

## 3 | The Corpus of Rubens Title Pages

### 3.1 | The Categorisation of a Corpus

Several case studies will be presented in chapters four to six, representing a cross section of the title pages Rubens designed. From the beginning it was clear that not all the title pages could be analysed in the same depth. Through the first case studies, I came to realise that title pages cannot be simply compared to other title pages. Comparing a duodecimo title page for a poetic work with a title page for a theological work or a Bible, for instance, is a problematic choice, as the format, the subject, the differing interests of publisher and illustrator and the varying involvement of authors makes these books very hard to compare. Categorising the books in terms of Rubens's stylistic development, as had been done earlier, was also not helpful, as this kind of research centred around Rubens the draughtsman, rather than the title pages. It was, however, not easy to see a useful pattern in the books Rubens illustrated: he worked on 47 title pages for books on a great variety of subjects over a period of 27 years, and for eight publishers.

The most useful basis for a categorisation for the research interest in this study was found to be the early modern book classification as exemplified in Albert Rubens's catalogue, drawn up at his death.<sup>1</sup> The early modern book classification is not clearly defined as today, mostly because every library had its own system, depending on the books it owned and specialised in. Nevertheless, there is some common ground.

The first fundamental distinction made between books is based on language: Latin books take precedence over other languages.<sup>2</sup> The second distinction is subject matter: a library was generally organised according to the subjects that could be studied at university (theology, law and medicine) on a first level (sometimes including philosophy), followed by subjects belonging to the liberal arts and based more or less on the studies of the trivium and quadrivium: mathematical

<sup>1</sup> Although Albert's catalogue might not necessarily help in establishing which books Rubens himself owned, it is a great help to understand how the books were categorised at that time. The early modern categorisation is known for 27 out of 47 titles.

<sup>2</sup> This grouping was also followed in the catalogue for the Frankfurt Fair, the Messkatalog; cf. Rovelstad 1973, p. 118.

books, philological books (rhetoric, poetry, grammar), humanistic books on history, devotional literature, and, lastly, those that could not be categorised, the miscellanea. History, although not a subject of its own in the liberal arts, is often placed between those of the higher faculties and the liberal arts, and a differentiation was made between sacred and secular history. A third distinction was the format of the books.

Structuring knowledge in this way had by then already been practiced for some time. Conrad Gessner (1516–1565), a Swiss physician and scholar, attempted to catalogue all writers who had ever lived and their publications, the *Bibliotheca universalis* printed between 1545 and 1549.<sup>3</sup> Just as the libraries, these entries needed to be organised, and Gessner divided the book into 19 sections, each devoted to a scholarly discipline. Another large collection, the library of Duke August of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel shows a similar categorisation and number of class marks.<sup>4</sup> The large number of class marks probably had to do with the large number of books these collections tried to make accessible.

The first theories on librarianship developed throughout the seventeenth centuries: in 1627 Gabriel Naudé's *Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque* was published shortly before Clément's *Musei sive Bibliothecae*, was first printed in 1628.<sup>5</sup> Naudé's work was a first attempt to outline the essential principles of librarianship.<sup>6</sup> Similar organising principles as stated above were also employed in a book on the structure of libraries written by the Jesuit librarian Claude Clément (1596–1642), who was professor of Greek and Latin at the Imperial College of Madrid.<sup>7</sup> As was common in his time, Clément begins his ideal structure with Latin books, preceded by the Bible.<sup>8</sup> The Bible is followed by theological books, subcategorised into those by scholastic and by moral theologians. Books of law are then divided into canonical and civil law, while the philosophers are divided into contemplative and moral philosophers. Only then mathematical books, books on physiology, and medical books are listed. The historical books are again divided into sacred and profane history, followed by philological works, rhetoric, poetry, and grammar. The final three categories are ascetic and devotional literature, manuscripts, and books in various languages.

<sup>3</sup> He collected 3.000 authors and about 12.000 titles, complete with short notes, biographies, and publication details. In 1548 he had also compiled an accompanying thematic index, *Pandectae*, that contained 30.000 entries.

<sup>4</sup> He restructured his library after 1625 in order to incorporate the 300 to 500 additional works each year, and he also decided on 20 class marks. "Theologica, Irudica, Historica, Bellica, Politica, Oeconomica, Ethica, Medica, Geographica, Astronomica, Musica, Physica, Geometrica, Arithmetica, Poetica, Logica, Rhetorica, Grammatica, Quodlibetica, Manuscripta." Katte 1998, p. 61.

<sup>5</sup> Rovelstad 1991, 2000; Rovelstad and Camilli 1994.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Rovelstad 1991, p. 183.

<sup>7</sup> Clément 1635.

<sup>8</sup> The major differences between categorisations occur through the different emphases in the collections: while Clément was a Jesuit, the Duke in Wolfenbüttel was a Protestant collector, certain class marks would not necessarily have made sense in his library.

Despite minor differences, Clément's theoretical approach is reflected in Albert Rubens's auction catalogue, but also in the Ximenez inventory.<sup>9</sup> The structure of the auction catalogue is typical of its time, and is not merely the result of personal taste or convenience. Not only was it produced by a professional, the printer and publisher Franciscus Vivien from Brussels, but the book classes also follow those used in literature on libraries of the time.<sup>10</sup>

Although the organisational principles visible in all these collections of books might not serve our postmodern needs for organisational principles, libraries nonetheless followed them and, considering that the libraries were located in different countries, these principles seem reliably constant.<sup>11</sup> Depending on the collection and its specifications, the various book classes could also be split into finer distinctions, as, for instance, in the library of Bishop Larvinus Torrentius (1525–1595), the second bishop of Antwerp, whose focus was on theological work.<sup>12</sup>

The order of the libraries reflects not only the interests of the collectors, but also how knowledge about the world was ordered and categorised. All the library catalogues consulted were structured in a strikingly similar way; there must have been a common understanding of the subjects' relevance and a specific structure of libraries that was as intercultural as the republic of letters itself. Large libraries, such as Duke August's library in Wolfenbüttel, or Gessner's compilation of authors and their subjects needed, of course, more book classes than a smaller library, such as Rubens's.

In any case it was deemed important to choose case studies based on early modern book classifications, and the inventory drawn up on Albert Rubens's death was used to identify possible book classes. After these had been established, mainly based on genre and format, it was easier to cluster the books and see the relationships between them, as well as between the agents in the various networks. Using the early modern book classes also provided the means to ensure that comparisons between works were valid, and to get a grasp on the masses of material.

### 3.2 | The Categorisation of Rubens's Title Page Œuvre

Rubens's oeuvre in title page design can be roughly divided into religious books, books on history, humanistic books, and books on mathematics and law. Through the use of the book classes, the

<sup>9</sup> The latter begins with the Bible and theological books, followed by books on law, mathematics, history, humanities—including a special section on books by Lipsius, medicine and chemistry, and followed by books in various languages. As was common, it was sorted by language, by subject, and by format.

<sup>10</sup> To name but one other example, John Dee's library was structured similarly: it is first categorised by bound or unbound books, followed by size, subject matter, and then by languages

<sup>11</sup> Sherman, however, sees "a relative and rather surprising lack of organizational principles". Sherman 1995, p. 32.

<sup>12</sup> The subcategories in Torrentius's library of theological books were: "Interpretes sacrae scripturae", "Patres", "Scholastici", "Controversiae", "Conciones", "Loci Communes", "Pii Libri", "Varii Tractatus", and as a final subcategory "Libri Ecclesiastici" (containing books for daily use such as the Missale or the Breviary); Greek books were subsumed under "Sacri" because of their limited number. Landtsheer 2002, pp. 181–182.

Categories	Author	Title	Date	Orig. Categories
<b>Libri Theologici</b>	13 titles			
<b>SS. Patres in Folio</b>	Blosius, L.	Opera	1632	
<b>Libri Ecclesiastici</b>		Breviarium Romanum	1614	
		Biblia Sacra	1617	
		Summa Conciliorum Omnium	1623	
<b>Patres Graeco-Latini</b>	Cordier, B.	Catena sexaginta quinque Graecorum patrum in s. Lucam	1628	
	Areopagita, D.	Opera S. Dionysii Areopagitae	1634	
<b>S. Scriptura Interpretes</b>	Van den Steen, C.	Commentaria in Pentateuchum Mosis	1616	
	Bosio, G.	Crux triumphans et gloriosa	1617	
	Boonaerts, O.	In Ecclesiasticum Commentarius	1634	
<b>Libri Pii in Folio</b>	Ríos y Alarcón, B.	De Hierarchia Mariana libri sex	1641	
<b>Libri Ecclesiastici in Octavo</b>		Concilii Tridentini canones et decreta	1640	
<b>Libri Pii in Octavo</b>	Thomas a Jesu	De Contemplatione divina libri sex	1620	
	Van Haeften, B.	Regia via crucis	1635	
<b>Libri Juridici</b>	2 titles			
<b>In Folio</b>	Lessius, L.	De iustitia et iure	1621	
		Gelresche Rechten des Vremvndtschen Quartiers	1620	
<b>Libri Mathematici</b>				
<b>Geographici, Architecti [...] in Folio</b>	Aguilonius, F.	Opticorum libri sex	1613	
<b>Libri Historici</b>	22 titles			
<b>Ecclesiastici et Profani in Folio</b>	Rosweyde, H.	T vaders boeck	1617	
22 titles	Росвейде, Н.	Generale legende der heylighen	1619	
	Rosweyde, H.	Generale legende der heylighen	1619	
	Tornielli, A.	Annales Sacri	1620	
	Mudzaert, D.	De Kerckelycke Historie	1622	
	Baronius, C. et al.	Generale kerckelycke historie	1623	
	Haraeus, F.	Annales ducum seu principum Brabantiae totiusque Belgii	1623	two title pages
	Hugo, H.	Obsidio Bredana	1626	also in Libri Hisp.
	Rosweyde, H.	Vitae Patrium	1628	
	Morgues, M.d.	Diverses pieces pour la defense de la Roynne mere	1637	Livres en Francais
	Aedo y Gallart, D.	El Memorable Y Glorioso Viaje Del Infante Cardenal [...]	1635	Libri Hispanici
	Boyvin, J.	Le siège de la ville de Dole	1638	Livres en Francais
<b>Antiquarii in Folio</b>	Augustin, A.	Nomismata imperatorum Romanorum	1617	
	Goltzius, H.	Graeciae universae Asiaeque minoris [...]	1618	
	Nonnius, L.	Commentarius in nomismata imperatorum	1620	
	Lipsius, J.	Opera omnia	1637	orig. in Misc.
	Liutprandus	Opera	1640	orig. in Misc.
	Goltzius, H.	Opera omnia	1645	orig. in Misc.
<b>Libri in Folio [...] diversarum Linguarum</b>	Gevaerts, G.	Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi	1642	Also in Misc.
<b>Historici in Quarto</b>	Scribani, C.	Politico-Christianvs	1624	
	Pietrasanta, S.	De Symbolis heroicis libri IX	1634	
	Marselaer, F. v.	Legatus	1666	
<b>Antiquari in Quarto</b>	De Bie, J.	Imperatorum Romanorum numismata aurea	1615	
<b>Libri Humaniores</b>	8 titles			
<b>Poetae, Oratores et Philosophi in Folio</b>	Tristan, F.	La peinture de la serenissime princesse isabelle C[...]	1634	Livres en Francais
<b>Humaniores etc in Quarto</b>	Mascardi, A.	Silvarum Libri IV	1622	
	Sarbiewski, M.K.	Casimir Lyrica	1632	
	Barberini, M.	Poemata	1634	
	Simonini, S.	Silvae Urbanianae	1637	
<b>Idem in 12. et Minori Forma</b>	Sarbiewski, M.K.	Lycorum libri IV	1634	
	Bauhuis, B.	Epigrammata	1634	
	Bidermann, J.	Herovm Epistolæ, Epigrammata, Et Herodias	1634	

Table 1: Overview of all Rubens title pages in their book classes. The coloured book classes and titles are present in Albert's catalogue.

focus shifts from the stylistic appearance of the title pages or Rubens as the solitary artist to the subject of the books themselves. However, the historicity of the book classes has to be considered: they often comprise a larger number of titles in Rubens's time than they would today.

Although only four theological works with Rubens's title pages are mentioned by title in Albert's catalogue,<sup>13</sup> similar books to those mentioned can be incorporated in this book class, including the liturgical works.<sup>14</sup> There are thus 13 title pages for religious works in the Rubens corpus.

Nine books with a Rubens title page are listed in the "Libri Historici" section of Albert's catalogue.<sup>15</sup> Several of the French or Spanish books or Miscellanea could be categorised as "Libri Historici": four French and Spanish books belong in the book class of the historical works,<sup>16</sup> and, in the "Miscellanea" section, three can be categorised as historical works.<sup>17</sup> Rubens contributed two title pages for Goltzius's *Opera omnia*: thus only 47 books are mentioned in the overview, but 48 title pages were designed. Two numismatic books are not mentioned in Albert's catalogue but should also be considered among the historical books,<sup>18</sup> as is the case with all those books that thematically belong to the *Annales sacri*, the *Kerckelycke Historie* and the *Vitae Patrum*, but they are not owned by Albert Rubens.<sup>19</sup> In the historical section, the total number of books for which Rubens designed is thus 23.

In the section "Libri Humaniores", three books are owned by Albert Rubens.<sup>20</sup> The other four books connected to these three and with a title by Rubens are not mentioned in the catalogue; of these three are minor formats, and the fourth has a Rubens title page because it was reused.<sup>21</sup> The work by the French poet François Tristan about the Infanta was also considered to belong in this class of humanist books.<sup>22</sup> Thus, there was a total of eight Rubens title pages designed for poetry.

Two works with a Rubens title page are so far not mentioned but are no less important: one is the mathematical treatise by Aguilonius, mentioned in "Libri Mathematici" in the catalogue, and the other is Lessius's *De iustitia et iure*.<sup>23</sup> To the latter can also be added *Gelresche Rechten des*

<sup>13</sup> Areopagita 1634; Blois 1632; Bosio 1617; Cordier 1628.

<sup>14</sup> *Biblia Sacra* 1617; Boonaerts 1634; *Breviarium Romanum* 1614; Chifflet 1640; Haeften 1635; Jesu 1620; Longo a Coriolano 1623; Rios y Alarcón 1641; Steen 1616.

<sup>15</sup> De Bie 1615; Gevaerts 1642; Goltzius 1618; Haraeus 1623; Hugo 1626; Marselaer 1666; Pietrasanta 1634; Scribani 1624; Torielli 1620. "Historical" here denotes works that Rubens and his contemporaries would have considered historical, including, for instance, festival books and legends of saints. Two copies of *Pompa introitus* were listed, once under Regal Folios in diverse languages and once under Miscellanea.

<sup>16</sup> Aedo y Gallart 1635; Boyvin 1638; Carnero 1625; Morgues 1637, as well as a Spanish copy of the *Obsidio Bredana, Descripcion de la Villa y Sitio de Breda*, Plantin 1628, D43 in Arents et al. 2001 is not counted here, as it already appears in its Latin version under "Ecclesiastici et Profani in Folio".

<sup>17</sup> Goltzius 1645b; Lipsius 1637; Liutprandus 1640.

<sup>18</sup> Augustín et al. 1617; Nonnius 1620.

<sup>19</sup> Torielli 1620, Baronio and Sponde 1623; Mudzaert 1622; Ribadeneyra and Rosweyde 1619; Rosweyde 1617, 1628.

<sup>20</sup> Barberini 1634; Mascardi 1622; Sarbiewski 1632.

<sup>21</sup> Bauhuis et al. 1634; Bidermann 1634; Sarbiewski 1634; Simoninus 1637.

<sup>22</sup> Tristan 1634.

<sup>23</sup> Aguilonius 1613; L. Lessius 1617.

*Rvremvndtschen Quartiers*.<sup>24</sup> Thus, all 48 Rubens title pages belong to five of the main book classes mentioned in Albert's catalogue (Table 1): religious and theological books (13 titles), mathematical books (1), juridical books (2), historical books (23) and humanistic books (8).

These book classes—religious and theological, historical, and humanistic books—are rather large, however, and have to be subdivided for Rubens's title pages. Religious books fall into three subcategories: the Bible and liturgical works, scholarly theological work, and pious books. Historical works can be subdivided into numismatic works, secular contemporary history, and ecclesiastical history. I included the works by Aguilonius and Lessius into the humanistic works, because the title pages do not focus on the religious or scientific content found in the books, but offer a humanistic interpretation of their subjects. The books of poetry were of course also in this category of "Libri Humaniores". With that the topic of Jesuit writings became important for this last category, as the vast majority of works in it were written by members of the Society of Jesus.

The book classes were, however, only the means to ensure valid comparisons between title pages. The main objective was the development of categories with which Rubens's involvement in title page design could be described. This is why the first chapter of case studies is only concerned with numismatic title pages, as these are the only title pages that occupied Rubens throughout his life. They are also the only ones, where a relevance to his public, professional and private life could be seen. The next chapter deals with Rubens the Humanist, mainly with his work for Jesuit authors. In the second part of this chapter the focus shifts to the system of patronage so relevant to early modern poets, and the Jesuits in particular. The last chapter is concerned with Rubens as a Catholic patriot interested in the welfare of his city and country: with the end of the twelve year truce in Antwerp, Rubens increasingly designed title pages that were political or decidedly Counter-Reformatory.

So, although there was a strong connection to Moretus,<sup>25</sup> who, after all, belonged to Rubens's professional and personal network in Antwerp, it seems that further factors were responsible for Rubens's involvement in title page design, and that these were closely connected to Rubens's roles as an antiquarian, as a humanist, and a Catholic patriot.

<sup>24</sup> *Gelresche Rechten des Rvremvndtschen Quartiers* 1620.

<sup>25</sup> Many scholars attribute Rubens's extensive involvement in the design of title pages and the diversity of subjects for which he designed to his friendship with Balthasar Moretus. Held 1982, p. 171; Judson and Van de Velde 1977a, p. 26; Voet 1969, p. 212.