Memory and Performance.
Classical Reception in Early Modern Festivals

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

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Special Section

Francesca Bortoletti - Giovanna Di Martino - Eugenio Refini*

Preface

The essays featured in this double issue stem from the conference 'Memory and Performance: Classical Reception in Early Modern Festivals', organised jointly by the University of Parma (Parma, October 13-14, 2022) and University College London (London, February 23-24, 2023), as part of the WIDE Program (Widening International Didactics and Education) of UNIPR and in collaboration with the Centre for Early Modern Exchanges at UCL.[1] The conference's rationale goes back to a meeting held at Oxford University's Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama, a pioneering research centre that is concerned with recording, documenting, archiving and writing about the performance of ancient texts from Greek tragedy to Roman epic, in any medium and any period, from stage to screen, from antiquity to the present day. Central to this meeting was the inquiry into whether the 'festival', viewed through an expansive temporal lens, serves as a privileged conduit for

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[1] The conference was supported by the Units of Arts, Italian Studies, and Classics at the University of Parma (UNIPR), the Centro per le Attività e le Professioni delle Arti e dello Spettacolo (CAPAS, UNIPR), the A.G. Leventis Foundation (UCL), the Institute of Classical Studies (UCL), the Classical Association, the Gilbert Murray Trust, and the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (Oxford). The project was in co-partnership with the Centro Interateneo, Memoria delle Arti Performative (MAP), the Centro Interuniversitario di ricerca di Studi sulla Tradizione (Bari), the Laboratorio Dionysos (Trento), the Society for European Festivals Research (SEFR), the Warburg Institute (London), and the Institute of Advanced Studies. This conference was part of a wider project organised jointly by UNIPR and UCL that has since led to the organisation of two further events related to classical reception in the performing arts: the International Fall School *Memory and Performance* (Parma, October 2023) directed by Bortoletti and Di Martino, featuring a performance workshop on Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, directed by Marco Martinelli - Teatro delle Albe, Ravenna, and Di Martino as dramaturg, in collaboration with 7 EU Universities (as part of the BIP Erasmus+ Program); the project *Aristophanes at Chickenshed* (London, October 2024), featuring a six-day performance workshop on Aristophanes' *Peace*, directed by Marco Martinelli, and Di Martino as dramaturg, and in partnership with Chickenshed Theatre, the University of Bristol and the Istituto Italiano di Cultura in London.

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the transmission and reimagining of Greco-Roman textual and non-textual sources within written and performative cultural practices. These sources constitute a veritable reservoir of memory, a fertile repository of themes and tropes – imaginary, material, and immaterial alike – that often evolve into collective memory.

To trace these memories through the reinterpretation of the classical tradition in early modern European and colonial American festivals, the four-day conference (two in Parma and two in London) convened international scholars from a range of disciplinary backgrounds, alongside archivists and performers. Three days of theatrical workshops, led by playwright and director Marco Martinelli (Teatro delle Albe) and Giovanna Di Martino (UCL) as dramaturg, preceded the conferences. A group of ten students from UNIPR and UCL collaborated with school students from a number of state-funded schools in Parma (the Liceo Classico Romagnosi and Liceo Artistico Toschi) and London (St Olave's, the Jewish Community Secondary School, Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School, and La Sainte Union, Camden). They worked on scenes selected from early modern translations of Aristophanes' *Plutus*. The workshops aimed to explore the performability and intricate web of references embedded in these early modern works, employing Martinelli's 'non-school' approach, which locates the political essence of his work in the festive inversion akin to the Dionysian carnival – a revitalisation of the ancient chorus within the contemporary *polis*.[2]

The culmination of the workshops was a script composed during the Parma and London sessions – a mosaic of text fragments drawn from *Plutus* through three distinct modern translations of the ancient Greek comedy, each tied to

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[2] Since 1991, Martinelli has been conducting a practice and methodology named 'non-school' in Italian schools and around the world. The name 'non-school' emphasises a non-prescriptive way of engaging with texts that may be studied in the classroom but need to be deconstructed and brought to life on the stage; see Martinelli 2016 and 2020. The reactivation (or as Marco Martinelli would say, "bringing to life") of the chorus, understood as a fundamental and characteristic element of Greek tragedy, will be the focus of some of the essays included in the second instalment of this special issue. For a history of the chorus in contemporary theatre, an excellent reference remains the pioneering study by Mario Apollonio (1956). More recent are two notable volumes published in German: Flashar 1991 (which concentrates on the differences vis-à-vis the ancient model) and Baur 1999 (although linked to a text-centred reflection on the chorus, it revisits theoretical and practical insights that originated in the 1990s around new modes of choral performance). See, more recently, Macintosh 2012 and Billings, Budelmann and Macintosh 2013. The APGRD webpage 'Publications' offers most recent and up-to-date volumes on the reception histories of the chorus on the stage across continents, time and media (http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/about/publications; last accessed: 10 June 2024).

celebratory occasions or periods of intense political unrest.[3] The workshops kicked off the conferences by engaging speakers and local communities through public performances at the Abbazia di Valserena, Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione (CSAC, UNIPR) in Parma and St George's Church Bloomsbury in London, respectively. Both conferences concluded with roundtable discussions among scholars and archivists on performing arts archives.[4]

Over the course of two weeks, a diverse network with global aspirations, deeply rooted in the Parma and London communities, emerged. It involved various institutions, theatres, archives, and high schools, with high school and university students not merely as recipients but as active participants in the reinterpretation and preservation of cultural and performative heritage inspired by classical models. The format we devised – an amalgamation of international and local initiatives, at the crossroads of different disciplines between theory and practice – stems from the imperative to create tangible platforms for sharing methodologies and theories concerned with the study of classical antiquity in the performing arts. More specifically, building upon our mutual interest in the significance of classical texts in the performing arts across different societies and epochs, we concentrated on a pivotal area of inquiry for early modernity: the festival. The overarching goal of our project, as reflected in this double issue, is to operate on multiple levels – both theoretical and practical – in an experimental dialogue that, starting from the tradition of classical drama, extends through the lens of Renaissance festivals to analyse the diverse forms and languages of early modern spectacles, with an eye toward their contemporary relevance.

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[3] The three translations are Eufrosino Bonini's *Commedia di Iustitia* (1513); Thomas Randolph's *Hey for Honesty, Down with Knavery* (1651); and *The World's Idol, Plutus a Comedy* (1659) by a certain H.H.B. Aristophanes' comedies have become one of Martinelli's favourite texts to 'play with' students in workshops: see Di Martino's blogpost on the workshops: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/classics/news/2023/mar/performing-aristophanes-early-modern-translations (Accessed 22 May 2024). Contributions in the second volume of this double special issue by Bortoletti, Di Martino, and Martinelli focus on the workshops, script and final results.

[4] The Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD) presented by Oliver Taplin (Oxford), Fiona Macintosh (Oxford), and Giovanna Di Martino (UCL); The HERLA-Project presented by Simona Brunetti (UNIVE/Fondazione Umberto Artioli); The Mnemosyne Atlas presented by Eckart Marchand and Steffen Haug (Warburg Institute/Bilderfahrzeuge); The Festivals in Renaissance Italy: Digital Atlas-FRIDA presented by Francesca Bortoletti (UNIPR); The DSPace-Muthea-Project presented by Paolo Russo (UNIPR); The Festivals Book Digitization Project (University of Warwick; British Library) presented by Margaret Shewring (Warwick); The Renaissance Cultural Crossroads Catalogue presented by Brenda Hosington (Warwick-Montreal); The Teatro Regio Historical Archive presented by Cristina Gnudi (Casa della Musica-Parma); The Laboratorio Dionysos (Trento) presented by Gaia Benamati (Bari).

Francesca Bortoletti - Eugenio Refini*

Introduction.
Ephemeral Renaissance. Memory, Myth and Drama in Early Modern Festivals

1. Prologue: the Time of the Festival

Attending a festival today, whether it is centred on theatre, art, literature, or tied to a civic or festive occasion, often evokes a surreal impression of both place and events: for a few days, one steps out of the daily routine, leaving behind the usual rhythm of life. It is a time of suspension, of extraordinariness, of exceptionality enacted in the 'here and now' of the present. Yet, it is also a time of immersion, experimentation, and participation, closely intertwined with the social, urban, and political fabric with which the festival engages, intercepting, amplifying, and generating tensions that, through performative events, activate various identity processes. The festival offers avenues for new modes of temporary imagining, where the ephemeral can acquire permanence, enduring over time. It is a time of disjunctions and memorability; a time that engenders collective memories to be shared by groups and communities, serving as an instrument to observe the surrounding reality, imbued – as Lucian's *Saturnalia* aptly phrases it – with the sense of a utopia, in the past as in the present.[1]

[1] For a definition of festival, we rely on the etymology outlined by the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, from the Latin *festum* ("public joy, merriment, revelry") or *feria* ("abstinence from work in honour of the gods"), both terms used in the plural *festa* and *feriae* to signify that festivals lasted multiple days and included many and varied events. The Italian *festa*, the French *fête* and *festival*, the Spanish *fiesta*, the Portuguese *festa*, the Middle English *feste*, *festial* then *festival*, all come from the Latin *festa*. These terms refer to a variety of events, as indicated by the entry on "festa" in the *Enciclopedia dello Spettacolo*: starting from the original and indissoluble link between any kind of celebration – understood as participation in a ritual – and any form of performance, this pioneering discussion of the term emphasised the persistence, even in modern

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It is widely acknowledged that at the onset of the Renaissance, Italian city-states and European courts crafted a complex system of celebratory events and public and private ceremonies that played a pivotal role in the societal fabric of the time, particularly for their consistent reiteration of images, gestures, and languages inspired by antiquity. These festive occasions and political celebrations encapsulated intangible yet critical aspects of early modern memory, emerging as products of a highly performative context. Stemming from seminal studies by Jacob Burckhardt (*The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, 1860) and Aby Warburg (*The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 1932) in history and art history, and by Alessandro D'Ancona (*Origini del teatro italiano*, 1891)[2] in theatre history, the study of festivals emerged as a distinct field, offering insights into Renaissance civilisation through art, symbols, collective practices, rituals, and theatre (Kernodle 1944; Seznec 1953). From seminal investigations such as those by Warburg, Renaissance Italy emerged as a 'laboratory' within the broader spectrum of European (and subsequently, extra-European) cultures. From Lorenzo de Medici's Florence to the intellectual circles of Pomponio Leto in Rome, Italy revived and reshaped the ancient language of festivals as a means of identity formation, social competition, and political discourse. Spanning the peninsula and adapting to specific historical-cultural contexts and political features, the Italian revival of classical festive models asserted itself as avant-garde vis-à-vis the burgeoning European monarchies and the new political entities in the colonial Americas.[3]

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times, of the festive character of any performance, no matter whether public or private, occasional or aristocratic, including royal entries, births, weddings, coronations on the one hand, and games, processions, mock battles, on the other. As pointed out more recently by Keren Zaiontz, "the term festival is part of a lexicon, in which it is but one term jostling alongside fiesta, carnival, bacchanal, fair and feast . . . " (2018, 6).

[2] On the origins of theatre and the beginning of a systematic survey of information about "popular" and "collective" performances, which go beyond the purely literary component of theatrical expression and instead belong to that complex universe of representative practices that Paolo Toschi later identified as ritual-spectacle (Toschi 1976); see also De Bartholomaeus 1924, Apollonio 1943.

[3] On the symbolic transparency of ritual practice and the direct and specific observation of symbolic actions that characterise European and non-European cultures, see the pioneering studies of Turner 1957 and 1967. "Symbol is the smallest unit of ritual which retains the formal properties of ritual behaviour. The symbols observed in the field were objects, activities, events, gestures and spatial units in a ritual situation" (Turner 1967, 19). The analysis of the ritual process led Turner to adopt and deepen, through his scholarly interaction with Richard Schechner and Performance Studies, the notion of cultural performance introduced by the American socio-anthropologist of Polish origin, Milton Singer, in his studies of cultural traditions and modernisation in postcolonial India (Singer 1955, 23-36).

Driven by methodologies indebted to *nouvelle histoire* (Bloch 1949), the study of the performative dimension of festivals experienced a resurgence in the mid-twentieth century through works by Jacques Jacquot (1956-1960; 1964) and Frances Yates (1959), contributing to the 'new theatrical historiography'.[4] This approach detached Renaissance theatre from a narrow definition of drama, encompassing and exploring the myriad forms of early modern performance. These studies transcended the reconstruction of institutional, civic, or religious ceremonies prevalent in earlier historiography, identifying festivals as conceptual and ideological spaces for the cultural and political self-legitimisation of the elites. The court festival emerged as the most recognisable manifestation of such a process, epitomising a substantially homogeneous synthesis of organisational motives, tensions, values, and forms. Festivals, diverging from the ordinary rhythm of city life, became an 'ideal' realm – a catalyst for expression within various areas of artistic creation, including set design, ephemeral architecture, dramatic texts, recitation, and theatre. "It is the ideal time when society glimpses its 'eternalized' dimension, projecting itself into its own utopia . . . : it is the well-regulated city" (Cruciani 1987, 40).

Subsequent studies expanded the socio-political and geographical analysis of these events, exploring symbolic forms and the relationship between the civic contexts of festivals and the visual, musical, and performative cultures of the time. This broadened perspective enabled the consideration of models, processes, creative and productive systems overlooked in earlier research, which predominantly concentrated on the history of institutions.[5]

This approach was further enriched by innovative studies in art and literary history, focusing on visual culture and the strategies of the art of memory (Settis 1986; Strong 1987; Bolzoni 1995). Viewing theatrical representations through the lens of memorability found particularly fertile ground in the early modern period. The revival of classical texts and materials underpinned the creation of new collective, national, and transnational models, fostering the development of new cultural forms, theatrical practices, genres, and languages of performance.

In recent decades, scholarly interest in early modern festival studies has further increased, promoting an interdisciplinary focus on theatre studies, social history, art history, anthropology, dance, music, literature, and cultural heritage. This has transformed the early modern festival,

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[4] See among others: Zorzi 1977; Trexler 1980; Muir 1981; Cruciani 1983.

[5] In addition to the studies mentioned previously, see among others: Ventrone 1992 e 2016; Decroisette 1993; Guarino 1995; Plaisance 2008; Mulryne and Goldring 2002; Mulryne, Watanabe-O'Kelly, and Shewring 2004; Mulryne, Aliverti, and Testaverde 2015.

from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century, into a prominent research domain not only in European cultures but also in extra-European contexts.[6] Concurrently, research on the reception of Greek and Roman material in the early modern period has led to a re-evaluation of those historiographical frameworks that have traditionally limited the engagement with classical antiquity. Studies on early modern translation, for instance, have emphasised the creative dimension of the receiving context, departing from a binary (non-creative) understanding of translation as a set of transactions involving texts and cultures (Burke and R.Po-chia Hsia 2007; Refini 2020; Di Martino and Dudouyt 2023).

Altogether, the essays included in this special issue contend that a better understanding of early modern festivals entails reconstructing them not only as discrete events but as complex systems of symbols, practices, and gestures in relation to their cultural, artistic, and political significance, along with the images and texts that shaped them and their preservation through memory. It also necessitates reconstructing, synchronically and diachronically, the 'backstage' of the festivals – the network of social communities that contributed to their creation and generated new memories. Finally, it involves viewing the festival as a site of both reflection and performative practice. In fact, early modern theatre was brought to life through the efforts of erudites and the promotion of collective rituals, always intertwined with the daily experience of the life of the city (both the tangible city and the ephemeral city of festival time), its spectacles, performance cultures, and shared memories (Bortoletti et al. 2018; Bortoletti et al. 2024).

The contributions gathered here delve into the complexity of the early modern festival through an interdisciplinary, expansive lens across time and space. They raise theoretical and methodological questions while examining case studies focused on specific contexts, geographies, and sites of poetic and visual invention; they also look at how the extant documentation allows us to appreciate the re-activation of classical models within the celebratory

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[6] The bibliography is extensive and heterogeneous. A still valuable survey of the state of the art are the following volumes: Bastinello and Zannoni 2018, Mulryne 2019 and Watanabe-O'Kelly and Simon 2000. See also the volumes edited by The Society for European Festivals in the Renaissance (SEFR); outcomes of the *PerformArt* project (directed by Anne-Madeleine Goulet), on the Performing Arts in Rome between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; those of the *RISK* project (directed by Alessandro Metlica), on festivals and celebrations in Italian and European Republics between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Also noteworthy is the seminar series *Times of Festival* (organised by Eckart Marchand at the Warburg Institute), in which scholars from different disciplinary fields discussed the temporal dimensions of the festival in the early modern age in Europe and beyond. See also Muir 2005, in which the scholar examines the impact on European understanding of ritual following the discoveries of the Americas and missionary efforts in China.

context of the festival as well as the promotion of 'new' dramaturgies. Also, these studies observe the impact of festivals on the imagination and collective memory of both the period and later eras.

2. The Event: Theatre and Festival as *instrumenta regni*

The occasions for festivals and public ceremonies were varied and frequent in the Italian and European courts of the early modern period. They ranged from the celebration of historical events and feasts to exceptional occasions, including civic and patronal rites, religious ceremonies, official visits of illustrious guests, weddings of important aristocratic families, often coinciding with Carnival, and other ritual or civic festivals. Thus, it is possible to identify different kinds of festivals, each assuming specific characteristics linked to the historical, political, and cultural context of the city. These festivals followed three main strands in constant dialogue with one another: religious and civic festivals, popular feasts, and festivals "all'antica" (in the style of classical antiquity).[7] These festive moments provided an opportunity to showcase the entire city and its significant places, chosen and adapted for each celebratory event.

During festive times, the entire city underwent a transformation into a theatre, utilising existing buildings and altering the signs of urban and private festive customs. Sometimes, this involves interventions in the urban layout, creating new temporary machinery and ephemeral apparatuses like triumphal arches, stages, theatres, and firework platforms. On these occasions, the city presents itself as a *theatrum mundi*, drawing inspiration from textual, architectural and figurative works inherited from the ancients. These various components were brought back to life in the political and cultural context of the city, often reflecting an idealised image of the city itself created on purpose by architects and painters on the occasion of entries and processions.

This phenomenon lies at the core of some of the essays gathered here. If Daniela Sacco's essay, by focusing on the case of Aby Warburg's studies of early modern festivals, makes a compelling argument for the need to consider the Renaissance culture of the festive celebration as an object that mobilises not only art-historical categories but also intellectual and epistemological dynamics, the relevance of this methodology to the analysis of case studies comes to the fore in contributions that shed light on the multifaceted nature of specific events. For instance, Claudio Passera's essay

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[7] See Fagiolo 1997; see also Fagiolo 2007 and Fagiolo Dell'Arco and Carandini 1977-1978.

describes the ephemeral architectural apparatus built for the triumphal entry of Elisabetta da Montefeltro and Roberto Malatesta during their wedding in 1455, illustrating how the ceremony transformed Rimini into a 'new' ancient Rome. The imagery evoked by archaeological remains of ancient theatres and temporary theatrical structures often serves to construct identities and politically and socially affirm rulers, as documented by Sergio Costola in his contribution on Lucrezia Borgia and her programmatic involvement in the festive and theatrical life of the Este court at the turn of the sixteenth century.

Italian and European city streets thus served as the architectural stage for triumphant entries accompanied by solemn music. Buildings are transformed into the backdrop for court processions and historical reenactments, while squares become theatres for tournaments, jousts, and races. Palaces host the private entertainments of the nobility, including banquets and the staging of mythological tales and classical dramas, both in Latin and in the vernacular, as well as newly written plays. In this context, urban scenery projects the image of the city into the court hall through the urban perspective, an artistic device mastered by Bramante (1444-1514) during his time in Rome at the end of the Quattrocento. Bernini (1598-1690), well known as a set designer, stage technician, and festival organiser, but also as an actor-author and director of comedies, would later bring this technique to its fullest theatrical development at the peak of the Roman Baroque.[8]

According to a conception of the city as the *patrimonium principis*, the reconstitution of urban space for festivals has guided, since the early Renaissance, strategies of *renovatio urbis*. Similarly, the reinterpretation of urban scenography as part of the festival reinforces the humanistic idea of *ornamentum urbis*. Tight connections exist between the external rites of urban society and the internal rites of family society, as well as between the representative practices of civic celebration, popular festivals, and those of courtly festivities *all'antica* (Zorzi 1977 and Trexler 1980). These various forms of performance expose the relationship between collective behaviours and the functions of urban spaces, as well as between these and the organisation of a social model and a new kind of knowledge in terms of power dynamics.

This dialectical bond reflects an idea of organising the world that finds its metaphorical and material counterpart in the ancient architectural space of the theatre (Bolzoni 1984; Bortoletti and Sacchi 2018), unearthed and appropriated – albeit with some uncertainty – in the decades around 1500. The model of the ancient theatre paved the way for both the earliest permanent court

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[8] On theatrical scenography and stage design, we refer to Elena Povoledo's studies from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century, and specifically her foundational work, Povoledo 1975. On Bramante and the perspective stage cf. Neiiendam 1969 and Bruschi 1969. On Bernini as theatre artist cf. Tamburini 2012; Zammar 2015, 233-52.

theatres and the grandeur of the Baroque spectacle (Tafuri 1969 and 1992; Ruffini 2013). The 'simple' urban perspective of the Quattrocento gradually disappeared in favour of scenic metamorphosis and the mechanical wonders of the Baroque festival. These innovations, in addition to recovering myths, stories, and forms from antiquity, also revived Greco-Roman techniques in the invention of new scenic and theatrical machinery. Benedetta Colasanti's study focuses on one instructive instance of this material heritage, namely, the representation of *Mercurio e Marte*, staged in Parma in 1628 to inaugurate the Farnese Theatre on the occasion of the wedding between Odoardo Farnese and Margherita de' Medici. The theatre was built ten years earlier by Giovanni Battista Aleotti – a masterful synthesis of the model of the ancient theatre already revived by the first modern permanent theatre (the Palladian Olimpico in Vicenza, 1583-1585), and the elongated arena of the Medici theatre by Bernardo Buontalenti in Florence. Using literary, iconographic, and documentary sources, Colasanti traces the models that shaped the staging of the mythological tournament. She observes how these contributed to strengthening the poetic-visual dramaturgy of the work while ensuring its communicative effectiveness both for the court audience and for those citizens who were allowed into the city's new theatre.

Edmund Thomas also examines the Farnese tournament, offering a comparative analysis of how Francesco Guitti in Parma and Gian Lorenzo Bernini in Rome revived ancient forms of spectacle, in line with the experimental fervour they both joined. Guitti's machine, based on ancient treatises, recreated an ancient naval battle to conclude the representation of Mercury and Mars. In contrast, the machines built by Bernini for the Roman Carnival in the 1630s transformed classical naval battles into a dramatised simulation of the Tiber's flood, producing a spectacle that transformed the urban landscape during the celebratory time of Carnival.

The history of festivals intertwines with that of architecture and urban development, often coinciding with significant urban renovations tied to celebratory and ritual events. Two emblematic cases include Biagio Rossetti's Erculean Addition in late fifteenth-century Ferrara and Bernini's renovation of Saint Peter's square in seventeenth-century Rome. Bernini's colonnade is not only shaped to embrace all faithful as a symbol of Mater Ecclesia's ecumenism, but also serves processional and liturgical purposes, protecting pilgrims' routes and facilitating the *Corpus Christi* papal procession circuit (Fagiolo 1997, 2). This creates a continuum not only between urban space and the theatrical representation, but also between urban representation and scenography, with repercussions on the staging of performative events built on shared notions of the city's landscape.

In Rome, Florence, Venice, Parma, and the capitals of the emerging European monarchies and the colonial Americas, the transient essence of festivals

generates compelling imagery, following the classical paradigm. It leverages diverse city locations and symbolic, communicative languages within the festivals' institutional frameworks, reflecting political strategies – whether propagandistic or oppositional – in a dialectical interplay between tradition, experimentation, and transnational exchange. These communication systems not only foster processes of identity affirmation, but also serve as social tools for artists and patrons to influence sovereigns on foreign and domestic policy matters or, alternatively, to oppose perceived adversaries, whether Muslim, Turkish, Jewish, or Protestant. Borja Franco Llopis's essay explores these themes, analysing, over an extended chronological range (from the conquest of Granada and the European arrival in America to the ascent of the House of Bourbon to the Spanish throne, 1492-1700), how ancient mythology, via standardised classical *topoi*, was employed to represent the enemies of the Spanish Habsburgs during early modern public celebrations. Similarly, as detailed in Jan Bažant's essay, classical mythology was used as a tool of political allegory during the visit of emperor Ferdinand I to Prague in 1558, when an elaborate ceremony involving Jupiter's fight against the Giants was staged in the garden of the palace: the representation of Mount Aetna and the defeat of the Giants were meant to impress the audience, which, being familiar with the political undertones of the spectacle, would be able to seize its allegorical content.

Viewed through this lens, the festival emerges as a mobile and ever-renewing 'living archive', where social and cultural groups, artists, and poets continuously revisit and refresh images, gestures, words, and rituals. These elements, recognisable, eloquent, and memorable, play a pivotal role in shaping new political actions and visions. Festivals, by moulding collective, civil, and ethical identities, foster a rich landscape of imagination. Through performances and representative practices, they trigger new forms of poetry, art, and theatre.

3. Backstage: the Community of the Festival

The fascination with early modern festivals as objects of interdisciplinary investigation certainly does not limit itself to the reconstruction of performances, even if done with philological detail. The fascination lies in recognising the 'essence' of a complex civilisation in the festival, one that groups and communities enact, discerning its patterns to tailor them to a particular vision that, during the festival, transforms into a tangible reality. Delving into theatrical events alone offers only a fragmentary history of this intricate culture, which instead materialises through the endeavours

of individuals – poets, intellectuals, artists, artisans, and patrons.[9] These individuals draw inspiration from the ancient ideas of theatre so as to re-enact them within the modern city. It involves a select 'handful of men', varying each time in response to evolving historical, social, and political contexts. They strive to relive the ancient past, emerging from secluded realms of recreation and study, to share their intent and vision as part of collective, participatory festivities, adapting to the nuances of local politics according to specific plans.

The rediscovery of antiquity sparked a profound and transformative renewal across disciplines. In the early modern era, it engendered a sort of 'collective dialogue' between written works and convivial and recreational practices during gatherings of intellectuals. Similarly, it fostered forms of interaction across educational institutions and secular brotherhoods, wherein dense networks of relationships were often intertwined with lived experiences and specific environments. It was from these encounters and networks of friendships, writings, and their capacity to establish cultural hegemony that the very organisation of festivals often emerged.[10]

In Rome, for instance, this phenomenon began in the mid-fifteenth century within the cultural project of the Pomponian Academy. It seized its validation within the domains of official culture and power, adapting to existing structures and traditions while also asserting the demands of new cultural milieus. As argued in Raimondo Guarino's contribution, the portrayal of classical dramas and the delivery of orations in Rome and among the humanist circles of the Pomponians produced a full immersion in antiquity and its upholding as a model for life. This project entailed educating the youth and society at large, akin to the ancient practice, in the arts of acting, rhetoric, and music. Latin recitation transcended the confines of schools or secluded cultural spaces; it swiftly became a fixture in both elitist and public ceremonies and festivities. It is within the interplay of entertainment and celebration that the words and endeavours of the humanists found resonance, as did their philological inquiries and archaeological investigations. However, the Pomponians' multifaceted and routine involvement in entertainment and official celebrations was not mere spectacle; rather, it presented itself as a dissemination of ideas, practices, and customs, constituting the formative essence of the humanist endeavour and an ethical/behavioural prototype, in fact, a model emblematically captured

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[9] "The Italian Renaissance theatre is the work of a group of men, not many, and often in relation to each other. The restoration of ancient theatre, which is at its origins, is part of a utopian project in a real society, the proactive dream that a group of men in a hegemonic position has of a noble and harmonious way of life" (Cruciani 1980, 356).

[10] On festivals' 'social actors' and the performance of micro-communities during the temporal dimensions of festivals see Meldolesi 1984 and Zaiontz 2018.

by the very image of the theatre. Sulpicio da Veroli's entreaty to Cardinal Raffaele Riario in the prefatory epistle to Vitruvius' *De Architectura*, seeking a theatre – a public edifice suitable for his students' performances and for the benefit of the Roman citizens – not only underscores the connection between the ancient and modern city in the name of theatre, but also exposes the deliberate and active engagement of the Roman academy in the political, economic, cultural, and performative fabric of the city.

Needless to say, this dynamic between the academy, the court, and the city is not exclusive to Rome. From Florence and Venice to Naples and the courts of northern Europe, humanist schools and circles serve as crucial community hubs for the integration of classical culture and drama into civic and festive contexts. This role of the humanistic school is shared with other environments and collaborative institutions, whose endeavours within and beyond the festival profoundly influence the nature of the spectacle itself.

However, the diversity of patronage systems and the network of 'social actors' involved in festive events, belonging to various forms of associations, whether religious or secular, have not always been emphasised enough. Similarly, the array of specialisations and skills that shape festival programmes, as well as the interconnections between the different stakeholders – writers, artists, dancers, promoters, organisers – and the urban spaces (both private and public), along with the types and forms of ceremonies, their models, circulation, and followers, still await full acknowledgement and appreciation. By tracing the paths of the protagonists of this narrative, it becomes possible to reconstruct the social, artistic, and politico-cultural network of a vibrant micro-community of social subjects and their respective skills, practices, and performative techniques. Moreover, the significant expenses – increasingly documented in detail during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – that the state, municipality, or religious orders had to manage for the realisation of festive programs and ephemeral apparatuses, provide not only a glimpse into the splendour and luxury of the spectacular event (and its political significance) but also into the economic impact that these events had on the social 'actors' involved at various times. From this perspective, the festival – especially its Baroque instantiation – serves not only as a platform for social affirmation but also as an economic engine and a means of wealth redistribution. It offers opportunities for employment and income, more or less consistent, to artists, artisans, organisers, poets, and writers.

The city of the festival is a realm of collectivity, a space that fosters communal experiences and the active participation of its people, another crucial social 'actor' contributing to the festival's success. It is to the people and their involvement that the preservation of the festival's memory and the understanding of a system composed of symbols, expressive and relational codes, are entrusted. These elements engage the mind, cultivate perception,

and evoke emotions according to ways in which they are expressed and experienced. The stage set by each festival forms a structure that, by transforming life into art, presents enduring concepts, experiences, and ideas that manifest in various forms over time.

4. Memory: Festivals and Performing Archives

The memory of festivals was preserved and renewed by reports of poets, ambassadors, or other witnesses, as documented in chronicles, letters, and poems. These accounts amplify the political and ideological messages conveyed by the poetic and visual elements of the festival itself, as well as by its promoters, who envisioned it, as recalled earlier in this introduction, as the 'great theatre of the world'. The descriptive rhetoric of this literature bears a strongly humanistic imprint, as suggested by the use of the lexicon of ancient theatre and the stylistic devices of classical ekphrasis. Therefore, verbal depictions of the festivals warrant further exploration in relation to the political, literary, and artistic milieu of the period.

The reference text, in this regard, was Flavio Biondo's *Roma Triumphans*, written between 1456-1459, in which contemporary celebrations, including tournaments, religious processions, and grand pageants in Florence and Rome, were compared to the triumphs and spectacles of ancient Rome. However, the descriptions provided by chroniclers and other sources from this period often lack completeness, making it challenging to reconstruct the festivals' complexity, their programmes, their models, and the creative processes involved in re-activating classical material. Despite some valuable documentary summaries,[11] absence of direct visual testimonies underscores the need for a more flexible and nuanced approach to this chronological phase (Passera 2020). Such an approach aims to piece together an 'iconography of the festival', interpreting the figurative and poetic aspects of festive ceremonies within their historical and cultural contexts and in relation to a rich tapestry of textual sources and images. This includes narratives ranging from biblical stories to ancient history, as well as works such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Petrarch's *Triumphs*, and classical dramas.

These texts serve as extraordinary thematic and iconographic prompts, utilised in both the figurative arts and the festivals themselves. They are adapted for triumphal entries, procession, and ceremonies, or transformed into new dramas for the stage, constituting a repository of images and

[11] Cf. Codex Vaticano Urbinate Latino 899, which includes a detailed description and 32 miniatures depicting the sequence of mythological entrances, and related verses, set up for the banquet organised for the wedding of Costanzo Sforza-Camilla d'Aragona in Pesaro 1475. Cf. Guidobaldi 1993; Bridgeman 2013.

words, as well as a warehouse of new inventions. Within this multifaceted universe of the festival, diverse dramaturgical materials emerge, each serving different functions. From mythological shows, enriched by the expertise of choreographers and dance masters (Sparti 1993; Casini Ropa and Bortoletti 2007; Pontremoli 2011), to forms of recitative poetry (Bortoletti 2008 and 2021), and the inheritance of ancient fables and classical comic and tragic texts (Staüble 1968; Tissoni Benvenuti and Mussini Sacchi 1983; TorelloHill and Turner 2020; Pieri 2023), all circulate in illustrated editions and are staged in convent schools or humanist circles for pedagogical purposes from the latter half of the fifteenth century. These are then transferred to the venues of hegemonic culture, of which the festival embodies the utmost expression. Throughout the following century, festive programmes, whether occasional or set by the calendar, continue to showcase such dramaturgical variety, which many contributions in the second volume of this double special issue focus on (especially those contributions that delve into the processes of translation, adaptation, and rewriting of the classical repertoire in the modern festival from the Renaissance to the end of the eighteenth century). At this juncture, it is noteworthy to observe that reconstructing textual and iconographic paths around the festival entails reassembling the network of texts and images directly or indirectly linked to the festive occasion and its dramaturgical writings (Zorzi 1977-2023; Torello-Hill 2022 and 2023). This enables a better understanding of the processes of selection, adaptation, and reinterpretation of the ancient repertoire based on the values and knowledge specific to the early modern context. Maria Czepiel, for instance, argues for this case in her analysis of *El divino Orfeo* by Calderón de la Barca in 1634, where the ancient myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is reinterpreted through a Christian lens, privileging biblical sources over pagan ones.

The poetic text, as well as its figurative counterpart, frequently serves as a means to discern the creative mechanisms inherent not only in the production of poetry and art but also in the performative and festive dimension. This helps to partly overcome the documentary fragmentation characteristic of the early modern era.

The efforts to preserve the memory of these transient ceremonial and festive events intensified in the ensuing centuries. Whether sponsored by the court, municipalities, or other entities, the transmission of the events relied on rich documentation. While the ephemeral nature of the apparatuses in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries boosted the marvel of the festival – and, correspondingly, the political and social influence of those entities directly involved with the planning of the celebrations – there was also a concerted effort to prevent these events from fading into obscurity. This led to a more systematic production of printed reports meticulously describing the ceremonies, apparatuses, and poetic and iconographic programs.

Additionally, printed librettos of theatrical works became more common, often accompanied by splendid engravings of the settings or occasional settings and machines featured in processions. These visual depictions, alongside the words of authors and poets, captured the luxury, splendour, and opulence of the events, contributing to the creation of highly memorable imagery long after the festivals concluded. In this imagery, the concept of wonder counterbalanced the ephemeral yet stately nature of the shows.

Indeed, from the early Renaissance, the memory of the festivals operated at the intersection of *ars memorandi* and the materiality of the scene, serving as both a metaphor and a tangible experience of the *theatrum mundi*. In this light, the festival and its apparatuses emerge as privileged spaces and moments where ideas are transformed into living images, sounds, and narratives, making memory itself visible. Through the essays collected in this special issue, we observe how in these 'memorial machines', images not only preserve the memory of the events but also, through their repetition and rejuvenation, activate models from the past and inspire new artistic creations – tapestries, everyday decorations, paintings, as well as engravings, drawings, and prints – and new poetry, thus asserting their mnemonic power. This understanding of memory also facilitates the exchange across cultures, transcending rigid boundaries. Particularly in colonial settings, the concept of 'memory' enables the exploration of conscious and unconscious acts of recollection that challenge the cultural dominance of Greek and Roman material undergoing adaptation.

5. Epilogue: Festivals as an Interactive Repository of Antiquity

Considering the modern festival not so much an ephemeral event as an 'interactive repository' of antiquity, this double issue aims to compile research offering a plurality of transdisciplinary perspectives and an extended temporal and spatial dimension around the festival as an object. The goal is to illuminate the relationships between forms and subjects, cultural materials and expressive tools, associative and institutional contexts that shape early modern festival culture. These represent specific relational strategies, each requiring continual redefinition. Such redefinition is possible by studying the festival – its interludes, triumphal entries, civic and religious ceremonies, theatrical representations, and choreutic-musical performances – as a series of living actions, "intermediary forms between art and life" (Burchardt 1860 and Warburg 1932), wherein humanists reactivate, with varying interpretations, classical models. This transfiguration occurs within the artistic, social, and political sphere, serving as an effective mnemonic vehicle for the transmission and creation of new knowledge.

Crucial to this field of research is the effort to explore not only the events as witnessed by the relevant sources, but also the 'ritual groups' as collective entities that promote celebratory activities. These groups are creators of an experiential time and space – the festival – that incorporates canonised models of theatre and society. The festival serves as a formalising ground for hybridisations, experiments, irreverent forms of expression, censorship, conflicts, and affirmations, fostering the development of new forms, practices, genres, and languages of performance. These events provided visibility to artistic and social communities, which come to light when we endeavour to reconstruct interconnections, exchanges, and networks of people involved in various capacities in the realisation of the events themselves. Their importance, compared, for example, to literary and figurative languages, lies in the syncretic coexistence of different cultural traditions (classical, romance, chivalric, and religious) within the festival project, which turned to theatre as a political tool for constructing identity and fostering a sense of ethical and civic responsibility.

Hence, the festival should be seen not as a self-contained object of study, but as a complex and nuanced field of investigation. It is characterised by diverse expressive forms and functions, varied projects and practices, as well as situations, languages, and mechanisms of production. Understanding its significance requires exploring relationships that need to be continuously redefined and reshaped within their specific contexts. Adopting this perspective allows for the constant scrutiny of established certainties in previous historiography, challenging them, discarding formulas and categorisations, while also offering new analytical tools and expanding documentary and historiographical knowledge.

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Daniela Sacco*

The Performativity of the Classical According to Warburg: *Pathosformeln* and Memory in Renaissance Festivals

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to examine the performative aspect implicitly embedded in Warburg's thinking about Renaissance festivals, starting with the formulation of the term *Pathosformel* introduced in the text Dürer and Italian Antiquity (1905). Here Warburg identifies Poliziano's *Fabula di Orfeo* as "the first Italian tragedy" and complements and extends the insights from the essay *Costumi teatrali per gli intermezzi del 1589* (1895). The lessons of Burkhardt and Nietzsche played a crucial role in shaping Warburg's understanding of *intermedi* as a form of transition between art and reality, as opposed to theatre, which is based on words and text. These *intermedi* are characterised by their high expressive mimicry qualities, and they are embryonic forms of the new art to come, which is accompanied by an implicit tragic element. Warburg shifts from mimetic models associated with iconology to a study of art history where he focuses on the creative principle as the tragic matrix of the artistic act. This allows him to integrate performative themes more effectively within the cultural understanding of art.

Keywords: Aby Warburg; Renaissance festivals; Pathosformel; intermedi; performance

Aby Warburg's reflections on Italian Renaissance art are significantly influenced by his attention to festivals, and within this interest, the origin of the performative bearing that characterises his thought becomes apparent. Indeed, the theme of performativity is central to the domain of Warburgian studies, given that, from Warburg's perspective, the subject of artistic creation and reception is the human being understood in its kinetic essence and the artwork conceived as a living organism (Sacco 2024). This contribution intends to investigate the meaning of performativity as it emerges from Warburg's early studies on mimicry and theatrical phenomena as observed in the context of Renaissance festivals, starting with the coining of the term *Pathosformel*, and in relation to the conception of cultural memory, which will find a particular declination in the *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*.

Any examination of the performative dimension within theatre – which privileges transient, intangible events associated with cultural practices

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and various forms of celebrations, whether private, public, political, or civic – cannot fail to account for the perspective from which we observe it. Particularly noteworthy are the insights derived from the twentieth-century performative turn, which led to a view of theatre not so much as a static work but a living form, shifting the focus to the physical and kinetic dimensions of the performer, reenactment, the active role of the spectator, and the participatory, civic, and political dimensions. It is therefore of interest within the realm of Renaissance theatre studies to turn to current reflections on performance, employing categories and concepts that can be retroactively applied to an earlier historical context.[1]

Warburg's interest in Renaissance festivals and theatre, rather than being considered a red thread running through his research and biography – one only has to think of the re-enactments of costume festivals on the Renaissance model in which Warburg and his family engaged (Contarini 1992, 88) –, should instead be seen as foundational to his reflections on the posthumous legacy of the classical – the *Nachleben der Antike.* The germinal nucleus of the conception of *Nachleben der Antike* is situated precisely in the context of the study of Renaissance festivities as living art, and it is from this study that Warburg outlines the key concept of *Pathosformel*, a concept that we could qualify as ''performative'', and to which a specific notion of memory is linked, of particular significance for theatrical studies.

Reconstructing the genesis of his thought, it is evident that Warburg acknowledges the paramount role of theatre in the reinvention of ancient formulas by visual artists from his earliest studies. This is notably exemplified in his dissertation on Sandro Botticelli's *Birth of Venus and Spring* presented at the end of 1891 (Warburg 1999c, 89-156). With reference to various theatrical texts, including Niccolò da Correggio's *Fabula di Cahepalo*, an anonymous drama on Daphne, an intermezzo from the *Rappresentazione di S. Uliva* and Poliziano's *Orfeo*, Warburg recognises "the theatrical type of the nymph" by its dynamic quality and vitality, characterised by its forms and accessories in motion (*bewegtes Beiwerk*) – flowing robes and windswept hair. The nymph will be recognised in later reflections as an emblematic example of *Pathosformel*. In this text, Warburg also states the importance of artists seeing "the revered figures of antiquity standing before them in flesh and blood", that is, seeing them in presence, in their theatrical reenactment. Warburg observes that the direct imitation of theatrical scenes is a recurring practice in the figurative arts, recognizing a connection between figurative representations of ancient gestures and the moving presence of real bodies on stage.

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[1] For an investigation employing this perspective in Italy, see Bortoletti and Sacchi 2018.

The kinetic force of the body's movement on stage, embodying vitality, serves as the defining element characterizing the revival of classical antiquity. In his analysis, Warburg adopts Jacob Burckhardt's definition of Italian festive pageantry from *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (1860) as a "true transition from life into art" (Warburg 1999c, 125). It is precisely the consideration of this passage that forms the basis of Warburg's original reflection, leading to the development of the concept of *Nachleben.*

Two years later, in 1895, Warburg reiterated in *The Theatrical Costumes for the Intermedi of 1589* the arguments already presented in his dissertation on Botticelli. This time the subject is the costumes designed by Bernardo Buontalenti for festivities in honour of Christina of Lorraine, the future wife of the Grand Duke Ferdinando I de Medici. Alongside Warburg's formulation of the thesis that *intermezzos* – in this case, Girolamo Bargagli's *La pellegrina*, performed in the Uffizi Theatre by the Siena Accademia degli Intronati – were an embryonic form of the new dramatic genre of opera, he makes a reflection on accessories.

Accessories, costumes and gestures play a pivotal function in the *intermezzos*, which were fundamentally characterized by mimicry. According to Warburg, these performances, devoid of verbal expression, do not qualify as dramatic art. This observation underscores his perspective that the *dramatische Kunst*, or dramatic art, in Germany during his era predominantly relied on verbal elements. They were mythological pageant and, as such, benefited from accessories more comprehensible to the audience. Once again, a "carne e ossa" (flesh and blood-) vision of the "le figure famose dei tempi antichi" (revered figures of antiquity) is essential for the effective rendering of the artistic creation and reception. In this essay first published in Italian, Warburg coined the expression "*forme intermedie*" (transitional forms) "between real life and dramatic art" (Warburg 1999b, 369). This concept appears to align with Burkhardt's formulation regarding festivals as a transition from life to art.

> But such a judgment is too closely tied to the standpoint of modern theatrical practice. It fails to take account of the true origins of the Intermedio, which did not lie in the spoken drama so much as in the mythological pageant; and this, being an essentially mute and gestural art, naturally relies on accessories and adornments. All those now extinct transitional forms between real life and dramatic art, which the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries produced in such abundance —as, for example, in the carnival mascherate, for the sbarre, the giostre, and the bufole — afforded a unique opportunity for members of the public to see the revered figures of antiquity standing before them in flesh and blood. And in them the aid of decor and costume was all the more necessary, because the figures moved past the spectator in large

numbers and in rapid succession, leaving him only a short time in which to divine their often highly involved significance. (Warburg 1999b, 369)[2]

Warburg's interest in festivals illustrates his departure from the prevailing positivist tradition that dominated his time. This tradition bringing the study of spectacular phenomena back to that of theatrical literature, focused on the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century drama of sacred subjects, and coined the myth of the "origins of theatre" or the Renaissance "invention" of theatre (Ventrone 1990, 35-53). The text on *Intermedi* has become a point of reference not only for musical studies but also theatrical studies. Its significance as a foundational manifesto of theatrical iconography has been duly acknowledged, particularly within the context of Italian studies, as it anticipates fundamental themes of current historiographical studies by identifying essential methodological issues (Zorzi 1979, 419-63; 1988;

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[2] See also Warburg, 1895, 24: "Ma un tale giudizio troppo moderno ci impedirebbe di apprezzare nel suo giusto valore psicologico il processo artistico, a cui questo simbolismo dei vestimenti deve la sua origine e la sua ragion d'essere. Si trascura di considerare che l'intermezzo, secondo il suo carattere, non apparteneva essenzialmente all'arte drammatica, che si manifesta con la parola, ma all'arte del corteggio mitologico, e che questo, di sua natura perlopiù muto, richiedeva, come è facile spiegare, l'aiuto dei cenni, degli accessori e degli ornamenti. Tutte quelle forme intermedie ora estinte, e che si collocano fra la vita reale e l'arte drammatica ove compare la processione mitologica o allegorica così frequente nei pubblici festeggiamenti dei secoli XV, XVI e XVII (come, ad esempio, nelle mascherate di carnevale, per le sbarre, le giostre, le bufole ecc.), davano appunto alla società di quel tempo l'occasione principale di vedere in carne e ossa le figure famose dei tempi antichi. È vero che talvolta i canti composti per le mascherate aiutavano il pubblico a indovinarne il significato, ma non si poteva fare a meno dell'ornamento esteriore quando tali maschere passavano l'una dopo l'altra davanti agli occhi degli spettatori che in tempo brevissimo ne dovevano indovinare il complesso significato" (But such a too-modern judgment would prevent us from appreciating in its proper psychological value the artistic process, to which this symbolism of costumes owes its origin and *raison d'être*. One neglects to consider that the *intermezzo*, according to its character, did not belong essentially to the dramatic art, which is manifested by speech, but to the art of mythological pageantry, and that this, by its nature mostly silent, required, as is easy to explain, the help of gestures, accessories, and ornaments. All those intermediate forms now extinct, and which lie between real life and dramatic art where the mythological or allegorical procession so frequent in the public festivities of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries appears (as, for example, in carnival masquerades, for bars, jousts, *bufole*, etc.), gave precisely to the society of that time the main opportunity to see in the flesh the famous figures of ancient times. It is true that sometimes the songs composed for the masquerades helped the public to guess their meaning, but one could not do without the external ornamentation when such masks passed one after another before the eyes of the spectators who, in a very short time, had to guess their complex meaning). Unless otherwise stated, all translations into English are mine.

Molinari 1996, 37-8; Guardenti 1996, 36-7).

Although the study of Warburg's contribution to theatrical iconography is by no means exhaustive, we can observe that iconography does not give sufficient credit to the richness of the contribution that Warburg's studies make to theatre. Warburg transcended the role of a mere iconologist, despite being unanimously considered the founder of this discipline, and having many heirs who were scholars in iconology and iconography (Fritz Saxl, Erwin Panofsky, to name the best known). He was also and especially an anthropologist and a cultural historian. His analysis of images was situated within a more intricately delineated framework of meaning from a cultural-historical standpoint. It is through these scholarly interests that we discern the significance of theatre in his intellectual pursuits, particularly in relation to its performative dimension.

Another text that should attract equal if not greater interest in theatre studies is Warburg's 1905 lecture on Dürer and Italian antiquity, where he returns to Poliziano's *Orfeo* (Warburg 1999a, 553-8). He coined one of the key concepts of his reflection – the *Pathosformel* – precisely in reference to this specific case, the first profane drama in the vernacular, better defined as a *festa* by Poliziano himself, or the "first Italian tragedy" in Warburg's own words (Warburg 1999c, 121).[3] The *Pathosformel* – the emotive formula – that is taken from antiquity and applied to the Renaissance is not simply an atelier theme, common in the aestheticising vision of the work from which Warburg immediately distances himself, but an experience passionately relived in the scene of Poliziano's drama. In this text, Warburg identifies the models from which Dürer drew inspiration for his depiction of the death of Orpheus, dismembered by the Maenads, whose primary reference in ancient art is the tragic dismemberment of Pentheus. Warburg had already noticed how the Maenads – ready to enact the *sparagmòs* on Orpheus, who was bent to the ground in the moment before receiving the fatal blows – had the distinctive features of nymphs, characterised by their striding step and their ancient robes moving in the wind. Warburg links this scene to depictions by Italian artists of the fifteenth century, in illustrations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, beginning with the inaugural vernacular edition of 1497, and in drawings from the school of Mantegna, Giulio Romano and Antonio Pollaiolo; however, the primary emphasis is directed towards the concluding scene of Poliziano's *Fabula di Orfeo*, original in the literature of the time for its inclusion of the *sparagmòs* proper to the ancient tradition. The emphasis lies on the tangible, observable, and perceptible reference points that artists of the time sought to employ. Their intention was to encapsulate the potency of pathetic eloquence and articulate gestures charged with *pathos*.

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[3] On the importance of the *Pathosformel* concept in this text, see also Wedepohl 2012.

This text signifies a departure for Warburg from his preceding studies, as explicitly stated by the author himself in a note dating back to 1905, the year in which the text was drafted. This note accompanies the essay on theatrical costumes for the *Intermedi* of 1589: "Only now (8 September 1905) do I find that Nietzsche, in his *Birth of Tragedy*, deals at length with the origins of the opera. But how fundamentally wrong in relation to the historical process!!" (Warburg 1999b, 544).

Another note by Warburg is dated the same year: "Sul sorgere dello stile rappresentativo si veda il mio lavoro sui costumi teatrali: allora a Firenze non avevo tra le mani Nietzsche e la questione del dionisiaco era ancora molto lontana" (On the emergence of the representational style, see my work on theatrical costumes: at that time in Florence I did not have Nietzsche to hand and the question of the Dionysian was still a long way off; Ghelardi 2021, LI). The affirmation of this discard should be of interest to the field of theatre studies, which has focused more on the consideration of the text on *Florentini Intermedi.*

From 1905 onwards, Warburg's comprehension of festivals, to which he significantly devoted a series of fragments – over two hundred pages grouped together in a dossier entitled "Festwesen" all yet to be studied (Warburg Institute Archive [WIA] 3.58.10 formerly 3.62.1.) – intended to serve as the cornerstone for an expansive research undertaking, underwent a reinvigoration facilitated by the lessons of Nietzsche and the consequential importance attributed to the Dionysian element in the context of Renaissance art.

It could be contended that, whereas previous studies focused on the influence of theatre in the figurative arts according to a mainly mimetic model – the artist's vision of the theatrical scene, selected for its pathetic eloquence, and its figurative reproduction, thereby engaging with primarily iconological concerns – from 1905, Warburg enters more deeply into a reflection on the creative principle as the tragic matrix of the artistic act (Sacco 2015, 8-22). The question now shifts to the origin of the artistic and cultural principle, thus touching on themes that we can define more correctly as performative. In this context, the mediation of Nietzsche becomes pivotal. Within this variation we understand the meaning of the new concepts of *Pathosformel* and *Nachleben* and, here, anthropological interest comes into play, complementing and correcting the perspective of the art historian.

The study of Renaissance festivals must be considered in parallel with studies that absorbed Warburg's attention during this period, when he developed an awareness of the biological necessity of images, perceived to be midway between religion and artistic practice. This realization was further informed by his firsthand experiences during a journey to New Mexico and Arizona in 1895–96, undertaken for the purpose of observing Native American cultures. Fritz Saxl, his historical collaborator, notes a distinct

shift in Warburg's perspective on the "paganizing festivals" of the Florentine Renaissance upon his return from America (Saxl 2003, 183-90).

The theme of festivals as expressions of the interconnectedness between life, art, belief, and ritual reoccurs, perhaps unsurprisingly, in the *Grundlegende Bruchstücke zu einer pragmatischen Ausdruckskunde* (*Gesammelte Schriften* IV). These fragments, penned between 1888 and 1903, coincide with the period in which Warburg completed his dissertation on Botticelli, the essay on *Intermedi*, and developed the reflective musings from his journey to New Mexico. Consequently, it is imperative to regard these foundational fragments as the crucible shaping Warburg's intellectual framework, wherein various concepts, including the idea of the inherent kinetic nature of human beings emerged.

Let us initially concentrate on elucidating the significance of *Pathosformel*, coined in the essay on Dürer. One of the most compelling interpretations is provided by Salvatore Settis, who identifies it as an "explosive word", encapsulating both the rigidity of a *formula* and the energetic impetus of *pathos* (Settis 2012, 269-89). The double valence of this term arises from the inherent tension between two elements: *Pathos* and *Formel* exist as dialectically distinct. *Pathos* implies emotion, encompassing notions of instability, movement, and instantaneousness, whereas *Formel* conveys form, embodying ideas of stability, fixity, crystallization, and typicality. Likewise, Andrea Pinotti discerns in *Pathosformel* the dual signification of the concept of form as *morfé* – a sensible form, hence pliable and indefinite, and as *eidos* – an intelligible form, eidetic structure, and thus definitive scheme (Pinotti 2001). Consequently, the *Formel* encapsulates and conveys *pathos* and, as an expressive convention, is destined to perpetuate itself over time, passing from generation to generation and undergoing transformation. This is the reason why Warburg regards and employs the *Pathosformel* as a repertoire of forms in the transmission of the classical tradition, serving to express movement and passions as cultivated by ancient artists, subsequently transmitted, lost, and rediscovered during the Renaissance. In its new usage, the *Formel* undergoes a transformation, signifying a crystallization, a rigidification, and a detachment from *pathos*, or life itself. Consequently, it experiences a diminished ability to make sense of the existing reality, ultimately culminating in a phase of mannerism and the erosion of formal innovation, until a new view of life, a new impetus sprinkled with *pathos* renews it.

The process unfolding here is vividly depicted by Settis as "a highly dramatic alternation of loss of meaning, corresponding to the hardening into *formulas*, and regaining meaning, from *formulas* that had seemed, for centuries, inert and dead" (Settis 2012, 273). A novel aspect that Warburg explicitly elucidates in his essay on Dürer, distinct from his earlier studies, is the "twofold" dimension of the *Pathosformel*, recognized in the two facets

of ancient plasticity – the "emotive force of gesture" ("pathetisch gesteigerte Mimik") and the "tranquil, classic ideal" ("klassisch idealisierende Ruhe"; Warburg 1999a, 553).

The Nietzschean coinage in this "twofold" dimension is evident, as Warburg explains later in his 1914 lecture *The Emergence of the Antique as a Stylistic Ideal in Early Renaissance Painting,* in which he refers to the image of "a double herm of Apollo-Dionysus", meaning an "Apollonian *ethos* together with Dionysian *pathos* grow like a double branch from one trunk, as it were, rooted in the mysterious depths of the Greek maternal earth" (Warburg 2001, 28). The assimilation of Nietzschean terminology enables Warburg to effect a decisive departure from the Winckelmannian conception of ancient art.

Nietzsche became an essential point of reference for Warburg, whose reading of *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1889 profoundly influenced his thinking. The binary perspective of Apollo and Dionysus, fundamental to the cultural process, metamorphosis, and the origin and dissolution of forms, which Warburg absorbed from the German philosopher Nietzsche, underwent further refinement and correction in Warburg''s interpretation through his engagement with the writings of Burckhardt. This is clearly seen in the 1927 essay *Burckhardt und Nietzsche, Schlußübung,* dedicated to the two thinkers considered by Warburg to be "seismographs" capable of capturing the mnemonic wave (or engram) from the past. They represent, in Warburg's eyes, the two poles of *ethos* and *pathos*, the Apollonian and the Dionysian. For Warburg, in whose worldview life and thought are intricately interwoven, both Nietzsche and Burckhardt serve as indispensable touchstones. They not only convey theoretical frameworks but also embody vital examples that profoundly shape his life. We are aware that Nietzsche, in invoking the Dionysian, eventually succumbed to its overpowering influence. Warburg, in contrast, defended himself against this eventuality by drawing lessons from Burckhardt. Through the virtue of *sophrosyne*, Burckhardt withstood the overwhelming impact of the mnemonic wave by shaping it and containing it within defined forms (Warburg, 1991).

Warburg reiterated in 1929, in his introduction to the *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, the imperative, following and extending beyond Nietzsche, to perceive the Apollo-Dionysus duality as a manifestation of the polar function within the organic unity of "sophrosyne and ecstasy". In essence, Warburg viewed Apollo and Dionysus "as a single, organic functional polarity that marks the limit values of the human will to expression" (Warburg 2017, 11-19).

The *Pathosformel* concept allows for this balancing act: in the Warburgian perspective, which regards human life as a kinetic process and a flux of energies, art emerges as an organic and harmonious creation stemming from the polarity between *ethos* and *pathos*. The *Pathosformel* serves as an expression of this inherent balance. Hence, an interpretation that views the

Pathosformel solely as an eruption of *pathos* is one-sided. Such an approach overly emphasizes the destructive and regressive facets while overlooking the constructive and formative aspects. In his essay on Dürer, Warburg models the concept of *Pathosformel* on the image of Orpheus, the central figure in Poliziano's *Fabula*, a character to whom Warburg would repeatedly return, discerning its inherently tragic nature. Indeed, the figure of Orpheus, as perspicaciously observed by Giorgio Colli, encapsulates the connection between Apollo and Dionysus, whereas Nietzsche, while unveiling their polarity, did not fully recognize their essential unity (Colli 1977).

The *sparagmós*, the dismemberment of Orpheus by the Maenads, devotees of the orgiastic cult of Dionysus, notably reintroduced in Poliziano's version, can be traced back through Ovid to Euripides' *Bacchae*. In its primary source, inferred from various fragmentary ancient accounts, the *sparagmós* is attributed to Aeschylus, who, in the lost tragedy *Bassarides*, narrates the dismemberment of Orpheus by the vengeful god Dionysus for Orpheus's preference of Apollo over him. The tragic myth of Orpheus precisely delineates the unity between Apollo and Dionysus within the character, illustrating a profound contradiction and paradox inherent in the polarity and unity between these two divinities.

Colli observes the foundational relationship between Dionysus and Eleusis as presuppositions of Orpheus. While Orpheus tells the narrative of the god and imparts the highest knowledge through initiation, he also engages in playing the lyre and singing. In Orpheus it is possible to recognise Apollo who manifests himself, revealing his benevolent aspect as "the one who grants Dionysus" (*Dionysodote*), after his dismemberment (Colli 1977, 37). The poetry of Orpheus, according to Colli, primarily embodies the song of Apollo in its expression, appearance, music, and speech. However, its content is infused with the passion of Dionysus. Hence, Warburg designates Orpheus as a *Pathosformel*, just as he did for the nymph. Still referring to the importance of reading Nietzsche to gain an understanding of the festivals, Warburg writes, in another note in the *Tagebuch* dating from 9 December 1905:

> Mir wird klar . . . dass eine stilgeschichtliche Ikonographie des Todes des Orpheus eigentlich das Nietzschesche Problem vom Ursprung der Tragödie trifft; in ganz auffi lligem Zusammentreffen, our musste es heissen: 'Der Ursprung der Tragödie aus dem apollinischen Stile des dionisischen Tanzspiels'. Ich sah auch erst vorgestern, dass Nietzsche über die Entwicklung des *Stile rappresentativo* zum Schluss schreibt. Wenn Nietzsche doch nur mit den Tatsachen der Volkerkunde und Volkskunde besser vertraut gewesen wäre! Sie hätten selbst für ihn durch ihr spezifisches Gewicht regulierende Kraft für seinen Traumvogelflug besessen. (WIA, 3.10.3; Gombrich 1970, 185)

[I now realize that a stylistic iconography of the Death of Orpheus really touches on Nietzsche's problem of the Birth of Tragedy; a very remarkable coincidence except that it should read 'The Birth of Tragedy from the Apollonian style of the Dionysiac dance-ritual'. The day before yesterday I also saw that Nietzsche writes in his conclusion about the development of the *stile rappresentativo*. If Nietzsche had only been familiar with the data of anthropology and folklore! Even in his case their specific gravity would have served as a regulating force for his dream-bird flight.]

Warburg discerns the dual aspects of the figure of Orpheus, as reflected in the meaning of *Pathosformel*. This understanding allows him to grasp the function of Renaissance festivals as intermediate forms between art and life, as moments of transition and metamorphosis, coinciding with the emergence of new forms of expression, such as opera. The interest in these transitional forms, in which *ethos* and *pathos* achieve a harmonious balance, is consistent with all Warburg's research. In these forms, he perceives the artwork not solely as content or representation, which implies the iconological category of mimesis, but rather in terms of the energetic tensions that facilitate its expression. This perspective aligns more closely with the performative category of metamorphosis rather than that of mimesis.

In the *Grundlegende Bruchstücke*, as mentioned, this very aspect is captured through frequent references to festivals. In the fragment 410 of 1901 Warburg recognises how

Festwesen unterscheidet sich dadurch von den andern dramatischen Künsten daß die Verbindung der künstlerischen Leistung mit dem praktischen Anlaß (der mimische soziale Reiz) nötig ist. Der Aufzug, die Procession, der Trionfo der zum Endpunkt (Ziel) das Opfergeschenk hat. (Warburg 2011, 144, translation mine)

[Festivals differ from other dramatic arts because they require the connection of an artistic performance and a concrete occasion (the social mimicry stimulus). The pageant, procession, and triumph that have as their end point (purpose) the sacrificial offering.]

In notes penned much later, in 1924, within the margins of a lecture delivered by Karl Reinhardt at the Warburg Haus in Hamburg on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Orpheus and the festivals are described by Warburg as "Darwin's missing link for artistic creation" (Warburg 2021, 513). This echoes the fragment 420 from 1901 where Darwin heads the list of Filippino Lippi, Botticelli, Carlyle, Vischer, festivals, the Hopi, the Tornabuoni, Ghirlandaio, and back to the nymph, via Lorenzo Il Magnifico[4] (Warburg 2011, 147).

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[4] See Warburg 2011, 147, fr. 420: "Automatische Reizausgleichung durch unorgani-

The reference to Darwin in Warburg's notes suggests an association with the study of mimicry and gestures as the foundational elements for understanding the genesis of cultural processes that culminate in the most refined forms of art. Warburg suggests that the genesis of art can be traced from the immediate mimicry prompted by the *pathos* of experience to artistic manifestations, for example, those that he, in the 414 fragment of 1901, recognises as: "ornamental figures that are the physiognomic precipitate of the mimicry of royal feasts. Degeneration (decay) through the deterioration (real or through animated recollection) of the immediate mimic stimulus" ("Ornamentale Figuren der physiognomische Niederschlag der realen festlichen Mimik. Entartung (Verfall) durch Absterben des unmittelbaren mimischen Reizes"; Warburg 2011, 145, Fr. 414 - 31.7.901).

During his university years, Warburg engaged with Darwin's seminal work, "The Expression of Emotions in Men and Animals" (1872), wherein the discernible influence on the *Pathosformel* concept becomes apparent. In Warburg's view, gestures serve as subtle remnants of intentional and dynamic actions executed in the past, a perspective inspired by Darwin's exploration of expressions and emotions in human and animal behaviour. A performative conception, wherein gesture is considered a cultural expression, entails a memorial stratification connected to its repetitive nature and subsequent reactivation.

If experience leads to the formation of ritualistic and artistic expressions, these formations are prone to undergo mechanical repetition over time, devoid of their original vitality. However, a renewed contact with life has the potential to metamorphose these expressions into novel forms. The genesis of artistic creation has its origin in this dialectic, where the tension between established forms and the vitality of lived experience sparks the evolution and innovation of artistic expression. The engagement with life, characterized by *pathos*, not only revitalizes forms but also shapes the connection with memory. It goes beyond mere survival of a memory that can be mimetically reconstructed; instead, it involves the potential to re-live an experience. This concept is encapsulated in terms such as reenactment, embodied and relived memory, and, consequently, *Nachleben* (survival or afterlife) – interpreted as *Nach-erleben* (reliving or re-experiencing) – signifying the ability to undergo a renewed experience (Bonneau 2022, 21-6).

sche / Umfangserfüllung / die Nymphe als Umfangsbestimmung endlich zusammen. Von Darwin über Filippino zu Botticelli durch Carlyle und Vischer zum Festwesen zu den Indianern und durch die Tornabuoni mit Ghirlandajo wieder zur Nymphe . . . " (Automatic balancing of impulse through inorganic fulfillment of scope, the nymph has determination of scope finally together. From Darwin to Filippino to Botticelli through Carlyle and Vischer to festival culture to the Hopi and through the Tornabuoni with Ghirlandaio and back to the nymph . . .).

Psychology assumes a pivotal role in Warburgian theory, drawing substantiation from Darwinian evolutionary theory. However, its emphasis lies more in elucidating an inchoative process than in providing an explanation for the anachronistic return of a memory object. Secular festivals appear to Warburg as "faded forms" of cultic practice:

> Die Perioden des Schwankens zwischen den Polen. Der Atarachie / Contemplatio und der Ekstase / Knisis - als Kreislaufgesetze erkennbar wenn wir die kultliche Praxis, deren abgeschwächte Formen wir als Welt. Festwesen festzustellen haben, als Zwischenleiter zwischen Religion und Begriff als katalytische Funktion in der Prägung der Ausdruckswerte begreifen, da sie das Summum der Eindrücke gestaltend sammeln und doch noch leidende Bewegung ist. (WIA, 1.9.18.4.2.3.1, fol. 15, translation mine)

> [The periods of fluctuation between the poles. Ataraxia / *contemplatio* and ecstasy / *kinesis* are recognizable as laws of circular motion if we conceive cultic praxis, whose faded forms we have fixed as profane festivals, as an intermediate scale between religion and concept as a catalytic function in the coinage of expressive values, since cultic praxis collects by forming them the sum of impressions, yet is still a suffering movement.]

Festivals emerge within a historical phase characterized by oscillation between these dialectical poles, heralding the formalisation of *pathos*, of lived experience, alongside the coinage of new forms. The mythical ritual complex embodied by Orpheus is invoked to disrupt crystallised forms within mannerism and give rise to the emergence of novel forms, particularly within the framework of festivals acknowledged as precursors to innovative theatrical genres.

In his 1927 autobiographical text *Vom Arsenal zum Laboratorium*, Warburg states how Poliziano, mediating the Ovidian passage via Orpheus, has been "the mediator of antique movements in dramatic representation". For this reason, his work is to be regarded: "the main thread that allowed me to penetrate the labyrinth of intellectual interrelations, which revealed to me also, as its ripest fruit and as a problem to be solved, the northern drama of the soul (Shakespeare!)" (Warburg 2012a, 115).

In the given context, the characterization by Warburg of Poliziano's text as the "first Italian tragedy" holds notable significance. Defying clear categorization, this piece, has been subject to diverse interpretations, being alternatively identified as a sacred representation of a pagan theme, a representative eclogue, a mythological fable, a fable, a pastoral drama, or a mixed form of drama. It can be inferred that, according to Warburg, the nascent theatrical form that emerged at the dawn of the Renaissance was inherently tragic, precisely because it was nascent. It was the new stylistic form emerged from the polaric process of its formation, from the interweaving

of *pathos* and *ethos*, the Apollonian and Dionysian, embodied in the symbolic figure of Orpheus. Warburg seems to contend that the fundamental tension of tragedy underlies the birth of all theatrical forms, including the works of Shakespeare. At the core of authentic artistic creation of new forms lies a tragic matrix, a concept akin to the one Warburg identifies at the roots of civilisation.

In the *Introduction* to the *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, artistic creation is included among the foundational acts of civilisation and described as a mechanism through which humanity navigates and orients itself within the world. The significance of artistic creation resides in the intricate interplay between the self, as the subjective entity, and the external world, perceived as the objective realm. Warburg designates the creation of a conscious distance between the self and the external world as the foundational act of human civilisation; this intermediate space serves as the substrate for artistic creation (Warburg 2017, 11-29).

In this text, Apollo and Dionysus – emblematic of *sophrosyne* and *ecstasy* respectively – emerge as two indissoluble poles that give rise to the *Denkraum*. This term was coined by Warburg in *Pagan-Antique Prophecy in Words and Images in the Age of Luther* (1920) to denote space for thought and is composed together with *sophrosyne* (*Denkraum der Besonnenheit*). This mental space acquired through artistic expression lies in the fragile ground between the two limiting poles of psychic behaviour, namely "tranquil contemplation" on the one hand and "orgiastic devotion" on the other. In comprehending the artistic act, characterized by Warburg as a civilizational act, one must be willing to:

> descend into the deep human spiritual compulsion to become enmeshed in the timeless strata of the material. Only then does one reach the mint that coins the expressive values of pagan emotion stemming from primal orgiastic experience: thiasotic tragedy. (Warburg 2017, 18-19)

As observed, the concept of *Pathosformel* encapsulates the fusion of *pathos* and *stasis*, incorporating the dynamism of movement alongside the enduring nature of form (*Formel*) (Settis 2012, 269-89). Hence, it is justifiable to regard the *Pathosformel* as "an expression aligning with the mental space of reflection", akin to the *Denkraum*, as articulated by Ulrich Port (Port 2004, 42). The radical and tragic polarity between *ethos* and *pathos*, as previously delineated in the two-faced herm of Apollo-Dionysus, is therefore conceived both in expressive forms of emotion precariously crystallised in *formulae*, recognizable in a rhetoric of gesture (the *Pathosformeln*), and in the dialectical interplay that nurtures the space for thought (the *Denkraum*), from which the artistic act emanates. *Denkraum* can be defined as the space for thought that emerges between impulse and action; it represents a suspended moment,

which Warburg recognizes as inherently dramatic.

This concept is exemplified in Warburg's analysis of the image of Medea, immortalized in the instant just preceding the act of infanticide. The image in question is taken from a fresco located in Pompeii, specifically within the House of the Dioscuri. In this depiction, Medea is portrayed holding a dagger, as she contemplates killing her children who are playing not far from her, and Warburg dwells on it often both in his written works and by including the image in some of the plates of the *Mnemosyne Atlas*. In Medea's gesture, Warburg discerns the poignancy and drama of the transitory moment in the symbolic interval of suspension. Within this symbolic suspension, Warburg identifies the potential for a demonic experience that can propel individuals towards unrestrained expression. He attributes this insight to the teachings of "Religionshistoriker, Philologen und Psychologen" (critics of religion, philologists, and psychologists) , as mentioned in a passage from his lecture *Italienische Antike im Zeitalter Rembrandts* (1926), specifically referencing the Pompeian image (Warburg 2012b, 100).

Furthermore, it is not challenging to perceive a correlation between the suspended gestures of Medea and the persona of another theatrical character, Hamlet. Both are characterized by a similar hesitation and delay in carrying out an act of revenge. Warburg identifies "the Hamlet problems of the agony of conscience between reflex movement and reflective behaviour" ("Hamletproblemen der Gewissensqual zwischen Reflexbewegung und Reflexionsverhalten"), a concept he acknowledges and occasionally references, particularly in his study of Rembrandt's *Claudius Civilis* (Warburg 2012b, 99, translation mine). In this moment of suspension, characterized as "the eternally fleeting pause between impulse and action" ("Die ewig flüchtige Pause zwischen Antrieb und Handlung"), where the dynamics of stimulus and response unfold, the full creative, formative (and at the same time potentially destructive) power of gesture as the first artistic form par excellence is revealed. "Es steht bei uns", Warburg writes, "wie lange wir mit Hilfe der Mnemosyne die Atempause dehnen können" (it is a pause of breathing, which it is up to us to decide how far to dilate, with the help of *Mnemosyne*; 2012b, 101).

The intermediate dimension of festivals, where Aby Warburg identifies the potential for dismantling antiquated forms and introducing new ones, resonates with the mid-Enlightenment reflections of Jean-Jacques Rousseau on festivals as opposed to theatre. Rousseau's perspectives on this matter are evident, for instance, in his *Lettre à d'Alambert* (1758) and *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne* (1771-1772); and specifically, this alignment resonates with the "generative model" attributed to Rousseau's conception of festivals, as highlighted by Marco De Marinis (2004, 35). This model revolves around the interplay of two contrasting elements: the festival as an

entirely spontaneous and disinterested occurrence that facilitates the release of unbridled energy, and the festival as an organized institution and tool of public pedagogy, directed towards representation. These two contrasting poles attributable to 'revolution' (understood as the emergence of a novel form) and order (understood as the repetition of the same form) encapsulate the dual elements inherent in the Warburgian concept of the *Pathosformel*: the bivalent significance of *pathos* and *ethos*, embodied in the mythical figure of Orpheus and in his revitalized ritual and civic function during the early Renaissance.

In this regard, to return to the reflection on contemporary and performance studies, one could note the resonance between the revival of the Orpheus myth at the dawn of the Italian Renaissance – evidenced by a surge in visual representations such as images, drawings, sculptures, and engravings, along with its incorporation into theatrical performances (Bortoletti 2020) – and the role shaping by the resurgence of the Dionysus myth since the late 1960s. This resurgence is manifested through the remarkable proliferation of Euripides' *Bacchae* in theatrical productions (Fischer-Lichte 2014; Hall, Macintosh, Wrigley, 2004).

This global phenomenon has been specifically examined by Erika Fischer-Lichte, who discerned in it a pivotal historical transition fostering the emergence of revitalized forms of expression, concurrent with the ascendancy of the performative dimension over the representative one. Dionysus, the deity associated with inebriation, the negation of the *principium individuationis*, and the rejection of any unequivocal definition of identity, has resurged as a central figure in twentieth-century culture. The dysfunctional and conflicting mythical realm depicted in Greek tragedy provides an aesthetic and cultural prism through which to interpret the comparably disordered and conflicting aspects of contemporary reality. Richard Schechner's *Dionysus in 69* serves as a seminal work in this resurgence, representing one of the pivotal moments in the performative turn, marked by its significant ritual bearing.

Fischer-Lichte observes how the performative turn in the late 19th and early 20th centuries went hand in hand with a shift in the theatre, overturning the hierarchy between text and performance, and at the same time redefining the relationship between ritual and myth. While, in the 19th century, myth was seen as primary and ritual only as its illustration, scholars such as William Robertson Smith, James George Frazer, Jane Ellen Harrison and Emile Durkheim reversed this hierarchy, and recognised that the ritual, as "not simply a thing done but a thing re-done or pre-done", came first (Fischer-Lichte 2001, 277-91). The same could be said about the "transitional forms" Warburg recognises in Renaissance festivals as embryonic manifestations of the emerging art, which have no connection with dramatic art built on

words and text (myth), but exhibit highly expressive, mimetic, and gestural qualities (ritual).

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Claudio Passera*

The Glory of Rome Comes Back to Life. Real and Ephemeral Triumphal Arches for a Renaissance Wedding. Rimini 1475

Abstract

On 24 June 1475, Elisabetta da Montefeltro and Roberto Malatesta's wedding took place in Rimini. Four wooden triumphal arches marked the processional route of the princess' entry. Over them, figurants impersonating historical characters welcomed the newlyweds and the most important guest, Federico da Montefeltro. The design of these ephemeral architectures was inspired by the Arch of Augustus, a gate in the former city wall dedicated to the Roman emperor in 27 BC. This essay investigates how the ceremony transformed Malatesta Rimini into a new Rome, reconstructing a monument of the city's glorious past with temporary materials and modifying the urban landscape with ephemeral decorations. It also clarifies how the poems proclaimed during the triumph associated Federico da Montefeltro with the figures of Julius Caesar, Themistocles, and Furius Camillus, thus celebrating his new alliance with the groom. Finally, it illustrates how Malatesta's allies sent artists to the nuptials as diplomatic gift. They made the feast an occasion to exchange different performance cultures, including that of the Roman triumph studied by the Italian Humanists, whose influence on the celebrations is analysed here. This essay also focuses on the presence in Rimini of theatrical events similar to those designed by Filippo Brunelleschi for the religious performances acted in the Florentine churches of Santa Maria del Carmine and San Felice in Piazza. By the second half of the fifteenth century, the Florentine craftsmen had exported such sets into the Italian courts with the most up-to-date theatre culture, for example Pesaro. Here, a few days before the Malatesta wedding, the city ruler Costanzo Sforza married Camilla d'Aragona during a five-day lavish festival. By comparing the primary sources of the two events, various similarities with the Rimini celebrations will be revealed. Such similarities are here investigated to identify the models, meanings, and political communicative intents of the Malatesta wedding feast.

KEYWORDS: Renaissance Italy; Wedding Feast; Spectacles; Rimini; Roberto Malatesta

On 24 June 1475, Elisabetta da Montefeltro, the thirteen-year-old daughter of Federico, duke of Urbino, entered Rimini to marry the city's ruler, Roberto Malatesta. This marriage healed the conflict which had seen Montefeltro opposing the Malatestas during the hostilities between the groom's father, Sigismondo Pandolfo, and the popes Pius II and Paul II for the control of Romagna (1460-1470). On another, more subtle, level, the nuptial alliance

between the two houses aimed to curb the ambitions of Sixtus IV, who in those years was trying to herd the small domains of Emilia into one area under direct papal control, in order to create a fief for his nephew, Girolamo Riario.

In April 1471, the betrothal of Elisabetta and Roberto had been signed with the approval of Galeazzo Maria Sforza, duke of Milano, Ferdinando d'Aragona, king of Napoli, Sixtus IV himself, and was followed by revels in Urbino and Rimini, mentioned exclusively in the *Cronaca di Urbino* by Guerriero da Gubbio.[1] In contrast, the testimonies about the wedding celebrations in Rimini are numerous, which show how the Roman glory of a Renaissance city, comning back to life thanks to the fictional atmosphere of temporary urban decorations and poems recited during the festivities, could legitimise the diplomatic policy of its ruler and exalt his incoming government. This essay analyses how the Rimini ephemeral return to its Roman past could be turned into a celebratory propaganda tool for Roberto Malatesta, which brought the city up to the level of the most advanced Italian centres of performative arts, thanks to the intervention of performers, musicians, and artists sent by the groom's allies according to the alliances they stipulated with him. This will be possible thanks to the comparative study of the celebration's primary sources and poetic texts recited therein, explaining the communicative intentions of its different performative moments.

1. Preparation of the feast

The *Cronaca malatestiana*, written by Gaspare Broglio between 1443 and 1477, reports the most extensive record of the festival and several of the compositions recited on that occasion.[2] The text describes how, in honour of the bride and her illustrious father, four ephemeral triumphal arches and several urban ornaments had been erected on the route that would have led her from the city walls to Castel Sismondo.[3] She entered Rimini through the arch of Augustus, built in 27 BC in praise of the first Roman emperor

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[1] See Guerriero Da Gubbio 1902, 88. On the political weight of the marriage, see Falcioni 2012, 51-3; Bornstein 1988, 101-17.

[2] Native of Siena, son of Angelo Tartaglia, after studying humanities Gaspare followed his father's footsteps by undertaking a military career. From 1443 he served Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, first as a soldier, and later as administrator and diplomat. After the death of his patron, Broglio retired, fully devoting himself to authoring *Cronaca malatestiana*. About this work, see Bornstein 2005, 143-9.

[3] A reconstructive hypothesis of the wedding procession route in De Maria 1984, 443-62.

and the rearrangement of via Flaminia he commissioned after his victory over Marc Antony (called Porta San Bartolo by the chronicler, because of the church that was once standing close to it). The monument, a symbol of the strategic importance that Rimini had for the empire, was among the first that displayed the *Augustus* title for Ottaviano, which the Senate bestowed on him in January of that same year. Despite its being absorbed into the medieval city walls and crested by a crenelation that altered its original appearance, it inspired Alberti for the project of the Tempio Malatestiano, and was renowned among Italian Humanists.[4] On the day of the event, on its façade, one could see "homini sperti vestiti in forma delli antichi e bon romani, li quali all'intrata dell'illustrissimo duca d'Urbino e della illustrissima madonna dissero in versi recievendo lo illustrissimo duca e la illustrissima madonna" (learned men dressed up as the ancient and fair Romans, who, as the most illustrious duke of Urbino and most illustrious lady made their entrance, proclaimed verses, receiving the most illustrious duke and lady).[5]

Refined cloths hanging on today's Corso Augusto marked the route that led to Piazza Maggiore, today's Piazza Tre Martiri, where Julius Caesar was said to have pronounced his famous speech to the XIII legion before crossing the Rubicon, provoking the civil war. The first two ephemeral arches were erected here, specifically for the event:

> In capo de la detta piazza fo edificato un archo triumphale altissimo e dignissimo, con tucte quelle solinnità apartenenti. E sull'archo v'era bellissimo palencato, sul quale v'erano dodici homini vestiti nella forma di quelli famosissimi romani; et in fra mezzo loro era una sedia voita dignissima, coperta di drappo d'oro.
>
> Conseguendo per insino a un altro arco triumphale, sopra el quale v'era defitii d'angeli su certi rami, li quali de continovo se volgivano intorno cantando degnie melodie. (Turchini 2001, 437)

> [At the top of the said piazza a high and commendable arch was built, full of solemnity. Atop the arch, within a splendid fenced area, there were twelve men dressed up as those most famous Romans; and in their midst there was a regal empty chair, covered in a gilded drape.
>
> Proceeding onward there was an additional triumphal arch, on top of which there were angels sitting above some branches, who continuously turned around singing beautiful melodies.]

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[4] Pasini 1988, 63-101. On the Humanists' interest for the monument, see Quaquarelli 2018, 237-50.

[5] The manuscript of *Cronaca malatestiana* is kept in the Biblioteca Gambalunga of Rimini, sc.ms 1161. The notes on Roberto Malatesta's wedding are published in Turchini 2001, 436. Here and below, translations from Italian are mine.

The central area of the piazza was occupied by a wooden castle, which was going to be stormed by two rival teams during the *Pas d'Armes* scheduled for the end of the festivities. The bleachers built on the sides of the square allowed the guests to watch the spectacle.

Two additional triumphal arches "in varii modi hordenati" (Turchini 2001, 438; differently displayed) and more cloths covered the second section of the Corso leading to Castel Sismondo, where the nuptial banquet would take place. Lastly, on the overlooking piazza Cavour, decorations for the fountain that had been gracing the city ever since the Roman Age, which was also the most important local source of drinking water, were laid (Ravara 2020, 80-6). A golden sphere held by four angels was added above its summit, while in the two polygonal fourteenth-century basins were four makeshift statues of dolphins.

After the urban decorations, Broglio described the ornaments of the Rocca malatestiana – built between 1437 and 1446 for Sigismondo Pandolfo –, starting from the gate of the entry tower that faced the city and whose walls, at that time, were painted red.[6] Two statues with shapes of giants watched this gate; and on its summit, according to the chronicler, two "composti con maestrevole mano" (Turchini 2001, 438; well-crafted) angels were sitting, who supposedly sang welcoming verses as Federico da Montefeltro, his daughter, and the most renowned guests crossed it. It is possible that said angels had been *crafted* with temporary materials (wood, papier-mâché, scagliola) and that singers, hidden behind them, sang welcoming messages; perhaps in polyphony, as their subdivision in two distanced groups would suggest.

After climbing the steps and crossing the Camera dei Ginepri and the rooms previously inhabited by Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, the guests ended up in the Sala Grande of the castle, with the tables set for the nuptial banquet lying before them.[7] Silk and fine gold tapestries covered its walls, with "figurati gran parte delli famosi re e inperadori e baroni e cavalieri de cristiani e pagani . . . et similmente tucte le famose donne." (438; images of most of the famous kings, emperors, barons, and Christian and pagan knights . . . along with all of the famous women). After these words, in *Cronaca malatestiana*, a poem illustrates the biblical and historical characters sewn in

[6] There is a wide bibliography on the castle, its project, its construction times. For the bare minimum, see the contribution by *Castel Sismondo, Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta e l'arte militare nel primo Rinascimento*, Atti del Convegno (Rimini, 20-2 September 2002), edited by Angelo Turchini. Cesena: Il Ponte Vecchio. Giovanni Maccioni provides a virtual reconstruction of how the building looked in the fifteenth century, available at www.riminiduepuntozero.it. (Accessed: 04 January 2024).

[7] About the identification of Castel Sismondo spaces according to an inventory of the movable property of Isotta degli Atti (1468), see Tosi Brandi 2020, 231-9.

the tapestries. Then, the text describes an unusual apparatus built upon the entrance of the Santa Colomba cathedral:

> In sull'entrata della prima porta del domo v'era dificato una cupola d'un padiglione dalle cortine fuori, in quatro parti il padiglione era disteso, significando i quatro elementi, aiero, terra, acqua e fuocho aceso. (442)

> [Above the entrance of the first gate of the duomo there was the dome of a pavilion with outward curtains, the pavilion was laid out in four parts, each representing the four elements: air, earth, water and lit fire.]

Then four octaves describe the natural wonders depicted on the curtains of the pavilion representing the power of the elements, introduced with these words: "edificato a strani intendimenti / or questo padiglione tenete a mente / v'era la luna colli raggi de sole / veder lo potiva chiunqua lo vole" (built toward bizarre effects / keep in mind this pavilion / moonlight shone through sunrays / anyone could see it if they wanted to), and concluded by declaring that atop the dome one could see a lamb.

The effects this pavilion produced on 25 June 1475 as the newlyweds entered or exited the Duomo have not been reported by Broglio. Since the lines mentioning the moon and the sunrays precede the ones about the painted images in the four curtains, claiming that anyone could easily see them (perhaps due to their prominence), my hypothesis is that in the middle of the pavilion hung a sphere shaped like a moon joined with a sun, which could rotate or be lowered down the structure towards the onlookers, thanks to a mechanism for rising, at a specific moment of the ceremony, which created the *bizarre effects* mentioned by the chronicler.[8]

Therefore, the pavilion structure and its operating principle would be similar to the theatrical sets (or *paradisi*) created, according to Vasari, by Filippo Brunelleschi in the 1420s for the religious performances of the *Ascension* and *Annunciation*, staged by the confraternities of Agnesa and Orciuolo in the Florentine churches of Santa Maria del Carmine and San Felice in Piazza respectively.[9] Hanging between the trusses of the roofs of the two churches, the said sets, with their cube-shaped structure containing a half sphere, which appeared as a dome looking at it from below, were a three-dimensional representation of paradise. At their bases they had

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[8] Additionally, in the fourth verse of the first octave dedicated to the wonders represented within the apparatus, Broglio mentions that in the air section there was a "Fair and clear moon", seemingly referring to a painting, because, if the first mention of the satellite wasn't referring to a three-dimensional object, then this would be a redundant repetition either of the iconographic aspect or its poetic description.

[9] The most up-to-date description about the operating mechanisms and structure of these apparatuses is provided by Ventrone 2016, 60-85.

moving curtains painted with starry skies, which opened up revealing painted angels overlooking the walls of the half sphere, placed behind actual children, dressed up as musician angels, sitting across the perimeter. From the centre, a cloud of cotton wool was lowered down, supported by a structure of metallic concentric circles equipped with upward gears: the sitting place of Christ, who hung from the ropes that would allow his ascension toward the heavens, or the archangel Gabriel, sent to the earth to bring the message to Mary. The wondrous appearance of the descending *cloud* – which was also equipped with lighting contraptions that made it glow, thus exalting its spectacle – was the reason of the success that Brunelleschi's *paradisi* achieved during the Renaissance.

By the second half of the fifteenth century, Florence's stagecraft masters had began to export the *clouds* outside the city's borders, adapting their appearance according to the staging needs of the cities where they were invited.[10] In Rimini, for example, the interior of the heavenly dome didn't host painted angels, but the wonders of creation, subdivided in four segments, and the upward mechanism of the cloud was simplified and adapted according to the motion of the sphere representing the sun and the moon.[11]

The Florentine inspiration for the apparatus seems confirmed by the fact that among the "[s]pese facte per ornare la ghiesa per le nocie del signore miser Robert" ([e]xpenses sustained for the church decoration for messer Roberto's wedding), reported in the bookkeeping of the Santa Colomba cathedral chapter, there can be found the item "Per corda per li festuni et per atacare *nevole* e fare altre cose necessarie per la ghiesa e per una corda nova per atacare el cerchio de le *nevole* e frasche in megio la chiesa" (Ropes for garlands and for attaching the *clouds*, and other necessary things for the church and for a new rope to attach the *clouds'* circle and the branches in the middle of the church).[12] The clouds' circle was supposedly a part of the structure comparable to the ones of the aforementioned Brunelleschi's *paradisi*, while the word *clouds* used in the notes confirms the reference,

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[10] On the implementation of the Brunelleschi's creations for court spectacles in Milan and Ferrara, see Ventrone 2022, 11–41.

[11] The apparatus iconography, with the half sphere divided into four decorated sectors dedicated to the power of the elements, seems to recall that of the cross-ribbed vault of the Sant Vitale in Ravenna presbyter. The image of the *Agnus Dei*, which stood out like the midday sun against a starry sky, surrounded by a garland carried by four Angels, divides into four sectors a phantasmagoria of birds, fishes, flowers, blazing flames, symbolizing Christ's power over the creation.

[12] Delucca 2020, 5-19. The note reveals that the apparatus was located "in the middle of the church", so it was inside it, hanging over the main gate of the Duomo, as Broglio indicated. It is therefore possible that it was hanging from the ceiling of the cathedral, perhaps with a support on the counter-façade.

even lexically, to the said theatrical sets, which had also been present, less than a month before, on 28 May 1475, in the Palazzo Ducale of Pesaro for the wedding feast of Costanzo Sforza and Camilla d'Aragona. On that day, the banquet began with the opening of a *paradiso* placed in the middle of the ceiling of the banquet hall; it contained a "*nebulla* d'oro" (golden *cloud*), from which an actor representing the Sun was lowered down, and later on it was the turn of another one representing the Moon, marking the *entremets* succession (*Ordine de le noze*, c. b2r.).

It is difficult to identify the prop master of the Rimini *paradiso*. Among the *Expenses* sustained by the Santa Colomba chapter for the Malatesta wedding only the name of Vignudolo di Matteo da Cesana can be found, a local artist paid to paint "dodece arme grande" (twelve large coats of arms) that enriched the decoration of the floral garlands of the cathedral naves.[13]

Cronaca malatestiana, though, reports a list of the wedding expenses (Turchini 2001, 428-35) which, when compared to a second list drafted by a page of the Roman prefect Leonardo della Rovere, a guest of the wedding, sheds light on the workforce employed in building the temporary urban architectures.[14] Under the column "*Ingenieri, doni facti alli dicti*" of both lists, there can be found the following names: "Iacomo fiorentino" (with four helpers), "Simone fiorentino", "Domenico fiorentino", "don Bartolomeo", "Agnolo da Bettino", "Francesco Sperandio da Mercatello", "Pietro Beretta", "Giovanni da Ragusa" and "Domenico da Firenze" (23). The contribution of the Florentine masters – some of them might have also offered advice for the Santa Colomba apparatus – was quite remarkable; and they were also the creators of the triumphal arches placed across the streets of Rimini, as indicated by Cesare Clementini's seventeenth-century *Raccolto istorico della fondatione di Rimino e dell'origine e vite de' Malatesti*, which expanded, through undeclared sources, Broglio's chronicles.[15] Following the information provided by this historian, Elvira Garbero Zorzi noticed how Vasari had actually highlighted the names of one "Domenico" and one "Simone fiorentini" among Brunelleschi's apprentices, and speculated that they were the same artists hired to work on the apparatuses of Rimini (1986, vol. 2, 301-30). The research for additional documentation on the event that I have carried out in the Archivio di Stato of Florence hasn't added new information to substantiate this hypothesis. It allows only to the requests to the Magnifico for sending horses and knights, as participants in the

[13] ASR, Congregazioni religiose soppresse, AB 704, c. 92. On Vignudolo di Matteo, see Delucca 1997, 164-5.

[14] Pesaro, Biblioteca Oliveriana, ms. 386, published, annotated and compared with the *Cronaca malatestiana* in Lombardi 1986, 13-26.

[15] Clementini 1617, vol. 2, 518-38. Turchini 2001, 427-67 compares the description of the wedding by Clementini with the one by Broglio.

joust organised for the wedding ceremony, and for sending the renowned improviser poet Antonio di Guido.[16]

However, as proof of the Florentine nature of the Rimini arches, it should be pointed out how at least one of those built in Piazza Tre Martiri supported children dressed up as angels on "some branches, who continuously turned around" (Turchini 2001, 437). Similar self-propelled mechanisms, either of rotating or ascensional nature, which was meant to recreate the angels' flight, characterised the structure of several pageants of the Florentine procession in honour of San Giovanni Battista, famous at that time in Italy for its spectacular features. In *Roma triumphans* (X, 14), for example, Flavio Biondo admiringly compared the trees sitting on the squared platforms of the said structures – equipped with golden-leafed branches among which, sitting in leather-made nests, children sang hymns in honour of the saint – to the Roman triumphs *pegmata*, where the cherubs sang the praises of the victorious.[17] The Humanist thus legitimated the inclusion of these marvels in the fifteenth century processions inspired by the glory of ancient Rome, such as Camilla d'Aragona's entrance in Pesaro, on whose route stood a triumphal arch, with a ship mast on its summit that had two sets of rotating iron branches, where some children carrying instruments sat, singing the praises of the bride as she passed by (*Ordine de le noze*, c. a6r).The similarities between the two princely celebrations of Pesaro and Urbino appear therefore more evident when comparing the stagecraft apparatuses they both employed. Before analysing the analogies in the timeline of the acts of perfomance, however, I would like to highlight how the relationships among the protagonists' two celebrations motivated the insertion of artists hailing from Florence, Urbino, and Pesaro within the lists of remunerated musicians and actors taking part in the Malatesta-Montefeltro wedding.[18]

Other than Antonio di Guido, Lorenzo de' Medici sent two of his drummers to the wedding and, perhaps due to his solicitation, the Florentine Signoria sent four *trombetti* (trumpeters) and three fifers, along with one "Giovanni fiorentino and his comrades", who apparently had a leading role among the

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[16] Firenze, ASFi, Mediceo avanti il principato, filza 32, c. 182 (26/04/1475); c. 242 (06/06/1475); c. 275 (10/06/1475). On Antonio di Guido, see Degli Innocenti 2017, 17-18.

[17] On the comparison between the chariots of San Giovanni and the *pegmata* in *Roma Triumphans*, see Cruciani 1987, 46-8. The Rimini poet Roberto Orsi, in the elegy *In adventu novae sponsae Roberti Malatesta*, Biblioteca Gambalunga Rimini, ms. 1262, Ursi, *Elegiae*, f.19r, remembered the temporary architectures of the triumphal entrance as follows: *Unde haec signiferum ferientia* pegmata *caelum*? providing an image of the apparatuses that recalled the ancient and literary memories from which the celebration took inspiration.

[18] For the list of musicians and their compensation, see Turchini 2001, 432-4.

singers of the liturgical chorus.[19] Federico da Montefeltro participated in the event along with his six *trombetti* and the lutenist Mastro Bartolo, and two other trumpet players from the Urbino community were present. Five Urbino masters were classified by Broglio as prop masters of the decorative cloths for the city streets and the joust stages. Lastly, Costanzo Sforza sent four *trombetti* and two drummers, along with the jester Mambrino, although *Cronaca Malatestiana* doesn't report any information about his performances.

From the two expense lists analysed, it can also be learnt that the wedding guests attended the performance of two famous artists under the protection of Ercole I d'Este: the jester Giovan Battista Scocola and the lutenist Pietrobono Burzelli dal Chitarrino.[20] When and how their performances took place is not known, but undoubtedly their presence showed great care toward the contemporary performative culture that Roberto Malatesta wanted to flaunt during the wedding. A culture which, thanks to performing arts, brought the reputation of the captains who promoted the celebration onto the same level as the glory of Ancient Rome, in a direct competition with the ruler of Pesaro for the supremacy in both arts and warfare – as the fierce *Pas d'Armes* that capped the celebration also showed – with an exceptional judge: the Duke of Urbino, of whom Roberto and Costanzo were key allies.

In fact, in May 1473 Federico da Montefeltro promoted the marriage pact between Costanzo Sforza and Camilla d'Aragona, which strengthened his relationship with Ferrante I, King of Naples and the princess' uncle, after the two had agreed upon a three-year military deal, which Montefeltro encouraged. In the summer of 1474, Costanzo also took part in the military campaign led by the Duke against Niccolò Vitelli to bring Città di Castello back under the papal rule. That's when Roberto Malatesta joined them, and it was due to the valour he showed on the battlefield that he earned the hand of Elisabetta da Montefeltro (Ambrogiani 2003, 74-81). Therefore, Costanzo and Roberto owed their military successes to Federico, as well as the nuptial policy that would favour their signorias in the political context of Renaissance Italy. There are no doubts, then, that their weddings had been a stage in which the two captains competed with each other to show the prestige, glory, and wealth they had earned thanks to the favour of duke Federico.

[19] About the influence of Lorenzo de' Medici on musicians employed by Florentine magistratures, see D'Accone 1993, 219-49.

[20] Saffiotti 2017, 23-9 observes that this is the last documented performance of the jester. The presence at the Rimini of Pietrobono doesn't seem to be well-known. See Maccarthy 2018, 431-59.

2. Unfolding of the Feast

In the afternoon of 24 June 1475, a welcoming procession with Roberto
Malatesta, his dignitaries, many refined high ladies and musicians, headed to
Terzo (present-day Miramare) to meet the Urbino delegation and accompany
the bride to Rimini. Once there, as the guests arrived, the re-enactors dressed
up as ancient Romans placed on the arch of Augusto proclaimed to the bride
and to Duke Federico their greeting lines, which are not reported in *Cronaca
Malatestiana*. As it entered the city, the procession advanced until the first
wooden arch that marked the access to piazza Tre Martiri. All the actors rose
from their seats placed upon its golden frame to greet Montefeltro. Broglio
specified how, looking at the arch façade, one could spot among them, to the
right, Julius Caesar, armour-clad and holding a book, and to the left Hercules
holding a club. While the latter stood silent, the author of *De bello Gallico*
pronounced these words to Montefeltro, as he approached the apparatus:
"Tucti t'aspectavamo, con grande alegrezza / Invicto duca Federico, a darti
/ Luocho conviniente a tua Fortezza" (Everybody was waiting for you, with
great merriness, / Undefeated duke Federico, to provide for you / A place
worthy of your might). And he pointed at a golden seat prepared for the
Duke on the arch frame. This greeting – which with the incipit "everybody"
bonded together the destinies of the ancient Romans with the Rimini citizens
and the wedding guests – was followed by the declaration of the Greek
tactician Themistocles. Introducing himself as the victor of the battle of
Salamina, he said:

> *Tu che sei spesso uscito con victoria*
> *delle tue imprese, como non sali*
> *qui, dove nasce ogni excellente istoria?*
> *Meritano i tuo gesti triumphali*
> *farti sedere fra noi con preminentia:*
> *de non avere al mondo molto equali.*
> *. . .*
> *Si legge nell'opere tue sì che conviene*
> *che essendo lo inventore dell'onione*
> *questo sia el luocho tuo de tanto bene.*

[You, who have always emerged victorious / From your ventures, won't you
rise up / Here, where every noble history is born? / Your triumphal deeds
make you worthy / Of sitting among us with prominence: / Not many in the
world are your equals. / . . . / By your endeavours it is appropriate / Since
you are the maker of this union / That you claim this benevolent spot as your
own.]

It was then the turn of Furius Camillus, a character that Plutarco placed side by side with Themistocles in *Parallel Lives,* a book that had been thoroughly translated and studied in fifteenth century Italy (Pade 2007). After recalling his victories against the Veients, the Falisci and the Gauls, he proclaimed:

> *Quantunque te ha condocto el sommo Iove,*
> *ove il più preminente esser tu deggi,*
> *per quanto el corso ogni pianeta move,*
> *tu in gratia di pontifici e di regi*
> *sola virtù porterà contubernale*
> *compagnia e guida e mane fida a pregi,*
> *onde riverde in te gloria mortale.*
> *Or nostra gloria in te restinstitata*
> *fa che per fama meriti essere dove*
> *la nostra dignità n'è disigniata.*
> (Turchini 2001, 448-9)

> [Albeit the sublime Jupiter led you here, / Where you should be the most eminent one, / As every planet follows its course, / You shall bring, by your virtue alone, / Company, guidance and loyal support / To the grace of pontifices and kings, / Whose mortal glory shall flow upon you. / Now, let our glory be renewed within you, / And let our worthy rank be reinstalled / Where our dignity is manifested.]

While the Athenian claimed that it was his deeds – and, in particular, the achievement of the wedding alliance – that had earned Federico the honour to seat on the triumphal arch, the Roman general underlined instead how the glory of the ancient *condottieri* was brought back to life thanks to the force of his sheer virtue. Therefore, Montefeltro was worthy of sitting on a seat where such glory could be admired: on the triumphal arch, among the men whose strategic, political prowess and ingenuity alike were celebrated by Plutarco.

On the second wooden arch, at the opposite edge of the piazza, as Broglio specified, Diana and the nymphs sang joyfully as the bride passed by, giving to the angels (mentioned in the apparatus description) the identity of the nymphs of the goddess' train who, a few days earlier, had met with Camilla d'Aragona near Fano and had accompanied her into the lands of Costanzo Sforza (*Ordine de le noze*, a2*r*). The author did not report what she said to Elisabetta; nor did he mention what happened along the route that connected Piazza Maggiore to the cathedral, but just wrote: "per abreviare, tucti li archi triumphali al passare dell'illustrissimo duca d'Orbino laudaro la fama e la gloria di Sua Signoria" (in short, every triumphal arch, as the most illustrious duke of Urbino passed by, praised His Lordship's fame and glory). Therefore, Federico da Montefeltro was the protagonist of the celebration, and the subject of the majority of the poems recited during the entrance of his daughter.

The first day of celebration ended when the procession entered Castel Sismondo in the evening. On the following morning, in the Duomo, the wedding mass was sung. The guests then gathered in the Sala Grande of the castle, where Giovanni Mario Filelfo recited a congratulatory oration, followed by the signing of the nuptial contract. Broglio did not describe the following banquet, and only provided a list of the dishes that composed its four courses, reporting how a dancing party ensued, and later a *colazione* choreographically served by 140 pageboys.[21] Among the sophisticated sugary sculptures of this pastry-based banquet, which traditionally ended the fifteenth century gala feasts, the chronicler described:

> La fontana della piazza d'Arimine che sta apresso al palazzo formata in propria forma con 16 puttini intorno di zucaro fino, la quale giettava acqua rosata. Et più in propria forma fo portato nella gran sala figurata di zucaro la porta di San Pietro con dui giganti nella similiatudine che già antichamente fo guardata da dui giganti, l'un chiamato Galarano al tempo del grande amirante Balante patre del valente barone di Fierabranca.
>
> Similmente fu dificato di zucaro l'Arco trionfale di Arimino con dui giganti di zucaro; la degna chiesa di San Francesco come doveva essere fornita tucta de zucaro fino, e più un carro trumphale con lo signore [Sigismondo] armato capitano col bastone in mano.
>
> La Rocha ovvero castello d'Arimine como proprio sta con ponti e porte seracinesche e con giente alle mura con fochi udirifichi, e tucti li toresini forniti di puctini assaissimi e so le mura di questo castello ardìano con fochi odorosissimi e in ciaschuno torresino v'era un gigante suso; pur di zucaro fino era ogni cosa. (Turchini 2001, 455)

> [A reproduction of the fountain of piazza d'Arimine, which is next to the castle, with 16 cherubs surrounding it made of the finest sugar, which pumped out rosewater. Later, a reproduction of the gate of San Pietro was brought in the hall, with two giants, in the same way as two giants overlooked it in the past, and one was named Galarano, during the era of the great admiral Balante, father of the valiant baron of Fierabranca.
>
> Likewise the triumphal Arch of Arimino was built with sugar, with two sugar giants; the fair church of San Francesco, all built with the finest sugar, and a triumphal chariot with His Lordship [Sigismondo] armed with a staff in his hand.
>
> The Rocha (i.e. the Arimine castle), with its bridges, gates, portcullises, people by the walls and scented fires, and every tower was brimming with a multitude of cherubs, and the walls of this castle burned with scented fires, and each tower had a giant on top of it; and everything was made of the finest sugar.]

[21] Observations about the courses of this feast can be found in Benporat 2001, 81-2.

The monuments from Rimini's proud Roman past (the ancient Roman fountain, the arch of Augustus, the gate of San Pietro), made of sugar and with hidden hydraulic devices, decorated with cherubs and marzipan giants, were restored to their ancient glory for the second time during the celebration. Likewise, the wedding was the stage to show to the guests how the modern buildings commissioned by the Malatestas (the church of San Francesco and the Malatesta's stronghold) would look upon completion, with their sugary reproductions, crafted by the court's confectioners, being displayed in the hall. Perhaps they were not that surprised when the ambitious ruler of Rimini showed off his future projects for the city through the wedding pastries. Three weeks before, during the *colazione* offered by Costanzo Sforza for his wedding, a model of the Rocca Costanza was displayed, "de zucaro candidissima facta a quella forma et proportione che el desegno over modo . . . che fa edificare el prefato signor di Pesaro" (*Ordine de le noze*, e3*v*; made of the whitest sugar, following the shape and proportions of the project . . . commissioned by the lord of Pesaro). Even in Pesaro the choreographic presentation of the magnificent pastries had been accompanied by music and dances, which at some point were interrupted by a Latin ode praising the newlyweds declaimed by a "uno garzoneto de Fano de età circa XIIII anni" (d8*r*; a boy from Fano about 13 years old). Likewise, the lord of Rimini wanted his nuptial *colazione* to have an acted interlude entrusted to "dui nobili damigille della età di quindici anni l'una, bellissime d'aspetto e di loquentia" (two noble damsels of fifteen years of age each, beautiful both in demeanour and eloquence)[22]. The *Cronaca Malatestiana* reports the two songs declaimed by the maidens, one in Latin and the other in the vernacular, praising the groom and bride, along with the names of the two performers – Adriana Polissena and Giovanna Grisalda Bianchella – and the lyrics of the song they sang when the celebration day was over.

Again, the performances of these adolescents with commendable Latin oratory and singing skills were an additional *trait d'union* of the nuptial ceremonies of the two captains, who, among poems, sugar sculptures, and ephemeral apparatuses, wished to flaunt the 'illusory' stability of their rulership. In the suspended time of festivals they build their ideal city, but it would only take one single fork to corrupt that majestic dream made of sugar and pretentious words, doomed to be shattered at the end of the celebrations. However, between an ideal continuity and a necessary discontinuity of forms of government, idealisations and hopes, the glory of Rome had come back to life.

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[22] See Turchini 2001, 456. The edition of the lyrics declaimed by the two maidens can be found in Rossi 2021, 7-17.

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Lucrezia Borgia's Triumphal Chariot: Notes on Performance Documentation[1]

Abstract

This paper explores Lucrezia Borgia's engagement with ancient forms at the Este court, focusing on her utilisation of the triumph. It argues that conventional labels such as 'actress' or 'playwright' fail to encapsulate the rich and varied theatrical contributions of women in this era, who, during this period, constantly overstepped the bounds of traditional theatre moving into broader fields of cultural and theatrical activity. Together with traditional categories of theatre production, then, it's important to also consider modes of performance, on one hand, located in the domestic and personal spheres and, on the other, to the ways in which they were connected to both the circulation and use of objects. By examining entries from account books detailing expenses for a 'carro triunfante de la Duchessa' in December 1507 and October 1508, the paper investigates how Lucrezia Borgia employed the triumph as a strategic means to navigate and construct her social identity. It focuses on two specific events: the celebrations organized for the wedding of Camillo Costabili and Bianca Martinengo in 1507, and the triumph over the river Po, organized to celebrate Ferrara's victory over Venice at the battle of Polesella in 1509. This approach not only offers fresh insights into historical performance but also prompts a reassessment of the role of archival documents in shaping and preserving meaning.

Keywords: Lucrezia Borgia, triumphal chariots, Este court, Performance documentation, Celio Calcagnini

1. Lucrezia Borgia and Classical Antiquity

According to Diane Ghirardo (2005), Lucrezia Borgia has "been locked into the paradigm of an Italian Renaissance duchess, . . . known for her material possessions and family affiliations" and "of interest mainly for her jewelry, her wedding to Alfonso I d'Este and fabulous dowry" (476). She is not

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alone: for centuries, women —and notably their theatrical achievements— have been strictly gendered and remained largely invisible. Anne Jacobson Schutte (1994) offers a way out, claiming that women in early modern Italy "managed to lay their hands on physical and psychological space, materials, and techniques insufficient for staging a revolution, but adequate for limited exercises in self-determination. They worked to create not only works of literature, art, and music but also themselves" (186). How did Lucrezia "create herself"? What forms did this creation take and how might they redirect the narrative to which she had been assigned in diaries, chroniclers, and scandal? For centuries, the theatrical achievements of women have remained largely invisible. How is it possible to recover them? This essay explores Lucrezia's engagement with ancient forms at the Este court. I focus on her utilization of the triumph, finding that conventional labels such as 'actress' or 'playwright' are insufficient to fully capture the diverse and nuanced theatrical contributions of women who, during this period, constantly overstepped the bounds of dramatic theatre and moved into broader fields of cultural activity.

The appropriation of Greek and Roman material has been well documented for a variety of cultural practices patrocinated by Alfonso I d'Este: as of lately, the image of the Duke of Ferrara as having very little interest in the creation or the concealment of meaning in the arts and literature, has been substituted by a more balanced perspective that sees instead the Duke of Ferrara as someone who "had perfectly understood the ideological meaning of the figurative arts, a veritable *instrumentum regni*" and who became a "great protagonist of Italian and European history and of an entire era: an era in which Ferrara, thanks to the very particular virtues of Alfonso and the skills of its artists, was truly one of the cultural capitals of Italy" (Farinella 2014, 4, 27).[1]

Lucrezia Borgia, Alfonso's wife, was also a great art enthusiast: she brought several paintings based on sacred subjects from the Roman papal court and commissioned others during her years in Ferrara. She summoned artists of the caliber of Benvenuto Tisi da Garofalo and Ludovico Mazzolino to paint the lunettes, friezes, and frames of her rooms (Ghirardo 2019, xliv). These were extremely costly works, but with a signal difference: unlike the important collection of Roman antiquities and depictions of pagan deities that could be found in Alfonso or her sister-in-law Isabella's studiolo, Lucrezia's collection only included one object from classical antiquity: a golden bracelet depicting the labors of Hercules. As Diane Ghirardo has noted, "no other secular or pagan objects appear in the inventory. Similarly, the artworks in

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[1] For a reevaluation of Alfonso I d'Este as patron of the arts, see also Venturi 2012, 1-10 and Hope 2012, 43-76. For an excursus of the image of Alfonso as patron of the arts, see Farinella 2014, 1-27.

her apartments in the Estense Castle depicted more Christian subjects than classical inspirations, sharply contrasting with the paintings commissioned by Isabella" (Ghirardo 2019, lxxii).

However, caution is necessary when applying modern categorizations to create distinctions between objects. As highlighted by Leah Clark, the value of an object during the early modern period was tied to the role it played in symbolic activities: "those who attended court in the Renaissance would likely have prized a small gem over a painting, for instance" (2022, 5). While it is true that Lucrezia's collection predominantly featured Christian subjects, it's arguable that the Christian symbolism depicted in these paintings was interpreted akin to the symbolic elements present in myths. This does not imply, Clark continues, that religious artworks were regarded as mythological representations. Observers would have rather employed similar interpretive tools as they would for paintings featuring mythological symbols, often found in private study spaces (134).

However, Lucrezia Borgia's fascination with classical antiquity was more vividly manifested through the kinetic pathos of dance, the representations of eclogues, and her public appearances rather than through the patronage of artworks centered on classical or mythological themes. These instances demonstrate how the moving body could express a sense of identity though the use of classical motifs and themes. Domenico Giuseppe Lipani has argued that Lucrezia Borgia was able to bring "her own specificity, partly consonant with the context, partly new" (2021, 81) into the Ferrarese theatrical culture.[2] It was not a clear *caesura*, Lipani continues, but rather a way of highlighting, within "the plurality of coexisting representative cultures", certain elements like "the accentuated predilection for the eclogue" (82). During the early 1500s, the eclogue was still a highly "experimental terrain" and "a container of classical images and symbols" that, as Francesca Bortoletti has pointed out, allowed to join, within the unitary frame offered by the singing competition among the shepherds, multiple dimensions of the spectacular, all charged with "the new Neoplatonic values and symbolic projections" that translated, within the places of elite entertainment, into pastoral fictions that were "compatible with the symbolic space of courtly celebrations" (2009, 69).[3] The eclogue was thus a multi-media dramaturgical system of both oral and written forms of communication. In addition, it also constituted an "intermedial system", a "system of references and allusions" (130), one in

[2] See also Bortoletti 2008, 133; 254-5.

[3] The eclogue, Bortoletti emphasizes, can be considered as "a container of classical images and symbols" and one characterized by the patronage of the three most important women of the time: Lucrezia Borgia, Isabella d'Este, and Elisabetta Gonzaga (2009, 93).

which the different elements were not only co-existing but interacting with one another in their re-enactment of ancient myths – an idyllic projection of the court to a place of peace and serenity and one to be contrasted to the cruelty of the present characterized by the Italian wars (Gerbino 2009, 23).

2. Triumphal Processions

Like the eclogue, the triumphal procession served as a vessel for classical images and symbols. It became a dynamic space where diverse elements not only coexisted but also engaged with one another, reenacting ancient myths. Amedeo Quondam highlights the significance of Alfonso of Aragon's triumphant entry into Naples on 26 February 1443. Having conquered the city the year before, this event garnered exceptional importance, as both visual and written accounts celebrated the grandeur of the occasion. Upon close examination of the Latin narrative penned by the humanist Antonio Beccadelli, known as the Panormita – his *Alphonsi regis triumphus* – it becomes evident that this event served as the prototype for all modern triumphal ceremonies (Quondam 2017a, 13). The rapid development of this new concept of virtuous majesty in triumph is notable a few years later in Reggio Emilia. On 4 July 1453, Borso d'Este took control of his domains with a dual triumphant entry into Modena and Reggio. Amedeo Quondam argues that while the morphological aspects of triumphs exhibit significant features with both consistencies and contradictions, the construction of the modern triumphal archetype can be attributed to two primary cultural factors. Firstly, the remarkable success, both figuratively and otherwise, of Francesco Petrarca's *Trionfi* lays the foundation for the conceptual framework of the triumph, infusing it with allegorical and moral significance and shaping its basic iconography. Secondly, the pervasive influence of humanistic ideals and practices takes direct control over the representation of the triumph, with many playwrights and directors being humanists. The amalgamation of these influences directs contemporary rulers' triumphs towards a rediscovery of essential elements found in the triumphs of ancient *imperatores*. The paradigmatic Petrarchan model establishes a triumphal archetype with moral and allegorical connotations, providing a standardized form to the quintessential image of the triumph. This straightforward yet highly impactful icon, featuring a chariot pulled by a pair (or more) of animals, parading the central figure of the triumph amidst accompanying figures displaying gestures of reverence, can be elaborated upon with limitless variations and complexities (Quondam 2017b, 342-5). Ferrara played a pivotal role in shaping the evolution of triumphal symbolism, boasting a rich repertoire of triumphal entries, wedding ceremonies, and other events. This

is epitomized by the splendid decorative scheme gracing the upper section of the Hall of the Months in Palazzo Schifanoia, showcasing the triumphs of ancient deities.[4]

Lucrezia Borgia was acquainted with this form, not only due to its popularity in Ferrara but also because of her upbringing in Rome. The spectacles during her father's, Pope Alexander VI, reign were described as "diverse and varied", already reflecting emerging trends. The triumphal arches during this time were noted as "a similitudine delli trionfi antichi" (Cruciani 1983, 243; similar to the ancient triumphs). The spectacles organized for Lucrezia Borgia's wedding to Alfonso d'Este are particularly noteworthy in this context. The classical triumph that graced St Peter's Square on 1 January 1502 to honor Lucrezia Borgia was meticulously organized according to a particularly sophisticated iconographic plan. Poet Giovanni Battista Valentini, also known as *Cantalicio*, sheds light on the allegorical meaning of the parade in his collection of forty-three epigrams titled *Spectacula lucretiana*. In poem 24, he reveals the objective: to restore Rome to the glory of its ancient triumphs and allegorically explain the virtues of the Borgias (Passera 2020, 137-40). Regarding the form of the triumph and its direct use by Lucrezia Borgia during public events, no documentary support can be found in the chronicles, diaries, and letters of the time. However, we have two important documents from account books. The first document, unpublished, dated 31 December 1507, reports the expenses incurred for the triumphal chariot of the duchess, paid to Piero da Cremona:

> Piero da Cremona chioldarolo de' havere lire trentacinque soldi sei de moneta per lo amontare de la intera feramenta che lui a dato et meso in opera in suso lo caro trionfante de la duchessa nostra de Ferara et per lui da la Spexa del caro trionfante.[5]

> [Piero da Cremona, locksmith, for having thirty-five lire, six soldi of currency, for the total amount of all the hardware that he has provided for the triumphal chariot of our duchess of Ferrara, and for him for the expense of the triumphal chariot.]

The second, dated 16 October 1508, reports the expenses paid to Bartolameo de Vinexia by Lucrezia Borgia for the work done to the "caro trionfale":

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[4] For an analysis of the relationship between the frescoes at Schifanoia, the triumphs depicted, and theatrical practices in Ferrara during the reigns of Ercole I and Alfonso I, refer to Zorzi 1977.

[5] ASMo, CDE, *M&F*, Reg. 48, Mem., 1507, 143r. I would like to thank Claudio Passera, Valentina Salierno, and Simone Balossino for their help in transcribing the document, here only partially published.

Spexa dela Illustrissima domina nostra lire una, soldi dodexe de marchesani a Maistro Bartolameo de Vinexia depintore contanti per havere pagato peze 50 d'oro che lui à posto a reconzare il caro trionfale che à facto fare Sua Signoria più di fano.[6]

[Expense of our Illustrious Lady, one lira and twelve soldi merchesani to Master Bartolomeo of Venice, painter, in cash, for having paid for 50 gold pieces that he placed to restore the triumphal chariot that Her Lordship had ordered.]

These two expenses should not be confused with expenses for the more common "careta de Corte": for example, for the same year and month — October 1508—, in another account book, there is an expense paid to "Mistro Cabreleto depintore per conto de dipingere una careta de Corte de Messer Alexandro Farofino" (Master Cabreleto, painter, for the task of painting a court carriage for Messer Alexandro Farofino).[7] The same year, two more expenses refer to these "carrette di corte": the first is dated 13 May 1508[8] and the second is dated 18 September 1508.[9] *Carrette de corte* and *carri trionfali* were two distinct things: for the wedding celebrations between Bianca Maria Sforza and the Emperor Maximilian I of Habsburg in Milan, for example, Bianca Maria sat on a triumphal chariot pulled by four white horses, followed by the orators sent by the King of France and various Italian principalities, together with Duke Gian Galeazzo and Ludovico il Moro. Behind them, as specified by Beatrice d'Este in a letter, there were twelve other *carrette* carrying "le prime damiselle de Milano" (the first ladies of Milan).[10] As Thomas Tuohy points out, "these carriages formed part of the standard equipment" of the Este court, but triumphal carriages were usually made specifically for weddings and, although their function "is not entirely clear", they appeared for the weddings of Anna Sforza, Beatrice d'Este, and her sister Isabella.

[6] ASMo, CDE, *Amministrazione dei Principi*, B, Non regnanti, Lucrezia Borgia, 1131, Mem. (1507-1509), CLI. Published by Franceschini 1997, 2.2, 698, doc. 866c.
[7] ASMo, CDE, *M&F*, Reg. 49, 1508, 62. Published by Franceschini 1997, 2.2, 694, doc. 859i.
[8] ASMo, CDE, *LCD*, 219, "Zornale de ussita" BBBB (1508), c. LII. Published by Franceschini 1997, 2.2, 697, doc. 862.h.
[9] Ibid., doc. 862.m.
[10] See Luzio and Renier 1890, 91, cited in Passera 2020, 88. I would like to thank Claudio Passera for bringing this important event with its use of both triumphal chariot and *carrette* to my attention, as well as for his precious notes on the distinction between *carrette* and *carri trionfali*.

3. Methodological Framework

Theatre history, as Raimondo Guarino has argued, is not "a collection of events comparable to objects", but rather a "process of symbolization, which travels and shapes particular durations, transforms spaces, and mobilizes communities". In addition, theatre must be recognized in its multiplicity and each inquiry must touch on "cultural systems and processes that require circumscribed analyses, relating to individual actions and individual contexts" (2005, ix). During the years of the Italian wars, Ferrarese theatrical culture was not characterized by "a void" (Cruciani 1994, 191): the "well-articulated" and "organic" dramaturgical system – a system elaborated, among others, by humanists such as Pellegrino Prisciani, Ludovico Ariosto, Niccolò da Correggio, supported primarily by Ercole I d'Este, and then by his sons Alfonso and Ippolito – was substituted by different ways of "transforming spaces and mobilizing communities" and, this time, under the tutelage of Lucrezia Borgia. It was the invention of a new "process of symbolization", one in which celebrations and triumphal processions on one hand, and diplomatic receptions on the other became mechanisms for producing signification, operations producing not "plays", but symbolic dramas characterized by dramaturgies more appropriate to the new context. On 31 May 1509, Ferrara celebrated a new victory of Alfonso d'Este over the Venetians with "fireworks, firecrackers, and sounds of bells".[11] In a letter sent to her husband the same day, Lucrezia expresses her joy and writes that she will order to "double the public signs of joy" and that she will also order "to give thanks to the high and omnipotent God" and "prayers for the prosperity and safety of Your Excellency".[12] This letter reveals not only the kind of celebrations that had already been described by the chronicler de' Prosperi, but also the active role that Lucrezia played in ordering and organizing them. The dramaturgy of the following celebrations, in fact, became more sophisticated: everything was turned into a solemn spectacle, with their order and hierarchies, and where political and religious motives were intertwined. To comprehend how Lucrezia Borgia engaged with classical culture, it is essential to view it as an integral aspect within the broader discourse on how the Duchess of Ferrara crafted her image using classical culture. This discourse encompasses various elements such as the portrayal of Lucrezia Borgia by poets, her dance performances during official events, her public appearances (whether alone, with her husband, or with the entire court of women from the windows of

[11] BdP to Isabella d'Este, 31 May 1509, ASMn, AG, b. 1242, 325*v*.
[12] Lucrezia Borgia to Alfonso d'Este, 31 May 1509, ASMo, AE, C&S, Carteggi fra principi estensi, b. 141, 199*r*. Also in Ghirardo 2020, 381.

the Great Hall)[13], and even instances of refusal to appear, like attending mass under a tent in the Cathedral.[14] Considering these instances collectively, as a performance of endurance, sheds light on Lucrezia Borgia's deliberate practice and intentionality, whether in rebellion against societal norms or in celebration of her ideal court of women. In both cases, the revival of ancient forms became a crucial aspect of her performances, transforming Greek and Roman materials into an ongoing, performative act.

It could be valuable, as suggested by Sarah Bay-Cheng, to consider performance not merely as a distinct occurrence but rather as a mode. In line with the *OED*'s definition, a mode is "a way or manner in which something is done or takes place; a method of proceeding in any activity, business, etc.". Instead of framing a phenomenon solely as performance, Bay-Cheng proposes embracing performance as the lens through which we evaluate phenomena. We can conceptualize performance as the medium through which a sequence of interconnected events is perceived. In essence, performance operates not as an isolated event but as a network of interrelated components, presenting audiences with a constellation of constitutive parts (Bay-Cheng 2012, 35).

Let us revisit the two entries in the account books related to the expenses for the *caro trionfante de la Duchessa* and explore the context to which they belong. In the specific case of Lucrezia Borgia's use of a triumphal chariot, the documentary evidence is elusive, since no explicit documentation has been found describing the utilization of such a chariot by Lucrezia, making it challenging to reconstruct a particular event or establish its actual occurrence. Nevertheless, within the historical and cultural milieu of the time, various events, situations, and locations could have provided a suitable backdrop for the appearance and utilization of a triumphal chariot by the duchess. Two notable occasions present fitting opportunities: the 1507 wedding at the Costabili Palace and the triumph organized for the celebration in 1509 following the victory at Polesella against Venice. These events are intertwined in various ways, with the humanist Celio Calcagnini featuring prominently in both instances, contributing to a shared cultural network and exchange of ideas.

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[13] "Doppo mangiare li franzesi hano corso al anello, rotte in terra de le lanze e facto uno pocho de bagordo in piaza denanci ale fenestre de la Sala Grande dove erano dicti Sig.ri cum la Duch.sa e parechie done" (After eating, the Frenchmen rushed to the ring, breaking the lances on the ground and causing a bit of commotion in the square in front of the windows of the Grand Hall where the gentlemen were with the Duchess and several ladies). BdP to Isabella d'Este, 9 March 1512, ASMn, AG, b. 1244, 182*r-v*.

[14] See Costola 2020, 79, 84, for Bernardino de' Prosperi's unpublished letters.

4. "De le noce anci triunpho" di Costabili

Bernardino de' Prosperi, in a letter sent from Ferrara to Mantua on 6 February 1507, writes:

> Da nui se fa mascare assai e festini terrazzaneschi per ogni contracta, ma de honorevole anchora non se ne è visto veruna, ni sento parlare che alcuna se ne abij a fare se non de le noce anci triunpho di Costabili, li quali ultra il degno apparato de la casa che fano se mettono ad ordine de farse honore grandissimo.[15]

> [Here we organize masquerades and parties for every neighborhood, but of an honorable nature, none has been seen yet, nor have I heard of any planning, except for the triumphant celebration of the Costabili. Besides the worthy preparations made at their home, they also arrange to bestow great honor.]

The following days, Bernardino de' Prosperi keeps the Marchioness of Mantua informed on the events following the wedding. On 15 February, he writes:

> Heri doppo le xxii hore la S.ra Duchessa montoe in carreta cum parechie done e andorno a casa de Costabili dove gli cenoe sua S.ria il S.re e credo tuti questi Cardinali . . . Montando in carreta epsa S.ra Duchessa notai due cose: l'una fo de una digna e richa veste che la tenia indosso . . . L'altra cosa fo de una carreta tuta dorata che ne saria honorata ogni Duchessa.[16]

> [Yesterday, after 10 o'clock, the Duchess mounted a carriage with several ladies and went to the Costabili's house where she and the Lord had dinner, and I believe all these Cardinals . . . Observing her as she mounted the carriage, the Duchess caught my attention for two things: one was a dignified and rich garment she was wearing . . . The other thing was a completely golden carriage, an honor befitting any Duchess.]

The carriage described by de' Prosperi in his letter is no ordinary one and it resembles instead the *caro trionfante de la Duchessa* as reported in the aforementioned account books. De' Prosperi vividly recounts the opulent festivities held at both the palace of Antonio Costabili and at the Estense palace: on one hand, there were Cardinal Ippolito and other distinguished guests, primarily cardinals; on the other hand, Lucrezia Borgia and her

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[15] BdP to Isabella d'Este, 6 February 1507, ASMn, AG, b. 1241, 403*r*. Published by Catalano 1920, 70.

[16] BdP to Isabella d'Este, 15 February 1507, ASMn, AG, b. 1241, 406*r*. Partially published in Catalano 1920, 69.

court of women, who paraded through the city streets in the carriages and triumphal chariot, and who entertained all significant guests with dances.

The relationship between the Este court and the Costabili family is well documented. In 1502, Antonio Costabili assumed the role of *consigliere secreto* (secret advisor) to the duke, and both Ercole I and his son Alfonso continued to engage him in significant diplomatic endeavors (Wattel 2018, 41). Attributed to the architect Biagio Rossetti, the Costabili Palace stands as one the most ambitious palaces of the Renaissance in Ferrara. It was commissioned by Count Antonio Costabili at the end of the fifteenth century and, as Benedetta Caglioti has demonstrated, its precise design can be considered "as expression of a clear linguistic and lexical intention, called *all'antica*, inspired to the Roman classical architecture" and part of that humanistic culture that "permeated the court at Ferrara" and Antonio Costabili himself (Caglioti 2021, 173). Noteworthy within the same structure is the room commonly referred to as the *Sala del Tesoro*, with its famous painted ceiling. The characters in the scene exchange sweet and persuasive glances, and offer fruits like apples, grapes, and even bouquets of roses to those below, thus suggesting an interactive exchange with the viewers in the room. Moreover, the presence of symbols evoking love may serve as a reminder of past events, such as the "noce anci triunpho" for the wedding of Camillo Costabili and Bianca Martinengo, which took place earlier in the same building in 1507, attended by Lucrezia Borgia and the Duke (Pattanaro 2016, 166). The compact chamber also houses eighteen lunettes adorned with grisaille depictions narrating the tale of Eros and Anteros. These illustrations follow an iconographic program crafted by Celio Calcagnini, arguably the most influential humanist in Ferrara during that time. Arvi Wattel (2018) has convincingly illustrated that the balcony scene is visually and conceptually linked to the lunettes. The myth, as narrated by the fourth-century rhetorician Themistius, tells of Venus consulting the oracle Themis about why her son Eros was not growing. Themis advised Venus that her son needed a brother to oppose him, and indeed, after Anteros was born, the rivalry with his brother caused Eros to grow taller and stronger. While Eros represents the god of love, Anteros punishes those who fail to reciprocate this love. Calcagnini emphasizes that Anteros is not a god in conflict with Eros, an anti-Eros, but rather the deity of mutual love.[17] Therefore, Anteros complements Eros rather than opposing him. Calcagnini's discussion of Anteros concludes with eighteen couplets detailing the scenes for the eighteen lunettes in the cubiculum (441). The extensive decorative project was primarily executed by Garofalo who, according to Pattanaro, showcases here a tendency towards classicism, employing elements such as drawing inspiration from ancient models and adopting a rhythmic approach

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[17] *Anteros sive the mutuo Amore*, in Calcagnini 1544, 436-42.

characterized by calm and harmonious balance (1994, 104). Garofalo's adjustment to a pictorial vocabulary derived from the sentimental courtly literary repertoire, evident in the Costabili ceiling, can be seen as the result of the cultural renewal underway at court, influenced by the phenomenon of Pietro Bembo's *Asolani* (105).

Costabili's choice to commission an important fresco for his palace to Garofalo could have been prompted by the lost ceiling canvases that were executed between 1506-1507 and that he most probably saw in the Torre Marchesana, where Lucrezia Borgia's apartment was located. The "Camera in volta dela torre marchesana", the very heart of Lucrezia's accommodation in the castle, was a square room of eight meters with a vaulted ceiling showcasing the eight canvases painted "a guazo" and "instoriate" by Nicola Pisano, Benvenuto Garofalo, Ludovico Mazzolino, Domenico Panetti, Michelotto, and Ettore Bonaccossi.[18] The documents do not describe the subjects of these canvases but, according to Allyson Burgess Williams, "it is possible that the subjects were worked out in cooperation with the poet and humanist Antonio Tebaldeo, who was on Lucrezia's staff at the time" (Burgess Williams 2013, 180). Information on the valuable services directly rendered by Tebaldeo to Lucrezia during the time the "tele instoriate depinte a guazo" were being painted, is found in a document indicating the salary paid to him, "620 ducats per year", a very prestigious annual position.[19] Tebaldeo not only served as the secretary of the Duchess of Ferrara from 1504 to 1508 and was her fervent singer, but he was also bound with a deep friendship with Pietro Bembo, whose *Asolani* opens with "a dedication from Bembo to Lucrezia Borgia, in which Tebaldeo is mentioned with honor" (Petteruti Pellegrino 2010, 190). Antonio Costabili, Pietro Bembo, Tebaldeo, Benvenuto Garofalo, Lucrezia Borgia, Celio Calcagnini: they are some of the figures that were part of a shared cultural network and exchange of ideas. As Alessandra Pattanaro has pointed out, Calcagnini's program for the wall painting on the ceiling in the *Sala del Tesoro* reflected Antonio Costabili's "high regard for 'classical' values of friendship and mutual love" and was based "on the same ideals [that] inspire the 'Compagnia degli Amici', of which the young Pietro Bembo was a member" (1994, 109).

On 17 February 1506, the Duchess of Ferrara entrusted Antonio Tebaldeo with the delicate task of traveling to Mantua, bearing two brief letters – one addressed to Francesco II Gonzaga and the other to his wife Isabella d'Este.

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[18] For a detailed reconstruction of Lucrezia Borgia's quarters and the documents for payments to the various painters for the eight canvases, see Ballarin and Menegatti 2002, 123-94, 140-1, 153, and 158-60 in particular. These documents can also be found in Franceschini 1997, 2.2, 645-6.

[19] ASMo, CDE, *Amministrazione dei Principi*, B, Non regnanti, Lucrezia Borgia, 1130, Uscite 1506, 93, December 31. Published by Franceschini 1997, 2.2, 646, doc. 7910.

These letters conveyed the purpose of the visit: Tebaldeo, recommended by Lucrezia Borgia herself, was tasked with delivering 'some matters' on her behalf.[20] One might speculate whether this journey to Mantua also served to glean insights into Isabella's renowned *studiolo*. Allyson Burgess Williams suggests that "in choosing a group of painters for the series, it is possible that Lucrezia was trying to imitate her sister-in-law, who had consciously set up a *paragone* between Mantegna, Perugino, and Costa in her famous *studiolo* in Mantua in the 1490s" (Burgess Williams 2013, 180). However, I propose a different perspective: rather than imitating, Lucrezia Borgia sought to engage in a cultural dialogue, perhaps competing indirectly with Isabella's *studiolo* by reviving the old debate on Love-Anteros – a debate stimulated by the arrival of Mario Equicola who joined Isabella's service in 1508 after a long experience in Italian courts, from Naples to Ferrara.[21] Giovanni Romano has emphasized the role of Mario Equicola in Isabella's *studiolo*, noting that the humanist resumed work on his *Libro de natura de amore*, dedicated to Isabella, immediately after 1508. Equicola's book

> aligns itself with the *Asolani* when it promises, in the opening, to explain 'what and how many are the affections, effects, causes, and movements that naturally occur in our souls through [love]' and diverges when it investigates 'what false and true pleasure and beatitude are with reason and authority of highly esteemed ancient sources'. (Romano 1982, 23)

This dichotomy reflects the broader cultural landscape of the time, with Bembo and Lucrezia representing one facet and Isabella and Equicola embodying another. Laura Ricci's research underscores the tension between Bembo and Equicola, evident in contemporary documents and reflected in their respective works dedicated to Lucrezia and Isabella (2007, 247). Bembo's *Asolani* forms the foundation of both Antonio Costabili's frescoes for his *Sala del Tesoro* and possibly Lucrezia Borgia's 'tele instoriate'. Equicola's *Libro de natura de amore* underpins Isabella's *studiolo*. Ricci's examination highlights how these texts shaped the symbolic language of early 16th-century painting, with Equicola's work portraying a dichotomous view of love, contrasting with Bembo's more harmonious interpretation (253).

In this period, at the Este court, the festivities surrounding the wedding held at the Costabili palace signified not merely a matrimonial triumph but, above all, the triumph of a distinct conceptualization of love, for which

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[20] The two letters have been published by Ghirardo 2020, 273-4 (letters 242 and 243). For these letters and their purpose, see Faggioli Saletti 2010, 185.

[21] Stephen Campbell (2004) has connected the contemporary humanist discussions on Anteros to Isabella d'Este's *studiolo*. See in particular 69-74 and 214-16. See more recently Wattel 2018, 43.

Lucrezia Borgia emerged as a compelling spokesperson. Within her circle of poets and artists, Lucrezia stood unequivocally triumphant, finding poetic resonance in the verses of Tito Vespasiano Strozzi, who likened her to Venus. One can envision her grandeur, possibly even riding on a triumphal chariot as she paraded through the streets of Ferrara.

5. The Triumph over the River Po

During this period, the city of Ferrara witnessed an unparalleled number of triumphs. Initially characterized by modest displays of jubilation such as fireworks, firecrackers, and the ringing of bells from the Old Castle, these celebrations evolved into grander and more intricately orchestrated events. Despite minor variations, they gradually adopted customary elements, suggesting a refinement in their organization. It could be argued that through these triumphs, Lucrezia Borgia was not only commemorating but also competing with the elaborate spectacles orchestrated by her father's successor to the Holy See, Julius II, engaged during the same years in the organization of entries and triumphs meant foster "the *vulgaris opinio* that a glorious era was starting anew" (Cruciani 1983, 306).

On 22 December 1509, Ferrara defeated Venice in the Battle of Polesella and the victory was so resounding that it prompted the organization of an entirely unprecedented spectacle for the Este city: a triumph on the water along the river Po.[22] On 27 December, Alfonso and Ippolito, along with the Este troops, re-entered the city by sailing along the Ferrarese branch of the Po on galleys seized from Venice and adorned with the spoils of the battle. Duke Alfonso closed the procession on the galley Marcella, adorned with the most splendid trophies (tapestries, silverware, vestments), accompanied by the courtiers and a hundred men-at-arms. The ballad *Gli orrendi e magnanimi fatti del duca Alfonso* (The dreadful and magnanimous deeds of Duke Alfonso) by street singer Bighignol compares this triumph to the one the Romans did for Hannibal: "Il duca Alfonso nobile e reale / Intrò in Ferara con trionfo grande, / Che mai Romani fe' per Anibale" (The Duke Alfonso, noble and royal, / Entered Ferrara with a great triumph, / Which the Romans never did for Hannibal).[23] According to Giovanni Maria Zerbinati,

> quando furno apresso a Ferrara montorno sopra una di esse e se ne venero sino alla porta di San Pollo ove era la duchessa in carretta da corte con tutte le gentildonne ben ornate in segno d'allegrezza e tutto il populo e con gran

[22] For an analysis of the images celebrating this battle, see Farinella 2014, 162-80.
[23] In Beer and Ivaldi 1989, 2.348.

trionfi . . . li gentilhomini e condutieri . . . se inviorno dentro della terra per la strada di San Pollo.[24]

[When they arrived near Ferrara, they mounted one of them and came forward until reaching the gate of San Polo, where the duchess was in a court carriage with all the noblewomen well adorned in a sign of joy, and the entire populace with great triumphs . . . the gentlemen and leaders . . . then went into the town along the San Paolo road.]

Thus, upon arriving at the Porta of San Paolo, the Duchess Lucrezia Borgia, in *carretta de corte* and accompanied by all the noble women of the city, welcomed her husband and brother-in-law as true ancient triumphators. Bernadino de' Prosperi says that the *carrete de done* were twenty in number and describes the procession leading Alfonso, Ippolito, and Lucrezia to the *catafalcho* built in front of the doors of the Cathedral.[25]

Both Zerbinati and Calcagnini add two very important details regarding the role played by Lucrezia: according to Zerbinati, Lucrezia performed a central role, since she "stete sempre . . . in piazza con le gentildone sempre in carretta da corte" (stayed always in the square with the noblewomen, always in a court carriage), overseeing the various rituals. Celio Calcagnini, in his description of the triumph, writes that "nobiliores etiam matronae duce Lucretia Borgia principe foemina in pilentis occurrerant" (1554, 490; even noble matrons, led by Lucretia Borgia, a female prince, had come in richly adorned carriages). "In pilentis" seems to be a reference to Book 8 of Virgil's *Aeneid*:

Hic exsultantis Salios nudosque Lupercos
Lanigerosque apices at lapsa ancilia caelo
Extuderat, castae ducebant sacra per urbem
Pilentis matres in mollibus.
(1910, 663-6)

[There, graven cunningly, the Salian choir / Went leaping, and in Lupercalian feast / The naked striplings ran; while others, crowned with peaked cap, bore shields that fell from heaven; / And, bearing into Rome their emblems old, / Chaste priestesses on soft-strewn litters passed.]

In Agylla, Aeneas forges an alliance with the Etruscans led by Tarchon. During this encounter, Venus bestows upon her son a set of arms and armor crafted by Vulcan. The centerpiece of this collection is an impressive shield adorned with scenes from Roman history – a history yet unknown to Aeneas

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[24] Giovanni Maria Zerbinati, *Croniche di Ferrara*, 27 December 1509, BCA, ms. cl. I, 337, cc. 41. In Muzzarelli 1989, 86-7.

[25] BdP to Isabella d'Este, 28 December 1509, ASMN, AG, b. 1242, f. xv.2, 398*r-v*.

as it unfolds in the future. On the shield's upper part, in the center, stands the Capitol, flanked on one side by scenes of Gauls launching an attack, while on the other, it portrays the solemn religious rites of the city saved. R. D. Williams elucidates the significance of the matrons in their carriages depicted on the shield, suggesting a connection to historical events: during the Gallic crisis, these noble women gave up their gold to the state, earning the privilege of riding in carriages as a symbol of gratitude and honor (Williams 1973, 269-70).[26] In a letter to Isabella dated 17 December 1509, Bernardino de' Prosperi writes that:

> Questa sira trovandomi in Guardaroba fo portato a D. Hieronimo Ziliolo il sfilzo de perle grosse già de sua Matre e parechi belli peci de zoglie che teneva la S.ra Duch.sa quale tute se mandano ad impegnare ultra molte altre che se ge sono mandate questi dì.[27]

> [This evening, while in the wardrobe, it was brought to Don Hieronimo Ziliolo the string of large pearls formerly owned by your Mother, and several beautiful pieces of jewelry that belonged to the Duchess. All of these are being sent to be pawned, along with many others that have been sent in these days.]

As Diane Ghirardo has discovered, there are also notarial documents to support de' Prosperi's statement that Lucrezia decided to pawn her jewels to raise money to finance the 1509-1513 wars with Pope Julius II and Venice.[28] It is clear that, in this passage, Celio Calcagnini wanted to celebrate Lucrezia and her court of women by comparing them to the ancient matrons who gave up their gold to save Rome during the war with the Gauls. The reference to a short passage of Virgil's *Aeneid* might seem to be stretch, if it were not that during the same years (1508-1509), as Vincenzo Farinella has convincingly demonstrated, Book Eight of Virgil's poem constituted "the most important classical literary source for the iconography of Antonio Lombardo's relief *La fucina di Vulcano* and for the study of Alfonso's 'studio dei marmi'" (Farinella 2014, 137). This relief, in fact, seems to cast Alfonso as a new Vulcan, here portrayed as the divine craftsman of weapons for heroes and thus ready to offer an effective *exemplum virtutis* to the new Duke of Ferrara (159).

These interwoven references are too deliberate to dismiss as mere coincidences: in his *Commentarius in Venetae classis expugnationem,*

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[26] This detail of story of the Gauls' attack on Rome can also be found in Livy 5.25.9 and Diodorus of Sicily 14.116.9.

[27] BdP to Isabella d'Este, 17 December 1509, ASMn, AG, b. 1242, 389*r*.

[28] Archivio di Stato Ferrara, Archivio Notarile Antico, notary matricula 283, Bartolomeo Codegori, pacco 26 (1510–1511), 27 November 1510, "Mandatum Romano Tombesi". In Ghirardo 2008, 54.

Calcagnini, drawing inspiration from the verse in Book Eight of the *Aeneid*, could have, as mentioned earlier, celebrated Lucrezia Borgia and her court of women who, reminiscent of the matrons of antiquity, not only saved Rome but were also granted the privilege of parading through the city in chariots. However, considering the favorable reception this book enjoyed at court during this period, and the celebratory context created by the comparison between Duke Alfonso and the god Vulcan, one might ponder if the reference to Virgil served as a dual celebration in honor of Lucrezia Borgia. This conjecture gains traction, particularly given that in the same book, Venus makes a sudden appearance to Aeneas, presenting him with arms crafted by her husband, Vulcan. The parallel between Lucrezia and the goddess Venus – the mother of Aeneas, protector of the Trojan people and, thus, of the Este Dynasty – had become a literary *topos* in Ferrara,[29] with a particular focus on Venus and Lucrezia's beauty. In Tito Vespasiano Strozzi's epigram *De eadem tropaeis aureis ornata*, for example, Lucrezia, having captured Cupid, is portrayed as sitting "worthy of veneration, on the triumphant throne".[30]

6. Conclusion

The existence of a triumphal chariot commissioned for Lucrezia finds confirmation in two account books, yet the absence of direct references in contemporary chronicles, diaries, and letters rekindles the debate on whether and how performance disappears or remains, on how to investigate something that, in Peggy Phelan's words, "becomes itself through disappearance" (1993, 146). Does life endure after performance? Can performance persist even in the absence of explicit documentation? I posit that it does. While plans, descriptions, expenses, poems, and paintings can indeed serve as tangible remains of live performances, they should not be viewed solely as traces of the past, relegated to what has been left behind. Instead, it is crucial to recognize that documents are inherently intertwined with any performance from its inception. As Lara Shalson aptly observes, "document and performance endure together in an ongoing relationship," a relationship

[29] The comparison between Lucrezia and Venus can be found in Tito Vespasiano Strozzi (Zarri 2006, 34-5; Cazzola 2010, 83-4, 90, 104), Antonio Tebaldeo and Nicolò Maria Paniciato (Negri 2010, 71), Bernardo Accolti (Tissoni Benvenuti 2006, 12-13), and Marcello Filosseno (Zanardi Prosperi 2010, 169). Notably, Niccolò da Correggio and Antonio Tebaldeo extended this analogy to encompass both Lucrezia-Venus and Alfonso-Mars, a fitting parallel given the Duke of Ferrara's engagement in artillery and cannon construction during those years (Fenzi 2006, 57).

[30] *Strozii poetae pater et filius, Venetiis, in aedibus Aldi et Andreae Asulani soceri*, MDXIII. BCA, Ferrara, coll. E. 77.3. Cited in Cazzola 2010, 90.

in which performance does not simply "depend upon documentation for its longevity, but documents also depend upon performance to endure" (2018, 182). This interdependence challenges us to appreciate the nuanced nature of the historical traces left by performances and prompts a reevaluation of the significance assigned to their documented and undocumented aspects. I suggest that performance can be traced and understood through the documents it generates and interacts with, even in the absence of direct witnesses. By examining the material related to Lucrezia's chariot, I have shown how they reveal aspects of her political, religious, and artistic agency, as well as the cultural and historical context of her time. This approach opens new possibilities for studying performance in the past and challenges us to reconsider the role of documents in the creation and preservation of meaning.

Abbreviations

AE	Archivio Estense
AG	Archivio Gonzaga
ASMn	Archivio di Stato di Mantova
ASMo	Archivio di Stato di Modena
BCA	Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea
BdP	Bernardino de' Prosperi
CDE	Camera Ducale Estense
C&S	Casa e Stato
LCD	Libri Camerali Diversi
Mem.	Memoriale
M&F	Munizioni e Fabbriche

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Raimondo Guarino*

Nympha Loci: Gardens, Statues and Poetry in Early Renaissance Rome

Abstract

This study addresses Nympha loci, the topos of the sleeping nymph as expressed in tangible and intangible form in the humanist gardens of early Renaissance Rome as shown in a confluence of texts, images, statues, epitaphs and epigrams. By collecting fragments of antiquities, humanists and cardinals pursued and shaped an environmental imitation of the Roman horti transposed into the Christian city. These were places devoted to the knowledge and celebration of ancient Rome. The collections were galvanised and enhanced by performances of drama, poetry and oratory, bringing together the political and spiritual values of the sodalitas for the Accademia Romana. The study also considers the transposition of theatrum and scaena within the context of the architectural inventions conceived for Villa Chigi and Villa Madama.

Keywords: nymph; humanism; gardens; Roman academies; collections

1. A Nymph and Her Sources

The nymph that inhabits and haunts the gardens of Roman Renaissance villas is at once a tangible and intangible figure: precarious, mobile and elusive but also real and ubiquitous. Loitering amidst the residences of academicians and the mansions of cardinals and aristocrats, she embodied the sites that encapsulated in their identity the prospects return of ancient Rome to the modern city. The gathering of texts and images, finds and artefacts, considered with respect to the places where such collecting was carried out or the places it was associated with, is one of the processes characterising the relations of humanists and collectors with antiquity in the Roman context.

In one of her last contributions on the legacy of Pomponius Laetus and his Accademia Romana, Phyllis Pray Bober wrote:

> Two aspects of Roman cultural and literary life in the early Cinquecento epitomize a heritage of devotion to the arts of poetry on the part of Leto and his circle. Whether revival of the ceremony of *laureatio* as part of

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inaugurating a celebration of Rome's birthday, the *Palilia*, or the resurrection
of ancient comedy with its stimulus to contemporary secular drama, each
documents the historical nature of Pomponius' humanism. The role of lyric
expression in the Accademia Pomponiana at Rome is no less striking than
the Orphism of Poliziano and Ficino in Florence . . . Convivial Latin poetry
shapes the origin of the *Palilia* celebration. (2004, 249)[1]

Within the context of the residences of the Pomponians, the *Palilie* as
celebrations of the foundation of Rome inspired the recitations and
performances identified by Cruciani (1983, 180-4) as the fulcrum of
humanist theatre in Rome. In the framework of the collections, gardens
and nymphaeums of humanists, cardinals and aristocrats, the patterns of
linkage and separation between epigrams, real or alleged epigraphs, statues
and declamation concern the substance of relevant practices and meanings.
The exceptionally broad scope of the Apollonian and Dionysian meanings
attributed to the sleeping and speaking nymph is explained in another
fundamental essay on archaeological gardens by Phyllis Pray Bober (1977).
Here she explores the sites of the academic meetings and the material
contexts of practices that we would now define as performative, based on the
relationship between the archaeological collections and oral poetry. This area
of studies points up the originality of the Roman humanists as compared to
the legacy of and contacts with Florentine Neoplatonism and the dialectics
proper to the Roman milieux (Guarino 1995, 2010, 2020; Cavallaro 2007;
for the most exhaustive overview, complete with a vast bibliography and a
catalogue of the sources of the collections, Christian 2010).

The epigram "Huius nympha loci, sacri custodia fontis", referred to a
statue of the sleeping nymph, has been attributed to Giovanni Antonio
Campano (1429-1477):

Huius nympha loci, sacri custodia fontis,
Dormio, dum blandae sentio murmur Aquae.
Parce meum, quisquis tangis cava marmora somnium
Rumpere: sive bibas, sive lavere, taces.

[I, The nymph of the place, the guardian of the sacred fount,
I sleep as I listen to the murmur of the enchanting waters.
Be careful, whoever approaches to this marble cave.
Not to disturb my slumber, drink or bathe in silence.][2]

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[1] For more about Neoplatonism in Florence and Rome, see Bober 2000.
[2] Transcribed and translated in Christian 2010, 134, 238.

The attribution to Campano was proposed on the basis of an indication by Bartolomeo Fonzio in a note around 1470 stating that Campano was the author. The epigram appears in the collection of *Epigrammata antiquae Romae* by Francesco Ferrarini (c.1470) and was referred to by Bartolomeo Fonzio as "Romae recens [or *nuper*] inventum. Campani est" (discussed in Kurz 1953; MacDougall 1975; Bober 1977; a survey and more recent speculations in Agnoletto 2019). Campano's authorship was accredited and confirmed by reference to a manuscript collection of epigrams dedicated by Campano to the Bishop of Pavia, Iacopo Ammannati Piccolomini. This would indicate a connection with a sculpture present in the Roman residence of the prelate (Pataki 2005, 1.36-44; Christian 2010, 132-6, with further examples of poem/ statue/epigraph correlations). Other contemporary sources refer to a statue owned by the Cardinal Domenico della Rovere:

> [Domenico] della Rovere's garden featured a fountain of the sleeping nymph which included the statue of a reclining woman and the famous *Huius Nympha loci* epigram. Between about 1482 and 1485 della Rovere served as the official Cardinal Protector of Pomponio Leto's Academy and his nymph fountain may well have been one of the favored Academy's gathering points . . . Several manuscripts of the late Quattrocento include poems which were written about della Rovere's statue. (Christian 2010, 367)

Ammannati, Domenico della Rovere and their residences connect the nymph with festive and academic milieux of literary creations. Ammannati records in his own correspondence, in 1474, the relationships between "artifices, histriones, mimi" from Florence and the festive initiatives of Cardinal Pietro Riario (Ammannati Piccolomini 1997, 3.1790). Campano's poetic activity leads back to traces of recitative practices in the milieu of Cardinal Bessarion. Recollecting facts and memories about Campano in his biographical introduction to the *Opera Campani* (first printed in Rome in 1496), Michele Ferno celebrates his importance in the context of Bessarion's *familia* and as an exemplum of the *magnificentia* of the cardinals' courts. Ferno describes a feast in which Campano offers a eulogy to Bessarion after a *masquerade*. During the Roman carnival: "urbs tota festivitatibus aliquando exultabat ut in Carnispriviis debacchantium turba larvatorum plausibus et cantu plena" (Campano 1502, 14*v*; The whole city enjoyed the carnival, crowded by masks applauding and singing like a Bacchic procession).

During this feast, a masked pupil sang the verses of the eulogy for the cardinal ("Quos larvatus ephebus . . . submodulata lyra incinuisset"; A masked boy sang these verses with a tuned lyre). The association between Roman villas and Parnassus surfaces in some poems from the circle of Bessarion; this association will recur after some years, around 1480, in poems by Lazzarelli,

Marso and Perotti (Schröter 1980; Guarino 2010, 2011), in which Latin verses gave shape to the restoration of the *Palilie*.[3]

In a letter written in October 1471 from a legation in Würzburg, the first letter of the sixth book of the *Epistulae*, which was addressed to Gentile de' Becchi, preceptor to Lorenzo de' Medici, Campano mentions the most notable Florentine poets, and among them celebrates "Marsilius noster" (Marsilio Ficino) who evokes Apollo with songs *ad citharam*. Campano mentions as well the Florentine *cantore* Baccio Ugolini and the *romana ingenia*, with Calderini, Platina and Pomponio, members of the *sodalitas pomponiana* (Campano 1502, *Epistularum Libri*, 47*v*; Di Bernardo 1975, 220-32). Campano celebrates Baccio as a singer *ad citharam* in the Roman nights: "Baccius sumpta cithara per urbem / Nocte sopitas canit ad fenestras" (Baccius, taking his cithara, sings nightly through the city to the sleeping windows). Through the protection of Campano, witnessed in *Epistolae*, and the munificence of Pietro Riario, Baccio was active as a poet and singer in Rome. The letter therefore evidences Campano as a leader of a Florentine-Roman network around 1470. Ugolini, under the protection of Pietro Riario, created the role of the singing Orpheus of the banquet for Eleonora d'Aragona, in Santi Apostoli in June 1473, as well as playing the bilingual Orpheus in at least one presentation of the *Fabula di Orfeo* by Angelo Poliziano. The famous episode regarding Baccio's role as an arbitrator between Latin and vernacular improvisers, as recounted by the humanist Ottavio Cleofilo in a letter sent from Rome to his friends in Ferrara in April 1474, adds further interest on top of the presence of Baccio in Rome and Pietro Riario's *entourage*. Cleofilo took note of the presence of Baccius as the judge of the poets' match: "Eligitur consensu utriusque iudex Baccius florentinus, homo bene eruditus et vulgaris musae poeta egregius" (Dionisotti 1968, 30-2; Wilson 2022, 202-3; For both Latin and vernacular poems, Baccio from Florence was chosen as the judge, a very distinguished man and an outstanding poet of the vernacular muse).

The presence of Bessarion and Campano is key to following the traces of the nymph and of her epigram. More important than the origin of the pseudo-Latin epigrams and songs is the context of antiquarian collections and pseudo-classical poetry:

> Campano was a protegé of Cardinal Bessarion, and was undoubtedly familiar with the Greek Anthology, for Bessarion owned a complete copy of the Planudean collection of epigrams. In addition, both Bessarion's Academy in Rome and Pomponio Leto's, of which Campano was also a member, were noted for their promotion of studies in Greek literature and its translation.

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[3] On convivial poetry in Bessarion's circle, see Bianca 1994.

> Campano's poems testify to the strong influence on him of Greek poetry.
> (MacDougall 1975, 358)

The sleeping nymph was the recurrent and accomplished personification of the substantial intercourse between poetry and archaeology. Her moving and ubiquitous presence is in present-day studies the perfect (and sometimes overlooked) connection between places housing collections, literary gatherings and performance practices. The connections she reveals are, in addition, the evidence of multiple and important exchanges between Florentine Neoplatonism and the Roman academies, and of connections between dramatic and musical performances in late Quattrocento festivals in Rome.

Consequently, Campano's personality, writings and relationships represent a link between the cosmic significance of Florentine Neoplatonic poetry and the archaeological and celebratory experiences of the Roman humanists. Hence, we can trace the derivation of pseudo-classical verses from the circles of the cardinals Bessarion and Pietro Riario to the constellation of academic sites in Rome.

2. Voices in the Gardens

Apparitions of statues and speaking mythological figures, vernacular and neo-Latin poetry, and improvised and carefully planned verses coexisted in a widespread and well-documented reality that provided the contexts for performing poetry in late Quattrocento Italy (Richardson 2017). Grasping the Roman expressions of this phenomenon means localising texts, artefacts and performances within the sites of humanist circles. A peculiar interest in the connection between statues, grottoes, fountains and epigraphs involves the projection of the written word into the sites where antiquarian collecting took place. The academic gardens therefore constitute a decisive terrain for the reconstruction of groups and communities within the Roman humanistic milieu. Amidst texts and sites, the lines of *Huius nympha loci* spread into and animated the places frequented by the Roman humanists, illustrating their literary expressions and the symbolic associations of the nymph with poetic creation. In this way, the resonances of Neoplatonic inspiration within the Roman context are clarified. Direct and extensive evidence of the stylistic and linguistic hybridisations of the Roman settings is found in the dialogue *Li Nuptiali* by Marcantonio Altieri (written between 1504 and 1515), which praises the talents of the poets who trained under humanists at the time of Julius II (Altieri 1995). The attractiveness of Marcantonio Altieri's testimony revolves around the wedding feasts of the aristocracy, which were juxtaposed with the communal celebration of the carnival *ludi* of Testaccio and the

spectacles prepared for Leo X in September 1513 in the temporary theatre built on the Capitoline Hill (Cruciani 1968). The list extends to the numerous and heterogeneous presences that took over from the dominant figure of Serafino Aquilano, who died in 1500 (on Serafino, see Bortoletti 2020). Under the protection of the sleeping nymph, gardens and collections were, in one characterisation of the academies, "safe areas for intellectual expression" (D'Amico 1983, 89). A statement about the *Palilie* in Pomponio's house on the Quirinal hill in Jacopo Gherardi's *Diario* refers to a festive banquet, a poetical contest, and orations and verses prepared for the celebration of *laureatio* and the performance of comedies (Gherardi 1904, 117; Christian 2010, 129).

Scholars looking for characters and contexts in early Renaissance Rome have often quoted the lines from Altieri's *Li Nuptiali.* These lines refer to the choice of vernacular and Latin poets who could be invited to recite their verses for the wedding feast of an aristocratic couple. The wedding that provided the occasion for the dialogue was the marriage between Gian Giorgio Cesarini and Marzia Sforza di Santa Fiora, which actually took place in April 1504. Altieri is a Roman *nobilis vir*, a patrician who celebrates ancient Roman culture and discusses with other citizens the right way to defend, to recover and to enhance the glory and "the ancient honors" of the Roman aristocracy against the imperial policy of Pope Julius II. His lines are intended to gather all of the poets active about 1500 into one list, facilitating the selection of literary skills appropriate to the nuptial rite. What draws our attention is not this social and ethnographic point, which has been well treated in outstanding papers about the Roman *nobilitas* by Christian Klapisch-Zuber (1988) and Massimo Miglio (1995). Our point is the choice of poets from the list compiled for the wedding feast.

In the initial lines, we find reference to two Neo-Latin poets, Cosmico and Marullo, who are called:

> to nurture the ears of the invited people with some merry and gracious inventions. And for the delight of the invited women, I would like to invite Serafino. But if the mentioned poets should refuse, with your permission I would ask Scrofolato to take care of this task, if his illness will allow him, and also Mr Bernardino de' Massimi, Mr Carlo Della Valle, Mr Pantagato de Capranica, and Messrs Pavolo degli Albertoni, Emilio Boccabella and Alessio Marinello. And there could be also Batista Casale, always cherished by the Muses. But I should remind you also of Blosio, Pimpinella, Phaedra and Casanova, who will be ready to willingly satisfy our request and answer our call. And if Serafino should be missing, there could be in his place Rustico Perleone, and in his absence, you could demand my Ramondo delli Albertoni. Almost all of them are of similar condition, as Roman gentlemen; and all of them well ready to comply; these are not lesser in their composed and published works to the most renowned that I have mentioned. And I would

like to add, also, as not less worthy, Antonio Lelio, Camillo Porzio and my nephew Fausto Capodiferro. (Altieri 1995, 8-9)

[Pigliassimo con Cosmico e Marullo el pensier de rascionare; et astrignerli, come me certifico farete, che con qualche iocunda et grata inventione, pascessero le orecchie non sol de' convitati ma de qualunca circostante desideroso de più oltra sapere . . . Et acciò le donne de qualche delectevile trastullo similmente se trovassero cibate, provarome anche condurve el Serafino. Quando questi vostri electi e nominati, per qualunca lor faccenda fossero impediti, col vostro grato assenso et con honor molto maiore della città, darremone la cura al Scrofolato, se lo mal suo non ce lo intertenga, a misser Bernardino de' Massimi, a misser Carlo Della Valle, misser Pantagato de Capranica, misser Pavolo degli Albertoni, Emilio Boccabella, Alessio Marinello. E quando de' nominati ognun v'abbandonnasse, non mancarace messer Batista Casale; quale sì se dimostra dedito alle Muse, che a sua richiesta de Parnaso, de Elicona et de Castalide, onde possa in qual volessimo gran tema, molto agilmente et in pronto satisfarve. Et vience hora alla memoria esserve anche el Blosio, Pimpinella, Phedra et Casanova, sì come giovinetti interlassati; quali sonno de natura sì disposti al compiacere che non tanto le Muse lor familiare, ma lo corpo a qualunchesso grave incomodo exporrando prontamente per servirve. E de rincontro al Sarafino sarrave el Rustico Perleone; e quando esso ve mancassi ce haverete el mio Ramondo deli Albertoni. Quasi tutti coetanei e de una consimile creanza, et tutti gentilhomeni romani; et ciascun de essi disposti similmente al compiacere: quali, sì come fra de' letterati è divulgato, se ritrovano in sì bona opinione, che per le lor composte cose e pubblicate, alli narrati non se tengono in acto alcuno litterale inferiore. Pur me confido, per la benigna e facile natura delli primi, et non meno delli secondi nominati, alli quali anche (non già per sopplimento) ce addurrìa Anton Lelio, Camillo Portio, et Evangelista Magdaleno Capodeferro mio nipote; ma per proximi ali primi, per quanto in questo honorevile successo abisognassi, per compiacerve mai denegarase.]

In this long list we find two major neo-Latin poets (Cosmico and Marullo), then humanists from Pomponio's Academy, and the scions of the Roman *nobiles familiae*, who are assumed to be their pupils (Albertoni, Capodiferro), and Serafino and his makeshift poet singer Pierleone, known as Rustico Romano. Roman feasts were places of fusion, confusion, and contestation involving contrasting voices. Rustico defines himself in the frontispice of *Compendio di sonecti*, his *canzoniere* printed in 1492, as a "devotissimo imitatore de' volgari poeti" (very devoted imitator of the vernacular poets). Like Serafino he was a performer, and the table of his works in the same document contains two texts acted by Rustico (see: *Compendio di sonecti et altre rime di varie texture intitulato lo Perleone recolte tra le opere antiche et moderne del humile discipolo et imitatore devotissimo de vulgari poeti Giuliano*

Perleonio dicto Rustico Romano . . . , in Napoli, per Aiolfo de Cantono da Milano, 1492; on Rustico Romano, see Addesso 2017).

As for the archaeological continuity, Bessarion casts a long shadow on the Roman gardens. His *viridarium*, his archaeological *hortus*, was built near his titular church, the Santi Apostoli. When Bessarion passed away, the *commenda* was assigned by Sixtus IV to his nephew Pietro Riario, and after the death of Pietro was inherited by Giuliano della Rovere, the cardinal of San Pietro in Vincoli, which became the location of the future pope's *viridarium*, in which the *Apollo* from Esquilius was placed after its unearthing in 1489 until its transfer to the Vatican Belvedere in 1508.

3. Beyond the Gardens

In Rome a concrete local aura enveloped the platonic values embodied in the archaeological collections of epigraphs and statues gathered by humanists and aristocrats. The speaking silence of the epigraphs was not merely "an attempt at providing archaeological authenticity to the setting", but also "a matter of achieving an *ambiente*", a composite imitation of an ancient environment that was in itself a hybridisation merging the Roman model of *villa* into Greek and Hellenistic sources (Brummer 1970, 220, 217; Ackerman 1951). The effect of the "poetic galvanization of sculpture" (Brummer 1970, 118) by means of the creation and recitation of texts that enabled them to speak, is exemplified by the poem written by Evangelista Maddaleni Capodiferro titled "Fausto" for the *Apollo* positioned in the *viridarium* of Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, and later, after he became Pope Julius II, installed in the Vatican Belvedere designed by Bramante (on the dramaturgy of the statues, after Brummer 1970, Cruciani 1983, Farinella 1992, Nesselrath 1998, Magister 2002, Christian 2010, 152-7).

We can read, in the manuscripts of Fausto (Altieri's nephew) (Vat. Lat. 10377) some verses referring to speaking statues, and some traces of the *actio* concerning eclogues and mythological dialogues. Brummer, in his reference work about the statues in Belvedere courtyard, wrote about this "poetic galvanization of the sculpture" as "a not unusual literary phenomenon" (Brummer 1970, 118-19). In a wider sense, poetry written for speaking statues created a kind of (projected) oral ekphrasis for the modern reinvention:

> The recreation of the classical villa must have comprised more than pure architectural features. Presumably a recreation of this kind was just as much a matter of achieving an *ambiente* . . . The very acts of recovering and installing statues must have assumed a significance beyond the mere revival of the antique: the physical presence of the sculptures undoubtedly enhanced the retrospective atmosphere. (Brummer 1970, 217-19)

The *Apollo* statue, eventually installed in Belvedere Court, actually spoke with a human voice in May 1504 during a banquet in the palace of the cardinal Giovanni Colonna, who was living in the former house and *viridarium* of Giuliano della Rovere near Santi Apostoli, which had been the residence of Bessarion. On this occasion we know that there was a statue (Apollo), and added to the verses in the manuscript by Fausto Capodiferro is the note, "Acta in convivio Johannis Columnae". In this case we can fix the date of a *recitatio* in the presence of the sculpture. We know that this note found the statue still in situ – Apollo was relocated to the Vatican only in 1508. In these documents showing the intercourse of poets and marble gods, we have the text, the site, the statue and the performance of the text employed as an *actio* related to the sculpture. The verses include the following sentence: "Non me marmoreum nunc aspicis. Aspice verum" (Now you don't look at me as a marble god. Look at my true presence; *Ecloga acta in convivio cardinalis Columnae kalendis Maii 1504*; Brummer 1970, 224-26; Magister 2002, 581-83, from BAV, Cod. Vat. Lat. 3351, f. 29*v*; BAV, Cod. Vat. Lat. 10377, ff. 63*v*-65*r*). For the Cleopatra/Ariadne in the Belvedere Court, Fausto Capodiferro wrote *De Statua Cleopatrae*:

> The Cleopatra installation was meant to stimulate the poetic imagination. Thus Fausto Capodiferro evokes the memory of the Queen who seduced Julius Caesar, and added that the second Julius loved her marble image with equal fervour. The Queen now served as a fountain figure in the Vatican. (Brummer 1998, 75)

It was not only their visual and architectonical quality, but the aura emanating from epigraphs, statues and *recitationes* that gave life to the archaeological mimetism of humanists and antiquarians, and the poetry for the speaking statues was not only a genre and frame for occasional verses. In a paper which stands as a milestone in the studies of the archaeological collections in early Renaissance Rome, Phyllis Pray Bober (1977) traces a long-term continuity between the first Pomponian Academy and its rituals, referring to the groups of poets gathered in the garden of Angelo Colocci near the Aqua Virgo and the villa of Johann Goritz near the Velia, from which originated the print of *Coryciana* in 1524. The connecting thread is a sculpture laying above an epitaph and a carved epigram in which the nymph invites the visitor of the garden to silence. The continuity of the nymph's speech created the interweaving of a philosophical background with the archaeological setting of the gardens, enhanced by the voices of the neo-Latin poetic festivals. We meet the *coniunctio* between epigrams and epitaphs in the Colocci garden, which reflects the passion for collecting of Pomponius Laetus. And we find the carved epigram *Huius nympha loci*, without the statue, in the garden were Johann Goritz celebrates the neo-

Latin poetical games, culminating in the writing of verses for Sansovino's plastic group of Maria, Anna and the Christ child.

These voices had different accents. There were *recitationes* of *edita carmina,* declamations and improvisations. Around 1500, the presence of Serafino and eulogies about Serafino trigger a process of fixing values in the vernacular field, following the genealogy that leads from Petrarch to the Aquilano. Two other poets selected by Altieri were involved in a *laureatio* celebrated at the Vatican Belvedere in November 1512. The master of the ceremony was Tommaso Inghirami, the pupil of Pomponius, *praefectus* to the Vatican Library ("Phaedra"/"Phaedrus" for Altieri, Sadoleto and his contemporaries. For his *cursus,* Cruciani 1980). The academic ritual took place near the courtyard of statues planned by Bramante for Julius' collection. The poets were the young Pimpinella, crowned as a new Orpheus while singing a *carmen* surrounded by dancing nymphs. The second is the old blind learned man, "cieco dotto", probably Raffaele Brandolini, who sang improvised Latin verses (the sources for *laureatio* in Guarino 2010, 2011). His treatise *De musica et poetica*, dedicated to Leo X in 1513, recalled, with a repertory devoted to Ficino and Landino, the orphic genealogy and the allegorical Neoplatonic values of poetry. Both Aurelio and Raffaele Brandolini were mainly orators in Latin, but they sang or improvised Latin and vernacular poetry (Moyer 2001). Brandolini junior passed away in 1517. The clichés of the performance of Neoplatonic inspiration came back in the text *De poetis urbanis,* the long poem about Roman poets written about 1520 by Francesco Arsilli, which closes the 1524 print of *Coryciana* (Alhaique Pettinelli 2004).

The symbiosis of epigram/epigraph/statue encapsulates and materialises the synthesis between invention and memory. Modern pseudo-classical poetry was recited in locations created using the inspiration of this synthesis, in which statues and inscriptions were tangibly connected. In the combination of archaeological imitation and the survival of the ancient city, the recumbent or sleeping nymph was effectively a *genius loci*, a deity of the place, the custodian of the symposial values of the humanist group and of the refractions and regenerations of the fragments, finds and artefacts contained in the collections. The recumbent figure assumed various mythical and historical projections – Ariadne, Cleopatra, Anna Perenna, Corycia – that were sensitive to different arrangements of the settings reproducing the ancient villa in modern Rome, absorbing the resonances of melancholy, silence, dream and Bacchic ecstasy (Baert 2018). These symbolic values were associated with practices of poetry and archaeology, Ariadne with myths and songs related to Dyonisos. The female recumbent statue recalling Ariadne in Naxos and her ecstasy became Cleopatra in the imperial context of the Vatican Belvedere, to be celebrated in the poem by Fausto Capodiferro, who borrowed verses from *Huius nympha* (Kurz 1953, 175). Anna Perenna was a

fluvial nymph celebrated in Ancient Rome with poetical contests (MacIntyre 2018). Corycia was reborn as the eponymous stepmother of Johannes Goritz' humanistic group. The intertwining of the recitations in the gardens with the poetic practices of the Roman context shows the actors involved in these experiences engaged in reviving the celebratory values of oratory and drama. This pursued a continuity stretching from the context of Bessarion to the traces and texts of the Pomponians, the proposals of the Vatican Belvedere and the very concept of the statue courtyard of Julius II, through to the garden of Angelo Colocci and the anthology of the *Coryciana* from 1524.

The symbolic dilation of the statuary presences and the epigraphic collections can be extended to the retrieval and representation of the natural and rural universe in the urban space, which blends the absorption of Greek culture into the ancient Roman villa (Giesecke 2010). However, this contribution is too short to explore this substrate. On this aspect too, I refer to the already-mentioned essay by Phyllis Pray Bober, "The *Coryciana* and the Nymph Corycia" (1977), which explicitly takes up the profound impetus of *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* by Edgar Wind (1958) and provides a crucial complement to Cruciani's studies of the Pomponians (Cruciani 1980, 1983). For members of the Roman academies, writes Bober:

> Participants in these mysteries linked in their minds Goritz's fountain and Colocci's dormant naiad with the full inscription at another favourite gathering place next to the Acqua Vergine, and the cave of Nymph Corycia above Delphi on Mount Parnassus. Her grotto was one of those *hieroi topoi* arousing spontaneous veneration in antiquity, as Leto echoes from his knowledge of Pausanias and other literary allusions. Lightly punning and at the same time gravely 'academic', the symposiasts' preference for the form Corycius as Goritz's name, and the title *Coryciana* for the anthology of verses he inspired, is placed in a new light. Illumination is also cast upon an earlier stage in the development of the nymph cult with a hint as to the role of Pomponio Leto, who not only recognized ancient reverence for springs and grottoes, but also shared responsibility for the *editio princeps* of Frontinus, where the sacred and healing powers of water are set out. (Bober 1977, 229)

In the convergence of the ritual aspects and archaeological values that marked the modern Roman villa within the residences of aristocrats and cardinals and in the vicinity of the Vatican, the statue – actual or virtual – embodied the enmeshing of words and contexts. Its genesis and meanings are inevitably tied up with the link between recitation and poetry. It is impossible to define Roman humanist theatre without reconstructing the genres, practices and presences of the statues in the gardens of the archaeological collections. From Sulpizio da Veroli's dedication to Raffaele Riario in the first printed edition of Vitruvius's *De Architectura* of 1486, through to the theatre erected

on the Capitoline Hill in 1513 and the initiatives of poetic *laureatio* proposed
to Julius II by Tommaso Inghirami, the most distinguished of Pomponius'
pupils in the Vatican (Guarino 2010, 2011), the very concept of theatre came
to a new life in the context and in the dissemination of the antiquarian
collections. In the topography, structure and usage of the Roman gardens,
theatre assumed the dynamics and directions of an ambience materialised
on the boundary between sites of dynastic and personal hegemony and the
civic value of public spaces. The Roman villa, according to Martial, was "rus
in urbe" (*Epigrammata* 12, 57). Its liminal area and structures sheltered a
world that was set apart, giving life in the early Renaissance to a peculiar
"cultural landscape" (Riboullault 2019). In Peruzzi's project for Villa Chigi
and in Raphael's designs for Villa Medici on Monte Mario (Villa Madama),
architectural inventions and symbolic condensations were transposed
into the tensions between villa and *urbs* that characterised and shaped
Renaissance theatre, orienting the conversion of the *theatrum* into a public
building within the space of the villa (Elet 2018). The *frons scaenae* designed
by Peruzzi for Agostino Chigi and the projects by Raffaello and Antonio da
Sangallo for Villa Madama in 1515-1518 were inspired by Vitruvius and by
the literary sources describing Roman residences (Pliny the Younger), in a
synthesis that transposed and reshaped architectural patterns for *theatrum*
in the modern Roman villa *all'antica*.

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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.[1] 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

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, 1*v*; 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, 1*v*, similarly 2*r*, 2*v*; 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, 8*v*; "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, 11*v*)

> [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, 6*r*; "Vestis rubra albo circundata 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, 4*v*; "Temporibus Zischae"). That is, it was the peasant, serf army (Collinus 1558, 4*r*; 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.[2]

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, 6*r*; "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

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[2] Ulloa 1564, 295: "alcuni bastoni lungi un braccio, et mezzo, da quali pende con una picciola cattena 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, 4*r*; ". . . 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, 11*v*; Collinus 1558, 4*r*).

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, 6*v*), 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, 8*v*).

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, 18*v*).

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, 14*v*). 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, 14*v*; "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 (Beneficientiam) 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, 30*r*; "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, 30*v*). 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, 30*v*; 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, 31*r*; "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, 31*r*). 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, 31*r* ; "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, 32*r*). 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, 7*v*).

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, 32*v*). 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, 32*v*). 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, 31*v*). 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, 21*v*; "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, 33*r*-*v*; Mattioli 1559, 21*v*).

The Trojans were referred to as the 'Teucri' 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, 2*v*).

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, 4*v*; "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, 4*r*; 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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Benedetta Colasanti*

A Rediscovery of Antiquity.
Traces of Ancient Mechanics
in the Staging of the Opening Perfomance
of the Farnese Theatre in Parma (1628)

Abstract

When studying Baroque theatre, which was characterized by surprising scene changes and mechanical movements, we cannot ignore ancient mechanics. In the sixteenth century, we can observe that the Renaissance city and its symbolic monuments were represented in perspective in the court theatres. Perspective rigor, scenic metamorphosis and mechanical wonder coexisted on stage; the latter were a point of arrival (and also a new starting point) of a tradition that, starting from antiquity, seems to have continued into the seventeenth century. When we study the machines of the inaugural performance of the Farnese Theatre in Parma – *Mercurio e Marte* (1628) – and the sources related to it, we easily come across the knowledge of the ancient heritage. The anonymous treatise *Il corago* (1628-1637) offers entire chapters from Julius Pollux's *Onomasticon* translated into the vernacular, and in his *Pratica* (1638) Nicola Sabbatini, like Heron, recommends oiling the machines in order to achieve a more fluid movement. Literary and iconographic documents also refer to machines already described by Vitruvius, Pollux and Heron of Alexandria: the cranes for suspending gods or other figures, the 'staircase of Charon' for access to the corridors between the stage and the under-stage, various systems for scene changes. By overlapping the sources for the study of the inaugural performance of the Farnese Theatre, the seventeenth-century treatises and the ancient treatises, this article aims to identify the ancient machineries still valid in *Mercurio e Marte* and in the Baroque theatre; it also aims to evoke a tradition of transmission of knowledge among mechanics that, starting from antiquity, extends directly into modern times, partially denying the extemporaneous 'rediscovery' of antiquity.

Keywords: rediscovery of antiquity; stage machinery; Farnese Theatre; scenery; set design

1. A Rediscovery of Antiquity

When approaching the study of Renaissance and Baroque theatre and the seventeenth-century treatises on scenography, the need to examine the influences of antiquity becomes immediately apparent. In the fifteenth

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and sixteenth centuries, the 'rediscovery of antiquity' relied primarily on the translation and discussion of classical works such as Vitruvius' *De architectura*. From the sixteenth century onwards, the performing arts were also included; in the theatre, Neoplatonic philosophy and the representation of political and cultural values and aspirations coexisted with the practise and experience of architects, engineers and set designers, who brought the technical skills they had learnt on construction sites to the stage and vice versa. The emergence of 'modern' theatre is the result of the intertwining of these two phenomena as well as classical Vitruvian principles, staging practices and new scientific achievements.

The monumental *scaenae frons* inspired by Greco-Roman theatre coexisted in the sixteenth century with the perspective scene conceived on the stages as a reflection of the real and rational city of the Renaissance; think of the Olimpico Theatre in Vicenza (1580-1585). Other examples of stable theatre buildings in modern times are the Mediceo Theatre of the Uffizi (1586-1589) and the Sabbioneta Theatre (1588-1590).[1] In some of these buildings, in addition to the rigor of perspective, another tradition can be observed, that of the *ingegni* by Leonardo Da Vinci or Filippo Brunelleschi (Bortoletti 2020; Ventrone 2016), as well as the technological advancement of the architectural or technical construction site on the stage. In court theatre, this tradition led first to the *intermezzi* of the sixteenth-century Baroque scene, which – despite the persistence of perspective – were characterized by metamorphoses and scenic technical wonders. While the process of translation and reinterpretation of Vitruvius in terms of architecture and perspective is well known, the studies on mechanics are more limited,[2] although this knowledge was widespread among professionals both in antiquity and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Lucien Febvre's reflection confirms the pioneering value of the *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* (1935): the history of techniques, at least until now, would have been

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[1] The Olimpico Theatre in Vicenza, commissioned by the Olympic Academicians, was built by Andrea Palladio and completed by Vincenzo Scamozzi, see at least Mazzoni 1998. For the theatre of Sabbioneta (1588-1590), built by Scamozzi himself, see at least Mazzoni and Guaita 1985. Finally, the bibliography on the Mediceo Theatre is endless; for a summary, see at least Mamone 1981. Not to forget the Roman experience in the first half of the sixteenth century at the papal court of the Medici and in the circle of Bramante and Antonio da Sangallo 'the young', a group of painters, architects and set designers who were engaged in the study and revival of the idea of ancient theatre. Think of Raffaello's project for the Capitoline Theatre (1513) and the never-realised project for the open-air theatre of Villa Madama (1518-1519) as well as the design of the stage set for Ludovico Ariosto's *I Suppositi* in the Vatican (1519). See at least Cruciani 1969.

[2] Although several contributions are the exception, see as an example Harris and Korda 2002.

ignored by history *tout court*; he aims to highlight the work of technicians, the dissemination of mechanical 'secrets' and the fact that the discipline was at the service of men's everyday life, first and foremost in the religious and political and artistic spheres (Febvre 1935, 646-8). Thus, if one reflects – in the wake of Febvre – on the possibility and necessity of shedding new light on the history of technology, it will be a natural consequence to bring technology and the history of entertainment as a political instrument into dialogue, even before it is an instrument of entertainment.

2. The State Technician

In Baroque theatre in particular, the machines and their builders and operators were essential elements, both historically and stylistically. In line with Traversier, we imagine a world behind the scenes consisting of mechanisms and machines coordinated by experienced professionals (Traversier 2018, 6-14). The work of the technicians is often underestimated by a historiography that focuses more on theatre literature, acting and even the visual aspects, which are certainly due to the aforementioned work of the technicians, invisible to the spectators, relatively little documented and disappeared, just as many other objects of the theatre have disappeared (costumes, masks, everything made of perishable materials; Roussillon and Dickhault 2021). However, there have been many attempts to shed light on the material aspects of theatre-making, particularly through case studies.[3]

In the seventeenth century, the rediscovery of antiquity and the appropriation of experience from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in the technical field seem to have favored a new, specifically scientific approach. Like the most important scientific discoveries,[4] mechanics gradually took its place in literature,[5] as a sign of the discipline's liberation from a *status* considered inferior. Between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there was no specialization for technical professions (architect, engineer, stage designer, stage technician), but every court was equipped with at least one State technician who – to quote Giuseppe Adami – "servono con la spada e

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[3] See for example Tkaczyk 2016, 99-117. The article is about Giulio Parigi, a master of technological spin-offs, who for his part inherited an older legacy, but who – among others – had the merit of juggling theory and practice.

[4] Think of the satellites of Jupiter discovered by Galileo Galilei, the 'stars' of the Medici. See a letter from Camillo Giordani to his wife from Parma, which is kept in the Oliveriana Library in Pesaro (manuscript 926, 4).

[5] Think of Guidobaldo del Monte's praise of mechanics as a preface to his *Mechanicorum liber*. After the warning *Ai Lettori* in *Le Mechaniche dell'illustrissimo sig. Guido Ubaldo de' Marchesi del Monte, tradotto in volgare dal sig. Filippo Pigafetta*, Venezia, appresso Evangelista Duchino, 1615.

con la penna diversi principi europei" (Adami 2003, 11; stood with sword and pen in the service of various European princes).[6] At this time, these learned experts seem to have overcome both the purely antiquarian and intellectual approach of the humanists and pure practice, favoring a technical and scientific attitude.

Giovan Battista Aleotti, the builder of the Farnese Theatre, is a famous example of a State technician, a versatile talent who worked as a translator and theorist in the moments of interruption of the great civil, war, hydraulic engineering and land reclamation works. In the introduction to the fourth book of his treatise *Hidrologia*, he argues in favor of the need to be "dotto ed esperto nella Meccanica Natturale, il fondamento della quale sono la Geometria, l'Aritmetica e la Filosofia Naturale" (qtd in Raimondi 1998, 77; learned and versed in natural mechanics, based on geometry, arithmetic and natural philosophy). Aleotti also translated Heron's *Spiritali* (1589),[7] demonstrating both intellectual qualities and technical skills. He was also a cartographer and music theorist, further evidence of the knowledge of Vitruvius, who dealt with harmony and music in the fourth book of *De architectura*.[8] State technicians, aware of the political, social and economic importance of the mechanical discipline, recorded their knowledge in writing, thus transmitting those secrets which, for various reasons, remained the prerogative of the different construction sites. These adaptable experts also dealt with spectacular installations.

The court theatres were gradually equipped with a rich stage machinery, which was not only used in magnificent theatrical performances on occasions of great political importance, but also served as a kind of museum for visitors to the courts. The spectacular wonder was an instrument for demonstrating power and therefore, like buildings, military equipment or efficient hydraulic systems, had to do with politics. The scenic metamorphism was also the real attraction for the elite audience of the court theatre and was part of the horizon of expectations of those who were called upon to write descriptions to send to the rulers who could not be present. To understand the role of the mechanics also in the field of the stage, the expression 'dramaturgy of machines' used by Sara Mamone (2015) is eloquent to place the role of the mechanisms and their builders and operators – at least in this historical period – not only on an equal footing, but even above the dramaturgy itself.

[6] All translations, unless othweise indicated, are mine.

[7] The treatise is dedicated to Alfonso II d'Este. See Frabetti 2006, 35-65; Torlontano 1993, 123-60.

[8] A treatise on music entitled *Della musica necessaria a quegli architetti che si dilettano di fabricare machine hidrauliche* is preserved in the British Library in London. See at least Fabbri 1998, 189-94.

3. Theatre Machines at the Opening Performance of the Farnese Theatre in Parma

An emblematic case of the use of machines is the opera-tournament *Mercurio e Marte*, the opening performance of the Farnese Theatre in Parma.[9] Although this performance was quite innovative, much of the ancient stage technology was retained. The Farnese Theatre was inaugurated in 1628, ten years after its construction,[10] as part of an important ceremony of political and dynastic significance: the alliance between the Farnese family and the Tuscan Medici family. After the magnificent triumphal entry of Margherita, daughter of Cosimo II de' Medici and new bride of the Duke Odoardo Farnese, into Parma, the public spectacle left room for private entertainment. Most of the festivities took place in the Pilotta Palace, between the new and stable court theatre and the temporary theatre built for the occasion in the adjacent courtyard of the church of San Pietro Martire. The composite festivities consisted of banquets, dances and performances, culminated in *Mercurio e Marte*, written by Claudio Achillini and set to music by Claudio Monteverdi, with scenes and machinery by Aleotti and Francesco Guitti. The aim of the patrons was to surprise the audience with marvelous machines.

In addition to the treatises and descriptions, the study of stage machinery finds a valuable ally in the iconographic sources. Unfortunately, most of the sources available to us have nothing to do with the construction site[11] and show the scenes not from the point of view of the professionals but from that of the spectators: the mechanisms of the machines are obscured by decorative elements, especially clouds.[12] It is also difficult to determine which of the surviving pictorial documents are directly related to *Mercurio e Marte*. Elena Povoledo (1959, 49-55) attributes the machine drawings preserved in the State Archives of Parma to Guitti. Regardless of this attribution, it is plausible to imagine similar devices on the Farnese stage.

There are many machines that crossed the scene of 1628; it is possible to obtain a list by comparing some literary documents, three of which are kept

[9] The bibliography on the Farnese Theatre is also very rich. I refer to my doctoral thesis and the accompanying biography.

[10] After the construction of the theatre in 1618 on the occasion of the hoped-for visit of Cosimo II de' Medici, with whom Duke Farnese was seeking an alliance, the theatre was opened in 1628 on the occasion of the wedding between Odoardo Farnese and Margherita of Tuscany.

[11] Girolamo Seriacopi's *Memoriale* (1589), for example, sheds light on the material and practical aspects of theatre-making and Mediceo Theatre of the Uffizi, a construction site teeming with professionals, see Testaverde 1991. A similar atmosphere can be imagined at the construction site of the Farnese Theatre in Parma.

[12] I have consulted pictorial documents preserved in the Palatina Library in Parma (manuscript 3708) and in the State Archives of Parma (*Mappe e disegni*).

in the State Archives of Parma and the State Archives of Ferrara.[13] The first machine that crossed the maritime scene at the beginning of the performance was the chariot carrying Aurora, "la quale, al calar della cortina, sorge dal mare, sovra un bellissimo carro, e canta la felicità de i presenti, in virtù delle serenissime nozze" (qtd in Solerti 1969, 485-6; who, when the curtain falls, rises from the sea on a beautiful chariot and sings of the happiness of those present thanks to the happy wedding). This chariot was pulled by a winged horse, emerged from under the stage and crossed the scene diagonally. As Aurora ascended, a mechanism consisting of ten groups of clouds was in action on stage (Adami 2003, 150-1, 156). Nicola Sabbatini also describes similar cloud machines, from chapter forty-two to chapter forty-nine of his treatise *Pratica di fabricar scene, e machine ne' teatri* (1638).[14] The cloud, a functional element for the staging, as it was suitable for concealing the scenic mechanisms, is a symbol of the Baroque spectacle, but also – together with the winch – of the long tradition of scenic machinery founded by craftsmen such as Brunelleschi.

Back on the Farnese stage, after Aurora, during the performance of *Mercurio e Marte*, the audience witnessed the action of more than twenty allegorical machines, which are listed both in the archival documents mentioned above and in the laudatory document written by the chronicler Marcello Buttigli (1629): the Zodiac machine with the Golden Age, Discord and the Furies, Mercury, Mars, Venus, Apollo, the Muses, Juno, Berecinzia (i.e. Cybele), Proserpina, Pluto, Bellona, Saturn, Neptune, finally Jupiter and the Consistory of the Gods. The gods and allegories usually enter the scene accompanied by real machines and in three ways: either in the clouds or on a chariot (a flying chariot, a spaceship floating on an artificial sea) or on

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[13] The documents preserved in the State Archives of Parma are: *Indicazioni per il movimento delle macchine sceniche* (Notes for the movement of the stage machinery), attributed to the Farnese officer Fabio Scotti, see Adami 2003, 174; *Scene che si devono movere, e mutare, nella nova Invent.ne degli Intermezzi* (Scenes that must move, and change, during the reinvention of the interludes); *Ristretto del Torneo del quale si potrà cavar lumi, e cognizioni sufficiente per cominciare a dispor le machine* (Brief description of the tournament that allows you to understand how the construction of the machines works). The last two seem to be unpublished. In the State Archives of Ferrara is preserved: *Argomento e ristretto del torneo* (Topic and shortlist of the tournament) by Ippolito Bentivoglio, qtd in Lombardi 1909, 15-8. Another useful document is *Composizione di Claudio Achillini per l'apertura del Teatro Farnese, 1628, Mercurio e Marte, ristretto del torneo* (Composition by Claudio Achillini for the opening of the Farnese Theatre, 1628, Mercury and Mars, short list of the tournament), qtd in Solerti 1969, 485-6.

[14] The first printed edition of Sabbatini's treatise (1638) is preserved in the Oliveriana Library in Pesaro.

the back of an animal (winged horses, hippogriffs, water monsters). Some figures 'flew' on their own, supported by special devices. Beyond the form, we imagine a prop on which the performer sat or was secured standing, covered by the shape of a chariot or an animal or by boards cut into the shape of a cloud. The clouds performed horizontal, vertical, diagonal or transversal movements and could rotate around themselves. The machines could also fill the empty space on the stage between the stage floor and the attic, cross the stage floor or the waves of the sea (in this case the sources speak of shells, boats or ships). These machines, which were set up on the stage of the Farnese Theatre for the opening performance, refer to the machines described by Vitruvius, which are designed to move loads:

> Machina est continens e materia coniunctio maximas ad onerum motus habens virtutes. Ea movetur ex arte circulorum rotundationibus, quam Graeci kyklike kinesis appellant. Est autem unum genus scansorium quod graece akrobatikon dicitur, alterum spirabile quod apud eos pneumatikon appellatur, terium tractorium, id autem Graeci baroulkon vocitant. Scansorium autem est cum machinae ita fuerunt conlocatae ut ad alitudinem tignis statutis et transversariis conligatis sine periculo scandatur ad apparatus spectationem. At spirabile, cum spiritus et expressionibus inpulsus et plaga est vocesque organicos exprimuntur. Tractorium vero cum onera machinis pertrahuntur ut ad alitudinem sublate conlocentur. (Vitr. *De arch.* 10.1)

> [A machine is a structured set of wooden elements that is very effective for moving loads. It is operated by circular rotations, according to the principle that the Greeks call *kyklike kinesis*. There is a first type of climbing, called *akrobatikon* in Greek; a second, pneumatic, called *pneumatikon* by the Greeks; a third, tractor-like, called *baroulkon* in Greek. The climbing type occurs when the machines are constructed so that they can be safely climbed by means of vertically fixed beams and crossbars that connect them, in order to monitor the operations from above; the pneumatic type, when the machine is made to vibrate both by its emissions under pressure and by a shock, producing mechanical noises; then there is the tractor type, where the loads are pulled by the machine in order to lift it and place it high up.]

When Vitruvius speaks of the 'climbing type' to supervise the work from above, he is referring to the building site, but we can also imagine a crane, which we find both in mechanical engineering and in architecture, but also in a simplified and smaller version in the theatre. This is the so-called *deus ex machina*. Pollux also speaks of suspension machines: "Machina vero, Deos exhibet, Heroes illos aerios" (Poll. *Onom.* 4.19.2, qtd in Marotti 1974, 88-90; The machine, on the other hand, introduces the gods, the heroes of the air).

The workers' letters reveal various information about the work on the construction site of the Farnese Theatre. On 18 December 1627 all the

machines in the hall were tested: "con l'asistenza della sud.ta Sereniss.ma e del Sig.r Magiordomo, ma se restasse sodisfata non lo so perché andò via avanti noi uscimo di scena, e veramente se vi fu qualche imperfetione fu scusabile, per non vi essere la quantità d'uomini che bisognava disposti a suoi luoghi" (with the help of the aforementioned Duchess and the Master Butler, but whether she was satisfied I do not know, for she left before we left the scene, and if there was any imperfection, it was excusable, for there was not the requisite number of men for the maneuver).[15] And as Vitruvius already stated, the operation of machines required a certain number of machinists: "Inter machinas et organa id videtur esse iscrimen quod machinae pluribus operis ac vi maiore coguntur effectus habere" (Vitr. *De arch.* 10.1; The difference between machines and organs seems to be that the machines are forced to achieve results with more labor and greater force). Not forgetting the scenic changes that showed different landscapes, from the sea to the forest scene, to the two usual poles of hell and paradise, which proved that the Farnese Theatre had an equipped attic and under-stage.

4. The Ancients and Their Mechanics

The numerous references to antiquity in the treatises on stage sets published in the seventeenth century – only think of the anonymous *Il corago* (after 1628-*ante* 1637)[16] or the aforementioned *Pratica* – stimulate reflection on the rediscovery of ancient mechanics. Among the topics treated in Vitruvius' *De architectura*, I would like to emphasize the mechanical discipline. In the tenth book of his work, Vitruvius defines the term 'machine' with these words: "Machina est continens e materia coniunctio maximas ad onerum motus habens virtutes" (Vitr, *De arch.* 10.1; A machine is an assembly of materials whose main function is to move loads). The various parts that make up the machine are assembled in such a way that they move loads and are driven by circular rotations. There are three types of machines: 'climbing' machines, to supervise the work on the construction site from above; 'pneumatic' machines, to generate sounds; 'trattorias', to pull and lift weights. Another classification distinguishes between 'mechanical' and 'instrumental' systems. The former require the intervention of numerous workers, for the latter the skillful touch of a single operator is sufficient (ibid.).

   The works of the ancients, alongside Vitruvius, Heron of Alexandria (first century AD) and Julius Pollux (second century AD), represent a

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[15] Letter from Francesco Mazzi to Enzo Bentivoglio from Parma (19 December 1627). Preserved in the Ariostea Library in Ferrara (*Collezione Antonelli*, manuscript 6609, qtd in Lavin 1964, 141-2).
   [16] The manuscript of *Il corago* is kept in the Estense Library in Moderna.

wealth of knowledge that has been passed down through the centuries. The construction of machines, the lifting of weights, the mastery of the laws of statics and the balance between forces are problems that are also on the agenda in the works of artists such as Leonardo, Brunelleschi or Francesco di Giorgio Martini, who were active in both the technical and theatrical fields between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Vitruvius, Heron and Pollux, for their part, relied on *veteres architecti* such as Archimedes and Euclid. The fact that these names appear in seventeenth-century treatises on scenography and stagecraft is evidence of the above-mentioned transfer of mechanical knowledge. *Il corago* reports entire chapters from Pollux's *Onomasticon* translated into the vernacular:

> Dux vero est senex, pilorum coronam circa caput habens, incurbus, lata facie praeditus, et supercilium attollit dextrum. Decrepitus praeterea, barbam promissam habens, et vibrans, pilorum corona capite cinctus; barbatus est, et non attollit supercilia, sed aspect ignavior videtur. (Poll. *Onom.* 4.19.5, qtd in Marotti 1974, 77)

> Dux: era un vecchio che tra i capelli li facevono intorno al capo corona, curvo, di faccia larga et il ciglio destro più alto del sinistro. Decrepitus: aveva la barba lunga e la dimenava intorno come fanno molti vecchi decrepiti, aveva intorno al capo ancor lui i capelli che gli facevono corona, teneva le ciglia basse et era d'aspetto più vile. (An. *Il cor.* 20)

> [Dux was an old man who wore a crown around his head, curved, with a broad face and the right eyelash higher than the left. Decrepitus had a long beard, which he waved like many old men, he also had hair that formed a crown, he kept his eyelashes low and had a rather ugly appearance.]

Sabbatini, like Hero, recommends that the machines should be well lubricated so that they run better (Her. *Aut.* 1.1.1-4, qtd in Di Pasquale 2003, 4-5; Sabb. *Prat.* 31, 42, 44, 46). The same necessity arose on 24 October 1627 in the Farnese Theatre when Francesco Guitti wrote: "La scena traggicha resta d'insaponarla che è accomodatta" (The tragic scene must be soaped, it is already finished).[17]

These are just a few of the many examples that illustrate the wide dissemination and knowledge of classical works in the Renaissance, not only as an intellectual exercise, but also as new scientific knowledge.[18] There were

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[17] Letter from Francesco Guitti to Enzo Bentivoglio from Parma (24 October 1627). Preserved in the Ariostea Library in Ferrara (manuscript 660, qtd in Lavin 1964, 124-5).

[18] Edited by Hilario-Perez, Simon and Thébaud-Sorger in 2016, this volume is an attempt to bring together the history of science and that of technology, two similar disciplines that are often kept at a distance due to the marginalized position of the 'applied sciences' as technology.

different positions in this respect: on the one hand, literary figures such as Francesco Petrarca were concerned with marking the boundary between 'liberal arts' and 'useful arts': "Mechanice res tuas age, oro te; cura, si potes; si minus, interface; et precium posce, cum occideris . . . Quid te autem non ausurum rear, qui rethoricam medicine subicias, sacrilegio inaudito, ancille dominam, mechanice liberalem?" (Petr. *Invect.*, qtd in Ricci 1950, 20; Labor thou, mechanic, please; if thou canst, take care of thyself; otherwise kill and atone for thy crime . . . But how dare you, with unprecedented sacrilege, subordinate medicine to theoretics, the mistress to the servant, a liberal art to a mechanical art?). On the other hand, a versatile artist like Leonardo Da Vinci recognized the value of experience and practical skills: "La sperienza non falla mai, ma sol fallano i nostri giudizi, promettendosi di lei cose che non sono in sua potestà. A torto si lamentan li omini della isperienza, la quale con somme rampogne, quella accusano esser fallace" (Leon. *Scritti*, qtd in Marinoni 1974, 65; Experience never makes mistakes, only our judgements make mistakes, because experience promises things that are not in its power. People complain wrongly about experience and accuse it of being wrong with great invective).

As far as the purely technical aspects are concerned – which then fall into the realm of theatre – the *Onomasticon* of Pollux is particularly interesting. One chapter of the work (4.19.5) deals with the *pars theatri* (the parts of the theatre), including some machines such as the *ekkyklêma*, which shows the secret events that took place in the houses; the hanging machine or crane to make gods, heroes and other figures fly; the *scalae Charoniae* (staircase of Charon) to lift the shadows of the deceaseds; and finally the portcullis doors to let out a river or something similar. Pollux further writes that on both sides of the scene there are devices to which the *versatiles machinae*, alias *períaktoi*, are attached:

> Apud utranque vero duarum ianuarum, quae in media scena sunt, etiam aliae duae sunt. Utrumque una, ad quas versatiles machinae compactae sunt: dextra quidem ea, quae extra urbem sunt repraesentans; sinitra vero ea, quae ex urbe ducit, maxime quae ex portu, et Deos inducit marinos, et alia omnia, quae graviora existentia, machina ferre nequit. (Poll. *Onom.* 4.19.2, qtd in Marotti 1974, 88-90)

> [On either side of the two doors in the center of the scene there are two more. Different fixtures are attached to both: the one on the right represents the outside of the city, the one on the left the harbor area and brings the sea gods, the sailors and all the other things that are heavier and that the chariots cannot carry.]

These were rotating prisms that could change the visible scene. They were already described by Vitruvius as triangular, moving machines with ornamental fields:

> Ipsae autem scaenae suas habent rationes explicitas ita uti mediae valvae ornatus habeant aulae regiae, dextra ac sinistra hospitalia, secundum autem spatia ad ornatus comparata, quae loca Graeci periaktoi dicunt ab eo quod machinae sunt in his locis versatiles trigonos habentes in singular tres species ornationis, quae cum aut fabularum mutations sunt futurae seu deorum adventus cum tonitribus repentinis ea versentur mutentque speciem ornationis in frontes. (Vitr. *De arch.* 1.5.6-7)

> [And the scenes themselves have their own explicit grounds, so that the central flap has the decorations of the royal court, to the right and left the *hospitalia* and the second rooms in relation to the decorations the Greeks describe as versatile triangles, which have three kinds of ornament in particular, which, when there are future changes in the stories or when the gods come with sudden thunders, rotate and change the appearance of the ornaments on the fronts.]

The *períaktoi* were activated simultaneously with a machine that produced sudden thunder. It consisted of a series of wineskins placed at the back under the scene and filled with pebbles that were pressed onto copper utensils. Centuries later, Sabbatini illustrates similar devices, also to prevent the sound of the machines from becoming too obvious:

> si sogliono usare in queste diversi artificij, come sarebbe che qualche persona confidente messa a bello studio nell'ultimo della sala, la quale, osservando il tempo che si dovranno tramutare le scene, mostri di far rumore con altra persona d'accordo, o veramente (ma potrebbe essere occasione di notabilissimo disturbo) fingere la ruvina o rompimento di qualche trave degli scaloni, overo con un tocco di tromba, tamburo o d'altro instrumento, deviare gli astanti dalla vista delle scene, et in quel tempo fare la detta operazione dello sparimento, senza che nissuno se ne aveda. (Sabb. *Prat.* 1)

> [It is customary to use these various tricks, e.g. a trustworthy person who is in a secluded part of the stage and who, alert to the moment when the scenes have to be changed, makes noises in unison with another person, or (but this could be very disturbing) feigns the destruction or breaking of a beam of the staircase, or distracts the audience from the scenes with a trumpet, drum or other instrument and at that moment performs the above-mentioned scene-change operation so that no one notices it.]

In addition to the machines, the Farnese Theatre also owned painted screens that were used for scene changes. These were flat sliding panels, four on each

side, which protruded from the sides of the stage and allowed three scene changes thanks to the synchronized movements of the stagehands. When assessing these scene changes, we must take into account the testimony of Giulio Inghirami, a Medici envoy in 1628, who sent a letter to Florence for the occasion, writing: "le scene erano benissimo intese e dipinte, tuttavia nel mutarle che facevasi andavano assai adagio" (the scenes were very well painted, but they changed very slowly).[19] The slow change involved the revelation of the trick, so the audience was obviously not very surprised. The *períaktoi* alias *scaena versilis* or *versatilis* are subject to a rotating movement on a pivot (manually or by turning a rudder) and must not be confused with the so-called *scaena ductilis*, i.e. those flat panels that are pulled at the ends and moved in a groove (sometimes they can be equipped with wheels) to reveal another scene that was previously hidden behind the flat screen that was in front of it and that showed the previous scenography. The invention of these flat screens in more recent times was attributed to seventeenth-century stage technicians, but it is actually a device that was already in use in antiquity. A passage from Servius' *Commentarii* testifies to this: "scaena quae fiebat aut versilis erat aut ductilis erat; versilis tum erat, cum subito tota machinis quibusdam convertebatur et aliam picturae faciem ostendebat. Ductilis tum cum tabulates huc atque illuc species picturae nudabatur interior" (qtd in Thilo 1961, 275-6; the scene was made 'versatile' or 'ductile'; 'versatile' was when, thanks to some machinery, everything suddenly changed, and a different scene was shown. 'Ductile' when the panels were pulled to one side and the hidden scene became visible from that side).

The authors of seventeenth-century treatises refer not only to ancient sources when writing their works, but also to their predecessors and masters. In his *Il secondo libro di Perspettiva* (1545), Sebastiano Serlio refers to the descent of the figures from the attic to flights and changes of scene (qtd in Marotti 1974, 196-8). In the *Commentarii* to *Le due regole della prospettiva pratica* (1583), Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola describes two wits placed at the sides of the scene, which we recognize as *períaktoi*. While acknowledging the debt owed to the ancients, the anonymous author of *Il corago* emphasizes the personality of Bernardo Buontalenti (Medici technician), "primo inventore di mutare le scene con i triangoli e di tante alter machine" (An. *Il cor.* 20; the first inventor of the scene change with *períaktoi* and many other machines), thus explaining his loyalty to the Medici family.[20] In fact, the *períaktoi*

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[19] Letter from Giulio Inghirami to Archduchess Maria Maddalena of Austria from Parma (14 December 1628). Preserved in the State Archives of Florence (*Mediceo del principato*, file 6075), also transcribed with some inaccuracies by Minucci del Rosso 1885, 562-4.

[20] For the transmission of the secrets of the trade from master to pupil at the Medici court, consider the thread that links the Sangallo family, Vasari, Buontalenti and the

certainly predated Buontalenti in a performance organized by Giorgio Vasari at the same Medici court in 1569 (Mazzoni 2003, 208). In his preface, Nicola Sabbatini refers instead to Guidobaldo del Monte, demonstrating his relationship with the court and the school of stagecraft in the Marche:[21] "Se brami nondimeno vedere la più fine Teorica di questa Pratica, ricorri all'Archimede d'Italia, e leggi il sesto libro della Prospettiva dell'Illustrissimo sig. Guido Ubaldo dei marchesi del Monte, di cui si gloria l'autore l'esserne stato buon discepolo" (Sabb. *Prat.*; If you want to see the best theory of this practice, read the sixth book of the perspective of the illustrious Mr Guido Ubaldo Marquis del Monte, Archimedes of Italy, of whom the author boasts of having been a good student).

In summary, the opening performance of the Farnese Theatre is just one case among many whose study try to demonstrate the convergence of a new performative tendency (which also draws to the great machine spectacle also as an 'allegory' of courtly power) and ancient practices passed down from master to pupil, but also learned and appropriated by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century treatise writers on the basis of surviving ancient texts, as the basis for a new technical-scientific interest that strongly influenced the history of theatre.

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Parigi family. See at least Fabbri, Garbero Zorzi and Petrioli Tofani 1975; Mamone 2015, 17-43 and 2016, 389-416.

[21] The Marquis del Monte was educated at the court of Urbino and was the protagonist of the scientific research promoted by the Duchy della Rovere. He was a translator and author of treatises: *Mechanicorum liber* (1577), *In duos Archimedis aequeponderantium* (1588), *Perspectivae libri sex* (1600). The praise of mechanics as the premise of his *Mechanicorum liber* – a reference work for architects, engineers, mathematicians, stage technicians and treatise writers – is a sign of the liberation of the mechanical discipline from an inferior *status*. See at least Becchi, Bertoloni Meli and Gamba 2013.

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Bernini's Two Theatres and the Trauma of Classical Reception

Abstract

This article compares how the theatrical architectural spaces of Francesco Guitti at Parma and Gian Lorenzo Bernini at Rome used classical traditions of spectacle to satisfy contemporary sensationalist demands. Guitti's stage machinery devised after ancient treatises recreated an ancient naumachia as a finale to the performance of the Mercury and Mars that celebrated the marriage of Odoardo, Duke of Parma, at the Farnese Theatre in Parma (see Benedetta Colasanti's essay in this issue). Bernini's spaces at the Rome Carnival in the 1630s played on other memories and misremembrances of popular classical spectacula to target elite audiences, generating a Bakhtinian mood of destabilising carnival laughter. He transformed naumachiae by flooding a stage to recreate a Tiber flood, and on the open-air setting of the 'Festa d'Agone', Domitian's Stadium misremembered as a racetrack, he bestowed the authority of an ancient circus, with turning posts and obelisk. But his most destabilizing performance was to recast the disastrous mechanics of Gaius Curio's legendary two revolving theatres in Republican Rome by means of a shocking pictorial perspective. This surpassed the technological schemes of other architect scenographers and exposed Rome's gentry and curial classes to subversive spectacle.

Keywords: Gian Lorenzo Bernini; Francesco Guitti; stage painting; commedia dell'arte; architecture; carnival; Roman theatres

The theatrical tournament of *Mercury and Mars* at the Farnese Theatre in Parma on 21st December 1628 was the spectacular culmination of a series of celebrations of the marriage two months earlier of Odoardo, Duke of Parma, to Margherita Medici in Florence Cathedral. The application of stage machinery devised after ancient treatises by Francesco Guitti (1605-1645), as described in Benedetta Colasanti's essay in this issue, complemented the innovative design of the theatre a decade previously by Guitti's teacher, the engineer Giovanni Battista Aleotti (1546-1636), the elder statesman of theatral architecture, which combined the classically inspired loggias of ancient theatres in the manner of Palladio's Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza with the elongated, circus-like tournament arena of Bernardo Buontalenti's

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Medici Theatre in Florence (Lavin 1990, 520). A series of letters preserved in the Archivio di Stato at Ferrara, written by Guitti and his colleague Francesco Mazzi (Ferrara, Biblioteca Comunale Arisotea, MS Antonelli 660, nos. 1-4, 6-10 by Guitti and 11-22 by Mazzi) to update the Marchese Enzo Bentivoglio, who was orchestrating the production at a distance from Ferrara, reveal the continued extensive preparations for the performance since the summer of 1627.

The productions involved movable stage sets ("tellari"), constructed and painted by Guitti's older compatriot Alfonso Rivarola, "detto il Chenda" (1591-1640), sent from Ferrara to Parma in 1628 by Bentivoglio (Ferrara, Biblioteca Comunale, MS Antonelli 660; Berni 1631, 3). The local dignitary and intellectual, Marcello Buttigli, who was in charge of the ornamental fittings for Margherita's solemn arrival in Parma, described a novel feature at the foot of the stage:

> a platform extended out from the front of the foundation [of the stage]. It was about a yard above the ground and about ten yards wide and formed a half-ellipse, raised up on little pedestals and surrounded by a balustrade. It provided a place for the musicians, where they could sing and play at the appropriate times and where they could see everything that was happening on the stage without being seen themselves. (Buttigli 1629, 263; translation by Spitzer 1996, 235)

Buttigli (1629, 263) auspiciously described this recent novelty in Italian theatre, which perhaps originated in Florence a few years earlier (Povoledo 1960, 1388; Lavin 1990, 523-4), as an "orchestra", misconstruing Vitruvius' reference to this space in the Greek theatre (Vitr. 5.7.2) as the location of all the performers who were not actors. This space, however, was not only for the musicians. It also facilitated the dramatic special effects that were the hallmark of the performances engineered by Guitti. The surrounding balustrade also protected the musicians from a dramatic flood in a marine scene (Lavin 1990, 523) and from the waters of the recreation of an ancient naumachia, which ended the performance.

This dramatic use of staging, painted sets, and architectural structures notionally modelled on the antique highlights the trend of 'Baroque' theatre in these years to strive for sensational effects. Guitti's performances were courtly manifestations for the Farnese Dukes of Parma and invited visitors to celebrate an aristocratic marriage alliance between the Farnese and Medici, two of the most notable families of early modern Italy. They enacted high-genre scenes of divine epic, and these recreations of classical spectacle allowed their privileged patrons and guests to re-imagine themselves as ancient Roman spectators through a visual language that embraced both the architecture and the entertainments. The painted sets and coded architectural

structures transported them into a world enjoyed before only by the rulers and citizens of ancient Rome.

The devices created by Guitti and Chenda at Parma were not beyond the architects and engineers of ancient Rome. In the last years of the Roman Republic, temporary theatre constructions provided a source of popular and elite entertainment in the theatre festivals that took place in the lower Campus Martius beside the Temple of Apollo, where Augustus would soon build his permanent theatre named after his prematurely lost heir Marcellus. Their aristocratic builders, usually with the office of aedile, responsible for public building and display, spared no expense on these structures, as much as the performances that they contained, competing with those constructed by rivals and showcasing their ephemeral works to promote their own career ambitions. One such work, however, was more notable than others.

During his memorable catalogue of the wonders of Rome, Pliny the Elder surprisingly digresses from his marble theme to mention a temporary wooden construction that not only no longer existed but must have been dismantled within a few years of its creation in 52 B.C.E. Cicero had warned the young Gaius Scribonius Curio, as he prepared for the funeral games of his father, the consul of 76, that theatrical shows were by then a stale genre, "a matter of means, not personal qualities", of which "everybody is sick and tired" (Cic. *Fam.* 2.3; Cicero 2001, 47 1.235, translation adapted). Curio, however, persisted. To compete with the expensive and exotic materials of the sensational theatre constructed six years earlier by the aedile Marcus Aemilius Scaurus, both "wasteful" and "madness" in Pliny's view, but still exalted in popular memory:

> Curio had to use his wits and think up some scheme. It is worth the effort to recognise what he invented and to be happy in our own manners and so, reversing the usual style, to call ourselves, and not our ancestors, the greater ones (*maiores*). He built two very large wooden theatres next to each other, suspended on individual pivots in versatile balance. The morning performance of the show was given with both of them facing in opposite directions, so that the noises from their stages would not drown each other out. Then they suddenly swung round (after the first few days, it is said, some of the spectators even remained seated), and their ends came together, and so Curio made an amphitheatre and produced gladiator fights there, making the Roman people itself seem even more hired out as he whirled them around. What would cause anyone more astonishment in this, the inventor or the invention, the designer or the sponsor, the fact that someone dared to think up this work or undertake or commission it? More amazing than any of these things is the madness of a people that dared to sit in such unstable and treacherous seating. Behold the conqueror of the world, subjugator of the entire globe, which distributes nations and kingdoms, issues edicts

to overseas peoples, humanity's share in the immortal gods, hanging on a contraption and applauding its own danger! What contempt for life! Why complain of Cannae? How much harm could have occurred here! (Plin. *Nat.* 36.116-20, translation mine)

Pliny details how Curio's two theatres turned Romans' play into risk: the "adsiduous attention to the *ludi*" highlighted by Curio's contemporary Lucretius (Lucr. 4.973-7) returned to haunt them; the Roman spectators became themselves the spectacle; and their enjoyment of what Tacitus (Tac. *Ann.* 14.21.1) would call "the pleasures of the shows" was replaced by peril, as they sat suspended on the rickety contraption (Jory 1986; Isager 1991; Citroni Marchetti 1991). They embodied in themselves an image of Rome the "hanging city" (*urbs pensilis*, Plin. *Nat.* 36.104; Carey 2003, 97). Pliny also compared the audience to passengers on boats, the same idea envisioned by Cicero's friend Caelius, for whom Pacuvius' maritime imagery was a metaphor for the experience of the shows: "You should have heard the 'shrieking and howling, roar of thunder, tackle whistling in the gale'" (Cic. *Fam.* 8.2.1; Cicero 2001, 1.349, translation adapted; Cic. *Tusc.* 2.48-9; Caston 2015). The emotions of the theatre and the excitement of Curio's animal displays reached a new intensity in the literally 'rollercoaster' experience of the audience (Cic. *Fam.* 8.9.3; Cicero 2001, 1.365). The "conquerors of the world" were at the mercy of a man 'neither king nor ruler of nations', who "had to use his own *ingenium*" (Plin. *Nat.* 36.117). Plutarch attributes two theatres to Curio's aedileship: in one, Cato managed the shows of the aedile Favonius; in the other, his colleague Curio "choreographed things at great expense"; though, Plutarch adds, "the people left him and went over to the other place, and enthusiastically joined in the games where Favonius played the private individual and Cato sponsor of the show" (Plut. *Cat. Min.* 46.4). This probably refers to Curio's re-use of the construction in September 51 in his bid to be aedile the following year, holding animal shows with panthers from Africa and Asia which he passed on to Caelius as curule aedile designate after withdrawing from the elections, saddled with debt from the costly shows (Cic. *Fam.* 8.8.10; Cicero 2001, 1.385). If, as Pliny says, the pivots were already "worn and displaced" by the final day of the funeral games in 52, the theatre cannot have withstood much more use. No more is heard of the structure. But it remained embedded in Pliny's treatise as a sombre warning to future builders, of the problematisation of the pleasures of theatre and of the dangers of ambitious architectural schemes.

Although the early humanists Flavio Biondo and Raffaele Maffei repeated that warning, condemning Curio's precarious structure as a hallmark of "insanity" (Biondo 2005-2012, 2.115; Fane-Saunders 2016, 39), later readers emulated the work as an exemplar of ephemeral urban ceremonial. The poet

Giannantonio Porcellio de' Pandoni clearly evoked Curio's construction
when he heralded a wooden theatre built in Rome for the marriage in 1473
between Ercole d'Este and Eleonora of Aragon it as a "hanging hall that can
hold the people, nobles and dukes", even if he confused Curio with Scaurus
as the author of the ancient model (Porcellio de' Pandoni c. 1473, lines 11-14).
It was not long before modern designers tried to recreate Curio's theatres
more closely. Leonardo da Vinci ingeniously constructed two semi-circular
theatres that locked together to form an "amphitheatre"; and Andrea Palladio
developed a geometrical reconstruction from his survey of a real Roman
theatre in the Veneto, which the printmaker Francesco Marcolini included
among the one hundred and thirty-one woodcuts in the first edition of
Daniele Barbaro's translation and commentary on Vitruvius in 1556, although
Francesco de' Franceschi Senese omitted it from the revised, enlarged second
edition eleven years later (Fane-Saunders 2016, 203-12; Witcombe 2004, 252).
In 1615, what Pliny had called an "unstable and treacherous" machine became
an epitome of stability in Giambattista Marino's dedicatory letter to his
Tempio, a "stupendous" and "versatile machine"; the "two poles" on which it
was "so well fixed" were a metaphor for the poem's twin dedicatees (Marino
1615; Coy 1983). In his epic *Adone* of 1623, Marino repeated the image to
describe the scene changes of the theatre of Cupid, whose stage rested "on
a central pivot strong, which, mobile yet well fastened to the floor, turns
easily, now lowered and now raised; and pivoting its mobile weight around,
it comes at last to fasten horn with horn" (Marino 1623, Canto 5, stanza
127). Derived from Curio's theatre, this mechanical stage was a *theatrum
mundi*, an image of the world, which "in single globe conjoined two separate
hemispheres together, linked by the horizon which from height to depth cuts
midway through the whirling universe" (Marino 1623, Canto 5, stanza 128).
Pliny's recollection of how the conquerors of the globe had seemed "doomed
to perish" on this machine were now, it seemed, long forgotten.

The sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini, a younger contemporary of Marino,
whom he had possibly met through his father Pietro (Lavin 2018), took
the bold step of trying to replicate the accounts of Curio's double theatre
contemporary drama. Bernini's dramatic performances took place in
aristocratic residences, especially of his patrons the Barberini, who in 1633
had hired Guitti to stage their renowned dramas (Hammond 1994, 205), but
despite their restriction to elite audiences, their staging during the Rome
Carnival allowed Bernini to play on the memory of ancient popular spectacle
in more carnivalesque spirit. During this period, preceding Lent, dramatic
performances and popular entertainments took place in two open-air and
longstanding popular settings: the plain below the artificial mountain of
amphora waste, Testaccio, to the south of the city; and the Festa d'Agone
in the northern Campo Marzio, actualized in the elongated space where

Piazza Navona is now, but then an open area surrounded by churches and aristocratic residences, whose classical history as the Stadium of Domitian was misremembered as a hippodrome with images of ancient chariots. Bernini's productions of *commedia dell'arte* within the houses of his patrons borrowed this spirit and were presented, in contrast to the mythological epics staged by Guitti, on a comic, human level that harked back to Roman comedy and pantomime. That does not, however, mean that they were improvised, as that genre usually expected (Molinari 1962; Lavin 2007, 26-7). Unlike Guitti, Bernini did not only design the scenographies for these performances; as the English diarist John Evelyn noted in 1644, for a recent "Publique Opera" Bernini had painted the sets and carved the sculpted figures himself, written the dialogue and music, and even performed as an actor on stage (De Beer 1955, 261). Altogether, he carefully planned his works to ensure that word, image, and action worked together flawlessly. Yet the wider carnival context allowed Bernini not to pander to, but to subvert the antique pretensions of his elite audience. In generating that mood of laughter which Mikhail Bakhtin has demonstrated was prevalent in that popular carnival culture transmitted in the sixteenth century by Rabelais, Bernini too had no inhibitions. As the festive phantasmagoria of Rabelais' world moved from the marketplace to court performances in the seventeenth century (Bakhtin 1984, 102), Bernini targeted the elites of Baroque Rome with carnivalesque laughter. In that context, he sought to present a recreation of the ancient special effects described by Pliny. However, it was not the stupendously versatile aspect of Curio's machine admired by Marino and others that he conveyed, but the alarmingly deleterious effects that Pliny had decried. Unlike Guitti, Bernini was no scenographic engineer. Crucially, he wanted to demonstrate that he could reproduce the impact of Curio's ancient spectacle not through theatrical artifice, but through his own art and pictorial skill.

Bernini had a personal point to prove. In January 1637 it was reported from Rome that "the Cavaliere Gian Lorenzo Bernini, who had thought of avoiding comedies altogether, is preparing a very fine one, the subject of which will be on the crack that can be seen on the cupola of St Peter's, and to counter the slanders made against him, namely that it is all his fault" (D'Onofrio 1963, 92-3).[1] Bernini's considerable reputation had taken a hit the previous year when, after he had inserted niches into the central piers supporting the dome to receive colossal statues of the Saints Veronica, Andrew, Helen, and Longinus, cracks had been observed inside the dome (Pollak 1928, 2 511). "The cupola is falling", people cried, "Bernini is to blame!" Although the Pope and the Fabric of St Peter were not convinced by the anonymous complaints, the rumours of Bernini's culpability never went away (Morello 2008, 203; Mormando 2011, 338).

It was not surprising that Bernini chose the theatre as the vehicle for his self-defence as, a few years earlier, he had used the genre of *commedia dell'arte* for personal attacks. His first known comedy, at the carnival of 1633, was described as "full of sparkling quips and very sharp stings against many people in this court, and against the corrupt practices of our time" (D'Onofrio 1963, 91).[2] His "great liberty of speech" was astounding, "and it seemed strange that he risked offending so many people in such a public place, but being loved with extraordinary passion by Our Lord he did not hesitate in anything. Indeed, many people think that everything occurred with the participation and contentment of His Holiness; which is confirmed by the certain knowledge that Pope [Maffeo] Barberini and [his brother] Antonio took extreme enjoyment when the subject of the comedy and the circumstances which accompanied it referred to them" (D'Onofrio 1963, 91; Fraschetti 1900, 261).[3] In a second drama, the next year, at an unspecified theatre (Zangheri 1985), Fulvio Testi reported to the Duke of Modena that Bernini moulded ancient comic invective to the conventions of the *commedia dell'arte* at the carnival: "The Cavalier Bernini has made conform to the practice of other years a very fine comedy of those in antique style which sting, and which, in accusing modern vices, make the persons look so much more ridiculous that if they are not named specifically they are known by practically everyone." (D'Onofrio 1963, 92).[4] A second spectator at that same carnival noted that Spanish cardinal Gaspar de Borja y Velasco subsequently kept an embarrassed distance knowing "full well" that the beating of an ox on stage "was meant for him" as it recalled the Borgia coat of arms (Fahrner and Kleb 1973, 12).

Bernini had not previously developed painted stage designs for his dramatic productions.[5] The 1637 show, therefore, might have been expected to offer more such verbal satire, aimed at his accusers in the cupola affair. Yet this is not what emerges from the detailed account that survives of the production, in a letter from Massimiliano Montecuccoli to the Francesco

[2] Letter to Francesco I d'Este Duke of Modena from Rome, 5 February 1633.

[3] Letter to Duke of Modena from Rome, 5 February 1633.

[4] Letter to Francesco I d'Este Duke of Modena from Rome, 25 February 1634.

[5] Past scholars credited Bernini with eight stage designs known from engravings by François Collignon in the Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe (reproduced in Mariani 1949, 254-64), which had graced Cardinal Giulio Rospigliosi's musical drama Sant'Alessio, performed at Palazzo Barberini in 1636 for a brother of the King of Poland. Gigli 1958, 140, reprinted by D'Onofrio 1963, 91-2 and, slightly differently, by Buccheri 2016, 170n12: "marvellous scenes which changed several times making appear palaces, gardens, woods, Hell, angels, who flew through the air speaking, and finally there appeared a great cloud low down which opened up to reveal the glory of Paradise". This attribution, however, rests on a misunderstanding of documents in the Vatican, and it now seems that Bernini played no part in that production (Lavin 2007, 17).

I d'Este Duke of Modena (Fraschetti 1900, 262-3). This highlights a witty exchange between two *covielli*, a Neapolitan version of the *zani* of *commedia erudita* derived from the *servus callidus* of Plautine comedy that had become a stock of Roman *commedia dell'arte* wearing costumes with bells and large-nosed masks (Schironi 2014, 469; Andrews 2008, xxi; Rudlin 1994, 157-8). Yet what most impressed Montecuccoli were the painted stage designs:[6]

Last Tuesday evening [10 February 1637, by the Gregorian Calendar], I was at such a comedy, a work of the Cavaliere Bernini; and, because it succeeded rather nicely especially for one perspective which remained in sight of all after the curtain dropped and another which was seen at the end of the comedy, I think that it may be of no little amusement to your Excellency to give an account of it as best I can. So, when the curtain fell there could be seen on the inside, that is on the side of the stage, a crowd [*popolo*] part real and part imagined [*fittivo*], which all together was so well constructed that it represented almost the same as that which really existed on this side in great numbers to see the comedy. On the stage were two clowns who, each with paper and pencil in hand, showed that they were drawing; and one looked towards the real audience and the other towards the imagined one. Standing like this for a while, one of them then broke the silence, and, after a few words which indicated their acquaintance and friendship, said to the other that he had little decency to stand in the position in which he was standing, meaning that he had his back to the people, and asked him why, and his answer was that *he* rather was the one committing this discourtesy and, grabbing him by the arm, made him turn towards that part where the fictive people were. When the other saw that, he said: "Well this is certainly the finest oddity that I have seen in people curious to hear comedies"; and he added, "How should we act to give satisfaction to one another?". Both these clowns made many further courteous remarks and concluded that a dividing curtain be drawn along the stage and each recited to his people, that is one of the same clowns on each side, and so in an instant the said curtain was drawn, and they entered inside. The comedy then began to be recited, and for the exquisiteness of the performers it is truly not possible to desire better. At the end, the same two clowns appeared once more on the stage, one of whom arrived there so stressed making wind with his cap that, when his companion asked him why he had arrived so heated, he replied that it was from the effort put into bringing to a conclusion the comedy he had recited to his own people and, when the other asked what invention of perspective or other similar prospect had accompanied that comedy, his companion replied that he had not needed any perspective or curiosity other than that the varied multitude of those who came out of the room together with an

[6] 13 February 1637. Modena, Archivio di Stato, Cancelleria Ducale, Ambasciatori Roma, f. 245.

equal quantity of carriages and horses, accompanied by an infinite number of lights and torches, appeared to him to be a sufficient, or rather a wonderful, representation by itself for the eyes of the observers. Well, naturally the other clown became desirous to see this curiosity, and so his companion asked this dividing curtain to be suddenly lowered as happened directly. There the excellence of the art presented wonderfully before the eyes of the observers a very inviting perspective and in the distance (considering the narrowness of the place) so artful that it hardly left room for the understanding to be able to form it or to imagine such. Above this perspective was seen a sky so well intended and so perfectly divided that it truly astonished the eye, and the curiosity of all remained suspended. The moon which was represented by eight days approximately and which being pursued by an infinite number of fixed and wandering stars was then observable in the sharpness of the lights, if not as much as some small machines expose themselves, was so very artfully obscured in aspect by clouds that running across that sky from time to time they lightly veiled its face, so that in truth there was no one who did not remain suspended in that so lifelike naturalness of the artifice and did not send a thousand praises and blessings to the Author.

Just the same was the effect of those stars, which also in every detail wonderfully represented reality. Then under the same sky, spread out at proportionate distances, were idyllic sites, spring-time greenery, charming shores, very beautiful gardens, houses and palaces of utmost desirability and extremely wonderful sites in the distance, with everything intended and constructed with truly more than the most exquisite mastery. Then peasant women appeared on stage dancing together and performing waltzes, and, something even more curious and notable to see, they did so for a good quarter of an hour more, behind them grooms with burning torches in hand, knights on horseback, walking, and on carriages, with two or six horses, and a great number following and litters conforming exactly to what you would expect to happen, and which in fact did happen at the exit and on the return at the houses of the real audience. Finally, many other grooms could be seen appearing dressed in mourning with dark torches lit in their hands and just behind them, above on a horse, tall but lean and rather frail, appeared Death dressed in mourning with a sickle in his right hand, who walked up and down two or three times and then positioned himself ostentatiously before the audience. At the arrival of this figure, one of the two clowns pretended to be terrified and then recovered to address these words to the audience: "Yes, it is really true, ladies and gentlemen, that this effigy is an image of death like that which finishes and cuts the thread of all the comedies and which by fatal decree breaks off any worldly taste or pastime, which therefore has wanted to do the same with our own staged comedy". And with that the clown instructed his companion to raise the dividing curtain on high so that this hated vision would remain covered and the enthusiasm of the spectators up to that point remain untormented. And so ended the comedy attended by

fourteen Cardinals between the two Nephews, as well as others including the Prefect and an infinity of Prelates and Knights.[7]

The illusion of two performances has been explained as a variant of the metatheatrical 'play within a play' tradition of Renaissance theatre, of which Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Giovan Battista Andreini's *Two Comedies within a Comedy* (*Le Due Commedie in Comedia*, 1623) (Cuppone 2013) provide examples (Neri 1930; Lea 1934, 1.130; Lavin 2007, 21). Bernini's production, though, was not technically two plays, since we (and the audience) know nothing of what happens in the second play, but a presentation of two *theatres*, which is better explained in terms of the visual impact of the screenplay. He had brilliantly recreated Curio's theatres in pictorial form, but in this case his second, imagined theatre reproducing the audience of the first one presented a confusion between stage and audience and between appearance and reality that enabled the real audience to see a mirror image of themselves watching the play (Warwick 2012, 28-31). As Bernini's son Domenico described in his biography, "in the fiction one saw figures so resembling those that were true as to delight all in showing them to themselves, like seeing themselves in a mirror, such was the counterfeit" (Bernini 1713, 56). Years later, in 1665, when Bernini was at Paris to oversee his design for the Louvre, an oval construction with curvilinear wings, he revealed more about the performers and setting of this early comedy, as his host Paul Fréart de Chantelou recorded (Chantelou 1885, 68). The two *covielli* had been played by himself and his brother Luigi, and during the performance, he recalled:

pretend howls of laughter were heard from the people on the other side, as if they had seen and heard something very amusing. Everything was constructed in such a way, and the artifice so hidden, that it was believed that this was reality; finally, his brother had come onto his theatre as if very heated and as he pretended to dry off the sweat from his face the Cavaliere had asked him if he had finished his play; and, receiving the answer that he had, had said to him in a serious tone: "Could you at least show us some *part* of this respectable public who were laughing so loudly and enjoying themselves so much?" The brother answered that he could and that he had only to open a window which he pointed to him; once it was open, a great moonlit scene appeared, the representation of St Peter's Square, a quantity of knights, some on horseback, others in carriages or on foot, who were passing back and forth across the square, and many torches, some of which looked large, others of middling size, others smaller, and finally some slender as a thread, arranged according to the diminishing size which perspective produces in reality . . .

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[7] Modena, Archivio di Stato, Cancelleria Ducale, Ambasciatori Roma, f. 245, 13 February 1637 (translation mine).

the magnitude and intensity of the light had also increased by degrees. He said that this representation had deceived everyone and added that a space no more than twenty-four foot deep was needed for the perspective of the candles; this space was enough to show infinite perspectives if the lights were used well. (Del Pesco 2007, 256-7; Stanic 2001)

Bernini's *Two Theatres* answered the critics who had challenged the architect's ability to re-design Rome's premier Christian site. It not only presented a deceptive perspectival stage design that recreated an image of St Peter's Square, the archetypal locus of Baroque performativity (Snickare 2012), opposite the real theatre where the audience was gathered; it also presented the illusion of two theatres placed face to face to form an amphitheatre with the stage like an arena between them. A telling example of how Bernini's ephemeral structures for the theatre offered an experimental and preparatory terrain for his more permanent works in different media (Warwick 2012, 22), this image would inform Bernini's subsequent vision for St Peter's Square, whose two spacious semi-circular colonnades produced the impression of an "Amphitheatre of the Christian Universe" on the site of the so-called "Circus of Nero" (Kitao 1974, 22-6; 52-6). Like the Louvre project, Bernini's first plan for St Peter's Square, a rapid sketch of 1656, has two facing semi-circles like Roman theatres (Kitao 1974, 12-13).[8]

Others have discussed the metatheatrical and illusionistic aspects of Bernini's scenographies and theatrical effects, especially his flamboyant recreation of cloudy skies (Damisch 1972; Warwick 2012, 19-41). What has not been noticed, however, is how far his theatrical ingenuity reworked the devices of ancient spectacle. Curio's *res mira et ingeniosa* was the inspiration for Bernini's own *ingegno* in the *Two Theatres*. Bernini knew Pliny's account from the excerpt in Barbaro's edition of Vitruvius (Barbaro 1567, 170-1). To counter the attacks on him for threatening the stability of the new St Peter's, Bernini chose the architectural icon of Curio's two theatres which had lately been recast as a model of stability, but turned it against his Roman audience, restoring the image of instability in Pliny's account and its traumatic consequences in undermining their pleasure at the show. Yet the 1567 edition which Bernini owned lacked the illustration of Palladio's geometrical reconstruction published by Marcolini. He dispensed with the mechanics described by Pliny and instead presented the two theatres through the power of his painted scenography, creating the second theatre through pictorial perspective alone. He took the opportunity not only to show his own architectural genius in his conception for St Peter's Square, but also to expose the weakness of his audience and his power over them through his deception.

[8] Vat. Chigi H II.22, fol. 155v.

As Curio had reduced the all-conquering Roman people to a near-death experience, suspended like gladiators on his revolving contraption, Bernini mocked his own Roman audience by deceptively mirroring their appearance in a second, painted audience wearing masks to resemble the more eminent members of the real audience in front (Baldinucci 1948, 151). Such deviousness demonstrated those qualities that led Cardinal Sforza Pallavicino to describe him as "la fenice degl' ingegno": his wit, fancy, and apparent participation in a divine power (Bernini 2011, 68-70, 267n153-4). His final image of Death with a scythe left the spectators in no doubt that they had been subjected to a near-death experience. The description of Curio by Velleius Paterculus (Vell. 2.48.3) might have applied to Bernini himself: "a man of noble birth, eloquent, reckless, prodigal equally with his own fortune and modesty as with those of other people, a perverse fellow in the cleverest possible way".

Two weeks later, the Duke of Modena, no doubt enthused by Montecuccoli's account, was told that Bernini "could not reproduce his comedy because the Doctor Gratiano was ill; others say there were other mysteries" (Fraschetti 1900, 263n1). Stanislao Fraschetti supposed that a repeat of this comedy had been "insistently requested", but that Bernini was not able to carry it out, "perhaps following orders from above" (Fraschetti 1900, 263). Yet the letter says nothing of such a request. The absence of the actor who played the Doctor, a leading role in the *commedia dell'arte*, was a plausible reason; but significantly Mantovani suspected something more sinister. Bernini's mockery of Roman nobles and prelates, aped by a painted audience across the stage, had unnerved all concerned. When the play was re-performed at the Carnival of 1638, the musicologist Giovan Battista Doni, writing a history of ancient music theory for Cardinal Francesco Barberini, was intrigued to see "the fiction of seated viewers watching a comedy, the first row of which was composed of real men with their backs to the audience, which therefore saw itself within the proscenium in an extension from life into depth, while in the distance there was a great crowd of painted figures, such that there appeared to be an opening into a great hall" (Montanari 2004, 312). Genevieve Warwick interprets the fictive audience on this occasion as "not that of a mirroring reflection of the guests [as at the first performance] but a laddered extension of the social viewer into illusionistic space", with the proscenium acting "as the glass of a window looking into a reflexive yet fictive realm" (Warwick 2012, 30). In the late 1660s, at Casa Rospigliosi for Pope Clement IX (Bernini 1713, 56), the performance was even "sadder".

The spectacular impact of Bernini's pictorial illusionism was also overtaken by events. Just days before the performance, celebrations in Rome of the recent election of Ferdinand III as King of the Romans had included fireworks in the Piazza di Spagna: etchings by Claude Lorrain, who lived nearby, record how a square tower had been constructed for the occasion

and spectacularly set alight, collapsing to reveal a round tower which in turn was set in flames to expose a statue of the new king (Boorsch 2000, 19).[9] The Roman population marvelled at such dramatic effects using three-dimensional temporary constructions or artificial *macchine* representing the volcanoes Etna and Vesuvius (Osborne 2019, 70-1).[10] Later that year, Nicolò Sabbatini's book on mechanical devices for the stage expanded the taste for the spectacular in contemporary drama (Sabbatini 1955). Bernini too experimented in his theatrical productions with the mechanical devices now in vogue, but did so less from fondness for sophisticated special effects and more for their ability to alarm his audience. In a play of 1638 he simulated the collapse of a house on stage; in another at the same festival, he recreated the disastrous Tiber flood of the previous February that had risen to record levels (Rankin 2018, 141), outdoing Guitti's recreation of an ancient *naumachia* in Parma ten years earlier by filling the stage with water which threatened to flood into the audience (Fraschetti 1900, 264-5; D'Onofrio 1963, 96-7). In 1645, one of the performers in a torch-lit procession pretended accidentally to set fire to the stage, causing the spectators to head for the exits in panic. Some of these stage effects were tricks in Sabbatini's handbook. Finally, with his architectural vision, Bernini later restructured the medieval carnival setting of the Agone as Piazza Navona, to give this traditional popular setting the appearance and authority of an ancient circus, complete with a central obelisk, atop his Fountain of the Four Rivers of 1651, and two other fountains in place of ancient turning posts. In 1653, under Pope Innocent X, the piazza was flooded to bring the italics recreated in courtly theatres into the open-air popular carnival, as in Pannini's famous painting of the giochi d'acqua. But none of these achievements made him so proud, as his painted recreation of Curio's ancient theatres, with which he had played to the destabilising nature of the carnival by recasting Pliny's account of Curio's disastrous mechanics in pictorial form and laid bare the subversiveness of Roman spectacle by ridiculing Rome's gentry and curial classes. He had not only defended his architectural reputation and traumatised his audience.

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[9] See also Agostino Ciampelli, "Election of Ferdinand III as King of the Romans, Rome 1637", an engraving after Niccolò Tornioli: New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, acc. no. 49.46.1.

[10] Rome, BAV, Urb. Lat. 1105, fols. 31v-32, avviso 7 February 1637.

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Maria Czepiel*

"Como la luz de la fe te falte": the Privileging of the Christian over the Pagan in Calderón's *El divino Orfeo* (1634)

Abstract

The seventeenth century saw the rise in Spain of *autos sacramentales*, allegorical plays performed on the feast of Corpus Christi. The most important writer of this genre was Calderón de la Barca, and among his *autos* is a group of ten plays whose dramatic action is based on Classical mythology. In these plays, Calderón draws on an age-old tradition of allegorisation in order to assimilate pagan fable to the Christian story of Redemption. I begin this study by discussing how contemporary mythographers dealt with the delicate balance of synthesising the pagan and Christian narratives while affirming the truth of the latter, as well as Calderón's own defence of the allegorical use of fable. I go on to exemplify how Calderón synthesises pagan and Christian elements while emphasising the validity of the Christian narrative in a specific play, *El divino Orfeo* (1634). Calderón principally exploits the myth of Orpheus, although he also draws on the Ovidian Creation myth, the myth of Proserpina, and the descent of Aeneas to the Underworld. I also discuss the use of a further myth which has not been noticed by scholars, namely that of Phaethon, which Calderón exploits in his depiction of the Devil. However, I demonstrate that Calderón privileges the Christian narrative by constantly naming biblical and patristic authorities, while never referring to Classical ones such as Ovid and Virgil. Furthermore, I will show how Calderón suppresses or elides certain elements of the Classical fable to make it more compatible with the Christian account of Redemption.

Keywords: Calderón; *El divino Orfeo*; *auto sacramental*; mythology; syncretism

Besides his comic and serious plays, the Spanish playwright Pedro Calderón de la Barca is famous for having perfected the form of the *auto sacramental*. This was a one-act play performed during the feast of Corpus Christi, which used allegory to tell the story of Christ's redemption of Man and presence in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Among Calderón's *autos sacramentales* is a group of ten, written over the course of some fifty years, whose dramatic action is based on Classical mythology.[1] In these plays, Calderón draws on

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[1] These are *El divino Jasón*, *El divino Orfeo* I, *Psiquis y Cupido* I, *Los encantos de la culpa*, *El laberinto del mundo*, *El sacro Pernaso*, *El divino Orfeo* II, *Psiquis y Cupido* II, *El verdadero Dios Pan*, and *Andrómeda y Perseo*. For an overview, see Martín Acosta 1969;

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an age-old tradition of allegorisation in order to assimilate pagan fable to the Christian story of Redemption, or rather, to expose the 'true' Christian meaning which the playwright frequently insists is already present and merely needs to be teased out. However, in order to prove that the Christian interpretation is correct, it is necessary to privilege it over the pagan one.

I will begin this study by discussing how contemporary mythographers dealt with the delicate balance of synthesising the pagan and Christian narratives while affirming the truth of the latter, as well as Calderón's own defence of the allegorical use of fable. I will go on to exemplify how Calderón synthesises pagan and Christian elements while emphasising the validity of the Christian narrative in a specific play, *El divino Orfeo* (1634). While the play is mainly based on the myth of Orpheus, critics have noticed the presence of various other myths, such as the Ovidian Creation myth, the abduction of Proserpina and the descent of Aeneas to the Underworld. I will discuss the use of a further myth which has not been noticed by scholars, namely that of Phaethon, which Calderón exploits in his depiction of the Devil. However, as we shall see, Calderón privileges the Christian narrative by constantly referring to biblical and patristic authorities while never citing Classical ones such as Ovid and Virgil. Finally, I will show how Calderón suppresses or elides certain elements of the Classical fable to make it more compatible with the Christian account of Redemption.

1. Allegories of Classical Myth in the Spanish Golden Age

The use of allegory to find Christian values in pagan letters began centuries before Calderón with the Church Fathers.[2] Although Ovid's stories of divine misdemeanours initially made his work more difficult to interpret in this light, by the fourteenth century works such as the *Ovide moralisé* and Bersuire's *Ovidius moralizatus* began to appear, vindicating the possibility of finding edifying messages in even the most seemingly frivolous Classical myths. In Golden Age Spain the issue continued to be contentious: on the one hand, some intellectuals felt that there was no benefit to be found in the *fingimientos* (fictions) of pagan poets, and that they were particularly inappropriate for Christian interpretations (Green 1970, 113-23; Páramo Pomareda 1957, 58-9). However, there was also a prominent current of allegorising interpretations. This tendency manifested itself with the publication of Pérez de Moya's *Philosophia secreta* (1585), in which the author's descriptions of each personage and episode is followed by a triple *declaración* (explanation)

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however, for up-to-date scholarship, including revised dating, see individual editions in the *Autos Sacramentales Completos* series.

    [2] For more on this, see Seznec 1953.

which interprets the story on historical, physical and moral planes. At the start of his work, Pérez de Moya argues that Classical authors used fable as a way to transmit virtue and morals:

> . . . porque toda fábula se funda en un razonamiento de cosas fingidas y aparentes, inventadas por los poetas y sabios, para que debajo de una honesta recreación de apacibles cuentos . . . inducir a los lectores a muchas veces leer y saber su escondida moralidad y provechosa doctrina. (Pérez de Moya 1599, 1*v*)

> [. . . because all fables are based on a description of false and feigned things, invented by poets and sages, so that beneath the honest recreation of pleasant stories . . . it will induce readers often to read them and come to know their hidden morality and profitable doctrine.]

This work was followed in 1620 by the appearance of Baltasar de Vitoria's *Teatro de los dioses de la gentilidad*, which offers us an illuminating insight into Calderón's use of allegory in the mythological *autos*. Like Pérez de Moya before him, Vitoria explains in his first chapter that the Gentiles used fable to transmit moral truths compatible with Christianity:

> Sabida cosa es, que los filósofos, y poetas antiguos, fueron los teólogos de la antigua gentilidad, como lo afirma Lactancio Firmiano, San Agustín, y San Ambrosio, y así los más de los poetas procuraron aprovecharse de los libros del sapientísimo Moisés, y de los demás que tocaban a la sagrada Escritura. (Vitoria 1620, 1.1)

> [It is well known that the ancient philosophers and poets were the theologians of ancient gentility, as Lactantius Firmianus, St Augustine, and St Ambrose affirm, and so the majority of poets sought to make use of the books of wisest Moses, and others related to Scripture.]

Here he seems to go even further than Pérez de Moya by listing Christian authorities extensively to support his claim and even alleging that the Ancients themselves used biblical texts.

Like the writers of the aforementioned mythographical works, Calderón often explains that pagan myth can be a vehicle for Christian values, while simultaneously emphasising the primacy of the Christian interpretation. Often, he makes his characters express surprise that mythological themes are being used: for example, in *El sacro Pernaso*, when Faith appears dressed as a Sibyl, Judaism asks: "¿De cuándo acá vistió traje / la Fe de Sibila?" (Calderón 2006, 171-2; Since when did Faith wear a Sibyl's clothes here?). Likewise, in the *loa* (short introductory play) to *El verdadero dios Pan*, Poetry asks: "en el festín / que sacra historia ha dispuesto, / ¿de qué la Fábula puede / servir?" (Calderón 2005, 103-6; in the banquet which sacred history has

prepared, how can Fable be of use?). These expressions of incredulity are always followed by an explanation of the idea that pagan cultures were exposed to the truths of Christianity, but without the guidance of true faith were unable to interpret them correctly: for example, in *El sacro Pernaso* Calderón has Faith say,

> . . . porque, como
> la luz de la fe te falte,
> a quien nunca viste, oyendo
> los prodigios singulares
> de sus misterios, fingiste
> fabulosas vanidades
> a quien los atribuyeses.
> (218-24)

> [. . . because, since you lack the light of faith, which you never saw, hearing the wondrous prodigies of its mysteries, you invented fictitious fancies to whom you could attribute them.]

He also uses the imagery of light in the *loa* to *El verdadero dios Pan*, where the character Poetry says that although the gentiles had heard of Christian truths, "como las oían ciegos, / sin lumbre de fe, a sus falsos / dioses las atribuyeron" (313-15; since they hear them blindly, without the light of faith, they attributed them to their false gods).

A particularly important text to our understanding of Calderón's vision of his role as writer of *autos* is the *loa* to *El laberinto del mundo*, where he writes:

> . . . y queriendo
> que el Pueblo sepa, que no
> hay fábula sin misterio,
> si alegórica a la Luz
> desto se mira, un ingenio,
> bien que humilde, ha pretendido
> dar esta noticia al Pueblo.
> (Calderón 1956, 1558)

> [. . . and since he wanted the people to know that there is no fable without mystery, if interpreted allegorically in the light of it, this author of humble talent has aimed to make this known to the people.]

Thus, Calderón sees his role less as a creative one, and rather as an interpretative one: as Kurtz puts it, "Especially noteworthy is his express denial . . . that he was the actual author of the mythological *autos*; rather, he

presents himself as the editor or transmitter of their truths" (1988, 266). She goes on to point out that, for Calderón, the only guarantee of 'interpreting' these myths correctly is interpreting them according to the true light of faith, which is the "warranty of perfected understanding and the foundation of valid interpretation" (266). Significantly, Calderón illustrates how Christian teaching should be used as the guide to interpretation of pagan fable by quoting a Christian authority just a few lines before, where he cites St Paul as the source for his ideas on allegory (Calderón 1956, 1558; "Dígalo el texto de Pablo", Let the text of St Paul tell it). As we shall see, Calderón puts these ideas into practice in *El divino Orfeo*, where he skilfully assimilates the Classical and Christian narratives while simultaneously privileging the latter through explicit references to biblical and patristic authorities.

2. Orpheus-Christ as Musician

The myth of Orpheus is well known from Ovid and Virgil (Ov. *Met.* 10.1-85, 11.1-84, Virg. *Georg* 4.453-527); in fact, Calderón used it as the inspiration for two separate *autos*, the one from 1634 under discussion, and one from 1663.[3] The myth has three main points of intersection with the story of Christ's Redemption of Man: firstly, that of the hero's musical abilities; secondly, Orpheus' descent to the Underworld; and finally, the pastoral element of the myth.

The most frequent way in which Calderón assimilates the stories of Orpheus and Christ in *El divino Orfeo* is through their associations with music. Throughout the play, Calderón draws on various Christian ideas of God as musician; however, in every case, he refers explicitly to a biblical or patristic authority, but omits Classical ones. For example, during Eurídice's eulogy of Orfeo in 143-218, Calderón refers to Clement of Alexandria's description of God as choirmaster:

> . . . cuando diga
> San Clemente Alejandrino,
> viendo que entiendes la cifra
> de la música del orbe,
> que eres maestro de capilla
> (158-62)

> [. . . as St Clement of Alexandria says, seeing that you understand the figure of the music of the sphere, that you are the choirmaster.]

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[3] For a detailed history of Christian interpretation of the Orpheus myth, see Duarte 1997, 73-91, and the "Introducción" to *El Divino Orfeo* (Duarte, 1999).

This idea is similar to Neo-Platonic and Pythagorean ideas, such as the idea that celestial bodies move in perfect proportions, resulting in the music of the spheres. Indeed, in 167-8, Calderón writes "Verso y poema es del cielo / con acordada armonía" (it is a heavenly verse and poem / with tempered harmony). However, the playwright privileges the Christian authorities behind the idea of universal proportion rather than Classical ones, and instead of citing a classical source such as Plato, refers to Wisdom 11.20 (170-3; "la eterna Sabiduría / lo entiende asi, cuando dice / que con número y medida / todo fue criado", Wisdom understands it thus when it says that everything was created with number and measure) and to Chrysostom (173-4; "como / Crisóstomo nos explica", as Chrysostom explains).

Another Christian idea to which Calderón refers in this passage is the assimilation of the harp of King David to Christ. Once again, Calderón points explicitly to his Christian sources:

> El instrumento templado
> eres tú y su melodía
> te ha de aplicar Agustino
> cuando sobre un rey salmista,
> con Ambrosio y Genebrardo,
> te llaman salterio y cítara.
> (175-80)

> [You are this tempered instrument, and Augustine will apply its melody to you when, with Ambrose and Genebrard, writing about the psalmist-king, they call you psalter and cithara.]

Later in the play, when Orfeo discovers the loss of Eurídice, Amor promises him an "instrumento" (1091) to help him descend to the Underworld to regain her. Here, Calderón is once again exploiting a Christian music-related conceit whereby the lyre represents Christ's death or the Cross itself (Duarte 1999, 59-63). The equation of lyre and Cross is explained in Amor's presentation to Orfeo of the harp decorated with a cross:

> El instrumento que ves
> . . .
> por aquesta parte es Cruz
> y ataúd por esta es,
> . . .
> porque la Cruz y ataúd
> tienen tan alta virtud
> que su música amorosa
> podrá librar a tu esposa

de prisión y esclavitud.
(1139-43)

[The instrument which you see . . . is a Cross on one side, and a tomb on the other . . . because the Cross and the tomb have such great virtue, that their amorous music will be able to free your wife from prison and slavery.]

A more specific identification of the lyre of David and the Cross occurs in 1092-4: "arpa con que lanzará / David demonios y ya / libre Saúl de tormento" (the harp with which David / will drive out demons and / free Saul from torment). Once again, Calderón reinforces his reliance on patristic authority via a reference to Saint Isidore's commentary on the Book of Kings:

Esta arpa dulce y clara,
el instrumento es sonoro
con trastes y cuerdas de oro
que dé números y leyes:
hable el libro de los Reyes,
dígalo San Isidoro.
(1128-33)

[This sweet and clear-sounding harp is that sonorous instrument with strings and frets of gold which gives numbers and laws; let the book of Kings tell of it, and let Saint Isidore speak of it.]

As these examples demonstrate, the references to authority are explicitly flagged by a verb of saying such as *decir*.

Calderón also draws on the Classical Orpheus' status as musician. In particular, he draws on the trope of Orpheus' ability to control nature with his music such as by moving rocks or enchanting birds and wild animals when Aristeo, the figure representing the Devil, tries to convince Eurídice to change her affections:

¿qué te sirve que a su voz
estos peñascos se muden,
estos aires se embaracen,
estos pájaros le escuchen,
estos cristales se paren
y aquestos brutos se junten . . .?
(783-8)

[What use is it to you that at his voice, these rocks move, these breezes are stopped in their tracks, these birds listen to him, these crystal waters stop flowing, and these brutes gather . . . ?]

However, although we recognise the allusion to the Classical myth, Calderón does not refer to a source such as Virgil or Ovid, even though in his Christianised portrayal of Christ as musician he explicitly points to the Bible and the Church Fathers.

One final way in which Calderón draws on ideas about music is by assimilating Orfeo's singing to God's creative power. At the very opening of the play, he draws on the idea of God's performative voice in Genesis: "Pues mi voz en el principio / el cielo y la tierra cría" (29-30, 35-6; Since my voice in the beginning creates heaven and earth). The idea of God as creator-musician is reinforced through form, since Orfeo's lines during the Creation sequence are probably all sung (Duarte 1999, 46). The biblical authority for this episode is referred to explicitly through quotations in Latin ("factum est ita", 80, cf. Gen. 1:7-30; "fiat", 82, cf. Gen. 1:3, 1:6).

While Orpheus was not considered a creating deity, there is a Classical parallel for the story of Creation in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 1.1-88. Indeed, elsewhere Calderón uses the Ovidian myth to demonstrate how Christian truth can be extracted from Classical letters with the right interpretation. In *El sacro Pernaso* (1659), to prove that the pagans had some idea of divine truth but misinterpreted it, Faith asks Judaism and Gentility to read corresponding passages from Scripture and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The first example is that of the Creation episodes at the beginning of both texts (Calderón 2006, 258; "en sus principios", at the beginning), whose similarities are underlined when Faith states that "hebreo y latino frase / convienen simbolizadas / fábulas y realidades" (Calderón 2006, 258-261; the Hebrew and Latin account bring together symbolised fables and realities). In *El divino Orfeo*, Calderón refers to both the pagan and Christian versions of the story of Creation during Aristeo's opening speech, when the audience is told that before Creation the world:

> . . . una masa está de modo
> sin ley, sin forma, ni uso,
> . . .
> y . . . los poetas
> caos le dirán y nada los profetas.
> (20-4)

> [. . . is a mass without law, form, or use, . . . and . . . the poets will call it chaos, and the prophets, nothing.]

"Nada" (nothing) refers to Genesis 1:2, whereas the references to an orderless mass and chaos described by poets evokes the state of the world before Creation in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: "quem dixere Chaos: rudis indigestaque moles" (Ov. *Met.* 1.3; which they called Chaos: a formless and confused mass). While here Calderón does use a verb of saying ("dirán") of both cases,

no specific authors are named, which on the surface seems to place the pagan and biblical accounts on an equal footing. Nonetheless, Lennon points out that the anaphora of "nada" in the following lines subtly reinforces the correctness of the account in Genesis over that of the Classical account (2016, 74), once again privileging the biblical version.

3. Orpheus-Christ's Descent to the Underworld

The second main point of intersection between the Orpheus story and the story of Redemption is that of the descent to the Underworld, used as an allegory of Christ's death on the Cross. The Christian narrative is made explicit in 1280ff. with the reaction of Nature to the death of Christ. In the stage direction to 1280, Calderón specifies a *terremoto* (earthquake), referring to the earthquake which occurred at Christ's death in Matthew 27:51-3. The reference to the eclipse in the following lines (1281, "Parasismo de luz", paroxysm of light; 1287, "bandolera del sol ha parecido", [night] has seemed a bandit stealing the sun; 1311, "Morir el sol", the sun's death) refers to that reported in Mark 15:33 and Luke 23:44, and is common in Calderón's *autos*. There is also a reference to Dionysius the Areopagite's comment that "o expira cielo y tierra o algún fuerte / Dios pasa por el río de la Muerte" (1317-18; either heaven and earth are passing away, or some great / God is passing through the river of death). Although here Calderón does not refer explicitly to the authority behind this account, he does so in the *auto El socorro general*, where the reference is once again signalled by the verb "dijo":

> sin haberme persuadido
> a que el general eclipse
> fuese por el homicidio,
> aunque viendo sus efectos,
> aquel gran varón Dionisio
> filósofo de Areópago
> desde allá diz que lo dijo.
> (Calderón 2001, 318-24)

> [. . . without persuading me that the great eclipse was because of a murder. Although they say that, seeing its effects, the great Dionysius, philosopher of Areopagite, said it was so.]

Various Classical elements converge in the sequence of Orpheus' descent to the Underworld. Naturally, Calderón draws on aspects of the Classical myth such as the ability of Orpheus' music to move the infernal inhabitants to grant his request, which Ovid reports in *Met*. 10.46-7. This idea also appeared in contemporary mythological handbooks, such as Vitoria's *Teatro de los dioses*:

> Allí llegando a las puertas del infierno, tañó con más suavidad, y más eficacia que nunca . . . Olvidados Plutón y Proserpina de su inexorable crueldad, dieron dispensación de sus inviolables leyes, remitiendo la ordinaria pena de sus afligidos condenados.
> (Vitoria 1620, 570)

> [There, arriving at the gates of hell, he played more sweetly and efficaciously than ever . . . Pluto and Proserpina, having forgotten their implacable cruelty, granted an exemption from their inviolable laws, dispensing with the usual punishment for the wretched condemned.]

In *El divino Orfeo*, Aqueronte allows Orfeo to cross the Styx since "Vencido me ha tu canto" (Your song has conquered me; 1220-1), and Aristeo returns Eurídice because "de tu canto / vencido estoy" (1377-8; I am conquered / by your song).

Calderón also alludes to the motif of the suspension of infernal punishments due to Orpheus' playing. Virgil mentions Ixion's wheel stopping in *Georg.* 4.484, and the motif is given even greater treatment in the *Metamorphoses*, where Ovid writes that Tantalus stopped reaching for water, Ixion's wheel stopped, vultures stopped plucking Tityus' liver, the Danaides stopped trying to refill their jars and Sisyphus stopped pushing his rock (Ov. *Met.* 10.41-4). Calderón evokes this *topos* in 1087, "suspendiendo el dolor todo / del Cocito" (suspending all the grief of Cocytus); significantly, in Virgil's *Georgics* the Underworld is called *Cocytus* in 4.479, just before the mention of the suspension of punishments. However, in none of the above cases does Calderón refer to Virgil or Ovid as authorities for the Orpheus story.

Orpheus-Christ's descent to the Underworld also has parallels to Aeneas' descent to the Underworld in Book Six of the *Aeneid*, as Lennon points out: for example, Amor's exposition of the necessity of an "instrumento" (1091) to descend to the Underworld may point to the story of the golden bough which Aeneas had to retrieve to gain entry (Lennon 2016, 89-92). Aqueronte's response to Orfeo's desire to cross the Lethe despite the fact that he is still alive (1206-9; "si tienes / tanto poder que vivo hasta aquí vienes; . . . no has de vencerme", if you have / such great power that you have come to this point alive; . . . you will not overcome me) also recalls Acheron's "corpora viva nefas Stygia vectare carina" (Virg. *Aen.* 6.391; it is not lawful for me to carry live bodies on my Stygian boat). Calderón seems to have this text in mind since, in their accounts of the Orpheus myth, other Classical texts do not mention Orpheus' first encounter with the ferryman of the Styx (Lennon 2016, 34). However, typically, Calderón does not allude explicitly to Aeneas or cite Virgil as an authority.

Another mythological allusion relating to the katabasis is signalled in 1267 where Aristeo reveals himself to be Pluto, the god of the Underworld

("Plutón me nombro", my name is Pluto). In combination with the fact that he kidnaps Eurídice in an attempt to make her his wife (1057-7; "el dios del infierno / dueño es suyo", the god of the Underworld is her master), this also evokes the myth of the abduction of Proserpina by the infernal king (Ov. *Met* 5.332-571). This myth is particularly pertinent to the story of the Fall, since Proserpina was condemned to live in the Underworld for six months of the year because she had eaten some pomegranate seeds while held hostage there, which provides a parallel for Eurydice-Eve's damnation through the eating of a fruit. Lennon points out that *apple* and *pomegranate* are etymologically linked through the Latin word *pomus* and that in Eurídice's description of the apples Calderón deliberately uses the word "pomas" (244), eschewing the more common *manzanas*, thus simultaneously alluding to the Fall and the Proserpina myth (Lennon 2016, 87). However, once again, Calderón makes no reference to Ovid in these passages.

4. Orpheus-Christ as Shepherd

The third main point of intersection between the Orpheus fable and the narrative of the Redemption is the pastoral element. Christ was often symbolised by a shepherd on the basis of biblical texts such as Psalm 23 ("The Lord is my shepherd") and the parable of the Good Shepherd in John 10:1-18. Once again, this Christian interpretation of the pastoral is supported by an allusion to a biblical authority. Here it is more difficult to pinpoint, but in line 146 ("pues dices / yo conozco ovejas mías", for you say / 'I know my sheep'), this is signalled by the word "dices" which, as we have seen, usually points to an authority. Here, "dices" refers to Christ's words in John 10:14 and so remits to his authority as transmitted by the Evangelists.

The play contains many *topoi* of the Classical pastoral. Perhaps the most obvious of these is the pastoral trope of pathetic fallacy; while highly conventionalised in the Renaissance pastoral, this device goes back to Theocritus and was perhaps most famously rendered by Virgil (for example, in Eclogue 5 where Nature mourns for Daphnis, and in Eclogue 10 where rocks and mountains weep in sympathy with Gallus' plight). These elements also appear in *El divino Orfeo*. Before the Fall, Nature is in harmony with the inhabitants of Paradise:

> La voz de mi esposo oí
> de cuya dulce armonía
> la luna rayos esparce,
> el sol resplandores brilla,
> la tierra produce flores,
> pájaros el viento giran,

peces las espumas cortan,
los animales animan
(113-20).

[I heard the voice of my husband, at whose sweet harmony the moon scatters rays, the sun shines with great brightness, the earth produces flowers, birds make the wind move, fish swim through the foamy sea, and animals are animated.]

However, after Eurydice-Eve's disobedience, Nature is inimical:

La tierra sepulturas
abre donde tropiece.
Los brutos, que solían
lisonjearme obediente,
garras y uñas afilan
para darme la muerte.
De mí los vientos huyen,
de mí las aves temen
y enturbian sus cristales
las cristalinas fuentes.
Todo se me rebela.
(1013-23)

[The earth opens tombs for me to fall. Brutes, which used to flatter me obediently, sharpen their claws and nails to kill me. The winds flee from me, birds fear me, and the crystalline springs muddy their crystal waters. Everything rebels against me.]

Other pastoral conventions include the motif of the lovesick shepherd carving words into the bark of trees. This trope has its roots in Virg. *Ecl.* 10.53-4, where Gallus declares that he will carve his *amores* (passionate love or its object) into the bark of the trees, and as the trees grow, so will the *amores*. Calderón exploits this in Aristeo's speech on first meeting Eurídice, where he says that, if he is allowed to kiss her hand, "haréis que victoria igual / con la pluma de un puñal / en las cortezas escriba / de estos troncos" (500-3; you will make it so that I will write of such a victory with a dagger for a pen, in the barks of these tree-trunks), and the inscription "con letra gótica y clara / crecer al paso se vea / del árbol" (507-11; will grow as a clear, Gothic letter along with the tree). The playwright blends this with the doctrine of original sin by saying that this carved letter will become "gigante, . . . una letra original . . . que el género humano lea" (512-14; giant . . . an original letter . . . for the human race to read).

Calderón also exploits another conventional action of shepherds in the pastoral genre, the offering of rustic gifts. Perhaps the most well-known

example of this motif occurs in Virgil's second eclogue, where Corydon demonstrates his attractiveness as a suitor by saying how rich he is in cattle, milk and sheep (Ecl. 2.20-2), and offers Alexis gifts of kids (40-2), flowers (45-50) and fruits and nuts (51-3).[4] In Aristeo's lengthy speech, he describes the "rústicos dones" (rustic gifts) of the shepherd Orfeo, which include "flores" (797; flowers), "espigas" (801; ears of grain), "pámpanos" (806; vine shoots) and "leche . . . desatada de las ubres / de sus ovejas" (811-13; milk . . . drawn from the udders of his shee), which remind us of Corydon's offers. He then rejects these gifts as "dones communes" (814; common gifts) and offers Eurídice more luxurious ones such as diamonds (819; "hijos del sol", sons of the sun), "perlas" (824; pearls), "coral" (827), "ámbar" (829; amber), "plata y oro" (833; silver and gold). However, in all of these cases, Calderón does not point us explicitly to the Classical pastoral.

Another *topos* Calderón makes use of is the *latet anguis* trope, from Virg. *Ecl.* 3.92-3. This appears at various points in the play. In 233-9 it is combined with a reference to the snake-bite of the Eurydice myth:

> porque la tierra que pisa
> de ponzoñosas serpientes
> poblada está y ser podría
> que alguna disimulada
> entre hermosas clavellinas
> su cándido pie mordiese.
> (233-9)

> [because the ground on which she treads is inhabited by poisonous serpents, and it could be that one hidden among some beautiful carnations bites her white foot.]

The trope also appears just before and after the Fall, modified to refer to the serpent in the Tree of Knowledge rather than the Virgilian serpent in the grass: "a su tronco torcida / he visto una serpiente" (947-8; I have seen a serpent twisted around its trunk); "La escondida serpiente, / Eurídice, soy yo" (980-1; I am the hidden serpent, Eurydice). However, once again, despite his sophisticated use of *latet anguis* trope, Calderón does not mention the Classical poet. Rather, he goes on to create a catalogue of patristic authorities for the trope of the Devil as serpent, as ever signalled by words like "dice":

> soy el áspid que dice
> Nacianceno que muerde;
> yo soy el escorpión

[4] The motif is of course even older than this, being based on the song of Polyphemus in Theoc. *Id.* 11.

. . . ,
Jerónimo lo enseña,
. . .
yo soy el basilisco
que con la vista hiere
como lo significa
Crisóstomo elocuente,
y, en fin, soy la culebra
. . .
como Agustino siente.
(983-996)

[I am the asp which Nazianzen says bites; I am the scorpion . . . as Jerome
shows; . . . I am the basilisk which wounds with its sight, as eloquent
Chrysostom indicates; in sum, I am the snake . . . about which Augustine
laments.]

This once again privileges the Christian authorities even where there is
close imitation of the Classics.

5. The Devil as Phaethon

The biblical references in the aforementioned description of the Devil also
demonstrate how Calderón privileges Christian sources, since in Aristeo's
narration in 535ff. the Devil's prehistory is described in terms which recall
the myth of Phaethon. This allusion has been thus far unidentified by critics,
perhaps because, once again, it is not signalled explicitly. Phaethon was
frequently allegorised as the Devil due to his rebellion against God and
thus his sinful ambition; for example, Berchorius interprets Phaethon as
Lucifer in the *Ovidius moralizatus* (Reynolds 1971, 160). Calderón draws on
this tradition in the aforementioned comparisons between Scripture and the
Metamorphoses in *El sacro Pernaso.* At one point, Judaism finds a passage on
the War in Heaven in Isaiah:

En *Isaías* aquí
encuentro . . .
. . . la primera
lid entre el dragón y el ángel
cuando aspirando soberbio
al solio, en vez de sentarse
sobre el monte de la luz,
en el de las sombras yace.
(306-13)

[I find here in Isaiah . . . the first battle between the dragon and the angel when, arrogantly aspiring to the throne, instead of being seated on the mountain of light, he lies in that of shadows.]

Gentility replies with the story of "Faetonte" (Phaethon), who "por querer, arrogante, / levantarse con el día, / al mar despeñado cae" (315-7; tumbles down into the sea for arrogantly wanting to rise with the sun). In the 1664 *El divino Orfeo*, the myth is explicitly referred to by the Príncipe de las Tinieblas or Prince of Shadows (the equivalent character to Aristeo): "¿Qué más Faetonte que yo, / que por gobernar la excelsa / carroza del Sol caí?" (726-8; Who is more of a Phaethon than me, I who fell for wanting to govern the sublime carriage of the Sun?). However, in the 1634 *El divino Orfeo*, Aristeo does not overtly call himself Phaethon, and only refers enigmatically to the mountains as "verdes faetontes" (308; green Phaethons) which reach up towards the sky earlier on in the play.

   Later, when relating his story to Eurídice he follows the mythological account of Phaethon point-by-point, still without naming his fabled forebear. For example, he begins by insisting that he is a prince (539ff.; "soy . . . por alta naturaleza / príncipe alto e ilustre", I am . . . by nature an eminent and illustrious prince), just as in the myth Phaethon insists that he is the Sun's son. Aristeo then goes on to describe the palace of the Sun:

   Sus muros son de diamante
   donde se tallan y esculpen
   crisólitos y topacios
   . . .
   Sus torres y capiteles,
   gigantes de piedra, suben
   hasta perderse de vista.
   (583-93)

   [Its walls are of diamond, in which chrysolite and topaz are carved and sculpted . . . Its towers and capitals, giants of stone, rise up until they are lost to view.]

With its emphasis on brightness and height, this cannot help but remind us of the palace of the Sun at the start of *Metamorphoses* 2:

   Regia solis erat sublimibus alta columnis,
   clara micante auro flammasque imitante pyropo,
   cuius ebur nitidum fastigia summa tegebat,
   argenti bifores radiabant lumine valvae.
   (2.1-4)

> [The palace of the sun was high up with its tall columns, bright with glittering gold and bronze which flashed like a flame; gleaming ivory adorned the top of its rooves, and the double-doors shone with the light of silver.]

Aristeo's subsequent account of the battle in Heaven also recalls Phaethon's struggle to control the chariot of the Sun. For example, the phrase "que humo exhalan, fuego escupen" (674; which exhale smoke, and spit out fire) recalls the description of the horses of the Sun, "ignemque vomentes" (Ov. *Met.* 2.119; "spewing out fire"). In 696ff. Aristeo narrates the chaos he caused in the sky:

> . . .
> no hay . . .
> globo que no se trastorne,
> ej que no se descoyunte,
> planeta que no delire,
> estrella que no caduque,
> astro que no se desmaye,
> y con la gran pesadumbre
> los polos del mundo suenan,
> los rumbos del cielo crujen.
> (696-706)

> [There is no . . . sphere which is not turned upside-down, no axis which is not dislocated, no planet which does not rave, no star which does not expire, no heavenly body which does not faint, and the poles of the world resound with great sorrow, and the courses of the heavens groan.]

This recalls the confusion Phaethon causes in the heavens when the colder northern constellations grow hot (Ov. *Met.* 2.171ff.) and, ultimately, the destruction brought about when the earth bursts into flame since the chariot of the Sun draws too near to it (2.201ff.). Like Jupiter in the *Metamorphoses* (2.311ff.), God has "un rayo en su mano" (709; a bolt of lightning in his hand). In 727 Aristeo even refers explicitly to an escape on a "desbocado caballo" (runaway horse). The immediate purpose of this extended allusion, like the others detailed above, is to draw the mythological and biblical accounts closer. However, it also aids the audience's interpretation of Aristeo's discourse. Although he tells Eurídice that he escaped from Heaven, the Bible says Lucifer was thrown out (Isaiah 14:12). Since we are alerted to the story of Phaethon and its ending with Jupiter striking Phaethon out of the sky, in conjunction with the opening of the play where Aristeo "cae despeñado" (tumbles down), the audience can see through his mendaciousness. However, despite following the myth so closely, and despite the fact that Calderón cites patristic authorities minutely in his description of the Devil, there is no reference to Ovid in the entire episode.

6. Suppressed or Elided Elements of the Orpheus Myth

Finally, there are some elements of the Classical myth of Orpheus which do not sit well with the theological narrative. Here, the privileging of the Christian story of Redemption is most obvious; indeed, in some cases Calderón simply does not include problematic parts of the fable. One of these is reported by Ovid (*Met.* 10.78-85), who writes that Orpheus' fidelity to Eurydice made him reject women altogether after losing her for the second time, which Ovid presents as an *aetion* for homosexuality in Thrace. Of course, this element of the myth would be intolerable on the Golden Age Spanish stage in itself, never mind as a representation of Christ. It is also omitted by all the Golden Age authors who treated the myth, such as Garcilaso, Jáuregui and Lope (Cabañas 1948, 30). Orpheus' death at the hands of the Bacchants (Virg. *Georg.* 4.520-2, Ov. *Met.* 11.1-43) is also omitted as it would have no place in the allegory where Christ's death has already been represented by the descent to the Underworld.

However, in other cases Calderón navigates problematic elements of the Orpheus myth through linguistic and literary ingenuity, rather than suppressing them altogether. For example, in the Classical myth of Orpheus, the hero looks back at Eurydice before they reach the upper world and thus loses her forever. Of course, the second loss of Eurydice does not map easily onto the story of Redemption, firstly, since it would suggest that humans have been condemned rather than saved, and secondly, since it places the blame for this condemnation on the Christ-figure. Critics have observed how, in order to counter this problem, Calderón explains it away using the double meaning of *volver el rostro*: "Frase con que se explica la atención o el cariño cuando se inclina hacia un sujeto para mirarle y al contrario desprecio o desvío cuando se aparta la vista del sujeto" (*Aut.;* "a phrase which signifies attention or affection when one turns towards a subject to look at it, and, on the other hand, disdain or contempt when one looks away from the subject"; see Duarte 1999, 63-4). Aristeo employs this double meaning when he warns Orfeo that every time Humanity sins, it risks going back to the Underworld:

> . . . atended mortales,
> que cada vez que perdiere
> la gracia de que hoy se vale
> y tú la vuelvas el rostro,
> (porque el volverle . . .
> es fuerza a quien te ofendiere)
> ha de volver a mi cárcel.
> (1382-8)

[. . . pay attention, mortals, for every time [Eurydice-Eve] loses the grace which today has saved her and you turn away your face from her (because it is necessary to turn away . . . from the one who offends you), she must return to my prison.]

In response, Orpheus-Christ leaves the sacrament of the Eucharist "para que no te pierdas / de vista" (1400-1; so that you will not be lost from view).

I would also argue that in his elision of the second loss of Eurydice Calderón exploits generic conventions. While plays like Lope's tragedy *El marido más firme* did include the permanent loss of Eurydice, the audience's expectation of the ending could be flexible depending on the genre of the work. In a parallel example, Buller points out that in Baroque Italian opera, it was common for the tragic ending to be omitted, and suggests that one of the reasons for this could be the close association of Orpheus with the myth of the pastoral and the predisposition of pastoral romance towards happy endings (Buller 1995, 78–9). As we have seen, Calderón emphasises the pastoral dimension of Orfeo, which creates a generic pull towards a happy ending.

Likewise, Orpheus' curiosity, which results in his inability to refrain from looking back at Eurydice, is a crucial part of the story which had to be retained. In his study of the myth, Cabañas compares the Orpheus' curiosity with that of various other mythological characters, such as the Classical Odysseus and the biblical Eve. He explains that Orpheus' love and ill-fatedness justify his looking back, whereas the curiosity of other mythological characters is usually a symptom of overweening ambition. Nonetheless, he notes in passing that this negative kind of curiosity appears in the character of Eurídice in *El divino Orfeo* (Cabañas 1948, 63-5). I would like to go a step further and argue that Calderón emphasises Eurídice-Eve's curiosity precisely in order to compensate for the fact that Orpheus's curiosity has been lost in the process of allegorisation. This is achieved in particular by the repetition of "ciencia" (knowledge), which underlines Eurydice-Eve's desire to obtain the knowledge contained within the forbidden fruit and therefore be like God (Genesis 3:5): "en copa y tronco tiene / la ciencia con que el cielo / supo obrarle" (950-3; in its crown and trunk it contains the science with which Heaven knew how to make it); "me dice que en sí / altas ciencias contiene" (969-970; it tells me that it contains profound sciences inside). In this way, Calderón maintains a crucial element of the Classical fable, while simultaneously privileging the Christian narrative, in which redemption has been achieved by a perfect saviour.

In conclusion, in *El divino Orfeo* (1634) Calderón masterfully synthesises pagan myth and Christian theological narrative, but always privileges the authority of the latter. We have seen how Orpheus is assimilated to Christ through the themes of music, katabasis and the pastoral; Eurydice

is assimilated to Proserpina; and the Devil is assimilated to Aristaeus and Pluto. I have also argued that the Devil is represented in terms which recall the story of Phaethon. However, in all these cases, Calderón refers explicitly to biblical and patristic authorities, but never to Classical ones such as Ovid and Virgil. The Christian narrative is also privileged through the suppression of certain elements such as Orpheus' homosexuality, and the elision of others through wordplay, manipulation of generic convention, and processes of transference. In short, Calderón both vindicates the value that is to be had in Classical letters and keeps within the bounds of orthodoxy by maintaining the superiority of Christian truth.

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Representations of the *Battle of the Giants:* an Early Modern Anti-Islamic Allegory Deployed by the Hispanic Monarchy

Abstract

The focus of the present paper is a prescient political allegory that was used to represent the Iberian monarchs' fight against Islam: the Battle of the Giants. We explore the propagandistic significance of this allegory through an analysis of its two principal forms: the Gigantomachy and the Titanomachy. Taking the Gigantomachies created by Giulio Romano and Perino del Vaga as our point of departure, this study develops a diachronic approach to reconstructing the genesis, evolution and dissemination of this mythological theme in Italy and the Iberian Peninsula from the early sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries. Attention is then turned to the incorporation of this allegory into the political discourse of the Hispanic Monarchy from the end of the sixteenth century onwards. Careful scrutiny is paid to invocations of this allegory in the ephemeral decorations created for royal festivals during the early modern period, and it is asked: who gained political capital from these events?

KEYWORDS: Battle of the Giants; Gigantomachy; Titanomachy; ephemeral art; Islamic imagery; Hispanic monarchy; Iberia

1. Introduction

From the 1970s onwards, a range of scholarly studies began to address the use of mythology as a key source for the creation of an iconography of the Hispanic monarchy during the early modern era.[1] In conjunction with this line of enquiry, scholars considered how this cultural development was shaped by the Renaissance interest in classical antiquity. However, it was not until the 1990s that the oft-repeated claim that mythology was not a common feature of Iberian artistic culture began to be questioned. Fernando Checa's

1 Amongst many others, see Rosenthal 1971 and 1973.

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analysis (1987 and 1992) of the evolution of the propagandistic imagery of
Charles V and Philip II; Rosa López Torrijos's landmark compendium (1985)
on mythology in Spanish art amply demonstrated the pivotal importance
of mythology in Iberian artistic culture, and the research by Adelaida
Allo Manero (1992 and 2003) devoted to this same theme through her
analysis of the funerary exequies staged for the Hispanic Monarchy; and
e. Drawing on these seminal studies, the focus of this article an analysis
of the repercussion of classical imagery upon ephemeral art and festival
culture in the early modern Hispanic world. To do so, we focus on visual and
theatrical representations of the theme of the *Battle of the Giants* during the
sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and we explore how this
was deployed as a political allegory of the Hispanic Monarchy. Subsequently
it was used by both Iberian monarchies to represent their struggle against
Islam. Our aim is to provide a diachronic reconstruction of this political
message which was formulated through the principal two forms of this
mythological subject, the *Gigantomachy* and the *Titanomachy*. To do so,
we trace its circulation between the Italian and Iberian peninsulas, where it
was represented repeatedly as part of ephemeral decorations created for the
Catholic monarchy in these two peninsular territories.[2]

2. Early Representations of the *Gigantomachy* and *Titanomachy*

The most famous sixteenth-century representations of the *Gigantomachy*
were undoubtedly those painted by Giulio Romano at the Palazzo Te in
Mantua, and Perino del Vaga at Andea Doria's villa in Genoa. Both images
were dominated by depictions of *Jupiter Tonans* annihilating the giants
with his thunder bolt. Nevertheless, the full significance of these paintings
transcends the artists' more or less faithful rendering of classical texts,
Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1, 152ff.), and the subsequent moralizing editions of
it.[3] Instead, what is of particular relevance for this study is how the scene
was re-signified as a political allegory in the context of the reign of Charles
V (1519-1556), which is when the monarch and Emperor was identified with
Jupiter, the king of the gods, and his enemies with the giants or Titans.[4]

  With regards to the first of the two aforementioned examples, Giulio
Romano's mural paintings in the *Sala dei giganti* in the Palazzo Te (1532-

  [2] For the iconography of the *Gigantomachy* and *Titanomachy* as allegories of the
protracted conflict fought against the Turks, and Muslims more generally, and above
all with regard to the representation of this subject by the Portuguese monarchy, see
Franco Llopis and Rega Castro 2020, 117-28; Franco Llopis and Rega Castro 2021, 74-84.
  [3] On the classical sources for this myth and their reception in western art from the
fourth century CE onwards, see Rodríguez López 2015, 7-26.
  [4] See the classical studies by Mitchell 1986, 147; Guthmüller 1997, 291-308.

1535) have been linked to Charles V's second visit to the city in November 1532, following his coronation as Emperor. Although he would have seen these frescoes in an incomplete state, he did see the preparatory drawings. He also witnessed a number of ephemeral spectacles staged by Federico II Gonzaga (Romano 1892, 242), which were intended to celebrate Charles's political power, as well as the value of his Italian alliances, such as those with the Gonzaga and Doria families. In this context, the *Gigantomachy* reveals a nascent iconographic tradition that would go on to explicitly identify Jupiter with the young Emperor;[5] this argument, however, has not been unanimously accepted by historians.

Indeed, on the vault of the *Sala dei Giganti* it is *Jupiter Tonans* alone who vanquishes his adversaries, and he does so under the protection of the Imperial Eagle, which doubles as Jupiter's own symbol; the bird is depicted enthroned beneath a canopy, which was intentionally chosen as the focal point of the composition (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Giulio Romano, *Gigantomachy*, 1532-1535, fresco,
Sala dei Giganti, Palazzo Te, Mantua

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[5] See e.g. Hartt 1958, 1, 157-8; Eisler 1983a (1996), 314-17, and 1983b, 101-3; more recently, see also Belfanti 2019, 55.

With regards to the giants, they were not intended to symbolize any particular enemy, but rather all the adversaries who confronted both the Holy Roman Empire and the Hispanic Monarchy (Guthmüller 1997, 291-308). On the other hand, both the triumphal arches that Giulio Romano designed to mark the Emperor's second entry into the city, as well as the facade of the Palazzo Te that leads into the garden, were decorated with military trophies, winged victories and figures of slaves and prisoners, all in accordance with the iconographic tradition established by classical Roman art, which Giulio Romano had first-hand knowledge of. Such features were wholly appropriate for Charles V, above all since his coronation as Emperor.[6] As a result, the giants were represented *all' antica*, not in the form of Turkish captives, nor as African slaves, as would later become a recurring feature of imperial decorative programmes, in particular after the Battle of Lepanto in 1571.

In the wake of this initial example, the *Battle of the Giants* became a theme that was deployed to celebrate military victories in North Africa, including the capture of both Tunis and La Goulette. For the Emperor's entry into Palermo in September 1535 four "statue gigantesche de' Turchi" (gigantic statues of Turks) were built in the form of Atlanteans or Telamons. Originally, these were created as elements of ephemeral architecture, but later, in the mid-sixteenth century, they were carved in stone as part of the decoration of the *Porta Nuova* (c. 1570-1668).[7] We can only imagine the design of the initial ephemeral triumphal arch on the basis of what the *Porta Nuova* looks like today;[8] however, conceptually it functioned as a metaphor for the Hispanic Monarchy's war against Islam.[9]

The second foundational example of the use of this allegory is provided by the decoration of the apartment of Andrea Doria in the Palazzo del Principe, which as was mentioned above are considered to be the work of Perino del Vaga (1531-1533). The theme of the decorative programme created for the room's vaulted ceiling was once more the fall of the giants, and it was interpreted, as had become tradition, as an allegory of Charles V conquering his political and religious enemies (Fig. 2).[10]

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[6] Belluzzi 1980, 47-62; more recently, see Mattei 2014b, 217-23; and 2014a, 110- 17; see also Angelucci et al. 2019, 129n27.

[7] Fagiolo and Madonna 1981, 126-35; see also Checa 1987, 105; Cámara Muñoz 1998, 141.

[8] On its anti-Turkish meaning, see Baskins 2019, 332; also, see Baskins 2017, 22.

[9] On the propagandistic use of this metaphor in the context of Hispanic festival culture during the sixteenth century, see Franco Llopis 2017, 87-116, esp. 90-3. In parallel, for recent studies of the use of the aforesaid imagery in the royal iconography created for the Portuguese Monarchy, see Rega Castro 2021.

[10] Parma Armani 1970, 44-8; 1986, 122-3; more recently, see Stagno 2019, 296-339.

Fig. 2 : Perino del Vaga, Gigantomachy, 1531-1533, fresco,
principal chamber in the apartments of Andrea Doria,
Palazzo del Principe, Genoa

The clue to its interpretation is provided by a letter Pietro Aretino sent to the Emperor in 1537, in which he compared the ruler's enemies – the Turks included – to the giants who challenged Jupiter and as a result were defeated. However, just as it had occurred in Mantua, a new dimension was conferred upon the paintings' political-propagandistic meaning by the presence of the young Charles V. He resided in the Palazzo del Principe from March to April 1533 as Andrea Doria's guest, by which time the paintings had been completed. To mark Charles's official entry into Mantua, Perino del Vaga designed a triumphal arch – for which a preparatory drawing has been conserved, close to the palace. The decoration of the arch moved away from the mythological scene to a more explicit evocation of Charles's Muslim foes. The arch's upper section was painted with two battle scenes, in which vanquished Ottoman soldiers wearing turbans can be clearly discerned, and to one side there is a personification of Faith or the Catholic Church.[11] This drawing can by interpreted as a celebration of the victories of Emperor Charles V against the Turks in Hungary and along the Eastern borders of the Holy Roman Empire – an outcome of the successful defence of Vienna against the forces of Suleiman the Magnificent in 1532. Yet, it is also a metaphor for the defeat of the enemies of Catholicism, more generally.

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[11] The drawing of this arch is conserved in the Courtauld Institute of Art (London), Blunt Collection. See, for example, Kubler 1972, 120. More recently, see Stagno 2017, 150, esp. Fig. 1.

The battle against the giants or Titans – this was never clearly distinguished – was also used in Italy to symbolize Philip II's victory over his religious enemies from an early date following his sojourn in Trent in 1549 as a young prince. It was there that a battle was staged in his honour, in which "quatro centauros con algunos soldados vestidos a la Turquesca" (four centaurs with some soldiers dressed in the Turkish manner) took part along with "quatro gigantes en forma de salvajes muy fieros y espantables alrededor de una cueva . . . la qual llamavan Infierno" (four giants of savage appearance, very fierce and terrifying, surrounding a cave . . . they called Hell);[12] all these characters were customary figures in this type of paratheatrical spectacle, as well as in early modern triumphal entries. It is of great significance that, in such performances, occurring all over the Italian peninsula, the representation of the Mediterranean enemy exhibits the stereotypical physiognomic and dress characteristics typically associated with the Turks. This contrasts with the portrayal observed in other enclaves, such as the Iberian peninsula, where they were also portrayed as North African Muslims or even as Moriscos (Muslims forced to become Christians at the beginning of the sixteenth century). This phenomenon can be attributed to the difference in political and defense policies employed by Italian regions, particularly in response to pirate and corsair attacks, as well as the captivity of their sailors.[13] The 'useful enemy', which marks the iconographic programs, is the Ottoman Empire, and not Islam in general.

If we return to the Genoese ephemeral arch, we notice another peculiarity, i.e. that Hercules is included in the scene: this was intended to extol the strength of the Habsburg monarchy. He was depicted as a figure "de grande relievo" (with impressive foreshortening) who stood right at the mouth of the cave and "que sacava con una cadena fuera del infierno al can Cerbero con tres cabeças" (he pulled the three-headed Cerberus out of hell with a chain). The allusion to the labours of Hercules is clear, yet to avoid any doubt the eight knights who had to fight against the centaurs entered "armados de armas blancas con almetes en las cabeças y por cimera en ellos un Hércules . . ." (armed with swords and wearing helmets adorned with an [image of] Hercules . . .).[14] Hercules was the prototype of the virtuous hero, and he was deemed capable of conquering both the barbarian centaurs, defeating the heresy, in other words, the Turks.

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[12] Calvete de Estrella 1930 (1552), 103. See also a recent study by Río Nogueras 2012, 187-205.

[13] On captivity in early modern Italy, see, amongst others, Bono 2002; Bono 2001; Małowist and Bieżuńska-Małowist 1987; Sánchez León and López Nadal 1996.

[14] Calvete de Estrella 1930 (1552), 103-4.

It is important to note that Charles V himself commissioned armour from prominent goldsmiths such as the Negroni family, in which his figure emulates that of the Theban hero. This tradition persisted until Philip IV, as evidenced by the well-known Salón de Reinos (Madrid), where Francisco Zurbarán depicted a series dedicated to Hercules as an emblem of the monarch's military policy. This imagery serves as a form of political reaffirmation, even in times of crisis.[15] It is also important to note that the selection of Hercules may have been influenced, as was the case at the funeral of Charles V in Rome, by the numerous expeditions to uncharted, distant lands that the Theban, like the Emperor, undertook in order to vanquish even his overseas adversaries.[16]

Staging allegorical battles akin to that which was held in Trent gained currency in the Iberian Peninsula, both for royal entries and exequies, as well as a subject in festive spectacles more broadly.[17] According to the Jesuit Juan Antonio Jarque, this type of symbolism was based on a statement by St Jerome:

'Monstrum' en latín . . . llamó San Jerónimo con toda propiedad a la Herejía . . . Y despúes de aver hecho largo arancel de Monstruos diferentes que refieren las Historias Sagrada y Profana, como Centauros, Sirenas, Cancerbero, . . . Hidra de siete cabeças, Caco de Virgilio, Gerión de tres cabeças, Gerolyficas todas de la Herejía . . .

[*Monstrum* in Latin . . . was defined by St Jerome with complete propriety as Heresy . . . And [he did so] having undertaken a lengthy survey of the different monsters referred to in Sacred and Profane History, such as Centaurs, Sirens,

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[15] See Elliott and Brown 1982, 163-70; Úbeda de los Cobos 2005, 152-65. For a general overview related to the ephemeral art, see Franco Llopis 2017, 87-116.

[16] "La inteligencia de la qual es que su Magestad Cesarea pasó en la conquista del mundo, mas adelante que Hercules, y con mayor trabajo y dificultad, y assi merecio mucho mas que Hercules sin comparación, porque abrió la puerta para la navegación y descubrimiento, no solamente del Poniente, pero aun del Septentrino, Medio dia y Oriente, en las quales partes a acrecentado y agumentado la ley evangelica y Fe de Christo" (The intelligence of His Majesty Caesarea is evidenced by his conquest of the world, which occurred later than that of Hercules and required greater labor and difficulty. Therefore, he merited greater renown than Hercules, as he facilitated navigation and discovery, not only in the West, but also in the North, South, and East. In these regions, he expanded and expanded the knowledge of the evangelical law and the faith of Christ): Sandoval y Rojas 1614, 487.

[17] Allo Manero 2003, 149-50. With regard to sacred oratory, of particular relevance is a sermon delivered in Málaga to mark the death of Philip II, in which the subject of the Battle of the Giants was related to other biblical passages and the victory won over the enemies of Christianity, see Aguilar García 1994, 281.

Cerberus, . . . the seven-headed Hydra, Virgil's Cacus, three-headed Geryon,
all Hieroglyphs of Heresy. . .][18]

It is for this reason that when Elizabeth of Valois, Philip II's third wife, made
her entry into Toledo (1559), the route she took to the Alcazar was adorned
with three very large statues of Hercules, Cacus and Geryon (Fernández
Travieso 2007, 37-46). The representation of these figures paid homage to
Hercules, the mythical founder of Toledo, the city that was honouring the
queen, but this was also an allusion to the Habsburg dynasty. Thereby, the
statue of Hercules could be read as an image of the monarch as the conqueror
of heresy, which was in turn alluded to by the figures of Cacus and Geryon.
The figure of Geryon also symbolized the Islamic enemy, in this case more
specifically associated with the Moriscos, converts from Islam, at the funeral
of Margaret of Austria in Córdoba. The intellectual Basilio Vaca devised a
hieroglyph in which a hand emerges from a cloud, stopping the scythe with
which Death was threatening the queen. The latter is shown cutting off one
of the three heads of Geryon with a saw. The motto was: "Ne totum pereat,
melius est abscindere parte / donec abscindat manum, quae scandalizat"
(Matthew 18), followed by these words: "Detén Muerte la guadaña / Hasta
que la mano la sierre, / y los Moriscos destierre, / que escandalizan a España"
(Guzmán 1612, 153; Cease the scythe of death / Until the hand saws it / And
the Moriscos banish / Who scandalize Spain).[19] These sentences illustrate the
polysemic value of these representations, as well as the varying associations
of the Islamic enemy in European and Hispanic contexts. While in Europe the
figure of the Islamic enemy was primarily linked to the Turk, in Spain, this
was not always the case. Instead, the Moriscos, a Muslim population forced
to convert at the beginning of the sixteenth century, played a key role in the
visual propaganda. Their presence in Spain contributed to the destabilization
of the Habsburgs' policy of unity of faith, which aimed to promote a single,
unified Christian identity across the Spanish Empire.

We find this same visual rhetoric a few years later at Philip III's entry
into Lisbon in 1619. On this occasion, in one of the most ritually significant
urban spaces, the Terreiro do Paço – the open space by the Royal Palace in
Lisbon close to the Customs House, the *Battle of the Giants* was represented
as a metaphor of the expulsion of the Moriscos, which had taken place ten
years earlier, but this same image also alluded to the struggle against the
Turks (Rega Castro and Franco Llopis 2021, 76-7). A spectacular sculpture
was staged there that illustrated the "fabula de la Guerra de los titanes . . .

[18] Jarque 1666, 259-60, qtd in Allo Manero 2003, 150.
[19] For these exequies see Moreno Cuadro 1988, for more general aspects, see Franco
Llopis 2022a, 61-83.

por lo mucho que simboliza esta fabula con los temerarios intentos de los Moriscos, que convocando las fuerças turquescas i Africanas . . . intentaron pertubar la paz" (Lavanha 1622, 9ff.; the fable of the War of the Titans . . . as this fable greatly symbolises the rash attempts made by the Moriscos, who by summoning Turkish and African forces . . . sought to disturb the peace); its appearance is partially known thanks to the engraving Joan Schorquens made for Lavanha's account of the festivity. However, an account conserved in the Biblioteca da Ajuda offers a more detailed description of these giants' "bultos muy crecidos" (very tall forms), and how there was a sculpture of Philip III as Jupiter, who with his thunderbolts caused "las monstruosas personas gigantescas [fueran] lançandose en un abysmo o gruta infernal" (BA 54-X-6 no. 1, 6ff.; these monstrous gigantic figures to be cast into an infernal abyss or pit). This description presents us with a scene that was wholly baroque, one that moved beyond the classical limits of representation.

A correct interpretation of these figures is possible thanks to Lavanha's aforementioned text, as well as a manuscript written circa 1619 and preserved in the archive of the Cathedral of Granada:

> Sabed que estos gigantes son conparadas a cuatro naçiones contrarios a nuestra ley y contra el Rey Phellipe que los defiende, los sujeta y los ba acabando y echando del mundo como segunda coluna de la fe. El un jigante senifica la (h) erejia; el otro la casa otomana, que son los moros; el tercero los moriscos que hecho de España; el 4.° se compara a los judíos . . . (Gan Giménez 1991, 419)

> [You should know that these giants are comparable to four nations opposed to both our law and King Philip who [is seen] fighting against them, subjugating them and eventually doing away with them, and like a second column of faith he casts them from the world. One giant signifies heresy, the other the House of Ottoman [Osman], who are Moors; the third the Moriscos who he expelled from Spain; the 4th is compared to the Jews . . .]

On the other hand, the identification of the monarch with Jupiter was a feature which, as we have seen, gained currency from the Italian Renaissance onwards, and some Italian courts frequently applied it to Charles V. Thereby, it is clear that the depiction of this subject in Lisbon was by no means a novelty, and nor for that matter was the 'bestialization' of the enemy in the form of a giant or monster.

The use of this allegory was a rhetorical strategy, and it was not restricted to the theatre and ephemeral art as it was also used in other media. In this regard, mention should be made of the frontispiece that the Flemish artist Petrus Firens engraved for the book *Guerras Civiles de Granada* by Ginés Pérez de Hita, which was published in Paris in 1606 (Fig. 3); an image that has barely been studied by experts (Franco Llopis 2022b).
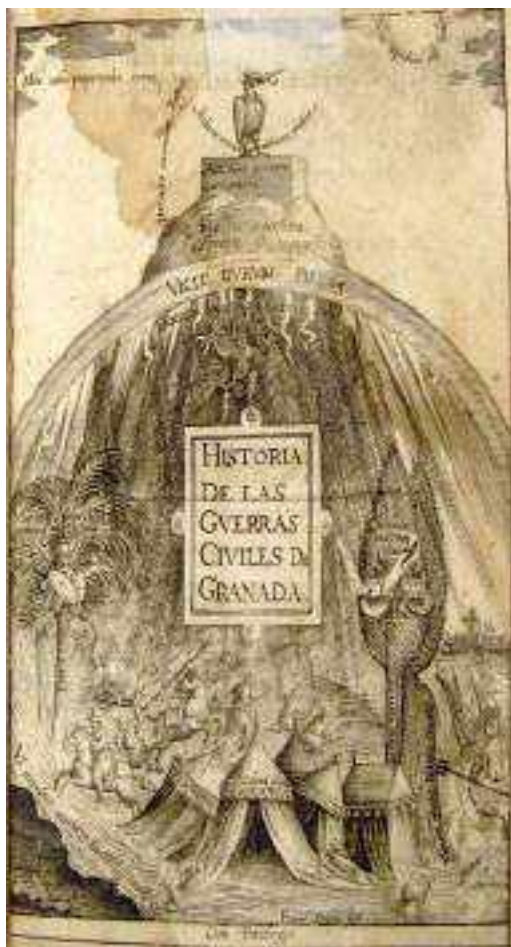
Fig. 3 : Petrus Firens, *Allegory of the Civil Wars of Granada*, c. 1606,
engraving, Tisch Library, Tufts University, USA

The artist's intention was to use this mythological allegory to represent the War of the Alpujarras (1568-1571), which broke out following an armed insurrection by the *Monfíes* (members of Muslim communities living in the mountain regions near Granada) and the Moriscos of Granada. This was one of the cruellest conflicts fought on the peninsula during the sixteenth century, and it resulted in a victory for the royal troops led by Juan de Austria; during the conflict the rebels received support from a small contingent of Berber and Ottoman pirates (Franco Llopis and Moreno Díaz del Campo 2019, 371-411). The frontispiece these accounts of the structures created for the triumphal arches and catafalques built for the Spanish Habsburgs. The main feature of the frontispiece is a mountain, on whose peak stands an eagle upon a plinth. Jupiter is depicted beneath his attribute, and he is depicted as sat upon a rocky throne just beneath the mountain's peak; he casts his thunderbolts down upon the insurrectionaries, who flee in terror from the foot of the mountain flee. The costume used for the latter figures is barely lifelike, as the fleeing troops do not really look like Turks or Muslims; instead, the artist has schematized or simplified all the sartorial elements of the various contingents of Muslims, whether *conversos* or not,[20] whereby it is hard to identity them. Furthermore, Neptune is seen on the right sinking enemy ships, with a naval battle as a backdrop.

In this regard, it is important to bear in mind two entwined issues: Neptune fought alongside Jupiter against the Titans, and his image went on to be used in Habsburg culture, above all after the battle of Lepanto (1571), as a means of symbolizing the victory won by the Christian fleet against the Turk. The allusion to Neptune reinforced the providentialist ideology invoked by the Holy League, and in particular Philip II's messianic imperialism. Thus, it is clear that Firens combined a range of iconographic types that were in circulation during the second half of the sixteenth century, and they were used to illustrate the Hispanic Monarchy's victories. His engraving underscores how the *Gigantomachy* or *Titanomachy* was used within an ideological and interpretative framework akin to that of the "fábula de la guerra de los titanes" (fable of the War of the Titans) that was depicted for the entry of Philip III into Lisbon, irrespective of the fact that he was a king who had suffered many years of penury and military defeat. Indeed, this is an illustrative example of how, during the period when the Hispanic Monarchy exercised control over the Italian and Flemish territories, the allegorical and mythological representations of the Islamic enemy, at these territories, were centered on the figure of the Turk; in the Iberian case, however, a double iconographic interweaving can be observed, as the internal enemy (Morisco)

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[20] On Moorish costume and its representation in literature and art, see for example, Carrasco Urgoiti 2003, and Irigoyen-García 2017.

was assimilated and represented on some occasions as the Mediterranean enemy (Turk) (see Franco Llopis and Moreno Díaz del Campo 2019, 396-412).

To avoid oversimplified or monolithic interpretations, we shall now turn to a further and more detailed contextualization of the sources for and thorough analysis of each celebration. The recurring depiction of this subject in a range of media suggests that it had become a well-known subject for extolling the feats of the Hispanic monarchs. Needless to say, it played an important role in the exequies held for Philip III in Seville in 1621. On this occasion Jupiter was depicted carried by an eagle and he was again seen quelling the giants' rebellion. On this occasion this allegorical image was concerned with his confrontation of the Protestant 'heresy', and this may be inferred from the image's motto, "Alitis opus" (He needs the eagle's wings), and the inscription "Por él inclinó el Danubio/ La frente al César Triunfante / del Palatino arrogante" (qtd in Allo Manero 2003, 154; Thanks to him the Danube bows / its head before Caesar, triumphant / over the arrogant Palatine), which clearly alludes to the support Philip provided to Emperor Ferdinand II against the Protestant Union.[21]

Once the theme had been codified as a political allegory in the visual culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it was further developed in the festive culture of the end of the century. This phenomenon allows us to analyse a series of aspects of its performative dimension through a comparative study of three festive events in three different contexts. These examples are intimately connected to the discourses of propaganda and legitimization of the Hispanic Monarchy, during a period marked by political crisis and dynastic change.

[21] To reaffirm the monarch's role as defender of the faith, these same exequies included a depiction of a lion fighting against a monster in the mythical setting of Hesperides at the foot of Mount Atlas, which was intended to commemorate the capture of Larache, one of this monarch's few military victories, on which see Allo Manero 2003, 154. This account was located in: BCC. MS 58-5-36. "Relación de las Honrras que hizo la Ciudad de Sevilla por su Magestad el Rey Don Felipe Tercero Nuestro Señor que ese en el cielo. Escrita para el duque de Alcala Virrey de Cataluña, 1621", in Historia desta ciudad de Sevilla que escribió el Lizenciado Collado em que se trata de su fundación hasta la perdida de España y el tiempo que dominaron los moros hasta su restauración por el santo Rey Don Fernando y lo que a obrado en servicio de los Reyes sus sucesores hasta el Rey Nuestro Señor Don Felipe Tercero. Añadido al libro Las Reales Exequias que hizo Sevilla desde las del Rey Felipe 3º año de 1612 hasta las de la Reyna D. Maria de Austria su mujer del Rey Don Felipe Quarto, ano de 1696. MS 1698, 199-207.

3. The *Titanomachy* in the Later Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

In another context and at a much later date, the *Titanomachy* was used to decorate a festival arch built in the Puerta del Sol in Madrid for the entry of Queen María Luisa de Orleans (1680), first wife to Charles II. Regrettably, the scene was depicted on the rear of the arch, which means it is not included in the drawing depicting this monument attributed to Matías de Torres (Zapata Fernández de la Hoz 2000, 130-1). The arch's principal facade was dedicated to the Catholic Religion and its defence by the Hispanic Monarchy, while its rear façade represented gods and heroes from antiquity, who were presented as models of heroic virtue. The first tier of images depicted, on the lower left-hand side the "Religión dándole armas a Cadmo para luchar con el dragon" (Religion giving weapons to Cadmus to fight the dragon), and on the right-hand side the "Batalla de los Cíclopes hicieron al cielo tirando piedras contra él" (Battle that the Cyclops waged against heaven casting stones against it) (An. 1680, 9, 10), or, in other words, a *Gigantomachy*, and it was identified as such by Zapata Fernández de la Hoz (2000, 142). These two scenes were displayed as the reverse of the *Battle of Lutos*, the *Tribute of the one hundred maidens* and the *Battle of Navas de Tolosa*, whereby both the Titans and giants would have been identified with the 'Moors' of the so-called Christian Conquest. Likewise, the dragon would have been linked with the many forms of heresy which the Hispanic Monarchy had to combat. Both Cadmus and Jupiter, who punished the giants with his thunderbolts, were presented as mythological prefigurations of the monarch himself, Charles II.

In a similar vein, an intriguing pyrotechnic display was staged a few years later, in 1689, in the Piazza del Palazzo Reale in Palermo to mark the feast of St Rosalia, the city's patron. It should not be overlooked that this city was one of the most significant representative spaces for the Hispanic Monarchy, and since 1535 it had staged lavish festivities to glorify the Spanish monarchs' struggle over their overseas enemies. On this occasion, there was a representation of Mount Olympus, whose peak was crowned "non dall'Armigero di Gioue, ma dalla sua medesima Aquila" (not by Jove's squire, but by his very own eagle), and which, as was the case in Firens's print, this monument provided a metaphor for the destruction of Jupiter's enemies: "di Centauri, e di Pitoni, d'immensa corporatura da Giganti" (An. 1690, 7-12, qtd in Mínguez Cornelles et al. 2014, 113-14; the Centaurs, Pythons, and the immensely tall Giants). Furthermore, the massive structure was surrounded by eight colossi or giants, who stood on pedestals and had a bronze-like patina. They were identified by inscribed cartouches and their number combined some of the Titans – Coeus, Iapetus and Atlas – along with other figures

who had only recently been invented – such as Adamastor,[22] and there were also other figures who had no link to this mythological subject – such as Goliath.[23] Nevertheless, their presence, far from being mere artistic licence, seems to have been justified on the basis that the overarching concept for the programme was to present a series of "geroglifici dell'empietà abbattuta" (hieroglyphs of impiety sundered) by the Hispanic Monarchy (An. 1690, 8), and this political dimension was clearly reinforced by the physical presence of the viceroy and the Sicilian nobility.

Nevertheless, the intended significance of the latter spectacle was based on both the number and type of enemies involved. They were defeated by the king of all the gods, Jupiter, as an alter ego of the Spanish monarch Charles II. The complexity of this *macchina* is also a key factor, but it cannot be addressed in depth in the present study due to the space available.

Many years would pass until another monument of this type depicting either the *Gigantomachy* or *Titanomachy* would be built. However, an opportune moment was provided by the celebrations held for the double betrothal of the Prince of Asturias, Ferdinand of Bourbon, to the Portuguese Infanta María Bárbara de Braganza, and Crown Prince José de Braganza of Portugal to the Spanish Infanta Mariana Victoria, which took place in both courts in 1727. In January 1728 a pyrotechnic castle was designed and built, once again in the Terreiro do Paço. Its subject was misidentified as *Júpiter Capitolino*. In fact, it represented the *War of the Giants or Titans*, and it was presided over by the figure of *Jupiter Tonans*, who annihilated his foes with his thunderbolts, casting them down from the peak of the mountain, as can be observed in the engraving by Antoine Quillard.[24] This pyrotechnic spectacle

[22] The Portuguese poet Luís de Camões incorporated this mythical character into this epic poem Os Lusíadas (Camões 1572, 51ff.), in which he described Adamastor as the guardian of the Cape of Storms, or Cape of Good Hope. For a deeper understanding of its value as a symbolic representation of Islam or African paganism in the ephemeral art of the Portuguese court, see: Franco Llopis and Rega Castro 2020, 117-18.

[23] Goliath appears in other contexts as a depiction of the struggle against the enemies of the faith. One example of this is provided by the entry staged for Prince Philip into Milan in 1559. A sculpture of the Philistine giant was built in the Piazza del Duomo in Milan, and it was accompanied by David, as well as Holofernes, Hercules and Atlanta, and it was intended to symbolize how Philip had confronted his antagonists (Leydi 1990). Another example is provided by the festivities held in Toledo for the canonization of St Ignatius Loyola in 1622, the saint was depicted as David, while Luther was represented as Goliath. See Sanz Baso 2022, 214; and Franco Llopis and Sanz Baso, 2023.

[24] Two carved plates based on the design by Pierre Antoine Quillard have been conserved, they were engraved by Théodore Andreas Harrewyn. The engraving in question is: Júpiter no Capitólio (Jupiter on the Capitoline), 1728, Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (BNP), class mark E. 1107 V. The other plate depicts: Diana no Templo de Éfeso

staged a metaphorical representation of the monarchy's triumph over the enemies of the faith. The imperialist political message was undoubtedly articulated in the upper section of the castle, where a personification of Fame bearing a laurel wreath sounded her trumpet, while accompanying two enchained prisoners; given their long moustaches and shaven heads these would have been read as captive Turks, despite them not wearing turbans (Fig. 4).

Fig 4 : Pierre-Antoine Quillard, Capitoline Jupiter [Gigantomachy or Titanomachy], c.1728, engraving. Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, Lisbon

(Diana in the Temple of Ephesus), 1728, BNP, class mark E. 65. R. Published in Pereira 2000, 127n42. See also García and Zink 2002, 52-5. More recently, see Rega Castro and Franco Llopis 2021, 79-81.

Nevertheless, the key to interpreting this programme is provided by another of the *artifícios* (artifices) that illuminated this event. Fortunately, the chronicler was more loquacious in his description of this second monument. According to Fray José da Natividade, the second of these pyrotechnic spectacles represented the temple of Artemis in Ephesus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, which had been located in Asia Minor, in other words, Ottoman territory. In 356 BCE it had been burnt to the ground by Herostratus, and it was burnt down once again during the festivities in Lisbon as an augury of a future time " . . . em que o Soberano Pincipe [D. José] . . . poria a ferro, e fogo as Mesquitas Ágarenas, que tem a Lua, porque era subentendida a mesma Diana, por seu timbre" (Natividade 1752, 32; in which the Crown Prince [Dom José] . . . would set fire to the Muslim Mosques, who fear the Moon, because it was assumed to be Diana herself). Although the half-moon does not appear on Diana's forehead in the engraving (García and Zink 2002, 67), this traditional attribute of the goddess and the crescent emblem of the Turkish empire were, according to the chronicle, conflated through metonymy, in order to allude to the Iberian monarchies' revived commitment to pursue the "cruzada" (crusade) against Islam beyond the traditional zone of influence in North Africa, and on into the heart of the Ottoman Empire.

Thus, it is clear that the subject of the *Battle of the Giants* was used recurrently up until the early eighteenth century, and it was depicted in a range of media, in particular in the artistic genres linked to Baroque festival culture. Of equal importance is the definitive codification of the political content of this iconographic theme as an allegory of the Iberian monarchies' unrelenting military struggle against Islam. Later, in 1768 the Aragonese painter Francisco Bayeu – follower of Corrado Giaquinto and Raphael Mengs, revived the subject and included it amongst the series of allegories designed for the decorative programme entitled the *Triumph of the Spanish Monarchy.* The *Battle of the Giants* was painted on the ceiling of the *cuarto de los Príncipes de Asturias* (chamber of the Prince and Princess of Asturias) in the Palacio Real in Madrid (Fig. 5);[25] however, the dynastic change brought about by the ascent of the Bourbons to the Spanish throne led to the exclusion of the imperial eagle from the iconographic programme.

Nevertheless, it is clear how this mythological subject evolved over the course of the centuries, from its Northern Italian origins, and went on to

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[25] The Museo Nacional del Prado also conserves the preparatory oil sketch (Inv. P000604), dated to 1767-1768; and in Zaragoza, the Real Sociedad Económica Aragonesa de Amigos del País conserves a ricordo (small-scale copy) of the aforementioned vault. Amongst others, see Morales and Marín 1995, 82; Mano 2016, 181, 186n53; see also Rodríguez López 2015, 22.

circulate across various Hispanic territories and the Iberian world. Based upon these two monarchies' conflict with their religious enemies, and above all the Ottoman empire, the *Battle of the Giants* gradually established itself as a (self)image of the Spanish empire, and (on occasion) of the Portuguese empire too.[26]

Fig. 5 : Francisco Bayeu, *The Fall of the Giants,* 1767-1768 c.,
oil on canvas, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid

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An. 1690. *Eco festiua de monti, che fan risonare per il mondo le glorie e i trionfi della gloriosa patrona S. Rosalia vergine palermitana: per le solennità annuali dell'*

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[26] Cardim, 2010, pp. 37-72. For a comparative study within the context of early modern Iberian art, see Franco Llopis and Rega Castro 2019, 459-89. See also Rega Castro and Franco Llopis 2021, 101-6.

inuentione di lei rinouate l'anno 1689 e per douuto riconoscimento consecrate nelle stampe all'illustrissimo Senato della felice città di Palermo. Palermo: Giuseppe la Barbera.

— [Lucas Antonio de Bedmar] 1680. *Descripcion verdadera y puntual de la real, magestuosa, y publica entrada, que hizo la reyna nuestra señora doña Maria Luisa de Borbon . . .* [s.l.]: [s.n.].

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CARLA SUTHREN*

Malika Bastin-Hammou, Giovanna Di Martino, Cécile Dudouyt, and Lucy C. M. M. Jackson (eds), *Translating Ancient Greek Drama in Early Modern Europe: Theory and Practice (15th-16th Centuries)*[1]

Abstract

This is a review of *Translating Ancient Greek Drama in Early Modern Europe: Theory and Practice (15th-16th Centuries)*, a collection of essays edited by Malika Bastin-Hammou, Giovanna Di Martino, Cécile Dudouyt, and Lucy C. M. M. Jackson. The collection importantly covers Aristophanes as well as Greek tragedy, and considers a range of translations into neo-Latin and vernacular languages. Its theoretical as well as practical focus is particularly helpful, and it should provide a significant resource for further work in this area.

KEYWORDS: Greek drama; translation; neo-Latin; tragedy; comedy; vernacular languages; Renaissance

This collection brings together thirteen chapters by scholars working on ancient Greek comedy and tragedy in the early modern period, along with a foreword by Cécile Dudouyt, introduction by Giovanna Di Martino and Cécile Dudouyt, and afterword by Stuart Gillespie. The first three chapters, constituting the first section ("Translating Comedy"), focus on Aristophanes, while the rest of the volume is devoted to Greek tragedy (mostly Sophocles and Euripides; the less popular Aeschylus is not a main feature of any individual chapter, but crops up here and there); this weighting is justified by the greater attention paid to the two younger Greek tragedians both in the Renaissance itself and by modern scholarship on Renaissance reception. The geographical spread is also rather heavily weighted towards Italy, with almost half of the contributions focusing on the Italian context. Again, this is undoubtedly in part a reflection of the precedence and significance of Italian scholarly and literary activity in this area, but since all three of the chapters

on comedy are Italy-oriented, the 'European' dimension does seem slightly lacking there. Within the wider remit of the tragedy section greater range has been possible, with contributions addressing the French, English, German, and Portuguese contexts.

The volume's promised attention to the "theory and practice" of translation is extremely fruitful, with contributors throughout thinking in interesting ways both with early modern translation theories (the choice of the plural is discussed in the introduction, 6) and with recent developments in the field of translation studies. Dudouyt's foreword opens the volume with an inspiring reading of the printer's emblem in Jean de Lapéruse's *Médée* (1556), supporting an interpretation of translation practice in this period being "as much about prolonging the life of the translated author as it is about giving a new one to the modern translator", in a characteristic "imitative-emulative relationship" (x). Negotiating the difficulties of defining "translation proper" and "not quite translation" or "adaptation" (3), Di Martino and Dudouyt set up in their introduction an alternative vocabulary of activities of "translation" and "translating", in which the former "usually features as the production of a full-length target text, often (but not necessarily) the work of a scholar", while the latter "represents the intertextual reworking" of one or more sources "in a dynamic and creative way", and is "typically, though not exclusively, by a playwright or poet" (4). This has the advantage of presenting "translation" and "translating" as more of a continuum of possible activities, underlined by the fact that (particularly in the realm of neo-Latin) the "scholar" and the "playwright or poet" might be one and the same.

As noted in the introduction, a significant contribution made by this collection is its inclusion of the section dedicated to Greek comedy, "a strand of translation that is often forgotten and overlooked, even though it is essential for gaining a full understanding of the literary, dramatic, and scholarly picture" (1). In her contribution to this section, Malika Bastin-Hammou draws attention to the fact that the Aldine press issued nine of Aristophanes' comedies in Greek in 1498, before Sophocles (1502), Euripides (1503), or Aeschylus (1518). Clearly, there was an interest in Aristophanes among the scholarly (though on the matter of priority it is also worth noting that an edition of four of Euripides' tragedies had been printed in 1495), and Latin translations opened up his readership beyond those proficient in Greek (38). But more than this: Aristophanes' *Plutus* was used as a text for teaching classical Greek to students, and it is in this didactic context that Micol Muttini places Lodovico da Poppi's interlinear Latin translation in the first chapter of the section.

Although Muttini is confident that "it was natural that the Greek playwright Aristophanes should figure prominently" in the "general rebirth of interest in all things classical" during the early modern period (19),

one notable feature of Aristophanes springs to mind which might make us surprised to find him cropping up as a sixteenth-century student text: namely, his obscenity, including scatological humour and explicit sexual and homosexual references. And indeed, Muttini shows that translators such as Leonardo Bruni (who produced the earliest translation of *Plutus* c.1440) and Coriolano Martirano (whose translation was printed in 1556) went so far as to cut entire passages from the play (25). However, it is striking that the principal translators discussed in the three chapters on Aristophanes do not, in fact, go in for such censorship, and seem surprisingly comfortable with this characteristic of Old Comedy. Muttini demonstrates that da Poppi translates literally, among other things, the word σκατοφάγον as *stercum comedentem* (26; "shit-eater"); Alciato, Bastin-Hammou tells us, "straightforwardly translates the scene of the farting mosquito" in *Clouds* (36); and the Rostini brothers translate the Greek ψωλός (*Knights* 964) with "senza capella" (Simone Beta helpfully explains that the "Italian word 'cappella' is a slang expression for indicating a hard penis with the prepuce drawn back", 61). This serves as an important reminder that in many respects Renaissance sensibilities might be more robust than those of some subsequent periods.

The three essays on comedy contain in microcosm the themes of the subsequent sections in the main body of the volume: Muttini's chapter focuses on translation into Latin, corresponding to 2.1 "Scholarly Networks: Translation Models and Functions"; Beta's concern with vernacular translation is reflected in 2.2: "Proto-National Dynamics and Vernacular Translating"; and Bastin-Hammou's attention to Alciato's Latin comedy *Philargyrus* anticipates Part 3, "Beyond Translation". Part 2.1 devotes considerable and deserved attention to Erasmus, whose translations of Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia in Aulis* were undeniably foundational to the theory and practice of translating Greek tragedy in the sixteenth century. Alexia Dedieu, in fact, situates them as a point of "origin'" using Antoine Berman's definition; not necessarily in the sense of being the *first*, but drawing "a *before* and an *after*" in the history of translation (76).

Underlining Dedieu's point, Erasmus also features in the contributions of Angelica Vedelago and Thomas Baier, focusing on English and German translators respectively. Dedieu restricts herself to examining what the translators she studies have to say about their own theory and practice in their prefatory materials, which are interesting in themselves and certainly understudied in Anglophone criticism, though it would be interesting to be given more of a flavour of the translations as well. This does, however, come across in Vedelago's chapter with respect to Thomas Watson's *Antigone* (1581), and in Baier's for the translations of Sophocles by Winsheim, Camerarius, and Naeogeorgus. Vedelago's consideration of the vertical and horizontal dimensions of what she calls "eristic" translation – competition

"with the source author", and "with other translators of the same text" (98) speaks interestingly to the vertical and horizontal axes examined by Dudouyt in the foreword. Baier's analysis, meanwhile, represents the primacy of the pedagogical motivations of his translators (analogous to Dudouyt's "transgenerational transmission", viii), apparently precluding eristic dimensions.

In 2.2, contributions from two of the editors take a wider view of translating Greek tragedy in the contexts of sixteenth-century Italy (Di Martino) and France (Dudouyt) respectively. These frame two chapters which focus on specific translations, Claudia Cuzzotti on Buonarotti's Italian *Hecuba*(s) – Buonarotti's multiple acts of translating the same source text offer an interesting case-study – and Maria Luísa Resende on Aires Vitória's Portuguese version of Sophocles' *Electra* (via Pérez de Oliva's Spanish *La venganza de Agamenón*). The only representative of the Portuguese (or Spanish) traditions in the volume, Resende explains that Vitória's "is the only translation of a Greek tragedy produced in Portugal during the 16th century"; interestingly, though, she attributes this not so much to lack of interest, as to "easy access to editions and translations" imported from elsewhere in Europe (175), an explanation which might apply to other national contexts too. The chapters by Di Martino and Dudouyt offer opportunities to begin to compare the Italian and French contexts, and both pay close attention to conceptions of "imitation" in poetic treatises and prefaces, and to the evolving terminology of translation (including "volgarizzamento" and "traduction" respectively). It is these chapters, too, in which consideration of "proto-national dynamics" becomes more explicit.

Turning to Part 3, the rewards of the theoretical groundwork that has been laid in thinking about "translation" and "translating" are evident, and not only in facilitating the inclusion of discussions of Grimald's *Archipropheta* (Lucy Jackson) and Anguillara's *Edippo* (Giulia Fiore), neither of which would be described as 'translations' in the strictest sense. In some ways Fiore's chapter on *hamartia* in translations and interpretations of Aristotle's *Poetics* and in *Oedipus* plays has more in common with earlier sections in its interests. Its analysis culminates in an interesting overview of the shifting relationship between the reception of the *Poetics* and the reception of Greek drama, as well as evolving dramatic practice (250-2). Jackson, meanwhile, combines the idea of "translating" with Carlson's notion of "haunting" – a metaphor that has been very fruitful in recent thinking about classical reception in this period (for instance, Pollard 2017). In doing so, she moves us beyond a model of reception which relies on "lexical equivalence, verbal echoes, paraphrase, or even explicit allusion" (209). Perhaps the most striking insight comes from Jackson's close attention to metre and character in the presentation of the messenger speech by a Syrian *ancilla* in Grimald, which aligns it with

the unusual "sung messenger speech in Euripides' *Orestes*, delivered by an enslaved Phrygian attendant" (218).

A further turn intriguingly suggests that Grimald might also have been familiar with Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, in the abridged version that was available in the first half of the sixteenth century. As Jackson acknowledges, *Orestes* was far better-known in the period, but she points out that Grimald could certainly have accessed the Aeschylean tragedies in Oxford and Cambridge, suggesting "the possibility of independent discovery and absorption of Aeschylean texts, along with his Euripides" (221). That sixteenth-century readers might be led from an interest in Euripidean texts to discover related works by Aeschylus appears to be a plausible trajectory; a cluster of editions of *Seven Against Thebes* in Latin and/or Greek between 1581 and 1585, for instance, comes after an increased concentration of interest in Euripides' *Phoenissae*, which deals with the same events. In 1990, Louise Schleiner argued for the possible influence of both Euripides' *Orestes* and Aeschylus' *Oresteia* on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*; Jackson's chapter points the way to a new and perhaps more nuanced re-evaluation of Orestes' hauntings in subsequent English drama. Importantly, she proposes an "anti-chronological mode of reception and translation" (211), by which neo-Latin drama, which was shaped in significant ways by Greek tragedy, in turn helped to shape subsequent receptions of Greek tragedy itself.

The "Coda" to the volume, on 'Dramaturgy and Translation', is co-authored by Di Martino and Estelle Baudou. Here, they offer a model for investigating the "inner dramaturgy" that translations of Greek drama inherently possess (257), and in the process offer a helpful approach for thinking about 'closet' drama, which moves beyond questions of actual or intended performance. Their methodology certainly provides insights into the Iphigenia plays in question (by Sébillet, Lumley, and Dolce), but it is perhaps the theoretical framing and the insistence on the "third language" of dramatic translation which may prove transferable – or, to use the authors' own term, "contaminating" (in a Derridean sense) – to further scholarship.

At this point I would like to respond briefly to a footnote in Di Martino and Baudou's chapter, which I quote in full: "Apparently Hans Sachs wrote a *Mordopffer der göttin Diane, mit der jungkfraw Ephigenie* ('Death sacrifice to the goddess Diana, with the virgin Iphigenia'), which was mounted in 1555 in Nuremberg, on which cf. Gamel 2015, 18, and Miola 2020, 15; we could not track down the production's script and thus the relationship between this play and the ancient source is unknown to us" (262n28). Their caution is warranted: Sachs' work of that title is not, in fact, one of his tragedies, of which he wrote fifty-eight, including a number on themes from classical mythology (see Skrine 1995, 83-104). Instead, it is a song, which can be found in Adelbert von Keller's edition of Sachs' works, where it is labelled "Historia",

and dated 2nd November 1555 (von Keller, 72-4).[2] Sachs' source, as he states in the first line, is Johann Herolt (specifically his 1554 *Hendenweldt*, according to Karl Breul, 1899, lviii). I believe this is worth mentioning here, since not only does it clear up the issue of the phantom German Iphigenia play, but it also represents an excellent illustration of one of the challenges of pan-European translation history, and the need to build up accurate databases of early modern translations, as articulated by Stuart Gillespie in his "Afterword" to the volume.

As Gillespie observes, while on the one hand we might have a transnational humanist culture of scholarship operating in the *lingua franca* of neo-Latin, vernacular translation is tied to particular cultural, social, and regional contexts. Due to current "[d]isciplinary boundaries and the structures of scholarly knowledge" (294) – not aided by the decline in language learning provision in both schools and universities in the UK[3] – scholars tend to have specialisms which rarely cross a significant number of national boundaries. The present review is a case in point: inevitably, I have responded to some chapters in the volume in greater depth than others, dictated in part by my particular areas of knowledge. One of the great advantages of this collection is that it brings together scholarship rooted in several European traditions of translating, offering, for an Anglophone reader, entry points into much early modern material which remains untranslated or inaccessible. Gillespie, indeed, suggests that such edited collections might be the way forward in this area, and there is much to be said for this. One thing that I find striking about this volume is that the sections contributed by the editors themselves speak particularly strongly to each other, especially in terms of their theoretical engagement. Perhaps another possibility for the area of pan-European translation history could be collaborative authorship, which might foreground the strength of such shared approaches, while preserving the benefits of multiple perspectives and areas of expertise. In any case, this volume should certainly be an important resource for future work in this area.

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[2] See further Linton 2008, esp. 44 and 55n8.
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Francesca Coppola*

Eduardo Pérez Rasilla (ed.), *El Teatro Español de Madrid. La Historia (1583-2023)*[1]

Abstract

The thirteen chapters of the anthology *El Teatro Español de Madrid. La historia (1583-2023)*, edited by Eduardo Pérez Rasilla (2023), analyse the history of this, the earliest existing European theatre. The contributors, each one a specialist in their field, reconstruct the various phases, from the first corrales de comedias to the present day, which have proved to be the key moments in the development of this historic establishment and have often changed it permanently. The volume is intended to be an easy-to-read chronological guide for a wide readership and includes - often for the first time – anecdotes, exploits and even accidents which occurred during the existence of the centuries-old theatre. But it also provides a rigorous analysis of a place where the greatest Spanish playwrights have had their work performed, from Lope de Vega to Benito Pérez Galdós to Alfonso Sastre.

Keywords: Teatro Español; Madrid; Siglo de Oro, corral; coliseo

In a celebrated quotation Orson Welles affirmed that "theatre resists as a divine anachronism". His words, *en abyme*, seem perfectly in line with the history of Madrid's Teatro Español, founded in 1583. The events revolving around this place, a symbol of Spanish literature and culture from the moment of its inauguration to the present day, are at the centre of the 2023 anthology of essays *El Teatro Español de Madrid. La historia (1583-2023)*, edited by Eduardo Pérez-Rasilla. The thirteen chapters of the volume are each the work of a scholar specializing in the period being discussed and present a surprising variety of anecdotes, exploits and even accidents which have proved to be key moments in the development of this historic establishment. The volume is intended as an easy-to-read chronological guide to this prestigious place, the oldest theatre of its kind in Europe. It also provides, for the first time, a complete reconstruction of all the events connected to the centuries-long existence of the Teatro Español, an investigation which depends upon meticulous and painstaking research on the place itself, where the works of

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the greatest playwrights have been performed, from those of the *Siglo de Oro* to those of today.

The Introduction, "La forja de una pasión" (The forging of a passion), consists of a dialogue between the editor, Rasilla, and the artistic director of the Español, Natalía Menéndez. They explain the reasons behind the book's conception: in reality, notwithstanding the large number of studies on the subject of the history of the Theatre, none of these, however important they may be, offers a vision of the "enorme montaña . . . de sustratos . . . creada por las personas" (9; huge mountain . . . of . . . substrata . . . created by people) that is concealed behind this emblematic location. Neither do these studies enjoy very much distribution. In other words, these specialist studies add to their necessary partiality the fact that they are directed specifically to a relatively small number of readers in the academic world. In this way the common reader is deprived of the "sensación de vértigo" (ibid., sense of vertigo) that is caused by information on the contextual background of the Español. Published after four years research, the aim of the volume is to "dar a conocer esta maravilla, una joya que estaba escondida, como en una pirámide" (10; allow people to get to know this marvel, a gem which seems to have been hidden within a pyramid).

The origins and the phases that preceded the foundation of the Teatro Español are outlined in the first chapter, "El Corral de comedias del Príncipe" (The Prince's Theatre) by Francisco Sáez Raposo. This is a detailed excursus illustrating the reasons behind the so-called professionalisation of Spanish theatre starting from the economic revolution which began in 1492 with the discovery and the riches of the new world. The effects of this unprecedented reality swiftly showed themselves in the cultural context of the time and Raposo explains how modern theatre is generated by this new-found wealth and becomes a mass phenomenon. Indeed between 1520 and 1565 actors, playwrights, musicians and the swarming network of agents gravitating around them gradually managed to earn their living from their work. Besides this, the writer pauses remind us that in the beginning places designated as locations for "teatro profesional" (24; professional theatre) such as public theatres or *corrales* used to be the property of religious brotherhoods engaged in good works such as healing the sick. They charged the theatrical companies large sums of money for the rental of such spaces and this practice, a fully-blown "modelo de explotación" (ibid.; exploitation pattern) was exported from Madrid to other cities in Spain. It is in this climate of fervent change, and, more precisely, on the 19th February, 1582, as witnessed by the Acquisition Deed kept in the Archivo Regional de la Comunidad de Madrid, that the Corral del Principe (Prince's Theatre) comes into being, an "espacio teatral que de manera estable más tiempo ha estado en uso de manera ininterrumpida en España" (28; a theatrical space which was in

continuous and uninterrupted use for the longest time in Spain). After its demolition in 1744 it was rebuilt on the same site by the Italian architect Juan Bautista Sachetti and inaugurated the following year as the Coliseo del Principe. In 1849 it was assigned to the municipal administration by royal decree with the name by which it is still known today: Teatro Español.

The next chapter, "De corral a coliseo: el Teatro del Príncipe en el siglo XVII" (From *corral* to *coliseo*: the Prince's Theatre in the seventeenth century), by Fernando Doménech, opens with the story of a momentous dynastic change at the end of the seventeenth century which sees the decline of the House of Habsburg in favour of the Bourbons. With the arrival of the new royal family a new idea of theatre is preferred, one characterised by greater spectacularity, with multiple stages and astounding scenographic and technical artifice: a theatre, "como expresión del fasto cortesano que se prodigaba en las cortes de toda Europa" (56; as an expression of the lavish pomp and splendour to be observed in all the courts of Europe). Besides this, thanks to the two marriages contracted by Philip V – first with Maria Luisa of Savoy and then with Isabella Farnese – Philip's French taste was enhanced by that of Italy. It was indeed the king's second wife who promoted Italian opera and its spectacular performances, which at the time were triumphing all over the continent. The magnitude of the resulting theatrical innovations signified that the original playhouses found themselves without either the means or the space to cope with them, and had necessarily to be transformed into *coliseos* or "teatros a la italiana ajustados al gusto moderno" (Italian style theatres adapted to suit modern taste). As for the works which were staged, in particular at the Teatro del Principe, the most frequently performed were without doubt those by Calderón de la Barca, followed by Agustín Moreto and Rojas Zorilla, signifying an evident predilection for plays from the *Siglo de Oro*. Another characteristic is the public attention given to authors unappreciated today, such as Matos Fragoso, Cubillo de Aragón, Bances Candamo, with a consequent relegation to the margins of Lope de Vega and Tirso de Molina. Doménech helpfully points out and emphasises an aspect of the century that comes as a surprise: the ease with which six *autoras de comedias* (women playwrights) managed successfully to establish themselves: Sabina Pascual, Petronila Jibaja, María Hidalgo, Águeda de la Calle, María Ladvenant. Among these Hidalgo deserves a special mention for the prolonged presence of her works on the stage (from the season of 1754-1755 to that of 1770-1771) and Ladvenant for also distinguishing herself as one of the most important Spanish actresses.

The third chapter of the book is dedicated to "El Teatro Español y sus actores: hacia un Teatro Nacional (1800-1850)" (The Teatro Español and its actors: towards a national theatre) by Guadalupe Soria Tomás. In this period the Junta de Dirección de Teatros (theatre management committee) was

founded and initiated a process of reform in all the public theatres of Madrid. The reform was conducted following Enlightenment ideology and sustained by intellectuals such as Jovellanos, Moratín and Francisco Plano. In their opinion the widespread corruption typical of the theatrical milieu prevented its didactic function, and the theatre had always been considered the "termómetro de la cultura nacional" (81; thermometer of national culture). The farfetched plots and the unrefined taste of the audience accompanied by mediocre actors who had little desire to improve their art through the exercise of their profession triggered the reaction of a plan for innovation; this, between highs and lows, aimed to replace the Baroque aesthetic code with Enlightenment verisimilitude. The same design intended that young actors should study "Declamación teatral" (84; theatrical declamation) – two actors for each *coliseo* in the area – so that they could receive an adequate training in dramatic art based on scientific principles, with a salary of 6000 *reali* a year subsidised by the government. At the end of the 1840s, in the wake of these innovations, the Teatro del Principe was promoted to the status of Teatro Nacional: that is to say it was regarded as an "escuela de ejercicio cómico" (117; school of comedic practice), a model to emulate, focussed upon training actors through the study of the "buenas máximas del arte dramático" (118; the true precepts of dramatic art), such as prosody, mime, decoration and costume.

The history of the Teatro Español is continued through the second half of the nineteenth century in Ana Isabel Ballesteros Dorado's essay "El Teatro Español (1851-1900): el disputado príncipe de los ingenios nacionales" (The Teatro Español 1851-1900: disputed prince of national talent). A particularly interesting part of the chapter is that dealing with the decree of the 28th July 1852, signed by Queen Isabella II, which establishes a new regulation of the times and modes of the theatrical seasons. In the first place it rules that the season must begin on September 1st and end on 30th June, performances are banned on 1st November, Fridays in Lent and during Easter week, only one Italian opera house is permitted in any town, foreign companies are only allowed to perform for three months a year and for the first time a prize is to be awarded for the best dramatic work staged. Among the most successful works of this period was the exceptional *El tanto por ciento* by López de Ayala which was repeated uninterruptedly for thirty-eight nights on the stage of the Teatro Español where at the time repeat performances only lasted four or five nights at the most. Among the interpreters, the brilliant Teodora Lamadrid managed to enthral the public so greatly that in all the *tertulias* and *paseos* she was the main subject of conversation, so predominant that even the birth of the Queen's second daughter took second place. What is more, the performance was permitted a three-week extension in the Madrid theatre before its tour in the provinces before it returned once more to the

Español on the 17th May 1862 in a special edition translated into Italian by the stage manager Giuseppe Pietriboni.

The first three decades of the twentieth century are the subject of Chapter 5, "Entre bambalinas: los entresijos del Teatro Español de 1900 a 1936" (Behind the scenes: the inner workings of the Teatro Español from 1900 to 1936) by Ana Alma M. Garcia. The author's research is based on a detailed consultation of primary sources including contemporary periodicals, journals and correspondence with the intention of reconstructing what was happening backstage at the Theatre: The chapter is divided into four sections, each one concerning a different management. The first eight years, 1900-1908, were under the aegis of the impresario Fernando Díaz de Montoya and his wife María Guerrero, the second, (1908-1918), was captained by Enrique Diego Madrazo, the third (1919-1931), saw Ricardo Calvo in command and finally the fourth (1931-1936) which coincided with the birth of the Second Republic and lasted until the outbreak of the Civil War. Ana Alma Garcia emphasises the almost daily attention the newspapers paid to any theatrical happening: they did not limit themselves to announcing the various stagings of the shows but gave column space to their designers and promotors. This is demonstrated by quotations from *El Heraldo de Madrid*, *Estampas de Madrid Teatral*, *Crónica Teatral*, *El Liberal*, *La Correspondencia de España*. to cite only a few among the many examples given. The chapter concludes with a chronogram clearly illustrating the succession of artistic directors and leading actors of the Español during the thirty years examined.

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1936 remains a moment of decided interruption but at the same time of continuity for the Teatro and this is the subject of Chapter 6, "El Teatro Español durante la guerra civil, y hasta 1950" (The Teatro Español during the Civil War and until 1950) by Victor Garcia Ruiz. The war had been going on for a year when the Consejo Central del Teatro (Central Council for the Theatre) was established, a body that was prevalently communist in character, consisting of thirteen members. Among these the most prestigious was the vice-president and author Maria Teresa León, who had just returned from the USSR with her husband Rafael Alberti. The new institution took over complete control of the theatrical repertoire which showed its first results right from the beginning with the staging of *Numancia*, produced by Alberti himself (he too was a member of the Council): This play was a revisiting of Cervantian tragedy inspired by the ideas of "de Arte y Propaganda" (220) admired in Russia. Because of the bombings of Madrid, the Español had to keep closing down and in the first six months of the war – between the 18th July 1936 and the 20th February 1937 – it was only open for thirteen days. Continuing with this line of argument Garcia Ruiz explores the second stage of the Theatre's activity during the conflict as he considers the founding of the Grupo García Lorca. This company, directed by

Manuel González, besides staging the classics of the *Siglos de Oro* and plays by Galdós (*Electra*, *Gerona*) put on the contemporary *Bodas de sangre* by Lorca. The chapter ends with a long and detailed discussion of the theatrical seasons from the end of the war onwards (1939-1950).

"El Teatro Español desde los años 50 hasta la transición política" (The Teatro Español from the Fifties to political transition") is the title of the seventh chapter by Berta Muñoz Cáliz and is focussed on the second half of the twentieth century until the Transition to democracy. The author bases her essay on the existence of two document collections which are particularly interesting and contain information about the intense "actividad escénica" (229; theatrical activity) of the Español. The first of these, kept in the Centro de Documentación Teatral (CDT) created in 1971, bears witness to the way in which Francoism took care to create a legacy that told, by way of a decidedly revisionist reading, the story of what had been staged during the years of the dictatorship. At the same time, another large collection, that in the Archivo General de la Administración (AGA), shows a very different reality: that is to say the many expedients adopted to censure anything that was not in line with the regime, to subjugate art in all its forms and manifestations and in particular to transform a place like the Español into the "buque insignia de su política teatral" (230; the flagship of its theatrical policy). The stages that the history of the theatre goes through during this particular phase are closely linked to those of the same dictatorship, as are the changes of direction and programming that the place in a certain sense underwent. For this reason, Muñoz Cáliz structures her essay according to the same vicissitudes which, in the following order, centred around the nominations of Cayetano Luca de Tena (1952), José Tamayo (1954-1962), again de Tena (1962-1964), the directorial triumvirate of Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, Francisco García Pavón and José López Rubio (1964-1965), Adolfo Marsillach (1965-1966), Miguel Narros (1966-1970), and Alberto González Vergel (1970-1974).

With the decline of Francoism and the transition to democracy the Teatro Español undergoes an epoch-making change writes José Ramón Fernández in Chapter Eight "Vida desde las cenizas (1979-2022)" (Life from the ashes 1979-2022). With the celebration, in 1979, of the elections (the first since 1931 to signal the beginning of a brief Second Republic) the cultural face of Spain is destined to change significantly. In a very short time the patrons of the theatre were the State and the Madrid City Council, while the artistic directorship was given to José Luis Alonso. He inaugurated the 1980-81 season with *Macbeth* by Miguel Narros. The following year José Luis Gómez took Alonso's place and the season went down in history with the huge success of *Las bicicletas son para el verano* (*Bicycles Are for the Summer*), which had received the prestigious Lope de Vega award in 1977. The subsequent seasons have a certain continuity with the first to follow the

end of the regime: great significance is given both to the Spanish classics and classics in general, without forgetting to make room for contemporary playwrights., For example, 1983 saw the stagings of Duque de Rivas' *Don Álvaro o la fuerza del sino* directed by Francisco Nieva, Clifford Williams' *Richard III* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (*La Tempestad*) in Terenci Moix' translation, in 1984 Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* directed by José Carlos Plaza was put on, and 1986 Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with José Pedro Carrión's brilliant interpretation of Puck. By the time the season of 2005-2006 arrived the Español's second auditorium was inaugurated and would eventually bear the name of Margarita Xirgu, the celebrated actor and director during the 1930s. The next season which opened on the 11th September saw the indispensable Alfonso Sastre, who at the Español was already well known for his celebrated *Escuadra hacia la muerte* (*Death Squad*). Some of the more significant works to mention, among many, are the adaptations of great literature for the stage such as the 2013-2014 season's show, Alessandro Baricco's *Novecento*, in the version by Raúl Torres, a long monologue interpreted by Miuel Rellán, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* reworked by Carme Portaceli with the collaboration of Michael de Cock and Anna M. Ricart, presented in 2019 and Isabel Allende's *La casa de los espíritus*, an important production also adapted by Portaceli and Ricart and performed at the Español in April and May 2021.

    The fact that the Teatro Español has been in existence for over four hundred years means that it is a living witness to the changes in architectural style during this time. What is more, although the spectators may perceive it as a unified space, it has always been in a state of evolution as Carlos Villareal Colunga explains so well in Chapter Nine "La huella del Español en la ciudad" (The Español's traces in the city). The stage where Calderón's *La vida es sueño* was performed is certainly not the same one where the *Electra* by Benito Pérez Galdós was staged and to this could be added the many other examples cited by the author. The great variety of styles and forms that have one after another defined the theatre's actual appearance – from the very first *corral de comedias* to the construction of the Margarita Xirgu auditorium – have made it into a "multiplicidad de edificios, la mayoría ya inexistentes, más que un edificio perpetuo" (338; multiplicity of buildings, the majority of which no longer exist, more than simply one permanent building). Colunga follows and reveals the many embodiments of the Teatro Español, from its origins (1583) to the construction of an eighteenth-century "coliseo a la italiana" (345; Italianate coliseum). He does not even overlook the introduction of the coffeehouse at the end of the century on the whim of the architect Juan de Villanueva, the reforms requested by the new bourgeois class, one of which was the royal box designed by Antonio López Aguado in 1816, or the safety measures for the building introduced by Pablo Aranda at

the beginning of the twentieth century, with the addition of extra space. In conclusion, the emphasis is upon how significant the architectural presence of the Teatro is today and how this presence extends beyond the 'original' building to include its surroundings which become a sort of network of collaborative entities. This is indeed the case of Las Naves del Español: theatre halls (numbers 10, 11 and 12) which were inaugurated from 2007 onwards inside the Matadero. This building was formerly a slaughterhouse built at the beginning of the twentieth century which was salvaged and has now become an important cultural centre. A gamble worth winning, linking the artistic heritage to the social redemption of an otherwise depressed area.

The Teatro Español has fallen victim to three fires during its long existence and in Chapter Ten "Tres incendios en el teatro" (Three fires in the theatre) Antonio Castro Jiménez recounts their history. The first one occurred on the 11th July 1802 after a performance of *El abate de l'Ep*ée. No-one in the public was hurt but the theatre was badly damaged and reconstruction work lasted four years. The origin of the fire was judged by many not to have been an accident but to have had something to do with a restoration project suggested by the Junta de Reforma (established two years previously), that in the end wasted 6000 *reali*. The determination to destroy the documents concerning this administration has been interpreted by the historian Emilio Cotarelo y Mori as being the root cause of the fire. More than a century later, on the 19th October 1975, during a rehearsal of the play *7000 gallinas y un camello* by Jesús Campos García another fire – also considered to be deliberate – destroyed the stage. It took the firemen almost four hours to get the better of the flames and they managed to save part of the structure. To avoid damage caused by water and by theft the artistic and documentary treasures in the building were temporarily transferred to the nearby Teatro de la Comedia. Finally, Jiménez reminds the reader of the much more recent third fire of the 14th July 1991 which stopped theatrical activities for six months. Various hypotheses were suggested for the cause of the accident such as negligence or simply a short circuit but these were never confirmed. The investigation which went on for two years was closed for lack of evidence.

The area surrounding the Teatro Español, whose streets and squares are often mentioned in literary anecdotes, is the subject of Chapter 11 "Un paseo histórico-anecdótico por los alrededores del Teatro Español" (A historical and anecdotal stroll in the vicinity of the Teatro Español) by Verónica Ripoll León. The stroll starts, of course, from the *calle del Principe* where the theatre is situated today, in the well-known *barrio de las Letras*. Nobody knows exactly which prince the name of the street is referring to, although some scholars believe he was Muley Xeque better known as Felipe de África, also called Príncipe Negro. The historian Gonzalo de Céspedes is of a different opinion – he thinks the name derives from the celebrations at the time for

the birth of Philip IV. Besides the *corrales* (the most famous one was the Pacheca) and the theatres, coffeehouses and *tertulias* (social circles) grew in importance and flourished in this area of the city. One of these was indeed the *café del Principe* which was active from 1807 to 1849 and was a meeting place for such celebrated writers as Moratín, Larra, Zorilla and Espronceda. Another renowned *café* was the *Gato Negro* where Benavente, Valle Inclán, Jiménez and Machado used to meet. At number 7 in the same street there is the C*uevas de Sésamo*, a coffeehouse which was opened in the upper part in1950. The following year to people's great surprise the access to an underground cavern, uninhabited for about a century was discovered on the ground floor. This became the centre for Madrid's "bohemians" (398) during Franco's dictatorship and it was frequented by such great names as Cocteau, Hemingway, Ava Gardner and Juliette Gréco. Needless to say, such were the stories written about the area around the *calle del Principe* that legends began to develop – such as the one about the beautiful Prudencia Grilo – and statues were erected like the one of Lorca in the centrally located Plaza Santa Ana. Ripoli León's fascinating account makes sense of the hints and anecdotes about the other streets and squares round about: calle de Las Huertas, de San Sebastián, de La Cruz, de Álvarez Gato, Núñez de Arce, Plaza del Ángel and shows how and when they were crowded with "toda clase de artistas, pensadores, políticos y figuras claves . . . desde que Madrid era una villa hasta la actualidad" (416; every kind of artist, thinkers, politicians and key figures . . . since the time when Madrid was only a small town until the present day).

The first nights at the Teatro Español during the course of four centuries of performances that have filled their seats to capacity have often become occasions of public tension. Many of these moments are examined by Eduardo Pérez Rasilla in Chapter 12, entitled "De la solemnidad teatral al crimen del día: reacciones de la crítica ante los estrenos del Español" (From theatrical solemnity to crime of the day: reactions of the critics to the Español's first nights). Among the shows that have aroused admiration, enthusiasm, have confirmed aesthetic tendencies or, on the contrary, caused controversy, some are distinguished by the attention with which theatre critics and consequently the press submitted reviews and hatchet jobs but also meticulous analyses. A complete list of these articles would fill several volumes – however Rasilla's essay manages to give an idea of how things were when theatrical life was welcomed with fervour, and was understood as an essential element of society. Among the plays that attracted the greatest attention from contemporary newspapers was *Saúl* by Gertrudis G*ómez* de Avellaneda, first performed on 20th October 1849. This was an ambitious production that was in fact also an attempt to model itself on French theatre and to become a benchmark for the Madrid stage. It was highly praised, especially by the periodical *La Esperanza* on 3rd November 1849, which commented "La representación de *Saúl* ha

sido una verdadera solemnidad teatral" (420; the production of *Saúl* was an example of true theatrical solemnity). The Queen herself came to the first night and at the moment of her leave-taking doves were released and people threw wreaths of flowers. However, for their effect upon the political and intellectual contexts Galdós's *Electra* (30th January 1901) and Rafael Alberti's *Fermín Galán* (1st June 1931) proved to be not less significant.

Chapter 13 by Noella Burgaleta Areces "De lo efímero que permanece, recuerdos del Teatro Español" (On the permanently ephemeral: memories of the Teatro Español). As the author informs us, unfortunately, the theatre archives have failed to keep the greater part of the posters advertising productions or theatre tickets of the time. But there is another category of documents that help to reconstruct with sufficient accuracy a series of facts about any of the typical days in past centuries spent at the Español. Thanks to the book *Productos y Gastos* (*Incomes and Expenses*) it is possible to learn how much any production earned. For example, during the season of 1731-32 the run of *La vida es sueño* put on by Juana Orozco's company earned 578 *reali*: a pitiful sum when compared to the 1571 *reali* taken by Ignaçio Zerquera and his company for the staging of the same play in 1737. Another source consulted by the author, *Los papeles de Barbieri*, reveals that the cost of an entry ticket varied: only 8 *reali* for a simple entry against about 37 for a reserved seat. The information about the actors of this same company and their pay-scales is also very interesting: in 1732 Antonia Mejía was paid 6 *reali* for a day's acting, Luis Palencia only got 2 *reali* for a day whereas his wife Maria Orozco got 3. It is even recorded that in December 1731 Antonia Mejía received 62 *reali* as assistance after she had "malparido" (460), that is she had suffered a miscarriage. Burgaleta's journey through time means she is also able to examine the reinterpretations of Lope de Vega's plays: from *Peribáñez y el comendador de Ocaña* reproposed by Montalbán in 1720 (*La mujer de Peribáñez*) with the worst takings of the century to *La dama boba* by María Guerrero during the first half of the twentieth century, right up to the version of *Fuenteovejuna* by Valle Inclán and Manuel Bueno in 1903, and the one by Lorca in 1935.

In conclusion, the volume, which is intended as a contribution to the diffusion of the history of the Teatro Español, does indeed evince its international dimension. On the one hand, it outlines the suggestive and complex trajectory of an institution which is deeply rooted in Spanish culture; on the other, it represents the most up-to-date testimonial on this subject and is an obligatory starting point, for anyone who wishes to approach the study of the history of Spanish theatre and literature.

Translation by Susan Payne

Roberta Mullini*

Francesco Marroni. *George Bernard Shaw. Commediografo e saltimbanco*[1]

Abstract

This review summarises and comments on Francesco Marroni's volume *George Bernard Shaw. Commediografo e saltimbanco* (2023), analysing it chapter by chapter on the basis of the author's vast knowledge of the Irish dramatist and thinker, especially of the multiple writings accompanying his major works, which constitute a rarely studied territory. In the book, Marroni regards his object with a disenchanted gaze, which allows him to speak of G.B.S. objectively, that is, also underlining Shaw's flaws and errors, especially those concerning the dramatist's political choices. In the end, Marroni stresses the impossibility to define G.B.S. with just one epithet, given the multi-faceted personality of an author who lived so long, changing his mind on various occasions, but always striving to convince his readers and audience of the righteousness of his own positions.

KEYWORDS: George Bernard Shaw; John Bunyan; Thomas Carlyle; Charles Dickens; Henrik Ibsen; Max Nordau; John Osborne

Near the end of the interview published in this journal, which Francesco Marroni gave to Enrico Reggiani about the monumental volume *Teatro di George Bernard Shaw* he edited in 2022, the interviewer hints at Marroni's "Shavian monography, which is currently being printed" (Marroni and Reggiani 2023, 216): less than a year after the nearly complete anthology of Shaw's plays, this "monography" was published (September 2023). What is peculiar in *George Bernard Shaw. Commediografo e saltimbanco* (George Bernard Shaw: Playwright and Mountebank)[2] is that, in spite of its subtitle, Shavian plays, although being of course mentioned (how could one speak and write about George Bernard Shaw without quoting his most famous and problematic plays?), remain in the background of an all-round portrait of the Irish author, seen in all his facets as a theatre and music critic, a novelist (albeit abortive), a painting expert, a polemicist, "the prophet and the puritan" (Palmer 1915, 80), the preacher and the playwright . . .

[1] Lanciano: Carabba, 2023. ISBN 9788863447156, pp. 215

[2] All translations from Italian are mine.

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In his life-long research activity on the Victorian Age, during which he has devoted articles, volumes, and translations to many Victorian authors, Marroni had already faced the 'enigma' G.B.S. in some contributions which he has now enlarged and put together with fresh material,[3] thus producing a brilliant work able to offer the reader a guide towards understanding the production (and the multi-faceted attitudes) of the Irish author. What strikes the reader is not only the vastity of Marroni's reading distilled in his book, but also his capacity to present and discuss some of Shaw's debatable and questionable stances (for example Shaw's sympathy towards Nazism and Fascism), well distancing himself from Shavian choices. When, in the "Epistle Dedicatory" to *Man and Superman* Shaw connects John Bunyan to Nietzsche, the author writes that "mi pare una forzatura l'associazione del nome di Bunyan con quello di Nietzsche" (104; to me the association of Bunyan's name to Nietzsche's seems like a forcing); soon afterwards he accuses Shaw of "una palese distorsione interpretativa" (a clear interpretative distortion), and later of "una rilettura tendenziosa del *Pilgrim's Progress*" (106; a biased reinterpretation of *Pilgrim's Progress*). These short quotes suffice to show Marroni's disenchanted reading of his subject, which he admires and discusses via many aspects of Shavian thought and works, without ever being blinded by the fascination of the playwright's prose.

The volume develops along six chapters (plus a Conclusion), which focus on Shaw's literary and philosophical sympathies, from his Fabian engagements that also led him to get to know Henrik Ibsen's drama and from which both *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1891) and his own deeper and deeper involvement in theatre and drama derived (Chapter 1, "L'uomo di genio, la 'sanità' dell'arte e la modernità: Shaw contro Nordau"; The man of genius, the 'sanity' of art and modernity: Shaw against Nordau, 9-60).

Chapter 2, "Genealogie vittoriane: Dickens, Carlyle e l'invenzione del Superuomo" (Victorian genealogies: Dickens, Carlyle and the invention of the Superman, 61-87), is devoted to Shaw's self-education as a prose writer, based mainly on Charles Dickens's novels and social engagement, although the future playwright was well aware of the fact that the Victorian novelist had not been able "superare il limite di una totale assenza di progettualità riformistica" (71; to overcome the limit of a complete lack of reformistic planning), as Marroni notes. In the same chapter Marroni studies Thomas Carlyle's influence on Shaw, especially because of Carlyle's 'prophetic'

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[3] Shaw coined the acronym G.B.S. in the "Preface" to *Three Plays for Puritans* to distinguish between himself as "the journalist" and "Bernard Shaw, the author" (1967a, 25). This is also the preface in which Shaw clearly defines himself as a "mountebank", or rather, a "natural-born mountebank" (23), and where he overtly counterposes his drama to Shakespeare's, in the famous/notorious section "Better than Shakespeare" (29-39).

writing against social degradation and his pre-socialist attitudes concerning labourers' industrial exploitation, which – for the playwright – anticipated Fabianism (75). But Carlyle is also examined as a powerful inspiration for Shaw's concept of the Superman: deriving the idea of an "aristocracy of talent" from Carlyle's *Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841), Shaw conceived his Superman as "un essere di raro ingegno che è sempre in anticipo sui tempi" (Marroni 2023, 76; a figure with a rare ingenuity who is always ahead of their time), a manifestation of the Life Force ready to appear in history in order to change things towards positive transformations (Saint Joan, in the homonymous play, is an example of the Life Force, although rejected by her own milieu, and by future generations as well, as the "Epilogue" to the play shows).

The essential relationship between the Irish playwright and John Bunyan, whom Shaw considers better than Shakespeare so as to write in 1896: "All that you miss in Shakespeare you find in Bunyan" (qtd 96), is examined in Chapter 3, "Shaw, John Bunyan and the vision of the 'just men made perfect" (89-118; Shaw, John Bunyan e la visione dei 'just men made perfect'). Marroni states that

nella sua carriera di commediografo e critico, Shaw, con straodinaria regolarità, userà il dualismo tra Shakespeare e Bunyan come una sorta di messinscena delle sue oscillazioni tra il relativismo filosofico e morale del primo e le certezze religiose del secondo. (96)

[in his career as a playwright and critic, with an extraordinary regularity Shaw uses the opposition of Shakespeare to Bunyan as a sort of staging of his own fluctuations between the former's philosophical and moral relativism, and the latter's religious certainties.]

Chapter 4 deals with Shaw's interpretation and celebration of Rembrandt's realistic painting, while Chapter 5 develops the analysis of the novel *An Unsocial Socialist* (written in 1883, rejected by many publishers and finally serialized in 1884 in the journal *To-Day: Monthly Magazine of Scientific Socialism*; Shaw 1887), containing the extolment of photography when compared to painting because of the former's "objectivity" (for these two chapters see below).

The last chapter ("La demolizione shaviana dei modelli: intorno a una lettera di Orwell", 173-96; the Shavian demolition of models: about a letter by Orwell) deals with the implications of a letter written by George Orwell in 1933 with "un unico obiettivo: distruggere l'immagine di George Bernard Shaw" (173; an only purpose: to destroy the image of George Bernard Shaw). It is a chapter that revisits Shaw's dislike for Shakespeare and, especially, the former's construction of Ibsen as a socialist and anti-idealistic writer. All

this despite young Orwell's appreciation of the Irish dramatist, of that Shaw who, to him, had been a strong source of inspiration. In this way, Orwell's iconoclasm is paralleled to Shaw's. This conclusive chapter also collects some twentieth-century negative reactions to Shaw's drama and thought as well, in particular John Osborne's, who perhaps did not like his own plays to be considered parallel to Shaw's "comedy of ideas" (202-3).

In the "Introduzione" (Introduction) to his volume, Marroni underlines Shaw's performing nature, not only when the dramatist called himself "a natural mountebank", but also every time he spoke in public or wrote something provocative and paradoxical:

> Per Shaw la messinscena della provocazione era il modo migliore per stimolare il pensiero degli spettatori. Per ottenere gli effetti desiderati spesso ricorreva all'arte del paradosso e dell'esagerazione che, a seconda dei casi, trasformava in interminabili sermoni di cui soltanto lui stesso conosceva i tortuosi itinerari ideologici. (6)

> [For Shaw the staging of provocation was the best way to arouse an audience's thought. In order to obtain the desired effects, he often resorted to the art of paradox and to exaggeration that, depending on the case, he transformed into endless sermons whose ideological meanderings were known only to him.]

Marroni's volume succeeds in highlighting Shaw's formation through a well-acted performance which progressively arose from a variety of intertextual influences he inherited in the first half of his life from his Victorian contemporaries, and which were ready to be engrafted on, and embedded in, the changing cultural situations he found himself in later. His polemical stances as a Fabian orator, or as a writer of "plays of ideas" (and especially of the long prefaces to them), were the hallmarks of a career that Marroni tries to explore by visiting the "extraordinary territories" (7) many Shavian critics have overlooked. Mainly to the study of these nearly unexplored Shavian production Marroni devotes his present research.

It is not a coincidence that the volume starts with a chapter devoted to Shaw's attack to Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1892, but translated into English in 1895 and reprinted three years later: Nordau 1898), which its author dedicates to Cesare Lombroso, calling him "Dear and honoured Master" and writing that

> [t]he notion of degeneracy . . . developed with so much genius by yourself, has in your hands already shown itself extremely fertile in the most direct directions . . . But there is a vast and important domain into which neither you nor your disciples have hitherto borne the torch of your method – the domain of art and literature. Degenerates are not always criminals, prostitutes, anarchists, and pronounced lunatics; they are often authors and artists. (Nordau 1898, vi)

Nordau's vision of contemporary art and artists as "degenerate" was rebutted harshly by Shaw in a long and articulated "letter to the editor" for the journal *Liberty* published in July 1895 and later, but only in 1908, as a separate publication. The title itself – *The Sanity of Art* – is a total reversal of Nordau's position. In the long preface added to the text published in 1895, Shaw explains how it happened that the editor of *Liberty* had asked him to write about Nordau's work and also explains his approval of the new edition of his own text because he recognizes that "it is still readable and likely to be helpful to those who are confused by the eternal strife between the artist-philosophers and the Philistines" (Shaw 1908, 13-14). In the latter category are included both Nordau and his supporters, while the former includes, among others, such artists as Henrik Ibsen, Richard Wagner, and the Impressionist painters (to whom Shaw devotes specific sections of his pamphlet, defending all of them from Nordau's accusations). In his fight against conventionalism Shaw, who by 1895 had already composed the "unpleasant" plays *Widowers' Houses*, *The Philanderer* and *Mrs Warren's Profession*, and written his personal defence (and interpretation) of Ibsen's plays in *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, does not refrain from criticizing Nordau's words about modern art, but he also attacks, as Marroni notes, Nordau's Jewishness (Shaw calls Nordau "one of those remarkable cosmopolitan Jews who go forth against modern civilization as David went against the Philistines"; 1908, 7). According to Marroni, Shaw's antisemitism "era lo stesso che aveva alimentato la fantasia di molti vittoriani, non escluso il suo amato Dickens" (59; was the same that had fed many Victorians' fantasy, including his beloved Dickens's). I would add that in 1895 (and in 1908 as well) Shaw had not shown Nazi sympathies yet, not only because that would have been historically ahead of the times, but also because his very construction of the Superman was based on the idea of the "men of genius" and on Carlyle's already mentioned "aristocracy of talent", not only on the Nietzschean philosophy of the *Übermensch*.

Another at least partly overlooked Shavian production that to many readers may be relatively unknown is the dramatist's appreciation and knowledge of the visual arts. To this topic Marroni devotes two chapters, as already said, that is, Chapters 4 and 5, where he deals with Shaw's admiration for Rembrandt's art and with his extolment of photography as a new art, comparable – if not superior in some respects – to painting itself.

In his Chapter 4, "Lezione di anatomia: Shaw, Rembrandt e il volto delle cose" (119-51; The anatomy lesson: Shaw, Rembrandt and the face of things), Marroni analyses Shaw's relationship with the Dutch painter after looking for the role of painting in George Eliot's and Thomas Hardy's novels, two writers who had found in Rembrandt inspiration for the rendering of some of their characters (122-7). Shaw mentions the Dutch painter in some of his plays: as a genius with "a programme of aesthetic revolution" in *Man*

and Superman (129), as a 'god' of the artistic faith of Louis Dubedat in *The Doctor's Dilemma*, who, some moments before dying in Act VI, "*utters his creed*" as the Stage Direction reads:

> I believe in Michael Angelo, Velasquez, and Rembrandt; in the might of design, the mystery of color, the redemption of all things by Beauty everlasting, and the message of Art that has made these hands blessed. Amen. Amen. (1906; Shaw 1977, 174)

As early as 1893, when he wrote *The Philanderer* (later to be included among the *Plays Unpleasant*), a "*framed photograph of Rembrandt's School of Anatomy*" is presented, in the Stage Direction introducing Act 3 of this play, as hanging on a wall of Dr Paramore's reception room (Shaw 1980, 162). The painter's name is mentioned twice later as that of a scenic object (a photograph of Rembrandt's picture) looked at by Charteris, the protagonist of the play. Marroni wonders whether that name and the photograph have a deeper function than that of offering a target to Charteris's gaze (133). What Marroni writes towards the end of this chapter, after discussing the presence of Rembrandt in other authors and other times than Shaw's, is worth noting:

> . . . non mi pare esagerato affermare che il commediografo intesse un dialogismo con Rembrandt fondato proprio sulle mani dell'artista-anatomista che, sollevando la 'pelle' del tessuto socioculturale di una nazione, scopre a beneficio di tutti le verità nascoste che, invece, nessuno vorrebbe vedere, tanto meno i fautori dell'ortodossia ideologica e del conformismo borghese. (149)

> [. . . I do not think it is an exaggeration to affirm that the playwright weaves a dialogic process with Rembrandt based on the hands of the artist-anatomist who, by raising the 'skin' of the socio-cultural texture of a nation, discovers to everybody the hidden truths that, instead, nobody would like to see, let alone the supporters of ideological orthodoxy and of bourgeois conformity.]

As for Shaw's interest for photography, Marroni finds relevant traces of it in *An Unsocial Socialist*, the novel written in 1883 but finally published in 1884, as already mentioned. In it Trefusis, the protagonist, praises photography by saying: "The only art that interests me is photography" (Shaw 1887, 11). Like in the other chapters of his work where he examines some of Shaw's almost unknown (or forgotten) writings, in "L'arte fotografica come paradosso" (the art of photography as a paradox; Chapter 5, 153-72) Marroni also peruses Shaw's enormous 'paratext' which accompanies the playwright's more famous production. In this case, Marroni enlarges his research to what Shaw wrote about photography outside drama, in particular to an article published in the journal *The Amateur Photographer* in 1902 and reprinted in 1906 (Shaw 1906). In spite of the many paradoxes one can read in Shaw's article (e.g.

the extolment of photography compared to painting, also when the Irish dramatist speaks of famous painters – Velasquez is a case – thus in a way contrasting his own opinion about them; see his praise of Rembrandt's art, for example), according to Marroni Shaw's strong support of photography had a positive effect on British society, because "fece sì che, contro le resistenze di ampi settori della cultura vittoriana e tardovittoriana, alla nuova modalità di rappresentazione fossero riconosciuti il valore estetico e la funzione sociale attribuiti a un'opera d'arte" (157; it caused the aesthetic value and the social function attributed to artworks to be credited to the new modality of representation, despite the opposition of wide sectors of Victorian and late Victorian culture).

Arriving at the end of Marroni's volume the reader fundamentally agrees with its writer, that is, that the Irish dramatist's attitudes remained those of a Victorian, no longer acceptable after the many changes occurred in twentieth-century Western society (and the Second World War). He was "un vittoriano antivittoriano", as Marroni calls him in the "Introduction" to the volume of Shaw's *Teatro* (2022, ix; an anti-Victorian Victorian): a paradoxical writer, an unorthodox (rather, anti-orthodox) thinker, a controversial and polemical 'preacher', in the end a "mountebank" as the playwright defined himself. All of these, but none of these alone. The idea one gets of George Bernard Shaw from Francesco Marroni's rich book is that of a man who lived the first half of his long life in a century the culture of which he wanted to change deeply, and the other half in quite a different century the challenges of which he could not always fight (nor understand) because of the Victorian legacy that accompanied him to the end. To understand this man, and his extensive and often ignored production that to many a spectator of his plays might remain unknown, Marroni's book is certainly a very valid and helpful compass.

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Beatrice Berselli*

Benjamin Wihstutz, Daniele Vecchiato, and Mirjam Kreuser (eds), *#CoronaTheater. Der Wandel der performativen Künste in der Pandemie*[1]

Abstract

This review focuses on *#CoronaTheater*, a thought-provoking collection of essays issued in 2022. These essays discuss the intersection of performing arts with the COVID-19 pandemic, examining the use of communication technologies to define a new kind of theatre, performer, and audiences. By reflecting on the immediate and long-term transformations of the theatre, as well as on the political and social developments during and after the pandemic, *#CoronaTheater* foregrounds at least three points of discussion: the impact of lockdown on the performing arts, providing a representative selection of firsthand accounts; the burning question of the post-pandemic future of theatre, attempting to understand how institutions might reinvent their spatial and dramaturgical practices in a virtual community-building; the reflection on questions of sustainability, social participation, and inclusion by exploiting digital theatre's potential to reform the theatre as institution. Finally, yet importantly, the contributors of *#CoronaTheater* introduce a decidedly cultural viewpoint into a discussion that had so far been dominated primarily by medical, political, and epidemiological perspectives.

Keywords: COVID-19; theatre; performance; performing arts; pandemic

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic radically affected human lives on many levels, including health, economic, and social well-being. The artistic and creative industries experienced an unprecedented impact, with the performing arts sector bearing the brunt of the crisis (Pietrzak-Franger et al., 2023). Live performances were among the first to suffer from sanitary restrictions, economic uncertainty, and a decline in public attendance due to their reliance on social interaction, shared experiences, and physical presence. Deserted theatre halls became a poignant sign of the times, echoing Hamlet's sentiment that "the time is out of joint" (Shakespeare 1899, 93). The closure of theatres and cinemas across the world became inevitable, with no clear timeline for reopening (Aggermann, Doecker, and Siegmund 2017). Festivals

and live events were cancelled or postponed, while theatre productions and film releases were rescheduled or delayed indefinitely. Social interactions shifted from bustling intermissions to socially distanced encounters or virtual experiences like quarantine concerts and Zoom readings. In this context, theatre companies faced two options: either remain closed or adapt the theatre experience. Seeing the crisis as an incentive for innovation, new possibilities for audience participation were created. Despite the devastating impact of the pandemic, people around the world found creative ideas to respond to unprecedented circumstances by developing alternative forms of performances: artists sang their arias on city balconies, DJs played from the rooftops of houses, theatre companies organized outdoor events, and many productions went online with the rise of live-to-cinema broadcasts, live intra-media performances on Zoom, and prerecorded versions of plays streamed on social media. Therefore, the rapid increase in actors and theatre producers embracing digital platforms in response to the crisis indicates that, during lockdown, "online became the new live" (Murphy McCaleb 2020).

Since 2020, a large number of publications have taken on the task of responding to developments in what has been variously termed "viral", "pandemic", and "digital theatre". Among these, Pascale Aebischer and Rachel Nicolas's *Digital Theatre Transformation: a Case Study and Digital Toolkit* (2020) constitutes a crucial point of reference, as it concentrates on adaptations of many pieces from analogue to digital, exploring their main features. Barbara Fuchs's *Theater of Lockdown: Digital and Distanced Performance in a Time of Pandemic* (2021) conceptualizes virtual theatre as a hybrid form that combines film and theatre aesthetics, investigating the transformed conditions of theatre-making and viewership in times of pandemic. Gemma Kate Allred, Benjamin Broadribb, and Erin Sullivan's edited collection of essays titled *Lockdown Shakespeare: New Evolutions in Performance and Adaptation* (2022) is a phenomenological history of experiencing a great variety of Shakespeare productions during 2020, which debates concepts such as liveness, immersion, and presence. Premised on the impossibility of physical co-presence, post-pandemic theatre and performance have strongly relied on a sense of liveness established through shared virtual spaces and a higher degree of interactivity between performers and audiences.

These aspects are explored in an important compendium of essays edited by Benjamin Wihstutz, Daniele Vecchiato, and Mirjam Kreuser. As the product of two online workshops held at the University of Frankfurt in collaboration with the *Mousonturm* and the University of Padua, the volume focuses on the relationship between COVID-19 and theatre. It reflects on the post-pandemic future of performing arts. By exploring the topic from a great variety of perspectives, employing different theoretical lenses, and

featuring contributions from scholars and artists across Germany, Austria, and Italy, the collection attempts to unravel the complex web of connections engendered by staging performances during a great crisis. In doing so, it aims to foster a profound understanding of how such new practices interface with current cultural issues.

First, by calling attention to an aspect too often neglected by the public sphere – the question of the future of theatre – *#CoronaTheater* introduces a distinctly artistic and cultural perspective to a debate that has hitherto been dominated mainly by epidemiology, medicine, and sociology. As the sociologist Rudolf Stichweh pointed out, the art system was initially completely ignored in the shadow of a health and epidemiological system, primarily because art and culture were seen, at least by politics and by most media, as less relevant compared to other disciplines in the hierarchy of societal subsystems (Stichweh 2020, 203).

The title of the collection explicitly refers to a series of hashtags that shaped the pandemic narrative from the very beginning. *#Wirbleibenzuhause*, for instance, instructed most citizens to "stay at home and save lives", discouraging the attendance of theatre and live venues. The media portrayed the empty (or half-empty) auditoriums as images of terror and, in some cases, as symbols of criticism against the strictness of containment measures. In May 2020, for instance, the picture of the dismantled stalls and deserted halls of the Berliner Ensemble went viral in German newspapers. Just a few weeks later, on the other hand, with the hashtag *#kulturtrotzcorona,* artists, musicians, and filmmakers expressed their need to experiment with alternative forms of sharing and being together.

In the introduction, the authors explain how, in the middle of the crisis, the theatre as an "art of presence" was significantly affected, with its principles, practices, and conventions being identified as posing an increased risk of infection. The crowds in enclosed spaces, the bodily presence of actors and spectators (Fischer-Lichte 2004, 58), the physical and collective plays with loud speeches and singing, the queues at the ticket office, post-performance discussions at the cafeteria or in communal spaces, and première celebrations were suddenly perceived as dangerous and unsafe. The cover image of *#CoronaTheater* features Doris Uhlich's dance performance, *Habitat*, adapted for the pandemic. The transparent full-body suits of the nonprofessional dancers evoke a dystopian atmosphere, symbolizing a diverse, precarious relationship with the body experienced during the pandemic. These suits represent the fear associated with the body as a vehicle of infection and the apprehension surrounding the loss of traditional gathering spaces like theatres and other public places. At the same time, Uhlich's performance, playing with physicality, collectivity, and theatrical space in new and creative ways, represents the theatrical potential of giving rise to alternative forms,

both aesthetical and dramaturgical, previously unknown. This also raises the question of whether the pandemic has made theatre more sustainable, inclusive, and barrier-free.

The contributions of the volume #*CoronaTheater* are divided into two sections. The first section, *Pandemische Publika und Dramaturgien* (Pandemic audiences and dramaturgies), sets the scene by providing an informed theoretical context for thinking about contemporary theatrical and critical practice. By exploring the emergence of new dramaturgies and forms of public engagement during the pandemic, the authors attempt to define and conceptualize a post-pandemic audience, delving into digital dramaturgies in theatre, social media, and various streamed content. The second section of the volume, *Postpandemische Infrastrukturen und Nachhaltigkeit* (Post-pandemic infrastructures and sustainability), shifts to how the climate crisis is portrayed on stage. This leads to the discovery of new 'ecological' dramaturgies which, often based on role-playing games or live streaming, test more concretely post-pandemic working methods and technologies to exploit in the future.

The first section begins with an essay by Doris Kolesch, *Gemeinsam/Allein. Publikum in digitalen Performances* (Together/Alone: the audience in digital performances), that explores the negative and positive implications of new experiences in the theatre during the pandemic. By showcasing the impact of COVID-19 on contemporary arts, particularly in the realm of theatre and live performances, Kolesch concentrates on the audience's experience in the reception of digital performances. The concept of *gemeinsam/allein* (together/alone) is introduced by Kolesch as a starting point to understand the challenges and shifts posed by the pandemic in the relationship between performers and audiences. To do so, Kolesch questions the traditional presence-based audience experience, highlighting the emergence of new forms, such as one-on-one performances and, more generally, those without a live audience. Despite the social nature of theatrical reception and theatre as a collective experience, Kolesch demonstrates the effectiveness of performances without a live audience, redirecting one's attention from the core of performance to the exploration of new ideas for contact with the public. These include streaming archival performances or interactive online experiences. By providing concrete examples and exploring various digital formats adopted by theatres, streaming, and online plays, the author explores the innovative responses of the theatre community to the challenges posed by the pandemic, urging for a redefinition of the role of people attending theatres. Moreover, Kolesch also underlines how the digital shift enabled theatres to reach wider and more diverse audiences, transcending geographical boundaries and allowing for increased accessibility, particularly for those with disabilities or limitations. However, the author raises critical questions about the nature

of digital audience engagement and the new barriers introduced by digital formats, such as technological requirements and potential limitations on audience interaction, thus urging scholars and theatre practitioners to investigate the profound implications of the evolving relationship between audience and performing arts in the digital era.

The essay by Ramona Mosse that follows, *Auf der Suche nach dem Publikum – Zuschauerräume in der Pandemie* (Looking for an audience: auditoriums during the pandemic), addresses the question of how actors have to cope with the absence of a physical audience, reflecting on the changed perception of space and social experiences due to lockdown restrictions. By insisting on the image of empty auditoriums as symbols of crisis, with their folded plush-red armchairs, Mosse starts her contribution by discussing both the end of the theatre as we know it and the challenge posed by digital theatre in replacing the live, material experience, emphasizing its difficulty in capturing authentic atmosphere. Throughout her essay, Mosse refers to the study *Performen ohne Publikum* (Performing without a public) by Daniel Reupke and Jasmin Goll. According to them, digital theatre will never fully replace the materiality and unique experience of a live performance (Reupke and Goll 2020, 215). Mosse criticizes the limitations of digital theatre in capturing the immersive atmosphere of live performances. She states that the flat screens of a computer or smartphone drastically reduce the richness of the orchestral sound, as the whole scenario is compromised by the ability to interrupt the stream at any time. At the same time, however, the author explores alternatives beyond this "technoscepticism". Similarly to Kolesch, Mosse sees the pandemic as a great opportunity to reassess practices and theories and rethink the interplay between technology and theatre, generating a different kind of audience engagement that does not rely on physical presence. By examining theatrical projects such as productions by the Old Vic in London and the Burgtheater in Vienna that employ creative strategies to maintain the theatrical atmosphere and engagement despite the absence of the audience, Mosse argues that the pandemic has provided an unprecedented opportunity to explore alternative ways of performing, also illustrating the potential of engaging with different spatialities. The concept of *Netztheater* (network theatre) is interesting, which Mosse introduces in the second part of her essay to show how the pandemic challenged the traditional definition of physical presence in theatre. An example of *Netztheater* is the work of the *Jungen DT,* a group of nonprofessional young players from the Deutsches Theater of Berlin, who developed various intriguing digital formats during the lockdown phases. A notable project that emerged during the pandemic is *Selbstvergessen. Vom Anfangen und Aufhören* (Self-Forgetting: About Beginning and Ending). Originally planned as a live performance, the play had to adapt instead to Zoom rehearsals

due to the pandemic's challenges. Hence, the resulting production was a streamed, multi-perspective live film involving significant changes in the use of the physical theatre space. Theatre settings vanished as screens replaced the audience area, creating a complex interplay between theatrical and cinematic space. Mosse explores another project by *Junges DT*, titled *Die Monster vom James-Simon-Park* (The monster of James Simon Park). Directed by the dramaturg Lasse Scheiba, it also employed an experimental approach to live streaming, using an innovative single-shot/single-cut technique that contributed to maintaining audience engagement. Therefore, by showcasing the theatre's ability to innovate and explore new formats during the pandemic, both projects developed new theatrical vocabulary and tools that challenged traditional notions of spectatorship/presence in theatre and led to the consideration of new thresholds in the future of performance in the context of evolving digital technologies.

The fundamental relationship between theatre and digital media triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic is also the main point of reference in Mirjam Kreuser's essay, "*The people formerly known as audience*". *Dramaturgie, Aufmerksamkeitsökonimie und Subjektdispositive im Netztheater* (Dramaturgy, attention economy and subject dispositives in network theatre), where the author emphasizes the need to move away from the traditional theatrical concept of co-presence/live performance as a fundamental condition for representation when approaching theatre in a digital context. In particular, Kreuser focuses on three digital productions that go beyond simple streaming and remediate theatrical perspectives with elements of gaming and social media. The app-based project *Loulu* is an interactive fiction presented as a single-player game where players/spectators engage with the main character, Frida, through text-based communication on a messenger app. In *Homecoming*, on machina eX, players have to help an old school friend, Rabea, who is struggling with the pandemic. By demanding active involvement from participants to progress the storyline and "save Rabea", the success of the performance depends on interactive spectatorship and collaborative problem-solving. Lastly, *Werther.live* on punkt.live is presented as a live stream, integrating social media platforms used and interacted with in real time. In particular, Instagram allows viewers to access, follow, and even contact the main characters' profiles, blurring the boundaries between the performance and everyday digital communication. Hence, viewers can consume the performance solely through the stream or engage with it alongside the characters' social media profiles. According to Kreuser, this disposition aligns viewers with the concept of the Benjaminian *flâneur*, navigating digital public spaces and engaging with their rhythms while maintaining agency in directing attention. To sum up, by illustrating these examples of contemporary digital practices, Kreuser reflects on the

implications of the net theatre for spectatorship, emphasizing the need to rethink the traditional roles of spectators and performers. The Internet's complex but interactive communication structures challenge hierarchical theatrical conventions and lead to a democratization of social elements within performances, transforming the audience from passive spectators into active participants in a shared experiential community whose interactive engagement contributes to the narrative progression.

Quite differently, but in the same perspective, Daniele Vecchiato's "*Konflikte sind voller Aerosole*". *Dramatisierungen der Corona-Krise auf deutschsprachigen Bühnen* ("Conflicts are full of aerosols". Dramatizations of the Corona crisis on German-speaking stages) explores how German theatre dramatized the COVID-19 crisis through two specific theatrical productions conceived during the initial lockdown, with the purpose to highlight the diversity of artistic responses to the pandemic: *Death Positive. States of Emergency* by Yael Ronen and *Black Box- Phantomtheater für 1 Person* by Stefan Kaegi. Ronen's *Death Positive,* first performed in October 2020 at the Maxim Gorki Theatre in Berlin, puts themes such as fear, loneliness, and death in symbolic relation to the pandemic, raising important questions about the societal relevance of theatre in moments of crisis. In particular, through meta-reflection and poignant dialogues, the play prompts discussions about the importance of art in society, with its potential to heal and connect people in precarious times. On the other hand, Kaegi's *Black Box* reflects on the effect of theatre closures on society. The immersive experience of the play involves participants in an audio walk through the deserted backstage areas of a theatre, where visitors are told via headphones where to go and what to observe as if they were part of a film crew. By exploring these vacant spaces, visitors are confronted with experiences of absence and isolation. At the same time, however, they encounter remnants of past performances, gaining insights into various theatrical professions in different epochs. Despite being alone during the tour, the presence of voices and sounds creates a sense of communal engagement, prompting reflection on the essence of theatre and performance as physical, sensory, and shared experiences, contrasting with the isolation lived during the pandemic. Hence, by addressing various aspects of pandemic life and reflecting on the impact of a lockdown on the theatre community, *Death Positive* and *Black Box,* according to Vecchiato, illustrate the significant role of theatre as a fundamental medium of communication in every modality of expression.

Amateur-Experimente als Theorielabor. Corona-Home-Videos, pandemische Medien und die Frage der Distribution – eine unsystematische Intervention in sechs Einstellungen (Amateur-experiments as a theory laboratory. Corona home-videos, pandemic media, and the question of distribution – an unsystematic intervention in six settings) by Alexandra Schneider deals with

the impact of the pandemic on the perception of media objects, focusing on amateur "corona home videos" created during the quarantine. Through examples from film history and artistic practice, Schneider illustrates both the intersection of amateur and professional realms in media production and the significance of these videos in capturing crucial moments of everyday life. By providing access to otherwise invisible spaces and conditions, these videos make the media-economic and artistic implications of the COVID-19 crisis more tangible. In the illustration of examples like the Marsh Family's viral musical performances, Schneider also discusses how social media entertainment (SME) platforms like YouTube and TikTok evolved from web-based social networking services to closed, platform-based systems where users can easily share content beyond their circles, both reaching wider audiences and altering the traditional distinctions between public and private media and amateur and professional content. Therefore, according to the author, the pandemic led to innovative, virtual forms of communication and artistic performance that created new possibilities for expression and collaboration across distances. The productive intertwining of amateur and professional practices and the potential for exploiting commercial infrastructures like Zoom in ways that transcend familial and individual career logistics – according to Schneider's conclusion – could contribute to reshaping the landscape of media production and distribution.

Holger Schulze's contribution *Affekterepertoires der Selbsteuphorisierung. Kleine Anthropologie des gestreamten Konzerts* (Affective repertoires of self-euphorisation. A brief anthropology of the streamed concert) closes the first section of #*CoronaTheater* by discussing the transformation of live concerts in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic when some of their traditional elements such as physical venues, live audiences, backstage areas, and dynamic stage setups faced significant challenges due to restrictions and safety concerns. By exploring alternative formats of concerts, the chapter delves into live-streamed music events performed from artists' homes or staged on platforms like TikTok or Instagram. Schulze considers Mare Rebillet's and Amanda Palmer's live-streamed productions, which, among other things, maintain a strong connection with the audience. The text concludes by questioning the characteristics and cultural implications of this intensive but relatively new post-digital music landscape, exploring the analytical and anthropological aspects of streamed concerts and collaborative performances. Hence, the author reflects on the very nature of these performances, challenging assumptions about attention spans and the role of digital technologies in shaping contemporary musical experiences.

Maximilian Haas' *Generalprobe Corona. Pandemie und Klima* (Corona final rehearsal. Pandemic and climate) opens the second section of the book, spotlighting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the institutions of

the independent theatre, dance, and performing arts in Germany. More specifically, by focusing on the attempts of theatrical institutions and artists to manage an unprecedented situation, the author emphasizes how the pandemic tested the foundational aspects and social establishments of the independent scene in Germany. Despite the lack of preparation, the text highlights how practitioners, actors, and performers swiftly developed operational concepts and performative formats that coordinated the demands of prevention with those of artistic production. In response to the need to maintain theatrical activities during the pandemic, many theatrical institutions had to rapidly reflect on possible solutions for infection protection and hygiene, promptly implementing them into their institutional practices. To prove this, the author refers in his essay to the creation of a stage inside the theatre *Mousonturm* in Frankfurt, designed to allow a limited number of spectators to join the theatre safely and adhere to social distancing measures. This project not only addressed pandemic-related challenges but also embraced questions of sustainability, utilizing materials like wood and clay intended for reuse in house construction.

Additionally, the text highlights how many theatrical institutions creatively compensated for limitations in rehearsals and performances by implementing technological infrastructures to produce digital or hybrid events. Consequently, Haas discusses the ecological implications of transitioning to digital formats in performative arts. While the use and construction of complex technical infrastructures for digital production may have significant environmental impacts, these impacts could be relatively minor compared to greenhouse gas emissions associated with heating, cooling, and illuminating theatrical buildings, as well as the travels of people to attend the theatre, whether by car or by plane. In conclusion, Haas deeply reflects on the need to reinvent the performative approach under digital conditions. Consequently, by introducing the intersection of ecological concerns in the performing arts and framing it within the broader context of the climate crisis, the author spotlights the importance of considering issues of environmental sustainability. According to Haas, this could contribute to rethinking performative arts practices for the future and reflect on the potential lessons for addressing other crises.

Haas' engagement with ecological concerns intertwined with issues brought by the pandemic paves the way for the next chapter, Über *Fluglärm. Pandemische Arbeiten von LIGNA und Lawrence Abu Hamdan* (About aircraft noise. Pandemic work by LIGNA and Lawrence Abu Hamdan) by Benjamin Wihstutz, which offers one of the most interesting points of view of all those analyzed in this volume, as it discusses the impact of flight noise and airports on the author's daily life in Mainz, Germany, particularly focusing on the change brought about by COVID-19. More specifically, the author describes

how the reduction in air travel due to the pandemic led to a noticeable decrease in flight noise, providing a unique experience of quiet skies. By starting with a reflection on the history of air travel, from the advent of commercial jet travel in the 1950s to the contemporary era characterized by concerns about flight noise and environmental impact, Wihstutz argues that the pandemic, coupled with growing awareness of climate change, led to a significant shift in attitudes toward air travel. By forcing people to find alternatives to in-person gatherings and events, COVID-19 and the lockdown led to a reevaluation of the necessity and environmental consequences of air travel. Hence, Wihstutz suggests that the pandemic may serve as a precursor to future crises, particularly climate change, underscoring the need to look for more sustainable alternatives to traditional modes of travel, mobility, and global connectivity. In the second section of the essay, the focus shifts to the intersection of the crises faced by airports and the performing arts. More specifically, Haas refers to the work of the radio and performance collective from Hamburg, LIGNA, which, staging a GPS-based video walk called *The Passengers* at Frankfurt airport in July 2021, offered participants a new way to experience the airport while addressing themes of global connectivity, capitalism, and climate change. By guiding participants through various locations within the airport while simultaneously transporting them across six other airports worldwide through the video display on their smartphones, the video walk tells specific stories related to each airport, underscoring the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of air travel and airport facilities. Despite their physical and geographical differences, these airports share a uniformity spotlighting their role as nodes in a globalized world dominated by capitalism and logistics. Overall, LIGNA's production serves as a form of global theatre, blurring the boundaries between reality and simulation while shedding light on the hidden narratives, dark sides, and power structures that define the modern airport experience. While it may seem that this work does not contribute significantly to the broader discussion on the evolution of performative arts during the pandemic, a closer look reveals its relevance as a dress rehearsal for addressing climate change, with its video material acquired without the need for physical travel. In conclusion, Wihstutz argues that this shift towards more sustainable artistic practices reflects broader societal efforts towards sustainability, with the COVID-19 pandemic serving as an opportunity for the arts to embrace environmentally conscious approaches. This shift towards sustainability could pave the way for performances at decommissioned airports in the future, a prospect that residents would welcome for its dual benefits.

Following on thematically from the previous essays of this section, Stefano Apostolo and Sotera Fornaro, in their essay *Zwischen Mythos, Klimakrise und Pandemie* (Between myth, climate crisis and pandemic),

argue that, in the context of COVID-19, social separation and the sudden disruption of relationships are likened to a pause from reality, necessary for reflecting on political decisions and facing current challenges. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a resurgence of interest in Greek tragedies, especially those exploring themes of leadership, responsibility, and the management of societal upheaval. Hence, by discussing works by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides as vehicles for prompting people to reflect on the ethical, moral, and social issues of their own time, the authors highlight the enduring relevance of these ancient narratives in prompting audiences to contemplate philosophical and moral aspects of their own time, such as authoritarianism and environmental degradation. Plays such as *Antigone* and *King Oedipus,* for instance, offer fundamental insights into the challenges of governance during social and political crises as they explore the consequences of power abuse. The second part of the contribution analyzes Alexander Eisenach's innovative theatrical production *Anthropos, Tyrann (Ödipus),* which reimagines Sophocles' classic tragedy of *Oedipus Rex* to confront contemporary environmental issues. Staged during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, Eisenach's play exploits innovative digital theatre techniques and a 360-degree camera to actively engage remote audiences and immerse them in the performance. By modernizing the Oedipus myth, focusing on challenges like climate change, Eisenach aims to prompt spectatorship reflection on humanity's relationship with the environment and the responsibility of past decisions in shaping the present. Therefore, the play underscores the need to shift away from exploitative attitudes toward nature, advocating for a synergistic approach between science and art. Nevertheless, despite the innovative nature of digital production, the chapter also discusses its limitations, including environmental impact, production costs, and the challenge of reconciling digital theatre with traditional live performances.

With Yana Prinsloo's *Theaterarbeit als Reproduktionsarbeit. Über spekulatives Fabilieren im pandemischen Theater* (Theatre work as reproductive work. On speculative fabulation in pandemic theatre), which comes next in the book, the intersection of theatre and work is explored, considering the implications of the pandemic in this field and the need for a comprehensive understanding of the conditions of work in the cultural sector. More specifically, the three main points presented in the essay are the portrayal of artistic experience as precarious, characterized by poverty and resource scarcity; the need for discussing strategies for regeneration and renewal within the theatre community; the inadequacy of governmental support programs for freelance artists, highlighting the fragility of the labor rights and protections for people working in the cultural sector. However, by delving into the complex and evolving nature of work shaped by historical, economic, and social factors, Prinsloo discusses the outstanding efforts of

artists, particularly of those in the independent theatre scene, in overcoming dichotomies and challenging traditional sociological dynamics, advocating for a more nuanced understanding of the contemporary labor industry. Finally, Prinsloo presents the feminist performance collective Swoosh Lieu, which, founded in 2009, employs innovative intermedial approaches like audiovisual elements and collaborative composition rather than pre-produced texts or strict directorial frameworks to actively engage the audience and stimulate reflection. Their digital production, *A Room of Our Own* (2021), drawing inspiration from Virginia Woolf's essay *A Room of One's Own*, tests new working methods and possible future technologies, thus challenging traditional modes of performing and innovatively contributing to shape post-pandemic theatrical scenarios. What is more interesting is that the project explores the pandemic impact on women from a feminist perspective, criticizing societal limitations and challenging gendered narratives. Therefore, like many other productions presented in the volume, this work, too, reflects the urgent need for societal and artistic reevaluation toward a more caring and inclusive future.

In the last contribution of the volume, *Und geht das also nun wirklich in Richtung ökologische Dramaturgie? Drei Anzeichen dafür* (So is this really moving in the direction of ecological dramaturgy? Three signs that it is happening), Kai van Eikels discusses the emergence of the concept of "ecological aesthetics" within the realm of performing arts, particularly focusing on the changes prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic in the years 2020 and 2021. More specifically, the author advocates for deeper integration of ecological principles into all aspects of artistic creation, moving beyond superficial engagement with ecological themes towards a more immersive and transformative experience for both creators and audiences. The study reveals intriguing developments that answer the question of what an ecological aesthetic might entail. The term "ecological aesthetic" implies that merely addressing ecological themes within established formats, such as writing plays about the climate crisis or incorporating elements like animals and plants into theatrical spaces, may not sufficiently provoke meaningful change regarding ecological issues. According to van Eikels, ecological aesthetics must be structured around three closely related aspects. First, it delves into the idea of "reimagining imagination", proposing a recalibration of how imagination operates within the context of performing arts. While traditional theatre primarily engages sight, recent developments demonstrated the crucial role of other senses, such as sound and olfaction, in shaping the audience's experience and stimulating reflection. This shift away from visual dominance is, according to van Eikels, seen as crucial in fostering a more holistic and conscious engagement with ecological themes. Consequently, the author introduces the need to redefine liveness in

performance, spotlighting the importance of sensory aspects beyond visual cues. To prove this, the author discusses examples, such as Vera Voegelin's *Earthbound*, where auditory elements, such as voices and soundscapes, play a central role in creating immersive experiences that transcend traditional boundaries between performer and audience. Third, van Eikels insists on the idea of "rethinking the performance", encouraging a reevaluation of what constitutes a theatrical production and advocating for collaborative world-building processes, whether analog or digital, that actively engage participants in shared experiences. This can be, according to the author, exemplified by formats of gameplays like *Live Action Role Play* (LARP) and *Real Live Game* (RLG), which, through specific practices like reading, discussions, and workshops, encourage participants to collectively build and negotiate a fictional world during a performance. By embedding gameplay within production, negotiation, and world exploration processes challenging traditional notions of performance, this approach can contribute both to fostering broader ecological thinking and situating aesthetic strategies within collaborative practices, which offer new formats for communication and engagement. In conclusion, van Eikels urges a shift from conventional practices towards more collaborative, dynamic, imaginative, and participatory forms. These forms prioritize cooperation with the audience's imagination rather than focusing solely on analog or virtual realities. By doing so, they create immersive experiences that resonate with the complexities of current ecological challenges.

Alongside contributions written by scholars and experts in the branch of theatre, film, literature, and music, the volume also includes three talks with leading representatives of the performing arts, which, similarly to the single essays, delve into questions related to changed spaces and dramaturgies, working methods, and infrastructures during the pandemic, aiming at complementing the themes covered in *#CoronaTheater* with a more concrete perspective. Hence, by adding first accounts of actors, creatives, and people working in the theatre industry, the authors of the volume are determined to give access to an understanding of the process, rather than simply the product, of the complex stage production during the pandemic.

The first talk involves Benjamin Wihstutz, the Viennese choreographer Doris Uhlich, the radio and performance artist Ole Frahm, and the theatre director Antje Thoms, discussing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their works. Uhlich starts by describing the adaptation of her dance piece, *Habitat*, spotlighting the difficulty of ensuring safety while maintaining the essence of collective experiences. Ole Frahm reflects on the evolution of his concept of radio ballet, now manifested in a globally adapted performance called *Dispersion Everywhere*. The artist highlights the need for international solidarity and trust in working with a group by discussing the challenges

of organizing dispersed performances during the pandemic. Lastly, Antje Thoms discusses the exploration of new spatialities in theatre, sharing her experience directing *Die Methode,* a station drama set in a theatre garage where the audience drives through. The conversation delves then into the institutional challenges the artists had to face due to pandemic restrictions, bureaucratic hurdles, safety protocols, and the economic impact on the theatrical realm, concluding with important reflections upon the future of theatre. By exploring not only the challenges but also the opportunities arising in the context of performative arts, such as the use of platforms like Zoom and social media on theatre, the boom of video conferences, and the development of new genres, the dialogue concludes advocating the need for a transformation of artistic practices, emphasizing the importance of flexibility and adaptability.

In the second talk, the journalist Georg Kasch, the theatre director Jana Zöll, the dramaturg and artistic co-director Anna Wagner, and the performer Marion Sièfert discuss the impact of a pandemic on theatrical representation, exploring the challenges and opportunities of online performances. In particular, the authors reflect upon how to maintain liveness and interaction with the audience online, exploring issues related to accessibility and sustainability for the future. Kasch starts by emphasizing the difference between traditional theatre and digital representations, highlighting issues related to sound, image, and the loss of the live dimension. Anna Wagner introduces then the *Manila Zoo* project by Eisa Jocson, a hybrid work with both actors from the Philippines performing from their living rooms projected on a screen and a physical audience attending theatre, thus emphasizing the importance of digital platforms involving artists from different parts of the world, thus making theatre more accessible. Marion Sièfert talks about *Jeanne dark,* a live-streamed monologue of a woman exposed through a live video on Instagram, offering different perspectives on the same performance and, at the same time, bringing challenges related to online interaction on social media. Lastly, Jana Zöll describes *Challenge Accepted – ich bin in deiner Wohnung* (Challenge accepted, I am in your apartment), a performance exploring identity through the digital medium, addressing the relationship between the artist and the audience. Despite the opportunities offered by technology and the benefits brought by the hybridity of digital theatre, the artists conclude their conversation by emphasizing the irreplaceability of the physical and live experience of traditional theatre.

The third and last talk involves Professor Sandra Umathum, theatre expert Noa Winter, directors Julia Wissert and Matthias Pees, and the cultural anthropologist Julian Warner, who discuss the impact of crises on cultural structures, underlining that the pandemic has exacerbated inequalities and challenges in the cultural domain, while simultaneously highlighting

the necessity for change. By spotlighting that the crisis can present a great opportunity to question certain structures and initiate changes, Pees, Wissert, and Warner agree that the pandemic can be seen as a forerunner of a more ethnically conscious theatre of the future. However, they also argue that the crisis does not inevitably lead to transformation and sustainable changes; it depends on how individuals cope with it, their decisions, and the measures they take, requiring continuous reflection and adaptation. The closely interconnected questions regarding work methods, infrastructures, power critique, and ecological sustainability must be addressed together to establish more sustainable infrastructures and effect positive changes in the cultural landscape. The dialogue concludes by underscoring the importance of ecological sustainability in the cultural sector, with theatres and other cultural institutions often not being carbon-neutral and the discussion on environmentally friendly practices gaining more and more relevance.

To sum up, the essays collected in *#CoronaTheater* demonstrate that the vitality of theatre and performance contributes to its persistence in the face of any crisis – adapting as a medium just as humans have done – in attempting to bring about the endemic stage of COVID-19. Despite difficulties and challenges that performers encountered and still encounter in the future, the alternative options that the theatre created during the pandemic allowed the industry to become more accessible and recruit a wide range of audiences, leaving a lasting impact on the idea of a 'classic' theatre experience.

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Shin'ichi Murata - Stefano Aloe*

An Appointment with Japanese Noh Theatre in Verona and Milan

Abstract

Noh theatre has the potential to influence world theatre of the future with its pantomime, theatricality and its grotesquery. Some aspects of this ancient Japanese theatre stray far from realism and are particularly interesting, especially in relation to European modernism. Noh theatre is a synthesis of stage genres combined with a unique stylisation of acting. Zeami (1363-1443) succeeded in developing the doctrine of the actor's skill and to create the illusory artistic drama Mugen-Noh. What is interesting in Noh theatre is that to improve the quality of the performance, theatre operators always tried to create an ideal relationship with the public. They were aware of the fact that the spectator himself participates in the creative process.

Keywords: Noh theatre; theatricality; grotesquery; pantomime; mask; imitation; method of acting

1. Preface[1]

My friendship and collaboration with Prof. Shin'ichi Murata, who teaches Russian literature at the Sophia University in Tokyo and is a specialist in comparative theatre history, gave me the opportunity to organise an unusual tour that from Kyoto, Japan, brought to Italy (Verona and then Milan) one of the greatest masters of Noh theatre art: Haruhisa Kawamura.

Here is the background: Haruhisa Kawamura, born in Kyoto in 1956, is heir to a dynasty of actors belonging to the main strand of the great school of theatre in the Japanese tradition known as Noh, whose originator is Maestro Zeami, who lived at the turn of the fourteenth-fifteenth century. Zeami was an actor and playwright, but above all he founded a deeply philosophical theory of theatrical expression. An eerie and enigmatic theatre of shadows and ghosts that has been transmitted from generation to generation, keeping its characteristics alive and unaltered. Haruhisa Kawamura learnt this art

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from his father, Haruo Kawamura, then studied with Maestro Kiemon Hayashi XIII, until he became one of the most famous Noh actors in today's Japan.[2] His activity is not limited to the performative sphere: Kawamura-san has also been engaged for decades in a passionate work of dissemination and teaching on several levels: from the scientific (he teaches Noh Theatre at Doshisha University in Kyoto) to that of popularisation (he holds multiple initiatives to bring young people closer to an art that is today considered distant and little understood). Noh for Kawamura-san is a philosophy of life, and as such it is universal. So much so that he wanted to transmit it as an asset not only to modern secularised Japanese society, but also to the rest of the world. Maestro Kawamura has thus devised a formula of 'lecture-performances', conducted in English with the help of audiovisuals, masks and stage requirements, which very effectively introduce audiences from any continent to Noh art.[3]

Maestro Kawamura's Italian tour was the result of a fortunate triangulation: Prof. Murata, mentioned at the beginning, had already collaborated with Kawamura-san, leading him to Ukraine a few years ago and establishing a solid friendship with him. My friendship with Murata-san is no less solid: so when in 2023 Kawamura expressed to him his wish to visit Italy for the first time in his life, offering universities free lecture-performances on Noh theatre, Murata addressed this proposal to me. Even without being a specialist in Japanese culture, I understood the uniqueness of this proposal, and accepted it with great enthusiasm. This led to the idea of the Italian tour, for which I sounded out a number of universities and theatre institutions, not always successfully… but in Verona I received from the very first moment the unconditional support of the director of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature where I work, Prof. Roberta Facchinetti, and this allowed me to manage every aspect of the organisation with serenity. I also had a very positive response from the director of the Studio Teatrale Novecento in Milan, Marco Pernich, who also involved the Municipality of Milan by obtaining a prestigious location for Maestro Kawamura's performance: a space in the Fabbrica del Vapore. In this way, the auditorium of the University

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[2] For a short biography of Haruhisa Kawamura, see https://kyoto-kanze.hinoki-shoten.co.jp/en/player/KawamuraHaruhisa (Accessed 13 June 2024).

[3] Among the venues where he offered these flashes of Japanese theatre art were Harvard University, the UNESCO headquarters in New York, the "Electrotheater Stanislavsky" in Moscow and the "Tanzquartier" in Vienna. See https://electrotheatre.com/people/haruhisa-kavamura;https://tqw.at/en/workshop/noh-theater-workshop/ (Accessed 13 June 2024).

of Verona and the Fabbrica del Vapore in Milan were, on 15[4] and 16[5] March 2024 respectively, the exclusive venues for this extraordinary demonstration of the theatrical art of the Far East. The event in Verona, in particular, was enriched with content for reflection on the theatre of the East and the West in a comparative key, thanks to two moments prior to Master Kawamura's performance. First of all, the *lectio magistralis* held in Italian by Prof. Shin'ichi Murata on Zeami and the history of Noh theatre: a precious introductory text that is reproduced here below in English translation; and then the round table, moderated by me, in which, in addition to Prof. Murata, my colleague Nicola Pasqualicchio, lecturer in theatre history at the University of Verona, and the theatre director from Verona, but known above all in north-eastern Europe, Matteo Spiazzi, took part. The discussion underlined the influences that Noh theatre exerted on the twentieth-century theatre avant-gardes (Pasqualicchio) and the expressive and philosophical power of the mask, in the variants derived from the Commedia dell'Arte, but also contaminated with the mask traditions of Asian cultures, emerged with force (Spiazzi).

Haruhisa Kawamura's lecture-performance offered an hour of real full-immersion in the tradition of Noh theatre: which if not completely comprehensible, is always capable of moving and soliciting in the spectator an immediate, total empathy, through the measured, ritualised gesture, rhythms, and the enchanting use of the voice, in an ancestral song that puts the living in communication with the afterlife. All of it demonstrated and explained with grace, clarity and a touch of fine humour. The Noh theatre actor, as Kawamura-san also explained and demonstrated, is a kind of monk, and acting a form of prayer. The ancient links of theatre with the sacred in this form of expression still remain evident and active.

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[4] "Alla scoperta del Teatro Giapponese: Lezione/performance del maestro Haruhisa Kawamura (Kawamura Noh Theatre, Kyoto)" (Rediscovering Japanese theatre: lecture performance of Maestro Haruhisa Kawamura, Kawamura Noh Theatre, Kyoto), organised by Stefano Aloe (University of Verona) and Shin'ichi Murata (Sophia University, Tokyo). With the collaboration of director Matteo Spiazzi and Nicola Pasqualicchio (University of Verona). https://www.univr.it/it/iniziative/-/evento/11920?p_auth=aLG02bDf;https://www.giapponeinitalia.org/events/alla-scoperta-del-teatro-giapponese-lezione-performance-del-maestro-haruhisa-kawamura/ (Accessed 13 June 2024).

[5] "Alla scoperta del Teatro Giapponese: 'La poesia che si muove nel mondo del sogno e nel passato'" (Rediscovering Japanese theatre: poetry moves in the world of the dream and in the past), lecture held by Prof. Shin'ichi Murata (Sophia University, Tokyo) and conference-show of Maestro Haruhisa Kawamura (Kanze Kyoto School), Sala Colonne of the Fabbrica del Vapore, Milan, STN-Studionovecento, in collaboration with Fabbrica del Vapore-Municipality of Milan, with the support of the University of Verona (Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures) and of the Consulate-General of Japan in Milan (https://www.studionovecento.com/il-maestro-haruhisa-kawamura-per-la-prima-volta-in-italia/; Accessed 13 June 2024).

In Prof. Murata's essay, which follows, we will be able to read more precise clarifications on the subject. Personally, I am very proud to have contributed to this magnificent initiative.

2. Aspects of Modernity of Ancient Japanese Theatre – Zeami's Legacy[6]

The essence of ancient Japanese theatre is difficult, not only for foreigners but also for the Japanese, to understand. At the same time ancient theatre can be a source of inspiration for contemporary theatre.

Let us take a look at the Noh theatre, an ancient form of Japanese theatre which has the potential to influence the world theatre of the future with its pantomime, theatricality and grotesquery. In the eyes of today's Japanese, this form of theatre looks otherworldly or simply ritualistic and we must therefore try to understand it better.

Traditional Japanese theatre of all genres existed in parallel and in accordance with strict theatrical conventions, which could also be applied to modern dramaturgy. However, there were conflicts between the different theatrical schools.

The Noh theatre was preceded by Gigaku – "theatre of processions", Bugaku – "theatre of masks and dance", and Sarugaku – "theatre of acrobatics and mimicry", all primitive forms of theatre. It should be noted that all forms of traditional Japanese theatre have preserved their unique style and musical characteristics.

Some aspects of ancient Japanese theatre stray far from realism and are particularly interesting, especially in relation to European modernism. Some scholars believe that the peculiar theatricality of ancient Japanese theatre is similar to baroque European theatre.

2.1

The birth and development of Noh theatre have had great meaning for ancient Japanese culture with artists appearing from different social classes.

The characters in Noh theatre come from ancient literary works such as short stories and novels. Noh theatre flourished during the reign of Shogun Yoshimitsu Ashikaga. The Shogun witnessed a Noh performance for the first time in 1374 and was fascinated by its synthetic and stylised aspects as well as the beauty of the leading actor, which we will talk about later.

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[6] Section 2 is by Shin'ichi Murata. When completing the present paper, the author drew on several sections of the following articles: Murata 2002 and 2003. All quotations are from Chitetsuo Iji, Omotesho, Riichi Kuriyama, 1992.

In Noh theatre the essential elements are "monomane", "yugen" and "hana". "Monomane" is the imitation of the nature of things. "Yugen" is the underlying, hidden beauty of things, the charm of the understated and the obscure. "Hana" is the flower or symbolic beauty. In Noh these elements combine to form a whole.

Noh theatre is a synthesis of stage genres combined with a unique stylisation of acting. Let us then observe the peculiarities of Noh theatre, from the point of view of the acquisition of acting skills.

Professional actors first appeared in the fourteenth century. In Japan there is an expression explaining the qualities of the ideal actor. "First the gesture, then the voice, and finally the appearance".

For the ancient Japanese spectator, it was most important to see the beauty of the movements of the actor, rather than following the development of complex conflicts or dramatic situations to their final resolution. Words and dialogues were not the main elements in the theatricality of Noh. In Noh, drama is of an epic nature, born deep in the soul of one individual. In Japanese theatre the appearance of symbolic recitation has long been considered a principal element.

It is interesting to note that the main characters of Noh are all ghosts. However, they are different from the ghosts of European imagination which torment or harm the living. How is the role of such a ghost played? As a rule, the hero is called "shite" and is an active character. The rest of the roles are "waki", or secondary characters, expressing feelings through dance and gesture. The characters on stage, including the hero, do not say a word. Only the chorus gives cues to the viewer to make him understand the context. The genre of Noh theatre is similar to tragedy, but not as it is known in the West.

We should remember that Noh theatre is a theatre based on purely conventional forms. It has a form of interpretation called "kata", based on a canon of stylised movements, as is also the case in Kabuki theatre. Generally, on stage, the actors must remain within the limits imposed by the kata. However, kata can be interpreted in diverse ways. Noh theatre actors regard kata as a musical instrument while scenography and traditional techniques are the score. Thus, the canon has changed very slowly over the centuries.

2.2

In the fourteenth century Noh theory already existed and continued to develop. Zeami, the famous actor and theorist of Noh and Japanese theatre in general wrote a remarkably interesting book about Noh theory, *The Flowering Spirit*.

Motokiyo Zeami was born in 1363 and died in 1443. He was the son of a skilled artist, Kan'ami, who brought together traveling actors who performed Sarugaku shows in the western Yamato province, which is the present-day

Nara Prefecture, near Kyoto. Kan'ami was already famous for his skills as an interpreter. Shogun Yoshimitsu Ashikaga (1358-1408), then head of state, admired the performance of the eleven-year-old Zeami who from that moment began working under the patronage of the shogun. In other words, he became a protected 'favourite' of the Shogun. Zeami succeeded in developing the doctrine of the actor's skill and to create the illusory artistic drama "Mugen-Noh" reflecting the Buddhist vision of time. He wrote plays that describe the transformation of a single individual, rather than conflict between personages. The main characters are reincarnated as ghosts. We see characters like the priest-wanderer, who in the course of his wanderings, has casual encounters with old men or women, mythical heroes of plays – and listening to their stories changes your inner soul.

In his creative process, it can be said that Zeami has courageously transformed the Buddhist religion into theatrical art. In his book *The Flowering Spirit*, Zeami develops his teachings on the education and training of actors, on direction, on the education of the spectator. In Japan this book is considered the most comprehensive treatise on the teachings of the Noh theatre, like Diderot's *Actor's Paradox*. For actors, Zeami's work offers a better understanding of the art of acting and transmits to ordinary readers the aesthetics of the Japanese Middle Ages. And any reader is able to understand the reasoning of the author on the art and method of acting.

Why did Zeami decide to write such a book? The title gives us a clue: *The Flowering Spirit* – this is a book about hidden beauty, made accessible to all. The canon of theoretical works had to be passed. down generation after generation. When Zeami authored his book, times were troubled and the principle of 'winner takes it all' was also in force in the world of art. In order to find patrons to finance it, the theatrical company "Yusaki-za" – now the current Noh school "Kanze-ryu", had to overcome other theatre companies in theatrical competitions. After the Shogun's fall from power Yoshimitsu, also changed the fate of Zeami who however, in addition to theatrical works, also left twenty-four theoretical works.

Let us now talk about "monomane": the imitation of the nature of things, a very important principle that defines this kind of theatre. For actors "monomane" means to "enter the essence of the character", Zeami teaches. "First of all become the subject and then transform that into action" (286-7). The biggest challenge for an actor is to merge psychologically with the character: a process that evolves from external imitation to internal transformation. In this way the spectator is presented with life's inner truths which is the ultimate purpose of art. Western art theory of the twentieth century also touches upon this theme in works by Stanislavski, Tairov, and Chekhov.

In Noh theatre we find three roles; a deity or demon who appears on stage as an old man, a deity or demon in the form of an old woman, or a deity

or a demon in the form of a warrior. The first two roles are considered more difficult. In Noh theatre actors must embody these different ages as well as female roles.

The success of their transformation lies in the concept of "yugen". Noh evolves from a farcical spectacle to the mysterious and profound beauty of the spirit of "yugen". Figuratively speaking "monomane" is the form and "yugen" is the content. "Hana" is a flower, embodying the concept of hidden beauty.

Zeami says:

> It is all about the flower of youth, which is ephemeral and transitory. The old actor has already lost the flower of youth but after the age of thirty, despite his physical decline, it is replaced by the true flower of maturity which he will have to maintain until old age. (242)

2.3

Noh theatre is based on three primary ideas; imitation (or great craftsmanship), hidden beauty (philosophy) and the flower (stagecraft). Here is the real flower without which the actor and the theatre do not exist. The actor must develop and strengthen his stagecraft through perfect mastery of the art of imitation and familiarity with the hidden beauty of "yugen".

Zeami wrote in his theory work *The Flower Mirror*: "Human life is limited, but there should be no dead end in the performance of an actor of Noh theatre" (341). This concept reflects the medieval and also the current way of thinking of the Japanese; the constant desire to reach the heights of the spirit and their influence on the human soul. This is an important quote from *The Flowering Spirit* of Zeami:

> When you say 'flower' you think of what blooms on trees and in meadows season after season in which we capture the wonder of the moment of full flowering. In the theatre it is the moment that is born in the heart of the individual, the wonder before the beauty of a show, which is the source of fascination. The flower, the fascinating and the wonderful constitute a triad which is one in its essence. A flower can never remain in its perfect form. Its wonder lies in its transience. The same applies to theatrical mastery, which must be considered as a flower and never immutable. Constantly evolving into a variety of styles, theatrical mastery gives rise to wonder. It will never defeat the old actor if he possesses the true flower (243).

We say that Noh theatre has no dialogue but is that true? In reality there is dialogue. You will ask yourself: "What kind of dialogue can there be without words? It is just dance and music." In reality, the Noh theatre actor, with silent movements, is showing the audience the suffering of human existence

as he continuously dialogues with the invisible world. As you can see, all the actors wear masks and in this way, they can face the invisible on the stage as if they were mediators in a dialogue with god. In Noh theatre there are religious elements which Zeami transformed into theatrical art.

As for external conventions and stylisation, Noh theatre has often been cited in the research works of scholars from all over the world. They have highlighted its religious origins without even considering that it is a form of theatrical art. Attention has rarely been paid to the aesthetic conventions at the heart of the Noh theatre.

In European theatre the actor wearing a mask feels liberated and inspired by the vast range of possibilities that opens up before him. The Noh actor not only hides his face behind the mask, but he is also deprived of his usual image, freedom of movement, clarity of speech and even normal breathing. Wearing the mask and seeing almost nothing around him, the Noh actor is forced to walk shuffling his feet, as if barely feeling the physical and psychological connection to the surrounding world. His gestures are particularly limited.

In short, the Noh actor is deprived of his freedom to see and move in the ordinary way and is completely isolated from the outside world and the audience, resulting in a helpless and tense perception of the world behind the boundary of the mask. Yet despite the intense physical and psychological pressure he is under, he must play his part and must strive to overcome the imposed limitations with more internal expressiveness and create his own poetic space on the stage. The simplified and limited use of gestures offers the Noh actor opportunities for internal interpretation, through an immobile execution, yet bringing dynamism to the role; a paradox that allows the theatricality of Noh to express its strength from within.

The actor will never try to 'get into the character' or to reproduce a character that is familiar to the viewer and from behind the mask is forced to look at himself not only with his own eyes, but through the eyes of the author and the spectator.

Even the face of the kabuki actor, emphasised by make-up, can be considered a kind of mask which, along with his body movements, informs the spectator of the actor's character, as happens in commedia dell'arte. Facial expression rarely reflects the ardour and momentary hesitation that arises from the depths of human feeling. In Kabuki theatre, the external movement dynamic and appearance of the actor shows in an explicit way the development of the action and the character's labours under the influence of the inexorable force of destiny, rather than being a metaphor for internal conflict.

In Noh theatre the spectator must always be an observer and cannot help but feel a sense of discomfort. The viewer must breathe with the rhythm of the internal breathing of the "waki" performer, who plays the secondary role. And that, with the help of the spectator himself, determines the

internal rhythm of the performance. The "shite", who plays the main role, in most cases is a ghost from another world. The spectator can sympathise with the main character, the "shite", or admire the universal tragedy of the world, reflected in a specific destiny.

The Japanese playwright Junji Kinoshita notes that thanks to the constant presence of "waki", the actions of the "shite" are made explicit and the "waki" guarantees the reality of the world created by the "shite".

There are a lot of different Noh theatre masks. The mask was inherited from ancient masks mainly used in Western Asia. Each mask represents the image of a fixed character.

Masks 'dress' the face, rather than 'cover it'. Wearing a mask, the actor takes control of the character sheltering behind it as a character-spectator. So, the actor does not forget that he is playing a role in a scene. Among other things, as it gradually evolved, the Noh mask diminished in size, thus losing the ritual aspect of the theatre.

In the world of Noh theatre there are so-called 'half expressions'. A minimal internal movement or fluctuation of feeling can interrupt this balanced 'half expression'. Using the 'semi-expressive' property of the mask, the performer gives its basic traits. Noh recitation requires not only a dynamic external movement, but also internal gestures, born from the control of the body and from the tension of the soul. The executor must abandon the puppet quality of the mask. In Noh theatre the actor is not a living doll.

2.4

In Noh theater there is also a maskless role, the "hita-men" play the secondary role of "waki". But the actor's facial expression is strictly limited and must be absolutely neutral, therefore even the naked face becomes in reality a theatrical mask.

Zeami radically influenced the development of Noh theatre as a whole, and in detail in the "Fukushiki-Mugen-Noh". The drama *Izutsu* written by him responds to the new needs of the public of the time, providing the Noh theatre with more dynamic plots.

With the advent of "Mugen-Noh", Noh theatre owes its significant transformation precisely to the female mask and the double structure of the play. The first act takes place in the present, while the second act is a dream in which the main character remembers the past. This dream takes place at the same time as the dream of the secondary character "waki" and of the spectator. It is interesting to note that the Noh theatre mask has the power to enhance the scenic reality that determines the theatrical meaning

of the work, in particular in the double illusory "Mugen-Noh", as happens for example in the play *Izutsu*.

Let us look at *Izutsu*. The action takes place in the Ariwara temple in autumn on a moonlit night. A wandering priest, who loves the story of *Ise-monogatari*, enters a temple, formerly the residence of the famous General Ariwara no Narihira and his wife – daughter of Ki no Aritsune. The priest sees the ghost of a woman drawing water from a well to tend a grave. The ghost tells him the story of a well-known married couple based on the story *Ise-monogatari* and reveals Narihira's infidelity. After the priest finishes telling this story, the ghost reveals that she herself is the daughter of Ki-no-Aritsune and then suddenly disappears. In a dream the priest sees the ghost dancing in the guise of Narihira. During the dance, the woman transforms into Narihira and when she looks into the well, she sees the image of Narihira reflected in herself. Narihira disappears as soon as she says the word: "Darling…". Sunrise. End of the dream.

In the first act, the woman's ghost, seen by the priest, tells him of her past, and in the second act – in the priest's dream – the ghost dances in the guise of the man she loved. The action takes place in the dual world of imagination.

The "Shite", who plays the role of the female ghost, the "waki", who plays the priest, and the "Hita-men", are busy in a dialogue. The entire action takes place only between the two of them, or in the dream of the "waki". The "waki" gradually takes the spectator into the illusory world with the continuous questions he asks the "shite". The techniques of Zeami's plays are clear in the dialogues between "shite" and "waki". The "shite" usually speaks in the first person, but in reality, often violates this canon and starts speaking in the third person. But speaking in the third person, the "shite" assumes the part of another character, not only to allude to the possibility of transforming into another character, but also to further enhance the sense of illusion and of the theatricality of the piece. And the "waki" listens to the speech of the "shite" with the ears of the spectators, to tell the spectators themselves of human existence. The more the "shite" tells his own stories, the better the "waki" can objectify his actions in poetic expression. When the "shite" appears on the scene, the female ghost speaks to herself. Zeami, as a playwright when he composes the dialogues of the work, uses homonyms as a poetic device borrowed from ancient Japanese "waka" poems. He manages to develop a synthetic rhythm of gestures and language gestures, combining poetic form with dramaturgy. To indicate a character, the first sentence is pronounced in the third person and the last in the first person. Zeami tries to present the complexity of the show to the spectator. Noh theatre, based on ancient poems broadens our knowledge of them.

To achieve this goal Zeami uses the technique of changing the grammatical subject. And the interpreter accompanies this shift not with a direct change

in tone of voice, but with a small gesture: Let us now see in a dialogue how Zeami introduces the gesture in the speech. The "waki" presses the narrator "shite" to tell his story and impels the viewer into the world of illusion.

> Waki Everything you said is true, but in ancient times there was a house here.
> Shite The owner Narihira is far away,
> Waki There are remnants left still.
> Shite The glory of its history is not lost.
> Waki It tells a story.
> Shite About the man who once lived here.
> Ji-utai In the name of the temple only the name Ariwara remains, but the remains are decrepit, the remains are decrepit, the pine is aged, grass grows on the grave.

The aspect of homophony that we find in the theatrical text may be found in an example such as 'the pine is aged' that in Japanese sounds like 'the pine has grown'. "Pine – matsu" is also associated in sound with the verb 'to wait' or 'to expect'. Therefore, this sentence can be also translated as 'getting old while waiting'.

When translating Japanese poetry into foreign languages, nuances are often lost which are nested in the homophonies, which are intricately linked to the profound content of poetic works. Zeami used the multiple meanings of the homophonies to evoke in the spectator a sense of active participation in the theatrical process. From the point of view of acting and public perception, Zeami wanted the interpreter on stage to act in such a way that the gesture follows the words and not vice versa.

The words spoken by the "waki" encourage the "shite" to continue the dialogue or complete the sentences. So, without haste, as if reaching for a fleeting shadow of emotion on the mask of the "shite", the "waki"'s goal of encouraging the spectator to listen to the story of the "shite" is successful: Until the moment the "ji" begins utai" (singing), the audience's attention is increasingly attracted by the slightest changes in the expression of the naked mask. Next, the "shite" will sit down and will tell the "waki" about the past as well as the present, in a mask that has already changed expression, all in a sort of interior polyphony of the voices of the five different roles: "shite", "waki", "ji-utai", "Zeami" and "spectator".

In the dual illusory representation of the "Mugen-Noh" everyone present participates in a highly effective theatrical performance.

It is evident that the originality of the mask and the polyphony of voices are an integral part of Zeami's dramaturgical technique. It should also be noted that Zeami did not copy the story *Ise-monogatari*, but reworked it

inventively and presented his interpretation of history, creating a theatrical
work based on short poems taken from the story.

2.5 Conclusion

To conclude, we can say first that theatrical art by its nature must be
constantly reinterpreted. Theatre is a synthesis of beauty and truth.
The process of preparing a production, writing a play, reading the text,
rehearsals, all this is theatre. And only theatre has such a wide range of
artistic creative processes. The history of theatre says that it is a universal
art, regardless of where it was born. This demonstrates, for example, the fact
that once you have experienced ancient Japanese theatre, you feel in touch
with the inner truth of life. Theatre is a common treasure that enriches the
spirit of humanity.

Secondly, theatre is not a simple mirror of life and conflicts between
characters, but it is an expression of human feelings: experiences, suffering,
fear, sadness, joy, expectations. Performances in the best theatres in the
world reflect the vanity and illusoriness of life, and they make us reflect not
on how, but on why we live. *The Flowering of Spirit*, Zeami's work on Noh
theatre theory. also says so. I consider traditional Japanese theatre can have
a significant impact on the development of modern theatre globally. Not
only regarding the worldly, technical side of productions, but for the theory,
the approach to theatrical art and vision of the world.

Third, what is interesting in Japanese theatre is that to improve the
quality of the performance, theatre operators have always tried to create
an ideal relationship with the public. They were aware of the fact that the
spectator himself participates in the creative process. Zeami says: "People
have quite different tastes. Tastes in singing, style and in mimicry vary
depending on location and represent great diversity, so it is unacceptable
to adhere to an unchanging theatrical style. That is why an actor who has
achieved complete mastery of the entire range of mimicry is like someone
who owns the seeds of various flowers which bloom all year: from the
blackthorn spring until the final flowering of autumn chrysanthemum. But
each flower should then only be shown at a time that satisfies the needs and
hopes of the that is born in the heart of the beholder" (282). Thus, the quote,
from which it is clear that Zeami has tried to create a theatre in constant
relationship with the public.

We may not have revealed all the mysteries of this genre of ancient
Japanese theatre. Indeed, it may have complicated the concept of theatre. But
we want to underline the fact that theatre is a living thing. It is impossible
to imagine what it will be like in a hundred years. We hope that the theatre

can continue to improve itself and change our stereotypical ideas in this regard, in the most unexpected and amazing ways. This is the legacy left to us by the best of theatre.

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