BACKGROUND TO SHAKESPEARE

Macmillan International College Editions (MICE) will bring to university, college, school and professional students, authoritative paperback books covering the history and cultures of the developing world, and the special aspects of its scientific, medical, technical, social and economic development. The MICE programme contains many distinguished series in a wide range of disciplines, some titles being regionally biased, others being more international. Library editions will usually be published simultaneously with the paperback editions. For full details of this list, please contact the publishers.

Other titles of interest

General Editor Professor A. N. Jeffares

Commonwealth Writers Series

Robson: *Ngugi wa Thiong'o*

Carroll: *Chinua Achebe*

Kiernan: *Patrick White*

Gurr and Hanson: *Katherine Mansfield*

New Literature Handbooks

King: *West Indian Literature*

King: *The New English Literatures – cultural nationalism in a changing world*

Rutherford and Hannah: *Commonwealth Short Stories*

Burton and Chacksfield: *African Poetry in English*

Larson: *The Emergence of African Fiction*

BACKGROUND TO SHAKESPEARE

M. M. Badawi

*Fellow of St Antony's College,
Oxford*

M
MACMILLAN

© M. M. Badawi 1981

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1981

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1956 (as amended).

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

First published 1981

Reprinted 1986

Published by

MACMILLAN EDUCATION LTD

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2XS

and London

Companies and representatives

throughout the world

ISBN 978-0-333-30535-5 ISBN 978-1-349-16636-7 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-16636-7

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	vii
1 The Study of Shakespeare	1
2 Shakespeare the Man (1564–1616)	16
3 The Social Background of the Plays	25
4 Cosmology and Religion	46
5 The Classical Background	69
6 Elizabethan Stage Conditions	96
7 The Chronology and Sources of the Plays	117
<i>Appendix: A Note on the Histories</i>	126
<i>Index</i>	137

FOR MIEKE

Preface

This book is designed primarily for the overseas student of Shakespeare, especially for the Afro-Asian student with no classical and little or no Christian background. That is why it attempts to take very little for granted. The assumptions which lie behind the works of Shakespeare, and for that matter behind the whole body of Western literature, and that are tacitly accepted by the English and the European reader are here explicitly stated in order to provide the reader with the frame of reference necessary for the understanding and appreciation of Shakespeare's plays. Similarly, the language of exposition is deliberately made straightforward and complex issues are presented in a manner which may at times border on simplification. However, I have endeavoured not to lose sight of my specific reader, and if by the end of the book he feels that he has been helped in understanding Shakespearean drama or that at least some obstacles have been removed from his path, my labour will not have been in vain. In short, I have tried to write the kind of book which I wished I had read on my first introduction to English literature.

It is hoped that, beside being a useful introduction when it is read straight through from beginning to end, the book may prove to be of some value to the student as a work of reference. With this latter end in mind I have provided a comprehensive index.

Finally, I should like to express my gratitude to my friend Professor Mahmoud Manzalaoui, of the University of British Columbia, who kindly read the first draft of this book and made many valuable suggestions.

St Antony's College, Oxford

M. M. Badawi

quantum sibi ipsi et spectantibus, bistrarum rotunditati
 prius designatum, in quo multi vesi, tauri et bustina
 magnitudinis ranti, disputis cantibus et fectis aluntur, qui
 ad

The Swan Theatre: a sketch made in 1596.