

THE BORGHIAS!

And the Renaissance!



TWO NARRATIVES

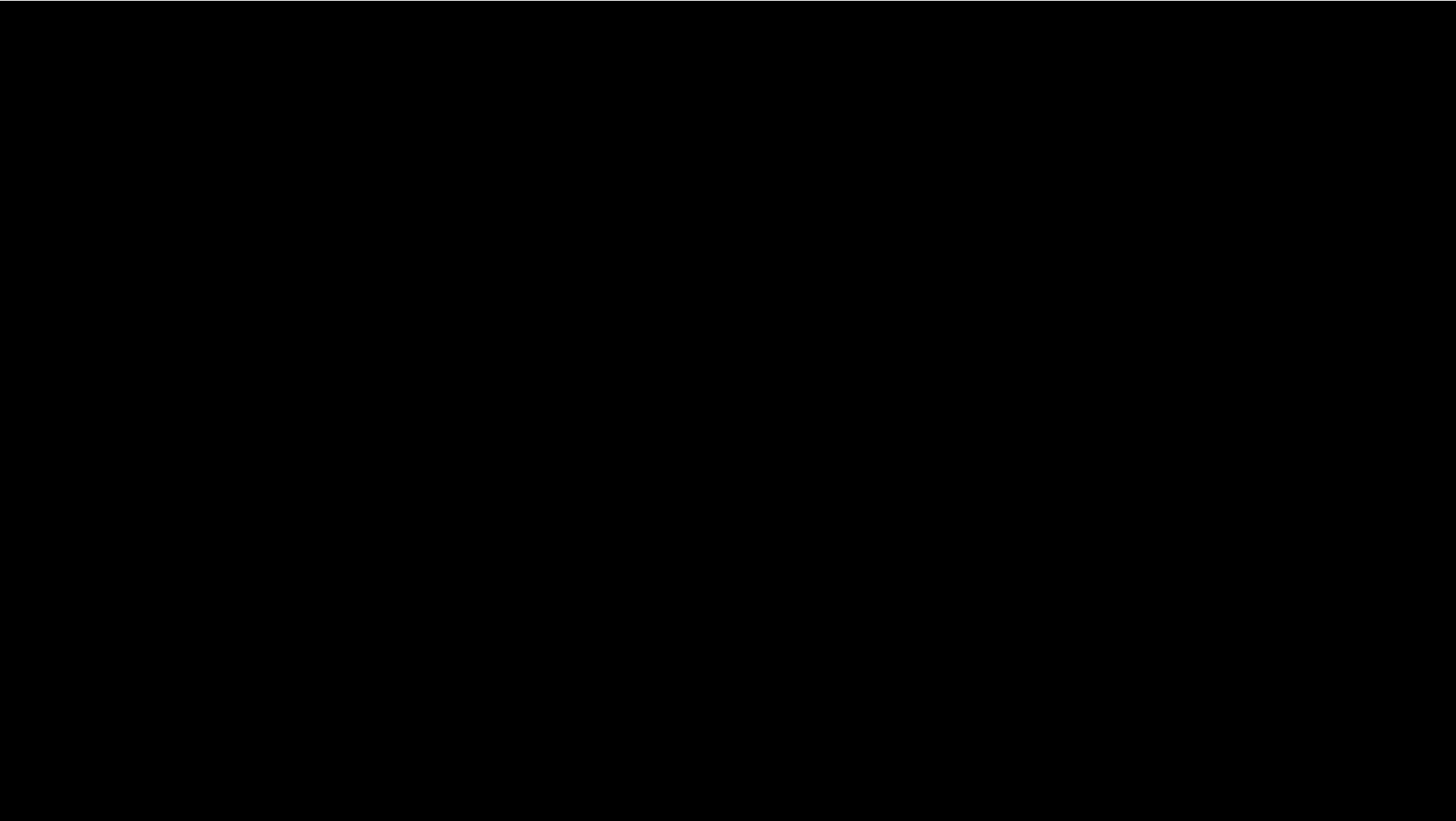
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- ▶ Two competing narratives about Rome in the Renaissance
 - ▶ 1. Hughes: Renaissance Rome is the pinnacle of architectural achievement and artistic might—imagine that Bramante, Raffaello and Michelangelo were all working together at the same time! The Sistine Chapel!
 - ▶ 2. *The Borgias*: Renaissance Rome was a hideous cesspool of betrayal, treachery, incest, poisoning, lechery, and corruption. Awesome!
- ▶ These happen at essentially the same time—Hughes skips from about 1455 to 1499, and doesn't mention the Borgias (the most notorious family in Renaissance Italy) even once in this chapter (he mentions Pope Alexander VI only once, in passing, in the introduction)

THE BORGHIAS

*Game of Papal
Thrones!*








in association with
SHOWTIME

A close-up, artistic photograph of two people kissing. The image is dominated by the texture of human skin, which is rendered in a way that resembles cracked leather or aged parchment. The lighting is soft and directional, highlighting the contours of the faces and the texture of the skin. The colors are warm, ranging from deep reds and browns to lighter, almost white tones where the skin is more exposed. The overall mood is intimate and sensual.

JEREMY IRONS



HOLLIDAY GRAINGER



DAVID OAKES



SIMON MCBURNEY

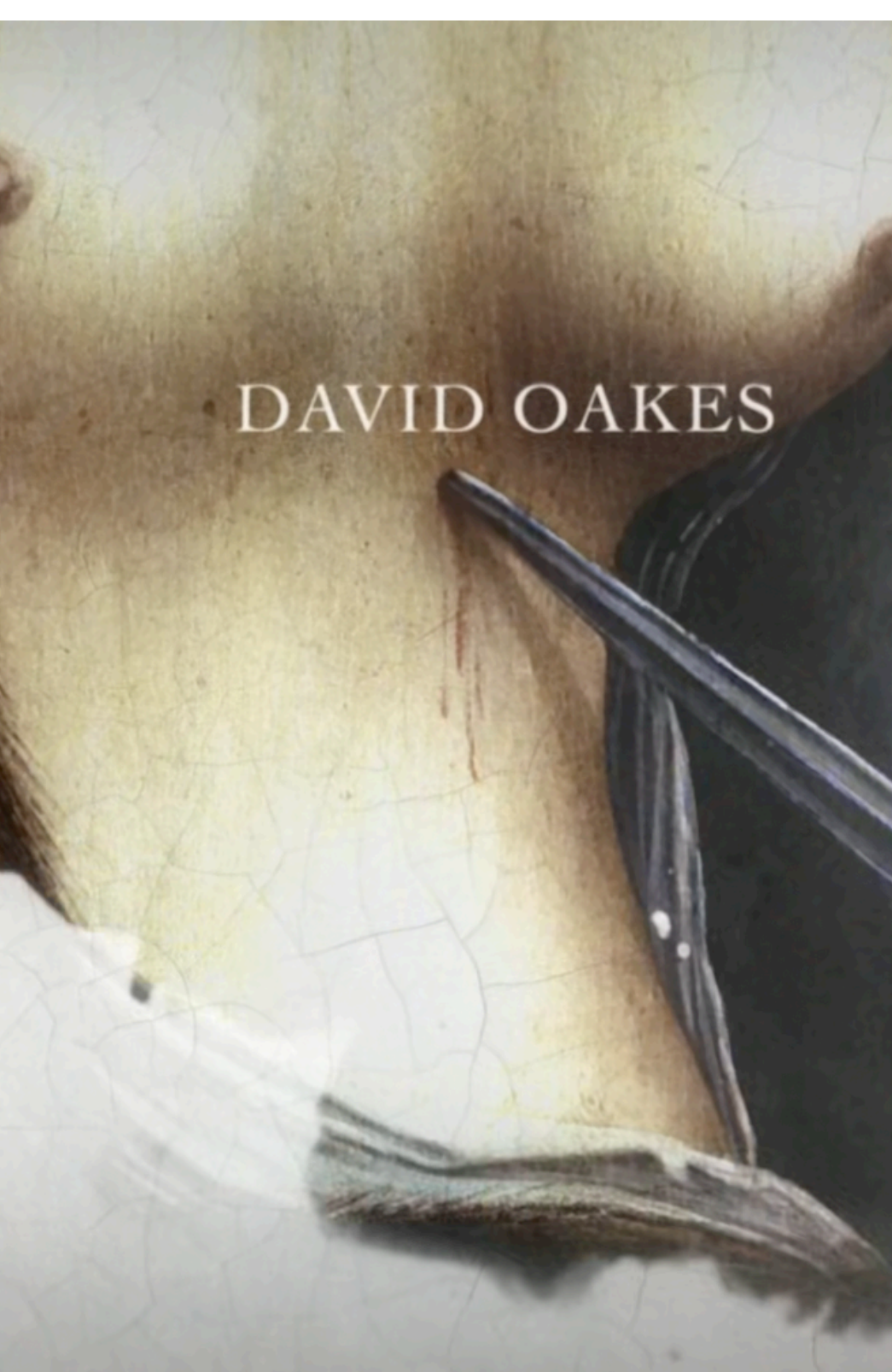


BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

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- 1492
- Many, even most rumors untrue, but a family renowned for incest, corruption, orgies, murder, etc.
- Factual: unusually skilled with arsenic and poisons
- After Pope Alexander VI (with one Dutch Pope who ruled for one year) Italians controlled the papacy from 1523–1978.
- Inaccuracies: Orsini was poisoned, but not at *that* dinner; Cesare was not the eldest child, but the second eldest.
- Surprising accuracy: Micheletto was a real person

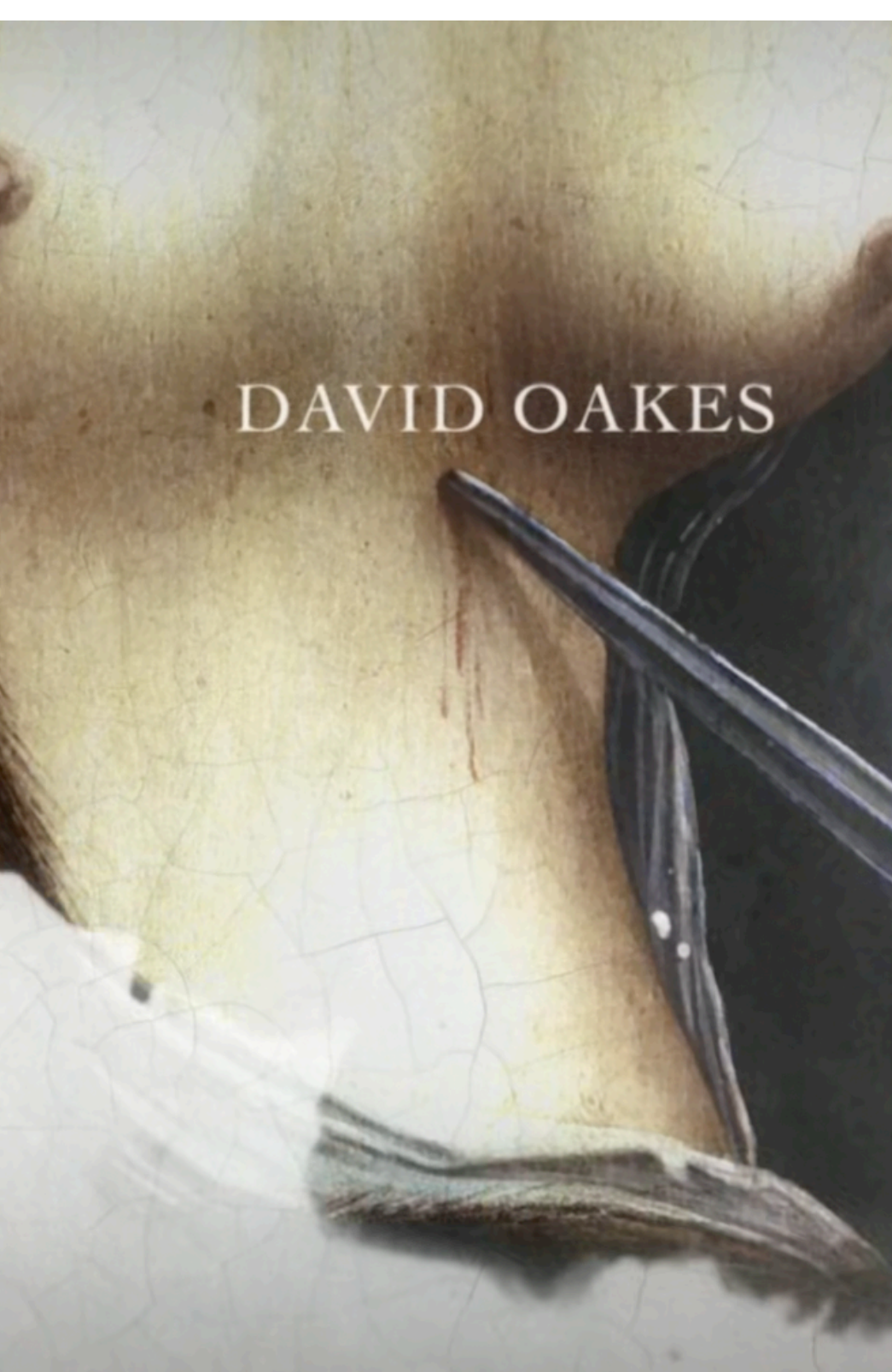




DAVID OAKES

THE BORGHIAS: THEMES





DAVID OAKES

THE BORGHIAS: THEMES

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- Sexuality and violence are always entwined
- Many characters appear to have relatively (Rodrigo de Borja) or completely pure motives; and yet, must do terribly evil things — which they don't seem to worry about much
- A Machiavellian universe — everyone looks out for his or her best interests, but often as defined by the family or clan
- Power and the powerless
- Multicultural Rome?





A woman with long, curly red hair is leaning over a man in a white shirt. The man is covering his eyes with his hand, suggesting a moment of emotional intensity or distress. The scene is set in a dimly lit room with heavy curtains and a decorative lamp in the background.

- and that what Rome needs now is...
- You.



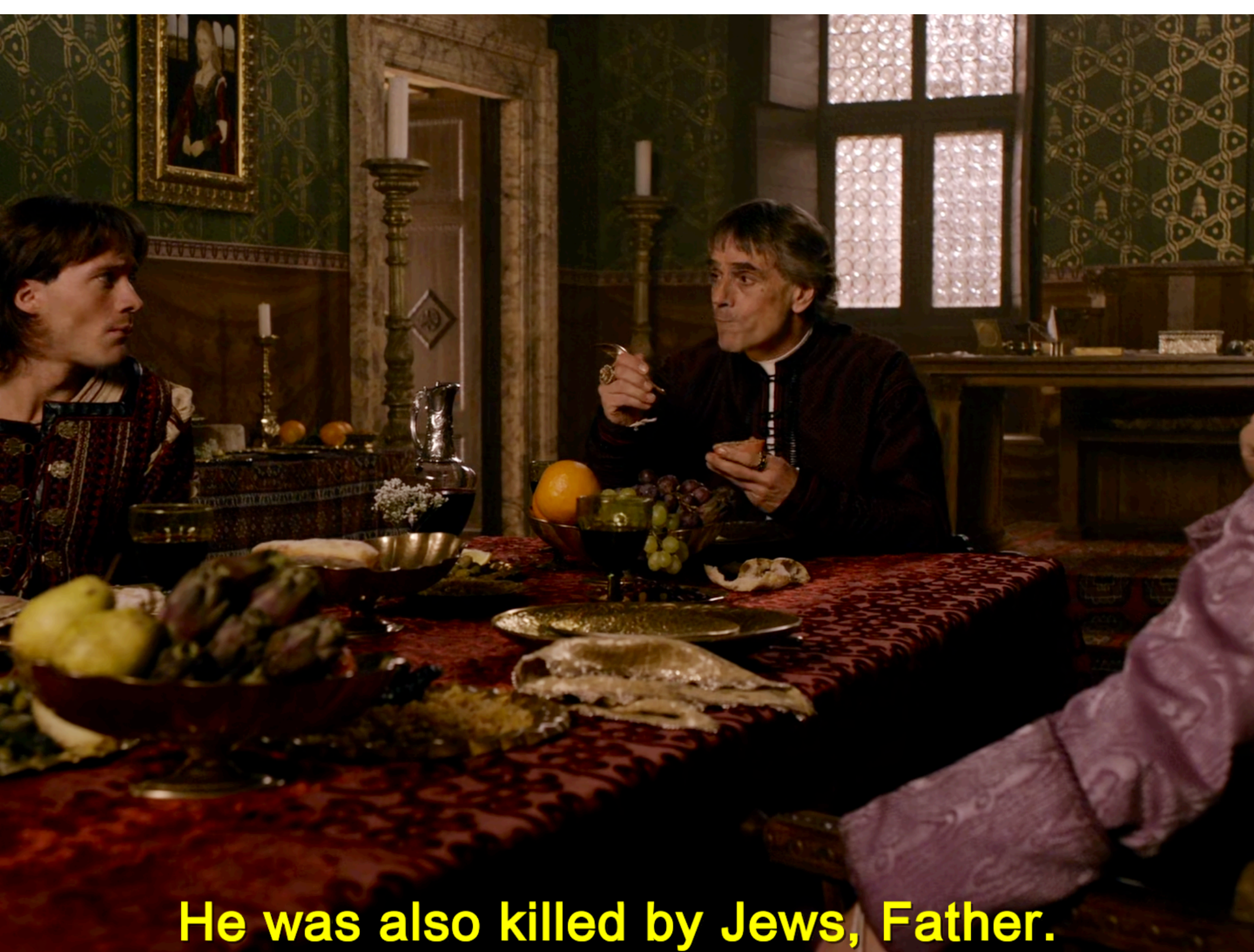
...power.



**And Jesus Christ our Saviour
was, after all, a Jew.**



**But I want my papacy to be
like Joseph's coat of many colours.**



He was also killed by Jews, Father.



Are you sure?



**I thought he was crucified
by Romans.**

The image is a reproduction of Michelangelo's famous fresco, 'The Creation of Adam', from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. It depicts Adam reclining on the left, reaching towards God who is reclining on the right, surrounded by other figures. The central focus is the gap between the two hands. The text 'THE RENAISSANCE' is overlaid in large, bold, black capital letters across the middle of the image. Below the text is a horizontal dotted line. At the bottom right, the text 'Robert Hughes Style' is written in a smaller, italicized, black serif font.

THE RENAISSANCE

Robert Hughes Style

“The Forum was a kind of wilderness with ruins, commonly referred to as the Campo Vaccino—the Cow Pasture—which it actually was, with animals grazing about. Shops, restaurants, workplaces—forget them. One traversed the place by stumbling hither and thither. Nothing was self-evident, as Roman ruins are today. The city was a jumble of fallen old columns and ruinous early walls, collapsed vaults, broken arches. The Roman natives who saw them at work on their quest for “the excellent and highly ingenious building methods of the ancients and their harmonious proportions” thought they [Alberti and Donatello] were nothing more than crazy treasure hunters.

“

And below, the motto QUID TUM, “What next?”
It is [Alberti’s] declaration of man’s faith in the
future, in the power of human invention.

“The second reason lay in the pope’s [Nicholas V] own archaeological interests. In addition to all his other talents, Alberti had the novel distinction of being the world’s first underwater archaeologist. The object of his search was an ancient Roman galley from the time of Trajan, which 1,300 years before had sunk, presumably during a *naumachia*, a mock naval battle, to the muddy floor of Lake Nemi. Its location was known because it kept fouling fishermen’s nets. But nobody had figured out a way to raise it, and without underwater goggles divers could not see more than a vague bulk looming in dark water. Commissioned to do so by Cardinal Prospero Colonna, Alberti brought it up with grappling hooks, cables, floating barrels, and winches.



ST. PETER'S

.....

“But the great work on which Nicholas V and Alberti hoped to embark was the replanning and construction of Saint Peter’s, the navel of Christianity. By the fifteenth century, Constantine’s original basilica was in poor repair, and Alberti saw that whole sections of it had to be rebuilt.”



“

And Bramante—an aging man when he came into Julius’ employ, more than sixty years old—took on the Herculean task of finishing the work Alberti had started, creating a new symbolic center for Christianity by demolishing Constantine’s Basilica of Saint Peter and building an entirely new one. It would be the biggest church in the world.

“

And of course the Church was directed to wring every penny it could from the sale of indulgences, that abusive and superstitious practice by which the faithful could supposedly buy remission from Purgatory in the next life by giving hard cash to Rome's agents in this one. “When you open your purse strings and the cash bell rings, the soul flies out of Purgatory and sings.”

“

Chi ppopolo po'èsse, e cchi sovrano,
Che cciàbbi a ccasa sua 'na cuppoletta
Com'er nostro San Pietr' in Vaticano?
In qual antra scittà, in qual antro Stato
C'è st'illuminazione bbenedetta,
Che tt'intontissce e tte fa pperde er fiato?









NI CAELORVM ES PETRVS

A FIDES

MYNDO

AGNO

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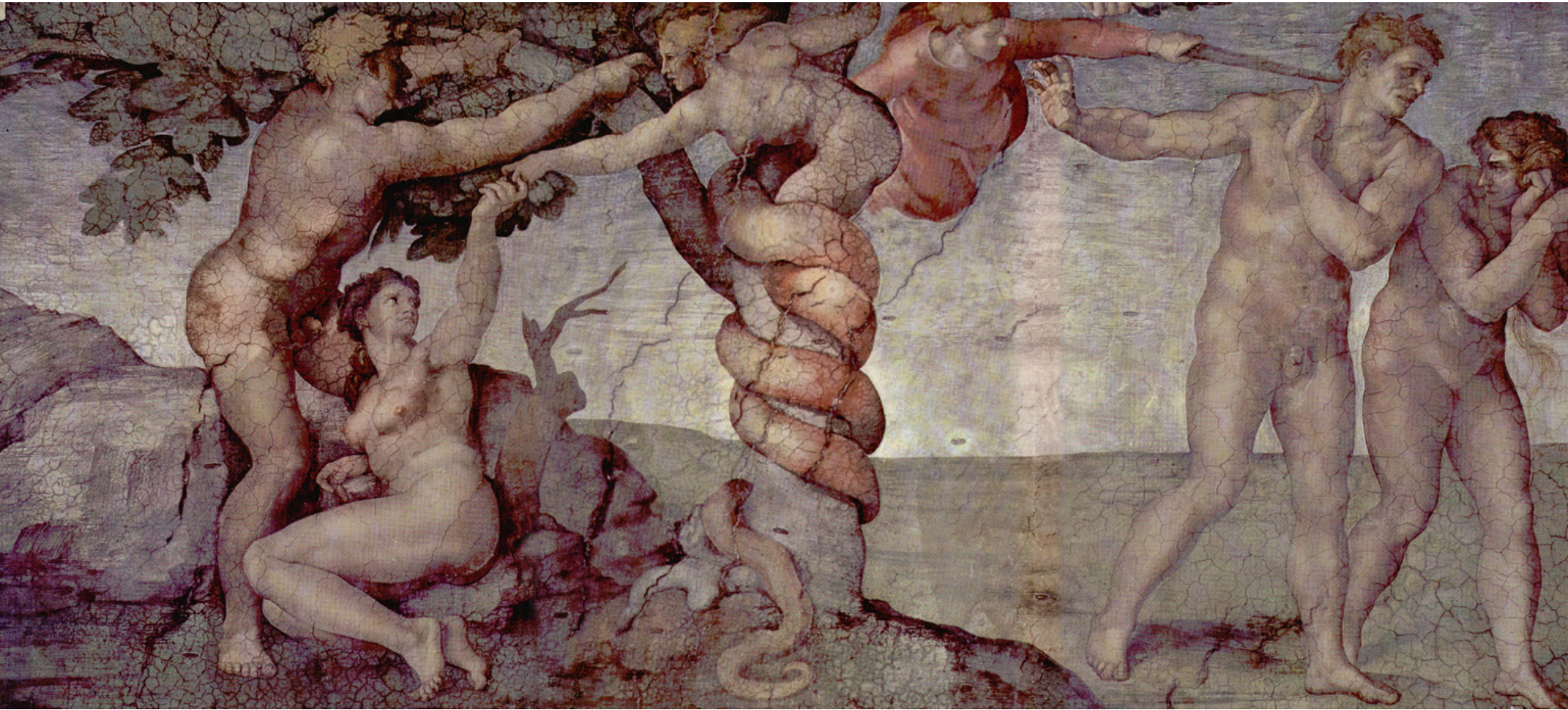
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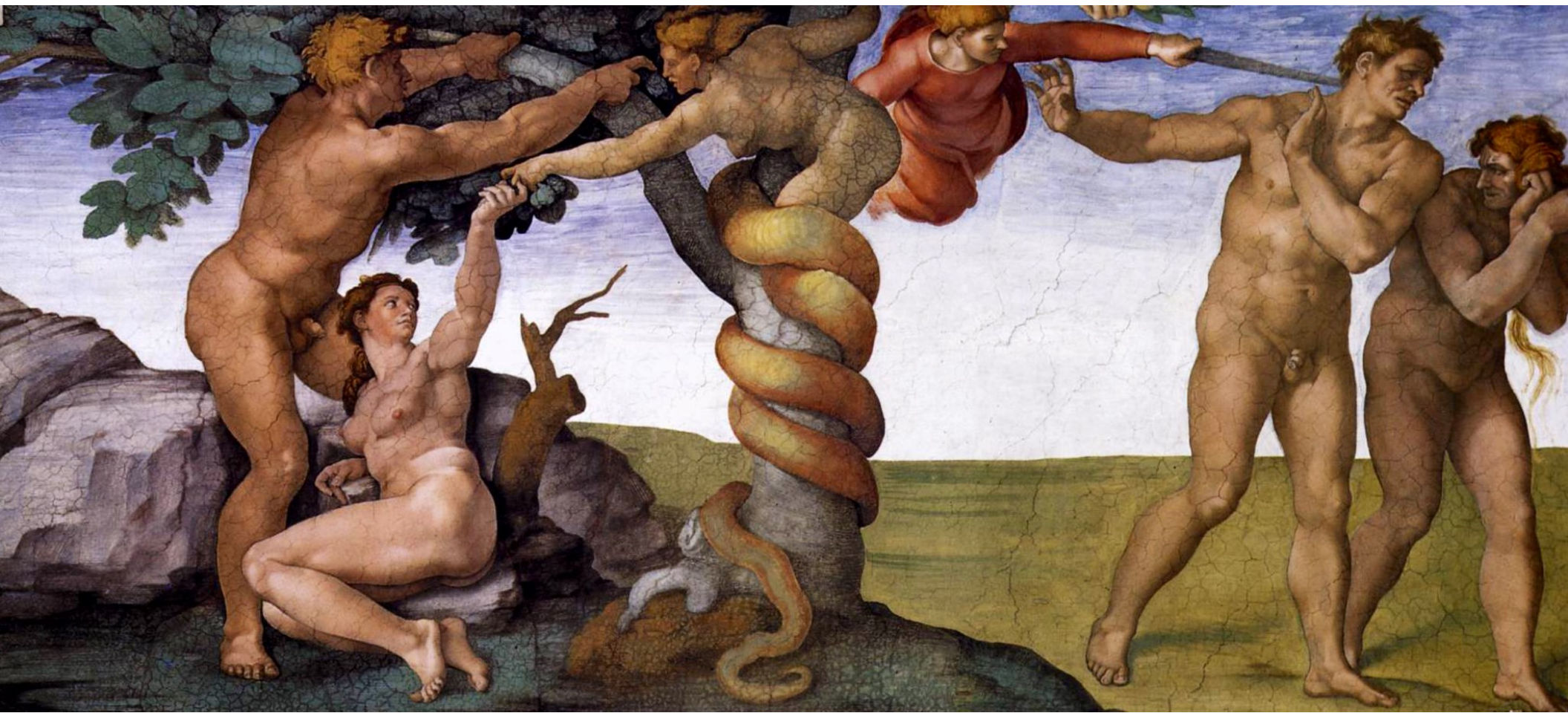
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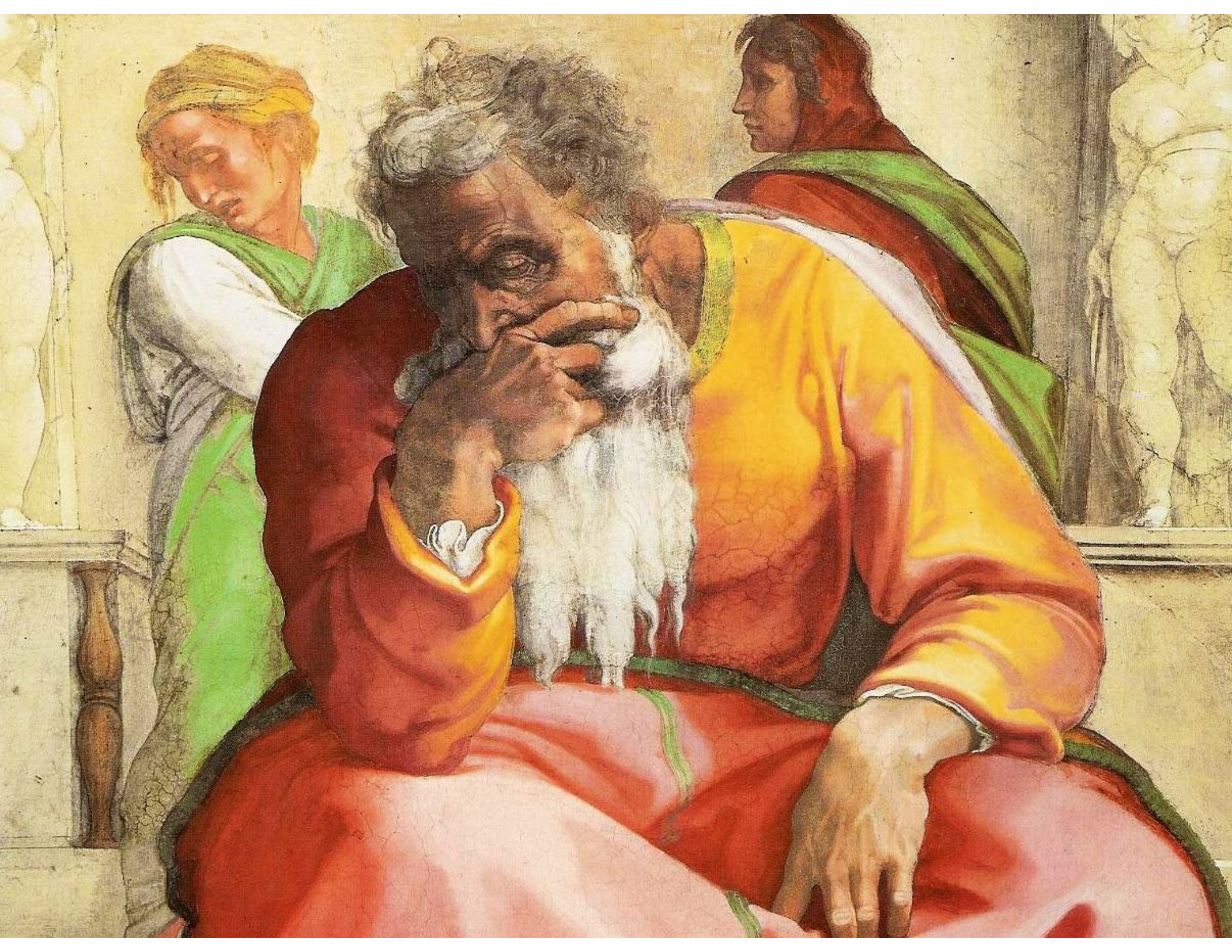
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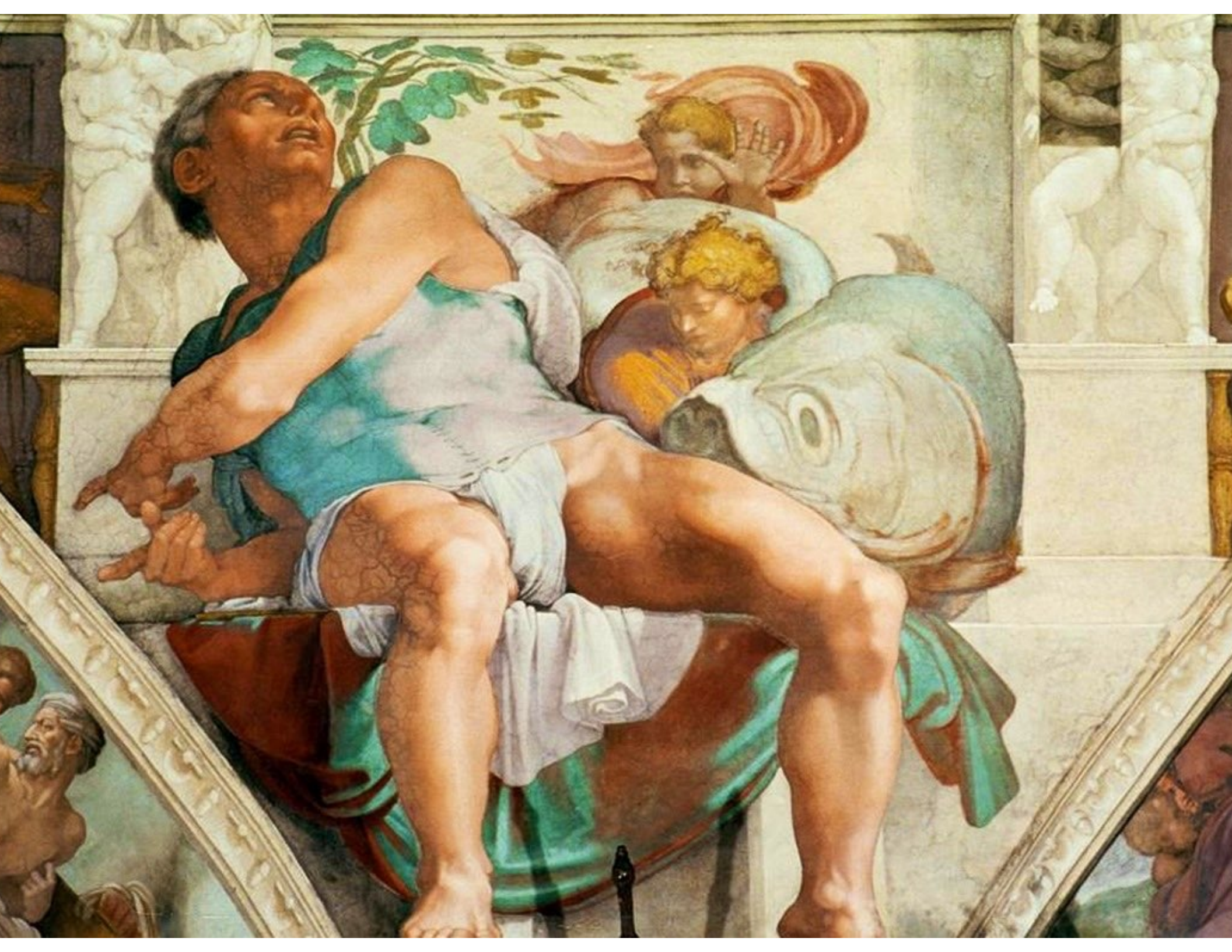




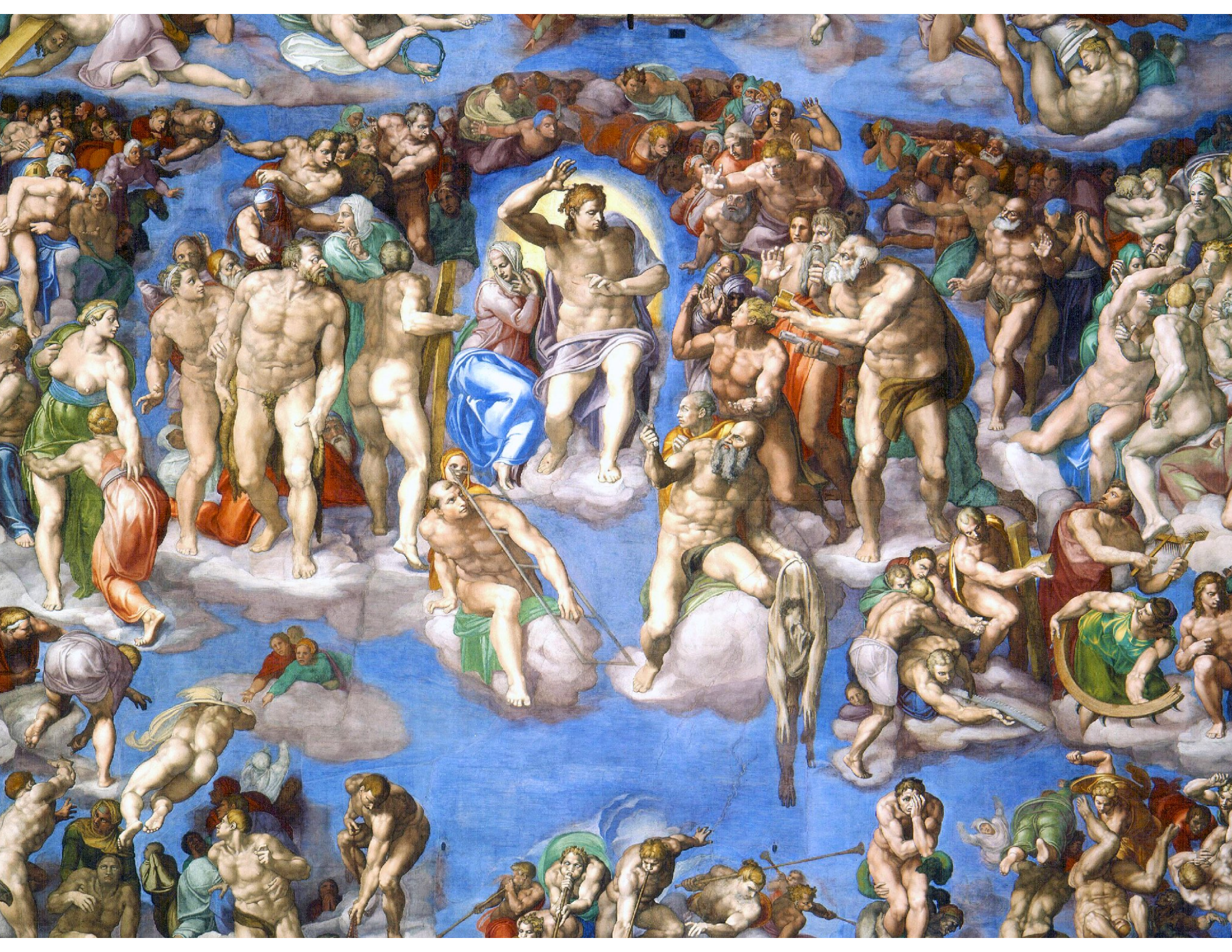


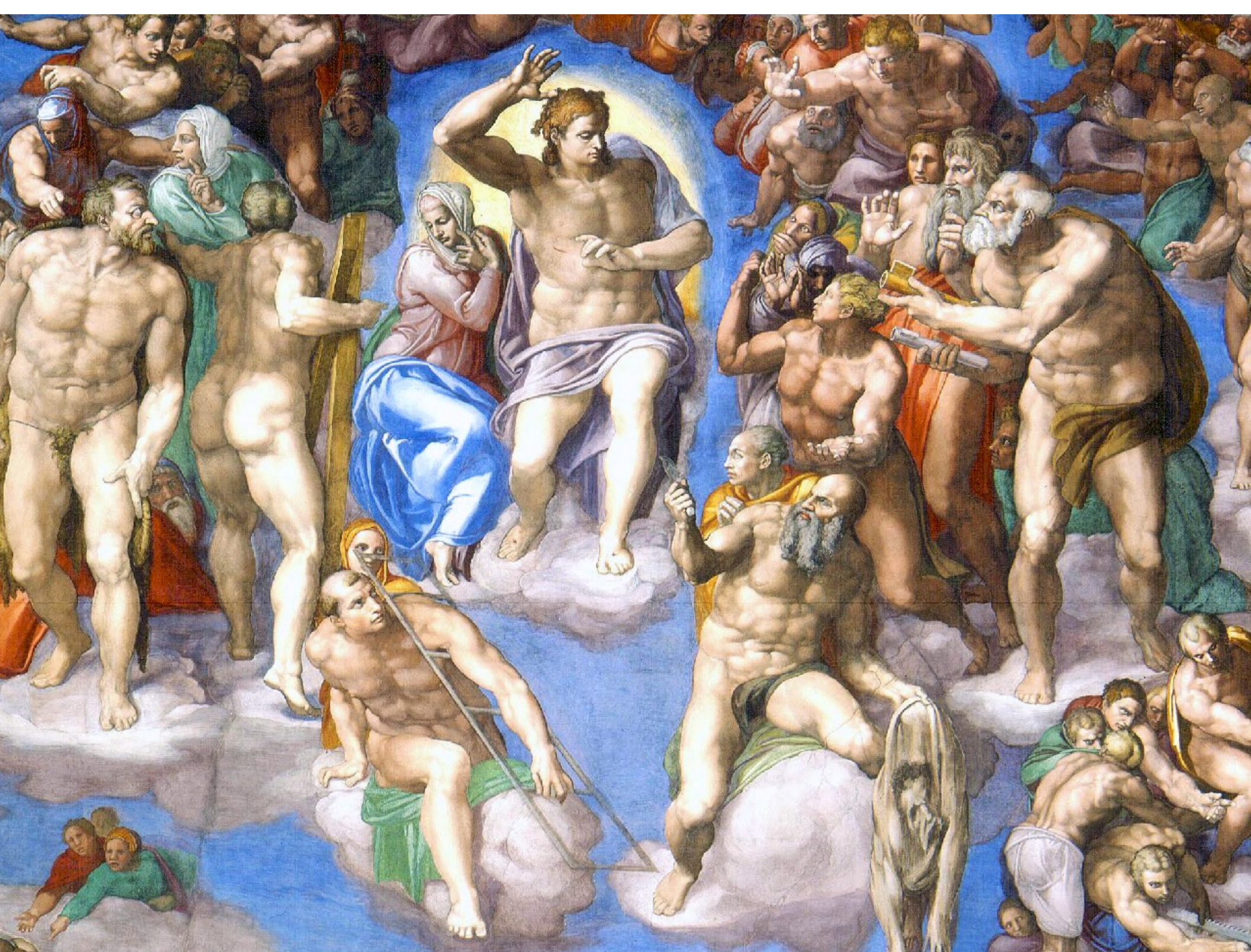








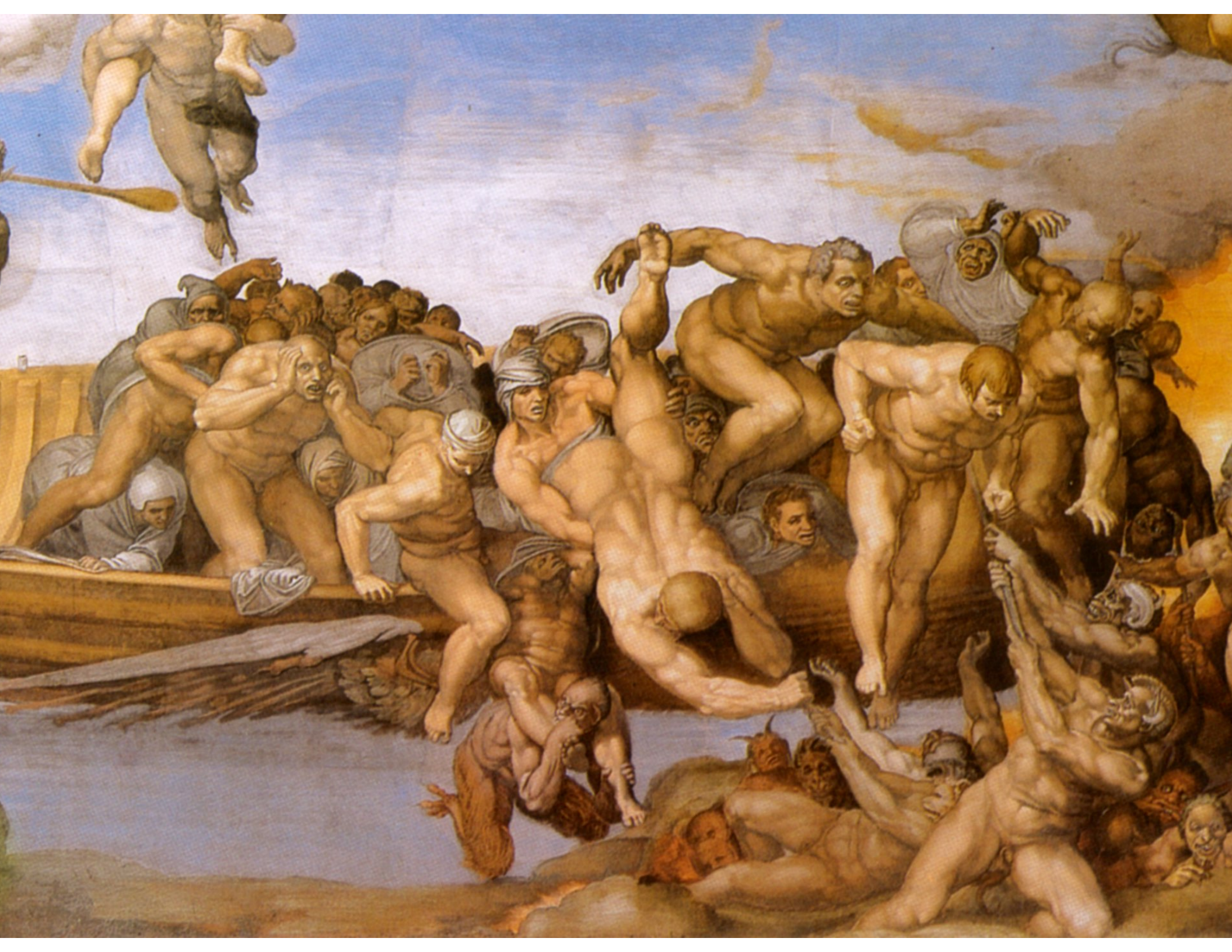




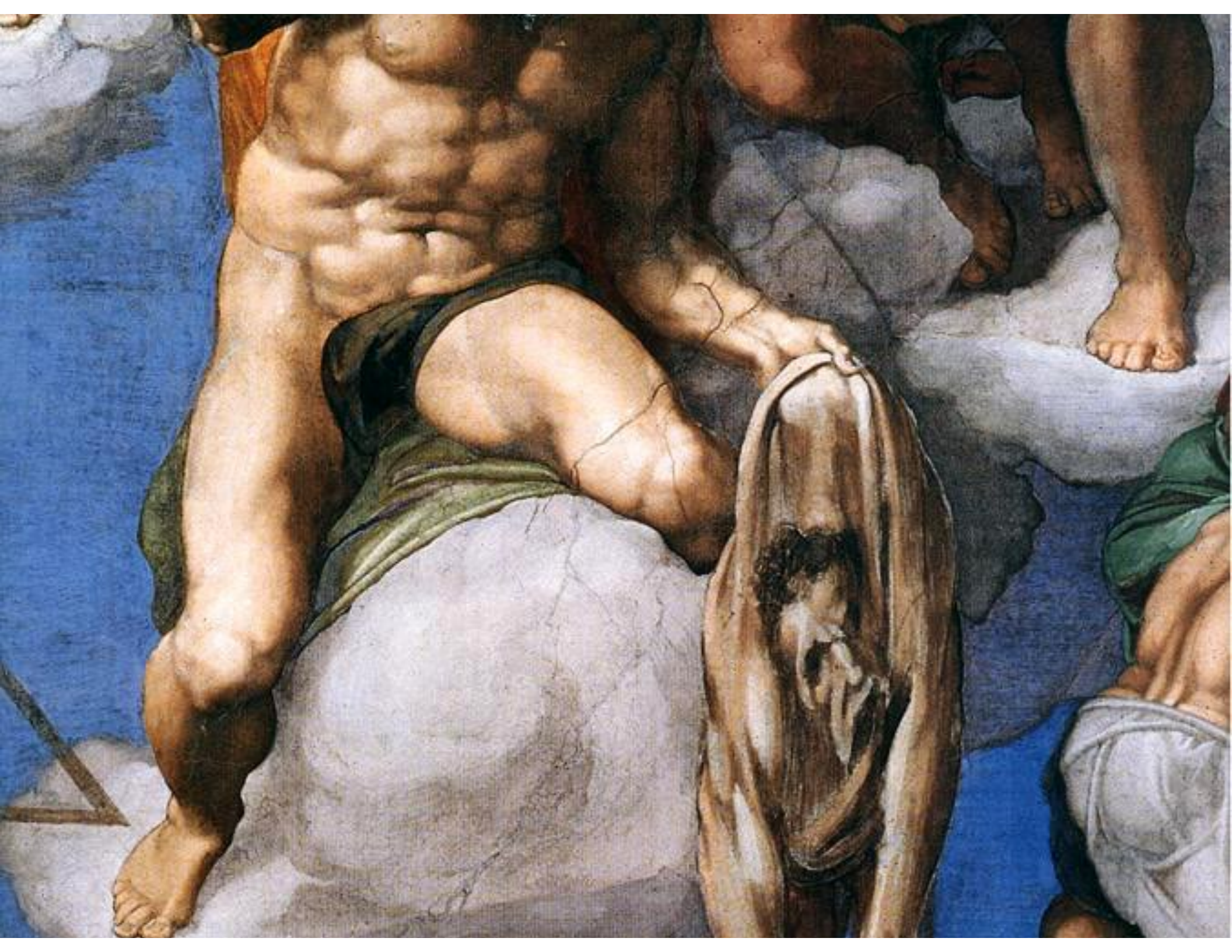










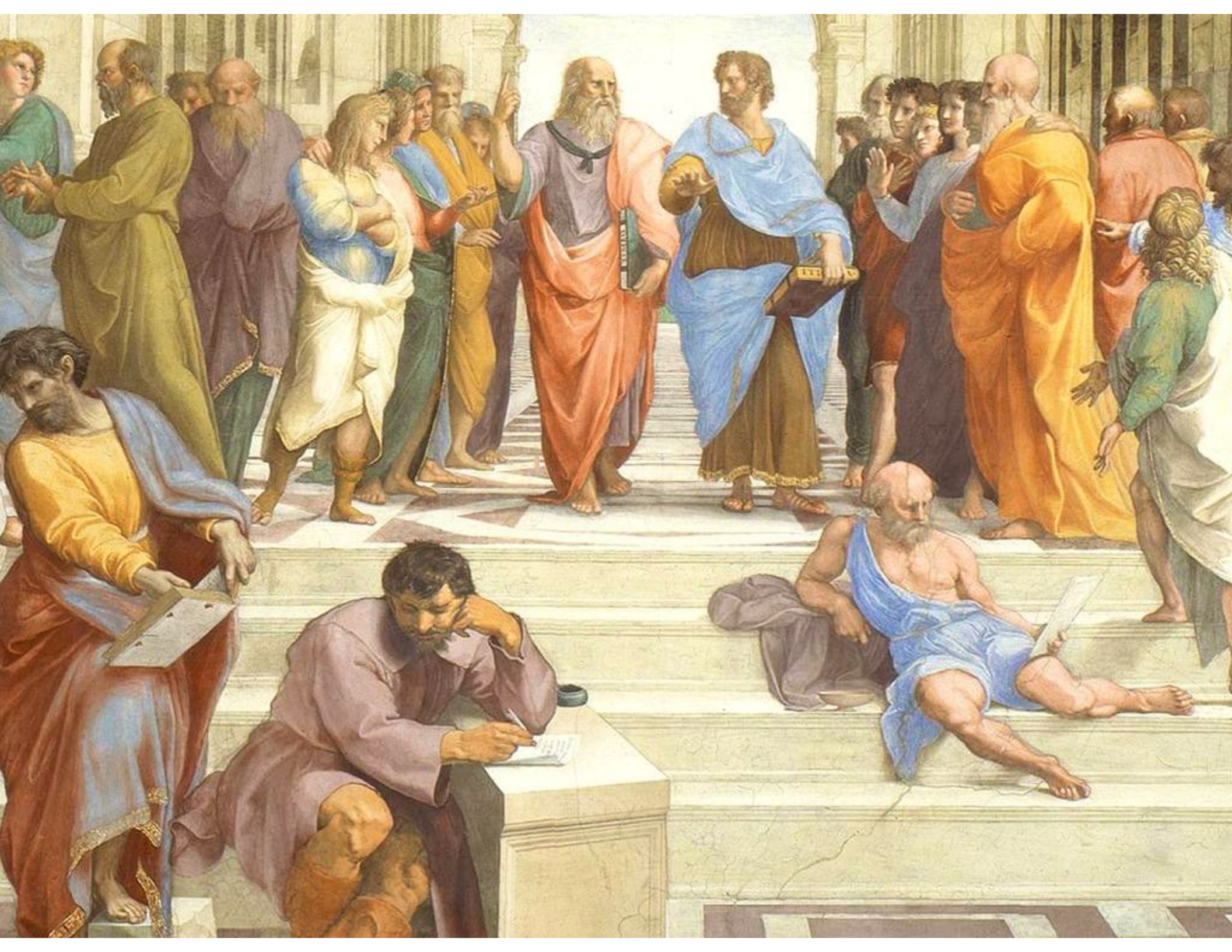


“

I'm no painter.

– *Michelangelo Buonarotti*













Politically, a great deal had happened in Italy in those twenty-nine years, and the most traumatic event of all had come in 1527, with the Sack of Rome. Barbarians and other enemies had got as far as the walls of Rome in previous years, but none had actually succeeded in breaching them on a large scale. The Sack of 1527, however, was almost another Cannae in its traumatic effects on Roman self-possession and self-confidence.