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# The launch of the first series of the Arden Shakespeare in 1899: An exploration of Bourdieu's concept of consecration

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## Abstract

This paper presents and analyses a case study of the launch of the first Arden Shakespeare series in 1899 with particular reference to Bourdieu's concept of consecration (1988, 1993, 2008). The analysis considers how the roles and collaboration of the Publisher, Algernon Methuen, and the first General Editor, Edward Dowden reflect the intellectual culture of that period, at the outset of what would become the academic field of English Literature. Drawing on primary and secondary sources including contemporary correspondence and archive material, the paper also considers the cultural and economic context of the Arden series' launch; and illustrates how copyright was defined in the early history of this critical edition of Shakespeare, which continued to be published throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is now nearing the completion of the third Arden Series as part of Bloomsbury Publishing and Drama Online. The paper concludes by assessing the potential analytical benefits to publishing research of Bourdieu's concept of consecration, and by reviewing how the findings of this study might inform debates about the establishment of the field of academic publishing for the humanities.

## Introduction

The Arden Shakespeare series affords an unusually stable and consistent case study of publishing history, and one that is timely: the third Arden series (Arden 3), which was initiated in the 1980s, is nearing completion; and General Editors for Arden 4 have recently been appointed to commission the first 'born digital' edition, with the first editions planned for launch in the 2020s.

This paper focuses on the first of the Arden Shakespeare series, published between 1899 and 1924. It presents the findings of a mixed methods study of primary and secondary sources, including a literature review; analysis of Arden 1 publications with their associated paracontent; and contemporary documents, including correspondence and archive resources housed in the University of Reading Publishing Archive. I also draw on book history research for insights into the history of the publishers of the Arden over the period studied (eg Eliot and Rose (eds), 2007; Stevenson, 2010), Maureen Duffy's centenary study of Methuen as a publishing imprint (Duffy, 1989), and the few available contemporary memoirs (eg Herrmann, 2002; Methuen, 1925).

The paper focuses on the production of the first series of the Arden Shakespeare within its historical and cultural context. The publication history of Shakespeare is foundational to the survival, history and cultural reception of his work. Consistent with Chartier (1995, 2014) and Kastan (2001), I

therefore consider Arden 1 as a literary work produced with a historical context, as a 'textual embodiment' which 'not merely passively conveys its content but... actively shapes its very intelligibility' (Kastan, 2001, p.5).

My main aim is to complement Thompson's (2005, 2009) application of field theory to academic publishing by exploring Bourdieu's concept of consecration in the production and reception of cultural goods (1993, p.18), and how this might be applied to this series of critical editions of the works of Shakespeare. In Bourdieu's terms, the publication of Shakespeare's work offers a rich example of the development of 'symbolic capital' through a publication (Bourdieu, 1986).

Writing with reference to both cultural institutions (including museums and, especially, education) and commercial players such as publishers, Bourdieu encouraged scholars to examine the power of institutions in the creation of cultural goods, which can be 'literary, artistic and scientific' (1993, p.3 note 3). For Bourdieu, these are produced within an inherently competitive, restricted 'field' which functions both 'to fulfil a consecration function' and to educate and reach the public who will consume those products (Bourdieu, 1993, p.11). Bourdieu also outlined how works of 'middle-brow' art (1993, p.18) become 'legitimized' through the efforts of 'agents engaged in technically and socially differentiated field of production' (1993, p.11). Publishers, he argued, are among those who act as commercial 'functionaries' or 'intermediaries' (Bourdieu, 1993, p.19), driven by 'the quest for investment profitability' (1993, p.18).

A theme which became key to this study was Bourdieu's definition of the process by which cultural products come to be 'consecrated' through the power of state and cultural institutions, especially by educational systems 'which ensure the reproduction of agents imbued with the categories of action, expression, conception, imagination, perception, specific to the "cultivated disposition"' (1993, p.11). The artistic producers themselves, he argued, are also dominated by the field and the educational system through 'mechanisms [which] orient very diverse individuals towards the obscure security of a cultural functionary's career or towards the prestigious vicissitudes of independent artistic or intellectual enterprise' (1993, p.16).

In his earlier study, *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu, 1988), Bourdieu critiqued the 'parasitical power' of this process of consecration, including the role of 'editorial committees, publishing houses, etc.' which he describes as 'hit parades' (Bourdieu, 1988, p.120). With particular reference to cultural journalism, he argued that fields of study become established when 'dual identity' practitioner-academics, acting within 'circuits of exchange', vouch for 'each other's claims to wield the power of cultural conservation' (Bourdieu, 1988, p.120). By publishing their literary works, the publisher then 'creates the creator' (Sapiro, 2015, p.263)

'A publisher is a person invested with the extraordinary power to ensure publication, to confer upon a text and its author a public existence... along with the fame and recognition that this entails. "Creation" of this sort usually involves a consecration, a transfer of symbolic capital (analogous to the one accomplished by a preface), bestowed by the publisher not only upon the author but upon the publishing house as well, specifically upon its "list", the repertoire of authors, themselves more or less consecrated, that it has published in the past.' (Bourdieu, 2008, p.123)

Critics of the work of Bourdieu point to difficulties in clarifying the meaning of his statements because of the difficulty of his prose, both in French and in translation, which can impede the application of his work, especially in smaller-scale studies; and to instances where his statements have not been confirmed by evidence. Since the 1980s, for example, British scholars have challenged Bourdieu's analysis of the role of educational systems in reproducing the social status of its pupils, evidencing the achievements of comprehensive school pupils whose parents did not have access to educational opportunities (Goldthorpe, 2007; Halsey, Heath and Ridge, 1980).

Alongside Bourdieu's critical and anti-commercial view of the role of the publisher, I also consider Thompson's application of field theory to academic publishing, which identified six 'key functions' through which such publishers can add value. In addition to taking financial risks, content development, quality control, management and coordination, and sales and marketing, Thompson emphasised the publisher's 'proactive' and 'creative' role in initiating and conceiving new works (2005, p.25). Thompson, again echoing Bourdieu, also defined contemporary scholars' motivation to publish in order to acquire symbolic rather than financial capital. For scholars and researchers:

'... the legitimacy bestowed by the journal or publishing organization becomes a form of symbolic capital .... the most important benefit of publication, far outweighing any direct financial return.' (Thompson, 2005, p.83)

Beyond Thompson's major empirical studies (2005, 2009, 2012), the work of Bourdieu has been applied to publishing in research related to authorship and readership (eg McDonald, 1997; Radway, 1997), especially where the focus of the research is primarily on the cultural impact of a genre of publishing (eg Brienza, 2010). For McDonald, Bourdieu's perspective offers the potential 'to reconstruct the context in which texts are originally written, published, printed, distributed, reviewed, and read' (1997, p.173). Field theory therefore provides 'a theory of context' (McDonald, 1997, p.10), an invitation to consider 'the genesis of cultural status' (1997, p.12) by looking beyond the commercial history of books to consider the 'positions' of the different agents, readers as much as authors and publishers, who together and separately to 'assert and defend specific principles of cultural legitimacy and generational imperatives' (1997, p.20).

### **The Arden Shakespeare: The publishing background**

The Arden Shakespeare is an authoritative, scholarly edition of Shakespeare's works which presents each work in an individual volume. The first Arden series (Arden 1), the focus of this paper, was launched in 1899. One of its innovations was to present each play text in a separate volume. Its page design also clearly distinguished the play texts, variants and scholarly notes – and its format has continued to be applied, with only minor amendments in design, in subsequent and competing series. In both its scholarship and its production values, the series sustained a global reputation and status throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Arden series was commissioned by Algernon Methuen, a former schoolteacher who (interestingly, in light of current publishing trends) began his publishing career by self-publishing Latin, Greek and French school textbooks before signing them over to the publishing firm George Bell & Sons (Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1925, p.6).

The potential for a growing, literate market in England must have been obvious to Algernon Methuen, both to provide reading for those who benefitted from the 1870 Education Act and to

service the library network that was developing in the late 1800s to feed the contemporary appetite for 'mutual improvement' through workers' and educational societies across the UK (Rose, 2001, p.57). Algernon Stedman (as he then was) encountered direct evidence of this growing educational marketplace when, as a young man, he edited *Oxford: Its Life and Schools* (Stedman (ed.), 1887). In a final chapter, M.E. Sadler, Secretary to University's Delegates on Local Lectures, reviewed the courses offered by Oxford in industrial cities around England (Sadler, 1887, pp.351–9), including Corresponding Lectures supported by short printed texts, 'each about twelve pages demy octavo' (221mm x 142mm), that were 'posted fortnightly from Oxford to the subscribing students' (1887, p.358). Sadler estimated that Oxford's Extension courses were attended by 6,000 'working people' between 1885 and 1887 (Sadler, 1887, p.356).

In a previous chapter of *Oxford: Its Life and Schools* (Stedman (ed.), 1887), Gent (1887, pp.340–50) indicated another important trend for the development of English literature as a tertiary subject: the rising demand for women's education. Though women were only fully admitted to Oxford degrees in 1920 and Cambridge in 1947 (Schwartz, 2011, p.6), Gent outlined the limited curriculum for women available at Oxford in 1887, including an optional English Literature module. By this time, the University of London had already opened many of its classes to women in 1878 by defining a Special Examination for Women (University of London External System – 150<sup>th</sup>, no date); and in 1883 the University of Manchester had become the first to allow women to attend classes on a 'probationary' basis before admitting them to most degree examinations (excluding engineering and medicine) in 1897 (Dyhouse, 1995, p.12).

Stedman also authored an 1888 book for applicants to Oxford University (Stedman, 1888) which included a summary of the texts available for what was then the full undergraduate curriculum at Oxford. In Appendix II (1888, pp.300–9), to support the earlier chapters, he listed all of the recommended books for the then Oxford Examination Schools, with their prices (eg for Modern History: 'Political Economy, Mill, 5; Fawcett, 12s' (Stedman, 1888, p.309)).

Combined with his own teaching and authoring experience, Stedman's knowledge of the marketplace was well established by 1889 when he decided to set up his own publishing house, Methuen & Co., while continuing to own and run a preparatory school in Surrey. He adopted his own middle name, Methuen, after which he had named the company, when he decided to devote himself full-time to this growing business in 1895 (Duffy, 1989, p.2; Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1925).

The company's growing list of publications directly responded to the strong publishing marketplace of the day – with almost all of the titles, as was normal at the time, published in hardback for individual and library purchase. An 1891 catalogue (Methuen & Co., 1891, bound with Sharp, 1891) ran to 15 small-format pages, listing eleven works of Fiction (most 3s. 6d., Crown 8vo (190mm x 126mm)); nine works of General Literature, ranging in price and length; four titles listed under 'New Books for Boys and Girls', including L.T Meade's *A Girl of the People* (Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.); ten titles in Methuen's Novel Series ('a Series of copyright Novels, by well-known Authors, handsomely bound', 3s. 6d); eight volumes in an English Leaders of Religion series, 'Edited by A.M.M. Stedman, M.A.'; twelve titles in a series entitled 'Social Questions of To-Day'; a University Extension Series (see below) with historical and some scientific works as well as Sharp's (1891) *Victorian Poets*; Educational Works, mainly science and languages, listing both a *German Primer* and *Companion German Grammar*; Stedman/Methuen's own school Classics texts; and a School Examination Series

(Crown 8vo, 2s.6d), also edited by him, which included a textbook on *Questions for Examination in English Literature* by W.W. Skeat (Skeat, 1890).

Stedman clearly built on his knowledge of the evolving educational marketplace in the educational authors and the topics he commissioned. His University Extension Series (Methuen, 1891, pp.9–10, bound with Sharp, 1891), for example, was edited by J.E. Symes, Principal of University College, Nottingham, one of the first ‘day training colleges’ established by government regulation in the 1890s as the precursors of teacher training colleges (Dyhouse, 1995, p.19). The series included Symes’ own *The French Revolution: 1789–1795* (Symes, 1892), and other titles on history, language, politics and science, including *The Evolution of Plant Life: Lower forms* (Massee, 1891). Many of the authors who were published in the series, including Massee, were ‘U.E. Lecturer in...’ (Methuen, 1891, p.10); and the affiliation for Amy Sharp on the title page of her book *Victorian Poets* (1891) was stated as ‘University Extension Local Secretary, Rugby Centre’.

By 1899, the Methuen and Co. catalogue of publications had grown to include works by Oscar Wilde, four series of theological titles for the general reader, two books by H.G. Wells, a children’s bestseller by G.E. Farrow featuring King Wallypug, the ‘Methuen’s Library of Fiction’ which offered sixpenny paperback reprints, a complete edition of Dickens, and an edition of Shakespeare’s poems (Duffy, 1989, pp.15, 22, 24, 25). By 1904, Methuen’s new company also published separate editions of the 1623, 1632, 1664 and 1685 Folios, each selling for the high price of 4 guineas; and the Little Quarto Shakespeare series, 23 separate play editions selling for 1s each (Methuen, 1904, p.18, bound with reprinted edition of Benson, 1898).

It was as part of this broad commercial list, catering for schools and libraries as well as the book trade, that the launch of what in the early 1900s came to be called the ‘Arden’ Shakespeare was announced publicly in Methuen’s *Gazette* in 1899 (Methuen & Co., 1899), to be published in hardback editions in Demy 8vo format (221mm x 142mm) at 3s.6d.:

‘an edition of the works of Shakespeare in single plays. Professor Dowden, who is probably the most distinguished Shakespearean scholar living, has consented to act as general editor, and the first play thus produced will be “Hamlet” edited by Professor Dowden himself.’ (Methuen & Co, 1899, p.25).

### **The intellectual and popular markets for Arden 1**

A key element of the intellectual context for the launch of the Arden series in 1899 was the Victorian focus on scientific processes and classification: Arden 1, like the Macmillan–Cambridge edition before it, was an expression of the same culture that produced the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). As stated in its Preface, the goal of the first OED was to produce ‘a Dictionary which, by the completeness of its vocabulary and by the application of the historical method to the life and use of words, might be worthy of the English language and English scholarship’ (Oxford English Dictionary, 1888, p.v). By extension, a late 19<sup>th</sup> century edition should be as true to Shakespeare’s language as possible: like the OED, the editor’s role was to include ‘every word in the literature of the language it professes to illustrate’, and not to ‘be an arbiter of style’ (Philological Society, 1859, pp.2–3).

By the late 1800s, there was also clearly a healthy marketplace for scholarly, high-quality Shakespearean texts as well as cheaper, popular editions. In the 1860s, alongside his more scholarly Cambridge edition, Macmillan had seen the potential for the single-volume ‘Globe’ edition which he

commissioned (Murphy, 2003, p.440 n.42), aiming to reach a broad, popular readership at a price of 3s 6d:

‘I want to give the idea that we aim at great popularity – that we are doing this book for the *million*, without saying it.... an edition of Shakespeare which every Englishman of the tolerably educated classes, from the intelligent mechanic to the peer of the realm, might gladly possess. It is fine enough for the latter, and cheap enough for the former.’ (Macmillan (ed.), 1908, p.175, quoted in Murphy, 2003, p.176

The Globe edition fulfilled Macmillan’s confidence: by the end of its final, 1911 edition, it had sold nearly 250,000 copies in hardback (Murphy, 2003, p.176). This publishing success soon inspired copy-cat editions, including from Routledge and Warne. A best-selling ‘shilling’ edition published by Dicks was also launched to coincide with Shakespeare’s anniversary in 1864, and sold over 700,000 copies; while an even cheaper, 6d edition was published by Ward & Lock in 1890, and included advertisements to cover the cost of the edition (Murphy, 2003, pp.177–8). Methuen commissioned his own Little Quarto Shakespeare, edited by Craig and published between 1901 and 1904, to compete in this popular marketplace.

The Arden series therefore entered a busy and varied Shakespeare marketplace, distinguished by ‘complete work’ compilations at the top end and affordable single-play editions at lower prices. The Arden’s distinguishing feature was to offer scholarly, high-quality editions which devoted a single volume to each of Shakespeare’s plays – a move which must at the time have seemed a bold innovation, though the Methuen list had some experience of individual Shakespeare volumes with its 1898 edition of the poems (Wyndham, 1898). This is how the readership for the Arden launch was defined in early marketing literature:

‘The aim of this edition of Shakespeare is to meet in some degree the requirements of three classes of readers. There are those who care only to enjoy the play without the retardation or the disturbance of notes; for them a text, which it is hoped will be regarded as trustworthy, is printed in a type which imposes little fatigue on the eye.... There are, secondly, readers who recognise the fact that many difficulties exist in what Shakespeare has written,... for these readers a body of explanatory notes, in which a mean is attempted between parsimony and superfluity, has been provided. Thirdly, there are scholarly readers, who have a legitimate desire themselves to check or control the work of the editor in the formation of his text... Every variation is not recorded, but the editor has chosen to err on the side of excess rather than that of defect.’ (Shakespeare, 1930)

This identification of three distinct markets for the series has largely been sustained throughout the Arden’s publishing history, with a continuing sale of the current Arden 3 editions to collectors. However, both the nature and the number of ‘scholarly readers’ was transformed over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reflecting dramatic changes in the provision of secondary and tertiary education, first in England and then worldwide.

In 1899, beyond special syllabuses for women such as that reviewed at Oxford by Methuen, referred to above (Stedman (ed.), 1887, pp. pp.340–50), there were virtually no undergraduate students of English literature anywhere in the world. Surviving documents confirm that an undergraduate English programme was strongly resisted at Oxford, for example: though a case was put forward that

it would serve the requirements of the Empire, 'to ensure that the Service's representatives abroad would be familiar with the language and literature of their country' (Baron, 2005, p.2), it was seen as suitable primarily to prepare women who wished to train to teach, and who were considered fit to educate alongside 'the second and third-rate men who were to become schoolmasters' (quoted without citation by Baron, 2005, p.2). Tertiary education in the British Isles at this time was still largely limited to the subject areas of Classics, Science, Mathematics and Law, with Medicine a poor cousin (as an activity not pursued by gentlemen). It was also constrained along social, religious and gender lines, despite the social changes brought by the industrial revolution and growing impact of the extension of educational primary schooling as a result of the education legislation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and especially the 1870 Education Act. Expressions of the appetite for wider, more democratic educational and social opportunities in Britain at the time of the launch of the Arden can be seen in the establishment of the Workers Educational Association in Oxford in early 1900s, the formation of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900 and election of the first Labour MPs in 1906, and the work of early educational pioneers such as Alan Mansbridge and R.H. Tawney (Department for Continuing Education, University of Oxford, 2016; Goldman, 2013).

### **Edward Dowden and Late Victorian scholarship**

In the late 1800s, scholarship itself was also only beginning to emerge as a profession. Victorian men of science and letters only slowly shook off the social distinction between the genteel world of self-supporting gentleman of means and those who relied on a salary. Up to the mid-1800s, for example, university professors' stipends were seen as honoraria rather than a living wage, as can be seen in the experience of William Hooker, the first head of Kew Gardens: in 1820 he took a position as Regius Professor of Botany at Glasgow University, teaching botany (a subject of low repute) to medical students. To supplement his salary, he both stood at the door of his lectures to collect fees from the students, and 'found he had to supplement his income by writing and publishing for the broadest possible audience' (Endersby, 2008, p.11). The financial struggles of Dr Murray, the first editor of the Oxford English Dictionary, confirm the acute financial difficulties experienced by men of letters until the late 1800s and beyond (Mugglestone, 2005, p.226 note 52)

As Edward Dowden's letters confirm (see below), in the 1890s there continued to be limited university teaching at Trinity College Dublin beyond the core university subjects of Classics, Law, Mathematics, Science and Medicine. There were no established university departments of literary scholarship related to writing in English. Two of the Arden 1 editors were librarians, and at least one other was a clergyman.

Edward Dowden, the first General Editor of the Arden Shakespeare, was appointed a Professor of English at Trinity College, Dublin in 1867 – one of the first Professors of English ever appointed. A letter he wrote to Professor Martin Sampson of Cornell University 33 years later, in 1900, gives a flavour of the comparative infancy and even informality of his English teaching at Trinity, Dublin:

'I want you to know that English Literature is a small part of the big University machine – Classics and Mathematics are our central subjects, and we have eminent teachers. English is a voluntary subject chosen by a few honour candidates, and studied in conjunction with French or German.

'I lecture to a few students in English during three terms, each term of six weeks, and my lectures are three in each week.



‘What my lectures are like you can see in such a volume as that just published , called “Puritan and Anglican,” or in that on the French Revolution and English Literature.

Sometimes, if students desire it, we go minutely through a play, or part of a play of Shakespeare.’ (Dowden and Dowden, 1914, pp.303–4)

Dowden’s letters show him to be someone who cared about his book sales, and who worked productively with his editors (for example his editions of Shelley for Kegan Paul, Trench and Co in 1888 (Dowden and Dowden, 1914, p.236)). By the late 1880s, as an established authority, he clearly saw writing and editing Shakespeare as a source of cash – as for example, in 1887:

‘Cassell offers me another £25 for 16 pages on “As You Like it.” (I like it!)’ (Dowden and Dowden, 1914, p.225)

His letters offer many other examples of the degree to which Dowden also relied on his writing to boost his relatively modest earnings at Trinity College Dublin. In 1879 he opted for a fee of £100 from Macmillan rather than a royalty to prepare an edition of Southey; in 1881, he estimated income of ‘nearly £200’ for acting as General Editor of a series of Shakespeare’s Plays and Poems for Paul & Co; and in 1883 he celebrated likely earnings of £350 for ‘a large Shakespeare enterprise, with the American Rolfe for coadjutor’ to sustain what he perhaps jokingly described as ‘Shakespeare mania’ (Dowden and Dowden, 1914, pp.179, 189 and 194). Such sums were clearly significant to him. To give some context to his statement in 1883 that ‘My English Literature professorship has very light duties and a very light salary’ (Dowden and Dowden, 1914, p.196): in 1884, after Trinity increased his annual salary by £200, Dowden refused a job offer from Johns Hopkins University with a proposed salary of £1000:

‘... “to found a school of English literature” in Baltimore would mean a life of teaching what I already know, instead of trying to know more; and I do not choose to gain the world and to lose my own soul. Ten years ago I might have given ten years to such work, and yet had time enough; but now it comes too late.’ (Dowden and Dowden, 1914, p.209)

In another of his letters, in 1898, he referred without enthusiasm to a publisher’s approach, received in the midst of research into less studied authors, which may have led to his Arden Shakespeare General Editor role:

‘I have been tearing away – I don’t know why – at “Seventeenth Century Writers.” Now a publisher is trying to beguile me into becoming general editor of a proposed edition of Shakespeare, but I mean to slip out of it.’ (Dowden and Dowden, 1914, p.279)

He clearly allowed himself to be beguiled, and the surviving letters also show that it was Dowden who suggested the name ‘Arden’ for the new series. Algernon Methuen replied that he found the name ‘distinctively attractive, and we cannot do better than to follow your advice’; and he decided to use the name Arden despite discovering that an American series also proposed to use it (Methuen, 1898, as quoted in Murphy, 2003, p.206). That Dowden also clearly took both care and pride in preparing his edition of *Hamlet* is also confirmed in letters to two of his correspondents in February and August 1899:

‘I fear for my poor “Hamlet” when you see it. My worst conscious sin is darkening, caused by stupid ingenuities. I am sure Hamlet meant something by *fishmonger* and such-like, and I

make foolish conjectures. I made a note on “look the morn in russet Mantle,” and Craig protested. I assumed it was the reddening dawn. He says gray turning to gold (or I’d say orange) and I think russet was used for gray and brownish red – Sir I. Newton (who is late in date) still seems to use it for gray.’ (Dowden and Dowden, 1914, p.286)

‘I am so pleased to think that you like “Hamlet.” Some of my suggestions may be mare’s-nests, but, even so, they won’t do much harm. I hear nothing of its publication – perhaps it will be in the autumn. J.E. tells me he is reading proofs of a little book on the Liturgy, which Methuen is also to publish.’ (Dowden and Dowden, 1914, p.291)

Despite deciding to withdraw from the General Editorship after the disappointing sales of *Hamlet* (see below), Dowden remained actively involved in the series until his death, producing two further critical editions: *Romeo and Juliet* (1900) and *Cymbeline* (1903). His letters also include one in 1900 to ‘my dear Craig’ about the Arden *King Lear*, published in 1901, which also confirms Dowden’s awareness of the commercial value of his and his fellow editors’ scholarship, and his pleasure in 1902 that Craig had agreed to take up the role of General Editor of the Arden:

‘The book is an enduring gift of great value to Shakespeare students. I only wish you received also a material recompense for all your labours and learning.’ (Dowden and Dowden, 1914, p.311)

‘After his sins in corrections of “Lear,” he has been appointed by Methuen general editor of the Shakespeare – a happy mode of punishment!’ (Dowden and Dowden, 1914, pp.314–315)

It is clear that Dowden was at the centre of a corresponding community of scholars and men of letters – including Dr Murray, who visited him in Dublin in 1903. This letter, also written in 1902, shows how actively that correspondence engaged with the minutiae that constitute the preparation of a critical edition of Shakespeare:

‘I sent Dr Murray a question about the word *lock*, which I hope won’t bother him... Craig’s friend and mine, Hart, gave me an example of “open that lock,” of 1675, in the wrestling sense. I want to learn from Dr Murray whether he has any Elizabethan example of *on* or *upon a lock*, meaning engaged in a wrestling lock. Perhaps I shall hear tomorrow.’ (Dowden and Dowden, 1914, p.325)

John Dover Wilson, one of the leading figures in the New Bibliography scholarship of the mid-twentieth century, confirmed Dowden’s status among the early scholarly editors of Shakespeare:

‘... it is a significant fact that, apart from Dr Johnson and Edward Dowden, none of the great Shakespearian critics have been editors. This has not greatly mattered in plays the purport of which is clear and undisputed, as it is with most. But in *Hamlet*, where all is in doubt, editor, commentator and dramatic critic must go to work as a committee of one. Dowden, indeed, came near to bringing it off...’ (Wilson, 1935, p.13)

In a more recent review, Egan (2007) was critical of the Arden 1 editors’ reluctance to question or overturn the earlier textual decisions of the Macmillan–Cambridge edition (eg Dowden pointed out but did not correct an error in the act interval placings (Egan, 2007, p.3)). Egan also pointed out that some of Dowden’s notes provided alternative readings, allowing the reader to decide – a practice

which is more common in current editorial practice (Marcus, 1996; Orgel, 2002; Tanselle, 1990). For example, citing the much-debated line “What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?”, which could be delivered by either Horatio or Marcellus in *Hamlet*:

‘Those who have followed recent arguments about the future of editing Shakespeare will recognise Dowden's approach as one that has recently become fashionable again: editors should not prescribe what is right and wrong, but simply lay out for the reader the possibilities, taking into account what happens in performance.’ (Egan, 2007, p.3)

### Dowden's successors

W.J. Craig, Edward Dowden's friend and fellow Trinity graduate, and the editor of the Oxford Shakespeare of 1891, took over as General Editor for much of Arden 1, seeing 25 volumes in print by 1907 and seven more by 1914 (Proudfoot, 2001, p.1). His successor was R.H. Case, who completed Craig's *Coriolanus* edition, incomplete when he died – a sad occurrence which was to be repeated often in the history of the series.

The acknowledgements in the editions themselves show how the General Editors and textual editors worked collaboratively and supportively. As one example among many, Edward Dowden thanked Craig in Appendix III of his *Hamlet* edition:

‘Mr. W.J. Craig, who in the knowledge of the language of Shakespeare is, I believe, unsurpassed by any living student, has read the proof-sheets of this edition (not always agreeing with my interpretations), has noted omissions, and has sent me a mass of valuable illustrations and additions, from which I make a scanty selection.’ (Shakespeare, 1919, p.235)

As Egan's detailed review confirmed (eg 2010, p.242), the majority of the Arden 1 editors, including Dowden in both *Hamlet* and *Cymbeline*, accepted the series' editorial restriction to maintain the earlier texts, to prepare a critical Introduction, and to provide textual variants and annotations. As Egan's review of the editorial standards of the Arden 1 edition also confirms, however (2010, pp.241–6), the Arden 1 editors increasingly amended the Macmillan–Cambridge texts to reflect the emerging findings of the detailed scholarship of the New Bibliographers into the textual history of the Shakespeare sources, which was beginning to become the accepted approach to the study of the texts by the end of the first decade of the 1900s.

In contrast to Dowden's avoidance of ‘interference in the text’ (Egan, 2010, p.242) and Craig's statement in his Introduction to *King Lear* that ‘the ground has been too exhaustively worked by preceding editors to admit of any new discoveries of importance’ (Shakespeare 1901, p.xv), Cuninghame went so far as to begin the Introduction to his *Macbeth* edition (Shakespeare, 1912) with the words: ‘The Editor is not responsible for the text of this play as printed in this edition’ (Shakespeare, 1912, p.vii); and other of the play Introductions ‘became increasingly concerned with matters textual’ (Egan, 2010, p.245).

Egan (2010, p.245) identified J.W. Holme's edition of *As You Like It* (Shakespeare, 1914) as the first of the Arden 1 editions to apply Pollard's (1909) seminal analysis, also published by Methuen, which initiated a profound intellectual reassessment of the Shakespearean texts based on the New Bibliographers' forensic study of printed sources. Until the Arden 1 series was completed, Case, as general editor, also oversaw a series of revisions to the early Arden 1 texts, ‘to add extra footnotes that amplified, corrected or flatly contradicted the editor whose volume was being reprinted’ (Egan,

2010, p.246). The series' debt to the New Bibliography movement is also clear in the final Arden 1 edition in 1924, Grace R. Trener's *Much Ado About Nothing* (Shakespeare, 1924) – the only Arden 1 edited by a woman.

Previous Shakespearean editions compiled by women included the sanitised 1807 'Family Shakespeare' of 20 plays compiled by Henrietta Maria Bowdler and an ambitious though unannotated compilation of the plays edited by Mary Cowden Clark, published in 1860 (Wayne, 2014, pp.58 and 59). Grace Trener's edition was therefore arguably the earliest scholarly edition of Shakespeare with full annotations produced by a woman. The little that is known about her includes that she attended Liverpool University with a scholarship in English Literature and graduated in 1912; was acknowledged for her help in the preparation of an edition of Keats's poems by Oliver Elton, published in 1917 by Cambridge University Press; was awarded an MA; and was about 37 when her edition of *Much Ado* was published (Woudhuysen, 2014, pp.80–1). The publication of her edition allowed the Arden 1 series to be completed within 25 years – a considerable achievement in comparison with its successors.

### Arden 1 texts and notes

The first Arden series used versions of Shakespearean texts from the 1863–1866 edition in nine volumes produced by Macmillan & Co, commonly called the 'Cambridge Edition' in recognition of the university base of the first editors (Proudfoot, 2001, p.1; Murphy, 2003, pp.175–6). This Macmillan–Cambridge edition, which may have been the first to print the texts with line numbers (Braunmuller, 2003, p.7), was successful in terms of both scholarship and popularity.

As a single-play series, the distinctiveness of the Arden 1 format defined by Dowden and Methuen lay in the scholarly Introductions and each editor's textual notes on the play texts. Dowden's *Hamlet*, for example, displays Dowden's deep knowledge of previous Shakespeare editions as well as his linguistic scholarship, as illustrated in these examples:

'21. *eternal blazon*] promulgation of eternity. But "eternal" as used by Shakespeare as an adjective expressing abhorrence – "eternal devil," *Julius Caesar*, I. ii. 160; "eternal villain," *Othello*, IV. li. 130; possibly it has a like sense here.' (Shakespeare, 1919, p.43)

'264. *Bad dreams*] Malone – perhaps by a printer's error – read "had dreams," a "noble emendation," as Johnson might have called it, attained probably by accident.' (Shakespeare, 1919, p.75)

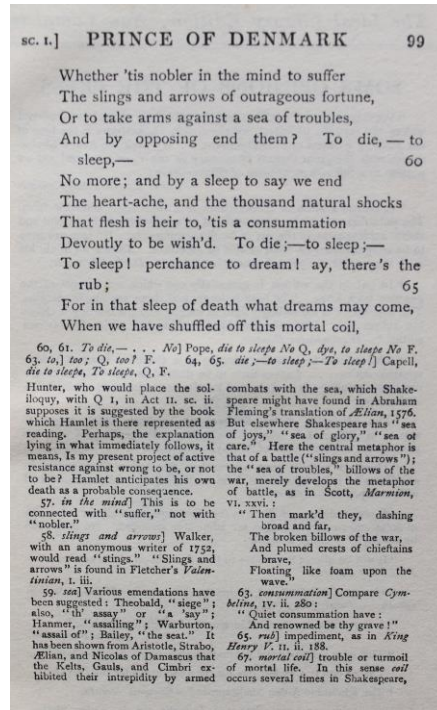
'56. *To be, or not to be:*] Explained by Johnson as a future life, or non-existence after death; by Malone, to lie, or to commit suicide. G. Macdonald regards the words as the close of a preceding train of thought, not to be connected with what follows.' (Shakespeare, 1919, p.99)

Such notes, which invite the reader to share Dowden's consideration of his predecessors' readings of the text, echo the medieval disciplines of '*ordinatio*' which collected commentaries on religious texts (Stoicheff and Taylor, 2004, p.12). To quote Wilcox (2003), this is:

'a process of slightly altering the focus but essentially adding to the immense heritage of ideas and comments from the interpretative community. The footnotes in these cases are the latest butlers seeing to the smooth running of a house which has been long standing,

with occasional alterations and rebuilding programmes, for centuries.’ (Wilcox, 2003, pp.206–7)

That this glossing function is cumulative, with each editor adding their own commentary and refinements, building upon the work of their predecessors, is the basis for much critical commentary on the development of copyright, including with reference to the publication of Shakespeare (Marino, 2011).



Treating such notes in a legible, elegant format on the same page as the play texts and other essential paratextual content, including line numbering, was a considerable typographical challenge (see illustration from Dowden’s *Hamlet*, Shakespeare, 1898, p.99). Many of the design elements, including the page arrangement and the two-colour title page, echo the Cambridge–Macmillan edition (which was reprinted in 1891, and would have been familiar to Methuen & Co.’s typographers) (Rooke Books, 2014). The play text was presented in a more elegant, spacious format than its predecessors, with a well-spaced page; a large, readable font for the play texts; notes of variants in small, full-column text; and two columns of commentary notes, with high-quality binding and paper. The chosen layout was well received by its reviewers (as quoted in Methuen, undated, p.4):

‘A critical edition of Shakespeare in a thoroughly readable form. The publishers are to be congratulated on an unobtrusively tasteful and skilful achievement in the art of book manufacture.’ (*Daily Chronicle*)

‘In get up the edition is essentially one which will appeal to the genuine book-lover. The type is large, and there are ample margins. The paper used is exceedingly light in weight, and the binding is chaste and substantial. Altogether, we have nothing but praise for this new edition.’ (*Westminster Gazette*).

‘A very welcome addition to the Shakespeare shelf, for its wealth of notes and parallel passages are admirably arranged. No praise can be too high.’ (*Daily Graphic*)

Though the fundamental layout for Shakespearean editions has remained remarkably consistent since the mid-1800s, the Arden edition’s design has influenced all subsequent scholarly editions (cf Wells, 2006, p.47).

### Initial reception of the Arden Shakespeare

The initial sales of the first Arden play edition, *Hamlet*, were disappointing. Methuen wrote to Dowden in 1900 in terms that will be familiar to many contemporary authors and publishers:

‘I am very sorry that the report of the sales of HAMLET is disconcerting. You must not base your calculations entirely on the preliminary sales of such a book. I think it is obvious that a scholarly edition of HAMLET cannot have an immediately large sale, and I see no reason why it should not go on selling for a long time, and you must remember that each volume of the series that appears will give a fillip to the preceding volumes; the greater the merit, the greater the fillip. Everyone has spoken so well of your work and of the plan and appearance of the books, that I feel sure the edition will fill a void, as they say.’ (Methuen, 1900, quoted in Murphy, 2003, pp.206–7)

The financial agreement between Dowden and Methuen, like that for the subsequent Arden 2 series (Proudfoot, 2014), is likely to have agreed the payment of a fee for his own editions, in line with those he described for his other writing projects (see above), and another as General Editor when new volumes were commissioned. The income would not be great, and the effort would certainly be considerable. Dowden, perhaps also wishing to turn his attention to the many other writing invitations his letters refer to, decided not to continue. A draft of his response survives on the back of the letter from Methuen quoted above:

‘Therefore, I am disqualified to act as general editor & some one else should take that place, if the edition is to be carried on... I think you have made Hamlet a beautiful book, & I suppose copies will be bought by a few persons from time to time. But I am convinced that the sales will not be such as to justify my asking any other person to do what I am unwilling to do myself.’ (Dowden, 1900, quoted in Murphy, 2003, pp.206–7)

The few surviving Methuen & Co. company documents confirm the modest sales of the initial Arden titles – especially when compared to the sales of popular editions such as the Globe Shakespeare (see sales figures above under *The intellectual and popular markets for Arden 1*). An incomplete bound ledger lists printing and binding orders for many of the company’s titles between 1900 and 1916 (Methuen & Co, undated), including four of the Arden 1 titles. From these figures, we can infer that Methuen’s own faith in the series must have been considerable, to sustain it through to completion after these early, loss-making years – though these ledgers also suggest an initial financial return from sales of 500 copies of each of these titles on publication to Bowen-Merrill, a US publishing company (Methuen & Co, undated):

#### ***Romeo & Juliet*** (Shakespeare, 1900)

1900 (plus 500 for Bowen-Merrill)	800
1901	600

1902	100
1903	200
1904	100
1907	80
1910	50
1911	150
1913	200
1914	100
1916	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,480</b>

***King Lear*** (Shakespeare, 1901)

1901 (plus 500 for Bowen-Merrill)	500
1902	150
1903	100
1904	50
1905	100
1907	50
1908	50
1909 (record unclear)	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,100</b>

Note on the ledger: 'Cancel titles'

***The Tempest*** (Shakespeare, 1902)

1902 (plus 500 for Bowen-Merrill)	500
1903	100
1904	170
1906	50
1907	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>920</b>

Note on the ledger: 'Moulds destroyed 6/8/07'

***Julius Caesar*** (Shakespeare, 1903)

1903 (plus 500 for Bowen-Merrill)	500
1904	150
1905	100
1906	50
1907	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>850</b>

Despite these early slow sales, new volumes continued to be published, and new editions appeared regularly (for example, of *The Tempest* in 1919; and new editions of *Hamlet* in 1909, 1912, 1914 and 1919).

## Discussion

### Cultural context

The evidence collected in this paper confirms underlying effects of cultural, political and even global factors in Britain in 1899 which can be related to the launch of the Arden Shakespeare, a product designed to appeal to a 'cultivated disposition' (Bourdieu, 1993, p.11). These include:

- The economic, social and political effects of the Industrial Revolution demanded an increasingly skilled labour force, which in turn inspired the educational changes represented by the many Education Acts of the late 1800s and early 1900s. The most notable of these was the 1870 Education Act which established universal primary education in England.
- The British Empire's needs for educated, skilled men who would be capable of leading colonial administration and trade created pressures for change in the educational and social culture of Britain. The scale of the need was considerable: the overseas population was estimated in the UK Census of 1861 to be 2.5 million, largely 'travellers, merchants, professionals, and military personnel', a figure which had risen to nearly 4 million by 1891 (Richards, 2004, p.47).
- This study has confirmed the growing appetite for personal improvement and learning in the late 1800s and early 1900s, evidenced in the growth of public libraries and workers' libraries; public support for the universities' Extension programmes; the establishment of the Workers Educational Association and the 'University Extension Colleges' which were the precursors of teacher training colleges, a shift which is strongly associated with an increasing demand at the time for educational opportunities for women. The demand was obviously considerable, and denoted a clear shift from the era of the Victorian 'gentleman scholar' (McDonald, 1997, p.7): when the Universities' Extension programmes were at their peak, in 1891–2, Read's (1979) analysis found that the Oxford and Cambridge Extension programmes alone provided 722 classes which reached nearly 47,000 people, most of whom were middle rather than working class (Read, 1979, quoted in McDonald, 1997, p.7).
- The evidence reviewed here also indicates that the establishment of English Literature as an academic discipline was strongly associated with the formal establishment of tertiary education qualifications for women. Grace Trenergy's edition of *Much Ado About Nothing*, published in 1924, was arguably an example of the impact of that movement, the only Arden 1 edition prepared by a woman.

### **The roles of the General Editors and volume editors**

This paper has thrown particular light on the motivations of Edward Dowden as a key participant in the 'textual embodiment' of the first Arden series (Kastan, 2001, p.5). As one of the first expert scholarly editors of Shakespeare, Dowden appears to have been conscious of the basic requirement on the editor to generate a distinct, publishable edition which would 'enjoy protection under the laws of copyright' (Marino, 2011, p.3) despite being based on the text of the Macmillan–Cambridge edition.

Did Dowden see himself as helping to initiate a Shakespearean initiative of lasting cultural value? His letters suggest that he defined his role as General Editor more in commercial than cultural terms, even though his Arden 1 editions evidence his effort, engagement and expertise, and his letters confirm his pride in the critical reception of *Hamlet*. As an aging scholar actively engaged in more personally enticing research projects, Dowden clearly valued his intellectual freedom. In Bourdieu's terms, Dowden could be described as seeking to avoid the role of 'a cultural functionary' in preference to the more 'prestigious vicissitudes of independent artistic or intellectual enterprise' (Bourdieu, 1993, p.16).

We cannot be certain whether Dowden or Methuen wrote the description of the intended market for Arden 1 (Shakespeare, 1930), as printed in his *Hamlet* and quoted above (see under *The*



*intellectual and popular markets for Arden 1*). However, the evidence of the texts themselves indicates the degree to which Dowden worked closely with the publisher ‘to lay down the principles to which he and his publisher wish[ed] his edition to conform’ (Wells, 2006, p.39). The new series was intended primarily for readers ‘who care only to enjoy the play without the retardation or the disturbance of notes’ – almost all, we can infer, gentlemen of means and education, given the production values and price of the volumes. Some of these readers might also, in keeping with the spirit of the age, ‘recognise the fact that many difficulties exist in what Shakespeare has written’ and wish to engage with the more forensic, analytical information offered in the notes (Shakespeare, 1930). As a third target audience, this marketing description also specified ‘scholarly readers, who have a legitimate desire themselves to check or control the work of the editor in the formation of his text’ (Shakespeare, 1930). This statement, combined with the evidence in Dowden’s letters of his role in promoting an active community of corresponding literary scholars, offers a direct link to Bourdieu’s description of the role of ‘dual identity’ practitioner-academics, acting within ‘circuits of exchange’ (Bourdieu, 1988, p.120), in establishment of academic disciplines, in this case English Literature. Arguably, the initial Arden 1 series allowed Dowden and his fellow editors, previously an expert corresponding community of largely ‘so-called amateurs’ (Marino, 2011, p.3), to demonstrate their collective expertise by producing editions of considerable symbolic capital which came to form part of the establishment of literary scholarship in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **The role of the publisher**

In Bourdieu’s terms, Methuen can be said to exemplify the publisher’s role as a mediator, driven indeed by ‘the quest for investment profitability’ (1993, p.18) and producing works of ‘middle-brow art’ for the ‘widest possible public’ (1993, p.19). In the case of the first Arden Shakespeare series, however, this case study also confirmed Thompson’s broader definition of the roles of the publisher (2005, p.25; see also above under *Introduction*): Algernon Methuen initiated and sustained the series despite its initially poor commercial performance. His own early publications and market research, as well as evidence of the other books published by Methuen & Co., also evidence how Methuen’s company published for both middle-class book buyers and the readership of newly literate and economically ambitious readers, either directly or through libraries.

That the series reused the earlier Macmillan–Cambridge texts rather than aiming to define new play texts suggests both pragmatic and commercial rationales, and also evidences the fundamental reliance of a publisher on the expertise of their authors: the initial Arden 1 editors were convinced that the Shakespearean texts available to them represented definitive scholarship (Egan, 2007). As the series progressed, however, the series’ editors showed their increasing awareness of the implications of the New Bibliography initiated by Pollard’s (1909) study of the surviving Shakespearean folios and quartos, also published by Methuen, which offered fundamental new insights into the accuracy of 19<sup>th</sup> previous Shakespearean editions, including the Macmillan–Cambridge texts.

Methuen’s initiation of the Arden series can also be said to confirm Bourdieu’s definition of ‘the field of restricted production’ (Bourdieu, 1993, p.11) and of the commercial and ‘intermediary’ role of the publisher. Methuen clearly sustained the established format of the series despite low initial sales, and argued in his correspondence with Dowden for its long-term potential and value. In this respect, Methuen’s decision can be said to refute Bourdieu’s insistence on the purely commercial motives of

publishers, and to call for a more nuanced consideration of what he terms their ‘parasitical power’ in the creation of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1988, p.120). In cases such as the Arden, an individual publication’s value, broadly defined, resides in the cumulative cultural capital of a series or list or depends on the changing educational or social context of the time. Thompson’s broader conceptualisation of the publisher’s role in devising new works, as ‘a great skill... blending together of intellectual creativity and marketing nous’ (2005, p.25) arguably better reflects Methuen’s role in both initiating and sustaining the Arden Shakespeare series.

## Conclusions

Though Thompson’s more detailed research relating to the field of academic publishing arguably better reflects Methuen’s role in the initiation of the Arden Shakespeare series (2005, p.25), Bourdieu’s definition of the process through which cultural goods come to be consecrated (Bourdieu, 1993) has enriched the findings of this case study by encouraging a focus on cultural context and on the different roles of the many actors involved, including the readers, the scholars, the General Editor and the publisher.

This paper has collected evidence for the format in which the first Arden Shakespeare presented the works of the pre-eminent British playwright – and how that format echoed the treatment of religious and Classical works of literature. The foremost Shakespearean scholars of the time were commissioned and paid by the publisher to create critical editions which extended the understanding of Shakespeare’s plays, published at a moment when English Literature was beginning to be established as a subject of university study. In his role as General Editor, Edward Dowden recruited volume editors from among his corresponding community of British, predominantly amateur scholars, arguably contributing to the legitimisation and recognition of their scholarship.

That the series acquired a pre-eminent status in both the domestic and educational study of Shakespeare can also be seen to confirm Bourdieu’s conceptualisation. Harold Brooks, one of the General Editors of Arden 2, remembered the ‘pride of place’ the Arden 1 editions held when he was an undergraduate in the 1930s (Brooks, 1982); and the initiator and longest serving General Editor of Arden 3, Richard Proudfoot, first encountered Shakespeare through a collection of Arden 1 on his parents’ bookshelves at home (Proudfoot, 2014). By the time of its completion, as described in this quotation from *The Times Literary Supplement*, the first Arden Shakespeare series was established as ‘The Ideal Library Edition’:

‘We congratulate the editors and publishers: they have deserved well of the republic of letters, for the Arden Shakespeare is the best of our working editions of Shakespeare.... We rank the Arden Shakespeare with the great Oxford Dictionary as the most powerful aid we possess to a full comprehension of Shakespeare.’ (Methuen, undated, p.4, bound with Shakespeare, 1930)

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