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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**...?



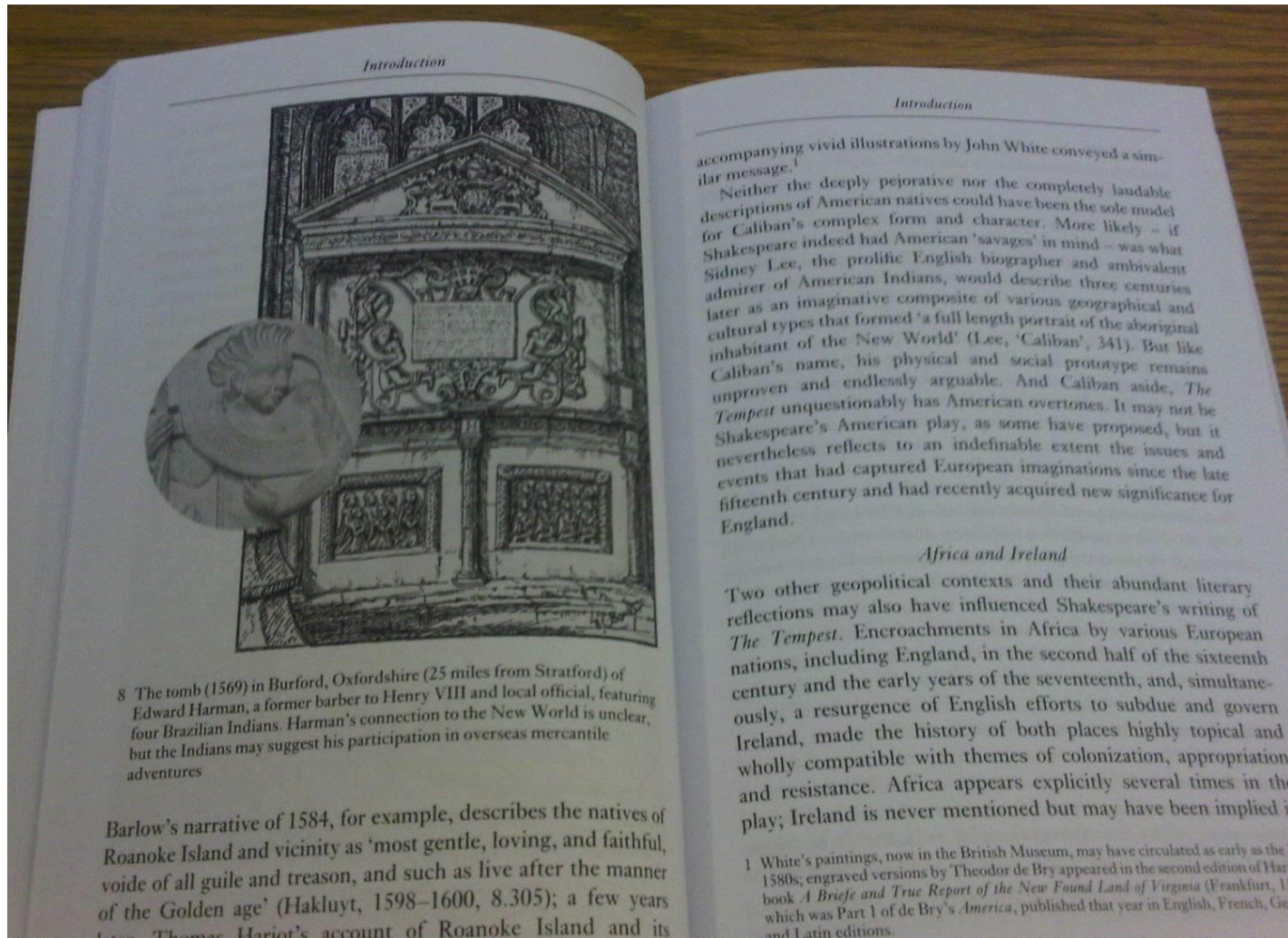
The Arden Shakespeare: overview

- **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



Introduction



8 The tomb (1569) in Burford, Oxfordshire (25 miles from Stratford) of Edward Harman, a former barber to Henry VIII and local official, featuring four Brazilian Indians. Harman's connection to the New World is unclear, but the Indians may suggest his participation in overseas mercantile adventures

Barlow's narrative of 1584, for example, describes the natives of Roanoke Island and vicinity as 'most gentle, loving, and faithful, void of all guile and treason, and such as live after the manner of the Golden age' (Hakluyt, 1598–1600, 8.305); a few years later, Thomas Hariot's account of Roanoke Island and its

Introduction

accompanying vivid illustrations by John White conveyed a similar message.¹

Neither the deeply pejorative nor the completely laudable descriptions of American natives could have been the sole model for Caliban's complex form and character. More likely – if Shakespeare indeed had American 'savages' in mind – was what Sidney Lee, the prolific English biographer and ambivalent admirer of American Indians, would describe three centuries later as an imaginative composite of various geographical and cultural types that formed 'a full length portrait of the aboriginal inhabitant of the New World' (Lee, 'Caliban', 341). But like Caliban's name, his physical and social prototype remains unproven and endlessly arguable. And Caliban aside, *The Tempest* unquestionably has American overtones. It may not be Shakespeare's American play, as some have proposed, but it nevertheless reflects to an indefinable extent the issues and events that had captured European imaginations since the late fifteenth century and had recently acquired new significance for England.

Africa and Ireland

Two other geopolitical contexts and their abundant literary reflections may also have influenced Shakespeare's writing of *The Tempest*. Encroachments in Africa by various European nations, including England, in the second half of the sixteenth century and the early years of the seventeenth, and, simultaneously, a resurgence of English efforts to subdue and govern Ireland, made the history of both places highly topical and wholly compatible with themes of colonization, appropriation and resistance. Africa appears explicitly several times in the play; Ireland is never mentioned but may have been implied i

1 White's paintings, now in the British Museum, may have circulated as early as the 1580s; engraved versions by Theodor de Bry appeared in the second edition of Hariot's book *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (Frankfurt, 1590), which was Part 1 of de Bry's *America*, published that year in English, French, German and Latin editions.



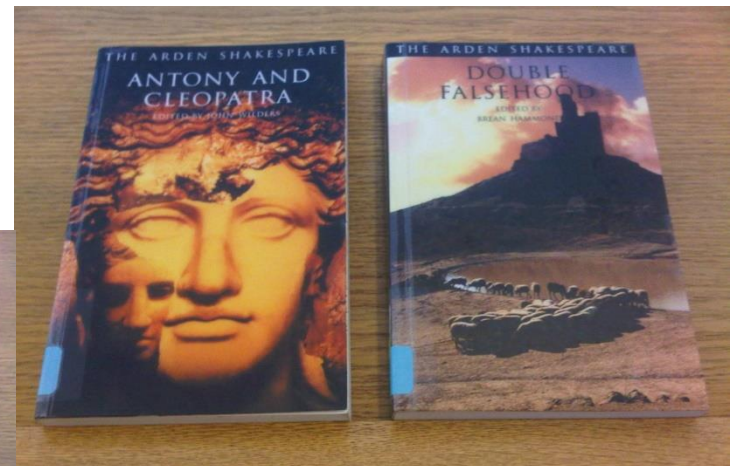
Arden 3: 1995 to 2017

- **Shifts in scholarship and markets / ‘Sociology of the text’ (McKenzie 1999, Kastan 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 Kastan) 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)



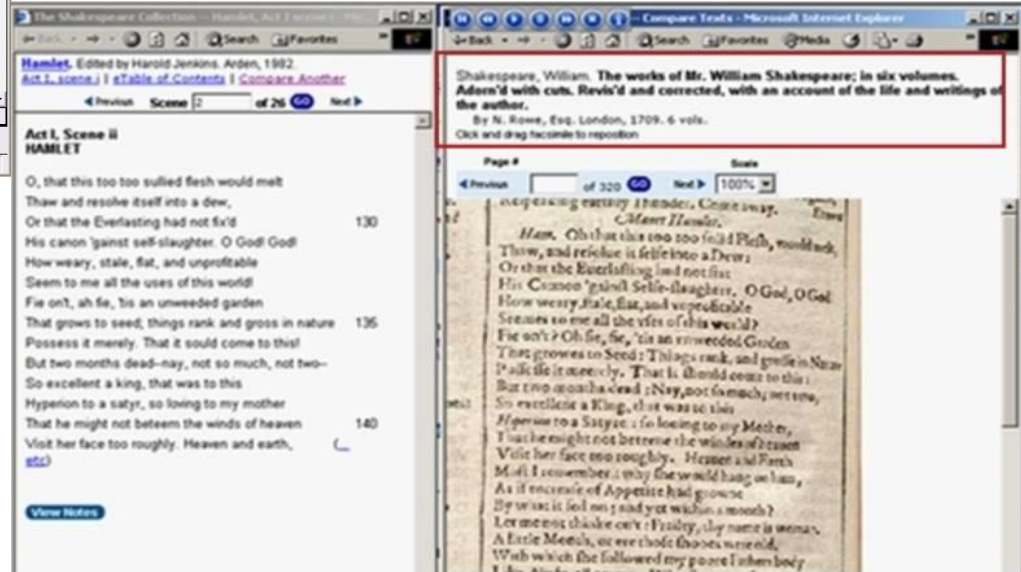
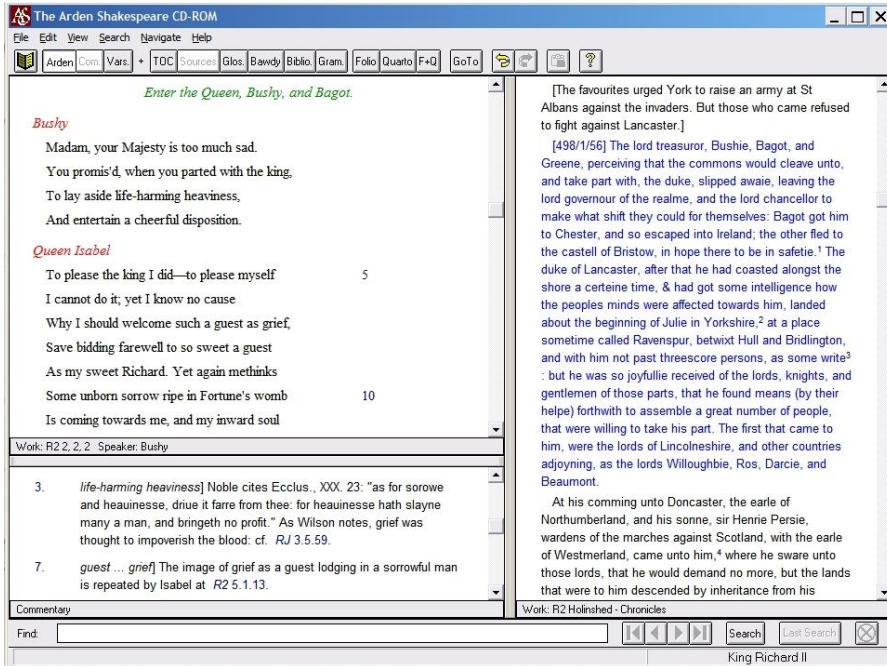
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Digital Arden

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



1999: Arden Online (Thomson Learning)



2005: Shakespeare Collection (Thomson Learning/Gale)



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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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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