

A rare early quarto edition of Shakespeare's *Pericles*

William Shakespeare, *Pericles*. London: Robert Bird, 1630. 7 inches x 5 1/16 inches (178 mm x 129 mm), [68] pages, A–H4 I2.

*The late, | And much admired Play, | Called | Pericles, Prince of | Tyre. | With
the true Relation of the whole Hi- | story, aduentures, and fortunes | of the
sayd Prince: | Written by Will. Shakespeare: | [device] | London, | Printed by
I. N. for R. B. 1630.*

Shakespeare's quartos, so named because of their format (a single sheet folded twice, creating four leaves or eight pages), are the first printed representations of his plays and, as none of the plays survives in manuscript, of great importance to Shakespeare scholarship. Only twenty-one of Shakespeare's plays were published in quarto before the closure of the theaters and outbreak of civil war in 1642. These quartos were printed from either Shakespeare's "foul papers" (a draft with notations and changes that was given in sections to actors for their respective roles); from "fair copies" created from foul papers that presented the entire action of the play; from promptbooks, essentially fair copies annotated and expanded by the author and acting company to clarify stage directions, sound effects, etc.; or from a previously published quarto edition. The quartos were inexpensive to produce and were published for various reasons, including to secure the acting company's rights to the material and to bring in money during the plague years in London when the theaters were closed.

Narrated by Gower, the play tells the complicated story of Pericles, eventual

king of Tyre. The story opens with Antiochus who is offering his daughter's hand to any suitor who can answer a riddle—failure means death. Pericles gives the correct answer, which exposes Antiochus as having an incestuous affair with his daughter. Pericles flees to Tarsus and saves the nation from famine by bringing stores of corn. He is called back to Tyre but is shipwrecked on Pentapolis, where he wins in a jousting tournament and the hand of the king's daughter Thaisa. Pericles is told that Antiochus and his daughter have been killed by a fire from heaven and he departs Pentapolis to return to Tyre. The ship encounters a great storm and Thaisa dies in childbirth. Her body is put in a chest and washes up in Ephesus, where she is revived. Thinking that his infant daughter Marina won't survive, Pericles leaves her in Tarsus, where she is raised by the king and queen and becomes the object of jealousy. Before she can be killed, Marina is captured by pirates and sold into prostitution on Lesbos, where she cleverly retains her virtue. Pericles returns to Tarsus to find his daughter and is told she is dead. After several more adventures Pericles, now the king of Tyre, is reunited with daughter and wife; the play closes with Gower proclaiming the joys that result from living a virtuous life.

This fifth quarto of Shakespeare's *Pericles* is bound in nineteenth-century red morocco with gold tooling. A stamp in the bottom center of the front cover turn-in ("BOUND BY F. BEDFORD") identifies this as the work of the noted nineteenth-century London binder Francis Bedford (1799–1883). The spine is divided into six compartments with raised bands, with "SHAKE- | SPEARE | — | PERICLES | PRINCE | OF | TYRE" lettered in gold in the second compartment; "LOND. | 1630" in the third. Handwritten notes by J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps "Perfect. This ed. of 1630 with the imprint

differing from the copy with the same date is usually seen, is of excessive rarity.” on the recto of the first blank leaf; copy correction notes by J.O.H. on obverse of back free endpaper. List of characters in the play on the verso of the title page in an unidentified hand.

This quarto was given to Edinburgh University Library in 1872 by James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps (1820–1889), the English Shakespeare collector and scholar whose *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* (1848) was published in several editions. Beginning in the 1870s, he devoted his time completely to the research of Shakespeare’s life. Halliwell-Phillipps was instrumental in the acquisition of New Place, the site of Shakespeare’s last home, and in the creation of the Museum at Stratford-upon-Avon (now Nash’s House and New Place).

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