CALL FOR STATEMENTS – SHAKESPEARE SEMINAR 2023

Shakespeare's Libraries

2023 marks the 400th anniversary of *Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*, known as the First Folio, published in 1623. It included 36 plays, some of which had not been published before. On the website of The Folger Shakespeare Library readers are invited to "learn more about Shakespeare's language, life, and the world he knew," suggesting that we might be able to unlock, or at least better understand, Shakespeare's works by studying what he and his contemporaries not only read but also saw or heard. In the preface to his edition of Shakespeare's works, Samuel Johnson ventured, "There are a few passages which may pass for imitations, but so few that the exception only confirms the rule; he obtained them from accidental quotations, or by oral communication" (Preface). Johnson's comment arguably makes a claim for Shakespeare's 'originality', but it also draws attention to the importance of hearsay and oral transmission for the production and reception of Shakespeare's works – 'libraries' that we can access only indirectly at best. Geoffrey Bullough's multivolume *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* remains the most comprehensive attempt to document similarities between Shakespeare's works and texts that may or may not have been available to the author, albeit one that focuses on written works. Much has been written about 'Shakespeare's books', and the notes in critical editions attest to the enormous spectrum and continued interest in possible sources. But what counts as a source? Digitalisation has opened a new chapter in this debate and discussions about authorship in early modern England continue to change the way we think about Shakespeare's libraries. The Shakespeare Seminar 2023 invites participants to revisit this historic moment in Shakespeare studies and consider the legacy of the First Folio under the title **'**Shakespeare's libraries.**'** We invite papers that deal with the idea of the library both in a narrow and in a wider sense of the word. That is, we invite participants to consider critical debates about Shakespeare and source studies but also about libraries and archives today, including digital libraries and archives, and how they provide access to Shakespeare. Topics may include, but are not restricted to

- First Folio(s), quartos, editions, collections, printers, editors, bookmakers
- reading in early modern England and Shakespeare's first readers
- from page to stage and from stage to page
- orality and book culture
- book history and book studies
- Shakespeare's books/libraries/sources
- Shakespeare as library – quoting Shakespeare now and then
- contemporary Shakespeare libraries, digital archives, and approaches to Shakespeare
- visual and performance libraries as ways of accessing repertoires not based on script

Our seminar plans to address these issues with a panel of six papers during the annual conference of the German Shakespeare Association, *Shakespeare-Tage*, which is scheduled to take place from 21–23 April 2023 in Weimar, Germany. As critical input for the discussion, we invite papers of no more than 15 minutes that present concrete case studies, concise examples and strong views on the topic. Please send your proposals (abstracts of 300 words) by **31 December 2022** to the seminar convenors
Dr. Lukas Lammers, Free University Berlin: l.lammers@fu-berlin.de
Dr. Kirsten Sandrock, University of Göttingen: ksandrock@phil.uni-goettingen.de

The Seminar provides a forum for established as well as young scholars to discuss texts and contexts. Participants of the seminar will subsequently be invited to submit (extended versions of) their papers for publication in *Shakespeare Seminar Online* (SSO). For more information, please contact Kirsten Sandrock and Lukas Lammers. For more information about the events and publications also see: https://shakespeare-gesellschaft.de/?lang=en.