Eugène Delacroix could never quite decide if he liked or disliked his fellow artist Paul Chenavard. His ambivalence is particularly evident in entries he made in his journal during the summer of 1853, when by chance he met Chenavard in Dieppe. After several ‘endless’ conversations with Chenavard, Delacroix noted, ‘He practices naively or knowingly wearing you down, like a surgeon practices cutting and bleeding’. And after a dinner darkened by Chenavard’s ‘lugubrious predictions’, Delacroix speculated, ‘I think that the doomed fate which, according to him, awaits everything, has also attached itself to the possibility of a bond between us’. The following evening, however, he wrote that Chenavard ‘pleases me; I like him and would like to find him more likable; but I always come back to the ideas that I express here’.

Delacroix’s ambivalence may well have stemmed from the fact that Chenavard was both profoundly like and unlike him. On the one hand, the two artists expressed similar ideas about history and art. Both scoffed at their contemporaries’ faith in progress and felt the art of their own day was in full decline. Delacroix regularly criticized what he called ‘the blind confidence of this generation and of the one that preceded it in modern ideas, in some supposed advent of an era in humanity that must mark a complete change’. He continued, ‘Is it not obvious that progress [...] has at present brought society to the edge of the abyss into which it could easily fall to make way for complete barbarism’. The Revolution of 1848 led him to conclude that ‘all progress must necessarily bring not still greater progress, but in the end the negation of progress, a return to the point from which one left’. Chenavard’s view of history was still more pessimistic: he believed that humanity was passing through an irreversible cycle that would end in

2 ‘lugubres prédications’; ‘Je crois que la fatalité qui entraîne, selon lui, les choses, s’attache aussi à la possibilité d’une liaison entre nous’. Delacroix, Journal, 828.
3 ‘il me plait ; je l’aime presque et voudrais le trouver plus aimable ; mais j’en suis toujours revenu aux idées que j’exprime ici’. Delacroix, Journal, 829.
4 ‘la confiance aveugle de cette génération et de celle qui l’a précédée dans les idée modernes, dans je ne sais qu’au venement d’une ère dans l’humanité qui doit marquer un changement combre’; ‘N’est-il pas évident que le progrès, c’est-à-dire la marche progressive des chose, en bien comme en mal, a amené à l’heure présent qu’il est la société sur le bord de l’abime où elle peut très bien tomber pour faire place à une barbarie complete’. Delacroix, Journal, 443.
5 ‘tout progrès doit amener nécessairement non pas un progrès plus grand encore, mais à la fin négation du progrèsm retour au point dont on est parti’. Delacroix, Journal, 443.
apocalypse, about which we shall learn more presently. While he would admit to scientific and technological innovations in his own period, he felt that artistic achievements were in an irreversible decline. ‘Progress’, as he stated bluntly to his friend Édouard Aynard, ‘does not exist’.6

The two artists shared more idiosyncratic ideas as well, suggesting how deeply their friendship may have shaped them both. For example, both penned long diatribes against what they saw as the increasing mental and physical division of labour in the modern period, which led to narrow, shallow individuals.7 Both firmly believed that music was the quintessential art of their own period, and that painting had seen its heyday in the Renaissance.8 On the other hand, Delacroix differed from Chenavard insofar as he felt that great individual artistic achievements were still possible in the present. Indeed, Delacroix sometimes counted himself among the greatest artists of all time, and he completed numerous projects in what he considered the most prestigious form of painting: monumental mural painting. In contrast, Chenavard spent much of his adult life explaining why great art was no longer possible. Like Delacroix, he esteemed mural painting above all other forms of painting, but he failed to complete his one major commission in this format, a failure that haunted him throughout his life.

This essay relates the two painters’ understandings of the course of civilization to their artistic practice. In the case of Chenavard that relationship seems clear enough: his radically eschatological vision of history, in which the arts inevitably declined after the birth of Christ, led him to believe that the painting of his own day could at best only reflect the great achievements of the past. The case of Delacroix is considerably more complicated. He felt that both the course of civilization and the appearance of great art were unpredictable, but he nonetheless firmly believed that great artistic achievements were possible in his own day. While many of his contemporaries were paralyzed by their respect for great art of the past, Delacroix was invigorated by it. His reaction to Chenavard helps to illuminate how his particular ideas about history, tradition, and creativity enabled his productive career.

Chenavard destroyed many of his writings before his death, but his elaborate historical vision may be reconstructed from surviving letters and the

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8 Delacroix expressed the idea that music was the quintessential modern art in ‘Des Variations du beau’, reprinted in Delacroix, Écrits sur l’art, 43. The notion that painting had reached a peak under the Renaissance was a truism that Delacroix repeated often. For Chenavard on this theme, see Paul Mariéton, ‘Souvenirs et anecdotes sur Paul Chenavard’, Le Figaro, 41ème année, 3ème série, no. 106, 16 April 1895, 2.
accounts of others. He believed that history proceeded through a birth, rise, and decline. History began with Adam and Eve in 4200 B.C., and it would end, he predicted, exactly 8400 years later with the death of mankind in 4200 A.D.

According to his scheme, history was divided into three (or sometimes he said four) periods, the first ending with the Tower of Babel, and the second with the birth of Christ. This second quarter was the time of humankind’s greatest achievements, as it included the culmination of the civilizations of Egypt, the Hebrews, China, Greece, and Rome. The course of history corresponded to the ages of man: both had a childhood, an adolescence and early adulthood, a full maturity, and an old age. Different possibilities were available to people living in different historical periods. During the second quarter of history, when the adolescent becomes an adult, man was governed especially by the heart, and thus by emotion, sensation, and honour. It was in this period when the arts had produced their greatest achievements. The third quarterfinal period of mankind’s life cycle belonged to the mind, and thus to science. As Chenavard explained, ‘In the last place comes the age of the Head in which scientific principles are substituted for needs and feelings. Then Art disappears, or at least only repeats itself, analyzes itself. Everywhere feeling is replaced by an exact knowledge of things’. Such was Chenavard’s pessimistic estimation of the artistic possibilities of his own time and the future.

Chenavard had planned to give visual form to this historical scheme in his decorations for the Pantheon. He received this commission in 1848 thanks to his close ties to key government officials in the Second Republic, but he lost it with the fall of the Republic in 1851. He planned sixty-three enormous murals, a portrait frieze, four decorated piers, and four enormous floor mosaics, all depicting the achievements of great men of history. Chenavard called his decorations ‘a sort of historical gallery, offering in a series of pictures placed in chronological order, the

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10 See especially Sloane, Chenavard, 66-83.

11 ‘En dernier lieu, vient l’âge de la Tête, où on substitue aux besoins et aux sentiments les principes scientifiques. Alors l’Art disparaît, ou du moins il ne fait que répeter, s’analyser; partout le sentiment fait place à une exacte connaissance des choses’. Vial, ‘Souvenirs’, 552.
great religious, political and civil events which have marked the procession of humanity through the ages'. In fact, his cycle focused especially on the actions of individuals whom Chenavard deemed the key figures in history: political and religious leaders, wise men, philosophers, writers, artists, scientists, and inventors. Such an emphasis on great men was common, but Chenavard made some effort to include both the East and the West in order to offer a more inclusive, universal history, as opposed to a particular sectarian view.

Figure 1 Paul Chenavard, *Social Palingenesis or The Philosophy of History*, 1848. Oil on canvas, 303 x 380 cm. Lyon: Musée des Beaux-Arts. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.

Space does not permit a complete examination of his scheme, but one of the mosaics, which he entitled *The Philosophy of History, or Social Palingenesis*, is particularly illuminating regarding his ideas, as it illustrates the past, present, and future of mankind (fig. 1). Chenavard’s image exists only in the form of cartoons and prints after them, but he intended it to be the focal point of his decorations, as it was to occupy nearly 500 square meters on the floor beneath the central dome of the building. The circular image divides history into four registers. At the top are the deities of various religions of the world, most of which have their origins in the beginnings of time. In the colonnade and on the level below it are the prophets, intellectuals, artists, and leaders of the ancient world, with older figures placed primarily in the upper storey. On the stairs below are more modern greats, with the most recent figures generally occupying the immediate foreground. Chenavard had originally completed his design with a lower level in which he pictured the future of

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12 Sloane, *Chenavard*, 122.
13 On efforts to reconstruct Chenavard’s exact plans for the Pantheon, see Sloane, *Chenavard*, 44-63.
mankind, but he eliminated this section from his designs, perhaps responding to criticism of his fellow republicans, who were generally far more optimistic about the future. According to written descriptions of this portion by Théophile Gautier and Chenavard himself, there were figures embodying the venality, triviality, and devotion to work that the artist felt would overtake society. Lower still Chenavard represented future mankind in full decline: humans took on bestial and monstrous forms and fought with one another, while underneath them were sterile, dying figures. At the very bottom was the fire of the final apocalypse, from which a phoenix rose.

Delacroix’s vision of the course of history was not nearly as total and final as Chenavard’s, but he meditated often and deeply on the subject in his journal beginning in the late 1840s. He was particularly fascinated by the destruction of civilization, which could come about, he often noted, through natural disasters, through the rise of barbarians within or without a society, or through decadence. Like Chenavard, Delacroix believed that many aspects of modernity, such as its supposed materialism, selfishness, and corruption—pointed to its decline. He repeatedly asserted that modern man was governed by pleasure and surrounded himself with idle amusements. Like Chenavard, Delacroix saw in America a grim vision of the future, dominated by industry, technology, and money.

In many ways Delacroix was even more pessimistic than Chenavard about the immediate future prospects of French society, particularly regarding politics. While Chenavard was a committed republican who embraced the Revolution of 1848, Delacroix came to see it as a mistake, writing long, sarcastic passages in his journal mocking its ideals of liberty and equality. In early 1849 he inspected the damage to the Tuileries Palace and the Palais Royal in a state of disgust; ten months later he fancifully considered writing a study demonstrating that vandalism was ‘the clearest result of revolutions’. This sentiment grew over time. Contemplating the vandalized ruins of an abbey near his country house in Champrosay in 1853, he exclaimed,

Destroy, burn, uproot, that’s what the fanaticism of liberty knows how to do as well as devout fanaticism; that is the way either begins its work, when it is unleashed; but that is where their brutal momentum ends.... To erect something durable, to mark its passage with something other than ruins, that is what the blind plebe does not know how to do.
Revolution was the opposite of civilization—indeed, it unleashed complete barbarism from within civilization—and Delacroix had little hope for the prospects of the democracy it might establish. In contrast, Chenavard saw the revolution as one of a series of events that disrupted the repressive powers of Catholic Church and allowed for democracy, polytheism, and a universal brotherhood of man, even if it also ushered in the reign of capital, industry, and materialism, all of which, he believed, undermined human creativity and made the greatest art a thing of the past.  

Like Chenavard, Delacroix devoted a major mural cycle to the history of civilization. His enormous ceiling for the Library of the Bourbon Palace consists of twenty-two separate paintings: two hemicycles and, between them, five cupolas, each divided into four pendentives. On one hemicycle Delacroix depicted Orpheus bringing civilization to the Greeks, and on the other Attila and his barbarian hordes trampling Italy and the arts (fig. 2 and fig. 3). Each pendentive depicts an episode from biblical, Greek, or Roman history, and the pendentives in each copula are devoted to separate fields of knowledge: science, history and philosophy, eloquence and legislation, theology, and poetry. Given that the hemicycles bracket the twenty paintings in the copulas, one might expect that the ceiling would be about the rise and decline of civilization over the course of antiquity, and therefore somewhat in the vein of Chenavard’s cyclical history, but in fact Delacroix offered just the opposite. Civilization is constantly under threat in his history, rising up at one moment only to disappear in the next, in an unpredictable succession of events. If the hemicycles promised a narrative about the rise and fall of civilization, the paintings in between them systematically undermined any sense of continual progress from barbarism to civilization.

The number of individual paintings in the ceiling prohibits a comprehensive examination of them here but, in summary, they systematically offer contrary propositions regarding the rise and decline of civilization. (The subjects of the paintings and their arrangement on the ceiling may be found in fig. 4.) For example, nature can inspire men to produce culture, as it does for the Chaldean Shepherds who invent astronomy (fig. 5), but nature also destroys culture, as when a volcano kills Pliny in the midst of writing his natural history (fig. 6). Political power sometimes nurtures the individual accomplishments that create civilization, as when Alexander preserves the poems of Homer, but frequently it hinders them, as when Nero orders Seneca’s death, or Herod executes John the Baptist. Civilization may be the result of feminine influence, as when a feminine deity inspires Numa leur impulsion brutale.... Élever quelque chose de durable, marquer son passage autrement que par des ruines, voilà ce que la plèbe aveugle ne sait point faire’. Delacroix, Journal, 654.

20 For Chenavard’s political views, see Sloane, Chenavard, 74-75; and Guernsey, Artist and the State, 176-79. Guernsey is particularly helpful on Chenavard’s relationship to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century political philosophy.

21 These, along with the remaining figures, may be found at the end of the text. [Ed.]
(fig. 7), and it may feminize men, and it has evidently done to Ovid (fig. 8), who appears delicate in relation to the barbarians who greet him in exile. At the same time, the civilizing process is often driven by virile men with exceptional masculinity, men like Achilles (fig. 9) or Demosthenes. A rational, European civilization is sometimes the envy of the East, as is Hippocrates’ medicine (fig. 10), yet for some kinds of knowledge, such as history and ethnography, the West must turn to the Eastern other, as does Herodotus when he is researching his history (fig. 11). As these contradictory narratives suggest, the ceiling of the Bourbon Palace Library records Delacroix’s open-ended and conflicted meditations on civilization.

What marks the ceiling most, however, is its refusal to characterize the civilizing process as one of more or less ineluctable progress leading to the present. In mid-nineteenth-century France, with its enormous and growing faith in progress, the barbarism/civilization opposition was normally mapped onto the binary pair past/future. The history of civilization was perhaps the most common theme in mural decorations of government buildings in mid-nineteenth-century France, and almost always it was recounted as a triumphant march to European modernity. For example, in his enormous set of murals in the Bourbon Palace’s Salon de la Paix, Horace Vernet included a painting entitled Steam Putting to Flight the Sea Gods (fig. 12). In it, industrial technology, embodied in a huge, black steamship, literally puts classical deities and animals to flight: the modern violently displaces the traditional and the natural.

More academically conventional mural paintings devoted to civilization shared Vernet’s unshakeable faith in progress. Henri Lehmann’s now-destroyed murals on the pendentives of the Galerie des Fêtes in the Hôtel de Ville (completed 1853) recounted, as one contemporary critic described it:

nothing less than an encyclopaedic history of the world, from Adam and Eve (‘humanum oritur genus’) to the most refined civilization, such as, for example, it would appear to the stunned gaze of a savage brought from the centre of the new Americas watching a performance of the opera. Thus, with multiple, successive allegories, we see man march in all his struggles, his efforts and his conquests, through religions, war, sciences and arts. It is all of humanity illustrated and progressing from brutal action to fecund meditation. [...] It is a comprehensive journey through humanity, having two stages: barbarism—civilization.22

The reference to the dazed savage reveals just how self-confident this writer felt in front of Lehmann’s version of civilization, and other commentators offered similar

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responses. Surviving reproductions of the fifty-six separate paintings—for example, one of humans procuring materials for clothing and shelter (fig. 13)—reveal that the ceiling used anodyne narratives and allegories and an academically unimpeachable style to embody various achievements on the path to modern civilization. The cycle offered a triumphant version of history characterized by gradual but continual progress, culminating in the present.

Delacroix’s ceiling, in contrast, offered neither the triumphant vision of history in the ceilings of Vernet and Lehmann, nor their clear sense of chronology. His aim was neither to chart a trajectory of civilization nor to privilege the present. Civilization is not a stable achievement. On the contrary, it must be achieved again and again. At any given moment civilization might blossom or whither away. The course of history remains occult. Delacroix shared Chenavard’s pessimistic vision of modernity, and in this regard both of their mural cycles differed from those of Vernet and Lehmann. He differed from Chenavard, however, in that he could not embrace any eschatological theory and saw the future as fundamentally unpredictable. Even Chenavard, while he doubted the benefits of progress, could not resist the idea of a clear pattern in history.

The comparison between Delacroix and Chenavard is especially instructive when we consider how each artist’s historical vision affected their ability to paint. Indeed, it offers an insight into Delacroix’s peculiar position in the history of nineteenth-century art. Marc Gotlieb has observed that while many nineteenth-century painters esteemed large-scale mural painting more than any other form, very few succeeded with it. Chenavard’s failure at the Pantheon, while spectacular, was only one of numerous commissions for large-scale mural paintings that ended in disaster of one sort or another. Gotlieb argues that painters in the middle of the nineteenth century were intimidated by great mural painting of the past and felt that the art historical canon offered them little room for originality. Delacroix is the greatest exception to Gotlieb’s argument. Given his reverent attitude toward the Old Masters, his feeling that the art of his own day was in full decline, and his disdain for progress and modernity, we might expect him to have suffered especially from a feeling of inadequacy in relation to the past. But, on the contrary, he completed numerous enormous commissions for mural paintings, revelled in the process, and enjoyed great success with the results. The comparison with Chenavard suggests why.

Both Chenavard and Delacroix emphasized the role of great men, or geniuses, in their accounts of civilization, but for Chenavard their achievements were very much determined by his eschatology: great achievements were shaped...

primarily by the possibilities of their historical moment. Delacroix’s ceiling for the Bourbon Palace Library suggests the opposite: civilization is won or lost in heroic individual struggles whose outcome is not tightly determined by their historical and social context. In his journal, Delacroix developed this idea further, disputing Chenavard’s ideas as they applied to art history. He argued that artists were not wholly determined by their time, and that those who succeeded in the midst of decadence deserved our admiration in part because of the difficulty of their task. Objecting to Chenavard’s idea that ‘talent is worth less in a time that is not worth much’, he speculated:

What I would have been in the time of Raphael, I am today. What Chenavard is today—that is to say, dazzled by the enormity of Michelangelo—he would have been, surely, in Michelangelo’s time.

Rubens is just as much Rubens for having come a hundred years later than the immortals of Italy [...]. He embellishes his century on his own, instead of contributing to its brilliance in the company of other talents.25

This was the opposite of Chenavard’s attitude, for whom civilization was too full of masterpieces beyond all possibility of emulation; for Delacroix, past greatness made the challenge of originality all the more compelling. He saw himself as one of a select group of artists who had equalled the achievements of the Renaissance despite coming in a period of decadence. One night when he was mulling over Chenavard’s ideas, he wrote, somewhat coyly, ‘I believe that Gros, David, Prud’hon, Géricault, Charlet are admirable men like the Titians and the Raphaels; I also think that I have done certain pieces that these gentlemen would not despise, and that I have made certain innovations that they did not make’26.

Delacroix’s unique attitude toward originality and tradition can be further seen in the prominence his ceiling gives to acts of barbarism. Delacroix was drawn to the primal, untamed world outside of civilization: the sublime violence of Attila and his horde, the crouching, animalistic tribe that greets Orpheus, the powerful, rustic Scythians aiding Ovid, the exotic appearance of the Persians, the Roman Empire’s decadence and corruption. The ceiling is as much about civilization’s others—the barbaric, the bestial, the ignorant, the savage, the violent—as about civilization. The events illustrated in Chenavard’s decorations in the Pantheon all represent key moments in his theory of world historical development. In contrast, the events in Delacroix’s ceiling offer a wide-ranging collection of examples of civilization and barbarism in the Bible and antiquity. Rather than offering an

25 ‘Ce que j’aurais été du temps de Raphaël, je le suis aujourd’hui. Ce qu’est Chenavard aujourd’hui, c’est-à-dire ébloui par le gigantesque de Michel-Ange, il l’eut été à coup sûr, de son temps. Rubens est tout aussi Rubens pour avoir venu cent ans plus tard que les immortels d’Italie [...]. Il orne son siècle à lui tout seul, au lieu de contribuer à son éclat en compagnie d’autres talents’. Delacroix, Journal, 853.
26 ‘je crois que Gros, David, Prud’hon, Géricault, Charlet sont des hommes admirables comme les Titien et les Raphaël ; je crois aussi que j’ai fait de certains morceaux qui ne seraient pas méprisés de ces messieurs, et que j’ai eu de certaines inventions qu’ils n’ont pas eues’. Delacroix, Journal, 820.
understanding of the shape of history, he was far more interested in exploring the various forms in which civilization manifested itself and its relationship to barbarism.

Delacroix envisioned the artist or intellectual in a constant battle with the uncivilized—it was the ground against which he defined himself. We begin to see the special appeal of the barbaric to Delacroix: it was the untamed, pre-civilized raw material upon which the artist exercised his work. Delacroix’s conception of civilization as a timeless and on-going struggle, one that demanded the same qualities from the creative individual in the present as it did in the past in the face of an ever-resurgent barbarism, helps to explain his relatively unproblematic relationship to the great achievements of the past. Rather than seeing civilization as an accumulated weight, he saw it reborn in every creative act.

The peculiar qualities of Delacroix’s conception of tradition are especially evident when seen in relation to Jean-Antoine-Dominique Ingres’ tribute to Western civilization, The Apotheosis of Homer (fig. 14). Ingres placed Homer, with personifications of the Iliad and the Odyssey at his feet, at the centre of a group of the greatest representatives of the arts from classical antiquity down to the present. The more ancient figures stand closer to Homer, while the more modern figures, depicted in more vivid detail, stand in the corners, closer to the viewer. The painting proclaims that most exalted forms of artistic achievement exist in the distant past. To the extent that excellence exists in the present day, it descends in an unbroken line from antiquity. This conception of excellence removes artists completely from the social world in which they work and into a timeless realm. Ingres’ painting suggests a monolithic canon of excellence from which the contradictory or discordant aspects of individual figures, and the societies in which they worked, have been erased. Its hierarchical rhetoric transforms tradition into a weighty, intimidating presence by suggesting that greatness is achieved solely by emulating the past. Modern figures find inclusion in the picture only to the extent that their own work approaches that of their illustrious forbearers. The critic Étienne Delécluze summed up this attitude when, after reviewing the great artists included in the painting, he concluded, ‘all that can be done now is to modify these archetypes indefinitely’. The past as envisioned in the Bourbon Library ceiling is not so remote, fossilized, or oppressive. Rather than offering virtually unattainable models of excellence, it examines the situation of the creative personality in a number of paradigmatic situations, explores the nature of civilization and its relation to basic binary oppositions, examines speculative and sometimes contradictory propositions, weighs competing forms of knowledge against one another, and makes observations about civilization and barbarism that might be applied to any age. It opens the classics up to inquiry rather than sealing them off from it.

I do not, however, wish to repeat the deceptive and now worn-out opposition between Ingres the classicist and conservative and Delacroix the romantic and innovator, because the two artists shared far more than this allows. Both Delacroix and Ingres turned to the distant past as a form of resistance to the present and its prevailing faith in progress. Ingres may have been more exclusive and orthodox in his choice of artistic models, privileging ancient Greece and Raphael above all else, while Delacroix showed allegiance to artists such as Rubens, Veronese, and Titian, who were out of fashion at the Academy, but this obscures their similar engagement with the past. In the late 1840s until the end of his life, Delacroix would become increasingly reliant on the example of past masters for his own artistic inspiration and solutions. In the Bourbon Library ceiling Delacroix meant to follow partly in the footsteps of none other than Ingres’s idol Raphael and to emulate the Stanza della Segnatura, which also contained a series of murals devoted to different domains of learning. In her study of Delacroix and Raphael, Sara Lichtenstein has documented the ceiling’s many borrowings from, modifications of, and allusions to Raphael. Delacroix derived some of his subjects, such as Alexander and the poems of Homer, directly from the Renaissance master, while in other places he drew on individual motifs. Delacroix was not as inclined as Ingres to quote his sources exactly or at length, and he often modified them or combined them with very different models. For example, the Archimedes took its soldier from a print thought to be after Raphael, but it integrated this source into a larger image whose lighting follows Rembrandt and whose handling is Rubenesque. Delacroix was just as engaged with art of the past as Ingres, but he did not represent a clear canon or lineage of greats in the Bourbon Library. Rather than seeing civilization as best embodied in a particular set of achievements or historical moment, he defined it through oppositions and conflicts that are seemingly always present in history. Moreover, his vision of civilization had to include the barbaric, for this was the ground against which the civilized defined itself.

Like Ingres, Chenavard connected his own artistic practice to a linear art historical narrative and a canon of greats. For him, art had not only to compete with the great achievements of the past, but also to acknowledge its own historical moment, to address the fallen state of humanity. This made him feel separated or cut off from the past. For Delacroix it was almost the opposite. While he shared Chenavard’s scorn for modernity, he saw past artistic achievements as still available to him as an individual. He was engaged in a continuing and unending battle with barbarism, the same struggle that had animated the ancients. The past as he conjured it up in his art and journal was for him a space of relative freedom, an escape from and even an antidote to modernity, a negation of all he found tedious.

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or constraining in the present, a form of resistance to the belief in progress and the 
new. It was hardly the unattainable, unsurpassable, and ultimately oppressive past 
conjured up by many other painters attempting to work in mural painting. 
Delacroix felt in touch with the past, but he also felt the present was like the past in 
a fundamental way, for he saw himself, like the figures in his history of civilization, 
as a man of talent living in an unpredictable world.

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Figure 2 Eugène Delacroix, Orpheus Civilizes the Greeks, 1845-7. Oil and wax medium on plaster, semicircle at arch, 
Figure 3 Eugène Delacroix, *Attila and his Hordes Overrun Italy and the Arts*, 1843-7. Oil and wax medium on plaster, semicircle at arch, 1098 cm., diameter, 735 cm. Paris: Library of the Palais Bourbon. Photo: Bibliothèque de l’Assemblée nationale.

Plan of Delacroix’s Ceiling in the Library of the Palais Bourbon, Paris

KEY: The theme of each dome (Science, History and Philosophy, Legislation and Eloquence, Theology, Poetry) is indicated in the circles. The subject of each pendentive is indicated in the surrounding, triangular areas. The subjects of the hemicycles are in the half-circles at either end. The diagram is not to scale.

(Illustration: Yoojin Hong)

Figure 4 Diagram of the ceiling of the Library of the Bourbon Palace. Design: Yoojin Hong.
Figure 6 Eugène Delacroix, *The Death of Pliny the Elder*, 1841. Oil on canvas, 221 x 291 cm. Paris: Library of the Palais Bourbon. Photo: Bibliothèque de l’Assemblée nationale.

Figure 7 Eugène Delacroix, *Numa and Egeria*, c. 1843-44. Oil on canvas, 221 x 291 cm. Paris: Library of the Palais Bourbon. Photo: Bibliothèque de l’Assemblée nationale.
Figure 8 Eugène Delacroix, Ovid Among the Scythians, 1844. Oil on canvas, 221 x 291 cm. Paris: Library of the Palais Bourbon. Photo: Bibliothèque de l’Assemblée nationale.

Figure 9 Eugène Delacroix, The Education of Achilles, 1845. Oil on canvas, 221 x 291 cm. Paris: Library of the Palais Bourbon. Photo: Bibliothèque de l’Assemblée nationale.
Figure 10 Eugène Delacroix, *Hippocrates Refuses the Gifts of the King of Persia*, c. 1841. Oil on canvas, 221 x 291 cm. Paris: Library of the Palais Bourbon. Photo: Bibliothèque de l’Assemblée nationale.

Figure 11 Eugène Delacroix, *Herodotus Consults the Magi*, c. 1841. Oil on canvas, 221 x 291 cm. Paris: Library of the Palais Bourbon. Photo: Bibliothèque de l’Assemblée nationale.
Figure 12 Horace Vernet, *Ceiling of the Salle de la Paix*, 1838-47. Oil on canvas, dimensions unknown. Paris: Salon de la Paix, Palais Bourbon. Photo: Philippe Galas alias photons_93.

Figure 14 Jean-Antoine-Dominique Ingres, *The Apotheosis of Homer*, 1827. Oil on canvas, 386 × 515 cm. Paris: Musée du Louvre. Photo: Wikimedia Commons.