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Excerpt

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CHAPTER I

A. DESCRIPTION OF MS., AUTHORSHIP, DATE, PROVENANCE

B. ITALIAN INFLUENCE ON THE ARTS IN VIENNA

A. *Description of MS., Authorship, Date, Provenance*

The MS. of 'Atis', No. 13107 of the National Library at Vienna, consists of thirty-five closely written quarto sheets, the first of which contains in addition to the title the words: "Hoffmann Direc. Comicus. Ao. 1723 Mense augusto", followed by the *dramatis personae*, the names of five actors and two lists of properties. The first of the latter is crossed out, the ink being faded and the writing illegible, whilst Frau Neuberin in the chief female rôle is the only player's name that is legible. The last page of the MS. ends with the note: "Finito d. 27ten Mart 1708. M. Dorcheus."

It seems at first difficult to reconcile either of the dates 1708 or 1723 with the presence of the Neuberin in the cast, for the Neubers did not become directors of a touring theatrical company until the 8th August 1727.¹ They did, however, belong, we are told, before the year 1722 to the troupe known as the "Kurfürstlich Sächsische Hofkomödianten" (for which they themselves later received the concession from the Saxon Court), under the management of Johann Caspar Haacke.² Haacke, at one time a barber's

¹ F. J. von Reden-Esbeck, *Caroline Neuber und ihre Zeitgenossen. Ein Beitrag zur dt. Kultur- und Theatergesch.* Leipzig, 1881, p. 52.

² M. Fürstenau, *Zur Gesch. der Musik und des Theaters am Hof zu Dresden*, Dresden, 1862, vol. II, pp. 310-12; Reden-Esbeck, *op. cit.* pp. 43, 55; cf. Th. Hampe, *Die Entwicklung des Theaterwesens in Nürnberg von der 2. Hälfte des 15. Jahrh. bis 1806*, Nürnberg, 1900, p. 268.

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apprentice in Dresden,¹ had joined the Elenson players, a company founded probably about the year 1670 by Andreas Elenson, a native of Vienna. At any rate Elenson, whose wife Maria Margarete was also an actress, appeared between 1671 and 1695 at Graz, Dresden, Vienna, Leipzig and Augsburg.² Elenson's son, Julius Franz, who had become the Pantalón in Velten's troupe,³ married Sophie Julia, a Hamburg actress.⁴ Julius Franz died in 1708, and three years later his shrewd and fascinating actress-widow married the above-named Johann Caspar Haacke, then the Harlequin of the Elenson company.⁵ Sophie Julia seems either to have enjoyed matrimony as much as acting or to have possessed sound business instincts which enabled her to secure a manager for her company each time the post fell vacant, for she was married a third time, in 1722, to Karl Ludwig Hoffmann, a member of her own troupe,⁶ who thus became a joint director of the Elenson-Haacke troupe of players. This must be the Hoffmann, then, whose name appears on the MS. of '*Atis*'. The Elenson-Haacke-Hoffmann company was probably in Vienna in 1722, certainly Sophie Julia was there in that year, and Hoffmann's name is to be found in several MSS. which are preserved at the National Library and dated 1722 or 1723. He was evidently still in charge of the same troupe when Gottsched arrived at Leipzig in 1724 and was, as the new dictator of German taste tells us, playing "lauter schwülstige und mit Harlekinslustbarkeiten unter-

¹ W. Flemming, *Das Schauspiel der Wanderbühne*, Dt. Lit. Reihe XIII, Barock, Leipzig, 1931, p. 60; Reden-Esbeck, *op. cit.* p. 44; cf. E. Devrient, *Gesch. der dt. Schauspielkunst*, Leipzig, 1848, vol. I, p. 226.

² Alexander von Weilen, "Die Theater Wiens", *Gesch. des Wiener Theaterwesens*, Ges. für vervielfältigende Kunst, Wien, 1899, p. 118; cf. Hampe, *op. cit.* p. 291.

³ Fürstenau, *op. cit.* vol. II, p. 300; cf. J. F. Schütze, *Hamburgische Theatergesch.* Hamburg, 1794, p. 48.

⁴ Flemming, *op. cit.* p. 60.

⁵ Flemming, *ibid.* p. 60; cf. Oscar Teuber, *Gesch. des Prager Theaters, Von den Anfängen des Schauspielwesens bis auf die neueste Zeit*, Prag, 1883-88, p. 105.

⁶ Teuber, *op. cit.* p. 105.

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mengte Haupt- und Staatsaktionen”¹ there during the Leipzig fair.

In all probability Hoffmann took down the play ‘*Atis*’ from a copy belonging to the rival Velten company, for the Dorcheus mentioned on the last page of the MS. may have been the actor Dorscheus or Dorseus, the ‘Pickle Herring’ of Frau Velten’s troupe, who, according to Fürstenau, later graduated at Vienna and had some knowledge of chemistry.² The play may, therefore, have been originally on the repertoire of the Velten troupe. We are told that both the Velten and Haacke-Elenson companies were in Frankfurt am Main in 1711 for the coronation of Charles VI, and that Frau Velten, being no match there for her astute rival, Sophie Julia, was unable to keep her troupe together, so that half of the members deserted her and went over to the successful rival company.³ Dorcheus may easily have been one of the deserters. It is not necessary to assume that he was the author of ‘*Atis*’, indeed it is more probable that he only made a copy of a play which was on Velten’s repertoire.

Nothing definite is known of the early performances of ‘*Atis*’. Johannes Meissner mentions it in his list of comedies under the title ‘*Der von Ciro gefangene Crösus, dessen Freiheit*’, which would indicate that it must have existed about the year 1700, or at any rate between that date and 1710.⁴ ‘*Der Stumme Prinz Atis*’ has no connection whatever, as Nagl and Zeidler’s history of Austrian literature⁵ suggests, with the ‘*Athys*’ written in 1673 by the Benedictine monk, Simon Rettenpacher, for a special performance at the university of Salzburg. The subject of Rettenpacher’s play is the slaying of Athys, son of Croesus, by Adrastes, whereas in the popular play the hero is the dumb son who suddenly

¹ Reden-Esbeck, *op. cit.* p. 47.

² Fürstenau, *op. cit.* vol. II, p. 300.

³ Teuber, *op. cit.* p. 105.

⁴ J. Meissner, “Die englischen Komödianten in Österreich”, *Jahrb. der Shakespeare Ges.* vol. XIX, p. 152, No. 134.

⁵ Vol. I, p. 742.

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regained his speech in a battle between the Lydians and Persians.¹

'*Atis*' is an adaptation in prose of 'Creso', an Italian opera, which, as is evident from the title-page of its libretto, was performed in the year 1678 by command of the Emperor Leopold I to celebrate the birthday of his third wife, Eleonora Magdalene Theresia (Eleonora von Pfalz-Neuburg). The words were written by Count Niccolo Minato, the most prolific librettist of his time. A native of Bergamo, he was Court poet at Vienna for no less than twenty-nine years, from 1669 to 1698.² The music of the opera was by Antonio Draghi, a gifted dramatic composer who was born at Ferrara in 1635 and invited to Vienna in 1664, where he was apparently not in the employment of the Emperor Leopold himself but of the Dowager Empress Eleonora.³ Later he was placed in charge of the music at the Imperial Court and was musical director there from 1682 to 1700.⁴ Like Minato he was most productive, as may be seen from the list of his works performed at the Court in Vienna, the number of his operas alone amounting to no fewer than sixty-seven. Thus Minato and Draghi were at the Imperial Court at the same time.

B. *Italian Influence on the Arts in Vienna*

But some explanation must be given here of the predominance of Italian influence upon the development of the arts in Vienna. In inviting Italians to his Court Leopold was but following in the footsteps of his predecessors. Italian music,

¹ Arthur Kutscher, *Das Salzburger Barocktheater*, Wien-Leipzig-München, 1924, p. 118; cf. Flemming, *Das Ordensdrama*, Dt. Lit. Reihe XIII, Barock, Leipzig, 1930, p. 32; Rettenpacher, *Ord. S. Benedicti Monachi Cremifanensis in Austria Superiore (Kremsmünster)*, *Selecta Dramata diversis temporibus conscripta et in scena recitata*, Salisburgi, Jan Bapt. Mayr. 1683.

² R. von Kralik, *Gesch. der Stadt Wien*, Wien, 1926, p. 216; cf. v. Weilen, *op. cit.* p. 71.

³ Kralik, *op. cit.* p. 207.

⁴ v. Weilen, *op. cit.* p. 71.

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art and literature had for generations been cultivated by the Hapsburgs. As early as 1493 Maximilian I had called scholars from Italy to the university of Vienna, and for musical entertainments at Court he had kept his own private orchestra which was distinctly international in character, the Italian element, however, far outweighing all the others.¹ The private orchestra became a regular tradition at the Court, it grew in size with each of the successors of Maximilian and the music was invariably in charge of an Italian. The preference for Italian art may to some extent be explained by the frequent intermarriages between the Austrian and Italian ruling houses. In 1494 Maximilian I married a daughter of the Duke of Milan,² and the wife of Duke Ferdinand of Tyrol, younger brother of the Emperor Maximilian II, was a daughter of Duke William of Mantua.³ Eleonora, the second wife of Ferdinand II, was also a Mantuan princess, in fact the daughter of Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga,⁴ famous as one of the leading managers of the Mask Comedies and patron of the arts in Italy. In Ferdinand II's reign Italian even became the official language of the Austrian Court.⁵ Not only Mantuan but Tuscan princesses found their way to Austria. Claudia de' Medici married the Archduke Leopold V of Tyrol and twenty years later another Tuscan princess, Anne de' Medici, became the wife of the Archduke Ferdinand Charles.⁶ Their daughter, Claudia Felicitas, a great lover of Italian music, became the Holy Roman Empress in the days of Leopold I. And if a Hapsburg monarch required the sanction of tradition for installing foreigners in the important positions that he had to offer, Leopold had but to look back to his ancestor Ferdinand III, who not only founded an Italian academy of letters in his capital but

¹ F. Biach-Schiffmann, *Giovanni und Ludovico Burnacini*, Wien-Berlin, 1931, p. 10.

² v. Weilen, *op. cit.* p. 44.

³ Marcus Landau, *Die ital. Lit. am österr. Hofe*, Wien, 1879, p. 8.

⁴ Landau, *ibid.* p. 8.

⁵ v. Weilen, *op. cit.* p. 45.

⁶ v. Weilen, *ibid.* p. 45.

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invited during his reign several celebrated foreign artists, the chief of these being Johann Wilhelm Baur, miniature painter and etcher, and the architect and stage designer, Giovanni Burnacini. Baur was, it is true, not an Italian but a native of Strassburg. He had, however, worked six years in Italy prior to 1637 when he became Court painter at Vienna.¹ Ferdinand III's third wife, also an Eleonora of Mantua, is generally supposed to have suggested to the Emperor the idea of engaging Giovanni Burnacini,² and certainly the beginning of his activity in Vienna coincides with the date of her marriage to Ferdinand.³ Though the rôle played by Baur in the development of Baroque art has never been satisfactorily investigated, it is certain that he exercised a profound influence on Ludovico Burnacini, son of the above-named Giovanni who at a very early age accompanied his father to Vienna as his apprentice in the year 1651 and later designed the stage setting and the scenery for at least a hundred and fifteen operas (and probably many more) that were performed at the Court of the Hapsburgs during the second half of the seventeenth century.⁴

Italian influence on art and literature being so pronounced at the Imperial Court, it is hardly surprising to find that an opera developed in Vienna which not only from a musical and literary point of view but from the standpoint of its complicated stage technique is the offspring of Italian opera. Indeed, no sooner did a new type of musical entertainment make its appearance in Italy in the early seventeenth century than the Imperial Court secured the services of the three master-composers of the new Venetian school, Cavalli, whose real name was Caletti Bruni, Marc Antonio Cesti and the elder Ziani.⁵ Though all three composers attracted attention

¹ Biach-Schiffmann, *op. cit.* p. 11.

² Eduard Vehse, *Gesch. der dt. Höfe seit der Reformation*, Hamburg, 1852, Part IV, *Gesch. des österr. Hofes*, p. 320.

³ Biach-Schiffmann, *op. cit.* p. 21. ⁴ Biach-Schiffmann, *ibid.* p. 47.

⁵ H. Kretzschmar, *Gesch. der Oper*, Leipzig, 1919, p. 137; cf. R. Lach, "Wien als Musikstadt", *Wien, sein Boden und seine Gesch.* Wien, 1924, p. 409.

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in their time and are still of some importance in the history of opera, they do not concern us here, for it was not they but Minato who fixed the form of the Italian libretto. He was the most characteristic product of Venetian influence and seems to have enjoyed undisputed authority amongst the writers and composers of his time. But the text of a seventeenth-century Italian opera is of minor importance as compared with its “*mise-en-scène*”. Since in fact the words were intended to be accompanied and enhanced by music and were written obviously with a view to the total impression to be produced upon the audience as a result of the combination of certain musical, pictorial and architectural effects, no account of the Venetian Baroque opera could be complete without some account, however inexhaustive, of the design of the stage, the scenery and the general decorative scheme of the whole setting of the opera.

The second chapter will, therefore, be devoted to an inquiry into the origin and development of the Venetian opera, followed by an examination of its structural elements, as laid down by Minato, and an attempt will be made in Chapter III to deal with the “*mise-en-scène*” of the particular variety of Baroque opera that depended for its success upon the designing ability of the two Burnacini. As the opera had a successful rival at Vienna in the Jesuit drama, it will be necessary to consider in the concluding section of the third chapter the nature of the relation between these two similar types of theatrical performances, before proceeding to an investigation of the popular theatre at Vienna and its dependence upon the opera.

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CHAPTER II

Origin and Structural Elements of the Venetian Opera

The man who is usually considered to be the originator of the new type of musical drama that became popular in Venice in the thirties of the seventeenth century and was known as the Venetian opera, was the composer Claudio Monteverde, a native of Cremona. It seems to me, however, that what Monteverde introduced into the new entertainment was a dramatic and human element¹ which was almost consistently neglected by those who succeeded him, and that his opera is, therefore, not typically Venetian at all. Monteverde, who had been musical director at the Court of the Gonzaga in Mantua from 1604 to 1613, was appointed “chapelmaster” at St Mark’s in Venice in the latter year.² His first important opera, ‘Orfeo’, was produced at the carnival in Mantua in the year 1607, first on the stage of the “Accademia degl’ In vaghiti” and later before the Court.³ ‘Orfeo’ is the story of the love of Orpheus for Eurydice and its tragic ending. In choosing a subject taken from the ancient world, Monteverde was but following the example set by a group of young scholars who met regularly in Florence at the home of Giovanni Bardi, Count of Vernio, a patron of the arts and a man of wide learning. Their aim was to cultivate literature, music and the sciences, and realizing the place and importance of music in ancient tragedy they decided to imitate the Greeks.⁴ What was new in Monteverde’s ‘Orfeo’ was that the music, apart altogether from the words, was the sincere and passionate expression of the composer’s grief at the loss

¹ C. Hubert H. Parry, *Oxford Hist. of Music*, vol. III, pp. 135, 176.

² Kretzschmar, *op. cit.* p. 55.

³ Kretzschmar, *ibid.* p. 55.

⁴ G. B. Doni, *Della musica scenica*, Firenze, 1763, chap. 9.

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of his own wife.¹ Instrumental music became more than a mere accompaniment of words, the orchestra interpreting the feelings of the characters directly and the libretto being subordinated to the music.² In reality this was contrary to the intention of the Florentine school which aimed at intensifying the effect of the words by means of the music,³ thus enhancing the meaning of a poem.

One of the chief members of the enterprising fraternity at Florence that was bent upon solving the problems of theatrical representation accompanied by instruments, was Ottavio Rinuccini, a poet who, though not himself a composer, was able, by reason of his cultivated taste in music and his deep appreciation of it,⁴ to give valuable assistance to musicians like Monteverde. Rinuccini wrote a play entitled ‘*Dafne*’⁵ and persuaded the composer Giacomo Peri to set it to music. Doni, a contemporary of Rinuccini and author of a treatise on ancient Greek music, describes ‘*Dafne*’ as a “*favola boschereccia*”, that is, a shepherd play, and tells us that it was the first drama (“*Azione*”) written in the new musical style. It was performed at Florence, probably in the year 1594,⁶ in the house of Jacopo Corsi who in virtue of his interest in everything pertaining to the muses had succeeded the above-mentioned Bardi as patron of the fraternity. ‘*Dafne*’ was followed in 1600 by Rinuccini’s ‘*Euridice*’, performed at Florence to celebrate the marriage of Marie de’ Medici with Henry IV of France.⁷ In 1607 Rinuccini dramatized the story of Theseus and Ariadne and the opera ‘*Arianna*’ was

¹ Lacy Collison-Morley, *Italy after the Renaissance*, London, 1930, p. 84.

² Collison-Morley, *ibid.* p. 84.

³ Kretzschmar, *op. cit.* p. 23, and v. Weilen, *op. cit.* p. 56.

⁴ Doni, *op. cit.*; see Kretzschmar, *op. cit.* p. 19.

⁵ ‘*Dafne*’, adapted by Martin Opitz and set to the music of Heinrich Schütz, was performed at Torgau in 1627 during the wedding festivities of the Saxon princess, Luise. This was the first German opera of any importance. See Kretzschmar, *op. cit.* p. 136; cf. Schiedermaier, *Die deutsche Oper*, Leipzig, 1930, p. 20.

⁶ Kretzschmar, *op. cit.* p. 31.

⁷ Kretzschmar, *ibid.* p. 31.

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performed at a royal wedding in Mantua in 1607, the music having been contributed by none other than Monteverde,¹ whom we already know as the composer of ‘*Orfeo*’.

The names Orpheus, Eurydice and Daphne at once suggest the pastoral, and indeed the Florentine “operas” resemble earlier pastoral plays not only in their subjects and their scenery, but like them they seem to have been intended for performance on the stages of the numerous Court theatres throughout Italy. Since the pastoral play was the favourite entertainment at Court, it is easy to explain Rinuccini’s choice of this form for his libretti. Tasso’s ‘*Aminta*’ was performed at the Belvedere palace of the Duke of Ferrara, the whole Court being in attendance,² whilst the earliest of the pastoral dramas, Politian’s ‘*Orfeo*’, was written specially in 1471 for Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua,³ and in his ‘*Euridice*’ Rinuccini adopted many of the characters, indeed even many of the verses, of his predecessor.⁴

One of the main features of the plot of the Florentine operas like ‘*Dafne*’ and ‘*Euridice*’ was a complicated love intrigue in which several pairs of lovers were presented. A similar love intrigue occurs in many pastoral plays, for example, in Agostino Beccari’s ‘*Sacrifizio*’, acted at Ferrara in 1554,⁵ where the fortunes of no fewer than three pairs of lovers are involved; in Agostino Argenti’s ‘*Lo Sfortunato*’ of the year 1567⁶ and in Guarini’s ‘*Pastor Fido*’ produced in 1590.⁷

But Rinuccini did not choose the pastoral form merely for the sake of pleasing the Italian aristocracy.⁸ From a purely musical point of view his choice was calculated to

¹ Kretzschmar, *op. cit.* p. 62; cf. Parry, *op. cit.* p. 50.

² Louis E. Lord, *The Orpheus of Politian and the Aminta of Tasso*, Oxford, 1931, p. 62.

³ Lord, *ibid.* p. 70; cf. W. W. Greg, *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama*, London, 1905, p. 157.

⁴ Kretzschmar, *op. cit.* p. 34.

⁵ Lord, *op. cit.* p. 59; cf. Greg, *op. cit.* p. 174.

⁶ Lord, *op. cit.* p. 60.

⁷ Lord, *ibid.* p. 65.

⁸ Kretzschmar, *op. cit.* p. 43.