



Height of binding 310 mm

Sbarra, Francesco

Lucca 1611 – 1668 Vienna

Sieg-Streit deß Lufft und Wassers Freuden-Fest zu Pferd zu dem Glorwürdigisten Beyläger Beeder Kayserlichen Majestäten Leopoldi deß Ersten Römischen Kayzers. und Margarita, Gebornher Königlich Infantin auß Hispanien dargestellt in dero Kayserlichen Residentz Statt Wienn.

Vienna, Matthäus Cosmerovin, 1667

FOLIO (300 × 195 mm), (20)ff. signed A–K², not foliated or paginated, plus thirty engraved plates captioned in Italian (nine folding and twenty-one full-page) of which five engraved by Franciscus van den Steen (all but one after designs by Nicolas IV de Hoey), fourteen (including series numbered 1–12) engraved by Jan Ossenbeeck (after Hoey), two engraved by Gerard Bouttats (after Hoey), eight numbered 1–8 both drawn and engraved by Hoey, and one print unsigned (most probably engraved by Ossenbeeck).

PROVENANCE title-page inscribed *Inscriptus est Bibliotheca* [name deleted] | *donatus ab Ill.mo D.no D.no Victore ab Althan... Anno 1667* — Reiss & Sohn, Auktion 89, Königstein im Taunus, 7 May 2003, lot 2166

Minor and well-executed repairs to hinges of two folding plates, fore-edge of another plate abraded, overall in fine state of preservation.

BINDING contemporary leather-backed vellum boards (bound with a related work, see below).

A DESCRIPTION (with libretto interspersed) of one of the most magnificent of Hapsburg court entertainments, a *balletto à cavallo* performed on 24 and 31 January 1667 in the inner court square (Innerer Burghof) in Vienna, to celebrate the marriage of the Emperor Leopold I (1640–1705) to the Spanish Infanta Margarita Teresa (1651–1673). The spectacle, involving around a thousand luxuriously dressed actors and two hundred musicians, was created and produced by the Florentine impresario Alessandro Carducci, aided by Carlo Pasetti of Ferrara, who designed theatrical machinery and scenes. ‘For centuries... [it] has been considered the greatest horse ballet in history’.¹

¹ *International Encyclopedia of the Dance* (New York & Oxford 1998), III, pp.381–382. Hilde Haider-Pregler, ‘Das Roßballett im Inneren Burghof zu Wien’ in *Maske und Kothurn* 15 (1969), pp.291–324; Herbert Seifert, ‘Die Festlichkeiten zur ersten Hochzeit Kaiser Leopolds I’ in *Österreichische*

The ‘Contest between Air and Water’ elaborates the conceit that the elements of air and water are in dispute over which of them has brought forth the beautiful Margarita; air calls on fire for help, and water on earth, and a mock combat with pistols and swords ensues. The tournament commences with a parade of decorated floats circling the Burghof, each bearing singers and surrounded by musicians and soldiers on foot and horseback. First to enter is the ship of the Argonauts bearing Fama, who recounts the quarrel between the elements; then air, fire, water, and earth in that order. The machines retire and combat between the two sides begins. Suddenly, a voice sings out, the fighting ceases, and painted clouds part to reveal Eternity in her Temple, who explains that Margarita belongs to neither element, but to Leopold. The temple opens and out comes the Emperor himself leading a procession of the spirits of his ancestors, musicians, courtiers, soldiers, and the ‘Chariot of Glory’. Glory calls on the Emperor, twelve spirits, and thirty-six riders to perform an equestrian ballet, and after it concludes, all the participants leave the courtyard.²

The first of the illustrations ‘Comparsa dei Cavalieri’ (440 × 690 mm, platemark) depicts the Burghof ringed with seats and the carousel of the ‘Nava degli Argonauti’ and four floats signifying the elements: ‘Gruppo di Nubi, con Giunone, et Iride in l’Arco Baleno’ (air, represented by Iris on her rainbow), ‘Grotta di Vulcano per la Squadriglia del Fuoco’ (fire, represented by Vulcan’s mountain), ‘Seno di Mare, con Nettuno per la Squadriglia dell’acqua’ (water, represented by Neptune’s fountain), and ‘Giardino di Berecintia per la Squadriglia della Terra’ (earth, represented by Berecinthia surrounded by gambolling fauns).

The next five plates are details, the first showing the ship of the Argonauts, designed to accommodate sixty actors and the largest of Pasetti’s machines (580 × 445 mm), then the float of each element (circa 280 × 440 mm). Another large plate, ‘Comparsa di sua Maesta Ces.a dal Tempio dell’Eternità’ (440 × 700 mm), depicts the entry of the Emperor into the arena, and is followed by one of the ‘Carro della Gloria’ with the heroic virtues on board (285 × 440 mm). The mock combat, conducted on foot and horseback and abruptly terminated by the descent of the Emperor from the temple of Eternity, is recorded on a series of eight plates entitled ‘Parte delle figure dei Caroselli’ (each print circa 140 × 200 mm).



The ship of the Argonauts bearing Fama, the first of the festival machines to enter the Burghof (folding plate 580 × 445 mm, by Franciscus van den Steen after a drawing by Nicolas IV de Hoey)

Musikzeitschrift 29 (1974), pp.6–16; Seifert’s *Der Oper am Wiener Kaiserhof* (Tutzing 1985), pp.58, 458; and his *Der Sig-prangende Hochzeit-Gott: Hochzeitsfeste am Wiener Hof der Habsburger und ihre Allegorik, 1622–1699* (Vienna 1988), pp.29–32; Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, ‘The equestrian ballet in seventeenth-century Europe’ in *German Life & Letters. A Quarterly Review* 36 (1982–1983), pp.198–212; Maria Golubeva, *The Glorification of emperor Leopold I in image, spectacle, and text* (Mainz 2000), pp.104–105.

² Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Triumphal shews: tournaments at German-speaking courts in their European context 1560–1730* (Berlin 1992), pp.94–105.



**‘Retirata di S.M.C. Seguita da Capi Squadri Cavalieri, et accompagnatore della Festa, nel Tempio delle Eternità’
(folding plate 290 × 430 mm, by Jan Ossenbeek after Hoey)**

A series of thirteen prints, entitled ‘Parte delle Figure del Balletto’ (circa 275 × 180 mm), records the choreography of the equestrian ballet, organised in twelve figures with an exit procession, and performed according to a dance suite composed by Johann Heinrich Schmelzer (see below). These illustrations show both the patterns executed on the ground by groups of eight, six, or four riders (the Emperor always in the centre), and the steps and leaps performed in the air: the *croupade* (a dressage figure), and the *capriole* (a leap in

which the horse kicks out its hind legs). The final illustration records the ‘Retirata... nel Tempio delle Eternità’ (290 × 430 mm).³

³ F.W.H. Hollstein and subsequent editors have described the prints inexactly in *Dutch & Flemish etchings, engravings and woodcuts 1450–1700*, IX (Amsterdam 1953), p.48 nos. 11–18 (de Hoey), XIV (Amsterdam 1956), p.211 nos. 44–58 (Ossenbeek), XXVIII (Blaricum 1984), pp.58–59 nos. 28–32

The court librettist Francesco Sbarra was assisted by Antonio Bertali (1605–1669), who composed the chorus and vocal soli (his music is lost), and by Johann Heinrich Schmelzer, who provided instrumental music (see below).

Two settings of the text are recorded by the Vd17 project (Verzeichnis der im deutschen Sprachraum erschienenen Drucke des 17. Jahrhunderts).⁴ An edition with Italian text (*La Contesa Dell'Aria, e Dell'Acqua*) was published simultaneously with the same plates.⁵ An edition in quarto format with copies of the illustrations by Andreas Frölich was published as part of the compilation 'Allerhöchst-Feyerlichste Festivitäten' in the *Diarium europaeum, XV, Appendix oder Anhang* (Frankfurt am Main circa 1667).

REFERENCES Anton Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte 1482–1882* (Vienna 1883), I, p.253, no. 1451; *Katalog der Ornamentstichsammlung der Staatlichen Kunstbibliothek Berlin* (1939), no. 2850 and Staatliche Museen Berlin, *Katalog der Lipperheideschen Kostümbibliothek*, edited by Eva Nienholdt & Gretel Wagner-Neumann (Berlin 1965), Sc8 (lacking a plate); *Das Barocke Fest*, exhibition catalogue by Eckehart Nölle, Neuen Residenz (Bamberg 1968), no. 41; *Libretti. Verzeichnis der bis 1800 erschienenen Textbücher* [in Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel] (Frankfurt am Main 1970), nos. 1491–1492; Edmund A. Bowles, *Musical ensembles in festival books 1550–1800. An iconographical & documentary survey* (Ann Arbor 1981), pp.329–334; Frank-Rutger Hausmann, *Bibliographie der deutschen Übersetzungen aus dem Italienischen* (Tübingen 1992), no. 1045

Bound with

Schmelzer, Johann Heinrich

Scheibbs (Lower Austria) circa 1620/1623 – 1680 Prague

(van den Steen); see now, Peter Fuhring, *Ornament prints in the Rijksmuseum, II. The Seventeenth century* (Rotterdam 2004), nos. 10405–10434.

⁴ VD17 I:088448B, having catchword 'Herr' on folio C1 recto, locating four copies, all incomplete; and VD17 23:248829K, having catchword 'Grav' on folio C1 recto (as our copy), locating six copies, of which two apparently complete (including Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek, G1 4° 424, digitised for 'Festkultur online', <http://dbs.hab.de/barock/feast.htm>). The copies at Harvard and New York Public Library also are incomplete (lacking one and two plates respectively).

⁵ VD17 23:250918U: three copies (including Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Hn 4° 32: 'Ohne den gefält. Kupferstich "Comparsa dei cavalieri ... nel maggior cortile dell'imperiale residenza in Vienna..." der dt. Ausgabe'; digitised for the Wolfenbütteler Digitale Bibliothek', <http://diglib.hab.de/drucke/hn-4f-32/start.htm>).

Arie per il balletto à cavallo, nella festa rappresentata per le gloriosissime nozze delle SS. CC. MM.tà di Leopoldo Primo, Imperatore Augustissimo, et di Margherita Infanta di Spagna.

Vienna, Matthäus Cosmerovin, 1667

FOLIO (300 × 195 mm), (6)ff. signed A⁶ (A2–A6 signed A2, B, B2, C, C2), not foliated or paginated. Woodcut device on title-page.

THE COMPOSER of the instrumental music for the *balletto à cavallo* performed in 1667 for the wedding of the Emperor Leopold and the Infanta Margarita Teresa was Johann Heinrich Schmelzer, the leading Austrian composer of instrumental music of his generation. The music consists of five movements: 'Corrente per l'Intrada di S.M.C. & di tutti i Cavaglieri', 'Giga per Entrata de i Saltatori [specially-trained horsemen, executing the *caprioles*], e per molte altre figure', 'Follia per nuovo ingresso de i Saltatori, & altre operazioni de Cavalli', 'Allemanda per gl'intrecci e figure di passeggio grave introdotto da S.M.C. e Cavaglieri', and 'Sarabande per termine del Balletto'.

'Nach Sbarras Beschreibung wurde die das eigentliche Ballett einleitende Sinfonia von über 100 Saiteninstrumenten, dazu Flöten, Trompeten und anderen Blasinstrumenten gespielt. Die als Intrada fungierende Corrente, die Follia als mittleren der fünf Tänze und die Sarabanda am Ende, alle sechsstimmig, führten 24 Trompeten und zwei Paar Pauken aus, die Giga vier Clarini, die zweistimmig mit dem doppelchörigen Streichorchester konzertierten, und die Allemanda nur die Streicher'.⁶

This edition was appended to both the Italian and German editions of Sbarra's libretto (see above), but apparently not all copies. It was reprinted as part of 'Allerhöchst-Feyerlichste Festivitäten' in the *Diarium europaeum, XV, Appendix oder Anhang* at Frankfurt am Main circa 1667.

REFERENCES Anton Mayer, *Wiens Buchdrucker-Geschichte 1482–1882* (Vienna 1883), I, p.252, no. 1471; Egon Wellesz, *Die Ballett-Suiten von Johann Heinrich und Anton Andreas Schmelzer* (Vienna 1914), pp.53–63, 74; *Teatro y fiesta del Siglo de Oro en tierras europeas de los Austrias*, catalogue of an exhibition held at Real Alcázar (Seville 2003), p.304 fig. 232 (title-page reproduced); *Dancing by the book: a catalogue of books 1531–1804 in the collection of Mary Ann O'Brian Malkin* (New York 2003), no. 117/2 (title-page reproduced)

⁶ Herbert Seifert, *op. cit.*, 1985, pp.144–145.