

ABSTRACT

Das neue digitale ‚Shakespeare-Bildarchiv Oppel-Hammerschmidt‘ an der Universitätsbibliothek Mainz. Reden und Beiträge. Eds. Andreas Anderhub and Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel (Universitätsbibliothek Mainz, 2011) - <http://archimed.uni-mainz.de/opusubm/archimed-home.html>

On the basis of illustrations of Shakespeare's Hamlet, the new digital 'Oppel-Hammerschmidt Shakespeare Illustration Archive' at the Mainz University Library - together with a lavishly-constructed and multiply-linked Web interface version - was presented to the public on 17 November 2008. This e-book, edited by Andreas Anderhub and Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel, contains the speeches and presentations given on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the electronic archive. The collection of the new archive, published here for the first time, holds about 3,500 images and is part of the only Shakespeare illustration archive in the world. The Shakespeare Illustration Archive was founded in 1946 by the internationally acclaimed Shakespeare and Goethe scholar, Prof. Horst Oppel. This part of the archive was donated to the Mainz University Library on condition that its holdings be digitalised and made available to the public. The collection has been named 'The Oppel-Hammerschmidt Shakespeare Illustration Archive' in accordance with the terms of the Agreement of Donation of 9, 15, and 16 September 2005, and honouring the 16 March 1988 Delegation of Authority and Declaration of Intent by Frau Ingeborg Oppel, Prof. Oppel's widow and legal assignee. Vice-President Prof. Jürgen Oldenstein opened the proceedings by noting that 2008 had been a good year for international Shakespeare scholarship. For, in London, the site of the 'Theatre' in Shoreditch, where Shakespeare's company performed, had been unearthed, and in Mainz the Shakespeare Archive had gone online with thousands of illustrations. The Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Philology, Prof. Mechthild Dreyer, who mentioned that she herself had long been successfully employing interdisciplinary research methods, took particular pleasure in the transdisciplinary approach to research resolutely pursued by Prof. Hammerschmidt-Hummel. Prof. Clemens Zintzen (Cologne), former President of the Mainz Academy of Literature and Sciences, recalled highlights from the more than sixty-year-long history of the Shakespeare Illustration Archive. Prof. Kurt Otten (Heidelberg and Cambridge) drew an impressive portrait of Horst Oppel's personality as an academic and praised his influential books on Goethe and Shakespeare. He pointed out that Oppel's Shakespeare Illustration Archive, the basis for many a dissertation, had enjoyed great popularity around the world. Prof. Otten also delineated the academic career of Prof. Hammerschmidt-Hummel and her new findings regarding Shakespeare's time, life and work. Prof. Rüdiger Ahrens OBE (Würzburg) drew attention to Prof. Hammerschmidt-Hummel's research results, directly or indirectly arising out of her work on the Shakespeare Illustration Archive. This research had centred on proving the authenticity of four visual representations of Shakespeare (the Chandos and Flower portraits, the Davenant bust and the Darmstadt Shakespeare death mask); solving the mystery around Shakespeare's 'Dark Lady'; and establishing the dramatist's Catholic religion. Prof. Hammerschmidt-Hummel reported on her 'Shakespeare Illustration' project, describing the nature, dimensions and significance of the Archive's pictorial material, which relates to all of Shakespeare's plays and stretches over five centuries. She explained that the digital 'Oppel-Hammerschmidt Illustration Archive' was an addition to the three-volume edition she had compiled, authored and edited for publication in 2003. Unlike the print version, however, the digital collection had only been partly editorially prepared. It represented source material and a basis for further work. Hammerschmidt-Hummel expressed her thanks to the Head of the Central University Library, Dr Andreas Anderhub, for his untiring commitment. After the initial donation had been made, he had entered enthusiastically into setting up the necessary contacts, getting all the work underway, and

clearing the legal hurdles. Hammerschmidt-Hummel was especially grateful to University of Mainz librarian Heike Geisel, who had worked for nearly five years to carry out the large-scale digitalization of a total of 8,800 items. Frau Geisel was also extremely resourceful in devising ways of making the collection yield even more, e.g. by classifying and cross-linking the data, assembling clusters of individual topics that lend themselves to research, and (in collaboration with the art historian Dr Klaus Weber) making the archive's index of artists compatible with the data-bank of artists held by the University of Mainz Institute of Art History. In addition, she compiled an extremely helpful 'users' guide' to the new digital collection. Frau Geisel had enjoyed invaluable support from Dr Annette Holzapfel-Pschorn, the leading academic in the Central IT Department at the University, who set up an intelligent, most impressive Web interface using the latest application technologies. Frau Geisel and Dr Holzapfel-Pschorn were highly praised for their convincing demonstration, using illustrations to Hamlet, of how to access this well-devised and exceptionally user-friendly Web version. For legal reasons, Prof. Hammerschmidt-Hummel pointed out, the collection could not be released for open access on the internet. The media - as Dr Anderhub stressed in his foreword - had shown great interest in the new digital collection of thousands of Shakespearean illustrations (cf. Benjamin Cor's TV feature in "Tagesthemen", 17 November 2008, presented by Tom Buhrow). The 'Oppel-Hammerschmidt Shakespeare Illustration Archive' should also meet with particular interest not only among academic specialists, but also among the performers of the arts and persons active in the cultural realm in general, as well as theatre and film directors, literary managers, teachers, and countless Shakespeare enthusiasts.