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978-0-521-85912-7 - Shakespeare, *A Lover's Complaint*, and John Davies of Hereford

Brian Vickers

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SHAKESPEARE, *A LOVER'S COMPLAINT*, AND JOHN DAVIES OF HEREFORD

When Shakespeare's *Sonnets* were published in 1609 a poem called *A Lover's Complaint* was included by the publisher, Thomas Thorpe, who was notorious for several irregular publications. Many scholars have doubted its authenticity, but recent editions of the *Sonnets* have accepted it as Shakespeare's work. Now Brian Vickers, in the first full study of the poem, shows it to be un-Shakespearian both in its language and in its attitude to women. It is awkwardly constructed and uses archaic Spenserian diction, including many unusual words that never occur in Shakespeare. It frequently repeats stock phrases and rhymes, distorts normal word order far more often and more clumsily than Shakespeare did, while its attitude to female frailty is moralizing and misogynistic. By close analysis and comparison, Professor Vickers attributes the poem to John Davies of Hereford (1565–1618), a famous calligrapher and writing master who was also a prolific poet. This book will redefine the Shakespeare canon.

BRIAN VICKERS is a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the School of Advanced Study, London University, and a Fellow of the British Academy. His publications on Shakespeare include '*Counterfeiting*' *Shakespeare: Evidence, Authorship, and John Ford's 'Funerall Elegye'* (Cambridge, 2002); *Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays* (2002); *Appropriating Shakespeare: Contemporary Critical Quarrels* (1993); and *William Shakespeare: the Critical Heritage, 1623–1801* (1974–1981), a six-volume collection of early Shakespeare criticism. Professor Vickers is also a specialist in rhetoric and stylistics, his publications including *Francis Bacon and Renaissance Prose* (Cambridge, 1968), *Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry* (1970, 1989), and *In Defence of Rhetoric* (1988).

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WORKS BY JOHN DAVIES

For a detailed list of poem titles within the main collections see the Bibliography on pp. 307–24.

- BV* *Bien Venu* (1606)
CP 'Commendatory Poems', in Grosart 1878, vol. II (separately paginated)
EC 'An Eclogue between yong Willy the singer of his native Pastorals, and old Wernocke his friend' (1614)
HE *Humours Heav'n on Earth* (1609)
HR *The Holy Rood* (1609)
MI *Microcosmos* (1603)
MM *Mirum in Modum* (1602)
MS *The Muse's Sacrifice* (1612)
MT *The Muses Teares* (1613)
SF *The Scourge of Folly* (1611)
SH *A Select Second Husband for Sir Thomas Overburie's Wife, now a Matchlesse Widow* (1616)
ST *Summa Totalis* (1607)
UP Uncollected poems (see Appendix 2)
WB *Wits Bedlam* (1617)
WP *Wittes Pilgrimage* (1605?)

OTHER PRIMARY SOURCES

- LC* *A Lover's Complaint*
LION *Literature Online*, a web resource: ProQuest UK
<http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk>
RL Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece*
VA Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*

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ed. Hyder Edward Rollins (Philadelphia, 1938)

STC

*A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England,
Scotland, & Ireland and of English Books Printed
Abroad, 1475–1640*, second edition, ed. W. A.
Jackson, F. S. Ferguson, and Katharine F.
Pantzer, 3 vols. (London, 1976–91)

Vickers 1999

Brian Vickers (ed.), *English Renaissance Literary
Criticism* (Oxford, 1999)