



Caravaggio

The master of painting in Milan, Rome and Naples

13–20 January 2025 (ML 613)

8 days • £4,290

Lecturer: Dr Xavier Bray

Unhurried appreciation of the finest painter of the Italian Baroque in the company of art historian Xavier Bray.

Almost twenty of Caravaggio's works: most in Italy's greatest art museums, some in their original chapels, one in private ownership.

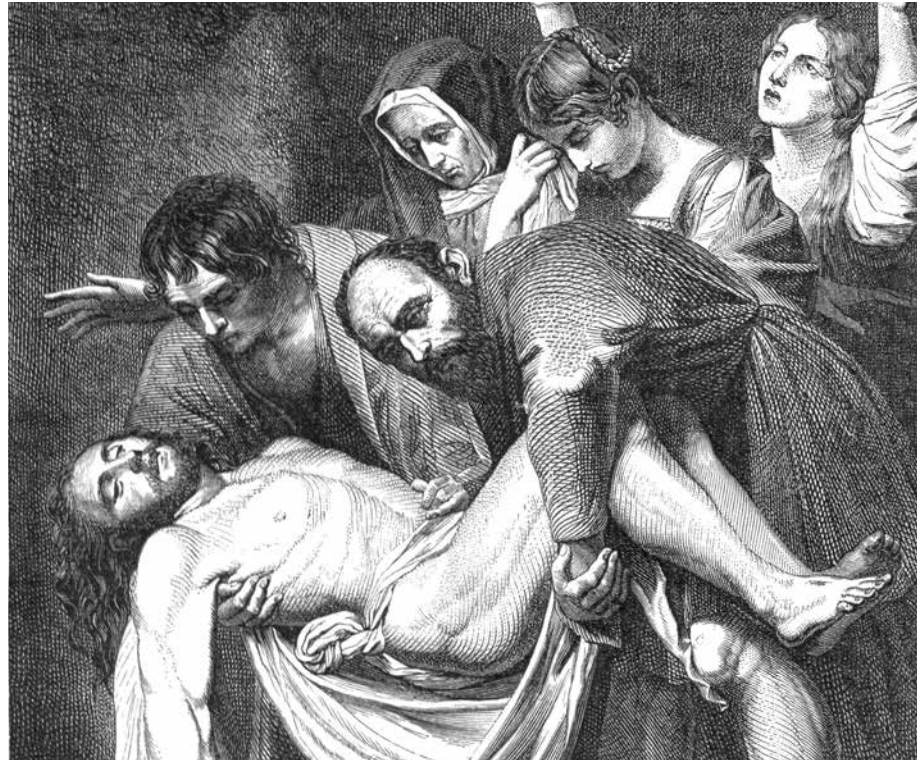
A unique and original journey by rail along the length of Italy.

When Caravaggio died in 1610 aged 38 he was the most famous painter in Italy, and the most influential. His reputation slumped in subsequent centuries but in recent decades his stock has risen steadily to a new peak. His works are now widely regarded as the most immediately compelling and dramatically charged in the whole history of Italian art.

With unflinching realism, stark contrasts of light and shade and intense emotional power, his art burst upon the tired, febrile artistic scene of *fin-de-siècle* Italy like a Damascene conversion. His paintings were radically innovative, even shocking; his personality was arrogant, tempestuous and violent. Accused of murder, he fled Rome and sought exile successively in Naples, Malta and Sicily, time and again obliged by further conflict to move on and try to make a fresh start.

Nevertheless, in his own lifetime connoisseurs clamoured for works. His patrons and protectors were among the richest and most powerful of cardinals, bankers and aristocrats. Though paintings by him now hang in museums around the world, many remain in the cities where he produced them, some still in the chapels for which they were made.

This tour begins in Lombardy, in Milan and the small town from which the artist took his name. It ends in Rome, where he established both his reputation and his notoriety, with a day in Naples where he was received with acclaim. Throughout it allows unhurried viewing of many of his finest paintings. The focus on a single artist provides not just a thematic stringency, but also a springboard to enhance the appreciation of the arts of 17th- and 18th-century Italy.



'The Entombment of Christ', engraving after Caravaggio's painting, 1862.

Itinerary

Day 1: Caravaggio. Fly at c. 10.15am (British Airways) from London Heathrow to Milan Linate. Drive to the town of Caravaggio for an introductory walk. Stay two nights in Milan.

Day 2: Milan. Visit the Brera, one of the premier art collections in Italy, which includes the *Supper at Emmaus*. The Pinacoteca Ambrosiana houses Caravaggio's *Still Life: Basket of Fruit*.

Day 3: Milan, Rome. Some free time in Milan. In the afternoon travel by train to Rome (business class), a journey of less than three hours. Stay five nights in Rome.

Day 4: Rome, Vatican City. See three churches containing some of Caravaggio's major religious paintings, including San Luigi dei Francesi (*The Calling of St. Matthew*), Sant'Agostino (*Madonna di Loreto*), and Santa Maria del Popolo (*The Conversion of St. Paul* and *The Crucifixion of St. Peter*). In the afternoon visit the Vatican's painting gallery, including Caravaggio's *Entombment of Christ*,

for long his most famous work. Some free time to explore the rest of the Vatican follows.

Day 5: Naples. Travel by train (business class) from Rome to Naples. Here see two works by Caravaggio, his *Martyrdom of St Ursula* in a bank and his *Seven Acts of Mercy* in the chapel for which it was commissioned. In the afternoon drive into the hilly suburbs to visit the palace of Capodimonte, originally a giant hunting lodge. Here is located one of Italy's greatest art galleries, with a magnificent range of art from the Middle Ages onwards, including *The Flagellation of Christ* by Caravaggio. Return to Rome by train.

Day 6: Rome. Cross the river into Trastevere for the gallery in Palazzo Corsini (*St. John the Baptist*). More paintings by Caravaggio and his peers are seen in the Capitoline Museums, which also house a breathtaking and recently-renovated collection of Ancient Roman statuary. In the afternoon visit the Villa Borghese, which contains *Sick Bacchus* and *Boy with a Basket of Fruit* among others.

Caravaggio
continued

Day 7: Rome. The Palazzo Barberini holds several important works, including *Judith Beheading Holofernes*. Continue to the Galleria Doria-Pamphilj to see Caravaggio's *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* and *Penitent Magdalene*. The rest of the day is free.

Day 8: Rome. Visit Villa Ludovisi, which houses Caravaggio's early ceiling painting *Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto* (special arrangement). Fly from Rome arriving at London Heathrow at c. 7.00pm.

There is a possibility that not all of the works mentioned above will be seen; sometimes galleries loan them at very short notice.

How strenuous? Despite the central location of the hotels there is unavoidably a lot of walking on this tour. In both cities, the historic area is vast, and vehicular access is increasingly restricted. On many occasions we get about on foot or occasionally by metro and even when a minibus is used there may often be a walk of several hundred metres due to traffic restrictions. This tour would not be suitable for those who have difficulty with everyday walking and stair-climbing. Participants need to be able to lift their own luggage onto and off trains. Average distance by coach per day: 14 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.

Lecturer

Dr Xavier Bray. Art historian specialising in Spanish art and sculpture and Director of the Wallace Collection, London. Formerly Chief Curator of Dulwich Picture Gallery and Assistant Curator of 17th and 18th-century European paintings at the National Gallery. His exhibitions include *Murillo & Justino de Neve: The Art of Friendship* and *Goya: The Portraits*. He completed his PhD at Trinity College, Dublin.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £4,290 or £4,130 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £5,050 or £4,890 without flights.

Included: air travel (Euro Traveller) on scheduled British Airways flights (aircraft: Airbus 320/Boeing 767); travel by coach, minibus and rail (business class); accommodation as described below; breakfasts, one lunch and five dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, porters and drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer.

Accommodation. Rosa Grand Hotel, Milan (starhotels.com/en/our-hotels/rosa-grand-milan): a smart 4-star hotel excellently located directly behind the Duomo. Rooms are well appointed in a clean, modern style. **Grand Hotel Palace, Rome** (grandhotelpalacerome.com): 5-star hotel in an impressive building complete with frescoes by Guido Cadorin. Excellently located on Via Veneto. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*