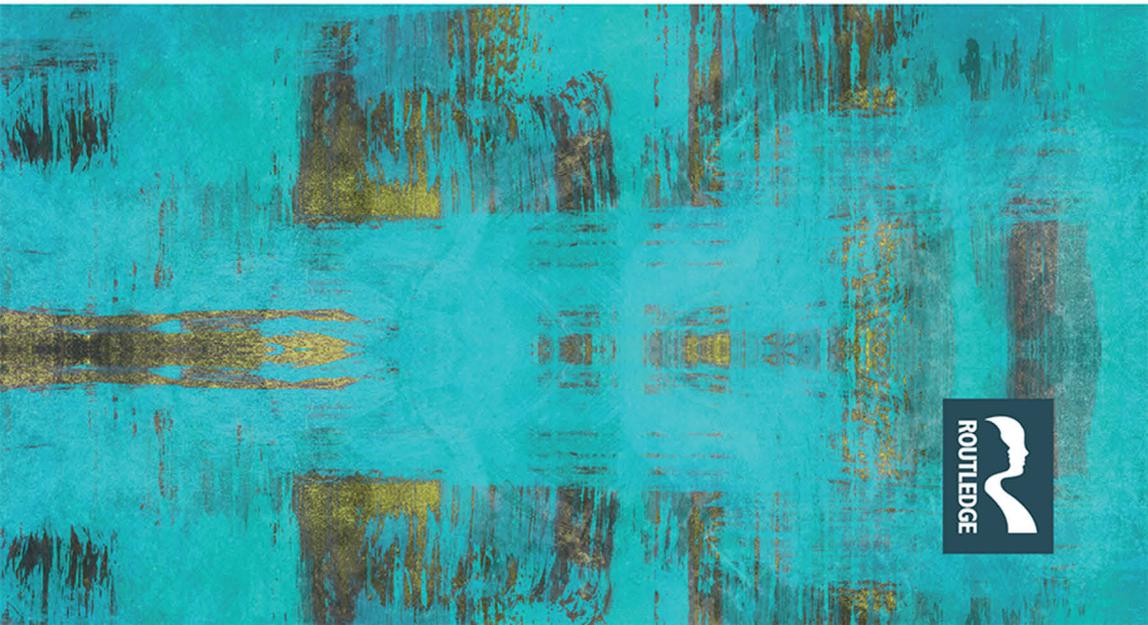




*Material Readings in Early Modern Culture*

# READING DRAMA IN TUDOR ENGLAND

Tamara Atkin



ROUTLEDGE



# Reading Drama in Tudor England

*Reading Drama in Tudor England* is about the print invention of drama as a category of text designed for readerly consumption. Arguing that plays were made legible by the printed paratexts that accompanied them, it shows that by the middle of the sixteenth century it was possible to market a play for leisure-time reading. Offering a detailed analysis of such features as title-pages, character lists, and other paratextual front matter, it suggests that even before the establishment of successful permanent playhouses, playbooks adopted recognisable conventions that not only announced their categorical status and genre but also suggested appropriate forms of use. As well as a survey of implied reading practices, this study is also about the historical owners and readers of plays. Examining the marks of use that survive in copies of early printed plays, it explores the habits of compilation and annotation that reflect the striking and often unpredictable uses to which early owners subjected their playbooks.

**Tamara Atkin** is Senior Lecturer in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature at Queen Mary, University of London, UK.

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# Reading Drama in Tudor England

Tamara Atkin

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# Abbreviations

<i>Annals</i>	Alfred Harbage and S. Schoenbaum, <i>Annals of English Drama, 975–1700: An Analytical Record of All Plays, Extant or Lost, Chronologically Arranged and Indexed by Authors, Titles, and Dramatic Companies</i> , 3rd edn, rev. by Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim (London: Routledge, 1989)
Arber	Edward Arber (ed.), <i>A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554–1640 A. D.</i> , 5 vols (London, 1875–77)
Atkin	Tamara Atkin, ‘Playing with Books in John Bale’s <i>Three Laws</i> ’, <i>Yearbook of English Studies</i> , 43 (2013), 243–61
BL	British Library, London
<i>Black Books</i>	William Paley Baildon and James Douglas Walker, <i>The Records of the Honourable Society of Lincoln’s Inn: The Black Books, Volume I: From A. D. 1422 to A. D. 1586</i> (London: Lincoln’s Inn, 1897)
Blayney	Peter W. M. Blayney, <i>The Stationers’ Company and the Printers of London, 1501–1557</i> , 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)
Bod.	Bodleian Library, Oxford University, Oxford
CUL	University Library, Cambridge University, Cambridge
DEEP	Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser (eds), <i>Database of Early English Playbooks</i> (2007) <deep.sas.upenn.edu>
Folger	Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC
Greg	W. W. Greg, <i>Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration</i> , 4 vols (London: Oxford University Press for The Bibliographical Society, 1939–1959)
HD	Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
HM	Huntington Library, San Marino, CA

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- Hodnett Edward Hodnett, *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973)
- Leedham-Green Elisabeth S. Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories: Book-lists from Vice Chancellor's Court Probate Inventories in the Tudor and Stuart Periods*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)
- Luborsky-Ingram Ruth Samson Luborsky and Elizabeth Morley Ingram, *A Guide to English Illustrated Books, 1536–1603*, 2 vols (Tempe: Arizona State University Press, 1998)
- McKerrow Ronald B. McKerrow, *Printers' & Publishers' Devices in England & Scotland, 1485–1640* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1913)
- McKF R. B. McKerrow and F. S. Ferguson, *Title-Page Borders Used in England and Scotland, 1485–1640* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1932)
- NIMEV Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards (eds), *The New Index of Middle English Verse* (London: The British Library, 2005)
- ODNB *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004–2016)  
<[www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com)>
- OED *Oxford English Dictionary*
- PLRE R. J. Fehrenbach, Joseph L. Black, and E. S. Leedham-Green (eds), *Private Libraries of Renaissance England: A Collection and Catalogue of Tudor and Early Stuart Book-Lists*, 8 vols (Tempe: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1992–2014)
- REED *Records of Early English Drama*
- STC A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave (eds), *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475–1640*, 2nd edn, rev. and enlarged by W. A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson, and K. F. Pantzer, 3 vols (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1976–91)
- TNA The National Archives
- t. p. title-page
- Tracy P. B. Tracy, 'Robert Wyer: A Brief Analysis of His Types and a Suggested Chronology for the Output of His Press', *The Library*, 6th ser., 2 (1980), 293–303

- USTC *Universal Short Title Catalogue* (2017)  
<[www.ustc.ac.uk](http://www.ustc.ac.uk)>
- Wiggins Martin Wiggins in association with Catherine Richardson (eds), *British Drama, 1533–1642: A Catalogue*, 8 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011–)
- Wing Donald Goddard Wing (ed.), *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America, and of English Books Printed in Other Countries, 1641–1700*, 2nd edn, rev. and enlarged by John J. Morrison and Carolyn W. Nelson, 4 vols (New York: MLA, 1972–98)
- Y Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CN



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# Two notes to the reader

## A note on quotations

Quotations from early modern materials appear in original spellings, retaining the distinctions between u/v, i/j and ff/F. Where possible, I have also tried to retain the distinction between different typefaces and cases. Modern italics represent emphases created by different typefaces in a single printed text. Italics are also used for the expansion of recognised scribal and typographic abbreviations. These include single letters like *m* and *n*, but also individual occurrences of the words *that*, *the*, and *with*. Square brackets are used to denote material added by me; angled brackets frame material deleted from or obscure in the original. Vertical bars are used to indicate line breaks.

## A note on early modern books

For all early modern playbooks (both pre- and post-1576), I adopt the modern titles suggested by DEEP; for related quasi-dramatic material, I likewise use the modern titles given in Wiggins. Full bibliographic details for these books are supplied in the prefatory table, 'Early Printed Playbooks, c. 1512–1576'. For all other early English printed material, I use the form of the title given in the STC (2nd edn). For undated early English printed material, I routinely adopt the inferred dates suggested by the STC; these are given in square brackets. Occasionally I have used alternative sources for conjectured dates: (A) indicates a date suggested in Atkin; (B) indicates one of many revised dates in Blayney, including those *not* offered as corrections, but to indicate a single date out of the range assigned by the STC ('Appendix K', II, 1027–71); and (T) indicates the revised chronology for Wyer's output as suggested by Tracy. For Continental works, I follow the bibliographic details provided by the USTC, where available. For all early printed works, the place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.



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## Early printed playbooks, c. 1512–1576

The first table contains all ninety-two single-play playbooks printed up to and including 1576. It accounts for all editions and issues with separate STC entries. Consequently, it contains two variants not included in DEEP's main data set (STC 24932.5 and STC 11643) and omits two not provided with separate STC entries (DEEP 56/Greg 36† and DEEP 98/Greg 68aiii). Inferred dates, printers, and publishers are given in square brackets along with their source. Modern attributions are supplied in square brackets, but where plays remain anonymous, gaps have been left. Formats are given in the form of O, Q, and F to refer to octavo, quarto, and folio formats, respectively. Edition numbers are given for each substantive edition; lower-case letters indicate variants. Q1b, therefore, specifies a first edition of a quarto playbook in a variant issue or state.

The second table contains an additional twenty-nine books, defined as plays in Wiggins. For the purposes of this book, these materials are categorised as quasi-dramatic. Their tabulation follows the same principles as those set out for the DEEP-listed playbooks, above. Primarily a literary, rather than a bibliographic, tool, Wiggins's catalogue provides serial numbers for each new play rather than for each edition, issue, or variant. Consequently, the numbers supplied in the 'Wiggins No.' column are given only for first editions.

#	Date	Title	Author	Printer and/or Publisher	DEEP No.	STC No.	Format and Edition/ Issue
1	[1514? (B)]	<i>Fulgens and Lucrece</i>	Henry Medwall	John Rastell (colophon)	5000	17778	Q1
2	[1515? (STC)]	<i>Hycke Scornor</i>		Wynkyn de Worde (colophon)	1	14039	Q1
3	[1518? (B)]	<i>Everyman</i>		Richard Pynson (colophon)	4	10604	Q1
4	[c. 1520 (STC)]	<i>Andria</i>	Terence, [unknown translator]	[Phillipe Le Noir? (STC)]	13	23894	Q1
5	[1520? (STC)]	<i>The Nature of the Four Elements</i>	[John Rastell]	[John Rastell (STC)]	9	20722	O1
6	1522 (colophon)	<i>The World and the Child</i>		Wynkyn de Worde (colophon)	8	25982	Q1
7	[c. 1525 (STC)]	<i>Calisto and Melebea</i>	[John Rastell?]	John Rastell (colophon)	11	20721	F1
8	[c. 1525 (STC)]	<i>Gentleness and Nobility</i>	[John Rastell? and John Heywood?]	John Rastell (colophon)	5001	20723	F1
9	[1527? (B)]	<i>Everyman</i>		Richard Pynson (colophon)	5	10604.5	Q2
10	[c. 1528 (STC)]	<i>Temperance and Humility</i>		[Wynkyn de Worde (STC)]	10	14109.5	Q1
11	[1529 (B)]	<i>Everyman</i>		John Skot (colophon)	6	10606	Q3
12	[c. 1530 (STC)]	<i>Youth</i>		[Wynkyn de Worde (STC)]	24	14111	Q1
13	[1530? (STC)]	<i>Hycke Scornor</i>		[Peter Treveris (STC)]	2	14039.5	Q2
14	[1530? (STC)]	<i>Pater, Filius, et Uxor, or The Prodigal Son</i>		[William Rastell (STC)]	23	20765.5	F1
15	[1531(B)]	<i>Magnificence</i>	John Skelton	[Peter Treveris for John Rastell (STC)]	12	22607	F1
16	[1532? (B)]	<i>Nature</i>	Henry Medwall	[William Rastell (STC)]	5002	17779	F1
17	1533 (colophon)	<i>Johan Johan</i>	[John Heywood]	William Rastell (colophon)	14	13298	F1
18	1533 (colophon)	<i>The Pardoner and the Friar</i>	[John Heywood]	William Rastell (colophon)	15	13299	F1
19	1533 (colophon)	<i>Old Christmas, or Good Order</i>		W. [i.e. William] Rastell (colophon)	16	18793.5	F1
20	1533 (colophon)	<i>The Play of the Weather</i>	John Heywood	W. [i.e. William] Rastell (colophon)	17	13305	F1
21	[1534? (B)]	<i>Everyman</i>		[John Skot (STC)]	7	10606.5	Q4
22	1534 (colophon)	<i>A Play of Love</i>	John Heywood	William Rastell (colophon)	21	13303	F1
23	[1544? (STC)]	<i>The Play of the Weather</i>	John Heywood	[William Middleton (STC)]	18	13305.5	Q2

#	Date	Title	Author	Printer and/or Publisher	DEEP No.	STC No.	Format and Edition/ Issue
24	[1544? (STC)]	<i>The Four P's</i>	John Heywood	William Middleton (colophon)	27	13300	Q1
25	[c. 1545 (STC)]	<i>The Four Cardinal Virtues</i>		William Middleton (colophon)	30	14109.7	Q1
26	[1547? (STC)]	<i>God's Promises</i>	John Bale	[Derick van der Straten (STC)]	31	1305	Q1
27	[1547? (STC)]	<i>The Temptation of our Lord</i>	John Bale	[Derick van der Straten (STC)]	33	1279	Q1
28	[1547? (A)]	<i>Three Laws</i>	John Bale	Nicolaum Bamburgensem (colophon) [i.e. Derick van der Straten (STC)]	35	1287	O1
29	[1548? (B)]	<i>A Play of Love</i>	John Heywood	[Printer of Smyth's Envoy for (B)] John Walley (colophon)	22	13304	Q2
30	[1549? (B)]	<i>Hycke Scorner</i>		[Printer of Smyth's Envoy for (B)] John Walley (colophon)	3	14040	Q3
31	[c. 1550 (STC)]	<i>Johan the Evangelist</i>		[Printer of Smyth's Envoy for (B)] John Walley (colophon)	37	14643	Q1
32	[c. 1550 (STC)]	<i>Interlude of Detraction, Light Judgement, Verity, and Justice</i>			38	14109.2	Q1
33	[1551? (B)]	<i>Somebody, Avarice, and Minister</i>		[William Copland? (STC)]	36	14109.3	Q1
34	[1551? (B)]	<i>Lusty Juventus</i>	R. [i.e. Robert] Wever	[John Wyer for (STC)] Abraham Veale	64	25148	Q1
35	[1557 (STC)]	<i>Youth</i>		[John King for? (STC)] John Walley (colophon)	25	14111a	Q2
36	[1558 (B)]	<i>Jacob and Esau</i>	[Nicholas Udall?]	[Henry Sutton (STC)]	79	14326.5	Q1
37	[1559? (B)]	<i>The Play of the Weather</i>	John Heywood	[John Tisdale for (STC)] Anthony Kitson (colophon)	19	13306	Q3
38	1559 (t. p.)	<i>Troas</i>	Seneca trans. Jasper Heywood	Richard Tottell (colophon)	40	22227	O1

(Continued)

#	Date	Title	Author	Printer and/or Publisher	DEEP No.	STC No.	Format and Edition/ Issue
39	1559 (t. p.)	<i>Troas</i>	Seneca trans. Jasper Heywood	Richard Tottell (colophon)	41	22227a	O2
40	[1560? (STC)]	<i>The Four P's</i>	John Heywood	William Copland (colophon)	28	13301	Q2
41	1560 (t. p., colophon)	<i>Thyestes</i>	Seneca trans. Jasper Heywood	House of Thomas Berthelet (imprint, colophon) [i.e. Richard Payne (B)]	43	22226	O1
42	1560 (t. p.)	<i>Impatient Poverty</i>		John King (colophon)	44	14112.5	Q1
43	1560 (t. p.)	<i>Nice Wanton</i>		John King (colophon)	46	25016	Q1
44	[1561? (STC)]	<i>Impatient Poverty</i>		[William Copland? (STC)]	45	14113	Q2
45	1561 (t. p.)	<i>Godly Queen Hester</i>		William Pickering, Thomas Hacket (colophon)	50	13251	Q1
46	1561 (colophon)	<i>Hercules Furens</i>	Seneca trans. Jasper Heywood	Henry Sutton (colophon)	51	22223	O1
47	[1562? (STC)]	<i>Troas</i>	Seneca trans. Jasper Heywood	Thomas Powell for George Bucke (imprint)	42	22228	O3
48	[1562? (STC)]	<i>Jack Juggler</i>	[Nicholas Udall?]	William Copland (colophon)	52	14837	Q1
49	[1562? (STC)]	<i>Thersites</i>	[Ravisius Textor trans. Nicholas Udall?]	John Tisdale (colophon)	57	23949	Q1
50	1562 (t. p., colophon)	<i>Three Laws</i>	John Bale	Thomas Colwell (colophon)	35	1288	Q2
51	1563 (t. p.)	<i>Oedipus</i>	Seneca trans. Alexander Neville	Thomas Colwell (imprint, colophon)	55	22225	O1
52	[1565? (STC)]	<i>Youth</i>		William Copland (colophon)	26	14112	Q3
53	[1565? (STC)]	<i>Wealth and Health</i>		[William Copland for John Walley? (STC)]	39	14110	Q1
54	[1565? (STC)]	<i>Nice Wanton</i>		John Alde (imprint, colophon)	49	25017	Q2
55	[1565? (STC)]	<i>Jack Juggler</i>	[Nicholas Udall?]	William Copland (colophon)	53	14837a	Q2
56	[c. 1565 (STC)]	<i>Lusty Juventus</i>	R. [i.e. Robert] Wever	John Awdely (colophon)	65	25149	Q2
57	[c. 1565 (STC)]	<i>Lusty Juventus</i>	R. [i.e. Robert] Wever	William Copland (colophon)	66	25149.5	Q3
58	1565 (t. p.)	<i>Gorboduc</i>	Thomas Norton, Thomas Sackville	William Griffith (imprint)	59	18684	O1

#	Date	Title	Author	Printer and/or Publisher	DEEP No.	STC No.	Format and Edition/ Issue
59	1565 (t. p.)	<i>King Darius</i>		Thomas Colwell (imprint)	62	6277	Q1
60	[1566? (STC)]	<i>Albion Knight</i>		[Thomas Colwell (STC)]	58	275	Q1
61	[1566? (STC)]	<i>Ralph Roister Doister</i>	[Nicholas Udall]	[Henry Denham for Thomas Hacket? (STC)]	71	24508	Q1
62	[1566 (STC)]	<i>The Cruel Debtor</i>	[William Wager?]	[Thomas Colwell (STC)]	68	24934	Q1
63	[1566 (STC)]	<i>Octavia</i>	Seneca trans. T. N. [i.e. Thomas Nuce]	Henry Denham (imprint, colophon)	70	22229	Q1
64	1566 (t. p.)	<i>Agamemnon</i>	Seneca trans. John Studley	Thomas Colwell (imprint)	67	22222	O1
65	1566 (t. p.)	<i>Medea</i>	Seneca trans. John Studley	Thomas Colwell (imprint)	69	22224	O1
66	1566 (t. p.)	<i>The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene</i>	Lewis Wager	John Charlewood (imprint)	72	24932	Q1a
67	1567 (t. p.)	<i>The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene</i>	Lewis Wager	John Charlewood (imprint)	73	24932.5	Q1b
68	1567 (t. p., colophon)	<i>An Interlude of Vice (Horestes)</i>	John Pickering	William Griffith (imprint, colophon)	74	19917	Q1
69	1567 (t. p.)	<i>The Trial of Treasure</i>	[William Wager?]	Thomas Purfoot (imprint, colophon)	75	24271	Q1
70	1568 (t. p.)	<i>Like Will to Like</i>	Ulpian Fulwel	John Allde (imprint)	76	11473	Q1
71	1568 (t. p.)	<i>Jacob and Esau</i>	[Nicholas Udall?]	Henry Bynneman (imprint)	80	14327	Q2
72	[after 1568? (STC)]	<i>Like Will to Like</i>	Ulpian Fulwel	John Allde (imprint)	77	11473.5	Q2
73	[1569? (STC)]	<i>Patient and Meek Grissel</i>	John Phillip	Thomas Colwell (imprint, colophon)	81	19865	Q1
74	[1569 (STC)]	<i>The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art</i>	W. [i.e. William] Wager	William How for Richard Jones (imprint)	82	24935	Q1
75	1569 (t. p.)	<i>The Four P's</i>	John Heywood	John Allde (imprint, colophon)	29	13302	Q3
76	[1570? (STC)]	<i>The Disobedient Child</i>	Thomas Ingeland	Thomas Colwell (imprint)	83	14085	Q1
77	[1570? (STC)]	<i>Cambises</i>	Thomas Preston	John Allde (colophon)	85	20287	Q1
78	[1570? (STC)]	<i>Enough Is as Good as a Feast</i>	W. [i.e. William] Wager	John Allde (imprint)	88	24933	Q1
79	[c. 1570 (STC)]	<i>Jack Juggler</i>	[Nicholas Udall?]	John Allde (imprint, colophon)	54	14837a.5	Q3

(Continued)

#	Date	Title	Author	Printer and/or Publisher	DEEP No.	STC No.	Format and Edition/ Issue
80	[1570 (STC)]	<i>The Marriage of Wit and Science</i>		Thomas Marsh (imprint)	84	17466	Q1
81	[1570 (STC)]	<i>Gorboduc</i>	Thomas Norton, Thomas Sackville	John Day (imprint)	60	18685	O2
82	1571 (t. p.)	<i>Damon and Pithias</i>	Maister [Richard] Edwards	[William Williamson for (STC)] Richard Jones (imprint)	89	7514	Q1
83	[1573? (STC)]	<i>Free-Will</i>	F. N. B. [i.e. Francesco Negri da Bassano] trans. Henry Cheeke	[Richard Jugge (STC)]	92	18419	Q1
84	[c. 1573 (STC)]	<i>The Play of the Weather</i>	John Heywood	John Awdely (colophon)	20	13307	Q4
85	1573 (t. p.)	<i>New Custom</i>		William How for Abraham Veale (colophon)	91	6150	Q1
86	[1574? (STC)]	<i>An Interlude of Minds</i>	H. N. [i.e. Hendrik Niclaes]	[Nikolaus Bohmberg (pseud?) (STC)]	93	18550	O1
87	1575 (t. p., colophon)	<i>Appius and Virginia</i>	R. B. [i.e. Richard Bower?]	William How for Richard Jones (imprint, colophon)	94	1059	Q1
88	1575 (colophon)	<i>Gammer Gurton's Needle</i>	Mr S. [i.e. William Stevenson?]	Thomas Colwell (imprint, colophon)	95	23263	Q1
89	1575 (colophon)	<i>The Glass of Government</i>	George Gascoigne	for C. [i.e. Christopher] Barker (imprint, colophon); Henry Middleton for Christopher Barker (imprint, colophon)	96	11643a	Q1a
90	1575 (colophon)	<i>The Glass of Government</i>	George Gascoigne	for C. [i.e. Christopher] Barker (imprint); H. M. [i.e. Henry Middleton] for Christopher Barker (colophon)	97 (see also 98)	11643	Q1b
91	[1576 (STC)]	<i>Common Conditions</i>		William How for John Hunter (imprint)	99	5592	Q1
92	1576 (t. p.)	<i>The Tide Tarrieth No Man</i>	George Wapull	Hugh Jackson (imprint)	101	25018	Q1

#	Date	Title	Author	Printer and/or Publisher	Wiggins No.	STC No.	Format and Edition/ Issue
1	[1534? (STC)]	<i>Dialogue between Julius II, Genius, and St Peter</i>	[Erasmus? or Faustus Andrelinus?]	Robert Copland for John Bydell (colophon)	17	14841.5	Q1
2	1534 (colophon)	<i>Fumus [The Funeral]</i>	Erasmus	Robert Copland for John Bydell (colophon)	18	10453.5	O1
3	1535 (colophon)	<i>Dialogue between Julius II, Genius, and St Peter</i>	[Erasmus? or Faustus Andrelinus?]	John Bydell (colophon)		14842	Q2
4	[1537? (B)]	<i>The Pilgrimage of Pure Devotion</i>	Erasmus	[Printer of Longland's sermons (B)]	35	10454	O1
5	[1538? (STC)]	<i>A Pretty Complaint of Peace</i>		John Bydell (colophon)	53	5611	O1
6	1540 (t. p., colophon)	<i>Acolastus</i>	Gulielmus Gnaphaeus trans. John Palsgrave	Thomas Berthelet (colophon)	84	11470	Q1
7	1545 (t. p., colophon)	<i>The Epicure</i>	Erasmus trans. Phillip Gerrard	Richard Grafton (colophon)	135	10460	O1
8	[1547? (STC)]	<i>A Dialogue between th'Angel of the Lord and the Shepherds in the Field</i>	T. B. [i.e. Thomas Becon]	John Day (colophon)	163	1733.5	O1
9	[1547? (STC)]	<i>A Dialogue between Lent and Liberty</i>	[Robert Crowley?]	[John Day? (STC)]	176	6084.5	O1
10	[1548? (STC)]	<i>The Examination of the Mass</i>	William Turner	John Day [for (B)] William Seres (imprint, colophon)	184	24361.5	O1
11	[1548? (STC)]	<i>The Examination of the Mass</i>	William Turner	John Day [for (B)] William Seres (imprint, colophon)		24362	O2
12	[1548?]	<i>Jon Bon and Mast Person</i>	[Luke Shepherd]	John Day [for (B)] William Seres (colophon)	179	3258.5	Q1
13	[1548 (STC)]	<i>The Examination of the Mass</i>	William Turner	[Thomas Raynald (B)]		24363	O3
14	[1548 (STC)]	<i>A Goodly Dialogue between Knowledge and Simplicity</i>		Anthony Scoloker [for (B)] William Seres (imprint)	185	6806	O1

(Continued)

#	Date	Title	Author	Printer and/or Publisher	Wiggins No.	STC No.	Format and Edition/ Issue
15	1548 (t. p.)	<i>A Goodly Disputation between a Christian Shoemaker and a Popish Parson</i>	[Hans Sachs] trans. by Anthony Scoloker	Anthony Scoloker (imprint)	180	21537.5	O1
16	1548 (t. p.)	<i>A Goodly Disputation between a Christian Shoemaker and a Popish Parson</i>	[Hans Sachs] trans. by Anthony Scoloker	Anthony Scoloker [for (B)] William Seres (imprint)		21537.7	O2
17	1548 (colophon)	<i>The Indictment Against Mother Mass</i>	W. P. [i.e. William Punt]	William Hill [for (B)] William Seres (colophon)	187	20499	O1
18	[1549? (STC)]	<i>The Examination of the Mass</i>	William Turner	[Robert Wyer for (B)] Richard Wyer (colophon)		24364a	O4
19	1549 (colophon)	<i>The Indictment Against Mother Mass</i>	W. P. [i.e. William Punt]	William Hill [for (B)] William Seres (colophon)		20500	O2
20	1549 (colophon)	<i>The Indictment Against Mother Mass</i>	William Punt	William Hill [for (B)] William Seres (colophon)		20500.5	O3
21	1549 (t. p., colophon)	<i>The Unjust Usurped Primacy of the Bishop of Rome</i>	Bernardino Ochino trans. John Ponet	Walter Lynne (colophon)	195	18770	Q1a
22	1549 (t. p., colophon)	<i>The Unjust Usurped Primacy of the Bishop of Rome</i>	Bernardino Ochino trans. John Ponet	Walter Lynne (colophon)		18771	Q1b
23	1557 (t. p.)	<i>A Merry Dialogue Declaring the Properties of Shrewd Shrews and Honest Wives</i>	Erasmus	[John Cawood for (STC)] Anthony Kitson (colophon)	290	10455	O1
24	1557 (t. p.)	<i>A Merry Dialogue Declaring the Properties of Shrewd Shrews and Honest Wives</i>	Erasmus	[William Copland for (STC)] Abraham Veale (colophon)		10455.5	O2

#	Date	Title	Author	Printer and/or Publisher	Wiggins No.	STC No.	Format and Edition/ Issue
25	1564 (t. p., colophon)	<i>A Dialogue between the Cap and the Head</i>	[Pandolfo Collenuccio]	Henry Denham for Lucas Harrison (imprint, colophon)	386	6811	O1
26	[c. 1565? (STC)]	<i>Robin Conscience</i>		[John Awdely? (STC)]	404	5633	Q1
27	1565 (t. p., colophon)	<i>A Dialogue between the Cap and the Head</i>	[Pandolfo Collenuccio]	Henry Denham for Lucas Harrison (imprint, colophon)		6812	O1
28	[1566? (STC)]	<i>The Banquet of Dainties</i>		[for Thomas Hacket? (STC)]	435	1367	O1
29	1567 (t. p.)	<i>A Conjuratiōn</i>	Erasmus trans. Thomas Johnson	Henry Bynne-man [for (STC)] William Pickering (imprint)	453	10510.5	O1



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# Introduction

## Towards a history of reading drama

In a copy of George Gascoigne's *The Glass of Government* (1575, STC 11643, hereafter Q1b), now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, one opinionated reader has made his feelings about the play very clear.<sup>1</sup> Written on the first page of the playtext, beneath the running title, scene designation, and opening stage direction, are the words 'old Teadious'.<sup>2</sup> For one early reader, Gascoigne's tragicomedy was clearly both dated and boring. But his words expose more than his low opinion of the play, since their repetition on the final verso serves to bookend the text, revealing a macroscopic mode of engagement in which the entire play, rather than its most memorable lines or phrases, is designated as the primary unit of meaning.<sup>3</sup> Identifying the book in this way, this reader's estimation of its worth is nonetheless bound up with a desire to mark it as both owned and read. The hand responsible for this brief note is that of the law officer and book collector Richard Smith (d. 1675), who amassed over 8,000 books, pamphlets, and manuscripts during his lifetime, among them a substantial collection of playbooks.<sup>4</sup> Acerbic statements in his distinctive hand appear in many of the early playbooks he once owned, and they might have helped him keep track of those he had read and those still to be judged.<sup>5</sup> Because for Smith, these activities – reading, marking, and appraising – are part of a single process, a self-evident and legitimate response to playbook ownership. And his repeated use of certain stock phrases (no fewer than seven playbooks are labelled 'relicque') might even indicate that he used such notes to help classify and organise his collection, a personal cataloguing system based on subjective taste rather than subject, genre, or format size.<sup>6</sup> Some early printed plays found their place in Smith's collection *because* they were 'verry bad' (Figure I.1).<sup>7</sup>

Smith's designation of early printed plays as 'bad' or 'tedious' relies first on an ability to recognise individual plays as discrete textual events. This may seem like an obvious point, but when English printers first began experimenting with the publication of plays, there were very few precedents in other European vernaculars, and those plays that had found their way into print tended, as Julie Stone Peters has shown, 'to be nearly identical to other kinds of works (dialogues, pamphlet tales,

## The Glasse of Gouvernment.

*Actus primi Scæna prima.*

PHYLO PAES and PHYLOCALVS Parentes,  
FIDVS seruauant to PHILOPAES. they come  
in talkinge.

*old Treachous*

*Phylopaes.*



Wrely *Phylocalus* I thinke my selfe in-  
debted vnto you for this frændly dis-  
course, and I do not onely agræe with  
you in opinion, but I most earnestly de-  
sire, that wee may with one assente  
deuise which way the same may be put  
in executiõ, for I delight in your louing  
neighbourhod, and I take singular comfort in your graue  
aduise.

*Phylocalus.* It were not reason *Phylopaes* that hauing so  
many yeares continued so neare neighbours, hauing  
traffiqued (in maner) one selfe same trade, hauing suffey-  
ned like aduentures, and being blessed with like successses,  
we should now in the ende of our time become any lesse  
then entiere frendes: and as it is the nature and propertie  
of frendshippe to seeke alwaies for perpetuity, so let vs  
seeke to bring by our Childzen in such mutuall societie  
in their youth, that in age they may no lesse delight in theyr  
former felowship, then wee theyr parentes haue taken  
comfort in our continuall cohabitation. It hath pleased  
Almighty God to blesse vs both with competent wealth,  
and though we haue atteyned therevnto by continuall  
payns and trauaile, rising (as it were) from meane estate,  
vnto dignify, yet doe I thinke that it were not amisse to  
bring by our childzen with such education as they may ex-  
cell in knowledge of liberall sciences, for if we being vn-  
learned

Figure I.1 George Gascoigne, *The Glass of Government* (Henry Middleton for Christopher Barker, 1575, STC 11643), sig. A1<sup>r</sup>. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Mal. 588(2). Reproduced with permission of The Bodleian Libraries.

devotional exercises)?<sup>8</sup> By the time *The Glass of Government* had found its way into Smith's hands, he was able to identify it as a play as opposed to any of these other related types of texts. That he was able to do so is a consequence of the successful development of conventions for rendering dramatic form in print. Prior to the use of print for the publication of plays, some playtexts did circulate in manuscript form, but for most people, plays were something seen in performance rather than read in books. Smith's estimation of Gascoigne's play as 'tedious' reflects a textual rather than a performed encounter; his judgment is a response to

reading a text that he is able to recognise as a play rather than seeing that play performed. How and when did printers develop effective means for articulating dramatic form? When did reading a play become a likely consequence of its print publication? And what significance might these developments have for our understanding of drama as literature?

*Reading Drama in Tudor England* is about the print history of drama in Tudor England, specifically the techniques and strategies developed by early printers of plays for making drama legible as a distinct category of text. Over the course of the sixty-five years that are the focus of this study, printers began routinely to adopt certain framing devices – what Gérard Genette would many years later label as ‘paratext’ – that signalled the text’s categorical status as play and *in turn* enhanced its vendibility.<sup>9</sup> The central claim of this book, therefore, is that well before the opening of London’s commercial theatres, drama had become a recognisable textual category that had its own market appeal. Moreover, while it has long been accepted that England’s earliest printed playbooks functioned as scripts ‘for future productions’, this book demonstrates that from the very outset, playbooks were also printed with readerly consumption in mind.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, the idea of legibility is integral to this book’s argument, as it communicates the extent to which print was responsible for the invention of drama as a textual category that was both ‘readily discernible’ and ‘enjoyable or interesting to read’.<sup>11</sup> *Reading Drama* therefore proposes that certain conventional features that have been typically understood as performance aids may also have served to communicate the categorical identity of the text as play, thereby modelling ways of reading specific to drama. Character lists and doubling schemes, for instance, seem to have been designed not only to enable performance, but also to signal the status of the text as play. But who was responsible for the inclusion and the design of these important framing devices? And what do these interventions say about the articulation of authority and textual production in Tudor England?

In his seminal account of the publication of playbooks, Peter W. M. Blayney has suggested:

If we want to investigate the text of a play [...] we need to study the printer. But if our concern is the source of the manuscript, the reasons why *that* play was published *then*, or the supposed attitude of the players or the playwright to the fact of publication, we must focus on the publisher.<sup>12</sup>

More recently, the list of duties attributable to publishers has been expanded to include title-page design and the writing of prefatory materials.<sup>13</sup> However, when it comes to England’s earliest printed plays, very little is known about the procurement of dramatic manuscripts or about the financial arrangements between authors and publishers. And while

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the distinction between publishers and printers is useful insofar as it helps delineate the different responsibilities associated with each role, the stationers responsible for early printed playbooks often performed both jobs, frequently serving as booksellers too. This book therefore moves from a consideration of some of the ways drama was made legible as a recognisable category of text to explore the relationships between authors, their representatives, and the various agents of the press in the making of playbooks. Blayney's account of publishing plays has become the standard work on the subject, but the model he offers is not always applicable to the early and mid-Tudor periods.<sup>14</sup> *Reading Drama* therefore offers a revised account of playbook publication that accommodates the specific mental and material conditions in which earlier playwrights and stationers worked. Much of what can be intuited about the interactions between authors, printers, and publishers can be found within the pages of early printed playbooks in the form of title-page attributions and imprints, signed prefaces, and colophons. Of course, not all playbooks include all of these features, but by the middle of the sixteenth century, such expressions of authority followed largely predictable patterns: playbooks with detailed information about their publication were more likely to be attributed to an author, and in turn, playbooks with title-page attributions were more likely to include one or more signed prefaces. Surveying this material reveals details about the publication of specific playbooks and offers insights about wider patterns in the early playbook trade. But it also indicates that such legible expressions of authority contributed to the appeal of some playbooks by marking them out for literary consumption. By the mid-1560s, by which time the conventions for these expressions of authority had crystallised, it was not only possible to market a book as a play, but it was also possible to market a play as literature.

Playbooks may have told their readers to use them in certain ways, but what did owners, readers, and other users actually do to them? *Reading Drama* is not only a study of the implied readers suggested by the front matter in early printed playbooks, but it also assesses the evidence of historical use in the hundred years after their publication. While marks of use are often too haphazard to permit broad-view conclusions, habits of ownership, compilation, and reading as evidenced by book-lists, *Sammelbände*, and marginalia nonetheless show early printed playbooks passing through the hands of owners and readers of all sorts. And the marks left by them suggest that playbooks were being directed to a range of uses, including, but not limited to, those suggested by their front matter. The shape and scope of *Reading Drama* is therefore defined by three related questions: What forms of use are suggested by early printed playbooks? Where and how do we locate the authority for shaping these receptive horizons? And once early printed playbooks left the hands of those who made them, to what uses were they actually put? The purpose

of this introduction is to situate these questions within a broader critical context, all the while illustrating the distinctive circumstances of play-book production in the early and mid-Tudor periods, which are themselves reason for a study of early printed playbooks in their own right.

The recent turn towards book history in studies of early modern drama has shown an overwhelming preoccupation with the interrelated issues of playbook popularity and literary status. Because so many early modern plays are now a part of the Western literary canon – however it may be defined – it has become desirable to know how widely they were read in their own time and when they achieved the status of literature. Investigation of these questions tends to present early printed plays as the foil against which the printed plays of the later Elizabethan and Jacobean periods are shown to achieve literary greatness. This introduction is therefore especially concerned with the terms ‘popular’ and ‘literature’ and their use in recent critical discussions of early modern drama. Arguing that in the era before drama developed its strong and lasting associations with the public stage, plays were at least as likely to be read as they were performed, I show how concepts of popularity and literariness as defined by scholars of the later early modern period are not readily applicable to England’s earliest printed plays. Instead, I suggest that in addition to facilitating performance, early printed playbooks were framed to promote different kinds of readerly experiences, some more ‘literary’ than others. Though there are medieval manuscript precedents for the readerly consumption of plays before the print era, the examples are not numerous and do not conform to obvious patterns.<sup>15</sup> The unique achievement of print, therefore, was the invention of stable and widely recognised conventions for the presentation of certain texts as plays, which in turn promoted specialised reading strategies. Despite – or perhaps because of – the success of these conventions, defining drama is not always easy, and this introduction therefore concludes by outlining a corpus of early printed playbooks.

### **Playbook popularity and drama as a literary genre**

In their ground-breaking research on the popularity of playbooks, Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser identify 1594 as a landmark year for the publication of playbooks that would eventually lead to the expansion of the market as a whole.<sup>16</sup> Farmer and Lesser’s essay was written as a direct response to Blayney’s oft-cited chapter on ‘The Publication of Playbooks’, and its publication sparked a printed debate, first between those authors, but subsequently taken up by other critics working at the intersection of theatre and book history.<sup>17</sup> Each contribution to this discussion has been underpinned by a very specific, though not always stated, definition of ‘popularity’ as ‘general acceptance or approval’, which in bibliographic terms is taken to mean market performance

## 6 Introduction

assessed according to the total number of editions, market share, frequency of reprinting, and profitability.<sup>18</sup> Popular, by this definition, stands in for economic success. But behind this sanitised and readily quantifiable notion of popularity as consumer demand lurks another definition, in which plays – both as performance events and in their material form as playbooks – are seen as part of a popular culture, ‘the culture of the non-elite’.<sup>19</sup> In this definition, plays partake of a ‘literary or visual style considered “low”’, and playbooks are reckoned ‘objects of low cultural status’.<sup>20</sup> Certainly, it was on these grounds that they were not admitted into Thomas Bodley’s famous library.<sup>21</sup>

In her study of cheap print and popular piety, Tessa Watts has cautioned against the ‘straight equation between “popularity” in numerical terms and print for the “popular” classes’.<sup>22</sup> Economic performance is not in itself a reliable guide to popular culture, and bestsellers were not always popular works in the cultural sense of the word.<sup>23</sup> However, the view that playbooks were low, non-elite productions has played an important role in the recent critical interest in drama’s perceived emergence as a literary genre. The question of when printed playbooks were first considered literature has received many answers. Until recently, the view that drama achieved literary status only with the publication of Ben Jonson’s *Works* in 1616 was a critical commonplace.<sup>24</sup> More recently, other watershed publications have been cited as responsible for this development: the 1605 quarto of *Sejanus*, the 1600 quarto of *Every Man Out of His Humour*, the 1603 quarto of *Hamlet*, or the 1590 octavo edition of *Tamburlaine*.<sup>25</sup> At the heart of much of this work is a definition of literature that is opposed to performance. So, according to Lukas Erne, ‘as early as the 1590s, we can witness a process of legitimation of dramatic publications leading to their establishment as a genre of printed texts in its own right rather than as a pale reflection of what properly belongs to the stage.’<sup>26</sup> Or, in the words of David Scott Kastan, ‘Ben Jonson labored to rescue his plays from the theatrical conditions in which they were produced, seeking to make available for readers a play text in which he could be said in some exact sense to be its “author”’.<sup>27</sup> Here, for a play to be printed, it had to pass ‘from playhouse to printing house’, and to achieve literary status, it had to do its best to efface – or at least reframe – its origins in performance.<sup>28</sup>

The plays that are the subject of this book were not performed in commercial playhouses. In fact, only a handful can be linked to specific performance auspices: four early printed playbooks record details of a performance prior to publication, and performance records survive for just three others.<sup>29</sup> These figures account for less than ten per cent of all plays printed in the pre-playhouse era.<sup>30</sup> Performance auspices can be conjectured in a number of other instances, usually on the basis of internal references or knowledge about the author’s profession. In this way, the *Annals of English Drama, 975–1700* has provided auspices

for a further thirteen pre-playhouse plays, and, more recently, work by Elisabeth Dutton, Maura Giles-Watson, and Greg Walker – among others – has contributed to a growing understanding of the way these plays were originally performed.<sup>31</sup> What all these studies have shown is that though varied, the performance environments for most early printed plays conform to Suzanne Westfall's definition of 'private auspices': great households, ecclesiastical households, schools and colleges, and Inns of Court.<sup>32</sup> This book therefore works from the assumption that most early printed plays began life as entertainment written by and for elite coteries. The corollary to this is that when these plays appeared in print – even in modest runs of around 500 copies – they would have been available to a wider public for the first time.<sup>33</sup> In a majority of cases, therefore, it is the play as book – rather than the play as performance – that would have defined the primary encounter with the text, which perhaps explains the relative scarcity of performance space attributions. When early playbooks do commemorate past performance – as they do on just four occasions – they draw attention to the exclusivity of the event, thereby offering textual access where, for most potential purchasers, it would have been physically impossible to go. Far from devaluing a play's literary worth then, such attributions suggest that the advertisement of a performance event could contribute to a sense of a play's value, signalling to the reader its origins in the hallowed halls of England's great houses and institutions.

In addition to those plays with known or conjectured auspices, the *Annals* describes a further eleven early printed plays as 'offered for acting'. In her introduction to the third edition, Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim explains that the designation is reserved for a few early Elizabethan interludes printed with explicit doubling instructions, but the view that early printed playbooks functioned as scripts for performance has been adopted more widely, typically to bolster arguments about the subsequent emergence of drama as a literary genre.<sup>34</sup> Following this line of argument, early printed playbooks cannot be literary because their primary function is to facilitate performance, and performance, as we have seen, is inimical to the achievement of literary status. Over the course of the first two chapters of this book, I show that there are good reasons for questioning the pervasive view that doubling schemes and other 'performance aids' were designed to enable performance, and suggest instead that they functioned to shape readerly experience. This point is important because it suggests that the *Annals*' definition of closet drama as 'plays not intended for performance' is ripe for revision.<sup>35</sup> If fewer early printed plays were performed or intended for performance than has previously been allowed, then the paratextual and typographic differences between different play types, as defined by the *Annals*, may have less to do with their original or intended performance auspices than with the crystallisation of conventions for rendering legible different dramatic genres.

## 8 Introduction

Read this way, doubling instructions not only offer the user the possibility of performance, but also help label the type of play – interlude – and in doing so serve as a how-to guide for reading the play. In this respect, they are apiece with other kinds of front matter like prefaces or dedicatory epistles, which similarly shape readerly experience, albeit in different terms. Conversely, those plays conventionally labelled as ‘closet’ should be distinguished from other contemporary printed plays not because they were never intended for performance, but because, in their material form as playbooks, their prefatory materials teach ways of reading that mark them as generically distinct.

In its assumption that *all* early printed playbooks were designed as much for readerly consumption as for performance, the definition of ‘literary’ suggested by this book is not then one that pits literature against performance, but rather has to do with the reading strategies imagined for different types of plays. Consequently, in designating certain playbooks or playbook features ‘literary’, my intention is not to distinguish between plays designed for the closet and those for performance. Instead, I use the term specifically to refer to paratexts that draw attention to the playbook as an object to be read or which situate it within a particular cultural or intellectual milieu – typically the Inns of Court, but other elite settings too. So where other revisionist scholars have begun to reassess arguments about the low cultural status of playbooks in typographic or physical terms, this book argues that some playbooks were marked as literary by their paratextual apparatus.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, since these ‘literary’ paratexts became common only after the 1559 publication of *Troas*, this book proposes the 1560s and the 1570s as a unique period in English literary history when playbooks were marketed as literary artefacts for the first time. This key development is often overlooked in studies of later playbooks, since it suggests the public stage impeded rather than accelerated the literary reception of dramatic texts, thereby complicating accepted critical narratives about the emergence of drama as a literary genre. But how effective were these strategies for branding playbooks in this way? By analysing the attitudes of owners and readers towards their playbooks as demonstrated by their book-lists, binding practices, and marginalia, I show how some users subjected their playbooks – *irrespective of their genre or type* – to the same kind of engaged reading as they undertook with other non-dramatic works. Playbook users, in other words, were far less concerned with the distinction between the literary and the non-literary than scholars of today.

### Defining early printed drama

The date parameters for this book are the publication of the earliest extant playbook in English (c. 1512)<sup>37</sup> and the opening of London’s first successful permanent playhouse (1576).<sup>38</sup> But defining which works

printed during that time were considered drama is a much harder task. W. W. Greg's *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration* is still the standard catalogue for printed drama of the early modern period, but since that work was completed in 1959, a number of fragments and variants overlooked in its four volumes have come to light. Farmer and Lesser's *Database of Early English Playbooks* (an on-line resource that went live in 2007), which incorporates these materials in addition to everything in Greg, is therefore the most comprehensive list of printed playbooks produced in England, Scotland, and Ireland from the beginning of printing through 1660, and I derive my own list of plays printed between *c.* 1512 and 1576 directly from it. DEEP contains three types of records: single-play playbooks, collections, and plays in collections. Collections are printed books comprising two or more texts, including at least one play. Plays in collection are editions that were not published as books themselves but only as part of collections. Since this book is concerned primarily with the ways that plays became recognisable as distinct textual events, it focuses on the evidence of single-play playbooks. Of these, DEEP lists eighty-eight for the period *c.* 1512–76, but I count ninety-two. The reasons for this discrepancy can be explained as follows. Unlike DEEP, I have included every extant single-play playbook printed between *c.* 1512 and 1576 with its own STC number. This means that I have omitted DEEP 125, Gascoigne's *The Princely Pleasures at Kenilworth*, which is not in the STC because the only known copy was burned in a fire at the Free Public Library in Birmingham in 1879. But following this general policy, I have also made five additions. In a memoranda to the first volume of his *Bibliography*, Greg sets out the conventions for his bibliographical description, writing 'each play is given a serial number, and for this purpose each "part" is treated as a separate play'.<sup>39</sup> His comments are relevant here insofar as they pertain to three early printed plays printed as single volumes (each with just one STC reference) but separated into two parts by an internal title-page: *Fulgens and Lucrece*, *Gentleness and Nobility*, and *Nature* (all printed by John Rastell). By treating each of the parts that make up these plays as separate plays, Greg rendered them indistinguishable from the plays in collection also catalogued in his *Bibliography*. Consequently, when DEEP was compiled, these parts were entered as plays in collection. For the purposes of this book, they are treated as single-play playbooks and are therefore added to my count of single-play early printed playbooks. At the same time, because DEEP is mostly interested in substantive editions, records for variant issues and states are not included in its main, fully searchable data set. For the period up to and including 1576, two of these variants have unique STC numbers: Q1b *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene* and Q1b *The Glass of Government*. Consequently, these variants have been added to my list of early printed playbooks,

bringing the total number of single-play playbooks for the period c. 1512–76 to ninety-two.<sup>40</sup> All of the statistical analysis in the first three chapters of this book is based on this data set of ninety-two books, and all references to ‘early printed playbooks’ should be taken to mean this specific corpus of printed material.

When defining the scope and limits of his *Bibliography*, Greg asked: ‘what is the line that separates mere dialogue from formal drama?’<sup>41</sup> The distinction, he suggested, is simply a matter of structural complexity: ‘decision in individual cases is not difficult.’<sup>42</sup> Though he recognised plays and dialogues as contiguous, some of his assessments still seem arbitrary, determined largely by the way texts are described in their own titles, rather than on the basis of other literary, typographical, or presentational features. So, John Heywood’s ‘A mery *play* betwene the pardonor and the frere, the curate and neybour Pratte’ is in, but ‘A newe *Dialog* betwene thangell of God, & the Shepherdes in the felde’ is out.<sup>43</sup> Other scholarly works, from the *Annals* to the volumes published as part of the *Records of Early English Drama* project, identify drama far more broadly and include a number of the quasi-dramatic dialogues Greg did not consider drama, like the one between the angel and the shepherds ([1547?], STC 1733.5). One such work is Martin Wiggins’s *British Drama, 1533–1642*. In defining the generic grounds for inclusion in this catalogue, Wiggins explains: ‘to be deemed dramatic, a work must be fictive, however vestigially, and must include some element of narrative or scripted language.’<sup>44</sup> Wiggins’s *Catalogue* purports to include every identifiable dramatic work, whether extant or lost, written in any of the languages of the British Isles between 1533 and 1642, and its scope is consequently rather different to Greg’s *Bibliography*, which is concerned only with printed drama. However, even within his far broader conception of ‘drama’, Wiggins acknowledges that dialogues present a unique case:

Dialogues are of course unquestionably dramatic where there is evidence that they were performed or written for performance. Beyond that, the judgement turns on whether they contain characterization or fictive narrative which goes beyond merely an expository vehicle for the ideas expressed.<sup>45</sup>

On this basis, dialogues judged to have characterisation – the English translations of Desiderius Erasmus’s colloquies, for instance – are reckoned to be dramatic, while others, like dialectical treatises and certain poems, ballads, and songs, are not. Like Greg’s *Bibliography*, Wiggins’s *Catalogue* is arranged chronologically. But where Greg listed each play in order of publication, Wiggins arranges his entries by (the often conjectured) date of composition or performance. This point is important because it undergirds a way of thinking about

plays as theatrical rather than literary artefacts, even though, in the case of much early drama, the identification of a text as dramatic often rests entirely on the material evidence of its existence as a printed book. Since one of this book's aims is to assess the effectiveness of the print conventions developed in order to make drama a readily identifiable textual category, it draws on the evidence of a further nineteen texts (in twenty-nine separate editions) listed in Wiggins's *Catalogue* as dramatic but in this book referred to as 'quasi-dramatic'.<sup>46</sup> Reading these twenty-nine books alongside the corpus of ninety-two playbooks outlined above, I suggest that the *look* of plays in print – specifically, the ways that they were framed on their title-pages and in other front matter – can help to offer new ways of delimiting what we mean when we talk about drama. This book therefore explores some of the ways that the quasi-dramatic items in Wiggins's *Catalogue* are presentationally distinct from the early printed plays in Greg's *Bibliography*, and asks whether it might be possible to define early printed drama in paratextual terms.

The catalogues I have been discussing are indispensable to modern scholarship, but the desire to compile exhaustive lists of plays – however drama might be defined – can be traced back to the early modern period, and the earliest of them include in their tally a number of texts that Greg estimated insufficiently dramatic to be included in his own count. The earliest, 'An Alphabetically Catalogue of all such Plays that ever were Printed', was issued by the stationers Richard Rogers and William Ley and prepended to their edition of Thomas Goffe's *The Careless Shepherdess* (1656, Wing G1005). It comprises mostly plays written for the commercial theatres, but contains at least thirty-four pre-playhouse plays, including two plays in collection, and one dialogue not reckoned by Greg to be drama (but that does appear in Wiggins's *Catalogue*). A further five entries might refer to early printed plays, but the items are not described in enough detail to make the identification reliable; unlike later lists, authorship attributions are sporadic and occasionally incorrect, plays are not identified by genre, and sometimes appear more than once. Writing of this list, Maureen Bell has suggested it assumes a play-buying market, but framed as a list of every play ever printed it suggests not only that there was a market for plays, but also that there existed an *antiquarian* market for drama.<sup>47</sup> As Richard Schoch has argued, its function must have been to advertise Rogers and Ley's stock of some 505 printed plays, making it 'the earliest surviving document of a thriving trade in secondhand printed drama'.<sup>48</sup>

Later in 1656, the stationer Edward Archer produced his own catalogue, based on the one prepared by Rogers and Ley, but with an additional hundred plays; he also standardised authorship attribution, providing the names of all known authors, and suggested genre

indications for each play.<sup>49</sup> Some of these generic designations are eccentric and, in the case of early Elizabethan translations of Seneca, clearly wrong: John Studley's translation of *Agamemnon* is labelled as a comedy, while Jasper Heywood's version of *Hercules Furens* is identified as an interlude. When the bookseller Francis Kirkman produced his own playlist in 1661, 'an exact Catlogue of all the plays that were ever yet printed', he resolved many of these inconsistencies, correcting some genre designations and removing others altogether.<sup>50</sup> As a consequence, eleven pre-playhouse plays are not given genre indications, among them plays as diverse as *The Cruel Debtor*, *Hick Scornor*, and *Fulgens and Lucrece*. Ten years later, Kirkman revised his list, updating it to include a further hundred or so titles published in the intervening period.<sup>51</sup> Like Rogers and Ley, and Archer, Kirkman arranged both his lists alphabetically according to the first letter of the title. But within each letter, he introduced a new organisational logic, ordering plays according to a hierarchy of preferred playwrights. At the top of the list for each letter are plays that appear in folio editions of works by William Shakespeare, John Fletcher, and Jonson. Other, singly issued works by these authors come next, followed by plays by a handful of other playwrights deemed by Kirkman to have 'writ best' (Figure I.2).<sup>52</sup> As Schoch has noted, 'for the first time, explicit [...] judgments were issued about which playwrights mattered most in a document whose stated purpose was to list [...] the entire corpus of printed drama'.<sup>53</sup> For Kirkman, producing these lists became an act of canon formation, with priority given – in all senses of the word – to those plays judged by him as best.

In contrast to the folio editions of plays by Shakespeare, Fletcher, or Jonson, the pre-playhouse plays included by Kirkman tend to appear towards the bottom of the lists for each letter. Whereas their inclusion in catalogues by Rogers and Ley or Archer is best understood in terms of the comprehension intended by those lists, in Kirkman's two inventories, their position below other works is a marker of their lowly status. And routinely presented as anonymous and/or generically indistinct, they look different to the way other plays are presented too. For Kirkman, early printed plays might constitute drama, but that does not stop him from marking them out as less important than works by the ten playwrights he identifies as literary dramatists. In this regard, he is not so very different to his near contemporary, Richard Smith, whose habit of passing judgment on his extensive collection of playbooks reveals a similar impulse to denigrate early drama even as the fact of his ownership betrays a desire to possess it. By the end of the seventeenth century then, early printed playbooks were collectable not because they were any good, but because they were identified as belonging to the same textual category – drama – as plays by the great literary dramatists of subsequent eras.

		T			
<i>Will. Shakespear</i>	<b>T</b> empest.	C	<i>Chr. Marlow</i>	Tamberlain, 2d.	T
<i>Will. Shakespear</i>	Twelf nights, or what you will.	C	<i>Geo. VVapul</i>	Tyde tarrieth for no man.	C
<i>Will. Shakespear</i>	Taming of the Shrew.	C	<i>VV. VVayer</i>	The longer thou liuest the more fool thou art.	C
<i>Will. Shakespear</i>	Troylus and Cre- tida.	T		Tom Tyler, and his Wife.	I
<i>Will. Shakespear</i>	Titus Andronicus.	T		Tryal of Chival- ry.	C
<i>Will. Shakespear</i>	Tymon of Athens.	T		Travaills of the three English Brothers.	H
<i>John Fletcher</i>	Thierry and The- odore.	T	<i>Day VV. Rowley &amp; VVilkins.</i>	Tancred & Gif- mond.	T
<i>John Fletcher</i>	Two Noble Kinf- men.	TC	<i>Rob. VVilms</i>	Two Tragedies in one.	T
<i>Ben. Johnson</i>	Tale of a Tub.	C	<i>Rob. Yarrington</i>	Tr polin suppos'd a Prince.	TC
<i>Ben. Johnson</i>	Time Vindicated to himself & to his Honours.	M	<i>Sr. Asten Cockain</i>	Tyrannical Go- vernment.	I
<i>James Shirley</i>	Traytor.	T		Therfytes.	I
<i>James Shirley</i>	Triumph of Peace.	M		Troades.	T
<i>James Shirley</i>	Triumph of beau- ty.	M	<i>S. Partridge</i>	Tryal of treasure	T
<i>Tho. Middleton</i>	Trick to catch the old one.	C	<i>VVebster &amp; Rowly</i>	Thracian wonder.	H
<i>Geo. Chapman</i>	Temple.	M	<i>T. VV.</i>	Thornby Abbey.	T
<i>Geo. Chapman</i>	Two wife men, & all the rest fools.	C	<i>Tho. St. Seuse</i>	Tarugoes Wiles, or the Coffe- Houfe.	C
<i>Sir W. D' Avenant</i>	Temple of Love.	M		Tyrannick Love, or the Royal Martyr.	T
<i>Tho. Nabs</i>	Totenham Court.	C	<i>John Dryden</i>	Tryphon.	T
<i>W. Rider</i>	Twins.	TC	<i>Earl of Orrery</i>	Tartuff, or the French Puritan.	C
<i>Jasper Heywood</i>	True Trojans.	H	<i>M. Medburn</i>	Thomazo, or the Wanderer.	C
<i>Jasper Heywood</i>	Thyestes.	T	<i>Tho. Killigrew</i>		
<i>Jasper Heywood</i>	Troas.	T			
<i>Tho. Newton</i>	Thebais.	T			
<i>Chr. Marlow</i>	Tamberlain, 1st. part.	T			
V					
<i>John Fletcher</i>	<b>V</b> alentinian.	T	<i>Phil. Massenger</i>	Very VVoman.	C
<i>Ben. Johnson</i>	Vilion of delight.	M	<i>Phil. Massenger</i>	Virgin Martyr.	T
<i>Phil. Massenger</i>	Unnatural combat	T	<i>Sir W. D' Avenant</i>	Unfortunate Lo- vers.	T

Figure I.2 Extract from 'A True, perfect, and exact Catalogue of all the Comedies, Tragedies, Tragi-Comedies, Pastorals and Interludes, that were ever yet Printed and Published', in Pierre Corneille, *Nicomede*, trans. by John Dancer (for Francis Kirkman, 1671, Wing C6315), p. 14. San Marino, California, The Huntington Library, HM 135023.

### Reading drama in Tudor England

This late-seventeenth-century view of early printed plays – drama, but bad drama – has by and large persisted. In recent, New Textual accounts of the *literary* history of early modern drama, the cursory treatment of early printed playbooks simultaneously reflects their accepted

place in a textual tradition that includes Shakespeare, Jonson, and other celebrated writers for the public stage, and the view that they were produced as scripts with no readerly function.<sup>54</sup> In the words of Stephen Orgel, there was, in the mid-sixteenth century, ‘nothing to do with a play but perform it’.<sup>55</sup> That early printed plays feature in such studies at all is a direct consequence of the role played by the printing press in creating the distinct category of printed drama. The continued use of many of the conventions developed by early printers of plays for the expression of dramatic form by subsequent generations of printers means that early and mid-Tudor plays are nonetheless treated as belonging to a single textual category, even though that category tends to be defined by performance auspices that did not yet exist at the time they were printed. In other words, early printed plays are recognisable as drama on bibliographic grounds, but dismissed as sub-literary on cultural grounds.

Showing how the printing press found ways of communicating the form of vernacular plays in print, *Reading Drama in Tudor England* is a history of early printed playbooks before the opening of successful public theatres. Reading early printed playbooks alongside other, quasi-dramatic books, it argues that plays became legible – recognisable and readable – far earlier than has previously been acknowledged. Over the course of its four chapters, it moves from a consideration of implied to historical forms of use, and demonstrates that the receptive horizons imagined by producers of early printed playbooks were sometimes followed but often subverted at the hands of early users. The work of the first two chapters is to consider some of the formal features developed to render drama recognisable in print to a mixed audience of actors, readers, and other users. They therefore contribute to an understanding of the role played by paratexts in the translation of plays from performance events into printed books that has been the focus of other scholarly projects, like Thomas Berger and Sonia Massai’s two-volume *Paratexts in English Printed Drama*.<sup>56</sup>

Chapter 1 focuses on dramatic title-pages to explore the tactics deployed by printers to programme a range of different – and sometimes competing – receptive possibilities. The recent turn towards materiality in the study of texts has resulted in a range of important studies that demonstrate how paratexts, preliminaries, and printed marginalia both manage the reading process and define readership. Recently, Heidi Brayman Hackel and Massai have examined prefaces and other preliminaries, while William W. E. Slights has considered printed marginalia.<sup>57</sup> The development of title-pages in incunabula has been the subject of extended analysis, as has the role of later dramatic pages in the marketing of Elizabethan and Jacobean playbooks.<sup>58</sup> More recently, Alastair Fowler has written about the pictorial aspects of title-pages, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, concentrating on such

graphic features as architectural structures, portraits, and printers' devices.<sup>59</sup> His work is a welcome contribution to burgeoning discussion about the role of title-pages in book history, but is nonetheless typical of a tendency to separate illustration from text, to distinguish between visual and textual effects of title-pages. This chapter assesses the neglected role of sixteenth-century dramatic title-pages in shaping playbooks' receptive horizons. It focuses on the ways two common title-page features were nuanced to model reading experience: the wording and arrangement of titles themselves, and factotum figures and decorated woodcut borders.<sup>60</sup> It offers, for the first time, an integrated approach to early modern title-pages, one that considers the interactions between word and image, between the linguistic and typographic effects of conventional title-page features. And, demonstrating how these features reflect the different kinds of audiences that makers of playbooks hoped to reach, this chapter reveals how drama was made intelligible as material to be read.

Title-pages frame playtexts, but other paratextual features also contribute to their material transformation into playbooks. Chapter 2 examines the role of other front matter in defining and marketing early printed drama. Most early printed plays contain little in the way of prefatory material, but almost all playbooks contain character lists. Indeed, while character lists occur in only a third of all playbooks printed between 1590 and 1619, in the decades immediately prior to the opening of commercial theatres, this figure rises to around ninety per cent.<sup>61</sup> This chapter surveys their diversity in terms of form and function, and posits reasons for their ubiquity in the decades immediately preceding the establishment of permanent playhouses and their fall from favour in what Farmer and Lesser have described as the first 'boom' era of professional playing.<sup>62</sup> It seems obvious that character lists functioned to signpost the dramatic nature of the printed text, but this chapter argues that they also signalled particular types of drama at a time when printers were experimenting with the publication of a range of different dramatic genres: academic, closet, interlude, masque, pageant or entertainment, and translation. Challenging the common view that character lists prove the inherent relationship between early printed drama and performance, this chapter considers the extent to which they may have encouraged other, more readerly forms of use. Unlike character lists, which are present in the overwhelming majority of early printed playbooks, other kinds of front matter – dedicatory epistles, addresses to the reader, and other prefaces of all sorts – tend only to be associated with certain kinds of plays: translations of classical or Continental drama, plays associated with the Inns of Court or one of the two universities. This chapter therefore ends with a close reading of the front matter in Jasper Heywood's *Thyestes*, showing how its prefatory material may have been designed to advertise a specific set of cultural affiliations,

and in so doing suggest particular forms of use appropriate to its genre (Senecan tragedy) and its cultural milieu (the Inns of Court).

Where the first two chapters are about the role of paratexts in the making of early printed drama, the third chapter considers more thoroughly the role of authors, their representatives, publishers, and printers in producing printed playbooks. Arguing that stationers (meaning practitioners of any of the trades involved in book production) should be seen as critical readers whose interpretations had a material impact on the presentation of drama in print, this chapter builds on the work of collections like Marta Straznický's *Shakespeare's Stationers*.<sup>63</sup> But where earlier efforts to expand the agency afforded to stationers have remained Shakespeare-centric, this chapter considers the earlier Tudor period as a powerful corrective to what is currently accepted about the print publication of playbooks. Blayney's account of 'The Publication of Playbooks' is still the standard work on the subject, but as a guide to early playbook publication, it needs to be read alongside Walker's work on early Tudor drama and the printed text.<sup>64</sup> This chapter revisits those essays, suggesting ways that the process outlined by Blayney should be revised to accommodate the rather different circumstances of early and mid-Tudor book and play production.<sup>65</sup> Beginning with an analysis of stationers' inventories, I suggest the trade for early printed playbooks was clearly unpredictable: some plays seem to have sold out quite quickly, while in other cases, substantial stock remained years after the publisher's death. Why then were plays ever printed? One answer to this question is suggested by the complex forms of authority represented in and by early printed playbooks themselves. Blayney has cautioned against confusing the roles of publisher and printer, but as I have already indicated, prior to the incorporation of the Stationers' Company, a single person often undertook both roles. Furthermore, in certain circumstances, it seems likely that authors also had a financial stake, thereby assuming some of the duties associated with publishers. This chapter therefore returns to the kinds of front matter considered in the previous chapter, and arguing that prefaces provide unique insight into the relationships between authors and agents of the printing press, I show how they can contribute to an understanding of why and how early plays were printed. Douglas Brooks has suggested that author attribution was not a priority on title-pages of plays printed in the first few decades of the professional theatre, and has noted that less than twenty per cent of the extant published plays feature the name of the author on the title-page.<sup>66</sup> However, if we discount the evidence of plays that survive only in copies that lack a title-page, just over half of all playbooks printed before the opening of the theatres give the name of the author on the title-page. Although early modern authors had almost no legal rights to intellectual property, the attribution of a text to an author has long been recognised as one means of assessing its validity as a piece of literature, and in the final section

of this chapter, I ask whether the high incidence of author attribution in early printed playbooks can shed light on their consumption as objects to be read. Reading author attributions alongside other expressions of authority – imprints, colophons, notes of allowance or license – I suggest that it is the legibility of authority *in all its forms*, rather than author attributions per se, that mark a text as appropriate for that particular form of readerly consumption commonly designated as ‘literary’.

The first three chapters of this book consider the strategies used to shape different kinds of reading experience. But while such strategies may have been intended to direct particular groups of readers to approach playbooks in specific ways, historical patterns of use are often far less predictable. Turning from these implied readers and reading practices, the final chapter examines a range of material traces that show what happened to the surviving 300 or so copies of pre-playhouse-printed playbooks once they had left the various bookshops and stalls and passed into the hands of real readers and other consumers. Readers’ marks have been central to various accounts of early modern reading. Traditionally focused on what Brayman Hackel has described as the annotations made by ‘extraordinary’ readers – men (and sometimes women) of letters and other professional readers – in recent years, the marks left by less noteworthy or even anonymous users have been the subject of critical attention.<sup>67</sup> However, where such studies have been concerned with the marks found in extant copies of a single text or edition of a text, this chapter surveys the signs of use pertaining to an entire corpus of texts: plays printed before 1577. Moreover, while the problems associated with the analysis of marginalia have long been recognised, annotations are still considered the best evidence of early modern reading. Taking account of this paradox, this chapter surveys copies of early printed plays for marks of use from erudite annotations to marks of ownership, scribbles to ink spots. But it also considers two other types of evidence: book-lists and *Sammelbände*. Considering plays as a textual category that sits between the practical and the literary, the broad range of evidence considered in this chapter reveals much about the ways early printed playbooks were actually used. And, while signs of ownership (entries in book-lists, signatures, book curses) imply the implicit value invested in these books as material objects, evidence of more engaged use (the compilation of bound volumes, underlinings, summaries, cross references) suggests that some readers were treating their playbooks in much the same way as other categories of writing. Following the precedent of increasingly legible conventions for the presentation of printed drama, the evidence of extant copies suggests that by the end of the pre-playhouse era, playbooks were rarely just performance aids but rather objects to be read, held, and valued.

*Reading Drama in Tudor England* suggests that the supreme achievement of early printers of plays was to develop ways of articulating the

form of drama that rendered entire plays rather than their constituent parts the primary unit of sense. Primarily comprising speech acts, all plays are, in essence, fragments. But constituted in the printed form of playbooks, they are made recognisable as complete entities, unities. And it is a direct consequence of this development that they become useful as objects to be read, even if the response to their use in this way is to label them, like Richard Smith, as old or tedious. That printers found ways to articulate the form of drama therefore communicates the dual sense by which plays are articulated. They comprise speech acts, given utterance to.<sup>68</sup> But as each of these speech acts is joined together, they are articulated in the way individual bones might be joined together to form a skeleton.<sup>69</sup> As printed playbooks then, plays become more than their component parts. But while plays are made up of parts, of the lines assigned to each character, sometimes they could be broken up into different kinds of fragments, and pieces of early printed plays often turn up inside the covers of other books as written or printed excerpts, or as binding waste. Concluding this book, I examine three such extracts, and show that while early printed playbooks did not always endure as coherent material entities, the forms that they articulate would continue to exert a powerful influence on the presentation of printed drama for decades to come.

## Notes

- 1 This copy is now bound with *The pleasauntest workes of George Gascoigne* (1587, STC 11639).
- 2 Q1b *The Glass of Government*, sig. A1<sup>r</sup>, Bod. Mal. 588. See also sig. N1<sup>r</sup> in the same book.
- 3 On the obverse practice of selective reading, see, for instance, Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass, 'The First Literary *Hamlet* and the Commonplac-ing of Professional Plays', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 59 (2008), 371–420. I return to the issue of commonplac-ing plays in this book's Conclusion.
- 4 Many of these were acquired from another early collector, Humfrey Dyson, and would eventually pass into the library of David Garrick. See George M. Kahrl in collaboration with Dorothy Anderson, *The Garrick Collection of Old Plays: A Catalogue with An Historical Introduction* (London: The British Library, 1982), pp. 12–15.
- 5 Claire M. Bourne suggests something similar for the notes that the eighteenth-century actor John Philip Kemble left at the beginning and end of playbooks in his collection. See Claire M. Bourne, "This Play I Red" and Other Marginal Notes on Reading', *The Collation: Research and Exploration at the Folger* (5 March 2015) <collation.folger.edu/2015/03/this-play-i-red-and-other-marginal-notes-on-reading> [accessed 17 July 2017].
- 6 On Smith's designation of certain plays as relics, see Chapter 4, p. 168.
- 7 This label occurs at the beginning of another play by Gascoigne, *Jocasta*, collected in his *A hundreth sundrie flowres*. See George Gascoigne, *A hundreth sundrie flowres* ([1573], STC 11635), sigs K3<sup>v</sup> and K4<sup>v</sup>, BL 644.a.15(1).
- 8 Julie Stone Peters, *The Theatre of the Book, 1480–1880: Print, Text, and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 23.

- 9 Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). This term is discussed in great depth at the beginning of Chapter 1, pp. 25–26. On the vendibility of early modern playbooks, see Adam G. Hooks, *Selling Shakespeare: Biography, Bibliography, and the Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), esp. p. 27.
- 10 Sonia Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 60.
- 11 ‘Legible, *adj.*, 3., 2.’, *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, June 2017) <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/107079](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/107079)> [accessed 19 July 2017].
- 12 Peter W. M. Blayney, ‘The Publication of Playbooks’, in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. by David Scott Kastan and John Cox (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 383–422 (p. 391).
- 13 On the publisher’s role in the design of title-pages, see Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, ‘Vile Arts: The Marketing of English Printed Drama, 1512–1660’, *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 39 (2000), 77–165. On the publisher’s role in the production of front matter, see Kirk Melnikoff, ‘Jones’s Pen and Marlowe’s Socks: Richard Jones’s *Tamburlaine the Great* (1590), and the Beginnings of English Dramatic Literature’, *Studies in Philology*, 102 (2005), 184–209; and Kirk Melnikoff, ‘Thomas Hacket and the Ventures of an Elizabethan Publisher’, *The Library*, 7th ser., 10 (2009), 257–71. See also his forthcoming *Elizabethan Publishing and the Makings of Literary Culture* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2018). For a recent overview of some of the other duties undertaken by publishers, see Tara Lyons, ‘Publishers of Drama’, in *A New Companion to Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Arthur F. Kinney and Thomas Warren Hopper (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), pp. 560–75 (pp. 561–64).
- 14 See Blayney, ‘Publication of Playbooks’.
- 15 On the readerly consumption of medieval drama, see Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Public Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007); and Carol Symes, ‘The Appearance of Early Vernacular Plays: Forms, Function, and the Future of Medieval Theater’, *Speculum*, 77 (2002), 778–831. It perhaps bears noting that many medieval English plays survive only in post-medieval witnesses. In some cases, these seem to have been influenced by established print conventions for the presentation of drama. On this point, see my article ‘Playbooks and Printed Drama: A Reassessment of the Date and Layout of the Manuscript of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*’, *Review of English Studies*, 60 (2009), 194–204.
- 16 Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, ‘The Popularity of Playbooks Revisited’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 56 (2005), 1–32 (7). The data underpinning their argument have now been made widely available as the *Database of Early English Playbooks*, and much of the statistical analysis in this book draws from this indispensable resource.
- 17 Blayney, ‘Publication of Playbooks’; Peter W. M. Blayney, ‘The Alleged Popularity of Playbooks’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 56 (2005), 33–50; Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, ‘Structures of Popularity in the Early Modern Book Trade’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 56 (2005), 206–13; Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, ‘What is Print Popularity? A Map of the Elizabethan Book Trade’, in *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England*, ed. by Andy Kesson and Emma Smith (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 19–54. See also, for instance, Andy Kesson, *John Lyly and Early Modern Authorship* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), Ch. 4, pp. 138–73; Emma Smith, ‘“To Buy, or Not to Buy”: *Hamlet* and Consumer Culture’, *Shakespeare Studies*, 39 (2011), 188–208; and,

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- Holger B. Syme, 'The Meaning of Success: Stories of 1594 and Its Aftermath', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 61 (2010), 490–525.
- 18 'Popularity, n. 3', *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, June 2017) <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/147912](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/147912)> [accessed 19 July 2017]. On the criteria for assessing popularity, see Blayney, 'Publication of Playbooks', pp. 384–89.
  - 19 Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd edn (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. xiii. On the difficulty of defining popular culture, see Andy Kesson and Emma Smith, 'Introduction: Towards a Definition of Print Popularity', in *The Elizabethan Top Ten*, pp. 1–15; and Joad Raymond, 'Introduction: The Origins of Popular Culture', in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture, Volume I: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 1–14.
  - 20 Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Towards Mixtures and Margins', *American Historical Review*, 97 (1992), 1409–16 (1411); Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield, 'Introduction', in *Literature and Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. by Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 1–12 (p. 3).
  - 21 *Letters of Sir Thomas Bodley to Thomas James, First Keeper of the Bodleian Library*, ed. by G. W. Wheeler (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926), letter no. 221 (21 January 1612).
  - 22 Tessa Watts, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 259.
  - 23 In a recent essay, Farmer and Lesser have outlined some of the challenges in linking these two concepts of popularity. See Farmer and Lesser, 'What is Print Popularity?', pp. 19–20. They discuss these ideas further in their forthcoming book, *Print, Plays, and Popularity in Shakespeare's England*.
  - 24 For examples of this older view, see Richard Dutton, *Ben Jonson: To the First Folio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), esp. pp. 1–22; and Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
  - 25 For *Every Man Out*, see Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 136–37; and David Scott Kastan, *Shakespeare and the Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 17. For *Sejanus*, see Philip Ayers, 'The Iconography of Jonson's *Sejanus*, 1605: Copy-Text for the Revels Edition', in *Editing Texts: Papers from a Conference at the Humanities Research Centre, May 1984*, ed. by J. C. Eade (Canberra: Humanities Research Centre, Australian National University, 1985), pp. 47–53; and John Jowett, 'Jonson's Authorization of Type in *Sejanus* and Other Early Quartos', *Studies in Bibliography*, 44 (1991), 254–65. For *Hamlet*, see Lesser and Stallybrass. And for *Tambulaine*, see Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 57–79.
  - 26 Erne, p. 57.
  - 27 Kastan, p. 17.
  - 28 The phrase occurs twice in titles to work about the transformation of play-scripts into printed works of literature. See Douglas A. Brooks, *From Playhouse to Printing House: Drama and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Kastan, Ch. 1, 'From playhouse to printing house; or, making a good impression', pp. 14–49.
  - 29 See *Damon and Pithias*; O1 and O2 *Gorboduc*; and *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. Records survive for performances of John Bale's plays *God's Promises*, *The Temptation of Our Lord*, and *Three Laws*. Performances have been

- conjectured for a number of other early plays, often on the basis of internal references to possible auspices.
- 30 Sixty-nine plays in ninety-two editions were published between *c.* 1512 and 1576. On these figures and the term ‘pre-playhouse’, see pp. 6–11.
  - 31 See Elisabeth Dutton, ‘John Heywood, Henry, and Hampton Court’, in *Performing Environments: Site-Specificity in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by Susan Bennett and Mary Polito (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 36–55; Maura Giles-Watson, ‘John Rastell’s London Stage: Reconstructing Repertory and Collaborative Practice’, *Early Theatre*, 16 (2013), 171–84; and Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
  - 32 Suzanne Westfall, *Patrons and Performance: Early Tudor Household Revels* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), p. 5. One possible exception is the purpose-built stage that John Rastell seems to have built at Finsbury in 1524. Since records of this stage survive only in lawsuits brought forward some years later in 1530 and 1531, it is hard to know whether it was used for public or more private performances. See Janette Dillon, ‘John Rastell’s Stage’, *Medieval English Theatre*, 18 (1996), 15–45.
  - 33 On the size of early dramatic print runs, see Chapter 3.
  - 34 *Annals*, p. xviii. For a recent elaboration of this view, see Kesson, p. 153.
  - 35 *Annals*, p. xviii.
  - 36 The argument that playbooks were ‘cheap quartos’ and therefore not literary has been brilliantly dismantled by three important articles: Joseph A. Dane and Alexandra Gillespie, ‘The Myth of the Cheap Quarto’, in *Tudor Books and Readers: Materiality and the Construction of Meaning*, ed. by John N. King (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 25–45; Alan B. Farmer, ‘Playbooks and the Question of Ephemerality’, in *The Book in History, The Book as History: New Intersections of the Material Text, Essays Honoring David Scott Kastan*, ed. by Heidi Brayman, Jesse M. Lander, and Zachary Lesser (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 87–125; and Aaron Pratt, ‘Stab-Stitching and the Status of Early English Playbooks as Literature’, *The Library*, 7th ser., 16 (2015), 304–28. On the role of typography in shaping the literary reception of playbooks, see Claire M. Bourne, ‘Dramatic Pilecrows’, *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 108 (2014), 313–52; and Douglas A. Brooks, ‘*King Lear* (1608) and the Typography of Literary Ambition’, *Renaissance Drama*, 30 (1999), 133–59.
  - 37 The publication date of the earliest extant printed playbook remains uncertain. The STC suggests a date range of 1512 to 1516; Blayney offers 1514? as a ‘statistical adjustment’. In the table ‘Early Printed Playbooks, *c.* 1512–1576’ and elsewhere in this book, I adopt Blayney’s dating for this and twelve other early playbooks. See Blayney, II, 1052, 1029.
  - 38 Earlier experiments with purpose-built playhouses include John Rastell’s stage on property fronting on Old Street in Finsbury and The Red Lion, built by John Brayne in Stepney in 1567, but The Theatre seems to have marked the establishment of the first commercially viable playhouse. Though the first professional plays were not printed until 1584, this study takes the opening of The Theatre as the end of the pre-playhouse era. On Rastell’s stage, see Giles-Watson. On The Red Lion see Janet S. Loengard, ‘An Elizabethan Lawsuit: John Brayne, His Carpenter, and the Building of the Red Lion Theatre’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 34 (1983), 298–310; and Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry, and William Ingram, *English Professional Theatre, 1530–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 290–94.

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- 39 Greg, I, 80.
- 40 However, I exclude two variants included in Greg (and DEEP) without separate STC entries. Greg 36a† (DEEP 55), is a variant state of *Oedipus*, with a different setting for two leaves of F; Greg 68aiii (DEEP 90) is another issue of *The Glass of Government*, with an inserted dedication to Sir Owen Hopton. I also omit subsequent editions of pre-playhouse plays printed after 1577, of which there are at least eight before 1600.
- 41 Greg, IV, xii.
- 42 Greg, IV, xii.
- 43 My emphasis. Similarly, because he felt translations should not be classed as plays unless they develop dramatic latencies in the original, Inns of Court translations of Seneca make it onto his list, but John Palsgrave's translation of *Acolastus* is left out.
- 44 Wiggins, I, xii.
- 45 Wiggins, I, xiii.
- 46 In total, then, the plays and quasi-dramatic materials treated in this book amount to seventy-six individual texts in 121 separate editions or issues.
- 47 Maureen Bell, 'Booksellers Without an Author, 1627–1685', in *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture: A Companion to the Collected Works*, ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007), pp. 260–85 (p. 271).
- 48 Richard Schoch, *Writing the History of the British Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), p. 52.
- 49 Philip Massinger, Thomas Middleton, and William Rowley, *The Old Law* (1656, Wing M1048).
- 50 This list is appended to Kirkman's antiquarian edition of a hitherto unpublished Tudor comedy, *Tom Tyler and His Wife* (1661, Wing T1792 and Wing T1792a).
- 51 This version appears appended to John Dancer's translation of Pierre Corneille's *Nicomede* (1671, Wing C6315).
- 52 'An Advertisement to the Reader', in *Nicomede*, but with 'A True, perfect, and exact Catalogue of all the Comedies, Tragedies, Tragi-Comedies, Pastorals, Masques and Interludes, that were ever yet Printed' separately paginated, p. 16.
- 53 Schoch, p. 56.
- 54 On the term 'New Textual', see Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, 'The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 44 (1993), 255–83 (p. 276).
- 55 Stephan Orgel, 'The Book of the Play', in *From Performance to Print in Shakespeare's England*, ed. by Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 13–54 (p. 15).
- 56 Thomas L. Berger and Sonia Massai (eds), *Paratexts in English Printed Drama to 1642*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
- 57 Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Literacy, and Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Sonia Massai, 'Editorial Pledges in Early Modern Dramatic Paratexts', in *Renaissance Paratexts*, ed. by Helen Smith and Louise Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 91–106; W. E. Slights, *Managing Readers: Printed Marginalia in English Renaissance Books* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).
- 58 Margaret M. Smith, *The Title-Page: Its Early Development, 1460–1510* (London: The British Library, 2000); Peter Berek, 'Genres, Early Modern Theatrical Title Pages, and the Authority of Print', in *The Book of the*

- Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. by Marta Straznicky (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), pp. 159–75, and his ‘Tragedy and Title-Pages: Nationalism, Protestantism, and Print’, *Modern Philology*, 106 (2008), 1–24; and, Gabriel Egan, “‘As it was, is, or will be played’”: Title-Pages and the Theatre Industry to 1610’, in *From Performance to Print in Shakespeare’s England*, pp. 92–110.
- 59 Alastair Fowler, *The Mind of the Book: Pictorial Title-Pages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).
- 60 Other common title-page features – character lists, author attributions, and imprints – are considered in subsequent chapters.
- 61 Tamara Atkin and Emma Smith, ‘The Form and Function of Character Lists in Plays Printed Before the Closing of the Theatres’, *Review of English Studies*, 65 (2014), 647–72.
- 62 Farmer and Lesser, ‘The Popularity of Playbooks Revisited’, 7.
- 63 Marta Straznicky, ‘Introduction: What is a Stationer?’ in *Shakespeare’s Stationers: Studies in Cultural Bibliography*, ed. by Marta Straznicky (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 1–16 (p. 2).
- 64 Walker, pp. 6–50.
- 65 Blayney, ‘Publication of Playbooks’.
- 66 Brooks, *From Playhouse to Printing House*, p. 10.
- 67 Hackel; Antonina Harbus, ‘A Renaissance Reader’s English Annotations to Thynne’s 1532 Edition of Chaucer’s *Works*’, *Review of English Studies*, 59 (2008), 342–55; and Alison Wiggins, ‘What Did Renaissance Readers Write in Their Printed Copies of Chaucer?’, *The Library*, 7th ser., 9 (2008), 3–36. See Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, “‘Studied for Action’”: How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy’, *Past and Present*, 129 (1990), 30–78; William B. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), and his *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
- 68 ‘Articulate, v., 5. a.’, *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, June 2017) <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/11190](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/11190)> [accessed 21 July 2017].
- 69 ‘Articulate, v., 9. b.’, *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, June 2017) <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/11190](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/11190)> [accessed 21 July 2017]. On articulation as connection, see Jennifer Daryl Slack, ‘The Theory and Method of Articulation in Cultural Studies’, in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. by David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 112–27.

# 1 Reading early printed dramatic title-pages

To encounter a book today is to encounter a range of different possibilities. We might browse the shelves of a bookshop, attracted to a colourful book jacket or the gold debossed letters of the title on a spine. Or we might seek out the same book electronically, keying in the terms of our desire into a search engine or online library catalogue. Such interactions can still result in ‘hands-on’ experience with the book as physical object; some time after ordering or purchasing a book online, it will arrive at our home, office, or library issue desk. But often, in material terms, we need not meet at all; whether online, or by way of an especially designed app or device, books can and are readily consumed on a variety of digital platforms and interfaces. However, for most of the sixteenth century, to encounter a book, and specifically, to encounter a book hot off the press and available to purchase in a bookseller’s shop, was to encounter the title-page. It was on the basis of this one page that the fate of a book – its success or failure in the marketplace – would largely be determined.

The *OED* defines a title-page as ‘the page at (or near) the beginning of a book which bears the title’.<sup>1</sup> It’s a curiously perfunctory definition, and one that fails both to accommodate the other features conventionally found on many title-pages and to account for the work such pages perform. In fact, in addition to recording the word’s earliest usages in the seventeenth century, the *OED*’s illustrative quotations provide a more accurate indicator of its early modern meaning and use. In addition to the title of the work, title-pages were frequently illustrated (‘Upon the Title-page is the Picture of the Queen in copper’), and often contained author attributions (‘Our Title page acknowledges him to be that famous Botero, the Italian’).<sup>2</sup> But more than that, they stood apart from the ‘body’ of the work and were consequently tasked with promoting it.<sup>3</sup> It is this particular function of the title-page that gave rise, early in its history, to the word’s more abstract use: ‘in a word, he is the index of a man, and the title-page of a scholler,..much in profession, nothing in practice’.<sup>4</sup> In this early seventeenth-century example, the word has been deployed figuratively: men, like books, should not always be valued on the basis of their outward appearance; slick advertising does not guarantee the quality of the product. In the early modern period as much as today, the material book was used for teaching proverbial lessons: do not

judge books by their covers (or title-pages);<sup>5</sup> people are not always what they seem.

This distinction between title-pages and texts that follow them, including the possibility that one might inaccurately represent the other, has been foregrounded in recent studies of the early modern book, thanks in no small part to the work of Gérard Genette, whose *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* has provided a vocabulary for writing about those parts of the book – title-pages, dedicatory epistles, commendatory verses, addresses to the reader, etc. – outside of the ‘authorial text’.<sup>6</sup> Genette’s work does not map perfectly onto the field of early modern book studies, and critics have been quick to note that his focus on nineteenth- and twentieth-century French fiction inevitably introduces problems for the strict application of his terminology to the first centuries of print in Britain.<sup>7</sup> Most pointedly, his suggestion that paratext is ‘always the conveyor of a commentary that is authorial or more or less legitimated by the author’ is clearly problematic in a culture where books were printed frequently without an author attribution and sometimes with no traceable input from the author.<sup>8</sup> Even when an authorial agent is signalled on the title-page or elsewhere, books, more often than not, were sites of contestation between the author and the various agents of the press. As William B. Sherman has demonstrated:

Were Genette more interested in moving back in time to trace the emergence and evolution of the paratext, he would quickly reach a point where “authorial responsibility” is too embryonic and diffuse to be considered a universal (or at least defining) feature.<sup>9</sup>

And, as Michael Saenger has shown, ‘in Renaissance front matter, fixing meaning is subordinate to advertising the text; the purpose and genres of front matter are entirely different in the Renaissance from those in the post-Enlightenment era’.<sup>10</sup> Far from simply advancing the views and authority of a stable and well-defined author, early modern paratexts are more likely to represent and further the printer’s or publisher’s agenda. And while the desire to sell books is arguably one way that the interests of an author and stationer will always overlap, in the early modern period, prefatory paratexts often highlight ways that printers and publishers set out to create horizons of reception that may well have been unimaginable to the authors whose work they were publishing.

Despite these anachronisms, in his most cited and citable metaphor, Genette still offers the best way in for thinking about the title-page as paratext:

The paratext is what enables a text to become a book and to be offered as such to its readers and, more generally, to the public. More than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a *threshold*, or [...] a ‘vestibule’ that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back.<sup>11</sup>

The figure of the threshold or vestibule turns up frequently in Renaissance writing about title-pages, and the preliminary space of the porch or portico regularly features in title-page illustration.<sup>12</sup> But more than simply offering possibility, the choice to step inside or turn back, these pages, with their frames, archways, and other architectural edifices, functioned like gatekeepers, designed to attract certain readers, whilst keeping others out. Title-pages, as Stephen Orgel has noted, ‘were the first thing readers saw, and the principle typographic inducement to buy’.<sup>13</sup> It is this oft-repeated argument – that since books were, for the most part, sold unbound, title-pages served as advertisements<sup>14</sup> – that no doubt explains the recent fascination with title-pages for scholars of early modern books. Perhaps more than any other part of the early modern book, they offer unrivalled access to the various ways that printers and publishers built and consolidated markets, and promoted particular strategies for reading.

This is no less true for early English playbooks than it is for other categories of text. Ninety-two single-play playbooks were printed before the establishment of successful, permanent playhouses in London in the late 1570s.<sup>15</sup> Of these, fourteen are extant in imperfect copies for which there is no surviving title-page. However, while the title-pages to playbooks of plays written for and performed by professional actors in public and private playhouses have been subject to the same scrutiny as other early modern title-pages, those that preface pre-playhouse drama have tended to be overlooked.<sup>16</sup> One reason for this critical oversight is the widely accepted view that the earliest English playbooks cannot have been intended for readerly consumption. It is a position that informs much recent writing about the relationship between early modern drama and literature, and is the premise that lies at the heart of Lukas Erne’s *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (2003) and its follow-up *Shakespeare and the Book Trade* (2013):

For part of Elizabeth’s reign, most playbooks were little more than ‘do-it-yourself’ staging aids (with doubling charts and the number of actors needed to perform the play indicated on the title page) or records of performance (‘As it hath been performed...’), yet towards the end of the century, they started being read as literature, and in the course of the seventeenth century, they received the dignity of Folio publication [...] as culturally prestigious works.<sup>17</sup>

In categorising early-Tudor playbooks as ‘staging aids’, Erne drives a wedge between what he calls ‘literature’ and the various other and more practical ways that such books could be used. As he acknowledges, this stance is in turn indebted to the earlier work of Paul Voss, who, in an

influential article, outlines the three-stage process by which playbooks eventually came to be realised as literature:

Early in the reign of Elizabeth I, printed quarto plays were promoted initially as aids to staging a drama and later as records of performance. By the end of the sixteenth century, as both the performed and printed play became far more common, it seems likely that plays started to be *read* as literature. Finally, during the reign of James I, printed plays started to be *treated* as literature.<sup>18</sup>

In reading the early history of printed drama as an inevitable march towards the achievement of literary status, Voss, and those critics who have been influenced by him, deny the possibility that playbooks may have served different functions for different users, including those who routinely subjected them to more readerly use even before the rise of the professional theatres.

This chapter argues that the tendency to read pre-playhouse playbooks in the light of the subsequent rise of the professional theatres has skewed our understanding of the ways they may have been accorded meaning by those responsible for their publication. When assessed on the basis of later developments and conventions, the title-pages to England's earliest playbooks seem to advertise books intended for a single purpose: as scripts for amateur performance. But this widespread view of early printed drama as performative and therefore sub-literary relies on a circular logic that turns all discussion of pre-playhouse playbooks to the status of backstory, useful only insofar as it can be corralled to highlight the gradual emergence of drama as a literary genre in the decades after the establishment of successful commercial playhouses. In this chapter, my intention is to reappraise the title-pages of early printed playbooks. Rather than reading them alongside the title-pages of later plays, I situate them in the context of other related categories of text – dialogues and other varieties of cultural ephemera<sup>19</sup> – which highlight that as early as the mid-sixteenth century, printers and other print agents envisaged horizons of reception for their playbooks that went beyond amateur performance. Consequently, the title-pages sampled in this chapter include not only all ninety-two single-play early printed playbooks, but also a further twenty-nine works listed in Wiggins, mainly comprising dialogues and other quasi-dramatic materials. My intention is twofold. First, I aim to elucidate the ways stationers used title-pages to make the category of drama readily identifiable. However, I also seek to demonstrate that stationers clearly sought to market playbooks in ways comparable to other entertainment categories of text. In short, by the middle of the sixteenth century, printers and other print agents were seeking to create and consolidate markets for their playbooks that extended beyond amateur players.

When searching DEEP for records of plays printed in England through (and including) 1660, possible title-page features are listed as follows: title, author, performance, imprint, Latin motto, and illustration. Clearly, by the middle of the seventeenth century, a concentration of these features was to be expected of most dramatic title-pages, which consequently explains their inclusion in DEEP's drop-down lists of searchable terms. However, earlier in the sixteenth century, when stationers were evolving new ways of articulating drama as a printed form, some of these items rarely feature at all. For instance, Latin mottos occur on just two title-pages of plays printed before 1577,<sup>20</sup> while notes about past performance – ‘as it hath been publicly played’ – were only routinely adopted with the rise of public theatres.<sup>21</sup> For that reason, this chapter focuses on two key features of early printed playbook title-pages: title and illustration. Other features common or ubiquitous to pre-playhouse playbooks – character lists and author attributions – are treated elsewhere in Chapters 2 and 3.<sup>22</sup> In elucidating how stationers used titles and illustration to make vernacular drama both legible and attractive to a range of different users, I am interested in what might broadly be described as the way linguistic and typographic features intersect. In this respect, this study differs from other recent accounts of title-page features, which have tended to focus on *either* the effect of word *or* image. So, for instance, while Eleanor Shevlin's illuminating 1999 article provides a carefully argued account of the history of the title's contractual functions, her insistence that ‘the title of a written work is made wholly of verbal matter’ closes down the possibility that word order and choice might interact with font and other aspects of textual arrangement and layout.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Peter Berek's discussion of generic markers (‘comedy’, ‘tragedy’, ‘history’, etc.) on dramatic title-pages overlooks how the meaning of any such terms is necessarily nuanced as a consequence of both active and accidental decisions on the part of the printer or compositor.<sup>24</sup> So, in addition to attending to the way language and phrasing changed as markets grew, this chapter also aims to illustrate the role of title-page typography and illustration in creating in drama a distinct and immediately recognisable category of printed text.

### From title to title-page

Medieval dramatic manuscripts do not have title-pages. Indeed, they rarely have titles.<sup>25</sup> None of the three so-called ‘morality plays’ in the mid-fifteenth-century Macro Manuscript (Washington, DC, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V. a.354) are given titles anywhere in that manuscript; the titles *The Castle of Perseverance*, *Wisdom*, and *Mankind* are modern inventions, popularised by the plays' nineteenth-century editors. A second, incomplete copy of *Wisdom* in the composite manuscript Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 133 likewise occurs without

a title. The other three plays in Digby 133 are given titles, but two occur as scribal colophons, appearing at the end of the text rather than prefacing it.<sup>26</sup> Only *Candelmes day and the kylling of þe children* is given a proper full title, which occurs before the text of the play at the top of fol. 146<sup>r</sup>. The same hand was also responsible for inscribing the date 1512 on either side of the same page, making the production of this copy roughly co-terminus with the publication of the first printed playbook.<sup>27</sup>

This short excursus through some late-medieval dramatic manuscripts is far from comprehensive, but it does begin to hint that a later copying date increases the likelihood that a play will appear with a full title, even if that title occurs at the end of the text. This is certainly the case for the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* (Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS F.4.20), which was copied towards the middle of the sixteenth century, and contains the following colophon in the hand of the third scribe:

Thus endyth the Play of the Blyssyd Sacrament, whyche myracle was don in the forest of Aragon, in the famous cité Eraclea, the yere of owr Lord God X cccc. lxj, to whom be honowr, Amen<sup>28</sup>

As a titular statement, it sits – quite literally – between medieval scribal and early print conventions. The long, descriptive title, with its succinct plot synopsis and pious framing, clearly borrows from earlier manuscript conventions.<sup>29</sup> But the provision of a date – in this case, of the performed miracle, rather than the copying or composition of the play – is very much apiece with early print practice. As Julie Stone Peters has argued in what is currently the only book-length study of the evolution of the form of plays in Europe, plays in manuscripts produced after the spread of printing were clearly influenced by the new technology and ‘have new or newly emphasized features setting them apart from earlier plays’.<sup>30</sup> The impulse to date a work in some shape or form is very much a part of these developments.

Given these trends, the absence of title-pages in some of the earliest printed plays is perhaps unsurprising. As Margaret M. Smith has shown, in the 1510s, when the first plays were printed, full title-pages, replete with title, author’s name, decoration, and imprint, were still a relatively new and by no means ubiquitous phenomenon.<sup>31</sup> But as early as the 1530s, the inclusion of a title-page had been adopted as a convention for the printing of single-play playbooks. In fact, just nine pre-playhouse plays were printed without full title-pages: *Andria*; *The Nature of the Four Elements*, *Calisto and Melebea*; *Gentleness and Nobility*; Q1, Q2, and Q3 *Youth*; *Nature*; *Johan Johan*; and *The Pardoner and the Friar*. However, while these playbooks all lack formal title-pages, they do adopt certain title-page features like half-diamond indentation or woodcut illustration. And one, John Rastell’s edition of Henry Medwall’s *Nature*, has a title-caption on its otherwise blank first page. This kind of ‘label

title' would have been noticeably archaic by the time the book was published in the 1530s; Smith has identified the years 1484–89 as the period when they were the most common way of prefacing a book.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the reissue of *Youth* in both 1557 and around 1565 without a title-page, while explicable in terms of the precedent of the first edition, would have made it markedly out of step with other books, both dramatic and otherwise, printed in the 1550s and 1560s. Indeed, by the middle of the century, almost all books, and even most pamphlets and other bibliographical ephemera, were printed with title-pages designed both to help the potential buyer or reader identify the work and to persuade them to make a purchase. For, by providing a site for crucial information about the works they prefaced, title-pages help to transform books into manufactured commodities. In the case of playbooks, title-pages function to situate the text as drama, and to suggest to potential consumers a range of uses that may have included leisure-time reading as well as amateur performance. It is the work of the rest of this chapter to outline some of the ways that early and mid-Tudor printers and publishers used dramatic title-pages to attract readers and suggest alternative forms of use.

### **Titles and the making of printed drama**

Throughout this book, I have standardised the spelling and typography of the titles of early printed plays, omitting major portions of long titles in order to make references both succinct and readily identifiable. But, as Bradin Cormack and Carla Mazzio have noted, such emendations misrepresent early modern titles, making it 'harder for readers today to see that titles were crucial dimensions of the early book'.<sup>33</sup> By attending to the full title, we can begin to see how titles served to construct the playbook's value for and appeal to particular kinds of readers and other users. The earliest extant playbooks have titles very similar to manuscript *incipits*. Directly addressing the reader, the title-page to *Fulgens and Lucrece* announces:

Here is conteyned a godely interlude of Fulgens | Cenatoure of Rome.  
Lucre his daughter. Gayus | flaminus. & Publius. Cornelius. of the  
disputacyon of noblenes.

This kind of informal plot announcement ('Here is conteyned') is also a feature of at least five other titles printed before 1530.<sup>34</sup> Shevlin has argued that such phrasing points to a more dialogical relationship between authors and readers: 'incipits behaved like conversational markers that featured authors introducing readers to their subject matter'.<sup>35</sup> In fact, only one of these titles identifies an author – *Fulgens* is 'Compyled by mayster Henry medwall' – and while it is certainly the case that they promote an intimate relationship between reader and text, there is

no evidence that they reflect the author's direct intervention or agency. Perhaps more striking is the extent to which these early titles efface their status as drama. *Fulgens* is identified as an 'interlude', but equally important is its ascription as a 'disputacyon of noblenes'. *Everyman* may be in the 'maner of a morall playe', but it is first and foremost 'a treatyse'. Similarly, *Gentleness and Nobility* is 'A dyaloge <...> compiled in maner of an enterlude'. In each of these examples, the title makes sense of the play's status as drama by likening it to another category of text: the dialogue. The dialogue was undoubtedly one of the most prevalent forms of printed text in the European Renaissance, and its widespread use for the exploration of a range of religious, moral, and ethical subjects has a long history stretching back through the medieval period to the classical world.<sup>36</sup> By likening ('in maner of') drama to dialogue, early printers of plays sought to make them recognisable by way of analogy; downplaying their dramatic status and paralleling them to other more easily identifiable categories of text offered printers a neat marketing strategy for a form that was more or less untested. Paradoxically, it was only by equating drama with dialogue that England's earliest printers of vernacular drama could begin to develop the conventions that would later be associated with rendering dramatic form recognisable in print.

If dialogue is the generic marker most commonly deployed to make sense of England's earliest printed plays, 'interlude' is the term most frequently used to indicate an association with drama and the dramatic. It occurs on the title-pages to no less than forty-five playbooks printed before 1577. The earliest example is the aforementioned *Fulgens*; the latest an anonymous English translation of Hendrik Niclaes's *An Interlude of Minds*, printed under the full title, 'COMOEDIA. | A worke in Ryme, | contaying an Enter= | lude of Myndes, witnessing | the Mans Fall from | God and Christ'. Critics continue to debate the precise meaning of the term, and remain undecided whether it connotes a form of drama that was part of a larger programme of entertainment (a literal 'between-play', perhaps performed between the courses of a banquet), or a discrete category of text in of itself.<sup>37</sup> Long ago, E. K. Chambers argued that 'an *interludium* is not a *ludus* in the intervals of something else, but a *ludus* carried on between (*inter*) two or more performers'.<sup>38</sup> And while his interpretation suggestively points out the structural similarities between early-Tudor drama and dialogue, the publication of at least three early plays in two parts – *Fulgens*, *Gentleness and Nobility*, and *Nature* – makes the more widely accepted definition of a play split over the course of an evening or consecutive days the more likely. Indeed, the description on the title-page to *Fulgens* that the play is 'deuyded in two partyes, to be played at | ii. tymes' indicates that in the context of early printed drama, 'interlude' almost certainly means a play or piece of dramatic entertainment designed for occasional performance.

Though not deployed as frequently as ‘interlude’, the word ‘play’ also has currency on early printed dramatic title-pages, appearing no fewer than twelve times. It has a far longer history in English usage (the *OED* lists examples that date back to the Anglo-Saxon period), but like ‘interlude’ it has been the source of scrutiny and contest, not least because its precise meaning in early records is often not easy to discern.<sup>39</sup> As John Coldeway has shown, ‘the word “play” is historically and conceptually a philological subset of the word “game”, not the other way around’.<sup>40</sup> For this reason, Lawrence M. Clopper has urged caution when looking at documents that refer to ‘play’: ‘it is because a drama is recreational, given to delight, that it is called a play, not because it is a drama (meaning “play”)’.<sup>41</sup> In fact, there are very few *non-dramatic* instances of the word on early- and mid-Tudor title-pages. It occurs as a noun on just four non-dramatic books printed before 1577: two editions of *The pleasaunt and wittie playe of the cheests* (1562, STC 6214; 1569, STC 6215); and two editions of *The most ancient and learned playe, called the philosophers game* (1563, STC 15542; [1563?], STC 15542a). Gabriel Egan has argued that the use of the word ‘play’ on early title-pages always invokes past performance and that it is only after its reappearance on the title-page to *Pericles* (1609, STC 22335) that it came to be associated with ‘future (indeed, imminent) performance’.<sup>42</sup> In his view, where the term ‘play’ was once used to serve ‘the (much smaller) demand for self-performable drama’, its adoption by seventeenth-century stationers reflects a culture in which play printing had become ‘parasitic upon the professional stage’.<sup>43</sup> In fact, while character lists occur on the title-pages of four plays with the word ‘play’ in the title, there is little else to suggest that early usage of the term need be associated with amateur or semi-professional production, and, as I argue in the next chapter, we should in any case caution against an over-simplistic equation of character lists and self-performance.

The concentration of the terms ‘interlude’ and ‘play’ on early printed title-pages and their virtual absence in non-dramatic titles suggest that even in the earliest years of dramatic print, stationers had begun to develop recognisable nomenclature for expressing the form of drama in print. And if ‘interlude’ and ‘play’ are the most frequently used terms to identify a work as dramatic, over the course of the sixteenth century, stationers experimented with a range of other generic markers to help advertise their wares. Berek has argued:

Tracing changes in the ways such terms appear on title pages can enrich our understanding of how the market for books develops, and of how what began as scripts for the popular art of playing on stages gradually takes on the status of what we would call today “literature”.<sup>44</sup>

His analysis fails to fully consider the evidence of pre-playhouse play-books; he produces a version of the widely adopted narrative about

drama's gradual achievement of literary status. But by reappraising the use of generic terms – both those derived from classical literature ('tragedy' and 'comedy', etc.) and other, more homespun markers – I want to show that stationers were marketing drama for leisure-time reading long before the seventeenth century.

### 'A new Tragicall Comedy': classical terms on early title-pages

So far, I have argued that early dramatic title-pages functioned in the absence of more formal prefaces by identifying and categorising the text and by defining and then guiding the reader.<sup>45</sup> One way stationers achieved these ends was through the careful deployment of generic markers, and of all the terms available to early modern stationers, those that are perhaps the most familiar to us are those derived from classical drama: comedy and tragedy. Of course, when these terms first appeared on dramatic title-pages in the 1540s and 1550s, their categorical identification with drama was not self-evident. 'Tragedy' in particular has a long non-dramatic history, and in the Middle Ages was most closely associated with the *De casibus* tradition of texts that can be traced back to Giovanni Boccaccio's *De casibus virorum illustrium* (1355–74). It is striking, then, that the word only really gains traction in print in the decades following the c. 1554 publication of John Lydgate's translation of *De casibus virorum illustrium* (STC 3178) under the title 'The tragedies, gathered by Ihon Bochas, of all such princes as fell from theyr estates throughe the mutability of fortune'.<sup>46</sup> Of the seventy-seven instances of the word 'tragedy' and its variants in the titles of books printed before 1577 listed by the STC, only six occur before the 1554 edition of *The Fall of Princes*. And given that only nineteen could be considered dramatic or quasi-dramatic, it seems reasonable to conclude with Berek that 'uses of the word [...] in nontheatrical texts presumably' must have impacted 'on the way book buyers and readers' perceived the word.<sup>47</sup> However, a closer look at the evidence suggests that as early as 1560, 'tragedy' was used quite specifically to invoke the classical past and its imagined theatrical traditions.

The first vernacular playbook to appear with the word 'tragedy' in its title is John Bale's *God's Promises*, which was printed on the Continent in around 1547:

A Tragedye or enterlude | manyfestyng the chefe promyses of God |  
vnto man by all ages in the olde lawe, from the fall of | Adam to the  
incarnacyon of the lorde Iesus | Christ.

In the phrasing of this title, 'tragedy' is used in the *De casibus* sense of the word: Adam is a type of prince, and the plot is concerned with his fall, and the fall of those who follow him until the eventual incarnation

and triumph of Jesus Christ.<sup>48</sup> However, in making Adam the first of a long line of great men to be duped by the forces of anti-Christ, the word also carries anti-Catholic connotations. This is also true of the roughly contemporaneous quasi-dramatic dialogue *The Unjust Usurped Primacy of the Bishop of Rome*, which was issued twice in 1549 under the title ‘A tragoedie or | Dialoge of the vniuste vsur= | ped primacie of the Bishop of | Rome, and of all the iust abo= | lishyng of the same’. However, thereafter, and with just a handful of exceptions, the word is almost always used in direct or suggestive association with classical drama. Nine instances of the word can be found in the titles of Seneca’s tragedies, which were translated by a coterie of scholars including Jasper Heywood and John Studley, and printed as single playbooks between 1559 and 1566. A typical example is the title found on the 1560 title-page to Heywood’s translation of *Thyestes*:

THE SECONDE | TRAGEDIE OF | Seneca entituled Thy= | estes  
faithfully Engli= | shed by Iasper Hey= | wood fellowe of | Alsolne  
Col= | lege in Oxforde.

Here, as with all eight of the other editions of Senecan tragedies printed before 1581 (when Thomas Marsh brought out a collected edition), the word ‘tragedy’ is very much bound up with the idea of authority. The text, as it were, is twice authorised: first by the name ‘Seneca’, who, to a mid-sixteenth-century reader would immediately invoke the authority of the classical past; and then by All Souls College, Oxford, which, as a hallowed seat of learning, would have lent authority to Heywood’s translation, rendering it faithful. In fact, in ‘The preface’, written as a poetical address to Seneca, Heywood suggests that the men of the Inns of Court might prove worthier translators:

But yf thy will be rather bent,  
    a yong mans witt to proue,  
And thinkst that elder lerned men  
    perhaps it shall behoue,  
In woorks of waight to spende theyr tyme,  
    goe where Mineruaes men,  
And finest witts doe swarme: whome she  
    hath taught to passe with pen.  
In Lyncolnes Inne and Temples twayne,  
    Grayes Inne and other mo,  
Thou shalt them fynde whose paynfull pen  
    thy verse shall florishe so,<sup>49</sup>

Protesting youthful inexperience, Heywood directs the reader to the men of the Inns of Court, and in doing so traces a network of authority

from the great Stoic, to the colleges of Oxford, to London's legal inns, which not only lends his translation status, but also makes it legible as a tragic text that belongs to a very specific context: the new learning of the schools and universities.

Berek has suggested that in the middle of the sixteenth century, 'the word "tragedy" does not simply assert a classical style; it announces a political stance and perhaps even a coterie affiliation with the young men of the Inns'.<sup>50</sup> *Thyestes* offers one example of the way this association can be announced; other examples include Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville's *Gorboduc* (O1 and O2),<sup>51</sup> and George Gascoigne's *Jocasta* ([1573], STC 11635; [1575], STC 11636, STC 11637; printed in collection) and *The Glass of Government* (Q1a and Q1b).<sup>52</sup> The last of these examples also illustrates another feature of the way 'tragedy' appears on mid-Tudor title-pages: mixed-up with other genres:

The Glasse of | Gouvernement. | A tragicall Comedie so entituled,  
by- | cause therein are handled aswell the re- | wardes for Vertues, as  
also the | punishment for Vices.

(Q1a)

Such hybrid generic identity can be found on at least two other title-pages from the period: *Cambises* and *Appius and Virginia*. And Richard Edward's *Damon and Pithias*, while straightforwardly identified as a comedy on its title-page, is entered into the Stationers' Register as 'a boke intituled ye tragicall comodye of Damonde and pethyas'.<sup>53</sup> It has been suggested that such 'hodgepodge generic designations' are best understood in the context of a tendency to use multiple generic markers, a tendency that flourished in the middle of the sixteenth century, but by the end of the first quarter of the seventeenth century, 'as generic designations grow more frequent, the words used to designate genres grows narrower'.<sup>54</sup> 'In part', writes Berek, 'the changes reflect the fading away of the old [...] moralizing use of generic categories to validate fictions and the rise of a new way of validating stories by creating them as literature, on the model of ancient texts'.<sup>55</sup> This view is wholly understandable in the context of a discussion aimed at establishing the game-changing effect of professionalisation on the generic identity of plays. Moreover, since the generic markers eventually adopted in the decades following the establishment of permanent playhouses are still the ones used today, it is hard not to see those that belong to an earlier period as antique or somehow clumsy. In fact, ever since Polonius's meandering list of categories, early- and mid-Tudor dramatic nomenclature is more likely to have been the butt of a joke than the subject of proper scholarly attention. But, what descriptors like 'Tragicall Comedie' illustrate is a kind of energetic inventiveness on the part of early stationers. In the absence of much in the way of pre-existing conventions – and here it is perhaps worth

remembering that other categories of text were generally presented without any distinguishing generic label<sup>56</sup> – hybrid designations reflect the work of stationers looking for creative ways to make playbooks both readily identifiable as drama and attractive to the right kinds of reader.

The word ‘comedy’ occurs slightly less frequently than ‘tragedy’: it is found in just thirteen dramatic or quasi-dramatic titles before 1577, and three of these are examples of the kind of tragicomic hybrids discussed in the previous paragraph. A further two are translations of Latin plays: *Andria* and *Acolastus*.<sup>57</sup> Both of these are school texts and point to the fact that like ‘tragedy’, ‘comedy’ often had academic associations. However, where *Andria* clearly shares structural similarities with later, Shakespearean comedy, *Acolastus*, in its retelling of the Prodigal Son parable, offers up a different pattern for comedy, one in which the wayward desires of youth must be tamed and brought into line with the views and social codes of an older generation. It is a comedic model well suited to the dissemination of Protestant morality, and it is clearly this sense of the word that is intended when ‘comedy’ appears in the titles to at least seven further playbooks.<sup>58</sup> The earliest of these, John Bale’s *Temptation of Our Lord*, is styled as ‘A brefe Comedy or enterlude’, and the equivalence of these two terms – an equivalence echoed on three further title-pages<sup>59</sup> – long ago led Allardyce Nicoll to conclude that the word ‘comedy’ is ‘drawn into the circle of “interlude” and so used to mean simply “any piece of writing suitable for theatrical performance”. Only gradually does it come to designate a play designed to arouse merriment and laughter’.<sup>60</sup> In fact, styling comedies as interludes is very much a feature of the Protestant morality play, and the alternative designation of comedy as a source of delight has far less to do with stationers counting ‘on a new awareness’ of this meaning ‘among a reading public’ than it does changing taste and appetite.<sup>61</sup> By the 1570s, moral comedies had fallen out of favour and plays advertising ‘delectable mirth’ were in.<sup>62</sup> And as ‘comedy’ became uncoupled from its association with the moral interlude, it was free to carry new connotations; it is in this context that a cluster of titles occur adopting phrasing like ‘A Ryght Pithy, Pleasaunt and merie Comedie’ or ‘An excellent and pleasant Comedie’.<sup>63</sup> Terms such as ‘pithy’, ‘pleasant’, and ‘merry’ are a feature common to early printed play titles, and as home-grown alternatives to classical generic markers, offer clear insights into the strategies stationers adopted to market drama to the widest possible consumer base.

### **‘Very mery and full of pastyme’: vernacular genre markers**

Virtually every early printed play or quasi-dramatic dialogue for which a title-page is extant features one or more adjectives that attempt to categorise the quality of the action: there are no fewer than twenty-three

occurrences of the word ‘merry’; twenty of the word ‘pleasant’; ‘witty’ appears four times; as does ‘pithy’; and ‘excellent’ occurs twice. As I have already suggested, there has been a tendency to understand this profusion of descriptors as indicative of textual inferiority, but it seems equally plausible that this great diversity of generic terms reflects attempts made by stationers to communicate the idea of drama as a distinct category of text. This conclusion seems probable given the recurrence of certain phrases – variations on ‘pleasant mirth’, for instance, occur on six title-pages – that only rarely appear on non-dramatic title-pages from the same period. In short, while the accumulation of adjectival markers perhaps reflects attempts to diversify the appeal of certain texts, the crystallisation of those markers into a set of stock phrases would have served to make those titles immediately legible as drama.

To demonstrate the effect of the use of such phrases on early printed dramatic title-pages, I offer Lewis Wager’s *Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene* (Q1a and Q1b) as a typical case. Wager’s play appeared in two issues from the press of John Charlewood under the full title:<sup>64</sup>

A new enterlude, neuer | before this tyme imprinted, entreating of  
the | Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene: not only | godlie,  
learned and fruitefull, but also well furnished with plea= | saunt  
myrth and pastime, very delectable for those | which shall heare or  
reade the same.

(Q1a)

The designation ‘fruitful’ appears in the title of only one other play from the period, William Wager’s *Enough Is as Good as a Feast*, but there too it coincides with the descriptions ‘godly’ and ‘pleasant mirth’. William was almost certainly the son of Lewis, and the close echoing of terms may have been an attempt to align the work of the son with that of the father. However, perhaps more significantly, both playwrights were also clergymen. While the term ‘fruitful’ does not appear in other dramatic titles from the period, it does seem to have had some currency among other ‘godly’ works; the STC lists around seventy-five occurrences in the early and mid-Tudor period, of which the overwhelming majority, from John Fisher’s *Treatise concernynge the fruytfull saynges of Dauyd* (1508, STC 10902) to Richard Wimbledon’s *Sermon no lesse fruteful then famous* ([1540?], STC 25823.3 and fourteen further editions), are in the titles of devotional works. Given the biblical equation of natural fecundity with abundant productivity (see Genesis 1.22: ‘And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth’), the generic descriptor offers a tidy means of advertising to potential readers something of the text’s nature, but also, and perhaps more tellingly, its value. Informing readers of the play’s fruitfulness, the title seems to suggest that time spent

reading this book will be time well spent. Moreover, equating fruitfulness with godliness, the title to Wager's play also implicitly takes advantage of the elastic orthography that allows 'godly' to stand for 'goodly'. According to DEEP, 'godly' occurs on nine dramatic title-pages before 1576, and 'goodly' on a further three. But the assortment of different spellings – 'godley' (from the title to *Fulgens* and conventionally read as 'goodly'), 'goodly', 'godlye', 'godly', 'godlie', etc. – suggests that while the two terms were hardly interchangeable, their orthographic similarity allowed one to be taken for the other, therefore widening their range of possible meanings. And since 'goodly/godly' so often coincides – as it does on the title-page to *Mary Magdalene* – with 'pleasant mirth' (five times in a four-year period between 1566 and 1570), it seems likely that this particular cluster of terms became popular with stationers for marketing vernacular playbooks by rendering them like the dialogues and treatises that adopted similar titular phrasing and distinct from other dramatic texts intended primarily for use in the classroom or study.

However, while it is obvious that a playbook of a vernacular interlude encodes a very different form of use to a playbook of a classical or academic play, it is wrong to conclude that these differences are those of performance versus the closet. In fact, the other generic markers in the title to Wager's play point to horizons of reception that go beyond amateur production. Described as 'well furnished' with 'pastime', the title identifies the play as belonging to a category of texts designed specifically for entertainment; as early as 1490, 'pastime', far more than simply referring to 'a period of elapsed time', designated 'a diversion or recreation which serves the time agreeably; an activity done for pleasure rather than work; a hobby; a sport, a game'.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, the additional instruction that the text is 'very delectable for those which shall heare or reade' indicates that 'pastime' here implies leisure-time reading as much as it does performance. Addressing the consumer as both audience-member and reader, Charlewood exploits the title-page to *Mary Magdalene* as an opportunity to appeal to the widest possible range of users.

### **Arranging the title: font, layout, and making meaning**

A title's linguistic elements obviously function to communicate the nature of the book it names, but its non- or quasi-linguistic features also contribute to the way it makes meaning, sometimes supporting, sometimes working against the title's verbal presentation. However, while the last thirty years of bibliographic scholarship has done much to emphasise the ways the visual appearance of early printed texts affected their reception and use,<sup>66</sup> surprisingly little has been written about these issues as they pertain to early printed dramatic title-pages. I want here, therefore, to consider some aspects of the visual language of dramatic title-pages, and to illustrate how printers used font, format, and layout,

first experimentally, but eventually inventing a graphic vocabulary that complemented the title's verbal cues. Mark Bland has argued that 'the principal advantage of moveable type (its legibility, regularity, and re-usability) imposed its own logic upon the page'.<sup>67</sup> He goes on:

A new diversity of presentation appeared as composers manipulated the visual and spatial structure within which they had to work. It is that consciousness about the visual construction of typography (the way in which a text is filled out and pieced together, rather than filled in) that separates the visual aesthetics of the written and printed word. Indeed, space – the physical blanks of type – introduced a precise and ordered structure where previously, with manuscripts, flexibility and sinuous variation had been a necessity. As a consequence, printing-house practice evolved in response to both the visual appearance of the text and the uses to which it would be put.<sup>68</sup>

His argument is that the technology of print imposed an aesthetic logic on the page rendering it utterly distinct from its manuscript counterpart. Over time, stationers learned to harness these functional differences, and developed ways of using typography both to signal the meaning of the text, and also to formally suggest ways in which it might be used. This argument is as true for drama as it is for other categories of text, and a closer examination of title-page font shows how the appearance of the text, and specifically of letter-forms, offered visual cues to indicate specific forms of use.

Type, bibliographers have taught us, offers one possible indication of intended use. In an influential article, T. Howard-Hill has shown that 'black letter was the dominant style in which plays were presented to readers until the 1590s'.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, it 'remained prominent on the title pages of English plays until 1591', after which it 'does not appear on the title pages of English plays'.<sup>70</sup> Bland has attributed the move away from black letter to the 1590 publication of Sidney's *Arcadia* and Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, which he argues had a substantial and immediate impact on the typography of all printed works of entertainment, as 'the appearance of less expensive books', like books of plays, 'imitated and assimilated the typography of these volumes'.<sup>71</sup> Recognising that the overwhelming majority of plays were printed in quarto format – quartos account for roughly seventy per cent of all dramatic and quasi-dramatic material printed before 1577 – and following Bland's conclusions, Voss has recently suggested:

The conflicting impulses of quarto size (that is, portability and disposability) and roman type (that is, literary production and permanence) perhaps bear witness to the evolution of printed plays

from something more or less utilitarian into something more self-consciously literary – from a playtext to be used into dramatic literature to be read.<sup>72</sup>

The view that quartos were bibliographically ephemeral has been challenged on a number of fronts, and I will not rehearse all the arguments here.<sup>73</sup> However, I do want to show that far from simply signalling literariness or cultural permanence, in the decades before the establishment of London's playhouses, roman and italic fonts were used to achieve numerous effects. Consequently, the view that there exists an underlying structural relationship between the adoption of roman or italic fonts and playbooks' achievement of literary status should be treated with extreme caution.

Arguments about the use of roman or italic fonts for high-status literary production are naturally related to those that associate black letter with popular or low literature. Noting the persistence of black letter into the seventeenth century for certain kinds of text, Charles Mish long ago argued that it served as a 'social discriminant',<sup>74</sup> an index to middle-class reading tastes, and this view has been subsequently adopted by critics in a number of fields eager to link the presentational decision to cast a particular type with historical reading practices.<sup>75</sup> As the final chapter and conclusion of this book demonstrate, typeface, format, decoration, and page layout can reveal much about the way playbooks were marketed, but do not necessarily speak to the ways historical readers used books. At the same time, if – and it is a big if – black letter was used in the seventeenth century to signify 'low' literature, in the sixteenth century, it was still the dominant typeface for books of all kinds. Consequently, it would be wrong to infer from its prevalence on early printed dramatic title-pages that it stood as a marker for popular or 'low' entertainment. It is therefore more instructive to survey the intrusion of roman and italic fonts onto these title-pages, as it is a direct consequence of fontal variety that different fonts eventually accumulated their own range of meanings.

The very earliest vernacular playbooks were printed using solely black letter. However, from *c.* 1520, when Phillippe Le Noir printed an anonymous English translation of Terence's *Andria*, roman or italic fonts begin to appear alongside black letter. In that book, roman is used for the Latin parallel text, which appears in the outer margins of each opening. However, the book contains no title-page, just a half-title at sig. A1<sup>r</sup> with the title 'Terens in englysh', which is set in black letter type. So, even before title-pages had been adopted as a universal standard, roman and italic fonts were being allied with translations of classical plays. Consequently, it is no surprise that roman and italic occur alongside black letter on the title-pages of all Senecan tragedies up to and including Thomas Marsh's collected edition of 1581. The earliest non-classical, native play to adopt

roman or italic on the title-page is John Bale's *Temptation of Our Lord*, printed around 1547. Here, while most title-page features are rendered in black letter, both the date of compilation, 'Anno | M. D. XXXVIII', and a character list are cast in roman. As Latin is used for both these features, here the association of roman and italic fonts with the classical past is extended to suggest their appropriateness for the presentation of texts in Latin. In fact, around half of all pre-playhouse title-pages mix black letter with other fonts, and in the majority of these cases, roman or italic is used to signal something culturally and/or linguistically ancient, foreign, or both. Here, it might be worth pausing to reflect on the names given to these types. The *OED* defines roman as 'a typeface of a kind derived from Italian humanist scripts and characterized by simple, upright, rounded letterforms [...] so called because of its resemblance to the lettering used in ancient Roman inscriptions'.<sup>76</sup> It is a name, in other words, that reflects the font's Continental origins and a line of descent that can be traced through Italian humanism back to ancient Rome. 'Italic' similarly connotes ancient Italy, and refers specifically to 'the species of printing type introduced by Aldus Manutius of Venice, in which the letters, instead of being erect as in Roman, slope towards the right'.<sup>77</sup> Given these associations, it seems hardly surprising that when roman and italic fonts were first used on dramatic title-pages, they were used to identify plays indebted to classical or Continental traditions. In this respect, their use by printers is perhaps best understood as part of a strategy to ensure the visibility of this network of associations.

Conversely, when John Awdely printed an edition – the fourth – of John Heywood's *Play of the Weather* in around 1573, he simply followed the precedent of previous editions, and cast the entire book in black letter. There were seventeen plays printed between 1570 and the opening of the theatres, and of these only three feature title-pages set solely in black letter. Consequently, it seems likely that Awdely's edition of *The Play of the Weather* would have seemed outdated or old-fashioned, particularly since it would have been sold alongside other, more up-to-date books. However, while the decision to reset using the typeface adopted for earlier editions may have been motivated by efficiencies of various kinds, it is equally plausible that the choice had an aesthetic function too. As Zachary Lesser reminds us, 'black letter, after all, was also known as "English letter", a name that draws the distinction with "Roman" type more clearly'.<sup>78</sup> By the second half of the sixteenth century, its appearance on dramatic title-pages could be used to signal 'the powerful combination of Englishness (the "English letter") and past-ness ([its] "antiquated" appearance)' that Lesser has called 'typographic nostalgia'.<sup>79</sup> In other words, by the end of the pre-playhouse period, when roman and italic were becoming more widely adopted, black letter had developed additional significance as an indicator of Englishness or the medieval past.

An extreme example of the ways these fonts could be used to register different meanings is found on the title-page to Jasper Heywood's translation of *Hercules Furens* (Figure 1.1). Here, the title is given twice: first in Latin and set in roman; and then in English and cast in black letter. This distinction is maintained throughout the book, a parallel text edition, with roman reserved for Latin and black letter for English. Roman type reflects the play's origins in the classical past; black letter, its present incarnation as an English translation.

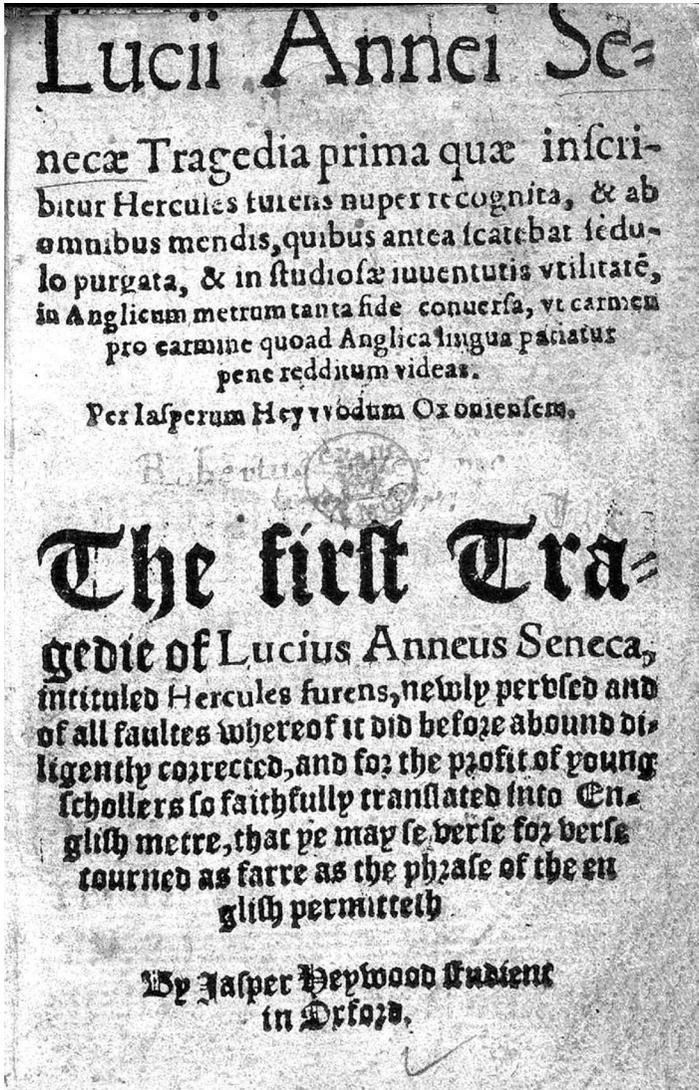


Figure 1.1 Seneca, *Hercules Furens*, trans. by Jasper Heywood (Henry Sutton, 1561, STC 22223), title-page. London, British Library, C.34.a.8.(1). Source: © The British Library Board.

If font was often chosen in order to signal some kind of textual affiliation, it could also function to offer variation and emphasis. From around the middle of the century, it becomes increasingly common to see a range of fonts deployed on title-pages in order to highlight key words or phrases. For instance, the title-pages to Richard Tottell's two editions of *Troas* (O1 and O2) use all three fonts (Figure 1.2). Roman is used for Seneca's name, but the name of the translator and his university are cast in black letter. One effect of these typographical choices is to preserve the distinction between the classical past and the English present. But if the change of font serves to emphasise Seneca's authority, it also disguises Heywood's authorial role, reducing his name to one of a long series of words set not only in black letter, but also in a diminishing font size. For Tottell, Seneca is not only the book's author, but also its legitimising authority; it is his name, rather than that of his English translator, that

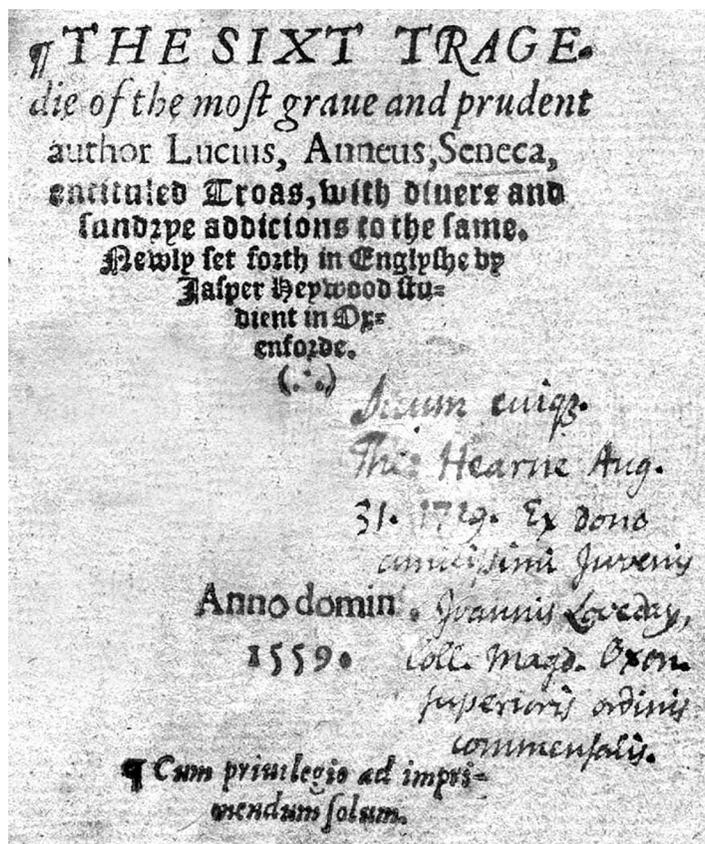


Figure 1.2 Seneca, *Troas*, trans. by Jasper Heywood (Richard Tottell, 1559, STC 22227), title-page. London, British Library, G.9440.

Source: © The British Library Board.

will sell this book. In other instances, the emphasis achieved by a change of font has less to do with cultural value or authority, and functions to make the title more easily navigable so that it can be skim read for meaning. This is clearly the case in Henry Bynneman's edition of *Jacob and Esau* (Q2), where alternating lines of the long title are cast in different fonts, encouraging the eye to break up the block of text into more manageable line-long units.

Emphasis could also be achieved by variations in font size and case. In a striking number of cases, the first line of the full-title is set using a larger font size or upper-case lettering or both. Early in the sixteenth century, when many dramatic titles adopted the form of a short title followed by a sub-title – for instance, ‘¶Magnyfycence, ¶A goodly interlude and a merry deuysed and made by ¶mayster Skelton, poet laureate late de= | ceasyd. .’ – the tendency to emphasise the first line through case and font size served to subordinate the descriptive portion of the title and emphasise the words that in modern anthologies and catalogues stand in for the whole title of the play.<sup>80</sup> However, in many other instances, the convention of using font size or case to emphasise the first line results, due to fairly predictable patterns in the naming of plays, in highlighting not a text's specific title, but rather its generic identity. There are no fewer than twenty-six extant playbooks with titles beginning with some version of the formula ‘A new interlude of’, and in at least twenty-one instances, this opening phrase is both the first line of a title set over a number of lines, and cast in a larger font size and/or using upper case. The effect of this arrangement is to draw attention to an affiliation with a particular type of dramatic text, the interlude. In other instances, a similar effect is achieved when variety of font size and case is used to emphasise first lines like ‘A lamentable tragedy’, ‘The excellent comedie of’, and ‘A newe tragicall comedie’.<sup>81</sup> In these examples, the short title – *Cambises*, *Damon and Pithias*, and *Appius and Virginia* – is buried in the many words of the long-form title, and the play's generic status as a comedy or tragedy is highlighted instead.

Printers and publishers may not have been fully conscious of much of this meaning. That the generic identity of early printed plays was highlighted in this way may be less the result of deliberate choice and more a consequence of what Lesser has described as ‘typographic inevitability’.<sup>82</sup> Long descriptive titles were very much a feature of all kinds of texts printed in the early- and mid-Tudor period, and half-diamond indentation (sometimes called ‘in pendentive’ setting) was far and away the most common way for such titles to be laid out.<sup>83</sup> Given these exigencies, emphasising the first line of half-diamond indented long titles may have been deemed ‘necessary’ rather than an active decision on the part of the stationer. Moreover, it was clearly the coincidence of this convention with fairly predictable patterns in the naming of plays, which resulted in the kind of generic emphasis I have just outlined. At the same time, and given the overall dominance of this kind of titular arrangement

during the period, first-line emphasis often worked in tandem with other title-page features like character lists to offer readily identifiable visual cues to help the potential purchaser or reader to quickly identify the text as a play. I take up the subject of such lists in the next chapter, but here it is worth mentioning that their frequent and regularly standardised appearance on title-pages may have had less to do with helping the reader stage his or her own production than to offer a graphic shorthand designed to signal the text's dramatic status. In other words, if titular emphasis promoted what we might think of as intelligent skim reading, it was very often complemented by the visual clues offered by other, immediately recognisable dramatic paratexts, like character lists. Together these features made parsing the title-page as dramatic both quick and easy; even at a glance, a casual browser would be able to categorise the text as a play.

However, while the conventional use of half-diamond indentation could result in the fortuitous emphasis of certain words and phrases, it could also interrupt what Walter J. Ong long ago described as 'visual retrieval', or the process by which units of text are made sensible to the eye.<sup>84</sup> Obeying the logic of a layout dictated by line length, the legibility of the words in the title was often subordinated to the legibility of the half-diamond shape. The title-page to *Thyestes* offers an extreme example (Figure 1.3). Earlier in this chapter, I suggested that Heywood leans on the classical author Seneca and the seat of learning, All Souls College, Oxford, to legitimise his translation. However, the layout of text using half-diamond indentation makes these words difficult to read and therefore undercuts their authority. 'Thyestes', 'Englished', 'Heywood', and 'College', all major words and integral to the title's meaning, are divided with double hyphens and split over two lines. A similar effect occurs on the title-pages to at least forty other playbooks printed before the end of 1576. 'The result', Ong argued, 'is often aesthetically pleasing as a visual design, but it plays havoc with our present sense of textuality'.<sup>85</sup> Ong attributed what he saw as this presentational flaw to the vestiges of an oral culture that dictated reading was primarily an auditory experience:

As soon as [the title] is read aloud, it is understandable, but it does not come into the visual field in such a way as to facilitate apprehension in lexical units with the ease which later typography would demand. [...] The reason is that the words are not thought of primarily as being picked off the page as units by the eye, by rather as being made into units with the auditory imagination [...] with only casual relation to the visual.<sup>86</sup>

It is hard to get beyond what William B. Sherman has described as Ong's 'technological determinism' here, the assumption of 'social or psychological effects from technological causes'.<sup>87</sup> My own sense is that the

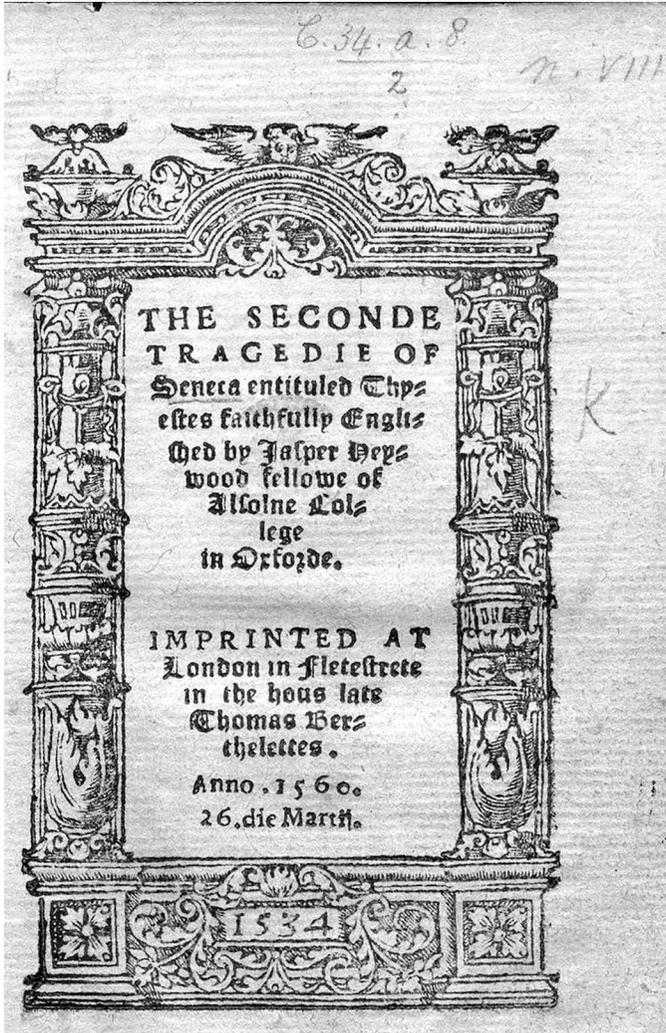


Figure 1.3 Seneca, *Thyestes*, trans. by Jasper Heywood ([Richard Payne], 1560, STC 22226), title-page. London, British Library, C.34.a.8.(2.).

Source: © The British Library Board.

inverted diamond or pyramid offered its own kind of legibility, a visual signification that may have been more important than the meaning of individual words. As I have already suggested, this way of styling long titles was not unique to drama, quite the opposite in fact; half-diamond indentation was so ubiquitous that to a mid- or late-sixteenth-century reader it would have signalled the bookishness of the material object in their hands. In the context of dramatic titles then, this kind of textual

arrangement functioned to underscore drama's place in a world of books as objects to be held and read.

### Visualising the play: woodcuts and other decoration

So far, I have been arguing that by the middle of the sixteenth century, stationers had developed title-page conventions – both verbal and visual – that helped playbooks make sense in print not only *as plays* but also *as books*. In short, the deployment of features that made playbooks both like and unlike other categories of text encouraged readers to register both the distinctiveness of drama and its kindredness to other kinds of writing that circulated in the form of printed books. This argument is no less true for title-page illustration and decoration than it is for title-page typography. All early printed playbooks are adorned with some form of decoration, from the decorative use of special characters, to borders, headpieces, and tailpieces, to factotum and other forms of representational woodcuts. In a series of three essays, Juliet Fleming has argued that in the sixteenth century, type-ornaments, specifically the 'combinale' use of printers' flowers, 'produced patterns that' had 'no representative aim, and thus began to comprise an aesthetic order that, perhaps for the first time, was freed from the obligation to signify'.<sup>88</sup> In other words, though very much part of the printed page, type-ornaments often "show" nothing', making them ideal for the articulation of the ordering or division of texts.<sup>89</sup> Most recently, she has suggested that one function of this 'iconic neutrality' is, perhaps paradoxically, to highlight textual affiliation:

In late sixteenth-century England, [...] the specific disposition of [type-ornaments] began to function, albeit in fleeting, unsystematic, and sometimes unintended ways, to mark books as being the products of particular printers or coteries, and, at least in one case, as belonging to a particular genre.<sup>90</sup>

Space does not permit a full survey of all decorative aspects of dramatic title-pages, so I here focus on what might be considered the iconographic opposite of the type-ornaments treated by Fleming, namely woodcuts (and, from the 1540s on, engravings) that clearly have their own signification and meaning. However, if factotum figures and architectural borders are iconographically partial where type-ornaments are neutral, they share with printers' flowers and other typographical means of organising text a tendency to 'mark books as belonging to a particular genre or kind, as having come from a particular print shop, as being the work of a particular author or coterie – or, alternatively, as wanting to look as if they were any of these'.<sup>91</sup>

In other words, concluding this chapter, I want to demonstrate that representational woodcuts contribute to the kinds of visual genealogies that would have helped potential purchasers easily identify books.

### **Pamphile-Cherea-Lamant-Everyman**

The factotum figures that occur in early printed playbooks are universally the product of a relief printing technique that involved cutting the image into a wooden block, inking the block, and then using the pressure of the common press to transfer the image onto paper. Such figures appear at the beginning of ten early printed playbooks: Q1 and Q3 *Hycke Scorner*; Q3 and Q4 *Everyman*; Q1 and Q3 *Youth*; Q1 *The Four P's*; Q2 *Impatient Poverty*; and Q1 and Q2 *Jack Juggler*.<sup>92</sup> I type this list in full because it helps register two important points. First, over half of these playbooks date from before 1550, suggesting that factotum figures were very much a feature of early title-page design. While relatively common in the first half of the century, by the second half of the century, they would have appeared old-fashioned. Secondly, only four of these examples are first editions. The regular reuse of factotum figures on the title-pages of second and third editions implies conservatism on the part of printers responsible for subsequent imprints. Rather than repackage old titles with new, up-to-date title-pages, printers recreated the visual effect achieved by first editions, thereby producing volumes that would have been both cost-effective and readily marketable. Moreover, in a number of instances, it is clear that when a printer failed to obtain the exact factotum used for the title-page of an earlier edition, rather than redesign the page from his own stock, he often sought to recreate the earlier design, and may have had new factotums cut especially.<sup>93</sup> Consequentially, if the images on the title-pages to second and third editions of plays sometimes looked outdated, this is no accident. Rather than attempting to remarket old plays in new ways, potentially attracting new kinds of readers, the visual language of these later editions indicates that printers were keen to retain the imagery that made them identifiable with earlier editions. In other words, in much the same way that black letter came to be nostalgically associated with 'the past', factotum woodcuts became a shorthand for a kind of antique quaintness, and were often used to illustrate specific textual genealogies.

These conclusions are borne out by closer examination of one factotum figure, that of a young, modishly dressed young man, identified by Martha W. Driver with the Pamphile-Cherea-Lamant figure that originated with Antoine Vérard in France in the first years of the sixteenth century.<sup>94</sup> In his indispensable catalogue to *English Woodcuts, 1480–1535*, originally printed in 1935, Edward Hodnett decided not to include this

and the many other ‘factotum blocks – small figures of men and women, trees and buildings, usually borderless – which [printers] sprinkled over the pages of their books’, writing:<sup>95</sup>

Vérard’s habit of repeating these stock figures several times in the same book appealed to Pynson, De Worde, and their fellows, and they copied the figures as avidly as a provincial miller copies a metropolitan style. Then, finding them increasingly useful and economical, they copied their own copies. As a result, so many of these cuts exist and differ so minutely from one another that they cannot be identified by verbal description, and since nothing short of the reproduction of every one would be useful, they have not been included in the Catalogue.<sup>96</sup>

But the iterability that kept factotum figures out of Hodnett’s catalogue is also why they are so useful for the study of the relationships between texts, printers, authors, and implied readers, and the figure of the young gallant makes such a good example because he appears not only on the title-pages to so many playbooks, but also has a long history in French and English books of all kinds. The figure first occurs in Vérard’s *Therence en françois* ([1499], USTC 71486), where he is used to represent both Pamphile in *Andria* and Cherea in *Eunnuclus*.<sup>97</sup> In this book, the use of factotums to represent characters recalls the *aediculae* of masks that occur in some early, illustrated manuscripts of Roman comedies, and perhaps explains the appeal of such movable figures to early printers of plays. But Vérard did not limit use of Pamphile-Cherea to his edition of Terence, and the figure turns up representing L’amant or L’amoureux in *L’amoureux transy sans espoir*, printed for Vérard in 1502 (USTC 34300). As Driver has demonstrated, the figure then made its way to England via Vérard’s edition of *The kalendayr of the shyppars* (1503, STC 22407), printed on the Continent for an English market, ‘in which the L’amant figure regularly appears, assuming a variety of identities’<sup>98</sup> (Figure 1.4). Thereafter, the figure is used frequently, especially by Richard Pynson and Wynken de Worde, and in all, Driver has accounted for his appearance in twenty-five English books printed between 1506 and c. 1562; it is likely that a full survey would reveal further examples. Some dramatic examples – those found on the title-pages to *Everyman*, *Hycke Scorner*, and *Youth* – are given brief treatment by Driver, but others – those on the title-pages to *Impatient Poverty* and *Jack Juggler* – have thus far gone unacknowledged.

After his English debut in Vérard’s version of the *Kalendayr*, Pamphile-Cherea-Lamant turns up in de Worde and Pynson’s edition of *The boke named the royall* ([1507], STC 21430 and STC 21430a), representing Everyman in his confrontation with Death, and it may be that the use of the figure on the title-pages to the third and four editions of



Figure 1.4 *The kalendayr of the shyppars* (Paris: for Antoine Vêrard, 1503, STC 22407), sig. L4<sup>v</sup>. London, British Library, C.132.i.2. Detail showing factotums of two men.

Source: © The British Library Board.

*Everyman* was suggested by this earlier book (Figure 1.5). However, it is more likely that Skot simply followed the precedent of Pynson's two earlier editions. Though their title-pages have not survived, it is very probable that they made similar use of the Pamphile-Cherea-Lamant-Everyman figure. And if Pynson did use the figure for his editions of the play, it is unlikely that it would have required the procurement of new stock, since he had a copy of the figure at least as early as 1507. But the version used by Skot for his editions of the play is subtly different to the figure that



Figure 1.5 *Everyman* (John Skot, [1529], STC 10606), title-page. San Marino, California, The Huntington Library, 412445. Detail showing Everyman.

appears in *The boke named the royall*, and can be traced directly to another de Worde production: *The noble hystory of <...> kynge Ponthus* (1511, STC 20108). This version looks over his left rather than his right shoulder, wears slightly modified shoes, and walks amongst differently rendered plants and shrubs. Skot collaborated with de Worde on at least three occasions (STC 15579.8, STC 3288, and STC 24242), and one of these works – *A treatyse of this galaunt* ([1521?]) – makes use of the same reverse Everyman factotum on its title-page. Consequently, it seems likely that Skot either obtained or copied the figure directly from de Worde.<sup>99</sup>

This reverse Everyman also appears on the title-pages of Q2 *Impatient Poverty*, Q1 and Q2 *Jack Juggler*, and Q3 *Youth*, all of which were printed by William Copland, who may have inherited some of de Worde's stock via his father Robert. But, although de Worde must have had this version of the reverse Everyman at least as early as 1511, when he came to print Q1 *Hycke Scorne* ([1515?]), he used a different version of the figure. Clearly a rather rough copy, this version is less neatly executed, with tougher lines around the fabric and a somewhat fuller face (Figure 1.6). De Worde's edition of *Hycke Scorne* features six factotums



Figure 1.6 *Hycke Scorne* (Wynkyn de Worde, [1515?], STC 14039), title-page verso. London, British Library, C.21.c.4. Printed page showing six factotums.

Source: © The British Library Board.



Figure 1.7 John Heywood, *The Four P's* (William Middleton, [1544?], STC 13300), title-page. London, British Library, C.34.c.43. Detail showing three factotums.

Source: © The British Library Board.

on its title-page verso, and while there are no other dramatic witnesses to its version of the reverse *Everyman*, the *Everyman*-type figure holding a sword also appears on the title-page of the third edition, printed for John Walley, and turns up again on the title-page of Q1 *The Four P's*, printed by William Middleton (Figure 1.7). Middleton's edition of Heywood's play features two other factotums, one of which also occurs on the title-page of Q1 *Youth*, and whom Driver identifies with the *Everyman* figure. *This* version of the *Everyman* assumes a similar gesture, but wears a longer cloak. And like all the other versions of the *Everyman* cut, this longer-cloaked version is 'based on those used earlier by Wynkyn de Worde in a number of books'.<sup>100</sup> The use of *Everyman*-type factotums in early printed playbooks can therefore be summarised as follows in Table 1.1.

Two patterns of use can be discerned from this table. In the case of *Everyman*, *Hycke Scorer*, *Jack Juggler*, and *Youth*, the use of the *Everyman* figure across multiple editions is indicative of an effort to visually align subsequent editions with earlier editions. As we have already seen, it is highly likely that Skot adopted the same title-page design for his two editions of *Everyman* as the one used by Pynson for

Table 1.1 Use of the Everyman figure in early printed playbook illustration

Reverse Everyman I	Q3 and Q4 <i>Everyman</i> ([1529], [1534?]) Q2 <i>Impatient Poverty</i> ([1561?]) Q1 and Q2 <i>Jack Juggler</i> ([1562?], [1565?]) Q3 <i>Youth</i> ([1565?])	John Skot William Copland William Copland William Copland
Reverse Everyman II	Q1 <i>Hycke Scorne</i> ([1515?])	Wynkyn de Worde
Everyman with Sword	Q1 <i>Hycke Scorne</i> ([1515?]) Q3 <i>Hycke Scorne</i> ([1549?])  Q1 <i>The Four P's</i> ([1544?])	Wynkyn de Worde [Printer of Smyth's Envoy for] John Walley William Middleton
Long-Cloaked Everyman	Q1 <i>The Four P's</i> ([1544?]) Q1 <i>Youth</i> ([c. 1530])	William Middleton Wynkyn de Worde

his earlier two editions. Similarly, while the title-page to Q3 *Hycke Scorne* is not a perfect copy of Q1, the reuse of the Everyman with Sword suggests an attempt to recreate the effect of the first edition. That it does so only imperfectly may reflect the limited availability of stock, or it might be that the now lost title-page to Q2 was in fact the archetype. *Jack Juggler* presents a slightly different case, since Q1 and Q2 are the work of the same printer. However, while the same Everyman factotum is used for both editions, the title-page's two other figures differ between editions. Why did Copland make these changes? Perhaps two of the cuts used for Q1 were for some reason unavailable when he came to print Q2, or maybe by 1565 he had obtained new stock that more accurately represented the play's central characters. It is certainly striking that the new factotum used to represent Jack Juggler bears more than a passing resemblance to the Everyman figure used for Boungrace, perhaps drawing attention to the play's treatment of identity theft (Figure 1.8). Whatever Copland's reasons for these changes, when John Alde came to publish a third edition in around 1570, he used a different decorative scheme altogether (Luborsky-Ingram 14837a.5). Likewise, where Q2 *Youth* features a single block of two figures, Q3 returns to the design of Q1, and reinstates a scheme featuring a version of the Everyman figure as one of three factotums. But where Q1 uses the Long-Cloaked version, Q3 adopts the more widely used Reverse Everyman. Again, it is likely that the availability of stock is behind these changes, but even though it does not replicate exactly the design of the original title-page, it is clear that Q3 is intended to resemble and recall the play as first printed in *c.* 1530. At the same time, the overall design of both editions may have been intended to evoke *Hycke Scorne*, on which the



Figure 1.8 Nicholas Udall?, *Jack Juggler* (William Copland, [1565?], STC 14837a), title-page. San Marino, California, The Huntington Library, 59381. Detail showing three factotums.

later play is clearly based.<sup>101</sup> Conversely, the occurrence of the figure on the title-pages of Q2 *Impatient Poverty* and Q1 *The Four P's* deviates from the original design, suggesting printers did not always follow the precedent of first editions. Q1 *Impatient Poverty* contains no factotums and its title-page features an intricate ornamental border of a kind typically associated with more 'literary' texts. And while no earlier edition of *The Four P's* survives, it is likely that William Rastell printed it in 1533–34 when he printed Heywood's other plays. Since none of Rastell's playbooks contain woodcut illustrations of any kind, it seems extremely improbable that his edition of *The Four P's* would have included factotums on its title-page.

Drawing together these various observations, a number of conclusions seem plausible. All four versions of the Everyman figure as outlined in the table above can be traced to de Worde, and it may be that the figure's use by a subsequent generation of printers is both indicative of the dispersal of the older printer's stock and illustrative of the debt owed to him by those who learned their craft at his shop. However, while all four versions of the Everyman figure turn up in the work of a number of printers,

he seems to have been particularly popular with Copland, appearing on the title-pages of half of all his playbooks: four plays printed between 1561 and 1565. Moreover, given that Copland produced over 150 books during his twenty-year career, it is striking that the figure only appears once in his non-dramatic output.<sup>102</sup> So, while Driver describes Everyman's career as being all but over by the middle of the sixteenth century, his persistence on the title-pages of plays printed by Copland in the 1560s points to what we might think of as nascent house style for the publication of plays, one predicated on the nostalgic alignment of drama – even new drama – with the look and feel of books printed by de Worde almost half a century earlier. Finally, it perhaps bears noting that all playbooks that make use of factotum figures also feature banderole labels. In their original use by Vêrard and later de Worde, such labels were used to spell out the name – often allegorical – of the factotum figure printed beneath. But the banderoles in early printed playbooks are often left blank, with the result that the factotums that they accompany remain nameless. The Everyman figure is unnamed in no fewer than five playbooks: Q3 *Everyman*, Q1 *Youth*, Q1 *The Four P's*, Q3 *Hycke Scornor*, and Q2 *Impatient Poverty*. Everyman's anonymity in these books suggests that factotum-banderole composites were more important for their ability to identify the allegorical nature of the text than the identity of its main players. It may be therefore that the Everyman figure functioned more generally alongside other factotums to identify the text not just as a play, but more specifically as a particular genre of play: personification allegory.

All these conclusions are predicated on the view that the Everyman figure was used deliberately to communicate a specific range of meanings, but as Anne Caldiron has wondered:

Did [stationers] calculate that customers would recognize these re-used factotum images as signals of genre and theme, or were these simply the figures at hand? It is probably not possible to know at what point such images' associations with a theme or genre render them functional signals to a readership, but their frequent reuse does suggest [they may] have been taking on such functions.<sup>103</sup>

It seems likely, given the patterns of use, that stationers did deploy the Everyman figure deliberately, to signal affiliation with a particular printing house or genre. But it is at least as plausible that they were simply working with the materials they had to hand. At the same time, if the Everyman figure was intended as a visual index to genre or theme, it remains impossible to assess the extent to which the full range of his meanings was legible to early readers of plays. However, that stationers so often undertook to replicate versions of the figure

between dramatic works speaks to a deliberateness of design – and I use the word in both of its senses – that suggests more may have been at stake than practical exigency, personal taste, or wider fashions and trends. In short, it seems likely – if ultimately unknowable – that until the middle of the sixteenth century, the Everyman factotum functioned as one of a number of visual cues that helped label the work as drama. Clearly, that was not the only thing he represented – he appears on the title-pages to too many works of different kinds to have had an identity solely associated with plays – but, with origins in French editions of Terence, he was clearly well-suited to mark texts as belonging to one of a number of related categories: drama, dialogue, or debate. In the second half of the century, he eventually fell out of use, but his persistence on dramatic title-pages at least as late as the 1560s suggests that he continued to function as an effective marketing tool, a graphic index to different networks of meaning. He could signal the relationship between different editions of the same play as well as between plays more generally. He could act as the calling card of a single stationer, or illustrate the indebtedness (both literally and figuratively) of one stationer to another. And, in the final decade of his use, when he is very often associated with second and third editions, he could mark out a text as either old or old-fashioned.

### **Grand entrances and borders**

The woodcuts I have been discussing are often described as ‘crude’. Noting the prevalence of this term in scholarly treatment of early printing, Michael Camille has said:

The modern sensibility is less concerned with function than with form, and thus gives priority to the inconsequential [...] and, taken in by pictorial tricks, we forget these elements are not essential to an understanding of the text. We forget that books are read as well as looked at.<sup>104</sup>

By attending to the function of factotum blocks, my intention has been to show that when read properly, they can be used to help identify the nature of the text. This is as true for other kinds of woodcut as it is for factotum figures, and for my final set of examples, I turn to the kinds of architectural borders that literally manifest Genette’s concept of the paratext as threshold.

Decorative borders that frame and draw attention to the text box are probably the most common type of title-page decoration, but here I am only interested in those borders either printed from a single block or intended to form part of a single design, specifically those that resemble

the grand or monumental entrances to buildings. The examples of such images from early printed titles listed in DEEP are not numerous and cover a range of different genres: *Thyestes* (McKF 30; see also Figure 1.3), Q1 *Impatient Poverty* (McKF 37β),<sup>105</sup> O3 *Troas* (McKF 34), *Octavia* (McKF 123), *The Disobedient Child* (McKF 49β), *The Marriage of Wit and Science* (McKF 125a), and *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (McKF 49β). To this list can be added two quasi-dramatic titles listed in Wiggins: Philip Gerrard's translation of the Erasmian dialogue *The Epicure* (McKF 54), and Q1a and Q1b *The Unjust Usurped Primacy of the Bishop of Rome* (McKF 38). In all, at least ten title-pages feature a design of this sort, and their variety resists any easy attempts to ascribe a particular function; 'closet' translations, interludes, and dialogues are all represented, as are both quarto and octavo formats.

The images featured on these title-pages all depict architectural spaces – gateways, arches, or porches – and therefore propose the analogy, much later made famous by Genette, between opening a book and entering a building. As Sherman has noted, 'architectural frames for pages are not new in the age of printing: some of the most artful examples can be found in illuminated manuscripts'.<sup>106</sup> However, they were quickly and readily taken up by Continental printers, and used, according to Lilian Armstrong, to invoke 'the world of Classical Antiquity through which one enters the glorious history of Rome, or memorials raised to the learning of the past'.<sup>107</sup> From an early date, English printers adopted these practices, and over the course of the sixteenth century, the architectural frame was to become one of the most common forms of title-page border.<sup>108</sup> Nonetheless, and despite the frequency of its use, it never entirely lost its associations with the classical past – its military prowess, cultural refinement, and its superior learning. As these borders became increasingly elaborate, they were often achieved by the intaglio technique of engraving; rather than cutting away the parts of the block not required (as in relief – i.e. woodcut – printing), the design would be cut into a metal plate, and the image printed using a rolling press that would squeeze ink and paper together through the incised lines on the plate. Because of the greater pressure required for intaglio printing, pages that contain both type and one or more engravings have been through two printing presses, presumably resulting in higher overheads for stationers who chose to illustrate books in this way. Given these inefficiencies and as engraved compartments became increasingly desirable, stationers began commissioning fully engraved title-pages that were printed separately, using a different method to the rest of the book. In turn, these exigencies resulted, by the end of the sixteenth century, in borders that were not simply reproductions of designs used elsewhere, but rather 'tied to the book for which they were first intended'.<sup>109</sup> All of these factors – both

cultural and technical – have resulted in a tendency among critics to read architectural borders as an index to literary status:

On the upper end of the scale of legitimacy/elitism is the engraved frontispiece, a special kind of title page, which epitomizes the book not only verbally but also emblematically, usually portraying the nature of the book in an architectural frame, accompanied by icons which allegorically stand for important aspects of the internal text.<sup>110</sup>

If Saenger has surmised correctly, it is perhaps unsurprising that three of the dramatic title-pages to feature architectural borders are translations of Seneca; indeed, the borders used for *Thyestes* and *O3 Troas* are virtually identical. Of all the plays printed in the pre-playhouse era, the nine editions of plays by Seneca (printed between 1559 and 1566) might seem the most likely to be adorned with architectural frames; as texts, they invoke the same cultural associations and expectations as those attributed to edificial title-page borders. In fact, given that Senecan tragedy is so well suited to this kind of title-page decoration, it is perhaps more surprising that most early editions – including the first two octavos of *Troas* – were printed without architectural borders. Moreover, the fact that such frames occur on some seemingly unlikely title-pages, including no fewer than four interludes, suggests that well-worn narratives about the opposition of high and low, elite and popular, and literary and performative are ripe for revision.

For my final example, I turn to two plays printed in the 1570s, *The Disobedient Child* and *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, which were both printed by Thomas Colwell from his shop near the Great Conduit on Fleet Street. Both plays have title-pages that feature the same ornamental border, identical with McKerrow and Ferguson's compartment 49β,<sup>111</sup> which, while less obviously architectural than some of the other examples listed above, contains a number of conventional features – strap work, floral wreaths, figurines – that make identification with this category of decoration appropriate. In many ways, both of these plays are unlikely contenders for such elaborate title-page decoration; they are both native interludes, and frequently dismissed as culturally ephemeral in critical surveys of early English drama. And while some dramatic title-pages combine an engraved border with moveable type for the title and imprint, the border used for these plays is a woodcut, printed using the relief technique.<sup>112</sup> Colwell printed no fewer than ten plays, including three Senecan tragedies, but the same cut appears nowhere else in his dramatic output; nor does it occur in any of his other printed works. However, a variant (McKF 49α) does turn up on the title-pages to at least five non-dramatic works, all printed two decades earlier in the 1550s: Gavin Douglas's

*The palis of honoure* ([1553?], STC 7073), his translation of the *Aeneid* (1553, STC 24797), Stephen Hawes's *The Pastime of pleasure* (Q4 and Q5, 1555, STC 12951 and 12952), and *The history of Herodian* ([1556?], STC 13221).<sup>113</sup> All of these books were printed by William Copland, though in the case of *The Pastime of pleasure*, financial assistance and backing seems to have been provided by Richard Tottell (for Q4) and John Walley (for Q5). Close comparison of all these examples makes it clear that Colwell used the same cut that Copland had used two decades earlier. There is no evidence of a direct relationship between Colwell and Copland, but it may be that Colwell purchased some of Copland's stock on his death in 1568. Certainly, Copland's circumstances were straightened enough to prompt the Stationers' Company to defray his funeral expenses, and it may be that the Company had some role in the dispersal of his equipment, which might explain how Colwell came to purchase or be in possession of this particular woodcut border.<sup>114</sup>

Why did Colwell choose to illustrate these two plays in this way? Answering this question necessarily involves a degree of speculation, but one possible explanation is that he wanted to frame these plays in ways that emulated other, more obviously 'literary' texts, but without all of the associated speculative costs. Recognising a growing market for drama as a category of text that thought of itself as akin to other literary genres, Colwell printed these playbooks with edifices grand enough to imply an edifying reading experience. His experiments with other dramatic genres and other modes of presentation perhaps reflect the extent to which the conventions for printing drama of all kinds were still very much in a state of creative flux, but the title-pages to these two plays combine the iconography of this particular woodcut border with an array of other authorising features, in ways that seem to suggest 'aspirational' horizons of reception.<sup>115</sup> Replete with author attributions – 'Compiled by Thomas Ingeland', '*Made by M<sup>r</sup>. S. Mr. of Art*' – institutional associations – 'late Student in Cambridge', 'Played on Stage, not longe ago in Christes Collidge in Cambridge' – and publication information including the name and the address of the printer, these two books are framed to resemble higher status texts and their associated production values.<sup>116</sup> Anecdotally, they indicate that while stationers may have been reluctant to outlay some of the higher costs associated with more luxury 'literary' productions, by the 1570s, there existed a series of legible strategies for highlighting the kindredness of drama to other categories of texts designed for leisure-time reading.

## Notes

1 'Title-page, n.', *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, September 2016) <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/202607](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/202607)> [accessed 14 September 2016].

- 2 '1703 J. Tipper in H. Ellis *Orig. Lett. Eminent Literary Men* (1843) (Camden) 307', and '1630 in tr. G. Botero *Relations Famous Kingdomes World* (rev. ed) To Rdr. sig. Aij<sup>v</sup>', in 'Title-page, n.', *OED Online*.
- 3 On the text as 'body', see David Scott Kastan, 'The Body of the Text', *English Literary History*, 81 (2014), 443–67.
- 4 'a1613 T. Overbury *Characters in Wks.* (1856) Meere Scholer 89', in 'Title-page, n.', *OED Online*.
- 5 In the early modern period, most books were sold unbound, meaning that the title-page served a similar function in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century stationers' shops, as the covers to hard and paperback books in modern book stores.
- 6 Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). As many critics have noted, 'paratext' is the word given by Genette to designate a more widely defined category of extra-textual materials including both those items that share proximity with the text and make up the physical book (what Genette calls 'peritexts') and physically independent items such as newspapers and other print media, radio or television programmes, etc. ('public epitexts'), and correspondence, diaries, journal entries, etc. ('private epitexts'). In other words, most of what recent criticism treats as paratexts are in Genette's terms in fact 'peritexts'.
- 7 See for instance, Kastan; Michael Saenger, *The Commodification of Textual Engagements in the English Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), esp. p. 15; and William B. Sherman, 'On the Threshold: Architecture, Paratext, and Early Print Culture', in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, ed. by Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), pp. 56–81 (pp. 56–58).
- 8 Genette, p. 2.
- 9 Sherman, 'On the Threshold', pp. 69–70.
- 10 Saenger, p. 15, n. 35. See also Margreta de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), pp. 49–93.
- 11 Genette, pp. 1–2.
- 12 For examples, see Sherman, 'On the Threshold'.
- 13 Stephen Orgel, 'The Book of the Play', in *From Performance to Print in Shakespeare's England*, ed. by Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 13–54 (p. 15). The same point is made by: Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, 'Vile Arts: The Marketing of English Printed Drama, 1512–1660', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 39 (2000), 77–165 (esp. 78); Saenger, esp. pp. 15, 38–54; and Paul Voss, 'Books for Sale: Advertising and Patronage in Late Elizabethan England', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 29 (1998), 733–56 (esp. 737–40).
- 14 'Unbound' is in fact misleading since many books would be sold stitched if only to ensure the coherence of the book as a single entity. And while we can agree with Paul Needham that for much of the early modern period 'there was no such thing as a ready-bound edition, corresponding to the clothbound books with which we (in English-speaking countries) are familiar today', it is also true, as Mirjam Foot has noted, that 'certain kinds of popular books, such as religious texts would sell sufficiently well for the publisher or bookseller to have a quantity ready-bound in stock'. Paul Needham, *The Printer and the Pardoner: An Unrecorded Indulgence Printed by William Caxton for the Hospital of St. Mary Rounceval*,

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- Charing Cross* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1986), p. 17; Mirjam Foot, *Bookbinders at Work: Their Roles and Methods* (London: The British Library, 2006), p. 16.
- 15 See 'Early Printed Playbooks, c. 1512–1576' and the Introduction, pp. 8–11 for a breakdown of this figure.
  - 16 See for instance, Peter Berek, 'The Market for Playbooks and the Development of the Reading Public', *Philological Quarterly*, 91 (2012), 151–84; and Gabriel Egan, "'As it was, is, or will be played": Title-Pages and the Theatre Industry to 1610', in *From Performance to Print*, pp. 92–110.
  - 17 Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare and the Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 92–93.
  - 18 Paul Voss, 'Printing Conventions and the Early Modern Play', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 15 (2002), 98–115 (98).
  - 19 Alan B. Farmer makes the helpful distinction between the discursive category of cultural ephemerality, shaped by historical attitudes and tastes, and the material category of bibliographic ephemerality 'affected by a publication's physical characteristics'. See Alan B. Farmer, 'Playbooks and the Question of Ephemerality', in *The Book in History, The Book as History: New Intersections of the Material Text, Essays Honoring David Scott Kastan*, ed. by Heidi Brayman, Jesse M. Lander, and Zachary Lesser (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 87–125 (p. 90).
  - 20 These are the first and second editions of the anonymous interlude *Nice Wanton*, which feature variations of the tag 'Ut magnum magnos, pueros puerilia deocus'.
  - 21 Robert Wilson, *The Three Ladies of London* (1584, STC 25784). On this development see: Egan; Farmer and Lesser, 'Vile Arts'; and James P. Saeger and Christopher J. Fassler, 'The London Professional Theater, 1576–1642: A Catalogue and Analysis of the Extant Printed Plays', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 34 (1995), 63–109.
  - 22 For author attributions and other forms of authority, see Chapter 3. For character lists, see Chapter 2.
  - 23 Eleanor F. Shevlin, "'To Reconcile Book and Title, and Make 'em Kin to One Another": The Evolution of the Title's Contractual Functions', *Book History*, 2 (1999), 42–77 (43).
  - 24 Peter Berek, 'Genres, Early Modern Theatrical Title Pages, and the Authority of Print', in *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. by Marta Straznicki (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), pp. 159–75.
  - 25 My discussion here, though brief, focuses on non-cycle plays since these are most proximate in terms of both form and function to the printed corpus that is the focus of this book. However, it is worth noting that the function of some mystery cycle manuscripts as Registers most likely explains the rather different conventions adopted for their formal presentation. See for instance, London, British Library, Additional MS 35290, the unique manuscript of forty-nine religious plays that were performed annually at York.
  - 26 The principal scribe of *The Conversion of St. Paul* has written on fol. 50<sup>v</sup> 'finis conuercionis Sancti Pauli'; *Mary Magdalen* was copied by a different scribe, who wrote in red on fol. 145<sup>r</sup> 'Explicit oregonale de sancta Maria Magdalene'.
  - 27 The STC dates *Fulgens and Lucrece* between 1512 and 1516, *Hycke Scorner* to 1515?, and *Everyman* to c. 1515, but critics continue to debate exactly which of these is in fact earliest and exactly when they were published. For instance, in 'Appendix K' of his *The Stationers' Company and the Printers of London, 1501–1557*, Peter W. M. Blayney adopts a date of

- 1518? for the first edition of *Everyman*. See Blayney, II, 1045. Elsewhere in this book, I adopt Blayney's revised dating of this and twelve other early playbooks as standard.
- 28 Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS F.4.20, fol. 355<sup>v</sup>.
- 29 Julie Stone Peters lists 'descriptive titles indicating venue' and 'use of "Amen" or "Finis" at the end of a play' among the features common to pre-print dramatic manuscripts. See *The Theatre of the Book, 1480–1880: Print, Text, and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 320.
- 30 Peters, p. 320.
- 31 Margaret M. Smith, *The Title-Page: Its Early Development, 1460–1510* (London: The British Library, 2000), pp. 11–24 and 109–46.
- 32 Smith, p. 60.
- 33 Bradin Cormack and Carla Mazzio, *Book Use, Book Theory, 1500–1700* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 49.
- 34 *The Nature of the Four Elements; The World and the Child; Calisto and Melebea; Gentleness and Nobility; Q3 Everyman*. This count includes titles that occur on half title-pages. It omits Q1 and Q2 *Everyman*, since they do not survive in copies with extant title-pages, but it is likely they adopted the same wording. Q4 was printed after 1530, but the title remains the same.
- 35 Shevlin, p. 46.
- 36 On the history and importance of the dialogue, see: Peter Burke, 'The Renaissance Dialogue', *Renaissance Studies*, 3 (1989), 1–12; David Marsh, 'Dialogue and Discussion in the Renaissance', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Volume III, The Renaissance*, ed. by Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 265–70; and Kenneth J. Washington, *Incomplete Fictions: The Formations of English Renaissance Dialogue* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1985). See also the various essays in Dorothea Heitsch and Jean-François Vallée (eds), *Printed Voices: The Renaissance Culture of Dialogue* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2004).
- 37 See, for instance: Nicholas Davis, 'The Meaning of the Word "Interlude"', and 'Allusions to Medieval Drama in Britain: Interlude', *Medieval English Theatre*, 6 (1984), 5–15 and 61–91; and Alan C. Dessen, *Shakespeare and the Late Moral Plays* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), pp. 10–16.
- 38 E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), II, 183.
- 39 Lawrence M. Clopper discusses some of these issues in his *Drama, Play and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2001), pp. 12–15, 19, 128–30.
- 40 John Coldeway, 'Plays and "Play" in Early English Drama', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 28 (1985), 181–88 (182).
- 41 Clopper, p. 19.
- 42 Egan, p. 96.
- 43 Egan, p. 95.
- 44 Berek, 'Early Modern Theatrical Title Pages', p. 160.
- 45 Not all plays were printed without formal prefaces, and I discuss these and other prefatory paratexts in the next chapter. For a similar view, see Ruth Evans, 'An Afterward on the Prologue', in *The Idea of the Vernacular*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor, and Ruth Evans (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), pp. 371–78.

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- 46 The first printed edition of this text appeared in 1527 (STC 3176) without the word ‘tragedy’ in its title.
- 47 Peter Berek, ‘Tragedy and Title-Pages: Nationalism, Protestantism, and Print’, *Modern Philology*, 106 (2008), 1–24 (3).
- 48 It may be that Bale is here following Chaucer’s Monk who similarly defines tragedy as ‘a certeyn storie, | As olde bookes maken us memorie, | Of hym that stood in greet prosperitee | And is yfallen out of heigh degree | Into myserie, and endeth wrecchedly’, and begins his own tale, first with the fall of Lucifer, and then of Adam. Geoffrey Chaucer, ‘The Prologue to the Monk’s Tale’, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 240–42 (p. 241), Frag. VII, ll. 1973–77.
- 49 *Thyestes*, sigs \*7<sup>r</sup>–\*7<sup>v</sup>. For further discussion of this preface, and the play-book’s other prefatory materials, see Chapters 2 and 3.
- 50 Berek, ‘Tragedy and Title-Pages’, p. 19.
- 51 O2 also appears in collection with other works by Norton ([1570], STC 18677).
- 52 There are in fact three variants of this edition, though only two have separate STC entries. Some copies of Q1b have an extra leaf with a dedication to Sir Owen Hopton, but are otherwise identical with Q1b. Q1a describes the printer as ‘Henry Middleton’ on the colophon, whereas Q1b only provides his initials. I discuss these differences further in Chapter 3, pp. 130–31.
- 53 Arber, I, 354.
- 54 Berek, ‘Tragedy and Title-Pages’, p. 20; Berek, ‘Early Modern Theatrical Title Pages’, p. 168.
- 55 Berek, ‘Early Modern Theatrical Title Pages’, p. 168.
- 56 This point was originally made with some force by Allardyce Nicoll in ‘“Tragical-Comical-Historical-Pastoral”: Elizabethan Dramatic Nomenclature’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 43 (1960), 70–87 (70).
- 57 A third example, George Gascoigne’s translation of Ariosto’s *I Suppositi*, was printed twice in collection under the title ‘SVPOSSES: A Comedie’ ([1573], STC 11635; [1575], STC 11636 and STC 11637). A third edition appeared, also in collection, in 1587 (STC 11638).
- 58 *The Temptation of Our Lord*; O1 and Q2 *Three Laws*; Q2 *Jacob and Esau*; *Enough Is as Good as a Feast*; Q1a and Q1b *The Glass of Government*.
- 59 ‘A NEWE Comedy or Enterlude’, Q2 *Three Laws*; ‘A newe mery and wittie Comedie or Enterlude’, Q2 *Jacob and Esau*; ‘A Comedy or Enterlude intituled’, *Enough Is as Good as a Feast*.
- 60 Nicoll, p. 81.
- 61 Nicoll, p. 82.
- 62 *Common Conditions*.
- 63 *Gammer Gurton’s Needle*; *Common Conditions*.
- 64 Q1b has the later date of 1567 on its title-page. The title-page is otherwise the same as Q1a.
- 65 ‘Pastime, n.’, 2 and 1. a, *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, March 2014) <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/138603](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/138603)> [accessed 14 October 2016].
- 66 This trend in bibliography originates with D. F. McKenzie’s seminal article, ‘Typography and Meaning: The Case of William Congreve’, in *Buch und Buchhandel in Europa im achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, ed. by Giles Barber and Bernard Fabian (Hamburg: Hauswedell, 1981), pp. 81–125, reprinted in *Making Meaning: ‘Printers of the Mind’ and Other Essays*, ed. by Peter D. McDonald and Michael F. Suarez (Amhurst: University of Massachusetts, 2002), pp. 198–236; see also the other essays collected

- there. Other critics to explore the role of typography in the production of meaning in early modern texts include: Nicholas Barker, 'Typography and the Meaning of Words: The Revolution in the Layout of Books in the Eighteenth Century', in *Buch und Buchhandel*, pp. 126–65; A. R. Braunmuller, 'Accounting for Absence: The Transcription of Space', in *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts: Papers of the Renaissance English Text Society, 1985–1991*, ed. by W. Speed Hill (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1993), pp. 47–56; Thomas Corns, 'The Early Modern Search Engine: Indices, Title Pages, Marginalia and Contents', in *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print*, ed. by Neil Rhodes and Jonathan Sawday (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 95–105; Martin Elsky, *Authorizing Words: Speech, Writing, and Print in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); Randall McLeod, 'Spellbound: Typography and the Concept of Old-Spelling Editions', *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme*, 3 (1979), 50–65; Paul Saenger, 'The Impact of the Early Printed Page on the History of Reading', *Bulletin du bibliophile*, 2 (1996), 237–300; and Raymond B. Waddington, 'Visual Rhetoric: Chapman and the Extended Poem', *English Literary Renaissance*, 13 (1983), 36–57.
- 67 Mark Bland, 'The Appearance of the Text in Early Modern England', *Text*, 11 (1998), 91–154 (126).
- 68 Bland, p. 126.
- 69 T. Howard-Hill, 'The Evolution of the Form of Plays in English During the Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43 (1990), 112–45 (139).
- 70 Howard-Hill, pp. 138, 139.
- 71 Bland, p. 107.
- 72 Voss, 'Printing Conventions', p. 100.
- 73 See, for instance: Joseph A. Dane and Alexandra Gillespie, 'The Myth of the Cheap Quarto', in *Tudor Books and Readers: Materiality and the Construction of Meaning*, ed. by John N. King (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 25–45; Farmer, 'Playbooks and the Question of Ephemerality'; Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, 'The Popularity of Playbooks Revisited', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 56 (2005), 1–32; Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, 'What is Print Popularity? A Map of the Elizabethan Book Trade', in *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England*, ed. by Andy Kesson and Emma Smith (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 19–54; and Zachary Lesser, 'Playbooks', in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture, Vol I: Britain and Ireland to 1660*, ed. by Joad Raymond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 521–35.
- 74 Charles Mish, 'Black Letter as a Social Discriminant in the Seventeenth Century', *Publications of the Modern Languages Association*, 68 (1953), 627–31.
- 75 For example, see: John Barnard's introduction to *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume IV: 1557–1695*, ed. by John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie with the assistance of Maureen Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 1–26 (esp. pp. 4–5); Paul Salzman, *English Prose Fiction, 1558–1700: A Critical History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), esp. pp. 265–67; and D. R. Woolf, 'Genre into Artifact: The Decline of the English Chronicle in the Sixteenth Century', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 19 (1988), 321–54 (esp. p. 328). For a staunch refutation of this position, see Zachary Lesser, 'Typographic Nostalgia: Playreading, Popularity, and the Meanings of Black Letter', in *The Book of the Play*, pp. 99–126 (pp. 101–02).
- 76 'Roman, n.1 and adj.1. B. 3a', *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, September 2016) <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/167058](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/167058)> [accessed 18 October 2016].

- 77 'Italic, adj. and n. 3a', *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, September 2016) <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/100268](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/100268)> [accessed 18 October 2016].
- 78 Lesser, 'Typographic Nostalgia', p. 104.
- 79 Lesser, 'Typographic Nostalgia', p. 107.
- 80 This effect is exacerbated by the use of pilcrows and other glyphs. Far more than simply decorative, these serve to rationalise the text, making it easier to navigate. Space does not permit a more lengthy discussion of such special characters, which are in any case treated at some length in Claire Bourne's forthcoming book, *Typographies of Performance in Early Modern England*.
- 81 *Cambises*, t. p.; *Damon and Pithias*, t. p.; and, *Appius and Virginia*, t. p.
- 82 Zachary Lesser, 'Walter Burre's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 29 (1999), 22–43 (31).
- 83 See Smith, p. 60. It is perhaps worth noting that half-diamond indentation became increasingly 'inevitable' as the sixteenth century wore on, and may be linked to its growing frequency as a terminal paratext. As William B. Sherman has explained, by the middle of the sixteenth century, 'centring and tapering the final sentences into an inverted pyramid or obelisk' was often used as a way of signalling the approaching ending of a printed text. However, if the underlying logic of this kind of textual arrangement was to mark 'the end of the book not just by pronouncing it but also by *looking like it*', the same cannot be said of half-diamond indentation on title-pages; there is no logical connection between centring and tapering and *the start* of the book. See William B. Sherman, 'The Beginning of "The End": Terminal Paratext and the Birth of Print Culture', in *Renaissance Paratexts*, ed. by Helen Smith and Louise Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 65–87 (pp. 73, 70).
- 84 Walter J. Ong, *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciousness and Culture*, rev. edn (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), pp. 164–69.
- 85 Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: Technologizing the Word*, rev. edn (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 119.
- 86 Ong, *Interfaces of the Word*, p. 165.
- 87 Sherman, 'Terminal Paratext', p. 78.
- 88 Juliet Fleming, 'Changed Opinion as to Flowers', in *Renaissance Paratexts*, pp. 48–64 (pp. 48–49). See also Juliet Fleming, 'How to Look at a Printed Flower', *Word and Image*, 22 (2006), 165–87; and Juliet Fleming, 'How Not to Look at a Printed Flower', *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 38 (2008), 345–70. For more on printers' flowers, sometimes called fleurons or vine-leaf ornaments, see: Francis Meynell and Stanley Morison, 'Printers' Flowers and Arabesques', *The Fleuron*, 1 (1923), 1–16; and Henrik D. L. Vervliet, *Vine Leaf Ornaments in Renaissance Typography* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2012).
- 89 Fleming, 'Changed Opinion', p. 49.
- 90 Fleming, 'Changed Opinion', p. 50.
- 91 Fleming, 'Changed Opinion', p. 63.
- 92 Q2 *Hycke Scornor* survives in two leaves only; Q1 and Q2 *Everyman* also lack title-pages. Q2 *Youth* adopts a different design for its half-title; as does the title-page to Q2 and Q3 *The Four P's*, Q1 *Impatient Poverty*, and Q3 *Jack Juggler*. Factotums are not used on the title-pages of any of the twenty-nine quasi-dramatic books listed in Wiggins.
- 93 The reuse I outline here is therefore quite different to the multiple-use of single-block woodcuts in books like John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*,

- where ‘they come as generic images to eclipse the particularity they seem to substantiate’. In *Actes and Monuments*, ‘this feature reminds us that woodblocks cost money and that early modern illustrations were as likely to be symbolic in function as representational’. Cormack and Mazzi, p. 17. See also Stephen Orgel, ‘Textual Icons: Reading Early Modern Illustrations’, in *The Renaissance Computer: Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print*, ed. by Jonathan Sawday and Neil Rhodes (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 59–95 (pp. 60, 63–64).
- 94 Martha W. Driver, *The Image in Print: Book Illustration in Late Medieval England and Its Sources* (London: The British Library, 2004), pp. 55–70.
- 95 Hodnett, p. vii.
- 96 Hodnett, pp. vii–viii. Ruth Luborsky and Elizabeth Ingram adopt a similar policy in their *Guide to English Illustrated Books*. See Luborsky-Ingram, I, x.
- 97 These early examples are illustrated as figures thirty-two and thirty-three in Driver, pp. 56–57. The present discussion is indebted to her illuminating study of the Pamphile-Cherea-Lamant figure. See Driver, pp. 55–67.
- 98 Driver, p. 55.
- 99 The same figure occurs elsewhere in Skot’s output: on the title-page to *A dialogue betwene the comen secretary and jelowsy* ([1530?], STC 6807).
- 100 Driver, p. 71.
- 101 On the relationship between the two plays, see Ian Lancashire, ‘Introduction’, in *Two Tudor Interludes: Youth and Hick Scorner*, ed. by Ian Lancashire (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), pp. 1–95 (pp. 41–48).
- 102 Robert Copland, *Jyl of braintfords testament* ([c. 1567?], STC 5730), t. p.
- 103 Anne E. B. Caldiron, *English Printing, Verse Translation, and the Battle of the Sexes* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 74.
- 104 Michael Camille, ‘Reading the Printed Image: Illuminations and Woodcuts of the *Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* in the Fifteenth Century’, in *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450–1520*, ed. by Sandra Hindman (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 259–91 (pp. 287–88).
- 105 The sill of this compartment, featuring a tablet with the initials ‘TR’, was essentially reused at least once by John King, since it also turns up on sig. C2<sup>r</sup> of his edition of *Nice Wanton* (Q1).
- 106 Sherman, ‘On the Threshold’, p. 14.
- 107 Lilian Armstrong, ‘The Hand-Illumination of Printed Books in Italy, 1465–1515’, in *The Painted Page: Italian Renaissance Book Illuminations, 1450–1550*, ed. by Jonathan J. G. Alexander (Munich: Prestel, 1994), pp. 35–47 (p. 42), cited in Sherman, ‘On the Threshold’, p. 15. For a useful précis of the significance of the architectural setting see, Margery Corbett and Ronald Lightbrown, *The Comely Frontispiece: The Emblematic Title-Page in England, 1550–1660* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 6–9.
- 108 For examples, see McKF.
- 109 Corbett and Lightbrown, p. 6.
- 110 Saenger, p. 43.
- 111 McKF, p. 52.
- 112 It is not always possible to be certain about the method used, but given the absence of cracks and wormholes, and the appearance of lines, cross-hatching, etc., it seems probable that the compartments on the title-pages to *Thyestes*, *Impatient Poverty*, and *Troas* were all produced using metal

68 *Reading early printed dramatic title-pages*

- plates. See McKF, p. xl. See also Bamber Gascoigne, *How to Identify Prints: A Complete Guide to Manual and Mechanical Processes from Woodcut to Inkjet*, 2nd rev. edn (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004); and Antony Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking: An Introduction to the History and Techniques*, 2nd edn (London: British Museum Press, 1996).
- 113 McKF lists one earlier example, Edward Whitchurch and Richard Bankes's edition of *A neue boke of presidentes* ([1543], STC 3327), which is the probable source for all subsequent iterations of the design. See McKF, p. 52.
- 114 I am grateful to A. S. G. Edwards for this suggestion.
- 115 On Colwell's experiments in dramatic *mise en page*, see Aaron Pratt, 'The Status of Printed Playbooks in Early Modern England', unpublished PhD dissertation (Yale University, 2016), ch. 2.
- 116 On this point, see Chapter 3.

## 2 Front matter in early printed playbooks

Speaking of ‘The Mousetrap’, *Hamlet*’s play-within-the play, Hamlet utters the memorable phrase, ‘The play’s the thing’.<sup>1</sup> He means that he intends for the play to be a weapon of revenge, and for ‘The Mouse-trap’ to serve to ‘catch the conscience of the king’. However, like much of *Hamlet*, it has become a detachable quotation, repurposed so that the thing referred to ceases to pertain specifically to Hamlet’s plans for his murderous stepfather, Claudius. Shorn of its qualifying clause, the quotation has been used in a multitude of ways: to advertise plays, as a title for numerous books and journal articles, and as a headline for reviews and other journalistic pieces. In its modern usage, ‘the play’ self-reflexively announces itself as both subject and object so that it, and not Hamlet’s revenge, becomes the thing. This chapter is concerned with the thingyness of plays – their material form as books – but also how certain material features, specifically the prefatory paratexts found in playbooks, construct the play as thing. Paul Voss has suggested that in their printed form, early modern playbooks are unusual in their conspicuous lack of front matter, and that this absence can be explained by the fact that they ‘were not *primarily* intended to be read’.<sup>2</sup> My aim in this chapter is a twofold rebuttal of these claims. First, I seek to refute the point that early printed plays contain no prefatory materials; in fact, there is one piece of front matter that is almost ubiquitous: the character list. Secondly, I demonstrate that the absence of particular forms of prefatory paratexts – dedicatory epistles, commendatory verses, and addresses to the reader – in *certain kinds of playbooks* says less about intended forms of use, and more about the efforts taken by printers to develop cost-effective solutions for making the form of the play immediately legible to potential purchasers. In short, the absence of such materials may have served to draw attention to the play as ‘the thing’. Conversely, when they do appear, they preface plays of a type – typically ‘closet’ translations and Inns of Court drama – that are generically inclined to downplay their status as drama. Put another way, at least until the 1560s and 1570s, dedicatory epistles, commendatory verses, and addresses to the reader are found mostly in the front pages of playbooks masquerading as other forms of text.

'Front matter' has been defined as anything other than the text proper, and includes 'the title page, preface, frontispiece, dedicatory epistles and poems, tables, indices, errata, and colophons'.<sup>3</sup> It has, in other words, become interchangeable with 'paratext', and used to describe all manner of extra-textual features of the material book. However, a more conservative definition would see it limited to those parts of the book that appear before the text proper; a paradoxical position given that, for the most part, such materials tend to be written or composed *after* the text itself. As David M. Bergeron has wryly commented, 'the prefatory position belies that these paratexts come *after* the play in terms of their composition even as the printer would ordinarily print this front matter last: the last shall be first'.<sup>4</sup> In fact, front matter often functions to point up the temporal gap between the original auspices and the moment of publication, and thus makes properly visible the otherwise hidden reality of the collaborative nature of all printed books. Giving voice to a range of different legitimising agents – the publisher or printer, the author, their associates, supporters, and champions – and appealing to both specific (typically aristocratic or otherwise high-ranking) and more general readers, such materials have often been read as 'the site of contestation and negotiation among authors, publisher/printers, and readership(s)'.<sup>5</sup> But while it is undoubtedly the case that printed preliminaries can often register the different agendas of those involved in the publication of a given text, their collective presence has often been linked to prestige, and taken as a sign of a volume's cultural or literary worth. In Michael Saenger's words, 'front matter has a special relationship to the idea of literariness because it marks a boundary between the commerce of the book and the content of the book'.<sup>6</sup> Following this line of argument, literary status and value proliferate with the addition of each new prefatory paratext. However, in this chapter, I want to explore the possibility that the routine absence of certain preliminary paratexts – prefaces, dedicatory epistles, commendatory verses, etc. – coupled with the near ubiquitous presence of one particular piece of front matter – the character list – may have served to help identify the text as play, a point that may have been more pressing to potential purchasers than what we would identify today as literary value. Consequently, this chapter takes a comparative approach, examining early printed plays alongside other texts with minimal front matter; it also takes a closer look at plays that do feature these more 'literary' paratexts, including those that occur in printed collections. Arguing against the view that prefatory materials need function as an index to cultural worth, I suggest the printed preliminaries in pre-playhouse playbooks point to the fact that plays were often framed both as pieces of drama and designed for leisure-time reading. The opening pages of early printed plays therefore challenge what critics have often seen as an opposition between "do-it-yourself" form[s] of entertainment' and 'literature' intended 'to be read and thoughtfully

digested'.<sup>7</sup> However, they also interrogate and refine modern ideas about 'literariness', and illustrate ways that playtexts, though not 'literary' in some definitions of the word, were nonetheless intended for various forms of use, including readerly consumption.

### Surveying front matter in early printed drama

In the first edition of *Songes and Sonettes*, often referred to as *Tottell's Miscellany* (1557, STC 13860), the text proper begins on sig. A2<sup>r</sup>, after just one, short prefatory paratext: a preface 'To the reder' on sig. A1<sup>v</sup>. The anthology is a text that today we would hesitate to describe as anything other than literary, and yet, in its earliest printed form, it is denied the grandeur of a series of legitimising preliminaries, and instead relies on the printer's brief exhortation to the reader to justify the publication of 'those workes which the vngentle horders vp of such tresure haue heretofore enuied the'.<sup>8</sup> Some thirty years later, two ground-breaking 'literary' works were also packaged and presented without the legitimising authority of extensive preliminaries.<sup>9</sup> Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590, STC 22539) begins with a blank leaf, which is followed by a dedicatory epistle from the author to his sister, the Countess of Pembroke (sigs A3<sup>r</sup>–A4<sup>r</sup>). A note from the 'ouer-seer of the print' (sig. A4<sup>v</sup>) then precedes the text itself, which commences on sig. B1<sup>r</sup>. Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590, STC 23081) is even more spare, featuring only a dedication to Queen Elizabeth (sig. A1<sup>v</sup>) presented in the style of an inscriptional tableau:

TO THE MOST MIGH- | TIE AND MAGNIFI- | CENT EM-  
PRESSE ELI- | ZABETH, BY THE | GRACE OF GOD QVEENE |  
OF ENGLAND, FRANCE | AND IRELAND AND DE- | FENDER  
OF THE FAITH | &c.

Her most humble  
Seruante  
*Ed. Spenser*<sup>10</sup>

A. R. Braunmuller has suggested that Spenser's trailing signature is a typographical expression of his humility,<sup>11</sup> and this effect is heightened by the removal of all other traditionally prefatory paratexts to the end of the book, so that they appear after the text itself. As Mark Bland has commented, moving these 'preliminaries served to make a [...] point. Instead of their mediation, a direct relationship was created between the dedication and the opening of the poem'.<sup>12</sup> The only thing framing the text is Spenser's humbleness before his queen; it is with the author's submission in mind that the reader turns to the adjacent recto, and commences reading the poem. The *Faerie Queene*, like *Arcadia* and *Songes and Sonettes*, ran to numerous editions, and despite changing historical

circumstances – the death of the author or patron for instance – their front matter remained unchanged. In contrast, texts that today we would readily define as non-literary seem to have accrued additional preliminaries as they ran to further editions. For instance, when John Bale's anecdotal anti-papal polemic, *The actes of Englysh votaryes*, was first printed on the Continent in 1546 (STC 1270), it featured just a preface (sigs A2<sup>r</sup>–A7<sup>r</sup>). But by the time a fifth edition was issued in London some fifteen years later (1560, STC 1274), it had acquired numerous additional paratexts: a curiously anachronistic dedication to Edward VI, an index of authors' names, and an errata list. Each of its two parts has its own title-page and preface, and the second part also features an address by Bale to the reader.

As these examples illustrate, modern notions of 'literature' as a category of text are not easy to map onto early modern texts; nor does the early modern book – the text in its material form – necessarily offer reliable evidence for the assessment of cultural value. It must have been the case that sixteenth-century readers sometimes expected to find one or more preliminary paratexts, but their number and form may have been as much a consequence of when or by whom a text was printed, as they were a marker of literary status. It is worth bearing these facts in mind when we turn to survey dramatic front matter. There are four preliminaries that critics have tended to link to high status publications: dedications, commendatory verses, addresses to the reader, and arguments. That these do not occur with any great regularity in plays printed before the opening of the theatres would seem to support the view that early printed drama was not intended for literary consumption.<sup>13</sup> However, the figures on their own are misleading and need to be understood in the context of both play type and publication date. Prior to the publication of translations of Senecan drama, prefatory paratexts such as these were unprecedented in dramatic publications of all kinds and are only very occasionally witnessed on the front pages of quasi-dramatic dialogues. But further to the 1559 publication of Jasper Heywood's translation of *Troas*, which was printed with a dedicatory epistle to Queen Elizabeth (sigs [A]2<sup>r</sup>–[A]3<sup>r</sup>), a preface 'To the Readers' ([A]3<sup>v</sup>–[A]4<sup>v</sup>), and a verse argument (sigs [A]5<sup>r</sup>–[A]6<sup>v</sup>), it becomes increasingly common for such materials to be included, and this is true not just of other Senecan translations, but also first editions of other genres of play. Between the publication of *Troas* and opening of the theatres, some fifty-five plays were printed, but just thirty-nine were first editions, and of that number around thirty per cent contain one or more so-called 'literary preliminaries'. Given what Bergeron has said about 'invariant' paratexts – that is, paratexts in 'later editions of the same play, appearing without any substantive alteration, despite being separated in time by years or decades, as if nothing had changed in the circumstances of the playwright or dedicatee in the interval'<sup>14</sup> – it is unsurprising that plays first printed

before *Troas* continued to be printed without front matter if they ran to further editions. ‘Printers, publishers, and playwrights’, he suggests ‘apparently came to believe that [paratexts] formed an essential part of the printed text and therefore should appear as the same, even if historically that practice may not make sense (at least to us)’.<sup>15</sup> This argument also makes sense of the retention of dedicatory epistles, addresses to the reader, and other ‘literary’ preliminaries in the front pages of second and third editions of plays first printed with them. However, perhaps more striking is that in a handful of cases, the conventions associated with the publication of classical plays clearly had a perceptible effect on the way that other plays were presented. O2 *Gorboduc*, *Free-Will*, Q1a and Q1b *The Glass of Government*, and *An Interlude of Minds* were all printed in ways that suggest indebtedness to the conventions for printing Senecan translations. Their inclusion of dedications, prefaces, commendatory verses, and arguments points to the fact that they were marketed so as to be visually and materially related to recent editions of classical plays. In short, printers and other print agents intended that they be less like other playbooks and more like those texts, which though dramatic, had nonetheless been designed to invoke the study rather than the stage.

That printers were able to make this distinction speaks to the fact that there were, by the 1570s, a clear set of conventions for making vernacular drama legible in print. As argued in Chapter 1, the language and look of title-pages clearly helped to standardise the verbal and visual cues that helped identify texts as plays, but there is a single paratext that probably did more for the development of such conventions than any other presentational feature of early printed playbooks: the character list. Character lists have often been taken as an indicator of a text’s proximity to performance, and, since performativity and literariness are frequently understood as inimical, their presence has been read as a marker of lowness, cheapness, and popularity. In other words, because of a perceived opposition between literature and performance, it has been assumed that plays with character lists cannot also have been intended for readerly consumption. At the heart of this chapter, therefore, lies a close reading of the form and function of character lists in early printed plays, intended to demonstrate the artificiality of this opposition. Character lists do not designate texts for performance *per se*; rather they serve to help identify the book as a play, and are therefore valuable insofar as they point readers to practise forms of use that might include performance, but also reading. More specifically, they teach ways of reading that are clearly unique to drama, and emphasise the point that *reading* a play is an activity related to, but in some ways unlike, reading other kinds of text. Character lists both mark the text as playbook and help the reader navigate the task of reading drama. Consequently, concluding this chapter, I return to consider other preliminary paratexts, and show how the rhetoric deployed in dedicatory epistles, prefaces, commendatory verses,

and arguments position the texts with which they are associated as categorically proximate to non-dramatic literary publications.

### **A potted history of the character list**

With just two notable exceptions, vernacular medieval plays fully extant in contemporary manuscripts are not provided with character lists.<sup>16</sup> Nor do such lists occur in manuscript or incunable versions of classical plays by Terence, Plautus, or Seneca.<sup>17</sup> But, discounting those plays for which the only witnesses are imperfect or fragmentary, just sixteen single-play playbooks printed before 1577 do not have a character list.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, they occur in every play printed after 1565. Their ubiquity, however, can be pushed back still further, since with two exceptions, all plays printed after 1535 without character lists are new editions of older plays that follow Bergeron's law of 'invariant' paratexts. But, if the inclusion of a character list had become the norm within the first decades of dramatic print, it is striking that in the years following the establishment of professional playhouses, the practice was far less widely adopted; between 1590 and 1620, just a third of printed plays provide character lists.<sup>19</sup> These statistics reveal two important trends. First, that character lists are primarily a print phenomenon – that is, while they do occur in manuscript form, it is clear that in the majority of such cases, print rather than scribal practice is the model. And second, there exists a special relationship between character lists and pre-playhouse drama – printed character lists continue to be used in a variety of inventive ways after the establishment of commercial theatres in London in the 1570s, but only in the decades preceding this development was the inclusion of such lists so pervasive. To these observations we may also tentatively add that the character list, at least in its earliest forms, might be recognised as a peculiarly vernacular paratext. The inclusion of a character list in John Rastell's *The Nature of the Four Elements* – the first printed play to include such a list – clearly marks a development independent from classical and other Continental traditions, one that would soon be adopted by all English plays printed before the late 1570s.

### **Positioning the character list**

When Rastell printed an edition of his play, he made the unprecedented move of providing a character list on the title-page – the three manuscript character lists that pre-date *The Nature of the Four Elements* all appear after the texts of the plays themselves.<sup>20</sup> But the decision to bring the list to the fore was a logical choice – as playbooks would have been sold unbound, the character list could function in tandem with the title-page's other features to attract potential buyers. In fact, the title-page remained the most common position for character lists for

much of the sixteenth century, accounting for around sixty per cent of all occurrences up to and including 1576. Almost all other character lists are also to be found before the text, usually on sig. A1<sup>v</sup>. Just two plays experiment with an alternative back position for their lists, and their early dates – *Magnificence* was printed in 1531 and *Nature* in around 1532 – indicate that their publisher, John Rastell, may have been working with an early manuscript rather than print examples in mind. If these two examples stand out as exceptions that prove print conventions for the position of character lists were established relatively early, the case of John Bale's *Three Laws* provides further, tantalising evidence. For while the character list appears among the front matter in both editions, the instructions for the doubling of roles that occur on sig. G1<sup>v</sup> of Derick van der Straten's first edition are repositioned so that they appear on the title-page of Thomas Colwell's second edition. It is a change that at once highlights the functional proximity of character lists and doubling instructions, and reflects one printer's efforts to ensure that his edition of this particular play met with the market's expectations.<sup>21</sup>

If the print history of the character list suggests certain conventions had been fixed by the middle of the sixteenth century, manuscript examples from across the period paint a more complicated picture. For while a number retain the back position favoured by the earliest manuscript playbooks, others occur on the title-page or amongst other prefatory materials. In a particularly striking example, two copies of the same play, *Gismond of Salerne*, adopt different approaches. The earlier, London, British Library, MS Hargrave 205 (copied c. 1568–75) includes a character list on fol. 22<sup>v</sup> at the end of the manuscript, immediately after other, typically prefatory material – dedicatory verses and an argument. The later, London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 786 (copied late sixteenth/early seventeenth century) places all this material at the front between fols 3<sup>r</sup> and 5<sup>v</sup>. In addition, a further fragmentary witness, Washington, DC, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.a.198, a miscellany of mainly poetic materials copied around 1570, adopts the layout preferred by the Hargrave manuscript. There are no entries in the Stationers' Company Records for a play of *Gismond* in the middle decades of the sixteenth century, but the scribes who copied these manuscripts seem to have had a very clear sense of what a play ought to look like in the second half of the sixteenth century. Moreover, the rearrangement of the paratextual apparatus in the Lansdowne manuscript suggests the work of a scribe keen to keep up with print conventions. In short, while the position of the earliest printed character lists may have been influenced by scribal habits, for later manuscripts, the obverse seems to have been true – the frontal position of character lists in a handful of mid- and late-sixteenth-century manuscript playbooks is evidence of just one of the many ways that scribes modelled their work on the form and layout of printed texts.

## Character lists and the target markets I

Noting the way that character lists are literally brought to the fore in early printed plays, critics have been quick to suggest that would-be actors would have been their primary consumers. ‘During this period’, Voss has argued, printed plays were ‘texts designed to assist individuals staging a given play’.<sup>22</sup> Matteo Pangallo has espoused a similar view, and noting that many ‘title-page *dramatis personae* lists in early printed interludes explicitly delineate how parts could be doubled or tripled to accommodate casts of various sizes’, he suggests that such lists served ‘as advertising to buyers interested in how to cast the play for their own performances’.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, Zachary Lesser has written:

Clearly stationers believed that a major part of the audiences for playbooks consisted of actors themselves, whether the household players of some great lord [...], a more humble touring company [...], or others who might want to put on a ‘do-it-yourself’ production.<sup>24</sup>

The near ubiquity of this critical position is a direct consequence of critical bias. Overwhelmingly, pre-playhouse plays are treated as mere forerunners to the great blossoming of dramatic literature in the age of Shakespeare, and for the most part, scholars have clung to narratives about the eventual emergence, around the turn of the seventeenth century, of drama as a category of literature printed for a ‘market comprised largely of private, silent play-readers’.<sup>25</sup> However, when considered more squarely within the context of the mid-Tudor book trade, it is absurd to imagine that playbooks were printed solely with players in mind. At the very least it is a view that has been overstated, not least because if we imagine even a very limited print run, perhaps along the lines of academic publishing today, it is hard to believe that such a market would have existed in sufficient numbers to merit the outlying costs of production.<sup>26</sup> It is therefore more plausible that certain features – like the character list – were inflected to encode theatricality in ways that helped readers imagine the text as performance. Moreover, if we think of the character list functioning to model a particular mode of readerly engagement, it seems likely that they were included less as an acting aid and more as a shorthand for the kind of text they accompany; given that the title-page is far and away the most common position for such lists, it is possible to speculate that they offered potential buyers a way of immediately identifying the book in their hands as a play.

Nonetheless, it *is* the case that on the face of it, some character lists seem more concerned with performance than others, and this is particularly true of those lists that offer instructions for the doubling of parts. With the exception of the first edition of *Three Laws*, the doubling instructions that appear in around a quarter of all early printed

single-play playbooks function as an extension of the character list, and either provide a statement of the necessary number of players and/or offer a schematised breakdown for the doubling of parts. In fact, while just three playbooks offer only a breakdown of roles, and a further six basic instructions regarding the pre-requisite number of players, in the majority of cases – some thirteen in all – these two features are combined to provide a fully conceived, if not always reliable, programme for economic casting. That this arrangement had some currency is supported by the appearance of a similar scheme on fol. 1<sup>r</sup> of London, British Library, Additional MS 26782, the sole witness to *A Marriage between Wit and Wisdom*, which was clearly copied to resemble a printed edition, perhaps taking its lead from a volume like William Wager's *Enough Is as Good as a Feast*.<sup>27</sup> On the title-page to Wager's play, the generic instruction 'Seuen may easely play this Enterlude' precedes a list of 'The names of the Players', which has been arranged to show how the parts should be divided amongst the actors.<sup>28</sup> In fact, the required number of actors is rather more than might be expected; while at least one other play requires eight players, a lower number is typical, with four the most common, particularly for plays printed in the first half of the sixteenth century. These lower figures tally with the case made by E. K. Chambers and developed by David Bevington that early Tudor interludes were originally performed by quasi-professional itinerant troupes of four or five men.<sup>29</sup> It may be that an awareness of these performance conditions informed a line in the collaborative play *Sir Thomas More* (composed c. 1590–93), when one of the players explains to More that his troupe comprises 'four men and a boy'.<sup>30</sup> The higher numbers required by *Enough Is as Good as a Feast* are similar to those given in the doubling instructions for four other plays printed after 1565 and might simply reflect more elaborate production values in the decade before the opening of permanent professional theatres. However, given that these schemes were occasionally inaccurate or unworkable,<sup>31</sup> it seems at least as likely that instructions concerning the number of actors – particularly in the case of later plays – were intended to authenticate the text as drama and render the book legible as a play. So, while playing companies and amateur actors must have formed one potential market, the inclusion of detailed doubling schemes may also have been intended to attract readers and inculcate specific ways of reading. This conclusion is borne out by the instructions on the title-page of Q1 *Lusty Juventus*: 'four may play it easely, takyng such partes as they thinke best:so that any one take of those partes that be not in place at once'. Jane Griffiths has recently argued that the wording of these instructions may indicate that amateur rather than professional actors were the intended market. 'It seems unlikely', she has suggested, 'that a professional troupe would need what is effectively a theoretical explanation of how doubling works [...]. The phrasing may suggest that the printing of the play was intended [...] to

widen its audience by [encouraging] amateurs' to play it.<sup>32</sup> But lacking the practical information required for the division of parts, and positing future performance in only the vaguest of terms, the doubling instructions for *Lusty Juventus* – which also recur in two later editions of the play – seem designed to aid readers as much as any would-be actors, professional or otherwise. In short, the character-list-cum-doubling-schemes that occur across a number of printed playbooks need not drive a wedge between performativity and readability – between drama and literature – but instead offer evidence of how printers worked to encode a particular kind of reading experience, unique to drama, where future performance is imagined to take place in the mind.

## Character lists and the target markets II

The mode of reading envisaged for plays with doubling instructions is clearly rather different to that associated with 'closet' dramas, plays that we know were never intended for public performance but were, rather, designed to be read or privately performed in the study or closet. Eleven such plays (issued fourteen times) were printed during the pre-playhouse period.<sup>33</sup> The earliest, an anonymous translation of Terence's *Andria*, was printed without a character list, but such lists do occur in all extant editions and issues of the remaining ten. Seven are translations of Senecan tragedies, printed individually – and in the case of Jasper Heywood's translation of *Troas*, in three separate editions – but eventually compiled alongside other plays and with some revisions, as *Seneca his tenne tragedies* (1581, STC 22221). Two others are also translations, though of contemporary Continental plays. Only one – George Gascoigne's moral allegory, *The Glass of Government*, which exists in more than one state – represents a new work by an English author. The character lists that are provided for these plays are never on the title-page, but rather occur among other prefatory paratexts that, as we have seen, have often been taken as a marker of cultural worth. These character lists tend to provide scant information – just a heading and a list of names – but are nonetheless presented on a page of their own, suggesting a kind of luxury that may have stood in as a byword for literariness.

The character list in John Studley's translation of *Agamemnon* is typical of lists of this kind. It is the last of a long series of prefatory paratexts. After the title-page there follows: It is the last of a long series of prefatory paratexts. After the title-page there follows: eight commendatory verses (sigs ¶2<sup>r</sup>–A1<sup>v</sup>) – two by Thomas Nuce (whose translation of Seneca's *Octavia* was printed in the same year); two by an unidentified 'W. R.'; one each by an 'H. C.', Thomas Delapeend (another translator, most famous for his partial translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*), 'W. Parkar', and a 'T. B.' (perhaps the translator Thomas Blundeville); a list of 'faultes scaped in the verses' (sig. A1<sup>v</sup>); a dedicatory 'Epistle' to William Cecil, the 1st Baron

Burghley, from John Studley (sigs A2<sup>r</sup>–A3<sup>r</sup>); and a ‘Preface to the Reader’ (sigs A3<sup>v</sup>–A4<sup>r</sup>). Only after all of this other matter does the character list appear on sig. A4<sup>v</sup>. With the exception of Cecil’s arms, which appear beneath it, no other material occurs on the same page, with the result that the list stands out, isolated from the text on the adjacent recto. This effect is enhanced by the adoption of an italic font for the speakers’ names, which may also have been intended to highlight the play’s Latin source and identify its characters with the classical past. As I noted in Chapter 1, black letter remained the dominant font for the presentation of plays until the 1590s, but as early as the *c.* 1520 edition of *Andria*, roman and italic fonts were used for Latin words and phrases. The mixing of fonts in the character list for *Agamemnon* is of a piece with this practice, but goes one step further to suggest that italic is not only appropriate for Latin-language words, but also for signalling the literary culture of the ancient world.<sup>34</sup> That font could contribute to the production of meaning is evident in the presentation of the character list on fol. A2<sup>r</sup> of Washington, DC, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.b.221, a seventeenth-century manuscript adaptation of Henry Cheeke’s closet translation of Francesco Negri’s *Free-Will*, that replicates the blending of italic and roman fonts found in the earlier printed version. Copied some fifty years after the translation was originally printed, and presumably intended for use by a particular reader or coterie of readers, the text of this manuscript copy substantially diverges from Cheeke’s printed translation, but the careful efforts to reproduce the mixing of fonts as they occur in the printed character list highlight the extent to which closet texts and the character lists that almost universally accompanied them were shaped by very specific horizons of reception.

That character lists are found at all in the texts of early printed closet dramas complicates the idea that such lists need always function to facilitate real, physical performance. Nonetheless, the formal differences between the lists found in these books and those with doubling schemes suggest they anticipate different and very specific reading practices. Closet drama has often been described as an elite literary genre, and the careful inflection of character lists attached to such plays certainly indicates a mode of consumption distinct from other kinds of character lists, including those with elaborate doubling instructions.<sup>35</sup> However, while different kinds of playbooks might have demanded different reading strategies, they do not necessarily imply different categories of readers. In the final chapter of this book, I consider further the early ownership and use of pre-playhouse playbooks, but it seems plausible that some readers of closet texts may also have owned and read more ‘popular’ plays. In short, the formal differences between character lists with doubling schemes and those included in the printed texts of closet plays need not reflect implacable oppositions between drama and literature, the public and the private, or popular and elite modes of consumption. Rather, positioned towards the front of the book, character lists seem to

have functioned like user-guides, offering the reader a sense of how best to approach, read, and use the text. In other words, it is not that these different kinds of character lists frame the play as appropriate for only certain categories of readers, but rather that they model for all readers different strategies for engagement.

### Character lists and the target markets III

A further kind of reading programme can be identified for eleven plays in fifteen editions or issues that provide relational descriptions for each of the characters.<sup>36</sup> For if character lists with doubling instructions could serve to help readers picture the auspices for any possible future performance (both in the mind and on the stage), and character lists for closet plays contribute to legitimising the text as ‘literary’, then descriptive lists could be inflected to record or suggest past performance. The earliest example of a fully descriptive character list is John Bale’s *God’s Promises*, though in many ways this example is anomalous as both the names of the characters and their descriptions are given in Latin.<sup>37</sup> Though there are few further early Tudor examples, the practice clearly became more common after 1570 – over half of the extant playbooks printed between 1570 and 1576 feature them. The list on the title-page of Q2 *Jacob and Esau* is typical; here the ‘partes and names of the Players’ are listed in two columns, reading vertically:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 The Prologe, a Poete.                            | 7 Hanan, a neighbour<br>to Isaac also.                        |
| 2 Isaac, an olde man, fa=<br>ther to Iacob & Esau. | 8 Ragau, seruant vn=<br>to Esau.                              |
| 3 Rebecca an olde woman,<br>wife to Isaac.         | 9 Mido, a little Boy,<br>leading Isaac.                       |
| 4 Esau, a yong man and a<br>hunter.                | 10 Debora, the nurse<br>of Isaacs Tente.                      |
| 5 Iacob, a yong man of god=<br>ly conuersation.    | 11 Abra, a little wench,<br>seruant to Rebecca. <sup>38</sup> |
| 6 Zethar a neighbour.                              |   |

With the exception of the Prologue, who enters and speaks first, all of the characters are described in relational terms to Isaac, who, as head of the family (and indeed the tribe of Israel), is the character invested with the most authority.

Describing characters relationally, such lists effectively plot the landscape of the play, and we might think of them functioning in much the same way as contemporary maps in that their relationship to the plays they precede is analogous to those between cartographical representations and the geographical spaces they seek to signify. Not for nothing was the map considered the first truly modern atlas printed with the title *Theatrum orbis Terrarum* (1570, USTC 401451).<sup>39</sup> Pangallo has

described such ‘explicating lists’ as ‘anticipatory and anti-dramatic, providing readers with prior knowledge about the relationships between characters that an audience in the theatre can work out only as the play unfolds’.<sup>40</sup> However, rather than thinking of descriptive lists as anti-dramatic, it is important to register the possibility that they were designed to facilitate the imaginative reconstruction of past performance. That the time and place of the first performance are given in a third of all playbooks with such lists would seem to support this reading of their function.<sup>41</sup> Since there are no further references to original auspices in any other single-play playbooks printed before 1577, it seems very likely that these two paratexts – details of the first performance and details about the status and relationships between characters – were designed to go hand in hand in an effort to help the reader construct both the imaginative world of the play and the historical occurrence of its first performance.

These three categories of character lists – those with doubling instructions, those designed to accompany closet plays, and those that describe characters in relational terms – demonstrate that a single paratext could be manipulated to signify to readers different ways of encountering the text. However, while it is possible to trace broad trends, in reality there is much overlap, and in many cases individual lists borrow features from all three categories. While all but one of the descriptive character lists for plays printed in the 1560s occur on the title-page, the opposite is true of similar lists printed in the 1570s; with just two exceptions, all descriptive character lists that occur after 1570 appear after the title-page, often among other prefatory paratexts. Pangallo has interpreted this development as an indication of the changing market for playbooks, suggesting that the removal of character lists from the title-page marks a movement away from the use of playbooks by amateur players, towards their function as objects of private study:

Because potential buyers no longer principally purchased the book for use in their own performances, placement of character lists shifted from the title-page into the preliminaries, where readers could consult them as reference tools in proximity to, often directly facing, the start of the first act.<sup>42</sup>

But there are other ways of accounting for this shift. The presentation of Senecan translations exerted a powerful influence on dramatic *mise en page*, and it is striking that the gradual displacement of the character list from the title-page coincides with the publication of Seneca in English in the 1560s. So, it may be that the displacement of character lists from the title-pages had less to do with changing markets than attempts to model certain reading practices, specifically those associated with the consumption of classical translations.

This conclusion is supported by John Day's (second) edition of Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville's *Gorboduc*, which includes a descriptive character list on sig. A2<sup>v</sup> in which the characters are described in terms of their relationship to 'Gorboduc, King of great Brittain'.<sup>43</sup> All of the Senecan translations printed before 1577 refer to characters as 'speakers', so it seems likely that this list's title, 'The names of the speakers', has been styled to resemble those used for Senecan drama.<sup>44</sup> In fact, its wording is virtually identical to headings used for the character lists in *Agamemnon* and *Medea*. Furthermore, its position, after 'The argument' and 'The P. to the Reader', but before an account of 'The order of the dome shew', approximates the content and layout of prefatory material associated with the publication of Senecan drama and suggests a similar preoccupation with framing the work for self-conscious readerly consumption. Day's edition of the play also includes printed commonplace markers in the form of single or double quotation marks, thereby further compounding the sense that this text was designed primarily for 'literary' use.<sup>45</sup> Such markers function in early modern printed books to identify lines or phrases of sententious merit for the careful reader to commit to memory or copy into his or her commonplace book.<sup>46</sup> This edition of *Gorboduc* is the first known printed play to include such markers, and the programme of reading suggested by them clearly aligns the play with those closet texts that likewise would have been read for examples of pithy, moral advice.<sup>47</sup> However, unlike any closet translation, O2 *Gorboduc* also proudly announces the moment of its original performance. The title-page informs the potential buyer or reader that the text has been:

set forth without addition or alteration but altogether as the same was shewed | on stage before the Queenes Maiestie, | about nine years past, *vz.* the | xvij. day of Ianuarie. 1561. | by the gentlemen of the | Inner Temple.<sup>48</sup>

While the character list clearly represents an attempt to align the play with closet drama, this note offers an alternative method of legitimation: the occasion of the play's performance before the Queen. In the case of O2 *Gorboduc* then, status is drawn from two supposedly opposing contexts: the socially elite, literary milieu of Senecan translation and the play's origins as a performance event, albeit one enjoyed in a similarly elite setting. So, rather than obscure the play's origins in performance, Day here invokes *Gorboduc*'s original auspices as a way of compounding the overall impression of the book's value and worth. Far from being opposed, in the marketing of O2 *Gorboduc*, the imaginative realms of stage and study are enjoined in an effort to reach the widest possible consumer base.

Other character lists imply a different kind of mixed market, and combine the features of the descriptive character list with doubling schemes. The title-page to *New Custom* provides a list of 'The players names in this | Enterlude', formatted in a single column with the characters' names given in roman type and descriptions provided in black letter. However, in addition to this descriptive list, the title-page also sets out a doubling scheme. Beneath the instruction that 'fower may Play the Enterlude', the parts have been divided for four actors so that one man takes on the role of 'Peuersedocrine', a second 'Ignoraunce | Hypocrisie. | and Education.', a third 'New Custome | Auarice. | Assurance.', while a fourth is required to act 'Light of the Gospell. | Creweltie. | Goddes felicitie.' and 'The prologue'. In combining these features, the printer, William How, may have been seeking to maximise the book's market potential; in its printed form, the play seems to both account for past performance and to enable the possibility of future performance. How printed a further three plays of which one – the anonymous *Common Conditions* – similarly blends a descriptive list with instructions for doubling. Like *New Custom*, this information occurs on the title-page, with the list of 'The Player's names' preceding the instruction that 'Six may play this Comedie'. However, unlike *New Custom*, the title-page does not provide more detailed information for the doubling of parts. One possible reason further instructions are omitted is that a production with just six actors would be impossible; as most modern editors of the play have realised, at least one scene requires no less than seven actors.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, the list provides as separate entries the roles adopted by Clarisia and Sedmond, daughter and son of the Duke of Arabia, when they are forced to flee their homeland and assume new identities. This distinction between character and adopted persona is also extended to the speech-prefixes used for the text itself, and may indicate that the printed play was set from a copy that rationalised the fictional plot in a similar way. Still, it is tempting to attribute the faulty doubling scheme to a printer keen to get the job done quickly; the overall impression is of a book produced with less care than haste. In the end, far more than documenting actual past performance or facilitating real future performance, How seems most concerned with conveying *the idea* of performance. For it is the sense that the text could have been or might one day be performed that identifies it as a play and thereby informs the reader how it ought to be read.

### Character lists, front matter, and the playbook as thing

Overwhelmingly, character lists seem tasked with promoting the categorical status of the text as play. It is this rather than designating the text for performance that is their primary function. Furthermore, while character lists could and did provide information that would be useful

to both amateur and professional actors, their overwhelming conformity to one of three categorical types indicates that printers used them to direct readers towards particular modes of reading. As we have seen, the lists associated with translations of classical and Continental drama are typically to be found among other prefatory paratexts, and the form and content of front matter in these playbooks seem intended to suggest the elite or 'literary' nature of the text. Despite the presence of character lists, these plays deploy preliminaries in ways designed to draw parallels with other, non-dramatic forms of writing, downplaying, or even effacing the text's status as drama. Conversely, the absence of front matter in the majority of other playbooks printed during this period may have been a conscious presentational decision on the part of printers keen to ensure the easy and economical identification of the text with play.

### Closet drama and front matter: *Thyestes*

Jasper Heywood's translation of *Thyestes* was printed once as a single-play playbook in 1560 in the same octavo format preferred for all Senecan translations, excepting *Octavia*, which at the time was erroneously attributed to the Roman author. It is one of three Senecan translations made by Heywood, and along with his *Troas* and his *Hercules Furens*, *Thyestes* would go on to be anthologised in 1581 (STC 22221) with other Senecan translations by other university men: John Studley, Alexander Neville, and Thomas Nuce. The writers and printers responsible for translating and disseminating Seneca to an early Elizabethan audience were a small and interconnected bunch, and as such, *Thyestes* makes a good case study for illustrating the ways front matter was used in closet translations to underscore the text's literary value and to distance it from the idea of performance. Its archetypality is also reflected in the fact that it is the only one of the Elizabethan translations of Seneca to have appeared in a modern, freestanding edition.<sup>50</sup>

*Thyestes* was published in 1560. A title-page imprint claims it as a product of the 'house late Thomas Berthelettes', but its printer has recently been identified as Richard Payne.<sup>51</sup> Compared with other early printed playbooks, it is rich in preliminary material. After the title-page, which as we saw in Chapter 1 identifies the author as 'Jasper Heywood fellowe of Alsolne Colledge in Oxforde', there appears: a dedicatory epistle 'To the right honorable syr Iohn Mason knight one of the Queenes Maiestie' and Oxford chancellor (sigs \*2<sup>r</sup>–\*2<sup>v</sup>); an address from 'The translatur to the booke' (sigs \*3<sup>r</sup>–\*4<sup>r</sup>); 'The preface' (sigs \*4<sup>v</sup>–\*8<sup>v</sup>), which contains an argument of sorts; and finally, a character list (sig. \*8<sup>v</sup>). A lot of care has gone into the overall presentation of these paratexts, not least in the use of type ornaments to designate the material occupying the first two signatures as preliminary to the text itself.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, it seems likely that the position of the character list on the same

page as the final lines of 'The preface' may have been determined by this presentational logic. While character lists for closet plays are usually presented on their own page, since front matter was typically printed last in this instance to do so would have affected the printing of the entire book, and may have necessitated an additional gathering between sig. f. and sig. A. This degree of presentational care may have been part of a project to call attention to the book as a 'literary' work; certainly, the inclusion of three out of a possible four 'literary' paratexts – missing only are commendatory verses – seems to support this assessment. That these preliminaries are in verse further elevates the text, legitimising its identification with literature. The play's most recent editors, James Ker and Jessica Winston, have reached a similar conclusion, and argue that the care taken signals the volume's 'literary importance':<sup>53</sup>

This emphasis may be part of the presentation of the book as a well-considered gift (it is something crafted with care), but it is also a way to garner attention as a writer, most notably from the men involved in the literary network of the Inns.<sup>54</sup>

It is possible, as Ker and Winston suggest, to see *Thyestes* 'as a valediction to [Heywood's] Oxford dedicatee and patron, Sir John Mason, and as an effort to connect with the literary network at the Inns', which, as we saw in Chapter 1, is described at some length in 'The preface'.<sup>55</sup> However, they are perhaps a little too eager to locate responsibility for all of the book's presentational choices with the author. In reality, Heywood's prefaces, and in particular their elevated style, may have worked in concert with the stationers' desire to market the book as a 'literary' artefact. In dedicating the epistle to the Oxford mentor who 'fayled not to helpe' and give him 'succour', Heywood may have simply intended to express his gratitude to the man who championed him when he found himself at odds with John Reynolds, the warden of Merton College, where he held a fellowship between 1553 and 1558.<sup>56</sup> But dedicatory epistles in printed books are of course read by many more than their intended recipients, and its position as the first of a number of paratexts must have served equally to help the reader locate the text within a specific milieu: the bookish world of the university. Moreover, to those who knew about Heywood's troubled Oxford career – a career defined by one biographer as marked by 'conflict' – the dedicatory epistle to Mason may have highlighted parallels between Heywood's successive conflicts with various Oxford authorities and the play's depiction of tyranny.<sup>57</sup> Put another way, the epistle may have invoked circumstances in ways designed to suggest particular strategies for reading the play. For booksellers eager to sell their stock, this cannot have been a bad thing. Similarly, Heywood's name-checking of various well-established Inns' men in his 'preface' may have been intended by him to 'flatter the

writers at an institution to which he would soon move'; in 1561, he left All Souls and joined his uncle, William Rastell, at Gray's Inn.<sup>58</sup> But rather than directing the book back to readers at the Inns, the effect of his flattery may have been to widen the book's appeal to include readers who aspired to but did not have access to its hallowed halls. Heywood expresses similar views in 'The preface' when he writes of a desire to render Seneca's tragedies 'In Englishe verse' for those 'that neuer yet coulde latine vnderstande'.<sup>59</sup> As Linda Woodbridge has explained, this is a 'socially progressive attitude. All educated males could read Seneca in Latin. Catering to "the unlearned" comprised resistance to a hierarchical system that denied education to women and lower-status men'.<sup>60</sup> However, Heywood's political commitment to reaching a wider audience would have also chimed with its publisher who for less exalted reasons would have been keen to extend the market share. Far from simply reflecting Heywood's intellectual and presentational agenda, *Thyestes*'s preliminaries therefore offer one example of the profitable coincidence of authorial and printerly desire. Rather than a 'site of contestation and negotiation among authors [...] and publishers/printers', here each piece of prefatory matter illustrates the coalescence of the aims of the author and the press, namely to reach as many readers as possible.<sup>61</sup> Strikingly, to achieve this aim, the book sells itself not as a play but as an elite literary production of the highest order.

Heywood's 'preface' to *Thyestes* has probably sustained more critical attention than all other early closet drama front matter put together.<sup>62</sup> Overwhelmingly, the focus of these studies has been both to illustrate Heywood's use of classical and medieval tropes – a subject to which I will return shortly – and to demonstrate his thematic foreshadowing of the play proper. Far less has been said about the way it frames the play as a book intended for private leisure-time reading. This model of reading is established early on in the verse address 'The translatur to the book', which precedes 'The preface'. Like the epistle, this paratext is directed towards Heywood's supporter, Sir John Mason, and in it, he imagines the work as a messenger, sent out into the world expressly as a gift for Mason:

Thou lytle booke my messenger must be,  
 That must from me to wight of honour goe,  
 Behaue thee humbly, bende to him thy knee,  
 and thee to hym in lowly maner showe.  
 But dooe thou not thy selfe to him present,  
 When with affayres thou shalt him troubled see,  
 Thou shalt perhapps, so woorthely be shent,  
 and with reproofe he thus will say to thee.  
 So proudly thus presume how darest thou,  
 at suche a tyme so rashely to appeare?

With thyngis of waight thou seest me burdned nowe,  
 I maie not yet to tryfles geue myne care.  
 Spie well thy tyme, when thou him seest alone,  
 an ydle houre for the shalbe moste meete  
 Then steppe thou foorth, in sight of him anone,  
 and as behoues, his honor humbly greete.<sup>63</sup>

This is a book designed not to compete with matters of State – since 1542, Mason had been a member of the Privy Council – but rather to be enjoyed in moments of quietude, during ‘an ydle houre’, or when ‘alone’. In this respect, in designating the translation mere ‘tryfles’, Heywood does more than pay lip service to conventional modesty topoi; he points specifically to text’s categorical status as entertainment. This effect is further achieved through allusions to other literary works, most noticeably Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*. In the envoi to Book 5, Chaucer’s ‘litel book’ is also imagined as a messenger, sent forth to ‘kis the steppes’ of the writers to whom the poem is dedicated.<sup>64</sup> Framing his translation in analogous terms, Heywood seems to suggest that his ‘lytle booke’ should be granted similar status, and read as a literary work. This conceit is extended into ‘The preface’, which likewise demonstrates its indebtedness to medieval literature in general, and Chaucer’s poetry in particular.

*Thyestes* is not the only work in which Heywood invokes Chaucer. In his preface to *Troas*, which is found in all three single-text editions of the play, he asks a ‘fury fell’ to ‘guyde’ his ‘hand and pen’ and help ‘In weeping verse of sobbes and sighes to wright’.<sup>65</sup> The language directly recalls Chaucer’s proem to Book I of the *Troilus*, which similarly calls for the aid of the fury Thesiphone to ‘help me for ‘t’endite | Thise woful vers, that wepen as I write’.<sup>66</sup> Ker and Winston have described this rhetorical strategy, which serves to underscore thematic similarities between Chaucer’s poem and Heywood’s translation, in terms of Heywood’s desire both to elevate ‘himself and his subject matter’.<sup>67</sup> If they are right, then his decision to write in *rime royale* – a verse form invented by Chaucer – may have been part of that project. ‘The preface’ to *Thyestes* adopts a different verse form – alternate rhyme – but is nonetheless framed so as to consciously invoke the earlier poet. This 391-line original poem is a dream vision, a form used repeatedly by Chaucer and his successors, and to which Heywood clearly owes a debt. In Heywood’s poem, the translator falls asleep on the twenty-fourth of November, ‘when flowre and frute from fieelde and tree were gone’, and dreams of a beautiful place, Mount Parnassus and the Temple of the Muses, where he encounters a figure dressed in a ‘scarlet gowne’ who is crowned with a laurel garland and holds a book in his hand.<sup>68</sup> That figure reveals himself to be the tragedian Seneca, and over the course of the poem he serves as the dreamer’s guide, instructing him to undertake the present translation. Here the

debt to Chaucer is generic rather than specific, but Heywood's careful use of certain conventions – the temporal setting, the invocation of a *locus amoenus*, the appearance of a learned guide – is certainly intended to align the poem with Chaucer's dream visions.<sup>69</sup> The point here is not simply that the dream framework permits an opportunity to 'present translation as a worthy enterprise, important enough for Seneca to return from the afterlife to urge it', but that it situates the play – or at least Heywood's translation of it – in a context that has nothing to do with performance; as one might read Chaucer, so one should read *Thyestes*.<sup>70</sup>

The house of Berthelet was no stranger to the publication of dream vision poems. In about 1529, Thomas Berthelet brought out an edition of Lydgate's *Temple of glas* (STC 17034), which similarly begins with a wintery scene. Since Berthelet's widow married Richard Payne early in 1556, there is a very real possibility that *Thyestes* was set using the same stock of type used for the earlier work, making Heywood's preface materially as well as thematically indebted to Lydgate's poem. But there are other, more explicit ways that 'The preface' works to draw attention to the printer and his role in the making of the book. When Heywood receives his commission to translate *Thyestes*, he protests that he has 'to muche alreadie doon | Aboue my reache, when rashly once | with Troas I begeon'.<sup>71</sup> However, the 'fawtes' he may have introduced in translating that text were, he argues, grossly multiplied by those responsible for its publication:

For when to sygne of Hande and Starre  
 I chaunced fyrst to come,  
 To Printers hands I gaue the worke:  
 by whome I had suche wrong,  
 That though my self perusde their prooues  
 the fyrst tyme, yet ere long  
 When I was gone, they wolde agayne  
 the print therof renewe,  
 Corrupted all: in suche a sorte,  
 that scant a sentence trewe  
 Now flythe abroade as I it wrote.<sup>72</sup>

Here, Heywood's all too conventional invocation of poetic modesty becomes a direct attack against Tottell, the printer responsible for the first two editions of *Troas*. Tottell's shop was located 'in Fletestrete within Temple barre, at the signe of the hand and starre', so when Heywood complains of the way his copy was treated by the printer located there, he is explicitly condemning the way the publication of *Troas* was handled by him.<sup>73</sup> Seth Lerer has said of Heywood's complaint that it sums 'up not just the personal but the historical situation of all authors': having left the careful and hardworking hands of the author, all texts

are liable to corruption and debasement.<sup>74</sup> In a sense Lerer is quite right, and it is certainly true that complaints of this type go back in English at least as far as Chaucer; his ‘Words unto Adam’, which appeared in print for the first time the following year (in Stow’s edition of *The workes of Geffrey Chaucer*, 1561, STC 5075), similarly excoriate the man responsible for the copying of his ‘Boece or Troylus’, and complain that the copyist’s ‘negligence’ has required him to ‘renewe’ and ‘correcte’ his work.<sup>75</sup> What all such complaints share is a recognition that the process of publication – in manuscript as well as print – is also always a process of commodification, in which the ideal text, the author’s ‘matchless handiwork’, is transmuted into a material object, something that can be both bought and sold, or read and used in ways beyond the author’s control.<sup>76</sup> As Lerer notes, such statements do more than register complaint, they also represent ‘the transformation of a voice into a text, a body into a book, and artefact into a narrative’.<sup>77</sup>

However, what is striking about Heywood’s attack on Tottell is its specificity; its terms direct the reader quite literally to Tottell’s door. Even as the reader holds *Thyestes* in their hands, its pages provide directions to the print shop of one of Payne’s market competitors. It is a neat conceit; all at once Heywood can celebrate the superiority of the present text, while both apologising for and advertising one place to buy his earlier work.<sup>78</sup> Similar statements in other printed works are almost always attributable to the author, but it seems undeniable that publishers benefited – quite literally – from such *succès de scandale*. All of which might explain why at least one printer-publisher, John Day, adopted a similar strategy when he came to print an edition – the second – of Norton and Sackville’s *Gorboduc*.<sup>79</sup> Unusually, this book contains an address ‘to the Reader’ written and signed by ‘The P.’, i.e. the printer (who in this instance is also the publisher), in which he bemoans the lack of care taken by William Griffith, printer of the first edition:<sup>80</sup>

yet one W. G. getting a copie therof at some yongmans | hand that lacked a little money and much discretion, in the last | great plage. an. 1565. about v. yeares past, while the said Lord [Sackville] | was out of England, and T. Norton farre out of London, | and neither of them both made priuie, put it forth excedingly | corrupted: euen as if by meanes of a broker for hire, he should | haue entised into his house a faire maide and done her villanie, | and after all to bescratched her face, torne her apparell, berayed | and disfigured her, and then thrust her out of dores dishonested. | In such plight after long wandring she came at length home to | the sight of her frendes who scant knew her but by a few to= | kens and markes remayning.<sup>81</sup>

Here, Day describes what we might think of as an author’s worst nightmare: taking advantage of their absence from town, Griffith prints

Norton and Sackville's text with neither their knowledge nor consent. It is in contrast to this unauthorised and consequently disfigured text produced by Griffin, Day sets out to provide one that is authorised and thus perfected.

Much has been made of the extended metaphor used by Day, in which the corrupted text is likened to a defiled maiden. Wendy Wall, in her sustained treatment of this passage, has suggested that Day's mingling of the sexual and textual 'provides a text that *has itself* become wanton': 'although the printing of the authorized text supposedly erases its wayward and lewd history, the publisher's lengthy analogy indelibly in-scribes the text as a promiscuous and immoral object'.<sup>82</sup> Bergeron proposes a more optimistic view:

Undeniably, Day has chosen a rich and sexually charged metaphor by which to express concern about the status of the text; but the emphasis falls on the process of correction and protection – that which printers in conjunction with authors and readers can do.<sup>83</sup>

Of course, both critics are right to pick up on Day's rich if disturbing language – certainly, it is unlike anything else to appear in contemporary printed front matter – but reading it in the light of Heywood's 'preface' to *Thyestes*, it is possible to posit an alternative interpretation, one that contributes to broader discussions about texts as material objects. If, following Lerer, publication marks the transformation of 'a body into a book', then Day's corporeal metaphor changes the book back into a body and recasts the event of *Gorboduc*'s first publication as a stunted attempt to make the body matter. Only with the publication of his own edition does the textual body properly become material book; dressed in 'one poore blacke gowne lined with white' – a typographical costume if there ever was one – Day's edition sets out in black and white the text as the authors intended it to be, *the* book of the play, and not just its latest textual iteration. In short, Douglas A. Brooks is almost right when he writes that the primary end of Day's preface is 'the re-embodiment and commodification of a play-text that had already been printed and marketed by someone else'.<sup>84</sup> But it is by giving the first edition a body of a maiden in distress that Day is able to turn his own edition into a commodity, legitimising it for financial gain.

Though authored by different agents, *Thyestes*'s 'preface' and O2 *Gorboduc*'s 'The P. to the Reader' share a tendency to downplay the text's status as play even as the book's status as object is both highlighted and made central to any putative marketing strategy. In the case of O2 *Gorboduc*, this tactic works against the title-page, which makes a case for the text's worth on the basis that it 'was shewed | on stage before the Queenes Maiestie, | about nine yeares past, *vz.* the | xvij. day of Ianuarie. 1561. | by the gentlemen of the | Inner Temple'. Here, the wording follows that of

Griffith's earlier 1565 title-page, consequently sharing with it a model of textual fidelity in which the authentic text derives not from an authorial source but rather from a performance event by and for figures of authority, here the men of the Inner Temple and the Queen. The removal of the authors' names from Day's title-page further emphasises this effect, even while the claim about Elizabeth's presence is false; as I. B. Cauthen long ago noted, 'Queen Elizabeth was not present at the first performance', although she did eventually see a royally commanded performance at Whitehall.<sup>85</sup> The point here is not the truth of the statement, but rather, and perhaps for the first time, that *performance* is shown to legitimise the text, offering the printer or publisher a radically new way of marketing playbooks as something to be read. 'The P. to the Reader', however, undermines this strategy – passing reference is made to an Inns performance, but in language that curiously effaces any sense of the text as play: 'Where this Tragedie was for furniture of part of the grand Christmasse in the Inner Temple first written'<sup>86</sup> – and reconstitutes the play as book, as literature to be read, unsullied by the stage.

It would be some number of years before dramatic title-pages begin routinely to record the occasion of first performance as a conventional feature. Indeed, *Thyestes*'s omission of any reference to the text's status as a play derived from an original performance event is both in line with its categorical identification as closet drama and typical of early Tudor printed drama in general. However, like *Gorboduc*, it derives legitimacy from its association with the Inns of Court. As we saw in Chapter 1, in his preface Heywood initially disavows Seneca's commission to translate the play and 'modestly defers to the Inns of Court humanists as better qualified for the work Seneca wants done'.<sup>87</sup> Directing the Roman poet to 'Lyncolnes Inne and Temples twayne, Grayes Inne and other mo',<sup>88</sup> Heywood proceeds to offer a kind of descriptive catalogue of the leading literary characters of his day:

There shalt thou se the selfe same Northe,  
 whose woorke his witte displayes,  
 And Dyall dothe of Princes paynte,  
 and preache abroade his prayse.  
 There Sackuyldes Sonnettes sweetely sauste,  
 and featly fyned bee,  
 There Nortons ditties do delight,  
 there Yeluertons doo flee  
 Well pewrde with pen: <...>  
 There heare thou shalt a great reporte,  
 of Baldwyns worthie name,  
 Whose Myroure dothe of Magistraits,  
 proclayme eternall fame.

And there the gentle Blunduille is  
     by name and eke by kynde,  
 Of whome we learne by Plautarches lore,  
     what frute by Foes to fynde.  
 There Bauande bydes, that turnde his toyle  
     a Common welthe to frame,  
 And greater grace in Englyshe geues,  
     to woorthy authors name.  
 There Gouge a gratefull gaynes hath gotte,  
     reporte that runneth ryfe,  
 <...>  
 And yet great nombre more, whose names  
     yf I shoulde now resight,  
 A ten tymes greater woorke then thine,  
     I should be forste to wright.<sup>89</sup>

Most of the writers praised by Heywood are well known. In 1560, Thomas North was a twenty-five-year-old law student who had been admitted to Lincoln's Inn four years earlier. Heywood praises him as translator of *The diall of princes* (1557, STC 12427), but he seems also to have had more than a passing interest in drama; in 1556–57, he shared with misters Bowes, Ravenynge, and Gage the position of Master of the Revels for his Inn.<sup>90</sup> Norton and Sackville were both students of the Inner Temple, where they had been admitted in 1555 and 1556, respectively. From the point of view of theatre historians, they are most famous as the joint authors of *Gorboduc*; however, it is in their capacity as the writers of sonnets and ditties that they are included in Heywood's list. Christopher Yelverton, who was admitted to Gray's Inn in 1552, is also praised for his ditties; though he clearly shared an interest in drama and would go on to collaborate with George Gascoigne in writing *Jocasta* (first performed, according to the first printed edition, at Gray's Inn in 1566).<sup>91</sup> William Baldwin, whose name is perhaps among the most recognisable of those in Heywood's list, was never a student at the Inns, but J. Christopher Warner speculates that Heywood may have made the association 'because of his working relationship with George Ferrers (c. 1510–79), a Lincoln's Inn-trained lawyer and editor of law texts since the 1530s, under whom Baldwin served at Court in the Department of Revels through 1557'.<sup>92</sup> Again, despite a professional interest in drama, it is his *Mirror for Magistrates* rather than his dramatic pursuits that Heywood emphasises in his list.<sup>93</sup> The three other figures mentioned – Thomas Blundeville, William Bavande, and Barnabe Googe – were all Inns men, belonging to Gray's Inn, the Middle Temple, and Staple Inn, respectively, best known for their translations.<sup>94</sup>

Despite the conspicuous absence of both George Gascoigne and George Puttenham – both of who were active at the Inns in the 1560s – 'The

preface' offers a fairly comprehensive account of the close-knit literary network based at the Inns of Court in the middle of the sixteenth century. Strikingly, while most of the men listed were known to have been involved with the writing and production of plays at the Inns, Heywood instead emphasises their work as poets and translators, and in doing so positions his version of *Thyestes* as belonging to a literary rather than a dramatic tradition of Inns of Court writing. Of course, the ostensible purpose of Heywood's catalogue is to provide a list of authors best equipped to translate Seneca's play, though in reality not one of the names he mentions would go on to 'display | thy Tragedies all ten, | Replete with sugred sentence sweete'.<sup>95</sup> In fact, it may be that the call to 'goe where Mineruaes men, | And finest witts doe swarme' is intended less to direct Seneca to the men of the Inns than it is to signpost the way down Fleet Street to Payne's shop, where men might flatter themselves and their intellects by purchasing a copy of Heywood's translation.<sup>96</sup>

The combined effect of the front matter in Powell's edition of *Thyestes* is to frame Heywood's translation of Seneca's play as worthy of the most erudite readers. Through its dedicatory epistle and two authorial prefaces, it reifies Seneca's text, making it something materially real, a book that can be held, its pages turned and read. In 1581, when Thomas Newton brought out a collected edition of Seneca's tragedies, he removed Heywood's original preliminaries and replaced them with a simple 'Argument' clearly designed to bring the text graphically in line with the other plays in the collection. He also prefaced the whole book with a new dedicatory epistle, addressed to Sir Thomas Heneage, 'TREASVRER OF HER MAIESTIES CHAMBER', which serves to transform each of the separately translated works into a single project, 'Seneca his tenne tragedies'. Indeed, so effective were his efforts to recast the works as a set that this view of them has persisted and is still routinely adopted<sup>97</sup> by critical accounts of Seneca in English. Seen in the context of the 1581 edition, *Thyestes* has become part of the 'body of the text' and consequently ceases to matter in quite the same way as the earlier single-text edition.

\* \* \*

At the start of this chapter, I showed how a tendency to quote Shakespeare out of context, a tendency that can be traced back to the Renaissance passion for commonplacing, can result in the production of aphorisms with meanings utterly unrelated to their original sense. Throughout the course of this chapter and the one preceding it, I have tried to demonstrate how paratextual front matter, from title-pages to character lists, dedicatory epistles to prologues of all kinds, do far more than simply frame texts, but rather serve to make them meaningful as matter, as both the ideal incarnation of the text *and* as a material entity.

The preliminaries prepended to early printed texts function dually to advertise and instruct how the text should best be read; they encapsulate a strategy that is at once driven by market imperatives, and modelled on humanistic ideas about learning. In the case of playbooks, front matter bears witness to the gradual crystallisation of conventions for the presentation of drama as a distinct category of text; it is here that the play becomes recognisable as ‘the thing’, the playbook. In this respect, the routine absence of certain kinds of prefatory paratexts from the front pages of most playbooks should not be taken as evidence of their popular, low, or non-literary status, but rather as a marked attempt on the part of early printers to develop strategies to make drama an immediately recognisable category of text. Consequently, when authors’ or printers’ preliminaries do occur, as they do in *Thyestes* and other examples of closet drama, they serve to hide the text’s proximity to drama and make the play make sense *not* as drama but as a different kind of text altogether. In the case of the second edition of *Gorboduc*, the playbook’s front matter attempts to have it both ways: the title-page and character list present the text as a play, authorised by performance; its preface repackages it as a book, only dimly related to its origins in performance. While O2 *Gorboduc* is unable to resolve these seemingly opposing impulses, the recognition that playbooks could draw authority from both the stage and the page presages the challenges that some later Elizabethan and Stuart dramatists and their publishers would face as they tried to market drama as literature.

## Notes

- 1 William Shakespeare, *Hamlet: The Texts of 1603 and 1623*, ed. by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, The Arden Shakespeare, 3rd edn (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), p. 110, 7. 434.
- 2 Paul Voss, ‘Printing Conventions and the Early Modern Play’, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 15 (2002), 98–115 (101).
- 3 Paul Voss, ‘Books for Sale: Advertising and Patronage in Late Elizabethan England’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 29 (1998), 733–56 (735).
- 4 David M. Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama, 1570–1640* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 5.
- 5 Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 222.
- 6 Michael Saenger, *The Commodification of Textual Engagements in the English Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 18.
- 7 Voss, ‘Printing Conventions’, p. 101.
- 8 Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, *Songes and Sonettes* (1557, STC 13860), sig. A1<sup>v</sup>.
- 9 I touch on the idea that *The Faerie Queene* and *Arcadia* were watershed publications in the previous chapter, p. 39. The effect of these two works on the appearance of text in early modern books is discussed at some length in Bland, pp. 109–13.
- 10 Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (1590, STC 23081), sig. A1<sup>v</sup>. See also the variant editions STC 23080 and STC 23081a.

- 11 A. R. Braunmuller, 'Accounting for Absence: The Transcription of Space', in *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts: Papers of the Renaissance English Text Society, 1985–1991*, ed. by W. Speed Hill (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Text and Studies, 1993) pp. 47–56 (pp. 53–56).
- 12 Mark Bland, 'The Appearance of the Text in Early Modern England', *Text*, 11 (1998), 91–154 (112).
- 13 There are just ten early printed single-play playbooks that contain dedicatory epistles, though this number increases to eleven if we include the several copies of Q1b *The Glass of Government* that were printed with an extra leaf containing a dedication to Sir Owen Hopton; this variant does not have its own STC entry, but Greg identified it as 38a(iii). Overall, the number rises to fifteen if we include the quasi-dramatic items included in Wiggins. Addresses to the reader occur a similar number of times: they can be found in eleven early printed playbooks and in a further eight Wiggins items. Arguments are to be found in just twelve dramatic publications, and commendatory verses in even fewer – a mere four early printed playbooks (there are no examples of arguments or commendatory verses in any of the twenty-nine Wiggins items).
- 14 David M. Bergeron, 'Invariant Paratexts in English Dramatic Texts', *Renaissance Papers*, 2 (2006), 121–36 (122).
- 15 Bergeron, 'Invariant Paratexts', 122.
- 16 Excluding the evidence of those cycle plays with medieval witnesses, the only fifteenth-century dramatic manuscripts that include a character list are the Macro *Wisdom* (Washington, DC, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.a.354, fols 98<sup>r</sup>–121<sup>v</sup>) and *The Castle of Perseverance* (Folger MS V.a.354, fols 154<sup>r</sup>–191<sup>v</sup>). Two early sixteenth-century copies of medieval plays, the Digby *Killing of the Children* (Oxford, Bodleian, MS Digby 133, fols 95<sup>r</sup>–157<sup>v</sup>) and the sole copy of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* (Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS F.4.20, fols 338<sup>r</sup>–356<sup>r</sup>), also feature character lists, but as I have argued elsewhere, it may be that these post-medieval witnesses followed the precedent of nascent print conventions. See Tamara Atkin, 'Playbooks and Printed Drama: A Reassessment of the Date and Layout of the Manuscript of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*', *Review of English Studies*, 60 (2009), 194–204.
- 17 Though some did contain painted *aediculae* (tabernacle frames) containing the characters' masks, ostensibly arranged in their order of appearance. On this point, see Gianni Guastella, '*Ornatu prologi*: Terence's Prologues on the Stage/on the Page', in *Terence between Late Antiquity and the Age of Printing: Illustration, Commentary and Performance*, ed. by Andrew J. Turner and Guilia Torello-Hill (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 200–18.
- 18 The following discussion is based primarily on character lists in early printed playbooks. But such lists of one form or another also appear in around half of all additional Wiggins items from the same period (seven texts in fourteen separate editions). I discuss the use of character lists in printed dialogues elsewhere. See, Tamara Atkin, 'Character Lists', in *Book Parts*, ed. by Adam Smyth and Dennis Duncan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming in 2019).
- 19 For a fuller discussion of these figures see Tamara Atkin and Emma Smith, 'The Form and Function of Character Lists in Plays Printed Before the Closing of the Theatres', *The Review of English Studies*, 65 (2014), 647–72 (649–50).
- 20 See the Macro *Wisdom* and *The Castle of Perseverance*, and the Digby *Killing of the Children*. The sole extant witness to the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* post-dates the publication of Rastell's play.

- 21 In an overwhelming majority of cases, paratexts remain ‘invariant’; Bale’s *Three Laws* therefore provides a rare opportunity to glimpse at the different editorial procedures of different printers working with the same text. For further consideration of Bale’s playbooks, including the extent of his involvement in the production of the c. 1547 imprints of *God’s Promises*, *The Temptation of Our Lord*, and *Three Laws*, see Tamara Atkin, ‘Playing with Books in John Bale’s *Three Laws*’, *Yearbook of English Studies*, 43 (2013), 243–61.
- 22 Voss, ‘Printing Conventions’, p. 99 (emphasis removed).
- 23 Matteo A. Pangallo, “‘I will keep and character that name’”: *Dramatis Personae* in Early Modern Manuscript Plays’, *Early Theater*, 18 (2015), 87–118 (93).
- 24 Zachary Lesser, ‘Playbooks’, in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture, Volume I: Britain and Ireland to 1660*, ed. by Joad Raymond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 521–35 (pp. 522–23).
- 25 Pangallo, p. 98.
- 26 This must have been particularly true after the 1572 Act for the Punishment of Vagabonds, which effectively outlawed all troupes without noble patronage. I discuss the size of print runs in the next chapter, pp. 105–10. See also, Peter W. M. Blayney, ‘The Publication of Playbooks’, in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. by David Scott Kastan and John Cox (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 383–422 (p. 412 and n. 62); and Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 11–13.
- 27 For further discussion of the manuscript and its indebtedness to print practices, see Tamara Atkin, ‘Manuscript, Print, and the Circulation of Dramatic Texts: A Reconsideration of the Manuscript of *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom*’, *English Manuscript Studies, 1100–1700*, 15 (2009), 152–65. For further discussion of the practices of individual printers in the presentation of early printed character lists, see Atkin and Smith, pp. 666–68.
- 28 ‘The Names of the Players’ is the most common title for character lists in this period. It (or one of its variants) can be found in around half of all extant plays with character lists. The title of a character list may have been one way of signalling a play’s genre. ‘The Names of the Players’ occurs only in playbooks of Tudor interludes. Conversely, ‘The Speakers’ seems to have been the norm for translations of plays by classical or Continental writers. I discuss the designation ‘Speakers’ on p. 82. For further discussion of character list headings see: Atkin and Smith, pp. 658–61; and Gary Taylor with the assistance of Celia R. Daileader and Alexandra G. Bennett, ‘The Order of Persons’, in *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture: A Companion to the Collected Works*, ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon, 2007), pp. 31–79 (pp. 63–66).
- 29 E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903) II, 188; David Bevington, *From Mankind to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 11–14.
- 30 Anthony Munday *et al.*, *Sir Thomas More*, ed. by Vittorio Gabrieli and Giorgio Melchiori, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 144, III. 3. 72.
- 31 For example, the title-page to *Wealth and Health* suggests a cast of four will be sufficient, when in reality at least five actors are required; similarly, *Common Conditions* erroneously calls for six actors, when at least one scene requires seven. I return to such ‘false’ doubling schemes on p. 83.

- 32 Jane Griffiths, 'Lusty Juventus', in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, ed. by Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 262–75 (p. 270).
- 33 In my designation of certain plays as closet dramas, I follow the classifications adopted in *Annals*. Two of these plays were printed more than once. *Troas* was issued as three separate octavo editions; *The Glass of Government* was published in three variant issues (two identified by the STC and a third, identified in Greg as 68aiii, which is not treated here).
- 34 For further discussion of the ways printers used different typefaces in the presentation of character lists, see Atkin and Smith, pp. 653–54.
- 35 On closet drama as an elite literary genre see, for instance, Marta Straznicky, *Privacy, Playreading, and Women's Closet Drama, 1550–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- 36 I omit from discussion those character lists for which a description is provided for only one or two of the characters. In such lists, the Vice is the character most commonly singled out for description; four plays (in nine editions) identify the Vice without providing descriptions for any of the other characters.
- 37 Though the characters are provided with Latin names in the character list, vernacular speech-prefixes are used throughout the play; the same is true of the two other extant Continental editions of plays by Bale.
- 38 This is the second edition of this play. The first edition was printed in 1558, and survives in a single copy, recorded in the catalogue of the library at New College, Oxford. However, as this copy has not been located since 2008, it is impossible to comment on the extent to which the second edition adopts the *mise en page* of the first.
- 39 The idea of the world as a stage and the stage as a world were metaphors widely used by scholars and playwrights throughout this period and beyond. See Tom Conley, 'Pierre Boaistuau's Cosmographic Stage: Theater, Text, and Map', *Renaissance Drama*, 23 (1992), 59–86.
- 40 Pangallo, p. 91.
- 41 For instance, the title-page to *Gammer Gurton's Needle* informs the reader that the play was 'Played on | Stage, not longe | a go in Chri= | stes | Collidge in Cambridge', while the following verso provides a fully descriptive list of the characters' names.
- 42 Pangallo, p. 99.
- 43 O2 *Gorboduc*, sig. A2<sup>r</sup>. An earlier edition appeared in 1565. Although this edition does include a descriptive character list (on sig. A2<sup>r</sup>), it lacks some of the prefatory matter included in the second edition. I discuss the front matter in these two editions on pp. 89–91, 111–12, 122.
- 44 O2 *Gorboduc*, sig. A2<sup>r</sup>.
- 45 Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass, 'The First Literary *Hamlet* and the Commonplacing of Professional Plays', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 59 (2008), 371–420.
- 46 On the function of commonplace markers, see Margreta de Grazia, 'Shakespeare in Quotation Marks', in *The Appropriation of Shakespeare: Post-Renaissance Reconstructions of the Works and the Myth*, ed. by Jean I. Marsden (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), pp. 57–71.
- 47 At least one reader did approach his copy of the text in this way: William Briton copied twenty-four extracts of the play into London, British Library, Additional MS 61822 (The Houghton Manuscript). Though the extracts he chose to copy do not tally with those marked for commonplacing in Day's edition, they indicate similarly an interest in sententious wisdom. On William Briton as an early reader of the play, see Laura Estill, 'New

- Contexts for Early Tudor Plays: William Briton, 'An Early Reader of *Gorboduc*', *Early Theatre*, 16 (2013), 197–210.
- 48 The same note appears on the title-page to the first edition. This account of the original performance is incorrect; the Queen was not in fact present. See pp. 90–91.
- 49 See, for instance, Roberta Barker's introduction to her edition of *Common Conditions* [?1576] (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The Malone Society, 2004), pp. v–xxi (p. vi).
- 50 See Seneca, Lucius Annæus, *Thyestes*: Translated by Jasper Heywood (1560), ed. by Joost Daalder (London: Ernest Benn and W. W. Norton, 1982). It is also the only play in translation with its own chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*. See Mike Pincombe, 'Tragic Inspiration for Jasper Heywood's Translation of Seneca's *Thyestes*: Melpomene or Magaera?' in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, pp. 531–46.
- 51 Blayney, II, 1054.
- 52 English books from this period typically start signing the text with B, leaving A for any front matter. Conversely, the use of special characters for preliminary gatherings, tends, as R. A. Sayce has shown, to be associated with Continental production. Though printed 'in Fleetstrete', it may be that Payne intentionally mimicked Continental practice, perhaps as a way of signalling the text's Continental origins. See R. A. Sayce, 'Compositional Practices and the Localization of Printed Books, 1530–1800', *The Library*, 5th ser., 21 (1966), 1–45. Reprinted, with corrections and additions by the Oxford Bibliographical Society (Oxford, 1977).
- 53 James Ker and Jessica Winston, 'Introduction', in *Elizabethan Seneca: Three Tragedies*, ed. by James Ker and Jessica Winston (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2012), pp. 1–62 (p. 34).
- 54 Ker and Winston, pp. 34–35.
- 55 Ker and Winston, p. 32.
- 56 *Thyestes*, sig. **¶**.2<sup>v</sup>.
- 57 Dennis Flynn, 'The English Mission of Jasper Heywood, S.J.', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 54 (1985), 45–76 (45).
- 58 Ker and Winston, p. 37. I discuss 'The preface' in the context of the Inns of Court more extensively on pp. 91–93.
- 59 *Thyestes*, sig. \*6<sup>v</sup>.
- 60 Linda Woodbridge, *English Revenge Drama: Money, Resistance, Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 154.
- 61 Marotti, p. 222. In fact, 'The preface' does register tension between the author and a printer. However, the subject of Heywood's abuse is not *Thyestes*'s printer, but rather Richard Tottell, who published the first and second editions of *Troas*. Heywood's accusations against Tottell are treated below.
- 62 See, for instance: Ker and Winston, pp. 34–37; Jessica Winston, 'English Seneca: Heywood to *Hamlet*', in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, pp. 432–87; Jessica Winston, *Lawyers at Play: Literature, Law, and Politics at the Early Modern Inns of Court, 1558–1581* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 45–47; and Woodbridge, pp. 153–54.
- 63 *Thyestes*, sig. \*3<sup>r</sup>.
- 64 Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 471–585 (p. 584), Bk. v, l. 1786. Lydgate deploys a similar conceit at the end of his *Troy Book*. See *Lydgate's Troy Book*, ed. by Henry Bergen, Early English Text Society ES 97, 103, 106, 126, 3 vols (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1906–35), III, Bk v, Envoy, ll. 92–99.
- 65 O1 and O2 *Troas*, sig. [A]5<sup>v</sup>. The same passage appears at sig. A5<sup>v</sup> in O3.

- 66 Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, Bk 1, ll. 6–7.
- 67 Ker and Winston, p. 23.
- 68 *Thyestes*, sigs \*4<sup>v</sup>, \*5<sup>r</sup>.
- 69 Ker and Winston have traced a series of more specific allusions to Lydgate, Skelton, and Gavin Douglas in their introduction. See Ker and Winston, pp. 35–38.
- 70 Ker and Winston, p. 38.
- 71 *Thyestes*, sig. \*8<sup>v</sup>.
- 72 *Thyestes*, sigs \*8<sup>v</sup>–~~8~~1<sup>r</sup>.
- 73 O1 and O2 *Troas*, t. p.
- 74 Seth Lerer, ‘Errata: Print, Politics and Poetry in Early Modern England’, in *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 41–71 (p. 64).
- 75 Geoffrey Chaucer, ‘Chaucer’s Wordes Unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn’, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, p. 650. Though included in the Chaucer canon since 1561, as recently as 2012 A. S. G. Edwards has questioned the attribution, suggesting instead the complaint is not of the author but of a supervisory scribe. See A. S. G. Edwards, ‘Chaucer and “Adam Scriveyn”’, *Medium Ævum*, 81 (2012), 135–38.
- 76 Lerer, p. 65.
- 77 Lerer, p. 65.
- 78 Printers’ shops were not exclusive retail outlets, and the function of imprints and colophons was to advertise where books could be purchased wholesale. On this point see Blayney, 1, 36.
- 79 For further discussion of this book, especially as it pertains to authority, see the next chapter.
- 80 The differences between the first and second editions of this play offer a rare example of a case in which Bergeron’s law of ‘invariant’ paratexts does not hold. O1 contains ‘Thargument of the Tragedie (sig. A1<sup>v</sup>)’, a character list (sig. A2<sup>r</sup>), and a description of the dumb show with which the play commences (sig. A2<sup>v</sup>). In contrast, while the O2 retains the paratexts found in O1, ‘The P. to the Reader’ is a new addition, and is the first such address of its kind.
- 81 O2 *Gorboduc*, sig. A2<sup>r</sup>.
- 82 Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 184.
- 83 David M. Bergeron, ‘Printers’ and Publishers’ Addresses in English Dramatic Texts, 1558–1642’, *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 27 (2001), 131–60 (154).
- 84 Douglas A. Brooks, *From Playhouse to Printing House: Drama and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 35. Brooks treats Day’s preface at some length. See pp. 24–43.
- 85 Irby B. Cauthen, ‘Introduction’, in Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, *Gorboduc; or Ferrex and Porrex*, ed. by Irby B. Cauthen (London: Edward Arnold, 1970), pp. xi–xxx (p. xxix).
- 86 O2 *Gorboduc*, sig. A2<sup>r</sup>.
- 87 Dennis Flynn, *John Donne and the Ancient Catholic Nobility* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 50.
- 88 *Thyestes*, sig. \*7<sup>v</sup>.
- 89 *Thyestes*, sigs \*7<sup>v</sup>–\*8<sup>r</sup>.
- 90 *Black Books*, 1, 318 (fol. 308).

- 91 His *ODNB* entry notes that he had by his own admission enjoyed a lively youth and played an active part in the revels and masques produced at Gray's Inn. See, David Ibbetson, 'Yelverton, Sir Christopher (1536/7–1612)', *ODNB* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, January 2008) <[www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30213](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30213)> [accessed 25 November 2016].
- 92 J. Christopher Warner, *The Making and Marketing of Tottel's Miscellany, 1557: Songs and Sonnets in the Summer of Martyrs' Fires* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 21–22.
- 93 According to his *ODNB* entry, Baldwin may have had a hand in 'a comedy concerning the way of life' and perhaps in a morality play, but this cannot be confirmed. See John N. King, 'Baldwin, William (*d.* in or before 1563)', in *ODNB* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, September 2004) <[www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1171](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1171)> [accessed 25 November 2016]. Baldwin's life, including his possible production of an Inns of Court play are further discussed in, Eveline I. Feasey, 'William Baldwin', *Modern Language Review*, 20 (1925), 407–18.
- 94 Thomas Blundeville translated a number of Continental works, including pieces from Plutarch's *Moralia*, but most of these were printed after the publication of Heywood's preface; a presentation copy of his translation of Plutarch survives in the British Library (MS Royal 18 A XLIII). William Bavande's translation of Ferrarius Montanus's *De recta Reipublicæ Administratione* was printed the year before *Thyestes* appeared (STC 10831); Barnabe Googe's translation of the first three books of Marcellus Palingenius's satirical epic *Zodiacus vitae* (STC 19148) was published a year later in 1560.
- 95 *Thyestes*, sig. \*8<sup>v</sup>.
- 96 *Thyestes*, sig. \*7<sup>v</sup>.
- 97 See for instance O. B. Hardison, *Prosody and Purpose in the English Renaissance* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), pp. 148–53.

### 3 The publication of early printed plays

In a typically virulent account of a violent disagreement with a local priest, John Bale, the playwright and polemicist, describes the abuse levelled by a priest at a servant and would-be actor for learning his lines for a performance of his 1538 play *Three Laws*:

Moreouer | he [the priest] requyred hym [the servant], in hys own stought name | to do a lewde massage, whych was to call | the compiler of that Comedie [Bale], both heretike | and knaue, concludynge that it was a boke | of most perniciousse heresie. That boke | was imprinted about.vi.yeares ago, and hath | bene abroad euer sens, to be both seane and | iudged of men, what it contayneth. And thys is the name thereof. A Comedie concerning. | iii.lawes, of nature.Moyses, & Christ. etc.<sup>1</sup>

Bale describes his ‘Comedie’ not as a play but as a ‘boke’, and specifically a printed book. Moreover, acknowledging the iterability of print as a technology, he advertises its publication (‘imprinted about.vi. yeares ago’) in language that accommodates both the singularity of the text and the plurality of its material existence.<sup>2</sup> ‘[T]he boke’ is the text, *Three Laws*, but it is also a printed copy of that text, which ‘hath bene abroad’ [i.e. published in multiple copies], and by which Bale might be ‘seane and iudged’.

Bale’s involvement in productions of his own plays has long been recognised and is a mainstay in critical accounts of his dedication to drama as a polemical weapon in the fight against popery.<sup>3</sup> But he seems to have been as invested – creatively and financially – in their print publication, which he likewise believed could function to serve the aims of the new religion. As one early biographer long ago commented, ‘Bale appreciated good book-making, and there can be no doubt that he personally supervised the publication of some of his works’.<sup>4</sup> During his exile on the continent (1540–47), Bale collaborated with the printer Derick van der Straten on no fewer than ten editions, among them at least three plays.<sup>5</sup> The quality of these works – both in terms of textual precision and presentational detail, including the choice and design of illustration – indicates a level of authorial involvement that suggests financial risk.<sup>6</sup> In the case of *Three Laws*, the text is framed in such a way as to efface its

status as play; it is presented not as drama but as a book, and not just any book, but the Book, the bible. This is particularly evident on the title-page, which utilises a wood-cut that seems to have been especially commissioned for the piece, and which clearly mimics the pictorial design of contemporary vernacular bibles.<sup>7</sup> In other words, the first edition of *Three Laws* complies with the account of it given by Bale some six years after its publication.

Bale seems to have had good working relationships with other printer-publishers. In fact, the overwhelming majority of editions that name him either as author, translator, or editor, and that were printed in his lifetime (he died on 15 November 1563), are the work of a small, interrelated group of stationers: John Day, Nicholas Hill, Steven Mierdman, and van der Straten. However, while the books are themselves testament to the productivity of these relationships, there is disappointingly little in the way of external documentary evidence to indicate their exact nature. Did Bale secure the funding for his own works, or was he paid a fee for his manuscripts? And if he did risk capital, did he assume some or all of the other duties usually attributable to a publisher?<sup>8</sup> I have suggested, both here and elsewhere, that Bale had some influence over the appearance and layout of his works, and that this in turn might reflect his financial involvement in their publication.<sup>9</sup> But we lack the information that would make it possible to quantify the terms on which Bale interacted with those responsible for the printing and publishing of his plays and other works. Lamentably, the same is true of most other pre-playhouse playwrights and their relationships to and with the various print agents who published them. Why did some publishers choose to print plays, and how did they choose which plays to print? Where did they get their copy-texts, and whom did they pay for them? How involved were authors in the publication process? And what about those plays that were printed anonymously? Was their journey to publication fundamentally different to those associated with a self-identifying author? These are just some of the questions that demand urgent attention, but which remain all-but-impossible to answer.

In the first chapter of his 1998 book, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama*, Greg Walker acknowledged how little was then known about the publication of early sixteenth-century drama:

What are we looking at when we read a play in printed form? What is the relationship between the text in our hands and the performance which it seeks in one way to represent? [...] Did playwrights always write for immediate performance, or, once there was a market for printed playbooks, was it possible for some authors at least to write directly for the printing press? And in more general terms what does this evidence suggest about the cultural significance of the printed text? What are the implications of the move from publication

through performance to publication in print – from dramatic performance to textual performance? Indeed, whom should we see as effecting that move? Whose text, ultimately, are we reading: the author's, the printer's, the actors', or some combination of these?<sup>10</sup>

In the twenty years that have passed since its publication, the questions raised by Walker's book about the early print history of drama have remained unanswered. But much has been written about the politics of publishing drama in the playhouse era. Peter W. M. Blayney's seminal account of the publication of Elizabethan and Jacobean playbooks has become the benchmark for all such discussions, and takes in such questions as the sources of copy texts, the reasons for publication, and the attitudes of those responsible for their writing and performance. Quick to establish the relative unimportance of dramatic publication in a book trade that was, by European standards, small, Blayney sets out, in precise terms, the roles of the various individuals involved in the printing and distribution of books – the compositor, printer, publisher, bookseller, and so on – and describes each of the steps necessary in transforming 'the manuscript offered to the press' into a printed playbook.<sup>11</sup> The legacy of his chapter has been twofold. First, his delineation of roles has cautioned against the improper use of 'printer' to mean 'publisher' and vice versa. Second, his claims about 'the relative *unpopularity* of playbooks' have prompted a critical debate that is on-going today.<sup>12</sup>

But Blayney's arguments are, in significant ways, inapplicable to pre-playhouse drama. For much of the sixteenth century, and certainly before the incorporation of the Stationers' Company in 1557, many printers did act as publishers, and in some instances these printer-publishers were also booksellers. When it comes to telling the story of how early Tudor plays found their way into print, we need to recognise that one individual could play many parts; this is significant because it has implications for the ways we might locate authority in and of the book. A similar observation has been made by critics like Marta Straznicky, Alexandra Halasz, and Adam G. Hooks, who have each argued that traditional definitions of the agency exercised by stationers need to be revised to reflect an understanding of publication as an act of interpretation.<sup>13</sup> These correctives are welcome, but remain paradoxically attached to the view that only Shakespeare's earliest printers, publishers, and booksellers could command such authority. At the same time, whether England's earliest playbooks were popular in the sense that they were widely read is perhaps less important than whether they were tailored to attract 'popular' readers or model 'popular reading practices'. In the first two chapters of this book, I sought to identify some of the tactics developed and used to make plays generically distinct from other categories of text in ways that would have been both readily identifiable and attractive to potential buyers or other users. Here, however, my intention is to assess more systematically

the role of authors, printers, and other print agents in the shaping and nuancing of these conventions, and to investigate their agency in the legitimising of playtexts for literary consumption. In doing so, I seek to model a range of different responses to two interrelated questions: Whose authority is responsible for the publication of the text? And how and where is this authority legible in the playtext as printed book?

To answer the first of these questions I turn to contemporary accounts of the relationships that subsisted between authors and those responsible for the print publication of their works. I begin with an examination of contemporary stationers' book-lists, and show how the occurrence of printed playbooks on such lists can begin to help nuance questions about the size of dramatic print runs and the cost of playbooks relative to other books and materials that are included in such lists. Then, drawing on the formative work of scholars like Blayney and Walker, I turn to consider other factors that might have affected the transformation of a manuscript copy, authorial or otherwise, into a printed playbook. While scant, the evidence that does survive illustrates the extent to which author-publisher-printer relationships resist systematic categorisation; the arrangements between playwrights and stationers are likely to have varied from person to person, and might even have varied from text to text. In the second half of the chapter, I examine extant editions as sites of authority, and explore the various ways playbooks made their authority legible. First, I return to some of the prefatory paratexts that were the focus of the previous chapter, reading them here for evidence of the relationships – sometimes antagonistic, sometimes collaborative – between playwrights and those responsible for publishing their plays. Where such material exists, it suggests that dramatic authors were at least as concerned about the integrity of their texts as their non-dramatic counterparts. However, as we saw in the last chapter, such front matter occurs only infrequently in pre-playhouse printed playbooks, usually as a conventional feature of a particular category of drama: Inns of Court plays. Should we therefore conclude that playbooks that do not provide space for such authorial intervention lack authority? Or that the authors of plays produced by and for different auspices were in some way less invested – in all senses of that word – in their printed publication? In recent years, numerous studies have suggested a link between a book's literary status and its author's visibility.<sup>14</sup> Prefaces and other prefatory paratexts offer one way for authors to make themselves seen, but title-page and other forms of attribution function in this way too. Concluding this chapter, I survey instances of authorial attribution in pre-playhouse playbooks, and arguing against the prevailing view that plays gradually 'became more worthy of an Author', I suggest that it is the *legibility* of authority in all its forms – imprints, colophons, privilege, allowance, licence, etc. – that determine how horizons of reception are shaped and formed.<sup>15</sup>

## Playbooks and stationers' book-lists

In Blayney's chapter on the publication of playbooks, he conjectures that a standard print run would have consisted of around 800 copies (but sometimes as many as 1,200 copies or more), with individual copies retailing at around 6*d*. In order to turn a profit, a publisher would therefore expect to spend no more than two pounds acquiring copy and 'having the manuscript properly allowed by the authorities', no more than £2 15*s*. on materials (paper etc.), and £4 4*s*. on printing (including composition, correction, presswork, and the printer's mark-up).<sup>16</sup> In his equally speculative account of the earlier sixteenth-century trade in playbooks, Walker is rather more conservative; he suggests that 'playbooks were produced in relatively large numbers, perhaps up to 500 or 600 copies, and sold relatively cheaply, at a price analogous to that of such "popular" literature as almanacs and ballads', around 2*d*.<sup>17</sup> These rather different projections remind us that over 100 years separate the printing of the earliest playbooks (Walker's period of focus) and the flourishing of the commercial theatres (Blayney's), and should caution against a one-size-fits-all approach to characterising the market for printed playbooks. It is not only plausible but also likely that print runs and their associated costs varied both between presses and over the period that this book takes as its focus.<sup>18</sup>

The clearest picture of the size and cost of print runs for Tudor plays can be found in the surviving inventories of early printers and other stationers, though here too, the evidence is fragmentary and not always easy to interpret. Take, for instance, a printer's inventory that was drawn up in 1538. It is one of very few such lists that survive from the early Tudor period, and it contains seventy-one items in Latin, Greek, English, and other vernaculars, among them books of law, history, music, and poetry, as well as theological works including prayer books of various kinds and saints' lives. It also contains valuable information about four plays:

[11] iij<sup>c</sup>lxx of the play of melebea cont v remys / <...>

[15] ij<sup>c</sup>lxxxiiij of the play of good order cont ij remys & di /

[16] lxxx of the play of gen= | tilnes & nobilite cont a reme / <...>

[21] viij of the second part of the play of Epicure cont a reme.<sup>19</sup>

The inventory records that there were 370 copies of *Calisto and Melebea*; 284 copies of *Old Christmas, or Good Order*; eighty of *Gentleness and Nobility*; and eight of a lost 'play of Epicure' that may have been an adaptation of Erasmus's dialogue of the same name.<sup>20</sup> But attempts to interpret this information have been complicated by the misattribution of the inventory to the lawyer, author, and printer John Rastell when it is in fact that of his less famous son, John Rastell junior.<sup>21</sup> Like most of

the books listed, two of the plays (*Calisto and Melebea* and *Gentleness and Nobility*) undoubtedly came from the stock left by John senior at his death in 1536, but one (*Old Christmas*) is known only in a fragment printed by another of his sons, William, and while the fourth is consistent with Rastell senior's interests, it remains impossible to attribute ('the play of the Epicure'). Following the traditional ascription of the inventory to the elder Rastell, Walker has asked:

What are we to make of the relative abundance of some texts and the meagre stock of others? Do the larger figures for *Calisto* and *Good Order* suggest that these were more popular works, printed in great quantities than the other plays, or rather (perhaps more plausibly) that they were unexpectedly poor sellers, leaving Rastell with a considerable surplus unsold? Similarly, what of the titles known to have been printed by Rastell which do not feature on the list, such as *The Nature of the Four Elements* (printed c. 1525–27), *Fulgens and Lucrece* (printed c. 1512–16) or Skelton's *Magnyfycence* (printed c. 1530)? Should we assume that these titles had already sold out their print runs completely by 1538, or perhaps, that Rastell's son William had taken possession of the remaining copies of these plays for sale under his own auspices, as he may well have done with a number of other works originally owned by his father?<sup>22</sup>

Such questions are pertinent, but need to be reframed in the light of the document's proper attribution. As Blayney has noted, the date of the document two years after John senior's death almost certainly means that the books recorded 'represent only what remained in John junior's hands two years after the best had been picked out and sold at presumably higher prices'.<sup>23</sup> In other words, their inclusion in the inventory indicates that they were regarded as being of little economic or cultural worth, and this is borne out by the value they are ascribed. All four plays occur in the middle section of the list, which comprises fourteen editions in 3,035 copies, amounting to sixty-nine-and-a-half reams, which are valued at a total of £3, or roughly a farthing per book. Given the inventory accords forty-eight reams of waste paper a total value of 45s. 10d. (or just over 8d. a ream), Blayney's conclusion that those responsible for drawing up the list considered the books in this section 'dross' seems about right. 'They were conceivably saleable, but worth on average less than a fifth as much as those in the first section and only thirty per cent more than waste paper'.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, far from selling out in the ten years allotted to the hypothetical play in Blayney's chapter on the publication of playbooks, the plays in Rastell junior's inventory are a salutary reminder that playbooks rarely sold like hotcakes.<sup>25</sup> If we assume Walker's conservative estimate of 500 books for a full run, then in the case of *Calisto and*

*Melebea* over two-thirds of the stock remained some thirteen years after it was published. Given that Rastell senior almost certainly risked capital to have it published, then it is fair to say the risk did not pay off; he died before the edition broke even and long before it turned a profit. This point is significant, as it may explain why some playbooks printed by Rastell senior do not occur on the list. Far from selling out or even being sold on by one or other of his sons, John senior's other playbooks may have been deemed *more* valuable as waste paper. That this was the fate of at least some playbooks is clearly evidenced by a playbook fragment in Cambridge University Library, which survives only as a single quarto leaf ([1530?], STC 20765.5). The needle holes across its middle indicate that early in its history, this playbook was dismembered and reused as binding waste, in this instance as the endpapers of a smaller, octavo book.<sup>26</sup> And even if remaining stock was not always recycled in this way, it may have been regarded as lacking significant value to be included in the inventory. Certainly, this kind of conclusion would explain the absence of the seven playbooks issued from William Rastell's press from the inventory made of his personal library when it was seized in 1562.<sup>27</sup> Since he was a lawyer by trade, it is unsurprising that of the forty-one items listed, twenty-one are law books, but it is striking that of the seventeen non-legal items, none is valued under 4*d.* – sixteen times the value of the four playbooks worth a farthing each in John junior's list.

William Rastell's sister Elizabeth was married to John Heywood, and the two men evidentially worked closely together; in the space of one productive year (1533–34), Rastell printed four of the six printed plays traditionally attributed to Heywood: *Johan Johan*, *The Pardoner and the Friar*, F1 *The Play of the Weather*, and F1 *A Play of Love*. A fifth (*The Four P's*) 'was probably published around this time', though no Rastell edition survives.<sup>28</sup> It is tempting, therefore, to imagine that Rastell kept copies of Heywood's plays in his private library, but if he did, the men responsible for taking an inventory of his goods did not deem them worth listing. Heywood's stock was evidently rated more highly in other quarters though, since a playbook by him occurs in a stationer's list preserved in London, British Library, MS Egerton 2974. This incomplete inventory was originally thought to comprise fragments from John Day's ledger book, but is now tentatively assigned to the Marian publisher Robert Toy.<sup>29</sup> It contains 153 entries, mostly comprising individual copies of single editions, but also a number of ready-bound composite volumes, among them item forty-three:

boke of sarvis in 8to i boke of sarvis in  
latane in forrell i play of loue  
w[i]th a sarmo[n] nova<sup>30</sup>

The wording leaves room for interpretation, but the ascription of a collective value (3s. 4d.) would seem to suggest that these four items, which include Heywood's *Play of Love*, were bound together in forel (vellum made from unsplit sheepskin). However, since neither edition of *The Play of Love* was printed in octavo, the entry must either refer to a no longer extant octavo edition, or instead comprise at least two separate volumes, of which at least one was in forel. Either way, if John King is right in suggesting that '2d. may have been the standard price for binding [...] in forel', then Heywood's play probably had a retail value under 9½d.<sup>31</sup> Given the likely cost of the two 'sarvis' books, a considerably lower figure seems most likely.

*The Play of Love* is not the only work by Heywood to occur in the list. Item forty-eight is described as 'boke of sarvis in 8to 1 hawoddis workis' and is valued at 2s. 4d. The earliest extant edition of *John Heywoodes woorkes* (STC 13285) was not printed until 1562, when Thomas Powell brought out a quarto edition. Its title notwithstanding, it does not contain all of Heywood's works, but is rather a collected edition of his proverbs and epigrams. Since this book post-dates Toy's inventory, the 'workis' referred to by the list is most likely a copy of either *A dialogue conteinyng the number in effect of all prouerbes in the englishe tongue* or *A hundred epigrammes*, which were both printed in numerous octavo editions between 1546 and 1562. Unlike *The Play of Love*, which is not ascribed to an author in the list, this item is categorically contingent on its identification with Heywood, bringing it in line with the way other classical and some vernacular texts are described. Evidently, and despite the explicit author attribution on its title-page, *The Play of Love* was, for Toy's purposes at any rate, readily identifiable by title alone.<sup>32</sup> It has become something of a commonplace to link visible evidence of authorship to literary value; conversely, authorial absence is often taken to signal a text's low status and worth.<sup>33</sup> However, here it may be the case that the association between *The Play of Love* and Heywood was so self-evident that the author's name was not required in order to identify the book.

Whatever Toy's reasons for describing the 'play of loue' in this way, a similar approach is adopted in a roughly contemporary stationer's list, which also contains a number of unattributed plays. In an article dated 1915, H. R. Plomer announced his discovery of a 1553 plea, which lists the contents of a London house, and includes the entire stock of a bookseller c. 1550–51.<sup>34</sup> Noting that most of the books that formed the stock had been printed by de Worde, Plomer imagined that the stock listed was that of Edward Whitchurch, the Edwardian occupant of de Worde's former house at The Sun in Fleet Street.<sup>35</sup> More recently, Barbara Kreps and Blayney have independently proved that the stock must in fact be that of The George, put up by its owner William Powell as collateral against a loan.<sup>36</sup> Values for individual items are not given, but the total for all of the items inventoried, including the contents of Powell's

own dwelling, was reckoned at £280. The stock listed amounts to over 12,000 books, including 193 batches of printed books.<sup>37</sup> The contents are varied, but as J. H. Baker has noted, 'law is strongly represented, more so than might be expected of a general bookshop'; there are over 1,500 year-book pamphlets as well as multiple copies of *Britton* ([1533?], STC 3803), and copies of the *Natura Brevium* and *Littleton's Tenures* in both French and English.<sup>38</sup> However, other kinds of texts are also richly represented, and the list contains books of worship, devotional works, practical guides and manuals, as well as works of entertainment, including at least four plays: 'centum libros [i.e. one hundred copies] of the play of good order', 'quinquaginta libros [fifty copies] of the enterlude of youthe', 'quinguagint libros [fifty] of the entlude of Nature', and 'duodocem libros [fifty] of thenterlude of magnificence'.<sup>39</sup> Two of these plays – *Old Christmas, or Good Order* and *Q1 Youth*<sup>40</sup> – were printed anonymously, but *Nature* and *Magnificence* both feature title-page attributions to 'mayster Henry Medwall' and 'mayster Skelton' respectively. However, like *The Play of Love* in Toy's list, all four plays in the list of Powell's stock are reckoned to be identifiable by title alone, and it is on the basis of this, rather than a relationship to a self-identifying author, that they are accorded value.

All of the plays listed in Powell's inventory were printed in the early 1530s, and the fact that they had not sold out within twenty years would seem to support Blayney's belief that 'the overall demand for plays was unimpressive'.<sup>41</sup> It is hard to say whether the hundred copies of *Old Christmas* that occur in the list are the remainder of the 284 listed in the 1538 inventory; certainly, the plea contains numerous other items printed by one or other of the Rastells – including *Nature* – and it is plausible that Powell may have inherited some of their stock. Either way, that a hundred copies remained twenty years after its original publication supports Blayney's contention that publishing drama was always a risky and rarely a profitable business. But the fact that a second edition of *Youth* was printed in 1557, just a few years after Powell's inventory was drawn up, strongly suggests that the remaining fifty copies of that play must have sold out in that time, and emphasises the obverse point that editions did sell out and were occasionally reissued.<sup>42</sup> Plays might not have necessarily represented a reliable investment, but they did sometimes turn a profit. *Magnificence* seems also to have been a solid seller, having virtually sold out by the time the list was compiled.

As with the other lists discussed earlier, the evidence is too patchy to draw definitive conclusions, but the figures are suggestive enough to permit some initial observations. Significantly, plays seem to have sold no better or no worse than other kinds of texts. Though it is not always possible to isolate specific editions – many are not described clearly enough for identification, while others survive in multiple editions or are no longer extant – it would seem that the inventory is comprised in no small part

of books printed in the early 1530s, most of which are listed in numerous copies, often as many as fifty or a hundred; in other words, the numbers listed suggest playbooks remained in similar quantities to other types of books. For instance, immediately after the entry for *Old Christmas*, ‘centum | libros of Necromantia’ are listed. The entry presumably refers to Lucian’s dialogue *Necromantia*, which was translated into English by Thomas More and printed by John Rastell in 1530 (STC 16895). Like the plays, it is identified not by its author or translator, but by its title. Strikingly, a few lines earlier on the same page, ‘lucyans dyologues’ appears again. It may be this earlier entry refers to one of three other early editions in Latin and English of dialogues by Lucian, but the list is in fact peppered with double entries – of the plays, the fifty copies of *Youth* are listed twice on the same page. So either the list records a number of lost editions, the stock was arranged in Powell’s shop in such a way that certain titles required multiple entries, or – and most suggestively – an attempt was made to inflate the overall value of the stock when the list was drawn up.<sup>43</sup> Whatever the reason for their occurrence, these double entries suggest that the values a stationer might ascribe to his own stock could differ both from those found in posthumous inventories of remaining stock and those given in more hostile circumstances such as in a lawsuit or other legal action. This, and what we also know about the difference between wholesale and retail prices, must surely explain the rather different values ascribed to playbooks in the lists I have been discussing.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, the survival of account books and other inventories is so haphazard – it is telling that most survive because they were bound as endpapers – that it is unsurprising that they fail to say anything systematic about the size of print runs or the time it took for editions to sell out.<sup>45</sup>

### **From playtext to printed playbook: a speculative account**

In ‘The Publication of Playbooks’, Blayney considers the various types of manuscript that might be offered to the press: a late draft or final copy in the author’s hand; an obsolete promptbook; a newly made copy, commissioned by either the players or the author; or a copy that has been borrowed, mislaid, or stolen from the players with which it is associated. To this list we might add Tiffany Stern’s more recent suggestion that some printed playbooks may have originated with copies ‘constructed by scribes in the audience’, using notes taken down during the performance in “‘charactery”, an early form of shorthand’.<sup>46</sup> What all of these sources share is a direct relationship to the stage; whether written down for or from performance, by a playwright, an audience member, or on behalf of the playing company, all of these possible copy-texts are demonstrably a product of a culture of playing that did not yet exist when printers first began printing playbooks. Of course, many pre-playhouse plays were performed, and thanks to the pioneering work of the *REED* project,

we now know much about performance conditions prior to the establishment of permanent commercial theatres. However, the very nature of these auspices makes it unlikely that the copy-texts for early printed playbooks shared the same relationships to performance as their later counterparts. While it is not true that professional drama did not exist in the early Tudor period, the later development of the company system alongside that of the public stage produced practices quite distinct from those of the earlier period, and we need therefore to revise accounts of the possible sources for copy-texts to reflect these differences.

Although the *REED* project has revealed much about the rich culture of playing that existed in Britain prior to the opening of London's playhouses, with just a handful of exceptions, plays that survive as printed playbooks are markedly absent from its records. At the same time, title-page references to past performance, while very much a feature of playbooks from the playhouse era, occur on the title-pages of just four pre-playhouse playbooks.<sup>47</sup> While we should not therefore infer that early printed plays were never performed, in the absence of more concrete evidence, it seems perverse to insist that their source manuscripts came to the press *as a consequence* of their performance. And while it is certainly possible that someone other than the author may have caused some plays to be printed, John Day's accusatory preface to the second edition of *Gorboduc* suggests such events were the exception not the rule.<sup>48</sup> According to Day, the authors 'neuer intended' the play 'to be published'. Instead, William Griffith, the printer of the first edition, purchased a manuscript from an unnamed young man who 'lacked a little money and much discretion'.<sup>49</sup> Thus, according to Douglas Brooks, 'does Day's preface introduce an early generation of readers of printed English vernacular drama to the discourse of textual piracy'.<sup>50</sup> But it is worth remembering that from an early modern point of view, there was nothing piratical about basing an edition on a copy-text that originated somewhere other than with the author. As Blayney has rightly noted, 'modern notions of literary property simply would not apply: what is being sold is a manuscript, not what we call a *copyright*'.<sup>51</sup> The nearest early modern equivalent 'was the publishing right conferred by the Stationers' Company', and in this respect, Griffith had more than met his legal obligations; a register entry dated September 1565 names Griffith as licensed to print 'A Tragic of gorboduc where iij actes were wretten by Thomas norton and the laste by Thomas Sackvyle &c'.<sup>52</sup> Still, who was this young man who lacked money and discretion? Where and how did he obtain his copy of *Gorboduc*? It is perhaps no coincidence that the only playbook categorically linked to a non-authorial source also happens to be one of a handful of early printed plays with a known performance history; as we saw in Chapter 2, the title-pages to both editions explicitly name a date and place of performance, as well as the company responsible: 'the Gentlemen | of Thynner Temple in London'. It is all too tempting,

therefore, to imagine a young law-student-cum-amateur-actor, strapped for cash, unscrupulously selling a manuscript of the play to the press located just over the road from his chambers, on the north side of Fleet Street at the sign of the Falcon in St Dunstan's churchyard.

How much this unknown man might have been paid we also do not know. Blayney has suggested that a sum just short of two pounds for a manuscript might have been average at the end of the sixteenth century, but his estimate is based both on the assumption of a print-run of 800 copies and that the entire run will sell out in the publisher's working lifetime. As we have seen from the stationers' inventories discussed above, clearly this was not always the case. Moreover, insisting that because the market for playbooks was limited, most plays must have been 'offered to, rather than sought out by, their publishers', he excludes from his discussion some of the other ways plays might have found their way into print.<sup>53</sup> While it is unlikely that publishers actively sought out plays, it is not inconceivable that where printers already had close relationships with authors, publication might come about more organically. It seems likely, for instance, that the familial relationship between the printer William Rastell and his brother-in-law John Heywood facilitated the working relationship that resulted in the four Heywood plays printed in 1533–34. But presumably some kind of financial arrangement existed between them. As Leon Voet has noted:

A publishing printer is not a philanthropist. He decides what texts he can print on the basis of their potential sales. If a work seems likely to reward his efforts, he himself may initiate negotiations to obtain it. In other instances it is the authors who take the initiative while the publisher adopts a more passive role, weighing up the pros and cons of a proposed publication.<sup>54</sup>

Perhaps Rastell and Heywood split the risk and both invested capital in the enterprise. Or maybe Rastell paid Heywood in kind, giving him a quantity of playbooks that he could then sell as he saw fit. Perhaps the obverse was true and Heywood was obliged to undertake to buy a proportion of the copies printed.<sup>55</sup> It is also not totally inconceivable that Heywood might have assumed more formally the duties of publisher, as Bale clearly did when he is named as publisher on the internal title-page for *The second part or continuacyon of the English votaries* (in *The actes of the Englysh votaryes*, 1551, STC 1273.5).<sup>56</sup> At the same time, it is equally possible that the terms of their arrangement differed from publication to publication. It is certainly telling that the earliest two Rastell-Heywood playbooks name their printer but not their author, while the later two are ascribed on the title-page as being 'made by John Heywood'.<sup>57</sup> The plays' modern editors have argued that the 'favourable reception of this first, anonymous pair of plays would have encouraged

William Rastell to publish Heywood's name in the future'.<sup>58</sup> But since the two later, attributed playbooks fail to announce an explicit relationship to the two published anonymously, it is hard to see how this might have served to Rastell's advantage. The attributed books could hardly have helped him shift copies of the two anonymously printed plays. Nor is it self-evident that they would have been easier to sell themselves; it is hard to know what, if anything, the name 'Heywood' might have added to their appeal. So, it is perhaps more plausible to locate responsibility for the decision to include these title-page attributions with the author. It is he who might have had good reasons for wanting, at least initially, to publish anonymously and he who would have stood to benefit from the attribution of the later two plays, not least if he 'had to contract to take a certain number of copies of the printed work at trade price' and then sell them on himself.<sup>59</sup> And given the otherwise uniform presentation of all four plays – folio format, centred speech prefixes and stage directions, and the use of special characters, typically pilcrows, to articulate dialogue and action – one possible conclusion is that the attributed plays reflect a different business arrangement between the two men.<sup>60</sup>

We will probably never know how and why Heywood's name came to be printed on the title-pages to Rastell's editions of *The Play of Love* and *The Play of the Weather*, or why it was omitted from *Johan Johan* and *The Pardoner and the Friar*. While some of the grand Continental houses preserved records of the inevitable arguments between authors and their publishers 'about the size of editions, choice of type, design of title-pages', in England, and in the absence of such records, it remains a challenge 'to reconstruct what input an author might have had in the design of their printed works'.<sup>61</sup> However, we do know from contemporary prefaces and other front matter that some authors were closely involved in the printing process, and it is to this evidence that I now turn.

### Attributing editorial intervention

On the title-page to Richard Taverner's translation of selections from Erasmus's *Aliquot sententiae insignes* (1540, STC 10445), authorial agency is attributed three ways: first, 'the flovvvers of sen | cies' are described as the work of 'sundry wry= | ters'; then, Erasmus is named as the man responsible for setting them in Latin; and finally, Richard Taverner is named as their translator.<sup>62</sup> The title-page invests further authority in Taverner, also naming him as publisher – 'Ex ædibus Richard Tauerner' – and while no printer is here mentioned, Richard Bankes is named in that capacity in the colophon:

Printed in Fletestrete very dili= | gently vnder the correction | of the selfe Richard Ta= | uerner, by Richard Bankes.<sup>63</sup>

In his brief discussion of this edition, H. S. Bennett accounted for the unusual wording of this colophon by explaining ‘closer supervision’ by authors ‘of the compositors was obviously sometimes necessary’.<sup>64</sup> However, it is unclear whether Taverner offered his diligent correction in his capacity as translator or publisher. To whom should the role of textual oversight fall? The book’s ambiguous colophon seems to propose a blurring of these separate roles, and permits agency to Taverner as both translator *and* publisher.

Other vernacular authors express their anxiety about textual corruption more explicitly, drawing on a tradition in English that goes back at least as far as Chaucer and his ‘Words unto Adam’.<sup>65</sup> In the preface to *The second part of the Image of both churches*, John Bale describes printers as ‘cruell enemies <...> whose headye hast, | neglygence, and couetousnesse common | ly corrupteth all bokes’.<sup>66</sup> These generic accusations are echoed in almost all authorial attacks on printers, but Bale goes on to enumerate very specific faults:

These haue both | dysplaced them and also changed their | nombres to the truthes derogacyon/ what | though they had at theyr handes. ii. ler= | ned correctours which toke all paynes | possible to preserue them.<sup>67</sup>

Despite the efforts of two correctors to check and preserve the integrity of the navigational tools provided for his readers, Bale laments that his printers have produced a book that is both hard to use and ridden with error. While Bale is here vocal about his frustration with the way *The image of bothe churches* has been treated by its printer, nowhere in his writing does he express similar affront about the printing of his plays. Of course, it may be that he had nothing to complain about, that he considered his printed plays matchless in terms of their textual and presentational precision, but it is at least as likely that the form of the printed playbook simply did not provide the appropriate space to express misgivings of this kind.

Prefatory paratexts provide a natural opportunity for authors to articulate doubt, but as we saw in the last chapter, prior to the publication of Senecan drama in the 1560s, it is extremely uncommon to find front matter prepended to printed plays. In all, just ten early printed playbooks include an authorial preface.<sup>68</sup> This figure includes the second and third imprints of *Troas*, which, following David Bergeron’s rule of invariant paratexts, simply replicate the front matter found originally in the first edition.<sup>69</sup> All ten of these prefaces feature conventional modesty topoi of the kind examined in Chapter 2.<sup>70</sup> But three also express anxiety about the text as printed book and point to authorial concern or even involvement in the process of transforming playtext into printed book. Two are the work of Jasper Heywood, and preface his translations of *Troas* and *Thyestes*; the third is also associated with Seneca, and prefaces Alexander Neville’s translation of *Oedipus*.

Neville's words are the most mild, and his concern about allowing his text to be published may say more about the perceived stigma of print than it does his desire for textual and presentational accuracy:

Such like Terrors | as these requyreth this our present | Age, wherin  
Vice hath chyefest | place, and Vertue put to flyght: | lyes as an abiect  
languishynge in | great extremytie. For the whiche | cause, so muche  
the rather haue I | suffred this my base translated Tra= | gedie to be  
publyshed.<sup>71</sup>

Were it not for the text's moral purpose, Neville would not have suffered his translation to be printed. In this respect, his anxiety about print publication is an extension of the kinds of authorial humility seen in other dramatic prefaces from this period. The dedicatory epistle, addressed to Nicholas Wotton, diplomat and Dean of Canterbury and York, confirms this sense that Neville's disdain for print is less a specific attack than it is both conventional and generic. At its outset, he explains that he produced the translation for:

a fewe <...> familiar frendes, who thought | to haue put it to the  
very same vse, | that *Seneca* hymself in his Inuen= | tion pretended:  
Whiche was by | the tragicall and pompous showe | vpon Stage, to  
admonish all men | of theyr fickle Estates.<sup>72</sup>

His translation, he writes, was intended for coterie use that may have involved performance, but not for the kind of wider circulation that print necessarily enables. It is then ironic that the 'frendes' for whom Neville produced the text seem to have acted against his wishes and caused the text to 'come into the Prynters hands': 'Thus | as I framed it to one purpose: so | haue my frendes <...> wrested it to another effect: | and by this meanes blowen it a= | broade, by ouer rashe & vnaduised | pryntyng'.<sup>73</sup> While this condemnation of print as ill-advised should be read as a counterpoise to what J. M Saunders long ago described as the 'temerity of achieving print', produced by and contributing to a culture of written modesty, it is nonetheless tempting to imagine the role of Neville's friends in the publication of his translation.<sup>74</sup> Was he simply flattered into offering his manuscript to Thomas Colwell, the printer, convinced by his friends that the text could teach important moral lessons to a wider audience? Or was the manuscript brought to Colwell's attention more forcibly as the word 'wrested' seems to imply? Whatever the circumstances, Neville's doubts about print as an appropriate medium for the circulation of his writings did not stop him from having other works printed; his name is associated with a further ten books printed before his death in 1614. Moreover, the authorial revisions made to the text of *Oedipus* when it was published in the 1581 collection of

*Seneca his tenne tragedies* (STC 22221) suggest a concern for textual accuracy that imply a degree of oversight.<sup>75</sup> So even as the retention of the original preface in the 1581 collection reminds us that Neville has allowed his translation to be printed (again) under sufferance, the revised text reveals his involvement in its printing.

Where Neville's opprobrium is generic, a functional consequence of the mechanics of print, Heywood's prefatorial remarks are more explicitly vituperative. We saw in Chapter 2 how he used the preface to *Thyestes* to launch a direct attack on Richard Tottell, the printer of his first Senecan translation, *Troas*.<sup>76</sup> But his ambivalence about print, specifically his anxiety about its tendency to cause textual corruption, is already evident in the preface to this earlier work:

But | now sins by request, and friendship of those, to | whome I  
 coulde deny nothing, this worke a= | gainst my will, exorted is out  
 of my handes, I | nedes must craue thy pacyence in reading, and |  
 facilytie of iudgment: when thou shalt appa= | rantly see, my witles  
 lacke of learning, praying | thee to consyder, how hard a thing it is  
 for me, | to touche at full in all poyntes, the aucthoures || minde, (be-  
 ing in many places very harde and | doubtfull and the worke muche  
 corrupt by the | defaute of euill printed bookes).<sup>77</sup>

Like Neville, Heywood denies any agency in causing his translation to be printed. The matter, he suggests, was quite literally taken out of his hands by certain friends who insisted on the work's publication. However, going beyond such expressions of conventional modesty, he adds that any deficiencies in his translation are a consequence of the inadequacy of his source texts, here identified as printed rather than manuscript copies of Seneca's play. Arguing that the Latin 'worke' has been debased by 'the defaute' of a mechanical process that he labels 'euill', he suggests that corruption is both the fault of and an inevitable consequence of print technology. Moreover, casting these printed books as the enemy of authorial intention, Heywood invokes humanistic assumptions about texts as immaterial entities that remain the mainstay of some forms of textual criticism that persist to this day.<sup>78</sup>

In the preface to his next Senecan translation, *Thyestes*, he extends this criticism, singling out specific editions of Seneca's plays by 'Gryphius' (Sebastian Gryphius), 'Aldus' (the Aldine press), and 'Colineus' (untraced) for missing the 'sense and uerse', or what we might call the intention of the author.<sup>79</sup> In fact, Joost Daalder has proved Heywood's absolute reliance on Gryphius's edition of Seneca.<sup>80</sup> But in citing a further two editions, one of which may never have existed, Heywood adopts a rhetorical stance that highlights his erudition and scholarly thoroughness even while it protects him from criticism or fault. He is, in effect, a good workman *because* he blames his tools.

Gryphius, Aldus, and ‘Colineus’ are not the only printers whom Heywood singles out for abuse in this preface. As we saw in Chapter 2, he also directs criticism towards Richard Tottell, who printed two editions of *Troas* in 1559, and his attack offers a rare glimpse of authorial involvement in the printing process. Even though Heywood ‘perusde’ the ‘prooues’, in setting the corrections, Tottell and his pressmen introduced further errors: ‘fowrescore greater fautes then myen | in fortie leaues espyde’.<sup>81</sup> Seneca, Heywood suggests, would give him ‘small thanks <...> for suche a worke’, and he vows never again to darken Tottell’s ‘doores’ with ‘any worke of myne’.<sup>82</sup> But it quickly becomes clear that Heywood’s disappointment about Tottell’s handling of *Troas* is designed so as to offer a platform for a more generalised attack on printers and printing:

My frend (*quoth* Senec therewithall)  
no meruayle therof ys:  
They haue my selfe so wronged ofte,  
And many things amys  
Are doon by them in all my woorks,  
suche fautes in euery booke  
Of myne they make, (as well he may  
it fynde that lyst to looke,)  
That sense and latin, verse and all  
they violate and breake,  
And ofte what I yet neuer ment  
they me enforce to speake.  
It is the negligence of them,  
and partly lacke of skill  
That dooth the woorks with paynes well pend  
full ofte disgrace and spill.<sup>83</sup>

Here, in his capacity as dream-guide and mentor, the fictionalised Seneca assures Heywood that fault is an inevitable function of print publication, that to be published in print is to court unavoidable error. Ventriloquising Seneca in this way, Heywood, like Bale some fifteen years earlier, pits author against printer, characterising the one as blameless, constantly striving for perfection, and the other as negligent and lacking skill, intent on perverting authorial intention. It is a striking rhetorical conceit, since it serves to drive a wedge between the act of translation and the craft of printing – both of which rely on the interpretation of ‘sense and latin, verse and all’ – and instead aligns Heywood with the author whom he is translating; together they must suffer the ignominy of witnessing their works – ideal and immaterial – transformed into what Virginia Woolf would centuries later describe as ‘grossly material things’.<sup>84</sup>

Heywood's negativity is not without mitigation. Despite ill treatment at 'Printers hands', his Seneca seems to offer some reassurance; where print corrupts, readers might correct:

But as for that be nought abasht:  
 the wise will well it waye,  
 And learned men shall soone discern  
 thy fautes from his, and saye,  
 Loe here the Printer dooth him wrong,  
 as easy is to trye:  
 And slaunder dooth the authors name  
 and lewdly him belye.<sup>85</sup>

Even as printing introduces fault, it makes possible the wider circulation necessary to bring the work into contact with men learned enough to discern and correct such errors. A similar breed of optimism is evident in the address to the reader that prefaces George Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* (STC 25347). Published in 1578, two years after the opening of The Theatre in London's Shoreditch, it is nevertheless apiece with pre-playhouse traditions; while its original auspices remain unknown, it was never publically performed, and may have been intended for closet recitation.<sup>86</sup> In it, the reader is implored to amend any mistakes, 'and if by chaunce thou light of some speache that see= | meth dark, consider of it with iudgement, before thou con= | demne the worke'.<sup>87</sup> Here, however, the sentiment does not belong to the author, but rather 'The Printer' (i.e. the publisher, Richard Jones).<sup>88</sup>

As we saw in the last chapter, printers' or publishers' prefaces are extremely uncommon in this period, and Richard Jones's is in fact only the second to occur in a printed playbook. Addressed to 'the Reader' and signed by '*Thy friend, R. I.*', Jones seems to style himself as a friend to all readers, but from its contents it is clear that the real target of his prefatory epistle is the author, Whetstone himself:

*Gentle Reader, this labour of Mai- | ster Whetstons, came into my handes, in his | fyrst cobby, whose leasure was so lyttle (being | then readie to depart his country) that he had | not time to worke it a new, nor to geue apt in= | structions, to prynte so difficult a worke, beyng full of va= | riety, both matter, speache, and verse.*<sup>89</sup>

Where Heywood's difficulties were a consequence of his working from inaccurate printed editions, Jones adopts the obverse position: his trouble arises from the poor quality of the author's manuscript or 'fyrst cobby'. Sonia Massai has argued that in some instances the process of perfecting dramatic copy might have extended to include 'the annotation of the text of a play already available in print, when readers' demand

encouraged a publisher to issue a second or subsequent editions'.<sup>90</sup> But here the publisher's words imply as standard an editorial scenario in which authors checked and revised printed proofs while the work was in press. Jones's problem is Whetstone's imminent departure for the Low Countries; the author's busy schedule has left him with no time to revise the work himself or leave detailed enough instructions for someone to do so for him. Though expressed from a different perspective, Jones's prefatory remarks outline a similar pattern of authorial involvement to those described in Bale's and Heywood's prefaces. In fact, the process of revision delineated in all these prefaces strikingly recalls the fictional Gregory Streamer in William Baldwin's *Beware the cat* (1570, STC 1244), who lodges above John Day's print shop so as to be available to correct his Greek alphabets while they are in press.<sup>91</sup> Evidently, in publishing plays and other works of entertainment, printers and other print agents frequently had to attend to authors' wishes. In other words, far from simply procuring dramatic manuscripts, printers were required to accommodate, and at times relied on the editorial oversight of the playwrights whose plays they published.

In the absence of such authorial correction, Jones urges his readers to 'amend' his mistakes, and doing so he adopts the kind of modesty *topoi* more usually associated with the author. At the same time, by enjoining readers to engage actively with the text, he imagines that his effort publishing Whetstone's play will be well repaid:

Vsing this courtesy, | I hould my paynes wel satisfied, and Maister  
*Whet | ston* vniniured: and for my owne part, I wil | not faile to pro-  
cure such bookes, as | may profit thee with delight.<sup>92</sup>

Kirk Melnikoff has said of this passage that 'marketing for gentlemen, Jones casts himself as a servant who is seeking patronage and permanently veils his profit-making motives'.<sup>93</sup> However, while he certainly seeks to flatter his readers, characterising them as attentive and discerning, his language exposes rather than veils his moneymaking endeavours. Here, concluding his address, he employs terms that indicate an acute awareness of market forces, what today we would call the laws of supply and demand. By successfully procuring the kinds of manuscripts (supply) that are likely to please his intended readership (demand), Jones hopes to cash in on their delight. As such, his use of the word 'profit' to refer to his readers' intellectual gain and enjoyment simultaneously invokes the financial advantage he expects their reading to generate. In all of this, he hopes that Whetstone will remain 'vniniured', a hope that seems to refer both to textual integrity and authorial reputation. Whetstone's reputation will be safeguarded *because* of the care that Jones (in collaboration with the discerning readership he hopes to attract) has taken to remain faithful to authorial intention.

Writing of Jones's preface, David Bergeron has said, 'curiously, even though Jones has to step in to assume editorial duties because the playwright is leaving the country, the same playwright manages to produce a lengthy Epistle Dedicatory, addressed to his kinsman, William Fleetwoode'.<sup>94</sup> In fact, the seemingly contradictory inclusion of Whetstone's dedicatory epistle admits another possibility, namely that authorial anxiety about publication prompted the generation of front matter designed to obscure responsibility for the final printed text. In this respect, what Jones's preface shares with those examined earlier in this chapter is a desire for an ideal, uncorrupted text that all the while recognises corruption or 'textual fall' as an inevitable consequence of print publication.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, the deflection and deferral of liability for the introduction of any such errors not only emphasises the various stages – and people – involved in the printing of any text, but should also remind us that publishing plays often involved a delicate negotiation between the twinned but opposing impulses of revelation and concealment, between authority and anonymity.

### **Attributing authority**

Nowhere are these tensions more apparent than in the competing ways authority is identified within the pages of the printed playbook. In this section, I am especially interested in author and printer attributions, but my discussion also acknowledges other assertions of authority: statements of privilege, and – especially later in the sixteenth century – allowance and licence.<sup>96</sup> The title-page is the most common place for playbook attributions, but the names of authors and printers occasionally occur elsewhere, sometimes amongst the preliminaries or otherwise, appended after the body of the text. As Marcy North has reminded us:

The standardization of the title page in the mid-sixteenth century [...] did not guarantee the standardization of the author's name as one of its features. It remained common to find a text's only reference to an author or authors in the dedicatory epistle, at the end of a literary work.<sup>97</sup>

At the same time, the persistence of colophons even after title-page impressum had become the norm means that statements about the printer or publisher can often be found at the end of the book instead of or as well as at the beginning, and sometimes contradict or complicate the way such information is represented elsewhere.

### **Anonymity and authorial attribution**

Forty-three early printed plays feature title-page author attributions; a figure that accounts for slightly over half of all plays printed in the period with extant title-pages.<sup>98</sup> And if we extend this count to include the twenty-five

quasi-dramatic works listed in Wiggins that survive with title-pages intact, a further eleven books can be seen to identify an author or translator on the title-page. In all, a total of fifty-four out of a possible 103 dramatic or quasi-dramatic items can be identified with title-page attributions.

The very prevalence of title-page attributed playtexts from across the pre-playhouse period should caution against the traditional association of pre-playhouse drama with anonymity. While it is true that the percentage of attributed plays and quasi-dramatic material printed between 1512 and 1550 (forty-three per cent) is significantly lower than that for the period 1551–76 (around sixty per cent), for the period immediately following (1577–1616), the percentage drops again to just over fifty per cent.<sup>99</sup> In other words, pre-playhouse plays were *as likely* to be anonymous as those printed after the opening of the theatres. If anything, these figures tell us that far from ennobling drama, rendering it ‘more worthy of an author’, the public stage actually had the opposite effect, pushing down attributions rates, which had been on the rise in the previous two decades.<sup>100</sup> At the same time, these figures are misleading since they assume all forms of title-page attribution are the same, when in reality attribution could take many forms, disclosing or obscuring identity in different ways. At one end of the spectrum are descriptive attributions, which not only reveal the author’s name, but also provide biographical information. Examples can be found on the title-pages of some of the earliest printed plays, among them the two plays by Henry Medwall printed by John Rastell. The earlier of the two, *Fulgens and Lucrece* is described as being ‘Compyled by mayster Henry medwall. late | chapelayne to *the* ryght reuerent fader in god Iohan | Morton cardynall & Archebysshop of Caunterbury’. Here, besides naming the author, the title-page ascribes Medwall authority by supplying him with a title, ‘mayster’ (presumably Master of Arts, i.e. a graduate of one of the universities); a vocation, ‘chapelayne’; and an association with a figure of power and influence, John Morton, the former Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1500). Virtually identical wording appears on the title-page to the second of Medwall’s plays, *Nature*: ‘Compyld by mayster | Henry medwall chapelayne to the ryght re= | uerent father in god Iohan Morton | somtyme Cardynall and | arche | bysshop of Can | terbury’. Much has been made of the use of the word ‘compiled’ to describe Medwall’s role in writing these plays. Brooks’s view that Medwall was condemned by print ‘to spend eternity embalmed’ as a compiler is typical of a critical tendency to regard compilation as a lesser ‘authorial activity’.<sup>101</sup> But the act of compilation could take a number of forms, and in addition to the construction of a work by arrangement of materials from various sources it could also involve the composition of an original work.<sup>102</sup> We should not therefore assume that a title-page designation of an author as a compiler implies less autonomy or originality on his part. Such concepts would, in any case, have been inimical to contemporary

definitions of authorship. Certainly, compilation is one of the preferred terms used by medieval authors to describe the act of composition.<sup>103</sup> Given its medieval usage, it is perhaps unsurprising that the term is frequently used to attribute authorship in some of the earliest playbooks, including all plays by Medwall and Bale. But its recurrent use – there are six examples from the last fifteen years of the period – suggests it continued to serve as one of a range of descriptors available to dramatic authors and those responsible for printing their work. At the same time its endurance into the 1560s may indicate that it functioned nostalgically, to evoke the native traditions of an earlier era. It is telling that for the period 1560–77, it is never used for classical or Continental plays, only for moral interludes (both new editions of older plays, like Q2 *Three Laws*, and first editions, like *The Disobedient Child*). Other authorial designations include ‘made by’ (fourteen instances), ‘translated by’ (six instances), ‘done by’ (two), and ‘written by’ (two), all of which model authorship not as a status but rather as an activity.<sup>104</sup> And in at least one instance, it is not even clear that the activity that is described by the act of making is authorship at all. The printer’s colophon for *Gentleness and Nobility* reads ‘Ionhes rastell me fieri fecit’ [John Rastell caused me to be made].<sup>105</sup> Is Rastell here the author, the printer, or some combination of the two?<sup>106</sup>

The designation ‘author’ is in fact conspicuously absent in early printed playbooks, occurring only twice: in ‘The P. to the Reader’ that prefaces the second edition of *Gorboduc*, in which the play is described as being ‘neuer intended by the authors thereof to be published’,<sup>107</sup> and to describe ‘the most graue and prudent author Lucius, Anneus, Seneca’ on the title-pages to all three editions of *Troas*. It is not until the publication of Ben Jonson’s *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1600, STC 14767) that the term appears again on the title-page of a printed playbook, and thereafter it is used only infrequently. This is unsurprising. Since authorship was not a profession, for much of the sixteenth century the word was reserved for use in the sense of the related Middle English word ‘auctor’, to mean both a writer, but also a source of authority, often classical or ancient in origin. Both of these meanings are implied when Seneca is described as the ‘author’ on the title-page to *Troas*. At the same time, having ‘set forth in Englyshe’ Seneca’s play, its translator Jasper Heywood derives reflected authority by dint of his association, across time and space, with his Latin source. For the writers of vernacular plays there were other ways of signalling authority, and on dramatic title-pages it is not uncommon to find authors described, like Medwall, in terms of status – ‘student’, ‘clarke’, ‘Esquier’, ‘Mr. of Art’; occupation – ‘chapelayne’, ‘poet laureate’, ‘Maister of the Children’; and/or an association with a prestigious institution – ‘Alsolne Colledge’, ‘Oxford’, ‘Trinitie Colledge’, ‘Cambridge’.<sup>108</sup> In all, there are eighteen early printed playbooks that describe the author in one or more of these ways, including moral and religious interludes, closet translations of

classical texts and other works not intended for public performance, and school and university plays. In other words, the distribution of title-page attributions of both authorship and authorial status across early printed playbooks of all kinds belies the suggestion that title-page attribution can be used to index literary value or worth. In the pre-playhouse era at least, we should be cautious about overemphasising a connection between plays deemed 'worthy of an Author' and their literary status, however that might be assessed.<sup>109</sup> At the same time, while there are some early examples, it does seem to be the case that complex biographical attributions became more common in the last twenty years before the opening of the theatres, giving some traction to Brooks's suggestion that 'printed drama seems to have come into its own' in the 'two decades between [the] incorporation [of the Stationers' Company] and the opening of the first public theater in 1576'.<sup>110</sup> While phrases like 'come into its own' underline the teleological bias of Brooks's argument, his observation is nonetheless helpful since it rightly identifies the middle of the sixteenth century as a time when conventions for rendering the author's authority legible in print were, for the first time, being regularly if not consistently employed.

Categorically distinct from the biographical attributions I have been discussing are those that offer only the author's initials. Where the former provide a context for the work, the latter obscure the author's identity even as they attribute agency. In her important study of anonymity in the early modern period, Marcy North has noted, 'sets of initials hang in balance between naming and authorial discretion, and because they are typographical in the most basic sense, they concretize one of the spaces from which anonymity emerges'.<sup>111</sup> Indeed, sets of initials – in whatever form – remind us that anonymity and naming are hardly opposites, but rather frequently occupied 'the same typographical mark on a page'.<sup>112</sup> Initials were probably first 'introduced by the early print industry as a way to designate responsibility for a text without taking up excessive type, space, and attention', and this impulse perhaps explains their inclusion in *Oedipus*, where the translator's name is abbreviated at the end of the preface in large display capitals as 'A N'.<sup>113</sup> However, far from functioning as a space-saving device, the large font size means that the translator's initials take up *more* not less room; they draw attention to themselves even as they signal modesty and discretion. At the same time, they serve to construct the audience as an intimate coterie of readers, easily able to decode the riddle of the author's identity. Within the wider context of the book this is of course true because Neville's name has already been disclosed on the title-page and again after the dedication to Nicholas Wotton. But within the fiction of this preface, styled as a private letter between friends, the reader is flattered to imagine himself as one of a limited circle of individuals qualified to identify Neville by initials alone.

There is just one further instance of initials coinciding with a full-name attribution: the title-page to *An Interlude of Vice (Horestes)* gives the author as ‘John Pickering’, but the play is signed at its end with the initials ‘I. P’.<sup>114</sup> There is also a single extant example of a partly abbreviated mark of authorship: the title-page to *Enough Is as Good as a Feast* ascribes the play to ‘W. Wager’. And there are a further five playbooks in which the author (or translator) is identified by initials alone.<sup>115</sup> In recent critical accounts and bibliographies of early drama, these contracted attributions are often silently expanded, sometimes tentatively, in brackets or accompanied by a question mark, but occasionally more assertively, with no qualification at all.<sup>116</sup> This tendency reflects a number of related modern ideas about authorship and identity: that it is always desirable to know the identity of the author, that knowing the name of the author will usually promote deeper understanding of the text, and that authored texts are ‘better’ than anonymous ones. But such ideas would have had little purchase in an early modern context, and the act of expanding initials effectively dismantles the ‘tension between discretion and exposure’ that was so clearly appealing to some writers of early printed plays, particularly those working in the 1560s and 1570s.<sup>117</sup> For them, initials suggested modesty even while they advertised ambition: a perfect conceit for playwrights who were perhaps unsure about the suitability of print for the publication of their plays.

If contracted attributions highlight the paradoxical proximity of naming to anonymity, it is also true that they are formally and functionally distinct from truly anonymous works in which names, initials, or even typographical blanks are absent. There are twenty-nine early printed playbooks with no author attribution of any kind; to that number we can add a further eight items listed in Wiggins.<sup>118</sup> However, as North has commented, ‘the label “anonymity” is a woefully broad term that tells us more about what the reader misses and seeks than what a text actually lacks’.<sup>119</sup> Anonymity could be authored; a decision made by the author to withhold their identity. But it could also be constructed, and non-authorial agents involved in the production of printed playbooks often had their own reasons for employing anonymity. The absence of authors’ names could therefore reflect a number of quite different scenarios. An author might choose to remain anonymous for reasons of modesty, protection, or some other personal whim. Anonymous publication might also result when publishers took the decision to print anonymous manuscripts obtained from non-authorial sources. In the case of texts written by more than one author, anonymity could reflect the difficulty or even the undesirability of identifying a single original source. This is especially true of playtexts, which, if not always conscious collaborations between two or more authors, were liable to change as a consequence of performance. Finally, as I suggested earlier in this chapter, anonymity might even speak to the terms, financial or otherwise, agreed between

a playwright and the publisher of his plays. At the same time, as Gérard Genette has noted, 'there are *de facto* anonymities which derive not from any decision but rather from the absence of information, an absence permitted and perpetuated by custom'.<sup>120</sup> Damaged playbooks fall into this category, and the fourteen imperfect editions that survive without title-pages may have become anonymous only over time, losing their authorial identity only with the loss of their title-pages.

Much of the preceding discussion has focused on the presence or absence of author attributions on early printed dramatic title-pages. While it is true that the title-page remained the most common place to name the author, attributions could occur elsewhere within the printed playbook: both before and after the text of the play itself. Take, for instance, the three editions of *Lusty Juventus*, in which the author's name is given not on the title-page but on the final recto above the colophon. Medieval dramatic manuscripts rarely name their authors (or scribes), but when they do, their names occur *after* the playtext.<sup>121</sup> By similarly revealing the author's name only at the end of the book, these three editions emphasise the persistence of scribal habits even after the adoption of the title-page as a recognisable print convention. At the same time, by adopting the scribal phrase 'quod R. Wever', they postulate composition as a kind of speech act, and, reminding us that all drama contains speech, they cast the body of the play as a speech-within-a-speech.<sup>122</sup> A similar effect is achieved by the attribution that occurs at the end of Q3 *The Four P's* – FINIS q Ihon Heywood' – which replaces the title-page attribution preferred for the two earlier editions. When John Allde came to print this edition in 1569, the play was already at least twenty-five years old, and it may be that the decision to move the attribution from the title-page to the final verso was intended to invoke earlier scribal conventions as a way of signalling the play's age, thereby framing it as a kind of antiquarian edition.<sup>123</sup> That rear-positioned attributions may have functioned more widely in this way is suggested by a further nine early printed playbooks that provide double attributions and name the author on both the title-page and at the end of the book.<sup>124</sup> Moreover, the fact that six of these examples were printed between 1565 and 1570 by stationers as diverse as William Griffith, John Allde, and Thomas Colwell suggests that authorial attribution at the end of the book may have been fashionable for a time *as* a deliberately archaising trope. In other words, by the end of the 1560s, printers had not only developed meaningful conventions for the presentation of texts as plays, but they had also begun to experiment with ways of promoting certain kinds of plays as old-fashioned, suggesting that there was a market not only for 'newly imprinted' plays, but also for texts framed as dramatic relics: Henrician interludes and their later imitations.<sup>125</sup>

Playbooks with extensive front matter also frequently contain multiple attributions; in all, there are ten early printed playbooks with one

or more prefatory paratexts signed by the author.<sup>126</sup> Names or initials most often occur in these books to head or sign dedications to patrons, and their appearance is unsurprising in this context since dedications like these were commonly styled as letters. Also worth noting here is the second edition of *Gorboduc*. When the play was first printed in 1565, the title-page not only named the authors, but also provided a precise statement about the play's authorship: 'whereof three Actes were wrytten by | Thomas Nortone, and the two laste by | Thomas Sackuyle'. As Brooks has wryly noted, 'it would be difficult to exaggerate the singularity of such an attribution, and the mind boggles at how much scholarly labor might have been spared if all subsequent dramas had been so precisely attributed'.<sup>127</sup> But when John Day printed the second, 1570 edition, he omitted this attribution, revealing the authors' names only in his preface:

this Tragedie was <...> written about nine | yeares agoe by the right honourable Thomas now Lorde Buckherst, and by T. Norton.<sup>128</sup>

Moreover, where the first edition attributed its authors in terms of the play's chronology, here in his preface, Day lists the authors in order of rank, giving precedence to Sackville, who on 8 June 1567 was created Baron Buckhurst. Identifying him with his public role as a servant of the queen, his private persona as 'Thomas Sackville' is occluded even as his new public identity is celebrated. Conversely, where the first edition provided a full name for 'Thomas Nortone', in the second edition his forename is contracted to the initial 'T.', a move perhaps intended to signal the printer's familiarity with the author, an intimacy that he hopes his readers will both acknowledge and share.

### Authorising printers and publishers

'T.' is not the only initial to occur in Day's preface. The entire paratext is labelled 'The P. to the Reader'. Title abbreviations are not uncommon in author attributions where they could 'precede, follow, or replace initials representing the name'.<sup>129</sup> But they are not frequently associated with printers or other print agents. On this occasion, however, the abbreviation both illustrates and capitalises on the instability of the word 'printer' within the context of the sixteenth-century print industry. Laurie E. Maguire has noted that 'epistles to printed texts headed "From the Printer to the Reader," often mean "From the Publisher to the reader," "printer" being used simply in the sense of "the one who caused the text to be printed"'.<sup>130</sup> But here the contraction resists expansion and points to Day's dual role as printer *and* publisher of this book.<sup>131</sup> While there has been extensive treatment of author attribution in both dramatic and non-dramatic early modern books, little consideration has been given to imprints and colophons as the sites of competing or complementary

forms of authority.<sup>132</sup> But, as Lotte Hellinga has observed, though often taken merely as ‘a statement appended to a text giving particulars about its genesis or production’, the colophon – and later the imprint – ‘is a text in its own right, and is therefore open to interpretation according to the time, place and circumstances of its origin’.<sup>133</sup> In addition to providing useful information about when a book was printed, who published it, and where it could be purchased, colophons and imprints functioned to legitimise books, rendering their authority immediately legible to potential readers. Consequently, their presence in a variety of forms in early printed playbooks usefully complicates long-held assumptions about the ‘low’ or non-literary nature of pre-playhouse drama.

That early print culture borrowed heavily from late medieval scribal culture is well known, and the early print convention, established in the incunable period, of including a colophon with information about the printing of the book is just one example of the kinds of structural debt that early printed books owe to their late medieval manuscript counterparts. However, as the print industry developed and the title-page became commonplace, printers began to introduce imprints containing similar information in addition to or instead of colophons. In the pre-playhouse era, it is therefore not uncommon to find anonymous playbooks that nonetheless advertise the circumstances of their publication, sometimes more than once. In all, there are fifty-two early printed playbooks with colophons, a figure that accounts for nearly seventy per cent of playbooks extant in one or more complete editions in the pre-playhouse period.<sup>134</sup> Their occurrence across the full range of the period – the earliest is *Fulgens and Lucrece* and the latest *The Glass of Government* – therefore neatly illustrates the extent to which the practice of including a colophon persisted even after the adoption of the title-page as a print norm. Conversely, the earliest playbooks to contain title-page information about their printing are the two 1559 editions of *Troas*, though the practice seems to have become fairly common thereafter; thirty-eight playbooks printed between 1560 and 1576 contain a title-page imprint of some sort, around three-quarters of all playbooks printed in that time.<sup>135</sup> Even after the establishment of the title-page imprint as a convention, the habit of including a colophon continued: twenty-one early printed playbooks with imprints also contain colophons, though their form and content often differ. Indeed, while imprints always reveal something about the circumstances in which a text was printed, they do not always provide the printer’s name. Conversely, while it is not uncommon to encounter an imprint that offers little more than the date and perhaps a note of privilege, with just one or two exceptions, colophons tend at the very least to provide the name of the printer, and often also give his address. At the same time, it is worth noting that while colophons often occur in unattributed playbooks – twenty-five, of which seventeen also lack an imprint – imprints and author attributions

coincide in close to seventy per cent of all early printed playbooks.<sup>136</sup> Even more strikingly, there are no author-attributed playbooks that do not also contain either an imprint, a colophon, or both.<sup>137</sup> In other words, plays attributed to a printer and/or a publisher are more likely to be attributed to an author. Overall these trends suggest that publication information played an important role in the marketing of playbooks, therefore revising the findings of both James P. Saeger and Christopher J. Fassler and Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser in their essays about the literary status of printed drama.<sup>138</sup> In the pre-playhouse period, it is not simply author attributions, theatre attributions, attributions of authorial status, or title-page Latin that signal the literariness of plays, but rather the coincidence of one or more of these features with detailed information about printing.<sup>139</sup> Put another way, literary status has less to do with authorial attribution than it does the legibility of authority in all of its forms.

To illustrate this point further, I turn here to five representative plays: a play in an edition with no author attribution but a detailed colophon (*Thersites*); a play in an attributed edition with a colophon (F1 *The Play of the Weather*); a play in two attributed editions each with an imprint and a colophon (O1 and O2 *Troas*); a play in two variants that each name the author, printer, and publisher (Q1a and Q1b *The Glass of Government*); and a playbook with false information about its publication (Q2 *Three Laws*). The STC describes *Thersites* as an adaption, possibly by Nicholas Udall, of a dialogue by Joannes Ravisius Textor, but the only extant edition contains none of this information; instead what it does provide is a remarkably detailed colophon:

*Imprinted at London, | by John Tysdale and are to be solde | at hys  
shop in the vpper ende of | Lombard Strete, in Alhallowes | churche  
yarde neare | vntoo grace | church.*<sup>140</sup>

John Tisdale became free of the Stationers' Company on 8 October 1555, and seems first to have established a press with John Charlewood. However, as Blayney has shown, by 1558 he was working independently from a print shop in the vicinity of Smithfield.<sup>141</sup> When he printed *Thersites* his shop had moved to the other side of the city to a site near Leadenhall. The unattributed play is his only known dramatic publication.<sup>142</sup> Although the book nowhere advertises the name of its author or translator, the title does provide a pithy moral: 'Thys Enterlude folowyng | Dothe Declare howe that the | greatest boesters are not | the greatest | doers'. Read alongside its detailed colophon, it may be that this particular book was marketed to attract not individual readers but rather retailers; the title clearly advertises the genre of text, while the colophon provides detailed information about where wholesale copies might be purchased.<sup>143</sup>

There are colophons found in three of the four editions of Heywood's *The Play of the Weather*, and like the one in *Thersites*, the third and fourth editions provide addresses for the printer's shop.<sup>144</sup> They also ascribe the play to Heywood on the title-page. However, while the first edition similarly describes the play on its title-page as being 'made by Johñ Heywood', its colophon is of a slightly different nature: 'fnis. | Prynted by w.Rastell. 1533. | Cum priuilegio'. This form – name, year, note of privilege – is adopted for the colophons found in all six fully extant playbooks printed by William Rastell, though in three instances Roman rather than Arabic numerals are used for the year, and in two instances the day and month are also provided. However, perhaps the most interesting feature of Rastell's colophon is its note of privilege. According to one recent estimate, for the 2,233 extant titles printed during the Henrician period, 302 were printed with some stated form of privilege.<sup>145</sup> But while such statements were intended to signal nothing more than the exclusive right to copy, it seems that in certain circumstances they were taken as a sign of official, or even regal endorsement.<sup>146</sup> Presumably, the 1538 proclamation directing printers 'not to put these wordes *cum priuilegio regali* without addyng *ad imprimendum solum*' was at least partly intended to clear up any such confusion.<sup>147</sup>

It is this authorised form of the phrase that Richard Tottell uses when he includes a similar note in the colophon to his two editions of *Troas*:

Imprinted at London in Fletestrete | within Temple barre, at the  
signe of the | hand and starre, by Ri= | chard Tottyll. | *Cum priuile-*  
*gio ad impri= | mendum solum.*<sup>148</sup>

The same wording is also used for the notes of privilege that appear on the title-pages to both editions, the earliest to include imprints. The colophon also usefully provides an address for Tottell's shop at the 'Hand and Star', a sign that punningly alludes to 'his dependence on imported paper' since the hand and star was 'a common watermark in early English impints, signalling paper imported from France or Italy'.<sup>149</sup> However, the title-page imprint for both editions suppresses this information, providing neither a name nor an address: 'Anno domini. | ¶*Cum priuilegio ad impri- | mendum solum*'. Giving just the year of publication and a generic note of privilege, the imprint contributes to the overall effect of the title-page, which is designed to signal the text's elevated status as the translation of an important Latin work. For, as Farmer and Lesser have suggested, 'Latin on a title page was obviously a classicizing gesture', and here, the Latin imprint underscores both the identity of the originating writer *and* his authority as 'the most graue and prudent author Lucius, Anneus, Seneca'.<sup>150</sup> 'Latin', as Farmer and Lesser have noted, 'attached itself most commonly to forms of drama that were purely

literary (translations and closet drama) [or] embedded in education institutions (university drama).<sup>151</sup> *Troas*, a closet translation of a classical text, written by a university man for an educated audience (or at least one that liked to think of itself in those terms), clearly conforms to these patterns, and its Latin imprint is just one of the many ways it advertises its elevated status.

When a third edition of *Troas* was published in 1562, its printer adopted a different approach. It contains no colophon, and its title-page imprint provides neither the date of publication nor a note of privilege: 'Imprinted at London by Thomas Powell, for George Bucke'. Long ago, Greg accounted for this formulation, explaining, 'the employment by the printer of a distributing agent gives rise to imprints of the type "Printed (by A) for B"'.<sup>152</sup> But, as Helen Smith has noted, his description 'misrepresents what we now understand to be the relationship between the bookseller who commissioned publication and the printer *s/he* employed'.<sup>153</sup> The imprint for O3 *Troas* is the earliest example of a playbook to draw this distinction between the printer (Powell) and the publisher (Bucke). But, in all, such statements are not common; there are just six further examples.<sup>154</sup> Among them is George Gascoigne's *The Glass of Government*, which was printed in 1575 in two issues.<sup>155</sup> The earlier (Q1a) contains an abbreviated imprint – 'IMPRINTED | at London for C. Barker' – but a more detailed colophon: 'IMPRINTED AT | London in Fleetestreate at the signe of the Faulcon by Henry | Middleton, for Christopher Barker. | Anno Domini. 1575'.<sup>156</sup> The later (Q1b) features the same imprint, but a different colophon: 'IMPRINTED AT Lon- | don By H M | for Christopher Barker at the signe | of the Grassehopper in Paules | Churchyarde, | Anno Domini. 1575'.<sup>157</sup> Clearly, both states were printed by Henry Middleton for Christopher Barker, but where Q1a provides an address for Middleton, Q1b features the address of Barker's shop. Correcting a long-held view that 'a printed address identified the book's exclusive *retail* outlet', Blayney has recently shown that 'the real purpose of an imprint was to tell *retailers* where a book could be bought *wholesale*'.<sup>158</sup> If we extend his point to include colophons, one possible reason for the publication of *The Glass of Government* in these two issues is to identify, for the convenience of interested booksellers, both Barker and Middleton as wholesale distributors. Consequently, it may be that in addition to printing the play, Middleton also shared some of the costs of publication; the number of copies printed with his address might even have reflected his initial investment. At the same time, even if members of the book trade were the target audience, it remains true that these imprints would have remained visible to a wider reading public for whom the 'claim of absolute proprietary rights by a [...] small consortium' offered a reassuring fiction and bolstered the legitimacy of the text in their hands.<sup>159</sup>

Whatever their differences, both variants of this play include explicit title-page notes of allowance, which clearly indicate compliance with the 1559 *Injunctions* requiring ecclesiastical authorisation for every book:

Seen and allowed, according to the order | appointed in the Queenes  
ma- | iesties Iniunctions.

However, although ‘authority of one kind or another had been officially required of every new printed book since the 1530s [...] it seems unlikely that even the authorities themselves expected total compliance’, and in fact a similar statement is found on the title-page of just one other early printed playbook: the second edition of *Gorboduc*.<sup>160</sup> There the note appears in a contracted form – ‘Seen and allowed. &c.’ – which seems both to acknowledge the stock phrasing used for all such statements and to recognise that plays exist both as texts and in performance; after 1574, it was required of all plays that they should be seen and allowed for performance by the Master of the Revels.<sup>161</sup> In other words, *Gorboduc* advertises that it has been authorised for print in language that also suggests it has been licensed for performance.

In all of these examples, legible expressions of authority – author attributions, Latin, notes of allowance or licence, etc. – occur only in playbooks that also have imprints and/or colophons. Authority, in other words, emanates not from the author, but rather from the printer or publisher who authorises all other statements of authority. But, on occasion, it was necessary or desirable for a printer or publisher to hide or obscure their identity, especially if the text they were printing was risky or seditious in some way. In such circumstances, it is not uncommon for a book printed in London to bear the imprint of a Continental city, though it is also true that English vernacular books *that were* printed on the Continent also sometimes contain false information about their publication.<sup>162</sup> One such example is the first edition of John Bale’s *Three Laws*. The STC gives the place of publication as Wesel, the printer as Derick van der Straten, and suggests a date of publication around 1548. But the information provided on the title-page and in the colophon is rather different:

Thus endeth thys Comedy | concernynge thre lawes, of Nature, Mo |  
ses, and Christ, corrupted by the Sodomy | tes, Pharisees & papystes  
most wycked. | Compyled by Iohan Bale. Anno M. D. XXXVIII,  
and lately inprinted *per Nicolaum Bamburgensem*.<sup>163</sup>

As Lotte Hellinga reminds us:

A colophon is a statement, usually spoken in another voice than that of the author of the main text (or texts), and made at another time. And

since this is a statement of facts that most bibliographers dearly want to know – the time and a place of the production of the text in this particular material form – these facts are usually taken very seriously.<sup>164</sup>

But here, since the colophon confounds these expectations – there is no place, the date is wrong, and the name untraceable – modern accounts of the play's publication tend to overlook the riddle of the colophon and accept and adopt the publication details suggested by the STC. 'Yet', as Hellinga rightly observes, 'this denies the subtleties and delights that can be embedded in a text that flirts with the truth'.<sup>165</sup> And here, the colophon's lack of place, its use of a date that almost certainly refers to the play's composition rather than publication, and its pseudonymous identification of 'Bamburg' as publisher signal an awareness of certain generic conventions, all the while denying their practical purpose. Since it does not 'identify a readily identifiable point of sale', this book 'could not participate in the mode of advertisement which' directed retailers and readers from the pages of the book to the bookseller's door.<sup>166</sup> It relies instead on a marketing strategy that links controversy to cultural capital and asks readers to identify it as valuable *because* of its false imprint. At the same time, in naming a fictional printer with initials that punningly play on the Latin abbreviation to 'note well', the colophon asks readers to take special notice and distinguish between truth and falsehood. Given the play's polemical preoccupation with the corruption of truth by infidelity in its various guises, it is therefore certainly plausible that Bale may have been involved with the wording of this particular colophon, suggesting a level of investment rarely equalled by other early dramatic writers. Certainly, it is his identity, his act of 'compiling', that is given precedence over the role played by van der Straten in the publication of the play. Unlike so many of the other examples examined in this chapter, in which the revelation of authorial identity is shown to be a corollary of other expressions of authority, Bale's authority here expends the legibility of the printer's authority. His name obscures that of his printer, reducing van der Straten's role to that of an identity riddle.

\* \* \*

In this chapter, I have argued that even when it is impossible to know the exact nature of the historical arrangements between publishers, printers, and playwrights, imprints, front matter, and colophons can reveal much about the way such relationships were given textual form within the pages of early printed playbooks. Rejecting the recent overemphasis on author attributions, I have suggested that in addition to noting whether or not a play has been ascribed to an author, we need to be attentive both to the textual and graphic forms of any such attribution and to the ways they interact with other statements of authority, including colophons, imprints,

and notes of allowance and licence. Consequently, rather than relying on author attributions as the primary marker of elite or literary status, I have here argued the categorical identification of a play as ‘elite’ or ‘literary’, may have as much to do with the legibility of authority *in all its forms* as it does the association with a known author. However, even as conventions developed to help make plays not only readily identifiable as plays but as *particular kinds of plays*, there was little guarantee that readers would subject them to their intended or even appropriate forms of use. Where this book has thus far focused on the strategies developed and adopted by authors and printers to make drama categorically distinct, I turn in the final chapter to extant copies of early printed playbooks. Examining the material traces left by early users, I show what happened to the surviving copies of early printed playbooks when they left the bookshop and passed through the hands of new owners and readers.

## Notes

- 1 John Bale, *An expostulation or complaynte agaynste the blasphemyes of a franticke papyst of Hamshyre* ([1552?], STC 1294), sig. C3<sup>r</sup>.
- 2 If the STC’s estimate of a 1552 publication for *An Expostulation* is correct, and if Bale’s memory serves him well, then *Three Laws* must have been printed in 1546, some two years prior to the STC’s estimate of 1548. However, as I have argued elsewhere, 1547 is perhaps the most likely publication date since it seems probable that the text was printed both before Edward’s accession and to coincide with the c. 1547 publication of three other plays by Bale. See Tamara Atkin, ‘Playing with Books in John Bale’s *Three Laws*’, *Yearbook of English Studies*, 43 (2013), 243–61 (244, 245, 250–61).
- 3 Documentary evidence provides accounts of performances of *King Johan* (1538), *Three Laws* (1551), and *God’s Promises, Johan Baptystes Preachynge* and *The Temptation of Our Lord* (1552). See *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*, ed. by J. E. Cox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Parker Society, 1846), p. 388; Bale, *An expostulation*, sigs C2<sup>r</sup>–C3<sup>r</sup>; and John Bale, *The vocacyon of Johan Bale to the bishoprick of Ossorie in Irelande* ([Wesel], 1553, STC 1307), fols 24<sup>r</sup>–24<sup>v</sup>. For critical discussion of Bale’s plays in performance see, for instance, Katherine Steele Brokaw, ‘Music and Compromise in John Bale’s Plays’, *Comparative Drama*, 44 (2010), 325–49, and her *Staging Harmony: Music and Religious Change in Late Medieval and Early Modern Drama* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), Ch. 2; Thea Cervone, ‘The King’s Phantom: Staging Majesty in Bale’s *Kynge Johan*’, *Studies in Medievalism*, 17 (2009), 185–202; Alice Hunt, *The Drama of Coronation: Medieval Ceremony in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Ch. 3; and Andrew Hiscock, ‘The Interlude’, in *The Routledge Research Companion to Early Drama and Performance*, ed. by Pamela King (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 237–58.
- 4 Honor McCusker, *John Bale: Dramatist and Antiquary* (Bryn Mawr, PA: [publisher unknown], 1942), p. 111.
- 5 These are the first and second parts of Anne Askew’s *Examinacyon* (1546, STC 848; 1547, STC 850); a translation, by the future Queen Elizabeth, of Marguerite of Angoulême’s *A godly medytacyon of the christen sowle* (1548, STC 17320); a treatise by John Lambert on the nature of the Eucharist

([1548?], STC 15180); a translation of a work attributed to Luther ([1543], STC 16984)\* and an account of his death ([1546], STC 14717); two separate imprints of the *Illustrium maioris Britanniae scriptorum, summarium* (1548, STC 1295, STC 1296)<sup>†</sup>; and three plays: *God's Promises*, *The Temptation of Our Lord*, and *Three Laws*. Although the original imprint of *Johan Baptystes Preachynge* does not survive, quire signatures suggest it formed a pair with *The Temptation of Our Lord* and was issued, alongside it, by van der Straten's press.

\*This item is not linked to Bale in the STC, but in a chapter on 'The Printers of Bale's Works', Honor McCusker makes the case for his hand in it. See McCusker, pp. 111–22 (pp. 117–18).

<sup>†</sup>In his recent account of the Bale-van der Straten collaboration, Aaron Pratt has suggested that the title-page to STC 1296, which gives a publication date of 1549, contains a composing error and should read 'M.D.XLVIII', making it agree with both the date on the colophon, and the date of STC 1295. See Aaron Pratt, 'The Status of Printed Playbooks in Early Modern England', unpublished PhD dissertation (Yale University, 2016), p. 54n69.

- 6 A third party was probably responsible for transporting copies of these works to England, and might also have contributed capital towards printing. Pratt has argued that the Ipswich man John Overton, who is named as the printer of the *Illustrium maioris Britanniae scriptorum, summarium* in the colophon to both imprints (sig. Qqq4<sup>r</sup>), may have functioned in this capacity. See Pratt, pp. 54–56.
- 7 I delineate the similarities in my article 'Playing with Books', 256–58. For a more general discussion (with examples) of Bale's use of wood-cuts see Peter Happé, 'A Catalogue of Illustrations in the Books of John Bale', *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s., 32 (2001), 81–118; and Cathy Shrank, 'Mise-en-page, "The Authors Genius", "The Capacity of the Reader", and the Ambition of "A Good Compositor"', in *Religion and the Book Trade*, ed. by Caroline Archer and Lisa Peters (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), pp. 66–82 (pp. 75–78).
- 8 In at least one instance, Bale is named as the publisher; in another, he is erroneously named as the printer. See *The first two partes of the actes of the Englysh votaryes* (1551, STC 1273.5), sig. A1<sup>r</sup> (Bale's name appears on the internal title-page to the second part, which is paginated separately: 'Imprinted at London, for Iohan Bale, in the yeare of our Lorde a M.D. & LJ. and are to be solde wythin Paules chayne, at the sygne of S. John Baptist'); and John Leland's *The laboryouse journey & serche <...> for Englandes antiquitees* (1549, STC 15445), sig. H7<sup>v</sup> (Bale's name occurs in the colophon: 'Emprented at London by Iohan Bale Anno M. D. XLIX').
- 9 See Atkin, 'Playing with Books'.
- 10 Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 6–7.
- 11 Peter W. M. Blayney, 'The Publication of Playbooks', in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. by David Scott Kastan and John Cox (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 383–422 (p. 392).
- 12 Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, 'The Popularity of Playbooks Revisited', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56 (2005), 1–32 (18). Further contributions to the debate include (in chronological order): Peter W. M. Blayney, 'The Alleged Popularity of Playbooks', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 56 (2005), 33–50; Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, 'Structures of Popularity in the Early Modern Book Trade', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 56 (2005), 206–13; Lukas Erne, 'The Popularity of Shakespeare in Print', *Shakespeare Survey*, 62

- (2009), 12–29; Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, ‘What is Print Popularity? A Map of the Elizabethan Book Trade’, in *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England*, ed. by Andy Kesson and Emma Smith (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 19–54; Neil Rhodes, ‘Shakespeare’s Popularity and the Origins of the Canon’, in *The Elizabethan Top Ten*, pp. 101–22; and Alan B. Farmer, ‘Playbooks and the Question of Ephemerality’, in *The Book in History, The Book as History: New Intersections of the Material Text, Essays Honoring David Scott Kastan*, ed. by Heidi Brayman, Jesse M. Lander, and Zachary Lesser (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. 87–125.
- 13 Marta Straznický, ‘Introduction: What is a Stationer?’ in *Shakespeare’s Stationers: Studies in Cultural Bibliography*, ed. by Marta Straznický (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 1–16; Alexandra Halasz, ‘The Stationers’ Shakespeare’, in *Shakespeare’s Stationers*, pp. 17–27; and Adam G. Hooks, *Selling Shakespeare: Biography, Bibliography, and the Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
- 14 See, for instance, Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser, ‘Vile Arts: The Marketing of English Printed Drama, 1512–1660’, *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 39 (2000), 77–165; Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass, ‘Shakespeare between Pamphlet and Book, 1608–1619’, in *Shakespeare and Textual Studies*, ed. by Margaret Jane Kidnie and Sonia Massai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 105–33; Jeffrey Masten, *Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Ch. 4; and Emma Smith, ‘Author v. Character in Early Modern Dramatic Authorship: The Example of Thomas Kyd and *The Spanish Tragedy*’, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 11 (1999), 129–42.
- 15 Farmer and Lesser, ‘Vile Arts’, p. 80. See also, James P. Saeger and Christopher J. Fassler, ‘The London Professional Theater, 1576–1642: A Catalogue and Analysis of the Extant Printed Plays’, *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 34 (1995), 63–109.
- 16 Blayney, ‘Publication of Playbooks’, p. 396.
- 17 Walker, p. 15.
- 18 For a more general account of print runs and retail book prices, see: H. S. Bennett, ‘Notes on English Retail Book-Prices, 1480–1560’, *The Library*, 5th ser., 5 (1950), 172–78; H. S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers, 1475–1557* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), pp. 224–30; Francis R. Johnson, ‘Notes on English Retail Book-Prices, 1550–1640’, *The Library*, 5th ser., 5 (1950), 83–112; and David McKitterick, ‘“Ovid with a Littleton”: The Cost of English Books in the Early Seventeenth Century’, *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 11 (1997), 184–234.
- 19 R. J. Roberts, ‘John Rastell’s Inventory of 1538’, *The Library*, 6th ser., 1 (1979), 34–42 (36). The original document is at Kew, The National Archives, PROB. 2/692.
- 20 Since the list pre-dates the publication of Philip Gerrard’s translation of *The Epicure* by some seven years, it presumably refers to a different – no longer extant – version or edition.
- 21 As ever, we are indebted to the careful and meticulous work of Peter Blayney for revealing this error. See Blayney, I, 454–54.
- 22 Walker, p. 13.
- 23 Blayney, I, 456.
- 24 Blayney, I, 455.

- 25 Blayney, 'Publication of Playbooks', p. 412.
- 26 This fragment is now shelved independently in Cambridge University Library as Syn. 5.53.4. The title *Pater, Filius, et Uxor, or, The Prodigal Son* has been suggested by the STC, as has the printer, William Rastell, and a publication date of 1530. The fragment is edited by W. W. Greg in *Malone Collections, Volume I, pt. 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The Malone Society, 1907), pp. 27–30, and is prefaced by the following note:

In April 1895 Dr. Francis Jenkinson purchased an octavo volume, printed at Paris by P. Vidouaeus in 1542, and intitled *Claudii Altissiodorensis in Epistolam ad Galatas enarratio*. The book had apparently been bound in England, for the end papers consisted of the two halves of a folio leaf [*sic*] containing a portion of an unidentified black-letter interlude.

I return to the subject of drama as printer's waste in the conclusion to this book.

- 27 See 'Legal Retrospections', *The Law Magazine*, 31 (1844), 54–63 (57–58). The original document, a 'Serjeants' Inn Inventory of possessions of William Rastall, late one of the Justices of the King's bench, a fugitive' is now housed at Kew, The National Archives, E 178/1076. A full transcription can also be found in William Ralph Douthwaite, *Gray's Inn: Its History and Associations* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1886), pp. 172–73.
- 28 Richard Axton and Peter Happé, 'Introduction', in *The Plays of John Heywood*, ed. by Richard Axton and Peter Happé (Cambridge: Brewer, 1991), pp. 1–54 (p. 4). The other play frequently attributed to Heywood is *Gentleness and Nobility* (STC 20723), which was printed by John Rastell senior in c. 1525. On the authorship of this play see Richard Axton's introduction to his edition of *Three Rastell Plays* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1979), pp. 4–8. A further play, *Witty and Witless* (an eighteenth-century title) seems never to have been printed, but is ascribed to Heywood in the sole manuscript witness, London, British Library, MS Harley 367, fols 110<sup>r</sup>–119<sup>r</sup>.
- 29 John N. King, 'The Account of a Marian Bookseller, 1553–54', *British Library Journal*, 13 (1987), 33–57 (37). Before they came to the British Museum, the two leaves containing the book-list were pasted at the end of a copy of William Alley, *The poore mans librarie* (1565, STC 374). For further discussion of the list's provenance, see King, pp. 33–36.
- 30 King, p. 43.
- 31 King, p. 41.
- 32 The title-page to the first edition describes the play as 'made by Ihon Heywood'; the second edition survives only in a single, imperfect copy that lacks a title-page.
- 33 See, for instance: Douglas A. Brooks, 'Dramatic Authorship and Publication in Early Modern England', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 15 (2002), 77–97; Farmer and Lesser, 'Vile Arts'; and Saeger and Fassler, pp. 63–109. I discuss the relationship between authorial attribution and literary worth at greater length on pp. 120–26.
- 34 H. R. Plomer, 'An Inventory of Wynkyn de Worde's House, "The Sun in Fleet Street"', *The Library*, 3rd ser., 6 (1915), 228–34. The lawsuit is recorded in Kew, The National Archives, CPR 40/1156, m.525. All quotations are from the original document.
- 35 Plomer, p. 229.
- 36 Peter W. M. Blayney, 'The Site of the Sign of the Sun', in *The London Book Trade: Topographies of Print in the Metropolis from the Sixteenth Century*, ed. by Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote (London: The British Library; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2003), pp. 1–20;

- Blayney, II, 712–13; and Barbara Kreps, ‘Elizabeth Pickering: The First Woman to Print Law Books in England and Relations within the Community of Tudor London’s Printers and Lawyers’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 56 (2003), 1053–88 (1073–74). See also J. H. Baker, ‘The Books of Common Law’, in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume III, 1400–1557*, ed. by Lotte Helling and J. B. Trapp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 411–32 (pp. 427–28), and Sir John Baker, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England: Volume IV, 1483–1558* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 496–97.
- 37 Blayney, ‘The Site of the Sign of the Sun’, p. 14.
- 38 Baker, ‘The Books of Common Law’, p. 427.
- 39 TNA, CPR 40/1156, m.525. *Youth* appears twice on 525a<sup>d</sup>, which also contains the reference to *Magnificence*; *Old Christmas* and *Nature* occur at 525b<sup>f</sup>.
- 40 Since the plea predates the second ([1557]) and third ([1565?]) editions of *Youth*, the copies listed in it must be of the first ([c. 1530]) edition.
- 41 Blayney, ‘Publication of Playbooks’, p. 392.
- 42 For further discussion of reprinting rates, see Blayney, ‘Popularity of Playbooks’, pp. 412–13.
- 43 That these double entries are typically divided by a number of lines, and sometimes entered under different titles, makes clerical error an unlikely cause. For instance, the first time *Youth* is mentioned, it is listed immediately after ‘centum libros of | Syr Lamwell’ (presumably STC 15187) and before ‘quatuor libros | of the prouerbes of lidgate’ (either STC 17026 or STC 17027); when it occurs for the second time, it is after ‘duodocem libros of the demande of loue’ (presumably STC 6573 or one of the numerous subsequent editions of the *demaundes joyeux*). Incidentally, *Sir Lamwell* is also entered twice on the same page. A second edition was printed in around 1558 (STC 15187.5), but this is too late for the list.
- 44 On wholesale and retail prices, see Blayney, ‘Publication of Playbooks’, p. 390. See also, Zachary Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication: Readings in the English Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 46–47.
- 45 In addition to the list now catalogued as London, British Library, MS Egerton 2974, fols 67<sup>r</sup>–68<sup>r</sup>, see E. G. Duff, ‘A Bookseller’s Accounts, circa 1510’, *The Library*, n. s., 8 (1907), 256–66; W. A. Jackson, ‘A London bookseller’s Ledger of 1535’, *The Colophon*, n. s., 1 (1936), 498–509; and Leslie Mahin Oliver, ‘A Bookseller’s Account Book, 1545’, *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 16 (1968), 139–55. Playbooks do not generally feature in these lists, although the 1535 ledger discussed by Jackson lists an unspecified playbook priced at 2d.
- 46 Tiffany Stern, ‘Sermons, Plays and Note-Takers: *Hamlet* Q1 as a “Noted” Text’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 66 (2013), 1–23 (1). Stern suggests there are good reasons to believe that *Hamlet* Q1 found its way into print in this manner.
- 47 They are: O1 and O2 *Gorboduc*, *Damon and Pithias*, and *Gammer Gurton’s Needle*, which I discuss in the previous chapter, pp. 81–82. On title-page records of performance for the later period, see Gabriel Egan, ‘“As it was, is, or will be played”: Title-Pages and the Theatre Industry to 1610’, in *From Performance to Print in Shakespeare’s England*, ed. by Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 92–110.
- 48 See Chapter 2 for further discussion of Day’s preface, pp. 89–91. Further, non-dramatic examples can be found in H. S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers, 1475–1557*, pp. 22–26.

- 49 O2 *Gorboduc*, sig. A2<sup>r</sup>.
- 50 Douglas A. Brooks, *From Playhouse to Printing House: Drama and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 31.
- 51 Blayney, 'Publication of Playbooks', p. 394.
- 52 Blayney, 'Publication of Playbooks', p. 394; Arber, I, 296, where Arber has added the note, 'this is the surreptitious edition of *Ferrex and Porrex*, the first printed English tragedy'. It is worth noting that Day failed to register *his* edition of the play. While this is a minor infraction in of itself, it is surprising given Day's stature within the company; he was a charter member and subsequently became its Master. Stephen Orgel has even gone so far as to suggest that Day's failure to register his edition may have been an 'attempt to conceal [...] the infringement of a fellow Stationer's property'. 'If either edition is at all surreptitious', he argues, 'it is the later one'. See Stephen Orgel, 'The Book of the Play', in *From Performance to Print in Shakespeare's England*, pp. 13–54 (p. 20).
- 53 Blayney, 'Publication of Playbooks', p. 392.
- 54 Leon Voet, *The Golden Compasses: A History and Evaluation of the Printing and Publishing Activities of the Officina Plantiniana at Antwerp*, 2 vols (Amsterdam: Vangedent; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; New York: Schram, 1969–72), II, 283.
- 55 While parallels between English and Continental practices should not be over-exaggerated, examples of all these financial arrangements can be found in the near-complete records of the Antwerp-based Plantin press. See Voet, II, 279–301. See also Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450–1800*, trans. by David Gerard (London and New York: Verso, 1976), pp. 160–62. On instances of authorial subvention in the English context, see A. S. G. Edwards and Carol M. Meale, 'The Marketing of Printed Books in Late Medieval England', *The Library*, 6th ser., 15 (1993), 95–124.
- 56 See pp. 101–02.
- 57 The attribution of *Johan Johan* and *The Pardoner and the Friar* to Heywood is universally accepted. For a rehearsal of the arguments see, Axton and Happé, pp. 45–42.
- 58 Axton and Happé, p. 38.
- 59 Voet, II, 294.
- 60 On the use of special characters to articulate the form of drama in print, see Claire M. Bourne, 'Dramatic Pilcrows', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 108 (2014), 313–52. Irrespective of whether they were set by forme or seriatim, playbooks of all formats would have required a large stock of certain punctuation marks and special characters. A type-by-type analysis of characters is beyond the scope of this book, but it is certainly plausible that printers of plays were self-selecting insofar as they owned the necessary stock of type. Other practical exigencies may also have determined a printer's willingness to publish playbooks. Presumably printers with fewer overheads may have been more likely to take on the risks associated with the publication of playbooks, and here location of their print shops must have been a contributing factor. Without lease records, we cannot know for certain, but in the case of Thomas Colwell, it seems that the 1565 move to his shop 'beneath the Conduite, at the syng of S. Iohn the Euangelyst' prompted a period of greater activity that may have been helped, in part, by lower rents; as Aaron Pratt has noted, 'he began publishing books more regularly during 1565, and stayed at his Conduit

location until at least 1575, when he stopped publishing'. During those ten years, he made continuous investments in the category of entertainment, and printed no fewer than eight plays. See Pratt, p. 72.

- 61 Voet, II, 298; Shrank, p. 72.
- 62 Desiderius Erasmus, *Flores aliquot sententiarum ex variis collecti scriptoribus*, trans. by Richard Taverner (1540, STC 10445), t. p.
- 63 Erasmus, sig. B3<sup>v</sup>.
- 64 Bennett, *English Books and Readers, 1475–1557*, p. 218.
- 65 See Chapter 2, p. 89.
- 66 John Bale, *The second part of the Image of both churches*, in *The image of bothe churches*, ([1545?], STC 1296.5), sigs A3<sup>r</sup>–A3<sup>v</sup>. This book was printed in two parts, each with its own title-page, register, and pagination. The attack on printers occurs in this, the earliest edition, and is repeated in subsequent editions.
- 67 Bale, *The second part of the Image of both churches*, sig. A3<sup>v</sup>.
- 68 By 'authorial' I mean written by the author of the play proper and can be identified as such in one of three ways: title, signature, and/or voice. In addition to these ten editions, the second edition of *Gorboduc* contains a letter from 'The P. to the Reader'. Publishers' prefaces were extremely uncommon in English books from this period, and totally unprecedented in dramatic publications. For further discussion of the prefatory matter in the 1570 edition of *Gorboduc*, see Chapter 2, pp. 89–91; I return to 'The P. to the Reader' below. See pp. 122, 126–27.
- 69 David M. Bergeron, 'Invariant Paratexts in English Dramatic Texts', *Rennaissance Papers*, 2 (2006), 121–36. See also Chapter 2, p. 72.
- 70 See pp. 84–93.
- 71 *Oedipus*, sig. A7<sup>v</sup>.
- 72 *Oedipus*, sig. A3<sup>v</sup>.
- 73 *Oedipus*, sigs A3<sup>r</sup>, A4<sup>f</sup>.
- 74 J. W. Saunders, 'The Stigma of Print: A Note on the Social Bases of Tudor Poetry', *Essays in Criticism*, 1 (1951), 139–64 (147).
- 75 Neville is the only translator to have revised his play extensively for the collected edition, apparently on stylistic grounds. See E. M. Spearing, *The Elizabethan Translations of Seneca's Tragedies* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1912), pp. 20–29; E. M. Spearing, 'Alexander Neville's Translation of Seneca's *Oedipus*', *Modern Language Review*, 15 (1920), 359–63.
- 76 See Chapter 2, pp. 88–89.
- 77 O1 and O2 *Troas*, sigs [A]3<sup>v</sup>–[A]4<sup>f</sup>. I here follow the spelling of O1, which differs slightly in O2. The same passage appears at sigs A3<sup>v</sup>–A4<sup>f</sup> in O3.
- 78 The recent publication of Brian Vickers's *The One King Lear* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), which argues against the textual and material evidence of the quarto and folio editions of the play for a single authorial text, is testimony to the persistence of such views.
- 79 *Thyestes*, sig. 7<sup>v</sup>. The Grypius edition was edited by Ludovico Carione and was printed by Sebastian Gryphius at Lyons in multiple editions from 1536 (USTC 157162). Aldus Manutius died in 1515, but his wife and her father continued the Venice press he had made famous; they issued an edition of Seneca's tragedies edited by Jerome Avantius (USTC 855885). The reference to 'Colineus' is less clear. Although there is no mention of an edition of Seneca's tragedies in the standard bibliography of his works, it is possible that Heywood is referring to Simon de Colines, a sixteenth-century French printer who issued many editions of classical authors, including other dramatists like Plautus and Terence. However, it is equally plausible that Heywood invented 'Colineus' to obscure his exclusive debt to Gryphius.

- See Henry de Vocht, *Jasper Heywood and His Translations of Seneca's Troas, Thyestes, and Hercules Furens* (Louvain: Uystpruyst, 1913), p. 339; and Philippe Renouard, *Bibliographie des éditions de Simon de Colines, 1520–1546* (Paris: Paul, Huard, and Guillemin, 1894).
- 80 Lucius Annæus Seneca, 'Thyestes': *Translated by Jasper Heywood (1560)*, ed. by Joost Daalder (London: Ernest Benn; New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), p. 86. See also John O'Keefe, 'An Analysis of Jasper Heywood's Translations of *Troas, Thyestes, and Hercules Furens*', unpublished PhD dissertation (University of Chicago, 1974), pp. 43–53.
- 81 *Thyestes*, sig. ♀1<sup>r</sup>.
- 82 *Thyestes*, sig. ♀1<sup>r</sup>.
- 83 *Thyestes*, sigs ♀1<sup>r</sup>–♀1<sup>v</sup>.
- 84 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, in *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas*, ed. by Michèle Barrett (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 76. My attention was drawn to this phrase by the title of Helen Smith's book, *Grossly Material Things: Women and Book Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
- 85 *Theyestes*, sigs ♀1<sup>r</sup>–♀1<sup>v</sup>.
- 86 Greg, 1, 73–74. The play is perhaps best known as the primary source for *Measure for Measure*.
- 87 George Whetstone, *Promos and Cassandra* (1578, STC 25347), sig. [A]3<sup>v</sup>.
- 88 *Promos and Cassandra*, sig. [A]3<sup>v</sup>. See Chapter 2, n. 83.
- 89 *Promos and Cassandra*, sig. [A]3<sup>v</sup>.
- 90 Sonia Massai, 'Editorial Pledges in Early Modern Dramatic Paratexts', in *Renaissance Paratexts*, ed. by Helen Smith and Louise Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 91–106 (p. 93).
- 91 William Baldwin, *A maruelous hystory intitulede, Beware the cat* (1570, STC 1244), sig. A5<sup>v</sup>. For a discussion of this passage, see Elizabeth Evenden, *Patents, Pictures and Patronage: John Day and the Tudor Book Trade* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 64.
- 92 *Promos and Cassandra*, sig. [A]3<sup>v</sup>.
- 93 Kirk Melnikoff, 'Richard Jones (fl. 1564–1613): Elizabethan Printer, Bookseller and Publisher', *Analytical & Enumerative Bibliography*, 12 (2001), 153–84 (160).
- 94 David M. Bergeron, *Textual Patronage in English Drama, 1570–1640* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 34.
- 95 The term 'textual fall' is Sonia Massai's. See Massai, p. 93.
- 96 For an account of the legal history of these terms and their applicability to the publication of drama, see Blayney 'Publication of Playbooks', pp. 396–404.
- 97 Marcy North, 'Ignoto in the Age of Print: The Manipulation of Anonymity in Early Modern England', *Studies in Philology*, 91 (1994), 390–416 (393). Further evidence of the flexibility of early modern attribution conventions is testified in John Horden's 1980 revision of Halkett and Laing's *Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous Publications in the English Language, 1475–1640*, 3rd edn, rev. by John Horden (Harlow and London: Longman, 1980). As North has noted, the original editors 'defined anonymity as the absence of a full name on the title page, but it is clear from the great number of corrections Horden has made that this was not the opinion of the book producers of the early modern period and it should not form the modern scholar's definition of anonymity'. See North, 'Ignoto in the Age of Print', p. 393n7.
- 98 Since fourteen early printed playbooks lack title-pages, this analysis is based on the seventy-eight early playbooks with title-pages intact.
- 99 Calculations for percentages up to and including plays printed in 1576 account for all ninety-two early printed plays and all twenty-nine editions of

- quasi-dramatic texts. The statistic for 1577–1616 is for illustrative purposes only, and is based on an analysis of single-play playbooks listed in DEEP.
- 100 Farmer and Lesser, 'Vile Arts', 82. See also, Saeger and Fassler.
- 101 Brooks, 'Dramatic Authorship', p. 83.
- 102 'Compile, v.', 2. a. and 3., *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, December 2016) <[www.oed.com/view/Entry/37595](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/37595)> [accessed 8 March 2017]. It is this latter sense of the word that Shakespeare intends when he writes 'be most proud of that which I compile' in Sonnet 78.
- 103 See, for instance, Stephen Partridge, "'The Makere of the Boke", Chaucer's *Retraction* and the Author as Scribe and Compiler', in *Author, Reader, Book: Medieval Authorship in Theory and Practice*, ed. by Stephen Partridge and Erik Kwakkel (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2012), pp. 106–53.
- 104 In contrast, 'made by' is overwhelmingly the most common descriptor to occur on the title-pages of editions of quasi-dramatic texts, occurring no fewer than five times. Others include 'interpreted by' (one instance) and 'compiled by' (one instance).
- 105 *Gentleness and Nobility*, sig. C4<sup>v</sup>.
- 106 This playbook also contains a frontispiece woodcut illustration of 'I H' or 'John Heywood'. While attribution of the play has tended to rely upon the colophon alone, Maura Giles-Watson has recently argued that taken together, the portrait and colophon imply *Gentleness and Nobility* as collaboration between the two men. See Maura Giles-Watson, 'John Rastell's London Stage: Reconstructing Repertory and Collaborative Practice', *Early Theatre*, 16 (2013), 171–84.
- 107 O2 *Gorboduc*, sig. A2<sup>r</sup>.
- 108 These examples are taken, in order, from the following title-pages: *Troas* (all three editions); *Mary Magdalene* (both variants); *The Glass of Government* (both issues); *Gammer Gurton's Needle*; *Fulgens and Lucrece*; *Magnificence*; *Damon and Pithias*; *Thyestes*; *Hercules Furens*; *Medea*; and *The Disobedient Child*.
- 109 Farmer and Lesser, 'Vile Arts', p. 80.
- 110 Brooks, 'Dramatic Authorship', p. 83.
- 111 Marcy L. North, *The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 67.
- 112 North, *Anonymous Renaissance*, p. 74.
- 113 North, *Anonymous Renaissance*, p. 70; *Oedipus*, sig. A8<sup>r</sup>.
- 114 *An Interlude of Vice (Horestes)*, sig. E4<sup>v</sup>.
- 115 *Octavia* is identified as the work of 'T. N. Student in Cambridge'; *Free Will* is labelled 'by F. N. B'; *The Interlude of Minds* was 'Set forth by HN, and by him newly perused and amended'; *Appius and Virginia* is 'by R. B'; and *Gammer Gurton's Needle* is named as the work of 'M. S. of Art'. All of these attributions occur on the title-page.
- 116 See Wiggins for recent examples of this tendency.
- 117 North, *Anonymous Renaissance*, p. 69.
- 118 Since the title-page remains the most common site of attribution, I have excluded from this count any books with no extant title-page.
- 119 North, *Anonymous Renaissance*, p. 14.
- 120 Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 42.
- 121 The final folio of the Digby *Killing of the Children* declares that 'Jhon Parfre ded wryte thys booke' and the monogram 'R C' appears on the final folio of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*.
- 122 Q1 *Lusty Juventus*, sig. E2<sup>v</sup>. A similar phrase – 'qd. Iohn Phillip' – occurs at sig. II<sup>v</sup> of *Patient and Meek Grissel*. It is worth noting that these four

- playbooks are the work of different stationers. A more abbreviated version of the phrase, in which the letter ‘q’ stands in for the idea of the text as spoken by the author, is found at the end of a further five playbooks: *An Interlude of Vice (Horestes)*; Q1 and Q2 *Like Will to Like*; Q3 *The Four P’s*; and *Cambises* – three of which were printed by John Allde.
- 123 This presentational choice is probably Allde’s, but since Heywood did not die until around 1580 it is plausible – if unlikely – that he may have been involved in the publication of this edition.
- 124 O1 and Q2 *Three Laws*, sig. G4<sup>r</sup> and sig. L3<sup>r</sup>; *Gods Promises*, sig. E4<sup>v</sup>; *The Temptation of Our Lord*, sig. E4<sup>v</sup>; *An Interlude of Vice (Horestes)*, sig. E4<sup>v</sup>; Q1 and Q2 *Like Will to Like*, sig. F1<sup>v</sup>; *Meek and Patient Grissel*, sig. I1<sup>v</sup>; and *Cambises*, sig. F3<sup>r</sup>.
- 125 Variants of the phrase ‘newly imprinted’ occur on the title-pages of seventeen single-play playbooks printed between 1559 and 1576. It is a phrase that has been much discussed in critical accounts of dramatic title-pages. See Peter Berek, ‘The Market for Playbooks and the Development of the Reading Public’, *Philological Quarterly*, 91 (2012), 151–84; Egan, pp. 92–110; and Famer and Lesser, ‘Vile Arts’.
- 126 O1 and O2 *Troas*, sig. [A]2<sup>r</sup>, epistle headed, ‘Iasper Heywood <...> wisheth helth | welth, honour, | & felicitie’ (the same heading is on sig. A2<sup>r</sup> in O3); *Thyestes*, sig. \*2<sup>r</sup>, epistle headed, ‘Iasper Heywood wyseth | health with encrease of | honour and | vertue’; *Hercules Furens*, sig. A1<sup>v</sup>, epistle headed ‘Jasper Heywood wissheth | prosperous health with | encrease of honour and | vertue’; *Oedipus*, sigs A3<sup>r</sup>, A4<sup>v</sup>, and A8<sup>r</sup>, epistle headed ‘Alexander | Neule wyseth | Health: with | encrease of honor’, and signed ‘your Honours to command. | Alexander Neule’, preface signed ‘A N’; *Agamemnon*, sigs A2<sup>r</sup>, A3<sup>r</sup>, epistle headed ‘John Studley, | wisheth longe lyfe, | with in-crease of | honour’, and signed ‘your honours to commaund, | John Studley’; *Medea*, sigs [A]2<sup>r</sup>, [A]2<sup>v</sup>, epistle headed ‘Iohn Studley | wisheth healtie, with | encrease of Honor’, and signed ‘Your Honours to commaunde, Iohn Studley’; *Octavia*, sig. A3<sup>r</sup>, epistle headed ‘T. N wisheth health, with in-crease of | honor and vertue’; and *Free-Will*, sig. \*2<sup>v</sup>, epistle signed ‘Your Ladyships for euer to | commaunde. H. C.’. Greg 38a<sup>iii</sup>, a variant of Q1a *The Glass of Government* is also attributed multiple times. An unsigned, inserted leaf contains an epistle to Sir Owen Hopton headed ‘George Gascoigne Esquire, wisheth long life’, which is signed ‘G. Gascoigne’.
- 127 Brooks, *From Playhouse to Printing House*, p. 27.
- 128 O1 *Gorboduc*, sig. A2<sup>r</sup>.
- 129 North, *Anonymous Renaissance*, p. 67.
- 130 Laurie E. Maguire, ‘The Craft of Printing (1600)’, in *A Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. by David Scott Kastan (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 434–49 (p. 435).
- 131 It is in this role, as printer-publisher, that Day draws a distinction between his own, careful, diligent practice, and that of ‘one W. G.’ who printed an ‘exceedingly corrupted’ edition ‘about v. yeares past’. Referring to William Griffith by his initials alone, Day introduces the kind of naming game more often associated with the attribution of authorship.
- 132 Exceptions are: Lotte Hellinga, ‘“Less than the Whole Truth”: False Statements in 15th-Century Colophons’, in *Fakes and Frauds: Varieties of Deception in Print and Manuscript*, ed. by Robin Myers and Michael Harris (Winchester: St Paul’s Bibliographies, 1989), pp. 1–27; M. A. Shaaber, ‘The Meaning of the Imprint in Early Printed Books’, *The Library*, 4th ser., 24 (1943–44), 120–41; and, Helen Smith, ‘“Imprinted by Simeon Such a Signe”’: Reading Early Modern Imprints’, in *Renaissance Paratexts*, pp. 17–33.
- 133 Hellinga, p. 4.

- 134 This statistic is roughly the same for the quasi-dramatic texts listed in Wiggins.
- 135 If we turn to quasi-dramatic items, the earliest dated imprint is somewhat earlier – *A Pretty Complaint of Peace* ([1538?]) – though there are only eight further examples; title-page imprints were clearly less common in dialogues and other quasi-dramatic materials of this sort.
- 136 Playbooks that lack title-pages have been discounted from these tallies.
- 137 Again, I discount playbooks that do not survive in fully extant editions. I also do not count *An Interlude of Minds*, which provides the author's initials but has neither colophon nor imprint.
- 138 In their 1995 essay, Seager and Fassler examine title-page attributions as an indicator of literary status. In their 2000 essay, Farmer and Lesser suggest that 'Saeger and Fassler's bifurcated approach cannot address how authorship functioned within the full complexity of publishers' marketing strategies', and they therefore provide a revised analysis based on attribution of theatres, attributions of authorial status, and Latin. Neither essay considers the importance of imprints. Saeger and Fassler ignore pre-playhouse playbooks altogether, and while Farmer and Lesser provide a cursory examination, their interest and focus lies clearly in the later period. For the quotation, see Farmer and Lesser, 'Vile Arts', 80.
- 139 On the idea of the primacy of the publisher over the author on early modern title-pages, see Brooks, *Playhouse to Printing House*, pp. 10, 14–65.
- 140 *Thersites*, sig. E2<sup>f</sup>.
- 141 Blayney, II, 795.
- 142 In contrast, between 1566 and 1592, John Charlewood printed no fewer than six plays.
- 143 As Blayney reminds us, 'retail customers do not usually buy books from printing houses'. Blayney, I, 36.
- 144 The second edition lacks all after sig. F3, but since it agrees page for page with the third and fourth editions, it is likely it misses only sig. F4.
- 145 Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 9. See also Blayney, I, 160–73.
- 146 A. W. Reed, 'The Regulation of the Book Trade before the Proclamation of 1538', *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, 15 (1918), 157–84.
- 147 *The kynges most royall maiestie being enfourmed*, [etc. Prohibiting unlicensed importation and printing of books] (1538, STC 7790). On the difficulty in and controversy surrounding the interpretation of this proclamation, see Blayney, I, 480–87.
- 148 O1 and O2 *Troas*, sig. F3<sup>v</sup>.
- 149 John Bidwell, 'French Paper in English Books', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume IV, 1557–1695*, ed. by John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie with the assistance of Maureen Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 583–601 (p. 585). For further consideration of the trade associations of printers' signs, see David Garrioch, 'House Names, Shop Signs, and Social Organization in Western European Cities, 1500–1900', *Urban History*, 21 (1994), 20–48; Smith, 'Reading Early Modern Imprints', pp. 25–29; and Yu-Chiao Wang, 'The Image of St George and the Dragon: Promoting Books and Book Producers in Pre-Reformation England', *The Library*, 7th ser., 5 (2004), 370–401.
- 150 Farmer and Lesser, 'Vile Arts', p. 101.
- 151 Farmer and Lesser, 'Vile Arts', p. 99.
- 152 Greg, IV, clxiii.
- 153 Smith, 'Reading Early Modern Imprints', p. 20.
- 154 On the basis of external evidence, Greg, the STC, and Blayney have ascribed separate publishers for a further nine editions. Here, I do not count

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these examples since I am interested largely in the *legibility* of any such arrangements within the printed pages of early playbooks.

- 155 The preliminaries and leaf N1 exist in two states. The later issue (Q1b) contains an errata list below the colophon on sig. N1<sup>v</sup>. Some copies with this later setting of leaf N1 also contain a new dedicatory epistle to Sir Owen Hopton inserted after the title leaf at sig. A2+1<sup>r</sup>. Greg identified this as a separate issue – 38a(iii) – but since it does not have a separate STC entry, I treat it along with other copies of Q1b.
- 156 Q1a *The Glass of Government*, sig. N1<sup>v</sup>.
- 157 Q1a *The Glass of Government*, sig. N1<sup>v</sup>.
- 158 Blayney, I, 36.
- 159 Smith, 'Reading Early Modern Imprints', p. 23.
- 160 Blayney, 'Publication of Playbooks', pp. 396–97.
- 161 On this development, see Richard Dutton, *Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of Renaissance Drama* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), pp. 27–30.
- 162 See Dennis B. Woodfield, *Surreptitious Printing in England, 1550–1640* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1973).
- 163 O1 *Three Laws*, sig. G4<sup>r</sup>.
- 164 Hellinga, p. 4.
- 165 Hellinga, p. 4.
- 166 Smith, 'Reading Early Modern Imprints', p. 29.

## 4 Reading early printed drama

In ‘The Translator to the Reader’ that prefaces Francesco Negri da Bassano’s *Free-Will*, Henry Cheeke informs the reader that ‘*the | more diligently thou | dost peruse this boke, | the greater pleasure | thou shalt reape of | thy trauaile*’.<sup>1</sup> Greater readerly effort will be repaid with greater enjoyment, and for Cheeke, to read diligently means explicitly to mark and annotate:

*there | be many things pretily touched in this | Tragedie, whiche without deliberate | reading wil slightly be passed ouer, and | so neither the wittie deuise of the auc- | thour wel conceiued, nor the good fruit | of the booke profitably geathered. I am | therefore to warne thee, that thou doo not onely reade, but diligently marke, | and blame not the writer, where thou | doest eyther misconceiue hym, or not || perfectly vnderstande hym, but enter | into deeper consyderation, and so | attayne to the true meanyng.*<sup>2</sup>

Cheeke requires that the reader read deliberately, diligently marking as he or she goes; in doing so, he or she may learn the author’s intentions and attain the text’s ‘true meanyng’. In 1573, when *Free-Will* was printed, Cheeke’s advice was hardly remarkable. At its core, printing is a collaborative craft, and ever since the incunable period, when printers frequently left space for hand-rubrication, newly printed books were considered unfinished books, ready for completion at the hands of others: rubricators, illustrators, binders, owners, and other readers. That books were deemed essentially incomplete upon leaving the printing press is a mainstay of scholarship on early modern books and their reception, but as Sonia Massai has argued, ‘even recent scholars who regard the early modern printed text as fluid and unstable normally stop short of grasping the extent to which such instability was due to the fact that its perfection was regarded as an open-ended process’.<sup>3</sup> The inclusion of a printed list of ‘Faultes escaped in the Printing’ on the final verso of Negri’s play contributes to this process of perfection and reinforces Cheeke’s prefatory invitation to ‘diligently marke’ up the text. Comprising a short list of errors, presumably noticed by Cheeke or his

publisher, Richard Jugge, only after the text had been printed, the ‘Faultes escaped’ is not designed to be exhaustive, but rather offers a model of reading – careful, attentive, precise – that activates the translator’s advice to read deliberately and encourages the reader to adopt similar practices of correction in his or her own reading of the work<sup>4</sup> (Figure 4.1).

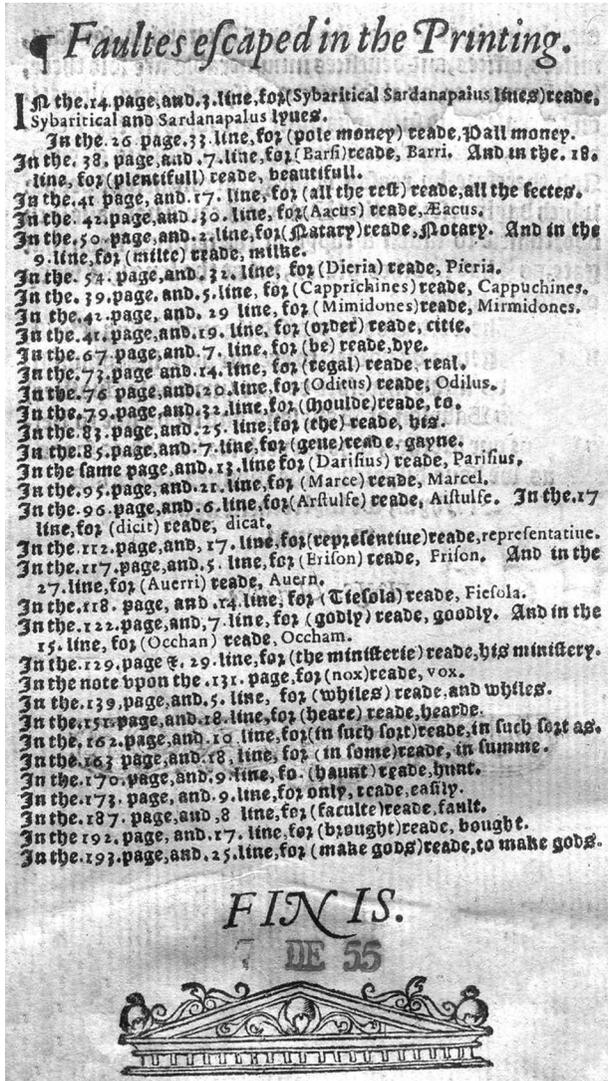


Figure 4.1 Francesco Negri da Bassano, *Free-Will*, trans. by Henry Cheeke ([Richard Jugge, 1573?], STC 18419), sig. Dd2<sup>v</sup>. London, British Library, 4256.b.1.

The corrections mainly consist of typographic errors – ‘for (Sybaritical Sardanapalus lines) reade, | Sybaritical and Sardanapalus lyues’ – but in at least one instance an improved reading is suggested: ‘for (plentiful) reade, beautifull’.<sup>5</sup> According to the STC, *Free-Will* is extant in eight copies in libraries across North America and Great Britain. While all of the six that I have examined show signs of use, none incorporate the corrections suggested by the printed errata list, and only one has been subjected to the kind of careful scholarly attention prescribed by Cheeke in his address to the reader.<sup>6</sup> It is one thing to encourage deliberate or diligent engagement, but actual patterns of use tend to be far from predictable.

In the first two chapters of this book, I focused on the way paratextual apparatus was used by agents of the press to try and shape readerly response, how prefatory paratexts were deployed by printers, publishers, and sometimes authors to construct an ideal, imagined, or implied reader. But, as Roger Chartier reminds us, ‘reading is not always inscribed in the text with no conceivable gap between the meaning assigned to it (by its author, by custom, by criticism, and so forth) and the interpretation that its readers might make of it’.<sup>7</sup> Implied readers behave differently to real readers, and in this chapter and the conclusion I turn to a range of contemporary materials – primarily extant copies of the plays themselves, but also early modern book-lists, manuscript miscellanies, and commonplace books – for evidence of actual, historical, or empirical use. It is precisely because actual patterns of use are so unruly – so resistant to scholarly order – that this chapter adopts the approach recommended by Sandra Hindman and offers ‘a collection of microhistories’ – the stories of individual users and their idiosyncratic habits – as the foundation on which a new history of reading early printed drama might be built.<sup>8</sup>

Plays printed before the opening of the theatres survive in a little fewer than 300 copies, and I have examined 220 of them, including a number of copies not accounted for by the STC.<sup>9</sup> I have also surveyed a further fifty-three copies of the quasi-dramatic texts listed in Wiggins from the same period. The marks found in these books form the basis for the history of reading that is offered in this chapter, but as William B. Sherman has noted, ‘[m]arginalia are not, of course, the only sources of evidence for the encounters of readers and writers, either inside or outside the covers of individual volumes’.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, I am also interested in other, extra-textual evidence of play-book use among early moderns, and this chapter also considers some sixteenth-century book-lists that feature plays. Book-lists were produced for various reasons – for probate, debt, or in response to some other more personal whim – and here, I discuss five lists that catalogue the books owned by five men between 1550 and 1600. While plays do not form a significant proportion of the books mentioned, the fact

they occur at all is striking; clearly, not all men regarded drama as 'riff-raffes' or 'baggage books', and unlike Thomas Bodley, some were even willing to admit them into their libraries.<sup>11</sup> However, not all books that are owned are read, and the entry of playbooks into book-lists, though undoubtedly part of their sociocultural history, cannot answer all questions about the way such books were used. Indeed, one of the more striking features of early modern book-lists – and in this respect, they are not unlike modern library catalogues – is their capacity to reimagine books as finite, finished, and perfected, when in reality, many books were abject in their materiality, bound together for purposes of both taste and survival. Listing each book as a separate entry, these inventories perform a kind of figurative dismemberment, presaging the archetypal modern experience of early playbooks bound as single volumes. But each early printed play was typically bought unbound, and as such was an invitation to the consumer to custom his or her own compiled volume. While most attempts to reconstruct early modern reading practices have focused on the legible marks left by early readers and other users within the pages of books, such customised volumes provide evidence of how early moderns made sense of and derived meaning from the books that they owned, and their construction should therefore be regarded as an act of reading. Even in those many cases where such volumes have been dismembered, it is often still possible to trace the work of early compilers and hypothetically reconstitute such volumes as they originally circulated. This chapter therefore moves from a discussion of sixteenth-century book inventories to consider the place of plays within early modern *Sammelbände*. What do such radically bespoke volumes reveal about the ways that early printed plays were read and used by their earliest owners?

In more than one instance, it is possible to trace the work of one or more annotating hands across each of the works that make up these volumes, and the predominant purpose of this chapter is to survey some of the marks left by early readers of printed plays in order to sketch out some of the uses to which these books were put. In the complex circuit of production and consumption of early printed plays, just how willing were readers and other users to follow the cues set out on title-pages and among other front matter, and use these books as the author or publisher seems to have intended? Answers to questions such as these depend on the ability to identify, decipher, and analyse the available evidence, and as more than one critic has noted, the study of early modern marginalia is beset with a range of interpretive problems. Consequently, this chapter begins by situating the study of readers' marks within the context of reading as a methodology.

## Historicising the reading of drama

All libraries, all collections of books, tell their own stories, and the purpose of any history of reading is to allow those stories to be heard. But the tools for uncovering a history of reading drama are inherently flawed. First, there are problems of definition. What is reading? What is a reader? And what counts as evidence of reading? In recent years, as scholars have turned from the implied reader of reader-response theory to consider the altogether less predictable habits of real or actual readers, the study of marginalia has become the gold standard for any account of early modern reading practices. But such studies can only ever account for the kinds of readers who were minded to leave marks in the books that they read or owned. What about other, more elusive readers? How do we account for readers who did not leave their mark, readers who did not read with a pen in hand?<sup>12</sup> Focusing only on annotated copies, studies of marginalia cannot help but write out or gloss over certain kinds of readers and reading experiences from the histories they recount. Moreover, as Sherman has noted, 'generalizations about Renaissance marginalia are hard to come by [because] the nature of marginalia itself makes them hard to produce'.<sup>13</sup> In the case of early printed drama, if we use the conservative estimate of 500 copies per run, then known extant copies of plays and other quasi-dramatic materials amount to slightly less than one per cent of all the copies originally printed; presumably many lost copies contained marginalia or other signs of use that are now totally irretrievable. Indeed, use is often an explanation for loss. Obviously, any history of reading can only accommodate the evidence that survives, but in addition to this huge corpus of lost copies, there are also numerous copies that have been altered at the hands of later owners and collectors in ways that obliterate earlier signs of use. As Zachary Lesser has lamented, 'the archive of marked books has been largely determined by historical accident and by the policies of collectors and librarians who may have preserved, bleached, or cropped the margins of their books'.<sup>14</sup> Many of the playbooks in the Huntington Library's holdings, for instance, are not only washed but also inlaid, reflecting the habits of an earlier collector, the great eighteenth-century Shakespearean actor John Philip Kemble.<sup>15</sup> So while Henry Huntington did not express a personal antipathy to marginalia, his acquisition in the early twentieth century of libraries that adopted a policy of destroying manuscript annotations means that 'other (more randomly assembled) collections are likely to have a higher proportion of annotated books'.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, any statistical analysis of marginalia is doomed to be partial, more a reflection of the history of a particular library than an overview of early reading and use.

Today when we read, we are encouraged not to leave any trace. It is an attitude that has its origins in the practices of eighteenth- and

nineteenth-century gentleman-collectors who, for the first time, began to see marginalia as a way of defacing rather than enhancing its value.<sup>17</sup> Stephen Orgel has suggested:

The desire for pristine books, unmediated by use or even prior possession, relates to the increasing centrality of the author in the way we have, until very recently, construed the idea of the book – the book, for us, has been the author’s not the reader’s.<sup>18</sup>

Certainly, the history of the destruction of marginalia seems to run parallel to the development of ideas about intellectual property and their codification in copyright law.<sup>19</sup> However, while recent scholarship has come to prize the kinds of marks that until recently were seen as detrimental to a book’s value, the continued prevalence of author-centric approaches to early modern literature has meant that most studies of early marginalia have tended to focus on either remarkable readers or remarkable books.<sup>20</sup> Despite the overwhelmingly collaborative nature of early modern dramatic composition and performance, this point is no less true for drama-specific studies. Typical of the first of these approaches were the pioneering studies by Sherman and Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, which examined the marginalia of two known and copious annotators of texts: the Elizabethan polymaths John Dee and Gabriel Harvey.<sup>21</sup> Today, the legacy of their work can be seen in the on-going projects of the Centre for Editing Lives and Letters (CELL), in particular its *Archaeology of Reading* project, carried out in collaboration with John Hopkins University and Princeton University:

While the body of early modern scholarship of the history of reading practices has burgeoned during the past several decades [...] as a collective body of knowledge the history of reading has nonetheless remained limited to isolated, partial, and impressionistic studies of single texts read by single annotators. [...] By creating a corpus of important and representative annotated texts with searchable transcriptions and translations, we can begin to compare and fully analyze early modern reading, and place that mass of research material within a broader historical context. [...] To facilitate this approach to these materials, the *Archaeology of Reading* team has elected to focus on a distinct and roughly contemporary dyad of clearly identified early modern readers: Gabriel Harvey and John Dee.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the acknowledgement that traditional approaches to the study of reading have tended to treat, in isolation, the annotations found in single texts or by single annotators, the *Archaeology of Reading* project prioritises known readers, specifically the two ‘uncommon’ men whose annotations and annotating habits have already been much studied.

In fact, the reason the ‘collective body of knowledge’ about early modern reading has ‘remained limited to isolated, partial, and impressionistic studies’ is because all traces of reading actively resist the ‘empirical, comparative, and systematic’ approaches championed by the *Archaeology of Reading* project; transcriptions and translations of Dee’s annotations may reveal something – though surely not everything – about the ways that he read and otherwise used his books, but they will tell us little about the uses to which other early moderns put their books.<sup>23</sup> If nothing else, reading is always and inevitably *unsystematic*. That it is traceable at all is not only a consequence of serendipitous survival but also a reflection of personal taste and whim.

A different set of interpretive problems pertains to studies that have focused on multiple copies of works by a single, known author. In her work on Renaissance readers of Chaucer, for instance, Alison Wiggins not only claims to draw out themes that characterise the signs of use in printed copies of Chaucer, but also to tease out larger patterns across a wider range of books and readers.<sup>24</sup> Her detailed survey provides a brilliantly detailed account of the signs of use in fifty-four early printed copies of Chaucer, but the nature of the material makes generalisations about larger patterns next to impossible. So, if the tendency of single-annotator studies is to project wider trends from a small and largely atypical sample, then studies that adopt a copy-census approach incline towards the view that all books are susceptible to the same forms of use. But in the sixteenth century, ‘printed books were primarily understood as instrumental, directing their readers and users, within particular fields of practice or knowledge, toward some more or less practical end’.<sup>25</sup> Reading poetry is not the same as reading law or medicine, just as reading a large, heavy book is not the same as reading a small, portable one. Alison Wiggins’s discussion of the marginalia and readers’ marks in Renaissance printed copies of Chaucer – folio editions of the *Works* by William Thynne, John Stow, and Thomas Speght – might contribute to our understanding of the canon of Chaucer reception, but it does not *therefore* shed light on early modern approaches to other categories of text. At the same time, the texts at the heart of most copy-census studies – Chaucer’s *Works*, Nicolaus Copernicus’s *Revolutions*, the Shakespeare First Folio, and Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia* – tend to reflect modern habits and tastes, books that we valorise today as having particular import: old or rare books, great works of English literature, and landmarks of science.<sup>26</sup> But, as David Pearson has warned, ‘if we want to understand the ways in which people received and responded to books in the past, we should not start by overlaying a distorting lens of twenty-first-century values as to which books are more interesting than others’.<sup>27</sup>

This chapter therefore adopts a slightly different approach. Looking at a range of evidence that includes book-lists and *Sammelbände* as well

as marginalia, it offers a new history of reading early printed drama. Rather than focusing on the copies of works by a specific author or the books owned by a particular individual, it is concerned with an entire category of text: the pre-playhouse play. It therefore attends to the signs of use in all playbooks and quasi-dramatic texts printed before the opening of permanent playhouses in London in the 1570s. I consciously adopt the term ‘use’ because it is essential to realise that while not all readers left marks, not all marks indicate reading. As Sherman cautions:

One of the most pervasive – and *problematic* – features of Renaissance marginalia is that by no means all of the notes left behind by readers engage directly with the text they accompany, and more have to do with the life of the reader than the life of the text.<sup>28</sup>

But by regarding this feature of early modern marginalia as problematic – by lamenting the prevalence of marks of ownership over marks of more active or engaged use – Sherman tacitly gives preference to a small and rather select group of users, namely those kinds of readers who were most likely to subject their books to sustained scholarly annotation: privileged users, typically university-educated men. By instead attending to and celebrating the full range of evidence – from erudite annotations to marks of ownership, scribbles and doodles to ink spots and blotches – this chapter seeks to give voice to playbook readers of all kinds, from great men to anonymous or otherwise invisible users of both sexes. It is a model of enquiry similar to that adopted by Heidi Brayman Hackel in her landmark study of the practices and representations of a wide range of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English readers, in which she champions early modern books for their ability to carry not just information, but also relationships.<sup>29</sup> Noting that early modern readers’ handwritten marks generally fall into three classes – active reading (diectics, underlining, summaries, cross references, queries), marks of ownership (signatures, shelf marks, proprietary verses), and marks of recording (debts, marriages, births, accounts) – she has suggested that books performed different roles for different readers: ‘as intellectual process, as valued object, and as available paper’.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, since owners and other users might use a single book in all three of these ways, and because books frequently capture the marks of more than one user in ways that suggest that once marked a book was more likely to sustain further marking, each copy not only tells its own story, but also illustrates the extent to which those stories have been shaped by the hands through which they have passed. If nothing else then, a history of reading is a history of touch, and while there will always be patterns of use that remain irrecoverable – either invisible, obscure, or intractable – it is clear that the hands that held early printed playbooks did more with them than has previously been allowed. So, while modern critical studies tend to

dismiss early and mid-Tudor playbooks as aids for amateur production, the signs of use preserved within their pages are testament to a much wider range of activities. There are examples of active reading in the form of annotations and glosses, underlining, bracing and other forms of taking note, and careful corrections to the text; marks of ownership of all kinds, including both dated and dateable signatures, multiple and occasionally contested *ex libris*, as well as both standard and original formulae for book curses; doodles representing people and animals; and pen trials reflecting a range of interests from typeface to printers' marks. One heavily annotated book reveals one reader radically rewriting and repurposing the text of a play for his own ends; another, though unannotated, is marked by the flowers that have been carefully interleaved between its pages.<sup>31</sup> As something to be read, something to be cherished, an 'external memory', or storehouse for thoughts, ideas, and even objects, playbooks clearly led multiple lives, and it is to these that I now turn.<sup>32</sup>

### Early printed playbooks in book-lists of private libraries

The 1551 probate inventory of Hugh Benyngworth, Fellow of Jesus College Cambridge, includes a list of sixty-eight books, mostly theological works in Latin, ranging from a relatively valuable copy of Jean Calvin's *Comentarii in quatuor Pauli epistolas* (1548, USTC 45001) appraised at 6s. 8d., to numerous smaller books valued at 2d. At the end of the book-list, entered as item twenty-seven, are 'xxi ynglysshe bookes bownde in parchment'.<sup>33</sup> The identities of these twenty-one books are unknown and unknowable, but appraised collectively at 2s. 6d., their individual value of a little more than a penny apiece suggests that they must have comprised small or otherwise ephemeral pieces: tracts, dialogues, pamphlets, perhaps even plays. Collective entries such as these are common in probate inventories; Alexandra Halasz has noted that 145 of the 200 inventories of Cambridge estates published by Elisabeth S. Leedham-Green 'include one or more entries of "additional books unnamed"', and a similar statistic pertains to the 166 Oxford inventories that are edited in Volumes II–VII of *PLRE*.<sup>34</sup> Halasz has further remarked that 'such entries often specify that the unnamed books are small format publications. In some inventories the number of quarto, octavo or duodecimo books unnamed equals or exceeds the named titles'.<sup>35</sup> From the point of view of the men who appraised goods for probate inventories, such small English books mattered very little, and this despite the fact that they often held the same value (around 1d.) as other, typically Latin books listed by title. The probate inventory of Paul Amcott, a contemporary of Benynworth's at Jesus, provides separate entries for ten Latin books worth 2d. or less, and two are valued at just a penny.<sup>36</sup> Since small vernacular items seem routinely to have been lumped together in this way, it is unsurprising that playbooks rarely turn up as individual items in early modern probate

inventories; their absence probably says less about patterns of ownership than it does about the habits of appraisers.

It has often been noted – and much lamented – that probate inventories and other evidence for the ownership of books (catalogues, wills, etc.) ‘lead us to wealthier, more confidently literate readers, and surviving lists tend to reflect the professional tastes of doctors, ministers, scholars and lawyers, whilst also privileging the university towns of Oxford and Cambridge’.<sup>37</sup> But it is worth remembering that such lists ‘could be and were manipulated by those who produced them’.<sup>38</sup> Far from ‘transparent texts’, probate inventories do not simply list and value the goods of the deceased, but also codify conventions for the presentation of such information in ways that inevitably reflect the concerns of the appraisers.<sup>39</sup> That he owned a number of ‘Enterludes and Commedies’ is in keeping with the tenor of the itemised list of books in the 1597 inventory of Richard Stonley’s library, which also features plays and other dramatic materials by George Gascoigne, Robert Greene, John Heywood, Jasper Heywood, and Francesco Negri de Bassano as separate items.<sup>40</sup> But the lumping together of a number of interludes and comedies as objects of little worth – their collective value of 8*d.* probably implies a number between four and eight – surely says more about the circumstances in which the inventory was made than it does the cultural value accorded by Stonley to his playbooks. Stonley was one of the four Tellers of the Exchequer of Receipt from 1554 until his death in 1600, and the inventory of his goods – which included over 400 books, but also diverse household items – was drawn up when he was convicted of embezzling more than £12,000 from the Crown. Imprisoned at the Fleet, Stonley had good reason to have his goods inventoried; to defray his huge debt he needed to sell off as much of his land and property as he could. Unlike a library catalogue – which in ordering a collection makes it more easily navigable – this inventory against debt seems disorganised, with books in both Latin and English jostling for space and position alongside all manner of household items, among them a chessboard, candlesticks, maps, perfume bottles, and a Turkish rug. But this lack of order is hardly surprising given the list’s primary function to accord value; items are listed room-by-room and reflect their location within the house at the time the inventory was taken. In his discussion of Stonley, Jason Scott-Warren notes that literary critics often overlook this point. ‘Leaving the material culture in them to historians of dress, food and domestic life’ they carve up such lists and requisition ‘the books for bibliographical and literary studies’.<sup>41</sup> But in many ways, the men responsible for drawing up the list of Stonley’s goods performed similar acts of purification in the way they itemised his property, singling out certain items for detailed description, while bundling others together under generic headings. Their agendas might differ, but sixteenth-century appraisers were as likely as twenty-first century critics to be guilty of bias or partiality.

It has been said of book-lists that where they fail to tell us ‘*how* things were read’, they allow insight into ‘*what* was read’.<sup>42</sup> But deciphering the ‘*what*’ of book-lists relies on interpretation; even when a title or author is listed, it is not always possible to deduce the edition referred to. And this is significant because the material form of a book can shape the horizons of a reader’s textual encounter. For instance, among the many theological works in Latin and English in the list of Stonley’s books is an entry for ‘Calvynes Instiutions in English’. Thomas Norton’s translation of *The institution of christian religion* was published in no fewer than seven editions between 1561 and 1587; a number of English abridgments were also printed in the same period.<sup>43</sup> From the description given in the inventory, it is impossible to say which of these editions Stonley owned, but they were all different: the first edition (1561, STC 4415) does not identify the translator on the title-page, is set in black letter type, and contains only limited paratextual apparatus; the third (1574, STC 4417) names Thomas Norton as the translator, includes a new preface by him ‘to the Reader’ in which he sets out the many faults he has corrected, and introduces, for the first time in an English translation, indexes by Antoine Reboul and Augustin Marlorat; the fourth (1578, STC 4418) abandons the black letter of earlier editions and is set in roman type. None of these alterations is insignificant and each would have affected Stonley’s experience of the text in ways I have outlined in the previous chapters. However, the phrasing of the inventory makes it impossible to determine which of these editions he owned. Similarly, the probate inventory of the Oxford student William Hurde made in 1551 contains among its twenty-one entries ‘a Terens’.<sup>44</sup> Richard Panofsky, who transcribed and edited the list for *PLRE*, has suggested that that scribes would have written ‘Terentius’ if this were a Latin edition, and has therefore determined that the work in question is most likely *Andria*, which is labelled on its title-page as ‘Terens in englysh’.<sup>45</sup> Since an earlier entry, ‘Terentius cum commento’, almost certainly refers to one of the many collected Latin editions with commentary, Panofsky’s conclusion seems reasonable. But even in those instances where positive identification is possible, it is worth remembering that owning a book is not the same as reading it: book-lists contain information about what was *owned* rather than what was *read*. It is with all these caveats in mind that I turn to the evidence of two further book-lists: an inventory of the goods of John Dudley, duke of Northumberland, dated 1550; and the probate inventory of John Glover, fellow of St. John’s College, Oxford, dated 1574.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Additional MS C.94 is a folio volume of fourteen pages, written in a single, neat secretary hand. Covering the years 1545–50, it contains a series of inventories of goods – mostly clothes, arms, trinkets, and furniture – belonging to John Dudley, Viscount Lisle, afterwards Earl of Warwick, and later Duke of Northumberland (be-headed 1553).<sup>46</sup> The heading of the first inventory (fols 1<sup>r</sup>–1<sup>v</sup>) identifies the

scribe as John Hough, who seems to have held the office of either steward or valet at Ely House, Dudley's London address.<sup>47</sup> Unlike the other inventories in the manuscript, which provide a date, the provenance, and a beneficiary for each of the items, the final inventory (fols 12<sup>r</sup>–14<sup>r</sup>), dated 'the last of January, 1550' (i.e. 1551), contains among the 'stuffe *that* my l Lord Lisle hathe in the wardrobe at Ely House' a list of forty-six books, presumably kept in 'a cupboard where in my Lordes l bokes so stand'.<sup>48</sup> As this catalogue is not widely available, it is worth transcribing in full:

Item thone part of tullie	2
Item Locci et Æneadas	2
Item Anthonius lustus	2
Item a boke to play at christis in aglishe	2
Item a boke to speake and write french	2
Item 2 bokes of cosmografye	2
Item a old paper boke	2
Item hormans vulgaries	4
Item the kynges gramer	4
Item Sidrack and king borchas	4
Item a plaine declaration of the crede	4
Item carmen buco. colphurnii	4
Item a paper boke	4
Item epistles from Seneca to paule	4
Item aponapis of <i>mr</i> monsons	4
Item a frenche boke of chryst and <i>the</i> pope	4
Item a boke of arthmetrik in lattyn	4
Item a tragedie in anglishe of the uniust supremacie of the bisshope of rome	4
Item a play of loue	4
Item a play called <i>the</i> 4 pees	4
Item a play called old custome	4
Item a play of the weather	4
Item a boke to write the roman hande	4
Item a paper boke of synonymies	4
Item a greke gramer	8
Item a catachismus	8
Item apothegmata	8
Item the debate betewene the heraldes	8
Item tullies office	8
Item sentencie <i>Veterum poetarum</i>	8
Item a boke of phisick in greeke	8
Item aurilius augustinus	8

The following verso reverts to itemising Dudley's clothing – 'a crymsyn Sattyn doblet', etc. – but the scribe returns to his books at the top of fol. 14<sup>r</sup>:

Item a boke of conceites	8
Item a italian boke	8
Item a italian boke	8
Item ad herenium	16

Item a terence	16
Item an exposition of the crede in frenche	16
Item a testament in frenche couered <i>with</i> black veluet	16
Item an <i>anglishe</i> testament	16
Item 3 litle tables	16

When this manuscript was discovered in the office of a nineteenth-century Oxford solicitor, Henry Thomas Riley supposed that the numbers written besides these books must have denoted their bookshelves.<sup>49</sup> But this cannot have been the case, and the numbers clearly identify the formats of the volumes, which range in size from folio to sextodecimo. Here, then, is the surprisingly modest library of an English aristocrat and statesman, reflecting interests in humanist learning, science, history, religion, and, significantly, vernacular drama. Containing volumes in a number of languages – Greek and Latin, but also French and Italian – it is striking that of the fourteen books that can be positively identified as English, three are plays by John Heywood featured in DEEP, one is catalogued as drama in Wiggins, and two others, ‘a play called old custome’ and ‘a boke to play at christis in aglishe’, though now lost seem also to suggest dramatic auspices.<sup>50</sup> While specific editions are not given, the format size makes it possible to isolate the publication dates for the three plays by Heywood. Since his plays were first printed in folio but are here listed as quarto volumes, *The Play of Love*, *The Four P’s*, and *The Play of Weather* can be dated to 1544–48 when these new, smaller editions were issued. And, given that *The Unjust Usurped Supremacy* was published in two editions in 1549, the playbooks are in keeping with the other items in the book-list, which mainly comprise recently published works, like John Coke’s *The debate betwene the heraldes of Englande and Fraunce* (1550, STC 5530). Either Dudley had a strong preference for newly printed books or the books listed represent only his most recent acquisitions.

The probate inventory of the Oxford scholar John Glover offers a glimpse of a rather more extensive library of nearly 300 titles. In 1574, Glover was elected to the vacant post of medical fellow in St. John’s College, Oxford, but the emphasis of his library on practical medicine suggests that he may also have practised.<sup>51</sup> While medicine naturally predominates, literature, history, and philosophy are also well represented.<sup>52</sup> As might be expected, Latin dominates, but one-eighth of the library can be positively identified as English vernacular books.<sup>53</sup> Though the formats are not always specified, it is clear that like the inventory of Dudley’s books, titles have been arranged according to size; 1–22 are grouped together as folio editions, 23–61 as quarto editions, 62–204 and 273–79 as octavo editions, and 205–72 as sextodecimo editions.<sup>54</sup> In other respects, there is no obvious order to the list, with medical textbooks in Latin appearing next to philosophical works in English, standard books of humanist learning occurring alongside works of contemporary

literature. Two English plays occur roughly two-thirds of the way down the list: listed as item 190 is ‘the tragedie of Gorboducke’; ‘Troas scenice in englishe’ occurs as item 199. Here, knowing the size of the format does not help in isolating exact editions since both editions of *Gorboduc* and all three editions of *Troas* were printed as octavos. However, naming Norton and Sackville’s play ‘Gorboducke’ makes it likely that Glover owned the earlier, 1565 edition, since the 1570 edition is labelled ‘The tragidie of Ferrex and Porrex’ on its title-page. Either way, both books represent relatively recent publications and fit a pattern that suggests Glover, like Dudley, ‘was chiefly a buyer of new books, owning 35 titles definitely printed in the 1570s, and another 50 or so likely to have been, but virtually nothing printed before the 1530s’.<sup>55</sup>

Two plays in a library of nearly 300 books might not seem a very promising figure, but when seen in the context of other items on the list, they help paint a picture of Glover’s leisure-time reading habits. Jasper Heywood’s translation of *Troas* was the first English translation of a play by Seneca to be printed, setting off an immediate fashion for Senecan translation and adaptation of which *Gorboduc* is one example. In addition to these two classically styled English plays, however, Glover also owned a number of Latin plays: ‘comaedia Aristophanis de pace’, ‘Senicae tragediae’, ‘Sententiae Plauti’, and ‘Comediae Plauti’.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, around seventy per cent of the English books in his library are direct translations of works previously published in Latin, and almost all the rest owe a debt to classical or humanist learning. In other words, *Gorboduc* and *Troas* take their place in Glover’s book collection not because of a preference for vernacular drama, but rather on account of a more general interest in the learning and literature of the classical world, an interest that would have been wholly typical given Glover’s status and position at the University. Indeed, it is hard to imagine any other kind of English play finding its way into Glover’s library. *Gorboduc* and *Troas* would have been permissible precisely because they are styled along classical lines; treating Senecan themes and tropes and modelling the humanist methods of translation and adaptation, these plays would have been admitted because they were so *unlike* other vernacular plays printed in recent decades.

In contrast, John Dudley seems to have had a particular taste for home-grown drama, with vernacular plays accounting for over ten per cent of his books. But here again, the figures are misleading. Greg Walker has suggested that ‘plays with a clear political or religious agenda might [...] be purchased by readers with no obvious interest in acting or play-going’, and Dudley’s commitment to the Protestant cause may have been as significant a factor in the purchase of his playbooks as their theatricality.<sup>57</sup> John Ponet’s English translation of Bernard Orchino’s anti-papal polemic *The Unjust Usurped Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome* was printed twice in 1549. Framed as a series of conversational playlets that pit the forces of the popery and anti-Christ against the true church and Christ, it names

Edward VI both as the book's dedicatee and the principal character in the last of its nine playlets, as true defender of the faith in the war against papal domination. In Q1a, the first of the book's impressions, the dedicatory epistle makes frequent reference to 'your most derest vnclē the lorde Protector', and the Lord Protector is also listed in the *dramatis personae* as taking part in the final playlet. However, further to Somerset's downfall, and the emergence of Northumberland as *de facto* regent, the book was reissued (Q1b) with all references to the Lord Protector altered to read 'the Counseil'.<sup>58</sup> With its strongly anti-Catholic tone, its modelling of counsel (especially in the final two playlets), the book's appeal to Dudley is hardly surprising.<sup>59</sup> But what is more striking is the extent to which his own change of circumstances – his elevation to the status of chief counsellor – is bound up with and reflected in its publication history.<sup>60</sup> A copy of Q1b now in the British Library (BL C.37.e.23, *olim* 484.a.15) was once owned by Edward VI, and it is tempting to speculate that the copy Dudley owned was also from this impression.<sup>61</sup> The other plays he owned may not have had the same personal associations, but they share *The Unjust Supremacy's* interest in both anti-clerical abuse and good counsel. While today John Heywood is known for his Catholicism and his cautious criticism of Henry VIII's break with Rome, in his own day he was celebrated as a critic of clerical abuses. It is most likely in this context that Dudley owned three of his plays, though he may also have been interested in them for their treatment of princely advice; *The Play of the Weather*, in particular, withstands scrutiny as a 'mirror for princes'.<sup>62</sup> As for the two other unidentified playbooks, the title 'old custome' certainly suggests an anti-Catholic bias, and the play done at Christ's might be a manuscript copy of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, performed at the Cambridge College around the same time the inventory was made, and recently reassessed as Reformation satire.<sup>63</sup>

But Dudley's playbooks also permit another possibility. In his pivotal study of Protestantism, patronage, and playing, Paul Whitfield White has suggested that long before the establishment of the professional company system, Tudor noblemen sponsored itinerant playing troupes, and that 'old custome' was probably performed by John Dudley's company, the Earl of Warwick's men during Edward VI's reign.<sup>64</sup> Beyond the entry of the title of the play in his inventory there is little evidence to support this conclusion. But if Dudley was active as patron of a playing troupe, it might explain his ownership of both a manuscript copy of a play performed at Christ's College and his other playbooks. These he might have lent to his players for the mounting of certain, carefully chosen (i.e. polemical) plays; alternatively, his troupe might have presented them to him to commemorate specific performances and to recognise his continuing support. Here, then, are two different, though not necessarily opposed, contexts for the playbooks in Dudley's library: taking their place among other anti-papal works in his collection, they reflect the leisure-time reading habits of a nobleman and statesman with strong

Protestant convictions; as a small and carefully curated sub-collection of plays, perhaps for performance by his own troupe of semi-professional actors, they point to a commitment to the use of drama in the war against popery.<sup>65</sup> In contrast, Glover's playbooks probably found their way into his collection because he did not consider them drama, but rather exercises in the scholarly skills of translation and adaptation. Between them, their libraries illustrate divergent horizons of use, as well as the wide appeal of playbooks across different social and educational contexts from one of the highest-ranking noblemen in the land to the rather more modest circumstances of an Oxford don.

There is, according to Scott-Warren, 'a fundamental intractability to much of the documentary evidence for the consumption of books' in the early modern period, which might explain 'why so little has been made of those sources that have been published'.<sup>66</sup> When literary critics discuss early modern book-lists at all, it is because they feature books by the period's most well-loved authors. In this vein, one list that has been singled-out for extensive treatment is the list of plays found in London, British Library, Additional MS 27632, the commonplace book and papers of the Elizabethan courtier Sir John Harington (d. 1612), which contains 168 entries and features plays by Shakespeare, Jonson, Dekker, and Webster, as well as no fewer than four pre-playhouse plays (fols 43<sup>r</sup>–43<sup>v</sup>).<sup>67</sup> The list is in fact not one but two: the first comprises forty plays in no obvious order; the second is made up of 128 plays, including thirty-three named in the first list. What is striking about the second of these lists is the way it is arranged. Unlike other inventories, which typically mask the vulnerability of all short quarto books by casting them as robust, stand-alone entities, this list divides its entries into eleven volumes of nine to thirteen plays each. Binding them this way would have produced longer-lasting, more secure volumes, less likely to be damaged or lost, and for this reason was clearly common practice among book owners of all kinds. So while 'certain kinds of popular books, such as religious texts, law books, school books, and classical texts, would sell sufficiently well for the publisher or bookseller to have a quantity ready-bound in stock', most early modern books were sold either unbound or roughly stab-stitched, ready to be turned into bound volumes at the hands of their new owners.<sup>68</sup> These bespoke bindings extend the habits of compiling and text collection that are so much a part of medieval manuscript culture, and offer different kinds of access, different ways of approaching the question of reading. Knowing something of the company playbooks kept when they turn up in composite volumes of this kind – which plays were most likely to be bound in this way and which other texts they are found alongside – can tell us about the role of drama in private libraries and suggest that, unlike Harington, some readers did not necessarily regard drama as a separate category of text. Consequently, such volumes offer material evidence of the place of plays in early modern textual culture.

## Early printed plays in composite volumes and *Sammelbände*

In his important book on compilations and collections in the making of Renaissance literature, Jeffrey Todd Knight has suggested that books in early print culture were ‘to a great extent bound (in both senses) by the desires of readers’.<sup>69</sup> While many early printed plays are now preserved as individual items, often found in neat twentieth-century bindings, and catalogued in ways that mask the histories of their intimate relationships with other books, some examples of playbooks in early modern bindings do survive. These account for just five per cent of the copies I have examined and are mostly found in the Bodleian (again, a reminder that modern encounters with early playbooks are in no small way determined by the histories of individual library collections); of these, over half are found in composite volumes. But there are other ways of identifying early modern *Sammelbände*, and as Alexandra Gillespie has suggested, in addition to those extant in an early binding are those:

Described with some reliability in a catalogue or scholarly notes as a sixteenth-century book since disbound; and those that contain separate printed books that may still be linked by date, size, binding, and provenance and marginal or paratextual marks in an early hand-foliation, a list of contents, or notes added continuously across component parts.<sup>70</sup>

One such example is Oxford, Bodleian Library, 8° H 44 Art.Seld. (hereafter the Selden *Sammelband*), a composite octavo volume of seven texts printed between 1560 and 1571, which includes a copy of John Studley’s translation of *Agamemnon*.<sup>71</sup> Several of the items were altered when the volume was assembled: with the exception of the first text, all are without their final leaves (containing the printer’s device or colophon), and one has been cropped at the bottom to bring it into uniformity with the others. Though now in a rather damaged nineteenth-century binding, the structure is clearly early, and it is very likely that the volume was assembled before it came into the possession of John Selden, whose library was donated to the Bodleian on his death in 1654. Though not heavily annotated, it contains a number of notes and marginalia in the same late-sixteenth-century hand, and was probably compiled around the same time that these additions were made. The front flyleaves contain handwritten extracts from *de officio coronatoris*, a law passed in 1276 detailing the duties of the office of the coroner. Though not identical to any sixteenth-century printed translation, the hand-copied text makes explicit reference to the queen – ‘The Quene shall haue the goodes of all felons | *which* be condempned’ – making it unlikely that the volume was assembled after 1603.<sup>72</sup>

Also helpful for dating this *Sammelband* are some verses that have been added in the same hand on the verso of the title-page to the final

item in the volume, William Hubbard's *The tragicall historie of Ceyx and Alicione* (1569, STC 13897):

my Tongue spare not to speake, the neuer shalt thow spede,  
 Except thow shew the hurt how shall the surgeon knowe thy nede?  
 Why hath a man a tongue, or boldnes in his brest  
 But to bewraye his minde by mouth to sett his hart at rest  
 The fysher man that feares, his cork and corde to cast  
 Or spred his nett to take the fishe, well worthie is to fast.<sup>73</sup>

These lines are a version of the opening of a poem by George Turberville, printed in his 1587 collection *Epitathes and Sonnettes* and there dedicated to his friend, the tantalisingly named 'Spencer'.<sup>74</sup> That version begins, 'My *Spencer* spare to speake, I and euer spare to speed'.<sup>75</sup> But here, the references to Spencer have been cut, perhaps with the intention of making the poem a more general meditation on friendship, though it is also possible the text was copied from an earlier version preserved in a lost printed edition or manuscript.<sup>76</sup> The subtitle to the 1587 edition announces that Turberville originally sent his poems 'to certaine I his frends in England' along with 'other broken pam I plettes' while on a diplomatic mission to Moscow in 1569. After leaving New College, Oxford in 1562 and before departing England for Russia, Turberville attended the Inns of Court, and there became part of a network of men including Arthur Brooke, Richard Edwards, Thomas Twyne, Barnabe Googe, and George Gascoigne who exchanged poems and other writings. These are the men most likely referred to by the allusion to 'certain friends', and if they did receive a copy of 'Spare to speake, Spare to speede', it is unlikely that it would have mentioned Spencer, unless the Spencer referred to was someone other than the poet; *that* Spencer, born in 1552, was surely too young.<sup>77</sup> So, whether these lines were copied directly or adapted, whether the omission of Spencer's name was original to Turberville or the scribe's own intervention, it seems likely that they were added to *The Tragicall historie of Ceyx and Alicione* before 1587. Indeed, it is probable that the entire volume was assembled in the early 1570s, shortly after the publication of the third edition of Edmund Tilney's *The Flower of friendshippe* (1571, STC 24077), the third item in the book and the last to be printed.

Both of these manuscript additions offer clues about the inclusion of a single dramatic text in a volume of otherwise non-dramatic works, since they confirm an association with the people, places, and ideas that occupied the Inns of Court in the 1560s. Item one in the Selden Sammelband is a tale from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, translated by a 'C. T.' who is sometimes identified with the 'T. C. Gent.' who published a translation of another tale from the same work a few years earlier, which forms the fifth item in the volume.<sup>78</sup> However, it seems plausible that 'C. T.' could be the same as the 'G. T.' credited with compiling Gascoigne's *A hundreth*

*sundrie flowres* ([1573], STC 11635), usually identified as Turberville.<sup>79</sup> Whether they are the same man, translations of Boccaccio were fashionable at this time and in this setting; in addition to various printed translations, an Inns of Court play of Gismond, based on Boccaccio's novella, survives in two manuscripts and one manuscript fragment.<sup>80</sup> All of the other works in the Sammelband – with the exception of Edmund Tilney's *Flower of friendship* – are also products of the intellectual climate of the Inns. Thomas Howell was a member of Clifford's Inn (this was an Inn of Chancery associated with the Inner Temple) before he was admitted to the Middle Temple in 1571; his *The arbor of amitie* (1568, STC 13874) is clearly styled on miscellanies by both Googe and Turberville. Studley produced his Senecan translations at Cambridge, but the commendatory verses to *Agamemnon* draw attention to his association with the literary circle of the Inns and he may have been a member of Barnard's Inn by 1566 (also an Inn of Chancery associated with Gray's Inn).<sup>81</sup> Though as a woman Isabella Whitney would have been excluded from membership of the Inns, her brother Geoffrey – who is implied as the author of at least one of the poems in *The copy of a letter* ([1567?], STC 25439) – is believed to have been at Thaves' (an Inn of Chancery associated with Lincoln's Inn) or Furnivall's Inn (also affiliated with Lincoln's), and her later published *A sweet nosegay* (1573, STC 25440) is modelled on the writings of Hugh Plat, a member of Lincoln's Inn; as Caroline Sale has argued, 'there is no question of [Whitney's] engagement with the literary culture at the Inns'.<sup>82</sup>

Here then is a context for the Selden Sammelband: a collection of works that together reflect and tease out the social and literary connections of the Inns of Court in the 1560s. It is as though the compiler of this bespoke volume read and took the advice of Jasper Heywood in his 'Preface' to *Thyestes* and went 'where Mineruaes men, | And finest witts doe swarme', making for him or herself a compilation that materially embodies the intellectual world of the Inns.<sup>83</sup> Read in this setting, *Agamemnon* takes its place in the collection not as a play, or even as a learned experiment in the art of translation, but rather as an expression of the community of textual exchange that characterised the Inns in the middle of the sixteenth century. Whether the compiler was himself a member of the Inns it is impossible to say – though the handwritten extracts from *stat. 4 Ed. 1. st. 2* surely make it a possibility – but the act of assembling the volume would have offered a way of entering into the kinds of debates that would have been current there at the time, casting the compiler as a kind of honorary member of a highly select and well-esteemed coterie of lawyer-writers.

A different kind of coherence is suggested by another Sammelband that contains among its twelve items a copy of the 1544 edition of John Heywood's *The Play of the Weather* (Q2; the first edition was published in folio). Now disbound but identifiable by the continuous shelfmarks

Sel.5.51-5.63, this set of early printed quarto books is one of many that passed into Cambridge University Library from the collection of John Moore, Bishop of Ely, in the early eighteenth century.<sup>84</sup> Largely comprising instructional works printed in the first half of the sixteenth century, the volume has recently undergone extensive analysis by Seth Lerer, who has persuasively argued that it was compiled and used by the Doe and Martindale families, prominent in Enfield in the last half of the sixteenth and the first decades of the seventeenth century:

These texts, though printed in the early sixteenth century, were assembled in the later sixteenth century, and [...] their generic, thematic, and authorial associations contribute to our understanding of recusant reading tastes in post-Reformation England. Their shared marginalia [...] places this collection in a specific familial and geographic environment, while at the same time evidencing a broad set of reading tastes among the younger members of its owner's family.<sup>85</sup>

Lerer here makes two observations that are important to my own discussion of this volume: that the works included comprise the kind of older literary texts that would have appealed to recusant readers, and that their instructional nature, together with the 'childishness of the scrawled annotations', point to their use by young boys.<sup>86</sup> Unlike John Dudley, who would have regarded Heywood as a critic of clerical abuses, the compilers of Doe *Sammelband* would have recognised him as an author with Catholic sympathies, engaged in the kinds of debates that occupied the previous generation, but which nonetheless appealed to current recusant tastes. Since some members of the Doe family circle are known to have had Catholic sympathies, this probably explains how the play found its way into this collection when it was assembled in the late sixteenth century. But it, like the other items in the volume, is littered with annotations, many of which can be dated to the 1620s and 1630s as the work of two brothers, Robert and Anthony Doe. What do these marks say about the life of this volume – and about the way *The Play of the Weather* was read and used – as it was passed down through the generations? Lerer has suggested that old books were often liable to become the scribal property of children.<sup>87</sup> This seems to have been the seventeenth-century fate of the Doe *Sammelband*, which is heavy with the brothers' playful marks of ownership, boyish notes, doodles, and other signs of youthful use, which together suggest a slightly different set of receptive horizons for Heywood's play to those that prompted its inclusion in the book when originally assembled.<sup>88</sup>

The title-page to *The Play of the Weather*, like other contemporary interludes, features a character list. Most of the play's characters are listed by name, but the last is framed in terms of theatrical exigencies: 'A boy the lest that can play'. As Pamela King has noted, 'hosting

entertainments written for, and staged by, children was a widespread phenomenon throughout the sixteenth century', and the designation of the last member of the cast as 'a boy' supports the possibility that the play was originally intended for child actors.<sup>89</sup> Whether the play was later performed by younger members of the Doe family is unclear but the annotations that cover the verso to the title-page suggest that by the seventeenth century the play, along with the other items in the volume, had fallen into their hands (Figure 4.2). The upper portion of the page

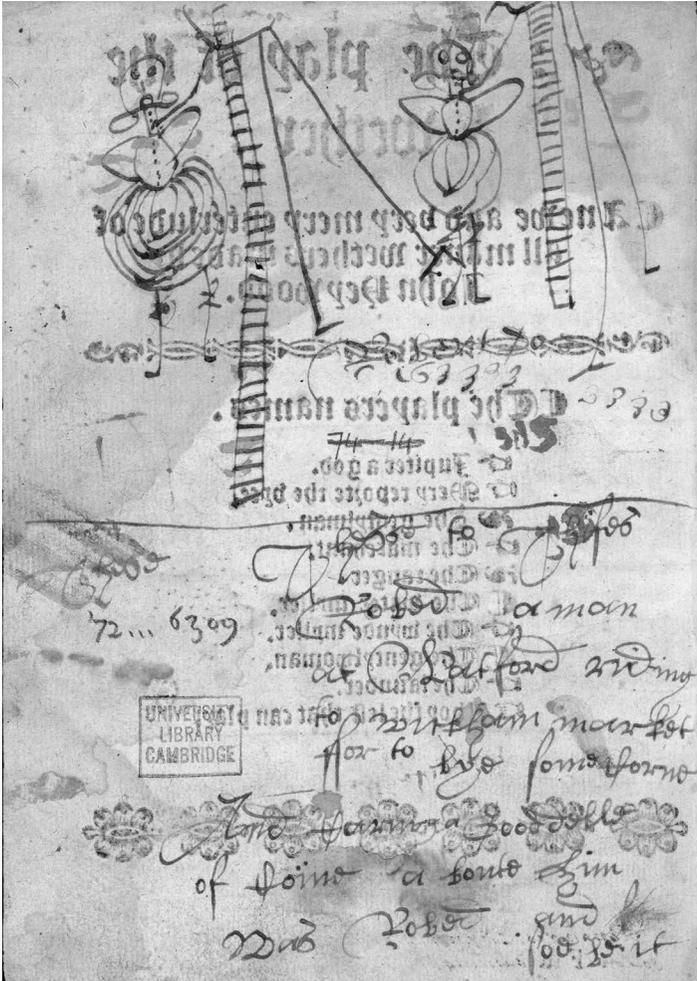


Figure 4.2 John Heywood, *The Play of the Weather* ([William Middleton, 1544?], STC 13305.5), title-page verso. Cambridge, University Library, Sel. 5.61. Seventeenth-century pen trials and doodles. Source: Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

is filled with a childish doodle of two men hanging from gallows dated 1633 (the latest of the volume's dated and dateable annotations), which seems to be glossed by the lines that accompany it:

Thesse to Thifes  
 Robed a man  
 at Stratford riding  
 to wickham market  
 ffor to bye some Corne  
 And Cariing a Gooddelle  
 of Coine a boutte Him  
 Was Robed and  
 soe be it

The rough justice of these lines – which find the man at fault for carrying so much money, even as they acknowledge the necessity of his ‘Coine’ for buying corn – and the tone of resignation and acceptance (‘soe be it’) that concludes them, echo both the violence that threatens to contaminate the play, and its curiously unsatisfactory ending. Cast as a debate between a series of petitioners seeking to arrange for weather best suited to their needs, the play rides ‘on the knife edge of violence’, as on more than one occasion orderly discussion seems likely to erupt into more physical displays of opposition.<sup>90</sup> In the end, Jupiter, the god who presides over the debate, resolves the conflict by promising that everyone will have some of the weather they have asked for. But, the solution offered is hardly a solution at all, since everything will simply remain the same. It is a point that only the play’s Vice, a character named Merry Report, seems to notice: ‘Syrz now shall ye haue the wether euen as yt was’.<sup>91</sup> I am not here trying to suggest that the annotation is a direct response to the play – in fact, the copy in the Doe Sammelband lacks sig. F4 on which this line occurs – but the Doe brothers clearly share a similar outlook to the character Merry Report, thereby illustrating the continued relevance and appeal of *The Play of the Weather* to schoolboys nearly a hundred years after it was originally printed.

Thanks to Lerer’s detailed work on the Doe Sammelband, we now know a huge amount about when, where, and why it was compiled. We are also able to narrativise changes in its use from the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century. A volume that began life in the late sixteenth century as a collection of early-sixteenth-century works reflecting contemporary recusant tastes had become, by the 1620s, a kind of networked hard drive on which different members of the same family could share and record names, dates, and other notes of various kinds. Though a very different book to the Selden Sammelband – both in terms of its early modern history and its modern fate – it shares with it the

view that drama had a place in bespoke collections of this kind. In other words, thematic rather than categorical coherence seems to have been the aim in the assembly of both these volumes, suggesting that the dramatic texts in them were read despite rather than because they were plays. But by the seventeenth century, book owners like Harington had begun to compile volumes formed entirely of playbooks. To conclude this section, I turn to one such example, a mid-seventeenth-century bespoke collection of dramatic works, which suggests that for at least one early modern book collector, the category of drama had become a coherent organising principle, as obvious to him as Inns of Court writers were to the compiler of the Selden *Sammelband* or older Catholic texts to the compiler of the Doe volume.

In his discussion of the making of Shakespeare's books, Knight writes about the sole copy of the 'sixth quarto' of *Pericles*, now held at the British Library, as a single, neat volume in a modern binding.<sup>92</sup> Noting that the book is one of many bequeathed to the library by the great eighteenth-century Shakespearean actor and erstwhile book collector David Garrick, he goes on to trace its earlier place in a volume of seven playbooks printed between 1573 and 1635 (BL C.21.b.40.). Most of this volume is still intact and contains both an eighteenth-century contents list (probably the work of Edward Capell, who in 1778 also produced a catalogue of Garrick's entire collection) and an earlier list in the instantly recognisable hand of the law officer and book collector Richard Smith (d. 1675). This earlier list is preserved on the blank verso of the final page of John Lydgate's *The serpent of deuision*, which together with *Gorboduc* was printed for the second time in 1590 (STC 17029), and comprises the sixth item in the Garrick volume as it now stands. The list can be transcribed as follows:

- :1: Luminalia : or *the* festiuall of light
- :2: Englishe prices [*sic*] or *the* Death of Richard *the* :3:<sup>d</sup> –
- :3: Eluyra : Sir W Killegrew : –
- :4: Spightfull sister : Bayle : –
- :5: Conuerted Twins MedBorne : –
- :6: Blind Begger of Alexandria : Chapman
- :7: how to choose a good wife from a Bad
- :8: Shoemaker a gentleman : – WR
- :9: promise of god made manifest : Bale
- :10: Gorbodock: with ferex & porax
- :11: Case is altred : Johnson<sup>93</sup>

What does this list say about the tastes and habits of its seventeenth-century gentleman collector? Unlike the other *Sammelbände* I have been discussing, this volume represents an attempt to curate a theatre collection, a book entirely comprising dramatic works.<sup>94</sup> At a first

glance it seems to be made up of new playbooks; four were printed in 1667, presumably close in time to when the contents list was made. It is certainly true that *Sammelbände* often give space to books that happened to be available around the time they were compiled,<sup>95</sup> but this volume also includes a number of plays that were printed earlier – John Bale’s *God’s Promises* and George Chapman’s *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (first printed 1602), for instance. Moreover, the list’s generic diversity – it includes a sixteenth-century interlude, an early vernacular tragedy, Stuart masques, and Restoration comedies – makes it hard to locate any organising principles, beyond, perhaps, the category of drama itself.

Many of Smith’s earliest playbooks were purchased from the library of the London scrivener Humfrey Dyson on his death in 1633, and while *God’s Promises* has not been positively identified as one of his books, it is likely that Smith obtained it from this source. Whatever its provenance, Smith marked it twice as a ‘strange: old: relicque’ – an epithet found in his hand in at least six further playbooks – suggesting it took its place in his collection as a curiosity, a quaint remnant of a long-lost dramatic culture.<sup>96</sup> But, Smith’s hand is not the only one to occur in this copy of Bale’s play, and on the final verso – soiled and faded in ways that suggest that when first printed, this book must have been, for some time, unbound – a much earlier user has left his mark, and his note can be partially transcribed as follows (Figure 4.3):

John Gyllders  
 theas boke ho so euer  
 stelethe it shale be  
 haynged by the croke

In many ways, the inscription illustrates a number of the problems posed by marginalia studies: it is faded, and at least partly illegible; it is undated, and the author, though named, is untraceable; and it seemingly fails to tell us anything about how he read or otherwise used this book. But while John Gyllder’s marks do not obviously or explicitly engage with the text of Bale’s play, they do belong to a textual community that offers clues about the role of *God’s Promises* as a valued possession. His words are similar to a book curse with no fewer than eight witnesses, sixteenth-century additions found in manuscript books copied a century or so earlier.<sup>97</sup> These eight witnesses illustrate the extent to which verses like these could come to be attached to books of all kinds: choir-books; liturgical manuals; homilies, gospels, and other devotional works; chronicles; polemical texts; and multilingual miscellanies. Nor is it possible to isolate the kind of owner more likely to inscribe his or her books in this way; the eight examples I have found

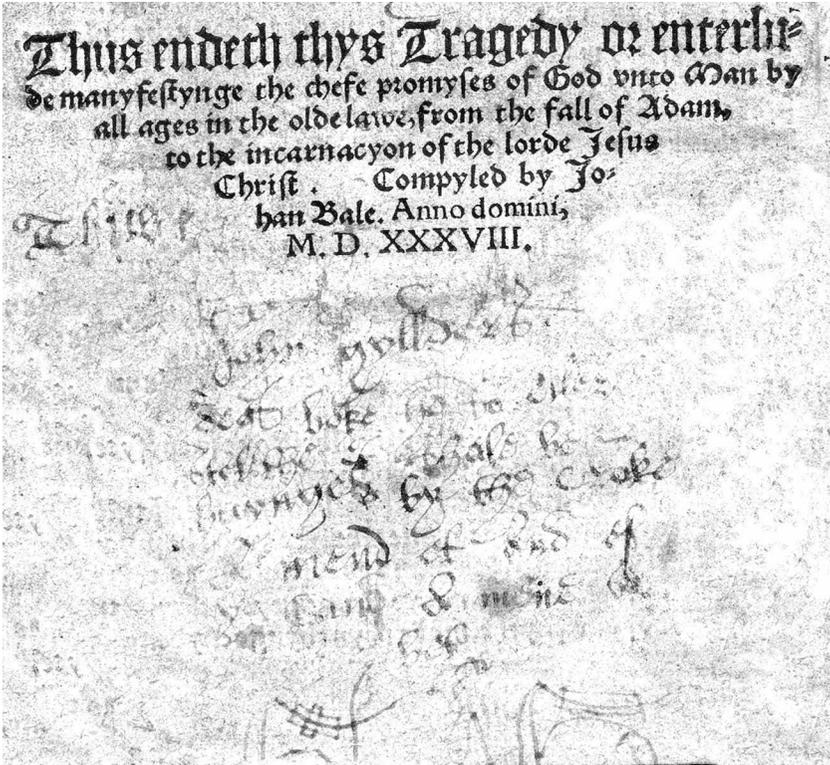


Figure 4.3 John Bale, *God's Promises* ([Derick van der Straten, 1547?], STC 1305), sig. E4<sup>v</sup>. London, British Library C.34.C.2. Detail showing the mid-sixteenth-century hand of John Gylllder.

Source: © The British Library Board.

point both to adults and children, boys and men from a range of different social backgrounds. But what all the known witnesses share is the view that the page – both manuscript and print – was the sort of place appropriate for this kind of mark of ownership; that books lend themselves to mottos of this kind. It is to these such marks of proprietorial identity that I now turn.

### Signatures, pentrials, and proprietorial identity

Today, marking a book with pen and ink is seen as an act of violence. But for John Gyllder, the harm he threatens anyone who might steal his book suggests that to borrow a book and not return it was, in the early modern period at least, the greater crime. Indeed, his proposed punishment for any putative book thief is identical to that suggested

(and illustrated) by the Doe brothers for their two hypothetical pick-pockets; failure to return a book is reckoned to be comparable to grand larceny, and both are deemed punishable by hanging. In fact, rather than devaluing the book, Gyllder's marks on the final verso of Bale's play are testament to the value he placed on it. As an object of personal importance, for Gyllder, *God's Promises* was worth far more than the 2*d.* or so he presumably paid for it. But there is a paradox inherent in his words, since they mark the book as a space shared with 'ho so euer' might borrow it even as they inscribe it as his private property. Attempting to limit this book's circulation in this way inevitably involves the tacit acknowledgement of the tendency of all books to wander. Moreover, declaring ownership by deploying a formula that had its own long literary tradition – using the generic to express the personal – the page becomes witness to different forms of literacy, as Gyllder casts himself not only as the book's owner (and thereby literate in its forms), but also as someone with mastery of the complex formulae available to those who wished to assert ownership. As Scott-Warren notes of another early modern note of this kind, '[s]uch an inscription suggests how property, propriety (self-ownership), and literacy could prove mutually reinforcing'.<sup>98</sup>

Traditionally, historians of the early printed book have been most interested in marks of ownership that can be identified with historical persons, and this approach continues to dominate as historical and genealogical sources become ever more available. Early signatures or other marks of ownership occur in a little over forty early printed playbooks (about fifteen per cent of those I have surveyed) with around half that number bearing the marks of two or more early owners.<sup>99</sup> Some signatures are immediately recognisable, like Humfrey Dyson's, which turns up in copies of *The Pardoner and the Friar* (HM 61433) and Q1b *The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene* (BL C.34.e.12), or that of Humfrey Byng (d. 1677), student and later vice-provost of King's College, Cambridge, which occurs on the title-page of a copy of *Hercules Furens* (BL C.34.a.8). Others are dated: the John Pulley who signed his copy of *The Nature of the Four Elements* (BL C.39.b.17) also provided a date, '1541'; as did the Christopher Taylor who dated the signature he left in his copy of Q1b *The Unjust Usurped Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome* (Bod Douce O 119) to '1582'. Even when the names are unknown and dates are not provided, sometimes enough information is given to make a positive identification possible: the multiple marks of ownership in a British Library copy of *Acolastus* (BL 644.e.11) locate the book in a circle of prominent local families based near Newcastle-under-Lyme at the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>100</sup> But while such information naturally helps build a better picture of the kinds of people who owned and read early printed books, focusing on the identity of owners ignores the *way* such marks express ownership

and what they can therefore tell us about the construction of proprietary identity. Take, for instance, another copy of a play by Bale now in the Bodleian Library under the shelfmark Tanner 155; like the British Library copy of *God's Promises*, this copy of the first edition of *Three Laws* also contains a book curse:

he That one me  
doth loke Shall witnes  
to me this Booke<sup>101</sup>

Whoever wrote these lines did not oblige history by leaving a name or date, but they do offer a different kind of insight into his or her identity. Like all of Bale's plays printed by Derick van der Straten, *Three Laws* is set in schwabacher, a black letter typeface popular in Germany in the first half of the sixteenth century. While the letterforms of the inscription do not perfectly match those of the printed typeface, they clearly echo them. And this owner's engagement with the look of Bale's play does not end there; with its half-diamond indentation and decreasing script size, the motto has been cast to resemble the colophon that appears on the previous recto. That final verso (along with title-pages) tend to be the most common location for marks of ownership is unsurprising for reasons of both access and space. New owners would have encountered most books unbound, making these pages the most readily available for marking in this way, and since they tend to be emptier than other pages, they also offer the necessary space for marks of these kinds. Here, however, the arrangement of text to resemble a colophon suggests an awareness of the conventions and forms used by printers to represent authority. Recognising the beginning and ends of books as the conventional loci for expressions of authority (author attributions, imprints, colophons, etc.), this annotator has left his or her mark in such a way as to enter into the complex network of textual authority represented by these pages.

Though such marks are typically dismissed along with other 'seemingly random and inexplicable marks in early modern books', early printed playbooks in fact abound with similar examples of annotators directly copying the look of the printed word.<sup>102</sup> The Cambridge copy of *The Play of the Weather* discussed in the previous section, for instance, has handwritten marks on its title-page and sigs C1<sup>r</sup> and D3<sup>r</sup>, that carefully replicate certain special characters, individual letterforms, and phrases from the printed text.<sup>103</sup> In the same vein, another Bodleian copy of the c. 1547 edition of *Three Laws* (Mal. 502) contains three sketches on its final verso that clearly resemble elements from early sixteenth-century printers' devices (Figure 4.4). The Tudor rose that appears to the left of the page occurs in numerous

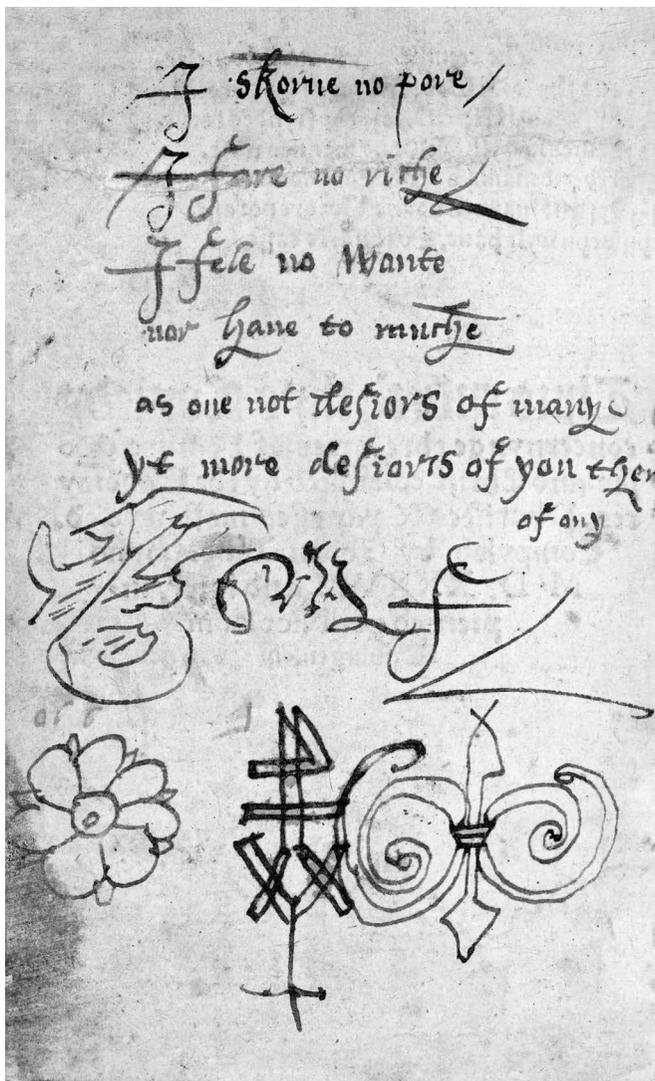


Figure 4.4 John Bale, *Three Laws* ([Derick van der Straten, 1547?], STC 1287), sig. G4<sup>v</sup>. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Mal. 502. Final verso showing sixteenth-century doodles.

Source: Reproduced with permission of The Bodleian Libraries.

devices; it is especially prominent in those used by Robert and William Copland (see, for instance, McKerrow 71 $\alpha$  and 71 $\beta$ ) but use seems to have been widespread before 1533. Typical is the device of the York printer Ursyn Mylner (McKerrow 39), which combines both the rose and a pomegranate, symbols traditionally used to signify the



Figure 4.5 Robert Whittington, *Editio de consinitate [sic] grammatices et Constructione* (Ursyn Mylner, 1516, STC 25542), sig. D4<sup>r</sup>. London, British Library, 68.b.21. Detail showing device of Ursyn Mylner.

Source: © The British Library Board.

marriage between Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon (Figure 4.5). Mylner's device also features his mark, a monogram made up of his initials, which bears more than a passing resemblance to one of the marks used by Wynken de Worde, with whom he may have had a working partnership.<sup>104</sup> The doodle on the middle of the final verso to Mal. 502 is virtually identical to this mark. Since Whittington's grammar is the only extant publication by Mylner to feature this device, it is possible the doodle was copied into Mal. 502 directly from it. As for the last of the three doodles, although not precisely the same as any of the strap-work in any of the devices catalogued by McKerrow in his *Printers' & Publishers' Devices in England & Scotland, 1480–1535*, it is certainly similar to the kind of ornamentation found in some early sixteenth-century printers' devices, particularly McKerrow 42, a device used by de Worde in his edition of the *Modus tenendi unum hundredum* ([1520? (B)], STC 7725.9). In all, the doodles suggest familiarity with the devices used by some of England's earliest printers and may indicate that the annotator adapted them for his copy of *Three Laws* from other books in his possession, possibly a grammar and a law book. Far more than just 'pentrials' then, these doodles reveal a user customising his or her copy of *Three Laws* (which was printed without a printer's device) to bring it in line with the look of other books in his or her possession. Moreover, since they reference devices that were not widely used, they also help situate this copy of Bale's play in the library of an educated user, perhaps that of a student or a lawyer who may have had a professional interest in the play's treatment of divine justice. While they do not permit the definitive identification of the books from which they were copied, they gesture towards a kind of 'anthropology of the book' in which it becomes possible to reconstruct one reader's experience of Bale's play, not as a text read in quiet isolation, but as an object that shared



that playbooks – typically dismissed as both bibliographically and culturally ephemeral – found their way into private libraries of all kinds, often meeting there such unexpected bedfellows as songbooks and schoolbooks.

A similar observation is borne out by work that has been undertaken to reconstruct the libraries of private individuals like Myles Blomefylde (d. 1603) and William Neile (d. 1624) from the signatures they studiously entered into their books, including copies of *Fulgens and Lucrece* ('I am Miles Blomefyldes booke') and *New Custom* ('Wm Neile').<sup>110</sup> Though both men clearly had more than a passing interest in drama – Blomefylde also owned two of the Digby plays, Neile's name is also found in a number of later playbooks including John Day's *The Isle of Gulls* (1606, STC 6412), and Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's *The World Tossed at Tennis* (1620, STC 17909) – their libraries, so far as they can be reconstituted from their marks of ownership, suggest far more heterogeneous tastes. These men were bibliophiles rather than lovers of plays per se. However, while an understanding of the place of playbooks in early modern book collections clearly gives a sense of the kinds of social worlds they inhabited, such information sheds little light on the question of how they were actually read or otherwise used. So, while it is useful, surprising even, to realise that pre-playhouse playbooks found their way into the libraries of educated men (and sometimes women) with sophisticated literary tastes, to appreciate the complex forms of use to which these books were subjected we need to turn to some of the other kinds of marks found within their pages.<sup>111</sup>

### Readers, playbooks, and performance

When Myles Blomefylde wrote his name in his copy of *Fulgens and Lucrece*, he seems also to have made a number of other additions to the text. The copy, now in the Huntington Library, contains a number of corrections: missing speech prefixes and pilcrows (¶) have been added and superfluous ones removed; braces have been inserted to correct printing errors; and in one instance, a word has been amended to preserve the rhyme scheme<sup>112</sup> (Figure 4.6). Claire M. Bourne has shown that pilcrows have a particular function in the page design of early printed plays to 'communicate the formal exigencies of vernacular and classical plays'.<sup>113</sup> Adopting them to represent far more than the residue of scribal practice, early printers used pilcrows in tandem with speech prefixes as a way to mark the beginning of each new unit of speech, thereby creating new forms of textual articulation that contributed to the development of conventions for the expression of dramatic form and its effects in print.<sup>114</sup> *Fulgens*, as Bourne notes, is not only 'the earliest surviving playbook', it is

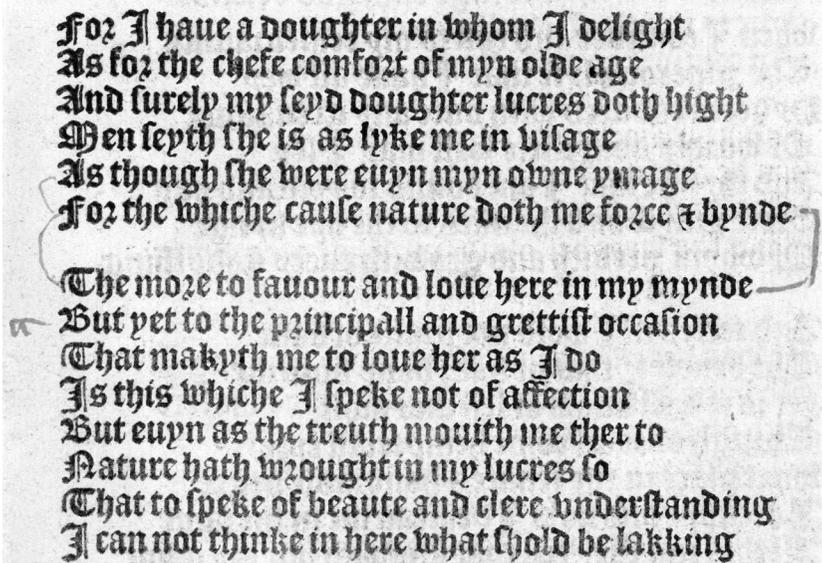


Figure 4.6 Henry Medwall, *Fulgens and Lucrece* (John Rastell, [1514?], STC 17778), sig. A6<sup>r</sup>. San Marino, California, The Huntington Library, 62599. Detail showing braces and a pilcrow added to correct a printing error.

also ‘the first to feature pilcrows prominently in its page design’, and its influence is evident in the dramatic *mise en page* of plays printed a full half century later.<sup>115</sup> While Bourne rightly acknowledges the significance of *Fulgens* for the development of conventions for the articulation of drama as a distinct category of text, her discussion does not take into account the handwritten amendments to HM 62599, Blomefylde’s copy of *Fulgens*.

The additions and corrections to the text are clearly concerned with perfecting errors affecting its dramatic design, and are as telling as the errors that remain uncorrected, mostly substitutions of one character for a similarly shaped character, an *n* typeset, for instance, where a *u* was clearly intended. In all, the pattern of amendment seems to suggest a reader with a keen awareness of the conventions developed by early printers for articulating dramatic form. Indeed, the additions to the text resemble those of a copy editor correcting a set of proofs, catching just the sort of faults that would later begin to appear in errata lists printed at the ends of plays. Here, then, is one receptive scenario: in the mid- to late sixteenth century, a reader, most likely Blomefylde, sat down with his copy of Medwall’s play and made a series of revisions

intended to preserve the integrity of the features developed by its printer to render its dramatic form legible. However, the concentration of corrections around the division of text into discrete units of speech not only illustrates an appreciation of dialogue as the play's chief organising principle, but they also suggest that whoever amended this text may have done so with at least one eye on performance. Little is known about the performance history of *Fulgens and Lucrece*, though it is usually assumed that Medwall wrote the play for performance at Lambeth Palace.<sup>116</sup> HM 62599's annotations do not point definitively to a later performance in the second half of the sixteenth century, but they are apiece with the kinds of marginalia found in a number of early playbooks that show one or more readers thinking through theatrical exigencies.

At least two other playbooks show early readers inserting missing speech prefixes and stage directions. The same hand that inscribed the book curse on the final verso of Tanner 155, a copy of O1 *Three Laws*, also adds a number of speech prefixes and the following stage direction: 'Incometh | Sodomy | and | Idolatrie | both to | gether'.<sup>117</sup> It is a striking addition, since elsewhere in *Three Laws*, printed stage directions appear only infrequently, and when they do occur they adopt a similar form to those in other early printed playbooks: centred, set in roman type, in Latin. However, the inserted stage direction in Tanner 155 is to the left of the page; its appearance – a kind of cramped coil – presumably dictated by the lack of other available space. While it is written in a very neat, clear hand, it does not replicate the appearance of the other printed directions in the book; in fact, it differs from them by providing instructions in English, not Latin. Similarly, the John Pulley who in 1541 inscribed his name into a copy of John Rastell's *The Nature of the Four Elements* (BL C.39.b.17) also added a stage direction, which likewise diverges from early print conventions for the presentation of such instructions and provides the following staging note in English: 'Sensuall | appetite | must syng | thys song | and his cum | pany must answee | hym lykewyse'.<sup>118</sup> Pulley seems to have had a more general interest in the musical features of Rastell's play, as his various written interjections cluster around the play's musical moments. For instance, the song on the previous pages (sigs E5<sup>r</sup>–E6<sup>r</sup>) is famous both because of being the first known example of secular music printed in England and because it was 'printed with the first known fount of single-impression music type used in any country'.<sup>119</sup> The score is fully notated, but the lyrics are heavily abbreviated, possibly reflecting the song's popularity at the time of publication; it may be that the words were so well known that it was not thought necessary to provide them in full. Whatever the reason, Pulley has, in two instances, expanded the printed text to

provide the full line: 'Tyme to pas &c.' has been revised to read 'tyme to pas wyth goodly sport our spryte to'.<sup>120</sup>

While changes such as these need not necessarily point to users preparing these plays for performance, the attention to certain performative features – speech prefixes, stage directions, songs, etc. – highlights the success of the strategies developed by printers for articulating drama as a distinct category of text. It is not simply that printers and other print agents successfully innovated techniques for the presentation of certain texts as drama, but that some readers seem to have responded to these techniques by recognising the unique susceptibility of these texts to performance. The annotations left by early readers and owners like Myles Blomefylde and John Pulley show that the typographic articulation of some of the earliest printed plays helped to shape their receptive horizons, pointing to a mode of engagement that we might begin to think of as 'performative reading'. Nowhere is this style of reading more evident than in a copy of Q1 *Lusty Juventus*, now in the Bodleian Library (Mal. 844). In the second chapter of this book, I suggested that the title-page doubling instructions for this play – 'foure may play it easely, takyng such partes as they thinke best: so that any one tak | of those partes that be not in place at once' – may have been included to help authenticate the text as drama, making it identifiable as a play.<sup>121</sup> Certainly, they offer little practical advice to any group of would-be actors, since they fail to explain how the nine roles should be split between four actors. The marks left in Mal. 844 point to one early user trying to work out exactly this problem. As a modern editor of the play has noted, for the doubling scheme to work the parts need to be divided as follows:<sup>122</sup>

1 – Juventus	2 – Prologue
	Sathan the Deuyl
	Abhominable liuing
3 – Good councill	4 – Knowledge
Felowshyp	Hypocrisie
	Gods mercyfull promyses

As can be seen, the eponymous Juventus is the only character not to be doubled, and it is striking therefore that each and every one of his speeches has been marked in Mal. 844 at the beginning with a cross (+) and at the end with a turnstile (⊖) (Figure 4.7).<sup>123</sup> Here is someone working through the implications of a doubling scheme that demands a single actor take on this one role. Furthermore, he or she is doing so using the same typographic conventions developed by early printers of plays. In the earliest printed playbooks, pilcrow and other special characters like fleurons and manicules commonly

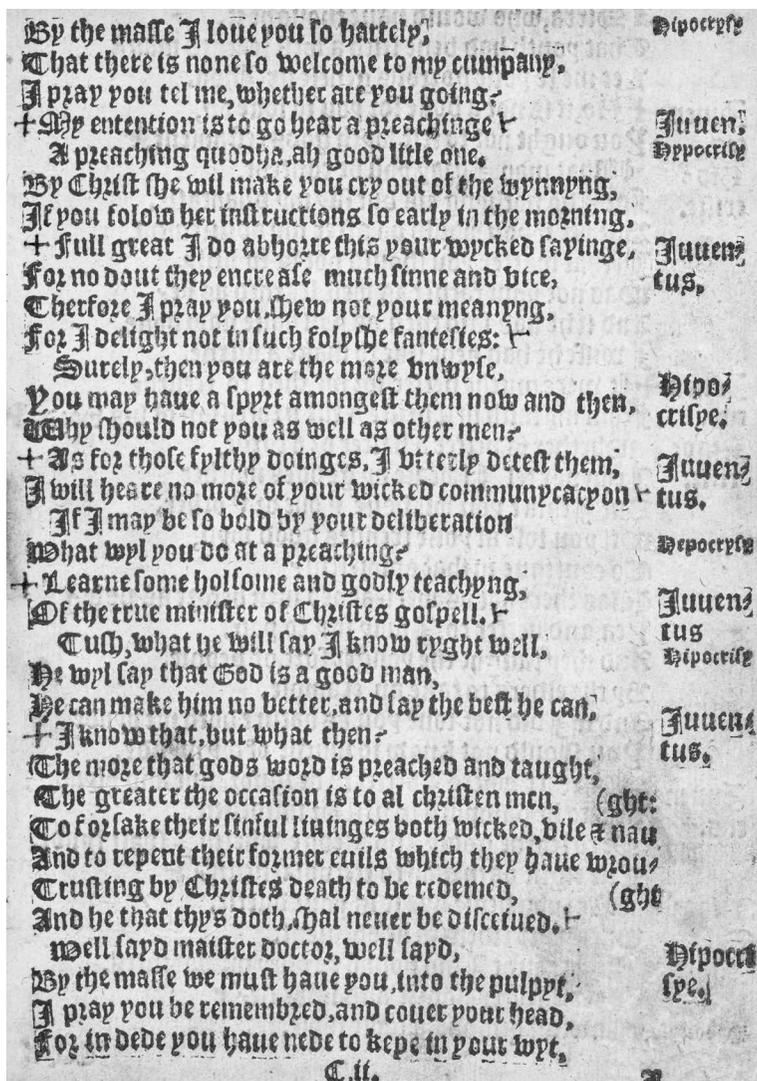


Figure 4.7 Robert Wever, *Lusty Juventus* ([John Wyer for] Abraham Veale [1551?], STC 25148), sig. C2<sup>r</sup>. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Mal. 844. Printed page showing crosses and turnstiles added by hand.

Source: Reproduced with permission of The Bodleian Libraries.

appear at the beginning (and, less frequently, the end) of each speech. By isolating each speech as an ‘individual unit of intellectual content’ in this way, early printers of plays contributed to an understanding of drama as performed dialogue; speech rather than action is made typographically visible as the drama’s chief organising principle.<sup>124</sup>

Unlike the very earliest printed plays, which systematically deploy special characters in this way, in *Lusty Juventus*, pilcrows are used only to mark the beginnings of some speeches. The crosses and turnstiles added to Mal. 844 therefore imply an annotator aware of early print conventions for the articulation of drama as a distinct category of text, and seem to illustrate his or her attempts to bring the book in line with other early printed plays. But the decision to mark only those speeches given to the title character suggest something slightly different, and point to one way that different print features could fruitfully overlap, shaping readerly experience in very particular ways. Guided by an awareness of the play's doubling scheme *and* the conventional use of dramatic pilcrows, this annotator has created a bespoke text that uses conventional print features to think through a performance-related problem: how 'foure may play it easely'. Of course it may be that the speeches have been marked up to be learnt, perhaps with a view to actual performance – it is telling that *Lusty Juventus* is one of the plays offered by Cardinal Morton's troupe in the play *Sir Thomas More* – but even if this is the case, the method of annotation implies a sophisticated awareness of the forms used for the typographic articulation of drama; whatever future he or she might have imagined for this text, the traces left by Mal. 844's annotator imply a style of reading that always and inevitably links plays to performance.

### Reading drama as literature

In contrast to the books that bear the marks of performative reading, a number of early printed playbooks evidence the kind of 'goal oriented' reading usually associated with professional scholars like Dee or Harvey.<sup>125</sup> There are playbooks in which important passages have been underlined (Q2 *Jacob and Esau*, Bod. Douce I 212) or marked up with other symbols (*Oedipus*, BL C.34.a.9.(1.)); and playbooks with extensive scholarly marginalia (Q1a *The Unjust Usurped Supremacy*, Bod. 4° Z 57(1) Th) or biographical notes about the author (*Free-Will*, Bod. Mal. 771). There is even one playbook with all the above: *Free-Will*, HM 56415. This playbook is heavily annotated in Latin and English in a neat humanist hand in the outer margins of the text, and its many additions include: the underlining of aphorisms and key points (often emphasised by the word 'nota' in the margin); marginal crosses to indicate insertions and cross references; the insertion of missing biblical references and other suggestions for further bibliography ('Reade further of this | mater in Platina *and* | suche Lyke, de vitis | Pontificum and in | Polydore Virgil, with | diuerse vthers church | wryters'); and marginal glosses that summarise the plot ('Mariage betweene | King

Freewyl and | La Gratia de Con | gruo'), its anti-clerical argument ('The Papists say, *that* | Aristotle was præ | cursor christi in na | turalibus, as John Baptist | was in spi | ritualibus' to gloss the printed line 'for we see that the weightiest poyntes of our fayth, can not be proued without the helpe of Aristotles discipline'), or that elaborate its more obscure points ('the name of Magister noster' is glossed by the handwritten note 'Rabbi, according to | the custome of the | Hebrews').<sup>126</sup> For the most part, amendments like these followed expected patterns, as evidenced by three copies of *An Interlude of Minds*, which contain virtually identical additions. Though clearly the work of three separate annotators, BL C.34.a.5.(2.), BL G.11158, and HM K-D 306 have each been amended to include additional biblical references (sig. B2<sup>v</sup>), provide missing words (sigs C3<sup>r</sup> and C5<sup>r</sup>), and expunge and correct textual errors (sig. C4<sup>v</sup>).<sup>127</sup> Overwhelmingly, the plays that attract this sort of attention are those like *Free-Will*, *An Interlude of Minds*, and *The Unjust Usurped Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome*, in which dramatic form is clearly a function of religious polemic, and unlike the annotations discussed in the previous section, the marks left in these playbooks serve to drive a wedge between the text's moral meaning and its status as play. Indeed, the underlining of sententious passages, the addition of cross references to biblical and classical works, and the provision of marginal glosses imply a method of reading roughly identical to the humanist practices that were widespread in schools and universities from the early sixteenth century. And by reading this way, the annotators of these playbooks cannot help but overlook – and at times even erase – those features that identify these books as drama. In short, their reading habits are always 'non-performative', and sometimes positively 'anti-performative'. However, while some forms of non-performative engagement evidently followed predictable patterns, other examples reveal users repurposing playbooks in unexpected ways, and to conclude this chapter, I turn to one final playbook, Eliz. 47, a copy of *Common Conditions* in the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University, which is annotated in ways that hint at the diverse ends to which early printed playbooks were sometimes read and used.

Eliz. 47 is the sole extant witness to the first edition of *Common Conditions*, a 'Come- | die <...> drawne out of the most | famous historie of Galiarbus Duke of Arabia'.<sup>128</sup> In his 1915 edition of the play for the Yale Elizabethan Club, Tucker Brooke noted a number of interlinear notes, which he identified as the work of the same sixteenth-century hand.<sup>129</sup> In her more recent introduction to the 2004 Malone Society reprint, Roberta Barker helpfully provides a full transcription and account of these notes, which can be summarised as follows (line numbers refer to the Malone Society edition) (Table 4.1):<sup>130</sup>

Table 4.1 Handwritten additions and amendments in *Common Conditions* ([1576], STC 4492), New Haven, CT, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Eliz. 47

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Sig. C1 <sup>v</sup> , ll. 524–39	Lamphedon's speech annotated in black ink in a secretary hand
Sig. C2 <sup>v</sup> , ll. 638–56	Clarisia's speech annotated in black ink in a secretary hand. These additions include three new rhyming couplets
Sig. C4 <sup>r</sup> , ll. 754, 757, 757, 766, and 768; Sig. C4 <sup>v</sup> , ll. 770–71	Sabia's soliloquy subjected to a number of minor amendments in brown ink in a secretary hand
Sig. D2 <sup>r</sup> , ll. 904–09	Sabia's speech annotated in brown ink in a secretary hand
Sig. G4 <sup>v</sup> , below the printer's ornament	A Latin motto added in a mixed italic and secretary hand

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No fewer than four speeches have undergone significant revision. Lamphedon's speech at sig. C1<sup>v</sup> has been altered to reflect a lover's complaint to a Suffolk maid, and this conceit extends to the changes the annotator makes to Clarisia's speech at sig. C2<sup>v</sup> (deviation from the printed text is printed in bold):

my hand here houering stands, to writ some prety verse to thee  
 my morning mynd for to delight that wantes the Ioyes that be  
 for as *the* lewed hauke whose rowling eyes, are fixt on Partedge fast  
 And liues in hope her flight once tayne to win her pray at last:  
 So I through loue of thee my deare who hath my hart in hold  
 Haue fixt my eye, vntill I die, **thou maist be sure and bold**  
 Ha my sweet hart, whose comly corps hath won my hart for euer,  
 Whose sight hath prest my tender brest, that I shal fayl thee neuer.  
 What double greifs feele I for thee? what woes do I sustaine?  
 What heapes of care in tender brest for thy sweet sake doth rayne?  
 Ha sweet Agnis, do pitie here thy captiue in this case.  
 And graunt that he obtayne of thee thy fauour and thy grace.  
 Let not blinde *Cupid* wrongfully on me his cunnynge showe,  
 Let not my loue forsaken be which I to thee do owe.  
 Let not thy mynde cleane contrary be setled on another.  
 Ha *Cupid* blinded God of loue, take not the tone for tother,  
 whom all *the* maids of suffolke soyle could once cause me to rue  
 but thou sweet Anne hath compelld me thy sweet loue for to sue  
 Sith that it is thy will o loue, ha thou mightie gods graunt mee,  
 That I may once obtayne thy loue, my linked spouse to bee.  
 therefore sweet Agnis perpend this well whiles I do lyue in Ioy  
 none other shall attayne my loue, though it bred myne anoy  
 But ha Amos, thy talke is wayne, thou art but a poore mans sonne,  
 And she daughter to one that is rich & of better state to come.

Here, the speaker, addressing himself as ‘Amos’, makes suit to a Suffolk maid, variously named as ‘Agnis’ and ‘Anne’ and identified in the final line as his social superior. Perhaps most strikingly, the changes made to this speech involve a reversal of gender, so that the female protagonist of a play set in the exotic orient becomes the male plaintiff in a far more domestic suit. In effect, it is as if the supplicant lover has assumed – rather too literally – the feminised identity of the archetypal chivalric suiter. In the annotator’s version of the play, the lover’s complaint is successful and the alterations to two of Sabia’s speeches ventriloquise the love of a lady – doubtless the Agnes/Anne of the earlier speeches – for an ‘Edward dear’, presumably identical with the earlier named Amos, which may, as Barker notes, be a ‘romantic pseudonym’.<sup>131</sup>

Various explanations have been given for these alterations. Tucker Brooke assumed the annotations express ‘the love of the owner of the book’, but as Barker has more recently noted, it is also possible ‘they represent a more general exercise in the creation of love poetry; a dialogue between two lovers (real or imaginary), or even the revision of these speeches for use in a new play or entertainment’.<sup>132</sup> While all these explanations are plausible, unless the annotator’s identity can be established – a task near impossible in the absence of dates or family names – the exact purpose of these interlineations remains uncertain. That said, the motto on the playbook’s final verso does help flesh out a context for the book’s idiosyncratic annotations:

Etsi (m.p.) hæc fabula

(m.p.)

Etsi est εωλος hæc fabula præsertim tantis novis rebus: tamen  
perire meam lucubrationem nolui

[Although (m.p.) this story

(m.p.)

Although this story is stale, especially after such new things: however  
I did not want to lose my midnight labours]

Read in the context of the annotator’s other amendments, these lines seem to suggest that irrespective of the outcome of his suit, his radical alterations to the text – here figured as his ‘midnight labours’ – retain an integral value of their own. In fact, the motto directly recalls Cicero’s *Epistolæ ad Familiares*, so in addition to glossing the book’s earlier annotations, these lines also offer a further instance of the annotator repurposing a text to fulfil a very personal need, ultimately suggestive of a receptive experience more literary than theatrical.<sup>133</sup> In fact, this particular allusion can be read as the annotator’s *apologia pro sua vita*: a defence of both the changes he has wrought and a celebration of their indelibility. Moreover, these lines demonstrate that whatever our

preconceptions about ‘the transitional form’ of early printed drama, at least one contemporary owner did not draw the distinction between popular and elite, dramatic and literary that characterise modern critical accounts of pre-playhouse drama.<sup>134</sup>

## Notes

1 *Free-Will*, sig. [A]2<sup>r</sup>.

2 *Free-Will*, sigs [A]2<sup>r</sup>–[A]2<sup>v</sup>.

3 Sonia Massai, *Shakespeare and the Rise of the Editor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 199.

4 As Bradin Cormack and Carla Mazzio have illustrated:

Errata sheets also functioned to establish the book’s authority by implying a process of scrupulous proofreading in the final stages of producing the material book. Nearly always, the errata sheet directs the reader, not only to make the noted corrections, but also to become a scrupulous reader by making further corrections, as required, on his or her own.

*Book Use, Book Theory, 1500–1700* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2005), p. 63. For further discussion on the relationship between errata lists and readers, see Ann Blair, ‘Errata Lists and the Reader as Corrector’, in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies after Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, ed. by Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), pp. 21–41.

5 *Free-Will*, sig. Dd2<sup>v</sup>.

6 Bod. Mal. 208; Bod. Mal. 771; BL 4256.b.1; Folger STC 18419; HD HEW 6.9.24; HM 5641. The last is heavily annotated in Latin and English in a neat humanist hand. I discuss this book at greater length below.

7 Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 2.

8 Sandra Hindman, *Printing the Written Word: The Social History of Books, circa 1450–1520* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 7.

9 In addition to a number of singly held items, I have examined all known copies in the following major repositories: Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Bodleian Library, British Library, Folger Shakespeare Library, Huntington Library, and Houghton Library. The only two significant collections not consulted are the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas and the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

10 William B. Sherman, ‘What Did Renaissance Readers Write in Their Books’, in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies*, ed. by Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 119–37 (p. 119).

11 In a letter dated 15 January 1612, Sir Thomas Bodley, founder of the Bodleian Library, justified his decision to exclude certain types of books including playbooks, writing to Thomas James, First Keeper of the Library, ‘I can see no good reason to alter my opinion, for excluding suche bookes, as almnackes, plaise, & an infinit number, that are daily printed, of very unworthy maters & handling’. *Letters of Sir Thomas Bodley to Thomas James, First Keeper of the Bodleian Library*, ed. by G. W. Wheeler (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926), pp. 221–22, letter no. 221 (21 January 1612).

- 12 I was fortunate enough to audit the *Shakespeare Association of America Annual Meeting 2017* seminar on 'Traces of Reading' where many provocative questions such as these were raised.
- 13 Sherman, 'Renaissance Readers', p. 120.
- 14 Zachary Lesser, *Renaissance Drama and the Politics of Publication: Readings in the English Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 6.
- 15 Kemble began inlaying his collection of around 700 quarto plays in 1792, and the process was completed by the Duke of Devonshire when he bought the collection in its entirety in 1821. The bookseller George D. Smith purchased them on behalf of Henry E. Huntington in 1914. See Seymour de Ricci, *English Collectors of Books and Manuscripts (1530–1930) and Their Marks of Ownership* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), pp. 80–81.
- 16 Sherman, 'Renaissance Readers', p. 123.
- 17 Stephen Orgel, *The Reader in the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 25.
- 18 Orgel, *Reader in the Book*, p. 25.
- 19 The modern concept of copyright dates back to the 1709 Statute of Anne. On the significance of this law and the subsequent history of copyright legislation, see Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
- 20 On this, and other problems associated with marginalia studies, see: Claire M. Bourne, 'Marking Shakespeare', *Shakespeare*, 13 (2017), 367–86; and Adam Smyth's forthcoming essay 'Book Marks: Object Traces in Early Modern Books', in *Early Modern Marginalia*, ed. by Katherine Acheson (London: Routledge, 2018), ch. 8.
- 21 On Dee see William H. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995); on Harvey see Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "'Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy', *Past and Present*, 129 (1990), 30–78.
- 22 'What Is the Archaeology of Reading?', *The Archaeology of Reading*, website <[archaeologyofreading.org/what-is-the-archaeology-of-reading](http://archaeologyofreading.org/what-is-the-archaeology-of-reading)> [accessed 19 May 2017].
- 23 'What Is the Archaeology of Reading?'
- 24 Alison Wiggins, 'What Did Renaissance Readers Write in Their Printed Copies of Chaucer?' *The Library*, 7th ser., 9 (2008), 3–36 (4).
- 25 Cormack and Mazzio, p. 4.
- 26 On Chaucer see: Antonina Harbus, 'A Renaissance Reader's English Annotations to Thynne's 1532 Edition of Chaucer's *Works*', *Review of English Studies*, 59 (2008), 342–55; and Wiggins, 'Renaissance Readers'. Copernicus: Owen Gingerich, *An Annotated Census of Copernicus' De revolutionibus (Nuremberg, 1543 and Basel, 1566)* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Owen Gingerich, *The Book Nobody Read: Chasing the Revolutions of Nicolaus Copernicus* (New York: Walker, 2004); Owen Gingerich, 'Researching *The Book Nobody Read: The De revolutionibus* of Nicolaus Copernicus', *Publications of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 99 (2005), 484–504. Shakespeare: Bourne, 'Marking Shakespeare'; Emma Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio: Four Centuries of an Iconic Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); Anthony James West, *The Shakespeare First Folio: The History of the Book, Volume II: A New Worldwide Census of First Folios* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Sidney: Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Literacy, and Gender* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), ch. 4.

- 27 David Pearson, 'The Importance of the Copy Census as a Methodology in Book History', in *Early Printed Books as Material Objects: Proceedings of the Conference Organized by the IFLA Rare Books and Manuscript Section Munich, 19–21 August 2009*, ed. by Bettina Wagner and Marcia Reed (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 321–29 (p. 323).
- 28 Sherman, 'Renaissance Readers', p. 130. My emphasis.
- 29 The idea of a book 'not merely as a source for ideas and images, but as a carrier of relationships' is Natalie Zemon Davis's, but the phrase has been adopted widely in studies of early modern reading practices. See Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Printing and the People', in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays by Natalie Zemon Davis* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 189–226 (p. 192). See also, for instance, Sherman, 'Renaissance Readers', p. 126; William B. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 18; Wiggins, 'Renaissance Readers', p. 29.
- 30 Brayman Hackel, p. 138.
- 31 See *The Banquet of Dainties*, BL C.39.a.22., where the trace of a pressed flower can be seen between sigs B5<sup>v</sup> and B6<sup>r</sup>
- 32 Harbus, 344.
- 33 Leedham-Green, I, 51, pp. 120–21 (p. 121).
- 34 Alexandra Halasz, *The Marketplace of Print Pamphlets and the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 9. See *PLRE*, II–VII.
- 35 Halasz, p. 9.
- 36 Leedham-Green, I, 50, pp. 119–20.
- 37 Helen Smith, "'Rare poemes ask rare friends": Popularity and Collecting in Elizabethan England', in *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England*, ed. by Andy Kesson and Emma Smith (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 79–100 (p. 89).
- 38 Lena Cowen Orlin, 'Fictions of the Early Modern English Probate Inventory', in *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England*, ed. by Henry Turner (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 51–84 (p. 53).
- 39 Orlin, p. 53.
- 40 Kew, The National Archives, E159/412/435; the list is edited in Leslie Hotson, 'The Library of Elizabeth's Embezzling Teller', *Studies in Bibliography*, 2 (1949–50), 40–63. Stonley is perhaps best known among scholars of early modern literature for his 1593 purchase of a copy of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, documented in his journals, which are now housed at the Folger Shakespeare Library. See Washington, DC, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.a.460, fols 9<sup>r</sup>–9<sup>v</sup>. For further discussion of both these documents see, Jason Scott-Warren, 'Books in the Bedchamber: Religion, Accounting and the Library of Richard Stonley', in *Tudor Books and Readers: Materiality and the Construction of Meaning*, ed. by John N. King (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 232–52, and Jason Scott-Warren, 'Early Modern Life-Writing Revisited: Accounting for Richard Stonley', *Past and Present*, 230 (2016), 151–70. For an overview of critical treatment of Stonley, see Alan Stewart, 'The Materiality of Early Modern Life-Writing: The Case of Richard Stonley', in *On Life Writing*, ed. by Zachary Lesser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 161–79.
- 41 Scott-Warren, 'Books in the Bedchamber', p. 237.
- 42 Scott-Warren, 'Books in the Bedchamber', p. 238.
- 43 Before Norton's translation appeared, the chapters on the Christian life (Book III, chapters vi–x in the final order of the work) had been put into

- English and circulated as *The life or conuersation of a christen man*, trans. by Thomas Broke (1549, STC 4436).
- 44 Oxford, University Archives, Hyp. A.5. The list has been transcribed and edited by Richard Panofsky and occurs in *PLRE*, II, 62, pp. 198–202.
- 45 *PLRE*, II, 62, p. 201.
- 46 Greg has argued that the effects inventoried are those belonging to Dudley's eldest surviving son, also John, 'who assumed the (courtesy) title of Lord Lisle when his father became Earl in 1547'. More recently, David Loades's *ODNB* entry for John Dudley, Earl of Warwick (1527?–1554) also takes the view that the wardrobe accounts are those of Dudley's oldest surviving son. However, since a number of items are listed as being given to Northumberland's issue (including John), identification of the list with the younger Dudley is next to impossible. See Greg, IV, p. 1651; David Loades, 'Dudley, John, duke of Northumberland (1504–1553)', in *ODNB* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, October 2008) <[www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8156](http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8156)> [accessed 31 May 2017].
- 47 'Thys apparell following | my Lord Lisle had whan J. Gough | was put to attend on his L. I first, *which* was Anno domini 1545. And | the 23th of december'. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Add. MS C.94, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>. The manuscript is partially transcribed by Henry Thomas Riley in *The Second Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts* (London: H. M. Stationary Office, 1874), pp. 101–02.
- 48 Bodl. Lib., Add. MS C.94, fol. 12<sup>r</sup>.
- 49 *The Second Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, p. 102. Sears Jayne also wrongly suggests that the books are 'arranged in order of value, 2d to 1s'; nowhere are the books appraised in this way. See Sears Jayne, *Library Catalogues of the English Renaissance: Reissue with New Preface and Notes* (Godalming: St Paul's Bibliographies, 1983), p. 104.
- 50 The DEEP items are three plays by John Heywood – *The Play of Love*, *The Four P's*, and *The Play of the Weather*. The item in Wiggins is *The Unjust Usurped Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome*. 'Old Custom' may have once formed a pair with the subsequently printed *New Custom*, or the latter may have been written or performed in response to the former. The 'book to play at Christ's' might be a reference to a play performed at Cambridge, or to a mystery-style pageant. While the phrasing 'a terence' is almost identical to 'a terens' as entered in the exactly contemporary inventory of William Hurde's books, discussed above, its size – a sextodecimo – makes it unlikely the reference is to an English book; *Andria*, the only single work by Terence to be printed before 1551, is a quarto.
- 51 Glover was a student of Christ Church 1563–72, and while his election to the Fellowship of St. John's was confirmed by the Bishop of Winchester, it was declared unstatutory a few months later. Nonetheless, despite the controversy, Glover seems to have been allowed to remain a Fellow and was eventually confirmed as such by Sir John Cordell, First Visitor and supporter of the foundation of the college in 1577. See Andrew Hegarty (ed.), *A Biographical Register of St. John's College Oxford, 1555–1660* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), p. 57.
- 52 *PLRE*, v, 133, pp. 218–60 (p. 219).
- 53 *PLRE*, v, 133, p. 219.
- 54 *PLRE*, v, 133, p. 219.
- 55 *PLRE*, v, 133, p. 219.
- 56 Aristophanes, *Eirēnē* [Greek] (Louvain, 1547, USTC 410486); Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Tragoediae* (Continent: date indeterminate); Titus Maccius Plautus, [*Selections* – *Sententiae*] (Continent: date indeterminate); and Plautus, *Commodiae* (Continent: date indeterminate).

- 57 Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 38.
- 58 See, for instance, the character list on sig. [A]2<sup>v</sup>.
- 59 On the style of counsel offered, see Stephen Alford, *Kingship and Politics in the Reign of Edward VI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 46–47.
- 60 Since his copy does not survive, it is impossible to say from the description in the inventory which of the two impressions he owned. However, if the earlier, it is tempting to imagine that he might have updated his copy to reflect the regime change in the way at least one other early reader did; in a copy of the book now at the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library all references to Somers set have been crossed through and altered to read ‘counsel’ or ‘counselours’. See Y 1974 3235.
- 61 This book has mid-Tudor royal binding and contains the signature of its publisher, ‘gwalter lynne’, inside the back cover. Diarmaid MacCulloch has suggested it may have been a presentation copy. See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 27.
- 62 For a recent assessment on the culture of counsel in Heywood’s writing, see Greg Walker, *Writing Under Tyranny: English Literature and the Henrician Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 29–119.
- 63 A character list for a play of Old Custom survives on the back of a Revels Office cloth-book (Woking, Surrey History Centre, MS LM 17) for the period covering December 1545–46. The characters listed – Virtue, Zeal, Old Blind Custom etc. – are apiece with other contemporary works of anti-Catholic satire. This play is more than likely identical with the one in Dudley’s possession. See Albert Feuillerat, ‘An Unknown Protestant Morality Play’, *Modern Language Review*, 9 (1914), 94–96. The performance of *Gammer Gurton* at Christ’s College is advertised on the title-page of the printed edition. On its polemicism, see Robert Hornback, ‘Reformation Satire, Scatology, and Iconoclastic Aesthetics in *Gammer Gurton’s Needle*’, in *A Companion to Tudor Literature*, ed. by Kent Cartwright (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 309–22.
- 64 Paul Whitfield White, *Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 55. See also, Paul Whitfield White, ‘Patronage, Protestantism, and Stage Propaganda in Early Elizabethan England’, in *Patronage, Politics, and Literary Traditions in England, 1558–1658*, ed. by Cedric Clive Brown (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1993), pp. 111–24 (esp. 123–24).
- 65 On the use of drama as religious propaganda, see Whitfield White, *Theatre and Reformation*; and Tamara Atkin, *The Drama of Reform: Theology and Theatricality, 1461–1553* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).
- 66 Scott-Warren, ‘Books in the Bedchamber’, p. 237.
- 67 For critical discussion of Harington’s playbooks see: Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 37; Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare and the Book Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 198; F. J. Furnivall, ‘Sir John Harington’s Shakespeare Quartos’, *Notes and Queries*, 7th ser., 9 (1890), 382–83; and Lucy Munro, ‘Reading Printed Comedy: Edward Sharpham’s *The Fleece*’, in *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. by Marta Straznický (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), pp. 39–53 (pp. 45–47).

- 68 Mirjam Foot, *Bookbinders at Work: Their Roles and Methods* (London: The British Library, 2006), p. 16 (see more generally pp. 16–22). Similar views can be found in: Jeffrey Todd Knight, *Bound to Read: Compilations, Collections, and the Making of Renaissance Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 4–5; Paul Needham, *The Printer and the Pardoner: An Unrecorded Indulgence Printed by William Caxton for the Hospital of St. Mary Rounceval, Charing Cross* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1986), p. 17; and David Pearson, *English Bookbinding Styles, 1450–1800: A Handbook* (London: The British Library, 2004), p. 1. On the practice of stab-stitching quarto books, see Aaron Pratt, ‘Stab-Stitching and the Status of Early English Playbooks as Literature’, *The Library*, 7th ser., 16 (2015), 304–28.
- 69 Knight, p. 9.
- 70 Alexandra Gillespie, ‘Poets, Printers, and Early English Sammelbände’, *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 67 (2004), 189–214 (199).
- 71 These are, in order: Giovanni Boccaccio, *A notable historye of Nastagio and Trauersari*, trans. by C. T. (1569, STC 3184); Thomas Howell, *The arbor of amitie* (1568, STC 13874); Edmund Tilney, *A briefe and pleasant discourse of duties in mariage, called the Flower of friendshipp*, 3rd edn (1571, STC 24077); *Agamemnon*; Giovanni Boccaccio, *A pleasant and delightfull history, of Galesus Cymon and Iphigenia*, trans. by T. C. ([c. 1565], STC 3183); Isabella Whitney, *The copy of a letter* ([1567?], STC 25439); and William Hubbard, *The tragicall and lamentable historie of two faythfull mates: Ceyx & Alcione* (1569, STC 13897).
- 72 Bod. 8 H 44 Art.Seld., unnumbered flyleaf 4<sup>v</sup>. For a roughly contemporary printed version, see ‘A statute vpon the offyce of Coroners made the .iiii. yere of kynge Edward .i.’, in *The boke of Magna Carta, with diuers other statutes* (1534, STC 9272), fols 160<sup>r</sup>–62<sup>r</sup>.
- 73 Hubbard, *Ceyx and Alcione*, sig. A1<sup>v</sup>, Bod. 8 H 44(7) Art.Seld.
- 74 George Turberville, *Epitathes and sonnettes* (1587), fols 153<sup>v</sup>–54<sup>v</sup>. This book was published with *Tragical tales* (1587, STC 24330); the foliation is continuous, and it does not have a separate STC entry.
- 75 Turberville, *Epitathes and Sonnettes* (1587), fol. 153<sup>v</sup>.
- 76 At least one critic has postulated that there was an earlier printed edition in 1574. See John Erskine Hankins, *The Life and Works of George Turberville* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1940), p. 13.
- 77 Spencer’s name also appears in ‘Certaine letters in verse’ written by Turberville, probably while in Russia, but printed in Richard Hakluyt’s *Principall navigations* (1589, STC 12625). Noting that Edmund Spenser was only sixteen when Turberville left for Russia, Haskins suggested that the ‘chances that he is the person addressed [...] are slight, especially when we note the large number of Spencers [...] at the Inns of Court’. Hankins, p. 23. For an earlier view, identifying Spenser with the poet, see Emil Koeppe, ‘George Turberviles Verhältniss zur italienischen Litteratur’, *Anglia*, 13 (1891), 42–71.
- 78 Boccaccio, *Galesus Cymon and Iphigenia*, trans. by T. C.
- 79 See ‘The Printer to the Reader’, in George Gascoigne, *A hundreth sundrie flowres* ([1573], STC 11635), sigs A2<sup>r</sup>–A3<sup>r</sup> (sig. A2<sup>r</sup>).
- 80 London, British Library, MS Hargrave 205, fols 9<sup>r</sup>–22<sup>r</sup>; London, British Library, MS Lansdowne 786; and Washington, DC, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.a.198, fols 10<sup>r</sup>–12<sup>v</sup>.
- 81 Jessica Winston, *Lawyers at Play: Literature, Law, and Politics at the Early Modern Inns of Court, 1558–1581* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 152.

- 82 Caroline Sale, 'The Literary Thing: The Imaginary Holding of Isabella Whitney's "Wyll" to London (1573)', in *The Oxford Handbook of English Law and Literature, 1500–1700*, ed. by Lorna Hutson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 431–49 (p. 434).
- 83 *Thyestes*, sig. \*7<sup>v</sup>.
- 84 'These early prints passed into the Cambridge University Library together with a Caxton volume of Lydgate's *The horse the ghooes & the sheep* (now CUL Inc. 5.J.1.1, STC 17018). But it is clear from the physical appearance of this text that it had circulated separately from the other prints in the sixteenth century'. See Seth Lerer, 'Medieval Literature and Early Modern Readers: Cambridge University Library Sel. 5.51–5.63', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 97 (2003), 311–32 (313). The twelve items that therefore make up the volume as it originally circulated are: *The dyctes*, trans. by Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers (1528, STC 6830), Sel. 5.51; Jacques Legrand, *The boke of good maners*, trans. by William Caxton (1507, STC 15398), Sel. 5.52; *The reygne of all the kynoges, with the sayntes and martyrs* (1530, STC 9983.7), Sel. 5.53 [this and the following, now separately bound quarto were printed as one text]; *A lytell shorte cronycle* [this is a version of Lydgate's chronicle in verse] (1530, STC 9983.7), Sel. 5.54; Stephen Hawes, *A joyfull medytacyon to all Englonde* ([1509], STC 12953), Sel. 5.55; *The fantasy of the passyon of the Fox* (1530, STC 10685), Sel. 5.56; [*The book of hunting*. An extract] ([1530?], STC 3313.3), Sel. 5.57; Paul Bushe, *The extripation of ignorancy* ([1526?], STC 4186), Sel. 5.58; *The testament of John Lydgate* ([1520?], STC 17035), Sel. 5.59; *Secrete of secretes*, trans. by Robert Copland (1528, STC 770), Sel. 5.60; Q2 *The Play of the Weather*, Sel. 5.61; Miles Huggarde, *A new treatyse in maner of a dialoge* ([1550?], STC 13560), Sel. 5.62; *The assise of bread* ([1550?(T)], STC 867), Sel. 5.63. Wynken de Worde printed the first seven of these items.
- 85 Lerer, 'Medieval Literature and Early Modern Readers', pp. 312–13.
- 86 Lerer, 'Medieval Literature and Early Modern Readers', p. 325.
- 87 Seth Lerer, *Chaucer and his Readers: Imagining the Author in Late Medieval England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 85–116. See also Lerer, 'Medieval Literature and Early Modern Readers', p. 325.
- 88 Heywood's play is not the only early playbook to be subjected to childish annotation. A copy of the Protestant morality, *An Interlude of Minds*, now in the Huntington Library (K-D 306), is inscribed repeatedly on B5<sup>v</sup> with the word 'fart'. It is a sentiment that cuts against both the play's moralistic tone and the scholarly additions of an earlier commentator, and it may be that the couplet added on the final verso by a third hand – 'He that woulde looke, vpon a Booke to learne therby: | Chyld lyke mvst he, his A B C, Learne perfectly' – was intended as a direct riposte.
- 89 Pamela M. King, 'John Heywood, *The Play of the Weather*', in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, ed. by Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 207–23 (p. 211).
- 90 Seth Lerer, 'Devotion and Defacement: Reading Children's Marginalia', *Representations*, 118 (2012), 126–53 (136).
- 91 F1 *The Play of the Weather*, sig. E2<sup>r</sup>.
- 92 Knight, pp. 58–61.
- 93 William Davenant, *Luminalia, or The Festival of Light* (1637, STC 16923); John Caryl, *The English Princess* (1667, Wing C744); George Digby, *Elvira* (1667, Wing B4764); Abraham Bailey, *The Spiteful Sister* (1667, Wing B445); Matthew Medbourne, *The Converted Twins* (1667,

Wing M1583A); George Chapman, *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria (Irus)* (1598, STC 4965); Thomas Heywood, *How a Man May Choose a Good Wife From a Bad* (first printed 1602, but the edition implied here is 1630, STC 5599); William Rowley, *A Shoemaker, a Gentleman* (1638, STC 21422); *God's Promises*; *Gorboduc* (1590, STC 17029); Ben Jonson, *The Case is Altered* (1609, STC 14757). Knight has stated that all but *Gorboduc* are traceable to different volumes in Garrick's library. But the phrasing 'Gorbodock: with ferex & porax' makes it clear that the reference is to the 1590 edition; no other early modern edition gives the title as 'The tragedy of Gorboduc <...> and of his two sonnes, Ferrex and Porrex'. This book, as we have already seen, is the sixth item in the Garrick volume now shelved as BL C.21.b.40. See Knight, pp. 209–10.

- 94 In fact, if we assume the copy of *Gorboduc* in BL C.21.b.40 is the one referred to in this contents list, then Smith's volume must have contained at least one non-dramatic item: Lydgate's *The serpent of deuision*, which was printed in collection with *Gorboduc* and does not seem to have been separated from it when the volume was originally compiled.
- 95 For examples, see Gillespie, pp. 203–04.
- 96 The phrase occurs twice: on the title-page, and the final verso (sig. E4<sup>v</sup>). The other playbooks it appears in are: *The Disobedient Child*, sig. H2<sup>v</sup>, BL C.34.c.55; *New Custom*, sig. D4<sup>v</sup>, BL C.21.b.40.(2.); Thomas Lupton, *All for Money* (1578, STC 16949), sigs A3<sup>r</sup> and E3<sup>v</sup>, BL C.34.d.24; Nathaniel Woodes, *The Conflict of Conscience* (1581, STC 25966.5), sig. A2<sup>r</sup>, BL C.21.b.40.(1.); Richard Edwards, *Damon and Pithias* (1581, STC 7515), sigs A3<sup>r</sup> and I2<sup>r</sup>, BL C.34.c.31; and *Gorboduc* (in collection with *The serpent of deuision*), sig. A3<sup>r</sup>, BL C.21.b.40(6).
- 97 On the history of the use of book curses and mottos of this kind, see Marc Drogin, *Anathemat!: Mediaeval Scribes and the History of Book Curses* (Montclair, NJ: Allanheld & Schram, 1983). Versions of this motto for a bookplate occur in the following manuscripts: Cambridge, Magdalene College, MS Pepys 1760 (a sixteenth-century choir-book once in royal ownership; the verses occur in a contemporary hand on the front paste-down); London, British Library, Additional MS 30506, fol. 170<sup>r</sup> (a late medieval liturgical manual; this example of the curse – 'Thys boke ys sancht audatys; he þat stelys þe boke shall be haulynth by þe neck' – is not listed in the *NIMEV*); London, British Library, MS Royal 18 A XVII, fol. 199<sup>r</sup> (a volume of homilies and gospels; the English lines are accompanied by a Latin couplet, which identify the author as one 'Pookefart', a kind of puckish spirit popular in children's rhymes and ditties, as discussed by Seth Lerer in *Children's Literature: A Reader's History, from Aesop to Harry Potter* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 69–71); London, British Library, MS Royal 18 B XXII, fol. 43<sup>v</sup> (a fifteenth-century professional-looking copy of *The Boke of Noblesse*, which contains revisions (c. 1475) in William Worcester's own hand; the *NIMEV* wrongly locates these lines to fol. 42<sup>v</sup>, but they occur a page later, where they have been crossed through, perhaps by the 'Edward Jones' who seems to have been responsible for some of the other, slightly later marks of ownership on the same page); London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 259, fols 4<sup>r</sup> and 4<sup>v</sup> (a mid-fifteenth-century copy of the *Brut*, with many manuscript additions in later hands; both occurrences of these lines are in the hand of William Bentley, whose signature and initials are also found elsewhere in the manuscript); Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29, fol. 143<sup>v</sup> (an incomplete Latin chronicle of the fifteenth century, on vellum and paper bound with a medieval miscellany of French, English,

and Latin texts, mostly in verse; the book curse occurs on the final verso of the first part of the manuscript, and names Thomas Ragland, who was knighted in 1520, as its scribe); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Hatton 106 (a mid-fourteenth-century portion of the breviary bound up with a portable ferial psalter of Sarum/Dominican use; the inscription occurs in a sixteenth-century hand on the rear paste-down); and New Haven, CT, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, MS Takamiya 47 (an illuminated manuscript on parchment containing the text of the psalter, preceded by prayers and a calendar; the motto occurs on the flyleaf). See *NIMEV*, 1165, p. 79.

- 98 Jason Scott-Warren, 'Reading Graffiti in the Early Modern Book', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73 (2010), 363–81 (371).
- 99 Here, I define early as within a hundred years of a book's publication. Dating signatures is notoriously difficult. Some are dated or dateable. In other instances, the cast of the handwriting offers the only guide.
- 100 Among the more interesting inscriptions in this book are: 'William fforde & Anne Yerdleye must by the sofarance | of almyghtye god make a Ioyfull | marryage | in the tyme to come by the consent of their | ffrendes' (sig. Z3<sup>r</sup>); 'Wylliam fforde Gentelmane & yemen' (sig. Aa3<sup>r</sup>); 'Bowyer est huius libri possessor | Ignota si me videas regione relictum | Bowyer querito herus est ille mihi' (Bowyer is the owner of the book. If you should see me abandoned in an unknown place I am looking eagerly for Bowyer; he is my lord) (sig. Bb1<sup>r</sup>); 'Wyllyam Forde onythe thys boke, god make hym a gud man | amen *per me*' (sig. Bb1<sup>r</sup>); 'Gayntelman | Be yt known unto all men be theys | presente *that I* | Wyllyam Forde of the mosse' (sig. Bb1<sup>r</sup>). The Fordes and Bowyers were members of the Staffordshire landed gentry. The Yerdley's were another prominent local family, from Audeley, co. Stafford. Another family member, Rondull (d. 1609), signed his name into a copy of George Gascoigne's *A hundreth sundrie flowres*, CUL Syn. 7. 57. 23. I have not been able to trace records of a marriage between William Forde and Anne Yerdley, but in 1565 a William Forde married Margaret Bowyer, which probably explains the appearance of both of these families' names in this book. Since William seems to have been a common family name, and because the handwriting is hard to date precisely, it is difficult to say whether *this* William is the man who inscribed BL 644.e.11. If it is, then his marks of ownership must date before his 1565 marriage at the age of fifteen. On the Forde and Bowyer families, see John Sleight, *A History of the Ancient Parish of Leek, in Staffordshire* (Leek: R. Nall; London: Bemrose, 1862), pp. 188–91. On the Yardleys, see 'Yeardeley, Flowerdewe, West (Continued)', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 25 (1917), 201–08; 'Pedigree of Yardley', *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 25 (1917), 208.
- 101 O1 *Three Laws*, sig. G4<sup>v</sup>, Bod. Tanner 155. Versions of this couplet also appear in at least one other printed book (*Horae ad usum Eborum* (1536, STC 16106), Lincoln Cathedral, RR.4.20), and in a further six manuscripts. See *NIMEV*, 4138, pp. 276–77.
- 102 Scott-Warren, 'Reading Graffiti', p. 369.
- 103 See CUL Sel. 5.61.
- 104 In addition to the similarities between their marks, the sun on Mylner's shield is a direct reference to the sign of Wynken de Worde. Together they suggest a connection, possibly a trade partnership between the provincial printer and his more prolific London counterpart. On Mylner see Blayney, I, 133–34.
- 105 Scott-Warren, 'Reading Graffiti', p. 379.

- 106 William Byrd, *Psalmes, sonets, & songs of sadnes and pietie* (1588, STC 4253), sig. D1<sup>r</sup>.
- 107 The first seven verses of the ballad version are adapted from another song in Byrd's collection, 'My minde to me a kingdome is', which has its own complex textual history. See L. G. Black, 'Studies in Some Related Manuscript Poetic Miscellanies of the 1580s', unpublished DPhil thesis, 2 vols (University of Oxford, 1970), 1, 159–78.
- 108 Scott-Warren, 'Reading Graffiti', p. 379.
- 109 O1 *Three Laws*, sig. G1<sup>v</sup>.
- 110 On Blomefylde, see Donald C. Baker and J. L. Murphy, 'The Books of Myles Blomefylde', *The Library*, 5th ser., 31 (1976), 377–85; on Neile, see Jason Scott-Warren, 'In Search of 850 Lost Books', *Cambridge Centre for Material Texts: A New Forum for the Study of the Word in the World*, blog post (21 October 2013) <[www.english.cam.ac.uk/cmt/?p=3716](http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/cmt/?p=3716)> [accessed 15 June 2017]. For the inscriptions mentioned above, see: *Fulgens and Lucrece*, sig. G3<sup>v</sup>, HM 62599; and *New Custom*, t. p., Folger STC 6150. Alan H. Nelson has adopted a similar approach to reconstruct the library of the bibliophile Humfrey Dyson, who was also something of an avid playbook collector. See Alan H. Nelson, 'Shakespeare and the Bibliophiles: From the Earliest Years to 1616', in *Owners, Annotators, and the Signs of Reading*, ed. by Robin Myers, Michael Harris and Giles Mandelbrote (London: The British Library; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2005), pp. 49–74 and also his 'List of Dyson Books Identified and Traced', *Alan H. Nelson Homepage*, website (28 February 2000) <[socrates.berkeley.edu/~ahnelson/PROVENANCE/dyson.html](http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~ahnelson/PROVENANCE/dyson.html)> [accessed 15 June 2017].
- 111 Early playbooks do not occur in any of the lists of books owned by women that I have examined, and I have only found women's signatures in three early printed playbooks or quasi-dramatic texts: *A Pretty Complaint of Peace*, Folger STC 5611, where the name 'Elizabeth Johnston' is written beneath the colophon; Q1b *The Glass of Government*, Folger STC 11643, where the name 'Sara Boswell' is inscribed alongside other members of the Boswell family; and *Acolastus*, BL 644.e.11, which contains the name 'Anne Yerdleye', discussed above. On early modern women as book owners, see: Robert Gary Babcock, *A Book of Her Own: An Exhibition of Manuscripts and Printed Books in the Yale University Library That Were Owned by Women Before 1700* (New Haven, CT: Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University, 2005); Caroline Bowden, 'The Library of Mildred Cooke Cecil, Lady Burghley', *The Library*, 7th ser., 6 (2005), 3–29; Arnold Hunt, 'The Books, Manuscripts, and Literary Patronage of Mrs Anne Sadleir (1585–1670)', in *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Writing: Selected Papers from the Trinity/Trent Colloquium*, ed. by Victoria F. Burke and Jonathan Gibson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 204–36; David McKittrick, 'Women and Their Books in Seventeenth-Century England: The Case of Elizabeth Puckering', *The Library*, 7th ser., 1 (2000), 359–80; and Paul Morgan, 'Frances Wolfreston and "Hor Bouks": A Seventeenth-Century Woman Book-Collector', *The Library*, 6th ser., 11 (1989), 197–219.
- 112 The ink used for these additions is lighter than that used for Blomefylde's signature. Because they largely comprise individual characters rather than continuous writing it is hard to be certain they are the work of the same hand, though this seems the most likely conclusion.
- 113 Claire M. Bourne, 'Dramatic Pilcrowes', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 108 (2014), 413–52 (413).
- 114 Bourne, 'Pilcrowes', p. 413.
- 115 Bourne, 'Pilcrowes', p. 425.

- 116 On the staging of *Fulgens*, see *The Plays of Henry Medwall*, ed. by M. E. Moeslein (New York: Garland, 1981), pp. 5, 8–10; and *The Plays of Henry Medwall*, ed. by Alan H. Nelson (Cambridge: Brewer, 1980), pp. 18–19.
- 117 O1 *Three Laws*, sig. B2<sup>v</sup>, Bod. Tanner 155.
- 118 *The Nature of the Four Elements*, sig. E6<sup>v</sup>, BL C.39.b.17.
- 119 Blayney, I, 264.
- 120 *The Nature of the Four Elements*, sig. E5<sup>r</sup>, BL C.39.b.17. Julie Stone Peters is clearly wrong to describe the song as ‘four blank music bars [...] to be filled in with hand drawn notes’. There is a single blank stave on sig. E4<sup>v</sup> accompanied by the note ‘Then the dausers with out the hall syng this wyse’, but this is not divided into bars. She is also wrong to suggest that these ‘hand-drawn notes’ have been added into several copies; only one copy is extant. See Julie Stone Peters, *The Theatre of the Book, 1480–1880: Print, Text, and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 17.
- 121 See Chapter 2, pp. 77–78.
- 122 *Four Tudor Interludes*, ed. by J. A. B. Somerset (London: Bloomsbury, 1974), p. 18.
- 123 In his admittedly brief treatment of this sign as used to mark line-endings in plays, Anthony Graham-White mistakes the examples in *Lusty Juventus* for printed characters. See Anthony Graham-White, *Punctuation and Its Dramatic Value in Shakespearean Drama* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1995), p. 32.
- 124 Paul Saenger, ‘Silent Reading: Its Impact on Late Medieval Script and Society’, *Viator*, 13 (1982), 367–414 (392).
- 125 I borrow the phrase ‘goal oriented’ to describe the reading habits of educated men of letters from Brayman Hackel. See her *Reading Material*, p. 3.
- 126 *Free-Will*, sigs P2<sup>v</sup>, B1<sup>v</sup>, C4<sup>v</sup>, and D4<sup>r</sup>, HM 56415.
- 127 While these additions mark the extent of the annotations in the two British Library copies of this play, the Huntington copy contains a number of further additions and corrections along similar lines. It also contains a number of other annotations in at least two further hands, as well as the signature of George Steevens, the eighteenth-century Shakespearean commentator. See above, p. 190n88.
- 128 This ‘famous historie’ remains untraced, though the play’s possible sources are the subject of an article by C. F. Tucker Brooke, and are further discussed by Roberta Barker in her introduction to the recent facsimile. See C. F. Tucker Brooke, ‘On the Sources of *Common Conditions*’, *Modern Language Notes*, 31 (1916), 474–78; and Roberta Barker, ‘Introduction’, in *Common Conditions* [?1576], ed. by Roberta Barker (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The Malone Society, 2004), pp. v–xxx (p. xii–xiii). A second edition printed after 1576 also survives in a single copy, now in the Huntington Library.
- 129 *Common Conditions*, ed. by Tucker Brooke (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1915), pp. 86–87.
- 130 Barker, pp. xxvi–xxx.
- 131 Barker, p. xx.
- 132 Barker, p. xx.
- 133 ‘etsi erat εωλος illa epistula, praesertim tantis postea novis rebus adlatis, tamen perire lucubrationem meam nolui’. Cicero, *Epistulae ad Familiares*, ed. by D. R. Shackleton Bailey, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), II, 7 (no. 177.9–11).
- 134 Barker, p. xxi.

# Conclusion

## Plays in books

This book has been about plays as books, about the articulation of dramatic form in print. Specifically, it has been about the print invention of drama as a category of text designed for readerly consumption. Arguing that plays were made legible by the printed paratexts that accompanied them, it has shown that by the middle of the sixteenth century it was not only possible to market a play for leisure-time reading, it was also possible to embed in its architecture ways of reading specific to its particular genre or type. However, more than just a study of implied reading practices, this book has also been about the historical owners and readers of plays and the sometimes-unpredictable uses to which they subjected their playbooks. Only a tiny fraction of the early printed plays originally printed still survive, and consequently, the patterns of use they suggest need to be understood in the context of this high rate of loss. But loss can be both a story of overuse and of neglect. Typically printed as slim quarto pamphlets and sold unbound, playbooks were materially prone to degradation, and low survival rates might simply reflect their heavy use. But playbook runs did not always sell out, and high loss rates might also suggest that some plays were not extensively read or otherwise used. In this scenario, playbooks may have been more likely to have been recycled than read at all. In concluding this book, I consider the unexpected afterlives of three early printed plays, showing that efforts to shape receptive horizons were only partially successful, that patterns of use did not always follow those suggested by title-pages and other front matter.

In a typically provocative statement, Stephen Orgel has suggested that ‘playbooks are not plays’.<sup>1</sup> What he means is that those elements of performance that resist textual expression prevent plays from becoming books. Playbooks, then, are not plays, but approximate their effects in material form. This book has argued that the achievement of early printers of plays was to develop conventions for the articulation of these effects. Playbooks might only ever recall or invoke the *idea* of performance, but the establishment of relatively stable and readily identifiable ways of rendering dramatic form in print meant that by the middle of the sixteenth century, most potential purchasers or readers would have *recognised* certain printed books as plays even as they appreciated that printed playbooks

were not, and could not, be the same as the performances to which they allude. The three examples with which I conclude this book problematise this argument in different ways. The first complicates the view that there was a secure market for playbooks by tracing the fate of a copy of *Impatient Poverty* as binding waste.<sup>2</sup> The second and third show two other ways that playbooks could turn up inside other books, thereby suggesting that for some early readers the primary unit of meaning was not the play as a whole, but one or other of its constituent parts.

### Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lawn F.214

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lawn F.214 is an octavo volume in a late-sixteenth or early-seventeenth-century Oxford panel-stamped binding, which contains a copy of Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (USTC 451500) printed in Geneva in 1595. At some point late in the seventeenth or early in the eighteenth century, it became the property of Isaac Newton (d. 1727) who signed it in his distinctive hand on the second free endleaf recto, 'E Libris Isaac Newton Armigeri'.<sup>3</sup> When the volume was bound a century or so earlier, a single leaf of an early printed play was incorporated as waste endpapers (Figure C.1).<sup>4</sup> A memo in the hand of the book collector Brian Lawn (d. 2001) on the verso of the second free endleaf correctly identifies this text as Q1 *Impatient Poverty*, and rightly notes British Library, C.34.i.26 as the only other copy of this edition to have survived.<sup>5</sup> But it is not the only early printed playbook to have suffered this fate. As I outlined in Chapter 3, the only evidence of *Pater, Filius, et Uxor, or The Prodigal Son* is a single leaf marked in ways that suggest it once served as endpapers for a smaller octavo volume.<sup>6</sup> And knowledge of a further six early printed plays seems likewise to be a consequence of their fragmentary survival in the binding of other books. *Temperance and Humility* survives as a single leaf that has obviously come out of a binding, and the same is true of *Old Christmas, or Good Order* (a four-leaf fragment); *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (extant in a single quire, sig. C); *An Interlude of Detraction, Light, Judgement, Verity, and Justice* (a two-leaf fragment, sigs E1 and E3); *Somebody, Avarice, and Minister* (also a two-leaf fragment); and *The Cruel Debtor* (two separate but conjugate fragments, each of two leaves, now bound as a single item).<sup>7</sup> Moreover, while none of the six extant leaves of *Albion Knight* bear any sign of ever having formed part of a binding, when John Payne Collier discovered the fragment he described it as 'recovered from the fly-leaves of an old book where it had originally been placed by the binder as waste paper'.<sup>8</sup> In addition there are also a number of plays extant in more than one copy, of which at least one is a fragment bearing the signs of reuse as binding waste. In fact, that *fragmentary* copies of early printed plays exist at all seems largely to be a consequence of their function as endleaves in volumes assembled at a later date.<sup>9</sup>

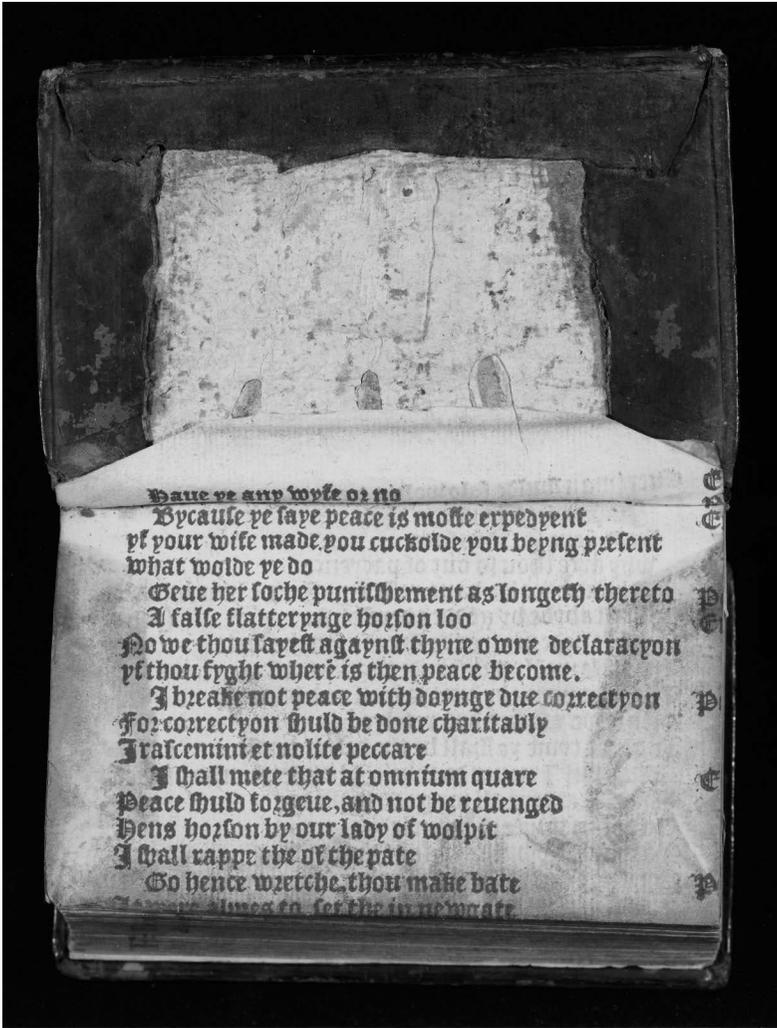


Figure C.1 Bodleian Library, Lawn F. 214, board and waste endpapers. Waste from a copy of *Impatient Poverty* (John King, 1560, STC 14112.5). Source: Reproduced with permission of The Bodleian Libraries.

Printed pages used as binding waste often bear the marks of earlier use: as proof sheets, damaged sheets, second-hand books, or unsold stock.<sup>10</sup> The recycling of printed material in this way is therefore typically a sign of its redundancy, and the early printed plays that turn up as endpapers often do so because they no longer have any use as playbooks. The single leaf of Q1 *Impatient Poverty* has not been marked up as a proof and agrees character for character with the British Library copy of the same

edition. And since it bears no other signs of historic use, it is likely that it was extracted from unsold stock. But there is a paradox here, since the play ran to a second edition just a year after it was first published. In other words, the decision to produce a second edition cannot have been predicated on the success of the first; when William Copland brought out a second edition in around 1561, it is unlikely that John King's edition of the previous year had sold out. At the same time, if Adam Smyth is right in surmising that new editions often rendered earlier editions obsolete, the publication of Copland's edition might explain why copies of King's first edition were available as waste some three decades later.<sup>11</sup> But if King's edition was not a flyaway success, why did Copland take this risk? One possible answer lies in the way these two editions were packaged. As I outlined in Chapter 1, the title-page to Q1 *Impatient Poverty* features an ornamental compartment of a kind rarely used for dramatic title-pages and unprecedented on the title-page of an interlude. In contrast, the title-page to Copland's edition is illustrated by three factotum figures, which represent the play's central characters. Such figures seem not only to have had some currency in the marketing of drama, but also to have been a hallmark of Copland's dramatic output. It may be that by making *Impatient Poverty* look more like other early printed plays, Copland speculated that his edition would meet with greater success. Whether it did is hard to say. The play was never again reprinted, and Copland's edition survives in just one, imperfect copy, HM 61801.

As Smyth has noted, the reuse of a printed page as binding waste transforms it into something entirely material; it ceases as text in its own right, and serves instead to reinforce the textual integrity of another book.<sup>12</sup> When playbooks are repurposed in this way, they cease to be legible as plays, becoming instead a 'tactile feature' of another book.<sup>13</sup> Like all such fragments, they are what Anna Reynolds has described as 'remnants that puncture the linearity of time, remembering a lost whole'.<sup>14</sup> In the case of Lawn F.214's endleaves, the whole recalled is not just Q1 *Impatient Poverty* but also the entire tradition of pre-playhouse drama. As theatrical practices and tastes changed with the rise of the public stage, early printed plays may have become more susceptible to reuse as binding waste. But as fragments used in the binding of other books, they inevitably evoke the practices and forms of an earlier dramatic culture. They are in a sense, then, monuments to their own obsolescence. This form of reuse as binding waste is not the only way that early printed plays could be reduced to fragments, and this book concludes with a consideration of two dramatic excerpts that found their way into other books.

### Cambridge, University Library, Additional MS 3573

In her study of seventeenth-century dramatic extracts, Laura Estill has defined dramatic excerpting as the practice of copying selections from a

play. That any readers felt compelled to do so suggests that some early moderns viewed plays as they did other texts, ‘as works to be broken into fragments for personal use’.<sup>15</sup> Appropriating knowledge in this way, such habits have their roots in a commonplacing tradition that can be traced back to the classical era, and which by the middle of the sixteenth century was at the heart of much schoolroom practice and theory. However, despite its long and reputable history, Estill has suggested that the habit of extracting memorable passages from plays only really took hold following the rise of the public stage.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, when readers began excerpting plays, they tended to do so from professional plays. In brief, she has concluded that there are no known examples of manuscript extracts from English plays prior to 1590, and that when readers began routinely to excerpt passages they were more likely to do so from plays written after 1590.<sup>17</sup>

Cambridge, University Library, Additional MS 3573 is a mid-fifteenth-century copy of John Walton’s Middle English verse translation of Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy*.<sup>18</sup> Copied in a hybrid anglicana onto vellum, the manuscript is bound with paper endleaves that contain numerous notes in at least one mid-sixteenth-century hand. Similar sixteenth-century annotations also occur elsewhere in the manuscript, some of which are signed – ‘Thomas | Chapman wrote | thys’ – and dated – ‘written the 21 daye of September in the yere | anno domene 1562’.<sup>19</sup> On the first endleaf recto, the following passage appears:

#### Contemplacion

Christe that was christened crucifyed & crowned In his  
bosom true lue was gaged wythe aspeare, his vaynes brused &  
browken & to apeller bunde with scurges he was ssearched the  
knotes the skane teare on his necke to calverye the grete crose,  
he bare his blude vayne to the grunde as scriptoure doiethe telle,  
his burdyne was so hevye that vnder y<sup>t</sup> he fyle, lo I am kynne to  
the lordes wyfe that is godes wyfe sonne my name is written  
formest<sup>20</sup>

in the bucke of lyfe, for I am caled per fet contemplacion.

The first six and a half lines are a conventional description of Christ’s passion of a kind common in late medieval religious writing, but the shift to the first person at the end of the sixth line reveals the passage is, in fact, a speech from a play. The play in question is *Hycke Scorner*, which was printed three times between 1515 and 1550, and the passage corresponds with the first ten lines of Contemplacyon’s first speech. Unlike the printed versions of the text, the extract in CUL Add. MS 3573 has been copied as prose, but commas after ‘aspeare’ ‘telle’, and ‘fyle’ and a virgule after ‘lyfe’ correspond with line breaks in the printed text

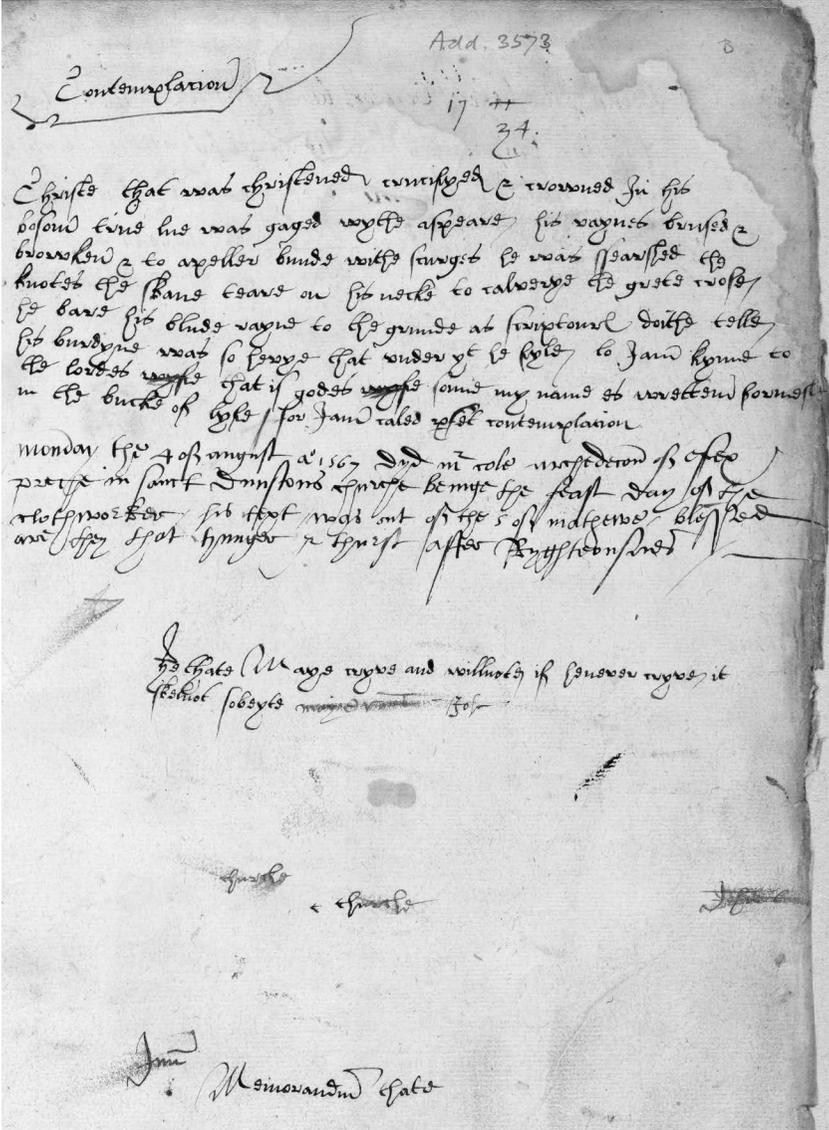


Figure C.2 Cambridge, University Library, Additional MS 3573, upper endleaf B recto. Endleaf showing extract from Hycke Scorer.

Source: Reproduced by kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

(Figure C.2). It is not clear which of the three editions the extract has been copied from. The passage is identical in Q1 and Q3, appearing in both editions on sig. A2<sup>v</sup>. Q2 survives only as a three-leaf fragment, which, like the examples outlined in the previous section, is marked in ways that suggest it once served as binding waste. None of its three

preserved leaves contains the passage in question. The version in CUL Add. MS 3573 is virtually identical to the text as it appears in Q1 and Q3, agreeing in all but three places.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, while it is possible the extract was copied from elsewhere, it is probable that one of the three printed editions was the source.

Why was this extract from *Hycke Scornor* copied into this manuscript? One reason that cannot be ruled out is that the endleaves simply represented available space. Such reasoning presumably explains the accounts that occur on the second endleaf recto. But there is a further possibility here, one that suggests Chapman, or whoever copied the passage, was using this extract from *Hycke Scornor* as a way of thinking through and responding to the Boethian text that follows. *The Consolation of Philosophy* is Boethius's best-known work and its appeal to English writers cannot be underestimated; it was translated into Old, Middle, and Elizabethan English by King Alfred, both Walton and Chaucer, and Queen Elizabeth respectively. Written as a response to his own imprisonment, it is presented as a dialogue between Boethius and Lady Philosophy in which the consolation she offers is not sympathy, but rather the hard lesson that the adversity he is experiencing is not in itself cause for unhappiness. Although Boethius was a Christian, Lady Philosophy does not invoke the obvious Christian sources of consolation: the comfort that echoes through Christian teaching of salvation through Christ's suffering. And at least one modern commentator has even gone so far as to suggest that the entire text should be understood as an ironic commentary on the insufficiency of philosophical consolation contra the comforts afforded by Christian faith.<sup>22</sup> The passage copied into the upper endleaf can therefore be read as a corrective to Boethius's philosophy, supplying in Contemplacyon's speech an alternative model for comfort: active contemplation of Christ's passion.<sup>23</sup> But what is striking about its use in this way is that it suggests a way of thinking about the text in which the primary unit of meaning is not the play, nor even one of its speeches. For even though the copyist followed the print convention of supplying a speech prefix, he did not deem it necessary to copy down the whole of Contemplacyon's speech. Paradoxically then, for at least one reader the printed texts of *Hycke Scornor* seem to have prompted a kind of generative urge that would lead not to their reconstitution as performance, but rather to their fragmentation into parts in which the whole is all but unrecognisable. So, like the fragments of *Impatient Poverty* used as binding waste in Lawn F.214, in ceasing to function as a play the extract from *Hycke Scornor* becomes something else, its use and meaning a consequence of its position inside the covers of another book.

### London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A XXV

Of all the kinds of extractable phrases and passages, songs seem to have been among the most popular, and Estill has even gone so far as to suggest

that the majority of dramatic excerpts in seventeenth-century manuscripts are songs.<sup>24</sup> But there is at least one earlier example of a dramatic song in a commonplace verse miscellany, for amongst the mid-sixteenth-century songs and ballads preserved in London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A XXV is a copy of a song from Richard Edwards's *Damon and Pithias*, 'Awake ye wofull wightes' (Figure C.3).<sup>25</sup> Nor is this the only manuscript

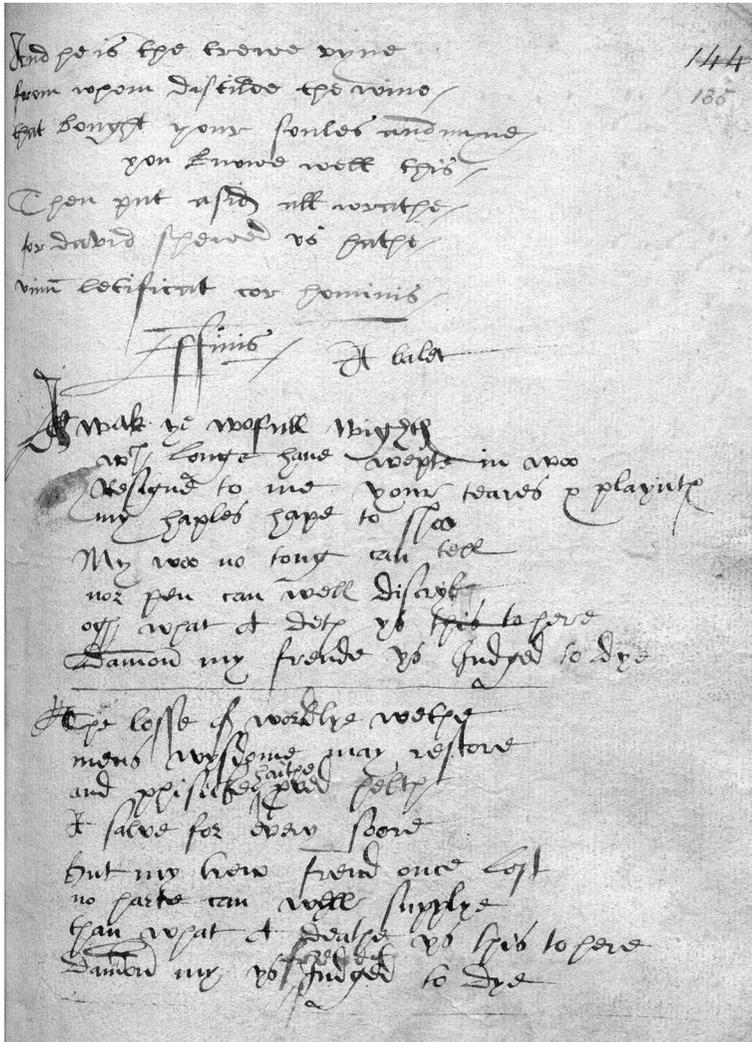


Figure C.3 London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A XXV, fol. 135<sup>r</sup> (olim 144<sup>r</sup>). Manuscript page showing first two stanzas of 'Awake ye wofull wightes'.

Source: © The British Library Board.

copy of the song, since the first one and a half stanzas also appear, with notation for lute and voice, in an early seventeenth-century collection of songs and instrumental pieces, London, British Library, Additional MS 15117.<sup>26</sup> The Cottonian version seems to have been copied around the time that the printed text was published in 1571, but it is not readily apparent that the printed version was the copy-text. In addition to marked orthographical differences, the refrain, which varies slightly in the printed text, is standardised in the Cottonian version as ‘Dammon my frende ys Iudged to dye’. Moreover, a song of ‘Damon and Pithias’ seems already to have been well known by the time the play was printed, since the tune of ‘Damon & Pithias’ is given on two occasions for songs printed before 1571.<sup>27</sup>

Cotton Vespasian A XXV is a composite volume of prose and verse in various hands, probably assembled by its late-sixteenth-century owner Henry Savile (d. 1617). The section in which Pithias’s song appears is entirely comprised of songs and ballads and has the integrity of a single unit. In the printed playbook, the song is introduced by a stage direction – ‘¶Here PITHIAS sings, and the Regalles play’ – and the first letter is a decorated woodcut initial.<sup>28</sup> Its arrangement on the printed page thereby signals its diegetic function even as it is marked as formally distinct from the dialogue that surrounds it. But in the Cottonian manuscript, it is simply titled ‘A balad’, and ending with the explicit ‘ffinis’, it is copied as a discrete item, orphaned from both its dramatic setting and its author. In this way, it resembles the forty-four other songs and ballads that occur in the same section of the manuscript.<sup>29</sup> Many of these exist in other contemporary manuscript and printed versions, including the various printed verse miscellanies that became increasingly popular following the success of *Tottell’s Miscellany* (first published 1557, STC 13860). The manuscript also includes at least one other song by Edwards, ‘Where gripe greues the hart wold wound’ (fol. 137<sup>r</sup>), which has one other manuscript witness (London, British Library, MS Harley 7392, fol. 50<sup>v</sup>) and appears in Edwards’s own miscellany, *The paradyse of daynty deuises*, which ran to at least nine editions following its publication in 1576.<sup>30</sup> In other words, Cotton Vespasian A XXV is testament to the crossover between manuscript and print in the transmission of popular verse in the second half of the sixteenth century, and the act of its compilation should be regarded as much an exercise in imitation as the poetry it contains.<sup>31</sup>

By copying ‘Awake ye wofull wightes’ into the Cottonian manuscript as ‘A balet’, the song ceases to be part of a play and becomes instead part of a collection of generically similar poems. In this respect, it is unlike the contemporary songs and ballads that share the same tune, since these seem to advertise an association with the play; they are ‘to the tune of Damon and Pithias’. In fact, the use of this phrase as a shorthand for musical accompaniment suggests that early in its reception history the song had usurped the play as the primary signification of the title

‘Damon and Pithias’.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, this development may have occurred *before* the play was even printed; *Patient Grissel* was printed five years before *Damon and Pithias* and yet Grissel’s song on sig. C4<sup>v</sup> is ‘to the tune of Damon & Pithias’, and when in 1568 William Griffith printed a ballad ‘of a Louer | extolling his ladye’ (STC 18876), it was also ‘To the tune of Damon and Pithias’. So, whether as ‘A balet’ in Cotton Vespasian A XXV, Grissel’s song in Phillip’s play, or a broadside ballad, the afterlife of Pithias’s song is as a text in its own right, one that is not only entirely independent from the play, but that overshadows it. And if Tiffany Stern is right in suggesting that songs were mobile pieces that could be used to advertise plays, then it is even possible that Pithias’s song pre-dates Edwards’s play, lending it its name, rather than vice versa.<sup>33</sup> In the case of ‘Damon and Pithias’, the song rather than the play is the thing.

\* \* \*

In dramatic terms, parts are the characters assigned to actors, and in an early modern context they refer specifically to the paper rolls on which each character’s lines were transcribed.<sup>34</sup> They are, in other words, those segments of text that first in performance, and later on the printed page, come together to form a whole, the play itself. *Reading Drama in Tudor England* has been about the way the earliest printers of English drama brought together these parts and developed ways for making drama easy to identify and possible to read. But as this conclusion has shown, there are other kinds of dramatic parts, fragments of plays that turn up inside other books as binding waste or copied extracts, and rather than cohere as wholes, these parts are testament to the vulnerability of early printed plays, their susceptibility to both literal and figurative dismemberments of all kinds. The earliest printers of English plays may have developed conventions that made it possible to read drama, but reading a playbook is just one of many forms of use suggested by its pages. This book has traced some of these implied and historical uses, but the bits of plays that serve to help other books cohere – whether physically or thematically – show ways that printed playbooks contributed to the textual culture of early modern England even when they were not read.

## Notes

- 1 Stephen Orgel, ‘The Book of the Play’, in *From Performance to Print in Shakespeare’s England*, ed. by Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 13–54 (p. 52).
- 2 In this section I use the term ‘binding waste’ to refer to all material reused for binding including both ‘binder’s waste’ (pages drawn from books once in circulation) and ‘printer’s waste’ (proofs, spoils, and other sheets that never constituted book form). On this distinction, see *The Collected Papers of*

- Henry Bradshaw, ed. by Francis Jenkinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 347.
- 3 On Newton's library see John Harrison, *The Library of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), though this item is not listed there.
  - 4 The leaf in question is sig. [A]3.
  - 5 However, the Bodleian Library catalogue wrongly identifies the source of the endleaves as Q2 *Impatient Poverty*.
  - 6 See *Pater, Filius, et Uxor, or The Prodigal Son*, CUL Syn. 5.53.4.
  - 7 See *Temperance and Humility*, HM 60585; *Old Christmas*, BL C.189.c.14; *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, BL C.125.dd.15.(6.); *An Interlude of Detraction, Light, Judgement, Verity, and Justice*, HM 131401:11; *Somebody, Avarice, and Minister*, London, Lambeth Palace Library, Z240 1.012 [\*\*]; and *The Cruel Debtor*, BL C.34.g.34.
  - 8 John Payne Collier, *The History of English Dramatic Poetry to the Time of Shakespeare: And Annals of the Stage to the Restoration*, 3 vols (London: Murrar, 1831), II, 369. See *Albion Knight*, HM 60584.
  - 9 By fragment, I refer specifically to those copies that survive in a single quire or just a few leaves. Copies that lack just one or two leaves are imperfect but should not be taken as fragments.
  - 10 I am grateful to Aaron Pratt for enumerating these possible sources. In the seventeenth-century, printers for the English Stock were, according to a note of 1627, required to return to the Stock-Keeper 'overplus' books. But it seems that a private trade in overrun or extra copies continued to thrive. William A. Jackson (ed.), *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company, 1602–1640* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1957), p. 200. See also Juliet Fleming, 'Damask Papers', in *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England*, ed. by Andy Kesson and Emma Smith (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 179–92 (p. 190, n. 34).
  - 11 Adam Smyth, *Material Texts in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 166.
  - 12 Smyth, p. 137.
  - 13 Elaine Scarry, *Dreaming by the Book* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 5.
  - 14 Anna Reynolds, "'Such dispersive scattrednes': Early Modern Encounters with Binding Waste", *Journal of the Northern Renaissance*, 8 (2017), 1–43 (5).
  - 15 Laura Estill, *Dramatic Extracts in Seventeenth-Century English Manuscripts: Watching Reading, Changing Plays* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 2015), p. xx.
  - 16 Estill, p. 7.
  - 17 Estill, p. 8.
  - 18 I am grateful to A. S. G. Edwards for drawing my attention to this manuscript, which he discusses in his chapter, 'Reading John Walton's Boethius in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries', in *Spaces for Reading in Later Medieval England*, ed. by Mary C. Flannery and C. Griffin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 35–49.
  - 19 Cambridge, University Library, Additional MS 3573, fols 48<sup>v</sup>, 57<sup>r</sup>.
  - 20 The expunged words read like a deliberate provocation.
  - 21 Where CUL Add. MS 3573 has 'ssearshes' the printed text has the better reading 'lasshed'; the expunged word 'wyfe' that occurs twice in the seventh line of text is also unique to the manuscript copy.
  - 22 Joel C. Relihan, *Ancient Menippean Satire* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 187–94. See also his *The Prisoner's Philosophy*:

*Life and Death in Boethius's Consolation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

- 23 Two further endleaf notes share similar preoccupations, furthering the view that this manuscript's endpapers record marks of active reading as well as marks of ownership and record. Beneath the extract from *Hycke Scornor* is the note:

Monday the 4 of august *anno* 1567 dyd *master* cole archedecon of esex l preche in saint Dunstans churche beinge the feast day of the l cloth-worker, his text was out of the 5 of mathewe, blessed l are they that hunger & thirst after Rygtheousnes.

And on the recto of the second upper endleaf is a copy of the first two and a half verses of Hopkin's translation of Psalm 78, 'Attend, my people to the law'.

- 24 Estill, pp. 25, 48.
- 25 London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A XXV, fols 135<sup>r</sup>–135<sup>v</sup>. It is with some irony, then, that Estill has suggested that 'scholars could yet find manuscripts that include extracts from works by [...] Richard Edwards'. Estill, p. 8.
- 26 London, British Library, Additional MS 15117, fol. 3<sup>r</sup>. For a discussion of this manuscript, see Mary Joiner, 'British Museum Add. MS 15117: A Commentary, Index and Bibliography', *Royal Music Association Research Chronicle*, 7 (1969), 51–109.
- 27 'Can my poore harte be still', in *Patient and Meek Grissel*, and a ballad 'of a Louer l extolling his ladye. To the tune of Damon and Pithias' (1568, STC 18876).
- 28 *Damon and Pithias*, sig. D1<sup>r</sup>.
- 29 BL MS Cotton Vespasian A XXV is made up of five sections, in different hands and which may have first circulated independently. The songs and ballads occupy fols 127<sup>r</sup>–179<sup>r</sup>. While some are untitled, most are identified by their genre: ballad, carol, ditty, prayer, and song. Around a quarter are attributed, though in some instances it is unclear whether it is the author or the scribe who is named.
- 30 See *Tudor Songs and Ballads from MS Cotton Vespasian A-25*, ed. by Peter J. Seng (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 33.
- 31 On Tudor poetry as a model for imitation, see Seth Lerer, *Courtly Letters in the Age of Henry VIII: Literary Culture and the Arts of Deceit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 31–32, 201. On the imitation of ballads, see Eric Nebeker, 'Broadside Ballads, Miscellanies, and the Lyric in Print', *English Literary History*, 76 (2009), 989–1013.
- 32 This may explain why John Ward assumed that the source of 'the tune of Damon and Pithias' given for 'The lamentation of a woman being wrongfully defamed' in the second, expanded edition of Clement Robinson's *A handefull of pleasant delites* (1584, STC 21105) was not the play but an earlier, now lost ballad of the same name. See John Ward, 'Music for A Handefull of pleasant delites', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 10 (1957), 151–80 (167).
- 33 On this point see Tiffany Stern's forthcoming book for Cambridge University Press, *Shakespeare Beyond Performance*.
- 34 Simon Palfrey and Tiffany Stern, *Shakespeare in Parts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 1.

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