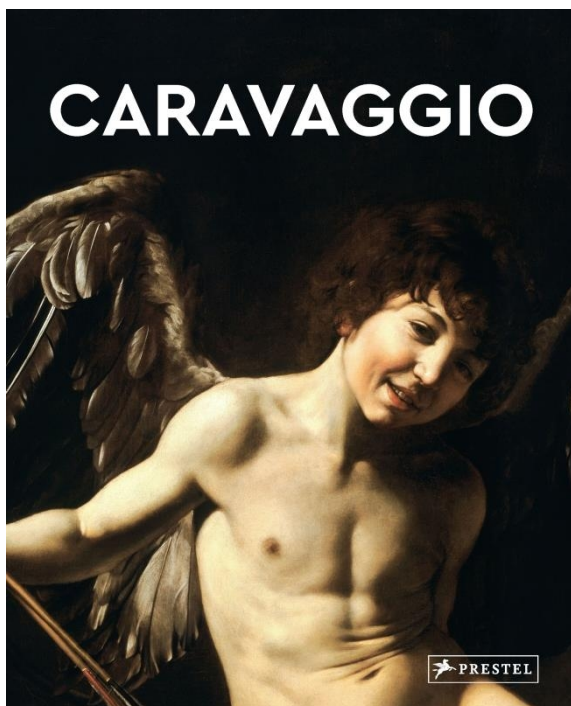




Leseprobe

Brad Finger

Masters of Art: Caravaggio

Bestellen Sie mit einem Klick für 13,00 €



Seiten: 112

Erscheinungstermin: 09. Oktober 2025

Mehr Informationen zum Buch gibt es auf

www.penguin.de

A PAINTER OF TALENT AND TUMULT

"I was seized the other day in the Piazza Navona. I do not know why. I am a painter. I think I know nearly all the painters in Rome. . . . I know Giuseppe [Cesari], [Annibale] Carracci, [Federico] Zaccari, Pomarancio [Cristoforo Roncalli], . . . Giovanni Baglione, . . . and others. Nearly all the painters I have mentioned above are my friends, but not all of them are good men. By a good man I mean someone who can perform well in his art, and by a good painter a man who can paint well and imitate natural things well. . . . I do not know anything about there being any painter who praises Giovanni Baglione as a good painter. . . . I do not amuse myself with composing verses, either in Latin or Italian. I have never heard of the rhymes or prose against Baglione." (Caravaggio, 1603)

On September 13, 1603, the painter Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (page 10) presented testimony in a libel suit, which had been waged against him by fellow painter Giovanni Baglione. Baglione claimed that Caravaggio had disparaged his reputation in lurid poems that had gone public, something Caravaggio denied. There was no love lost between the two men. They were both part of a hyper-competitive Roman art world – a world that was cutthroat and often violent – and each was quick to ridicule the other's character and talent. The alleged poems involved in this suit were related to a *Resurrection* altarpiece

that Baglione had painted for the Gesù, one of the most prominent churches in Rome. Baglione's supporters claimed that Caravaggio penned the verses because he was jealous of Baglione for receiving this sought-after commission. Caravaggio, on the other hand, dismissed such a notion in his testimony, calling Baglione's *Resurrection* "clumsy and . . . the worst he has ever done."

The suit was a bit of bad luck for Caravaggio. He was found guilty of libel and sentenced to time in prison. It would be one of his many encounters with the law, a scandalous moment in a whirlwind life that would eventually end in an early death. But the story also reveals other aspects of Caravaggio's career and art. The lenient sentence he received, only two weeks in jail with an additional month of probation, was probably arranged for him by two of the most powerful men in Rome, the French Ambassador Philippe de Bethune and Cardinal Francesco Maria del Monte. Caravaggio was certainly no common criminal. His brilliant talent as an artist had won him friends in the highest echelons of power, and even his enemies were forced to concede his genius. Baglione himself would write a partially laudatory biography of Caravaggio, one of a handful of short biographies that historians have used to piece together the painter's life and the commissions that occasioned specific paintings. These texts are especially vital because, other than the one deposition from September 1603, we have almost no quotes or writings of any kind in Caravaggio's own voice.

