



Chaucer Press

The True Face *of William Shakespeare*

Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel

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'Her theory makes obvious sense of a long mystery' **A. N. Wilson**

In this ground breaking study, Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel offers a convincing solution to the centuries-old question of what William Shakespeare really looked like and also offers convincing evidence for what appears to have caused his death.

Professor Hammerschmidt-Hummel is the first scholar to apply state of the art forensic techniques to the study of Shakespeare's portraits and the timely publication of her findings in the 'Year of the Bard' is a major addition to our understanding of this iconic poet and playwright.

By combining exhaustive academic research with the latest technology and collaborating over many years with specialists from the most varied disciplines – including forensic experts from the German Federal Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BKA), doctors, among them ophthalmologists, dermatologists, pathologists, 3D imaging engineers, archivists and an expert on old masters – Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel has proved the authenticity of the Chandos portrait, the Darmstadt death mask and the Flower portrait (recently dismissed as a 'fake' by the National Portrait Gallery). This revolutionary research has also authenticated the true face Shakespeare – the Davenant bust. This haunting sculpture has resided in the Garrick Club since 1855 and was thought to be the work of an eighteenth century sculptor. The author's original research has succeeded in tracing its provenance to the early 17th century.

By tracing the development of certain signs of illness in each of the images, first noticed by Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel, the author's medical experts have identified and verified the probable cause of Shakespeare's death. The conspicuous growth on the upper left eyelid, they interpreted as Mikulicz Syndrome (a probably cancerous abnormality of the tear glands), the swelling in the nasal corner of the left eye as a fine caruncular tumour, and the considerable swelling on the forehead (in conjunction with the other pathological symptoms) as systemic sarcoidosis, an inner disease that affects the organs and takes a very protracted course, but proves to be fatal.

Professor Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel has taught English Literature and Culture at the Universities of Marburg and Mainz since 1977 and is the long-standing senior research scholar and editor of *The Shakespeare Illustration* collection. She has published widely in scholarly periodicals and newspapers and is the author of the seminal three volume study *Shakespeare Illustrations from 1594 to 2000*, as well as a number of other books in this area including *The Secret Surrounding Shakespeare's Dark Lady*, and *The Secret Life of William Shakespeare: Poet and Rebel in the Catholic Underground*. Her major biography, ***The Life and Times of William Shakespeare***, will be published by Chaucer Press in March 2007.

'the new twist in the tale' **New Scientist**

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