

Never being boring: Filippino Lippi, Michelangelo and the concept of chapel decoration

There were surprisingly few circumstances that linked Filippino Lippi and Michelangelo Buonarroti directly, and, indeed, they were very dissimilar as artists. Their approaches, notably evident in drawing, were markedly different: Filippino characteristically had a scintillating elegance and lightness of touch that was largely alien to Michelangelo, who had been formed in quite another ambience, as a pupil of Domenico Ghirlandaio. Yet it is generally understood that the extraordinary Carafa Chapel at Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome and Strozzi Chapel at Santa Maria Novella in Florence, are immediate precedents for Michelangelo's solutions in the Sistine Chapel.¹

Although from different generations, they were peers among the elite of Florentine artists in the years around 1500. They were both commissioned to contribute to the decoration of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio.² Filippino was among the artists to advise on the placement of the giant statue of *David* in January 1504.³ He argued that Michelangelo's opinion about the location should be respected, suggesting positive relations between the two artists. These connections are still quite remote but there is also the odd and evidently garbled story in the *Anonimo Magliabechiano*, notes on Florentine artists compiled in the fifteen thirties and forties.⁴ According to this, Michelangelo was interdicted for spilling someone's

¹ J. Nelson, P. Zambrano, *Filippino Lippi*, Milan 2004, 529. C. Brothers, *Michelangelo, Drawing and the Invention of Architecture*, New Haven/London 2008, 49-50, 96

² M. Hirst, *Michelangelo, The Achievement of Fame 1475-1534*, New Haven/London 2011, 57

³ G. Gaye, *Carteggio inedito d'artisti dei secoli XIV, XV, XVI*, Florence 1839-40, II, 455.

⁴ Michele Agnolo quando era interdetto per sparsione di sangue di uno de Lippi [interdetto], entro la in una volta, doue erano moltj depositj di mortj, et quiuj fece notomia di assaj corpo et tagliò et sparò, aqualj a caso prese uno de Corsinj, che ne fu gran rumore, fatto dalla casata de dettj Corsinj. Et fume fatta richiama a Piero Soderinj, allora gonfaloniere di iustitia, del che ei rise, ueggiendo hauerlo fatto per aquistare nell' arte sua. C. Frey, ed., *Il Codice Magliabechiano cl. XVII.17: contenente notizie sopra l'arte degli antichi e quella de' fiorentini da Cimabue a Michelangelo Buonarroti, scritte da anonimo fiorentino*, Berlin 1892, 115.

blood, described as ‘one of the Lippis’, and then hiding the body in a vault where he carried out anatomical investigations on the corpses he found there. As a result, he was brought before Piero Soderini, who laughingly pardoned him as ‘he had done it to progress in his art’. This might have been in 1501, since Soderini is merely called *Gonfaloniere di Justizia*. While there is no reason to be certain that the initial body was someone of Filippino Lippi’s family, it conceivably might have been an associate, a pupil or assistant; though possibly, equally well, it might have been a member of a different family of the same name. In any case this most probably falls in the category of ‘fake news’ but as is now well understood that does not mean that it is not significant. This intriguing and under-considered story may disrupt the comfortable familiar or documented patterns of artistic formation and patronage that a more restrictive history of art often insists upon. Moreover, the association of anatomy with the macabre was one Michelangelo certainly made himself, as he exploited the sentiment forcibly in the lower section of the *Last Judgement*, contrasting bare skeletons to fully-fleshed bodies. In fact, Filippino played with such imagery in the Strozzi Chapel, where the angels above the donor’s tomb play with skulls and Drusiana comes to back to life on a bier surmounted, quite comically, by a grinning skull. So, in this area at the least, the two artists shared a sense of humour.

Michelangelo’s emphatic rejection of a key part of his artistic formation, to the point of suppressing the truth of his apprenticeship as a painter with Domenico Ghirlandaio in the personally sanctioned biography of his pupil Condivi, indicates, perhaps, an inclination or a need to break away.⁵ While, as has been generally acknowledged, the influence of Ghirlandaio is very apparent, throughout his career Michelangelo returned repeatedly to visual ideas drawn more broadly from a wide

⁵ A. Condivi, *Vita di Michelagnolo*, ed. G. Nencioni, Florence 1998, 9-10.

range of artistic practice and experience in Florence in the decade and a half before 1500, a period of extraordinary diversity and variety. Filippino was then an outstanding figure and a telling example of what it was to be a successful painter both in Florence and Rome where Michelangelo was making his own career.

In this world Filippino must have appeared in distinct contrast to Ghirlandaio, perhaps the normative artist for late fifteenth-century Florence. It might be tempting to think of Filippino's elegant style as a market strategy articulating particularity and difference. Vasari's characterization of Filippino, specifically in terms of the revival of the antique, was of 'such copious invention in painting and most bizarre and new in his ornaments', indicating an inspiring precedent.⁶ Michelangelo's situation after 1500 was rather different from that of Filippino. The younger man was increasingly a court or a state artist, perhaps not subject to market competition, but, nevertheless the need to stand out as a singular talent was also important as a professional and to his self-conceit as artist.

However, it may have been necessity, as much as admiration, that led Michelangelo to take Filippino as an example. The design of the Sistine ceiling, a required and certainly not initially a desired task, seems to have been devised in an extraordinarily short period by a fairly inexperienced painter. Although first mooted in 1506, Michelangelo does not seem to have done any work on it until Spring 1508. According to Michelangelo, a relatively simpler scheme of *Twelve Apostles* and decorative elements had been rejected in favour of the larger executed version with *Prophets and Sibyls, Ancestors of Christ* and a major series of narrative images of Genesis set in a complex architectural scheme.⁷ It was his first intention to employ

⁶ *Di sì copiosa invenzione nella pittura e tanto bizzaro e nouo ne' suoi oranamenti*, G. Vasari, *Le Vite dei piu eccellenti Pittori Scultori e Architettori nelle le redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, ed. R. Bettarini, P. Barocchi, Florence 1966-1987, III, 559-60.

⁷ G Poggi, P. Barocchi, R. Ristori, eds., *Il Carteggio di Michelangelo*, Florence 1965-1979, III, 8-9.

quite a large team of qualified masters to help him execute the work in an expedite fashion, which presumably required a substantial amount of pre-planning and preparation in a quite brief time frame in order that they should help substantially in the execution.⁸ Given this pressure it is not surprising that Michelangelo may have appropriated ideas from a number of sources including Filippino.

The first scene of the ceiling was the *Drunkenness of Noah*. The back view of one of Noah's sons harks back to the youth who raises the cross in the *Martyrdom of St. Peter*, one of the scenes that Filippino painted in his completion of the Brancacci Chapel in the mid 1480's. Though Filippino's figure leans back at an angle hauling at the pulley, it is difficult to believe that Michelangelo did not have the oval shape of the head and the curve of the back to some extent in mind (fig. 1, 2). Furthermore, Filippino's careful anatomical exploration of the interaction of youths and an older man in the *Martyrdom* may have prompted Michelangelo's unconventional approach to his subject, seemingly at odds with the ostensible theme of shame, with the sons as well as the father naked.

While Michelangelo's approach to the nude is hugely original there is a sense in which the *ignudi* develops a form of adolescent nude that Filippino had explored with the *Raising of the son of Theophilus* in the Brancacci Chapel. This is particularly true for the *ignudi* in the first half of ceiling, notably those over *Joel* and the *Delphic Sibyl*, after which the musculature becomes considerably heavier. According to Vasari the model for the son was Francesco Granacci, a friend of Michelangelo, and a fellow apprentice in the studio of Ghirlandaio, and the leader of the group of Florentine artists hired to help execute Michelangelo's project in the Sistine Chapel.⁹ Such a connection between Filippino and Michelangelo would have both been

⁸ Hirst, op. cit. (note 2), 91-94.

⁹ Vasari, op. cit. (note 6), 561.

remarkable and visceral since it turned on the representation of the male nude, based on life study, that was a focus for both artists. The figure based on Granacci was not just beautiful, it was also, demonstrably, a public example of a nude study of an identifiable body. Since it is normal to acknowledge Masaccio's crucial influence on Michelangelo and the importance of drawing in the Brancacci Chapel to him, it is worth reflecting on how Filippino's inspired completion of this decoration of the first half of the 1480s offered a significantly different approach than that he would have imbibed in Ghirlandaio's studio. Masaccio, viewed via Ghirlandaio, reflected, for example, in the *Calling of the Apostles* of 1481 in the Sistine Chapel, was sonorous but also ponderous and staid. Filippino's intervention, in the Brancacci Chapel, by contrast, responded to the liveliness in drawing and colour shared by both Masaccio and Masolino, despite profound differences of approach. Moreover, Michelangelo's handling of fresco was significantly freer than that of Ghirlandaio, from which it substantially derived, and perhaps this was stimulated by the example of Filippino.

The impact of Filippino may have gone beyond the borrowing of individual figures or refining the notion of life study. The ceiling scheme has nine narrative fields and Michelangelo, having opted principally for sculpture, had relatively little experience in the invention of composition. Tentatively it may be suggested that the interaction of the main protagonists in Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam* owes something to Filippino's *Vision of St Bernard* of 1480, painted for the monastery of the Campora at Marignole, and now in the church of the Badia in Florence (fig. 3, 4).¹⁰

¹⁰ Nelson, Zambrano, op. cit. (note 1), 346-347.

The hands of the Virgin and the Saint hover above the text and do not touch while the eyes engage. The Virgin's head in authoritative profile, set higher than that of Bernard, which is slightly inclined to one side, is echoed in Adam's and God's heads on the ceiling: the eyes engage, precluding any need for touch, reifying inspiration. This is deftly used in the crucial idea for the *Creation of Adam*, as clay becomes living and breathing flesh. Finally, the Virgin's accompanying angels prefigure God the Father's wriggling companions. In a further Adam scene, the *Temptation*, Eve's head, tilted to one side, framed by waving brown curls, looking up to the profile of a woman's head on the serpent, recalls Adam's head similarly tilted towards the female serpent in Filippino's own representation of Adam among the *Four Patriarchs* in the vault of the Strozzi Chapel.¹¹

Although these were important contributions to the decoration of a chapel, they were essentially opportunistic, indicating, perhaps, a relative lack of practice as a painter on Michelangelo's part. To go further, Filippino provided an example for a strategy of decoration in its broadest sense. This included issues, both iconographic and formal, of accommodating mural and vault painting to requirements defined by a predetermined space, of which Michelangelo had no previous experience of devising. However Filippino's work seems also to have had a broader structural impact. It may have in part prompted the move from an initial project of *Apostles* to one of *Prophets and Sibyls*; and the *Genesis* cycle was an appreciation that this might be better suited to the dedication of the Sistine Chapel, which was to the Virgin. In this case the Carafa Chapel, also dedicated to the Virgin, is an obvious precedent of which everyone, including the Pope, would have been aware, including the representation of the *Sibyls*, the ancient prophetesses foretelling the Virgin birth and the coming of

¹¹ Ibid, 586.

Christ.¹² Perhaps unsurprisingly, Michelangelo did not appropriate any of Filippino's figures directly but he clearly was inspired by their extreme variety, which radically developed the range of the representation of the previously rather staid, front facing, *Sibyls*. In his *Libyan Sibyl* Michelangelo specifically echoed the back view of Filippino's *Carafa Delphic Sibyl*. Again, on the Sistine Ceiling, accompanying *putti* to *Prophets and Sibyls* followed the example of subsidiary angels who accompany the *Sibyls*, doing lively things with books on the vault of the Carafa Chapel. What Michelangelo also realized was the dynamic quality of the curved triangular field that he was to exploit, both in the four major corner spandrels, and especially in the minor ones over the lunettes, where he specifically echoes Filippino's *Sibyls* seated on the ground for the additional images of the *Ancestors of Christ*.

It worth considering broader motivation. The statement that Michelangelo made a few years later indicates that the key commitment in designing the Ceiling was to create something splendid. 'The first design for that work was the twelve apostles... The rest a kind of compartment full of the usual ornaments. Then the work having begun, it seemed to me that it would come out a poor thing... So he [The Pope] gave me a new commission that I could do what I wanted.'¹³ In the middle of the century, in vivid and complex evocation of the design of the ceiling in emphatically architectural terms which stressed the diversity of elements and their arrangement, Condivi stressed that the ceiling, as executed, was specifically designed with the intention of not being tedious, with a phrase that may have defined

¹² Ibid, 579-584.

¹³ *l' disegno primo di decta opera furono dodici Apostoli... e l' resto un certo partimento ripieno d'adornamenti chome s'usa. Dipoi, cominciata decta opera, mi parve riuscissi cosa povera... Allora mi decte nuova chommensione che io facessi ciò che io volevo* C.Poggi, op. cit. (note 7), 8

Michelangelo's aesthetic purpose. 'And he did this to escape the tediousness that is born of similitude.'¹⁴

Condivi's description was an emphatic rejection of Vasari's implication that the Ceiling was merely a decorative arrangement and not a genuinely spatial or architectural illusion.¹⁵ The passages cited ornament and arrangement but, by extension the representation of architecture was being considered. In short Michelangelo's concern was that his work should stand out, being distinctive and complex or, put simply, not be boring. While many things contribute to the design and its fictive architecture of the Ceiling, Filippino's example is crucial. Filippino's conception of architecture in the Carafa and Strozzi Chapels was particularly significant for Michelangelo. For Filippino, architecture had both the quality of vividly represented buildings and also served as an assertive narrative element. It was quite different from the role almost of perspective stage set which it had normally served for Ghirlandaio and Perugino and their followers.

Filippino is a truly distinguished exponent of architectural ideas. An outstanding example is found in details of the Carafa Chapel, which anticipate by ten years features of Donato Bramante's Roman architecture, notably in the fragmentary building to the left of the enthronement of St Thomas Aquinas. Here the module of an arch flanked by piers surmounted by a trabeated loggia supported by a central Corinthian pillar prefigures Bramante's Cloister at Santa Maria della Pace, and the double baluster balustrade prefigures that of the Tempietto. This matters in this context because Bramante, despite Michelangelo's later attempt to denigrate him, seems to have been involved in the ceiling project at the commission and design

¹⁴ *Et questo ha fatto per fuggir la sacietà, che nasce dalla similitudine.* Condivi, op. cit. (note 5), 31

¹⁵ C. Robertson, 'Riflessioni sulle architetture dipinte della Capella Sistina', in K. Weil-Garris Brandt, *Michelangelo e la Capella Sistina, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Roma, marzo 1990*, Vatican/Tokyo/Novara 1994, 155-157.

stage, particularly influencing some architectural elements.¹⁶ Quite how Filippino had achieved this degree of architectural fluency is unclear as this interest is not apparent in his surviving autograph drawings. Perhaps the several lost sketch books described by Benvenuto Cellini, as containing ‘representations after the beautiful antiquities of Rome’ might fill this gap.¹⁷ One example of how profound his understanding of architecture was is evident in a preparatory drawing for the *Sacrifice of Laocoon* of about 1493 for Poggio a Caiano, now in Moscow, which presents an alternative approach to the eventual solution.¹⁸ In the Moscow drawing a Tuscan/Doric building is contrasted with a Corinthian/Composite one in a manner that prefigures theoretical practice of the next century. Filippino again shows a precocious understanding of the Tuscan in his *Mystic Marriage of St Catherine* altarpiece, painted for San Domenico in Bologna in 1501, which prefigures Michelangelo’s later exploration of this order in the Biblioteca Laurenziana.¹⁹ Part of what explains Michelangelo’s growing sophistication as an architectural designer around the period of the ceiling and beyond perhaps should be put down to an engagement with Filippino’s inventions.

Michelangelo may in fact have begun to consider Filippino’s architecture even before the Ceiling as he developed the design for the Tomb of Julius II. One of the earliest schemes for the Tomb, the drawing in the Metropolitan Museum in New York shows how Michelangelo engaged with Filippino’s ideas (fig. 5).²⁰

¹⁶ C. Robertson, ‘Bramante, Michelangelo and the Sistine Ceiling’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 49 (1986), 91-105.

¹⁷ *ritratti dalle belle anticaglie di Roma*, B. Cellini, *La vita*, ed. G. D. Bonino, Turin 1973, 27

¹⁸ Nelson, Zambrano, op. cit. (note 1), 590, cat. no. 44.

¹⁹ Ibid., 604-05, cat. no. 62. Filippino’s use of plain double pilasters in this painting closely follows Giuliano da Sangallo’s design for Santa Maria delle Carceri at Prato. I am grateful to David Hemsoll and Paul Davies for this point.

²⁰ C. Bambach, *Michelangelo: Divine Draftsman & Designer*, cat. exh. New York (Metropolitan Museum), 2017, 296, cat. no. 69.

In general appearance, particularly the relationship between the figures and architecture in the drawing resemble The Altar of Mars that dominates *St Philip driving the dragon from the Temple of Hieropolis* in the Strozzi Chapel. This has a similar tiered structure set around a wide curving wall-like niche of the tomb project (fig. 6). There is a rather similar delicate, almost febrile quality in the figures, with tilted heads and billowing garments. The sculpted figures interact with the architecture that supports them in Michelangelo's scheme, recalling the mix of live and fictive sculpted figures in Filippino's invention. More broadly, Vasari's vague but evocative explanation of the Pope and Michelangelo's shared intention for the tomb 'which should outdo any antique imperial sepulchre in beauty, pride and invention' articulates what Filippino was also aiming at in his *all'antica* image of an ancient shrine of Mars.²¹ For Michelangelo, Filippino seems to have contributed to the standard of what the imitation of the antique might achieve. Indeed, at this early stage, Filippino's vision certainly outstripped Michelangelo's in strictly *all'antica* terms.

When it came to designing the ceiling a number of aspects of Filippino's architecture were to be important for Michelangelo. The first, demonstrated by the altar wall of the Strozzi Chapel, was the representation of architectural elements that seem to project into the viewer's space, derived from the attached columns of triumphal arches. The form of thrusting cornice and frieze emphasised by the receding diagonal above attached columns repeats in the giant entablature and cornice that houses the Prophets and Sybils. The device of the sharp recession of the returning mouldings is a close echo of the conventions of architectural demonstration drawings before the development of elevation projection. Filippino expanded the potential

²¹ *la quale di bellezza, di superbia e d'invenzione passasse ogni antica imperiale sepoltura*: G. Vasari, *La Vita di Michelangelo nelle redazioni del 1550 e del 1568*, 5 vols., ed. P. Barocchi, Milan, 1962, I, 28.

meaning of architectural representation. The cool white gray monochrome of the altar wall that frames the tomb of the donor, Filippo Strozzi, signifies death. In contrast, the lateral narrative scenes, in particular the scene of St Philip, are strongly polychrome, with the verdigris green of the capitals and gilded bronze cornices, coloured marble columns, and porphyry moldings. Though in a more limited way, Michelangelo painted architecture and ornament that combined grisaille and polychrome with white marble, purple stone work, which probably referenced the fragmentary porphyry revetment of the Arch of Constantine, and imitation gilded bronze.

The notion of a painted architecture peopled with fictive sculpture is prefigured by Filippino, and Michelangelo's fictive sculpture plinths owe much to Filippino's Altar of Mars in the Strozzi chapel. To go further, living figures such as the infants below the tablets with the names of the Prophets and Sibyls derive from those above the entablature of the Throne of St Thomas Aquinas in the Carafa Chapel. There are a multitude of other parallels as forms and figures, slip, as it were, back and forth from sculpture to architecture, imitated in paint. Less concretely, yet no less importantly Filippino conceived of architecture as subject, not merely setting, and both the structure around the throne for St Thomas Aquinas and the Altar of Mars provide meaning as well as structure and compositional organisation. Michelangelo's brilliant, indeed unique conception of the ceiling as a convincing evocation of architecture took up this challenge. In filling the central field of the ceiling with a unified architectural scheme cut off by the framing zigzag of the spandrels from the chapel, he created a discrete structure for the central exegetical message of the ceiling, creation and God's covenant and the foretelling of the Messiah, to which

discontinuously the spandrels and lunettes are in a way simply juxtaposed, setting out the antitypes for Christ's sacrifice and his ancestors.

Filippino's willingness to entertain different contrasting solutions was a crucial precedent for Michelangelo. Particularly in the Strozzi Chapel the altar wall is treated quite differently from the side walls. The ceiling is an assemblage of elements and indeed an augmentation of the earlier decoration of Sixtus IV. This additive process is a quality which it shares with both the Strozzi and Carafa Chapels, which may both be considered as compilations with coherent themes rather than rigorously focused iconographic projects. Filippo interestingly contrasted the framing architecture of both chapels with the architecture represented in the scenes; and similarly Michelangelo set up a comparison between the framing architecture of the Medici Chapel and the internal architecture of the wall tombs. With the Medici Tombs he returned to the interface between sculpture and architecture, a notable feature of the Strozzi altar wall that accommodates the actual carved tomb in addition to the elaborate painted wall treatment reminiscent of a triumphal arch. Specifically, the finished pen and wash drawing for the Medici tombs in the Louvre is strongly reminiscent of the tiered structure of Filippo's Altar of Mars.²² The term figures and military trophies in the attic storey of the drawing were derived directly from Filippo's conception. Michelangelo also adapted the Victory and Captive figures that crown the Mars Altar in various iterations of the basement of the tomb project for Julius II. Beyond particular devices and forms that Michelangelo seems to have found delightful, Filippo provided Michelangelo with an object lesson in chapel

²² Louvre, Département des Art Graphiques, Paris, 838 C. de Tolnay, *Corpus dei Disegni di Michelangelo*, Novara 1975-80, 4 vols. II, pp 30-31, no. 186.

decoration, required as painting in the Sistine Ceiling or as worked stone in the New Sacristy.

Filippino may well have continued to be important to Michelangelo. Vasari's account from the mid sixteenth century underlines that Filippino was seen as a hugely talented artist who remained generally relevant, effectively almost a contemporary, a point which was also confirmed by Cellini's admiration. Furthermore, Filippino is also one of the few fifteenth century painters, who by virtue of Cristofano Robetta's engravings had a significant, if somewhat muddled reproduced graphic afterlife and consequently currency.²³ For career reasons, largely as a result of his problematic involvement in the Republican rebellion in Florence against the Medici, in the years around 1530 Michelangelo moved from sculpture and architecture to create and design paintings and highly finished graphic works, the so-called presentation drawings, covering both religious and mythological subjects, in both of which areas Filippino could have provided important precedents. Michelangelo's design for the devotional panel the *Noli Me Tangere*, ultimately made as a gift for Vittoria Colonna, realised by Jacopo Pontormo, recalls Filippino's invention, exemplified by the exquisite small altar piece the *Meeting at the Golden Gate*, 1497, now in Copenhagen.²⁴ Michelangelo's design and indeed Pontormo's own *Visitation* in the parish church of San Michele e San Francesco, Carmignano, of 1528-29, depend for their impact on the movement of elegant draped figures to impress the viewer in an intensely dramatic way echoing Filippino's precedent, resonating precisely with the point Vasari made.

²³ Nelson, Zambrano, op. cit. (note 1), 529

²⁴ There are two versions, ascribed to Pontormo: Private collection, Busto Arsizio; and Casa Buonarroti, Florence. See V. Romani in *Vittoria Colonna e Michelangelo*, cat. exh. Florence (Casa Buonarroti), 2005, ed. P. Ragionieri, 86-88, cat. no. 21. Filippino Lippi, *Meeting at the Golden Gate*, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen. Nelson, Zambrano, op. cit. (note 1), 596, cat. no. 53.

In Rome the mid 1530s, working again for the Medici Pope, Clement VII, Michelangelo had a new task, the reworking of the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel to create the *Last Judgement* (fig. 7). As Johannes Wilde astutely realised, the early conception for this, shown in a drawing in the Casa Buonarroti Florence, in which the original altar piece of the *Assumption of the Virgin* from Sixtus IV's decoration of the chapel around 1480, was to be surrounded with the *Judgement* scene, was clearly inspired by the arrangement of the altar wall of the Carafa chapel, where the mural of the *Assumption of the Virgin* envelops the altar piece of the *Annunciation* with its frame, standing proud of the wall (fig. 8).²⁵ Indeed the dynamic build towards the centre of the composition, especially with the rising elements to the left, retain a memory of Filippino's conception, as does the division of the whole composition.

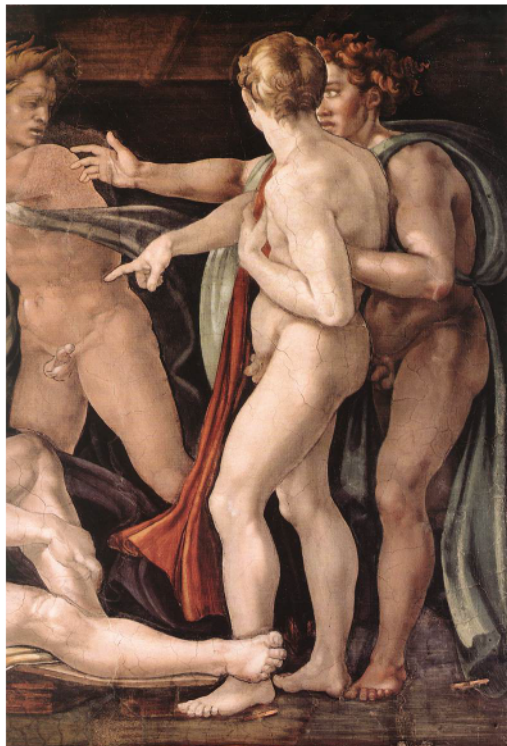
It has been suggested that the central group around Christ and the virgin resembles Leonardo's unfinished *Adoration of the Magi* in the Uffizi.²⁶ This may be the case; however a closer parallel is actually found in Filippino's composition of the subject, also in the Uffizi. In fact, Michelangelo seems to have used the rather altered version, engraved by Cristoforo Robetta, which was reversed and more tightly drawn together and may, indeed, also refer to Leonardo's composition as well (fig. 9).²⁷ The arrangement of figures is quite similar, notably the position of the kneeling figures and the standing figures either side. Driven by the imperative of the demanding tasks Michelangelo had to cast his net pretty wide both in the Ceiling and the *Last Judgement* so that this is but one of many probable print sources.

²⁵ J. Wilde, 'Der Ursprüngliche plan Michelangelo's zum Jünsten Gericht', *Die Graphische Künste*, Neue Folge, 1 (1936), 10. For the drawing see Tolnay, op. cit. (note 22), 21-23, no. 346 recto.

²⁶ J. Hall, *Michelangelo and the Reinvention of the Human Body*, New York 2005, 138.

²⁷ A. Hind, *Early Italian Engraving: A Critical Catalogue*, 7 vols., London/New York 1938-1948, I, 200, cat. no. D. II. 10.

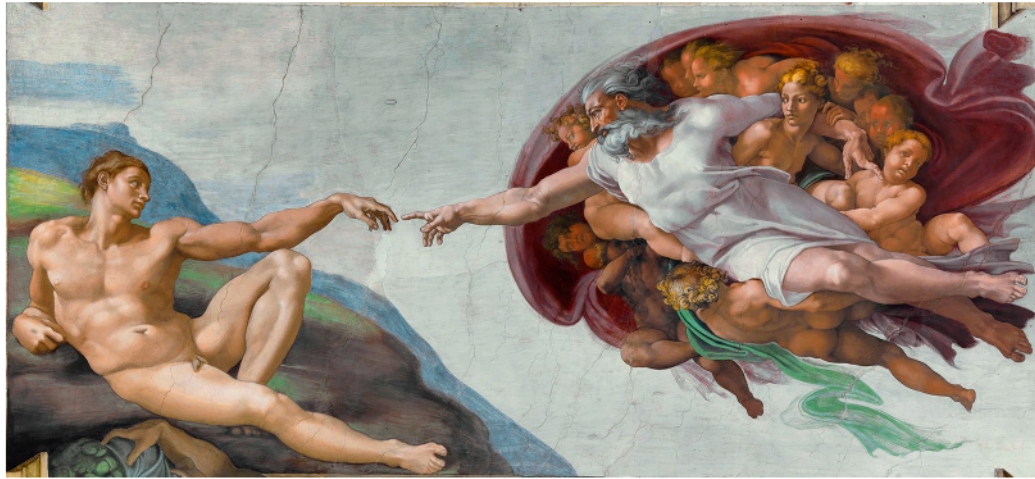
The parallels suggested here are all contestable. Yet there is good reason to be wary of a dominant understanding of Michelangelo that puts too exclusive an emphasis upon what are often seen as a canonical set of influences from Masaccio and Donatello, inculcated through the formation with his masters Ghirlandaio and Bertoldo. In fact, as has been noted, Michelangelo forcefully sought to suppress the memory of his formation with Ghirlandaio in particular. Furthermore, he also hinted at the possibility of the Sistine Ceiling failing to please its viewers because it risked being boring, something he wished to avoid. This sensitivity, alien, one might think, to a Ghirlandaio or perhaps even a Raphael, was refined in the young Michelangelo in Florence in the 1480s and 1490s as he was exposed to the extraordinary inventiveness around him. For Michelangelo, as he matured as an artist in the context of High Renaissance Rome, designing a tomb and painting the Sistine Ceiling for Julius II, Filippino's example seems to have suggested, vividly, what art should be in broad range of ways that comprehended the conception of individual figures, narrative composition, architectural design and ornament. It continued to be relevant a quarter of a century later, as Michelangelo reconfigured himself as a mural painter, once more, creating the *Last Judgement*.



1. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Drunkenness of Noah*, detail, fresco, Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome.



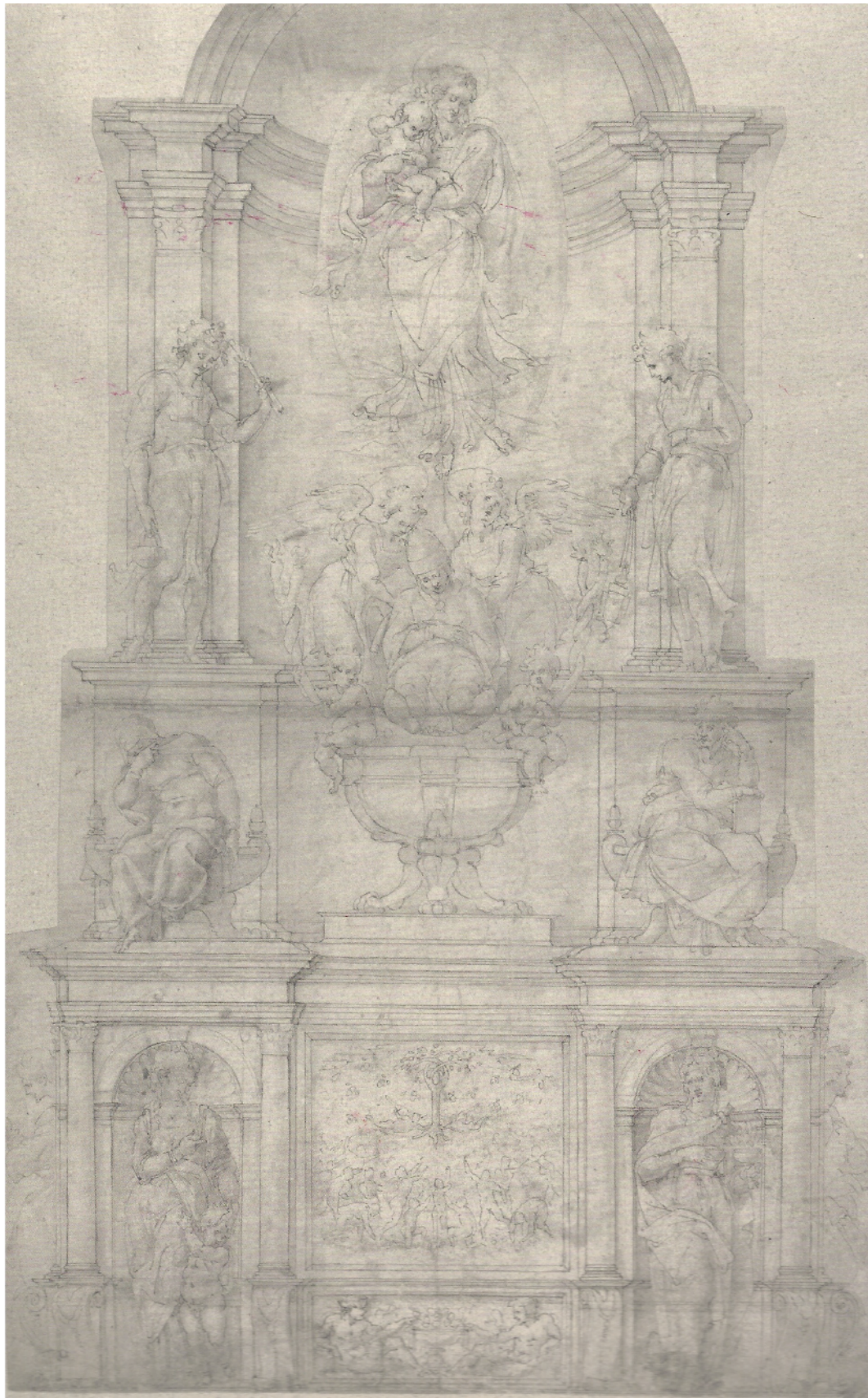
2. Filippino Lippi, *Martyrdom of St. Peter*, fresco, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence.



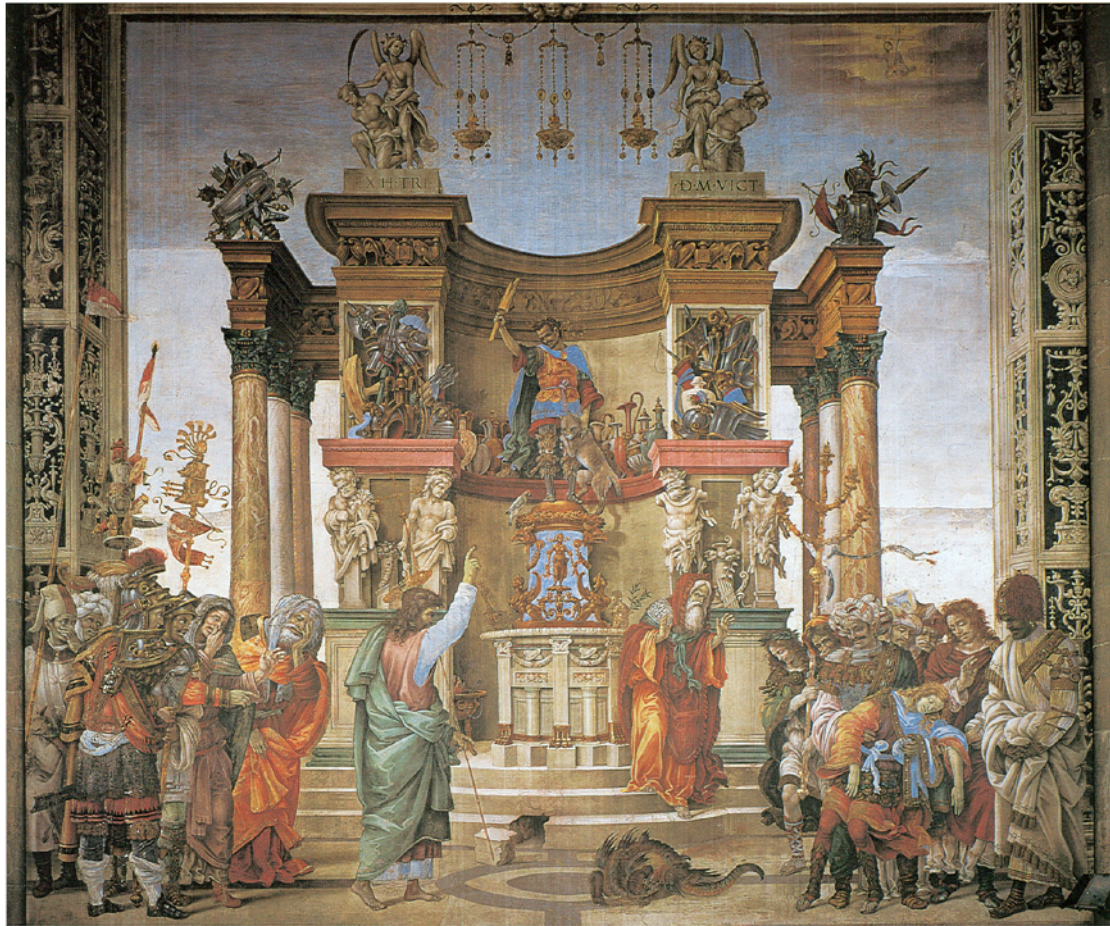
3. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Creation of Adam*, fresco, Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome.



4. Filippino Lippi, *Vision St Bernard*, oil on panel, 210 x 195 cm, Church of the Badia, Florence.



5. Attributed to Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Scheme for the tomb of Julius II*, pen and wash, 51 x 39 cm, Metropolitan Museum, New York.



6. Filippino Lippi, *St Philip driving the dragon from the Temple of Hieropolis*, fresco,

Strozzi Chapel, Santa Maria, Florence.

Filippino Lippi

Beauty, Intelligence and Invention

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7. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Last Judgement*, fresco, Sistine Chapel, Vatican, Rome.



8. Filippino Lippi, *Altar Wall*, fresco, Carafa Chapel, Santa Maria sopra Minerva.



9. Cristoforo Robetta, *Adoration of the Magi*, engraving, 30.1 x 28.1 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington.