

The work is conclusive in demonstrating that the religious contexts in which illustrated books were produced in the North of Europe between 1500 and 1800 were complex and locally nuanced. Readers are also effectively convinced that authors, engravers, and printers acted in response to those religious contexts, but that their agency reached far beyond merely reflecting those circumstances. Motivated by market concerns as much as confessional identities, the makers and distributors of images acted within networks of exchange, both ideological and tangible, that were distinct from, though not independent of, the mosaic of religious convictions that characterized the region.

Aneta Georgievska-Shine and Larry Silver. *Rubens, Velázquez, and the King of Spain*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014 + 297 pp. + 154 illus. \$ 119.95. Review by LIVIA STOENESCU, TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY.

A seminal contribution to Spain's historical and visual culture in early modernity, the book deepens our knowledge of the Torre de la Parada, the former hunting lodge of the Hapsburg monarchs located near Madrid's Royal Palace of El Prado. The ruins of Torre still survive after the building's devastation by fire during the War of Spanish Succession in 1714, in the aftermath of which the Hapsburg collection was distributed among El Prado and other palaces. The authors focus on Torre's timeless attraction, namely, the painted decorations commissioned from Rubens, and subsequently from Velázquez, to personalize the hunting lodge to the Spanish court while maintaining a spontaneity inherent in the leisurely activities carried out in a royal environment. In 1636 King Philip IV ordered Rubens to undertake work on 63 mythological scenes derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a project enriched in 1638-40 by the portraits executed by Velázquez, the court painter of Philip IV. Velázquez supplied Torre de la Parada with his royal male portraits as hunters, as well as several images of court dwarfs and jesters and the full-length portraits of the ancient philosophers Menippus and Aesop.

Both Georgievska-Shine and Silver advance their own methodologies, diversifying and expanding existing theoretical models for

interpreting Spanish visual culture. Thus, Larry Silver intensifies the tenor of his *Art in History* (1998) that established a foundation for relating works of art to the cultural movements in which they were created and for understanding the imaginative powers of many long-acknowledged masters. Silver updates his earlier theories to the cultural idiosyncrasies integral to early modern Spain, a culture imbued with noteworthy discrepancies between classical antiquity and its Spanish interpreters. In so doing, Silver unmoors Rubens from Svetlana Alpers's *The Decoration of the Torre de la Parada* (1978) with the goal of demonstrating that his narrative prowess lies in the suprahistorical senses of mythology. Rather than reiterating the significance of classical culture as a preeminent source for early modern painters, Georgievska-Shine furthers a dialectical opposition between mythological interpretation and the individual opinions of playwrights, theorists, musicians, and engravers, which were circulated in the royal circles frequented by Rubens. The idea that Rubens investigated mythology not to repurpose classical values, but to translate the dialectics of classical antiquity into allegorical expression was eloquently formulated by Georgievska-Shine in *Rubens and the Archeology of Myth* (2000), which posits exegesis at the heart of the Flemish master's effort to uncover the manifold layers of mythical reading. *Rubens, Velázquez, and the King of Spain* presents the thought of two influential early modern experts while rekindling interest in art history as a discipline rife with metaphorical contradictions. The book implicitly underscores the importance of allegorical reading for Rubens, an orientation brilliantly laid out by Wolfgang Stechow's *Rubens and the Classical Tradition* (1968).

Rubens's painted decorations at Torre are the product of his dynamic yet final years, during which Ovid's *Metamorphoses* became an inspiration for unveiling the humanity of his mythical characters (14). For the aging Rubens, it was also essential to convey to the king and his family a moral message about the unruly passions that characterize any absolutist regime (21). Georgievska-Shine and Silver underscore Rubens's ability to leave the viewer in suspense as to the outcome of his dramatic scenes, an indeterminacy that sharpens the narrative tenor of his *Battle Between Lapiths and Centaurs* and *The Story of Cadmus*. The complexity of Rubens's argument about the struggle between passions and reasoning is deepened in his numerous scenes

filled with misconducting behaviors and violent actions, which are depicted at Torre as the deeds committed by gods, humans, and various sub-human creatures. As part of this arsenal of bestial instincts, the love theme is predominately depicted by Rubens as a scene of the rape of either Ganymede or Europa (58). By divesting love of the enchanting dimension that the myth typically presents to the viewer, Rubens folds into his narratives allusions to royal authority and the unreasonable situations to which rulers may succumb when governed by unrestrained emotions (58).

Although in the Torre cycle Rubens derived from Titian an overall emphasis on the human failings of the gods, he put a positive interpretative spin on the myths associated with the Spanish Habsburgs, such as the nurturing of the infant Hercules by Juno (98, 99). This event is insufficiently developed in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* but amplified by Rubens to reveal the divinity of a *Hercules Hispanicus*, which transcends his humanity and at the same time foreshadows his apotheosis. The significance that Hercules holds for the Spanish rulers is exhibited in *Hercules Killing the Dragon of the Hesperides*, a composition predicated on theft and murder that assured the triumph of *Hercules Hispanicus* over the Americas and the territorial expansion of the Habsburg Empire beyond Europe's frontiers (103).

In the Torre cycle, Rubens culled from Spanish literary sources to an unprecedented extent and with a sheer interest in laying stress on the humanization of his mythological protagonists—much as Cervantes, Calderón de la Barca, and Baltasar Gracián did in their writings. His painted decorations also registered the meaning of pagan myths, as presented by Perez de Moya's influential *Philosophia Secreta* (1585) (26, 65, 69). As Georgievska-Shine and Silver argue, Rubens reveals his interpretation of Orpheus as influenced by the published libretto of Monteverdi's opera *L'Orfeo* (1607). The operatic narrative presents a sense of irrecoverable love analogous to the Flemish master's visual rendition of Orpheus's fatal glance, which triggered to lose Eurydice forever (134). The book thus sets the benchmark in examining Rubens as more than the artist, collector, and antiquarian, aiding us to engage the various theatrical and lyrical sources he deployed in the creation of his allegorical paintings.

It was certainly no simple coincidence that an equally comprehensive modernist, the painter Diego de Velázquez, stepped in the decoration of the Torre cycle to complement Rubens's mythological inventions with his allegorical portraits. Georgievska-Shine and Silver underscore Velázquez's mock-heroic rhetoric as the corresponding narrative force to Rubens's mythological inventions (195). In kinship with his Flemish counterpart, Velázquez relayed the meeting of oppositions as a mode for portraying, for instance, the ambivalent character of Mars in his dual stance as the god of war and the lover of Venus. Yet the portraits of courtiers, jesters, and dwarfs illustrate Velázquez's ability to convey a sense of separateness from the world, an intentional withdrawal or a natural alienation that enhances the coloristic effects of oppositions among the populace at the royal court (214, 215). Persuaded much like Rubens by the demystification of the gods as the dominant theme at the Torre de la Parada, Velázquez presents Philip IV's portrait as a hunter whose ordinary appearance departs from an ideal image of the ruler while stressing the pronounced Habsburg physiognomy and aplomb (217).

The book stands out in Spanish art historical literature and simultaneously paves the way for further insights into the culture of early modernity. It recommends that original thought return to art history, with a vehemence only comparable to Eugenio d'Ors's *Three Hours in the Prado Museum* (1923), which believed in breaking traditional norms to advance visual interpretation. D'Ors argued that classical antiquity ceased to hold sway over modern art and that artists referred back to it in allegorical, not literal modes.

Livio Pestilli. *Paolo de Matteis: Neapolitan Painting and Cultural History in Baroque Europe*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013. 502pp. + 108 color and 112 b & w illus. \$119.95. Review by EVE STRAUSSMAN-PFLANZER, DAVIS MUSEUM, WELLESLEY COLLEGE.

Livio Pestilli has succeeded in producing an important, albeit voluminous, recuperative monograph on the Neapolitan artist Paolo de Matteis (1662–1728). Born on February 9, 1662, in Piano del Cilento (modern day Piano Vetrale) to Decio and Lucrezia Orico, he