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## Francis Daniel Pastorius, the German-American Poet

When it comes to his poetry, Francis Daniel Pastorius (1651-1719) must be characterized as another "großer Unbekannter." There are a few samples of his verse in the anthologies of Heinrich Arnim Rattermann and John Joseph Stoudt, but the transcriptions are faulty and neither of the anthologies is readily available.<sup>1</sup> Marion Dexter Learned, who is also the author of a detailed biography of Pastorius, published a selection of his verse in the *Americana Germanica*, a journal that is by now fairly rare.<sup>2</sup> Finally, there is my edition of the *Deliciae Hortenses and Voluptates Apianæ* manuscript (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1982). The relatively short manuscript contains, among other material, verses on flowers and bees. In her dissertation DeElla Victoria Toms has probed the intellectual and literary background of some of Pastorius' poetry.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of the following pages is to introduce the poet by selecting and discussing from his vast oeuvre what we believe is representative of his best efforts in the German language.<sup>4</sup>

Francis Daniel—he changed his first name from Franz after his arrival in Pennsylvania—was born in Sommerhausen, Franconia. Like his father, Melchior Adam, Francis Daniel became a lawyer and wrote, in addition to factual accounts, a good deal of poetry. Francis Daniel came to Philadelphia as agent of the so-called Frankfurt Company that had bought a large tract of land from William Penn. Pastorius was joined by thirteen Krefeld families who also had acquired land from William Penn. Thus it came to the founding of Germantown in October of 1683, the first permanent German settlement in the colonies.

The first years in Germantown were extremely difficult for the small group of settlers. But Pastorius was soon able to put his training to good use and became a prominent citizen; he held a variety of posts in the town government, taught school, and provided legal services for his fellow immigrants. In his later years as a member of the leisure class he had time for horticulture and apiculture, for polite society, and especially for reading and writing. His interests covered a wide range, from the Bible to all of history, from legal and moral treatises to medicine

and accounts of the unusual, from the origin of words to word games. He had, then, encyclopedic interests, not uncommon for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European men of letters but out of place among the early German-American settlers in the colonies. Pastorius published a number of prose works, foremost among them the *Umständliche Geographische Beschreibung* of Pennsylvania in 1700. He left many manuscripts, the most important of these being the so-called *Beehive*. This manuscript measures 7½ × 12 inches, comprises over 850 pages, and is filled with his small, but usually very legible handwriting. Here we find the most complete body of material that Pastorius composed, adapted, translated, collected, and organized during his life. The *Beehive* is now a prize possession of the Rare Book Collection of the Charles Patterson Van Pelt Library of the University of Pennsylvania. Harold Jantz has been trying for years now to make the *Beehive*, or at least its most interesting parts, generally accessible, a truly Herculean undertaking.

Before we begin to discuss Pastorius' poetry, especially his epigrams, we must address the question as to why he never published a book of verse himself. There are several possible explanations. One reason must have been that he saw himself primarily as a compiler and transmitter of knowledge. He wanted to amass as much information as possible for his two sons who, as he stated, would not have the benefit of their father's superb university education. Thus, some of the poetry found in the *Beehive*, the manuscript that was to pass on to his sons, is copied from other authors. Then, there is the issue of readership. It seems that the bulk of Pastorius' own verse dates from after 1683. His fellow German-American immigrants were primarily interested in almanacs, hymnals, and other Christian literature, if they read at all. A look at Oswald Seidensticker's *The First Century of German Printing in America, 1728-1830* (Philadelphia, 1893; rpt. 1966) informs us that religious publications predominated among the books in German printed in the colonies. Pastorius also wrote religious poetry, but here he did not plead the cause of any one of the many competing Protestant denominations to which German-Americans belonged. As we will see below, he was above sectarianism and thus lacked denominational backing. Finally, there is the issue of choice of language. Pastorius knew that English would be the language of his two sons and therefore turned more and more to that language when compiling information for the *Beehive*. Also, even though he began studying and speaking English only after leaving Germany at age thirty-two, he ultimately wrote more poetry in that language than in German since he could in this fashion communicate with his many English-speaking friends who shared with him a similar cultural background. A manuscript in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, entitled *Alvearialis* attests to Pastorius' enormous efforts to learn English: It is filled with excerpts from a great variety of books in English.

For an understanding of Pastorius' approach to poetry we should look at another manuscript, also in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, with the title *Common Place Book*, actually the *Phraseologia Teutonica*. The fairly lengthy manuscript seems to consist of nothing but an alphabetically arranged list of words and their synonyms. On closer

inspection one notices that for many entries there is a category called "poetic." Under this category Pastorius has collected synonyms and phrases that a poet might use in lieu of or in connection with the entry word. Thus, for "Bienen" we find: "Jmmen. arbeitsame honigvögelein. Die gulden gelbe schar. Schumsen [?] und brummen der bienen."<sup>5</sup> And for "Spinne" there is: "hochhangend mit gifft geschwängert. ertzspinnerin webet ihre Zelt. gewiß ist, keine menschen hand, die spinnt mit solchem Kunstverstand."<sup>6</sup>

Here we have a key to Pastorius' approach to writing verse, an approach that is especially conducive to the writing of epigrams, that is, of brief gnomic and ironic poems. The point of departure is a word, a thing, even an idea. That word or concept is then amplified. The amplification can take the form of a lesson, a serious reflection on life either from a specifically Christian point of view or from one of general wisdom. A second type of amplification has either a satiric or a humorous twist to it. Finally, there are verses in which Pastorius shows off his linguistic ingenuity, where he plays with words and forms. It is interesting to discover that both Ruth K. Angress and Jutta Weisz describe the same three types when it comes to a classification of German epigrams.<sup>7</sup> That this genre, which is characterized by wit and pithiness, was also very much on Pastorius' mind when it came to writing poetry, is confirmed by his hope that his verses will be "sharp" and not "edgeless."<sup>8</sup>

In the following we will, with few exceptions, present samples of the three types of epigrams from Pastorius' work since we believe that, at least as far as his German verse was concerned, this genre suited his poetic abilities best. First, though, we want to quote a poem that does not belong to that genre and that contains a clearly Christian message. Pastorius was, after all, a sincere believer who wrote many verses with religious sentiments:

Mir *Jesus* alles ist, die welt mag immer lauffen  
nach Ehr u. hohem Pracht, u. sich umb selbe rauffen  
Wie *Alexander* thät; Jhm *Midas* gold erkiest;  
Und wollust *Epicur*. Mir *Jesus* alles ist.  
Die Ehre bringt beschwerd; das gold hat seine diebe;  
bey wollust ist gefahr. Die unzertheilte Liebe  
Zu *Jesu* giebet Trost, so unser hertz durchsüßt.  
Weg Ehre, wollust, gold! mir *Jesus* alles ist.<sup>9</sup>

Pastorius uses the venerable alexandrine, introduced by Opitz as the meter best suited for serious poetry. Our poet allows an effective stress irregularity, such as one might also find in the alexandrines of his predecessors, in the last line where "Weg" is stressed and finds its counterpart in the regularly stressed "Jesus." The poem is built on the typically Baroque antithesis of worldly vs. spiritual values. Also in keeping with the poetic tradition are the prototype figures from antiquity that were passed on from one generation to the next. The first quatrain is effectively enclosed by a phrase that is also used as the conclusion; it could well have been the title of the poem. Instead, as title

Pastorius has a Latin phrase that might have formed the point of departure for the German verses: *Mea Spes est unica IESUS*. An English poem on the same theme follows in both the *Phraseologia Teutonica* and *Beehive* manuscripts.

Let us now turn to the first type of epigram, the one with a serious intent. The following poem is representative of Pastorius' idea of a truly Christian life:

Quietisten, Pietisten,  
sind nur Nahmen, Wahre Christen,  
Müßen doch mit furcht u. beben  
streben Still und fromm zu leben.<sup>10</sup>

Line three has a reference to "Phil 2.12" and line four a reference to "1 Tim. 2.2" to give the epigram Biblical authority. In other words, Pastorius favored an inward Christian life over one of propagation of a given creed. In the face of the ever-increasing sectarian splintering, especially noticeable among the German-Americans, he stresses the essential aspects of a truly religious existence in four pithy lines.

Such an attitude is also the basis for Pastorius' antislavery stance as seen in these four lines of a longer poem:

Allermaßen ungebührlich	ist der Handel dieser Zeit,
Daß ein Mensch so unNatürlich	and're druckt mit Dienstbarkeit:
Jch möcht einen solchen fragen,	Ob Er wohl ein Slav wolt seÿn?
Sonder Zweiffel wird Er sagen,	Ach bewahr mich Gott! Nein, Nein. <sup>11</sup>

These ideas find their official expression in the protest against slavery Pastorius and three other Germantown residents signed on February 18, 1688, for presentation at the Quaker monthly meeting.<sup>12</sup>

In the following we shall give three more examples of the type of epigram that imparts a general lesson. It is common knowledge that vanity, the transitory nature of human life, was one of the favorite themes of Baroque poetry. For Pastorius, as for others, the theme is easily combined with the thought of a fast-wilting flower:

Recht Kluge menschen wißen,	Daß sie und die Narcissen
Diß Welt-rund nur begrüßen,	Und bald von hinnen müßen. <sup>13</sup>

The smooth meter and the single rhyme make for speed and thus reinforce the idea of brevity.

On the title pages of the *Beehive* and the *Voluptates Apianæ* manuscripts we find:

Beßer bringt man Honig-seim	Immen-gleich von fernen heim;
Als daß man nach Art der Spinnen	Selbst was gifttigs solt ersinnen. <sup>14</sup>

There are Greek, Latin, and English versions of the same thought on the *Beehive* title page. A check of Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne's *Emblemata* establishes the fact that the idea was a literary commonplace.<sup>15</sup> "Von fernen" means here out of books and thus refers to the source of much of the poetry of Pastorius and of Baroque literature in general. Originality or *Erlebnisdichtung* was not something a poet of

Pastorius' time strove for. There were exceptions: Thus, he has a series of poems on his adventures with swarms of bees, but they are of a descriptive nature and usually culminate in a sententious phrase. The bee-spider epigram was chosen by our author for such prominent places as the two title pages exactly because it expressed his own idea about what an author should aim for. At the same time, this approach to writing leaves the critic guessing as to the "newness" of the product; that is, not the "newness" of the idea, but the "newness" of the melding of form and contents. It might be that one or the other verse quoted here to exemplify Pastorius' art could have been taken by him verbatim or almost verbatim from another poet. It would be a superhuman undertaking to try to trace the many poems found in Pastorius' manuscripts to their models: There are too many possibilities in too many different languages.

However, there is one epigram in both the *Beehive* and the *Deliciae Hortenses* manuscripts that can be traced to its source: Pastorius rewrote this well-known epigram by Logau:

Frage.  
Wie wilstu weisse Lilien / zu rothen Rosen machen?  
Küß eine weisse *Galathe*, sie wird errothet lachen.<sup>16</sup>

In Pastorius we find:

Wie wilstu weiße Lilien                      Zu rothen Rosen machen?  
Küß unversehens dein Polyxen,      Sie wird erröthet lachen.<sup>17</sup>

In the case of the *Beehive* a rather different English version follows. DeElla Victoria Toms states that Pastorius' variation of the first half of the second line of the Logau epigram "may be the result of oral transmission, an intervening printed version, or inadequate recollection on the part of Pastorius."<sup>18</sup> It seems to us that the variation might well be deliberate, that Polyxena, the beloved of Achilles, is a good substitute for Logau's Galatheia. There is the "Lilien" / "Polyxen" rhyme; also, Pastorius could have objected to the tautology of "weisse" and "Galathe" (*gala* means milk). The "unversehens" adds the cause for blushing that is not found in the model. As is well known, Gottfried Keller was to use the same epigram by Logau for *Das Sinngedicht* where it serves to define the hero's female ideal. For Pastorius the reference to flowers undoubtedly played a major role in his selection since he was a passionate gardener.

Let us turn to the second type of epigram, the satiric and humorous one:

Den leüten dieser Welt Vergleich ich meine Schrift,  
Beÿ welchen man Viel Wort, u. wenig Witz antriff.<sup>19</sup>

A satiric comment on people in general serves at the same time to deprecate the wordiness and lack of wit of the author's own writings. Of course, the wit and pithiness of the epigram take out at least some of the sting as far as the poet is concerned.

Pastorius shares with Logau and many other authors of the time a strong anticourtly tendency:

Nep or Catmint: If you set it,	Cats will eat it;
If you sow it,	Cats can't know it.
Du streichst den Fuchsschwantz,	Und giebst ein Judas'-Kuß,
Versteh'st die Hoff-sprach gantz,	Dein Grus is Joabs-Grus;
Doch endlich observirts der Printz.	(Chameleon; Syrenen Sohn!)
	Und lohnet dir mit Katzen = Müntz. <sup>20</sup>

This epigram is especially successful with its apt language of metaphors and images. We are fortunate in being able to pinpoint the origin of at least some of the language and thus remove any doubts about authorship. In the *Phraseologia Teutonica* we find the following entry under "Schmeicheln": "einem nach dem mund (maul) reden. den fuchsschwantz streichen. pfeiffen wie er gern dantzen wolte . . . Pöet. liebkooser. fuchsschwäntzer. ein betriegliche\* Sÿrene. Cameleon. \* Polypus. Joabsgrus, Judaskuß" (p. 292). Joab is David's general who, after greeting Amasa with a kiss, stabbed him to death (2 Samuel 20.9-10). Johann Christoph Adelung gives as one meaning for "Katzenmüntz" a counterfeit coin on the basis of the plant's unpleasant odor (*Grammatisch-kritisches Wörterbuch*, Second Part, 1808, p. 1517). Pastorius is here, as in some other epigrams, at the level of the foremost German practitioners of the genre.

The humorous type of epigram is well represented by the following example that lets a watchdog speak:

Garten Hund.	
Horticustos heiß ich, Böse Leüte beiß ich,	Und ihr Strümpf zerreiß ich;
Aber fromme preiß ich,	Bettel-arme speiß ich:
Was jeder thun will, weiß ich	Drumb Horticustos heiß ich.
Man nennt mich auch Triest-Wacker,	Merckts wohl, ihr Trauben-Zwacker. <sup>21</sup>

The epigram shows a combination of humor and the author's pride in his ability to come up with seven consecutive two-word rhymes (the first and last ones are repeated) and the virtuoso performance of "Triest-Wacker . . . Trauben-Zwacker" in the concluding line. "Triest" is the pomace, the residue remaining after pressing wine grapes. "Wacker" means the one who is watching and "Zwacker" is a thief.

Another example of a humorous and, in this case, macaronic verse is the following:

Hanns has his hands and tongue at his Command;  
He keeps most fast what he did promise, and  
Verspricht, und liefert nicht; Das ist ein Schand.<sup>22</sup>

This mixing of English and German, the rhyming of "Command," "and," and "Schand," and the surprise reversal in the last line demonstrate Pastorius' excellent control of two languages and his cleverness at creating a humorous effect with words.

Our third and last type of epigram is the playful one in which the poet shows off his linguistic and formal mastery and is less intent on conveying an idea. Already as a young man Pastorius used an acrostic at

the end of his Latin dissertation *De rasura documentorum* (Altdorf, 1676).<sup>23</sup> There is, to mention just one example of an acrostic in his poetry, the "Blumen und Kräuter ABC" that begins as follows:

Anemone wohl bekannt, Braune Mägdlein, so genannt,  
Hirn = stärckend Camomill, Hertz = erfrischend Daffodil,  
. . .<sup>24</sup>

Equally playful is the fourfold repetition of "mäßig/müßig" in the following epigram that is patterned on the Latin phrase "Cibi modicus, Sibi Medicus":

Wer mäßig u. nicht müßig, Hat alles überflüßig,  
wird keines Dings verdrüßig.  
Vice versa: Wer müßig u. nicht mäßig,  
versoffen u. gefräßig, ist Jedermann verhäßig.  
Mäßig und nicht müßig Leben Hat dem Artzt kein geld zu geben;  
Müßig und nicht mäßig seÿn bringt dem Artzt sein Nahrung ein =  
Füllet ihm den Säckel fein.<sup>25</sup>

Pastorius successfully recreates the Latin "o"/"e" alternation in the "ä"/"ü" variation.

Many more verses for the three types of epigrams presented here and for other kinds of poems could be added. The examples selected can, however, be considered indicative of the best efforts Pastorius was capable of. Their quality implies that he must be taken seriously as an author of German poetry, especially of epigrams. Francis Daniel Pastorius should be appreciated not just in the historical context of the burgeoning German community in Pennsylvania but also as a German-American poet in his own right who gave shape to his ideas and observations in the New World in language and forms that rival those of his continental predecessors and contemporaries.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Arnim Rattermann, ed., *Deutsch-Amerikanische Dichter und Dichtungen des 17ten und 18ten Jahrhunderts: Eine Anthologie*, Sonderabdruck aus dem *Jahrbuch der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Historischen Gesellschaft von Illinois* (1914), pp. 12-20, and John Joseph Stoult, ed., *Pennsylvania German Poetry, 1685-1830*, The Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, 20 (1955) (Allentown, PA: Schlechter's, 1956), pp. 3-7.

<sup>2</sup> Marion Dexter Learned, "From Pastorius' Bee-Hive or Bee-Stock," *Americana Germanica*, 1, No. 4 (1897), 67-110; continued in 2, No. 1 (1898), 33-42; No. 2, 59-70; No. 4, 65-79. Learned is also the author of *The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius, the Founder of Germantown; Illustrated with Ninety Photographic Reproductions; With an Appreciation of Pastorius by Samuel Whitaker Pennypacker* (Philadelphia: Campbell, 1908).

<sup>3</sup> DeElla Victoria Toms, "The Intellectual and Literary Background of Francis Daniel Pastorius," Diss. Northwestern Univ. 1953.

<sup>4</sup> A good but small selection of English poems is found in Harrison T. Meserole, *Seventeenth-Century American Poetry* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1968), pp. 293-304.

<sup>5</sup> *Phraseologia Teutonica*, p. 58. The author gratefully acknowledges the permission granted by Mr. James E. Mooney, Director of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania Library, to quote from this manuscript.

<sup>6</sup> *Phraseologia Teutonica*, p. 110 (recte 310).

<sup>7</sup> R. K. Angress, *The Early German Epigram. A Study in Baroque Poetry* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1971); Jutta Weisz, *Das deutsche Epigramm des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1979); see especially chapter iv.

<sup>8</sup> From a poem that Toms quotes as "Pastorius' own modest statement about his verse" (pp. 230 f.).

<sup>9</sup> *Americana Germanica*, 1, No. 4 (1897), 102. Whenever possible a published version of the poem quoted is referred to. However, corrections were made according to the manuscript version.

<sup>10</sup> *Americana Germanica*, 1, No. 4 (1897), 107.

<sup>11</sup> Rattermann, p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> Learned, *The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius*, pp. 261-263.

<sup>13</sup> Francis Daniel Pastorius, *Deliciae Hortenses or Garden = Recreations and Voluptates Apianae*, ed. Christoph E. Schweitzer (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1982), p. 9 (transcription on p. 53). A longer, nine-line poem on the same thought is found in this collection on p. 17 (transcription on p. 63).

<sup>14</sup> See the reproduction and the following transcription of the *Beehive* title page in Learned, *The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius*, pp. 250-253. Johann Philipp Glock in *Die Symbolik der Bienen und ihrer Produkte in Sage, Dichtung, Kultus, Kunst und Bräuchen der Völker* (Heidelberg: Verlag der vorm. Weiß'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung Theodor Gross, 1891) quotes the proverb "Wie die Biene aus allen Kräutern Süßes saugt, so saugt die Spinne aus allen Gift" (p. 258). The proximity between proverb and epigram is discussed by both Angress, pp. 29 ff. and Weisz, pp. 76 f. Swift also uses the contrast between the bee and the spider in *The Battle of the Books*.

<sup>15</sup> See Arthur Henkel and Albrecht Schöne, ed., *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1967), pp. 302 f. For the poetological significance of the bee metaphor see Jürgen von Stackelberg, "Das Bienengleichnis. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der literarischen Imitatio," *Romanische Forschungen*, 68 (1956), 271-293.

<sup>16</sup> Friedrich von Logau, *Deutscher Sinn-Getichte Drey Tausend* (Breslau, 1654; rpt. 1972), Third Part, p. 175, III, 10, 8.

<sup>17</sup> *Deliciae Hortenses*, p. 9 (transcription on p. 53).

<sup>18</sup> Toms, p. 98.

<sup>19</sup> *Americana Germanica*, 1, No. 4 (1897), 96.

<sup>20</sup> *Deliciae Hortenses*, p. 10 (transcription on p. 56).

<sup>21</sup> *Deliciae Hortenses*, p. 25 (transcription on p. 71).

<sup>22</sup> *Beehive*, p. 148. Quoted with kind permission of Professor Harold Jantz.

<sup>23</sup> See Learned, *The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius*, pp. 78-81. The copy with Pastorius' handwritten explanations is now in the Schwenkfelder Library (Pennsburg, PA).

<sup>24</sup> *Deliciae Hortenses*, p. 15 (transcription on p. 61). *Braune Mägdlein*: the plant adonis or pheasant's eye.

<sup>25</sup> *Americana Germanica*, 1, No. 4 (1897), 103.