MICHELANGELO´S BRONZE CORPUS, DOCUMENTED IN SEVILLE 1597, REDISCOVERED

IMR

INSTITUTE OF OLD MASTERS RESEARCH

To my beloved sister, Helena

MICHELANGELO´S BRONZE CORPUS, DOCUMENTED IN SEVILLE 1597, REDISCOVERED

Carlos Herrero Starkie

INTRODUCTION

Rosario Coppel

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PREFACE

It is with profound honour that we present at our stand at TEFAF the rediscovered bronze *Corpus Christi*, the finest extant example of Michelangelo's extraordinary four-nails Crucifix design. This masterpiece, so intimate in scale yet monumental in its impact, holds a unique place in the story of Italian Renaissance art's global diffusion. Displayed alongside Velázquez's *Sor Jerónima de la Fuente*, where this very image of Christ is rendered in painted form, the dialogue between these two works offers a rare opportunity to consider Michelangelo's influence across time, media, and geography.

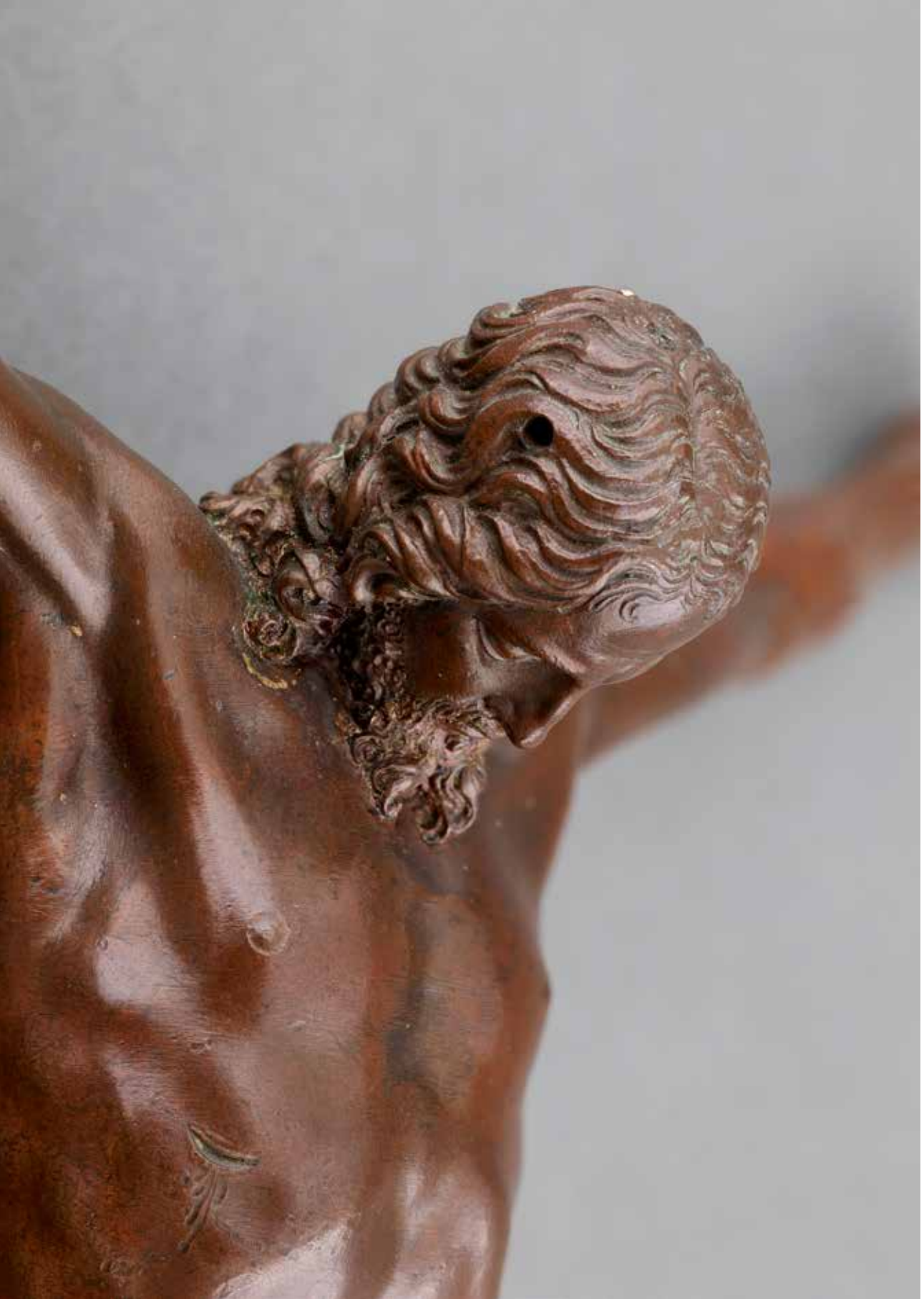
The tale of this remarkable design is as compelling as the object itself. Created in the early sixteenth century, the Crucifix journeyed from Italy to Seville in 1597, finding its way into a vibrant artistic and spiritual milieu. From Seville—a gateway to the New World—it transformed not only local devotions but also the image of the Crucified Christ across the ocean. The four-nailed configuration, a departure from the traditional three-nail representation, accentuates the physical suffering of Christ while preserving a balance of pathos and serenity. This duality resonates powerfully with the Counter-Reformation's emphasis on personal piety and the theological depth of Christ's sacrifice. The bronze's astonishing craftsmanship testifies to the outstanding achievements in the art of casting in Rome towards the end of the sixteenth century. Every detail, from the tension of Christ's musculature to the sublime stillness of his expression, is rendered with minute precision, elevating the work beyond mere technical achievement. Its feather weight is further proof of the consummate skill employed in casting.

We are thrilled to share this masterpiece with you at TEFAF. The discovery and presentation of this bronze serve as a poignant reminder of the enduring relevance of Michelangelo's legacy. *The Corpus and Velázquez's Sor Jerónima*, brought together here for the first time, invite us to reflect on the profound dialogues between artists across chronologies and geographies.

Stuart Lochhead

< *Jerónima de la Fuente.* Portrait by **Diego Velázquez** of holding the Crucifix cast by Juan Bautista Franconio and polychromed by Pacheco, 1620, private Collection Madrid

TABLE OF CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION

Rosario Coppel Areizaga
Renaissance Bronze Scholar

Technique and Cataloging of Bronze Sculpture[1]

Bronze is obtained through an alloy of copper and tin, to which lead and occasionally small proportions of zinc are added. Similarly, during the copper extraction process, infinitesimal amounts of impurities such as nickel, iron, silver, arsenic, and antimony may adhere, enabling the determination of its age and origin. Such was the case with the Crucifix in question, whose Fahlerz-type copper originates from Tyrolean mines which supplied Roman foundries during the first two-thirds of the 16th century.

In bronze work, the sculptor creates a model in wax or clay, and the caster then produces a plaster mold over the original to obtain a wax replica, known as the "intermediate model," thus preserving the original for further use.(1) Once the piece is cast, it requires repair the work, which consist of removing the wires that held the model and core in place, as well as the channels used for the wax and gases to escape and for the liquid metal to enter. Finally, any defects or imperfections are corrected with various tools, such as a saw or a file. The sculptor who created the original model, or one of his most skilled assistants, is responsible for the cold finishing, refining the piece's details with a chisel.

Patina refers to the surface transformation that occurs over time due to wear, friction, or chemical treatments. There are natural patinas, caused by oxidation, and artificial ones, created by adding a superimposed layer to the cast object. "Fire gilding" was achieved by covering the surface with a mixture of gold and mercury, then removing the mercury through heat. In the case of the Crucifix under study, the patina is in an extraordinarily well-preserved state of condition, likely due to its use as a workshop model rather than as an object of worship.

For the cataloging of a bronze piece, visual analysis is crucial. This involves direct examination, assessing its weight, sound, and the quality of finish through touch; identifying holes, imperfections, patches, rough surfaces, and cold chisel work. Then the results are verified through documentary research, which may provide information about its origin (commissioner, history, and vicissitudes of the work), consulting relevant bibliography, and identifying the iconography and style. This research provides the necessary data to attribute the piece to a specific artist, workshop, or school.

The techniques used to study bronze include X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF), which identifies the metal alloy used (distinct for each period, region, or even workshop), and radiography, which reveals wall thickness, interior features, whether it is hollow or solid, and any nails or other elements used for assembling different sections. These methods were applied to the newly discovered Crucifix, contributing to its scientific cataloging.

Finally, for the study and cataloguing of bronze sculpture, it is important to understand the terminology used. An autograph bronze is cast from the sculptor's original model and finished by the sculptor or an assistant under his supervision. A replica is cast from the same model and is identical in shape and size, except for any adjustments during mounting or finishing. In the 16th century, it was usual to produce two or three replicas of each autograph model. A signature inscribed in wax is found only on exceptional pieces. A variant is a bronze similar to another but cast from an independent model. It could be a second attempt by the sculptor or a new model based on the first. Meanwhile, after-cast involves using an existing bronze as a model for indirect casting. This process involves covering the bronze with a protective substance, creating a plaster mold, and proceeding with the indirect lost-wax casting method.

In this sense, the present study confirms, based on technological, iconographic, and artistic grounds, that the bronze Crucifix meets all the criteria to be considered cast from an original model by Michelangelo, by a highly talented goldsmith from the realm of the prestigious Roman "Gran Scuola", either during or shortly after the master's lifetime. However, its strictly autograph nature may be questioned, as there is no evidence that the Michelangelo directly oversaw its casting. This "Corpus Christi" seems more like a collaborative work between Michelangelo, who designed the iconic Christ model, and Guglielmo della Porta or one of his goldsmiths, who immortalized that model in bronze

Fig. A. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, IOMR Collection, the Netherlands

Iconography of the Crucified Christ

In Christian iconography, the Passion of Christ is one of the most frequently depicted themes, beginning with the Agony in the Garden and continuing through fourteen subsequent episodes, culminating in the Resurrection. This cycle, meant for didactic purposes, faithfully follows the Gospel accounts.

In representations of the Crucifixion, Christ is shown nailed to the cross, sometimes alive, at the moment of speaking his last words, or already deceased. Each moment is depicted differently. Generally, the living Christ has his head turned upwards, with open eyes and mouth, expressing supplication, similar to when, semi-alive before expiring, he addresses the Father in his final words. In contrast, the deceased Christ's head droops fully onto his chest, with closed eyes and mouth. These three scenarios require an anatomical study, crucial in the case of Michelangelo's work, which must account for the body's posture, arms, and legs. The artist conveys tension through the firmness or laxity of the limbs. Additional signs, such as the position of the arms (more horizontal or vertical) or the hands (fingers outstretched, thumb and middle finger joined in blessing, or, less commonly, hands nearly closed with thumb and index finger touching), enhance the realism of the figure. After the Council of Trent (1545–1563), Counter-Reformation norms stipulated that Christ should be depicted as a divine figure, without emphasizing the suffering caused by his passion and death.

In the Crucifixion model by Michelangelo's unveiled in this publication, Christ is depicted dead, naked, with his head entirely slumped onto his chest, eyes and mouth closed, a furrowed brow, and a solemn, dignified expression. His arms are nearly horizontal, his legs crossed (left over right), and the anatomical study exquisitely reveals the sunken diaphragm, ribs, muscles, and tendons. The hands have the thumb and index finger joined but the most unusual feature is that Christ is nailed to the cross with four nails, in line with St. Bridget's vision.[2]

The figure likely originally bored a crown of thorns or a halo of sanctity (now lost), as it features a hole at the crown of the head and another on the right side. On the side there is a wound and some raised drops of blood that emerge from it, an important detail for dating the Corpus. The face of classical beauty has delicate features, almond-shaped eyes, a small mouth, and meticulously chiselled eyebrows, moustache, and beard. Another distinctive feature is the hair, which does not fall forward but is neatly arranged over the shoulders in regular waves. Although designed to be mounted on a cross, the figure is modelled in the round, with the back as perfectly finished as the front. The perizonium, attached with screws, was added after the wax model was cast in bronze. (Fig. A)

Fig. B. **Leone Leoni**, *portrait of Michelangelo*, bronze medal, Museo Arquelógico, Madrid

Michelangelo as a Bronze Sculptor

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) is considered the greatest sculptor of all time. Although his specialty was marble, documents confirm that he also created bronze sculptures, particularly in his early years. One of the Renaissance's earliest bronzesmiths was his teacher, Bertoldo di Giovanni, who may have provided Michelangelo with the necessary training and instilled in him a profound admiration for Donatello, Bertoldo's own mentor.[3][4] Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) was one of the first to note Michelangelo's activity as a bronze sculptor:

"The fame Buonarroti gained through his marble sculpture <the David, installed in the Piazza della Signoria in 1504> *allowed him to model a beautiful David in bronze for the gonfalonier, which Soderini sent to France."*[5]

The bronze David was commissioned in 1502 by the Florentine Republic to be sent to France as a diplomatic gift. Pierre de Rohan, Maréchal de Gié, had requested a copy of Donatello's David for King Louis XII the previous year, but the project was never realized. After much deliberation, and through the intervention of the gonfalonier Piero Soderini, the commission for a new David was entrusted to Michelangelo. The statue was completed in 1508, with Benedetto da Rovezzano overseeing the final touches. It was then sent to France via Livorno. Unfortunately, the life-size statue (measuring about two and a quarter braccia) has not survived.

In another instance, the tomb project designed in 1505 for Pope Julius II included a bronze frieze above the cornice, which was never executed. Similarly, a second design in 1513 proposed three panels, either in marble or bronze, which also remained unrealized.[6][7]

In 1506, Michelangelo received his most significant bronze commission: a seated portrait of Pope Julius II, a colossal statue (measuring between five and seven braccia, according to chronicles), to be placed above the main entrance of San Petronio in Bologna. Michelangelo created a full-scale stucco model, possibly executed by Alfonso Lombardi, known for his skill with this material. In 1507, with the wax model ready, Florentine founders Lapo d'Antonio, Ludovico di Guglielmo del Buono (Lotti), and Milanese Pietro Urbano were tasked with the casting. However, Michelangelo dismissed them due to dissatisfaction with their work and brought in a French master and Bernardino dal Ponte, a Florentine renowned for his artillery-making skills. The casting process was fraught with difficulties and left Michelangelo with a bitter experience. Both the statue and his stucco model met a tragic fate; they were destroyed in 1511 when the Medici were expelled, and the Bentivoglio family came to power. The bronze was sold to the Duke of Ferrara, who repurposed it into a cannon.[8]

In his later years, Michelangelo was approached by Catherine de' Medici to create an equestrian statue of King Henry II of France. which he declined due to his advanced age, recommending Daniele da Volterra instead. The latter managed only to cast the horse, which was designed by Michelangelo (who also supervised the preparatory work). After Michelangelo's death in 1564, the horse became part of an equestrian monument to King Louis XIII in the Place des Vosges, Paris, created by Pierre II Biard between 1634–1639. This monument, too, was destroyed during the French Revolution in 1789.[9]

Despite these misfortunes, a few small bronze sculptures attributed to Michelangelo survive, among which the newly discovered bronze Crucifix under study. These pieces are linked to his sketches or ink studies, which he used to create small wax or clay models. There is evidence that he gifted a wax group of *Hercules and Antaeus* to Leone Leoni as a token of gratitude for a medallion Leoni had cast of Michelangelo's portrait in 1560. The medallion's reverse depicted a blind man guided by a dog.[10] (Fig. B) Once again Vasari provides further insight:

"Michelangelo was so impressed by that medallion that he decided to give Leone several of his drawings, as well as a wax effigy representing Hercules crushing Antaeus."[11].

Fig. C. *Samson and two Philistines*, after a model by **Michelangelo**, XVI century, 36,8 cm., The Frick Collection >

The Small Bronzes

The small bronzes made from Michelangelo's models were generally cast at later dates. Among them are mythological themes such as *Resting Hercules*, 33 cm (original model 1493–1494), London, Victoria and Albert Museum;[12] *Captive*, 19.5 cm (original model 1513), Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli;[13] and *Fragment of a River God*, 31.3 cm (original model 1521), possibly cast by Alessandro Cesati around 1540. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello.[14]

One of the most widely reproduced small bronzes is the famous group *Samson and Two Philistines*, 37.2 cm, housed in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello. Its terracotta model (41 cm) has been dated to ca. 1530 (Florence, Casa Buonarroti Museum).[15] Several versions exist, the earliest cast around 1550, likely by Daniele da Volterra, such as the ones in the Berlin Bode Museum (36.5 cm) and The Frick Collection, New York (36.8 cm).[16] (Fig. C)

The publications of Paul Joannides are fundamental to the study of these works, as he has devoted much of his research career to Michelangelo's drawings and, more tangentially, to his activity as a bronzesmith. Joannides is also responsible for the attribution of a *Hercules Pomarius* figure in bronze (33 cm, ca. 1500), housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.[17]

The *Calvary Group* in New York's Metropolitan Museum was one of the first small bronzes linked to a Michelangelo model, as will be explored in this study.[18]

A separate case, bearing in mind it may be an autograph example, involves the *Pair of Bacchantes on Panthers* from the Rothschild Collection. After being temporarily exhibited at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, it was studied by various experts during the *Michelangelo Discovering Symposium*, led by Victoria Avery, who, along with Paul Joannides, proposed Michelangelo's authorship in 2015.[19]Three years later, the results of the research were published, featuring significant articles by specialists, a magnificent technical study, and excellent photographs. These two bronzes, measuring 91.2 and 90.2 cm in height respectively, are dated ca. 1504, preserved in magnificent condition, and showcase great plastic beauty.[20]

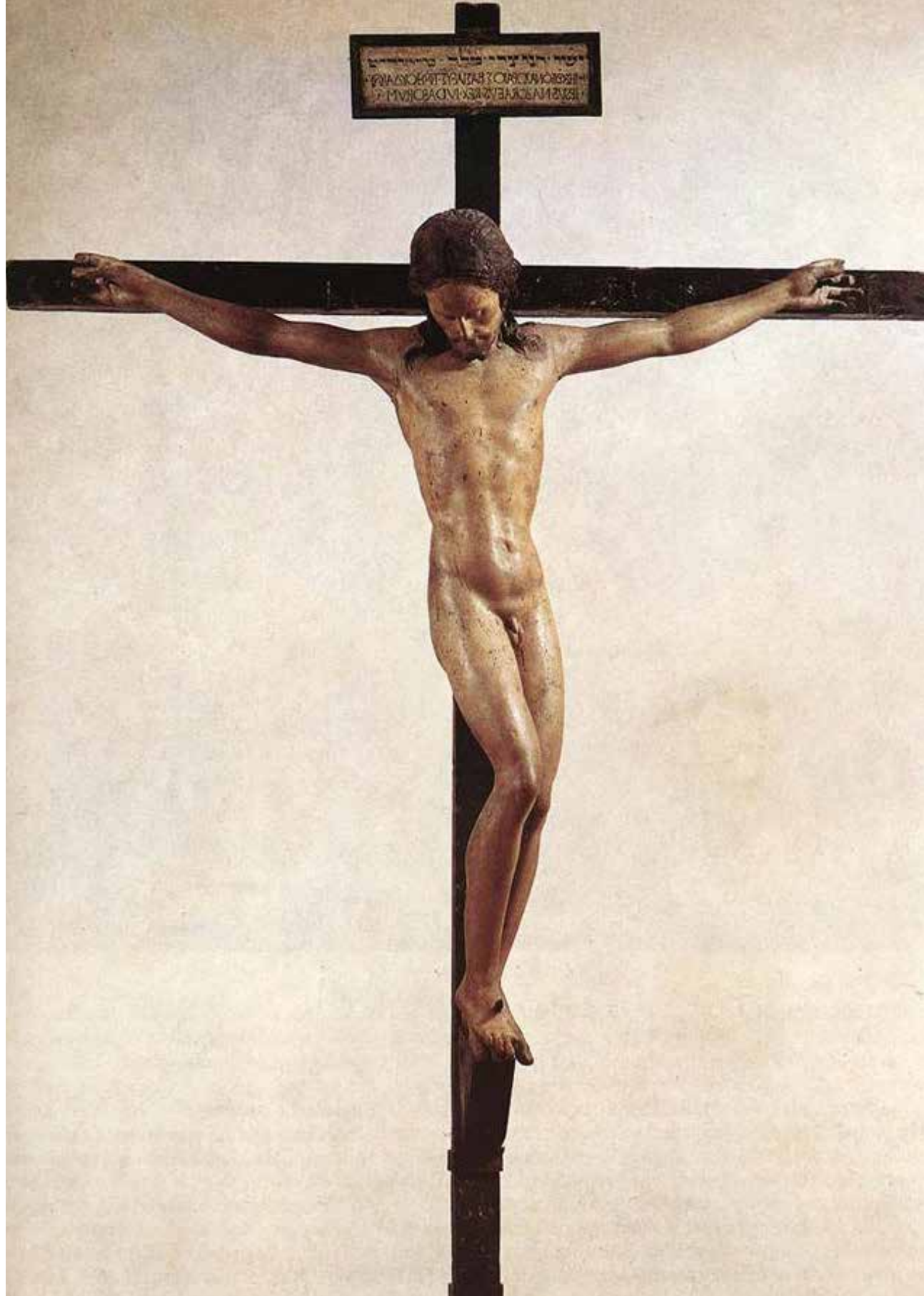


Fig. D. *Christ Crucified*, polychromed wood ca 1491, **Michelangelo**, > 1491, 142x135 cm., Church of the Santo Spirito, Florence

Models of the Crucified Christ created by Michelangelo

The earliest representation of a Crucified Christ by Michelangelo is a polychromed wooden sculpture, 139 cm tall, dated ca. 1493. It is preserved in the sacristy of the Church of Santo Spirito in Florence (Fig. D). According to early biographers Ascanio Condivi and Giorgio Vasari, the sculptor, still an apprentice at the time, created this piece as a gesture of friendship toward the prior, in gratitude for allowing him to perform anatomical studies on cadavers.[21] In this youthful work, Michelangelo was inspired by Brunelleschi's *Crucified Christ* (1410–1415), a polychromed wooden piece (170 cm tall) housed in the Gondi Chapel of the Church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, which was the first depiction of a naked Christ.[22]

Additionally, well-known drawings related to the Crucifixion theme are preserved in the British Museum (early 1520s) (Fig E), Windsor Castle (1533), the Louvre, and the Teylers Museum in Haarlem, Netherlands.[23] These works are associated with the scholarly and religious circle of the Spaniard Juan de Valdés and Michelangelo's profound friendship with Vittoria Colonna, the Marchioness of Pescara, between 1536 and 1540—a topic further explored in this publication after analysing their correspondence.

A sketch of a Crucified Christ, carved from limewood (27 cm), is preserved in Florence's Casa Buonarroti Museum. It is dated ca. 1562, based on four letters written between August and October of that year by Lorenzo Mariottini (a tailor and confidant of Michelangelo) and Cesare Bettini (supervisor of the construction of St. Peter's), sent from Rome to Leonardo, Michelangelo's nephew in Florence. Another letter to Leonardo from the sculptor Tiberio Calcagni also references Michelangelo's wish to create a wooden Crucified Christ as a gift for his nephew.[24]

Finally, a tabernacle featuring Passion scenes, commissioned by Pius IV for the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Rome, was designed by Michelangelo and cast between 1566 and 1568 by his last assistant, Jacopo del Duca. It is now housed in the Carthusian Monastery of Padula, Salerno, and is closely related to the model under study.[25]

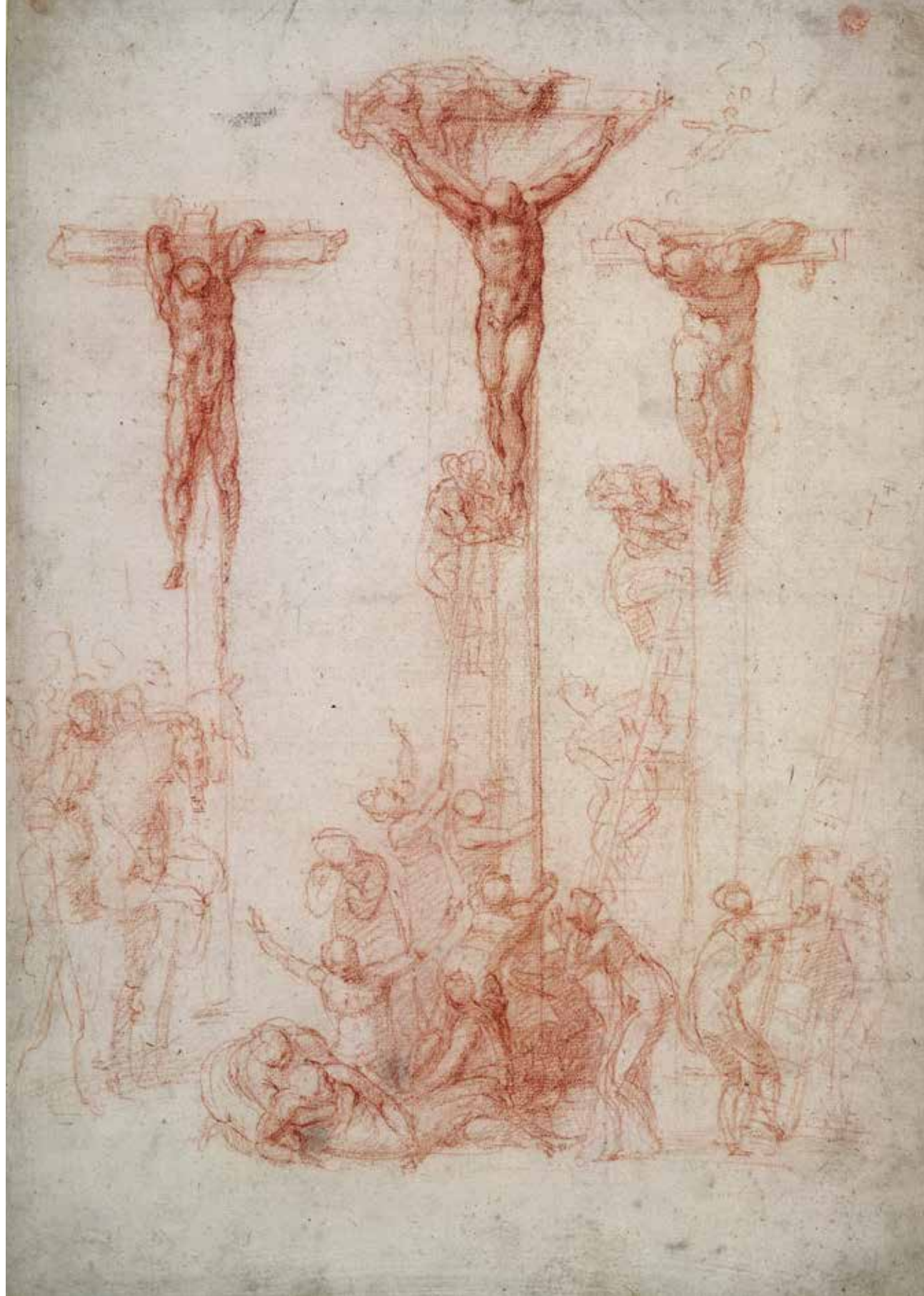


Fig. E. *Crucifixion,* **Michelangelo**, drawing, early 1520, British Museum >

The Bronze Crucifix and Guglielmo della Porta. The Roman "Gran Scuola"

The bronze Corpus Christi we are studying was cast from Michelangelo's wax model under the close supervision of Guglielmo della Porta by one of his most talented goldsmiths.

Guglielmo della Porta worked in Rome from the early 1540s until his death in 1577. Thanks to Michelangelo's recommendation, with whom he maintained a close friendship until they came into conflict over the tomb of Paul III in 1549, he was appointed *Custode del Piombo* (Keeper of the Papal Seal). He was responsible for portraits of Paul III and his most ambitious work, the mausoleum installed in St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City. His privileged position allowed him to maintain a large workshop and create a series of original models that were highly successful. In his early years in Rome, he worked for the Farnese family, restoring classical statues and producing copies to complete their sought-after antiquities collections.(26)

After the Council of Trent (1563), when his activity shifted toward religious art, Guglielmo adapted secular themes to meet the new spiritual demands, creating images of Christ, the Virgin Mary, Saint John, Mary Magdalene, and other saints in small formats. These works showcased his originality and the technical perfection he achieved.

Thanks to extensive documentation, Guglielmo della Porta's personality has been reconstructed, especially through his *Album of Drawings* (dated 1555–1560), published in a facsimile edition by Werner Gramberg. This valuable repertoire is at present housed in Düsseldorf's Museum Kunstpalast.(27)

Guglielmo's connection to Spain began before his move to Rome. From his family workshop in Genoa, he and his brother Gian Giacomo della Porta created tombs, such as that of Bishop Baltasar del Rio in Seville Cathedral and the Marquis of Villanueva del Fresno in the Convent of Santa Clara, Moguer, Huelva(28) This connection illustrates the prestige Guglielmo della Porta had attained, not only in Italy but also in Spain. One of his most valuable works, a gilded silver relief of *Calvary*, gifted by Pope Gregory XIII to Grand Duchess Bianca Capello, was sent to Philip II in 1585 as a diplomatic gift. It is preserved in El Escorial Monastery, with a magnificent bronze-gilt version (48 cm tall) in a private collection.(29) (Fig. F)

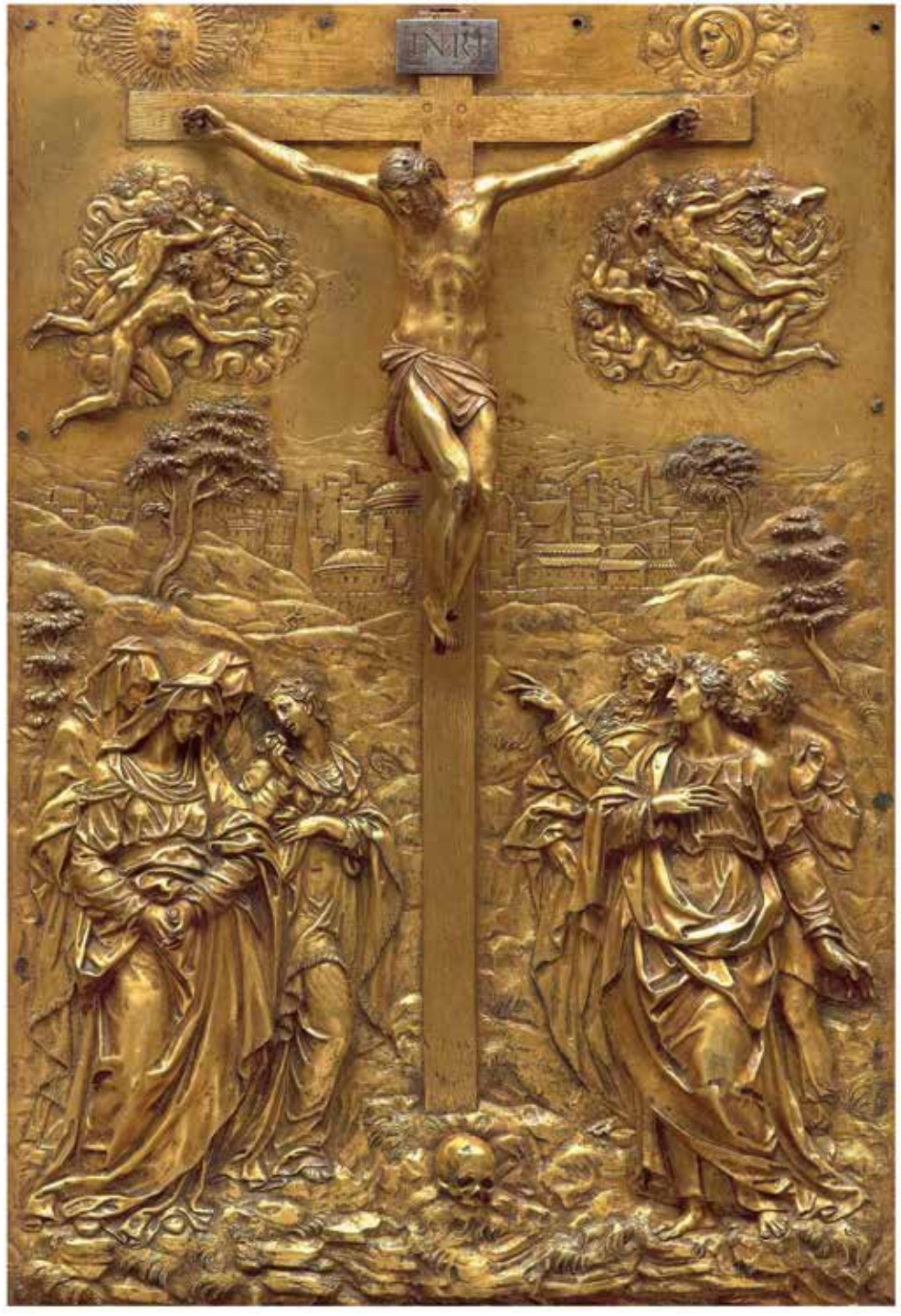


Fig. F. **Guglielmo della Porta and Antonio Gentili da Faenza,** *Calvary*, Rome c1570-1575, private collection >

The iconography of the Crucifixes sculpted by Della Porta is inspired by Michelangelo's model, revealed to us through drawings and bronzes such as the bronze Corpus subject of this study. It was created in accordance with the new guidelines dictated by the Counter-Reformation.[31] Some of these models were cast by his assistant Bastiano Torrigiani, the goldsmith who worked most frequently with him in the70'. Among his external collaborators were Manno Sbarri, the author of the *Casseta Farnese* and Antonio Gentilli da Faenza, who worked in Rome between 1572–1609 as the craftsman responsible for silver castings.[32]The most representative examples include the Crucifix of Maximilian II, in gilded silver, measuring 23.8 x 24 cm and preserved in Vienna's Geistliche Schatzkammer, and the version, also attributed to Della Porta, of the Cross for the high altar of St. Peter's Basilica, which was donated by Cardinal Farnese in 1582. In the workshop inventory drawn up after his death in 1577, as many as 58 metal crucifixes in various stages of completion are recorded, 55 of which were made of bronze, some with dimensions similar to ours.[33]

Among his assistants, Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert, known in Italy as Coppe Fiamingo (Enghien, Flanders, 1535–Rome, 1615), stood out for being the first and the most talented goldsmith until Torrigiani's entry in the work-shop during the early 70s .He arrived in Rome between 1552 and 1555, at around 20 years of age, and immediately became Guglielmo's chief assistant, creating models in clay, chalk, plaster, and wax, in addition to handling the casting and chiselling of bronze models. He remained in the workshop until his master's death in 1577. According to the biography published by Baglione in 1642, Cobaert specialized in small-scale works:

"Coppe was a Flemish sculptor, and in small-scale work, he was excellent, creating some very graceful and beautiful models." [34]

Jacob Cobaert served his master as a goldsmith, executing numerous precious metalworks, including a *Descent from the Cross* (now lost) and a series of oval plaquettes on the theme of *The Bacchanals* and *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, designed by Guglielmo della Porta between 1550–1560 and modelled in clay by Cobaert under his supervision. Magnificent examples of this series can be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, The Metropolitan Museum in New York, and the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. These pieces enjoyed widespread popularity in Northern Europe in the late 16th and early 17th centuries.[35] In terms of the alloy of the bronze used and the meticulous technique, the bronzes reliefs of the Bacchanals are fundamental in dating and attributing the cast of the Crucifix from Michelangelo's model that we present here.

A work attributed to Cobaert, due to both, model and excellent craftsmanship, that had a similar impact to that of our Crucifix is a rectangular plaquette in gilded bronze depicting *The Pietà in a Landscape* (18.5 x 12.8 cm), cast in Rome around 1569 and preserved in The National Gallery in Washington. It features the Virgin holding Christ's lifeless body in full scale, with the city of Jerusalem in the background.[36] Recently, I identified a replica of exceptional quality (still unpublished) in a private Spanish collection, also in gilded bronze, with slightly larger dimensions of 19 x 13 cm, suggesting it could be the first cast of the original model. [37] (Fig. G)

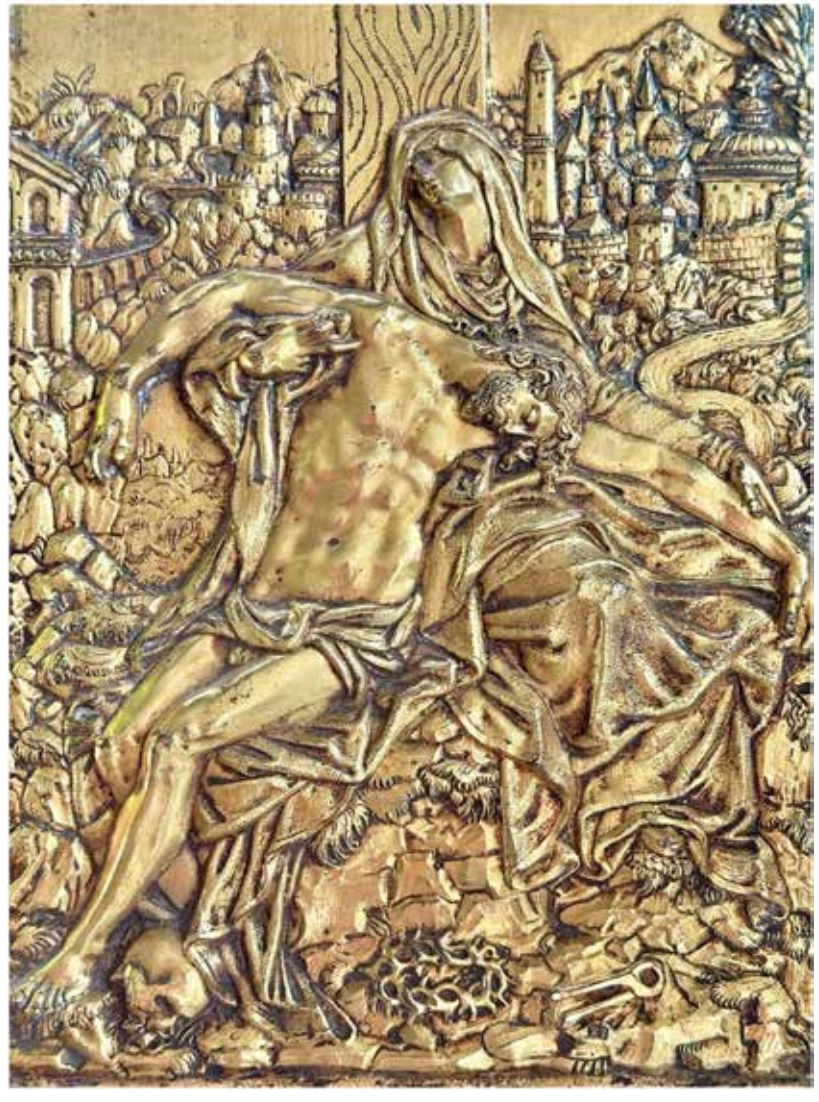


Fig. G. **Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert**, *Calvary*, gilded bronze, Rome, 1569, 19x13 cm, private collection

The distinctive alloy of the bronze Corpus introduced here compared to the Bacchanal plaquettes and the fact that Jacob Cobaert was already known for the perfect and detailed finishing of his works in the 60's, when, according to its unique iconography and particular alloy , our bronze likely might have been cast, lead me to maintain that Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert is the only goldsmith in Guglielmo della Porta's workshop capable of achieving this level of technical and plastic virtuosity between 1560 and 1570. In this sense, it is not likely that Bastiano Torrigiani, the other possible candidate and brilliant goldsmith, cast the bronze Corpus , as there is no documentary evidence that he worked with Guglielmo della Porta's during this period; nore that Guglielmo itself did it, even though, no doubt, he had a supervisory role, because the level of meticulousness shown in the work can only correspond to the hand of an extremely refined goldsmith and by then della Porta had become more of a designer. Furthermore, it is reasonable to think that he did not want to directly cast a model made by an artist with whom he had a conflict at that time and, if he had contributed anything, it might have been to give it a Nordic, expressive, and somewhat nervous touch—qualities absent in our Crucifix, which exudes a Michelangelesque serenity.

Spain. Historical and Artistic Context

The profound religiosity experienced in Spain during the reign of Philip II was reflected in the Monastery of El Escorial. It is not surprising that the image of Christ crucified became the most venerated in religious iconography, symbolizing humanity's redemption through the death of the Son of God on the cross[38]. In 1576, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo II, sent a Crucifix sculpted by Benvenuto Cellini for his own tomb between 1559 and 1562. This marble sculpture, larger than life (180 cm), was installed behind the choir of the church. Pompeo Leoni, the Italian sculptor at the Spanish court, considered the nudity inappropriate, so it was soon covered with a fabric loincloth.

A few years later, in 1583, Philip II received another valuable gift from the Tuscan court: a small bronze Crucifix, 44 cm in height. Despite its size, it was no less significant, as it was crafted by the most renowned sculptor of the time, Giambologna. According to a letter from Simone Fortuna dated April 9, 1583, one of the Crucifixes made by the artist was destined for the King of Spain[39]. A year later, on January 22, 1584, Francesco I wrote to the Spanish monarch, stating that he was sending him an ivory Crucifix: *"piccolo per tener a capo al letto"* (small to place at the head of the bed)[40].

In 1603, the Countess of Lemos, sister of the Duke of Lerma, received a magnificent gift from Ferdinando de Medici: a Crucifix and four Evangelists by Giambologna, cast in gilded bronze and completed the previous year by his chief assistant, Antonio Susini. This Crucifix is preserved in the church of the Monastery of Las Descalzas Reales in Madrid. In 2001, I found a replica was located in a private Spanish collection. Two of the Evangelists are in the Museo de la Fundación Lázaro Galdiano; the other two remain missing[41].

In 1612, Maria Magdalena, wife of Cosimo II de Medici, selected one of her most cherished Crucifixes as a wedding gift for Infanta Doña Ana, daughter of Philip III and Margaret of Austria. The future Queen of France gifted it to the Duke of Lerma, who was present at the ceremony. The event was documented as follows: *"That crucifix was presented to the Queen of France as I wrote, and because it seemed a beautiful and curious item, and perhaps the Duke of Lerma desired it, I understand that His Most Catholic Majesty made him a gift of it."*[42]

These events highlight the prominence of representations of Christ crucified in Spain, crafted in various materials and sizes, as precious objects, admired for their beauty and artistic perfection achieved by the finest sculptors of the time.

Fig. H. **Alonso Sánchez Coello** (atrib), *Seville during XVI century*, oil on canvas, Museo de América, Madrid

Seville, a "New Rome"

The publication by Jonathan Brown in 1978, along with those by Vicente Lleó Cañal in 1985 and 2012, remain the starting point for studying the Renaissance in Seville, which at that time had become a prosperous city as the port of the Americas, and therefore a destination chosen by aristocrats, merchants, foreign artists, and expatriates.[43] This was how Venetian ambassador Andrea Navagero defined it in 1526 when he stated that Seville "resembles Italian cities much more than any other city in Spain."[44] (Fig. H)

As early as the beginning of the century, when in 1503 Seville gained the monopoly on trade with the Indies, a vibrant cultural scene emerged in the city, with key figures such as Antonio de Nebrija, Ambrosio de Morales, and Antonio Agustín. This is evidenced by the creation of Hernando's Library —Hernando being Christopher Columbus's son— and the collection of the first Duke of Alcalá, Perafán de Ribera at the Casa de Pilatos.[45]

Later, Francisco Pacheco's academy, where intellectuals, poets, and painters gathered, played a fundamental role in shaping artists. It was a literary salon attended by humanists such as Juan Mal Lara, Juan de Arguijo, Rodrigo Caro, Argote de Molina, Fernando Herrera, Pablo de Céspedes, and Fernando Enríquez de Ribera, the third Duke of Alcalá.[46] The latter was one of the few collectors of small bronzes in Spain, a collection formed during his stays in Italy as ambassador in Rome and as Viceroy of Naples and Sicily.[47]

Francisco Pacheco (1564–1644), painter and art theorist, is historically well known as Velázquez's teacher and father-in-law, as well as for his literary works, *Libro de retratos de ilustres y memorables varones* (Seville, 1599),[48] and *Arte de la pintura*, completed in 1641 (posthumously published in 1649)[49] where he provided data that constitute one of the pillars of the present publication.

As will be seen, Pacheco referred in his treatise three times to a bronze crucifix, providing information about the date of its arrival in Seville from Rome in 1597 and the person who brought it, a silversmith named Juan Bautista Franconio. He specified that the crucifix was nailed to the cross with four nails and attributed to Michelangelo. He continued by stating that, around the year 1600, Franconio made several casts from the original brought from Rome; the first in bronze (suggesting that he may have polychromed several), which he himself polychromed on January 17, 1600 (Fig. I), and others in silver, all considered first-generation casts. Finally, Pacheco provided an intriguing detail: the original crucifix brought by Franconio from Rome was donated by the silversmith to Pablo de Céspedes.[50]

Fig. I. *Bronze Crucifix* after a model by **Michelangelo**, cast by **Juan Bautista Franconio** ca. 1597-1600, painted by Francisco Pacheco, ca. 1600, private collection

Little is known about Franconio's biography, except for a brief note published by Ceán Bermúdez referring to him as "a highly regarded silversmith in Seville around 1630 and a friend of Francisco Pacheco."[51] Since he left Rome a year after the death of Torrigiani (1596), who had been the heir to Guglielmo Della Porta's workshop, it is very likely, as Michael Riddick has suggested, that he worked for him and that the closure of the workshop facilitated the acquisition of the bronze crucifix, its transfer to Seville, and its use as a mold for the largest series of metallic crucifixes with four nails ever known.

However, information about Pablo de Céspedes (c. 1538–1608) is abundant. He was a close friend and companion of Pacheco, who included him in the *Libro de retratos*,[52] and a cleric, canon of the Cathedral of Córdoba, humanist, painter, sculptor, architect, poet, and art theorist , according to what Ceán published in his *Discourse on the Comparison of Ancient and Modern Painting and Sculpture.*[53] During his stay in Rome between 1570 and 1577, Céspedes lived at the home of the Bishop of Zamora, became a member of the Academy of Saint Luke, worked with Daniele da Volterra, and interacted with Tommaso Cavalieri. In his discourses, he praised Michelangelo's Vatican *Pietà* and stood out as a collector by describing ancient Roman monuments.[54]

It seems logical that Michelangelo's original bronze crucifix would end up in the hands of Pablo de Céspedes, who admired the Master and held him in such high steam that, according to Pacheco, he wore it around his neck— something possible due to its small size and lack of a cross. The Corpus is also referred in his testament as "Christ of metal without a Cross in a leather box". Upon Céspedes's death, it was inherited by Juan de Peñalosa y Sandoval (Baena, 1579–Astorga, 1633), a priest, painter, altarpiece designer, and poet who had trained and lived in his household. Later, he became a canon of Astorga Cathedral. Upon his death, an auction inventory of his belongings dated 1533 mentions "a craft of a Christ without a Cross very good in a box"[55], hence the abundance of four-nailed crucifixes in northern Spain.

The bronze crucifix served as inspiration not only for sculptors like Martínez Montañés in the *Cristo de los Cálices* (1603, Seville Cathedral), but also for painters such as Pacheco himself, who in 1611 created an oil-on-panel crucifix for the parish of Nuestra Señora de la Consolación in El Coronil (Seville); Alonso Cano (*Christ Crucified with Four Nails*, 1630, Madrid, Academy of San Fernando); and Velázquez, in the *Portrait of the Venerable Mother Jerónima de la Fuente* (1620), where the crucifix depicted in the painting corresponds to the one polychromed by Pacheco (Prado Museum (Fig. J) Ribera and even Goya depicted four-nailed crucifixes, contributing to the success of this model in Spain and South America. The

series of metallic four-nailed Christs in silver or bronze later produced in various Spanish workshops, mainly in the North of Spain, also bears witness to this.

One of the most notable artists associated with casting Franconio's model is Lesmes Fernández del Moral (Burgos, c. 1550–Madrid, 1623). A silversmith and sculptor who married in 1592 Germana de Arfe, daughter of the renowned goldsmith Juan de Arfe, with whom he collaborated on reliquary busts for El Escorial. He also worked with Pompeo Leoni in El Escorial on the cenotaphs of Charles V and Philip II; the praying statues of the Dukes of Lerma for the Church of San Gregorio, now the National Sculpture Museum in Valladolid; and that of Archbishop of Seville Cristóbal de Rojas, housed in the Collegiate Church of Lerma, Burgos.[56] (Fig. K)

Fig. J. Portrait by **Diego Velázquez** of *Jerónima de la Fuente holding the Crucifix cast by* **Juan Bautista Franconio** *and polychromed by* **Pacheco**, 1620, Museo del Prado

Critical Reception and scholarly Research

John Philips Goldsmith published the group of bronze crucifixion figures from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, linking them to a model by Michelangelo.[57] As such, it was featured in an exhibition held in Montreal in 1992.[58]

The earliest publications on Michelangelo's crucifix in Spain are attributed to Manuel Gómez Moreno, followed by Francisco Javier Sánchez Cantón, José María de Azcárate, and the Marqués de Lozoya.[59] These researchers brought attention to examples found in the Ducal Palace of Gandía, Seville Cathedral, the Royal Palace of Madrid, and the Rodríguez Acosta Foundation, as well as others located in the cathedrals of Cuenca (Fig. L), Valladolid, Córdoba, Granada, and the Caja de Ahorros de Segovia (originating from the collection of the Marqués de Lozoya), among others.

Juan Carlos Brasas Egido cataloged seventeen versions of these crucifixes in Spain in his studies on silversmithing.[60] Later, Anselmo López Morais published a remarkable example in Astorga and another in a private collection in Ourense coming from the Marques del Toro Collection.[61]. Meanwhile, Fernando Llamazares Rodríguez examined a silver processional cross in the parish of Castro Tierra de Valduerna (León), now housed in the Museum of Caminos de Astorga. This cross was crafted in 1631 by the Valladolid silversmith Andrés de Campos Guevara. However, the gilded silver crucifix it bears, with a superimposed bronze perizonium, corresponds to Michelangelo's four-nailed model and probably predates the Cross [62] (Fig. M)

Fig. K. *Silver Crucifix* after a model by **JB Franconio**, cast by Lesmes del Moral, circa 1630, Marqués de Toro Collection >

Fig. L. *Silver Crucifix*, polychromed pewter, XVII century, Catedral de Cuenca

Fig. M. *Gilded silver Crucifix*, after a model by **JB Franconio** cast by **Andrés del Campo**, circa 1630, Museo de los Caminos de Astorga

Fig. N. *Bronze Crucifix* after a model by **Michelangelo**, (1538-41), Metropolitan Museum, New York

Giancarlo Gentilini, in an article on crucifixes, introduced a drawing by Giulio Clovio dated 1540, housed in Windsor's Royal Collection, depicting Christ with crossed feet. He linked this depiction to small metal crucifixes, including the one at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, which he tentatively attributed to Jacopo del Duca.[63]

Juan Nicolau Castro and Antonio José Díaz Hernández have unveiled three new examples in Toledo that are connected to Michelangelo's model.[64]

Paul Joannides recently published a study on a bronze group of *Christ and the Two Crucified Thieves* (27.3 x 20.3 x 4.6 cm) housed at the Metropolitan Museum in New York (Fig N). He cataloged it as designed by Michelangelo Buonarroti and cast by a follower, dating it to 1560–1570. He compared it to a similar group held at Milan's Castello Sforzesco Museum,[65] whose Christ figure belongs to a different model probably also by Michelangelo.

Finally, Michael Riddick has identified a bronze crucifix of the same four-nailed model in a private American collection. Measuring 23 x 21.8 cm, its high quality indicates it was cast from the original wax model, albeit with less detail than the version under study as it lacks the dotted pattern of the eyebrows. Furthermore, the lack of drops falling from Christ side attest probably being cast a bit later, at some point after 1570. According to Riddick, the *perizonium* (loincloth) suggests it was cast , in the last quarter of the 16th century, raising the hypothesis that it may have been a later addition, as with Guglielmo della Porta's statues of *Minerva* and *Prudence* in the tomb of Paul III.[66] Riddick also possesses a polychromed crucifix in Rome, which, based on its quality, is most likely a first-generation cast and potentially a second bronze crucifix polychromed by Pacheco, given the remarkable craftsmanship evident in its image.

The Publication

The aim of Carlos Herrero Starkie's publication is to present a bronze four nailed crucified Christ, 23 cm in height, and identify it as the one documented in Seville in 1597, cast from an original wax model by Michelangelo and brought from Rome by the silversmith Juan Bautista Franconio. To achieve this, the author conducted a rigorous investigation and technical study, but most importantly, he recognized from the outset the exceptional quality of the piece, distinguishing it from other versions and maintaining that it could be the lost original of the famous Crucifix.

The first chapter outlines the steps of the investigation. It begins with the description of the Crucifix based on visual analysis, enabling a detailed understanding of the bronze, its technical perfection, and the beauty of the model. It proceeds to demonstrate that this is the bronze mentioned by Pacheco, brought from Rome to Seville by Franconio, and used as the mold for the first generation of four-nailed metal Crucifixes. This conclusion is supported by a technical study conducted at the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) in Madrid, which provided evidence for the attribution and dating of the work[67].

The alloy, with very high copper content and typical impurities, as well as the results from X-rays, correspond to the modus operandi of a skilled bronze worker or goldsmith, using advanced techniques in Rome before 1597. This is consistent with the references given by Pacheco and aligns with the methods employed in the workshop of Guglielmo Della Porta in Rome before 1570, as evidenced by the casting's current sealed hole in the head, its three-piece construction and the movable perizonium added to the model. The alloy, patina, and cold finish resemble the Bacchanals reliefs designed by Della Porta and cast by Jacob Cobaert between 1550-1560. The old silver alloy of the *perizonium* added to cover the nudity corresponds unmistakably to Della Porta's designs. Finally, remnants of wax and plaster on the bronze Crucifix definitely confirms that the bronze under study was used as a model for casting other examples.

The second chapter undertakes a comparative analysis with the other surviving versions in order to identify those cast by Franconio in Seville around 1600, which the author calls the "first generation". These include two bronzes, polychromed by Pacheco on January 17, 1600—one in the Ducal Palace of Gandía and the other in a private collection in Italy. The silver versions are found in Seville Cathedral, the Royal Chapel of Madrid's Royal Palace, and the Pública Andaluza Rodríguez-Acosta Foundation in Granada. The chapter also covers the "second generation of casts," made in various parts of Spain, mostly in silver and in the North of Spain. It delves into describing the original bronze Crucifix prototype cast from Michelangelo's wax model and justifying its identification based on its technical excellence, contrasting it with the first generation cast made in Spain. Furthermore, it is compared to another bronze cast recently published by Michael Riddick, made in Rome in the latter half of the 16th century, with the same model and quality and to the example housed in the Metropolitan Museum of New York, slightly larger (27 cm). The conclusion is that none match the minute precision of this Corpus, such as the detailing along the eyelids or the definition of eyebrows and nipples, but most important, none reveal in such high way this ultimate expression of pathos and serenity stamped in Michelangelo 's canon of spiritual beauty.

The third chapter explores the iconographic model of the four-nailed Crucifix created by Michelangelo, including comparative photographs of related drawings and sculptures. It addresses the physiognomic features, anatomical study, and expression of peaceful sleep, characteristic of Michelangelo. Additionally, the text analyses his correspondence with Vittoria Colonna (1538-1541), which sheds light on an "unfinished" Crucifix that Michelangelo gave her. The author publishes extracts of the letters which refers to this unfinished though perfect Corpus. He meticulously interprets these letters, supporting with new arguments Riddick's thesis that this correspondence reveals a gift or commission of a three-dimensional Crucifix, rather than a drawing, as traditionally believed. Finally, Herrero Starkie examines the bronze Crucifix's style (Fig A, Fig. O), comparing it to Michelangelo's marble works, such as the *David* at the Accademia, the *Pietà* in the Vatican (Fig. P), *Bacchus* at the Bargello (Fig O, Fig. P), and Giuliano de Medici's portrait in the San Lorenzo sacristy, with comparative photographs of details illustrating their similarities.

The fourth chapter attributes the cast to a goldsmith under Guglielmo Della Porta's supervision and dates it, based on technical analysis, taking into account that the alloy and casting methods match those used in Rome in the third quarter of the 16th century. The iconography is analysed with comparative photographs of drawings and sculptures, emphasizing that the depiction of the bleeding wound confirms a date before 1566 consistent with the alloy tests. This year, Pope Pius V, applying Counter-Reformation doctrines, ordered the suppression of blood drops from side wounds (while allowing the wound itself). At this time, nudity was covered for decorum, as evidenced by the silver *perizonium* designed and cast in Della Porta's workshop to cover the wax model's nudity.

In the fifth chapter, the author develops the theory that Michelangelo's wax model had limited influence in Italy, with only a few known versions—Jacopo del Duca's for the Tabernacle of Padula, the one published by Riddick in a private collection, and the one studied here. Herrero Starkie contrasts this fact with the widespread influence of Michelangelo's *Samson and Two Philistines,* which exists in numerous bronze versions and inspired artists like Giambologna and Bernini.

The text highlights the success of Della Porta's own Crucifix model, which circulated widely in the Roman market and European courts. The question arises as to why Della Porta did not use in a more open way Michelangelo's model. The reason may lie in the fallout between the two, following disputes during the construction of Pope Paul III's mausoleum and plagiarism accusations against Della Porta, due to similarities between his tomb designs and Michelangelo's Medici chapel models. This may explain why Michelangelo's model was stored in the workshop as a work material in the 1570s, leaving Della Porta's model as the one

that survived after his death in 1577 and influenced artists like Antonio Gentili, Sebastiano Torrigiani, and Gaspar Mola.

The impact of this Crucifix in Spain was significant, owing to Francisco Pacheco's mention in his *Tratado de la Pintura* and Seville's prominence as a port for the Americas.

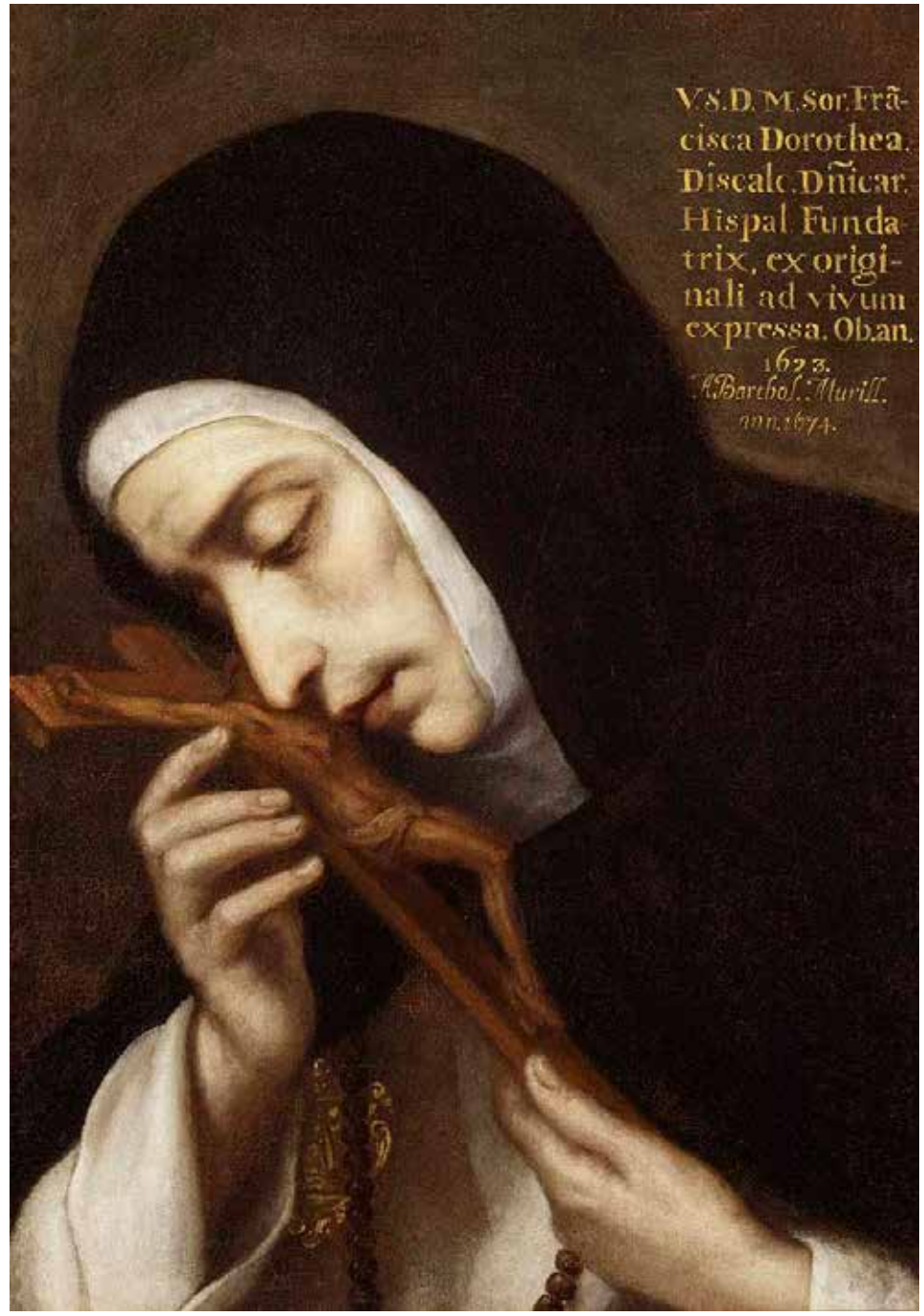
Fig. O. Crucified Christ, after a model by Michelangelo (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, IOMR Collection, the Netherlands

Conclusion

This text introduces us to the fascinating history of a bronze crucified Christ, conceived by Michelangelo, whose exceptional execution and dating between 1560-1570, confirmed by its alloy and iconography, identify it as the finest and earliest surviving version of his four-nailed Crucifix model. Its design stands out for its fully Renaissance yet heterodox character.

Having hold this bronze with my hands and personally inspected in flesh the wax's indelible trace on the surface of the Corpus, as well as compared its meticulous details to other most refined versions, I endorse the author's thesis: this is a bronze cast directly from Michelangelo's original wax model, in the context of the Roman *Gran Scuola* in the 1560s, by one of most talented Guglielmo della Porta's goldsmiths, in my opinion, Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert, under his close supervision. This, along with the evident wax and plaster remnants on its bronze surface and its Spanish provenance, strongly support the rediscovery of the long-lost four-nailed Michelangelo's Corpus, mentioned by Pacheco as brought to Seville by Juan Bautista Franconio in 1597 and last time documented in the auction of Juan de Peñalosa's estate, a disciple of Pablo de Céspedes (1633).

Fig. P. *Pietà, detail of Christ*, **Michelangelo**, 1498, Basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano, Rome



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58. Shell, 1992, cit., pp. 254-261.

59. Manuel Gómez Moreno, "Obras de Miguel Ángel en España", *Archivo Español de Arte y Arqueología,* vol. 6, nº17, 1930, pp. 189-198; ibidem, "El Crucifijo de Miguel Ángel", *Archivo Español de Arte,* vol. 9, nº26, 1933, pp. 81-84; Francisco José Sánchez Cantón, "Sobre el crucifijo de Miguel Ángel", *Archivo Español de Arte*, 1937, p. 529;José María de Azcárate, "La influencia miguelangelesca en la escultura española", Goya, 1966, nº74-75, p. 109; El Marqués de Lozoya, "Sobre el Crucifijo de plata, vaciado según el modelo de Miguel Ángel, en la Caja de Ahorros de Segovia", *Estudios Segovianos*, XXIII, 1971, nº67, pp. 5-10.

60. "Aportaciones a la historia de la platería barroca española", *Boletín del Seminario de Arte y Arqueología, Universidad de Valladolid,* 1975, pp. 428-429; ibidem, *La Platería vallisoletana y su difusión,* Valladolid, 1980, pp. 186-187, 209, 236.

61. Anselmo López Morais, "Un Cristo de Miguel ángel en Astorga", *El Pensamiento astorgano,* 1974 (as a reproduction of the one in the Museo de los Caminos de Astorga); ibidem, *"Crucifijo de Miguel Ángel. (Un ejemplar en colección particular de Orense)" Porta da Aira: revista de Historia del Arte Orensano*, 1988, nº1, pp. 97-107. Sold in Durán, Madrid, may 21, 1974, coming from the collection of the marqués del Toro and conde de los Villares.

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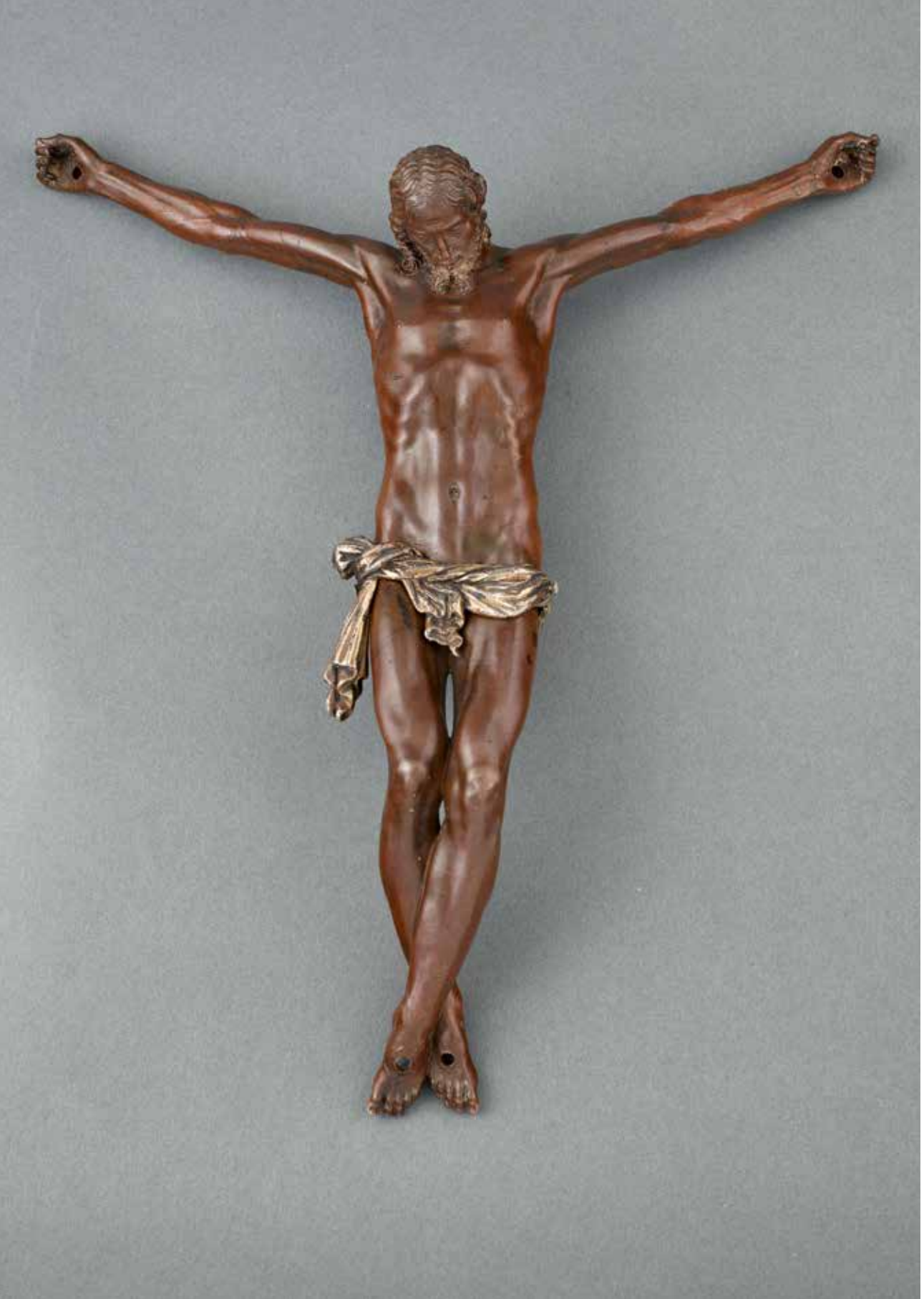
65. Paul Joannides, "Two bronze Crucifixion groups designed by Michelangelo", *Colnaghi Studies Journal-11*, 2022, cit. pp. 22-61.

66. Michael Riddick, *Michelangelo's Crucifix for Vittoria* (Online). He records 28 versions in Spain.

67. The technical study has been carried out by Ignacio Montero, CSIC, Madrid 3 July 2023.The radiographic images by SGS Tecnos. The restoration was undertaken by Sara Cavero August, 2023. All the technical reports are included in the Annexes of the publication.

Crucified Christ, silver, cast by **Juan Bautista Franconio** >>
circa 1600, detail, Catedral de Sevilla



MICHELANGELO´S BRONZE CORPUS, DOCUMENTED IN SEVILLE 1597, REDISCOVERED

Carlos Herrero Starkie
Director of IOMR

In his book "The Art of Painting, "Pacheco mentions on three occasions explicitly a bronze Crucified Christ with four nails attributed to Michelangelo, which the silversmith Juan Bautista Franconio brought from Rome to Seville in the year 1597 (Fig.1, 2), inspiring Juan Martínez Montañés design of the Christ of the Chalices in 1603.[1]

This Crucifix is known from an image that was incorporated into Velázquez's portrait of Sor Jerónima de la Fuente in 1620 (Fig. 7) and from five casts made by Juan Bautista Franconio directly from this bronze model, all of them considered the Spanish first generation series: in bronze, the Crucified Christ on the Cross polychromed by Pacheco the 17th January 1600, currently in the Ducal Palace of Gandía (Fig.4), and another one, also polychromed located in Italy, belonging to a private collection; in silver, the Christ Crucified with four nails, in the Cathedral of Seville (Fig. 5), the one in the Royal Palace (Madrid) of similar quality, and the Crucifix in the Pública Andaluza Rodríguez-Acosta Foundation (Granada), former Manuel Gómez Moreno Collection all cast around 1600. (Fig. 3)

The purpose of this study is to introduce this bronze Crucified Christ attributed to Michelangelo, which was long thought lost and whose information was provided by Pacheco himself when he indicated that, after serving as a model for artists and sculptors, Juan Bautista Franconio gave it to Father Pablo Céspedes, who cherished it and wore it around his neck until his death in 1608.[2]

< Fig. 1. *Christ Crucified with four nails,* **Michelangelo** (model 1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome 1560-1570, in Guglielmo della Porta´s workshop probably by Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert, 23 cm. high. Historical provenance: Probably one of 55 bronze crucifixes mentioned in Guglielmo della Porta's inventory, Rome February 1577, brought by the silversmith JB Franconio to Seville in1597, inventory Pablo Céspedes 1608, Inventory Juan de Peñalosa 1633, Spanish private collection San Sebastián, Spanish private collection Madrid, IOMR collection The Nethelands

Fig. 2. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 3. *Crucified Christ*, silver, cast by **Juan Bautista Franconio** circa 1600, Fundación Pública Andaluza Rodríguez-Acosta, Granada

Fig. 4. *Crucified Christ,* bronze, cast by **Juan Bautista Franconio** polychromed by Francisco Pacheco in January 1600, Palacio Ducal de Gandía

Fig. 5. *Crucified Christ*, silver, cast by **Juan Bautista Franconio** circa 1600, Catedral de Sevilla

To achieve this, we will provide comprehensive answers to three questions:

Firstly, we will show how our bronze has been used as a model for casting and how its alloy and X-rays are consistent with a Roman origin from 1560-70.

Secondly, we will focus on demonstrating the prototype nature of this bronze Crucifix, based on its intrinsic quality, contrasting its excellent craftsmanship on the one hand with that of the casts made in Spain by the silversmith Juan Bautista Franconio around 1600 and on the other hand with that of another bronze Crucified Christ, also cast in Rome in the second half of the 16th century with an identical model and similar characteristics to ours. We will also relate it to the bronze Crucified Christ currently in the MET, which follows the same model attributed to Michelangelo, and whose casting has traditionally been attributed, albeit with many reservations, to Zaccaria Zacchi da Volterra.

Finally, we will analyse the doctrinal, documentary, and stylistic foundations that connect this bronze to Michelangelo. We will explain to what extent a Crucifix attributed to Michelangelo by such a recognized source as Pacheco, that arrived in Spain only 33 years after his death and had a major impact on Spanish art, deserves an in-depth study to elucidate the degree of involvement that can be assigned to Michelangelo in this work. Currently, there are only recognized, not without controversy, as bronzes attributed to Michelangelo: the Hercules Pomarius, circa 1500, one of Michelangelo's earliest bronzes when he was still collaborating with Bertoldo di Giovanni; the pair of Rothschild bronzes, circa 1504, studied by a team of experts sponsored by the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and led by Victoria Avery; the bronze Samson and two Philistines (Fig. 107), whose best version is preserved in the Frick Collection, related to a wax model by Michelangelo now lost, whose earliest versions were likely cast by Daniele Volterra during Michelangelo's lifetime, a bronze with an immense artistic impact; the fragment of the River God, possibly cast by Alessandro Cesati (El Gregetto) circa 1540, and the bronze Captive, circa 1513, at the Poldi Pezzoli Museum, Milan.

Fig. 6. *Christ still alive Crucified with four nails,* **Juan Martínez Montañés**, 1603, Capilla de los Cálices, Cathedral of Seville

Furthermore, based on the summarized data, we will proceed to attempt a more precise dating of the work prior to 1597 and to argue for an attribution of the cast to one of the goldsmiths who comprised the Roman "Gran Scuola".

As a conclusion, we will bring this study to an end with an analysis of the transcendence that this image of the Crucified Christ with four nails almost universally assigned to Michelangelo has had. This extends to the Roman context, where it likely served as an artistic guide for the Counter Reformation Crucifix's canon created by Guglielmo della Porta. Additionally, it impacted Spain thanks to Francisco Pacheco's public mention of the arrival of a bronze Crucified Christ with four nails by Michelangelo in Seville, giving it unprecedented resonance in Spain and the New World. This impact is evidenced by the existence of the most significant series of casts of this model and the fervent adoption of this iconography by key figures in Hispanic Art, such as Martínez Montañés (Fig. 6), Velázquez, Alonso Cano, Ribera and Goya.

Fig. 7. Portrait by **Diego Velázquez** of *Jerónima de la Fuente* holding the Crucifix cast by Juan Bautista Franconio and polychromed by Pacheco, 1620, private Collection Madrid

1. The bronze Crucifix faithfully corresponds with Pacheco's description of the Four-Nailed Crucified Christ brought from Rome to Seville in 1597 by Juan Bautista Franconio

The bronze Crucified Christ we are studying now (Fig. 8) fully matches the description provided by Pacheco, who mentioned it in his book "Arte de la Pintura" as Michelangelo's Four-Nailed Christ brought from Rome to Seville by Juan Bautista Franconio and as a model used for multiple casts. It became an iconic prototype for various sculptural and pictorial works, including the Christ of the Chalices by Juan Martínez Montañés and Pacheco's, Velázquez's, Zurbarán's and Alonso Cano's Crucified, among others.

One of its distinctive iconographic features is being nailed to the Cross with four nails, a dogma to which Pacheco attached special importance[3], and which Michelangelo no doubt paid attention to, as evidenced by several of his drawings and a wooden sculpture from his later years kept in the Casa Buonarroti (Fig. 61). Moreover, it is known that Michelangelo, along with his friend the Marquess of Pescara, belonged to the sect of the "Sprituali" between 1530/1540, who believed in Saint Bridget's vision of Christ Crucified with four nails[4].

After confirming the data provided by Pacheco, we have come to the conclusion that the Christ under study fully corresponds to his description:

Our bronze measures 25 cm in height at its highest point (23 cm from feet to head), similar to the measurement of a "tercia" indicated by Pacheco, faithfully representing the Four-Nailed Christ painted by his pupil Velázquez in his portrait of Sor Jerónima de la Fuente and corresponding in its forms to the bronze cast polychromed by Pacheco at present in the Ducal Palace of Gandía. Nonetheless our Crucifix noticeably displays a superior quality in detail, typical of being the bronze cast from Michelangelo's original wax model.

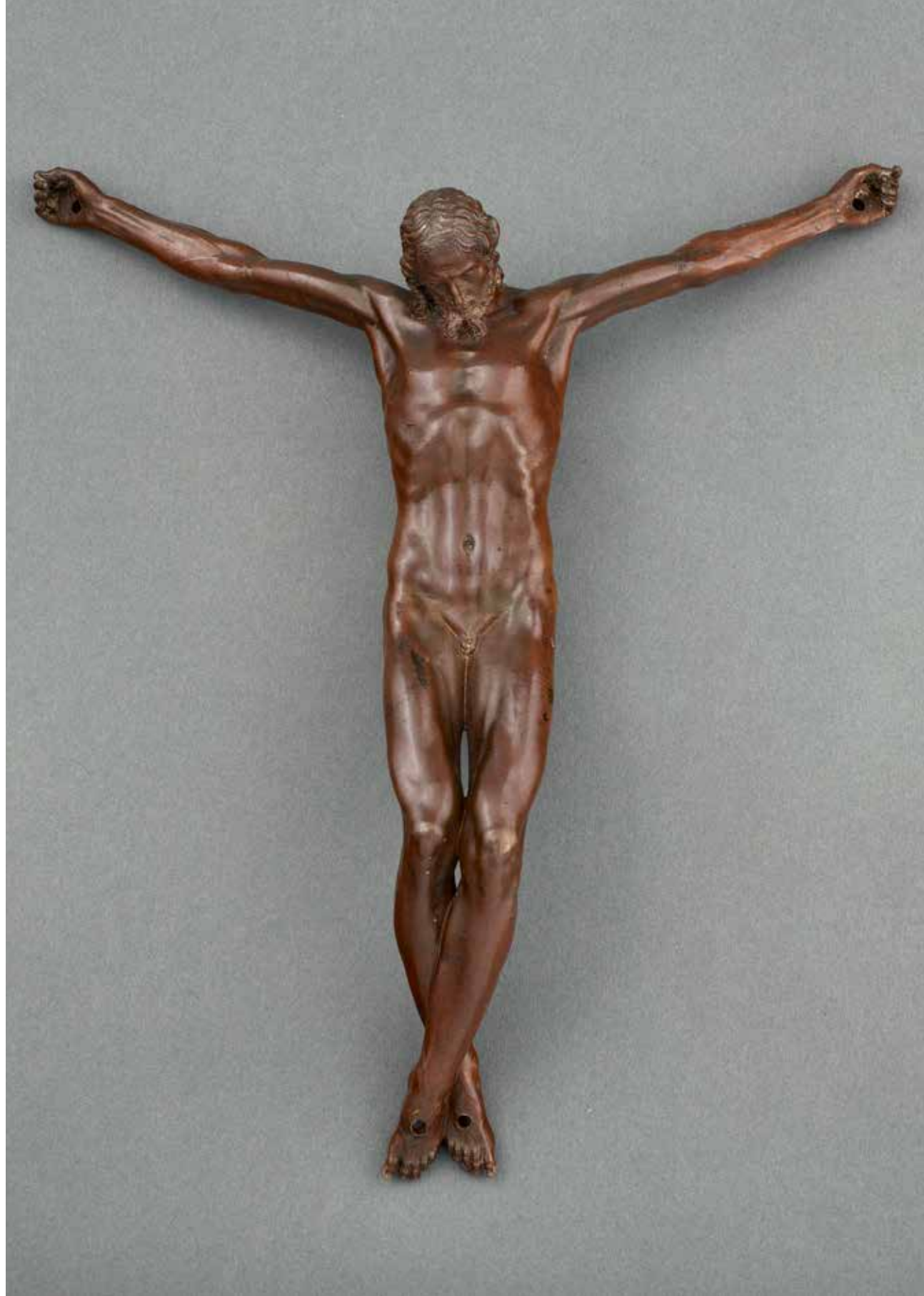


Fig. 8. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, IOMR Collection

Our bronze bears a clear and compelling evidence that it was used as a model for casting, like the Crucifix brought from Rome by Juan Bautista Franconio in 1597, because it is covered with plaster and wax in many areas, embedded in the curls of the hair, the beard, the nostrils and the hands (Fig. 10). Traces of wax still remain on both arms (Fig. 9), as can be seen in the images taken after initial cleaning. The extensive presence of these material remnants can only be explained to provide the model with an intermediate layer to protect it from plaster, faithfully preserving the forms that will be reproduced in negative in the plaster layer of the intermediate model and facilitating its removal without damaging the original bronze[5].

Fig. 9. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 10. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Finally, the remarkable quality of the Crucified Christ, the results of bronze alloy test and the technical details revealed by the X-rays support that our bronze Crucifix has been cast in Italy before 1597 by a highly skilled bronze- smith or a goldsmith using advanced techniques, something consistent with the Roman origin mentioned by Pacheco for the piece.

Fig. 11. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 12. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

The analytical results of the sample and the analysis of the bronze surface yield an alloy of 94% copper, 2.7% tin, and 2% lead with impurities of iron arsenic, nickel, antimony and silver, typical of a grey copper or Fahlerz extracted from the Fugger mines in Tyrol (Fig. 15). This type of copper slightly purified, known as "rame peloso" in Italy during the 16th century, allowed for reliable cold work and was the most commonly used for bronze art in Italy until the late third of the 16th century when it was gradually replaced by Neusohl, a much finer alloy used by Daniel Volterra's workshop for the equestrian statue of Henry II, circa 1560, with Michelangelo's input, and by Giambologna for that of Cosimo I, 1590. The very low proportion of tin and, especially, lead is almost identical to the bronze used by Cellini in his Perseus in 1545, emulating the horses of Piazza Marco, which were made of almost pure bronze[6]. Likewise, its alloy is basically consistent with the Rothschild bronzes, except for a slightly higher proportion of lead circa 1510, the Levite, Saint John the Baptist, and the Pharisee by Rustici in 1506, the Hercules and Antaeus by Ammannati in 1559[7]. Dr Arie Pappot has confirmed that the alloy of our bronze Crucifix is consistent with XVI century Roman casts and in particular with the reliefs representing a bacchanal by Guglielmo della Porta, circa 1550-60[8]. However, it differs from the alloy of Giambologna and his workshop, which employed a much higher tin content and a more refined copper. It is also different from the alloy of Juan Bautista Vázquez's Giraldillo, cast in Seville by Bartolomé Morel in 1566, which had a very high lead content[9]. No doubt, working with copper of such a low alloy of other metals must have presented challenges during casting, as pure copper melts at a much higher temperature (1083 °C) than a binary bronze with 13% tin (which melts at 1000 °C). Thus, it corroborates the skill of the expert bronze caster who managed to ensure that the pour reached all parts of the mold, despite not being of the highest quality, attesting both, the Roman origin and a dating prior to 1570 of the bronze.

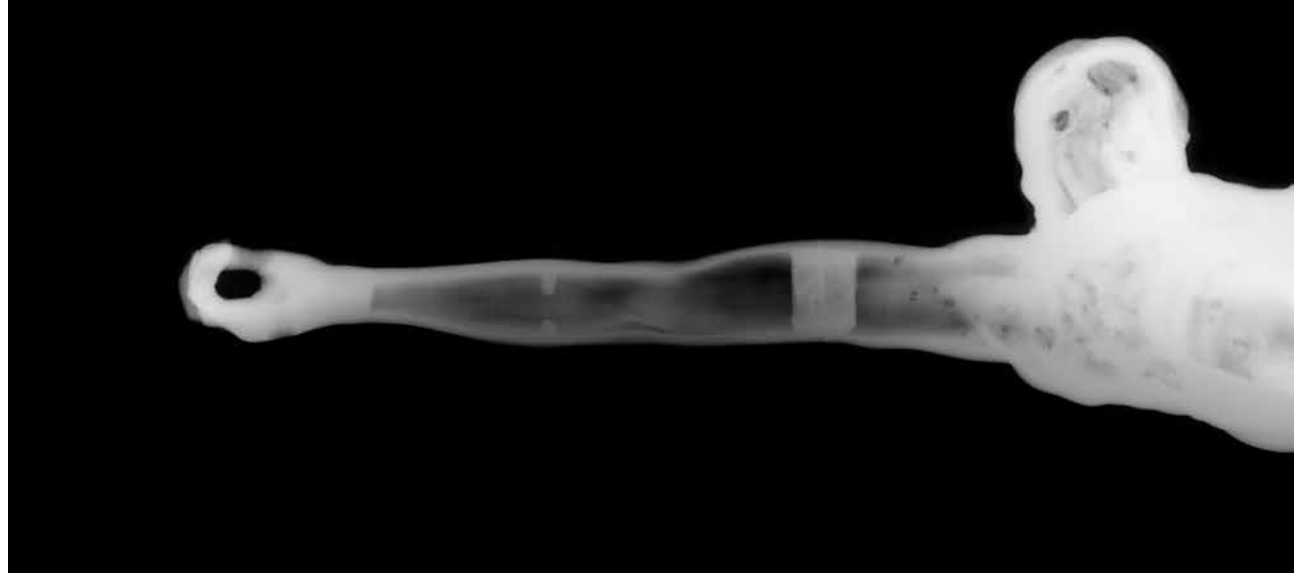


Fig. 13. X-rays right arm of the bronze *Christ Crucified*, IOMR Collection

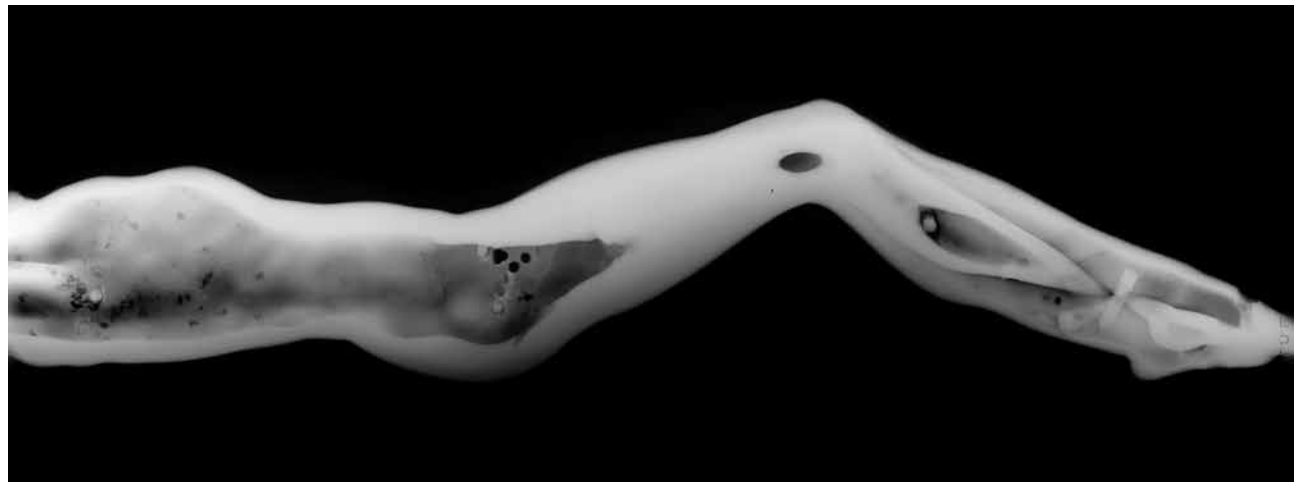


Fig. 14. X-rays low body of the bronze *Christ Crucified*, lateral image, IOMR Collection

Análisis	Zona	Fe	Ni	Cu	Zn	As	Ag	Sn	Sb	Au	Pb	Bi	Hg
PA29693A	Perizonium trasero	0,2	ND	2,42	ND	ND	64,9	ND	ND	25,3	0,37	0,10	5,87
PA29693B	Perizonium delantero	0,44	ND	4,08	0,17	ND	58,0	ND	ND	32,4	0,4	0,10	3,78
PA29693C	Clavo largo	ND	20,5	62,7	16,8	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
PA29693D	Clavo corto	ND	20,5	62,8	16,7	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
PA29693E	Arandela	ND	ND	6,57	ND	ND	92,9	ND	ND	0,11	0,07	ND	ND
PA29693F	Cabeza muestra viruta interior	0,12	0,19	94,5	ND	0,37	ND	2,76	ND	ND	2,09	ND	ND
PA29693G	Pierna derecha superficie	0,19	0,23	93,5	ND	0,24	0,16	4,55	0,23	ND	0,92	ND	ND
PA29693H	Brazo derecho zona unión	0,18	0,23	86,8	0,19	0,19	6,95	4,13	0,29	ND	1,08	ND	ND
PA29693I	Brazo derecho zona antebrazo	0,11	0,22	94,3	ND	0,19	0,18	3,91	0,32	ND	0,79	ND	ND
PA29693K	Brazo izquierdo zona de unión	0,2	0,23	90,5	0,3	0,23	2,46	4,64	0,32	ND	1,11	ND	ND
PA29693L	Remate cruz derecha	0,13	ND	6,32	ND	ND	93,5	ND	ND	ND	0,02	ND	ND
PA29693M	Remate cruz superior	ND	ND	6,21	ND	ND	93,8	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
PA29693N	Clavo pie izquierdo	ND	ND	11,2	1,01	ND	87,8	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND

Fig. 15. Results of analyses of a sample and by XRF of the surface of the Bronze Crucifix, IOMR collection

Furthermore, radiological tests confirm what is apparent at first glance. The work is cast from the head, where it has a sealed vent hole, to the feet, a characteristic feature in the Christ figures by della Porta, in three pieces, with the precision and meticulousness characteristic of a highly skilled bronze master with knowledge of goldsmithing (Fig. 13, 14, 16). Such craftsmanship, emphasized by the extremely fine cold joints of the forearms, welded with a soft silver alloy typical of the second half of the 16th century (Fig. 18), the thin thickness of the bronze and the real "tour de force" of even casting the feet and left hand (Fig. 16), is only conceivable from the 60s onwards. The Xray's also reveal a tiny threaded screw in both arms of the Christ and a larger one also with threads at the junction of his feet, an innovative technique that emerged with the explosion of watchmaking in the second half of 16th century and was only used by the most cutting- edge workshops (Fig. 13, 14). One of these workshops was Giambologna's, capable of successfully navigating the challenges of cutting and placing the screw during the casting process in such a small work. The radiographs also show casting techniques typical of the Renaissance, such as wax-on-wax joints at the same level on both legs and a silver solder seam following the shape of a circle that resulted in a crack at the height of the Christ's right buttock (Fig. 16, 82). This patch was clearly intentional to remove the core whose remains do not appear in the bronze, although the radiological trace of the multiple pins that held it in place is still visible. All of these pins were delicately removed and expertly concealed by the superb patina of the bronze[10].

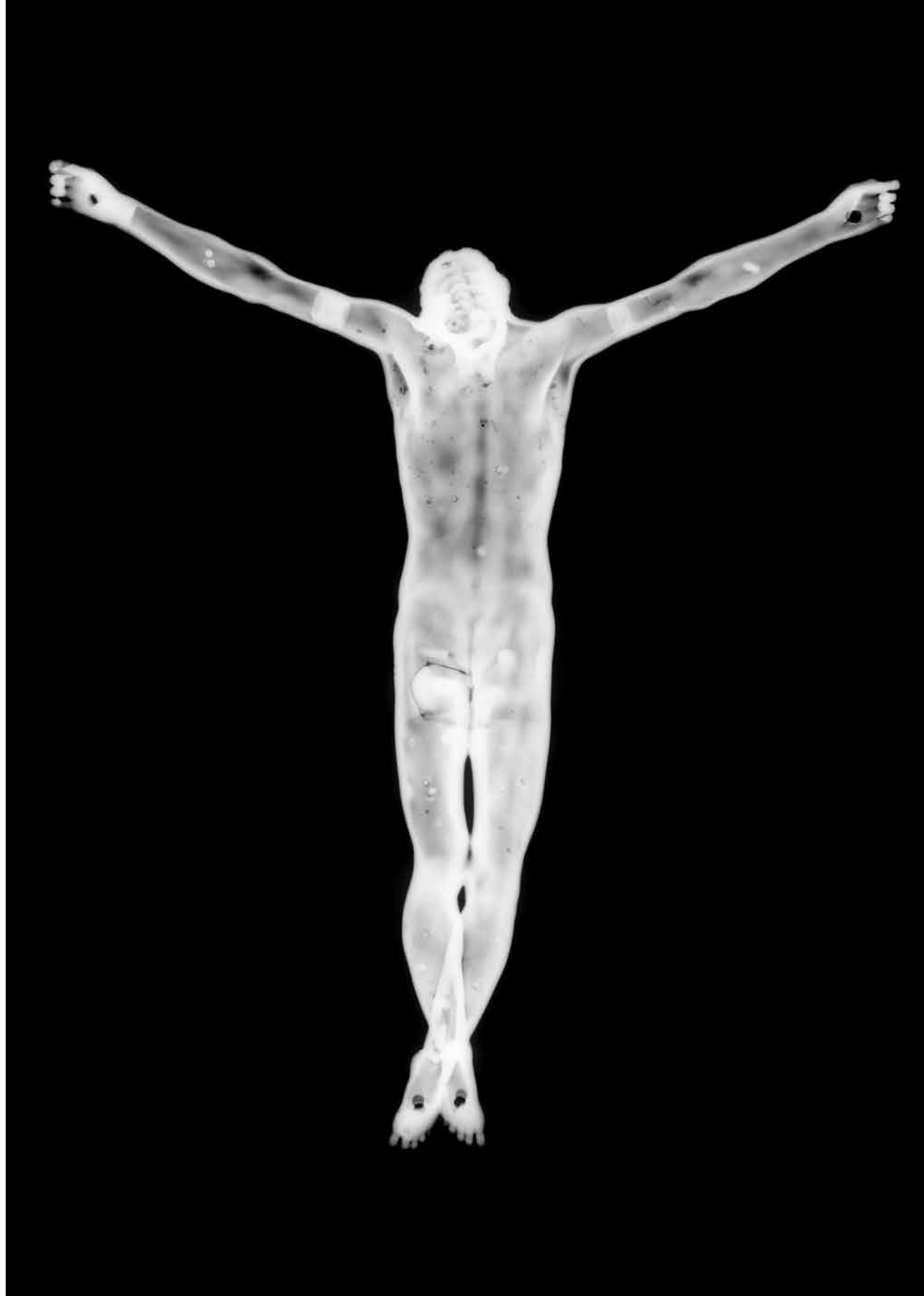


Fig. 16. X-rays general frontal image of bronze *Christ Crucified*, IOMR Collection >

The patina is very homogeneous due to the natural oxidation process of almost pure copper, with minimal interference from the other components, tin and lead, which do not distort the alloy on the surface. An entirely original patina that still retains the indelible mark of the cast wax process and its reddish colour, characteristic of almost pure copper, as seen in high-resolution images, albeit lightly darkened with time and perhaps slightly opaque due to not having been treated by Italian conservators and collectors who seek to maintain or even enhance its transparency over the centuries. Nevertheless, it has magnificently withstood the challenges of being used as a model for multiple castings (Fig. 17, 18).[11]

The radiological data confirm the extreme skill of the cold work displayed in the artwork and the use of the latest technological advancements, something consistent with its origin within the realm of highly skilled Roman goldsmiths who constituted what Baglione referred to as the "Gran Scuola" in the late second and last third of the 16th century; an artistic response to the devastating effects of Michelangelo's death and the new directives of Pope Pius V, which promoted a renewed image of the Catholic Church. All of this is in line with the time limit of 1597, when Juan Bautista Franconio brought this piece to Seville, a date that would act as a "terminus ante quem" in relation to a secure dating of the work.

Fig. 17. Digital image of patina with remains of wax and gesso in the arm of the *Bronze Crucified Christ,* IOMR Collection

Fig. 18. Image silver soft solder in the arm of the *Bronze Crucified Christ,* IOMR Collection

NOTES

1. Francisco Pacheco mentions this bronze Crucifix model as by Michelangelo three times in his book "*Arte de la pintura*", completed in 1641 and posthumously published in 1649, although it was the result of a lifetime of work for him. Edición Cátedra 2009 pp497 -98.

"Michelangelo, the brightest light of painting and sculpture, created a Crucifix model of four nails one tercia high, which we enjoy today. Juan Bautista Franconio, a skilled silversmith, brought it cast in bronze to this city in the year 1597. After enriching all the painters and sculptors with it, he gave the original to Pablo Céspedes, a canon of the Holy Church of Córdoba, who carried it with great esteem around his neck." Original text in Francisco Pacheco 1649 "*Arte de la pintura, su antigüedad y Grandezas*" p 611, Simón Faxardo, Sevilla, 1656.

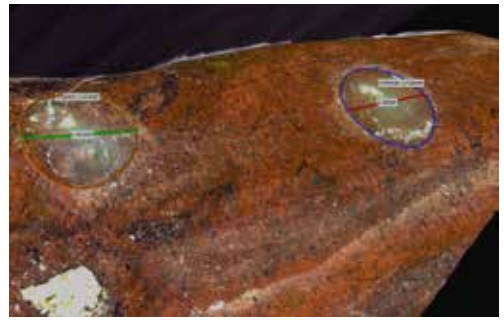
Another mention is when he says that pictorial anatomy can be studied "in the Christ with four nails by Michelangelo", and the last mention is when he refers to matte flesh tones: "For on January 17th of that year (1600) I painted with matte flesh tones a bronze cast of a Crucifix by Michelangelo which Juan Bautista Franconio a notable silversmith, from the one he brought from Rome" Brown (1970). Original text in Op cit pp405- 06. Velázquez copies this Crucifix polychromed by Pacheco in his Sor Jeronima's portrait. (Fig. E)

2. It is interesting to notice that this Crucifix is mentioned in the inventory of Pablo Céspedes made in 1608 as "Christ of metal without a Cross in a leather case" "*Boletín de Arte*" N 32-33 Universidad de Sevilla pp 437-455. Pablo Céspedes has worked with Daniele Volterra in Rome who most probably knew Michelangelo. It must have been inherited by his great friend and assistant Juan de Peñalosa, who took it to Astorga when he was appointed canon of the Cathedral. This allowed several castings of the model to be made in Northern Spain. It is mentioned in the inventory of Juan de Peñalosa's belongings made at his death in 1633 as "A cast Christ without a Cross, very good, in a box". A H P León Protocolo de Felipe Becerra, 3 de junio 1633. These are the last two documentary references to this bronze Crucifix.

3. Francisco Pacheco was a fervent advocate of the four nails iconography in a letter dated 1620 and, in his book, "*Arte de la pintura*". He based his views on the theories of Francisco de Rioja and Angelo Rocca, Bishop of Tagasta, who, following the testimonies of the revelations of Saint Bridget and the statements of the Bishop of Tuy, argued that the iconography with four nails had more authority than the one with three, where one foot was placed over the other with a single nail. The latter was introduced by the heretical Albigensians in France and entered Spain through León with the aim of diminishing reverence for Christ. In Italy, Nicolo Pisano spread the iconography of the three nails, becoming popular from the 13th century and remaining consistent after the Council of Trent. However, in Spain, the dogma of the four nails promoted by Pacheco gained more ground, thanks to the publicity he gave to this Christ model with four nails by Michelangelo, brought by Juan Bautista Franconio from Rome, among ecclesiastical and cultured circles in Seville. It became an argument in favor of countering accusations that considered this theory contrary to dogma. This iconography spread to Northern Spain through the model brought by Juan de Peñalosa. The fact that important Spanish artists such as Martínez Montañés, Diego Velázquez, Juan Zurbarán, Alonso Cano, and Francisco de Goya chose this iconography for the representation of the Crucified Christ is strong evidence of its success and the significance of the arrival of this Michelangelo model.

4. The "*Spirituali*" was an Italian reformist movement between 1530 and 1540 that promoted an approach to Christ through the spirit imbued by faith alone, rather than through dogma and liturgy. Its doctrine was not written down for a long time, as it was in a way a secret society, until their ideas were written by the monk Benedetto Fontani in his "*Beneficio de Cristo*" in 1543 Michelangelo was influenced to some extent by these principles, which were close to Protestantism when he fell platonically in love with Vittoria Colonna, his friend and spiritual advisor, "the divine lady" who devoted to the Spanish reformer Juan Valdés and very closed to Cardinald Reginald Pol and to the capuchin Bernardino Ochino who promoted a more austere way of life. This happened during an artistic period when he was deeply involved with the Last Judgment, in which he dared to depict himself facing Christ (1536-1541). In his Florentine Pietà of 1553, made to adorn his own tomb, he also represented himself as Nicodemus holding the dead Christ, assimilating his way of following God in secret, as the "*spiritualt*" did, seeking the triumph of their thoughts by attaining positions of authority to effect reforms within the Church, rather than through a schism. In his later years, Michelangelo returned to God when his artistic genius was obsessed by the figure of the Crucified Christ, creating models and designs that he gifted, including one to his nephew Lionardo, which probably corresponds to the one in the Casa Buonarroti, made of wood and also with four nails(Fig. 61). It represents a spiritual approach as death draws near. In this sense, this design of a nude Christ clearly shows his belief that humans present themselves to God with humility, naked, devoid of the baggage of their good works, with salvation being an arbitrary and gratuitous act of God, which humans face loaded with faith. The "*spirituali*" who artistically advocated for an intellectualization of the Crucifixion, removing all signs of suffering, acted secretly until they were considered heretics at the Council of Trent in 1547, and were severely persecuted, especially during the papacy of Paul IV (1554-1559), Cardenal Carafa, through the Roman Inquisition created by Paul III in 1542.

5. See annex Ignacio Montero CSIC 3 July 2023 "*Informe sobre el estudio de un Cristo Renacentista*", see annex digital microscope and tomographic images of the wax residues; and Sara Cavero "*Memoria final de Restauración de un Crucifijo de bronce*" August 2023.



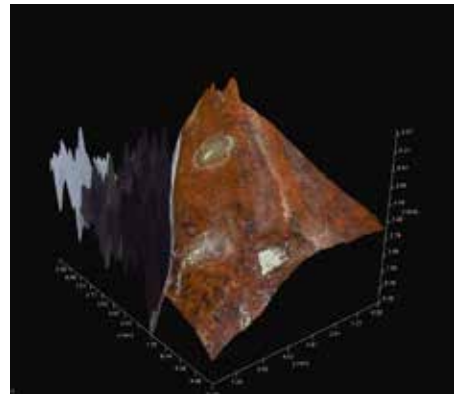


Fig. A. Tomographic images of the Wax

6. Ignacio Montero, CSIC op cit note 5; Vannoccio Biringuccio "De la Pirotecnia" 1540, Smith and Gnudi 1942 p172; Arie Pappot & Robert Van Langh on pages 161-173, "*The Science of Art: Technical Considerations of the Rothschild Bronzes. Michelangelo Sculptor in Bronze*", ed Victoria Avery in 2018. In this article, the authors explain how the copper used for bronze sculpture evolved in the 16th century, shifting from bronze used for cannon production to that used for bells, which had a higher tin content. Initially, alloys contained more lead, as seen in the Rothschild bronzes, and progressively changed to a more purified copper, replacing the "rame duro" (unpurified Fahlerz) with "rame Peloso" (purified Fahlerz) commercialized in the form of cakes, known as "migliace". Several early Renaissance sculptures, as Amor-Artys by Donatello, have similarly impurities content of antimony, arsenic, nickel and silver. Iron, antimony and arsenic can be removed by oxidation process and silver by liquidation with lead, but nickel change very little in the process of refining. Towards the end of the 16th century, they started using Neusohl, which came from present-day Slovakia and was the most refined copper of the late Renaissance. This type of copper was widely used by Giambologna. While the use of lead in the alloy facilitated casting and cold working, it increased the risk of breaking since it does not fuse well with copper. The use of purer copper indicates that the cold working of our bronze must have been carried out by a recognized bronze caster because, although more challenging to work with, the results obtained were superior. The alloy with arsenic and antimony may be related to its greater ease of soldering, as noted by Gauricus, and could explain its use in our bronze, which, based on iconography and technology, should be dated circa 1570. L A Glisman "*The application of X-rays fluorescent spectrometry to Museum objects*". 2004.

7. Following references provided by Massimo Leoni in "Considérations des bronzes antiques", page 178, "*Les chevaux de Saint-Marc*" Olivetti 1977 and by Arie Pappot and R Van Langh in "*Michelangelo Sculptor*", 2018.

8. We are grateful to Arie Pappot from the Rijksmuseum who in a written communication, September 2023 and after checking his data base, considers the alloy of our bronze Crucifix similar to some bronzes cast in Rome before 1570 in the work shop of Guglielmo della Porta, among them the Bacchanal plaquettes attributed Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert of The Met, (Fig. B), the Kunsthistorisches Museum, (Fig. C), and from a private Collection, cast 1550-60, whose alloys references are comparable to our bronze Crucifixes ones, (Fig. D).

This reference is consistent with a possible attribution of the cast of our bronze Crucifix to Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert (Enghien 1535 – Rome 1615) who was an extremely talented goldsmith who "excelled at making small sculptures in metal, though his style is a mystery due to the fact that he has only a documented work in marble". He was "allevato" at the house of Guglielmo della Porta since 1550. CD Dickerson opus cit note 41.

Fig. B. *Bacchanal* bronze plaquette Rome, circa 1550/60, attributed to Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert after a design by Guglielmo della Porta, Metropolitan Museum. New York

Fig. C. *Bacchanal* bronze plaquette Rome, circa 1550/60, attributed to Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert, after a design by Guglielmo della Porta, Kunsthistorisches Museum Viena

part	Fe	Ni	Cu	Zn	As	Ag	Sn	Sb	Pb
Christ	0,15	0,23	93,90	—	0,22	0,17	4,23	0,28	0,86
Bacchanel plaque	0,35	0,20	91,99	3,43	0,21	0,13	1,57	0,31	1,26

Fig. D. *Bacchanal* gilt Bronze plaquette, circa 1550/60 attributed to Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert after a design by Guglielmo della Porta. Private Collection

9. The sculpture of the Giraldillo was hoisted in August 1578 on to the belfry of the Seville Cathedral to act as a weather vane in a display of mechanical engineering, in homage to the end of the Council of Trent, as a colossus of victorious faith. The model was conceived and executed by Juan Bautista Vázquez and was cast by the silversmith Bartolomé Morel. It took two years to complete the casting, following the lost wax technique in a single piece and a single pour. Its alloy does not contain tin, but it does have a significant proportion of lead, likely to facilitate the casting and cold working. In 1997, it underwent restoration, including a study of its structure and the alloy of materials used. Andalusian Institute of Historical Heritage. "*El Coloso de Sevilla*".

10. Xrays and Radiographic report conducted by SGS 2023; Richard Stone "*Italian Renaissance and Baroque Sculptor in Bronze*" pp 25-46, "*Italian Renaissance and Baroque Bronzes in the Metropolitan Museum*" 2021; Francesca Gabriella Bewer "*A Study of the Technology of Renaissance Statuettes*" Thesis University of London, 1996.

The technique of cold joining, metallurgy, and soldering, something characteristic of classical sculptures, is not so common in the Renaissance. It only appears in the workshops of the best goldsmiths. The documented fact that Cellini and Biringuccio describe the process in their treatises, and Gauricus mentions a method of bronze soldering with an arsenic alloy, demonstrates the existence of this technique in the second half of the 16th century. As Richard E Stone notes, during the Renaissance, soldering techniques were mainly used for repairing defects with patches and not so much for the process of casting in cold parts, replacing the wax joining technique, which was the norm since the widespread use of the indirect casting system in Mantua by Antico. Casting in cold parts, as is the case with our bronze cast in three parts, required extreme skill, achievable only by the most talented goldsmiths and bronze casters. These joints were made using silver or, alternatively, tin and lead. Since these joints are so carefully overlapped by the patina, they are sometimes only visible through radiographs. The Susini family, definitely the bronze casters with the greatest skill in cold working, advanced the soldering technique, creating very fine casts, many of them using copper rich in antimony, Charles Avery suggests that the gilt bronze Crucifix by Guglielmo della Porta, Coll and Cortes (Fig. 91), which is very finely cast (3 mm thick) despite its size of 48 cm, must have been cast in three parts like ours, which is only perceptible through radiographs due to the thick layer of gilding. (Charles Avery "Guglielmo della Porta Relationship with Michelangelo. Christ Crucified by Guglielmo della Porta", Coll y Cortes, 2012 p126).

The technique of pouring the liquid bronze through sprues placed in the head was widely used by bronze casters in the Roman sphere of della Porta. It allowed them to conceal the holes with a crown of thorns or a nimbus (Fig. 100).

The sight of a silver-soldered patch when the Christ is detached from the Cross is further evidence of the skill in cold working, in this case, to remove the bronze core. The position on the reverse chosen for the patch is common in other Crucifixes, such as the Castello Sforcesco Group of a Crucified Christ and impenitent Thief cast circa 1540 in which a patch is visible in the lower left back where the poring should have taken place.

The use of thread screws is another example of the employ of cutting-edge techniques in the casting of our bronze. The first to apply this technique in an incipient way was Severo de Ravenna, becoming its use more common with the development of clockmaking in the late 16th century. There is visual evidence through X-rays that Giambologna used them, as his bronzes have been the subject of scientific study. This does not rule out their likely use in Roman workshops, given their recognized interaction with Florentine workshops, especially the relationship between Giambologna and Guglielmo della Porta. Bewer points out the use of thread screws in cataloging the version signed by Giambologna of the Mercury at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, considering it one of the key characteristics for attributing his works. Bewer 1996 p 320 op cit.

11."*Organic Patinas on Small Bronzes of the Italian Renaissance*" by Richard E. Stone, Metropolitan Museum Journal, 2010.

Fig. E. *Portrait by D***iego Velázquez** *of Jerónima de la Fuente* holding the Crucifix cast by Juan Bautista Franconio and polychromed by Pacheco, detail, 1620, private Collection Madrid >

2. The Crucifix is a Roman bronze prototype, assigned to Michelangelo and model of a series of Spanish casts made in 1600

The Crucified Christ with four nails that we have the privilege to see in its various versions, bears a Renaissance design characterized by its precise lines and symmetry, yet it displays a revolutionary character in its representation of the dead Christ, befitting a genius like Michelangelo.

Never before has the concept of death been expressed so beautifully as in this lifeless body, devoid of life and imbued with the noblest acceptance of human fragility in the face of destiny.

His bowed head expresses an attitude of respect and resignation, set upon powerful shoulders that project outward from open arms, symbolizing universal surrender and sacrifice; the torso features ribs and the linea alba akin to Marsyas, a nod to Hellenistic pathos. The lifelessness of Christ's body is portrayed through his long, linear legs, devoid of any sign of life, extremely elegant, beautiful, and crossed at the lower part in a gesture that, out of context, might bring to mind a ballet step, Nijinsky or Nureyev "en pointe". Lifeless yet in motion ...

No one but Michelangelo could convey the stillness of death with such movement, nor the seamless union between the divine and the human.

Simplicity, restraint, elegance, classicism, immediacy and an eternal sense of modernity are the hallmarks of the design of this work (Fig. 19).

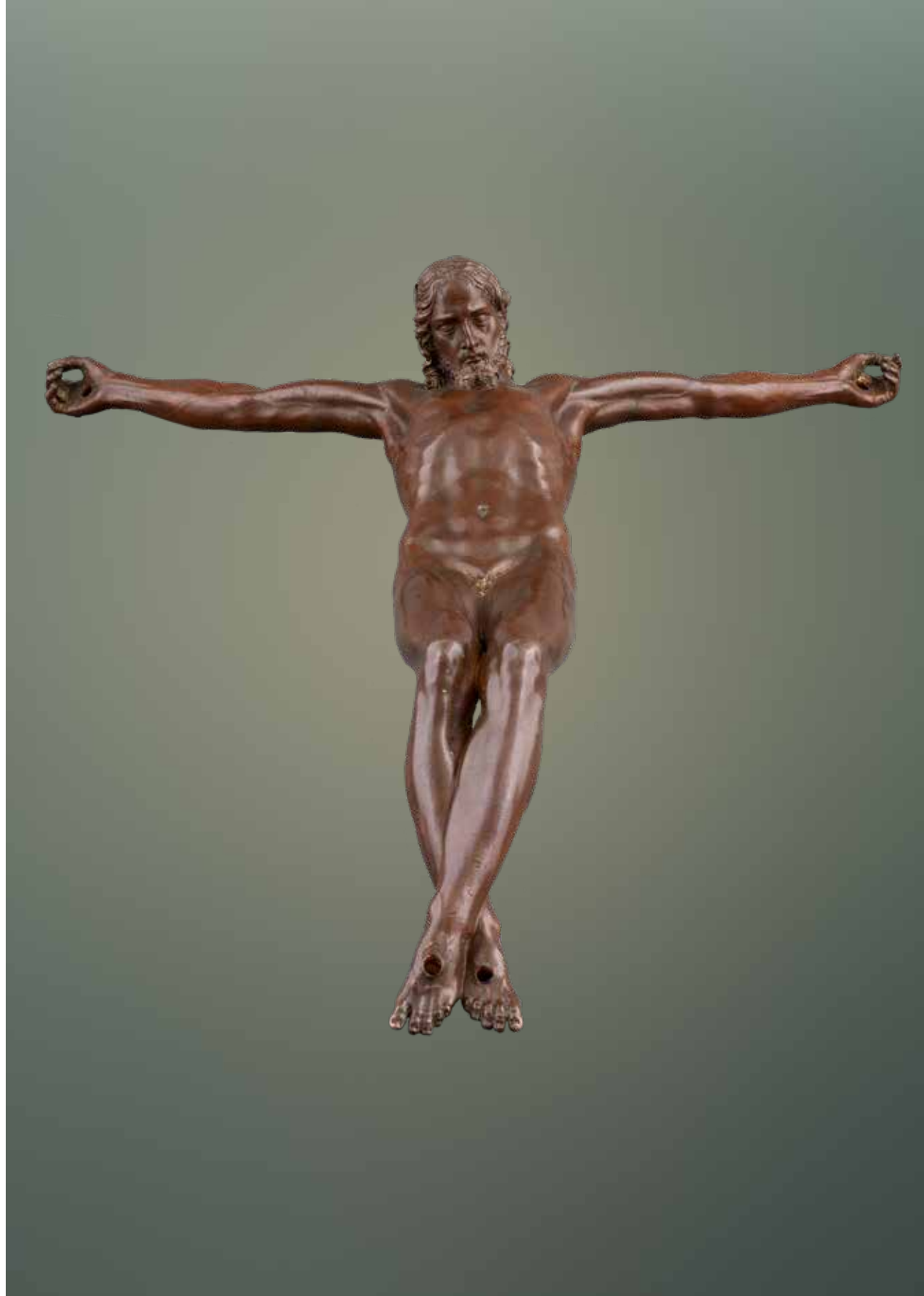


Fig. 19. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection >

All the Spanish first generation casts of this model are imbued with this magical Michelangelesque character and with the imprint of the Master's perpetual design. However, not all of them captivate us in the same way, due to differences in the quality of the casting and cold work. Art is not just conception; it is the divine expression that manifests through the execution of all those involved in its creation.

If we compare our bronze model (Fig. 20, 23) with the magnificent silver cast from the Gómez Moreno collection (Fig. 22), similar to those in the Seville Cathedral (Fig. 21) and the Palacio de Oriente (Madrid), beyond the significant datum that the height of the model (23 cm) is one centimetre higher than that of its subsequent casts (22 cm), one observes differences in quality. Many noticeable details which constitute Michelangelo's hallmarks, rendered in bronze with exquisite cold work gradually, fade away, either only roughly outlined or simply not described in later casts, this being most evident, in the face of Christ, in his extremities, and in the perfect definition of the aureole around his nipples (Fig. 20)[12].

Fig. 20. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560- 70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 21. *Crucified Christ*, silver, cast by **Juan Bautista Franconio** circa 1600, detail, Catedral de Sevilla

The face in the prototype appears much more complex, both physically and psychologically, exuding that inimitable pathos that we only perceive in Michelangelo's original works; a halo of humanity inherent in the figure of the dead Christ that moves us, not only because of the master's unique conception, but also due to the perfect depiction in bronze of all the details that together represent that moment of contained pain, from which inner peace has finally emerged (Fig. 23).

Fig. 22. *Christ Crucified* cast by **Juan Bautista Franconio** circa 1600, in silver, detail, Manuel Gómez Moreno collection, Fundación Pública Andaluza Rodríguez-Acosta, Granada

Fig. 23. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

In the model the broad forehead more clearly displays some striations, and the furrowed brow is more pronounced, as are the eyebrows, defined by tiny holes, completely absent in the first-generation Spanish casts (Fig. 21, 22, 24). The Greek nose, with meticulously carved nostrils on both sides is flanked by the eyelids which appear gently closed with a double curvature only in the model; deep eye sockets are formed by the simple hollow of the metal and the virtuoso interplay of light with its patina, accentuated by somewhat prominent cheekbones (Fig. 20, 23, 25). The curling of the beard and wavy treatment of Christ's hair, are very well rendered in all these early Spanish silver versions, acquiring great expressiveness (Fig. 21, 22, 24), thanks to a certain rawness of stroke inherent to silverwork; though the bronze prototype presents a more exquisite and crisp manner, displaying excellent cold work. The hair on the left side intentionally reveals the canonical design of the ear, a true "tour de force" of casting technique, perfected by chisel in bronze, extraordinary well integrated into the classic profile of Christ's face (Fig. 20, 23, 25). The neck more strikingly presents in the model the thickening of the jugular vein on its left side and the muscular tension of a position symbolizing death (Fig. 20). The torso is crowned by the nipples which in the prototype take on the michelangelesque form (Fig. 25), something completely absents in the Spanish casts which, nevertheless, faithfully follow the rib- cage and the definition of the linea alba, very much in style of Marsyas and both hallmarks of Michelangelo's nude (Fig. 35).

Fig. 24. *Crucified Christ*, silver, cast by **Juan Bautista Franconio** circa 1600, Catedral de Sevilla

Fig. 25. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560- 70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection >

As a unique feature of our Christ, on the right side of his chest, there is a bleeding wound, likely chiselled cold or modelled in the intermediate wax model, though in no case could it have been present in Michelangelo's original wax model, given his spirituals convictions. A symbol not found in other versions, which, as we will mention later, provides a highly significant iconographic clue for dating and attributing the casting (Fig. 25)[13].

The arms reflect the tension inherent in their position, with tendons and veins subtly thickened in the finest versions. The fingers and toes show technical virtuosity, more pronounced in the prototype. The right hand displays the typically flattened thumb so characteristic of Michelangelo's work (Fig. 26). In the bronze's prototype, one perceives a greater freshness specially in the face and extremities of the Christ, no doubt a reflection of the original wax model; the fingers are more stylized with the nails outlined down to the cuticle, as the Master like to convey them; the feet with an extended roman index almost at same height as the Hallux, a common feature in many Michelangelo's sculptures and which in Spanish casts also have the particularity of being more separated from the index, a hallmark burned into Hispanic Mannerism (Fig. 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31).[14]

Fig. 26. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560- 70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 27. *Crucified Christ*, silver, cast by **Juan Bautista Franconio** circa 1600, detail, Catedral de Sevilla

Fig. 28. *Crucified Christ*, silver, cast by **Juan Bautista Franconio** circa 1600, detail, Catedral de Sevilla

Fig. 29. *Christ Crucified*, silver, cast by **Juan Bautista Franconio** circa 1600, detail, Manuel Gómez Moreno collection, Fundación Pública Andaluza Rodríguez-Acosta, Granada

Fig. 30. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560- 70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 31. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560- 70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

The bronze Christ was affixed to an ebony cross with silver handles, which, upon analysis, were found to be from a different period (Fig. 15, Fig. 32). The Christ was then removed from the Cross, allowing us to, on the one hand, remove the perizonium, revealing the respectful nudity of Michelangelo's original model, and on the other hand, fully appreciate the back of the bronze sculpture.

Fig. 32. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, IOMR Collection

The alloy analysis of the perizonium (Fig. 33, 34) concluded that it was an original piece from the 16th century, made of silver with impurities of iron, copper, lead, bismuth and nickel, all of it gilt with mercury. Thus, the piece was inscribed as an original and integral part of the work's history, helping us to assess a possible attribution of the casting to della Porta workshop. In this regard, the use of a movable perizonium for metal sculptures is first known with Giambologna in a gilt bronze nude Christ in 1590 and in the later Christs by Sebastiano Torrigiani which follows drapery models designed by Guglielmo della Porta, who was probably the original creator of this artistic device so characteristic of the Counter Reformation. Apart from Daniel Volterra, who was responsible for preserving the decorum of the Sistine Chapel frescoes, many of Michelangelo's nudes were covered by Guglielmo della Porta´s workshop or external collaborators. The movable perizonium allowed both the preservation of the almost divine origin of Michelangelo's work of art and compliance with the decorum imposed by Pope Pius V in 1566. As it could not be otherwise, all the Spanish casts of the first generation follow the perizonium's of the bronze model brought by Juan Bautista Franconio, based in della Porta design[15].

Fig. 33. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560- 70, documented in Seville 1597, perizonium gilded silver, IOMR Collection

Fig. 34. *Crucified Christ,* after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, perizonium gilded silver, IOMR Collection

Therefore, we proceeded to detach the Christ from its Cross, bearing in mind that this bronze Christ was brought to Spain by Juan Bautista Franconio without it, unlike all the first-generation Spanish crucifixes provided with crosses for veneration. In Spanish versions sometimes the Cross is made of ebony with square edges, like the one of the polychrome Christ by Pacheco and copied by Velázquez. Other times, it is made of gilt silver with extensive embossing probably done by Juan Bautista Franconio himself, as the four-nailed silver Christ in the Seville Cathedral (Fig. 35). The primary purpose of the Bronze Crucifix under study was utterly different, serving as a model for casting the figure of Christ Crucified. Furthermore, according to Pacheco, once the bronze Crucifix assigned to Michelangelo had fulfilled its function as a model, Juan Bautista Franconio gave it to Father Pablo Céspedes, who wore it around his neck. In the inventory made at his death in 1608, it is mentioned as "metal Christ without a Cross in a leather case". It is also possible that it was inherited by his friend and assistant, Juan de Peñalosa, who took it with him to the Cathedral of Astorga when he was appointed canon, serving as a source of inspiration for many four-nail Christs created in the northern half of Spain. This thesis is attested by the mention of "a Christ figure without a Cross very good, in a box" in the inventory of the auction conducted after the death of Juan de Peñalosa in 1633[16].

Fig. 35. *Christ Crucified*, silver, cast by **Juan Bautista Franconio** after the bronze model he brought to Seville in 1597, circa 1600. Cathedral of Seville >

When the Christ was removed from the Cross, it appeared before us unprotected (Fig. 19), within reach of our touch, and due to its small size, susceptible to close inspection from all angles, much like what the supposed first recipient of Michelangelo's original wax model, Vittoria Colonna, describes in their correspondence. As we bring our eye closer to the piece to discern the meticulousness of its finish, in its eyebrows, veins, and nails, it is then when the bronze Crucifix model takes on all the prominence it deserves. In the carefulness of its execution lies its excellence, its distinctiveness compared to later versions, and the aura of being the closest version to Michelangelo's original model.

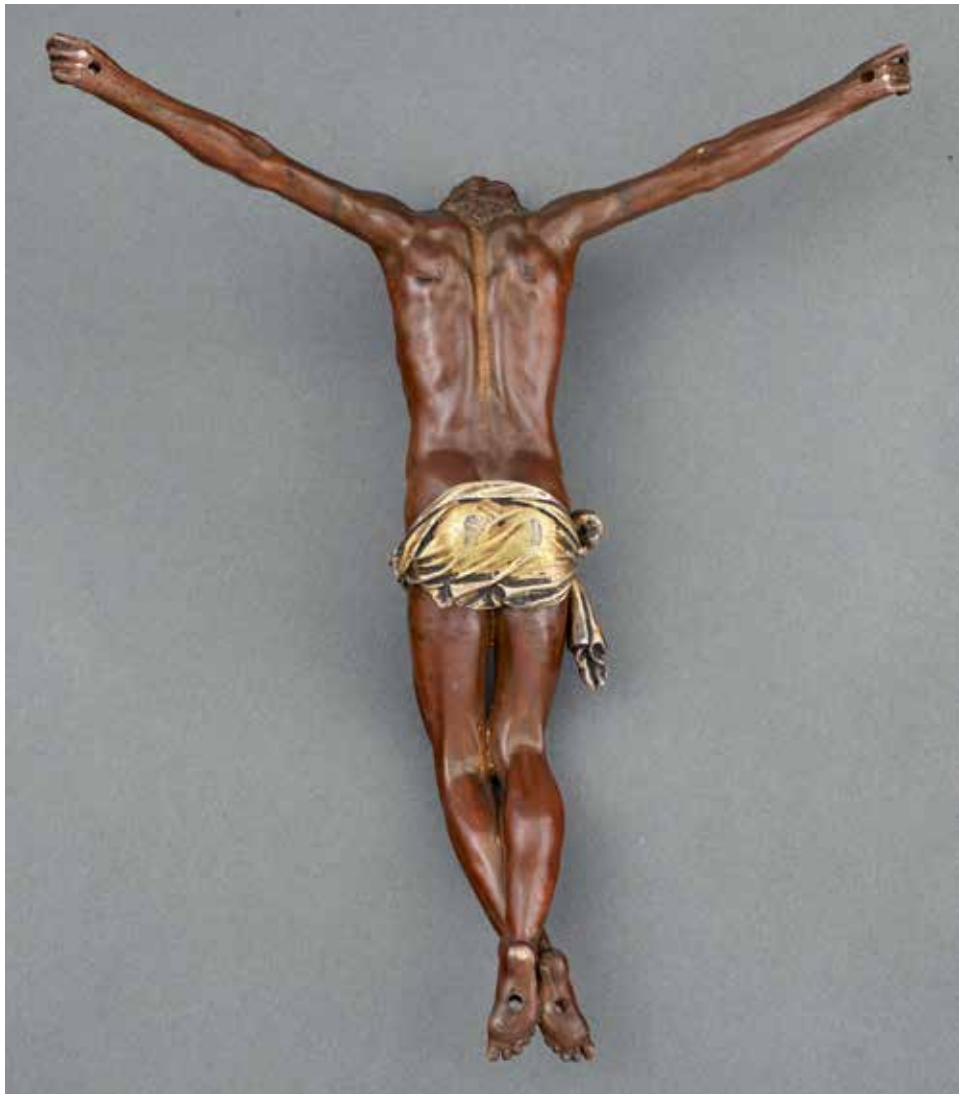


Fig. 36. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Once devoid of the Perizonium, we observe its nudity with awe, presented with an extreme care, very much in line with the Crucified Christ of the Church of the Holy Spirit, Florence (Fig. G, H) and the recently donated to the Louvre (Fig. C, H).

Finally, when we turn the bronze (Fig. 36), we are struck by the vitality that radiates from the design of the back (Fig. 37, 38). In contrast to the inert character of the body shown on the front of the sculpture, where the expressive burden is concentrated in the resignation of the face and the description of the ribs, the back displays the monumental strength of Man facing death and showing his desperate struggle by means of a portentous conformation, where each muscle is outlined following the natural form. The back is divided by that curvaceous line so characteristic of Michelangelo, which perfectly balances the right side against the left, converging robustly at his powerful pelvis, now liberated from the Cross and the perizonium.

Fig. 37. Christ Crucified, silver, cast by Juan Bautista Franconio circa 1600, detail, Manuel Gómez Moreno collection. Fundación Pública Andaluza Rodríguez-Acosta, Granada

Fig. 38. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 39. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), 23 cm high, bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 40. *Bronze crucifix*, after a model attributed to **Michelangelo**, ca. 1538-41, 23 cm. high, probably cast by **Guglielmo della Porta** and workshop, 16th century, private collection

In order to analysed the prototypical nature of our bronze it is also important to compare it with the almost identical one currently in an American collection, which Michael Riddick considers to be a cast made in the workshop of Guglielmo de la Porta circa 1570, following Michelangelo's Christ model circa 1540 (Fig. 39, 40, 41, 42).[17]

Although the bronze doubtless exhibits outstanding quality, without having seen it in flesh, it is difficult to make a comparative judgement. I will accept Riddick opinion as valid and focus primarily on analysing historical coincidences and formal differences of both pieces that support the Roman origin of our bronze, leaving aside a detailed technical comparison, which would require an examination of the original, technical studies, alloy analysis, radiographs, and high-resolution detailed images.

Firstly, it should be noted that it is possible that there are two or more bronzes, not necessarily contemporaneous, cast from the same original wax model. Michelangelo, who passed away in 1564, may have wished to ensure the survival of his design in a more durable material and, because it was cast using the lost wax method, which preserves the model, multiple versions could have been made, with differences in the finish of the intermediate wax model before cast, as the angle of the arms or the position of the head, and certainly in the cold work after casting each version.[18]

Fig. 41. Crucified Christ, after a model by Michelangelo (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection >

Fig. 42. Bronze crucifix, after a model by Michelangelo, ca. 1538-41, cast in Rome XVI century, private collection >

Secondly, it is reasonable to believed that both bronzes likely were cast in the same workshop that owned the original wax model. This workshop was probably operated by a renowned bronze caster who had a special relationship with Michelangelo, such as Rafaello di Monteluppo, who collaborate with the Master until 1542; Jacopo del Duca, Michelangelo's last assistant; Antonio Gentili, who claimed to own a model by Michelangelo; Guglielmo della Porta or Leone Leoni, due to his well-known friendship; and Daniele Volterra, for his documented collaboration in Michelangelo's castings. All of them are possible candidates to support the hypothesis that Michelangelo handed over a model created by his own hand, either as a token of friendship, for preservation, or for casting during his lifetime or after his death[19]. This bronze caster, heading an important workshop, was probably the only one to circulate casts of Michelangelo's original four-nail Christ model. These casts may have varied slightly due to differences in the wax model's finish before casting. These variations were common practice in such workshops.

Fig. 43. *Bronze crucifix*, after a model by **Michelangelo**, detail, ca. 1538-41, cast in Rome XVI century, private collection

Fig. 44. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Thus, both bronzes can be considered as early versions of the same original model, created in the same workshop, although probably at different times. It is even possible that they were cast by different masters or craftsmen, as workshops often had different holders who inherited all the models. For example, in Guglielmo della Porta's workshop, Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert was his first assistant in the 50s, Antonio Gentili collaborated from the 1560s until Della Porta death in 1577. In circa 1570s, Sebastiano Torrigiani became one of his leading bronze workers. After Guglielmo's death, Torrigiani married his widow and become his successor as head of the workshop. Juan Bautista Franconio may have worked with him in Rome until Torrigiani´s death in 1596, just before Franconio's trip to Seville. All of them could have had access to Michelangelo's model and to the first generation of Roman casts made directly from the original. One of these casts was brought to Seville by Juan Bautista Franconio in 1597, a year after Sebastiano Torrigiani's death. It served as a model and became the prototype of the most important series of casts known so far, following Michelangelo's original four-nail Christ model[20].

Fig. 45. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 46. *Bronze crucifix*, after a model by **Michelangelo**, detail, ca. 1538-41, cast in Rome XVI century, private collection

Regarding the particular formal comparison between both bronze versions cast from the original model, without acknowledging the alloy results and technological data of Riddick's bronze Christ, I will limit my observations to what is evident through the available images (Fig. 39 to 48). Both versions no doubt exhibit superior quality compared to that of the first-generation Spanish casts and of the MET's bronze example. Nevertheless, the two prototypes have minimal but significant differences in technique, with the most prominent being the treatment of the eyebrows (Fig. 47, 48), which is executed in a more exquisite manner in our bronze compared to the somewhat more simplified approach in Riddick's bronze. From an iconographic perspective,

Fig. 47. Crucified Christ, after a model by Michelangelo (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

it is important to notice the bleeding wound on the right-side present in our bronze (Fig. 25). This detail suggests a dating closer to 1564, coinciding with Michelangelo's death when the norms of decorum promoted by Pope Pius V had not yet been fully established, and it was still permissible to represent clear signs of Christ's suffering.[21]

Fig. 48. Bronze Crucifix, after a model by Michelangelo, ca. 1538-41, cast in Rome XVI century, private collection

The comparative analysis with Michelangelo's bronze four-nail Christ at the MET (Fig. 49), based on available images, reinforce our belief that the newly discovered bronze has a more refined and faithful finish to the original wax model. In contrast, the MET version is rendered with a certain rawness and without such minute details, even though being the most well-known version and having universalized the four-nailed Christ Crucified as cast after a design conceived by Michelangelo, accepted almost unanimously by the scholars. The MET's Christ rather resemble the second-generation Spanish versions produced in northern Spain by the silversmith Lesmes Fernández del Moral (see the silver Christs Crucifixes from the Marqués de Lozoya's collection and from the former collection of the Marqués de Toro). Many of these Spanish versions share the common feature of displaying a non-bleeding wound on Christ's right side, similar to the MET Christ.

A specific characteristic of the MET Christ is its larger size, measuring 27,3 cm., which is bigger than the Spanish versions, usually measuring 22 cm, and the two referred prototypes, which both measure 23 cm from head to toe. In common with our version, both are cast completely hollow, even the limbs. The MET version has been traditionally attributed to Zaccaria Zacchi da Volterra and it has been suggested a certain connection with Jacopo del Duca's bronze Crucified Christ, created for the tabernacle of the Certosa di San Lorenzo in Padula. This sculpture is historically considered the first documented bronze version of Michelangelo's four-nail Christ. In particular, this correspondence is mentioned in terms of a greater raising of the arms in both versions. However, one could argue if this is sufficient to provide certainty regarding an Italian origin of the cast and to a more direct link with Michelangelo's original model. In fact, the MET catalogue is more inclined to associate it with the series of Spanish metal Christs. A study of its alloy and X-rays could shed more light on this matter.[22]

< Fig. 49. Crucified Christ bronze, after a model by Michelangelo (1538-41), Metropolitan Museum, New York

NOTES

12. Mike Riddick relates with Guglielmo della Porta's work, well-defined and somewhat pointed halos nipples, the bleeding wound, and the inverted navel. Michael Riddick Ren bronze "Appendix C: Michelangelo Influence on Guglielmo della Porta".

13. The bleeding wound on the right side is something very peculiar to our Crucifix; on the one hand, it serves as a basis for attributing its casting to Guglielmo della Porta, who frequently added this sign to his Christs. On the other hand, chronologically, it places a time limit for its execution circa 1570 when Guglielmo della Porta made Christs for the Farnese family. After the 1570s, it was not considered appropriate to include a bleeding wound according to the norms of decorum, although it was accepted without blood. See note 40 with regard a solid bronze Crucified Christ dated 1525/1570 with a bleeding wound; Michael Riddick op cit note 12; Rosario Coppel, "Guglielmo della Porta: A Counter Reformation Sculptor", Coll y Cortes, 2012.

14. Michael Riddick, Renbronze.com, "Michelangelo's Crucifix for Vittoria Colonna" he maintains the thesis that the Crucifix could have been a gift to his friend Vittoria Colonna and relates it to various sketches by Michelangelo representing the human body and Christ. In Appendix B, the author compares a bronze Crucified Christ with different Spanish versions, especially with the silver one from the Rodríguez Acosta Foundation and the polychrome one sculpted by Pacheco in bronze, currently in the Ducal Palace of Gandía.

15. We agree with Michael Riddick when he establishes a stylistic correlation of the perizonium of this Crucified Christ with della Porta's whose drawing at the Museum Kunstpalast, Dusseldorf, confirms it (Fig. A, B). He also points out that the first movable perizoniums were used by Giambologna and Torrigiani in 1590s, although it probably emerged earlier in Rome as a compromise formula devised in the early 1570s, coinciding with the new norms of decorum promoted by Pope Pius V. It certainly most likely emerged as a formula invented by La Gran Scuola of della Porta to cover, as in the case of our bronze, the nudity of Michelangelo's Christs. The bronze model must have arrived to Seville in 1597 with the perizonium, and the early Spanish metallic versions, all have an identical perizonium.

Fig. A. Crucified Christ, after a model by Michelangelo (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, perizonium, IOMR Collection

Fig. B. Guglielmo della Porta, drawing, circa 1570, Museum Kunstpalast. Dusseldorf >

16. Inventario de bienes de Pablo Céspedes, 1608. Boletín Arte N 32-33, Universidad de Sevilla pp 437-55; Fernando Llamazares Rodríguez "Juan de Peñalosa y Sandoval: Enfermedad, Testamento, Muerte y Almoneda, 1633".

17. Michael Riddick, Renbronze.com "Michelangelo's Crucifix for Vittoria Colonna". Both Crucifixes have a clear stylistic connection with the wooden Crucified Christ recently donated to the Louvre and with the Crucifix of the chiesa di Santo Spirito, Florence. (Fig. C, D, E, F, G, H).

Fig. C. *Crucified Christ*, polychrome wood attributed to **Michelangelo**, Musée du Louvre

Fig. D. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. E. *Crucified Christ*, polychrome wood attributed to **Michelangelo**, Musée du Louvre

Fig. H. *Crucifix of Chiesa di Santo Spirito*, **Michelangelo**, 1491, 142x135 cm., detail, Florence

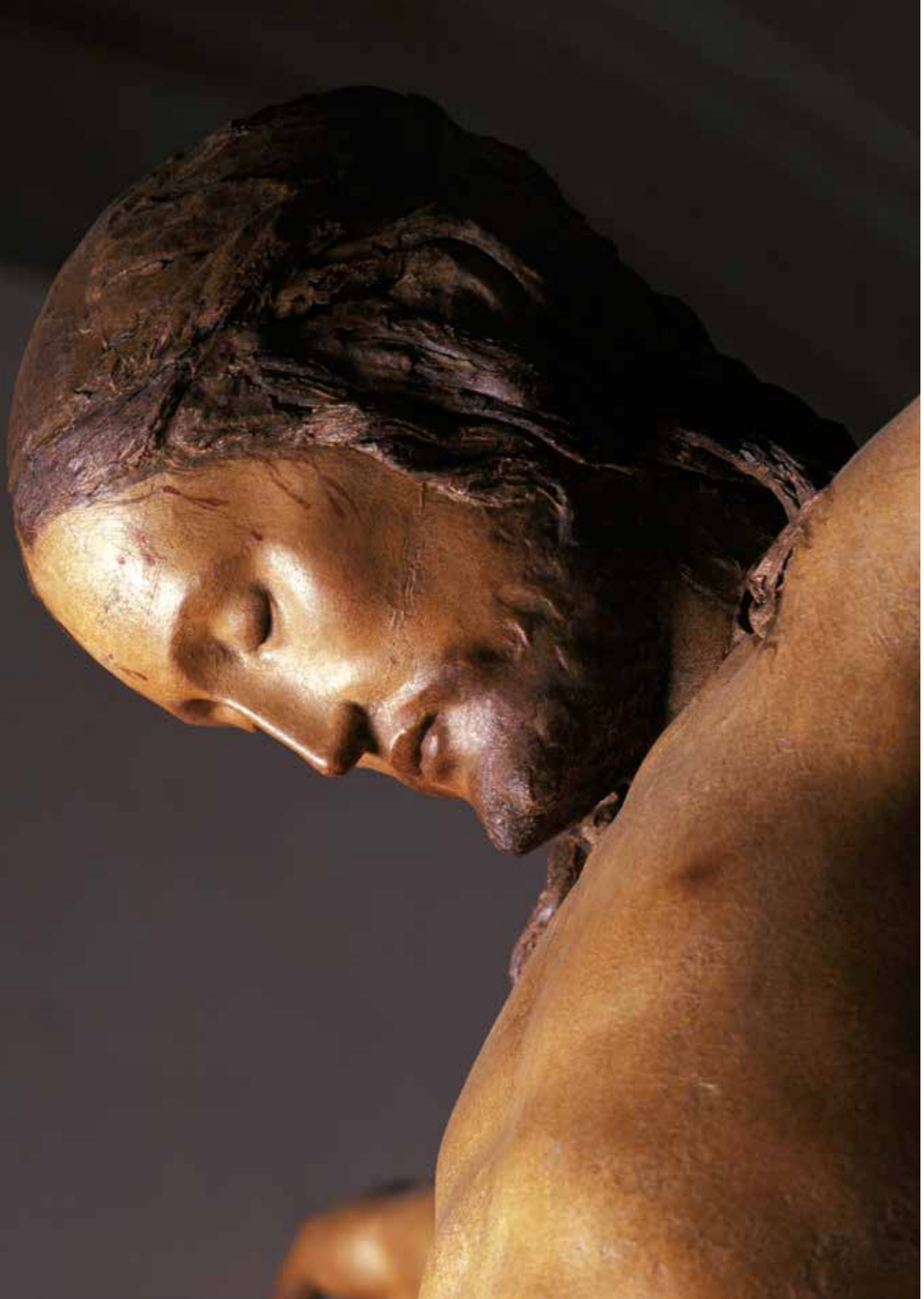


Fig. F. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

18. Richard E Stone's "Italian Renaissance and Baroque Sculptors in Bronze," p36 Metropolitan Museum 2021.

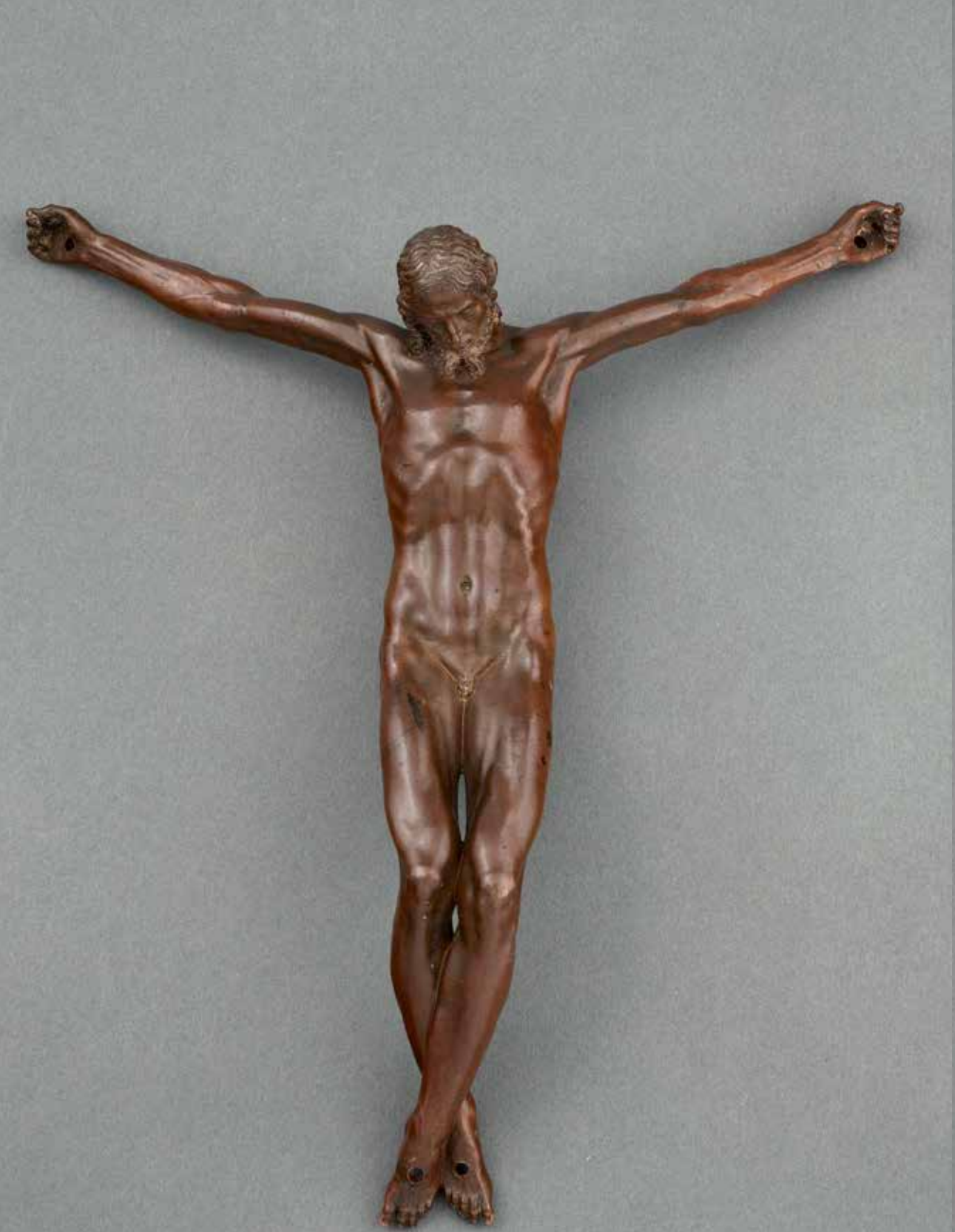
19. Richard E Stone's "Italian Renaissance and Baroque Sculptors in Bronze,"p38 Metropolitan Museum 2021.

20. Michael Riddick Renbronze.com, "Michelangelo's Crucifix for Collona"; "Michelangelo's Influence on Guglielmo della Porta"; "Reconstituting a Crucifix by Guglielmo della Porta and His Colleagues: A Possible Corpus Saint and Siren by Sebastiano Torrigiani"; Rosario Coppel, Margarita Estella, "Guglielmo della Porta: A Counter Reformation Sculptor. Biography"; "Christ Crucified", Coll y Cortés 2012.

21. Michael Riddick op cit note 20; Rosario Coppel op cit note20

22. John Phillips Goldsmith "A Crucifixion group after Michelangelo" 1937 The Art bulletin vol 79n 4 pp647-668 Metropolitan Museum of Art; Janice Shell, Exhibition catalogue Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal ed Pietro Marani "The genius of the sculptor in Michelangelo work" 1992, pp 254-261; Italian Renaissance and Baroque Bronzes in the MET 2022 cat 101 pp287-294; Michael Riddick Renbronze.com, "A bronze Crucifix attributed to Michelangelo" April 2016; "The Thief of Michelangelo: Model Preserved in Bronze and Terracotta". August 2020; Paul Joannides "Two bronze Crucifixion groups designed by Michelangelo" Colnaghi Studies journal, 11 October 2022, mentions in note 8 p48 that Denise Allen informed him by email that Linda Borsch has examined it in X- rays and consider this bronze Crucifix fully hollow. He relates this model to drawings, in particular to the Teylers Museum (Fig. 54, 56) which he considers a primo pensiero or sketch for a sculpture.

< Fig. G Crucifix of chiesa di Santo Spirito, Michelangelo, 1491, 142 x 135 cm., Florence



3. Michelangelo's involvement in the four-nailed bronze Crucifix prototype: Doctrinal, documentary and stylistic foundations

The purpose of this study is not to determine the autograph character of the bronze. Since, it is cast using the indirect method, it cannot be considered as the sole original. Furthermore, one cannot prove the direct participation of Michelangelo in the finishing of the intermediate wax model or the cold work. Nonetheless, the attribution of the design of this model to his genius is currently accepted almost unanimously. In this regard we would like to elucidate to what extent Michelangelo was involved in the conception of this model and demonstrate the grounds on which our bronze can be considered the closest version to Michelangelo's "primo pensiero", drawing or wax model, which has given rise to one of the most beautiful sculpted images of a Crucified Christ in Art History.

The origin of the connection of this model with Michelangelo will always be linked to Prof Manuel Gómez Moreno. As the owner of one of Spanish first-generation silver casts of this model, he studied the attribution of the design of Spanish metal series of the four-nailed Crucified Christ, initially assigning it to Alonso Cano with many doubts. However, he later strongly believed that this heterodox model had its origin in Michelangelo, based on its link with the Crucified Christ of four nails mentioned by Pacheco in his book "El Arte de la Pintura" 1641.

Fig. 50. *Christ Crucified*, silver, by **Juan Bautista Franconio** circa 1600, Manuel Gómez > Moreno collection, Fundación Pública Andaluza Rodríguez-Acosta, Granada

Manuel Gómez Moreno, in his article "El Crucifijo de Miguel Ángel," 1930, considers this Spanish metal series of Crucified Christs as cast from Michelangelo's bronze Crucifix model, which, according to Pacheco, Juan Bautista Franconio brought from Rome to Seville in 1597. He supports his thesis in Vasari when he mentions that in his final years, Michelangelo designed a bronze tabernacle for the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Rome, whose execution his assistant Jacopo Siciliano del Duca began in 1565, as referred in a letter from Jacopo to Michelangelo's nephew, Lionardo. Among the eight bronze reliefs on the tabernacle, one of them depicts a scene of Calvary with a Crucifix that is identical in design to the Spanish metal Crucifixes, except for the position of the arms and the inclination of the legs (Fig.51). This is the evidence Gómez Moreno was seeking to confirm Pacheco's claim that the four-nail Christ, arrived in Seville in 1597 and from which Juan Bautista Franconio made several casts, was effectively Michelangelo's work. A relief representing a Crucifixion nearly identical to the Spanish Crucifixes could be found in the Capodimonte Museum, Naples. Charles de Tolnay, 1978, also mentions that this tabernacle was moved from the Farnese collection to the Palazzo Capodimonte in 1734, and he identifies another tabernacle's project for the Church of San Lorenzo in Florence, created between 1525 and 1526, and another cast for Philip II of Spain by Jacopo del Duca which remain unfinished and whose whereabouts are unknown, possibly because it was later rejected by the King.[23]

The tabernacle referred to by Gómez Moreno currently located at the Charterhouse of San Lorenzo in Padula, Salerno bears, cast in its relief representing the Calvary, the date of execution, 27 January 1574, showing noticeable traces of wax (Fig. 51). Thus, this date serves as a "terminus ante quem" regarding the existence of a wax model supposedly created by Michelangelo, which would have been available before 1573. The nine years that elapsed between its start in 1565 and its completion in 1574, combined with the fact that it was still unfinished in 1574, suggest that

Michelangelo's project for the bronze tabernacle at the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli went through many setbacks, ultimately failing. It appears that the project for the tabernacle at the Church of San Lorenzo in Florence and the one intended for the Escorial also did not come to fruition, leading Jacopo del Duca to sell the unfinished project to the Carthusians of San Lorenzo in Padula, where it currently resides. This would explain the nine-year gap between Jacopo del Duca's 1565 letter to Michelangelo's nephew, indicating the commencement of the tabernacle, and the 1574 execution's date inscribed on the relief of the Calvary. It also explains the different location of the tabernacle compared to what Vasari mentioned.

Fig. 51. *Relief representing the Crucifixion of Christ*, bronze, 1574, **Jacopo del Duca**, Tabernacle of San Lorenzo in Padula, Salerno

Charles de Tolnay put forward the idea that the model of Christ Crucified with four nails was conceived by Michelangelo for the altarpiece of the New Sacristy of the Medici Chapel at the Basilica of San Lorenzo, Florence. Furthermore, he considered that it was cast in bronze after a wax model made by Michelangelo (opus cit 1978). As Joannides wrote in his paper (opus cit October 2022), it is certainly an intriguing idea and cannot be ruled out, because the dates assigned for the conception of the four nailed Crucifix design, 1533 correspond with last period of the New Sacristy, though no document can attest this hypothesis.

Fig. 52. *New Sacristy*, **Michelangelo**, 1524/34, Medici Chapel, Basilica di San Lorenzo, Florence

Fig. 53. *Christ Crucified*, Black chalk, After Michelangelo, 1533 Windsor Castle >

Paul Joannides, the latest historian to address this model, in an article dated October 2022, takes a conclusive stance on Michelangelo's four-nail Christ where he confirms that this conception was the origin of several drawings made by Michelangelo around 1533, representing the naked Christ, bowed head, arms raised, and legs crossed. One of these sketches is currently in the Teylers Museum Haarlem (Fig. 54), whose reverse has the same design, but with the calves crossed in the opposite direction (c1533- 40) (Fig. 56); another is a copy of an original currently in the Royal Collection Windsor Castle (c1533) (Fig. 53) and another one is a study made by his pupil, Raffaello da Montelupo owned by the Louvre (c1534) (Fig. 58). They were preceded by the small Crucifix sketch and the preparatory drawing for a relief representing the three Crosses, both currently in the British Museum (c1520) (Fig. 57), in which Michelangelo shows for the first time his spiritual interest in the revelation of St Bridget. Joannides maintains that the drawing in the Teylers Museum is a design studied from various angles for a sculpture, a view consistent with that of Carmen Bambach[14]. From this conclusive opinion, one could infer that between the Roman bronze versions of this model and the aforementioned drawing, Michelangelo most likely created a wax model, hitherto unknown. A question raised by Michael Riddick regarding whether Michelangelo's letters to Vittoria Colonna (1538/41) could refer to the gift of a small wax Crucifix model instead of a drawing of a living Christ looking towards the Father (British Museum), as maintained by Joannides and most of the scholarly community following the description provided by Vasari and Condivi.[24]

Fig. 54. *Studies for a Crucifixion*, **Michelangelo**, drawing 1533-40, Teylers Museum Haarlem >

A close reading of Vittoria Colonna and Michelangelo correspondence suggest that these letters could likely refer to a small wax Crucifix model, a "cosa", defined by the Marchesa as unfinished but inherently perfect, apparently awaiting its bronze casting process to be completed by one of Michelangelo's assistants and capable of displaying all the splendour of its details only with lenses and appreciated from all angles with the help of a mirror. This interpretation put forth by Michael Riddick is, reasonable, conclusive, well documented and consistent with the dating of the cast of our bronze, 1560-70, based on technological and iconographic grounds. Its relevance lies in both, a coherent interpretation of the exchange of letters referring to a Crucifix and a contextual interpretation of Condivi and Varchi quotes regarding a lifeless nude Christ Crucified given to the Marchesa by Michelangelo. In light of the newly discovered bronze Crucifix prototype designed by Michelangelo, we intend to infer from these documents his direct involvement in a bronze project of a Crucifix for Vittoria Colonna, not only in its conception but also in the execution of the wax model hitherto unknown which could be the original model from which our bronze Christ was cast, an idea perfectly possible within Michelangelo's artistic and spiritual interests.

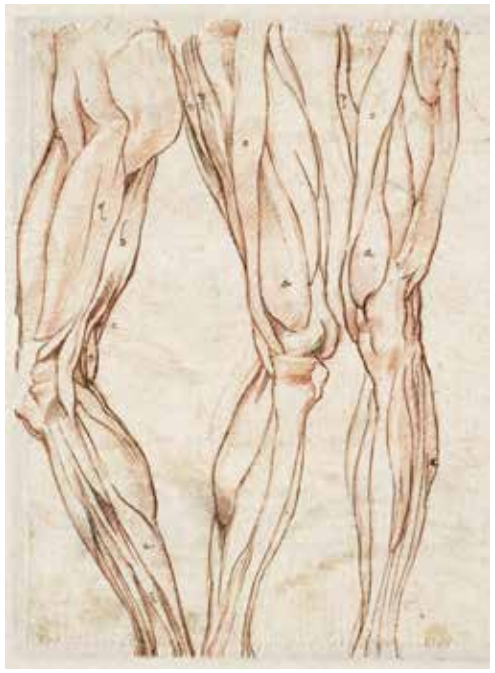


Fig. 55. *Anatomic drawings*, detail. **Michelangelo**, 1513-20, Teylers Museum Haarlem

Fig. 56. *Study for Crucified Christ,* drawing, **Michelangelo**, 1533/40 Teylers Museum, Haarlem

Fig. 57. Crucifixion Michelangelo, drawing, detail, early 1520, British Museum

Fig. 58. *Christ Crucified*, drawing, **Raffaello da Montelupo** after **Michelangelo**, ca. 1534, 24,4 x 12,3 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre

It is generally assumed Michelangelo's artistic interest in the figure of the Crucified Christ and his participation in bronze sculptural projects. According to Vasari and Condivi he learned the craft of bronze as a young man in the workshop of Bertoldo di Giovanni, the favourite bronze sculptor of Lorenzo the Magnificent and it is documented that he participated in several bronze projects all over his life[25]. Vasari, refers to Michelangelo's first wooden Christ sculpture created for the Church of Santo Spirito in Florence, ca 1491 (Fig. 89), as a token of gratitude for having been allowed to work on dissections cadavers for his anatomical studies, that has come to us thanks to the rediscovery of Margit Lisner. One can consider it is the first image that brings closer the spiritual feelings maintained by Michelangelo throughout his life with an evident connection to the above- mentioned drawings, even on an anatomical point of view (Fig. 55) and to the bronze Crucifix's model under study, presenting a compelling figure of Christ Crucified in dialogue both with God and Humanity. (Fig. 53, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60)[26].

Furthermore, there are others testimonies of Michelangelo's continuous interest in the figure of Christ Crucified. Paul Joannides (October 2022) mentions a project of Crucifixion's group in marble related with a drawing (ca 1520) at Casa Buonarotti, representing three blocks with different dimensions for the Corpus of Christ, the Virgin and St John. In his last years Michelangelo returned to the figure of Christ Crucified as attested by the letter he wrote on 1562 to his nephew Lionardo, expressing his intention to sculpt a wooden Crucifix, which could well be the one rediscovered by Charles de Tolnay today in the Casa Buonarroti (Fig. 61). It features a lifeless body, a bowed head, and a position of the feet separated that suggests the use of four nails[27]. Vasari also mentions Michelangelo's intention to give a Crucifix as a gift to his friend Menighella[28]. However, where the reference to a small Crucifix becomes clearer, it is in all the documents related to the Marchesa di Pescara and Michelangelo, in particular in their correspondence.

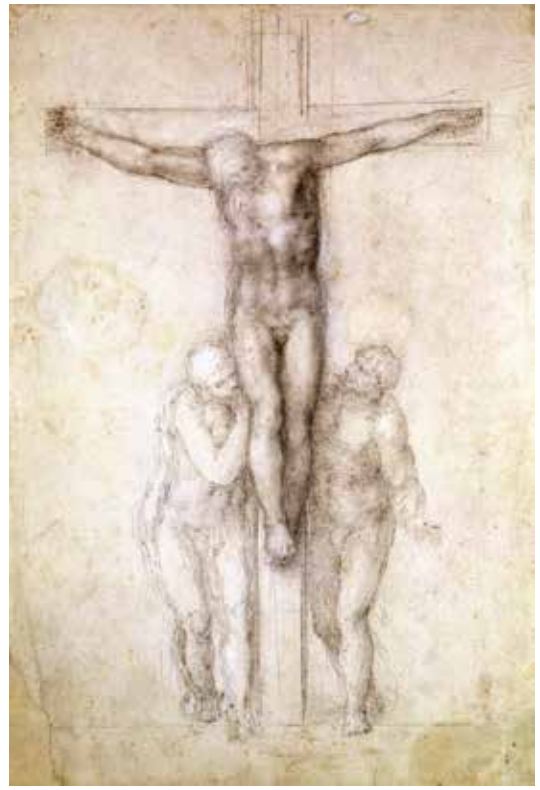


Fig. 59. Study for a Crucifixion, Michelangelo, 1550-60, British Museum

Fig. 60. Study for a Crucifixion, Michelangelo, 1552-54, Musée du Louvre

Vasari frequently mentions the poems that Michelangelo wrote to the Marchesa, expressing their mutual interest in the figure of Christ and also to the process of casting[29]. Documented evidences indicate that both shared the reformation principles of Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga by the late 1530s.

Michelangelo's biographer, Ascanio Condivi, in 1553, referred to a nude Christ, without a cross, depicting a lifeless body in a position of complete abandonment with the legs falling collapsing that Michelangelo gifted to the Marchesa di Pescara[30]. In the elegy for Michelangelo's death, Benedetto Varchi relates this same nude Christ Crucified given to the Marchesa with regard another distinct Christ that Michelangelo sculpted in marble in Rome for the Minerva. This *parangone* suggests that the gift to Vittoria Colonna had a sculptural character, not a drawing or a painting.[31]

One should notice also the striking connection of Michelangelo's four-nails Crucified face and the traditionally considered Vittoria Colonna's portraits attributed to Michelangelo (Fig. 62, 64). The precise description made by Paolo Giovio in the "Dialogui" of Vittoria Colonna's countenance would likely be appropriate for both, the face of our Michelangelo's bronze Crucified Christ (Fig. 2) and that of the drawing representing a portrait of Vittoria Colonna, permitting a reasonable identification of the sitter represented in the drawings:

> *"the eyelids like tenders wings protect and decorate the eyes ... her eyebrows do not adjoint ... they are only slightly curved ... her face is encircle by ebony black hair interwoven with gold ... flowing down ... across her temples ... adorns the broad, free, serene forehead ... the onlooker's eyes are fascinated by her pretty ears ... and what a lovely nose, resembling the noses of the Arsacid Dynasty ... executed in such a moderate and adroit way that, what hints at male astringency, does not at all impair her female charm".*

< Fig. 61. **Michelangelo**, *sketch for a Crucifix*, 27 cm., 1562, Casa Buonarroti, Florence

Fig. 62. Probably *Vittoria Colonna*, portrait, drawing, **Michelangelo**, Ashmolean Museum, UK

Crucified Christ, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Michelangelo preferred human beings whose faces and bodies united the male and female in a way that appeared to him divine (Fig. 63). In this regard Vittoria Colonna's androgynous appearance described by Giovio matched very well with his stereotype of beauty which he transferred to an idealized physiognomy of Vittoria Colonna rendered in the drawings and to the features of the Crucified Christ recently discovered, no doubt also reminiscent to his canonical sense of male beauty burned into his mind thanks to the sensual relation he had with his apprentices all over his life, in particular with Tommasso Cavalieri and marvelously conveyed in the series drawings he gave to him.[32]

Three letters exchanged between Michelangelo and the Marchesa deserve a detailed study in order to guess the nature of the Crucifix and his intercourse with the Crucified Christ we are now studying:

Fig. 63. *Study for the head of Leda*, drawing, 1530/32, **Michelangelo**, Casa Buonarroti, Florence

"Dearest Sir Michelangelo, I kindly request to send me for a while the Crucifix, even though if it's not finished, because I would like to show it to the most reverend Cardinal of Mantua, and if you are not busy today, please protect yourself to come and talk with me at your convenience. At your command. The Marquise of Pescara."[33]

From this letter of the Marchesa di Pescara to Michelangelo, it can be inferred that the Crucifix is a model or a design which will be returned to Michelangelo in a while, in order that the Master or his assistant may finish the work or complete a planned work.

Fig. 64. *Ideal head of a woman.* Probabably Vittoria Colonna, drawing, **Michelangelo**, British Museum, UK

"Unique master Michelangelo and my most singular friend. I have received your letter and seen the Crucifix, which certainly has crucified in my mind all other image I have ever look at, I have never seen anything better made, more vivid and finished, nor explained how delicately and wonderfully it is made. Therefore, I have resolved not to give it to other hands then yours. So, if I may ask you, enlighten me, whether it is yours or another's. If it is yours, I want it from you at all costs, but if it is not yours and you wish to have it done by that person of yours, let us talk about it first, because knowing the difficulty that exists in imitating it, I am more inclined for that person to create something else than this. But if this is yours, I beg you to be indulgent, because I will not return it. I have been looking at it, in light, with a magnifying glass, and with a mirror, and I have never seen anything more accomplished and exquisite. I am at your command. The Marchesa di Pescara".(34)

The apparent contradiction between the highly finished nature of the object mentioned at the beginning of this letter and the reference to an uncompleted piece indicated in the first letter, confirms our thesis that this Crucifix could likely be a perfect model in itself, most probably conceived and manipulated by the Master.

In the second part of this letter Vittoria Colonna clearly talks about two different works: the exquisite small "cosa" she has inspected closely with a lamp and the planned work which she fears won't reproduce the model's faithfully, if is not executed by the Master, something consistent with general meaning of the letters.

The reference to the doubt about whether the exquisite object was made by Michelangelo's own hand or by his assistant, in my opinion, definitely rules out the alternative of being this Crucifix a drawing, because it is difficult to consider that Michelangelo would present to the Marchesa a design executed by an assistant. Furthermore, the mentioned difficulty in reproducing the object reinforce even more our thesis of being the Crucifix a wax model, ready for casting. All the more, the Marquise on the one hand acknowledges the huge challenges of the casting technique, as expressed in a poem written by Michelangelo and, on the other hand, is fully satisfied to keep the object in its current state, if the Master confirms its autograph character, suggesting that in this case Michelangelo's assistant should be occupied with another task; All this, provides further evidence that the Marchesa considers the small Crucifix model lended by Michelangelo more precious than the planned work and that the model's quality, formal aspect and size should be similar to the final work, something consistent with a wax model with regard to its cast.

Fig. 65. Crucified Christ, after a model by Michelangelo (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560- 70, documented in Seville 1597, IOMR Collection >

Finally last sentence is even more illuminating with regard to our thesis when she mentions a “cosa”, meaning an object whose quality can only be appreciated in all its splendour with a lamp and lenses and inspected from different angles thanks to a mirror, definitely supporting the idea that the object must be a small three-dimensional sculpture, characterized by intricate details and great virtuosity in its execution, all virtues that can be attributed to a wax model for cast.

“Signora Marchesa. Knowing that I am in Rome, I do not think it is fair that to entrust the Crucifix to Mr Tommao and make him an intermediary between your Lordship and me, your servant, so that I can serve you. In particular because I have fulfilled your most desired wishes to a greater extent than for anyone in the world. But the great occupations in which I have been and still am involved have prevented me from making this known to you Lordship. Because, I know, that you know that love does not want a master, and he who loves does not sleep nor need intermediaries. Although it may seem that I have forgotten, I was doing something unexpected that I have not mentioned. Now my design has been thwarted.” Vatican Apostolic Library.[35]

This letter expresses on the one hand Michelangelo’s dissatisfaction with the return of the Crucifix through an intermediary and a certain exculpatory tone. On the other hand, it highlights the Marchesa’s displeasure and disappointment, who returned the Crucifix in such a haughty manner, considering their friendship.

The return of the Crucifix presupposes in itself the resolution of the enigma we intend to elucidate regarding these exchanged letters:

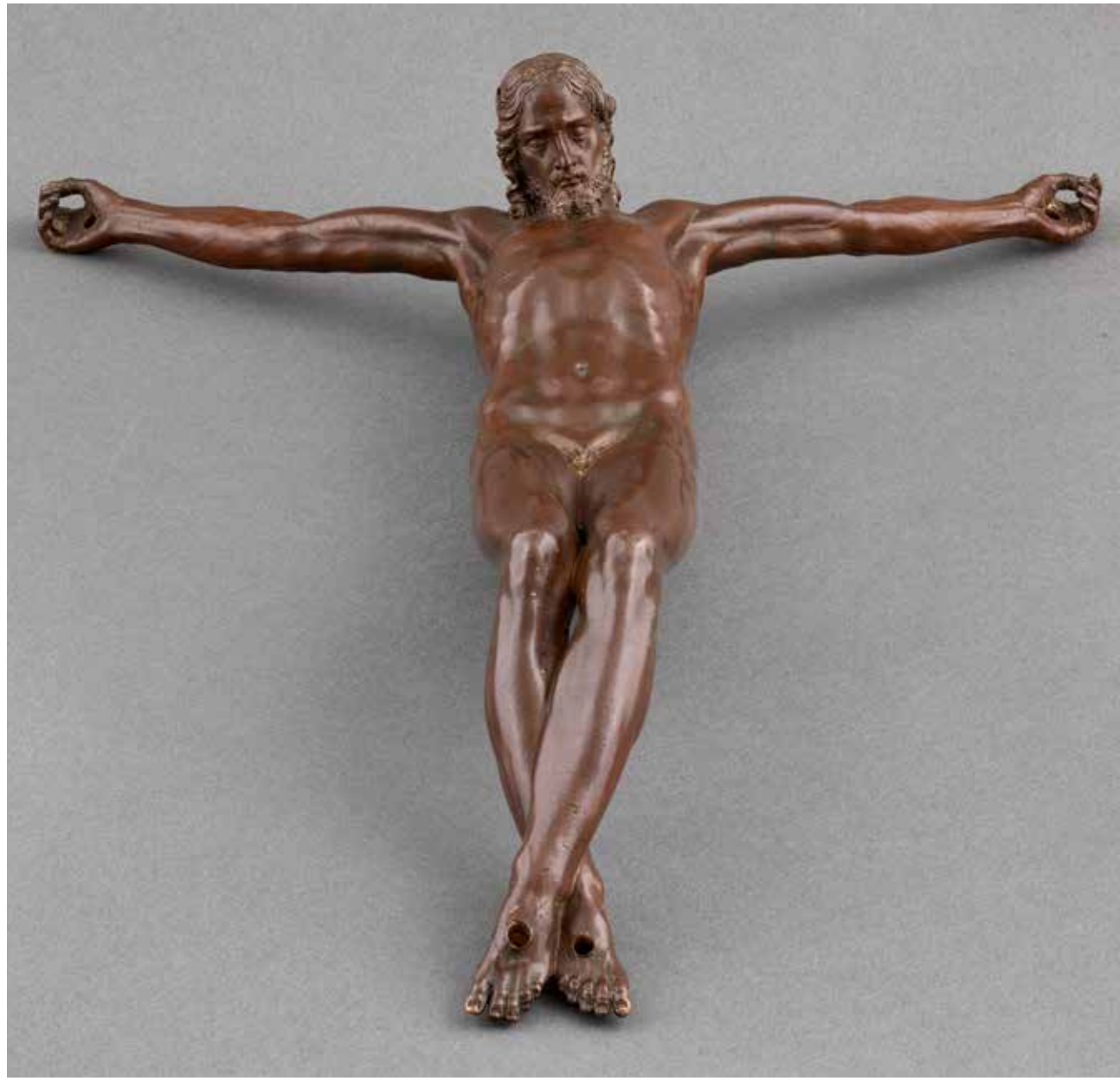


Fig. 66. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560- 70, documented in Seville 1597, IOMR Collection >

Why did the Marchesa return the object to Michelangelo? probably because he did not answer to her requests, or even though the model was created by his own hand, it needed to be perfected, in line with our thesis that the process for which the model had been created might need to be completed. Certainly, it was the delay in picking up the model for accomplishing the project that caused the Marchesa's displeasure, leading her to return the Crucifix in such a nasty way, through a third party. However, it seems clear that Michelangelo was apologizing for not having completed a task for her, without specifying in the letter what task he was referring to, as if it were understood. An idea consistent with the Crucifix being a wax model lended to the Marchesa, the initial stage of the complex casting process that Michelangelo no doubt had not completed, at least before writing this letter.

As Linda Borsch suggests, this letter could infer that the Crucifix was more a result of a commission than a gift. This hypothesis could be connected to Pope Paul III granting Vittoria Colonna's permission to create a convent for nuns in Montecavallo, owned by her family. The bronze Crucifix have been a commission related to the decoration of this convent. This aligns with the idea that a, bronze Crucifix was commissioned, and its wax model lended by Michelangelo to the Marchesa[36].

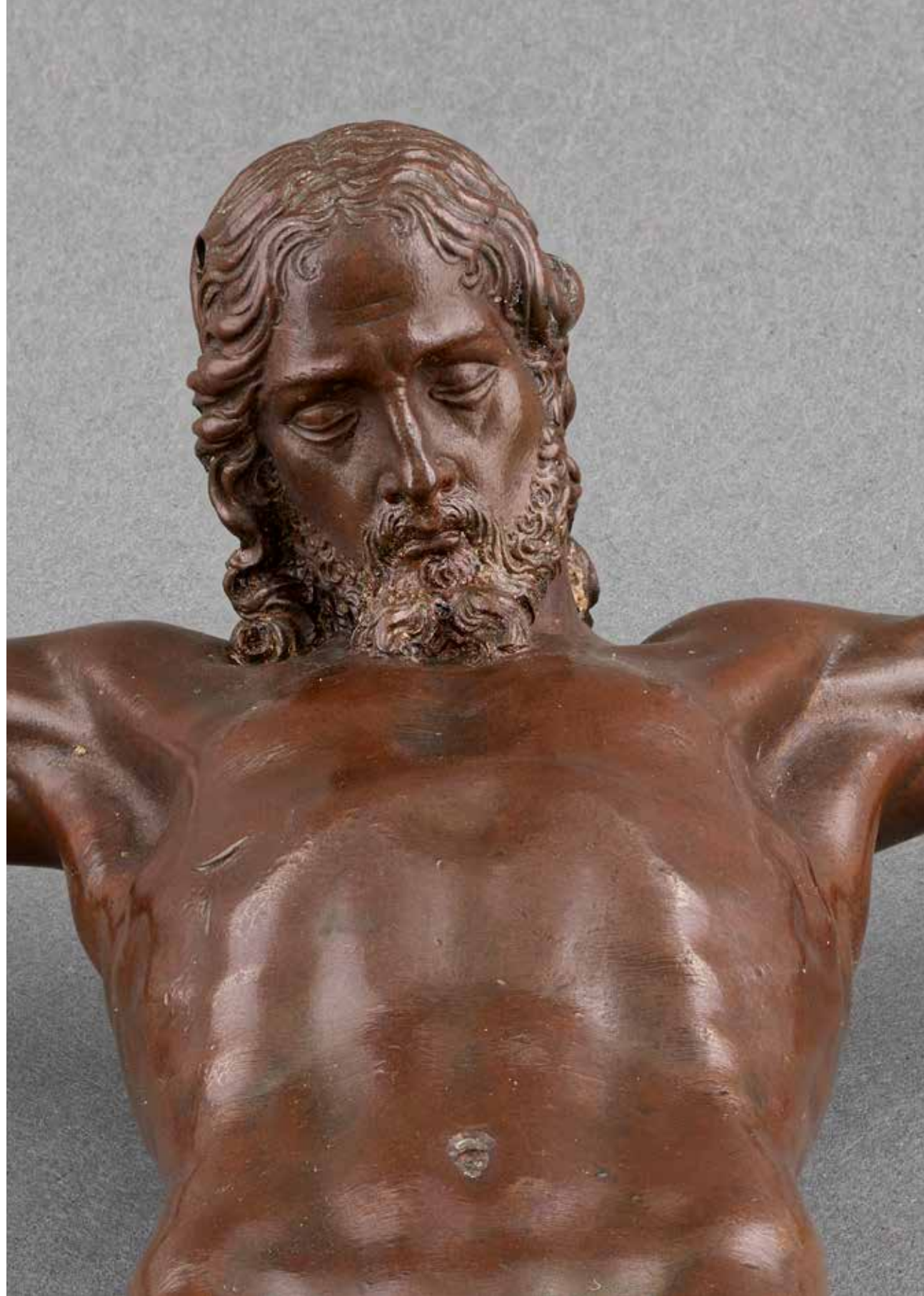


Fig. 67. Crucified Christ, after a model by Michelangelo (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection >

The bronze Crucifix model we are studying evinces Michelangelo's stylistics hallmarks of grand serenity mixed with Pathos, a true touchstone when assessing a work of Michelangelo.

Symmetry in composition, restrained expressiveness in its message, meticulousness in the description of the details and contrast in their meaning to increase the depth and immediacy of the figure. An interplay of virtues that make this sculpture a Masterpiece, whose message seems of a major complexity, only comparable to that conveyed by Christ as God turned into Man which Michelangelo represents in this case dead for the salvation of Humanity.

Comparisons for the figure of Crucified Christ must be sought in Michelangelo's depiction of Human nude and in particular in the Crucifix of the Chiesa Santo Spirito, Florence (Fig. 89). These nudes are treated with the verisimilitude and accuracy of someone who, having dissected cadavers, is intimately familiar with all human muscles which he outlines faithfully, as befits the gesture of the Crucified:

• The external jugular vein is prominently marked on the neck as a consequence of the head flexion (Fig. 68).

• The armpit muscles are perfectly defined and exaggeratedly extended, a consequence of the forced position of arm opening, with well- defined biceps and basilic veins in both arms, naturally describing the tension of someone nailed to the Cross (Fig. 66).

• The chest is crowned by nipples in the form of typically Michelangelesque aureole and with the noticeable rib-cage, that recalls the figure of Marsyas tied up, a classical feature that the Master frequently uses to express in a contained way resistance of Human being to divine command (Fig. 68, 69).

• The linea alba, a true touchstone of the Master, is subtly indicated by the sunken belly (Fig. 66, 69, 70).

Fig. 68. Crucified Christ, after a model by Michelangelo (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560- 70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection >

Fig. 69. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 70. *David*, **Michelangelo**, detail, 1501- 1504, Galería del Academia, Florence

• From the narrowness of the hips, the legs collapse, crossing the left calf over the right, which appears slightly flattened and whose extreme slenderness marks an accurate anatomy, highlighting the serratus muscle, a fundamental muscle in Michelangelo's nudes, that stretches longitudinally, stylizing Christ's figure (Fig. 71).

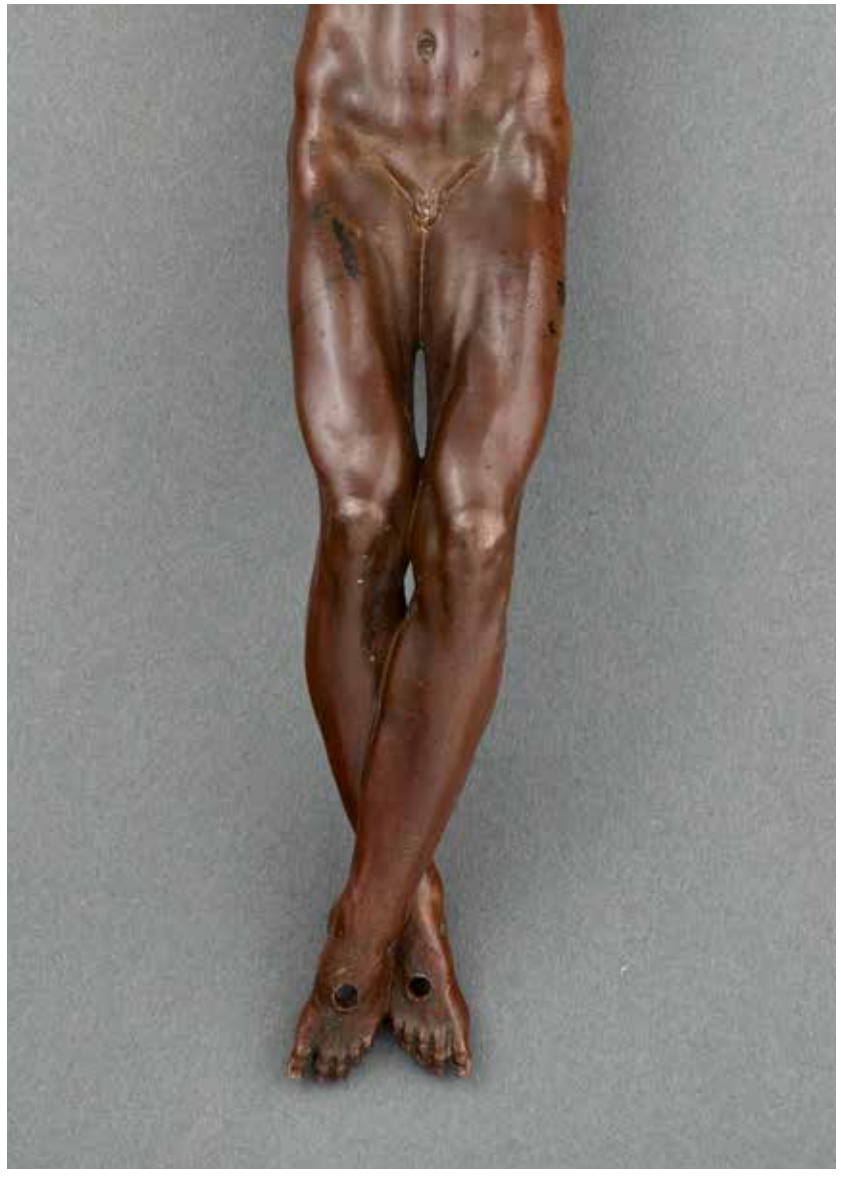


Fig. 71. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560- 70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

• The feet and hands, with outstanding technical virtuosity, impress with how they display the tendons and veins thickened by the action of the nails; while the elongated fingers are remarkable for their nails, defined down to the cuticle, another characteristic of Michelangelo. The toes follow the classic position, found frequently in Michelangelo's works, where the second and third toes are almost as long as the big toe. (Fig. 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78).

Fig. 72. *Pieta of Michelangelo detail foot Christ*, **Michelangelo**, 1498, detail, Basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano, Rome

Fig. 73. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 74. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 75. Foot of the sculpture representing the day. *Monument decorating the sepulcher of Juliano de Medici*, **Michelangelo**, 1534, Church of San Lorenzo

Fig. 76. *David*, **Michelangelo**, detail, 1501-1504, Galleria della Academia

Fig. 77. *Crucified Christ*, bronze, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), cast in Rome before 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 78. *Sculpture representing the day decorating the sepulcher of Juliano Medici*, detail, **Michelangelo**, 1534, Chiesa di San Lorenzo, Florence

• On the back all the muscles are clearly outlined, especially the scapula and the triangle of auscultation, which, according to Julia C Ruston and Peter H Abrahams, is the only part of the back without muscle, giving a general impression of still vital resistance, descending from the trapezius that marks the shoulder muscles, following the valley that indicate a curved spine falling into a powerful pelvis, strongly defined by the glutes (Fig. 79, 80, 81, 82)[37].

• In the legs, the muscles of the perineum and soleus are well rendered ending in the heels, emphasized by folds that add a naturalistic touch that gives an even more naturalistic character to the position of the Christ nailed to the Cross (Fig. 83) whose ultimate expression is reached in the wounds on the hands and feet (Fig. 44, 73, 74, 77).

Fig. 79. *Bacchus seen from behind*, **Michelangelo**, 1496-97, Bargello Museum Florence

Fig. 80. *Sketch of a nude man*, 1510-11, **Michelangelo**, Metropolitan Museum, New York

Fig. 81. *Male nude*, **Michelangelo**, 1504, Albertina Museum, Viena

Fig. 82. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 83. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 84. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

The resemblance of our bronze Crucifix also appears in the face that correspond to Michelangelo's canon of male beauty which we find depicted in the visage of Christ, such as the dead Christ who collapses in the Vatican Pietà (Fig. 85, 87), in many drawings for his friend Tommasso Cavalieri and in his drawn portraits of Vittoria Colonna attributed to him (Fig. 62, 64).

The countenance of our Crucified is only perceived in its fullness when photographed from the feet, then emanating a sense of classical beauty, that is absolutely moving, as only Michelangelo could have conceived (Fig. 84, 88).

A broad forehead, framed by hair with two symmetrical curls, marked by the lines of pain that reveal a furrowed brow, a technique well known to Michelangelo from the recently discovered Laocoön, to appeal to the sense of pathos with which Michelangelo seeks to imbue the figure of the dead Christ. The eyes, well-spaced apart by a straight nasal bridge, set in a deep hollow delimited by prominent cheekbones that encourage the interplay of light, emphasizing the drama. The slightly fleshy lips, covered by a well-defined beard that lightly reveals a dimple, lending the figure a serene expression of peaceful sleep. The hair, with wavy curls perfectly differentiated from the beard with a more intricate spiral, falls gently on the sides, on its left side pointing to the ear of canonical perfection and on the back, displaying a beautiful interweaving that forms a distinctly Renaissance hairstyle which in this case contributes to enhancing the virtuosity of the bronze caster (Fig. 85, 86, 87, 88, 99, 100).

Fig. 85. *Pietà*, **Michelangelo**, 1498, detail, Basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano

Fig. 85. *Pietà*, **Michelangelo**, 1498, detail, Basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano

Fig. 86. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 87. *Pietà*, **Michelangelo**, 1498, detail, Basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano, Rome

Fig. 88. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

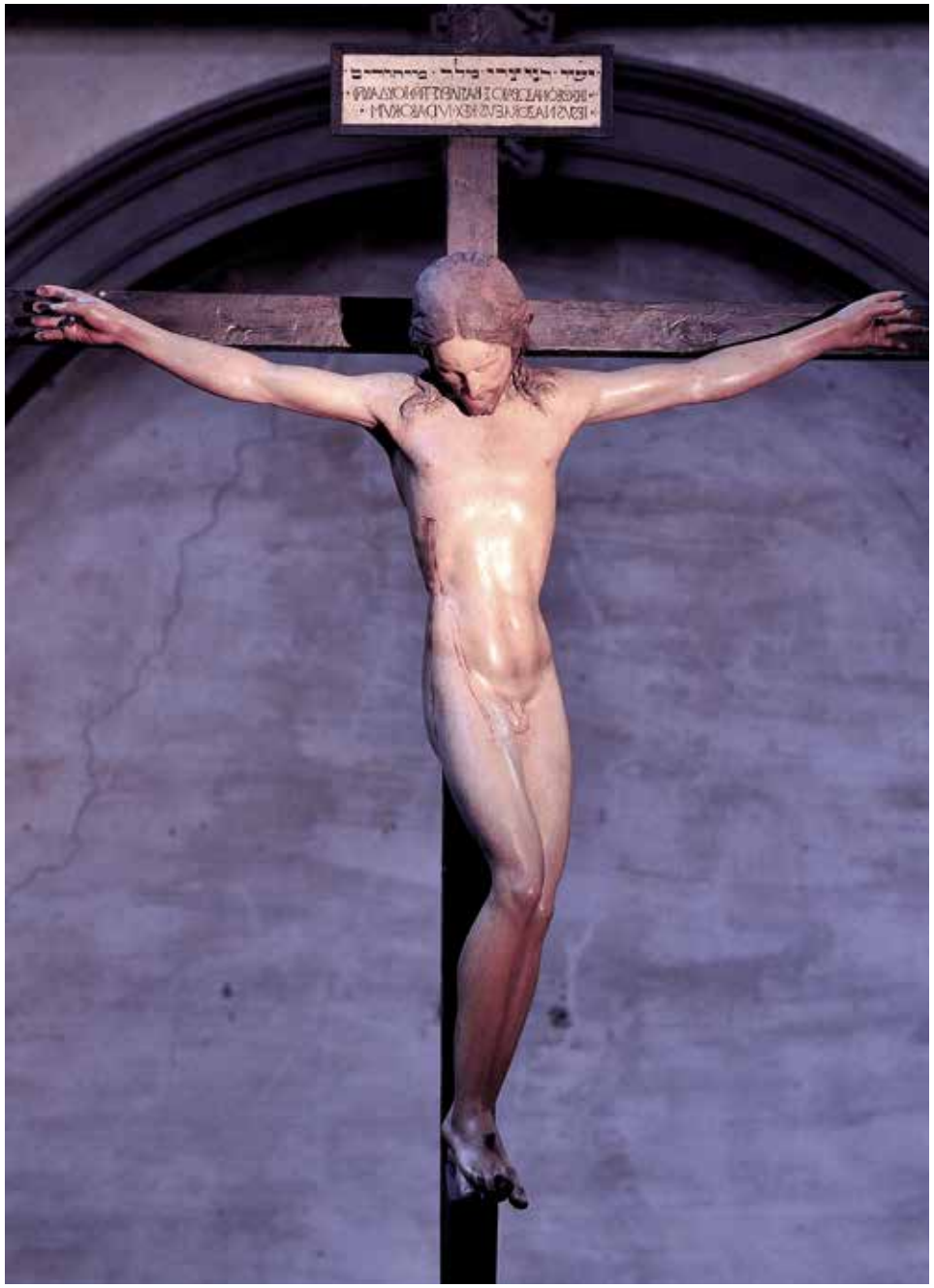
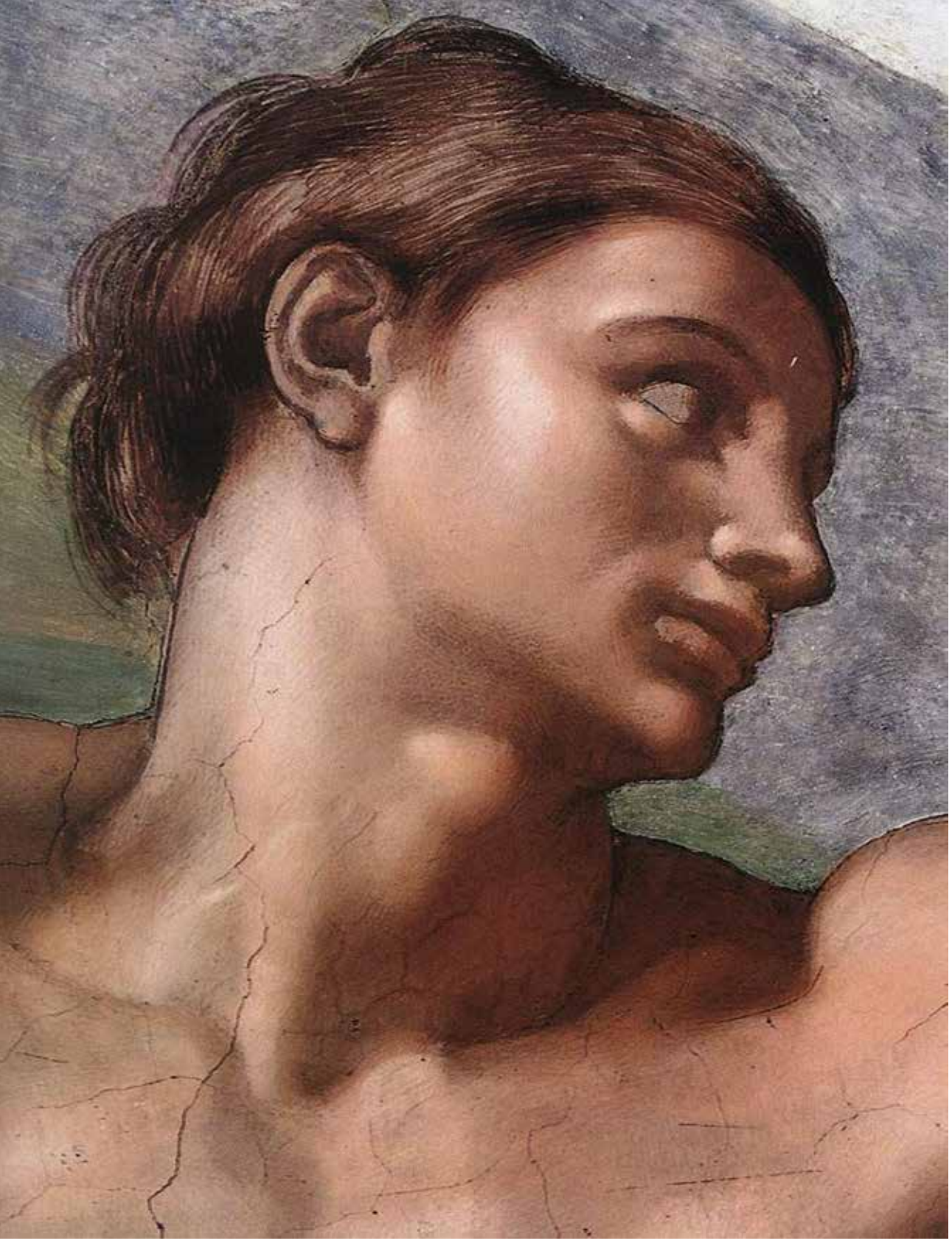


Fig. 89. *Christ Crucified*, polychromed wood ca 1491, **Michelangelo**, 1491, 142x135 cm., Church of the Santo Spirito, Florence

Fig. 88. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, IOMR Collection >



[144] Fig. A. *Adan*, Sistine Chapel, detail, **Michelangelo**, 1508-1512, Basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano

NOTES

23. Manuel Gómez Moreno, "Alonso Cano Escultor, Archivo España y Arqueología", No. 6, M; "Obras de Miguel Ángel en España" AEAA n17,1930 pp189-198 "El crucifijo de Miguel Ángel en España", AEAA No.26, 1930 pp 81- 84; Charles de Tolnay "Miguel Ángel. Artista – Pensador – Escritor", 1978, capítulo obras mayores. Anselmo López Morais, "Crucifijo de Miguel Ángel. Un ejemplar en una colección particular en Orense" Historia del Arte Orensano 1988 pp 97- 107. With regard, the Crucifixion by Jacopo del Duca see Giorgio Vasari le Vite dei piu eccelenti pittori, scultori e architettori1550/68 Ed Gaetano Milanesi Florence Sansoni 1963 vol 6 p 273; J P Montagu "Gold Silver& Bronze: Metal Sculpture of the Roman Baroque" Princeton University, p24, ap A1996, refers to a contract signed between Jacopo del Duca and Marco Antonio Hortensio and to a letter dated 1 February 1573.

24. Charles de Tolnay Michelangelo pp171-172 refers that the wax model was apparently prepared by Michelangelo and created for the New Sacristy "Corpus dei disegni di Michelangelo" Novara Instituto Geografico De Agostini, 1975-80 pp 63-64; Paul Joannides, "Two bronze Crucifixion groups designed by Michelangelo" October 2022, op cit note 10 p43. In this paper Joannides reveals a significative point of view regarding how Michelangelo's mind is obsessed and puzzled with the position of the crossed legs, choosing finally for the bronze Crucified Christ with four nails the left calf crossed over the right calf, in opposition to the testimony of Saint Bridjet and in accordance to the Easten-byzantine-Orthodox tradition, rendered in the Three Crosses drawing 1520, British Museum (Fig. 57) and the reverse of the Haarlem sketch (Fig. 56). Email addressed to Carlos Herrero Starkie 5 October 2023 in which he strongly supports the Teylers sketch represents a primo pensiero of a nude Crucifix for a Sculpture, bearing in mind he has drawn the figure from different angles; Shell op cit 1992 note 10, Bambach 2017, p194 and Paul Joannides op cit 2022, agree in dating the letters 1538/41.

25. Victoria Avery "Michelangelo Sculptor: Brazen Defiance" pp 22-47, 2018. The influence of Bertoldo di Giovanni extends beyond 1500, and although it is not believed he received a training as a goldsmith as Ghiberti, Donatello Verrochio and Pollaiuolo, it is assumed that Michelangelo had an activity in the conception of small bronzes, though only "Hércules Pomarius" circa, 1490 had come to us. Victoria Avery's "Small Sculpture in Bronze", op cit 2018, also discusses Michelangelo's activity in the conception of small bronzes, including one representing a horse for the Duke of Urbino. He considered that it was not cast properly, and claimed the original model from Micheangelo. In 1525, he also made a wax model for the "Hércules and Anteus" commissioned for the Piazza della Signoria. Since the commission was not completed, he gifted it in 1561 to his friend Leone Leoni in gratitude for casting a medal with his likeness. It is interesting to note that in the will of his son, Pompeo Leoni, there is mention of a Crucifix by Michelangelo, which may be one of the metallic versions of our model or another Roman prototype given to him by his father Leone. Additionally, in 1528, Michelangelo made another wax model representing Samson and two Philistines, which Daniele Volterra cast. The best version of this sculpture is in the Frick Collection, and Paul Joannides considers it one of the small bronzes with the greatest significance (Fig. 107). There are designs for both the horse and Samson in the Casa Buonarroti and the Ashmolean Museum.

See Margrit Lisner "Il Crucifisso di Michelangelo in Santo Spirito a Firenze" Munich, 1964. Referred by Vasari, op cit note 23.

See note 24.

26. Paul Joannides, 1996, "Michelangelo and His Influence: Drawings from Windsor Castle" "Two

bronzes Crucifixions groups designed by Michelangelo" October 2022; Michael Riddick Renbronze. com, "Michelangelo's Crucifix for Vittoria Colonna" p1-23 in this article, the author makes a very accurate comparison with Michelangelo's drawings at the Teylers Museum and another drawing that appears in a manuscript dated 1540 in the Vatican Apostolic Library; Carmen Bambach "Divine Draftsman & Designer", Metropolitan Museum, 2017. J Shell Ed Pietro Marani cat exhibition Montreal, "The genius of the sculptor in Michelangelo's work", 1992. With regard to the Christ on the Cross looking upwards related to the British Museum see second edition 1568 of Vasari Vite, Gaetano Milanesi Florence Sansoni 1963, vol 6 p273.

27. Letters from Michelangelo to his nephew Lionardo in August 1562. Il Cartegio indiritto di Michelangelo, 1988, Ed P Barrocci-Firenze vol2 p126n 324.

28. With regard to Menighella's, Crucifix see Giorgio Vasari's "Le Vite dei più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori" second edition, 1568. Le opere di Giorgio Vasari Gaetano Milanesi, Ed 1878-85, Firenze, Vol 7 p282.

29. See the note 4.

See Sarah Rolfe, "Michelangelo's Christian Mysticism: Poetry and Art in Sixteen Century Italy", 2014, Cambridge University Press, p143, Rime 153. In this Poem Michelangelo compares on the one hand Vittoria to the liquid that fills him like the fluid that go through the channels used to fill the mould and on the other hand he describes himself as the sculpture revealed when the mold is broken.

30. Ascanio Condivi "Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti", Rome 1553, pp4-46. Michelangelo's first biographer compares two works for the Marchesa of Pescara, one representing a naked Christ without a Cross with the dead body abandoned and another design of a living Jesus Christ with His head raised, looking at His Father with a body that is not dead but appears to be suffering and contorted in agony. The first seems to refer to a sculpture or, alternatively, a painting, but in any case, it faithfully describes the forms and spirit of the Crucifix under study. The second, a design of a living Jesus Christ, appears to refer to some drawings by Michelangelo, especially "Christ on the Cross" from 1538/ 1541 at the British Museum.

31. Benedetto Varchi's "Orazione funerale di Messer Benedetto Varchi, e recitata da lui publicamente nell exequie di Michekangelo Buonarroti in Firenze nella chiesa di San Lorenzo" 1564, p 29 "In Rome, in La Minerva, there is a naked Christ, and another Christ also naked but in a different manner, which he (Michelangelo) gave to the most divine Marchesa of Pescara". The sculptural character of both references is clear and reinforced by the fact that Varchi has already discussed before the drawings given to the Marchesa.

32. Fig. 62 and Fig. 64 have been traditionally considered Michelangelo's drawn portraits of Vittoria Colonna due to the resemblance of the sitter with Giovio's description of Vittoria's face and to its sophisticated coiffure. More recently scholars have been more prone to consider these heads, as the representation of Michelangelo's ideal of beauty characterized by a straight nose, a broad forehead, well separated eyes, lightly curve eyebrows, perfect outlined ears, fleshy lips and a prominent chin. Joannides suggest that it could have inspired an idealized portrait of Vittoria Colonna, in accordance to the long neck, bowed head and concentrated gaze of the sitter, bearing an overall melancholic appearance in close connection with Vittoria Colonna's mood. A canon of male beauty already burned in his mind when he painted the Sixtine Chapel (1512/1518) as attested by his depiction of Adan (Fig. A) and the drawings offered to Tommasso Cavalieri who is certainly also an alternative for the identification of the sitter of Fig. 62.

Maria Musiol "Michelangelo and Vittoria Colonna letters" ISBN979-3-7365-3628-3 p14-15 Paolo Giovio "Vittoria Colonna subtle description of her physiognomy" cuoted from his "Dialogui"; "Vitoria Colonna in Michelangelo's Drawings 1520-1543 pp13-33; Sara Vowles and Grant Lewis "Michelangelo. The last decades". British Museum, 2024, exhib catalogue, 2024. C1 "Return to Rome". Cuoting Vasari, Grant Lewis refers to the beautifully heads drawn by Michelangelo for Tommasso Cavalieri that have disappeared p 41, though the drawing Tityus Royal Collection Trust fully embody Michelangelo's ideal of male beauty that Thomasso inspire him. In contrast with the sensual relation he had with Cavalieri, Sara Vowles describes in C2 "Vittoria Colonna" how Michelangelo was platonically in love of Vittoria Colonna who was his Muse and spiritual guide. She comments the letters with regard the British Museum drawing of the living Christ and a painting representing the same Crucifix by Michelangelo's pupil and assistant, Marcellus Venusti. pp76-107.

33. Riddick Michelangelo's and Vittoria Colonna's discussion of a Crucifix Appendix A Renbronze. com, pp1-7. Maria Forcelino, "Vittoria Colonna and Michelangelo drawings and painting. A companion to Vittoria Colonna". The Renaissance Society of America, vol 5 pp270- 313

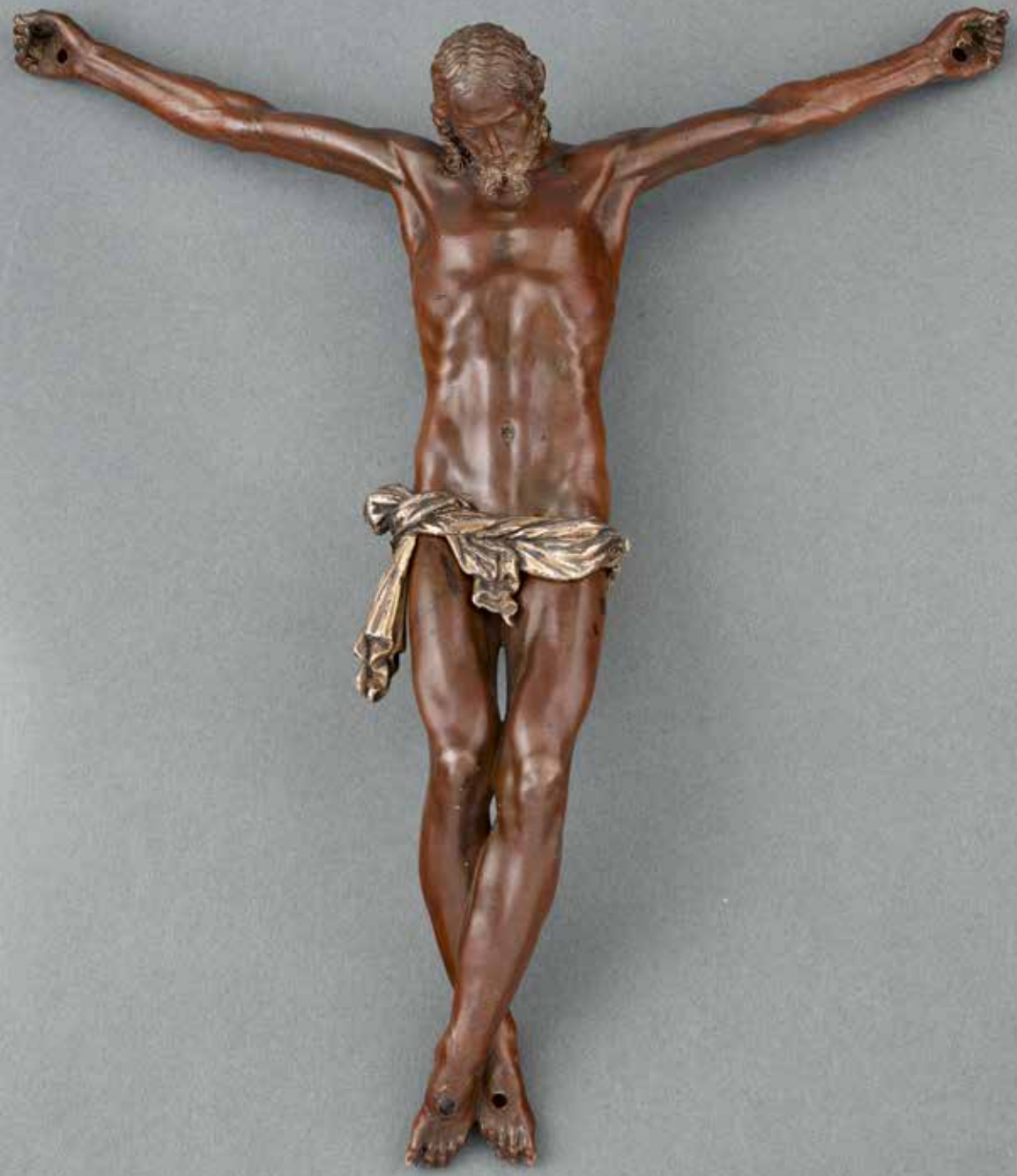
Casa Buonarroti original text CodIX.507. Correspondence collected and published by Ermanno Ferrero and Giuseppe Muller, Turin Loescher, pp268-69: "Cordialidisimo mio S. Michel Agnolo. Ve prego me mandiate un poco il Crucifisso se bene non fornido, percha il vorria mostrare a gentilhuomini del R. Cardinal de Mantua et si voi non sete oggi al laboro, protessi venir a parlarmi con vostra comodita. Al comando vostro. La Marquesa di Pescara".

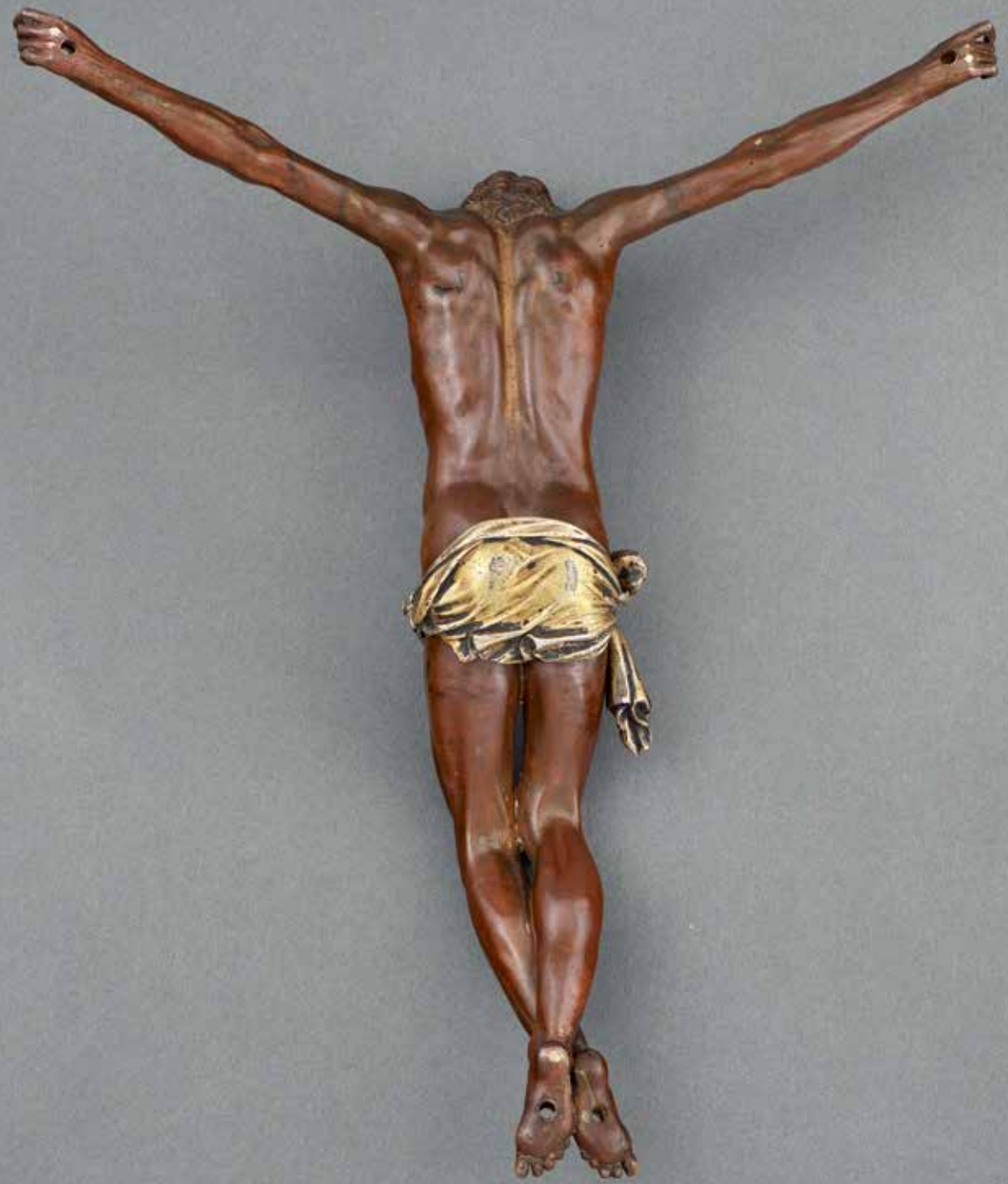
34. See note 29. British library, 23139, fol 10. Original text "Unico maestro Michelangelo et mio singularissimo amigo. Ho hauta la vostra et visto il crucifixo il qual certamente ha crucifixe nella memoria mia quali altre pittura viddi mai, ne se po veder piu ben fatta, piu viva et piu finita imagine et certo io non potrei mai explicar quanto sottilmente et mirabilmente e fatta, pero il che ho risoluta de non volverlo di man d'altri, et pero chiaritemi, se questo e d altri, patientia. Se e vostro, io in ogni modo vel torrei, ma in caso che non sia vostro et vogliate farlo fare a quel vostro, circa parlaremo prima, perche cognoscendo io la dificulta che e ce di imitarlo, piu presto mi resolvo che colui faccia un altra cosa che questa; ma si e il vostro questo, habbiate patientia che non son per tornarlo piu. Io l ' ho visto al lume et col vetro et col spechio, et non viddi mai la piu finita cosa. Son accomandamento vostro. La Marchesa di Pescara.".

35. Vatican Apostolic Library cod. Vatic. Latino 3211c 99. Original text "Signora Marchesa. E non par, sendo io in roma, che egli accadessi lasciar il Crucifisso a messer Tommao e farlo mezzano fra Vostra Signoria e me suo servo, acchioche io la serva e massimo avendo io desiderato di far piu per qu'elle che per uomo che io conoscessi mai al mondo; ma l'ocupacione grande, in che sono state e sono, non ha lasciato conoscer questo a Vostra Signoria: e perche io so ella sa che amore non vuol maestro, e che Chi ama non dorme, manco accadeva ancora mezzi: e benche paressi che io non mi ricordassi, io facebo qu'elle ch' io non diceva per giugnere con cosa non aspettata. E state guasto il mio disegno: ma fa tanta fe si tosto oblia". Biblioteca Apostilica Vaticana".

36. Linda Bosch (2018).

37. Domenico Laurenza,"Duality in Art and Anatomy: Men and Animals, Youth and Old Age in Leonardo and Michelangelo" pp221-228; Julia C. Ruston and Peter H Abrams, "Dissecting the Rothschilds Bronzes", "Michelangelo Sculptor", Ed. Victoria Avery, 2018.





4 Dating and attribution of the cast of the newly discovered four-nailed Crucifix modelled by Michelangelo in 1538-41

The bronze alloy "rame peloso" type of our bronze Crucifix, combined with its exquisite casting technique and technological innovations, such as the inclusion of threads screws in the hands and feet, characteristic of a workshop well-versed in the latest techniques, is consistent with the opinion expressed by Francisco Pacheco that the bronze arrived to Seville from Rome in 1597 through a silversmith, Juan Bautista Franconio, who likely worked in one of the most sophisticated workshops in the Eternal City during a time when Rome was a hotbed of goldsmiths, focused around the creativity of Guglielmo della Porta (Fig. 91). In this regard, once we have rule out, due to technical reasons, the workshops of Daniele Volterra and Jacopo del Duca, who collaborated directly with Michelangelo towards the end of his life, the workshop of Benvenuto Cellini, who was a declared enemy of Michelangelo, the workshop of Leone Leoni, a great friend of Michelangelo who operated in Milan and Giambologna whose workshop was located in Florence, and employed a Neusohl copper with higher proportion of tin which differs from the nearly pure Fahzel used in our bronze, the most probable workshop responsible for casting the newly discovered bronze is the innovative and renowned Roman bronze workshop of the time, Guglielmo della Porta, or one of the goldsmiths integrated in the "Gran Scuola" who collaborated with him[38].

Michael Riddick, in his analysis of the bronze Crucified Christ after a model attributed to Michelangelo (Fig. 40), puts forth the reasonable theory that Juan Bautista Franconio must have worked in the workshop of Sebastiano Torregiani. After marrying Guglielmo della Porta's widow, Torregiani succeeded him as the head of the workshop upon Guglielmo della Porta's death in 1577[39].

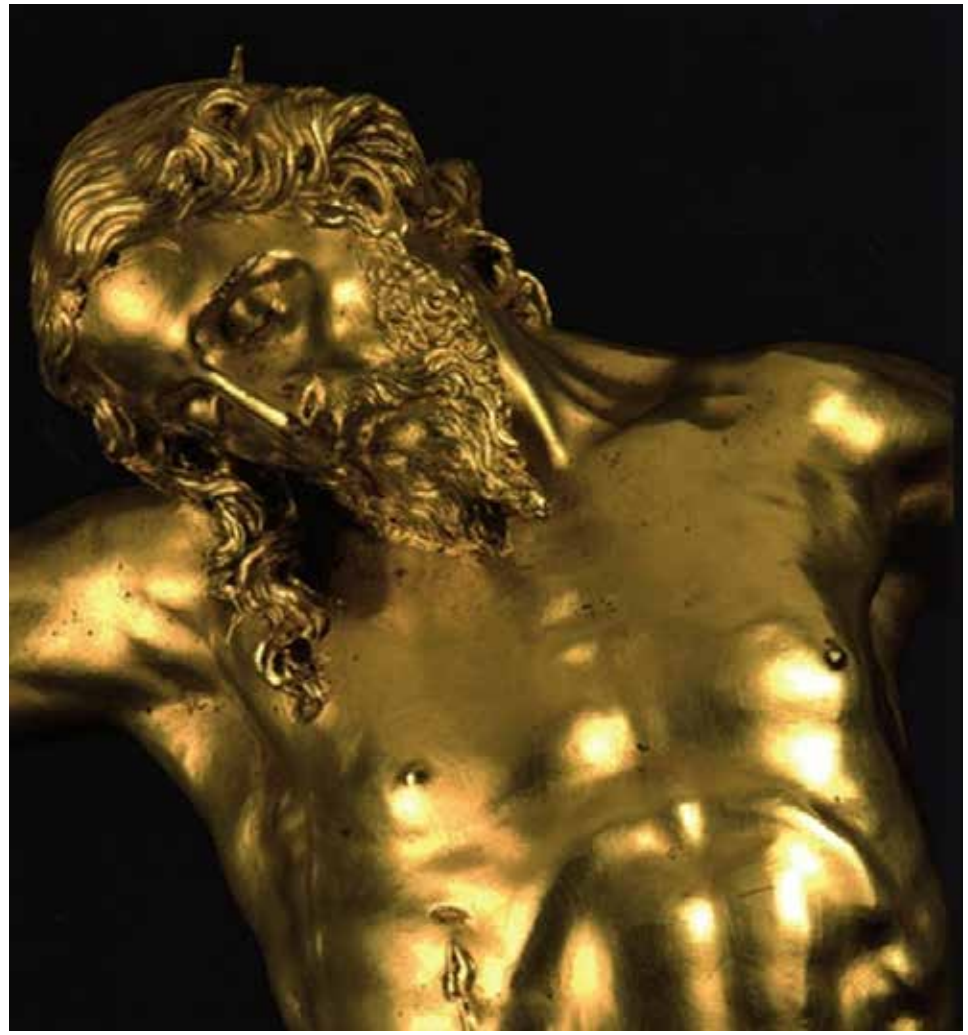


Fig. 91. *Christ Crucified*, gilt bronze, **Guglielmo della Porta**, circa 1570, Coll & Cortes

Following this idea, Juan Bautista Franconio, would have had access to a cast of Michelangelo's original model preserved in Guglielmo della Porta's workshop as a gift from Michelangelo during the period when they had a recognized friendship between 1530 and 1540. This friendship eventually soured due to a dispute related to the execution in bronze and marble of the funerary monument of Pope Paul III, commissioned in 1549, which led to many enemies for Guglielmo della Porta. Franconio brought this cast from Rome to Seville in 1597, as indicated by Pacheco[40].

The bronze Crucified Christ we are studying now has likely been cast just before or shortly after the death of Michelangelo in 1564. Given its particular iconography, showing a bleeding wound on the right side (Fig. 92), and its type of alloy, the most probable dating is 1560-70, aligning with the late 1560s when Guglielmo della Porta begins his activity of creating Crucifixes for the Farnese family (Fig. 93)[41]. During this period, there still was a preference for including this sign of Christ's suffering in Crucifixion depictions (Fig. 91, 92), a practice that faded away in the late 1570s when the artistic circles in Rome adopted the doctrines of the Council of Trent, endorsed by Pope Pius V, regarding decorum rules that promoted the decontextualization of pain in images of Christ. In this regard, it is worth noting that it is improbable Michelangelo could have included a bleeding wound in a Christ model created for his friend, Vittoria Colonna, because, in the 1540s, he was already influenced by the doctrinal currents of the "Spirituali" that preceded the decorum rules of the Council. Therefore, this sign would be an addition in the intermediate wax model specific to our bronze or in the cold work carried out in the workshop of the bronze caster, most probably Guglielmo della Porta[42].

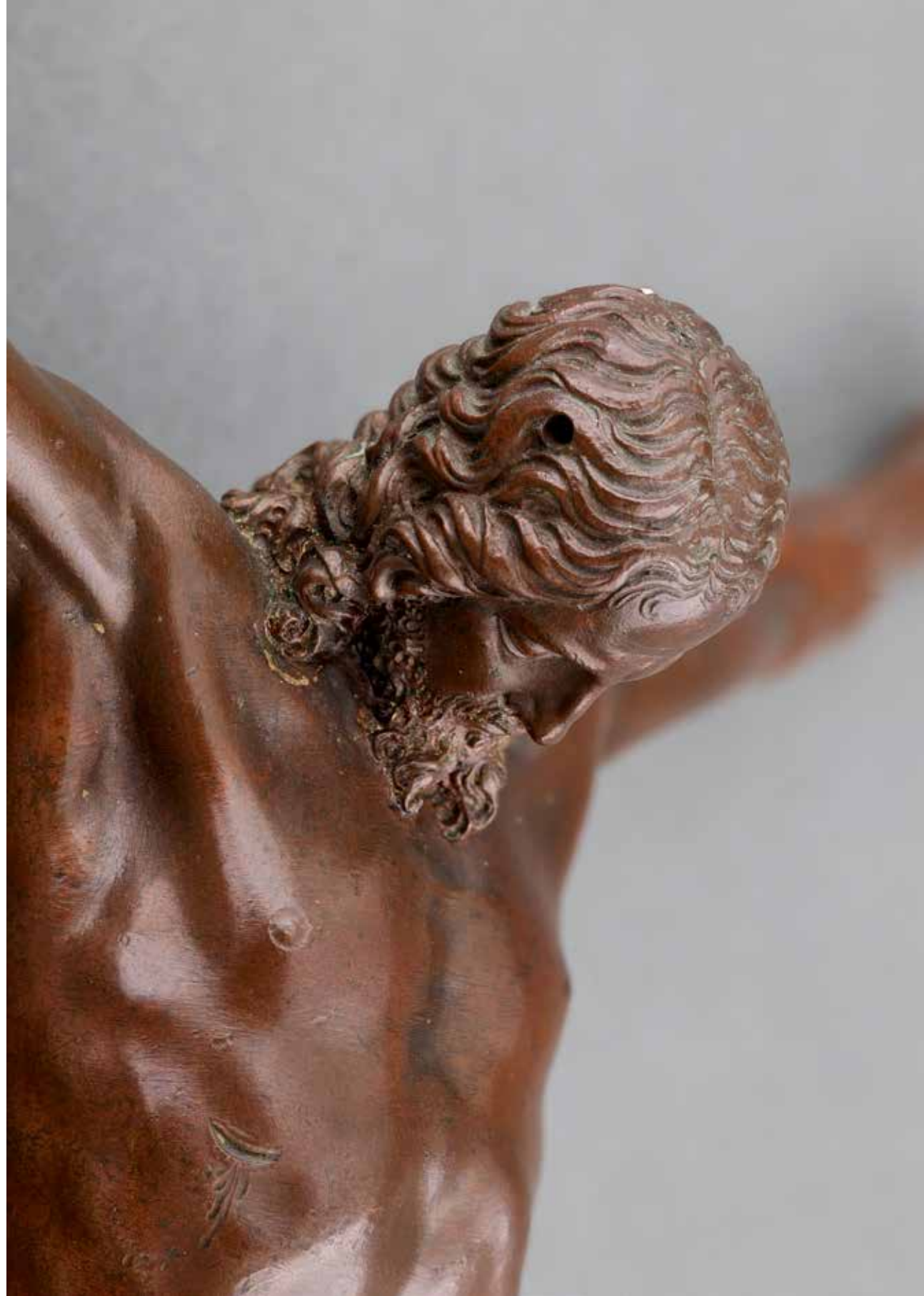


Fig. 92. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection >

Fig. 93. *Gilt bronze Crucifix* by **Guglielmo della Porta**, Farnese Prototype, circa 1570, from an altarpiece-belonging to the Capponi family

Fig. 94. *Silvered bronze Crucifix* attributed by **Sebastiano Torrigiani** after a model by **Guglielmo della Porta**, Grimaldi Fava Collection

Fig. 95. Gilt bronze Crucifix by Sebastiano Torrigiani, 1581, after a model by **Guglielmo della Porta,** San Giacomo Maggiore, Bologna

Although the bronze must have been cast during Guglielmo della Porta's lifetime, the intricate cold work displayed by our bronze rule out that he executed it himself. This leads us to consider the idea that one of his talented goldsmiths who were part of the "Gran Scuola" could have executed it in his workshop. The most likely candidates are, Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert, "Coppe Fiamingo", 1535-1615, one of the first assistants of Guglielmo della Porta who worked with the Master until his death in 1577 and was specialized in casting small bronzes sculptures, Antonio Gentili da Faenza, who collaborated with Guglielmo della Porta before his death in 1577 and claimed to have models by Michelangelo, and Sebastiano Torrigiani, who became Guglielmo della Porta's main assistant from circa 1570 and inherited his workshop after 1577.

Following what we have mentioned in the first chapter, Dr Arie Pappot relates the alloy of our bronze Crucifix to several Guglielmo Della Porta's bacchanal plaquettes (1550/60) which are at present attributed to his assistant, Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert. This technical correspondence of the alloy, combined with the bleeding wound as an iconographic terminus ante quem, strongly support the possibility that the bronze could have been cast by Jacob Cobaert during the life of Michelangelo or just after he passed away (1564) and before the death of Guglielmo della Porta (1577). All the more he was considered the most refined goldsmith of Guglielmo della Porta's workshop until the arrival of Torrigiani in the 70s, translating into metal or clay the mannerist designs effected by Guglielmo della Porta and casting his wax models. He was also in charge of the finishing of all the cold work, fully dominating the goldsmith technique of chiseling and welding. Unfortunately, only a statue in marble, the St Matthew circa 1587 at present at SS Trinita dei Peregrini, Rome, is documented to him and just a few small bronzes can be traced. Thus, his technique, as CD Dickerson states, is a bit of a mystery and can only be appreciated through the inspection of some attributed bronze works; among them, the prophets and the Saints from the tabernacle of S Luigi dei Francese, Rome, 1585, attributed by CD Dickerson and the Altoviti portable altarpiece whose Apostols are ascribed by Jennifer Montagu to him on the bases of a comparative analyze with the tabernacle. Furthermore, scholars have assigned to him the already mentioned Bacchanals and the Ovid's metamorphoses plaquettes (Fig. A) as well as a Descent from the Cross relief (Fig. 96).[43]

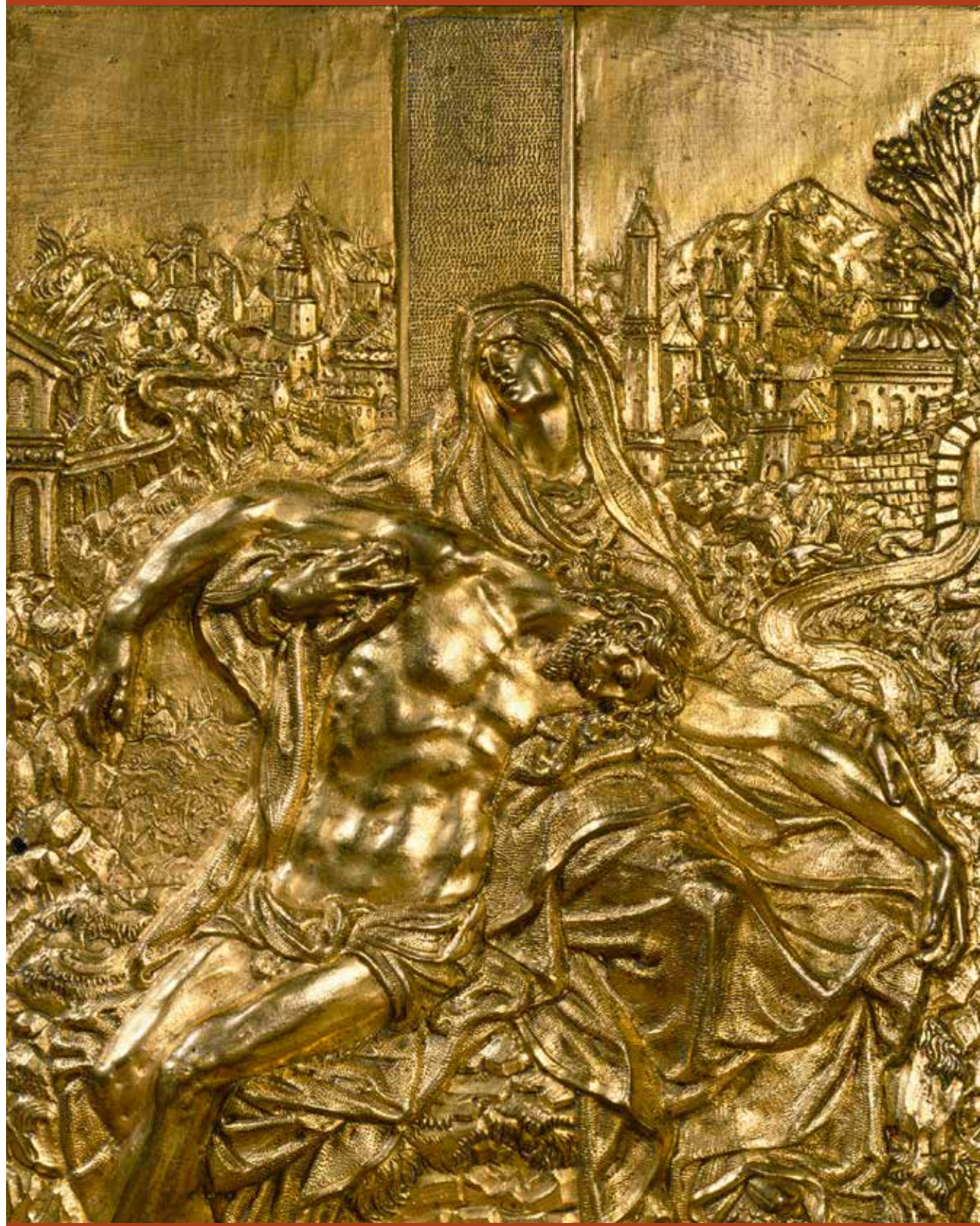


Fig. 96. A gilt bronze relief of the Pieta, attributed to **Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert** after a design by **Guglielmo della Porta**, 1569, NGA Washington DC >

While, based on dates, either of the three goldsmiths could have executed around 1570 our bronze Crucifix, the technical virtuosity and precision in the design displayed in it, suggest that the goldsmith most esteemed at the time, Antonio Gentili, could have cast it. However, certain stylistic elements, such as the interweaving of the hair in the beard, which is highly characteristic of Sebastiano Torregiani (Fig. 94, 97), and the fact that he died a year before Juan Francisco Franconio arrived in Seville in 1597, reinforce the possibility of Torrigiani's involvement circa 1570 just after the death of Michelangelo[44], and before the decease of della Porta in 1577.

Anyhow, whoever has cast the bronze Crucifix, no doubt it has been undertaken under the close direction of Guglielmo della Porta, bearing in mind our bronze attests several stylistic features common to some of his autograph sculptures: the dripping wound, the curled hair in the beard and wavy hair separated by a streak in the middle of the head; the sprue at the top of the head (Fig. 100) and the movable perizonium with a design very similar to Guglielmo della Porta's Crucifixes, which covers the nudity of Christ, a technique invented in his workshop and imported to Spain by Juan Bautista Franconio for its use in his early casts (Fig. 98, 99, 100, 103, 106).

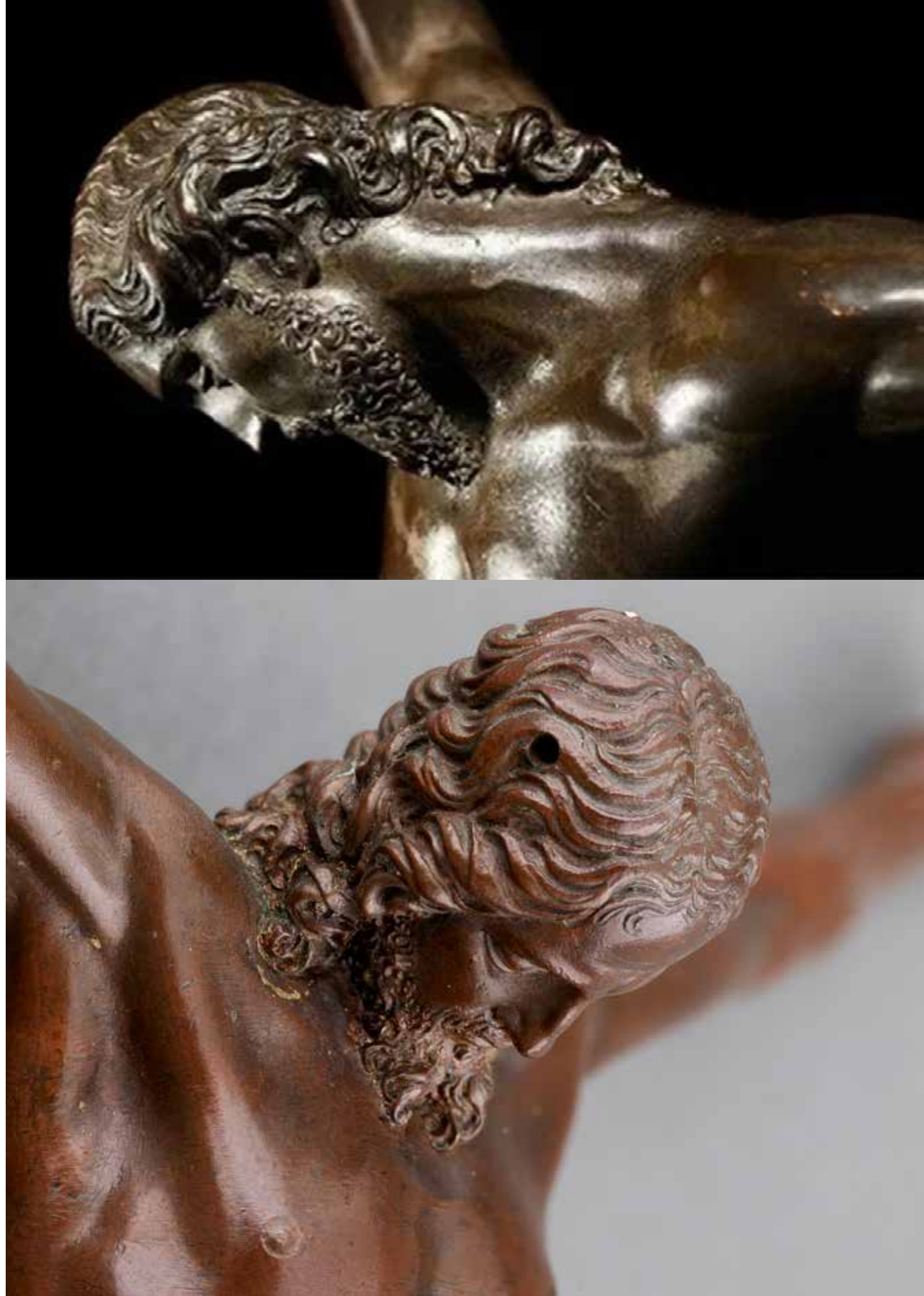


Fig. 97. *Silvered bronze Crucifix*, attributed to **Sebastiano Torrigiani**, Grimaldi Fava Collection >

Fig. 98. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection >

Fig. 99. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 100. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 101. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

Fig. 102. *Gilt bronze Crucifix* by **Guglielmo della Porta**, 1570, Farnese Prototype

Fig. 103. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection

38. Arie Pappot with Robert Van Langh "Technical Considerations of the Rothchild Bronzes. Michelangelo Sculptor", ed Victoria Avery, 2018.

39. Riddick Renbronze.com, Op cit Appendix B p2 "Casts of the Crucifix".

40. Riddick, "Michelangelo's influence on Guglielmo della Porta" Renbronze.com; Rosario Coppel, Charles Avery op cit Coll y Cortes, 2012, pp62-65; According to Giorgio Vasari, Michelangelo recommended Guglielmo della Porta as a restorer of sculptures and archaeological objects for the Farnese family. He also recommended him as an "apostolic sealer", the custodian of the papal seal for papal bulls, which allowed him to receive a monthly income, to the detriment of his rival, Cellini. This eventually led Guglielmo della Porta to become the preeminent portrait sculptor of the pope. Despite Michelangelo's evident influence on Guglielmo, their friendship soured when Guglielmo signed his work, the monumental tomb of Pope Paul III from 1550-55 in the Basilica of San Pietro, emulating Michelangelo, who had only signed one work in his life, the Vatican Pieta. This must have angered Michelangelo, especially since the sepulcher bears a resemblance, to some extent, to the tomb of the Medici from 1524-34. (Charles Avery, opus cit, Coll y Cortes, 2012).

We will comment further the consequences of this dispute in particular because it supports in a way the hypothesis that, if the wax model was given by Michelangelo to Guglielmo as a present or as commission for casting it for Vittoria Colonna in the 40s when they still were friends, it is reasonable to justify why he did not gave it back to Michelangelo when Vittoria died (1547) and that he preferred to keep it in secret as a source of inspiration for his model of Crucified Christ.

In the inventory of Guglielmo della Porta's workshop, compiled after his death in February 1577, there are records of 58 Crucifixes, ranging in size from 70 cm to 22 cm, with three of them in silver and the rest in bronze. (Rosario Coppel, op cit, p68) All these Crucifixes must have been sold or given away by Teodoro della Porta and Sebastiano Torrigiani. In a second inventory drawn up October 1578 mentions only 19 Crucifixes.

Fig. A. *Ovid's metamorphoses*, bronze relief, cast circa 1590 by **Jacob Cobaert** after a model in plaster made under supervision by **Guglielmo della Porta**, circa 1560. Victoria & Alber Museum

There is evidence that Teodoro della Porta denounced Antonio Gentili for the theft of a model, most probably the wax models made by Jacob Cobaert under the design and supervision of della Porta 1550/60 representing Ovid's metamorphoses cast by Cobaert or Gentili da Faenza. This trial proves a strained relationship between this goldsmith and the heirs of della Porta. As a matter of fact, Teodoro della Porta was also accused of the robbery of these models. CD Dickerson "The Gran Scuola of Guglielmo della Porta: The rise of the Aurifex Inventor and the education of Stephano Maderno", Storia del Arte, Vol 121 pp25 -71; Victoria & Albert Museum Catalogue's entry of the Ovid's metamorphoses bronze plaquette; Baglione, in "Le Vite", assigned some of Ovid's plaquettes to Cobaert (Fig. A).

41. Rosario Coppel, "Guglielmo della Porta in Rome: A Counter-Reformation Sculptor", Coll y Cortes 2012; Michael Riddick, "Michelangelo Influence on Guglielmo della Porta"; See an example of a gilt bronze Crucifix with a bleeding wound cast by Guglielmo della Porta between, circa1570, Coll y Cortes 2012, Catalogue, pages 62-65; Riddick, op cit, p 5. In a letter from Guglielmo to his friend Amanatti dated 1569, he indicates that he made a Crucifix for Pius V, another for the Austrian Emperor Maximilian, delivered along with a letter in 1569, and another for Cardinal Farnese in silver, currently in the Vatican, whose satisfaction was mentioned in a letter in December 1571. These three Crucifixes show a significant stylistic influence from Michelangelo's Crucifix under study.

42. Refer to note 4 and 13.

A solid bronze with an alloy datable 1525-1575 representing a Crucified Christ, identical to the Sforcesco model designed by Michelangelo, exhibited at Tefaf 2022 by Gallerie Sismann, also presents the same bleeding wound and is also dated before 1570. This Bronze Crucifix is discussed and published in op cit Paul Joannides October 2022 p24 note 15. The closeness of this model with Jacopo del Duca's Crucifix in La Certosa di San Lorenzo in Padula, dated in 1574, leads me to consider whether it could derived from a combination of two models designed by Michelangelo, The Sforzesco model and the four nails model under study both preceding Jacopo del Duca's model (executed before 1573). See Stefano L' Occaso, "Michelangelo, I bronzi della Pasione" Museo Palazzo Ducale, 13 Marzo-15 Giugno, 2022, Mantova.

43. Refer to note 4, 7 and 8. In a legal document dated 1609, Antonio Gentili da Faienza mentioned that he had many models from many great artists, including one from Michelangelo.

Dickerson 2008, op cit note 38; Riddick Renbronze.com "A renowned Pietà by Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert". Probably Jacob Cobaert first intention when he arrived Rome was to work as an ivory craftsman, as he came from Flanders with great tradition in this medium, but his plans changed when he enters in della Porta workshop. Anyhow he is documented as having worked the ivory in Italy in a letter to Jacopo Crescendi and a deposition at the Palazzo Venezzia is traditionally attributed to him. Baglione considers Jacob Cobaert the most dedicated goldsmith in Rome "in far picolo era eccelenti" only comparable to Gentili or Torrigiani and far superior to Vanni and Spagna who chose to industrialize the workshop so as to attend the increasing Papal and rich patron's commissions. In a letter to Ammanati sent in 1569 he is mentioned as the assistant of Guglielmo della Porta (Gramberg 64 p122) and was the one who made original clays models from the designs of the Master from 1550 to 76 (Goldsmith 73); this is also confirmed in the lawsuit of the Ovid's metamorphoses where he states that he models after the designs by the Master Guglielmo. He creates his own workshop after the death della Porta 1577 and worked as a goldsmith for the Contarelli family. Jennifer Montagu has rediscovered the four prophets cast in 1580/85 for the tabernacle of St Luigi dei Francesi that were dispersed. She highlights the detail of the cold work and chasing (see Montagu 96).

44. Coppel Opus cit, Coll y Cortes 2012; Riddick “A Possible Corpus, Saint, and Siren by Sebastiano Torrigiani”; “Michelangelo Influence on Guglielmo della Porta” and “Reconstituting a Crucifix by Guglielmo della Porta and His Colleagues” by Michael Riddick; CD Dickerson 2008 in op cit note 38 “explains how Rome became a breeding ground for craftsmen specializing in decorative arts. They were the only ones authorized to work with gold, marking the decline of Art in Rome, emphasized by the death of Michelangelo. This decay would only be overcomed with the appearance of another genius, Bernini. The Gran Scuola of decorative arts in Rome came about as a reaction to great sculptors leaving Rome for other cities, such as Giambologna to Florence, Leone Leoni to Milan, Amanatti to Urbino, fleeing from Michelangelo’s artistic monopoly. Only Guglielmo della Porta remained, whom Michelangelo helped to establish in the Papal’s court to the detriment of Cellini. della Porta’s exultant success was due to his ability to create designs and models of great bravura and inventiveness which were transferred to metal by the best Roman goldsmiths, in virtuoso executions (Fig. B). This was comparable only to the virtuosity that Giambologna achieved in Florence. Among these goldsmiths, it is worth mentioning the Florentine Manno Sbarri (1496-1553), who executed the Farnese Casket, and the Sienese goldsmith Alexandro Turchi, both of whom lived in the goldsmiths’ district, alongside the foremost exponent and president of the guild, Antonio Gentili da Faenza. They all worked in close competition with the renowned Curzio Vanni and Spagna, all independent goldsmiths who collaborated with Guglielmo della Porta’s workshop whose most skilled officials were , Jacob Cobaert and Sebastiano Torrigiani ; all these craftsmen in one way or another under the creativity of Guglielmo della Porta, formed the so-called by Baglione the “Gran Scuola”, a sort of academy of decorative arts that transferred the ingenious designs of Guglielmo della Porta to metal with remarkable talent. These designs were ultimately inspired by Michelangelo, albeit somewhat diminished by an affected mannerism of elongated forms and compositional arabesques. This influence is evident in the custodies, bronze plaquettes, and reliefs that depict Christ tied to a column, framed by ornate cornucopias with a marked and somewhat decadent Michelangelesque character. This may have inspired El Greco before his arrival in Spain. “The Gran Scuola of Guglielmo della Porta, Storia del Arte”, vol. 121; Michael Riddick, “El Greco’s Roman period and the influence of Guglielmo della Porta” 2020.

< Fig. B. *Flagelation*, gilt bronze relief, **Guglielmo della Porta**, 1575, Victoria Albert Museum


5 Artistic Transcendence of Michelangelo's Crucified Christ with Four Nails

The resolute simplicity with which Michelangelo expresses himself in this composition, based on symmetry and constraint in its lines, holds in itself as the epitaph of the Renaissance.

The transcendence of this model in Rome was significant due to the somewhat concealed influence it had on the design of Guglielmo della Porta's Crucified Christ, 1570s, transformed into a symbol of the Counter Reformation, bearing a monumental serenity not found in the rest of della Porta's oeuvre, which tended to be more prone to nervousness and expressiveness than the Michelangelesque restraint.

Certainly, Michelangelo's model had to be reinterpreted, adapted to new religious trends and the decorative context promoted by the "Gran Scuola". In the case of the recently discovered bronze Crucifix, Guglielmo della Porta added a bleeding wound, and he covers his nudity with a movable perizonium. In his canonical Crucified Christ, he inclined His head to the right, breaking the symmetry of the original design and sacrificing naturalism in the representation of death in favour of a more rhythmic movement, emphasized by the fold of the legs, similar to Jacopo del Duca's Christ (Fig. 104). Furthermore, in some examples, there is a slight hip movement, accentuating the waist and the lengthening of the legs in clear mannerist contrapposto. However, fundamentally, all these variations of the Crucified Christ produced in della Porta's workshop share the common characteristic of exalting the physical and spiritual beauty of Christ, imbued with solemn and almost musical serenity, which fundamentally follows Michelangelo's model. This is in perfect harmony with the ecclesiastical guidelines that aimed to bring believers closer to Christ through art, considering beauty as a material manifestation of the spirit of Christ.[45]

Fig. 104. *Relief representing the Crucifixion of Christ*, 1574, > **Jacopo del Duca**, Tabernacle of San Lorenzo in Padula, Salerno, Italy

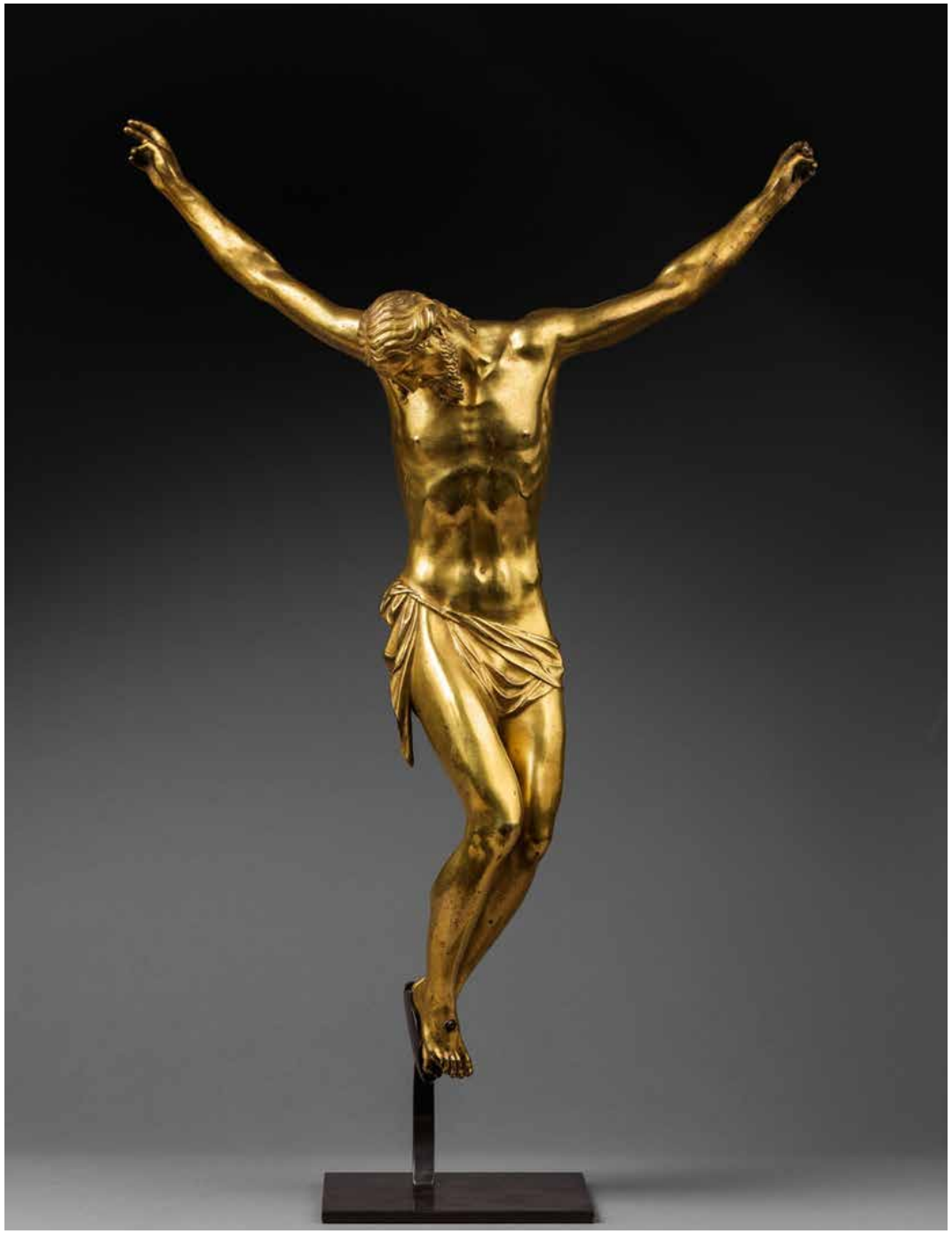


Fig. 105. *Crucified Christ*, gilt bronze, **Guglielmo della Porta**, circa 1570, Gallery Sismann Paris

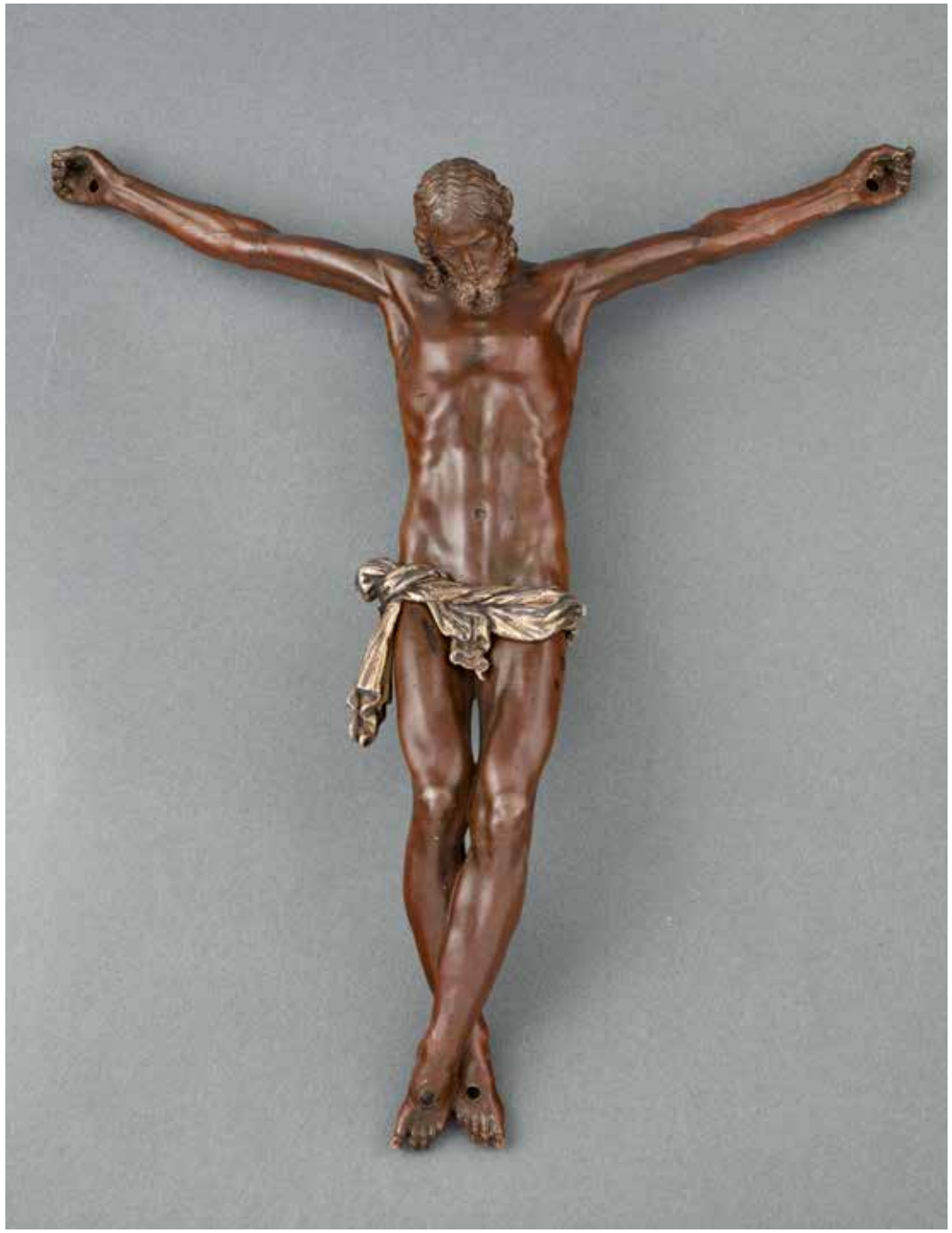


Fig. 106. *Crucified Christ*, after a model by **Michelangelo** (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, IOMR Collection

Michelangelo's model, once its survival was assured, was not excessively replicated in Rome, as evidenced by the fact that only three Roman first— generation casts of this model are known: the Jacopo del Duca's version for the tabernacle of the Certosa di San Lorenzo in Padula (Fig. 104), based on Michelangelo's designs for the tabernacle of the Church of St María degli Angeli in Rome, the prototype considered by Michael Riddick (Fig. 40), and the recently discovered bronze Crucifix brought from Rome to Seville by Juan Bautista Franconio in 1597 and head of the series of Spanish metallic Crucifixes (Fig. 106). This contrast with Michelangelo's model of "Samson and the Philistines" (Fig. 107), which was much more replicated and publicly accepted, exerting great influence in Giambologna in Florence and later Bernini in Rome.

Such an iconic and perfectly conceived plastic representation of the Crucified Christ had an influence somewhat mute because on the one hand Roman workshops, especially that of Guglielmo della Porta, were very protective of the originality of their designs, keeping their sources of inspiration hidden. On the other hand, della Porta's workshop and the "Gran Scuola" had patented a model of Christ as an authentic icon of their success in the papal realm, with ramifications at the courts of Philip II of Spain and Maximilian of Austria. This model solidified della Porta's dominant position in the Roman art market, making any potential artistic connection between their successful Christ model and Michelangelo's more detrimental than beneficial. All the more, that during Michelangelo's lifetime, Guglielmo della Porta had to endure accusations of plagiarizing Michelangelo's models for the Medici Chapel in the tomb of Paul III.

Fig. 107. *Samson and two Philistines*, after a model by **Michelangelo**, >
XVI century, 36,8 cm., The Frick Collection

In this regard, the fact that Michelangelo's model served as an artistic and spiritual guide for the late XVI century typology of the Christ Crucified, embodied by della Porta, attests and justifies the intention to keep it secret during the 1570s, just when the fashion for gilt Christs emerged. During this time, it remained in the workshop more as a working material than for veneration, almost forgotten and as such it was brought to Seville, giving life to Michelangelo's four-nailed Crucifix model and expanding its influence to Spain and the New World. Meanwhile, della Porta's Christ survived his death in 1577, thriving through the "Gran Scuola" of goldsmiths with Antonio Gentili, Sebastiano Torrigiani, and Gaspar Mola as its chief representatives (Fig. 108).[46]

This Crucifix model had a much more direct and public impact in Spain because it had the good fortune to come to the attention of Francisco Pacheco, a renowned Art theoretician and the head of the most important workshop and academy in Seville, a city with strong connections with the New World and Italy. Pacheco actively promoted Michelangelo's model, through his treatise "Arte de la pintura", owing to the importance he assigned to its iconography based in representing the Crucified Christ dead with four nails.[47]

Shortly after the first generation of Spanish casts of this model (Fig. 109), carried out by Juan Bautista Franconio in 1600, whose iconography spread to the north of Spain through the examples of a second generation executed by the silversmiths Andrés del Campo and Lesmes Fernandez del Moral in Valladolid, circa 1630, Juan Martínez Montañés, the founder of the polychrome sculpture school in Seville, reproduced this image in wood for the first time, representing a Crucified Christ with four nails for the Church our Lady of Mercy, Lima, in 1603 (Fig. 111)[48]. This marked the beginning of an iconography that enjoyed enormous success in the American territories. Several months later, Martínez Montañés produced another sculpture by commission of the archdeacon of Carmona, this time, according to the client's wishes, representing a Christ still alive, looking at the faithful, and with His head tilted to the right (Fig. 110)[49]. In 1614 Pacheco adopt this iconography in a painting, following the same model of the Crucified Christ with a perizonium virtually identical to the bronze model brought by Franconio, with the only difference of rendering the feet separated and standing on a flat board, as depicted by Dürer. Pacheco's painting, like most of his work, did not exhibit great artistic genius; still, he was more significant for its intellectual contributions than its artistic ones, and doubtless for mentoring Diego Velázquez (Fig. 113).[50]

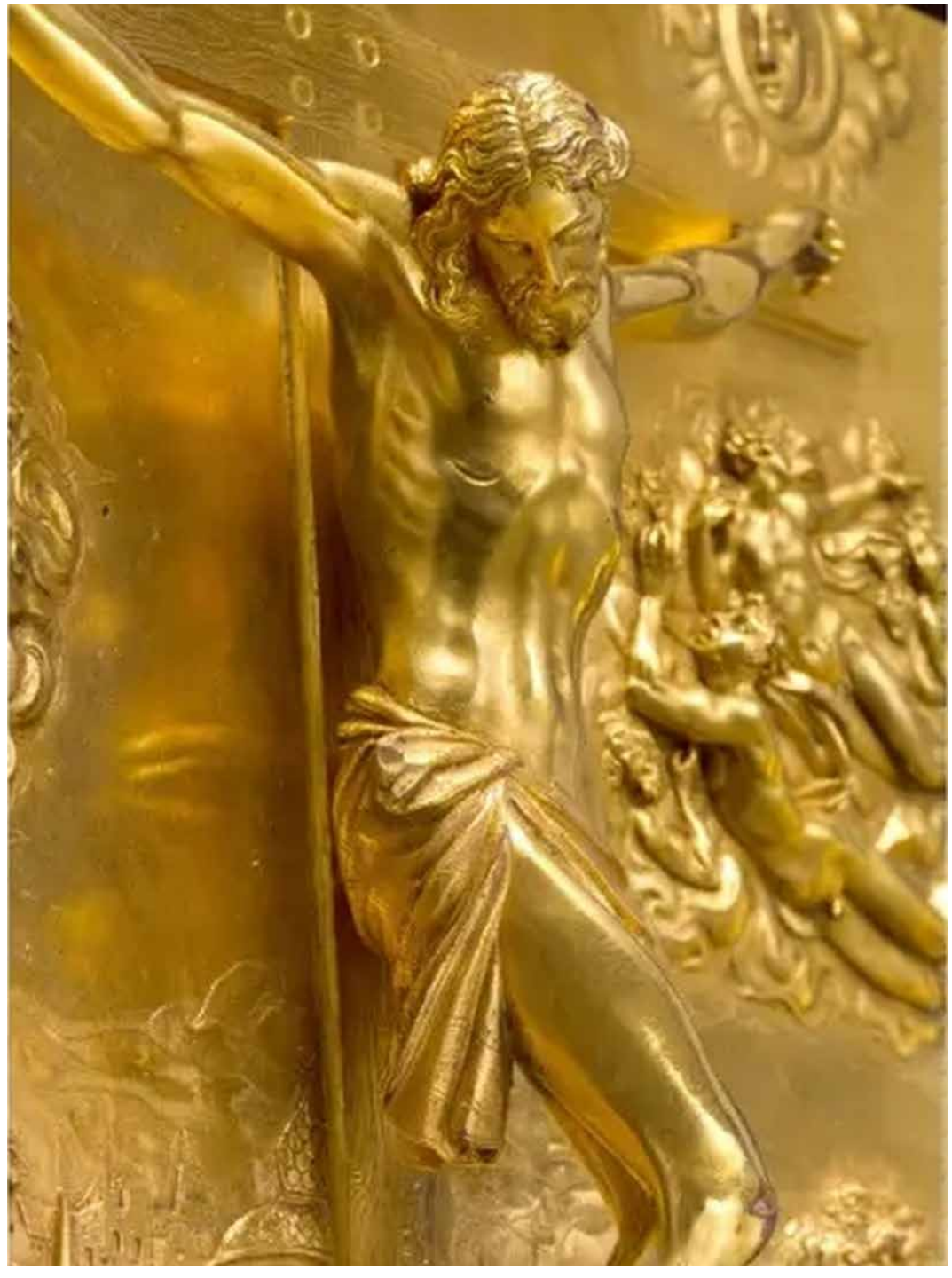


Fig. 108. Mount Calvary, Gilt bronze, detail, > Guglielmo della Porta, circa 1575, Coll & Cortes Gallery

Fig. 109. *Crucifix*, silver, cast by **Juan Bautista Franconio** circa 1600, Catedral de Sevilla > >

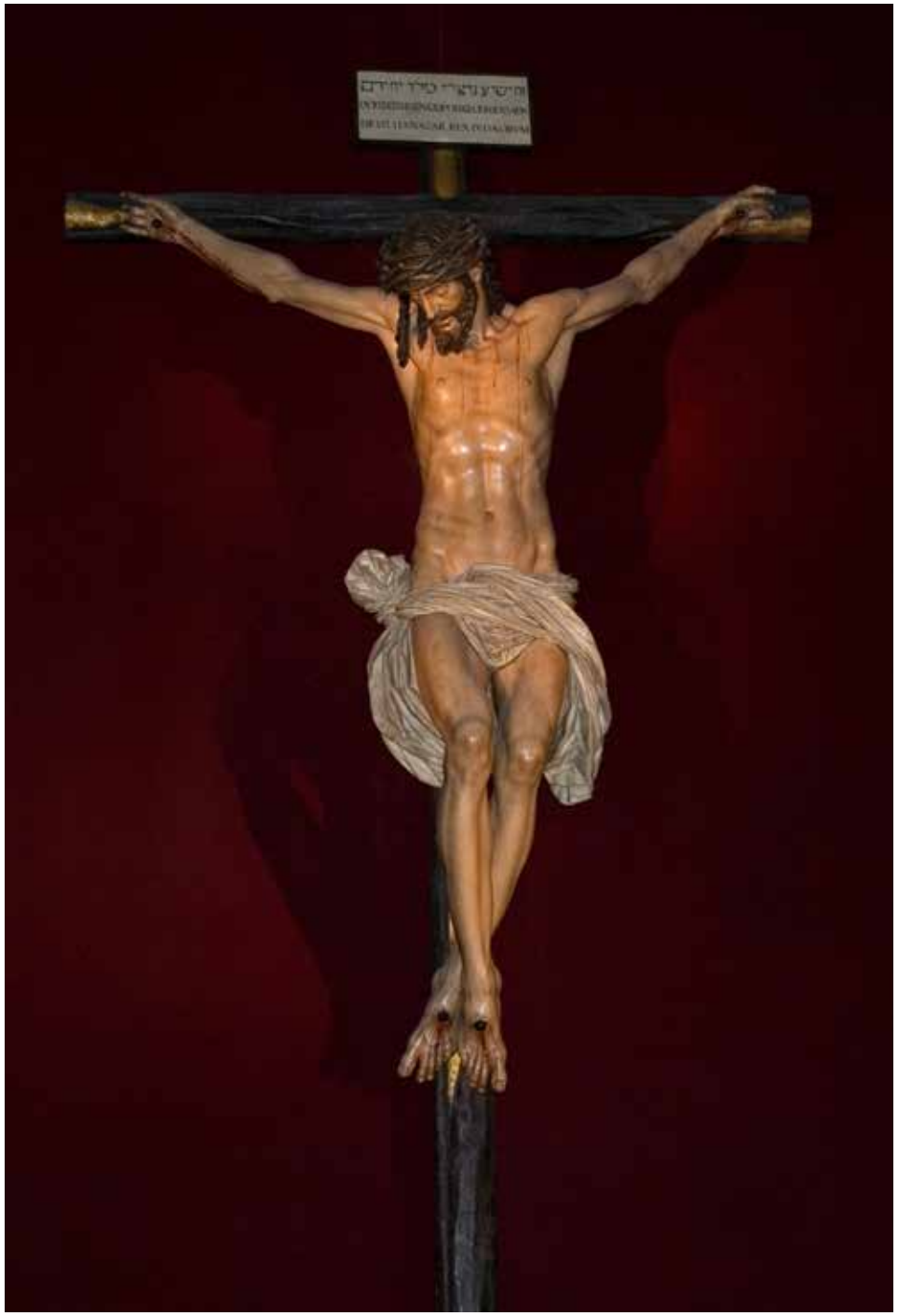
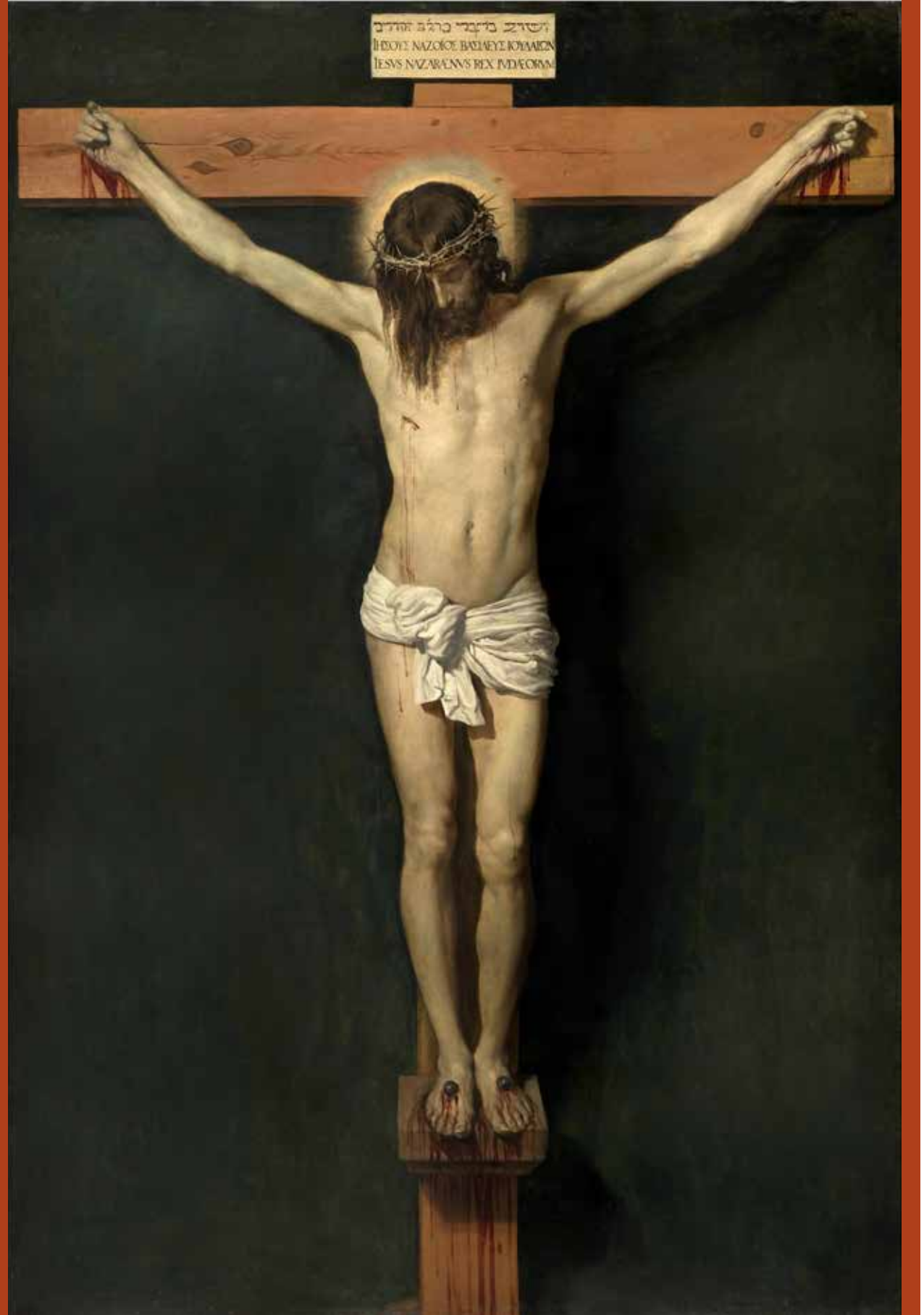


Fig. 110. *Cristo de la Clemencia*, polychrome wood, 1603, **Juan Martínez Montañés**, capilla de los Cálices. Catedral de Sevilla

Velázquez provides a compelling example of the impact this image had on him by including this Crucifix in his painting of Sor Jerónima de la Fuente, executed at the beginning of his stay in Madrid in 1620 (Fig. 7) and drew direct inspiration from this model of the deceased Christ to create the most significant Crucified Christ image in the history of Spanish painting.

Fig. 111. *Cristo del Auxilio*, polychrome wood, 1602-1603, **Juan Martínez Montañés**, Church of our Lady of Mercy, Lima



Velázquez painted the Christ of San Plácido in 1629 (Fig. 112), seemingly using the model by Michelangelo that he had seen in Pacheco's workshop and might have been brought from Seville to Madrid, as his sole source of inspiration.[51]

In this Christ, Velázquez bypassed the contorted models of Rubens, the mannerism of Giambologna, and the graceful naturalness of Cellini, all of which represented Christ in ways he could have seen at the Escorial and the Alcázar. Instead, he focused on a youthful image of Christ that, thanks to its perfect symmetry and the downward tilt of the head revealing Christ's Apollonian profile, was much closer to the model by Michelangelo that had left a profound impact on him years earlier. Velázquez, however, added his own touch of greater naturalness, introducing a lock of hair covering half of Christ's face and representing Him standing naturally with both feet nailed to a board that prevents His body from collapsing, displaying a slight contrapposto. There is no trace of pain or struggle with death, only the pale skin, the dripping blood in the limbs and lifeless muscles express the coldness of death. This distinguishes Velázquez's Christ from Michelangelo's model, which is suffused with contained drama and whose serene demeanour and inner peace reveals a reflexive act that overcomes suffering.

Only a genius as Velázquez could reinterpreted Michelangelo's iconic image so as to infuse his Christ a more Baroque, down-to-earth humanity, imbued with Hispanic naturalism. Yet, at the same time, connected to an inherent beauty, elegance, and simplicity, which are distinctive and unequivocally linked to the message conveyed by Michelangelo in his model of the Crucified Christ.

< Fig. 112. Cristo de San Plácido, 1629. Diego Velázquez, Museo del Prado. Madrid

Following this Christ, the most Michelangelesque of those painted in Spain, other artists also adhered to the four-nail iconography. Alonso Cano created his Crucified Christ, 1638, at present in the "Academia de San Fernando", strongly influenced by Velázquez's translation of the model (Fig. 114). Several living Christs Crucified with four nails were produced, including examples by Zurbarán, Ribera and finally, Francisco de Goya's Crucifix in the late 18th century whose model aligns more with Italian models by Guido Reni.

Fig. 113. *Crucified Christ* with four nails, **Francisco Pacheco**, 1614, Fundación Pública Andaluza Rodríguez-Acosta

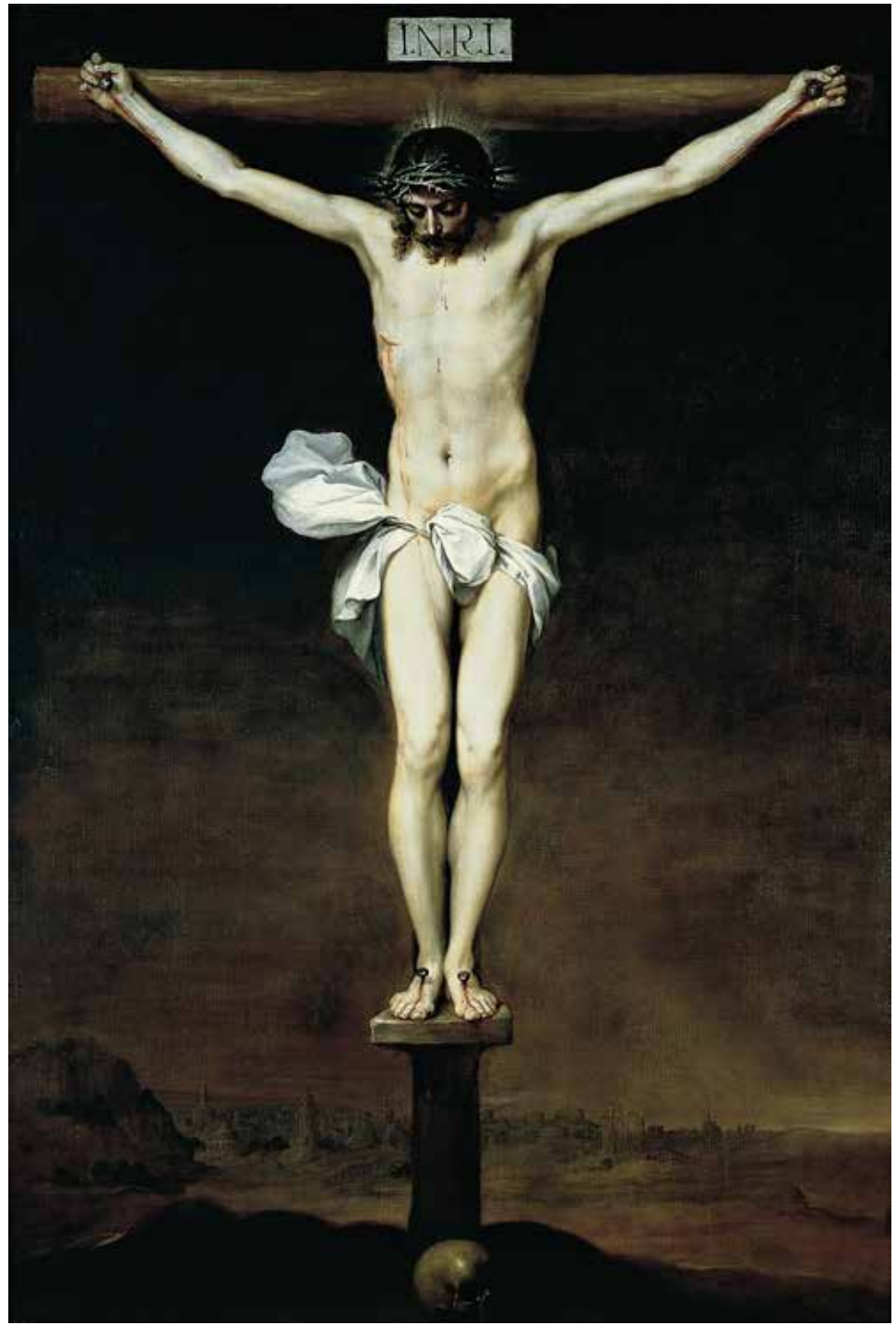


Fig. 114. *Crucified Christ* with four nails, **Alonso Cano**, 1638, Academia de San Fernando, Madrid

Among all the followers of this model, perhaps Zurbarán deserves special mention due to the number of versions of the Crucified Christ with four nails he created, the importance of his workshop, and the influence of his painting in Mexico and Peru. One of his early representations of a dead Christ, heavily influenced by his master Pacheco, with whom he worked in his workshop, is currently in the Museum of Fine Arts in Seville. For different reasons, we should mention, on the one hand, his masterpiece painted in 1627 for the Dominican convent, currently held at the Institute of Art of Chicago (Fig. 115) where Zurbarán presents a Christ more in the style of Caravaggio, thus deviating from the Michelangelesque canon, by portraying Him as a rough, unrefined man, devoid of nobility, resembling a peasant in death, with His head slanted to the right and on the other hand, the one closest to Michelangelo's model, painted in 1650, representing the Dead Christ with His head inclined toward His chest and His legs crossed, depicted alongside Saint Luke, currently housed in the Prado Museum (Fig. 116)[52].

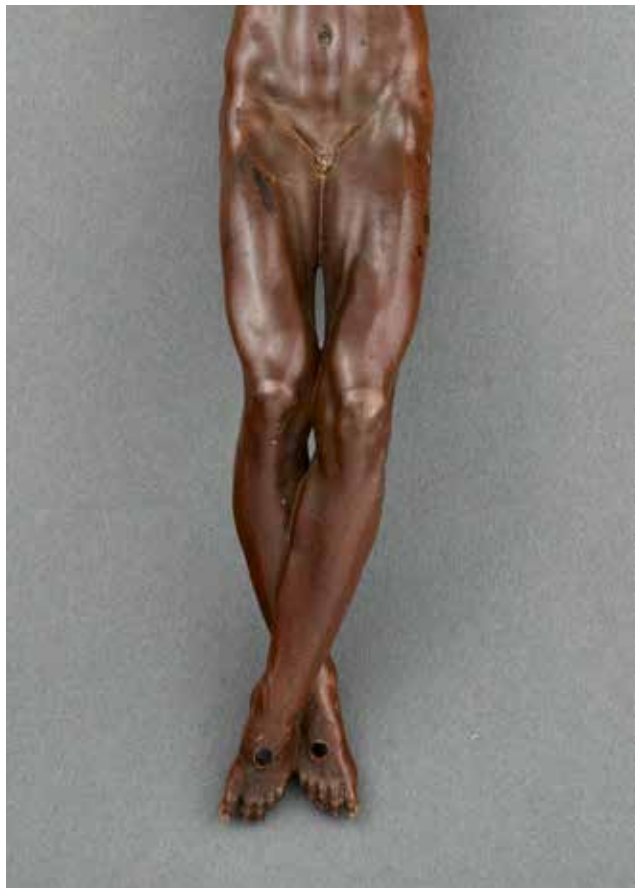
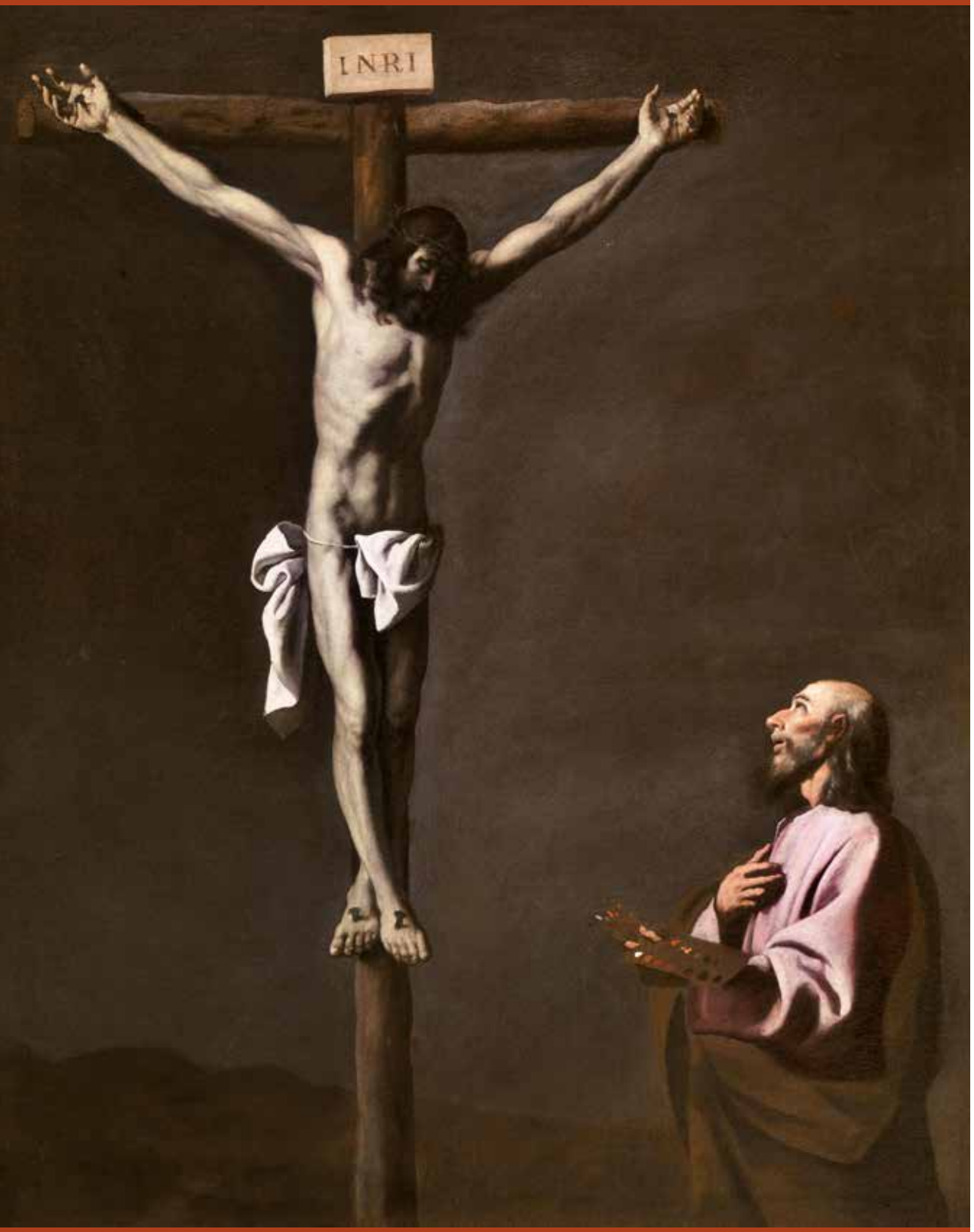


Fig. 115. Crucified Christ with four nails, Francisco de Zurbarán, 1627, Art institute of Chicago >



In light of the rediscovery of this bronze Crucifix model by Michelangelo, brought to Spain in 1597, and its scientific study, we have aimed to recapitulate all the artistic, spiritual, and iconographic facets that grant this Christ's image a canonical character that bears the potential, not only to define and attribute its design to one of the greatest artistic geniuses in history, but also to transform the course of Art history.

Fig. 117. *Portrait of Jerónima de la Fuente* by **Diego Velázquez** holding the Crucifix cast by Juan Bautista Franconio and polychromed by Pacheco, 1620, private Collection Madrid

< Fig. 116. Crucified Christ with four nails accompanied by Saint Luke, circa 1650, Francisco de Zurbarán, Museo del Prado

NOTES

45. See note 42. CD Dickerson. The Grand Scuola of Guglielmo della Porta, the rise of the "Aurifex inventor". "Michelangelo's influence on Guglielmo della Porta". Stefano L'Occaso, 2008. "Michelangelo, I bronzi della Pasione" Museo Palazzo Ducale, 15 marzo-15 junio 2022. Mantova.

It is a reasonable idea to consider Guglielmo della Porta's canon of Crucified Christ a symbiosis between two models conceived by Michelangelo: the four nails Crucifix model and the Castello Sforcesco's Christ Crucified with the head inclined to the right and the legs slightly fold to the left in a beautiful contrapposto. (Fig. A)

46. Coppel, Estella, Avery, exhib cat, Coll y Cortes 2012; Michael Riddick "Reconstituting a Crucifix by Guglielmo della Porta and his Colleagues".

47. See notes 1, 2 and 3.

48. In Lima, there are several Christs that follow this model, such as the "Cristo de la Constricción" created for the Jesuit Church of Pedro by Martín Oviedo, represented as dead with the head inclined and legs crossed, and the so-called "Cristo de la Conquista" in La Merced, represented as alive with crossed legs and looking upwards. There are others made later in Lima between 1632 and 1650, such as the one by Gaspar de la Cueva, and in Bolivia, in La Paz, there is another Christ by Francisco Herrera y Velarde, made in Potosí in 1653 for the Jesuits of San Pedro. Leonardo Mattos Cardenas "Dos invenciones: El Cristo del Auxilio de Juan Martínez Montañés y el Felipe IV a caballo. Orígenes y eco arquitectónico de su difusión en Lima", Instituto di Studi Latinoamericani 2019.

49. The "Cristo de la Clemencia" was created for the private oratory of the canon of the Archbishopric of Seville, Mateo Vázquez de Leca, a scholar born in Italy with many influences at the court of Philip IV. After his death, it passed to the Cartuja de las Cuevas, and since 1836, with the disentailment of Mendizábal, it has been in the Cathedral of Seville, in the Chapel of the Chalices. Hence its new name "Cristo de los cálices." op cit note 46, Leonardo Mattos Cárdenas 2019. Jose Hernández Diaz "Monográfica de Juan Martínez Montañés" 1949.

50. This work is currently at the Fundación Pública Andaluza Rodríguez-Acosta, Granada.

51. This work has been analyzed in all the monographs and scientific studies of Velázquez, among them stand out the one by Karl Justí, López Rey, Diego Angulo, Jonathan Brown, and Carmen Garrido.

52. Odile Delenda, Wildenstein Institute Francisco Zurbaran 1598-1664, Fundación Arte Hispánico 2009; José Gudiol Ricart "Zurbarán"1976; Paul Guinard, "Zurbarán et les peintres espagnols de la vie Monastique"; "Zurbaran a new perspective" published by the Thyssen Foundation.

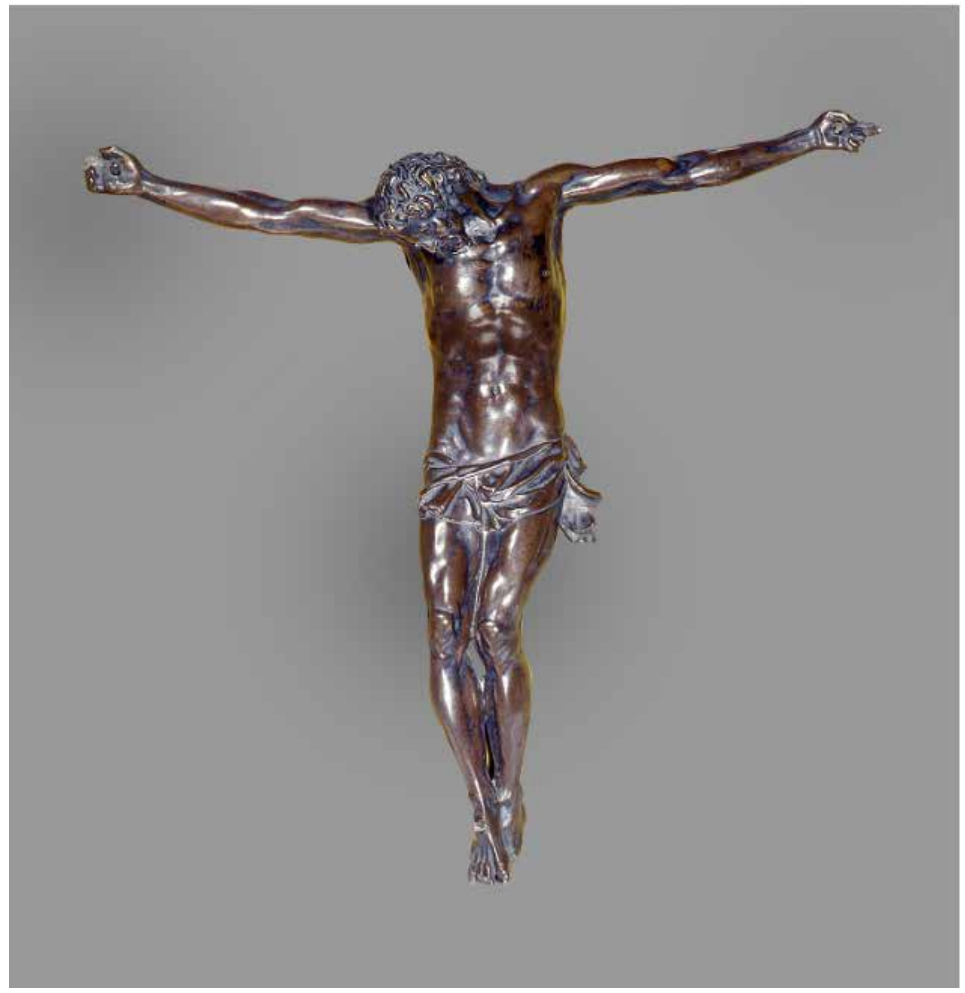


Fig. A. *Crucified Christ*, bronze, after a model by **Michelangelo**, circa 1525, Crucifixion group, Castello Sforcesco, Milano

Conclusions

From all the foregoing, we can conclude that the Crucifix under the scope of this study is the one referred to by Francisco Pacheco as conceived by Michelangelo and brought from Rome to Seville by Juan Bautista Franconio in 1597; a first generation of casts of metal Crucifixes with four nails was made from it in Spain, three of them in silver and at least two in bronze, polychromed by Francisco Pacheco (1600).

The use of our Crucifix as a model for producing further casts is demonstrated, on the one hand, by the superior quality of its details compared to other versions and, on the other hand, by the presence of wax and plaster residues on its surface. Furthermore, its height from feet to head (23cm) is one centimetre taller than two of its best silver casts, the one belonging to the Palacio Real and the one from the Fundación Rodríguez Acosta, as indicated by its heritage record and the former owner, Manuel Gómez Moreno, respectively (The polychromed bronze version in a private collection in Italy also measures 22cm)

The tests conducted by the CSIC regarding the bronze alloy are consistent with mid-16th-century Roman casts of the Fahlerz type with impurities of arsenic, antimony, nickel, iron, and silver, as indicated by Dr Arie Pappot of the Rijksmuseum. Likewise, the radiological images confirm that it was cast in three parts soft welded with silver and the inclusion of thread screws visible by X-rays, demonstrating a technical virtuosity, corresponding to the fine craftsmanship of the casting and meticulous cold finish, which was only achievable by Roman goldsmith workshops related to Guglielmo della Porta's "Gran Scuola."

Although the assignment of the casting and cold finish of this Crucified Christ in bronze to Michelangelo is a discarded matter, the attribution of the design of this model to his genius is almost universally accepted. Paul

Joannides, the foremost authority on Michelangelo's corpus of drawings, maintains that this conception of the Christ with four Nails was the source for several drawings made by Michelangelo in 1533, especially the Crucified Christ depicted as naked, head bowed, and feet crossed in two drawings at the Teylers Museum in Haarlem (Fig. 54, 56). According to him and the opinion of Carmen Bambach, these drawings correspond to a "primo pensiero" for a sculpture of a Crucifix. However, they do not support Michael Riddick, the living scholar who has extensively studied this model, in his belief that this sculpture was the small Crucifix referred to in the letters between Michelangelo and Vittoria Colonna; though Paul Joannides considers reasonable the thesis drafted by Charles de Tolnay of a lost

sculptural model by Michelangelo related to this design of Crucified Christ with four nails.

After a close reading of these letters available to everyone, we agree with Michael Riddick in this matter, interpreting them as referring to a small wax model of a Crucifix, unfinished but perfect in itself, awaiting completion in bronze by one of Michelangelo's assistants. This interpretation is consistent with the mention by Condivi and Varchi of a dead and naked Christ with legs hanging limp, presented by Michelangelo to the Marquise, and does not exclude the reference by Vasari and Condivi to another gift from Michelangelo to Vittoria, a living Christ gazing towards the Eternal Father, corresponding faithfully to the drawing in the British Museum, as upheld by Paul Joannides.

Therefore, while there is near unanimous agreement in scholarly circles that this Christ model originates from a drawing by Michelangelo created as a study for a sculpture, the interpretation that this sculpture was made by Michelangelo as a gift for the Marquise of Pescara awaits further scholarly support.

Another question yet to be definitely resolved is the identity of the Roman goldsmith who executed the casting and the excellent cold work of our bronze Crucifix, bearing in mind the dating of the bronze between 1560/70, based on a combination of factors, alloy, technical virtuosity, and unique iconography.

We agree with Michael Riddick that the prototype casts directly made from the original wax model were carried out under Guglielmo della Porta close supervision in his workshop. Though in the case of our bronze Crucifix, due to its excellent cold finish, it should be more the work of one of his finest assistants, Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert or Sebastiano Torrigiani, than of Guglielmo della Porta himself.

The matching alloy regarding the bacchanal plaquettes (1550-1560), whose cast is attributed to Jacob Cornelisz Cobaert, points towards being the caster of our bronze Cobaert, the first assistant of della Porta, at the end of Michelangelo's life or just after his death (1564) and before Guglielmo della Porta's decease (1577). However, the fact that Sebastiano Torrigiani died in 1596, just one year before Franconio brought the bronze model from Rome to Seville, could be a significative point to consider, when we bear in mind a possible attribution of the cast to Torrigiani in the late 60s, thus, shortly after the death of Michelangelo and still alive della Porta.

The significance of this Christ model is immeasurable, on par with any work by Michelangelo.

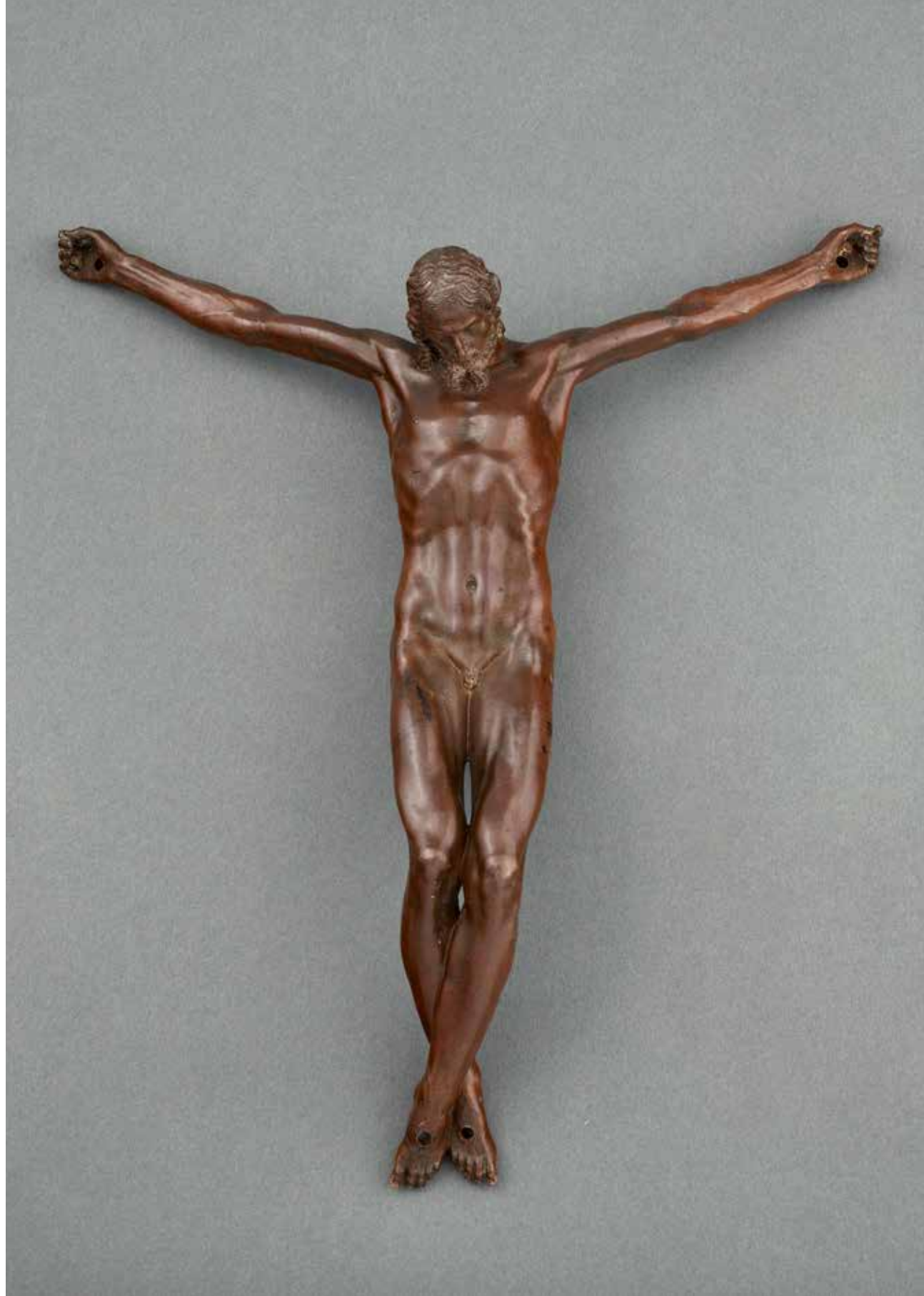
The work reflects the Master's concern for intimate spiritual matters related to the representation of Christ as the Savior of Humanity. His image, naked and Crucified with his feet crossed and individually nailed, is entirely innovative and so heterodox that it could only have been conceived within the context of a personal relationship, such as the one he had with the Marquise of Pescara.

Its impact in Italy, somewhat silenced by Guglielmo della Porta, the supposed custodian of the model, is evident in the design of the Crucified Christ's canon of the Counter-Reformation that dominated the Roman scene until Bernini. A model already devoid of its revolutionary original Michelangelesque character, as it covers its nudity with a perizonium and abandons the iconography of four nails, chosen for the first time since the 12th century by Michelangelo for the representation of the Crucified, but it retains all the beauty and serenity of the original prototype.

Its distinctive iconography of four nails had a much more resounding impact in Spain and the New World.

A true testament to this is its adoption by artistic geniuses such as Martínez Montañés, Velázquez, Alonso Cano, and Goya.

CHS.



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Carlos Herrero Starkie

Director of the Institute of Old Masters Research (IOMR)

28 October 2023

Fig. 118. Crucified Christ, after a model by Michelangelo (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, documented in Seville 1597, detail, IOMR Collection >

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- Reproduction courtesy Cathedral of Cuenca: introduction Fig. L.
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Fig. 119. Crucified Christ, after a model by Michelangelo (1538-41), bronze, cast in Rome, 1560-70, detail, documented in Seville 1597, IOMR Collection

Annexes

1. CSIC Report regarding results of alloy tests and microscope digital and tomographic images of the wax and gesso residues
2. State of condition and restoration Report
3. X-rays images documentation provided by SGS tecnos

1. CSIC Report regarding results of alloy tests and microscope digital and tomographic images of the wax and gesso residues

GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA · MINISTERIO DE CIENCIA E INNOVACIÓN

Instituto de Historia

INFORME SOBRE EL ESTUDIO DE UN CRISTO RENACENTISTA

A solicitud de Ricardo Herrero se ha realizado el estudio para caracterizar el metal empleado en un Cristo identificado como de época renacentista (Fig.1).

Fig. 1 Objeto analizado en el Instituto de Historia del CSIC

Para la caracterización elemental de los distintos elementos metálicos se ha utilizado el espectrómetro portátil INNOV-X Alpha del Museo Arqueológico Nacional equipado con tubo de rayos X y ánodo de plata. Las condiciones de trabajo se establecieron en 35kV y 20μA. Los tiempos de adquisición se fijaron en 60 s y los valores cuantitativos se han calculado a partir de una calibración validada con patrones certificados. Los resultados de los análisis (Tabla 1) se expresan como porcentaje en peso (%) de cada uno de los elementos (ND= no detectado). El límite de cuantificación para plata (Ag) y antimonio (Sb) es de 0,15 %, y para el resto de los elementos se sitúa en el 0,02 %. Los márgenes de error son inferiores al 1 % en los elementos mayoritarios.

Las imágenes de microscopia se han tomado con un microscopio digital Leica DVM6 M con objetivo PL APO FOV 43.75 mm.

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Instituto de Historia

Análisis	Zona	Fe	Ni	Cu	Zn	As	Ag	Sn	Sb	Au	Pb	Bi	Hg
PA29693A	Perizonium trasero	0,2	ND	2,42	ND	ND	64,9	ND	ND	25,3	0,37	0,10	5,87
PA29693B	Perizonium delantero	0,44	ND	4,08	0,17	ND	58,0	ND	ND	32,4	0,4	0,10	3,78
PA29693C	Clavo largo	ND	20,5	62,7	16,8	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
PA29693D	Clavo corto	ND	20,5	62,8	16,7	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
PA29693E	Arandela	ND	ND	6,57	ND	ND	92,9	ND	ND	0,11	0,07	ND	ND
PA29693F	Cabeza muestra viruta interior	0,12	0,19	94,5	ND	0,37	ND	2,76	ND	ND	2,09	ND	ND
PA29693G	Pierna derecha superficie	0,19	0,23	93,5	ND	0,24	0,16	4,55	0,23	ND	0,92	ND	ND
PA29693H	Brazo derecho zona unión	0,18	0,23	86,8	0,19	0,19	6,95	4,13	0,29	ND	1,08	ND	ND
PA29693IJ	Brazo derecho zona antebrazo	0,11	0,22	94,3	ND	0,19	0,18	3,91	0,32	ND	0,79	ND	ND
PA29693K	Brazo izquierdo zona de unión	0,2	0,23	90,5	0,3	0,23	2,46	4,64	0,32	ND	1,11	ND	ND
PA29693L	Remate cruz derecha	0,13	ND	6,32	ND	ND	93,5	ND	ND	ND	0,02	ND	ND
PA29693M	Remate cruz superior	ND	ND	6,21	ND	ND	93,8	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
PA29693N	Clavo pie izquierdo	ND	ND	11,2	1,01	ND	87,8	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND

Tabla 1. Resultados del análisis elemental por pXRF del Cristo renacentista. Valores expresados en % en peso.

Además de las partes del cuerpo del Cristo, se han analizado otros elementos como las dos partes del perizonium o paño de pureza, varios clavos y los remates de la cruz de madera.

La figura del Cristo ha sido analizada mediante viruta extraída del interior a través del orificio que presenta en la parte superior de la cabeza (PA29693F). Este análisis nos permite conocer la composición del metal original no afectado por la pátina superficial. El resultado muestra un bronce plomado, aunque las proporciones de estaño y plomo son muy bajas (2-3%). Las proporciones obtenidas en las zonas del cuerpo con patina (pierna y brazo derechos) confirman la baja proporción original de los elementos aleados, aunque el estaño se encuentra enriquecido en proporciones cercanas al 80 % del valor original, mientras que las proporciones de plomo son inferiores en casi la mitad. Además, este metal contiene impurezas de arsénico, antimonio, níquel y plata (en mayor proporción en las tomas realizadas en la pátina donde suele enriquecer su proporción original). La presencia de impurezas de los 4 elementos señalados indica que el cobre probablemente tiene un origen en minerales tipo cobre gris o fahlore.

En los brazos del crucificado se aprecian unas finas líneas de unión. El material que une ambas partes se identifica como plata (PA29693H y K), ya que es el único elemento que cambia significativamente respecto a la composición general del cuerpo, siendo notablemente más elevado (7% en la toma H). El análisis realizado es en área (en torno a 25 mm^2) y no permite un microanálisis preciso de esta zona de unión, que como se observa en la figura 2 es muy estrecha (máximo de 0,48 mm), por tanto, el resultado obtenido incluye mayoritariamente la composición de la pátina de la figura de bronce.

Fig. 2.- Detalle de la zona de unión del brazo derecho del Cristo.

El resto de los elementos analizados incluye las dos partes del perizonium o paño de pureza, varios clavos y los remates de la cruz de madera.

En cuanto al perizonium las dos partes muestras una composición similar (PA29693A y B) de plata con restos de dorado con mercurio. La plata empleada lleva una pequeña proporción de cobre aleada y destaca por los contenidos de plomo y bismuto, impurezas características de platas antiguas asociadas a los procesos de obtención del metal.

Los clavos sueltos analizados (PA29693C y D) corresponden a una aleación contemporánea de cobre, zinc y níquel que se conoce como alpaca o plata alemana, que empieza a usarse en el primer tercio del siglo XIX.

La arandela (PA29693E) es de nuevo de plata, pero difiere de las proporciones del perizonium al tener una menor proporción de plomo (apenas 0,07 %). También se detectan impurezas de oro, que no suelen encontrarse en la plata de manufactura moderna, salvo que se trate de un resto de dorado no apreciable a simple vista.

Los remates de la cruz (PA29693M y L) están fabricados en plata con una ley similares a la arandela anterior, pero sin la presencia de oro. Tanto la arandela como estos remates están muy próximos a la ley de 925 milesimas y dado el efecto enriquecedor en superficie es posible que originalmente se trate de una plata de esta ley, de uso muy muy común desde la Edad Media, aunque la ausencia de plomo sugiere periodos más recientes.

Finalmente, el clavo que fija el pie izquierdo del Cristo (PA29693N) es también de plata, pero en este caso presenta porcentajes más elevadas de cobre (11%) y aparece el zinc en proporciones del 1%, sin que se detecte plomo o bismuto. Se trata de una composición diferente a las platas anteriormente comentadas, que quizás pueda responder a una plata contemporánea por la ausencia de plomo. Sin embargo, la presencia de zinc es un rasgo que solo conocemos en platas antiguas debido a su aleación con latón, en vez de cobre. Descartamos que sea un latón bañado en plata ya que la proporción Cu/Zn es de 10/1 cuando en los latones modernos la proporción es de 3/1 o superior.

Como ultimo elemento de estudio se documentaron unas posibles gotas de cera que aparecen en el antebrazo junto a una de las muñecas del Cristo. En las imágenes se aprecian dos gotas de una sustancia traslucida, una de ellas algo deformada.

Fig. 3 y 4 Detalle de las gotas de la sustancia traslucida en el brazo izquierdo

En Madrid a 3 de julio de 2023

Fdo: Ignacio Montero Ruiz
Investigador Científico IH, CCHS-CSIC

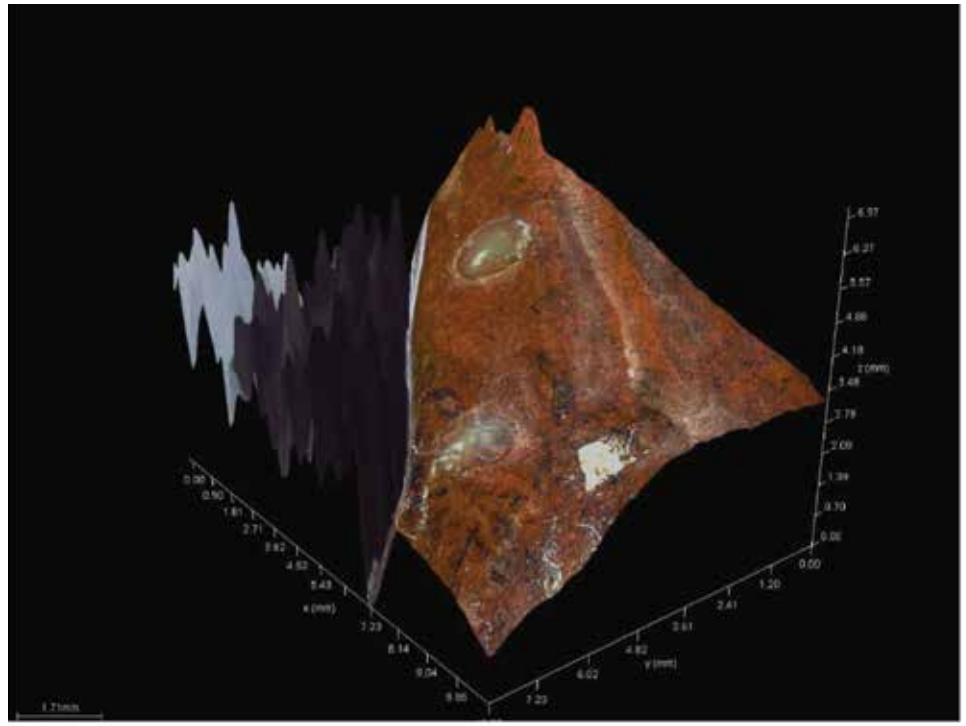
2306261207-Cristo-brazo izq-10x.tif

2306261209-Cristo-brazo izq-50x-1.tif

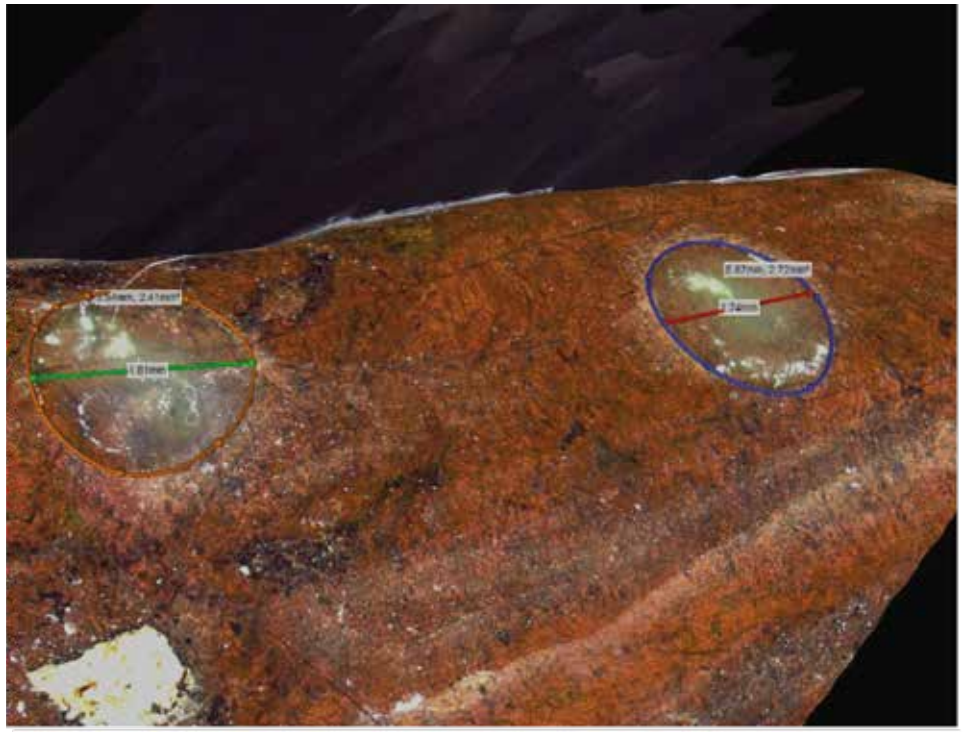
2306261210-Cristo-brazo izq-50x-2.tif

2306261211-Cristo-brazo izq-50x-3.tif

2306261214-Cristo-brazo izq-EDOF-70x.tif



2306261214-Cristo brazo izq-gotas cera-topo 2.tif



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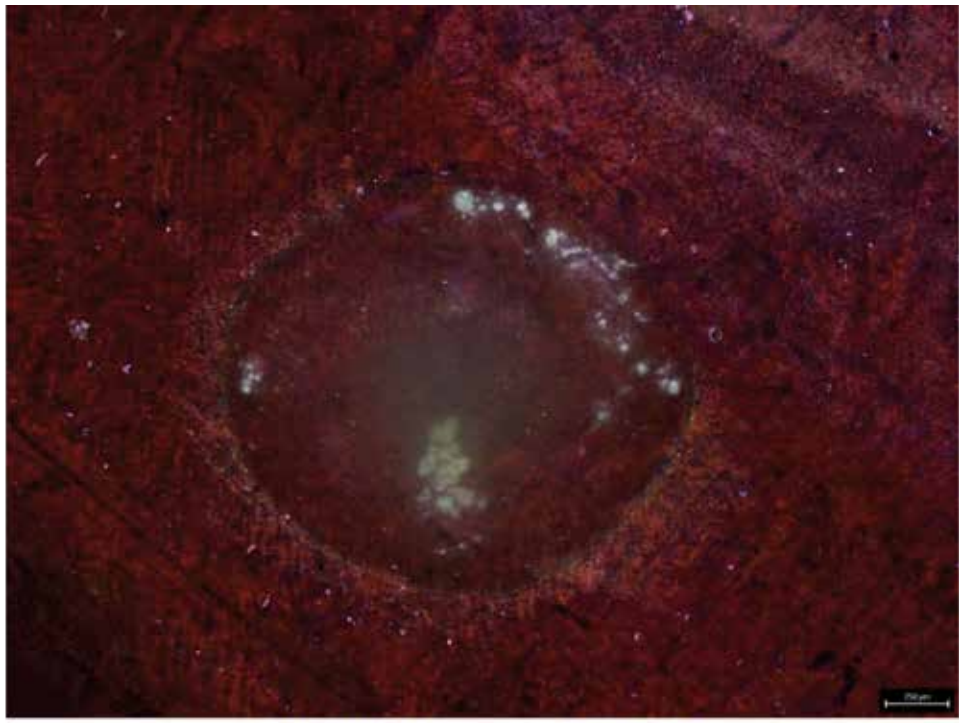
2306261214-Cristo brazo izq-gotas cera-topo.tif



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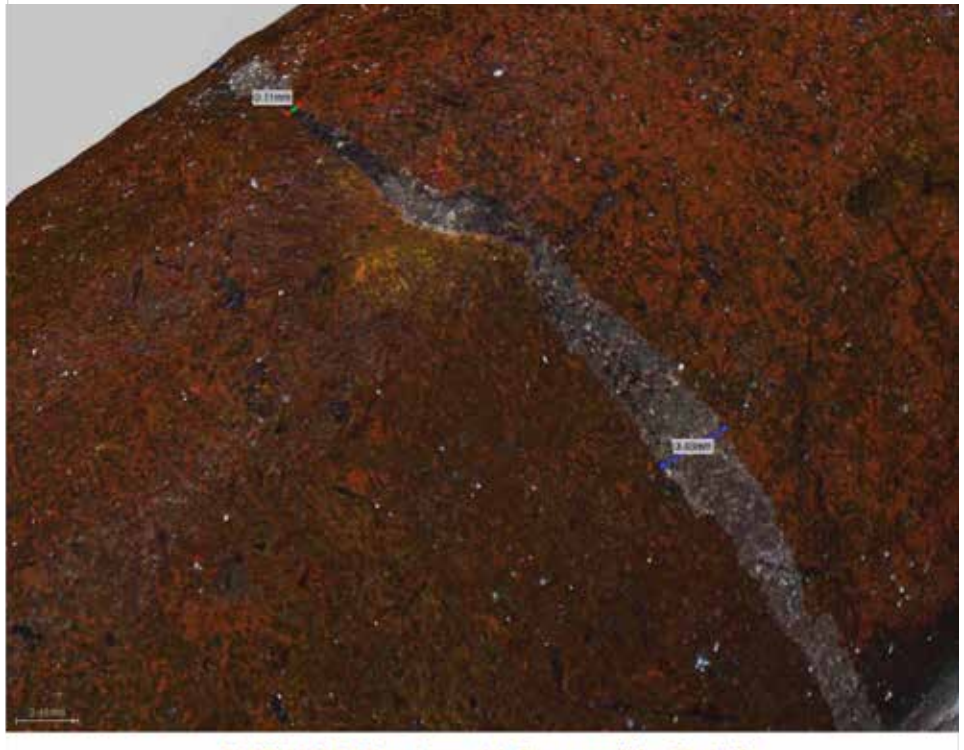
2306261225-Cristo-brazo dch-70x.tif

2306261227-Cristo-brazo dch-EDOF-70x-medidas.tif

2306261227-Cristo brazo dch-fisura-medidas 3D.tif

2306261227-Cristo brazo dch-fisura-medidas 3D-2.tif



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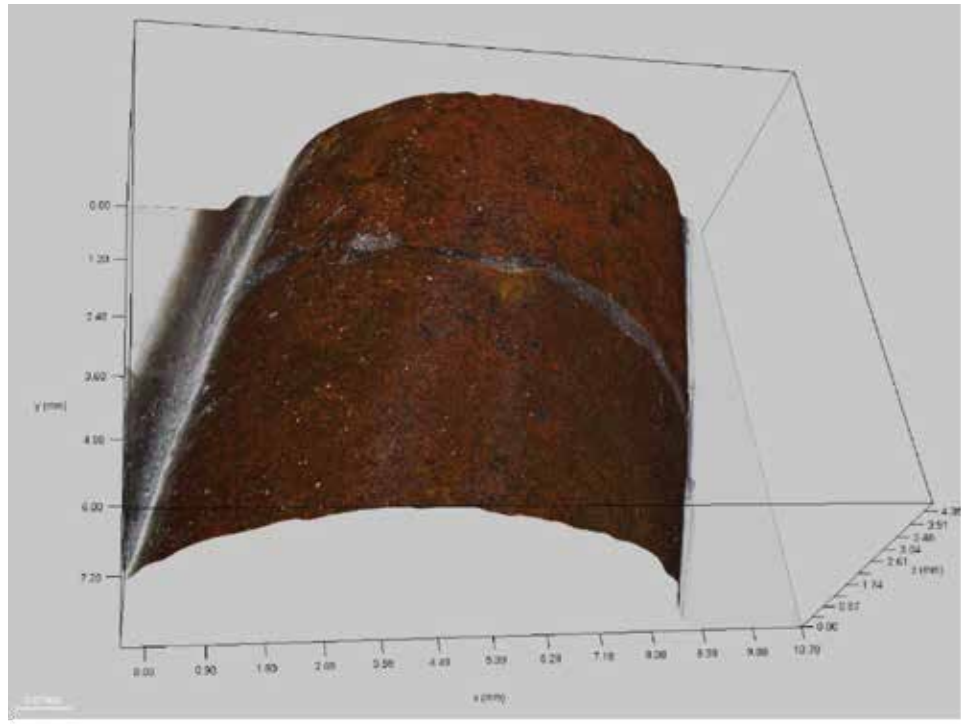

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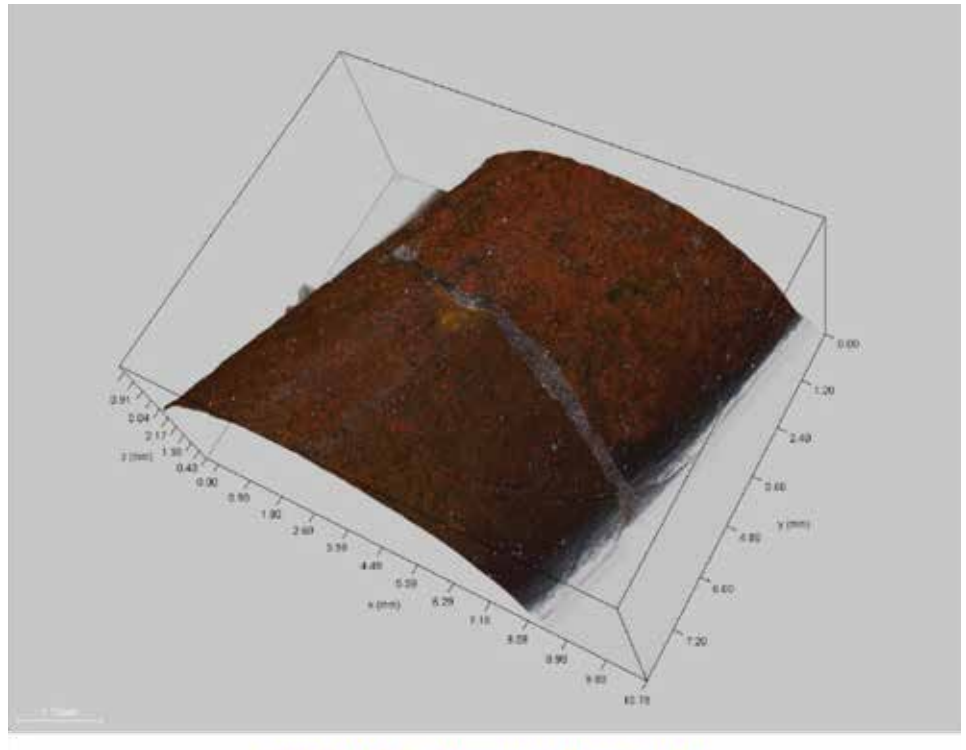

2306261227-Cristo brazo dch-fisura-topo2.tif

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2. State of condition and restoration Report

FINAL REPORT

RESTORATION OF BRONZE CRUCIFIX. PRIVATE COLLECTION.

AUGUST 2023

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DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK OF ART

IMAGES OF THE WORK OF ART

TYPE OF OBJECTS

DEFINITION:

BRONZE SCULPTURE IN THE ROUND MADE FROM A MULTI-PART MOLD.

BRIEF OBJECT DESCRIPTION:

IT REPRESENTS A BEARDED MALE FIGURE, CRUCIFIED WITH FOUR NAILS. THE PRELIMINARY MOLD HAD AT LEAST THREE PARTS: ONE FOR THE BODY AND TWO FOR EACH ARM, WHICH ARE LATER WELDED TOGETHER IN AN ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLE WAY. THE MODEL IS NUDE, BUT THERE IS A REMOVABLE PERIZONIUM COVERING HIS NUDITY.

GENERAL DIMENSIONS

IT MEASURES ABOUT 25 cm IN HEIGHT x 22 cm IN WIDTH

CHRONOLOGICAL OR STYLISTIC DATING

THE MODELLING OF THE WORK DISPLAYS CHARACTERISTICS OF CLASSICAL MODELS FROM THE 16TH CENTURY

EXECUTION TECHNIQUE

BRONZE CASTING. GENERAL OIL-BASED PATINA THAT PROTECTS AND ENHANCES THE FEATURES OF OF THE CARVING. ARM WELDING AND SEAM IN THE BUTTOCKS OF THE BACK PART FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE MOLD CORE. METAL LOINCLOTH IN TWO PIECES ATTACHED TO THE BODY WITH TWO FLAT-HEADED METAL NAILS.

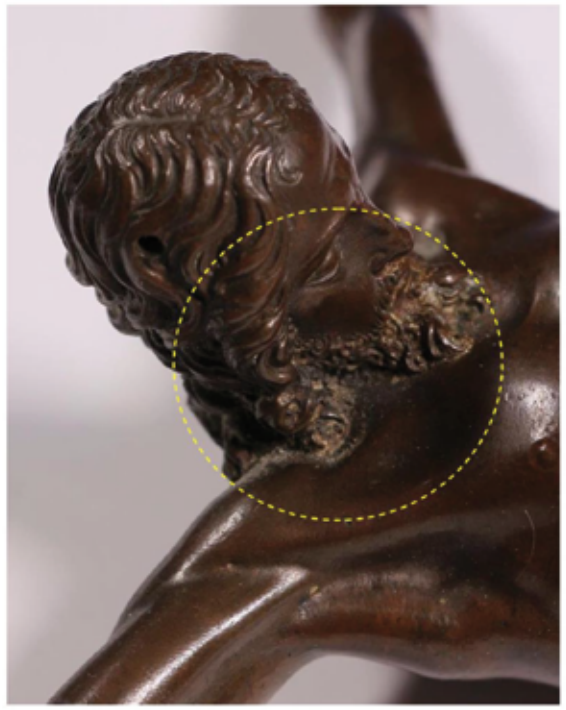
STATE OF CONDITION

This is a high-quality patinated round bronze sculpture. It measures approximately 25 cm in height and 22 cm in width, and it exhibits a good overall state of condition. It is a hollow model, made in 3 pieces and later welded together.

During the restoration, we identified some pathologies which are described below:

- **Generalized dirt lightly adhered**, likely due to **the entire piece being coated with a waxy substance**. This substance could correspond to a demolding material applied to the entire piece.

- **Drops of waxy substance on the right and left forearms:** several drops of what appears to be a waxy substance, which might also correspond to the demolding material applied across the piece for creating another mold based on this model.



DETAIL OF THE DIRT ADHERED IN THE BEARD AREA AND DROPS ON THE FOREARM

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- **Hardened whitishplaster residues**, mainly found in the indentations of the piece: hair, body creases, mouth, or nasal cavities. These residues could be from the material used to create a mold over the piece.

DETAIL OF DIRT AND WHITISH RESIDUE IN THE BEARD, MOUTH, AND NOSE AREA

DETAIL OF WHITISH RESIDUE BETWEEN THE THUMB AND INDEX FINGER AND TWO DROPS OF A WAXY SUBSTANCE ON THE WRIST

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- **Thick and continuous patina, in very good general condition**, but with **slightly abraded areas:** areas in contact with the cross (right heel and knuckles of both hands) or where it rubs against the loincloth. The spine also has a less intense coloration, probably due to a lower patina application in that area.

AREAS WITH LESS PATINA: RIGHT HEEL, LEFT TOES, KNUCKLES OF THE HAND, SPINAL COLUMN, AND CLOTH OF PURITY AREA

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- **Three holes can be observed in the head**, two of which are open and another partially hidden, which likely correspond to vents used in the creation of this bronze model. Once their filling function was completed, these vents were cut and concealed using different substances. There are **two other holes on the sides of the hip** for inserting the nails that hold the loincloth.

DETAIL OF THE HOLES ON THE HEAD AND HIP SIDES FOR THE PLACEMENT OF THE REMOVABLE PERIZONIUM

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- **Deformation or seam on the right buttock**, probably created during the original mold extraction process. The loss of patina in that area is due to friction with the metallic loincloth. This area was probably chosen for mold extraction because it would remain hidden by the loincloth or the cross.

DETAIL OF THE FRICTION AREA OF THE REMOVABLE PERIZONIUM

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ANALYTICAL DATA OBTAINED

Analytical tests conducted on the sculpture primarily focused on the **organoleptic examination** of the surface. These data helped determine the best cleaning formula and the substances present in the image.

- **ORGANOLEPTIC EXAMINATION:**

This examination revealed the **state of condition** of the image and provided insights into its **initial craftsmanship**.

We will emphasize three important aspects observed, as previously discussed in the conservation status section:

1. It is a hollow **model made in three parts** (body and arms) subsequently joined with fine welding.

DETAIL PHOTO OF THE HOLES IN THE HANDS AND FEET BALD SPOTS, WHERE IT CAN BE SEEN THAT THE WORK IS FULLY HOLLOW

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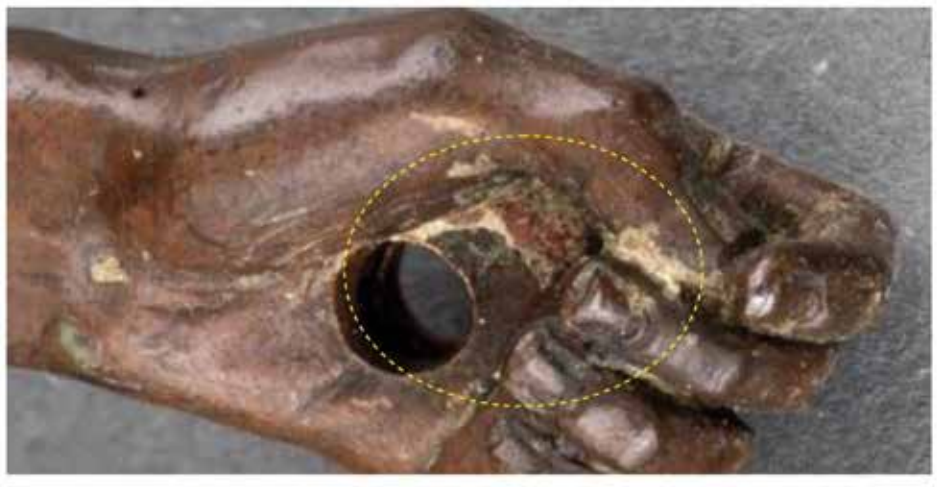
2. It is coated with a **waxy substance that is noticeable throughout the work**, with accumulations or **droplets** present on the arms.

DETAIL PHOTO OF THE WAXY SUBSTANCE ON THE ARMS

3. Abundant **remains of a whitish plaster material** are also found, with some areas displaying a **reddish surface coloration**.



DETAIL PHOTO OF THE HOLES WHERE YOU CAN SEE THE WHITISH SUBSTANCE INSIDE THE NOOKS OF THE HANDS, WHERE A REDDISH LAYER CAN BE SEEN ABOVE THE WHITE.

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- **ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT EXAMINATION:**

An ultraviolet light examination was performed using the UV Fluorescence system, which is designed to capture visible light reflected by a surface stimulated with UV light. The photographs taken clearly reveal the presence of whitish substance residues in crevices and recesses. However, it did not exhibit prominent and distinct fluorescence in the wax droplets, perhaps due to the presence of a general wax layer throughout the artwork.

UV PHOTO OF THE ARM AREA WHERE CAN BE APPRECIATED A PROMINENT FLUORESCENCE OF THE UPPER WHITISH LAYER AND ACCUMULATIONS IN CERTAIN AREAS OF ANOTHER SUBSTANCE UNIDENTIFIED TO THE NAKED EYE THAT COULD CORRESPOND TO ANOTHER DIFFERENT WAX OR VEILS OF THE WHITE LAYER.

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TREATMENT PERFORMED

A general, non-exhaustive cleaning treatment was conducted, which can be completed when sufficient analyses and studies of the artwork are available. Mechanical cleaning methods were employed, targeting specific areas affected by dirt while avoiding interference with clean areas.

The application of any protective substances or varnish was also avoided since the patina is in very good condition and provides protective properties to the metal.

1. CROSS DETACHMENT AND REMOVAL OF THE LOINCLOTH:

The nails that secured the Christ to the cross were removed, and all the component pieces were sealed and preserved for the cleaning treatment and subsequent study of the artwork. Likewise, the loincloth was removed to facilitate the cleaning process in all crevices.

2. GENERAL SURFACE MECHANICAL CLEANING:

Initially, a very superficial mechanical cleaning was performed using very fine hair brushes to allow for a better assessment and work. Dust accumulations were removed with a light application of White Spirit D-40.

3. PHYSICAL-MECHANICAL REMOVAL OF WHITISH RESIDUES FROM THE BEARD, NOSE, AND MOUTH:

The removal of large accumulations of the whitish substance in the beard, nose, and mouth was carried out without the use of solvents and without rubbing the surface. Instead, gentle mechanical methods such as wooden swabs and boxwood sticks were employed. For the complete removal of certain residues, White Spirit D-40 was applied to a thoroughly squeezed cotton swab.

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IMAGES

PHOTO OF THE BEARD, NOSE, AND MOUTH AREA BEFORE AND AFTER THE INTERVENTION

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PHOTO OF THE SIDE OF THE BEARD, NOSE, AND HAIR BEFORE AND AFTER SUPERFICIAL CLEANING INTERVENTION

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DETAIL PHOTO OF THE BEARD FROM ANOTHER ANGLE BEFORE AND AFTER THE INTERVENTION

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DETAIL PHOTO OF THE HAIR'S REVERSE SIDE BEFORE AND AFTER THE CLEANING INTERVENTION

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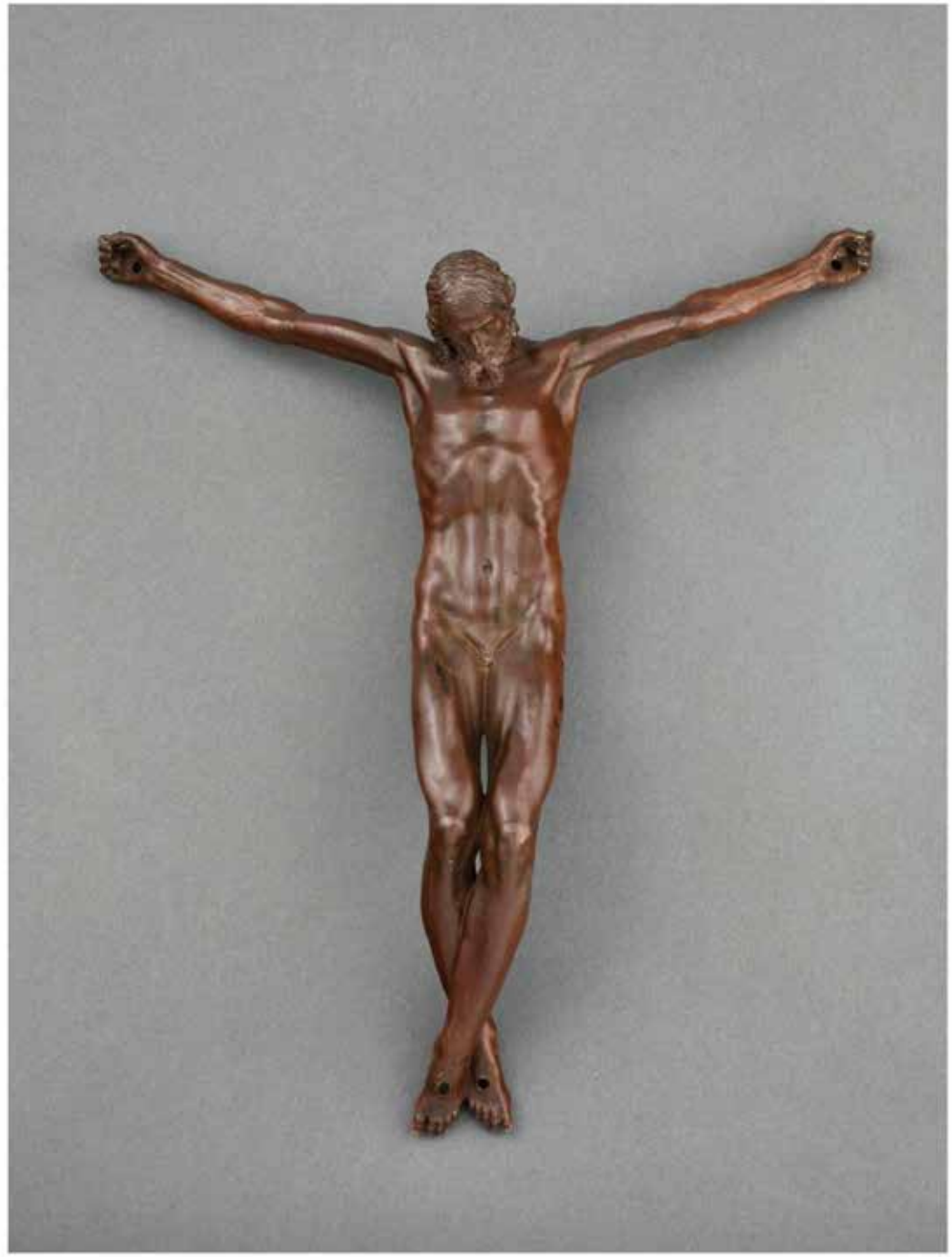

FINAL PHOTO OF THE ARTWORK
GENERAL IMAGE OF THE FRONT WITHOUT THE PERIZONIUM

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FINAL PHOTO OF THE ARTWORK
GENERAL IMAGE OF THE BACK WITHOUT THE PERIZONIUM

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FINAL PHOTO OF THE ARTWORK
DETAIL OF THE PERIZONIUM'S BACK AND FRONT

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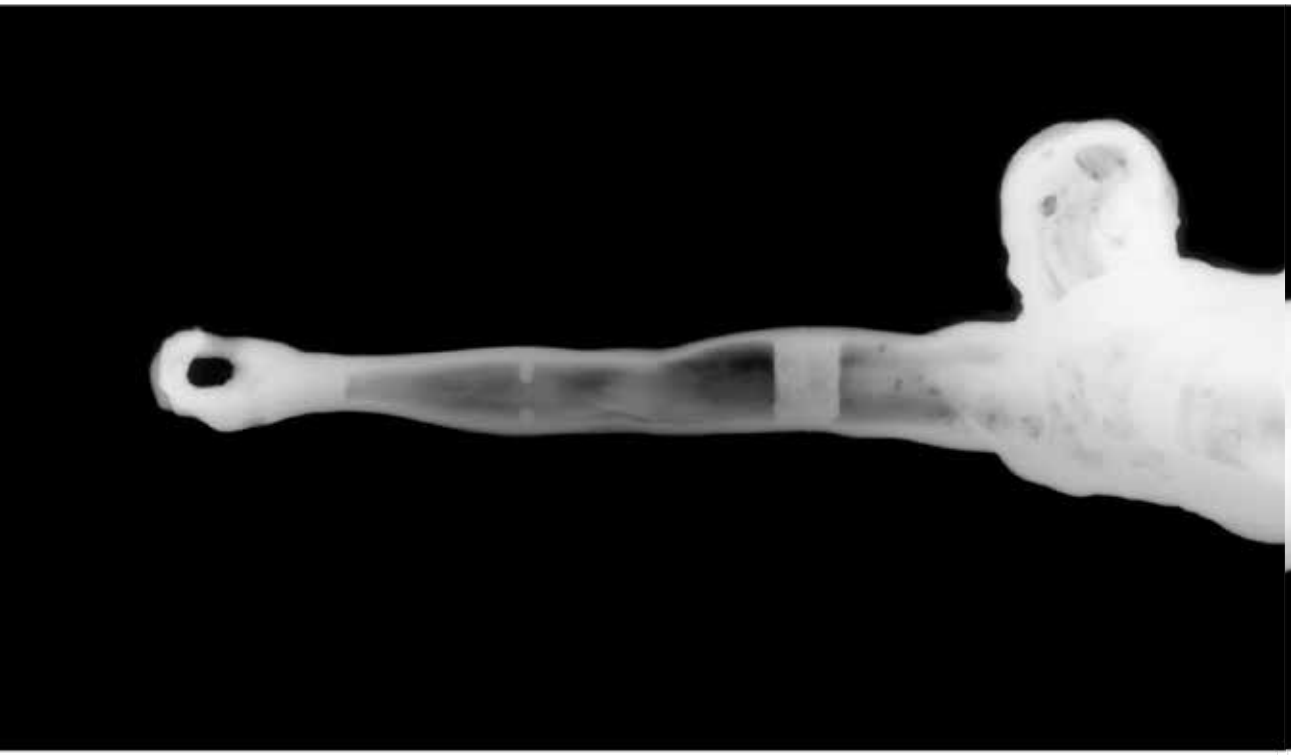
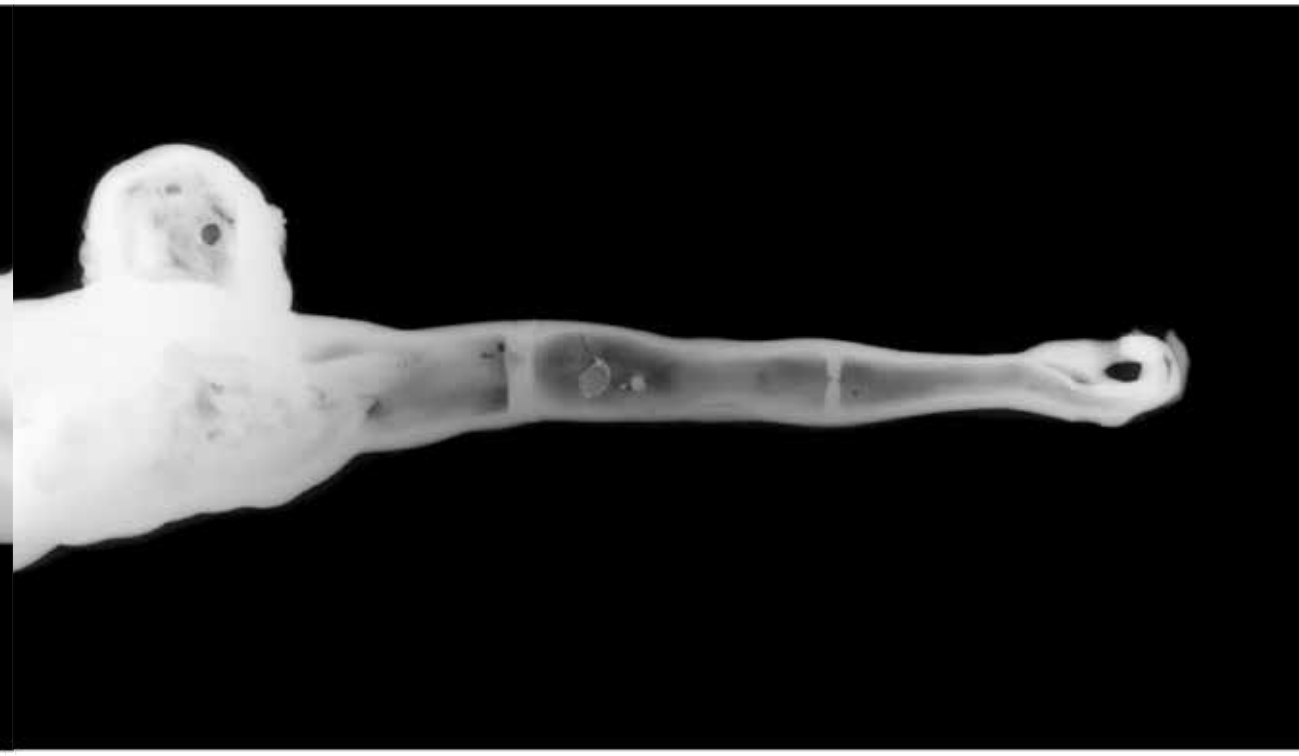
Restauradora de escultura. Escuela de Arte y Superior de Bienes Culturales de Valladolid
Restauradora de pintura. Escuela Superior de Conservación de Bienes Culturales de Madrid
Historiadora del Arte. Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Valladolid

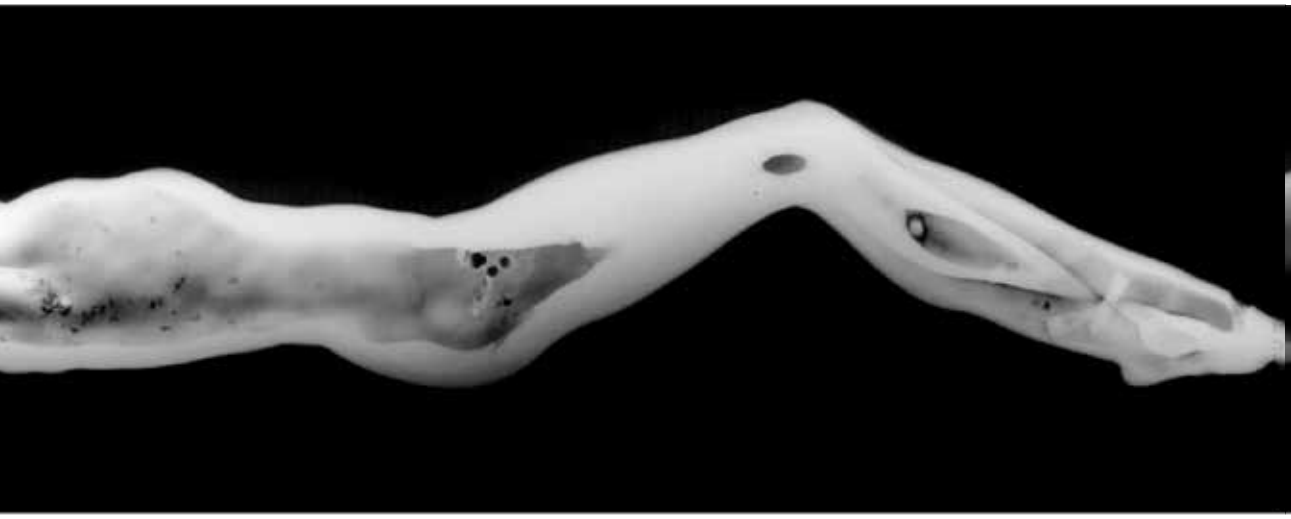
3. X-rays images documentation provided by SGS tecnos



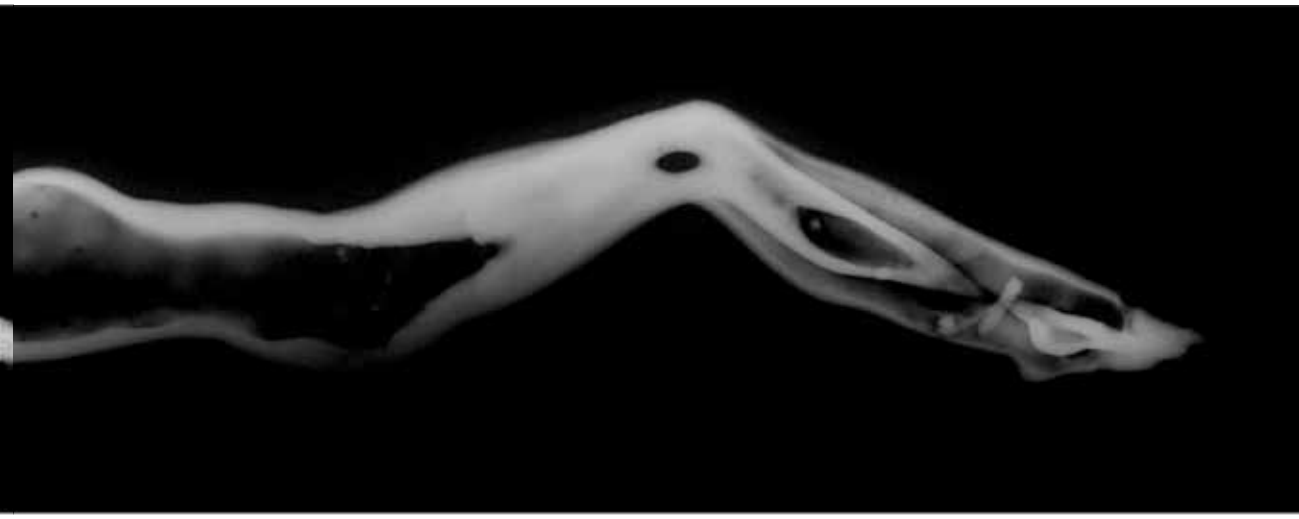
Overhead X-ray detail of the right arm



Overhead X-ray detail of the left arm

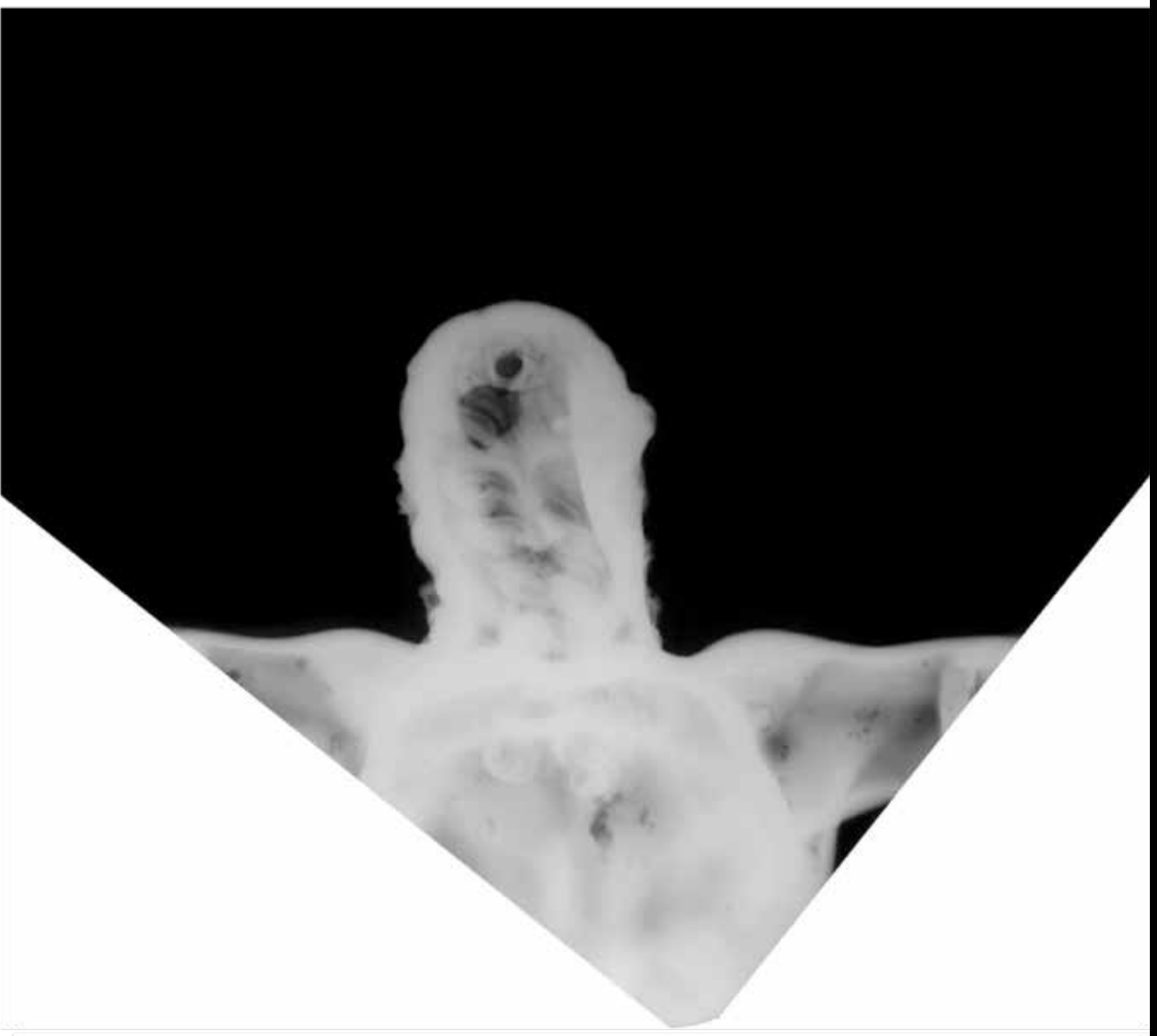


Detailed lateral X-ray of the torso and legs



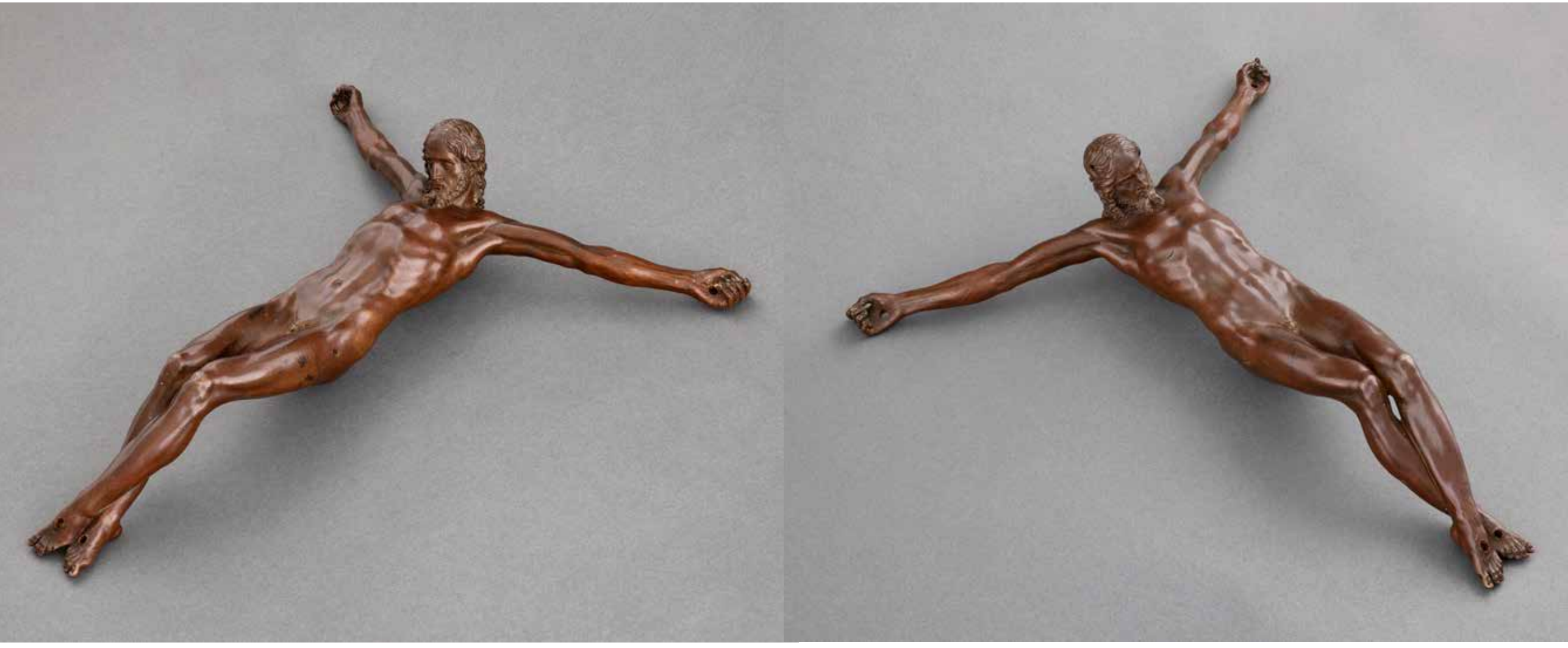
Detailed lateral X-ray of the legs

X-rays images documentation provided by SGS tecnos



Detailed X-ray of the head, taken at a 45-degree angle from the frontal exposure, from chin to crown

General frontal X-ray of the piece >



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