

# THE BVRLINGTON MAGAZINE

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# Two new attributions to Jusepe de Ribera

by ANTONIO VANNUGLI

AS HAS BEEN demonstrated recently, the longest Roman sojourn of Jusepe de Ribera lasted for about four years.<sup>1</sup> Immediately before arriving in (or rather returning to) Rome between 1611 and 1612, the twenty-year-old Spanish artist had been working in Parma, probably under the protection of Mario Farnese, Duke of Latera, whose acquaintance he could have made during his practically certain, although undocumented, first sojourn in Rome from c.1608. Mario Farnese, who from 1609 until his death in 1619 lived in what was later known as Palazzo Falconieri in via Giulia, was a friend of another patron of the painter, Cardinal Benedetto Giustiniani.<sup>2</sup> In Parma Ribera carried out a handful of works, including a lost *St Martin and the beggar* in the church of S. Prospero, for which he was paid on 11th July 1611. The painting disappeared in France in the early nineteenth century and is now known only through copies and two prints.<sup>3</sup> Shortly afterwards Ribera returned to Rome, where he is recorded from 5th June 1612 to 7th May 1616. Leaving behind a considerable number of debts, by 21st July of the same year he had settled in Naples. This article publishes two new attributions of religious pictures from the artist's early period in Rome, both representing compositions for which there is no match in his known *œuvre*, and one that is completely new to the literature, thus extending the latest catalogues raisonnés published by Gianni Papi and Nicola Spinosa in 2007 and 2008, respectively.<sup>4</sup> They provide further evidence for Ribera's role in the development, transformation and diffusion of Caravaggesque naturalism in Rome between 1610 and 1615.<sup>5</sup>

The first painting is a full-length *Penitent St Peter* in a private collection (Fig. 38), by descent from the Monaldi family. The first trace of this canvas can be found in the unpublished inventory of the Roman residence of Cardinal Benedetto Monaldi Baldeschi, also known as 'de Ubaldis', who died on 18th January 1644 at the

age of fifty-six; the inventory lists sixty-six pictures in forty-eight entries, including works by Agostino Carracci, Guido Reni, Guercino, Girolamo Muziano and Bernardino Gagliardi.<sup>6</sup> In 1784, the *St Peter* is registered in the palace of marchese Pietro Monaldi in Perugia.<sup>7</sup> Born in 1588, at about twenty years of age Benedetto Monaldi was taken to Avignon by his uncle Francesco Baldeschi. By 1610 he was back in Perugia, where he graduated on 26th November 1611, and immediately afterwards – coinciding exactly with Ribera's arrival – he went to Rome to work with his uncle, who had been appointed 'Auditor di Rota'. At the latter's death on 17th March 1626, Benedetto assumed his surname and a few months later succeeded him in office; in 1628 and 1630 he accompanied Cardinal Antonio Barberini to Lombardy and Urbino. On 28th November 1633, Pope Urban VIII bestowed upon him the red hat; despite his subsequent appointment in early 1634 as bishop of Perugia, from that year to 1637 he resided in Bologna as papal legate.<sup>8</sup>

It is impossible to say whether the *Penitent St Peter* – a very common subject in this period<sup>9</sup> – was commissioned by Monaldi himself. However, a very early mention of a *Penitent St Peter* by Ribera in Rome can be found in the inventory drawn up in 1626 after the death of Cardinal Scipione Cobelluzzi; the picture was immediately sold for twenty-two scudi by the Jesuits of Viterbo, who had inherited the Cardinal's estate.<sup>10</sup> It is worth remarking that the iconography of the penitent St Peter is very well suited to a patron personally involved in administering justice.

The picture, somewhat larger in size than a 'tela d'imperatore', is very probably the earliest ever made by Ribera, preceding not only the famous canvas at Osuna and the related etching of 1621,<sup>11</sup> but also the smaller, so-called Algranti version, which shows only the bust of the saint (there are two replicas in private collections),

I wish to thank Carmen Morte García for providing the bibliography on the cathedral of El Pilar and helping to obtain access to the chapel of St Lawrence; Christine Larsen, who restored the *Martyrdom of St Lawrence* in April 2000; Frank Dabell for his assistance with the text; and Silvia Danesi Squarzina, Maurizio Marini, Nicola Spinosa and Claudio Strinati for confirming the attribution of both the paintings published here on the basis of photographs, as well as for their generosity in sharing their opinions on the artist.

<sup>1</sup> See S. Danesi Squarzina: 'New documents on Ribera, "pictor in Urbe"', 1612–16', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 148 (2006), pp.244–51; and *idem*: 'Jusepe de Ribera a Roma, 1612–1616', in A. Zuccari, ed.: *I Caravaggeschi. Percorsi e protagonisti*, Milan 2010, pp.579–93. See also J. Milicua: 'De Játiva a Nápoles', in A.E. Pérez Sánchez and N. Spinosa, eds.: exh. cat. *Ribera 1591–1652*, Madrid (Museo del Prado) 1992, pp.19–33; G. Finaldi: 'Apéndice documental de la vida y obra de José de Ribera', in *ibid.*, pp.485–504, esp. pp.490–92; and M. Gallo: 'Ulteriori dati sulla chiesa dei SS. Luca e Martina e sugli esordi di Jusepe de Ribera', *Storia dell'arte* 93/94 (1998), pp.312–36, esp. pp.315–21. All the Roman documents are transcribed in M. Epifani: 'Appendice documentaria. Le fonti sul soggiorno romano di Ribera', in G. Papi: *Ribera a Roma*, Soncino 2007, pp.241–55, and discussed by Papi on pp.11–18 of that catalogue, as well as by N. Spinosa: *Ribera. La obra completa*, Madrid 2008, pp.25–31, 53–58 and 543–44. The *Adoration of the Shepherds* in the National Gallery, London (inv. no.232), attributed to Ribera in G. Bozzo: 'L'Adorazione dei pastori di Londra e l'opera giovanile di Ribera', *Paragone* 90 (2010), pp.28–43, is the work of a still unidentified master active in Andalusia.

<sup>2</sup> The now widely accepted hypothesis that Ribera reached Rome around 1608 was first put forward in Milicua, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.22–23. On Mario Farnese, see

Danesi Squarzina 2006, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.249–50; and *idem* 2010, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.579 and 591, notes 6–8.

<sup>3</sup> M. Cordaro: 'Sull'attività del Ribera giovane a Parma', *Storia dell'arte* 38/40 (1980), pp.323–26; and Spinosa, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.31, 35–36 and 497, no.C3.

<sup>4</sup> Papi, *op. cit.* (note 1); and Spinosa, *op. cit.* (note 1). If not otherwise specified, all the information on the artist and his works is taken from these two publications.

<sup>5</sup> For a synthesis, see G. Papi: 'Ribera a Roma: dopo Caravaggio, una seconda rivoluzione', in *idem et al.*: exh. cat. *Caravaggio e l'Europa. Il movimento caravaggesco internazionale da Caravaggio a Mattia Preti*, Milan (Palazzo Reale) and Vienna (Lichtenstein Museum) 2005–06, pp.45–55 and 250–85, nos.III.1–III.17.

<sup>6</sup> Rome, Archivio di Stato (hereafter cited as ASR), Trenta Notari Capitolini, Ufficio 1, Ascanio Ricci, vol.176, Istromenti 1644, fols.794–837 ('*Inventarium* [...] *honorum* [...] *Benedicti Cardinalis de Ubaldis* [...] *ad Instantiam* [...] *Joannis Antonij Monaldi germani fratris et haereditis*'), esp. fol.831v: '*San Pietro in atto di contemplatione opera dello Spagnoleto con cornice tocca d'oro*'. As Francesco Federico Mancini points out, '*de Ubaldis*' is the Latin form of Baldeschi. The entry is mentioned in M. Fratarcangeli: 'La diffusione "caravaggesca" negli inventari romani del Seicento', in M. Fratarcangeli, ed.: *Intorno a Caravaggio dalla formazione alla fortuna*, Rome 2008, pp.25–40, esp. pp.36 and 40, notes 58–59, with a mistaken reference to vol.177. See also S. Alloisi: 'Panigarola e Caravaggio: temi predicatori e pittura religiosa', in *Caravaggio. Nuove Riflessioni (Quaderni di Palazzo Venezia, 6)*, Rome 1989, pp.15–46, esp. pp.42 and 45, note 13, who knew the inventory through a copy in Rome, Archivio Storico Capitolino (hereafter cited as ASC), Sez. V, Prot. 2, fol.1063v; and G. Papi: 'La revolución de Ribera. Reinventando a Ribera', *Ars Magazine* 1 (2008), pp.97–105, esp. p.104. The inventory is now published in A. Giammaria, ed.: *Archivio del*

as to make a total of ten.<sup>52</sup> Now that the puzzle of the Cosida Apostles series is almost solved, it would be interesting to establish through technical examination if the background of these five *Apostles* was originally as bright and clear as that of the Longhi ones.<sup>53</sup>

It should be noted that a provenance going back to Pedro Cosida has already been suggested for other Caravaggesque paintings in Saragossa because of their indisputable attribution to

<sup>52</sup> On the two *Apostles* at Capodimonte, see R. Causa in exh. cat. *Arte francese a Napoli*, Naples (Palazzo Reale) 1967, p.36, nos.25–26; A. Brejon de Lavergnée and J.P. Cuzin, eds.: exh. cat. *I caravaggeschi francesi*, Rome (Accademia di Francia, Villa Medici) 1973, p.241, who first connected them to the Longhi series; B. Nicolson: *The International Caravaggesque Movement*, Oxford 1979, p.73; and Papi 2003, *op. cit.* (note 13), pp.65–67. The other three were identified in *idem, op. cit.* (note 5), p.53; see also *ibid.*, pp.264–67, nos.III.8–9; *idem, op. cit.* (note 45), pp.50–53, nos.4–5. On the whole series, including the Pushkin *St James the Greater* (127 by 98 cm.), see Papi, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.140–43, nos.14–23; and Spinosa, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.309–14, nos.A12–A21, and pp.486–88, nos.B5–B9, for the copies in Genoa. For the new *St James the Greater* and the *Redeemer*, see G. Papi: 'Ancora sugli "Apostoli" Cussida di Ribera e qualche altra aggiunta al suo catalogo romano', in P. Bassani Paecht, ed.: *Le Caravage aujourd'hui et autres études* (*Bulletin de l'association des historiens de l'art italien* 15/16), Paris 2010, pp.93–104; and L. Leonelli in Gregori 2010, *op. cit.* (note 49), pp.42–49, nos.1–15. Until 1880 the Giustiniani *St James* (125 by 97 cm), originally a pendant of a *St Peter*, is recorded in Schloss Friedenstein, Gotha: see Danesi Squarz-

ina, *op. cit.* (note 32), I, p.135, no.83. As demonstrated by Spinosa, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.317–18, no.A25, the ex-Moroni *St James the Lesser* (now private collection, Rome) is not part of the series (see Papi, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp.143–44, no.24).

<sup>53</sup> As argued in Papi 2003, *op. cit.* (note 13), p.67; and *idem, op. cit.* (note 1), p.142.

<sup>54</sup> Grilli 1997, *op. cit.* (note 40), pp.41–42 and 49, notes 54–56. On the *Evangelists*, see Abbad Ríos, *op. cit.* (note 21), p.63 (Neapolitan School); A.E. Pérez Sánchez: *Pittura italiana del siglo XVII en España*, Madrid 1965, p.543 (Genoese school); *idem: Caravaggio y el naturalismo español*, Seville (Reales Alcázares) 1973, nos.51–54 (Flemish school); Nicolson, *op. cit.* (note 52), p.18 (Baburen); F. Bologna: 'Battistello e gli altri. Il primo tempo della pittura caravaggesca a Napoli', in *idem, ed.: exh. cat. Battistello Caracciolo e il primo naturalismo a Napoli*, Naples (Castel S. Elmo and Certosa di S. Martino) 1991, pp.15–180, esp. p.103 (De Haen); S. Causa: 'Note di primo naturalismo: un contributo per Filippo Vitale', *Paragone* 44/46 (1994), pp.203–11, esp. p.205 (Baburen or De Haen); Papi 2003, *op. cit.* (note 13), p.71 (De Haen?); and *idem, op. cit.* (note 1), pp.17, 32 and 35, who observes that Juan Calvo and Juan Corral were also from Saragossa, sharing a house with Ribera in 1615–16.

## Art History Reviewed XIII:

### Michael Baxandall's 'Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy', 1972

by PAUL HILLS

*Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy* is one of the most celebrated and most misunderstood books of the past forty years. Its opening sentence, 'A fifteenth-century painting is the deposit of a social relationship', is so succinct and so programmatic that it is more often remembered than the book's subtitle, 'A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style'. In the preface Michael Baxandall underlined the message of the subtitle by declaring that the lectures that the book grew out of 'were meant to show how the *style* of pictures is the proper material of social history' (author's italics). In two short paragraphs he used the word *style* four times, arguing that 'visual skills and habits become identifiable elements in the painter's style'. Those art historians in the later 1970s and 1980s who eagerly embraced the first sentence as a manifesto for the social history of art tended to overlook the fact that for Baxandall a new kind of social history, more nuanced and supple than that of Arnold Hauser or Frederick Antal, could only emerge by close engagement with – and reflection upon –

pictorial style and the style and inflections of the language used to discuss and describe paintings.

It is easy to explain why this aspect of *Painting and Experience* was overlooked while the emphasis upon social history was embraced. As young scholars in the 1970s, my contemporaries and I were bored by the analysis of style as an aid to defining an artist's *œuvre*, or as a means of tracing genealogies of influence and narratives of stylistic change. The history of style as practised in some quarters seemed far too insulated from a broader understanding of history and culture. But the history of style as something generated and confined purely within the domain of art was not Baxandall's concern. Rather, he was attempting to elucidate something more subtle, that involves modes of living, the agency of working and using tools, and the communication of skills and experience in the medium of language.

The first edition of *Painting and Experience* was distinctive in both appearance and content.<sup>1</sup> Although a hardback, its small

<sup>1</sup> All references are to the first edition: M. Baxandall: *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*, Oxford 1972.

<sup>2</sup> U. Middeldorf in the *Art Bulletin* 57 (1975), pp.284–85.

<sup>3</sup> M. Wackernagel: *The World of the Florentine Renaissance Artist*, transl. A. Luchs, Princeton 1981.

<sup>4</sup> M. Baxandall: *Shadows and Enlightenment*, New Haven and London 1995, p.vii.

<sup>5</sup> For Leavis, see Baxandall's memoir: *Episodes: A Memorybook*, London 2010,

pp.63–72, where he notes 'that "close reading" was not what was specific to Leavis, though he did it or something like it' (p.63), and emphasises 'the intensity of his moral response to literature' (p.69).

<sup>6</sup> *Idem: Giotto and the Orators: Humanist observers of painting in Italy and the discovery of pictorial composition 1350–1450*, Oxford 1971.

<sup>7</sup> See A. Langdale: 'Art History and Intellectual History: Michael Baxandall's Work between 1963 and 1985', Ph.D. diss. (University of California, 1995); and *idem: Aspects*