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2003

## Distaffs and Spindles: Sexual Misbehavior in Sebald Beham's Spinning Bee

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## Distaffs and Spindles

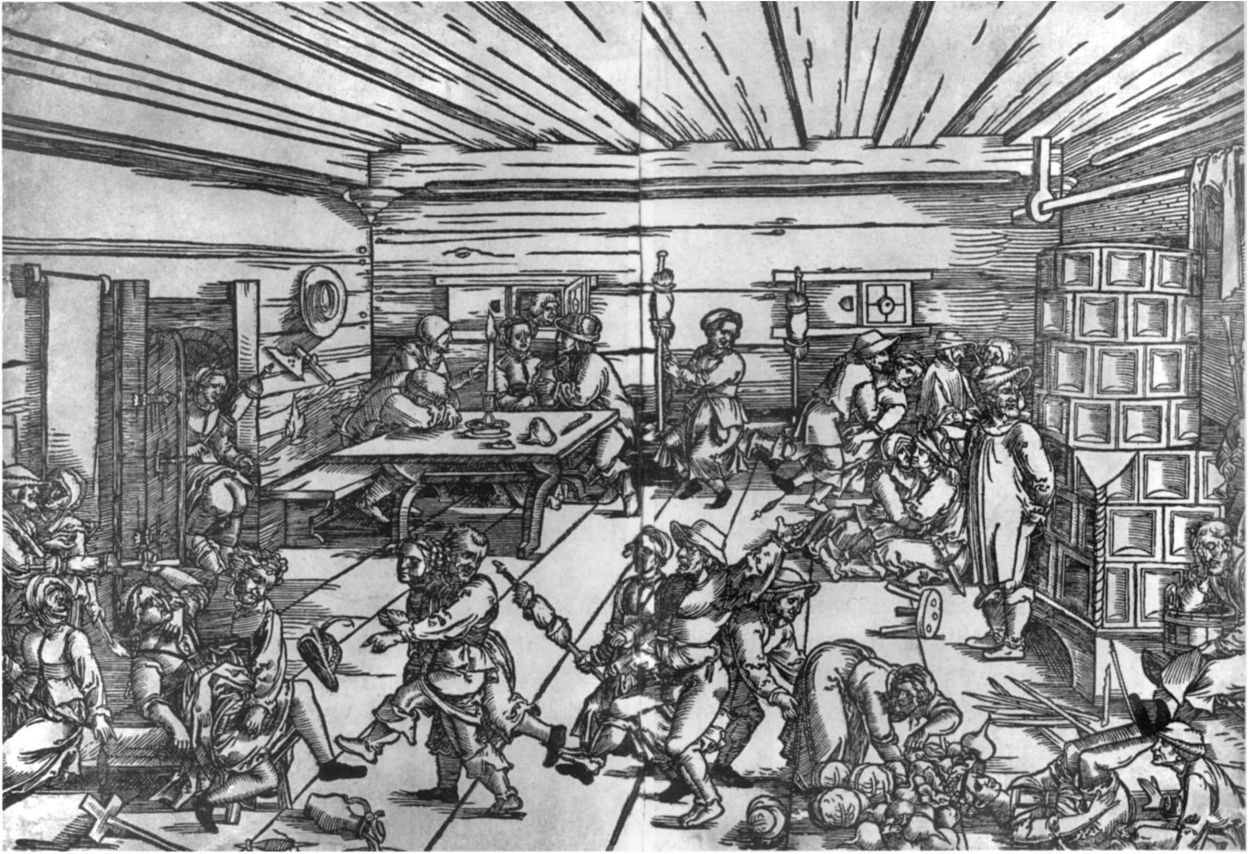
### Sexual Misbehavior in Sebald Beham's *Spinning Bee*

Alison G. Stewart

Sebald Beham from Nuremberg designed his *Spinning Bee* woodcut around 1524 (Figure 1) as a medium-sized work of approximately 1 ft by 1.5 ft, printed on two sheets of paper glued side by side. A large number of individuals are included and most are women, significantly so because spinning bees served as meeting places for rural girls and women where they would spin and amuse themselves during the fall and winter evenings.<sup>1</sup> Beham's print is the first surviving example of a spinning bee in visual art and one of the first substantive examples of the theme in any form. The print thus began a tradition in the visual arts and followed one in literature that continued through the eighteenth century with German poems and prints, including an engraved copy of Beham's *Spinning Bee* with text.<sup>2</sup>

In Beham's print only two of the women spin: the woman whose distaff stands out prominently at center, and an older woman at lower left, who is probably married, judging from her matron's bonnet. Each of these women holds yarn she has spun from the raw wool or flax on a long distaff. The older woman also holds a spindle, a long bobbin-like weight that helps turn the distaff in its base. The remaining women and men eat and drink, dance, and are engaged in a variety of sexual antics in which the men embrace or lie on the women (at upper right), look under their skirts (at lower right), and reach aggressively under their clothing (lower left). Sebald Beham seems to offer the viewer a tantalizingly exaggerated picture of the kind of Early Modern German spinning bee Hans Medick broadly describes as a "youth-sexual culture" showing "rural customs of courtship."<sup>3</sup>

The design of Sebald's *Spinning Bee* is known today only through the work of a mediocre woodcutter or a mediocre copyist. Nevertheless, the woodcut goes back, I believe, to a design by Sebald Beham (1500-50), not to his younger brother Barthel, as recorded in recent literature.<sup>4</sup> The date of the print marks the eve of Nuremberg's adoption of Martin Luther's new religion and precedes



**Figure 1.** Sebald Beham, *Spinning Bee*, woodcut, ca. 1524, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford.

by a few years the death of Albrecht Dürer, Nuremberg's most famous artist and Sebald Beham's teacher. Despite the ostensible reasons for this gathering of women—spinning and sociability—Beham depicts a large room teeming with women and men that emphasizes a variety of sexually-charged activities in what appears to be a rural setting.

My purpose in this essay is to examine the sexualized view of women Beham presents in this print. Most of the women are depicted as sexually involved and, I argue, therefore misbehaving, while only two women attend to their distaffs and are thereby shown to be virtuous. I intend to discuss these contradictory attitudes about women, as virtuous and sexual, by placing them within the broader context of attitudes in Nuremberg. The results show that Beham's microscopic view of one group of Nuremberg women telescopes into more general attitudes toward women during Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe.<sup>5</sup>

In 1524, the year Beham's *Spinning Bee* design was printed, actual spinning bees appear to have been thriving in Nuremberg, although first-hand reports are lacking. The existing evidence for spinning bees in Nuremberg comes from two sources: first, Nuremberg's popular literature such as carnival plays, including several penned by Nuremberg's shoemaker-poet, Hans Sachs, and second, legislation handed down by the town council, which comprised men exclusively from Nuremberg's established patrician families. These sources will be introduced and evaluated in our discussion of meaning in the *Spinning Bee*. A third source also will be studied, namely German words and expressions visualized as everyday objects: what might be called "undisguised symbolism."

It is important to keep in mind that most of the evidence and information about spinning bees in Nuremberg comes from the very small group of men comprising Nuremberg's town council, discussed in Hults's essay (ch. 5) in this volume. That body had its own traditional view of Nuremberg's citizens and how they should behave. It also had its own agenda for changing popular culture and festival-like behavior, such as spinning bees, under the influence of the Lutheran Reformation. The council included no members who represented craftspeople, the middle or the lower classes (as in Augsburg and Basel), or women. Thus the authoritative, paternalistic attitudes of the town fathers should be kept in mind when evaluating the laws they penned. At the same time, popular literature, like carnival plays, offers insights into entertainment aimed at a broad sector of Nuremberg's society and thus reveals more popular attitudes and ideas. Both legislation and carnival plays address spinning bees and emphasize extensive sexual behavior. It will be my task to evaluate their conflicting views of sexuality in relation to the one Beham depicts.

In Nuremberg, an imperial city answerable only to the emperor, spinning bees served as meeting places for rural girls and women during the fall and winter evenings.<sup>6</sup> Spinning bees were widely called *Spinnstuben* and *Rockenstuben* in German, but *Lichtstuben* in Nuremberg's Franconian dialect. Despite their ostensibly female nature, spinning bees were also visited by men. Indeed, in the sixteenth century, spinning bees throughout Germany were officially viewed as centers for scandalous socializing and were forbidden under penalty,<sup>7</sup> although forbidding spinning bees was not the same as abolishing them, as we will see.

In the absence of first-hand accounts, the precise nature of the amusements and socializing present at Nuremberg's spinning bees must be deduced from popular literature and from legislation, including sources outside Nuremberg. Talking, singing, eating, drinking, and dancing are considered standard at spinning bees, which took place at inns and at various houses, the latter after the middle of the sixteenth century. Larger villages often sustained several spinning bees, which segregated participants by location, age, social class, or marital status.<sup>8</sup>

## Literary Parallels

The first written references to spinning bees date to the thirteenth century and increased considerably in number during the following centuries. The subject became increasingly addressed in literature and ordinances attempting to regulate behavior at spinning bees.<sup>9</sup> In the fifteenth century, a lone surviving German carnival play refers to a spinning bee, and it includes only a dozen lines. These lines begin the spinning bee *topos* centered on socializing sexuality, and raucous behavior.<sup>10</sup> Undoubtedly, the sexual behavior characterized at spinning bees has much to do with the phallic shape of the primary spinning implements used at the time—distaff and spindle. Just as round forms encouraged association with the womb and the female, the word “spindle” stood for the penis in Late Medieval English, French, and German. For example, in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* (ca. 1599) (1.4.108-10), Sir Andrew Aguecheek looks for a bride. Sir Toby Belch remarks directly that the former’s hair “hangs like flax on a distaff; and I hope to see a housewife take thee between her legs and spin it off.”<sup>11</sup> Although spinning was a female activity, spinning tools assumed unquestionably male shapes. This gender-jumping seems to have appealed to contemporaries.

A similarly sexual and comic situation centered on spinning as seen in Beham’s print is presented in the anonymous tale called the *Gospel of Distaffs* (*Les Evangiles des Quenouilles*), written in French during the second half of the fifteenth century. In the *Gospel*, six women spinners called “doctresses” gather together in a home to spin. Although not called a spinning bee as such the gathering certainly amounted to one. The *Gospel* stresses women’s lascivious and sexual nature and the sexual potential of spinning tools, while employing parody, irony, and antifeminism.<sup>12</sup> It was translated into various languages in the early sixteenth century and into German during the second quarter of that century. The *Gospel* offers important literary parallels to Beham’s *Spinning Bee* print, albeit one within the larger context of Europe. The two fifteenth-century written works, the carnival play and the *Gospel*, appear to have established the spinning bee *topos* before 1500 in Europe and Nuremberg as a theme stressing sexuality in general and women’s sexuality in particular, sexually suggestive banter, and the erotic potential of spinning tools like distaff and spindle.

In Nuremberg several works with the spinning bee subject were penned in Beham’s home town by Hans Sachs, poet, shoemaker, and Beham’s senior by a few years. Sachs’s works drew on the spinning bee *topos* established earlier in the carnival plays and the *Gospel of Distaffs*. His spinning bee writings include a carnival play from 1536, and humorous poems from 1546 and 1553. Sachs stresses amusements over spinning, and he catalogues what may well have been literary stereotypes or actual practices in Nuremberg spinning bees—talking, eating, drinking, dancing, playing bagpipes, cutting turnips, and horseplay



including sexual amusements. By emphasizing these diversions, sexual play receives more attention than spinning, as it does in Beham's print. Indeed, Sachs's humorous poem from 1553, called *The Spinning Bee* (*Die rockenstüeben*), corresponds closest in tone and content to Beham's print from around 1524.<sup>13</sup> Such correspondences include bagpipe playing, women spinning and hollowing out turnips, a man looking up maidens' skirts, and a peasant maiden sitting with her naked backside next to the stove. She, in turn, cuffs a young peasant man in the back when he tries to grab her. But historical reality also lies behind some of these practices. Turnip cutting is documented in a Franconian spinning bee of 1590 at Eichstätt, 40 miles southwest of Nuremberg, along with the carnival plays and poems by Sachs, mentioned above.<sup>14</sup> Although turnips were probably cut and eaten at spinning bees, turnips probably also functioned on a symbolic level as well.

In Sachs's poem from 1553 the voyeuristic man looking up a maiden's skirts can be likened in Beham's print to the man at lower right who looks up the bloomers of a woman with a coronet of braids. She lies on the floor, pressing together her lifted legs. Likewise, the woman warming herself before the stove in Sachs's poem parallels Beham's bearded man who stands before a tiled stove, his naked backside freed of shirt and stockings. In addition, Sachs's peasant maiden, who defends herself from one man's physical advances, repeats the activities of Beham's young woman with loose braids at lower left, who readies her distaff to fend off the aggressive hands of the man groping her bodice and skirts.

Beham's *Spinning Bee* and Sachs's poem 30 years later agree in several important ways. All three texts by Sachs correspond to Beham's printed image in their emphasis on amusement and sexuality, demotion of spinning, and use of a satirical tone based on exaggeration and excess. These similarities suggest that Beham and Sachs drew on a similar body of ideas or cultural values, such as those seen in earlier carnival plays and the *Gospel of Distaffs*, thereby continuing the spinning bee *topos*. Alternatively, these similarities suggest that Beham drew on a lost text by Sachs, although no existing evidence speaks for such a work. Most convincing is the possibility that Beham turned to the earlier spinning bee *topos* in literature and transformed it into a full-blown visual work independent of text, and that Hans Sachs's text was inspired by Beham's printed image. Beham's print becomes, as a result, more influential for the continuation of the spinning bee theme than has been acknowledged to date. Judging from the existing evidence, Beham's *Spinning Bee* shows an unprecedented visual inventiveness for the spinning bee theme by offering a visual interpretation that dramatically increases the number of participants, both male and female, as well as the kinds of sexual behavior included and the numbers of spinning tools used for sexual symbolism. Beham thereby draws on the general features of the spinning bee literary *topos* while increasing their numbers and merging them with Nuremberg's legislative interests, combining them into

visual form for the first time. Beham's encyclopedic and hyperbolic approach may be unprecedented for the theme but it fits well within sixteenth-century German forms of discourse.<sup>15</sup> Beham thereby becomes the inventor of the spinning bee theme in visual form.

Sachs's other writings on spinning bees also merit discussion. In his earliest work, from 1536, the *Carnival Play with Five People Called the Spinning Bee* (*Fasznacht spiel mit 5 Personen, Die Rockenstuben genandt*), Sachs shares with Beham a humorous, moralizing interest in several amusements and a raucous, satirical tone.<sup>16</sup> The main characters are male and female peasants, both unnamed, and younger servants Küntzl and Gredt. The play opens with Gredt declaring that in that day's spinning bee servants and grooms will play numerous games with women. The mayor, in turn, plays his bagpipe as they sing and dance until the rooster crows at dawn. Gredt rebuffs Küntzl's advances and he insults her, saying she looks like an ape and is neither rich nor pretty.<sup>17</sup> The unnamed peasant woman reminds Gredt that they should hollow out turnips, but when the older woman sees her husband, who has drunk too much wine and spent too much money on it, she swears profusely, "Oh shit, oh crap, here comes my husband" ("Bosz mist, bosz dreck, dort kumpt mein man"), and she promptly tells him to go home. This peasant couple come to blows, fighting with fist and distaff. A gypsy informs Gredt that she gossips too much and is pregnant.<sup>18</sup>

Like Sachs, Beham includes bagpipes beside the stove at far right, dancing at bottom, and turnips on table and floor at upper left and lower right. Beham includes, at lower left, distaff as weapon, like Sachs in his later poem. Such a visual scuffle may have been responsible for the spilled liquid Beham places on the floor, which equates with the wine Sachs mentions. In Sachs's humorous poem dating one decade later, *The Gossipy Spinning Bee* (*Die geschwezig rockenstüeben*) from 1546 reissued in 1557, he stresses physical contact between man and woman once again, as Beham does.<sup>19</sup> The author describes himself hiding behind the stove, a position recalling Beham's bagpipe player. Once again, Sachs underscores dancing, music-making, drinking, physical aggressiveness, and turnip cutting, as in his carnival play. Drunken and violent behavior are also emphasized with barely a mention of spinning. Beham similarly points to drunkenness by including drinking vessels such as covered tankards, while violence he denotes by aggressive sexual advances toward the women.

### **The Lutheran Reformation in Nuremberg**

Beham's position at the beginning of the pictorial tradition of spinning bees raises the question of why Beham designed his print in 1524. What happened at that time that caused Beham's *Spinning Bee* to be printed? The answer lies in the introduction of the Lutheran Reformation in Nuremberg and that city's leg-

isolation addressing spinning bees. In March 1525 Nuremberg officially became Lutheran after phasing in aspects of Luther's new religion over several years. Dürer's *Last Supper* woodcut (B. 7.53) published in 1523 visually testifies to the gradual acceptance in Nuremberg of the Lutheran idea that chalice and wine should be offered to the lay community during Communion, in addition to the traditional wafer. The debate goes back to Luther's tract of 1522 in which he argues for the congregational acceptance of both wine and wafer. Also testifying to Luther's growing importance in Nuremberg is the inclusion of 40 works by Luther in Hans Sachs's library in 1522.<sup>20</sup> Lutheran ideas first influenced Nuremberg's educated men like Sachs, and were gradually introduced to most of the population over the next few years by new appointments to church offices. The first evangelically inspired liturgical changes were put into place between 1520 and 1524.

By the time Beham's *Spinning Bee* was published in 1524, the only citizens within Nuremberg's town walls who seriously resisted Luther's new religion were members of the monasteries and convents.<sup>21</sup> By June of that year, the first evangelical church ordinance was prepared with the result that the council gained total control over religious as well as secular life.<sup>22</sup> Between 1525 and 1533 the council re-ordered Nuremberg's church affairs along evangelical lines, taking into consideration the interests of the community as passed on by the town's theologians.<sup>23</sup> Here it needs to be stressed that all Lutheran changes to the town's religious and secular life were carried out by the council whose members were responsible for the laws intended to institute the new Lutheran ways. Once again, these changes extended beyond religious life to the secular sphere, including spinning bees.

Under the influence of Nuremberg's new Lutheran sympathies, the council began re-evaluating religious festivals and celebrations that were especially popular with common folk in Nuremberg's large, sprawling countryside. In 1523 and 1524, for example, the elaborate ceremonies of Lent were simplified because of "improper carryings-on which were prevalent" and "more conducive to vexation and frivolity than to piety," to use the words of the city government.<sup>24</sup> One year later, in June 1525, the council began its review of the most popular peasant festival of the time, Kermis, the celebration of a church's anniversary or its saint's day, within the context of re-evaluating religious holidays. By late summer 1525, the council decided to abolish Kermis except for its fair. The council also suspended Nuremberg's carnival procession, the Schembart Lauf or Run in that year.<sup>25</sup>

In late summer 1526, the council began its debate on spinning bees. In a decree from August 30, 1526, the council asked for suggestions on how to institute laws pertaining to nightly spinning bees (*Rockenstuben*) in the countryside,<sup>26</sup> apparently because spinning bees in town posed no problem or had been curtailed. Within three months, the council issued an ordinance pertaining to spinning bees in which parents were charged with accepting the respon-



sibility for their children and for ensuring that they act “chastely, honorably, and moderately” as “Christian people” (*zuchtiglich erberlich vnnd bescheidennlich* and *Christlichen leutten*). The council emphasized its view that there had been an increase in “vice and frivolity” and “ungodly acts” (*laster vnd leichtfertigkeit* and *ungetlicher hanndlungen*) at spinning bees.<sup>27</sup> In 1528 and 1529 the council reiterated its concerns and elaborated its reasons for clamping down on spinning bees. Here we find an emphasis on the sexuality that pervades Beham’s *Spinning Bee*: seduction, pregnancy, promise of marriage, and violence outside spinning bees.

The council also stated that “more than once in such gatherings your daughters were talked into unseemly marriages behind their fathers’ backs, perhaps also violated, and brought totally to disgrace” ( ... *das mermalen in solchem zusammen geen/jre Döchter verführet/hindter den vättern zu vnzimlichen een überredt/auch etwo geschwecht vnd gar zuschanden bracht worden* ...).<sup>28</sup> Council members’ strict, paternalistic attitudes are revealed by their wording, which stresses the council’s authority, “fathers’ backs” (*hindter den vättern*), and the submission of women including “daughters” (*Döchter*). The council also mentions other excessive, unchristian actions, and the meeting afterwards outside spinning bees of young, single men who wound and kill each other. We need to stress here that spinning bees were probably less the issue at the time than the conservative, reforming spirit of Nuremberg’s new Lutheran council, which was concerned with cleansing the religious and secular culture of the people below them, thus most of Nuremberg’s urban and rural population.

The council’s course of action for spinning bees in Nuremberg’s countryside called for drastically modifying spinning bees by keeping out all men, no matter the age, and all women and men from other villages. Fines of ten old pounds were levied for all men or for women visiting from another village, and the fine was doubled for the innkeeper sponsoring the spinning bee. The fine of ten old pounds was roughly equivalent to the minimum cost of a new coat, to two or so pairs of shoes depending on quality and style, or to ten days of wages for a journeyman carpenter, making such a fine quite substantial for the peasants affected.<sup>29</sup> In a letter dated 23 November 1528, the Office of Territorial Administration asked all ministers of Nuremberg’s rural parish churches to announce publicly and post the printed ordinance, which was included as an enclosure.<sup>30</sup> To keep the council’s task in perspective, Nuremberg’s countryside included 736 villages with a rural population of 40,000 peasants divided into 13 administrative districts, each governed by a territorial administrator.<sup>31</sup> As Hults notes in her essay (ch. 5) in this volume, there were 42 patrician families in Beham’s time from whom council members could be selected. Thus the council’s intentions of curtailing Nuremberg’s rural spinning bees were undoubtedly ambitious and had less to do with the realities of spinning bees in Nuremberg than with attitudes toward them and toward peasant culture. A compilation of printed laws dated 1529 may have codified the law from 1528,

which has not survived. The printed mandates are entitled *Mandates or Laws, to be Announced Yearly on the First or Other Sunday in Lent in the Countryside, 1529* (*Mandata oder Gesetze, Jerlich am Ersten oder Andern Suntag inn der Vasten, auff dem Lande zuuerkünden. Anno 1529*).<sup>32</sup>

### The Reform of Popular Culture

The council's attempts at reforming various aspects of popular culture, including what its members viewed as the negative and sinful sides of celebrating, appear to have begun about 1526. Although legislation of a reforming nature in Nuremberg goes back to the thirteenth century, it was not until 1526, one year after Nuremberg officially became Lutheran, that efforts at social reform by the secular authorities appear to have increased. This change is indicated by a dramatic rise in the number of extant printed laws, especially mandates and police ordinances issued as printed broadsheets and pamphlets.<sup>33</sup> Similar attempts at reforming popular culture go back to Basel and Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* from 1494, which spoke against temptations on feast days. Somewhat later, the reform movement of the early sixteenth century was taken up by humanists, members of the clergy, and secular authorities redressing abuses in both religious and secular practices. They attacked, in fact, nearly all aspects of secular and religious behavior. Peter Burke called this effort "the reform of popular culture" and viewed it as a systematic attempt by the educated minority to change the basic values and attitudes of the rest, or majority, of the population.<sup>34</sup>

Although we are looking here at the attempts by one small group to effect change in another much larger group, it would be a mistake to view those two groups as totally separate or to assume that influences passed only from the educated to the uneducated. Following the lead of cultural anthropologists and literary theorists, the historian Lee Palmer Wandel, among others, argued in 1995 that elite and popular cultures cannot be easily separated into two discrete entities. She returns agency to those people constituting popular culture and the majority by calling them "ordinary" people, instead of "the common folk" or "peasants," or even "the masses," and by making their role in the Reformation more dynamic than earlier recognized.<sup>35</sup> But whatever we might call those forming the majority of the population in sixteenth-century Germany, the authorities were trying to change their behavior.

Nuremberg's attempts at cleansing popular culture, including the spinning bee and Kermis, continued the earlier pre-evangelical reform movement and thus the Nuremberg Reformation constitutes a continuation of earlier historical directions but under new Lutheran leadership. Lyndal Roper calls the broad reform movement in nearby Lutheran Augsburg "evangelical urban moralism," noting that council's pessimistic view of human nature and all relation-

ships, which the council considered in terms of their own authority and submission of their subjects to it. Convincing parallels can be made between Augsburg and Nuremberg, both south German imperial cities that became Lutheran early. As Roper explains for Augsburg, "evangelicals made the language of moralism their own," with a resulting "ambitious style of exclusive claims to authority."<sup>36</sup>

This exclusive authority also appears to be the case for Nuremberg, where we have seen the town council acted as the sole decision-making, paternalistic body of "fathers" responsible for the town's "daughters" in rural spinning bees. The comparison between Nuremberg and Augsburg similarly extends to legislation and discipline. Augsburg's council attempted to create what Roper calls the "kingdom of God" through discipline articulated in the form of ordinances and statutes she calls Discipline Ordinances.<sup>37</sup> Such ordinances were issued in Nuremberg by its town council. As we have seen, the broad attempts at social change under evangelical rulers, begun under Catholic German rulers in the late fifteenth century and continued into the new Lutheran and Protestant areas during the sixteenth, were articulated through a massive quantity of legislation. At Nuremberg that legislation increased dramatically after the official acceptance of the Lutheran religion, and points to discipline and the reform of popular culture, including spinning bees and Kermis.

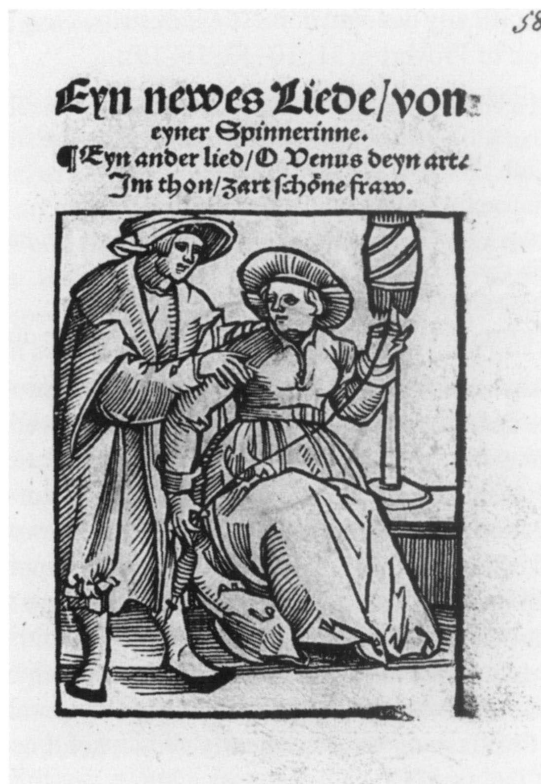
Here, secular and religious control intertwine, within the context of social reform and social disciplining, a concept first developed by Norbert Elias in 1939. Elias's now familiar argument underscores that authorities imposed stricter requirements for order and civilized behavior on individual citizens at the time the Early Modern state emerged in the sixteenth century.<sup>38</sup> This concept of social disciplining applies to authorities controlling and prescribing the behavior of most people through official regulations, with the implication that those in control need only ask and those they controlled would obey, eventually.<sup>39</sup> The council's goal at Nuremberg of controlling 40,000 residents in the countryside with an additional 40,000 within the city walls was unquestionably ambitious.<sup>40</sup>

Nuremberg's spinning bee legislation both prescribes and proscribes behavior at spinning bees in terms centered on the interests of the male patrician council members who penned that legislation. The council prescribed spinning, chaste and Christian behavior and proscribed seduction, pregnancy, and the marriage promise. Beham similarly prescribes spinning and chaste behavior, indicated by only two women attending to their distaffs, while presenting but not necessarily proscribing sexual misbehavior indicated throughout. Beham's *Spinning Bee* print from around 1524 thus can be seen within the body of ideas on social disciplining and the civilizing process. The council accordingly viewed women in its rural spinning bees as disorderly and threatening a social order that required women to be chaste and subordinate to men in general and patrician men constituting the council in particular. Female popular culture was clearly understood as in need of control. Elias's ideas thus extend here to Nuremberg's popular culture and to the gendered popular culture of the spinning bee.

### Spinning's Meanings and Associations

We now come to the third source for the *Spinning Bee*, visualizations of proverbial expressions. To underscore the sexual connotations of his image, Beham made visible concepts connected to spinning. Of primary importance is the word "spinning" (*spinnen*) which, since the fifteenth century, contained veiled allusions to love and sexual intercourse in colloquial German, undoubtedly relating to the shape of the spindle as erotic male metaphor. Popular carnival plays in particular used "spinning" as a metaphor for the sex act, while moralist and preacher Geiler von Kaisersberg in 1510 expressed the idea of being besotted by love with a spinning metaphor: "there is work on the distaff" (*es hat werk an der gunkel*).<sup>41</sup>

Spinning, love, and sex are similarly associated in the anonymous *New Song about a Woman Spinning* (*Eyn neues Liede/von eyner Spinnerinne*), a short pamphlet of six pages published about 1530 in Nuremberg. The title page (Figure 2) shows a seated young woman attending to distaff and spindle while her male companion converses with her and touches her shoulder. The text informs us



**Figure 2.** Anonymous, *A New Song about a Woman Spinning*, title page woodcut, ca. 1530, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz – Abt. Historische Drücke.

that he mourns the loss of his love's "small red mouth" (*mündleyn rot*). Having spent many a night with her, she no longer wants to spin with him.<sup>42</sup>

Spinning and sexual appetite are even more directly equated in an anonymous Italian engraving from the late fifteenth century. There a spinning woman points her spindle down toward her lap and a round basket filled with spindles. At the same time, a musician blows his phallic-shaped bagpipe adorned at top with phallus, as a man with exposed genitals carves spoons, undoubtedly indicating appetite especially sexual appetite.<sup>43</sup> The equation of spinning with sex and copulation, seen in these German and Italian examples, remained a familiar *topos* into the seventeenth century in Dutch emblems by Jacob Cats and others.<sup>44</sup>

While spinning could indicate the sex act, it simultaneously and more importantly epitomized the virtuous woman, incongruous as these oppositions may seem. The long tradition equating female virtue and industry throughout Western culture requires an important detour in our discussion since virtue, more than sex, was the historically dominant association of spinning. Spinning was considered a female occupation since the Bible when Adam delved and Eve spun, and since the Fate Lachesis created the thread of life through spinning. Spinning specifically denoted domestic industriousness and female virtue in the Bible's Book of Proverbs (31: 10--13, 18-19):

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.  
The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no  
need of spoil.  
She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.  
She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands, ...  
She perceiveth that her merchandise *is* good:  
her candle goeth not out by night.  
She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.<sup>45</sup>

Such age-old associations of spinning with virtue and women's work also can be seen in the culture of the ancient Greeks who viewed the distaff, their attribute for spinning, as a symbol of the highest female virtue, industriousness, as exemplified by the faithful Penelope.<sup>46</sup> Ancient Roman women from all social classes included spinning and weaving in their housework, and Medieval women followed this tradition. We do know that Emperor Charlemagne ordered his daughter to learn spinning to avoid idleness and lethargy, and that Francesco da Barberini recommended spinning to avoid boredom in his *Regimen and Dress of Women* in the early fourteenth century.<sup>47</sup> By the late Middle Ages, spinning was so integrally bound to womanly virtue that the Virgin Mary and St Elizabeth were frequently shown holding a distaff in paintings and prints of the time.<sup>48</sup>

Just as chastity for women was seen as a Medieval virtue, unchastity or lust was viewed as the typical Medieval vice for women, as seen in religious art.<sup>49</sup> By the sixteenth century, spinning became such a customary symbol of the virtu-

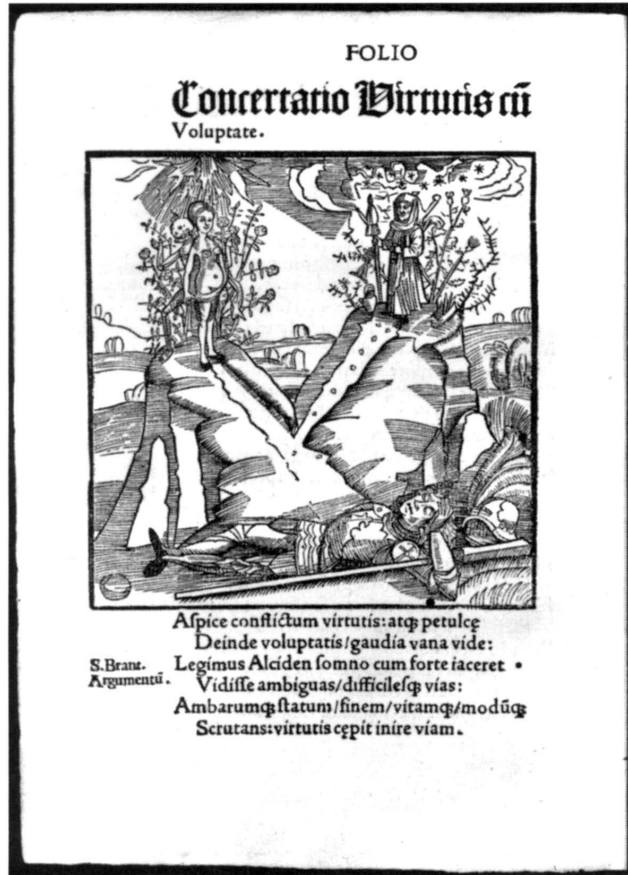




**Figure 3.** Pieter Pietersz., *Pair of Lovers*, painting on panel, third quarter sixteenth century, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

ous housewife that Netherlandish women were portrayed in paintings with spinning wheels, used to spin wool into yarn, as distaffs did. Although some of these paintings are portraits—like Martin van Heemskerck's *Anna Codde at a Spinning Wheel* and Jan van Scorel's *Agatha van Schoonhoven*, both dating a few years after Beham's *Spinning Bee*—the sitters sometimes seem more generally than specifically rendered. Pieter Pietersz.'s *Pair of Lovers* (Figure 3) is a good case in point.<sup>50</sup> It continues the general awareness of the connotations of distaff and domesticity seen in the portraits using spinning wheels, but adds an erotic twist. Dating to the third quarter of the sixteenth century, Pietersz.'s work shows a woman pointing a spindle suggestively at her lap, while her male partner holds an open tankard, reminiscent of the open tankard spilling its contents in Beham's woodcut. Gender-jumping may be once again employed here, as it was by Beham.

The link between female virtue and spinning appears, therefore, to have been solidly ingrained in Late Medieval and Early Modern notions of gender by the time Beham designed his *Spinning Bee* print. Spinning was a feminine and domestic art, one that Rozsika Parker calls a nearly defining "female sexual characteristic" and "a signifier of sexual difference."<sup>51</sup> The notion that spinning women were virtuous women because they were industrious was so firmly embedded in Western notions of gender, a notion that Nuremberg's town council undoubtedly supported, that putting aside or neglecting the distaff for socializ-



**Figure 4.** Anonymous German, *Hercules at the Crossroads*, woodcut, 1497, from Jacob Locher's Latin *Ship of Fools*, Basel, 1 Aug 1497, fol. 130v. Universitätsbibliothek, Basel.

ing of any kind, let alone sex, constituted laziness and was understood to be a harsh criticism of the female sex.

Such ideas were visualized in art roughly contemporary with Beham, such as the anonymous woodcut from Basel of 1497 Showing *Hercules at the Crossroads* (Figure 4) from Jacob Locher's Latin *Ship of Fools*, and Peter Vischer's drawing, *Allegory of Virtue and Sensual Pleasure* (Figure 5), dating ca. 1516.<sup>52</sup> In the woodcut from Basel, Hercules must choose between two paths, one with a nude woman and a skeleton denoting death, and the other with a clothed matron holding distaff. Beham's teacher, Albrecht Dürer, engraved *Hercules at the Crossroads* around 1498 (B. 7.73) with similar ideas, although his nude woman stands beside a satyr and is blocked by Hercules from being clubbed by a clothed woman (Virtue?) who holds no distaff equating virtue and domesticity, as Vischer's woman does. Vischer was a younger contemporary of Dürer from Nuremberg, and he depicts Virtue as a woman alone clutching distaff while climbing up a rocky path. Below, a nude Woman exemplifying sensual plea-



**Figure 5.** Peter Vischer the Younger, *Virtue and Sensual Pleasure*, drawing, ca. 1516, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz.

sure stands next to a Mouth of Hell, while men play musical instruments, sing, and drink from vessels placed on a fountain. The message here is clear: the virtuous path for women is lonely and hard, but ends in heaven; the lascivious path for women is sociable and pleasurable, but leads to hell.<sup>53</sup>

Neglecting one's distaff was tantamount to laziness, an idea visualized earlier in an anonymous woodcut from Nuremberg's region, Franconia, and dating ca. 1490 (Figure 6). The title *Laziness* derives from its Latin inscription, "acedia." The seated woman holds distaff in one hand and falls asleep on the other. Work and rest are diametrically opposed, just as neglecting spinning amounts to laziness; these ideas also are seen in engravings from the mid-sixteenth century depicting proverbs illustrating various forms of laziness.<sup>54</sup>

Returning to the sexual associations of spindle and spinning, Beham appears to have used the spindle for the male member, thus in a gender-specific manner. In the sixteenth century, the German verb "to stick" (*stecken*) meant sexual intercourse, and was used by Luther, among others.<sup>55</sup> Beham positioned



**Figure 6.** Anonymous Franconian, *Acedia*, woodcut, ca. 1490. Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, vol. 2, fig. 210. © 1955 Princeton University Press. Reprinted by permission of PUP.

one spindle to “stick” into a shoe of the young woman at upper right whom the fully clothed man embraces, lies on top of, and appears about to rape. For the sixteenth-century viewer, the visual pairing of man on woman and spindle into shoe undoubtedly indicated copulation.<sup>56</sup>

Finally, Beham underscores the sexual and chaotic nature of the spinning bee activities by including actions and objects unrelated to spinning. The turnips on table and floor, at upper left and lower right, allude to the generally chaotic state of affairs in the spinning bee.<sup>57</sup> Specifically, the German expression “topsy-turvy like cabbages and turnips (*Durcheinander wie Kraut und Rüben*)” figuratively signified chaos and confusion,<sup>58</sup> and thus the less than orderly behavior shown in Beham’s spinning bee print. Possibly the pointed, somewhat phallic shape of the turnips and the round, womb-like cabbage underscored male and female on one more level in Beham’s *Spinning Bee*. To be sure, Beham places the cabbages before the woman bending over, visually likening cabbages to buttocks as if to show that the man behind her seeks to expose them by attempting to lift her skirt. Beham also indicates the consummation of male and female sexual play through everyday vessels. He suggests sexual union, at lower left, by a man forcing himself onto a young woman with braids who defends herself with distaff. Similarly, the diagonal position of the woman at upper right suggests the sex act, if not rape. At lower left, the young woman’s distaff holder and spindle have fallen to the ground during her scuffle with her groping partner, but the liquid contents of the tankard, spilled on the floor, form a puddle before and between her legs, indicating the consummation of the man’s advances.



Beham's general approach of what may appear to the modern audience to be exaggeration, even overkill, seems to be similar to what Joy Wiltenburg calls "comic violence" common in contemporary German literature presented on the street. Such violence served both to enforce sexual hierarchy and to challenge it, should the men representing that hierarchy prove unworthy. Comic violence punishes both women as sexual offenders and men for what she calls "faults ranging from sexual disorderliness to pusillanimity."<sup>59</sup> In his *Spinning Bee* Beham shows women as sexual beings and sexual offenders because they are diverted from their spinning and become engaged in sexual activity, no matter how unwillingly. The women are shown punishing men for unwanted advances by ineffectively attempting to stop them with their distaffs; thus Beham shows women attempting to punish men for their sexual aggressiveness but with little success.

Beham's approach appears to be similar to the comic violence of contemporary popular literature, showing that women, as well as men, are lustful and therefore sexual offenders.<sup>60</sup> But for a woman to be viewed as a sexual offender in the sixteenth century was undoubtedly more heinous than for a man because women were expected to be chaste, this despite the widespread belief in the sixteenth century that unmarried women's sex drive was stronger than men's.<sup>61</sup> Beham shows us lazy, lustful women, as well as lazy, lustful men, for both men and women were considered lustful in the Renaissance, according to Margaret King.<sup>62</sup> Hans Burgkmair similarly indicated Lust in his woodcut from 1510.<sup>63</sup> Contemporaries generally viewed laziness and lust as far more serious for women than for men because women were held to the higher virtue of industry, which included spinning.

### Housewife and Home

Why was Beham so seemingly critical of the women he shows in his *Spinning Bee*? The answer lies in the cultural context of the time in Nuremberg's Lutheran Reformation. We have already viewed the specific Lutheran critique of spinning bees within Nuremberg, to which we will return. More broadly speaking, Beham's print anticipates two central ideas of the Reformation relating specifically to women: first, that the housewife and thus the home became the only acceptable profession and place for women,<sup>64</sup> and second, that the father became the head of the household. In Beham's *Spinning Bee* women are criticized for their less than virtuous activity outside the home. Women's place increasingly became restricted to the home in Lutheran cities like Nuremberg and Augsburg, as nunneries and brothels were eliminated. In Beham's *Spinning Bee* women are shown outside their homes and out of sexual control. Male authority—both as head of home and head of Nuremberg—was central to Lutheran attitudes including efforts at male control in Nuremberg legislation of the kind seen here where "fathers" attempted to control their "daughters."



Within the larger cultural context of Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe women's identity was at once increasingly linked with housewife and home, while women's home-based economic activities increasingly moved away from the home into the free market. This contradiction of stressing home, while work moved away from it, made it increasingly difficult for women to work for financial gain while maintaining their important role in organizing and caring for family and home, including workshops based in the home.<sup>65</sup> Such change resulted in a pull away from the hearth at the same time that Luther idealized the role of housewife, thereby making unacceptable other roles for women, like nun and prostitute. In essence, staying at home meant forfeiting economic power and advantage. Being a woman increasingly became synonymous with being a wife. These trends took place at the same general time that misogyny in literature attacked women and witchcraft persecutions killed tens of thousands of women.<sup>67</sup> Husbands governed; wives were subordinated to them within the paradigm of authority and submission.<sup>68</sup> Intriguingly, Beham places the face of a man looking through the window at upper left, possibly indicating such attempts at male control or oversight of the primarily female spinning bee.<sup>69</sup>

At a time when women's nature was debated by men who became more and more obsessed with women's sexuality and controlling unmarried women,<sup>70</sup> and church leaders and theologians told women to be "chaste, silent, and obedient,"<sup>71</sup> Beham's print calls women's chastity into question by showing those women embattled with distaffs and fending off sexual advances, thus turning the spinning bee, a woman's space, into a sexual free-for-all. How better to condemn women and the women's space of the spinning bee than to fill it with men and extensive sexual activity?

## Interpretations

Beham's print conflates such male-centered ideas on chastity with those of Nuremberg's council and those from popular literature in Nuremberg, where women seem to bear the brunt of the criticism and comic elements. These sources point to dominant, patriarchal values from all classes, as we have seen in the council's legislation and in Sachs's literary works. These sources also raise the question of whether women comprised part of the audience for Beham's print. In seventeenth-century street literature, the "triumphant shrew" character is believed to have been funny for both men and women,<sup>72</sup> but, as Joy Wiltenberg argues for seventeenth-century street literature, "shrew beating" was funny only to men. Could women in the sixteenth century have found the sexual violence in Beham's *Spinning Bee* enjoyable or humorous on any level, or might they have only condemned it? I would like to suggest that both enjoyment and revulsion were possible for women viewers in Beham's time, just

as they are today for women viewers. Women are not beaten in Beham's print, but they are physically forced into sexual acts. Undoubtedly some women held the shared patriarchal values of the sixteenth century and found Beham's *Spinning Bee* to be humorous in a comic vein, especially where the women use distaffs as weapons, as men flaunt their sexual prowess over the seemingly innocent maids.

Because women have been shown to understand and respond differently from men, because they identify with women who serve as the brunt of the story's aggression or humor, it is also possible that many women viewers might have been appalled at activity that included sexual coercion and violence, sensing at once their own physical vulnerability and the reality of their own or other women's everyday violation, especially within the home.<sup>73</sup> At the same time, Beham's *Spinning Bee* is not a photograph or a sixteenth-century version of one capturing women at a particular location, but rather a visual work that creatively draws on literary and other contemporary themes. Thus, whether the violence and sexuality were seen as literary type or as social problem, for some viewers it was worth a good laugh, at a time when acceptable roles and financial opportunities for women were actually shrinking in Germany.<sup>74</sup> In either case, Beham's print carried a vivid message no matter who the audience.

Beham's *Spinning Bee* indicates a chaotic, violent and oversexed world where female sexuality and virtue serve as the point of departure for male desire, aggression, and humor. Beham's woodcut needs to be understood within its cultural context at a time in Europe when women, as well as men, were viewed as lustful, although women then and since antiquity were seen as the more susceptible sex.<sup>75</sup> In the context of Nuremberg and the Lutheran Reformation, however, Beham's image acquired even greater poignancy, for it visualized what the authorities in both Nuremberg and Augsburg considered to be appropriate female behavior, "as chaste, modest, and silent," to use Roper's words.<sup>76</sup> At a time when Nuremberg's authorities desired to reform popular culture, Beham's print shows female popular culture in desperate need of control and reform. Beham's print offers a gendered, Lutheran view of spinning bees and popular culture and what the authorities thought of the fair sex. At a time when the Nuremberg authorities wished spinning bees to be Christian models of women working—enclosed indoors, even if not at home—Beham's print shows spinning women as easy to divert and possible to seduce. These were attitudes widespread in the sixteenth century and ones that undoubtedly received wide acknowledgment by some viewers of Beham's *Spinning Bee*. Some viewers (patricians or patrician "wannabees") may well have bought into the authorities' view that women and spinning bees needed reform both within Nuremberg and throughout Europe. Others, however, may have understood the print as humorous entertainment, albeit one centered on exaggeration of sex and violence, much in the manner of entertainment today on television and in films.

The crisis in gender relations bubbling at the time Beham's *Spinning Bee* was produced accounts for the negative perception of women shown in the print and the currency of re-evaluating women spinning at spinning bees. As we have seen, Beham's print is similar in several ways to popular literature like carnival plays. Broadly speaking, the carnival play included ideas and attitudes that appealed to a broad audience, in essence expressing the interests of popular culture or the majority of the population.<sup>77</sup> We might say the attitudes associated with popular culture complement those of official culture, the culture of the ruling group—Nuremberg's patrician council—and that the official culture overlaps but is not identical with the educated elite or the small minority of individuals who could read and write.<sup>78</sup> The elite included, for example, authors and humanists. Beham's *Spinning Bee* demonstrates that official and popular cultures are far from distinct and separate, and that they overlap in important ways.

We have seen that Beham's *Spinning Bee* print similarly offers a meeting ground for elite and ordinary concerns by visualizing a subject that draws on the wellsprings of popular culture at a time when popular culture was re-evaluated on a massive scale by Nuremberg's elites. Beham's paper image dips in and out of both these cultures, employs a subject situated in ordinary culture, and stresses beliefs taught to women of all social classes—the importance of female virtue despite woman's lustful nature.<sup>79</sup> Beham's print thus appears to have enjoyed an audience that crossed both class *and* gender boundaries at a time of transition within the lives of all men and women in Early Modern Germany.

## Notes

Portions of this article were first presented at the Historians of Netherlandish Art conference in Cleveland in 1989, and the CEMERS conference in Binghamton in 1992; I would like to thank the organizers and panel leaders for the opportunity to explore the connection between devotional imagery and the suicide of Lucretia. I would also like to thank Diane Wolfthal and Jane Carroll for their critical input and bibliographic suggestions.

1. Kück and Sohnrey, *Feste und Spiele*, 239, and Kamann, "Altnürnberger Gesindewesen," 155. On professional women spinners, see Wiesner, "Spinsters and Seamstresses."
2. In a mandate of 1529 (*Mandata oder Gesetze*, fol. Fi v-Fii v, section entitled "Rockenstuben nit zuhalten"), Nuremberg's town council imposed the following penalties for spinning bees: 10 old pounds for a man or woman from another village, and 20 old pounds for the innkeeper who allowed such a person to enter a spinning bee. On the value of old pounds, see n. 31, below, and my corresponding text. On later re-issues of this mandate, see the "Spinning Bee" chapter of my book, Stewart, *Before Bruegel*. For the spinning bee tradition in German art and literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Wendeler, "Zu Fischarts Bildergedichten," 340.
3. Medick, "Village spinning bees," 318.

4. Beham's *Spinning Bee* measures 14 in. × 20 in. (347 mm × 501 mm). Impressions of the *Spinning Bee* can be found in print collections at Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle; Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum; Oxford, the Ashmolean Museum; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale; and Vienna, the Albertina. I believe the designer of the *Spinning Bee* print was Sebald Beham, based on comparisons with his prints contemporary with the *Spinning Bee* ca. 1524. Barthel may not, in fact, have designed any woodcuts at all; see Röttinger, *Die Holzschnitte*. My attribution to Sebald returns the spinning bee woodcut to the earliest published attributions by Johann Passavant (1863) and Gustav Pauli (1901), the latter part of his reliable oeuvre catalogue on Sebald Beham. See Passavant, *Le peintre-graveur*, vol. 4, no. 196, and Pauli, *Sebald Beham*, no. 1244. I reject the attribution to Barthel Beham made by Röttinger, *Die Holzschnitte* (1921), no. 5, continued by Geisberg, *Einblatt-Holzschnitt* (1929), vol. 36, no. 1, Ho1.(2) (1954) 2.245, and Geisberg, *Single-Leaf Woodcut* (1974), vol. 1, no. 154.
5. "Sexual misbehaviour" is Roper's term. See her *Oedipus*, 153. Although my multilayered, multivalent approach may seem similar to Michel Foucault's strategies, and what he calls "discursive layers," it was developed independently. See Foucault's *Order of Things*, cited in Foucault, "What is an Author?," 299.
6. Kück and Sohnrey, *Feste*, 239; Kamann, "Altnürnberger Gesindewesen," 155.
7. For Saxon spinning bees, see Kück and Sohnrey, *Feste*, col. 48; for Nuremberg, Kamann, "Altnürnberger Gesindewesen," 155-57, and 247. For Bavaria, see Schmeller, *Bayerisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 2, col. 47.
8. German spinning bees remained vital until the mid-nineteenth century when their number decreased significantly under the impact of industrialization. Kamann, "Altnürnberger Gesindewesen," 155 and 157; Kück and Sohnrey, *Feste*, 241, 242, and 247f. Recently spinning bees experienced a revival, both in the popular consciousness and in practice. For the wagon called "Rockenstube" or "Spinning Bee" belonging to a local folk band at the Fürth Kermis outside Nuremberg in 1966, see *Nürnberger Nachrichten. Sonderbeilage*, 1/2 October 1966, 2. For a spinning bee in 1985 near Kassel, which revived spinning and socializing, see "Alte lachen," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, no. 40 (16/17 Feb 1985), 7.
9. Sohnrey and Schröder, *Der Spinntrupp*, 36.
10. Von Keller, *Fastnachtspiele*, 386-87, lines 27-37 from "Ein spil von der vasnacht."
11. On the spindle, see Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, vol. 10, pt 1, col. 2499, and Posner, "An Aspect of Watteau," 281, and 285, n. 14.
12. For the *Gospel of Distaff*, I am grateful to Brenda Hosington, McGill University, Montreal, for her presentation on 27 February 1996 to the Medieval-Renaissance faculty group, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and for her generosity in otherwise sharing her work on the *Gospel* with me. See also Jeay, *Les Evangiles*.
13. For Sachs's poem from 1553, see Goetze, *Sämtliche Fabeln*, vol. 1, 65-66.
14. Eisenbrand, *Ehehaftsordnungen* 31. Goetze, *Zwölf Fastnachtspiele*, vol. 1, 126, l. 54, and Goetze, *Sämtliche Fabeln*, vol. 1, 66, l. 28-30.
15. For sixteenth-century discourse, I am thinking in particular of the repetition and seeming redundancy of printed legislation issued in Nuremberg contemporary with Beham's *Spinning Bee*. See my forthcoming book, *Before Bruegel*.
16. For Sachs's carnival play from 1536, see Goetze, *Zwölf Fastnachtspiele*, vol. 1, 124-31, and Wendeler, "Zu Fischarts Bildergedichten," 340.
17. Goetze, *Zwölf Fastnachtspiele*, 125.
18. Goetze, *Zwölf Fastnachtspiele*, 129 and 130.

19. For Sachs's humorous poems of 1546 and 1557, see respectively Goetze, *Sämtliche Fabeln*, vol. 1, 256-63, and von Keller, *Hans Sachs*, 386-95.
20. On Dürer's *Last Supper*, see *Albrecht Dürer*, no. 208, and *Hans Sachs*, VIII. For Sachs's library, see Seebass, "Reformation," 23.
21. Seebass, "Reformation," 23.
22. See Pfeiffer, "Die Einführung," 120, for evangelical changes before Nuremberg officially became Lutheran.
23. Seebass, "Reformation," 29-30.
24. Seebass, "Reformation," 25.
25. The Schembart Lauf in Nuremberg was suspended from 1525 to 1538, and then banned for good after one disastrous presentation in 1538, which resulted in a major run-in with Nuremberg's most difficult and powerful preacher, Andreas Osiander. See Kinser, "Presentation and Representation," 19.
26. Staatsarchiv, Nuremberg, Ratsverlässe 734, fol. 10 [30 August 1526]: Ferrer zu ratschlagen, wie ufm land zutrinkens, gotschwerns, kinds schenkens, kindbethof, waisait rockenstuben halb und der gleichen ordnung und handthabung zu machen, was auch für ampt leut dar zu zu prauchen sein.
27. Staatsarchiv, Nuremberg, Ratsbücher 13, fol. 189r [14 November 1526], incorrectly cited by Barack, "Die Spinnstube," 64, as an ordinance of 23 October 1526.
28. *Mandata oder Gesetze*, fol. Fi v-Fii v, entitled "Rockenstuben nit zuhalten."
29. In contrast to these modest wages was one councilor's annual salary of 128 old pounds. On currency and prices, see Strauss, *Nuremberg*, 203-206. See Wilson and Wilson, *Making*, 239-41.
30. Staatsarchiv, Nuremberg, Briefbuch des Landpflegetamt, Rep. 27b Nr. 6, fol. 238v. (23 November 1528).
31. Stewart, "Paper Festivals," 327, and 327, n. 69.
32. *Mandata oder Gesetze*, fol. Fi v-Fii v: "Rockenstuben nit zuhalten"; issued in slight variation in 1548 and 1572 (Stadtarchiv, Nuremberg, Mandate 1548 and 1572).
33. The evidence exists especially in the form of printed mandates. See Stadtarchiv, Nuremberg, Rep. A6, Mandate and Register volumes. Stewart, "Paper Festivals," n. 94, for Nuremberg's pre-Reformation regulations.
34. Brant, *Ship of Fools*, 306-309, ch. 5. Burke, *Popular Culture*, 207.
35. Wandel, *Voracious idols*, 2-3, and 6.
36. Roper, *Holy Household*, 57, 73, and 83.
37. Roper, *Holy Household*, 4, and 57, and Roper, *Oedipus*, 40.
38. For Elias, see Roper, "Drinking, whoring and gorging," in *Oedipus*, esp. 146; Hsia, *Social Discipline*, 4-5. See also Elias, *Manners*, xi-xviii; and Elias, *The History of Manners*, vol. 2, *State Formation and Civilization*, Oxford, 1982.
39. Hsia, *Social Discipline*, 143, supports these ideas of authority and submission, stating that "It would be misleading to describe confessionism only as a historic process generated by the bureaucratic and intellectual elites and imposed on the rest of society" and that common folk automatically acquiesced to commands from the authorities. On social disciplining, see Schilling, "'History of Crime'" and Stewart, "Paper Festivals," n. 101.
40. Stewart, "Paper Festivals," 323, 327.
41. Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, vol. 5, col. 2658, and vol. 10, pt 1, col. 2530.
42. *Eyn neues Lied*, unnumbered text.
43. See Levenson et al., *Early Italian Engravings*, 526-27.



44. For seventeenth-century examples equating spinning with the sex act, see Stone-Ferrier, *Images*, 95-100. Stone-Ferrier, 100, notes that Dutch seventeenth-century paintings did not include erotic allusions to female spinners as they did for female lacemakers and embroiderers. For such an image of spinning, see Peacock's fig. 3.3 in her essay in this volume (ch. 3).
45. Proverbs 31: 10-13 and 18-19, from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible.
46. Kishlansky and Stater, *Sources*, 122-125, and Fantham et al., *Women*, 33-34.
47. The Barberini information generously came from Kim Phillips, "Damsels in the Tower? Service, Space and Community in Noble Households," International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, 9 July 1996, paper 519-c, who kindly cited Klapisch-Zuber, "Working Servants," 58, for me. On the earlier tradition of spinning, Clark, "Roman Women," 89, and Kishlansky and Stater, *Sources*, 123-25.
48. For images of Mary with spindle and distaff at the Annunciation, see Wyss, "Die Handarbeiten," especially 155-62, and the anonymous Nuremberg, *Elizabeth and Mary at her Distaff*, panel painting, ca. 1400 (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg), illustrated by Wyss, 171. For St Elizabeth spinning, see Geiler von Kaisersberg, *The Spiritual Spinner according to the Example of the Widow St Elizabeth*, published at Augsburg in 1510 (see Kaisersberg, *Die gaistlich spinnerin*), and at Strasbourg by Johann Knoblauch in 1511, with title page woodcuts by Hans Burgkmair and Hans Baldung Grien. For illustrations, see H. 2.136 and H. 5.278. A sampling of recent literature addressing women and virtue includes Bange et al., "Who can find a virtuous woman?"; Baskins, "La Festa di Susanna"; King, *Women*; and Fermor, "Movement," 143-44.
49. Parker, *Subversive Stitch*, 42, and Krauss, "Eve and Mary," 81. On women, lust, and virtue, see also Hults's and Smith's essays in this volume (chs. 5 and 4 respectively).
50. For the Netherlandish paintings of women at spinning wheels, such as van Heemskerck's *Anna Codde* dated 1529 (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum) and van Scorel's *Agatha van Schoonhoven* from around 1530 (Rome, Doria Gallery), see Bruyn, "Vroege portretten," with illustrations.
51. Parker, *Subversive Stitch*, 60.
52. Wuttke, *Die Histori Hercules*, fig. 5. See Spätrenaissance, pl. 140, no. 37a.
53. Wuttke, *Die Histori Hercules*, fig. 2, and Stafski, *Der jüngere Peter Vischer*, pl. 91. Vischer's drawing accompanied a poem dated 1515 written by Nuremberg council member and humanist, Pankraz Schwenter that treated Hercules, male hero.
54. Mid-sixteenth-century engravings of laziness include the anonymous Netherlandish *Proverbs of Laziness* and Crispijn de Passe and Martin de Vos's *Negligence and Sloth* (H. 15.451). See Renger, *Lockere Gesellschaft*, 85 and figs 57 and 58.
55. Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, vol. 10, pt 2, col. 1308.
56. Some sixteenth-century viewers may have also likened sliding foot into shoe with sexual intercourse. Aigremont, *Fuss- und Schuh*, 46.
57. Eisenbrand, *Ehehaftsordnung*, 31.
58. Röhrich, *Lexikon*, vol. 1, 537, Grimm and Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, vol. 5, col. 2109, and vol. 8, cols. 1334-35. See Becker, *Kraut und Roub'n*.
59. Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women*, 120, and 183-84. Wiltenburg, 4, explains street literature as "cheap pamphlets and ballads purveyed to a wide audience in streets and markets."
60. Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women*. King, *Women*, 41, and Roper, *Oedipus*, 41, for Luther's belief that unmarried nuns "sunk in the toils of a burning lust which had no outlet," thus Luther believed they should marry.
61. Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women*, 23, Wiesner, "Nuns," 13, and Russell, *Eva/Ave*, 148.

62. King, *Women*, 41: "The church's assumption was that neither the lusty male nor the lascivious female could long do without sexual contact, and should be free to indulge in it nearly at will. Such engagement was to occur only, however, at a proper time, in a proper place, and in the proper way."
63. For Burgkmair's *Lust*, see Diederichs, *Deutsches Leben*, vol. 1, fig. 59.
64. Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women*, 12. On women and the Reformation, see Wiesner, "Beyond Women," and Marshall, *Women*.
65. See Schleif's essay (ch. 9) in this volume for the important role Adam Kraft's wives played over decades in his home-based workshop production.
67. Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women*, 23.
68. Roper, *Oedipus*, 40.
69. The man looking through the window may also be a voyeur. See Linda Hults's essay (ch. 5) in this volume and the illustrations in Stewart, "Sebald Beham's Fountain of Youth-Bathhouse Woodcut," she cites.
70. Wiesner, "Beyond Women," 318.
71. Marshall, *Women*, 2.
72. Wiltenburg, *Disorderly Women*, 108.
73. For reading and, by extension, viewing as a woman, see Miller, "Rereading as a Woman," esp. 355.
74. My text here admittedly only scratches the surface of the question of the female audience for Beham's print. On women as viewers of art and thus a female audience, see Pollock, *Vision*, 50-91; Gamman and Marshment, *Female Gaze*, 1-5; Kettering, "Ter Borch's Ladies," esp. 110-13; and Honig, "Space of Gender."
75. Bange et al., "Who can find a virtuous woman?" n. 39 and 40, and Fermor, "Movement," 143.
76. Roper, *Holy Household*, 153. Marshall, *Women*, 2, uses the slightly different "chaste, silent, and obedient."
77. I use "popular" here as defined by Natalie Davis to refer to "beliefs, literary and visual works, practices and festivities widely dispersed in a given society and in their appeal often (though not always) jumping barriers of wealth, birth, religion, and ethnic background." See Davis, "Toward Mixtures," 1411.
78. The term "official culture" goes back to Kinser, "Presentation," 27, 29.
79. For women of all social classes, see Wiesner, "Nuns," 25.

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