IN PRAISE OF CARAVAGGIO’S SLEEPING CUPID:
New Documents for Francesco dell’Antella in
Malta and Florence

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The archival record of Caravaggio’s fifteen-month sojourn in Malta,1 from July 1607 to October 1608, is so patchy that the discovery of a patron’s letter containing a reference to a Caravaggio painting executed on the island is a welcome surprise.2 This missive, by the Florentine commendatore, Fra Francesco dell’Antella (1567-1624),3 together with several other previously unpublished documents gathered below and in a brief Appendix, sheds new light on artistic relations between Malta and Florence during the early Seicento. It also confirms, that even after Caravaggio’s commission of a crime in the late summer of 1608 and his subsequent expulsion from the Order of St. John, his works were still esteemed by individual knights.4

Dell’Antella, perhaps best known to scholars of Maltese history as the designer of the large map of Valletta in Giacomo Bosio’s Historia (1602), served the Convent for approximately a decade as Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt’s secretary.5 He also

1. This article is based on research for my book, Caravaggio and the Knights of Malta, which has been supported by two 1997-98 fellowships, the Andrew W. Mellon Post-Doctoral Rome Prize in History of Art at the American Academy in Rome; and a General University Research Fellowship from the University of Delaware. I am especially grateful to Dott.ssa Ludovica Sebregondi for confirming my transcription of the dell’Antella letter at Casa Buonarroti, where the staff was also most helpful.

2. No letters mentioning works by Caravaggio have thus far been identified among the papers of Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt, Prior of Naples Ippolito Malaspina, or Prior of Mussina Antonio Martelli—all presumed patrons of Caravaggio in Malta. For Martelli, see J. Gash, ‘The Identity of Caravaggio’s Knight of Malta’, The Burlington Magazine, CXXXIX, March 1997, pp. 156-60.

3. For dell’Antella’s patronage, which included a lost portrait “in ovato” of Grand Master Wignacourt by Caravaggio, see L. Sebregondi Fiorentini, ‘Francesco dell’Antella, Caravaggio, Paladini e altri’, Paragone, no. 383-385, 1982, pp. 107-22. The author kindly informs me of the recent appearance on the Florentine art market of a full-length portrait of dell’Antella; see Casa d’Asta Pandolfini, sale cat., 4 December 1996, lot 609, oil on canvas, 205 x 130 cm., attrib. to G. Sustermans, reproduced on p. 119. For the oval portrait of the Commendatore by Sustermans (apparently made as a pendant for the Caravaggio Wignacourt just mentioned), see Sebregondi 1982, fig. 78; see also Il Seicento Fiorentino, exh. cat. (Florence, Palazzo Strozzi), vol. I (Pittura), Florence, 1986, p. 316 and colour ill.


5. With innumerable references to dell’Antella’s activities as secretary, Wignacourt’s (ongoing) correspondence between 1601 and 1611 (National Library of Malta [NLM], Archivum Ordinis Maltiae [AOM] 1380-1391) supplements the few firm dates for dell’Antella’s residence on the island given by Sebregondi 1982, p. 107. Dell’Antella was in Malta, with few if any absences, during this entire period. He was certainly on the island during Caravaggio’s visit and was involved in the negotiations with the pope to obtain a knighthood for the painter (see S. Macioce, ‘Caravaggio a Malta
lent his expertise to a variety of artistic and architectural projects, as when he supervised the construction of the fortifications (“di San Giovanni Battista”) being erected in Gozzo in 1603 by Fra Vittorio Cassar. His abrupt departure from Malta in 1611, the shocking circumstances of which are treated below, allowed him to continue his interests in Florence. On 11th June 1613, he became a member of the Accademia del Disegno. In 1622, he was made Soprintendente alle Fortezze e alle Fabbriche Granducali. As commander of several Tuscan commende, including the Knights’ church in Florence, San Jacopo in Campo Corboli, dell’Antella saw to important architectural renovations and painting commissions, calling on the talents of a number of Florentine artists such as Francesco Rustici and Giovanni Martinelli. Another of these was the painter Filippo Paladini, an exile much like Caravaggio, who spent most of his career in Malta and Sicily.

Though it had been suspected earlier, the identity of dell’Antella as the patron of Caravaggio’s Sleeping Cupid (Florence, Pitti Palace) became certain only recently with the discovery of a letter preserved at Casa Buonarroti written in Malta on 20th June 1609 by another Florentine member of the Order, the amateur architect Fra Francesco Buonarroti (1574-1632), great-neophyte of the famous sculptor. The recipient in Florence was the acclaimed poet Michelangelo the Younger (1568-1642), Fra Francesco’s older brother:

6. See AOM 1382 (1603), f. 23v, letter from Wignacourt to dell’Antella, 4 August 1603. Fra Antonio Martelli, another Florentine and presumed Caravaggio patron, was also an advisor to this project; see AOM 1382 (1603), f. 137v, letter from Wignacourt to Cassar, 6 May 1603.
8. He was also Commander of San Leonardo in Siena and Santa Maria a Mucciano in Mugello.
9. For dell’Antella’s patronage of these artists, see Sebregondi 1982.
10. Paladini is so poorly documented that we take the opportunity here to publish three previously unknown letters. The first (Appendix: Doc. A) is Wignacourt’s plea to Cosimo II, asking permission for Paladini, who had been sent to Malta as a forzato, to be able to return to Florence. Wignacourt’s acknowledgment (Archivo di Stato, Florence, Mediceo, filza 4177, 5 April 1610) of Cosimo’s affirmative reply was first mentioned by Sebregondi 1982, note 49 (the “file copy” exists as AOM 1389 [1610], f. 98v). Docs. B, C, and D, letters from Wignacourt to Paladini, are especially interesting in that they represent the only correspondence I have traced thus far in which the Grand Master wrote directly to an artist. Abbreviations here and elsewhere are expanded for simplicity.
12. For a recent discussion of the painting, see G. Bonsanti and M. Gregori, Caravaggio da Malta a Firenze, exh. cat. (Florence, Palazzo Vecchio), Milan, 1996, pp. 40-41, colour ill. (entry by M. Gregori). The verso of the canvas bears an old inscription—OPERA DEL SR. MICHELANGELO MARESI DA CARAVAGGIO IN MALTA 1608—which supports the traditional dating of the painting to the latest months of Caravaggio’s stay in Malta. Catherine Puglisi, author of a forthcoming monograph on Caravaggio (London: Phaidon), recently presented a paper on the picture in a symposium I was unable to attend (April 1998; Hartford, Wadsworth Athenaeum).

Per Vostra intelligenza sappiate che mi son trovato due o tre volte in ragionamento con il Signor Antella, il quale mi dice haber mandato costà un quadro di mano di Michelangelo da Caravaggio, dentrovi un Cupido che dorme, in casa il Signor Niccolò suo fratello, il quale il Signor Commendatore lo tiene per una gioia, e ha gran piacere che sia visto perché gli sia detto l’opinione altrui e perché qualcuno che l’ha visto ci ha composto sopra qualche sonetto, i quali esso mi ha mostrati, perciò m’immagino ch’esso avrebbe caro che lo vedessi.

It is now possible to add an interesting “postscript” to Francesco Buonarroti’s letter, which attempted to entice the poet to go to the house of Senator Niccolò dell’Antella (1560-1630) in Piazza Santa Croce to see the recently arrived canvases. A new documentary discovery at Casa Buonarroti shows that correspondence between Malta and Florence concerning the Caravaggio Cupido continued.

On 24th April 1610, Commendatore Antella wrote from Malta directly to Michelangelo Giovane to inform him on the status of negotiations with the Grand Master concerning the reception into the Order (as a page) of the Buonarotti brothers’ nephew, Lionardo Barducci (1600-1625), the eleven-year-old son of their sister Caterina Buonarotti. From the concluding sentence of this missive, we can surmise that Michelangelo followed his brother’s advice and went to see the painting during the intervening ten months. Indeed, the poet was moved to praise the work. Michelangelo’s enthusiasm for the Cupido seems to have been conveyed to dell’Antella directly, in the very same “cortesissima lettera” by the poet that Fra Francesco Buonarroti had hand-delivered to dell’Antella “pochi giorni sono”:

Molto Illustrissimo Signore mio osservantissimo.
Da quanto deve scrivere a Vostra Signoria il Signor Fra Francesco suo fratello, che pochi giorni sono, al ritorno di un viaggio che fui con le Galere, mi dette la sua cortessissima lettera, intenderà quanto si sia trattato qui circa il negozio del Signor Barducci loro nipote; E però senza replicarle le medesime cose, mi occorre solamente dirle, già che il detto Signor Fra Francesco è di nuovo andato fuora con le stesse galere, che per andar tirando al desiderato fine questo negozio, Vostra Signoria potrà servirsi dell’alligata lettera dell’Illustrissimo Gran Maestro per il

14. As transcribed in Sebregondi 1982, p. 122. The document, filza 104 (‘Lettere di fra Francesco Buonarroti’), carta 145r, has since moved—along with the rest of the family archive—from the Biblioteca Laurenziana a Casa Buonarroti [CB].
15. Yet another indication of Caravaggio’s popularity despite his defrocking, the picture was immortalized in 1619 by Giovanni da San Giovanni in a fresco (still visible) on the palace’s facade. See C. Pizzorusso, Un “Tranquillo dio”: Giovanni da San Giovanni e Caravaggio. Paragone, no. 405, 1983, pp. 50-59.
Signor Fra Francesco dei Medici luogotenente del Priorato di Pisa, che è del contenuto che la vedrà dalla copia e potrà parimente vedere da un altra copia, quanto Sua Signoria Illustrissima risponda con l’originale a Madama Serenissima, onde Vostra Signoria intenderà a pieno quel che bisogna farsi costi, mentre può assicurarsi che in quel resta a farsi quà, non mancherà di continuare a servirla con ogni possibile prontezza; stimando io ora molto più di prima il mio cupido poi che mi viene lodato da Vostra Signoria alla quale bacio le mani . . .

di Malta alli 24 di Aprile 1610
Fra Francesco dell’Antella

S. Michel Angelo Buonarotti

Caravaggio’s painting, which dell’Antella proudly calls “il mio cupido,” could not fail to hit its target—an audience of Florentines. The all’antica subject of this small canvas, of course, had been the inspiration for one of “uncle” Michelangelo’s legendary early sculptures. Now lost, the marble was purportedly mistaken for a real piece of ancient statuary when it was first sold in Rome. 37 Michelangelo da Caravaggio’s conceit of competing with Michelangelo Buonarotti by repeating a subject closely associated with his name-sake could not have been lost on our third Michelangelo—the poet. Nor could it have eluded the work’s Florentine patron, dell’Antella, who may have even suggested the theme to Caravaggio, the “Michelangelo moderno” he had discovered in Malta. 19 Caravaggio took up the challenge with his usual wit, focussing his naturalism like a cruel lens on the deformities of the child’s moribund face and body. 19 His brush subverts the ideality of Tuscan-Roman classicism, replacing Michelangelo’s “counterfeit” antique (what Caravaggio would certainly have called a double sham) with a simulacrum of nature. 20

It seems safe to hypothesize that Francesco Buonarotti’s letter of 1609 successfully lured Michelangelo to the dell’Antella palace not only by disclosing the provocative subject of Caravaggio’s “gioia” but by dropping an unsuitable hint that another poet had already composed “qualche sonnetto” and given them to the work’s owner. The latter, we recall, invited critiques of his new picture (“e ha gran piacere che sia visto perché gli sia detto l’opinione altrui”). Thus, one gets the distinct impression that a small poetry competition was being orchestrated by Francesco dell’Antella—all the way from Malta—and that Michelangelo was expected to join in. It is worth pointing out in this regard that members of the dell’Antella family formed part of a little-known literary society, the “Accademia dei Pastori Antellessi,” whose leader was none other than Michelangelo Giovanni. Escaping the heat of the city, the Pastori met for day-long picnics and poetry readings on the banks of the Ema and Antella rivers, surrounded by their family villas and refreshing springs. 21 What connection Commendatore Antella had to this group before his return to Florence is unclear, though his interest in poetry during his residence in Malta needs no further attestation. 22

Dell’Antella seems to have been instrumental in other artistic exchanges between Malta and Florence. As two previously unpublished documents demonstrate, more

16. CB, filza 46 (‘Lettera a Michelangelo Giovane’), carta 756r. The date and place of this letter, but none of its contents, are mentioned in Sebregondi 1982, note 5. I have not included a transcription of the two attachments concerning Barducci’s application for the paggeria (these immediately follow the letter in filza 46).


18. The theme is far-removed from the iconography associated with the Knights of St. John in this period, leading me to think that the commission was a very personal one for dell’Antella. Caravaggio may have come up with the subject on his own, though I would imagine, in that event, that dell’Antella’s Florentine background and his friendship with the Buonarotti family were elements the artist took into account when developing his ideas. Caravaggio had apparently treated this theme before, in an untraced work celebrated by Gaspare Murtola in a 1603 madrigal: see Bonsanti and Gregori 1996, p. 19.

19. The sickly appearance of the child has led one physician to suggest that Caravaggio’s model (perhaps dead) suffered from Still’s disease. See C.H. Espinel, ‘Caravaggio’s “Il Amore Dormiente”: a sleeping cupid with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis’, The Lancet, 334, 1994, pp. 1750-52. This diagnosis was sustained in a letter by D.A. Person, The Lancet, 346, 1995, p. 62, who includes a photo of a 6-year-old patient, some of whose features closely resemble those of the Cupid. I thank Dr. Gordon Bendesky for providing me with these references.

20. This was hardly the first time Caravaggio had set up an artistic dialogue with his name-sake. See chapter 6: ‘Michelangelo Merisi e Michelangelo Buonarroti’, in H. Hibbard, Caravaggio. London, 1983.

21. For a cursory description of the group (with un scholarly citations), see the interesting pamphlet by M. Casprini, 1 Pastori Antellessi: Arcadia all’Antella nel primo seicento. Antella: Circolo Ricreativo Culturale, 1994. My thanks to Dott.ssa Elena Lombardi for this reference. Casprini provides a partial list of members and their accademia pseudonyms: Michelangelo was “Alfesebo” and a certain Francesco dell’Antella (presumably the Commendatore himself) was “Anillo.” Comm. dell’Antella certainly had a villa (in the area where the society met: Fra Francesco Buonaroti, in his book of “conti” and “ricordi” (CB, filza 120, f. 1v), notes that on 21st October 1612, he lent a little over a scudo to Fra Giulio di Dionigi Carducci, “prestatis gratis per giocare ssmo in Villa del Signor Commendatore Fra Francesco dell’Antella a Santo Felice a Ema in compagnia di Monsù Beriguardo, e al Signor Antonio Altoviti . . .” This may be the earliest document for dell’Antella’s return to Florence, unless it refers generically to the owner of the villa and not, as it appears, to the gamblers’ current host.

22. He certainly could have been supplied with a valuable library by his friend Francesco Buonarotti. Sebregondi 1986, esp. pp. 70-73, documents the extraordinary amount of art-literature the latter brought with him to Malta (Alberti, Vitruvius, Serlio, etc.). Buonarotti also received sketches from Cristofano Allori and apparently kept at the Convent several original drawings by Michelangelo as well as entire albums of prints by diverse masters. We should add to this the fact that in October 1611 (CB, filza 105, f. 80r), he asked his poet brother to send him what must have been the first copy ever in Malta of the Vocabolario della Crusca. The volume arrived on 26th December 1613 (CB, filza 105, f. 108r).
than a year before meeting Caravaggio, the Commendatore helped coordinate the selection of a painter (as yet unknown) to work in the Grand Master’s Palace in Valletta, where Matteo Perez d’Aleccio and Filippo Paladin had previously completed important fresco cycles:

[Grand Master Wignacourt in Malta to]
Receivitore Medici Adi 14 di Marzo 1606

Doppo haver’ inteso à pieno le risposte, che havete date al Commendatore dell’Antella sopra il particolare del Pittore, abbiamo resoluto, per la certezza, che la persona proposta da voi, con il parere d’altri intelligenti habbia a riuscire a nostra satisfazione, di farlo venire quà, e però lo persuaderete à piglar l’impresa con le conditioni, che il detto Commendatore vi avisa d’ordine nostro, che oltre saranno adimipie (come conviene) riuscendo egli conforme all’aspettazione lo vedremo, e favoriremo sempre in tutte le sue occorrenze, come conoscerà dall’effetti; Intanto si varrà dell’alligata nostra per il Receivitore Capece di Napoli, si per poter’ fare la provisione dei colori, e come per ricevere aiuto, e consiglio nel viaggio, che Nostro Signore Iddio lo conduce à salvamento e voi mantenga in sua Santa custodia.23

(and the next letter in the register, from Grand Master Wignacourt in Malta on the same day to)
Napoli Receivitore Capece Adi 14 detto

Dovendo il Receivitore Medici mandarci di Firenze un Pittore per dipingere in questo nostro Palazzo, abbiamo voluto accompagnarlo con questa nostra si per ordinari, che in presentarvela lo proveghere à 50, o 60. Ducati; che hanno a servire per proveedere colori, alla comprehensione di quali non mancherei d’assisterlo per essere egli nuovo in cotesto Paese, come per assicurarsi, che cij farete piacere accusissimo ad aiutarlo, e consigliarlo in tutto quello, che gli potesse occorrere, particolarmente per fargli godere buon passaggio fino a Messina dove lo raccomandarete da parte nostra al Receivitore Ventimiglia acciò che anco da esso riceva buoni trattamenti e di tutto ci darete particolare conto’ .24

The language of these letters, written by Wignacourt on 14th March 1606 to the Order’s receivitori in Florence and Naples, is strikingly similar to that used later, in 1609, when Leonello Spada (again with dell’Antella’s involvement) was successfully called to Malta to fresco two rooms of the palace.25 One suspects, therefore, that Spada was the replacement for the mystery artist of 1606, probably a Florentine (“mandarci di Firenze”), who seems not to have fulfilled the commission.

Dell’Antella’s position as Wignacourt’s secretary and occasional artistic advisor came to a sudden and tragic end when he killed the Grand Master’s nephew, the ship captain Fra Henri Lancy de Bains.26 The story, which has never been related in the modern literature, is worthy of a brief epilogue, if only to highlight the misleading nature of our only printed source, Bartolomeo Dal Pozzo.27

A final group of previously unpublished documents (see Appendix) now make possible a more accurate account of the incident. From a letter penned by Francesco Buonarotti on 16th July 1611 (Doc. F),28 we learn that a few days before (“non molti

25. For these letters, see S. Macioce, ‘Leonello Spada a Malta: nuovi documenti’, Storia dell’arte, 80, 1994, pp. 54-58.
27. B. Dal Pozzo, Historia Della Sacra Religione . . . vol. 1 (Verona, 1703), pp. 567-68. In his chronicle of the year 1611, the author presents the story as an “Atto magnanimo del G. Maestro Wignacourt” (marginal gloss on p. 567), noting that the commenda in Florence was given to dell’Antella as a kind of peace offering, after the latter killed the Grand Master’s nephew (“per canto della madre”) in self-defense: “io chiamai di nuovo a Palazzo, e volle che continuasse nel suo ufficio di Segretario, premiando in fine il suo buono, e fedel servire con la predetta Comenda di Corbolini di 1200. Piastrate Firenze dopo assedio” (p. 568). Though Wignacourt was indeed just taking possession of dell’Antella, in actual fact the Grand Master conferred the commenda some two months before the assault, which occurred in early July—after. In one of Francesco Buonarroti’s six volumes of notes entitled “Copie e Spogli di documenti e scritture, lettere originali ed in copia, relativi alla storia della Religione di Malta” (CB, filza 114, f. 248v), the architect records that the commenda was given to his friend on 27th April 1611. He cites his source, f. 149 of the Liber Bullarum for 1610-11; and, indeed, on f. 149v of AOM 457, the collatio of dell’Antella is recorded under 27 April (I include this information especially because of the positive light it throws on Buonarroti as a source). Sebregondi 1982, p. 107 and note 13, gives the date as 23 June 1611, but this appears to be the day Cosimo dell’Antella took possession of the commenda on Francesco’s behalf (since the latter was still in Malta). In a letter of 14 May 1611 to Fra Gaetani, Receivitore in Florence (AOM 1390 [1611], f. 149r), Wignacourt remarks: “havendola [Comenda Corbolini] noi conferita per grazia nostra Magistrale al Commendatore dell’Antella ha bisogno per l’abissinia sua d’esser aiutato da voi nell’occorrenze di detta Comenda,” “Comandieri and Priori were often administered through lieutenants. Indeed, the Prior of Messina Antonio Martelli was in Florence on 17 April 1611 when Agostino Mego (the reigning Commander of San Jacopo in Campo Corbolini and Martelli’s “inagotendite” resident at Messina) died: see Wignacourt’s letter to Martelli of 14 May 1611 asking the Prior to elect a new lieutenant (AOM 1390 [1611], f. 147v). Like many writers of his day, Dal Pozzo, as these documents indicate, skewed the facts in order to present a more compelling narrative.
28. I thank L. Sebregondi for her help in tracing and transcribing this document.
Dell’Antella’s voyage back to Florence was punctuated by a lengthy stay at Messina, where he seems to have suffered something akin to a nervous breakdown. His condition was exacerbated by legal threats (alluded to in the documents) made against him by the late Cav. de Bains’ family. Wignacourt did his best to calm the waters between the Italian knight and his French detractors, but the feud seems not to have been settled for over two years, as a letter (Doc. M) of 23rd September 1613 shows.

Wignacourt’s correspondence underscores his loyalty to certain members of the Order (and even to non-members such as the painter Paladini), and reveals his extraordinary tenacity and diplomatic skill in seeking peaceful resolutions to conventional disputes—no matter how heated. The killing of de Bains reminds us once again how dangerous life could be in Caravaggio’s Malta, where points of honor, duels, and brawls were commonplace.

29. CB, filza 114 (“Francesco Buonarotti, Copie e spogli”), carta 257v, records the departure of Francesco dell’Antella, Ugolino Grifoni, and Leone Strozzi on “16 luglio 1611.” This reference, part of a useful list of “arrivi” and “partenze” of Florentines at the Convent, appears by typographical error as “filza 112” in Sebregondi 1982, note 6 (the 1611 date appears as “1612” on p. 107 and elsewhere).
sempre particolare contento per la grata memoria, et buona volontà che conosciamo che conservate di noi, il che ci obbliga ad assicurarvi che troverete in noi pronta disposizione di adoprarci per vostro onore, et beneficio sempre che cene porgerete occasione come conoscervi delli effetti alli quali vi faranno vero testimonio dalla affettione che vi portiamo, et della stima che facciamo delle vostre virtù . . .

2. Letters concerning Dell’Antella and De Bains.

DOCUMENT D

AOM 1390 (1611); f. 223r-v
Wignacourt to Cosimo II, 14 July 1611

Al Serenissimo Gran Duca Adi 14 di luglio 1611

Il Commendatore Fra Francesco dell’Antella mio segretario per uno accidente successoli all’improvviso senza sua colpa mi ha con tanta instanza e ragione domandato licenza di potersene tornare alla Patria, che se bene il privarmi di uno de’ più antichi, fedeli, et principali servitori che io habbia m’ha fatto grandissima repugnanza, con tutto ciò mi son resoluto di concedergliela proponendo la sua soddisfazione alla mia. Et perché egli nelle occasioni di servizio di Vostra Altezza è stato sempre prontissimo, et zelantissimo come suo fedelissimo et obligatissimo vassallo, la supplico con tutto l’animo à degnarsi di vederlo, et favorirlo della sua buona gratia, come tale et come Cavaliere da me molto stimato, et amato . . .

DOCUMENT E

AOM 1390 (1611); ff. 223v-224r
Wignacourt to Grand Duchess, 14 July 1611

Similar to the preceding letter.

DOCUMENT F

CB, filza 105, ‘Lettere da Francesco Buonarotti a Michelangelo Giovane’; f. 24v
Francesco Buonarotti in Malta to Michelangelo Giovane in Florence, 16 July 1611

Molto Illustre Signor Fratello

. . . Viene costà a riposarsi il nostro S. Commendator Antella dolendo quà a
ciascuno la sua partenza; la cagione della sua partenza così inaspettata depende che non molti giorn i sono esso fu affrontato di notte contro a ogni ragione e senza occasione alcuna da un nipote del Gran Maestro del qual fatto il Signor Commendatore ne habbe 3 ferite una in testa, e una per mano ma di poco valore, e ne è già quasi sano; et il nipote del Gran Maestro ne rilevò 8 o 10 ferite delle quali ne sta in pericolo di morte; ora dopo questo fatto esso ha chiesto licenza e con soddisfazione del Gran Maestro e di ogni uno, e di se stesso si parte, e così perdiamo un protettore appresso al Gran Maestro noi fiorentini . . .
di Malta il di 16 di luglio 1611
Vostro fratello

Fra Francesco Buonarotti

DOCUMENT G

AOM 1390 (1611); f. 256v
Wignacourt to dell’Antella in Messina, 13 August 1611

Mentions receipt of dell’Antella’s letter from Messina of 20 July and expresses pleasure in knowing that the Commendatore has arrived in Messina “con la buona salute.”

DOCUMENT H

AOM 1390 (1611); f. 355v
Wignacourt to dell’Antella (in Messina?), 9 October 1611

Al Commendatore fra Francesco dell’Antella Adi 9 d’ottobre 1611

Si come ci siamo rallegrati d’intendere per la vostra deli X del passato, che vi trovavi con buona salute aspettando la comodità per finire il vostro viaggio così ci è dispiaciuto incredibilmente di sentire, che stavi con l’animo molto inquieto per quello che vi veniva referito, che si diceva per conto dell’accidente occorsavi, e poi che non solo è cosa chiara che ne habbiamo sentito molto disgusto ma che in tale occasione habbiamo fatto ogni possibile demonstrazione per onore, et servizio vostro, come non solamente voi ma tutto il Convento ha veduto, et come faremo ancora in quella che occorrerà per l’avenire, di sorte che doveriano questi effetti havere molto maggior forza per quietarvi, che le altrui contraste interpretazione per toglier vi la quiete, la quale noi vi desideriamo et vi procureremo sempre con ogni volontà et prontezza per la viva memoria che conserviamo della lunga et fedelissima servitù che ci havete fatta . . .
DOCUMENT I

AOM 1390 (1611), ff. 420v-421r
Wignacourt to Ambassador La Marra in Rome, 14 November 1611

Dell’Antella (by now in Florence) has fallen extremely ill:

“L’aviso scritoci da voi della grave, et pericolosa infermità del Commendatore Antella ci ha dato molto dispiacere . . .”

DOCUMENT J

AOM 1391 (1612), f. 433r-v
Wignacourt to dell’Antella, 15 September 1612

Concerning ongoing negotiations for peace

DOCUMENT K

AOM 1391 (1612), f. 588r-v
Wignacourt to dell’Antella, 15 December 1612

Negotiations with the de Bains family (see the following Doc.)

DOCUMENT L

AOM 1391 (1612), f. 588v
Wignacourt to Cosimo II, 31 December 1612 transcription is from the original in Florence, Archivio di Stato, Mediceo, filza 4177, unpaginated:

Serenissimo Signore

Il Cavaliere di Bains si ritrovava in corso in Levante quando io ricevi il comandamento di Vostra Altezza, espresso con la benignissima sua del 3 d’Agosto, alla quale ho differito di rispondere, fin’hora, perché egli non è ritornato qui prima, che all’13 del presente; et essendomi interposto seco l’ha disposto di sorte, che già ha fatto stipulare la Procura in persona di Monsieur di Bains suo fratello con facoltà di poter concludere anco a nome mio, la pace col Commendatore Fra Francesco dell’Antella, per sicurezza, et soddisfazione del quale, se ne manda una copia autentica con la presente a Vostra Altezza, mentre il detto Cavaliere Bains ne invierà un’altra

DOCUMENT M

AOM 1392 (1613), f. 466r
Wignacourt to Dell’Antella in Florence, 23 September 1613

Commendatore Antella Adi 23 di settembre 1613

Seben seria bastata la dichiarazione che ha fatta Monsù di Bins così à nome suo, come del Cavaliere suo fratello in virtù della sua Procura à quietarvi l’animo. Con tutto ciò per soddisfare alla caldissima instanza che ci è stata fatta à nome vostro, dalla nostra Ricevitore Ceba, et Segretario Benci, abbiamo di sorte interposta l’autorità nostra, che il detto Cavaliere ha riferito quanto ha fatto il detto Monsù di Bins suo fratello in piede dell’istessa lettera con la quale gli scrive che ha dato parola al Signor Marchese d’Ancre tanto per sè quanto per il detto Cavaliere suo fratello che voi non sarete già più ricercato da loro per via di querela o processo, ne qui in Malta ne in altro luogo per quello che segue tra voi, et il defunto Cavaliere Bains loro fratello, et si come sentiamo contento molto particolare che questo negotio resti finito con intiera vostra soddisfazione per il molto che desideriamo la vostra quiete, così lo sentiremo ancora tale sempre che con qualche effetto potremo mostravi segno della viva memoria, che conserviamo della vostra lunga et fedelissima servitù . . .

DOCUMENT N

AOM 1393 (1614), f. 48r
Wignacourt to dell’Antella, 15 January 1614

States contentment that dell’Antella is finally satisfied that “le differenze che sono passate tra voi, et li nostri Parenti di Bins” have come to an end.