INTRODUCTION

Date

Pericles cannot be later than 1608, since on 20 May of that year it was entered in the Stationers' Register. There is no terminal date in the other direction. It was seen by Zorzi Giustinian, who was Venetian ambassador between 5 January 1606 and 23 November 1608, in the company of the French ambassador de la Boderie and his wife (who seems not to have been in England before April 1607). Since Giustinian paid admission, the performance must have been a public one; and since the theatres were closed by plague from April to December 1607 and again in the summer and autumn of 1608, some time during the first six months of 1608 seems plausible, though it does not follow that the play was new when he saw it.[1] It has been suggested that the use of Guicchiardine as Chorus in Barnabe Barnes's *The Devil's Charter* influenced the treatment of Gower in *Pericles*, but the resemblances between the two are slight (see p. 35 n.). Barnes's play was performed by the King's Men at court on Candlemas night (2 February) 1607, and therefore presumably was first publicly performed late in 1606 (the quarto was not entered on the Stationers' Register until 16 October 1607, but being a King's Men's play, it is not out of the question that Shakespeare may have known it on stage). The choruses in *The Travailes of the Three English Brothers* (by John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins) bear some similarities to those in *Pericles*. This play was entered on 29 June 1607; it was a topical piece, and may well have been published shortly after it was performed (the title page declares 'As it is now play'd' by the Queen's Men), and it was successful enough to attract a satirical reference in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*.[2] There is general agreement that *Pericles* predates the other romances, but by how much no one can say. While it remains possible that *Pericles* was both written and produced in the busy year 1606, it seems likelier that it was written in 1607 and first performed early in 1608.

Sources

The sources and analogues of fairy-tales and legends tend to reach back in time for their generation, and grow in various directions throughout their narrative travels in different countries, either by word of mouth or in written form. In this way, tracing the sources of *Pericles* over distance and time bears a resemblance to the journeys of the hero in the play. The story of *Pericles* originated in Hellenistic antiquity in the Greek romance of Apollonius of Tyre and, after all sorts of metamorphoses, attained its final

[1] See E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, 1930, II, 335.
[2] See 4.1.27–30 (in *The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, general ed. Fredson Bowers, 1966, I, 64). The first performance of *The Knight* is usually dated 1607 on the basis of this allusion.

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statement in Shakespeare's play in the seventeenth century.[1] Like the histories of Xenophon, Heliodorus, and Iamblichus, the original story exhibits the familiar characteristics of the Greek sophistic romance: sea-storms, pirates, apparent death, dreams, and reunited lovers – the very fabric of adventure in Shakespeare's last plays.

The survival and popularity of the Apollonius of Tyre story is attested by a number of Greek and a hundred Latin manuscripts surviving from the Middle Ages, as well as by the number of adaptations and translations produced, including one in Anglo-Saxon (dating from the eleventh century; the only romance in Anglo-Saxon literature and the first of all known vernacular versions), and one in Middle English (early fifteenth century).[2] In the twelfth century Godfrey of Viterbo included it in his Latin *Pantheon, or Universal Chronicle* (written *c.* 1186 and first printed in 1559). By the fourteenth century the story entered the famous collection of fictitious moralising stories, the *Gesta Romanorum* (the 153rd story), in which much is made of wanderings, searches, sufferings in the brothel, and riddles to be solved; riddles asked not only by Antiochus but also by the maid in an effort to relieve her ailing father. It is clear that the story became disseminated in vernacular versions throughout Europe from the eleventh century onwards: Italy, Russia, Hungary, Bohemia, Norway, Iceland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Spain.[3]

Despite the story's enduring fame, Chaucer's Man of Law refers unflatteringly to its features of rape and incest as unsuitable subjects for an author:

> (Of swiche cursed stories I sey fy!).
> Or ellis of Tyro Appollonious,
> How that the cursed kyng Antiochus
> Birafte his doghter of hir maydenhede,

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[1] For the full history of the story see A. H. Smyth, *Shakespeare's Pericles and Apollonius of Tyre*, 1898: 'Shakespeare's *Pericles of Tyre* is the most singular example in Elizabethan literature of a consistent copying of a venerable and far-travelled story. The Apollonius saga, from which it is wholly drawn, is known to nearly every language of Europe, and persists through more than a thousand years, flourishing in extraordinary popularity', p. 5. See also S. Singer, *Apollonius von Tyrus*, 1895; E. Klebs, *Die Erzählung von Apollonius aus Tyrus*, 1899. For a comprehensive survey and reprint of the major sources, see Bullough.

[2] The Anglo-Saxon version is a prose fragment (the MS. is in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge) which contains the story as far as the betrothal of Apollonius to Aroestrates' daughter, their reunion in the Temple of Diana, and the marriage of their daughter Tharsia to Athenagoras. The Middle English fragment (in the Bodleian Library, Oxford) is in rhymed verse (144 lines) and relates Apollonius' narrative in the Temple. Both works have been edited by J. Raith in *Die alt- und mitttelenglischen Apollonius-Bruchstücke*, 1956.

[3] In Italy the story appears in a fourteenth-century MS.; a version in *ottava rima* was published frequently between 1486 and 1692. In Germany Heinrich von Neustadt wrote a verse version in 20,893 lines in the fourteenth century; Heinrich Steinhöwel wrote a prose history in the fifteenth century (printed in 1471). In the Netherlands the story appeared in the translations of the *Gesta Romanorum* from 1481 onwards and was separately published in 1493. In France the story was known by the troubadours and was assimilated into the cycle of Charlemagne; a prose version appeared *c.* 1480; F. de Belleforest retold the story from the *Gesta Romanorum* in his *Histoires Tragiques* in 1595. In Spain there were vernacular MSS.; Juan de Timoneda printed a version from the *Gesta Romanorum* in 1576. As Bullough has pointed out, 'a few coincidences with other versions suggest that the dramatist knew some folklore version of the tale unknown to us. "Perillie" is a name assumed by Apollonius in a French MS. in Vienna [MS. 3428, Wiener Hofbibliothek]; Cerimon's helper Philemon . . . is called Philominus in von Neustadt's poem; and in a Greek poem on the story printed in the sixteenth century there is a tournament at Pentapolis' (p. 355).

> That is so horrible a tale for to rede,
> Whan he hir threw upon the pavement.
> And therefore he, of ful avysement,
> Nolde nevere write in none of his sermons
> Of swiche unkynde abhomynacions . . .[1]

His views were not shared by Chaucer's contemporary and friend, John Gower
(?1330–1408) who retold the full story from Viterbo's *Pantheon* in Book VIII of his
Confessio Amantis (1390s); Shakespeare knew early in his career of Gower's work, and
probably drew from its version of the reunion in the Temple of Diana for the conclu-
sion of *The Comedy of Errors*. Gower is one of the two major sources of *Pericles*.

The popularity of the tale grew throughout the Renaissance with the publication of
a scholarly edition of the early romance,[2] new adaptations, and translations. The first
printed English version appeared in 1502 when Wynkyn de Worde published a prose
romance, *Kynge Apollyn of Thyre*, translated by Robert Copland from a French
romance derived from the *Gesta Romanorum*.[3] Shakespeare's second major source for
the play was a novel by Laurence Twine, *The Patterne of Painefull Adventures* (*c.* 1594,
reprinted 1607), which draws upon a French translation of the Latin *Gesta* for its
version of the story.

Both Gower's *Confessio Amantis* and Twine's *Patterne of Painefull Adventures* are
generally recognised to be the primary sources for the play, which draws material from
one or other in a fashion that suggests Shakespeare the scholar consulting the open
pages of these books during composition. It was Gower, however, who exercised the
greater influence on the dramatist.[4]

GOWER

The *Confessio Amantis*, finished not later than 1393, contains 141 stories in its 33,000
lines of octosyllabic couplets.[5] Gower is not much read these days except by medieval-
ists, yet C. S. Lewis, in his *Allegory of Love*, declared him 'almost Chaucer's equal as
a craftsman'. While conceding that 'architectonics were not the strong point of the

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[1] *The Man of Law's Tale*, lines 80–8, in *Works* ed. F. N. Robinson, 1957.
[2] Velserius' *Historia Apollonii regis Tyrii* in M. Welser, *Narratio Eorum Quae Contigerunt Apollonio Tyrio*,
1595.
[3] Other translations of the *Gesta* were published at intervals in the sixteenth century, but did not include the
Apollonius story.
[4] There are two possible lesser sources or analogues worth mention. Sir Philip Sidney, in Books I–III of his
Arcadia (1590), recounts the adventures of Pyrocles who, like Pericles, undergoes sea-storms and ship-
wreck; he is provided with clothing by two shepherds, rescued by pirates, adopts a disguise for love of
Philoclea; and his friend Musidorus finds a suit of armour belonging to his cousin. When Pyrocles believes
Philoclea dead he is visited by a woman who rebukes his excessive grief; angered, he attempts to strike her
only to discover that she is really Philoclea. Events such as these strongly suggest that Sidney was recalling
a version of the Apollonius story, but are not enough to confirm that Shakespeare borrowed from the
Arcadia. Marina's situation in the brothel has an analogue in *The Orator* (1596, Declamation 53), a
translation by L. Piot from the French of Alexandre van den Busche, which ultimately derived from
Seneca the Elder's *Controversia*. The story tells of the triumph of chastity in the adventures of a nun who
is captured by pirates and sold to a brothel where she withstands temptation.
[5] First printed by Caxton in 1483, and by Berthelette in 1532 (reprinted 1554; the edition probably used by
Shakespeare).

2   Genius and Amans, from Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, British Library MS. Egerton 1991 fol. 7ᵛ

Middle Ages', Lewis goes on to praise Gower for 'a concern for form and unity which
is rare at any time, and which, in the fourteenth century in England, entitles him to the
highest praise'. Lewis also defends Gower's 'plain style' in poetry, and praises his
ability to sustain narrative movement ('What he sees is movement, not groups and
scenes, but actions and events').[1] The entire poem is the confession of a lover, Amans,
to Genius, a priest of Venus, who helps Amans examine his conscience by telling him

[1] *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition*, 1936, pp. 222, 198–9, 206. Lewis further comments
     that 'Ships and the sea, indeed, are always good in Gower' (p. 207), a comment apposite in view of the
     poem's relationship to *Per.*

stories of behaviour and fortune in love (see illustration 2, p. 4). The theme of Book VIII (3,172 lines) is 'unlawful love' and its chief narrative illustration is the story of 'Apollinus the Prince of Tyr' (taking up 1,785 lines), used to warn Amans against the evils of incestuous lust as exemplified in Antiochus and his daughter. This narrator and his obvious enjoyment of storytelling surely suggested to Shakespeare the Chorus, Gower, whose resurrected spirit presents the dramatisation of the story throughout the course of the play. Like Genius in the *Confessio*, Gower is Shakespeare's ancient storyteller, shaping and giving life to the dramatic experience for the audience by engaging the help of their imagination. The whole concept of narration, of telling a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end, proceeding in intricate stages and leisurely description, was utilised by Shakespeare as the structural basis for *Pericles* (see pp. 27–36).

From Gower Shakespeare derived most of the names of characters and places.[1] Likewise certain passages are freely paraphrased from the source, like the riddle in 1.1.65–72, the letter found in Thaisa's coffin at 3.2.67–74, the first part of Marina's epitaph at 4.4.34–7, and several lines from each of the five choruses.[2] Shakespeare also took from the *Confessio* the basic outline of the story and the order of events in the plot while adapting and omitting from it to suit the requirements of a play. A glance at the play's differences from Gower helps to shed light on Shakespeare's working method with his sources during composition.

In Gower, Antiochus' daughter and her situation are initially described in a sympathetic light, and the story of Antiochus' incest before Apollonius' arrival is given more treatment than it receives in the play. There is nothing in Gower which resembles 1.2; Hellicanus is introduced much later and has a brief and unimportant role. Thaliard leaves Tyre having discovered its people are in mourning because of the disappearance of their prince, and returns to Antioch where the king eventually abandons any notion of killing or pursuing Apollonius; these events are reshaped and compressed into Thaliard's meeting with the Lords of Tyre in 1.3. Gower has only one fisherman and therefore nothing which corresponds with the lively comedy of 2.1.

There is no tournament scene in Gower, though the young men of Pentapolim play athletic games at which Apollonius excels. At the banquet Apollonius distinguishes himself with his harp-playing and is given the post of music teacher to the princess (unnamed in the source); in the play Pericles' skill in music is referred to by Simonides in 2.5.[3] Where Shakespeare has three Knights sue in person for Thaisa's hand in 2.5, Gower has a lengthy description of the process in which three suitors write their bills of intention and are subsequently dismissed with the daughter's written refusal of them in favour of Apollonius. There is no equivalent in the play to the Queen of Pentapolim, who in Gower is instrumental in consenting to the marriage between her daughter and the Prince of Tyre, and the description of the marriage feast itself is

[1] See Notes to the List of Characters for details of the characters' names and place-names as they appear in the play and the sources.
[2] See Commentary for paraphrases and word-borrowings.
[3] See Textual Analysis, p. 209.

much condensed in the play. In Gower it is Apollonius who has a coffin made for his wife and Cerimon himself who finds it on the seashore.

Much of the material of Act 4 appears in Gower in outline form; Theophilus (Leonine) is reluctant to kill the young Thaise (Marina in the play), and nothing suggests the antagonistic argument between Cleon and Dioniza in 4.3. The brothel scenes are extended in the play with much colour and additional characters: in Gower there is no female bawd, only the master of the brothel (Leonin) and his servant (who corresponds to Boult); Athenagoras (Lysimachus in the play) never appears in the brothel and is introduced only at the point when he sees Apollonius' ship on the day of Neptune's festival when he meets Thaise for the first time; he is allowed to speak to Apollonius but is not successful in soliciting a response from the ailing king. Most significantly, the great recognition scene between father and daughter, which in Shakespeare is carefully constructed and builds to the climax of the play, in Gower occupies only a few lines. The play omits the marriage and accompanying feast in Miteline between Athenagoras and Thaise.

Where Shakespeare ends the play with the reunion of the family in Ephesus, and has Pericles tie up loose ends by announcing his plans concerning future events (5.3.75–8), Gower has everyone travel back to Tyre where Athenagoras and Thaise are made king and queen; he then has Apollonius and his wife set off for Tharse (Tarsus) to seek revenge on Stranguilio (Cleon) and his wife. Yet another journey brings Apollonius and his wife to Pentapoim where they rule for the rest of their days. In general the most dramatically effective scenes in the play are either not in Gower or are only present in rudimentary form: the comic turn of the Fishermen, the ritualistic and chivalric presentation of the Knights' tournament, the unique perspective of the low-life in the brothel scenes, the drawn-out intensity of the recognition scene between Pericles and Marina.

Gower's intentions are strictly moral; he expounds them in his conclusion to his story about 'What is to love in good manere, / And what to love in other wise'.[1] Shakespeare's play encompasses not only that but much more. Gower's hero goes on many journeys and experiences various adventures along the way, but the journeys are simply a travelogue, a process of going from one place to the next. In Shakespeare the journeys are elevated metaphorically to a towering significance: the journey of the hero through the archetypal rhythms of birth, life, death, and rebirth, in a sea which is not merely a body of water under his ship but the fecundating emblem of these rhythms.

TWINE

Laurence Twine's novel *The Patterne of Painefull Adventures* was entered on the Stationers' Register in 1576 and is extant in two editions, one undated but published about 1594, and reprinted in 1607 (mistakenly ascribed to Thomas Twine, Laurence's

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[1] In both Gower and Twine the intentions of the authors are simply expressed and reiterated throughout their stories: Gower is interested in the eventual rewards bestowed on the good, and the punishment meted out to the bad; Twine is chiefly concerned with the vagaries of fortune.

brother), but it is not possible to determine which edition Shakespeare used.[1] The novel contains in its twenty-four chapters, as the title page tells us,

the most excellent, pleasant and variable Historie of the strange accidents that befell unto Prince Apollonius, the Lady Lucina his wife, and Tharsia his daughter. Wherein the uncertaintie of this world, and the fickle state of mans life are lively described.

Though in general the dramatist depended more on Gower than on Twine, Twine's influence is particularly evident in the fourth act of the play, especially as it concerns Athanagoras (Lysimachus), who has a much more prominent role in Twine than in Gower. Theophilus (Leonine in the play) lurks nearby as Tharsia (Marina) is abducted by the pirates, and then goes to tell Dionisiades (Dioniza) that the girl is dead (4.1). Twine does not confine the scenes in Machilenta (Miteline) to the brothel as Shakespeare does, but includes the street scenes where Tharsia is sold in the market, and is paraded through the public to attract custom: in the play this material is made the subject of discussion among the bawds within the brothel itself (4.2). In Tarsus, Stranguilio (Cleon) deplores his wife's evil deed in an extended diatribe (4.3).

Athanagoras, who comes to the brothel disguised (4.5), intends to be Tharsia's first client but is moved with compassion (more so because he has a daughter himself, an awkward fact the play understandably omits) when she tells him her history and reveals her identity: in the play Lysimachus is unaware of Marina's presence in the brothel, is a bachelor, and does not hear Marina's true story until he is made aware of it in Act 5. Another converted client receives the same 'divinity preached there'; he and Athanagoras enjoy the discomfiture of the 'many which went in and gave their mony, and came foorth againe weeping' which corresponds somewhat to the conversation of the converted gentlemen at the beginning of 4.5, and Boult's declaration that 'we'll have no more gentlemen driven away' (4.5.118–19). Since Athanagoras has heard Tharsia's story in detail, he is more instrumental in bringing Apollonius and Tharsia together than he is in the play. In dramatically appropriate fashion, Shakespeare reserves the discovery of the father–daughter relationship for the recognition scene. Like Gower, Twine goes on beyond the point where the play ends to record Apollonius' completed history: yet more travelling, seeking acts of revenge, rewarding past kindnesses, issuing pardons, sorting out kingdoms and who will rule them, having another child; all this sees Apollonius into his eighty-fourth year.

It is clear that Shakespeare decided to end *his* story on the note of concord which is established by reunited familial bonds, a recurrent theme in the late plays. Perhaps more than anything else, Twine suggested to Shakespeare the broader scope for the brothel scenes which in Twine make up a lively and sometimes humorous section of

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[1] As Hoeniger has remarked in his Arden edition, 'the edition of 1607 may have been the immediate cause for the play, or the play may have been the immediate cause for it. As Twine's novel is an indirect translation of the story in the *Gesta Romanorum*, some passages in the play that appear to be derived from Twine may in fact come from a different source', p. xvi. Whatever the chronology it seems that the subject of Pericles was unusually topical in 1607–8, especially since the play occasioned the subsequent publication of George Wilkins's novel, *The Painfull Aduentures of Pericles Prince of Tyre* in 1608 (see 'Authorship', pp. 9–14).

the larger story. Tharsia's role, which is more prominent in Twine than in Gower, is amplified in the play in terms of the daughter's significance to the father: the familial bond rather than the characters' relationship itself receives the dramatic focus.

Previous editors have allowed their low estimate of the play to obscure the true novelty of the dramatist's use of his source material. Hoeniger believed that

the playwright of *Pericles* followed, on the whole, the outlines of his story – a very undramatic story at that! – more closely than was Shakespeare's usual custom in romantic comedy or tragi-comedy.[1]

J. C. Maxwell in his New Shakespeare edition maintained that

the plotter follows a complicated episodic narrative in a fashion unparalleled in Shakespeare, and makes very little attempt to adapt it to the requirements of drama, though the introduction of Gower reflects a certain sense of the difficulties involved. It might be said that it is only by means of a deliberately naïve transcription that this fantastic and often irrational narrative could be put on the stage at all . . . If it was Shakespeare who first dramatized the story, all we can say is that he used a method he never used before or after.[2]

Rather than seeing Gower's and Twine's works as sprawling narratives incompatible with the stage and the requirements of drama, it is preferable to credit Shakespeare with a new insight into the handling of his sources for dramatic purposes. Although of course he took from Gower and Twine the elements of the story, perhaps their most instrumental influence on him was the potential he found there for presenting narrative as a dramatic form. This is different from a play telling a story; all plays tell a story in one way or another. What Shakespeare dramatises in *Pericles* is *the storytelling process itself*. Maxwell is right to say it is a method he never used before or after; he is wrong to imply it is dramatically naïve and theatrically unsuccessful.

Authorship

The first quarto of *Pericles* is in no doubt about the authorship of the play: it roundly declares that the work 'hath been diuers and sundry times acted by his Maiesties Seru-ants, at the Globe on the Banck-side. By William Shakespeare'. Unfortunately, other printed plays of the period grandly but fraudulently make the same claims.[3] No word of protest arose at the time at the attribution, but the play was not included in the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, the First Folio of 1623. Though it was included in the Third and Fourth Folios (1663–4 and 1685), and in Rowe's pioneering editions (1709 and following), most of the important editions of the eighteenth century omit it. Doubts as to the actual relationship between Shakespeare and the play seem to have arisen somewhat more than a hundred years after it was first performed and

[1] Hoeniger, p. xvi.
[2] NS, pp. xiii–xiv.
[3] Both *The London Prodigall* (1605, STC 22333) and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608, STC 22340) are likewise claimed on their title pages to be by Shakespeare and to have been performed by the King's Men. Scholars have overwhelmingly rejected the attributions to Shakespeare. Neither publication seems to have aroused any objection at the time; perhaps the King's Men could afford to take a lofty attitude to such matters, or perhaps they thought any publicity good.

printed. George Lillo's adaptation of *Pericles* as *Marina* (1738) includes a Prologue that calls the play 'unequal', complains of its 'rude wild scenes', but holds that Shakespeare's 'bright inimitable lines' are to be found therein. (It should be remembered that almost all the adapters of Shakespeare from the Restoration on have defended their vandalism with similar excuses.) The opinion that Shakespeare was the reviser or re-toucher of someone else's play, then, is very much a child of eighteenth-century critical Bardolatry. Curiously, rather than being challenged by subsequent critical scholarship, it has survived and hardened into dogma.[1]

The play's absence from the First Folio has often been taken as an indication of doubts about its authenticity on the part of Heminge and Condell (the members of the King's Men responsible for its compilation); but they included in that collection plays which Shakespeare wrote in collaboration with other dramatists (such as *Henry VIII* and to a lesser extent *Macbeth*) and excluded others that Shakespeare wrote either on his own (*Love's Labour's Won*) or in collaboration (*Cardenio* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*). The notion, then, that Heminge and Condell might have stayed their hands of *Pericles* because they knew it to be collaborative is hard to sustain.

The reason collaboration has been suspected is the widespread perception that there is a change in the style of the play after Act 2. The characteristic style of the first two acts is a leisurely and formal use of verse, often rhyming couplets, interrupted by the lively prose scene of the Fishermen (2.1). At the beginning of Act 3, a much more intensely poetic language begins to inform the play, especially 3.1 and most of 5.1 and 5.3; besides, the scenes in the brothel (4.2 and 4.5) are written in very agile and confident prose. When disintegration was fashionable, it seemed to many a reasonable inference that Shakespeare wrote the second half of the play (adding 'touches' to the first half) and that the celebrated author, Another Hand, composed at least Acts 1 and 2.

It would be pointless to rehearse the various theories that have been advanced and names that have been put forward concerning this putative collaboration (so far as we know, no one has dared to suggest Jonson).[2] H. Dugdale Sykes first made out a plausible case for George Wilkins, in 1919.[3] In our time Wilkins has become the preferred collaborator, beating off all other comers; and though we have the gravest doubts that Wilkins had anything to do with *Pericles*, in view of his popularity in the co-author stakes it seems only fair to summarise what is known of him, and the arguments put forward in his favour.

[1] Barbara Everett, in the programme note for the National 1994 production, trots out all the clichés: 'the Quarto *Pericles* is formidably badly written . . . its language moves from the untalented to the nonsensical. And yet there are even in the problematical first two acts touches which may be called Shakespearian . . . substantial masses in the last three acts are not only Shakespearian but wonderful . . . Shakespeare picked up, or was presented with, an old play of little merit . . . [or] Shakespeare worked with an actual if clearly dim collaborator from the beginning', etc., etc. 'Touches' has a nicely antique ring; though she concedes that 'the collaborative case has always had grave flaws' on the grounds that 'no Elizabethan playwright who we know writes badly enough for *Pericles*'. For our view of the play's language, see pp. 36–51.

[2] See Hoeniger pp. lii–lxiii for a full, though misguided, survey.

[3] See his *Sidelights on Shakespeare*, pp. 143–204.

Happily, a good deal of light, much of it unflattering, has been shed on Wilkins by the researches of Roger Prior, to which the following account is indebted.[1] Wilkins (born *c.* 1576) was a minor writer who collaborated with William Rowley and John Day in *The Travailes of the Three English Brothers* (1607), wrote a play of his own called *The Miseries of Inforst Mariage* (STC 25635) and a pamphlet, *Three Miseries of Barbary* (both 1607) among other minor things. The *Three English Brothers* was performed by Queen Anne's Men; his *Miseries of Inforst Mariage*, rather surprisingly, by the King's.[2] He also published a novella called *The Painfull Aduentures of Pericles Prince of Tyre*, based on the play, which was printed in 1608 (see Textual Analysis, pp. 197–210 for details).

This book makes no claim to be the work of the author of the play. Its title page declares that it is 'the true History of the Play of *Pericles*, as it was lately presented by the worthy and ancient Poet *John Gower*', a claim reiterated at the end of the Argument on A3ʳ: 'Onely intreating the Reader to receive this Historie in the same maner as it was under the habite of auncient *Gower* the famous English Poet, by the Kings Maiesties Players excellently presented'.[3] It is evident that the novella is indeed a recollection of the performed play, with additional material taken verbatim from Twine's novel of nearly identical title (*The Patterne of Painefull Adventures* – see 'Sources', pp. 6–8.).

By profession, Wilkins was a victualler (i.e. an innkeeper) who lived in Cow Cross, hard by the present Farringdon station, and who made a regular series of appearances before the Middlesex Sessions between 1610 and 1618. He may have been the 'George Wilkens, Poett' recorded as the father of a son whose birth is included in the register of St Giles Cripplegate, 11 February 1605.

Wilkins also made a deposition in the Belott–Mountjoy suit of 1612, in which Shakespeare was a witness.[4] In 1604 Shakespeare 'laye in the house' of, i.e. lodged with, Christopher Mountjoy on the corner of Muggle and Silver Streets in Cripplegate, close to St Giles. According to Wilkins's deposition in the suit, Belott and his wife lived in one of the 'Chambers' in Wilkins's inn after their marriage. There is nothing whatever in the depositions made at the trial to suggest that Shakespeare was acquainted with Wilkins. Nor is there anything that makes it impossible, for Shakespeare deposed he had known the families for about ten years, Wilkins had known them for seven.

The fact that seems pretty well to clinch the connection between Wilkins the victualler and Wilkins the author arises from one of the nastiest cases for which Wilkins was arraigned: that of March 1611, when he was accused of 'abusinge one Randall Borkes and kikkinge a woman on the Belly which was then greate with childe'

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[1] See 'The life of George Wilkins', *S. Sur.* 25 (1972), 137–52.
[2] Equally surprisingly, this bad play went through three subsequent editions: it was probably therefore also popular on stage.
[3] The sole evidence to connect Wilkins with the book consists of a dedicatory leaf present in one of the two surviving copies, the Zürich (not in the British Library's) with Wilkins's name attached. There seems no reason to challenge the identification, though the coyness of both title page and Argument are worthy of note.
[4] See E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare*, 90–5.