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FROM LOUIS XIV'S PARIS
TO THE SCHWARZENBERGS'
CESKÝ KRUMLOV: «LE THÉÂTRE ITALIEN»,
ITALIAN ACTORS AND IMAGES
OF THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE

Printed imagery and the spread of Commedia dell'Arte

The thirteenth-century castle in the town of Český Krumlov, situated on the banks of the Moldava river in Bohemia, provides yet another example of the extent to which the fame and popularity of Commedia dell'Arte travelled across Europe. It houses a wonderful baroque theatre, complete with original eighteenth-century scenery and a large costume collection, a Masquerade Hall, and a collection of sixty miniatures on parchment, seven of which represent character-types from the Commedia dell'Arte. Although the exact date of production of the miniature paintings is uncertain, possible indications of their existence date from 1719, in an inventory that was drawn up when the Krumlov estate passed into the hands of the Schwarzenberg family. Another inventory dated 1733 provides a more clear reference to the paintings¹. The fact that the collection contains seven paintings of Commedia dell'Arte figures attests to the popularity of this type of theatre not only in European capitals, but also in the provinces of countries which were not geographically close to the Italian city-states. However, from the second half of the seventeenth century, the popularity of Commedia dell'Arte could be attributed to French, rather than Italian, sphere of influence, in keeping with a general adoption and adaptation of French courtly fashions in various cultural domains. The existence of the miniatures provides a clear indication of the importance of French influence in

¹ Katerina Cichrová, *A history of the Schwarzenberg miniatures collection*, in Katerina Cichrová, Vicki Ann Cremona, Lenka Nováková, «*Plusieurs Nations*». *The Schwarzenberg collection of costume miniatures in the Český Krumlov Castle*, České Budejovice, Národní památkový ústav územní odborné pracoviště v České Budejovicích, 2011, p. 18.

the Habsburg court at a time when Viennese court habits, dress and etiquette still followed Spanish styles. It was only a while later, in 1736, with the marriage of Maria Theresa to the Archduke Francis of Lorraine, and his crowning as Emperor Francis I², that a more radical shift towards French habits took place at the Austrian court and its territories, contributing further to spreading French fashions and manners in different parts of the empire. These new modes and tastes also penetrated Bohemia, which had come under the domination of the Princes of Schwarzenberg, who were intent on transposing court fashions to their own realm.

Commedia dell'Arte was introduced to the Imperial court, which was then exceptionally located in Prague, between 1627 and 1628, by the Fedeli, troupe under the leadership of Giovan Battista Andreini. The rare visits by Italian companies to Czech lands in the seventeenth century can be traced to Prague, and were mostly linked to the emperor's presence in the city. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Commedia dell'Arte performances given in Prague were French, and derived from the Italian repertory in France that had been re-elaborated at the fairground theatres³. Commedia dell'Arte became more widely known in Czech lands between 1730 and 1770, and Commedia figures were chosen to adorn Czech castles and even furniture⁴. However, at the time the miniatures were painted, nobility such as the Bohemian Schwarzenbergs had little or no direct contact with this theatre form, because they seldom had the chance to witness this type of performance. Their acquaintance with Commedia dell'Arte derived mostly from their pictorial knowledge of this type of theatre, which Taviani describes as: «a mental theatre, a paper theatre, printed *mises-en-scène* which [were] transferred from one sheet to the other, gathering in the apparent unity of a genre, scenes and moments coming from different times and contexts»⁵.

² Their daughter, Marie Antoinette, was to marry the fated King Louis XVI on 16th May 1770.

³ See Adolf Scherl, *Commedia dell'Arte in the Czech lands and the Český Krumlov Castle Theatre*, in *The world of baroque theatre. A compilation of essays from the Český Krumlov Conferences 2007, 2008, 2009*, Jiri Blaha and Pavel Slavko eds., Český Krumlov, Baroque Theatre Foundation of Český Krumlov Castle, 2010, p. 30. Scherl states that Claude Rosidor's company gave two performances in Prague in 1718, *Arlequin enchanteur* and *La fausse coquette*. The latter was part of the repertory of the *Comédiens Italiens*, during the reign of Louis XIV (p. 36).

⁴ *Ivi*, p. 41.

⁵ Ferdinando Taviani, Mirella Schino, *Il segreto della Commedia dell'Arte*, Firenze, la casa Usher, 1982, p. 297, my translation.

Awareness of, and attraction for Commedia dell'Arte, therefore, was generated in different European regions and provinces mostly through imagery, particularly prints, which contributed to spreading the mental impression of this kind of theatre even among the less affluent classes. Discussion on Commedia dell'Arte in such areas must necessarily refer mainly to the pictures that were brought there, and not only to the rare actors who, due to their technical capabilities, had earned sufficient notoriety for European rulers to summon them to their courts, and who probably gave other performances along the way⁶. It is through these pictures that second-hand knowledge of costumes, bodily positions, and technical abilities of the actors they were inspired from, was acquired. Iconography of the Commedia dell'Arte, therefore, played an essential role in fostering awareness across Europe of this type of theatre, and contributed greatly towards generating its mythical dimension. This article will focus mainly on the Commedia dell'Arte figures that form part of the Krumlov miniature collection, and relate them to earlier seventeenth-century French engravings and the actors and types they represent. The miniatures may be also seen as representative of a restricted social class, used to staging itself on the theatre of life. They hint at a way of life among the courtly aristocracy where, in order to prosper, it was essential to attract attention, in particular that of the monarch and his entourage, by putting oneself constantly on show. Fine costume and opulent jewellery were a possible means to achieving this end.

European nobility collected and commissioned Commedia imagery well into the eighteenth century, even after the appeal of Commedia dell'Arte performances had already begun to wane. The owner of one of the earliest known collections, a musician-copyist living in Versailles, who defined himself as «Ordinaire de la Musique du Roi Louis XIV», appears to have hoped to sell his pictures to the King himself. The collection, identified today as the «Recueil Fossard», is composed of different sets of prints dating from different periods, which seem to include some of the earliest depictions of the Commedia dell'Arte⁷. The fact that the collection was in France just when the Commedia dell'Arte was attaining the height of its popularity at the French court

⁶ See Siro Ferrone, *Attori, mercanti, corsari. La Commedia dell'Arte in Europa tra Cinque e Seicento*, Torino, Giulio Einaudi Editore, p. 32.

⁷ See Agne Beijer, *Le Recueil Fossard*, in *Le Recueil Fossard: la Commedia dell'Arte au XVI^e siècle*, Paris, Librairie théâtrale, 1981, pp. 16-17.

and among the general public, would certainly imply that engravings of the sort, even though rare enough to be thought fit for a king, could be found circulating in Paris at the time. Commedia dell'Arte imagery in the eighteenth century was, however, often inspired by seventeenth-century engravings that had been produced in Paris. Various French engravers produced Commedia dell'Arte prints in the second half of the seventeenth century such as the Bonnart family, Arnoult, Jean Mariette, and Trouvain⁸. Works by artists such as Claude Gillot, and later Watteau and Lancret were also reproduced in print. Guy Boquet claims that the Paris engravers turned to theatrical subjects when Louis XIV's military campaigns became less successful⁹. They were certainly inspired by the huge success enjoyed by the Italian actors on the Paris stages and depicted both the character-types and scenes from their plays. Many of these engravings travelled across Europe. Apart from creating an idea of Commedia dell'Arte in people's minds, they influenced and inspired other artists who adapted the engraved figures and subjects in their own works without having necessarily seen any actors at play.

A collection of French prints, mainly by the Bonnart family, was taken to Ceský Krumlov by Prince Ferdinand Wilhelm Eusebius Schwarzenberg (1652-1703) round about 1690 and deposited in the Castle library, in a leather-bound volume entitled *Plusieurs Nations*. The collection of pictures of costumes from different countries was also very popular¹⁰. The prints in *Plusieurs Nations* depict costumes of various nationalities, as well as some tradesmen and Commedia dell'Arte figures, and include the highly theatrical allegories of vocations by Jean Bérain. Various elements indicate that the prints were a direct source of inspiration for the collection of miniatures, which probably hung in the private cabinet of the bedroom of Princess

⁸ For a detailed discussion about the Bonnart and Mariette families, see Renzo Guardenti, *Gli Italiani a Parigi. La Comédie Italienne (1600-1697). Storia, pratica scenica, iconografia*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1990, 2 voll.: vol. I, pp. 209-219.

⁹ Guy Boquet, *Les comédiens italiens à Paris au temps de Louis XIV*, «Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine», tome 26, n. 3, Jul.-Sep. 1979, p. 438.

¹⁰ Already as far back as 1590, Cesare Vecellio had published his seminal work displaying different costumes around the world, which he later amplified. See Cesare Vecellio, *De gli habiti antichi, et moderni di diverse parti del mondo libri due, fatti da Cesare Vecellio, et con discorsi da lui dichiarati*, Venezia, Damian Zenaro, 1590. It includes portrayals of European dress, including examples from Ottoman Turkey, and a short section on Africa and Asia that comprises the costumes of Persians, Moors, and Arabs.

Eleonore Amalia née Lobkowitz (1682-1741), wife of the first Schwarzenberg owner of the castle, Prince Adam Franz (1680-1732). Both the prints and the miniatures were also used later for some of the characters depicted in the frescoes painted by Joseph Lederer in one of the halls of the castle, known as the «Masquerade Hall»¹¹. The miniatures consist of a series of costume studies of persons from different nations and trades, as well as Commedia characters, and were executed by one or more anonymous artists in gouache on parchment¹². Some of the costumes in the miniatures are practically copies of the Bonnart prints, such as the *Distinguished Greek Lady from Adrianopole*, which is an exact copy of Bonnart's *Femme de qualité Grecque, d'Andrinople*, or the *Lemonade seller*, which practically reproduces the engraving *Tisane à la glace*. Others portray costumes of different regions or countries, such as Nuremberg, Alsace, Italy and even Lapland. Some of these are very reminiscent of opera, as for example, the tartar costume worn by a *Tartar lady of distinction*, which recalls the castrato costume that is part of the Castle costume collection. Moreover, the miniature collection contains various peasant costumes such as that of the «Fille du village», again highly inspired from an engraving by Bonnart that is presently missing from the volume *Plusieurs Nations*, but which is characterised by opulence rather than by simple rustic qualities, and therefore more reminiscent of a lavish court setting than the kind of dress one would expect to find in the countryside¹³.

Louis XIV and the spread of French courtly taste

French influence across Europe at the end of the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth, was principally due to the personality of Louis XIV. The king's tastes established trends in fashion and cultural refinement that were followed all over Europe. French language began to penetrate European courts and intellectual mi-

¹¹ Katerina Cichrová, *The diversity of the world in the garb of disguises. Costume studies in aristocratic culture of the 17th and 18th centuries*, in «*Plusieurs Nations*», cit., p. 18.

¹² *Ivi*, pp. 13-14.

¹³ The Vienna Theatre Museum in Palais Lobkowitz contains a series of rococo costume sketches by Daniele Bertoli that include a *Paysanne des environs de Paris*, which like the Krumlov miniature, is certainly also directly inspired by Bonnart's print.

lieus, which up to then, were still under the Italian humanist influence. The rise of the importance of the French language was an effective way of asserting the supremacy of the French kingdom, its culture and, above all, its king well beyond the borders of France¹⁴. European nobility sent their sons to Paris, because «from the perspective of young and upcoming noblemen, Paris and the Court of Versailles of Louis XIV offered the best courtier upbringing in Europe»¹⁵. They also sent cultural scouts to the French court in order to report on current fads and make contacts with artists there. French culture, tastes and habits remained a focal point of reference long after Louis XIV, in spite of the fact that none of his two successors managed to retain any of the Sun King's importance or charisma within the European cultural dimension¹⁶.

The French king's love for *Commedia dell'Arte* contributed to increasing European attention to this type of theatre. Louis XIV managed to constitute the best *Commedia dell'Arte* company of his time in Paris, eventually conferring upon its actors the royal title of *Comédiens Italiens du Roi* and allowing them to perform both at court and in a Paris theatre¹⁷. The fact that this type of theatre was liked in Paris and Versailles helped to further boost its popularity among the European nobility, which was so highly influenced by Parisian aristocratic behaviour, tastes and manners, either through direct experience or through word of mouth. Its growing popularity in Paris was due to the actors' skills and the company's consistent presence in a fixed theatre venue. The need to communicate better with a regular public also fell in line with the new trend imposed by Versailles of substituting the Italian language by French even in purely

¹⁴ Richelieu and later, Louis himself, developed the refinement of the French language through the Académie Française, created in 1636, and about thirty years later, through the work of the *grammairiens* based at the Port Royal.

¹⁵ Václav Buzek, Rostislav Smíšek, *Dance in the everyday life of the nobility at the beginning of the modern era*, in *Dances and festivities of the 16th-18th centuries*, Andrea Rousová ed., Prague, Národní galerie v Praze, 2008, p. 30.

¹⁶ Eighteenth-century French court influence in fashion and culture can be attributed rather to the king's immediate entourage, particularly Louis XV's mistress, Mme de Pompadour, and Louis XVI's wife, Marie Antoinette. Of course, however, during this period, France acquired new cultural and political importance through the revolutionary ideas of the Enlightenment, and later, the revolution itself.

¹⁷ From 1658 to 1680, the Italians shared their premises with the company directed by Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, known as Molière, first at the Hotel de Bourbon, later at the Palais Royal, and after Molière's death in 1673, at the Hotel de Guénégaud. In 1680, they were given their own space at the Hotel de Bourgogne.

Italian theatre genres such as opera. It implied new adaptations of these forms of performance, particularly those generated by the *Commedia*¹⁸. This change gave rise to a very particular type of *Commedia dell'Arte* performance which became more and more distinct from that practised in Italy, and which could also travel around Europe. Italian *Commedia dell'Arte* actors who had acquired fame in the French capital were of such high quality that they were asked to perform at other courts¹⁹. The popularity of French-style *Commedia dell'Arte* continued well after the expulsion of the Italian troupe from Paris in 1697, when the *Comédie Italienne*, banned in Paris, shifted to the *théâtres de la Foire* just outside the capital²⁰. There, the

¹⁸ The penetration of the French language in the Italian comedies meant that Italian forms of verbal improvisation, where generic speeches or *zibaldoni*, often of literary inspiration, as well as Italian dialects, played an important role, had to be abandoned. The actors had to develop their types in new ways, abandoning the distinction between «parti serie» and «parti comiche» and allowing for a greater interpenetration of the two, with the predominance of physical prowess to make up for the verbal lacunae. In certain cases this also meant a radical change in the social status and importance of the types. Although various actors spent so much time in France that some were naturalised French, while others were actually born or at least bred in France, they resorted to French authors for their dialogues. Among the Italian actors who took up French nationality were Ursula Cortezzi (Bologna, ?-Paris, 1718) stage name: Eularia, wife of Domenico Biancolleli, who was naturalised in 1680 and Patrizia Adami (Rome, 1638-Paris, 1693) Diamantine, and her husband Angelo Agostino Lolli (Bologna, 1622?-Paris, 1702) Dottore, who obtained French naturalisation in 1683. Marc'Antonio Romagnesi (1633c.-1706) Cinthio, was naturalised in 1685, as was Tiberio Fiorilli (Naples, 1608-Paris, 1694) Scaramouche, and Michelangelo Fracanzani (Naples, 1638c.-?) Polichinelle, in 1688. See Émile Campardon, *Les Comédiens du Roi de la Troupe Italienne pendant les deux derniers siècles*, Paris, Berger-Levrault et C^{ie}, 1880, vol. I, at the entries of the different actors. For the French scenes of the *Commedia dell'Arte* plays in Paris see Evaristo Gherardi, *Le Théâtre Italien de Gherardi, ou le Recueil Général de toutes les Comédies et Scènes Françaises jouées par les Comédiens Italiens du Roi, pendant tout le temps qu'ils ont été au service*, Paris, Chez Briasson, 1741, reprinted in Genève, Slatkine Reprints, 1969.

¹⁹ Such was the case of Tiberio Fiorilli who performed at the English Court of Louis' cousin, Charles II. Fiorilli's popularity was such that he could charge exorbitant fees, to the extent that in 1675, the English King had to take the unprecedented initiative of making his courtiers pay to attend Scaramouche's performance. See Vicki Ann Cremona, *From Arlecchino to Harlequin: Italian actors on the English stage*, «Journal of Anglo-Italian Studies», University of Malta, vol. 2, 1992, pp. 83-84. Virginia Scott states that Fiorilli received large sums of money over and above his share of the King's subsidy, see: *The Commedia dell'Arte in Paris 1644-1697*, Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1990, p. 85.

²⁰ The Théâtre Italien was closed down by order of Louis XIV, on the 14th May 1697, because it was suspected that the Italians were about to stage a play *La fausse prude*, that poked fun at Madame de Maintenon, whom the king had married

actors' work was enhanced by techniques that were more typical of the fairground performances, such as acrobatic feats or dancing²¹. Commedia plays continued to be exported from France to other European stages, even after the installation of a new Italian company in Paris under the direction of the actor Luigi Riccoboni in 1716, a year after the death of Louis XIV²². Unfortunately, there is no evidence which would allow us to link the inspiration of the miniatures to the presence of the *troupe foraine* in Prague in 1718, referred to before.

Another art that attained unprecedented importance at the time of Louis XIV may also be linked to the Castle miniatures. Dance, always a feature of court and peasant life, had grown into a serious pastime in the newly-developed European courts during the Renaissance, when Commedia dell'Arte came into existence. Under the Sun King, dance had developed intensely as a high form of artistic expression. Moreover, the French balls at the Court of Louis XIV had set the standard for dancing in aristocratic circles, and masked balls, which were an integral part of the Carnival season, were also held at other times of the year, because they provided a popular occasion for dancing where court constraints could be relaxed as sovereigns and aristocrats hid behind their masks and disguises²³. In the eighteenth century, the ability to dance well in public was still considered a social necessity among aristocrats²⁴. Cohen asserts that the

in secret in 1685. This marriage marked a radical change in the king's tastes, and the slow abandonment of his love for comedy and ballet. The actors were not allowed to perform within a thirty-kilometre radius of Paris.

²¹ See Corrado Pani, *L'immagine svela il grottesco. Per una iconografia della danza prima della danza*, in Renzo Guardenti, *Teatro e iconografia: un dossier*, «Teatro e Storia», n. 25, 2004, p. 24.

²² See scene in the anonymous play *Comparison between the two stages, with an examen of the Generous conqueror* (London 1702), pp. 45-48, quoted in Emmett Avery, *Dancing and pantomime on the English stage 1700-1737*, «Studies in Philology», vol. 31, n. 3, July 1934, p. 418, where reference is made to performances by the «Sieur Allard [...] and the two *Monsieurs* [*sic*] his Sons Rogues that show at Paris for a Groat a piece». The play indicates that the sons play Arlequin and Scaramouche. Xavier de Courville refers to a planned trip to England in 1723 by Riccoboni and his troupe, following an invitation from the Princess of Wales, which had to be cancelled after permission was withdrawn. See Xavier de Courville, *Luigi Riccoboni dit Lélío*, Paris, l'Arche, 1967, tome II, pp. 237-238.

²³ Rebecca Harris-Warwick, *Ballroom dancing at the court of Louis XIV*, «Early Music», vol. 14, n. 1, Feb. 1986, p. 42.

²⁴ Helena Kazarova, *Theatre and dance in the life of the Schwarzenbergs reflected in the correspondence with the Thürheim Family. Part I: Letters from the years 1744-1752*, in *The world of baroque theatre*, cit., pp. 329-357.

proliferation of masked balls at the beginning of the eighteenth century blurred the distinction between the social person and the fictional character represented, transforming this duality into a «carnavalesque play with identity»²⁵. The change in identity was facilitated by a transformation in appearance, mainly through masks and costumes that were out-of-the-ordinary, and evoked exotic, poetic and theatrical worlds. The Commedia dell'Arte costumes were a suitable choice in this respect.

From actors to miniatures

The main interest of the collection of 60 miniatures, each measuring 16.5x10.5 cm, is linked primarily to the costumes worn by each of the sixty figures, which hail from European countries, Turkey and beyond. Certain details in the miniatures indicate that even though the costumes may represent theatre types, peasants, burghers or lords, their quality and adornments are such that they were probably to be worn by the aristocratic echelons of society, who would certainly put on this type of dress to a masquerade ball. The miniatures, therefore, certainly depict either real costumes worn to balls, or imaginary costumes that could serve as a source of inspiration to their beholders. Moreover, just like Louis XIV and other court figures well before his time, Bohemian aristocracy, as well as those of other lands, also enjoyed acting in private performances. Ceský Krumlov Castle houses a beautiful court theatre with changing scenery based on Torelli's chariot and pole system, which was built between 1680 and 1682, and overhauled in the second half of the eighteenth century. Consequently, many of the costumes in the miniatures, including the seven Commedia dell'Arte figures, may be linked both to masked balls and amateur performances. The Commedia figures, who are all richly dressed, consist of three individual characters: Monsieur Pantalon (erroneously spelt Candalon), Le Docteur and Capitain (*sic*) Spavento, and two couples wearing matching costumes: Arlequin and Arlequine, and Scapino and Scapine.

The fact that the Commedia dell'Arte characters are present in miniatures that were painted after the sun had set on Louis XIV's

²⁵ Sarah R. Cohen, *Body as «character» in early eighteenth-century French art and performance*, «The Art Bulletin», vol. 78, n. 3, Sep. 1996, p. 497.

Paris, shows that the characters played by the Italian actors had, thanks to the actors' ability, captured and diffused through prints, fascinated their audiences and engaged popular imagination. Whereas the French engravings represent real-life actors, who were famous for their roles, the miniatures do not represent any specific person, their beauty and attraction is mainly due to the quality and exceptional details of the costumes. The particular features of the miniatures representing theatrical figures, especially the ones showing couples, are indicative of a wealthy society for whom theatre was only a leisurely pastime, and whose main concern was to appear fashionable in the costumes and opulent jewellery they wore to masked balls of the kind depicted on the walls in the Masquerade Hall in Český Krumlov. Unlike the seventeenth-century estampes, they are, therefore to be seen as a testimony, not to a person, but to a particular restricted social class. Some are directly inspired by the French engravings to be found in the castle, and others may be compared to the designs of costumes in other European court collections.

One of the paintings directly inspired from an engraving by Nicolas Bonnart (1637 c.-1718) is that of the Dottore. The two characters are more or less in the same position; the Bonnart version depicts the Dottore in three-quarter profile, while he is shown in full profile in the miniature. The position taken by the Dottore may be seen in other engravings of the time, which would indicate that this is a typical scenic pose²⁶. The two wear very similar costumes, with some slight variations, such as the ruff, belt and purse, and adopt the same gesture of touching the brim of their hats and lifting their coats at the back, even though the coat by Bonnart is longer. An important difference can be seen in the mask, which could indicate that whereas Bonnart's picture is inspired directly from the theatre, the other figure could be painted with a social category in mind, that of the aristocracy. Bonnart's figure wears the typical mask covering the forehead and nose, associated with the type, which would allow the Dottore to deliver the long, bombastic speeches he was renowned for. The Dottore in the miniature sports a beard, as well as a moustache, while close examination of the face and jawline would actually sug-

²⁶ This point is amply discussed by Renzo Guardenti (*Gli Italiani a Parigi*, cit., vol. I, pp. 235-236) with reference to iconography relating both to the Dottore and Arlequin. The pose, with the hands at the back lifting a heavy coat, is also reminiscent of the stance taken up by Pantalone in the engraving by Jacques Callot.

gest that the character is wearing a full mask, which includes the characteristic mask he would normally wear. In that case, the character would not be able to speak, and would therefore only wear this costume in a mute scene, or perhaps at a masked ball.

Nicolas Bonnart, who developed his business at the rue Saint Jacques as from 1674, must have been familiar with the Italian comedy in Paris at his time, and was probably inspired by the appearance of the Italian actors playing the role. He may have watched Jean-Baptiste-Ange-Augustin Lolli at the Théâtre Italien, as the latter took on the role of Dottore from 1653 up to his retirement in 1694. Lolli was succeeded by Marc'Antonio Romagnesi, who had become too old for the role of first lover, which he had held since 1685, after moving up from his previous role of second lover which he had held since 1667. An engraving by Mariette depicting Romagnesi in this role gives his name as Le Docteur Balouard, and he is wearing the characteristic elements of the Dottore's costume: a black costume and his typical mask²⁷. Interestingly, a painting at Milan's La Scala Theatre Museum shows Dominique Biancolelli, famous for his role as Arlequin, wearing a costume of the Dottore. He is unmasked, and assumes the stance of delivering a speech²⁸. The fact that Dominique, who held such an essential role within the *Comédie Italienne*, could actually allow himself to be painted in another role, clearly indicates two things. It demonstrates that the specialisation of Commedia dell'Arte actors lay not so much in enacting a particular role, but rather in manipulating particular bodily skills and theatre techniques. This meant that the same actor, although associated with a particular type, could easily take up different roles, especially when age or economic factors necessitated this type of switch²⁹. It also suggests that this principle was applied indiscriminately, even to the biggest crowd-pullers of the company. The Dottore also appears in various frontispieces of plays in the Gherardi collection³⁰, and he often carries a large, soft, wide-brimmed hat in his hand that is similar to

²⁷ *Marc-Antonio [sic] Romagnesi dit le Docteur Balouard*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Collection Hennin, tome 83.

²⁸ See reproduction of painting in Cesare Molinari, *La Commedia dell'Arte*, Milano, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1985, ill. p. 8.

²⁹ See Clelia Falletti Cruciani, *Il teatro in Italia. Il Cinquecento e Seicento*, Roma, Edizioni Studium, 1999, p. 358.

³⁰ Evaristo Gherardi, *Le Théâtre Italien*, cit., such as in volume 6, p. 155.

the one in the miniature, and wears a skullcap on his head, just like Mariette's depiction of Romagnesi³¹.

Both the miniature collection and the engravings by Nicolas Bonnart include Pantalone, the counter-figure to the Dottore. Giovan Battista Turri had climbed the boards in Paris as Pantalon on the 10th August 1653 but was in Italy in 1671. It is claimed that he came back to Paris and was certainly present until 1686³², however Pantalone is nowhere present in the *Recueil de Gherardi*, which comprises productions from 1682 to 1697. There is only one engraving of the type by Bonnart, which is absent from the collection at Český Krumlov even though it may have formed part of it at the time the miniature was painted. The copy held at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France bears a short description stating that Pantalon plays the role of the amorous old man. It also states that the type speaks Venetian «*en bredouillant*», which could either mean that he mumbles or stutters. His use of Venetian could explain his absence from the *Recueil*, which according to its author, only includes the French scenes because the Italian ones «*ne sauroient s'imprimer*»³³. It would mean that Turri only used Italian dialect and did not recite in French, and that his role was very much in line with Italian Commedia dell'Arte, where the type often appeared as a lascivious figure, rivalling with the young lovers for the hand of the beautiful young maiden, and courting the servant girls³⁴. In the French context, this indication could also be viewed as an actor's stratagem to distract the audience from his lack of knowledge of the French language, by putting on an act which would render him interesting even to persons who did not understand what he was saying³⁵.

Although, as stated previously, the collection of engravings by

³¹ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Collection Hennin, tome 75.

³² Delia Gambelli, *Arlecchino a Parigi. Dall'inferno alla Corte del Re Sole*, Roma, Bulzoni, 1993, p. 216, footnote 45.

³³ Evaristo Gherardi, *Avertissement qu'il faut lire*, in *Le Théâtre Italien*, cit.

³⁴ This aspect of the type is often taken up in iconography. See illustrations in Agne Beijer, *Le Recueil Fossard*, cit., plates XVIII, XXII. A painting on the same theme that seems to be inspired by the *Recueil* hangs in the Drottningholms Teatermuseum in Stockholm. It is reproduced in Cesare Molinari, *La Commedia dell'Arte*, cit., p. 216.

³⁵ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Collection Hennin, tome 58. The complete French text reads as follows: «Pantalon, Masque Vénitien, vêtu [*sic*] de rouge avec le bonnet et la veste de Gentilhomme vénitien. Il parle vénitien en bredouillant et contrefait le vieillard amoureux».

Bonnart still stored in the volume *Plusieurs Nations* at the Castle library does not include a Pantalone, details in the miniature would suggest that the artist was aware of the Bonnart engraving, which may have been part of the Krumlov collection at the time. The way the Monsieur Candalon (*sic*) in the miniature puts out his right hand recalls Bonnart's engraving; in both cases, the right arm is held at a right angle and the little finger is held at a distance from the rest of the fingers, which are bunched together. This little detail would imply that the anonymous miniaturist had picked up the detail in the print. Although both pictures present a straight-backed Pantalon, the Bonnart engraving, places the type frontally, while Monsieur Pantalon in the Bohemian miniature collection is depicted in profile. Pantalone is more commonly illustrated in this position, as it highlights both the mask's long pointed nose and the beard sticking out almost at right angles to the profile of the face. However, in the miniature, Monsieur Pantalon's long nose is shaped very much like a real nose, a feature often found in artistic representations of Pantalone, but which differs from the long stylised nose usually found in masks worn by actors. Moreover, the type wears a full mask with red lips forming an uncharacteristic pleasant smile, which reveals even more clearly than the miniature of the Dottore, that the costume is either intended for a silent part, or more probably, for a masked ball. On the other hand, the wide opening for the eyes is characteristic of the masks worn by Commedia dell'Arte actors in the eighteenth century, when the eye-opening had evolved from two small points to one that revealed the eyes completely, rendering the face more expressive.

Similarities with the Bonnart engraving may also be found in the costume. In both cases, Pantalone is wearing a coat³⁶, a jacket and wide, knee-length breeches. The breeches, however, mark an evolution of the type's costume. In sixteenth and seventeenth-century

³⁶ Luigi Riccoboni, the eighteenth-century Commedia dell'Arte actor and writer who headed the Paris troupe, narrates a curious story with regard to the colour of the coat, which was inspired from the gown worn by Venetian patricians. He states that in origin the coat was red, and attributes the black colour to the sign of mourning at the loss of the Kingdom of Negroponte which, if true, would probably refer to Doge Morosini's defeat in 1688, rather than the year the Kingdom was ceded in 1479, as part of the agreement underlying the treaty of peace with the Ottomans. See Luigi Riccoboni, *Histoire du théâtre italien depuis la décadence de la comédie latine; avec un Catalogue des tragédies et comédies italiennes imprimées depuis... 1500, jusqu'à... 1600, et une Dissertation sur la tragédie moderne, par Louis Riccoboni*, Paris, A. Cailleau, 1731, vol. 1, p. 311.

iconographical material the type is usually represented in tight-fitting hose «which were the height of daring fashion for young Venetian males in the opening decades of the sixteenth century»³⁷. The painting of the Gelosi troupe, hanging in the Musée Carnavalet in Paris, which is similar to certain prints of the «Recueil Fossard», depicts Pantalone in profile, wearing this type of costume³⁸. A seventeenth-century engraving by Mariette also shows a Pantalone wearing tight hose; he is in the company of a Polichinelle³⁹. This type of hose can also be seen in the Pantalone painted by Alessandro Scalzi, known as il Paduano, in one of the three frescoes painted on the walls of the bedchamber of Duke William V in the Castle of Trausnitz (Bavaria) in the late sixteenth century, or in the seventeenth-century engraving by Jacques Callot⁴⁰. The breeches and general appearance of the costume in the miniature can also be compared to that of the Pantalone in the late seventeenth-century watercolour by Lodovico Ottavio Burnacini⁴¹, as well as to the breeches worn by the Pantalone painted in 1748 on the walls of the Masquerade Hall in the Castle of Český Krumlov, where the red stockings appearing at the knee seem to be held up by a ribboned garter. A Pantalone costume that is part of the costume collection at the castle of Český Krumlov also consists of breeches, but the jacket is much longer than that worn in the miniature⁴².

Unlike the other two miniatures, the third individual character of the *Commedia*, Capitain Spavento does not resemble any known

³⁷ M.A. Katritzky, *The Art of «Commedia»: a study in the «Commedia dell'Arte» 1560-1620 with special reference to the visual records*, Amsterdam-New York, Rodopi, 2006, p. 189.

³⁸ «Une représentation de la *Commedia dell'Arte* par la troupe des Gelosi (1571-1604): peinture flamande de la fin du XVI^e siècle», Musée Carnavalet. The picture may be accessed on the following website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Commedia_dell'arte_-_troupe_Gelosi.JPG (accessed 21-4-2011).

³⁹ See Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Coll. Destailleur. As there was no Polichinelle at the time the Pantalon Turri was with the Italian company, one can wonder whether this part was given to Joseph Giaraton, who worked as «gagiste» from 1662 taking on various roles, generally as walk-on parts or small appearances until 1673, when he took on the role of Pierrot.

⁴⁰ There are many reproductions of these two pictures; see for example: Cesare Molinari, *La Commedia dell'Arte*, cit., pp. 24 and 58.

⁴¹ Burnacini designed a series of *Commedia dell'Arte* costumes for the theatre. His designs may be found at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna.

⁴² Michal Tuma, *The story of the Masquerade Hall in Český Krumlov Castle*, České Budjovice, Foto Mida, 2007, p. 46.

French engraving, even though an engraving by Bonnard represents a Capitan Spezza Ferre with a short description highlighting his poltroonery. The Italian troupe in Paris also included a Capitan, called Spezzafer, played by Geronimo Cey. In his *Registre*, La Grange states that «Gieronimo Cey dit Spessafer, Comédien Italien et bon acteur, est mort au commencement d'avril 1685»⁴³. Although this character does not appear in Gherardi's *Recueil* which was first printed in 1700, he appears in an earlier publication, the *Supplément du Théâtre Italien* that includes scenes from various plays, some of which were later incorporated into Gherardi's final version⁴⁴. In the *Supplément*, he appears as «Spestafer» in the «Scène de la Nourrice» of the play *Arlequin lingère du palais*, which according to Gherardi was first staged on the 4th October 1682. In the 1700 edition, the character has been replaced by Pasquariel, who was played by Giuseppe Tortoriti. The actor had entered the company in the month preceding Cey's death, and stayed on till it was suppressed by order of the king in 1697. The creation of the Commedia character of the Capitano is often attributed to Francesco Andreini, who took on the role of Capitan Spaventa della Valle Inferna, and toured France in the early seventeenth century with his company I Gelosi. However, the part can also be found in other European plays, often with the Spanish-sounding name of Capitan Matamoros, as in Pierre Corneille's *L'illusion comique*, written in 1636. The numerous wars in seventeenth-century Europe brought many soldiers to foreign lands, and there are many seventeenth-century cartoons of Spanish and German soldiers, especially as a result of the Thirty Years War which brought on the downfall of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire. There are also Dutch cartoons poking fun at their French enemies in the Dutch Wars where names and characters such as Harlequin appear, often in the company of French literary comic characters such as Rabelais' Panurge⁴⁵.

⁴³ Quoted in Henry Carrington Lancaster, *A history of French dramatic literature in the seventeenth century. Part IV, 1673-1700*, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1942, vol. II, p. 601.

⁴⁴ *Supplément du Théâtre Italien, ou Recueil des Scènes françoises qui ont été présentées sur le Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne, lesquelles n'ont point encore été imprimées*, à Bruxelles, chez N*****, Première Edition, 1697, tome II. Before Cey, the role of Capitano was played by François Mansac, who was murdered in 1662 in front of Molière's house in rue de Richelieu (see Émile Campardon, *Les Comédiens du Roi de la Troupe Italienne*, cit., vol. II, pp. 1-3).

⁴⁵ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Collection Hennin, tome 65.

The two pairs of Commedia dell'Arte characters that are part of the Castle collection, present a certain interest, because although the male types are both intrinsically associated with the Commedia dell'Arte, the female characters are less well-known. No collection would be complete without Harlequin, and in fact there are four Bonnat engravings in the collection at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, depicting Harlequin in a theatre scene, and two different-sized engravings of another picture of the type⁴⁶. The volume at Krumlov Castle includes the engraving in the larger format⁴⁷. It is thought to represent Domenico Biancolleli in his later years, and shows the technical ability of a heavy-bodied actor who can still assume a graceful off-balance position, closely resembling dance. Through the diffusion of the print, a pose belonging to a particular actor became associated to the type and the Arlequin in the miniature is also depicted in an off-balance, dance-like position.

The popularity of Arlequin in France may be attested by the description on the engraving: «Il faut avouer qu'Arlequin fait les delices du theatre». Biancolleli, who died two years before the engravings were brought to Český Krumlov, together with Tiberio Fiorilli, provided the main attraction at the Théâtre Italien and were among the king's favourite actors. The capabilities of both lay mainly in physical action. Fiorilli was famous for his mimic qualities rather than his speeches, in fact in Gherardi's *Recueil* he is given few speaking parts, but the didascalies provide detailed descriptions of some of his *lazzi*. According to Gueullette, Biancolelli had a hoarse and high-pitched voice, which he managed to change into one of Arlequin's characteristics, to the extent that his successors were obliged to speak in the same way. Although the actor wore a mask that was typical of the role, he completely altered Arlequin's physical appearance, and consequently his role, through a radical transformation of the type's costume. It is not known when Biancolelli replaced the coloured patches on the *zanni* costume still worn by his predecessor Domenico Locatelli, head (*capocomico*) of the first permanent company in Paris as from 1658, who played the role of Trivelin⁴⁸. How-

⁴⁶ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, ED-113-FOL.

⁴⁷ The other engraving in the castle collection is one by Henri Bonnat of Mezzetin dressed as Arlequin, flanked by a monkey, which states that his role may be placed on a par with that of Arlequin: «On n'a rien vu au theatre que le dispute plus au burlesque Arlequin».

⁴⁸ Trivelin played in Paris from about 1644, certainly up to 1659. Thomas

ever, the transformation of the patches into a brightly-coloured stylised design which absorbed the patches into multi-coloured triangles of red, yellow, white and blue allowed the shift from the hierarchically-determined role of Arlecchino, a simple *zanni*, to that of Arlequin, a role that could no longer be easily defined, and was linked more to imagination than to class. It is in this guise that he is represented by Bonnart. The «classless» costume, coupled with the great ability of Biancolelli, contributed to making the type become the most popular figure in French seventeenth-century Commedia dell'Arte. In the *Galerie Théâtrale* it is stated that Biancolelli was superior to his comrades and that «his gaiety, manners, and acting were always natural, and did not reveal their art»⁴⁹. Through his talent and wit, he managed to place Arlequin as the core figure of the French Commedia dell'Arte. The attractive colourful costume, that easily identified the type, certainly increased Arlequin's popularity across different nations, probably mainly through coloured prints, which were additionally an important source of inspiration for the casting and colouring of porcelain figures, so popular with the more affluent echelons of society⁵⁰, and which together with other decorative arts constituted another iconographical means of transmission of the Commedia dell'Arte.

Even when the Théâtre Italien was abolished in 1697, Arlequin continued to live on in the fairground plays, thanks to capable actors such as Baxter⁵¹ and Pierre-François Biancolelli, Dominique's son, who shifted to the role of Pierrot when he joined the newly-founded Nouveau Théâtre Italien. The Duke of Orléans, as Regent, had reconstituted the Italian theatre in Paris, under the direction of Luigi Riccoboni, a year after Louis XIV's death⁵². The role of Arlequin

Gueullette states that the actor wore the costume and mask of Harlequin (see Delia Gambelli, *Arlecchino a Parigi*, cit., p. 217).

⁴⁹ *Galerie Théâtrale ou collection en pied des principaux acteurs des premiers théâtres de la capitale qui ont illustré la scène française depuis 1552 jusqu'à nos jours*, Paris, Imprimé en noir et en couleur chez Barneoud, 1773 (my translation).

⁵⁰ See Meredith Chilton, *Harlequin unmasked. The Commedia dell'Arte and porcelain sculpture*, New Haven-London, The George R. Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art with Yale University Press, 2002, p. 35.

⁵¹ Émile Campardon, *Les Comédiens du Roi de la Troupe Italienne*, cit., tome I, p. 100.

⁵² Luigi Riccoboni, *Mémoire pour servir à l'histoire de la Comédie Italienne*, in *Le Nouveau Théâtre Italien ou Recueil général des comédies représentées par les Comédiens italiens ordinaires du Roi. Augmenté des pièces nouvelles, des arguments de plusieurs autres qui n'ont point été imprimées et d'un catalogue de toutes les comédies*

was played by Tommaso Antonio Vicentini, known as Thomassin, and after his death in 1739, first by Antonio Costantini up to 1742, when he was dismissed, and then by Carlo Bertinazzi, known as Carlin⁵³. Arlequin was one of the leading characters in the Opéra-Comique. The European popularity of this type of performance, which as Philippe Vendrix explains, consists of a play where spoken parts are mixed with sung parts and with danced parts⁵⁴, could also partly explain the diffusion and popularity of the type in Europe.

As stated previously, the miniature in Český Krumlov represents Arlequin in an off-balance, dancing position, which could indicate either Arlequin's agile, performative qualities or the fact that the costume is intended for some court performance or dance. The rich details of the costume point even more clearly to the fact that the character depicted is representative of the more affluent classes, and probably denotes an aristocrat in disguise. The costume contains various atypical characteristics. Arlequin's typical soft white hat «en pan de sucre», is decorated with a black feather, rather than the usual hare's foot. Uncharacteristically, this hat is also decorated with a jewelled buckle probably holding a band around the crown, as well as a brooch pinned to the rim. Both the buckle and brooch are painted in such a way as to convey the idea that they are covered with diamonds. Whether these are real diamonds or paste jewellery is not certain; however, Arlequin wears a jewelled ring on both his little fingers, which would seem to indicate somebody from the richer classes rather than a professional actor. The costume in the miniature is still very much in the seventeenth-century style, with a long jacket reaching to the thighs, and gathered at the hips by a belt, as in the famous engraving depicting Evaristo Gherardi⁵⁵. It is covered by coloured triangular shapes that, as we have seen, are typical of Har-

représentées depuis le rétablissement des Comédiens italiens, nouvelle édition, Paris, chez Briasson, MDCCXXXIII, tome I, pp. XV-XVI. Biancolelli later abandoned the role for that of Trivelin, which he kept till the end of his career (*Ivi*, p. XVIII).

⁵³ Thomas-Simon Gueullette, *Notes et souvenirs sur le Théâtre Italien au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, Droz, 1938, p. 48. Gueullette states that Antonio Costantini was the natural son of Gradelin, and therefore half-brother to Angelo Costantini, who had played Mezzetin in the old troupe, and to Jean-Baptiste Costantini who had played Octave. The name «Costantini» is often spelled «Constantini» when the names of the actors are written in French.

⁵⁴ Philippe Vendrix, *L'Opéra-Comique en France au XVIII^e siècle*, Liège, Pierre Mardaga Editeur, 1995, p. 11.

⁵⁵ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, engraving by Jean Mariette, Département des Estampes, Recueil Destailleur.

lequin's costume in seventeenth-century France. In the miniature, the predominant colours are red, white and blue; there is no trace of yellow, which is to be found in seventeenth and eighteenth-century iconography, as in the case of the Harlequin in the Masquerade Hall at Český Krumlov, which clearly depicts a masked ball⁵⁶. However, it is interesting to note that the triangular shapes are already beginning to form the diamond-shape pattern which was to become typical of Harlequin's costume in the later eighteenth century. Interestingly, an engraving by Trouvain in the Hennin collection, dated as 1700, places the full diamond-shape pattern right at the start of the eighteenth century; it shows a dancing Harlequin with a diamond-shaped costume, wearing the same type of semi-circular shaped sleeves that can be found in other iconography such as the «Recueil Fossard»⁵⁷, Burnacini's Harlequin⁵⁸, the engraving of *Evaristo Gherardi faisant le personnage d'Arlequin* by Mariette⁵⁹, and the Harlequins in the collection by Gregorio Lambranzi⁶⁰. Whereas the dancing Arlequin, in full diamond-shape patterned costume, wears something closely resembling spats on his feet⁶¹, the shape of Arlequin's shoes in the miniature are reminiscent of dancing shoes.

The female equivalent to Arlequin, depicted in the castle miniatures, was certainly unknown in Italy, but emerged from French Commedia dell'Arte at the end of the seventeenth century. The name «Arlequine» first appears in the finale of the play *Le retour de la Foire de Bezons*, performed for the first time at the Théâtre Italien on the 1st October 1695. A number of Commedia characters come out to dance on stage, and «Arlequin danse avec une Arlequine»⁶². This fact is important enough for the dancing couple to be chosen as the main subject for the frontispiece of the play, however, the name does not occur again in the whole collection of plays printed by Evaristo Gherardi. It

⁵⁶ Michal Tuma, *The story of the Masquerade Hall*, cit., p. 64.

⁵⁷ Agne Beijer, *Le Recueil Fossard*, cit., plates XVI, XVII, XVIII.

⁵⁸ Lodovico Ottavio Burnacini, *Harlequin*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna. See illustration in Lynne Lawner, *Harlequin on the moon. Commedia dell'Arte and the visual arts*, New York, Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1998, p. 147.

⁵⁹ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Collection Hennin, tome 75.

⁶⁰ Gregorio Lambranzi, *Neue und Curieuse theatralische Tantz-Schul*, Nuremberg 1716.

⁶¹ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Collection Hennin, tome 74.

⁶² Evaristo Gherardi, *Le Théâtre Italien*, cit., tome VI, p. 202.

is very difficult to identify who the first «Arlequine» really was. At the time, the company had just lost one of its two main actresses: Françoise-Marie-Apolline Biancolelli, known by her stage name as Isabelle, who had withdrawn from the stage. There were, therefore, only three women. Catherine Biancolelli was highly successful as Colombine and had transformed the role from that of a simple soubrette to a highly-sophisticated, witty character that could not be classified as belonging to one particular class. Angela Toscano had played the role of second soubrette under the name Marinette from 1685 to 1694. That year, she took on the role of second lover under the name Angélique, and was promoted to first lover the following year when Françoise Biancolelli abandoned her acting career⁶³. She is described by Campardon as being tall, well-turned out and having a pretty face, but a mediocre actress. Another change that occurred in 1694 was the entrance into the company of Gherardi's wife, Elisabeth Danneret, known as Babet-la-Chanteuse. She appeared on stage for the first time on the 24th August 1694, in the «Divertissement» that followed the play *Le départ des Italiens*. Following the forced closure of the Théâtre Italien in 1697, she joined the opera, known as the Académie Royale de Musique⁶⁴. Given Catherine Biancolelli's success as Colombine, Dominique's daughter probably did not need to recur to another role unless it was really necessary; Angelica Toscano was then trying to establish herself in the serious parts. Taking these factors into consideration, and the fact that Arlequine only appears at the end of the play, it would seem probable that the role was taken up by Elisabeth Danneret.

It would, however, seem more probable that the popularity of Arlequine should be attributed to another actress, Spinette, rather than Danneret. Spinette, whose real name was Maria Teresa, was married to Vittorio Dorsi, a Commedia actor living in Italy who took on the roles of Dottore. She was the sister-in-law of Angelo Costantini, who played Mezzetin in the company. The actress only joined the Théâtre Italien in April 1697, barely one month before the theatre was closed down, and was only able to perform five or six times. Gueullette recounts a rather picaresque story about her: she had previously been a member of the troupe belonging to the Duke of Bavaria, and was also the latter's mistress, but was seduced and carried away by Angelo Costantini, who brought her to France, where she joined the company⁶⁵. The

⁶³ Émile Campardon, *Les Comédiens du Roi de la Troupe Italienne*, cit., tome I, p. 165.

⁶⁴ *Ivi*, p. 240.

⁶⁵ Thomas-Simon Gueullette, *Notes et souvenirs*, cit., pp. 21-22.

Frères Parfaict describe her as very pretty and an excellent actress. The latter must certainly have been the case because for her début, she played the title role in *Spinette, lutin amoureux*, where she interpreted five or six characters⁶⁶. The Frères Parfaict claim that she returned to Italy after the company was disbanded in 1697, however, an engraving by Bonnart, *La Signore [sic] Spinette en Arlequine à l'Opera*⁶⁷, would seem to indicate that like Danneret, Spinette moved on to the Opéra after the Italian theatre was closed down. The date in the Hennin collection is established at 1680, but the attribution is questionable, because it actually predates the appearance of Arlequine in the Théâtre Italien according to the date given by Gherardi for the first performance of the *Retour de la Foire de Bezons*. Moreover, an identical figure of Arlequine is to be found in another engraving by Bonnart entitled *L'Opera*, and dated in the collection as 1710. It shows Arlequine dancing on stage with another four actors, in a performance called *L'Opéra du Carnaval de Venise*⁶⁸. This opera, in French and Italian, was written by Jean-François Regnard together with the musician André Campra, and was first performed at the Académie Royale de Musique on the 20th January, 1699. Regnard was well-known to the Italian troupe, as he was the author of a number of plays published in Gherardi's *Recueil*. At least two other characters of the five in the engraving are also depicted separately by Bonnart and the title under each individual picture mentions the same opera. A female character is dressed in a costume closely resembling the one worn in an engraving representing *Isabelle Venitienne, amante de Leandre de l'Opera du Carnaval de Venise*⁶⁹, although in this case the actress's physical position is slightly different. The date for the latter engraving is given as 1699, which would be a more plausible date for Spinette's presence in Paris than that attributed to either the engraving of Spinette herself or that of the *Opera*, and would correspond to the year the opera was launched. The other

⁶⁶ Claude et François Parfaict, *Histoire de l'Ancien Théâtre Italien en France, depuis son origine en France jusqu'à sa suppression en 1697*, Paris, Chez Rozet, 1767, p. 128.

⁶⁷ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Collection Hennin, tome 58. This print may be viewed on the following website: <http://images.bnf.fr/jsp/index.jsp> (accessed 25/9/2011).

⁶⁸ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Collection Hennin, tome 83.

⁶⁹ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Collection Hennin, tome 73. This Isabelle is certainly not Françoise Biancolelli, who had already left the stage five years before and had probably never performed at the opera.

character may also be found represented individually in Bonnart's *Un Chinois dansant à l'Opera du Carnaval de Venise*⁷⁰.

The popularity of the figure and of Bonnart's prints outside France may be attested by the fact that the English actress and dancer, Hester Santlow, later Booth, is represented as Harlequine, in a stance that is very similar to that of Spinette, in an oil painting by John Ellys around 1722-25⁷¹. The fact that the English actress was already playing this role in Drury Lane in 1706, after training with a French dancing master, René Cherrier⁷², shows clearly that the figure of Arlequine as a Commedia dell'Arte character had quickly spread beyond France in the early eighteenth century. When the new Italian troupe came to Paris, its leader could not afford to ignore the existence of this new character. Arlequine appeared for the first time in the Comédie Italienne on the 15th March 1718, in the play *Les Comédiens Italiens par hazard*. Riccoboni actually placed two Arlequines on stage: «la Signora Trufaldina Arlequine», from Bergamo (Arlecchino's town of origin), and «la Signora Gradelina», «autre Arlequine» and in the play Arlequin has promised marriage to both⁷³. It is not known who of the four actresses in the company

⁷⁰ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Collection Hennin, tome 73. The word «Venice» is spelt in exactly the same way at the bottom of the two prints, which could mean that they were part of a series.

⁷¹ John Ellys, *Portrait of Hester Booth as a Harlequin Woman*, ca. 1722-1725, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Inv. Nr. S688-1989, reproduced by Jim Fowler, *Hester Santlow Harlequin Lady*, in *The world of baroque theatre*, cit., pp. 47-52, illustration on p. 466. The patterned design on Spinette's costume is more complex than that on Booth's; the multi-coloured triangles which are similar to the pattern on Booth's dress, are divided into panels that are bordered by narrower panels bearing a distinctive sinuous line going right down the skirt, decorated with large circles on each side of the loops. The pattern is repeated at the hemline. Interestingly, an engraving of Mademoiselle Harlequine at the Biblioteca del Burcardo in Rome, shows a figure which is very similar to that in Ellys' painting, but with a different head, no slapstick and a different background behind the curtains framing the figure. However, the pattern of the skirt is quite similar to that of the miniature painting of Český Krumlov, with its distinct vertical panels (see Biblioteca e Museo Teatrale del Burcardo, *Mademoiselle Harlequine: Horatius Lib. I. oda. J9*. - Inv. 1236/1249, reproduced in Renzo Guardenti, *Gli Italiani a Parigi*, cit., vol. II, p. 136).

⁷² Jim Fowler, *Hester Santlow Harlequin Lady*, cit., p. 47. Cherrier also trained Kellom Tomlinson, who wrote *The art of dancing* in 1735, and was a friend to P. Siris, who in turn, had been trained by Pierre Beauchamp, the choreographer of Louis XIV. See Jennifer Thorpe, *Your honor'd and obedient servant. Patronage and dance in London c. 1700-1735*, «Dance Research. The Journal of the Society for Dance Research», vol. 15, n. 2, Winter 1997, pp. 84-98, in particular pp. 95-96.

⁷³ Luigi Riccoboni, *Le Nouveau Théâtre Italien*, cit., tome I. Although the title

played the two roles; at the time, the comic roles were played by Pierre-François Biancolelli's wife, Margarita Rusca, who normally appeared as Violette. In his painting *Les acteurs de la Comédie Italienne ou le Théâtre Italien*, possibly depicting the new company of actors under Riccoboni's leadership, Nicolas Lancret not only included Arlequine, but placed her in a very prominent central position, just behind the central figure of Pierrot, a further attestation of her popularity. Arlequine's name, and possibly that of Spinette, appear a few years later in musical works by a famous composer of the time, François Couperin. His fourth book of suites for harpsichord, published in 1730, contains an «Arlequine» in the 23rd Order, and an «Epineuse» in the 26th Order, which could be an interpretation of the name Spinette. The inclusion of the two names in a musical piece would indicate that the two figures had become so well-known through opera, the fairground theatres, and the Théâtre Italien, as well as prints and pictures, that they had been integrated into popular imagination in France and abroad.

The costume of the Arlequine in the miniature collection is reminiscent of the one in Lancret's painting that is today at the Louvre. Both Arlequines wear a ruff and a low cut bodice, unlike the Arlequine in the print by Bonnat, where Signore Spinette wears a very simple frill in guise of a ruff, covering the closed neckline of her bodice. The costume of Bonnat's Spinette is similar to that of the Arlequine in the illustration to *Le retour de la Foire de Bezons*, who wears a petal-shaped frill at her neck. All wear a short jacket with a basque. Spinette wears a tricorne hat rather than a toque, but all have a raised foot, and a physical off-balance position that suggests they are dancing. This particular ability is further underlined in an engraving by Trouvain, depicting *Arlequine dansant à l'Opera*⁷⁴. This Arlequine's costume shows an interesting variation: the very long, buttoned jacket, bearing a diamond-shape pattern, is tight-fitting up to the waist, and it then puffs up at the hips, and flares out into a basque that reaches to the thighs in front, and appears longer at the back. In this depiction, Arlequine is carrying an open box rather than a slapstick.

at the top of the play itself states that this is a «Comédie Italienne en Trois Actes» (*Ivi*, p. 66), in the *Catalogue Alfabétique des Comédies Représentées par les Comédiens Italiens, jusqu'à l'année 1732*, it is stated that this is a «Comédie Française en Trois Actes» by M. Gueullette, and that Riccoboni had replaced a short act called «L'anneau de Brunel» by the two Arlequines (*Ivi*, p. XLI).

⁷⁴ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Collection Hennin, tome 73.

Arlequine is also painted on the walls of the Masquerade Hall in Český Krumlov. The closed bodice of her costume has a little cape over the sleeves⁷⁵. However, none of the representations shows any of the fine jewellery that the Arlequine in the miniature is wearing. Jewellery would seem to be one of the distinguishing features between representations of actresses and those of aristocrats. An anonymous painting of Sibylla Augusta, Margravine of Baden dressed as Harlequine with her son Ludwig Georg as Harlequin, dating from c. 1720, shows a bejewelled lady, also wearing a toque decorated with a feather held by a diamond brooch. The Margravine wears jewels in her hair, embroidered onto her stomacher, and in her belt. As in the case of the Krumlov miniatures, this painting was intended to decorate a cabinet, or more specifically, the door panels of a mirrored cabinet at Schloss Favorite, in Baden-Württemberg⁷⁶. Like the dancing Arlequine at the Opera, the Margravine's costume is composed of diamond shapes, and she wears a ruff collar and a little cape over the costume – two little details which may also be found in the Harlequine costume in the Masquerade Hall of the Castle of Český Krumlov. It would seem, therefore, that the Krumlov miniature is certainly representing the appearance of an aristocrat disguised as Arlequine.

Unlike Arlequine, the name Scapine is itself very rare – it does not exist either in the Gherardi collection, or in that of the Nouveau Théâtre Italien. Scapine is certainly associated to *opera buffa*; the name is found in Goethe's little farce, *Jest, Craft and Vengeance* (*Scherz, List und Rache*), dating from 1784, which was an experiment in the genre. The aristocratic features are even more pronounced in the miniature depicting Scapine, who is wearing a fine embroidered costume and jewellery, reminiscent of French court fashions, that were followed all through the eighteenth century by European aristocracy. She carries a black mask in her hand. This latter feature was not only characteristic of the theatre; many women from the higher echelons of society wore masks to protect their faces and preserve their pale skin, especially in summer. Already in the latter part of the seventeenth century, women carrying masks are frequently depicted in pictures related to the theatre, such as the engraving by Mariette entitled *Dame en habit de théâtre*⁷⁷, but also in those depicting fashionable ladies such as the engrav-

⁷⁵ Michal Tuma, *The story of the Masquerade Hall*, cit., p. 41.

⁷⁶ See Meredith Chilton, *Harlequin unmasked*, cit., p. 328 and ill. p. 239.

⁷⁷ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Collection Hennin, tome 58.

ing by Arnoult of a *Femme de qualité en habit d'Este*⁷⁸. Like other female characters in the miniatures, Scapine follows the fashion of the time, and applies two patches on her cheekbone, next to the eye. The difference in size is probably intended to attract more attention to the eyes and the position is calculated to make them look softer; placed thus, they were termed «assassine» or «passionnée». These «mouches», as they were called, were made of black velvet, taffeta, silk or leather and served to enhance ladies' facial features and their fashionable pale, powdered complexions, as well as to hide any spots or blemishes that were created by the mercury or lead powder used in the cosmetics of the time. In the two paintings of Arlequine and Scapine, the character's hair is shaped according to a fashion that became popular in the 1760s, following one of the many styles launched by Louis XV's notorious mistress, Madame de Pompadour, a key figure and trend-setter at the French court from 1745 to her death in 1764.

Scapine's male partner is, on the contrary, well known. Scapino is a *zanni* figure who probably came to France for the first time with the company of I Confidenti around 1584, and certainly in 1620. He was then played by Francesco Gabrielli, known for his musical and acrobatic talents, who was described as «the best Zanni of his time»⁷⁹. The character must have attained some fame in France, as he was adopted and adapted by Molière in 1671, in his play *Les fourberies de Scapin*, but did not form part of the Italian royal company. Riccoboni's company included a very talented Scapin, Giovanni Bissonni, who died in 1722, a few years after the company's launch. Riccoboni might have been thinking of him when illustrating the type's costume at the beginning of his *Histoire du Théâtre Italien*, but was probably reproducing a print by an Italian engraver known in Paris as Le Bel⁸⁰. Scapin's costume is usually represented either as the white tunic and trousers worn by the *zanni*, or as that worn by Brighella, with horizontal green stripes decorating the front and sides of a white tunic and baggy trousers⁸¹. In the Czech miniature, the green

⁷⁸ Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, Collection Hennin, tome 63.

⁷⁹ This attribute was given to him by his companion, Niccolò Barbieri: «il miglior Zanni, de' tempi suoi». See Cesare Molinari, *La Commedia dell'Arte*, cit., pp. 138-139.

⁸⁰ See Luigi Riccoboni, *Histoire du Théâtre Italien*, cit., vol. II, p. 314.

⁸¹ See engraving by Mariette of Briguella and Trivelin, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes, coll. Destailleur. As in the case of Polichinelle, it is not easy to identify the actor behind Briguella.

and white colours have been kept, only the wide stripes have been transformed into beautiful and elaborate embroidery or braiding. The poor servant assumes a very rich appearance in this painting. The impression of high rank and opulence is further underlined by the red-heeled shoes, as only aristocrats who were presented at court were allowed to wear this type of heel, following a fashion that had been set by Louis XIV in the previous century.

Concluding thoughts

The miniatures in the Český Krumlov collection shed an intriguing light on the visual definition of Commedia dell'Arte roles in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The details in the miniatures representing theatrical figures, especially the ones showing couples, indicate clearly that the paintings portray a wealthy society, used to rich fashionable dress and opulent jewellery. The presence of the Commedia dell'Arte characters in a collection of miniatures depicting costumes that would all look very appropriate in the setting of a masked ball or on a stage provides yet another demonstration of the passion of Czech aristocrats for the theatre. The fact that the miniatures were part of a larger collection that also displayed lavish costumes, housed in an aristocrat's private cabinet, indicates that they were intended to be seen by few people in an intimate setting, who could gaze on them every day, and would probably derive pleasure in noting and rediscovering the tiny exquisite features they contain, as well as the subject matter. The beauty and interest of the miniatures lies mainly in the quality of the costumes that are depicted in such fine detail. The sheer lavishness of some of the costumes reflects the type of apparel that could be witnessed in the playful settings of popular court activities, such as amateur plays or masked balls. The miniatures do not simply represent the internal development of theatrical costuming; they also reflect the need of the aristocratic patrons of theatre to promote themselves among their peers and royal superiors. This analysis has attempted to link them not only to the world of aristocratic masquerade, but also to that of the professional theatre which rendered famous the roles they depict.

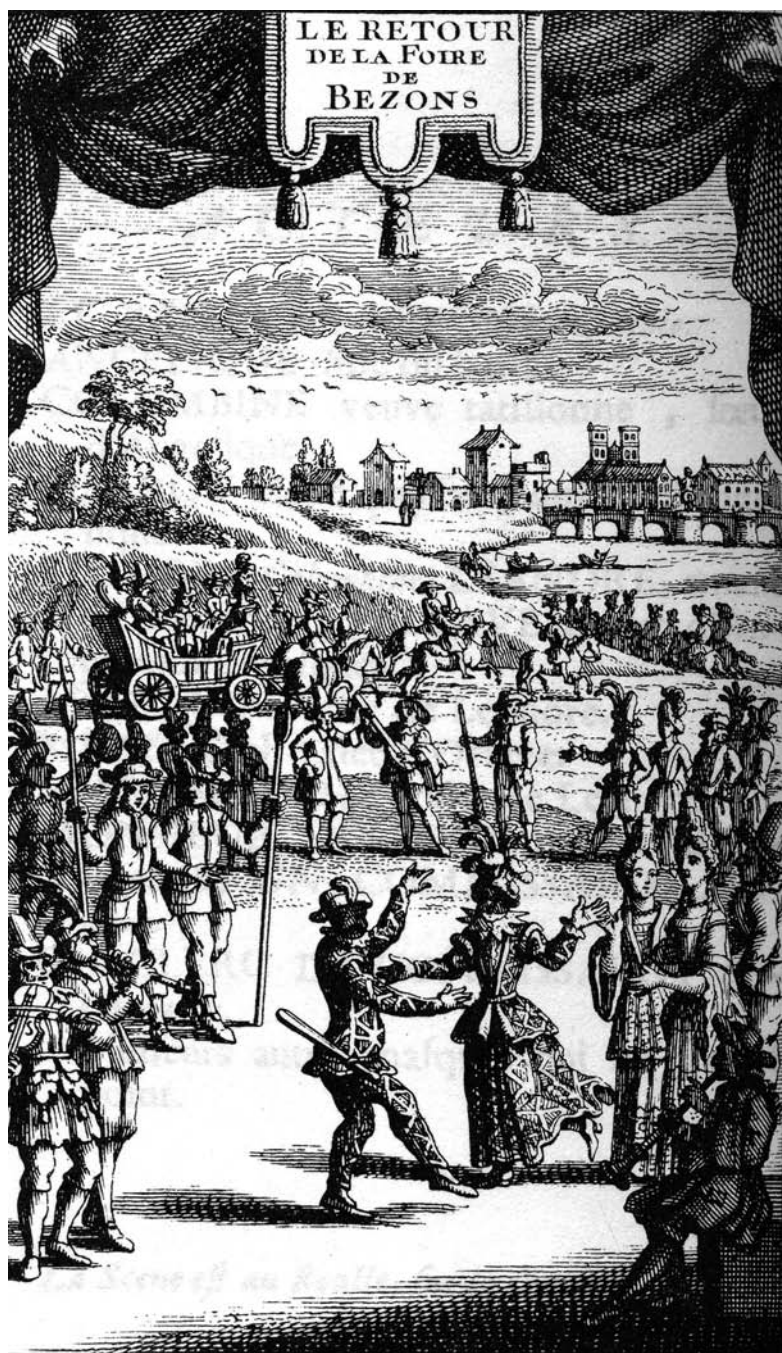


Fig. 1. Frontespizio della pièce *Le retour de la Foire de Bezons*.



Fig. 2. *L'Opéra* (Parigi, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Département des Estampes).



Fig. 3. *Le Docteur* (Collezione del Castello di Český Krumlov).



Fig. 4. *Monsieur Pantalón* (Collezione del Castello di Český Krumlov).



Fig. 5. *Capitain Spavento* (Collezione del Castello di Český Krumlov).



Fig. 6. *Arlequin* (Collezione del Castello di Český Krumlov).



Fig. 7. *Arlequine* (Collezione del Castello di Český Krumlov).



Fig. 8. *Scapino* (Collezione del Castello di Český Krumlov).



Fig. 9. *Scapine* (Collezione del Castello di Český Krumlov).