

# S K E N È

**Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies**

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Memory and Performance.  
Classical Reception in Early Modern Festivals

Edited by Francesca Bortoletti, Giovanna Di Martino,  
and Eugenio Refini

# SKENÈ Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies

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JAN BAŽANT\*

## *Pompa in Honorem Ferdinandi, 1558*

Abstract

On November 8, 1558, the Austrian Archduke, Hungarian and Bohemian king, and the newly elected Holy Roman Emperor, Ferdinand I, was welcomed in Prague, the capital of the Bohemian kingdom. The grandiose welcome ceremony continued the next afternoon with a theatre play with songs, fireworks, and a themed tournament. It was organized for elite guests in front of Ferdinand's Lusthaus in the garden of Prague Castle. The political significance of the welcome ceremony and, above all, the theatre play are the themes of this paper. On November 9, 1558, when it began to get dark, Ferdinand and his whole court adjourned to the Lusthaus' arcades. On the improvised stage, an artificial mountain with a fiery cave, representing Etna, was built. On its top, Jupiter appeared, and five enormous Giants began approaching the mountain with pieces of rock on their backs, evidently intending to rush the mountain and dethrone the supreme god. However, as soon as they neared the foot of the mountain, Jupiter hit them with lightning bolts. As soon as the Giants were destroyed, horrible-looking demons with fire coming out of their eyes, nose and mouth appeared on the stage and dragged the fallen attackers into a cave. However, monkeys were born from the slain Giants, whose leaping and dancing entertained the terrified audience. The performance was a political allegory. Just as Jupiter destroyed the Giants, Ferdinand suppressed the Bohemian estates' revolt in 1547. The current Bohemian rebels are monkeys, the completely harmless and ridiculous descendants of the great Hussites, before whom everyone used to shake with fear in the second quarter of the fifteenth century.

KEYWORDS: Holy Roman Emperor; theatre; Ferdinand I; Prague

In medieval Europe, the monarch's arrival had key significance for the communication between him and his subjects.<sup>1</sup> While other ruling rituals were meant only for a more or less limited number of guests, all subjects could participate in the monarch's arrival. They were spectators and actors in various presentations staged on the route of the ruler's arrival. In the sixteenth century, the medieval ceremony was developed into a gigantic

<sup>1</sup> The text was written as part of the research activities of the Centre for classical studies at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague.

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spectacle inspired by classical tradition, which could be combined with theatre performances and tournaments with allegorical plots. The celebratory arrival of the French king in Lyon in 1548 was the first celebration of the new type to the north of the Alps (Scève 1997). Starting in the fifties of the sixteenth century, ceremonial entrances of the king became a significant instrument of power throughout Europe (Bussels 2012; Metlica 2022; Russell and Visentin 2007). At the same time, the descriptions of the celebrations began to establish themselves as a literary genre serving to glorify the monarch (Canova-Green, Andrews and Wagner 2013). The new type of ceremonial entry was introduced to the Bohemian kingdom by the grandiose ceremony with which Ferdinand was welcomed in Prague, the capital of Bohemia, as the new emperor on November 8, 1558 (Da Costa Kaufmann 1978, 22-4; Sandbichler 2005; Bůžek 2009, 168-88; Sandbichler 2015; Borbála 2019).

Our information regarding the celebrations comes from several celebratory poems (Hejnic and Martínek 1966-1982, vol. 1, 128-9, 430; vol. 2, 139; vol. 5, 383; Bažant 2006, 219-36; 2011, 112-21), but most of all from two detailed descriptions. Their authors were the court doctor Piero Andrea Mattioli and a professor of Latin and Greek at the Prague University, Matouš Collinus from Chotěřina, who came to Prague in 1540. Collinus' Latin work is signed by him and his colleague, the history professor Martin Cuthen, who, however, most likely only wrote the celebratory poems incorporated into the text and was also, it appears, the author of the verses with which the Prague Castle was decorated in honour of the emperor (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558). The book was translated into German in 1802 by Ignac Cornova (Collinus 1802). Piero Andrea Mattioli (Mattioli 1559) published his description a year later than Collinus. However, Collinus adhered closely to Mattioli's narrative, circling Prague in manuscript form immediately following the celebrations. Collinus also thanks Mattioli in his introduction for the information he had gathered from him (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 1v; Ryba 1930, 104n3). The short work signed by Collinus and Cuthenus is valuable because it complemented Mattioli's text with further information and the entire texts of some of the celebratory speeches, which had also circulated in Prague in manuscript form (Stemmonius 1559).

The subject matter, script and direction of the two-day celebration were the work of the emperor's son, Archduke Ferdinand, who was then entrusted with the administration of the Bohemian kingdom (Bůžek 2014; Dobalová and Hausenblasová 2021). Implicit testimony is provided by the sophisticated structure of the two-day celebration, conceived as an ongoing theatre performance with a prelude, an epic middle part and an ingeniously gradual climax. Explicit testimony to the fact that Archduke Ferdinand was the author is provided by all preserved celebratory poems and descriptions, which he ordered. Mattioli and Collinus attribute the celebrations to the

archduke directly in the titles of their reports. In the text, he is celebrated as “motor, instructorque pompae Caesari” (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 1v, similarly 2r, 2v; the initiator and director of the imperial festival). Collinus writes something similar in the title of his ode (Collinus 1558; “pompae . . . instructae ab serenissimo archiduce”; the festivities . . . presided over by the most serene Archduke). Balbinus also mentions the archduke in his hymn (Balbinus 1558, 8v; “Ducitur archiducis cura hic, studioque triumphus”; The triumph was arranged with the care and efforts of the Archduke).

An entire series of people helped with the preparation of the celebration and the decoration of the Prague Castle, among whom the educated and very organizationally competent Florian Griespek certainly played an important role. The archduke, however, was undoubtedly the author of the overall celebration concept. His authorship is vital because, as Ferdinand’s son and representative in Bohemia, he had a perfect sense of how the ruler wanted to present himself to Prague, the Bohemian nobility, and the surrounding world. In addition, he was educated enough to express this idea through up-to-date parades, live pictures, makeshift buildings, and theatre performances.

The pomp began before the emperor’s arrival. On November 8, in the morning, the ten-thousand-member Bohemian army marched in tight rows across the entire city, from Hradčany to Vyšehrad. At noon, the emperor appeared in front of the Vyšehrad gate, where Archduke Ferdinand greeted him. With the emperor at its head, the army marched outside the city walls toward the Horse Gate, where representatives of the Bohemian kingdom welcomed the emperor. Afterwards, the army accompanied the emperor to the Horse Gate. Through the Horse Gate, the emperor entered the city and passed to its opposite end, to Hradčany; the army remained outside the city fortifications. When the emperor entered the city through the Horse Gate, he no longer encountered men of military age. The soldiers were replaced inside the city by their opposite, children, women, and old people. The emperor was first welcomed by children in white garments with flowers in their hands as a symbol of peace, followed by maidens placed in the heart of the city on Old Town Square. On the other side of the river, at Malá Strana, widows awaited the emperor and, finally, the Prague elders in front of the castle. Representatives of Ferdinand’s Bohemian subjects were arranged according to age, from infancy to maturity. It was also a journey in time, from the past to the present. Vyšehrad Castle was the seat of Bohemian rulers of a mythical past. The Prague Castle at Hradčany was the actual residence of the Bohemian kings.



Fig. 1: Bohemian children greet Ferdinand I (Paprocký 1602, 141 above)



Fig. 2: Bohemian girls greet Ferdinand I (Paprocký 1602, 141 below)





Fig. 3: Bohemian widows greet Ferdinand I (Paprocký 1602, 142)



Fig. 4: Bohemian old men greet Ferdinand I (Paprocký 1602, 143)

The trip into the Protestant past of Bohemia was staged as an *intermezzo* before the emperor entered the city. In front of the Horse Gate, the archduke led the emperor to the neighbouring valley, to the war encampment of the Hussites, or the ‘veterans’ on one of the hills. As soon as the imperial procession neared:

Intensissimo clamore, instar praeliantium, vociferabantur, et erectis in altum ferreis flagellis horribilem strepitum ex concussione eorum edebant, moxque stipulas inanes in subiacenti campo iisdem flagellis fortiter contundebant, incitante ac alacritatem in eis acuente Serenissimo Archiduce Ferdinando. (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 11v)

[They shouted loudly and intensely, as if they were engaged in a fierce battle. With iron flails held high, they struck the ground, creating a deafening noise. Soon, they began to beat the empty stalks on the ground before them with the same flails, their energy amplified and intensified by the presence of the Most Serene Archduke Ferdinand.]

The script emphasised the wild nature of the appearance and displays of the ‘Hussites’, and the archduke vehemently urged them on to even greater fury during the production.



Fig. 5: Hussites (on the right, with flails and shields) ‘greet’ Ferdinand I (Paprocký 1602, 139)

The archduke thus posited a contrast between good and bad armies at the beginning of the celebration; the emperor was first welcomed by an ideal army, characterized by numbers (8,000), perfect discipline, training, and

uniforms – the musketeers had red caps with white plumes, doublets in one colour with white cuffs, white stripes on the fringes and in the middle. They all had modern equipment and were recognized as Ferdinand's army due to their striped uniforms in the colors of the Austrian crest (Balbinus 1558, 6r; "Vestis rubra albo circumdata rite colore denotat Austriacae nobile stemma domus"; The red garment, properly adorned with white, signifies the noble emblem of the House of Austria).

In front of Prague's gates were camps of Ferdinand's good army and the remainder of Hussite Bohemia of the fifteenth century. This Hussite army was from the time of Žižka (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 4v; "Temporibus Zischae"). That is, it was the peasant, serf army (Collinus 1558, 4r; Chamovitica gens). It was the 'black army', the members of which wore cast-off rural clothing with black hoods, hid behind large shields, and their main weapons were the armoured flails. This weapon was atypical in 1558 and was described in a complicated manner by both Mattioli and Collinus. The flail was known in the sixteenth century as a typical Czech weapon, described by Ulloa both in the biography of Ferdinand I and in that of Charles V (in the same words), who makes the mistake of calling it a pavis.<sup>2</sup>

The evaluation of Hussites varied, understandably, according to who was viewing it. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Bartoloměj Paprocký from Hlahol, for example, described this performance proudly:

The flail-bearers went in a swarm, armed with pavises, flails jangling, Ferdinand neared them and beheld them. They also demonstrated courage and art, for which knight folk looked upon them with a laugh; it was ordinary but quite horrible bravery. They were five hundred, gathered by Archduke Ferdinand, wishing to build Žižka's army before his father's eyes. (Paprocký 1602, 139)

The organizers of the celebratory welcoming of the new emperor did not include the 'Hussites' in the program to highlight the Bohemian military history. Instead, they wanted to emphasise that the 'Hussites' represented an inversion of the proper army and the standard socio-political situation. This 'peasant army' welcomed the emperor by jangling their flails, which Mattioli understood as a display of their social inaptitude (1559, 6r; "Non sapendo come farle reverenza"; They did not know how to show respect towards him). The only thing these anti-warriors knew how to do was look forbidding and make noise, and in the end, the archduke lets them return

<sup>2</sup> Ulloa 1564, 295: "alcuni bastoni lungi un braccio, et mezzo, da quali pende con una picciola catterna un altro bastone di mezzo braccio infernato. Questa forte d'arme chiamano esti Pavese" (staffs that are one and a half arms long, with a smaller staff hanging from them by a chain. These weapons are called Pavese). See also Ulloa 1560, 473.

from whence they came. The closing beating of the straw was understood as an image of a futile work even by the public at that time (Collinus 1558, 4r; “. . . fervet opus fructu cassum”; the work was done with great intensity but did not yield any profit). It was not only a spectacle that entertained the emperor greatly but also an educational lesson (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 11v; Collinus 1558, 4r).

As soon as the emperor entered the city through the Horse Gate, he was welcomed merely by men who could not serve as soldiers due to their young or old age or status, which was the case of Prague Jews. Here, a personification of the nine muses with their names written was deployed, and costumed groups of Prague inhabitants competed for the emperor's protection. The first muse awaited the emperor in front of the Horse Gate, and others were scattered around the city along the procession route, which led across the Charles Bridge toward Prague Castle. The muses and the costumed group represented an unarmed city; the emperor was welcomed first by children in white garments with flowers in their hands as a symbol of peace (Balbinus 1558, 6v), followed by maidens, who were placed in the heart of the city, on Old Town Square. On the other side of the river, widows awaited the emperor and, finally, the Prague elders in front of the Prague Castle.

The character of the Bohemians in war and peace was rendered in the archduke's direction with a tinge of ambiguity, at the very least for the educated viewer. Inside the city walls, the greatest attention was drawn by two groups: the exotic-looking Jews stationed by the Old Town end of the Charles Bridge, for whom, of course, there are only words of contempt in the descriptions, and the two thousand Prague maidens stationed on Old Town Square, in the very centre of the city. The maidens had silk undergarments, their hair in golden nets, wreaths on their heads, bouquets of fragrant herbs in their hands, and their outer garment layers were varied, usually various rare furs and, on top, expensive cloaks. Unlike the other groups, the maidens had a much more freely-set uniform; diversity ruled their appearance, attracting the eye. The maidens were beautiful and richly dressed as if in a fairy tale, but they also drew attention with their fragrant bouquets. Collinus likened them to nymphs accompanying Diana or to those whom Juno extolled to Aiolus (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 8v).

The likening of the Prague girls to Juno's nymphs is quite atypical; it was decidedly not a commonly used phrase. The nymphs that Juno extols to Aiolus have an explicitly negative function; their beauty is also fatally dangerous, as they nearly cost Aeneas his life. They appear at the beginning of the Aeneid, where Virgil presents Juno immediately when she realises that Aeneas has already embarked on the journey that would ensure the rule of the world for his line. This event could be directly related to the emperor as a descendant and successor of Aeneas (Tanner 1993). Juno tries to foil Jupiter's aim at the last

moment. When Juno visited Aiolus with the request that he destroy Aeneas' fleet arriving in Rome from Troy, Deiopea appears for the first and last time in ancient mythology. The only other documentation of her also comes from Virgil (*Georg.* 4.343), where she is fleetingly mentioned as an 'Asian' nymph.

"Twice seven nymphs have I of wondrous beauty", Juno coaxes the god of wind, "of whom Deiopeia, fairest of form, I will link to thee in sure wedlock, making her thine for ever" (*Aen.* 1.71-3). Aiolus allows himself to be persuaded by this gift, and Aeneas' fleet is destroyed. The character of Prague in the pomp prepared for the emperor by the archduke is thus ambiguous; it was Ferdinand's rich and powerful city, which lay at his feet and was unconditionally subservient. At the same time, however, it was a city of potential danger, as it was not only a metropolis of Ferdinand's kingdom but also the former capital of Hussite rebels and heretics who did not even know how to greet Ferdinand politely. There was not only a threat of danger from declared enemies but, above all, from hidden enemies, hiding their identity underneath its exact opposite. Juno's nymphs were a reminder of the hidden adversity that Aeneas-Ferdinand had to overcome on the journey to world domination and the establishment of general peace.

In the odes of the muses and the speeches given by the representatives of individual groups of inhabitants, most often repeated are the themes which glorify the monarch bringing peace. Ferdinand is the king of the world, who has no equal, whose deeds overshadow everything which has ever happened in the past, but above all, who protects civilization from barbarians. In an address by the fourth muse, Cleo, the songs of praise significantly taper, just as the ancient references do. References to the awful adversities Ferdinand had to overcome appear simultaneously – the columns of world order are already cracking under immense weight. Ferdinand and the entire world with him are on the edge of collapse, but Apollo's prophecy shall be fulfilled, and the monarch shall be saved due to God's goodwill. According to Polyhymnia, Prague was predetermined to triumph over Babylon, Troy and Athens. According to Urania, with Ferdinand, only peace and plenty shall come to Bohemia; in the speech of the sixth muse, the prediction of the war Demon's demise and the establishment of the Golden Age appears (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 18v).

It was already dark when the procession reached the Castle, where the Prague residents could get a taste of the new age. A column with a statue of Bacchus had been erected in front of the gate. In his raised right hand, he held up a bunch of grapes; in his left hand, he held a wine bag out of which red and white wine flowed in reference to the colours of the Austrian crest. The wine was served free of charge, and it attracted crowds of people. Prague Castle was symbolically shifted to the mythical Arcadia, the paradise on earth where there was plenty of everything and no cares.



Before entering Prague Castle, the emperor was welcomed by a representative from the Bohemian Catholic church, and the procession passed through the first of the temporary triumphal arches built in Prague in his honour. It was rendered in the ancient style, in the Corinthian order, with statues, paintings and accompanying inscriptions. At this time, triumphal arches *all'antica* were a sensational novelty in Central Europe (Zaho 2004). On the triumphal arch's sides were two giant 'colossi' statues (Mattioli 1559, 14v). On the right was Samson, holding in one hand a lion's hide and a large donkey's jaw in the other. On the left stood Gideon, wielding a massive sword in one hand and holding a giant shield with a lion depicted on it in the other. Thanks to the double miracle with the fleece, Gideon had acted in Burgundy since the fifteenth century as a patron of the Order of the Golden Fleece. He can thus be considered the alter ego of the knight of this prestigious order, Emperor Ferdinand I. As the lion does not appear in the biblical story of Gideon, the image of the lion on his coat of arms can be understood as a reference to the Bohemian lion. Gideon's relationship to the lion was illuminated by the statue's opposite, Samson, the victor over the lion, who held its hide "with the head hanging down" as a war trophy (Mattioli 1556, 14v; "con la testa pendente"). The trophies thus glorified Ferdinand as the embodiment of the Old Testament warrior and as the one who tamed the Bohemian lion.

On the outer side, i.e. the side turned toward Hradčany, on the top of the triumphal arch was a two-headed eagle with Ferdinand's imperial crown on its breast, next to it two allegorical figures, on the right, Justice with a sword and scales, on the left Temperance pouring liquid from one vessel into another. The triumphal arch's façade featured paintings of Power and Nobility, as well as Religion and Faith. On the sides of the thoroughfare were paintings imitating the bronze statues of Charles V and Maximilian. On the column pedestals were paintings of captives with their hands tied behind their backs. On the inner side, i.e. the façade turned toward Prague Castle, there was also a two-headed eagle with the crests of Ferdinand's countries on top. On one side, Magnanimity (*Magnanimitas*) has a basilisk on a chain, and on the other side, Generosity (*Beneficentiam*) has a sun in its hand. On the façade were further personifications relating to the Golden Age established by Ferdinand – the pairs *Bonitas* and *Mansuetudo* and *Magnificentia* and *Liberalitas*. Ferdinand's predecessors on the imperial throne, Rudolph and Fridrich, were between the columns.

All three gates of the Prague Castle were decoratively painted, and each had the two-headed eagle symbolizing the Roman Empire on top. On the exterior of the first gate was *Concordia*, with coiled symbols of all of Ferdinand's countries in its hand. The accompanying inscription placed inside explicitly proves that the key to the interpretation of numerous

mythological references in the ceremonial decorations, with which the archduke welcomed his father to Prague, is the identification of Ferdinand with Jupiter (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 30r; “Interiori parte eiusdem Portae itidem Aquila Imperialis picta conspiciebatur cum hoc disticho: quae Iovis ante tuli, magni fero Caesaris arma, hic siquidem terris Iuppiter alter erit”; On the interior side of the same gate, a painted Imperial Eagle was seen with this couplet ‘I bring the powerful weapons of the Emperor that Jupiter once wore, for there will be a new Jupiter on earth’).

The Prague Castle’s third gate was adorned with an image of Peace surrounded by banners, war drums, armour and weapons. The personification of Peace held a torch in its right hand and was used to light these war attributes; in its left hand, it held a green olive branch. This gate alluded to Virgil’s Aeneid by its accompanying inscription, which the educated public at that time knew was the words of one of the Rutuls, who advises Turnus to make a peace pact with Aeneas (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 30v). Above Peace was a two-headed eagle inscribed “Divo, pioque Caesari Ferdinando primo, pacis ac unitatis instauratori maximo” (To the pious and divine Emperor Ferdinand I, the excellent restorer of peace and unity). In another decoration, the code was shifted dramatically – the second temporary triumph arch erected at the Prague Castle in honour of Ferdinand was rendered in an aggressive, militant spirit. It was covered with purple silk, and war banners flew above it. Its decoration consisted of captured Turkish weapons.

The rhetoric of the Prague Castle and the entire city culminates in the last gate. On the gate leading to the royal palace were personifications (Honour, Gloria and Rumour), above them a two-headed eagle with the inscription “Gloria adorentur, diademaque regis honore, aeternis meritis volitet super aethera Caesar” (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 30v; Let us honour the Emperor’s ascension to heaven with the crown of glory, sovereign honour, and eternal merit). Ferdinand’s promise of apotheosis is confirmed on the inner side with an inscription in which the emperor is addressed directly and ordered not to hesitate and ascend to the eternal stars (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 31r; “Clara tibi portas aperit victoria, Caesar, fulgidus aeternas scandere perge domos”; Victory opens the bright gates for you, Emperor. Climb the shining eternal houses). So that there would be no doubt about the content of this mission, above the inscription, the two-headed eagle held Immortalitas in one talon and Victoria in the other. Above his entrance to the palace was a large silver-coated lion with an imperial crown, and the inscription ensured the emperor that there was no force which would take away the crown that the gods had given to him and which the silver lion guarded (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 31r). On the roof above the entrance was a two-headed eagle with Ferdinand’s symbols accompanied by a caption in which the eagle bearing Jupiter’s lightning bolts, declares himself at Ferdinand’s service: “The

weapon of the highest god has been entrusted to me. Now, Emperor, I will serve you faithfully under all circumstances” (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 31r ; “Ales, qui summi fueram Iovis armiger, omnem fidus in eventum iam tibi, Caesar, ero”).

On November 9, 1558, in the afternoon, when it began to get dark, the emperor and his whole court adjourned to the Lusthaus, which Ferdinand built in the Prague Castle’s garden (Uličný 2019; Bažant and Leggatt-Hofer, forthcoming). Under the Lusthaus’ eastern façade was a closed-off flat space reserved for theatre performances and tournaments. In the eastern arcades of the Lusthaus, Ferdinand was seated on the ‘golden throne’ (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 32r). On the sides of the stage, two towers were erected with musicians, and between them, an artificial mountain with a fiery cave representing Etna was built (Balbinus 1558, 7v).

The performance began with Jupiter appearing above the mountain with lightning in his hand. Since the terrain in front of the Lusthaus’s eastern façade was several meters lower, we can imagine Jupiter and Ferdinand sitting on a throne in Lusthaus’s arcades at roughly the same height. This arrangement immediately effectively emphasized the identification of Ferdinand with Jupiter from afar. After a musical interlude, five enormous Giants began to approach the mountain with pieces of rock on their backs, evidently intending to rush the mountain and dethrone Jupiter. However, as soon as they neared the foot of the mountain, Jupiter hit them with a lightning bolt, which looked like a thin string of fire beginning at his hand (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 32v). Three large figures of Giants used in the celebration were kept until 1563 in a shed in the Royal Garden (Gulyás 2019, 75n75).

At the same time, the mountain split with a rumble and this perfect illusion of thunder and lightning terrified the viewers because the air was full of sparks and balls of fire. Hence, the men were allegedly afraid that the fire would burn their clothing and beards, and some of them allegedly fled. As soon as the Giants were destroyed, horrible-looking demons with fire coming out of their eyes, noses, and mouths appeared on the stage and dragged the fallen attackers into a cave. From the blood of the slain Giants, however, monkeys were born, whose leaping and dancing entertained the terrified audience (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 32v). The monkeys set off rockets among the audience and carried out many other devilish tricks.

An important aspect of the Prague performance on November 9, 1558, was an ‘alegoria’. Both Collinus and Mattioli talked extensively about this new addition to the court festivals, as they wanted to highlight its presence in the Prague show. For the same reason, they repeatedly emphasised the entourage’s grandiosity, the performance’s imaginativeness and the utilisation of the most modern technology, such as Jupiter ‘soaring above the mountain’, ‘the bursting mountain’, or the rich fire and smoke effects.



The Renaissance performances and artwork vary from the medieval ones primarily in the faith that images do not only express the hidden truth but also confirm and legitimise it, as everything which is expressed in this indirect manner gains in general and permanent validity.

Giants in early modern Europe represented chaos and barbarism, the opposite of order and civilisation. *Gigantomachia* appeared in monumental art during 1532-1534 in significant realisations directly relating to the Roman emperor (Vetter 2002). Why, however, did Archduke Ferdinand present Giants changing into monkeys? Collinus answers this question only as far as the archduke's motivation is concerned. He allegedly staged the entire performance to show off to his father. He supposedly wanted to prove his shrewdness and proficiency in allegories, the point of which he refuses to disclose any more about, however (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 31v). Mattioli is also surprisingly vague. The performance was an "alegoria" and Mattioli is aware that its significance ("significato") could not be guessed by expositor ("espositore") so learned and sharp as the count Alfonso, to whom his work was dedicated, should Mattioli not provide an additional explanation (Mattioli 1559, 21v; "Senza ch'io vi faccia altro commento sopra"; Without my making any further comment on it). Mattioli, then, knew what the performance was about. However, he oddly does not give the promised additional explanation, merely referring his patron and readers to the text of a poem written in large 'ancient' letters on one of the towers, on the basis of which it is possible to uncover everything. However, this poem itself requires interpretation. It is only a brief sum of the performance, introducing only one new piece of information. The "family of monkeys" ("Simia gens") born from the blood of the Giants are "Simia Teucra" (Collinus and Cuthenus 1558, 33r-v; Mattioli 1559, 21v).

The Trojans were referred to as the 'Teucrici' during antiquity, and beginning in the fifteenth century, the Turks were also referred to as such. Cornova, in his translation of Collinus, considered 'Simia Teucra' to be a label for Ferdinand's Turkish enemies (Collinus 1802, 118). Da Costa Kaufmann proposed that the giants whose uprising Jupiter 'quells with thunderbolts could well represent the rebellious princes of the Empire, whose revolts Ferdinand I and Charles V had recently put down, finally sealing peace in the Empire with the Treaty of Augsburg' (Da Costa Kaufmann 1978, 24). Piero Aretino, in a letter to Charles V in May, 1536, referred to all of his enemies, the French, the Swiss, the Italians and the Turks as monkeys emerged from the blood of the Giants (qtd in Dolce 1553, 2v).

The comparison to monkeys was not meant to merely poke fun at the enemies but also to emphasise the significant religious aspect of their wrongdoing. Whoever fought against Charles V fought against Christ's deputy on earth, implying that an uprising against the Emperor is a religious sin emphasised by the devil's creature, the monkey (Guthmüller 1977, 59).

However, why would Count Alfonso and other sharp and learned individuals not be able to figure out the significance of the theatrical performance of November 9, 1558, in Prague? It was generally known that the Turks were the archenemies of Christianity, and the main burden of defending Europe against them lay on Ferdinand's shoulders. It was also generally known that Protestant princes were enemies of Ferdinand. The Giants could not be Turks or rebel princes of the empire. We must look for an explanation of the allegory that considers Giants and monkeys. They both appear on a monumental wall fresco in Palazzo del Te in Mantua, which Giulio Romano completed in 1534. The fresco depicted a Gigantomachia with monkeys emerging from the Giants' blood. We can surmise that Mattioli expressed himself vaguely because he could assume Count Alfonso knew the famous fresco well.

The motif of monkeys emerging from giants' blood is not supported in Ovid, who wrote: "You might know that they were sons of blood" (*Met.* 1.162; "Scires e sanguine natos"). The motif's origin was an incorrect version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by Bonsignori from 1375-1377, which came out in 1497 in Venice and then in five editions by 1522. In this text, monkeys appear instead of people emerging from the blood of the Giants and not venerating the gods about which Ovid had written (Bonsignori 1497, 4v; "pertanto le simie se inzenerorono e naquero del sangue loro"; therefore, the monkeys were born of their blood). This was not merely a matter of an omission, but of the fact that something like this was expected in Ovid's text because the monkey was often associated with the devil and infidels during medieval times (Guthmüller 1977).

The key to understanding the Prague performance also existed in Prague, and the archduke exhibited it at the beginning of the celebratory welcoming of the new emperor for the sake of greater expressiveness. This key was the appearance of the 'Hussites'. The 'Chamovitica gens' are most likely identical to the 'sima gens'; they are the monkeys of the great Trojan, the Bohemian king and Roman Emperor Ferdinand I. They are not the Hussites from the Bohemian past, whom it would be neither appropriate nor necessary to recall on this occasion, but their current descendants (Simons 2009, 199). The current Bohemian rebels, who resisted Ferdinand's will, are entirely validly compared to the wholly harmless and ridiculous descendants of the great Hussites, before whom everyone used to shake with fear. This comparison is explicitly proven by Collinus, not in his description of the celebration, but in a much shorter celebratory poem, where a long passage is devoted to the 'Chamovitica gens'. The first half of the verse cited above regarding the beating of the empty straw ("Fervet opus fructu cassum") continues: "gemit ictibus sub ipsis profunda tellus" (Collinus 1558, 4r; the earth deep beneath them groans under the blows). The 'Hussites' here are likened to Giants,

under the flails of which the earth and the underworld shake and whom Jupiter thrust down to Etna with his lightning bolts. This comparison was what was presented in front of Ferdinand's Lusthaus.

The emperor's entry to Prague in 1558 was intended to "demonstrate the continuity of imperial power in Prague by suggesting links with the reign of Charles IV" (Dmitrieva-Einhorn 2002, 246). The welcome ceremony was capped off with a theatre presentation, the content of which was Jupiter's victory over the Giants, who were indirectly identified with the Bohemian insurgents. Not long before the theatrical performance, in 1547, Bohemian estates denied obedience to their king, Ferdinand I (Vorel 1999). The dark past of the Bohemian kingdom was still present in Prague, which is why the emperor needed to be on constant guard so that he might protect not only his empire but the entire world order as well.

At the very beginning of the celebration, the archduke hence presented the contrasting pairs of good and evil, order and chaos, with evil and chaos explicitly named – it is the Protestant faith, the sinister heritage of the Hussite tempests, which the Protestant Bohemians refuse to surrender. This conflict is converted to the cosmic dimensions in the battle of the Olympians with the Giants at the end of the celebration. The victory of Jupiter, Ferdinand's alter ego, definitively resolves it. The monkeys emerging from Giants indicate that it alludes to recent Bohemian history. Giants were Hussites, and monkeys were the Bohemian estates that rebelled in 1547. The theatre was a condemnation and warning to current or future followers of these rebels.

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