Large Noses and Changing Meanings in Sixteenth-century German Prints

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Woodcuts produced by the Nuremberg school during the early sixteenth century provide insights into the history of taste, in particular the changing nature of the bawdy aesthetic so prevalent in the art of the time. Sebald Beham's *Nose Dance* of *c.* 1534 (fig. 170) offers a good case in point.[1] The print represents in the foreground a group of large-nosed men and one woman, and a fool who exposes himself (at lower right). By the early seventeenth century the woodblock had been altered, removing most of the offensive areas – the large noses and some of the revealed body parts (fig. 175). Beham's print will be discussed here, first, within the context of German culture of the time and the various meanings noses held, and as part of a body of bawdy imagery common to early sixteenth-century Germany. The print will also be evaluated in light of the late sixteenth-century development away from the overt bodily oriented imagery of the earlier part of that century. Beham's woodcut will be understood, therefore, in the context of its time and the meanings it then held.

The text by the Nuremberg poet-shoemaker Hans Sachs beneath the image is known from what used to be a unique impression in the Schlossmuseum at Gotha; that impression was lost in the last War. According to the text, Beham's nose dance is set at kermis, the celebration of the anniversary of a church or of the name saint to whom the church is dedicated.

Kermis was the favourite peasant holiday in Germany in the decades around 1500. Accordingly, numerous woodcuts treating kermis designed by Beham date to the years around the time he made the *Nose Dance*.[2] In this print one church is visible on the horizon and another in the distant village at upper left, as a number of dancers with large noses dance around a maypole to shawm and bagpipe music. A variety of kermis entertainments take place in mid-ground: selling sweets (left), roughhousing (centre), musicmaking, drinking and singing (right), dancing below a rooster on a pole (upper centre), as well as playing skittles, or ninepins, and fighting (upper right). Beham presents us with the best and worst features of the kermis – from dancing and playing games to fighting and stabbing.[3]

Dancing, musicmaking, fighting, eating and drinking form integral parts of Beham's *Nose Dance* in particular and his kermis woodcuts in general. Here, along with the nose dance, however, there are two additional features – the rooster dance and the magistrate (upper left). The rooster dance, or *Hahnentanz*, was documented in Nuremberg both as a dance and a carnival play as early as the fifteenth century. The magistrate approaches the group of dancers apparently in response to the sword-fight on the skittles field (magistrates were responsible for maintaining the peace at kermis). The magistrate here replaces the kermis flag, which is normally used in woodcuts by

Beham as the means of identifying the event as a kermis.[4]

A new element in this kermis woodcut is the nose dance competition between large-nosed participants, who vie for the prizes to be seen at the top of the may-pole. A variety of nose types for people from various stations are depicted in the foreground. The clothing worn by the dancers (seven male and one female) re-veals that three groups of people are involved: peas-ants, who wear simple garb; lansquenets in slashed clothing; and entertainers – or those specifically associ-ated with dancing – in clothes with scalloped or tat-tered edges. Thus, three are peasants, two appear to be lansquenets, while three dancers (including the fool) and the shawm player at far left comprise the last group.[5]

The leader of the nose dance (clockwise beginning at top right) carries a baton and holds his hooked nose in profile. The next dancer, a lansquenet, points up at his own bulbous nose with large nostrils, while his long, prominent sword hangs suggestively between his legs. The third dancer, another entertainer, is seen full face and sports what appears to be a runny nose; he is barefoot, skips energetically, wears a fool's cap, and exposes his genitals as he appears to glance in the direction of the viewer. The next dancer is a stocky peasant woman with large, flared nostrils, the round-ness and projection of which mirror those of her bulging bust-line. The fifth dancer is seen with his stepped nose in profile; his slashed sleeves suggest a lansquenet, yet the simple dress suggests a peasant. According to the text, the noses of the remaining dancers bear warts, are pocked and runny, and are shaped like pickles.

Narrated in the first person, the text relates that numerous drunk peasants can be seen at the kermis held in the town of Gümpelsbrunn:[6] there they eat, drink and yell, a maiden sings to the accompaniment of a bagpipe, two shawm players arrive to play for the row dance, and the young men run, wrestle and throw each other down on their stomachs, many smashing their penises. Gingerbread is for sale, and a rooster dance takes place, involving wonderful tricks – wad-dling, bowing and turning around, so that one can see up the women's skirts. Sachs describes the rows and disputes, with two men attacking three, and even a flogging. Since the narrator himself hopes to win a prize, Sachs places himself among the guests with ample-sized noses at the dance.

Sachs mentions many old peasants standing in the field, and also the three beautiful prizes hanging on the pole – a nose mask, male underpants, and a gar-land, which will be awarded that evening to the men with the largest noses (women are not mentioned). The dancer with the largest nose will be crowned king of the dance and gets the garland. Second prize is the nose mask, and third the underpants. The garland is, of course, a traditional attribute of the victor; the nose mask mirrors the shape of the nose, and may well have been worn by some of the contestants; while the underpants reminds us of the popular belief that the size of a man's nose is indicative of the size of his penis, as will be discussed below.

The noses Sachs describes are long, thick, curved, hanging, arched, morose, unpleasant, wide, misshapen, raised slightly, hooked, gnarled and lumpy, triangular, square, round, shiny and red, copper-coloured and humped, full of maggots, growths and knots. Beham's younger contemporary, Johann Fischart, described var-ious noses and joked about them in *Geschichtklitterung*, first printed in 1575, his German version of Rabelais's *Gargantua*: his noses include ones that drip and look

4. *Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde*, edited by O. Erich and R. Beitl, 3rd edn, Stuttgart 1974, p. 319; E. Kück and H. Sohnrey, *Feste und Spiele des deutschen Landvolks*, 3rd edn, Berlin 1925, p. 318f; W. Lenk, *Das Nürnberger Fastnachtspiel des 15. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur Theorie und zur Interpretation des Fastnachtspiels als Dichtung*, Berlin 1966, pp. 28, 115, who cites the carnival play 'Der alt Hannentanz', and *Fastnachtspiele aus dem fünfzehnten Jahrhundert*, edited by A. von Keller (Bibliothek des Litterischen Vereins in Stuttgart, XXVIII–XXIX), Stuttgart, 1853, no. 67. For a similar carnival play, 'Der kurz hannentanz', see Von Keller's *Fastnachtspiele*, no. 89. For the protection of peace at ker-mis, see K.-S. Kramer, *Bauer und Bürger im nachmittelalterlichen Unterfranken. Eine Volkskunde auf Grund archivalischer Quellen*, Würzburg 1957, p. 71, and J. and W. Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, V, Leipzig 1854, col. 834.

5. For lansquenets, see Erhard Schön's series of lansquenets from the 1530s illustrated in Geisberg, *op. cit.*, nos. 1198–1234. For scalloped-edged clothing, see Hans Schäufelein's *Dance Leader* woodcut of *c.* 1535 (*ibid.*, no. 1064).

6. My translation of Sachs's text often differs from that in K.P.F. Moxey, 'Sebald Beham's "Church Anniversary Holidays": Festive Peasants as Instruments of Repressive Humour', *Simiolus*, XII, 1981–82, pp. 107–30, and idem, *Peasants, Warriors and Wives: Popular Imagery in the Reformation*, Chicago 1989, pp. 35–66. For the original German, see Geisberg, *op. cit.*, I, no. 262 and Von Keller, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 276–78; a shorter ver-sion by Sachs of 1548 is in *Hans Sachs*, edited by A. von Keller and E. Goetze, XXII (Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, CCI), Tübingen 1894, pp. 450–51.

170. Sebald Beham, *Nose Dance*, state I, woodcut, 396 × 363 mm (formerly Gotha, Schlossmuseum; photo from Geisberg, no. 262).

like icicles hanging from a roof and have nine bends, like a shepherd's staff.[7] Beham, Sachs and Fischart all drew on the same body of cultural ideas and bawdy descriptions typical of popular culture of the time.

Sachs's text continues. The pipers play and encourage the dancers to grab each other's noses. They pull one another by them, and jump into the row dance, now involving twenty men and women. Just when the dance is at its height, a fight breaks out on the skittles field, there is great confusion, and people run from the dance to the gingerbread stand (seen in the print at left). The nose dance breaks up. A bailiff declares that 'the judge and my lords announce near and far that because the nose dance has been dispersed today, there will be no more dancing. The nose dance will be postponed until Sunday'. All large-nosed people are invited to return on Sunday: be they burgher or peasant, poor or rich, they will be measured just the same – with compass, calliper and triangle. The kermis at Gümpelsbrunn thus ends.

Sachs began by locating the nose dance at Gümpelsbrunn, a fanciful name that held a number of meanings in the early sixteenth century. *Gümpel*, or *Gimpel*, referred to the bullfinch, which has red colouring and hops around gracelessly; *Gümpel* also meant simpleton or fool, and was often used to describe peasants; finally, *Gümpel* was another name for both the penis and a large red nose (the colour of the bullfinch).[8] Each of these meanings is illustrated in the *Nose Dance*, where peasant dancers hop around gracelessly, one wears fool's costume and exposes himself, and another – to the left of the maypole – displays what appears to be a large, pocked nose; perhaps it was intended to be red. *Brunn*, the latter part of the town's name, meant both fountain and urine. Gümpelsbrunn in title and text thus humorously associates fountain and urine with the foolish peasant

who dances like a clumsy bird and whose large nose matches the size of his penis, thus highlighting the satirical aspects of the unskilled dancing, lack of wisdom, and overt sexuality associated with the nose dance. Text and image draw on the common belief that a man's intelligence is inversely proportional to the size of his penis.

These meanings would have been evident to the sixteenth-century viewer even without the help of the text (fig. 171). In folk culture, the large, misshapen nose was called both 'cucumber' and 'pickle', and was often compared to the male member.[9] The nose of the dancer at far left, in front of the musicians, was certainly intended to be so understood. The nose was also viewed as a reflection of one's character: a pointed nose indicated a cunning and sarcastic person, while a pug-nosed person was evil, unchaste, untruthful and fickle.[10] Women with long noses were considered to be capable of bearing many children: the woman in Beham's *Nose Dance* appears to have a long, broad nose, suggesting that she is a good child-bearer and a crafty person too. Even the shape of the nostrils was supposed to reveal a person's character. Thin, pointed ones indicated a fighter, while long, thin ones, perhaps like those of the lead dancer, denoted folly. Broad nostrils meant little wisdom and a lecherous nature – the fool and the woman dancer may qualify here. Nostrils wide or open, like those of the lansquenet with the prominent sword at right, indicated wrathfulness.[11]

As for the association of nose and penis, this was a long-standing one, from at least Ovid into the nineteenth century. In Beham's own century the composers Johannes Puxtaller and Orlando di Lasso alluded to it in their works of 1544 and 1576, and were both influenced by Sachs's *Nose Dance* text.[12] Orlando di Lasso's music and text were written for the ducal court of Bavaria at Munich, a fact that suggests an even

7. J. Fischart, *Geschichtklitterung (Gargantua)*, glossary by U. Nyssen, Düsseldorf 1963, pp. 365–67.

8. J. and W. Grimm, *op. cit.*, IV, pt. 4, cols. 7511, 7513, 7515. K. Filzeck, *Metaphorische Bildungen im älteren deutschen Fastnachtspiel*, Würzburg 1933, p. 44, for the association of nose and penis. The meaning of *Gümpel* as simpleton or fool is still known today, and was used in the title of a recent opera by David Schiff: 'Gimpel the Fool'. See *The New York Times*, 15 February 1985, p. C14.

9. *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, edited by H. Bächtold-Stäubli and E. Hoffmann-Krayer, VI, Berlin and Leipzig 1934–35, col. 970.

10. *Ibid.*, cols. 969 and 971, where Paracelsus is cited.

11. *Ibid.*, VI, col. 971. See also E. Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, Princeton 1971, p. 269 and fig. 320, for Dürer's *Book of Proportions* of 1525, where faces have aquiline and pug noses,

among others. Hans von Gersdorff discusses noses in the *Feldtbuch der Wundartzney* of 1540, book IV, *fols.* LXIIIIv–LXVr. Gersdorff does not include the section on noses in his first edition of 1517, recently published in facsimile in Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgessellschaft, 1981. M. Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, New Haven and London 1980, p. 153, cites Joannes ab Indagine, *Chiromantia; physiognomi . . .*, Strasbourg, Johann Schott, 1531, for large noses.

12. A. J. Storfer, *Marias Jungfräuliche Mutterschaft. Ein völkerpsychologisches Fragment über Sexual-Symbolik*, Berlin 1914, p. 68 n. 2. For Orlando di Lasso and Puxtaller see *Orlando di Lasso: Sämtliche Werke*, edited by H. Leuchtmann, Wiesbaden 1968–, XX, pp. 170–73; XVIII, pp. lxxix–lxxx, no. 10, and R. Eitner, *Das deutsche Lied des XV. und XVI. Jahrhunderts im Wort, Melodie und mehrstimmigen Tonsatz*, I, Berlin 1876, pp. 115–17.

171.   Sebald Beham, *Nose Dance*, state III, woodcut, 257 × 358 mm (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum).

broader audience for bawdy texts, one that extended to the nobility. This association was repeated by the French physician Laurent Joubert in 1579, in his book on popular superstitions in medicine, and by Rabelais in his *Gargantua and Pantagruel* of 1534, which Fischart translated into German in 1575. The main character of Fischart's *Geschichtklitterung* is Gorgellang or Gurgeldursttinger (translatable as Long Gullet or Thirsty Gullet), and, like his French prototype Gargantua, a true connoisseur of excess.[13] Rabelais's *Gargantua* dates, of course, to more or less the same year as Beham's *Nose Dance*, even if the former was not to be known in the German vernacular for close to 50 years. The comic emphasis on the body is common to both:

'Why is it.' asked Gargantua, 'that Friar John has such a handsome nose? . . .'

'Because,' said Ponocrates, 'he was one of the first at Nose-fair. He chose one of the finest and biggest.'

'Stuff and nonsense,' said the monk. 'According to true monastic reasoning it was because my nurse had soft breasts: when she suckled me my nose sank in, as if into butter, and there it swelled and grew like dough in the kneading-trough. Hard breasts in nurses make children snub-nosed'.[14]

Associations made between a large nose and a

13.   See Fischart, *op. cit.*, I, p. 366.
14.   For Joubert and Rabelais, see M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. H. Iswolsky, Cambridge, MA, 1968, p. 316, and *The Histories of Gargantua and Pantagruel by François Rabelais*, translated by J. M. Cohen, New York 1979, p. 127, ch. 40: 'Why monks are shunned by the world and why some have bigger noses than others'. The association between nose and penis used by Fischart and Rabelais was played on in the eighteenth century by Laurence Sterne in *Tristram Shandy*.

sensual nature were common in Beham's time. Other German woodcuts stress this connection, and more. For example, the large, long straight nose of a woman is said to be the cause of her defective personality in Thomas Murner's *Logica memoratiua*, published in Strasbourg in 1509 (fig. 172).[15] A decade later, another print (fig. 173) shows a man with a huge nose, as well as fool's bells on his hat, arm and foot; moreover, the bathhouse and attendant on his nose belie the wisdom of the owls perched on his beard and left hand, while the text spells out Hans Lützel's coarseness. The foolishness or lack of intelligence of those with large noses was also rendered in an anonymous woodcut made in Augsburg, possibly by Hans Weiditz, in *c.* 1540 (fig. 174).[16] This *Nose Dance* depicts two large-nosed performers, one male and one female, who wear scalloped- and slashed-edge fool's clothing similar to the kind shown by Beham, suggesting that they are professional entertainers. The accompanying text

172.   Anonymous Artist, *Woman with Large Nose*, woodcut, 1509, from Thomas Murner, *Logica memoratiua* (Strasbourg, Johann Grüninger, 1509; photo from E. Diederichs, *Deutsches Leben der Vergangenheit in Bildern*, I, Jena 1908, fig. 621).

undoubtedly owes a debt to Sachs's: it mentions competition among those with large noses, prizes, possible contestants who include both burgher and peasant, both those from the countryside and within the town walls, and woman, maiden, man and servant. Eugen Diederichs suggested earlier this century that this print shows a masquerade of people wearing masks and, therefore, that the noses are fake ones.[17]

Although it is unclear whether the nose dance participants had naturally occurring large noses or wore masks, the dance itself appears to have been a real one in the sixteenth century, and not merely a literary convention, as Moxey has suggested. For instance, some 40 miles west of Nuremberg, at Bad Windesheim, a nose dance was performed in the market square by a barber and his journeymen in 1550; the latter were paid one-half *taler* each for their services, a sum recorded in a contemporary document. This nose dance may actually have taken place during carnival, according to K. S. Kramer. Diederichs's suggestion that the nose dance was in fact a masquerade should therefore be considered seriously.[18]

Beham's *Nose Dance* draws its inspiration from an actual folk dance that was enjoyed at kermis, at a time when the authorities were attempting to reform kermis as well as other aspects of popular culture. Both image and text stress large noses, dancing, drinking, embracing, yelling and fighting: the last four activities illustrate aspects of a contemporary belief in the 'four effects of wine', which I discuss in full elsewhere.[19] The *Nose Dance* and the related woodcuts mentioned here may well have been popular with the town's people, who presumably felt superior to clumsy, sensual peasants. Yet, the *Nose Dance* appears to be more a vehicle for humour – as was Rabelais's *Gargantua* – than one for expressing class resentment. At the same time, the fact that Sachs situates the nose dance at kermis points to a large and popular audience, comprising members of Nuremberg's folk from

15. T. Murner, *Logica memoratiua* . . . [Strasbourg], Johann Grüninger, 1509, p. liv: *causam defectus naso habebis'* (Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Rar. 1455). See E. Diederichs, *Deutsches Leben der Vergangenheit in Bildern*, I, Jena 1908, p. 188, fig. 621.
16. David Landau informs me that he sees in this woodcut many of the traits characteristic of Weiditz's production in this genre.
17. For the Augsburg woodcut, see Geisberg, *op. cit.*, no. 1586, and Diederichs, *op. cit.*, I, p. 191, fig. 641. Diederichs mentions the masquerade in the text accompanying fig. 641.
18. Diederichs, *op. cit.*, I, p. 191, text to fig. 641.
19. The four effects of wine will be discussed in my forthcoming book, *Feasting and Spinning: The Popular Festival Prints of Sebald Beham in Reformation Nuremberg*.

173. Anonymous Artist, *Hans Lützel Hüpsch*, woodcut (Gotha, Schlossmuseum).

town and country, an audience that would have de-
lighted in the raucous and bawdy text that, presum-
ably, was read to them aloud.[20] While not discounting
altogether the moralizing aspects of the image and
text, it is important to keep in mind that although they
may seem outrageous to many today, sixteenth-century
audiences would have found them highly entertaining.
Nuremberg was then a loud and dirty place, the be-
haviour found there uncouth and often violent. People
talked loudly in church – and even defecated in the
street: an announcement was issued to warn residents
not to use the streets in this manner during the
Emperor's visit, but to avail themselves of the public
Sprachhäuser, or latrines.[21] Beham's woodcut simply
reflects this culture's tastes and habits; as Mikhail
Bakhtin said of Rabelais's work, 'Only if torn away
from this world and seen per se in the modern sense
will these images appear vulgar and dirty'.[22]

In Beham's *Nose Dance*, interest in the sensual and
bawdy is embodied by the fool, a male dancer whose
gown is lifted provocatively. By the early seventeenth
century, this detail had been changed and nearly
neutralized, producing a more elegant, though dif-
ferent, aesthetic: the woodblock was cut to a circle,
thereby eliminating much of the fool's lower regions as
well as the lansquenet's phallic sword (fig. 176). Along
with the change in format, additional alterations
were made: the noses were reduced in size in the
block, an elaborate border was added, and text and
title were done away with altogether. In its circular
state, Beham's popular and humorous picture was
transformed into a more tempered one, lacking the
sexual associations of large noses. The joke was lost.

The circular border comprises a thin ring decorated
with fruit, leaves and scrollwork. In addition, two ovals
and two roundels containing putti, musicians, ensign
and a seated figure were added at the four angles. The
paper of the impression at Coburg bears a watermark
with Nuremberg's coat of arms, examples of which
Meder dates from *c.* 1591 to *c.* 1605; one example of
this watermark Meder found on a drawing by Hans
Rottenhammer dated 1605.[23] This watermark estab-
lishes a firm *terminus ante quem* of 1605 for the round
state of the *Nose Dance*. Of the eight round impressions
known to me, only two retain the corner forms. The
impression in Stuttgart (fig. 176) indicates that the

frame and corner forms were printed together from
one block. In that impression the borderline of the
upper left roundel (at 10 o'clock) overlaps with the bor-
derline of the round frame. This suggests that border
and ovals were printed from, and cut from, a single
woodblock.[24]

Closer examination of the impressions where the
ovals and roundels have been cut off (shown by a
straight slice at 2, 4, 8 and 10 o'clock) offers potentially
conflicting information. In the Oxford impression
(fig. 177) the border has been trimmed to within the
border line, and even more of the border removed at
2 and 4 o'clock, indicating that the oval and roundel
forms present in the Stuttgart impression were cut off
at those two points. Additional evidence indicates that
the roundels may, however, have been cut from blocks
separate from the circular block for the frame. For
example, the geometric curl with shading (at top) and
foliage (at left), was printed at 2 o'clock, adjacent to
the oval border form in the Stuttgart (fig. 176) and
Nuremberg impressions. The same curl was, however,
printed at 9 o'clock in the Oxford impression (fig. 177).
If a roundel were attached to the border adjacent to
that curl, why then is there also a straight slice indi-
cating the cutting off at 2 o'clock of another roundel?
This suggests a placement for the roundels different
from those in the Stuttgart impression, and thus separ-
ate and therefore moveable blocks for the roundels.
We should also note that the light represented in the
border in the Oxford impression is consistent with
that in the image and comes from the right. In the
Stuttgart and Nuremberg impressions, however, the
border was rotated, and as a result, light and shadows
are at directional odds from those in the image. This
evidence points to the rotation of the entire circular
border, including the roundels, but the straight slices
mentioned above in other impressions indicate that
the roundels may have been printed from separate
blocks and that the circular block of the frame was
rotated independently of the angle blocks.

The precise dating of the round framework is dif-
ficult to establish, as is that of the deletion of the title
and monogram NM from the rectangular block. The
text, however, is a different matter: because the text for
woodcut images was generally printed from a separate
block, the text present in the first state appears to have

20. For the importance of reading aloud in the sixteenth century,
    see my 'Paper Festivals', p. 344.
21. The *Sprachhäuser* document (3 November 1543, no. 3,
    Nuremberg, Staatsarchiv, Rep. 63–6a, Bd. A, no. 71, 184) is
    given in full in my 'Paper Festivals', p. 304, n. 6.
22. Bakhtin, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

23. J. Meder, *Dürer-Katalog. Ein Handbuch über Albrecht Dürers Stiche,
    Radierungen, Holzschnitte, deren Zustände, Ausgaben und Wasserzeichen*,
    Vienna 1932, p. 312, no. 209. I am grateful to David Landau for
    identifying this watermark.
24. I am again grateful to David Landau for this observation.

174. Anonymous Artist, *Nose Dance*, woodcut, 340 × 239 mm (Gotha, Schlossmuseum).

175.   Sebald Beham, *Nose Dance*, state II, woodcut, 257 × 362 mm (London, British Museum; photo Warburg Institute).

been left off subsequent states, none of which includes it. Were the title and monogram in the rectangular impressions deleted by Beham or by the printer Niklaus Meldemann, or did that happen even later? The removal of the monogram may have occurred sometime after 1550, when Beham died, which is about the time when the block could have passed to another publisher, since Meldemann had himself died in 1547. Meldemann is known to have been active as a publisher of woodcuts *c.* 1530 to 1535, albeit one probably without his own press, though since he is documented in town council minutes between 1522 and 1547, he may have been active there for far longer.[25] But de-

liberations may have been under way for the round form with altered noses even while Meldemann's initials were still on the block: two rectangular impressions of the *Nose Dance* exist in which the noses have been reduced in size in ink on the sheet (London, fig. 175, and Nuremberg). The London impression shows that when it was pulled, the block had at least two dozen wormholes or similar round breaks plus numerous long horizontal cracks: the cutting down to a circular shape may therefore have been necessitated by the physical deterioration of the block. For instance, in the area at lower left with musicians and lansquenet, one can see six horizontal cracks, four wormholes, and

25. On Meldemann, see J. Benzing, *Buchdruckerlexikon des 16. Jahrhunderts (Deutsches Gebiet)*, Frankfurt am Main 1952, p. 133, no. 27. Meldemann is described as a printer and a block-cutter in

D. Landau and P. Parshall, *The Renaissance Print*, New Haven and London 1994, p. 227.

176.   Sebald Beham, *Nose Dance*, state IV, 435 × 410 mm (Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie, Graphische Sammlung).

an additional four wormholes below, in and around the rock and grasses.[26]

The removal of the large symbolic noses may seem puzzling when seen in the light of a continuing trend towards bawdy meanings for noses in literature for centuries to come. Perhaps the reshaping of Beham's

Nose Dance resulted from a Nuremberg printer trying to capitalize on Counter-Reformation attitudes. As David Freedberg has shown, many prints with erotic subjects were censored in the late sixteenth century by reworking the plates. The prints Freedberg discusses and illustrates date from the first half of the sixteenth

26. I am grateful to Giulia Bartrum, Assistant Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum, London, for providing

this information.

177.   Sebald Beham, *Nose Dance*, state IVa, woodcut, 326 mm diameter (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum).

century, like Beham's woodcut, although his are all engravings:[27] the changes made to the *Nose Dance* are not unlike correcting the placement of a hand from below the bodice of a low-cut dress to above it, or cutting up erotic prints to clean them up, or replacing an erect phallus with foliage, or a copulating couple with a lone woman asleep in bed, or covering bare buttocks with a drape. Although the examples Freedberg cites are exclusively Italian and exclusively engravings, Beham's German woodcut appears to fit into that Counter-Reformation tendency toward prudery and censorship.

The history of Nuremberg during the second half of the sixteenth century indicates that the council did not welcome Catholicism, although Nuremberg was still in the precarious position of being an Imperial city directly under the rule of Catholic emperors. From 1555, with the *Augsburger Religionsfrieden*, Imperial cities like Nuremberg could choose to be bi-confessional, but Nuremberg's council wanted nothing to do with a Catholic revival, as the populus had embraced the evangelical faith even before its official acceptance in 1525. Nuremberg's last monk was to die in 1562 and its last nun towards the end of the century, whereupon the religious buildings passed to the city, and the council even expelled a priest of the Teutonic Order who read mass secretly in the Order's chapel.[28] Despite the council's Lutheran bias throughout the century, attempts to revitalize Catholicism increased after the Council of Trent (1545–63) up until the end of the century, not least by the neighbouring princes who had jurisdiction over Nuremberg, such as the bishops of Bamberg, responsible for the city's religious affairs before it became Lutheran in 1525. In the last decade of the century the then Bishop (1591–98), a militant Counter-Reformationist called Neithard von Thüngen, offered Nuremberg's small farmers the choice between emigration and conversion to Catholicism.[29] Nuremberg was, therefore, a more religiously diverse city during the second half of the century than previously, having also admitted Calvinists; although the council maintained its Lutheran stance, this had to be a moderate one.[30]

Given the Counter-Reformation pressures from beyond the city, it would be surprising if Nuremberg's publishers had not responded. Perhaps they felt the pinch under von Thüngen, or simply saw an opportunity to reissue prints and capitalize on their woodblocks. There was, indeed, nothing 'Catholic' that had inspired the changes to the *Nose Dance* block, for there was no criticism of Pope or Emperor in the print. Equally, there would have been no reason for a Nuremberg censor to object to changing a rectangular block to a circular one, or to turning large noses into small ones.[31] The last decade of the century, under von Thüngen, was contemporary with the reign of Clement VIII (1592–1605), whose objections to the nudes in Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* almost ended in the fresco's destruction. Just as 'a wind of pious and belligerent conservatism blew through the streets of Rome' in the 1560s after the Council of Trent,[32] a similar chill also seems to have blown through Nuremberg's streets under the influence of von Thüngen. The watermark dating to *c*. 1591–1605 in one of the round impressions of the *Nose Dance* supports a proposed date for the changes in noses and shape of the block to the time of the Catholic squeeze: all the evidence, then, suggests that the round state can be dated to the end of the sixteenth century.

The style of the border and the separate roundels confirms this dating. The oval form became popular, especially for portraits, in the decades around 1600, both in Germany and the Netherlands. At the same time, curled decorative elements of the kind seen in the circular border became a major decorative motif on title-pages and in borders. The work of Hendrick Goltzius and Jost Amman are especially interesting here. Goltzius's oval portrait of *William of Orange* of 1581 shows the penchant for curled forms, albeit considerably more elaborate ones than in Beham's work; more to the point, however, are the prints of Jost Amman, active in Nuremberg, where he died in

27. D. Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, Chicago 1989, pp. 361–68, including figs. 165–76.
28. G. Pfeiffer, ed., *Nürnberg – Geschichte einer europäischen Stadt*, Munich 1971, pp. 170, 266–67.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 279.
31. On censorship, see *Censorship: 500 Years of Conflict*, exhibition catalogue, New York Public Library, 1984, in particular the essay by Christiane Andersson, 'Polemical Prints during the Reformation' (pp. 34–61).
32. Landau and Parshall, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

1591.[33] Ovals and curls were also employed by Jan Theodor de Bry, for example in his *Golden Age* engraving of 1608; de Bry made engraved copies of several woodcuts by Beham, including his *Large Kermis* of 1535, thus showing that there was a market for such images around 1600, at the time of the so-called Dürer renaissance.[34] The forms in the roundels and ovals of Beham's *Nose Dance*, furthermore, display a simplicity

of style often seen in woodcuts from the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth.[35]

The forms within the ovals and roundels added to the *Nose Dance* border show the influence of Jost Amman. There are general correspondences between the putti making music in the upper roundel and oval of the border and putti by Amman, although no corresponding angels with drum and flute have been

33. See Amman's illustrations in Leonhard Fronsperger's *Kriegsbuch*, first published in 1573, and a bath-house scene published in Paracelsus, *Opus Chyrurgicum*, 1566 (with foliage in border). The curls are also present, for example, on the title-page to Jost Amman's *Book of Costumes* of 1577. For these images, see J. Amman, *Trachtenbuch*, Nuremberg 1577, title-page (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, 4° Lr 157/1), published in F.W.H. Hollstein, *German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts, ca. 1400–1700*, II, Amsterdam [1954], p. 35 (as Andresen 125). For the style of the border, see the prints of Jost Amman in Hollstein, *op. cit.*, II, illustrations on pp. 9, 10, 17 (engravings) and (woodcuts) 24, 45, and especially 55 (the latter two for the ovals in Fronsperger and Paracelsus); *The Illustrated Bartsch: German Masters of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. J. S. Peters, XX, pt 1, New York 1985, *passim*, especially pp. 245, 246, 325, 326ff.; and T. Stimmer, *Neue Künstliche Figuren Biblischer Historien, grüntlich von Tobias Stimmer gerissen . . .*, Basel 1576, published Munich 1923. For Goltzius, see *The Illustrated*

34. *Bartsch*, III, ed. W. L. Strauss, New York 1980, p. 167, no. 178.

For de Bry, see F.W.H. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, ca. 1450–1700*, IV, Amsterdam [1951], circular compositions: nos. 3–4, 9–10, and 14 (dated 1608); and copies after Beham: nos. 11, 12 (after Beham's *Large Kermis*), 16, and 28. On the appreciation of early sixteenth-century German artists in the late sixteenth century, see J. C. Smith, 'The Transformations of Patrician Tastes in Renaissance Nuremberg', *New Perspectives on the Art of Renaissance Nuremberg: Five Essays*, ed. J. C. Smith, Austin, TX, 1985, p. 93.

35. For the style of the roundels and ovals added to the border, see W. L. Strauss, *The German Single-leaf Woodcut, 1550–1600*, New York 1975, especially I, p. 90 (1590); *Deutsche illustrierte Flugblätter des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*, edited by W. Harms, Tübingen 1980–89, especially IV, p. 419ff.; J. R. Paas, *The German Political Broadsheet, 1600–1700*, Wiesbaden 1985–91; and D. Alexander and W. L. Strauss, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1600–1700*, New York 1977, especially II, p. 771 (dated 1629).

178. Jost Amman, *Ensign*, detail from *A Train of Soldiers*, woodcut,   360 × 1,690   mm   (whole)   (Oxford, Ashmolean Museum).

179. Detail from fig. 176.

found.[36] Amman's *Train of Soldiers* (*Soldatenzug*) in particular, provided a specific model for the new *Nose Dance* framework: at the centre of this five-sheet horizontal procession, an ensign strides to the left in a three-quarters view (fig. 178), the model for the ensign in the lower-left oval (fig. 179). Amman's ensign holds a large, billowing flag (at left), the right arm hangs down, and a large, prominent sword pierces the space nearly horizontally (at right). Feathered cap, full pantaloons, and slashed sleeves create a fashionable, if not foppish, appearance. This image also conforms to that by Beham. Both ensigns stride toward the left, and both are depicted with a similar feel for the rich black of printer's ink in hat and shirt. In de Bry's engraved copy, by contrast, the ensign moves in the opposite direction, and has none of the tonal richness of these.[37] Unfortunately de Bry's print, like Amman's, is not dated, although impressions of the *Train of Soldiers* exist with text by Hans Sachs above the image and a poem dated 15 May 1573.[38]

This text offers a *terminus post quem* of 1573 for the round border and thus for the round state of the *Nose Dance*, while earlier was mentioned a *terminus ante quem* of c. 1591–1605. The historical information also supports a date at the end of the century for the change of shape in the block of the *Nose Dance*. This circular version continued to be popular well into the nineteenth century, when impressions on wood-pulp paper were printed: for instance, the paper of the impression in Vienna (state IVa, see Appendix) contains wood fibres that have darkened it to the medium-brown colour of a paper bag.[39]

The longevity of Beham's altered image with small noses, with a printed lifetime from the late sixteenth century through to the nineteenth – thus some 300 years – contrasts strikingly with less than 70 years for the original form, with large noses. First, it suggests that the taste for bawdy prints declined, and second, that the early sixteenth-century audience for woodcuts was larger, more popular, and less refined than even 50 years later. It should be added that these shifts in taste were affected by the reform of popular culture

that began during the late fifteenth century and which culminated in what Lyndal Roper calls (for Lutheran Augsburg) 'evangelical urban moralism', a term well suited for Beham's Nuremberg.[40]

As we have seen, Beham's print emphasizes the nose, in various shapes and (larger) sizes. Large noses were also employed by Hans Weiditz, from Augsburg, for his series of comic woodcuts of 1521 (Geisberg nos. 1508–1520), where the exaggerated size of body parts plays a significant rôle. Weiditz's prints, generally speaking, single out noses and bellies in both woodcut and accompanying text. The exaggerated size of the proboscis and belly is the basis for the humour: the long, curved nose of a physician (fig. 180; Geisberg 1514) parallels the curved shape of his low, rotund belly, while the curve of the flask he holds mirrors that of his own giraffe-like rubbery neck. His exceptionally short arms underscore these distortions. Other examples in Weiditz's series include the long, hooked nose that parallels the bulging belly of a poor man (Geisberg 1515), and the discusion of large noses in the texts accompanying two other images (Geisberg 1509 and 1510). In most of these the nose is clearly used as a metaphor for the sexual parts of man and woman. Sexual jokes, some beyond our comprehension, appear to lie at the basis of Weiditz's series, just as the association of large nose and large penis is at that of Beham's *Nose Dance*. In another Weiditz print (Geisberg 1508), a woman with a large hooked nose, no arms, and huge breasts is described in the text above as belonging to a people, dreamt to live on an island, and whose women had the 'longest tits' (*die lengsten Tutten*) – an association between large nose and large breasts that we also found in Beham's *Nose Dance*. Her male counterpart, inscribed 1521 (Geisberg 1512), is a man with no arms but bearing a horse's head and neck in front of his own – indicating the correspondence between his large nose and his stud-like qualities.

Drink is another leitmotif: a man suffering from a horrendously bloated stomach, which he carries before him in a wheelbarrow, spits forth wine into the air (Geisberg 1511). This Wine-pouch ('*Weinschlauch*'), as he

36. For putti by Amman with full-feathered wings, see *Jost Amman's Wappen und Stammbuch*, Frankfurt 1589 (Munich 1881), p. 9, and *The Illustrated Bartsch*, XX, pt 1, pp. 245, 287, and 301.

37. For Amman's ensign, see Strauss, *The German Single-leaf Woodcut 1550–1600*, I, p. 29; *The Illustrated Bartsch*, XX, pt 2, p. 820; A. Andresen, *Jost Amman. Graphiker und Buchillustrator der Renaissance, 1539–1591*, Amsterdam 1973 (reprint of the 1863 edition, *Der Deutsche Peintre-graveur*, I), p. 227, no. 71. For de Bry's ensign after Amman, see Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts*, IV, p. 35, no. 27.

38. For Sachs's text, see H. Röttinger, *Die Bilderbogen des Hans Sachs*

(Studien zur deutschen Kunstgeshichte CCXLVII), Strasbourg 1927, p. 96, no. 6169, cited by Strauss, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut 1550–1600*, I, p. 29.

39. On the introduction of wood-pulp into paper during the first half of the nineteenth century, see D. Hunter, *Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft*, New York 1978, pp. 374–77.

40. L. Roper, *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg*, Oxford 1989, p. 57. For the reform movement c. 1500, see my 'Paper Festivals', pp. 336–38, and my forthcoming *Feasting and Spinning*.

180. Hans Weiditz, *Physician and Assistant*, woodcut, 300 × 230 mm (Gotha, Schlossmuseum).

Gar höflichen kan ich tantzen
Mit meiner greten vmher schwäntze
Die hat ain mündlin das ist klüg
Ir naß wer gut zum essich krug

Mit tantzen treibt sie adlich kunst
Darum hat sie ach fil mein gunst
Ob ich dañ hab ain grossen bauch
So fi nd ich dännocht wol das rauch

181.   Hans Weiditz, *Dancing Couple*, woodcut, 300 × 230 mm (Gotha, Schlossmuseum).

is called in the text, also sports a fat chin that oozes down onto his belly; the wine flask he carries in his belt is the reason for his grotesque shape. A similar combination of distended stomach ('*grossen bauch*') and general ugliness is seen in Weiditz's dancing couple (fig. 181, Geisberg 1519). The man's legs barely support his voluminous and weighty, orb-like middle, as he vigorously dances about. That wine is the cause of his problem is indicated by the garland of grape leaves. His partner carries the same drinking vessel seen in the previous image; her dependence on drink is also indicated by a huge beaker atop her head. Her large nose and bulging forehead do not make for a pretty face: the text describes her mouth as clever and her nose as suited for being a bottle of vinegar ('*Die hat ain mündlin das ist klug/Ir nasz wer gut zum essich krug*'). These figures are grotesquely ugly. In Weiditz's series they are surpassed in ugliness only by Mair Ulin and his

companion (Geisberg 1518): she boasts a large hooked nose, buck-teeth and a big belly, and carries a huge drinking vessel on her head, while he has a projecting lower lip, goitres on his neck, the now standard wine bottle, and vast chest and elephantine legs; the goitres here are used as a satirical attribute.[41] When we return to Beham's *Nose Dance*, his dancers seem tame by comparison. He emphasizes noses in a manner that fits a competition of real, large-nosed dancers, whose bodies are otherwise free of distortion, unlike many of Weiditz's.

The analysis of these woodcuts by Beham and Weiditz demonstrates that early sixteenth-century German taste needs to be taken on its own terms. Viewed as positive expressions of popular culture rather than as overtly moralizing censures of it, these prints can be better appreciated as the entertaining images they were originally intended to be.

Appendix

States of Sebald Beham's *Nose Dance*[42]

I. Rectangular, with title *Der Nasentantz zu Gümpelsbrunn bis Sonntag* above, and text by Hans Sachs in four columns below the image. Signed *NM* (Niklaus Meldemann) at lower right. Formerly Gotha (unique) 396 x 363 mm (fig. 170). See Geisberg, *German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1500–1550*, no. 262.

II. Same as I, but with variation in title (*Nassen tantz*) and without the text (rectangular, with title, signed *NM*).
   a. Vienna: 276 x 362 mm
   b. Without title
      Berlin: 260 x 363 mm
   c. Without title, and with noses reduced in ink by hand
      London: 257 x 362 mm (fig. 175)
      Nuremberg: 257 x 358 mm

III. Same as II, but without title and *NM*. Meldemann's dates suggest this state post-dates his death in 1547.
   Erlangen: 259 x 360 mm

Nuremberg
Oxford: 257 x 358 mm (fig. 171)

IV. Round, with circular border added, with two circles and two ovals containing figures added to the four corners of the border. Noses decreased in size in the block.
   Stuttgart: 435 x 410 mm diameter (fig. 176)
   Vienna: 437 x 411 mm diameter (321 x 324 mm plus 41–53 mm for each roundel/oval)

IVa. Without the four ovals/roundels.
   Berlin: 287 x 283 mm diameter (cut to the borderline)
   Coburg: 289 x 283 mm diameter
   Nuremberg: 335 x 328 mm diameter
   Oxford: 326 mm diameter; on paper yellowed from varnish (fig. 177)
   Vienna: 288 x 281 mm (lacks border); on nineteenth-century browned paper
   Vienna: 328 x 326 mm.

41. For goitres as 'satirical attribute' see Andersson's catalogue essay in *Censorship*, p. 61, n. 24, who refers to the Swiss expression 'goitered fool'.
42. The traditional sequence of states for the *Nose Dance* is that of G. Pauli, *Hans Sebald Beham. Ein kritisches Verzeichnis seiner Kupferstiche, Radierungen und Holzschnitte* (Studien zur deutschen

Kunstgeschichte XXXIII), Strasbourg 1901, no. 1250, which is given in Hollstein, *German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts*, II, p. 259. Pauli lists four states. The first two are rectangular with slightly different titles, the third has been cut to an oval, and the fourth has been changed to a circle, with framework not by Beham. My order differs only slightly.