

Abstract

Many portraits of Rudolf II were painted and created during his lifetime, forming a significant component of Rudolfine art, however, they have not received a sufficient art historical attention. They document, at times in a stylized manner, the transformation of Rudolf's appearance. However, their most important task was to demonstrate and make tangible Rudolf's authentic appearance to the world and to celebrate his magnanimity and personality. Thus, there are many portraits that represent Rudolf as a good emperor or a brilliant commander, although, as we know, they did not correspond to reality. A special chapter of the portrait iconography also creates complicated allegories about Rudolf's reign relying on representations of personifications, mythological and animal symbols using Rudolf's personal *impresa*. Most of the portraits follow former portrait types typical for the 16th century, as bust, standing figure or equestrian monument. However, the peculiarity for Rudolfine portraiture is the allegorical portrait *Rudolf as Vertumnus* painted by Giuseppe Arcimboldo that combines classical portrait with allegory.