

The Troublesome Raigne of King John. London: Thomas Dewe, 1622. 7 7/8 inches x 5 1/2 inches (200 x 140 mm), [92] pages, A–L4, M2.

THE | First and second Part of | the troublesome Raigne of | IOHN King of England. |
With the discoverie of King Richard Cor- | delions Base sonne (vulgarly named, the
Bastard | *Fauconbridge*:) Also the death of King | *John* at Swinstead Abbey. | *As they*
were (sundry times) lately acted. | Written by W. SHAKESPEARE. | [printer's device] |
LONDON, | Printed by Aug. Mathewes for *Thomas Dewe*, and are to | be sold at his shop in
St. Dunstones Church- | yard in Fleet-street, 1622.

The Troublesome Raigne of King John was originally published anonymously in 1591 by Sampson Clarke. The title page of second edition (Valentine Simmes, 1611) indicated that the author was “W. Sh.” Only in this, the third quarto edition (Thomas Dewe, 1622), is the work explicitly attributed to Shakespeare. It is now a matter of general agreement that *The Troublesome Raigne* is not the work of Shakespeare, but most likely a source for his 1623 First Folio *Life and Death of King John*, which is similar in plot but diverges in its language. *The Troublesome Raigne* has been ascribed to various contemporaries of Shakespeare, such as George Peele (1556–1596), Robert Greene (1558–1592), and Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593), but no conclusive proof of its authorship has yet emerged.

The play tells the tale of the Plantagenet King John (1166–1216), who despite his status as the fifth son of Henry II and his immediate failure as ruler of Ireland (1185), came to rule England from 1199 until his death. John's reign was marked by conflict, first with his nephew Arthur of Brittany and King Philip II of France over the throne, then with the pope over the appointment of the Archbishop of Canterbury, again with France over territories previously lost by John, and finally with England's barons, who were frustrated by John's failures and his introduction of new taxes upon them. Fleeing a French

invasion that was instigated by the rebellious barons, John fell ill and died shortly thereafter.

This copy of the third quarto of *The Troublesome Raigne* is bound in nineteenth-century maroon morocco with gold tooling. A stamp at the top of the reverse 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 | KING | JOHN” in gold in the second spine compartment and “LOND. | 1622” in the third. The edges of the boards and the turn-ins are gold tooled. A note by J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps “The first title is in FS. | The rest is perfect.” is handwritten on the front free endpaper.

This book 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).

Octavo code: **shakis**