similar arguments were being made about the reading of novels. It seems that on a grander scale, the risk of the theatre was less in the size of its audience, than in its ability to verbalise – figuratively and, more importantly, literally – ideas seen to challenge the status quo.

Apart from some early resistance, this new 'culture of censorship' was quickly internalized by playwrights and, as a result, very few plays were

[46] Thomas, '1737 Licensing Act', 96–97.

[47] R. W. Schoch, '"A Supplement to Public Laws": Arthur Murphy, David Garrick, and 'Hamlet, with Alterations'', *Theatre Journal*, 57 (2005), 21–32 (24).

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actually refused licences or banned completely following the passing of the Act.[48] Instead, censored plays were given revisions – sometimes minor, sometimes extensive – and received licences in a 'cleaner and much less political' state.[49] In the few cases where a play was banned under the Act, such as with Henry Brooke's *Gustavus Vasa* (1739), a playwright may have used a play's print publication as a way to recoup any financial losses from the cancelled performance. This was one risk of the fact that the Licensing Act only applied to the performance of plays. In his speech against the act, Lord Chesterfield had warned that:

> When my L[ord] C[hamberlain] has *marked* a Play with his *Refusal*, may it not be *printed*? *Will* it not be *printed* with *double* the Advantage, when it shall be insinuated, that it was *refused* for having some Character or Strokes of Wit or Satire in it, that were *not suffered* to come on the *Stage*? And will not the Printer set the *Refusal* in his Title-Page as a *Mark of Value*?[50]

This is exactly what happened in the case of Brooke's play. *Gustavus Vasa*, a historical play concerning the liberation of Sweden from the Kingdom of Denmark, was banned following Walpole's anxieties about being compared to its antagonist. It has been contended that the play was 'notable for [its] critical treatment of imperial invasion and domination'.[51] The title page of Brooke's play, rejected by the Lord Chamberlain in 1738 and printed in 1739, tempts its reader with the promise of exclusive access to its censored content: the play presented 'as it was to have been acted' at Drury Lane, in

[48] D. O'Shaughnessy, 'Introduction: Theatre Censorship and Georgian Cultural History', in D. O'Shaughnessy, ed., *The Censorship of Eighteenth-Century Theatre: Playhouses and Prohibition, 1737–1843* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 1–32 (7).

[49] M. J. Kinservik, *Disciplining Satire: The Censorship of Satiric Comedy on the Eighteenth-Century London Stage* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2002), 30.

[50] *A New Miscellany*, 20, original emphasis.

[51] B. Orr, 'Theatrical Censorship and Empire', in O'Shaughnessy, ed., *Censorship*, 102.

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Chesterfield's words, 'as a *Mark of Value*'.[52] With Brooke's *Gustavus Vasa* and Gay's *Polly*, print is the playwright's only chance at publication and, crucially, an opportunity to take back control over their contentious literary property.[53]

Similarly, playwrights of an edited play could use print publication as a method of circulating its earlier, unedited form, in effect, offering the printed play as a 'second edition' of a drama's initial publication in performance. However, this was not particularly common. It has been observed that there was rather 'a remarkable reticence on the part of the playwrights' and that, in most cases, printed plays followed the same version as was performed on the stage, including any changes made by the Lord Chamberlain's office.[54]

It has previously been claimed that at least 88 per cent of plays submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's office under the Licensing Act were also printed.[55] However, despite their existence in print, it is impossible to access what was actually performed on the stage. Performance, by its very nature, is ephemeral and so, to understand and interpret historical performance, theatre historians must turn to forms of print evidence such as playbills, advertisements, prints and the playtexts themselves. Perhaps we often think of publication as printing precisely because these printed sources are the forms that most easily survive the passing of time. However, as we will continue to argue, performance itself can be considered a kind of publication through which the performer, with their voice rather than a pen, expresses to the audience their knowledge or ideas.

[52] H. Brooke, *Gustavus Vasa, the Deliverer of His Country: A Tragedy – As It Was to Have Been Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane* (London: Dodsley, 1739).

[53] On the other end of the spectrum, some playwrights withheld the printing of their plays to protect their literary property from wily copiers. See Wessel, *Owning Performance*, 39–40.

[54] M. J. Kinservik, 'The Dialectics of Print and Performance after 1737', in J. Swindells and D. Taylor, eds., *Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre*, 123–39 (139).

[55] R. W. Bevis, *The Laughing Tradition: Stage Comedy in Garrick's Day* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 26.

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