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Made to Measure: Eugène Guillaume's Michelangelo

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Abstract:

In the first decade of the Third Republic, sculptor Eugène Guillaume could be numbered among those men who sought to uphold the conservative traditions of official French art in the face of inevitable change. This article examines Eugène Guillaume's essay, "Michel-Ange, sculpteur," the first major French study of Michelangelo's sculpture published in a special edition of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in 1876. It demonstrates the strategies employed by Guillaume to bring Michelangelo into the Academic fold as part of the conservative "call to order" in the fine arts in the first decade of the Third Republic.

Made to Measure: Eugène Guillaume's Michelangelo by Claire Black McCoy

In 1876, the academic sculptor Eugène Guillaume published an article, "Michel-Ange, sculpteur," in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*.^[1] It was the first extensive study focused on Michelangelo's sculpture published in France. Guillaume's article responded to those who admired Michelangelo's sculpture for its passion and force and found in those powerful contorted figures a reflection of the turbulent character of the Italian Renaissance. Guillaume took a very different view, presenting an interpretation of Michelangelo's sculpture that emphasized the artist's debt to the classical tradition and styled Michelangelo as a man who, like Guillaume, found refuge from turmoil in the enduring tradition of classical art. Like so many books, chapters, essays, paintings, and poems about Michelangelo created in nineteenth-century France, Guillaume's essay has been eclipsed completely by more modern approaches to Michelangelo rooted in the examination of documentary evidence.^[2] "Made to Measure: Eugène Guillaume's Michelangelo" examines Guillaume's article, "Michel-Ange, sculpteur," as a reflection of the concerns and attitudes of its author, during the early years of the Third Republic, uncovering an interpretation of Michelangelo distinctly rooted in nineteenth-century France.

The eighty-five page article was part of a special issue of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* published on the 400th anniversary of Michelangelo's birth.^[3] Spearheaded by the journal's founding editor Charles Blanc, the issue was also published as a monograph and offered the most complete and scholarly study of Michelangelo published in nineteenth-century France. Blanc selected men from his own circle for the work. Paul Mantz, the first art critic associated with the *Gazette*, covered Michelangelo's painting. Charles Garnier wrote on architecture while Alfred Mézières, a literary historian recently elected to the French Academy, presented the poetry of Michelangelo. Anatole de Montaiglon, archivist and bibliographer, offered a critical biography and an up-to-date bibliography that enhanced the scholarly character of the monograph.^[4]

For Blanc, Guillaume was a natural choice to write on sculpture, given his role as Professor of Sculpture and Director of the *École des Beaux-Arts*. Throughout his life the Academy had shaped and supported Guillaume's career, providing aesthetic and professional continuity during periods of immense change. During the unsettled years immediately before and after the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune, approaches to art changed rapidly, and challenges to the institutions that governed it steadily gained ground. Guillaume's essay may be seen as part of the Third Republic "call to order" in the fine arts aimed at maintaining continuity in the wake of social and political transition by incorporating Michelangelo, commonly considered one of the great geniuses of Western art history, into the academic tradition.

As France emerged from the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune, republicanism won the day politically, but little was certain during that first decade. *Orléanistes*, *Légitimistes*, and *Bonapartistes* dominated the Assembly and aspired to restore monarchy. In response to the tumult of war and the Commune, a conservative reaction gripped the nascent republic, and it was not until 1879 that a true secular republic was realized. The first decade of the Third

Republic saw no flowering of progressive policies and art institutions, but instead an emphasis on moral order, Catholicism, and continuity with the monarchical past prevailed. [5] In the fine arts, this return to order meant a reassertion of the traditional, didactic role of the French Academy. Severed from the French government with the decrees of 1863, by the end of 1871 the Academy had regained control of the Grande École, the Prix de Rome, and the French Academy in Rome. [6] The first director of fine arts under the Third Republic, Charles Blanc, was, according to Philippe de Chennevières, “more a supporter of Ingres and the Academy than of Courbet and the Commune,” despite his Republican credentials and his service in the same office during the Second Republic of 1848. [7] Blanc’s successors, Philippe de Chennevières and Eugène Guillaume, were academicians first appointed to official positions by monarchist regimes, and for them French art meant conservative, disciplined work rooted in Classicism and the elite traditions of the Academy. [8] Despite conservative domination in French politics for much of that decade, by 1875 liberal Republicans began to gain ground advocating for the rights of workers, anti-clericalism, universal education—in their words “peaceful progress.” [9] “Michel-Ange, sculpteur” demonstrates Eugène Guillaume’s effort to reinforce the status quo at this critical point by bringing Michelangelo into the fold of the academic tradition.

Eugène Guillaume: *Théoricien de la mesure*

Reflecting on Guillaume in a public address to the French Academy in 1907, Henry Roujon, Perpetual Secretary of the Academy and Director of Fine Arts, described the late artist as one who embraced order, moderation, and the classical tradition. Turning to “Michel-Ange, sculpteur,” Roujon contrasted Guillaume’s conservatism (calling him the “théoricien de la mesure”) with Michelangelo characterized by Roujon as the sculptor who possessed “le génie du démesuré.” “This quiet theorist of measure,” wrote Roujon, “serves as a guide through the work of the one who possessed the genius of extremes. A journey into the thought of Michelangelo is a Dantesque adventure, something like a visit to the forbidden country.” A frightening journey it might be but, with Guillaume, “a Virgilian conductor precedes us, and before him the black smoke clears up. The hero appears to us in the light.” [10] Guillaume found no darkness, violence, or excess in the art of Michelangelo. Instead the man and his sculpture were the product of careful study and training, and Guillaume’s Michelangelo serves as a mirror, reflecting back to Guillaume his own values and beliefs about art and life. Any student of Guillaume would certainly have recognized his teacher’s artistic tenets enumerated in “Michel-Ange, sculpteur”: elegant, simple poses, clarity of gesture, groupings with an unyielding equilibrium, suppression of detail in the service of the whole. [11] These qualities were more than mere markers of the academic style by 1876; for Guillaume they represented unbroken continuity with the past.

Eugène Guillaume never struggled against the strictures of academic training, competition, and exhibition. His career and sculpture embodied the academic system. While his friends and even some detractors wrote of him with personal respect and great affection, his obituary in *Gil Blas*, commented, “In reality he was a maker of statues, and one of the most mediocre of the (neoclassical) school. . . . He accumulated a number of state commissions that he carried out with the regularity of an irreproachable industrialist. . . . Eugène Guillaume was all his long life hostile, without acrimony, to artistic originality and to creative originality.” [12] Indeed, Guillaume never embraced risk-taking and was known for his calm demeanor and deliberative approach to art, instruction, and administration. [13]

Born in Montbard, 1822, Guillaume followed a predictable artistic path from the École Gratuite de Dessin in Dijon to the Grande École and atelier of James Pradier in Paris. Steeped in the academic milieu of Pradier's studio he moved forward, winning the Prix de Rome in 1845 with *Theseus Discovering His Father's Sword beneath a Rock*. While in Rome, he witnessed the tumult of the dissolution of the Papal States in 1849 and the flight of Pope Pius IX to Gaeta as the troops of Louis-Napoleon marched toward the city. After Guillaume's death, Henry Roujon recalled that it was the always level-headed Guillaume who negotiated the young artists' retreat from Rome to Florence at the request of the Villa Medici's director Jean Alaux in April 1849.^[14] Guillaume's final work sent from the Villa Medici back to Paris was his seated figure of the lyric poet *Anacréon* (fig. 1), a subject that Pradier and others had also depicted. That conservative work, exhibited in the Salon of 1852 and purchased by the state, reveals his embrace of the academic system and unwillingness to indulge in any form of excess. Although his upbringing imbued him with monarchical beliefs, his apparent political indifference may have led to his success as a fine-arts administrator and teacher in the Second Empire and Third Republic.^[15]



Fig. 1, Eugène Guillaume, *Anacréon* (Anacreon), 1851. Marble. Photograph by author. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)

Guillaume's career within the official apparatus of the fine arts began in 1862 with his election to the Académie des Beaux-Arts and appointment as a professor at the École des Beaux-Arts; by 1864, he was the director of the school. He held that post until 1878, when he replaced Philippe de Chennevières as Director of Fine Arts. During the 1860's, working with Jules Ferry, Guillaume (the "théoricien de la mesure") implemented his own approach to drawing instruction in public schools. Developed and overseen by Guillaume, the curriculum, rooted in measurement and geometry, required students to move systematically from copying drawings of cubes and spheres, to drawing from actual geometric solids, through to copying plasters of antique sculpture and decorative ornament.^[16] In 1882, he assumed the late Charles Blanc's position as Professor of Aesthetics at the Collège de France. Honors soon followed: he became a Grand Officer of the Légion d'Honneur in 1889 and was elected to the French Academy in 1892. Guillaume ended his career in Rome as the Director of Villa Medici, a post he held from 1891–1904, and spent his remaining months in Rome, dying in 1905.^[17]

Context

To grasp the singular viewpoint of Guillaume's essay, one has to understand the earlier nineteenth-century conceptions of Michelangelo to which he responded. Until the opening of the Buonarroti archive in 1875, artists and scholars had little documentary evidence to shape their studies of Michelangelo. They made do with sixteenth-century anthologies of letters from Michelangelo's correspondents and reprinted biographies from Vasari and Condivi. As with Vasari and Condivi before them, their images of Michelangelo took the form of fabrications created to fit the demands of their time.[18] "Michel-Ange, sculpteur" came just at this moment of transition from the studies that were as much fable as fact to those that employed the forms of documentary evidence that mark modern art historical practice.

Enthusiasm for Michelangelo began in the late eighteenth century and continued throughout the nineteenth century in Europe. In his Fifteenth Discourse before the Royal Academy in 1790, Sir Joshua Reynolds dramatically ended his final address, telling his audience, "The last words which I should pronounce in this Academy, and from this place, might be the name of - Michael Angelo." [19] Reynolds's discourse may provide a good place to start exploring the qualities ascribed to Michelangelo and his art. After all, between 1790 and 1875 four biographies appeared in Europe along with studies of his art, images depicting episodes from his life, fanciful stories, and plays.[20] In his discourse, Reynolds urged the students of the Royal Academy to study the painting of Michelangelo, and secondarily his sculpture, as a means to elevate their art through the example of Michelangelo's grandeur and to always remember Michelangelo's respect for the classical heritage and his indefatigable diligence.[21] Guillaume's essay echoes Reynolds's overall theme, but it is also colored by his reaction to alternative versions of Michelangelo that had emerged in the intervening decades.

The enduring nineteenth-century image of Michelangelo as a solitary, quarrelsome, passionate artist has its roots in the writing of the Romantic man of letters, Stendhal (Marie-Henri Beyle). The background to Stendhal's view of Michelangelo was a generally shared view of Renaissance Florence as a politically tumultuous, dangerous world. Historians often look to Swiss art historian Jacob Burckhardt's *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860) as the origin of a formulation of Renaissance Florence that emphasized the emergence of a remarkable cultural life in the midst of often violent political turmoil, but the idea of Florentine volatility emerged earlier in France. At the end of the Napoleonic Era, Stendhal characterized Michelangelo's world as one governed by superstitions and political disorder. "Do we really want to understand Michelangelo?" he wrote in his *History of Painting in Italy* (1816). "Then we must become Florentine citizens of 1499. For in Paris we do not force strangers to wear a band of red wax on the thumbnail; and we do not believe in ghosts, astrology, and miracles." [22] It was, Stendhal argued, a time when men felt emotions more keenly and were not stifled by arcane rules of etiquette. "Violent passions had not yet been extinguished," he wrote. "Everything was less professional and more spontaneous." [23] If Stendhal saw the Florentine Renaissance as an age of passion and tumult, he noted evidence of a similar character emerging in the early nineteenth century, finding it in theatre and novels, writing, "The nineteenth century is going to restore these passions to their rightful place." [24] To do so, argued Stendhal, a new, modern artist was required, and Michelangelo would serve as the model.

Like many writers who came after him, Stendhal discussed Michelangelo principally as a painter in his *History of Painting in Italy*, but turned his attention to Michelangelo as a sculptor in his call for a new art. "If a Michelangelo were born in our enlightened days," exclaimed Stendhal, "imagine what heights he might achieve! What torrent of new sensations and pleasures he would release among a public already well primed by the theatre and novels! Perhaps he would create a modern sculpture and compel the art to express passion, if indeed it can express passion."^[25] Michelangelo's sculpture, in Stendhal's view, did not reflect the enthusiasm for the antique and its concomitant coolness, like the sculpture one experienced in the Salons. Instead, Michelangelo, a man of his time, responded to Renaissance Florence—a city poised between salvation and redemption by Savonarola, churning from tyranny to republic and back again—producing work that expressed terror and dark ferocity.^[26]

In the coming decades, others responded to Stendhal's Romantic view of Michelangelo by creating passionate "proto-modern" Michelangelos. The critic and historian Hippolyte Taine, whose historical interpretation was rooted in positivism, rejected the notion that art was the product of genius. He suggested to the students of the *École des Beaux-Arts* that art could be studied as the product of three closely linked historical factors—*race*, *milieu*, and *moment*. In Stendhal, Taine found the first writer who had understood what Taine called "the history of the heart" delineated by studying "nationality, climate, [and] temperament."^[27] From Stendhal's dramatic evocation of the Italian Renaissance, Taine derived his understanding of Michelangelo as a towering figure, one whose "voice alone we hear at this moment across the distance of the centuries, but below this magnificent voice," he continued, "we distinguish a murmur, the vast dull hum, the great infinite and multiple voice of all the people who are singing around the artists."^[28] Stendhal's writing had taught Taine to interpret the art of Michelangelo as the embodiment of concerns of his age, and both Stendhal and Taine recognized the sculptor as a titanic figure. At a private dinner with the Goncourts and Sainte-Beuve in 1864, Taine carved out a special place for Michelangelo, one of his "four caryatids of humanity" along with Shakespeare, Dante, and Beethoven.^[29]

Naturalist writer and critic Émile Zola rejected *race-milieu-moment* and argued for the role of individuality in an 1866 critique of Taine. Zola described art as an expression of individual temperament, explaining that "in ages of awakening, of free expansion, the artist disengages himself, isolates himself and creates according to his own heart." At such times, he wrote, "there is a rivalry between feelings, the unanimity of artistic beliefs is no more, art divides and becomes individual. It is Michelangelo raising up his giants before the Virgins of Raphael; it is Delacroix breaking the lines that M. Ingres straightens out."^[30] By 1866, the link between Michelangelo and Delacroix would not have surprised Zola's readers. Delacroix had associated himself with Michelangelo well before publishing essays on the artist for two Parisian journals, the two-part article "Michel-Ange" (1830 and 1831) in *Revue de Paris* and "Sur le jugement dernier de Michel-Ange" (1837) in *Revue des Deux Mondes*.^[31] For his *Revue de Paris* readers, it may have seemed as if Delacroix had a particular connection with Michelangelo when he evoked Michelangelo alone in his studio late at night, "struck with fear at the sight of his own creations, reveling in the secret dread that he wanted to awaken in the souls of men."^[32] The artist described by Delacroix was redolent with the terrible passions ascribed to him by Stendhal, a social acquaintance, whom Delacroix praised in "Sur le jugement dernier de Michel-Ange."^[33]

By contrast, Antoine Quatremère de Quincy offered a vision of Michelangelo that balanced the artist against his vision of the classical style and artistic innovation. Often characterized as a French Winckelmann, Quatremère's view of Michelangelo reveals the subtlety of his approach. In his *Life of Michelangelo* (1835), Quatremère contrasted the careers of Raphael and Michelangelo, writing,

[They] took a very different course and manifested a very different character. Raphael offers us the image of a river flowing gently along its way across a vast plain, with a large number of tributaries that increase it and accelerate it along its course without interruption. Michelangelo suggests an enormous body of water surging over uneven territory, accelerating sometimes in rapid torrents, retarded at other times by great boulders, eventually overcoming all obstacles and reaching the sea, but only after having changed its names several times.[34]

Quatremère praises Michelangelo's original approach to sculpture while pointedly reminding the reader that Michelangelo had little access to classical sculpture given the paucity of complete figures or fragments in Florence, even in the Medici gardens. His achievement was even more remarkable because he accomplished it all with so few good models. Praising the originality of *Bacchus*, for example, Quatremère notes that Michelangelo really had no choice but to model the figure on a drunken man and that his statue "from that point of view, is a masterpiece." [35]

The Romantic Michelangelo made appearances in painting as well as history and criticism. To cite only two examples, Horace Vernet presented *Raphael au Vatican* (fig. 2) in the Salon of 1833, and Eugène Delacroix created *Michelangelo in his Studio* (fig. 3) in 1852. In Vernet's painting a scowling, solitary figure exits the San Damaso courtyard of the Vatican as he glares back at the suave Raphael. Vernet, it seems, had drawn the subject from a brief footnote in Quatremère's *Life and Works of Raphael* (1824). In the story, taken in turn from Roger de Piles's seventeenth-century *Abrégé de la vie des peintres* (1699), the two artists cross paths in the Vatican. "There you are surrounded by an entourage, like a general," commented Michelangelo. "And there you go, alone," retorted Raphael, "like an executioner." The choice of the story seemed deliberate, and at least one critic seized upon the anecdote with marked disapproval. [36] For his painting seventeen years later, Delacroix drew much of his understanding of Michelangelo from Stendhal and depicted the sculptor alone in his dim studio surrounded by looming sculptures. According to Théophile Silvestre, his small painting *Michelangelo in his Studio* depicting the sculptor in his atelier, never exhibited in Paris, was viewed as an allusion to Delacroix. [37]



Fig. 2, Horace Vernet, *Raphael au Vatican* (Raphael in the Vatican), Salon of 1833. Oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris. [\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 3, Eugène Delacroix, *Michel-Ange dans son atelier* (Michelangelo in his Studio), 1849–50. Oil on canvas. Musée Fabre, Montpellier. [\[larger image\]](#)

This is not to say that the image of a Romantic Michelangelo completely dominated in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Indeed, as Francis Haskell noted, most images of Michelangelo depicted a kindly, often old, man, rather than the now more familiar, quarrelsome, prideful figure.^[38] In the Salon of 1841, for example, Robert-Fleury exhibited *Michel-Ange soignant son domestique malade* depicting Michelangelo quietly attending his sickly servant Urbino. Later, he created images of Michelangelo kneeling before Pope Julius II and on his deathbed fancifully located in the Vatican with the *Pietà* in the background. In an 1849 image designed to cement Michelangelo's reverence for the classical tradition, Jean-Léon Gérôme depicted Michelangelo (aged, stooped, and blind) led to the Belvedere torso by a young man (fig. 4). These images point to another conception of Michelangelo as the father of the modern tradition that was consonant with Guillaume's interpretation. Instead of Vernet's aggressive figure, Gérôme presents us with a completely non-threatening artist on his last legs paying homage to the classical tradition from which his art sprang.



Fig. 4, Jean-Léon Gerôme, *Michelangelo Being Shown the Belvedere Torso*, 1849. Oil on canvas. Dahesh Museum of Art, New York. [\[larger image\]](#)

While most viewed Michelangelo from within the confines of the art world, by 1871 some writers considered him a political actor as well. For the statesman Émile Ollivier and the playwright Maurice Douay, Michelangelo's story possessed a political charge, and he became a republican protagonist as well as an artist. Writing after the fall of Paris to the Prussian siege and the Commune, they focused on Michelangelo's role in the fortification of Florence and defense of the Florentine republic during the 1529 siege of Florence. The Medici Chapel, completed after the siege and the restitution of Medici power, became a site that embodied the conflict of republicanism and tyranny.^[39]

“Michel-Ange, sculpteur”

In “Michel-Ange, sculpteur,” Guillaume offered an alternative reading of Michelangelo. Proceeding chronologically through the artist's works and referencing illustrations of the sculptures dispersed throughout the entire publication, Guillaume asserted Michelangelo's story was not a descent into a dark, saturnine world, but rather a rational, illuminating journey. He produced sculpture that was not merely beautiful but a beneficial, wholesome (*saine*) reiteration of the classical style.^[40] For the “théoricien de mesure,” Michelangelo and his art developed systematically, reflecting the benefits of order and tradition. He attempted to demonstrate that “l'homme démesuré” was also “absolument classique.”^[41]

Unlike the writers who preceded him, Guillaume employed newly available primary sources published by Florentine scholars Gaetano Milanesi and Aurelio Gotti in 1875. Milanesi, curator of all Florentine state archives, published 495 letters, contracts, and other records in *Le lettere di Michelangelo Buonarroti* (1875) and Aurelio Gotti, director of all Florentine museums and the first director of the Buonarroti archive, published the first biography employing the materials from the Florentine archives in his two-volume *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti* (1875).^[42] The availability of these materials was of particular importance to Guillaume and the other authors involved in Blanc's project, enabling them to write the most authoritative work on Michelangelo yet to appear in France.^[43] Other critical sources were the biographies by Vasari and Condivi, as well as Hermann Grimm's more recent *Das Leben Michelangelos* (1868). With the exception of Hippolyte Taine, Guillaume did not directly

reference any French writers in the text, but the essay responds to the interpretations of Stendhal, Quatremère de Quincy, Émile Ollivier, and others in its presentation of Michelangelo.

While Guillaume employed the materials of a modern empirical approach to history, he did not deny his own very conservative roots. He opened the essay with an invocation drawn from the writing of Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, the 17th-century priest and orator most famous for his full-throated support of absolutism and the divine right of kings.^[44] Turning to Bossuet's *Élévations à Dieu sur tous les mystères de la religion chrétienne* (1694–95), Guillaume placed the seventh exaltation, "Fécondité des Arts," at the start of his text. Guillaume's invocation underpinned his argument that if one wished to understand Michelangelo the man, one had to understand his sculpture as a medium that expressed the essence of his being. The same foundational rules and principles shaped both the artist and the art, inculcating each with the moral order prized by Guillaume.^[45] The interpretation of the sculpture was not merely an exercise in aesthetic analysis or criticism; it uncovered Michelangelo's identity and claimed Michelangelo for the forces of order and continuity with the past.

Guillaume's article, in its tone and its content, responds to the author's assessment of Michelangelo's status as a student, a young artist, or a master sculptor. Michelangelo's earliest sculptures, *Battle of the Centaurs* and *Madonna of the Steps* were student works, and Guillaume's approach is professorial as he assesses the overall design and execution of the work. The *Pietà* and the *David* function as the equivalent of *envois* sent back to France by the young artists at the Villa Medici in Rome. Turning to those sculptures, Guillaume notes the emergence of Michelangelo's personal style as the young sculptor addressed the heritage of Donatello with his *Pietà* and the classical tradition with the *David*. The Julius Tomb figures and the Medici Chapel stand as mature works, and Guillaume permits himself a more subjective, admiring tone while interpreting those sculptures in a manner that corresponds to his overall goal of presenting Michelangelo as a precursor of the academic approach.

Training and Early Works

Guillaume's study opens in Florence with young Michelangelo in the workshop of the painter Ghirlandaio. In Vasari's telling, Michelangelo immediately outpaced the other apprentices and equaled the work of his master on more than one occasion.^[46] Not so for Guillaume who emphasized the progressive nature of Michelangelo's training in drawing. Michelangelo began drawing from unspecified prints in the studio, then from the drawings of his master, progressing to imported German engravings by artists such as Martin Schongauer.^[47] By emphasizing the orderly nature of Michelangelo's training in drawing, Guillaume developed an image that reflected his own experiences and the very systematic nature if not content of his own drawing curriculum.

Leaving the workshop of Ghirlandaio for the Medici household and the gardens of San Marco, Michelangelo entered what Guillaume characterized as the precursor of the École des Beaux-Arts with old Bertoldo, the keeper of the Medici gardens and Donatello's student cast as director. In the gardens of San Marco, Guillaume wrote, "one found the first school of fine arts, a school that had the advantage of uniting theory and practice."^[48] The characterization of the Medici gardens and the impact of the sculptor's interaction with the

antique early in his education lay the groundwork for understanding the artist and his work. Guillaume remarked, “Would there have been a Marsyas, a Sleeping Cupid, a larger than life female figure, all of which are suggested to have been in the collections of Lorenzo? That would be natural.” Still, no inventory existed to precisely indicate the impact of classical sculpture on the young artist. In Guillaume’s eyes, the well-documented classical literary culture in Florence provided clear evidence of the impact the antique must have had on a young artist who flourished in that “first school of fine arts.” Quatremère, earlier in the century, saw things differently and could not tie Michelangelo so closely to the classical tradition.

Where Guillaume imagined a school “uniting theory and practice” that “provided two peculiar features: the students received a pension and, those who distinguished themselves received cash prizes,”^[49] Quatremère had envisioned a place where one might absorb the classical tradition in a more ad-hoc situation. In his view, the gardens held Lorenzo’s limited collection of classical fragments that comprised a “body of doctrine,” with the goal of “awakening the taste and ambitions of his city.” Bertoldo was there to supervise the young men drawn from the various studios, and Michelangelo benefitted from that “little school” as well from the intellectual atmosphere of the Medici court.^[50] Indeed, later in his study of Michelangelo, Quatremère commented regarding Michelangelo’s *Bacchus* (fig. 5), “So, here we find, again, proof of how little knowledge was available to the public concerning the doctrines of Antique art and, as a consequence, how little influence it exercised on the sculpture of Michelangelo from his earliest works.”^[51] Michelangelo might be admired on his own terms by someone like Quatremère, but he could not be brought into the academic fold, with its emphasis on the classical tradition so easily.

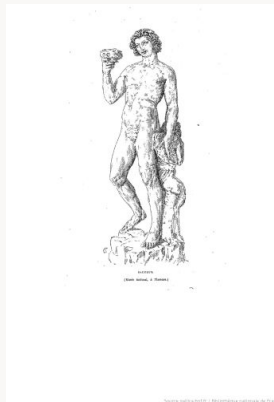


Fig. 5, F. Gaillard, *Bacchus, L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète* (Paris: Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1876): 57. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>.

[\[larger image\]](#)

If one sought a raw expression of Michelangelo’s youthful instinct, unfettered by tradition and mature experience, it could be found in Michelangelo’s early relief, *Battle of the Centaurs* (fig. 6). The professorial Guillaume patiently noted that the young artist had not submitted himself to the demands of the discipline yet, and so the relief was all fire and no phlegm.

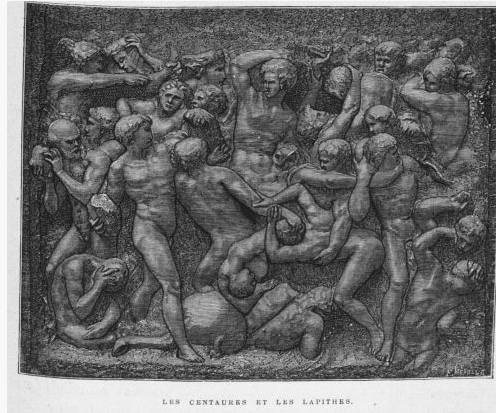


Fig. 6, F. Méaulle, *Les Centaures et Les Lapithes, L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète* (Paris: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1876): 45. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>. [larger image]

An epic fire reigns in this combat scene. All the figures are nude: it is an absolutely heroic *mêlée*. It is not completely finished and marks of the toothed chisel that Michelangelo used so often remain. He has introduced no variety in the forms and all of the figures originate from the same ideal that was already his own: this relief is certainly Michelangelo and one can understand the value that it always held for him.

When Michelangelo undertook *Battle of the Centaurs*, it is doubtful that old Bertoldo was asked for his opinion; nothing, really, has less resemblance to a work that a student of Donatello would have preferred.[52]

The battling figures expressed the passion that Stendhal had sought for sculpture, but for Guillaume it was too much, and, surely, Michelangelo could not have sought Bertoldo's advice on the relief. After all, it reflected none of the elegant modulation found in the work of Bertoldo's master, Donatello. From Guillaume's perspective, educating a passionate young artist like Michelangelo meant modulating that fire and developing an internal discipline that enabled him to conform to the demands of the art.

Guillaume found Bertoldo's influence in *The Madonna of the Steps*. "This time," wrote Guillaume, "[Michelangelo] conformed to the traditions of the school that had come before him and began to see that he possessed that sensibility and skill." [53] In Guillaume's formulation, Michelangelo chose to follow Donatello's tradition, to emulate, as an act of deference and an acknowledgment of the role of artistic precedent. Michelangelo worked closely with Bertoldo, creating versions of the relief in marble and in bronze as the old sculptor taught him both tradition and technical skills. Within the Grande École during Guillaume's tenure, the teaching reforms of 1863 introduced training in the more pragmatic aspects of design and production for just this sort of career.[54] Guillaume did not misprize the *sculpteurs-orfèvres* (sculptors trained as goldsmiths) or the technical aspects of artistic production, after all he had developed the practical and systematic approach to drawing employed across France. Still, for Guillaume, Quatremère, and others in the world of official art, art at its highest level was not the province of those who had passed through the doors of

the Grande École only to learn the *métier*.^[55] It required deeper dedication and the discipline to submit oneself to the requirements of the classical tradition.

Michelangelo began that process of moving from craftsman to artist when Lorenzo the Magnificent died and Michelangelo found his life completely changed by that single, abrupt event. "He remained stricken; . . . it made him bitter and he developed the harsh, ironic, dark temperament that characterized his later reputation."^[56] Michelangelo began to work alone and to find his own path in a cell at Santo Spirito where he dissected the human body. Guillaume alerted the reader that Michelangelo had not left art behind to pursue mere observation and scientific rendering of the human form, instead he continued a Florentine tradition: "From the beginning of their apprenticeships, the [Florentine] painters and sculptors went through this *initiation préparatoire*."^[57] Still, Michelangelo, away from the garden and alone in Santo Spirito dissecting and studying bodies, seems to have troubled Guillaume who one year later would chair the sculpture committee of the Salon that admitted Rodin's *Age of Bronze* and confronted the suspicions that it had been cast from life.^[58]

Guillaume cautioned the reader not to focus on what Michelangelo might have learned about anatomy from this close examination of cadavers, but rather to consider what this experience taught him about the distinction between empirical study and art.^[59] Guillaume drew a clear distinction between observation and art. Dissection and anatomical study in Renaissance Florence were intended to substitute for the freer access to the nude body enjoyed by classical artists, in Guillaume's view. He warned the reader that while such bodies may be appropriate for the depiction of the dying or ascetic, the rendering of robust, healthy figures might suffer from such an objective study focused on accuracy rather than art.

Michelangelo understood this first. The studies he made after the antique sculptures in the gardens of San Marco exercised a decisive influence on his genius. Penetrated by these models, in which gleamed the qualities of art missing from his contemporaries: force and power, he brought to his anatomical studies a superior direction, as the knowledge of anatomy kept him from studying the antique as a dead language. He got rid of all pathology . . . ; he realized the figures without keeping any trace of death. He knew how to bring them back to life.^[60]

What was the role of the human body in sculpture? For Guillaume, the answer was clear. The human body served as theoretical matrix from which sculpture might come forth, but art did not consist of the accurate translation of flesh into stone. Instead, art was the transformation of fleshy, temporal reality into disciplined and timeless form. Rather than acceding to a desire to make a sculpted figure appear as it might in nature, Guillaume's Michelangelo stepped away from the real and moved toward the ideal. For others it was not so clear, and the intersection of real, fleshy bodies and the classical ideals would occur in Rome with the creation of *Bacchus*.

For Guillaume, Rome meant everything. One might train elsewhere, learn theory and technique, but Rome was where one became an artist. "The first steps, the slow training and learning of tradition, the development of practical skills, talent, genius can all be produced in the mountains of Umbria or on the banks of the Arno; but it is on the banks of the Tiber and

among the seven hills," wrote Guillaume, "these gifts obtain the sustained power and harmony of grandeur."^[61] Guillaume had come to Rome as a student with his mentor Pradier. Later, as a *pensionnaire* at the Villa Medici, he had studied classical sculpture and produced his *envois*, *The Gracchi* and *Anacréon*. While the young Carpeaux might leave the Villa Medici to seek out Michelangelo as an antidote to the chill of the antique, Guillaume emphasized the formal discipline found in Michelangelo's work, a rigor that, he felt, the Renaissance artist owed to the study of classical art.^[62]

Art, at its most elite level, possessed qualities that, from Guillaume's perspective, could only be learned in Rome by those adepts willing to consistently pursue the classical tradition. By asserting this, he clearly identified himself as an artist who supported the academic tradition, knowing full well that by the 1870's that tradition was fading fast. Young artists no longer saw a need for the imprimatur of the Grande École, and independent galleries and group shows had supplanted the Salons.^[63] Indeed, after the world of the Salons that he so fully embraced reached its dénouement, Guillaume retreated from Paris, becoming the director of the Villa Medici in 1894 and remaining in Rome until his death.

In Rome, Michelangelo created the first major work of his initial Roman period, *Bacchus* (1496–97), pointing the way toward his more mature style. The pivotal work marked the intersection of originality, the real, and the ideal for Stendhal, Quatremère de Quincy, and Guillaume. In Stendhal's view, Michelangelo was "made to create precisely what he wanted to execute in the arts, and nothing else. If he erred it was his taste that went wrong and not his skill." *Bacchus* marked a moment when originality and imitation of the antique came together. He had surpassed all of the sculptors of his own century and "soared toward the ideal and beyond servile imitation without knowing how to seize greatness."^[64] Quatremère saw another path in Michelangelo's development: direct observation not classical art. The genius of *Bacchus* lay in an original approach because "ignorant of any Antique model for his subject, [Michelangelo] could conceive of no other idea nor any image other than a drunken man. Eh bien," wrote Quatremère, "one must say that, from this point of view, the statue is a chef d'oeuvre."^[65] In Guillaume's eyes, *Bacchus* marked the point when Michelangelo's classical roots met the revivifying force of direct observation and Michelangelo began to find his way forward.

What one certainly must note, and what surprises, is the exactitude with which the myth of *Bacchus* is expressed and the fidelity of the artist who submits himself to the mythology without falling into servility. Nothing resembles an Antique *Bacchus* less than this in the fifteenth century, and yet, in the manner of conceiving of the subject, nothing among the modern works is closer to antiquity.^[66]

The critical terms are fidelity and submission. This Michelangelo is not a wholly original artist responding as an individual genius to his turbulent time, nor is he the product of *race-milieu-moment* or temperament. Guillaume's Michelangelo, armed with the knowledge of the body gleaned in Santo Spirito, can move forward because of his roots in the classical tradition learned in the gardens of San Marco.

In the *Pietà* (fig. 7), which followed *Bacchus* in 1500, Guillaume found few echoes of the classical tradition but instead an elegant interruption of the trajectory hinted at by the

earlier figure. Stendhal had addressed the work in theological terms, and Quatremère explained that it betrayed “no symptom of an ambitious quest for grandeur and force”; it revealed a more “sober effort and energy,” resulting in his most “careful and pleasing work.” [67] In Guillaume’s essay, the *Pietà* serves as the final iteration of Michelangelo’s student years. An entire range of expression had been thrown open by him with the *Bacchus*, but in Guillaume’s view something, perhaps the death of Savonarola, compelled Michelangelo to revert to his earliest roots in the tradition of Ghirlandaio’s workshop and the Florentine *sculpteurs-orfèvres*. “In some respects,” noted Guillaume, “he took a sort of backward step and, forgetting the [Medici] gardens of San Marco, returned to the path of Ghirlandaio.” [68] Describing the group, Guillaume recalls Michelangelo’s earliest training in the studio of Ghirlandaio, where the master set his student to copy the engravings of Schongauer, and notes the lingering impact of the German’s engravings in the many pleats and folds of the Virgin’s drapery. [69] Guillaume’s analysis emphasizes the debt to Donatello and Ghiberti in the elegant massing of the figural group, the grave expression of the Virgin and the suppression of detail to the service of the whole. The almost painterly play of dark and light in the sculpture, the extended body of Christ depicted as if life had just left the body, the harmony and delicacy of the forms all recalled the Florentine art of Michelangelo’s early years. [70] From the perspectives of both aesthetics and theology, wrote Guillaume, “*Pietà* summarized all of the sentiment and all of the science of the predecessors of Michelangelo: Donatello and Ghiberti were surpassed.” [71] If the *Pietà* stood as a summary of all that the fifteenth-century tradition of the *sculpteurs-orfèvres* had to offer, the *David* (fig. 8) marked the moment when the artist expressed the full potential of his talent bringing together the skill of the *sculpteurs-orfèvres*, anatomical studies in Santo Spirito, and the classical tradition.



Fig. 7, T. de Mare, *Pietà*, *L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange*, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète (Paris: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1876): 49. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>. [larger image]

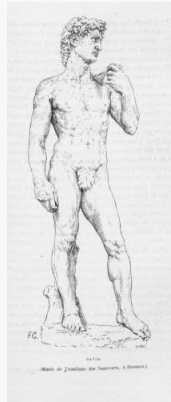


Fig. 8, F. Gaillard, *David, L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète* (Paris: Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1876): 57. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>.
[\[larger image\]](#)

In Rome, Michelangelo thoroughly internalized the classical tradition that he had simply learned to imitate as a student in the gardens of San Marco and made it his own. “The *David*,” Guillaume wrote, “marked a talent at its fullest point but not yet free of all obstacles.” [72] For Stendhal the sculpture had stood as an example of Michelangelo’s thoroughly Romantic genius. He wrote,

The *Bacchus* is more Greek than any of his other works. A bit of tranquility remains in the *Pietà* of St. Peter’s. The tranquility dies out entirely in the colossal *David* and he was the *terrible* Michelangelo. [73]

In an argument that reads as a retort to those who imagined Michelangelo creating *David* in a fit of Romantic inspiration, Guillaume traced Michelangelo’s gradual and careful formation. Reminding the reader of the winding path from the *Battle of the Centaurs* and the *Madonna of the Steps*, through the dissections in Santa Spirito, *Bacchus*, and *Pietà*, he reflected on the meaning of *David*:

We had to follow the starts and stops, the comings and goings of he who first looked everywhere to uncover his genius. It is helpful to see all the efforts, the varied approaches and ardent attention he gave to different projects. He, whom we call *le terrible*, was never destined to appear out of nowhere like a bolt of lightning. His genius escapes no law; it is part of the order of things; he deduces and develops; he roughly sketched himself out, so to speak, and disengaged himself bit by bit until the moment when he stood alone. [74]

Guillaume sees no *terribilità* in *David*; instead, the figure encapsulated his view of Michelangelo as an artist who, like himself, was the product of an evident development and strict discipline. *David* marked the moment of Michelangelo’s artistic and personal maturation when his education in the gardens of San Marco, training with Bertoldo, anatomical studies in Santo Spirito, and independent creation came together. When he stands alone, though, Guillaume’s Michelangelo is not an independent actor; he has “roughly sketched himself out” of a matrix of past traditions and present experience.

The Mature Work

The second half of the essay explores Michelangelo's mature work, focusing on three projects: the Accademia Slaves associated with the Tomb of Pope Julius II, the Medici Chapel, and the *Moses*, which he discusses apart from the overall Julius Tomb project as the apex of Michelangelo's oeuvre. Guillaume also adopts a new tone in his writing; he no longer writes as an instructor analyzing the works of a student but is transformed into an admirer, freer to reveal the profound emotional effect of Michelangelo's figures.

The period marked by those projects was politically tumultuous and the focus of those nineteenth-century writers who explored Michelangelo from a political perspective. In the years after the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune, some Parisians associated Michelangelo with progressive, if not outright republican, politics. He stood with his *patrie*, the Florentine Republic, defending it against the tyranny of the Church and the later Medici during the Last Republic (1527–30) and Siege of Florence (1529–30). For Napoleon III's chief minister Émile Ollivier, the republican architect of the Liberal Empire, Florence in the years 1529–30 was directly comparable to Paris in 1870–71. After all, he wrote the stark phrase "1871=1529" in notes for his 1895 study of Michelangelo.[75] In *A Visit to the Medici Chapel: Dialogue on Michelangelo and Raphael* (1872) written during Ollivier's self-imposed exile from France,[76] Ollivier reached out to his friends and supporters, calling the chapel a "sanctuary of sadness." Accomplished more "out of fear than love," quoting Condivi, the chapel was the place where Michelangelo, a republican who had flourished under the benign leadership of Lorenzo the Magnificent, felt the boot heel of tyranny under the later Medici.[77] Another contemporary expression of Michelangelo's republican leaning may be found in *Michelangelo, a Drama in Five Acts and Six Settings* by Maurice Douay and Jules Payen, performed in Paris's Théâtre Oberkampf in December 1877.[78] The play presents the tragic story of a love triangle involving the lecherous Piero de Medici, the beautiful, virtuous Leona, and her beloved Michelangelo, but the secondary plot involves Michelangelo's recognition of the corruption of the Medici and his acceptance of his role as a leader of the republic just as the Medici begin their exile.[79]

While others saw a turbulent, politicized artist in Michelangelo, Guillaume withdrew Michelangelo from politics. For him, Michelangelo's position was neatly summed up: "He was alternately a favorite, a rebel, a citizen, a soldier: and after having been banished and having his life endangered, he returned to favor." [80] As the writer viewed it, Michelangelo's world, incessantly on the verge of revolution, required an artist who could assume an apolitical role when necessary, riding the waves of favor and disfavor as they came no matter his own political view.

Guillaume turns first to the never fully realized commission for the tomb of Pope Julius II. He offers the reader a history of the commission and its eventual resolution in the wall tomb in San Pietro in Vincoli. He begins his discussion with the *Slaves* in the Louvre and the Accademia in Florence, and ends with the *Moses* in San Pietro in Vincoli, representing the apex of Michelangelo's career. The *Dying Slave* and the *Rebellious Slave* in the Louvre, and the unfinished *Slaves* in the Accademia, captured his imagination. The latter group of figures, still partly encased in the marble block, overwhelmed him. He viewed them as sculptural sketches, *ébauches*, with so few features that one could not distinguish a subject.[81] Their

existence as *ébauches*, perhaps, freed Guillaume from the requirements of professional analysis, allowing him to respond spontaneously to the work. In the most poetic passage of the essay, he wrote, “They want to tear away the veil that hides them, leave their transparent prison; they suffer. . . . Never before had the art of Michelangelo been so moving. Amid the light reflecting around them, these phantoms, these larvae of marble escaped from the hands of the great artist, appear to us as the borders of his thought.”^[82] It seems that the unfinished sculptures, sketches, have undone Guillaume’s carefully controlled, rational approach. Closer examination, though, reveals that Guillaume did not accept the figures as works that could stand on their own as complete. Instead, the figures long to be finished. They suffer, in Guillaume’s words; they want to tear their stony veils and leave their confinement in the marble. By definition, a thought in the midst of transformation, the depiction of a fleeting moment might be acceptable and even quite moving in an *ébauche*—but an *ébauche* was not a finished work for Guillaume.

If sculpture should be force and passion distilled and rendered into stone with discipline, order, and grandeur, no figure exceeds *Moses* (fig. 9) in Guillaume’s estimation. If the *Accademia Slaves* “writhe with a fierce despair,”^[83] *Moses* expresses physical power and a sense of powerful calm, despite the potential for motion. “It is grandeur, life, and simplicity,” he writes, “the calm and strength of faith.”^[84] In Guillaume’s eyes, *Moses* brings together all that was great in the work of Michelangelo. For him that figure “summarizes [Michelangelo’s art] and is the measure.”^[85]



Fig. 9, J. Jacquemart, *Moïse, L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète* (Paris: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1876): 75. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>. [larger image]

After the discussion of the sculptures for the tomb of Pope Julius II, Guillaume turned to Michelangelo’s most complete work, the Medici Chapel in San Lorenzo (1526–33). Housing the sepulchral monuments of Giuliano, Duke of Nemours; Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino; and the Medici Madonna, the chapel was seen by nineteenth-century devotees as the pinnacle of Michelangelo’s art. It became a special pilgrimage site in 1875, when artists and art lovers from across Europe descended on Florence for the Michelangelo Festival.^[86] Guillaume stressed the importance of experiencing the work in person, quoting Hippolyte Taine, “Everyone has seen the drawings and the plasters of these statues but without coming here, no one has seen their soul.”^[87]

Objecting to contemporary, purely aesthetic interpretations of the chapel and its figures, Guillaume emphasized the importance of understanding its historical significance. He acknowledged that Hermann Grimm, Aurelio Gotti, and Charles C. Perkins had questioned the traditional identification of the two Medici princes, Giuliano and Lorenzo, but he saw no reason for it, assuring his reader that Vasari's identifications were correct.[88] He also dismissed more modern, purely formal, interpretations of the allegorical figures—*Day* and *Night*, *Dusk* and *Dawn*. “Now,” he wrote, “one is disposed to believe that [the figures] have an indeterminate meaning and purely plastic expression.” Taking direct aim at those who favored a more progressive approach, he continued “These reservations, these doubts are characteristic of a time in the arts that is preoccupied with material [formal] qualities . . . and finds that the subject of a painting or sculpture resides solely in its execution.”[89] For him, the allegorical figures were not “vague entities,” instead they stood as the embodiment of Michelangelo's otherwise inchoate thoughts and emotions fixed in stone. In this manner, the site might be read as a place where the concrete history of Michelangelo's own time was encoded in the figures of the two Medici dukes, and resting in midst of princely power was Michelangelo, whose response was revealed by the allegorical figures.[90]

In the Giuliano and Lorenzo figures, Guillaume found the two extremes of Medici rule, benevolent tyranny and despotism. Giuliano, open and at ease, embodied all that was best in the Medici and their dominion over Florence. His relaxed but dynamic pose, noble aspect, and tranquil expression recalled a time when Florentine republicans found their concerns represented by the *de facto* monarch, and government was delicately balanced between Medici domination and the desire for a truer republic.[91] Solitary, still fearsome, Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino,

old before his time, overcome by debauchery and political schemes, he became solitary, fierce, and lived alone in his palace. [Michelangelo] shows him seated in a seemingly immutable pose: his finger to his lips, he thinks . . . he thinks in a dark recess. . . . The head appears lugubrious. The visage funereal: a fixed eye, haggard, seems to follow his spirit descending down to his lowest depths.[92]

Although that figure might have the poetic title, *Le Penseur* (fig. 10), it possessed a concrete identity rooted in Michelangelo's own knowledge of Medici tyranny.[93]



Fig. 10, A. Gilbert, *Le Penseur*, engraved by Smeeton and Tilly, *L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète*, (Paris: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1876): 101. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>. [\[larger image\]](#)

The political charge of the site could not be denied, given the history of its creation. Michelangelo had supported the Republic of Florence in its rebellion against Medici rule and its resistance of the Papal States in the late 1520's. Imprisoned by the Medici for his activities, he was forgiven and required to complete the chapel.^[94] Émile Ollivier focused on the allegorical figure of *Day* in his 1872 book on the chapel, writing,

On all sides, abandonment and failure; the people submit themselves to a foreign power with blind resignation; they mock their masters and they suffer under them; they condemn the very battle they sought; only a few stay on the sidelines with a stoic attitude and refuse to express their feelings and opinions; to them any justification appeared to be a mockery, an abasement; they keep silent and keep the honor of the *patrie* intact waiting for the hour to avenge and recreate it.^[95]

Writing in the early months of his flight from besieged Paris, Ollivier's emotions were raw. Guillaume surely found political tumult reflected in the Medici Chapel as well, but for him the expression of Michelangelo's anxieties and regrets dwelt in the allegorical figures and those feelings were muted and veiled.^[96]

Guillaume does not ignore the site's political charge, but in the allegorical figures *Day* (fig. 11) and *Night* (fig. 12) he found political reticence. To support his interpretation, he turns to the famous poetic exchange concerning *Night* between Giovanni di Carlo Strozzi and Michelangelo. Strozzi had sent Michelangelo a flattering quatrain praising the figure carved "by an Angel," urging, "wake her if you do not believe, and she will speak to you." By reply, Michelangelo wrote:

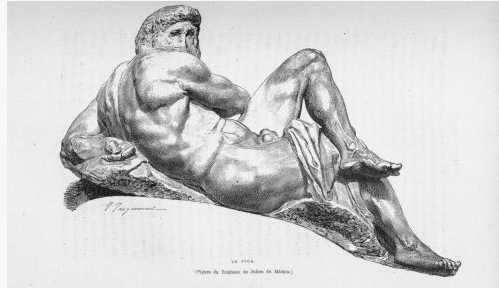


Fig. 11, J. Jacquemart, *Le Jour, L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète* (Paris: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1876): 93. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>.

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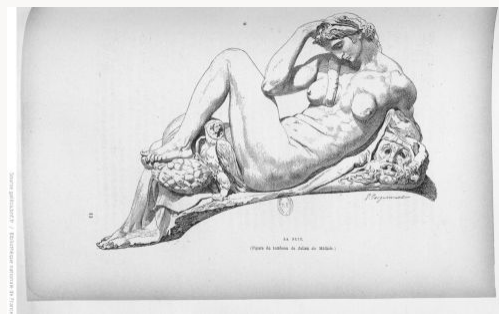


Fig. 12, J. Jacquemart, *La Nuit, L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète* (Paris: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1876): 97. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>.

[\[larger image\]](#)

Sleep is dear to me and, being of stone is dearer,
As long as injury and shame endure;
Not to see or hear is a great boon to me;
Therefore, do not wake me—pray, speak softly.[97]

Written in Rome in 1545–56, well after the completion of the figures and installation of the chapel when the authoritarian Grand Duke Cosimo de' Medici ruled Florence, Michelangelo indicated his political conviction and the sorrow he felt for the loss of the Florentine republic.[98] Poetry, Guillaume argued, might offer an insight into Michelangelo's political conviction, but the sculpture did not engage those debates by design. *Night*, Strozzi's "living marble," sleeps and hopes not to waken. For Guillaume, Michelangelo's quatrain reveals the secrets of his republican soul, but *Night* also afforded comfort and safety by taking those feelings and submitting them to obdurate, silent stone. *Day*, with his Herculean body and unfinished face, also avoids the political conditions of Florence. Guillaume wonders if the face, shrouded in stone, was left incomplete by fate or by design. "Why this sacrifice?" ponders Guillaume for whom incompleteness in sculpture is synonymous with loss. Perhaps, Guillaume asks, might Michelangelo, like the Greek sculptor of a veiled Agamemnon have found the indignation or shame of *Day* impossible to realize in the stone?[99] Whatever the

case, Guillaume's Michelangelo mutes, veils, internalizes his response to Florentine political life after the events of 1529.

Elegant simplicity and twisted complex forms, benevolence and despotism, darkness and light, Guillaume linked all of these contrasts to Michelangelo's ultimate submission to the demands of sculpture. Michelangelo chose the discipline imposed by the marble block. In Guillaume's view, "the desire of an artist to bring his idea into a fixed framework can be found generally in all the products of the mind and is not contrary to laws of great art: far from it. But this particular type of force comprises the genius of Michelangelo: he forced his sculptural idea to take hold in a block of marble with a silhouette that he severely limited, just as he compelled his poetic thought to enter into the narrowest form of prosody."[\[100\]](#) Stone imposed discipline on sculpture just as prosody restrained poetic thought, but, if one reads Guillaume's text carefully, it is Michelangelo who willingly submits to the discipline of marble.

At the end of his essay, Guillaume summed up his principal themes with all of the ends neatly tied up. He acknowledged the outpouring of emotion elicited by Michelangelo's powerful sculpture but argued against those who credited this to formal unruliness. Guillaume always uncovered discipline, order, equilibrium, elegant proportions, and precision in Michelangelo's work. Turning back to those who saw only passion and force in Michelangelo, Guillaume delivered his final blow, reminding his reader,

Indeed, these essential qualities of sculpture, qualities of which we are rightly jealous—equilibrium, precise movements, exact balance of masses, the order, in one word, are those that give Michelangelo's figures, even the most tormented, an imposing stability and that give one the sense of eternity, these architectural qualities have not been sufficiently noticed and offered as part of the study of artists. For all of that, Michelangelo is absolutely classic, the most classic of the modern artists, although daring. It is a mistake and an injustice to see nothing but extremes of force, an excess of life, complacent execution, to find only a kind of startling violence, a challenge to our modest expectations and a science that humbles us. . . . Michelangelo is incomparable.[\[101\]](#)

Guillaume's world, though, was already in decline while he was writing his essay, and soon his construction of Michelangelo as precedent for the modern academic artist would be meaningless. Salon exhibitions continually faced pressure to be more inclusive, admitting and awarding more diverse subjects and styles in sculpture and painting. Independent shows and galleries also challenged the authority of the Academy. Guillaume attempted to re-establish its status and buttress the tradition of "French art," by pushing for a second, more elite, exhibition purely governed by an academic jury, the Exhibition Nationale Triennale, presenting French art at its highest level to establish an aristocracy of art.[\[102\]](#) By the time it finally occurred in 1883, the era of moral order and hegemony of the academic system had all but ended. His attempt to recast Michelangelo in the academic mold was likewise a failure, and Michelangelo only grew in importance as a precedent for modern sculpture. Indeed, eight years later in 1884, Octave Mirbeau styled Rodin, an artist who represented everything Guillaume opposed, as a new Michelangelo.[\[103\]](#)

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Notes

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Unless otherwise noted, the translations are the author's.

[1] Eugène Guillaume, "Michel-Ange, sculpteur," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 2nd per., vol. 13 (1876): 34–118, Gallica, accessed November 18, 2016, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k2031028>.

[2] The article was cited in Émile Ollivier, *Michel-Ange* (Paris: Garnier, 1892), 12, 17, 23, 185, 295 but effectively disappears from scholarly and popular sources thereafter. By contrast, John Addington Symonds, *Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti: Based on Studies in the Archives of the Buonarroti Family in Florence*, 2 vols. (London: J. C. Nimmo, 1892) stands as the first modern biography of the artist and a landmark in gay studies. Working from archival documents made available in 1875, Symonds's work helped to establish modern standards of scholarship and candor in the field.

[3] In 1994, Casa Buonarroti mounted an exhibition concerning the festival. See Stefano Corso with Carlo Sisi, *Michelangelo nell'Ottocento: Il centenario del 1875* (Milan: Charter, 1994). The festival was also widely covered in the Parisian press at the time. See, for example, Roger Ballu, "Le Quatrième Centenaire de Michel-Ange Buonarroti," *L'Art: Revue hebdomadaire illustrée*, vol. 1, pt. 3 (1875): 73–84; and Louis Gonse "Les Fêtes du centenaire de Michel-Ange," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 2nd per., vol. 12 (1875): 375–84. The illustrated journal *Le Monde illustré* offered complete coverage in "Les Fêtes de Florence pour le centenaire de Michel-Ange," *Le Monde illustré: Journal hebdomadaire*, no. 963, September 25, 1875, 199–202.

[4] Charles Blanc and others, *L'oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre, architecte et poète* (Paris: Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1876), Hathi Trust Digital Library, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/njp.32101075445963>.

[5] Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 38; and Charles Sowerwine, *France Since 1970: Culture, Society and the Making of the Republic*, 2nd ed. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 27–30.

[6] Mainardi, *Salon*, 40.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Philippe de Chennevières, "Les Musées de province, 1865," in *L'Art social de la Révolution à la Grande Guerre: Anthologie de textes sources*, dir. Neil McWilliam, Catherine Méneux, and Julie Ramos, INHA ("Sources"), June 11, 2014, accessed November 15, 2016, <http://inha.revues.org/5506>; and "Les Immortels: Eugène Guillaume, biographie," Académie Française, accessed November 13, 2016, <http://www.academie-francaise.fr/les-immortels/eugene-guillaume>.

- [9] Sowerwine, *France Since 1870*, 28.
- [10] Henry Roujon, "La vie et les travaux d'Eugène Guillaume," presented at the annual public meeting of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, Paris, printed in Supplement to *Le Temps*, November 10, 1907, 1, Gallica, accessed August 2, 2016, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k239176k>.
- [11] Guillaume, "Michel-Ange," 82.
- [12] Louis Vauxcelles "Eugène Guillaume," *Gil Blas*, March 3, 1905.
- [13] Roujon, "Guillaume," 1.
- [14] Ibid.; and Eugène Guillaume, "Un directeur de l'Académie de France à Rome - Jean Alaux," *Revue des Deux Mondes* 101 (1890): 296–350, accessed December 10, 2016, <https://fr.wikisource.org>.
- [15] Ibid.
- [16] See Jean-Baptiste Claude Eugène Guillaume, *Idée générale d'un enseignement élémentaire des beaux-arts appliqués à l'industrie: Conférence faite à l'union centrale des beaux-arts appliqués à l'industrie, le 23 mai 1866, à propos de la dernière exposition des écoles de dessin* (Paris: Union Centrale, 1866), Hathi Trust Digital Library, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/ucl.c2528036>.
- [17] Roujon, "Guillaume," 1.
- [18] Deborah Parker, "The Role of Letters in Biographies of Michelangelo," *Renaissance Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 103. On this point see also Paul Barolsky, "Vasari and the Historical Imagination," *Word and Image* 15 (1999): 286–91; and Caroline Elam, "'Che ultimo mano!' Tiberio Calcagni's Marginal Annotations to Condivi's *Life of Michelangelo*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 475–97.
- [19] Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses*, ed. Pat Rogers (London: Penguin, 1992), 337.
- [20] Antoine Quatremère de Quincy, *Histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de Michel-Ange Bonarrotti [sic]* (Paris: Fermin Didot Frères, 1835); Gustave Planche, *Portraits d'artistes: Peintres et sculpteurs*, vol. 1 (Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1853); John S. Harford, *The Life of Michael Angelo Buonarroti: With Translations of Many of His Poems and Letters; Also Memoirs of Savonarola, Raphael, and Vittoria Colonna* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, & Roberts, 1858); Herman Grimm, *Leben Michelangelos* (Hannover: K. Rümpler, 1860–63); Francis Haskell, "The Old Master in Nineteenth-Century French Painting," *Art Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (1971): 58–66; and Maurice Payen and Jules Douay, *Michel-Ange, drame en 5 actes et 6 tableaux* (Paris: Barbré, 1877).
- [21] Reynolds, *Discourses*, 337.
- [22] Stendhal, *Stendhal and the Arts*, ed. and trans. David Wakefield (London: Phaidon, 1973), 80.
- [23] Ibid., 44.
- [24] Ibid., 80–88.
- [25] Ibid., 80–81.
- [26] Ibid.
- [27] Hippolyte Taine, *History of English Literature*, trans. Henri van Laun (New York: Holt and Williams, 1871), 20, Hathi Trust Digital Library, accessed August 2, 2016, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008662698/Home>.
- [28] Hippolyte Taine, *Philosophie de l'art* (1870; Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1980), 4–5.
- [29] Edmond de Goncourt and Jules de Goncourt, *The Journal of the de Goncourts: Pages from a Great Diary, Being Extracts from the Journal des Goncourt* (London: T. Nelson, 1910), 200.
- [30] Émile Zola, "M. Taine, Artiste," *Mes haines: Causeries littéraires et artistiques* (1879; Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1979), 225–26.
- [31] Eugène Delacroix, "Michel-Ange," *Revue de Paris* 15 (1830): 41–58, Gallica, accessed November 18, 2016, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5804739f/f318.item>; Eugène Delacroix, "Michel-Ange," *Revue de Paris* 16 (1830): 164–78, Gallica, accessed November 18 2016, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5805039b/f158.item>; and Eugène Delacroix, "Sur le jugement dernier de Michel-Ange," *Revue des Deux Mondes* 11 (1837): 337–44, Gallica, accessed November 18, 2016, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k868604/f338.item.%201>.
- [32] Eugène Delacroix, "Michel-Ange," 174.
- [33] Delacroix, "Sur le jugement dernier de Michel-Ange," 342.
- [34] Quatremère, Michel-Ange, 75.
- [35] Ibid., 21.

- [36] Victor Schoelcher, "Salon de 1833," *Revue de Paris* 16 (1835), 54, accessed November 18, 2016, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k57787720/f56.item>, in which he calls the story and painting a "miserable calumny" that should have never seen the light of day.
- [37] See Théophile Silvestre, "Michel-Ange dans son atelier," introduction to *La galerie Bruyas* by Alfred Bruyas (Montpellier: Musée de Montpellier, 1876), 296–306; Jack J. Spector, "Towards a Deeper Understanding of Delacroix and his Art: An Interpretation of *Michelangelo in His Studio*," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 103 (1984): 19–28; and Charles de Tolnay, "Michel-Ange dans son atelier par Delacroix," *Gazette Des Beaux-Arts* 59 (1962): 43–52.
- [38] Francis Haskell, "The Old Master in Nineteenth-Century French Painting," *Art Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (1971): 58–66.
- [39] Émile Ollivier, *Une visite à la chapelle des Médicis: Dialogue sur Michel-Ange et Raphaël* (Paris: Sandoz et Fischbacher, 1872), 40; and Payen and Douay, *Michel-Ange, drame en 5 actes*.
- [40] Guillaume, "Michel-Ange," 82.
- [41] See Rosella Froissart-Pezone and Richard Wittman, "The École Nationale des Arts Décoratifs in Paris Adapts to Meet the Twentieth Century," *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 7, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 1999-2000), 2–32.
- [42] Guillaume employed the following: Gaetano Milanesi, ed., *Le lettere di Michealngelo Buonarroti edite ed inedite coi riconri et i contratti artistici per cura di Gaetano Milanesi* (Florence: Lemonnier, 1875), and Aurelio Gotti, *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti narrate con l'aiuto di nuovi documenti* (Florence: Gazzetta d'Italia, 1875). For additional information regarding the publication of the letters of Michelangelo, see Deborah Parker, *Michelangelo and the Art of Letter Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- [43] Before this publication, interested readers might have consulted Vasari, Condivi, Stendhal's *History of Painting in Italy*, or various articles and published lectures on specific aspects of Michelangelo's life and work. Those who sought more contemporary biographical studies would typically turn to the following sources: Quatremère, *Michel-Ange*; Planche, *Portraits d'artistes*, vol. 1; Harford *Life of Michael Angelo Buonarroti*; and Grimm, *Leben Michelangelos*.
- [44] For Bossuet's point of view regarding absolute monarchy, see Jacques Bénigne Bossuet "Politique tirée des propres paroles de l'Écriture sainte," ed. Jacques Le Brun (Geneva: Droz, 1967).
- [45] Guillaume, "Michel-Ange," 34.
- [46] Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 417.
- [47] Guillaume, "Michel-Ange," 39.
- [48] *Ibid.*, 41.
- [49] *Ibid.*
- [50] Quatremère, *Michel-Ange*, 8.
- [51] *Ibid.*, 21.
- [52] Guillaume, "Michel-Ange" 48.
- [53] *Ibid.*
- [54] Anne Middleton Wagner, *Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux: Sculptor of the Second Empire* (New York: Yale University Press, 1994), 94.
- [55] *Ibid.*, 66.
- [56] Guillaume "Michel-Ange," 48.
- [57] *Ibid.*
- [58] Albert Elsen and Rosalyn Frankel Jamison, *Rodin's Art: The Rodin Collection of Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center of Visual Arts at Stanford University* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 417.
- [59] Guillaume, "Michel-Ange," 50.
- [60] *Ibid.*
- [61] *Ibid.*, 58.
- [62] Wagner, *Carpeaux*, 152.
- [63] For an overview of the artistic production, exhibitions, and government involvement in the fine arts during the early years of the Third Republic, see Mainardi, *Salon*, 9–35.

- [64] Stendhal, *Stendhal and the Arts*, 306–7.
- [65] Quatremère, *Michel-Ange*, 21.
- [66] Guillaume, “Michel-Ange,” 62.
- [67] Quatremère, *Michel-Ange*, 185.
- [68] Guillaume, “Michel-Ange,” 62.
- [69] *Ibid.*
- [70] *Ibid.*, 63.
- [71] *Ibid.*
- [72] *Ibid.*, 64.
- [73] Stendhal [Marie-Henri Beyle], *Histoire de la peinture en Italie: Seule édition complète, entièrement revue et corrigée* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1883), 318, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.hn2hhe?urlappend=%3Bseq=324>.
- [74] Guillaume, “Michel-Ange,” 65–66.
- [75] Undated and unpaginated notes compiled by Marie-Thérèse Ollivier, 542 AP7 D. 3, Papers of Émile Ollivier, Archives Nationales, Paris.
- [76] Theodore Zeldin, *Émile Ollivier and the Liberal Empire of Napoleon III* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 183.
- [77] Ollivier, *Une visite à la chapelle des Médicis*, 40.
- [78] Payen and Douay, *Michel-Ange, drame en 5 actes*.
- [79] *Ibid.*
- [80] Guillaume, “Michel-Ange,” 83.
- [81] *Ibid.*, 70.
- [82] *Ibid.*, 79.
- [83] *Ibid.*, 91.
- [84] *Ibid.*, 98.
- [85] *Ibid.*
- [86] Ballu, “Le Quatrième Centenaire,” 73–84; Gonse “Les Fêtes du centenaire,” 375–84; and “Les Fêtes de Florence pour le centenaire,” 199–202.
- [87] Guillaume, “Michel-Ange,” 94.
- [88] *Ibid.*, 86.
- [89] *Ibid.*, 99.
- [90] *Ibid.*, 88.
- [91] *Ibid.*, 90.
- [92] *Ibid.*, 92.
- [93] *Ibid.*, 88.
- [94] Vasari, *Lives*, 458; Ascanio Condivi, *The Life of Michelangelo*, trans. Charles Holroyd (London: Pallas Athene, 2006), 116; Howard Hibbard, *Michelangelo* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 178; and William E. Wallace, *Michelangelo: The Artist, the Man and His Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 159–60.
- [95] Ollivier, 42–43.
- [96] *Ibid.*, 88.
- [97] Michelangelo Buonarroti, *The Poetry of Michelangelo: An Annotated Translation*, ed. and trans. James M. Saslow (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 247.
- [98] Wallace, *Michelangelo*, 244–45; and Buonarroti, *Poetry*, 419.
- [99] Guillaume, “Michel-Ange,” 91.
- [100] *Ibid.*, 94.
- [101] *Ibid.*, 107.
- [102] Mainardi, *Salon*, 54.
- [103] The first reference to Auguste Rodin as a new Michelangelo appeared in Octave Mirbeau, “L’Indiscrétion,” *Le Gaulois*, December 15, 1884. Mirbeau comments, “There is in Paris a

sculptor whom you do not know. . . . I tell you sir, this man is Michelangelo, and you do not know it.”

Illustrations



Fig. 1, Eugène Guillaume, *Anacréon* (Anacreon), 1851. Marble. Photograph by author. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 2, Horace Vernet, *Raphael au Vatican* (Raphael in the Vatican), Salon of 1833. Oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 3, Eugène Delacroix, *Michel-Ange dans son atelier* (Michelangelo in his Studio), 1849–50. Oil on canvas. Musée Fabre, Montpellier. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 4, Jean-Léon Gerôme, *Michelangelo Being Shown the Belvedere Torso*, 1849. Oil on canvas. Dahesh Museum of Art, New York. [\[return to text\]](#)

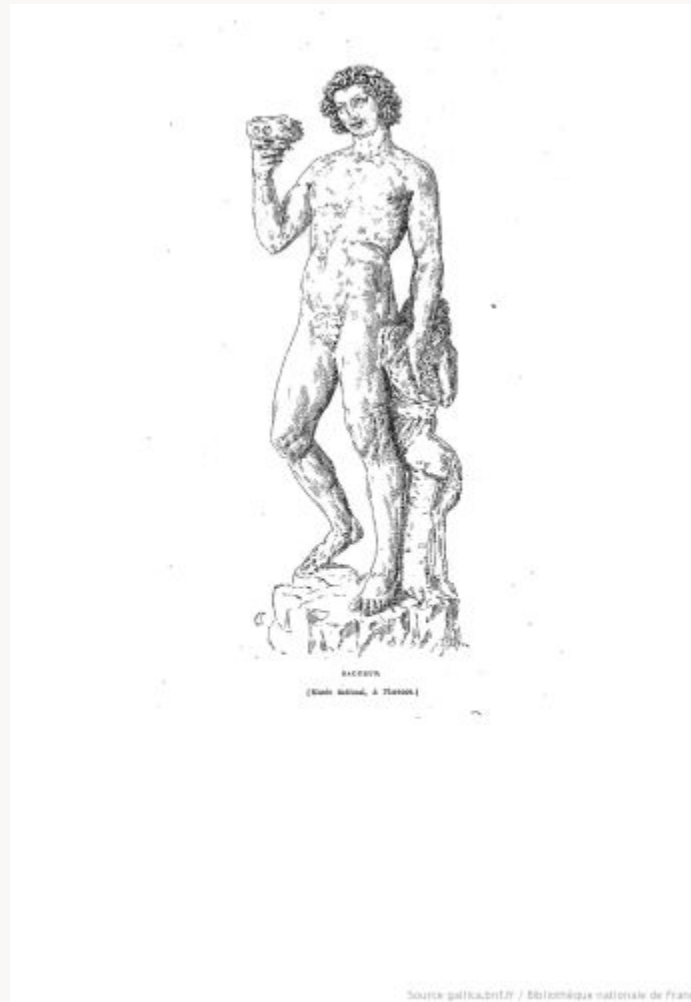


Fig. 5, F. Gaillard, *Bacchus*, *L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète* (Paris: Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1876): 57. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>.
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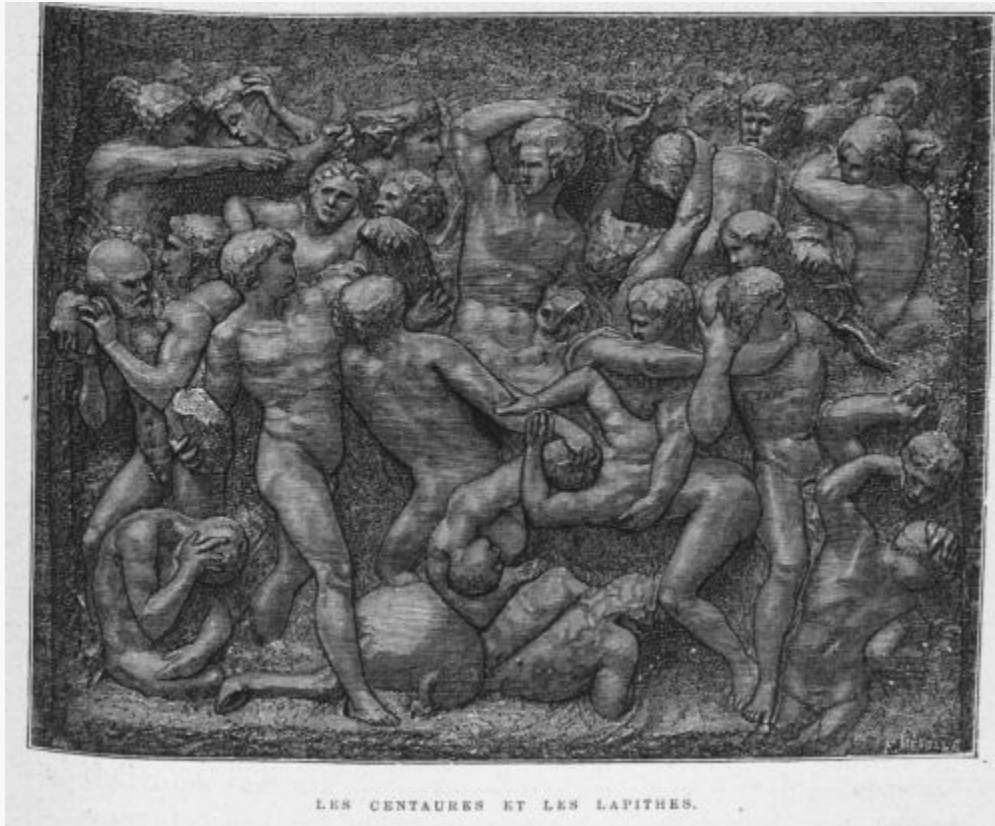


Fig. 6, F. Méaulle, *Les Centaures et Les Lapithes*, *L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange*, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète (Paris: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1876): 45. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>. [return to text]



Fig. 7, T. de Mare, *Pietà*, *L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange*, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète (Paris: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1876): 49. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>.

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Fig. 8, F. Gaillard, *David, L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète* (Paris: Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1876): 57. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>.
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Fig. 9, J. Jacquemart, *Moïse, L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète* (Paris: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1876): 75. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>. [return to text]



Fig. 10, A. Gilbert, *Le Penseur*, engraved by Smeeton and Tilly, *L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète*, (Paris: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1876): 101. BNF/Gallica.
Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr> [return to text]

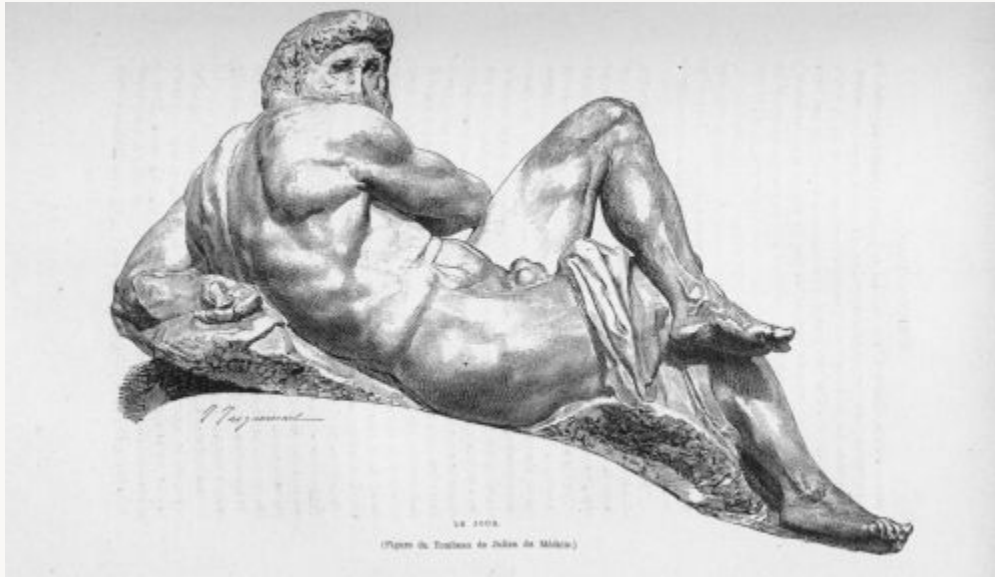


Fig. 11, J. Jacquemart, *Le Jour, L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète* (Paris: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1876): 93. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>.
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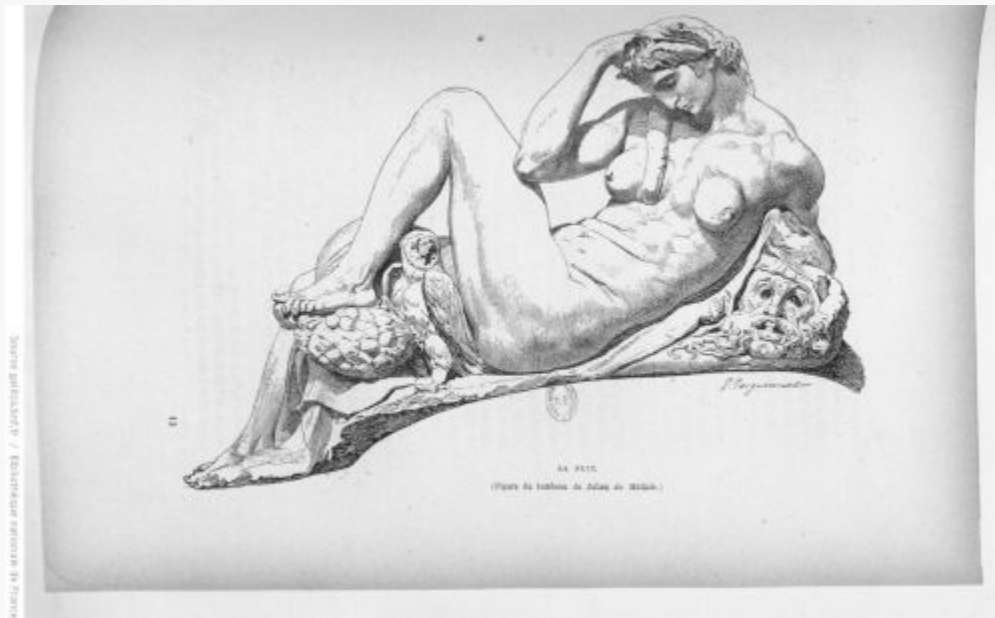


Fig. 12, J. Jacquemart, *La Nuit, L'Oeuvre et la vie de Michel-Ange, dessinateur, sculpteur, peintre architecte et poète* (Paris: *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1876): 97. BNF/Gallica. Available from: <http://gallica.bnf.fr>.
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