

Autumn No.1

Autumn Lectures 2016 for the Angel Foundation, by Peter Milward

No.1. Saturday September 24, at Kibe Hall, on *Pericles*

Paradox. One of Sh most popular plays, on stage and in quarto publication rejected for First Folio of 1623, included only in Third Folio of 1662 in 2nd printing then added to *Cymbeline* as tragedies, though both tragi-comedies

with *Tempest* and *Winter's Tale* as comedies, though both tragi-comedies while emphasis on false genre of histories, placed in central position though two histories at least collaborative, KJ and H8, others tragedy or comedy Why? Ben Jonson breathing down necks of editors, Hemings and Condell.

Pericles as collaborative with George Wilkins, living near Sh near Bishopsgate

Different from other collaborative history plays at beginning and end

First two Acts already composed by Wilkins, taken over and completed by Sh

Taken over from Act III with impressive storm scene

Why? For three special reasons –

- a) Opening scene in which King Antiochus shows beautiful daughter to suitors Pericles guesses riddle, that daughter is also wife to Antiochus reflecting rumor about Henry VIII, that Anne Boleyn also daughter to H spread by N.Sander in book on Anglican Schism (1985) in Latin, not English
- b) First scene of Act III, with death of mother Thaisa, birth of daughter Marina ideal heroine continuing after interruption among 12 plays four at beginning of Jac. Sh, then gap of four, then four more at end of Jac. Sh
- c) Connection with *King Lear* by making up for sad ending of one with happy ending revealed in presentation of both from Quartos to Catholic audience in North Yorks

Notable characteristic of *Pericles*, Chorus of "ancient Gower", tale from *Conf. Amantis*

problem, whether taken over from Wilkins and continued by Sh in iambic tetrameter?

or added by Sh from beginning, to convey antique flavor?

only to be dismissed by Ben Jonson as "moldy tale", rejected by two editors

Contribution of Sh from Act III, with impressive storm scene, as in KL and T

Pericles. "Thou god of this great vast, rebuke these surges/ Which wash both heaven and hell, and thou that hast/ Upon the winds command, bind them in brass/ Having called them from the deep. O still/ Thy deafening, dreadful thunders, gently quench/ Thy nimble, sulphurous flashes!"

(Note. Pagan, not Christian setting, owing to Puritan inspired Act of Parliament 1606, "against players' abuse of divine name".)

Sadly in the storm, Thaisa dies in giving birth to Marina, cast overboard in coffin
Pericles, pursued by vengeful Antiochus, sails on to Tarsus in Cilicia,
Leaves Marina with governor Cleon and Dionyza, but she jealous of maiden Marina
has her servant Leonine put Marina to death on seashore, leaving her time to pray
where on attack of pirates he runs away, she sold to brothel in Mitylene
but she resists attempts on her chastity, "would make a Puritan of the devil"

Climax comes when aged Pericles in ship puts in at harbor of Mitylene

and Marina is brought to ship to amuse and dance with singing before him

Pericles. "Pray you, turn your eyes upon me./ You are like something that – what
countrywoman? Here of these shores?"

Marina. "No, not of any shores./ Yet I was mortally brought forth, and am/ No less than I
appear."

Pericles. "I am great with woe, and shall deliver weeping."

"Falseness cannot come from thee, for thou look'st/ Modest as Justice, and thou seem'st
a palace/ For the crowned Truth to dwell in. Thou dost look/ Like Patience on kings'
graves and smiling/ Extremity out of act."

(Then when Marina reveals her name, Pericles exclaims to attendant, like Lear)

"Put me to present pain/ Lest this great sea of joys rushing upon me/ O'erbear the
shores of my mortality/ And drown me with their sweetness."

"O come hither,/ Thou that begett'st him that did thee beget!"

(translation of Latin hymn *Alma Redemptoris Mater*, "*Tu quae genuisti, Natura
mirante, tuum sanctum Genitorem*".

(This passage taken up by TS Eliot in poem "Marina", among *Ariel Poems* 1930)

Further Climax, with vision of goddess Diana, amid heavenly music,

telling Pericles to go on from Mitylene to temple at Ephesus, and explain why he came

There he meets the priestess, none other than wife Thaisa, resurrected by Caerimon

Pericles. "This, this, no more, you gods! Your present kindness/ Makes my past miseries
sport."

(i.e. Unlike *KL*, happy reunion both of father with daughter, and of husband with wife)

Moreover, a) *Pericles* and *King Lear* in Quartos of 1608 and 1609 presented by Catholic
Cholmeley Players at Catholic residence in Yorkshire at Candlemas Feb.2, 1610

evidently as both suited to recusant taste with reference to religious background

b) In Neo-Platonic correspondence, Diana = Virgin Mary, and Ephesus not only shrine of
Diana (as in Acts 19) but also place of Council proclaiming Mary as *Theotokos*

c) Final setting of *Pericles* looking back to early *Comedy of Errors*, also at Ephesus,
culminating in revelation of Abbess Aemilia as long-lost wife of Aegeon from Syracuse