

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

William Shakespeare, *Pericles*. London: Robert Bird, 1630. 4o, [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, adventures, and fortunes | of the sayd Prince: | Written by **WILL. SHAKESPEARE**: | [device] | *LONDON*, | Printed by *I. N.* for *R. B.* and are to besould | at his shop in *Cheapside*, at the signe of the | *Bible*. 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* from the Bodleian Library was rebound November 1927 in full brown leather with a darker spine piece. "MAL. 222(5). W. SHAKESPEARE. PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE. 1630" is lettered in gold up the spine. On the verso of the flyleaf facing the title page is a note in the hand of Edmund Malone: "The first edition was in 1609; the second in 1619. See them in my Large Quarto Collection of Shakespeare's plays." Annotations in an unidentified hand appear throughout the play.

This quarto was donated to the Bodleian Library in 1821. It was previously owned by Edmund Malone who bequeathed it, among many other important books, to his older brother Richard, Lord Sunderlin. Edmund Malone (1741–1812), after whom the Malone Society was named in 1909, was a renowned Shakespeare scholar who began his literary work in London in 1777. He was a friend to both Samuel Johnson and James Boswell, and he assisted Boswell in revising his biography of Johnson. Malone, the only collector of Shakespeare quartos to acquire a complete set, published an 11-volume edition of Shakespeare's works in 1790 and unmasked the Shakespeare manuscript forgeries of William Henry Ireland. Malone left his uncompleted work on Shakespeare to James Boswell the younger, who had it published in a 21-volume octavo edition in 1821 (Third Variorum Edition). Although not particularly successful as a textual editor of Shakespeare, Malone is especially noted for his work on Elizabethan theater.

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