

detail of the sketch showing the head of Tamora (fig. 3) was compared with two authentic portraits of the actor,<sup>1</sup> one of which is here reproduced in part (fig. 4). Optical resemblances emerged in six respects: (1) medium-high, sloping forehead, (2) prominent nose, (3) nostrils (curved lower edge of the left nostril), (4) thin outside upper lip, (5) thin outside lower lip, (6) low chin. No divergences were detected. According to the expert opinion, this result suggests that the persons depicted in the *Titus* sketch (as Tamora) and in the Burbage portraits are identical. In the case of the actor playing Titus, whom I believe to be William Shakespeare, it was not possible for the Bundeskriminalamt experts to make a forensic pictorial comparison, as a considerable portion of the head is concealed – the forehead by a broad laurel wreath and much of the face by a beard, sideburns and a moustache (fig. 5).

However, identification of Richard Burbage in the Peacham sketch does not only constitute evidence that Peacham drew it directly from an Elizabethan performance and that the first great Shakespearean actor was presumably depicted here for the first time. In view of the close cooperation and joint appearances of Burbage and Shakespeare as the main actors in the Lord Chamberlain's Men, it also allows us to conclude that this 1594 drawing of the opening scene of William Shakespeare's early revenge play *Titus Andronicus* shows the playwright himself in the role of the eponymous hero (cf. fig. 5).<sup>2</sup>

In her essay "Rereading the Peacham Drawing" June Schlueter propounds the thesis that "the Peacham drawing depicts a sequence from *Eine sehr klägliche Tragædia von Tito Andronico und der hoffertigen Käyserin* (A very Lamentable Tragedy of Titus Andronicus and the Haughty Empress), a play performed in Germany by English actors which survives, in German, in a volume published in Leipzig in 1620 as *Engelische Comedien und Tragedien*" (Schlueter 1999, 171). Schlueter's thesis is untenable, because her reasoning does not hold up to close examination. The number of figures depicted in Peacham's sketch corresponds, according to Schlueter, with the number of persons in the opening scene of *Eine sehr klägliche Tragædia von Tito Andronico*, but not with the number of persons in the first scene of Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, where the stage direction calls for "as many as can be" (Schlueter 1999, 173-4). Schlueter here disregards the fact that after the plague year of 1593 actors were scarce in London, so that plays had to be performed with a reduced cast

---

1. See the opinion on the pictures in question produced by BKA identification expert Reinhardt Altmann, "Assessment of pictorial material for art-historical research, re: SHAKESPEARE", reference Federal Bureau of Criminal Investigation Wiesbaden, ZD 15 – 1170/95 (3 May 1995), text section pp. 1-101; picture file appended, pp. 1-21" ("Bildgutachten in der kunsthistorischen Forschung, hier: SHAKESPEARE", Aktenzeichen Bundeskriminalamt Wiesbaden, ZD 15 – 1170/95 (3. Mai 1995), Textteil: S. 1–10, Anlage: 1 Bildmappe, S. 1–21.), text section 4-5; picture file, nos. 1, 2 and 3.

2. Cf. Hammerschmidt-Hummel (1995), in which the result of this identity check was first announced. The examinations carried out in connection with Peacham's sketch also gave occasion for checks on the genuineness of the "Chandos" and "Flower" portraits of Shakespeare, the Darmstadt Shakespeare death mask and, later, the "Davenant bust" of Shakespeare. The results showed that both the portraits, the bust, and the death mask are authentic representations of William Shakespeare and that the portraits were painted from life, the bust modelled on a live mask of Shakespeare and the death mask was cast immediately after his death. See Hammerschmidt-Hummel (1996a), 58-74; (1996b), 119-22; (1996c), 115-36; (1998), 101-15 and 117-30. A summary account of the findings between 1995 and 1998 appeared in Hammerschmidt-Hummel (2000), (2003a), (2003b) and (2007). For a monograph on the authentic four portraits of William Shakespeare, in which all the results are presented in relation to their biographical, cultural and historical context see Hammerschmidt-Hummel (2006a) and (2006b).