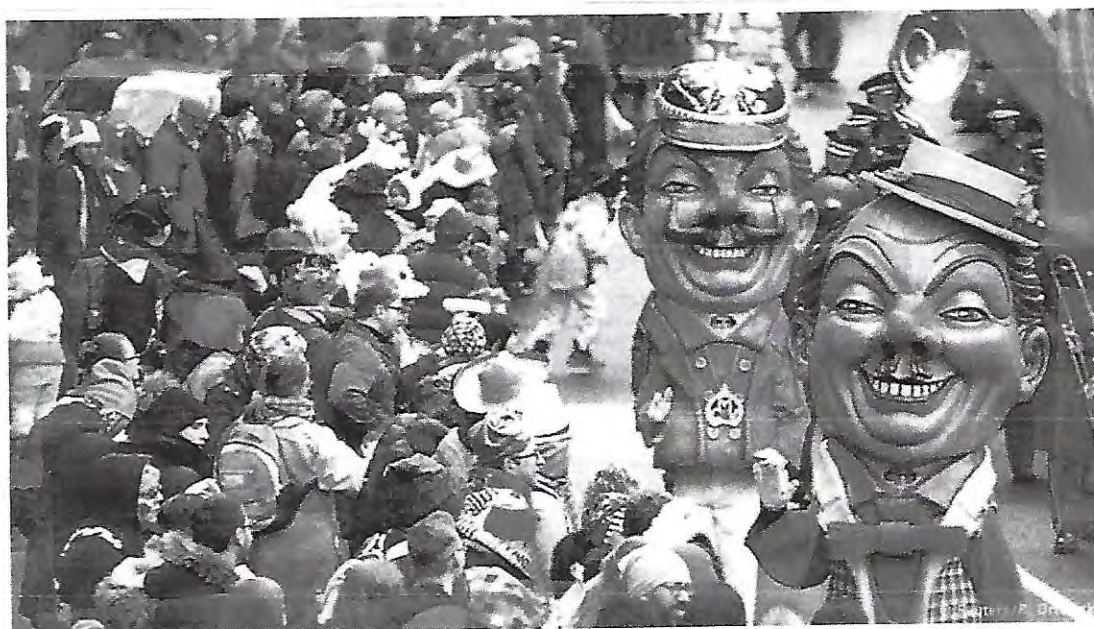


Fastnacht in Mainz Helau Mainz!



Helau, thought to be an old shepherd's call, is today used as a carnival greeting. In Mainz the "Schwellköpp" - oversized papier-mâché heads known as "swollen heads" - have been an important part of the city's carnival for over 80 years. Their big day is the Rose Monday parades - which is no mean feat as each head, exaggeratedly representing typical Mainz characters, weighs around 30 kilograms.

Swollen heads in Mainz



The Mainz carnival season opens with cries of "Helau." The typical giant papier-mâché heads called "Schwellköpfe", or "swollen heads", are always part of the big procession. Everyone heads to the Carnival Fountain where the fools' constitution is read out. Article 4 declares that "every fool who is also foolish when sober is to be praised."