



68. *The painters: M'Bride and Colquhoun*, by Ian Fleming. 1937–38. Canvas, 102 by 127.2 cm. (Glasgow School of Art; exh. Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh).

names are often mentioned in discussions of British Neo-romanticism, but, judging from the examples on show at Edinburgh, this link remains tenuous. Neither the experience of landscape, nor bombed cities, nor the need to assert national identity and recover native traditions lay at the core of the two Roberts's motivations. When the expressive force of their melancholy romanticism fully emerged in the immediate aftermath of the War, their use of representation was more disturbing, more complicated. Indeed, the sense of loneliness and despair communicated by these pictures now seems concomitant with Existentialism and a post-atom-bomb world.

These paintings fill the second room and represent the high point of the exhibition. At this stage the two artists shared a similar palette of sombre greens, restrained reds and umbers. In MacBryde's case, the stylised method of representation works with the close-toned colours to suggest a world both archaic and modern. As in *The woman and the tric-trac game* (c.1945–46; Fig.66), his figures are sometimes aligned with activities dependent on the play of chance, and this, combined with a raised arm or deliberate gesture, conveys a mysterious drama. Colquhoun, on the other hand, more frequently sets up tensions between human and animal, making repeated use of a leaping cat (Fig.67). He also alludes to the question of fate in *The fortune teller* (1946). Wyndham Lewis commented pithily in a *Listener* review that Colquhoun's paintings of women 'have the waxen pallor of a corpse' and that he had dug a metaphorical grave behind all these images.<sup>4</sup>

The powerful sense of originality and foreboding in these paintings makes it unsurprising that in 1948 the two Roberts had their first exhibition in America, at the George Dix Gallery in New York. That same year Alfred Barr bought five paintings by young British artists for the Museum of Modern Art, New York, including MacBryde's *Seated woman with red hat* (1947) and Colquhoun's *Two Scotswomen* (1946). Unfortunately, neither is represented in the exhibition or illustrated in colour in the catalogue (although the latter can be seen placed on an easel in a black-and-white photograph of Colquhoun in their studio at Bedford Gardens). It is also regrettable that the connection, at Bedford Gardens,

between the two Roberts and Jankel Adler is only lightly explored in the catalogue, as is the impact of Picasso through his joint exhibition with Matisse at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in the winter of 1945–46.<sup>5</sup> Here and elsewhere, despite the inclusion of much new information, the catalogue remains frustratingly limited in its usefulness. Although described as 'fully illustrated' and undeniably attractive, offering 112 colour and black-and-white illustrations, the catalogue contains no list of exhibits, and extra works have crept into the show.

The opportunity to explore the entirety of both men's careers is nevertheless absorbing, taking the viewer on a fascinating, if uneasy, journey. A sudden shift in style in Colquhoun's art in 1947 resulted in some rather wooden paintings of paired figures and an increasingly formulaic use of colour. More successful were the colour lithographs he made in the same year for the anthology *Poems of Sleep and Dream* (1947). Further success came with his and MacBryde's designs for Massine's ballet *Donald of the Burthens* (1951) and Colquhoun's designs for the Stratford-upon-Avon production of *King Lear* in 1953, in which MacBryde is thought to have collaborated. But, having been the recipient of the highest possible praise in the immediate aftermath of the War, Colquhoun found it hard to bear the sudden withdrawal of support from collectors, critics and dealers. The well-known story of the two Roberts's restlessness, fights, drinking and abuse of other people's homes begins. During this period, MacBryde retains his interest in still lifes, chiefly composed of fruit and vegetables, and painted in an increasingly hard-edged style that prefigures the work of Patrick Caulfield, but without the latter's sophisticated agenda. Colquhoun made a stay against decline in 1958 with his near-monochrome paintings *Bitch and pup* (City Art Centre, Edinburgh Museums and Galleries) and *Dancers rehearsing* (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), made in connection with a retrospective curated by Bryan Robertson at the Whitechapel Art Gallery that year. But four years later, while working on a series of monotypes, he reached the end of his tether. MacBryde's view was that Colquhoun's death, at the age of forty-eight, partly brought on by drink, a poor diet and stress, was inevitable. 'I really don't think he wanted to try any more [. . .] It was just clear from day to day, he was wooing death'.

<sup>1</sup> Catalogue: *The Two Roberts: Robert Colquhoun and Robert MacBryde*. By Patrick Elliott, Adrian Clark and Davy Brown. 120 pp. incl. 112 col. + b. & w. ill. (National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh, 2014), £14.95. ISBN 978-1-906270-74-2.

<sup>2</sup> For a review of this exhibition, see J. Griffiths: 'Robert Colquhoun' in this Magazine, 123 (1981), pp.440–43.

<sup>3</sup> See the review of this biography by J. Rye in this Magazine, 153 (2011), p.264.

<sup>4</sup> W. Lewis in *The Listener* (23rd October 1947), quoted in Elliott, Clark and Brown, *op. cit.* (note 1), p.89.

<sup>5</sup> See P. James, ed.: exh. cat. *Picasso Matisse Exhibition*, London (Arts Council of Great Britain) 1945.

## The Baroque underworld

Rome and Paris

by JOHN GASH

THE CURATORS OF this exhibition, Annick Lemoine and Francesca Cappelletti, are to be congratulated on providing an illuminatingly amplified perspective on the art of Rome in the first half of the seventeenth century in *Les Bas-fonds du baroque: La Rome du vice et de la misère*, that ran at the Villa Medici, Académie de France, Rome (closed 18th January), and has now transferred, with some changes, to the **Petit Palais, Paris** (to 24th May). The spacious surroundings and natural light combined with restrained electric lighting of the exhibition rooms at the Villa Medici, where this reviewer saw the show, created exceptionally good viewing conditions which greatly enhanced aesthetic appreciation. However, the rationale of the exhibition, some forty years after its equally groundbreaking predecessor, *I Caravaggeschi Francesi* of 1973,<sup>1</sup> held at the same venue, was to take a broader overview of the currents of 'alternative' art in the first half of the sixteenth century: not just the initial anti-establishment wave of international Caravaggism, but the overlapping and subsequent phenomena of the Bentvueghels (the bohemian society of Northern artists in Rome, formed c.1619/20), the Bamboccianti (the predominantly Netherlandish disciples of Pieter van Laer) and the Dutch Italianate landscape painters. Within this purview it also succeeded in unlocking (not least in its multi-authored catalogue)<sup>2</sup> a whole range of low-life subject-matter, dovetailing it with the artists' biographies as they navigated this rich demi-monde, seeking to imbue their existential experience with poetic resonance.

The interwoven themes of the exhibition revolve round the way in which Bacchus became the presiding deity of the artists under review (starting with Caravaggio, although his *Bacchino malato* from the Borghese Gallery is only exhibited in Paris; cat. no.1) and the tutelary spirit both of the Bentvueghels and of the Bamboccianti – Pieter van Laer,



69. *Halt at the inn*, by Pieter Boddigh van Laer (Bamboccio). c.1630. Canvas, 49.5 by 35.5 cm. (Palazzo Spada, Rome; exh. Petit Palais, Paris).



70. *A gathering of drinkers*, by Bartolomeo Manfredi. c.1619–20. Canvas, 130 by 190 cm. (Private collection; exh. Petit Palais, Paris).

we are informed by the documentary research of Cavazzini and Cappelletti, having actually run a Roman tavern. But Bacchus also impinges on scenes both of brawling and of carnival, amply illustrated, with one of the characters in a tavern scene like the large and imposing one by Pietro Paolini (private collection; no.17), having a carnival mask dangling from his arm. It is a scene that also contains music as well as gaming, two other recurrent features of the tavern culture. The breaking down of conventional iconographic subdivisions is thus a reflection of the fluidity of the low life and bohemian situation, generating a new range of artistic metaphor, from the assaults and the celebrations of brigands, through single images of beggars and prostitutes, to the interlarding in various low-life subjects of the provocative '*far la fica*' sign of sexual congress, whether it be in Vouet's *Fortuneteller* in which the old gypsy mockingly indicates that the peasant dupe is 'fucked' (Palazzo Barberini, Rome; no.25), or, more gratuitously, in the painting probably by Vouet of a transvestite man holding figs (no.24), or the possible Vouet, as proposed by Annick Lemoine, of a churl directing the gesture unambiguously at the viewer (no.26). One is reminded in the latter of Ancient Pistol's jibe, 'figo for thy friendship', in *Henry V*. And Bacchus returns, at the tail end of the cycle, with men urinating in engravings of Bentvueghel initiation ceremonies or in Cornelis van Poelenbergh's painting of a shepherd relieving himself in front of a statue of a Vestal Virgin (no.37) – a calculated sully of the emergent idealisation of Carraccesque landscape painting. Such insistence on everyday reality is also present in Claude's *View of Rome with the Trinità de' Monti* (National Gallery, London; no.38), aptly shown here as the church is a

near-neighbour of the Académie française, which includes a picturesque scene of prostitution in the foreground – one of several prestigious foreign loans to the exhibition, including Valentin's *Concert with a bas relief* from the Louvre (no.56). But the presence of many rarely seen paintings from Italian public and private collections also greatly embellishes the panorama. While the display in Rome did not always strictly follow the thematic ordering of the catalogue, this made sense both in terms of the spaces available and because of the shifting nature of its iconography of the marginal and the outsider, which also ventured into scenes of witchcraft and necromancy, although most of these are exhibited only in Paris.



71. *The Bentvueghels in a Roman tavern*, by Roeland van Laer, 1626–28. Canvas, 88.5 by 147.5 cm. (Museo di Roma, Palazzo Braschi, Rome; exh. Petit Palais, Paris).

Manfredi emerges, artistically speaking, as the star of the show, with his *A gathering of drinkers* (Fig.70), the *pièce de résistance* of its Caravaggesque strand, underscoring just why he was, despite recent murmurings in favour of Ribera,<sup>3</sup> the undisputed *caposcuola* of the realists of the second decade of the seventeenth century. Indeed, one wonders why this scintillating canvas, which has now found its home in an Italian private collection, was never snapped up by a major museum. Its proximity in the exhibition to the *Young man with a flask* (Galleria Estense, Modena; no.30), given to Tournier, and Tournier's *Concert* from Bourges (no.55), leaves little doubt that the Modena picture is either wholly, or substantially, by Manfredi, whose rich modelling and colouring it shares. Among the northern Caravaggesque exponents of Bacchic subjects, Lemoine's suggestion that the impressive Van Baburen half-length of *Pan* (no.50; not shown in Paris) is a self-portrait is plausible because of similarities with the anonymous drawing of Baburen made at a Bentvueghels celebration, possibly by Leonaert Bramer (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Brussels; no.10b). The six exhibited black-chalk drawings, out of a set of ten, also only hung in Rome, could well be by Bramer, since they share the dynamic rhythm of two of his exhibited miniature paintings (nos.19 and 21) and are Dutch in facture, not dissimilar in fact from Peter Lely. One of them is a suggestively mysterious image of Claude Lorraine (no.10c) with his face hidden by the wide brim of his cavalier hat as he raises a glass, another a more dignified and 'academic' portrayal of Van Honthorst giving an intellectual impression as he swivels round to peer at us from under an artist's cap, although we discover from Cavazzini's documentary delvings that he was a regular nocturnal visitor in 1618–19 to a certain *corteggiana*, Vittoria de Rieti.

The extent to which the Bamboccianti (many of whom were also Bentvueghels)

both recorded actual life and drew upon the recent artistic fashions of their native Holland is one of the revelations of the exhibition. *The Bentvueghels in a Roman tavern* (Fig.71), scribbling their signatures and other graffiti on the walls, by Roeland van Laer, the younger brother of Pieter van Laer, echoes a common practice among the northern artists, who also covered the porticos of churches with such inscriptions, as projected for the visitor onto a wall in the antechamber to the exhibition. It translates the Netherlandish tavern idiom of Adriaen Brouwer and David Teniers the Younger into a Roman setting, and casts one of the prostitutes in the pose of a reclining Magdalene. Such an irreverent hymn to Bacchus and Venus is perhaps ultimately redolent of the sense of liberation felt by the foreign painters away from home. But, artistically, as well as culturally and biographically speaking, it is Bamboccio himself, Pieter van Laer, who emerges as one of the more interesting figures in the show. His small self-portrait in profile, on wood (not canvas as it says in the catalogue) from the Pallavicini collection (no.11; only shown in Rome) hints at the deformity that gave rise to his nickname (a kind of rag doll), while the late, large self-portrait of him casting spells and screaming at the approach of a taloned devil (no.53), painted after his return to Haarlem, and shown only in Paris, is perhaps suggestive of the hallucinations of the tertiary syphilitic that he became. His small anecdotal paintings are more typical of his Roman style, as with the masterly *Halt at the inn* (no.14; Fig.69), where a mounted horseman is swigging from a flask outside an inn in the Roman Campagna and about to be offered a refill by the innkeeper. One wonders whether Géricault might not have seen it during his Roman sojourn of 1816–17, since his *Postillion at the door of an inn* of 1822–23 in the Fogg Art Museum, Boston, is remarkably similar both in conception and in its brooding palette.

<sup>1</sup> Reviewed, with other exhibitions, by Benedict Nicolson in this Magazine: 'Caravaggio and the Caravaggesques: Some recent research', 116 (1974), pp.603–16, esp. p.604.

<sup>2</sup> Catalogue: *Les Bas-fonds du baroque. La Rome du vice et de la misère*. Edited by Francesca Cappelletti and Annick Lemoine. 304 pp. incl. 149 col. & 25 b. & w. ill. (Académie de France à Rome, Villa Medici, 2013), €40. ISBN 978-88-97737-53-7. Also available in Italian. *Young Bacchus* (Städel Museum, Frankfurt; no.3), given to Pseudo-Salini, is an undistinguished copy of the damaged version in a Maltese private collection (B. Nicolson: *Caravaggism in Europe*, Turin 1990, plate 527), while the *Gypsy and her child* (no.36) is too weak for Vouet.

<sup>3</sup> The large painting of the *Beggar playing the cittern* (Galleria Nazionale, Palazzo Barberini; no.28) is linked to the circle of Ribera in Naples in the 1620s, but it is remarkable how it also parallels Georges de La Tour's *Hurdy-gurdy player* at Nantes.

## Viollet-le-Duc

Paris

by LOUIS CELLAURO

ON THE OCCASION of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–79; Fig.72), a retrospective exhibition *Viollet-le-Duc, Visionary Archaeologist* is being held at the **Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, Paris**, in partnership with the Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine (to 9th March). Viollet-le-Duc was largely self-taught and, in contrast to the vast majority of his colleagues, had not received his training at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and at the French Academy in Rome, which fostered an architectural practice rooted in the classical tradition. The son of the Sous-Contrôleur des Services for the Tuileries, grandson of a successful contractor and nephew of a well-known artist and critic, Viollet-le-Duc was from an early age exposed to the critical thinking and intellectual pursuits of the Parisian bourgeoisie. His parents, faithful royalists and rational classicists, held a salon on Friday evenings, while his uncle, Etienne Delécluze (1781–1863), a republican and romanticist, held gatherings on Sunday afternoons. Among those who attended Delécluze's salon was Prosper Mérimée (1803–70), who became from 1834 Inspecteur Général des Monuments historiques, and who went on to commission Viollet-le-Duc's restorations of Vézelay Abbey in 1840, the Cathédrale Notre-Dame-de-Paris in 1843 and the city of Carcassonne in 1853. After receiving the baccalauréat at the age of sixteen from the Collège royal de Bourbon in Paris (today Lycée Condorcet), Viollet-le-Duc



72. *Bust of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc*, by Antoine Zoegger. 1880. Patinated plaster, 66 by 49 by 34.5 cm. (Musée d'Orsay, Paris; exh. Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, Paris).



73. *Sainte-Chapelle, perspective view from the southwest corner before 1841 restoration*, by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. 1841. Ink, wash and watercolour, 44.5 by 27.8 cm. (Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, Charenton-le-Pont; exh. Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, Paris).

announced his intention to pursue a career in architecture. Rejecting formal training at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in favour of direct experience, he was trained in the offices of Jean-Jacques-Marie Huvé and Achille Leclère. In the following decades he became an accomplished practising architect and theorist, famous for his interpretative 'restorations' of medieval buildings. He was a major Gothic Revival architect, and his writings played a part in the definition of modern architectural theory and twentieth-century Functionalism. Indeed, he was a central figure in the public discourse on 'honesty' in architecture, which eventually transcended all revival styles to inform the emerging spirit of Modernism.

The exhibition at the Cité de l'Architecture, curated by Laurence de Finance, Jean-Michel Leniaud, Jean-Daniel Pariset and Christine Lancelstremère, aims to present to a wide audience the lesser-known aspects of the artist, and to illustrate the richness and complexity of his personality, rather than focusing on his alleged role in the origins of Modernism. Particular emphasis is placed on the visionary character of his art. No fewer than 250 items are exhibited, including drawings, paintings, sculptures, watercolours, models, prints, manuscripts, account books and photographs. The material comes exclusively from French public collections, particularly from the Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, since the documentation on Viollet-le-Duc is preserved almost exclusively in France.

The last monographic exhibition on Viollet-le-Duc was held in 1980 at the Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais in Paris. The