

March 14, 1960

Dr. Walter R. Friedlander
17 East 80th Street
New York, New York

Dear Dr. Friedlander:

While in Rome last winter, I purchased from Cellini a Caravaggesque picture, photographs of which I am sending you.

The painting is said to have come from Malta, and, of course, Cellini hoped it was the missing St. Jerome mentioned by Bellori. I understand that Roberto Longhi attributes it to Johann Ulrich Loth, but I am much interested in finding out what your opinion is.

We are inclined to call it simply school of Caravaggio, since it does seem very close to the Neopolitan and Sicilian pictures by the master.

The photographs are for your files if you wish to keep them.

With kind regards,

Sincerely,

Daniel Catton Rich
Director

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS

1 EAST 78TH STREET
NEW YORK 21, N.Y.

TELEPHONE: YUKON 8-5550

April 26, 1960

Mr. Daniel Catton Rich, Director
Worcester Art Museum
55 Salisbury Street
Worcester, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Rich:

Thank you very much for sending me the photographs of the St. Jerome with the Malta provenance and the Caravaggesque attribution. A comparison of your painting with the still preserved "Writing St. Jerome" in the Church of San Giovanni in La Valleta, Malta, illustrated in my Caravaggio Studies, plate 52, reveals a very different style, as far as I can judge from your photograph (I remember having seen a better photograph of the La Valleta painting in which the head almost looked like a portrait of Wignacourt.).

The style is, after my feeling, very different in this half-figure of St. Jerome which you were so kind to send me. In all the late works of Caravaggio in Sicily, we nowhere find this flamboyant white light contrasted to the darker passages as in your painting. The chiaroscuro, e.g., in the Malta Jerome, is much more even and based on disegno.

Now it is true that there is another St. Jerome mentioned from this period which Caravaggio made for the Cappuccini in Messina. But I doubt that your painting could be identified with it. There is a possibility that the author is a Sicilian painter of the time of Caravaggio's sojourn in Sicily or shortly after.

Longhi's suggestion of Loth is also to be considered.

Thank you for the photographs for my files.

Sincerely yours,

Walter Friedlaender

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