

mit einer Madonna und vier Heiligen in einem antikisierenden Rahmen scheint eine bislang unbekannte plakettenartige Darstellung zu überliefern, die wahrscheinlich auf ein Siegel zurückzuführen ist. Eine eingehende Untersuchung des oft schwer zugänglichen, wenig bearbeiteten Materials der Glockenkunde dürfte eine Reihe neuer Ergebnisse über die Entstehung von Plaketten sowie über ihre Verbreitung und Vervielfältigung liefern (dazu: L. Franzoni, *Fonditori di campane a Verona*, Verona 1979).

Charles Davis

## Ausstellungen

### THE AGE OF CARAVAGGIO

Exhibition in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 5. 2.—14. 4. 1985  
(with one reproduction)

*The Age of Caravaggio* afforded the rare but welcome occasion in New York to view a wealth of splendid Italian Baroque paintings. It was the late Raffaello Causa's idea to dedicate this, the first in a series of exhibitions sponsored jointly by the Metropolitan Museum and Italy's Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali, to the Lombard painter and his times. The exhibition's scope was novel in that it departed from the format of coupling Caravaggio and the *caravaggeschi*, a practice established in the now legendary Milan *Mostra* of 1951 and followed subsequently. *The Age of Caravaggio* attempted instead to reconstruct the art-historical context from which Caravaggio emerged and against which his achievement can be measured. The exhibit's installation reflected its two-fold purpose, a full-scale monographic treatment of Caravaggio on the one hand, and an historical commentary. Thus, some sixty paintings by forerunners and contemporaries, divided in two sections, served as an introduction to the exhibit's third and last part, dedicated to the master himself. Almost forty paintings by or attributed to Caravaggio were on exhibit, the largest number assembled since 1951. Although the exhibit's underlying historical premises were commendable, nonetheless the show succeeded best in the Caravaggio section which posed traditional questions of chronology and authenticity.

Fourteen works by eleven "Precursors in North Italy" hung in the first two rooms. Representative paintings were chosen to demonstrate the Lombard and Venetian traditions that modern scholars have judged formative for the young artist's naturalism and for his experiments with *chiaroscuro*. However, the Lombard background was only approximated in the opening galleries, for on the basis of the single Moroni or Romanino, both devotional pictures from American museums, the viewer might well have dismissed these artists' importance for Caravaggio's formation. Simone Peterzano and Antonio Campi were better served

by impressive altarpieces (the same as were chosen for the 1951 *Mostra*) brought from Milanese churches. But the Metropolitan's Moretto, still languishing under yellow varnish, hardly did him justice. Likewise, Vincenzo Campi's *Christ Nailed to the Cross* from the Prado (cat. 4), which is in a dirty state. Surprisingly, Vincenzo's genre pictures of 1580—90, in which he combined figures with still-life elements in large-scale compositions with symbolic overtones and which were an important precedent for Caravaggio's early work, did not figure in the show in New York. Indeed, the whole northern tradition of genre painting was strangely slighted in the introductory sections, and invoked by only two examples (cat. 12, 24). Thus, the rationale of the exhibit's organizing committee seemed askew: displayed were mostly monumental altarpieces by Caravaggio's precursors without the parallel pictures by the master himself; conversely, comparative earlier genre pictures which would have illuminated the whole first Caravaggio gallery with its array of this very category of painting were omitted.

In regard to the artist's ties to the Venetian tradition, Mina Gregori, in her excellent introductory essay to the catalogue, unequivocally states of the artist that "It is inconceivable that he did not visit Venice" (p. 32). Our recent discovery of an extra four-year period in northern Italy between the end of Caravaggio's apprenticeship with Peterzano and his arrival in Rome during which period he had ample time to visit the principal artistic centers of Lombardy and the Veneto, taken together with the evidence of the early sources in which Bellori posited a Venetian trip and in which a Roman painter such as Federico Zuccaro saw *giorgionismo* in the Contarelli Chapel, encourage us to reconsider the exact sources and nature of Venetian influences in the artist's work. Unfortunately, the exhibit's Lotto, two Jacopo Bassanos, and one Tintoretto did not fully explicate this question.

"Caravaggio's Contemporaries in Rome and Naples", the second and largest part of the exhibition, presented an impressive panorama of painting in the papal city during the artist's lifetime. Contrary to the promise of its title, a single painting by Caracciolo afforded this section's only Neapolitan presence. The recent exhibit, *Painting in Naples*, had presented Caravaggio in the Neapolitan context, and the current show need not have tried to cover this ground again. Forty-five paintings by twenty artists hung in three rooms. The term "contemporary" was loosely applied to cover a wide range of artists from Federico Barocci, more than a generation older than Caravaggio, to Bartolomeo Cavarozzi, born only two years before 1592, the year in which the already twenty-one-year-old Caravaggio arrived in Rome. In the first gallery, Barocci's radiant *Visitation* (cat. 17) from the Chiesa Nuova drew a knot of admirers just as it had done upon its unveiling in Rome in 1586. The inclusion of this, Philip Neri's favorite altarpiece, along with Rubens' *bozzetto* (cat. 55) from Berlin for the same church's high altar broached the issue of Oratorian patronage, an issue first discussed in relation to Caravaggio by Walter Friedlaender in 1955, but challenged by some recent scholars. Regrettably, this important problem of Caravaggio's religious art and contemporary religious reform was not fully addressed because of the unexplained absence of Cristoforo

Roncalli's Oratorian altarpiece, catalogued (cat. 53) but not lent, and of Caravaggio's own altarpiece for the Chiesa Nuova, the *Entombment* now in the Vatican. In the next gallery, Annibale Carracci and his followers represented the fresh infusion of Bolognese ideas to Rome. In the third room of this section, Caravaggism slipped in, and most space was accorded those artists such as Orazio Gentileschi, Baglione, Manfredi and Saraceni, who came into direct contact with Caravaggio around 1600 and responded to his influence. Outstanding in this gallery were the works of the two most distinguished northern artists in Rome in the first years of the seventeenth century: the miniaturist *Stoning of St. Stephen* (cat. 38) from Edinburgh by Adam Elsheimer and the bravura *Equestrian Portrait of the Marchese Giovanni Carlo Doria* (cat. 54) from Florence by Peter Paul Rubens. One did wonder, however, why this Rubens from the Genoese sojourn was chosen, splendid as it is, and not one from the Roman years.

Fewer omissions marred this section than the previous, and for the most part, the artists chosen were well represented, even where possible, with paintings that had some specific historical or iconographical link with those by Caravaggio. However, had the hanging here as well as in the preceding section been less haphazard, these links might have been more readily apparent. Indeed, the decision proved misguided to install these sections as discrete entities which were almost exhibitions in themselves. In consequence, works by precursors hung at least five galleries away from the very pictures which justified their inclusion in the first place. The catalogue, the effort of an international team of twenty-three scholars and attractively produced by Electa of Milan, addressed the specialist, and offered no general essay by way of introduction to the non-specialist who must have been overwhelmed by the presence of the thirty-two other artists on exhibit. The unfortunate result was that the visitor hurried through the preliminary galleries to get to the Caravaggios, a tactic endorsed by Frank Stella, and only specialists and the hardy retraced their path to assess the scholarly questions posed in the introductory rooms. In the final analysis, more could have been said with less, that is, with fewer and more carefully chosen comparative pictures interspersed with Caravaggio's own works. For example, a first gallery might have addressed the issue of Caravaggio's formation by juxtaposing his earliest paintings with related examples by Peterzano, the Campi and so forth. Other galleries might have presented Caravaggio in context by grouping his treatment of a theme with contemporary parallels.

After the appetizers in the introductory galleries, the main course was served up in the next five rooms. Quintessential easel pictures by Caravaggio, among which were the *Judith and Holofernes* from Rome (cat. 74), the newly cleaned Berlin *Amor Vincit Omnia* (cat. 79), and the Borghese *David with the Head of Goliath* (cat. 97), acquainted the general public with the artist's innovative treatment of traditional themes. The absence of all of the great Roman altarpieces, however, undeniably prevented a comprehensive view of the painter. Regrettable as was the refusal of major loans by the Italian authorities, who, it would seem acted as much

from political as conservationist scruples, at least the greater mistake of violating the integrity of the Contarelli or Cerasi Chapels was avoided.

Thirty-nine paintings were exhibited in this section (cat. 67 & 75 did not arrive), and as its title alerted — “Paintings by, after or attributed” — accepted, autograph works hung alongside questioned ones. Indeed, more than half of the pictures exhibited in these galleries could be called “problem” pictures. Seasoned and would-be Caravaggio specialists huddled in front of these teasers, and the greatest *schiamazzo* was stirred up by *The Toothpuller* (cat. 98) whose attribution to the master has received serious consideration only in the past decade. As a radical addition to the oeuvre, that is an “active” attribution as Donald Posner so usefully put it during the two-day Caravaggio symposium held at the Metropolitan, this would be the unique example of a late genre subject by Caravaggio, and of an anecdotal type not found even among his early works. But not only is the painting’s conception difficult to reconcile with our understanding of the master’s latest activity, its execution equally raises serious doubts as to its authenticity. Despite the impressive passage here and there, what can only be called incompetent draughtmanship warps the hands and proportions of the two central figures, and draughtmanship warps the hands and proportions of the two central figures, and and others made the Caravaggio galleries consistently fascinating. The pertinent catalogue entries, all prepared by Mina Gregori, summarized clearly the basic data, but went beyond the factual with the author’s stimulating arguments for her expansionist (often optimistic) viewpoint of the artist’s oeuvre. Both in her introductory essay and in her paper delivered at the symposium, Gregori further opened the discussion to the controversial Ludovisi Ceiling, presenting persuasive if not conclusive evidence for the attribution to Caravaggio. Although this particular attribution could not be tested in New York, the exhibit presented the chance to examine other important problems of connoisseurship and interpretation.

Little is known about Caravaggio’s studio practice, and the exhibit provoked thought about the artist’s technique as well as about the organization of his workshop. Regarding the former, the catalogue entries gave up-to-date information on condition and submitted the results of recent x-rays where available. At the symposium’s conclusion, Metropolitan curator Keith Christiansen presented the results of the museum’s photographic campaign, identifying numerous instances in which incisions directly onto the canvas marked out minimal information, still incomplete, has yet to be studied methodically before we can fully define the individuality of Caravaggio’s working habits. The character of his workshop is perhaps even a more difficult problem. The number of fine replicas or versions that continue to surface, the existence of Caravaggesque compositions known only in copies, and those pictures that bespeak the presence of more than one hand (eg. the Detroit *Conversion of the Magdalen*; cat. 73) suggest that Caravaggio, like most of his contemporaries, made use of studio assistants. The

opportunity to compare replicas was offered by the display of the two versions of the *St. Francis in Meditation* from the Church of the Cappuccini in Rome and from Carpineto Romano (cat. 82, 83) and of *The Flagellation* from Rouen and a Swiss Private Collection (cat. 91, 92). The confrontation of the latter pair established conclusively that the Swiss picture is a mediocre copy of the splendid French version, but the question lingers as to where exactly is this picture's niche in Caravaggio's oeuvre, or whether this canvas's athletic Christ is not the conception of another artist altogether.

Gregori rightfully acknowledges in her introductory essay those scholars who "have had the courage to make new attributions to Caravaggio", and of course, she herself has been foremost among their number. Nonetheless, arguments about the authenticity of many works on exhibit will certainly continue unabated. The juxtaposition of very fine examples of the master's work with attributed paintings in many instances accentuated incompatible differences in execution or conception. For example, the beautiful *St. John* from Kansas City (cat. 85), itself a relatively recent addition to the oeuvre, fairly glowered to find himself between the Montserrat *St. Jerome* (cat. 84) and the Prato *Crowning with Thorns* (cat. 81). Much less convincing at first hand than in photographs, the *St. Jerome* has the pasty, textured flesh more typical of Riberesque paintings. As for the ex-Cecconi *Crowning*, its composition is superficially Caravaggesque, but the picture's lack of any expressive content and its weak execution elicit little enthusiasm. Until any documentation is forthcoming, these and other questionable attributions must remain in the "state of limbo" evoked by Posner in his paper at the symposium. Documentary evidence in fact has contributed greatly to the latest Caravaggio scholarship. Our reconstruction of chronology and the circumstances surrounding commissions has been advanced by Herwarth Röttgen's find of the documents for the Contarelli Chapel, by Marilyn Lavin's research in the Barberini archives, by Parks' just published contract for the *Death of the Virgin* (July issue of *The Burlington Magazine*), and by the work of the late Raffaello Causa and Vincenzo Pacelli in the archives of Naples. Longhi's hypothesis of a second, busy Neapolitan sojourn, based upon his discovery that Caravaggio spent as long as ten months in that city after his flight from Malta and before his death, has been borne out by the new documentary evidence which has permitted the redating of late works, and the identification of hitherto unknown works. The impressive group of paintings in the exhibit's final gallery attested to the significance of the second Neapolitan period. Working quickly under what must have been adverse circumstances, Caravaggio managed to complete both altarpieces and easel pictures that display a new economy of technique but that paradoxically gain a new intensity of expression. In the extraordinary *Martyrdom of St. Ursula* (cat. 101; *Abb. 1*), recently rediscovered by Gregori and documented by Pacelli as the artist's last known work, the unique conception of the subject in which murderer, victim and witnesses are caught in a web of conflicting emotions points to a wisdom and experience that we more readily associate with the old-age works of Michelangelo,

Titian and Rembrandt, and that mark Caravaggio's late religious pictures as one of the most outstanding achievements of his age.

Catherine Puglisi

## PIERRE BONNARD

Frankfurt, Städtische Galerie im Städel, 3. Mai — 14. Juli 1985

In seinem Vorwort zur Frankfurter Veranstaltung weist Klaus Gallwitz darauf hin, daß in Deutschland die letzte Bonnard-Ausstellung im Jahre 1970 zu sehen war. Sie wurde damals von Hans Platte im Hamburger Kunstverein veranstaltet. Jetzt führte das Städel den Künstler erneut vor, indem es sich des Bestandes der 1984 in Paris (danach in Washington und Dallas) und, in erweiterter Form, in Zürich gezeigten Ausstellungen bediente. Den Frankfurtern gelang damit in einer nur dreimonatigen Vorbereitungszeit der rasche Griff nach einer gebotenen Chance, wobei sie nicht nur aus erschwerenden Bedingungen — die fünfte Station für ein hochkarätiges Ausstellungsgut — das Beste machten, sondern auch aus den Erfahrungen der Vorgängerveranstaltungen souverän ihre eigenen Konsequenzen zogen.

Als im Frühjahr vergangenen Jahres das Centre Pompidou mit einem groß angelegten Überblick auf das Spätwerk des Künstlers aufmerksam machte, mußte man schließlich doch bedauern, daß nur eben dieses zu sehen war. Denn wie man danach in Zürich nachprüfen konnte, wirkt gerade das, worum es in Paris und den USA ging, im Zusammenhang mit den vorhergehenden Positionen des Künstlers umso intensiver: Der späte Bonnard, ein immer noch undeutliches Kapitel der Kunstgeschichte, wird — besonders auch für den Ausstellungsbesucher — in der Rückkoppelung an das vorhergehende Oeuvre besser faßbar. Seine charakteristischen Eigenschaften trifft man in der Entwicklungsspanne vom maßgebenden Mitglied der Nabis-Avantgarde, das seine eigenen Ziele zunächst in ausgesprochener Bindung an die Gruppe verfolgt, zum Einzelgänger, der fortschreitend vereinzelte Wege geht — Wege, von denen sich die prägenden Entwicklungen der Zeit abwenden. Bonnard, der vor 1900 so spezifisch die Intimität des Pariser Alltags schilderte, damit an einem vorrangigen Thema der Zeit neben anderen prägenden Künstlern teilnahm und es wesentlich mitformte, „privatisiert“ später im Abseits. Gerade dort entfaltet sich jedoch die sinnliche Intelligenz seiner Farbsynthesen, deren im Spätwerk geradezu aufblühende Monumentalität — neben Picasso, neben Matisse, neben den Surrealisten — eigene Position bezieht. Gerade die internen Bezüge zwischen seinen einzelnen Etappen erläutern den Charakter dieses Oeuvres. Das erkannten die Veranstalter in Zürich und erweiterten den Werkabschnitt der Pariser Ausstellung zu einem Gesamtüberblick; ein imponierender Auftritt, dessen Überzeugungskraft jedoch Gefahr lief, durch die Menge der Exponate geschwächt zu werden.

So erscheint die Frankfurter Ausstellung als logischer Schluß aus den beiden vorhergehenden: ein Überblick über das gesamte malerische Werk, jedoch mit einer Auswahl