Summary

Contrary to recent assumptions, the Danzig in which Luise Kulmus-Gottsched wrote Die Pietisterey im Fischbein-Rocke (1736) was not dominated by pietists. I reinvestigate the cultural background of Danzig; examine views of the Kulmus family and friends; consider the author’s views on religion; and, finally, revisit her adaptation of Bougeant’s La femme docteur. The scene involving “Frau Ehrlichin” reveals the author to possess views close to those of her father, Dr. Johann Georg Kulmus, and the physico-theologists.

Why did Luise Kulmus-Gottsched choose to adapt Bougeant’s La femme docteur (1730) as her comedy Die Pietisterey im Fischbein-Rocke (1736)? When this question is asked, reference is inevitably made to Kulmus-Gottsched’s epistolary statement that she found a similarity between French Jansenists and German “heuchlerischen Frömmlinge”. But Wolfgang Martens is even more specific. Pietists in Kulmus-Gottsched’s native Danzig, allegedly, dominated that

---

1 I refer throughout to Luise Kulmus-Gottsched in order to distinguish her easily from both her father and her husband.


culture to such an extent that theatrical performances and dances were forbidden and sumptuary laws restricted what kinds of clothing one could wear.\textsuperscript{4} Cited is a Danzig ordinance from 1705.\textsuperscript{5} The implication, never investigated, is that Luise Kulmus-Gottsched protested pietist dominance of municipal affairs, especially the theater. In this characterization she appears as both a literary and a political rebel.

This she may have been, but something is amiss, for — with the permission of Danzig authorities — wandering theatrical troupes performed there in the 1720s, and in 1730 municipal patricians gave approval to convert the old fencing school into a standing theater. The ordinance of 1705 was not out of date; it was re-enacted in 1746. The problem lies with the explanation of the edict. Not only did it \textit{not} forbid all theatrical performances, the patricians who passed it — and the \textit{Geistliches Ministerium} that had requested it — were actively engaged in banning pietist conventicles from Danzig. Indeed, during her childhood when Kulmus-Gottsched publicly displayed her superior knowledge of Lutheran catechism at the Johanneskirche in Danzig (roughly 1721-1725),\textsuperscript{6} a pastor presided who had participated in petitioning the City Council for that very ordinance — Johann Heinrich Nothwanger (1664-1726).

Radical pietists were not in control of municipal government in Danzig in 1705.\textsuperscript{7} Nor were they in power thirty years later, when Kulmus-Gottsched adapted Bougeant’s comedy. In the absence of

\textsuperscript{4} Setting the location of the play’s action in Königsberg is rightly considered a masking device.

\textsuperscript{5} Wolfgang Martens probably took this inference from a French source: A. Vulliod: \textit{La femme docteur. Mme. Gottsched et son modèle français Bougeant, ou, Jansénisme et Piétisme.} Lyon 1912. In turn, on pages 3-4, Vulliod cited a German source as evidence that Kulmus-Gottsched was motivated by opposition to this government and ordinance. Gotthilf Löschin asserted that pietists exerted strong influence in Danzig in 1705 when the edict was issued: Gotthilf Löschin: \textit{Geschichte Dantzigs.} Danzig 1822, pp. 210-214.

\textsuperscript{6} Johann Christoph Gottsched: Leben der [...]. Luise Adelgunde Victoria Gottschedinn [...]. In: Johann Christoph Gottsched. \textit{Sämtliche kleinere Gedichte [...].} Leipzig 1763, fol. *5r-******8v, here fol. *6r. This biography may also be found among other primary texts at http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/Gottsched/index.php

\textsuperscript{7} The situation in Königsberg, in Ducal Prussia. was different. There the Prussian King officially supported pietist reforms.