

**CLARENDON PRESS  
SERIES; SELECT  
PLAYS: THE TEMPEST**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649701391

Clarendon Press Series; Select Plays: The Tempest by William Shakespeare & William Aldis Wright

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**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & WILLIAM ALDIS WRIGHT**

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PLAYS: THE TEMPEST**



◦ Clarendon Press Series

SHAKESPEAR

*SELECT PLAYS*

THE TEMPEST

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AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

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## PREFACE.

THE *Tempest* was printed for the first time, so far as we know, in the folio of 1623, where it stands first in the volume. It is divided into acts and scenes, and the locality of the play is indicated at the end, 'The Scene, an uninhabited Island,' followed by the 'Names of the Actors,' or *dramatis personæ*, which are substantially the same as those given in modern editions.

The date at which *The Tempest* was written is still uncertain, and can be only approximately determined. Among the 'Extracts from the Accounts of the Revels at Court in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I,' edited for the Shakespeare Society in 1842 by the late Mr. Peter Cunningham, appeared the following from the book for the years 1611, 1612:—

By the Kings  
Players.

Hallowmas nyght was presented at Whithall  
before y<sup>e</sup> Kinges Ma<sup>tie</sup> A play Called the  
*Tempest*.

It is now ascertained that this entry, and all the others of a similar kind contained in the books of the Revels numbered xii and xiii, are undoubted forgeries. The books themselves disappeared for many years, but were restored in 1868 to their proper place in the Record Office by the authorities of the British Museum, to whom they were offered for sale. The date, 1611, assigned to the performance of the play in this spurious entry, agrees however with that given by Malone in

his 'Account of the Incidents, from which the Title and part of the Story of Shakespeare's *Tempest* were derived; and its true date ascertained' (Shakespeare, ed. Boswell, 1821; vol. xv. pp. 377-434). The conclusion at which Malone arrived, that 'the circumstances attending the storm by which Sir George Somers was shipwrecked on the island of Bermuda, in the year 1609, unquestionably gave rise to Shakespeare's *Tempest*, and suggested to him the title, as well as some of the incidents, of that admirable comedy,' was put forward independently by Douce in his *Illustrations of Shakespeare*. If *The Tempest*, as is not improbable, be hinted at in the Induction to Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, this fact supplies an ultimate limit for the date of the play. The passage in which it is supposed to be referred to was pointed out by Theobald, and is as follows: 'If there bee never a *Servant-monster* i' the *Fayre*, who can helpe it, he sayes; nor a nest of *Antiques*? Hee is loth to make Nature afraid in his *Playes*, like those that beget *Tales*, *Tempests*, and such like *Drolleries*.' *Bartholomew Fair* was acted at the Hope Theatre, Bankside, on 31st October, 1614, by the Lady Elizabeth's servants. The *Winter's Tale*, to which the extract just given appears also to allude, was undoubtedly among the latest of Shakespeare's plays, and was acted at court in May 1613. Malone conjectures that it was licensed about the end of 1610 or beginning of 1611; and, according to Dr. Simon Forman's diary, it was put on the stage at least as early as May 15, 1611, when he witnessed the performance of it at the Globe Theatre. Mr. Collier argues that *The Tempest* was written before *The Winter's Tale*, from the fact that whereas in the latter Shakespeare closely follows the story of Greene's *Pandosto*, he departs from it in one important particular, namely the manner in which Perdita is exposed in the deserts of Bohemia. In Greene's tale the child is cast adrift at sea in a sailless and rudderless boat, and Mr. Collier's suggestion is that Shakespeare purposely varied this incident in *The Winter's Tale* because he had already made *use of it in The Tempest*. In seeking for a superior limit to the



date of the play, we come to a passage which was pointed out by Steevens as having possibly suggested to Shakespeare the lines in the fourth Act, beginning 'The cloud-capt towers,' &c. It is from 'The Tragedie of Darius,' written by William Alexander, afterwards Earl of Stirling, and originally published at Edinburgh in 1603. The following quotation is from the London edition of 1604, sig. H recto, Act. iv. Scene 2—

'Let greatnesse of her glascie scepters vaunt;  
 Not sceptours, no, but reeds, soone brus'd soone broke:  
 And let this worldlie pomp our wits inchant.  
 All fades, and scarcele leaves behinde a token.  
 Those golden Pallaces, those gorgeous halles,  
 With furniture superfluoslie faire:  
 Those statelie Courts, those sky-encountring walles  
 Evanish all like vapours in the aire.'

There is certainly sufficient resemblance to warrant the quotation of this as a parallel passage, but hardly enough to justify any inference with regard to priority of date. But there is another fact which seems to fix 1603 as a superior limit to the date of the play, and it is this: that Florio's translation of Montaigne's Essays, from which the passage in Act ii. Scene 1, lines 147 &c., is evidently borrowed, was not published till that year. We know that Shakespeare possessed this book, for a copy with his autograph is now in the British Museum. It may therefore be fairly assumed that *The Tempest* was written between the years 1603 and 1614, and nearer the latter than the former limit. Malone states, on the authority of Mr. George Vertue's MSS., that it 'was acted by John Heminge and the rest of the King's Company, before Prince Charles, the lady Elizabeth, and the Prince Palatine Elector, in the beginning of the year 1613.' If Mr. Collier's conjecture is right, that *The Tempest* was written before *The Winter's Tale*, this would place the time of its composition not later than 1610, for *The Winter's Tale* was written and acted as early as May 1611. Again, supposing the theory of the origin of the play advanced by Malone and Douce to be true, and it is, to say the least, a very reasonable conjecture, we then arrive at

a further approximation to its date. The fleet, under the command of Sir George Somers, was overtaken by a tempest, and the admiral-ship, the 'Sea-venture,' was wrecked off the Bermudas. The crew landed on July 28, 1609, and were given up for lost; but having built themselves two vessels of cedar, they set sail from the Bermudas on May 10, 1610, landed on the coast of Virginia on May 24, and ultimately embarked for England on June 8 in the same year. An account of the wreck was written by Silvester Jourdan, one of the survivors, with the title, 'A discovery of the Barmudas, otherwise called the Ile of Divels: by Sir Thomas Gates, Sir George Sommers, and Captayne Newport, with diuers others.' The date of the dedication is October 13, 1610. The tract is reprinted in the fifth volume of Hakluyt's *Voyages* (ed. 1812), pp. 551-558. Another account, by William Strachey, is given in Purchas, vol. iv. p. 1734, &c. For some months after the news of the disaster reached England the fate of the admiral-ship and of those on board was still a matter of uncertainty; and a pamphlet was issued by the Council of Virginia in December 1609, or January 1610, for the purpose of counteracting the gloomy impression produced by the calamity. It is evident from this fact that the subject was one which deeply affected the minds of the people, and although it is quite possible that Shakespeare might have raised a storm at his pleasure, there is no *a priori* improbability in the supposition that his thoughts may have been influenced by what must have been the topic of common conversation; and the reference to the 'still-vext Bermoothes' would be more natural while the memory of such an event was fresh. Malone, after quoting the account of the storm given by Ariel in Act i. Scene 2, sums up the points of resemblance to the passage in the pamphlet of Jourdan and another which was subsequently issued by the Council of Virginia, apparently from materials supplied by Sir Thomas Gates. 'It is obvious, that we have *here a covert allusion to several circumstances minutely described in the papers quoted in the preceding pages; to the*

circumstance of the Admiral-ship being separated from the rest of Somers's fleet, and, after a tremendous tempest, being jammed between two of the Bermuda rocks, and "fast lodged and lock'd," as Jourdan expresses it, "for further budging"; to the disaster happening very near the shore, and not a single person having perished; to the mariners having fallen asleep from excessive fatigue; to the dispersion of the other ships; to the greater part of them meeting again, as the Council of the Virginian Company have it, "in consort"; and to all those who were thus dispersed and thus met again, being "bound sadly" for Virginia, supposing that the vessel which carried their governor was lost, and that his "great person had perished." In various other passages in the second Act,—where the preservation of Alonzo and his companions is termed "miraculous"; where Stephano asks, "have we devils here?"—where the same person makes a very free use of his bottle, and liberally imparts it to Caliban and Trinculo;—where it is said, "though this island seem to be desert, uninhabitable, and almost inaccessible, it must needs be of subtle, tender, and delicate temperance"; that "the air breathes most sweetly," and that "there is everything advantageous to life," we find evident allusions to the extraordinary escape of Somers and his associates, and to Jourdan's and Gates's descriptions of Bermuda; as in the first scene of the play, the circumstances of the sailors and passengers taking leave of each other, and bidding farewell to their wives and children, was manifestly suggested by the earlier of those narratives.' It is of course possible to make too much of coincidences of this kind; but, in the absence of positive proof, there appears to be reasonable ground for the conclusion that *The Tempest* was written about the end of 1610 or the beginning of 1611. Apart from the storm, the only mark of time which occurs in the play is to be found in Act ii. Scene 2, where Trinculo says, 'When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian.' But it is impossible from this to draw any conclusion with regard to the date; for Frobenius, in 1576, had