

## QUESTION 32

Are there any other writers whose authorship is questioned?

Martin Wiggins

In 1647, The King's Men, the acting company which owned and performed the plays of Shakespeare published a collection of plays by their other great authorial brand, Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher. The book contained plays by Beaumont and Fletcher, plays by Beaumont writing on his own, and Fletcher writing on his own, and it contained plays written by neither. Many plays of this period were published with no author's name on the title pages, but Shakespeare's plays were probably not among them.

In 1599 or thereabouts there appeared *The Passionate Pilgrim*, a collection of poems with Shakespeare's name on the title page. But according to the playwright Thomas Heywood, Shakespeare was 'much offended' with the publisher 'that altogether unknown to him presumed to make so bold with his name.' The King's Men may not have cared much about dramatic authorship later in the seventeenth century, but Shakespeare cared, and Shakespeare was really careful.