## Professor Tobias Döring reports on the German research material held in the Library of Shakespeare Collection

In February 2019, Professor Tobias Döring of Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, former President of the German Shakespeare Society, visited the Library of Birmingham at the Project. The foundation of the Birmingham

Shakespeare Memorial Library was immediately hailed by the German Shakespeare Society the oldest national Shakespeare society in the world as a major landmark in European culture. The great German Shakespeare scholar, Delius, visited the Library in 1873. It has always included significant European holdings and as the earliest records reveal, its first readers took their Shakespeare in a variety of European languages, including for instance, according to the statistics for 1890-1, English, Dutch, French, German, Hebrew, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish Swedish and Welsh. So famous as a great European cultural collection Shakespeare Library that a Russian deputation from behind the Iron Curtain thought it worth their while to deposit three hundred gifts from Soviet territories in the very depths of the Cold War. Today the Library has thousands of German holdings, including some utterly unique treasures, but these have not been surveyed for many years. In this short article, Professor Döring reports on what he found in the stacks.

From 26 to 28 February, 2019, I visited Birmingham Public Library, on the invitation of Professor Ewan Fernie and Tom Epps, and had the chance to take a good look at the German material held in the Shakespeare Collection. I worked in the actual archive, directly in front of the stacks, and over the three days managed to survey all books and other papers kept there with the shelf mark (for I did not have sufficient time to actually read or study any of them in great depth, but I browsed through quite a few and took extensive notes, so my impressions are, I think, detailed enough to offer the following comments as a first estimation of the range, extent and quality of this German collection. I can say therefore with confidence and great conviction that this library holds a hidden treasure. Especially with regard to 18th-century and 19th-century material, the German Shakespeare holdings are superb, with all edition] of collected works in the canonical Schlegel/Tieck translations, which the DSG under its first president Ulrici published in 1867, as part of its agenda to bring work to a new and broader readership; the holdings also contain several other volumes which testify to this special connection. The first five volumes of the Shakespeare Jahrbuch [yearbook], 1865 to 1870, which the DSG publishes to this day, are present on the shelves (presumably a gift from Weimar). I also found a number of books by Hermann Freiherr von Friesen, a writer from Dresden and personal friend of Ludwig who evidently sent and dedicated his works to the Birmingham Library as personal gifts: both his two-volume memoir of Ludwig Tief the scrap books, containing newspaper cuttings, leaflets,