

JUSEPE (GIOSEPPE OR GIUSEPPE)  
DE RIBERA

An alternative view of his origins,  
apprenticeship, and early works

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For Pamela

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# Jusepe (Gioseppe or Giuseppe) de Ribera

## An alternative view of his origins, apprenticeship, and early works

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### Part One - His Origins

Since the publication by Viñes in 1923 of a number of baptismal records pertaining to a certain Ribera (not *de Ribera*) family, most historians (including the cataloguers of the three major Ribera exhibitions of 1992), have accepted that the painter Jusepe de Ribera was born the son of a cobbler in Játiva, Spain, in 1591<sup>1</sup>. Little if any heed was paid to Lorenzo Salazar's earlier conflicting information published in 1894, in *Napoli Nobilissima* (Pt. III, p. 98, Note 4), which specified that Ribera belonged to a noble family, with many branches but a common stem.

Three important contemporary records exist however which seem to prove that Jusepe de Ribera cannot have been the offspring of a cobbler. These are, respectively, the Vatican deed accepting Ribera in the Order of Christ of Portugal, drawn up at St. Peter's, Rome, on 29 January 1626, on which the painter is described as "de nobili genere procreatus" i.e. "of noble origin"<sup>2</sup>; the records of the Gran Corte della Vicaria (High Court) of Naples where, on 27 January 1646 during the course of a legal action, the painter was described as "de familia suae excellentiae commorans in Regio Palatio" ("of excellent family and residing at the Royal Palace") again implying a noble origin<sup>3</sup>; and, finally, the painter's claim to kinship with the noble *de la Rivière* family of Auch, in France, expressed in a letter from Ribera to his French publisher Langlois. [1] (*Rivière* is a gallicized form of the Spanish Ribera, used sometimes in Rome as well as in France).

A century or so later the French historian Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694-1774) described the painter's statement to Langlois as an unwarranted claim of a socially ambitious painter to aristocratic kinship<sup>4</sup>. Mariette was however clearly unaware of the results of later genealogical research (published only in 1867 and 1874) which apparently disproves his assertion. These indicate that the two *de la Rivière* families in the Auch area were either of Spanish origin, or allied by marriage with great families of Spain. These were the *de la Rivière* family of Languedoc, which produced several Commanders of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and the Viscounts *de la Rivière* of

Bigorre<sup>5</sup>. It was evidently with one or both of these families that Ribera claimed kinship.

Furthermore, when referring in 1724 to Ribera's appointment as a *Cavaliere* in the Order of Christ of Portugal, Antonio Palomino observed that this appointment was made because of Ribera's outstanding artistic ability, rather than because of his noble background although *as regards the painter's illustrious origins*, Palomino noted, *there was no doubt* ("...no quanto por lo ilustre de su casa, de que non se duda, quanto per lo eminente de su habilidad"). Palomino also clarified that Ribera was a member of the Valencian branch of the illustrious Ribera family of Murcia<sup>6</sup>. This statement substantiates the preceding information and shows that the painter was deemed noble by many competent authorities from 1626 - 1894, i.e. from the seventeenth until the dawn of the twentieth century.



1. A. Van Dyck Portrait of François Langlois, called Ciartres, (or de Chartres), playing the bagpipes. Canvas 104 x 80cm. Private Collection.

Palomino did not lightly accord noble status to the painters about whom he wrote, and there is no reason to assume that he exaggerated with Ribera. Palomino occupied a responsible position among the Court painters (and was indeed charged with the design of the decorations in honour of the marriage of King Charles II of Spain). He is unlikely to have risked offending the influential Ribera family by publicly assigning to their family the offspring of a humble cobbler<sup>7</sup>.

Ribera's January 1626 *Application to the Pope for Appointment in the Order*, and the resultant *Order of Appointment* itself (both of which documents are in the Vatican archives and are unlikely to have been seen by Palomino) confirm the details of Palomino's assertion. In the former the painter requests his appointment on grounds of artistic merit, while the latter document (already referred to) explicitly volunteers his noble origins<sup>8</sup>, Palomino's reference to the circumstances of Ribera's appointment as a Cavaliere are then fully corroborated in Vatican documents, and constitute another important impediment to the acceptance of Ribera's cobbler parentage as fact.

In addition to Palomino's information Paolo de Matteis and Bernardo De Dominici have stated that Ribera was the son of a Spanish officer who, according to their collective information, served at the castles of Lecce, Gallipoli, and at the Castello Nuovo in Naples, at the last of which he is reported to have occupied the important post of Adjutant, with superior powers ("con maggiore provisione")<sup>9</sup>. The full significance of this information has not perhaps been fully appreciated for, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the majority of high ranking officers in the Spanish forces were drawn from the aristocracy, and would scarcely have countenanced accepting orders from a commoner<sup>10</sup>.

De Matteis was among the most distinguished pupils of Luca Giordano, who studied for many years under Ribera. Given his involvement with so intimate an associate of Ribera, his information merits serious attention. Similarly De Dominici notes that much of his own information about Ribera came from a one-time collaborator of Giordano, Maestro Luca Vecchio, and his information should likewise not be casually dismissed<sup>11</sup>.

Yet another impediment to the acceptance of Ribera's humble origins is the regulation of the Papal Order of Christ of Portugal which stipulated *unless the Pope personally authorized otherwise* that Catholics *only of noble descent* should be admitted to the Order<sup>12</sup>. In his *History of the Orders of Chivalry* of 1692 Bernardo Giustiniani explains that the Pope occasionally made exceptions to this rule (which also applied to many other Catholic Orders of Chivalry) when, as in the cases of Caravaggio and Velásquez, an applicant possessed exceptional talent.

Giustiniani further explained that applicants unqualified by birth *having once obtained such an authorization of the Pope* were described technically as 'Cavaliere di 'brevetto' i.e. licensed knights, from the 'brevetto' or 'letter' (of authorization) from the Pope<sup>13</sup>.

The appointment of Velásquez as a Knight of the Order of Santiago in 1658 is a typical example of the appointment of a humbly-born 'Cavaliere di brevetto'. In that case King Philip IV of Spain, the secular head of the Order of Santiago, whose anxiety for his favourite to be appointed a Cavaliere is well recorded, was obliged to approach the Pope, on behalf of Velásquez, and await his letter of authorization before appointing the painter to the Order<sup>14</sup>.

It is clear therefore, especially at the Vatican where the Pope was readily accessible, that it would have been unnecessary for the authorities to state incorrectly that Ribera was of noble origin. Rome was after all a major political and religious centre and it would have been pointless to publish a lie to have Ribera appointed a Cavaliere, when so simple an alternative procedure had been established *precisely for cases of this kind*.

The question therefore now arises of whether Chenault (and the many authorities who followed her lead) were not in fact mistaken to prefer the suggestion that Ribera's father was a cobbler (advanced by Viñes in 1923, after the discovery in Játiva of the baptismal records of the similarly, but not identically-named, 'Joan Josep' Ribera) to the information contained on the official Vatican document and elsewhere describing Ribera as 'of noble lineage'<sup>15</sup>.

Ribera's actual place and date of birth was totally ignored by his early non-Neapolitan biographers who included Mancini (c. 1618-21), Scannelli (1657), Bellori (1672), Scaramuccia (1674) and Baldinucci (1681)<sup>16</sup>, all of whom lived at a distance from Naples (where Ribera spent most of his life) and would have had limited access to original sources.

The first historians to broach this subject were three distinguished Neapolitans Carlo Celano (1692), Paolo de Matteis (c. 1700), and Bernardo De Dominici (1742), all of whom agreed (in marked contrast to the evidence relating to the 'Joan Josep' Ribera, the cobbler's son, born in Jativa, Spain), that the painter Jusepe *de* Ribera was born in the province of Lecce which, throughout and long-following the painter's lifetime, belonged to the kingdom of Naples in a part of Italy then under Spanish dominion<sup>17</sup>.

De Dominici noted, furthermore, that Ribera was born in 1593 (as opposed to 1591, the date recorded on the Jativan baptismal record). This would of course make Ribera's quatercentenary two years later than recorded in the Naples, Madrid and New York catalogues of 1992. There is no doubt that the three Neapolitan biographers

were independent of each other, for their information differs vastly in quantity, and also on matters of detail<sup>18</sup>.

The prime responsibility for the belief that Ribera was born in Spain lies arguably with Antonio Palomino who, in his biography published in 1722-4, arrived at this conclusion through what might be judged a misinterpretation of inscriptions made by Ribera on his works. Palomino betrayed his reasoning with the following explanation:

Ribera was a member of the Roman Academy which *like his origin* is demonstrated on a picture by him representing *St. Mathew the Evangelist* which I have seen, which is signed on a simulated piece of paper *Jusepe de Ribera español, de la ciudad de Xátiva, reino de Valencia, Academico Romano. Año de 1630.* And on the print of *Bacchus*, an etching by him, there is this signature on a stone *Joseph. a Ribera Hisp. Valent. Setabens. F. Partenope. an. 1628.* - 'Partenope' means in *Naples* and 'Setabensis' *native of Játiva*<sup>19</sup>.

One may perhaps complete the latter part of Palomino's explanation by noting that "Hisp. Valent." means "Spanish from the kingdom of Valencia".

Palomino's argument was accepted and promoted by many subsequent historians including Pierre Mariette and August Mayer (1923). Both these latter published inscriptions of a similar nature which they too put forward as proof of the painter's Spanish birth<sup>20</sup>. Mayer, in an article of 1942, added however that the painter was probably of noble stock<sup>21</sup>.

What all three historians have overlooked or ignored however is that *a person's birthplace and nationality may be different*. Ribera's birth to a Spanish officer who hailed from Játiva, and was stationed in Lecce (one of Spain's Italian territories) would not have precluded the painter from being and describing himself as a citizen of Játiva, in Valencia, Spain, precisely as he did on the inscriptions cited by Palomino. SETABENSIS in fact means "of, or belonging to Játiva", and can as easily be read to imply "citizen of Játiva" as the more specific "native of Játiva" noted by Palomino. This part of the inscription may also have been intended primarily to emphasise that the painter was a product of the Játivan branch of the Ribera family.

There are many historical examples of this including, in an earlier period, St. Paul, who was born in Tarsus, in Asia Minor, and is reported by many sources to have inherited Roman citizenship from his father. Also, throughout the first half of the twentieth century, Belgians born in the Congo, Frenchmen in Algeria, and Englishmen born in many parts of the world similarly inherited the nationality of their fathers.

Finally and perhaps the closest parallel is Gaspar de Guzmán Count-Duke of Olivares, Ribera's contemporary and Philip IV's Minister, who was born in Rome in 1587, of a Spanish father, and

passed his first thirteen years in Italy. It has never been argued, on grounds of birth, that Olivares was an Italian and not a Spaniard, and Ribera's status, according to his Neapolitan biographers, would appear to have been similar.

Once Palomino's, Mariette's, and Mayer's likely confusion of Ribera's citizenship and birthplace has been accepted it follows that De Dominici and the two earlier Neapolitan biographers may have been correct when they stipulated that Ribera was born in Spanish Italy rather than in Spain itself.

On the other hand, during the period when Palomino's and Mariette's argument enjoyed, as it did, practically the status of canon, with a common name like Ribera, and in the best possible faith, it remained only a matter of time before searches through the archives of his freshly-deduced birthplace of Játiva revealed the baptismal record of another Jusepe Ribera son of Simon (who happened to be a cobbler). Although no evidence, aside from a similar and it ought perhaps to be stressed not even *identical* name, has ever definitively connected this cobbler's son with the painter, this record was published by Viñes in 1923, and the claim put forward that it related to the painter.

It is nonetheless surprising, with so many people having accepted this baptismal certificate as genuine, that no one appears to have questioned why its contents so utterly contradicted Palomino's other information regarding Ribera's noble origin, confirmed as it has been shown to be by serious Roman and Neapolitan sources. Palomino after all, like Paolo de Matteis, worked with Ribera's pupil Luca Giordano and therefore, while his Latin interpretations may legitimately be queried, his statements of biographical fact should hardly be lightly dismissed.

It is appropriate therefore to now subject the Játivan deeds to closer scrutiny. The first very curious observation (alluded to already) is that the crucial baptismal record is startling in recording not one but *two* forenames for the cobbler's son. These are "Joan Josep" instead of merely "Josep" (or "Jusepe"), by which single name the painter is described on over a hundred published documents<sup>22</sup>.

In addition the missing 'de' between the forenames and the surname, on *all* documents relating to the Játivan cobbler's family, seems to have rung no warning bells (indicative though this prefix may often be of a noble background) and despite the fact that this 'de' was hardly ever omitted on other official documents relating to the painter or his family<sup>23</sup>.

Having identified these two discrepancies the principal argument which remains in favour of the Játivan baptismal records is that they prove the cobbler's son, like the painter himself, to have possessed a father named Simone, and two brothers named, respectively, Juan and Geronimo.

(Although Mayer specified Ribera's father's full name to have been *Antonio* Simone de Ribera the second name of the painter's father and italianised versions of the name of his siblings are confirmed on deeds in Rome and Naples)<sup>24</sup>.

At a time however when women regularly bore upwards of eight children, it can hardly have been a great statistical rarity, within the same decade and in two separate cities under Spanish rule, to find a father named Simone with three sons bearing such well-loved names as Juan, Jusepe, and Geronimo.

It can therefore now be plausibly argued that we are confronted here with a classic case of mistaken identity and the Játivan deeds in fact refer to a quite different (Joan) Jusepe Ribera, from a humble family, and totally unrelated, so far as can be ascertained, in any direct way to Jusepe *de* Ribera, the famous painter.

At this stage one final misleading document should be mentioned. Found only in 1953 by the genealogist Salazar y Castro in the Biblioteca de la Real Historia, Madrid, this is a handwritten genealogy with a preamble which states that it was supplied by the painter to the Inquisitor General in 1638. It is printed below:

Preamble:

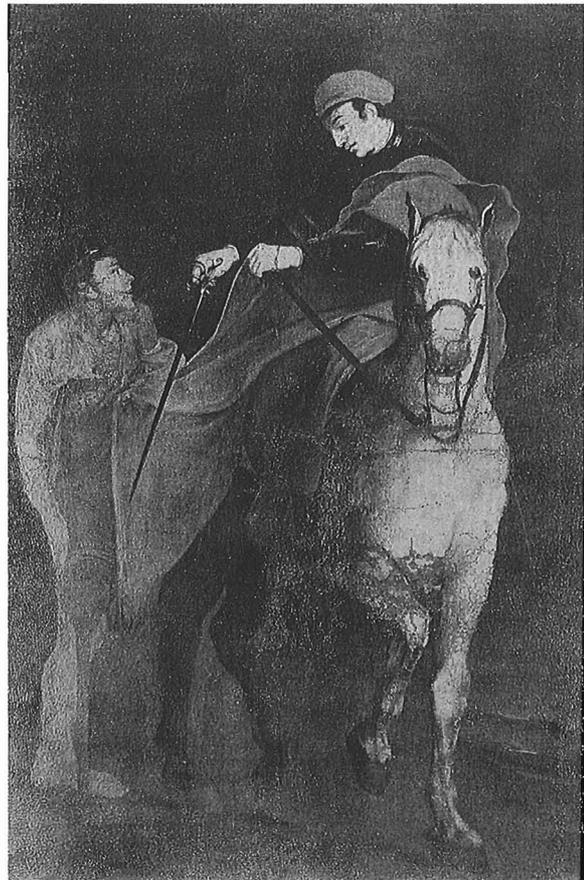
Jusepe de Rivera, insigne pintor llamado en Italia el españoletto, fué natural de Játiva, y en el año 1638 envió al Inquisidor general esta genealogia Juan Bautista Martí, vecino de Játiva, Notario del Secreto del Santo Oficio.

padre Simón Ribera, zapatero natural de Ruzafa, cerca de Valencia. Abuelos paternos, N. Ribera, natural de Ruzafa, y Juana Navarro, natural de Teruel. - Madre Margarita Ana Selleres, natural de Játiva. Abuelos maternos, Bartolomé Selleres, zapatero, natural de Barcelona, y Agustina Brú, natural de Játiva<sup>25</sup>.

That this information cannot possibly apply to the painter is quite certain for it states that his mother was another cobbler's daughter Margarita Ana Selleres. As Margarita Selleres was the cobbler Ribera's third wife, and married him only in 1607 (see note 24), one would, for the contents of the document to be authentic, have to accept that Ribera was either born after 1607, or that he was illegitimate. As he had already painted the masterly *St. Martin dividing his cloak* in Parma by 1611 [2,3] the former case is impossible, and not one of the sources even remotely hints at the latter.



2. *Saint Martin dividing his cloak*, Engraving after a lost painting by Ribera.



3. *Saint Martin dividing his cloak*. A copy of a lost painting by Ribera.

As the painter had by then also been a Knight of the Order of Christ of Portugal since 29 January 1626, to which Order the Vatican itself had admitted him without problem (and with clear acceptance of his noble lineage) the suggestion that so much humbler a genealogy could have been supplied by the painter for the Spanish Inquisition, twelve years later on, in 1638, is untenable.

More recent suggestions moreover that he might have furnished such an ancestry in order to be admitted in the Orders either of Calatrava or Santiago must likewise be excluded, for a pedigree embracing a cobbler father and maternal grandfather would have been far too humble to submit, even for initial consideration, for entry to Orders as illustrious as these<sup>26</sup>.

Doubts have already been cast upon the veracity of this document and a possible explanation, if it is indeed genuine, may be that it was supplied to the Inquisitor General, for some unspecified reason, by the now-famous cobbler's son of similar name. It has after all been commonly accepted since 1923 that the painter and the cobbler's son were one and the same person, and an official statement by the latter would, since that time, have been accepted as having been made by the painter. It is suggested then, either that the deed is an outright fake, or that it may be the result of a confusion of this kind, either by the person who gave it to Salazar y Castro, or by Salazar y Castro himself<sup>27</sup>.

It is now suggested then that while it may be, in order to query the truth of Ribera's noble origins specified, on the Vatican deed of 1626, and by the Gran Corte de la Vicaria of 1646; and the painter's personal claim to noble kinship, (notwithstanding that the first two stem *from the highest clerical and legal sources*, and the last *from the painter himself*); and indeed the subsequent correctness of corroborative statements of his biographers to which reference has been made, to dismiss them all out of hand surely requires more solid evidence than that produced by Viñes in 1923 (some two hundred and seventy odd years after the painter's death), which is namely *one* baptismal certificate issued *in different names, different province and country*, and indeed *different year* to those provided by the early independent biographers.

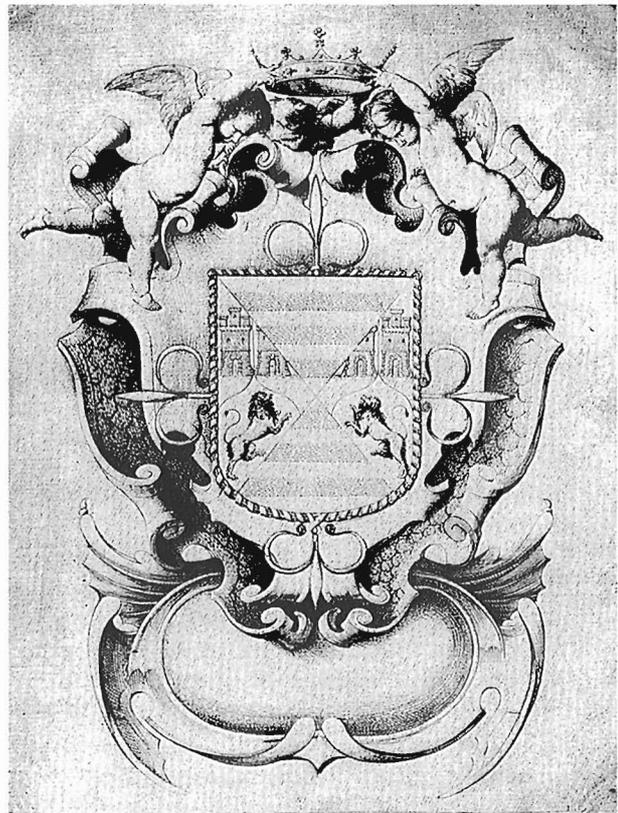
It is proposed then, so far as Ribera is concerned, that the expression 'de nobili genere procreatus' on the Vatican deed should no longer be dismissed as a mere documentary formula, but should be accepted at face value as meaning (and indeed deliberately so) that the painter was 'of noble stock'. The primary *Coat of Arms of the Ribera family* has been reproduced (on the cover) and also an engraving of the *Coat of Arms of the Viceroy of Naples, Fernando Afán de Ribera, Duke of Alcala and Marquess of Tarifa*. (4) This latter engraving was produced at least in part by Ribera himself<sup>28</sup>.

#### *Connections of the painter Jusepe de Ribera with persons of the noble Ribera family*

Apart then from documentary sources is there any circumstantial evidence to support the contention that Ribera came from a noble background? Several factors might be considered not the least of which is, for instance, the appointment of Ribera as Court-Painter in Naples, in preference to his rivals, during the 1616-1620 viceroyalty of the Duke of Osuna, who was married to Catalina Enriquez de Ribera.

Several historians have reported that Ribera was appointed a *Cavaliere* in the Order of Christ of Portugal through the good offices of the Viceroy of Naples<sup>29</sup>. It was normal for an applicant to have influential sponsors and Chenault, in her article reproducing Ribera's letter of application and deed of acceptance in the Order in 1626, noted that the Ambassador to Rome in that year (and subsequently Viceroy of Naples from 1629-31) to whom one assumes the historians refer, was Fernando Afán de Ribera, Duke of Alcalá. As Ambassador to the Holy See (or perhaps Ambassador-Extraordinary, as was more probably the case) Afán de Ribera could well have been involved in this process<sup>30</sup>.

This inevitably raises the question however, if the painter was not a kinsman of Fernando Afán de Ribera, Duke of Alcalá, of why the duke, or his



4. *The Coat of Arms of Fernando Afán de Ribera, Duke of Alcala and Marquess of Tarifa.*

predecessor as viceroy, the Duke of Alba, raised no objection to the 'noble origin' of the painter explicitly specified on the Vatican document. It seems unlikely that a Spanish grandee would have allowed so overt a claim to membership of the illustrious Ribera family to have been put forward, had it been in any way spurious. (Witnessed proof of several generations of nobility had in all cases to be provided by applicants claiming to be noble.)<sup>31</sup> It should be remembered in addition that it was common practice during the seventeenth century for an important family to arrange for a male member (not in line to inherit a title) to be appointed a *Cavaliere*, which was an ennoblement in its own right<sup>32</sup>. This could perhaps have been the painter's situation.

Four years later Prince Don Luis Moncado, the son-in-law of Afán de Ribera, acted as godfather at the baptism on 22 April 1630 of Ribera's daughter Margarita<sup>33</sup>. Prince Moncado was three times grandee of Spain and became successively Viceroy of Sicily, Sardinia, and Valencia.

Yet another event of note is the presence of Don Cristobal de Ribera and his son Don Parafán de Ribera, relatives of the former Viceroy, together with the painter and his son Antonio in 1646, as witnesses at the wedding of Ribera's brother-in-law Gabriele Azzolino<sup>34</sup>.

De Dominici's additional statement that Ribera's brother took a letter of recommendation to the Count of Olivares may perhaps be viewed differently, for the mother of Enrique de Guzmán, 2nd Count of Olivares (Ambassador to Rome 1582-91, and Viceroy of Naples 1595-99) was Francisca de Ribera Niño, of the same family<sup>35</sup>.

Aside then from answering the all too rarely posed question of how a cobbler's son obtained the funds for his apprenticeship and extensive travels, membership of so illustrious a family could explain how, in the first instance, the painter obtained introductions to Spanish allies such as the Farnese family by 1611, the Doria family by c. 1616, the Viceroy of Naples by c. 1616, and to Prince Philiberto of Savoy, grandson of Philip II of Spain, by 1624<sup>36</sup>.

It is also easier to understand the revelations of contemporary Italian and Spanish sources, confirmed by De Matteis and De Dominici in the eighteenth century, and incorrectly denied by Prota-Giurleo in 1953 of how (on his appointment as Viceroy and arrival in Naples in 1648) Don Juan of Austria, Philip IV's nineteen-year-old legitimized son [5] became a regular visitor to Ribera's home, and on such close terms with the family that he succeeded in seducing and fathering a child, the Excelentissima Doña Margarita of Austria, by Ribera's youngest daughter, Maria Francesca de Ribera. Ribera's grand-daughter was raised and passed most of her life in the *Convento de las Descalzas Real* in Madrid, where her room and portraits of her [6, 7] remain to this day<sup>37</sup>.

In 1651 Ribera petitioned Philip IV on behalf of his recently widowed eldest daughter Margarita. The king, who by then shared a grandchild with the painter, accorded Margarita a 'Real Privilegio' entitling her eventual new husband to be awarded an important government post as soon as one became available<sup>38</sup>. Such direct and fruitful communication with the monarch also indicates Ribera to have been, in the royal view, of special regard.

In summary, it is unlikely in seventeenth century Spanish circles that the son of a Spanish cobbler would readily have been afforded distinguished social opportunities, yet Ribera moved in illustrious circles from a very youthful age.

The documentary evidence attesting to his noble lineage should therefore be considered seriously and, if the reasoning outlined here is judged correct, then Jusepe de Ribera may be seen to have been an outstanding product of the kingdom of Naples, and the Játivan baptismal record should henceforth, like Piltdown man before it, be regarded merely as an amusing diversion, and cast finally and forever into the genealogical dustbin.



5. Don Juan of Austria, the legitimized son of King Philip IV of Spain, and father of Ribera's grand-daughter, the Serenissima Señora Sor Margarita de la Cruz y Austria. Equestrian portrait by Jusepe de Ribera, c. 1648. Canvas 319 x 251 m.

*Part two. His travels and apprenticeship. A reassessment of the biographical data*

A study of the twentieth century literature on Jusepe de Ribera indicates that much information from the early sources, relating to his youth and training, has been selectively omitted or denied, and merits reconsideration.

These omissions may be because Ribera's biographers, superficially at least, seem occasionally to conflict. When studied closely, however, these sources may in fact be found generally to complement, rather than contradict each other. So far as the painter's early travels are concerned Celano noted that "Ribera left Puglia and after learning the principles of his art in Naples went on to the Academy in Rome to perfect them". This first indication that Ribera studied in Naples before Rome is significant<sup>39</sup>.

Paolo de Matteis confirmed that Ribera, as a boy, went with his father from Puglia to Naples, adding, where "he became a disciple of Caravaggio from whom he learnt his style and the perfect imitation of simple nature". De Matteis noted "He then travelled to Rome and Lombardy"<sup>40</sup>.

De Matteis, it should be repeated, was twice the pupil of Luca Giordano who, in his turn, had

served a nine year apprenticeship under Ribera. Bearing in mind his intimacy with Ribera, it is evident that Giordano could have relayed to De Matteis, more accurately probably than anyone else, the Spaniard's artistic training<sup>41</sup>.

De Dominici repeated that "Ribera travelled from Puglia to Naples, and thence to Rome where he learnt much at the Farnese Gallery". Ribera would of course have admired the works of the Carracci at the Farnese Gallery. De Dominici also precised "He then went on to Parma and Modena before returning eventually to Naples and that, while in Lombardy, he partially earned his living by producing a book of engravings after Guercino, whom he greatly esteemed. Parma is only a hundred or so kilometres from Cento, which is in turn near Guido Reni's home town of Bologna, and it may be that Ribera met both these painters at this time<sup>42</sup>. Lanzi (1795) further confirmed ".after Naples..Ribera went to Rome where he studied Raphael and Annibale; and Correggio in Modena and Parma.. These studies helped him to invent and draw better than Caravaggio"<sup>43</sup>.

From these reports it seems the painter travelled by a logical route from Puglia to Naples, and thence on to Rome, Parma, Modena, and perhaps



6. *The Profession of St. Clare*. The painter has used as his model for the saint la *Serenissima Sor Margarita de la Cruz y Austria*, product of the illicit union of Don Juan of Austria with Ribera's daughter, Maria Francesca de Ribera (b. 1636). Ascribed to Claudio Coello (1642-1693). Possibly painted in 1666 when this grand-daughter of the painter Jusepe de Ribera, at the age of sixteen, made her own profession of faith, and entered the Order of the Descalced. *Convent of the Descalced, Madrid* (copyright Patrimonio Nacional - Madrid).



7. *Portrait of La Serenissima Sor Margarita de la Cruz y Austria*. Grand-daughter of King Philip IV of Spain and the painter Jusepe de Ribera. Ascribed to: *Matias de Torres*. *Convent of the Descalced, Madrid*. (Copyright Patrimonio Nacional - Madrid).

elsewhere in Lombardy, before returning to Naples (presumably via Rome, where he was recorded in 1615-16), and taking up the position of Court Painter to the Viceroy. (Ribera was back in Naples by July 1616, and was married there on 10 November of that same year).

The small signed copper painting of *Hecate* [8] which, according to its inscription, was executed after a missing painting by Raphael, may be an example of Ribera's studies from Raphael<sup>44</sup>. This painting by Ribera came from the Spanish royal collection, and was given by Ferdinand VII of Spain to the 1st Duke of Wellington. The *Hecate* was shown at the National Gallery, London, during 1993-4, while Apsley House, the erstwhile mansion of the Duke of Wellington, was being refurbished.

De Dominici noted furthermore that, while still in Puglia, the young Ribera was attracted to drawing through a juvenile acquaintanceship with a painter's son who brought with him, to the school which they both attended, the basic elements of draftsmanship, such as drawings of noses, mouths, and ears<sup>45</sup>.

Baldinucci records Ribera's early master as Giovanni Bernardino (whom Milicua has identified as Ribera's eventual father-in-law Giovanni Bernardino Azzolino)<sup>46</sup>. Azzolino was not merely a painter but also a noted sculptor and silversmith, and had two sons the older of whom Gabriele Azzolino was for many years his father's principal collaborator. Perhaps it was he who attended school with Ribera.

Giovanni Bernardino Azzolino did not, as Mancini noted, come from Sicily, but from Lecce province in the Puglia region of Italy, where his biographers note Ribera to have been born<sup>47</sup>. Azzolino was married to the daughter of a nobleman. He was also godfather to a child of the princely Doria family of Genoa, which illustrates his own social standing. His daughters also made distinguished marriages<sup>48</sup>.

Is there any corroboration of Paolo de Matteis' assertion that Ribera studied under Caravaggio, and is he likely to have been with the great Lombard painter, after the latter's arrival in Naples? While this may never be answered to universal satisfaction it is significant that Ludovico Carracci and Giulio Mancini, respectively in 1618 and 1618-21, clearly designated Ribera as among the most able of Caravaggio's followers<sup>49</sup>.

Assuming furthermore that Ribera's travels followed the routes outlined above it must be assumed that the artistically well-connected Carracci and Mancini would have known that the Spaniard had been in Naples at the same time as Caravaggio.

Several prominent biographers since De Matteis (c.1700) may be seen to have concurred with De Matteis on this point. These include, in date order, the Frenchman De Piles who, in his *Abregé de la Vie des Peintres* (1715), noted "*Ribera was... the*

*pupil of Caravaggio*. He painted in a strong, naturalistic manner like his master..but his works were not as mellow"<sup>50</sup>.

The Spaniard, Palomino, (1724) described Ribera as being a disciple of Ribalta in Spain before studying at the Academy in Rome. (This remark will be reconsidered shortly). Palomino also stated "He then went to Italy where... continuing his studies *and applying himself at the school of Caravaggio* he advanced to supreme eminence in his art"<sup>51</sup>.

The words "at the school of Caravaggio" are ambiguous, and should probably not be interpreted too literally. Nonetheless, given that Ribera's youth overlapped Caravaggio's later years (and considering also De Matteis's background, and confirmatory evidence), the acquaintanceship of the two painters during Ribera's formative years seems likely.

So far as Ribera's apprenticeship with Caravaggio is concerned the sources already cited are by no means alone, for De Dominici (1742) confirmed De Matteis's and De Piles's assertions, adding "Ribera went to Naples where he was *taken by his father to Caravaggio* who was at that time active and famous there, and where *under the direction of Caravaggio* he advanced and perfected his drawing and thus laid the basis for improvement of his painting"<sup>52</sup>.

J. Richard (1781) also wrote "*He (Ribera) was formed as a youth at the school of Caravaggio*. It is from this master that Lo Spagnoletto acquired his vigorous style"<sup>53</sup>.

The last of Ribera's eighteenth century biographers to be cited is L. Lanzi (1795) whose information precised: "*Ribera worked under Caravaggio in Naples when this latter was exiled from Rome around 1606*"<sup>54</sup>.

Furthermore, in his biography of Ribera, Lanzi added the footnote "Caravaggio had *another* important pupil in Mario Minnitti, from Siracuse, who worked under him in Rome"<sup>55</sup>. This confirms that Caravaggio, like other seventeenth century masters, had his own pupils although, given his peripatetic and erratic lifestyle, it is unlikely that he could have retained any for long.

Later, in the nineteenth century Descamps (1843) wrote: "at the school of Caravaggio he (Ribera) became very able in a short time, *but the death of his master* determined him to leave Naples"<sup>56</sup>. If Palomino's account of Jusepe de Ribera's kinship with the noble Ribera family is true (a statement supported by documents at the Vatican, and in Naples) his family would have held considerable sway in Naples. And if, as De Dominici has suggested, Ribera's father was the Adjutant at Naples castle at the time, his powerful influence could surely have ensured that his son was taught by the finest master then painting in the city.

Caravaggio was in Naples from at least October of 1606 until mid- summer of 1607, and received important commissions from the Count of

Benavende (Viceroy of Naples from 1603-10), the De Francis family, the Pio Monte della Misericordia, Nicoló Radolovitch and others. He also returned to Naples in late 1609 and stayed until July 1610<sup>57</sup>.

Having then to execute so many commissions during so short a period, Caravaggio would have needed a studio and probably some assistants. Given such circumstances it is quite possible that the various biographers were recording a significant moment in Ribera's training.

Throughout the twentieth century it has been fashionable to believe that Caravaggio was a lone agent, without any personal school as such but, in consideration of the biographical data outlined above, this matter should now perhaps be seriously reconsidered.

It has after all been shown that in Naples and elsewhere in Europe, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the suggestion that Caravaggio should have had pupils was perfectly acceptable, and the mystique which surrounds him has built up particularly during the twentieth century.

So far as Palomino's allusion to Ribera's training under Ribalta is concerned, he also worked with Giordano at the Court of Spain and thus, though rarely accorded much credence today, this statement should not be ignored.

One should perhaps consider whether Palomino confused the Ribera/ Ribalta connection, for Ribalta's *patron*, (not *pupil*), was the noble Juan de Ribera, Patriarch Archbishop of Valencia, whose

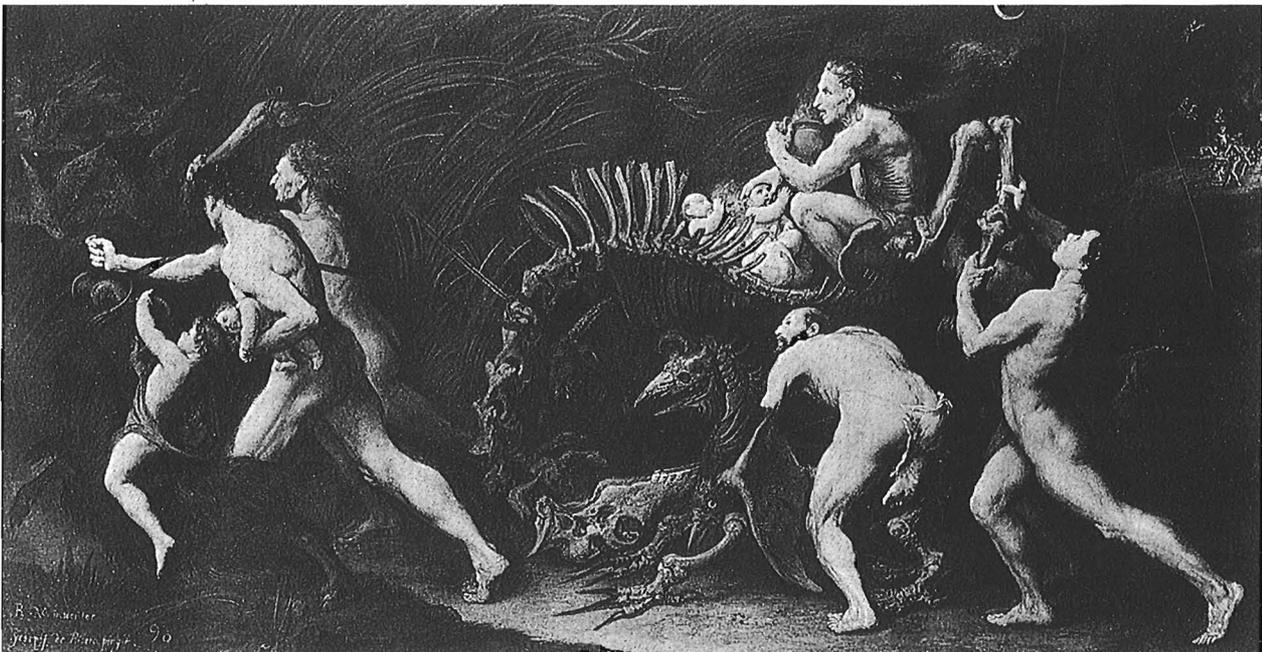
father was Viceroy at Naples from 1559-71. On the other hand one could as easily argue that this proven Ribera/Ribalta connection might have encouraged the painter to visit his kinsman's protégé.

It is clear, in short, that one cannot totally exclude that, as a boy, perhaps after the expiry of one of his officer-father's terms of duty, at Lecce or Gallipoli, (and prior to the assumption of his final command in Naples) the young Ribera travelled with his father to Valencia, and met Ribalta.

Had the painter made such a boyhood trip to his ancestral city, (for Palomino's account not to conflict with those of Ribera's other biographers) such a trip must have taken place prior to Caravaggio's arrival in Naples, i.e. pre 1606.

In 1605 Ribera would have been twelve years of age (according to De Dominici) or fourteen, according to the Jativan deeds. Either age would of course fit well for such a youthful voyage. Even had he made such a trip, however, an eye as discerning as Ribera's would immediately have observed that there was far more to learn from the masters of the Italian peninsula (some of whose paintings he could have found in the archbishop's and other collections in Valencia), than from any painters active in Spain during the first decade of the seventeenth century, including Ribalta. Such an immediate comparison would almost certainly have convinced him, if seriously concerned to improve his art, as no doubt he was, to return to Italy.

Palomino's information in this regard could then be correct and, as a fellow Spaniard, it would be



8. Jusepe de Ribera. *Hecate*. On Copper 33 x 63 cm. After a lost painting by Raphael. (Subject engraved by Agostino de' Musi). Apsley House, London. Provenance: Spanish Royal Collection.

understandable for him to emphasize the Spanish aspect of Ribera's pre-Caravaggio training, and for the Neapolitan biographers, in their turn (and assuming they knew of it) to have considered it irrelevant, and hardly worthy of mention.

So far as Ribera's studying with various masters is concerned it was not uncommon at that time for well-connected and ambitious painters to enjoy several apprenticeships. Luca Giordano, for instance, studied under Ribera for many years, and then under Pietro da Cortona. And Paolo de Matteis studied under Luca Giordano, Giovanni Maria Morandi, and then for a second time under Luca Giordano<sup>58</sup>.

So far as other influences on Ribera are concerned Baldinucci (1681) noted "When in Rome, Ribera copied Reni who taught him fresco painting" Baldinucci added "Because he was such a fine draftsman he was appointed director of the Academy several times"<sup>59</sup>. Ribera is of course believed to have produced frescoes in Parma<sup>60</sup>. It is impossible at this stage to verify Ribera's directorships of the Academy as many relevant records are missing, particularly for the years 1600-1634. (He would have been at least forty-one years old by 1634). It nonetheless seems eminently plausible<sup>61</sup>.

Some recent scholars have stated that Ribera's brother, Juan de Ribera, was also a painter but this conclusion seems to have been arrived at through a misinterpretation of the Latin text which preceded Juan's affidavit of 1622<sup>62</sup>.

Having now clearly established the Caravaggio/Ribera link (through literary sources at least) the next obvious step must surely be to study some of Ribera's earlier works and the debt they owe to Caravaggio.

#### Endnotes to Parts 1 & 2

<sup>1</sup> The baptismal record of a *Joan Jusepe Ribera* the son of a cobbler, on 17 February 1591, in Játiva, Spain, was published by Gonzalo Viñes in *La verdadera partida de bautismo del Españoleto y otros datos de familia* Archivo de Arte Valenciano, 9, 1923, pp. 18-24, and once again in the 1992 Naples and Metropolitan Museum *Ribera* exhibition catalogues. The most significant records from this latter publication are reprinted in note 24 below.

August Mayer in his *Jusepe de Ribera* (p. 184) published in Leipsig in 1923, expressed his belief that the painter was born in Jativa, Spain but, in his final article on Ribera in *Historia de la Pintura Española* in 1942, noted that the painter was probably of noble stock.

In 1952 and 1970, respectively, Neil MacLaren and Alan Braham indicated reservations as to whether the Jativan baptismal record applied to the painter. N. MacLaren, *National Gallery Catalogues. The Spanish School*, London 1952, p. 55; and A. Braham *Spanish Paintings at the National Gallery*, London 1970, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> *Jusepe de Ribera* Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 1992, p. 240. This catalogue is henceforth referred to as: *Ribera* N.Y. 1992.

<sup>3</sup> V. Pacelli *Processo tra Ribera ed un Comittente*, Napoli Nobilissima Vol. XVIII January-February MCMLXXIX, p. 28; *Ribera* N.Y. 1992, p. 248.

<sup>4</sup> P.J. Mariette *Abeceano* (Published 1851-60), Vol.3, p. 273. Mariette had seen this letter from the painter to Langlois "in which Ribera requested that Langlois should find out whether in the diocese of Ausch (sic) there were people who bore the name de la Rivière". Mariette added the opinion that Lo Spagnoletto did this "so that he could associate them with his own family in order to magnify its glory". ("Ce mémoire avait pour objet de s'informer si dans le diocèse D'Ausch (sic) il ne se trouvoit pas alors des personnes de nom de la Riviere, que l'Espagnolet auroit voulu associer à sa famille pour en tirer plus d'éclat").

For information about the publishers François and Nicolas Langlois see: J. Brown, *Jusepe de Ribera, Grabador*, Valencia 1989, p. 40. Ribera's name was spelt 'Josefo di Riviera' on an invitation to the Academy of 27 October 1613 and 'Giuseppe Riviera' on the Rome censuses of April 1615 and March 1616. *Ribera* N.Y. 1992, p. 232. Similar spellings of his surname also appear on later documents.

<sup>5</sup> La Chenaye, Desbois & Badier, *Dictionnaire de la Noblesse* Paris 1867, Vol.17 1872, pp. 133 and 140. This information (illustrating the links of the *de la Rivière* families of France with important Spanish families) is reported here, and again by M. de Saint-Allais, *Nobiliare Universel de France*, Paris 1873-4, Vol.8, pp. 358-362, & Vol. 11, pp. 363-74.

<sup>6</sup> Antonio Palomino y Velasco, *El Museo Pictorico*, Madrid 1724, pp. 310/11.

<sup>7</sup> E. Benezit, *Dictionnaire des Peintres*, Paris 1954, Vol. 6, p. 498.

<sup>8</sup> *Ribera* N.Y. 1992, p. 240.

<sup>9</sup> Paolo de Matteis's biography of Ribera of circa 1700 was reprinted by Bernardo De Dominicis in the volume mentioned hereunder (pp. 21/2). Bernardo De Dominicis, *Vite de' Pittori, Scultori ed Architetti Napoletani*, 1742, Vol. III, p. 2. According to Mayer, Ribera's father was named *Antonio Simone de Ribera*. This is apparently confirmed by De Dominicis's earlier information that the painter named his eldest son after the grandfather, for Ribera's first son was named *Antonio Simone Giosepe* de Ribera (Giosepe presumably after the painter himself). The painter also named his third son Antonio (Francisco Antonio di Rivera). August L. Mayer *Jusepe de Ribera "Lo Spagnoletto"* Leipsig, 1923, p. 185; & B. De Dominicis, cit. (Ed. 1844) p. 139. *Ribera* N.Y. 1992, pp. 241-4.

On Ribera's November 10, 1616 marriage contract his father's name is more briefly written as "Simonen de Ribera". *Ribera* N.Y. 1992, p. 232. As so little other documentation relating to the painter's father has yet surfaced archivists should be encouraged to search for deeds referring both to "Antonio" and "Simone" de Ribera when researching the painter's immediate forebear. Ribera's father was described as "resident in Spain" on this marriage contract. He may have retired back to Spain by that date; however, as a serving soldier whose posting changed often (he is recorded to have served in Gallipoli, Lecce and Naples) it is probable, for official documents of this sort, that he would have been regarded as "resident in Spain". A claim to residence in Naples might have caused inheritance and other bureaucratic disadvantages.

Mayer (citing Giulio Cesare Infantino *Lecce Sacro*, Lecce 1633) identifies as a possible candidate for Ribera's father "Antonio Ribera, Chatelain of Trezzo and Supreme Commander of the Spanish Army in Savoy and Piedmont in 1592". Mayer, cit. p. 186. One of the painter's most important dedications (on an engraving of *The Martyrdom of St. Bartholomew* of 1624) is to Prince Philiberto of Savoy, the grandson of Philip II of Spain. The painter, therefore, like his suggested father, Antonio Ribera, also evidently enjoyed an important connection with the House of Savoy.

On 3 July 1602 the baptism was recorded at the Parish of S.

Marco dei Tessitori (di Palazzo), of Anna Ribera, the daughter of *Simone Rivera* and *Vittoria Bnchi de Rivera*. It has been suggested that Anna was the painter's sister and these were his true parents. Caterina Azzolino lived in this parish and, later on, the painter and his family also.

<sup>10</sup> It would have been unthinkable for an ex-cobbler to have been given command over noblemen and their sons.

<sup>11</sup> B. De Dominici, *cit.* (Ed. 1971) p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> (Regulations etc.) "L'altra stabiliva le prove de Nobiltà, non solo del Cavaliere, ma dei lui Antenati.." "...the other (regulation) established proof of Nobility, not only of the Cavaliere, but also of his ancestors". Bernardo Giustiniani, *Historie Cronologiche dell'Origine degl'Ordini Militare di tutte le Religioni Cavalleresche*, 1692, Vol. 1, p. 4.

"Niuno poteva essere ammesso senza provare la sua discendenza da una famiglia, *ab antico nobile e cattolica*". (Nobody could be admitted without proving his descendance *from a longstanding noble and Catholic family*). Luigi Cibrario, *Descrizione Storica degli Ordini Cavallereschi*.

"Catholics only of noble descent can be admitted to the Order". *The Order of Christ* (of Portugal). S.M. Tagore *The Orders of Knighthood British and Foreign*, Calcutta 1883, p. 80.

<sup>13</sup> Giustiniani explained (specifically concerning humble appointments in the Papal Order of Christ of Portugal, to which Ribera belonged) "questi non sono obligati alla formazione di prove di Nobiltà..sicché sono chiamati Cavalieri di Brevetto, cioè *fatti per Breve Ponteficio*. Quindi alcune volte i Sommi Pontefici, *spediti i brevi a favore dei supplicanti*, rimettono la creazioni di essi ai Prelati ordinari delle loro Città." (These exceptions are not obliged to prove their nobility..and are known as Licensed Knights. Thus occasionally, *the Papal letter in favour of the supplicant having been sent*, it was left to the local Prelate to make the applicant a knight). Giustiniani further explains how *following instructions contained in a Papal Brief of Innocent XI* he himself had acted as sponsor in the creation of a knight (or Cavaliere) in this Order ( *cit.* Vol. 2, p. 553).

<sup>14</sup> The King's Orders of 27 and 28 November 1659 concerning Velásquez are relevant. The latter states: "Por quanto yo hiche merced a Don Diego de Silva Velásquez ...no ser el su sodicho noble por línea paterna y materna, y su Santidad ha dispensado para que, *sin embargo deste defecto, pueda recevir el ávito.. etc.*" *Velásquez*, Instituto Diego Velásquez, Madrid 1960, pp. 293. (Briefly: As *Velásquez* was not of noble stock the Pope had given a dispensation, to allow him to join the Order of Santiago.)

Caravaggio was made a Knight of the Order of St. John under similar circumstances, and by a papal authorization W. Freedlander *Caravaggio studies* 1969, pp. 288-9

<sup>15</sup> Vide: Jeanne Chenault, *Jusepe de Ribera and the Order of Christ*, BurlM 1976, pp. 305-7; & *Ribera* N.Y. 1992, p. 240.

<sup>16</sup> Giulio Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla Pittura*, c. 1617-21. L. Salerno (reprint) Rome 1957. Francesco Scannelli. *Il Microcosmo della Pittura*, Cesna 1657. (Reprinted Milan 1966). L. Scaramuccia, *Le finezze de' pennelli italiani*, Pavia 1674.

Giovanni Pietro Bellori, *Vite dei pittori, scultori etc*, Rome 1672. Filippo Baldinucci, *Notizie dei Professori etc*, Florence 1681.

<sup>17</sup> C Celano, *Notizie del bello, dell'antico, e del curioso, della città di Napoli*, Naples 1692, p. 696. & B. De Dominici *cit.* 1742, pp. 1 & 21. Celano states the painter to have been born in the city of Lecce whilst De Matteis and De Dominici report his birthplace as Gallipoli (in the province of Lecce). It seems likely that Celano (or his transcriber) confused the town and province of the same name. It may be significant in this context that Ribera's daughter Margarita, after her marriage in 1647 to Leonardo Sersale, a high official in the Spanish employ, transferred from Naples to Lecce.

In 1647-8 Sersale was responsible for suppressing a revolt against the Spaniards in Lecce. In 1680 the diarist

Domenico Conforte reported moreover that Ribera's eldest son Antonio was appointed *Preside della Provincia di Lecce* for eight years. The Ribera family may thus be seen to have retained close links with this province well after the painter's death. U. Prota-Giurleo, *Pittori Napoletani del Seicento*, Naples 1953, pp. 97 & 114.

<sup>18</sup> Celano published one paragraph on Ribera, De Matteis an entire page, and De Dominici twenty-four pages. De Dominici is often criticized by later historians who, in many cases, seem either not to have studied him in depth, or to mis-quote him. A principal offender in this regard was Prota-Giurleo who disparaged De Dominici in an article of 1953 entitled *La Fine di Una Leggenda*. Although Prota-Giurleo's article contained a number of errors and, in every case cited by Prota-Giurleo, as this study proves, De Dominici did not in fact have his information wrong, this article is still regularly cited against De Dominici. U. Prota-Giurleo. *Pittori Napoletani del Seicento*, Naples 1953.

<sup>19</sup> A. Palomino, *cit.*, p. 313.

<sup>20</sup> Mariette wrote: "Le même auteur (De Dominici) prétend que l'Espagnolet n'est point né en Espagne, mais en Italie, d'un pere qui était Espagnol. J'ai peine à le croire. De Ribera, sur plusieurs de ses planches, ne dit seulement qu'il est Espagnol; il spécifie jusqu'au lieu qui l'a vu naître, et qui est Xátiva, dans le royaume de Valence. Un témoignage aussi positif que celui-ci est bien difficile à détruire". *Abeceario de P.J. Mariette*, Paris 1857/8.

<sup>21</sup> Mayer wrote: "Dass Ribera in Jatiba geboren ist, kann keinem Zweifel unterliegen. Er selbst nennt sich auf dem Navidadbild von 1640 (Escorial) "español valenciano de la ciudad de Xátiva", bezeichnet sich öfters als Setabensis..fast stets als valenciano und hispanus oder español" *cit.* p. 184. Mayer has thus taken this Spanish inscription of Ribera to mean that the painter was born in Xátiva, whereas the maximum that can in fact be deduced from it is that he was a citizen of that town. See also note 1, Paragraph 2.

<sup>22</sup> See note 1. This baptismal record is reprinted in note 24.

<sup>23</sup> Assuming always that this has been correctly transcribed, the 'de' is missed out on the baptismal certificate of 17 July 1631 of Ribera's second daughter Anna Luisa. *Ribera* N.Y. 1992, p. 243. The writer has not come across any other official contemporary documents, either in Italian or Spanish, where the 'de' in Ribera's name is similarly omitted.

<sup>24</sup> Ribera's father's forename is recorded as *Simonen* on the painter's marriage contract of 10 November 1616. His brothers' names '*Girolamo*' and *Giovanni* (or 'Juan') figure on Roman census documents of April 1615 and March 1616, and on an affidavit made by 'Juan' in Naples, on 13 March 1622. *Ribera* N.Y. 1992, pp. 232 and 238. The significant Viñes nuptial and baptismal records are reprinted hereunder: (See also *Ribera* N.Y. 1992, p. 232).

January 13 1588: The marriage was recorded of Simon Ribera, cobbler, to Margarita Cuco:

"A 13 De Janer 1588, yo Nofre Juan Llopis Vicari factis Tribus solitus monitionibus y estant certificat De com se feren in St. marti de Valencia ab lletres Del Sor. official Scolano dades en Valencia a 23 De octubre proposat de cum nullibi appareret impedimentum, esposi ab paraules De present a *simo Ribera sabater de Valencia y a Margarita Cuco* filla De pere Cuco, en la sglesia de Sta. Tecla y statim los doni las benedictions nuptials presents pro testibus lo magnific. Frances borell, ciutada y hierny colomer y altres".

October 1 1588: The baptism was recorded of *Visent Miguel Geroni*, eldest son of Simón Ribera and Margarita Cuco: "Lo primer de octubre 1588 yo quintana vicari e bategat a *visent miguel geroni fill de simo ribera sabater y de margalida cucona fon compare Frances borell ciutada y compare Isabet Juan vizerra viuda de nofre abril*".

February 17 1591: Baptismal record of Joan Josep Ribera, full brother of Visent Miguel Geroni:

"Dit dia de diset de Febrer 1591- mosen quintana vicari bateja a Joan Josep fill de Simo ribera y margarida cucco conjuges foren padres misser pere vezerra prevere y hieronyma vezerra donzella filla de misser vezerra generos".

May 12 1593: Baptism of Juan, younger brother to Joan Josep Ribera:

"A 12 de maig 1593. Jo onofre Julbi bategi a juan fill symo ribera y de margarita cuquo coniuges compares Juseph gavila y margarita daroca donzella".

December 8 1597. Marriage of Simon Ribera, cobbler, to Angela Ferrandiza. (It has been assumed that this is the same person who had married Margarita Cuco in 1588 but he was not described here, as was the norm in such cases, as a widower). It might therefore be another Simon Ribera. "A 8 mosen christotol ferrandiz de licentia del Sor. official soler sposa en sa casa iuxta Decretum Concilii Tridentini a Simo Ribera çabater ab Angela Ferrandiza donzella testes Hieroni Vezerra canonge y mosen (?) pavia vedell y Frances boters reberen es benedictions nuptials".

February 4 1607: Another marriage of Simon Ribera, cobbler, (widower) to Margarita Anna Selleres (widow). "Dicto die Jo Pere Juan Albero Vicari desposi ab paraules de present a Simo Ribera Sabater Viudo y a margarita anna Selleres Viuda de Miguel pareja tots habitants de Xátiva factis tribus canonicis monitionibus de llicencia obtesa y dada en Xátiva a XXXI de giner 1607 Testes mestre Juan redolat Sastre y Pere alemany mercader y molts altres".

<sup>25</sup> Ribera N.Y. 1992, p. 245.

<sup>26</sup> Ribera N.Y. 1992, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup> See C. Felton, *Jusepe de Ribera: A Catalogue Raisonné* University of Pittsburgh 1971, p. 9, No.8. Felton was uncertain about the veracity of this genealogical note, and noted that Margarita Selleres was the cobbler's third wife. He accepted, were it genuine however, that it thoroughly established Ribera's lineage and nationality.

<sup>28</sup> Ribera N.Y. 1992, p. 188

<sup>29</sup> B. De Dominici, *cit.*, Ed. 1742, p. 18, et al.

<sup>30</sup> Jeanne Chenault, *BurlM* May 1976, p. 76. Trapier also recorded the Duke of Alcalá to have been Ambassador to Rome at that date. E. Trapier, *Ribera*, New York 1952, pp. 23-4. Alcalá's name is not however confirmed as Ambassador on Pérez Sánchez's list of Ambassadors to the Vatican and Viceroy of Naples during the seventeenth century. Pérez Sánchez moreover notes there, that the Viceroy of Naples in the years 1644-6 was Juan Alfonso Enriquez de Ribera (which should actually read Juan Alfonso Enriquez de Cabrera). A.E. Pérez Sánchez, *Pintura Italiana del Siglo xvii en España*, Madrid, 1965, Appendix pp. 607/8. (I am indebted to Sir Denis Mahon for this clarification.) After serving as Viceroy of Naples the Duke of Alcalá was appointed Viceroy of Sicily. He was a most prominent personality and there is little doubt that whilst in Rome, he occasionally acted as ambassador-extraordinary for Philip IV.

<sup>31</sup> As noted before Palomino, who was involved in Spanish Court circles and is unlikely to have stated so lightly, reports Ribera to have been a member of the illustrious Ribera family. Whilst there were several branches of the Ribera family already in the seventeenth century it seems, so far as the present writer has been able to ascertain, that they descended from the same source. Massimo Stanzione, on his application for appointment to the Portuguese Order of Christ, was sponsored by the Count of Oñate, Spanish Ambassador to Rome from June 1626 - September 1627, and Vulpiano Volpi, Archbishop of Novara and Segretario dei Brevi. Stanzione's noble origin like that of Mattia Preti, but unlike that of Ribera, has rarely been questioned.

Schütze & Willette, *M. Stanzione* 1992, pp. 49 & 65. *Mattia Preti*, Fratelli Palombi, 1989, p. 63.

<sup>32</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1973, Vol. 5, p. 475. Reference "Chevalier" (or Cavaliere). In 1639 Ribera's younger son Francesco de Ribera was appointed "l'Homme d'Arma" by Ramiro de Guzmán, Duca di Medina de las Torres (Viceroy of Naples 1638-47). This appointment may well have been secured by the painter to enhance this son's status. *Ribera* N.Y. 1992, p. 245.

<sup>33</sup> *Ribera* N.Y. 1992, p. 242.

<sup>34</sup> Prota-Giurleo, *cit.*, 1953, p. 129.

<sup>35</sup> B. De Dominici, *cit.* (Ed. 1971), p. 2. De Dominici notes that this trip to Rome took place after the disgrace and death of Caravaggio, i.e. post July 1610. Gaspar de Guzmán, the famous Count-duke of Olivares was the son of this viceroy and ex-ambassador to Rome. The count-duke was himself offered the ambassadorship to Rome in 1611 but refused the position. Although no documentary evidence has yet come to light of a journey of the Count-duke as ambassador extraordinary to Rome around 1611, the possibility cannot be totally excluded that he travelled there to assess the position prior to declining it, and that it was to him that Ribera's brother presented his letter. He too was known as Count Olivares in those years. His ducal title was only conferred upon him by Philip IV in 1625. ADI *Montesclaros Mss.* lib. 31, Olivares to Montesclaros, 24 August 1626.

Ribera retained contacts with several members of the Guzmán family, many of whom were keen collectors of his works. These included Manuel de Guzmán, Count of Monteray (Viceroy of Naples 1631-44) and Diego Felipe de Guzman, Marquis de Leganés. *Ribera Electa*, Naples, 1992, pp. 64-8.

<sup>36</sup> Prince Philiberto of Savoy was appointed Viceroy of Sicily in 1621. See also footnote 9, paragraph 6.

<sup>37</sup> B. De Dominici (Ed. 1971), p. 20; & A. Mayer *cit.* pp. 12/13. E. Trapier, *Ribera*, 1952, p. 203. De Dominici refers to this daughter as "Maria Rosa", which would seem to be a simple mistranscription of "Maria Francesca" (the true name of Ribera's youngest daughter). Maria Francesca was barely 12 years old in 1648 and, for this and other less clear reasons, Mayer and Prota-Giurleo suggested incorrectly that De Dominici was wrong to single her out but had meant instead either a niece or an older daughter of Ribera, named Margarita (who in fact married Leonardo Sersale in 1644, and left Naples with her husband before Don Juan arrived).

The following information was published in the *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada*, Madrid 1926, Vol. 5, pp. 336-7. It confirms that Ribera's daughter did indeed have a child by Don Juan of Austria, and disproves Prota-Giurleo's refutation of this:

The Jesuit Padre Juan Everado Nithard (1607-81) arranged for the entrance into the Convent of the Descalzas in Madrid of the daughter of Don Juan of Austria "la nieta del pintor Ribera" (the grand-daughter of the painter Ribera). Nithard recorded a letter from Don Juan of Austria to this effect and his request that the lady should be referred to as 'Excelentissima Señora'.

Barrionuevo in his *Avisos* of 23 January 1657 wrote: 'A daughter of Don Juan of Austria reared by Count Eril, which he had with a very pretty girl, the daughter of the famous painter called Espanoleto Ribera. There was great competition to raise her between the Convents of the Encarnación and the Descalzas'.

On 2 September 1666 Vicaria Doctor Francisco Forteza examined for her vocation a sixteen year old novice Doña Margarita de Austria, whose mother was the daughter of Ribera. (From this one may deduce that this grandchild of

Ribera was born in 1650, when Maria Francesca was fourteen years of age).

The Descalzas still possesses portraits of this grand-daughter of Ribera and the King of Spain [6, 7], one of which bears the inscription: 'La serenissima señora sor Margarita de la Cruz y Austria. Religiosa profesora de este Real Monasterio, tomó el abito de edad de 6 años en el 1656 y profesó en 1666. Murió de 36 años en 1686'. This portrait is attributed to Matias de Torres (1631-1711). Palomino records furthermore that when the nuns at the church of Santa Isabel discovered that the head of the Virgin in their Immaculate Conception had been modelled by Ribera's daughter they ordered Coello to alter it forthwith. A. Palomino, *Lives of the Spanish Painters* (Ed. translated by N.A. Mallory), 1986, p. 184.

U. Prota-Giurleo published the following extracts from two diarists: On 28 March 1667 the diarist Fuidoro recorded the marriage and promotion of Giovanni Morgano to Annicca Ribera, which latter he described as "the Ribera girl, with whose sister Don Juan had a daughter".

On 3 June 1680 another diarist Domenico Conforte wrote that Annicca's brother, Antonio de Ribera, was appointed *Preside della Provincia di Lecce* "which appointment was due to the affection which Don Juan of Austria felt for his sister, with whom (in Naples at the time of the Revolution) he had a daughter". U. Prota-Giurleo, *La Fine di una leggenda Pittori Napoletani del Seicento*, F. Fiorentino, Naples 1953, pp. 111 & 114. The accounts of the 17th Century Spanish and Italian chroniclers (and de Matteis and De Dominici) evidently then concur regarding Don Juan of Austria's paternity of Ribera's illegitimate grandchild.

<sup>38</sup> Felton, *cit.*, p. 48 & Ribera N.Y., p. 251.

<sup>39</sup> C. Celano, *Notizie del bello, dell'antico e del curioso della città di Napoli*, Naples, 1692, p.696.

<sup>40</sup> P. de Matteis's biography of Ribera was reprinted by De Dominici in his *Vite de' pittori, scultori, ed architetti napoletani*, Vol.III, 1742, Reprint 1971, Vol. III, pp. 21-22.

<sup>41</sup> De Dominici, *cit.*, pp. 396/7 & 519.

<sup>42</sup> De Dominici, *cit.*, pp. 3 & 17.

<sup>43</sup> L. Lanzi, *Storia Pittorica 1795/6*. Vol. I, pp. 611-3.

<sup>44</sup> This painting measures 33 x 63 cm. It bears the Latin inscription "Joseph de Ribera pingit". The authenticity of this painting was questioned at one time but is generally accepted today.

<sup>45</sup> De Dominici, *cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>46</sup> J. Milicua, *Archivo Español de Arte*, t. XXV n. 100, 1952, p. 313, no. 10 & p. 319.

<sup>47</sup> C. Felton, *Jusepe de Ribera*, Kimbell Museum of Art Fort Worth, 1982, p. 68, footnote 23.

<sup>48</sup> Giuseppe de Vito, *Scritti di Storia dell'Arte in Onore di Raffaello Causa*, Electa, Naples, p. 175. Their respective spouses were Don Baltazar Cagnizal, Protomedico Generale del Regno, and Capitán Don Pedro Francisco Lopez y Palomino.

<sup>49</sup> G. Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, Ed. Salerno 1957,

Vol. 1, p. 108 and pp. 249-50. Mancini observed that there were four main schools of painting in the early seventeenth century, one of which was that of Caravaggio. Mancini named the principal adherents to the school of Caravaggio as Ribera, Manfredi, Cecco del Caravaggio, and Lo Spadarino. These were all youths during Caravaggio's maturity and it is difficult to argue why they should not indeed have been his students. The word 'Discepolo' so often used to describe the painters listed by Mancini can of course be translated either as 'Pupil' or as 'Disciple'.

Ludovico Carracci wrote to this effect in a letter of 11 December 1618, to Carlo Ferrante. See Ribera N.Y. 1992, p. 236.

<sup>50</sup> M. de Piles, *Abregé de la vie des peintres*, 1715, p. 41.

<sup>51</sup> A. Palomino y Velasco, *El Museo Pictorico*, Madrid 1723, p. 310.

<sup>52</sup> De Dominici, *cit.*, Ed. 1971, pp. 2-3. As was mentioned in note 35, De Dominici reports Ribera's brother to have taken a letter of recommendation to Count Olivares in Rome after the disgrace and death of Caravaggio i.e. post July 1610. If Ribera was indeed a pupil of Caravaggio, this would have been a logical date for him to embark on an independent career, and may explain his status at the Academy, and subsequent ability to donate 100 scudi to the Academy chapel in 1614. (This will be further explored in Part 3 of this study).

<sup>53</sup> J. Richard, Abbé de Saint-Non *Voyage pittoresque à Naples etc*, 1781.

<sup>54</sup> "da fanciullo studiò in Napoli sotto Michelangelo da Caravaggio, quando questo esule da Roma per omicidio, vi si trasferì intorno al 1606". L. Lanzi, *Storia Pittorica*, 1795/6, (1822 reprint) Vol. 2, p. 267.

<sup>55</sup> L. Lanzi, *cit.*, Vol. p. 267.

<sup>56</sup> Descamps, *Vie des Peintres*, Marseilles 1843, Vol. IV, p. 345.

<sup>57</sup> See: Mia Cinotti and G. Dell'Acqua, *Caravaggio*, Bergamo 1983, pp. 233-256.

<sup>58</sup> B. De Dominici, Ed. 1971, pp. 394-6 & 518-20.

<sup>59</sup> Baldinucci, *cit.*, Florence I, 1681, fol. 129.

<sup>60</sup> L. Scaramuccia, *Le finezze de' pennelli italiani*, Pavia 1674, pp. 173-4. It has been suggested that Ribera's decorations at the Chapel of S. Maria Bianca in Parma were frescoes.

<sup>61</sup> Mancini wrote, around 1618-21, that Ribera was the most gifted painter to have appeared in Rome for many years. There is therefore no reason to doubt that he would have been considered for the directorship of the Academy. G. Mancini, *cit.* (L. Salerno reprint, Rome 1957, pp. 249-50).

<sup>62</sup> The Latin text reads: "(Die quinta decima Martij 1622. Examinatus fuit dominus Joannes de Ribera Hispanus Civitatis Valentiae Neapolis habitans in Platea plagie in domo Josephi de Ribera eius Fratris germani pictoris, etatis annos viginti septem in circa. This may be translated as "Giovanni de Ribera, Spanish citizen of Valencia, living in Naples in the house of his full brother the painter Giuseppe de Ribera, about twenty-seven years of age". It is thus not Giovanni who is described as a painter, since this term applies grammatically to Giuseppe de Ribera.

Part three - His early oeuvre reconsidered

*The influence on Ribera of Caravaggio, Reni, and other masters. The possible confusion of Giuseppe de Ribera's signature with that of Giuseppe Recco. The pertinence of De Dominici's advice that Ribera improved on compositions by Caravaggio*

It is now time to discuss the stylistic relationships between the works of Caravaggio and Ribera, which may be seen to be particularly discernible when comparison is made, for example, of works such as Caravaggio's *Flagellation of Christ* of c. 1607 [1] and Ribera's *Martyrdom of Saint Laurence* in a private collection in Geneva, which was painted a few years later. [2a-b]. In these two paintings the disposition of the foreground figures is clearly related, Ribera has merely reversed the central characters. The similarity of the stooping youth kneeling in the gloom to the left of each composition is particularly remarkable. Finally the illumination in both paintings stems from an unseen source in front of the figures, at the upper left. Such illumination was identified by Mancini as a shared characteristic of many paintings by Caravaggio, and certain close followers of his, such as Ribera.

The *Saint Laurence* by Ribera was at one time in the collection of Prince Anatole Demidoff of San Donato, Florence, where it hung with other masterpieces including the great altarpiece by Crivelli, and the series of panels portraying *The Life of Saint Francis* by Sassetta, now in the National Gallery, London (Nos. 788 & 4757-63). It later belonged to M. André Marie, the President of the Council of Ministers of France. Its provenance and bibliography is published, at the end of this essay.

All the authorities cited in the bibliography, with the solitary exception of Pérez Sánchez, agreed this *Martyrdom of Saint Laurence* to be the earliest of Ribera's multi-figured altarpieces and indeed, as Eric Young wrote on its rediscovery in 1976, that it is the hitherto lost original of the composition long known in the Vatican<sup>1</sup>. In his Burlington Magazine exhibition review column of July 1976, Benedict Nicolson, perhaps the twentieth century's foremost authority on European Caravaggism, agreed with Eric Young, strongly advising whoever might remain unconvinced, through knowing the picture only in reproduction 'basta vedere' ('Just see it!')<sup>2</sup> Nicolson did of course disagree with the Prado establishment on other occasions and, most remarkably, on Caravaggio's *Crucifixion of Saint Andrew*, José Manuel Arnaiz's important rediscovery, which left Madrid for the Cleveland Museum, Ohio, in the 1970's.<sup>3</sup> On that occasion Nicolson's view prevailed, and this picture is listed today, in practically all significant Caravaggio publications, as the missing *Crucifixion of Saint Andrew*, noted by Bellori, which was taken to Spain by Viceroy Benavente, and figured, in 1653, in the Benavente

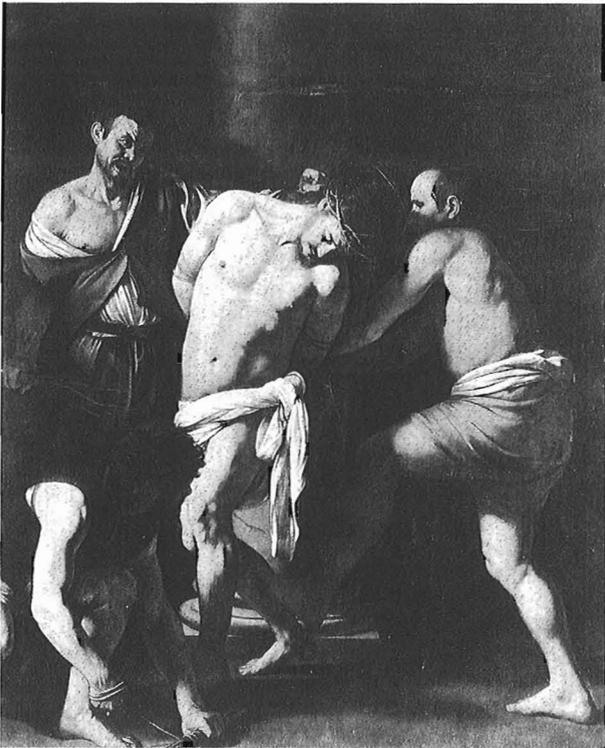
in the Benavente Palace inventory, at Valladolid<sup>4</sup>.

In any survey of Ribera's early life and works, certain fundamental points require addressing. These include the disturbing fact that the organisers of the great 1992 Ribera exhibitions (in Naples, Madrid, and New York) succeeded in procuring no more than eighteen works dated to Ribera's pre-1624 period. Furthermore, aside from the Parma *Saint Martin* of 1611, few significant references were made to other works of Ribera's youth<sup>5</sup>. Yet, by 1624, Ribera was already at least thirty-one years old. It will be argued here that this view of Ribera's often reported prolific early career, while reflected in the monographs published to date, must be an unduly restrictive one, for it is impossible that Ribera would have produced so few works during the prime of his life (pre 1624), yet hundreds from the threshold of middle age until his death (the years 1625-1652).

Five other contentions of the above mentioned cataloguers with which this writer took issue, were discussed in parts 1 and 2 of this study. These include that the painter was the son of a cobbler, rather than of noble origin; that he was born in Spain, rather than Italy; that his birth year was 1591; that his brother Juan de Ribera was a painter; and the denial that Philip IV's son, Don Juan of Austria, fathered a child by Ribera's daughter Maria. (Portraits of this grand-daughter of Ribera and the King of Spain, from the Convent of the Descalced in Madrid, were illustrated in Part 1). All five contentions were shown to be without basis<sup>6</sup>.

In the Naples and Metropolitan Museum catalogues of 1992 Nicola Spinosa suggested a dating of c. 1613 for the *Martyrdom of Saint Laurence*, when Ribera was already a member of the Academy in Rome (it had previously been dated some years later)<sup>7</sup>. This was an astute suggestion, for this composition is precisely the kind of tour de force one could expect of a brilliant twenty to twenty-two year old academician, attempting to establish a solid reputation. Among the leading painters at the Academy in those years was Guido Reni and, although the *Saint Laurence* composition is strongly Caravaggesque, the pietistic expression of the youthful saint, his eyes gazing heavenwards, owes more to Reni's influence than to the more earthy realism of Caravaggio. (Compare illustration 3). With this work Ribera seems to be paying homage to both masters, who his biographers record to have been, at different moments, among his instructors<sup>8</sup>. The *Martyrdom of Saint Laurence* accords perfectly with De Matteis's and De Dominici's descriptions of Ribera's paintings, aptly summed up by the former when he wrote:

he (Ribera) constructed his works with inimitable diligence; whilst using such colour and impasto that the brushstrokes seem to turn, so that the muscles ripple through; and this one notices not merely in the large parts of the body, but even in the fingers, and in



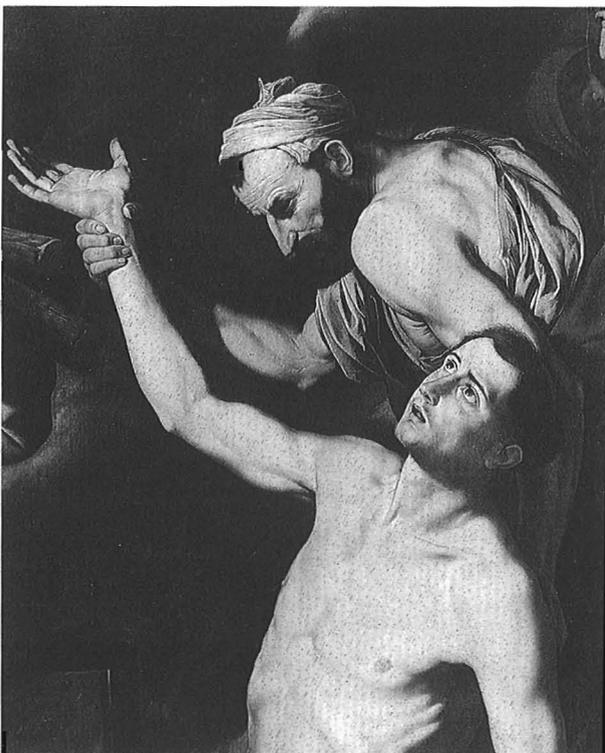
1. Caravaggio, *The Flagellation of Christ*, 1606. Canvas 286 x 213 cm. Capodimonte Museum, Naples. From the Church of S. Domenico Maggiore, Naples.



2. Jusepe or Giuseppe de Ribera, *The Martyrdom of Saint Laurence*, Canvas 204 x 154.

From the collection of Prince Anatole Demidoff of San Donato, Florence.

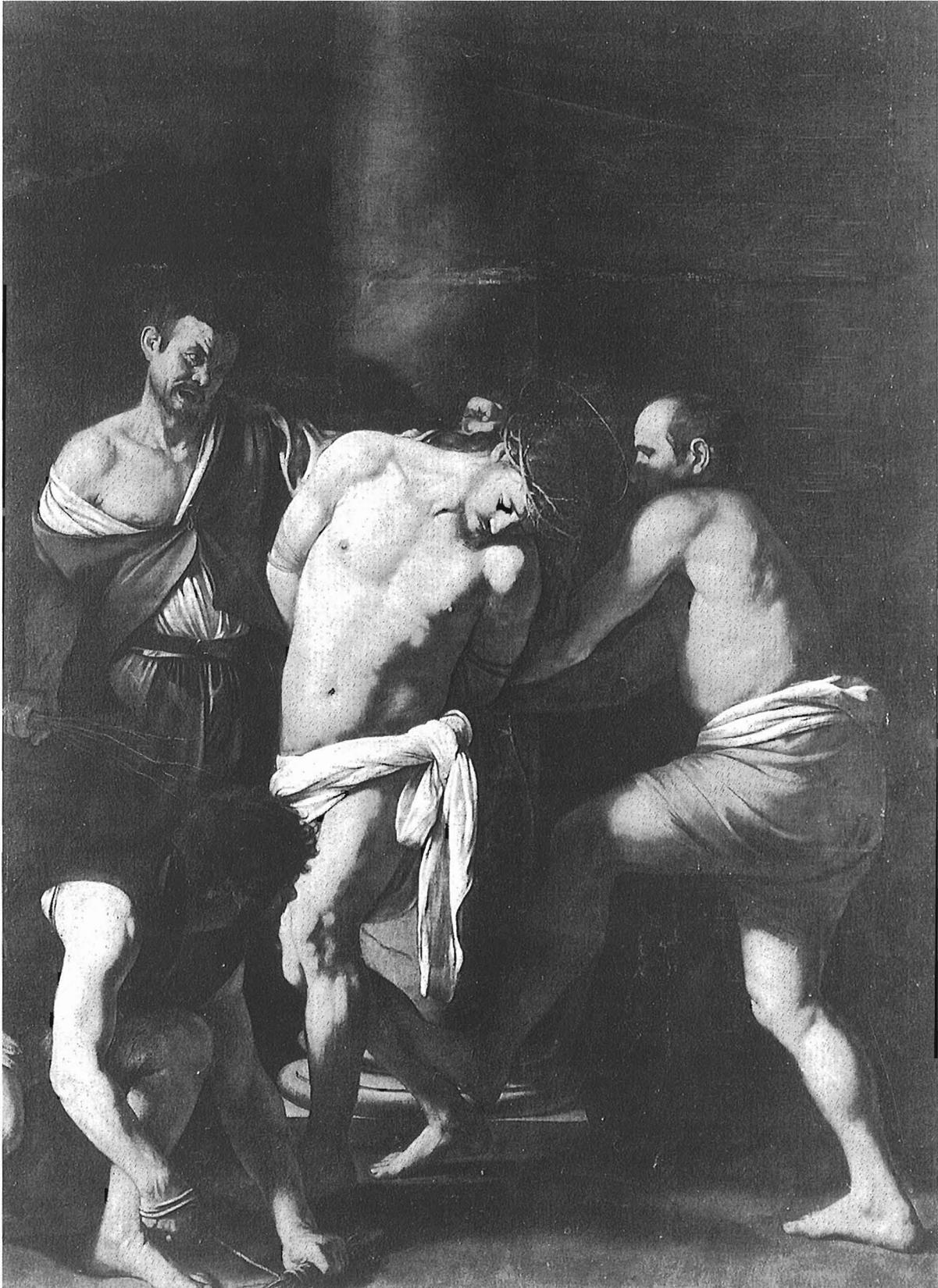
Possibly painted for the High Altar at the church of San Lorenzo (St. Laurence) in Lucina, Rome c. 1610-13. Private Collection Geneva.



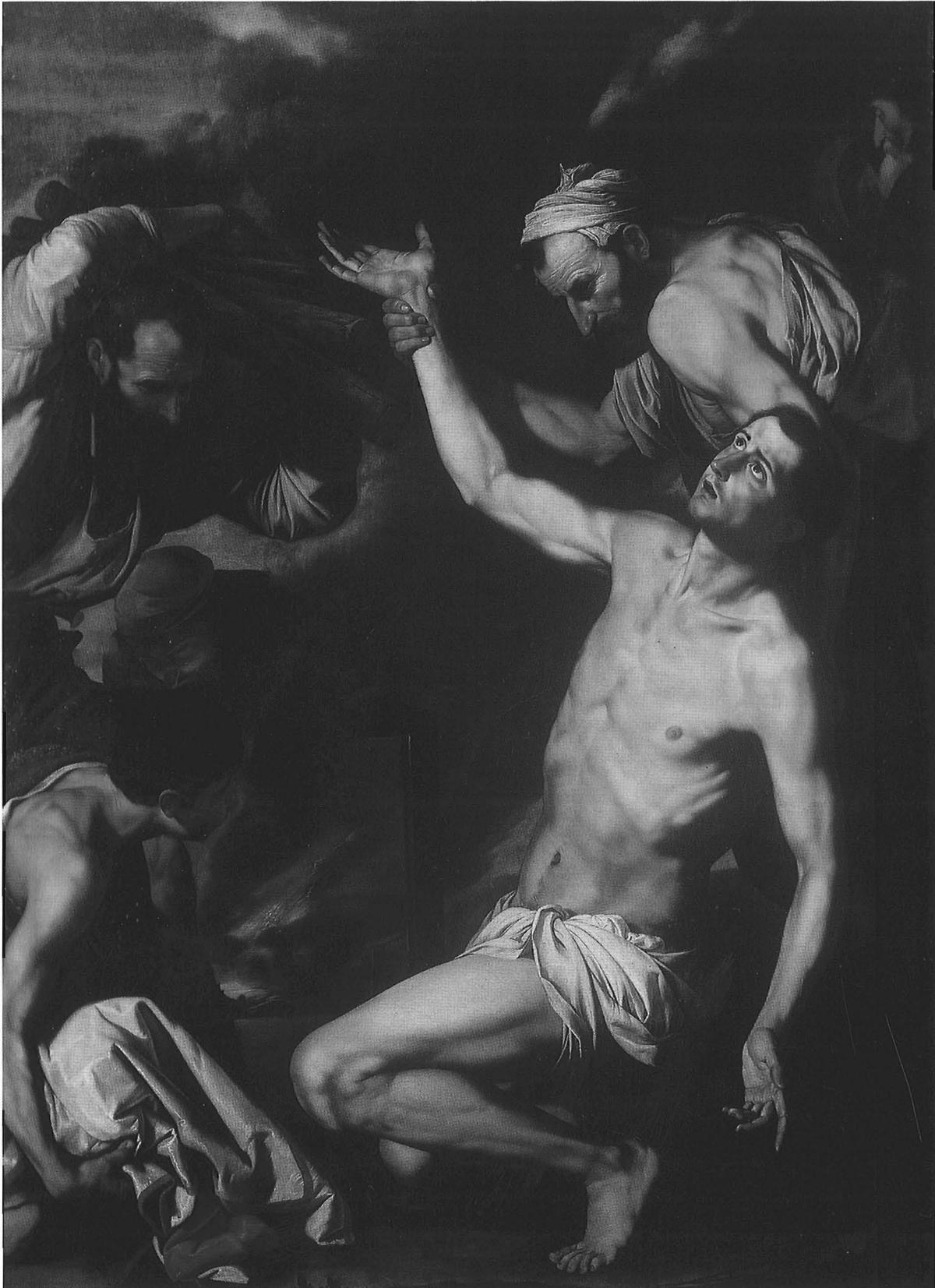
2a. Detail of Fig. 2.



2b. Detail of Fig. 2.



1. Caravaggio, *The Flagellation of Christ*, 1606. Canvas 286 x 213 cm. Capodimonte Museum, Naples. From the Church of S. Domenico Maggiore, Naples.



2. Jusepe (or Gioseppe) de Ribera, *The Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence*, Canvas 204 x 154 cm. c. 1610-13. From the Collection of Prince Anatole Demidoff of San Donato, Florence. Possibly executed for the High Altar at the Church of S. Lorenzo in Lucina, Rome. Private Collection Geneva. Believed to be the earliest multi-figured altarpiece by Jusepe de Ribera.

the finger-nails [2a-b]. He had such a marvellous and refined ability with paint that it would be impossible to be more so...<sup>9</sup>. (De Dominici's description, though more elaborate, closely resembles that of De Matteis.)

The *Saint Laurence*, a monumental yet sensitive multi-figured religious composition is distinguished by an anatomical understanding and draftsmanship which De Dominici suggested, among painters of his generation, to have been unique to Ribera. The bone and muscular structure of the martyred saint's neck, chest, arms, and leg are extraordinarily well defined, as is the body of the executioner behind him. The executioner's right hand, firmly gripping the wrist of the youthful saint, also reflects well De Matteis's description of Ribera's painting of hands [2a]. Ribera's unquestioned ability with still life elements is also apparent in this *Saint Laurence*, where the saint's apparel (his deacon's dalmatic) is masterfully portrayed [2b].

This Saint Laurence is absorbed in a silent dialogue with the Lord above, and his expressive left hand seems to reflect the saint's slowly resolving spiritual conflict. This left hand relates closely to that of the *Saint Sebastian* at Bilbao [4] but contrasts strongly in mood with, for example, that of the recumbent Christ in the *Pietà* at the Certosa di S. Martino [5] in which Christ's flaccid left hand suggests that life has just ebbed from his body. Ribera's expressive hands, indeed, often aid the comprehension of his subject material. The left hand of the angel in the *Liberation of Saint Peter* at the Prado [6], superficially similar to those of Sts. Laurence and Sebastian, illustrates this point well. It is an aspect of his compositions of which an observer may be only unconsciously aware.

Some authorities have suggested that the *Saint Laurence* composition might date to the mid-1620's.<sup>10</sup> This is improbable not least because, by 1625, the brilliantly innovative Ribera was thirty-two to thirty-four years old, and would surely no longer have been so reliant on Caravaggio and Reni for his models. Moreover, for that proposal to be acceptable, the *Saint Laurence* would have to correspond to other works painted by Ribera in the mid-1620s and, in particular, to those paintings dated 1626 such as the two versions of *Saint Jerome with an Angel* [7 & 8], respectively at Capodimonte and Saint Petersburg, and the *Drunken Silenus* at Capodimonte [9]. Those, however, are works of Ribera's full maturity. Their style is fully baroque and, aside from the total confidence with which they are painted, the brushwork is fuller and more characteristic of Ribera's later painterly style. By contrast the *Saint Laurence* is painted in an earlier, more restrained idiom, more akin to the Osuna *Saint Sebastian* [10].

Pérez-Sánchez, when discussing the evolution of the Osuna *Crucifixion* of 1618 (No. 14 in the New York exhibition) justly commented that it marked a radical departure from the smooth finish and

minutely detailed, analytical character of the *Five Senses*. Conversely the execution of the *Saint Laurence* manifests precisely those characteristics typical of the earlier period of Ribera<sup>11</sup>. Finally, the *Martyrdom of Saint Laurence*, an essentially Caravaggesque painting, was sufficiently admired to have been copied ten or more times during the seventeenth century. While this would have been credible for a work conceived c. 1613, when Caravaggism was still strongly in vogue, had it been painted as late as the mid-1620s, it is most unlikely to have inspired such repeated imitation. By then, under the influence of painters such as Van Dyck, and the later Gentileschi and Vouet, Caravaggism was no longer considered *avant garde*. For the *Saint Laurence* composition to have merited copying it must have been acknowledged as a prime example of the painting of its period, i.e. much closer to 1610 than to 1625.

As is known, already by 6 April 1614, Ribera figured (with important personalities such as Reni, Grammatica, and Leone), among the most generous benefactors of the Academy's church, each having promised one hundred scudi for its support<sup>12</sup>. If Mancini was correct, and the youthful Ribera had difficulty making ends meet in Rome, it seems likely that such financial difficulties may have related to the years prior to 1614, by which date he was clearly capable of considerable munificence. Mancini cited the painters's extravagant lifestyle, which might, of course, have kept him poor, but his text indicates an unawareness of any connection of the painter with the noble Ribera family, from whom he could have received money, or of the painter's access to the Spanish crown's secret fund. On 12 February 1618, for instance, (about which time Mancini compiled his notes), Ribera was paid 300 ducats, equivalent to 375 scudi, out of Philip IV's secret expenses fund for which, it is written, «no account needed to be given»<sup>13</sup>. To put these figures, and Ribera's gift of one hundred scudi to the Academy church, into perspective, it should be recalled that in 1603 Caravaggio, at the height of fame, also received one hundred scudi, from Maffeo Barberini (later Pope Urban VIII), for a picture believed to be his *Sacrifice of Isaac*, now at the Uffizi Gallery<sup>14</sup>. Some years later moreover, in 1628, five hundred and fifty scudi acquired Caravaggio's *Catherine of Alexandria*, now in the Thyssen collection in Madrid, together with *The Cheats*, a *Musician* (probably also by Caravaggio and assumed to be the Lute-player in the Hermitage), and paintings by Breughel and Guercino (as well as an unspecified number of books)<sup>15</sup>.

Mancini indicates Ribera to have been active already as a youth, and we know that he was in Parma, where he received 209 lire on 11 June 1611 for the famous lost *Saint Martin dividing his cloak*, which he painted for the Chiesa Parrocchiale di S. Prospero. While there, his outstanding ability



3. Guido Reni, *Saint John*, On Copper 50 x 40 cm. Galleria nazionale d'arte antica, Rome.

aroused such jealousy among the local painters (fearful of losing to Ribera their own employment with Duke Ranuccio Farnese) that, according to Scaramuccia, «they threatened his life and forced him to leave». Mancini confirms Ribera's Parma experience<sup>16</sup>. That the *Saint Martin* was an outstanding work is unquestionable for, as many have noted, some years later, on 11 December 1618, Ludovico Carracci, the celebrated head of the Bolognese Academy, wrote about it to his friend Giancarlo Fattori «those painters of great taste, particularly that Spanish painter who follows the school of Caravaggio. If he is the one who painted a *Saint Martin* in Parma, who was with Mario Farnese, I shall have to be very adroit that they do not rid themselves of poor Ludovico Carracci.<sup>17</sup> This unsolicited testimonial from so distinguished a fellow-painter makes crystal clear, already by 1611, that Ribera was a seriously accomplished artist. It also obliges one to consider whether the *Saint Laurence* may actually be datable to 1610-11 for, given that his biographers place him in Rome before Parma, he must surely have had to prove his abilities there by producing a major work such as the *Saint Laurence*, prior to being awarded the Parma commission, in

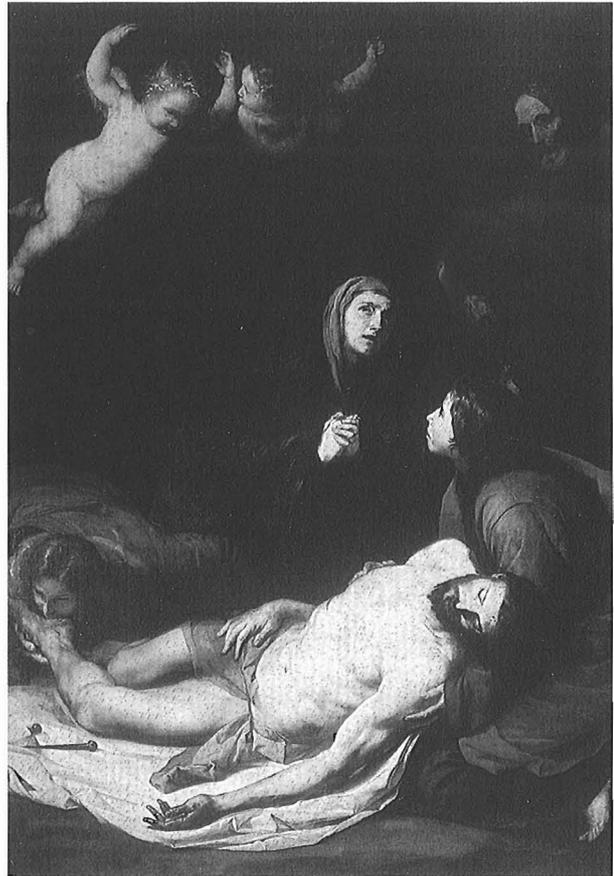


4. Jusepe de Ribera, *The Nursing of Saint Sebastian*, Canvas 180 x 228 cm. Signed and dated indistinctly 1621. Bilbao Museum.

preference to such well reputed local painters as Bartolomeo Schedoni.

This writer's proposal that the Demidoff *Saint Laurence* may have been commissioned for the Church of S. Lorenzo in Lucina, in Rome has been seriously received<sup>18</sup>. This church was handed over in 1606, by Pope Paul V, to the Chierici Regolari Minori, an Order founded by the Neapolitan Giovanni Pietro Carafa. Carafa was a member of a family related by marriage to various Viceroys and one of its members, Artemisia Carafa, Marchioness of Vico, acted as godparent to Ribera's daughter Margarita, on 22 April 1630. This church still retains important Caravaggesque works by Carlo Saraceni and Simon Vouet, though it has long since lost its painting of that period portraying *Saint Laurence*, to which saint it is dedicated<sup>19</sup>. From 1606 onwards the Carafa family would probably have considered commissioning a *Saint Laurence* for the high altar which (given the church's dedication) would fairly certainly have figured among the first choice of major altarpieces for the new decoration. The likelihood of their choosing their fellow-Neapolitan Ribera to paint it seems high.

Bearing in mind that some ten or so copies exist of the Demidoff *Saint Laurence*, including one at the Vatican and another (also in Rome) originally in the Barberini collection, the painting must evidently have been on public view for some



5. Jusepe de Ribera, *Pietà*, Canvas 264 x 170 cm. Signed and dated 1637. Certosa di S. Martino, Naples.



6. Jusepe de Ribera, *The Freeing of Saint Peter*, Canvas 177 x 232 cm. Signed and dated 1639. The Prado, Madrid.

considerable time, conceivably at an important place of worship such as this. If Balducci's information is correct and Ribera was often Director of the Academy of Saint Luke, in Rome, then some of the copies of the painting may be works of his students or followers.

The church of S. Lorenzo in Lucina was redecorated by Cosimo Fanzago during the years 1650-52, when Fanzago was in refuge in Rome after the Masaniello revolt. The high altar, where Ribera's *Martyrdom of Saint Laurence* may have hung, was also redecorated in 1675 by Carlo Rainaldi as a setting for Guido Reni's *Crucifixion* which was bequeathed to the church by the Marchese Angelelli<sup>20</sup>. If Ribera's *Martyrdom of Saint Laurence* was commissioned for this church it is possible that it may have been removed during this latter redecoration. In any event, by 1836 it had found its way into the Gagliardi collection in Florence.

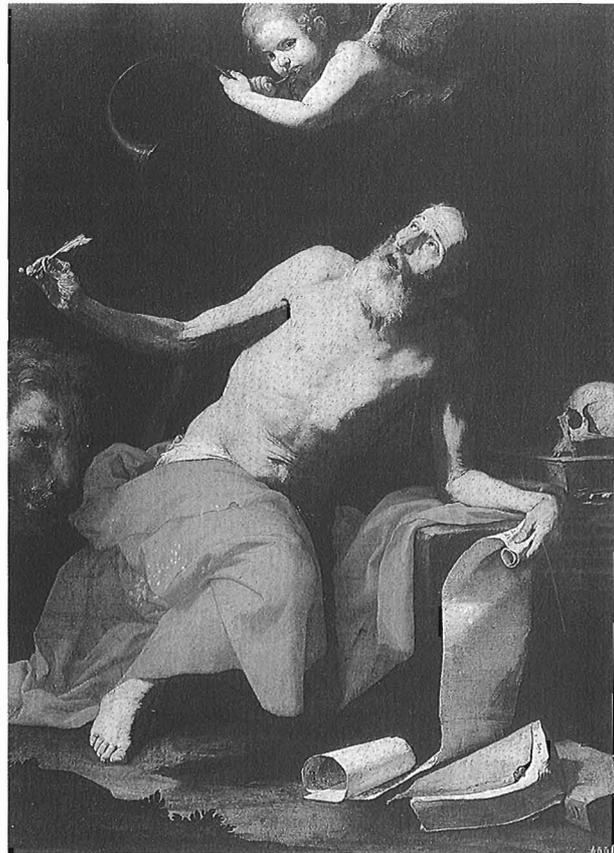
His biographers note that, as a youth, Ribera both copied and painted in the manner of Correggio, Caravaggio, and Reni<sup>21</sup>. Moreover, his *Hecate* after Raphael, from the Spanish Royal Collection, seems to be an example of Ribera interpreting the

Umbrian in a seventeenth century manner<sup>22</sup>. If Ribera's early paintings were painted in emulation of masters such as these it is conceivable, given his technical prowess and sometimes underestimated versatility, that there are works extant which, being uncharacteristic of the familiar Ribera, may at present be given to them.

The great enigma then, which was not satisfactorily addressed in the exhibitions of 1992, remains the absence of any appreciable oeuvre of Ribera's youth and early maturity. Mancini, writing before 1621, confirmed that *prior to his departure for Naples in 1616* Ribera had painted "many things here in Rome"<sup>23</sup>. Despite the high esteem in which Mancini is held, and this unequivocal statement there has been little attempt so far to establish the kind of pictures Ribera was painting, before or shortly after his acclaimed *Saint Martin* of 1611. It is surely strange, with so well recorded a talent already by 1611, that Ribera's first known signed and dated painting is of 1624, some thirteen years later. This is the *Madonna and Child with Saint Bruno* now at Weimar [11], which bears the kind of Latin inscription JOSEPH A RIBERA VALENTINUS



7. Jusepe de Ribera, *Saint Jerome and the Angel*, Canvas 262 x 164 cm. Signed and dated 1626. Capodimonte Museum, Naples.



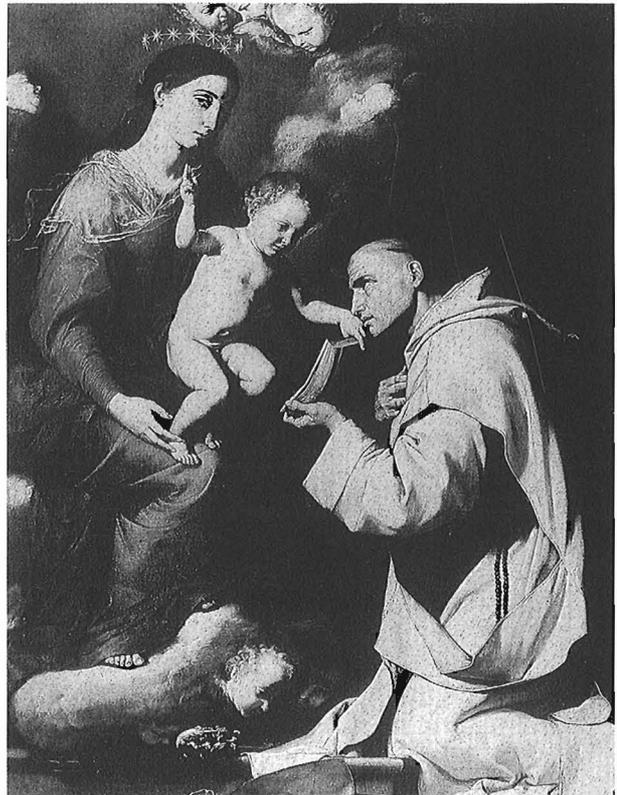
8. Jusepe de Ribera, *Saint Jerome and the Angel*, Canvas 185 x 183 cm. Signed and dated 1626. The Hermitage, St Petersburg.



9. Jusepe de Ribera, *The Drunken Silenus*, Oil on canvas 185 x 229 cm. Inscribed and dated 1626. Capodimonte Museum Naples.



10. Jusepe de Ribera, *Saint Sebastian*, Canvas 179 x 139 cm. Patronato de Arte de Osuna, Seville.



11. Jusepe de Ribera, *The Madonna and Child with Saint Bruno*, Canvas 205 x 153.5 cm. Signed and dated 1624.

SETHABIS ACADEMICUS /ROMANUS FACIEBAT 1624, from which Palomino, Mariette, and others, drew their emphatic, but demonstrably inaccurate conclusions, which were discussed in the first of these essays on Ribera. In this inscription Ribera's pride in his membership of the Roman Academy is recorded and, bearing in mind Baldinucci's reference to his repeated occupancy of its directorship, it may be questioned whether Ribera might not have spent more of his time in Rome than is currently assumed.

Mancini paid Ribera a rare compliment when he wrote *no one of superior artistic aptitude has appeared in Rome for many years*. Mancini's text was after all completed by 1618–21, and his records shows that he was quite aware of the great pool of artistic genius practising in Rome during the first two decades of the seventeenth century. His text was however completed too early to record Ribera's post-1621 activities, or any subsequent rise of the painter in the hierarchy of the Academy of Saint Luke<sup>23</sup>.

It has already been noted that by the time Ribera signed and dated his *Saint Bruno*, in 1624, he was at least thirty-one years of age. Nonetheless, as was mooted earlier, only eighteen works of a suggested dating prior to 1624 were included in the 1992 exhibitions, which seemingly confirms that much of his earlier style is just not being recognised<sup>24</sup>. In tracing some of these lost works of Ribera De Dominicis's text is important for he wrote:

It is true that *Giuseppe used occasionally to call himself and write his name as a Spaniard*, but he only did this out of arrogance believing that, by seeming to belong to the dominant nation, he would tower above the rest. He did this on his father's advice who, also with sinful pride, held the Italians in low esteem<sup>25</sup>.

In an attempt to verify this statement of De Dominicis, both Felton's and Finaldi's documentation was thoroughly checked and, on official documents, revealed that Ribera's first name was spelled in the *Spanish* manner 'Jusepe' (commencing with a 'J'), *only twelve times* against something like *one hundred* variants of the *Italian* spelling commencing 'Gi...' ('Giuseppe', 'Gioseppe' or 'Gioseffo')<sup>26</sup>. This is a proportion of around eight Italian spellings to one in Spanish. It was also sometimes written in Latin, but more rarely still. The documents cited include census registrations, baptismal certificates, and Ribera's sister-in-law's dowry. Furthermore the painter's name is also continuously spelled in the Italian manner after his death, during the dispute for payment between his heirs and the Certosa di San Martino. It could of course be contended that

the form of the name on official documents may often have been determined by the scribe, but there is little doubt that so eminent a painter and personality could and, had he considered it important, undoubtedly *would* have insisted on maintaining the Spanish spelling for permanent records of the kind.

Currently only five or so genuine documents signed by Ribera himself are known. These include two letters to Prince Antonio Ruffo of Scaleta, written from Naples respectively on 7 October 1649 and 22 September 1650, towards the end of the painter's life. These, like three later letters written from Naples to the Prior of San Martino, in June and September 1651, were signed in the Spanish fashion 'Jusepe' or 'Josepe' de Ribera. (According to Finaldi the last three, though signed by Ribera, were not actually written by him.) In this particular context it is also important to recall that, on 18 January 1627, the painter had his son baptized *Gioseppe* (spelled in the Italian fashion) and, on perhaps the most important document of all, his personal application to Pope Urban VIII on 29 January 1626, for his appointment as a Cavaliere in the Portuguese Order of Christ, his name is once more written *Gioseppe*. Jeanne Chenault remarked that this application was written in Neapolitan Italian, which is also a distinctive characteristic of Ribera's letters to Antonio Ruffo of 1648 and 1650<sup>27</sup>. That his name was generally spelled in the Italian fashion is thus proved on the great mass of existing documents, and he may be seen, both in Rome and in Naples, to have used the Italian spelling of his first name. Once more then, close study confirms a crucial statement of De Dominicis.

From the psychological and social point of view moreover, it is easy to understand, when working for Italian clients, especially in his early years, that Ribera would have found it more politic and easier to sell his works, if he had been considered by the locals as a native Italian rather than a member (given the political situation in Naples and elsewhere) of what many Italians regarded as the oppressor state. On the other hand, in Naples and under Spanish hegemony, it would have been in the Spanish interest for them to demonstrate that the Court painter to the Viceroy, and the finest painter in the city, was one of their own. The question therefore obviously arises of whether there are any works which might be considered his, where his name is spelled, as on the 1626 application to the Pope, in an Italian fashion?

I have previously suggested that Ribera may have been responsible for one still life composition *The Piglet* (or *La Porchetta*) [12]. This combines a strongly Caravaggesque chiaroscuro with extraordinary powers of draftsmanship, and relates closely to certain works both of Ribera and Caravaggio. At the same time, attention was drawn to a restricted group of signed drawings, and a painting, with which it might be linked<sup>28</sup>. The *Piglet* is on canvas, and measures 73.7x102 cm (29x40.12 inches). In the 1993 study referred to above, it was incorrectly described as *Il Porcellino* rather than *La Porchetta*. (*Il Porcellino* is, of course, a literal translation of the genderless English words 'The Piglet'). Closer examination reveals however that a *female*, rather than a *male* piglet, has been portrayed, and accounts for its current change of Italian title to *La Porchetta*. In addition the measurements previously given were mistaken and the correct dimensions are recorded here. This painting is signed *GIOS. R*, a signature which, with its *Italianate* spelling of the first syllable of the painter's first name (commencing with 'Gi' rather than with 'J'), relates closely to other signatures, judged by Walter Vitzhum to be authentic, on such drawings by Ribera as the *Saint Peter*, inscribed *Gio Ra* [13]; the *Figure waving a stick*, signed *Gio Rib<sup>a</sup>* [14]; the *Saint Sebastian*, inscribed *Giuseppe de* [15]; and the *Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew*, signed *Giuseppe Ribera l'anno 1649* [16]. (This last drawing was signed and dated in this *Italianate* manner just three years before Ribera died)<sup>29</sup>.

Jonathan Brown has reasoned (because they were in Italian) that these signatures may have been added by a different though contemporary hand. De Dominicis's remarks, however, confirmed by the documents, support the conclusion that such an *Italianate* writing of Giuseppe de Ribera's signature was in fact perfectly normal<sup>30</sup>. Thus Vitzhum's contention, that they are authentic signatures, seems certainly plausible. Furthermore, study of the *Saint Bartholomew* drawing in particular [16], reveals its signature to be an integral and, indeed, essential part of the composition itself. Removal of this signature would leave the composition tilting above a line, at a peculiar angle, and destroy its harmony<sup>31</sup>. The foreign painters who *italianized* their names while in Italy are too numerous to list but, given that Ribera spent most of his life there, it would probably be strange had he never done so.

The composition of *La Porchetta* is extremely naturalistic. On a wooden table are a piglet suspended by its feet, a disturbingly realistic plucked chicken, a crusty pie, a sausage, a knife, waxed paper, live birds, and a provolone cheese, all of which are executed with exquisite refinement. The picture came originally from a French collection, and may have been known to

Théophile Gautier, who clearly had works such as this in mind, when he penned the following lines on Ribera, in 1843:

*"Toi, cruel Ribera, plus dur que Jupiter, Tu fais de ses flancs creux, d'affreuses entailles Couler flots de sang des cascades d'entrailles"*<sup>32</sup>.

This writer has been familiar with *La Porchetta* for more than a decade, during which period, and understandably in the light of the current knowledge on Ribera, it was twice published as a work of Giuseppe Recco<sup>33</sup>. At first glance the inscription *Gios. R* would have suggested an Italian, and not the Spanish painter Jusepe de Ribera. Nonetheless, it is now clear that the abbreviated signatures of Ribera and Recco may be easily confused. The reasons for discarding the Recco attribution will be discussed later. It is understandable, given Mancini's description of Ribera as a young man who led a Bohemian life, that Ribera (and his illustrious family) might have preferred not to have his true origins disclosed by a full signature. His first fully signed and dated painting is the *Saint Bruno* of 1624, by which date he had been appointed Court Painter to the Viceroy, and steps were being taken to create him a *Cavaliere* (which occurred in January 1626).

In his *Considerazioni sulla Pittura* Mancini writes: *«Living painters divide themselves into four schools, one of which is that of Caravaggio. Among its most accomplished adherents is Lo Spagnoletto... Jusepe de Ribera»*. Mancini also lists the painters Bartolomeo Manfredi, Carlo Saraceni, Lo Spadarino, and Cecco del Caravaggio, together with Ribera, among Caravaggio's most distinguished followers. Mancini's next words describe the approach to composition of Caravaggio, and of his immediate followers, which is clearly also the approach of the creator of *La Porchetta*:

*"Characteristic of this school is the illumination with a unified light from above, without reflections (as it might be from the window in a room with black walls). Thus, having the light parts very bright and the shadows very dark, the painting is thrown into relief; but not however in a normal way, (nor ever thought of in earlier times by painters such as Raphael, Titian, Correggio and others). This school, working in this manner, is very faithful to the truth, and aims always for realism"*<sup>34</sup>.

This remains, even today, probably the most accurate description of how Caravaggio and his close followers produced their famous chiaroscuro effects. However, Lanzi's description is also relevant. He wrote: *Caravaggio's figures seem to dwell in a prison cell, illuminated from above...they impress greatly through the contrast of light and shade*<sup>35</sup>.

Judging from the mere glimmer of light entering the window, and just as Mancini described, the artist painted this still life at night-time, in a room with practically black, stone walls. A strong light source at the upper left dramatically illuminates much of the painting, leaving other parts in shadow. The spilled entrails of the hanging piglet,

and the pimply flesh of the dead chicken contrast sharply with the other objects. There is also an unexpected introduction, among the inanimate objects, of two expressive live birds. Indeed most of Ribera's works given to the pre-1624 period are similarly lit (if not always in a room with black walls) and *The Sense of Sight* [17] is illustrated here, and is worthy of study in this connection.

The *Saint Sebastian* [10] may have been produced around the same time as Prince Demidoff's *Saint Laurence* [2] for they resemble each other in many ways, both reflecting the influences of Caravaggio and Reni. Although Pérez-Sánchez, and others, have suggested a dating of c. 1616 for the *Saint Sebastian*, it may have been painted prior to this, perhaps as early as 1610. The Duke of Osuna (1574-1624), from whose collection the *Saint Sebastian* came, was Viceroy of Naples from 1616-1620, but visited Naples in 1611, on his way to Sicily, and may have been there earlier<sup>36</sup>.

The *Saint Sebastian* could thus have been acquired by Osuna from Ribera during his trip to Naples of 1611.

It has already been noted that this writer first seriously attributed the painting of *The Piglet* to Jusepe de Ribera in the Trafalgar Galleries catalogue of November 1993. Like the controversial views

both on Ribera's noble origins and Italian birth, that attribution initially occasioned a certain surprise. Nonetheless, given the early baroque character of its composition, its virtuoso draftsmanship, and its clear embracing of the lighting principles which Mancini described as typical of Ribera's pre-1618 paintings, this attribution met with much authoritative approval. The final determining comparison in any painting, however, must of course be a visual one. Paolo de Matteis describes an individual and rare characteristic of Ribera's works, which is also discernible in this painting:

*As a child Ribera went to Naples with his father, and became the disciple of Michelangelo da Caravaggio, from whom he learnt his style, and to imitate nature perfectly. After visiting Rome ... and Lombardy, where he copied the local masters, he returned to the simple imitation of nature...he paints with inimitable diligence, in a beguilingly true manner... his impasto is such that the brushstrokes seem to revolve*<sup>37</sup>.

The words in bold print (which, in Italian, read "che par che girino le pennellate") describe precisely the manner of painting, respectively, of the *Piglet's skin* [18], of the sitter's *white jerkin* in the *Sense of Taste*, at the Wadsworth Atheneum [19], and of the head and the sitter's left hand in the Prado's *Sense of Touch* [20]. As Craig Felton pointed out independently long ago (and without



12. Giuseppe Ribera, *The Piglet (La Porchetta)*, Canvas 73.7 x 102 cm. (29 x 40.12 inches). Signed GIOS R..



13. Giuseppe de Ribera, *The penitent Saint Peter*. Signed: Gio R<sup>a</sup>. Pen and brown ink with red and brown wash and white highlights.



14. Giuseppe de Ribera, *Grotesque Figure waving a stick*, Signed *Giu. Rib<sup>a</sup>*. Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco.



15. Giuseppe de Ribera, *Saint Sebastian*, Pen and brown ink laid down 186 x 130 cm. Signed *Giuseppe de.* California Palace of the Legion of Honor.



16. Giuseppe de Ribera, *The Martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew*, Pen and brown ink with brown wash 179 x 132 mm. Signed *Giuseppe Ribera l'anno 1649*. Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York. This drawing was executed three years prior to the painter's death and seems to prove that Ribera used both the Spanish and Italian versions of his signature almost to the end of his days.

reference to De Matteis) such ‘revolving brushstrokes’ are also discernible in many other of Ribera’s paintings, including the *Saint Laurence* <sup>38</sup>.

While Palomino’s pronouncements on earlier painters are not invariably accurate, and his information may be derived from a variety of sources it should be recalled, in the case of Ribera, that Palomino was acquainted with Ribera’s pupil and close acquaintance Luca Giordano, with whom Palomino worked at the Court of Spain during Giordano’s stay there from 1692-1702. Palomino therefore had access to arguably the most knowledgeable of all sources on Ribera. Palomino wrote:

Ribera applied himself assiduously at the school of Caravaggio, and he *achieved that vigorous chiaroscuro manner, which he improved daily through the constant imitation of nature. He continued to apply himself at the school of Caravaggio, in which he became so accomplished that he attained the heights of eminence in art, giving his works such powerful relief that he not only could compete with the most famous artists of his day, but indeed surpassed them* <sup>39</sup> [Writer’s italics]

The words “at the school of Caravaggio” are ambiguous, and do not necessarily imply a direct study with Caravaggio. *La Porchetta*, however, fits precisely this “chiaroscuro imitation of nature” which Palomino describes Ribera to have been painting, while under the Caravaggio influence. Considering this, and De Dominic’s revelation that Ribera normally spelled his name in the Italian way, it may be pondered whether it was not precisely to paintings like *La Porchetta* that Palomino was referring. It may well be, in any event, that these naturalistic chiaroscuro studies of nature were executed early in Ribera’s career, and that *La Porchetta* was painted either prior to, or just after the death of Caravaggio in 1610. Other similar still lifes may indeed lie unrecognised, or have been destroyed.

When this painting was exhibited in London in 1993, it evoked considerable interest, and many distinguished scholars travelled to study it. The most difficult hurdle to overcome in its attribution to Ribera was its Italianate signature. Irrespective of its authorship there was, nonetheless, almost universal agreement that, with *La Porchetta*, one was confronted by an impressive masterpiece of realism of the seventeenth century. Comparison was most often drawn with Rembrandt’s *Slaughtered Ox* of 1655, at the Louvre [21]; and to the more naturalistic still lifes by other great masters of the genre, such as Snyder’s [22], and it was commonly agreed that the *Piglet* exhibits no less sense of immediacy than those famous images. It is, at the same time, the antithesis of the elaborately contrived Pronk Still Lifes of northerners like Heda, and De Heem, and a distinguished precursor of the still lifes of Goya, such as the *Sides of meat with an animal’s head* at the Louvre [23].



17. Giuseppe de Ribera, *The Sense of Sight*, Canvas 114 x 89 cm. Frans Mayer Museum, Mexico City.

#### **La Porchetta and the missing Caravaggio of the same title**

De Dominic’s account of Ribera having copied, and improved upon compositions by Caravaggio which he possessed, should also now be considered, for *La Porchetta* may be just such a painting <sup>40</sup>. In the 1682 inventory of Don Gaspar de Ibaro y Guzmán, seventh Marqués del Carpio, a painting by MICHEL ANGELO DA CARAVAGGIO (No. 121) was described as *A dead female piglet, opened at the side, of which one sees the innards. (Una porchetta morta aperta per fianco, che si vede l’interiora)* <sup>41</sup>. This was one of a pair of paintings by Caravaggio, the second of which was described as: No. 128 *A piece of veal tied with a reed. (Un pezzo de vitello attaccato con un gionco)*. The size of this pair of paintings was listed there as 1x3 palmi. According to Marcus Burke, the unit of measurement adopted for this inventory was the Roman ‘palmo’, which was equivalent to ca. 22.5cm (against a Neapolitan ‘palmo’ of ca. 26.4cm). Assuming this to be so, and that the measurements were correctly taken, the paintings by Caravaggio would have measured ca. 22.5 x 67.5cm.

However, seven years later on in Madrid in 1689 (after Carpio’s death) when these two paintings were checked and inventoried anew, their size was noted as *A bara*. The sources indicate that a Spanish *bara* (or *vara*) measured ca. 83.6 cm <sup>42</sup>. It has been suggested that the letter ‘A’ before the word *bara* may be an abbreviation of the Spanish



18. Giuseppe Ribera, *The Piglet* (Detail of Fig. 12).

19. Giuseppe Ribera, *The Sense of Taste*, Oil on canvas, 113 x 88.3 cm. Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford. E.G. and M.C. Summer Collection.

Examples of the revolving brushstrokes of Giuseppe de Ribera

20. Giuseppe Ribera, *The Sense of Touch*, (Detail). The Prado, Madrid.



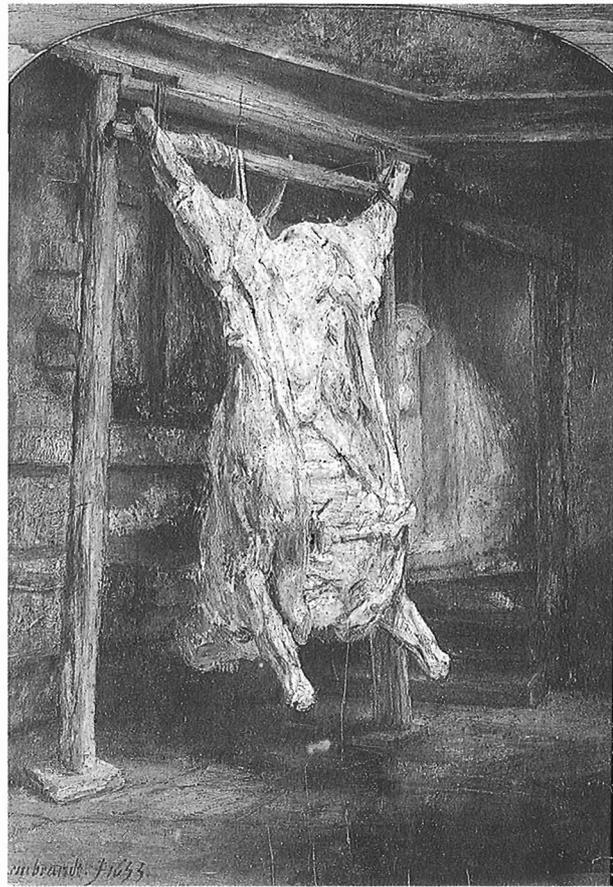
*Altura* (height). Whether or not this is so, ca. 83.6cm (or 1 vara) is fairly close to the 73.7cm height of *La Porchetta*, especially allowing for a *passepourtout* around it, as indicated in the inventory description by the words ‘con suoi regoletti intorno’. That the same paintings appear on both the 1682 and 1689 inventories is almost certain, for their individual subject matter is rare and, as a pair, must surely be unique. Though unattributed on the 1689 Madrid inventory they are there listed as: 412 *Two equal paintings measuring ‘A vara’*. One with a piglet, and the other with a side of meat. 100 Reales each. (Dos quadros Yguales de A vara El uno Con un Cochinito y el otro Con Un quarto de Carnero ambos en Cien Rs 100).

The Spanish *cochinito* describes a male piglet but, as the creature cannot have changed sex during shipment, it is likely that the compiler of the later inventory, like me in 1993, failed to examine the animal’s gender attentively. It is also worth considering whether the *Side of Meat* by Caravaggio, from the Carpio collection, may have served as the inspiration for Goya’s *Still Life* at the Louvre, for he could well have seen it in Madrid. Goya copied masters such as Velázquez, and may also have been tempted by the works of Caravaggio.

So far as the subject of *A Pig* is concerned Maria Gilbert of the Getty Art History Information Program has carried out research, and informs me that of ca. 19,000 pictures figuring on the Getty Spanish Inventories database, this still life given to Caravaggio is the only one which portrays a pig. Clearly then, *A pig* was a subject most rarely tackled during this period, and *A pig with its innards visible* must be rarer still; one may further argue that such a *suckling pig*, or *piglet*, of the *female sex*, measuring ca. 83.6cm, would probably have been so rare as to rule out coincidence.

The collection of the Marqués del Carpio was second only to that of the King of Spain himself and included, among numerous masterpieces of the seventeenth century, the *Rokeby Venus*, and portraits of *Cardinal Astalli*, *Cardinal Massimi* and *Donna Olympia*, by Velázquez; and sixteen still lifes by Caravaggio. The 1682 Roman inventory alone covered 750 pages. The collection required a small armada for its shipment from Naples to Spain<sup>43</sup>.

The sixth Marqués del Carpio was Don Luis de Haro y Guzmán, nephew and successor to the title, and position at Court, of the Count-Duke of Olivares, Philip IV’s famous Minister. His successor, Don Gaspar de Haro, the seventh Marqués del Carpio, inherited his titles and estates on his father’s death in 1661. Don Gaspar de Haro was the greatest collector in Italy of the seventeenth century<sup>44</sup>. This seventh Marqués del Carpio was, successively, Ambassador to Lisbon and Rome, and then Viceroy of Naples. Given his illustrious pedigree, and the powerful positions he occupied in Italy, it is unlikely that his collection would have



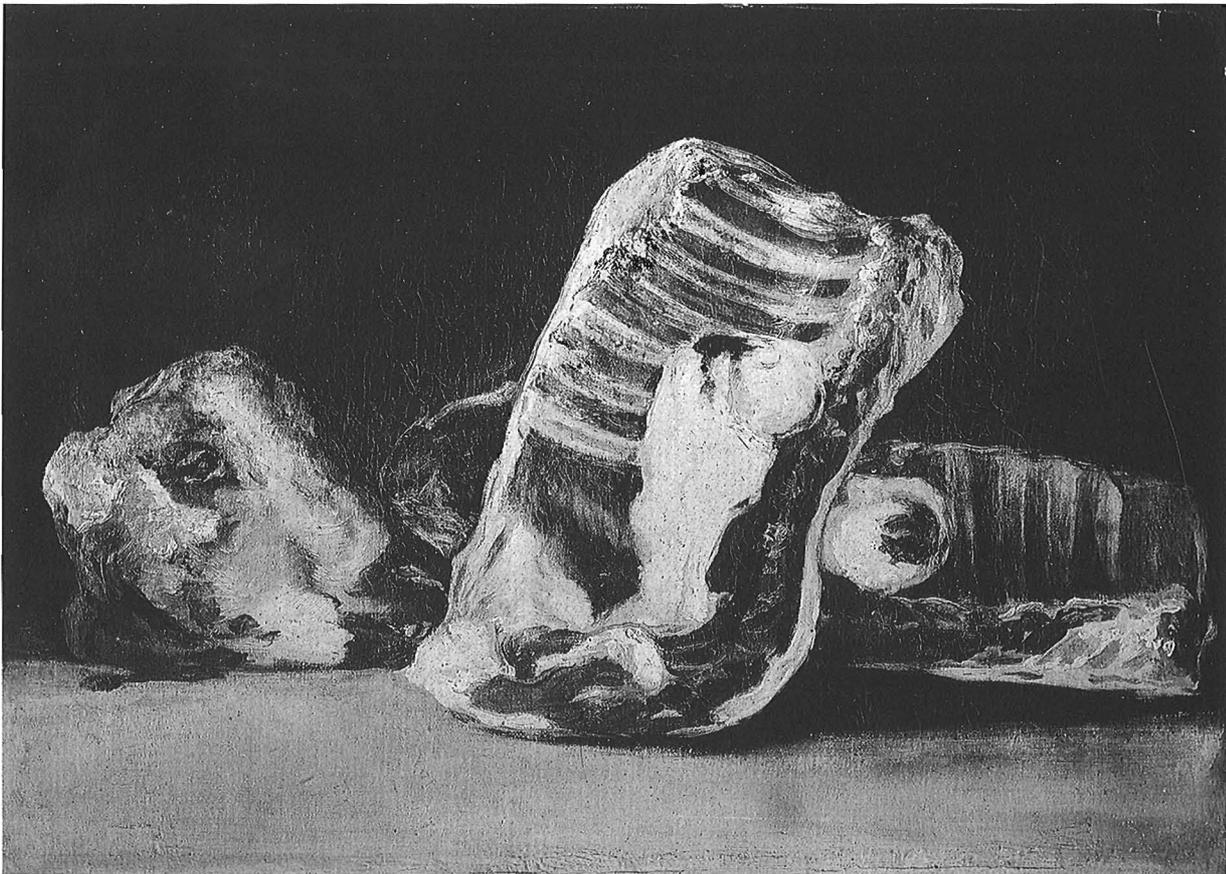
21. Rembrandt, *The Slaughtered Ox*. 94 x 67 cm. Signed and dated 1655. The Louvre.

contained many paintings (by seventeenth century Italian masters, especially), of dubious authenticity. The Marqués del Carpio went to great lengths to obtain authentic works, and his 1682 inventory was compiled in Rome by Giuseppe Pinacci, prior to Carpio’s transfer from his position as Ambassador to Rome to that of Viceroy in Naples. Pinacci was highly esteemed, not merely as an artist, but as probably the supreme authority of his time on earlier painters, so much so that Antonio Orlandi, in his dictionary of 1733, after listing his other talents wrote: “Among Pinacci’s most remarkable gifts was his astonishing, and quite perfect (“perfettissima”) ability to recognise the authors of earlier paintings”. Luigi Lanzi, in his biography of 1795, gave a similar description of Pinacci’s talents, and this aspect of his fame is recalled, even to day, in dictionaries and catalogues, including that of the Uffizi Gallery of 1980, where it is noted “Pinacci also worked in Rome and Naples, but little, because he was so often employed as an expert...”<sup>45</sup>. After Carpio’s death, in late 1687, Pinacci was employed, as painter and expert, by Grand Duke Ferdinand of Tuscany.

The 1682 inventory shows that Pinacci had access to earlier Carpio archives, for he records several illustrious provenances, including gifts to the future Viceroy. Contemporary correspondence



22. Frans Snyders, *Dogs disputing a meal*. Canvas 150 x 250 cm. Signed Ex: De Berghe Collection, Brussels.



23. Francisco de Goya, *Sides of meat with an animal's head*. Canvas 45 x 62 cm. Signed. The Louvre



24. Caravaggio, *Bacchus with a bowl of fruit*, Canvas 96 x 85 cm. Uffizi, Florence.

moreover suggests that Pinacci did not rely solely on his own acknowledged abilities, but consulted other important painters about attributions and valuations. (Luca Giordana and Carlo Maratta were painters to the Marques del Carpio, and may conceivably have been among those consulted) <sup>46</sup>. Given then both its august provenance and the

acclaimed connoisseurship of Giuseppe Pinacci, it may well be that Viceroy del Carpio's *Piglet with its innards exposed* was in fact by Caravaggio.

Caravaggio was renowned early in his career as a still life painter, in which capacity he was employed by Cesare d'Arpino. While few of Caravaggio's pure still lifes are currently extant or recognised, the still life elements discernible in his compositions such as his *Bacchus with a basket of fruit* at the Uffizi [24] seem often influenced, both in treatment and colour, by elements from the still lifes of Vincenzo Campi [25] who flourished in the years 1563-1591 at Cremona, some 60 kilometres from the former's birthtown of Caravaggio. Friedlander, and others, have already suggested that Caravaggio gained his chiaroscuro inspiration from the works of Vincenzo's older brother Antonio Campi <sup>47</sup>, and have cited, as examples of earlier works of this kind, Antonio Campi's 1584 painting *The Empress Faustina visiting Saint Catherine in prison* [26], at the Church of S. Angelo, Milan, and his *Beheading of Saint John* of ca. 1580, at the Church of St Paul in that same city. Certainly ideas from these compositions were used by Caravaggio in later paintings, including his *Beheading of John the Baptist* produced in Malta in 1608. [27]

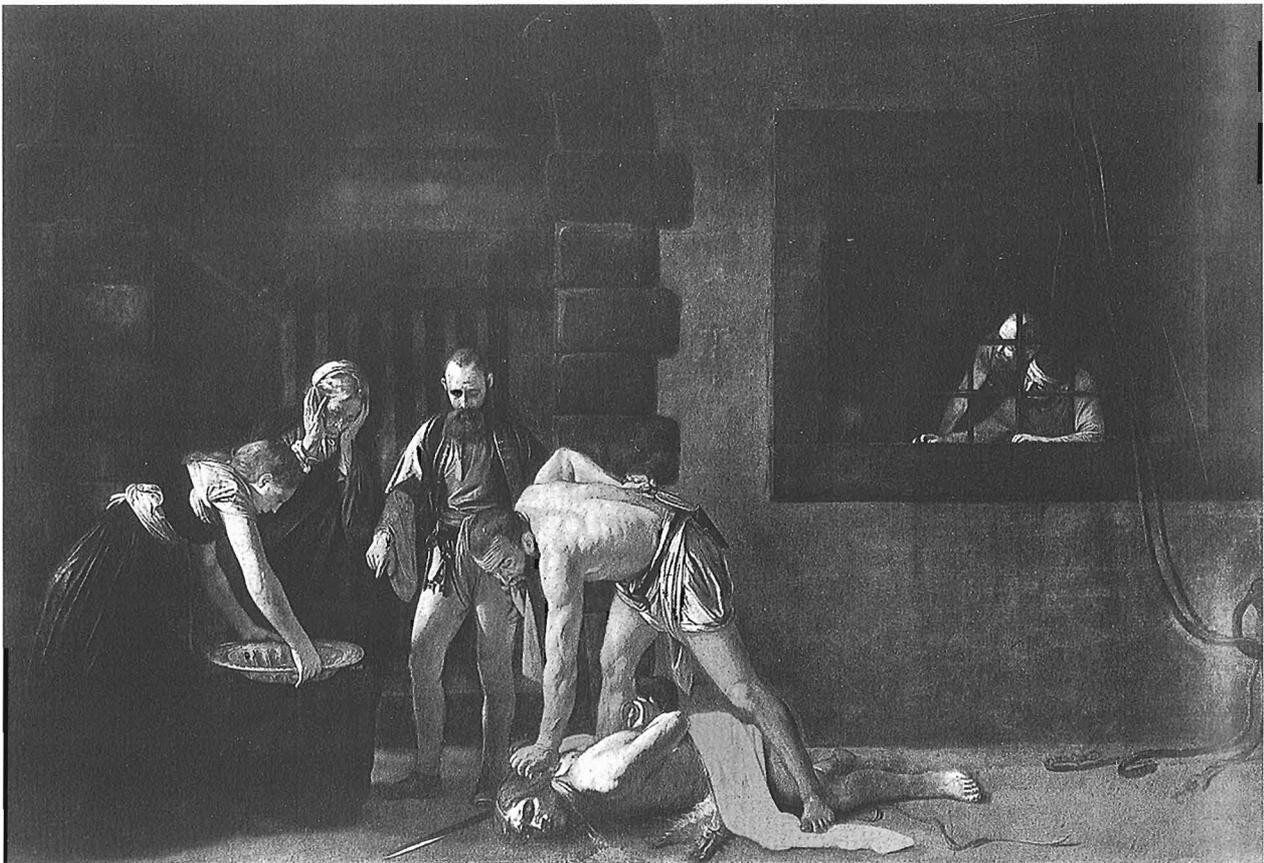
Caravaggio began his four year apprenticeship with Simone Peterzano at the age of ten, in Milan in 1584, and would have been among the first to admire the *Empress Faustina visiting Saint Catherine*, which was completed in that year. It is also likely that he was acquainted with Antonio and Giulio Campi, who frescoed the vaults of the Church of



25. Vincenzo Campi, *The Fruit Seller*, Canvas 145 x 215 cm. Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.



26. Antonio Campi, *The Empress Faustina visiting Saint Catherine in prison* (1584). Canvas 400x500 cm. Church of St. Angelo, Milan.



27. Caravaggio, *The Beheading of St. John the Baptist*. Oil on canvas 361 x 520 cm. Cathedral of St. John, Valletta, Malta.

Saint Paul there during the years 1586–9. So far as I am aware, however, Caravaggio's formation as a still life painter, under the possible influence or aegis of Antonio and Vincenzo Campi, has rarely been considered. While then, in the light of what is currently known of Caravaggio's still life paintings, such chiaroscuristic still lifes as *La Porchetta* seem unusual in his oeuvre, it is neither impossible nor unlikely that he painted them, nor that he passed on certain hints on how to resolve the lighting problems entailed, to followers such as Ribera. Given that so few of Caravaggio's still lifes remain extant, it is impossible nowadays to judge the basis of his reputation as a still life painter, when hired by Cesare d'Arpino for this specific purpose on his arrival in Rome around 1591. The likelihood of his having painted chiaroscuristic still lifes seems nonetheless supported by the still life elements in his larger compositions. It is after all only logical that he would have experimented at such small scale works before including them in his grander compositions. Given moreover the influence on him of Antonio Campi of Cremona, it cannot be excluded that he produced such chiaroscuristic still lifes while still in Lombardy.

The valuation of *La Porchetta* on the inventories (10 ducats in Rome, and 100 reales in Madrid), is not great, but equal to that of portraits listed there by Giorgione and Tintoretto. It may thus be deduced, by comparison with the valuations on the same lists of grander compositions by these same masters that, by 1682, the portraits of the Venetians, and still lifes by Caravaggio, were no longer highly prized specimens of their art. Insofar as Caravaggio's still lifes are concerned, given the fashion for ornate compositions which swept Italy and Spain in the years after his death, it is understandable that, by 1682, their stark simplicity may have become less appreciated<sup>48</sup>.

At this stage De Dominici's text should perhaps be cited directly for, as noted previously, one finds in it a possible explanation of how Caravaggio and Ribera might have come to produce almost identical compositions De Dominici writes:

"After returning from Parma and Modena, Ribera abandoned the Correggesque manner, and returned to his earlier studies, dedicating himself to forceful, naturalistic painting, which one may reasonably say, in some ways, surpassed Caravaggio himself. *He repeated certain copies of works by Caravaggio which he possessed, correcting inherent weaknesses of the master, with superior draftsmanship and colour, thus to demonstrate, to the masters of his craft, his superiority, as a naturalist painter, in the details as in the whole*"<sup>49</sup> [Writer's italics].

If true, this statement encourages a renewed study of works by Caravaggio (of which at least two versions are known), for the commonly-held view may be suspect, that the better-drawn of two existing and identical Caravaggio compositions has to be the true Caravaggio.

### *The reasons for excluding Giuseppe Recco or Michelangelo da Caravaggio as author of La Porchetta*

#### *Giuseppe Recco*

While considering the feasibility of Giuseppe Recco himself having painted *La Porchetta* one must emphasize, contrary to our information about Ribera, that no records exist of Recco ever having copied Caravaggio. One would therefore have to invent the circumstances in which this important, but relatively late, baroque master, may have been obliged to copy his, no longer so fashionable (so far as still life painting is concerned), predecessor of several decades<sup>48</sup>. Once again, of course, one must recall the rarity of *La Porchetta's* subject matter, and the reasons for assuming that it has to be, at the least, inspired by Caravaggio.

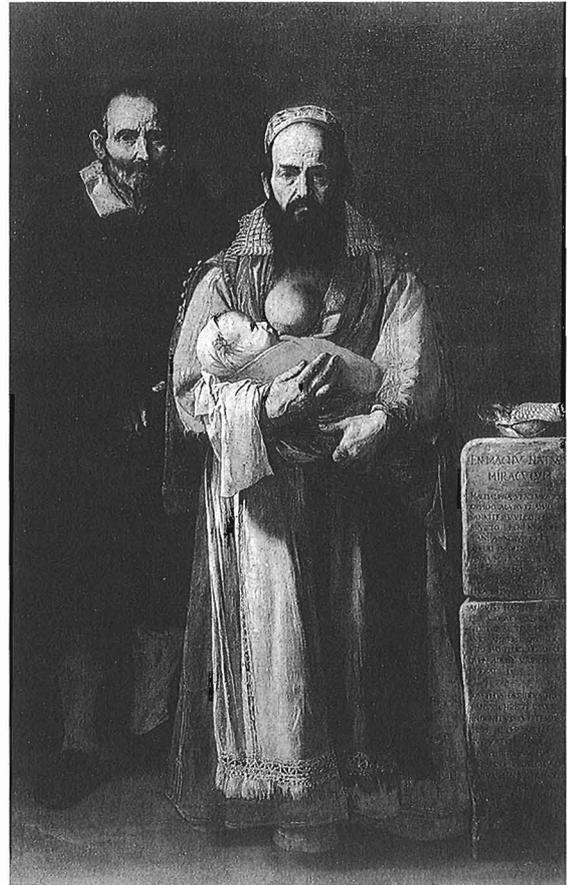
Although clearly subjective, the writer shares with many others the belief that this painting is an early baroque southern (Neapolitan or Roman) composition, almost impossible to date after 1634, in which year Giuseppe Recco was only just born. Its composition and style are typical of paintings executed within the first two decades of the seventeenth century, and it fits perfectly the detailed description of the pre-1621 paintings of Ribera, written by Mancini and Palomino.

Giuseppe Recco was a fine artist, and capable of painting still lifes realistically. He was not, however, it is suggested, a painter of anything like the degree of naturalism of Ribera. This is probably less true of his brother Giovanni Battista Recco, whose style was somewhat archaic for a painter of his generation, and many of whose works reflected the chiaroscuristic and realist mode of the earlier painters of the seventeenth century. The inscription GIOS. R on *La Porchetta* could not however be that of Giovanni Battista Recco, for GIOS. stands for 'Giuseppe' and cannot be an abbreviation of 'Giovanni'. When confronted by a painting by Ribera, be it the famous *Bearded Woman* at Toledo [28], a *Martyrdom*, or paintings such as his *Tityus* at the Prada [29]. the viewer feels privy to, and almost involved in the suffering of the sinner. Their psychological intensity is indeed such that viewers have been known to shiver, when faced with certain of his works. So far, however, as the paintings of Giuseppe Recco are concerned, his fish and flowers are admirably executed, but one would have difficulty in identifying, in any painting of his, the immediacy, say, of the pimply chicken or dead piglet in *La Porchetta*, or the alertness of the birds on the table. Recco's paintings, in short, are more deliberately intended to be easier on the eye, and conform to the more readily appealing, later baroque style. Spinosa illustrates many paintings by both Giuseppe, and Giovanni Battista Recco, in his publication *La Pittura Napoletana del '600*. A

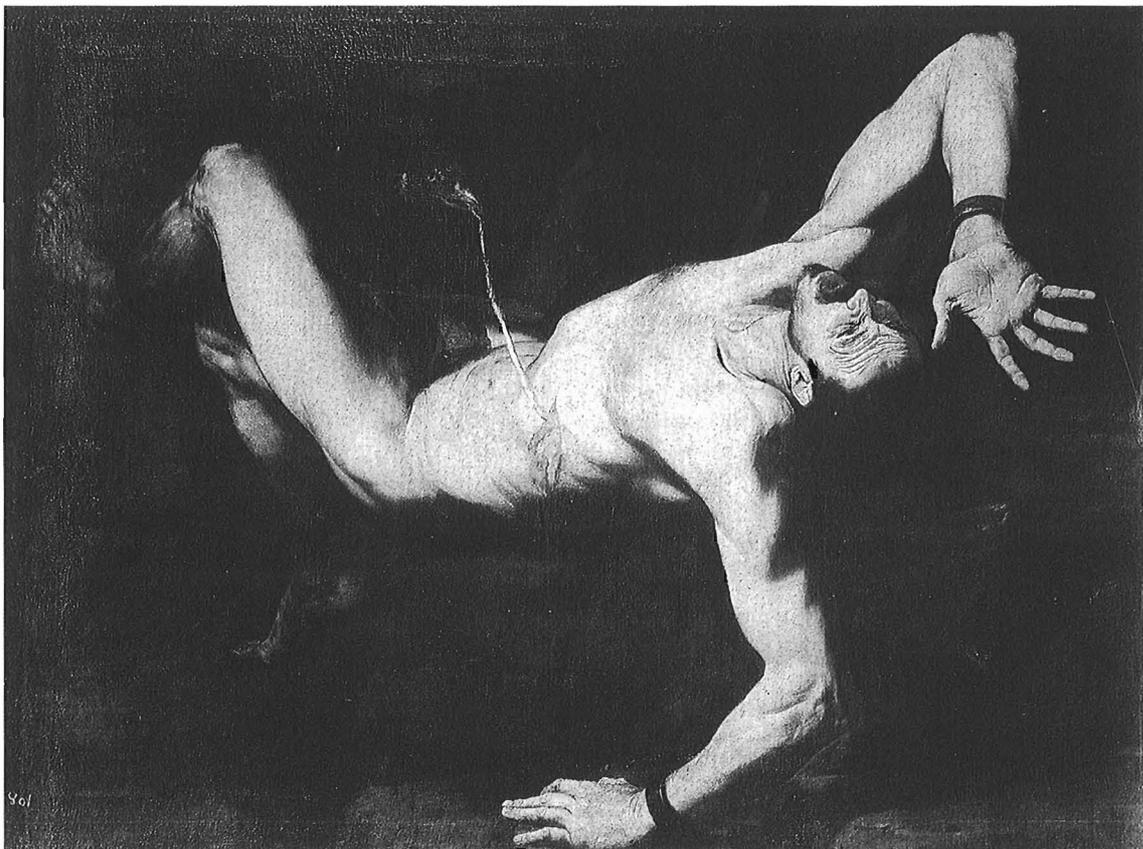
scrutiny of the still lifes of these artists should verify these observations <sup>50</sup>.

Finally, as De Dominici explained (which statement is almost invariably cited in reverse by present-day scholars) Giuseppe Recco was *taken from Naples as a child and reared in Milan* (at that time part of Spanish Lombardy) by an uncle named Antonio Recco, a cavalry captain who later rose to the rank of 'maestro di campo' (roughly translatable as Field Marshal). *Giuseppe Recco returned to Naples only at the age of twenty, in 1654*. Recco was then, first of all, a northern trained artist who, already as a youth, must have studied famous Northern painters such as Baschenis and Bettera, as his *Still Life with Masks* [30] at the Boymans Museum makes clear. His southern style paintings, including sea creatures and fish, presumably came later, after his return as an adult to the seaport of Naples. (The suggestion of De Vito that there may have been two painters called Giuseppe Recco is an intriguing and separate issue, but one about which this writer remains, at present, unconvinced) <sup>51</sup>.

Several seventeenth century still lifes initialled G.R. have been exhibited over the last decades and catalogued, according to individual whim, sometimes as Giacomo Recco, sometimes as Gioseppe Recco and, occasionally, as Gioseppe Ruoppolo <sup>52</sup>. It might be worth considering whether those which fit the early, rather than the late baroque style, are perhaps works of Giuseppe



28. Jusepe de Ribera, *The Bearded Woman*. Canvas 196 x 127 cm. Palacio Lerma, Toledo.



29. Ribera, *Tityus*. Canvas 227 x 301, Signed: Jusepe de Ribera F. 1632. The Prado, Madrid..

Recco's natural father, Giacomo Recco. They remain difficult to reconcile with those works of Giuseppe Recco which bear fuller signatures. It may indeed be that Giuseppe Recco signed more extensively to differentiate his works from those of his father. It also seems unlikely that Giuseppe Recco would have acquired so considerable a reputation had he been viewed, during his lifetime, as a retardataire rather than a thoroughly modern painter. It remains to be clarified how often Giuseppe Recco signed in the abbreviated form *Gios R*, and consideration must be given to whether certain other paintings thus signed ought not to be restored to Ribera's oeuvre. John Spike informs me that he shortly intends to undertake this task.

#### *Caravaggio*

In order to argue that this picture is the missing *Porchetta* listed as by Caravaggio in the Carpio collection, one would still need to explain how it came to bear its old GIOS. R inscription, which one now knows to be a characteristic signature, not only of Giuseppe Recco, but also of Giuseppe Ribera. There can be little doubt, had the *Still Life with a Female Piglet* borne so prominent an inscription in 1682 (given, in those pre-De Dominici days, that he would possibly have been unaware that such an inscription could also be Ribera's) that Pinacci would have recognised it as the signature of his colleague Giuseppe Recco. Recco was Court Painter to the Marqués de los Vélez, Carpio's predecessor as Viceroy of Naples until 1682, and could easily have verified any doubts Pinacci may have had about such a signature. The reasons for excluding Giuseppe Recco as the author of *La Porchetta* have already been dealt with, and may of course be equally well applied to his slightly later contemporary, Giuseppe Ruoppolo, who was born only in 1639, and shared the same first name and initials. What is however inescapable, but could explain a much later application of Recco's signature on an unsigned and (by the time of the 1689 inventory) unattributed still life by Caravaggio, is that, at the time of the death of the Marqués del Carpio in 1687, Giuseppe Recco was among the most renowned and valuable of the Spanish/Neapolitan still life painters. De Dominici and Giuseppe de Vito have clearly testified to this<sup>53</sup>. Further tests were therefore carried out, and a microscopic section of the signature GIOS R. was taken from the painting of *La Porchetta* and analysed. The results of this analysis, carried out at University College, London, in 1995, suggest however that this signature is contemporary with the painting itself<sup>54</sup>.

Given therefore De Dominici's clear testimony, that Ribera copied and improved upon compositions of Caravaggio, in an attempt to demonstrate to his peers his superior technique, and the close affinities

which *La Porchetta* has been shown to share with other paintings by Ribera, it is proposed that he, and not Caravaggio, was the author of this *Porchetta*. The prominent GIOS. R, it is suggested, represents a confident final flourish of the proud Spaniard, to emphasize the superiority of this, his composition, over the original, and in his personal (and perhaps quite justifiable) view, less well-composed and drawn *Porchetta* by Caravaggio. Considering the reputation Caravaggio has been accorded this century, Lanzi's statement that Ribera was a better draftsman than Caravaggio, may seem heretical. Lanzi has however been shown to be by no means unique in his opinion, and there can be no question that *La Porchetta* is the product of a master draftsman<sup>55</sup>.

Pinacci wrote that each item in the Carpio collection was marked with the Carpio monogram, surmounted by a coronet<sup>56</sup>, Maria Gilbert has furthermore confirmed to me that several paintings still bear such a mark on the reverse, and cites, for example, Domenico Tintoretto's *Venus and Mars and Cupid and the Three Graces in a landscape* at the Art Institute of Chicago, which bears his mark and number under the relining, and Parmigianino's *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* at the Louvre, which similarly sports a rather worn Carpio monogram, on the rear of its panel. *La Porchetta* has however been relined more than once and, as it is standard practice to scrape and flatten the back of a canvas prior to relining, this could explain the removal of an original Carpio mark.

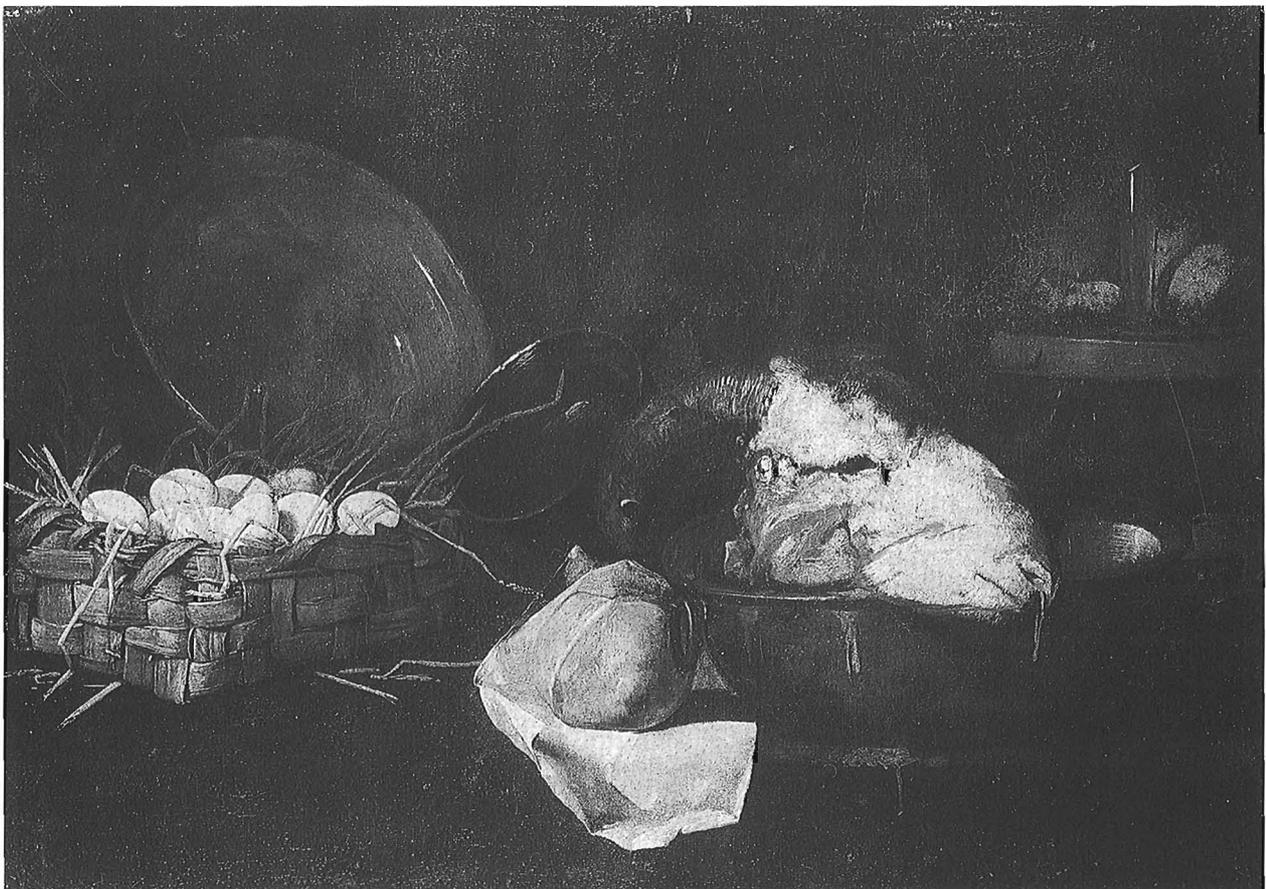
Given the above information it seems then, in order to maintain that this *Porchetta* and that in the Carpio collection are the same picture, one would have to accept that Pinacci, knowing that it could not be by Recco (and perhaps having Recco's confirmation that, in this instance, the GIOS R. was indeed not his signature) felt it to be of such high quality that he judged the Caravaggio attribution to be totally convincing.

Finally mention should be made of another (unsigned) still life which I have suggested may also be by Ribera. This is the *Still Life with a goat's head and basket of eggs* at the Capodimonte Museum, Naples [31]. In 1982, at the exhibition *From Caravaggio to Giordano* at the Royal Academy in London, this was given to Giovanni Battista Recco<sup>57</sup>. Roberto Middione, while admitting its attribution to be controversial wrote, in words which might be equally applicable to *La Porchetta*.

*This painting is violently naturalistic and Riberesque, compared with such works as Giovanni Battista Recco's Kitchen Still Life at Capodimonte, in which an incipient academicism in the composition suggests that it may date from the 1650's... it must be considerably earlier, and is permeated with a sense of realism which recalls Ribera's maturity.*



30. Giuseppe Recco, *A still life with masks, books and musical instruments*. Canvas 103.5 x 157 cm. Signed. Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam.



31. *Still Life with a basket of eggs and a goat's head*. Here attributed to Giuseppe de Ribera, 69 x 100 cm. Capodimonte, Naples.

This painting displays high technical ability, as regards both draftsmanship and painting. Its lighting, moreover (and the realism remarked upon by Middione) fit well with Mancini's description of Ribera's pre-1621 style of painting. It may perhaps be of an earlier date than has so far been considered, and may also deserve consideration for

inclusion in Ribera's oeuvre.

I hope that this research may stimulate further investigation into the youthful creations of Jusepe (or Giuseppe) de Ribera and that the observations made about the Recco family, and Caravaggio's early training and reputation, may likewise help towards the eventual clarification of their still life oeuvres.

### Endnotes to Part 3

<sup>1</sup> E. Young, *In the light of Caravaggio*, Trafalgar Galleries, London 1976. No. 5 - Jusepe de Ribera *The Martyrdom of St. Laurence*. To the list of scholars cited in the bibliography who have separately expressed their accord with Young may be added the names of Alan Braham, Raffaello Causa, Keith Christiansen, Sidney Freedberg, Diane de Grazie, Enriquetta Harris, Michael Helston, Alfred Moir, Sir Ellis Waterhouse, and Federico Zeri. Jonathan Brown and Pierre Rosenberg have held fluctuating views about the status of this painting. Each has opined at one stage that it was the missing original, and at another that it was not.

<sup>2</sup> BurlM, July 1976, p. 536.

<sup>3</sup> Xavier de Salas expressed his doubts about the authenticity of the *Crucifixion of Saint Andrew*, in a talk at the *Colloquio caravaggesco* held at the Accademia dei Lincei, on 12-14 February 1973. Pérez Sánchez later expressed further misgivings and excluded, on iconographic grounds, that this picture could portray the *Crucifixion of Saint Andrew*. He suggested instead that it portrayed *Saint Philip*. *Caravaggio y el naturalismo español*, Seville 1973, no. 4.

Nicolson's article proving the *Crucifixion of Saint Andrew* to be the lost Caravaggio, which had been sent to Spain by the Count of Benavente, was published in the *Burlington Magazine* of October 1974, pp. 624-5. (He also demonstrated there that the identification was iconographically sound.) Ann Lurie and Dennis Mahon published further evidence in *Caravaggio's Crucifixion of Saint Andrew from Valladolid*. *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, January 1977, pp. 3-24.

<sup>4</sup> See Mia Cinotti & G. dell'Acqua *Caravaggio*, Bergamo 1983, pp. 420-23, no. 8 (for further biographical data); *The Age of Caravaggio*, Metropolitan Museum, New York 1985, No. 99; M. Marini, *Caravaggio*, 1987, no. 80, p. 272; B. Nicolson *Caravaggism in Europe* 2nd Edition, 1989, vol. 1, p. 80, et al.

<sup>5</sup> A.E. Pérez Sánchez and N. Spinosa, *Ribera 1591-1652*, 1978 Exh. cats. Naples, Madrid and New York 1992.

<sup>6</sup> *Storia dell'Arte* 1995, No. 85.

<sup>7</sup> *Jusepe de Ribera*, Naples 1992, No. 1.1, pp. 112-3; *Jusepe de Ribera*, N.Y. 1992, No. 1, pp. 58-9. On October 27 1613 *Josefo de Riviera* was invited to a meeting of the Academy. *Ribera*, Naples, p. 24; 8. *Ribera*, N.Y. 1992, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> The association of Ribera and Caravaggio was discussed in Part 2 of this study, and the corroborative statements of many early biographers were cited. Ribera's debt to Reni is referred to, among others, by Baldinucci who wrote: "a Roma si diede a disegnare opera dei migliori e particolarmente a copiare cose di Guido, dal quale apprese il modo di colorir fresco". F. Baldinucci, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, Florence, I, 1681, fol. 129. (...in Rome he sketched the works of the best painters and copied particularly things by Guido Reni, etc.)

<sup>9</sup> De Dominici, 1971 (P. de Matteis on Ribera), pp. 21-2.

<sup>10</sup> This suggestion was made by W. Prohaska in an entry prepared on another *Martyrdom of Saint Laurence* attributed to Massimo Stanzione, and evidently inspired by this famous Ribera composition. (Sotheby's, New York. *Old Master Sale*, 14 January 1993, No. 176). Prohaska suggested the original Ribera *Saint Laurence* might date to c. 1624.

<sup>11</sup> *Ribera*, N.Y. 1992, p. 72.

<sup>12</sup> Marco Gallo, *Un nuovo documento su Ribera*, F.I.M. Antiquari, n. 00, p. 68, 1992. This compared with only 25 scudi, or a painting to decorate the church, which was promised by other such renowned painters as Antonio Carracci, Lanfranco, and Domenichino. As Gallo noted, the sum offered by Ribera could be expected only of a well established master, and indicates that Ribera, by 1614, must already have been greatly esteemed by his peers.

<sup>13</sup> *Ribera*, N.Y. 1992, p. 235. This sum was drawn by the Viceroy Duke of Osuna's secretary, from the Military Account. De Dominici and others record Ribera's father to have been a high ranking military officer at Naples Castle, and one might ponder whether he had some influence on the matter. Ribera had been married just over a year, and was established in Naples. It also explains his splendid lifestyle at Court alluded to by Mancini and Bellori.

<sup>14</sup> See M. Cinotti and G. dell'Acqua, *Caravaggio*, No. 12, p. 429.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 7, p. 418 & No. 24, p. 448.

<sup>16</sup> L. Scaramuccia, *Le finezze de' pennelli italiani*, Pavia 1674, pp. 173/4, note 52. G. Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla Pittura* (Rome c. 1617); Ed. Salerno 1956, Vol. 11, pp. 249-251.

<sup>17</sup> G. Bottari & S. Ticozzi, *Raccolte di lettere sulla pittura, scultura ed architettura*, Milano 1754, p. 199. Ribera was paid 209 lire for the *Saint Martin* he painted in Parma in 1611, which was so admired by Ludovico Carracci, and aroused the jealousy of the local painters. M. Cordaro, *Sull'attività del Ribera giovane a Parma*, Storia dell'Arte 38-40, 1980, pp. 324-6. According to De Dominicis Ribera was then 17 years old, which would accord well with Mancini's remark that he travelled there 'ancor giovanetto'.

<sup>18</sup> *Ribera*, N.Y. 1922, No. 1, p. 59 (N. Spinosa).

<sup>19</sup> According to an extract from the *Archivio di Stato di Roma*, on 29 March 1651, following the installation of Cosimo Fanzaga's marbled pulpit "the large painting of *St. Laurence the Martyr* was brought to the church by *Giuseppe Antonino*, and installed on the Main Altar". While no record remains of the precise author of this *St. Laurence*, which evidently belonged on the High Altar, the text implies that it had been removed from the church while the building work progressed. It may have been cleaned by the painter Antonino at the same time. M.A. Bertoldi, *Le chiese di Roma illustrate. S. Lorenzo in Lucina*, Rome 1994, pp. 43-4, note 62. For baptismal record of Margarita de Ribera see *Ribera* N.Y., p. 242 (22 April 1630). Vouet and Saraceni were in Rome, with Ribera, from 1613.

<sup>20</sup> See: A. Blunt, *Guide to Baroque Rome*, London 1982, pp. 68/9, for a brief artistic history of the Church of San Lorenzo in Lucina.

<sup>21</sup> Luigi Scaramuccia related that there were works by Ribera, at the Church of S. Maria Bianca in Parma, which were almost indistinguishable from those of Correggio. L. Scaramuccia, *Le finezze de' pennelli italiani*, Pavia 1674, pp. 173/4. De Dominicis confirmed Scaramuccia's report and noted further that, while in Parma, Ribera copied Correggio and imitated his style. Ribera continued painting this way for a while after returning to Naples but reverted to his earlier naturalistic, Caravaggesque manner after being persuaded that it was superior. B. De Dominicis *cit.*, Vol. III (Ed. 1971), pp. 5-6. Ribera's copying of Reni has already been mentioned. For information regarding his copies of works by Caravaggio see *B. De Dominicis, cit.*, Vol. III (Ed. 1971), pp. 3-4.

<sup>22</sup> This subject was engraved by Agostino de' Musi. The *Hecate* was considered to be by Raphael in Ribera's time.

<sup>23</sup> G. Mancini, *cit.*, p. 249

<sup>24</sup> See also N. Spinosa, *L'Opera Completa del Ribera*, Milan 1978.

<sup>25</sup> B. De Dominicis, *cit.*, (Ed. 1971), p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> C. Felton, *Jusepe de Ribera. A Catalogue Raisonné*, University of Pittsburgh, Ch. II. Finaldi's archival research is published in the Neapolitan and New York catalogues of 1992.

<sup>27</sup> *Jusepe de Ribera and the Order of Christ*, *BurlM* 118, (1976) pp. 301-7.

<sup>28</sup> R. Cohen, *Trafalgar Galleries XII*, no. 14, pp. 44-51.

<sup>29</sup> W. Vitzthum, *A Selection of Italian Drawings from North American Collections*, Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, Toronto 1970, No. 38 & Pl. VII; and *Disegni inediti di Ribera*, *Arte Illustrata* IV, January-February 1971, pp. 74-84.

<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Brown, *Jusepe de Ribera Prints and Drawings*, Princeton 1973, drawings Nos. 13 & 35, pp. 162 & 176.

<sup>31</sup> Only five or so personally signed letters from Ribera have been found, all written towards the end of his life

(1649-51), and none of his pre-1624 works are signed in script. There is, therefore, no way of checking how he signed during the first fifteen years of his career. C. Felton, *cit.*, 1971, p. 40 (Letters from Ribera to Antonio Ruffo 7 October 1649 and 22 September 1650). *Ribera*, N.Y. 1992, pp. 250/2 (Letters from Ribera to the Prior of the Certosa di S. Martino of 20 June 1651, 23 June 1651, and 6 September 1651).

<sup>32</sup> "You, cruel Ribera, harsher than Jupiter, From the dreadful gashes, of hollowed-out flanks, Flow cascades of guts, streams of blood". The pie, often containing livers and meat, is a typical Neapolitan concoction of the seventeenth century, and figures in many Neapolitan still life paintings. Mattia Preti's *Marriage at Cana* at the National Gallery, London, also portrays a similar pie.

<sup>33</sup> A photograph of this painting was given by the writer to Nicola Spinosa and published by him, by mutual accord (with its longstanding attribution to Giuseppe Recco) both in *Pittura Napoletana del '600*, 1984, and in F. Zeri, *La Natura Morta in Italia*, Milan 1989, p. 910. At that time neither Professor Spinosa nor I had considered De Dominicis sufficiently in depth to realise that GIOS R. could also be the signature of Giuseppe Ribera. It was the dawning realisation that the *Piglet* had to be by Ribera, and not Recco, which set off this literary trawl, encouraged by Spinosa, and unearthed De Dominicis's confirmation that Ribera also signed in such an Italianate fashion.

<sup>34</sup> G. Mancini, *cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 108.

<sup>35</sup> L. Lanzi, *Storia Pittorica* (2nd Ed.), 1822, Vol. 4, p. 136.

<sup>36</sup> G. Coniglio, *I Vicere Spagnoli a Napoli*, Naples 1967, p. 193. He was the guest of the Count of Lemos in 1611.

<sup>37</sup> B. De Dominicis (Reprint of De Matteis) *cit.*, Vol. III, Ed. 1971, pp. 21/2.

<sup>38</sup> C. Felton, *BurlM*, Feb. 1991, p. 74. Felton noted: "In the hands of Saint Lawrence in both paintings (respectively from the Demidoff and Kansas City collections) Ribera has structured the 'mound of Venus' with circular sweeps of the brush".

<sup>39</sup> A. Palomino, *cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>40</sup> B. De Dominicis, *cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 3-4. See also note 21.

<sup>41</sup> M. Burke, *Private Collections of Italian Art in Seventeenth Century Spain*, Vol. 2, p. 282. Dissertation, New York University, 1984.

<sup>42</sup> *Encycl. Britannica*, 1973, Vol. 23, Weights & Measures, p. 379.

<sup>43</sup> Marcus Burke, *cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 334 etc. *La Porchetta* and its companion-piece travelled to Spain in 1686, on the English ship 'Lagoun Merchant', captained by John Harrington.

<sup>44</sup> F. Haskell, *Patrons and painters*, 1980, pp. 190-2 etc. Marcus Burke *cit.*, Vol. 1, Ch. 4.

<sup>45</sup> Lanzi wrote: "His (Pinacci's) major talent was to recognise the hands of earlier painters". L. Lanzi, *cit.*, Reprint 1822, Vol. I, p. 310. *Gli Uffizi Catalogo Generale*, A702. This statement figures beneath the *Self-Portrait* of Giuseppe Pinacci.

<sup>46</sup> *Letter of 20 February 1688 from the Bishop of Cassano to the VIII Marque's del Carpio*. "...In his Excellency's book may be found the appraisal by the best painters in Rome". *Letter of 1 April 1688 from the Marquesa del Carpio to Don Esteban Carrillo* "arrange the sales according to the appraisal made by the painters from Rome".

<sup>47</sup> W. Friedlander, *Caravaggio Studies*, New York 1969, Figs. 26 & 28. 48

<sup>48</sup> Marcus Burke, *cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 277 etc. On Pinacci's inventory two, admittedly larger paintings of Fish by Giuseppe Recco (of 4x7 palmi) were valued at 20 ducats each (Nos. 623/4). This compares with 10 ducats each for *La Porchetta* and its pendant by Caravaggio; and 50 ducats,

respectively, for the portraits by Velázquez of Cardinal Massimi, and Donna Olympia (Nos. 429/30). The inventory also shows that, in those years, Caravaggio was more esteemed as painter of figure subjects than for still lifes. Two works by Caravaggio *A small putto holding a bird* (of 3x4 palmi) and a *Saint Sebastian with two women nursing his wounds* (measuring 7x5 palmi) were valued there, respectively, at 30 and 200 ducats (Nos. 221 & 338).

<sup>49</sup> B. De Dominici, *cit.*, Ed. 1971, Vol. III, pp. 3/4.

<sup>50</sup> Other paintings by Recco are illustrated by De Vito in *Un giallo per Giuseppe Recco etc. Ricerche sul '600 Napoletano*, Storia dell'Arte, Milano 1988, p. 67, and notes 13 and 14. De Vito cites a deed of 1697 which proves Giuseppe Recco to have been the brother of Giovanni Battista (and of Domenico, Gaetano, and Nicolao Recco) which relationship has occasionally been questioned.

<sup>51</sup> Giuseppe de Vito's argument that there were two painters named Giuseppe Recco, should be borne in mind, but seems questionable. Once again like Prota-Giurleo, Salazar, and others, De Vito criticises De Dominici, but hardly fairly. One of De Vito's arguments that they cannot be the same person is based on the fact that, on his 30 August 1663 application, for acceptance as a Knight in the Order of Calatrava, Giuseppe Recco named as his father, not Giacomo Recco the painter, but Don Guglielmo Recco from a military family, and of proven aristocratic lineage. A close reading of De Dominici indicates however that, as a child, Giuseppe Recco was adopted by his cavalry captain uncle, Don Antonio Recco, and it would have been perfectly in order for the name of his adoptive father to appear on the deed in question. While it is true that De Dominici refers to this uncle merely as Don Antonio Recco, it was common for children to be given a saint's name, as well as that of parental preference, and one can certainly not exclude that his name in full read 'Guglielmo Antonio Recco'. Giuseppe Recco seems indeed to have been named after this uncle, for his baptismal record shows his full names were Giuseppe Antonio Recco. This could have been another reason for the differentiation of names, between him and his uncle, on Recco's application.

Prota-Giurleo records that the painter Giuseppe Recco was baptised by the *Mammanna* (midwife) "*casu necessitatis*", which seems to indicate, like so many women in those years, that his mother may have died in childbirth. This could explain his adoption by his uncle.

On Recco's marriage record in Naples, of October 1654, he further referred to his natural father as the "late Giacomo Recco". Given then that, by 1663, Recco's natural father was long dead, his statement citing the permission of his adoptive father, on his application to the Order of Calatrava is understandable. His cavalry captain uncle was, moreover, able to prove his nobility (and thus that of Giuseppe Recco to have had a noble father) whereas, had the painter's true father been a younger brother, this would not have been possible. And such nobility was of course essential for a successful application for appointment in the Order.

De Vito further explains that Giuseppe Recco applied to

become a Knight of Calatrava in August 1663, "with his father's permission". This indicated, at the time of preparing the document, that Giuseppe Recco had not yet attained his majority. (Nigel Glendinning has confirmed to me that, like in France, the age of majority in those years was not eighteen but twenty-five). The same document was re-presented four years later on, in March 1667, as the former application had not met with success. One might therefore question whether, for some reason not fully understood, these applications had to be re-presented at four year intervals. If so, the prior and first application may have been made in 1659 (just before Giuseppe Recco, who was baptised on 12 July 1634, came of age). This is not an illogical sequence of events.

Giuseppe Recco himself was described on his application as a cavalry captain, which commission might have been acquired through the good offices of his uncle and adoptive father, who De Dominici records to have been firstly a cavalry captain, and later 'maestro di campo', and who De Vito proves to have descended from a noble military line. See: G. de Vito, *cit.*, pp. 65 on.

<sup>52</sup> See, among other publications, *La Natura Morta Italiana*, Naples 1964, Nos. 69, 91 etc. and G. De Vito *cit.*, Figs. 21 & 22 etc.

<sup>53</sup> De Dominici, *cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 205-298. De Vito, *cit.*, pp. 65-127. In addition to being appointed a Knight of the Order of Calatrava during the regency of Charles II of Spain, Recco became Court painter to the Marqués de los Vélez, Viceroy of Naples from 1675 until 1683. His fame even reached England, and he painted two elaborate flower pieces for the fifth Earl of Exeter, which still hang at Burghley House.

<sup>54</sup> The tests were carried out by Dr. Libby Sheldon and assistants. The laboratory supplied as reasons for its conclusion, that there was no old varnish or dirt between the signature and the surface of the picture, which might be expected if the signature had been added later; and that a degree of integration was found, between the two paint layers (of the signature and of the painting itself). This latter evidence supports the view that the signature was applied before the painting itself had completely dried. Against these conclusions one could probably argue, in the first instance, that the painting could have been cleaned prior to the application of the signature. Against the second statement one might also add that there is still much to be learnt both about the possible chemical reactions and the penetrative abilities of certain paints, when added above others which have already dried, as in the case of a signature, and also indeed about the absorptive capacity of any particular paint beneath. At this stage it may therefore be perilous to draw any categorical conclusions.

<sup>55</sup> Lanzi, when writing about Caravaggio noted that, while Caravaggio's paintings had great effect, they were not especially remarkable for their drawing. L. Lanzi, *cit.*, (2nd Ed. 1822), p. 108.

<sup>56</sup> Marcus Burke, *cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 274.

<sup>57</sup> *From Caravaggio to Giordano*, Royal Academy, London 1982, No. 112, p. 220.

**THE PROVENANCE AND LITERARY REFERENCES  
OF JUSEPE DE RIBERA'S MARTYRDOM OF SAINT LAURENCE**

**Jusepe De Ribera**

*The Martyrdom of Saint Laurence*

Oil on Canvas 80 x 60.75 inches (204 x 154cm)

**Provenance:**

Possibly the missing altarpiece from the High Altar at the Church of S. Lorenzo in Lucina, Rome. All trace of this seems to have been lost since its replacement by Guido Reni's Crucifixion, which was bequeathed to the church by the Marchese Angelelli, in 1675.

Gagliardi, Florence, by 1836. (Gagliardi was a well-known Florentine dealer and the source of the National Gallery's *Lapiths and Centaurs* by Piero di Cosimo).

Prince Anatole Demidoff, S. Donato, Florence 1836-1870: Sold Paris 3-4 march 1870, No. 199.

M. Andre Marie, President of the French Council of Ministers until 1975.

**Literature:**

*Collections de S. Donato*, Catalogue by C. Pillet and F. Petit, 3/4 March 1870 No. 200. 'Oeuvre magistrale où brillent toutes les grandes qualités de Ribera'.

E. Young, *In the Light of Caravaggio*, Trafalgar Galleries, London 1976, No. 5 'Without doubt the original of the well-known composition in the Vatican'.

B. Llewellyn . C. McCorquodale *In the Light of Caravaggio* Connoisseur, June 1976, pp.110-3, Fig. 4. 'An extremely important document for the artist'.

T. Crombie, *Masters of Light and Shade*, Apollo, June 1976. 'A valuable addition to the known work of this Neapolitan-Spanish Master'.

B . Nicolson, *BurlM.*, July 1976, p. 536. 'A real find, the original of a canvas long known in the Vatican'.

Jeffery Daniels, *The Listener*, June 1976. 'An early masterpiece by Ribera is another major discovery'.

D. Sutton, *Financial Times*, June 1976. 'Impressive picture by Ribera which once belonged to Prince Anatole Demidoff, the one time husband of Princess Mathilde'.

C. Felton, *Storia dell'Arte* 26, 1976, Fig. 12. 'The discovery of this painting is a most significant event for Ribera studies'.

N. Spinosa, *L'opera completa del Ribera*, Milan 1978, no. 273. At the time of this publication Spinosa had seen the painting only in its uncleaned state, and felt it was probably an excellent studio version. After its cleaning he agreed it was autograph, and catalogued it as such (No. I) in the 1992 Ribera exhibitions in Naples, and at the Metropolitan Museum, New York. (See: *Exhibitions* below).

C. Felton and W. B. Jordan, *Jusepe de Ribera*, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth 1982, Fig. 17. 'A work that summarizes the artist's early career'.

A. Pérez Sánchez, *Pittura Napolitana de Caravaggio a Giordano*, The Prado, 1985, Ill. p. 266. Pérez Sánchez cited Felton's opinion in this publication, and his disagreement with it in the Metropolitan Museum Catalogue of New York in 1992, p. 72.

C. Felton, *Ribera's early years in Italy*, *BurlM.*, February 1991, pp. 71-81, 111. 2.

R. Cohen *Jusepe (or Giuseppe) de Ribera. An Alternative View* *Storia dell'Arte* 1996, No. 86, Part three, fig.2. (Suggested dating 1610-13).

**Exhibited:**

*In the Light of Caravaggio*, Trafalgar Galleries, London 1976, No. 17 (Entry compiled by Eric Young).

*Jusepe de Ribera*, Castel S. Elmo, Naples, 27 February 1992 - 17 May 1992, No. 1 (Spinosa here suggested a dating of c. 1613).

*Jusepe de Ribera*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 18 September - 29 November 1992, No. No 1.