



Although the empire is on the brink of bankruptcy, a lavish masked ball is taking place at the Imperial Palace. The so-called Mummenschanz. We see Faust dressed as Plutus, the god of wealth, and the Emperor as Great Pan.

New series on Goethe's Faust II – The Masquerade – Part 1

“A cheerful celebration awaits you.”

Let us recall the paper money scene depicted by bellazinnfigur: Mephisto took on the role of the court jester and persuaded the Emperor and his entire court to print paper money. Although the empire is in turmoil and national bankruptcy looms, the Emperor is hosting a lavish celebration in the form of a glittering masked ball.

Do not think that within German borders you are free from the devil's dance, the fools' dance and the dance of death; a merry festival awaits you. Thus begins the herald – familiar to us from the tin figure sets *Papiergeldszene* and *Das Zelt des Gegenkaisers* – as



For the scene depicting the elephant's entry, Goethe drew inspiration from the nine-part series of paintings of 'Caesar's Triumphal Procession', painted by Andrea Mategnas around 1490. The master was also familiar with scenes of elephants from Dürer's 'Triumphal Procession of Emperor Maximilian'.



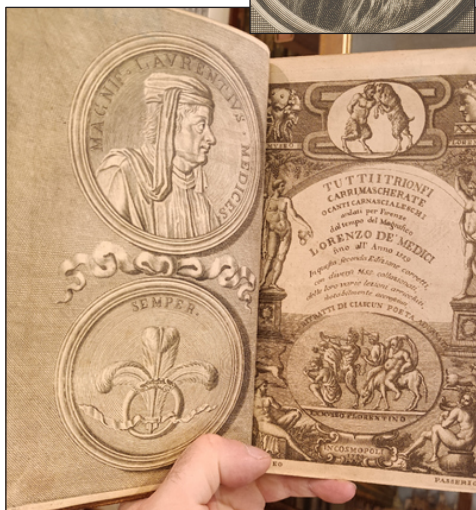
Left: Albrecht Dürer: The Torch Dance from the **Freydal**, woodcut, c. 1517/18



he introduces the proceedings. Under his direction, this masked play features characters grouped by social class, archetypes, mythological creatures and allegorical figures. Through rehearsed songs and speeches, they present themselves indirectly. 'Even if their appearances seem clichéd, they represent the way of life and reflect the feudal court's understanding of the world and of humanity,' writes the Germanist Albrecht Schöne in his famous commentary on J. W. Goethe's **Faust**.

A lavishly staged parade

The lavishly decorated carnival procession is led by singing Florentine gardeners, accompanied by mandolins. We are a charming sight to behold, gardeners and gallant; for women's nature is so closely akin to art. They are accompanied by performers dressed as wreaths of ears of corn, olive bran-



When it came to the numerous characters and props in **Mummenschanz**, Goethe drew his inspiration almost without exception from the anthology **Tutti i trionfi**, published in 1559 by the Italian apothecary and comedy writer Antonio Francesco Grazzini (pictured above).

ches, bouquets of flowers and rosebuds.

Faust as the god of wealth

The female gardeners are followed by a group of male gardeners who tout their wares to the audience. Next come boisterous woodcutters, a bumbling Pulcinella and fawning sycophants. Then a drunkard and a satyr make their appearance. The chorus sings: 'Every brother, drink, drink! Raise a fresh toast, Tinke, Tinke!' We see nume-

rous fantastical figures: the Three Graces – Aglaia, Hegemone and Euphrosyne; the Three Fates – Atropos, Klotho and Lachesis; and the Three Furies – Alecto, Megera and Tisiphone. Then the herald announces the entrance of the allegories: 'You would do well to step aside, for what is coming now is not of your kind.' An elephant, adorned with oriental carpets, makes its entrance. Seated upon its shoulders, a young woman-representing (State) Wisdom-steers it with a slender wand.

Victory, the goddess of all endeavours, sits majestically enthroned in a defensive tower on the elephant's back. She spreads her wings powerfully. Two noble ladies – Fear, driven by a delusion of persecution, and Hope, looking towards a utopian future – are chained to the elephant. One looks on anxiously, the other joyfully; one wishes, the other feels free, proclaims the herald. Faust appears as the god of wealth, wearing the mask of Pluto and clad in the finest robes of an Oriental sul-



Goethe's collection of prints included a copperplate reproduction of Charles Le Brun's orientalisising depiction, 'The Triumphal Entry of Alexander the Great into Babylon'. The elephant, surrounded by female figures, and the dainty, delicate woman guiding it with a slender wand, inspired us in the design of our pewter figurine scene. Charles Le Brun, **Entrée d'Alexandre dans Babylone ou Le triomphe d'Alexandre**, oil on canvas, 1665, Louvre Museum, Paris.

tan. He is the highly learned man tasked with restoring the state's finances. Plutus, known as the god of wealth, appears in all his splendour; the great Emperor desires him greatly. The Emperor himself appears in the guise of the great Pan, the ancient symbol of instinct and the joy of life, who stands for that which lies beyond reason and social conventions.

Allegorical figures

'These are all "allegorical figures that require a key to be understood";' comments Albrecht Schöne. The elephant is probably to be seen as a symbol of the empire's immense popular power. Goethe had repeatedly described fear and hope as problematic, even destructive, forces within human nature. In essence, it was his conviction that human beings are held back by fear and lulled into complacency by hope. The two noble ladies symbolically embody this view.

'The whole scene, then, is a multifaceted conceptual image of a well-ordered state: a political allegory,' comments Professor Albrecht Schöne. The goddess Victoria spreads her wings to turn towards victory on all sides. The philologist Heinz Schlaffer observes in his work **Faust, Part Two – The Allegory of the 19th Century**: "The ancient goddess of military victory (Victoria) becomes an allegory of commercial 'profit'." And Schöne emphasises "the breadth of meaning of this symbolic figure repre-



The actor Bruno Ganz in the role of Plutus in the theatre production by the German director Peter Stein to mark Expo 2000 in Hanover. The performance of the entire epic lasted 22 hours. Not a single word from either of the two plays was omitted. "I was lucky enough to experience this unique performance at the Berlin tram depot on 21 and 22 October 2000," reports Dieter Beller, editor of *bellazinnfigur*.



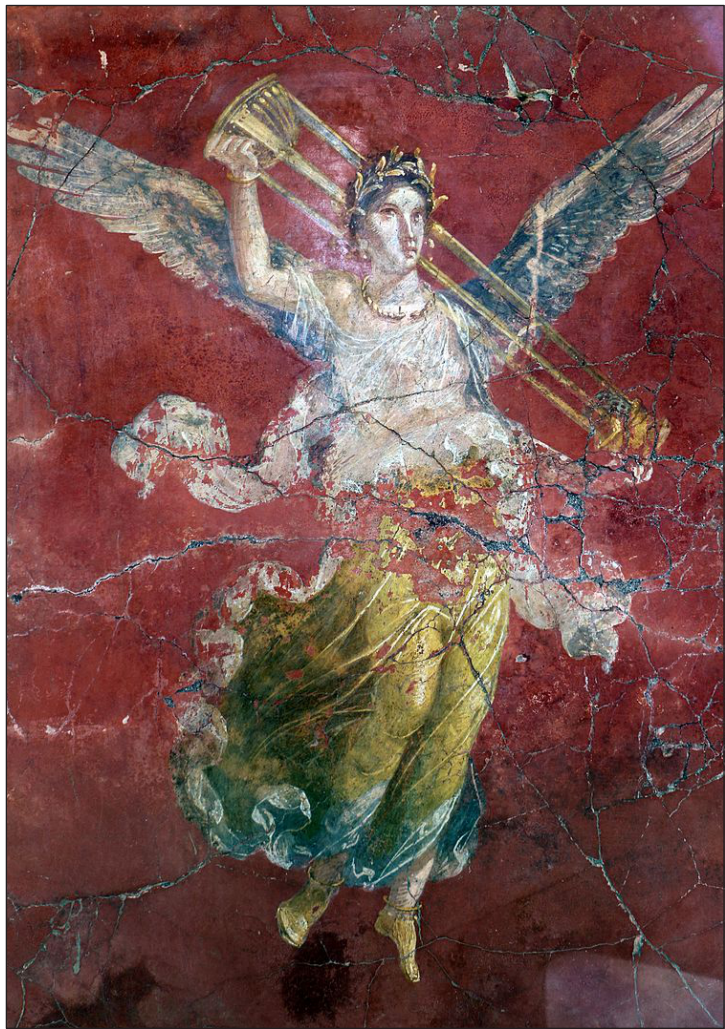
senting the triumphant success of all activities within the state."

In Greek mythology, Plutus (Greek: Πλούτος, 'wealth') is the personified god of wealth, abundance and prosperity. In Goethe's **Mummenschanz**, Plutus is the allegorical figure embodied by Faust in disguise. He appears as a powerful bringer of gold and treasure.

Left: Plutus. Hand-coloured copperplate engraving, engraved by Jacques Louis Constant Lacerf after illustrations by Leonard Defraigne from **La Mythologie en Estampes Chez P. Blanchard**, Paris, 1820.

Right: **Mummenschanz – The Procession of the Allegories**. Woodcut by Franz Xaver Simm, Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1899.







Victoria, the goddess of victory

In antiquity, she was a central symbol of triumph and success. She was often depicted as a winged woman wearing a victory wreath or holding palm branches. In Roman culture, Victoria played an important role in the state cult and was particularly revered by military commanders. Her image adorned coins, triumphal arches and temples, and was intended to demonstrate military superiority.

It was also significant in political terms, as it was regarded as divine legitimization for power and rule. In the literature and art of antiquity, it embodied victory as divine providence.

The philologist Heinz Schlaffer interpreted the scene in the Weiterläufiger Saal as an allegorical depiction of the representation of power, in which Victoria appears as the embodiment of state power. His colleague Albrecht Schöne emphasised that the goddess Victoria spreads her wings to turn towards everyone for their benefit.

Above: **Victoria** by Christian Daniel Rauch, 1830. A marble statue of a winged woman symbolising victory and triumph. Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

Left: *'Vittoria con tripode'*. Palestra Grande in Pompeii. The illustration shows one of the oldest surviving depictions of Victoria. This and other ancient Roman frescoes from Moregine (near Pompeii) date from the Neronian period. It depicts the winged goddess of victory, Victoria, holding a tripod.

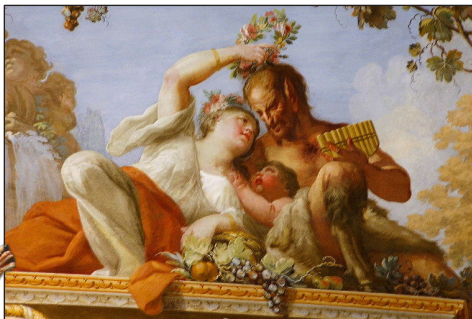
Reflections on Power and Appearances

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe staged a multi-layered reflection on power, appearances and social order. 'People use masquerades to drown out ... their own and others' distress,' wrote Goethe, who organised numerous court festivities and masked processions of this kind in Weimar. Goethe wrote the *'Mummenschanz'* in **Faust II** as an artful allegory. Behind the dazz-

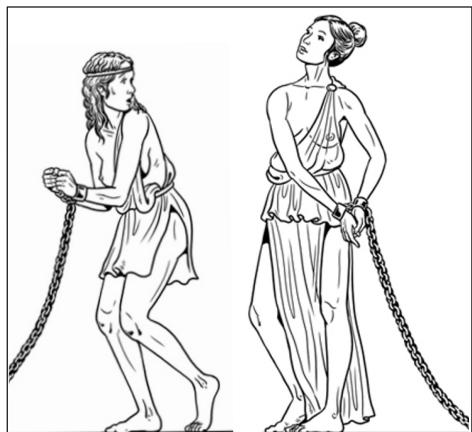
ling façade, he concealed a critical examination of political and economic mechanisms. Furthermore, Goethe reflected on the relationship between appearance and reality. The masked procession symbolises a society that parodies itself and deludes itself into believing in a dreamlike world.

The literary scholar Heinz Schlaffer wrote that the Mummenschanz scene should be understood in an emblematic (symbolic) sense. '...

here, within the confines of a crumbling feudal system, there is a playful foreshadowing of a social upheaval, as if prophesying the course of history', for: 'With the licence afforded by carnival, the court acts out what is to come after it. Mummenschanz is the dream of a passing (feudal) era of the future (bourgeois-capitalist) one."



Below: Fear and Hope. Illustrations by Sascha Lunyakov. In the world of the gods, Phobos represents fear and panic. Hope is personified by Elpis. When Pandora opened her box and released all the evils of the world, only Hope (Elpis) remained inside when the lid was closed again. Goethe regarded fear and hope as destructive forces within humankind.



Goethe has the Emperor appear in the guise of Great Pan. In Greek mythology, Pan is a symbol of the forces of nature, fertility and the fullness of life, but also of instinctual drives, chaos and irrationality. Goethe exposes the Emperor's apparent omnipotence as mere theatre and political illusion. Above: a fresco depicting the figure of Pan in the Royal Palace of Caserta.

