immediately after other, more typically prefatory material — dedicatory verses and an argument. The later, BL MS Lansdowne 786 (copied late sixteenth/early seventeenth century) places all this material at the front between fols 3^r and 5^v. In addition, a further fragmentary witness, Folger 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, in the case of some, 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

Having made some very general observations about the history of the character list and its conventional appearance in manuscript and print playbooks, in the remainder of this article I want to show how different forms may have been utilised to appeal to different target markets. Indeed, that such lists exist in such a range of different forms suggests something of the complexity of choices available to playbook makers, and shows, at the most basic level, that printers had, even within the first decades of dramatic publication, a keen sense of how to harness different markets. For now, let us return to the position I introduced at the opening of this article: that character lists provide the clearest indication that the primary consumers of early playbooks were would-be actors. It is a view that I have already suggested seems 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.[13] However, it could be 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

printers included them less as an acting aid and more as a shorthand for the kind of text they accompany; if we recall 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 printed playbooks from our period function as an extension of the character list, and either provide a statement of the necessary number of players and/or give 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 13 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^{r} of British Library Additional MS 26782, the sole witness to *A Marriage Between Wit and Wisdom*, which, as I have argued elsewhere, 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* (?1570; see FIG. 1).[14]

On the title page to *Enough is as Good as a Feast*, 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.[15] 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 earlier in our period. These lower figures tally with 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.[16] And it may be that an awareness of these performance conditions informed a line in the collaborative play *Sir Thomas More* (composed c. 1590–1593), when one of the players explains to More that his troupe comprises 'foure men and a boy'.[17] 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