

## **A rare 1639 quarto edition of Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I***

William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part 1*. London: Hugh Perry, 1639. 7 13/16 inches x 4 9/16 inches (199 mm x 116 mm), [80] pages, A–K4.

The | historie | *of* | Henry the Fourth: | VVith the battell at | *Shrewsbury*,  
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**. | *London*, | Printed by **John Norton**,  
and are to be sold by | **Hvgh Perry**, at his shop next to Ivie-bridge | in the  
Strand, 1639.

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 eighth quarto of *Henry IV, Part 1* is bound in nineteenth-century dark olive straight-grained morocco with gold tooling. 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). The spine is divided into six compartments with raised bands, with “SHAKE | SPEARE | HENRY | IV.” in gold in the second spine compartment, and “LOND. | 1639 in the third. The edges of the boards and the turn-ins are gold tooled, the endpapers marbled, and the edges gilt. A handwritten note by J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps identifying the copy as perfect, and that the word “Finis” is on all copies is 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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