



**Press Release 50/2022**

## **Exhibition opening: Will's Book - 400 Years of Shakespeare's First Folio on 12 October in Marbach**

In 1622, a catalogue of the Frankfurt Book Fair (*Catalogus vniuersalis*) announced the first printed edition of Shakespeare's collected plays, which subsequently appeared in 1623 under the title *Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*. Until 1623, only individual plays had been published - without the publication of this ›First Folio‹, many of Shakespeare's dramatic works would have been lost.

To celebrate the 400th anniversary of the First Folio, the German Literature Archive Marbach (DLA) in cooperation with the Shakespeare's Globe is pleased to present an exhibition, dubbed ›Will's Book‹, which will be accompanied by a conference and programme of events. ›Will's Book‹ will focus on the historical significance of the First Folio and Shakespeare's influence on the German-speaking world. The project has been initiated and supported by Marcus Coles (London) and Reinhard Gorenflos (Munich).

The exhibition will be opened on 12 October by Neil Constable, Chief Executive of Shakespeare's Globe, and Sandra Richter, Director of the DLA. Jens Harzer and Janie Dee will read from selections of Shakespeare's plays.

The focal point of the exhibition in the Museum of Modern Literature is an edition of the First Folio (1623), of which only approximately 230 of the original 750 printed editions are extant - and only around 40 of these are complete and in good condition. The display of the First Folio is complemented with editions of the ›Second‹, ›Third‹, and ›Fourth Folio‹ (1632, 1664, 1683). The central display - modelled on the form of Shakespeare's Globe - is surrounded by manuscripts, books, images, and objects from Shakespeare's Globe and the German Literature Archive Marbach. Forty exhibits explore the person of Shakespeare and the impact of his works in the German-speaking world, including Friedrich Schiller's corrections of Johann Heinrich Voss's *Othello* translation, reading traces in Shakespeare editions that belonged to Paul Celan and W.G. Sebald, Schiller's adaptation of *Macbeth* and Gerhart Hauptmann's adaptation of *Hamlet* as well as Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Shakespeare und wir*. Photographic stills from performances at the Shakespeare's Globe and the State Theatre Stuttgart provide insights into English and German Shakespeare productions.

The exhibition will be opened at 7:30 pm in the Humboldt-Saal (Archive Building). Please register by email: [direktion@dla-marbach.de](mailto:direktion@dla-marbach.de).

»All of us here at Shakespeare's Globe are delighted to be teaming up with the German Literature Archive Marbach (DLA) to celebrate the creation and printing of the remarkable 400th anniversary of the First Folio. It is unimaginable to us today to think of having fewer of Shakespeare's plays than the 37 famous works we produce year after year at the Globe. Having been announced first in Germany at the 1622 Frankfurt Fair catalogue, it is a great opportunity to join with the DLA to ensure this great wonder of the literary world is celebrated internationally.«

*Neil Constable, Chief Executive of Shakespeare's Globe*

»The edition of Shakespeare's collected plays, which was highly unusual for its time, created the image of a world-class poet at an early stage. On the occasion of the 400th anniversary of this publishing event, it is a special pleasure to do tribute to the First Folio with a look at the perception history of Shakespeare's dramatic works as documented in Marbach's archival holdings. I am indebted to Reinhard Gorenflos and Marcus Coles,

who have made possible a unique cooperation with Shakespeare's Globe.«

*Prof. Dr. Sandra Richter, Director of the DLA*

»English players toured to German lands in Shakespeare's lifetime, and versions of his plays took on fresh life in a new language. Shakespeare's poetry acted like a drug on Romantics like Goethe, and his plays have been treasured and studied Germany for centuries. So it seems only fitting that we're opening our year of celebrations to mark the four hundredth anniversary of the printing of the first folio in Germany, where news of the iconic book was brought to the world at the 1622 Frankfurt book fair.«

*Dr Will Tosh, Head of Research at Shakespeare's Globe*

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