

Shakespeare; *Hic Mulier, Haec Vir*
ENGL 2323
British Literature I
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William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

- Born Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, third of eight (John Shakespeare, Mary Arden)
- Kings New School in Stratford; solid acquaintance with classical works, even though he is not known for his Latin
- Marries Anne Hathaway at age 18 (Susanna, Hamnet, Judith); pregnancy may have been involved
- 1585 begins to write plays and act; first records of his work, 1592
- Becomes part-owner of the Lord Chamberlain's Men company (later known as the King's Men under James); build Globe Theater in 1599 but also performed indoors at the Blackfriars Theatre
- Retires to Stratford c. 1613; buried in Holy Trinity Church
- Remarkably few life records survive; a lot of speculation about his personal life as a result

Shakespeare's work (partial list)

- 154 sonnets, as we have already seen, with *A Lover's Complaint* (1609)
- *Venus and Adonis*, *Rape of Lucrece* in 1593-94 during plague outbreak
- Early plays were comedies (*Twelfth Night* c. 1601-02; *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, etc.)
- Shifts to history plays early 17th C (*Richard II*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*) bookended by tragedies (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*)
- Problem plays - *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, etc.) and a return to tragedies (*Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*)
- Final period - *Cymbeline*, *Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, *Pericles*; probably collaborated with John Fletcher on *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*
- Most of his works had been published in quarto format, probably without his authorization; First Folio (36 works) published 1623

***Hic Mulier* (Anonymous, 1620)**

- *Hic* ('this' m. nom. sg. dem.) *mulier* ('woman' f. nom. sg. noun) - Latin joke that would have jumped out
- Short pamphlet - a common means of getting out political discourse at the time (if you knew a printer)
- Reports of a short trend near end of James I's reign of women adopting men's clothing
- Biblical prohibitions against cross-dressing in Leviticus; fear of women taking over male roles; idea that women might be approaching other women (sound like any play we know?) - idea of clothing as a sign of essential gender difference
- Concerns about homosexuality at the court

***Haec Vir* (Anonymous, 1620)**

- *Haec* ('this' f. nom. sg. dem.) *vir* ('man' m. nom. sg. noun) - another obvious Latin joke
- Another pamphlet - printed within about a week of *Hic Mulier*

- Fear that in an age of peace under James, men are getting soft – martial courtiers under Elizabeth vs. dandies of James's court
- Dialogue between cross-dressed man and woman – discussion of the roles of men and women; what happens when men don't do the things they are supposed to do and women take these things over?
- Starts out sounding like a defense of women's rights and what women can do – Biblical prohibition against cross-dressing wins out and there is a return to the usual order, but her criticism of men not acting 'manly' still present
- Seen as a proto-feminist text – aims to expand what women can do, but doesn't really upset the social order that much