

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

The Future of Research in Renaissance Festivals: Resources and Collaboration

Venice (Italy), 20-22 March 2010

Convened by:

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Co-sponsored by

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Main Objectives of the Workshop:

- To bring together leading experts in the area of Renaissance Festival Studies, with early and mid-career researchers, to explore shared initiatives for the future, taking in manuscript, printed, digital and material resources.
- To promote effective collaboration in identifying and making accessible the materials and opportunities to forward this research on an interdisciplinary and pan-European basis.

Recent years have seen considerable progress in the scientific study of Renaissance Festival.

The ESF has played a part in this 21st century development, specifically by funding conferences held in 2000 and 2003 at Castelveccchio Pascoli, Tuscany, the first of which led to the collaborative volume of scholarly essays, *Court festivals of the European Renaissance: Art, Politics and Performance*, edited by J. R. Mulryne and Elizabeth Goldring (Aldershot and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2002), a volume which was very well received in the research community and by reviewers. The volume accompanied other major advances including the bibliographical survey, *Spectaculum Europeum*, edited by Pierre Béhar and Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly and the 2 volume *Europa Triumphans: Court and Civic Festivals in the Renaissance*, edited by J. R. Mulryne, Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly and Margaret Shewring (Aldershot and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2004) with its edited transcription, translation, annotation, illustration and commentary of festival books from eight different countries in Europe and South America. A recent addition to the scholarship of Festival is Iain Fenlon's *The Ceremonial City: History, Memory and Myth in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven and London: Yale University press, 2007).

These printed texts and studies have led to publication by electronic means. *Europa Triumphans* is currently being republished as an e-book (February 2010); a major collection of 253 Festival books is now available in digitized form on the website of the British Library as the result of a project led by J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (University of Warwick) in collaboration with Dr. Kristian Jensen and his colleagues (British Library) with funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK); further work is going forward on websites hosted by the Warburg Institute, University of London, and the University of Warwick. Cognate significant

developments have been undertaken at the Herzog August Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel, where a major collection of Festival texts has been online for a number of years and is constantly evolving. An important and relevant initiative is the Medici project in Florence and there are high expectations related to the development of *Europeana*, an open-access on-line resource.

These materials provide a means of accessing a great deal of previously barely accessible texts with varying levels of searchability. Some initial collaboration has taken place to secure common standards and keyword search terms but this is an area in which further discussion is now essential.

Rich repositories of Festival-Related materials exist in such collections as the Kupferstichkabinet (Dresden), Schloss Ambras (Austria), the Nationalmuseum and the Royal Armoury (Stockholm), the Palace of Versailles and the Loire Chateaux (France) and the Musei Civici (Venice). Opportunities for collaborative study of these materials exist and, if appropriately pursued, will bring important new knowledge of a trans-European kind to scholarly notice.

Renaissance Festival studies now needs a well-understood common discourse that will permit new and established scholars to communicate successfully and to develop a theoretical vocabulary that makes possible detailed case-studies and wide-ranging analytical assessments across multi-disciplinary boundaries from cultural, social, political and economic history, through languages and literatures to creative and performative studies in the fields of theatre, scenography, dance, musicology, architecture, heritage and the visual arts.

Discussions with leading figures in the museum world have suggested that exhibitions centring on festivals and related events are a distinct possibility for major galleries. Such exhibitions would set well with recent developments in gallery space and the role of the curator.

The success of television programmes on historical topics is widely acknowledged and future programmes might well include topics related to Festival studies.

Invited scholars have welcomed the opportunity to be present at a most promising gathering which has every chance of defining trajectories for the discipline into the future.

Workshop Agenda

A key aspect of this workshop will be the collation in advance of information on developments in Festival resources to date.

The Workshop will provide a forum for detailed discussion of the current scholarship of Renaissance Festival Culture.

It will provide an ideal opportunity to achieve a measure of agreement among international participants on the most effective way of disseminating current and

future research to a wider public through printed and visual media including websites, CDs and DVDs, printed collections, exhibitions, pod-casts and broadcast media and by a programme of funded translation studies, in particular to make Festival texts in the less familiar European languages (Polish is an important example) available to the generality of researchers across Europe.

An element in the workshop deliberations would be a consideration of Festival on a wider, global scale and in a temporal framework that stretches both before and after the Renaissance from the classical heritage of Ancient Rome to the ceremonial world of the 21st century.

Report publication and dissemination

A workshop report will be circulated among the participants and their colleagues. It will also be made available on a website. It will provide a point of reference for future plans for publications (in various formats), for funding bids and for the development of collaborative international, interdisciplinary networks.

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

Location: Palazzo Pesaro Papafava, Venice

Saturday 20 March 2010

Afternoon/ Evening *Arrival*

Sunday 21st March 2010

10.30-11.00 *Registration and Coffee*

11.00-11.10 **Welcome by Convenor, Margaret Shewring**, University of Warwick

11.10-11.30 **Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF)**
Arianna Ciula (Standing Committee for the Humanities)

11.30-12.30 **Introductory Session: including a series of brief introductions
outlining the topics to be discussed during the workshop and the
questions to be addressed about the content and scope of future
research and related developments**

12.30-14.00 *Lunch*

14.00-15.30 **Afternoon Session: Documentary and Visual Archives**
Brief presentations followed by whole group discussion

15.30-16.00 *Coffee / tea break*

16.00-17.30 **Digital Resources:**
**Brief presentations/demonstrations followed by whole group
discussion**

18.30 *Dinner*

Monday 22nd March 2010

09.30-11.00 **Morning Session: Translation and Dissemination of Source
Materials for Renaissance Festival Studies**

11.00-11.30 *Coffee / Tea Break*

11.30-13.00 **Discussion:**

- (1) Future programmes of digital resource enhancement
- (2) Future developments in galleries, museums, collections and heritage sites

12.30-14.00 *Lunch*

14.00-15.00

Afternoon Session: Ways forward

- (1) Discussion of plans for future interdisciplinary and trans-European collaborations
- (2) Discussion of funding possibilities for: documentary and digital archives; visual and performance research; curating, conservation and heritage developments; research and the broadcast media; dissemination of research and its accessibility beyond the academic community

15.00-16.30

**Concluding Session including summary of future actions and
follow-up activities/networking/collaboration**

16.30

End of Workshop and departure

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Objectives of the ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH)

The main tasks of the **ESF Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH)** are:

- to encourage interdisciplinary work through the independent evaluation of collaborative research proposals emanating from the scholarly community;
- to identify priority research areas and to play an integrative and co-ordinating role by creating links between research communities which in the Humanities are often small and fragmented.
- to contribute to the development of the ESF science policy agenda and to provide expert advice on science policy actions at the European level in the field of its responsibilities.

The Committee is well aware that the ESF is the only European Agency where the Humanities have a place next to the other sciences and where European projects are reviewed, developed and subsequently operated.

The Committee considers it all the more important to be heard as the voice of the Human Sciences in Europe and to continue pleading for a more prominent place for the Humanities in the European landscape.

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