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Memory's Cut

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Memory's Cut. Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid* of 1608.

"Without repetition art would lose its memory"

(Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, 1998)

G. P. Bellori's *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, published in Rome in 1672, was both a continuation, and a variation, of the conventions of art-historical writing that Giorgio Vasari had instituted a century earlier. While Vasari's anthology of artists' biographies traced a history of the arts centred on Florence, Bellori was concerned to present carefully culled examples of Roman 'classicism'. As curator of antiquities for Pope Clement X, recently appointed secretary to Rome's academy for artists the Accademia di S. Luca, and future librarian and antiquarian to the great patron of the arts and letters in Rome Queen Christina of Sweden, Bellori's primary interest lay in the development of an art-historical canon for subsequent emulation. His selection comprised artistic exemplars marked by a heightened ability to capture art-historical memory within themselves, in order to strengthen the practice of imitation.¹ Notwithstanding this larger historiographical purpose to further art founded in classicising models, Bellori included Caravaggio as a painter of antithesis, a dangerous example, yet justly celebrated for his skill in painting only 'what he saw'. For according to Bellori, Caravaggio "recognised no other master than nature, and without nature's models before him, he did not know how to paint."²

[Caravaggio] not only ignored the most excellent marbles of the ancients and the famous paintings of Raphael, but he professed to despise them, and nature alone became the object of his brush. Thus when the most famous statues of Phidias and Glycon were pointed out to him as models for his painting, he gave no other reply than to extend his hand toward a crowd of men, indicating that nature had provided him sufficiently with teachers....The moment the model was taken away from his eyes, his hand and his imagination remained empty....³

Bellori's Caravaggio was, then, a painter without memory. In opposition to the kind of recollective classicism that Bellori otherwise espoused, Caravaggio was an artist apparently "able to emulate art – astonishingly - without art."⁴

Lieux de mémoire

Caravaggio painted the *Sleeping Cupid* in 1608 while under the protection of the Knights of Malta, a pan-European knightly and aristocratic brotherhood dating from the Crusades. A manifestly classical subject, the painting depicts a sleeping child with the attributes of Eros, his naked body framed by great wings that arc around him, a bow and arrow at his side (fig. 1).⁵ The painting was commissioned by a Knight of the Order, the Florentine Francesco dell'Antella, as a gift for his family palace. On its arrival in Florence in 1609 the painting immediately entered circles of patronage surrounding Michelangelo's heirs and legacy, for the dell'Antella included among their acquaintances Michelangelo Buonarrotti the Younger, whose brother was also a Knight of St John. Together they frequented the many literary academies of the city, and were fellow members of the Florentine *Accademia del Disegno* founded in Michelangelo's memory. Buonarrotti the Younger was in these years concerned with the commemoration of his predecessor's legacy in conserving the artist's house, the Casa Buonarrotti. Thus the patronage group for which this painting was destined was dense in its dedication to the cultural memory of a particular Florentine artistic identity. Ties with Grand Ducal circles of cultural patronage were also close, dell'Antella's heirs subsequently ceding the painting to the Medici collections in 1667.

Caravaggio had painted a sleeping cupid before, in 1603, a work now lost but which was the subject of poetry in Rome's *literati* circles, demonstrating the tight interweaving of literary and artistic recollection of antiquity in early modern patronage circles.⁶ Similarly, the arrival of the *Sleeping Cupid* in Florence occasioned the production of sonnets by the city's literary academies, possibly including the immediate circle of Michelangelo the Younger.⁷ The Florentine canvas also quickly became the source of further emulation by subsequent artists.⁸ In these same years the Medici became the greatest collectors of Caravaggio's work outside Rome, notably including his *Bacchus* and *Medusa*, further seeding the artistic reception of the Caravaggesque style in Florence and beyond.⁹ While Bellori saw only the absence of Caravaggio's place within art-historical memory, the intended viewing circle surrounding the *Sleeping Cupid* in Florence suggests another, quite different understanding of the complex folds of image and memory present in this work.

Over a hundred years before the arrival of Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid* in Florence, the young Michelangelo had carved a marble figure of a sleeping cupid, now lost, which subsequently travelled to Rome and then entered the starred collection of Isabella d'Este. Caravaggio cannot have known Michelangelo's piece first-hand but surely knew of it, as it became one of the most celebrated works in the Mantua collections. Here it was joined by an antique sculpture of the same subject, then attributed to Praxiteles, with an illustrious poetic heritage from antiquity which the Michelangelo piece would also soon sustain. The two were displayed together as a visual comparison of ancient and modern, in a collocation precisely concerned with the question of repetition and difference in a history of art constructed as a series of visual citations. This comparative display of the young

Michelangelo beside Praxiteles acted both to mark and confound the passing of time between them.¹⁰

Like Caravaggio's painting and the marble attributed to Praxiteles, Michelangelo's sculpture was, according to documentary sources, of a sleeping and recumbent child, life size, judged to be about 6 or 7 years old. Much of the renown of Michelangelo's piece rested not only on its subsequent comparison with Praxiteles, but also on its early genesis. Conceived in a concerted play with artistic memory and the legacy of the past, it was intended as a historically-doubled work from its inception. In a brilliant display of the counterfeit of art, the young Michelangelo purposefully sent the piece to Rome as an antique, thus establishing his reputation as a sculptor who could recall and rival antiquity through the skill of his imitation.¹¹

Sleeping cupids in black and especially white marble were ubiquitous to ancient funerary art, and the Medici collections comprised examples of both, which the young Michelangelo could have studied in the Medici sculpture garden where he trained. (figs 2 & 3).¹² Clearly inserting himself within an art-historical iteration of sleeping cupids from across antiquity, Michelangelo's repetition constituted a fully mimetic recollection of the past within the present, making it a temporal 'metapicture', in WJT Mitchell's terms, capable of sustaining a doubled reading as both 'ancient' and 'modern' in an oscillating simultaneity.¹³ In this way Michelangelo laid claim to an enduring artistry, able to defy the constraints of time through the force of art-historical recollection.

This quality of condensed, intensified art-historical citation lay in the object's ability to signify its own repetition. As Michelangelo surely understood, its distinction resided in its power to make present within itself the long historical arc of the sleeping cupid's sculptural

form, suffused with the echoes of myriad Roman marble 'copies', imitations, and variations, themselves citations of those Greek bronzes that Homer had termed 'deathless' (fig. 4).¹⁴ The sleeping cupid's repeated figuration exemplifies the type of nested citation that Louis Marin understood as an intensification of mimetic art's most enduring manifestations.¹⁵ This reflection on the sequential in art marks the point of encounter between two strands of scholarly writing pertaining to the survival of antique forms. The first is concerned with cultural memory in its complex relation to objects and images; the second with issues of adaptation as part of a larger landscape of artistic reflection on the past. As André Malraux argued in a discussion of the extended temporality of the 'classic' in art, "*l'art est un anti-destin*". By this he meant to differentiate what he and others such as George Kubler understood as the time of Art from the time of History.¹⁶ The figure of the sleeping cupid is an exemplary image for this problematisation of art and history, constituting precisely what Malraux understood as the kind of radical antagonism of the 'masterpiece' within the continuous temporal rhythms of the history of art. This also preoccupied Gilles Deleuze, who understood the work of memory as the introduction of 'discontinuity' into the simple repetitions of time. Similarly Alfred Gell, at the close of his celebrated anthropological discussion of art's agency, turned to the question of what anthropologists term 'distributed objects', or a sequence of objects arranged as a series of intention, such as those examples in which artists remembered or quoted previous works in making new ones. Gell understood this as the constitution of art's memory.¹⁷

Examining the place of material culture as a lodestone of recollection, Pierre Nora brought to the fore another kind of distinction between *histoire* and *mémoire*, linking history to events, while situating memory in objects, places and monuments. The consequences of Nora's analysis here are two-fold: that art as both an artefact and a symbol is deeply

implicated in the construction of memory, as Gell also understood; and that memory – as distinct from history - resides above all in the material and spatial domain, attaching itself to places and things - in Nora's words, *les lieux de mémoire*.¹⁸ This sense of place as closely tied to affective nodes of memory was a key to Sigmund Freud's understanding of conscious memory as resting on the great subterrain of the unconscious, which he likened to the remains and traces of ancient Rome still latent within its current map. As echoes of a past half-buried, half-forgotten, yet insistently present in every contour of the mind's processes, Freud founded the psychoanalytic understanding of archaic and suppressed memory as manifest in serial repetition through the classical references of the mythopoetic. This conceptualisation of buried memory as a sequence of ruined but emotionally immortal object-recollections from the ancient and mythical past, both individual and collective, would remain an enduring legacy for the psychoanalytic project, shaping the work of Jacques Lacan and Michel de Certeau among others.¹⁹ Memory is precisely the psychoanalytic subject, in its perpetual reframing of the past through the affective condition of the present. Again, Deleuze saw the recollective searching of memory as linked and formed by the displacements of Eros, in its serial search for past pleasures, similar to Lacan's understanding of repetition as a chain of displacement driven by desire. The study of collective memory inaugurated by the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs would also prove critical for the interdisciplinary analysis of cultural memory, between history and anthropology, and in history of art in Aby Warburg's writings. Following Freud's conceptualisation of submerged memory as afterlives and survivals made manifest in repetition, Warburg understood the long arc of historical imitation of an artistic form to manifest and intensify the affective power of each recollection. The insistent repetition of Cupid's sleeping childish form is, in Warburg's terms, a *pathosformel*, or 'pathos formula',

that is, a visual trope accreted with a high degree of affective force, stemming from the memorative density of its accrued repetitions in art.²⁰ As a cultural figuration of desire, Eros may be understood as the touchstone of this recollective yearning.

Looking back on the sequence of Medicean sleeping cupid sculptures that Michelangelo's lost piece would seem to have contained within it, these were Roman works in Florentine collections. Thus Michelangelo's sculpture was composed of references to an antiquity now transposed to Florence, and intended to nurture a specifically Florentine 'classicism', laying claim to a new Rome in Florence. Conversely, Michelangelo's arrival in Rome would establish the hegemony of Florentine style in Rome and beyond. In the *great questione della lingua* – and comprising visual languages also – that would unfold across Renaissance Italy to touch its many civic centres competing for cultural, as well as political, pre-eminence, Michelangelo like the Medici made Florence the source of a renewed 'classicism'. This interplay of a continual doubling of artistic recollection between ancients and new ancients, Florence and Rome, as has long been constated, runs throughout Medici patronage.²¹ The reception of Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid* was surely embedded in this context. Acknowledging its position in relation to the historic legacy of the sleeping eros figure, both ancient and modern, it also recalls the layered referencing of art-historical citation between Florence and Rome. A pictorial commentary on the Medicean and the Michelangesque, its position in Florence immediately brought the work into the ambit of this lineage and memory. By the *Sleeping Cupid's* reception we may understand it to have become celebrated as a *lieu de mémoire* in its recollection both of the Medici collection of Roman antiquities for Florence, and of Michelangelo's reception piece as a 'new ancient' and a Florentine in Rome.

For the *Sleeping Cupid's* circle of viewers and patrons in Florence, the long history of antique mythological representation in art, but also literature, was a subject of considered discernment. Thus Caravaggio's subject of ancient myth, the male love god, was undoubtedly understood by its audience as an interpolation into an art-historical series including the Michelangelesque, to be sure, but also comprising the far longer arc of this subject in both art and literature, to the earliest-known archaic forms of Eros in fertility worship. There was marked interest in the earliest, primordial manifestations of classical myth in humanist circles in Florence, Mantua and Rome, figuring Eros as the child of Chaos, or Gaia, the generative force of the Earth. Marsilio Ficino and Politian, in particular, led an interest in the study of the archaic Orphic hymns in the circles of Lorenzo de' Medici, echoed in Ficino's student in Florence, Mario Equicola's treatise on love, *Libro de natura de amore* of 1525, written when he was court secretary in Mantua.²² Much later, Eros / Cupid would come to be identified as the son of Aphrodite / Venus, with an attendant taming of his identity into a poetic love emblem. But in his earliest manifestations among the primordial deities of archaic myth, in the writings of Anacreon and Hesiod, he embodied desire, and his parentage was generic to the earth, apparently born of a union between Night and Darkness in the abyss of time.

While a cosmogonic literature brought out the reproductive aspects of desire in the figure of Eros, lyric poetry instead dwelt on its sweet pathos. Compilations of the poetry of the ancient Greeks, notably the so-called *Greek Anthology* first published in 1494, became readily available across the sixteenth century, with renewed interest upon the discovery of the Palatine compilation in 1606. Its corpus of epigrammatic verse including amatory themes on Cupid/Eros, was widely read in precisely the circles in which Caravaggio's painting was received. Indeed, Praxiteles' sculpture of Cupid, which Equicola identified with

Isabella's example, was seen as the origin of the poetry on Cupid in the *Greek Anthology*, for the sculpture was said to have been a gift of love from the artist to his mistress, Phryne, "making Love itself a gift to love."²³ The poetry celebrated love in all its valences – its wiles and joys but also its capacity to madden with unrequited desire, impossible to predict or reason with.

Other poetic strands concerning Eros dwelt on the cruelties of love unrequited, drawing on the broadly influential legacy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in its account of Cupid's mischievous perfidy with Apollo and Daphne. Wounding Apollo with the arrow of passion and Daphne with one of flight, the terrible narrative culminated in her death-like transformation into the laurel as the sign of poetry and of love that finds no return.²⁴ In the long tradition of Petrarchan verse, Cupid is remorseless and love is a torment, wounding the defenceless with his blows. In Shakespeare's *Romeo*, the Petrarchan lover is distracted, spent, and finally driven to his death; in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* Amor is the "Great God of Love... with... cruell darts".²⁵ Thus in Caravaggio's painting for Florence the arrow by Cupid's side is marked with red to allegorise the wounds of love. With the weight of an accreted mythic and poetic legacy from his earliest cosmogonic manifestations to its wide literary elaborations over hundreds of centuries, the complex of polyvalent identities made Cupid a bivalent and unstable sign, of desire, but also of love's ferocity. The arrows of Eros comprise the throes of the heart, to be sure, but might also imply deflowering and symbolic castration, as myth and poetry often told, that unmanned Ariosto's Rinaldo and even great Jupiter. Yet ancient Eros was also a figure of male beauty and the splendour of desire, from the poetic culture of *Symposium*, even as the power of that pleasure might be wild and without bounds.²⁶ Across antiquity and the Renaissance, in both poetry and art, this

oscillating bivalence between the pain and pleasure of desire was fully manifest in all representations of Eros.

Art's beauty itself was also understood within a metaphor of love's desire to possess. This was elaborated in texts on courtly love, art and beauty. In this trope the art-viewer became a lover confronting his own cupidity, smitten by beauty in art as in life. Art's own powers to quicken and to still the heart lay in its ability to touch the affects of memory, to draw together and intensify the mind's recollection of desire's past pleasures. In this way, representation of the gods of love became elided with the love of art, and the painting's beauty was tied to the expression of its subject - desire.²⁷ Yet the figuration of sight as the means of love was further complicated in Renaissance culture by the rising poetic motif of love as blind, quixotic, unpredictable and unreasonable. Cupid is blindfold because love is blind, as exemplified in Andrea Alciati's well-known emblems of love, first published in 1531.²⁸ A sleeping cupid might also represent love's unseen folly, as the poet Gaspare Murtola recognised in his poetic response to Caravaggio's lost sleeping cupid of 1603: "if you wish to paint him blind, look at him there... in sleep."²⁹ The poets of the *Greek Anthology* had also seen the *Sleeping Cupid* as a subject to be wary of: "You sleep, you who bring sleepless nights to mortals; you sleep, child of the ruinous foam-born goddess.... I fear you, proud child, that even in your sleep you will dream dark dreams for me."³⁰

In a complement to love's oscillations of pain and pleasure, poetry returned insistently to its bittersweet passing, swift as flight, ephemeral as the wind. In Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid* for Florence, the child's body is surrounded by a great pair of dark wings whose furthest perimeters are picked out by glancing lights that indicate their reach into the shadows of pictorial space. As one of Cupid's chief mythological attributes, they are the wings of swift

love. Yet Cupid's wings, from his earliest figurations, could signify not only the rapid arousal of desire and the transports of love, but also its fleeting transience. Archaic cosmogonic accounts of Eros sometimes described his birth as generated by the wind blowing over the waters of darkness, or of a birdlike genesis from a cosmic egg, and of Eros himself as a kind of whirling windshift of the heart borne on the wings of desire, as changeable and intangible as the wind itself. Further mythological echoes of primordial bird worship include narratives such as that of Leda, and Jupiter's transformation into an eagle in pursuit of Ganymede, both poetic themes that Michelangelo had taken up, as dell'Antella's Florentine circle undoubtedly knew.³¹ This legacy of archaic myth on Eros as erotic drive is latent within Cupid's later figurations, sometimes insistently, in other instances largely veiled by a history of poetic conceits, in the great expanse of his historic recollection and reproduction in art. Collectively these imitations and citations manifest the repetitions of those lost but immortal and always longed-for memories of desire with which the figure of Eros was, from its archaic inception, so fully bound.

Memory and Oblivion

A *seicento* Florentine recollection of Cupid typologies would also certainly have comprised the bronze standing *Attis Amorino*, now acknowledged as by Donatello, in the collection of the classical scholar Giovanni Battista Doni (along with Michelangelo's Doni tondo) at that time (fig. 5). Then of uncertain attribution as to both the iconography and the artist, it was taken for an antique, and a source of much literary discussion. At Doni's behest Bellori would suggest its enduring identification as the archaic deity Attis.³² His attributes, which continue to elude definitive identification, are primarily bacchic references to wine, but also rustic in the protective leather leggings worn for field work. Like Caravaggio's painting,

albeit in different ways, Donatello's *Amor* is a disruptive classicism vexed by a bodily abandon. His swaying figure is ornamented with poppies, by the flower on his forehead, and by gilt pods on his belt. The poppy pod was also, it seems, held in the hand of Michelangelo's *Sleeping Cupid*, according to inventory drawings of the Mantua cupids that seem to include his lost work. There are also poppy pods in the Roman example of a sleeping cupid in white marble in the Medici collections that Michelangelo surely knew and, though now largely broken, the black marble version too (figs. 2 & 3).³³ Similarly, x-rays of Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid* reveal a series of *pentimenti* within the paint layers of the canvas, including the depiction of a single poppy in the child's right hand.³⁴ While Caravaggio himself painted this over, as was often the case in a process characterised by constant revision within the paint surface as he worked, the hidden attribute signifies a further chain of associations surrounding Cupid's sign.

The poppy with its powerfully narcotic juice grew across the Mediterranean throughout antiquity, dying out in Europe in the Middle Ages and much later rediscovered by Crusaders in and around Constantinople. Ancient texts, both literary and medical, make reference to its varied uses, by fighters in preparation for battle, but also common to most forms of dying, commemorated in emblems of poppies in tombs and funerary artefacts to serve on the journey into the underworld. In cultic terms the poppy was associated with the twin gods of sleep and death, Thanatos and Hypnos or Somnus, whose cave Ovid described as bordered by poppies and through which flowed the river Lethe of oblivion. Ovid's *Fasti* further describe a figuration of sleep with her brow wreathed in poppies, while Virgil's *Georgics* also make reference to poppies soaked with the sleep of Lethe. Celsus' compendium of Roman medical and pharmacological knowledge, *De Medicina*,

acknowledged the use of poppy juice to calm anxieties as well as pain, but also noted its ability to induce dreams. He cautioned that the sweeter the dreams, the harder the awakening, signalling its hypnotic, addictive pull into oblivion and death that the cultic funerary poppy also referenced. Similarly the sixteenth-century itinerant professor of medicine named Paracelsus after his Roman forebear apparently brought back from Constantinople a renewed contact with the poppy's uses propounded in his writings, touching on its bivalent ability to simulate hope and fearlessness, to ease pain and anxieties of the mind, but also conducive to sleep, and even death.³⁵

Subsequent to both Michelangelo and Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupids*, this form and its canon of variations in marble and paint would produce Algardi's black marble figure of *Sleep* (fig. 6).³⁶ It is a particular kind of sleep, however, for child's softly tender body is both the emblem of love and the fruit of passion, while the clutch of poppy pods in his hands recalls mortuary art. Within antiquity, sleeping cupids were common *memento mori* to soften the apprehension of dying with the solace of eternal sleep. Through a polished rendering of stone in terms of an idealised smoothness, to suggest the gentle swell of childlike flesh, it intimated both tenderness and pathos, in keeping with its funerary remembrance of life cut by death.

Likewise poetry frequently turned on art's power to capture life as if in stone, as a form of sleep-like 'death' that at the same time conferred immortality, as in Giambattista Marino's poetic ekphrases of Caravaggio's powers of painting.³⁷ Poetic responses to Isabella's Cupids at Mantua had similarly dwelt on this bivalence of both art and eros: "Oh progeny of Venus, boy renowned....let eternal sleep hold you in entombment, and may you always lie in marble".³⁸

Sleep could connote death, but also dreams, thus signalling the depths of the psyche unbound. Mythologically, sleep was the realm of Hypnos, of hallucinations and nightmares, those traversals of memory out of the mind's deepest recesses into fugitive forms of unconscious illusion. In myth, of course, Psyche is Cupid's spouse whose wings, like Cupid's, referenced the flight of the soul in love, but also death. Hence the common presence of butterflies, like poppies, to signify the transience of life in ancient figurations of Eros-Thanatos or Death, as in the white marble version in the Medici collections that Michelangelo surely knew.

This triangulation of sleep and dreams between memory, death and desire runs throughout the classical literature on Eros. In archaic cosmogonies, Sleep, like Eros is born in the chasm of the Earth, and cradled with Thanatos as well as other siblings characterised as types of dream-recollection – Morpheus, Phantasos and Phobetor. As the children of Night, and of the shadows of Darkness, they were heirs to the full gamut of sleep's bivalence.

For Caravaggio's patrons and viewers, the best-known illustrated text pictorialising the realm of Hypnos and Eros was the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, or the 'Strife of Love, in which it is shown that all human desire, like memory, is but a dream'. Published by Aldus Manutius in 1499 with finely-detailed woodcut illustrations, it was widely-known by Caravaggio's time and undoubtedly familiar to the *Sleeping Cupid's* patronage circle. Styled as a literary genre of courtly love or Romance, it tells the story of the young humanist Poliphilo's afflictions and trials in a quest for his beloved Polia, a name that means both 'many things' and, in Greek, antiquity; while the name Poliphilo means lover of those many things in an allegory of his humanist longings. Poliphilo pursues Polia through a series of dreams-within-dreams, configured as emblems of a lost classicism, across fictional

landscapes of ancient architectural ruins and sculptural fragments (figs. 7 & 8). The celebrated illustrations to the text are palimpsests of antique citations, as is the text itself. Text and image together effect a literary fusion of the lost world of antiquity with lost love, and of strife and death with classicism, fragments, dreams and unrequited desire.³⁹ Antique recollection, as a Renaissance act of cultural memory, is bittersweet and touched by the cut of loss.

Equally, ancient verse on love and so Cupid is replete with references to love unrequited as a fatal wound; or to love grown cold like marble, or mortuary stone.⁴⁰ Sleep like Eros was an oscillating sign, coupling life with the spectre of death. Poets alternately saw Cupid's sleep as love disarmed, a respite from the raging fires of desire, conjoined with a fear of his awakening. This foreboding was also a metaphor for the disturbed dreams and sleeplessness of Eros, fraught with all the bodily violence of unspent passion. Love's weapons may smite you in a kind of living death, according to the poets. The presence of Eros, like Hypnos, in ancient funerary decoration, as Algardi also imitated, touched on these linked cultural concerns. Algardi's Cupid pose is, tellingly, that of a sleeping Venus, with the intimation of pleasure stirring in his sleep, yet mitigated by the poppies he holds and the suggestion of the tomb beneath him in the unpolished, earthlike marble that contrasts with the glossy rendering of the child's flesh. The smooth beauty of the sculpted body was also understood as an allegory for the fiery desire that dashes itself on the marbled longing of a love that is not returned. At the same time, sleeping Cupid in both Renaissance and classical verse certainly familiar to Algardi and Caravaggio's patrons, was frequently read as passion tamed, the powers of Eros temporarily disarmed by sleep. Yet sleep might also be like the child itself the culmination of the act of love, of a sweet if transient oblivion in a dream-filled

moment of bliss. In this sense the act of love, and so of procreation, was understood as a mimetic defence against the harshness of death, as voiced in both archaic poetry and myth.

Memory's Cut

... whenever it happened that [Caravaggio] came upon someone in the streets that pleased him, he was fully satisfied with this invention of nature.... Thus he painted a young girl seated on a chair with her hands in her lap in the act of drying her hair; he portrayed her... with a small ointment vessel, jewels and gems placed on the floor to have us believe that she is the Magdalen.⁴¹

Bellori's estimation of Caravaggio's artistic practice, allegorised in his description of the seated *Magdalen*⁴², was one devoted to the exclusive imitation of nature without recourse to art. Caravaggio apparently "recognised no other master than the model" – that is, the particular example from life. In Bellori's judgement the desire to render the likeness of things led Caravaggio to an exacting naturalistic imitation at the expense of artistic beauty. Yet Bellori also recognised in Caravaggio a dazzling verisimilitude that as a critic he valorised, understanding it as a valuable corrective to the sculptural manner of painting – *maniera statuina* – that had swept through Rome in the wake of Michelangelo. If the marbled *maniera* style had blanched painting of its powers of resemblance, Caravaggio's was an artistic example that, notwithstanding its defects in his eyes, nonetheless reinvigorated painting by reintroducing the 'blood' of nature's surfaces, to render the effects of what Bellori termed the 'real'.⁴³

Yet much of Caravaggio's corpus, as in the *Sleeping Cupid*, is of works manifestly founded in references to the art of the past, and specifically to the sculpture of both antiquity and Michelangelo. Thus Bellori's understanding of Caravaggio as a 'painter without memory' points up a puzzling pictorial rupture or estrangement of the painting from its art-historical

sources. If the *Sleeping Cupid* rests on the long history of this subject's representation in art, it does so through a radical reconfiguration that Bellori could not recognise. For the Florentine *Cupid*, like the *Seated Magdalen*, is both genre and myth, as much a specific child as the cultural typology of a god. The attributes and the title of the work establish its mythological identity. Yet the persistent presence of the particular undercuts the representation, calling to mind Bellori's view that Caravaggio had no capacity to paint from memory and could only paint a specific example or model from nature before him as he worked.⁴⁴

This quality of specificity, of identifiable models in Caravaggio's work, runs through not only his paintings' figural forms but their objects and attributes too. Thus in the shadowy light that obscures much of the *Sleeping Cupid's* surroundings lies the bow, picked out by detailed gold decorative ornament, its string falling loosely into the foreground. Scholars of weaponry have identified this bow as of Turkish or Indo-European provenance, likely one that Caravaggio saw among the armour collections of the Knights of Malta.⁴⁵ His patron on Malta the Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt had recently established an armoury within the precincts of the Grand Master's palace in 1604, bringing together one of Europe's most celebrated collections of armour and weaponry. In his portrait by Caravaggio, Wignacourt chose to be depicted in damascened armour, probably from the Order's collection and dating to the Battle of Lepanto of 1571 against the Turks in which Wignacourt had served as a young knight, possibly even a suit of armour belonging to Wignacourt's great predecessor as Grand Master, Jean de la Valette, whose forebears had fought in the Crusades and who himself led the resistance against the Ottomans at the siege of Malta in 1565. Undoubtedly Caravaggio's knightly viewers were discerning connoisseurs not only of art and myth but of arms too, and particularly of those collected from war with the Turks as central to the

crusading history of the order's foundation. Medici collections of arms and armour also included examples of Turkish bows, displayed alongside Caravaggio's painted *Medusa* head on a parade shield, undoubtedly familiar to dell'Antella's circle. The detailed specificity of Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid* bow, like the specificity of features in the *Medusa* that suggest self-portraiture studied in a mirror, corroborates Bellori's description of Caravaggio's ability to paint only what lay before him – not a generic bow from visual memory, but a particular, identifiable object before him as he worked.⁴⁶

Similarly, the tangible materiality of Cupid's wings also suggests these are identifiable objects. Documentary sources relate that Caravaggio borrowed a pair of wings around 1603, just as he was painting his earlier now lost sleeping cupid. The wings apparently came on loan from the workshop of his fellow painter in Rome, Orazio Gentileschi, along with other pieces of costume.⁴⁷ This detail speaks to the question of Caravaggio's models, substantiating Bellori's claim that he had no capacity to paint generic wings from visual memory, but only the feathery materiality of a specific pair before him, large and dark, like the particular gold-embossed bow.

Depictions of wings run across Caravaggio's corpus, both mythological and religious, and most closely in his so-called *Laughing Cupid* or *Love Victorious* for the Giustiniani palace in Rome, painted at the time he borrowed Orazio Gentileschi's wings (fig. 9).⁴⁸ An early inventory of the Giustiniani collection described this painting as a *Cupido ridente*; Bellori would later identify the subject with Virgil's eclogue, *Amor vincit omnia*. Joachim von Sandrart, German art critic and curator of the Giustiniani gallery in the early 1630s, described it simply as "a life-size Cupid, a boy aged about 12, sitting on trophies with large dark eagle's wings."⁴⁹ Indeed it depicts a Cupid of that age, in a playful pose of triumph,

standing over a collection of objects like a still life. These are trophies of music, arts, letters, geometry, architecture, astronomy, and kingship while youthful love, laughingly, disarmingly, irreverently, conquers all, as Virgil said. Yet Love is as fickle as it is overpowering, for Amor's two arrows, one red and one black, recall again the story of Apollo and Daphne, while the celestial globe suggests the precariousness of Fortune's favours in love.

Again, the work is a register of a profound classicism, yet ruptured by what Bellori saw as Caravaggio's art of the 'real'.⁵⁰ Scholars have suggested a Roman marble of *Eros stringing his bow* in the Giustiniani collection as a loose source.⁵¹ If there is no clear classical antecedent for the *Laughing Cupid's* pose, the Michelangelesque composition and delineation of the body is suggestive yet vexing, recalling the stony forms of the *maniera statuina* through what Bellori would describe as Caravaggio's art of blood, skin and surfaces.⁵² Sources from the period suggest a specific model for the boy, apparently Caravaggio's servant and studio hand in these years, known as Cecco del Caravaggio.⁵³ Whether this is the case or not, it testifies to the insistent presence of a bodily specificity in Caravaggio's work that complicates the status of art-historical memory within his pictorial representation of antique myth. Here the wings extend to either side of the boy and are more broadly lit. Strangely echoing antique examples such as those of the black marble Cupid from the Uffizi, yet sources from the period, namely Sandrart, insisted instead on their ornithological identity, resembling dark eagle's wings "rendered so as to yield nothing to life itself."⁵⁴ The various types of feathers within the wing are readily discernible here – the long stiffened arc of the flight feathers capped by smaller, downy feathers along the crest of each one – suggesting a materiality grounded in observation of the particular. The persistent tangibility of a recognisable model, a specific bow, an identifiable pair of wings,

disrupts painting's claim to its subject. Is this the Cupid of mythology, an art-historical citation of a Michelangelesque antiquity, or a boy taken 'from the street', as Bellori said, with Orazio Gentileschi's wings attached to his back and a couple of arrows in his hand? The haptic address of this work is at its height in the feather that brushes against the boy's thigh, again complicating the image in the full mesh of myth's ambiguities, disrupting the distancing dream of classicism that Bellori propounded with the invitation of material touch.

Murtola's poetic response to Caravaggio's earlier lost version of a sleeping cupid seems to suggest there was a named model for that work also: "If you wish to paint Amor, skilled painter, paint the beautiful infant Giulietto.... If you wish to paint him blind, look at him there, his tender limbs languid in sleep."⁵⁵ Whether or not there was a life model for this painting, Murtola's verse again demonstrates the proclivity to name the model in Caravaggio's art, complicating the mythological identity of the figure with an observed social field that cuts against the art-historical citation. As the painting is lost we have no means of judging the seeming presence of the model, but the 1608 painting has also raised questions about the ambiguous relationship between myth, portrait and genre in Caravaggio's work. In the Florence painting, the position of the body has always been recognised as a mimetic engagement with the canonical antique sculptural pose, yet it too is undercut by the disturbing incursion of another social realm, of models taken 'from the street'. The child lies largely on his left side, though his back is flat to the ground across the chest, and his head inclines awkwardly to the right. His bodily configuration was cited in the medical journal, *The Lancet* (1944), as a pictorialisation of childish forms of early modern medical illness manifest above all in the swollen leg and hip joints, like the recognition of the representation of the swellings of goitre in Caravaggio's *Crucifixion of St Andrew* painted in the same years (1607-10).⁵⁶ It has also been suggested that the model for the 1608 *Sleeping*

Cupid was dead, recalling the claim of Caravaggio's biographers that he worked with a corpse in painting the *Raising of Lazarus* c. 1609.⁵⁷ My point is not with the medical or forensic diagnosis of the painting as such, but with the acknowledgement of a visible troubling of the figural languages of classicism in the *Sleeping Cupid*. As Bellori, the classicist, argued of Caravaggio, while admiring his art's vivid lifelikeness, that in the figures: "he and his followers paint wrinkles, defects of the skin and exterior, knotted figures and limbs disfigured by disease, seeking out deformity."⁵⁸ It is above all in the rendering of the surfaces, the complexion, flesh and skin, that Bellori termed Caravaggio 'painter of the real'.⁵⁹ In Caravaggio's work its contrapuntal relationship with art-historical memory is indeed most explicit in the rendering of surfaces – manifest in the body of the *Sleeping Cupid* marked by ungainly folds and swellings, that together seem to repel touch as much as to invite it. The body of the classical sculptural Cupid, by contrast, was made to solicit the affect of tenderness through a rendering of stone in terms of an idealised smoothness. The skin of Caravaggio's Cupid is instead semiotically unstable, its references to the world of the painter and his models in seeming conflict with the established idealising visual conventions of the subject matter, so challenging its own pictorial act of recollection. What we grasp in Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid* is the cut of Bellori's real within a recollection of the visual languages of a broken dream of classicism. It pictures the darkened materiality of 'the streets', like the deeper realms of the psyche, manifest in archaic myth and the dreams and desires of troubled sleep. If the classical mortuary figure of the sleeping cupid was at once a memorial of life's tenderness and a marker of its passing, Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid* is a fractured or ruptured memory, a shifting and unstable dream-like recollection of the past within the present.

Illustrations:



1. Caravaggio, *Sleeping Cupid*, 1608, oil on canvas, 72x105 cm, Pitti Palace Florence.



2. Roman, 3rd century A.D., *Sleeping Cupid*, black marble, 128 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.



3. Roman, 2nd century A.D., *Sleeping Cupid*, white marble, 69 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.



4. Greek Hellenistic, 3rd-2nd century B.C., *Sleeping Eros*, Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, bronze, 85 cm.



5. Donatello, *Attis Amorino*, bronze with gilt, 104 cm, c. 1440-43, Bargello Museum, Florence.



6. Alessandro Algardi, *Sleep*, c. 1627-35, black marble, 48 x 90 cm, Borghese Gallery, Rome.



7 & 8

Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, attrib. Francesco Colonna, Venice, 1499



9. Caravaggio *Laughing Cupid / Amor Vincit Omnia*, 1602, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

Notes

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¹ Giovan Pietro Bellori, *Le vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti*, Rome, 1672, see also the recent translation by Alice Sedgwick Wohl, notes by Hellmut Wohl, introduction by Tomaso Montanari, *The lives of the modern painters, sculptors, and architects*, Cambridge, 2005. On the formation of the 'classic' and artistic memory of the antique see especially Salvatore Settis, ed., *Memoria dell'antico nell'arte italiana*, 3 vols., Turin, 1984, 1985, 1986; Bober, Phyllis and Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture: A Handbook of Sources*, (1986), London, 2010; Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture*, New Haven & London, 1999; Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900*, New Haven & London, 1981.

² Bellori, *Vite*, 1672, 201.

³ Bellori, *Vite*, 1672, 202-03.

⁴ Bellori, *Vite*, 1672, 201.

⁵ See the very useful summary of the painting's documentary and conservation history by Mina Gregori, *Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio: Come nascono i capolavori*, 1991, exh. Florence & Rome, Milan, 1992, no. 19, 310-17. Most of the scholarly literature on this painting is concerned with its patronage context for which see note 7.

⁶ Gaspare Murtola, *Rime*, 1604, 471. On the painting's subject matter and literary reception see Elizabeth Cropper, "The Petrifying Art: Marino's Poetry and Caravaggio", *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 26, 1991, 193-212; Avigdor W G Posèq, "A note on Caravaggio's *Sleeping Amor*", *Source: Notes in the History of Art*, 6.4, 1987, 27-31.

⁷ 20 July 1609 letter from Francesco Buonarrotti from Malta to his brother in Florence concerning the reception of the painting in Florence according to a conversation with dell'Antella, that the painting was thought very precious, and that a viewer has already composed sonnets on it, although no further identification of these sonnets has surfaced to date; 24 April 1610 letter from dell'Antella to Michelangelo Buonarrotti the Younger that dell'Antella was very pleased that Michelangelo's heir, and a court poet, had been to see the painting. The literature on this painting is chiefly concerned with its patronage: Stefania Macioce, *I cavalieri di Malta e Caravaggio: la storia, gli artisti, I committenti*, Rome, 2010; David Stone & Keith Sciberras *Caravaggio: Art, Knighthood and Malta*, Malta, 2006, 80-85; David M Stone, "In praise of Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid*: New documents for Francesco dell'Antella in Malta", *Melita Historica*, XII, 1997. 2, 165-77; Giorgio Bonsanti & Mina Gregori, *Caravaggio da Malta a Firenze*, (exh. Florence), Milan, 1996; Sebregondi Fiorentini, "Francesco dell'Antella, Caravaggio, Paladini e altri", *Paragone*, XXXIII, 383/85, 1982, 107-22.

⁸ Giovanni da S. Giovanni's fresco after Caravaggio's *Sleeping Cupid* for the façade of the Dell'Antella palace of 1619 survived into the 19th century on which see Claudio Pizzorusso, "Un 'tranquillo dio': Giovanni da San Giovanni," *Paragone: Arte*, 34, 1983, 52. There are several early seventeenth-century versions of the composition on canvas, in Palermo, Indianapolis, the Royal Collection UK, and in private collections, and scholars differ in their attributions, for example, see Sciberras & Stone, *Caravaggio*, 2006, 84; Mina Gregori, ed., *Come dipingeva il Caravaggio: Atti della giornata di studio*, Milan, 1996, especially 123-34 on Cecco del Caravaggio; Stefania Macioce, "*L'amore dormiente nella pittura caravaggesca*", *Sul carro di Tespi: Studi di storia dell'arte per Maurizio Calvesi*, ed. Stefano Valeri, Rome, 2004, 127-38.

⁹ Gianni Papi, ed., *Caravaggio e caravaggeschi a Firenze*, exh. Florence, Florence & Milan, 2010.

¹⁰ The 'Praxiteles' Cupid was cited by Pliny *Natural History*, xxxvi, 21; and the subject of a series of epigrams in the *Greek Anthology* xvi, trans. Jay Winter, ed., *The Greek Anthology and other Ancient Greek Epigrams*,

London, 1981. The collection and display of the Mantua Cupids is documented in a series of inventories, and a related drawing in the Royal Library, Windsor Castle, 1698 Whitehall Palace inventory. Michelangelo's Cupid arrived in Mantua in 1502 where it remained until the 1620s, subsequently passing into the collections of Charles I and seemingly lost in the 1698 Whitehall fire. See Michael Hirst and Jill Dunkerton, *The Young Michelangelo*, exh. National Gallery London, London, 1994; Stephen Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella*, London & New Haven, 2006, 87-113; Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt, "Sogni di un cupido dormiente smarrito", *Giovinetta di Michelangelo*, exh. Florence, ed. Kathleen Weil-Garris Brandt, Cristina Acidini Luchinat, J.D. Draper, Nicholas Penny, Florence & Milan, 1999, 315-23.

¹¹ Ascanio Condivi, *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti*, 1553, trans. Alice Sedgwick Wohl, ed. Hellmut Wohl, 1976, 1999, 19.

¹² Hirst & Dunkerton, *Young Michelangelo*, 1994; Brandt, "Sogni", 1999, 320-23. On the Uffizi *Sleeping Cupids* Bober & Rubinstein, *Handbook of Sources*, 2010, 98.

¹³ W J T Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on verbal and visual representation*, Chicago, 1995.

¹⁴ Salvatore Settis with Maria Luisa Catoni, *La forza del bello: l'arte greca conquista l'Italia*, exh. Mantua, Milan, 2008; Jàs Elsner and Jennifer Trimble, *Art and Replication: Greece, Rome, and Beyond*, *Art History*, 29, 2, 2006.

¹⁵ Louis Marin, "Mimésis et description", *De la Représentation*, Paris, 1994, 71-92, trans. Catherine Porter, Stanford CA, 2001; Thomas Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry*, London & New Haven, 1982; Rosalind E. Krauss, ed., *Retaining the Original: Multiple Originals, Copies, and Reproductions*, *Studies in the History of Art*, National Gallery of Art, 20, 1989

¹⁶ André Malraux, *Museum without walls*, (1965), London, 1967; George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (1962), London & New Haven, 2008; Georges Didi-Huberman, *L'image survivante: Histoire de l'art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg*, Paris, 2002.

¹⁷ Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, Oxford, 1998; Gilles Deleuze, *Différence and Répétition*, Paris, 1968, trans. Paul Patton, London, 1994.

¹⁸ Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*, 3 vols., Paris, 1984, 1986, 1992.

¹⁹ Sigmund Freud, especially *Civilisation and its Discontents* (1929), London, 2002; Jacques Lacan, especially "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis" & "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious" *Écrits*, (1966), trans. Bruce Fink, London & New York, 2006, 197-267 & 671-702; Michel de Certeau, especially *The Mystic Fable: XVI & XVII centuries* (1982), 2 vols., Chicago, 1992, 2015. Donald Kuspitt, "A Mighty Metaphor: The Analogy of Archaeology and Psychoanalysis" *Sigmund Freud and Art*, eds. Lynn Gamwell & Richard Wells, New York, 1989, 133-152;

²⁰ Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, Paris, 1952; Aby Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, Los Angeles CA, 1999.

²¹ Nicoletta Maraschio, "I fiorentinisti e la 'questione della lingua'", *Puro, semplice e natural nell'arte tra cinque e seicento*, ed. Alessandra Giannotti & Claudio Pizzorusso, Florence, 2014, 96-107, for a recent synthesis.

²² Laura Ricci, *La redazione manoscritta del Libro de natura de amore di Mario Equicola*, Rome, 1999, 444-48. Classic studies of Florentine humanism include P.O. Kristeller's *The Classics and Renaissance Thought*, Cambridge MA, 1955; Anthony Grafton, *Commerce with the Classics: Ancient Books and Renaissance Readers*, Ann Arbor, 1997.

²³ *Greek Anthology*, especially book xv; Daryl Hine, *Puerilities: Erotic Epigrams of The Greek Anthology*, Princeton NJ, 2001

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- ²⁴ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I, 466-74 (A.D. Melville trans., Oxford, 1986, 15).
- ²⁵ Francesco Petrarca, "Era il giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro", *Il Canzoniere*, ed. Giancarlo Contini, Turin, 1964, 3, written in 1348 just after the death of Laura, his unrequited love, describing their first meeting; Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, London, 1596, 4.7.1.1.
- ²⁶ Jane Kingsley-Smith, *Cupid in Early Modern Literature and Culture*, Cambridge, 2010, for a useful synthesis.
- ²⁷ Elizabeth Cropper "'Heu vicit Venus': amour et désir au XVIe siècle à Florence", *Daniel Arasse, historien de l'art*, eds. Frédéric Cousinié & Danièle Cohn, Paris, 2010, 87-104; Hubert Damisch, *The Judgment of Paris*, trans. John Goodman, Chicago and London, 1992, drawing on Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), that the concept of beauty has its roots in desire, on which see also Christopher Bollas, *The Shadow of the Object; Psychoanalysis of the unknown thought*, London, 1987.
- ²⁸ Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanist themes in the Art of the Renaissance* Princeton NJ, 1964, 95-128; "And therefore was winged Cupid painted blind", *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I:I:235. Andrea Alciati, *Emblematum liber*, 1531, appearing in over 100 editions in French, German, Italian and Spanish by the 1620s.
- ²⁹ Murtola, *Rime*, 1603, 471.
- ³⁰ *Greek Anthology*, 16.212, on which see Anthony Colantuono, "Caravaggio's Literary Culture", *Caravaggio: Realism, Rebellion, Reception*, ed. Genevieve Warwick, Newark NJ, 2006, 57-68, especially 61.
- ³¹ Leonard Barkan, *Transuming Passions: Ganymede and the Erotics of Humanism*, Stanford CA, 1991.
- ³² Tomaso Montanari, "Gli esordi di Giovan Pietro Bellori e l'Amorino-Attis di Donatello", *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, 4, 9/10, 2000 (2002), 213-17; Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi, *Il ritorno d'Amore: L'Attis di Donatello restaurato*, exh. Bargello Museum, Florence, 2005.
- ³³ Several versions of the sleeping cupid in white marble at the Uffizi hold poppy pods in one hand. The black marble version clearly did once hold a clutch of poppies in the raised right hand, of which only one remains. The Windsor sheet of the four Gonzaga cupids shows one, which is identified with Michelangelo's, as holding two poppy pods in his right hand. A 1627 Gonzaga inventory lists four sleeping cupids, one of which holds two poppies in his hand, though these descriptions do not correspond to the Windsor sheet from the 1698 Whitehall inventory entirely in other details, Hirst & Dunkerton, *Young Michelangelo*, 1994, 24-28.
- ³⁴ Gregori, ed., *Caravaggio*, 1992; Vodret, *Caravaggio e Roma*, 2010; Rossella Vodret, *Caravaggio: opera a Roma, tecnica e stile*, 2 vols., Milan, 2016.
- ³⁵ Virgil, *Georgics*, trans Janet Lembke, New Haven, 2005, I, 77-78, II, 14-16; Ovid, *Fasti*, 5 vols., (LOEB), Cambridge MA, 1967, IV, 661; Celsus, *De medicina*, 3 vols., (LOEB), Cambridge MA, 1938, II, 230. See further Thomas Dormandy, *Opium: Reality's Dark Dream*, London & New Haven, 2012, who also traces references in Homer, *Odyssey*, IV, v. 219, and to Sumerian ideograms of c. 4500 BC. Paracelsus would coin the term laudanum for his mixture of opium with alcohol, in praise of what he termed its magical qualities, on which see Richard Davenport-Hines, *The Pursuit of Oblivion: A Global History of Drugs*, London, 2002.
- ³⁶ Jennifer Montagu, *Alessandro Algardi*, London & New Haven, 1985, 117-18.
- ³⁷ Elizabeth Cropper, "The Petrifying Art: Marino's Poetry and Caravaggio", *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 26, 1991, 193-212
- ³⁸ Baptistae Mantuani, *Opera Omnia*, 4 vols., Antwerp, 1576, I, 375v, cited in Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros* 101, 331 note 46.

³⁹ *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, published by Aldus Manutius, Venice, 1499, attributed to Francesco Colonna, facsimile ed., Farnborough, 1969, English translation by Joscelyn Godwin, New York, 1973. Maurizio Calvesi, *Il sogno di Polifilo prenestino*, Rome, 1980; Stefano Borsi, *Polifilo architetto: cultura architettonica e teoria artistica nell' Hypnerotomachia Poliphili di Francesco Colonna*, (1499), Rome, 1995. On dreams more broadly, see especially *Il sogno nel Rinascimento*, exh. Florence & Paris, 2013.

⁴⁰ *Greek Anthology*, bk v. The subsequent broader cultural history is suggestively outlined by Philippe Ariès, *Essais sur la mort en Occident*, Paris, 1975; and in art by Edgar Wind, "Amor as a god of death", *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, London, 1958, 129-41.

⁴¹ Bellori, *Vite*, 1672, 202-03.

⁴² C. 1598, Doria Pamphili Gallery, Rome

⁴³ Bellori, *Vite*, 1672, 212. See Ferdinando Bologna, *L'incredulità di Caravaggio e l'esperienza delle 'cose naturali*, Turin, 1992, in response to Maurizio Calvesi, *Le realtà di Caravaggio*, Turin, 1990.

⁴⁴ On the question of models in Caravaggio's work see the fundamental study by Keith Christiansen, "Caravaggio and l'esempio del naturale", *Art Bulletin*, 68, 1986, 421-45.

⁴⁵ Sciberras & Stone, *Caravaggio* 2006, 83 & 102, notes 57 & 58.

⁴⁶ On the *Medusa*, Klaus Krüger, "Un'immagine inconcepibile: La *Medusa* di Caravaggio", *Caravaggio e il suo ambiente*, eds. Sybille Ebert-Schifferer, Julian Kliemann, Valeska von Rosen, Lothar Sickel, *Studi della Bibliotheca Hertziana*, 3, Milan, 2007, 35-57; Antonio Paolucci, *La Medusa del Caravaggio restaurata*, Florence, 2002; Detlef Heikamp, "La *Medusa* del Caravaggio e l'armatura dello Scià Abbās di Persia," *Paragone: Arte*, 17, 1966, 62-76.

⁴⁷ Orazio Gentileschi court deposition, 14 September 1603: "it must be six or eight months since I spoke to Caravaggio last, though he sent to my house for a Capuchin's habit, which I lent him, and for a pair of wings, which he sent back to me about ten days ago", published in Friedlaender, *Caravaggio*, 1955, 278-9.

⁴⁸ From the considerable literature on this painting see especially: Rudolf Preimesberger, "Michelangelo da Caravaggio – Caravaggio da Michelangelo: zum 'Amor' der Berliner Gemäldegalerie", *Der stumme diskurs der Bilder: Reflexionsformen des Ästhetischen in der Kunst der Frühen Neuzeit*, eds. Valeska von Rosen, Klaus Krüger, Rudolf Preimesberger, Munich, 2003, 243-60; Herwarth Röttgen, *Caravaggio: Der irdische Amor oder der Sieg der Fleischlichen Liebe*, Frankfurt, 1992.

⁴⁹ Luigi Salerno, "The Picture Gallery of Vincenzo Giustiniani: 1; 2 The Inventory; 3", *The Burlington Magazine*, 102, 1960, 21-27, 93-104, 135-48, especially 93-104 for the 1638 Giustiniani inventory. Virgil, *Eclogues*, x:69; Bellori, *Vite* 1672, 207; Joachim von Sandrart, *Teutsche Academie der Bau-, Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste*, Nürnberg, 1675, 190.

⁵⁰ Cropper, "Petrifying Art", 1991, on its literary reception.

⁵¹ Avigdor Posèq, "Caravaggio and the Antique", *Artibus et Historiae*, XI, 21, 1990, 147-67.

⁵² Preimesberger, "Michelangelo da Caravaggio", 2003.

⁵³ Anne Brookes, *Richard Symond's account of his visit to Rome, 1649-51*, *Walpole Society*, 69, 2007, 35, 69 note 334, 128 note 257. On Cecco's own art see Gianni Papi, *Cecco del Caravaggio*, Cremona, 2001, especially cat. 17, 135-7 on his *Cupid at a Fountain*, c 1620s, (formerly Viti Collection, Rome) and its proximity to the *Laughing Cupid*.

⁵⁴ Sandrart, *Teutsche Academie*, 1675, 190.

⁵⁵ Murtola, *Rime*, 1603, 471.

⁵⁶ C H Espinal, "Caravaggio's *Amore dormiente*: A Sleeping Cupid with junior rheumatoid arthritis", *The Lancet*, 344, 1944, 1750-52.

⁵⁷ Anna Banti, *Giovanni da San Giovanni*, Florence, 1977, 10, 52-53, cat. No. 8, suggests the model for the *Sleeping Cupid* is dead. Francesco Susinno, *Le vite de' pittori messinesi*, Naples, 1792, relates the purported use of a corpse as the model for the *Raising of Lazarus*, published in Howard Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, 1983, Appendix II, 384. The story also reflects the long tradition of anatomical study by artists.

⁵⁸ Bellori, *Vite*, 1672, 212.

⁵⁹ Bellori, *Vite*, 1672, 203.