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**Frontispieces of
Political Works in the
Habsburg Monarchy
(1660–1710)**

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Original scientific paper

Frontispieces of Political Works in the Habsburg Monarchy (1660–1710)

The article explores the significance of frontispieces in political works produced roughly between 1660 and 1710 in the territory of the Habsburg Monarchy, with a focus on Austrian and Bohemian lands. Frontispieces played a key role in this period as a visual-rhetorical device with which authors and publishers presented the content of the work and addressed readers. The article presents several examples of political frontispieces, such as works by Johannes Nicolaus Flämizer, Christian Weirauch, Franz Reinzer and others. The analysis shows that frontispieces were often designed allegorically, using universal symbols (e.g. virtues, state symbols, divine support) that expressed political values, idealized rule, and dynastic ambitions of the Habsburgs. The article concludes that frontispieces are an important source for understanding the visual political culture of the early modern period, as they offer symbolic models for interpreting politics, government and authority that complement but do not necessarily directly reflect the textual content of the works.

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KEYWORDS:

early modern period, frontispiece, political iconography, Habsburg Monarchy, visual rhetoric

The understanding and perception of politics is not only determined by words, but also by images, whether they are photographs or depictions of certain events and concepts. This text aims to show the importance of frontispieces in works on politics that were created roughly between 1660 and 1710 in the Austrian and Bohemian lands of the Habsburg Monarchy. I want to connect an analysis of frontispieces with an analysis of texts and determine the connections between the two modes of argumentation, which are inextricably linked.

A frontispiece is an illustrated page at the beginning of a book, usually placed immediately before or after the title page.¹ While the title page provides information such as the author's name, the book's title, the year of publication, the publisher's name, and the place of origin, the frontispiece serves primarily as a visual representation of the book's content, possibly supplemented with mottos, as well as notes explaining the depicted symbols, persons or elements. It can be regarded as the "face" of the book or the "façade" of a building, conveying and expressing its subject matter through imagery:

Oftentimes, they are full of allegorical references organised to be seen in a certain order and thus guiding the thinking of the viewer into specific directions. (...) Hence, frontispieces are not only entrance halls for books but the via regia leading into early modern visual culture: they provide emblematic models and ideograms; they are the key to the worlds of cognition and imagination; they show patterns of perception, ordering and reasoning; they shape the collective memory, and sometimes they even serve as tools for meditation. In short, they are outstanding witnesses for the history of the early modern cosmos of images.²

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Or as Gwendoline de Mûelenaere wrote:

The frontispiece structure coordinates different loci to glance over according to a determined order, in order to discover the imagines and understand the inventio that presides over this system of images. By means of emblems and personifications, caryatids guarding the entrance of the bookish edifice, the temporal unfolding of the text and its reasoning is condensed into a short moment, that of the deciphering of the symbolic language that occurs during the observation of the frontispiece.³

¹ Basic literature on frontispieces: *Gateways to the Book Frontispieces and Title Pages in Early Modern Europe* eds. Gitta Bertram, Nils Büttner and Claus Zittel (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2021); Henning Ottmann, *Titelblätter, Titelkupfer, Frontispize. Bucheröffnungen von "Narrenschiff" bis "Alice im Wunderland"* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2021), specially 179-211; Dietmar Peil, "Titelkupfer/Titelblatt – ein Programm? Beobachtungen zur Funktion von Titelkupfer und Titelblatt in ausgewählten Beispielen aus dem 17. Jahrhundert," in *Die Pluralisierung des Paratextes in der Frühen Neuzeit. Theorie, Formen, Funktionen*, ed. F. v. Ammon (LIT Verlag: Münster, 2008) 301-336; *Einladende Buch-Anfänge: Titelbilder des Wissens in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Stefan Laube (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2022); Alastair Fowler, *The Mind of the Book: Pictorial Title Pages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

² Gitta Bertram, Nils Büttner and Claus Zittel, "Gateways to the Books: Early Modern Frontispieces – Introduction," *Gateways to the Book*, 2-4, quotation on page 4.

³ Gwendoline de Mûelenaere, *Early Modern Thesis Prints in the Southern Netherlands. An Iconological Analysis of the Relationships between Art, Science and Power* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2022), 69.

The function and prevalence of frontispieces varied depending on the book's format, genre and theme, which is why there are not always present, especially in works of smaller formats. Printing a frontispiece increased production costs, which explains their rarity in political works, often lacking wealthy patrons to support their publication, and their more frequent appearance in subjects such as astronomy.

Frontispieces are of particular interest to researchers due to their inherently intermedial, diverse and multifunctional nature, often serving as a bridge between the visual and the linguistic part of the book.⁴ The study of frontispieces is closely aligned with "visual studies," which have moved beyond the traditional art history, expanding their scope to include all forms of representation. As noted by authors of the introduction to the volume *Gateways to the Book*, this shift has indeed increased interest in frontispieces. However, it has also led to a tendency to overlook the text in favour of an imminent interpretation of the image, thereby ignoring the interdependence between text and image, as it is essential to take this mutual dependency more seriously.⁵ As we could paraphrase French literary theorist of paratext Gérard Genette's words: There is no paratext without text. Genette describes paratexts as the "thresholds" of a book, liminal spaces where literary and publishing conventions intersect, both within the book (peritext) and outside it (epitext).⁶ In particular, the connection between the frontispiece and elements of the text – such as metaphors, emblems, explanatory verses, captions, and symbols – warrants close examination, as it can provide insights into how closely a frontispiece is related to the content of the book for which it was created. Examples presented here will showcase that some frontispieces were copied or slightly modified from other titles and authors.⁷ Another influential French thinker, Marc Fumaroli, in his work *Sur le Seuil des livres: Les frontispices gravés des traités d'éloquence (1594–1641)*, demonstrated how frontispieces could be viewed as expressions of rhetorical strategies. He regarded them as a means by which an author might engage the reader's interest.⁸

The study of the history of frontispieces faces challenges similar to those encountered in the history of books. It is often difficult to discern the intended target audience of a work and, more generally, to understand

⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁵ Ibid., 28. As Werner Telesko notes, every "reading" of images is a "co-reading" of text, and vice versa. Quoted from: Mûelenaere, *Early Modern Thesis Prints*, 52.

⁶ Gérard Genette *Paratexts. Thresholds of interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Genette also highlighted the importance of the typographical aspect of a book, which also functioned as a means of communicating the most important values, names, meanings ...

⁷ For unsuccessful copying of the Machiavellian frontispiece and the discrepancy between the frontispiece and the content of the book, see Roberto De Poi, "Text - Übersetzung - bildliche Übertragung. Zur Ikonographie der Lehre Machiavellis," in *Machiavellismus in Deutschland: Chiffre von Kontingenz, Herrschaft und Empirismus in der Neuzeit*, eds. Cornel Zwierlein and Annette Meyer, *Historische Zeitschrift / Beihefte*, 51 (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), 179-189.

⁸ Summarised from: Bertram, Büttner, Zittel, "Gateways to the Books: Early Modern Frontispieces – Introduction," *Gateways to the Book*, 24.

how the frontispiece was perceived or was meant to be perceived.⁹ Much of this is related to the material aspects of the work, where it is often challenging to determine whether a sheet has been removed from the book or if the sequence of the entire book was altered during its original binding or rebinding. An important question, which we will not explore in detail here, concerns the origin of frontispieces: who commissioned their design and how much creative freedom the artist had in their creation. From the analysed examples, I can infer that the printer or publisher who organized the book's appearance played the most significant role.¹⁰ The reasons for the inclusion or exclusion of a frontispiece are not easily determined; it was likely to satisfy both producers (mainly the printer/publisher) and consumers. The importance of frontispieces during this period is underscored by German poet and translator Georg Philipp Harsdorffer's observation: "Nowadays, almost no book can be sold without an engraved frontispiece, which presents the content to the reader not only with words but also through an image."¹¹ A similar conclusion was drawn by the twentieth-century German book historian Karl Josef Höltgen, who stated: "It is obvious from the earliest pictorial title pages that their main function was not to illustrate the book or give an accurate indication of its contents but to attract readers. Such title pages were almost the only means of sales promotion when the books were displayed in printers' or booksellers' shops to be inspected by potential buyers."¹²

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There were certainly good reasons for choosing frontispieces as a medium. Visual forms of communication played a central role in the early modern period, and frontispieces offered an opportunity to include pictorial methods in the field of modes of expression, which led to a mode of visual argumentation.¹³ The visual strategies employed by authors and publishers

⁹ Some works included an explanation of the frontispiece at the beginning, but such examples are rare. In the dedication to the Monegasque prince Honoré II Grimaldi in Giovanni Battista Riccioli's work *Almagestum Novum*, the author wrote: "For turn one and another page for a while, and study the picture at the front of the work." The author then continued with the explanation of the frontispiece. The text is interesting because it asks the reader to "study" the image and consider certain difficult scientific questions, but the prince is not urged to read or study the text. Quoted from Inga Elmqvist Söderlund, *Taking possession of astronomy. Frontispieces and Illustrated Title Pages in 17th-Century Books on Astronomy* (Center for History of Science at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences: Stockholm, 2010), 273. In the cases we selected ourselves, we did not encounter such hints.

¹⁰ The frontispiece of Athanasius Kircher's work *Principis Christiani Archetypon Politicum* shows Minerva carrying a column in each arm, each with a quotation on the classical virtues of rulership from Justus Lipsius' *Politicorum sive Civilis Libri Sex* (as also stated in the frontispiece: "Sapientia grandia rerum sustentaculum" and "Virtus bellica domum magnarum origo et gloria"). Since Lipsius appears as a reference only once in Kircher's work and does not seem to have had any influence on Kircher's doctrine of virtue in other works, it is possible that the text on the banners was added by the printer. Felicia Englmann. "Titelkupfer: Frontispize aus Werken zum politischen Denken der frühen Neuzeit und ihr Bezug zur Emblemik." *Zur Geschichte des politischen Denkens: Denkweisen von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Dirk Lüddecke (Stuttgart: Metzler, Poeschel, 2014), 105–137, 123.

¹¹ Quoted from Peter Daly, *The Emblem in Early Modern Europe: Contributions to the Theory of the Emblem*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 199.

¹² Quoted from Elmqvist Söderlund, *Taking possession of astronomy*, 88.

¹³ Susanna Berger, *The Art of Philosophy: Visual Thinking in Europe from the Late Renaissance to the Early Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

were based on different models, ranging from political symbolism and symbols recognized by specific reader groups to more general commonplaces.¹⁴ One of the most used strategies was allegory, which, much like metaphor, guides us in understanding one or more concepts, usually abstract notions or qualities, in terms of another or others. In the early modern period, it was common to use this term for both visual and textual representations. A visual allegory is a concrete image or set of images that represent an abstract meaning that, by its very nature, cannot be fully visualized. As Susanna Berger notes in her book *The Art of Philosophy*, these images, rather than merely simplifying pre-existing philosophical concepts, enrich theoretical knowledge by translating it into visual form in combination with words and independently of texts in the book.¹⁵ Pedagogy, established by the Jesuits, made abundant use of images in a dynamic that stimulated the students' imagination and intellectual faculties and led to a better assimilation of the sciences.¹⁶

While the themes of political iconography have been well-studied,¹⁷ fewer authors have focused on the frontispieces of works with political content. Nevertheless, some studies are particularly noteworthy.¹⁸ Among these, the most important is undoubtedly the frontispiece of Hobbes's *Leviathan* as discussed by Horst Bredekamp, who demonstrated that it functions as a program for the entire work. He also analysed Hobbes' other works which had a similar function.¹⁹ Alongside Bredekamp, German historian Bernhard Roeck also explored frontispieces, focusing on works related to the genre of *Reichspublizistik*, situated at the intersection of politics and law, roughly produced between 1630 and 1740.²⁰ In these frontispieces Roeck identifies an allegorical reduction of the empire to specific objects or figures that find their counterparts in metaphorical phrases, as the empire can be "read" as a building, an eagle, a pyramid, or a body with a head and limbs.²¹

¹⁴ For history of political metaphors see Dietmar Peil, *Untersuchungen zur Staats- und Herrschaftsmetaphorik in literarischen Zeugnissen von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1983). For Commonplace Books see Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

¹⁵ Berger, *The Art of Philosophy*, 3.

¹⁶ Mûelenaere, *Early Modern Thesis Prints*, 2.

¹⁷ For example, the studies of Quentin Skinner on the paintings from Lorenzetti in Siena. Skinner, "Ambrogio Lorenzetti and the portrayal of virtuous government." *Visions of Politics*, Vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 39-92.

¹⁸ See also Englmann. "Titelkupfer: Frontispize aus Werken zum politischen Denken." In this article she presents five different frontispieces of political works ranging from 1516 till 1698.

¹⁹ Bredekamp's presentation of the other frontispieces of Hobbes's works, Horst Bredekamp, *Leviathan: Body Politic as Visual Strategy in the Work of Thomas Hobbes* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2020), 123-153; see also the appendix with various illustrations, 155-192. Hobbes was well aware of the importance of visual representations.

²⁰ Bernd Roeck, "Titelkupfer reichspublizistischer Werke der Barockzeit als historische Quellen." *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 65, no. 2 (1983): 329-368, 341 quotation 37 and 38 for list of works he used.

²¹ As Roeck writes, frontispieces do not merely attempt to inform the reader about the content of the book, but also seek to persuade them of the dignity and power of the Reich, thus expressing a distinct political stance. *Ibid.*, 359-361. Frontispieces could also be described as cognitive filters that sift through various segments of truth, revealing some aspects while concealing others, thereby generating the development of new meanings.

The allegorical depictions of the imperial constitution, the position of the emperor and the estates, follow the perspective of *jus publicum*, seeking to find a compromise between the emperor's aspirations and delineating the legal and political circumstances that bind the system together. It is evident that the frontispiece is a suitable medium for expressing certain concepts, though one should not expect it to depict conflicting ideas. What often characterizes these frontispieces is their remarkable complexity, which is under the influence of the meaning of symbols in the early modern period.²² Roeck speculates that contemporary viewers may not have always been able to unambiguously discern the intended meaning of all semantic components of words and images – assuming that such unambiguity is ever truly possible.²³

This raises the question of how to visualize the political, how to explain and depict political concepts. What is the significance of images in political writings? Politics is difficult to depict, and the purpose of these works was not so much to illustrate specific political practices, but rather some common topics – for example, the virtues that they promoted, or the virtuous life that a decision maker/ruler must lead. Here we are faced with the problem of the genre in which the authors write. The majority of works analysed are from the genre known as mirror for princes, which tended to offer a more simplified argumentation.²⁴

Analysis of the Sources

Let us begin with a work by Balthasar Sigismund von Stosch, *Politischer StaatsGarten von XIII. StaatsBluhmen*,²⁵ which was published in Wrocław (Breslau) in 1676 and printed in octavo format. The frontispiece depicts a garden with flowers, with the engraver strictly adhering to the comparison expressed in the title. The thirteen flowers mentioned in the title, which are also illustrated in the frontispiece, represent the thirteen chapters of the work. In the early modern period the garden symbolized a place of knowledge for readers—associated with flowers, it represented a *florilegium* of all knowledge.²⁶ The reader was invited to assume the role of a bee, moving from flower to flower, gathering the finest nectar, which would be transformed into honey or, in the present context, into their own knowledge of politics. An interesting feature of this relatively simple frontispiece is that it is the only example presented here in which the frontispiece includes both the title of the work and a reference to the author, so it functions also as the title page.

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²² See for example different handbooks on iconography and emblems from the early modern period, like Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (Roma, 1618. Modern reprint: Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 2012).

²³ Roeck, "Titelkupfer reichspublizistischer Werke," 360.

²⁴ Bruno Singer, *Die Fürstenspiegel in Deutschland im Zeitalter des Humanismus und der Reformation*. (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1981); *Politische Tugendlehre und Regierungskunst. Studien zum Fürstenspiegel der frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Hans-Otto Mühleisen and Theo Stamm (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990).

²⁵ Details about all the sources can be found in Bibliography.

²⁶ Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books*, 21-23, for Seneca and the meaning of the garden.

The next example is found in Johannes Nicolaus Flämizer's *Ars Artium*.²⁷ Even though it was printed in *duodecimo* format, it featured a frontispiece – the only one in Flämizer's works – and was one of only two of his works that included a dedication.²⁸ This indicates that frontispieces could be afforded by those with certain financial backing, or those who believed that investing in the work was worthwhile, as the print could yield specific benefits. The frontispiece is informative enough to attract the reader, depicting a library as the “place” of knowledge transmission, along with essential items: books, a globe, a compass and a ruler. Considering that Flämizer was a former soldier, he had knowledge of both theory (which consisted of geometry) and practice of warfare, making it reasonable to associate these objects with his background. Clearly, in the early modern period, all four items, like the library, held symbolic significance: they represented the learned community. However, one item expected from the subtitle of the work is missing: the “Fern-Glaß” (telescope), which was a metaphor for precise observation. The telescope is absent in the illustration, and Flämizer does not make an effort to materialize this metaphor in the text or directly reference it. Instead, we can read the telescope as a metaphor for the library, a distant space enabling a view of politics. The title of the work is notably rich, providing the reader with Flämizer's premise and the methodological approach of the work, with a focus on political maxims, which he terms *politischen Lehr-Gründen*. The work is structured as a dialogue between a young courtier and his tutor (possibly Flämizer's alter ego?), focusing on classical political themes. Most of these conversations do not occur in the library, as the frontispiece might suggest, but rather in a garden or during a carriage ride. Nevertheless, the printer/engraver was well aware of the symbolic importance of the library as the place of knowledge.

The authors of the frontispieces used various manuals to help them. One of the most famous was Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* (1618). In this book Ripa depicted different symbols, also those connected with politics – as for example the allegorical figure of the “reason of state” (*ragione di stato*). It depicts a female personification with her left hand resting on the head of a lion, as if she were trying to calm or pet it. The lion appears tame but also shows its paw. Between the figure's feet lies a book titled IUS. The *ragione di stato* garment is studded with eyes and ears. It symbolizes the transition from God's all-seeing eye and all-hearing ear to a state that wants to imitate

²⁷ The surname is also written as Flämitzer. In addition to the numerous pamphlets he published, his two fundamental works are *Politico-Militarischer Staats-Minister* (Nürnberg, 1688) and *Europäischer Monarchen Staats-Compas* (Nürnberg, 1690). In the title he describes himself as “Hauptmann über eine Compagnia Teutschen Fuß Volckes/ nachmals Vice-General-Auditore.” The full title is: *Ars Artium: Oder Des Politischen Gesichtschärfers Geheimes Fern-Glaß: Durchgehend Mit vielen politischen Lehr-Gründen ausgezeieret/ nicht weniger kurzweilig/ als auch hochnützlich zu lessen*, Herbronn 1689. About him: Wolfgang E. J. Weber, “Armierter Wachsamkeit und militärische Verfassung: Johann Nikolaus Flämizers Politico-militarischer Staats-Minister; oder vielmehr: Prudentia politico-militaris von 1688,” in Marco Faini and Maria Elena Saini, eds., *Books for captains and captains in books: shaping the perfect military commander in early modern Europe* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016), 35–64.

²⁸ The vast majority of his works fall under the genre of pamphlets, where price was very important.

God.²⁹ There are no such depictions in the selected period, with the sole exception of the work by Christian Weirauch,³⁰ which speaks of *ragione di stato* in the title of his work *Della ragione di Stato* (Leipzig, 1673). It is also the only work where an explanation of the frontispiece is offered. The work is a guide to the duke Georg Wilhelm I of Liegnitz, Brieg and Wohlau, who was the last male descendant of the Silesian Piasts. Unlike other authors, Weirauch came from a university background, which probably also influenced his choice of frontispiece.

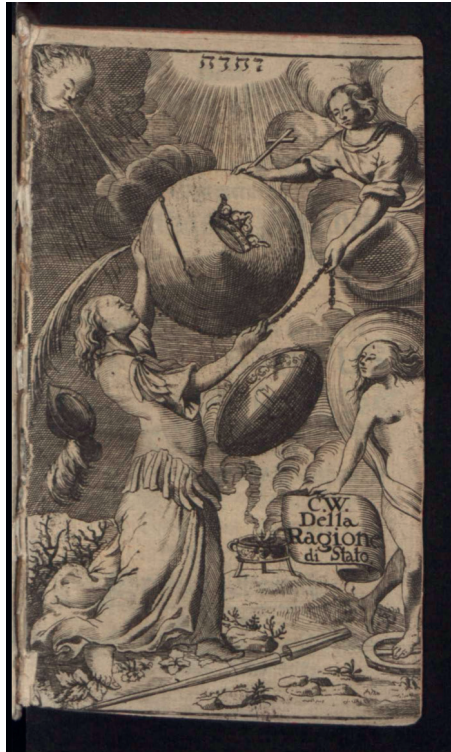


Figure 1. Frontispiece of Christian Weirauch's *Della ragione di Stato* (Leipzig, 1673)

In the frontispiece we see a female figure, personifying the reason of the state, trying to control a sphere on which there is a crown and a sceptre, two fundamental insignia of the ruler. In this, she is supported by God, as well as an angel holding a chain, while the other female figure, personifying luck (recognizable by the fact that she is standing on a wheel), observes the situation. By doing this, the author wants to show that his theory will be based on something permanent, like God's favour, and not on the search for worldly happiness. The explanation following the frontispiece is written in Latin, while the work is in German. This shows that the author wanted

²⁹ Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi, 2012), 504–506.

³⁰ His surname is also sometimes spelled as Weirach. For details about the literature written on the Silesian Piasts in the 17th century: Ewa Pietrzak, *Literatur für den Hof. Die Piastenhöfe als kulturelle Zentren Schlesiens im 17. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter 2021).

to demonstrate his knowledge of the field. The explanation is in verse, it covers five pages and is thus much more extensive and denser than the frontispiece itself, which shows that the authors sometimes wanted to say more with images than they were actually capable of. Weirauch tries to prove that *ragione di stato* is not just a deception and dissimulation, but can also represent an appropriate governmental prudence (*Regirungs-Klugheit*) that a future ruler must know. It was discovered that this book was offered with two different versions of frontispieces, which shows us how quickly images could adapt. In one case, the title of the book is also on the frontispiece, while in another case it is not.³¹

Having first introduced three works in smaller size, we will now focus on two folio-sized publications. The first is an emblematic mirror for princes by Franz Reinzer, a Jesuit professor specializing in rhetoric and philosophy, who served at colleges in Linz, Krems, Graz and Vienna. His *Meteorologia philosophico-politica* was published in Augsburg in 1698 (with a German translation in 1712) and combines meteorology with political reflection. This representative folio work is dedicated to Joseph I, who is depicted on the frontispiece and in some of the emblems. With this work Reinzer aimed to ease tensions between the ruler and the Jesuits, providing a context for interpreting the title page.



Figure 2. Frontispiece of Franz Reinzer's *Meteorologia philosophico-politica* (Augsburg, 1698)

³¹ The work located in the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt with signature !Ha 179!Lf 332 (1) has no text on the frontispiece. For an image with a text compare the work from Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz with signature: Fb 538<a>. See also the example located in Bayerische Staatsbibliothek with signature: Pol.g. 991.

The frontispiece was glued, not bound, into the works, indicating that it was possible to produce both a more expensive and a cheaper version of the book. This shows us how sometimes pragmatic reasons influenced the choice and type. Reinzer's panegyric frontispiece contains allegories of elements, cosmic forces, and depiction of war, all converging on the portrait of Joseph I at the top of the image, supported by quotations from Virgil and Claudian, as well as Joseph's royal motto *Timore et amore* ("With fear and love"). The frontispiece can be divided into three parts: at the bottom we see a clash between the Ottoman and Habsburg armies, aided by divine intervention—the lightning sent by God, through the Habsburg eagle, strikes the Ottoman forces, bringing about their destruction. The battle scenes are complemented by depictions of various natural phenomena: the sun, hail, comets, rain wind, and a rainbow—depicting nearly every possible occurrence. The middle section is covered by clouds, on which virtues and angels appear, along with the ruptured earthly globe, delivering the crown with which the future ruler will be crowned. Above all this is the ruler's portrait, positioned beyond both the sublunary and superlunary realms, in a world of permanence where his reign will be eternal, sharing this space only with God (depicted as Chronos). The title of the image, *Gloria Austriae* ("The Glory of Austria"), is fitting.³²

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As Christian Peters points out, the frontispiece's objectives are primarily panegyric and do not allow for didactic warnings, which are instead reserved for emblems later in the book.³³ Despite the frontispiece and the ruler's placement in immutable eternity, Reinzer uses the text to emphasize the necessity of instructing the ruler. This highlights the symbolic role of the frontispiece, which demanded a relatively straightforward line of argumentation, while other messages were left for later in the work's content. The analysis reveals that the frontispiece reflects the work's content (meteorological phenomena), the historical context in which it was created (the conflict with the Ottoman Empire), as well as the portrayal of the individual to whom the work is dedicated.

Let us continue with the *Fürsten-Spiegel, Oder Monarchia Deß Hochlöblichen Ertz-Hauses Oesterreich*, a mirror for rulers by the Bohemian jurist Johann Jacob von Weingarten. This work, composed in two books, is a lavish tribute to the monarchy and its rulers. Unlike Reinzer's work, it features portraits of all Habsburg rulers as well as an extensive genealogy and history of the royal family. The frontispiece is allegorical and depicts Leopold gazing into a mirror held by personified figures of Faith on one side and Battle on the other, with four female figures representing the cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance) behind him. Along the lower and outer edges of the image, symbolically placed on a column, are the portraits of Habsburg rulers, while the second column within the image is reserved for

³² For the explanation Christian Peters, "Atmospheric Pressure: Natural Philosophy, Political Didactics and the Exigencies of Praise in Franz Reinzer's *Meteorologia Philosophico-Politica* (1698)," in Karl A.E. Enekel and Paul J. Smith, eds., *Emblems and the Natural World* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2017), 351–380, here: 354–356; Englmann. "Titelkupfer: Frontispize aus Werken zum politischen Denken," 125–131.

³³ *Ibid.*, 361.

the emperor's motto *Consilio et industria* ("By reason and industry"). The upper left corner repeats the title of the work, this time in its Latin version *Speculum principum*.³⁴ Following this, there is an illustration with Emperor Leopold's portrait at the centre, surrounded by smaller portraits of other Habsburg rulers and some emperors of the Empire, all encircled in two rings. Each ruler is also depicted in an individual portrait. These images were inserted into the work later, indicating that the book was likely available for purchase without them, thereby reducing the cost, similarly to what we saw in Reinzer's case.



Figure 3. Frontispiece of Johann Jacob von Weingarten's *Fürsten-Spiegel, Oder Monarchia Deß Hochlöblichen Ertz-Hauses Oesterreich* (Prague, 1673)

This seemingly simple depiction has a historical predecessor. A remarkably similar representation can be found in the frontispiece of Pedro Juan Belluga's *Petri Bellugæ Valentini. J.C. famosissimi Speculum principum*, published in 1655. This imagery was adapted to fit the Habsburg context, yet the fundamental motif of the ruler looking into a mirror, surrounded by virtues, remains the same. This is an example of employing established commonplaces, but also of printers aiming at copying existing images, which made printing easier for them.

In the other two mirrors of virtues that Weingarten produced—one for citizens and another for jurists—there are no classical frontispieces. The

³⁴ It is the only time that this title is used in the work.

first features a portrait of the ruler, while the second, as in the case of von Stosch, presents in the frontispiece, which also functions as the title page, some basic information about the work. This image depicts two Roman columns draped with a curtain, on which the title of the work is inscribed. Unlike other illustrations that allude to esoteric knowledge (*arcana imperii*), this image appeals to the idea of ancient knowledge as true wisdom. Two figures stand at the top of the columns, with a third figure between them symbolizing Emperor Leopold I, identifiable by his motto *Industria et consilia*. In all of Weingarten's works there is a discernible dedication to the Habsburg dynasty, especially to Leopold I, which we perceive through the repetition of his motto. Like Reinzer's example, Weingarten's work demonstrates the potential of such a lavish print, as he was awarded with a noble title.

The next example is the imperial mirror *Adamas Austriacus*, published in 1668 by Johann Adam Weber, a Benedictine monk from Salzburg. Despite the fact that the work was published in *octavo*, it has a frontispiece in which we see two people representing the German and Spanish parts of the Habsburg family holding the royal ring together. The work, which is dedicated to Leopold I, thus emphasizes the connection between the two parts of the family, with them being united by a common enemy: the French. Such images are of course not limited to works with political content. A similar example is Christophorus Franciscus Volkmann's *Philosophia peripatetica Austriacorum Caesarum symbolis adumbrata*. The work, which is primarily focused on philosophy, shows the four cardinal virtues with recognizable attributes, located under the Habsburg eagle, which bears the inscription *Iste tuetur* ("This one protects"), highlighting the importance of the dynasty as a foundation of stability. Above the imperial coat of arms is the church coat of arms, which is visually placed in a supralunar sphere, and above it is the inscription *Hi fundarunt* ("These founded").

62

With the previous example we touched on a special type of genre and frontispiece, which we will briefly present here: university prints.³⁵ They were often better financially supported (e.g. because of the noble family to which the student belonged), and usually had a celebratory meaning, expressing loyalty to the noble or ruling family. One of such works is *Ethica Austriaca, Sive Doctrinae Politicae Flores*, prepared by Franciscus Rescalli. In the frontispiece we see the Austrian eagle, holding all the threads of the event in its beak. The central part is represented by a cartouche with the inscription *Inspice et fac* ("Look and do"), which is directly related to the writing at the top: *Speculum Politicum*. Although the work does not bear the words *Speculum Politicum* in the title, it is clear that it was conceived as such, which reminds us of Weingarten's work. This shows how fluidly titles were sometimes understood. It is also a good example of the frontispiece serving as a message to the readers of what they can expect, or in which genre the author wants to place it.

³⁵ This work differs from the thesis prints, which were printed in bigger format and were meant for announcement of defences. For detailed analyses of thesis prints see: Mûelenaere. *Early Modern Thesis Prints*.

The frontispiece is built on symbols and mottos that the author puts next to the depictions, thus demonstrating a connection with emblems that were extremely popular among the Jesuits. Among the symbols we can recognize some of the most obvious, such as the rose (*Utrum lubet*), the candle (*Omnibus æque*), the lion (*Fugam nescit*), the pearl (*Una unium*) and others. The frontispiece is thus transformed into a commonplace, listing some of the most common symbols that were associated with government and politics.

Although it is somewhat outside the era in focus, *Politica Austriaca In Imperatoribus Austriacis*, published in 1717 in Vienna and written by Gerhard Hillebrand, is also worth noting. The frontispiece represents a huge building in the classical style, which can be divided into two parts. In the middle of the lower part, justice stands on a pedestal with the Habsburg coat of arms, below is the inscription *Politica Austriaca*. On the left and right are *fortitudo* ("courage") and *constantia* ("constancy"). Above this we read *decus imortale tuorum* ("Your immortal glory"). At the top of the building, we see a depiction of the first Habsburg ruler, Rudolph, surrounded by four soldiers. Despite the simplicity of the image, we can see how important was the symbolic placement of the dynasty among the virtues that they were supposed to pursue – courage on one side, and constancy on the other. They can be achieved by being just – participating only in just wars, not committing violence. The guarantee of everything is the genealogy of the family, which ensures that such a lineage will continue. We should also not overlook the symbolic placement of Emperor Rudolph, whose depiction is similar to the personification of God.

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The Carniolan nobleman Franz Albrecht Pelzhoffer published three works, two of which include a frontispiece. One such frontispiece is featured in his final work, *Neuentdeckte Staats-Klugheit*, which was prepared for print posthumously by his widow, who also contributed the foreword. It is precisely her foreword that must be compared with the frontispiece. The image is the work of Joseph de Montalegre (1672–1718), Czech painter and graphic artist, primarily active in Nuremberg, who also created the title pages and Pelzhoffer's portrait in *Arcanorum status* (Ljubljana, 1709).

In the frontispiece, we see a tree and, in its canopy, rests a double-headed eagle, symbolizing the imperial coat of arms. The tree, lush with leaves, represents the family tree in all its might and bears the inscription *sic viresco* ("thus I flourish"). The four cardinal virtues, depicted as young women, water the tree, hinting that the future of the monarchy is secure. All of this suggests that the Habsburgs are committed to the four cardinal virtues, affirming their moral standing. However, not everything is as ideal as it seems. Five men stand around the tree, attempting to pull the eagle down with ropes, while the hand of God holds the ends of their ropes, striving to thwart their efforts. Above the scene is the inscription *Fecit potentia in brachio Suo* ("In my hands lies infinite power"). Upon closer inspection, these five men can be identified as the enemies of the Habsburg Monarchy. There is an Ottoman with a turban, alongside a Frenchman, recognizable by the fleur-de-lis on his armour. Next to them is a Hungarian in his distinctive uniform. It is more difficult to ascertain who the remaining two figures represent. Brey

proposes that one should be seen as a Huguenot/Calvinist, whom Pelzhoffer, throughout his work, considers as one of the greatest dangers to the faith, mostly due to the doctrine of predestination. Additionally, Frederick V of the Palatinate, the “Winter King,” a Calvinist, is described as a usurper both in the widow’s foreword and in Pelzhoffer’s text. The other indistinct figure is most likely a Protestant, though this remains a hypothesis.³⁶



Figure 4. Frontispiece of Franz A. Pelzhoffer's *Neuentdeckte Staats-Klugheit*, (Leipzig, Frankfurt, 1710)

The image thus depicts both the state enemies active during Pelzhoffer’s time, as well as ideological Others, who will remain so until they change their faith. It is evident that the frontispiece was created in the same spirit as the widow’s foreword. The introductory image partially reflects Pelzhoffer’s ideological stance (the glory of the Monarchy, the struggle against the Ottomans/French/other religions), though it cannot be entirely aligned with the content of the book, as these themes are not as prominent in the text. We believe the explanation lies elsewhere: the work was published in 1710 and includes Pelzhoffer’s foreword, dated just a few days before his death. Whether this date is real or fabricated is not relevant here. What is clear is that his widow had to ensure a swift publication of the book, which comprised 597 pages, and her twelve-page foreword was written after his

³⁶ Matthias Brey, “Franz Albrecht Pelzhoffer: Neu-entdeckte Staats-Klugheit in Hundert Politischen Reden oder Discursen abgefasst, (1710): zur Erschließung und Analyse eines politiktheoretischen Werkes des beginnenden 18. Jahrhunderts,” Bachelor diss, University of Augsburg, 1997, 80.

death. The printer likely gave Montalegre hints for the frontispiece, based on what was more readily available—the widow's foreword, which served as the source for the frontispiece.



Figure 5. Frontispiece of Franz A. Pelzhoffer's first volume of *Arcanorum Status* (Ljubljana, 1709)

A frontispiece with a different message can be seen in the first volume of another Pelzhoffer's book, *Arcanorum Status*, which is the only one of four volumes to feature a frontispiece.³⁷ It is likely that Pelzhoffer collaborated with the printer for this, and that the artist received more information directly from the author. It presents a portrait of Emperor Joseph I, labelled *Semper Augustus* (to whom the work is also dedicated). Above the portrait we see a double-headed eagle holding a sword and a sceptre, similar to the one in *Neuentdeckte Staats-Klugheit*, but without a representation of God. Both include a depiction of the four virtues. However, in *Arcanorum Status* they are more easily recognized, due to the symbols associated with them, whereas in *Neuentdeckte Staats-Klugheit* they are allegorized in the form of four women watering a tree.

In the image we see ten books, indicating that the frontispiece was made at a later stage, or that Pelzhoffer had already completed (or at least prepared) the remaining books by the time the first volume was published. The central focus is on the emperor's portrait, above which is a double-headed eagle, holding a sword, in its left claw, and a sceptre, in its right. This image is complemented on the left by the ruler's motto, *Amore et timore*, alongside depictions of a mother and a soldier. Beneath the portrait is the

³⁷ The later edition lacked the frontispiece. Instead a portrait of the author was inserted.

Austrian coat of arms and the maxim *Supericum hujus sepiterum*, while a lion can be seen on the right.

While the upper part of the frontispiece features themes similar to those addressed in *Neuentdeckte Staats-Klugheit*, the key difference lies in the background, which depicts an ancient triumphal arch. On the left and right sides of the arch stand two ancient gods, inviting the reader to enter hidden spaces and the mysteries themselves. One of these gods can be recognized as Mercury, whom early modern intellectuals regarded as the god of political secrecy. Mercury standing on the right and Mars standing on the left are both drawing back the curtain that conceals the inscription *Arcana Status detecta*. What lies behind the curtain is what the reader seeks and what Pelzhoffer further legitimizes by invoking the transmission of ancient knowledge. Pelzhoffer's choice of Mars and Mercury reflects his grounding of political secrets in ancient knowledge, with Tacitus being the most renowned author of this genre. At the same time, he builds a bridge between ancient knowledge and the present. This frontispiece represents a completely different approach from that of *Neuentdeckte Staats-Klugheit*, where the frontispiece is more politically relevant, yet more indirect in addressing the potential reader. The reader of *Arcanorum Status* immediately understands what to expect from the work, as the frontispiece reiterates the title "with other means," whereas this cannot be said of *Neuentdeckte Staats-Klugheit*, where there is no clear link between the content and the frontispiece. It thus articulates both the political and scholarly credo to which he, as the author, is committed.³⁸

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Lastly, let us mention the frontispiece of the political novel *Austriana regina Arabiae* (Augsburg, 1687) by Anton Wilhelm Ertl (1654–ca.–1715), Bavarian by origin. The frontispiece depicts a queen on the throne, symbolizing Austria. Bowing before her are some dark-skinned individuals, Ottomans, inhabitants of the New World, as well as the King of France, indicating that the entire world will submit-or has already submitted-to Austria, thereby realizing the ideal of *monarchia universalis*. This frontispiece must also be read in conjunction with the novel's final sentence: *Austriana Esset In Orbe Ultima!* Despite the allegorical nature of the novel, to which the frontispiece corresponds, it clearly depicts the imperial ambitions of the House of Habsburg. These ambitions are expressed indirectly yet pointedly through symbolism, highlighting the dynasty's aspirations. In this instance, the frontispiece clearly demonstrates its dual role: on the one hand, it facilitates its readers' understanding of the narrative and reveals the author's fundamental premise; on the other hand, it serves as a strategy for promoting the work and seeking favour with the ruling dynasty.

³⁸ Here we can see some similarity with Thomas Hobbes' frontispiece. As Bredekamp wrote about it in his *De Cive*, the two columns of images flank a central panel. Following the veils of the tabernacle, described in the Old Testament, it alludes through alternating hints to the notion that the text is itself a fount of arcane knowledge. Bredekamp, *Leviathan Body politic*, 6.

Conclusion

Visual forms of communication played a central role in the early modern period, and frontispieces offered an obvious opportunity to incorporate these pictorial methods into the realm of various modes of expression, be they political, scientific, religious, or other. They were the most direct way of communicating fundamental values to the reader. Their purpose was to highlight the issues addressed by the work in a more or less emphasized way and to use the image to attract the reader to purchase or read. Some did this in a literal way (e.g. von Stosch), while others depicted dense, allegorical images, such as Reinezer's frontispiece, which is the most complex image we have discussed. The visual strategies used by authors and publishers could be based on various models, from political symbolism of Atlas and Hercules to symbols that were recognized by certain groups of readers.

As the selected frontispieces show, the argumentation has mostly been based on a system of commonplaces, i.e. *loci communes*, to which a frontispiece attempted to direct the readers, with the arguments being reflected through images and symbols that particularly highlighted the importance of virtue. They did not directly touch the text, so the frontispiece did not serve as a mapping of the content, which would be demanding, given the scope of some works. Direct allusions to the text are rarely found, in most cases they correspond to the general visual culture and symbolic registers of the time. The frontispiece fluctuated between the complexity that allowed for artistic expression and the need for a certain "simplicity" that allowed readers to decipher the image and convey the content of the work. The frontispieces show us what the key symbolic points of political thought were.³⁹ Unlike Roeck's conclusions, we see that the examples presented tended more towards political virtues, which had great importance in the Habsburg Monarchy, and the authors primarily tried to situate politics inside those virtues.⁴⁰

It has been pointed out that printing a frontispiece made the work more expensive, but the depictions added value to the works, as evidenced by their (sub)titles, which often emphasized that the works contained pictorial additions. If the emblem book required more complexity, the frontispiece allowed for individual engagement. Authors had less influence on the inclusion and depiction of a frontispiece, since it seems that printers were usually responsible for them.

Images not only reproduce reality, but also act as agents that create and guide beliefs, and therefore we must see them as active forces. As the

³⁹ As Felicia Englmann wrote: "The complexity of the frontispieces is also common to all of them. Not one of them, not a single motif, is purely unambiguous or even merely decorative. Each individual motif can be read in multiple ways; each acquires further facets and possible interpretations in the context of the other symbols, in the interplay with the text engravings (where present), and in relation to the actual text of the work - entirely in keeping with the taste of the time, which loved riddles, ambiguities, and encryptions. These are already present in the texts and are taken up by the frontispieces and translated into another code, the complex pictorial code of the early modern period." Englmann. "Titelkupfer: Frontispize aus Werken zum politischen Denken," 134-135.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 133.

German historian Rolf Reichardt said, the value of images “lies not in their depictions of individuals or events, but in their symbolic, metaphorical, and allegorical interpretation of collective ideas and community issues. They can show us the ways in which contemporaries interpreted their experiences in ways that remain hidden in written sources.”⁴¹ Frontispieces are thus not just antechambers to books, but guides into early modern visual culture: they provide symbolic models and ideograms; they are the key to worlds of knowledge and imagination; they show patterns of perception, organization, and reasoning; they shape collective memory. Viewers synthesize these images in their minds, not by recognizing a single reality depicted in the image, but by understanding their conceptual connections and unity.

⁴¹ Quoted in: Christian Fuhrmeister, “Eripuit caelo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis:” The Political Iconography of Lightning in Europe and North America, 1750-1800. *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series 99, no. 5 (2009): 144-163, 157.

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