



## FLAGELLATION

Circle of Francisco de Alfaro  
 Spain (probably Seville); ca. 1600-25  
 Bronze/Copper; 100.3 x 138.2 mm

*Provenance:*

Private collection (Cabral Moncada Leiloes auction, 15-16 Dec 2014, Lot 30)

Contemporary cast. Light greenish brown patina with trace amounts of gilding present on the obverse. Possible chasing on the surface of the relief and other details. Reverse engraved. Handle lacking with traces of former attachment. Two ungalvanized replacement screws along underside of the base that have unfortunately rusted shut.

The present pax features a small relief of the *Flagellation* loosely following after Sebastiano del Piombo's (1485-1547) fresco of the *Flagellation of Christ*, ca. 1516-24, in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The subject, whose design was provided to Piombo by Michelangelo (1475-1564), was widely successful and can be found frequently reproduced in small relief on numerous devotional objects created in Spain during the 16th and 17th centuries.

The architectural features of the pax frame and engraved motif on its reverse places it in close association with the work of Francisco de Alfaro and his father, Diego, who were active in Seville and Cordoba, ca. 1565-1610. The present pax is probably the work of an early 17th century follower of the Alfaro workshop or an associate.

A pax at the Church of St. Mary Magdalene in Arahal, made by Francisco in 1598-99, shares several characteristics with the present pax. Its protruding square plinths supporting plain columns topped by horizontally pinched ionic capitals terminating in pyramidal spires are related. The general structure and method of assembly for both paxes also correspond and might indicate the copying or sharing of fabrication concepts between the maker of this pax and the Alfaro family workshop.

Further correspondences with Francisco Alfaro's influence can be observed in the pax-like embellishments he added to the knots of monstrance and processional cross stems such as one at the Church of St. Maria de Carmona in Seville,<sup>1</sup> again sharing the same architectural treatments.

Apart from its commanding architectural presence the highlight of this pax is its reverse which exhibits an elaborately engraved cartouche design. The motif is a bit too progressive to be reliably connected with the period of activity which concerns the Alfaro family and certainly the obverse of the pax is too crude to be connected with Francisco's graceful, albeit modest reliefs, therefore suggesting the present pax belongs to another hand and a slightly later date.

<sup>1</sup> For a visual reference see: Manuel Varas Rivero (2007): *El lenguaje arquitectónico en los portapaces bajocordobeses del Manierismo: la influencia de los tratados. Estudios de Platería*. San Eloy; p. 575, Fig. 4b

Special thanks to María Jesús Sanz (private communication, Aug 2016) and Juan Luis Ravé Prieto (private communication, Sep 2016) for their feedback on this pax, and to Fernando García Gutiérrez, delegate of Diocesan heritage in Seville (private communication, Oct 2016), for providing photos of the Alfaro pax in Arahal.

