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## **Pindarising in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Württemberg – Johannes Kepler’s *Melos Hymeneium Pindaricum* (1591) in the Light of the Epithalamia of Paulus Melissus**

*The paper presents a Pindarising Neo-Latin epithalamium, that the astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) wrote for his friend Gregor Glarean in 1591, and compares it to similar poems by Paulus Melissus Schede (1539–1602). While earlier critics have compared Kepler’s epithalamium mainly to Pindar’s epinicians, I focus on the poem’s relationship with the Pindarising epithalamia of Paulus Melissus Schede, who was a popular Neo-Latin poet at the time. The comparison reveals that Kepler’s epithalamium takes up developments already present in Schede Melissus’ epithalamia, such as the separation of the Pindaric form from epinician content and individual variations in tune with the respective addressee in the epithalamium. At the same time, Kepler maintains an independent stance towards both Schede and Pindar. The paper is complemented by an English translation and a chart of the positions of the planets at the time of the wedding.*

**Keywords:** Pindarising, Pindarism, Pindaric, epithalamium, wedding song, occasional poetry, Paulus Melissus Schede, Johannes Kepler

### **1. Johannes Kepler and his time. Poetry and Science**

When the name Johannes Kepler is mentioned, one typically associates him with being an early modern astronomer and his involvement with the heliocentric worldview. Indeed, Kepler’s most significant astronomical contribution was the discovery or refinement of the laws of planetary motion. He occupies the space between Copernicus, who proposed the idea that the planets and Earth move around the Sun in circles, and Newton, who formu-

lated the laws of mechanics.<sup>1</sup> In Kepler's era, advancements in astronomical tools, particularly telescopes, allowed for detailed observations of planetary movements. Kepler combined these new observations with Copernicus' theories through mathematics and modified them to align with what he observed in the sky. Ultimately, he discovered that planets move on ellipses, that their speeds depend on their distance from the Sun, and that there is a regular correlation between the size of a planet's orbit and the time it takes to complete that orbit.<sup>2</sup>

However, when examining Kepler's life in its entirety, there are other notable aspects. Kepler was born in Weil-der-Stadt, Württemberg, in 1571, and received his education through the Protestant monastic school system in Württemberg (1584–1589 in Adelberg and Maulbronn). He studied theology at the *Stift* in Tübingen (1589–1594), where Michael Maestlin taught astronomy and mathematics. Kepler excelled in these subjects and was sent to the Protestant *Stiftsschule* in Graz, where he taught mathematics and astronomy (1594–1600). This school was the Protestant university of Graz at the time, and it was here that Kepler published his first astronomical book, *Mysterium cosmographicum* (1596), concerning the relationship of the distances of the six known planets in the solar system. Kepler's university in Graz was not the predecessor of the present-day Karl-Franzens-University. This is the rival Jesuit University founded in 1585. Despite the religious tolerance in Graz when Kepler arrived, the end of religious tolerance and Protestant culture in Styria soon followed. Kepler and his colleagues were forced to leave Graz and Inner Austria in 1598. Kepler found refuge in Hungary for a brief period before returning to Graz, where he continued his work. In 1600, he went to Prague to work as the assistant of Tycho Brahe, the most prominent astronomer of that era. Kepler succeeded Tycho Brahe as court mathematician in 1601, and during this period he wrote his most significant astronomical book, the *Astronomia Nova* (1609), and worked on the *Rudolphine Tables* (1627). After Rudolph II's death, Kepler became the Mathematician of

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<sup>1</sup> POSCH (2017: 49–52).

<sup>2</sup> KERNER (2022: 307–330); HOLDER (2015: 101–109).

the Estates of Upper Austria in Linz (1612–1627), where he remained until he became the personal astrologer of Wallenstein during the Thirty Years War. Kepler died while traveling in Regensburg in 1630.<sup>3</sup>

Aside from his contributions to astrodynamics, Kepler was also an engaged natural philosopher, literary artist, and theologian.<sup>4</sup> These diverse roles were not in conflict for Kepler. He referred to himself as ‘a priest reading from the book of nature’ in the preface to his *Epitome Astronomiae Copernicanae*, which in his own view is the reason why he dedicated his life to astronomy and mathematics.<sup>5</sup> However, astronomy was mainly a *Hilfswissenschaft* of astrology in Early Modernity, and astrology was intertwined with many areas of life, as is evident in Kepler’s role as astrologer for Wallenstein. There is a conflict between science and religion for late-modern people, but it was not present during Kepler’s time.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, the exclusivity between creative art and critical science, which is evident in late modernity, did not exist in Kepler’s era. Kepler combined both spheres, often using poetic passages in his scientific works. These passages were not only decorative but explain his process of finding knowledge and convey qualitative points about his research.

## 2. Kepler’s *Melos Hymeneium Pindaricum*: Introduction

The poem I will be discussing in this paper is Kepler’s *Melos Hymeneium Pindaricum*, a ‘wedding poem in the style of Pindar’ that he wrote for his fellow student, and possibly his teacher or tutor, Gregor Glarean in 1591, when Kepler was just 19 years old and still studying theology in Tübingen.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See POSCH (2017) for a comprehensive life of Kepler.

<sup>4</sup> See ZITELMANN (2016), who explores Kepler’s world view from a theological point of view.

<sup>5</sup> KGW 7 (9, 10–11): *Denique cum Suae Caesareae Majestatis Vestraque, Proceres, liberalitate, constitutum me veluti sacerdotem Dei Conditoris ex parte libri Naturae intelligam* – ‘Finally, with His Imperial Majesty’s and your, my Nobles, licence, I would like to understand myself as a priest of the Lord Creator [reading] from the Book of Nature.’

<sup>6</sup> This does not mean that Kepler had an uncritical understanding of religion or astrology, for instance. He rather applied scientific thinking to areas that would appear to stand beyond science to most late modern people. Cf. POSCH (2017: 16).

<sup>7</sup> See in the Appendix for the entire poem with translation.

Chronologically, this is the second poem of Kepler that has been recorded. As it was written when Kepler was still very young, many of the general considerations when looking at Kepler as a whole are not immediately important for this particular poem. In my opinion, it is a particularly interesting poem as it shows that Kepler's poetry from the very start of his poetic activity was programmatic. One critic has claimed that it was only a 'finger exercise' or the by-product of the social life of an academic in Early Modern Germany.<sup>8</sup> I hope to show, though, that in its unity this early poem is characteristic of Kepler's artistic mind, and that it is a valid example for Kepler's literary ambition beyond mere exercise.

Kepler's epithalamium follows strictly the meter of Pindar's *Olympian 1*, or what was believed to be the meter of Pindar's *Olympian 1* in the 16<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>9</sup> and is therefore considered a Pindarising poem.<sup>10</sup> The poem was printed, along with two other occasional poems for other occasions probably by Gregor Glarean himself in 1601, ten years after the poem had been written. This print exists today in one version in the Landesbibliothek of Württemberg.<sup>11</sup> However, the gap in time and the absence of Kepler himself from the printing process mean that there might be mistakes in the print.

To begin, Kepler's epithalamium is structured like a Pindaric choral ode. It consists of three triads of strophe, antistrophe, and epode, which are metrically built exactly like the triads in Pindar's *Olympian 1*, according to the metrical understanding of Greek choral odes of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The only difference is that Kepler's epithalamium consists of only three triads, while *Olympian 1* consists of four.

The poem begins with a very long heading that explains exactly what it is for:

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<sup>8</sup> SECK (1973: 435–436) seems to suggest this.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. SECK–BALZERT (2020: 312).

<sup>10</sup> On the meaning of Pindarising in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, cf. SCHMITZ (1993: 17–19), and below.

<sup>11</sup> GLAREANUS 1601. Cf. SECK–BALZERT (2020: 318).

For the second act<sup>12</sup> being the first wedding of the very honorable and very learned man, Sir M. Gregor Glarean, from Stuttgart, deacon in Gruibingen, mathematician not of low rank, with the very chaste virgin Anna, daughter of an honest man, Fabian Kommerell, citizen and former councillor of Tübingen, to be celebrated in Tübingen on the 22 June in the year 1591: a wedding song in the style of Pindar.<sup>13</sup>

The first triad of the poem praises the attributes and abilities of the addressee. The strophe praises him as a propagator of Christianity – ‘divine trumpet of Christ’<sup>14</sup> – and with mythological pictures in the style of Pindar – Charis and Maia take care of the special man. In the antistrophe, this mythological course is continued with a special view on Glarean’s talents as a craftsman and creator of models and gadgets – a gift he is given by Daedalus and Hermes. Finally, in the epode, Glarean is described as a gifted astronomer who ‘tames the labyrinthine courses of the stars with the spindle of his genius.’<sup>15</sup>

The second triad depicts Gregor Glarean’s involvement as an astrologer. The strophe provides an exemplary description of the horoscopes of two individuals, Amyntas and Deucalion, whose names suggest a young and naive person and an older and wise person, respectively.<sup>16</sup> In the antistrophe, the addressee, who possesses the knowledge to interpret horoscopes, which are ‘strings led by the sacred thumb,’ is portrayed as someone who is ‘related to God’<sup>17</sup> and can therefore guide both the common people and the clever ones. This individual understands that astrology ultimately has no binding power over human beings. The epode continues this argument by acknowledging the Holy Trinity as the only truly universal power and

<sup>12</sup> This refers to the order of the three texts in Glarean’s 1601 publication.

<sup>13</sup> GLAREANUS (1601: 4v): *In actum secundum Primarum Nuptiarum integerrimi, doctissimique viri, D. M. Gregorii Glareani Stutgardiensis, Diaconi in Gruibingen, Mathematici haudquaquam postremi, cum pudicissimâ virgine Anna, honesti viri, Fabiani Kommerelli, civis, & quondam Senatoris Tubingensis F. Tubingae 10. Cal. Quintil. Anno 1591. celebratarum: Melos Hymeneium Pindaricum.*

<sup>14</sup> 6: *dia buccina Christi.*

<sup>15</sup> 36–37: *Labyrintheosque / Refraenat ingeni turbine gyros.*

<sup>16</sup> See n. 55 and 56.

<sup>17</sup> 69–70: *sacro / ducta pollice fila; 65: congenerem Deo.*

by mentioning Proteus, who can change his own nature, as an example of human beings' ability to shape their own destiny.

In the third triad, Kepler describes a favorable horoscope for the wedding and offers the couple his best wishes. The strophe addresses the Sun and requests that it bring together the other celestial bodies in a horoscope. The antistrophe describes this horoscope in detail, including the placement of Mars in Scorpio and Mercury in the Eleventh House, likely in Leo or Cancer. It is not clear whether or not this horoscope could refer exactly to the horoscope of the day of the wedding.<sup>18</sup> If not, it might represent (partly) an ideal horoscope for a wedding that an astrologer like Glarean would recognize as such. In the epode, Kepler renews his good wishes for the couple, hoping that they will live harmoniously to a ripe old age, have prosperity, children, honour, happiness, and friends.<sup>19</sup> He also asks that God bless them with 'divine warmth'<sup>20</sup> and assist them in bearing children.

The epithalamium is signed by Kepler with a Greek salutation expressing felicitation and gratitude.<sup>21</sup>

### 3. Pindarising in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century

From a formal standpoint, the epithalamium is clearly indebted to Pindaric choral odes, especially Olympian 1. To fully comprehend the poem, it is essential to contextualize it within the Pindaric or Pindarising tradition of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Pindar's odes were made available to a book-reading audience in Western Europe once again in 1513, the year of Aldus Manutius' initial printed edition. This edition was soon followed by Zacharias Kallierges' edition and commentary in 1515, which was widely popularized by a slightly inferior but much less expensive edition by Brubach in 1542, with numerous

<sup>18</sup> See n. 61 and Appendix 2.

<sup>19</sup> 131: *Opes, genus, decus, gaudia, amicos.*

<sup>20</sup> 136: *Fotu [...] sacro.*

<sup>21</sup> 142–147: *Scriptum / Συγχαριστίας καὶ εὐχαριστίας / ἔνεκα ἃ / Joanne Kepplero / Villano, / Tubingae 1591.*

reprints.<sup>22</sup> By the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, Pindar's odes were available to individuals with humanistic interests in Western and Central Europe. At the same time, Pindar became a popular poet for emulation. An important moment in the entry of Pindar into the modern European literary canon seems to be the work of French Grecist and poet Jean Dorat,<sup>23</sup> who influenced the poets of the *Pléiade*, including Pierre de Ronsard, who published his *Quatre premiers liures des Odes* in 1550, which were French poems in the Pindaric style. This appears to have started or given impetus to a fashion of Pindarising poetry in Renaissance France.<sup>24</sup> The tradition of composing poems in the style of Pindar seems to have spread from France (and Italy)<sup>25</sup> and to have reached neo-Latin and other vernacular languages. It continued to be vibrant well into the Baroque era, with Martin Opitz's (1597–1639) poems in German,<sup>26</sup> for example. Kepler's *Melos* is situated in the middle of this development and is, thus, entirely typical of its time.

One feature that sets Kepler's poem apart is that it closely emulates the meter of Pindar's *Olympian* 1. To appreciate this point, it is necessary to remember that Greek lyrical poetry, including choral odes, was only deciphered metrically in the way that is still considered correct today by August Boeckh in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>27</sup> In editions and commentaries of Pindar from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the text was broken off differently, in shorter cola. Kepler's *Melos* strictly follows the number of syllables and the brevia and longa of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century editions. This can be demonstrated through a comparison with an excerpt from *Olympian* 1 in the Brubach edition from 1542:<sup>28</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Cf. SCHMITZ (1993: 264–308).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. PFEIFFER (1958: 76–83) for a concise summary of Dorat's achievement as poet and philologist.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. SCHMITZ (1993: 17–26), SECK (1973: 435–436).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. SCHMITZ (1993: 24–26) on the potential influence of the Italians Francesco Filelfo (1398–1481), Gian Giorgio Trissino (1478–1550), Benedetto Lampridio (1478–1540), Luigi Alamanni (1495–1556) and Antonio Minturno (1500–1574) on the Pindaric odes of Ronsard with the older literature.

<sup>26</sup> e.g. *Ueber das Absterben Herrn Adams von Bibran auff Profen unnd Damßdorff*, OESTERLEY ed. (1888: 39–40).

<sup>27</sup> BOECKHIUS (1811: I; XXVIII–XXXII), cf. SECK–BALZERT (2020: 312).

<sup>28</sup> See also SECK (1973: 445–446) for a comparison with the edition of Ceperinus from 1526.

Pind. *Ol.* 1, 1–9:<sup>29</sup>

ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ, ὁ δὲ  
 χρυσὸς αἰθόμενον πῦρ  
 ἄτε διαπρέπει νυ-  
 τὶ μέγανος ἔξοχα πλούτου.  
 εἰ δ' ἄεθλα γαρεύει,  
 ἔλδεται φίλον ἦτορ,  
 μηκέθ' ἀλίου σκόπει  
 ἄλλο θαλπνότερον  
 ἐν ἀμέρᾳ φαεινὸν ἄστρον,

Kepler, *Melos Hymeneium* 1–9:

1 Uolantum intime mentium  
 2 Rector, ὁ Cytharoede  
 3 Bombe, quid intonabis?  
 4 Querulumne gamelion ille  
 5 GLAREANVS excitat,  
 6 Dia buccina Christi:  
 7 Prodigum salutis an-  
 8 cile perpetuae  
 9 Deus quod aethere è sereno

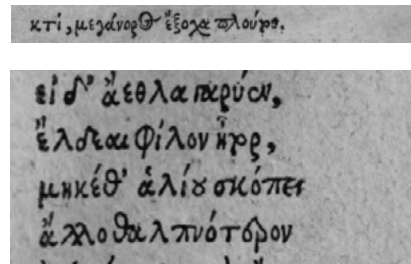
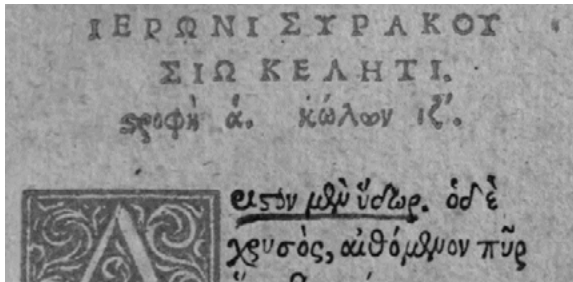


Figure 1: Petrus Brubach, *Pindari Olympia, Pythia, Nemea, Isthmia*. Frankfurt 1542.  
 Digitized by the University of Regensburg. *Olympian* 1, vv. 1–9, excerpts from pp. 7r, 7v, 8r.

This complete emulation of the form of the odes is a possible but not a necessary part of Pindaric imitation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Many poets only imitate the triadic structure of Pindaric Odes. However, Johannes Kepler may have known very recent Neo-Latin models for his close imitation of the structure. Jean Dorat published his Latin poems in Paris in 1586. His collection includes similarly tight formal imitations of Pindar, such as his ode *Ad Ronsardum*,<sup>30</sup> for his poet-friend Ronsard, who himself wrote Pindaric odes in French. This ode follows the structure of Pindar's *Olympian* 2 in similar fashion.

<sup>29</sup> Text after BRUBACHIUS (1542), cf. figure 1.

<sup>30</sup> AURATUS LEMOVICIS (1586: 176–181) *Ad Ronsardum. Ode ad numeros Pindaricos*.



#### 4. Kepler's *Melos Hymeneium Pindaricum* between convention, innovation and accident

After examining the context of Pindaric poetry in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it is necessary to consider how young Kepler created the *Melos Hymeneium*. This poem follows different conventions of the time, including a social convention in which intellectuals exchanged occasional Latin poems for events in their lives.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, it was not uncommon and fashionable to write occasional poems in the style and form of Pindar, reflecting thus a literary-generic convention.

The school system that Kepler was educated in was an important factor in enabling him to produce such a poem, as it included creative writing exercises in Latin in imitation of classical models from a relatively early age.<sup>32</sup> Friedrich Seck has fittingly compared the writing of neo-Latin poetry to the playing of the piano in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a typical pastime of (aspiring) members of the cultural elite.<sup>33</sup> Young Kepler's studies in Tübingen included besides mathematics and astronomy also Latin and Greek language and rhetorics, which at the time were represented by the notable philologist Martin Crusius (1526-1607). Crusius' teachings and example certainly shaped Kepler and furnished the necessary skills for the writing of Latin poetry.<sup>34</sup>

While Pindaric occasional poems were relatively common, epithalamia in the style of Pindar were not present in the earlier French tradition of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, nor does anything in the odes of Pindar themselves make them

<sup>31</sup> Cf. SECK (1973: 436–437).

<sup>32</sup> Cf. HOLTZ 2022; SECK (1973: 428–433).

<sup>33</sup> SECK (1973: 439).

<sup>34</sup> Kepler's student relationship to Crusius can be grasped in Kepler's self-characterisation from 1597, within which he remembers to have striven to learn, all examples from Crusius' grammar by heart' (*Grammaticae Crusij omnia exempla ediscere tentavit.*) and characterises his own talents as a writer in comparison of the famous rhetorician: 'He [= Kepler himself] was even with Crusius in his alertness for super-fine matters, much inferior in his industriousness, superior in his judgement. The other (= Crusius) worked by bringing things together, he (= Kepler) by separating them, the other a rake, he a wedge' (*Crusio par diligentia minutula, labore longe inferior, iudicio major. Laborabat ille colligendo, hic separando, ille rastrum, hic cuneus.*) KGW 19, 328–329; cf. ZITELMANN (2016: 57); SECK–BALZERT (2020: 13).

appear particularly suitable to be reshaped as epithalamia. The particular combination of Pindar's odes and wedding poems would be a far-reaching expansion of the Pindaric tradition. 19 year-old Kepler would have been a literary innovator of astonishing independence, if he performed this feat without a model.

Friedrich Seck treats the combination of Pindar and wedding poem as an accident and suggests that young Kepler meant it to be a difficult finger exercise for showing off, and, thus, totally missed the point of his model.<sup>35</sup> Kepler himself remembered this poem a couple of years later in a way that supports Seck's argument. In the description of his own character in 1598, he lists his *Melos* as one of the difficult feats he has achieved so far, only mentioning his model (Pindar), not the fit between the model and the content (wedding): 'He wrote a poem in the style of Pindar.'<sup>36</sup> Pindar would have been a fitting object to show off in this way: he was thought of as the most complicated Greek poet, and one of the Greek course books of the 16<sup>th</sup> century that Kepler might have known presented *Olympian* 1 as the marker of perfection at the end of its reading syllabus.<sup>37</sup> However, in the opinion of this reader, the *Melos Hymeneium* has too much artistic unity to be explicable by such accidents alone.

The praise of the groom, Gregor Glarean, artfully shows different aspects of the man in an organic order, and intertwined with digressions, that truly resembles Pindar's praise of Hieron, naturally in a parodic fashion. After Glarean's mythological birth and education (13–23), we see him in action as an engineer making a model of the world (24–34). This model, whose purpose is to understand celestial mechanics leads to a description of Glarean's activities as an astronomer (35–47), which are the foundation of his activity as astrologer, which we perceive, like before, in the shape of the results: his horoscopes and his counsels gained from astrology (48–64). This leads us back to the man and his model of the solar system. Glarean is

<sup>35</sup> SECK-BALZERT (2020: 311); SECK (1973: 436) 'schon im Ansatz verfehlt.'

<sup>36</sup> *Scriptis melos Pindaricum*, KGW (19, 328, 7, 30). For a translation and commentary, see HAMMER (1971: 16–30; 87–90), see also SECK (1973: 434–436).

<sup>37</sup> CLENARDUS (1557: 380–388) with an interlinear translation into Latin.

shown as the god of his model (65–74), a variation of the ever-present hubris motive in Pindar's Odes,<sup>38</sup> which leads to a digression on the relationship of God, Man, the free will and the role of astrology (75–94). In the end, the various strings are brought together in a possibly idealized horoscope for the wedding day (95–128) including a call to the sun that resembles a similar passage in *Olympian* 1.<sup>39</sup>

The self-conscious, meta-poetic quality of the *Melos* comes to the fore even more, when one considers a contemporary model. The idea to write an epithalamium in the style of Pindar, was not an innovation of young Kepler but had been done a little time before by Paul Melissus Schede (1539–1602),<sup>40</sup> a famous German neo-Latin poet and *poeta laureatus* of Emperor Ferdinand I. These Pindaric epithalamia had been published in 1586 in the second edition of his collection *Schediasmata Poetica*. Paulus Melissus fills the gap between the Pindaric poets in France, who wrote Latin and French, and those in Germany, who at the time wrote mainly in Latin: Paulus Melissus spent time in Paris in 1567/8 and again in 1584/5 where he met Pierre de Ronsard. His Pindaric epithalamia, which in the German context had to be written in Latin and not in German, were heavily influenced by these encounters. An important innovation in Schede's Pindaric poems is that they address not only people from the nobility, like the Pindaric poems of Dorat and De Ronsard, but mainly urban bourgeois people.<sup>41</sup>

### 5. Paulus Melissus Schede and his Pindarising Epithalamia<sup>42</sup>

There are three extant Pindaric epithalamia in Paulus Melissus' *Schediasmata*, all of which are addressed to bourgeois city patricians: 1. *In Nuptias Sebaldi Welseri*, 2. *Ioanni Iacobo et Ioanni Ludovico Hainzelis, patriciis Augustanis*,

<sup>38</sup> Cf. DICKIE 1984, GRIFFITH (2009: 76).

<sup>39</sup> *Melos Hymeneium* 95–100; Pind. *Ol.* 1, 5–7; for other markers of Pindaric style in the poem see SECK-BALZERT (2020: 314–317).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. ROBERT (2007: 205–213) with a detailed biography.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. SCHULTHEISS (2015: 247–252).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. SCHULTHEISS (2015: 252–260) for an extensive treatment of the poems.

*nuptias celebrantibus*, 3. *Abelo Strasburgo sponso*.<sup>43</sup> The interesting specific elements of each of these poems will be presented, as they provide a basis for comparison with Kepler's *Melos*.

The first Pindaric epithalamium is the wedding poem for Sebald Welser, a patrician in Augsburg and Nuremberg.<sup>44</sup> This poem is interesting with respect to its structure and focus on the generic conventions of the epithalamium. It can be seen as the archetype of Paulus Melissus' Pindaric epithalamia. The poem consists of two triads, with the first Strophe addressing the bride and groom in conjunction with the Muses. The first antistrophe calls for the joys of marriage, while the first epode praises the beauty of the bride. The second strophe encourages the groom to appreciate the beauty of his future wife, and the second antistrophe calls for the groom's mother to accept the bride into the family and for the bride's father to do the same with the groom. Finally, the second epode expresses the hope that the bride's father will have a long life and, more significantly, procreate through his children, like the mythical phoenix. This imagery at the same time encourages the newlyweds to have many children.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of this Pindaric poem is that, aside from its triadic form, which metrically resembles a Pindaric ode, its content is entirely that of an epithalamium, not at all epinician. This is markedly different from Dorat's or De Ronsard's Pindaric Odes, which typically relate to a contemporary hero, often a French nobleman, and, thus, maintain some degree of panegyric-epinician content. In Melissus' ode, there is none of this. Only the form, the metre, and some stylistic features, such as the use of compound neologisms, are Pindaric at first glance. The most obvious of these stylistic markers is the compressed, obscure *pars mythica* in the wish for many children at the end of the epithalamium, via the reference to the phoenix.

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<sup>43</sup> MELISSUS (1586: 41–43; 35–36; 44–46). See also SCHULTHEISS (2015: 254–256; 262–267) with translations.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. SCHULTHEISS (2015: 252–253).

In fact, Schede's turn towards epithalamia in Pindaric form takes up a faint wedding theme present in some of Pindar's odes: in the *pars mythica* of Olympian 1, Pelops turns to horse-racing to win Hippodameia and is allowed to marry her as a result of his victory; in the beginning of Olympian 7, Pindar compares himself, who is presenting epinician odes to winners, with a father, who presents a bowl of wine to his son-in-law at the wedding day; and, in the *pars mythica* of Nemeian 5, Peleus, who successfully rejected the overtures of Acastus' wife Hippolyta, is awarded with the hand of Thetis.<sup>45</sup> One ode even combines the motives of athletic victory and of marriage on different levels over its entire length: in Pythian 9, Telesikrates' victory at Pytho serves as a pretext to tell the marriage story of Apollo and Kyrene in an extensive *pars mythica*, which throws a light on the young victor, who is encouraged to use his new-won fame to find a wife in his home polis; this hope is matched with the story of Telesikrates' ancestor Alexidamos, who won his wife in a footrace.<sup>46</sup> In none of Pindar's odes, though, not even in Pythian 9, is the epinician replaced completely by an epithalamium in the way Schede has chosen to do in his Pindaric epithalamia.

With Paulus Melissus Schede's epithalamia published, the abolition of epinician content in a Pindaric ode, which later became common in German baroque poetry,<sup>47</sup> is already an established artistic possibility for young Kepler in 1591. This was likely a prerequisite for his decision to compose an astrological epithalamium in Pindaric form. In the light of Schede's epithalamia, Kepler's work appears as a continuation of what Schede had begun before him.

Another interesting point of reference for Kepler's transformation of his model Schede is the wedding poem for the brothers Johann Jakob and Johann Ludwig Hainzel, patricians from Augsburg.<sup>48</sup> One of the marked features of Schede's epithalamium for Sebald Welser is the poem's restriction to content

<sup>45</sup> Pind. *O.* 1, 67–71; 88–89; 7, 1–10; *N.* 5, 25–37.

<sup>46</sup> Pind. *P.* 9, 1–70; 97–100; 98–123; vgl. KÖHNKEN (1985) with an interpretation unveiling the parallel of marriage and ultimate satisfaction after a victory.

<sup>47</sup> SCHULTHEISS (2015: 259).

<sup>48</sup> Cf. SCHULTHEISS (2015: 253–254).

that pertains solely to the wedding occasion. This is atypical of Pindar's odes, which generally contain aphoristic or sententia-like parts that reference general ideas of religion, wisdom, or virtue. Schede's second poem is notable because it contains such a portion in its second antistrophe:

|   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| [...] nam probis                        |    | [...] Because righteousness is the companion of the righteous: odd things are followed through by those that have been born from a tribe of odd people. Happy offspring, learn to listen to words of |
| Probitas comes est: prava sequuntur     |    | praise in your honour and to know the  |
| Stirpe sati pravorum.                   |    | new name of glory. As good trees rejoice   |
| Felix propago, tuam disce               |    | to have brought forth good fruit, likewise   |
| Sentiscere laudem, et novum adorea      | 50 | parents shall be joyous and feel themselves  |
| Nosse nomen. Ut bonae gaudent           |    | honoured by a well-mannered  |
| Bonum arbores tulisse fructum;          |    | offspring. Leave aside fame and honour   |
| Prole sic bene moratâ ipsi              |    | itself – what is there in this world worthy  |
| Exhilarantur honestanturque parentes.   |    | of praise or glory?  |
| Deme famam et ipsum honorem;            | 60 |  |
| Laudi quid hoc in orbe aut gloriae est? |    |  |

Even though this passage is completely attuned to the topic of parental pride in one's offspring – one of the desired results of marriage – the excursus can stand much more independently than any part of the epithalamium for Sebald Welsch could. This passage is in this respect more Pindaric than the rest of the epithalamium.<sup>49</sup>

It is worth noting that a similar passage can be found in Johannes Kepler's *Melos Hymenaeum Pindaricum*. However, what sets Kepler's passage apart is its even greater deviation from the topic of marriage: the second epode of Kepler's poem provides a general observation on the state of human beings in the world in relation to astrology.<sup>50</sup> This departure from the central theme of marriage in a Pindaric epithalamium is a noteworthy aspect of Kepler's work and highlights his experimentation with the Pindaric form:

<sup>49</sup> Notably, v. 59 is also reminiscent of a similar passage in Pind. O. 10, 86–87: ἀλλ' ὥτε παῖς ἐξ ἀλόχου πατρὶ / ποθεινός – 'but like a child that is born from its mother's womb is longed for by the father'.

<sup>50</sup> See above.

Neque enim  
 Cathenata vis adurget hominem 80  
 Poli, neque necesse ferreum.

*Epodos Col. 13.*

Sed illa verenda Nati  
 Patris halitusque  
 Fouentis vnitas ordia rerum  
 Vt initio omnium seminaverant: 85  
 Teres gremium septiformis aethrae,  
 Citosque omniparentis orbis ambitus,  
 Doctasque Elementa flammulas  
 Formare molliter  
 Et fingere motus 90  
 Corde in sequace Protheos,  
 Suae domuêre Iconis  
 Potenti voluntate, hominis, Deûm  
 Arbitrio potiti.

Because neither  
 the power of chains of Heaven urges Man  
 forward, nor an iron necessity.

*2<sup>nd</sup> Epode*

But that venerable unity of the Son,  
 the Father and the well-meaning  
 Spirit had sown the order of the world  
 as if for the beginning of everything:  
 the rounded womb of the sevenfold ether,  
 the quick, all-bearing courses of the heavenly  
 bodies,  
 and the little flames that are able to softly  
 form the elements  
 and to instill impulses  
 in the docile heart of Protheus  
 to rule about his own shape  
 with a mighty will, as he was a man,  
 endowed with the freedom of the gods.

In this excursus that is thematically related to the poem but stands apart from the rest, Johannes Kepler proclaims the view that astrology has no binding power over the human being (or at least over human beings who are like Proteus). The reason for this is theological: the Holy Trinity, which stands at the beginning of all worldly things, endows the human being with free will, which allows them to change their nature and their fate like Proteus can change his physical appearance. This is a view of astrology that Kepler has repeated often in later writings.<sup>51</sup>

The similarity between this excursus and the excursus in Paulus Melissus' poem lies mainly in the form. One point of particular interest is the enjambement between the strophes at the beginning of both excursus. Enjambement is a common stylistic element in Pindar's odes or one could even say that in Pindar's odes usually the different parts of the triads do not serve to organize the ode thematically but only rhythmically.<sup>52</sup> In the odes of

<sup>51</sup> Cf. SECK-BALZERT (2020: 312).

<sup>52</sup> Cf. GIANNINI (2008).

the 16<sup>th</sup> century and also in Paulus Melissus Schede's and in Johannes Kepler's ode(s), strophe, antistrophe and epode usually do represent thematic blocks.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, it seems to be no chance that Paulus Melissus used a Pindaric enjambement in his Pindaric excursus in his epithalamium to the brothers Hainzel. Kepler took this combination of conspicuously Pindaric elements from his model, which is not only Pindar but also Schede.

Schede's epithalamium *Abelo Strasburgo sponso* 'For the groom Abel Strasburger' consists only of one triad. Abel Strasburger was an advocate, who also wrote poetry and probably liked to think of himself as a poet.<sup>54</sup> Paulus Melissus Schede as I have described, was the closest thing to a professional poet one could have in Early Modernity. So, this epithalamium is written from one poet to another poet.

It is therefore laden with poetological and intertextual allusions that are meant to speak to the other poet. The topic of the wedding and the couple is secondary. The poem begins with an address to the groom that calls him *lep- idulum venustulumque* – 'my cute and lovely one' and thus speaks to the poet in the most intimate manner of friendship. The rest of the strophe is used to ask two questions: In short: Isn't there a choir of nymphs to sing a wedding song in your parts? Must I sing your wedding song? In the following antistrophe, the poet suggests other famous poets and rhetoricians of the time who might be more suitable: Gregor Bersman, the professor for philology and ethics in Leipzig, Johannes Caselius, professor for Greek, philosophy and rhetoric in Helmstedt, and Nathan Chytraeus, a famous humanist and author of three books of epithalamia and epitaphs. The first half of the poem is thus spent on feigned diversions and a topical statement of humility – many others would be more fit to sing a wedding song. The rest of the antistrophe is spent on a preparation of the wedding: Juno is appealed to; the evening star and the other stars bring the night and invite for the wedding, which can be read here as an invitation for sex. The epode, finally, shows the couple kissing each other madly and encourages the couple to have sex. The

<sup>53</sup> Cf. SCHULTHEISS (2015: 249–250; 253).

<sup>54</sup> Cf. SCHULTHEISS (2015: 254); KARRER (1993: 442).



epode is highly reminiscent of parts of various carmina of Catullus, particularly *carmen* 5, the famous *da mihi basia mille*, and *carmen* 99.<sup>55</sup>

While being a creative take on the topic of wedding, the wedding song for Abel Strasburger works mainly as a metapoetical piece. The topical humble refusal of the poet to take on his task fills half of the poem. The rest is about sex, artfully clad in reminiscences of Catullus, and thus skips most parts of a conventional epithalamium. From a metapoetical point of view it is an overly obvious collection of topoi from Catullus. In both respects, the delay of the wedding by the poet in the first half and the overly obvious haste of the poem in the second half create a comic effect and may, at the same time, express the state of mind of the young couple in the moment of marriage – again not without an element of humour.

Also this third epithalamium of Schede is an interesting model for Kepler's *Melos*. Schede's epithalamium for Strasburger plays with the fact that Schede and Strasburger are both poets and that we are therefore witnessing a take on an epithalamium from one poet to another. This special situation allows Schede to almost completely drop the conventions of the epithalamium with a comic effect. The epithalamium that is announced turns out to be entirely about the groom, and about the groom as a reader of Catullus. Similarly, Kepler's *Melos Hymeneium* is announced and concluded as an epithalamium, but is in fact a poem for the groom, that addresses him not mainly in his function of groom but as an astronomer, astrologer and theologian. The relationship between the poet and the addressee in Kepler's *Melos*, thus, mirrors the same relationship in Schede's *Abelo Strasburgo sponso*: here a poet writes to a poet about poetry, there an astronomer-astrologer-theologian writes to another one about astronomy, astrology and theology. Only the barest frame of the epithalamium is kept. Kepler seems to have adopted the degree of individual adaptation that Schede introduced to Pindaric poetry and applies it to his and his addressee's circumstances.

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<sup>55</sup> SCHULTHEISS (2015: 256–258).

## 6. Conclusion: Schede's Influence on Kepler's *Melos* and Kepler's Artistic Independence

Comparing Kepler's *Melos* with the Pindarising epithalamia of Paulus Melissus Schede, it becomes clear that Kepler was aware of either Schede's work, or something similar to it. As Schede was the most famous contemporary Neo-Latin poet of the time, and the first person to compose Pindarising epithalamia, publishing them five years before Kepler wrote his *Melos*, it is highly likely that Schede's epithalamia were Kepler's model. The similarities between the pronounced combination of Pindaric enjambement and Pindaric excursus and the singular focus on the grooms' capacities in both Schede's and Kepler's wedding songs add weight to this claim.

Kepler's *Melos*, thus, must be looked at completely differently than before. This is not merely a formally close and thematically awkward imitation of Pindar, but rather a demonstration of Kepler's knowledge of the Pindarising tradition of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, specifically of the late 1580s. Kepler is completely up-to-date, aware of the latest contemporary poetry, and he uses it as a model for his own work, while continuing to develop Pindaric poetry in his own way. Kepler fills his academic version of the epithalamium with content that is fitting for the audience he had in mind, taking the tradition established by Schede and transforming it.

Furthermore, Kepler takes a literary stance in contrast to Schede. Although both use the Pindaric form, Schede employs themes from love poetry and the epithalamium tradition, while Kepler uses the form to discuss theological subjects and astrology. Kepler's *Melos* is, in some respects, closer to Pindar, Dorat, and De Ronsard than to Schede, particularly in the choice of the panegyric of the ingenious man rather than the poet or lover. Kepler also follows Pindar more closely in the form and the choice of his devices. In sum, Kepler's *Melos hymenaeum Pindaricum* reveals a young poet who is not only capable of setting words in a meter but of playing in the field of literature, interacting with his contemporaries, and in possession of his own unique voice.

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## Appendix 1

### *Melos Hymeneium Pindaricum – Text and Translation*

IN ACTVM SECVNDUM  
 Primarum Nuptiarum  
 INTEGERRIMI,  
 DOCTISSIMIQUE VIRI, D.  
 M. GREGORII GLAREANI  
 Stutgardiensis, Diaconi in Gruibingen,  
 Mathematici haudquaquam postremi,  
 cum pudicissimâ virgine Anna,  
 honesti viri, Fabiani Kommerelli, cuius,  
 et quondam Senatoris Tubingensis  
 F. Tubingae 10. Cal. Quintil. Anno 1591.  
 celebratarum:

*Melos Hymeneium Pindaricum.*

*Stropha 1. Col. 17.*

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Uolantum intime mentium         |    |
| Rector, ô Cytharoede            |    |
| Bombe, quid intonabis?          |    |
| Querulumne gamelion ille        |    |
| GLAREANVS excitat,              | 5  |
| Dia buccina Christi:            |    |
| Prodigum salutis an-            |    |
| cile perpetuae                  |    |
| Deus quod aethere è sereno      |    |
| Humo indulsit? illi apex        | 10 |
| Morum et eruditionis            |    |
| Carptus, obumbrat Caput.        |    |
| Venerigena Charis               |    |
| Ventre matris editum            |    |
| Manibus abluit tepidulis.       | 15 |
| Paternas Atlantias dedit aquas, |    |
| Suique apice montis abdidit.    |    |

*Antistropha 17.*

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Manum Daedalus, ingenI  |    |
| Argicida recessus       |    |
| Fingere iuſi, vterque   | 20 |
| Juene obstupuere polito |    |

Caeteros nigrae supra  
 Continentis alumnos.  
 Iuſſa quercus, illius  
 Ad manus sequitur. 25  
 Fit orbici toreuma mundi:  
 Fit ingentis aetheris  
 Compes, vnde concitatum  
 Implicitis orbitis,  
 Celeriter oculo 30  
 Comprehendit altero:  
 Fit aqua et eminentis humi apex:  
 Fit vmbellae iter volucre tenuis,  
 Breuis spacia lucis indicans.

*Epodos Col. 13.*  
 Vagos numerat ille motus, 35  
 Labyrintheosque  
 Refraenat ingenl turbine gyros.  
 Quadrifidus ipse vix certius suum  
 Olympus iter nouit aut reuoluit.  
 Fatigata vbi lumina obsidet sopor, 40  
 Mortalibus atque caeteris  
 Muta incubat quies  
 Tunc hic sua pernox  
 Stat sydera intuens: iuuat  
 Sagacia commercia 45  
 Inire, et choros cernere lacteo  
 Tripudiare circo.

*Stropha 2. Col. 17.*  
 Libris inde patentibus  
 Sera secula pandit.  
 Indicio futuri 50  
 Noua pagina surgit. Amyntae  
 Scorpionum reciprocatur  
 Promptus aethere Stilbon.  
 Cyprida inclytâ locat  
 Parte Deucalion. 55  
 Nec respuit benigna Phoebe.  
 Hic ergò pius sapit.  
 Asserit Ceres fluentis  
 Diuitias: lubrica

Propè rotula Deae 60  
 Nutat, icta Leucadi  
 Jubare pertinace senis. Ar-  
 Ma Bellona ruminat sacrilega.  
 Jouem Geticus occupat Deus.

*Antistrophe 17.*

O et congenerem Deo 65  
 Aetherisque potitum  
 Delicijs virum: cûi  
 Redeuntis imagine mundi  
 Replicare fas sacro  
 Ducta pollice fila. 70  
 Instar ille numinis  
 Mente vaticinâ  
 Vetat, iubet rudem popellum  
 Hoc, illud catum sequi:  
 Nec nimis minantis iras 75  
 Horribiles aetheris  
 Metuere: placidum  
 Nec nimis Iouem suis  
 Sceleribus putare. Neque enim  
 Cathenata vis adurget hominem 80  
 Poli, neque necesse ferreum.

*Epodos Col. 13.*

Sed illa verenda Nati  
 Patris halitusque  
 Fouentis vnitas ordia rerum  
 Vt initio omnium seminaverant: 85  
 Teres gremium septiformis aethrae,  
 Citosque omniparentis orbis ambitus,  
 Doctasque Elementa flammulas  
 Formare molliter  
 Et fingere motus 90  
 Corde in sequace Protheos,  
 Suae domuère Iconis  
 Potenti voluntate, hominis, Deûm  
 Arbitrio potiti.

*Stropha 3. Col. 17.*

Tuam ô qui faciem inspicis, 95  
 Vndiquaque resultans,  
 Aetheris vmbilice,  
 Vitreum per inane fluentum  
 Fulgurum scatebra, sol,  
 Quae reflexa resorbes: 100  
 Siue equis magis placet  
 Turbinare rotas,  
 Tuos coire Phoebe manda  
 Clientes: et his nouis  
 Machinatione sponis 105  
 Vnanimi gignere  
 Facileque leueque  
 Coniugale vinculum.  
 Age per angiportum itiner a-  
 Ge sex limites: repone solia 110  
 Quaterna ter: et ordines loca.

*Antistropha. Col. 17.*

Nepam viuificus premat  
 Primus ordine Mauors.  
 Majugenam, per aedem  
 Vehat vndecimam Tegeaea. 115  
 Idalis retrogradi  
 Dura tergora Cancri  
 Occupet, procacibus  
 Intuens oculis  
 Agenoris feram, tenebras 120  
 Cadentem sub inferas.  
 Aede cude opes secundâ  
 Aegoceroti incubans  
 Pueriuore senex.  
 Noctiluca Iuppiter- 125  
 Que geminos petat fretigenas  
 Domo quintâ. At ô, sed axe medio  
 Leonis, Hyperion, ad iubas.

*Epodos Col. 13.*

Pyli serite consonanter  
 Senis aeuitatem: 130  
 Opes, genus, decus, gaudia, amicos



Serite toro coniugum novo.  
 Sed induperator ille vester  
 Deus conditor ille, VELLE cuius, est  
 Tellusque polusque et omnia, 135  
 Fotu incubans sacro  
 Maturet aristas.  
 Sic illius sacro gregi, Hic  
 Ministerio, plurimos  
 Suo copulet terrigenas, humum 140  
 Ingenerans Olympo.

Scriptum  
 Συγχαριστίας καὶ εὐχαριστίας  
 ἔνεκα ἃ  
 Joanne Keplero 145  
 Villano,  
 Tubingae 1591.<sup>56</sup>

For the second act being the first wedding of the very honorable and very learned man, Sir M. Gregor Glarean, from Stuttgart, deacon in Gruibingen, mathematician not of low rank, with the very chaste virgin Anna, daughter of an honest man, Fabian Kommerell, citizen and former councillor of Tübingen, to be celebrated in Tübingen on the 22 June in the year 1591: a wedding song in the style of Pindar.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Strophe

Most expert commander of floating spirits, oh low-pitched singer to the cithara, what will you start to play? Does this Glarean, the divine trumpet of Christ, elicit a soft sounding wedding song, this holy shield, overabundant with eternal salvation, whom God has granted to Earth from the Heavens? A wreath, plucked from good manners and erudition, obumbrates his head. Charis, born from Venus, washed him with her dear, warm hands, after he had been born from his mother's womb. The daughter of Atlas<sup>57</sup> gave him water from her father and kept him hidden at the summit of her mountain.<sup>58</sup>

### 1<sup>st</sup> Antistrophe

Daedalus was ordered to form his hand, the Argicide<sup>59</sup> to form his innermost genius; both of them were astonished about the result, as the young man was polished beyond

<sup>56</sup> Text after SECK-BALZERT (2020).

<sup>57</sup> Maia.

<sup>58</sup> Mt Cyllene.

<sup>59</sup> Hermes.

compare with the other children of the black Earth. When he commands the oak, it follows his hands exactly. A relief of the round world is made. Fetters for the vast heaven, through which he can grasp the confusion caused by the entangled orbits quickly with a second glance. Water and the high point of the land that protrudes are formed. The fleeting path of a faint shadow, which indicates the intervals of short daylight, is made.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Epode

He counts the wandering movements and tames the Labyrinthine courses of the stars with the spindle of his genius.<sup>60</sup> Even the fourfold heaven itself hardly has safer knowledge of its path, nor could it spool it off with more certainty. When sleep besieges the tired eyes and mute silence holds sway over the other mortals, then he is up all through the night keeping watch over his stars, and he is happy to enter into keen-sighted businesses and to watch the dance troupes perform a dance in triple time in the Milky Way.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Strophe

From this he reveals later ages as if from open books. As a sign of the future a new page arises. Visible in the sky at first, Mercury brings the scorpion back to Amyntas.<sup>61</sup> Deucalion has Venus in a glorious place.<sup>62</sup> Also the benign Moon does not reject him. Thus, this man is pious and wise. Ceres grants flowing riches.<sup>63</sup> The inconstant wheel of the

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<sup>60</sup> *turbo* means (a part of) the spindle, cf. eg. Cat. 64, 314. Glarean tames the unfathomable movements of the celestial bodies with his mind, like a spinner tames the tangled fibers of wool or another material with the spindle.

<sup>61</sup> The passage is mysterious, cf. SECK-BALZERT (2020: 315); Gregor Glarean is a practising astrologer (48–51). V. 51ff gives an example for this activity and alludes to the horoscope of an ‚Amyntas‘ that might have meant something for the poet and his audience. Amyntas is a typical bucolic name (eg. Verg. *Ecl.* 10, 37) that is often used exchangeably as a name for a typical shepherd (boy) and could therefore easily be a stand-in for another name or a coded name. The astronomical-astrological situation in the horoscope would be the following: when Mercury is visible as the first ‚star‘ (*promptus aethere*), i.e. when Mercury is at its furthest eastern elongation, at the point of its greatest brightness (*Stilbon*), when it is briefly visible as the first evening star just after sunset (this is the only time when Mercury is ever visible), cf. KERNER (2020: 55–56), and when it is either in the scorpion or in some relationship (aspect) to something in the scorpion, which would affect Amyntas. *reciprocat* may imply that the ‚bringing back‘ of the scorpion’s influence has something to do with Mercury’s retrograde motion (= apparent movement against the direction of the stars’ movement from the earth perspective) just after reaching its maximum elongation, when Mercury can actually return to (and thus ‚bring back‘) a relationship with (something in) the scorpion that it has just been in a little time before.

<sup>62</sup> Deucalion, a name from the myth used similarly like Amyntas before.

<sup>63</sup> *fluenteis* is an uncommon form = *fluentes*? cf. SECK-BALZERT (2020: 89).

goddess sways after it has been hit by the persistent light of the old man of Leucas.<sup>64</sup> Bellona ponders sacrilegious weapons. The god of the Getes<sup>65</sup> occupies Jupiter.

*2<sup>nd</sup> Antistrophe*

O man, who is related to God<sup>66</sup> and a partaker in the treasures of the celestial vault: it is his destiny, that he brings in a picture of the ever-returning world the strings led by the sacred thumb. Instead of the deity, he interdicts and commands with prophetic spirit, for the raw populace to pursue this, for the clever person to pursue that: not to be too afraid of the menacing, horrifying rage of heaven, not to think God all too friendly towards their misdeeds. Because neither the power of chains of Heaven urges Man forward, nor an iron necessity.

*2<sup>nd</sup> Epode*

But that venerable unity of the Son, the Father and the well-meaning Spirit had sown the order of the world as if for the beginning of everything: the rounded womb of the sevenfold ether, the quick, all-bearing courses of the heavenly bodies, and the little flames that are able to softly form the elements and to instill impulses in the docile heart of Protheus to rule about his own shape with a mighty will, as he was a man, endowed with the freedom of the gods.

*3<sup>rd</sup> Strophe*

Oh you, who looks at his own face, as you are reflected from everywhere, navel of the sky, bubbling spring of flashes of lightning that travel through the translucent, empty space, Sun, who drinks up his own reflections: be it that you prefer horses to turn your wheels, command your clients, Phoebus, to come together and beget with unanimous effort for these newly weds a comfortable and easy marriage bond. Make a path through the narrow passage, make six boundary lines, put up twelve thrones and assign dominions their place.

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<sup>64</sup> *Leucadius senex* is identified as Saturn in Kepler's *Votum Gratulatorium*, 22, of his *Nycthemeron Augustale*, cf. SECK-BALZERT (2020: 316; 447). The connection between the god and the place is not clear; Leucas sported a temple of Apollon and was known for human sacrifice (Strab. 10, 2, 8–9), cf. STRAUCH.

<sup>65</sup> Mars, cf. SECK-BALZERT (2020: 316).

<sup>66</sup> Glarean made a model of the solar system. He is the God of his model like God is the God of the solar system.

*3rd Antistrophe*<sup>67</sup>

The scorpion<sup>68</sup> shall be pressed by enlivening Mars, first in line. The one born from Maia<sup>69</sup> shall be led through the eleventh house by the Tegeaeon.<sup>70</sup> Idalis<sup>71</sup> shall occupy the hard backside of backward-striding Cancer and watch with frivolous gaze the beast of Agenor,<sup>72</sup> which sinks below the shadows of the Underworld.<sup>73</sup> Mint riches in the second house, while lying on the Wild Goat, child-eating old man.<sup>74</sup> Moon and Jupiter shall look for the seaborne twins in the fifth house.<sup>75</sup> And you, Sun, in the middle of the sky near the Lion's mane.

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<sup>67</sup>The question, whether the horoscope given here, is a horoscope of the day of the wedding, is complex and cannot be resolved here. Seck states correctly, with reference to Günther Oestmann, that the position of the Sun in the Lion, 127–128, cannot be reconciled with the date of the wedding, SECK–BALZERT (2020: 313). Other positions are remarkably close, though, to those in the actual sky in Tübingen on 22 June 1591. Württemberg still used the Julian Calendar in 1591, cf. GROTEFEND (1922: 27). 22 June 1591 in Tübingen according to the Julian Calendar corresponds to 2 July 1591 according to our Gregorian Calendar. On this day, Mercury and Venus were in the Crab; Jupiter and the Moon indeed had had a conjunction the day before (and were, thus, still very close to each other), though not in the Fishes or Twins but in the (twinlike?) Scales; Mars is not in the Scorpion but in the nearby Archer; Saturn does not find itself in the Wild Goat but in the Twins directly opposite to the Goat, cf. Appendix 2. It could be that Kepler intended to give a horoscope of the wedding day and made mistakes, some of which might be due to either faulty ephemerides etc or mistakes in his imagination. It seems that he mostly got things right that would be visible with the naked eye in Tübingen at night (Jupiter, Moon, Venus, Mercury, Mars). The possible mistakes were made with those celestial bodies, whose positions in the Zodiac have to be inferred or calculated (Sun, Saturn near the Sun), cf. Appendix 2. On the other hand, our lack of understanding of his metaphors for astrological relationships (*incubat, petat* etc.) might blur our understanding of his intended meaning. These could point not to the positions but to some other meaningful relationships (trines, oppositions etc.). The description of the Sun's position 'near the Lion's mane' while it would have been in the Twins is astonishing, especially if he got Venus and Mercury right, 114–118. One could make this mistake by 'counting one down (the Crab to the Lion) instead of one up (the Crab to the Twins).' It is hard to imagine, though, that Kepler would not have known where the Sun was in the Zodiac at any given day.

<sup>68</sup>Cicero uses *nepa* in his translation of Aratus both for the Crab and for the Scorpion, e.g. Cic. *Arat.* 216 (Crab); 405 (Scorpion). The Scorpion is much closer to Mars's position on the day.

<sup>69</sup>Mercury.

<sup>70</sup>Callisto, who is the Great Bear, cf. SECK–BALZERT (2020: 316), is positioned in the vicinity of the Lion, the Crab, and the Twins. Mercury, like any planet, is usually seen from Earth a little above or below the ecliptic, the Sun's path that determines which star signs are part of the Zodiac. Mercury, though, would never be far enough from the ecliptic to appear in the Great Bear. The passage is mysterious. One could imagine that Callisto pulls Mercury while he is travelling through the signs in her vicinity mentioned above.

<sup>71</sup>Venus, cf. SECK–BALZERT (2020: 316).

<sup>72</sup>The Bull, cf. SECK–BALZERT (2020: 316).

<sup>73</sup>Below the horizon.

<sup>74</sup>Saturn.

<sup>75</sup>'the seaborne twins' could refer to the sign Fishes, which is usually imagined as two fishes, cf. SECK–BALZERT (2020: 317). One could also think of the constellation Twins, which, like

*3<sup>rd</sup> Epode*

Harmoniously lay the foundations for as many years as those of the old man of Pylos.<sup>76</sup> With the new marriage of yourselves, spouses, lay the foundations for riches, offspring, honour, happiness and friends. But He, your master, He, God the creator, who has the willing and the Earth and the Heaven and all, may he, incubating with his divine warmth, bring the ears to maturity. In the same manner, shall this one,<sup>77</sup> through his service, attach very many inhabitants of Earth to His divine flock, remaking Earth through Heaven.

This has been written as congratulation and out of thankfulness by Johannes Kepler from Weil, in Tübingen 1591.

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every star sign, arises from out of the sea, or the constellation Scales, which like the fishes has a somewhat twinlike shape and is the actual position of Moon and Jupiter on the day, see Appendix 2.

<sup>76</sup> Nestor, cf. SECK-BALZERT (2020: 317).

<sup>77</sup> Gregor Glarean, who as a priest can, in turn to (*sic*) God's generosity, draw people to God's flock.

## Appendix 2

Table of the positions of Sun, Moon and the planets on 22 June 1591, Julian Calendar (= 2 July 1591, Gregorian Calendar) and the positions inferred from the Melos Hymeneium 112–128.

| Celestial bodies | Position on 22 June 1591 (Julian = 2 July, Gregorian) |                        | Position according to the <i>Melos</i> |                          | Match                         |
|------------------|---|------------------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                  | Ecliptic longitude                                    | Sidereal constellation | Ecliptic longitude                     | Sidereal constellation   |                               |
| <b>Sun</b>       | 99–101°   | Twins                  | 132–168°                               | Lion                     | no                            |
| <b>Moon</b>      | 224–237°  | Scales, Scorpion       | ?                                      | Twins?, Fishes?, Scales? | (yes?, matched with Jupiter!) |
| <b>Mercury</b>   | 125–126°  | Crab                   | 85–168°                                | Twins, Crab, Lion        | yes                           |
| <b>Venus</b>     | 129–131°  | Crab                   | 112–133°                               | Crab                     | yes                           |
| <b>Mars</b>      | 262–263°  | Archer                 | 235–264°                               | Scorpion                 | yes <sup>78</sup>             |
| <b>Jupiter</b>   | 218–219°  | Scales                 | ?                                      | Twins?, Fishes?, Scales? | (yes?, matched with Moon!)    |
| <b>Saturn</b>    | 93–94°  | Gemini                 | 294–322°                               | Goat                     | no                            |

This research has made use of the Stellarium planetarium (version 0.22.5.0).<sup>79</sup>

<sup>78</sup> The sidereal constellations, which correspond to what is visible in the sky, are not as clearly divisible as the tropical zodiac signs, cf. KERNER (2022: 43–44; 193–197). Looking at the sky, Mars would have appeared to be between the Archer and the Scorpion, although it was in what astronomers today would consider to be part of the Archer.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. ZOTTI et al. (2021).