

Shakespeare's Contemporaries

Other Poet/Playwrights of the Elizabethan & Jacobean Era



Ben Jonson

1572-1637



Notable Points About Ben Jonson

- Became Poet Laureate in 1616, the same year Shakespeare died.
- Was a favorite of King James I.
- Was known as a combative individual.
- Known for his comedies, particularly *Volpone*.
- Is associated with the decline of British drama.

Volpone

The story of an old, childless, Venetian nobleman whose ruling passion is avarice.

Not unlike...



John Fletcher

1579-1625

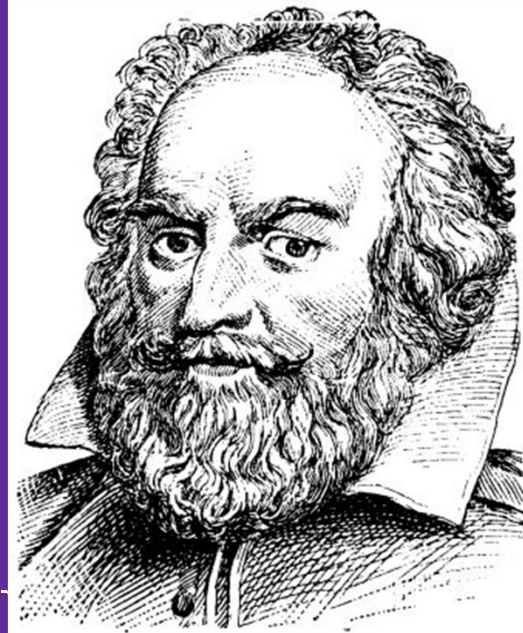


Notable Points About John Fletcher

- Wrote more than 50 plays.
- Known for his tragicomedies.
- Collaborated most often with Francis Beaumont, but also occasionally with Shakespeare.
- *The Faithful Shepherdess* -- a “pastoral tragicomedy”
- Died during a plague epidemic.

George Chapman

1559-1634



Notable Points About George Chapman

- Served in military campaigns prior to becoming a poet/playwright
- Goal was to make literature an instrument for ethics and public policy
- Is a serious contender for Shakespeare's "Rival Poet" sonnets
- Was arrested on more than 1 occasion
- Is also well-known for translations of Ovid and Homer

Thomas Kyd

1558-1594

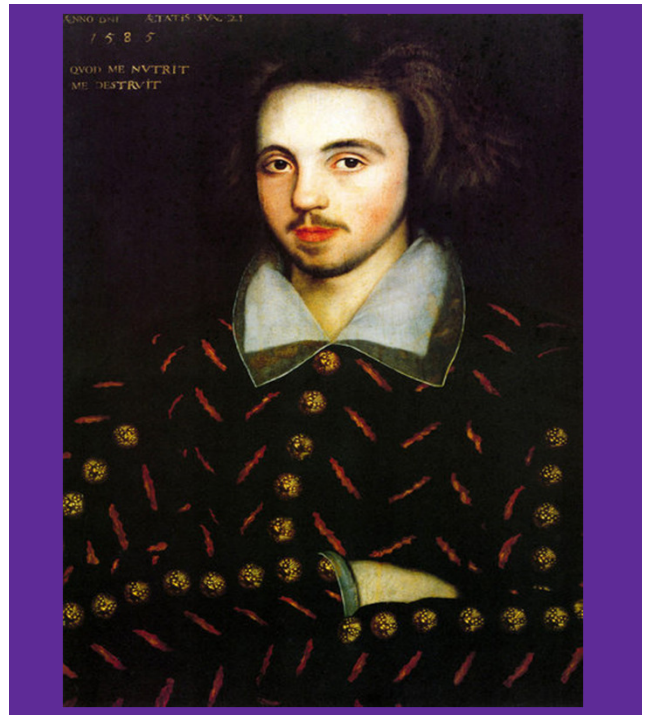


Notable Points About Thomas Kyd

- Very little known about his life until he is in his 30s
- Most notable play is *The Spanish Tragedy*
- Credited with an early version of *Hamlet*
- The only play to have his name on the title page is a translation of the play *Cornelia*
- Was arrested and accused of heresy in 1591 but was later released

Christopher Marlowe

1564-1593

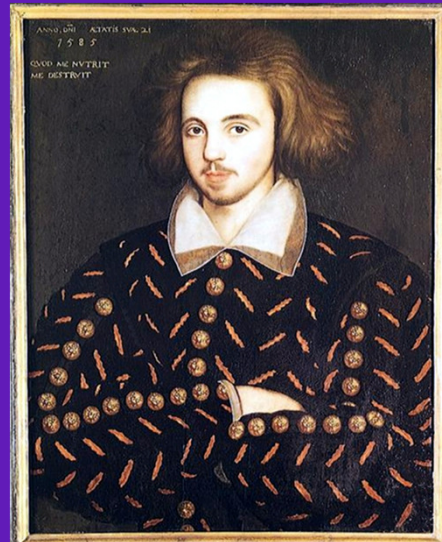


Notable Points About Christopher Marlowe

- Attended Corpus Christi College (although barely received his master's degree!)
- Possible secret agent in the service of Sir Francis Walsingham
- His play, *Tamburlaine*, is the first play to be written in blank verse
- Died on May 30, 1593, after a fight allegedly broke out between Marlowe and Ingram Frizer over the bill at the lodging house where they were meeting.
- In October of this year, it became widely known that he collaborated with Shakespeare on the *Henry VI* plays

...Or did he?

The Marlovian Theory of Shakespeare Authorship



The Theory:

The Elizabethan poet and playwright Christopher Marlowe was the main author of the poems and plays attributed to William Shakespeare.

The evidence, according to theorists:

- Similarities in their works
- The timelines of each poet/playwright
- The question of Marlowe's death