



 CATALOGUE ENTRY

Sleeping Cupid

about 1610–1615

After Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio

Italian

oil on canvas

25-7/8 × 41-1/4 in.

(65.8 × 104.8 cm)

The Clowes Collection

2010.39

Marks, Inscriptions, and Distinguishing Features

None

Entry

1 The Clowes painting is widely, but not unanimously, considered to be a copy made in the early seventeenth century after the original by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, known simply as Caravaggio (1571–1610).¹ The original has been in the Medici collections since 1667, and still today belongs today to the Uffizi Galleries in Florence (fig. 1).



Figure 1: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (Italian, 1571–1610), *Sleeping Cupid (Amorino dormiente)*, 1608, oil on canvas, 29-17/32 × 41-11/32 in. Palazzo Pitti, Galleria Palatina, Florence, Italy, K106613. Photo credit: Scala / Art Resource, NY.

2 The subject of this painting is Cupid (or Eros)—the smallest and youngest of all the Olympian deities—fast asleep, with his quiver tucked under his head as a pillow and his bow beneath his wing. When awake and armed with his arrows, the erotic desire that Cupid controls is a powerful force in both human relationships as well as divine ones. Yet that power has its limits: erotic love's forces can inexplicably tire and dwindle. Figuring as the embodiment of those forces, this Cupid is overcome by fatigue, indicating the tempering of the libido, possibly as the effect of self-discipline, mental disposition, old age, or sickness. As long as he sleeps, he is innocuous.

3 This theme of the sleeping Cupid can be traced back to both the art and the poetry of ancient Rome. As a subject for ancient sculpture, it had marked the graves of small children, alluding to death through the visually similar concept of sleep.² The *Statuette of a Sleeping Cupid*, 50–100 CE, in the collection of the Getty Museum is one such example (fig. 2). As a subject for ancient literature, it is found in humorous reflections on human love, as in the epigram “On Love Asleep” attributed to Statyllius Flaccus (lived in first century BCE):



Figure 2: Unknown artist, *Statuette of a Sleeping Cupid*, 50–100 CE, marble, 5-5/16 × 16-1/2 × 10-1/4 in. J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Villa, Los Angeles, 73.AA.95.

4 “You sleep, you who bring sleepless nights to mortals; you sleep, child of the ruinous foam-born goddess, neither armed with your fiery torch nor launching the inescapable darts of your bending, twanging bow. Let others work up their courage, but I fear you, proud child, that even in your sleep, you may dream something unpleasant for me.”³

5 During the Renaissance revival of Classical Antiquity, just as modern poets were translating and popularizing the Greek epigrams about Cupid's antics, Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) carved a recumbent, sleeping *Cupid* in marble in 1496, probably using as his model an antique sleeping Cupid brought from Naples to the Medici sculpture garden by Giuliano da Sangallo in 1488, a present from Ferdinand I to Lorenzo de' Medici “the Magnificent.”⁴ The resulting sculpture, now lost, fooled many experts of his era into thinking it was an antique, so strong was its resemblance to ancient prototypes

such as the one now in the Uffizi (fig. 3), perhaps the very sculpture once in the Medici sculpture garden.⁶ Cesare Borgia, Guidobaldo da Montefeltre, and Isabella d'Este (1474–1539) were among those deceived by Michelangelo's imitation. Through the latter's purchase, Michelangelo's sculpture was brought from Urbino to Matua in 1502, where it remained at least until 1627, whence it was purchased for the collections of King Charles I of England.⁶



Figure 3: Unknown artist, *Sleeping Eros (after a mid-Hellenistic model)*, 100-200 CE, marble, 27-11/64 in. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy, Inv. 1914 n. 392. Photo credit: Scala / Art Resource, NY.

6 Just over a hundred years after Michelangelo's sculpture was made, Caravaggio became the first modern painter to take up the theme of the sleeping Cupid, first in 1603 in Rome (a work which is now lost) and again in 1608 in Malta.⁷ He had already won fame for his stunningly realistic image of a sassy, frolicking cupid known as *Amor Vincit Omnia Omnia (or Cupid as Victor)* (fig. 4), painted in 1602 and now in Berlin's Gemäldegalerie.



Figure 4: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (Italian, 1573–1610), *Cupid as Victor*, 1602, oil on canvas, 61-27/64 × 44-31/64 in. Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Germany, Inv. 369. Photo: bpk Bildagentur / Gemäldegalerie / Staatliche Museen / Jörg P. Anders / Art Resource, NY.

7 Born in Milan and trained by the Venetian-trained painter Simone Peterzano (about 1535–about 1599), Caravaggio transferred to Rome in 1592. After a few years of working as a still-life specialist in the papal capital, he began developing a radically new style of highly illusionistic figure painting notable for its unidealized naturalism, its directional light in dark settings, and its elaboration through direct painting on the canvas rather than preparatory drawings.⁸ Caravaggio's artistic success in Rome was undermined by his own irascible nature. In 1606, after the painter killed Ranuccio Tomassoni (about 1580–1606), a well-connected Roman citizen, he fled to Naples, where he found protection under Costanza Colonna, the widow of Francesco Sforza. He then made his way in 1607 to the island of Malta, where Costanza's son Fabrizio was a naval general in the religious Order of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, better known as the Knights of Malta. Aiming to obtain knighthood himself, the artist saw this elevation of his status as a possible pathway to obtaining a papal pardon for the murder of Tomassoni.⁹

8 Among the works Caravaggio painted in Malta is the above-mentioned *Sleeping Cupid* now in Florence, of which the Clowes work is a nearly exact replica.¹⁰ Caravaggio's patron for this work was Francesco dell'Antella (1567-1624), a Knight of Malta who hailed from Florence, where he had been a gentleman member of Florence's Accademia del Disegno and a friend of the Buonarroti family, and where he would eventually carry out the prestigious role of *maggiordomo maggiore* at the court of Grand Duke Cosimo II de' Medici.¹¹ Shortly after the painting was completed in 1608, the patron sent it to his brother in Florence. It had certainly left the island by 20 July 1609, the date that Fra Francesco Buonarroti (1574–1632), a Knight of Malta since 1599 as well as the nephew of the famous sculptor, wrote from Malta to his brother in Florence, Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger, saying that "a painting by the hand of Michelangelo da Caravaggio, representing a sleeping Cupid" had been sent to the dell'Antella home in the Tuscan capital and that Francesco dell'Antella wanted very much for him [Francesco Buonarroti] to see it. Francesco dell'Antella further incited Francesco Buonarroti's curiosity by showing him sonnets about the painting that had been written by those who already had seen it in Malta.¹² By 24 July 1609, Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger had sent to Francesco dell'Antella his own adulatory reaction to Caravaggio's painting after seeing it installed in Palazzo dell'Antella in Florence.¹³

9 With regard to dell'Antella's motivations for commissioning this unusual subject, two intriguing hypotheses have been proposed—neither of which excludes the other. One theory is that the subject of a dormant Eros served as a witty reference to the patron's suppression of his libidinous urges, since dell'Antella, as a Knight of Malta, would have taken a vow of celibacy.¹⁴ Notably, that autobiographical interpretation extended to the artist himself, since Caravaggio had recently taken his own vow of celibacy on the pathway to being received into the Order of Malta on 14 July 1608. (He was expelled from the Order shortly thereafter, on 1 December 1608).

10 A second hypothesis regarding the choice of the subject of sleeping Cupid posits that Francesco dell'Antella, aware that Michelangelo Buonarroti had once sculpted a *Cupid*, asked the similarly named Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio to repeat the subject in order to facilitate dell'Antella's promotion of him as a "modern Michelangelo."¹⁵ This theory is corroborated by dell'Antella's well-documented efforts to encourage the sculptor's kinsmen, namely the above-mentioned brothers, Fra Francesco Buonarroti and Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger, to view his painting. Of additional relevance to this theory is the fact that the Florentine *Sleeping Cupid* once bore references to Michelangelo's sleeping figure of *Night* in the Medici Chapel of San Lorenzo in Florence. As shown by x-ray photography, at an early stage of that painting, the composition included the additional attributes of a poppy in Cupid's right hand and an owl behind his stomach.¹⁶ Both of these attributes appear prominently in Michelangelo's *Night*.

11 The sculpture of *Night* was universally appreciated by Michelangelo's contemporaries, however some of their writings indicate that in addition to being an aesthetic achievement, the sculpture was also a touchstone for political dissent. One of the political enemies of the Medici, Carlo Strozzi (1587–1671), had written a short poem in praise of *Night* in which he provoked the reader to wake the figure, with the suggestion that her awakening would renew the fight for Florentine liberty. To this provocation, Michelangelo responded with a more pessimistic poem about the sleeping statue of *Night*, in which the statue's sleep is presented as necessary protection from the shame and sorrow of the state of political affairs.¹⁷ In light of the tentative links between Michelangelo's *Night* and Caravaggio's painting *Sleeping Cupid* in its early phase with the owl and poppies still visible, we might wonder if the sleeping child by the "modern Michelangelo" was perhaps intended by dell'Antella to allude to a dormant but ever-ready spirit of Florentine republicanism, ready to use its weapons upon waking. It may indeed be the case that Francesco dell'Antella used the painting to signal his anti-Medici sentiment, given that some historians have seen a Florentine patrician's entrance into the Order of Malta as an act of resistance to the Medici regime.¹⁸

12 When Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid* arrived in Florence, its value as a rare and prized cultural commodity indubitably raised the stature of the dell'Antella family, particularly since, in all of Tuscany, only the Medici Grand Dukes could also claim to own works by Caravaggio at this time. The Medici had received both of their Caravaggios through their agent in Rome, Cardinal Francesco Maria del Monte: the *Bacchus* of 1597–1598 and the *Head of Medusa* of about 1597, which had been painted on a wooden shield. The subject of the dell'Antella family's *Sleeping Cupid* complemented both of those two mythological themes in the Medici collections, since the aphrodisiac power of Bacchus's wine could be compared to the power of Cupid's darts, while the shield with Medusa's head could perhaps offer protection from those same darts. These thematic connections may have incited the Medici family's avidity for the painting. That avidity would have been reignited each time they passed by Palazzo dell'Antella in Piazza Santa Croce, since Niccolò dell'Antella had commissioned the painter Giovanni da San Giovanni (1592–1636) to paint a prominent copy of Caravaggio's work in fresco on the building's façade around 1619–1620, advertising to the world the treasure that lay within (figs. 5, 6).¹⁹ The Medici finally had the opportunity to purchase the *Sleeping Cupid* in 1667 upon the death of the childless Donato di Niccolò dell'Antella, whose entire estate was bequeathed as a testamentary gift to the Church of the Santissima Annunziata.



Figure 5: Façade of the Palazzo dell'Antella, 1619–1620, Florence, Tuscany, Italy. Photo © Kim Young Tae. All rights reserved 2022 / Bridgeman Images, YOU4419805.



Figure 6: Giovanni da San Giovanni (Giovanni Mannozi) (Italian, 1592–1636), *Amorino dormiente*, fresco, detail of the façade of the Palazzo dell'Antella, 1619–1620, Florence, Tuscany, Italy.

13 The Clowes painting, which, by all accounts, dates from the early seventeenth century, is very similar to the Florentine original and shares almost the exact same dimensions.²⁰ (The *Sleeping Cupid* in the Uffizi measures 72 × 105 cm, while the Clowes painting is only slightly smaller in its vertical dimension: 65.8 × 104.8 cm.) In cases where a copy and the original share such similarity in size, this can indicate that the copy was intended to fill the vacancy left when the owner of the more valuable original was reluctantly obliged to gift or sell his original. We can exclude that scenario in the case of the Clowes painting, since the dell'Antella never parted with their painting so long as their family line was in existence. The making of a copy was therefore undertaken to satisfy the desire of someone who admired the original and who was on good enough standing with the dell'Antella to obtain their permission to have a copy made, a situation that necessarily required the dell'Antella to allow the artist who had been commissioned with the copy to have direct access to the original for an extended time.

14 Until further archival research can be carried out, it remains a matter of pure speculation as to which friend the dell'Antella favored with a copy, but of course they were always dependent upon the Medici, and correspondence demonstrates that they were close to the Buonarroti. It is only slightly less hazardous to attempt to identify the hand behind the masterful copy, but the distinctiveness of the hand is borne out by subtle changes between the copy and the original. In the Clowes painting, we can see that the Cupid's body is chubbier and plumper; we detect more finely nuanced planar changes that give the child a younger appearance as well as an air of greater innocence and less debauchery; we recognize that the child's lower body problematically rests upon a board that is no longer visible underneath the upper body, and which does not seem to be present in the original work at all; and we can clearly note a compositional change to remove the feathers that obscure part of the lower hand in Caravaggio's original. The Clowes painting also lacks gold ornamentation on the bow, however this detail could have been lost in an early cleaning.

15 Two theories about the identity of the copyist have been put forward. In 1970, Evelyn Borea proposed the Clowes painting was painted by Orazio Gentileschi (1563–1639), Caravaggio's companion in Rome, but it is now clear that this artist would never have seen Caravaggio's painting during its trajectory from Malta to Florence; six years later, Alfred Moir proposed that Angelo Caroselli (1585–1652) painted the copy.²¹ The name of Orazio Fidani (1610–after 1656) can be eliminated from the possible candidates, because his copy (76.8 × 102.2 cm), which is not only signed but also dated "1632," bears none of the individuating traits noted in the paragraph above.²²

¹⁶ One name which has not yet been proposed, but which is perhaps worth consideration, is Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1654?), the daughter of Orazio Gentileschi. Unlike her father, her presence in Florence after the arrival there of the painting from Malta is securely documented: she arrived in the Tuscan capital in early 1613 and left in the first half of 1620. During her Florentine years, she worked for both the Buonarroti family and the Medici grand duke.²³ Moreover, she enjoyed fame in Florence for her ability to imitate Caravaggio's style, as we know from a biography written during her stay in the city that elaborates on her early debut as a highly paid and much-admired copyist of Caravaggio.²⁴ A few years later and in any case before 1627, Artemisia is known to have made an original painting of the subject, known as the *Amoretto (Sleeping Cupid)*. Her rendition was seen and celebrated in Venice, triggering a laudatory anonymous poem now associated with the Venetian literary academician Gianfrancesco Loredan (1607–1661).²⁵

¹⁷ For the rest of the seventeenth century, Italian artists produced copies of Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid*, as well as originals inspired by it, at a steady rate. The popularity of the subject in the seventeenth century reflects both a fascination with the role of passion in human lives and enthusiasm for a new painting style capable of bringing ancient myths and their ancient sculpted counterparts to life.

Author

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Provenance

Possibly a private collection or convent in Ireland.²⁶

Ivan N. Podgorsky (1901-1962), New York and Boston, by 1948;²⁷

G.H.A. Clowes, Indianapolis, in 1951–1952;²⁸

Exhibitions

John Herron Art Museum, Indianapolis, 1959, *Paintings from the Collection of George Henry Alexander Clowes: A Memorial Exhibition*, no. 13 (reproduced);

Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, 1962, *Italian and Spanish Paintings from the Clowes Collection*, no. 22;

Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, 1965, *Art in Italy, 1600–1700*, no. 4;

Wildenstein and Co., New York, 1968–1969, *Gods and Heroes—Baroque Images of Antiquity*, no. 3;

Milan, Palazzo Reale, 2000–2001, *Il Cinquecento Lombardo. Da Leonardo a Caravaggio*, no. IX.4;

Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf, 2006, *Caravaggio: Auf den Spuren eines Genies*, no. 2;

Salander-O'Reilly, New York, 2007–2008, *Caravaggio*, no. 6;

Guangdong Museum, Guangzhou, China; Hunan Museum, Changsha, China; Chengdu Museum; 2020–2021, *Rembrandt to Monet: 500 Years of European Painting*.

References

Walter Friedlaender, *Caravaggio Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 212, no. 38B, pl. 54;

Paintings from the Collection of George Henry Alexander Clowes, exh. cat. (Indianapolis: John Herron Art Museum, 1959), no. 13;

André Berne-Joffroy, *Le dossier Caravage* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1959), 340–342;

René Jullian, *Caravage* (Lyon: IAC, 1961), 186, 194 (note 21), 230;

Italian and Spanish Paintings from the Clowes Collection, exh. cat. (Bloomington: Indiana University Art Museum, 1962), no. 22;

Art in Italy, 1600–1700, exh. cat. (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1965), 26–27, no. 4;

Howard Hibbard and Milton Lewine, "Seicento at Detroit," *The Burlington Magazine* 107, no. 748 (July 1965): 371;

Michael Kitson, *The Complete Paintings of Caravaggio* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1967), 106–107;

Alfred Moir, *The Italian Followers of Caravaggio* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 1:212 (note 3).

Gods and Heroes—Baroque Images of Antiquity, exh. cat. (New York: Wildenstein and Co, 1968–69) no. 3, fig. 15.

Evelina Borea, *Caravaggio e Caravaggeschi nelle Gallerie di Firenze* (Florence: Sansoni, 1970), 6;

Luigi Salerno, "Caravaggio e i Caravaggeschi," *Storia dell'arte* 7/8 (1970): 236, 241;

A. Ian Fraser, *A Catalogue of the Clowes Collection* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1973), xxvii, 42–43;

Maurizio Marini, *lo Michelangelo da Caravaggio* (Rome: Studio B di Bestetti e Bozzi, 1973–1974), 248, 441;

Giorgio Fulco, "Ammirate l'altissimo pittore: Caravaggio nelle rime inedite di Marzio Milesi," *Ricerche di storia dell'arte* 10 (1976): 76, no. 10;

Alfred Moir, *Caravaggio and His Copyists* (New York: New York University Press for the College Art Association of America, 1976), 8, 102, no.42d;

Anthony F. Janson and A. Ian Fraser, *100 Masterpieces of Painting* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1980), 63–65;

Mia Cinotti, *Michelangelo Merisi detto il Caravaggio: Tutte le opera* (Bergamo: Poligrafiche Bolis, 1983), 433;

Maurizio Marini, *Caravaggio: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio "pictor praestantissimus": la tragica esistenza, la raffinate cultura...* (Rome: Newton, 1987), 284, 530, 532;

Avigdor W.G. Posèq, "A Note on Caravaggio's *Sleeping Amor*," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 6, no. 4 (Summer 1987): 27, 31;

Avigdor W.G. Posèq, "Caravaggio and the Antique," *Artibus et Historiae* 11, no. 21 (1990): 161;

Flavio Caroli, *Il Cinquecento Lombardo – da Leonardo a Caravaggio*, exh.cat. (Milan: Skira, 2000), no. IX.4 (by Maurizio Marini);

Karen Michels, "Pineapple and Mayonnaise—Why Not?: European Art Historians Meet the New World," in *The Art Historian: National Traditions and Institutional Practices*, ed. Michel F. Zimmermann (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 64, fig. 7 (photograph of Walter Friedlaender lecturing at NYU with *Sleeping Cupid* on an easel in his classroom, date unknown, possibly 1951);

Caravaggio: The Final Years, exh. cat. (London: The National Gallery, 2005), 116–118;

David M. Stone, "Fra Michelangelo' and the Art of Knighthood," in Keith Sciberras and David M. Stone, *Caravaggio: Art, Knighthood and Malta* (Valletta: University of Malta, 2006), 84–85;

Jürgen Harten and Jean-Hubert Martin, eds., *Caravaggio: Originale und Kopien im Spiegel der Forschung*, exh. cat. (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2006), no. 2, 112, 206–207;

Edward Clark, ed., *Caravaggio*, exh. cat. (New York: Salander-O'Reilly in association with Whitfield Fine Art London, 2007), 70, no. 6 (reproduced);

Genevieve Warwick, "Memory's Cut: Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid* of 1608," *Art History* 40, no. 4 (September 2017): 901 (note 9) DOI: 10.1111/1467-8365.12345.

Kjell M. Wangenstein et al., *Rembrandt to Monet: 500 Years of European Painting* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Phoenix Literature and Art Publishing, 2020), 76–77 (reproduced);

Kjell M. Wangenstein et al., *Floating Lights and Shadows: 500 Years of European Painting* (Nanjing: Jiangsu Phoenix Literature and Art Publishing, 2020), 74–75 (reproduced).

Notes

1. This work's documented history goes back only to the mid-twentieth century when it was imported into the United States from an unknown location. See the [Provenance](#) section of this entry.
2. See Jean Sorabella, "Eros and the Lizard: Children, Animals, and Roman Funerary Sculpture," *Hesperia Supplements*, vol. 41 (2007): 353-370.
3. Translation from *Greek Anthology*, Loeb ed., vol. V, 285; cited in Paul F. Norton, "The Lost *Sleeping Cupid* of Michelangelo," *The Art Bulletin* 39, no. 4 (Dec., 1957): 251–257, 256 n. 25, and Anthony Colantuono, "Caravaggio's Literary Culture," "Caravaggio's Literary Culture," in Genevieve Warwick, *Caravaggio: Realism, Rebellion, Reception* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), 57–68, 61.
4. Paul F. Norton, "The Lost *Sleeping Cupid* of Michelangelo," *The Art Bulletin* 39, no. 4 (Dec., 1957): 251-257.
5. On the *Sleeping Cupid* in the Uffizi, see Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists & Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2010) 2nd edition, cat. no. 51; see also Catherine Puglisi, *Caravaggio* (London: Phaidon Press, 1998), 296. For the suggestion that Michelangelo's model was the sculpture now in the Uffizi, see Paul F. Norton, "The Lost *Sleeping Cupid* of Michelangelo," *The Art Bulletin* 39, no. 4 (Dec., 1957): 251–257, 256.
6. Paul F. Norton, "The Lost *Sleeping Cupid* of Michelangelo," *The Art Bulletin* 39, no. 4 (Dec., 1957): 251–257, 251.
7. On the first, lost, and little-known *Sleeping Cupid* made in Rome, see Genevieve Warwick, "Memory's Cut: Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid* of 1608," *Art History* 40 (Sept., 2017): 884–903, esp. 886–887.
8. See Elizabeth Cropper, "The Petrifying Art: Marino's Poetry and Caravaggio," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 26 (1991): 193–212.
9. Catherine Puglisi, "Caravaggio's Life and Lives Over Four Centuries," in Genevieve Warwick, *Caravaggio: Realism, Rebellion, Reception* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), 23–35, esp. 30.
10. The Uffizi's *Sleeping Cupid* is in poor condition according to Sybille Ebert Schifferer [*Caravaggio. The Artist and His Work* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012), 219], who notes "extreme abrasion of the surface, particularly on the areas of the skin, where much of the dark ground is showing through."
11. Ludovica Sebegondi Fiorentini, "Francesco dell'Antella, Caravaggio, Paladini e altri," *Paragone*, nos. 383–85 (1982): 107–122, esp. 113.
12. "[...] un quadro di mano di Michelangelo da Caravaggio, dentrovi un Cupido che dorme [...]." Archivio Buonarroti, filza 104, fol. 145r, letter from Fra Francesco Buonarroti to Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger, Malta, 20 July 1609; first published in Ludovica Sebegondi Fiorentini, "Francesco dell'Antella, Caravaggio, Paladini e altri," *Paragone*, nos. 383–385 (1982): 107–122, esp. 122.
13. Archivio Buonarroti, filza 46, fol. 756r, Letter from Fra Francesco dell'Antella to Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger, Malta, 24 July 1609; first published in David M. Stone, "The Context of Caravaggio's *Beheading of St John* in Malta," *The Burlington Magazine* 139, no. 1128 (1997): 161–170, esp. 168.
14. Maurizio Marini, *Caravaggio: Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio [pictor praestantissimus]*, (Rome: Newton & Compton editori, 1987), entry no. 85.
15. Catherine Puglisi, *Caravaggio* (London: Phaidon Press, 1998), 149, following Avigdor W.G. Posèq, "Caravaggio and the Antique," *Artibus et Historiae* 11, no. 21 (1990): 147–167. Caravaggio was indeed called "Michelangelo" in Malta, signing his *Beheading of St. John the Baptist* (1608) for the Knights' Oratory at the Co-Cathedral of St. John in Valletta with the formula "f. Michelang." On this signature, see David Stone, "Signature Killer: Caravaggio and the Politics of Blood," *The Art Bulletin* 94, no. 4 (December 2012): 272–293.
16. Mina Gregori, ed., *Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio: Come nascono i capolavori*, exh. cat. (Florence: Palazzo Pitti and Rome: Palazzo Ruspoli/Milan: Electa, 1991), entry no. 19. For a deeper consideration of poppies and the iconography of sleeping Cupid figures in art, see Genevieve Warwick, "Memory's Cut: Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid* of 1608," *Art History* 40 (Sept., 2017): 892–896.
17. William E. Wallace, *Michelangelo. The Artist, the Man, and His Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 244–245.
18. Angelantonio Spagnoletti, *Stato, aristocrazie e ordine di Malta nell'Italia moderna* (Bari: Università degli Studi, Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 1988), 33, 77–78. Spagnoletti points out that, among Florentines, joining the Order of Santo Stefano was a sign of fidelity to the Medici regime; to join the rival Order was to flout their regime. Historian Elisa Johanna Goudriaan ["The Cultural Importance of Florentine Patricians. Cultural Exchange, Brokerage Networks, and Social Representation in Early Modern Florence and Rome (1600–1660)," Ph.D. Diss., University of Leiden (2015), 50], believes that the preference for the Order of Malta originated instead in the wish to demonstrate one's superior aristocratic lineage, yet this ignores the fact that even *uomini nuovi* of common birth could gain admission to the Maltese Order by means of a *commendà*. Even Niccolò dell'Antella, despite being an advisor and key member of the Medici government, represented a kind of opposition to the Medici's fullest claims to political power, having written strongly in favor of the role of the Senate in the distribution of powers, even if it was only a theoretical position. See Carlo Vivoli, "Niccolò dell'Antella," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 37 (Roma: Treccani, 1989), *sub voce*.
19. Claudio Pizzorusso ["Caravaggio contromano. Episodi di naturalismo nella Toscana Fiorentina," in Alessandro Zuccari, ed., *I Caravaggeschi. Percorsi e protagonisti* (Milan: Skira Editore, 2010), vol. 1, 179–191, 180] notes that changes to the setting of the sleeping Cupid in Giovanni da San Giovanni's fresco gave it the nature of an "iconographic rebus" and he notes the motto "Tranquillitas animi" written on a drapery in the foreground. This hidden meaning may have had political undertones.
20. Ludovica Sebegondi, "Cupido che dorme," in Gianni Papi, ed., *Caravaggio e caravaggeschi a Firenze*, exh. cat. (Florence: Palazzo Pitti/Florence: Giunti, 2010), entry no. 6, 116–118, 118.
21. Ludovica Sebegondi, "Cupido che dorme," in Gianni Papi, ed., *Caravaggio e caravaggeschi a Firenze*, exh. cat. (Florence: Palazzo Pitti/Florence: Giunti, 2010), entry no. 6, 116–118, 118.
22. On Fidani's painting, see Ludovica Sebegondi, "Cupido che dorme," in Gianni Papi, ed., *Caravaggio e caravaggeschi a Firenze*, exh. cat. (Florence: Palazzo Pitti/Florence: Giunti, 2010), entry no. 6, 116–118, 118.
23. The fullest account of her patronage in Florence is in Sheila Barker, "Artemisia's Money. The Entrepreneurship of a Woman Artist in Seventeenth-Century Florence," in Sheila Barker, ed., *Artemisia Gentileschi in a Changing Light* (Turnhout: Harvey Miller, 2017), 59–88; and Sheila Barker, *Artemisia Gentileschi* (London: Lund Humphries; Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2022), chap. 2.
24. Sheila Barker, "The First Biography of Artemisia Gentileschi: Self-Fashioning and Proto-Feminist Art History in Cristofano Bronzini's Notes on Women Artists," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 60, no. 3 (2018): 404–435.
25. R. Ward Bissell, *Artemisia Gentileschi and the Authority of Art* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1999), 355–356.
26. Ireland is first mentioned as a possible previous location for the painting by Friedlaender, who attributed the painting to Caravaggio; see Friedlaender expertise, December 1948, File C10016, Clowes Registration Archive, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields.

A "convent in Ireland" is mentioned in A. Ian Fraser, *A Catalogue of the Clowes Collection* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1973), xxvii. Neither has been verified. However, the painting had been overpainted as a Christ child with a crown of thorns. Removal of the overpaint, prior to its acquisition by G.H.A. Clowes, revealed a sleeping Cupid; see [Technical Examination Report](#).

27. See agreements between Clowes and Podgorsky, 1951–1952, File CI0016, Clowes Registration Archive, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields.

28. Clowes bought the painting in installments beginning in November 1951; see agreements between Clowes and Podgorsky, 1951–1952, File CI0016, Clowes Registration Archive, Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields.