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DIE BAUREN: AN UNKNOWN ADAPTATION
OF GRYPHIUS'S DIE GELIBTE DORNROSE

Andreas Gryphius's Verlibtes Gespenste / Die gelibte Dornrose comprise one of the classics of seventeenth-century German comedy. While there is no lack of sound scholarly argument for their contemporary theatrical, social and aesthetic importance, as well as their place in the development of German drama, accompanying assumptions about their reception in later centuries are not documented, despite claims to the contrary. Die Bauren, an eighteenth-century manuscript adaptation of Die gelibte Dornrose, has been forgotten by modern scholars, and an examination of this text in light of the existing critical assessment of its source leads to a greater appreciation of Gryphius's contribution and to a broader understanding of the theatre scene in the following century.

Die Bauren is located in the manuscript collection of the Austrian National Library in Vienna (Cod. 13/193, leaves 105r-113r), bound in a quarto volume entitled Manuscrit Comaedi which consists of various works by different authors or transcribed by others. The unpaginated volume contains 141 leaves and eight works in all:

Holberg, Artaxerxes. Ein heroisches Schauspiel;
Holberg, Der betrogene Betrüger. Ein Lust-Spill, translated by J.[=F.]W. Weiskern, 1755;
Joseph Kurz (Bernardon), Der 30jährige A,b,c Schütz: oder Hanswurst der reiche Baur und Pantalon der arme Edelmann, 1754;
Anon., Die Durch Zwey Bernardon gestörte Nacht-Visite;
Anon., Die Beschämbe Hoffart und die Belohnte Demuth mit Odoardo dem brummenden Vatter;
Anon., Die Bauren. Ein Nachspill;
Anon., Basilisco di Bernagasso oder Undanck ist der Welt ihr danck; and
Anon., *Der falsche Verdacht*, ein nachspill.¹

As the title of Asper's catalogue suggests, these are works performed mostly by itinerant companies either on temporary stages or in more permanent facilities and the list points us to Vienna's theatre scene about 1750, particularly the two Kurz/Bernardon works, products of the highly popular Viennese writer and comic actor Johann Joseph Felix von Kurz (1717-84); the translation by Friedrich Wilhelm Weiskern (1711-68), another prolific Viennese writer and translator; and the character Odoardo, a favourite of the mid-century Viennese public, identified with Weiskern who usually played the part. There is evidence that some of these works were performed in Vienna in the Kärntnertortheater, where Kurz, Weiskern and other comic stars enjoyed their greatest fame.² Some of the works, such as the Bernardon plays and *Der falsche Verdacht* also show clear evidence in their language and local references that they must be Viennese.

There is, however, no evidence that *Die Bauren* was ever performed in Vienna, or for that matter anywhere else.³ Yet


2. On the actors who performed these roles, see Walter Lehr: Die Szenischen Bemerkungen in den Dramen des Altwiener Volkstheaters bis 1752. Diss. Wien 1965, p. 416. Repertoires showing when some of the plays were performed are available in Gustav Zechmeister: Die Theater nächst der Burg und nächst dem Kärnterthor von 1747 bis 1796. Graz, Wien, Köln 1971.

3. I have checked the repertoires and histories of many itinerant troupes of the time as well as permanent theatres. There were hundreds of such companies in the mid-eighteenth century, and for most of them there exist no repertoire or performance records except as scattered in fragmentary form in histories and on surviving playbills. For some itinerant troupes, however, we have detailed records, as well as for most permanent public theatres after about 1770. A comprehensive list of German theatre histories according to place and name is available in