

Georg Weber's *Lebens-Früchte* (1649)

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Georg Weber's Sieben Theile Wohlriechender Lebens-Früchte (Danzig 1649) is investigated with regard to the pattern poems it contains. Each of the seven introductory poems (all pattern or picture poems) are thematic indicators of the remaining poems in each of the seven sections, and, further, these seven poems form a progression among themselves.

Pattern poems were very common in seventeenth-century Germany.¹ They occur in both Latin and German, and, occasionally, in other languages as well. Regardless of the language, however, they are mostly single poems, written for one specific occasion — a birthday celebration, a wedding, a funeral, or some such similar event. Such singularity of purpose does not detract from their value or appearance; it simply means that they are to be understood on their own terms as individual units, and not in relation to any other poem or poems, pattern or otherwise.

It is, therefore, the more enjoyable to find a collection of songs, hymns, and prayers which offers several pattern poems. The collection, written by the relatively unknown Georg Weber (ca. 1610-after 1653), is entitled *Sieben Theile Wohlriechender Lebens-Früchte . . .* and was published in Danzig in 1649.²

Most of the lexicographers can piece together only a very scant biography of Weber, and little if any progress has been made over the years in gaining a more complete picture. Zedler's *Universal-Lexikon* reports Weber was born around Dalen (Dahlen near Meissen), that he received a master's degree, and that he was employed in Magdeburg.³ In the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Robert Eitner added nothing new, although he did sort out two persons named Georg Weber and one Georg Heinrich Weber from each other.⁴ In *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Martin Geck adds a few details, but he admits that Weber's life has not been thoroughly investigated.⁵ Geck says Weber was at the court in Stockholm beginning in 1640, that the well-known baroque musician Heinrich Schütz recommended him for a position in Danzig in 1647, and that he remained there until 1651. Later he was, as Zedler already knew, in Magdeburg. Geck also brings Weber into a circle of song and hymn writers who were quite active in Danzig and Königsberg around the middle of the seventeenth century, a circle which included T. Strutius, J. Weichman, C. Kaldenbach, and C. Werner.⁶ Finally, in 1980 the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* brings a short note on Weber, written by A. Lindsey Kirwan. In terms of new details, Kirwan informs us that Weber was appointed

as bass singer in the court chapel at Gottorf in 1632, notes the influence of Heinrich Albert (1604 to ca. 1656), and points out the Italianate influences which can be seen, especially in the solo songs in the *Lebens-Früchte*, where "recitative-like passages and ornate vocal writing occur."⁷ Kirwan also notes Weber's importance in the development of the instrumentally accompanied song, especially the ritornello. A very few minor details, coupled with generally harsh judgments of Weber's literary ability, can be found in other works as well.⁸

This is really about all we know of Georg Weber. Nonetheless, this does not hinder an appreciation of his works, of which very few are actually known. In addition to the *Lebens-Früchte*, only two are readily accessible: *Kampf und Sieg oder ganzer Lebenslauff eines recht Christlichen Kreutzträgers* (Hamburg 1645), which is written in the form of a drama⁹ and *Himmel Steigendes Dank-Opffer* (Leipzig 1652).¹⁰ Another work, listed in Goedeke's *Grundriss*, *Sieben Lieb- Lob- und Danklieder für die heilige Menschwerdung Jesu Christi* (n.p. 1653), was unavailable to me.¹¹ Other works, now apparently lost, are often listed in other bibliographies. The work to be discussed here, the *Lebens-Früchte*, indicates in its title that there are seven sections, or parts to the composition, and that they are concerned with various sections or parts of life:

Sieben Theile Wohlriechender Lebens-Früchte eines recht Gott-ergebenen Herzen, deren Saft und Wachsthum, auss ihrem ewigen Lebens-Baume Jesu Christo . . . entsprossen ist . . . auff folgende Sieben Zeiten als Tägliche Jährliche Stündliche Augenblickliche auch bey Labens- Liebens- Scheidens- oder Sterbens-Zeit in niedriger Reim-Ahrt an das Licht getragen, mit gantz schlechten Melodian bequemet und . . . gesetzt Durch Georg Webern 1649. Zu Danzig . . . zu finden.¹²

[Seven Kinds (or Parts) of Sweet-smelling Fruits of Life of a Heart which is truly dedicated to God, the juice and growth of which has sprung from their eternal tree of life, Jesus Christ . . . Brought to Light at the following seven times, viz. daily, yearly, hourly, momentary, as well as in times of comforting, loving, and departing or dying. Put to very simple melodies and . . . set by Georg Weber. 1649. To be found in Danzig.]

Hence, the times referred to are daily, yearly, hourly, momentary, as well as times of comforting (or refreshing), loving, and departing or dying. The number seven is defended by Weber in his introductory notes, as in the number ten. Weber himself says:

And as it pleased our merciful heavenly Father, to make me, an unworthy person, through the loving cross, without which no true Christian can be found, similar to the image of His loving son, so here, too, in the present seven divisions, which division is naturally self-evident, he had given me the ability to portray a man intellectually oriented toward the cross. (In the same way, the two constituent parts of a man contain within themselves seven parts: namely the body: earth, water, air, fire; the soul: disposition, reason, and memory. In addition, the numbers seven and ten are common in Holy Scripture, and induce reflection. Among which, this one, the *Stufen-Zahl* of

noch kein
 verlescht nicht
 denn ihr Jun
 dier kann verdank
 Die nicht Trübsals. W
 wunder, süße W
 wodurch du wirst empfin
 ihr Stral wird dich engin
 nemen in dier ihren La
 Sie wird selbst stets gehen
 viel mehr als aufzusprechen hi
 so große Freud' in's Herz einschül
 nach der Lebens-Sonn / und die wird
 süßer Andacht; daß du hinn kannst bli
 Denn dier wird da die Morgenröth' erschei
 getrost zu seyn / auch mitten in dem Wein
 in der Müdigkeit / dich kanst erfrischen also
 zihen in die Höhe dich / allwo du verge
 Hier täglich auff und ab? der Himmel wird sich ne
 Wirst du bemühet seyn / du Pilgers-Mann zu sta
 Anfang.

wohltrtechender Lebens-Früchte.
 fähret an folgenden Thurm / ist der andre T
 Treppe der Andacht



endlich gar
 Dich wird laden
 Er aus Gnaden
 Biß zur Engelschar
 Setz ihm dienstbar seyn
 Opfern GOTT dein Leben
 Zum Gefangenen geben
 Dich wirst dieser Höh' und drein
 Vorhinn in der Welt verirrt

Daß du verbinden
 Ersehn / empfinden
 Groß Wunder wird
 Wo Herz und Sinn
 Wiß oben hinn
 So glückt der Lauff
 Hält nichts dich auff?

In der kranken Seelen.
 Furcht und Angst dich quelen

Weñ Sünden. Wust
 So machet frey
 Die Argeney
 Die Freud und Lust
 Darinn / und alles:
 Auch selbst der Schatz
 Er ist der Thurm
 Du Erden-Wurm!

An JESU Letzter wester
 Die dich zu JESU Christo trägt
 Recht Veren ist die Letzer
 Die Treppe ist dort schon angelegt

Geistlicher Schatz-Thurm

Figure 1. Introductory
 poem for part one of
 Georg Weber's
Lebens-Früchte (1649).
 Yale Collection of
 German Literature.
 Beinecke Rare Book
 Library.

Figure 2. Introductory
 poem for part two of
 the *Lebens-Früchte*.
 Yale Collection of
 German Literature.
 Beinecke Rare Book
 Library.

mankind was already used by me twelve years ago in Poland in my *Poetischen Abtheilungen*, not from some strange brain [i.e., it was not some stranger's idea], so it has also been retained here.)¹³

Hence, the four basic elements related to the body are considered important: earth, air, fire, and water, as are the three powers of the soul: disposition, reason, and memory. These, however, have little to do with the seven parts of the collection, that is, no one part is devoted to any, or to each, of these seven items. However, each of the seven parts is generally composed of ten songs or hymns: parts one, four, five, six, and seven each have exactly ten hymns, and parts two and three each have sixteen hymns. The songs in part two are dedicated to "die vornehmsten 10. Fest-Tage des Jahres" ("the ten most eminent festivals of the year") which according to Weber are the Annunciation, Christmas, New Year's Day, the Passion and Death (five songs are printed here), the Resurrection (two songs), the Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity, St. Michael (two songs), and All Saints' Day. The songs in part three are divided into three songs dealing with the Prodigal Son, three songs dealing with Penance, and, finally, ten songs about the cross, misery, and temptation. Here, the seven-ten relationship is least applicable or visible.

The numbers seven and ten do play a role in the collection as a whole, even to the point where one might say that seven times ten would have been the ideal, and probably was what Weber actually intended, as seventy is generally considered to be a number of special significance.¹⁴

What is more interesting, however, is the fact that each of the seven parts is introduced by a picture poem. To be sure, there are other pattern poems in the collection, but they actually play a subordinate role when compared to the introductory poems. It would have been most appropriate had there been a readily discernible connection between each introductory poem and the remaining poems in the given section, but this was not always the case. The remainder of this paper will focus on such relationships to the extent that they do occur.

The first pattern poem (Figure 1) forms a stair: there are twelve steps made from twenty lines of poetry (i.e., two times ten lines) with each of the eight longest steps composed of two lines, the four top ones of one line each. The poem is entitled "Treppe der Andacht" ("Stairs of Devotion") and has to be read from bottom to top. Weber gives a hint about interrelatedness of the pattern poems when he says of the stair that it "leads to the following tower, that is, the second part of the *wohlriechender Lebens-Früchte*." There is no apparent connection between the stairs and the prayers or songs of part one, which all deal with everyday, rather mundane items. Songs are written, for example, for the following types of events: "When one arises", "When one goes to work", "Song of Thanksgiving after eating", "When one is ready to go on a trip", etc. However, if one considers each of these a small step toward perfection, which would be quite in keeping with Weber's thoughts and aims, then some connection does begin to emerge.

The second picture poem (Figure 2) is that of a "geistlicher Schatz-Thurm" ("Spiritual treasure-tower") and, referring to the first section of his

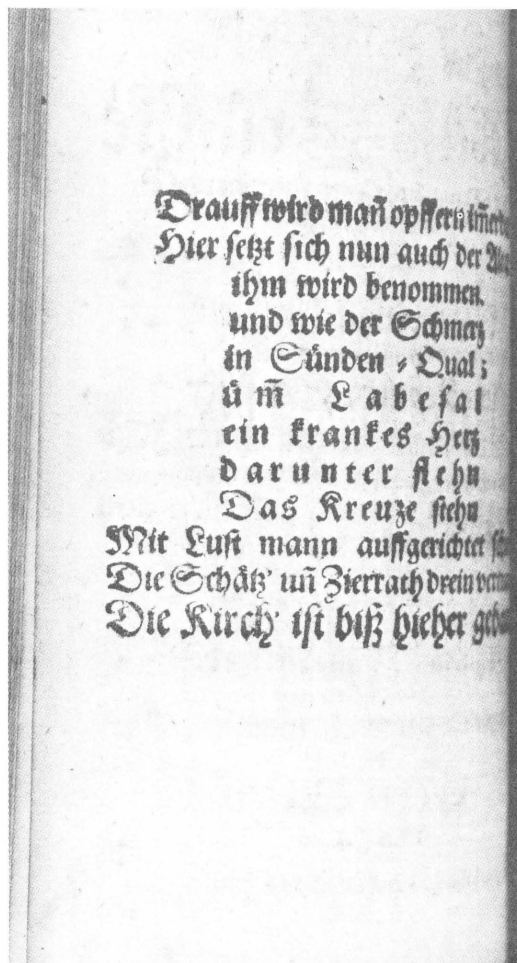
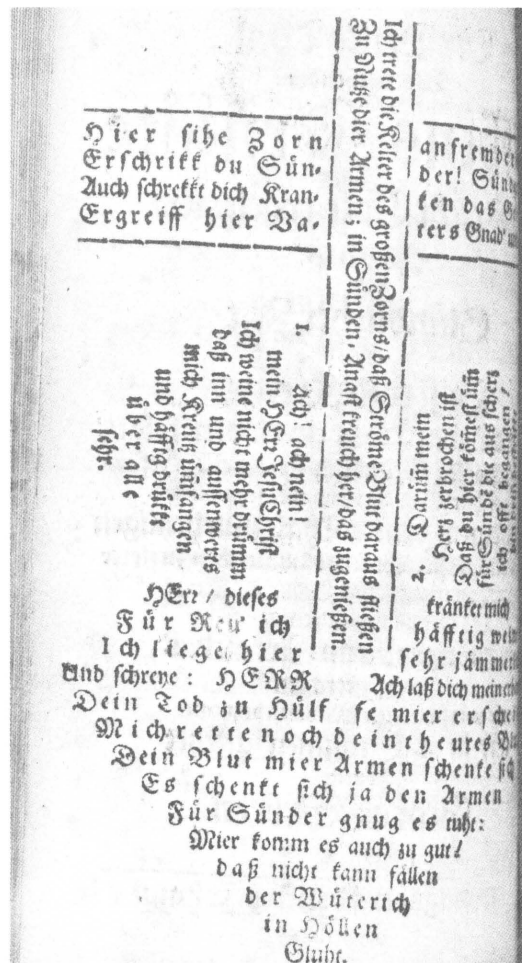


Figure 3. Introductory poem for part three of the *Lebens-Früchte*. Yale Collection of German Literature. Beinecke Rare Book Library.

Figure 4. Introductory poem for part four of the *Lebens-Früchte*. Yale Collection of German Literature. Beinecke Rare Book Library.

Lebens-Früchte, Weber notes in the first line of the tower: "The stair was already laid out back there". This poem, too, has to be read from bottom to top. The reader is admonished to continue climbing toward his savior: "Climb further, toward Jesus, You Earth worm!" The top lines make clear the end of the journey: "Always serve him until he out of mercy finally invites you to [be part of] the angelic throng". It should be noted, too, that this poem consists of thirty lines, three times ten. A connection between the tower and the poems is not readily apparent, but the feast days indicated might indeed represent some of the treasures.

The poem introducing part three (Figure 3) is somewhat more complicated: it shows a large heart pierced with a cross in the center, and contains two smaller hearts on either side of the cross as well; it is one of two Weber pattern poems which contain more than one image (the other being the poem introducing part seven). This part deals with repentance, penance, and crosses, and here the connection between the introductory poem and the other hymns in this part begins to emerge more clearly, particularly as there are three penance prayers and ten songs about crosses and temptations. After three songs about the Prodigal Son (in the first, the son speaks to himself, in the second he falls at his father's feet and asks forgiveness, and in the third we hear the father speaking to the son and forgiving him), the second section deals with contrition and the request for forgiveness. The three songs in this section are entitled "As man observes his soul, cries sincerely about it, and, filled with remorse, finds refuge in his savior Jesus Christ", "Sevenfold Comfort", and "As the soul, rueing its sins, turns from the wrath and justice of God to his mercy". The last section consists of ten songs dealing for the most part with temptation, penance, and contrition. Representative titles include "A serious prayer in intellectual temptation and all kinds of need", "An ardent prayer during periods of distress", "Sighs of prayer and belief in times of temptation and great need", and similar titles.

Part four is introduced by an altar (Figure 4) with Weber's opening line (again at the bottom) being "So far the church has been built up to this point", obviously a reference to the steps and tower of parts one and two. There are twelve lines, divided into three sections (three lines, seven lines, and two lines); the top line, "On this, one will continuously offer sacrifice", leads directly to part five. In the fourth part, one is to see the untiring pleading of a soul pining for its King and Savior, Christ. The songs include a conversation between Christ and a sorrowing soul (a pattern poem, incidentally), a poem of encouragement about how one can lie prostrate before God's throne in a state of continual pleading, and one on divine solace (also a pattern poem). Most of the other poems are also related to the altar and the pleading one would do in front of such an altar.

Two poems are shown on the first page of part five (Figure 5) both clearly indicating what one would offer or sacrifice on the altar of part four: bread and wine. "Hunger of the Soul for Jesus Christ" is the top poem, in the form of a host; "Thirst of the Soul for Jesus Christ" is the bottom poem, in the shape of a goblet or chalice. The bread poem has eleven lines, the wine poem is a sonnet

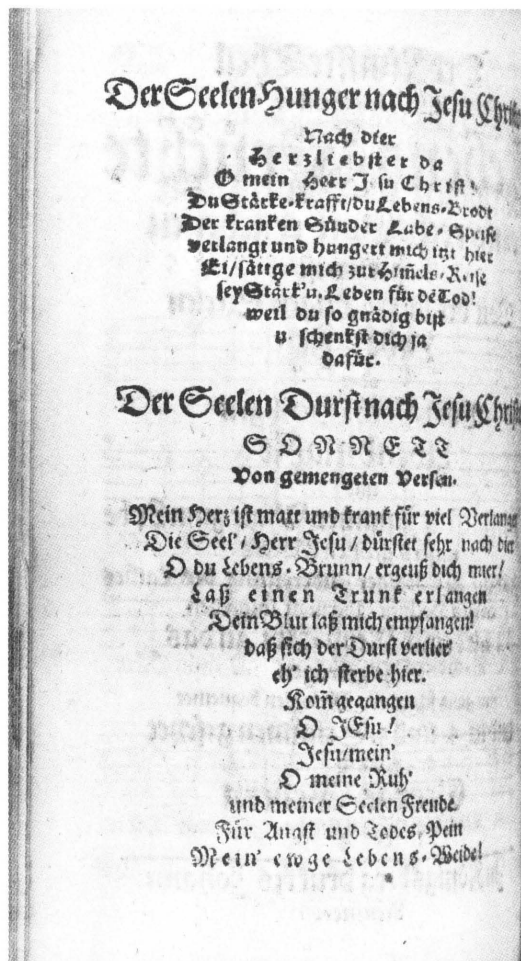
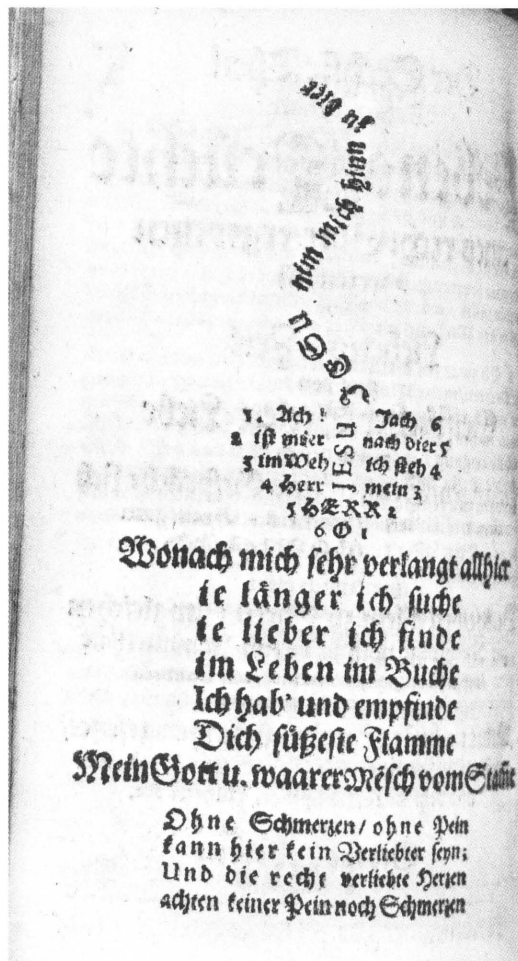


Figure 5. Introductory poem for part five of the *Lebens-Früchte*. Yale Collection of German Literature. Beinecke Rare Book Library.

Figure 6. Introductory poem for part six of the *Lebens-Früchte*. Yale Collection of German Literature. Beinecke Rare Book Library.

of two times seven lines. Even though a sonnet generally has an eight/six division, the division here is clearly seven/seven, as even the punctuation indicates (the only period in the poem follows line seven). This section of the hymnal deals with communion and there is a clear connection between the introductory pattern poem and all the other hymns, as each of these is very clearly related to communion. A sampling of titles or introductory words shows the link clearly: "When one kneels to receive communion", "Another, during the continuing communion [service]", "Joy of the soul about communion received", "A fervent song of thanksgiving after communion". The song mentioned above which is to be sung during the continuing service is actually a pattern poem, composed of two stanzas, each printed in the form of a cross; the ninth poem in this part is a seven-line pattern poem.

The sixth part deals with the soul's desire for its heavenly mate, Christ, and a flame is used to depict the burning love of the soul for Him (Figure 6). Although one has to read in two directions (up and down), the image is clearly a flame, most likely emanating from a candle. The flame/wick even consists of seven words: "Jesus, Jesus, take me up to you!" Some, but not all of the songs are clearly related to the image of desire, as is evident from sample titles: "How one sighs [or pines] to be united with God, as with eternally essential love", "The sweet kiss of love" (also a pattern poem), "Sighing for unchanging heavenly love".

The seventh part is introduced by a pattern poem depicting a coffin (Figure 7) and is entitled "Von Scheiden oder Sterbens Zeit" ("The Times of Departing or Dying"). This poem, too, consists of seven lines. Again in this section a clear connection exists between the introductory pattern poem and all the other poems in the section, e.g., "A song or prayer when faced with the fear of death", "A valet or death song", "A holy departure from this vale of tears in[to] the eternal hall of joy", "Valet and departure of a poor person".

Overall, there are four sections with an overt connection between pattern poem and content of the other hymns in the respective sections (sections four, five, six, and seven), one where some are related (section three), one where the connection is at best a loose one (section two), and one where there is no visible connection at all (section one). There is no clear explanation for the apparent progression in connection between introductory pattern poem and other hymns, but it can be noted that the latter sections were published later; perhaps Weber himself only gradually became aware of the possibility of using the pattern poems as thematic indications of the contents of a given section.

What is also very interesting is the interrelatedness among the pattern poems themselves. We begin with stairs (part 1) leading to devotion or to prayer, followed by a tower of spiritual treasures (part 2). The next chapter, with its emphasis on penance, repentance, and the crosses one has to bear in life (part 3), is a preparation for approaching the altar (part 4), on which bread and wine (part 5) are offered. Finally, after having participated in communion, one's soul is swept up by a longing (part 6) for the Savior, and, in death (part 7), one goes forward to meet that same Savior in heaven.

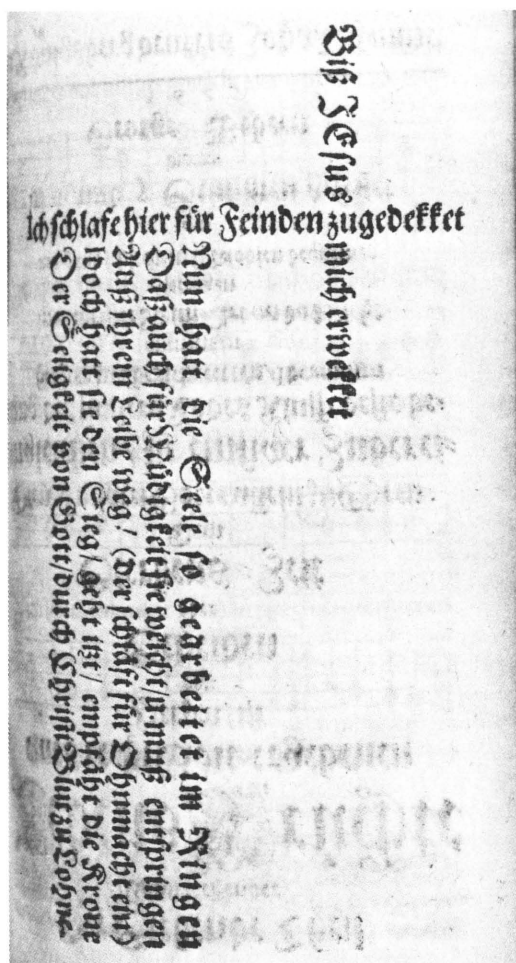


Figure 7. Introductory poem for part seven of the *Lebens-Früchte*. Yale Collection of German Literature. Beinecke Rare Book Library.

Although the poems are clearly not among the best the German Baroque has to offer, they are definitely the product of a genuinely religious person. There is little doubt that they belong to early pietistic devotional literature.¹⁵

In his unusual use of pattern poems Weber is several steps ahead of his contemporaries who generally wrote single poems only. Weber's attempts to use pattern poems as thematic introductions for individual portions of his book are just as unusual as his attempt to have each of the seven poems relate to each other in a natural progression. It would be worth investigating whether later German devotional writers were able to make use of Weber's example, or even to improve on it. The most obvious starting point would be further pietistic devotional literature.

1. Two recent studies provide an excellent introduction to pattern poetry: Jeremy Adler, "Technopaigneia, carmina figurata, and Bilder-Reime: Seventeenth-Century Figured Poetry in Historical Perspective," in *Comparative Criticism: A Yearbook*, 4 (1982), 107-47, and Ulrich Ernst, "Europäische Figurengedichte in Pyramidenform aus dem 16. und 17. Jahrhundert: Konstruktionsmodelle und Sinnbildfunktionen: Ansätze zu einer Typologie," in *Euphorion*, 76 (1982), 295-360.

2. Actually, each of the parts carries its own date of publication; parts one to four were printed in 1648, parts five to seven in 1649. Although the overall title page indicates J. Andre in Danzig as the publisher, each of the parts was printed in Königsberg by Johann Reussner. It is unclear whether the seven parts each appeared separately but that, although not inconceivable, is not likely.

3. Johann Heinrich Zedler (publisher), *Grosses Universal-Lexikon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*. . . 64 vols. + 4 supp. vols. Halle and Leipzig: Zedler, 1732-1754. Reprint: Graz: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1961-1964. Here, vol. 53, col. 896.

4. *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*. 44 vols. + 11 supp. vols. + index. Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1875-1912. Second edition: reprint, 1967-71. Here, vol. 41, p. 298.

5. "Webers offenbar sehr unstesetes Leben ist noch nicht genauer erforscht worden", *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Friedrich Blume. 14 vols + 2 supp. vols. Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1949-79. Here, vol. 14, p. 330.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie. 20 vols. London: Macmillan, 1980. Here, vol. 20, p. 267.

8. For example, in books like Gottfried Döring, *Zur Geschichte der Musik in Preussen*. Three fascicles. (Elbing: Neumann-Hartmann, 1852-55); Hermann Kretzschmar, *Geschichte des neuen deutschen Liedes*. Kleine Handbücher der Musikgeschichte nach Gattungen, 4. (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1911), (Reprint: Hildesheim: Olms, 1966); Hermann Rauschnig, *Geschichte der Musik und Musikpflege in Danzig von den Anfängen bis zur Auflösung der Kirchenkapellen*. Quellen und Darstellungen zur Geschichte Westpreussens, 15. (Danzig: Kommissionsverlag Rosenberg, 1931).

9. Copy in the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel (Signatur: Lo 7841.1).

10. Copy in the Faber du Faur Collection of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Faber du Faur, No. 477.

11. Karl Goedeke, *Grundriss zur Geschichte der Deutschen Dichtung*. 2nd ed. vol. 3: Vom dreissigjährigen bis zum siebenjährigen Kriege. Dresden: Ehlermann, 1887, p. 171.

12. Copies in the Faber du Faur Collection (Faber du Faur, No. 475) and in the Harold Jantz Collection, Duke University Library. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Yale University Library for preparing copies of the individual pattern poems for print and for allowing me to reproduce them in this study. Special thanks are due Christa Sammons of Yale University for her efforts.

13. Weber's *Poetische Abtheilungen* are apparently lost, and a stay in Poland has not yet been mentioned in the research literature on Weber.

14. The symbolism of numbers in general and of seven and ten in particular was quite widely discussed in the seventeenth century. See for example, the lengthy discussion of "Stufen-Zahlen" in Philipp von Zesen, *Simson*, ed. Volker Meid. Philipp von Zesen, *Sämtliche Werke*, 8. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), pp. 278ff, 611-615. The original edition of *Simson* appeared in Nürnberg in 1679 and was published by Johann Hoffmann. Additional works of Zesen, especially the programmatic works for his language and literature society, the *Deutschgesinnete Genossenschaft*, also contain lengthy discussions of the symbolism of various numbers (they will appear in a modern edition in the same series by de Gruyter in 1985).

15. See, for example, Geck in *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 14, p. 331, and Kirwan in the *New Grove Dictionary*, vol. 20, p. 267.