Section 2. Study of art

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*Efremova I. V.,
Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts,
candidate of art history, Associate Professor,
doctoral student of the Department of
Belarusian and World Art Culture,
Republic of Belarus, Minsk
E-mail: efremova_lug@mail.ru*

THE PREREQUISITES FOR THE EMERGENCE OF BALL

Abstract. The article identifies specific prerequisites (historical, social, cultural, artistic) on the basis of cause-and-effect method, which created a favorable ground for the birth of ball — a unique socio-cultural and social-art phenomenon with a centuries-old history that has not lost its relevance to the present time.

Keywords: ball, ball as a cultural practice, genesis of ball culture, ball ontology, elite, Etiquette norm, secular art, dance program.

Back in Antiquity, the ancient Greek philosopher Empedocles of Akragas (ca. 490–430 BC) formulated one of the important principles of ontology, according to which “nothing comes from nothing...”. In other words, the birth of a phenomenon can only take place if there are certain reasons for it. In this article the author will attempt to identify specific prerequisites for the emergence of ball phenomenon — a unique socio-cultural and socio-artistic phenomenon that has not lost its relevance to the present time. The algorithm for solving the given objective will be based on cause-and-effect relations. At the same time, we will first formulate an effect in the form of a basic postulate, after which we will address the definition of the cause causing it.

Postulate one: Ball is a purely European phenomenon, the origins of which, like the origins of the entire European culture, dates back to ancient times.

In ancient Greek symposiums (from Latin “symposium” and Ancient Greek “συνπόσιον” — “feast”) and ancient Roman feasts, which were purely men’s leisure time and arranged for communication and recreation on various occasions, organized an entertainment, consisting of wonderful dancing hetairas (they also served at the feast and could also communicate with men by entering into a conversation), as well as invited dancers; artistic performances; performances of instrumental and vocal music by kithara and aulos players; various games and contests. At the same time, the organizers of these feasts acted as spectators, not leaving their seats for the dining tables — apocliners. The feast was followed by the Symposiarch, his chief administrator. Comparing these ancient festivals with balls, it is not difficult to notice many things in common — the festive spirit, the presence of artistic, communicative (verbal) and

game components, the concert and entertainment program, the meal itself and, as a result, the pleasure of being at these events.

Also in the Antiquity period, important semantic “signs” appear, under which, many centuries later, the ball will be born. Among these “signs” developed by the intellectual elite of antiquity (philosophers Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Epicurus, Democritus) are the most important aesthetic categories of beauty, harmony, moderation, catharsis, *kalokagathia*, hedonism and others. Furthermore, as early as in the Ancient Greece and Roman times, a special attitude towards art in general and dance in particular can be observed; its importance in educating the body and spirit of ancient citizens is noted.

In the context of ball ontology the period of Antiquity can be considered as a period that prepared aesthetically fertile ground for the genesis of ball culture.

Postulate two: Ball is a phenomenon born of an elite environment.

Aware of their exclusivity, the medieval elite sought to make their lives as exceptional and exemplary as possible, including its idle side. In this respect it is impossible to pass by the figure of Charlemagne — king of the Franks, who went down in history as one of the greatest monarchs, famous not only for military victories, but also for his desire for enlightenment and culture, passion for art. Having gathered the most educated people of his time at court, he initiated the creation of the so-called “Palace Schools”. It is no coincidence that the years of this monarch’s reign (768–814) went down in history as the “Carolingian Renaissance”. Certainly, the actions of Charlemagne, which prepared the necessary cultural and artistic ground for the emergence of ball, can be considered as one of its important prerequisites.

In addition, among the medieval elite (important feudal lords and noble knights) various forms of leisure solidified, among which a special attention was

paid to dances usually held on the occasion of the conclusion of another knightly tournament (or other significant event). The dance program of the late Middle Ages involved not only knights, but also ladies. It was the gender principle that determined the specificity of the compositions that made up this program, which was to represent pair dances. During their performance, the gentleman showed special respect and reverence for the lady. Over time, thanks to the formation of the so-called “Code of Knightly Honour” (this code was finally formed only in the XIII century.), the dance practice was better embodied, becoming one of the ways to demonstrate chivalrous kurtuosity and called ball.

The appearance in the dance program of medieval festive events of paired dances, in which both men and women participated, was another important prerequisite for the birth of the ball.

Postulate three: Ball is a strictly regulated phenomenon, subject to etiquette norms.

This principle is most directly related to the previous one, because the elite attached great importance to a special system of behavior and communication, seeing it as a kind of “marker” of their choice. Originally, this “code” of etiquette was the “Code of Knightly Honour” already mentioned by us, based on the knight’s piety towards the fair sex.

In this place, we have come to a very important point that touches upon the very essence of ball culture, based on the worship of the Lady of the Heart. This veneration of the Woman in worldly ceremonies was a natural consequence of worshipping the Virgin Mary in the Christian cult (especially its Catholic branch). As noted by A. P. Baturin and N. D. Polischuk, due to Christian views of the cult of the Virgin Mary “...The Beautiful Lady, who served as a knight, became the image of his spiritual love. <...> the position of a troubadour in relation to his lady copies in every detail the position of a Catholic believer in relation to the Virgin Mary and other saints. Like a believer, a lover experiences in the contemplation of his lady all the stages of the mystical vi-

sion of the deity” [1, p. 17]. The elevation of the Lady by the knights, her peculiar “iconization”, played a huge role in raising the social status of women in medieval Europe, helped her “...to get out of her lowly condition” [1, p. 19].

The observance of the rules of the “Code of Knightly Honor” by medieval knights and their special attitude towards women in the context of secular festivals was also one of the prerequisites for the emergence of ball.

Postulate Four: Ball is a purely secular phenomenon.

In accordance with this principle, it is obvious that the development of secular art, in particular musical art, is a prerequisite for its emergence. This process is accelerated at the turn of XII — XIII centuries. thanks to: (a) The activities of jugglers who actively performed at court festivals and, in some cases, were enrolled in court service as organizers of spectacles and festive events; b) the work of troubadours, trumpeters and minnesingers, which gave rise to the first examples of secular vocal lyricism (including the genre of “dance song”, samples of which often accompanied the performance of aristocratic medieval dances); c) the development of musical instruments (according to numerous reports, by the 14th century). It was represented by more than thirty different instruments, including wind instruments — trumpets, horns, flutes, bagpipes; string instruments — harp, crwth, rebab, vielle, fiddle [2, p. 107].

“Entry into the avant-scene” of secular art in the late Middle Ages can be regarded as another prerequisite for the emergence of ball.

Postulate Five: Ball is a kind of artistic complex based on the interaction of arts and implies the creation of special conditions for its performance.

One of such conditions is the change associated with the dwelling of the feudal lord. For example, throughout the late Middle Ages ascetic castle construction was gradually replaced by the construction of magnificent palaces, in which the protective and defensive function was replaced by the grand presentation. It was the palaces, with their magnificent, in detail thought-out exteriors and interiors, that turned into amusing residences of monarchs and noblemen of the highest rank, who in their daily lives aspired to “...exorbitant luxury of clothes, jewelry, weapons and furniture; in all this the gentlemen tried to surpass each other, especially demonstrating their worthiness at tournaments, festivals, feasts and dwelling” [3]. The Palace of the feudal lord became the “hearth” of cultural life, performing in the medial epoch simultaneously the functions of a concert hall, museum, entertainment institution, home for receptions and audiences.

Therefore, by the end of the XIV century on the basis of the abovementioned prerequisites a favorable ground for the birth of ball was prepared. The next stage, connected with the development of the ball and its “transformation” into a very visible socio-cultural and social-artistic phenomenon, will be the Renaissance.

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