



il. 1 P. P. Rubens, *The Consequences of War*, 1637-1638. Fot. Florence, Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti; from: Wikimedia Commons

On the Consequences of War by Peter Paul Rubens

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When Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) completed his monumental response to the continuing pan-European military and political conflict in 1638 for Ferdinand II de Medici, he could not know its fate. The painting known as *The Consequences of War* was soon placed amongst the jewels of all Old Master art and not just those from the Medici collections, and for centuries it draws attention of artists themselves, but also art historians and art lovers. A testament to its exalted position is the *Tribuna of the Uffizi* by Johann Joseph Zoffany (1733–1810) painted between 1772 and 1778, of which two versions are extant, depicting works from the collections of the Medici family¹. It is also evidently referred to in Picasso's no less significant *Guernica* from 1937².

Jacob Burckhardt called this Rubens work as the defining painting of the whole of the Thirty Years' War³. Its content is permeated by symbolism pointing to the master's disillusion with the interminable military conflict, which is particularly clear when compared with his earlier monumental painting – *Allegory on the Blessings of Peace*⁴. That painting was allegedly dedicated to the English monarch Charles I during a diplomatic mission staged to negotiate peace between England and Spain. In the slightly off-centre composition, topped with Minerva, the dominant sentiment is that of hope. The fruits of peace, symbols of fertility and plenty, lie below the goddess of wisdom, while Mars and the horrors of war are mere mementoes in the background.

The famous Rubens painting of the *Consequences of War*, sometimes called *Allegory of the Horrors of War* from 1637–1638 is today kept in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence⁵. It falls into the late period of the painter's production, in which he was interested in his own artistic self-expression. Apart from other factors, this period was characteristic in the change of the colour scale, with an increased interest in the significance of green and with a shift from the primary to the secondary colour triad. Rubens took great advantage of his sketchy technique with a limited colour palette, particularly influenced by the study of Titian's late work. Rubens carefully analysed the latter during his second stay in Spain in



¹ *Tribuna of the Uffizi* (oil on canvas, 123,5 x 155 cm, The Royal Collection, Windsor Castle), see M. Craske, *Art in Europe 1700–1830*, New York 1997, pp. 175–181. Rubens' work is visible in the centre of one of the versions, under Raphael's *Saint John the Baptist*, surrounded by numerous other key works by Old Masters such as Titian, Raphael, Correggio, Annibale Caracci or Caravaggio; the collection naturally also includes the celebrated ancient sculpture, the Medici Venus.

² *Guernica* (oil on canvas, 349,3 x 776,6, Museum Reina Sofia Madrid) from 1937 was inspired by the horrific bombardment of the eponymous Spanish town by Nazi Germany on 26 April of that year, during the Spanish Civil War. See, for example, A. Doumanian Tankard, *Picasso's "Guernica" after Rubens's "Horrors of War": a comparative study in 3 parts, iconographic and compositional, stylistic, and psychoanalytic*, Philadelphia 1984.

³ J. Burckhardt, *Rubens*, Wien 1937, p. 105; *Idem*, *Erinnerungen aus Rubens*, Hrsg. H. von Kauffmann, Leipzig 1928, p. 130; H. von Einem, "Die Folgen des Krieges": ein Alterswerk von Peter Paul Rubens, Opladen 1975, p. 19; M. Warnke, *Rubens Leben und Werk*, Köln 2006, p. 132.

⁴ Also known as *War and Peace* or *Minerva Protecting Pax* from Mars, 1629–1630, oil on canvas, 203,5 x 298, National Gallery, London, inv. no. NG 46. See <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/upload/pdf/roy1999b.pdf> (access date: 14 VIII 2013); R. Wohlfeil, *Kriegs- und Friedens Allegorien*, [in:] *Der Krieg vor den Toren. Hamburg in Dreissigjährigen Krieg 1618–1648*, Hrsg. M. Knauer, S. Tode, Hamburg 2000.



⁵ Oil on canvas, 206 x 345, Florence, Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, inv. no. 86. See <http://www.uffizi.com/galleria-degli-uffizi/> (access date: 14 VIII 2013).

⁶ Comp. R. Mayer, *Peter Paul Rubens and Colour Theory: an assessment of the evidence*. Montreal 1995.

⁷ *Die Briefe des P. P. Rubens*, transl. O. Zoff, Vienna 1918, letter no. CCXVIII, p. 461–463, after the Italian original, [in:] *Bottari Raccolta di Lettere sulla Pittura, Scultura et Architectura*, Milano 1822, p. 525.

⁸ *Ibidem*. In the letter's postscript Rubens asks Sustermans, thanking him in advance, to make any necessary repairs to the painting after its delivery.

⁹ See H. von Einem, *op. cit.*; R. Baumstark, *Ikongraphische Studien zu Rubens Kriegs- und Friedensallegorien*, *Aachener Kunstblätter* 1974, no. 45. For wider context see *1648 Krieg und Frieden in Europa*, Hrsg. K. Bußmann, H. Schilling, Münster 1998.

¹⁰ Described as after Rubens, *The Horrors of War*, oil, paper on canvas, 47,6 x 76,2, inv. no. NG 279; www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/after-peter-paul-rubens (access date: 9 V 2013).

1628. It became a confirmation of his own artistic direction, which led to a brilliant colourism executed with inspirational draughtsmanship and a plastic modelling of form⁶.

Rubens was paid for the *Consequences of War* in the Palazzo Pitti in 1638 with the sum of something over 142 guildens⁷. Its patron was Ferdinand II de Medici, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who was recently (since 1637) married to Vittoria della Rovere, and who began with the restoration of Palazzo Pitti. For this task he invited the famous Pietro da Cortona from Rome who, in the first phase of the adjustments, created wall paintings of the *Four Ages* for the Camera della Stufa (he completed the *Golden* and *Silver Ages* in 1637, the other two after 1640). It is possible that it was Cortona who influenced de Medici to invite Rubens and his *Consequences of War* were a kind of test for future commissions.

Interpretations of this painting tend to emphasise both the thematic connection to the wall paintings of the *Four Ages*, as well as Ovid's original scheme of the subject. Rubens knew and used the latter, writing about it in letters from his earlier period. He carefully explained the content of his allegory of the *Consequences of War* in a surviving letter from 12 March 1638 to Justus Sustermans⁸, the Flemish painter working in the services of the Medici in Florence: on the left Europa, in the guise of a terrified woman dressed in black is fleeing from an antique Roman temple dedicated to the god Janus, whose doors were open only in times of war, as Ovid mentions in his *Fasti*. By the entrance to the temple and at the feet of Europa an angel holds a globe surmounted by a cross, the symbol of the Christian world. A key figure of the narrative is the god of war Mars set on war in antique armour and a tellingly blood-red robe. His feet trample upon books and drawings. According to the letter to Sustermans, this destructive power of war was emphasised by the drawing representing the Three Graces. Mars is depicted between his lover Venus, who is attempting to keep him from battle, and an ancient incarnation of anger also known from Virgil's *Aeneid* or later from Dante's *Inferno*, the Fury Alecto, who drags the god to war. Like Amor and Cupid accompanying Venus as symbols of love, Alecto is followed by Plague and Famine as consequences of war. Below them on the ground lie downtrodden Harmony with her harp, an architect with the tools of his profession as a sign of the destruction of creativity, as well as a mother trying to protect her son in an embrace, only confirming Rubens' words that war annihilates and corrupts all things. Finally, the absence of agreement and love is symbolised by the degrading position of the symbols of peace (Amor's arrows, the olive branch, and the caduceus) underneath the feet of Venus and her train.

Rubens' Florentine work was repeatedly studied and interpreted. We are also partly aware of the circumstances around its creation as well as later responses to it⁹. The National Gallery in London, for instance, owns a small-scale painting of the same composition on paper attached to canvas¹⁰. The gallery presents this work as made after Peter Paul Rubens, later than 1639, and purchased by the gallery in 1856. This reduced



— il. 2 P. P. Rubens - workshop, *The Consequences of War*, around 1638, private collection. Fot. J. Čechovský, 2012



¹¹ See M. M. Grasselli, P. Rosenberg, *Watteau 1684–1721*, Berlin 1985, p. 557, fig. 6.

¹² Paper on wood, 49 x 75; published in: *Catalogus der Tentoonstelling Schetsen van Rubens*, Brussels 1937, no. 48.

¹³ See H. von Einem, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

copy of Rubens' picture is faithful to the original even in its details (such as an identical book at the feet of Mars, the feather in his helmet, the form of the sword, or the profile of Alecto); yet it contains small changes or more precisely just shifts in the colour palette and technique which in places acquires a Rococo feel (particularly in the child figures). Ostensibly, the copy could have been made at the time when the original painting, now hanging in the Palazzo Pitti, was still in Rubens' studio. But personally I suspect that, with regard to its technique and handling, it is more likely a type of a younger, so-called keepsake *ricordo*, without a direct link to Rubens' original workshop. Neither should we forget that a younger copy of the picture from the period around 1745 was part of the decoration of the concert hall in the Potsdam city palace belonging to Frederick II of Prussia¹¹. The relevant literature also mentions a sketch of the painting, today lost, from a private collection exhibited in Brussels in 1937¹².

In this context it has been highly interesting to discover that a Slovak private collection contains a painting on a wooden panel, not yet mentioned in scholarly literature, which apart from a few details corresponds to Rubens' *Consequences of War* from 1637–1638. Though it is small-scale, it succeeds in presenting a similarly, dynamically graded scene with a busy foreground. Its composition begins with a diagonally placed figure of the suffering Europa, with an angel cowering by her feet carrying the symbol of Christendom. From this point, the composition fans out into the right bottom corner. The power of movement is strengthened by a combination of formal elements. A substantial role is also played by the chosen colour palette, emphasising the contrast of Europa's mourning weeds with the shining nudity of Venus in a comparable pose, as well as the flesh tones of Amor and Cupid by her right foot. In the painting's central axis, Mars divides the surface into two thematically, emotionally and compositionally distinct parts. While fear and anxiety pervades the left side with its diagonally composed female allegories of Europe and Love (Venus) with reference to Christendom, the right side has a generally sinking character with a double horizontal made up of Alecto's arm and Mars' sword. The upper part contains the Horrors themselves (Alecto, Plague and Famine), while the bottom part depicts the frightening consequences of destructive battles on creative and fruitful life.

The rhythm of the unsettled frieze-like composition which makes use of the golden mean, is based not only on the changing light and dark parts of the composition, but also on the repetition of expressive gestures. As an example we can describe the contrasting arm positions in the upper part of the painting alongside the central axis (Europa, Mars and Alecto). Rubens probably modelled his frieze-like composition on the so-called Persephone Sarcophagus incorporated into the decoration of the Palazzo Rospigliosi in Rome¹³. There are only few references in literature to the figure of Mars in the painting and its models. Indeed, the movements of the god of war correspond to the form of a no-less famous Hellenistic sculpture of the *Borghese Gladiator* made by Agasias of Ephesus in the time after 100 BC. From its discovery in 1611 in Anzio until its transfer to

the Louvre in Paris in 1807, it was exhibited in its own hall in the Roman Villa Borghese, as part of the Borghese family collection. Immediately after its discovery the original work became carefully studied by artists. There is no doubt that Rubens also studied it. He used it, for instance, in 1622–1625 for the pose of a Fury in one of 24 allegorical paintings for the Marie de Medici's Luxembourg Palace in Paris (*The Peace of Angers*), or also for the painting of *Mercury and Argus* today in the Prado¹⁴.

The Slovak work is accompanied by a short appraisal by the German Professor Justus Müller Hofstede from 2009¹⁵. According to him the painting on an oak panel is a sketch of Rubens' composition made in his own workshop in around 1637–1638. It served as a preparatory painting to the monumental *Allegory of the Horrors of War*, today kept in Palazzo Pitti in Florence, while this workshop sketch must have been preceded by the master's own *modello*, now believed to be lost.

The painting is in good condition, and in the past it was partly restored in order to secure it physically. The back of the panel is clearly strengthened with canvas and a pair of added brackets. There are a couple of later retouches and a modern 'gallery' frame with a metal plate in its bottom part, reading *Peter Paul Rubens 1577–1640*. In terms of quality, this work from a private collection is unusually high. Almost the entire surface shows a discernible, skilfully made red-brown under drawing which clearly defines the individual parts of the composition. Particularly attractive and valuable are the visible *pentimenti* which reveal the creative process, the search for an adequate form and the artist's decisions (especially the profile of Harmony, or the architect's clenched hand). Despite the picture's diminutive dimensions, its individual parts differ not only in the degree of their finish but also in handling. The left hand side of the painting relies more on form defined by line (which also sets the precise position of the fingers or the musculature) that is then enriched and modelled by the use of a painted colour palette. On the contrary, the right hand side of the work is handled in a more painterly manner, with quickly sketched shapes in basic forms, and modelled in a more summary and gestural way. This brilliantly executed part is shed of descriptive detail and is distinctive for its almost monochrome colour scale.

The modesty of formal expressive means of the master is countered by the urgency of the terror depicted in the painting. In carefully studying the work it is impossible to miss several mutually contrasting details in terms of quality. In relation to the rest of the work, the feet (particularly those of Mars) and some arms (such as Venus left, or Harmony's right hand) are surprisingly weak. In contrast to these stand the confidently and brilliantly depicted parts painted quickly but with sureness and with a free hand, for instance the mother and child or Alecto. At times it appears as if the painting was made by two skilful, yet in terms of quality unequal artists. In Rubens' own sketches from the 1630s, however, the modelling is summary and absent of descriptive details¹⁶. His relaxed painterly gesture, used also in depicting form in burgundy or brown colour, is wider and in its character different from the more precise, more draughtsman-



¹⁴ *The Peace of Angers* or *The conclusion of the peace in Angers* (oil on canvas, 394 x 295 cm, Louvre, Paris, inv. no. 1787). *Mercury and Argus* (oil on canvas, 179 x 297, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, inv. no. 1673). See H. Dubois, N. Peters, *The Mythological Decor of the Torre de la Parada*, [in:] *Rubens. A Genius at Work* [exhibition cat.], ed. J. van der Auvera, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels 2008, p. 256.

¹⁵ J. M. Hofstede, *The Consequences of War*, expert opinion from 15 January 2009. The opinion is one page long, and gives the dimensions of the works as 62 x 82. From the author's work on this theme, see for instance: *idem*, *Neue Skizzen von Rubens*, [in:] *Städal-Jahrbuch*, N. F. II 1969. The same *Vier Modelli von Rubens*, *Pantheon* vol. 25 (1967).

¹⁶ *Comp.* for instance Rubens' sketches – for the marriage of Henri IV of France to Mary de Medici (1628–1630, Wallace Collection London), *Fall of Icarus* (1636, Musées Royaux des Beaux Arts Brussels), *Cupid on a Dolphin* (1636, Musées Royaux des Beaux Arts Brussels), plan for a Kallo triumphal coach (1638, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen); see *Rubens. A Genius...* Particularly on the sketches: D. Freedberg, *Peter Paul Rubens: Oil Paintings and Oil Sketches*, New York 1995; J. S. Held, *Rubens Ölskizzen: Ein Arbeitsbericht*, [in:] *Peter Paul Rubens. Werk und Nachruhm*, München 1981; *eadem*, *The Oil Sketches of Peter Paul Rubens. A Critical Catalogue*, vol. 1–2, Princeton 1980; *eadem*, *On the Date and Function of Some Allegorical Sketches by Rubens*, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 1975, no. 38.



il. 3 P. P. Rubens - workshop, *The Consequences of War - Harmony*, around 1638, private collection. Fot. M. Bezák, 2012



il. 4 Peter Paul Rubens - workshop, *The Consequences of War - Harmony*, around 1638, UV reflectography, private collection. Fot. M. Bezák, 2012

like execution of a large part of the *Consequences of War*. Another peculiarity is the base coat made in a transparent ochre or silver grey, which forms part of the picture's final effect. Lastly, a soft painterly technique was in this decade typical not only in Rubens' preparatory paintings, but also in his finished works, particularly the smaller ones¹⁷.

With the new appraisal of this picture in 2012–2013, it became possible for the first time to conduct a number of analytical tests with the view to discover its age and the breadth and character of secondary changes. RTG scanning confirmed the originality of the work, with a later strengthening of the panel base of the painting¹⁸. UV reflectography of the whole and of selected details, together with an IR microscopic analysis of some parts of the painting confirmed that a dominant part of the painting is in its original condition, and its luminescence corresponds to analogous 17th century works¹⁹. At the same time, it was confirmed that the picture contains small yet numerous later changes²⁰. These are the retouching of mechanical damage particularly around the edge of the work and along the fault line of the panel base at knee-level of the depicted main characters. Similarly damaged by wear were parts of the temple and Europa's dress, and numerous small deteriorations of the original colour layer are discernible above Venus' head and its surrounds, and on Mars' hands. One serious figural change was the damage of the face of Cupid hovering above Venus. An important discovery made during microscopic analysis was a marking in a red-brown line on the left eyebrow of Mars, reading *RVBENS*²¹. In light of the fact that this quite original marking is to be found in that part of the painting which, in its character, is different from Rubens' free manner of the 1630s, it must be interpreted as a workshop mark.

The painting also underwent a chemical and technical analysis of the pigments and the canvas from the reverse side of the panel. The processes used were Energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS), scanning electron microscope (SEM), and optical microscopy. Its goal was to further confirm the dating of the work, as well as to more precisely analyse the nature and age of the later changes²². The linen textile with a canvas binding from the backing of the panel corresponds in its thickness and character with canvas used in until around the mid-18th century²³. Stratigraphic analysis confirmed the traditional Old Master construction of the work. The wooden panel was covered in a white layer of sedimentary chalk, with typical micro-fossils, and characteristic for the age of the painting. On top of it lies a very thin layer of ochre-brown *imprimatur* containing lead white and iron clays. Even in the 17th century, lead white remained the most widespread white pigment thanks to its high opacity. In base coats it was regularly used mixed with chalk or plaster. Rubens and his workshop used precisely this type of *imprimatur*, or another silvery grey variant. This base layer was covered in a dark, green-blue grainy layer of pigment containing grains of lead-zinc yellow, iron red clay, blue copper pigment with elements of calcium carbonate and lead white. The fourth and last layer of the stratigraphic analysis was a thick,



¹⁷ This is supported by, among other things, the painting *Crowning of the Victor* (around 1630–1635, KHM Wien, inv. no. 66695), painted after one of his older compositions (1613, Kassel Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister). See *Die Gemäldegalerie des Kunsthistorischen Museums in Wien: Verzeichnis der Gemälde*, verf. S. Ferino-Pagden, W. Prohaska, K. Schütz, red. M. Haja, Wien 1991, p. 105; *Rubens in Wien. Die Meisterwerke*, ed. J. Kräftner, W. Seipel, R. Trnek, Vienna 2004, pp. 320–321.

¹⁸ K. Chmelinová, *The Consequence of War*, expert opinion nr 1/2013 working with and including results of all new analytical tests. Z. Krivošíková, M. Antalová, RTG of the *Allegory of War* from a private collection, 17/13, The Monuments Office of the Slovak Republic, 5 March 2013.

¹⁹ M. Bezák, UV reflectography and IR microscopy of the details of the *Allegory of War* from a private collection, Bratislava, 30 November 2012.

²⁰ The current owner has no information concerning any previous interventions. They are all neutral in tonality, suggesting the basic forms and volumes, but with no traces of modelling. This sober method, similar to a museum approach, without any creative additions by the restorer, was evidently chosen intentionally since Rubens' finished *Consequences of War* from Florence was well known, and the relation between the two works was unquestionable.

²¹ Another discovery was the use of a sign, almost invisible by the naked eye, made by the combination of letters 'PPRV' – the letters PP turned towards each other in a mirror, with the smaller letters RV inscribed into each other. These were found on Mars' footwear on a bow, which itself frames the mirrored PP sign with the RV letters made in black line, visible only through the microscope between Amor's curls at ear-level. Neither of these UV and IR reflectographies showed any later interventions. See J. Castagno, *Old Masters: Signatures and Monograms, 1400–Born 1800*, Lanham [Maryland] 1996. H. H. Caplan, *The Classified Directory of Old Artists' Signatures, Symbols & Monograms*, London 1976, pp. 349–350.

²² E. Kučková, M. Antalová, Z. Krivošíková, analysis of samples taken from the panel painting *Consequences of War*, verif. J. Želinská, 4/2013, PÚ-7045/24252/ZEL, The Monuments Office of the Slovak Republic, 10 April 2013.



— il. 5 P. P. Rubens - workshop, *The Consequences of War - Venus*, around 1638, private collection.
Fot. M. Bezák, 2012



— il. 6 P. P. Rubens - workshop, *The Consequences of War - Venus*, around 1638, UV reflectography,
private collection. Fot. M. Bezák, 2012

brown, varnish glaze of an organic nature, its craquelure containing calcium carbonate and barytic white. It is probably a combination of the discoloured original varnish with a later layer, which today affects the visual experience but which corresponded to “gallery” changes of works in the 19th century.

Subsequently an SEM–EDS analysis was made on four chosen pigments on a C-band. A yellow pigment was taken from the decoration on Mars’ armour, which was identified as lead tin oxide (Pb_2SnO_4) with lead white and a red grain of iron clay. It was the most popular yellow pigment in European painting until the early 18th century; it definitively disappears around 1750. The green pigment from the terrain on the right-hand side was made from grains of copper pigment with grains of lead tin oxide yellow. The sample also contained a common admixture of lead white and chalk. Following a consultation with the analyst, the copper pigment was defined as a copper carbonate, or azurite – $\text{Cu}_3(\text{CO}_3)_2(\text{OH})_2$. It is a poisonous pigment which is not used today and which was already in decline in the 17th century, superseded by cheaper alternatives such as enamel. The rare ultramarine (lapis lazuli) survived in 17th-century Italy from earlier times, but it was very rare in the Netherlands in those times. Rubens, Rembrandt or Hals usually painted with azurite blue, less frequently with enamel mixed with azurite or sometimes ultramarine. Its use to make a mixed green tone when combined with lead tin oxide yellow was common and is documented with Rubens and his workshop²⁴.

The blue pigment was also analysed by itself, in a sample from Harmony’s dress. Apart from the usual lead white and chalk, it contained only grains of azurite. In the blue sample from the right hand side undercoat we found grains of cobalt blue (CoOAl_2O_3) alongside azurite grains from the original. The former were mixed with zinc white, which is a clear sign of a local later change. Cobalt blue, or cobalt(II) aluminate is a semi-glaze pigment of an intense blue tone, which was invented in 1802 by Thénardom as a replacement of the expensive ultramarine²⁵. The first attempts to create zinc white were made by Curtois in 1781, but it was manufactured only from 1847 under the name of Chinese white, from 1853 on an industrial scale. At one point it belonged to the most common inorganic white pigments of modern times, but in the second quarter of the 20th century it was superseded by titanium white (TiO_2)²⁶.

Overall it was concluded that the painting, in its technological makeup or pigmentation, corresponds to 17th-century works and is therefore in agreement with Hofstede’s appraisal. The otherwise unknown “restoration” work on the painting was probably made between the mid-19th century and the early 1940s at the very latest. In light of the character and execution of the restoration we could probably specify this to the cusp of the two centuries.

Unfortunately, we know nothing of the former owners of the Slovak *Consequences of War*. The current owner bought the painting from a member of an unspecified, important Austro-Hungarian noble family



²³ *Ibidem*, pp. 7–8. Analysis was made on a piece 13 x 13 mm large. The sample was a handmade linen fabric with a canvas bind and threads of different thickness (from approximately 0.1 to 0.5 mm). Its density was 10 x 10 threads for 1 cm².

²⁴ In the 17th century, various palette mixtures of blue and yellow pigments predominated in making green. See R. Ashok, Rubens’s ‘Peace and War’, *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* vol. 20 (1999): *Painting in Antwerp and London: Rubens and Van Dyck*, p. 95. Comp. M. L. Almaturo, M. Ciatti, *La tecnica artistica di Rubens nelle due grandi tele degli Uffizi, [in:] Rubens agli Uffizi i il restauro delle Storie di Enrico IV*, Florence 2001.

²⁵ See R. Kubička, J. Zelinger, *Výkladový slovník, malířství, grafika, restaurátorství*, Prague 2004, pp. 16, 174–175.

²⁶ See *ibidem*, pp. 35–36. After initial failures from 1915 a higher-quality pigment of titanium white appeared after 1925. A breakthrough was its manufacture from rutile from 1932 and in the US from 1941.



— il. 7 P. P. Rubens - workshop, *The Consequences of War - Mother and Child*, around 1638, private collection. Fot. M. Bezák, 2012



— il. 8 P. P. Rubens - workshop, *The Consequences of War - Mother and Child*, around 1638, UV reflectography, private collection. Fot. M. Bezák, 2012

close to the Habsburg court and indeed to Francis Stephen I of Lorraine himself. Purportedly the painting was bought in the 18th century. If we accept this hypothesis, it is surely significant that between 1737 and 1765 Francis Stephen I of Lorraine was the Grand Duke of Tuscany. He took over rule from the last male representative of the relevant Medici branch – Jean Gaston de Medici – with the title Francis II, enabling him to enrich himself by parts of the famous Medici art collection. However, a theory about that kind of provenance for our painting, with no documentation, is very speculative. In this connection we should also wonder whether Baldinucci's note that Rubens' *Consequences of War* was for a certain time 'in casa de suoi eredi', so in the house of the painter Sustermans, was not made in relation to the Slovak work considering its more likely dimensions²⁷. The archives of the anonymous owners are not accessible at this time. As such, there is still considerable space for further study into the work's provenance and history, and we hope that in the future it will also illuminate the issue of authorship.

It is evident from the above that the small panel painting from Slovakia is an exceptional original work, most probably directly from Rubens' workshop. On the basis of its comparison with the famous Florentine original by Rubens for the Grand Duke of Tuscany from 1637–1638, it is probable that it was made before the latter was finished. Although both paintings are mutually linked and undoubtedly depict an almost identical composition, upon closer inspection we see details which are absent from the picture in the Palatine Gallery in the Palazzo Pitti. There are variations of themes, or more precisely of certain motifs, and so it also differs from a later London copy. Thus, for instance, the book at the foot of Mars in our picture contains a pair of large prints, while the Florence and London works do not have these. Similarly, the feather crest on Mars' helmet forms here a clearly discernible triad of overhanging feathers, while in Florence and London their contours are significantly softer and their position is confused by the hand movement of Cupid. The smaller work also differs from the two others by the profile of Alecto with her closed mouth (which is open in the Florence and London versions); by the manner of capturing blood on Mars' sword, which is more expressive; and by the unclear hand of Harmony or the differing position of heads and overall expression of the mother and child.

The carefully executed underdrawing and the sophistication of the Slovak composition could, in terms of the typology of sketches, be compared to a form of *modello* or sketch *ex post – ricordo*. But since it is different in several ways from the definitively finished painting in Florence, and contains visible *pentimenti*, we are dealing with a rare kind of *modello*, in contrast to the *Consequences of War* in the National Gallery in London, which is evidently an example of a *ricordo*, furthermore probably a later one. The confirmed date of the work as well as its undoubtedly close connection to the Florence work, the Rubens markings in its original layers on one side, and the differences in details with those in Rubens' originals from the 1630s point to a workshop *modello*



²⁷ See H. von Einem, *op. cit.*, p. 7, note 5, with a reference to Baldinucci's *Vita Sustermans*.



²⁸ See A. Balis, *Rubens and His Studio: defining the Problems*, [in:] *Rubens. A Genius... Comp. J. van der Auvera, Anonymous and not so Anonymous Hands in Rubens's Studio. A Footnote on the Boundaries of Connoisseurship*, [in:] *Rubens. A Genius...* In the 1630s, and particularly during the decoration work on the Spanish Torre de la Parada (1636–1638), these assistants included Erasmus Quellinus II, Jan van den Hoecke, Theodoor van Thulden; or, in relation to the simultaneous production of smaller works, the above mentioned Frans Wouters or Jan Thomas called van Yperen.

made according to the master's instructions, and perhaps with his own corrections. On the basis of contemporary sources we know that at this time Rubens employed several artists, many of them masters in their own right; possible candidates for the authorship of the Slovak picture are probably lesser known individuals²⁸. A more specific attribution is therefore the task for specialist scholars on the work of Rubens and his circle.

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*Historyk sztuki. Kurator zbiorów sztuki barokowej Słowackiej Gallerii Narodowej w Bratysławie. Od roku 2001 asystent, a od 2012 dyrektor Katedry Historii Sztuki Uniwersytetu Komeńskiego w Bratysławie. W swoich badaniach skupia się na nowożytnym rzeźbie i malarstwie Europy Środkowej. Opublikowała m.in. monografię poświęconą rzeźbiarskiej rodzinie Grossów ze Spiskiej Soboty (2002) oraz książkę *Ars inter Arma. Umenie a kultúra raného novoveku na východnom Slovensku* (2009). W 2011 r. była kuratorem wystawy „Industriálna krajina? Stredoslovenské banské mestá v 16.-18. storočí” i redaktorem towarzyszącego jej katalogu. Aktualnie jest także współautorem publikacji *Pamiatky františkánskeho rádu v 19. storočí na Slovensku a Konrád Švestka* (2013) oraz ekspozycji „Nestex” w Słowackiej Gallerii Narodowej w Bratysławie (2014). Pełniła funkcję edytora czasopisma „ARS” Instytutu Historii Sztuki Słowackiej Akademii Nauk (nr 2/2013).*

Summary

KATARÍNA CHMELINOVÁ/ On the *Consequences of War* by Peter Paul Rubens

Jacob Burckhardt called Rubens' *Consequences of War* (Palazzo Pitti in Florence) as the defining painting of the whole of the Thirty Years' War. This famous painting was completed in 1638 for Ferdinand II de Medici, the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Rubens carefully explained the content of his allegory in a surviving letter dated 12 March 1638 to Justus Sustermans, the Flemish painter working in the services of the Medici in Florence. This work was repeatedly studied and interpreted. We are also partly aware of the circumstances around its creation as well as later responses to it. The National Gallery in London, for instance, owns a small-scale painting of the same composition on paper attached to canvas. Neither should we forget that a younger copy of the picture (around 1745) was in the Potsdam city palace belonging to Frederick II of Prussia. The relevant literature also mentions a sketch of the painting, today lost, from a private collection exhibited in Brussels in 1937.

In this context it has been highly interesting to discover that a Slovak private collection contains a painting on a wooden panel, not yet mentioned in scholarly literature, which apart from a few details corresponds to Rubens' *Consequences of War* from 1637–1638. This work is accompanied by a short appraisal by the German Prof. J. Müller Hofstede from 2009. According to him the painting on an oak panel is a sketch of Rubens' composition made in his own workshop in around 1637–1638. With the new appraisal of this picture in 2012–2013, it became possible for the first time to conduct a number of analytical tests with the view to discover its age and the breadth and character of secondary changes (RTG scanning, UV reflectography, IR microscopic analysis, EDS and SEM analysis and optical microscopy of the pigments and the canvas from the reverse side). Overall it was concluded that the painting, in its technological makeup and pigmentation, corresponds to 17th century works and is therefore in agreement with Hofstede's appraisal. Unfortunately, we know nothing of the former owners of the Slovak *Consequences of War*. The current owner bought the painting from a member of an unspecified, important Austro-Hungarian noble family close to the Habsburg court and indeed to Francis Stephen I of Lorraine himself. Purportedly the painting was bought in the 18th century.

The small panel painting from Slovakia is an original work, most probably directly from Rubens' workshop. The carefully executed underdrawing and the sophistication of the Slovak composition could, in terms of the typology of sketches, be compared to a form of *modello* or sketch *ex post – ricordo*. But since it is different in several ways from the definitively finished painting in Florence, and contains visible *pentimenti*, we are dealing with a kind of *modello*, in contrast to the *Consequences of War* in the National Gallery in London. The confirmed date of the work as well as its undoubtedly close connection to the Florence work, the Rubens markings in its original layers on one side, and the differences in details with those in Rubens' originals from the 1630s point to a workshop *modello* made according to the master's instructions, and perhaps with his own corrections. On the basis of contemporary sources we know that at this time Rubens employed several artists. A more specific attribution is therefore the task for specialist scholars on the work of Rubens and his circle.

Translated from Slovak: Mirko Pomichal

Summary

KATARÍNA CHMELINOVÁ/ O *Skutkach wojny* Petera Paula Rubensa

Jacob Burckhardt określił *Skutki wojny* pędzla Rubensa (Palazzo Pitti, Florencja) jako dzieło charakteryzujące cały okres wojny trzydziestoletniej. Ten słynny obraz, wykonany dla Ferdynanda II, wielkiego księcia Toskanii, został ukończony w 1638 roku. Rubens starannie objaśnił alegorię w nim zawartą w zachowanym liście z 12 III 1638, adresowanym do Justusa Sustermansa, flamandzkiego malarza pracującego we Florencji na usługach Medyceuszy. Dzieło to było wielokrotnie badane i interpretowane. Po części znamy także okoliczności jego powstania, jak i późniejsze wersje malowidła. Przykładowo, londyńska Galeria Narodowa posiada w swych zbiorach pracę na papierze przytwierdzonym do płótna powtarzającą kompozycję obrazu, ale w mniejszej skali. Nie należy też zapominać, że wcześniejsza kopia obrazu Rubensa (ok. 1745) znajdowała się w Poczdamie w pałacu miejskim należącym do Fryderyka II Wielkiego. Literatura przedmiotu wzmiankuje również szkic do obrazu z prywatnych zbiorów, obecnie zaginiony, wystawiony w Brukseli w 1937 roku.

W tym kontekście niezwykle interesujące okazało się odkrycie w słowackiej kolekcji prywatnej obrazu z tej epoki, wykonanego na drewnianej desce, niewzmiankowanego dotąd w fachowej literaturze, który, poza kilkoma detalami, koresponduje z rubensowskimi *Skutkami wojny* z lat 1637–1638. O pracy tej wydana została krótka opinia niemieckiego badacza, prof. J. Müllera Hofstedego, w 2009 roku. Według niego ów obraz na desce dębowej jest szkicem kompozycji Rubensa wykonanym w jego własnym warsztacie ok. 1637–1638. Dzięki nowej ekspertyzie z 2012–2013 r. możliwe stało się przeprowadzenie serii testów analitycznych pomagających ustalić wiek oraz zakres i charakter późniejszych zmian (skan RTG, reflektografia w UV, pomiar mikroskopem IR, analizy EDS i SEM oraz mikroskopia optyczna pigmentów i odwrócia płótna). W efekcie stwierdzono, że pod względem technologicznym i użytych pigmentów badany obraz odpowiada parametrom dzieł XVII-wiecznych, co potwierdza opinię Hofstedego. Niestety, nic nie wiemy na temat poprzednich właścicieli słowackich *Skutków wojny*. Obecny posiadacz obrazu kupił go od członka nieokreślonego, choć ważnego, szlacheckiego rodu austro-węgierskiego, blisko skoligaconego z dworem habsburskim, a nawet z samym Franciszkiem I Lotaryńskim. Malowidło miało by jakoby zostać zakupione w XVIII stuleciu.

Niewielki obraz sztalugowy ze Słowacji jest dziełem oryginalnym, najprawdopodobniej namalowanym bezpośrednio w warsztacie Rubensa. Starannie wykonany rysunek wstępny oraz wyrafinowanie słowackiej kompozycji (uwzględniając typologię szkiców) pozwalają określić to dzieło jako formę *modello* albo szkicu *ex post – ricordo*. Ponieważ jednak różni się ono w kilku elementach od ukończonego obrazu florenckiego i ma widoczne *pentimenti*, mamy tu do czynienia jednak z rodzajem *modello*, w przeciwieństwie do *Skutków wojny* z Galerii Narodowej w Londynie. Potwierdzona data powstania dzieła, niewątpliwie ścisły związek z płótnem z Florencji, oznakowania Rubensa widoczne z jednej strony oryginalnej warstwy słowackiego obrazu, a także różnice detali w porównaniu z rubensowskimi oryginałami z lat 30. XVII w. pozwalają na określenie go jako warsztatowego *modello* wykonanego według wskazówek mistrza, a być może z poprawkami naniesionymi przez niego samego. Współczesny stan wiedzy potwierdza, że w owym czasie Rubens zatrudniał kilku artystów. Bardziej szczegółowa atrybucja to jednak zadanie dla badaczy zajmujących się dziełem Rubensa i jego kręgu.