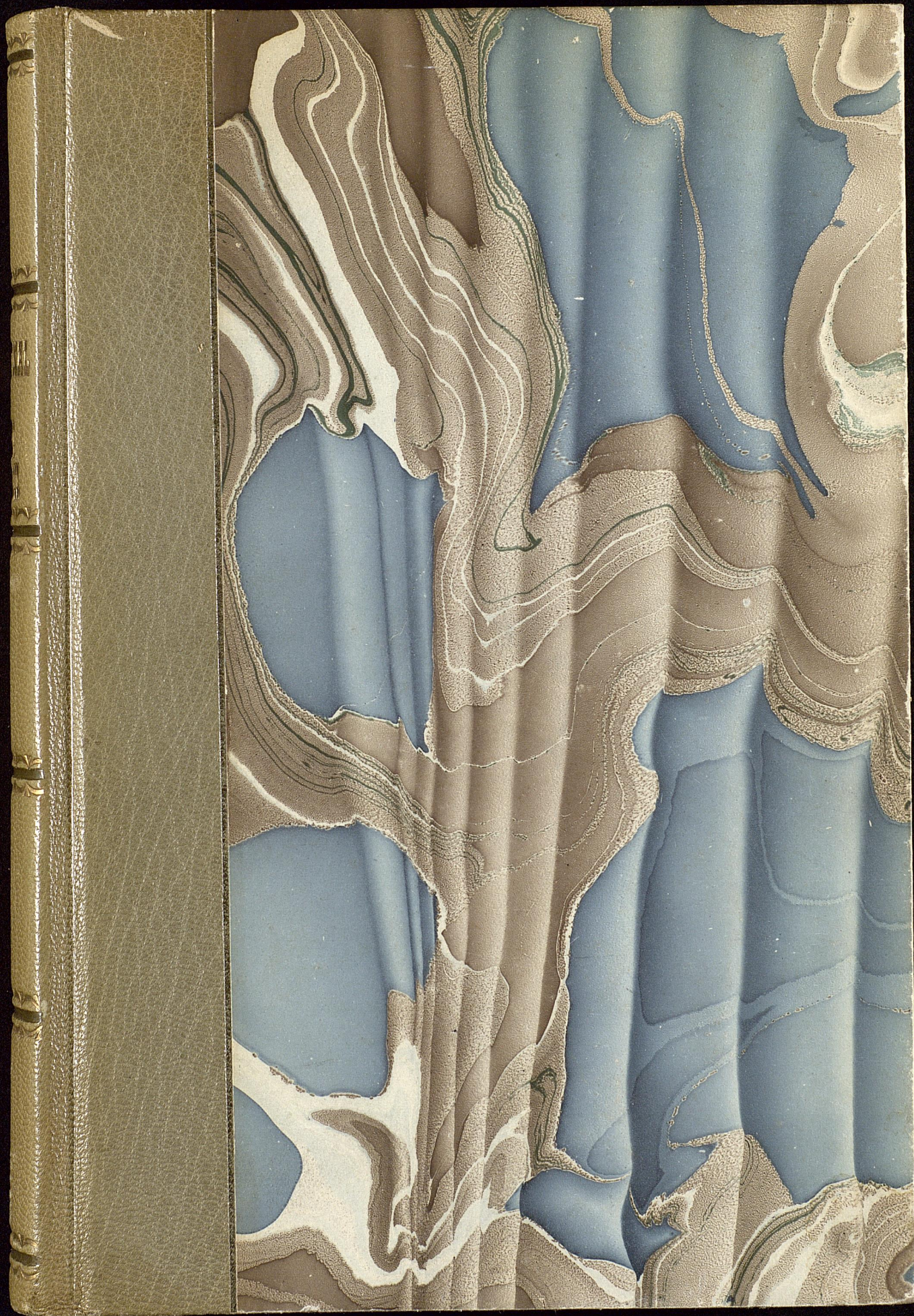
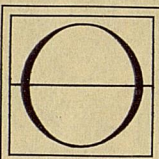


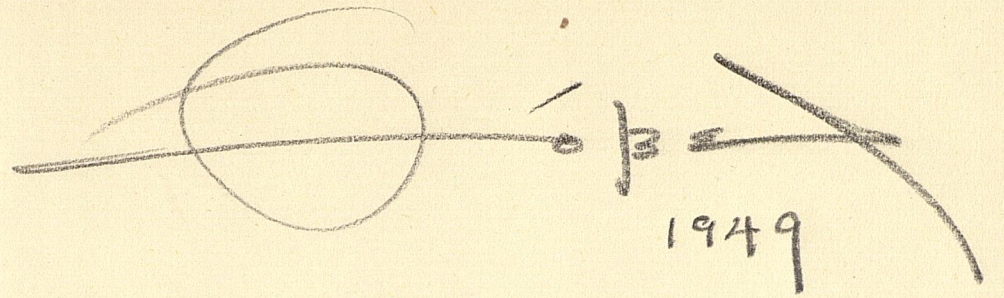


THE NOURISHMENT
OF
EUGENE
DEFLANDRE



EX LIBRIS
FERNANDO
ZOBEL ET
AMICORUM



A handwritten signature in pencil, consisting of a large circle on the left, a horizontal line extending to the right, and a curved line on the far right that loops back towards the center.

1949

THE JOURNAL OF EUGENE DELACROIX

THE JOURNAL OF
EUGENE
DELACROIX

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY WALTER PACH



Illustrated with Reproductions of the

Drawings of the Artist

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NEW YORK

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EUGÈNE
DELACROIX

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THE JOURNAL OF EUGÈNE DELACROIX 1850

great if it gives me the means of bringing them into existence. Good books have that effect, and above all certain ones among those books. The first thing to have is health, to be sure; but even in a sickly condition, such books as those can reopen sources through which imagination can issue forth generously.



THE JOURNAL OF EUGÈNE DELACROIX 1850

Took a delightful walk. To live in material fashion is not to live; in the three or four days since I came here, occupied as I have been with lodgings, with getting something for dinner, with running after the doctor, with obtaining a glass of water at the spring, I am a regular machine; I do not live, I am not in possession of my mind; the place is really beautiful and it means nothing to me. I take walks which would be delightful for a mind, and which are nothing but distance for a body and for legs which go on haphazard. What a shame for my *immortal soul!* Its whole ability is taken up with my quarrels with my host over getting a bed that I can sleep in, or it is taken up with my indignation against the Germans, who make the mistake of not being Frenchmen, which is to say that they understand nothing of the jargon of a man dropping from the clouds who, himself, understands nothing of their jargon. Most human beings live only such a life as that; but as they do not know the life of the mind, they do not feel themselves deprived of anything in the various kinds of limbo where they vegetate, nearer to the animal than to man.

July 15.

"... How many pieces are there that are spoken of as Shakespeare's and that belong to him exclusively; and, at a period so distant when so many works of that time are lost, how can one distinguish that which is really of his composition from that which is not? The actors cut things off, transposed things, and even altered the text to please the spectators or for their own convenience: who knows how much rubbish they have cut off or added?"²⁰

When one thinks that Voltaire could not get the text of his pieces played in the theater! The friends whom he charged with presenting them to the actors had already altered them, and those gentlemen of

²⁰ Extract from Captain T. Medwin's *Journal of the Conversations of Lord Byron*, 1824, of which Delacroix found a French translation in the reading room of Ems. He thus renews the deep interest in Byron which he had in his youth.

feed them the more they will become degraded! What a noble spectacle in this best of centuries — human cattle fattened by the philosophers!

Friday, May 20.

While at lunch, read the article by Peisse, who surveys the Salon as a whole and who inquires into the present-day tendencies into the arts. Quite correctly, he sees them in the *picturesque*, which he believes to be an inferior tendency. Yes, if it is only a question of creating an effect for the eyes by an arrangement of lines and colors, in other words an arabesque; but if, to a composition which is already interesting through the choice of subject, you add a disposition of lines which augments the impression, if you add chiaroscuro which seizes the imagination, and color adapted to the characters, you have solved a more difficult problem you have entered a realm of superior ideas, doing what the musician does when, to a single theme, he adds the resources of harmony and its combinations. Peisse calls *musical* that tendency of which he speaks; he uses the word in disparagement, while I, for my part, consider it as praiseworthy as any other.

His friend Chenavard has insinuated into his mind his own theories of the arts, and Chenavard considers that music is an inferior art; he has that French type of mind which needs ideas that can be expressed in words; as to those before which speech is impotent, he cuts them off from the domain of the arts. Even if we admit that drawing is everything, it is not, evidently, a matter of pure and simple form. Within the contour which suffices for such a purpose, there is coarseness or there is grace: a contour drawn by Raphael will have a different charm from what it would have if drawn by Chenavard. What could be vaguer or more inexplicable than the impression it produces? Are we to establish degrees of nobility among the feelings? That is what is done by the learned and unfortunately too cold Chenavard. He puts literature in the first rank; painting comes next, and music is only last. That would perhaps be true if one of them could contain the others or replace them; the trouble is that if words can easily give a general idea

of a painting or a symphony, the reader is still at a loss to understand them because they are themselves so lacking in exactitude. One must see the things that are made for the eyes; one must hear the things that are made for the ears. When one writes things that are to be spoken, they will produce more effect coming from the lips of an orator than they will if merely read. A great actor will transform a piece, so to speak, by his accent. . . . I stop here.

Saturday, May 21.

All morning I worked at pastels of the lions and the trees which I had studied the day before at the Jardin des Plantes; at about quarter past two, I went to call for Pierret and Riesener; I found Pierret very much changed. Why is it that when I meet two such old friends here in the country, under the open sky and amidst the beauties of the spring, the sight of them does not give me the complete happiness that I should not have failed to get in the past? I felt myself irresistibly moved by feelings which they did not have: I was in the presence of witnesses and not of friends. I took them to the house, and then to the forest. Riesener began again with his criticism of this search for a certain finish in my small pictures, which seem to him to lose heavily as compared with what I get from the sketch or from things done in more rapid fashion and at a single go. Perhaps he is right, and perhaps he is wrong. Pierret said, probably to contradict him, that things ought to be the way the painter feels, and that the interest of the work takes precedence over all those matters of touch and of frankness. I answered him with the observation that I set down in this book a few days ago regarding the unfailing effect of the sketch as compared to the finished picture, which is always somewhat spoiled as to the touch, but where the harmony and depth of the expression become a compensation.

At the oak called *le Prieur*, I showed them how much more striking the isolated parts appeared; in a word, the old story of the comparison between Racine and Shakespeare. They reminded me of my

it follows the
to a hurried
generation &
sketch will
take precedence
over the ptg.
that nobody
can look at
long enough
to flavor it.
Not just the
mid 20th century public. I
also mean what happens in
Ming and Ch'ing China or in
part - Antonine Rome.