Introduction

The title of this book, 'Shakespeare and the Admiral's Men', may require some explanation. Although, as Terence G. Schoone-Jongen shows in *Shakespeare's Companies*, disagreement still rages about the playing company or companies to which William Shakespeare may have belonged prior to joining the Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1594, one thing almost everyone agrees on is that he never belonged to the Admiral's Men.[1] The chapters that follow explore a different type of relationship: one not of company affiliation, but of reciprocal influence. I aim to show how, over the course of the 1590s, Shakespeare's work as a dramatist for the Lord Chamberlain's Men was informed by the plays that the Admiral's Men were staging at the Rose theatre, in terms of subject matter, theme, characterisation, treatment of materials and more; and how in turn, Admiral's Men dramatists drew on Shakespeare's work when writing new plays of their own. I follow this relationship up to 1600, the year in which the Admiral's Men relocated to the Fortune playhouse in Golding Lane. This and other important developments around that time, such as the move of the Lord Chamberlain's Men to the Globe (1599), the revival of the children's companies (1599–1600), and the growing willingness of the Privy Council to tolerate a third adult company (formally licensed in 1602), represent a reconfiguration of London's theatrical culture in ways that make the turn of the century an appropriate end point.[2]

[1] According to Schoone-Jongen, 'The Queen's Men, Strange's Men, Pembroke's Men, and Sussex's Men arguably constitute the four most prominent candidates', while John Southworth, *Shakespeare the Player: A Life in the Theatre* (Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing, 2000) is a rare recent example of a work that makes the case for Shakespeare's involvement with the Admiral's. Terence G. Schoone-Jongen, *Shakespeare's Companies: William Shakespeare's Early Career and the Acting Companies, 1577–1594* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 173, 190–5.

[2] A company made up of the servants of the Earl of Oxford and of the Earl of Worcester was licensed to perform at the Boar's Head on 31 March 1602. See *English Professional Theatre, 1530–1660*, ed. by Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry and William Ingram (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 108–10.

In some respects, the argument that Shakespeare's work in the 1590s was influenced by the Admiral's Men is not a new one. The Admiral's repertory included plays by Christopher Marlowe such as the two parts of *Tamburlaine*, *Doctor Faustus* and *The Jew of Malta*, not to mention Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, and the importance of all of these to Shakespeare's dramatic development is generally accepted. Since 1990, the question of Marlowe's impact on Shakespeare has attracted book-length studies by James Shapiro and Robert A. Logan, not to speak of book chapters and journal articles, while *The Spanish Tragedy* is routinely cited as an influence on *Hamlet*.[3] However, during Shakespeare's time with the Lord Chamberlain's Men, neither Marlowe (who died on 30 May 1593) nor Kyd (who was buried on 15 August 1594) was in a position to supply the Admiral's Men with new material; their drama, not all of which had been originally written for that company in any case, survived in its repertory as old plays that could still attract audiences. From 1594 onwards, the contributors of new plays were dramatists like George Chapman, author of the first 'humours' comedy, *An Humorous Day's Mirth*; William Haughton, whose play *Englishmen for My Money* can be regarded as the first London-based city comedy; and Anthony Munday, whose *Earl of Huntingdon* plays supplied the template for subsequent literary treatments of Robin Hood – besides authors of plays such as *A Knack to Know an Honest Man* whose identities have been lost to posterity. Any discussion of Shakespeare in relation to the commercial environment in which he wrote during the latter part of the 1590s needs to recognise men like these as his competitors and fellow innovators.

In electing to read Shakespeare's dramatic output, not in relation to the work of an individual dramatist, but in relation to the repertory of the Admiral's Men as a whole, my practice both exemplifies and is informed by a strand of research into early modern drama that takes playing companies and their repertories as the object of its enquiry. This approach has a long pedigree, exemplified in the twentieth century by works such as T. W. Baldwin's *The Organization and Personnel of the*

[3] James Shapiro, *Rival Playwrights: Marlowe, Jonson, Shakespeare* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Robert A. Logan, *Shakespeare's Marlowe: The Influence of Christopher Marlowe on Shakespeare's Artistry* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007). Three recent discussions are Clara Calvo, 'Thomas Kyd and the Elizabethan Blockbuster: *The Spanish Tragedy*', in *Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists*, ed. by Ton Hoenselaars (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 19–33; Richard Wilson, '"The Words of Mercury": Shakespeare and Marlowe', in *Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists*, pp. 34–53; and Thomas Cartelli, 'Marlowe and Shakespeare Revisited', in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. by Emily C. Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 285–95.

Shakespearean Company (1927), Robert Boies Sharpe's *The Real War of the Theaters* (1935) and Alfred Harbage's *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* (1952).[4] In the 1980s and 1990s, it gathered pace as texts such as Andrew Gurr's *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (1987), Roslyn Lander Knutson's *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company 1594–1613* (1991) and Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean's *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (1998) made their influence felt.[5] The reasons for this development are multiple and varied, as I have discussed at greater length elsewhere.[6] Gurr and Knutson were (amongst other things) contributing to existing scholarly debates: in Gurr's case about the demographics of playgoing, in that of Knutson about the extent to which different acting companies followed similar business models.[7] I would also suggest that the increased enthusiasm, from the 1980s onward, for historicist approaches to early modern drama found useful materials in repertory-oriented studies, since the acting company represented a place where dramatic writing came into contact with other practices such as patronage, censorship, repertory management and playgoing and with the commercial pressures of the marketplace.[8] Knutson's book, for example, sought to identify the principles upon which acting companies bought and commissioned plays, while McMillin and MacLean identified political reasons behind the formation of the Queen's Men in 1583.[9] In a period when critics were keen to relate the drama to the new social and economic formations of Elizabethan capitalism, or to identify the workings of power in dramatic literature, a theatre history oriented towards acting companies offered a way of grounding their analysis in the material practices of the entertainment

[4] T. W. Baldwin, *The Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1927); Robert Boies Sharpe *The Real War of the Theaters: Shakespeare's Fellows in Rivalry with the Admiral's Men, 1594–1603: Repertories, Devices and Types* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1935); Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* (New York: Macmillan, 1952).

[5] Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Roslyn Lander Knutson, *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company 1594–1613* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1991); Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Citations in the current study are from the second edition (1996) of Gurr.

[6] Tom Rutter, 'Repertory Studies: An Overview', *Shakespeare*, 4 (2008), 352–66.

[7] Gurr's book responds to Ann Jennalie Cook's *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576–1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), which in turn served as a rejoinder to Harbage. Knutson takes issue with a view of the Admiral's Men that she associates with F. G. Fleay and others, and which I discuss later in this chapter.

[8] This is well illustrated by the contents of a landmark collection of 1997, *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. by John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), which includes separate chapters on all of these topics.

[9] Knutson, *Repertory of Shakespeare's Company*, pp. 15–55; McMillin and MacLean, pp. 1–36.

industry. At the same time, the influence of post-structuralist theorists such as Michel Foucault, who interrogated and historicised the role of the author, provided a theoretical rationale for moving away from the individual dramatist as the object of enquiry, as Lucy Munro recognised in a 2003 article that sought to theorise a 'repertory approach' to early modern drama. This shift of focus seemed particularly appropriate to the study of the early modern theatre, partly because of its inherently collaborative nature but also because it was not a culture that necessarily privileged dramatists above theatre companies: witness the title pages of printed plays, which almost always name the acting company but do not necessarily specify a playwright.[10] Finally, I would suggest, the *Records of Early English Drama* (REED) project conducted from the University of Toronto since the late 1970s uncovered a wealth of archival material, and collated material already known to scholars, in a way that made it possible to analyse the professional habits (in particular the touring patterns) of individual companies much more extensively than had previously been the case. The results of this are evident in the third chapter of McMillin and MacLean's book, which discusses the touring habits of the Queen's Men and stresses the importance of travel for the company, and they can also be seen in the more recent work of MacLean (with Lawrence Manley) and Gurr on individual companies.[11]

The potential of a company-oriented approach to generate new insights is illustrated by a wealth of monographs that have appeared since 2000 and that share an interest in companies and their repertories while remaining diverse in their focuses and methodologies. Mary Bly's *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage* offers a history of the King's Revels Company of child players, identifying a distinctive corporate style in their plays' bawdy comic heroines and 'queer puns'.[12] Knutson's *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare's Time* addresses the question of commercial relationships between companies: she argues that these were less competitive than is sometimes supposed, and she reads allusions to the contemporary theatrical scene in plays such as *Hamlet*, Ben Jonson's

[10] Lucy Munro, 'Early Modern Drama and the Repertory Approach', *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 42 (2003), 1–33 (pp. 1–2, 6–14).

[11] McMillin and MacLean, pp. 37–83; Lawrence Manley and Sally-Beth MacLean, *Lord Strange's Men and Their Plays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 247–79; Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespeare Company, 1594–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 54–69; *Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company 1594–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 72–81.

[12] Mary Bly, *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 6.

Poetaster and Thomas Dekker's *Satiromastix* as strategic rather than aggressive.[13] Gurr has offered company histories both of the Lord Chamberlain's and of the Admiral's Men, examining their commercial strategies, staging practices, touring habits, finances, repertories, patronage and more. Munro's history of the Children of the Queen's Revels surveys their relationship with the Blackfriars audience, their role in the development of tragicomedy, and their dramatists' innovations in the genre of tragedy.[14] Schoone-Jongen summarises the critical debate over Shakespeare's company affiliations prior to the Lord Chamberlain's Men. A collection of essays on the Queen's Men edited by Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin testifies to the range of topics a company-oriented approach can embrace, including contributions on touring, patronage, playing spaces, printing and performance, as well as critical discussions of individual plays.[15] Brian Walsh, too, focuses on the Queen's Men, stressing their importance in shaping 'the historical and theatrical imagination of Shakespeare', while James Marino suggests that Shakespeare's plays on subjects previously treated by the Queen's Men and others were rewritings undertaken with the aim of asserting his company's rights over the material.[16] Two studies focus on specific playhouses and, consequently, the companies who performed there: Mark Bayer's *Theatre, Community, and Civic Engagement in Jacobean London* considers the Fortune and Red Bull theatres, homes of the Admiral's successor companies the Prince's / Palsgrave's Men and of Queen Anne's Men, while Eva Griffith offers a history of the Red Bull.[17] Bart van Es in *Shakespeare in Company* approaches Shakespeare's writing after 1594 in the light of his position as sharer in the Lord Chamberlain's Men, arguing that his close familiarity with the men who would perform his plays had a decisive effect on his writing.[18] Most recently, Lawrence Manley and Sally-Beth MacLean's study of *Lord Strange's Men and*

[13] Roslyn Lander Knutson, *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare's Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[14] Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[15] *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583–1603: Material Practices and Conditions of Playing*, ed. by Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme and Andrew Griffin (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009).
[16] Brian Walsh, *Shakespeare, the Queen's Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 3; James Marino, *Owning William Shakespeare: The King's Men and Their Intellectual Property* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).
[17] Mark Bayer, *Theatre, Community, and Civic Engagement in Jacobean London* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2011); Eva Griffith, *A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse: The Queen's Servants at the Red Bull Theatre (c. 1605–1619)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[18] Bart van Es, *Shakespeare in Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Their Plays offers a comprehensive account of that company including their career in and outside London, the probable contents of their repertory, the distinctive qualities of their plays and their relationship with their patron.

When one surveys this increasingly populous field, the obvious question arises of what the current study has to add to it. Its distinctiveness rests in a combination of factors. Firstly, rather than focusing on the repertory of a single playing company it seeks to chart an evolving and reciprocal relationship. Neither Shakespeare, as a Lord Chamberlain's Men dramatist, nor the playwrights working for the Admiral's Men operated in a hermetically sealed environment determined by the boundaries of their repertory: they were demonstrably open to each other's innovations, such that one can see (for example) *A Midsummer Night's Dream* responding to plays in the Admiral's repertory (as I shall argue in Chapter 2) and going on to influence the author of the Admiral's play *Captain Thomas Stukeley* (as I shall argue in Chapter 3). Secondly, it attempts to combine an approach informed by the findings of theatre historians with a set of priorities that are, above all, critical. On the one hand, I hope that it sheds light on the way in which dramatists for different companies drew on each other's work; on the other, I hope that in doing so it reveals new features of the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, highlighting the artistic choices they made and the aesthetic effects generated by their adherence to and rejection of earlier practice. To this extent, although I follow the practice of 'repertory studies' in using playing companies as my organising principle, treating Shakespeare as a Lord Chamberlain's Men dramatist and Chapman, Haughton, Munday and the rest as Admiral's Men dramatists, I retain a sense of authorial agency, whether of dramatists working individually or collaboratively, while recognising that this agency was shaped by other forces including the repertorial policies of companies themselves, the decisions made by actors when preparing a play for the stage, the various processes involved in getting a play into print, and the changes a play might undergo during its afterlife in the repertory.

One obvious objection to my approach relates to the decision to consider a number of Admiral's Men dramatists, but only Shakespeare among the dramatists writing for the Lord Chamberlain's Men during the 1590s. Surely, the argument might run, this is an unholy combination of two different theoretical models, one focused on the acting company and another focused on an individual playwright. Moreover, in privileging Shakespeare above other Lord Chamberlain's Men dramatists, and indeed over the Admiral's Men dramatists who are not named in the title of my

book, I could be accused of perpetuating a bardocentric model of theatre history of the very kind that repertory studies seeks to question: McMillin and MacLean, for example, begin their study of the Queen's Men by observing that only partial attention has been given to that company by 'scholars with other stories to tell, stories that concern Shakespeare and the 1590s'.[19] I accept the justice of this accusation, although I would note that in the above list of monographs since 2000 some seven incorporate Shakespeare in their titles, suggesting that practitioners of repertory studies have found it harder to get out of his shadow than they might like. This may indicate authors' awareness of the utility of Shakespeare in bookselling terms, but (more kindly) it may also be attributed to an understanding that when navigating unfamiliar territory of the kind that company-oriented surveys often enter, it is useful to have some familiar points of reference such as Shakespeare offers. The reader's prior knowledge of *The Merchant of Venice* offers an easier way in to *A Knack to Know an Honest Man* than does, say, *Fair Em*, which may be equally unfamiliar. Furthermore, a discussion of 'Shakespeare and the Admiral's Men' can be defended as an honest response to the fact that the tally of Lord Chamberlain's Men plays up to 1600 that have survived in print is dominated by Shakespeare: other than his twenty-two (or thereabouts), only *A Larum for London*, *A Warning for Fair Women* and Ben Jonson's two humours plays can be securely attributed to the company, along with, more speculatively, *Fair Em* and *Mucedorus*.[20] There is no Lord Chamberlain's Men equivalent of Henslowe's diary that might give us a sense of the many other plays, since lost, which presumably comprised the company's repertory. Accordingly, to focus explicitly on Shakespeare avoids the misleading impression that the plays under discussion comprise a representative sample of what his company was performing during the 1590s. For similar reasons, I have chosen to focus on the Admiral's Men rather than including other London companies such as Pembroke's Men, who staged the lost and notorious *Isle of Dogs* in 1597, or the servants of the sixth Earl of Derby, to whom Thomas Heywood's *Edward IV* was

[19] McMillin and MacLean, p. 1.

[20] A plausible list of Shakespeare's Lord Chamberlain's Men plays to 1600 might include *As You Like It*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Hamlet*, *1 Henry IV*, *2 Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, *King John*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, *Richard II* and *Romeo and Juliet*, along with plays probably written for other companies that came into the Lord Chamberlain's repertory: the three parts of *Henry VI*, *Richard III*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Titus Andronicus* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. See Knutson, *Repertory of Shakespeare's Company*, pp. 179–209.

ascribed when it was printed in 1599.[21] A comprehensive history of the 1590s theatre would certainly need to take account of both companies, but neither has left behind a sufficiently substantial repertory to allow for a sustained comparison with Shakespeare's work.[22]

Above all, though, I hope to achieve two things by considering Shakespeare's plays alongside the repertory of the Admiral's Men. The first is to add to our understanding of this outstandingly canonical figure. Recent studies have highlighted the influence that works in the repertory of the Queen's Men, in particular, exerted upon Shakespeare's development: Walsh, for example, argues that 'Shakespeare seizes on the consciousness of history as a construct' that he finds in Queen's Men history plays and 'experiments with different ways in which this notion can be used to assess the concept of history', while Janet Clare demonstrates the persistent influence of Queen's Men plays upon Shakespeare throughout his career (as with *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* and Shakespeare's *Henry IV* and *Henry V* plays).[23] However, less attention has been paid to the new plays that were appearing during Shakespeare's first years with the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Although specific instances of intertextuality have been addressed, such as the similarities between *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Anthony Munday's *John a Kent and John a Cumber* (which may be the Admiral's play *The Wise Man of West Chester*), a more comprehensive study is yet to appear.[24] The nearest thing is Martin Wiggins's *Shakespeare and the Drama of His Time*, a short but wide-ranging monograph that efficiently and convincingly locates Shakespeare's development in relation to emerging dramatic trends such as the humours comedy of the late 1590s (as I discuss in Chapter 4).[25] However, the broad chronological sweep of Wiggins's book, and its interest in plays staged by a variety of companies, distinguishes it from my own, whose narrower focus allows a lengthier discussion of individual dramas.

That leads me to the second thing I hope this book will achieve, which is to give sustained critical attention to plays that seldom receive it. In some

[21] Thomas Heywood, *The First and Second Partes of King Edward the Fourth*, 'As it hath diuers times beene publiquely played by the Right Honorable the Earle of Derby his seruants' (London, 1599; STC: 13341).

[22] On the importance of companies beyond the Lord Chamberlain's and the Admiral's Men, see Knutson, *Playing Companies and Commerce*, pp. 8–9.

[23] Walsh, p. 109; Janet Clare, *Shakespeare's Stage Traffic: Imitation, Borrowing and Competition in Renaissance Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 144–64.

[24] I. A. Shapiro, 'Shakespeare and Mundy', *Shakespeare Survey*, 14 (1961), 25–33; Nevill Coghill, *Shakespeare's Professional Skills* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp. 42–60.

[25] Martin Wiggins, *Shakespeare and the Drama of His Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

cases, as with *A Knack to Know an Honest Man*, this may be due to their anonymity, which prevents them from being easily classified in a literary system that still tends to privilege the role of the author. In others, as with the plays of Anthony Munday, it may be because they are perceived as the work of minor dramatists. But even Admiral's Men plays of acknowledged importance are not always discussed with the level of detail one would expect: in his essay on Chapman in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists*, for example, Paul Franssen notes the significance of *An Humorous Day's Mirth*, observing that it 'antedates the fashion for the "humours" play, usually associated with Ben Jonson, by a year', only to pass on immediately to other topics. Shona Mcintosh's survey of 'Recent Studies in George Chapman (1975–2009)' was able to find only two critical essays on this landmark play.[26] In the current study, as well as discussing the impact of such plays on Shakespeare – and his on their authors – I have tried to offer a more general discussion of their themes, language, stagecraft and politics, with the aim of conveying some impression of the range of theatrical material offered by the Admiral's Men between 1594 and 1600. This makes no claims to exhaustiveness: I do not refer, for example, to the anonymous *Look About You* printed as an Admiral's Men play in 1600, which Gurr discusses at length in *Shakespeare's Opposites*, or to Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, perhaps the Admiral's Men play of this period that has the greatest claim to canonical status after the work of Marlowe and Kyd (although I have touched on its relationship with *Henry V* elsewhere).[27] My choice of material has been shaped by the extent to which I have been able to identify instances of intertextuality between Admiral's Men plays and the work of Shakespeare: thus, in Chapter 1 I focus on their 1594 play *A Knack to Know an Honest Man*, a drama set in Venice that pits two faithful friends against a vengeful moneylender, which has obvious points of affinity with *The Merchant of Venice*. More specifically, I argue that this anonymous play brought together material from earlier works including Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (which was playing alongside it in the Admiral's repertory), the Lord Strange's Men play *A Knack to Know a Knave* and a much earlier drama,

[26] Paul Franssen, 'George Chapman's Learned Drama', in *Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists*, pp. 134–48, pp. 134–35; Shona Mcintosh, 'Recent Studies in George Chapman (1975–2009)', *English Literary Renaissance*, 41 (2011), 219–44.

[27] Gurr, *Shakespeare's Opposites*, pp. 59–71; Tom Rutter, *Work and Play on the Shakespearean Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 88–96.

Richard Edwards' *Damon and Pythias*, in ways that Shakespeare would find dramatically enabling and which proved to be commercially successful.

In the next two chapters, I continue to argue that as well as being directly influenced by Marlowe plays in the mid-1590s repertory of the Admiral's Men, Shakespeare learned from the work of dramatists who had themselves reshaped Marlovian materials. In Chapter 2 I focus on *Doctor Faustus*, another play that discernibly influenced Shakespeare's dramaturgy of the 1590s. As with *The Jew of Malta* and *The Merchant of Venice*, I argue that Shakespeare's practice in integrating aspects of this tragedy into the comic *A Midsummer Night's Dream* followed the example of playwrights including Anthony Munday in *John a Kent and John a Cumber*, as well as non-Admiral's dramatists such as Robert Greene. In Chapter 3 I discuss Shakespeare's *Henry IV* plays in relation to George Peele's *The Battle of Alcazar* and the anonymous *Captain Thomas Stukeley*, two plays whose response to Marlowe is more complex and creative than the critical label 'sons of *Tamburlaine*' would suggest. Both of them undermine the rhetoric and values of Marlowe's protagonist in ways that resemble Shakespeare's practice; the former unquestionably predates *Henry IV*, and if the latter does not, then its verbal closeness to Shakespeare has implications for the dating of Part I. *Stukeley* also responds to aspects of its non-dramatic context – the Nine Years' War, the career of the Earl of Essex – in ways that parallel features of the *Henriad*.

Although it is uncertain whether *Captain Thomas Stukeley* responds to *Henry IV* or vice versa, my final chapters demonstrate that by the late 1590s, the direction of influence between Shakespeare and the Admiral's Men had unquestionably become two-way, with plays such as William Haughton's *Englishmen for My Money* and Henry Porter's *The Two Angry Women of Abington* incorporating pieces of dialogue and stage business that allude to *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Merchant of Venice* (amongst others). I discuss these plays alongside *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which shares their English setting, non-aristocratic milieu and interest in women's free choice in marriage, and which, like them, has affinities with the 'humours' comedy inaugurated by Chapman in 1597 with *An Humorous Day's Mirth*. Furthermore, I use the points of contact between all four plays as a means towards highlighting any differences between the ways in which Shakespeare and Admiral's Men dramatists treated comparable materials that might point to an identifiable company style or outlook. Along similar lines, my final chapter considers whether the Admiral's Men repertory articulates a consistent religious position, a topic I explore by