

## CARAVAGGIO

( Italian school, 1573 (?) - 1610

Michelangelo Merisi was born in Caravaggio, between Milan and Brescia. His father was the majordomo and architect of the Marquis of Caravaggio. He was apprenticed at the age of eleven to the Milanese painter Simone Peterzano, and this apprenticeship appears to have continued for five or six years. According to Mancini, he arrived in Rome at the age of about 20<sup>or 21</sup>; and the sources agree that he assisted for a while Giuseppe Cesari, known as the Cavaliere d'Arpino, the leading fresco painter in Rome. Lombard, Bergamasque and Venetian painting all contributed to the formation of his art. He was already "very famous" by 1597. His major patron in Rome was the Cardinal del Monte; and he did paintings for a number of churches there. From 1600 on he<sup>was</sup> involved in numerous lawsuits. In May 1606 he was forced to flee from Rome, after wounding a man in a fight. He stayed in Naples briefly, probably in 1607, and then moved to Malta, from which in turn he fled to Syracuse in October 1608. On his return to Naples in 1609 he was wounded in another armed fight, but recovered and sailed to Port' Ercole. He died there in July 1610. His art had a tremendous influence in the North during the early seventeenth century, as well as in Italy itself.

### Sleeping Eros

oil on canvas, 25 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 41 $\frac{1}{2}$  ins.

### Condition

Altered at one time to show a sleeping Christ-Child. Cleaning revealed the two wings, the bow with its string loose, the arrow and quiver (in place of a crown of thorns). An X-ray revealed a head akin to that of St Lucy in Caravaggio's Martyrdom of St Lucy of 1608 in Syracuse. There are a number of pentimenti.<sup>(1)</sup>

The left foot appears to have been altered. The general appearance of the picture suggests that its condition is not good and that it has been considerably restored.<sup>(2)</sup>

Provenance

Private colln., Ireland<sup>(3)</sup>; New York art market. Acquired by Dr Clowes in 19 .

Literature

W.Friedlander, Caravaggio Studies, Princeton, 1955, p.212, no.38B and pl.54 ; A.Moir, cat. of exhbn. Art in Italy, 1600-1700, Detroit Institute of Arts, 1965, pp.26f. / ; H.Hibbard and M.Lewine, "Seicento at Detroit" (exhbn. review), Burl.Mag., 108, 1965, pp.370f. ; A.Moir, The Italian Followers of Caravaggio, 2 vols, Cambridge, Mass., 1967, I, p.212.

Exhibited

~~Ind., 1959, no.13 ; Detroit, 1965 (see under lit.) ;~~

INSERT

Versions

Palazzo Pitti, Florence, : Sleeping Putto, 27 $\frac{3}{4}$  X 41 ins. (Friedlander no.38A and pl.53). Inscr. on back "Opera di Michelangelo Marese da Caravaggio i[n] Malta 1608". Overpainted to make the figure a Christ-Child. From the colln. of the Grand Duke of Tuscany ; in Florence by 1618.

Certified by Friedlander as a Caravaggio (1948 and 1950). Also certified by L.Venturi (1949), with a suggested date of 1600-1605<sup>(4)</sup>. Friedlander subsequently published the painting as an autograph Caravaggio (1955). He suggested that it was painted around 1608 --the date on the back of the Pitti version -- for one of the Knights of Malta, and that the Pitti version, rather than this one, could be the duplicate. Since then, scholarly opinion has inclined to the view that the Clowes painting is by a South Italian follower of Caravaggio's<sup>(5)</sup>. The compiler considers it particularly close to the work of Giovanni Battista Caracciolo, called Battistello (Neapolitan school, ca.1570 -1637<sup>(6)</sup>). A directly comparable painting of a Sleeping Cupid, attributable

Exhibited

Ind., 1959, no.13 ; Italian and Spanish paintings from the Clowes Collection, Indiana University Museum of Art, Bloomington, 1962, no.22 ; Detroit, 1965 (see lit.) ; Gods and heroes, Baroque Images of Antiquity, Wildenstein, New York, Oct.1968 - Jan.1969, no.3 (cat.by E.Williams)

to Carracciolo, is at Hampton Court<sup>(7)</sup>; it appears similar in technique and character.

The correspondence with the Pitti version extends to every element of the imagery except the wooden board (which became ~~the~~ in this case the stem of the Cross). A copy of the Pitti version by Giovanni Manozzi, with a swan beside the Cupid -- on the facade of the Palazzo dell'Antella in Florence, painted in 1619 -- is recorded by Baldinucci.<sup>(5)</sup>

The subject of the sleeping Cupid, with wings and unstrung bow, goes back to ancient sculpture.<sup>(4)</sup>

#### Notes.

1. See Friedlander's entry for these comments.
2. Moir noted the weakness of the left foot; the remaining comments on condition are based on notes taken by S. Slive at the Detroit exhb. (communicated orally to the compiler).
3. Information given at time of acquisition.
4. Docs. of Dec. 1948, May 8, 1949, and May 1950 (Clowes archives)
5. See Moir's comments (1965). Other visitors to the Detroit exhb. expressed the same view. Moir subsequently (1967) called the Clowes <sup>work</sup> ~~version~~ an "excellent copy" of the Pitti version
6. See, for this artist, Moir, 1967, <sup>I,</sup> pp. 159ff. Hibbard and Lewine introduced the name of Caracciolo in their review of the Detroit exhb., but it is difficult to attach any precise meaning to their phrase "circle of Caracciolo"; it appears to amount simply to an attribution to a South Italian follower of Caravaggio's.
7. No. 1107, 36 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 49 $\frac{3}{4}$  ins. From the Gonzaga colln. at Mantua. See M. Levey, Late Italian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen, Phaidon Press, 1964, pp. 68f., no. 422.

Notes, cont.

The right arm lies across the front here, the left arm crosses to the right shoulder and the attributes lie below to the right. A loose derivation from the Pitti painting is noted in that entry; and also the existence of the Clowes version and two further versions with a landscape background (Sabin Gallery, London, 1956, as Urazio Gentileschi; and colln. Miss E.H. Bayard, Baltimore).

There is also a Nude Boy, attributed to Caracciolo, in the Museo Nazionale, Palermo; but the photograph of it in the Witt Lib. is unrecognizable.

8. F. Baldinucci, Notizie de' professori del disegno (Florence, 1681-1728), 1767-73 ed., XIII, p.116 (Cited by Friedlander). Cf. Moir, 1967, I, p.214.

9. As noted by Moir (1965). Williams (1968) suggested that Caravaggio might have known a xviii<sup>th</sup> c. bronze or marble statuette, or the "antique" Cupid made by Michelangelo in his youth.