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# The Artist's Lament in 1528. Exile, Printing, and the Reformation<sup>1</sup>

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Alison G. Stewart

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The plight of painters and other artists was not an easy one when the Reformation made inroads into German-speaking lands. Commissions for Catholic subjects and altarpieces dried up as a result of Lutheran influence. Two laments dating from the early Reformation period address the artist's situation. Both are brief, date from 1526 and 1528, and appear in different contexts – one in a letter of introduction and the other in a printed pamphlet. The first concerns the painter Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/98–1543) whose portraits painted for King Henry VIII and his court indicate that the pictorial genre of portraiture and the painter himself were popular during the Reformation in London, but not in Basel.<sup>2</sup> The second lament involves Sebald Beham (1500–50) who has become well known as a 'godless painter' within the context of a Nuremberg trial.<sup>3</sup> Although Holbein's lament was written about him by someone else, Beham's was penned by the painter himself. Both laments point to the role the Reformation played in reducing work for painters in the years following 1525.

In order to place Holbein's and Beham's laments in historical perspective, I will discuss events that led to Beham and to his exodus from Nuremberg. First, I will briefly address the better known lament by Holbein and its relation to Basel, painting, and printing. Second, Beham's complaint for Nuremberg and the arts will be discussed within the context of one printed booklet penned by him. Both laments indicate that the shrinking audience resulting from the early Reformation extended to publishing and printed book illustrations, and that the designers of such book illustrations experienced difficulties even in Lutheran cities that were also imperial cities.

The portraits Holbein painted in London are impressive indicators that the reception to his work in England was far more positive than in Basel. The letter of introduction for Holbein that Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam wrote in 1526 to Pieter Gillis (Peter Giles, Petrus Aegidius), town clerk (*griffier*) of Antwerp, points to the worsening situation for the arts in that Swiss town before Holbein moved to London.<sup>4</sup> One section of that letter has become well known through the translation of Wolfgang Stechow:

"Here the arts are cold; he [Holbein] goes to England in order to scrape together a few angelots." Recently, the passage has been translated a bit differently, "The arts are not appreciated here, so he [Holbein] is off to England in the hope of scraping together a few angels".<sup>5</sup> Both translations point to a worsening, even frosty situation in Basel for the 'arts' in which painters, among others, struggled to earn a living.

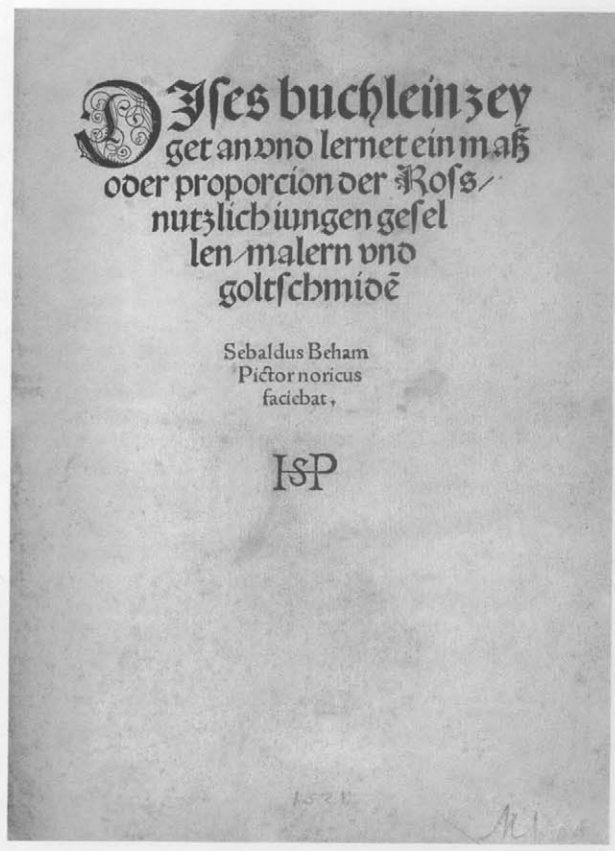
In 1526 Basel's painters' guild found itself in a difficult situation after losing income and entire businesses as a result of the Reformation's decreased demand for religious and humanist imagery. The result: the guild petitioned the town council for assistance. Jeanne Nuechterlein states that Holbein's "steady stream" of designs for prints showing subjects classicizing and decorative had also suffered, at least temporarily, and acknowledges that "It is no surprise then that Holbein left Basel to find more reliable work elsewhere".<sup>6</sup> Holbein had designed book illustrations for the Basel scholar-printer Johannes Froben (c. 1460–1527) who had printed all of Erasmus' books from the 1510s into the 1520s. Holbein also made designs for stained glass, an art form whose demand decreased dramatically with the demise of Catholicism throughout much of the German-speaking lands. Beham was also involved in designing stained glass in Nuremberg during the 1520s, and he produced considerably more prints and designed many more book illustrations throughout his career lasting over three decades, judging from his surviving work. It was in the area of printed works that Beham, trained at Nuremberg in Dürer's workshop or under his influence before 1520, made his most important contribution: hundreds of small engravings and etchings, with woodcuts and woodcut book illustrations alone numbering 1,500.<sup>7</sup>

The Reformation made a strong, but varied impact on printed works, both independent sheets and book illustrations. In Basel the demand for book illustrations decreased along with stained glass designs. In Nuremberg the *de jure* adoption of Luther's new religion in 1525 resulted in a town council that avoided controversy with all things Catholic because of the town's imperial city status

and what has been seen as its emphasis on law and order.<sup>8</sup> The result: banishment of questioners of religion, including Sebald Beham, who found Nuremberg to be a difficult place to live. Before Nuremberg officially became Lutheran, Beham's career had taken off as a designer of stained glass and prints and as an engraver of his own print designs, within a thriving printing industry. In 1528, the date of Beham's lament, he left town. He returned to Nuremberg the next year and, after a period of moving from town to town, settled at Frankfurt am Main in 1531 for greater professional opportunities. There he began a successful career working with Christian Egenolff who, only a few months earlier had moved from Strassburg, printed books featuring a wide range of subjects. He may have called Beham to Frankfurt, or agreed to work with him, to design the illustrations for the books he printed. Although that variety was undoubtedly intended to appeal to a diverse audience and to be profitable at a time when the arts and Catholic subjects were being rethought, the broad range of subjects undoubtedly provided a steady stream of work for Egenolff and Beham for decades to come, allowing Egenolff to enlarge and later replace his workshop-home, until their deaths in 1550 and 1555.<sup>9</sup>

Beham's lament, his *Klage des Künstlers*, appears in the introduction to his booklet on the proportion of horses published at Nuremberg in 1528. "This Booklet Demonstrates and Explains the Measurement or Proportions of the Horse, which is Useful for Young Apprentices, Painters, and Goldsmiths" ('Dises buchlein zeyget an vnd lernet ein maß oder proporcion der Ross, nutzlich iungen gesellen, malern vnd golttschmidē') (fig. 1) included 38 pages with letterpress text and eight woodcut illustrations (averaging 118 x 128 mm) that Beham wrote and designed.<sup>10</sup> Below the title Beham included his name, profession, and town, as painter from Nuremberg (*Sebald Beham/Pictor noricus/faciebat*), followed by his Nuremberg monogram, HSP. The colophon indicates the pamphlet was printed at Nuremberg in 1528. Although the name of the printer is not given, he is believed to have been either Hieronymus Andreae or Friedrich Peypus.<sup>11</sup>

Beham began the introduction to his booklet by wishing luck and contentment (*seligkeit*) to all the pupils and boys (*schulern/vnd jungen*) he has taught. He wrote that painting is now viewed with disdain (*Verachtung*) and there is little demand for it ("Die weil nun die malerei so gar in verachtung kummen ist/vnd so wenig nach ir gefragt wirt"), therefore "we must return to the foundation or basis of this lost art [and] manifest this again in the measurement of compasses and rulers and in pleasingly skillful proportion" (*Darumb müssen wir uns werden und zuruck gen und widerholen/das rechte fundament oder grund solcher verlornen kunst/wider in messung des circkels / und lini / und in wolgeschickter proporcion her für tragen*).<sup>12</sup> These



1 | Sebald Beham, Title page, from Beham's *Treatise on the Proportions of the Horse*, 1528, woodcut, 20 cm high (octavo format), London, British Museum, 1918, 0309.3.

two sentences constitute the core of Beham's lament on both the diminished respect and decreased demand painting received in 1528. Beham concluded that the use of proportions and other basics will remedy the situation. The importance Beham placed on the use of tools for proportion, especially the compass (*Zirckel*) and the ruler (*Richscheid* or *Linē*) was by no means an isolated example for the time. These tools can be found in numerous works including Dürer's 'Melencolia I' engraving of 1514 (fig. 2) and in the wording of the title page of his book on proportions of 1525, as well as on Peter Apian's map of Hungary of 1528. Beham included his self-portrait holding compass on his tabletop of 1534, painted for Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg in the Louvre, on his map showing the travels of St. Paul dating c. 1528, and in his engraving of 'Geometry' from his Liberal Arts series dating from the 1540s (fig. 3).<sup>13</sup> Martin Schaffner's painted tabletop of 1533 in Kassel includes Geometry measuring with compass and drawing lines with a ruler.<sup>14</sup> These works show geometry within the context of both prints and paintings. Pia Cuneo has discussed these tools for three pamphlets written by Nuremberg artists Sebald Beham, Erhard Schön, and Hans Lautensack.<sup>15</sup>

Beham's booklet using the compass and ruler was therefore not unusual for the time (fig. 4), but it was brand new as a manual on proportions. Beham ends the introduction to his pamphlet by stating that he had wanted to include three topics in his booklet: horses in linear proportion, heads for apprentices (*gesellen*), and proportions for the heads of a man and woman.<sup>16</sup> Instead, he wrote, to be obedient he divided the book and intended to publish one part after another, with God's will:

*"Solches ist von mir vermeint gewest/alles in ein Buechlein zu bringen ist vnterkommen/das ich es nun taylen müssz ausz gehorsam etc. Doch wens*

*Got haben wil/mit der zeyt wil ich ymmer eins nach dem andern in druck gehn lasse. Dar mit wil ich meyner vorred ein end geben."*<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, his publication on horses constitutes the first of three sections on the topic of proportions he wished to publish together within one publication.<sup>18</sup> To be obedient he decided to publish only one part, the one on horses. Beham indicates that he complied with the wishes of the Nuremberg authorities by publishing only one section of his larger work addressing the importance of proportions and mathematics. He appears to have selected the section least like Dürer's book on human proportions.



2 | Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I*, 1514, engraving, 24 x 18.8 cm, London, British Museum, 1895, 0915.345.

Beham's booklet on horses ends with "God be praised and honored for eternity" (*Got sey lob vnd ehre yn ewigkeit*) and warns against the book being copied or damages would need to be paid (*"Ob sich einer vnter stehen wolt/mir dyses büchleyn nach zu drucken/Sollest du wissen/das ich das büchleyn wider drucken wil mit vil mer figuren der Rosz denn hye steet/deutsch vnd lateinisch Sey gewarnet vor schaden"*).<sup>19</sup> This statement on copying may seem rather out of place today in a publication by Beham because his pamphlet has often been seen in the art historical literature as a plagiarized or unauthorized copy of Dürer's 'Four Books on Human Proportions' ('*Vier-Bücher von menschlicher Proportion*'), published at Nuremberg in 1528 by "*Jeronymus Formschneyder*" whose proper name was Hieronymus Andreae.<sup>20</sup> Both Beham's and Dürer's books dealt with proportions and were written in German, but Dürer's specifically addressed human proportions and was a larger *magnus opus* (folio, c. 32.5 cm, 132 sheets) while Beham's addressed horses' proportions and was a smaller and more practical, hands-on book (quarto, 20 cm, 19 sheets), a kind of how-to manual, which he intended to publish also in Latin.<sup>21</sup>

The understanding of Beham's pamphlet as plagiarized results from the view in the literature that Beham was a godless painter with a rebellious nature as seen in the inquest of 1525 around which time the appellation 'godless painters' was coined for Beham, his brother Barthel, and Jörg Pencz.<sup>22</sup> However, a closer look at the surviving evidence indicates that the council did not specifically accuse Beham and Hieronymus Andreae of using material from Dürer's unpublished book on proportions, a fact corroborated by other art historians who state that Beham was falsely accused.<sup>23</sup> Council records indicate that on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1528 the council forbade Beham and Andreae from publishing the pamphlet on horses until Dürer's book on human proportions was published, against punishment to body and property:

*"Iheronimus, formschneidern, und Sebald Behem, malern, soll man verpieten, nichts der proporcionen halben ausgeen zu lassen, pis das exemplar, vom Dürer gemacht, ausgangen unnd gefertigt ist, bey straff eins erbern rats, die man gegen iren leib und gütern furnemen würd."*<sup>24</sup>

One month later, on 26<sup>th</sup> August, Beham appealed this decision, but it was denied by the council ("*Sebald Beheim, maler, sein begern ablaynen und noch bei origen beschied lassen bleiben, nichts ausgeen zu lassen, bisz Dürer ding vor auszgee*").<sup>25</sup>

Beham appears to have promptly fled town. Within the week, on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1528, the council decreed that Beham should be placed immediately in the tower prison, that he should be spoken to, then freed. Once again the



3 | Sebald Beham, *Geometry*, from a series of the *Liberal Arts*, ca. 1540s, engraving, 9 x 5.5 cm, London, British Museum, 1868, 0822.274.

booklet was forbidden to be printed – in addition, the books already printed needed to be returned from Frankfurt – under punishment of his remaining in the tower prison. This council decree indicates that the recent decree, issued one week earlier, had not been effective and needed repeating, as was customary for the time:

*"Sebalden Beheim von stund an uff den thurn in die straf schaffen, nachmals rethig werden, wenn man ine herablassen welle. Auch das verkauffen des buchs von neuem verpieten und die bücher von Franckfort widerbringen zu lassen bei straf, solong ufm thurn zu bleiben."*<sup>26</sup>

The term used here for prison, '*thurn*', generally indicated a better prison located in the lower floors of a city or castle tower.<sup>27</sup> In Nuremberg '*thurn*' or '*turm*' was used for the Tower or tower prison where prisoners were held for longer periods of time with little to eat.<sup>28</sup> Nuremberg possessed several tower prisons including the Frog Tower in the

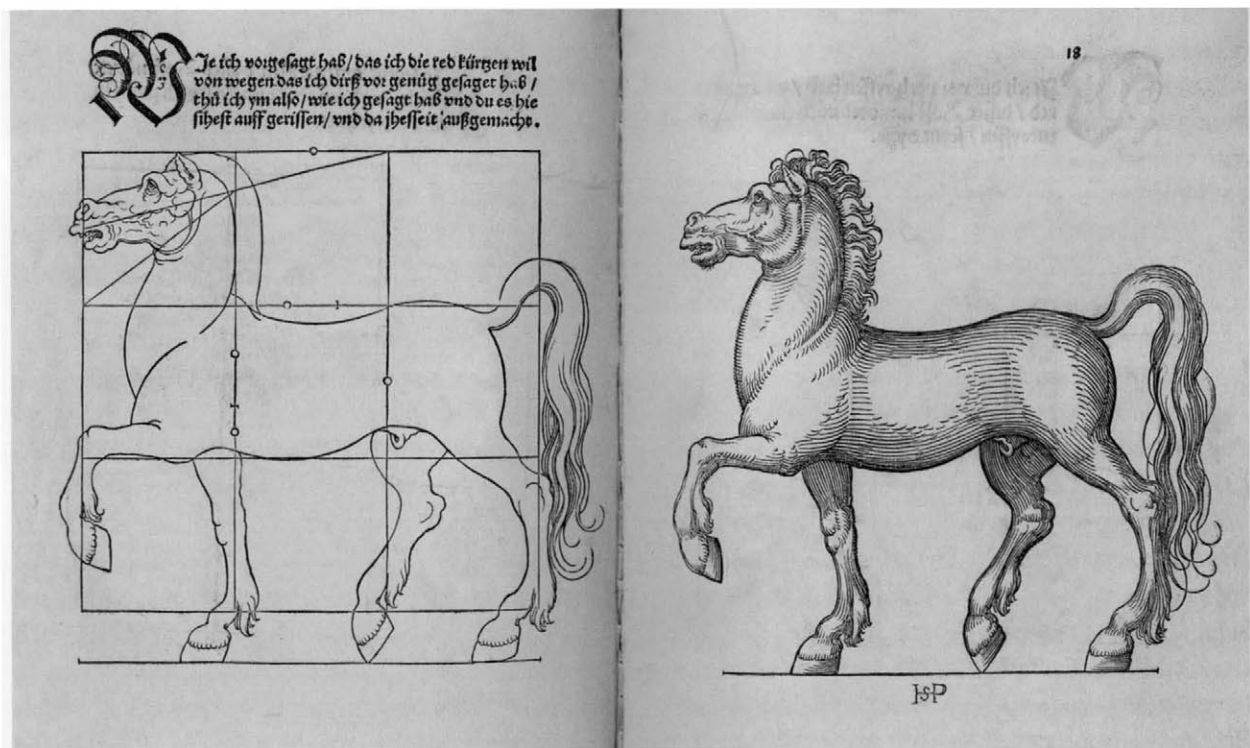
northeastern town wall and the Water Tower on the Pegnitz River southwest of the church of St. Sebald by the late sixteenth century.<sup>29</sup> Long-term prison sentences like those meted today did not exist in Beham's time. Instead, public punishments or executions were believed to offer deterrents to crimes committed. Banishment offered an easy, although less than effective solution to ridding an area of problem individuals from a town or territory and was increasingly used as a punishment in the German-speaking lands during the course of the sixteenth century. Such punishments and legislation in general were considered highly ineffective, a fact that explains the duplication of efforts on the council's part for Beham.<sup>30</sup> Such legislation was issued repeatedly in an attempt to affect change and bring order.

The council decided the next day (on 2<sup>nd</sup> September) that if Beham returned to town, he should be placed in another prison of sorts, 'das Loch', because he had escaped and the books and frames [i.e., printing blocks] for his book should not be printed again ("Sebald Beheim, so er betreten, in das Loch legen, weil er gewichen, auch die bücher und form niderlegen").<sup>31</sup> The 'Loch' indicated the worst kind of holding location, more a dungeon; although often called a jail, the term is not applicable in Nuremberg for

the time.<sup>32</sup> Theodor Hampe called Nuremberg's Loch "a labyrinth of cells, passages and spacious rooms beneath the Rathaus."<sup>33</sup> However, that *Loch* or *Lochgefängnis* (fig. 5) is now believed to have consisted of twelve small cells, each about 2 meters high, wide, and long, that often held two individuals at one time. The *Loch* was used as a holding cell for the interrogation of prisoners awaiting trial and for convicted criminals awaiting their punishment; it was not normally used as a detention center or prison in the modern sense. It included a torture chamber called the 'Kapelle', or chapel, due to its larger size (fig. 6).<sup>34</sup> Located in the basement of Nuremberg's town hall, the *Loch* included an interrogation room linked to the town council chamber above by air ducts that carried sound between the two areas. Interrogation by two council members thus took place in this manner. Secretaries recorded the events and, when necessary, the prisoner was tortured by the town's executioner to extract the required confession.<sup>35</sup> The *Loch* was a place that was so feared that mention of its name produced confessions or self exile, as was the case with the schoolmaster Hans Denck whom Beham knew.<sup>36</sup>

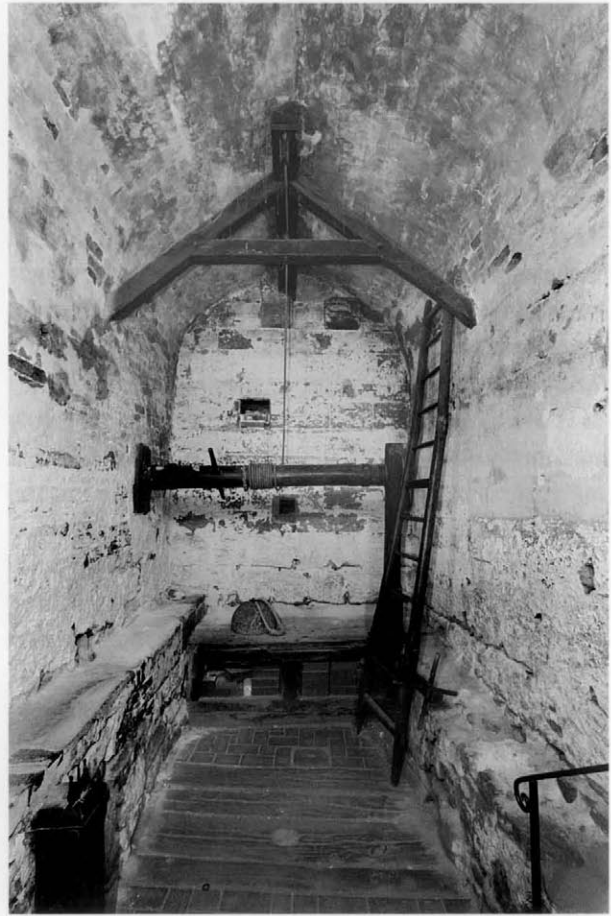
The council changed the location where Beham was to be held early September, from the tower to the Loch dungeon, thus to a more threatening place of incarceration probably

4 | Sebald Beham, *Construction of a horse within a grid and finished horse design*, from *Beham's Treatise on the Proportions of the Horse*, 17v-18r, woodcuts, 1528, 11.8 x 12.8 cm (average size), London, British Museum, 1918, 0309.35.





5 | The Lochgefängnis hallway between the cells, Altes Rathaus, Nuremberg.



6 | The Chapel in the Lochgefängnis, Altes Rathaus, Nuremberg.

because Beham had neither complied nor appeared before the council, nor had he presented the printing blocks for his pamphlet. On the same day the council also decreed that both Peypus [Friedrich Peypus, act. c. 1510–35 Nuremberg] and Sebald, painter, should receive a “*strefliche rede*” apparently a reprimanding speech, because of the printed book (“*Dem Peypus Sebald, malers, gedruckten buchs halben ein strefliche rede sagen*”).<sup>37</sup> Peypus was both a printer and owner of a bookstore in Nuremberg, but his role for Beham’s pamphlet is not clear even though some believe he was the printer.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps he was the printer or distributor of the booklet if Andreae served as block cutter.

An explanation of Nuremberg’s interrogation process may prove helpful. Theodor Hampe explained that after a subject was apprehended and brought into custody, an ‘enquiry’ began in the *Loch* that extended over many weeks. Two councilors (*Lochschöffen*) reported any progress to the council and a prison clerk recorded the proceedings in a protocol. The reports were tied into bundles, but very few survive today.<sup>39</sup> Hampe indicates that an interrogation in Nuremberg could take many weeks in the *Loch*.

For Beham one month later (6<sup>th</sup> October 1528) the council stated that his coat could be sent to his wife (“*Sebald, malers, rock seinem weib zu stellen*”), indicating that the council was in possession of his coat and that Beham was still living outside Nuremberg.<sup>40</sup> Early December the council decided that Beham should be given a “*burgerliche straf*” or one without physical aspects or torture, if he returned to town (“*Sebalden, maler, uf ein burgerliche straf so verren er sich darein begibt, lassen ein kumen*”).<sup>41</sup> A “*burgerliche straf*” was a civil punishment in contrast to a corporeal one (*peinlich*). Two months later (6<sup>th</sup> February 1529) Beham was allowed to return to Nuremberg with what appears to be a reprimanding speech or verbal warning, a “*strefflichen redt*” (“*Sebolten Beheim, maler, sein straff nachlassen mit einer strefflichen redt*”).<sup>42</sup> These town council records indicate that over the course of six months, between late July 1528 and early February 1529, Beham was told to cease and desist printing his proportion of horses booklet and to return all printed copies along with the wood blocks and printing forms, until Dürer had completed and printed his book on proportions. These records also indicate that Beham had left town, required the return

of his coat presumably because of cool fall weather, and stayed away from Nuremberg during this time. The records also state that if he returned he would be placed first in the tower jail, then in the dungeon. In December he would receive a non-violent speech, perhaps the equivalent of a dressing down, if he returned to Nuremberg, but by early February his return would result in a warning. Despite Beham's no-show he was allowed to return to Nuremberg. These records underscore both the ineffectiveness of Nuremberg's legal system and Beham's desire to stand by the publication of his writings on the proportion of horses and possibly his authorship of it as independent of Dürer's larger publication. By Beham's refusal to return the printed copies of his booklet and the printing blocks for it, as the council demanded, he asserted his ownership of them as his intellectual and physical property. Although the council records undoubtedly represent only a small fraction of the story because many records from the time have not survived, they underscore his determination not to be placed in prison, even if meant exile from his home town. Beham's actions might be viewed as non-compliance even rebelliousness, and certainly as a businessman protecting his interests. For its part the council attempted to enforce the imperial copyright Dürer's widow, Agnes Frey, had secured from the emperor to prevent any copying of her late husband's 'Four Books on Human Proportions'. As an imperial city owing allegiance to the Emperor, Nuremberg was bound to attempt to enforce the copyright, especially from someone as important in Nuremberg as Dürer. What is important here is the fact that Beham's pamphlet was published before Dürer's book, that he published only part of his work on proportions to appease the council ("to be obedient"), and that he was nevertheless told to return all printed copies, even those shipped to another town, and to stop all publication by returning the printing forms. Beham's booklet on the proportion of horses was published a few months after Dürer's death in April 1528 and before his widow had brought his 'Four Books on Human Proportion' to publication in October of that same year. It is significant that Dürer or his wife had taken the time, effort, and expense to apply for an imperial privilege for a period of ten years to protect his book on proportions and perspective against illegal reprinting, copying, and sale. That privilege was granted at Speyer on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1528, less than one month after the council told Beham and Andreae not to publish their pamphlet before Dürer's book appeared in print. The privilege singled out protection from everyone, in particular the following individuals and professions: all subjects of the Holy Roman Empire, especially all painters, book-, picture- and art printers, colporteurs, and sellers ("*insbesondere allen Malern, Buch-, Bild- und Kunstdruckern, Buchführern und Verkäufern*"),

with a punishment of 10 "*Mark lötigenGoldes*". No excerpts or appendices were allowed.<sup>43</sup>

The decree issued July 22<sup>nd</sup> forbidding Beham and Andrea from printing their booklet indicates a process underway long before the privilege's mid August date. When in late August Beham appealed the council's decision to discontinue publishing his book, the imperial privilege had gone into effect and the council had no recourse but to attempt to enforce it. Expecting the town council to override the privilege sealed by the emperor was simply not realistic given Nuremberg's status as an imperial city. The importance of Dürer and the emperor in Nuremberg resulted in a collision course for Beham with the enforcement of the council's prohibition of his publication, because it appeared in print before Dürer's and not because it was deemed to be plagiarized. A few copies of the book remained in circulation, judging from existing copies, and it appears that Beham did not publish additional copies until 1546.<sup>44</sup> Privileges or copyright were not new in 1528 (for example, Dürer's four large print series of 1511 had received an imperial copyright from Emperor Maximilian<sup>45</sup>), but they were still not very effective.

Beham was allowed to return to Nuremberg in February 1529 after living in exile for six months, since late August or September. This exile appears to have been the tipping point in Beham's relationship with Nuremberg and the catalyst for his decision to leave town once and for all, soon after his return. In order to understand the impact of his exile from Nuremberg during 1528/29, Beham's earlier conflicts with the council will need to be considered.

### Earlier confrontations

Beham had experienced several documented run-ins with Nuremberg's town council before he made his complaint in 1528. The first confrontation. As early as November 1521 Sebald Beham, then an apprentice, was taken into custody for several days by the Nuremberg authorities because the language he used was deemed unsuitable ("*seiner ungeschickten red*") when he scolded a Dominican preacher for preaching the "gospel like a villain or rogue" ("*daz ewangelium als ein posswicht*"). The council warned the preacher to discontinue his inappropriate speech, which had provoked the painter, while acknowledging that the painter had reason to feel provoked.<sup>46</sup> This seemingly insignificant event, with dual culpabilities, resulted in Beham being taken into custody, an act that would have made Beham, at age 21, aware of the town council's power to observe and question his speech and actions early in his career. The result: Beham was sentenced to four days punishment in a tower if he were a citizen or, if not, four days



in the *Loch* dungeon (“4 tag auff ein thurn straffen, so verr er bürger ist; wo nicht, so vil tag ins Loch mit dem leyb zu verpringen. Frist: Natalis”).<sup>47</sup>

The second confrontation. Four years later (on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1525) the ‘godless painter’ interrogation began during which the council posed questions to Sebald (and brother Barthel and Georg Pencz), then a master painter, on baptism and the sacrament. Questions continued over several days, then weeks. On 12<sup>th</sup> January the three prisoners were interrogated in the *Loch*. On 14<sup>th</sup> January, the three painters were interrogated once again, but this time they were held in the area of the *Loch* called the Chapel of the Torture Chamber (fig. 6), a location that indicated the seriousness of the occasion because the *Loch* was the worst ‘prison’ in the town.<sup>48</sup> The threat of torture hung over the proceedings, which over time moved from religious matters to the role of the secular authorities. On 16<sup>th</sup> January the interrogation took yet another turn, in the direction of an inquisition with questions and answers prepared apparently in advance by Lazarus Spengler, council member and its publication censor. The Behams were questioned once again on 17<sup>th</sup> January and on the 20<sup>th</sup> Hans Denck, schoolmaster of the church of St. Sebald who knew Beham, agreed to banishment after being threatened with the *Loch*. He was told to leave town by nightfall and his wife was instructed to take care of their school-age children.<sup>49</sup> Denck’s agreeing to banishment, versus the *Loch* and possible torture, points to the widespread reputation of the *Loch* dungeon as a place where painful confessions were extracted through torture from those who had the misfortune of being brought there. Denck’s behavior reinforces the suggestion that no one voluntarily went to Nuremberg’s *Loch*.

On day fifteen (26<sup>th</sup> January), the council’s consultants, five preachers and three legal councils, made recommendations how to proceed with the three painters. Spengler sided with the theological hard-liners. Although no decrees (*Ratsverlässe*) from the council meetings with the deliberations exist, it is clear that the

three painters were recorded as released from prison on 27<sup>th</sup> January and banished from the town. Despite several requests made by the painters for an earlier return, banishment lasted until 16<sup>th</sup> November, over ten months, until the council responded positively to the intercession of Melchior Pfinzing (fig. 7), the esteemed provost of the church of St. Alban in Mainz – and earlier of St. Sebald, Nuremberg – and advisor to the emperor.<sup>50</sup> The council stated that after their release the painters would receive special attention and observation (“*ein sonder achtung und aufsehen*”). In other words, they and their activities were subject to surveillance.<sup>51</sup> As Gerd Schwerhoff recently stated, the punishment of banishment was significant and not universally agreed upon by council members. The painters had important patrons who had argued successfully for their return. Yet, the jurists were of the opinion that the painters’ public denial of their mistaken religious views would suffice, along with suspension of sentence, if they were placed under observation. However, the theologians and Spengler insisted on banishment, a punishment that allowed for their later return to Nuremberg and their living there as citizens with the accompanying rights.<sup>52</sup> In other words, far worse sentences such as execution could have been meted out to them and their futures were not irrevocably harmed.

The third event. Within nine months of the painters’ return to Nuremberg in November, Barthel and Sebald and others, including the shoemaker-poet Hans Sachs and the painter



7 | Hans Scharz, Melchior Pfinzing, cast and gilded bronze, 1519, Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum.

Hans Geyffenberg, were called before the council and asked for their views on the sacrament. On 16<sup>th</sup> August 1526 the council still viewed both men, along with the cantor of St. Sebald and clergyman Bernhard Glatz, as suspicious parties concerning the sacrament. The council decreed that if the Beham brothers were disobedient and did not come before the council, they should be led to the *Loch* dungeon (*“Seinen des Pehaims bruder, der uf beschicken ungehorsam erschienen ist, widerum zu beschicken, zu meren und, wo er aber nit köm, in ins Loch füren ze lassen”*).<sup>53</sup>

Documents do not tell us what happened that August, but Barthel soon left Nuremberg and settled in Munich a few months later, to work at the Bavarian court of Duke Wilhelm IV where he specialized in painted portraits.<sup>54</sup> In his recent discussion of the ‘godless painters’, Gert Schwerhoff asked whether Barthel’s move to Munich may have resulted from the certainty of living under constant watch by the authorities in Nuremberg. Certainly the same question should be asked for Sebald who during the following summer of 1528, while still in Nuremberg, experienced his confrontation with the authorities resulting from the printing of his artist’s lament.

The fourth confrontation. As we have seen, in July 1528 Beham published his booklet on the proportion of horses in Nuremberg even though the council had forbidden him from doing so. The reason: the imperial copyright Agnes Frey had received for bringing Dürer’s book on human proportions to publication after his death only a few months earlier. Nuremberg’s council was socially conservative in the sense that its members were mostly patricians who inherited their wealth and power over centuries, thus there was no representation for crafts or for artists. Nuremberg had a well-earned reputation by the late sixteenth century, and perhaps earlier, as a law-and-order city, one whose capital punishment rate was about the highest in the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>55</sup> In Beham’s time law and order often resulted in banishment, not execution, for certain crimes, including those for Beham.<sup>56</sup>

Beham left Nuremberg by late August 1528 and in the next months probably searched for a new home, if he had not already begun to do so, one that would ideally allow him more personal and religious freedom. Beham may have traveled to various locations (Augsburg, Ingolstadt, and Munich) where his designs for book illustrations were printed, although this is by no means certain.<sup>57</sup> He could have made his designs at the printer’s directly on the wood blocks or, alternately, he could have sent his designs to the printer on paper or on the wood blocks by messenger. Should Beham’s lament be understood as facts about the contemporary plight of the artist and his personal situation or should it, as Pia Cuneo has argued, be seen as rhetorical statement? Cuneo studied three German artists’

manuals and argued for the importance of horses and mathematics in Early Modern culture, specifically within the context of geometry.<sup>58</sup> For the practical writings by Beham and his older and younger contemporaries Erhard Schön and Hans Lautensack, she stressed the importance of mathematics over language as the new primary tool of learning.<sup>59</sup> This use and enthusiasm for mathematics might be understood within the context of the diminishing role of the guilds, thus within market forces.<sup>60</sup> She discussed the manuals’ shared concern with the lack of contemporary mathematical skill by artists and posits that painting’s inability to keep up with new trends in “mathematically based techniques in art production” contributed to the decline in German art in the sixteenth century. For Cuneo the lack of mathematical knowledge, not the Reformation, was primarily responsible for what has been seen as a crisis in German art after 1525.

I see the important role Cuneo indicated for the area of mathematics as one of several factors alongside the Reformation that led to the diminished role German painting held after 1525 and the accompanying decrease in commissions by German artists. This dual shift in what was deemed important in art – mathematics increasing in importance and Catholic images decreasing – might explain why Holbein and Beham sought new homes and workplaces soon after 1525. Was the lack of mathematics really the issue here, especially for Holbein and Beham, and should Beham’s lament be taken at face value? Dürer’s lament about how financially disadvantageous painting had become has been viewed as part of this tactical bargaining within specific financial situations. As Wolfgang Schmid argued, Dürer may have written that he was forced to seek patrons outside Nuremberg due to lack of work in that town to serve his own purposes, thereby deliberately twisting the truth and omitting his patrons outside that town to mislead cause and effect.<sup>61</sup>

We are left with the laments centered on Holbein and Beham that presaged their departures from their German-speaking homes for what offered the possibility of greater opportunities and court patronage at London with Henry VIII and Frankfurt am Main with Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg along with work from the printer Christian Egenolff. After numerous years of living in exile and under the heavy hand of the Nuremberg authorities, Beham probably could once again turn to his art, including proportions and geometry, and no longer worry about politics and religion. Beham’s self portrait for the Cardinal shows a proud, accomplished painter who was free to use the tools of geometry he holds in his hands. Beham’s lament, although small in size as was his booklet, resounded from Nuremberg and beyond across the German lands. The town council’s order to return printed copies

from Frankfurt, and to cease and desist printing of his horse booklet, undoubtedly spread Beham's name and booklet to Frankfurt and printing centers elsewhere.<sup>62</sup> The

laments of Holbein and Beham brought these painters to new towns that became their homes for the years to come.

## NOTES

- 1 This work has benefited greatly from the helpful responses offered by the art historians working at the Social History of the Artist Research Centre project at the University of Trier in 2014 during a Senior Fulbright Teaching and Research Award. I am grateful to those many individuals and especially to the project director Prof. Dr. Dr. Andreas Tacke and to Dr. Birgit Ulrike Münch. Dr. Danica Brenner helped with translation and Prof. Dr. Dagmar Eichberger and Dr. Katja Wolf offered collegiality and outstanding sustenance. Thanks also to Joel Harrington for assistance with crime and punishment.
- 2 SILVER: Peasant scenes uses the term 'pictorial genre'.
- 3 For the godless painters and Beham, see CAT EXH. Maler.
- 4 On Gillis and Erasmus, see CAMPBELL: Matsys.
- 5 STECHOW: Renaissance Art, 131. Original letter in Latin, translated in ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM: Correspondence, 312. On the value of the English currency angel, see 1344–1526, 64, and 572.
- 6 NUECHTERLEIN: Nature, 36.
- 7 STEWART: Beham; and STEWART: Bruegel, ch. 1.
- 8 HARRINGTON: Executioner, and HARRINGTON: Child.
- 9 BENZING: Buchdrucker, 120.
- 10 My translation of the book title is based on CUNEO: Beauty, 279. Illustration dimensions from the British Museum's site. Copies of Beham's pamphlet under the title 'Dises buchlein zeyget an' are found in the following collections, often on-line: the British Museum, London; Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich; and Herzog Anton Ulrich Bibliothek, Wolfenbüttel. Other copies of Beham's book are said to be in collections at Dresden, Leipzig, and Yale University.
- 11 Andreae is given as the printer by the website of the British Museum, London, and Peypus by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, under VD16.
- 12 Translation in CUNEO: Beauty, 279.
- 13 For an illustration of Beham with compass on the tabletop, see STEWART: Beham, fig. 1; and STEWART: Bruegel, fig. 1.7. On Apian, see DACKERMAN: Prints, 104–107. For Beham's map with the journeys of St. Paul, see DACKERMAN: Prints, cat. 83; and HOLLSTEIN: Engravings, 209 (PAULI: Beham, no. 898) with compass at bottom. Dürer mentions "Zirkel vnd richtscheyt" on the title page of his 'Underweysung der messung' book of 1525 where his name is included in the title; below an imperial privilege at: <http://www.e-rara.ch/zut/content/pageview/2660680> (25 Nov. 2014, 11:10).
- 14 Schaffner, Painted tabletop for Erasmus Stedelin, 1533, lime-wood, Kassel, Gemäldegalerie. For an illustration, see: [http://www.museum-kassel.de/index\\_navi.php?parent=1493](http://www.museum-kassel.de/index_navi.php?parent=1493) (6 Nov. 2014, 12:34). Geometry is shown as a woman wearing red hat and blue gown. For three treatises on Geometry, see CUNEO: Beauty. For Geometry, see PARK: Allegories, 359f.
- 15 CUNEO: Beauty.
- 16 Fol. A<sup>ii-v</sup>/page 2. Beham included both folio and page numbers.
- 17 Fol. A<sup>ii-v</sup>-A<sup>iii-r</sup>; 2<sup>v</sup>-3<sup>r</sup>.
- 18 Beham's illustrations for his 'Das Lehr und Kunstbüchlein' were printed beautifully on fine paper in 1546, independent of a book text, as seen in three impressions at the Städel Museum, Frankfurt. They bear Beham's HSB monogram and the date 1546: PAULI: Beham, 1262–1269, followed by HOLLSTEIN: Engravings, 265, give 1546 as the date of the printing of the book, although I have not found a book that bears that date. The Städel also has the book dated 1552 (as is Dresden's copy) and bears the name of the publisher Christian Egenolff. The book appears there have been published after Beham's death. The paper of the Staedel's book is thinner and less fine than the paper used for the independent images. These works indicate that Beham printed his images in 1546 and Egenolff the book text with images after Beham's death in 1550.
- 19 Fol. 19<sup>v</sup>. On Beham's proportion of horses booklet, see PAULI: Beham, 1262–1269; and HOLLSTEIN: German, 265. It is unclear how many copies have survived, but at least five copies are known to me: Munich, London, Leipzig, Yale and Wolfenbüttel, for which see: [pac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=1/SHW?FRST=2](http://pac.lbs-braunschweig.gbv.de/DB=2/SET=2/TTL=1/SHW?FRST=2). For the Munich copy, see: [urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00026022-6](http://nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00026022-6).
- 20 According to the colophon: HINZ: Dürer, 1.
- 21 Information from VD16 D 2859, VD16 B 1483, and HINZ: Dürer, 1, at: [http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/bsb00026022/Im-age\\_4](http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/bsb00026022/Im-age_4) (15 Oct. 2014, 9:00). For Dürer's book: [urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00084490-7](http://nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00084490-7). BARTRUM: Prints, 104.
- 22 The term 'trial' is not accurate for the time, therefore 'inquest' is used here. BARTRUM: Prints, 104f., no. 94, rightly states that the issue was not only use of Dürer's material, but that "Dürer's much lengthier work had been in progress much longer and should have been accorded the status of being the first book to be published in German by a German artist on the subject of proportion".
- 23 CUNEO: Beauty, 278, no. 37, cites MOXEY: Peasants, 32, following KURTHEN: Problem.
- 24 HAMPE: Ratsverlässe, 1621; RUPPRICH: Dürer, no. 26.
- 25 HAMPE: Ratsverlässe, 1629; RUPPRICH: Dürer, no. 27.
- 26 HAMPE: Ratsverlässe, 1632.
- 27 GRIMM/GRIMM: Wörterbuch, vol. XXI, col. 468, at: <http://woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB/> (24 Oct. 2014, 12:15).
- 28 On the tower prison, see HAMPE: Crime, 86, for a case from 1531 for the tower: "24 burghers who had committed lewdness and

- adultery with the wife of Wolf König, the tanner, were confined to the Tower for four weeks on a diet of bread and water". For the original German, see HAMPE: Malefizbücher, 43.
- 29 For a map showing the location of these prisons and others, see HARRINGTON: Executioner, xi.
- 30 HARRINGTON: Executioner, 31, 65.
- 31 HAMPE: Ratsverlässe, 1633.
- 32 For 'Loch,' see GRIMM/GRIMM: Wörterbuch, vol. XII, col. 1094, at: <http://woerterbuchnetz.de/DWB/> (24 Oct. 2014, 11:45). HARRINGTON: Child, 61, recently called the Loch the 'Hole.' I use the term 'Loch' to retain the original terminology.
- 33 HAMPE: Crime, 25.
- 34 See: <http://nuernberg.bayern-online.de/die-stadt/sehenswertes/museen/mittelalterliche-Lochgefaengnisse/> and <http://www.museen.nuernberg.de/Lochgefaengnisse/> (6 November 2014, 14:10).
- 35 HARRINGTON: Child, 64.
- 36 For the *Loch* and images, see: <http://www.museums.nuernberg.de/mediaeval-dungeons/index.html> (7 November 2014, 15:00).
- 37 HAMPE: Ratsverlässe, 1634. '*Streflich*' is defined as '*tadelnd*' or reprimanding, scolding by GÖTZE: Glossar, 210. See also GRIMM/GRIMM: Wörterbuch, vol. IXX, col. 745, def. II, as '*strafbar, strafmässig*'.
- 38 BENZING: Buchdrucker, 354; and BENZING/RESKE: Buchdrucker, 664f. On Peypus as printer of Beham's pamphlet, see Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, under VD16.
- 39 HAMPE: Crime, 25.
- 40 HAMPE: Ratsverlässe, 1640.
- 41 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1528; HAMPE: Ratsverlässe, 1652.
- 42 HAMPE: Ratsverlässe, 1667.
- 43 BRENNER: Druckprivileg, 220; and HINZ: Dürer, 268f.
- 44 The history of Beham's book during his lifetime, and soon thereafter, is a topic in need of study.
- 45 SCHMID: Enterprise, 33.
- 46 SCHWERHOFF: Maler, 34, who cites HAMPE: Ratsverlässe, 203f.
- 47 HAMPE: Ratsverlässe, 1332.
- 48 SCHWERHOFF: Maler, 35.
- 49 SCHWERHOFF: Maler, 35f.
- 50 LÖCHER: Beham, 15.
- 51 SCHWERHOFF: Maler, 36.
- 52 SCHWERHOFF: Maler, 42.
- 53 LÖCHER: Beham, 254, no. 16; and DYBALLA: Pencz, 34.
- 54 LÖCHER: Beham, 73.
- 55 HARRINGTON: Child, 20, cited by KNAPP: Lochgefängnis, 100.
- 56 HARRINGTON: Executioner, 31.
- 57 For example, Beham designed illustrations for books published at Ingolstadt in 1527, 1529, and 1530. In 1529 his book illustration designs appeared as woodcuts in books published at Augsburg, and in 1530 Sebald appears to have worked in Munich which was the setting for a large woodcut showing the entry of Emperor Charles V into Munich. See HOLLSTEIN: Engravings, 177 and 190 (for Pauli: Beham, numbers 703–752 and 878–883) and see CAT. EXH. World, 223.
- 58 CUNEO: Beauty.
- 59 CUNEO: Beauty, 277, cites Timothy Reiss on "the gradual passage from the privileging of language as the primary way of knowing to the preference for mathematics as the ultimate epistemological tool".
- 60 CUNEO: Beauty, 276f. This point on market forces I must leave to others to evaluate.
- 61 SCHMID: Enterprise, 37.
- 62 The town council of Nuremberg undoubtedly wrote to Frankfurt's ruling entity to ensure that copies of Beham's book on horses would be returned to Nuremberg. Such communication between cities was common in the sixteenth century, including for matters relating to citizenship. Beham would have therefore needed to have Nuremberg's council clear him of all debts and outstanding responsibilities and punishments before becoming a citizen of Frankfurt in 1540.

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