

Summary

Dazzled by the Hellenic Sun. The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Czech Literature in 1880-1914

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The work addresses the Classical reception in Czech literature and culture between 1880 and 1914. The work examines and analyzes various manifestations of the relationship to the Antiquity in a period characterized by a strong inclination toward ancient themes, motifs, and forms. It focuses on an entire range of phenomena and genres in which Classical stereotypes and myths, artistic/literary reinterpretations of ancient themes, pedagogical, aesthetic, and popularizing texts from Antiquity with varying focus, etc. are thematized or used. The Introduction outlines the European and Czech historical context, i.e. the modern Classical reception, drawing attention to the privileged position of Classical Antiquity in the history of European culture which has resulted in its prestige and inviolability.

The first part (Culture and Society) describes the period's intellectual horizon as it concerns the Antiquity. Its methodology is inspired by the demystifying perspective of Vladimír Macura and Jiří Rak, analyzing selected Classical myths and stereotypes which appear most frequently in the period's discourse: it follows the differing period evaluations of ancient Greece and Rome in which Greece is presented as ideal, noble, and perfect, whereas Rome appears as decadent, cruel, and, in relation to Greece, non-original. It also focuses on the most common topoi: the topos of the ancient sun and sky, the topos of sculptures (including the period's reaction to the discovery of polychrome in ancient sculpture), the topos of Greek gymnastics with its application to the Sokol physical education movement, and finally to the topos of natural ancient man. This part also contains separate chapters devoted to the important intermediaries of its reception, i.e. grammar school education and translation.

The second part (Drama and Theater) deals with theater as an important social phenomenon in 19th century culture. It focuses on the first productions of ancient dramas at Prague's National Theater and on their ambivalent acceptance by the cultural public; the next chapter is devoted to the image of Classical Antiquity in Jaroslav Vrchlický's plays using ancient themes and

to their reception at the time. As it turns out, a great many reviewers were aware of the distance and foreignness of the Antiquity, despite the proclaimed admiration for ancient works, appreciating Vrchlický for bringing Antiquity closer to contemporary viewers in his dramas. The theatrical Classical reception is complemented by a chapter on parodies of ancient myths in operetta, with a special focus on the specific genre of amateur parody operetta.

The third part (Literature) traces Classical reception in the works of four authors. In a poetic work of Jaroslav Vrchlický, a strong representational function of the Classical culture can be discerned, often serving as an effective decorative element for his verses. In Julius Zeyer's work, we noted, on the one hand, the presence of magnificent Parnassian images of Antiquity, brimming with sunshine and radiant marble and based on the traditional Classical stereotypes, while emphasizing, on the other, his original approach to Roman prehistory and creative work with myths. In the collections *Sodoma* and *Sexus necans* by Jiří Karásek of Lvovice, we showed how he used the motifs of Greek symposia and Roman orgies to create a decadent image of the Antiquity; in Josef Svatopluk Machar's work we observed the evolution from the ridicule of Classical Antiquity to its worship, and its use as a weapon against Christianity and clericalism.

Despite the variety of material that the period provides for a study on the Classical reception, it turns out that the period is marked by an often uncritical adoration and adoption of traditional myths originating in German Neo-Humanism, and that there is more inherited, adopted, and automatic in the fascination with the Antiquity than there is original and newly grasped. At the same time, however, we captured a different discourse, one which draws attention to the foreignness of the Antiquity, to its lifelessness and distance from contemporary life. In this period, then, it seems that contradictory discourses about Classical culture coexist: one enthusiastic and "dazzled", although this dazzlement bears a temporary blindness and an inability to view it critically, and the other doubtful and critical, questioning the importance of Classical tradition and even directly drawing attention to its excessive emphasis. We were able to observe, albeit roughly, the gradual detachment from the idealized image of Classical Antiquity and how it related to the arrival of the modern thinking with its dispersal of myths.