

6 | Books for God and Country: Rubens the Catholic Patriot

From 1622 onwards pro-Habsburgian and often Counter-Reformatory title pages were increasingly designed by Rubens. Although not exclusively, most of these can be found in the historical book class of “Libri Historici”.¹ This book class of “historical books” cannot be transposed into a modern one, as the early modern understanding of historiography covered a broader range than it does today.² It included accounts such as travel literature, literature on festive entries or feasts, and numismatic literature, as well as encompassing geographical and topographical work.³ It could, of course, also encompass historical events and annals, both secular and religious, and, because of the situation in the Low Countries, these were often both. The imagery used in these title pages is often used by Rubens in works that touch on the complex political situation in Antwerp during the Eighty Years’ War in particular, and the Thirty Years’ War in Europe in general. A good example of this is the depiction of the opened Temple of Janus in several of Rubens’s works, analysed in the first part of this chapter. Rubens, however, also saw a solution to the political problems in his country, and that was the victory of the Spanish Habsburgs over the northern Provinces, resulting in a Catholic unity. The triumphant Catholic Church was thus another topic used in title pages from the 1620s onwards, and is the theme discussed in the second part of this chapter.

6.1 | Secular Historical Works: the Temple of Janus is Opened

Allegories of Peace and War occupied Rubens from the 1620s at the latest. One of the first depictions of the open doors of the Temple of Janus is the title page for the third book of *Annales ducum seu principum Brabantiae totiusque Belgii* published in 1623 (Fig. 55).⁴ The work is a history of Bra-

¹ Cf. Table 1, p. 106.

² Lang 2012, p. 67ff.

³ Andermann 1999; Kintzinger 1995, p. 15.

⁴ Haraeus 1623.

bant from Burgundian times until the Truce in 1609, and written by Franciscus van Haer (Verhaer, Haraeus, c.1550–1632). Haraeus was a priest who, after his studies in Douai and various placements all over Europe, became the rector of the Antwerp convent of the “witzusters”, the White Nuns, from 1609 until 1617.⁵ During this time he must have written the “Annales of the Dukes or Princes of Brabant”, because the *approbatio* by Laurentius Beyerlinck, censor in Antwerp, is from 31 May 1617, and the Ducal Privilege was granted on 7 July of the same year.⁶ Moretus started printing the work in 1621, but had to stop due to a lack of paper.⁷ When Rubens designed the two title pages is not known, but it can be assumed that it was shortly before they were engraved in the beginning of 1622; Cornelis Galle was paid 75 guilders for cutting the title on 5 April 1622.⁸ A second entry of 10 April 1623 mentions Lucas Vorsterman cutting the second title page for Volume Two.⁹ Thus the production of the books took almost two years, which does not at all explain why Moretus waited four years to publish this work at all.

The timing of the printing coincides with the end of the 12-year truce in 1621. The dedication to the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia expresses the wish for peace, a notion also expressed in a letter by Moretus to Van der Heyden written in May 1623. In his letter he explains that Haraeus’s work was written “impartially and truthfully, for and against both parties.”¹⁰ Moretus wanted this book written, as he mentions that he himself encouraged the author and helped him both financially and by providing the necessary sources; he also edited it himself in order to make sure that the work would not offend, but show both parties “where their faults lay.” Thus Moretus intended this to be a diplomatic work, and for the title pages he turned to Rubens who was, by that time, already known as a political mind. As far back as 1618, Frans Sweerts already advertised Rubens in a letter as a painter who was extremely well versed in history and politics.¹¹

⁵ Judson and Van de Velde 1977a, p. 226.

⁶ Haraeus 1623.

⁷ Letter from Jan van Meurs to Antonio de Toro, 27 Dec 1621, in: Judson and Van de Velde 1977b, p. 422.

⁸ Ibid., p. 463.

⁹ Ibid., p. 464.

¹⁰ “Voor soo vele aangaet het werck ende des selven stil, versekere V.L. volcomelijcker te wesen als wel sommige sullen verwachten, onpartydichlyck ende waerachtelyck geschreuen, soo wel tot voordeel als naerdeel van beyde de partijen. Hebbe selue den Aucteur, den welcken beuende inde historie van onse Landen genoegh geueerseert te wesen, tot het schryven van deze Annales met sekeren loon verweckt, ende necessaria Librorum adiumenta gesupeditert: ende daer naer de selve Annales met alle neerstigheydt selfs ouersien, op dat de waerheydt van beyde de partijen soude geseght worden, ende dat met sulcken maniere ende moderatie van woorden dat d’eene oft d’andere met redenen niet en souden geofiendert worden. Alsoo dat ick hope dat dese historie sal dienen om d’een ende d’andere kennisse van syne faulden te brengen; den prys is seshien guldens.” Letter from Moretus to Van der Heyden, 27 May 1623, in: *ibid.*, p. 400; MPM Archives, no. 139, pp. 122–123.

¹¹ “Wij van Antwerpen willen allenskens Italiae monumenta incorporeren. Petrus Paulus Rubenius, seculi nostri Apelles, heeft: onlanckx uut Engellant becomen over 100 capita marmorea & statuas. Sijn daer comen van Venetiën ex Musaeo Patriarchae Aquileiae. Desen Rubbens windt dagelickx 100 guldens. Is niet alleen schilder, maer versatissimus in historiis et re politica. Heeft alreede over 24 duysent guldens versnoept in syn huys.” Letter from Frans Sweerts to Janus Gruterus, 18 Jul 1618, in: Heinen 2002, p. 310. Cf. chs. 2.2 and 2.5.

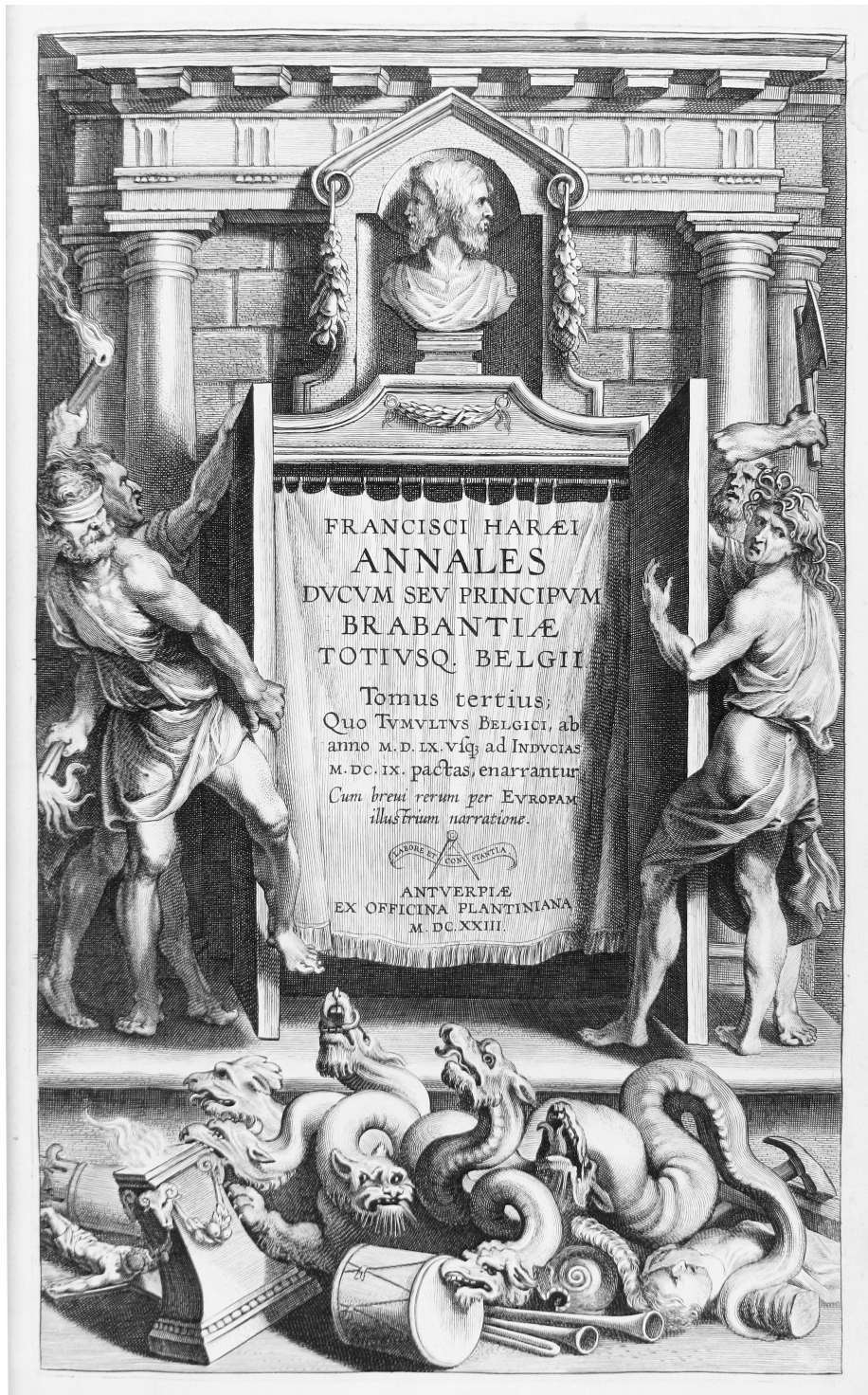


Figure 55 – Title Page for Vol. 2 of Haræus 1623; engraving: 288 × 177mm by Cornelis Galle I after Rubens. Private Image.

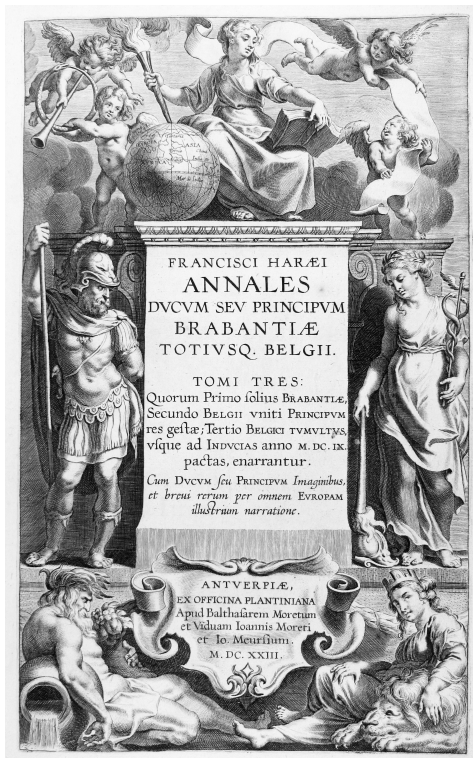


Figure 56— Title Page for Vol. 1 of Haraeus 1623; engraving, 285 × 177mm by Cornelis Galle I after Rubens. Private Image.

The title page for the first two books, published in one volume, (Fig. 56) depicts an enthroned *Historia* carrying an burning torch and reading from a book, while seated on a globe. She is surrounded by symbols of eternity with the *ouroboros* in the hand of one putto, and the endless scroll of yet untainted parchment in the hands of two others on her left. Below her are the two opposing forces in history, War in the form of Mars, and Peace, personified by Pax who is holding the caduceus and putting a flame to weapons. The geographical location of this history is personified by the reclining river god of the Schelde, and the personification of *Belgica* with her lion.¹² The two latter figures were used by Rubens in a memorial print for a military commander of the Southern Netherlands, Charles Bonaventure de Longueval, 2nd Count of Bucquoy, who was killed in 1621.¹³ In this memorial print the situation of the Southern Netherlands is expressed even more dramatically than in the title page for Haraeus's work: both *Belgica* and the river god are shackled and bound and, instead of reclining, they are bowed in desperation (Fig. 57). This illustrates the desperate situation the Southern Netherlands found themselves in, as they fought against an escalation

¹² Cf. Kintzinger 1995, p. 58. The title page was copied in 1625 in the work by a publisher from Brussels designed for the Spanish market: *Historia De Las Gverras Civiles Qve Ha Avido En Los Estados De Flandes* is a history of the war in the Netherlands from the years 1559 to 1609, Carnero 1625.

¹³ Rubens, Oil sketch on panel, 1621; Hermitage Leningrad, Inv. no. 508; engraving by Lucas Vorsterman after Rubens. Vlieghe 1987, pp. 67–70, no. 82–82a. Cf. also Heinen 2002, p. 301.



Figure 57 – Rubens, *Portrait of Charles de Longueval*; oil on panel, 620 × 500 mm. Hermitage Leningrad, Inv. no. 508; Wikimedia-Commons. Private Image.

in a war that threatened to leave the country isolated from the rest of the Habsburg empire, and dependent on France.¹⁴ On the title page for a book that also covered the history of the Golden Age of Antwerp, such a desperate depiction of *Belgica* and the Schelde, that secured the region's wealth, would not have been acceptable.

The Horrors of War were thus illustrated on the second title page for the third book, bound in a separate volume. The book deals with the rebellion of the seven northern Provinces from the Spanish Netherlands from 1560 until the beginning of the 12-year truce in 1609. Accordingly, this title page shows a stage-like depiction of the opening of the doors of the Temple of Janus. The temple is crowned by a two-faced bust of Janus, the Roman god of gates and transition, looking into the past and the future. The open doors of his temple marked the times of war for the Romans; in the rare times of peace they were closed.¹⁵ Virgil, in his *Aeneid*, explained how *Furor* was kept in chains behind the closed doors of war.¹⁶ Although the doors of the temple are opened in the title page, the reader is not allowed to glimpse the inside of the temple. The title of the book, woven into a hanging tapestry, still blocks the view and is thus an additional barrier to war. It reflects Moretus's

¹⁴ Cf. the account of the problems of the Southern Habsburgian Netherlands in: *ibid.*, pp. 297–302.

¹⁵ Vergil, *Aeneid*, VII:601–605; Ovid, *Fasti*, I:99 and I:140.

¹⁶ Vergil, *Aeneid*, I:293–296.

wish for peace and an ending in which both parties concede their faults. A similar ambivalence is visible in the four figures surrounding the open doors: two of them seem to be attacking the doors themselves and blindfolded *Furor* and *Discord* are both caught in the middle of an action. *Furor* is the embodiment of a blind madness, expressed as a “blindness of the mind, totally deprived of intellectual light” by Cesare Ripa.¹⁷ John Rupert Martin interprets these figures as pulling the doors open, but their bodies are not necessarily in a forward motion.¹⁸ Judging from the way they are depicted by Rubens, they could be either stepping out of the temple or creeping back into it, especially if compared with other depictions of the Temple of Janus by Rubens.

In 1635 Rubens designed the Temple of Janus as a two-storeyed stage of 19 metres height and 15 metres width for the triumphal entry of the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand of Spain into Antwerp on 17 April 1635 (Fig. 58).¹⁹ The stage was placed on the Melkmarkt in the shadow of Antwerp Cathedral, and was an open acknowledgment of the plight of Antwerp, for, in contrast to the Temple of Janus raised for the Entry of Prince Philip into Antwerp in 1549, the doors of Rubens’s Temple were wide open. A painting in the background of the stage depicted the opening of the temple’s doors and divided the building into two opposing sides. To the left of the opening doors is the side of war with Ferocity in the midst of the allegorical figures; to the right is the side of peace with Tranquility in the centre. While the whole depiction of war and peace, in fact the whole of Rubens’s design for the Entry of the Cardinal-Infante, merits a closer look, I want to focus on the opening doors, as these show the differences to Rubens’s invention of fourteen years earlier.

In the painting of the opening, engraved by Theodoor van Thulden for the belated publication with a commentary by Rubens’s friend Gevaerts, *Furor* does not politely hold the door open but is seen to hurl himself at the viewer, sword in one hand and the a flaming torch in the other (Fig. 58).²⁰ *Discord* and Tisiphone, a Fury, are opening the door for *Furor*, while *Peace* is trying to close it, helped by the Infanta Isabella and *Piety*. The appeal to Ferdinand was inscribed by Gevaerts in the epigraph placed above the picture and preserved in the subscript on van Thulden’s engraving:

Having won triumphs on both land and sea, O Prince, would that you might close the inmost shrine of warlike Janus! And may savage Mars, who has now oppressed the Belgians for almost seven decades, and the fierce Harpies, and Grief and Furor, depart hence to the distant recesses of Thrace and Scythia: and may Peace, so long desired, return to the people and the land!²¹

¹⁷ “Furore”, in: Ripa, *Iconologia*, Siena, 1613, p. 256; trsl. by J. R. Martin 1972, p. 174.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

¹⁹ J. R. Martin 1972, p. 164. For the entry cf. *Ibid.*, Knaap 2014, Manfré 2013, Berghaus 2005, Mulryne 2004a.

²⁰ The oil painting by Theodoor Rombouts is lost, cf. J. R. Martin 1972, pp. 169–175, nos. 44a–45.

²¹ “O vtinam, partis terraqve mariqve trivmphis, belligeri clvdas, Princeps, penetralia lani! Marsqve fervs, septem iam pæne decennia Belgas qvi premit, harpyiæque trvces, lvctvsqve, fvrqrqve, hinc procvl ac thraces abeant, scythicosqve recessvs paxqve optata div, popvlos atqve arva revisat!” Trsl. by *Ibid.*, p. 175.

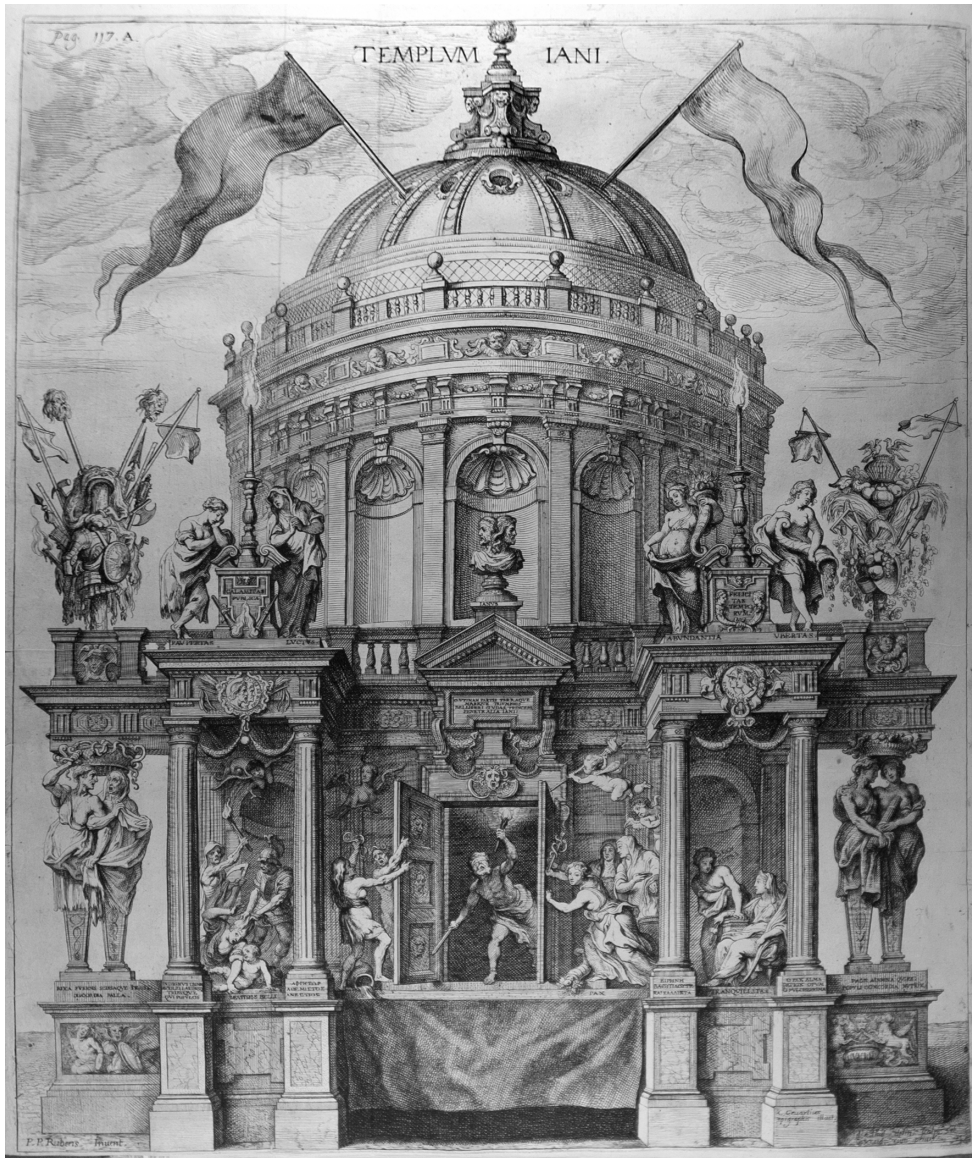


Figure 58—“Temple of Janus”, in: Gevaerts 1642; engraving, 511 × 453 mm by Theodor van Thulden after Rubens. Private Image.

This plea to Ferdinand was also forcefully expressed in the title page designed by Rubens for the large commemorative volume that was illustrated by Theodoor van Thulden after Rubens's designs, and was accompanied by a learned commentary by Gevaertius.²²

The same impetus from the open doors of the Temple of Janus towards war has been depicted by Rubens in a very dramatic way in his painting *The Consequences of War* painted between 1637 and 1638 (Fig. 59).²³ In this painting it is, however, not blind *Furor* emerging from the Temple, but Mars. Rubens himself, in an often-quoted letter to Justus Susterman, a Flemish painter at the Florentine court, described the painting that was on its way to Florence for his customer:

The principal figure is Mars, who has left the temple of Janus open (this in time of peace, according to Roman custom, remained locked) and advances with shield and bloody sword, threatening people at large with great ruin [see the opening verses of Lucretius]. He pays little heed to Venus, his Lady, who strives with caresses and embraces to hold him back, accompanied by her Amors and Cupids. From the other side, Mars is dragged forward by the Fury Alecto [see Virgil, book IX of the Aeneid], with a torch in her hand and two monsters next to her symbolising Pestilence and Famine, inseparable companions of War [Pestilence's mouth is on fire and Famine's is wide open]. On the ground, turned away, lies a Woman with a right-angled lute, which denotes Harmony which is incompatible with the discord of War. There too is a mother with a babe in arms, illustrating how Fecundity, procreation, and Charity are thwarted by War, which corrupts and destroys everything. In addition, there is an Architect thrown on his back with his instruments in his hand, to show how that which in time of Peace is constructed for the use and ornamentation of cities, is brought to ruin and hurled to the ground by the violence of armaments. I believe, if I remember rightly, that you will also find on the ground under the feet of Mars a book as well as a drawing on paper, to imply that he treads underfoot literature and other fine things in life (*altre galanterie*). There should in addition be a bundle of darts or arrows, with the band which held them together undone; this was, when bound together, the Emblem of Concord; and likewise the Caduceus and olive, symbol of Peace which I have put lying alongside. That sorrowing woman (*matrone*), clothed in black and with torn veil, and despoiled of her jewels and all sort of ornaments, is the unfortunate Europe who, for so many years now, has suffered plunder, outrage, and misery, which are so

²² Gevaerts 1642; Cf. Knaap 2014, therein: Z. Arnold 2014, Berghaus 2005, J. R. Martin 1972, Arents 1949, and especially Judson and Van de Velde 1977a, pp. 327–334, no. 81.

²³ Cf. Büttner 2018. Also called *The Horrors of War*, Galleria Palatina Florence, Inv. no. Pal. 86; first engraving by Ferdinando Gregori (1771) in: Heinen et al. 2004, cat. no. 17, pp. 157–161. Cf. also Chemlinová 2014.



Figure 59—Rubens, *Consequences of War*; oil on canvas, 2060 × 3420 mm. Galleria Palatina Florence, Inv. no. Pal. 86.

injurious to everyone that I need not specify them. Her mark is that globe, held by a little Angel or Genius, with the cross on top, which denotes the Christian World.²⁴

Thus Rubens explains the destruction of the arts by war, be they architecture, music, learning, or indeed painting. The two figures on the title page to Haraeus's work attacking the doors of the Temple of Janus could thus be an example of the furious destruction of buildings. But the figures commonly interpreted as opening the doors to the temple do not show a movement out of the temple. *Furor's* and *Discord's* rather hesitant movements could also be interpreted with regard to the ambivalent situation in Antwerp at the beginning of the 1620s. Although the truce had ended on 9 April 1621, war did not immediately break out. All the parties endeavoured to work for lasting peace in the first year.²⁵ Thus the hesitancy of the figures on a title page dealing with the war in Brabant until the truce could be a visible sign of hope for all who contributed to this book, that peace might be an option soon, and *Furor* might yet be contained.

In the foreground the consequence is already visible: a seven-headed hydra with lion's paws and forked tongues is crawling there, destroying religion, Christianity, piety, soldiers, buildings, and the arts and crafts. Martin identifies the hydra as the monster of civil war laying waste to the

²⁴ Trsl. after McGrath, *War and Peace*, forthcoming. Baldinucci, *Notizie dei professori*, 1845–1847, IV, pp. 492–495.

²⁵ Büttner 2006b, p. 69.

land.²⁶ This interpretation is very probable, as the northern Provinces were still seen as a part of the Low Countries by the Habsburg loyalists. Only with the Peace of Westphalia was the Dutch Republic recognised as an independent country, which Rubens would not live to see. For Rubens, the war with the northern Provinces was thus a civil war in his country, and a war furthermore, that was brought to his doorstep.

That title pages dealing with this topic increase from then on coincides with Rubens's own diplomatic activity. He actively contributed to the negotiations with the northern Provinces on 30 September 1623, mostly due to family connections and connections of his humanist circle.²⁷ This was only the beginning and Rubens was to travel on diplomatic errands for the next ten years until the death of the Infanta Isabella. In his biography of Rubens, Büttner shows how important a certain reputation was for Rubens on these diplomatic missions, and how Rubens used his reputation as a gentleman and a painter for the benefit of himself and his family. It is thus entirely possible that the production of title pages with such a diplomatic or even patriotic content benefited not only Moretus, but also Rubens's reputation as a man "extremely versed in history and politics."²⁸

The title page for the History of the Dukes and Princes of Brabant was only the beginning of title pages that thematised the war. To name but one other notable example, the *Obsidio Bredana* (1626) describes the siege and fall of the city of Breda.²⁹ As the only noteworthy success of the Spanish forces, the most was made of this victory: apart from the books (two English translations, a Spanish and a French translation; the Latin version was printed again in 1629), a large engraving by Jacques Callot and Velázquez' *Las Lanzas*, the event was the historical source for the literary endeavours of Calderón, Alonso Vázquez and Lope de Vega.³⁰ Another account of a siege was published in 1638 and introduced by a title page by Rubens: *La siège de la ville de Dole* is an account of the city of Dole, attacked by the French army in 1636 and regained by the Spanish forces three months later. A book that can be placed in the vicinity of these descriptions of sieges is de los Ríos y Alarcón's *De hierarchia Mariana*, published in 1641.³¹ Both of these titles were discussed above in terms of the authors' or intermediaries' involvement in the design of the title pages.³² It was precisely because of the publicity these works enjoyed and because of their political importance that the intermediaries were worried that the king might not be depicted in the proper way or with the proper decorum.

²⁶ J. R. Martin 1972, p.174.

²⁷ Büttner 2006b, pp. 69ff. and Heinen 2002.

²⁸ See the Letter from Sweert to Gruterus in *Ibid.*, p. 310, quoted in 2.5.

²⁹ Hugo 1626.

³⁰ Engelen 2008; D. Velázquez, *Las Lanzas o La rendición de Bredá*, Oil on canvas, 307 x 367 cm; Madrid, Prado, Inv. no. 1172.

³¹ Ríos y Alarcón 1641.

³² Cf. Section 2.4.

Moretus and other publishers often commissioned Rubens for books that praised the Spanish Netherlands and its rulers, so that an increasing tendency to create designs for pro-Habsburgian literature can be perceived in Rubens's title pages in the later years of his life. This goes hand in hand with a panegyric aspect that moves into the centre of Rubens's title-page design: *La peinture de la Serenissime princess Isabelle Claire Eugenia infante d'Espagne* (1634) celebrates the life of Isabella Clara Eugenia in a poetic work by Tristan l'Hermite (1601–1655); in *El memorable y glorioso viaje del Infante Cardenal D. Fernando de Austria* (1635) Diego de Aedo y Gallart describes the journey of the new governor of the Spanish Netherlands to the Netherlands; *Diverses pieces pour la defense de la Royne mere du roy tres-chrestien Louys XIII* (1637) is a reprint of several political tracts against the French king in favour of the Queen-Mother Maria de' Medici; this culminates in the design and the subsequent and belated publication of the *Pompa introitus Ferdinandi*.³³ In the 1630s, Rubens's tendency to design panegyric title pages is also reflected in the neo-Latin books described above, among which the panegyric to Pope Urban VIII is central. The culmination of Rubens's efforts in service to his hometown and country was the triumphal entry he designed for the Cardinal-Infante Ferdinand, for which neither Rubens nor Antwerp spared any expense. Apart from this political side of the fight for Catholic unity, there were also book productions that were more religious in their tenor, but had the same agenda.

6.2 | Ecclesiastical History: the Triumphant Church

For the modern eye most books published in these centuries could be considered religious as they often had a religious or moral justification even when the authors understood their work as historical, as for instance in terms of ecclesiastical history or the histories of the saints and hermits.³⁴ It is, however, possible to distinguish between books that were primarily religious and those that only had a religious undertone. In the books with religious content, finer distinctions can be made: the book class of religious books contained the Bible and liturgical books, such as breviaries and missals; it also contained pious literature meant for everyday use and aimed at bolstering belief; and it included the writings of the venerated church fathers or commentaries on parts of the Bible, thus more theological books. A finer distinction into subcategories of the book classes is necessary, as a liturgical book has a different use and readership than a pious one, thus often these books also have different formats and the title pages a different design, especially if Rubens designed them. The same can be observed for historical books: the subcategories for this book class are ecclesiastical history, profane history, and books about antiquity. In both book classes, title pages of certain

³³ Tristan 1634; Aedo y Gallart 1635; Morgues 1637; Gevaerts 1642.

³⁴ For this problem considering religious publications, cf. Collinson et al. 2002.

subcategories, liturgical, ecclesiastical and profane history books, emphasise the Catholic faith in connection with the war against the reformists on their title pages.

Books with Counter-Reformatory content appear more often from 1619 onwards. The first religious books to which Rubens contributed a title page in the 1610s were mostly liturgical and scholarly works: the Bible, liturgical works, exegetic commentaries, and the history of the cross.³⁵ This coincides with a general increase in the production of liturgical works in the Officina Plantiniana: from the 1590s when these works amounted to a quarter of the overall production to the 1640s, when they constituted three quarters of the production.³⁶ Particularly from 1609 onwards, the production of the Officina Plantiniana increased as the Spanish market was suddenly reopened for Moretus: the Spanish publishers could not supply the demand for high quality products.³⁷ In the 1620s and '30s Rubens increasingly provided title pages for theological and pious works,³⁸ and works of a Counter-Reformatory nature.³⁹ A generally an increased output of pious and Counter-Reformatory literature could explain Rubens's increased contribution to this kind of literature. On the other hand, he also contributed several title pages of a panegyric and patriotic nature from the 1620s onwards,⁴⁰ which could also be attributed to a sense of patriotism and religious belief on Rubens's part. While these last books were connected to the Counter-Reformation because of the strong emphasis of the Southern Low Countries on Catholicism, the religious books and the ecclesiastical histories can be attributed to a more global goal of Catholic reform.

This term has been strongly criticised in the past decades for its strong connection with the art-historical period "Baroque" and its deprecatative association of decay and decadence.⁴¹ The term Counter-Reformation is neither used in the sense of historical periodisation here, nor in the sense of a Catholic Reform out of which many new orders were founded, and in the wake of which the Council of Trent was held in the sixteenth century. Even when used in an art-historical context, the term is misleading when used as a means of periodisation; after all, the movement against the reformation was only one concern of the Catholic Church, and plays almost no role in relation to the theology of images.⁴² Even though Counter-Reformation might be not precise enough when used

³⁵ *Biblia Sacra* 1617; Bosio 1617; *Breviarium Romanum* 1614; Steen 1616.

³⁶ This also meant that the print run was increased to over 2,000 for these liturgical works; one third of all these runs were of over 2,000 per edition. Materné 1991, p. 482.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 489.

³⁸ Rosweyde 1617, Jesu 1620, Haeften 1635, Rios y Alarcón 1641.

³⁹ Cf. sec. 6.2.1.

⁴⁰ E.g. *Gelresche Rechten des Rvremvndtschen Quartiers* 1620, Hugo 1626, Tristan 1634, Aedo y Gallart 1635, Boyvin 1638, Gevaerts 1642.

⁴¹ For a historical, critical discussion of "Counter-Reformation" and "Catholic Reform" cf. Hecht 2016, Ditchfield 2015, O'Malley 2000, p. 35; Hsia 1998, *passim*; Jedin et al. 1967, pp. 449–450.

⁴² Hecht 2016, p. 11.



Figure 60 – Title page for Hazart 1681, unknown engraver.

for a period or even for a larger movement of the Catholic Church,⁴³ for the Southern Netherlands, and especially for the book production in this region, it is found to be a fitting term. The Eighty Years' War took place on Antwerp's doorstep and it is safe to say that it occupied the minds and influenced the lives of the city's inhabitants. The war was not only religiously motivated, but also had economical and political reasons, such as the political and financial independence of the northern Provinces from Habsburg Spain. And it was not only waged with weapons, but was also a war of books: via their writings the reformers had heated discussions with those scholars and priests concerned with countering the allegations, and tried to defend their faith and the foundations of their territories. While Rubens provided title pages for books with that emphasis, it is visible, however, that he, or at least his son Albert, did not favour these books: most of them are not in the inven-

⁴³ For Hecht "Counter-Reformation" is particularly useful concerning images as Catholic theologians explicitly argued against the "reformatory" use of images. He sees Counter-Reformatory tendency of the Catholic Church as one among many, if a very central one. "Weil das ausdrücklich 'gegen die Reformation' gerichtete Handeln der katholischen Seite für die kirchliche Theorie und Praxis beständig wahrzunehmen ist, konnten die Versuche, andere Begrifflichkeiten einzuführen, nie völlig überzeugen". "Counter-Reformation" is used for a second phase of a much larger Catholic Reform from the 12th century onwards. Ibid., p. 11.



Figure 62—Portrait frame from Hazart 1681, unknown engraver.

for him enemies of the true faith.⁴⁶ His writings were part of a new movement of authors writing Catholic Church history. For Hazart, as for any other author writing on Catholic Church history, the aim of historiography was showing the Catholic Church as the true church and the only possible belief. The designs that were copied from Rubens for framing the popes' portraits mainly depicted the triumph of the Holy Catholic Church—thus, his designs were well suited to Hazart's polemic work *Triumph der Pausen*.⁴⁷

While it would lead too far to investigate each and every one of the original title pages and the books for which they were designed in *Triumph der Pausen*, it is worthwhile to investigate the central idea in most of these: the triumph of the Church and the depiction of the two captives over whom she triumphs. This motif, in all its variants, enables us to see how the title page design worked and how widespread the ideas became through the dissemination of these images into the world. For an understanding of the motif, is necessary to delve deeper into history and look at the beginnings of ecclesiastical history in the Catholic Church which began with Caesar Baronius's *Annales ecclesiastici*. The title page for this work had become a brand for Catholic ecclesiastical history by

⁴⁶ Tollebeek et al. 1992, p. 315. More than 90 polemic works were written by Hazart, cf. Backer et al. 1890.

⁴⁷ Cf. Poorter 1978, esp. *The Triumph of the Church*, no. 11.

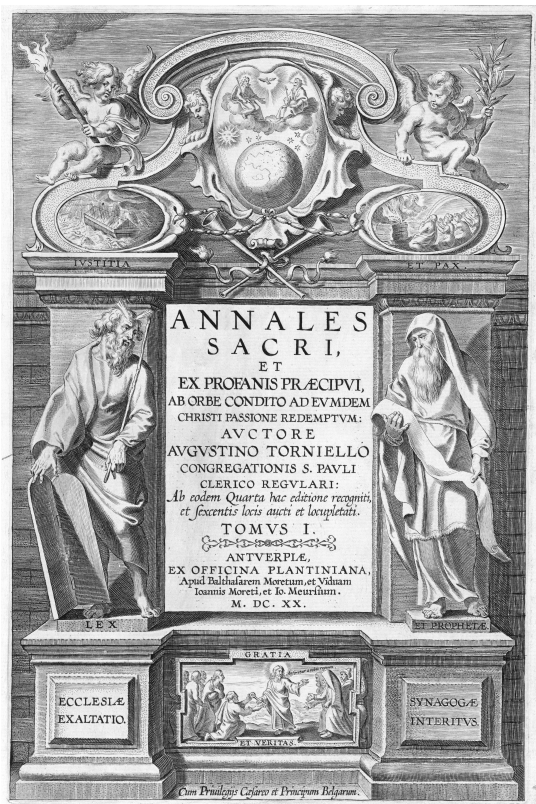


Figure 63 – Title page for Tornielli 1620; engraving, 329 × 216 mm. Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-6887. © Rijksmuseum.

the middle of the seventeenth century, and Rubens's later title pages take up its central theme of the triumphant Church. Among these are the title page for the *Annales sacri* (Fig. 63) and for two vernacular compendia of Baronius's *Annales* published in quick succession in Antwerp.⁴⁸

6.2.1 | The *Annales ecclesiastici* by Caesar Baronius

The beginnings of Catholic ecclesiastical history lie with the famous Caesar Baronius, an Oratorian cardinal, and his *Annales ecclesiastici*. This bulwark of the Catholic faith with its defence of the papacy was in parts the answer to a large project published in Basle that shook the Catholic world when its first volume was published in 1558. It was the first volume of *Historia Ecclesia Christi*, later called the *Magdeburg Centuries* after the location where it was compiled and the way history was presented: in centuries.⁴⁹ This project was initiated by Matthias Flacius (1520–1575), a Lutheran theologian. He had developed a concept in which the history of the Church from Christ to the present day would be shown in 16 volumes, with one century per volume. In the end, only thirteen volumes were published from 1558 to 1574. The project was to be based entirely on medieval

⁴⁸ Tornielli 1620, Mudzaert 1622, Baronio and Sponde 1623.

⁴⁹ Flacius 1558; Mentzel-Reuters et al. 2008, Pullapilly 1975, p. 15.

sources, a novelty in early modern historiography.⁵⁰ Flacius and his contacts collected and copied manuscripts from all over Europe, sending their copies to the group of scholars in Magdeburg.⁵¹ The publication of this feat of scholarship was disastrous for the Catholics: for the first time a history of the Church was meticulously researched on the basis of sources, but directed against the authority of the Church and against the Pope.

In the same year that the first volume of this history was published, a fervent young Catholic on his way to become a secular priest, was asked by his mentor Philip Neri to provide his Oratory with a series of lectures on the history of the Church from the beginning to contemporary times.⁵² The young Catholic was Caesar Baronius (Cesare Baronio, 1538–1607), born in Sora into an impoverished noble family. Baronius finished his doctorate before finally committing to religious life in the newly founded order of Oratorians, a congregation of secular priests that was officially recognised in 1575 under its leader Philip Neri (1515–1595). Baronius obliged his mentor and began to study and compile the history of the Church on the basis of historical records in order to refute the *Magdeburg Centuries*. In the following decades he gave seven lecture series on Church history, refining his scholarship and his arguments before finally writing them down. In 1577 he had almost finished the first volume, twenty years after the first of the *Magdeburg Chronicles* had appeared, when he requested for the first time to be allowed to read this Protestant work.⁵³

Both publications of Church history were considered bulwarks in the debate between Protestants and Catholics and were incredible feats of scholarship. The *Magdeburg Centuries* contended that the Church had deviated from its course somewhere between the third and seventh centuries with the establishment of the papacy as the supreme authority in the Church. The Reformers tried to prove this claim with the use of many old manuscripts and books, to show that their wish to restore the Church to its pre-papal purity and its original state was valid and right. For Baronius the true history of the Church was and remained uncorrupted and was not to be separated from the papacy. He also unearthed a large number of documents with the help of many of his learned contacts to substantiate the authority of the church fathers; as the reformers' case had been mainly a historical argument, the Catholics had to refute it in same manner.⁵⁴ Although both works are polemic in nature, the interest shown in the original sources is a milestone in early modern historiography and both parties saved many long-forgotten and hitherto unknown documents.

Due to the many changes of publishers, the publishing history of the *Annales* is tangled. Baronius had finished his work on the first volume in spring 1579, but it took another eight years until its

⁵⁰ Hartmann 2008, p. 5.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 14.

⁵² For Baronius and the beginnings of ecclesiastical history, see Machielsen 2017, Finocchiaro 2005, Rietbergen 1983, Jedin 1978, Pullapilly 1975.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 15.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 145.

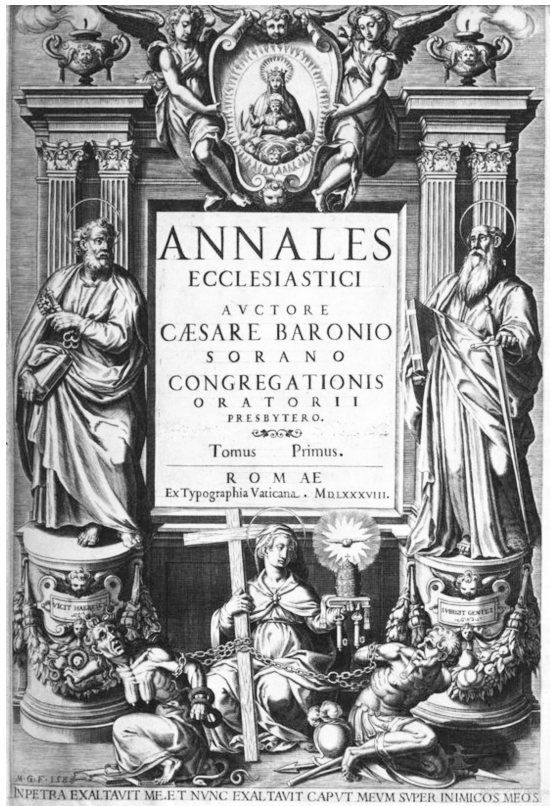


Figure 64 – Title page for Baronio 1588.

publication. The reason for the slow publication of this and the other volumes was the many tasks in which Baronius was involved, among them the revision of the *Martyrologium Romanum* under Gregory XIII. This task, however, put him into contact with the Officina Plantiniana and Christopher Plantin who was eager not only to print an edition of the *Martyrologium Romanum* but also the *Annales*. The publication of the martyrology had already been a traumatising experience for Baronius, as only its third edition was deemed acceptable for publication, and the printing of the first edition of the *Annales* was equally difficult for him. At the request of Sixtus V, the *Annales* were printed at the newly established Vatican Press.⁵⁵ However, the newly founded Typographia Vaticana had enormous problems, and the first printing was full of errors, even though much of the text had been reset.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the first two volumes were published there.

⁵⁵ Papal Bull of 27 April 1587 reorganised curial bureaucracy. The fourteenth congregation was charged with the institution and administration of the Typographia Vaticana that was to print “libri sacri, sanctorumque Patrum traditiones, vitae, gesta, miracula ac purae doctrinae christianae dogmata et alia sacra opera, non modo latine et italice, verum etiam [...] diversarum barbararum linguarum idiomate.” *Bullarium Romanum*, vol. VIII (Turin 1863), pp. 841–847, in: Rietbergen 1983, p. 90.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

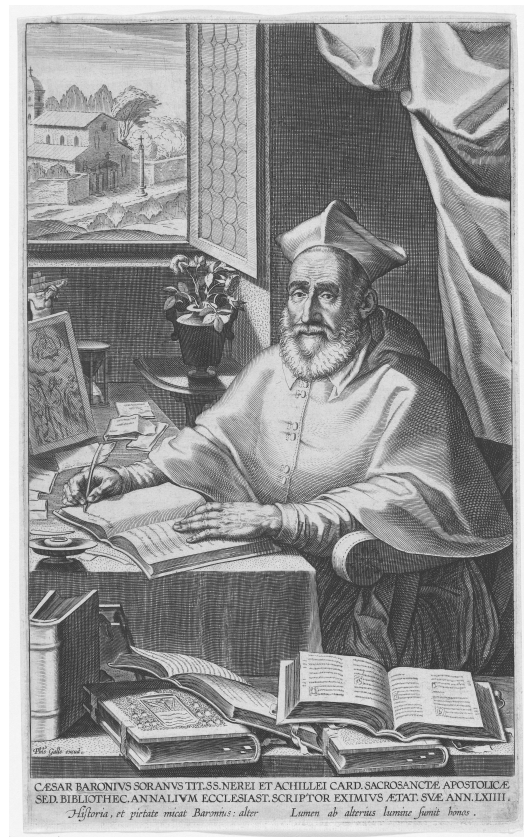


Figure 65— Philip Galle after Villamena, *Cardinal Cesare Baronio*, 1610; engraving, 315 × 193 mm. Rijksmuseum, RP-P-1909-4463. © Rijksmuseum.

This first edition had an engraved title page by an artist or engraver with the monogram M. G. F., which would be copied in all of Europe for the next century (Fig. 64). On the title page the title is presented on a central plate that is immersed in a classical architectural frame. Peter and Paul, the pillars of the Church, are standing on the pedestals, above them are two oil lamps burning. In the centre, above the title, two angels carry a medallion with a Madonna and child. Below the title a group of three figures is a depiction of the triumphant church: the central figure is a depiction of the holy Church with a cross in her right hand, and the Bible, keys, the papal tiara, and the dove of the holy ghost in the left. Two figures are chained to the cross: an old hag lying on open books and accompanied by snakes, and a Roman soldier kneeling on weapons and armour.

Baronius must have had a say in the design of this title page, as it depicted the Vallicellian Madonna at the top. The Madonna della Vallicella was a miraculous medieval icon from the church of S. Maria in Vallicella, also known as the Chiesa Nuova. It was very important to the Oratorians as it was their only Marian relic.⁵⁷ Devotion to the Virgin Mary was one of the collective values shared by the members of the Congregations of the Oratory and in March 1599 the high altar was dedi-

⁵⁷ Mühlen 1996, p. 258.

cated to the Nativity of the Virgin and Saint Gregory the Great.⁵⁸ In 1606 the medieval fresco was removed from a side chapel in the church and taken to the high altar where it would eventually be placed within a painting that was commissioned from Rubens.⁵⁹

This image was also depicted in the portrait of Cardinal Caesar Baronius, created in 1602 by Francesco Villamena.⁶⁰ This portrait was soon the authoritative portrait, reproduced in many volumes of the *Annales*, but also in other later books.⁶¹ Philipp Galle reproduced the author's portrait in the reverse (Fig. 65).⁶² Cardinal Baronius is seated at his desk, the several open books referring to his work, while in the background his titular church, SS. Nero ed Achillo, can be seen through an open window.⁶³ The portrait shows Baronius's dedication to his order and his church by the image of the venerated Madonna della Vallicella leaning against the crucifix. Thus even before the decision was made that the miraculous icon would be incorporated into Rubens's painting on the high altar, it was broadcast across the world and brought into close contact with Baronius's endeavours. This increased when Baronius decided to print the next volumes on his own.

Throughout its history, the personification of the Church had been depicted in several ways: most common were the use of the apocalyptic woman, Virgin Mary as the elected Woman of the Apocalypse, as a woman on a four-headed beast, or simply as a woman holding a chalice.⁶⁴ Often Church, representing the new law and the new testament, is usually depicted triumphing over the personification of the old law, Synagogue, as, for instance, in the title page for a Bible that Rubens designed in 1617.⁶⁵ On this title page Rubens depicted these two personifications in the form of caryatids, with Synagogue on the left-hand side and Church on the right (Fig. 2 on page 31). The depiction of Church with a chalice was similar to that of Faith and often they appear as one and the same. This is the central idea of the Counter-Reformation authors, who insisted on the existence of one faith only. Church, as she was represented on the first title page for Baronius's *Annales ecclesiastici* (Fig. 15 on page 79), was shown as "Roma Santa": cross in one hand, and in the other holding the book from which two keys dangle and upon which the tiara rests. The dove, the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit, usually hovers over the tiara.⁶⁶ Chained to the cross are the Church's captives: Heresy is an old hag is sitting on her books, holding snakes and smoke curling out of her mouth as she sows discord with her words in both speech and writing. The heathen, however,

⁵⁸ Verstegen 2015, p. 9 and p. 53; Mühlen 1996, p. 254.

⁵⁹ Noyes 2016; Buttler 2011; Mühlen 1996; Herzner 1979; Müller-Hofstede 1964.

⁶⁰ Hecht 2016, p. 43.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 43, fn. 255. For Christian Hecht, the author's portrait is a response to Dürer's Erasmus portrait while showing the cardinal explicitly as a servant of the Church; *ibid.*, pp. 43–44.

⁶² Philip Galle, engraving; in the Collection of the Rijksmuseum, object no. RP-P-1909-4463.

⁶³ A small picture leans against the crucifix on his table, in which Justus Müller Hofstede sees Rubens's design for the main altar for the Chiesa Nuova. Müller-Hofstede 1964, pp. 445–446.

⁶⁴ Knipping 1974, pp. 348ff. See also "Maria, Marienbild", in: Kirschbaum et al. 1971, cols. 154–210.

⁶⁵ *Biblia Sacra* 1617.

⁶⁶ Knipping attributes this ensemble to Galle, but it is older. Knipping 1974, pp. 350–351.

only sows discord with his weapons. In the *Annales ecclesiastici* the heathen is depicted as a Roman soldier, but on the following copies of the title page, he is slowly transformed into an unspecified heathen.

6.2.2 | The Printing History of the *Annales*

The problems with the Vatican Press increased when it ceased to function properly due to the rapid succession of various popes from 1590 until 1592 and the bureaucratic difficulties this entailed.⁶⁷ Thus in 1590, Baronius turned to Jacopo Torniero, a Roman printer, for the printing of the third volume.⁶⁸ This was published in 1592 but Torniero “failed in the same year [the venture] turned out its first volume of the Annals”,⁶⁹ and Baronius had to look for another publisher yet again. In the meantime, Plantin had started printing his edition, a quarto edition had been published in Rome, Marcus Fugger from Kirchheim had finished his German translation (published in 1594), and a Polish edition was issued.⁷⁰ Baronius decided to get into the printing business himself, willing to back the printing of his work himself financially, and founded the Vallicellian press.⁷¹ During the time when his work was printed at his press the title page changed significantly (Fig. 66). Instead of using the title page that had been used by both the Vatican Press and Torniero, Baronius had an oversized printer’s mark or emblem cut, depicting the miraculous image of the Madonna della Vallicella. Decorated by an elaborate frame with the superscript “Signum Magnum”, the focus is fully on the icon. While the earlier title page had also incorporated the Church both through the depiction of Peter and Paul and its personification, the Church was left out of this title page.

The reason for the change from a fully illustrated title page to a title page with a vignette only, was most probably Baronius’s personal involvement in the Vallicellian Press. Essentially, it was an in-house Oratorian press, located next to the headquarters of the Oratorians, the monastery attached to the church of St Mary of Vallicelliana. With Luigi Zannetti, Baronius had found a printer who was willing to participate in this joint venture: the contract between Zannetti and Baronius stipulated that while Zannetti would provide the presses and undertake the necessary steps to acquire the material needed, Baronius would finance the necessary equipment. This encompassed the type, the sheets of paper and the renting of the building—all in all a considerable investment, for which Baronius had to take up a loan.⁷² As Baronius had learned from his previous collaborations with printers, the contract also stipulated that faulty printing had to be remedied by the printer at his own costs. Given that Baronius identified heavily with his order and had even con-

⁶⁷ Calenzio 1907, pp. 287–288; Rietbergen 1983, p. 94.

⁶⁸ Baronius to Talpa, December 1590, in: *ibid.*, p. 94.

⁶⁹ Calenzio 1907, p. 287. I take it to mean that he went bankrupt.

⁷⁰ Rietbergen 1983, p. 94.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 95ff.

⁷² Calenzio 1907, pp. 343–344.

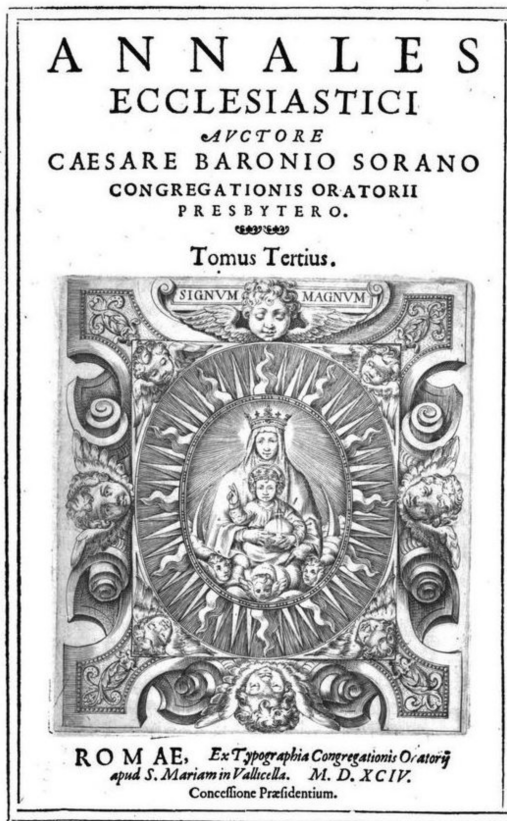


Figure 66 – Title page for Baronio 1594.

sidered publishing the *Annales* not under his own name, but that of his order, the step to advertise his order via the vignette seems in line with what is known about his personality. When Baronius wanted the honour and credit of his work to go to the Oratorians, the brethren of the Oratorian community decided after some deliberation that the books should be published under Caesar Baronius's own name.⁷³ With the icon of the Madonna della Vallicella presented on the title page, Baronius made sure that some of his honour was again transferred to his order.

Nevertheless, the move to use a different title page is baffling. All the other volumes had so far had the same title page that had been used in the first volume: it was copied by Plantin in Antwerp, as well as by publishers in Cologne and Venice. Additionally, the title page was also used for all further volumes (volumes XIII–XXI) printed in Cologne from 1616 onwards and in Rome from 1646 onwards, as well as the Latin compendium by Spondanus. So even though the title page was already used in two editions by 1593, Baronius decided to have his own printer's mark for his own Vallicellian press. Apparently the emphasis on his own press was more important than a coherent title page throughout the series. For the publication of volume VII he returned to the Vatican Press

⁷³ Pullapilly 1975, p. 36.

because he had been elevated to the cardinalate and subsequently to a membership of the Sacred College in the meantime. This also included a seat on the committee overseeing the press, which made it impossible for him to continue printing his seminal work in his own press.⁷⁴

In 1588, during the printing of the *Martyrologium Romanum* Plantin inquired about the *Annales*; as Baronius had mentioned this work repeatedly in the new Martyrology, Plantin was informed about this forthcoming work. Plantin offered to print the work, and in the summer of 1589 the first volume of the *Martyrologium Romanum* was published in Antwerp.⁷⁵ Plantin found a way to finance the project and thus published an Antwerpian edition of the *Annales* (Fig. 15 on page 79). In general, the Officina Plantiniana managed to bring out their revised second editions of the following volumes within a one-to-two-year period after the Roman edition. The further history is very complicated as Baronius began to revise and correct editions before all twelve volumes of the first edition were printed. Bowen and Imhof have taken the opportunity presented by the prolonged and confused printing history of the *Annales* in the Officina Plantiniana and have analysed the wear, the reworking and the reprinting of the title pages of these volumes.⁷⁶ The edition of the first volume of the *Annales* published by Plantin was an immediate success, which resulted in a second edition, “which, though the price had been raised by thirty-three per cent, still sold out within a remarkably short time.”⁷⁷ Only a few editions were printed in Baronius’s lifetime, but many more were printed for many centuries to come. The 12 volumes of the *Annales* inspired many authors to write either sequels or concise compendia.

6.2.3 | Enter Rubens: Two Vernacular Compendia for Baronius’s *Annales*

The title page of the *Annales* is crucial to the title pages designed by Rubens from 1620 onwards, as he increasingly collaborated with authors writing against the reformation and for a Catholic and regional Catholic history. In 1620, Rubens bought the *Annales ecclesiastici* for himself,⁷⁸ but he had known the books and the author before then. Held surmised that Rubens must have known Baronius through his brother, who had been to see Baronius in Italy in 1606.⁷⁹

Balthasar Moretus sent Philip Rubens some parcels to be distributed in Rome, among those one for Baronius with whom he also had to talk regarding Baronius’s prohibited publication of “*De monarchia siciliae*”.⁸⁰ This was a long treatise at the end of the eleventh volume in which Baro-

⁷⁴ Calenzio 1907, pp. 467ff.; Rietbergen 1983, p. 96.

⁷⁵ *Martyrologium Romanum, ad novam Kalendarii rationem et ecclesiasticae historiae veritatem restitutum...*, Antwerp 1589. Bäumer 2004, pp. 476–478.

⁷⁶ Bowen and Imhof 2005.

⁷⁷ Rietbergen 1983, p. 94; Verweis auf Pullapilly, p. 54.

⁷⁸ McGrath 1997, p. 65. Rooses, Moretus, 183, p. 193.

⁷⁹ Held 1980, p. 70.

⁸⁰ Ruelens and Rooses 1972a, pp. 286ff.

nus attempted to prove that the claim of the Spanish crown to the Kingdom of the two Sicilies was based on falsified documents, and that they in truth belonged to the Holy See. The Spanish king was not pleased, and forbade the publication of this offending text. Rumour has it, that it was this text that cost Baronius the papacy.⁸¹ Baronius, however, stubbornly refused to have an eleventh volume of the *Annales* published without this treatise.⁸² Moretus even considered sending the printed material to a printer outside the Spanish territories in order to circumvent the prohibition. He had already printed the book and, because of the reinforced prohibition, was still not able to publish it.⁸³ In the fourth letter Philip also conveys greetings from his brother Peter Paul, with whom he was in contact during this whole Baronius episode. This strengthens Held's assumption that the painter knew of the author, before he was commissioned to paint the altar for the Oratorian church, even though he probably never met him.⁸⁴ In December 1606 Rubens reports to Annibale Chieppio that he would not be able to return to Mantua where he was still employed as the court painter, because he had the commission to paint the main altar for the Chiesa Nuova.⁸⁵

The *Annales* were also recommended to artists by Roger de Piles (1635–1709), in his prose translation of Charles-Alphonse Dufresnoy's didactic poem *De arte graphica* (1667). In this poem he not only explained why artists should read, he also lists the books he found most necessary to the craft: he recommended Josephus,⁸⁶ a Roman History or even two,⁸⁷ Homer (translated into French from the beginning of the sixteenth century onwards⁸⁸), and also Ovid, Philostratus, and Plutarch. The *Annales* by Baronius often mentioned images, making it a great source for both artists and theologians of images.⁸⁹ Thus it is possible that Rubens bought the books at this point in time when he was considering the tapestry series of Emperor Constantine, although the first mention of this series is not until 1622.⁹⁰ It is, however, also the time in which the truce between the Southern Netherlands and the northern Provinces slowly came to an end, and a project that had to do with this fact might have induced him to finally buy all the volumes of this important work.

At the beginning of the 1620s two vernacular compendia of Baronius's Church history were published in Antwerp: *De Kerckelycke Historie van de Gheboorte onses Heeren Iesu Christi tot het tegenwoordich laer MDCXXII* in 1622 with Hieronymus Verdussen, and *Generale kerckelycke historie van de*

⁸¹ Pullapilly 1975, pp. 107–108; Voet 1969, p. 104.

⁸² Ruelens and Rooses 1972a, pp. 305ff.

⁸³ Ibid., pp. 330ff. The same letter also carries the news of the death of Lipsius, Philip's teacher and friend.

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 333ff.

⁸⁵ Büttner 2015c, p. 48. For more information see Mühlen 1990, 1996 and Müller-Hofstede 1964.

⁸⁶ Flavius Josephus, *Histoire des Juifs et l'Antiquité judaïque* publ. in French 1569.

⁸⁷ N. Coeffeteau, *Histoire romaine depuis Auguste jusqu'à Constantin*, 1621; De Piles also suggests Livy's *Les Decades* with comments by Vigénère, in French from 1583.

⁸⁸ Pettegree et al. 2007.

⁸⁹ Hecht 2016, p. 43.

⁹⁰ McGrath 1997, p. 65. For the first letters between Peiresc and Rubens written in the summer of 1622 and pertaining to the tapestry series, cf. ch. 3 in Brosens 2011, pp. 83ff.



Figure 67 – Title page for Mudzaert 1622; engraving: 322 × 204 mm, by Jan Collaert III; Rijksmuseum, RP-P-BI-6100. © Rijksmuseum.

gheboorte onses H. Jesu Christi tot het jaer MDCXXIV. The *Annales ecclesiastici* by Baronius had been a long awaited book and the publishing took many years until the final volume of the first edition was brought out. Because of its bulk and its perceived usefulness in the fight against heretics, the idea to publish a compendium of the work arose early; the first was to appear in Italian in 1590.⁹¹ Baronius did not grant Henri de Sponde, an ex-Calvinist and bishop of Palmiers, the right to publish a Latin compendium until 1606. This first came out in Paris in 1612; it was one of the better Latin compendiums and was thus published in many editions and translations. Its translation into Dutch by Heribert Rosweyde was published by Jan Cnobbaert in folio in 1623, one year after another compendium by Dionysius Mudzaert (1580–1635), published by Hieronymus Verdussen. Rubens designed the title pages for both works and this deserves closer examination. For one thing both works were drawing on Baronius's famous *Annales*; they were thus very similar in nature and can only be seen as competing books by two rival printers in the same city. Additionally, the decision to print both books with new title pages, and not the well-known title page usually used for works related to the *Annales*, needs to be analysed.

Dionysius Mudzaert, *De Kerckelycke Historie*

The first title page by Rubens for Dutch Church history was published by Verdussen in 1622 and was for Mudzaert's *De Kerckelycke Historie* (Fig. 67). Dionysius Mudzaert was a Norbertine priest who had studied at Louvain and Douai, and at the time of this publication was priest at Kalmthout.⁹² A close reading of this title shows what is emphasised, what exactly was advertised to potential readers, and explains some choices by Rubens and Verdussen:

DE KERCKELYCKE HISTORIE VAN DE GHEBOORTE ONSES HEEREN IESV CHRISTI TOT HET
TEGENWOORDICH IAER M. DC. XXII. Inhoudende den Oorspronck, het Veruolgh ende
den tegenwoordighen Standt der H. R. Kercke: de Successie der Pausen, den opganck
ende val der Ketteren, d'Outheyt des geloofs in onse Nederlanden; midsgaders de
Heylighen aldaer. Alles getrocken uyt de kerckelycke iaer-boecken CÆS. BARONII,
ende andere treffelycke schryuers; Door F. DIONYSIVM MVDZAERT Religieus-Canon-
ick van O. L. Vrouwe te Tongerlo, der Ordre van Premonstreyt.

The title is already divided into two parts, the first is the short title in capitals and very large type; the second, in smaller capitals, sets the time frame from the birth of Christ to the year of writing; it emphasises that the full Church history is covered in the publication. The second part is a summary and lists the main points of Catholic historiography: the beginning, continuation and the

⁹¹ Baronius first ordered a Latin compendium and had to be reminded that as an abridged version for the common people a vernacular version might be more to the point. Pullapilly 1975, p. 55.

⁹² Judson and Van de Velde 1977a, pp. 219.

current state of the Holy Roman Church, the papal succession, the rise and fall of the heretics, and the history of the faith in the Netherlands. This is reinforced by Mudzaert in the introduction to the work where he explains why the reader should read the history of the Church: to see and understand “how the promise of Christ to his Church, to remain with her until the end, is fulfilled in no other assembly than in our Catholic Church”.⁹³ The third part of the title, set in italics, reveals the book’s main source, the *Annales* of Baronius, while the fourth part introduces the author of this publication with his occupation and religious affiliation. That the source of this publication is explicitly mentioned is possibly the result of historiographical paradigmatic change that emphasised sources even in Church history and maybe suggested reliability. It is, however, also a way to show the dependence on a very influential and famous work that would have been known widely by that time. At the bottom is the name of the city with the printer and the address of his printing shop, as well as the date of printing.

Accordingly, with indebtedness to Baronius in mind, Rubens uses the central imagery from Baronius’s *Annales*, but replaces the Madonna della Vallicella with the personification of the Church, at the bottom of the *Annales* title page. All in all, Rubens expresses visually what is expressed verbally on the title page. On a pedestal carrying the title, the Church sits as if on a throne, holding the cross in her right hand, but the dove of the holy ghost is placed above her head in a circle of light. As on the previous title page, she holds the papal tiara in her left hand, next to which a phoenix perches on a celestial globe. The phoenix is a bird famed for its ability to be reborn, suggesting that the Church will always survive. This same aspect of eternity is expressed by the angel carrying a snake coiled in a circle and eating its own tail, the *ouroboros*. The light of the faith pushes the dark clouds away that gather to the feet of the Church, and a putto carrying a torch while pointing to the source of the light, furthers the spread of this light. This putto looks down to a woman holding a book with the inscription “veritas vincit”, expressing the conviction that truth will prevail. This is a depiction of History, who, while pointing at the words, has her foot firmly placed on three books of the Bible—the law, the prophets and of grace—while she looks at the cross.⁹⁴ On the other side of the pedestal is the personification of Papal Succession, carrying a string of medallions with portraits of the popes in her hand. The emphasis on the uninterrupted succession of popes is delivered by her matronly dress, the veil over both shoulders and the snake above her head.⁹⁵ At the bottom of the page are two captives as on the title page for Baronius, but Rubens has changed their appearance. In contrast to the hag and the Roman heathen depicted in the *Annales*, Rubens shows Ignorance, blindfolded and with ass’s ears, while heresy focuses on the viewer and looks him, snarling, in the eye. The two are not bound to the cross, but to a lion’s head, showing strength and invincibil-

⁹³ Mudzaert 1622, f. a 4v; in: Judson and Van de Velde 1977a, p. 219.

⁹⁴ For the depiction of History in early modern title pages, see Kintzinger 1995, passim; here esp. p. 27.

⁹⁵ This is also expressed in Ripa’s *Iconologia*, Rome 1603, p. 141; Judson and Van de Velde 1977a, p. 219.

ity. The hag's snakes have turned into her hair, alluding to Medusa, and to depictions of envy. The books that in the *Annales* were unidentified writings, have received a name on this later title page, and refer directly to the Magdeburg Centuries. Apparently time had made it necessary to give the books a name, while in Baronius's time the reference would have been explicit without this.

Heribert Rosweyde, *Generale Kerckelycke Historie*

In the following year, a similar book was published in Antwerp by a different publisher, the *Generale Kerckelycke Historie* by Cnobbaert also with a title page by Rubens.⁹⁶ The title again summarises the content and intent of the book, but is longer and has more variation in the fonts:

Generale Kerckelycke Historie Van de Gheboorte onses H. IESV CHRISTI tot he laer
M. DC. XXIV. Bewysende den vasten stand der H. ROOMSCHE KERCKE; de onghebro-
ken successie der PAUSEN; de SYNODEN der VADEREN; victorie der MARTELAREN; op-
ganck en onderganck der KETTERYE. Ghemaect door den Doorluchtichsten Cardi-
nael CÆSAR BARONIVS ende den Eerw. Heer HENRICVS SPONDANVS. Ouersien, verri-
jckt, ende noch vermeerderd met eene besondere KERCKELYCKE HISTORIE VAN NEDER-
LANDT. Veruatende d'outheyt des GHELOOFS inde XVII. Provincien, stiften der BISCH-
DOMMEN, fondatien van CLOOSTERS, de SYNODEN, HEYLIGHEN ende KETTERS.

Ghetrocken wt Authentycke Registers en Chronycken Alles door HERIBERTVS ROSWEY-
DUS Preister der Societeyt Iesv.

The contents of this book seem to coincide with the contents of that printed by Verdussen the year before. It accentuates Baronius's name by capitalising the larger type, and seems to put stress the strong stand of the Roman Catholic Church. Both books include an ecclesiastical history of the Netherlands, but the second book emphasises that this information was taken by the Jesuit Rosweyde from authentic registers and chronicles. The first book merely mentions Baronius and other excellent authors, without naming them, just as it only mentions Baronius's history without mentioning "authentic registers". The increased emphasis of points raised in the first book, but accentuated in the second title seems to indicate a certain competitiveness; this is then proved by Verdussen's reaction,⁹⁷ for he reacted quickly and enlarged his edition by two parts, including history from before the coming of Christ, as well as an even more detailed Church history of the Netherlands: these constituted parts 1 and 4 to the previous two volumes, parts 2 and 3 of the 1622 edition.

⁹⁶ Baronio and Sponde 1623.

⁹⁷ Van Rossem 2014a, 152–153.



Figure 68 – Title page for Baronio and Sponde 1623; engraving, 334 × 234 mm, by Lucas Vosterman after Rubens. Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-33.064. © Rijksmuseum.

The title page by Rubens again shows references to the *Annales* (Fig. 68). Although the contents of the two books are very similar, he designed a title page that highlights very different aspects from the first vernacular compendium discussed above. Rather than a stone pedestal into which the title was “engraved”, the title is presented in this title page on a cloth carried by two angels blowing trumpets. By leaving the architectural elements out of the title page, Rubens gained more freedom to present the Church. It is unclear on what kind of throne the personification of the Church sits, but it seems as if it is set upon a globe with clouds billowing across the sky behind her. Instead of the cross and the papal tiara in her hand, she now carries a torch representing the light, and has the tiara on her head. The Church is thus set between the earth and the celestial spheres on which Saints Peter and Paul stand next to the title, the one pointing towards the Church below with his keys, the other leaning on his sword. Above the title and in a circle of light is not the dove as would be expected, but the Lamb of God carrying a cross with the banner of the red cross, the symbol of Christ. Below the lamb is an open book with seven seals, a reference to Revelations 5:1–10, where the Apocalyptic Lamb is mentioned placed in the context of light.⁹⁸ Below the clouds, and thus unable to see the light emanating from the Lamb, there are four heathens in various stages of belief. While the one on the left is able to see Church and starts to venerate it, the other behind him has covered his eyes. On the right side is a native American receiving the light from an oil lamp given to him by one of the angels, lighting their lamps from the torch carried by Church.

The distribution of light in this title page is a symbol for the apostolic mission and the spreading of the one belief. After all this was a title page for a Jesuit author, whose order was founded on the grounds of a missionary zeal and who were active missionaries all over the world. The aspect is also expressed by the two saints: Saint Paul is deliberately resting on his sword looking pointedly towards Peter, the great missionary of the early Church.

6.2.4 | The Title Page for the *Sacrosancti et oecumenici Concilii Tridenti*

The small title page for the decrees of the council of Trent, *Sacrosancti et oecumenici Concilii Tridentini [...] canones et decreta*, is the last title page by Rubens in which the topic of dominance over heretics and heathens is the key idea (Fig. 69).⁹⁹ The title page is dominated by a depiction of the Council of Trent, as it took place in SS. Maria Maggiore in Rome; depictions of this event circulated throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, always showing the elevated benches in the Roman church on which the Council was seated. The viewer is kept outside of this space by a rusticated arch, as are the enemies of the Church: the seven-headed beast, Discord depicted with bat’s wings,

⁹⁸ “The glory of God did lighten [the city], and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring glory and honour to it”. Revelations 21:23–24. Cf. Judson and Van de Velde 1977a, p. 235.

⁹⁹ Chifflet 1640. Judson and Van de Velde 1977a, no. 77, pp. 315–318.

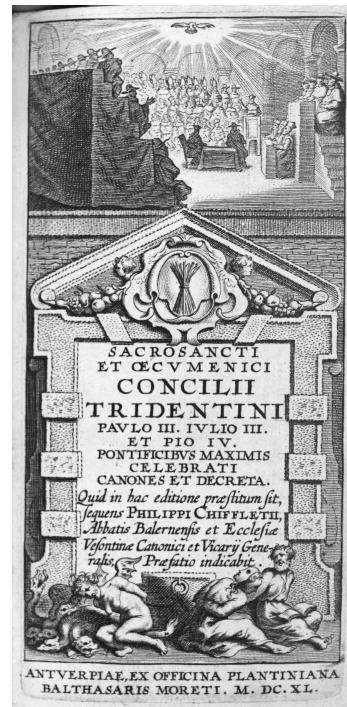


Figure 69 – Title page for Chifflet 1640; engraving, 120 × 57 mm, by Cornelis Galle II after Erasmus Quellinus II. Private Image.

Deceit, and Heresy as an old man with an open book on his lap.¹⁰⁰ On top of the rusticated arch a medallion of a bundle of arrows or sticks announces the unity or concord of the Council inside. The tiny figures on this small duodecimo title page are highly untypical of Rubens, and it is possible that by this time his long-time assistant Erasmus Quellinus had more freedom in the design. This title page was copied and reprinted for twelve editions in the next half century. In the following editions the basic design for the title page by Quellinus and Rubens was enlarged and enriched. The composition was rearranged in various other editions all over Europe, which shows vividly how international the printing business was.¹⁰¹

6.3 | Conclusion: The Triumphant Church in Rubens's Title Pages

Rubens's title pages depicting the triumph of the church were often reused for other Counter-Reformatory publications in later years. Especially the title pages and illustrations for works by the renowned preacher against the Calvinists in the Low Countries, Cornelius Hazart (1617–1690), often referred to Rubens's designs. His most popular work was without doubt his own version of ecclesiastical history, a version that had four title pages, one for each volume and all designed by

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 317–318.

¹⁰¹ Cologne: Egmond 1644, 1656, 1679, 1688; Lyon: Cellier 1657; Paris: Pepingue 1661; Venice: Pezzana, 1688, 1705 and 1729; Antwerp: Verdussen 1644, 1694; Brussels: Frick 1704.

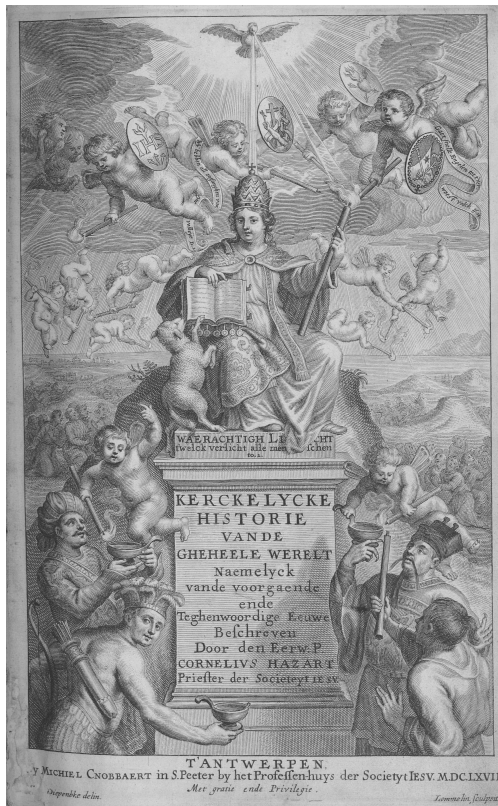


Figure 70 – Title page for Hazart 1667; engraving by Abraham van Diepenbeek.

Abraham Diebenbeek (Fig. 70).¹⁰² These title pages took up much of what Rubens had previously delivered. The fourth volume of Hazart's Church history even combines two Rubens title pages (Fig. 71):¹⁰³ the title page for *Icones Imperatorum Romanorum* (Fig. 26 on page 130) was combined with the title page for the *Kerckelycke Historie* (Fig. 67).¹⁰⁴ Rubens's triumphal iconography used for a work on coins depicting Roman emperors was here used for a polemic Catholic. The depiction of the first Christian Roman emperor and the first Habsburg emperor together with the defeated enemies of the Church and with the Church's blessing is a fitting title page for a work that is an ecclesiastical history of the whole world, claiming the imperial motif for the Church itself. In Hazart's *Triumph der Pausen*, Rubens's designs were even used as the frames for the portraits of popes, which shows that his designs were understood in an explicitly Counter-Reformatory way.

The two title pages by Rubens for the compendia of Baronius's *Annales* discussed above highlight two very different aspects: the triumph of the Church over the heathens and reformists and the missionary success of the Church. It is possible that the two very similar works were intended

¹⁰² Hazart 1667, 1668, 1669, 1671.

¹⁰³ Hazart 1671.

¹⁰⁴ Goltzius 1645a, Mudzaert 1622.

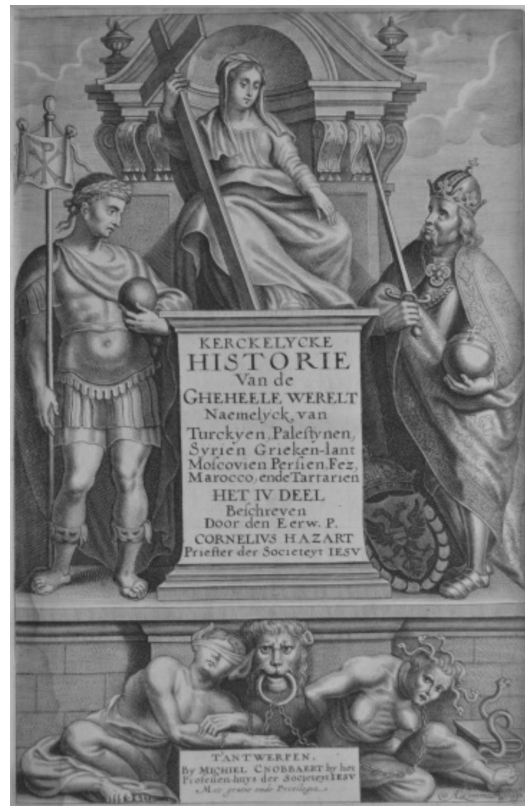


Figure 71 – Title page for Hazart 1671; engraving by Abraham van Diepenbeek.

for different markets, or at least different readers, and that the title pages reflect this. Charles Parker emphasises that Catholic literature was regularly sold in the Northern Provinces and found a broad audience there. That Calvinist preachers found it necessary to denounce the trade with these books in their preaching shows that selling the Catholic literature into the north was indeed a substantial trade for Antwerp printers.¹⁰⁵ While the title page of Verdussen's publication celebrates the triumph of the church over heathens, highlighting the fight and the dominance, Cnobbaert's edition celebrates the Jesuit's mission by placing emphasis on benevolence and education. Cnobbaert's edition might thus have been used more in a missionary context in the Northern Provinces, while the Verdussen's might well have been for a Catholic market in which the readers would take the dominance of the Church as granted.¹⁰⁶

Both Verdussen and Mudzart had high ambitions with this work, for which a title page by Rubens could already be seen as a sign.¹⁰⁷ And indeed, even though Baronius is mentioned in the titles of the works, and even though compendia of Baronius's work could and would use the estab-

¹⁰⁵ Parker 2008, esp. p. 137.

¹⁰⁶ I thank Rudy Jos Beerens for pointing this difference out.

¹⁰⁷ Van Rossem 2014a, p. 152.

lished title page of the *Annales*, these books do not.¹⁰⁸ But Rubens refers to this old title page by using the group from the lower half of the Baronius title page with the depiction of the Church and two captives (Fig. 15 on page 79). He rearranges the group on the title page and places the Church on the top of a pedestal, with a cross and the papal tiara in her hands and the dove above her head in a circle of light. With this placement Rubens elevates the Church in a similar way to that he had done for *Optica* in Aguilonius's title page (Fig. 29 on page 149), and his depiction of Church in the Breviary (Fig. 72). While on the title page for Baronius's work the venerated icon of the Vallicellian Madonna was in the most elevated place, drawing attention to Baronius's order of the Oratorians, here Rubens places the Church at the centre. The central idea was the unity of the faith in the Holy Roman Catholic Church, the continuance of the succession of popes, and with it the continuity of the Church from Apostolic times until his own, and the downfall of the heretics which the Church had brought about.¹⁰⁹ This is mentioned explicitly in Mudzart's introduction but it was also central to Baronius's work. The novelty Rubens introduces is not the imagery as such, which has a long tradition, but the composition and arrangement of the title page.

The depiction of the Church in Rubens's title pages always depends on the central idea and aim of the book. The Church is not presented in the same way in any of the title pages. The aspect of the enemies of the Church, for instance, so present in the Church histories, is not present in his first books concerning the Church. One example is the Breviary, in which the focus is on the liturgical aspect of the Church. The Church is thus portrayed in full regalia and without her enemies (Fig. 72).¹¹⁰ On the title page for the 1617 Bible (Fig. 2 on page 31), the Church and the Old Testament are present as a pair of caryatids: Church holds the medallion above her head with her hand, and with the other the cross and keys; the tiara and the chalice are at her feet, together with books and a vessel.¹¹¹ On the title page for Bosio's *Crux triumphans* (Fig. 73), a book that tries to explain the forms of the cross in heaven and the reason for the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, the Church is not present in the form of an explicit personification; the imagery, however, alludes repeatedly to the Church, such as with the depiction of the tiara and the keys beneath a figure that could be interpreted as Divine Love.¹¹² In the *Annales sacri* (Fig. 63), another title page which Rubens rearranged, the Church is also not present in the form of a personification; instead it is alluded to by the vignette in the lower part.¹¹³ A quotation of Matthew 21:43, "auferetur a vobis regnum", the kingdom will be taken from you, was added to the image in which Christ hands Peter "the power

¹⁰⁸ The compilation by Spondanus, for instance, had the Baronius title page in editions printed: *Annales ecclesiastici ex XII tomis Caesaris Baronii... in Epitomen redacti*, Paris: de la Nouë, 1613; Mainz: Schönwetter 1617.

¹⁰⁹ Mudzaert 1622, f.a. 4v. in Judson and Van de Velde 1977a, p. 219.

¹¹⁰ *Breviarium Romanum* 1614.

¹¹¹ *Biblia Sacra* 1617.

¹¹² Cf. Judson and Van de Velde 1977a, p. 180.

¹¹³ Tornielli 1620.

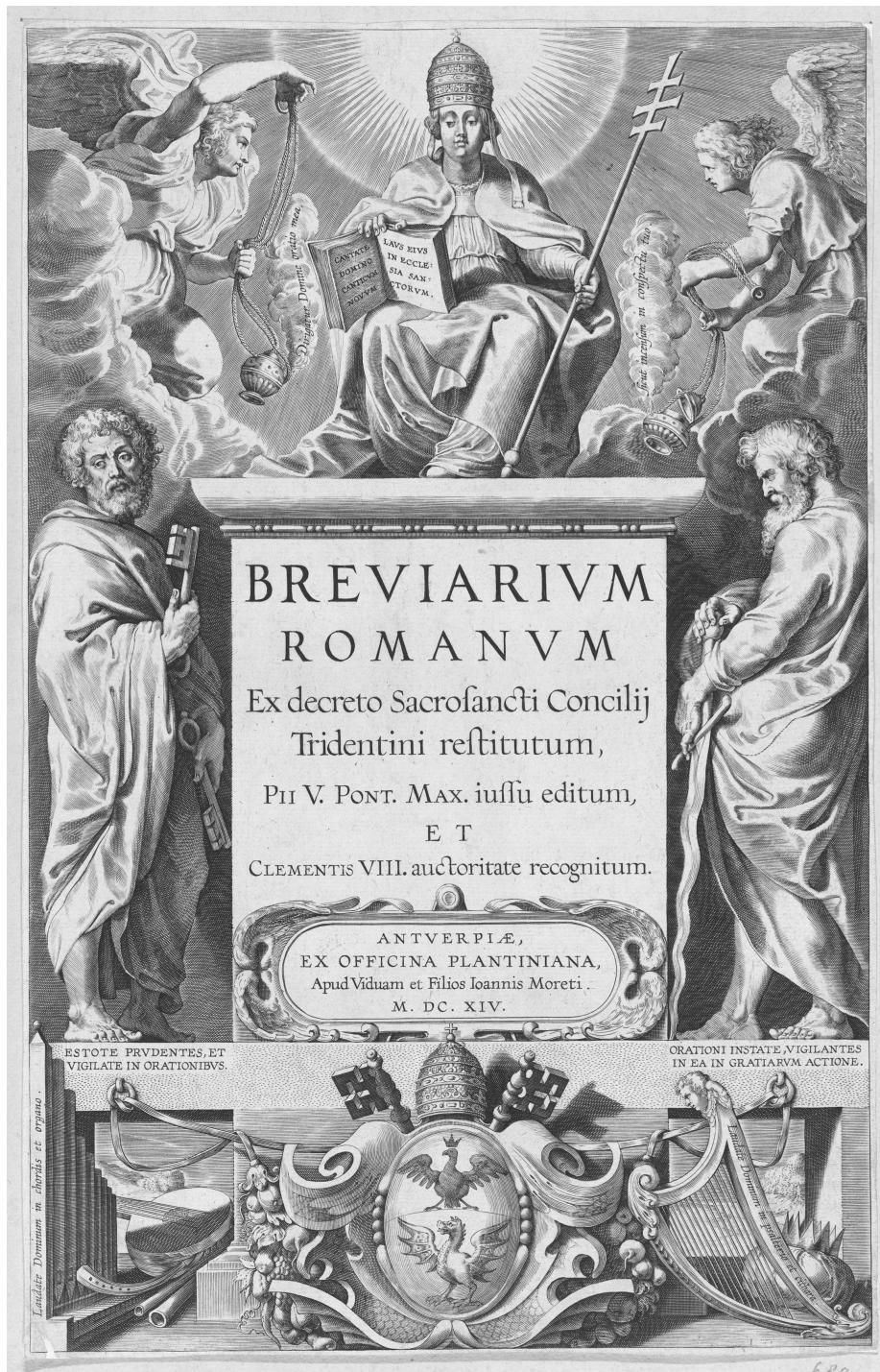


Figure 72 – Title page for *Breviarium Romanum* 1614; engraving, 298 × 193 mm by Theodoor Galle after Rubens. Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-6847. © Rijksmuseum.

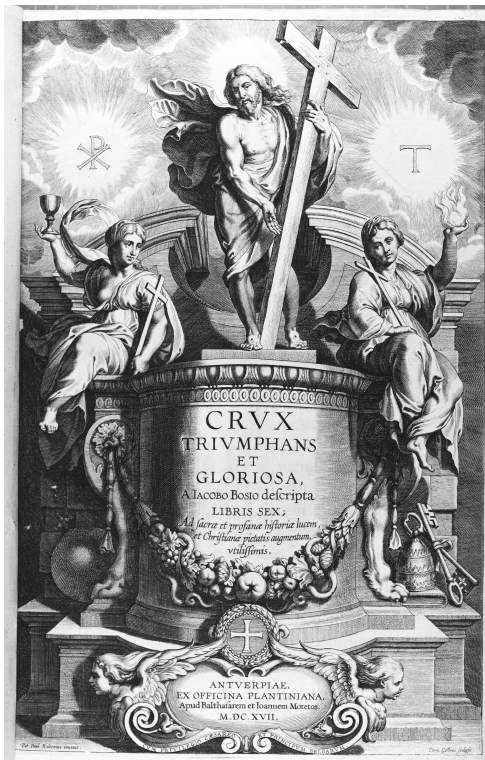


Figure 73 – Title page for Bosio 1617; engraving, 328 × 210 mm, by Cornelis Galle I after Rubens. Private Image.

of the keys while repudiating the Jewish cult”.¹¹⁴ Thus, until 1620, the title pages that thematised the Church depicted it in a rather neutral way, while from then onwards the Church was depicted as victorious over the enemies of the true belief in works that were openly apologetic and polemic.¹¹⁵

The enemies of the Church could be, on the one hand, enemies because of their ignorance of the true faith, i.e. because they were ancient or present-day heathens, or, on the other, because they knew of the true faith but renounced it. Both these ideas are often coupled. The basis for the depiction of Heresy as a hag is the personification of Envy who was often depicted as an old hag; it was suggested that the Spanish “herejo” contributed to this conflation of the allegories.¹¹⁶ The basic iconography of *Invidia* or Heresy had already been described by Ripa as an old woman with wild hair, naked, with sagging breasts, surrounded by snakes, and with flames and smoke shooting out of her mouth.¹¹⁷ A very similar personification is that of Deceit, who is also often shown in connection with the triumph of the church: she, however, shows two faces and often has eagle’s feet. All these attributes could, however, also be mixed and denote certain aspects of sin. In this

¹¹⁴ This quotation is present in an edition from Milan 1610, but not in those from Frankfurt. Knipping 1974, p. 349.

¹¹⁵ Baronio and Sponde 1623; Mudzaert 1622, Longo a Coriolano 1623, *Ibid.*, Mudzaert 1624, Chifflet 1640.

¹¹⁶ Knipping 1974, p. 377; J. Brouwer, “De achtergrond der Spaanse Mystiek”, p. 74f.

¹¹⁷ For instance in Ripa 1611, pp. 261–263.

representation of triumph in *De Kerckelycke Historie* (Fig. 67),¹¹⁸ Rubens recurs to classical iconography by using the concept of bound captives that can often be found on Roman coins, emphasising the dominance of Rome.¹¹⁹ The motif that expressed Rome's triumph on coins contrasted the emperor's name or even portrait on the one side of the coin with the kneeling prisoners of war, barbarians of course, with weapons, on the other.

The captives on another title page again make the triumph of the Church its central theme, but in a different manner. This title page for the *Summa Conciliorum Omnium* (Fig. 74) was conceived in the same year as, or shortly after, the *Kerckelycke Historie*.¹²⁰ The *Summa* was an account and a discussion of all the Councils held by the Catholic Church from the first Synod in Jerusalem in 51 CE.¹²¹ The book was written by a well-known Roman Franciscan preacher, F. Longo a Coriolano (1562–1625). The depiction of the Church in this case has its focus on the papacy, carrying the papal staff, the tiara and the coat-of-arms of Gregory XV. Behind the personification of the Church the council is represented by a symbolic congregation of cardinals and bishops, while the two saints Peter and Paul, the pillars of the Church, stand beneath her. St Paul, resting on his sword, is looking down towards the chained and ailing figures at the bottom of the page. There is again chained Heresy with snakes in her hair, mouth opened in reference to the *Gorgoneion*, the head of Medusa depicted on Minerva's shield. She holds a torch in her hand, leaning on the books with which she will ignite the flames of discord, while a devil is helping her. On the left is defeated Deceit, depicted classically as in an allegory of a conquered province painted by Rubens.¹²² Rubens here again employs the classical imagery of triumph, but ignores the missionary aspect which is not the main point in this work.

This central idea of the Counter-Reformation was thus repeatedly expressed by Rubens, and not only in the title pages. The triumphant Church and its eternal domination over the world was also used by Rubens for the series of tapestry known as the "Eucharist Series".¹²³ In this depiction of the "Triumph of the Church" the prisoners, Ignorance and Blindness, play an important role, as they are led into the light.¹²⁴ In the title pages, Rubens had repeatedly used this idea of the triumphant Church, but always with a different emphasis.

¹¹⁸ Mudzaert 1622. Cf. Judson and Van de Velde 1977a, no. 49, pp. 218–222; Held 1979, no. 33, pp. 132–134.

¹¹⁹ For the two captives see also a painting on panel, 31.7 x 49.8 cm, c. 1628, in: Büttner 2018, no. 29, "Two Captives with Booty", pp. 404–410.

¹²⁰ Longo a Coriolano 1623.

¹²¹ Judson and Van de Velde 1977a, no. 50, pp. 223–225; Held 1979, no. 28, pp. 115–116.

¹²² Büttner 2018, no. 28, pp. 397–403.

¹²³ Cf. Poorter 1978.

¹²⁴ Ibid., no. 11, pp. 319–335, esp. p. 325.

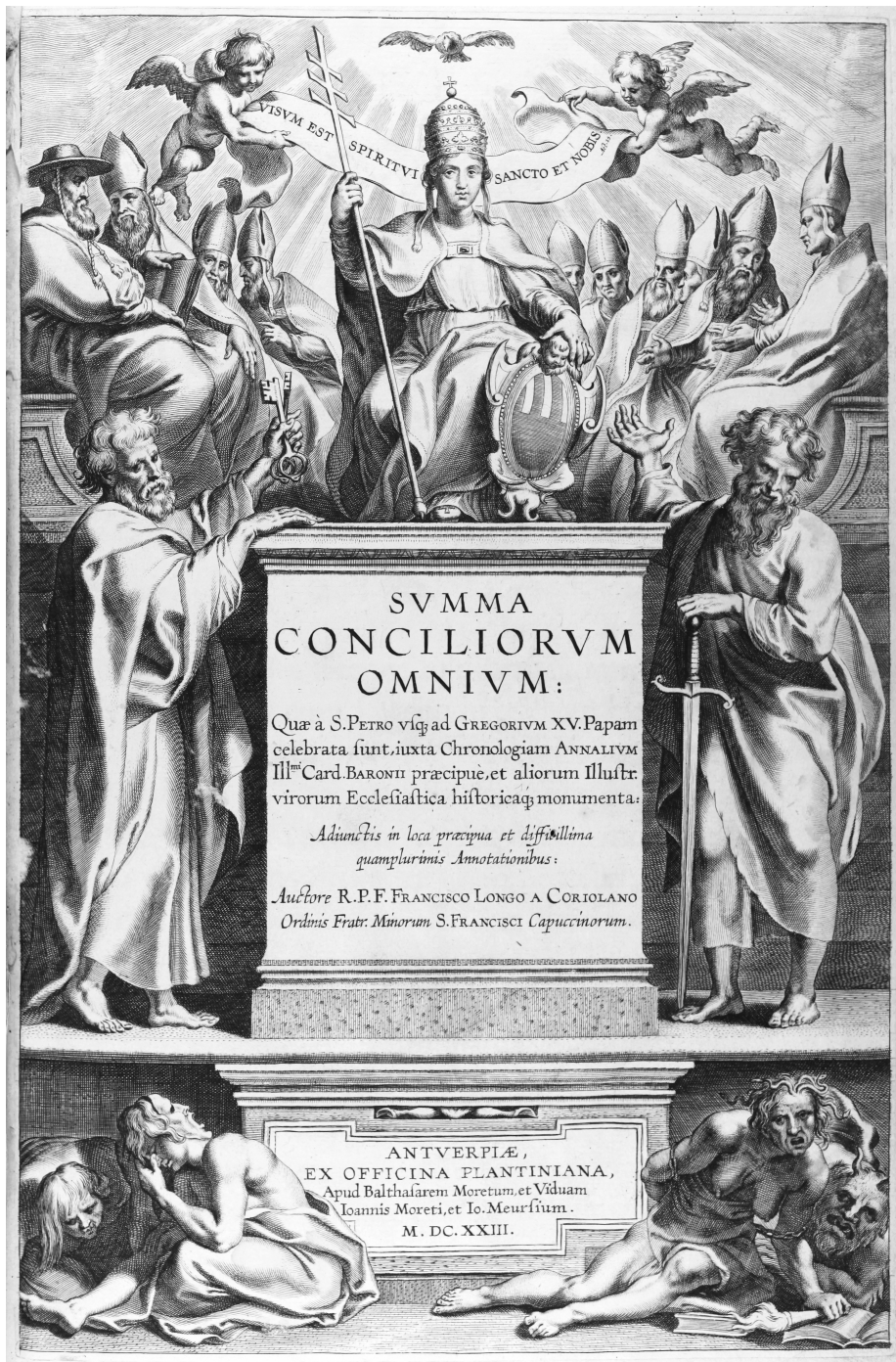


Figure 74 – Title page for Longo a Coriolano 1623; engraving, 314 × 205 mm, by Cornelis Galle I after Rubens. Private Image.