



Michelangelo's New Sacristy and Vecchietti's Criticism of the Missing Attributes of the *Times of the Day**

The mortuary chapel of the Medici in the Florentine Church of San Lorenzo (fig. 1) is an important site for the display of the family's status and significance, for the liturgical intercession for the members of the dynasty buried there *and* – almost from the outset – Michelangelo's art. In the documents the chapel is always called the New Sacristy. On the one hand, it was the most spectacular mausoleum with the most elaborate commemoration of the dead in Italy at the time and, on the other, a *Gesamtkunstwerk* of Michelangelo's art that was closely studied by countless artists and eagerly visited by tourists even before it was completed and in the centuries since then.

THE NEW SACRISTY – CONSTRUCTION AND RECEPTION IN THE 16TH CENTURY*

In the course of the 15th century, the untitled Medici family experienced an unparalleled rise to power. While their house developed into one of the wealthiest in Europe, members of the family assured their dominance within the Republic of Florence. Lorenzo de' Medici, who was known as "il Magnifico" (1449–1492), was the third de facto ruler of the city in the Medici line and had tremendous influence on Italian politics as a whole. In the year 1513, his son Giovanni (1475–1521) was enthroned as pope under the name of Leo X. The pontiff used the power he had obtained to elevate his family to the rank of a hereditary princely house. After paying an enormous dowry, he was able to marry his younger brother Giuliano (1479–1516) to Philiberta of Savoy, an aunt of the French king François (Francis) I. The conferment of the title of "Duke of Nemours" on the groom was of vital significance for the family. However, the newly ennobled duke passed away soon thereafter, in 1516, without leaving a legitimate heir. Following that, the pope led a

Fig. 1: Michelangelo, Medici Chapel, 1520–1534, Florence, San Lorenzo

campaign against the dukedom of Urbino, captured the city and named his nephew, who had been christened Lorenzo (1492–1519) after his grandfather, the new duke of Urbino. However, the family's hopes were dashed yet again when Lorenzo died without male heir in May 1519. That marked the end of that line of the Medici family. There were now only two legitimate male descendants and both were members of the clergy: Pope Leo X and his cousin, Cardinal Giulio, who was elected pope in 1523 and took on the name of Clement VII. Against this backdrop, consolidating and increasing the power of the family no longer took pride of place. The focus now shifted to the cultivation of the *memoria* – the salvation of family members in the hereafter and the dynasty's historical reputation in this life. Pope Leo and Cardinal Giulio decided to achieve this by expanding the family church, San Lorenzo in Florence, by adding a mortuary chapel. This extension was to be the most important construction project of the two popes. It was planned to have funerary monuments for the two ennobled Medici dukes who had died while still young, as well as for the fathers of the two popes (Lorenzo, “il Magnifico” and his brother Giuliano). Money was obviously not an issue. Unlimited sums were approved for the architecture and decoration. At the same time, they initiated an eternal worship for the souls of those buried there that was unique in all of Italy: mass was to be read three times daily and psalms recited continuously at all other times of the day and night.

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) was commissioned with the architecture and decoration of the new chapel. This was an obvious choice seeing that he already had the reputation of being the greatest sculptor of his time and had been responsible – as master builder in the service of Leo X – for the façade of San Lorenzo in Florence. Construction began in November 1519. At the beginning, the donors discussed the number and distribution of the tombs in the chapel with the artist. However, apart from these fundamental decisions, Michelangelo was given absolute free rein in planning the architecture, as well as the iconography and form of the sculptural decoration. Cardinal Giulio appears to have been Michelangelo's main contact for this project from the outset. After taking up office as pope in Rome, he communicated with the sculptor in writing. Several letters provide us with an insight into the relationship between client and artist. The pope enquired about progress at the building site several times a month; he had drawings sent to him and made competent, detailed comments on the work. He frequently urged Michelangelo to haste and, in matters concerning funding and responsibilities at the construction site, interceded to ensure they were decided in Michelangelo's favour. He often wrote that the work was to be carried out according to Michelangelo's desires. Due to the exceptional amount of work involved in the decoration, to political turmoil that led to work being interrupted, as well as to the fact the Michelangelo was reluctant to delegate work on the sculptures, progress was slow. Clement VII did not live to see the chapel completed. Following the pope's death, in September 1534, activities came to a halt and the chapel remained an unfinished building site for almost a generation. The shell had been completed, the

architecture of the tombs for the two dukes erected and the seated figures of Giuliano and Lorenzo placed in their niches. The four unfinished sculptures of the *Times of the Day*, which were intended to be positioned on the tops of the sarcophagi, were left standing on the floor. The walls were unplastered and there was no glass in the windows. Work on three statues had begun for the double tomb planned for Lorenzo the Magnificent and his brother Giuliano: Michelangelo's *Madonna and Child* and the two patron saints of the Medici family, the doctors Cosmas and Damian, which were to be executed by Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli and Raffaello da Montelupo.

After the death of all male descendants of the old Medici line, Cosimo de' Medici (1519–1574) assumed power in 1537. He was a scion of a younger family line but his political skill and military victories made it possible for him to establish himself as duke of Florence and subsequently grand duke of Tuscany after 1569, which resulted in him finding a place in the history books as Cosimo I. Completing the mortuary chapel of the Medici line that had ruled before him was not one of his main priorities. The efforts made by two confidants of the duke are to be thanked for this happening at all: Cosimo's chamberlain, Piero Francesco Riccio (c. 1490–1564) and Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574), the artist-biographer who also served as painter and architect for Cosimo.

Riccio arranged for work to recommence and, in 1546, commissioned the sculptor Niccolò Tribolo (1497–1550) to install the four *Times of the Day* on the sarcophagi and to bring the three sculptures for the double tomb into the chapel. It is remarkable that, although Tribolo placed Michelangelo's statues on the sarcophagi, he did not rework them and, as a result, the *Times of the Day* have stood where they were intended to from the outset in spite of their unfinished state. Such a move was utterly unique in the 16th century. The sources provide no information as to the grounds for this restraint on Tribolo's part. One reason could be that the duke did not want to spend any money on their reworking. However, it is more likely that nobody dared lay a hand on the work of the universally admired Michelangelo, at least not as long as he was still alive.

The second construction campaign took place on Giorgio Vasari's initiative; he had been in Cosimo's service since 1554 and frequently beseeched him to finish work on the chapel. The walls between the stone architectural sections were plastered and the windows completely glazed sometime in early 1557. In 1559, the double tomb on the front wall was executed as a simple marble box and the three sculptures placed on it without any kind of architectonic framework. In this case as well, it is remarkable that without any knowledge of Michelangelo's plans, no architectural setting was designed and the *Madonna and Child* left unfinished (fig. 1). Around 1561, the chapel had progressed to the stage that the eternal worship ordered three decades earlier could begin. Mass and prayers must have taken place in the small chancel so as not to hinder artists and travellers from accessing Michelangelo's art in the main hall of the chapel. In 1563, Vasari attempted to convince Cosimo I to

engage twelve sculptors and twelve painters from his own recently established Accademia del Disegno to proceed with the completion of the New Sacristy. This idea failed because the aged Michelangelo did not reply to Vasari's questions, nor did he provide the duke with the information on the planning that he had asked for. All the same, the New Sacristy did serve as the official meeting place for Vasari's academy for five years, starting in 1563. Everybody was talking about the New Sacristy long before it was finished. Young artists in particular were eager to gain admittance. We know that sometime around 1533 Vasari took advantage of Michelangelo's temporary absence to enter the chapel secretly. After a halt in the construction in 1534, the chapel emerged as a prominent attraction, in spite of its unfinished state and the fact it still resembled something of a building site. It was visited by many travellers, including Emperor Charles V, and, according to Vasari, "by all of the sculptors and painters in Florence".¹ The sources report that there were quarrels over who held authority over the keys: Riccio – and later, Vasari – complained to the duke about the clergymen who, with their lack of understanding of art, did not tend to the upkeep of the room. One after the other, the two men succeeded in taking over authority.² Two drawings that Federico Zuccari probably made in the 1560s show what everyday life in the chapel sometimes looked like (see cat. 9): we see artists drawing and modelling after Michelangelo's works quite unimpeded, they are busy discussing the art among themselves, have brought food and even a dog with them.³ Of all of Michelangelo's sculptures, the *Times of the Day* were by far the most frequently copied in the 16th century. Copies drawn by 13 different artists have been preserved of the *Dawn* alone – in comparison, there are only two after the *David* that had been on unrestricted public display on the Piazza della Signoria in Florence since 1504. Among the drawings, the preference for female figures is conspicuous; I was able to list drawings after the *Night* by nine artists, but only seven after the *Dusk* and four after the *Day*.⁴

MICHELANGELO'S *TIMES OF THE DAY* –

THE LANGUAGE OF HIS CHARACTERISTIC BODILY FORMS AND POSES

Tombs decorated with figural sculptures and positioned along the walls of a church have been a customary form for the burial of prominent individuals in Italy since the 13th century. Michelangelo's monuments for the two Medici dukes followed in this tradition and, simultaneously, surpassed any previous memorials of the kind. Both tombs exhibit the same symmetrical, two-storeyed arrangement with three axes separated by double pilasters. The statues of the two dukes are placed in the central, considerably deeper, gableless niches of the respective monuments. With his depiction of the deceased persons as living, seated figures, the sculptor oriented himself on the bronze memorial in Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome that Antonio del Pollaiuolo had created for Pope Innocence VIII in the 1490s (fig. 2). However, Michelangelo's elaborate



Fig. 2: Antonio del Pollaiuolo,
Tomb of Pope Innocent VIII,
1492–1498, Rome, St Peter's
Basilica



Fig. 3: Michelangelo, Tomb of Lorenzo de' Medici, 1520–1534, Florence, San Lorenzo



Fig. 4: Michelangelo, Tomb of Giuliano de' Medici, 1520–1534, Florence, San Lorenzo

architectural arrangement, with its wealth of ornaments and the differentiation in the movement of the two seated figures outstripped both Pollaiuolo's papal tomb and all other monuments of this kind existing in Italy in that period. In the 16th century, the four *Times of the Day* reclining on the sarcophagi received the greatest amount of attention. They were a completely new invention – in terms of both content and form. The theme of (the passing of) time is linked with death, and the hourglass already frequently featured as an attribute in allegories of death in the early 16th century.⁵ Since antiquity, specific times of the day had occasionally been a subject in art – especially *Aurora*. However, never before had the four times of the day been presented together side by side – neither on tombs nor in any other context. The fact that Michelangelo introduced such a novel iconography without using attributes was unprecedented. He thwarted the usual practice of the time that almost always identified figures – whether through commonly accepted facial types, clothing or objects. It is clear, however, that Michelangelo did not originally intend to abstain from symbolic attributes entirely.⁶ The *Night*, which he must have worked on first, actually does have several attributes – including a diadem with a star and half-moon, as well as an owl next to her left foot.⁷ By contrast, the three other figures bear no attributes at all. They are identifiable solely when one pays attention to their physical state, their posture and suggested movement.

The poses of *Day* and *Night* (fig. 4) are very similar. Both support their elbow on a raised left leg while the right thigh is only slightly bent. Both left arms are placed behind the body. However, the two statues have contrasting characteristics. The torsion of the male figure is strained. The left leg crosses the right (the *Night*, by contrast, has both legs next to each other), the head is emphatically turned over the arm and shoulder to the right and almost all of the musculature is exaggeratedly depicted. In comparison, the *Night* is relaxed. Even the crossing of the right elbow with the left thigh seems comparatively casual in this case. The polarity of *Day* and *Night* intensifies in their gaze: the *Night* has her eyes closed and seems to be withdrawn into herself, whereas the *Day* looks directly – and almost defiantly – at the viewer. In keeping with the Italian gender of the word *aurora*, the *Dawn* is feminine; the *Dusk* (*crepuscolo* in Italian) is masculine (fig. 3). Here, as well, we are dealing with two reclining figures of opposite sex with postures that balance each other out – in this case they are almost mirror-symmetric. Both stretch the front leg out and bend the back one; both support themselves on the arm facing us and have their faces turned towards the centre of the tomb. Here again, the two times of the day are formed as polar opposites. In the *Dusk*, everything hangs loosely downwards: the head, arms and legs, even the penis. Although he supports himself on his left elbow and crossed thighs, he seems to have lost his hold and to be slipping off the curved sarcophagus.

In contrast, the awakening *Dawn* seems to be tensing her muscles. Her left leg is pulled up while the right one still hangs down completely relaxed. The two arms are bent and the muscles show clear signs of tension. The left hand

is tense while the right hand rests peacefully on a cloth. The head is turned to the right and the neck musculature is strongly contracted. The unusual headdress does not correspond with the fashion of the time nor of older models. A kind of diadem with two thick volute-like bulges holds a veil that cascades down the figure's back. By using this spiral sculptural form, the sculptor seems to have wanted to repeat the subject of the figure as a whole – awakening and tensing individual muscles and limbs – on a more abstract level.

Never before had a sculptor characterized the body so specifically and with such contrast as Michelangelo did in his *Times of the Day*. His renunciation of attributes shows that he assumed that his language of a characteristic rendering of the nude would be generally understandable. Some of his contemporaries understood this language⁸ but this mode of representation was not widely copied in Michelangelo's own century. Giambologna is a typical example of a younger artist who was more interested in the beauty of the bodies and the unbroken flow of visual lines, rather than in the multifaceted characterization of figures. This also explains why the *Dawn*, which fulfils this ideal, was reproduced in drawings much more frequently than the other figures in the New Sacristy.

MICHELANGELO'S ABSTENTION FROM ATTRIBUTES – CONTEMPORARY REACTIONS

How did people react to Michelangelo's eschewal of attributes at the time? The sources that we have at our disposal indicate three very different points of view. First of all, records show that some visitors did not understand what the reclining nudes were supposed to represent. For example, the Frankfurt legal counsel Johann Fichard, who visited the chapel in 1536, mentions Minerva and Hercules in his travel diary. Here he is obviously referring to the *Night* with the owl and the muscular *Day*. This reveals that the obstacle to understanding the iconography was primarily the unusual subject and only secondarily the lack of attributes.⁹

The second reaction we know of is that the absence of attributes was met with criticism. There is only indirect proof of this during the sculptor's lifetime; namely, in the reports made by Michelangelo's pupil and biographer Ascanio Condivi. In his *Vita*, which was published in 1553, Condivi writes that even the *Day*, and not just the *Night*, has attributes ("note"), without specifying which ones. Of course, this statement is false. I assume that Condivi made it, in order to defend his master from critical voices already raised in the middle of the century.¹⁰ This criticism must have found a greater echo in the context of the Council of Trent, and all the more after the publication of its decrees. The *Sessio XXV* determined in 1563 that painting and sculptures in Catholic churches were to be clear and moral. Michelangelo's *Times of the Day* were incapable of satisfying either one of these two stipulations. However,

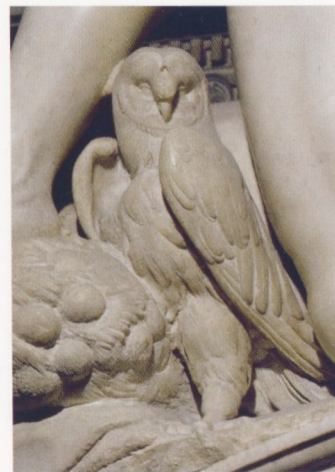


Fig. 5: Michelangelo, *Night*, detail, 1524–1534, Florence, Medici Chapel, San Lorenzo



Fig. 6: Michelangelo, *Night*, detail, 1524–1534, Florence, Medici Chapel, San Lorenzo

Florence held back in discriminating against the great son of the city. While the concealing of the “immoral” sexual organs in his *Last Judgement* in the Sistine Chapel was fulfilled in 1565, it was not carried out on the *Times of the Day* until 1725.¹¹ Express criticism of the insufficient clarity of the *Times of the Day* was first formulated in print in 1584: In his art-theoretical discourse *Il Riposo*, Raffaello Borghini writes that, despite all the admiration, Michelangelo should be justly rebuked for not providing three of the *Times of the Day* with any attributes: “A well-observed invention can be called that of Michelangelo, in the very beautiful figure that he did as the Night. Besides doing her in the act of sleeping, he put a moon on her forehead and a nocturnal bird at her feet. These things demonstrate night [...]. And while the Dawn, Day, and Dusk are not only beautiful but marvellous, primarily for their pose and the composition of their parts, nevertheless I do not know what to say of the invention. They did not have, when they were finished, any of the attributes that the ancients gave them to make them known. If the names that Michelangelo had for them were not already known, I do not know that I could see that any, while well conceived, would be recognizable.”¹² Borghini places these words, which we will return to in the next section, in the mouth of Bernardo Vecchiotti. It is noteworthy that this criticism was formulated so explicitly just once in the early modern era. It was not until the 19th century that a wider discussion took place: the art historians Carl Ludwig Fernow (1803), Leopoldo Cicognara (1816) and Antoine Chrysostôme Quatremère de Quincy (1835) – and even Jacob Burckhardt (1855) – were appalled at the lack of attributes and triggered vehement protests for their attitude, including from Stendhal (1817) and Heinrich Wölfflin (1898).¹³

The discussion about the attributes was not only carried out in writing but also visually – in copies of the *Times of the Day* with added attributes. This is particularly the case with the alabaster copies in Dresden that stand at the centre of this exhibition and that Claudia Kryza-Gersch has very convincingly attributed to Giambologna. The sculptor – who I will henceforth call Giambologna – formed the statuettes so that each one of them can be identified by attributes. He adopted and completed Michelangelo’s additions to the *Night*: the owl (fig. 5), the diadem with the moon and star (fig. 6), the mask and garland of fruit. He added a sun or its rays to the three other figures: the round face of the orb behind the back of the *Day* (fig. 7), the barely half-risen sun next to the right arm of the *Dawn* (fig. 8), and a few clouds with the last rays of light shining beneath them next to the left elbow of the *Dusk* (fig. 9). The choice of symbolism – the sun in three different stages – is admittedly not especially imaginative but nevertheless easily understandable. The Dresden alabaster statuettes are the only set of copies of the *Times of the Day* in which each figure has been given attributes.¹⁴ In the collection I have assembled over almost three decades, there are no other copies of the *Day* and *Dusk* featuring attributes¹⁵ – not even those made of other materials or at a later time. If one overlooks a few copies with rather unspecific attributes, the same applies to the *Dawn*.¹⁶ Conversely, there are indeed some copies from

Fig. 7: Giambologna, *Day*, detail, c. 1555–1558, Dresden, Skulpturensammlung



the 16th century of the *Night* – the only figure with original attributes by Michelangelo – bearing yet more attributes added to it. We know of four paintings with masks and/or an oil lamp and hourglass along with Michelangelo's attributes (fig. 11)¹⁷ and an anonymous unpublished copperplate engraving (fig. 10), which is here attributed to Cornelis Bos (c. 1506/10–1555).¹⁸ It was probably created before the mid-16th century, making it the very first printed reproduction of the *Night*.¹⁹ The engraver did not take particular care in reproducing Michelangelo's attributes, but added a sleeping youth at the feet of the allegory as an additional symbol of the night. The third contemporary response in the reception of the *Times of the Day* is diametrically opposed to the second: even as early as the 16th century some connoisseurs appreciated that Michelangelo had done away with attributes nearly entirely. This is revealed in an anecdote told by Vasari in the second edition of his *Vite* (1568): The painter Giuliano Bugiardini – whom Vasari usually characterized as something of a sympathetic dimwit – painted a picture after Michelangelo's *Night* in which he made fun of its iconographic inventions. Similar to the reproduction just discussed, Bugiardini added numerous objects that could be plainly connected with darkness – from a lantern to a bat. When Michelangelo saw the painting, he simply could not stop laughing.²⁰

VECCHIETTI AND GIAMBLOGNA – COMPLEMENTING AND COMPLETING MICHELANGELO'S *TIMES OF THE DAY*

Although the final proof is missing, many things speak in favour of the Dresden statuettes of the *Times of the Day* having been created by Giambologna in the 1550s and coming into the possession of Cosimo I, who then presented them to the Saxon elector Augustus soon thereafter.²¹ If one considers the alabaster copies from the perspective of the contemporary reception of the New Sacristy, it becomes clear that they are unique in many ways. This leads to conclusions that provide a coherent picture of the reasons and conditions for their creation, in which Bernardo Vecchietti (1514–1590) becomes the centre of interest.²² It seems likely that he commissioned the statuettes from Giambologna; possibly from the outset with the intention of presenting them to Cosimo I. Vecchietti, the scion of an old Florentine noble family, was a member of the closest circle of advisors to Cosimo I and his son and successor Francesco I. He was active for them as a commercial attaché and enjoyed the trust of the Medici family – especially in the field of precious stones. He was extremely well educated, a passionate collector and assembled one of the most important art collections of the day in his villa, *Il Riposo*, south of Florence. Vecchietti did not leave any theoretical writings, but it can be assumed that Borghini's book *Il Riposo*, which is written in the form of a series of conversations and was published during Vecchietti's lifetime, probably reflects his thoughts to a large extent. The title refers to Vecchietti's villa where the

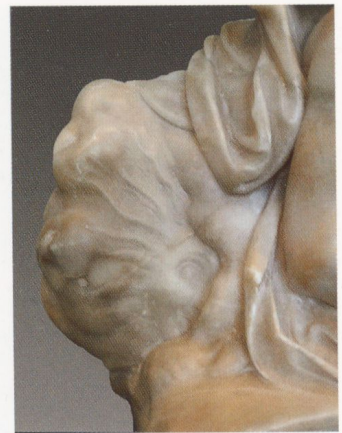


Fig. 8: Giambologna, *Dawn*, detail, c. 1555–1558, Dresden, Skulpturensammlung

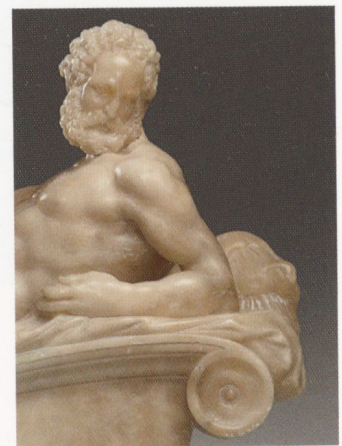


Fig. 9: Giambologna, *Dusk*, detail, c. 1555–1558, Dresden, Skulpturensammlung

dialogues were staged, and the squire makes his appearance as the leading interlocutor. In modern historiography, Vecchietti is mainly known as Giambologna's patron. He was also the person who gave the young man from Flanders board and lodging for several years, setting up a workshop in his villa, subsequently introducing him to the Medicean court and, in this way, binding him to Florence. Exactly when Giambologna arrived in Florence is unclear, possibly around 1552.²³ However, there is evidence that Vecchietti was his first patron and that the two men remained close to each other until Vecchietti's death.

Similarly to his teacher Jacques Dubroeucq and many other Flemish artists, Giambologna set out on his trip to Italy to further his education and study works both of antiquity and by the leading Italian sculptors of the day – precisely, those of Michelangelo. It is completely natural that the Fleming – like all other young artists in the city – was interested in the *Times of the Day* in the New Sacristy. It also comes as no surprise that, as a sculptor, he not only drew the *Times of the Day* but also made plastic models (*modelli*) of the sculptures. However, unlike Tribolo (cat. 16) and Van der Schardt (see cats. 35, 38), Giambologna was not satisfied with forming his copies in clay. He went to much greater effort and made copies in stone. This was quite unique, for the 16th century at least, and leads to the assumption that Giambologna did not make the statuettes for himself, nor as study objects, nor souvenirs. It is much more likely that they were purposefully created to fulfil a commission. A commission that, in all likelihood, must have come from his host and patron at the time, Bernardo Vecchietti. This would also explain the reason that Giambologna was the only artist to endow all of the *Times of the Day* attributes – for Vecchietti was, after all, the man who formulated the only

Fig. 10: Cornelis Bos (attributed to), *The Night*, 1540s, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum





Fig. 11: Michele Tosini, called Michele di Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio, *The Night*, c. 1565, Rome, Galleria Colonna

explicit criticism of the omission of attributes known to us from the early modern era. But, of the two men, who drew the other's attention to this alleged flaw? There can be no doubt that it was the Catholic doctrinaire Vecchiotti. In *Il Riposo*, he appears obsessed with the question of how artists should deal with the *invenzione* (inventions) – with the subjects to be depicted: how far could they be permitted to stray from Holy Scripture, when should they be allowed to develop ideas of their own and, when doing so, how could one ensure that the greatest consideration and prudence prevailed.²⁴ However, Vecchiotti's ideas did not make much of an impression on Giambologna. Compared with his contemporaries, the Fleming's interest in iconographical questions was relatively weak. The three-figure marble abduction group (1579–1583, see cats. 31, 32) was considered Giambologna's masterpiece already during his lifetime. It is known that he created it without any literary model. The title that is ordinarily used today – *Rape of a Sabine Woman* – was only appended to the work at someone else's advice and only once the monumental statue had been completed; a fact that is widely

discussed in Borghini's *Riposo*.²⁵ Like three of the *Times of the Day* by Michelangelo, the figures in this group possess no attributes. It can therefore be assumed that the attributes for the *Times of the Day*, as well as the unusually complex iconography for the *Allegory of Francesco I de' Medici* (cat. 20), were Vecchiotti's inventions. As the duke's confidante responsible for gemstones, Vecchiotti probably had good connections to the Tuscan stone trade. We know that he provided Giambologna with his first block of marble. It seems natural that he would have also procured the alabaster for the figures in Dresden and the relief in Madrid.²⁶ But why did he choose this material that was widely available in Tuscany but almost never used by Italian sculptors? The main reason must have been that young Giambologna already had command of the material and would only later risk working in marble.²⁸ It is also possible that Vecchiotti thought that the sculptor would be praised for his skill with the uncommon material. The Florentine viewers would have been unaccustomed to figures made of alabaster and, therefore, impressed by the material's much greater translucency than marble's. In addition, the skin of an alabaster statue is considerably softer and warmer than one carved out of Carrara marble.

Alabaster simply begs to have its surfaces polished to a lustrous finish as this is the only way to showcase its characteristic transparency – and Giambologna certainly followed this aesthetic. His *Times of the Day* are finely worked and have been given a very smooth surface that must have been even more glistening when they were created than they are today. Alabaster crystals react to humidity and the exterior of the stone becomes dull over time as a result. No other sculptural replicas of the *Times of the Day* are as fine as Giambologna's and this makes the contrast to Michelangelo's originals, which are partially only roughly hewn and left unfinished in many passages, all the greater. Giambologna finished the *non-finito* in Michelangelo, for example in the heads of the *Day* and *Dusk*, the left hand of the *Night*, all the draperies on which the figures recline, and, most markedly of all, all the back surfaces. This type of finishing of unfinished works was customary in the 16th century, in sculptural replicas, as well as copy drawings and prints.²⁸ However, Giambologna goes further than all his contemporaries – further in the degree of completion and further in distancing himself from Michelangelo's original concept. For example, this is particularly obvious when the heads of the *Day* are compared. Through slimming down and inclination, the alabaster figure loses the monumental impact and force of the marble original.

A comparison between the Dresden copies and the Florentine originals shows that Giambologna had no interest in Michelangelo's characteristic bodily forms. The expressions of the four alabaster figures are more alike than those of the four marble originals. Giambologna beautified the bodies and, in doing so, homogenized their individual characteristics. While the *Dusk* reclines limply in Michelangelo's work, Giambologna shows him with tensed muscles that are much more like the *Day* than in the Italian sculptor's figures. The torso of Giambologna's *Dusk* is shorter and less inclined. The head is more

actively turned to the back. To prevent falling, the alabaster figure braces itself against the slope of the sarcophagus with its right foot and, in this way, contradicts the overall impression and sense of its model.

The commission for the Dresden alabaster figures must therefore have come from Vecchietti. But what was his reason for this? Is it conceivable that he ordered the works for his own collection and only decided at a later date to present them to the duke? It is just as plausible that he conceived them as a present for the Medici court from the very beginning. In any case, it seems certain to me that the statuettes were not originally ordered as gifts for Dresden, since in this case they would have been made of the white Carrara marble of which people in Tuscany were rightly proud.

What was Vecchietti's intention when he presented Cosimo with the alabaster *Times of the Day*? We have no sources that can supply us with this information, but we can certainly speculate. It would be natural for Vecchietti, as a court official, to try to curry the duke's favour. It would also be natural for him to try to recommend his protégé, Giambologna, for greater tasks. Did he have a specific assignment in mind? I think that the demonstrative complementing and completion was meant to encourage Cosimo to have Michelangelo's *Times of the Day* completed. It is possible that before Vasari planned a large-scale project to complete the chapel in 1563, Vecchietti had already tried to complement the *Times of the Day* in the 1550s.²⁹ In such a case, Giambologna would then have been assigned with finishing the figures, which were left rough in many passages, and adding the attributes Vecchietti deemed necessary. The marble block for the *Dawn* would have sufficed for the half-sun as executed in the alabaster copy and Vecchietti would have probably tolerated the necessary pieces being added to the *Day* and *Dusk* if they would remedy the flaw of iconographic vagueness.

The goal of the statuettes in Dresden could have therefore been to encourage Cosimo I to complement and complete Michelangelo's statues. This is admittedly mere speculation but, considering Vecchietti's zeal known to us through Borghini's *Il Riposo*, nonetheless plausible. What would have happened if Giambologna, in contrast to Tribolo, had dared to lay his hands on Michelangelo's blocks, to develop the missing sections, smooth the rough chisel marks of the "divine" sculptor, and invest the figures with the appropriate attributes – maybe even beautifying the figures to resemble each other more closely? We should be grateful that that did not come to pass!

* Unless stated otherwise, the summary of the history and reception of the chapel is based on the comprehensive chronology in Rosenberg 2000, pp. 127–143; this, as well as the analysis of the *Times of the Day*, is taken – in part, verbatim – from Rosenberg 2015, pp. 216–222. I would like to thank Gerd Blum, Jane Boddy, Zoya Dare, Tanja Jenni, Claudia Kryza-Gersch, Angelika Marinovic and Heidrun Rosenberg for their suggestions, assistance and corrections.

- 1 See Rosenberg 2000, pp. 129–131, with a register of confirmed visits, and pp. 201–253 for a list of drawn copies.
- 2 The church chapter had to ask Riccio for keys as early as 1540 (letter from Figiovanni, prior of San Lorenzo, to Riccio dated 5 June 1540 in the Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Mediceo 1169, Ins. 5, fol. 179 = The Medici Archive Project, ID 2347). On later confrontations, see Rosenberg 2000, pp. 133–136.
- 3 Rosenberg 2006, pp. 105, 110.
- 4 Rosenberg 2000, p. 254.
- 5 E.g., in Dürer's copperplate engraving *Knight, Death and the Devil*, dated 1513.
- 6 A possibly autograph drawing in the Louvre (inv. 838, see Joannides 2003, pp. 140–143) shows an earlier stage in the planning of Giuliano's tomb. In it, the *Day* and *Night* (mirror-reversed compared with the realized tomb) are both male and have horn-like attributes (sunrays/crescent moon).
- 7 In contrast to the *Dawn* and *Dusk*, the blocks of the *Day* and *Night* have flat lower surfaces indicating that they were begun before Michelangelo designed the curved lids of the sarcophagi. Although some sections of the *Night* were not completed, it has the highest level of finish among the four statues. Some limbs already have the final polish. On the significance of the garland of fruit (poppies?) and mask (symbol of dreaming?), see Rosenberg 2000, p. 32.
- 8 This is less obvious in the written sources, but more so in some copy drawings stressing characteristic aspects of the sculptures (Rosenberg 2015, especially p. 232).
- 9 Rosenberg 2000, p. 33, 130.
- 10 Condivi 1553, p. 30, who also explained that Michelangelo had planned to carve a mouse to symbolize time gnawing away at everything: "Et per che tal suo proposito meglio fusse inteso, messe alla notte, ch'è fatta in forma di donna di maravigliosa bellezza, la civetta, et altri segni acciaio accomodati, così al giorno le sue note. Et per la significatione del tempo, voleva fare un topo, havendo lasciato in sù l'opera un poco di marmo, il qual poi non fece, impedito, percioche tale animaluccio di continuo rode et consuma, non altrimenti chel tempo, ogni cosa divora."
- 11 See Rosenberg 2000, pp. 29–30.
- 12 Borghini (1584) 2007, pp. 65–66. Original: "Invention ben osservata si può chiamar quella di Michelagnolo nella bellissima figura da lui per la notte finta; percioche oltre al farla in atto di dormire, le fece la Luna in fronte, e l'uccello notturno a' piedi; cose che dimostrano la notte, [...] e come che l'Aurora, il Giorno, & il Crepuscolo sieno figure quanto all'attitudini, & al comportamento della membra non solo belle, ma meravigliose, nondimeno non so io che dirmi dell'invention, poiche elle non hanno insegna alcuna di quelle, che davano loro gli antichi, per farle conoscere per quelle, che sono state finte; e se non fosse già divulgato il nome che Michelagnolo le fece per tali, non so io vedere che alcuno, come che molto intendente, le potesse conoscere."
- 13 Bibliographical references, see Rosenberg 2000, pp. 34–37.
- 14 Frank Zöllner was the first to draw attention to the fact that the statuettes in Dresden are an exception in this respect (lecture at the conference *Antworten auf Michelangelo* in Bonn, 29 April 2015).
- 15 The only exception that could be asserted is an anonymous pair of paintings from the 16th century with depictions of the *Day* and *Night* each shown alone and in a landscape (oil on canvas, 137.5 x 173 cm each, Christie's, Monaco, 20 June 1992, lot 10). The sky is darkened in both paintings. No symbols can be discerned in the *Dusk*. In the *Day*, a nude male figure, resting on a lion (?) can be seen in a patch of light. It is formed after Michelangelo's/Pontormo's, *Venus and Amor* (c. 1533, oil on canvas, Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence), but reversed.
- 16 Two large-scale paintings on canvas are part of decorative cycles with reclining female nudes after Michelangelo's sketches (in the Galleria Colonna and Casa Buonarroti; see Rosenberg 2000, p. 34, note 81). The added attributes seem to pertain less to the *Dawn* than to the neighbouring paintings. Francesco Salviati made a drawing copying Michelangelo's *Dawn* in a bed and added a view of a landscape with two wanderers (Uffizi, inv. 608 F; see Rosenberg 2000, p. 249 and plate 12).
- 17 See Rosenberg 2000, p. 34, note 81. On the painting by Michele Tosini illustrated here, see Hornik 2009, pp. 90–94.
- 18 Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-206-687-2, 147 x 255 mm. I would like to thank Angelika Marinovic for her suggestion to attribute the work to Bos. She writes: "The perfectly parallel, long curved lines that invest the body of the nude with a light curvature without any three-dimensionality, are typical of engravers from the Low Countries. I would attribute the engraving to Cornelis Bos, who developed a particular precision in setting long parallel curves of this kind, leading to figures having less vitality than those made by his contemporaries such as Hieronymus Cock and Dirck Volkertsz. Coornhert. Bos' long curved lines, created in one continuous movement, are not oriented according to the form of the body. Therefore his nudes appear rather relief-like, in front of a background of, for example, creased drapery, without becoming detached

- from it sculpturally. This effect of a flowing transition between the foreground and background is heightened by the fact that Bos and the engraver of the copperplate after Michelangelo's *Night* often interrupt the inner hatching shortly before the contour line or allow it to protrude beyond this line. It is also typical that he pays close attention to the human body while the architecture and attributes are less strongly modelled" (trans. Robert McInnes).
- 19 The figure is shown in a flat reclining position and viewed from above. Therefore, Bos' model must have been made before the sculpture was installed in 1546. The engraving was probably made later than Battista Franco's etchings of the *Dawn* and *Dusk* (c. 1536; see Rosenberg 2003; see also Barnes 2010, p. 200, nos. 121, 122, and Jenkins 2017, vol. I, pp. 69–71, vol. III, pp. 242–245), and definitely before Cornelis Cort's complete views of the three tombs from 1570.
 - 20 Vasari (1568) 1966–1987, vol. V, p. 283: "Ne' portelli del detto tabernacolo, per mostrare le tenebre che furono nella morte del Salvatore, fece [Giuliano Bugiardini] una Notte in campo nero, ritratta da quella che è nella sagrestia di San Lorenzo di mano di Michelagnolo. Ma perché non ha quella statua altro segno che un barbagianni, Giuliano, scherzando intorno alla sua pittura della Notte, con l'invenzione de' suoi concetti, vi fece un frugnuolo da uccellare a' tordi la notte, con la lanterna, un pentolino di quei che si portano la notte con una candela o moccolo, con altre cose simili e che hanno che fare con le tenebre e col buio, come dire berrettini, cuffie, guanciali e pipistregli. Onde il Buonarruoto, quando vide quest'opera, ebbe a smascelare delle risa, considerando con che strani capricci aveva il Bugiardino arricchita la sua Notte." Bugiardini's painted tabernacle has disappeared – if it ever existed at all.
 - 21 On the dating, see the essay in this volume by Claudia Kryza-Gersch, p. 30.
 - 22 On Vecchiotti, see Bury 1985; Natali 1996; Carrara 2006.
 - 23 Bury 1985, pp. 23–24.
 - 24 Borghini 1584, p. 64, differentiates "l'inventione da altrui derivante" from the "[invention] che viene dall'artefice istesso". The latter must be employed "con grandissima consideratione, e giudicio" (p. 78). See Natali 1996, especially pp. 124–25.
 - 25 Borghini 1584, pp. 71–75.
 - 26 In addition, Vecchiotti had very strong opinions about the choice of the material for sculptures and intervened with Giambologna in this area. See Cole 2011, p. 253, and elsewhere.
 - 27 Borghini 1584, p. 586, see Bury 1985, pp. 14, 26.
 - 28 The concept of the *non-finito* dates from the 18th century. The Italian word is used outside of Italian to positively describe Michelangelo's unfinished sculptures. It is often bound to the assumption that the sculptor had intentionally left his figures unfinished. This definitely does not apply to the figures in the New Sacristy. See Rosenberg 2000, pp. 92–120; Rosenberg 2015, pp. 233–34.
 - 29 Claudia Kryza-Gersch proposes dating the statuettes to around 1555/58 (see her essay in this volume, p. 30). If Giambologna had already been a guest in Vecchiotti's house from 1552 on, they could have been created earlier. In the discussion on *invenzione* (Borghini 1584, p. 67), Vecchiotti refers to relevant publications by Paolo Pino (*Dialogo di pittura*, 1548), Vincenzo Cartari (*Le imagini con la spositione de i dei de gli antichi*, 1556) and Pierio Valeriano (*Hieroglyphica*, 1556). In my opinion, the omission of Lodovico Dolce's *Dialogo della pittura* von 1557 does not need to be understood as the *terminus ante quem*. However, he seems to have dealt in depth with the matter already before the corresponding resolutions in the Tridentinum. To date, we have no written reports or records of favours being given by the duke in return for the presentation of the statuettes. Cosimo did not become totally committed to Michelangelo, who had been in exile since 1534, until after the sculptor's death in 1564 and the celebration of his funeral in Florence as a "great patriotic Florentine event" (Veen 2006, p. 180). Hence, the donation to Dresden probably dates to or after 1564.