Herbsttagung “Maß für Maß” 6./7.11.26 in Weimar
INFORMATIONEN UND ABSTRACTS

Freitag, 6.11., Tagungseröffnung 15 h, musikalischer Auftakt:
Mykhailo Rakov, Gitarre, Klasse 11-28, Hauptfachklasse Prof. Christiane Spannhof, Musikgymnasium Schloss Belvedere
- Fernando Sor (1778-1839): Andante Largo (op. 5)
- Mathias Duplessy (1972*): Cavalcade

Freitag, 6.11., Vortrag 15:30 h, John Jowett (University of Birmingham)
Of Government: *Measure for Measure* and the Abuse of Authority

This paper begins by noting the relevance of Jean Calvin’s writings on self-government and civil government to *Measure for Measure*. It proceeds to a close reading of the play based on Angelo and the Duke's confusion of these categories. It contrasts a clearly defined moral fable that centres on Angelo’s abuse of authority with a destabilizing and perplexing riddle that centres on the Duke’s abuse of authority. Despite the Duke’s project of exposing his deputy as ‘seemer’, he is a seemer himself.

John Jowett, Emeritus Professor of Shakespeare Studies at the Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham, is a textual scholar and a general editor of the New Oxford Shakespeare. He has edited *Richard III* and *Timon of Athens* for the Oxford World’s Classics, *Sir Thomas More* for Arden Shakespeare, and *Volpone* for Arden Early Modern Drama. He has recently co-edited the Arden Early Modern Drama Guide to *Measure for Measure*.

Samstag, 7.11., Vortrag 9 h, Franziska Quabeck (Münster)
‘Pressing to death, whipping and hanging’ – *Measure for Measure* und die Goldene Mitte

Measure for Measure bandies about the words ‘law’ and ‘justice’ more than any other Shakespeare play. Almost all of the characters in one way or another refer to either or both in frequent intervals. The play therefore sets up a structure that seems to inquire into the precise relationship between law and justice and the ancient questions already discussed by Aristotle and others in which legal system there may be a sufficient or even necessary condition that binds together law and justice. In the play, the two seem at many points so disparate that critical opinion has often found equity, Aristotle’s concept of ‘natural’ justice, to be the only compromise. When the Duke finally sidesteps the law and thereby assures a happy ending that seems more just than lawful, he is enacting an equitable judgement that allows for the comedy’s conflicts to be resolved. However, as law and justice are so sternly juxtaposed in this play as to question the very compatibility of the one with the other, thesis and antithesis are arrested with no means of reconciliation, which is certainly one of the reasons why both the play’s ending and its inherent genre have troubled so many critics and audiences. In this paper, I will not try to offer any solutions to the apparent contradictions, but I will take a closer look at the several ideas and meanings of justice that can be found in the play. As the term occurs not only in its meaning of institutionalised right for all the state’s citizens, but also implicitly evokes the cardinal virtues and occurs as a synonym for the term ‘revenge’, I will try to show that law and justice remain opposed to each other as thesis and antithesis in a play that has great trouble aiming for the golden mean. After all, ‘measure for measure’ does not seem to be understood as a principle of distribution, but of retribution.

Franziska Quabeck is a senior lecturer at the English Department of the University of Münster. Her publications include *Just and Unjust Wars in Shakespeare* (de Gruyter, 2013), *The Lawyer in Dickens* (de Gruyter, 2021), and *Not I – Kazuo Ishiguro and the Politics of Misrecognition* (Winter, 2023). She has published a variety of articles on Shakespeare and Dickens, law and literature, and the contemporary Anglophone novel. Her research focuses on Shakespeare’s drama, the Victorian novel, feminism and gender studies, law and literature and comedy and humour theory.

Samstag, 7.11., Vortrag 10 h, Elizabeth Schafer (Royal Holloway, University of London)
‘A more strict restraint/ Upon the sisterhood’? Women, governance and *Measure for Measure*.

Shakespeare wrote *Measure for Measure* in the period around the death of Queen Elizabeth I in 1603, when England was preparing for the governance of James I, and the play’s brief, 90 line, exhibition of a cultural space where it is women who govern – the convent of St Clare – can offer an important contrast to the play’s patriarchal, ‘Viennese’, urban, mainstream. This paper will explore how dramaturgical and design choices have enabled directors to illuminate or downplay the convent and the play’s concern with women, governance and cultural – especially green – space both in 1.4 and elsewhere in the play.

Elizabeth Schafer is Professor of Drama and Theatre Studies at Royal Holloway, University of London. Her publications include *MsDirecting Shakespeare: Women Direct Shakespeare*, performance histories of *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Twelfth Night*, and a biography of theatre manager, Lilian Baylis. She is co-General Editor for the forthcoming Oxford University Press complete edition of Richard Brome’s plays for which she edited *The City Wit* and *The Northern Lass*. Recent monographs are *Theatre & Christianity* (2018) and *Shakespeare and Eco-Performance History: ‘The Merry Wives of Windsor’* (2024). In 2026 she and her co-author David Bullen published *Shakespeare in the Theatre: Phyllida Lloyd*.

Samstag, 7.11., Vortrag 11.30 h, Pascale Aebischer (University of Exeter)
‘Meed for Meed’: Prefiguring *Measure for Measure* in *Titus Andronicus*

This paper explores the impact of Shakespeare’s memory of *Titus Andronicus* (1594) in his return to the subject matter of rape and justice in *Measure for Measure* (1604). I argue that *Titus* functions in the manner of a traumatic presence or ‘stressor’, whose unresolved ethical quandaries resurface in the later play. Bringing together Laurie Maguire and Emma Smith’s trauma-informed approach to Shakespearean source study, Louise Geoge Clubb’s concept of ‘theatregrams’ and Nora Williams’s recent work on dramaturgies of sexual violence, I trace how the classical tragic matter of *Titus* puts pressure on the comic world of Shakespeare’s modern-day Vienna.
I argue that the sexual assaults at the heart of both plays raise ethical questions that are explored through shared theatregrams and broader dramaturgical structures. Scenic motifs of unsuccessful pleading, summary execution, severed heads, exchanges of body parts and veiled women in *Titus* re-emerge in *Measure for Measure*, where their implications are reframed within a recognisably Jacobean bureaucratic and juridical world. The latent presence of *Titus* in *Measure for Measure* exposes the violence concealed within apparently lawful structures of authority and transactional conceptions of justice and sexual relations. *Titus Andronicus* haunts and unsettles the generic and ethical resolution of *Measure for Measure*, revealing the traumatic dramaturgy that underpins its comic movement towards mercy and marriage.

Pascale Aebischer is Professor of Shakespeare Studies at the University of Exeter. She is the author of *Shakespeare’s Violated Bodies: Stage and Screen Performance* (CUP, 2004), *Screening Early Modern Drama: Beyond Shakespeare* (CUP, 2013), *Shakespeare, Spectatorship and the Technologies of Performance* (CUP, 2020) and *Viral Shakespeare: Performance in the Time of Pandemic* (CUP, 2021). During the coronavirus pandemic, she led research projects that sought to tackle the impacts of lockdowns on society, culture and the performing arts sector. She has since returned to her first love and is editing George Peele and William Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus* for Cambridge Shakespeare Editions.