

William Shakespeare and Cambridge University Press: A History

As Cambridge Shakespeare: The Works and Worlds of Shakespeare Online publishes, we take a whistle-stop tour through Cambridge's history of Shakespeare publishing.

1863
1866

The first 'Cambridge' Shakespeare

Before embarking on editing and publishing Shakespeare's works, the Press printed a 9-volume edition for Macmillan. The texts were edited by a team of University of Cambridge academics.



1866

The Works of Shakespeare: The Globe Edition

1866 was a busy year – the Press also printed Macmillan's single-volume Globe Edition.



1890s

The Pitt Press Shakespeare for Schools

With Shakespeare already on school syllabuses, The Pitt Press Shakespeare series was launched; single-volume editions edited by A.C. Bradley.



1921
1966

The New Shakespeare

The first scholarly editions began with *The Tempest* in 1921. This behemoth project took over 40 years. Editor Arthur Quiller-Couch dropped out and his co-editor, John Dover Wilson, eventually lost his eyesight.



Blitzed books

During the Second World War over 5 million books stored at a London wholesalers were destroyed. The New Shakespeare editions of *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Winter's Tale* went out of print.

1940

Shakespeare Survey

The first volume of *Shakespeare Survey*, an annual yearbook of Shakespeare studies and production, was published. It aimed 'at appealing to the scholar, the theatre-worker and the archivist'. More than 70 years later and it's still going strong!

1948

Shakespeare on vinyl

The Dover Wilson Shakespeare was licensed to Argo, who produced audio versions sold as LPs. These vocal performances featured actors from the University's Marlowe Dramatic Society, alongside professional actors including Peggy Ashcroft and Trevor Nunn.

1957

The Picasso Shakespeare

Dover Wilson's editions appeared in yet another form – paperback editions illustrated with Picasso's iconic take on Shakespeare. They became known as 'the Picasso Shakespeare'.

1968

1984
present

Another New Cambridge Shakespeare

Dover Wilson's editions were showing their age, so newly edited versions with supporting notes were published from 1984, decorated with a new David Hockney design that referenced Picasso's Shakespeare.

It wasn't all smooth sailing – one editor claimed to have lost his typewritten manuscript in a Berlin train station!



1990s

Shakespeare in Production

Performance of Shakespeare has long been critical to Cambridge's editions. This series does what it says on the tin by providing comprehensive notes on performance history alongside the play text.



2000s

Naxos audio performances

Audio performances based on Cambridge's Shakespeare editions entered the 21st century, graduating from LP to cassette and then to CD. The performances feature high profile actors including Kenneth Branagh as the Fool in *King Lear*.



2020

Cambridge Shakespeare: The Works and Worlds Online

As a new decade looms, it's time for Cambridge Shakespeare to embrace yet another format. Preview Cambridge Shakespeare at www.cambridge.org/cambridgeshakespeare.



www.cambridge.org/cambridgeshakespeare

Sources

- Publishing Shakespeare in the Academic Marketplace', a lecture given by Sarah Stanton, former Press Commissioning Editor, in Bochum, Germany, 2001.
- 'Preface' to *Shakespeare Survey* Volume 1, 1948.
- *A History of Cambridge University Press* by David McKitterick, 1992. Volumes 2 and 3.



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