

A rare early quarto edition of Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I*

William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part I*. London: Mathew Law, 1622. 6 3/4 inches x 4 7/8 inches (172 mm x 124 mm), [80] pages, A–K4.

The | historie | of | Henry the Fourth. | With the Battell at *Shrewseburie*,
betweene | the King, and Lord *Henry Percy*, surnamed | *Henry Hotspur of*
the North. | With the humorous conceits of Sir | *Iohn Falstaffe*. | Newly
corrected. | By *William Shake-speare*. | [ornament] | London, | ¶ Printed by *T.*
P. and are to be sold by *Mathew Law*, dwelling | in *Pauls* Church-yard, at the
Signe of the *Foxe*, neere | *S. Austines* gate. 1622.

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.

Henry IV, Part 1 begins where *Richard II* (1595) leaves off — following Henry’s usurpation and Richard’s death. Henry immediately faces rebellion by supporters of Richard. In the climax of the play, a rebel force led by the Percy family of Northumberland that sought to join a group of Welsh rebels is engaged by the forces of Henry IV in the Battle of Shrewsbury (21 July 1403). Henry’s men, led by Prince Hal his young son, win the battle, although casualties are high on both sides. Ironically, the Percy family had assisted Henry only three years before in deposing Richard. But when land in Cumbria that the Percys felt were their just reward was given to a rival, they were greatly offended and joined the uprising against Henry.

This sixth quarto of *Henry I, Part 1* is bound in nineteenth-century tan half levant morocco with marbled boards. A stamp on the verso of the front free endpaper (“BOUND BY F. BEDFORD”) identifies this as the work of the noted nineteenth-century London binder Francis Bedford (1799–1883). Up the spine reading “SHAKESPEARE’S HISTORIE OF HENRY THE FOURTH. LOND. 1622” in gold. A handwritten note by J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps regarding the book’s facsimile title page and last leaf is written on the obverse of the front free endpaper.

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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