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Digital Shakespeare, 1996-2017

**An exploration of the cultural and technological
history of the four Arden Shakespeare digital formats
with reference to analytical insights from
digital humanities research**

Mary Ann Kernan

Centre for English Research Seminar
15 February 2017



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Outline

1 Arden **101**

2 **Digital Arden Shakespeare: Overview**

3 Digital Humanities **101**

4 Whither DH/Arden research?

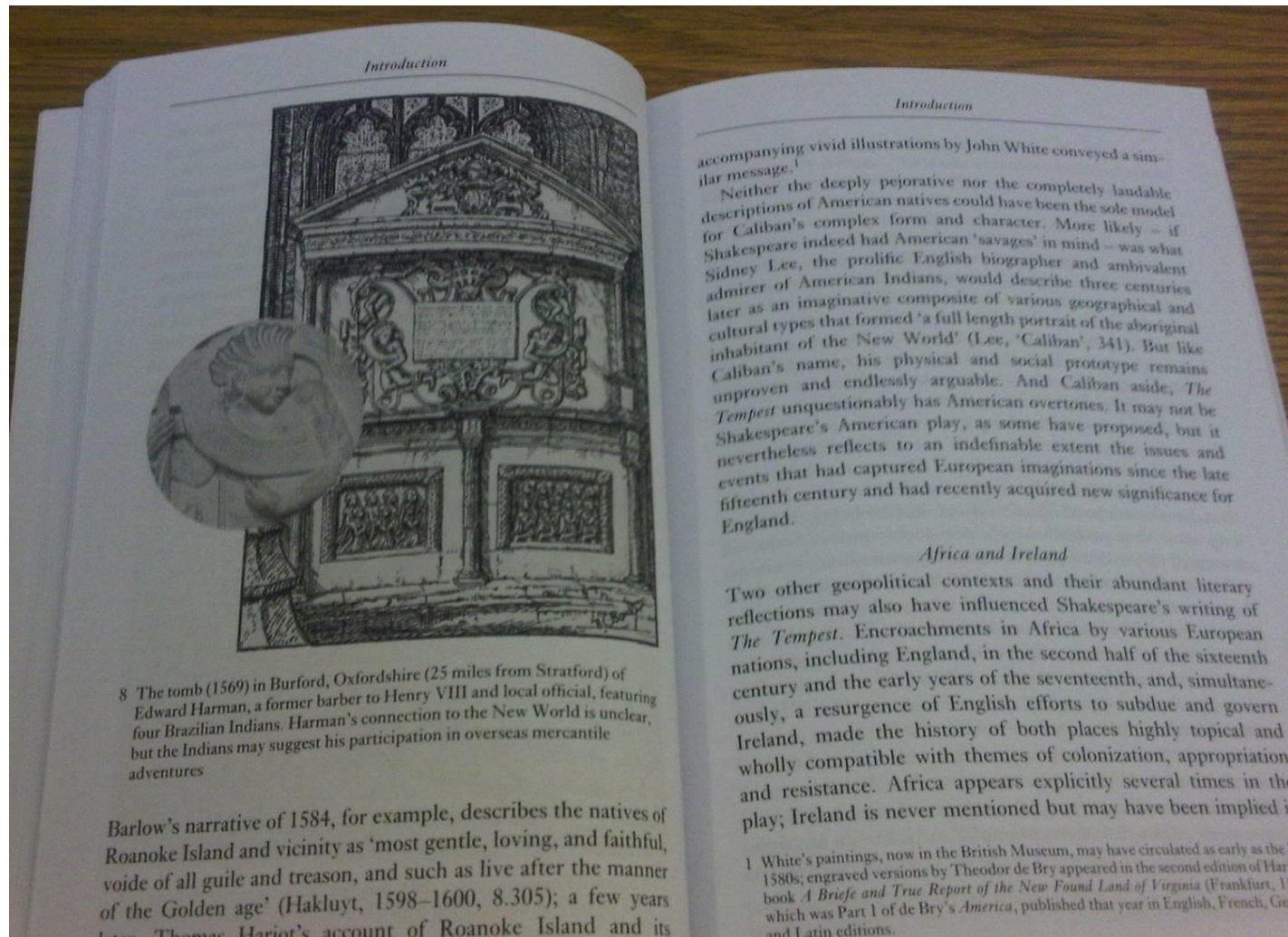
5 And **Impact**...?



The Arden Shakespeare: overview

- **Why Arden?**
 - **Authoritative edition** of Shakespeare; global status
 - **Publishing values:** consistent since 1899
 - Only **three series** since 1899, **fourth** now being commissioned
 - Dramatic **ownership shifts** between 1980s and 2008: 'ownership' of the series?
 - Digital Ardens: **Primary data** on its curation and history
(**Sources:** texts/digital products, documents, **interviews**, sales analysis, some surviving DVDs/library copies...)*

*eg Driscoll and Scott, 1998; Scott, 2010; Proudfoot, 2001; Thompson and McMullan, 2002



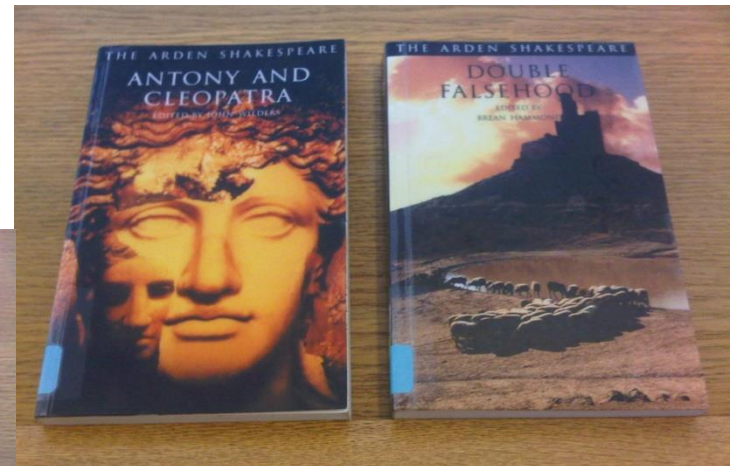


Arden 3: 1995 to 2017

- **Shifts in scholarship and markets / ‘Sociology of the text’ (McKenzie 1999, Kasten 2001) / Editing/unediting / Copyright debates...**
- **Content/layout:** Redesign; performance notes; note additions, e.g. on religion and obscenity **Scholarship:** Production of texts, performance history, critical and feminist theory
- **General Editors:** recruited both a female (Ann Thompson) and a US (David Kasten) General Editor
- **Arden imprint** extended to Early Modern Plays (Cengage) and monographs (Bloomsbury)
- **Market shifts:** levels of study/global



‘The **team of editors** is at **the very heart of the Arden project**; it is their individual knowledge, skills and ideas that will make the series exceptional and ensure it a long and successful life.’
(Routledge, 1995, p.3)





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Arden's publishing turmoil, 1987–2009



- 1987:** Associated Book Publishing bought by **Thomson Corporation**; Methuen name sold; **Routledge** launched, including Arden
- 1996:** Thomson sold Routledge, retained Arden; moved to **Thomas Nelson** (Schools Arden)
- 2000:** Thomson sold Thomas Nelson; retained Arden – Arden Schools initiated; moved to **ITPS**, part of Thomson Learning
- 2007:** Thomson sold Thomson Learning to private equity firm, renamed **Cengage Learning**
- 2009:** Arden purchased from Cengage by **Bloomsbury Publishing**, part of **Methuen Drama/Bloomsbury Academic**



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Digital Arden

Digital Ardens



Hamlet contemplates a mouse. © Internet Shakespeare Editions



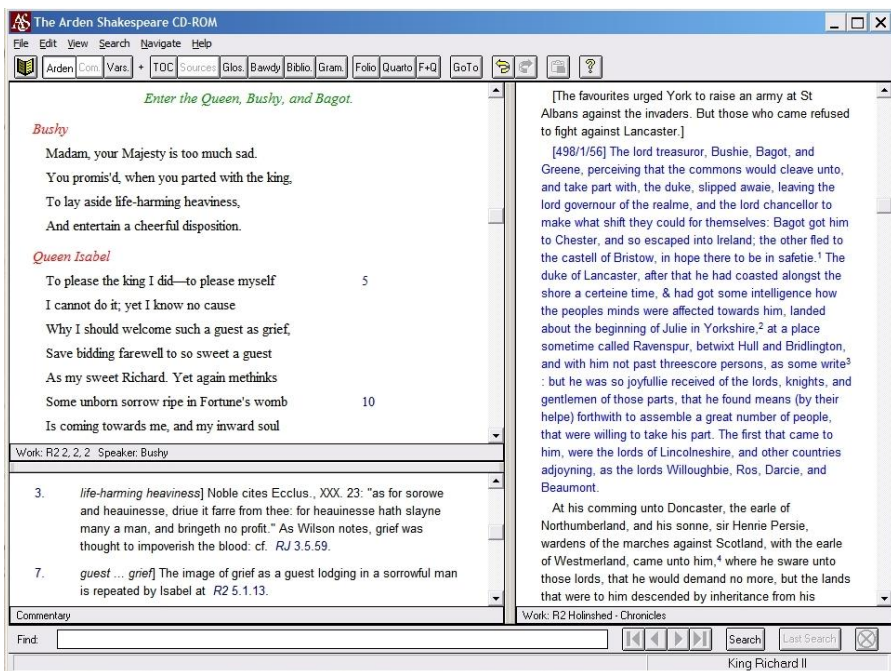
- Planned from **1992** (Scott, 2010)
- 1997: Arden Shakespeare **CD-Rom** (Thomas Nelson)
- 1999: **Arden Online** (Thomson Learning)
- 2005: **Shakespeare Collection** (Thomson Learning/Gale)
- 2013: **Drama Online** (Bloomsbury)



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Digital Arden

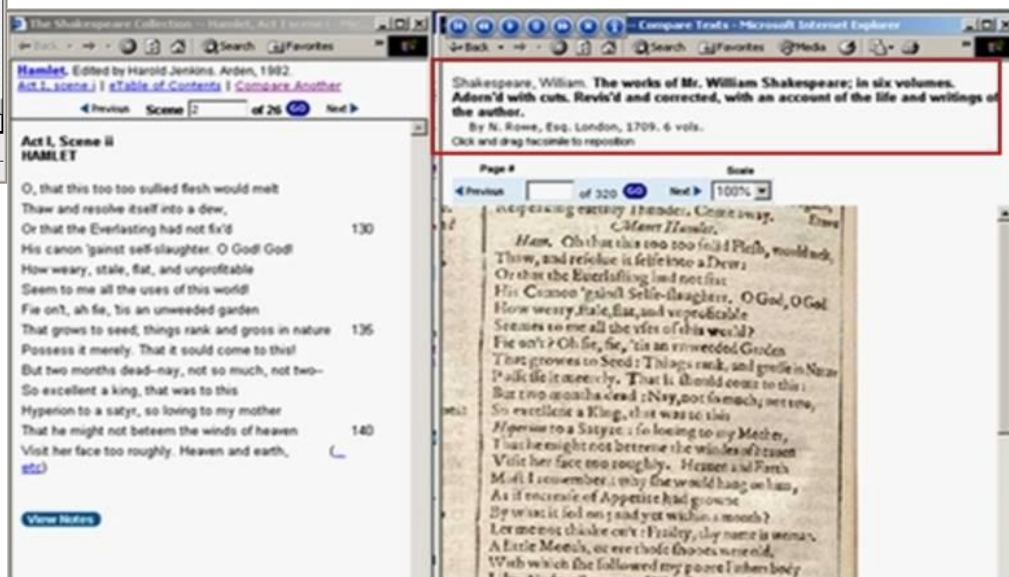
1997: Arden Shakespeare CD-Rom (Routledge/Thomas Nelson)



2005: Shakespeare Collection (Thomson Learning/Gale)



1999: Arden Online (Thomson Learning)





Drama Online (Bloomsbury)

- **Branding:** Arden Shakespeare as 'partner'; included by end 2016, some Arden 2s; complexity / cost
- **Content:** 2,095 plays; Character Grids and Part Books; searches (eg monologues by gender); criticism; images; audio; video
- **'Coopetition':** Faber and Faber; V&A Museum and American Shakespeare Center; Nick Hern Books; LA Theatre Works; Globe Theatre; Playwrights Canada Press
- **Online database:** May 2013 as subscription, scholarly resource for university libraries

<http://www.dramaonlinelibrary.com/>





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Video Tours

Overview of playtext features:



Drama Online - Over...

Downloaded: Ingram Content Group Digital Publishing Award - 2016

Latest News: 10th March: Another great review

Playtext landing page

Discover the magic of live theatre with our new video releases:

Shakespeare's Globe on Screen Collection - critically acclaimed theatre productions from **Shakespeare's Globe**.



Globe On Screen: Twelfth ...

Latest News

The Hollow Crown Series and BBC Drama Films to join Drama Online this autumn. [More information.](#)

February 2016: Drama Online shortlisted for the "Ingram Content Group Digital Publishing Award", IPG Independent Publishing Awards, 2016. [More information about this.](#)

Modern plays from [Nick Hern](#)



Debates in Digital Humanities

- What/who **are** the Digital Humanities...?
(http://dh101.humanities.ucla.edu/?page_id=15)
- Technical skills / analysis of **data** allied to humanities research
- Is it all about **medieval scripts**...? (projects)
- It's an **activity**, not just scholarship → outcomes/applied focus (McGann, 2004)
- A **community** of scholars/explorers, conferences to be found on Twitter
- '**Methodological commons**'
- '**Embodiment, Entanglement, and Immersion...**'
(Kenderdine, 2016)



Implications for Digital Arden study?

- Text as **metaphor** [= narrative research?]
- **Textual analysis** tools and research lit
- **Critical lens** in digital context (eg gender, publishers as the enemy)
- **Processes** of digital development (cf McGann, 2004)
- Overlap with **UX** [user experience] research: 'model of use'



Impact/future research potentials: Discuss...?

- Defining **metaphors** for the development of digital Shakespeare → *for publishers/developers/consultants?*
- Facilitating **reader input** to product development → *with communities of users/educational hub?*
- City partnerships: IT/Creativity Centre → *introducing insights from Digital Humanities into **design and management** projects?*



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Insights from discussion

Potential applications:

- Analysis of the development of multi-language texts/for special audiences
- Jean Rhys project / city spaces
- Student use of online research / pedagogy / outcomes

Overall conclusion:

- Digital as a positive benefit for Humanities research



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