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Lesson 09: Michelangelo- From High Renaissance to Mannerism

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“Michelangelo from High Renaissance to Mannerism” is part of the

ART APPRECIATION

Open Educational Resource

by Marie Porterfield Barry
East Tennessee State University, 2020

Introduction

This course explores the world’s visual arts, focusing on the development of visual awareness, assessment, and appreciation by examining a variety of styles from various periods and cultures while emphasizing the development of a common visual language. The materials are meant to foster a broader understanding of the role of visual art in human culture and experience from the prehistoric through the contemporary.

This is an Open Educational Resource (OER), an openly licensed educational material designed to replace a traditional textbook.

Course Materials

Presentations

The course materials consist of 24 presentations examining art across the globe from prehistory through the contemporary art world. These introduce key vocabulary, explore the way that culture and art are linked, describe the varying methods and techniques of the featured artists, and encourage classroom discourse.

Reading Lists

Each of the 24 presentations has an accompanying reading list which provides links to articles, videos, and other resources. The reading list is meant to reinforce and clarify information covered in each of the presentations.

Sample Assignments

A list of sample assignments is also included. Ranging from brief essays to simple art projects, these are designed to be completed in a sketchbook to more deeply explore course concepts. Intended to encourage learners to think like artists, art critics, and art historians, assignments emphasize practices of creative thinking and artistic method, while reinforcing concepts addressed in classroom lectures and required readings.

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Adopting, Adapting, or Expanding the Resource

The goal for this OER is to build an educational resource that is flexible enough to address concepts relevant to the contemporary discourse and scholarship in the visual arts. For those interested in utilizing these course materials, I am providing below some additional information that may be useful in expanding, adapting, or reinterpreting the materials. Editable versions are available in Microsoft PowerPoint and Word at <https://dc.etsu.edu/art-appreciation-oer/>

The font used to create the presentations and written documents for this OER is Calibri.

Finding Additional Readings, Lessons, and Articles

Smarthistory: <https://smarthistory.org/>

Smarthistory is an extensive open educational resource which publishes outstanding essays and video lectures about art. The Creating + Conserving section of Smarthistory includes wonderful informational articles and videos about materials and processes: <https://smarthistory.org/tag/conservation/>

MoMA Learning: https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/

MoMA Learning provides a wonderful selection of essays on works of modern art and also has assignment suggestions at the bottom of each section.

KhanAcademy: <https://www.khanacademy.org/>.

Khan Academy is an outstanding platform of open educational resources covering a variety of academic and scholarly topics.

Trivium Art History: <https://arthistoryproject.com/>

Trivium Art History is a free, online art history book with clean design and approachable descriptions of works of art, periods of art history, and fun artist biographies. The [Themes of Art](#) section is a nice tool to helping students explore works that match their interests. The [World of Art](#) section is a useful tool for an exploratory World Art sketchbook prompt. The [Timeline](#) section is useful, as it separates works of art into galleries based on period.

Introduction to Art: Design, Context, and Meaning: <https://oer.galileo.usg.edu/arts-textbooks/3/>

For a more traditional, textbook approach, there is an Introduction to Art open educational resource textbook available.

Locating Images

If you are utilizing the course materials and would like to add new images that are public domain or licensed under Creative Commons, there are several useful tips provided below for finding images.

The Met Museum: <https://www.metmuseum.org/>

The Met has an option to search for Open Access images within the collection [here](#). Make sure that the “Open Access” box is checked. The image license is [CC0 1.0](#), and will be marked OA Public Domain at the lower left of the image.

Google Images: <https://www.google.com/imghp?hl=en&tab=wi&ogbl>

[Google Images](#) has an option under “Settings” > “Advanced Search” to search by “Usage Rights”. Choosing “Free to use share or modify” will allow a search for images suitable for expanding our OER.

Wikimedia Commons: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>

[Wikimedia Commons](#) is an outstanding resource for finding open source images, with a strong collection of works of art.

Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com>

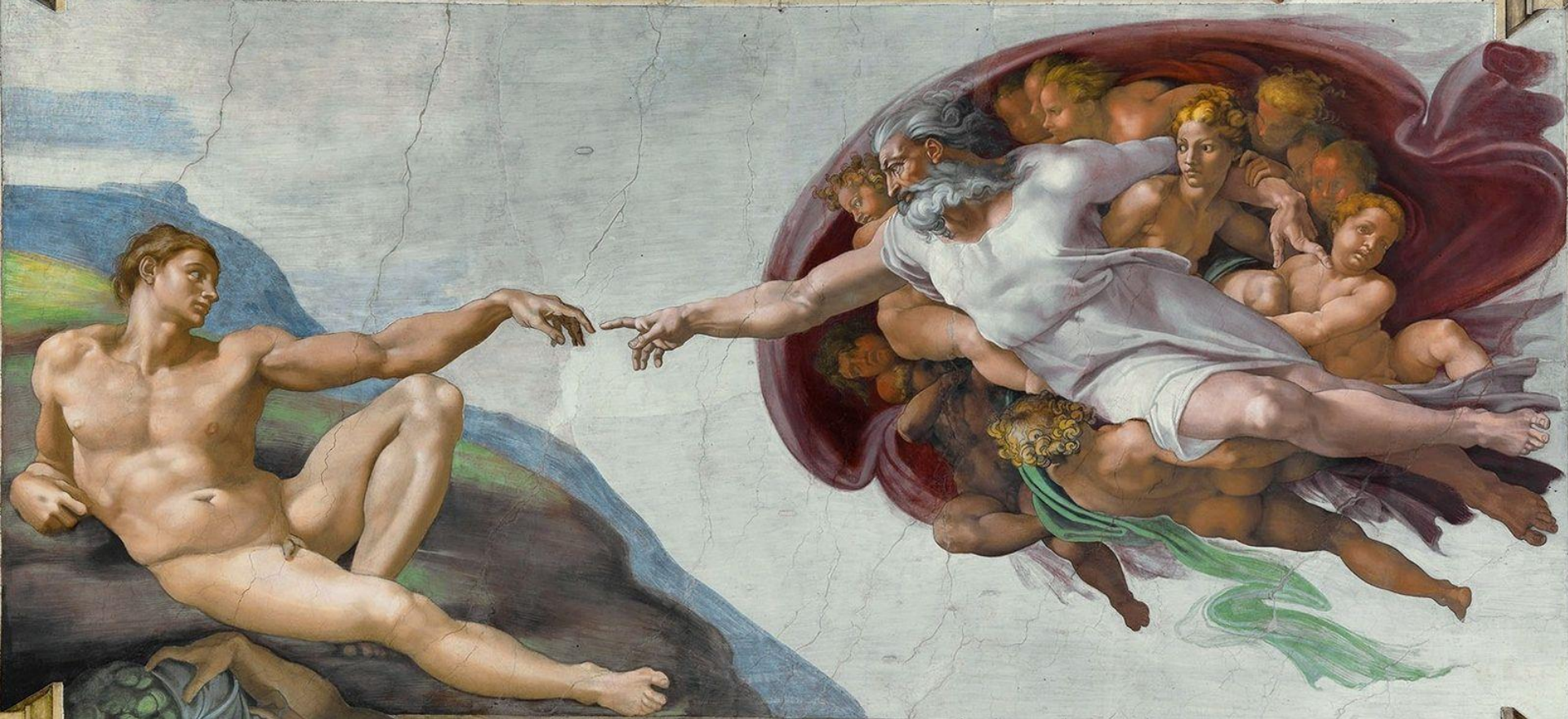
[Flickr](#) allows users to specify image licenses on uploaded photographs. Click “Some rights reserved” at the lower right of the image to check the licensing. Some images will say “Public Domain” or will be licensed under a [Creative Commons](#) (CC) license, allowing for the use in an OER.

Smarthistory Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/groups/smarthistory/pool/>

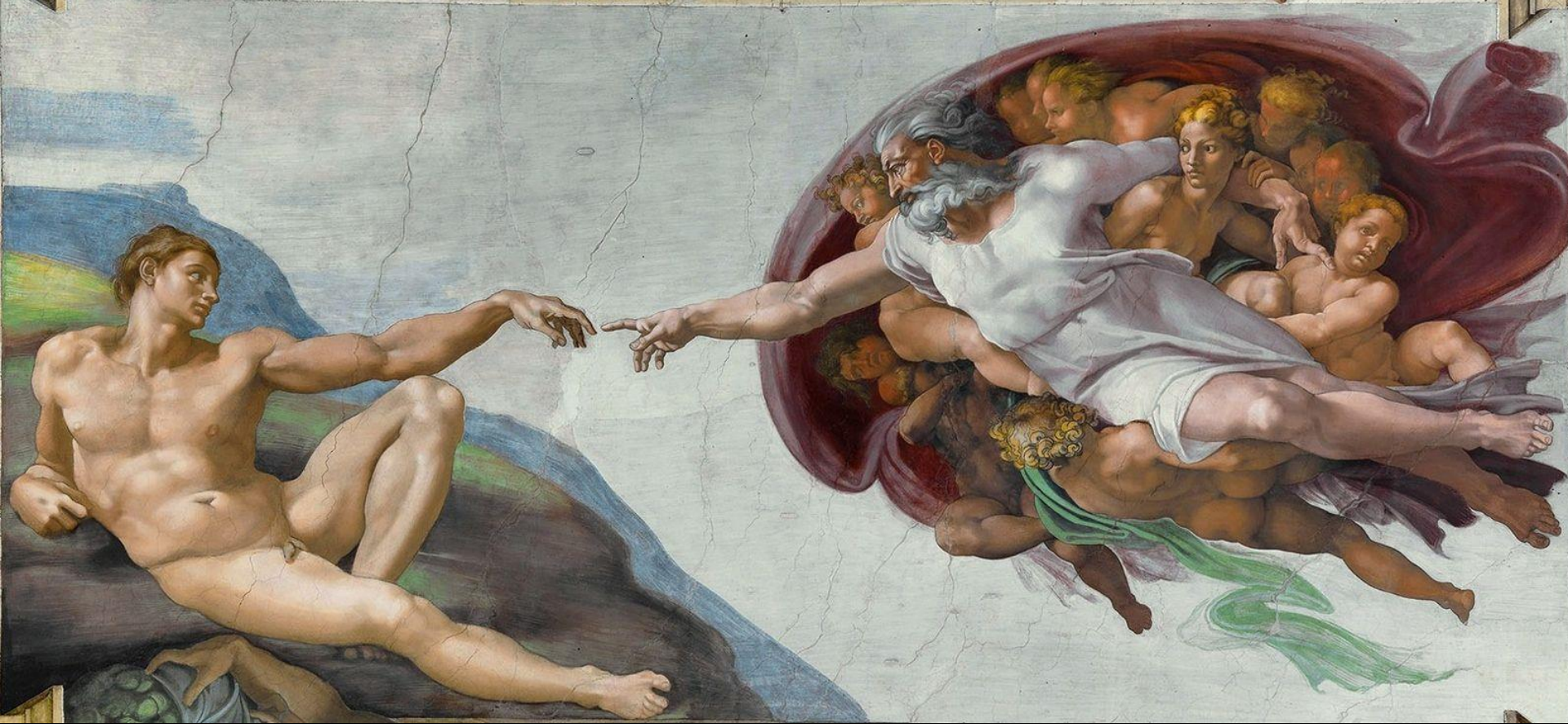
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Acknowledgements

This Art Appreciation OER was adapted from existing resources by Marie Porterfield Barry as part of East Tennessee State University’s Open Educational Resources (OERs) Initiatives, which are a collaboration of the Charles C. Sherrod Library and the Center for Teaching Excellence. Deepest gratitude for the support from Ashley Sergiadis of Sherrod Library and Phil Smith of the Center for Teaching Excellence during the building of this resource. Thanks as well to my students at East Tennessee State University whose feedback and participation during our Art Appreciation classes was immensely valuable in compiling and evaluating this OER.



MICHELANGELO:
From High Renaissance
to Mannerism



Michelangelo Buonaratti, *The Creation of Adam*, Sistine Chapel Ceiling c. 1511

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

The writing of Giorgio Vasari influenced our view of the High Renaissance, which he believed is the apex of perfection in art after increasing in beauty and realism. Vasari, in *Lives of the Artists* (1550) describes the High Renaissance as the culmination of art with Michelangelo as the greatest artist.



Although Michelangelo considered himself a sculptor, many of his commissions required that he make paintings as well. Like Leonardo, he had an advanced understanding of anatomy achieved through the dissection of bodies. He is particularly known for his muscular nudes.

Michelangelo
Awakening Slave
1525-1530
Marble



Michelangelo

Pietà

1499-1501

Marble, height 5'8 1/2"

Author: [Stanislav Traykov](#)

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

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Michelangelo's earliest masterpiece is the *Pietà* which shows Mary cradling her dead son.

Michelangelo

Pietà

1499-1501

Marble, height 5'8 1/2"

Author: [Stanislav Traykov](#)

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

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The central figures from the *Lamentation* are isolated in this contemplative, devotional sculpture.



Michelangelo, *Pietà*, Marble, c. 1500
Author: [Stanislav Traykov](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#),
License: [CC BY 2.5](#)



Giotto, *Lamentation*, Scrovegni Chapel, Padua. Frescos, 1305-1306.
Author: [Web Gallery of Art](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License:
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How would you describe the figures in this work of art?

Michelangelo

Pietà

1499-1501

Marble, height 5'8 1/2"

Author: [Stanislav Traykov](#)

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Michelangelo uses a pyramid or triangular composition to create a sense of stability, balance, and geometric unity.

In order to achieve this stability, Michelangelo made the figure of Mary much larger than that of her adult son.

Michelangelo

Pietà

1499-1501

Marble, height 5'8 1/2"

Author: [Stanislav Traykov](#)

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Michelangelo presents an idealized, sorrowful Virgin Mary.



Author: [Johanna Loock](#), Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)



The young Mary is restrained in her sorrow.
Her youthful face is symbolic of her purity.

Jesus ages to indicate his humanity.

Author: [Redbanshee](#)

Source: Flickr

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Michelangelo was 24 or 25 years old when he sculpted the *Pieta*.

Author: [Redbanshee](#)
Source: Flickr
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It was the only work he ever signed. He carved his name across Mary's sash.





The *Pietà* is carved from a single block of marble.

Michelangelo selected his own blocks of marble; he conceptualized the sculptures as already within the block of marble before carving to set them free.

Michelangelo

Pietà

1499-1501

Marble, height 5'8 1/2"

Author: [Stanislav Traykov](#)

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

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In every block of marble I see a statue as plain as though it stood before me, shaped and perfect in attitude and action. I have only to hew away the rough walls that imprison the lovely apparition to reveal it to the other eyes as mine see it."

- *Michelangelo*



Michelangelo

Atlas Slave

Author: [Jörg Bittner Unna](#)

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

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Following the completion of the *Pietà*, Michelangelo carved his seventeen foot tall marble masterpiece of the *David*.

Michelangelo
David
Marble
1501-1504

Soon thereafter Michelangelo began an extensive series of frescoes in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican Palace. He painted the ceiling between 1508 and 1512. Decades later, between 1536 and 1542, he returned to complete the fresco of the *Last Judgement* on the altar wall.



Sistine Chapel, Author: [Alex Proimos](#), Cropped from original, Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY 2.0](#)

The ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, depicting scenes from the Old Testament, is painted in the High Renaissance Style.



Michelangelo, *Scenes from the Old Testament*, Sistine Chapel Ceiling, Fresco, 1508-1512
Author: [Qypchak](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

The altar wall of the Sistine Chapel, showing the *Last Judgement*, is painted in a Mannerist style.

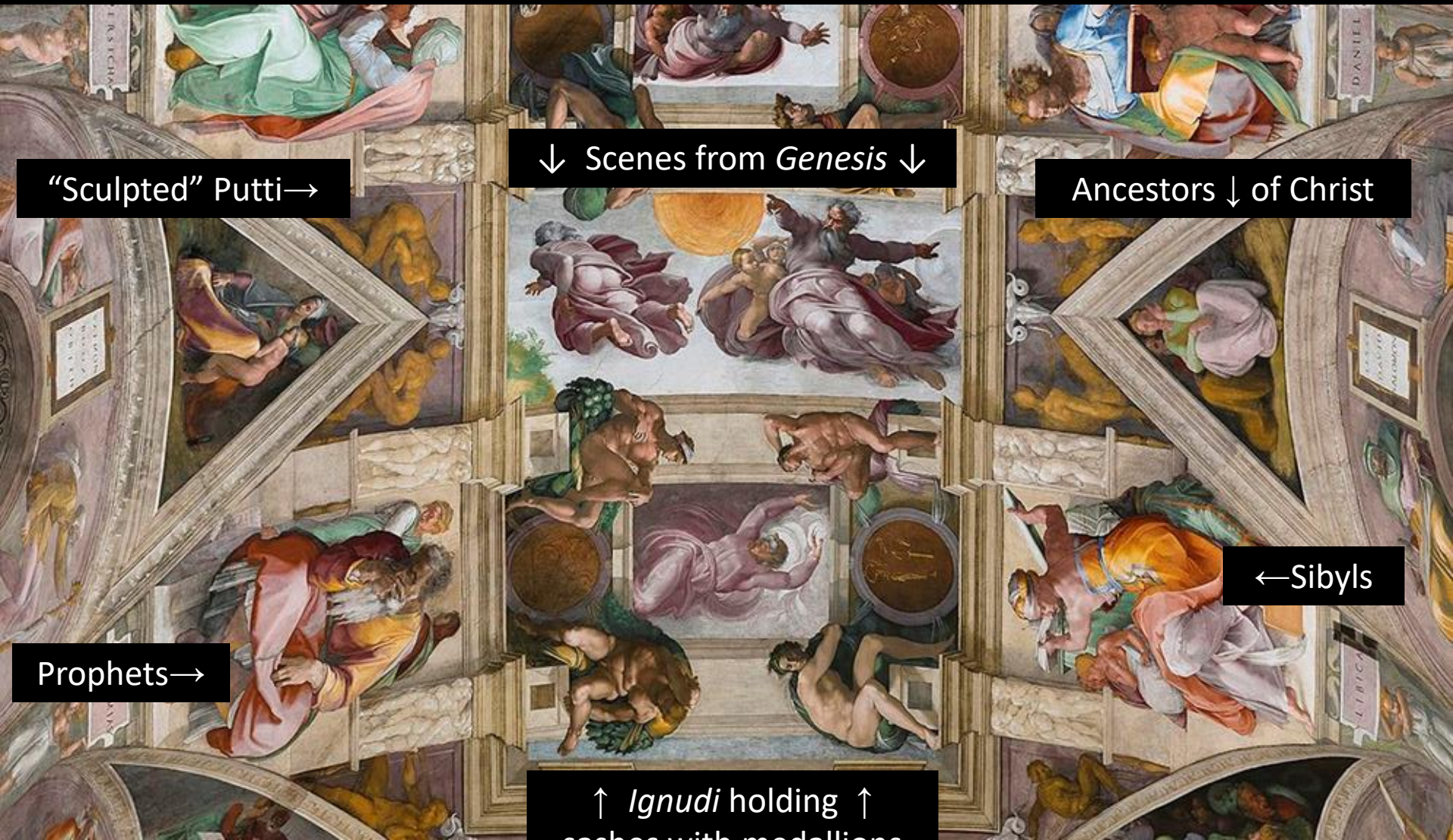


Michelangelo, *Last Judgement*, Sistine Chapel Altar Wall, Fresco, 1536-1542. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain



The iconography of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel is taken from the Old Testament of the Christian Bible and includes scenes from Genesis in the center, images of Hebrew prophets and classical sibyls on the sides, and lunettes across the top showing the ancestors of Christ.

There are also *ignudi* (or muscular nudes) holding medallions as well as illusionistic architecture framing the scenes.



“Sculpted” Putti→

↓ Scenes from *Genesis* ↓

Ancestors ↓ of Christ

Prophets→

← Sibyls

↑ *Ignudi* holding ↑
sashes with medallions

Author: Aaron Logan (Cropped from original),
Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: CC BY 2.5

Illusionistic architecture provides a visual structure.



Author: [Aaron Logan](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: [CC BY 2.5](#)

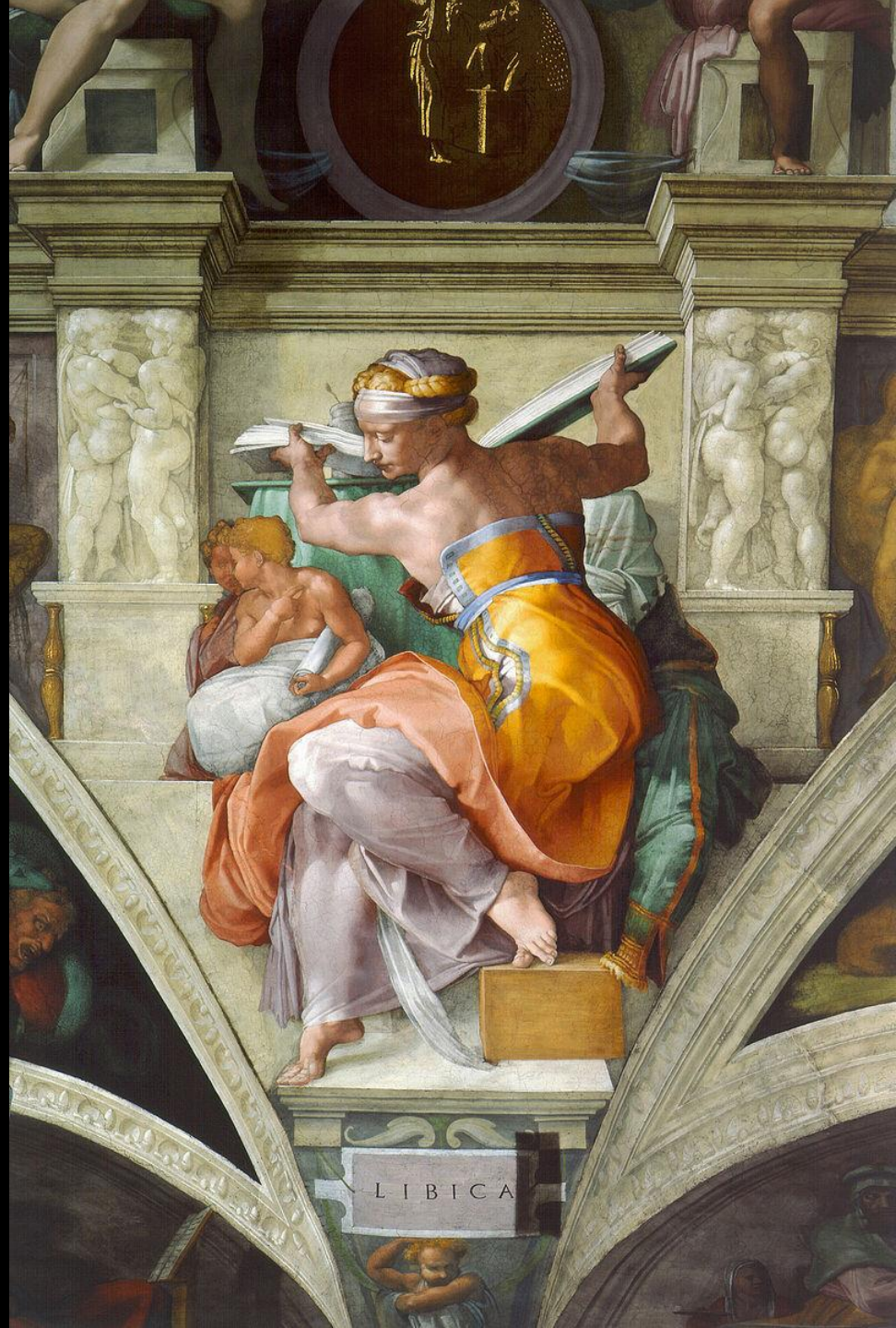
Right: Michelangelo

Libyan Sibyl

Sistine Chapel Ceiling

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

License: Public Domain



Left:

Author: [Qypchak](#), Source:

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Sibyls were wise women and oracles of ancient Greece and Rome.

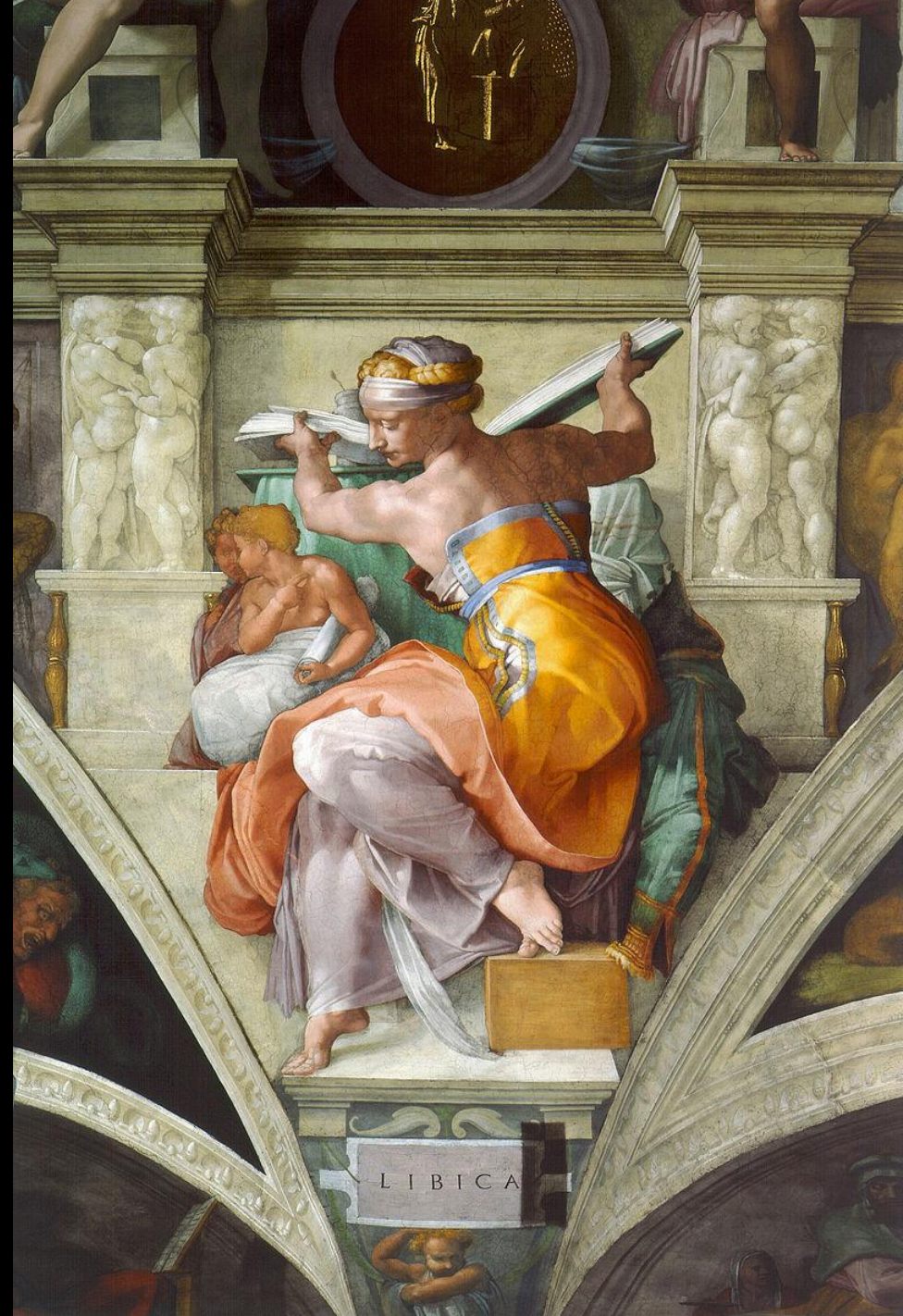
Renaissance Christians interpreted the words of both the Hebrew prophets and the classical sibyls as prophecies of the coming of Christ.

Michelangelo
Libyan Sibyl

Sistine Chapel Ceiling

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

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Michelangelo used preliminary drawings to understand his figures. The sketch for the *Libyan Sibyl* shows that he used a male model to plan the figure of the classical wise woman.



Sketch for the *Libyan Sibyl*, Source: [Met Museum](#), License: CC0 1.0

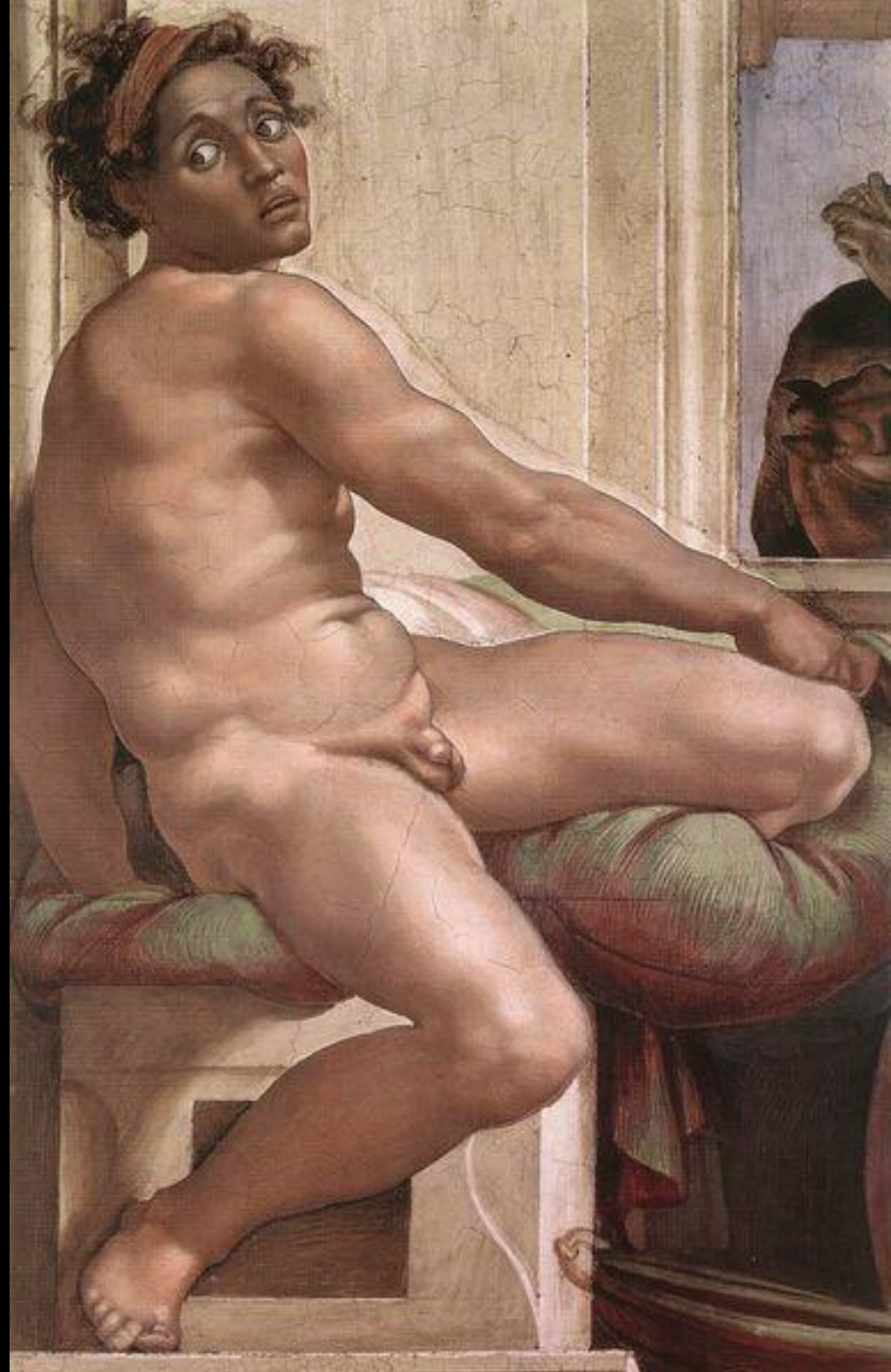


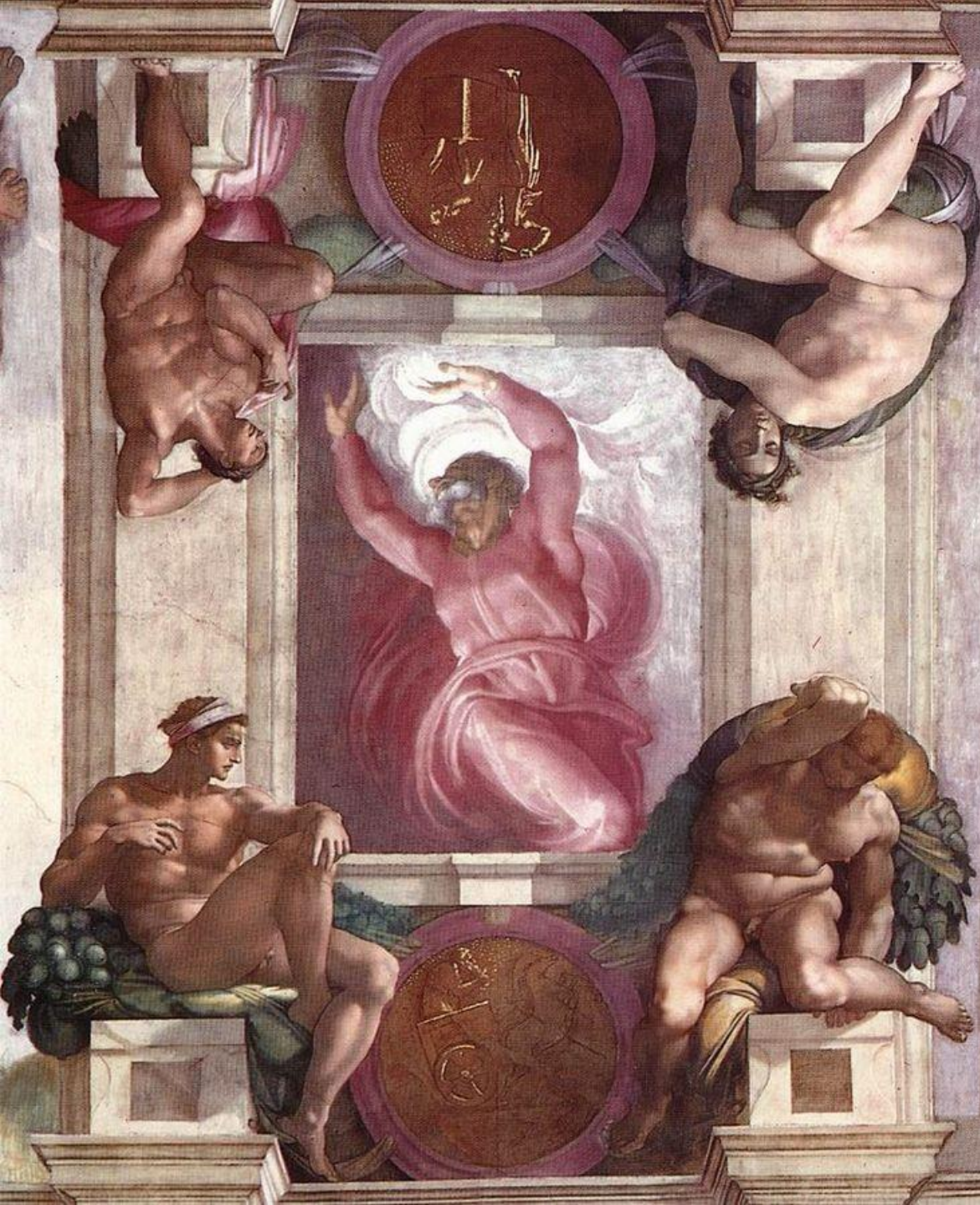
Michelangelo, *Libyan Sibyl*, Sistine Chapel Ceiling
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain



Sketch for the Libyan Sibyl, Source: [Met Museum](#), License: CC0 1.0

Some of the figures included on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel are purely decorative. Michelangelo's *ignudi*, or nudes, demonstrate the artist's masterful understanding of anatomy.





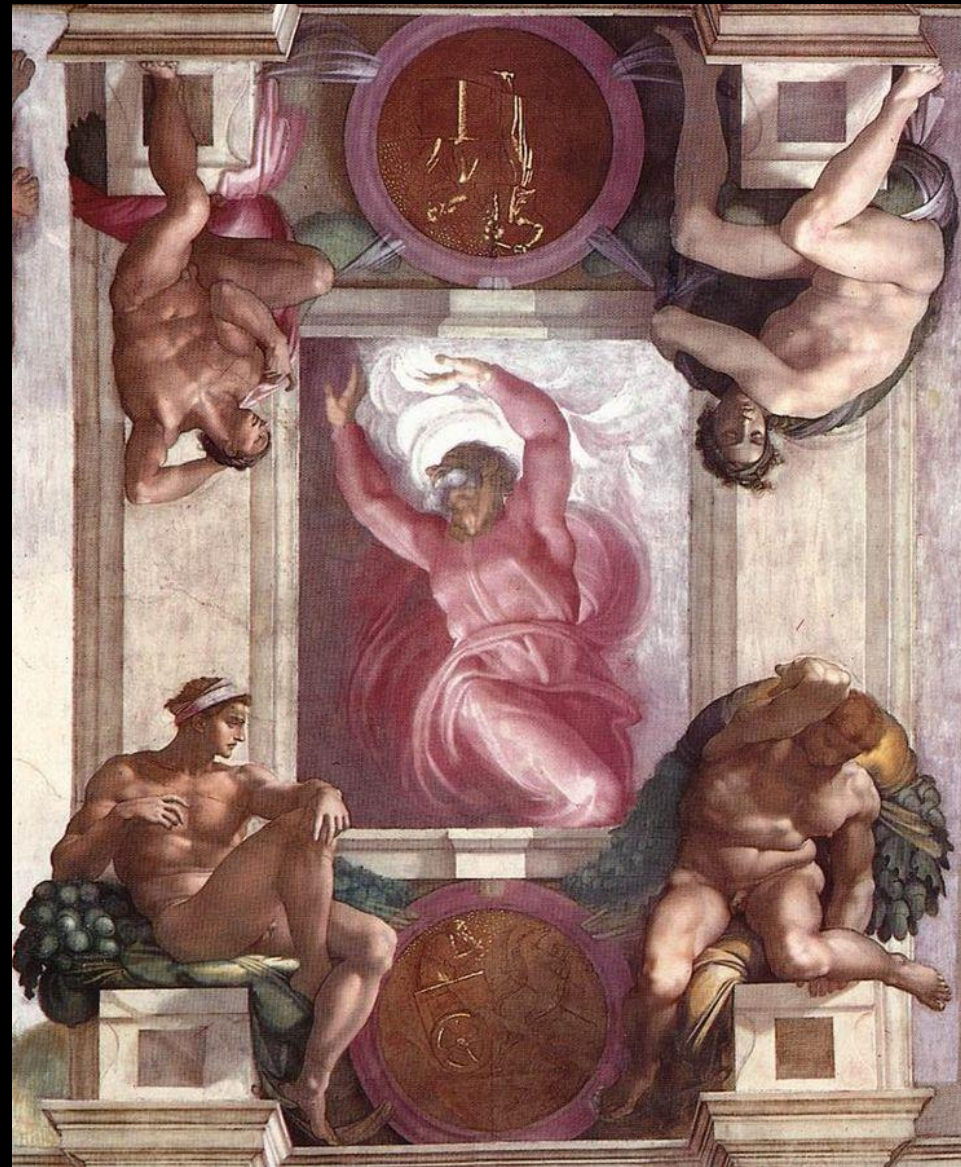
The *ignudi* hold ribbons attached to medallions and serve as ornamentation around the panels depicting scenes from the Old Testament.

Michelangelo
First Day of Creation
Sistine Chapel Ceiling

Author: [Web Gallery of Art](#)
Source: Wikimedia Commons
License: Public Domain



*Right: Michelangelo
First Day of Creation
Sistine Chapel Ceiling
Author: [Web Gallery of Art](#)
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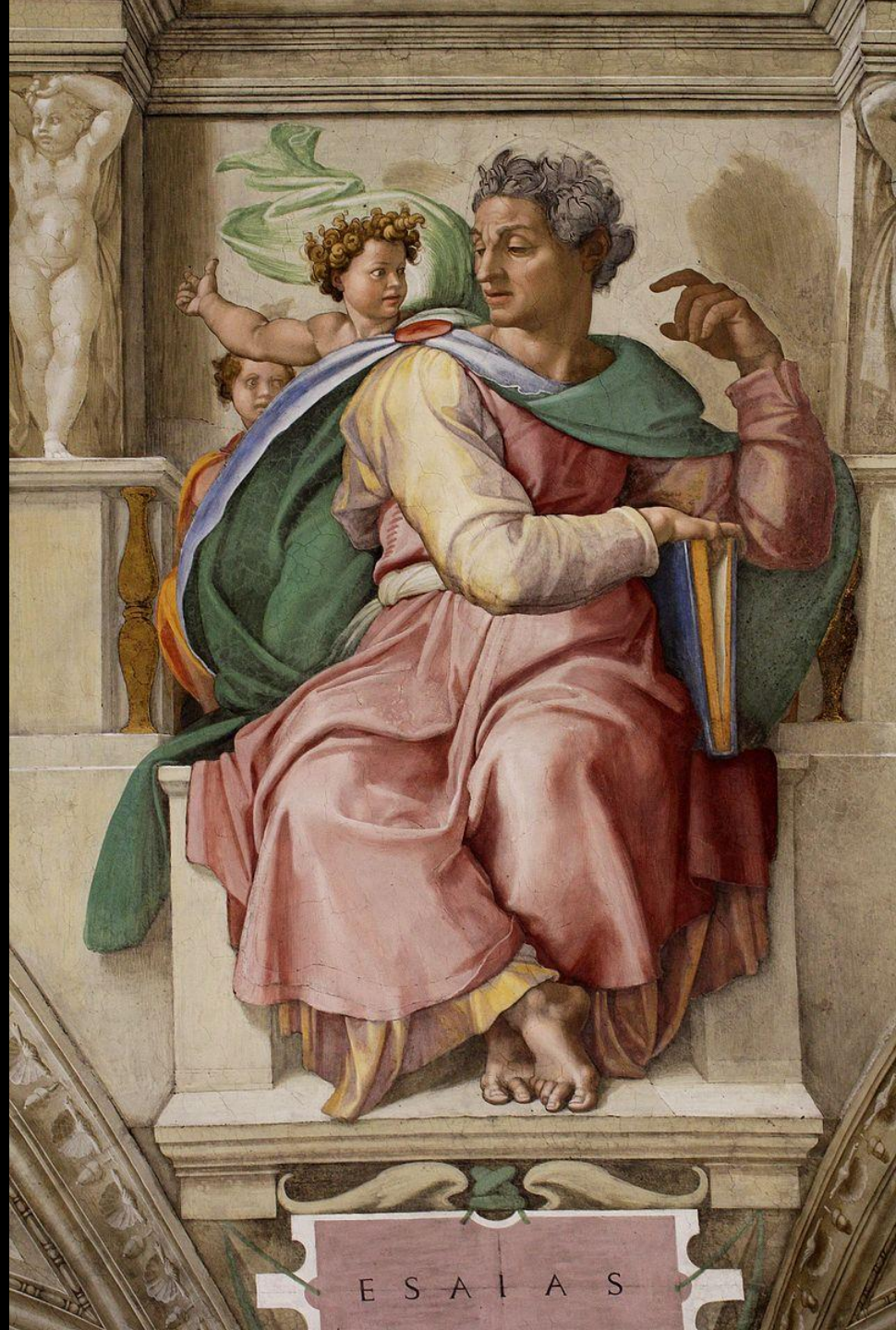
*Left: Author: [Qypchak](#), Source:
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Michelangelo uses vivid colors in his Sistine Chapel fresco paintings.

For example, in Isaiah's garments, Michelangelo uses complementary colors (yellow and violet) to show the form of the voluminous drapery along the hemline.

Michelangelo
The Prophet Isaiah
Sistine Chapel Ceiling

Author: Jörg Bittner Unna
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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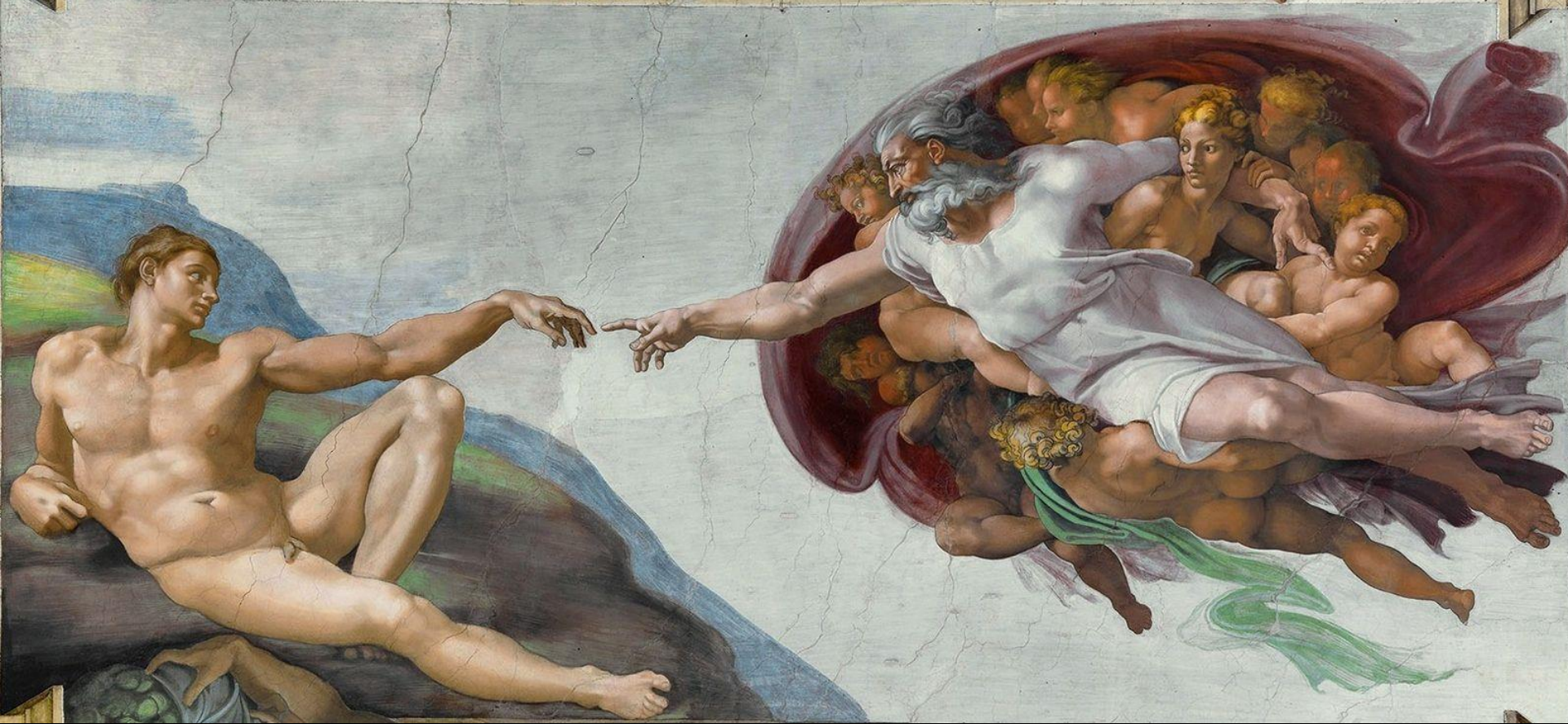




*Right: Michelangelo
The Prophet Isaiah
Sistine Chapel Ceiling
Author: Jörg Bittner Unna
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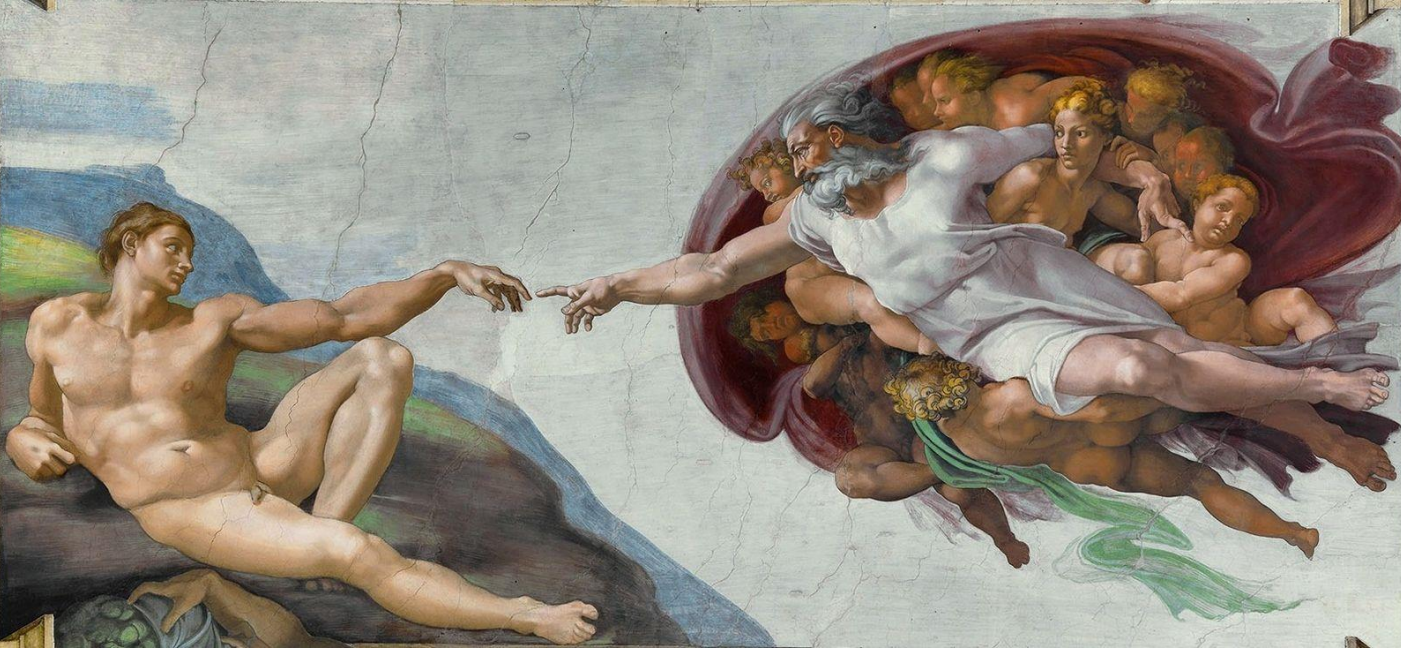
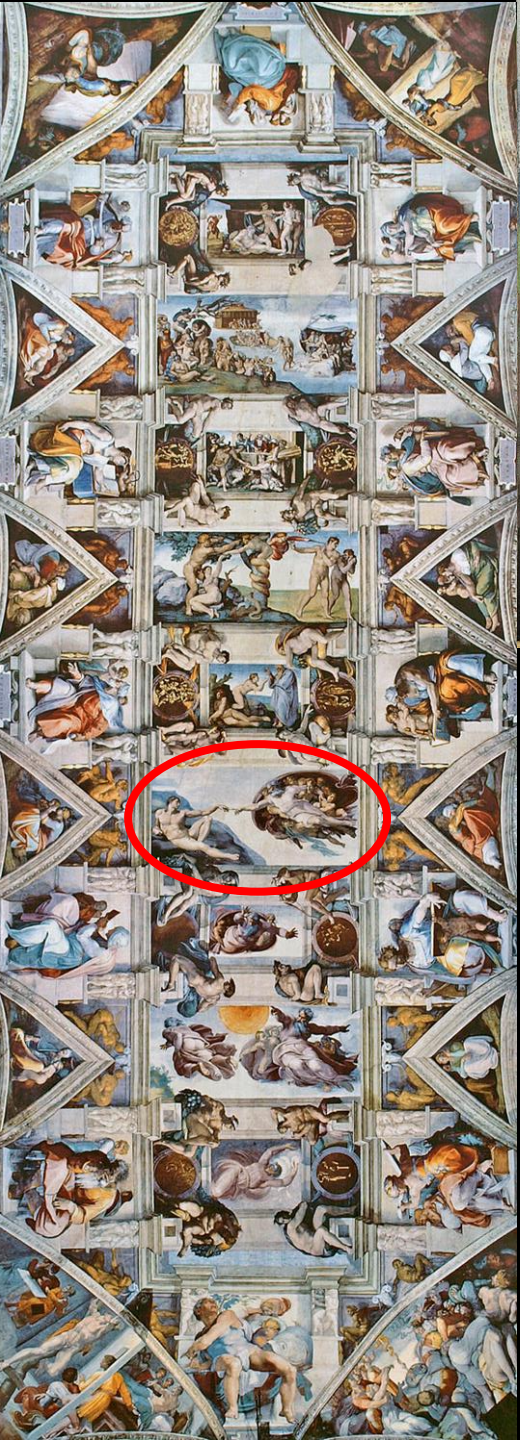




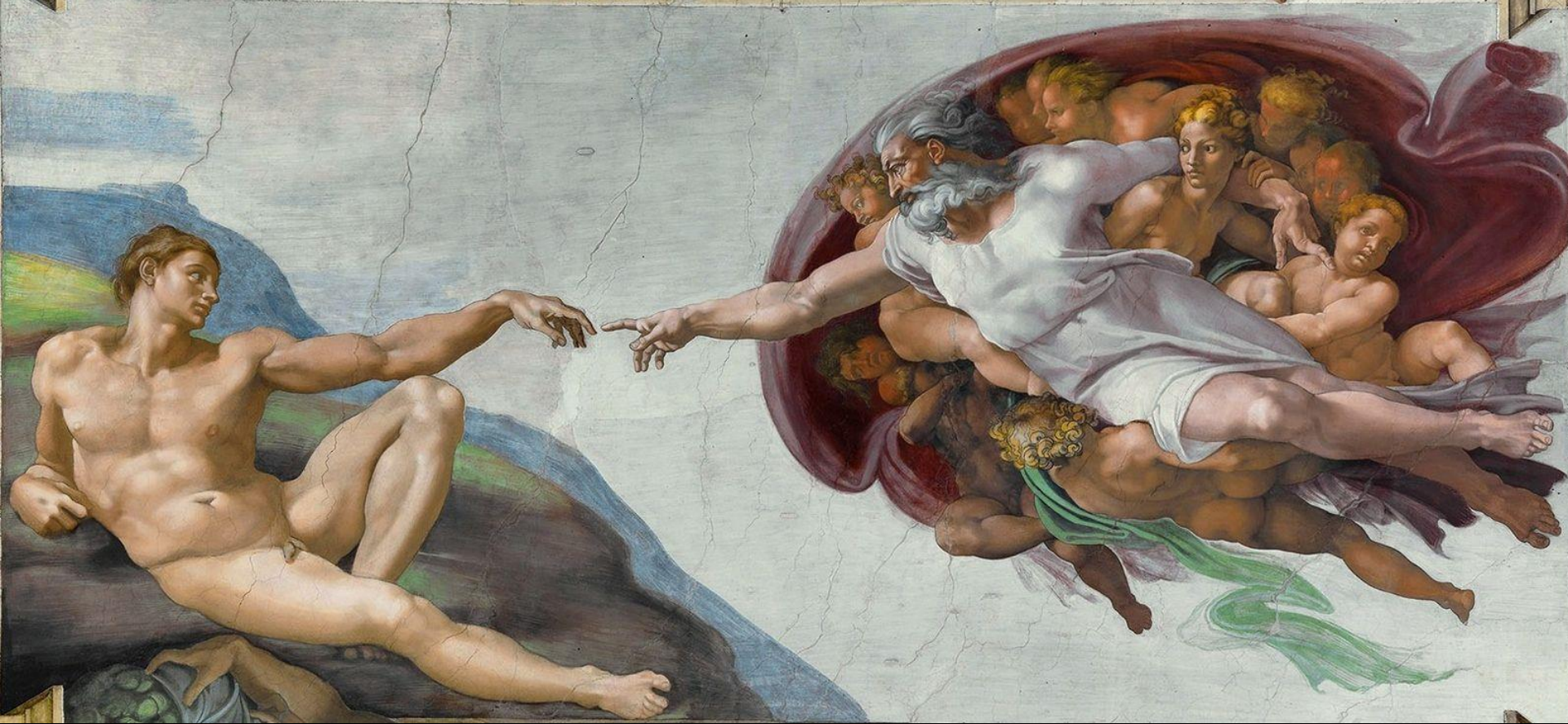
Michelangelo, *The Creation of Adam*, Sistine Chapel Ceiling c. 1511

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

One of the most recognizable panels from the Sistine Chapel ceiling is Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam*.



Michelangelo, *The Creation of Adam*, Sistine Chapel Ceiling c. 1511
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain



Michelangelo, *The Creation of Adam*, Sistine Chapel Ceiling c. 1511

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

The figures reference classical images of heroes and gods.



Michelangelo, *The Creation of Adam*, c. 1511
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain



Barberini Faun, Greek (Hellenistic), Marble, c. 220 BCE. (Found c.1620)
Author: [Steven Zucker](#), Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

Adam is depicted as an ideal, muscular nude in a classical style.

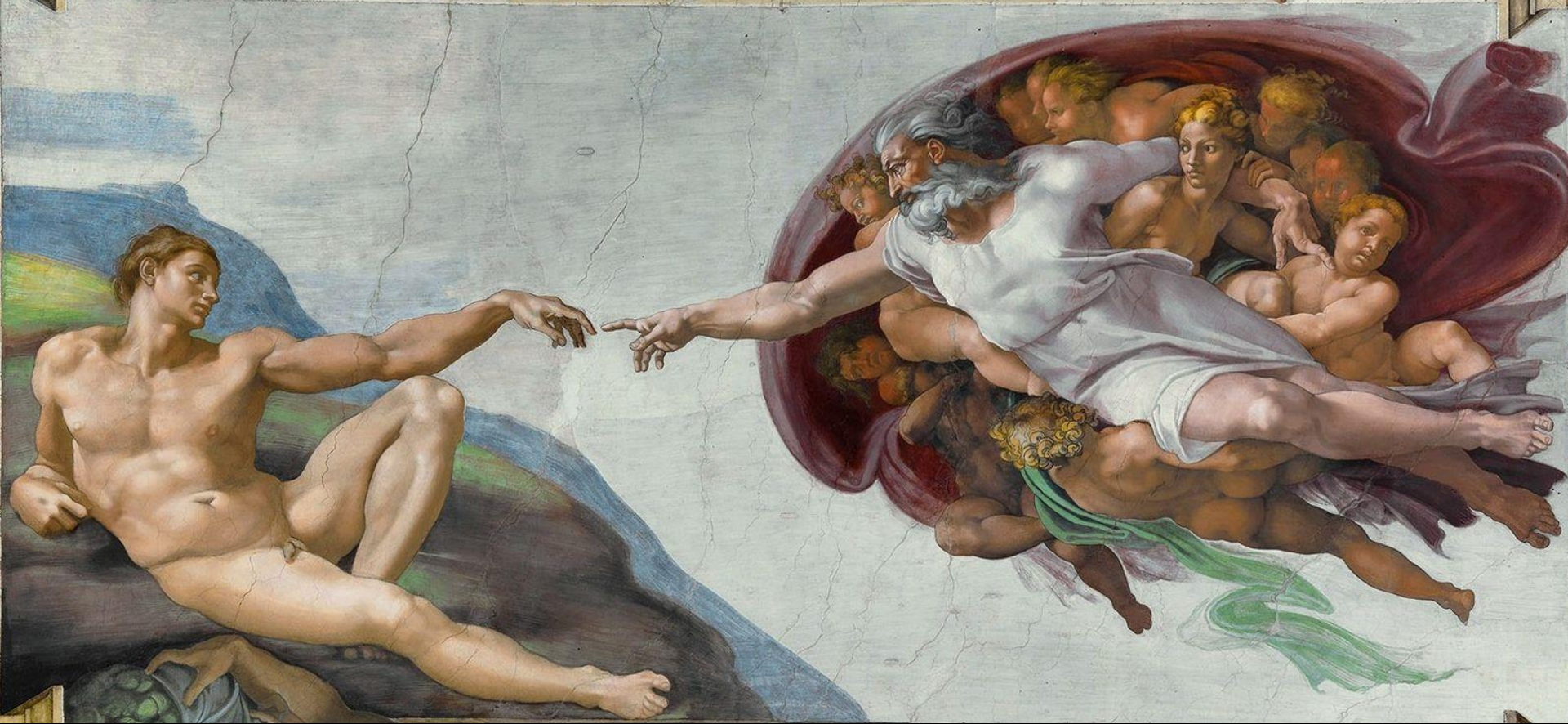


Statue of Jupiter, Roman, Marble with bronzed plaster, End of 1st Century. Author: [Sailko](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: CC [BY-SA 3.0](#)



*Michelangelo, [The Creation of Adam](#), Sistine Chapel Ceiling c. 1511
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain*

God the Father is a powerful, muscular bearded man resembling classical images of the Greek Zeus or the Roman Jupiter.

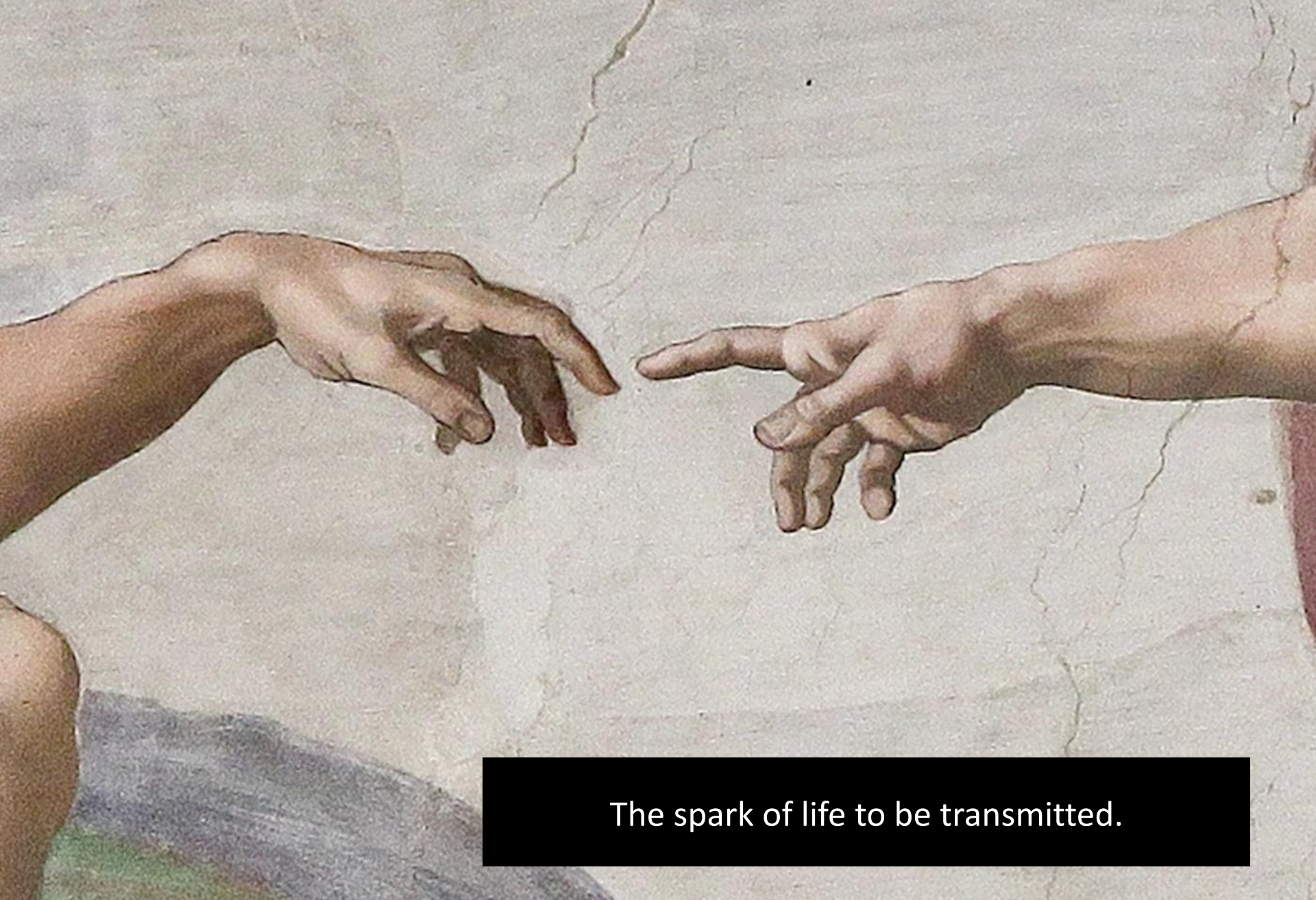


Michelangelo, *The Creation of Adam*, Sistine Chapel Ceiling c. 1511

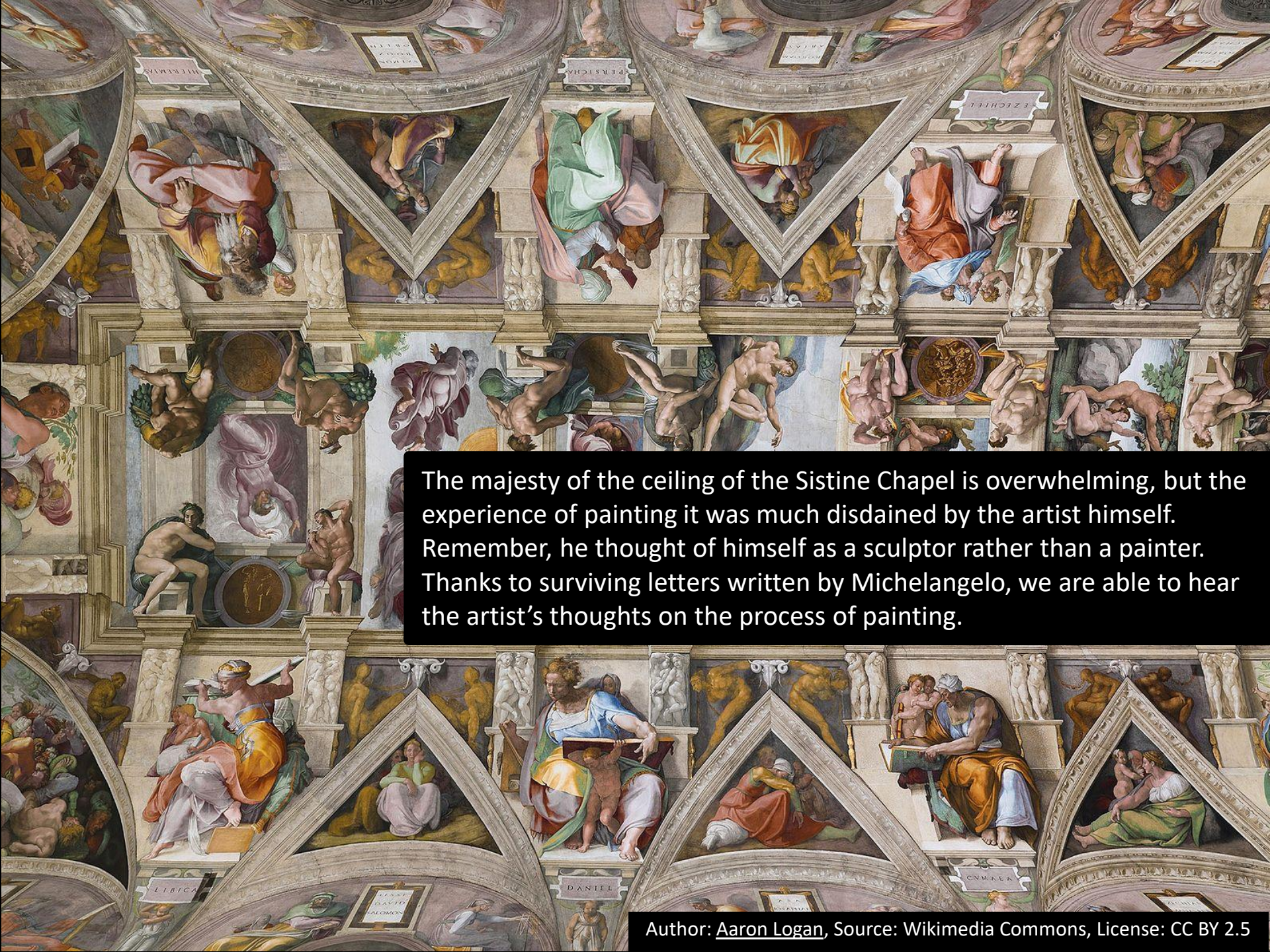
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Disegno, or drawing, was central for Michelangelo. Notice the clarity of the hand of God as it reaches toward the hand of Adam. This is the moment in which the spark of life will be transmitted.

The drama of the moment is communicated by the way the hands are drawn. Michelangelo places the hands over a nearly white background to emphasize their form. The hand of Adam is limp and not yet animate. The hand of God is commanding as he prepares to bring the form of Adam to life.



The spark of life to be transmitted.



The majesty of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is overwhelming, but the experience of painting it was much disdained by the artist himself. Remember, he thought of himself as a sculptor rather than a painter. Thanks to surviving letters written by Michelangelo, we are able to hear the artist's thoughts on the process of painting.

Michelangelo: To Giovanni da Pistoia
"When the Author Was Painting the Vault of the Sistine Chapel" c 1509

I've already grown a goiter from this torture,
hunched up here like a cat in Lombardy
(or anywhere else where the stagnant water's poison).
My stomach's squashed under my chin, my beard's
pointing at heaven, my brain's crushed in a casket,
my breast twists like a harpy's. My brush,
above me all the time, dribbles paint
so my face makes a fine floor for droppings!

My haunches are grinding into my guts,
my poor ass strains to work as a counterweight,
every gesture I make is blind and aimless.
My skin hangs loose below me, my spine's
all knotted from folding over itself.
I'm bent taut as a Syrian bow.

Because I'm stuck like this, my thoughts
are crazy, perfidious tripe:
anyone shoots badly through a crooked blowpipe.

My painting is dead.
Defend it for me, Giovanni, protect my honor.
I am not in the right place—I am not a painter.







During his long career,
Michelangelo's style
changed.



Michelangelo, *Medici Madonna*, 1521–1534
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

Michelangelo, *Madonna and Child*, 1504
Author: [Elya](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: [CC BY- SA 3.0](#)



Michelangelo's style changed from *High Renaissance* idealism and restraint, to a late Renaissance style called *Mannerism*.



Michelangelo, *Effigy of Giuliano de' Medici*, 1520-1534

Author: [Rufus46](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

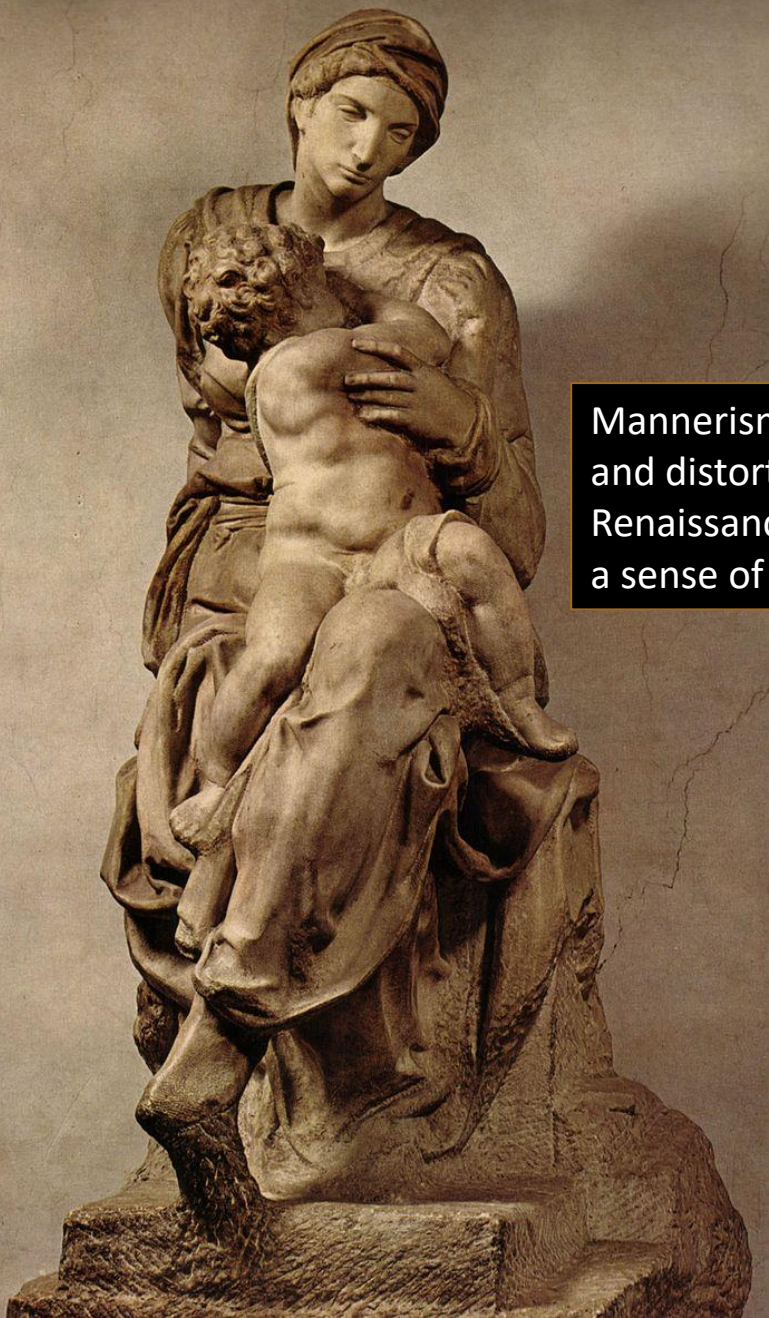
Author: [Jörg Bittner Unna](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY 3.0](#)

High Renaissance art is based on nature that is idealized or perfected.



Madonna and Child, 1504. Author: [Elya](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

David, 1501-4. Author: [Jörg Bittner Unna](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY 3.0](#)



Mannerism exaggerates and distorts elements of Renaissance art, creating a sense of imbalance.



Michelangelo, *Medici Madonna*, 1521–1534
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

Michelangelo, *Effigy of Giuliano de' Medici*, 1520-1534
Author: [Rufus46](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)



For the *Tomb of Giuliano de' Medici*, Michelangelo sculpted an effigy of the deceased in a Mannerist style, seated behind two reclining figures representing Night and Day.

Michelangelo
Tomb of Giuliano de' Medici, 1520-1534
Author: [Elias Roviello](#) (Cropped from original)
Source: Flickr
License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)



The effigy of Giuliano de' Medici is not a naturalistic portrait, but instead is an idealized representation.

Michelangelo, *Effigy of Giuliano de' Medici*, 1520-1534.

Author: [Rufus46](#)

Source: Wikimedia Commons

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A copy of a Raphael portrait of Giuliano confirms that the tomb effigy by Michelangelo is not naturalistic, but idealized using a classical model.



Above: Copy of Raphael's *Portrait of Giuliano de' Medici*
Source: [Met Museum](#), License: [CC0 1.0](#)



Left: Michelangelo, *Effigy of Giuliano de' Medici*, 1520-1534.
Author: [Rufus46](#), *Cropped from original*,
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Michelangelo's Mannerist style consists of exaggerated proportions, elongated bodies, and twisting poses.

Michelangelo, *Effigy of Giuliano de' Medici*, 1520-1534.

Author: [Rufus46](#)

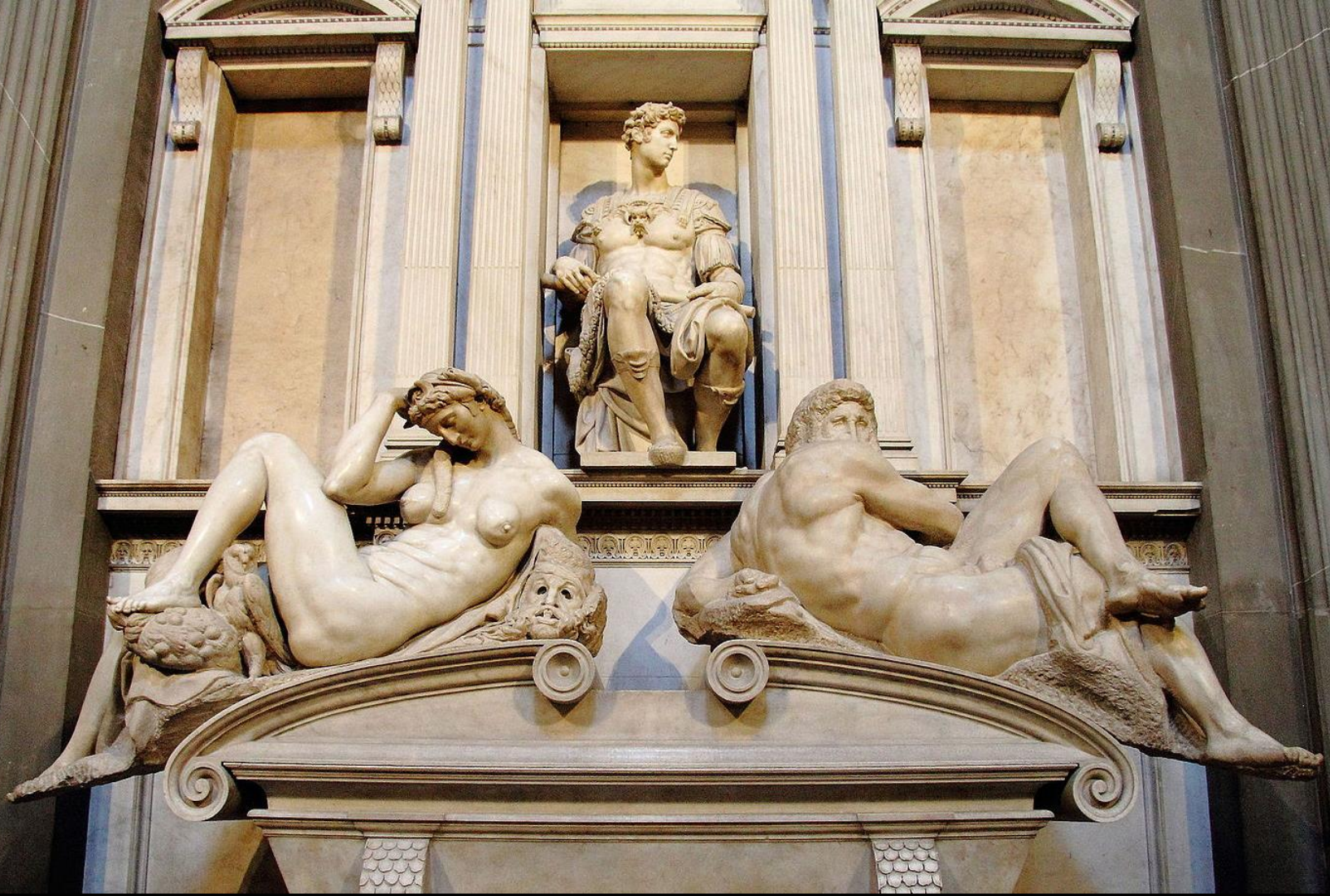
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The *Effigy of Giuliano de' Medici* is distorted and ambiguous. The abdomen is soft like flesh yet the epaulets are attached as if to a breastplate. Layers of cloth stick out from beneath the breastplate. Grotesque heads decorate the classical armor.

Michelangelo, *Effigy of Giuliano de' Medici*, 1520-1534.
Author: [Rufus46](#), *Cropped from original*,
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
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Tomb of Giuliano de' Medici, Author: [Rabe!](#), Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Personifications of Night and Day recline back to back. The limbs of the two figures are impossibly long and twisting. Michelangelo is intentionally distorting the anatomy to create figures that are more expressive and symbolic.



Night



Day

1508-12:

Michelangelo
paints the
Sistine Chapel
ceiling frescoes.



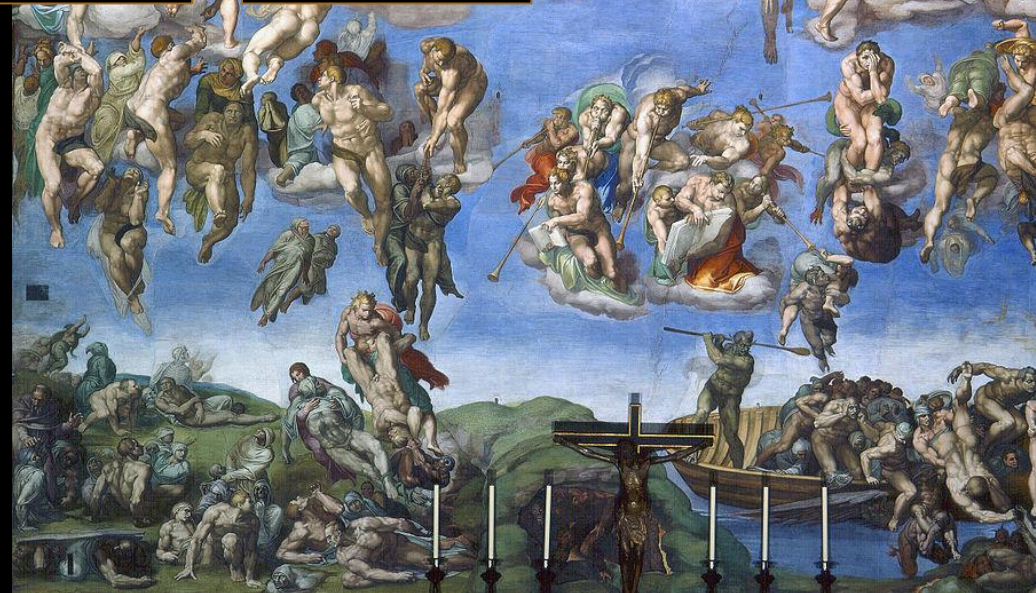
1517:

Martin Luther publishes
Ninety-five Theses,
objecting to practices of
the leaders of the Roman
Catholic Church...

And marking the beginning
of the Protestant
Reformation.

1536-41:

Michelangelo
paints the
Sistine Chapel
altar wall.



The altar wall of the Sistine Chapel showing the *Last Judgement* is painted in a Mannerist style.

In the lower left, the dead are awakened then rise to heaven.

In the lower right, the damned are ferried to hell.

In the upper center, a powerful Christ separates the blessed from the damned.





Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* is full of muscular nudes. Here, angels awaken the dead.

Michelangelo
Last Judgement, Sistine Chapel Altar Wall
Fresco, 1536-1542.
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), *Cropped from original*,
License: Public Domain

The awakened dead crawl, writhe, and struggle from their graves.

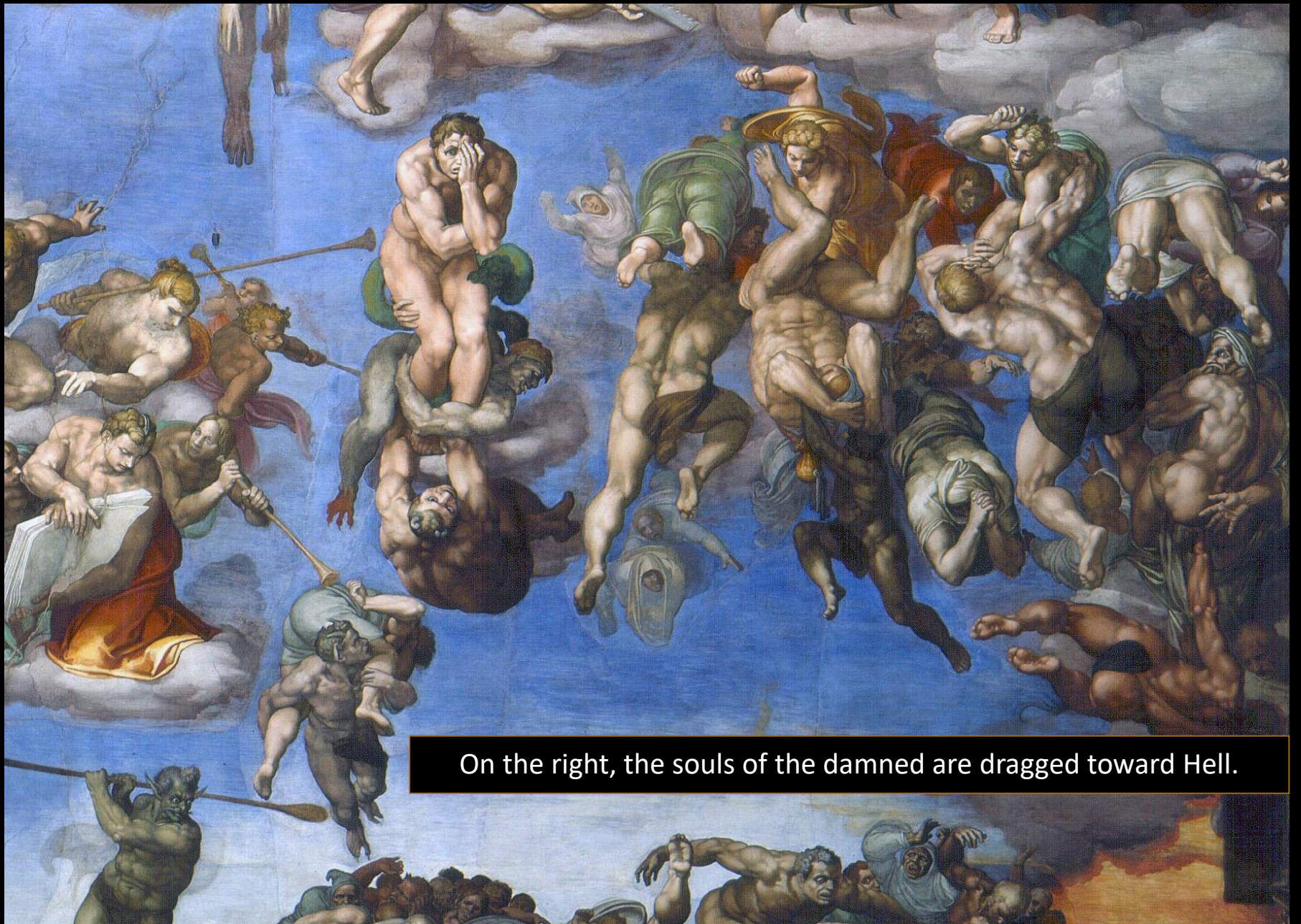


Michelangelo, *Last Judgement*, Sistine Chapel Altar Wall, Fresco, 1536-1542.
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), *Cropped from original*, License: Public Domain



On the left, at the right hand of Christ,
the blessed rise to heaven.

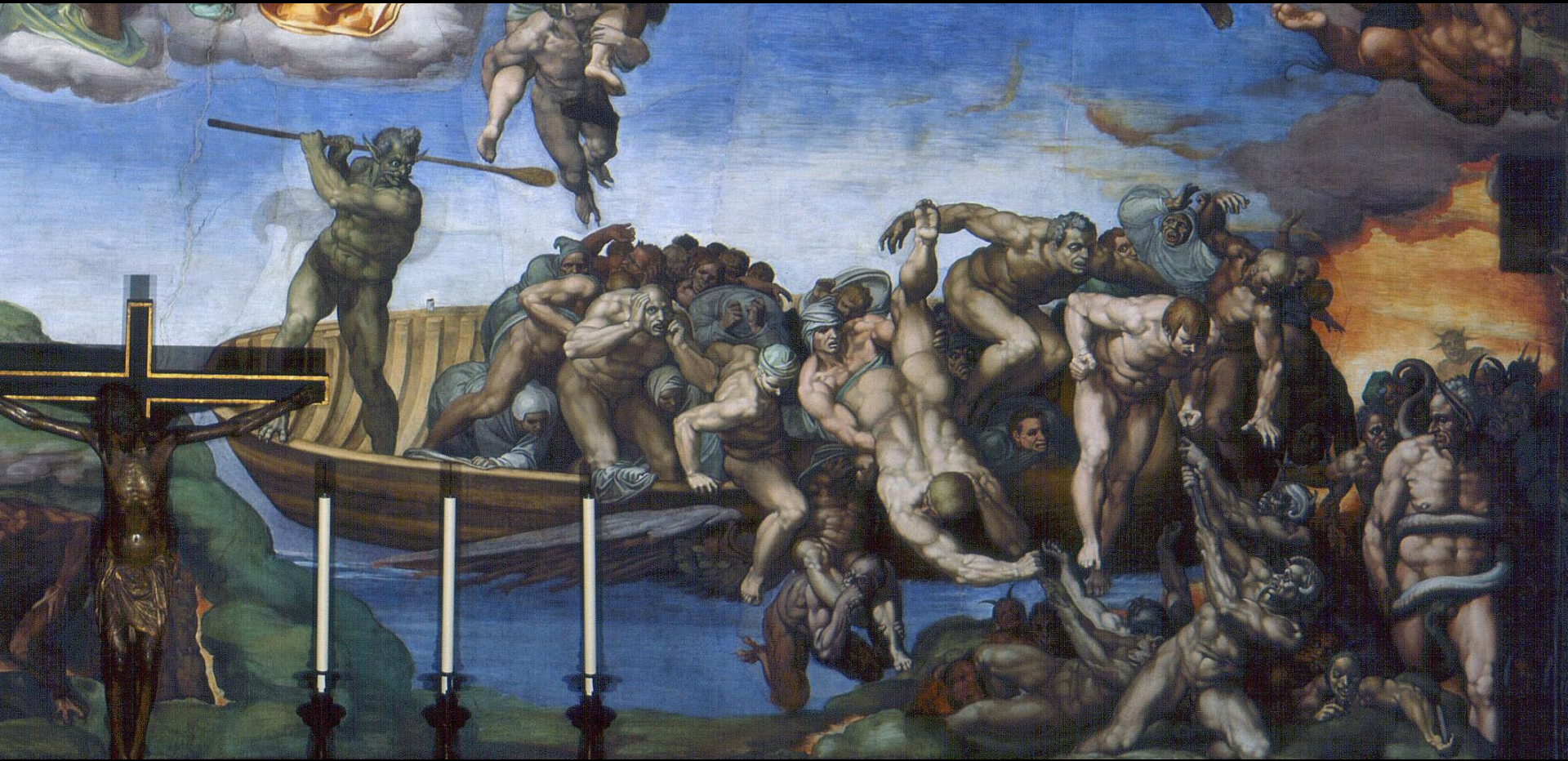
Michelangelo
Last Judgement, Sistine Chapel Altar Wall
Fresco, 1536-1542.
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), *Cropped from original*,
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On the right, the souls of the damned are dragged toward Hell.

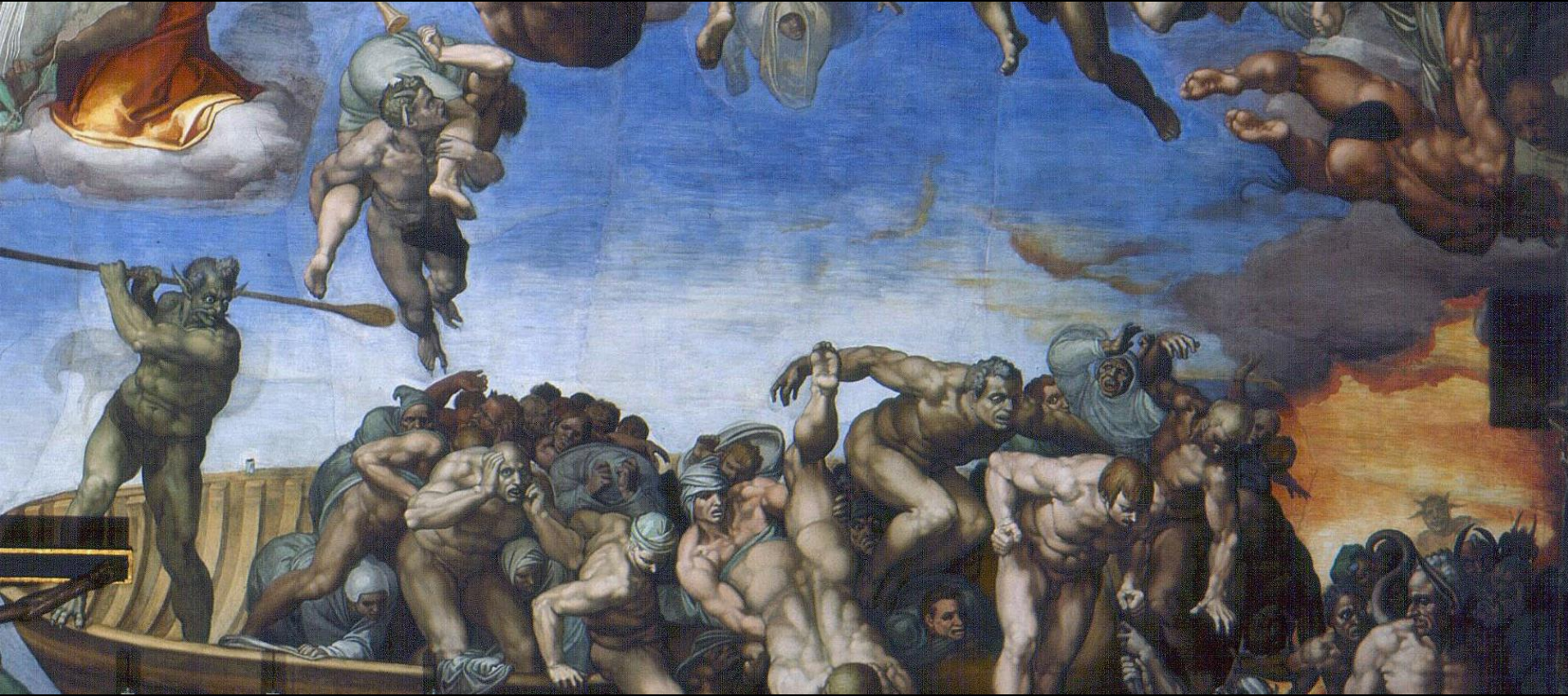
Michelangelo, *Last Judgement*, Sistine Chapel Altar Wall, Fresco, 1536-1542.
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), *Cropped from original*, License: Public Domain

The damned are ferried to hell across River Styx, which is the river in Greek mythology that separates Earth from Hades.

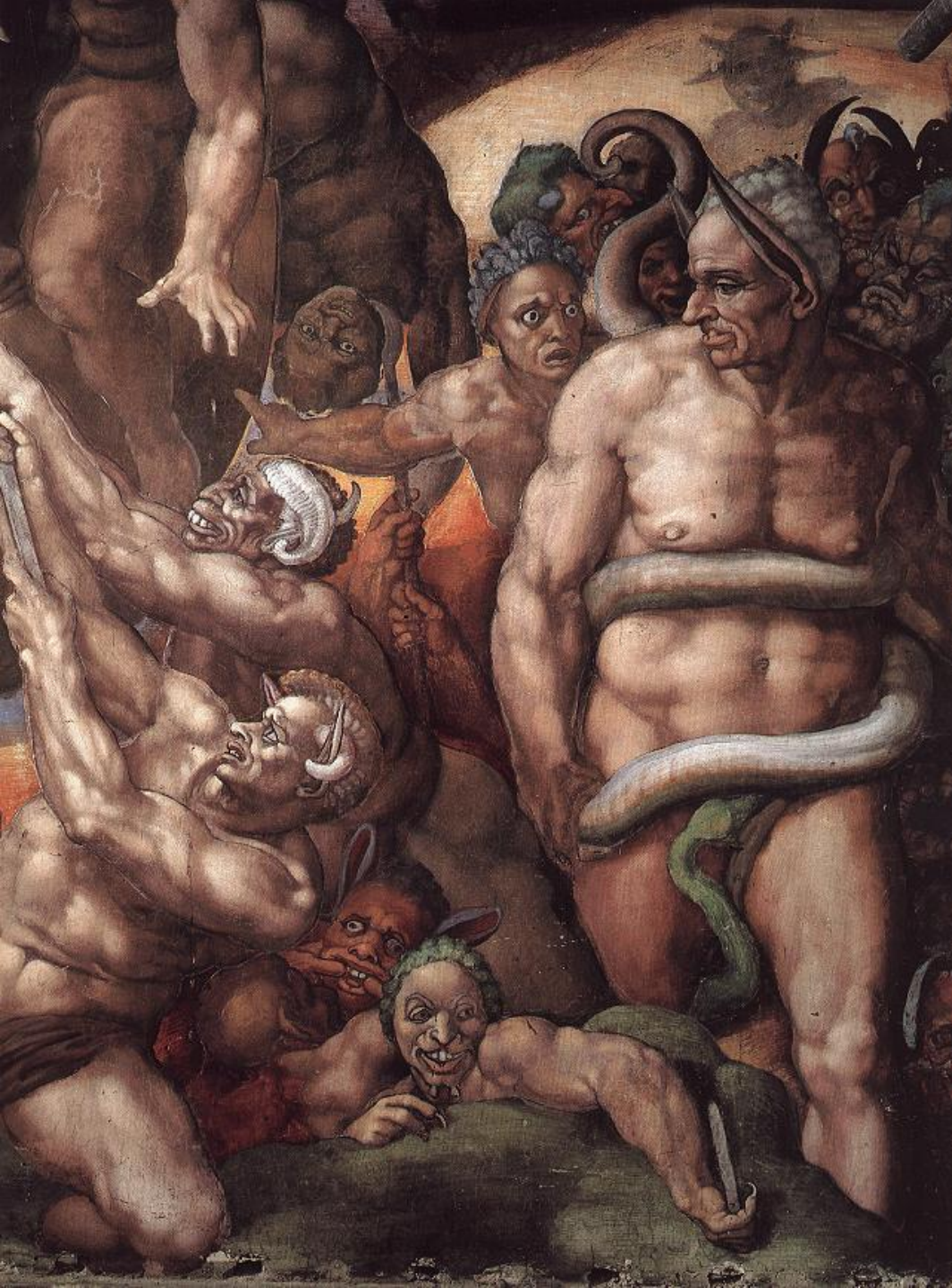


Michelangelo, *Last Judgement*, Sistine Chapel Altar Wall, Fresco, 1536-1542.
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), *Cropped from original*, License: Public Domain

Charon, the classical ferryman of Hades, carries lost souls to hell.



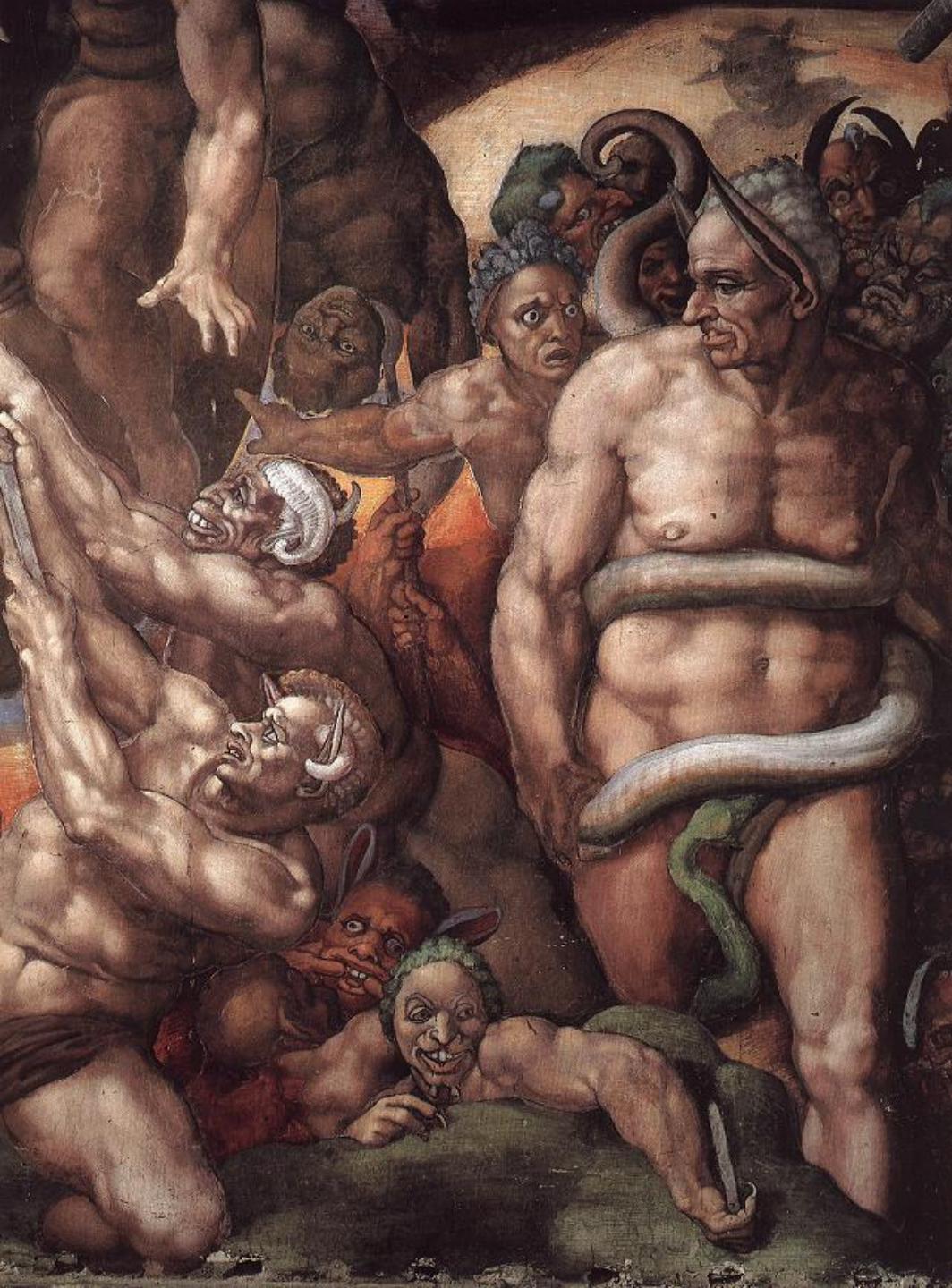
Michelangelo, *Last Judgement*, Sistine Chapel Altar Wall, Fresco, 1536-1542.
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), *Cropped from original*, License: Public Domain



Dante included classical figures in his *Inferno*, the depiction of Hell in his epic poem *Divine Comedy*.

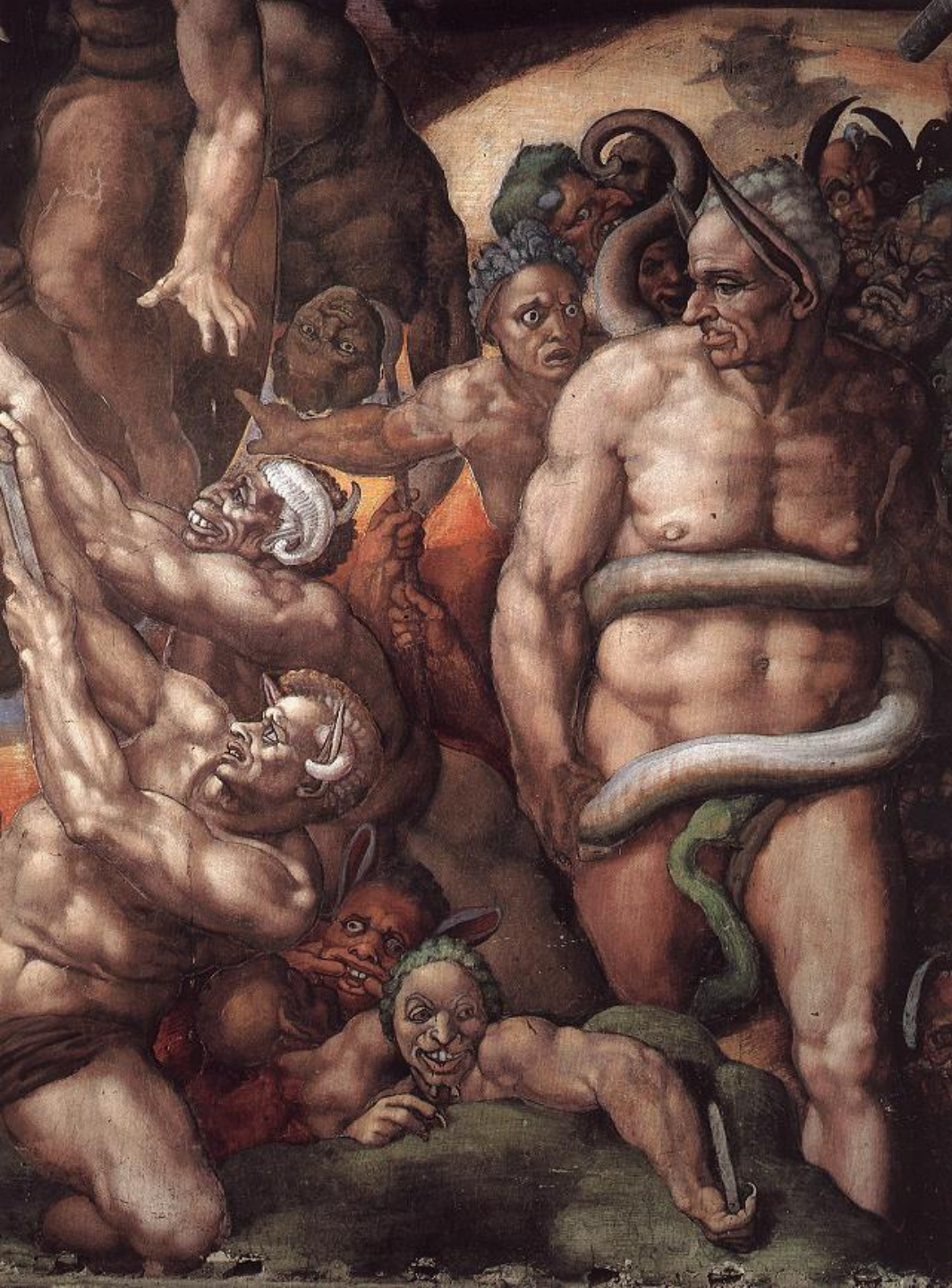
Michelangelo is borrowing from Dante by mixing classical figures from Greek mythology with Christian iconography.

Michelangelo
Last Judgement, Sistine Chapel Altar Wall
Fresco, 1536-1542.
Author: [Web Gallery of Art](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
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In Greek mythology, Minos was a judge in Hades. Accordingly in Dante's *Inferno*, Minos judged the damned and had a serpent-like tail that coiled around him, indicating the circle of Hell to which the sinner would be condemned.

Michelangelo
Last Judgement, Sistine Chapel Altar Wall
Fresco, 1536-1542.
Author: [Web Gallery of Art](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
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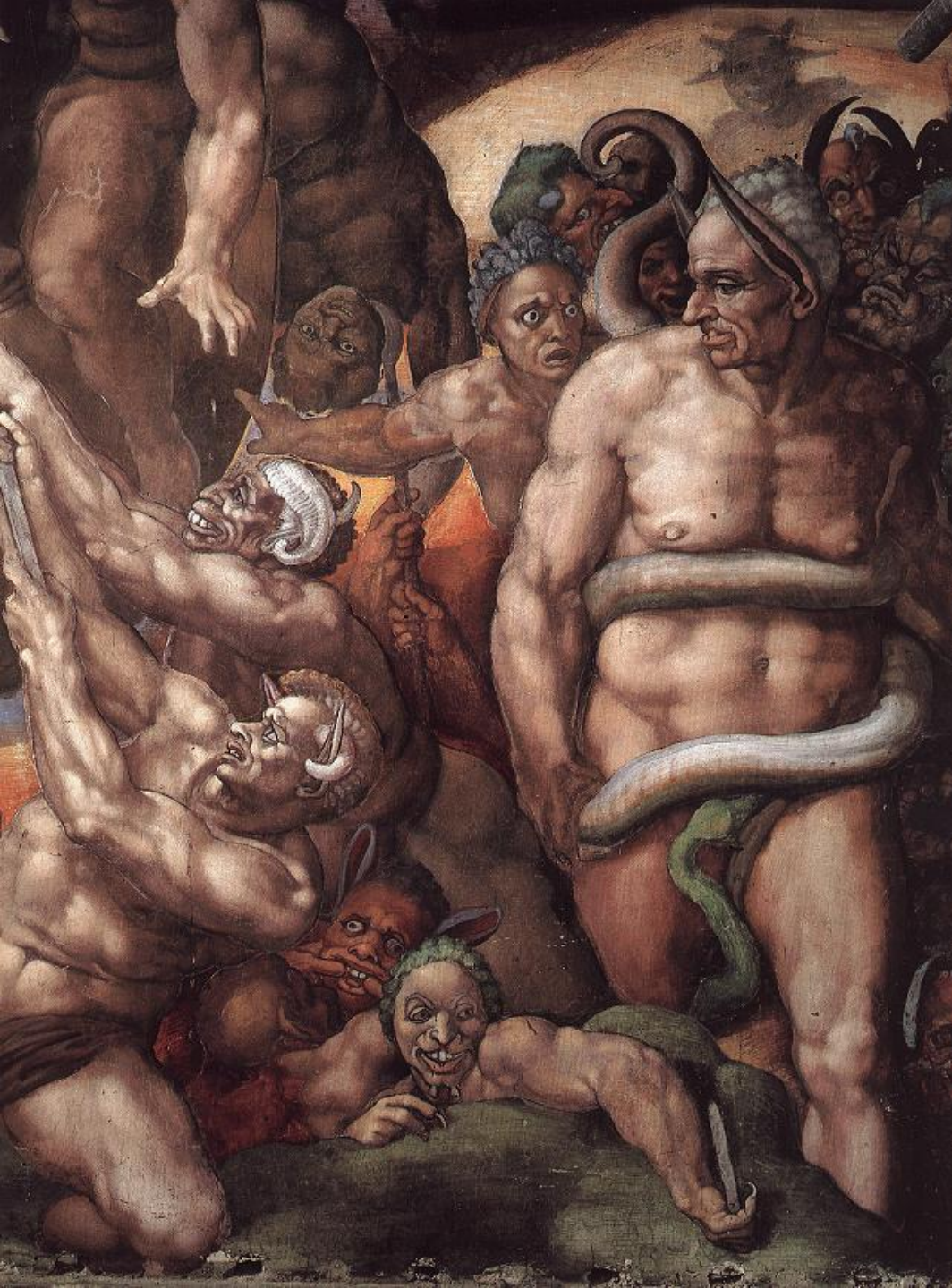
Notice, also, that the serpent appear to be biting the figure around which it coils. This serpent's bite on the breast or genitals is used in Christian art to indicate the sin of lust.

For example, in the Romanesque *Last Judgement* relief carving below, two women have snakes biting their breasts, indicating the sin of lust.



Above: Detail from *Last Judgement Tympanum*, Cathedral of St. Lazare, Autun, c. 1130-46. Author: [Steven Zucker](#), Source: Flickr, License: [CC BY-NC-SA 2.0](#)

Left: Michelangelo, *Last Judgement*, Sistine Chapel Altar Wall Fresco, 1536-1542. Author: [Web Gallery of Art](#). Source: Wikimedia Commons, License: Public Domain



The figure also has the ears of a donkey, linking him with the mythological King Midas.

Midas was asked to judge a music contest between Pan and the powerful god of music, Apollo. When Midas argued that Pan should win the contest, Apollo was angered and gave Midas the ears of a donkey.

Therefore, Midas and his donkey's ears represents the unjust (or tasteless) judge of the arts.

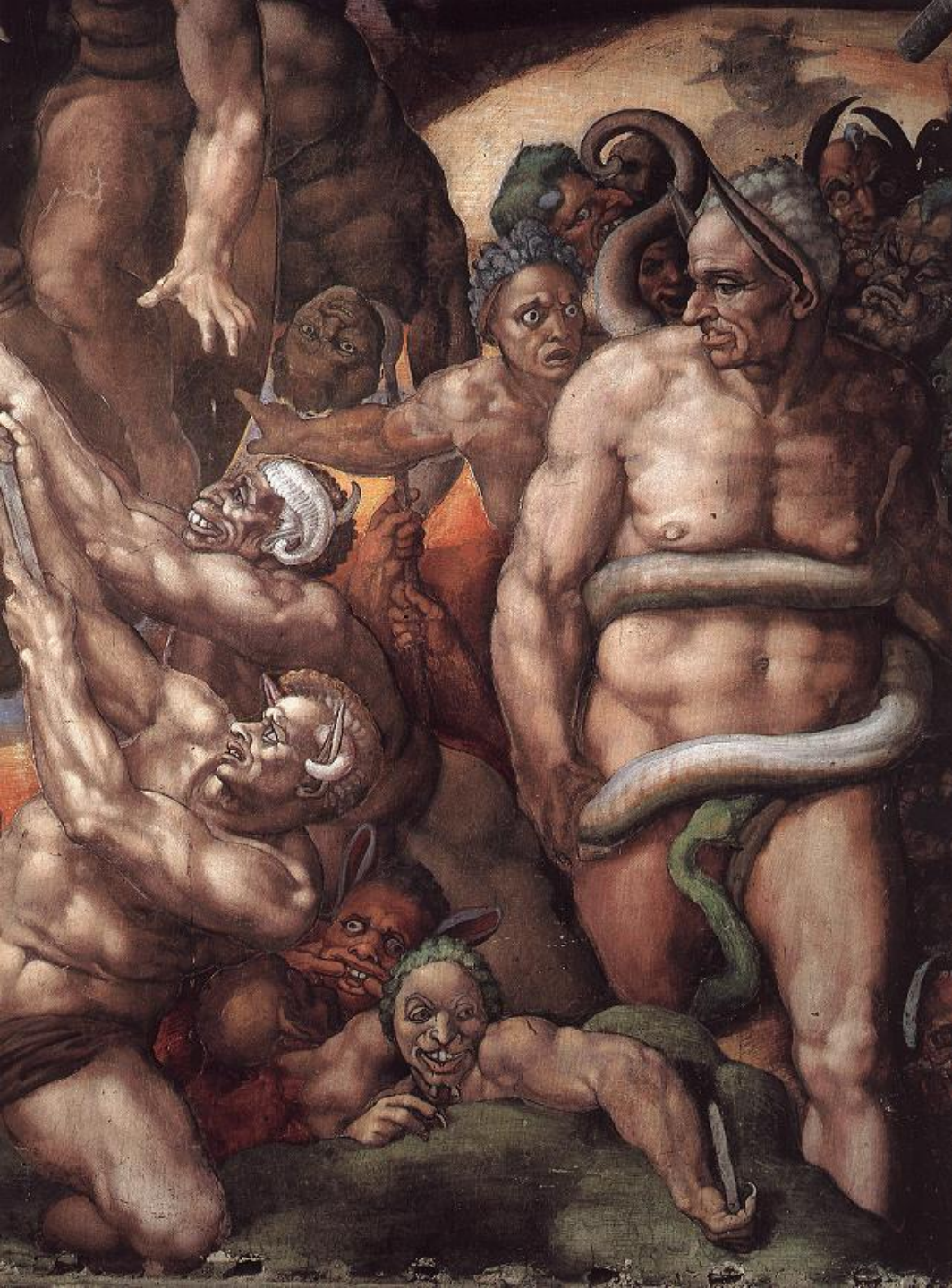
Michelangelo

Last Judgement, Sistine Chapel Altar Wall
Fresco, 1536-1542.

Author: [Web Gallery of Art](#)

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This figure is a combination of Minos, the judge of the dead, Midas, the unjust judge of the arts, and a lustful sinner damned to Hell.

It is actually a portrait of one of Michelangelo's adversaries, Biagio da Cesena, the Papal Master of Ceremonies.

Biagio da Cesena had complained bitterly about Michelangelo's nudes exposing themselves shamefully in a sacred space.

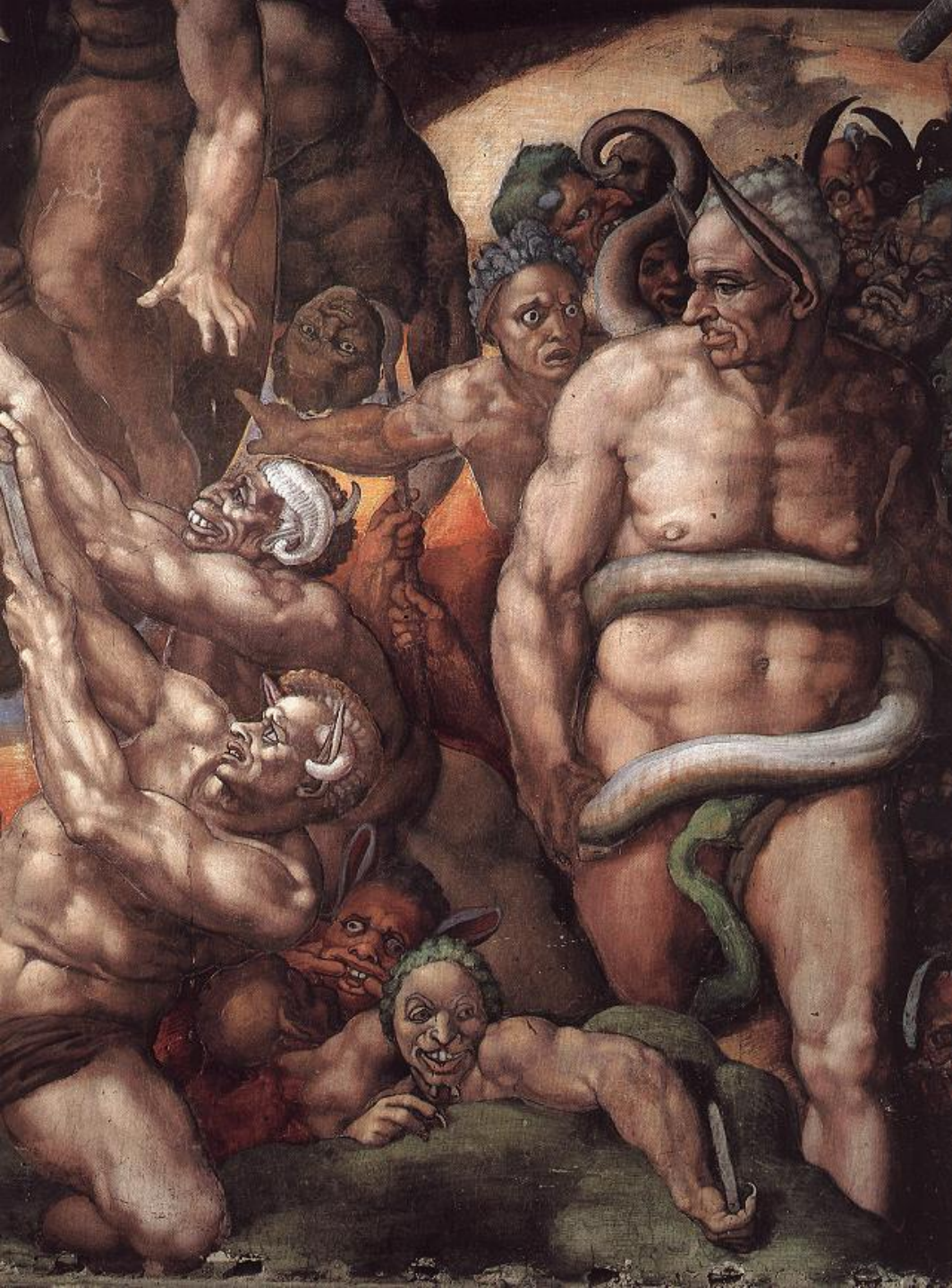
Michelangelo

Last Judgement, Sistine Chapel Altar Wall
Fresco, 1536-1542.

Author: [Web Gallery of Art](#)

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When he saw Michelangelo's *Last Judgement*, Biagio da Cesena complained to the pope that Michelangelo had painted his likeness in Hell and asked that he order Michelangelo to remove the portrait.

However, the pope refused saying that if Biagio da Cesena were in purgatory, he could remove him, but once he is in Hell then it is outside of the pope's control.

Michelangelo
Last Judgement, Sistine Chapel Altar Wall
Fresco, 1536-1542.
Author: [Web Gallery of Art](#)
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#)
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The youthful and beardless Christ in Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* resembles a Greek Apollo figure.



Above Right: *Apollo Belvedere*, c.120–140 CE; copy of bronze original of c.350–325 BCE. Author: [Belmonte77](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

Above Left: Michelangelo, *Last Judgment*, 1536-1542. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), *Cropped from original*, License: Public Domain



Christ appears powerful and wrathful as he lifts his hand in condemnation toward the damned.

Mary, typically seen in Last Judgement scenes as an intercessor who prays for the souls of mankind, instead turns away from Christ's wrath.

Traditionally, Christ is an even-handed judge and Mary is the chief intercessor.



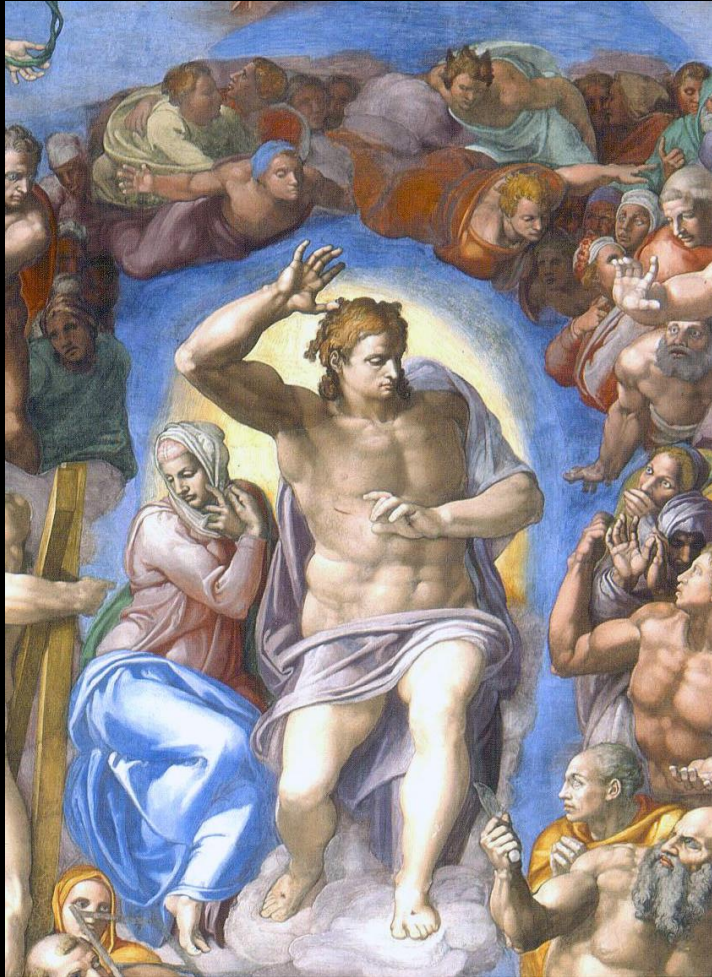
Hans Memling, *Last Judgment*, 1467–1471. Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain



Mary as the chief intercessor prays for the souls of mankind, helping people secure forgiveness.

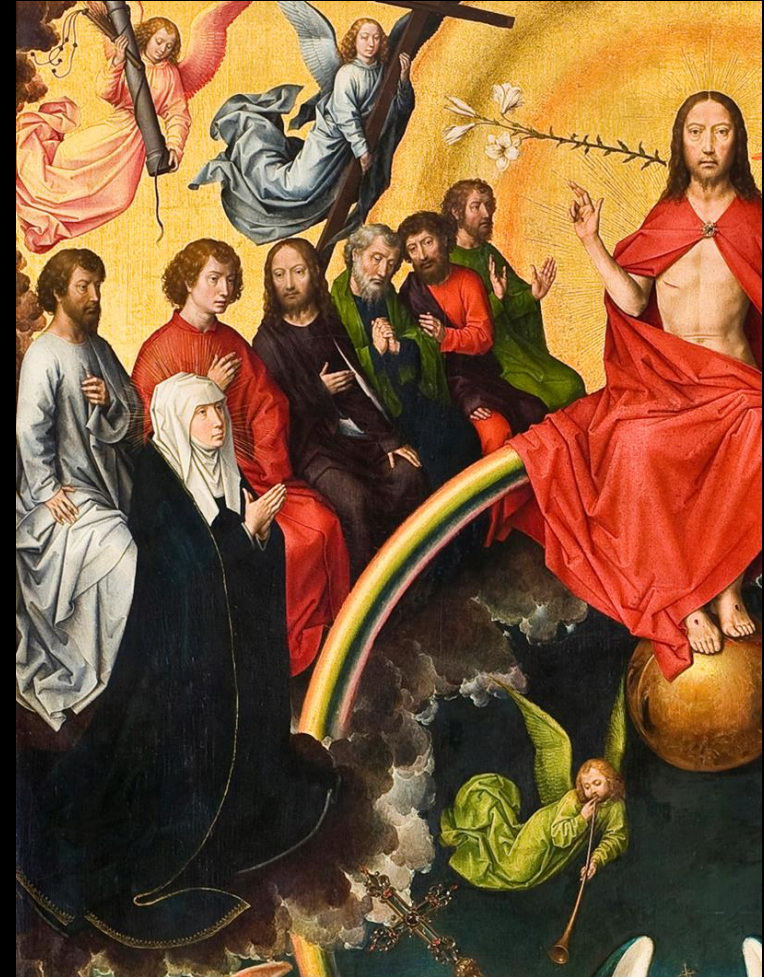
Hans Memling, *Last Judgment*, 1467–1471.
Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain

However, Mary does not intercede in Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*.



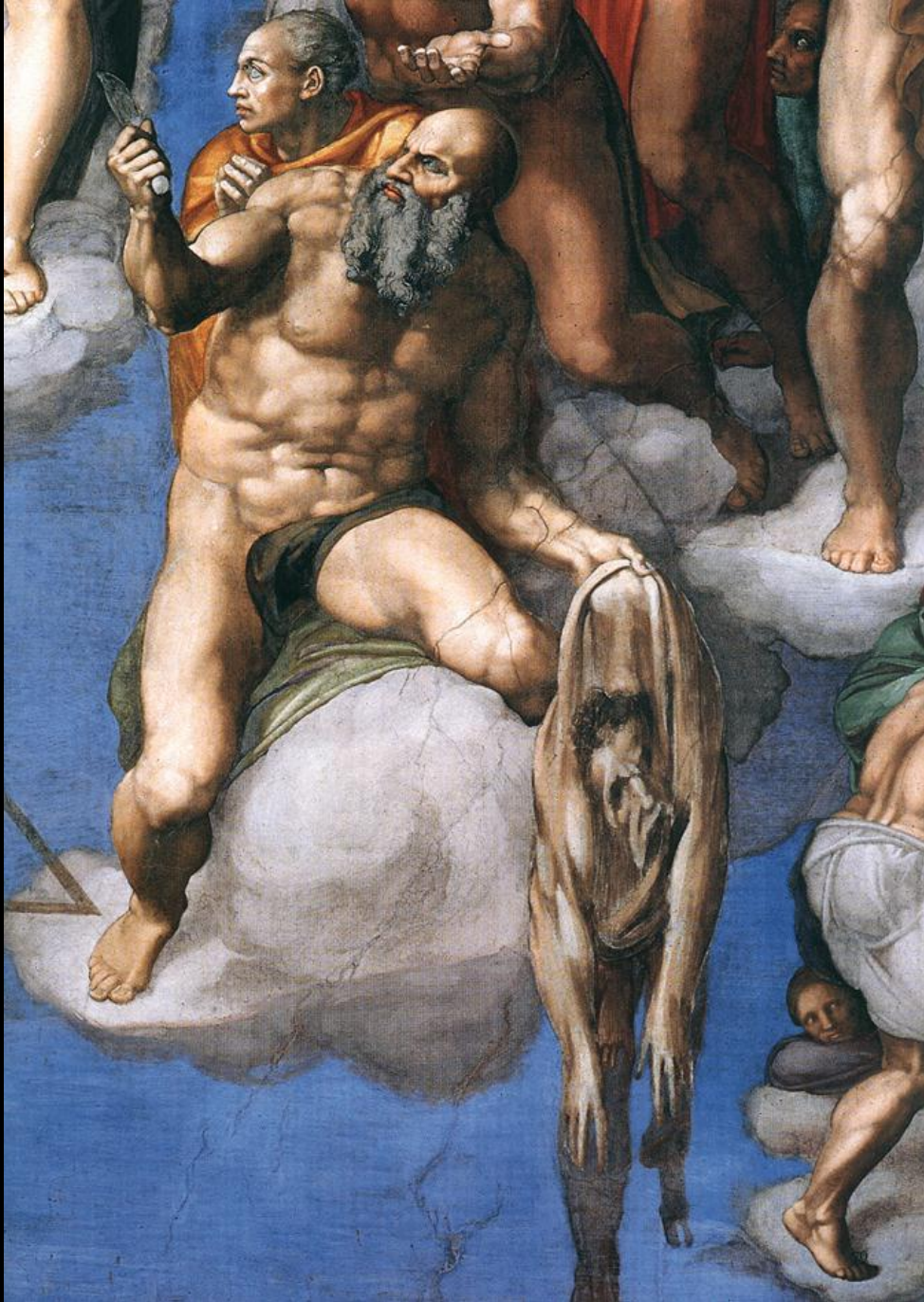
Michelangelo

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), *Cropped from original*, License: Public Domain



Hans Memling

Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain



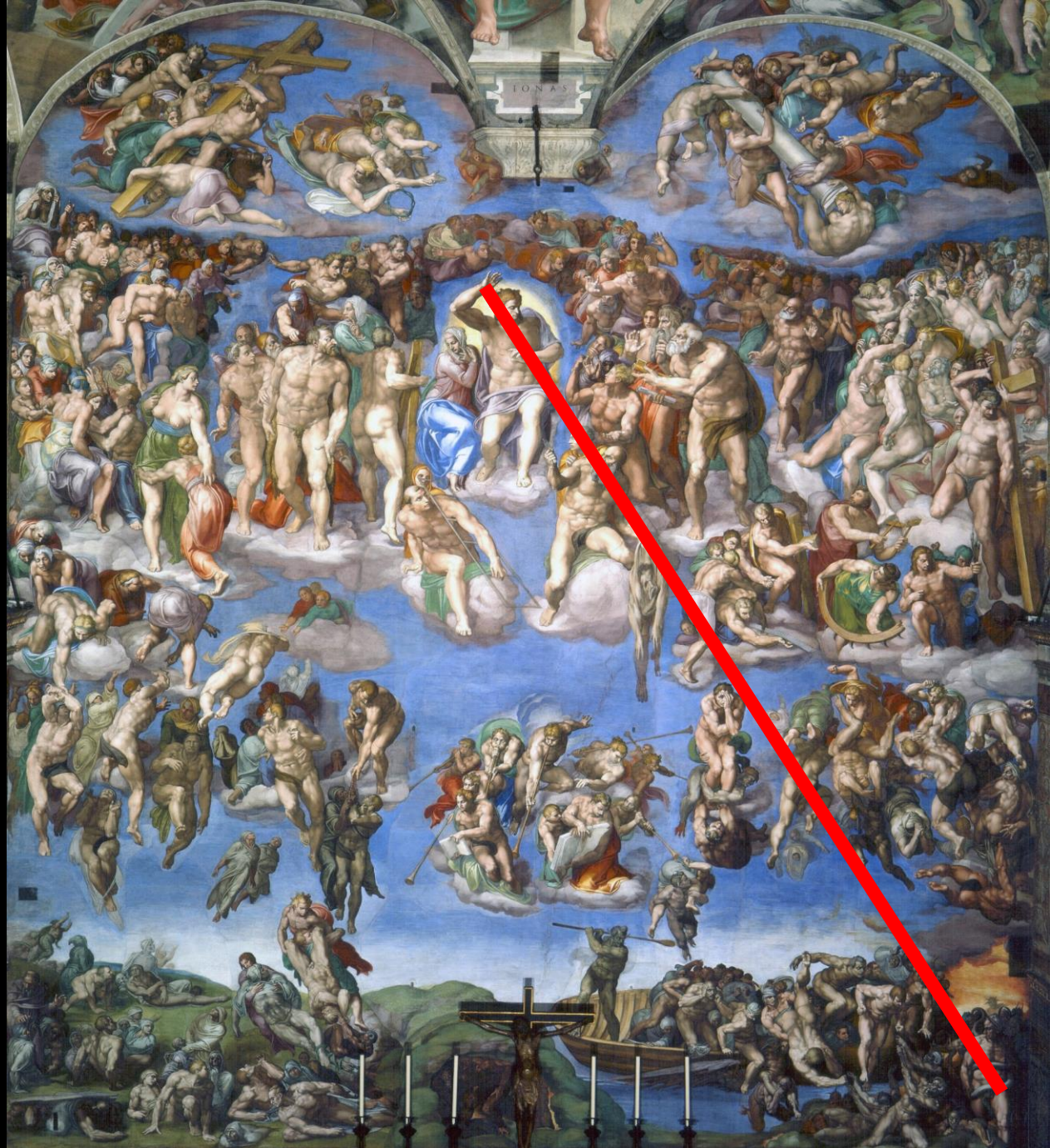
Historians suggest that St. Bartholomew's flayed skin is meant to be a self-portrait of Michelangelo. St. Bartholomew holds flayed skin as a symbol of his martyrdom.

The god Apollo also flayed the satyr Marsyas as punishment for unwisely challenging him to a musical competition.

Perhaps Michelangelo identifies with the satyr Marsyas having spent his life caring for the beauty of his art over the salvation of his soul.

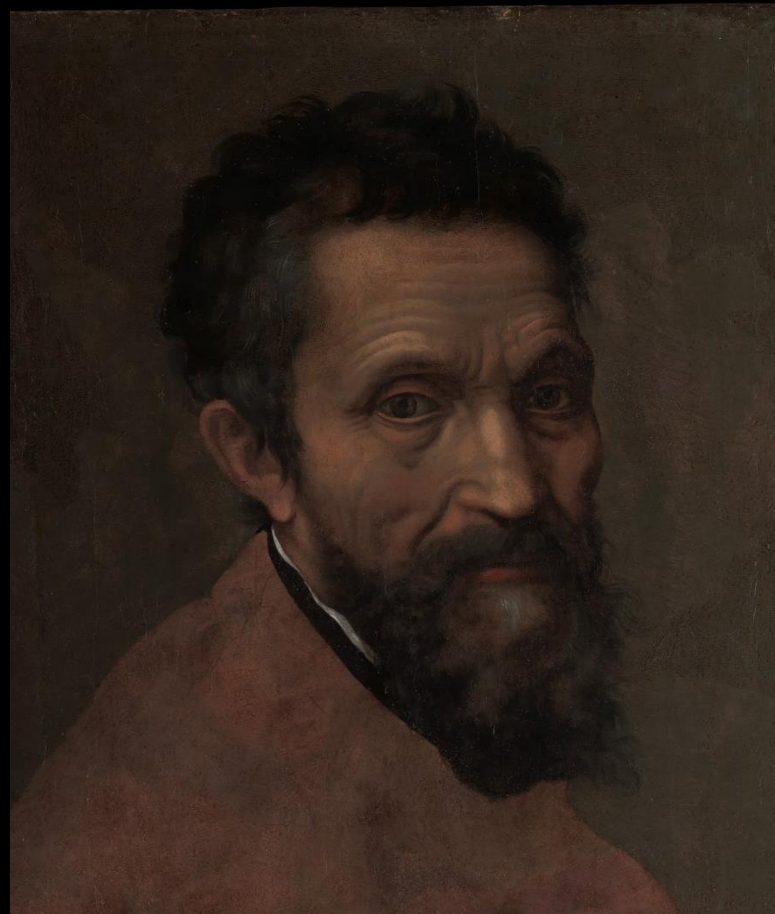
The flayed skin self-portrait of Michelangelo dangles just over the boat crossing the River Styx.

When drawing a diagonal from the raised hand of Christ to the judge of Hell, the flayed skin occupies a precarious position.





Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain



Portrait of Michelangelo Buonarroti
Attributed to Daniele da Volterra, c. 1544
Source: [MET Museum](#), *Cropped form original*,
License: CC0 1.0

Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* is painted on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel.

Imagine the priest standing before it, beneath the powerful figure of Christ and between the realms of the blessed and the damned.





The *Council of Trent* (1545–1563) issued condemnations of the Protestant Reformation and provided new guidelines for the Roman Catholic Church, including a banning (or limitation) of nude figures in papal art.

Just one year after Michelangelo's death, another painter was hired to censor the nudity in the *Last Judgement*.



Known best as the “breeches maker”, Daniele da Volterra painted draperies to cover many of the nude figures in the *Last Judgement*.

And he even removed plaster and completely repainted some of the more scandalizing figures.

Daniel da Volterra had been Michelangelo’s apprentice and painted his portrait during his lifetime, seen below.



Above: Portrait of Michelangelo Buonarroti, Attributed to Daniele da Volterra, c. 1544. Source: [MET Museum](#), *Cropped form original*, License: CC0 1.0

Left: Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), *Cropped from original*, License: Public Domain



A small copy of the original Michelangelo painting survives, which allows us to examine the extent of censorship of the original figures.



Above: Detail of Repainted St. Catherine from Michelangelo's Last Judgement, Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), Cropped from original, License: Public Domain

Left: Copy of Michelangelo's Last Judgement by Marcello Venusti, 1549. Author: [Museum of Capodimonte](#), Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#), License: Public Domain



Reading List: 09_Michelangelo-From High Renaissance to Mannerism

Introductory article about Michelangelo:

<https://smarthistory.org/europe-1300-1800/italy-16th-century/michelangelo/>

Video lecture on Michelangelo's *Pieta*:

<https://smarthistory.org/michelangelo-pieta/>

Video lecture and article on Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling:

<https://smarthistory.org/michelangelo-ceiling-of-the-sistine-chapel/>

Video lecture on Michelangelo's sketch for the Libyan Sibyl:

<https://smarthistory.org/michelangelo-studies-for-the-libyan-sibyl-recto-studies-for-the-libyan-sibyl-and-a-small-sketch-for-a-seated-figure-verso/>

Brief outline about the Roman Jupiter Statue:

<https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/statue-of-jupiter/9gHnD9Jf2FDNDQ>

About the *Barberini Faun*:

<https://smarthistory.org/barberini-faun/>

Brief entry regarding *disegno*:

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/glossary/disegno>

Video lecture and article on Michelangelo's *Last Judgement*:

<https://smarthistory.org/michelangelo-last-judgment/>

Sketchbook Assignment: 09_Michelangelo- From High Renaissance to Mannerism

Write two paragraphs about which works of Michelangelo's you prefer: High Renaissance or Mannerist. Why do you prefer one over the other? Do you have a favorite work of art by Michelangelo within your preferred category? Why?