Pastoral Typography: Sigmund von Birken and the "Picture-Rhymes" of Johann Helwig

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This paper argues that European figured poetry of the Renaissance and Baroque periods is a distinctive art form, which combined aspects of Greek and Latin art into a new synthesis. The result was a specifically typographical style of literature, exemplified here in the theoretical comments and the cyclical collections of "picture-rhymes" by Birken and Helwig.

The Emergence of Renaissance Figured Poetry

When later writers adopted the Greek medium of figured poetry, they introduced some far-reaching changes. Whereas the Greek poets, such as Theocritus, had written individual poems in which the outline represented the shape of an object, Latin poets such as Porphyrius and Hrabanus Maurus utilized a new, rectlinear form where, by the use of complex acrostichs, a pattern was produced within a rectangle. No less significantly, the Latin poets put their poems into cycles. The unity of perceptual time implied by a single image notionally inscribed onto an object now gave way to the sequential progress of hours as the reader worked his way through from one complex image to the next. There was a time change. The visual instantaneity of previous figured poetry gave way to a contemplative continuum. And an ontological change: the free interplay between word, image, and object in the Greek poems was shut off by the eschatological certainties of Christianity. History had become a closed book. Hence, metaphysically, those magnificently adorned Latin rectangles, fit for a King or a Pope, which lay immutably bound between their covers. Time began with Creation and ended with the Second Coming. Between these incontrovertibles lay the mutable pages of history, of mere passing interest. The book, then, as a leaf in the volumes of time, asserted the permanence of faith. But with the Renaissance the splendid monastic folios made way for pocket books which an individual could afford. Even if he remained the child of God, the reader could open and close his books freely, without the say-so of clerical authority. The Church's censorship was ultimately ousted by this freedom.

Devotional copying receded before mechanical impression: the earliest success of mechanization was the lever of free ideas. Printing with movable type made ideas portable as never before. It also brought a new lease of life to figured poetry which, in fact, became the art form of printing with movable

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type. The form ceased to be a calligraphic exercise and now depended on the determinants of lead and press. Other functions of typography were utilitarian or decorative, albeit in the best sense, but in figured poetry the printer's skill could be stretched in the service of verbal-visual meaning. For printed figured poetry is not an eccentric art form but a quintessential expression of the emerging modern era. The machine had entered the service of art, and the age of mechanical reproduction, in which no 'original' existed, had begun.

An acute dialectic of Greek and Christian typifies the new poetry of the Renaissance, and not least figured poems. This even shows in the way they were put together. Numberless single poems were written. But, no less, most of the best writers linked several poems in some or other form. They were gathered into small anthologies in various poetics; or were included as integral parts of longer works. Here a complex play could arise between verbal image, implied object, associated, corresponding, and contrasting images — and between the surrounding text and the figured inserts.

The Pegnitz Shepherds

Among the most interesting examples of extended texts including groups of figured poems are the works of the Pegnitz Shepherds. The Shepherds were a moral and literary society founded in the seventeenth century in Nuremburg. Uniquely, the Shepherds gathered their figured poems into pastoral romances in the tradition of d'Urfé and Sidney. Thereby, they combined the dual heritage of Theocritus as a father of pastoral poetry and as an originator of figured verse. The resulting pastoral romances transfigured the maze of the world into what Poe called "the playful maziness of art".[1]

The work which first combined these two aspects of the Pastoral tradition was *The Pegnitz Pastoral* published in 1644 by Georg Philip Harsdörffer and Johann Klaj.[2] These were the founding fathers of the Pegnitz Shepherds. Their pastoral contains a figured poem in the shape of an *Anvil,*[3] more remarkable for its original shape and historical significance than for any intrinsic worth. The full import of its inclusion in a pastoral was only to be recognized later, by Sigmund von Birken and Johann Helwig. It was Birken who first exploited the potential of the new medium in his *Continuation of the Pegnitz Pastoral* of 1645.[4] This work includes two figured poems: "Garland"[5] and "Syrinx".[6] Birken's recognition of the form's worth emerges in his use of it in these two poems to celebrate the foundation of the Pegnitz Shepherds or Flower Order, as it was also known.

Sigmund von Birken's Typographical Poetics

Birken's beautifully produced volume reveals that when he turned to figured poetry, it was not for him just a visual form, but a typographic one. At the end of the work he gives expression to a typographical consciousness which typifies not just the layout of his volume, but the content, and the interrelation of typography and meaning which characterizes the whole production:

> Furthermore, I hereby exhort the reader to observe *three things* in this little work: Of these the first are the *side-notes* (marginalia) which often clarify the content of a poem, and are therefore not to be ignored, although they are mainly included for his benefit, who is not conversant with the ancient names and histories. Furthermore, by use of small and large *picture-letters,* the content of a poem is often expressed, and sometimes even represented emblematically . . .. Thirdly, and most importantly, I have always noted something remarkable by use of the *blacker (Schwabacher) type,* signifying amongst other things the objects described and sung . . . *common rhyme-schemes* . . ., etc. All this the gentle reader is asked to study most exactly, and then to judge in a favourable manner.[7]

Birken conceives of typography creatively, as a part of the poet's technical arsenal: his concept of form extended beyond poetics, and embraced the elements of typographical meaning as constituent parts of the literary artifact. Typography belonged integrally to meaning, and typographical meaning merged into poetic sense. As an illustration of Birken's three typographical devices, consider the page on which his "Syrinx" appears (Figure 1).

1 The Marginal Notes. These function here much as they may in other texts, but it makes a difference when the poet himself prescribes them. In the first he draws attention to the nature of his "Syrinx" as "Picture-Rhymes" *(Bilderreimen).* By using the term "Picture-*Rhyme*" he specifies the precise nature of his text: it is not just a visual poem, but a rhyming picture. In denoting the form, he lets the act of naming enter into the poetic process: the linguistic sign, the very act of signifying, is integrated into reading. Such play between signifier and signified is basic to Birken's technique, and underlies both the inter-relation of text and image, and a whole series of transformations.

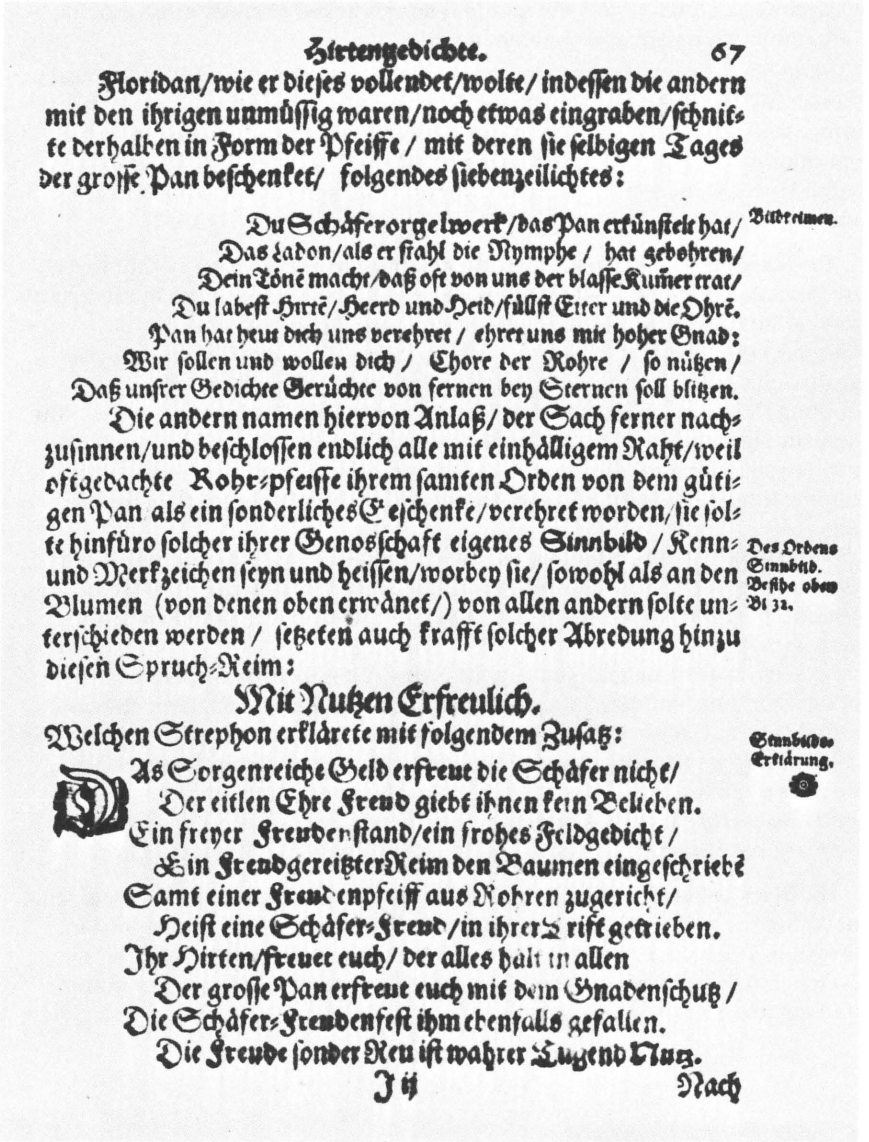
By seemingly stating the obvious, the marginalia elevate poetic representation into a self-conscious, abstract process. Typographical play intellectualizes the content. Typically, after "Syrinx" has been written, the poets *think* about it *(nachsinnen).*

The second of these marginalia goes further: it is a cross reference to the Society's original emblem *(Sinnbild)* presented earlier. In fact it introduces several correspondences: explicitly, it connects the Society's first emblem, the Garland, with its new one, the Syrinx; implicitly, it may remind that the first, also, was depicted as a picture poem. Crucially, then, both emblems are elevated into picture poems — and they are the only two such poems in the work. The marginal note thus draws attention to the poems' symbolic function.

2 The Black Letter *(Schwabacher).* This works in a way related to the maginalia, but within the text. For example, *Sinnbild* ("Emblem") stands out almost in mid-page. The type also picks out the motto of the emblem, *Mit Nutzen erfreulich.* Finally, it picks out the key words of the motto as they recur in the interpretative poem which follows.

3 **The Decorative Initial.** The book which forms the ground of the initial complements the meaning of the entire poem, by imaging the vehicle through which the Shepherds become useful (cf. *Nutzen)* and give pleasure *(erfreulich)*. For the text refers only to "pastoral poem(s)" *(Feldgedicht)*, to "rhyme" *(Reim)*, and to the "gleeful pipe of reeds" *(Freudenpfeiff aus Rohren)*. The pictorial initial asserts the verse's literary dimension: the work forms part

Figure 1. Sigmund von Birken, *Fortsetsung Der Pegnitz-Schaferey*, p. 67.



Hirtengedichte. 67

Floridan/wie er dieſes vollendet/wolte/ indeſſen die andern mit den ihrigen unmüſſig waren/noch etwas eingraben/ſchnitte derhalben in Form der Pfeiffe / mit deren ſie ſelbigen Tages der groſſe Pan beſchenket/ folgendes ſiebenzeilichtes:

Du Schäferorgelwerk/das Pan erkünſtelt hat/ Bildreimen.
Das Ladon/als er fliehl die Nymphe / hat gebohren/
Dein Tönē macht/daß oft von uns der blaſſe Kumer trat/
Du labeſt Hirtē/Heerd und Heid/füllſt Eiter und die Ohrē.
Pan hat heut dich uns verehret / ehret uns mit hoher Gnad:
Wir ſollen und wollen dich / Chore der Rohre / ſo nützen /
Daß unſrer Gedichte Gerüchte von fernen bey Sternen ſoll blitzen.

Die andern namen hiervon Anlaß/ der Sach ferner nachzuſinnen/und beſchloſſen endlich alle mit einhälligem Raht/weil oftgedachte Rohr-pfeiffe ihrem ſamten Orden von dem gütigen Pan als ein ſonderliches Eſchenke/verehret worden/ſie ſolte hinfüro ſolcher ihrer Genoſſchaft eigenes Sinnbild / Kenn- und Merkzeichen ſeyn und heiſſen/worbey ſie/ ſowohl als an den Blumen (von denen oben erwänet/) von allen andern ſolte unterſchieden werden / ſetzeten auch krafft ſolcher Abredung hinzu dieſen Spruch-Reim: Des Ordens Sinnbild. Beſihe oben Bl 32.

Mit Nutzen Erfreulich.

Welchen Strephon erklärete mit folgendem Zuſatz: Sinnbilds-Erklärung.

DAs Sorgenreiche Geld erfreut die Schäfer nicht/
Der eitlen Ehre Freud giebt ihnen kein Belieben.
Ein freyer Freudenſtand/ein frohes Feldgedicht /
Ein Freudgereitzter Reim den Baumen eingeſchriebē
Samt einer Freudenpfeiff aus Rohren zugericht/
Heiſt eine Schäfer-Freud/in ihrer Trift getrieben.
Ihr Hirten/freuet euch/ der alles hält in allen
Der groſſe Pan erfreut euch mit dem Gnadenſchutz /
Die Schäfer-Freudenfeſt ihm ebenfalls gefallen.
Die Freude ſonder Reu iſt wahrer Tugend Nutz.

of book-culture, which is a self-conscious mirror of the pastoral existence, grounded in learning as well as play. Letter and book assume a single identity as mirrors of the world.

All three typographical devices coincide in emphasising the emblematic nature of the page, which in fact reflects the typical tripartite structure of an emblem: *lemma* or motto, *pictura* or picture, and *subscriptio* or epigram.[8] As the emblem depends upon the interplay between curious motto, image, and explanation, so Birken's typographical play effectively multiplies the signs involved into a veritable maze of meaning. Within this constellation, too, the visual poem has a pivotal place, in that it condenses the different features of an emblem into a single text.

Mythological Transformation of Antiquity

Behind the verbal visual play lies a further dimension of mythological transformations. The poem recalls the god Pan's love for Syrinx as related by Ovid.[9] The story is this. Syrinx, fleeing from Pan's advances, begged the earth and the river nymphs to aid her, and was thereupon turned into a bed of reeds. In lamenting his disappointment at clasping these reeds for Syrinx, and to his own surprize, Pan stirred a melancholy sound from the reeds with his signs. Hereupon, he cut the reeds up into pipes of unequal length, to make the original Pipes of Pan or "Syrinx". In Birken's pastoral, Pan himself gives this same pipe to the Pegnitz Shepherds.[10] Thus the pipe represents a mythical continuity with original pastoral poetry.

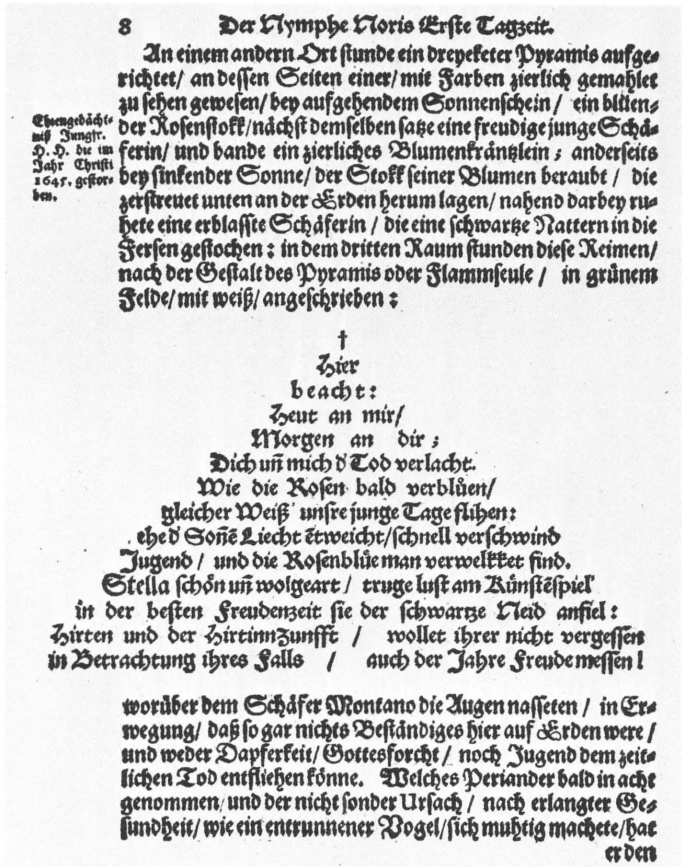
Further, the pipe implicitly asserts an historical continuity with the origins of figured poetry, and its connection with pastoral, by imitating the shape of Theocritus' one figured poem, the "Syrinx". An obvious difference between Theocritus' syrinx and Birken's, however, lies in the number of reeds. This indicates another, contemporary significance.

In the Shepherds' original emblem of the Garland, the individual flowers represent particular members of the Order of Flowers, each of whom selects one flower as an emblem. The seven reeds of Birken's poem correspond to the seven members of the society at the time Pan donated them the Syrinx.[11] Thus, the text telescopes myth, history, and contemporary reference into a single image.

However, no less importantly, an interplay emerges in the juxtaposition of Garland — Flowers — Shepherds — Reeds — Pipe, whereby a motif undergoes a sequence of transformations, to establish the fundamental identity of only outwardly distinct realities. The mythical process engages contemporary action. Individually, the Shepherds are represented by flowers and reeds; collectively, by the garland and pipe. Thus garland (visual) and syrinx (acoustic) represent two aspects of a single reality. The choice of pictorial poems to embody this coincidence is of course crucial: for through its dual character as poem and picture, the genre in its very essence typifies the mirror-relation and identity of different orders of existence, and, specifically, of music and painting in the art of verse. It is to this quality especially which Birken's choice of name, *Bilder-Reim* ("Picture-Rhyme"), draws attention.

Note: Figures 2 through 13 are from Johann Helwig, *Die Nymphe Noris*.

Figure 2. "Hertz" (heart), p. 7.



8 Der Nymphe Noris Erste Tagzeit.

An einem andern Ort stunde ein dreyeketer Pyramis aufgerichtet/ an dessen Seiten einer/ mit Farben zierlich gemahlet zu sehen gewesen/ bey aufgehendem Sonnenschein/ ein blühender Rosenstokk/ nächst demselben satze eine freudige junge Schäferin/ und bande ein zierliches Blumenkräntzlein; anderseits bey sinkender Sonne/ der Stokk seiner Blumen beraubt/ die zerstreuet unten an der Erden herum lagen/ nahend darbey ruhete eine erblasste Schäferin/ die eine schwartze Nattern in die Fersen gestochen: in dem dritten Raum stunden diese Reimen/ nach der Gestalt des Pyramis oder Flammseule/ in grünem Felde/ mit weiß/ angeschrieben:

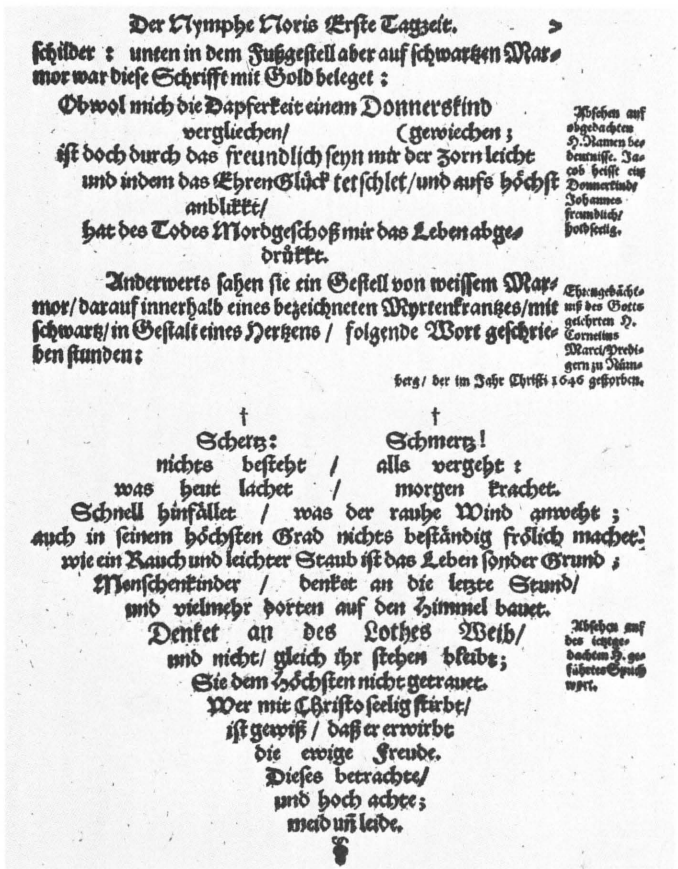
Ehrengedächtnüß Jungfr. H. H. die im Jahr Christi 1645. gestorben.

†

Hier
beacht:
Heut an mir/
Morgen an dir;
Dich uñ mich d' Tod verlacht.
Wie die Rosen bald verblüen/
gleicher Weiß unsre junge Tage flihen:
ehe d' Sonē Liecht ētweicht/ schnell verschwind
Jugend/ und die Rosenblüe man verwelket sind.
Stella schön uñ wolgeart/ truge lust am Künstēspiel
in der besten Freudenzeit sie der schwartze Neid anfiel:
Hirten und der Hirtinn Zunfft/ wollet ihrer nicht vergessen
in Betrachtung ihres Falls/ auch der Jahre Freude messen!

worüber dem Schäfer Montano die Augen nasseten/ in Erwegung/ daß so gar nichts Beständiges hier auf Erden were/ und weder Dapferkeit/ Gottesforcht/ noch Jugend dem zeitlichen Tod entfliehen könne. Welches Periander bald in acht genommen/ und der nicht sonder Ursach/ nach erlangter Gesundheit/ wie ein entrunnener Vogel/ sich muhtig machete/ hat er den

Figure 3. "Pyramis oder Flammseule" (pyramid), p. 8.



Der Nymphe Noris Erste Tagzeit. 9

schilder: unten in dem Fußgestell aber auf schwartzen Marmor war diese Schrifft mit Gold beleget:

Obwol mich die Dapferkeit einem Donnerskind
vergliechen/ (gewiechen;
ist doch durch das freundlich seyn mir der Zorn leicht
und indem das EhrenGlück tet schlet/ und aufs höchst
anblükte/
hat des Todes Mordgeschoß mir das Leben abgedrükt.

Absehen auf obgedachten H. Namen bedeutnisse. Jacob heisst ein Donnerkind/ Johannes freundlich/ hohseelig.

Anderwerts sahen sie ein Gestell von weissem Marmor/ darauf innerhalb eines bezeichneten Myrtenkrantzes/ mit schwartz/ in Gestalt eines Hertzens/ folgende Wort geschrieben stunden:

Ehrengedächtnüß des Gottgelehrten H. Cornelius Marci/ Predigern zu Nürnberg/ der im Jahr Christi 1646 gestorben.

† †
Scherz: Schmertz!
nichts besteht/ alls vergeht:
was heut lachet/ morgen krachet.
Schnell hinfället/ was der rauhe Wind anweht;
auch in seinem höchsten Grad nichts beständig frölich machet:
wie ein Rauch und leichter Staub ist das Leben sonder Grund;
Menschenkinder/ denket an die letzte Stund/
und vielmehr horten auf den Himmel bauet.
Denket an des Todes Weih/
und nicht/ gleich ihr stehen bleibt;
Sie dem Höchsten nicht getrauet.
Wer mit Christo seelig stirbt/
ist gewiß/ daß er erwirbt
die ewige Freude.
Dieses betrachte/
und hoch achte;
meid uñ leide.

Absehen auf des letztgedachten H. geführten Sinnschrifft wort.

Johann Helwig's Aesthetics of the "Picture-Rhyme"

Johann Helwig adopted the same format as Birken for his avowed sequel to the pastoral, namely his *Noris the Nymph* of 1650.[12] He adopted the same open formal structure; and a similar layout to his predecessors, following them in the very choice of page size. However, where Birken had included only two figured poems, Helwig marshalled a total of twelve (Figures 2-13). If history had robbed him of the chance to commemorate the founding of the Pegnitz Shepherds, he was not to be outdone when it came to a pyrotechnical display of technopaegnia.

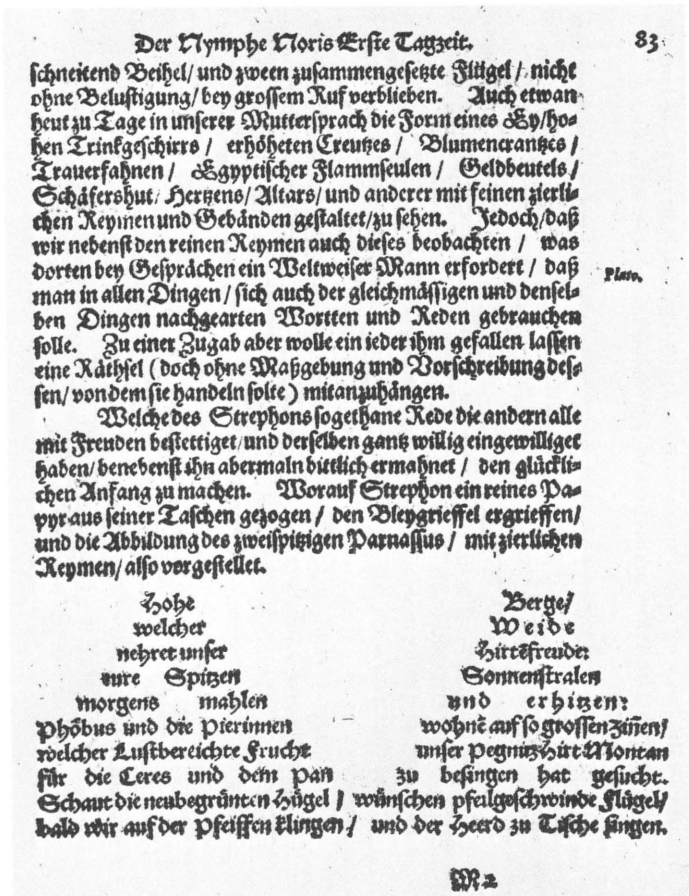
Shortly after presenting his first two figured poems, Helwig explains the form by way of a speech which he attributes to Strephon (i.e., the poet Georg Philip Harsdörffer) to whom Birken, in his turn, had previously attributed his "Garland" poem. Helwig's speech contains four main points. Firstly, Helwig cuts a lance for figured poetry by modifying Harsdörffer's actual published views. Previously, Harsdörffer had expressed some reservations about the form, classing it more to rhyming than to poetry proper.[13] Now, Helwig lets him designate it the finest example of poetic "novelty" *(des Neuen)*. It is the form par excellence which both "amuses" and "instructs" *(belustiget und nutze)*.[14] Thus he gives figured poetry pride of place among all poetic forms, by presenting it in terms of an aesthetic of novelty. This aesthetic is indeed crucial to the appreciation of the form.

Secondly, and no less importantly, Helwig underpins his case with reference to classical precedent, by naming the earliest Greek examples: "Theocritus' Pan-pipes, the egg made by Simias of Rhodes, the double-headed axe, and a pair of wings."[15] In this way Helwig fills a gap in Birken's argument, where the role of the pastoral poets in developing figured poetry had remained unstated: he explicates both the aesthetic and the historical sub-text of Birken's achievement.

Thirdly, Helwig surveys the current scene to give an idea of contemporary inventiveness: ". . . And today in our mother tongue the shape of an egg, tall goblet, raised cross, garland, mourning flag, Egyptian pyramid, purse, shepherd's cap, heart, altar, and others . . .".[16] This observation combines the first and second points, in that it reveals contemporary "novelty" at work in the historically attested form: besides the Greek shapes of an egg and an altar, Helwig lists others typical of the new age, such as the cross, the heart, and the goblet; but also some which are less common, such as the purse and the shepherd's cap.

Fourthly, Helwig concludes with two linguistic points: the purity of rhymes in figured verse, and the appropriateness of the language: "Yet, . . . besides the purity of rhymes, we should also observe what a wise man has demanded in his dialogues [marginal note: Plato]: that in all things one should employ the equivalent words and phrases, which imitate the things".[17] The reference to rhymes is far from incidental: it recalls Birken's preferred term, *Bilder-Reime*, and asserts the dual character of the medium, not just as picture-poems, but as a combination of words and music. More than this, as the reference to Plato's *Cratylus* indicates, the choice of language should be meaningful, not arbitrary; words and picture should combine into a meaningful image.

Figure 4. "Parnassus", p. 83.



Der Nymphe Noris Erſte Tagzeit. 83

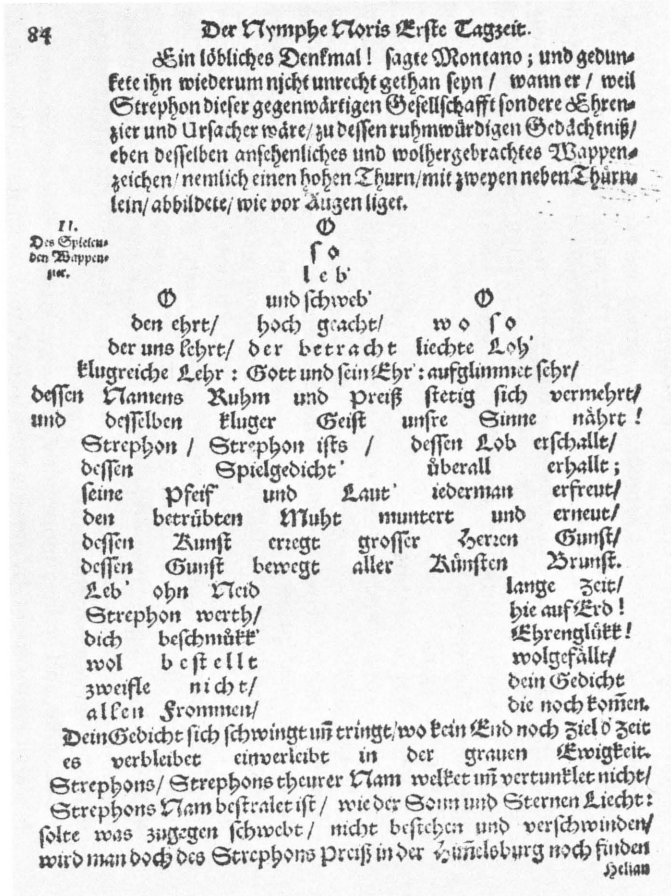
ſchneitend Beihel/ und zween zuſammengeſetzte Flügel/ nicht ohne Beluſtigung/ bey groſſem Ruf verblieben. Auch etwan heut zu Tage in unſerer Mutterſprach die Form eines Ey/ hohen Trinkgeſchirrs/ erhöheten Creutzes/ Blumencrantzes/ Trauerfahnen/ Egyptiſcher Flammſeulen/ Geldbeutels/ Schäfershut/ Hertzens/ Altars/ und anderer mit feinen zierlichen Reymen und Gebänden geſtaltet/ zu ſehen. Jedoch/ daß wir nebenſt den reinen Reymen auch dieſes beobachten/ was dorten bey Geſprächen ein Weltweiſer Mann erfordert/ daß man in allen Dingen/ ſich auch der gleichmäſſigen und denſelben Dingen nachgearten Wortten und Reden gebrauchen ſolle. Zu einer Zugab aber wolle ein ieder ihm gefallen laſſen eine Räthſel (doch ohne Maßgebung und Vorſchreibung deſſen/ von dem ſie handeln ſolte) mitanzuhängen. Plato.

Welche des Strephons ſogethane Rede die andern alle mit Freuden beſtettiget/ und derſelben gantz willig eingewilliget haben/ benebenſt ihn abermaln bittlich ermahnet/ den glücklichen Anfang zu machen. Worauf Strephon ein reines Papyr aus ſeiner Taſchen gezogen/ den Bleygrieffel ergrieffen/ und die Abbildung des zweiſpitzigen Parnaſſus/ mit zierlichen Reymen/ alſo vorgeſtellet.

Hohe Berge/
welcher Weide
nehret unſer Hirtenfreude
eure Spitzen Sonnenſtralen
morgens mahlen und erhitzen:
Phöbus und die Pierinnen wohnē auf ſo groſſen Zinnen/
welcher Luſtbereichte Frucht unſer Pegnitz-Hirt Montan
für die Ceres und den Pan zu beſingen hat geſucht.
Schaut die neubegrünten Hügel/ wünſchen pfeilgeſchwinde Flügel/
bald wir auf der Pfeiffen klingen/ und der Heerd zu Tafche ſingen.

M 2

Figure 5. "Thurn" (tower), p. 84.



84 Der Nymphe Noris Erſte Tagzeit.

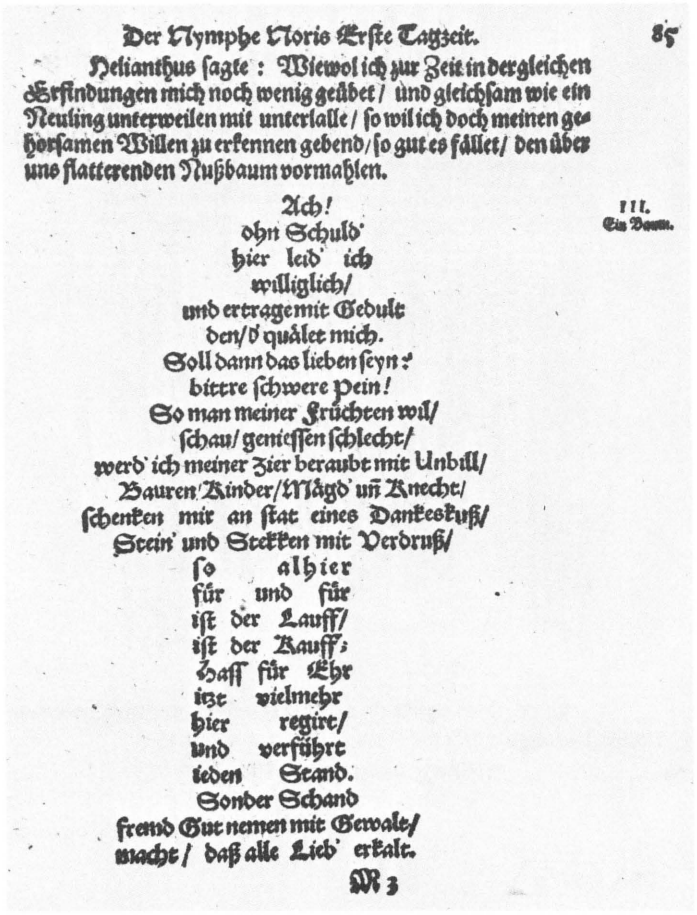
Ein löbliches Denkmal! ſagte Montano; und gedunkete ihn wiederum nicht unrecht gethan ſeyn/ wann er/ weil Strephon dieſer gegenwärtigen Geſellſchafft ſondere Ehrenzier und Urſacher wäre/ zu deſſen ruhmwürdigen Gedächtniß/ eben deſſelben anſehenliches und wolhergebrachtes Wappenzeichen/ nemlich einen hohen Thurn/ mit zweyen neben Thürnlein/ abbildete/ wie vor Augen liget.

II. Des Spielens den Wappenger.

O
ſo
leb'
O und ſchweb' O
den ehrt/ hoch geacht/ wo ſo
der uns lehrt/ der betracht liechte Loh'
klugreiche Lehr: Gott und ſein Ehr': aufglimmet ſehr/
deſſen Namens Ruhm und Preiß ſtetig ſich vermehrt/
und deſſelben kluger Geiſt unſre Sinne nährt!
Strephon/ Strephon iſts/ deſſen Lob erſchallt/
deſſen Spielgedicht' überall erhalle;
ſeine Pfeif' und Laut' iederman erfreut/
den betrübten Muht muntert und erneut/
deſſen Kunſt erregt groſſer Herren Gunſt/
deſſen Gunſt bewegt aller Künſten Brunſt.
Leb' ohn Neid lange Zeit/
Strephon werth/ hie auf Erd!
dich beſchmückt' Ehrenglückt!
wol beſtellt wolgefälle/
zweifle nicht/ dein Gedicht
alten Frommen/ die noch komen.
Dein Gedicht ſich ſchwingt uñ tringt/ wo kein End noch Ziel d' Zeit
es verbleibet einverleibt in der grauen Ewigkeit.
Strephons/ Strephons theurer Nam welket uñ vertunklet nicht/
Strephons Nam beſtralet iſt/ wie der Sonn und Sternen Liecht:
ſolte was zugegen ſchwebt/ nicht beſtehen und verſchwinden/
wird man doch des Strephons Preiß in der Norñelsburg noch finden

Helian

Figure 6. "Nußbaum" (nut-tree), p. 85.

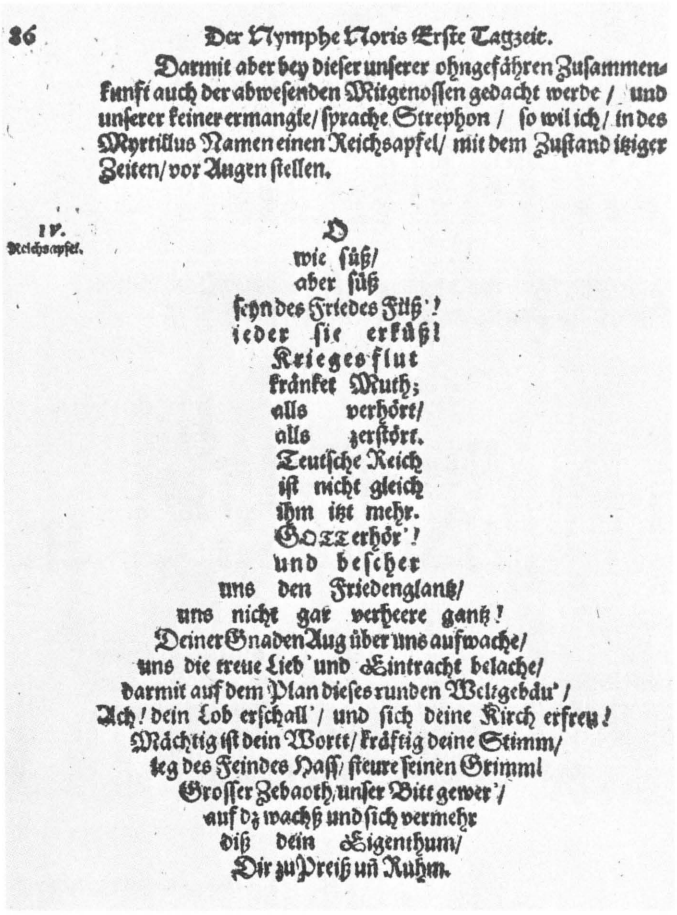


Helianthus ſagte: Wiewol ich zur Zeit in dergleichen Erfindungen mich noch wenig geübet / und gleichſam wie ein Neuling unterweilen mit unterlalle / ſo wil ich doch meinen gehorſamen Willen zu erkennen gebend / ſo gut es fället / den über uns flatterenden Nußbaum vormahlen.

III.
Ein Baum.

Ach!
ohn Schuld'
hier leid' ich
williglich/
und ertrage mit Gedult
den/ d' quälet mich.
Soll dann das lieben ſeyn?
bittre ſchwere Pein!
So man meiner Früchten wil/
ſchau/ genieſſen ſchlecht/
werd' ich meiner Zier beraubt mit Unbill/
Bauren Kinder/ Mägd' uñ Knecht/
ſchenken mir an ſtat eines Dankeskuß/
Stein' und Stekken mit Verdruß/
ſo alhier
für und für
iſt der Lauff/
iſt der Kauff:
Haſſ für Ehr
itzt vielmehr
hier regirt/
und verführt
ieden Stand.
Sonder Schand
frend Gut nemen mit Gewalt/
macht / daß alle Lieb' erkalt.

Figure 7. "Reichsapfel" (imperial orb), p. 86.



Darmit aber bey dieſer unſerer ohngefähren Zuſammenkunft auch der abweſenden Mitgenoſſen gedacht werde / und unſerer keiner ermangle / ſprache Strephon / ſo wil ich / in des Myrtillus Namen einen Reichsapfel / mit dem Zuſtand itziger Zeiten / vor Augen ſtellen.

IV.
Reichsapfel.

O
wie ſüß/
aber ſüß
ſeyn des Friedes Füß'!
ieder ſie erküß!
Krieges-flut
kränket Muth;
alls verhört/
alls zerſtört.
Teutſche Reich
iſt nicht gleich
ihm itzt mehr.
GOTT erhör'!
und beſcher
uns den Friedenglantz/
uns nicht gar verheere gantz!
Deiner Gnaden Aug über uns aufwache/
uns die treue Lieb' und Eintracht belache/
darmit auf dem Plan dieſes runden Weltgebäu'/
Ach! dein Lob erſchall' / und ſich deine Kirch erfreu!
Mächtig iſt dein Wortt / kräftig deine Stimm/
leg des Feindes Haſſ / ſteure ſeinen Grimm!
Groſſer Zebaoth / unſer Bitt gewer' /
auf dz wachß und ſich vermehr
diß dein Eigenthum/
Dir zu Preiß uñ Ruhm.

Figure 8. "Oergelein" (organ), p. 87.

Der Nymphe Noris Erſte Tagzeit. 87

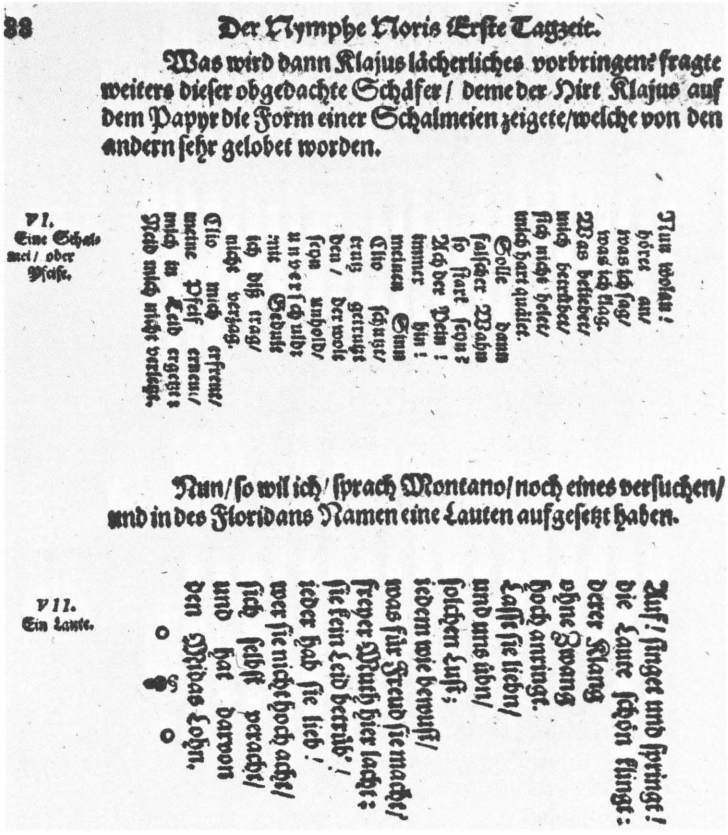
Und ich/ erwiederte hingegen Helianthus/ wil unter des
V. Ein Orgelwerk
Amintas Perſon ein kleines Oergelein aufrichten.

Was des Menſchen Sinn vermag/ iſt unbekant/ weil man nicht abgründen/
als Tag und alle Stund ſihet neue dinge was Neus erfinden.
Menſchen-Sinn durchtrachtet die Erd/ Waſſer und Lufft/ Feuer/
iſt ihm unerachtet nicht: Lufft und Feur in gleicher Stärk.
In dieſem ringen Hirt er sich/ drum nicht vergnügt/
weil immerfür ſein Geiſt auch Himmel an ſich klebt:
von dannen er auch iſt/ und wieder dorthin kehrt/
wo die vollkomne Freud auf ewig ihn ernehrt.
Was von ſeiner Wahrheit der Menſch darvon
iſt gedenket Zier. Unvermelte Cron.
Ach der Sterbligkeit. Ach der groſſen Ehre.
Bey der Sterbligkeit dient uns dieſe Lehre:
Wie den Erdenklang Menſchenmuth erdacht/
und in ſolcher Kunſt auf das höchſt gebracht.
Doch ein Zand war iſts/ und ein flüchtig Ding/
gegen jener Freud wie zu ſchlecht und ring.
Wie ein Lufftzug hat d Luft hinweicher ſchwindet/
kainer Pfeifen Schall weſentlich ſich findet/
ſo in diſem Rund nirgent was beſtäts/
alles wie der Rauch und d:r Dampf vergeht.
Man gleich des Menſchenwerk reichet bis zu höchſten Grad:
ſo wandlet ſichs doch bald/ iſt unſrer wie ein Rad.
Ja wie ein Luftgeſchoß das Menſchen Anſehn umſtimmet ſie:
Ihm ſelbſten ſelb der Menſch ſein eignes Grabmal pflantzet.
Eitel der Blaſebalg ſtürmt ruht/ iſt der Thon und Klang dahin:
iſt der Leib der Seel beraubt/ iſt Witz und Sinn
Ach. Hier aller Menſchen-werk an ihr in ſelbſt Verhängnuß hangen.
Dorthin zu der ſtrikt Freud trägt die klugs Seel Verlangen.

Menſchen-Hand was zwinget bezünget/ ſchlürpfet und ſchürpfet mit tichtlich Hall/
Pfeifen und die Orgelwerke ſpielen und füllen die Lüfften mit Schall:
auch die groſſen Pommersröhren ſchüttern und ſtettern mit rauhem Gethön/
und die kleinen / als die Cymbeln/ ringlen und klingelen im Ringen gar ſchön.
Solche Muſic iſt zu loben / ſolcherley Künſten mit Gunſten man mehre/
zum den Allerhöchſten GOtt / jeder ſie dichte / verzichte zur Ehre.

Figure 9. "Schalmei" (Syrinx), p. 88.

Figure 10. "Laute" (lute), p. 88.



88 Der Nymphe Noris Erſte Tagzeit.

Was wird dann Klajus lächerliches vorbringen/ fragte weiters dieſer obgedachte Schäfer / deme der Hirt Klajus auf dem Pappir die Form einer Schalmeien zeigete/ welche von den andern ſehr gelobet worden.

VI. Eine Schalmei / oder Pfeife.

Nun wolan!
höret an/
was ich ſag/
was ich klag.
Was betrüber/
mich betrübet/
ſich nicht leget/
mich hart quälet.
Solle
dann
falſcher Wahn
ſo ſtark ſeyn?
Ach der Pein!
bin!
immer
meinen
Sinn
Clio ſchutz/
trutz
den/ der wolt
ſeyn
unhold/
unſer ſich nicht
mit
Gedult
ich diß trag/
nicht
verjag.
Clio mich erfreue/
meine
Pfeif
ernen/
mich zu
Lob ergetz:
Mich mich nicht verletze.

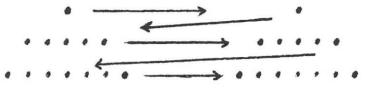
Nun/ ſo wil ich/ ſprach Montano/ noch eines verſuchen/ und in des Floridans Namen eine Lauten aufgeſetzt haben.

VII. Ein Laute.

Auf! ſinget und ſpringet!
die Laute ſchön klingt:
derer Klang
ohne Zwang
hoch anringt.
Laſſt ſie liebn/
und uns übn/
ſolchen Luſt:
iedem wie bewuſt/
was für Freud ſie machet/
freyer Muth hier lachet:
ſie kein Leid betrübt!
iedes hab ſie lieb!
wer ſie nicht hoch achte/
ſich ſelbſt verachte/
und hat darvon
den Midas Lohn.
o
o

Verbal-Visual Poetry

Besides the general fulfilment of shape by language in lines, each of Helwig's figured poems entails the specific enactment of rhythm, metre, and rhyme. In his poems (as in Birken's) rhyme is indeed inseparable from shape, and contributes substantially to the poems' "playful maziness". Take "Parnassus" (Figure 4). The poem consists of a first visual dimension provided by the outer shape; and of a second, created by the sequence of lines, which demand a reading *against* the shape:



The text displaces the normal smoothness of linear perception by a technique of repeated interference. Simultaneously, the rhymes overlay the first two visual dimensions with a third, defined by the point where the eye recognizes the exact repetition of a sound. Here, the visual and the acoustic dimensions of the poems intersect, and the sound effectively creates a third acoustico-visual dimension.

The text continually plays on the reader's rhyming expectations. A suggestion of rhyme emerges in the first two lines with the echoing "e" of *hohe, Berge,* and *Weide,* which imply a connexion between the separate summits. But the rhymes only fully emerge in lines two and three with:

welcher — *Weide*

unser — *Hirtenfreude*

The poem asserts a pattern of vertical rhyme. The two summits appear separate. Thereupon, however, the text immediately breaks the pattern with cross rhymes:

Spitzen — *Stralen*

mahlen — *erhitzen*

The summits seem connected. Then come parallel rhymes:

Pierinnen — *Zinnen*

Next, a reversion to cross rhyme:

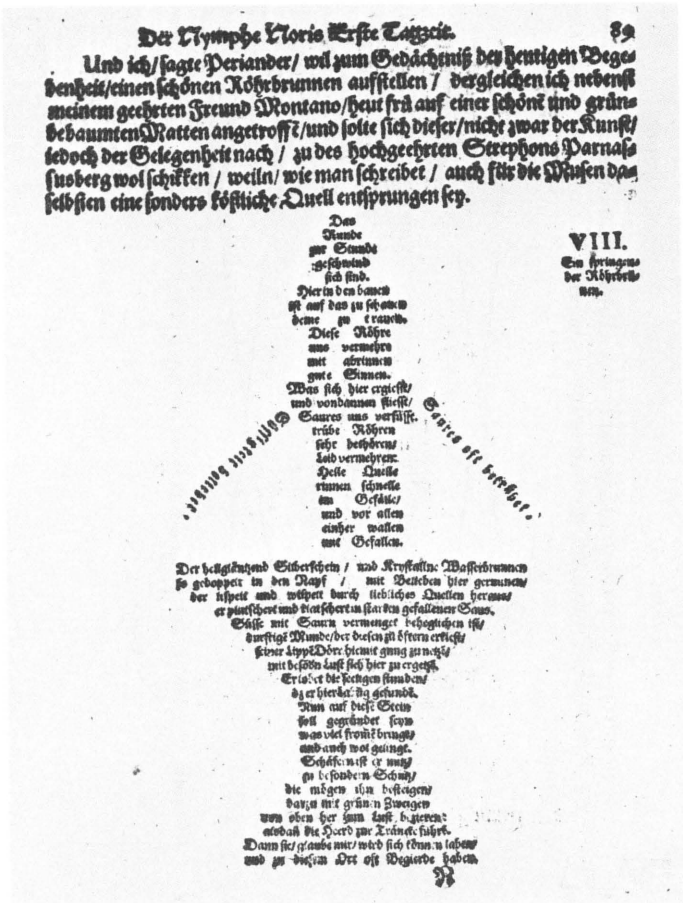
Frucht — *Montan*

Pan — *gesucht*

Finally, the text reaches a climax with another parallel rhyme:

Klingen — *singen*

Figure 11. "Springender Rohrbrunnen" (fountain), p. 89.



Der Nymphe Noris Erste Tagzeit. 89

Und ich/ sagte Periander/ wil zum Gedächtniß der heutigen Begebenheit/ einen schönen Röhrbrunnen aufstellen/ dergleichen ich nebenst meinem geehrten Freund Montano/ heut früh auf einer schönt und grünbebaumten Matten angetroffen/ und solte sich dieser/ nicht zwar der Kunst/ iedoch der Gelegenheit nach/ zu des hochgeehrten Strephons Parnaßusberg wol schikken/ weiln/ wie man schreibet/ auch für die Musen daselbsten eine sonders köstliche Quell entsprungen sey.

VIII.

Ein springender Röhrbrunnen.

Des
Runde
gar Stunde
geschwind
sich sind.
Hier in den baum
ist auf das zu schauen
deine zu trauen.
Diese Röhre
uns vermehren
mit abrinnen
gute Sinnen.
Was sich hier ergiesset/
und vondannen fliesset/
Saures uns versüsse.
trübe Röhren
sehr beshören/
Leid vermehren.
Helle Quelle
rinnen schnelle
im Gefäße/
und vor allen
einher wallen
mit Gefallen.

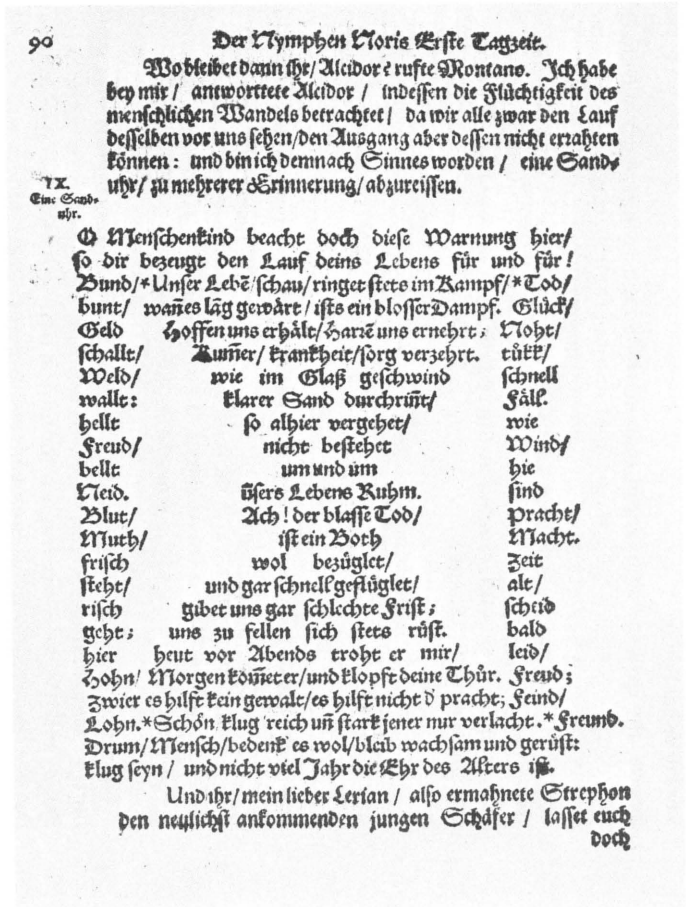
Gutes ist beständig.

Böses flieht bald.

Der heilquellende Silberschein / und Krystallne Wasserbrunnen
so gedopper in den Napf / mit Beiseben hier genommen/
der Nymphe und wöhrt durch liebliches Quellen heraus/
er plätschert und rieselt in stat den gefallenen Saus.
Süsse mit Saurn vermenget behaglichen ist/
durstigs Munds/ der diesen zu stärn erlischt/
seiner Lippel Dörr: hiemit gnug zu wegs/
mit deßen Lust sich hier zu ergetzn.
Erlabet die seeligen stunden/
da er hierbei: sig gefunden.
Nun auf diese Stein
soll gegründet seyn
was viel frombringt/
und auch wol gelingt.
Schäfer ist er nun/
so besonders Schutz/
die mögen ihm besteigen/
darzu mit grünen Zweigen
von oben her zum Lust beizeiten:
alsdann die Heerd zur Tränke führt.
Dann sie/ glaube mir/ wird sich erinnern lahen/
und zu diesem Ort oft Begierde haben.

M

Figure 12. "Sanduhr" (hourglass), p. 90.



90 Der Nymphen Noris Erste Tagzeit.

Wo bleibet dann ihr/ Alcidor! rufte Montano. Ich habe bey mir/ antwortete Alcidor / indessen die Flüchtigkeit des menschlichen Wandels betrachtet/ da wir alle zwar den Lauf desselben vor uns sehen/ den Ausgang aber dessen nicht erahten können: und bin ich demnach Sinnes worden / eine Sandvhr/ zu mehrerer Erinnerung/ abzureissen.

IX.

Eine Sandvhr.

O Menschenkind beacht doch diese Warnung hier/
so dir bezeugt den Lauf deins Lebens für und für!
Bund/ *Unser Lebē schau/ ringet stets im Kampf/ *Tod/
bunt/ wañes läg gewärt/ ists ein blosser Dampf. Glück/
Geld Hoffen uns erhält/ Hartz uns ernehrt; Noht/
schallt/ Zuñer/ Krankheit/ Sorg verzehrt. tükk/
Weld/ wie im Glaß geschwind schnell
wallt: klarer Sand durchrüt/ Fäll.
hellt so alhier vergehet/ wie
Freud/ nicht bestehet Wind/
bellt um und üm hie
Neid. üsers Lebens Ruhm. sind
Blut/ Ach! der blasse Tod/ Pracht/
Muth/ ist ein Both Macht.
frisch wol bezüglet/ Zeit
steht/ und gar schnell geflüglet/ alt/
risch gibet uns gar schlechte Frist; scheid
geht; uns zu fellen sich stets rüst. bald
hier heut vor Abends troht er mir/ leid/
Zohn/ Morgen köñet er/ und klopft deine Thür. Freud;
Zwier es hilft kein gewalt/ es hilft nicht d' pracht; Feind/
Lohn. *Schön klug reich uñ stark sener nur verlacht. *Freund.
Drum/ Mensch/ bedenk es wol/ bleib wachsam und gerüst:
klug seyn / und nicht viel Jahr die Ehr des Alters ist.

Und ihr/ mein lieber Lerian / also ermahnete Strephon den neulichst ankommenden jungen Schäfer / lasset euch doch

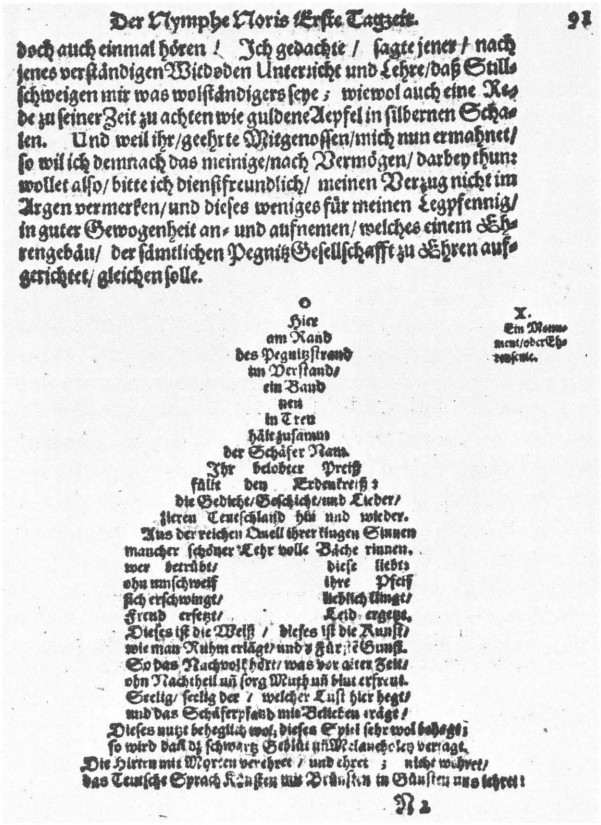
The rhymes not only enhance the poem's density. By offsetting the interference between the first two visual dimensions and by introducing repeated acoustic resolutions, the rhymes actually *complete* the image. More than just a visual poem, it is a verbal, visual, and acoustic text, whose parts create a single whole.

The "Open" Cycle

If for Helwig the figured poem depends upon an aesthetic of novelty, this must mean the initial novelty of words put into shape in a single poem. For this creates a surprise effect, by breaking out of a standard framework into pictorial space. Such novelty can indeed be found in the individual poems. But there is also another aspect: the sense of novelty which arises in a sequence of poems, where one image replaces another in quick succession. The experience of novelty when discovering an individual poem or sequence consists in a peculiar combination of things: surprize, curiosity, admiration, a shade of incredulity, perhaps, and possibly a moment of doubt and censure. Mixed with a mild sense of wonder, the viewer will probably feel, either more or less approvingly, a sense of disquiet or satisfaction at the overturning of an aesthetic norm. Hence the ridicule and disproportionate criticism that figured poetry has called forth.[18] For the visual poem is by its nature a small outrage against convention. It is a hybrid, bordering on the grotesque, what has been called a "Centaur".[19] The form depends, in the West, upon the tension between expectation (distinctness of the arts) and fulfilled contradiction (picture poem). As a result, the complexity of emotions which the form arouses produces a degree of pleasure (or discomfort) out of all proportion to the artistic achievement. The pleasure consists, I think, in a kind of mental intricacy. An intellectual delight corresponding to the ingenuity of the work.

As when Pierrot pulls out a whole succession of coloured handkerchiefs from his pocket, sheer abundance enhances the novelty. The order of the poems similarly heightens the surprise. In some cases poems may be visually paired; in others, wholly contrasted. The best collections combine continuity with variety, as is the case with Helwig's. Some poems are clearly paired: the first "Heart" shape (Figure 2) is inverted in the following "Pyramid" (Figure 3); "Nut-tree" (Figure 6) in "Orb of the Realm" (Figure 7); and "Syrinx" and "Lute" (Figures 9 and 10) also form a pair. But no less significantly, related objects may be separated, such as "Monument" (Figure 5), "Fountain" or "Spring" (Figure 11), and the final "Monument" to the shepherds (Figure 13). Where a more logical sequence might strengthen the coherence, the emphasis here falls on variety, to heighten the sense of abundance and ingenuity. As a result, a theatrical quality enters the collection: the sequence of texts forms a dazzling display, as each page opens up new surprizes. To the extent that they are novelties, these poems are conceits. But as in the best conceits, incongruity reveals a more deep-rooted order. For example, the poem in praise of Strephon (Figure 5) in the shape of a tower with three turrets represents Harsdörffer's real coat of arms. By alluding to his noblest attributes, the poem unequivocally explains his escutcheon: the linguistic representation of the

armorial bearings discloses the underlying meaning of the visual image. First (lines 1-4), the text interprets Strephon's position on earth — according with his tower — in terms of height imagery. Then, prior to praising his poetry, it establishes Strephon's relation to the metaphysical order, by equating his height with contemplation of the Divine (line 7). This creates a moment of anticipation at the poem's head, only resolved at the end (lines 22-27). Here, it emerges that poems such as Strephon's actually attain the metaphysical order in eternity. The earthly tower is ultimately replaced by God's heavenly tower (line 27). Thus, the figured poem captures the metaphysical reality underpinning the sublunary world, disclosing a correspondence between worldly escutcheon and heavenly estate. No less important than the hierarchical order which an individual poem establishes is that which emerges in the interconnection between different poems. Here, too, behind the apparent diversity of forms, the reader is led to discover a basic unity. Take "Fountain" (Figure 11). Visually, this belongs with the architectural pieces such as Strephon's "Tower" and "Monument" (Figures 5, 13). According to the accompanying text, it represents an actual fountain which two of the poets had seen that morning.[20] However, it is also to be understood as an emblem of a spring on Mount Parnassus. Hence, the poem is to be seen as a companion-piece to "Parnassus" several pages earlier (Figure 4). These two poems, moreover, are but two points in a more complex image pattern which, in fact, encompasses the whole collection. Visually, "Heart" and "Pyramid" (Figures 2 and 3) reappear in the


Der Nymphe Noris Erste Tagzeit. 91

doch auch einmal hören! Ich gedachte / sagte jener / nach jenes verständigen Wiedoden Unterricht und Lehre/daß Stillschweigen mir was wolständigers seye; wiewol auch eine Rede zu seiner Zeit zu achten wie guldene Aepfel in silbernen Schalen. Und weil ihr/geehrte Mitgenossen/mich nun ermahnet/ so wil ich demnach das meinige/nach Vermögen/ darbey thun: wollet also/ bitte ich dienstfreundlich/ meinen Verzug nicht im Argen vermerken/und dieses weniges für meinen Legpfennig/ in guter Gewogenheit an- und aufnemen/ welches einem Ehrengebäu/ der sämtlichen Pegnitz-Gesellschafft zu Ehren aufgerichtet/ gleichen solle.

X.
Ein Monument/oder Ehrensäule.

Figure 13. "Monument oder Ehrensäule" (monument), p. 91.

double pyramid of "Parnassus"; thematically, "Parnassus" heralds the theme of poetry and music, which in its turn finds expression in "Organ", "Syrinx", and "Lute" (Figures 8, 9, 10). But via "Fountain" another relation also pertains to the final poem, which celebrates the Shepherds' work as a "spring" and "stream" (Figure 13, l.15f). Thus, in a cycle like Helwig's, the free-play typical of the earliest Greek examples fuses with the more structured framework of a medieval cycle.

Helwig's poems can be seen to exploit the same principle of quasi-mythical transformations as Birken's. This they do by relating past and present (e.g., Parnassus' stream and the fountain), and by successfully transforming different categories of being: visual shape, language, semantic sense, theme, imagery, object, and metaphysical reality. Going beyond Helwig, one might add that it is not just novelty which distinguishes picture poems nor, indeed, their pivotal position as the one typographical art, but their dual character which makes them the ideal vehicles of poetic transformation. In congruent duality, they can reveal an essence equally beyond word and picture, which unites the bristling diversity of things into a delightful yet somehow edifying whole.

1. Edgar Allan Poe, *The Complete Poetical Works* (ed. R. Brimley Johnson). Oxford University Press, London, 1919. See "To the River", p. 113.
2. Georg Philip Harsdörffer and Johann Klaj, *Pegnesisches Schaefergedicht.* Wolfgang Endter, Nuremberg, 1644.
3. *Pegnesisches . . .*, p. 18.
4. Sigmund von Birken and Johann Klaj, *Fortsetzung Der Pegnitz-Schäferey,* Wolfgang Endter, Nuremberg, 1645.
5. *Fortsetzung . . .*, p. 33.
6. *Fortsetzung . . .*, p. 67.
7. *Fortsetzung . . .*, p. 103.
8. Ivo Braak, *Poetik in Stichworten,* Ferdinand Hirt, Kiel (1964), sixth edition, 1980, p. 38.
9. Ovid, *Metamorphoses,* with an English translation by Frank Justus Miller. 2 vols., Harvard University Press and William Heineman, Cambridge & London (1916); third edition, 1977, vol. 1, p. 106f, Book 1, l.699ff.
10. *Fortsetzung . . .*, p. 57.
11. *Fortsetzung . . .*, p. 63f.
12. Johann Helwig, *Die Nymphe Noris,* Jeremia Dümler, Nuremberg, 1650.
13. Georg Philip Harsdörffer, *Frauenzimmer Gesprechspiele.* Vol. 5, Wolfgang Endter, Nuremberg, 1645, p. 23.
14. *Die Nymphe Noris,* p. 82.
15. *Die Nymphe Noris,* p. 82.
16. *Die Nymphe Noris,* p. 82f.
17. *Die Nymphe Noris,* p. 83.
18. See for example Addison's attack on figured verse in *The Spectator,* No. 58, 7 May 1711.
19. The term is that of Jochen Gerz, *Die Schwierigkeit des Zentaurs beim vom Pferd steigen,* Munich, 1976. See Christina Weiss, *Sehtexte.* Verlag für moderne Kunst, Zirndorf and Nuremberg, 1984, p. 155ff.
20. *Die Nymphe Noris,* p. 83.