Acknowledgements

In my work for this study, as with previous books of mine, I have once more collaborated with experts from various disciplines. By employing their investigative methods and their specialists' knowledge they have all contributed decisively to resolving the problems concerning the Flower portrait. Without their participation the results obtained from a new and thorough investigation of the portrait would not have been possible.

I owe a very special debt of gratitude to the former forensic expert at the German Federal Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BKA), Reinhardt Altmann, without whose exhaustive and invaluable reports in connection with my Shakespeare research in the 1990s and the first decade of this century I could not have produced my proofs of the authenticity of the 'Chandos' and 'Flower' portraits of Shakespeare, the 'Davenant bust' as well as the 'Darmstadt Shakespeare deathmask'. As for the present case, the retired BKA expert has again been extremely helpful by meticulously checking and confirming my results. The same is true of Professor Jost Metz, the dermatologist who gave his professional opinion as early as 1996 on the signs of illness shown in the Flower portrait and on the death mask, thus establishing that Shakespeare must have suffered from a serious systemic disease (a chronic skin sarcoidosis) that, after a protracted course, proves to be fatal. My special thanks also to Professor Volker Menges, who enhanced the present work immeasurably with his important radiological and cultural-historical findings and insights. In combination with my book, published in 2006, on the genuine likenesses of Shakespeare, and with the new results presented here, Professor Menges' evidence confirms again the authenticity of the Flower portrait x-rayed in 1966 and restored in 1979. My wholehearted thanks go also to Professor Wolfgang Speyer, who as an expert on Old Masters thoroughly scrutinized and endorsed my proofs of authenticity of the four Shakespearian likenesses in 2005 as well as my placing of these images in their cultural-historical context (all presented in book form a year later). Prof. Speyer also thoroughly examined and approved the results published in Parts I and II of this study. I sincerely thank the Anglo-American Shakespeare scholar Dr Thomas Merriam, who in a review article on my 2006 book engaged in detail with my results, made available to him in the summer of 2007. I am also especially grateful to the American conservator Helmut E. Zitzwitz and a colleague of his. Both approached this study with a particularly critical eye, in order to bring out any potential mistakes or deficiencies, but found no weaknesses in the analysis. I am once more indebted to the inscriptions expert at the Mainz Academy of Sciences and Literature, Dr Eberhard J. Nikitsch, who had already made a decisive contribution in March 2009 towards resolving the problems surrounding the 'Cobbe portrait': on this occasion - and at short notice - he again made his valuable expertise available to me, in comparing the inscriptions on the original Flower portrait with its two copies.

I should also like at this point to express my thanks to the curator of the Royal Shakespeare Company Collection in Stratford-upon-Avon, David Howells, for his unflagging willingness to answer my many questions; permitting me to inspect, measure, and make a photo-documentary record of the Flower portrait kept in the RSC depository; and repeatedly granting me permission to reproduce this Shakespeare portrait. In addition, I extend my thanks to the National Portrait Gallery curator Dr Tarnya Cooper, who supplied me in 2004 with information about the then forthcoming London exhibition, 'Searching for Shakespeare' (2006), and whom I in turn informed about the stage my research had reached at that point. My thanks are also due to the BBC film producer, John Hay, who in April 2005 sent me a copy of his documentary film 'The Flower Portrait' bearing the superimposed BBC time code, which identifies individual frames of the video recording. His film document was to prove particularly significant for the results of this investigation.

I owe special thanks to my publisher, Dr h.c. mult. W. Georg Olms, Hildesheim, who in 2006 published the German first edition of *Die authentischen Bildnisse William Shakespeares*; thanks, too, to the Chief Editor of the Olms Verlag, Dietrich Olms M.A., who made possible the speedy acceptance and publication of this work in English and German; and to the editor, Dr Peter Guyot, with whom I discussed at length the as yet uncompleted project at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2009. Dr

Guyot made every effort to ensure that the enterprise came to fruition as quickly as possible. This aim was also furthered by Dr Annette Holzapfel-Pschorn at the Centre for Data Processing, Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz. I would like to thank her most heartily for her great assistance in setting up and organising the two picture files which are included with the book on a DVD.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to the Vice-President of the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, Professor Jürgen Oldenstein, responsible among other things for the development of a study programme on 'Restoration'. During a long discussion in November 2009, I was able to present to him my new findings concerning the Flower portrait. It is to him I owe my contact with the Director of the Landesmuseum Mainz, Dr Isabella Fehle, who kindly offered her assistance and put me in touch with Dr Eva Brachert as respondent. In December 2009, Dr Brachert, with the eye of a picture restorer responsible for Old Masters, read through the text and examined the pictorial material presented to her, devoting special attention to the dating of the Flower portrait. She also drew attention to some previously overlooked aspects of the image, and succeeded in demonstrating an additional criterion for the date and authenticity of the Flower portrait that was x-rayed in 1966 and restored in 1979, a criterion not met by either of the two copies.

I owe many thanks to Professor Alan Bance, who – with great sensitivity towards the often complex material – has already translated two of my books into English, and has now taken on responsibility for the English version of this work. Professor Bance and his wife Sandra Bance took part (as did my husband) in the delegation that accompanied me in January 2007, when I went to inspect and make a photo-documentary record of the Flower portrait in the Royal Shakespeare Company depository in Stratford-upon-Avon. I would like to thank Alan and Sandra Bance for this, too.

But my greatest thanks are reserved for my husband, Dr.-Ing. Christoph Hummel, and my daughter, Anna Corinna Hummel. Both of them, and especially my husband, have followed the progress of this work with great helpfulness; acute understanding; many, extremely lively discussions; ever-constructive criticism; and not infrequent contributions to the solution of thorny problems. I am infinitely grateful to both of them for their wonderful support and assistance.

Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel