

**HESPERIA. STUDIES IN GERMANIC
PHILOLOGY. NR. 10. GEORG
RUDOLF WECKHERLIN: THE
EMBODIMENT OF A TRANSITIONAL
STAGE IN GERMAN METRICS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649463312

Hesperia. Studies in Germanic Philology. Nr. 10. Georg Rudolf Weckherlin: The Embodiment of a Transitional Stage in German Metrics by Aaron Schaffer

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

AARON SCHAFFER

**HESPERIA. STUDIES IN GERMANIC
PHILOLOGY. NR. 10. GEORG
RUDOLF WECKHERLIN: THE
EMBODIMENT OF A TRANSITIONAL
STAGE IN GERMAN METRICS**

Hesperia

STUDIES IN GERMANIC PHILOLOGY

EDITED BY HERMANN COLLITZ AND HENRY WOOD

Nr. 10

GEORG RUDOLF WECKHERLIN
THE EMBODIMENT OF A TRANSITIONAL
STAGE IN GERMAN METRICS

BY

AARON SCHAFER, PH. D.

Assistant in German, The Johns Hopkins University

BALTIMORE
THE JOHNS HOPKINS PRESS
1918

LA40/853.

THIS STUDY IS DEDICATED
TO THE MEMBERS OF
THE GERMAN DEPARTMENT OF THE
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

329030

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

GERMAN METRICS FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO OPITZ

	PAGE
A—Introduction.....	1
B—Early Germanic Metrics.....	3
C—The Metrics of Otfrid.....	8
D—Middle High German Metrics.....	10
E—The Romance Metrical Technique.....	15
F—Metrics in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries.....	18
1—Volksdichtung.....	18
2—Kunstdichtung.....	19
a—Master-Song.....	19
b—The “kurze Reimpaare”.....	21
c—Hovering Accent.....	30
d—Secondary Accent.....	34
e—Crypto-rhythmia.....	36
G—Hans Sachs to Opitz.....	38
a—Luther and the “Kirchenlied”.....	38
b—The Humanists and Quantitative Metrics.....	40
c—Theorists and Grammarians.....	41
d—The Alternating Technique.....	45
e—The Biblical Drama.....	48
H—Martin Opitz.....	52

CHAPTER II

GEORG RUDOLF WECKHERLIN

I—Biographical.....	58
II—Weckherlin's Opposition to the Opitzian Law.....	63
III—Weckherlin's Position in German Literature.....	67
IV—The Metrics of Weckherlin's Poetry.....	72
a—The Opinions of Previous Scholars.....	72
b—The Alternating Technique in Weckherlin.....	77
c—Weckherlin's Approach to the Opitzian Law.....	81
d—The Dating of Poems by Internal Evidence.....	87

	PAGE
e—Hovering Accent in Weckherlin.....	90
f—Secondary Accent in Weckherlin.....	94
1—Nominal Compounds.....	98
a—Formed of two nouns.....	98
y—Derivatives of Compound Verbs.....	98
2—Secondary Suffixes.....	100
a—In Nouns.....	100
y—In Adjectives.....	102
3—Inflectional Endings.....	103
a—In Verbs.....	103
y—In Nouns and Adjectives.....	104
4—Verbal Prefixes.....	105
5—Abnormal Sentence-Accent.....	106
g—Résumé of Secondary Accent.....	108
h—Varying Degrees of Secondary Accent.....	109
i—Conclusion.....	111
Bibliography.....	113

GEORG RUDOLF WECKHERLIN.¹

CHAPTER I

GERMAN METRICS FROM EARLIEST TIMES TO OPITZ

A—INTRODUCTION

The first quarter of the seventeenth century was fraught with great moment for the history of the development of German metrics. Already for almost a century, there had been a vague, more or less unconscious, feeling that something was radically wrong with the metrical technique which had come into being during the two centuries following the decadence of Middle High German poetry, and that a sweeping change must be made. Just exactly where the fault lay was by no means clear; indeed, many of the poets and theorists of the day saw no fault whatsoever, and, consequently, opposed bitterly all attempts at change. But change there was, and that a very fundamental one. And it is for this reason that today we give, not to Kaiser Maximilian, nor even to Hans Sachs, but to the man who laid down the laws governing this change and put them into practical application in his own verses, the appellation of "father of modern German poetry."

Whether or not Martin Opitz deserved the high praise showered upon him by his generation and those immediately succeeding him is a question that will be considered later in the course of this study. Certain it is that, although he was the leading spirit, nay, may even be called the product, of the

¹ The subject of this monograph was suggested to me by my teacher, Prof. Henry Wood, to whom, as well as to my teacher, Prof. Hermann Collitz, I am deeply indebted for much valuable assistance during my researches.

Heidelberg enthusiasts who hoped to do such valiant service in the cause of German literature during the last years of the second decade of the seventeenth century, he was by no means accepted at once as the guide and philosopher to be unswervingly followed. Poets of a tenacious character, who either refused to see the necessity of a change or had formulated plans of their own to bring about such a change, for a time totally ignored Opitz and his school. Even these, however, were gradually compelled to bow to the inevitable, and, in most instances, to admit, grudgingly enough, to be sure, the justice of the demands of the Opitzians. Perhaps the most striking instance of this class of poets is the man whose metrical contribution to German literature forms the principal theme of this study—Georg Rudolf Weckherlin.

In order to understand the exact basis upon which rests the difference of opinion between Opitz and Weckherlin, we must make a more or less thorough study of German metrics, from its very beginnings in alliterative poetry down to the year 1625. The principal feature in the development through these centuries is the fact that the pendulum of German metrics swings from one extreme to the other. The steps in this development are by no means perfectly clear even today. "Endlich aber," says Minor,² "sind auch unsere historischen Untersuchungen" (in der Metrik) "mangelhaft. Ueber die wichtige Uebergangszeit, ueber das sechzehnte und siebzehnte Jahrhundert, fehlen sie leider fast ganz."³ By the same token, so excellent a work as Borinski's "*Poetik der Renaissance*"⁴ suffers from the grave defect of attempting to work without an historical background. It shall be the task of this study to trace this development, in the first place, and to examine, in the second place, the metrical system of Weckherlin from the view-point thus attained.

² *Neuhochdeutsche Metrik*, Strassburg, 1893, p. 3.

³ This work was written before the appearance of studies by Helm, Saran, and a number of others to which reference will be made.

⁴ Berlin, 1886.

B—EARLY GERMANIC METRICS⁵

In entering upon the discussion of early Germanic poetry, this study will dwell chiefly upon the most salient facts in the technique of this period, but will also devote some little space to the opposition of several independent scholars to the "five-type system" of Sievers. The first and basic principle in the metrics of alliterative poetry is the fact that it is "accentuating," that is to say, that *it is based upon the number of stressed members allotted to each rhythmic unit*. The rhythmic unit of alliterative poetry is the short-verse or half-verse; each two half-verses combine to form a long-verse. Every regular half-verse must contain two main stressed elements (*Haupthebungen*), *the stresses guided*, and this is most significant, *by the normal word and sentence accent of prose speech*. Besides the two main stressed elements, or primary arses, the half-verse also contains two secondary stressed elements (*Nebenhebungen*, secondary arses), and usually, though not always, one or more unstressed elements, or theses, syllables bearing no stress whatsoever. (I shall return to these statements very shortly.) An arsis may be composed not only of a syllable bearing either primary or secondary stress, but also of two unaccented syllables occupying the time of one stress. This latter process is known as "*Auflösung*" or "resolved stress." The thesis, on the other hand, may comprise many more than one, or even two, syllables, while, in numerous instances, it may be altogether lacking. Thus, as can clearly be seen, the possibilities for variety in the number of syllables to the half-verse are manifold. Likewise, it is evident that the theses are more or less negligible parts of the technique. It is the number and position of the arses that are all-important; on these are based all the interpretations of alliterative metrics, from Lachmann and Müllenhoff, through

⁵ Although the technique of alliterative metre has little direct connection with the metrics of Weckherlin, it is, nevertheless, discussed here because of its historical significance in the development of German metrics.