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Academic excellence for business
& the professions

The Arden Shakespeare, 1890 to 2014

**A cultural, historical, commercial and
technological case study**

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**By the Book: The book and the study of its
digital transformation**

Villa Finaly, Florence, Italy 23–24 May 2014



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Outline

Introduction

1 The Arden Shakespeare: publishing context

2 The Arden Shakespeare as content

3 The Arden as digital product

Conclusion



Arden Shakespeare: the case study

- **Why Arden?**
 - **Authoritative edition** of Shakespeare; global status
 - **Publishing values:** consistent since 1899
 - **Only three series** since 1899, **fourth** now being commissioned
- **Sources:** texts/digital products, documents, interviews, sales analysis, Arden sources*
- **Theoretical sources?** Rose; Bourdieu/Thompson; Foucault/HE studies; Barthes/critical scholars of authorship; Shakespeare studies; user experience; Management and innovation (grounded theory)

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



Arden's publishing context



1899: Series launched: **Methuen & Co Ltd**

1966: Methuen joined **Associated Book Publishers Ltd**

1987: ABP 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; 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**



Publishing themes

- **Authorship:** The academy↔academic publishing relationship
- **Content:** Consistent, excellent, evolving (Bhaskar, 2014)
- **The publisher's role/value added** in the digital age
- **Technology** in publishing innovation
- **Commercial trends:** Conglomeration / Competition / Coopetition / Globalisation / Outsourcing
- **Branding:** Shakespeare, Editors, publishers, series and imprint branding
- **Digital:** CD-Rom (1997) and Arden Online (1999)); Shakespeare Collection (2005); Drama Online (2013)

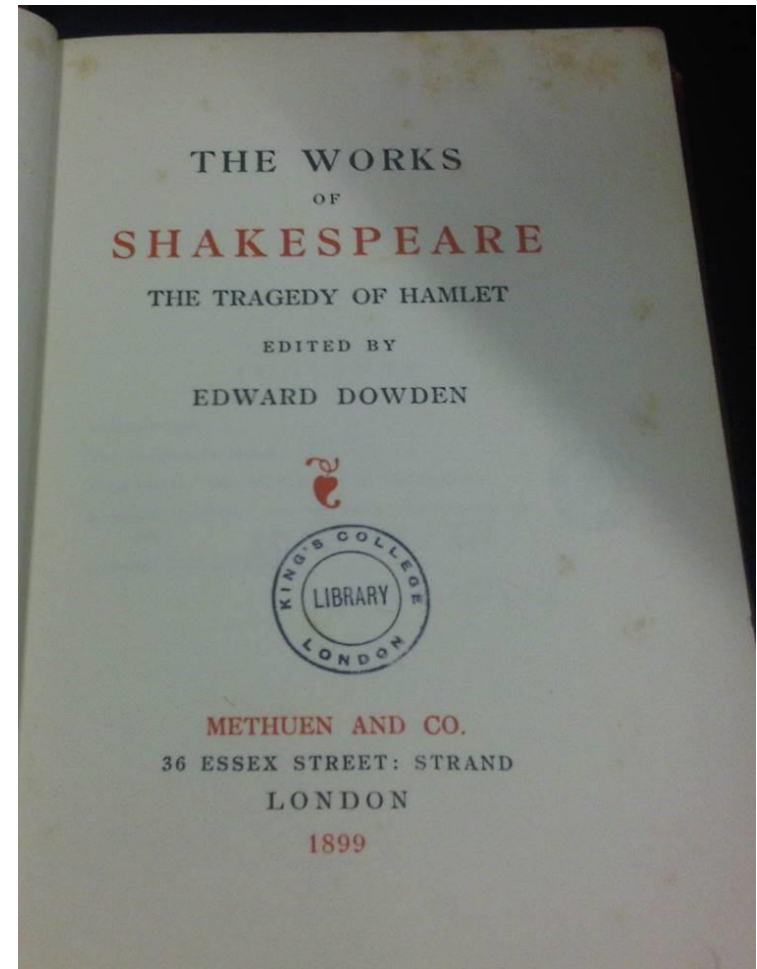


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2 The Arden Shakespeare as content

Arden 1: 1890s to 1920s

- **Commissioned** in 1890s by Methuen & Co Ltd
- **Used texts from** 1864 Cambridge edition, revised in 1891-93
- **Innovative:** the first play-per-volume series
- **Market:** for the general reader and (for the first time) *university students*





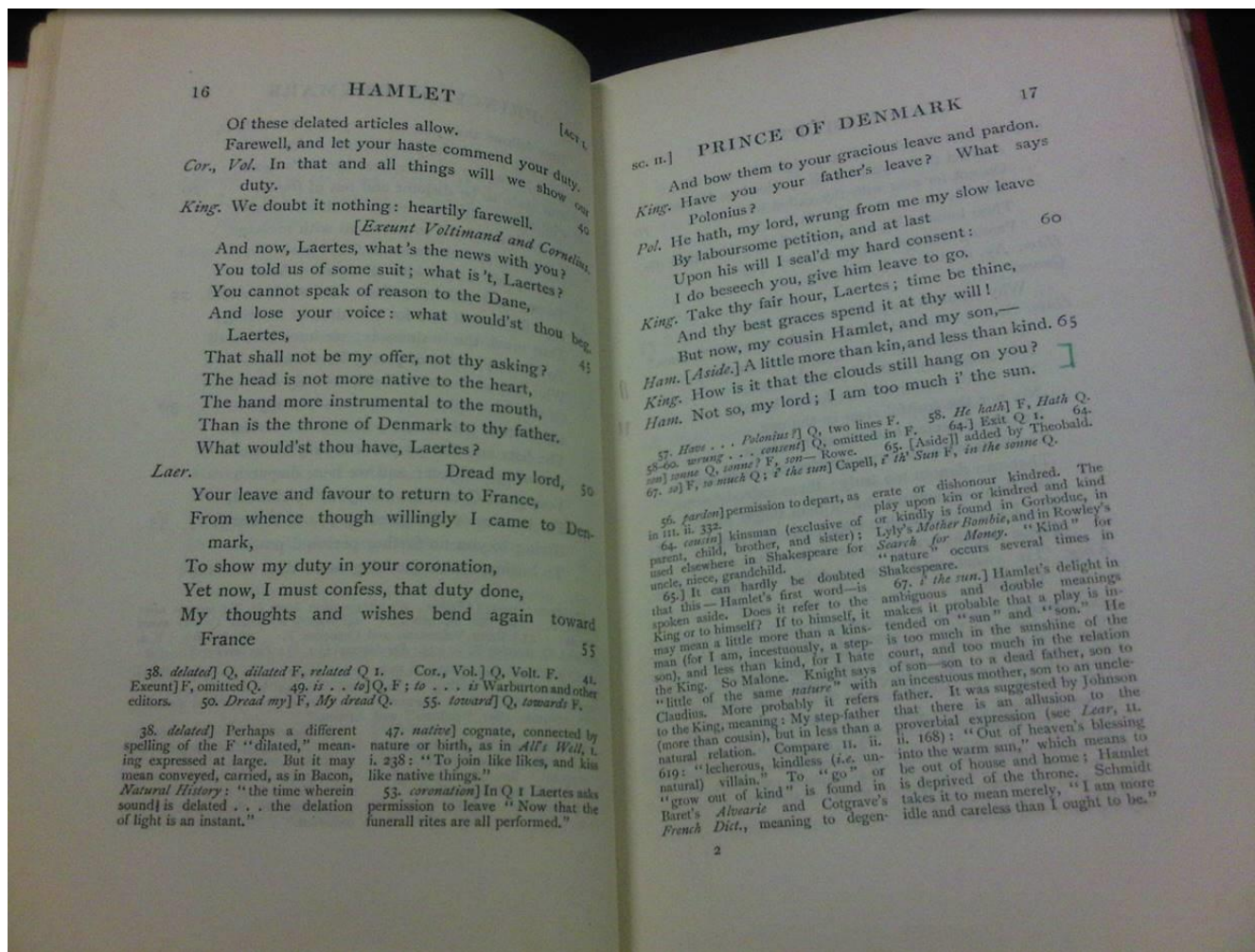
Arden 1

- **Algernon Methuen:** published his own textbooks; authors: Kipling, Belloc, Stevenson, Wilde and D.H. Lawrence
- **English – new at UK universities:** 1st Professor, Dublin, 1866; Oxford and Cambridge in 1904 and 1911
- Set a **new standard** for publishing Shakespeare: on-page textual **variants** and **commentary notes**





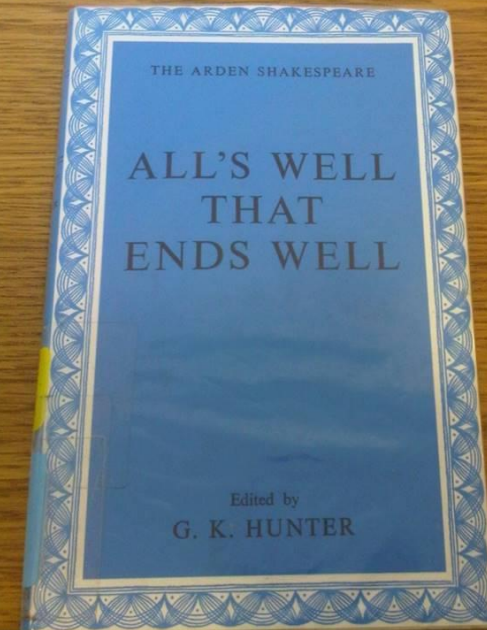
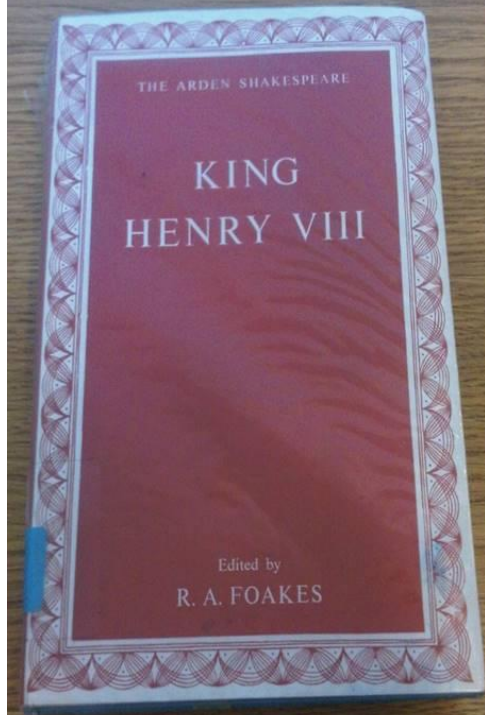
Arden 1





Arden 2: 1940s to 1980s

- **Post-war:** Shakespeare = British identity (Olivier *Henry V* 1944)
- **General Editor:** Una Ellis-Fermor; *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, 1951; play editors made responsible for the play texts
- **Hardback** only/**typographic** complexities
- **Scholarship** = revolution in Shakespeare studies; long periods to edit plays (25 years, Jenkins *Hamlet*, *Sonnets* unfinished)
- **Fees:** editors paid a fee only; 'gentleman's agreement' with General Editors



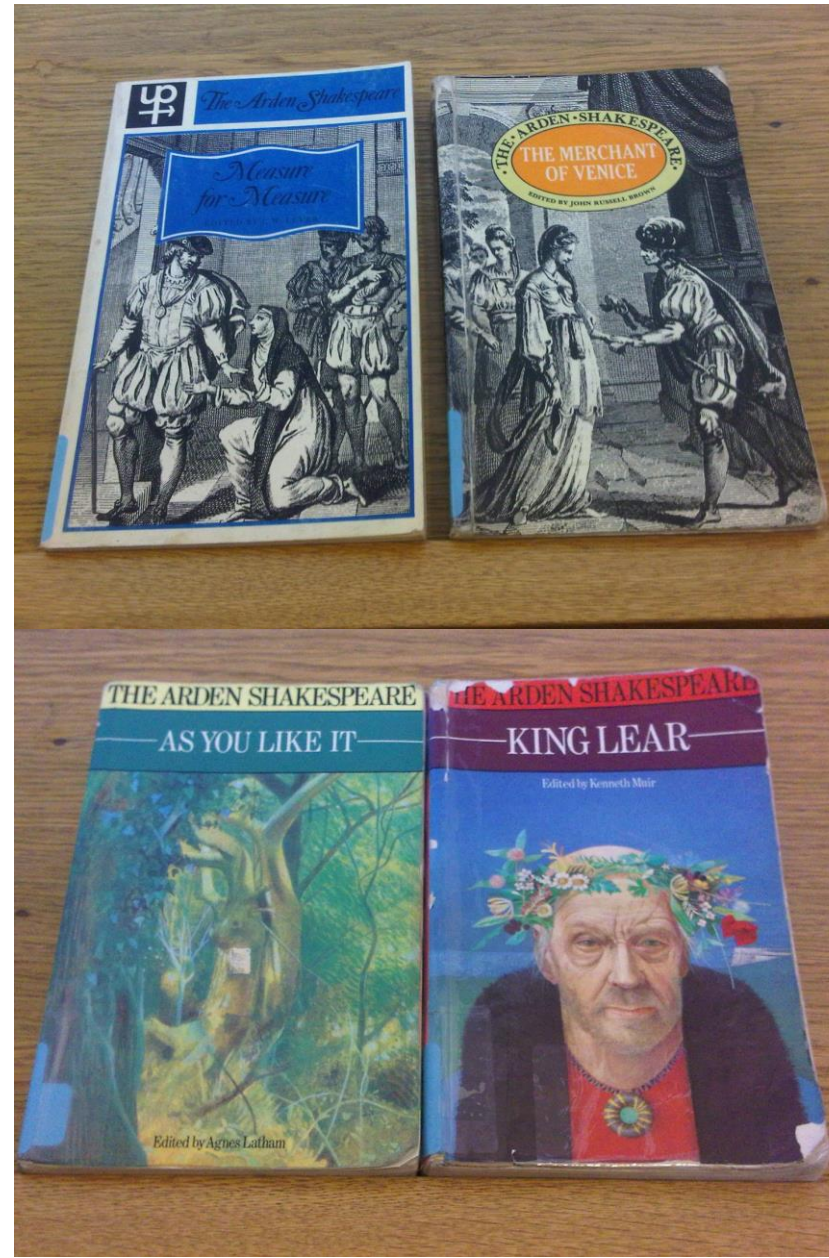


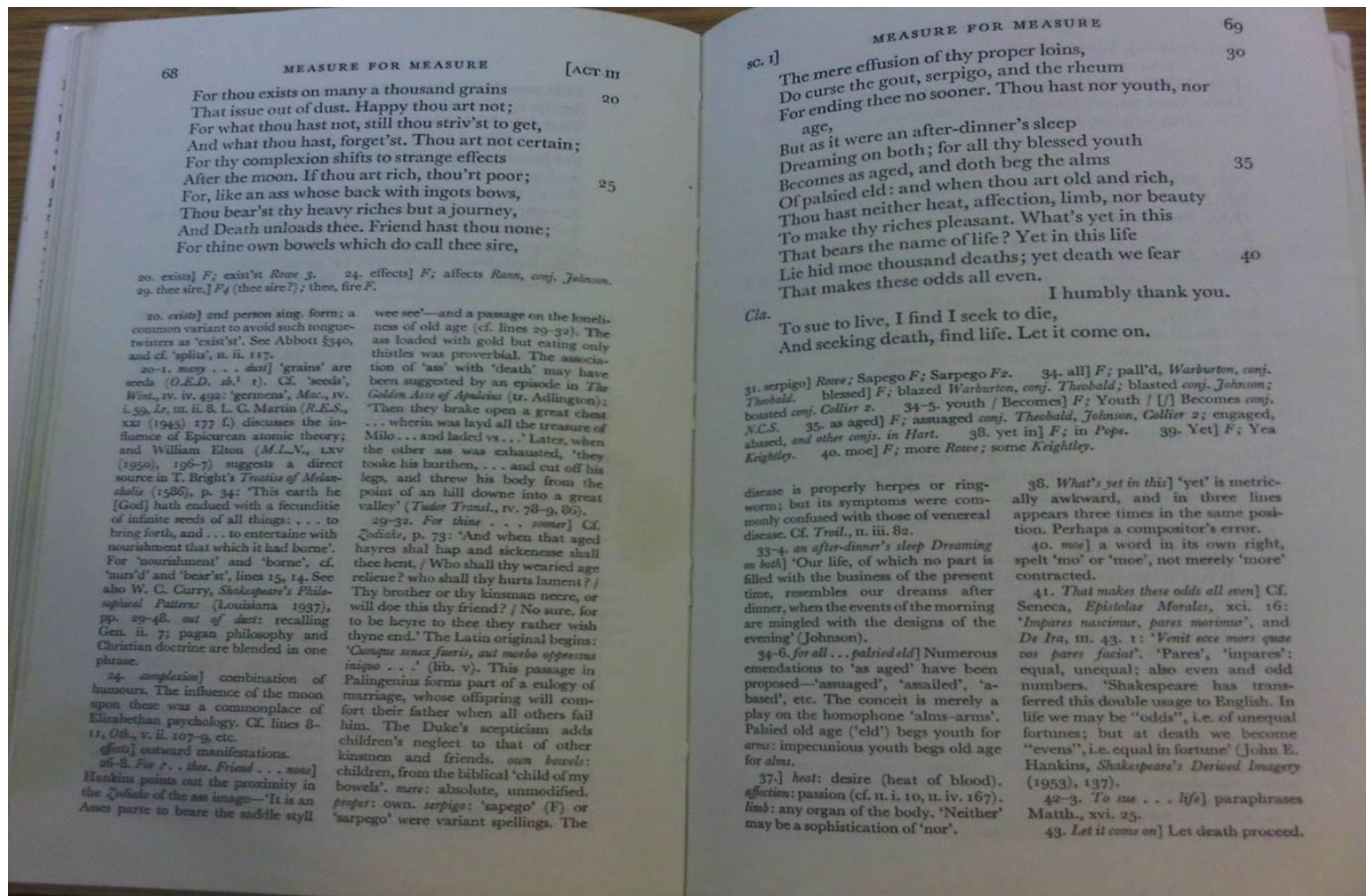
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Arden 2

- **1960s:** In University Paperbacks; UK HE expansion
- **High reputation of series:**
 - Professional impact of appointment as play editor
 - Arden 'Lite' resisted = 'Arden is scholarship'
 - Series = 'lustre' / 'crown jewels' for Methuen: Ruralists jackets in 1980s
- **Complexity of production/outsourcing:** Typesetting (India) and printing (Far East); ROI 3-5 years
- **Arden Shakespeare brand, 1990s/2000s**

2 The Arden Shakespeare as content



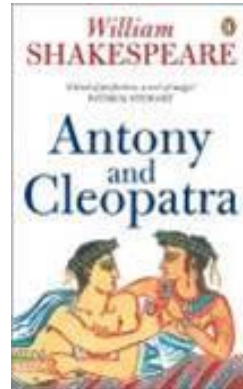




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Arden 3: 1990s to 2016

2 The Arden Shakespeare as content

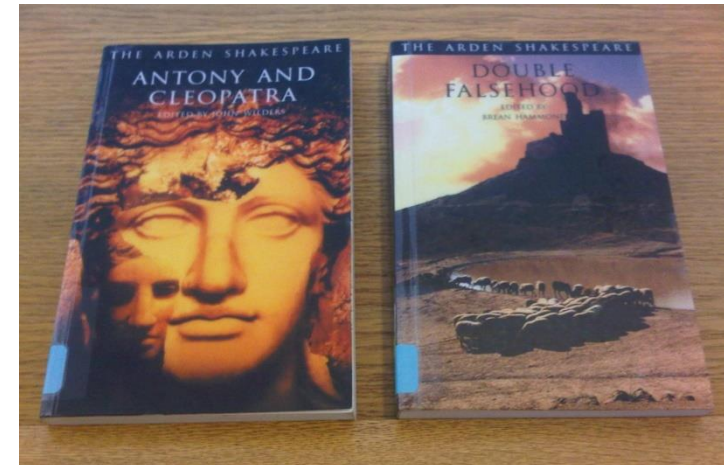


- **Competition:** OUP and CUP; Penguin; Norton; Palgrave Macmillan/RSC
- **Content/layout:** Redesign; performance notes; note additions, e.g. on religion and obscenity
- **Scholarship:** Production of texts, critical theory and feminist theory
- **General Editors:** recruited both a female (Ann Thompson) and a US (David Kasten) General Editor; The Sacking of Pat Parker, 2008...
- **Arden imprint** extended to Early Modern Plays (Cengage) and monographs (Bloomsbury); retained in 2013 Bloomsbury rebranding



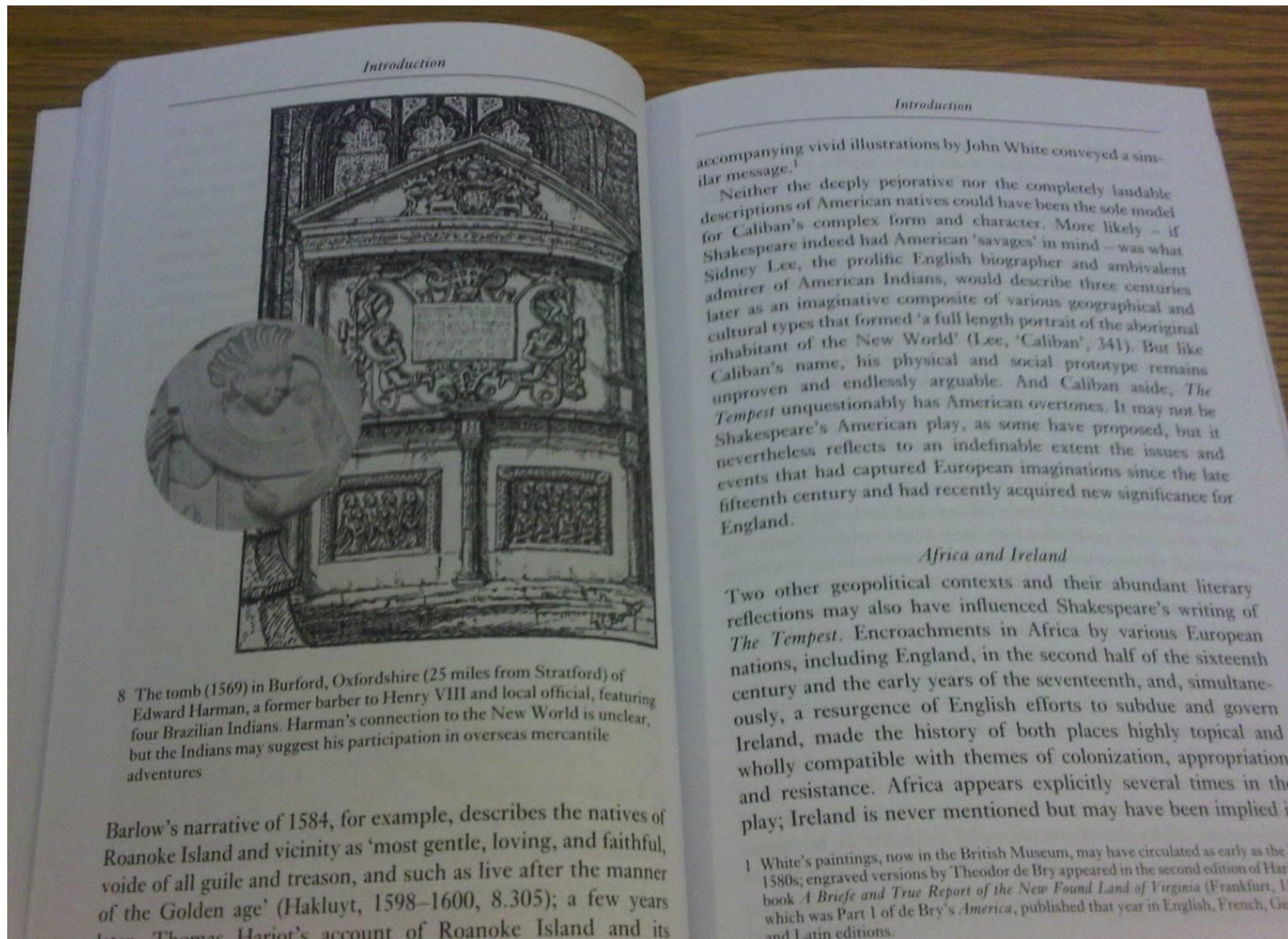
Arden 3

- **Market shifts:** Shakespeare as module option
- **New titles/designs**
- **Production:** high values; POD = flexibility
- **Lifespan:** 'In print for 20 years'/ROI target = 1 year; aim to complete in 2016
- **Payment:** Royalties/contracts agreed; 'You don't edit an Arden for the money' (Thompson, 2014)
- **Global scholarship:** Indian editor; US Black female scholar writing *Othello* introduction





Arden 3





Arden 4: 2014 onwards

- **USPs?** meet needs of different users in print + digital?
- **Arden Shakespeare as brand:** expansion of imprint with Bloomsbury's academic acquisitions (eg Continuum, 2011)
- **Global** appeal / scholars / notes?
- Increasingly aim for **subscription** products
- **Performance media:** partnerships, film/other media?



3 The Arden as digital product

Planned from 1992 (Scott, 2010):

Multimedia “opens up enormous opportunities, particularly in the performing arts. Arden texts linked to historic filmed and TV performance.”

“Most important, from our point of view, is Internet.... Internet links together some 1 million computers in the US alone... Internet is not currently available for commercial, money-generating products.”

John von Knorring, MD, Routledge Inc, 1992
(quoted by Brad Scott, 2010)



Four digital iterations of the Arden

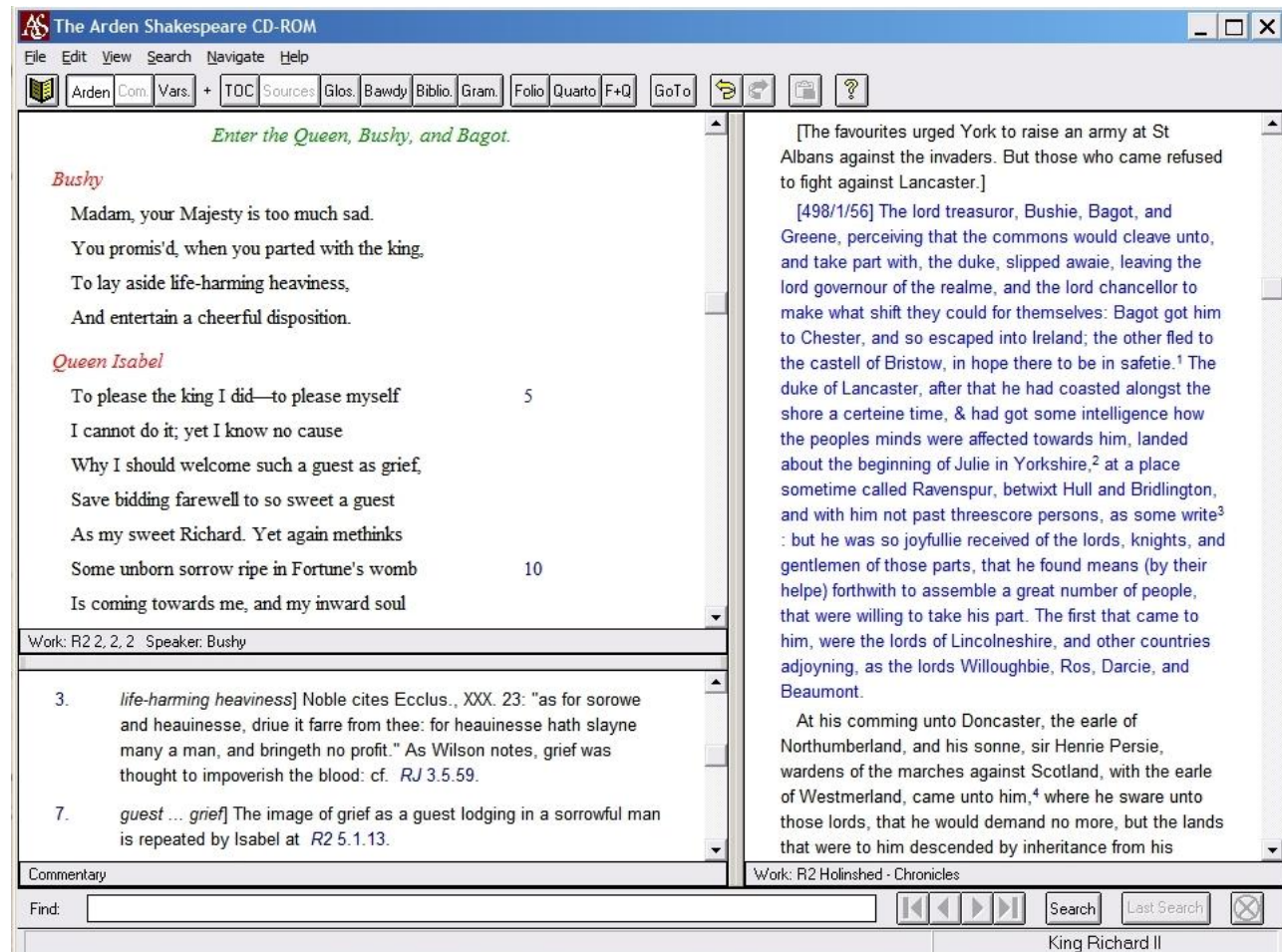
1. 1997: Arden Shakespeare CD-Rom (Thomas Nelson)

Contents:

- Arden 2
- images
- other sources

Technological features :

SGML,
DynaText
browser,
synchronised
frames (Scott,
2010)





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3 The Arden as digital product



2. 1999: Arden Online (Thomson Learning) (Scott, 2010):

- Online-only, subscription product
- Arden 2 + completed 3s
- Included performance images (other multimedia content limited by rights costs)
- Used CD-Rom content/code
- *Early online community, arden/net?*

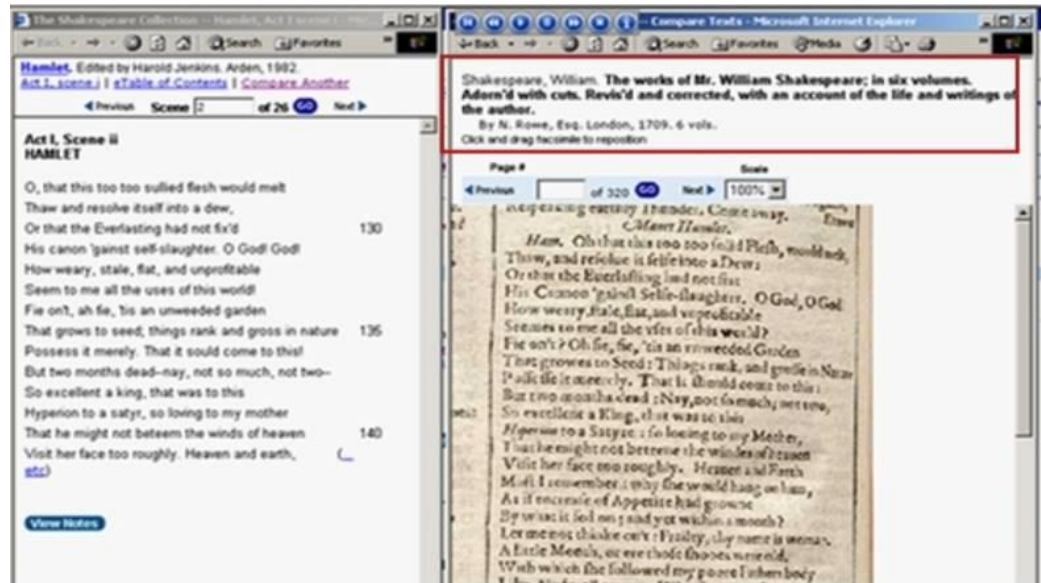


3. 2005: Shakespeare Collection (Thomson Learning/Gale)

Still available: library/subscription product (*branding?*)

Content (Cengage, no date):

- Arden (2?) + fascimiles of Quarto/Folio/other editions
- Works/documents contemporary to Shakespeare
- Scholarly criticism and commentary; reference texts; linked web resources





4. 2013: Drama Online (Bloomsbury)

- **Launched:** May 2013 as subscription product
- **Content:** 1,025 plays (February 2014): Character Grids and Part Books; searches (eg cast size/monologues by gender (Bloomsbury, no date)); scholarly criticism
- **Branding:** Arden Shakespeare a full 'partner'; 12 Arden 3s to date (editorial complexities); librarians: 'When will the Arden be included?' (Bartley, 2014)
- **Other partners:** Faber and Faber (plays); V&A Museum (image archive); Nick Hern Books (contemporary plays) and LA Theatre Works (audio archive) from 2015





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Conclusion

- **Arden = rich example** of evolving content from print to digital
- **Initial findings:**
 - Content excellence since 1899 = key to survival
 - Impact of ownership changes on editor–publisher relationship; role of shared values/vision
 - Evolving digital models: interactive potential seen in 1990s; programming + marketplace have evolved
- **Questions/comments welcome**



Source: <http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/>



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