

## **The first quarto edition of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida***

William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*. London: R. Bonian and H. Walley, 1609. 6 7/8 inches x 4 9/16 inches (175 mm x 116 mm), [92] pages, ¶2, A2–A4, B-L4, M1 (-M2 blank).

THE | Famous Historie of | Troylus and Cresseid. | *Excellently expressing the beginning* | of their  
loues, with the conceited wooing | of *Pandarus* Prince of *Licia*. | *Written by* William  
Shakespeare. | [ornament] | LONDON | Imprinted by *G. Eld* for *R. Bonian* and *H. Walley*, and |  
are to be sold at the spred Eagle in Paules | Church-yard, ouer against the | great North doore. |  
1609.

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.

This tragic-comedic play is set in the seventh year of the Trojan War. Troilus, one of the sons of the king of Troy, and Cressida, daughter of Calchus, fall in love. Much of the play is concerned with infighting among the invading Greeks, who attempt to provoke Achilles to fight against the Trojans. Calchus flees to the Greeks and, in exchange for information, asks that Cressida be brought to Greece, where she is pursued by Diomedes. Troilus discovers Cressida's betrayal and

vows to kill Diomedes in battle but fails. Achilles finally decides to fight when his companion Patroclus is killed by Hector. Achilles has his men kill Hector as he resting and unarmed, and Troy is laid waste.

Now at the National Library of Scotland, this 1630 first edition, second issue quarto of the *Troilus and Cressida* is bound in half yellow morocco with dark gray boards; the spine has raised bands with the title, author, and date in black. The bookplate of John Patrick Crichton Stuart, the third Marquis of Bute is on the front pastedown; the bookplate for the Bute Collection of English Plays is on the back pastedown.

This quarto was purchased by the National Library of Scotland from Major Michael Crichton Stuart on 3 April 1956. It is part of the Bute Collection of early English plays that was initially formed by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762). It was expanded by her son-in-law John Stuart, third Earl of Bute, and further enlarged by her grandson the first Marquis of Bute, also named John Stuart (1744–1814), who notably acquired 39 Shakespeare quartos. The collection contains 1,266 English plays and includes seventeenth- and eighteenth-century adaptations of Shakespeare's plays and examples of the foremost dramatists from Elizabethan, Jacobean, Caroline, and Restoration periods; also included are a number of promptbooks.

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