



# Mediating Culture in the Seventeenth-Century German Novel: Eberhard Werner Happel, 1647- 1690

*Gerhild Scholz Williams*

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Eberhard Happel, German Baroque author of an extensive body of work of fiction and nonfiction, has for many years been categorized as a “courtly-gallant” novelist. In *Mediating Culture in the Seventeenth-Century German Novel*, author Gerhild Scholz Williams argues that categorizing him thus is to seriously misread him and to miss out on a fascinating perspective on this dynamic period in German history.

Happel primarily lived and worked in the vigorous port city of Hamburg, which was a “media center” in terms of the access it offered to a wide library of books in public and private collections. Hamburg’s port status meant it buzzed with news and information, and Happel drew on this flow of data in his novels. His books deal with many topics of current interest—national identity formation, gender and sexualities, Western European encounters with neighbors to the East, confrontations with non-European and non-Western powers and cultures—and they feature multiple media, including news reports, news collections, and travel writings. As a result, Happel’s use of contemporary source material in his novels feeds our current interest in the impact of the production of knowledge on seventeenth-century narrative. *Mediating Culture in the Seventeenth-Century German Novel* explores the narrative wealth and multiversity of Happel’s work, examines Happel’s novels as illustrative of seventeenth-century novel writing in Germany, and investigates the synergistic relationship in Happel’s writings between the booming print media industry and the evolution of the German novel.

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