

BRIAN VICKERS

Shakespeare,

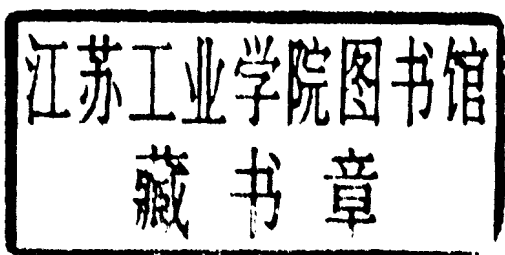
A Lover's Complaint,
and John Davies of Hereford



CAMBRIDGE

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

BRIAN VICKERS



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521859127

© Brian Vickers 2007

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2007

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN-13 978-0-521-85912-7 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-85912-3 hardback

Illustrations

Plate 1	Engraved frontispiece to John Davies of Hereford, <i>The Writing Schoolmaster</i> (1636). Reproduced by permission of the Syndics, Cambridge University Library	<i>page</i> 14
Plate 2	Final page of the Penshurst manuscript of the Sidney <i>Psalms</i> , with the autograph subscription by John Davies of Hereford. Reproduced by permission of the Viscount De L'Isle	18
Plate 3	John Davies of Hereford, autograph poem 'A dedicatorie and consolatorie Epistle To the right honorable Henry Earle of Northumberland', in the British Library copy (G. 11190) of Davies, <i>Humours Heav'n on Earth</i> (1612). Reproduced by permission of the British Library	21

Acknowledgements

In writing this book I have incurred many debts. I should like to thank Alan Jenkins and Mick Imlah of the *Times Literary Supplement*, who encouraged me to submit a brief summary of my argument for their pages (5 December 2003). At ProQuest Matthew Kibble helped solve several problems. MacDonald Jackson has been, as ever, generous in sharing his knowledge. Margrit Soland made several thoughtful contributions. Richard McCabe and Hugh Craig kindly read earlier versions of chapters 3 and 5, respectively. Jonathan Hope read the whole typescript and once again (as with '*Counterfeiting*' *Shakespeare*) gave acute advice on re-organizing its structure and argument, while an anonymous reader for the publisher also made helpful suggestions. None of these is responsible for any blemishes that remain. At Cambridge University Press my editor, Sarah Stanton, has been patient and supportive; Rebecca Jones helped see the book into print, while Caroline Drake has been a keen-eyed copy-editor. I thank Dr Marcus Dahl for generating the index, and Henry Woudhuysen for last minute suggestions. The earlier versions were typed by Kathy Hahn, my indefatigable assistant while I was teaching at the ETH, Zürich. The final versions have been prepared by my wife, and have also benefited from her sometimes acerbic comments. The book is dedicated to our daughter.

Abbreviations

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 Roode* (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*

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Barber 1976 Charles Barber, *Early Modern English* (London, 1976)
- Barber 1997 Charles Barber, *Early Modern English*, revised edn (Edinburgh, 1997)
- Burrow 2002 The Oxford Shakespeare. *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, ed. Colin Burrow (Oxford, 2002)
- Duncan-Jones 1997 The Arden Shakespeare, third series. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Katherine Duncan-Jones (London, 1997)
- Grosart 1878 *The Complete Works of John Davies of Hereford*, ed. The Rev. Alexander B. Grosart, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1878; facs. edn, Hildesheim, 1968)
- Jackson 1965 MacDonald P. Jackson, *Shakespeare's 'A Lover's Complaint': Its Date and Authenticity* (Auckland, New Zealand, 1965)
- Jackson 2004 MacDonald P. Jackson, "'A Lover's Complaint' Revisited', *Shakespeare Studies*, 32 (2004): 267–94
- Kerrigan 1986 New Penguin Shakespeare. *'The Sonnets' and 'A Lover's Complaint'*, ed. John Kerrigan (Harmondsworth, 1986)
- Mackail 1912 J. W. Mackail, 'A Lover's Complaint', *Essays and Studies*, 3 (1912): 51–70.
- Muir 1973 Kenneth Muir, "'A Lover's Complaint': A Reconsideration", in Muir, *Shakespeare the Professional and Related Studies* (London, 1973), pp. 204–19
- Murphy 1940 Charles Driscoll Murphy, 'John Davies of Hereford', PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1940
- Nevalainen 1999 Terttu Nevalainen, 'Early Modern English Lexis and Semantics', in Roger Lass (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the English Language, Volume III*, pp. 332–458 (Cambridge, 1999)
- Partridge 1976 A. C. Partridge, *A Substantive Grammar of Shakespeare's Nondramatic texts* (Charlottesville, VA, 1976)
- Roe 1992 The New Cambridge Shakespeare. *The Poems*, ed. John Roe (Cambridge, 1992)

- Rollins 1938 *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: The Poems*,
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)

Contents

<i>List of illustrations</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	x
Introduction	
1 Thomas Thorpe and the 1609 <i>Sonnets</i>	7
PART I BACKGROUND	
2 John Davies of Hereford: a life of writing	15
3 <i>A Lover's Complaint</i> and Spenserian pastoral	47
4 'Poore women's faults': narration and judgement in the 'Female Complaint'	76
PART II FOREGROUND	
5 A poem anatomized: the rival claims	121
6 <i>A Lover's Complaint</i> in Davies's canon	204
Appendix 1 The text of <i>A Lover's Complaint</i>	267
Appendix 2 John Davies, Uncollected Poems	278
<i>Notes</i>	282
<i>Bibliography</i>	307
<i>Index</i>	325

Illustrations

Plate 1	Engraved frontispiece to John Davies of Hereford, <i>The Writing Schoolmaster</i> (1636). Reproduced by permission of the Syndics, Cambridge University Library	<i>page</i> 14
Plate 2	Final page of the Penshurst manuscript of the Sidney <i>Psalms</i> , with the autograph subscription by John Davies of Hereford. Reproduced by permission of the Viscount De L'Isle	18
Plate 3	John Davies of Hereford, autograph poem 'A dedicatorie and consolatorie Epistle To the right honorable Henry Earle of Northumberland', in the British Library copy (G. 11190) of Davies, <i>Humours Heav'n on Earth</i> (1612). Reproduced by permission of the British Library	21

Introduction

This book may be seen as a sequel to *'Counterfeiting' Shakespeare: Evidence, Authorship, and John Ford's 'Funerall Elegye'* (Cambridge University Press, 2002). In that study I contested the recent ascription to Shakespeare of two poems, 'Shall I die?', made by Gary Taylor in 1985, and *A Funerall Elegye* for William Peter, made by Donald Foster in 1989. My case against Shakespeare's authorship of those poems has been generally accepted, and it is gratifying to learn that the *Elegye* will no longer appear in the one-volume editions which hurried to include it in the canon (the Norton Shakespeare, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al., the Riverside Shakespeare, ed. G. B. Evans and J. M. Tobin, and the Longman Shakespeare, ed. David Bevington). The one-volume Oxford Shakespeare, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, in its second edition (Oxford, 2005), still includes 'Shall I die?', with no reference to the unanimously sceptical discussions it had provoked over the intervening twenty years, a strange rebuff to the notion of a scholarly consensus.

In the present study my task might seem much harder, to deny Shakespeare's authorship of *A Lover's Complaint*, which has been associated with his canon ever since Thomas Thorpe printed it with the *Sonnets* in 1609. However, as I show in chapter 1, Thorpe's record as a publisher who often obtained copy by dubious means, and got into trouble for claiming another printer's property, is not enough on its own to guarantee the authenticity of this work. The fact that Thorpe signed the dedication, as he did on several occasions when an author was 'absent', suggests that the *Sonnets* were printed without Shakespeare's knowledge. Thorpe had registered them with the Stationer's Company, the correct legal procedure once a publisher had got hold of a manuscript, the law then not requiring a publisher to secure an author's agreement. Thorpe's independence of Shakespeare in this matter does not call the authenticity of the *Sonnets* in question, which are wholly Shakespeare's work, but it cannot be used to guarantee his authorship of *A Lover's Complaint*, an extremely mediocre

poem which differs in every respect from Shakespeare's normal clarity and economy of composition.

Those who have ascribed it to Shakespeare have based their argument on isolated verbal parallels between the *Complaint* and his works, but have overlooked the many dissimilarities. Anyone who reads the poem attentively, without preconceptions as to Shakespeare's authorship, will be struck by its clumsiness and lack of invention. Many passages in the *Complaint* are irredeemably vague and confused, with ambiguities of grammar and syntax that we never find in Shakespeare. The diction is both highly Latinate and archaic; there are a large number of 'new' or strange words not found elsewhere in Shakespeare, some of them indeed never used by any other writer in English. There are many banal expressions which serve to fill up a verse line – 'high and low', 'wake and sleep', 'takes and leaves', 'wind and raine', and one piece of iambic padding, 'many a', which occurs no fewer than four times. The rhyme-word 'takes' has to do duty twice over in one stanza ('makes' / 'takes' / 'takes', 107–10), while four rhyme pairs occur twice within a short space: 'heart' / 'art' (142/5, 174–5), 'eies' / 'lies' (50/52, 288/90), 'eie' / 'flie' / 'eye' (247, 249, 251), and 'eye' / 'flye' (323/5), and 'grace' / 'place' (261/3, 316–18). The most blatant instance of recycling a rhyme is the pair 'find' / 'minde', which occurs three times within less than a hundred lines (88–9, 135/7, 184/7). Re-using a rhyme eleven times in a poem of 329 lines shows a paucity of invention not found in Shakespeare. But the most strikingly un-Shakespearian feature is the amount of inversion caused by the demands of metre or rhyme, which affects 149 of the 329 lines, more than 45 per cent of the whole. (For details of these anomalies see chapter 5.)

These are just some of the ways in which *A Lover's Complaint* falls below Shakespeare's normal inventiveness, and which have made me doubt his authorship since I first read it fifty years ago. Of course, there is a huge gap between judging a poem inauthentic and being able to produce a convincing counter-argument. It is only in the last eight years, while working on *'Counterfeiting' Shakespeare* and its companion volume, *Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays* (Oxford University Press, 2002), that I have felt that I knew enough about the methodology of authorship studies to start examining *A Lover's Complaint* more closely. One personal problem I faced was that the two most convinced proponents of Shakespeare's authorship, Kenneth Muir (in 1964) and MacDonald Jackson (in 1965) were scholars I had long admired.¹ However, apart from a few inconclusive comments on metaphor, both

used just one stylistic marker, the co-occurrence of single words in the *Complaint* and in Shakespeare's vast *oeuvre*. It is a fundamental principle in authorship studies that a single stylistic marker is never sufficient to make a positive identification. All persuasive attributions in modern times have used several independent markers: when these all give the same result, there is a high probability that the correct author has been identified. (The cautious scholar never claims certainty.) An exemplary instance of this use of multiple criteria was given by MacDonald Jackson himself, in *Defining Shakespeare: 'Pericles' as Test Case* (Oxford, 2003), which synthesized the findings of many different approaches: vocabulary tests for rare words, word-echoes between Shakespeare plays, verbal parallels, metrical data (extra syllables, run-on lines, pause-patterns, rhyme, and assonance), high-frequency or 'function' words, and idiosyncrasies of grammar. All these independent tests produced the same result, identifying George Wilkins as the author of Acts 1 and 2 of *Pericles*, with Shakespeare writing Acts 3 to 5. Unfortunately, Professor Jackson did not draw on the same wide range of stylistic markers in examining *A Lover's Complaint*. In *Shakespeare, Co-Author I* brought together eighteen independent tests that had been used on *Titus Andronicus* since 1919, adding two of my own: all indicated that Act 1, and three other scenes (2.1; 2.2; 4.1) were non-Shakespearian, and can be ascribed to George Peele with a high degree of probability. A short narrative poem does not offer the same range of interpretation, but in chapter 5, 'A poem anatomized: the rival claims', I bring together several different kinds of evidence – vocabulary, word-formation, the use of rhetorical figures, metaphor, syntax, and rhyme – which will, I hope, convince readers that the *Complaint* was not written by Shakespeare.

But why do I propose John Davies of Hereford (1564/5–1618) as its author? His work disappeared from view soon after his death, and like many minor poets he has 'sunk without trace'.² Davies's name entered this arena in unusual circumstances, worth recalling. In 2003 MacDonald Jackson kindly sent me the typescript of an essay in which he repeated his case for Shakespeare's authorship, drawing on the newly available electronic database 'Literature Online', or LION (now maintained by ProQuest UK), an update of the Chadwyck-Healey collections of English poetry and drama (1995). Having searched this new and more complete resource for words and phrases, Jackson concluded that, according to his methodology, no other English dramatist of the period showed as many 'links' with the text of *A Lover's Complaint* as Shakespeare did. As I read this statement the thought occurred to me, 'why must the author of the

Complaint have been a dramatist? Why not a poet?' So I began searching the poetry database, starting with some of the acknowledged rare words in the poem. I typed in 'maunde' (a basket), and a number of poets were identified as having used it, including John Davies of Hereford. I then typed in 'forbod', and a smaller list of names appeared, also including Davies. Similarly with 'fell rage', 'particular' and 'affectedly' – for which LION records only two instances in Jacobean poetry, from the *Complaint* and Davies. The fact that Davies was the only Jacobean poet who had used all five words suggested that it might be fruitful to investigate his work, and so it has proved.

But I would not wish to give the impression that authorship attribution studies these days can be performed merely by doing electronic word-searches. Having been alerted to Davies as a possible candidate I spent several months reading and re-reading his works. It is my firm conviction that a first-hand reading experience of an author's work is the prerequisite for attribution studies. A scholar needs to know whole poems in order to understand the meaning or significance of a single line or a single word. Irony, sincerity, and other matters of tone or register can be evaluated only when you have grasped the author's intention as embodied in the work. The kind of detailed demonstration that I give in chapter 6 of the intersections between the language of *A Lover's Complaint* and the canon of John Davies, looking at rare words, common phrases, poetic diction, rhetorical figures, metaphor, and rhyme, can be performed only on the basis of an extensive reading knowledge. I have documented each of my quotations from Davies's work, using a short-title reference system explained in the Bibliography (p. 307), so that all my research can be replicated.

Having insisted on the primacy of reading, I have nonetheless been fortunate in having access to electronic resources which helped to confirm, or correct, something I had noticed in reading. I acknowledge my indebtedness to LION, but also to two other invaluable resources. The CD-ROM issue of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition (1992; version 3.1, 2004) allows users to call up all the citations the Dictionary has taken from any author.³ Thanks to this facility I was able to locate about 600 quotations from John Davies of Hereford in the *OED*, most of which were Latinisms, and many of which provided the sole entry, described as 'obsolete, archaic', the so-called 'nonce words' invented by him and used by no one else. In both cases Davies's usages provided striking generic similarities with the diction of *A Lover's Complaint*, as chapter 5 will show. By 'generic' I understand recurrent patterns of usage and word-formation,

linguistic habits which link the *Complaint* closely to Davies's work while differentiating it from Shakespeare's. In chapter 6 I complement that approach by instancing eighty specific parallels of thought and phrasing between Davies's poetry and the *Complaint*. In the final stages of documenting these intersections I was much assisted by an electronic software program called 'Concordance', developed by R. J. C. Watt.⁴ This ingenious tool allows users various search possibilities, checking word frequencies, word-endings, and collocations; with it I was able to trace additional instances of specific parallels that I had noted in my reading.

The case against Shakespeare, and for Davies, is made in the book's second part, or 'Foreground'. The first part, or 'Background', attempts to answer the question several friends put to me, 'Who was John Davies of Hereford? And why have we not heard of him before?' In chapter 2 I briefly reconstruct his 'life of writing', a phrase which I use in two senses: he was a distinguished calligrapher, chosen to copy the Sidney *Psalms* to be presented to Queen Elizabeth, and he was the leading handwriting teacher in Britain, whose pupils included Prince Henry. But he was also a poet, who published twelve volumes of verse between 1602 and 1617, was known to many literary figures of the day, and seems to have had a special relationship with Shakespeare's company, the King's Men. He addressed a poem to Shakespeare, 'our English Terence', referred to him several times elsewhere, while Shakespeare echoed his poem *Microcosmos* in both *Macbeth* and the *Sonnets*. Davies's range as a poet was wide, his many voices including didactic philosophical-theological verse, scabrous satire, love sonnets, devotional poetry, and allegory. His ability to imitate other poets' voices as easily as he could write many different hands, was exceptional, and makes it impossible to define his own 'normal' verse style. His most revered model was Spenser, whom he imitated throughout his career, and in chapter 3 I document the predominantly Spenserian nature of the *Complaint's* setting and language. These features, which no advocate of Shakespeare's authorship has acknowledged as counter-evidence, again bring the poem close to Davies while distancing it from Shakespeare, who never showed any inclination to imitate Spenserian archaisms.

The following chapter, 'Poore women's faults', reconstructs the 'Female Complaint' poetic tradition through its two most distinguished exemplars, Daniel's *The Complaint of Rosamond* and Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*. John Kerrigan seemed to be about this task in his anthology, *Motives of Woe* (Oxford, 1991), which has the subtitle *Shakespeare and 'Female*

Complaint'. However, strangely enough, he neither included *Lucrece* as a text nor discussed it in his Introduction.⁵ Nor did he offer any sustained analysis of the *Complaint* in terms of its predecessors. My account shows that the author of *A Lover's Complaint* knew both *Rosamond* and *Lucrece* well, but that he differed from them in several surprising ways. He presented a heroine who is not remorseful for her fallen state, who continues to flout ethical norms by praising the power of desire over reason and judgement, and who is still so infatuated with her seducer, despite all she has suffered, that she would willingly renew the relationship. The poem is in effect an indictment of female sexuality and an attack on the pleasure principle, simultaneously moralizing and misogynistic. Both attitudes are found throughout Davies's work, but not in Shakespeare's.

I hope to have settled the authorship of *A Lover's Complaint* once and for all, by combining contextual studies of genre, socio-ethical attitudes, and language, considered from several different aspects. I expect to see this spurious poem removed from the canon where it has been allowed to nest for four centuries.

CHAPTER I

Thomas Thorpe and the 1609 *Sonnets*

What unapproved witness doost thou beare!

(LC, 53)

The Stationers' Register for 20 May 1609 carried this entry

Tho. Thorpe. Entred for his copie under the handes of master
Wilson and master Lownes Warden a book called
Shakespeares sonnettes

vjd.

When published later that summer, 'By G. Eld for T. T. and are to be solde by *William Aspley*', the volume of SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS had acquired an additional poem not mentioned in the Stationers' Register, and that poem had acquired an author: 'A Lovers complaint. /BY/ WILLIAM SHAKE-SPEARE' (Sig. KIV). The forty-seven stanzas of this poem conveniently fill the book's eleven remaining pages. The printer, George Eld, was a regular associate of the stationer Thomas Thorpe, with whom he produced over twenty books.¹ Thorpe had registered his ownership of the manuscript with the Stationers' Company, although there is no way of telling how he acquired the 'copy' of either the *Sonnets* or of *A Lover's Complaint*. The dedication of the *Sonnets* is a much reproduced document:

TO.THE.ONLIE.BEGETTER.OF.
THESE. INSVING.SONNETS.
M^R. W. H. ALL.HAPPINESSE.
AND.THAT.ETERNITIE.
PROMISED.
BY.
OVR.EVER-LIVING.POET.
WISHETH.
THE.WELL-WISHING.