

Contents

Preface vii

The world he found

- 1 The cradle of security 3
- 2 A challenge to fortune 31
- 3 The upstart crow 47
- 4 The poet of the plague years 65

The world he made

- 5 The poet of love 91
- 6 The Lord Chamberlain's Men 112
- 7 Enter, fighting, at several doors ... 129
- 8 Hamlet, revenge! 150
- 9 'His Majesty's poor players' 169
- 10 The kingdom of fools 188

The world and the dream

- 11 The dream of ancient lands 205
- 12 The end of the revels 221

Notes 239

A select list of sources and authorities 253

Family tree of Shakespeare's patrons 260

Index 263