MICHELANGELO AND THE ART OF LETTER WRITING

Michelangelo’s extant correspondence is the most abundant of any artist. Spanning sixty-seven years, it comprises roughly 1,400 letters, of which Michelangelo himself wrote 500. Biographers and art historians have combed the letters for insight into Michelangelo’s views on art, his contractual obligations, and his relationships. Literary scholars have explored parallels between the letters and Michelangelo’s poetry. Nevertheless, this is the first book to study the letters for their intrinsically literary qualities. In this volume, Deborah Parker examines Michelangelo’s use of language as a means of understanding the creative process of this extraordinary artist. His letters often revel in witticisms, rhetorical flourishes, and linguistic ingenuity. Close study of his mastery of words and modes of self-presentation shows Michelangelo to be a consummate artist who deploys the resources of language to considerable effect.

Deborah Parker is Professor of Italian at the University of Virginia. She has been awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Villa I Tatti – the Harvard Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, and numerous others. She is the author of many articles; her most recent book is Bronzino: Renaissance Painter as Poet (Cambridge University Press, 2000).
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For Paul Barolsky
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NOTE ON SOURCES

All citations from Michelangelo’s letters are to the following two editions:


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