In the first comprehensive study of how Shakespeare designed his plays to suit his playing company, Brett Gamboa demonstrates how Shakespeare turned his limitations to creative advantage, and how doubling roles suited his unique sense of the dramatic. By attending closely to their dramaturgical structures, Gamboa analyses casting requirements for the plays Shakespeare wrote for the company between 1594 and 1610, and describes how using the embedded casting patterns can enhance their thematic and theatrical potential. Drawing on historical records, dramatic theory, and contemporary performance this innovative work questions received ideas about early modern staging and provides scholars and contemporary theatre practitioners with a valuable guide to understanding how casting can help facilitate audience engagement. Supported by an appendix of speculative doubling charts for plays, illustrations, and online resources, this is a major contribution to the understanding of Shakespeare’s dramatic craft.

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Shakespeare’s Double Plays

*Dramatic Economy on the Early Modern Stage*

Brett Gamboa

*Dartmouth College, New Hampshire*
Contents

List of Figures
List of Tables
Acknowledgements

1 Introduction

1 ‘Improbable Fictions’: Shakespeare’s Plays without the Plays
2 Versatility and Verisimilitude on Sixteenth-Century Stages
3 Doubling in The Winter’s Tale
4 Dramaturgical Directives and Shakespeare’s Cast Size
5 Doubling in A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Romeo and Juliet
6 ‘What, are they children?’: Reconsidering Shakespeare’s ‘Boy’ Actors
7 Doubling in Twelfth Night and Othello

Epilogue: Ragozine and Shakespearean Substitution
Appendix: Doubling Roles in Shakespeare’s Plays

Bibliography
Index
Figures

I.1 Alec Guinness in *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949)  page 10
2.1 Title page and doubling plan for Ulpian Fulwell’s *Like Will to Like* (1587)  68
2.2 Title page and doubling plan for Thomas Preston’s *Cambyses* (1569)  73
2.3 Doubling plan for *The Fair Maid of the Exchange* (1607)  76
6.1 Mark Rylance as Cleopatra at Shakespeare’s Globe (1999)  161
6.2 ‘The Names of the Principall Actors in all these Playes’, First Folio (1623)  170
6.3 Scene from John Madden’s *Shakespeare in Love* (1998)  176
6.4 Panel from the frontispiece to William Alabaster’s *Roxana* (1632)  194
# Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Plays with casting information, 1560–1610</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Hypothetical doubling plan for Shakespeare’s <em>The Winter’s Tale</em> (c. 1610)</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Number of actors necessary to perform Shakespeare’s plays (c. 1592–1610)</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Hypothetical doubling plan for Shakespeare’s <em>A Midsummer Night’s Dream</em> (c. 1595)</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Hypothetical doubling plan for Shakespeare’s <em>Romeo and Juliet</em> (c. 1595)</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Hypothetical doubling plan for Shakespeare’s <em>Twelfth Night</em> (c. 1601)</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Hypothetical doubling plan for Shakespeare’s <em>Othello</em> (c. 1604)</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.1</td>
<td>Hypothetical doubling plan for Shakespeare’s <em>Measure for Measure</em> (c. 1603)</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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‘… only I have left to say, / More is thy due than more than all can pay’

( _Macbeth_, 1.4.20–1).

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… and our daughter,
In honour of whose birth these triumphs are,
Sits here like beauty’s child, whom nature gat
For men to see and, seeing, wonder at.

( _Pericles_, 2.2.4–7)