

The '*Politica*' of the 17th Century Germany, as Reflected in the '*dissertationes politicae*'. Some Aspects of the Older Tradition in Academic Political Science

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In the late 16th century a fully distinctive academic discipline dealing with politics as a science established itself at Protestant universities in Germany. Modern research has paid relatively little attention to this *Politica*, also called *prudentia civilis*, until now. The work of Hans Maier and his pupils focusses on later periods of time and concentrates mainly on 'Polizeiwissenschaft', 'Kameralismus' and natural law in the late 17th and 18th century as the early forms of political science.¹ The look back to early modern political science has been further blocked by a number of other reasons. Firstly, as a rule not much distinction is made between political philosophy and political science. In addition, since the times of Friedrich Meinecke,² there has been the prejudice that political thinking in Germany at the time was intellectually not very demanding. Furthermore, modern German political science was only moderately interested in the subject's history and its older traditions. Finally, the language barrier has also contributed its share - the literature of the early modern *Politica* is written exclusively in Latin.

Nevertheless there are pioneering works on political thinking and German political science of the 17th century. These date back to historians like Horst Dreitzel³ and Wolfgang Weber,⁴ as well as from the public-law historian Michael Stolleis, who regards political science as a sister discipline of the *Ius publicum* in his History of the Public Law in Germany.⁵ Only recently has there

1 Maier, Hans: Die ältere deutsche Staats- und Verwaltungslehre (Polizeiwissenschaft): ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Wissenschaft in Deutschland, Neuwied a. Rh./ Berlin 1966; Maier, Hans: Politische Wissenschaft in Deutschland: Aufsätze zur Lehrtradition und Bildungspraxis. München 1969; Maier, Hans: Die Lehre der Politik an den älteren deutschen Universitäten, in: ders., Politische Wissenschaft in Deutschland. Aufsätze zur Lehrtradition und Bildungspraxis, München 1985, S. 31-67. Cf. as well Denzer, Horst: Moralphilosophie und Naturrecht bei Samuel Pufendorf. Eine geistes- und wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Geburt des Naturrechts aus der praktischen Philosophie, München 1972; Brückner, Jutta: Staatswissenschaften, Kameralismus und Naturrecht. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Politischen Wissenschaft im Deutschland des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts, München 1977.

2 Friedrich Meineckes search for German classics of politically thinking proved disappointing. It was based, as is now known through Michael Stolleis, on wrong premises and criteria, see. Cf. Stolleis, Michael: Friedrich Meineckes ‚Die Idee der Staatsräson‘ und die neuere Forschung (1981), in: ders.: Staat und Staatsräson, Frankfurt 1990, pp. 134-164, especially p. 152 & p. 158f. Meineckes verdict on the 'mediocrity' of the German political thinkers had a long-lasting impact in research; Hans Maier also picked up and passed on this prejudice.

3 Dreitzel, Horst: Protestantischer Aristotelismus und absoluter Staat. Die '*Politica*' des Henning Arnisaeus (ca. 1575-1636), Wiesbaden 1970; ders.: Monarchiebegriff in der Fürstengesellschaft. Semantik und Theorie der Einherrschaft in Deutschland von der Reformation bis zum Vormärz (2 Bde.), Köln/ Weimar/ Wien 1991; ders.: Absolutismus und ständische Verfassung in Deutschland. Ein Beitrag zur Kontinuität und Diskontinuität der politischen Theorie der Frühen Neuzeit, Mainz 1992; cf. incidentally the best summary on political thinking in Germany in its full complexity ders.: Politische Philosophie, in: Die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts IV: Das Heilige Römische Reich Deutscher Nation, Nord- und Ostmitteleuropa, hg. v. Helmut Holzhey und Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, Basel 2001, 607-748.

4 Weber, Wolfgang (E.J.): Prudentia gubernatoria. Studien zur Herrschaftslehre in der deutschen politischen Wissenschaft des 17. Jahrhunderts, Tübingen 1992.

5 Stolleis, Michael: Geschichte des öffentlichen Rechts in Deutschland, Band I: Reichspolitik und Policeywissenschaft 1600-1800, München 1988; cf. as well as Stolleis, Michael (Hg.): Hermann Conring (1606-1681). Beiträge zu Leben und Werk, Berlin 1983; Stolleis, Michael (Hg.): Staatsdenker in der Frühen Neuzeit,

been a thorough investigation of the historical tradition of this discipline at the hands of a political scientist: Wilhelm Bleek's *History of the Science of Politics in Germany* (Munich 2001).

An analysis of the *Politica* of the 17th century cannot only consider the history of political thought, but must also take the basic political conditions into account. These were on the one hand shaped by the development of the territorial states, but on the other hand also by the Holy Roman Empire, a virtually federal, 'polyarchic' power association with a variety of rulers. The political science of the 17th century tries to do justice to this variety under the umbrella organization of the Empire. Therefore one can also describe it as 'polyarchy science'.⁶

This contribution deals primarily with the *Politica* as a university discipline. It tried to do justice to its claims as a practical science as understood during the period of late humanism in a number of different ways: On the one hand it developed a genuine technical language and terminology; furthermore it used certain methods and theories for the extraction of knowledge; and finally it developed a systematically structured curriculum. In addition, it claimed its relative independence as a discipline by disassociating itself from other sciences and posing its own questions and objectives. Ethics, theology and law can be regarded as its closest rival disciplines.⁷

Around 1600 political science was embodied in the statutes of the universities, institutionalized in the form of chairs and from there conveyed to a fast-growing number of students through various courses. Above all it manifested itself primarily by an academic literary output, the outlines of which were only roughly known up to this time. These texts include the editions of political writings of the well-known ancient authors and their respective comments, above all Aristotle's 'Politics', but also the historical writings of Tacitus and many more. Particular attention was devoted to Aristotle's 'Politics', which was also represented in summarized form. A corresponding pamphlet was published by the Nuremberg school headmaster Johann Michael Dilherr (1644), for example.

Another group is composed of the teachings on state and politics, which apart from the works of Bodin and Lipsius, also include numerous comparable works by German authors. Examples would be the *Doctrina Politica* (first edition: Frankfurt 1606) by Henning Arnisaeus of Helmstedt or the *Collegium politicum* (first published in Giessen 1619) by Christian Liebenthal of Giessen.⁸

Frankfurt/a.M. (3. Aufl.) 1994. In his summary of essays on the subject of "Staat und Staatsräson in der Frühen Neuzeit. Studien zur Geschichte des öffentlichen Rechts" (Frankfurt 1990) Stolleis also provides important insights into discourses and reception processes of political thought in Germany.

⁶ Philipp, Michael: Polyarchiewissenschaft. Die Geburt der Politischen Wissenschaft in Deutschland im 17. Jahrhundert (Habilitationsschrift), Augsburg 2003.

⁷ Cf. Dreitzel, Protestantischer Aristotelismus, S. 127f., on the arguments of separation of the *Politica* from the other aforementioned disciplines.

⁸ Weber, Prudentia gubernatoria. Weber analyses the main themes of the 16 most important systematic and compiled works of the science of politics in the 17th century, namely those from Justus Lipsius, Bartholomaeus Keckermann, Georg Schönborner, Henning Arnisaeus, Christian Liebenthal, Adam Contzen, Wolfgang Heider,

Other political scientists such as Christoph Besold (*Synopsis doctrinae politicae*, first printed 1620) and Johann Geilfus of Tuebingen (*Opusculum politicum*, first printed 1628), or Balthasar Cellarius of Helmstedt (*Politica succincta*, first printing 1641), have written independent textbooks on politics which give a brief insight of the subject's content.

These are joined by the numerous treatises on special topics and problems of politics, for example on the secrets of state.⁹ The rapidly growing literature on the *Politica* also resulted in first bibliographical and preparatory documents being written shortly after 1600.¹⁰ The quantitatively most extensive group of political science publications is made up of printed disputations. Around 3,000 works of this kind were written and printed at German universities during the 17th century.¹¹ They prove to be particularly valuable as sources for reconstructing early modern political science as they originated directly from teaching.¹²

First of all they show with which topics and discussions the *Politica* dealt with. Through their numbers, they show at which universities and with what intensity political science was taught. As opposed to the textbooks and topic-specific monographs they also give information about who taught and who studied the subject. The title pages of these printed pamphlets actually provide information about the following questions (cf. also the illustration on the following page):¹³

- Who wrote disputations (and led the disputation exercises) and can therefore be regarded as having taught the *Politica*? What educational background did these people have and what other subjects did they lecture?
- Who were the respondents or defenders of the disputations and therefore the students of the subject? Where did they come from? To which social class (bourgeoisie or nobility) did they belong? Which professional career might they have aspired to? To be able to answer the question on the professional career better, additional biographical research is needed, of course.

The peculiarities of this subject, its relation to other academic disciplines and its social relevance can therefore be derived as a reflection of these writings.

Balthasar Cellarius, Marcus Z. Boxhorn, Daniel Clasen, Samuel Pufendorf, Johann H. Boecler, Johann Chr. Becmann, Johann N. Hertius, Christian Weise and Johann F. Buddaeus.

⁹ As an example cf. the *Arcana regnorum et rerumpublicarum* (Herborn 1655) of Cyriacus Lentulus.

¹⁰ Cf. on the bibliographic and preparatory (propaedeutica) political writings Weber, *Prudentia gubernatoria*, pp. 67-80 and pp. 10-42. An early example for this kind of texts is: Coler, Christoph: *Epistola de studio politico ordinando*, Hannover 1602 (printed as an appendix Christoph Colers Edition of the *Germania* of Tacitus); cf. to this Philipp, Michael: *Über das Studium der Politik. Propädeutische Ratschläge des Altdorfer Gelehrten Christoph Coler aus dem Jahr 1601*, in: Riescher, Gisela u.a. (Hg.): *Politikwissenschaftliche Spiegelungen* (Fs. f. Theo Stamm), Opladen/ Wiesbaden 1998, S. 47-59.

¹¹ Cf. my collection of political disputations <http://www.philso.uni-augsburg.de/web2/Politik1/geschpw5.html>.

¹² Cf. Philipp, Michael: *Politische Dissertationen im 17. Jahrhundert*, in: Müller, Rainer A. (Hg.): *Promotionen und Promotionswesen an deutschen Universitäten der Frühmoderne*, Köln 2001, S. 21-44.

¹³ Useful indications for the various details on the title pages at Horn, Ewald: *Die Disputationen und Promotionen an deutschen Universitäten vornehmlich seit dem 16. Jahrhundert*, Leipzig 1893 (ND Wiesbaden 1968) and Marti, Hanspeter: *Philosophische Dissertationen deutscher Universitäten 1660-1750. Eine Auswahlbibliographie unter Mitarbeit von Karin Marti*, München u.a. 1982.



Title of the disputation:
„On Kingship and Tyranny“

The chairman („Praeses“):
The most honorable ...
Hermann Conring,
Doctor of Philosophy and
Medicine and Professor of
this subject

The Respondent, who
defended this disputation:
Conrad-Ascanius von
Marenholtz, Knight (*Eq.* =
Eques) in Braunschweig

Printed in Helmstedt
Printed by the university printer Hennig Müller
anno 1640

1. Political science in the light of the *Disputationes politicae*.

Dissertationes, Disputationes or *Exercitationes politicae* – hereafter called disputations for simplicity's sake¹⁴ - are small documents of 20-30 pages which resulted from teaching, from lectures and *collegia* (a kind of seminar) as well as directly from disputation exercises. They represent a first form of monographic scientific treatise.¹⁵ Disputations frequently form the basis for systematic textbooks (*Systema politicae, Institutiones politicae*) and compendia (*Collegia politica, Opera politica*). Examples of these, apart from the works of Arnisaeus and Liebenthal that were already mentioned, are those of the Tuebingen jurist Christoph Besold (*Opera politica*, Strasbourg 1626) and the Jena philosopher Johann Fabricius (*Institutiones politicae*, Jena 1671).

The disputations fulfilled different functions. Firstly, it was to establish the exact meaning of the basic concepts of the subject.¹⁶ Secondly, traditional political knowledge and historical experiences were to be collected, reappraised and passed on. Thirdly, the process of reappraisal was done under systematic points of view and by further developing typologies and concepts as set down by the 'politics' of Aristotle (for example with his state morphology). A restructuring of this knowledge inventory, actually. Finally, contemporary experiences were also incorporated and the applicability of this knowledge to the political life determined.

An overview of the main topics and discourses of the *Politica*, seen in the light of the theses and the compilations, shows the following picture.

In accordance with the systematic order of the teaching program, one first finds the (1.) basic principles and peculiarities of the subject (*constitutio & natura politicae*) and its place in the canon of sciences and arts (*artes*). From here there follow considerations on the quality of political scientific cognition and to the ways of acquiring political knowledge by reading suitable literature (the reading of *optimae auctores*) and by gaining personal experience through an extensive educational journey (*peregrinatio academica*). To this context belongs the concept of the *Politicus*, the extensively trained and universally employable politician which political science aimed to train.

The basis for the *Politica* is (2.) the analysis of society (*societas civilis*) and its component parts (*societas matrimonialis, paterna, herilis*, the village, *pagus*, and the *civitas*) as defined by Aristotle, which are regarded as the base material

14 This and further names do not mean any differences as regards content. *Exercitatio, discursus, disquisitio, quaestio* and *thesis politicae* are also common besides the terms mentioned in the text. A great number of further names (*diaskepsis, diatribe, disceptatio, exercitium, hypomnemata, positiones, schediasma, specimen, themata, velitatio*), are found only occasionally.

15 Dreitzel, *Monarchiebegriff*, 457.

16 The central concepts were at first looked at etymologically, homonyms and synonyms were then introduced, different definitions were transcribed in context and finally the best one selected according to the opinion of the authors. By division or taking apart of the concept the argumentation as regards content was then developed. This in turn orientated itself on dialectical samples: With help of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis the correct and 'true' knowledge was to be determined.

to be formed by politics. An analysis of the social elites and ruling classes, the nobility (*nobilitas*), the knight orders (*ordo equester*) and the town patricians can also be found in this context.

This serves as a base for further investigations of the (3.) community (*respublica*), the 'nature' of the state, its foundation, preservation and expansion (*conservatio & augmentatio*), the reason for and the aims of political order (*finis reipublicae*), which includes the maintenance of the ruling order and care for public welfare (*bonum commune*). This leads to an identification of the legitimation of power.

The next step (4.) looks at the different forms of state and government, that is the three basic types of state and their respective faulty counterpart (*regum & tyrannis, aristocratia & oligarchia, politia & democratia*), as well as the different versions of mixed constitution (*respublica mixta*) and new models of political systems like the Dominat. Often this was followed by a discussion on the application of these types to contemporary states, in which the form of the German Empire represented a special challenge.

A fifth (5.) group of topics is made up of the questions related to sovereignty (*summa potestas, maiestas*) and the different types of *iura maiestatis* as well as the constitutional order behind it, which was based on power over and submission (obedience) of the subjects (*subditus*).

The *Politica* dealt extensively (6.) with the rulers, such as the prince and his election or his succession (*electio or successio*), the council (*consilium*), senate and authorities (*magistratus*), as well as especially with councillors, ministers, judges, envoys (*legati*) and other *officiales*.

Furthermore, different areas of politics (7.) were analyzed. These include the duties of the state in connection with protecting religion and the church (*cura religionis*), the legal system and its legislation, punishments and awards (*leges, poenae & praemiae*), the education system (*educatio, scholae*), monetary and taxation laws (*aerarium, moneta, tributa, vectigalia*), social life and trade regulations (*commercium et mercatura, ius nundinarum*) and the military constitution. These political areas were analyzed under the scope of preserving the structures of power.

Another thematic focus are (8.) dissertations on the relations between states, especially on the subject of war (and its domestication under international law), peace, cease-fire (*inducium*), treaties and alliances (*foedera*). These topics, like the aforementioned state tasks, are regarded as arising from sovereignty and also belong into the context of *conservatio reipublicae*.

An analysis of (9.) long-term changes in communities and empires, such as their rise, change and fall (*mutatio, eversio & corruptio reipublicae/ imperii*) and the main causes for these changes form a ninth focus point of general political science.

These nine main subject groups make up the standard teaching program of general political science. Some more difficult problems of the *Politica* are left for discussion during a more advanced stage of the study of politics. These

include (10.) reasons of state (*ratio status*) and state secrets (*arcana imperii*), which had to be analyzed with respect to the different forms of state. They represent the maxims for the conservation of power. In this context, Machiavellism (roughly the question of *simulatio* and *dissimulatio* in politics) and the monarchomachic theory with its specific emphasis on sovereignty and the right to opposition (resistance doctrine) are also dealt with.

The balance between *utilitas* and *honestas* is always in the background - a policy free of ethical and legal barriers aiming only at utility opposed to a moral one committed to religion and the common good. This equilibrium of force appears regularly, particularly in the discourses about Machiavellism and reasons of state, which tended to become increasingly independent. The positioning of political studies at the individual schools of political science was defined specifically depending on how closely connected with ethics the school regarded its field to be. The debate around Machiavellism is characterized by increasing historization and de-emotionalization: From the middle of the 17th century it is generally accepted in political science that Machiavellism already existed before Machiavelli. A good example for this are the disputations of the Jena scholar Christian Hoffmann (*Machiavelli ante Machiavellum, ex historia Lacedaemoniorum productus*, 1668); his colleague, the professor for eloquence and poetry Philipp Müller (*Bene et maledicta in Principis Nicolai Machiavelli*, 1668) analyses weak or bad as well as good political advices given in the Prince of Machiavelli.

In the course of the 17th century this standard teaching program was enlarged increasingly by incorporating specific problems of the time and current political questions. The *Politica* experienced a growing differentiation which among other things led to the creation of subdisciplines like 'Staatenkunde' (**international studies**, *notitia rerumpublicarum*).

The expansionist foreign policy of the Turks and France for example, led to the discussion whether one of these countries was developing into a new *Monarchia universalis* which could become a danger for Germany. Among others Matthias Bernegger in Strasbourg (*Dissertatio politica De universali Monarchia*, 1625) and Adam Rechenberg in Leipzig (*De monarchia universali, quae Europae imminere dicitur*, 1681) took up this debate. Political science occupied itself to a large degree with the expansionist *Respublica Turcica*, the Turkish empire, as shown by the example of the *Exercitatio politica De republica Turcica* (Rudolstadt 1688) by Johann Michael Schwimmer of Jena. The description and analysis of contemporary countries and states eventually developed into the 'Staatenkunde', represented particularly by Conring in Helmstedt and Johann Heinrich Bose in Jena. Bose's *Introductio generalis in notitiam rerumpublicarum* (Jena 1676) can be regarded as one of the major works of this sub-discipline of political science.

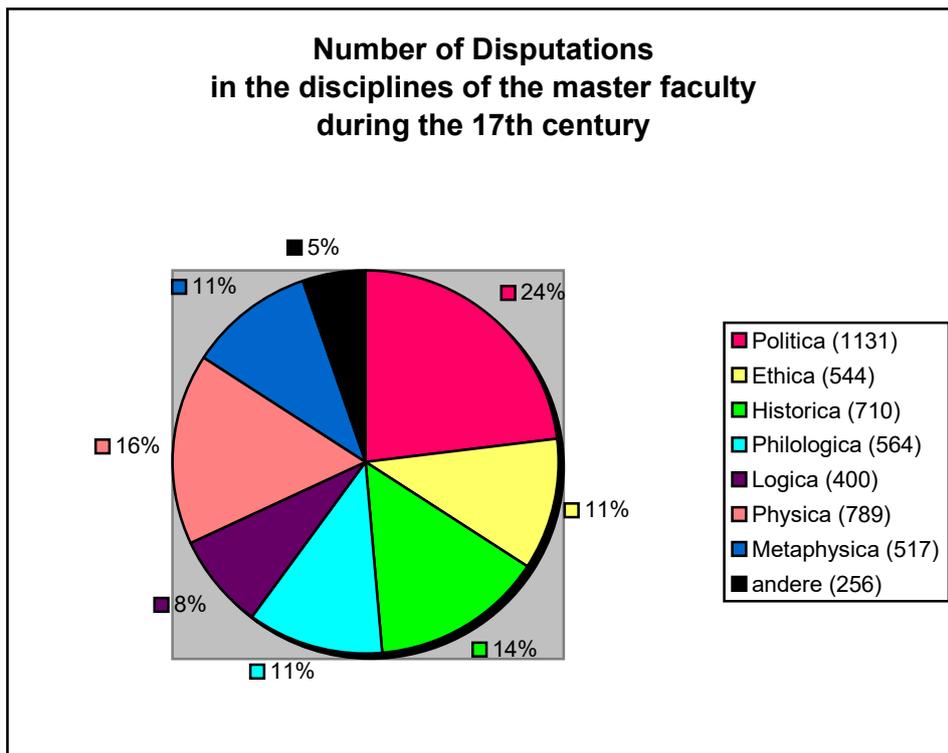
A further example for a current problem with which the *Politica* increasingly concerned itself were the special forms of princely power. Jakob Thomasius of

Leipzig, the father of Christian Thomasius, for example discussed the rule of women, that is the temporary reign by princesses for an underage heir to the throne (*Disputatio politica de gynaecocratia subsidiaria*, 1667). His colleague Johann Christoph Köhler also analyzed dynastic marriage policy resulting from the reasons of state (*Dissertatio politica De matrimonio illustri ex ratione status*, 1676).

As reflected in these works, it becomes evident that the universities were able to strengthen their leading position as places for political discussion. Only later in the 17th century was their leading role as intellectual centers of the princely states increasingly contested by the courts.

2. The teachers of politics and the related subjects of the *Politica*.

The most important teaching centers for politics were the universities in the two free city-states of Nuremberg (Altdorf) and Strasbourg, as well as the princely-state universities in Giessen, Helmstedt, Jena, Leipzig, Tuebingen and Wittenberg. More than 100 political disputations respectively were published during the 17th century at these Protestant universities. Leaders are Jena and Wittenberg with about 400 to 500 disputations. Political science was therefore a popular subject in the 17th century. As evidenced by the following graph, in no other discipline in the faculty of arts were disputations held even nearly as often. According to contemporary reports, students of the legal faculty, for example, skipped their law lectures in order to attend politics classes. In addition, the popularity of the subject can be seen in that it was taught by scholars from different fields. Therefore, the idea of the political scientist has to be seen in a broader sense and cannot be restricted to holders of the chair of politics.



While discussing the subject of the quality of the teaching staff, distinction has to be made on the one hand between the professors of the various fields, and the young graduates on the other hand, who were attached to the philosophical faculty, taught politics as private lecturers or as tutors of young nobles ('Adelspräzeptoren'). This results in a remarkably broad bandwidth of scholars who have dealt with the *Politica* at least in the form of disputations.

Among the professors, those of the faculty of arts make up the largest group. This group is composed of representatives of the Philosophy of Morals (ethics), as well as chair holders of History and Philology (of Greek, Hebrew and/or Latin, occasionally Italian and French), of Rhetoric (eloquence) and Poetry. To this group one can add the holders of a Politics chair who, however, often did not play a leading role. In principle, the professors of the faculty of arts at early modern universities were responsible for two subjects. For Politics it meant that as a rule it was combined either with Ethics or with History. There were however also other combination possibilities. The important Altdorfer political scientist Johann Paul Felwinger, for example, also held the Logic and Metaphysics chairs. Jakob LeBleu of Giessen was extraordinary professor for Law (this was the usual combination at the University of Giessen after the middle of the 17th century).

Besides this, not only a few professors of theoretical philosophy, of Logic (analytics) and Metaphysics in particular, taught political science and wrote corresponding disputations. Examples are found with Johann Christoph Hundeshagen in Jena and with Valentin Alberti in Leipzig. In these cases, as well as for the previously mentioned group, the chair in the faculty of arts was

frequently only a stopover on the way to a chair either in one of the three upper faculties or for a political career.

Among the professors of the three upper faculties, i.e. Theology, Law and Medicine, one finds protagonists who have in some cases taught politics intensively. Under these the jurists are numerous; the most striking example being Christoph Besold in Tuebingen. This can be explained by the proximity of the *Politica* to public law. Common topics were found in the treatment of sovereignty (*maiestas*) and its partial rights (*iura maiestatis*) as well as in the legal system (*leges, iudices*). The relationship to theology comes through the subject of authorities (*magistratus*) and above all from the sovereignty of the state over religion (*cura religionis*). Examples would be Johann Gerhard in Jena and Jakob Martini in Wittenberg. A small number of members of the Medical Faculty, namely Henning Arnisaeus and Hermann Conring in Helmstedt and Philipp Scherb in Altdorf also contributed greatly to the development of political science.

Finally, a large number of young graduates, private lecturers and tutors to the aristocracy played an important part in supporting the teaching of politics at many universities. The professors of politics could hardly cope with the rush of students to this subject. As a rule, this group of lecturers pursued a course at the legal or theological faculty parallel to their teaching activity. The large majority of them pursued a career in the civil service. They later took up a career in

- politics, typically as a court counsellor, privy counsellor, municipal councillor, as an envoy or diplomat and in the civil administration of princely states and city states;
- in spiritual welfare (as parish priests, for example) and church administration (as a member of the 'Consistorium' or as a superintendent);
- as educationalists (as school principals, for example) or in school supervisory boards. In this way they ended up contributing to the establishment of the *Politica* in the teaching curriculum of high schools.

A smaller number remained at the universities and took up various chairs.

Political science therefore stood in the center of diverse career paths in the civil service. It was the basic subject for the education of the power elites of the early modern state, more specifically of office bearers in the civilian and the church administration, as well as of educationalists and university teachers.

3. Students of political science and their career paths

With the consolidation of the early modern state the need for trained staff grew enormously. Political science contributed fundamentally to satisfy this demand. It is remarkable that not only descendants of the bourgeois classes studied the subject, but also that an overproportionately large number of the nobility -

relative to their share in society - did so as well. Their share varies between 14-30 %. The strong interest of the nobility has contributed fundamentally to the prestige of the *Politica*. Therefore political science was the basic discipline for training public servants from the different layers of society. The fields of activity taken up by former students ('Respondents' and defenders of disputations) coincide with those of the lecturers.¹⁷

Roughly four areas of activity can be distinguished among the professional activities taken up by former politics students. Firstly in the education sector, secondly in positions at the royal courts and in the politics, justice and administration of the princely state, thirdly professions in the administration of city states (government, administration and jurisdiction) and finally in the administration of the church, which was also incorporated into the early modern territorial state.

As expected, members of the nobility are found exclusively in the royal service, be it as steward or court marshal, in the military and as envoy, in the treasury or or chamber councils, as court or privy councillors, or as court judge or in councils of justice. The *Politica* therefore fulfilled its function of integrating the nobility, which originally insisted on its independence, into the service of the royal state.

All these areas were open to graduates from outside the nobility, no matter whether they only defended a political disputation or whether they obtained additional academic qualifications. Nevertheless, approximately a third of them completed a further course in law, a smaller portion also one in theology. The largest portion of the students became active in the civil administration of the state. Among them we find public clerks and *Secretarii*, counsellors in different committees (in the consistorium, for example) and jurists (court lawyers, jurors, county judges) and also chancellors. In the area of the municipal politics they worked as town clerks, secretaries, tax administrators, municipal advocates, envoys and councillors, some of which even reaching the office of mayor.

A change of area of activity can often be seen. University lecturers from the philosophical faculty become superintendents in the church administration, for example; or jurists working as municipal lawyers became advisers to the prince.

4. The *Politicus* and the significance of the 17th century political science.

Political science began with the claim of being the royal discipline and leading all the other sciences and mastering all the problems and challenges of its time. This claim comes to light primarily in the conception of the *Politicus*, the

¹⁷ The following is based on biographical enquiries of the Defenders ('Respondenten') of the political disputations of the universities of Altdorf, Helmstedt, Jena and Tuebingen. Due to the lack of details on many of these students, corresponding details could only be found for a smaller proportion of them. Cf. the tabular overview of the results under <http://www.philso.uni-augsburg.de/web2/Politik1/geschpw4.htm>.

demanding ideal of the extensively educated and competent statesman.¹⁸ He should master all forms of political wisdom, namely

1st, the legislative (*prudentia architectonica*),

2nd, the consultative (*prudentia consultatoria* or *deliberativa*) and

3rd, the jurisdictional prudence (*prudentia judiciaria*).¹⁹

The *Politicus* alone recognizes the 'spirit of the laws' in a community, the connection between constitution and government on the one hand, and the mental disposition for the population as well as the other basic conditions of the *respublica* on the other; he can recognize signs (symptoms) of decline and fall and counteract these. Only he is capable to found, administrate and protect and increase the state (*constitutio, administratio, conservatio, correctio* and *augemntatio reipublicae*).

This *Politicus* had to process a wealth of literature and with that acquire both normative as well as empirical historical knowledge during his studies. On his academic education journey he was expected to collect additional knowledge based on his own opinion. At the same time, he should establish contacts to important 'politicians', which could be both useful for exchanging experiences as well as for his own career.

The *Politica* therefore proves itself to be a subject which is interdisciplinary and integrates knowledge from other subjects. Political science regarded above all history, but also ethics, jurisprudence and various other 'arts' as important auxiliary sciences (ancillaries). Its conception as a synoptical universal discipline should prove its Achilles' heel in the latter 17th century, though: The subject matter had increased to a degree where it became impossible to connect the ideas, and the systematic framework of the system of theories of political science was lost in the process. New subjects like natural law, 'Kameralistik' and others replaced it in the 18th century.

These claims of the *Politica* were surely too optimistic and excessive. The dominance of theology and jurisprudence, which were actually already established by the hierarchy of the faculties couldn't be overcome by the *Politica*. (In the eyes of the political science jurisprudence should confine itself to the application of law alone while theology should keep itself completely out of earthly politics.) It was nevertheless able to cover the early modern state's enormous need for scientifically trained staff, together with other disciplines. In addition, it contributed to the professionalization of the state administration. Besides, it had a beneficial effect on the rationalization of the political decision-making process and the determination of political tasks and state aims. In this way it made an essential contribution to the secularization of politics and overcoming the ruinous competition of the religious denominations.

18 Weber, Wolfgang E.J.: Die Erfindung des Politikers. Bemerkungen zu einem gescheiterten Professionalisierungskonzept der deutschen Politikwissenschaft des ausgehenden 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts (in print).

19 For example Johann Paul Felwinger: *Dissertatio politica De politico* (1660), in: Felwinger, *Dissertationes politicae*, Nürnberg 1666, S. 805.

By offering the study of political science, the universities were not only the main center for educating public servants. They became both the intellectual centers for discussing the basic questions of politics as well as current political problems, issues and conflicts. They have therefore been legitimaly described as service training centers for political consultancy.²⁰

²⁰ Wolfgang Weber, *Erfindung des Politikers* (Manuscript with unnumbered pages).