

Caravaggio's
Musicians





The Musicians, restored. Oil on canvas, 34 ³/₈ × 47 ¹/₁₆ in. Private collection.

Recovering Lost Fictions: Caravaggio's *Musicians*

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During the year between 1595-1596, shortly after taking up residence in the household of the Roman prelate Cardinal Francesco Maria del Monte, Caravaggio painted one of his most famous works, now known as *The Musicians*. The painting, subsequently described by his contemporary biographer Giovanni Baglione as “a concert of youths, which was quite well drawn from nature,”¹ is a remarkably subtle and coy allegory of love and music. After the death of Del Monte in 1626 the painting passed among several owners. Eventually, however, it disappeared from public view for nearly 300 years until the early twentieth century when it was discovered in a private collection in England and subsequently purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1952. In the years following this acquisition various scholars have assumed that the Metropolitan Museum's copy was the original painting that Caravaggio made for Cardinal Del Monte. Recently, however, a long-lost copy of the painting that last made a public appearance in London in 1950 was discovered in a private collection in the Lakes District of England and brought to New York, where it underwent extensive analysis and restoration. This major rediscovery—coming as it does only a few years after the rediscovery of another lost Caravaggio in Dublin—reveals that Caravaggio made not one version of *The Musicians*, but two, both strikingly similar in their surface apparition, but startlingly dissimilar in terms of their *pentimenti*, or compositional revisions. The practice of making copies of his own work was not unusual for Caravaggio. Early in his career he made two distinct, yet closely related, copies of several paintings, including

The Fortune Teller, *The Lute Player*, and *St. John with a Ram*.² Copies typically have compelling, and sometimes very private, stories to tell, and the newly discovered and restored version of *The Musicians* is no exception: it casts light not only on Caravaggio's extraordinary working methods, but also his private life, both of which have been subjects of considerable speculation and controversy.

Outwardly, the newly restored copy of *The Musicians* is strikingly like the Metropolitan Museum's copy. In both, a triumvirate of young men dressed in loose clothing and bearing musical instruments are tightly juxtaposed in a moment best described as an interlude, either just before or just after a performance. One youth, with his mouth open slightly, holds his lute and appears to be tuning it, his eyes gazing into the air as if searching for the perfect octave; a second youth, often alleged to be Caravaggio himself, holds a coronetto that seems almost subordinate to the glance he makes over his shoulder; and the third youth, his shoulders white and bare, his violin and love madrigals lying at his side, assuredly grasps in his left hand a madrigal that rests on his lap. What is most revealing here is that all of the figures are preoccupied by harmonious disharmony, their gazes intently unintent. The composition is, as scholars have frequently noted, awkward and forced, as if Caravaggio had used individual models (or even one model) to ‘collage’ the scene piecemeal.³ To the far left of the painting can be found the autonomous winged figure of Cupid who plucks from a vine a bunch of grapes, thereby defining the painting's conventionalized iconography as an allegory of love and music.



Caravaggio, Michelangelo Merisi da, *The Musicians*, 1595-96. Oil on canvas, 34 7/8 × 45 1/16 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Rogers Fund, 1952. 52.81. Photograph © 1983 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

It is when we look at the *pentimenti* of the new copy of *The Musicians* that similarities between the two versions end, and a strange, almost bewildering, but ultimately explicable story begins. X-radiographs of the Metropolitan copy reveal very few compositional alterations. Not so the new copy, which reveals beneath the images on its surface an extraordinary sexual encounter: instead of a lute, the central figure holds a mirror, in which can be seen the lap of the third youth. But instead of grasping a love madrigal in his left hand, he grasps a metonym of this madrigal: his erect penis. The mirror, like the mirrors in paintings by

Velázquez and de La Tour, is positioned at an impossible angle; yet it is precisely this impossibility that affirms the activity taking place is supraordinary. The pose of the second youth—the one believed to be Caravaggio—is unchanged: he glances over his shoulder, not so much at the viewer (as previous scholars assumed), but at the sexual activity taking place. To play in concert—or to ‘play’ an instrument—thus becomes here an act of artifice, a moment in which the performance becomes pure metaphor couched in the guise of polite decorum.

Improbable as it seems, this discovery does not put to question Caravaggio’s

sexuality or temperament, but rather confirms what has long presumed to be true: that his own bisexual predilections were present in his work, and that the subject of love and music, far from being a simplistic allegorizing of northern Italian traditions, is far more complex and personal, and personal in a way that scholars have hitherto overlooked. The most significant critical ramification of the *pentimenti* of the newly restored version of *The Musicians* is how it helps explain one of the more perplexing and disconcerting aspects of the painting: the awkward composition of the figures. The general critical consensus is that this awkwardness can be attributed to Caravaggio’s well-known habit of painting directly from posed models. Unlike many contemporaries, Caravaggio did not use preliminary drawings when painting. Working directly, the models seem to have provided Caravaggio with a radiant energy that translated extraordinarily well to the canvas. So life-like were some of Caravaggio’s individual figures that, as Baglione said of the painting, the *Boy Bitten by a Lizard*, “The boy actually seems to cry out.”⁴ In the case of groups, however, the final result seemed to betray Caravaggio’s skill in painting individuals. Baglione claimed that Caravaggio was “incapable of putting two figures together,”⁵ and twentieth-century scholars (including Christiansen, Friedlaender, and Gregori) all noted a certain patchwork-like apparition in the final composition. This has been interpreted as a sign of Caravaggio’s weakness. As Spear observed, “the piecemeal nature of the composition reflects inexperience in designing a gathering of figures.”⁶ But we may also interpret this as a sign of Caravaggio’s



X-ray of *The Musicians*, restored. Detail. Private collection.

initial decision to enhance the tactile effect of the composition. The figures touch each other, and in their awkwardness reflect the social awkwardness of the event itself. The tightness of the figures is thus a prelude to their eventual release from containment, something that, for Caravaggio, could never be merely prosaic.

Nor, for that matter, could it be merely sexual. Caravaggio could not openly risk embarrassing Del Monte and hope to maintain his continued patronage. Faced with this dilemma, Caravaggio could, however, convey an implicitly sexual narrative wherein the overpainting retains traces of the activity taking place behind and



Ottavio Mario Leoni, *Cardinal Francesco del Monte*. 17th century. Chalk on paper. SN 832. Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida. Bequest of John Ringling.

beneath its surface. The presence of Eros in *The Musicians*, hitherto the painting's most overdetermined and imposing symbol, has not convincingly persuaded scholars that love was Caravaggio's pretext so much as his subtext. In re-reading both versions of *The Musicians* in the context of the earlier copy's *pentimenti*, we can see, however, that the youths do not sing so much as exclaim, in a panting, post-orgasmic gasp, that their song conspires to a different octave and rhythm than the song printed on the madrigals in the foreground. Here Caravaggio's

unexpectedly bold gesture involves being able to masturbate in the presence of an audience, to look and to see and to not be seen. It is simultaneously radical in its willful pre-emption of conventions and coy in its concealed withdrawal. Rarely has an artist of the stature of Caravaggio ventured to put decorum to such an imposing test, and rarer yet is the realization that the artist's success is defined not by leaving us just one masterpiece, but two.

Provenance

The question of how a painting of such great historical and scholarly significance could lie unnoticed for hundreds of years must be answered in the course of authenticating this remarkably unsettling version of *The Musicians*. Surprisingly, the task is not difficult, although it involves numerous historical peregrinations. Early in his career Caravaggio painted for two primary patrons, both ecclesiastical: the Cardinal Del Monte, with whom Caravaggio resided at Palazzo Madama between 1595-1600, and the Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani, who would eventually accrue thirteen paintings attributed to Caravaggio by the time of his death. Del Monte was a remarkably prescient aesthete with an eye for the new. As a prelate his social position was far less restrictive than we might assume, and in fact privileged him with access to otherwise inaccessible cultural and political circles. An ardent concert-goer and an amateur musician (so he himself claimed),⁷ Del Monte maintained in his household, in addition to Caravaggio and numerous servants, a castrato, Pedro Montoya, who some scholars have presumed to be the model for Caravaggio's *Lute Player*, a work



Caravaggio, Michelangelo Merisi da, *The Lute Player*. 1596-97. Oil on Canvas, 39 3/8 x 49 13/16 in. Private collection. Photograph courtesy of Alinari/Art Resource, New York.

executed shortly after *The Musicians*. Like Caravaggio, Del Monte's sexuality is shrouded in rumors about what might be described as ecclesiastical infidelity. Caravaggio scholars have also observed that a number of Del Monte's painting by Caravaggio, including *Bacchus*, *The Musicians*, and *The Lute Player*, employ models with a distinctly effeminate appearance.⁸ This observation may be discredited as an indication of sexual orientation, whether of the model, the artist, or the patron. Nonetheless, it cannot, at the same time, be ignored. It conveys not so much indexical certitude as it conveys an image of ambiguity: not decisiveness, but the fictional space between appearances and reality. This was Caravaggio's greatest strength as an artist. No one, perhaps, was more fooled by Caravaggio's prestidigitation than Pietro Bellori, who claimed that the painter "followed his model so slavishly that he did not take credit for even one brush stroke."⁹ Caravaggio's models were not merely people, but (as the English Romantic critic William Hazlitt said of Shakespeare),

they are both individuals and a class, singular and plural. Del Monte is known to have once held a banquet in which male guests, most of whom were clergy and some of whom dressed as women, sang and danced and drank.¹⁰ While there is little to be gained by overinterpreting this event, it is by no means insignificant and reflects the tenor of Caravaggio's *Musicians* as well as a predisposition to relate music, wine, and sexuality on a grand theme—a theme that achieves its greatest moment as art itself. This was not lost on Del Monte, who saw in Caravaggio's work not so much a new naturalism (as most scholars claim), but a new vulgarity, a vulgarity that was itself the epitome of contemporary Roman life—rude, capitulative, lascivious, and full of subtle mockery.

In attempting to trace the provenance of *The Musicians*, the question that logically follows our discussion about Caravaggio's chief patron is this: If Caravaggio painted the earlier, promiscuous version of *The Musicians* for Del Monte (a conjecture that now seems indisputable in the context of Del Monte's reputation and habits), for whom did he paint the second version of the work that is now in The Metropolitan Museum?

Before approaching this question directly, it would be of help to examine the historical context in which it is being posed. The great difficulty about Caravaggio's work is that it exists primarily in two centuries: the late sixteenth and early seventeenth, when he produced most of his work in a short fifteen-year time span; and the twentieth, when the neglected and forgotten painter was resurrected from the detritus of history by the great Italian scholar Roberto

Longhi. This wide gap—roughly three hundred years—has resulted in the fragmentation of evidence, particularly in terms of the provenance of many works. For this reason, art historians have been slow to discover and trace copies of Caravaggio's paintings that were made by both his admirers and detractors, as well as by Caravaggio himself. Until the 1950s, it was not widely accepted that Caravaggio painted autograph copies in the sense that Chardin and de La Tour would later do. Traditionally, an 'autograph copy' or 'replica' refers to a copy of one work made by the hand of the same artist, whether or not the copy incorporates minute variations—something extant in the three versions of Chardin's *Soap Bubbles*.¹¹ In this sense a copy is not literally an act of replication or cloning, but instead incorporates variation within a series or sequence. In the field of critical studies known as textual criticism and bibliography, a field that studies the transmission of printed cultural texts, the term 'version' is used to denote a variant state of a work, thereby suggesting that other versions of legitimate authority exist. The concept is crucial because it allows that variations exist as a consequence of causation and intention, something that we would expect to occur when a single work is being made for two different patrons. This, as textual critics point out, is also true when a poem is printed in two differing publications, which has the effect of 'recontextualizing' the poem's two texts.¹² Not all of the differences between the two texts, or between two autograph replicas, are therefore necessarily visible: sometimes they lie hidden beneath the surface of the painting proper and become manifest

only in the process of excavating the historical accretions of the work.

We can examine this process in Caravaggio's two versions of *The Lute Player*, the first having been painted for Giustiniani in 1595-6, and the second, perhaps a year later, for Del Monte.¹³ The Del Monte version was initially quite like the Giustiniani version, and included an assemblage of fruits and flowers. But for some unexplained reason, Caravaggio ultimately decided against this, and he replaced the fruits and flowers on the left side of the painting with additional musical instruments—providing, as it were, a bouquet of another kind. The fruits and flowers can, with the aid of careful X-ray analysis, still be seen beneath the musical instruments. As a variant copy, then, the Del Monte version may be termed 'radically variant' because of the extreme degree to which it departs from the original execution. Two other works that are known to exist in two versions—*St. John with a Ram* and *The Fortune Teller*—reveal considerable more fidelity in the relationship between the first and second versions. It is significant to observe that all of Caravaggio's double-version works were painted at an early stage of his career while residing in Del Monte's household (roughly 1595-1600), perhaps as a means of spreading his talent as widely as possible. After Caravaggio left Del Monte's household and began what was to be a ten-year long exodus of troubles with the law, he had difficulty staying in one place long enough to complete a single commission, let alone two versions of one.

At this point it is necessary to return to our original question: if Caravaggio painted the original version of *The Musicians* for Del Monte, for whom did he paint the

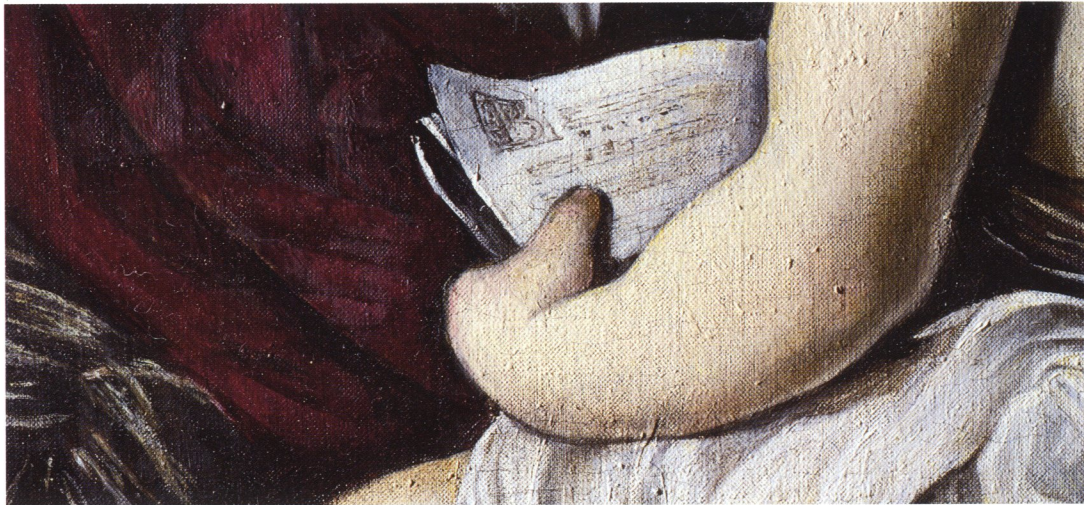


Pietro Paolini, *Bacchic Concert*. 1625-30. Oil on canvas, 46¼ × 68¾ in. Dallas Museum of Art, The Karl and Esther Hoblitzelle Collection. Gift of the Hoblitzelle Foundation.

Metropolitan Museum copy of the painting? Since he was the recipient of Caravaggio's original version of *The Lute Player*, Giustiniani seems a likely candidate; but there is no record of the painting in a 1638 inventory of his collection. Another early patron, Msgr. Fantino Petriagnani, who owned one of the two versions of *The Fortune Teller* (the other was owned by Del Monte) is a further possibility; but again, there is no record of him having owned the work.

There is, however, a third possibility, one that is likely in a most unlikely way: that Caravaggio painted *both* versions of *The Musicians* for Del Monte himself. There is little doubt that the sexual subject

of *The Musicians* was a guarded secret in Del Monte's inner circle, but like all secrets and rumors surrounding Caravaggio (whose early biographies by Baglione and Bellori read more like gossip than biographies); it could not be kept back forever. The key piece of evidence here is Pietro Paolini's painting entitled *Bacchic Concert*, which was painted around 1625, and which openly quotes Caravaggio's theme of onanism. The young man at the far right of the painting—the most androgynous figure in the composition—does not merely hold his erect flute, but appears to stroke it. This would not draw much attention were it not that the flute is positioned precisely where flutes are not



The Musicians, restored, under raking light. Detail. Private collection.

positioned to be played, and were it not that other figures in the painting ostentatiously vulgarize the sensitive intimacy of Caravaggio's composition.

What is important about Paolini's painting in relation to Caravaggio's is that it introduces an element of self-consciousness into the mystery about the subject of *The Musicians*, even to the extent that it mocks it. Looking at the original version of the painting, Del Monte could only have been aware of the potential troubles that lay ahead if he were to openly exhibit the work. Even though Caravaggio had painted over the sexual revelry, traces of this revelry still remained visible to the naked eye. A careful analysis of the original copy of *The Musicians* under raking light reveals extensive evidence of Caravaggio's well-known method of incising the canvas with the butt end of his brush. The process leaves small ridges, or levees, of paint that are highlighted by the raking light, and under such light we can faintly see the hand and penis of the

masturbating musician. Should the painting have been exhibited at a height in which illumination was provided at a sharp angle, such as through typical Romanesque clerestory windows, the painting's original composition would be visible. This, understandably, was not something Del Monte could risk, and the only solution was to have Caravaggio paint a second copy of the work. This, then, resulted in the 'public' copy that Del Monte could display while retaining the more ribald version for his own gratification, which he no doubt shared with his closest friends. Whether Paolini's knowledge of the original *Musicians* was based on firsthand knowledge or rumor is not so important as the fact that his allusion is emphatically and startlingly direct, something that not only substantiates and verifies Caravaggio's intended subject, but also explains why Del Monte could have commissioned two copies of *The Musicians*.

The Mystery of Caravaggio

That Caravaggio could have actually painted a work that conflates touching, music, love, and onanism is not, either in the context of his life or his milieu, surprising. Despite being categorized by scholars as a Baroque artist, Caravaggio's early work and life have more in common with Shakespeare's lowbrow Renaissance sensibility than with inheritors of his stylistic idiom. One April evening in 1604, when dining at the Blackamoor Tavern in Rome, Caravaggio asked a waiter who brought to him a plate of artichokes, which had been cooked in oil and which had been cooked in butter. When the waiter told him he didn't know, Caravaggio replied by shoving the plate of artichokes into the face of the waiter—and for this indelicate breach of decorum he was arrested.¹⁴ Such a response may have been shocking in Rome; but in London at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Caravaggio simply would have been another one of the gang at the famous Mermaid Tavern, where Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson, among others, indulged in their own similar brand of disrepute. After leaving Del Monte's household in 1600, Caravaggio was continuously in trouble with his peers and the law. On one occasion he was hauled into court on charges of having libeled the rival painter Baglione, and on separate occasions over the years was imprisoned for throwing stones, insulting an officer, and for offending a woman and her daughter.¹⁵

Some of the most compelling things ever said about Caravaggio were said by his contemporary detractors who took particular care that his depravity not be forgotten. Bellori, in one of his more generous moments, remarked that Caravaggio was

“very negligent of personal cleanliness and for many years morning and evening he used the canvas of a portrait as a tablecloth.”¹⁶ Baglione wrote in his biography that Caravaggio “would often speak badly of all painters, both past and present, no matter how distinguished they were.”¹⁷ In a sense Caravaggio was one of the most unapologetic and remorseless painters ever, one who makes Jackson Pollock's life and rodomontade seem tame by comparison. Pollock surprised people, of course—his unencroachable act of pissing in Peggy Guggenheim's fireplace is a landmark of modernist New York sensibility—but what Pollock achieved by 1950 was possible only because the twentieth century had not yet learned about Caravaggio's inspired depravities.

Ultimately it is Caravaggio's work, and the way he translated both his life and the life of others into his work, that commands our attention most. Bellori remarked that Caravaggio “often degenerated into low and vulgar forms,”¹⁸ thereby affirming our earlier observation about the presence of a particular kind of vulgarity in his work. Caravaggio was painting against a backdrop of Counter Reformation art in the last decade of the sixteenth century, a context that would graphically accentuate his sense of departure. To say that his work was “wanting decorum,” as many critics did, is to be egregiously polite about what was happening. Bellori was more blunt: “His figures inhabit dungeons,” he wrote, adding that as a consequence “Now began the representation of vile things; some artists began to look enthusiastically for filth and deformity.”¹⁹ It is thus almost ironic—or perhaps it is not—that Caravaggio should

have counted as his earliest and most ardent patrons three prelates of the Roman Catholic church.

Clearly it was artifice, not merely art, that was Caravaggio's supreme subject. His interest was not so much in convention, but in what convention hides. Open, direct, and forthright, his vulgarity or 'naturalism' can also be found in the dirty fingernails of his *Bacchus*, and in the blemished representations of fruit in *The Lute Player* and *The Basket of Fruit*: grapes are rotting, leaves are withering, apples have bruises, figs have split open, and pears are streaked with scars. What is vulgar here is vulgar not because Caravaggio self-consciously vulgarizes, but because his audacity is in his honesty: these are real fruits, just as the participants of the musical orgy are real people. They are shameless.

Shamelessness is consequently one of Caravaggio's ongoing themes. When not dealing with reconfiguring iconographic allegories, Caravaggio probed, and probed with probity, his contemporary underworld—fortune tellers, cardsharps, neurotics, and murderers. Art scholars have frequently observed that Caravaggio's chief innovation was to work directly from the model—Bellori described this as painting "naturale."²⁰ But 'nature' to Caravaggio was more than just representations of the visible; it also had to do with human nature. In *The Musicians* Caravaggio comes face-to-face with this human nature, balancing, in a unique way, the tension between social facts and social fictions in contemporary Rome. As Philippe de Montebello, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, observed on the occasion of exhibiting the newly discovered and restored copy of *The Lute*



Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. From Pietro Bellori, *Vite de Pittori, Scultori et Architetti*, Rome, 1672

Player in 1990, "No less significant than the appearance and reidentification of 'new' pictures by Caravaggio are some developments—really advances—in our understanding of the cultural milieu in which he worked in Rome and of the meaning that underlies some of his most familiar early masterpieces."²¹

Lost Fictions

The recovery of a lost artwork, and the reattribution of hitherto misattributed works, constitute major events in the annals of historical scholarship. Caravaggio, fortunately, has been privileged with the best of this scholarship, and efforts to recover his lost works have resulted in some astonishing discoveries in recent years. Only in 1987 did Caravaggio's early masterpiece, *The Cardsharps*, reappear after having been lost since 1895, and it is now in the Kimball

Art Museum, Fort Worth; in 1990 the Del Monte version of *The Lute Player* went on public display at the Metropolitan Museum for the first time since it was privately sold from the Barberini Collection in Rome in 1948; and in 1993 the National Gallery of Ireland discovered Caravaggio's long-lost masterwork, *The Taking of Christ*, in the dining room of a Dublin residence for Jesuit priests, where it had been labeled as the work of a minor Dutch painter, Gerrit van Hantorst. The process of conservation has also authenticated works originally presumed to be copies by revealing how the *pentimenti*—usually not extant in copies made by other artists—survives. Carefully documented and executed conservation has also had a major role in authenticating one copy of *The Fortune Teller* (which was verified as original only in 1985) and in putting to rest claims (first proffered by Longhi) that the Metropolitan Museum version of *The Musicians* was an inferior copy simply because it was in bad condition; and now, continuing this tradition of late-twentieth century discoveries authenticated on the basis of conservation, we can add the original Del Monte copy of *The Musicians*.

Any new attribution or discovery, particularly of a work with ambiguous provenance, will be subject to various kinds of scrutiny in the process of being authenticated. While the process itself deals largely with formal levels of analysis, a purely material interpretation, even when based on extremely sensitive technical resources, does not in itself adequately express the ways or degrees in which all paintings are by necessity fictions, and the ways or degrees in which our analytical

judgments are fictions too. A painting is more than a two-dimensional surface with a story to tell: the imbrication of intention, of history, of iconology, and of representation, creates a text of interwoven meanings—something that, in the case of Caravaggio's *Musicians*, is ultimately much more than merely a painting, more than just an allegory on love and music. The author of an artwork, like the author of a literary work, is a participant in a tacitly collaborative process that involves not just the making of a work, but also its subsequent unmaking and remaking in the course of its transmission as a cultural artifact.

Art history inevitably participates in this process by sequencing certain events and objects, at times effacing or evading what is considered non-essential to this sequence. Essentially, it is the act of making history, like the act of making art, that reminds us the process involves opinions, predilections, doubts, and misgivings. As we modulate what we consider irrelevant or deconsecrate the past in the act of reattributing works, we frequently counter this act with that of discovery, of locating in the sequence a work or idea that ultimately comes to bear on all other works and ideas. By this process we prove that the previous sequence was, *in fact*, a fiction—fact effacing fact, each new discovery functions to verify its own ultimate lack of veracity. For this reason the Caravaggio canon, like that of Rembrandt, can never be complete. Therein lies the mystery, and in the mystery lies the art.

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Notes

- 1 "La Vita di Michelangelo da Caravaggio, Pittore," in *Caravaggio Studies*, ed. Walter Friedlaender (Princeton, 1955), 234.
- 2 One copy of *The Fortune Teller* (1594-5) is in the Pinacoteca Capitolina, Rome, while the second copy is in the Louvre. *The Lute Player* (1596-7) is stylistically more advanced than *The Musicians*, and therefore logically postdates it. Additional evidence for the dating is provided in accounts by Baglione and Bellori, who both affirmed that *The Musicians* was the first painting Caravaggio undertook after moving into Del Monte's household. The copy of *The Lute Player* painted for Del Monte is on extended loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the original copy, believed to have been painted for a rival patron and collector, Vincenzo Giustiniani, is now in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg. See Keith Christiansen, *A Caravaggio Rediscovered: The Lute Player* (New York, 1990), 58-60. For a detailed analysis of the two versions of *St. John with a Ram*, see *Identificazione di un Caravaggio: Nuove tecnologie per una rilettura del San Giovanni Battista*, ed. Giampaolo Corrales (Venezia, 1990).
- 3 See Christiansen, *op cit.*, 25.
- 4 *Caravaggio Studies*, 234.
- 5 *Caravaggio Studies*, 236.
- 6 R. Spear, *Caravaggio and His Followers* (Cleveland, 1971), 70. See also Christiansen, *op cit.*, 25, 58; Friedlaender, *op. cit.*, 148; Mina Gregori, *The Age of Caravaggio* (New York, 1985), 234; and Keith Christiansen, "Caravaggio and 'L'esempio davanti del naturale,'" *The Art Bulletin* 68.3 (September 1986): 423.
- 7 L. Spezzaferro, "La cultura del Cardinale Del Monte e il primo tempo del Caravaggio," *Storia dell'arte* 9-10 (1971): 57-92.

- 8 See, for example, Spear, *op cit.*, 70; D. Posner, "Caravaggio's Homo-erotic Early Works," *The Art Quarterly* 34.3 (1971): 301-24; and *Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio: Come nascono i Capolavori*, ed. Mina Gregori (Milan, 1992), 114.
- 9 *Caravaggio Studies*, 252.
- 10 J.A.F. Orbaan, *Documenti sul Barocco in Roma* (Rome, 1920), 139 n. 1.
- 11 Marcia Kupfer, *Soap Bubbles of Jean-Siméon Chardin* (Washington, D.C., 1991).
- 12 For an introduction to this facet of contemporary textual scholarship, see Jerome McGann's *The Textual Condition* (Princeton, 1991). For a study on the relationship between textual scholarship and art history, see Joseph Grigely's *Textuality: Art, Theory, and Textual Criticism* (Ann Arbor, 1995).
- 13 For an overview of this discussion, see Christiansen, *A Caravaggio Rediscovered*, esp. 58-60.
- 14 *Caravaggio Studies*, 279-80.
- 15 For police and court records, see *Caravaggio Studies*, 269-87.
- 16 *Caravaggio Studies*, 254.
- 17 *Caravaggio Studies*, 235.
- 18 *Caravaggio Studies*, 249.
- 19 *Caravaggio Studies*, 253.
- 20 *Caravaggio Studies*, 254.
- 21 Christiansen, *A Caravaggio Rediscovered*, 6.

Suggestions for Further Reading

- Keith Christiansen,
A Caravaggio Rediscovered: "The Lute Player"
(New York, 1990).
- Keith Christiansen,
"Caravaggio and 'L'esempio davanti del naturale,'" *The Art Bulletin*, vol. LXVIII, No. 3 (1986).
- Walter Friedlaender,
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Caravaggio (London, 1983).
- Denis Mahon,
"Addenda to Caravaggio," *Burlington Magazine*, vol. XCIV (1952).
- A. Moir,
Caravaggio and His Copyists (New York, 1976).
- D. Posner,
"Caravaggio's Homo-erotic Early Works," *Art Quarterly*, vol. 34 (1971).
- Richard Spear,
Caravaggio and His Followers (Cleveland, 1971).

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Cover:
The Musicians, restored. Oil on canvas, 34 3/8 x 47 1/16 in.
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