

SHAKESPEARE:
Metamorphosis

Resources: Research guide

<http://shakespeare.senatehouselibrary.ac.uk/resources/research-guide>

INTRODUCTION TO THIS RESEARCH GUIDE

The aim of this research guide is to introduce you to the range of material held at Senate House Library that relates to Shakespeare, primarily focused on editions of his work. To locate specific titles, you will need to search our catalogue

ORIGINS OF THE COLLECTIONS

A key moment for the development of Shakespearean holdings at Senate House Library was the bequest of the Durning-Lawrence Library in 1929. The collection contained all four early folios, and was rich in Shakespearean sources as well as works pertaining to the Baconian theory of Shakespearean authorship.

Moreover, this donation gave tremendous impetus to the collecting of modern literary materials, building the basis of what is now the English collection.

This programme of acquisition was given another significant boost when the Sterling Library was donated in 1956. This greatly enhanced the library's holdings of English literature, including those of Shakespeare as it included early editions, further sources, and many private press editions.

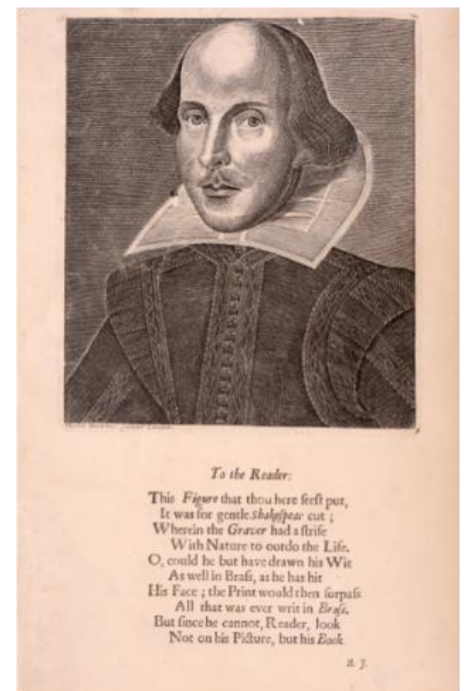
KEY HOLDINGS

Early sources for Shakespearean text

The Library contains comprehensive holdings of works printed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which provided inspiration for Shakespeare, from Boccaccio's *Decameron* and the works of Chaucer to Fabyan's and Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*.

Early folios and editions

The library's holdings across its collections represent the full gamut of Shakespearean editions, beginning with three early quartos and all four early folios, in eleven copies with variants, and some later seventeenth-century quarto adaptations from Shakespeare's plays. Other editions include those of every



Frontispiece of 'Fourth folio', 1685

notable eighteenth-century editor, and several minor ones, and impressive holdings of competing nineteenth-century scholarly texts.

Popular editions

In contrast to such productions of accumulated learning, the Library has also collected a wide range of copies that represent the truly popular and inexpensive. Our Special Collections include several eighteenth-century acting editions, cheaply produced and textually unreliable, and an extremely rare full set of the penny editions of Shakespeare produced in the nineteenth century in the Dicks Standard Plays series. Printed as cheaply as possible, these items rarely survive.

Teaching editions

Indeed, the Library has consistently demonstrated a broad approach to the editions it has added to the shelves. For example, beginning with A. W. Verity's Pitt Press editions from the 1890s, we have selectively acquired samples of texts printed specifically for a school audience. We continue to sparingly collect these robust little volumes, which demonstrate the universality of Shakespeare's readership and in their unequivocal judgments and notes give a distillation of the least controversial editorial opinions of their age. Some have more august patronage than others, for example the copy of *Coriolanus* printed especially 'for the use of Rugby School'. Many also bear ink blots and smudges from the 'whining schoolboy with his satchel' who owned them, which leave their own narrative of the text's reception.

'Modern' editions

The English Collection has for decades systematically acquired editions of the texts to support teaching across the University. This has included purchasing new series as they emerge, from the Variorum and New Variorum editions to less scholarly items such as the Penguin Shakespeare in the 1930s. Other notable examples of editions purchased in their entirety include the New Temple Shakespeare, with ornaments by Eric Gill, neither quite scholarly nor populist. Other curiosities include the carefully censored editions of Thomas Bowdler, and the 1866 Handy-volume Shakespeare, pocket-sized copies intended for the student rambler. Perhaps our richest holdings relating to a single edition are in successive versions of the Arden Shakespeare, a close association due partly to the fact that many of its editors were drawn from the University of London, and one of them, Dr John Pafford, from the Library. A particularly intriguing copy of this edition comes from the library of director and author Harley Granville-Barker, which is wholly transformed by a mass of annotation crowding the page. Registered readers of the Library have access to the fully searchable text of the latest editions of the Arden Shakespeare through the Drama Online portal.

Foreign language editions

While the overwhelming majority of the editions of Shakespeare's works held are in English, the Library has served the wider community of literary scholars by collecting editions in foreign languages. The most representative collection is undoubtedly in German, with translations ranging from the eighteenth-century to the present day, including the editions of Tieck and Schlegel, Johann Heinrich Voss and his son, and Johann Wilhelm Otta Benda. There are also significant holdings in French and Spanish amongst other European languages. Cranach Press *Hamlet*

Illustrated editions

While the Library's chief motivation has always been to record and promote research into the dissemination and



Cranach Press *Hamlet*

interpretation of the text, it has also collected numerous illustrated editions of Shakespeare. It is impractical to record all of these here, but some oddities and prominent examples deserve mention, including several versions of Moritz Retzch's publications where line drawings wholly replace text. Nineteenth-century editions noted for illustration include those of Charles Knight and Howard Staunton, the latter illustrated by John Gilbert.

Many exquisite private press editions, notably in the Sterling Library, are illustrated in ways which are so beguiling as to draw attention away from the page. Perhaps most spectacular are the Cranach Press *Hamlet*, a set of editions by the Limited Editions Club, the Folio Society's edition of Shakespeare's works and limited editions printed by Ernest Benn at the Shakespeare Head Press.