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## **Symbolism of the gate on title pages of books**

Two traditions: Greek and Judeo-Christian were followed when applying gate symbolism in decorating and editing title pages of books. In both traditions the gate was regarded as a place important in social life, architecture and defence of the city or the symbolism of the temple. However, in religious tradition of Jews - the older of the two - the gate plays an important role in paradise. After committing the original sin God placed cherubs and “glittering swords to guard the way to the tree of life”<sup>1</sup>.

The symbolism of the gate on title pages appears almost simultaneously with the first incidents of shifting the colophon to the beginning of the book or the development of the medieval incipit. Nevertheless, there has not yet been a full study made on a global scale.

The symbolism of the gate can be compared to the book illustration, which is an “explanation, addition, interpretation or apposition to the text”<sup>2</sup>. However, the gate symbol is not only a graphic element but it has its own allegorical and cultural significance. For the gate symbolizes the transition from one reality to another, often a better and more desirable one, from the state of ignorance to accomplishment, from anxiety of the quest to the bliss of possessing. It refers to the Biblical Apocalypse and has the deepest symbolic meaning; the passage through the gate enables the salvation of an individual who crosses its threshold and enters the Holy City of Jerusalem, from *profanum* to *sacrum*.

As we are embedded in Christian and Mediterranean culture, the word “gate” is obviously associated with the interior to which it leads and the decision of transition, which we undertake when passing through the gate. Let us use an analogy; imagine we take a book and open it on its title page where we find a picture of the gate. Or we turn the page and start exploring the content of the book, acquiring its knowledge, feeling its spiritual message, identifying with its slogans, with its “world” that pulsates on each new page. The gate metaphorically separates what happens to the reader

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<sup>1</sup> Gen 3,24.

<sup>2</sup> J. Wiercińska, *Sztuka i książka*, Warszawa 1986, p. 37.

before reading the book and after having gone through it. Everybody can interpret this transition in their own way but the reader is never the same as before reading the book. This gate symbolically marks the beginning of a new life that begins with reading the first page of the text.

I suppose that is what the authors and book publishers thought; various elements of the entrance gate were used on title pages and fronts in simple, easily understandable or more complex forms, saturated with allegories, sentences and other forms set in deep triumphal arches.

Architects, designers of magnificent temples, gardens, cemeteries and public buildings wanted to have such visions. One does not need to give examples. However, as far as I know, no analysis of the gate as a symbol on title pages has ever been a separate subject of research.

As early as in the story of Lot from the book of Genesis the gate had a social significance first when Lot hosts two angels<sup>3</sup>, and religious significance in the story of Joseph when he wakes up and thinks: "Truly this is the house of God and the gate to heaven!"<sup>4</sup>. In Shechem the sons of Jacob and Hamor discuss the prospect of marriage of their sister Dina to Shechem, the son of Hamor, to join both families<sup>5</sup>.

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses orders the Chosen People to obey the commandments, especially the commandment of love of God, neighbour and oneself; he tells them to inscribe them the form of the Ten Commandments on the doors of the houses and on "your gates"<sup>6</sup>. He speaks even more clearly about this in his next order: „Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds...Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates"<sup>7</sup>.

The vision and behaviour of young Samuel, who was with Heli in the house of Jehovah in Shiloh, is also symbolic. When he hears the words of the revelation of God, he "opens the gates of the house of Jehovah"<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Gen 19, 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> Gen 28, 17.

<sup>5</sup> Gen 34, 20.24.

<sup>6</sup> Deut 6,5.8-9.

<sup>7</sup> Deut 11, 18. 20.

<sup>8</sup> 1Sm 3,15.

After King Solomon had built the temple it became a symbol of God's presence among the people. He rhetorically asks in prayer: "But will God really dwell on earth?" And then he cries: Lord, my God. Hear the cry and the prayer ... May your eyes be open toward this temple... this place of which you said, „My Name shall be there so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place” (1Kings 8, 27-29). When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers ... when an enemy besieges one of its gates ... then hear in heaven, the place of your dwelling” (1 Kings 8: 37-38).

In the Old Testament, the words of God are often fulfilled through people's behaviour at the gates or after crossing them, eg 2Chron. 23,20, where King Joash is introduced to the royal palace through the Upper Gate to be seated on the throne.

In the Old Testament, the symbolism of the gate, especially the temple gate is very rich. Jesus himself and his prophets address people at the gate. The call of Yahweh to the prophet Jeremiah is very vivid: „This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: “Stand in the gate of the house of the Lord and there call out this word: Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of Judah who enter through these gates to worship the Lord” (Jr. 7, 1-2).

The symbolism of the gate was developed on various planes. The prophet's cry for improvement of behaviour towards God and fellow human beings introduces a moral meaning into this symbolism. It conveys the idea that only those who have converted and undergone moral and intellectual transformation have the right to enter the Lord's temple. A similar thought was expressed by prophet Zachary (For 8, 16-17).

The Book of Nehemiah describes the act of rebuilding the walls and gates of Jerusalem and the temple; mocking Samaritans and angry Arabs, Ammonites and Ashdods, who sneer at the attempt to renew the former splendor of Judah. They try to discourage and intimidate the builders in various ways. They, however, encourage each other: “Let us go together to the house of God - inside the temple and shut the temple gate” (Nh 6, 10).

Similarly, the symbolism of the gate appears in the book of Psalms, which is a treasury of prayers and, among others, they promise Christ. The Hebrew title of this collection of one hundred and fifty prayer texts - *Tēhillim* - that is, “praise” or “song of worship” expresses the very essence of prayer, which is a cry of joy, love, gratitude and adoration for the existence

of God (Ps 8, 2.10) and for His creative and saving works (Ps 104, 33-34). Prayers of psalms are closely related to life, therefore, they fully capture the experience of happiness and sadness, crisis and hope of people of all times. They also inspired etchers who were looking for inspiration for the title page designs<sup>9</sup>. The verses of Psalm 118, 19-20 can serve as a representative example: "Open the gates of justice for me: I want to come in and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous will enter through it." Thanks to the prayer, believers enter the book of Psalms.

Moreover, Psalm 118, proclaiming the final victory of God over all evil, became a joyful song of the Church, which praises the resurrection of Jesus Christ and foretells the definitive overcoming of death. Christian tradition of individual verses of Psalm 118 refers to Jesus Christ personally, to His suffering and resurrection<sup>10</sup>.

The psalmist wants to testify to the merciful love of God, and therefore he asks for permission to enter the temple through the gate. Accompanied by the sound of this part of Psalm 118, pilgrims entered the temple in procession (cited, 19-29). Israel, freed from the abyss of death, wants to cross the gates of life leading to God to give Him thanksgiving. This is the beginning of the proper liturgy of praise and thanksgiving for God's salvation. At the gates leading to the sanctuary, the gatekeepers, responding to the call for the opening of the "gates of righteousness", warn everybody that only the "righteous" can approach righteous God (v. 20, cf. Ps 15 and 24)<sup>11</sup>.

The symbolism of the Old Testament was enriched with new content in the teaching of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. In the parable He compared himself to the Good Shepherd, who enters the sheepcote through the gate leading the sheep, which follow him because they know his voice (John 10: 1-6). But because they did not understand the meaning of what he said, "he said again: I am the gate of the sheep ... I am the gate. If someone comes in through me, he will be saved - he will come in and go out and find the forage" (Jn 10, 7-10).

The motif of the gate and the passage appeared again in the context of Christian calling and God's judgment: "Enter through the narrow gate! ... How narrow the gate is and narrow the way that leads to life, and there are

<sup>9</sup> A. Tronina, *Teologia Psalmów. Wprowadzenie do lektury Psalterza*, Lublin 1995, pp. 89-106.

<sup>10</sup> H.J. Kraus, *Psalms 60-150. A Continental Commentary*, Minneapolis 1993, p. 401.

<sup>11</sup> St. Augustine, *Sermo super Ps CLIX*, De Pascha 3; PL 39,2059.

few who find it! (Mt 7, 13-14). Or equally tellingly: “Try to enter through a narrow door; for many, I say to you, will want to enter, and they will not be able to do so.” (Jn 13, 24).

This symbolism was used by the Apostles in their teaching. In the book of Acts we read that Barnabas and Paul, when they came to Antioch, “gathered together the local Church, told them how much God had done through them and opened the gate of faith to pagans” (Acts 14, 27). In his letters to the Corinthians, St. Paul used this comparison when he enjoyed the fruits of his mission, saying that “a great and promising gate was opened” (1 Corinthians 16: 9) or new prospects of apostolic work in Ephesus. He wrote similar words about his work in Troas (2 Cor 2:12).

The vision of heavenly Jerusalem, as seen and described by St. John in the Apocalypse, is most impressive. One of the angels revealed to him the “Holy City - Jerusalem”, coming down out of heaven from God. [...] It had a great high wall with „twelve gates”, and at the gates - twelve angels and “names” written on the gates, which were the names of the “twelve tribes of the sons of Israel” (Rev 21, 10-12).

These were clear indications for the creators of Christian art who, mainly in Romanesque architecture, designed and erected cathedrals, chapels, cemeteries and gardens. Inspirations from the Scriptures were deepened by the Fathers of the Church, but because of lack of space for these considerations, they will be omitted here. However, we should at least mention St. Augustine, who wrote in his commentary on the psalms: “Two, therefore, are the gates - the gate of paradise and the gate of the church; through the church gate we enter the gate of paradise”<sup>12</sup>.

In his textbook explaining how to understand particular parts of ecclesiastical buildings Wilhelm Durand, who lived in the years 1230-1296, wrote that the door is connected not only with Christ, but also with the Apostles. His indications were used in many medieval cathedrals, where a statue of Jesus holding a book in one hand and inviting people to enter the temple with the other was placed on the pillar dividing a large doorway (*trumeau*). Thus, in many European cathedrals, a church-goer met Christ face to face on the doorstep<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> St. Augustine, *Sermo Super Ps CLIX. De Pascha 3*; PL 39,2059.

<sup>13</sup> Guillaume D. De Mende, *Manuale per comprendere il significatio simbolico delle cattedrali e delle chiese*, Roma 1999, p. 36; Wilhelm Rüdiger, *Die gotische Kathedrale Architektur und Bedeutung*, Köln 1979, p. 113, il. 45.

Jan Amos Komensky (1592-1670) transfers the symbolism of the gate into the sphere of editing. He was a theoretician and practitioner of applying and combining words with images to act on the mind and senses of the recipient-student. Proclaiming the idea of permanent education, he wrote in *Pampaedia*: “[...] because the senses are the gates, which way the outside world enters into us together with all that exists in the world. Reason is a gate through which a man enters into himself as if in God’s likeness to look into numbers, measures and weights in himself, which helps him to reach deep into things (even distant and hidden). And finally, faith is the gate through which the word of God enters, and even God Himself with his eternity”<sup>14</sup>.

The symbolism of the gate was used in the process of editing at the end of the Middle Ages period, which looked for patterns drawn from the Holy Scriptures for all its achievements. This was noticed by Jan Huizinga, a Dutch historian, essayist and linguist, who wrote that the life of the medieval Christian world in all its relationships had been penetrated and even saturated with religious imaginations. He emphasized that there was no such case or action that would not be in constant relation with Christ and faith<sup>15</sup>. This was also the creative horizon of the then editors, who crossed the border thresholds of the temples and admired their beauty and message every week. I think that they consciously used it to raise the rank of their own products.

But there was also a trend to admit that the symbolic way of thinking interfered with the development of cause-genetic thought<sup>16</sup>. That is why in his “Monarchy” Dante first had to break the power of the symbol, denying its usefulness; only then did the road to historical research open up. Marcin Luther also spoke against symbolic and allegorical thinking. He talks about great masters of medieval theology such as Dionysius of Cartuja, Guillaume Durand (Durantis), Bonaventura and Gerson, saying that their “allegorical studies are the work of idlers”<sup>17</sup>. However, there is no significant difference between the medieval allegory and the mythology of the Renaissance. However, a kind of competition between them arose in

<sup>14</sup> Jan Amos Komeński, *Pampaedia*, Wrocław 1974, p. 47.

<sup>15</sup> J. Huizinga, *Jesień średniowiecza*, Warszawa 1974, p. 237.

<sup>16</sup> J. Huizinga, *op. cit.*, ed. 1992, p. 25.

<sup>17</sup> W. James, *The Varieties of religious Experience*, London 1903, p. 343.

the 14th century<sup>18</sup>. This may also be found on title pages of incunabula and the first 16th-century prints. The treasures of antiquity gradually became an object of interest and admiration. Olympian Gods and nymphs pushed biblical symbols and *Roman de la Rose*<sup>19</sup> into the background.

Without those new images and symbols the people of the turn of two epochs were not able to express more general or synthetic thoughts. When they started talking about the cognizable essence of things almost every word became an image then. As a result of 16th-century criticism of the allegory all its colours and shapes gradually returned, also in the publication of M. Luther's works<sup>20</sup>.

One person affected the forms of the title pages, even though unintentionally. It was Thomas à Kempis, a quiet monk, introverted, holding to a narrow view of divine direction in the world. Any colourful symbolism was alien to him. And yet thanks to the clear form of expressing thoughts, his book "*Imitatio Christi*" influenced the composition of title pages by the fact that it contained only a certain number of invariably simple thoughts, gathered around one central point. Each thought is contained in one simple sentence; there is no subordination or any correlation among them. This book overcomes imagery and symbolic thinking but gives phrases that, although they do not belong to any cultural circle, are so simple that they provide the recipients with peace, tranquility, comfort, solace and expectation<sup>21</sup>. This way of expressing thoughts was followed by some creators of title pages who added apothegms placed on sashes and curtains to symbols and allegories from late 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Proverbs were also used when composing title pages in the medieval way. It is amazing what a large number of proverbs was in circulation at the end of the Middle Ages. They combined everyday life with literature and vice versa. Even sermons, along with quotations from the Holy Bible, contained numerous proverbs. They were used during serious disputes at state and church assemblies.

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<sup>18</sup> J. Huizinga, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.251.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.265.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.267-268.

The motto was also a similar crystallization of thoughts. It was of personal character. It was treated as a teacher of life, elevated to the status of an emblem and written in golden letters as the motto of one's own life.

Emblems are also closely related to the motto; they clearly illustrate it or remain in a relationship with it. The motto and emblem are correlated with heraldry. The heraldic drawing had an almost totem value. Lions, lilies and crosses symbolised a pictorial complexity of real aspirations, pride, sense of belonging and community<sup>22</sup>.

At the end of the Middle Ages each work included a hidden practical purpose, some specific life task combined with glamour and extravagance, which pushed beauty into the background. But this glamour and vanity were important for the people of that time. It converted everything that could be thought into an image overloaded with an infinite system of formal images. Also the title pages of books could not be left without a special form of picture or decoration. With time, there was an unbridled overgrowth of form over the idea, of decorative details over the meaning of the work<sup>23</sup>. *Horror vacui* appeared and threatened natural beauty, which was gradually to find its way back in the works of title page creators.

I am referring to the gradual disclosure of the measure of taste in the presentation of the content in a mixture of mythological, allegorical and moralistic figures and dedication to patrons - feudals, clergy, knights and middle-class. The Renaissance and later concepts of beauty never managed to liberate themselves from medieval concepts. Medieval heritage included the symbol of gate-ports, facades, the boundary between *profanum* and *sacrum*, between ignorance and knowledge, between going to school and being educated in it.

From the second half of the 15-th century the book, printed in hundreds of copies, needed buyers as well as advertising, gaining interest on the part of readers-buyers and patrons who were immortalized in dedications placed on frontispieces, title pages and the following ones.

In 1464, Ulrich Zell, a printer from Cologne, was the first one to place the title on the back of the first card. With time, in 1476 in Venice, German

<sup>22</sup> J. Huizinga, *Aus der Vorgeschichte des niederländischen Nationalbewusstseins*, in: *Im Bann der Geschichte*, Amsterdam 1942, pp. 213-302. (p. 275).

<sup>23</sup> J. Huizinga, *Jesień...*, p.298.



printers, Erhard Ratdolt, in cooperation with Peter Löslein and Bernard Maler, embossed the first artistic title page, which also contained all the contemporary elements of bibliographic description<sup>24,25</sup>. It pre-figured *Calendarium* - the work of astronomer Regiomontanius.

Margaret M. Smith states that towards the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century there was a significant increase in the number of titles on the first page in connection with the production of incunabula, with less than 1% in the period 1455-1484, up to 40% in the years 1485-1500. She admitted that the printing art was looking for new typefaces and codex forms in order to increase sales and interest in the book among readers. The development of artism in the creation of title pages also began at the time. For comparison, figure 1 shows a work in which the title was not presented as an independent element but in a text that looks like a contemporary description of the publisher: it states the author and title of the book, place and year of publication as well as the names of publishers<sup>26</sup>.



Fig. 1. Title page of *Calendarium* by Regiomontanius. Source: <https://ilovetypography.com/2016/02/14/the-first-title-pages/> [access: 20 02 2018 ]

In Polish typography it was Wolfgang Stöckel, a printer from Lipsk, whose title page in the work of John of Glogów *Exercitium super omnes tractatus Parvorum logicalium Petri Hispani*, published by John Haller in 1500 resembles most closely the layout of our times. It is presented in Fig.2.

<sup>24</sup> <https://ilovetypography.com/2016/02/14/the-first-title-pages/> [Access: 20 02 2018] M. Smith, *The Title-Page: Its Early Development 1460-1510*. London 2000, p. 49.

<sup>25</sup> M. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 50. Also in the works of Theodore Low de Vinne, *The Practice of Typography: A Treatise on Title-Pages*, New York 1902. <https://archive.org/stream/practicetypogra02vinngoog#page/n484/mode/2up> [access: 20 02 2018]; *Title-Page Borders Used in England & Scotland: 1485-1640*. R.B. McKerrow & F.S. Ferguson, 1934; F.E. Pardoe, *John Baskerville of Birminham: letter-Founder & Printer*, London 1975; Martinus Nijhoff, *Post-Incunabula & their Publishers in the Low Countries*, Paperback 1978.

<sup>26</sup> M. Smith, *op. cit.*, p.44.



Fig. 2. Title page of a work published on 20/03/1517. Source: <https://polona.pl/item/exercitium-super-omnes-tractatus-paruorum-logicalium-petri-hispani,NDMyO-TYzNjA/10/#info:metadata> [access:20 03 2018] and title page of New Testament by Jakub Wujek of 1593.





Fig. 3. Various forms of colouring of a woodcut made by Michael Wolgemut adapted to the needs of buyers. Sources of copies: [https://www.google.pl/search?q=wolgemut+michael&client=safari&tbm=isch&tbs=ring:CW1QwjM-JcEfkIjicRELfKa5Yb7fe6J0f4GJG1IN-7F7aHSZM\\_1caPIF0pdpBFFCDBMK-wwzJcLzncs1tfXYfaR2ugfIMCoSCZx-EQt8prlhvEahcGrch2SwXKhIjt97onR\\_1gYkYR9ic-DXTHMrcqEgnUg3sXtodJkxF7uR3RaSYZpioSCT9xo-UX-Sl2kEb8vfEhGsJA\\_1KhIJEUIME-wrDDMRwDfO6r7qKOqkEgklwvOdyzW19RFpluy4sEk9hyoSCdh-9pHa6B8gwEWriw08Ox\\_1F&tbo=u&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj0p5mJpq\\_ZAhUPzaQKHx4tDDkQ9C8IHQ&biw=1099&bih=677&dpr=1#imgcr=DlIT1TBj\\_EcQqM](https://www.google.pl/search?q=wolgemut+michael&client=safari&tbm=isch&tbs=ring:CW1QwjM-JcEfkIjicRELfKa5Yb7fe6J0f4GJG1IN-7F7aHSZM_1caPIF0pdpBFFCDBMK-wwzJcLzncs1tfXYfaR2ugfIMCoSCZx-EQt8prlhvEahcGrch2SwXKhIjt97onR_1gYkYR9ic-DXTHMrcqEgnUg3sXtodJkxF7uR3RaSYZpioSCT9xo-UX-Sl2kEb8vfEhGsJA_1KhIJEUIME-wrDDMRwDfO6r7qKOqkEgklwvOdyzW19RFpluy4sEk9hyoSCdh-9pHa6B8gwEWriw08Ox_1F&tbo=u&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj0p5mJpq_ZAhUPzaQKHx4tDDkQ9C8IHQ&biw=1099&bih=677&dpr=1#imgcr=DlIT1TBj_EcQqM): [access: 20 022018].

Were it not for the artistic creation of Renaissance artists, future title pages would have only bibliographic information (as on the title page of Jakub Wujek's *New Testament*, Fig. 1, the right picture). Simple titles appeared in many works that did not need to advertise and their authors, and even more so publishers, did not have any ambition or need to provide them with a compelling and inspiring title card. Going further along this path, below artistically made interfaces, we find extensive introductions to books including dedication, message, motto, etc.

Among the many artistic, marketing and visionary solutions stands out the idea of the gate-door, to be composed in such a way as to move the reader's imagination and show him in one picture what will happen to him when he begins to explore the content of the work.

Let us use the half-title page of the Nuremberg *World Chronicle* published on June 12, 1493 as an example of creative work in this area. Fig. 3 presents various forms of colouring of a woodcut made by Michael Wolgemut in 1490 as a project of the frontispiece from *Weldchronik* by Hartmann Schedel.

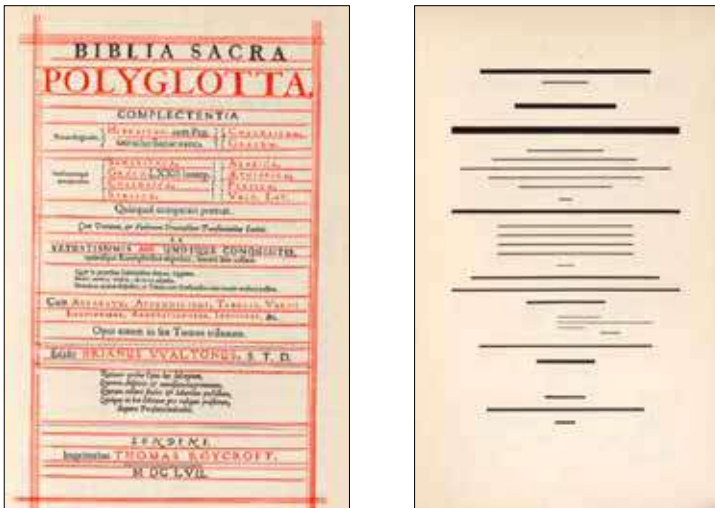


Fig. 4. Source: Theodore de Vinne, *The Practice of Typography: A Treatise on Title-Pages*, New York 1902, p. 345 and 227. <https://archive.org/stream/practicetypogra02vinngoog#page/n484/mode/2up> [access: 20 02 2018].



Figure 4 shows the title page already printed by Thomas Roycroft in London in 1657, on which the next printer drew lines and analysed bibliographic information to make a new design of the title page for the new edition. Examples of such creative work on the form and colour of title pages and frontispieces were not documented and therefore hard to find today.

It should be emphasized that the publication of many works on ancient architecture was of great importance for the development of typographic art. Vitruvius' treaty, inherited from antiquity, to which everyone referred, posed some difficulties, though also possibilities of interpretation. In its aftermath in Renaissance art, the idea of the gate is connected with the symbolism of triumphal arch. Engravers adopted rules pertaining to how to use orders, ie columns, capitals, beams, bridgeheads, cornices, palisters and arcades from ancient theoreticians<sup>27</sup>.

Numerous academic textbooks published in Italy by prominent architects (Sebastiano Serlio, Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola, Andrea Palladio) included illustrations of projects that were never carried out but were the source of ideas for lovers of classical art in typography.

Fig. 5 shows the title page of a book on architecture of a less-known artist - Vincenzo Scamozzi, which shows a picture of the door with two columns, six allegories, the title over the facade and a further part of the bibliographic description placed on the door that needs to be opened; there is also a picture of the author-translator and publisher who invites the reader to open the door. The book (Fig. 6) describes the design theory on how to maintain harmony in portals leading to palaces and tenement houses of the Renaissance.

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<sup>27</sup> J. Białostocki, *Sztuka cenniejsza niż złoto*, Warszawa 2004, p. 403.



Fig. 5. *L'idea della Architettura universale Di Vincenzo Scamozzi Architetto, Veneto, 1615.*

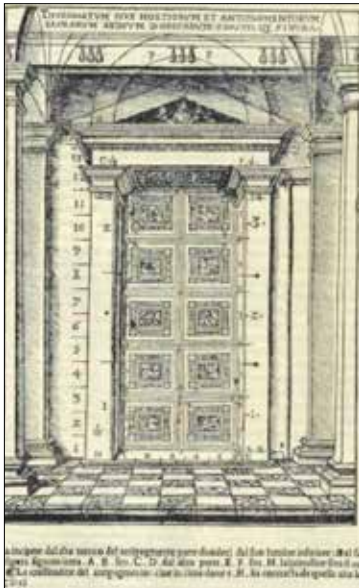


Fig. 6. Gate designs in *L'idea della Architettura universale Di Vincenzo Scamozzi Architetto Veneto, 1615, Liber Quartus, pp. LXVIII-LXIX.*

Fig. 7 presents even more help for designers; it shows one of the pages of forty-eight portal projects, which allowed for small adaptations and additions, and the addition of the title and author of the work, place and year of publication and the name of the printer. The drawing could also be enriched placing historical figures, allegories, symbols and coats of arms as well as proprietary marks in the niches.



The two forms were also combined, printing the title on one part of the page with the symbolism of the gate on the other part to emphasize one of the elements, for example, the coat of arms, allegories or the printer's signature - in this case Gotardus de Ponte's. This is how the title page of the printed book about architecture by the ancient author Marcus Vitruvius Pollio was designed.

Fig. 7. Page 44 of Sebastiana Serlio's *Extraordinario libro di architettura*, Venetia 1560; <http://www.rarebookroom.org/Control/serext/index.html> [access: 20 02 2018].

It was considered the first book that survived from antiquity to the Renaissance and the main source of ancient and Renaissance architecture canon. The first edition in Italian with new illustrations by Cesar Cesariano, a Milanese friend of Bramente, was printed in Como in 1521.

In the *Book Knowledge Encyclopedia* it is generally stated that antique prints often included wood engraving or copperplate reproductions<sup>28</sup> on the title page, where artists used the motif of the gate. It is impossible to present chronological or material development of this form of book illustrations. I will only give examples of typical solutions in European and Polish printing. Because we associate the idea of the gate with the Holy

<sup>28</sup> Title page in *Encyklopedia Wiedzy o Książce*, ed. A. Birkenmayer, B. Kocowski, J. Trzynadłowski, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków 1971, c.1112-1113.



Fig. 8. Lucio Vitruvio Pollione, *De architectura libri dece traducti de latino in vulgare affigurati: commentati...*, Como 1521.

Source: [https://archive.org/details/gri\\_33125008262210](https://archive.org/details/gri_33125008262210) [access: 20 02 2018]

Scriptures, let's start with illustrated editions of the Bible. According to what was said above, the title was distinguished by using red colour and coffers by representations of symbolic or allegorical figures. They alluded to the medieval tradition or used numerous textbooks of allegories. Venetians and Florentine humanists believed that behind the peculiar language of signs from the distant past the ancient humanity's encrypted wisdom was hidden, thus protected from the curiosity of laymen. This period in the history of culture aroused unprecedented enthusiasm for secular symbolism. In 1872 Henry Green recorded over 3 thousand publications where the title suggested that they related to the study of emblems. There were over 1,300 authors<sup>29</sup>.

With regard to such a great number of symbolic combinations they provided it is difficult to point to direct inspirations of book illustrators.

It should be mentioned, however, that the book *Hieroglyphica Horapollona* served as the source of knowledge about symbolic and allegorical painting. It was a compendium of knowledge from Alexandria dating back to the fifth century, which reached Italy in the Greek translation about 1500. Another work - *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (The Primer of Images and Characters) by Francesco Colonna was of great importance for the subsequent development of books about emblems, motifs in painting and poetry. It consisted of Egyptian pictographic script, Pythagorean symbolism and cabbalistic mystic numbers and was published in Venice in 1499. The work of Ioan Piero Valeriano (1556) is considered the greatest compilation made on the basis of *Hieroglyphica*.

<sup>29</sup> H. Green, *Andrea Alciati and His Books of Emblems*, London 1872, p.VII, Jan Białostocki, *Sztuka cenniejsza niż złoto*, Warszawa 2004, p.403.



However, the most famous and quickly widespread collection of emblems throughout Europe was Andrea Alciati's *Emblematum Liber*, first translated into German and published in Augsburg in 1531, and later into other European languages. Other important books devoted to emblems and symbols are: *the Iconology* of Cesare Ripa from 1593 and *Emblemata Nova de secretis naturae chymica*, called *Atlanta Fugiens*, published by Michael Maier in 1618<sup>30</sup>.

Figure 8 presents solutions showing a variety of emblems, symbols and forms placed on some title pages. Exaggeration and glamour, however, created some difficulties in understanding them; therefore, they probably did not fully serve their aim.



Fig. 8. Title page from the first Welsh translation of the Bible from 1588 in the translation of William Morgan (1545-1604); it contains ornamentation drawing on Celtic decorations from the ninth century and the title page of “Szarfenberg’s Bible”, ie “Leopolita” or “Cracow Bible” from 1561, containing four historical illustrations and two human figures.

<sup>30</sup> E. Kluckert: *Emblematyka, in Sztuka baroku. Architektura. Rzeźba. Malarstwo*, ed. Rolf Toman, Koln 2000, p.428.

It was not enough to use symbolism only. Examples show that title pages abounding in panels with symbols are flat and do not appeal to the viewer-reader, ie the recipient of the book. For instance, the Bible from 1611 contains figures of the apostles, symbols of generations of Israel, the three persons of the Holy Trinity and presentations of evangelists. Two open books with olive branches were also added (probably the Old and New Testaments). The composition is overloaded, probably it was the engraver who wanted to fill the page with a symmetrically divided cartouche.

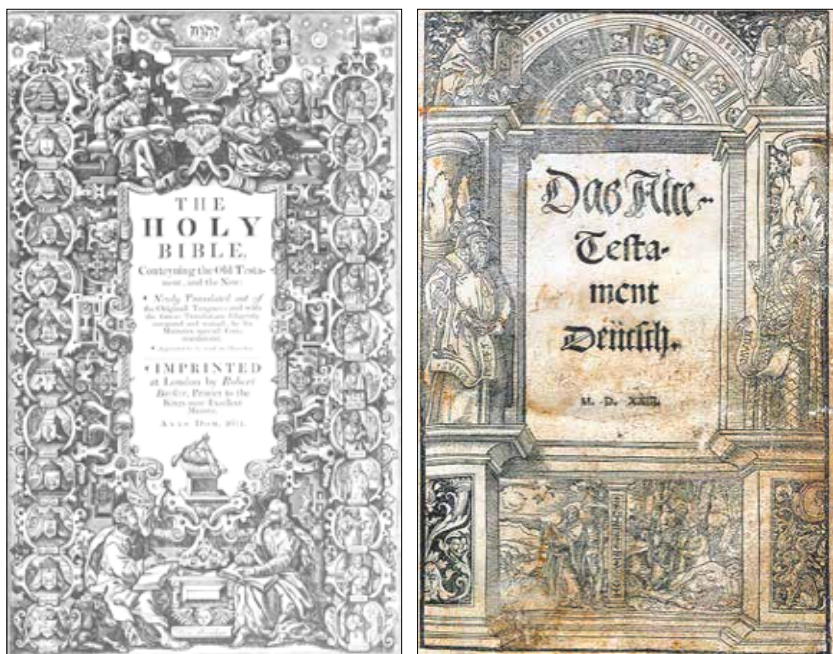


Fig. 10. Title page of M. Luther's Old Testament published in Augsburg by Melchior Ramming in 1523. Source:

file:///Users/zdzislawkropidowski/Documents/Bible-Title%20page-1523%20%7C%20Title%20page%20in%20%22Das%20Alte%20Testament%20de...%20%7C%20Flickr.webarchive [Access: 7 03 2018]

Figure 11 shows the title page of Gustav Vasa Bible (Gustav Vasas Bibel, Vasabibeln) with its full name: *Biblia, Thet är: All then Helgha Scrifft, på Swensko*. It is a translation of Luther's Protestant Bible into Swedish made during the reign of King Gustav Vasa. The translation of the New Testament was made and printed in 1526 and the entire Bible was issued by the printing house in Upasala in the summer of 1541. The translation, title page and numerous woodcuts and illustrations were modeled on the Luther Bible. We do not know much about the authors of the translation or the title page. What we do know from a letter written by Laurentius Petri in 1540 is that a lot of people participated in it (he mentions his own and "other" participation in the work on translation)<sup>31</sup>.

M. Luther entrusted the publication of the New Testament to his friend, the German painter, illustrator and woodcutter Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553), who became the court painter of Frederick the Wise in Wittenberg in 1505. He also shared a publishing house with the goldsmith Christian Döring. Luther attached great importance to the quality of printing, he took care of the graphic layout, type of paper and choice of fonts. He could reprove a printer for sloppily made printing or, on the contrary, invite him to Wittenberg and entrust the printing of his works. This was the case with the Leipzig typographer Melchior Lotter the elder (1470-1549), who printed many of Luther's writings, including his 95 theses after 1517 and then founded a branch of his Leipzig publishing house in Wittenberg in 1519 at Luther's request. It was located in the home of Lucas Cranach the Elder who, together with his partner Christian Döring, ran a publishing house there. The branch was headed by his sons Melchior Lotter the younger (1490-1542) and Michael Lotter. And it was in this branch that the first edition of the New Testament of Martin Luther was printed. In one house there were both a printing house and a publishing house<sup>32</sup>.

During Luther's lifetime, 110 reprints of the New Testament and more than 20 editions authorized by the reformer were published. Hans Lufft himself, as a printer and publisher, issued about 100,000 copies and came to significant wealth and municipal offices. From 1529, almost every one of them was reviewed and corrected by the "biblical commission",

<sup>31</sup> G. Bergman, *Kortfattad svensk språkhistoria*, Stockholm 1984, p. 59-60.

<sup>32</sup> Joanna Sztuchlik, *Biblia wrześnieiowa. Pierwsze wydanie Biblii Lutra z 1522 r. w zbiorach Książnicy Cieszyńskiej*, <http://www.cieszyn.pl/files/Biblia%20wrzesniowa.pdf>. [Access: 20 02 2018].

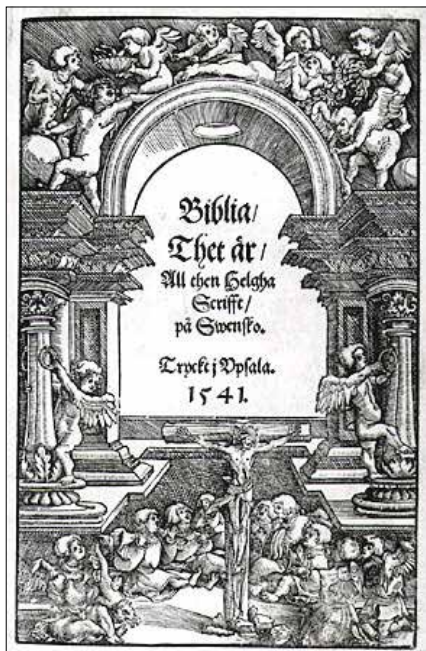


Fig. 11. Title page of Gustav Vasa's Bible of 1541. Source: [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblia\\_Gustawa\\_Wazy#/media/File:Gustav\\_Vasa\\_Bible\\_1541.jpg](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblia_Gustawa_Wazy#/media/File:Gustav_Vasa_Bible_1541.jpg)

which gathered as frequently as several times a week since 1531. It consisted of philologists Philip Melancton and Matthew Aurogallus and theologians Justus Jonas and Caspar Cruciger; they were the same people who collaborated with Luther on the translation of the Old Testament of 1522. *Biblia Hebraica* published by Gerson ben Moses Soncino in Brescia in 1494 became the basis for the translation of the Old Testament. The translators' work was carried out in stages and each of the translated parts was successively published: the *Pentateuch* in 1523, followed by the *Song of Songs* and the *Book of Job* in 1524, historical books and the Book of Psalms in the following year. From 1525 on, the translators clearly slowed down, which is why the whole Bible was published not earlier than in 1534. The subsequent editions, approved by Luther, ap-

peared regularly almost every year - in 1535, 1536, 1539, 1540, 1541 and in 1545<sup>33</sup>.

Such a wide distribution of the Bible within a few decades also resulted in the popularisation of the gate symbol on title pages of books on various subjects, forms and quality of prints. An example is the title page of a treaty against Jews made in the woodcut manner in Hans Lufft's workshop, in which he accuses them of a lot of evil that is happening in the Christian world.

<sup>33</sup> H. Lülfiing, *Lufft Hans*, in: *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Band 15, Berlin 1987, pp. 493–495.





Fig. 12. Title page of Martin Luther's treaty, *Von den Jüden und iren Lügen*, Wittemberg, 1543.

evoked symbolic impressions. The Bible was printed by Cyprian Bazylik in a printing house belonging to Mikołaj Radziwiłł the Black in an edition of about 500 copies<sup>34</sup>.

In Poland, this pattern was used in a limited way and in some editions it was enriched with Italian designs. An example is the title page of the *Brzesc Bible*, which refers to the works of Lucas Cranach. It is a woodcut showing the gate to paradise, in which the tree of life is placed in the middle of the page, and from it hangs a picture with the title of the book. On the left side of the tree Eve reaches for the forbidden fruit and gives it to Adam, and on the right Jesus dies on the cross, and under it stands the Lamb of the Apocalypse by St. John. At the foot of the gate, on the left you can see a man pushed down to hell by Satan, and on the right Christ coming out of the grave. The design of the ornaments is very light, delicate, encouraging to analyze historical contents so arranged that they

<sup>34</sup> I. Kwiecińska, *Biblia brzeska jej dzieje i znaczenie*, „Nauka”, 3/2006, pp. 111-121.



Fig. 13. Title page of the Holy Bible, that is, the Books of the Old and New Order, just from the Jewish, Greek and Latin newly translated with diligence and faithfulness into the Polish language. Brześć Litewski, 1563.



Fig. 14. Title page of the Gdansk Bible of 1632.

A little later, the title page of the Gdansk Bible of 1632 was designed. The title is symmetrically integrated into the cartouche, revealed by allegories and the Mother of God with the Child. They depict two scenes: Christmas and the adoration of the Magi and the death and resurrection of Christ. The spiritual successors of the publishers of the Brzesc Bible chose a Baroque form of the composition.



Fig. 15. Frontispiece of the New Testament of Gdansk from 1633. Source: Z. Nowak, *Po starą księgę sięgam ze wzruszeniem* (I reach for the old book with emotions), Gdansk 2008, p. 182.

In 1632 the Gdansk printer Andrzej Hünefeld published a full text of the Bible in the translation of Daniel Mikołajewski in octavo format. It was edited in one volume, which was unprecedented in Polish conditions in terms of typography. The beautiful Baroque frontispiece made specially for this book by the Dutch engraver Cornelius Claessen Duysend presents some allegorical scenes from the Old Testament<sup>35</sup>. The front cover of the New Testament of Gdansk of 1633 was equipped with a copperplate engraving of the same author but used the form of the gate, which introduces us to the text of the Holy Bible<sup>36</sup>. Allegorical figures of truth and religion stand at the columns, and in the corners of the page he placed the figures of the four Evangelists and - sitting beneath the vault of the gate - allegories of courage and peace. The image is deep in meaning and it can be said that the symbol of the gate introduced the reader into the world of the New Testament.

In the Protestant Netherlands, the Holy Bible was printed in Dutch since 1477. The first Bible after the reform of the church in the Dutch language was the Bible of Liesveld of 1526. The translation was based on the German translation of Martin Luther. This entire edition was banned by the Spanish government, and burnt in 1535.

The new translation made according to the indications of Luther and Calvin and the correction of the Old Testament were completed in September 1634; the New Testament was completed in August 1634. Most of

<sup>35</sup> Z. Kropidłowski, *Próba oceny Biblii Gdańskiej*, „Studia Gdańskie”, v. V, 1983, p. 45.

<sup>36</sup> Z. Nowak, *Po starą księgę sięgam ze wzruszeniem*, Gdańsk 2008, p. 182.



Fig. 16. Printed title page of the Bible of 1702 and the painted copy. Source: <http://www.statenbijbelmuseum.nl/nl/collectie/bijbelbanden> [Access: 2002 2018]

the Bibles in this country were published with the title page in the shape of a gate.

The Bible shown on the left, fig.16, was printed by Lindenbergh in 1702. At the Statenbijbelmuseum in Leerdam there is one copy of 1702 with the hand-made title page; the painting also represents a gate. However, this copy is displayed in the museum with regard to its leather binding, not the painted cover page.

The neo-gothic title page of the Bible containing the text of the New Testament in the translation by Jakub Wujek in the form of a stereotype edition made in Leipzig in 1838 by Jan Nepomuk Bobrowicz, was published





Fig. 17. Title page of the New Testament issued in 1838. Source: <http://dlibra.kul.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=1410> [Access: 20 02 2018]



Fig. 18. Title page of the work of Tommaso Porcacchi, *L' isole piu famose del mondo descritte ...*, Venetia 1776. Source: <http://movio.beniculturali.it/bupd/lemusetrailibri/it/131/17-lisolar-io-di-porcacchi> [ Access: 2002 2018].

by J. Baumgärtner, stereotype and print by Breitkopf and Haert<sup>37</sup>. It was “decorated with more than 300 fairly miserable woodcuts”<sup>38</sup>

Title pages with elements of the gate were probably used for all kinds of books. Again, it is impossible to present the scope and chronology of subsequent editions. Some subjectively selected examples must be sufficient.

The first of these is a cartographic work containing a description of the “most famous islands of the world” with maps by Tommaso Porcacchi. It is the first work that uses concave printing technique that allows for more

<sup>37</sup> K. Estreicher, *Bibliografia polska XIX stulecia*, v. V, Kraków 1880, p. 156.

<sup>38</sup> M. Wiszniewski, *Historia literatury polskiej*, v. VI, Kraków 1844, p. 604.



Fig. 19. Title page of Lorenzo Pezzi's reflections on sacred sacraments, paradise, purgatory and hell. *La Vigna del Signore, Nellaquale si dichiarano and Santissimi Sacramenti, et si descrivono il Paradiso ...*, Venetia 1589. Source: H. Dubowik, *Inkunabuly and cymelia from the 16th century in the collection of the Library of the University of Casimir the Great in Bydgoszcz*, in collaboration with Aldona Chlewicka and Bernardeta Iwańska-Cieślík, Bydgoszcz 2009, p. 54.

precise and detailed results. The title page was designed and made by the engraver Girolamo Porro from Padua.

This study was a sought after work; the first edition published in Venice appeared in 1572, and until 1686 five other editions were published. For this purpose, on July 16, 1571, the publisher received a 10-year exclusive privilege of its printing. Figure 18 shows a view of the title page of a copy from the University of Padua, which represents the second edition, printed in 1576, with 44 maps of islands, a city map of Constantinople, a globe and card form needed to leave the port.

There are two examples from the collections of the University of Casimir the Great Library. The first is the work of the same engraver Girolamo Porro, operating in Venice in 1574-1604. In 1589, he published a prayer book illustrated with the author's portrait and 17 engravings. There is also the title page, on which four Evangelists stand with books in their hands among four square columns. The composition is crowned with a flower arch, and the title was printed in the background, as if in the Garden of Eden. The author may have been inspired by the gates to mazes-gardens, which, according to the Renaissance fashion, were arranged around palaces and manor houses. The font is made in convex printing and the illustration in concave printing.



Fig. 20. Title page of the poem *De rerum et artium inuentoribus poema* by Marcus Antonius Sabellicus, Cracoviae 1521.

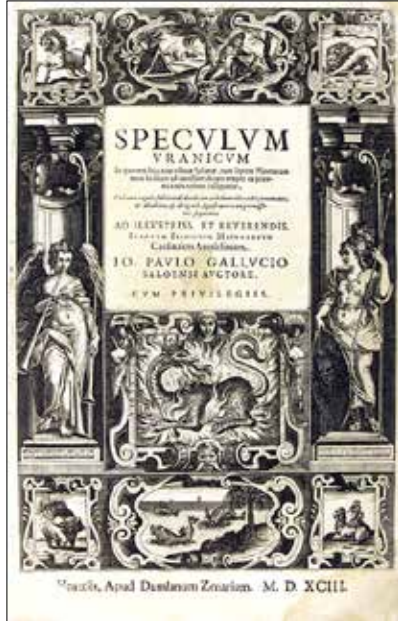


Fig. 21. Title page of the work of Giovanni Paul Gallucci, *Speculum vranicum* ..., published in London in 1593 by Damian Zenarium. Source: <http://movio.beniculturali.it/bupd/lemusetrailibri/it/153/20-speculum-vranicum> [Access: 20 02 2018].

The second example is the title page consisting of a woodcut frame in the form of arcades with columns and putti at the top, holding a rod and chain with birds sitting on it. The title was embossed with antiqua, and the publishing address and year were given in the colophon on the last card. At the doorstep of the gate the artist's signature: V pierced with an arrow.

The next example shown in Fig. 21 comes from the work of Giovanni Paola Gallucci, a mathematician, astronomer and cosmologist who was an outstanding figure in the vibrant cultural panorama of his time. In 1564, together with other eighteen fellow citizens, he founded the Unanimi Academy. After studying in Salò and Padua he moved to Venice, where he devoted himself to private tutoring of noble youth for the rest of his

life, but also developed intensive activities as a translator of humanities. In 1593, he was one of the nine organizers of the Second Venice Academy, founded to continue the activities of the first Venice Hall of Fame. In the last decade of the century he also published his own works, primarily in the field of mathematics and astronomy, but he was also interested in military art, perspective, medicine and astrology. He is responsible for a series of texts describing how to build various types of solar watches and use observation tools. He devoted many years to the in-depth studies of astrolabe, which was the main instrument of navigation for many centuries until the invention of the sextant.

The work devoted to the movements of eight spheres of the seven planets, published in 1593, consists of 43 numbered cards with 17 large illustrations covering entire pages with astronomical calculations made in

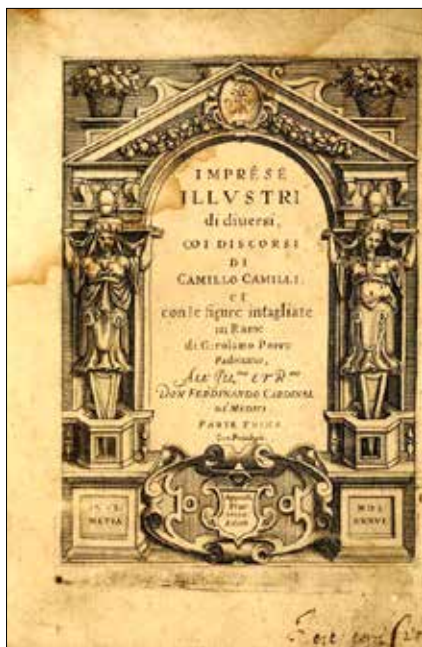


Fig. 22. Title page of Camillo Camilliani's work, *Imprese illustri...*, Venice 1586. <http://archive.org/stream/impresellustrid-04cami#page/n4/mode/1up> [Access: 20 02 2018]

woodcut technique. The title page contains a refined, late-Mannerist architecture that encircles the title and the publishing brand. It depicts columns with statues within their niches, figures of Fame with trumpets as their attributes and Minerva, armed with a lance and shield and with a snake in her hair. In the four corners there are four figures of animals: horse, lion, elephant and camel, referring to different parts of the world. Between the top and bottom corners we see two lively cartoons alluding to earthly matters, personified by a woman lying under a palm tree and the sea inhabited by huge fish.

It is a beautiful title page made as engraving containing a signature in a niche “centre James Franco F.” and the typographic mark of the publisher Damian Zenaro:





Fig. 23. Frontispiece of the work of Bartłomiej Ranisch, *Beschreibung Aller Kirchen-Gebäude der Stadt Dantzig ...*, Danzig 1690.

a crowned salamander in flames, with the slogan “VIRTVTI SIC cedit INVIDIA” (In such a way jealousy subordinates to virtue). According to tradition, salamanders, when in flames, were not afraid of the power of fire and so became a symbol of fame and immortality<sup>39</sup>.

Another example of a page with the use of architectural elements can be found in Camillo Camilliani’s biographical entries collection, *Imprese illustri ...*, dated 1586, published in Venice by Francesco Ziletti (which was printed on the coat of arms set on the doorstep of the gate). The title page - a collection of ‘respected’ Italian humanists - was again performed by Girolamo Porro, born in Padua. On February 25, 1575 or 1576, he was granted the city of Venice privilege to perform copperplate portraits of the city authorities, statues and book illustrations. He was also granted the next privilege for twenty

years on March 24, 1589. In 1584 he was admitted to the Accademia dei Virtuosi in Rome. He sometimes used the pseudonym Battista Pittoni<sup>40</sup>.

We find an architectural form of the gate with deep background on the frontispiece of a Gdansk architect and builder Bartłomiej Ranisch’s work *Beschreibung Aller Kirchen-Gebäude der Stadt Dantzig ...*, published by Jan Zachariasz Stolle in 1690. This copperplate engraving exhibits some Baroque features in its peak<sup>41</sup>.

Another example is the use of the entrance door to the tobacco store as an advertisement of tobacco and snuff. The front of the four-page print

<sup>39</sup> <http://movio.beniculturali.it/bupd/lemusetrailibri/it/153/20-speculum-uranicum> [Access: 20 02 108].

<sup>40</sup> E. Pastorello, *Tipografi, editori, librai a Venezia nel secolo XVI*, Firenze 1924, p. 33.

<sup>41</sup> Z. Nowak, *op. cit.*, p. 205-207.

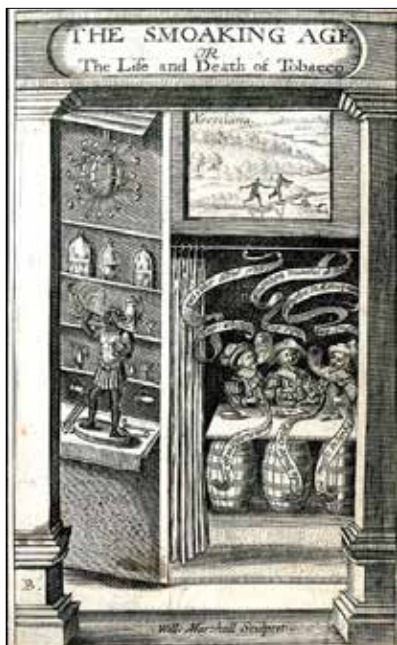


Fig. 24. *The smoking age or the life and death of tobacco*, London 1617. Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/kintzertorium/3080067456> [Access: 3 03 2018]



Fig. 25. Title page of Phillippe Bethune's work, *Il consigliere di stato ouero raccolta delle benefitingi piu generali intorno al maneggio de pubblici affair, Venetia 1646*. Source: <http://movio.beniculturali.it/bupd/lemu-setrailibri/getImage.php?id=123> [Access: 20 02 2018]

was made by William Marhsall about 1617 for an anonymous work on the “smoking age or the life and death of tobacco.” On the counter on the left, in front of a shelf with smoking accessories we see a figure of a black man smoking a pipe. On the right there are three people smoking pipes at a table supported on barrels. The engraver's name - Will Marshall – appears on the doorstep. This picture is topped with a view of two people running into the town with the inscription “Necotiana”.

The next example comes from the law enforcement guide in public affairs management, which was written anonymously by Philippe de

Bethune (Paris, 1561? -1649). The treaty was first published anonymously in French in 1633. The Italian edition (photo 25), in turn, was published in 1646; made in the printing house of Paolo Baglioni, who printed hundreds of titles in the 17th century. The work was accompanied by a frontispiece by Burin Giacomo Piccini, an Italian who was born in Padua in a family of painters in 1619 and died in Venice on August 29, 1660. Although little is known about his preparation for the profession, towards the end of the fourth decade of the century he began his successful cooperation with the Incogniti Academy, and in particular with its founder Giovan Francesco Loredane. The Academy entrusted him with the role of an official publisher and illustrator of works of artists associated in it<sup>42</sup>. The page he designed presents an allegory of stupidity (because it has donkey's ears), who wants to get into the room through an open door, and is invited by a figure which opens the door with one hand and holding two keys symbolizing deeper insight into knowledge in its left hand. The knowledge is here meant to be mainly on legal matters as keys to success - achieving goals thanks to diligence and patience, and not the use of force<sup>43</sup>. In the background there is a city clerk with a gesture inviting us inside. The building is marked with the Habsburgs' coat of arms.

The above examples illustrate the appearance of new factors in editing that broadened people's perceptual processes in that you could simultaneously "read the picture" and the text. The use of woodcut and copperplate as a convenient means of reproduction made an important breakthrough in printing. It allowed us to interact with the image and the word at the same time, if only on title pages. The contents of a book and its aim were linked closely in time and plane. To describe this, the gate-door image was often used, which was the main theme of the composition of many title pages of old and modern books.

*Tłumaczenie Teresa Osowska*

<sup>42</sup> <http://movio.beniculturali.it/bupd/lemusetrailibri/it/184/61-considerazioni-sul-maneggio-dei-pubblici-affar>.

<sup>43</sup> W. Hoffsummer, *Leksykon dawnych i nowych symboli do wykorzystania w praktyce duszpasterskiej i katechetycznej*, Kielce 2001, p.40; J.E. Cirlot, *Słownik symboli*, Kraków 2006, p.180.

## Symbolika bramy na stronach tytułowych dawnych ksiąg

**Abstrakt:** Brama (drzwi) jest jednym z symboli chrześcijańskich podkreślanych w średniowiecznej architekturze, wywodzących się z Biblii i architektury starożytnej. W edytorstwie została wykorzystana od momentu wynalezienia druku, głównie w komponowaniu stron tytułowych. Ich celem jest określenie i wprowadzenie czytelnika w treść dzieła. Symbolika bramy miała wywoływać u czytelników te same emocje jakie towarzyszyły przekraczaniu progów świątyń, przechodzeniu ze świata *profanum* do *sacrum* czyli z lekturą księgi, którą rozpoczynała, miała przenosić czytelnika, z niewiedzy i nieumiejętności do mądrości. Nadto miała zapowiadać treści w korelacji z tytułem, dalej zachęcać do nabycia i korzystania z książki i wywoływać wrażenia artystyczne. W artykule omówiono genezę symboliki bramy, przedstawiono przykłady świadomej działalności projektantów - autorów i wydawców, źródła i wzory komponowania, podano przykłady publikacji i ich zależności. Podano subiektywnie dobrane przykłady realizacji stron tytułowych z terenów polskich i europejskich od XV do XIX w.

**Słowa kluczowe:** brama, symbolika, edytorstwo, wiek XV-XIX.

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