

portion of the ruins into a building shaped like a Latin cross, but this was changed into a Greek one, and the interior of the church desecrated by the vulgarest style of rococo decoration. The handsome cloisters attached to this church, now used as a museum, are said to be Michael Angelo's designs, and were one of the features of the Eternal City, when the great clump of cypresses, said to have been planted by the architect, still grew in their midst.

CHAPTER VII

MICHAEL ANGELO AS DRAUGHTSMAN

IT has been justly said that Buonarroti's drawings and studies are among his most wonderful productions, for his hand followed the working of his mind with marvellous rapidity, and the simpler the means the greater appears the talent of the artist. Of the three greatest art-geniuses of Italy—Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo—the last produced, if not the greatest number of drawings, many of the finest, which are now the glory of the great art museums of Europe. In the Louvre, in the British Museum, in Berlin, at Oxford, at Windsor Castle, and at Chatsworth are many superb drawings by the master; but the most remarkable collection of his drawings is perhaps that in the Albertina Museum at Vienna.

No other great Italian artist made the human body his special study as did Michael Angelo. Up to his time it had been considered contrary to the tenets of the Church to sculpture or paint the nude; it had been ignored in art; but Buonarroti did not hesitate to portray man as he was, naked and not ashamed.

I think there is no exaggeration in saying that if all Michael Angelo's other works were to disappear, like some "baseless fabric of a vision," his studies and drawings in chalk, India ink and sepia would prove him to

have been one of the most consummate artists of all time. Among the hundreds of drawings scattered throughout the great public and private collections in Europe, there is one at Windsor Castle, known as *The Archers*, which is probably the finest drawing in existence.

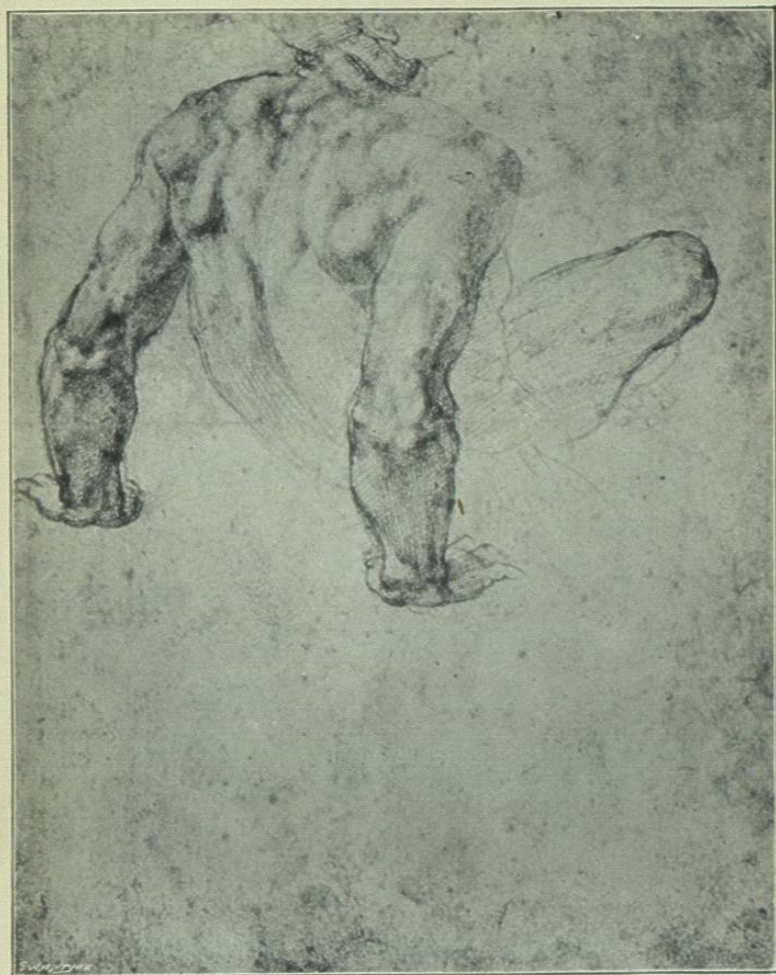
As a sculptor Michael Angelo was unequal, as a painter in oils he had his failings, but as a draughtsman he was supreme. With what mastery he indicates by a few cross hatchings of his reed pen a figure, a study for a figure in a fresco, or for a statue in marble. Although at times he seemed carried away by his tremendous energy, there are few of his studies which are not anatomically perfect in every detail. No other master in the art of drawing, Leonardo alone excepted, could vie with Buonarroti, for compared with him even Raphael, with all his divine grace, lacks power. There is a mastery even in the slightest study by Michael Angelo which arrests and rivets the eye.

In no museum can Michael Angelo's drawings be better studied than in the Louvre, where his drawings are all displayed in glass cases, not placed out of sight as in most museums. And in that gallery are some fine examples of his work, that but for the miserly stupidity of the English Government might now have been the property of the British nation. After Sir Thomas Lawrence's death, in 1830, his collection of drawings by the old masters, which formed the finest private collection of the time, was offered to our Government at a price infinitely below its value. The offer was declined, and the collection was consequently sold and scattered. During the lifetime of Sir Thomas the English Government might have acquired this collection for £20,000, a sum which represented only half of what the President had spent



[British Museum]

DESCENT FROM THE CROSS
STUDY IN BLACK CHALK
Formerly in the Warwick Castle Collection



ANATOMICAL STUDY

[British Museum]

upon it. But this offer was not accepted. The Louvre possesses forty-seven drawings by Michael Angelo, of which the following formed part of the Lawrence Collection :

A study of *The Madonna and Child* for the statue in the Sacristy at Florence.

A study of the smaller figure of *David*, which was sent to France.

A study for a *Dead Child*.

The Museum of Lille possesses a very valuable collection of drawings by Michael Angelo—some hundred and fifty of which are in a book, which was probably lost by the master at the time of the siege of Florence. This precious volume contains studies after the buildings of Brunelleschi and Bramante, and after ancient buildings and measurements ; among them is Michael Angelo's design for the façade of the library of San Lorenzo at Florence. At the end of this book of designs is a long notice written by the master, describing the manner of casting a "piece of artillery," with sketches illustrating the notice, as well as a sketch of a cannon. Probably this design and description were written before the siege of Florence ; for when, thirty-two years later, Vasari on the part of Cosimo asked him for the plan of the staircase for the library of San Lorenzo, Michael Angelo told him that all he remembered relating to it was like a dream ; the plan of this very staircase is one of the illustrations in this most interesting book, and one of the most precious treasures of the Musée Wicar.

Next to the Louvre the museum where one can thoroughly enjoy some of Michael Angelo's drawings is that of the Uffizi in Florence, for there, as in the Louvre,

they are placed under glass. Want of space prevents this arrangement at the British Museum, but in the galleries at Oxford the same system has been carried out as at the Louvre and the Uffizi, to the great boon of the student.

While Raphael's drawings are full of grace and sweetness, Michael Angelo's are full of energy and passion. No other artist ever used chisel, brush and pen with such tremendous power. With a few strokes of his pen dipped in bistre he would create a little masterpiece. Even his slightest sketches once seen are not easily forgotten, whether the drawing represents a Crucifixion, the figure of a satyr, a group of boys at play, or a scene of terror and bloodshed. Among a pile of drawings by other masters a scrap by Buonarroti will stand out as defined and individual as a phrase of Shakespeare, bearing unmistakably the mind and hand of supreme genius. Every one of Michael Angelo's studies is replete with meaning, whether it is of a beggar or a goddess. There is intense originality, but the terrible prevails, and even in his designs of loves and cupids, of Venuses and Ledas, there is a majesty and dignity in the figures which belong to Buonarroti alone. His anatomical studies are highly finished: every bone and every muscle is drawn with amazing accuracy and knowledge. Yet no models could have posed for the figures in *The Last Judgement*, with their limbs rising, falling, and hurtling through the air. Those figures were born of inspiration.

Nowhere has photography been more useful to art students than in reproducing the frescoes and drawings of this great master. Until the middle of the last century Michael Angelo's works were only known to those who



[British Museum]

STUDY IN PEN AND BISTRE

From the Malcolm Collection



[British Museum
STUDY IN RED CHALK FOR THE FIGURE OF LAZARUS
IN SEBASTIANO DEL PIOMBO'S PAINTING
IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY

had visited Italy, or who could afford to buy the engravings after his best known works. It is now possible for the art student to buy for a few shillings what for all practical purposes are equivalent to the original drawings and studies of Michael Angelo.

In England, where the master has always been appreciated, a series of admirably engraved plates after his designs was published between 1798 and 1841. Of these young Ottley's engravings, and those in the Lawrence collection engraved by Metz, were the most important. But the work in which these engravings appeared was too expensive for the public at large, and only within reach of the rich. France, always the leader in matters of art, issued some noble works on Michael Angelo, but even in that country Buonarroti was almost as little known outside the artistic world as in England, until Adolph Braun's superb phototypes were published.

Now there is no lack of photographs of the whole life-work of the master in sculpture, in drawing and in painting, published by Anderson in Rome, by Alinari in Florence, by Hanfstängl in Munich, and by Braun in Paris. In 1901 F. Bruckmann of Munich published a superb portfolio of photographic reproductions of drawings and studies by Michael Angelo in the Teyler Museum at Haarlem—some thirty facsimiles of the master's designs for his frescoes. As showing the details of those works this publication is of the highest interest and importance to all those desirous of studying Michael Angelo, and one can only regret that neither the British Museum nor the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford have similar records of the treasures that are hoarded in their galleries.

It is to Sir Thomas Lawrence, P.R.A., that Oxford

indirectly owes its almost unrivalled collection of original drawings by Michael Angelo. That great artist and indefatigable collector of drawings by the old Italian masters, as already stated, is said to have expended £40,000 upon his collection, and in his will offered this collection "of genuine drawings by the old masters, which, in number and value, I know unequalled in Europe, and which I am fully justified in estimating, as a collection, at twenty thousand pounds," first to George IV., and, if declined by that illustrious monarch, "to the Trustees of the British Museum, and afterwards, successively, to the Right Honourable Robert Peel" and Lord Dudley. Finally, failing these, Sir Thomas instructed that the collection was to be sold by public auction.

To the everlasting disgrace of the nation and of the individuals to whom Lawrence had offered his collection at half its value, it was purchased by Messrs. Woodburn, the picture dealers, to whom Sir Thomas was largely indebted, for the sum of £16,000. No purchaser for the Michael Angelo and Raphael drawings coming forward in England, Messrs. Woodburn ultimately sold a portion of them to King William of Holland; but fortunately the royal amateur knew little of their importance, and the finest studies of Michael Angelo, disregarded by him, returned to England. At length, in 1842, the Michael Angelo drawings were purchased from Messrs. Woodburn for the University of Oxford, a difficulty in regard to the price to be paid to the dealers having been removed by the second Earl of Eldon supplying the £4,000 required to complete the purchase.

Among the eighty studies and designs in the Ashmolean Museum the following are the most important:



[British Museum]

STUDY, APPARENTLY FOR THE FRESCO OF THE CREATION
OF ADAM IN THE SISTINE CHAPEL

DRAWN IN BLACK CHALK
From the Malcolm Collection



[British Museum]

STUDY FOR THE FIGURE OF CHRIST, IN A COMPOSITION
OF THE RESURRECTION

BLACK CHALK

From the Malcolm Collection

A group of three standing figures. (From the Richardson, Spencer, Ottley and Lawrence Collections.) Full of life and character. Pen drawing in bistre.

Study of a recumbent figure in black chalk, probably for one of the Medici tombs. (From Sir J. Reynolds's and Sir T. Lawrence's Collections.)

A study for a man's head in profile in red chalk. Full of the "mano terribile" of the master. (From the Wicar, Ottley, and Lawrence Collections.)

A woman's head in profile in red chalk. A very fine and striking work. (From the Buonarroti, Wicar, and Lawrence Collections.)

A torso study in pen and bistre of a youth. On the same sheet are beautiful little studies of amorini, and smaller sketches of a leg, and four seated figures. (From the collections of Charles I., Lord Hampden, and Lawrence.)

A sketch in pen and bistre for the Battle of Pisa cartoon, from which we can form some idea of that marvellous creation. Nothing can be more animated than the little groups of combatants.

Five sheets of studies for the same cartoon in pen and bistre from the same collections.

There are also studies in red chalk and pen drawings in bistre for the tomb of Julius II. drawn about 1506 (from the Mariette, Lagoy, and Lawrence Collections), as well as eight leaves from a sketchbook (from the Ottley and Lawrence Collections), the latter mostly drawn with a pen and bistre; these contain figures for the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. There are many separate studies for this ceiling, and one, especially superb, in black chalk, for the figure of Adam in the



composition of *The Creation of Eve*. (From the Reynolds and Lawrence Collections.)

A study in red chalk (from the Denan and Lawrence Collections) of a group of the disciples carrying the body of the dead Christ, is supposed to be unique. It was probably designed for an oil painting of which no trace exists. It has no point of similarity with the dead Christ in the National Gallery. There is another composition in red chalk for a Crucifixion into which a group of the holy women is introduced gathered round the Virgin, who is swooning; this fine study was in the Lawrence Collection. The Ashmolean Museum also possesses many architectural studies by the master, some evidently intended for the sacristy of the Church of San Lorenzo in Florence, as well as designs for the architraves of windows, probably those of the palace on the Capitoline Hill and the Farnese Palace. There are also some delightful studies of cupids drawn between the years 1510 and 1520. Besides all these there are numerous studies of anatomical subjects, the most interesting of which is the drawing, already referred to, in which Michael Angelo has introduced himself and his friend Antonio della Torre dissecting a dead body. This is a pen or reed drawing in bistre. It has belonged to several well-known collections, that of Mariette amongst others. Here, too, are studies for the Sibyls of the Sistine. Some appear to have been taken from life, as if the artist had found in the figure of some old peasant a fitting subject to be transformed into a sibyl or prophet, as in the case of that other great master, Rembrandt, who found in some old Jew huckster of Amsterdam a Samuel or an Abraham. The many studies for the fresco of *The Last*

Judgement in the Museum are very interesting and helpful in indicating the manner in which that stupendous work grew in the artist's conception.

These brief notes of the drawings by Michael Angelo in the Ashmolean Museum will, I think, give some idea of the wealth and importance of that collection. There are a few drawings by him in the Library of Christ Church College, but none of them compare with any of those in the Ashmolean.

The watermarks of the paper upon which Michael Angelo drew his studies have a curious interest. They are no less than eighty-four in number, all different in design, many of them being emblematical. One interesting point is proved by them—that Michael Angelo used the same paper for writing his letters and sonnets as for his drawing. And to the student they are particularly valuable as they fix the date of the drawing, and sometimes the place in which the drawings were made. Thus, the watermark on two letters, written by Michael Angelo at Bologna in 1506, is a large capital B, which doubtless indicates Bologna; and it may be fairly thought that the paper was made in that city and bought there by the sculptor. A close study of these watermarks has led to the dates of Michael Angelo's more important studies being comparatively fixed.