54. Poster for Jules Offenbach's *La Vie Parisienne*, by Jules Chéret. 1866. Lithograph, 67 by 50.4 cm. (Bibliothèque Musée de l'Opéra, Bibliothèque Nationale de France; exh. Musée d'Orsay, Paris).

the graphic artist and poster designer Jules Chéret, which have been featured to a small extent in recent monographic exhibitions in France, are not referred to.[5] In the show itself, Morel-Ladeuil's electroplated *Milton shield*, executed for the Birmingham firm of Elkington & Co., and now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, is made to represent on its own a very considerable brain-drain, which had operated for a time to the benefit of British industry, a period during which much will have been learned by the French operatives. And finally, it perhaps falls to an English reviewer to point out a probable English inspiration for Prince Napoleon's Pompeian house in the avenue Montaigne, which figures so largely in the exhibition (nos.140–52). Rather than Ludwig I of Bavaria's austere Pompeianum in Aschaffenburg, it seems likely that Plon-Plon and his architect were following the example of the Crystal Palace Company, whose re-creations of Pompeian domestic interiors were opened at Sydenham in 1854.

[1] G. Marcus, ed.: exh. cat. *The Second Empire. Art in France under Napoleon III*, Philadelphia (Museum of Art), Detroit (Institute of Arts), and Paris (Grand Palais) 1987–79; it was reviewed in this Magazine, 121 (1979), pp.463–64.
[2] Catalogue: *Spectaculaire Second Empire*. Edited by Guy Cogeval, Yves Badetz and Marie-Paul Vial. 320 pp., incl. numerous col. and b. & w. ills. (Editions Skira, Paris, 2016), €45. ISBN 978–2–35433–216–7. Cogeval's remarks are on p.28.
[3] N. Fergusson: *The World's Banker*, London 1998, pp.560–61.
[4] E. Starcky and L. Chabanne, eds.: exh. cat. *Napoléon III et la reine Victoria, une visite à l'Exposition Universelle*, Compiègne (Musée National du Château), 2008–09; reviewed in this Magazine, 151 (2009), pp.121–23.
[5] J. Hargrove and G. Grandjean, eds.: exh. cat. *Carrier-Belleuse, le maître de Rodin*, Compiègne (Palais

de Compiègne) 2014; reviewed in this Magazine, 156 (2014), pp.551–52; and R. Bargiel and S. le Men, eds.: exh. cat. *La Belle Epoque de Jules Chéret, de l'affiche au décor*, Paris (Musée des Arts Décoratifs), 2010; reviewed in this Magazine, 152 (2010), pp.694–95.

Rubens and the birth of the Baroque

Milan

by LUCIA SIMONATO

YOU HAVE TO GO back a quarter of a century for the last exhibition held in Italy that placed Peter Paul Rubens so firmly at its centre[1] as did *Rubens and the Birth of the Baroque* at the **Palazzo Reale, Milan** (closed 26th February).[2] Organised by Anna Lo Bianco, working with, among others, David Jaffé, the exhibition is not scheduled to travel, but it was a worthwhile undertaking given the rarity of works by Rubens in Italian collections. More than thirty autograph paintings by the artist were on show, the great majority of which were dateable either to his early Italian years (1600–08) or to the extraordinary decade that followed. Several were of sublime quality, such as the *Ganymede* (cat. no.41) or the *Finding of Erichthonius* (no.65; Fig.55) both from Vienna; others had been recently and excellently restored, such as the *Risen Christ* from Florence (no.23); most of them were superbly lit. Among the loans from outside Italy, those from the Liechtenstein Collections (Fig.57) and the Prado stood out.

The intention of the exhibition was to give visual shape to Rubens's relationship with Italy. The importance to the painter

of Antique sculpture and Italian art more generally from Mantegna to Caravaggio has long been established by early sources – from Giovanni Pietro Bellori (who coined the expression the '*furia del pennello*' to which the show makes reference) to the work of Jacob Burckhardt. The topic has received especially close attention from Anglo-Saxon scholars in recent decades, beginning with Michael Jaffé's magisterial book *Rubens and Italy* (1977). It highlighted some especially convincing links with the Antique, for example the relationship between the *St Domitilla* from Bergamo (no.17) and a female portrait bust from Rome's Capitoline Museums (no.18), and some less successful comparisons with sixteenth-century paintings, such as that between an early Tintoretto (no.14), placed alongside the *Martyrdom of St Ursula* (no.13), which in its strong contrasts of light and shade seems to relate more closely to the later works of the Venetian painter. But this was not the exhibition's principal focus. The main theme was rather the extent to which the Flemish master played a role in the birth of the Italian, or better Roman, Baroque. In other words, did Gianlorenzo Bernini and Pietro da Cortona become 'Baroque' artists thanks to Rubens? This question has come under scrutiny in recent years in the context of the rediscovery of Bernini the painter, but it goes back to a suggestion made by Roberto Longhi in 1935,[3] which was further underlined in the monograph on Cortona by Giuliano Briganti, who saw Rubens as 'the true father of the generation of the 1630s'.[4]

Thus the exhibition did not follow a chronological course, but focused on specific themes – sanctity, agitated space, violence, terror, etc – an approach that echoed that of the recent exhibition *Rubens and his Legacy*, shown in Brussels and London in 2014–15.[5]

55. *The finding of Erichthonius*, by Peter Paul Rubens, 1615–16. Canvas. 218 by 313 cm. (Liechtenstein, The Princely Collections, Vienna; exh. Palazzo Reale, Milan).

56. *Allegory of Peace*, by Luca Giordano, c.1682–83. Canvas, 226 by 303 cm. (Galleria Nazionale della Liguria a Palazzo Spinola, Genoa; exh. Palazzo Reale, Milan).

But if some works came across as true evocations of a Rubensian style, for example Luca Giordano's *Allegory of Peace* (no.71; Fig.56), placed towards the end of the show, it must be said that not all the visual dialogues suggested by pairing works by Rubens with those by other seventeenth-century painters were as convincing. This was the case with Lanfranco's *St Sylvester* (no.20) from Caprarola, a vibrant, neo-Venetian work, but not necessarily 'Rubensian'.

The critical point at stake here concerns not just the exhibition, but the scholarly tradition that supports it. As Federico Zeri recognised, the Rubens of the Chiesa Nuova altarpiece or that in S. Croce in Gerusalemme (incidentally, the only works that Bellori knew at first hand), was unquestionably of fundamental importance for Bernini as a sculptor.[6] However, it is quite another thing to try to guess how aware Cortona might have been of the Flemish painter when the former began the great frescos in Palazzo Barberini. Nor, as Jörg Martin Merz has recently emphasised,[7] should it be accepted as a given fact that, in the Rome of the seventeenth century, Rubens was universally admired. From this point of view, Rubens's cycle of tapestries of the *Life of Constantine*, on which Cortona worked in the capacity of a successor to Rubens, demonstrates how both the painters and their Barberini patrons were seeking to establish an individual style. There were certainly attempts, not very successful, on the part of the Flemish master to strengthen his reputation in Rome during these same years, evident in the episode of the frontispiece for Urban VIII's poems (1634). In this case it was

Rubens who was influenced by Bernini, and not vice versa, although in the exhibition it is suggested that the influence also worked the other way and that *Samson and the Lion* (no.43) was influenced by Rubens; however the attribution of this work to Bernini is not universally accepted.

The exhibition and its catalogue pose important questions for research. Which of Rubens's works could be seen in Italian cities? What engravings and drawn copies of his paintings were in circulation? Which foreign artists based in Italy in the 1620s already had previous contact with his work elsewhere in Europe? We need some answers if we are to better understand the diffusion of his style and his iconographic innovations in Rome. Many of Rubens's Italian contemporaries were already beginning to value those aspects of Italian artistic culture loved by Rubens and thus perhaps their embrace of the Baroque style was in fact autonomous.

[1] D. Bodart, ed.: exh. cat. *Pietro Paolo Rubens (1577–1640)*, Padua (Palazzo della Ragione), Rome (Palazzo delle Esposizioni) and Milan (Società per le Belle Arti ed Esposizione Permanente), 1990–91.
[2] Catalogue: *Rubens e la nascita del Barocco*. Edited by Anna Lo Bianco, with contributions by Alejandro Vergara, David Jaffé, Eloisa Dodero and Cecilia Paolini. 272 pp. incl. 134 col. ills. (Marsilio, Venice, 2016), €34. ISBN 978–88–317–2376–3.
[3] R. Longhi: 'Momenti della pittura bolognese', *Archiginnasio* 30 (1935), pp.114–15.
[4] 'il vero padre della generazione del 30'; G. Briganti: *Pietro da Cortona o della pittura barocca*, Florence 1962, pp.30–32.
[5] Reviewed by Christopher Brown in this Magazine, 157 (2015), pp.117–18.
[6] F. Zeri: *Mai di traverso*, Milan 1982, p.86; D. Sparti:

'Bellori's biography of Rubens: an assessment of its reliability and sources', *Simiolus* 36, 1–2 (2012), pp.85–102, esp. p.92. On Rubens and Bernini, see recently T. Montanari: *Il Barocco*, Turin 2012, pp.47–51, with its elegant expression '*la lenta miccia di Rubens*' ('the slow fuse of Rubens').
[7] J.M. Merz: 'Per sempre a Roma? Rubens e l'Italia, amore reciproco?', in *La festa delle arti*, Rome 2014, II, pp.720–25. See also M. Jaffé: *Rubens and Italy*, Oxford 1977, esp. p.103: 'what picture by a Florentine offers even a pale reflection of the heady lessons to be learned from *The Horrors of War*?'.

57. *Portrait of Clara Serena Rubens*, by Peter Paul Rubens. 1615–16. Canvas, 33 by 26.3 cm. (Liechtenstein, The Princely Collections, Vienna; exh. Palazzo Reale, Milan).

Rembrandt, Peter Paul Rubens, Baroque Painting, Baroque Art, Classical Art, Canvas Art Prints, Pierre Paul, Rubens Paintings, Pedro Pablo Rubens. Lucyna Galuba. RYSUNEK.Â Rubens, anno 1606, "Marchesa Brigida Spinola Doria",from ORIGINAL painting, Courtesy of The National Gallery of Art, Washington DC,USA. Gorgia. Framed Wall art.