



..... International Press Service

Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

A Ballad of the Months during Shrovetide in Southern Italy

Rome, 10.02.2020 [ENA]

The carnival is a festivity celebrated all over the world. The most famous celebrations, which attract thousands of tourists every year take place in Rio de Janeiro, Cologne and Venice. However, also other parts of Italy have extremely rich and still rather unknown carnival traditions, which strongly reflect the ancient rituals, cults and beliefs deep-rooted in the Peninsula over the centuries.

Despite the religious

dimension of contemporary carnivals, the roots of Italian carnival date back to the pre-christian times and old pagan rites. The traditions of Southern Italy carnival are reflections of a strong agro-pastoral culture and the "Ballad of the Months" represents a contribution to the recording and understanding of what remains of the archaic folk tradition.

The text of this Ballad is based upon a variant of the Neapolitan dialect spoken in Marcianise a town situated about 20 miles from Naples and whose name is strictly connected with the ancient Roman God of the War: Mars. There are certain features in the cult of Mars suggesting the god was also associated, at least at an early stage, with agro-pastoral culture (the so called "Mars Silvanus").

Consequently, Mars was invoked in the ancient hymn of the Arval Brothers, a college or priesthood whose chief original duty was to offer annual public sacrifice for the fertility of the fields.

The ritual "Ballad of the Months" was performed during the Carnival (on Sunday before Shrove Tuesday and on the Carnival Sunday).

The group of actors performing the Ballad was formed in Marcianise, where the following text was collected, by eighteen persons. But the main characters were the twelve months, Punchinello and Volante (The One who can Fly).

The performance consisted in trumpeting in squares or in given places of the town the qualities of each month. Usually, the leader of the group of performers was Punchinello.

He paved the way of the funny cortege on foot and behind him a Trumpeter went on horseback announcing with fanfare the arrival of Volante with the Twelve months (All of them arriving on horseback).

The first to speak was Volante. Volante was not an angel, but for the performance he wore artificial wings (wing usually handmade with cardboard).

This character immediately brings us back to memory the flying messenger par excellence, the ancient Greek and Roman God Hermes. Normally, there was also a commander of the performance who had

Redaktioneller Programmdienst:
European News Agency

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
Email: contact@european-news-agency.com
Internet: european-news-agency.com

Haftungsausschluss:

Der Herausgeber übernimmt keine Haftung für die Richtigkeit oder Vollständigkeit der veröffentlichten Meldung, sondern stellt lediglich den Speicherplatz für die Bereitstellung und den Zugriff auf Inhalte Dritter zur Verfügung. Für den Inhalt der Meldung ist der allein jeweilige Autor verantwortlich.



..... **International Press Service**

spoken after Volante. He set the tone to Punchinello who replied him in kind. The characters of the Months were performed by twelve men (men performed female characters too as in the time of Shakespeare)

and they wore clothes representing their own feature (i.e. meteorological conditions) and embraced also their typical agricultural utensils).

The crucial event of this Feast day was the so called “Sacrifice” of Carnival.

Following is the Neapolitan version and the English translation by Carlo Marino:

Prologue

Volante: “Di qua, di là, di giù e di su, I fuje p’ogni sentiere:/ppe cielo, ppe terra e ppe mare I so’ nu passeggiere./ Che belle novelle, che requie adesso e e’ mise ell’ann me veneno appriess’. I’ so Volante che scengo do cielo, vi lascio a Dio/ a tutti quanti e la tromba si fa avanti – ed ecco il Capitano con dodici lancieri”. (Here and there, up and down I swiftly pass I run away/ on every path, by sky, by land and by sea. /

What good news! What peace now! And the months of the year follow me. I am Volante a passenger from the sky. I say you Farewell/ And the trumpeter comes forward and here is the Captain with twelve spearmen).

Capitano: “I so’ o’ capitan ‘ra primma schiera, a casa mia/ se tromba e se sciala (I am the Captain of the first rank /In my house you drink and you are happy!).

Pulcinella (Punchinello): ”Aière sera te mangiaste a’ ciottola senza sale! (Yesterday evening you certainly ate saltless maize flour porridge!)

Capitano: “Ah Procinella! Te’arraccumanno chisti rurece mise, si nun ‘e puorte buone, cu chesta mia frusta frustar ti voglio!”

(Oh Punchinello! I recommend these twelve months to you/ if you don’t lead them well, with this whip of mine I will whip you!)

Pulcinella (Punchinello): E I’ te ronc a’ nnoglia! (What a silly! And I am going to cheat you !).

Capitano: “T’arraccumanno o’ mese e’ jennaro ch’è o’ cchiù/maturo e’ ll’anno. I miei cumanne so’ n’attacc/ e’ tromba e vire jennare cosa ti racconta! (I recommend to you January, the ripest of the year./ My orders are like a sound of a trumpet and let’s see what January tells you).

The prologue gives clearly some indications on the nature and on level of exposure to certain cultural influences: from the Fescennina jocatio (one of the earliest kinds of Italian poetry, subsequently developed into satire and

Roman comic drama. This kind of play stemmed from the southern Etruscan town of Fescennium) right to the early Middle Ages performances and to Commedia dell’Arte, which was performed outdoors in

**Redaktioneller Programmdienst:
European News Agency**

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
Email: contact@european-news-agency.com
Internet: european-news-agency.com

Haftungsausschluss:

Der Herausgeber übernimmt keine Haftung für die Richtigkeit oder Vollständigkeit der veröffentlichten Meldung, sondern stellt lediglich den Speicherplatz für die Bereitstellung und den Zugriff auf Inhalte Dritter zur Verfügung. Für den Inhalt der Meldung ist der allein jeweilige Autor verantwortlich.

**International Press Service.....**

temporary venues by professional actors who were costumed and masked. The Months try to describe cosmogonic acts of creation at the beginning of time, the creation of the world and of man, animal and plant life, with particular reference to those factors which condition man's relation to his environment such as the need to ensure fertility and protection of himself. After the prologue, in the scene of the action are represented the features of the months. No translator can hope to grasp the condensed force and the flavour of the original dialect

words associated with sexual metaphors: fertility, the magic of a small, primitive agricultural community. My version is just a "compromise" without aesthetic ambitions and goes as follows:

- 1) I' so' jinnare o' cchiù maturo e' ll'anno/ Uerra faccio ch'e putature/ Sciarra faccio ch'e' pecurare/ nisciuna jurnata justa le faccio fa'/e me ne vaco cuntento e felice/ verite frebbaro che cosa ve dice. (I am January the ripest of the year/ At war I am with pruners/ with shepherds I have quarrel/ No nice day I offer them!/ And I'm happy and cheerful, and look what February tells you).
- 2) I so' frebbare curte e minore/ che specie ponno fa vintotto juorne?/ Si o' mese mio fosse justo/ facesse quaglià o vino rint'o fusto/ me ne vaco cuntento e felice/

e verite marzo che cosa vi dice. (I am February small and short/ how important they are 28 days! If my days were right/ you would have excellent wine in the barrels! And I'm happy and cheerful, and look what March tells you!).

3) I so marz e cu stu mie zappiello/ me mangio pane e puorre/ e sto sempe riuno/ognuno chistu mese spenne/ cause, cazette e pellicciune./ Mo sicco, mo mbuso/ chisto o chiappa sempe 'nto purtuso./ A vui femmene ca nun facite a' razza/ è signo che a' fune nun c'arriva 'nfaccia o' musso./ Me ne vaco cuntento e felice/ e verité abbrile cosa ve dice. (I am March with the little hoe, / I am eating bread and leaks and / I am always hungry!/ Every year during this month, you need to buy socks, stocking and furs. / with dry

weather and wet I am/ and I always cheat you/ Women try to generate, otherwise it means that the rope is too short!/ And I'm happy and cheerful, and look what April tells you!).

4) I' so abbrile dorce dormire/gli uccelli cantano/e gli arbri fioriscono/ ho coppato boschi, montagne e vallone/ pe trovare chistu mazzett' di fiore/ chistu mazzette de fiori/ faccio nu ramaglietto e regalo/ al mio sposo Maggio/ch'e un bravo giovinetto. (I am April sweet sleep/ birds are singing/trees are blossoming! / I crossed woods, mountains and valleys/ to find this bunch of flowers,/ This bunch of flowers I wish to give to my bridegroom May as a present).

5) I so' Maggio che mo' so' calato/ questo è il fiore che abbrile mi ha regalato/dimme donzella bella

addò si stata/ pe' truvare questi così profumati?/ I' so' Maggio e sono allegro di mente/ mantengo tutti in alimenti:/puorc, capre, ciucce e ghiumente,/ anche gli asini vanno 'nta la furesta/ chi raglia, chi ammaglia, chi monta/ chi smonta, chi arrizza e chi fa festa/ e me ne vaco cuntento e felice/ e verite giugno che cosa ve

**Redaktioneller Programmdienst:
European News Agency**

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
Email: contact@european-news-agency.com
Internet: european-news-agency.com

Haftungsausschluss:

Der Herausgeber übernimmt keine Haftung für die Richtigkeit oder Vollständigkeit der veröffentlichten Meldung, sondern stellt lediglich den Speicherplatz für die Bereitstellung und den Zugriff auf Inhalte Dritter zur Verfügung. Für den Inhalt der Meldung ist der allein jeweilige Autor verantwortlich.



..... **International Press Service**

dice. (I am May, just in time/ This is the flower April gave me/ Tell me nice girl where have you been / to find this wonderful bunch?/ I am May and I am very merry/ I offer everybody food and drink: Pigs, she-goats, donkeys and mares/ asses to go to the forest/ heehawing, mating and living up!/ And I'm happy and cheerful, and look what June tells you!).

6) E I so' giugno cu sta mia sarrecchia/ tante meto,

quanno songo chieccio/ trentasei carrate e na varrecchia/ 'ncoppa a' pignata 'e mammeta/ ce manca a cuperchia!/ E si cocche femmena/appriesse me venesse/'a capa le tagliasse/ cu chesta mia sarrecchia./ E me ne vaco cuntento e felice,/ verite luglio che cosa ve dice.(I am June with my scythe/ but I reap only when I am mature./ And if a woman dared to come/ behind me, I surely cut her head/ by this scythe of mine!/ And I'm happy and cheerful, while July is ready to speak up!).

7) E I so' luglio cu chistu carro rutte/ E l'aggio rutte rint a' na maese/ fatecate! Quanno è tiempo asciutto/ pecché quann' chiove/ se perdonò e' spese!/ Ma si stu carro mio 'ncarrasse tutto/ cantanno, cantanno me ne venesse/ ra 'a carrese./Ma si stu carro mio

pigliasse tutto/trentasei tuommole 'e rano/ mett' e spese. Eccoci Agosto/ ch'è o cchiù fetente mese! (And I am July on this broken cart/ I did break it in a furrow/ Work! When the weather is dry/'cause when it rains/ you lose money! If my cart everything loaded/ I come back singing a song/ through the main street/ And here's August, the cruellest month!).

8) I so agosto, Agosto malato/ I' so Agosto, Agosto infettato;/ O miereco m'ha ordinato/ na vallina, ma tante che me l'ha fatta/ cotta, m'è scesa na mezza paposcia, che mo' m'ammoscio. (I am August, the ill August/ I am August, infected August;/ the doctor prescribed me / a hot chicken consommé, but/ I am suffering from gout/ and I cannot work).

9) E I so settembre cu sta fica moscia/e l'uva muscarella se fernisce/si cocche donna patisce l'angoscia/cu chesta mia mano ce l'alliscio!/ Ce l'alliscio con grande amore/ecccove uttobre ch'è/nu bravo velignatore (And I'm September with figs and muscatel grapes . If any woman suffer deep anxiety my hands is ready to play with her ! I will play with great love and here is October clever in the vineyard).

10) I so' uttobre e so' nu/ bravo velignatore/ cu sta scalella e cu sta fiscenella/ vaco truvanno quatte nenne belle/ ca me regneno zeppe zeppe sti cupelle!/ Me ne vaco cuntente e felice/ Verite novembre che cosa vi dice. (I am October clever in the vineyard , with my ladder and basket I' m looking for nice girls who can fill up my baskets

with pig bones and now I need some Verdicchio wine and a nice wife ! I am happy and say you bye - bye I am December .

My own feeling is that the structure of this Ballad - sequence of isolated scenes , caricature of the historic

Redaktioneller Programmdienst:
European News Agency

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
Email: contact@european-news-agency.com
Internet: european-news-agency.com

Haftungsausschluss:

Der Herausgeber übernimmt keine Haftung für die Richtigkeit oder Vollständigkeit der veröffentlichten Meldung, sondern stellt lediglich den Speicherplatz für die Bereitstellung und den Zugriff auf Inhalte Dritter zur Verfügung. Für den Inhalt der Meldung ist der allein jeweilige Autor verantwortlich.



..... **International Press Service**

time - is inherited , as part of its emotional stuff , from the CARMINA SALARIA , the songs of the Salii .
Salii were priests of Mars and performed carmina salaria dancing in processions , which annually occurred
in honour of Mars , during the month of March , through the streets of Rome .

And I go away cheerful and lively while November is ready to speak)

11) I so nuvembre e so nu bravo semenatore/tengo a' semmenta pe' 'nate tre partetelle/: una pe me, una pe'
l'aucielli e n'ata/ pe' tutt'e femmene belle!/ me ne vaco cuntente e felice/ verité ricembre che cosa ve dice.
(November , Clever Sower , I ' ve got sows in three parts : one for me , one for birds and one for nice
women ! And I go away cheerful and lively while December is ready to speak) .

12) I so' dicembre/ o cchiù decembrato e l'anno!/m'aggio fatto na mangiata/ 'e chesti quatt'ossere 'e puorc/
e mo ce vo' nu poco 'e vino Verdicchio/ nu lietto frisco e na mugliera fresca!/ Ve saluto e so
cuntiento/I'so'dicembre. (I' m December the worst of the year !I had a meal

The Salii were twelve (the months are 12) and their invocations were called Axamenta (latin Axare = to
mention) and were addressed to all gods . The invocations could have the name of the single god , in the
Ballad = name of the single month .

Bericht online lesen:

https://netizen.en-a.eu/kunst_kultur_und_musik/a_ballad_of_the_months_during_shrovetide_in_southern_italy-77319/

Redaktion und Verantwortlichkeit:

V.i.S.d.P. und gem. § 6 MDStV: Dr. Carlo Marino

**Redaktioneller Programmdienst:
European News Agency**

Annette-Kolb-Str. 16
D-85055 Ingolstadt
Telefon: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.660
Telefax: +49 (0) 841-951. 99.661
Email: contact@european-news-agency.com
Internet: european-news-agency.com

Haftungsausschluss:

Der Herausgeber übernimmt keine Haftung für die Richtigkeit
oder Vollständigkeit der veröffentlichten Meldung, sondern
stellt lediglich den Speicherplatz für die Bereitstellung und
den Zugriff auf Inhalte Dritter zur Verfügung. Für den Inhalt
der Meldung ist der allein jeweilige Autor verantwortlich.