William Shakespeare, *Richard III*. London: Andrew Wise, 1598. 7 3/8 inches x 5 3/8 inches (187 mm x 136 mm), [94] pages, A–M4 (M4 blank). Title extended in lower right margin; margins mended throughout damaging some text on A3.

THE | TRAGEDIE | of King Richard | the third. | Conteining his treacherous Plots against his | brother *Clarence:* the pitiful murther of his innocent | Nephewes : his tyrannicall vsurpation : with | the whole course of his detested life, and most | *deserued death*. | *As it hath beene lately Acted by the Right honourable* | *the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants*. | *By* William Shake-speare. | [Creede's device] | LONDON | Printed by Thomas Creede, for Andrew Wise, | dwelling in Paules Church-yard, at the signe | of the Angell. 1598.

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.

Richard III opens in the period of peace and prosperity under the York King Edward IV that followed many years of civil war between the royal houses of York and Lancaster, England is enjoying. Edward's brother Richard, physically deformed and morally corrupt, plots to seize the throne from Edward. Richard connives and convinces Anne, the wife of a nobleman he murdered, to marry him; he then plots his older brother Clarence's execution and places the guilt

on Edward, which hastens Edward's death. Richard becomes the Lord Protector of England until Edward's two sons are old enough to take the throne. Richard then murders the courtiers loyal to the young princes and the kinsmen of their mother, Queen Elizabeth. Richard is crowned king, and he imprisons the princes in the tower and arranges for their assassination. Richard's bloodthirsty reign leads a challenger from the house of Lancaster, Richmond, to gather forces in France and overthrow Richard. Richard, meanwhile, has had his own wife killed in order to marry Edward IV's daughter Elizabeth (his niece), securing his claim to the throne. Richmond invades England, Richard is killed, and Richmond becomes King Henry VII and marries Elizabeth, uniting the houses of York and Lancaster.

This second quarto of *Richard III* was bound in nineteenth-century red straight-grained morocco with gilt rules and blind-stamped ornamentation on the front and back covers. "TRAGEDIE OF KING RICHARD THE 3." is lettered in gold up the spine between raised bands. The turn-ins are gold tooled. Heber stamp and notes on the first flyleaf.

This second quarto of *Richard III*, before its acquisition by the Bodleian Library, was owned by Richard Heber (1773–1833), British bibliophile, started amassing a classical collection as an undergraduate at Oxford, but broadened his collection to include rare editions of early English drama and literature. He purchased both single volumes and entire libraries and did not limit himself to a single copy of any particular book. As a result, he owned at least 150,000 volumes, and his collection filled eight houses. He was member of Parliament for Oxford University (1821–26) and a founder of the Athenaeum Club in London.

Octavo code: **sharjh**