



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
and
Minister for the Arts.

2nd January 1981

CONFIDENTIAL

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

Dear Prime Minister,

I have seen the letter of 19th December from your Private Secretary to mine enclosing a copy of Dr Hammer's letter to you of 17th December about the Leonardo manuscript.

As I have already reported to you, I was able to arrange for the issue on 29th December of a licence for the temporary export of the manuscript to the United States. Dr Hammer has undertaken that the manuscript should be returned to this country by 28th January when the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art will meet to consider Dr Hammer's application for an export licence for the longer term. I propose to announce a decision on the grant of a licence within a few days of that meeting.

In reaching a decision I shall of course take the fullest account of the proposed arrangement for the exhibition of the manuscript in this country for three months each year. Since we met I have been in touch with Dr Hammer and I am pleased to report that he has now agreed that the arrangement should apply not only during his lifetime but also for a period of ten years after his death, and thereafter at mutually convenient intervals. I hope that it might be possible for the manuscript to be displayed in various parts of Britain, not just at the Royal Academy.

It has been suggested by the Royal Academy that it might be more appropriate for the first showing of the manuscript in this country to be arranged as part of the Leonardo exhibition to be held at the Academy this summer rather than during the forthcoming exhibition of Dr Hammer's Daumier collection. It seems likely, therefore, that the first exhibition of the manuscript in this country will be in June rather than in February as indicated in Dr Hammer's letter.

... I enclose a draft reply for you to send to Dr Hammer which takes account of the developments since he wrote to you.

Yours sincerely

S E Dancer

for

Norman St John-Stevas

(Approved by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and signed in his absence)

CONFIDENTIAL

DRAFT REPLY FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO DR HAMMER

Thank you for your letter of 17 December about the Leonardo Codex. I congratulate you on its acquisition and am grateful to you for informing me of your plans for its future.

As you know, Norman St John-Stevas was able to arrange at short notice for the issue of a licence for the temporary export of the manuscript to the United States for the purpose of its restoration and its exhibition during the Inauguration ceremonies.

I understand that the manuscript will be returned to this country later this month for the hearing by the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art of your application for an export licence for the longer term. The Reviewing Committee will submit their recommendation to Norman St John-Stevas, with whom the final decision on the grant of an export licence rests. Clearly an important factor will be the proposed arrangements for the exhibition of the manuscript in Britain for three months each year. I was very pleased to learn from Norman St John-Stevas that you have now agreed that the arrangement should continue to apply for ten years after your death and thereafter at mutually convenient intervals.

I gather that, since you wrote to me, the Royal Academy have suggested that it might be more appropriate for the first showing of the manuscript in this country to be arranged as part of the Leonardo exhibition to be held at the Academy this summer rather than during the exhibition of your Daumier collection. I hope that I shall have an opportunity to see the manuscript while it is on display at the Academy this year.