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The Court Culture in France, Italy and England in 16-17th Centuries: Interaction and Mutual Influence

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Abstract

The article examines the traditions of French court ballet, which are rooted in early medieval Italian musical and theatrical performances, as well as the traditions of the medieval carnival. The functional features of the French court ballet are revealed. French ballet is viewed through the prism of a synthesized art form: dance, music, poetry and complex scenography. It is specified that French ballet as an independent genre was formed in the era of Queen Catherine de Medici.

It was revealed that thanks to the skill and professionalism of choreographers of both French and Italian descent, the French court ballet reached its peak in the first half of the seventeenth century.

It was determined that the court ballet was becoming a cultural and political instrument that raised the status of France in Europe, served to strengthen the authority of the French monarch, and was a means of uniting the French monarchy and the people. Despite significant financial costs, the political and cultural feasibility of staging court ballets exceeded the economic feasibility.

An analogy is drawn with the English court Masque. It is substantiated that the English court Masque was based on the traditions of Italian intermedio and French court ballet. Thus, English stage designers adopted the experience of Italian stage designers. Dances of Italian origin were an integral part of Masque in England. Choreography in Masque was created by French and Italian choreographers.

It has been proven that English culture was influenced by continental culture, which contributed to the formation of a common cultural space.

It is substantiated that the genre of French ballet, Italian intermedio and English Masque were not a high art, but over time, having undergone a transformation, they evolved into new forms and genres.

Keywords: French court ballet, Italian intermedio, Italian carnival, English court Masque, performance, court culture, interaction.

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1. Introduction

In the first half of the 17th century, the Masque genre dominated the court culture of the Stuart royal court. The court genre of the Masque was a unique contribution of England to the development of European musical theater.

The intellectual scripts of the famous English playwright B. Johnson and the magnificent scenography of the architect-designer I. Jones filled the genre of Masques with artistic, aesthetic, and socio-cultural meaning and placed London on a par with Paris, Rome, and Madrid, turning the capital of England into a world cultural center of influence.

The Court Masques were distinguished by the allegorical nature of poetic texts, magnificent costumes and decorations, as well as complex stage effects. The core of the Masque was dance.

In the twentieth century, a number of British researchers came to the conclusion that the evolutionary development of the English Masque was greatly influenced by the traditions of the French court ballet and the Italian carnival.

Determining the origins of the interaction of different cultures is an important condition for understanding the history of intercultural communication.

The research methodology presupposes the unity of such methodological approaches as system-historical and comparative methods. The system-historical method made it possible to study the genre of French court ballet, Italian carnival and intermedio as an integral historical phenomenon. The comparative method made it possible to identify the level of influence of these genres on the genre of the English court mask.

2. Court culture in France in the 16-17th centuries

In the 17th century, dance was an art that unified French society. Such French regions as Brittany, Poitou, Auvergne, and Provence have made a significant contribution to the enrichment of the choreographic and musical repertoire of France. The dance was considered one of the three basic noble exercises and occupied an important place in French education along with court etiquette, horsemanship, and fencing skills (some fencing techniques, such as inversion of the legs and hand positions were used in ballet choreography).

The love of the French for dancing has become the talk of the town. King Alphonse II of Naples wrote that "he appreciated the kindness of the French, but could not tolerate the ease that usually led them to dance. Dancing was as important to the reputation of the French as trade was to them" (De Grenaille, 2003, p.382).

The surviving correspondence of the French aristocrat Madame de Sevigne testified to the importance of dancing in the life of the French: "After dinner, as usual, the whole family danced: steps, minuets and even village dances. Finally, midnight struck and Great Lent began" (De Rabutin-Chantal, 1861, p.127).

The scholar D. Lindley, discussing court entertainments known since the reign of the French king Henry II (1547-1559) 1, conventionally divides them into two main types: grandiose performance-shows held in the open air (carnivals) and, in fact, court performances which were staged on the stage of the royal palace or in more modest-sized premises belonging to aristocrats. D. Lindley also believed that musical theatrical performances, in turn, could be divided into performances dominated by poetry or performances in which dance was cultivated (Lindley, 1995).

The origins of the French court ballet go back to the era of the early Italian Renaissance, where musical and theatrical performances were timed to coincide with the weddings of aristocrats, gained particular popularity. To entertain the guests attending the wedding, the playwrights alternated musical and choreographic numbers. At the final stage, the actors urged the guests to perform a joint dance.

French court ballet was also closely associated with the traditions of the medieval carnival. The social function of the carnival was determined by its duality: men played the role of women, an aristocrat disguised himself as a servant, people turned into gods, and the gods condescended to human problems. Carnival denied reality. Carnival erased the rules, and relationships were built without any restrictions.

According to the historian F. Bossant, in the French court ballet, as in the carnival, "all roles changed, society turned upside down, social functions were violated, the king obeyed, the master became a donkey, the gendarme became a thief, the fool became a sage, and then a kind of temporary freedom, physical and moral. No one was ashamed: the seventeenth century is not at all what people think of it " (Bossan, 2002, p. 15).

French ballet, like the Court Masque in England, was a collective art form. Aristocrats or favorites of the king, who took part in the performances of a particular ballet, usually chose companions "with equal social status", and were also responsible for the selection of professional musicians and choreographers (De Pure, 2009, p. 68).

Ballet was seen as a representative art form, combining dance, music, poetry, set design, and impressive stage effects. The strictly sustained plot of the line, the synthesis of melodrama, carnival traditions, vocal and choreographic elements, the balance of dance, music, poetry, costumes, and stage effects determined the specificity of French ballet (Kassing, 2007).

French ballet is established as an independent genre at the court of Queen Catherine de Medici, one of the most powerful women in 16th century Europe, who is considered the patroness of art. Queen Catherine de 'Medici was known for her passion for elaborate and financially costly recreational activities. The easily carried away, ambitious and conceited Medici, cultivated Italian traditions in the royal court, inviting musicians and choreographers from Milan.

The ballet «Circe», staged by the royal composer and choreographer Balthazar de Beaujoyeux, became the first fully-fledged ballet performance in the history of world theater. «The Queen's Comedy Ballet» («Circe») premiered at the Royal Palace of the Louvre in Paris on 15 October 1581. The ballet was watched by ten thousand spectators, and its duration exceeded the wildest fantasies: the ballet lasted, in total, more than five hours. The ballet included long monologues and dialogues from the actors, which explained the length of the performance (De Osés, 2012).

The plot of the ballet is based on the story of Circe, in turn based on the famous story of Homer "The Odyssey", as well as "the pious stories of the dignitary Chenier". Catherine de Medici also took an active part in the production of the ballet. According to the artistic conception of the choreographer, each act of the ballet ended with a pas de trois of young priests swearing eternal love for the Queen. One of the dances included the following dance figures: rhythmic steps in a spiral trajectory with squatting on one knee and a victorious wave of the hand squeezing the wand. The main male part — de Laroche, was performed by the order-bearer musketeer from the Queen's personal guard. His part was technically difficult, including high jumps turning into splits, as well as high lifts of the dancers (De Osés, 2012).

The last scene of the performance was a dance in which the main role was played by the maestro Balthazar de Beaujouille himself. The final dance united the actors and spectators in the hall. It became the prototype of the dance "revel", which marked the final scene of the performance in the English court Masque of the era of the reign of the Stuart kings.

Another notable ballet production was «Le Ballet des Polonais», whose premiere was timed to coincide with the visit of Polish ambassadors to Paris in 1573. The choreography of the «Polish Ballet», surprising for that time, also belonged to the talented Balthazar de Beaujouille, the music was written by Roland de Lassus (Koana, 2005). The ballet impressed the audience with its stage effects, and also had a bright political flavor. Sixteen French maidens, chosen from among the most beautiful ladies of the court, represented the provinces of France. Girls dressed in silver and dark blue costumes were in special niches shaped like clouds. Illuminated by the "bright light of countless torches" the maidens descended, while "the violins played divinely" (Welsford, 2015).

«The Polish Ballet» had similarities with the English «Masque of Darkness», which was written in 1605 by the famous English poet and playwright B. Johnson in close collaboration with the English architect and set designer Inigo Jones at the request of the wife of King James I, Anna of Denmark (Stevens, 2009). Queen Anna of Denmark took part in the performance of «The Masque of Darkness». The Queen and the ladies of the court were dressed in costumes of blue, silver and pearl, harmonizing well with their black faces. According to the scriptwriter B. Johnson's idea, the ladies were in a giant pearl-colored seashell.

French court ballet of the 17th century developed rapidly, the best musicians and choreographers came to France from many European countries. The technique of performing the dances was not complicated, but it was complicated by lush and not very comfortable costumes, as well as the obligatory presence of hats, which were a sign of bad taste to take off. The dancers acquired virtuosity in performance thanks to the skill and professionalism of talented choreographer-teachers, mostly of Italian descent.

However, the French court ballet cannot be classified as a work of high art. The names of the ballets spoke for themselves: «Windmills and Flowerpots» (1610), «Headless Women» (1610), «Bakers» (1617) (De Prunieres, 1934). Over the course of many decades, the French court ballet has evolved to the level of a "sumptuous masquerade", or grand ball. The ballet was losing its quality due to amateur dancers who took part in the performances but did not possess either musicality, or a sense of rhythm, or plasticity of movement. To participate in the ballet, it was "not necessary to know how to dance correctly, because you can make even the lame dance" (Lacroix, 1868, p. 208). The unprofessionalism of the dancer was ignored if the dancer was a high-status courtier.

The French court in the 17th century was a structurally formed institution that inherited the traditions of the Burgundian and Breton courts of the 15th century. The French court becomes an integral part of the court culture and an important political instrument. The court ballet quickly turned into one of the most popular entertainments, becoming a mirror reflecting the French royal court with its merits and demerits. The royal ballet turned into a politically significant one for the king's courtiers and numerous foreign ambassadors.

The ballet united the King and his courtiers, it was the only form of entertainment in which almost all the nobility of France took part. For the King of France, ballet was a political weapon, an additional means of "taming" the aristocratic nobility. Choreographers acted as intermediaries between the king, the royal court, and the king's courtiers. Thanks to ballet, the internal politics of the French King turned into the art of political compromise, the art of maneuvering opportunities and tolerance.

"Entertainment at the royal court," wrote M. Paco, "served the purpose of the highest royal will, not only by formalizing the nobility, but also by turning it into an instrument that allowed the King to approach his people" (Paquot, 1932, p. 7).

Allegory, as an important element of the synthesis of biblical and classical traditions, it was possible to consider problematic moments of public life through the prism of dialogue, freely express their thoughts, realize spiritual aspirations through the prism of art, praise the king and compare him with God.

During the Renaissance, French Kings took care of their reputation and took public opinion into account, allowing the French to be involved in the military-political victories and successes of the King. Thus, the monarchs tried to avoid bloody uprisings and revolutions in the country.

The scholar De Grenaille, criticizing the ballet for "maintaining idleness", was forced to admit that entertainment "can be allowed to the heroes after the performance of an outstanding feat" (De Grenaille, 2003, p. 87). "After we have won many battles and can boast of many victories that are blessed by heaven, everything must be done to spark joy in the hearts of our subjects" (Lacroix, 1868, p. 33). "Not only the King and his gallant warriors deserve entertainment, and all the people should rejoice" (Howarth, O'Regan, Clarke, Forman, Golder, 1997, p. 112). That is why in year 1641 a ballet was staged in France, the mission of which was to establish the greatness of the coat of arms of France. "We take this opportunity to glorify royalty and the exploit of the King. Royal power, through ballet, completed the perfection of French unity" (Howarth, O'Regan, Clarke, Forman, Golder, 1997, P.112). "If the people obey, then let them at least sometimes be the undisputed winner" (De Ménéstrier, 1988, pp. 235-236).

The monarchs demonstrated to their courtiers the ability to adequately govern the country. The royal power intuitively and unconsciously sought an excuse before the French people for sometimes tough and unpopular decisions, the oppressed position of their people. In his memoirs, Louis XIV wrote: "People enjoy the spectacle, and we, in the end, always strive to please them, all our subjects in general are happy to see what we like, and this makes them better. By this we keep their spirit and heart more than for reward and benefit. Entertainment teaches monarchs to communicate with people" (De Cassan., Guillemet, Larquié, Pelus-Kaplan., Villiers, Sabatier, Vogler, 2000, p. 38).

The French priest Menestrieu echoed the king: "Greatness is the duty of Kings, but in order to make entertainment more enjoyable and freer, the great are glad to descend from their Olympus for a few hours, and to be equal to those whom they almost always see at their feet" (De Grenaille, 2003, p. 87).

Louis XIII and Louis XIV, with the help of popular ballet performances, "put" the nobility in the service of the King. At the same time, the exorbitant expenditures on luxurious court life, also characteristic of the English royal court of the late Renaissance, are gradually undermining the foundations of royal power. Many contemporaries indignantly noted the impermissible luxury of clothing, the abundance of precious stones, "the redundancy was such that it stretched from the ends of the hair to the shoes" (Howarth, O'Regan,, Clarke, Forman,, Golder, 1997, p. 16)

Louis XIII viewed the cost of staging the ballet as "one of the most destructive and useless expenses of his state" (Howarth W.D., O'Regan, M., Clarke, J., Forman, E., Golder, 1997, p. 13). However, even an understanding of the destructiveness of this policy, which could shake the financial foundations of the state, was not an obstacle: spending on royal entertainment increased from year to year. The courtiers were thirsty for spectacles. The aristocratic youth, eagerly looking for entertainment, got great pleasure from participating in ballet performances. Monarchs, aristocracy, foreign ambassadors took an active part in various ballet performances.

Louis XIII personally participated in the Marlezon ballet, which was performed on March 15, 1635 at the Château de Chantilly, he also took part in the design of the stage "steps and costumes" (Howarth W.D., O'Regan, M., Clarke, J., Forman, E., Golder, 1997, p. 143). The role of the king in the court ballet followed the logic of the carnival. The images, into which the monarchs easily got used to on stage, surpassed the wildest fantasies and amazed the imagination of the sophisticated audience.

The reign of Louis XIV is often called "Le Grand Siècle" (Great Age). Ascending the throne, the Sun King embodied the principles of absolutism. In 1682 he moved the royal court to the Palace of Versailles, which becomes a symbol of his power and influence in Europe. However, the Sun King was more interested in the visual arts than politics and government affairs. Like his great predecessor, the Sun King took part in ballet performances.

In the court ballet, Louis XIV played noble roles: the role of the Rising Sun in 1653, Apollo in 1654, the role of the Aspirant in 1656 and the role of Happiness in 1659.

From 1651 to 1661, Louis XIV also appeared before high-ranking spectators in the form of a drunken rogue, Fury, Passion, Rage, Libertine, insane Spirit, Hatred, Demon, and Moor. As in *Anti-Masque*, created by the English playwright B. Johnson, which is a contrasting prelude to the main part of the *Masque*, chaos was temporary, but absolutely necessary. The order that replaced Chaos demonstrated to the public the inviolability of the foundations of royal power. The restoration of the divine status of the King usually took place in the last act of the ballet. The performance of such burlesque roles by monarchs testifies to their desire to be closer to the people, to the absence of "red lines", for which the kings were not allowed to step over, in contrast to the English court *Masque*, where the greatness and glory of the King were never questioned (Lacroix, 1868).

The endurance of kings and famous dancers as well as aristocrats amazed many contemporaries. Some of them could dance ballet all night long, from early hours until the next morning. Sometimes the dance was staged in record time. In 1636, the King, who took part in the ballet, learned his role in 6 days "without much effort and without long studies", because "long rehearsals make the ballet boring and unbearable" (Mersenne, 1636, pp. 17-18). However, the great royal ballet, which was the hallmark of the royal court of France, which was staged on the royal stage every year, was carefully rehearsed.

Ballet, as a genre, conveyed a spicy feature: regardless of the age or status of the ballet participants, this art form revealed all the advantages, disadvantages, and complexes of the performer, starting with his figure, degree of giftedness, character, temperament, and even moral qualities.

The ballet theorist Abbot de Pure wrote in his treatise: "In dance, you are who you are, and all your "pas", all your actions convey to the eyes of the audience, show them both good and evil, which Art and Nature have awarded or deprived your person" (Bossan, 2002, p. 11).

Parisian ballet fashion expanded beyond the borders of France and gained popularity on the European continent. So, Rene Descartes, the famous French philosopher, mathematician and physicist, at the invitation of the Swedish Queen Christina I in October 1649, visits Stockholm on the occasion of the conclusion of the Peace of Münster (an agreement between the Republic of the United Provinces of the Netherlands and Spain, signed in 1648). At the request of the Queen, he writes a ballet in verse for a court ball, but categorically refuses to participate in the ballet. In 1615, a ballet was staged in Rome, the author of which was the ambassador of the King of France, the Marquis de Tresnel (Lacroix, 1868, p. 28).

In 1662 "because of the poor quality of the choreography and the ignorant dancers" Louis XIV decided to create the Royal Academy of Dance (Loret, 2018, p.101). The Royal Academy was dedicated to

providing the royal court with professional dancers. However, already in 1670, Louis XIV refused to take part in the court ballets, which, according to the researcher Akiko Koana, symbolized the death of the court ballet. The reason for such a strange decision is still the subject of research for historians and art historians (Koana, 2005).

A departure from burlesque and a return to the heroic style leads to the gradual decline and disappearance of the court masquerade ballet. However, a talented person, to whom one can undoubtedly include an opera composer, founder of French musical theater, and an outstanding theatrical figure J.B. Lully, was able to return ballet to the mainstream of high art. The ballet has evolved, becoming more and more refined, and the choreography has gradually become more complex.

The genre of the French court ballet, like the genre of the English court Masque, carried a certain political subtext to the same extent, served to strengthen the authority of the monarch, muffle hotbeds of tension among the courtiers and favorites of the king, who were in conflict with each other. However, such goals could not have been achieved without the artistic and aesthetic component of ballet. That is why huge sums were allocated for luxurious costumes, expensive stage effects, and titled teachers of choreography.

The French court ballet of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries undoubtedly influenced the development of the English court Masque genre, primarily due to the dominant presence of French choreographers at the Royal Palace of White Hall in London. In the 16-17 centuries, in search of a better life, French poets, musicians, and choreographers emigrated to London, hoping to find high patrons. French choreographers gladly taught the dance tricks to the English aristocrats and performed on the White Hall stage. The burlesque, grotesque, images in the French court ballet can be compared with the satirical and grotesque images of anti-Masques (invention of B. Johnson) (Welsford, 2015).

The Court Masques, which were staged on the White Hall stage during the reign of the royal dynasty of the Stuarts, according to contemporaries, resembled "French ballet, especially in terms of dance movements" (Loret, 2018, p.109).

Composers, poets, choreographers and designers of French and English origin "keenly caught" the changes taking place in the cultural and political life of the countries of France and England. The genre of court ballet and Masques evolved and gradually transformed into the well-recognized forms of classical ballet.

3. Comedy Dell'arte, Intermedio and Italian Carnival.

The Masquerade Carnival is an integral part of Italian culture. Some scholars believe that Italian carnival traditions date back to pagan holidays. Italian carnival traditions have become famous far beyond the borders of Italy.

Carnival as a form of public entertainment was first mentioned in 1092 in the Doge Vitale Faliero documents. In 1296, in an official document of the Serenissima Senate (the name of the Venetian Republic), the Venice Carnival was declared a public festival (Cerulli, 2010, pp. 12-17). By the 16th century, carnival celebrations in Italy acquire a royal scale and amaze with their luxury (Cerulli, 2010, pp. 12-17). Carnival performances were carefully staged, distinguished by excellent choreographic performances, as well as the amazing peacefulness of the people participating in the celebration.

The exclusive role of the mask in Italian culture is confirmed by a set of laws that governed the time and place of wearing masks. It was forbidden to wear masks at night, masks were strictly prohibited in monasteries and during the plague epidemic. The person in mask was not allowed to carry a weapon

or any other object that could harm another person. In general, masks were allowed to be worn for six months.

Having a mask provided an excellent opportunity to hide your identity without worrying about retaliation from the people of the upper social class. People belonging to the lower social strata could easily mingle in the crowd. The presence of mask made it possible to turn entertainment into an exciting game.

The anonymity inherent in all Italian carnivals thanks to masks temporarily eliminated social inequality, contributed to the manifestation of public criticism of those in power. This was allowed and encouraged by the authorities in order to remove the hotbeds of tension and discontent that were brewing in society.

From the middle of the 16th century in Italy, the comedy of masks — *Commedia Dell'arte* — has become widespread. Classical theatrical performances bored the viewer with their excessive modesty and severity. *Commedia Dell'arte* violated the classical rules of the theater, opposing theatrical traditions with entertainment, lack of censorship, and caustic satire ((Fava, 2007).

Dell'arte Comedy, also known as the "Italian Comedy", was a satirical theatrical performance performed by professional actors who traveled throughout Italy. Usually, performances were staged on city streets at temporarily constructed venues. On average, the acting troupes numbered from ten to twelve people. The best comedians (Gelosi, Confidenti and Fedeli) were allowed to perform in the palaces of the Italian aristocrats. Music, dance, witty dialogues all contributed to the extraordinary popularity of this genre. This art form quickly spread in Europe, and many elements of this genre were, and have survived, in modern theater.

Dell'arte's performances lacked complex decorations. The stage set was distinguished by its modesty and minimalism. Despite the anarchic spirit of the comedy *Dell'arte*, the performance obeyed certain compositional laws, which required the actors to perform ensemble virtuosity. The unique talent of comedic actors was expressed in the ability to improvise. Masks forced actors to project the emotions of their characters through their bodies through jumping, somersaults, and obscene gestures. The loose cut of the actors' suits alternated with overly tight suits, and bright colors — with monochrome. The main characters (Pantolone, Brighella, Harlequin) wore colored leather Masks, and their stage counterparts, usually a pair of young lovers, around whom the intrigue swirled, did not hide their faces (Fava, 2007).

The heyday of the dance genre in Italy came at the end of the 14 and the beginning of the 15 century. In 1520, the Italian writer Baldassare Castiglione, the author of one of the most famous works of the Italian Renaissance, *The Courtier*, draws a parallel between dance and virtue. Court dances in Italy were determined by the degree of sophistication of the performance. The duties of the courtier included the performance of the dance "with a certain dignity, grace and airy sweetness of movements," and it was also ordered to avoid "quick steps and repetitive movements", which "did not suit a true aristocrat at all" (Kastil'one, 1996, p. 208).

In the 16th century, Italy became a trendsetter in dance fashion in Europe: Italian teachers are in demand and respected. The main popularizers of choreographic art are the Italian dance teachers: Domenico da Piacenza, the dance master and composer of the Renaissance Guglielmo Ebreo, the Italian dancer Antonio Cornazano, who wrote the treatise "The Book of Dance Art" and is known in the most influential aristocratic courts of Italy, including Naples, Urbino, Milan and Ferraru ... In numerous works of masters-choreographers, a set of rules for dancing is recorded, the technique of which was

invariably perfected at magnificent court balls. An excellent example of art has crystallized from amateur dance. Choreography has become the main passion of the Italian aristocrats (Fava, 2007).

Presumably in 1545, Pompeo Diobono opened the first school for masters of dance in Milan, where dancers and choreographers acquired skills, which, subsequently, were carried to Europe and received deserved recognition there. Among the students of the P. Diobono dance school, Balthazar de Beaugoayo, Ludovico Paluello, Bernardo Tetoni, Pietro Martyre, Francesco Gera, G. Hernandez, Martino da Asso and Giovanni Varade stood out. Later, Balthasar de Beaugoyeux, known in secular circles not only as an excellent dancer, but also as a virtuoso violinist, was invited to Paris as a choreographer. Balthasar de Beaujouillet became famous for staging choreographic numbers for the French court. De Beaugoyeux also visited the capital of England. His mission was to teach the art of dance to members of the Stuart royal family (Cerulli, 2010).

In the 16th century in Italy, Italian intermedio became widespread — connecting links between the acts of the performance. Intermedio could be thematically related to each other, and ultimately represent an action that is more interesting than the main idea. Intermedio was first performed at the end of the 16th century between the acts of the comedies of Titus Maktius Plautus. Numerous intermedios in the performance, staged for a special occasion — the weddings of Ferdinand I de Medici and Christine of Lorraine in 1589, are among the finest examples of the Renaissance.

In intermedio, the choreography included complex geometric shapes as a sign of figurative and spatial symmetry. The peak of the spread of interludes came at the end of the 16th century. After 1600, intermedio was modified and became part of the opera.

The Court Masques, created by the famous English poet, playwright and drama theorist Ben Johnson, relied heavily on the Italian «intermedio» traditions, although B. Johnson publicly rejected the connection of Masques with Italian traditions. “Perhaps a few Italian herbs, picked and turned into a salad, may find sweet recognition, but I prefer the most hearty and healthy dishes in the world,” B. Johnson wrote (Goldsworthy, 1970, p. 95). However, B. Johnson's Masques are close to the Italian "intermedio" in their plot, structural, and compositional style. A number of British researchers of the 20th century drew attention to this.

B. Johnson's contemporary Inigo Jones, an English architect, designer, artist and set designer, also studied in Italy, where he undoubtedly adopted the experience of Italian designers, used sketches of costumes and stage scenery in the productions of the English Masques at White Hall. It is known, that in 1613 J. Jones visited Florence and carefully studied the development of stage perspective, as well as stage machinery (Lee, 2002).

English designer I. Jones borrowed and creatively processed the experience of Italian masters in stage design and creating impressive stage decorations and effects.

One of the Scottish dancers of King James I visited Padua and Venice in 1608. In the surviving recordings, the dancer mentions a performance-The Masque, staged in Venice in the palace of one of the local aristocrats, in which five English and five Scottish dancers took part, specially invited to Venice. This serves as indirect evidence of the exchange of cultural information between England and Italy at that time.

In the historical chronicle of the English poet and playwright C. Marlowe "Edward II", published in 1594, one of the heroes exclaimed: "I have Italian Masques in the evening", hinting at the Italian roots of the English Masque:

The English researcher Enid Welsford discovered that many of the librettos that have come down to our times, as well as stage sketches used for the production of English court Masques, were borrowed from the scripts of Italian carnivals, which, according to the author, shed light on the origins of the English court Masque (Welsford, 2015).

The studies of the famous scientist B. Ravelhofer seem incredibly valuable from the historical and cultural point of view. In her opinion, Italian choreography was highly regarded by the English royal court (Ravelhofer, 2009). In the libraries of the English aristocrats, Italian textbooks on choreography were kept. Early editions of Italian treatises, textbooks on choreography, dating back to 1605, were found in the catalog of Sir Thomas Bodley's library, and the catalog also included the famous Caroso Ballarino. The most famous textbook of this kind can be attributed to the work of Lútio Compasso "Ballo della Galliarda", published in Florence in 1560 (Ravelhofer, 2009).

In England, learning the technique of Italian and French dances was considered good form. Some documents contain references to the "stupid Italian habit" of English dancers, allowing them to kiss their own hand before and during the dance.

Undoubtedly, Italian choreography was well known to the English royal court during the Stuart period. Italian galliards, ancient dances of Italian origin, performed by the Italians without equal, were staged in the English court Masque. The Italian style, notes B. Ravelhord, peacefully coexisted in England with other European styles for a long period (Ravelhofer, 2009).

Conclusions

During the Renaissance, England was tolerant of all sorts of innovations. In the cultural sphere, England actively interacted with the cultures of other countries, first of all, this concerned French and Italian cultures.

The genre of the French court ballet, the English court Masque, the Italian carnival and intermedio, in fact, were a synthesis of various types of arts: dance, music and poetry. The distinctive features of these genres include luxurious costumes and sets, as well as the exorbitant costs associated with staging a particular performance, which gradually undermined the foundations of the financial stability of royal power both in Italy and France, and in England.

The genre of Masque, French ballet and Italian intermedio, as an art form, were a collective form of art, through these genres the basis for contacts between the family of the monarch and the courtiers of the royal court was laid, hotbeds of tension were removed, and the authority of king was strengthened. The authorities "signaled" to society about their negotiability, which ultimately led to the leveling of the social causes of negative social phenomena. Thus, the role of lightning rods was assigned to court performances.

French and Italian choreographers contributed to the interpenetration of continental culture in England. Burslesque roles in the court ballet became the prototype of the Anti-Masque, later created by the English playwright B. Johnson.

Undoubtedly, English culture was influenced (by cultural diffusion) from Europe. In turn, the openness of cultures can be viewed as a condition for progress and development, which contributed to mutual enrichment and formed a common cultural space.

The court entertainments of France, Italy, and England cannot be considered high art. However, fading away, these genres have evolved into new well-recognizable forms of high art — opera and classical ballet.

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