

The Paxes and Reliefs of Antonio Gentili da Faenza

by Michael Riddick



The ‘Great School’ of Guglielmo della Porta

While a quantity of objects have been reasonably attributed to Guglielmo della Porta (1515-77), less attention has been given to the distinction of his collaborators. As a result, various artworks have doubtless been given Guglielmo’s signature authorship while they could instead be the workmanship of qualified assistants working from his models and designs.

In the survey of art historical literature, observing the distinction between individual craftsmen in a workshop has been an arduous undertaking with attributions debated for great lengths of time and few documents available to definitively confirm artistic authorship. Adding to this complexity are the diverse roles assumed by workshop assistants as well as the succession of ownership and diffusion of a workshop’s models which can make secure attributions virtually impossible.

We could compare this art historical maze with the past century of research invested in delineating the evident qualities that distinguish the workmanship of assistants operating in Giambologna’s (1529-1608) workshop: Antonio Susini, Pietro Tacca (1577-1640), Adriaen de Vries (1560-1626), *et al.* It is expected the artists active in Guglielmo’s workshop will be equally discussed in coming

decades, a process first initiated by Werner Gramberg and Ulrich Middeldorf who made great advancements in our understanding of Guglielmo’s output. It is the present author’s hope that the observations and ideas presented in this series of articles, tentative as they might be at times, may serve as a clarifying step in the course of understanding not just Guglielmo himself but also the distinct work of those with whom he collaborated.

Rosario Coppel commented, “A comparative study has yet to be made between Guglielmo’s documented works and those of his workshop assistants.”¹ It is this challenge of being categorical about the individual artists in Guglielmo’s circle that the present author adopts as the role of this series of articles concerning the “*Gran Scuola*” of Guglielmo.²

1 Rosario Coppel (2012): Guglielmo della Porta in Rome. *Guglielmo della Porta, A Counter-Reformation Sculptor*. Coll & Cortés, pp. 28-57

2 For a discussion of the cultural environment within which Guglielmo’s workshop operated see C.D. Dickerson III (2008): The “*Gran Scuola*” of Guglielmo della Porta, the Rise of the “*Aurifex Inventor*” and the Education of Stefano Maderno. *Storia dell’arte*, 121, pp. 25-71

The Paxes and Reliefs of Antonio Gentili da Faenza

While documents survive outlining the myriad objects Antonio Gentili (b. Faenza, 1519 – d. Rome, 29 Oct 1609) created for the papacy, ecclesiasts and elite patrons of the era, only a minority survive and fewer can be established as his exclusive invention due to the collaborative nature of his work.

To the present author's knowledge, no paxes have been connected with this master whose varied output included a diverse array of objects including reliquaries, vases, lamps, keys, tableware and even bedwarmers and of whom Giovanni Baglione claimed, "there was no rival to such talent."¹

In consideration of the production of his peers,² his ecclesiastic clientele³ and his specialization with small scale devotional objects,⁴ paxes would have formed part of Gentili's oeuvre. There is documentary evidence that may suggest a pax could have been adopted by Gentili while inheriting Manno Sbarri's original 1561 commission of an *Altar Service* for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese in 1578. The *Altar Service*, heralded as one of Gentili's masterpieces, was completed by him in 1581 and donated to St. Peters Cathedral by Alessandro on 2 June 1582.⁵

Sbarri died in 1576, resulting in Gentili's inheritance of Alessandro's commission. The commission was probably transferred to Gentili on account of Sbarri and Gentili's collaborative work in creating another masterpiece, the *Farnese Casket*, for Alessandro in 1561. Of particular interest is Alessandro's living will

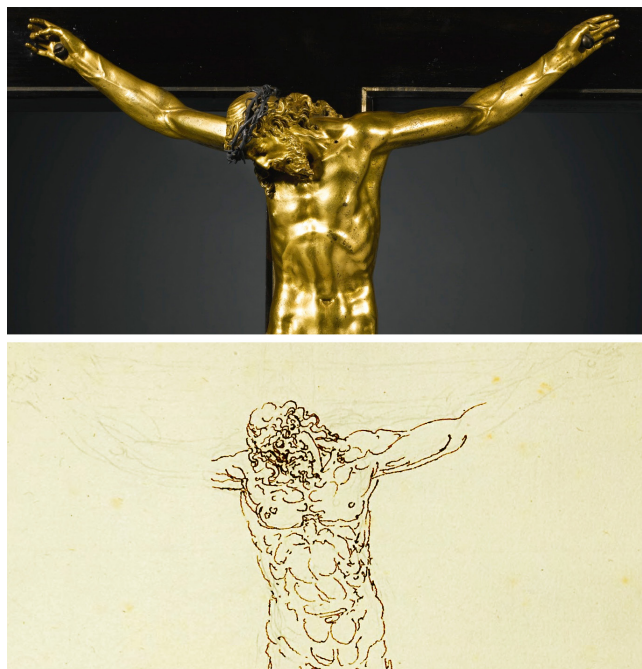


Fig. 01: detail of a gilt bronze crucifix here attributed to Guglielmo della Porta, ca. 1570 (above); sketch of a crucifix by Guglielmo della Porta (below)

of 1574 which comments on the *Altar Service*, noting a cross, candlesticks **and a pax**, yet to be finished, as the work of Manno Sbarri.⁶ Sbarri's 1561 acceptance letter of the commission does not include mention of a pax⁷ and it can only be surmised that the pax was probably added to the commission sometime between 1561/62-74 and may also have been left unfinished by Sbarri at the time of his death in 1576, presumably adopted by Gentili along with the *Altar Service* in 1578. Alternatively, Sbarri's pax may relate to a separate commission by Alessandro, of which we have no additional knowledge.

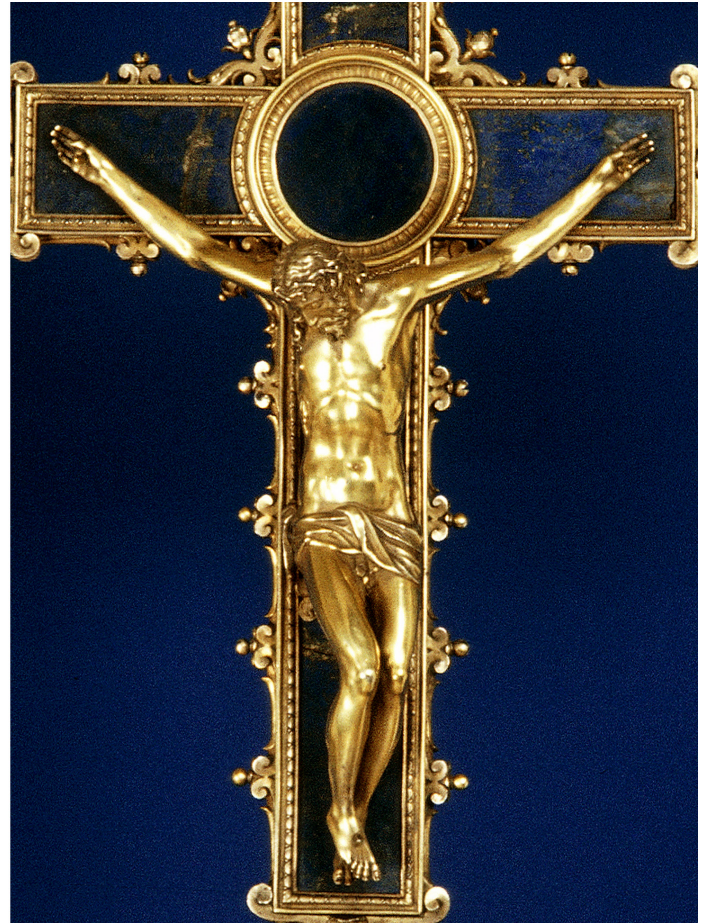


Fig. 02: A gilt copper crucifix here attributed to Guglielmo della Porta (the “1571 corpus-model”), ca. 1570, from an altar cross belonging to the Capponi family of Rome (left); a gilt silver crucifix by Antonio Gentili da Faenza, 1582, after a model by Guglielmo della Porta for the Farnese altar service (Treasury of St. Peters, Vatican) (right) (photo: Ronald Widenhoeft)

CORPORA

An initial point-of-departure for our survey of the paxes and plaquettes of Gentili is an analysis of the manner in which we may confidently observe Gentili’s treatment of models he produced after Guglielmo della Porta’s creation. Gentili’s collaborative work with Guglielmo is documented as early as 1570 when he produced twelve silver reliquary busts for Pope Pius V in collaboration with Pier Antonio di Benevenuto Tati after Guglielmo’s sketches.⁸ A contrast between Guglielmo’s

workmanship and that of Gentili’s can be observed on Gentili’s version of Guglielmo’s corpus for the *Farnese Altar Cross* of 1582.⁹

In 1571 Alessandro sent a letter of gratitude to Guglielmo, praising him for receipt of a crucifix.¹⁰ This same corpus-model is reprised on the *Altar Cross* for the *Altar Service* commissioned by Alessandro and produced by Gentili. Evidence connecting the 1571 corpus-model with Guglielmo is found in



Fig. 03: Gilt bronze relief of *Mount Calvary*, attributed to Guglielmo della Porta, ca. 1571-73 (left, Budapest Museum of Fine Arts); Gilt bronze relief of *Mount Calvary*, here attributed to Antonio Gentili after a model by Guglielmo della Porta, last quarter 16th century (Coll & Cortes Fine Art)

documents concerning the trials initiated by his son, Teodoro della Porta, in which a testimony is given by Giovanni Battista Montano, who infers Gentili's use of Guglielmo's corpus-model for inclusion on the *Farnese Altar Cross*.¹¹ A further proof is Gentili's own decision to omit the image of the corpus on his engraving of the finished altar cross, probably recognizing it as not his own invention. Guglielmo's other collaborator, Sebastiano Torrigiani likewise reproduced this same 1571 corpus-model in gilt bronze for an altar cross commissioned by Pope

Gregory XIII in 1583, also donated to St. Peters Basilica.¹²

Distinct from the two aforementioned casts of Guglielmo's corpus-model by his collaborators is an art market example fixed to an altar cross historically belonging to the Capponi family in Rome.¹³ It appears to preserve an original model by Guglielmo and is probably analogous to the one received by Alessandro in 1571. Its quality and exquisite detail indicate a contemporaneous casting while Christ's



Fig. 04: Detail of a gilt bronze relief of *Mount Calvary*, attributed to Guglielmo della Porta, ca. 1571-73 (left, Budapest Museum of Fine Arts); detail of a gilt bronze relief of *Mount Calvary*, here attributed to Antonio Gentili after a model by Guglielmo della Porta, last quarter 16th century (Coll & Cortes Fine Art)

dynamic figure, expressed with muscular drama and disheveled hair, suggests the nervous mode articulated in Guglielmo's sketched works and establishes it as the probable prototype for the 1571 corpus-model (Fig. 01).¹⁴

For the *Altar Cross*, Gentili's manipulation of Guglielmo's prototype removes the sign of blessing made by Christ's proper right hand, raises his arms approximately 1.2 cm, and centers Christ's head over his chest. More importantly, Gentili tempers his features, reducing the stress of Christ's musculature while softening the features of his face. Gentili also transforms Guglielmo's signature inverted triangular umbilicus with a circular one. Gentili has also transformed Guglielmo's tousled sinewy strands of Christ's hair into a subdued form that is less bodied while the beard is given more volume and is shortened in length (Fig. 02).

MOUNT CALVARY

This same smoothing-over and pacifying of Guglielmo's anxious style can be observed while comparing the varied examples of his *Mount Calvary* relief of about 1571-73. Possible origins for the relief's design are first noted by Giorgio Vasari in his *Livres* of 1568,¹⁵ and the relief is also identified in the second posthumous inventory of Guglielmo's workshop on 2 October 1578.¹⁶ The 1586 trial between Guglielmo's sons, in which the younger Teodoro accuses the elder Phidias of stealing and illegally selling workshop models includes the marginal note of an "altar of figures of Our Lord Jesus Christ on Mount Calvary."¹⁷ Some of the stolen models were sold to Gentili who subsequently made casts, probably inclusive of the *Calvary*.¹⁸



Fig. 05: Details of a gilt bronze relief of *Mount Calvary*, here attributed to Antonio Gentili after a model by Guglielmo della Porta, last quarter 16th century (left and right, Coll & Cortes Fine Art); detail of the gilt silver binding for the *Farnese Hours*, depicting *Gabriel*, by Antonio Gentili, ca. 1600 (center, Pierpont Morgan Library, NY)

Werner Gramberg suggested a gilt silver example of *Mount Calvary* from the chamber of Philip II at *El Escorial* was by Guglielmo but cast and finished by Gentili.¹⁹ This would appear accurate since its finish has the same silky matte-like quality of Gentili's corpus and figures for the *Farnese Altar Service* but retains Guglielmo's complete energetic '*horror vacui*' as Gramberg describes it.²⁰ This example of the *Mount Calvary* at *El Escorial* was a gift to Bianca Capello Granduchess of Tuscany from Pope Gregory XIII in 1580.²¹

A second silhouetted silver example of *Mount Calvary*, alternatively featuring Guglielmo's earlier 1571 corpus-model is kept in the sacristy of the church in the monastery of *El Escorial*, donated

also by Philip II.²² The quality and detail appear to reproduce Guglielmo's original models.

Commensurate with the two aforementioned silver examples is an exceptional gilt bronze cast of *Mount Calvary* in Budapest.²³ Its writhing, energetic manner suggests a work directly handled by Guglielmo himself.

Comparatively different from these is another gilt bronze example of *Mount Calvary* on the art market which features the characteristic smoothness of Gentili's remodeling and finishing. The cast is derived from Guglielmo's model but the protagonists have been refined in such a way that reflects Gentili's workmanship (Figs. 03, 04). In particular, the groups



Fig. 06: A silver plaque of the *Deposition* here attributed to Antonio Gentili after a design by Guglielmo della Porta (Museo Medievale di Bologna).

of billowing angels to the left-and-right of Christ have been remodeled in a way that recalls the style of figures featured on Gentili's securely assigned gilt silver binding for the *Farnese Hours* commissioned by Cardinal Odoardo Farnese around the year 1600. The binding is additionally documented in a Parma-based Farnese inventory of 1653 as the workmanship of Gentili.²⁴ A comparison between the figure of Gabriel on the Farnese binding and the reinvented manner of the angels on the revised *Mount Calvary* demonstrates Gentili's workmanship upon Guglielmo's model (Fig. 05).

DEPOSITION

A silver relief of the *Deposition*, set into an ebonized wood tabernacle at the Museo Medievale di Bologna (Fig. 06), was assigned to Guglielmo by Gramberg based upon its relationship to one of his sketches.²⁵ However, the luster of the figures, the modeling of their hair and the treatment of the foliage relate more closely with Gentili's treatment of Guglielmo's *Mount Calvary*. A master model or cast of the *Deposition* is not known to the present author, and there remains the possibility the design could be Gentili's own invention following after a sketch rather than a sculptural model by Guglielmo. There is reason to suggest the sketch cited by Gramberg as the impetus for this relief, or a lost sketch of similar import, may have been satisfactorily diffused since El Greco appears to have borrowed ideas from it for his *Holy Trinity* painting of 1579, probably observed during his residency at the Palazzo Farnese in Rome where Guglielmo had been active.²⁶ A 19th century electrotype version of the *Deposition* is in the Amedeo Lia (La Spezia).²⁷

FLAGELLATION

A plaque relief of the *Flagellation of Christ*, intended for a pax,²⁸ and a pax depicting the *Risen Christ Appearing to the Apostles* are also ascribed to Guglielmo's workmanship on account of their relationship to his surviving sketches.²⁹

Of the *Flagellation*, four casts are known. Bronze examples are at the Victoria & Albert Museum³⁰ and in the Berlin collections³¹ while two silver examples are at the Museo Nazionale del Bargello³² and Los



Fig. 07: Silver plaque of the *Flagellation* attributed to Guglielmo della Porta (left, Museo Nazionale del Bargello); silver plaque of the *Flagellation* attributed to here Antonio Gentili after a model by Guglielmo della Porta (right, LACMA)

Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) (Fig. 07).³³ While these reliefs are all ascribed to Guglielmo or his workshop on account of their shared design there are distinctions which require a better understanding of them. Foremost, the Bargello example is housed in an exquisite ebony frame with silver filigree, lapis lazuli and carnelian inlays of late 16th century fashion and probably at the bequest of a venerable commission. Guglielmo is documented for the

employ of German woodworkers specializing in this manner of art.³⁴ This silver example is the finest of the group and features a remarkable vitality and detail. There are features which also distinguish it from the others, namely the simple whip handled by the central-left flagellant who grips the column in lieu of the scourge whip handled by other figures in the scene. Another difference is the right-most attendant who faces forward into the scene while



Fig. 08: Gilt bronze pax of the *Risen Christ* attributed to Guglielmo della Porta (left, MET); silver pax of the *Risen Christ* here attributed to Antonio Gentili after a model by Guglielmo della Porta (right, Museo degli Argenti, Palazzo Pitti)

his head is lowered and turned closer to the viewer on the other reliefs. It is probable the example at the Bargello reproduces Guglielmo's model³⁵ while the next best example, the LACMA variant, borrows the model but reworks it anew in a manner that again recalls Gentili's fabrication, particularly as regards the modeling of the hair. The quality of the LACMA cast is likewise accomplished but remains different in

character. It too is housed in a period frame, though of ivory. The bronze casts appear to be aftercasts of Gentili's reworked model. The V&A example is of somewhat superior quality while the Berlin version is an even later aftercast of lesser fidelity.

RISEN CHRIST

While attributing the Metropolitan Museum of Art's (MET) pax of the *Risen Christ* to Guglielmo, Stefanie Walker discussed a silver version of the relief, in a much different frame, at the Palazzo Pitti (Fig. 08). Walker observed the distinction between the frames but also noted the exclusion of one figure in the background of the Pitti's *Risen Christ* and the addition of a perspective-based ground to help draw the viewer into the scene.

The Pitti's silver *Risen Christ* was the only other example of the relief previously identified apart from the MET's example, however, other pax examples of lesser significance include a gilt silver or bronze cast featured in a frame of similarly classicized character as that of the MET example, located at an unidentified church in Bologna and potentially the product of Guglielmo's workshop; a very crude silver aftercast featuring the relief set in the same frame as a *Pietà* discussed below (see Fig. 18) and another of slightly better quality, in a different frame, of gilt silver or bronze, both located at unspecified churches in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Siena-Colle di Val d'Elsa-Montalcino; and a heavily afterworked later cast reproducing also the Pitti pax frame,

though in bronze with a silver (or silvered) central relief with colored enamel treatments at the Museu Frederic Marés in Spain. One further silver example, reproducing only the frame of the Pitti pax and an enameled scene of the *Crucifixion* is a weak aftercast formerly on the art market.³⁶

Walker drew further comparisons between the Pitti's pax and the previously discussed silver LACMA plaquette of the *Flagellation* (Fig. 07, right), observing their "extremely close" chasing and polish with figures that have been "calmed and smoothed" and hair given fluid form when compared against their vigorous counterparts.³⁷ She also noted the obfuscated cherub beneath the column of the LACMA *Flagellation* followed closely with one featured along the base of the Pitti's pax.

The character of the Pitti's *Risen Christ* and pax frame are quite different from the classicized frame and dazzling vitality of the MET's *Risen Christ*, the later more exemplary of Guglielmo's treatment. Walker assigns the LACMA *Flagellation* and the Pitti's *Risen Christ* pax to Guglielmo's son, Teodoro della Porta, as a logical suggestion. However, their appearance is



Fig. 09: Detail of the *Farnese Altar Cross* by Antonio Gentili, 1582 (left, Treasury of St. Peters, Vatican); detail of the *Risen Christ* pax, here attributed to Antonio Gentili (center, Museo degli Argenti, Palazzo Pitti); detail of the *Farnese Hours* binding by Antonio Gentili, ca. 1600 (right, Pierpont Morgan Library, NY)



Fig. 10: A gilt bronze pax of the *Pieta*, attributed to Sebastiano Torrigiani (Workshop of Guglielmo della Porta), Rome, ca. 1570-77 (left, and top-right, private collection); details of a candlestick from the San Giacomo Maggiore altar service by Sebastiano Torrigiani, 1581 (right, center and bottom)

congruent with Gentili's modification of Guglielmo's models.

In addition, the female busts, topped by ionic capitals, along the corners of the *Farnese Casket* and the face of the sphinxes along its base recall also the herms that frame the central relief of the Pitti's pax. The presence of Florentine lilies, or blue irises,³⁸ on its plinths may also indicate a connection again with the Farnese whom Gentili regularly served. Gentili

uses this motif also on the corners of his binding for the *Farnese Hours* and on a monstrance attributed to him at the SMART Museum in Chicago.³⁹ However, most noteworthy is a comparison of the cherubs on the Pitti's pax with the masks on Gentili's binding for the *Farnese Hours* or the scarcely observed series of masks along the reverse stem of the *Farnese Altar Cross* or those along its lower knot above its base (Fig. 09).

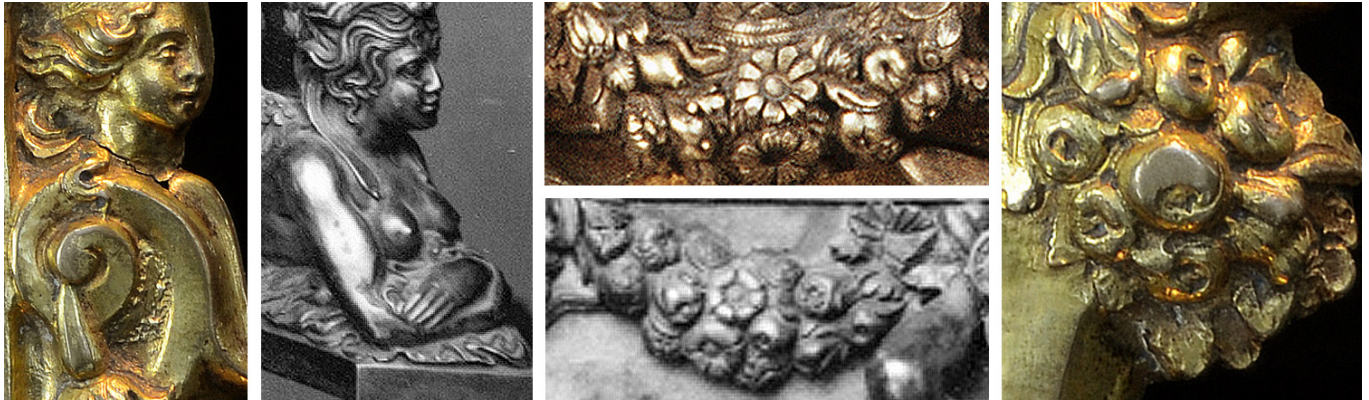


Fig. 11: Details of a *Doubting Thomas* pax here attributed to Antonio Gentili (left and right, private collection); details of the *Farnese Casket* by Antonio Gentili, Manno Sbari and Giovanni Bernardi, 1561 (second-from-left, center-bottom, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte); detail of the *Farnese Altar Cross* by Antonio Gentili, 1582 (center-top, Treasury of St. Peters, Vatican)

While attributions based on such superficial characteristics are generally frowned upon in art historical dialogue, we digress to the fact that these works of little visual content require a specialized focus. In addition, it becomes necessary to bring such attention to bear for an artist praised for his “work with many bizarre adornments, graceful to the highest degree; with little figures, animals, and diverse decorations, extraordinarily noble and delightful to see.”⁴⁰

Other assistants in Guglielmo’s studio produced paxes, like Torriagini, whose similar motifs are distinguishable. For example, a pax of the *Expired Christ in the Arms of the Virgin*, whose integral frame featuring scrolling volutes and cherubim, is commensurate with those depicted on his altar service commissioned by Pope Gregory XIII for the Sacristy of San Giacomo Maggiore (Fig. 10).⁴¹ Torriagini’s cherubim are characterized by their cool and serene personality with pupils delineated by a small delicate punch and feathered wings, smoothly polished, graciously curved, and outlined by a modest bevel.

Anna Beatriz Chadour commented on the distinctiveness of Gentili’s masks, being his own creation or that of a remarkably qualified journeyman in his workshop.⁴² The former is more probably the case, with ornamentation being an idiosyncratic trait for which he was celebrated. The modeling of cherubs realized by Torriagini and Gentili are close. They both feature the same manner of sculpting feathers except that Gentili sometimes adds a single thickly-chased vein down the middle carefully terminating in a sharp point. He also prefers rounded or oval pupils formed by two chased curves whereas Torriagini prefers a single delicate punch. Gentili’s facial types have an *art nouveau* character about them that is more tense than the coolness of Torriagini’s creations. It’s perhaps this *art nouveau* character about his work that appealed to 18th century neo-Renaissance art entrepreneurs inspired by Gentili’s creations such as Josiah Wedgwood, Matthew Boulton and Jean-Louis Prieur.⁴³

DOUBTING THOMAS

An observation of Gentili's typology for masks and cherubim draws our attention to an unpublished pax featuring a silver relief of *Doubting Thomas* (Cover photo). The flanking herms again recall the sphinxes along the base of the *Farnese Casket* while the bunches of fruit and leaves recall those adorning the *Farnese Altar Service* (Fig. 11). The cherub atop is remarkably close to that on the Pitti's pax and both frames share the same filleted border treatment around the relief (Fig. 12). The use of scrolling volutes and the incorporation of eaves and teardrops used to heighten the visual drama of the frames are commensurate. Further linking the frame with Gentili is his probable exposure to the innovative architectural influences of Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola at the Villa Farnese and Palazzo Farnese. In particular, a relationship can be seen between Vignola's unconventional mantelpiece for the bed chamber of Cardinal Ranuccio at the Villa Farnese and the pax design (Fig. 13).

Contemporaneous examples of this frame are scarce with only one other identified and slightly reworked example known.⁴⁴ However, later reworked aftercasts are quite prominent and frequently feature integrally cast reliefs of a Roman origin. The frame was serially produced in silver with an integral *Pietà* scene during the 18th or 19th century and many examples reside in Italian provincial churches. The frame was also diffused in southern Spain through a similar serial facture in bronze, probably during the late 17th century, and featuring a depiction of the *Madonna of the Crescent*, belonging to a popular Flemish-Spanish relief series of saints.⁴⁵

While no other contemporaneous examples of this frame are identified incorporating the *Doubting Thomas* relief, save for a slightly reworked bronze aftercast in the Russell-Cotes Art Museum in the UK, examples of the relief are known elsewhere, both independent and featured alternatively with a



Fig. 12: Detail of the *Risen Christ* pax, here attributed to Antonio Gentili (left, Museo degli Argenti, Palazzo Pitti); details of a *Doubting Thomas* pax here attributed to Antonio Gentili (right, private collection)

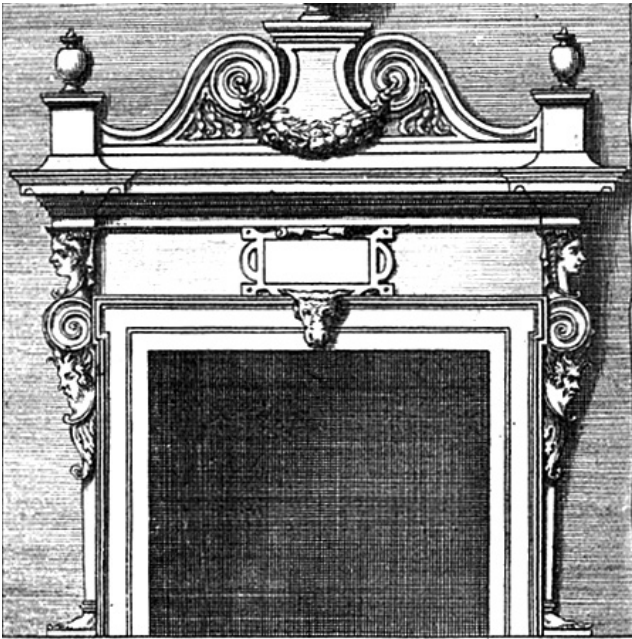


Fig. 13: Engraving from Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola's *Regola delli Cinque Ordini*, 1562, depicting the mantelpiece for the bed chamber of Cardinal Ranuccio at the Villa Farnese

diverse array of later frames. A *terminus ante quem* for the frame is established by way of a punched inscription along its base: FRANCISCVS . SPAGNIA . CVSTOS . 1634. The inscription recalls one in the Sigmund Morgenroth collection⁴⁶ discussed by Andrew Geber, and suggested as indicating the name of an owner, marked as a piece of property for prevention against theft or loss rather than the name of a donor or maker as would traditionally appear on the obverse or reverse of paxes.⁴⁷ As the handle and back-plate of the *Doubting Thomas* pax is lacking, it probably suggests the inscription belongs to a later owner (particularly if the handle and backing were no longer present or once featured a former donor's name) therefore it represents not the year the object was made but rather the year of adoption by an early owner. The owner must have been in Spain (SPAGNIA) and was probably a custodian (CVSTOS) over a provincial region.⁴⁸

Another *terminus ante quem* for this frame-type is provided by a hallmarked silver aftercast featuring a *Pietà* and belonging to an unidentified church in the Diocese of Adria-Rovigo. The underside of the handle features two silver hallmarks: one belonging to the Chamber of the Papal States, depicting the crossed keys of Saint Peter beneath a liturgical umbrella, and linking the pax with the guild in Rome; and another depicting a prancing horse, the hallmark of the foundry of Cristoforo Vischer of whom little seems to be known except that he was from Augsburg and was probably descendent of the famed Vischer family who dominated medieval German sculpture. His workshop was situated on the Via del Pelligrino, only a ten-minute walk from Guglielmo's studio. It is known that Vischer was in Rome in 1610, as he went to court over a dispute regarding some gold that was stolen from him by a companion while in route to Naples. Other Italian indices of artists, while offering little detail on his career, cite him as active around 1630. The silver pax at the Diocese of Adria and Rovigo has an attributed date of 1617-25, likely due to the dates in which the papal hallmark was being issued and indicating aftercasts of Gentili's model were already ensuing not long after his death in 1609.

Sparsely discussed in the literature on plaquettes is the relief of *Doubting Thomas* (Fig. 14, left). An example in Berlin was first considered German by Emile Molinier⁴⁹ a suggestion followed with hesitation by Wilhelm Vöge.⁵⁰ Ernst Bange accepted a German origin while emphasizing a Dutch influence⁵¹ and an example in Warsaw led Maria Stahr to also follow the possibility of a German origin.⁵² Arthur Sambon, whilst cataloging an example in his collection, was the first to forward an Italian connection, though attributing it to the



Fig. 14: Detail of a *Doubting Thomas* pax here attributed to Antonio Gentili (left, private collection); detail of the *Farnese Hours* binding, depicting the *Virgin*, by Antonio Gentili, ca. 1600 (right, Pierpont Morgan Library, NY)

Venetian sculptor Andrea Spinelli.⁵³ While discussing an example in the Morgenroth collection, Ulrich Middeldorf later disregarded this attribution but accepted a Venetian possibility in relation to works by Alessandro Vittoria and Girolamo Campagna.⁵⁴ Other uncatalogued examples include two in the Goodman collection, one formerly in the Frederiks collection,⁵⁵ one in the Palazzo Madama,⁵⁶ one art market example set into a later pax,⁵⁷ and an aftercast brass example made integrally in a later pax frame of

unidentified origin in a church within the Diocese of Perugia-Citta della Pieve.

Certain characteristics of the *Doubting Thomas* relief further link it with Gentili. An initial observation is the incorporation of a perspectival-grid like that added by Gentili to the Pitti's pax. The compositional format is generally the same, with the main protagonist framed by a mass of spectators. The modeling of Christ's chest, subtle as it is in low-relief, corresponds

also with his figures on the *Farnese Altar Service* and more so in comparison with the figure of Christ on the silver *Deposition* in Bologna. Most evident, however, is the closeness of Christ with Gentili's depiction of the *Virgin* on the binding for the *Farnese Hours*, notwithstanding the use again of a grid for the ground (Fig. 14). The manner in which Gentili has modeled the hands, almost too large, is similar, while the essence of each character, as though frozen-in-time, carries the same impression.

While the draperies are full-bodied, the characters' "lively body shapes appear through the fabric,"⁵⁸ as Chadour notes of Gentili's manner. The textured cloak worn by Christ also displays the kind of detail expected of a talented silversmith of which Gentili was credited.

A PIETÁ WITH JOHN THE EVANGELIST

A pair of plaquettes in the Goodman collection, both probably cast in the same workshop and once set into pendant paxes, include a *Doubting Thomas* and a *Pietá with John the Evangelist* (Fig. 15). The workshop responsible for producing these aftercasts may have either had a keen eye or a possible knowledge these two reliefs could share the same author.

The *Pietá with John the Evangelist* has shared a similar categorical fate as that of the *Doubting Thomas*, oscillating between associations of a German or Italian origin. An example in Berlin was first judged by Vöge as a work of late 16th century German invention,⁵⁹ followed also by Bange who suggested a slightly later early 17th century dating.⁶⁰ An example in the Faure collection was cataloged as German,⁶¹ probably following Vöge's assessment.

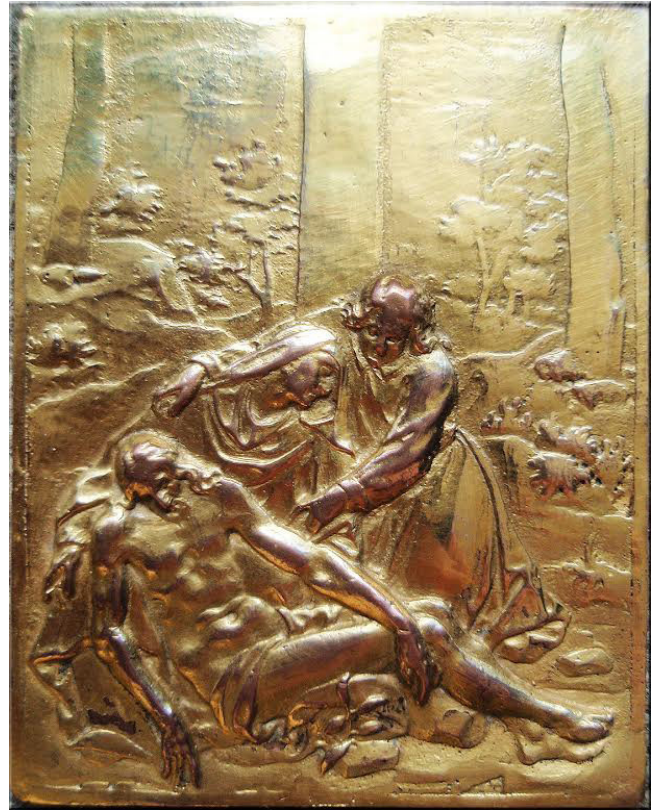


Fig. 15: A plaquette of the *Pietá with John the Evangelist* here attributed to Antonio Gentili (Goodman collection)

Ingrid Weber first inferred a possible connection to Italy by ascribing it to an artist influenced by Antonio Abondio, a sculptor and producer of small reliefs of Italian descent but active in the North.⁶² Examples at the Louvre⁶³ and British Museum⁶⁴ have subsequently been cataloged as under Abondio's influence. However, the example at Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris considered an Italian possibility and the example formerly belonging to Gramberg was ascribed to Jacob Cornelis Cobaert in 1961 at the Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe in Hamburg as part of the *Sechs Sammler stellen aus* exhibition, an attribution certainly due to Gramberg's own expertise on Guglielmo and the artists operating in his circle.^{65 66}



Fig. 16: A pax of the *Adoration of the Magi* by Muzio Zagaroli with a frame here attributed to Antonio Gentili (Museo Diocesano, Monreale)

As Gramberg prefigures, apart from its connection with Guglielmo's sketches, the relief does appear to have a presence in the sphere of Roman production. One early cast example is featured integrally on a silver pax with Torrigiani's frame (Fig. 10, left), located at an unidentified church in the Diocese of Viterbo. Another exceptional and possibly contemporary example, with a heightened and arched format, is set into a classicized frame fitted with a winged cherub atop that recalls the influence of Gentili.⁶⁷ Its character suggests a possible dating to the first quarter of the 17th century. While Gramberg's

familiarity with Guglielmo's output successfully links the relief to one of his collaborators, the extremely low-relief format of the plaquette suggests a closer proximity with Gentili when compared against the scenes of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* Cobaert modeled using Guglielmo's designs and whose reliefs arise from their surface with greater animation.⁶⁸ Cobaert's manner is infused with a spirited agility that contrasts against the much more subdued character of Gentili's creations.

PAX FRAME FOR MUZIO ZAGAROLI'S ADORATION in MONREALE

A pax featuring a rock crystal of the *Adoration of the Magi* by Muzio Zagaroli,⁶⁹ now in the Museo Diocesano in Monreale, is first noted in the Palermo historical archives of 1599 (Fig. 16). Muzio was a pupil and later employee of the more renowned gem engraver: Giovanni Bernardi.⁷⁰ The subject of Monreale's *Adoration* pax has sometimes been associated with a plaquette relief of the *Adoration of the Magi* frequently attributed to Bernardi.⁷¹ As regards this association, the plaquette literature has often stated that Muzio's pax was commissioned by Alessandro in 1539,⁷² but this is a confusion. The rock crystal pax commissioned in 1539 by Alessandro was for a scene depicting the *Conversion of St. Paul*.⁷³ The origin of Monreale's pax of the *Adoration* is certainly much later and is due to a commission by Cardinal Ludovico II Torres for the Chapel of San Castrense within the cathedral.⁷⁴

Of note is Muzio's contribution to the *Farnese Altar Service*. Apart from Vasari's mention of Bernardi's work for the Altar Service,⁷⁵ a letter from 4 April 1546, between Alessandro and Bernardi, discusses



Fig. 17: A gilt silver pax of the *Pietà* after a design by Michelangelo for Vittoria Colonna, anonymous, Circle of Antonio Gentili, ca. 1600 (Diocese of Isernia-Venafro)

Bernardi's completion of four of the crystals.⁷⁶ When Bernardi died in 1553 the completion of the remaining crystals was inherited by Muzio, resulting in three contributions by his hand, a scene of *Christ and the Captain of Capernaum*, the *Crowning of Christ with Thorns* and an autographed crystal depicting the *Healing of the Daughter of Jairus*.^{77 78}

A relationship between Muzio and Gentili is already established by way of the *Farnese Altar Service*

assumed by Gentili in 1578 and completed in 1582. It is reasonable that such a working relationship would again be called upon when either artist could have received Torres' commission for the Monreale pax. Beyond this logical inclination there are stylistic features evident on the frame which guide it to an association with Gentili's craftsmanship, most notably the manner of the cherub set within the pediment whose facial character recalls the one featured along the base of the Pitti's pax.

RELATED WORKS: PAXES of a PIETÀ and CHRIST AT THE TOMB

The present author formerly suggested a gilt silver pax at a church in the Diocese of Isernia-Venafro, depicting a relief which follows after Michelangelo's *Pietà* for Vittoria Colonna, could have possibly been the workmanship of Torrigiani or Gentili (Fig. 17).⁷⁹ The subject of Michelangelo's *Pietà* was serially produced on Roman paxes probably emanating from the workshop(s) of either Ludovico or Jacopo del Duca during the 1580s. During that period Torrigiani was actively working with Ludovico on the Sta Maria Maggiore tabernacle in Rome. The project was also overseen by Gentili who worked with its commissioners on the budget for its production. One of the tabernacle's panels reproduces the motif of Mary as featured on the Duca's production of the *Pietà* paxes. The Duca brothers and Gentili were also regularly consulted during the completion of work at the Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano.⁸⁰ The ambit of Torrigiani and Gentili, in close association with a serial producer of *Pietà* paxes following after Michelangelo's motif, would make them probable



Fig. 18: A gilt bronze pax of *Christ at the Tomb*, anonymous, Circle of Antonio Gentili, ca. 1600 (private collection, Dorotheum sale 24 November 2008)

candidates for the creation of the *Pietà* pax in Isernia-Venafro.

However, the pax diverges from the Duca variant and follows after the early sculptural prototype like the marble version in Santo Spirito in Sassia rather than being dependent on the serial pax version or engraved copies by Giulo Bonasone and later editions by other engravers.

The manner of the *Pietà*'s relief falls near Gentili's workmanship while the cherub in its pediment

appears to be a cross-pollination between Torrigiani and Gentili's style. The frame, however, clearly employs a contemporary example of Gentili's workshop model, suggesting its maker had access to his models. Though superficial, the handle of the pax appears to be a redacted version of Guglielmo's handle featured on his *Risen Christ* pax at the MET. The treatment to the handle follows what we might expect of Gentili's simplification of Guglielmo's models, however, the handle is not particularly unique as similar models were becoming more popular for use on paxes in late 16th and early 17th century Rome and perhaps even the Veneto. The handling of the *Pietà* relief distinguishes it from Gentili and Torrigiani's style. It would be logical to assume a creation by someone in their circle, if not the production of Gentili's own son, Pietro, who assumed his role at the Papal Mint on 10 January 1602. Contrarily, we know Gentili worked alongside other gold and silversmiths like Sbarri and Pier Antonio di Benevenuto Tati, already discussed, and others like Orazio Marchesi and Gabriele Gerardi with whom he established a workshop in 1576.

A *Christ at the Tomb* plaque may be the work of the same artist active in the circle of Gentili and Torrigiani. A contemporary cast of the relief, observed in the art market (Fig. 18),⁸¹ borrows a frame developed by Torrigiani (Fig. 10, left). However, the cherubim featured in the tympanum and along its base have been replaced by models commensurate in style to that of the *Pietà*. A *terminus ante quem* for this pax is established via a Roman hallmark of 1690. The cherubim of this pax have a more alert expression than what is observed on Torrigiani's cooler cherubs or Gentili's examples featuring an

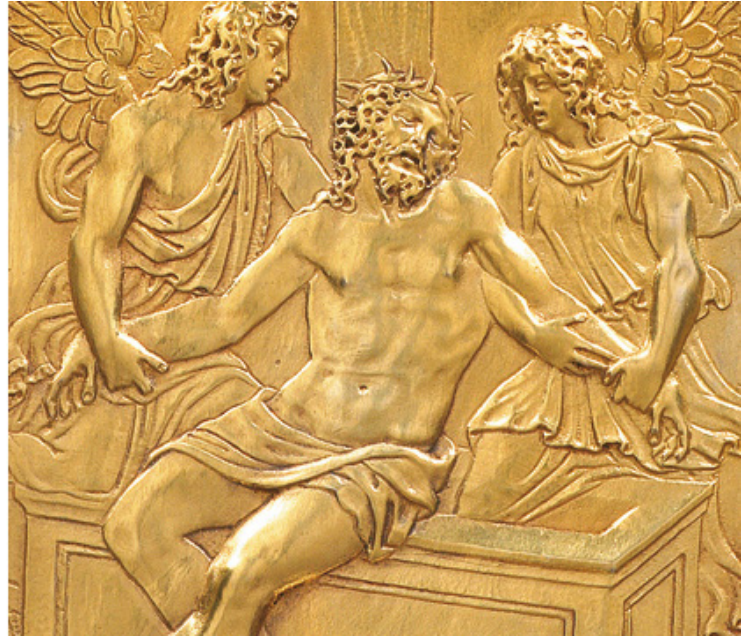


Fig. 19: Detail of a gold repoussé *Entombment* by Cesare Targone, ca. 1580, after a model by Guglielmo della Porta (Walters Museum, Baltimore, MD); detail of a gilt bronze pax of *Christ at the Tomb*, anonymous, Circle of Antonio Gentili, ca. 1600 (right, private collection, Dorotheum sale 24 November 2008)

aloof stare. The foreheads are taught and the eyes are opened wide. There is also a late Renaissance swagger added to the rendering of the wings, suggesting an early 17th century spirit. However, its maker is evidently borrowing fine molds from Torrigiani and Gentili's creation.

The extremely low-relief modeling of the Christ at the Tomb suggests the hand of a qualified goldsmith. The character of the relief also bespeaks the influence of another artist active in Guglielmo's circle: Cesare Targone. While the ground of his larger repoussé gold reliefs is densely stippled, his smaller works, like the series he rendered with Antonio Susini for the *studiolo* of the Medici Duke Ferdinando I, after designs by Giambologna, feature a more modest ground with stroked and chased foliage that share parallels with the *Christ at the Tomb* and *Pietà*.

The elongated torsos of the protagonists can also be related to Targone's style in addition to the amphibious-like digits which appear a challenge for the artist to render. Foremost, the web-like, mottled hair featured on both reliefs recall the work of Targone and a comparison may be superficially drawn between the *Christ at the Tomb* pax relief and Targone's larger-scale *Entombment* (Fig. 19). However, the lack of prowess in foreshortening the figures seems to distance the maker of these two paxes from Targone.

Lastly, a related pax of the *Nativity* at the Church of Santa Maria della Santà in Naples features a similar frame. The pax is known by a watercolor by Francesco Bartoli, ca. 1690-1730, at the British Museum.⁸²

Endnotes

- 1 Giovanni Baglione (1642): *Le vite de' pittori scultori et architetti. Dal pontificato di Gregorio XIII del 1572. In fino a' tempi di Papa Vrbano Ottauo nel 1642*, p. 109 (...non ritrovossi pari, che in quel genio l'uguagliasse).
- 2 For example, the 5 February 1577 inventory taken after the death of Gentili's regular collaborator, Guglielmo della Porta, counts three silver paxes and one gilt pax remaining in his workshop: *Tre paci de argento con li fondi de metalo indorato et una de metalo indorato*. See Rosario Coppel, Charles Avery, Margarita Estella (2012): *Guglielmo della Porta: A Counter-Reformation Sculptor*. Coll & Cortes, pp. 140-41.
- 3 In addition to his role as assayer of the Papal Mint from 1584-1602, Gentili also completed commissions for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, Pope Pius V, Pope Gregory XIII and Pope Sixtus V.
- 4 Examples of Gentili's small-scale devotional objects include twelve silver reliquary busts he made for Pope Pius V in 1570 after Guglielmo's designs, a silver reliquary bust of *St. Petronilla* for Gregory XIII around 1574, a silver and rock-crystal reliquary for the Compagnia di Gesu in 1578, the *Farnese Altar Service* in 1582, a *Descent from the Cross* devotional relief sold to Monsignor Centurione around 1584, a cross for the Certosa di San Martino in Naples in 1593, completed with assistance from his son, and a silver reliquary bust of *Mandosius Tiberius* in 1600.
- 5 R. Coppel (2012): *op. cit.* (note 2), *Guglielmo della Porta in Rome*, pp. 53-54.
- 6 *Reliquit Basilicae Principis Apostolorum de Urbe et in dictae basilicae perpetuo retinenda duo candelabra et crucem argentea per magistrum manim aurificem cum cristaliij una cum pace elaborata licet aliquantulum imperfecta...* See Wolfgang Lotz (1951): Antonio Gentili or Manno Sbarri? *The Art Bulletin*, 33(4), pp. 260-262.
- 7 Sbarri's letter to the Cardinal at Caprarola on June 28 1561 omits mention of the pax (e.g., **quella mi commesse che io dovessi attendere alla Croce et alli Candelieri**." See W. Lotz (1951): *op. cit.* (note 6).
- 8 Werner Gramberg (1960): Guglielmo della Porta, Coppe Fiamingo und Antonio Gentili da Faenza," *Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunstsammlungen*, V, pp. 31-52.
- 9 R. Coppel (2012): *op. cit.* (note 2), pp. 28-57.
- 10 Alessandro's letter to Guglielmo was written on 8 December 1571 stating: "I have received the crucifix that it was your pleasure to send me and because it is a work of such merit and made with so much care and diligence by such a perfect hand as your own, it has pleased me so much, to the furthest extent to which I can express myself, and indeed I know not of any image that could be sculpted with greater mastery and more skill than this one, so the greater is my gratitude to you." (from the State Archives of Naples, first published by W. Gramberg in 1981 and reproduced by R. Coppel (2012), *op. cit.* (note 2).
- 11 Anna Beatriz Chadour (1982): Der Altarsatz des Antonio Gentili in St. Peter zu Rom. *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch*, vol. 43, p. 169.
- 12 A.B. Chadour (1982), *op. cit.* (note 11).
- 13 Sotheby's auction, 10 December 2015, Lot 399.
- 14 Satisfying comparisons may also be drawn with Guglielmo's 1569 gilt silver corpus for Maximilian II of Austria residing at the Geistliche Schatzkammer in Vienna.
- 15 Vasari describes: ...*Cristo crucifisso, con diciotto figure...* (...Christ crucified with eighteen figures...). See Giorgio Vasari (1568): *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architetti*, ed. G. Milanesi, 9 vols., Florence 1878-1885, vol. 7, p. 549.
- 16 *Un monte Calvario de metallo* (A metal Mount Calvary). See Antonino Bertolotti (1881): *Artisti lombardi a Rome nei secoli XV, XVI, XVII. Studi e ricerche negli archivi romani*, 2 vols. Milan, Vol. I, p. 142.
- 17 ...*altare di figure di N.S. Jesu Christo sul Monte Calvario*. See A. Bertolotti (1881), *op. cit.* (note 16), p. 154.
- 18 Gramberg asserts this idea, which is not only logical but also evident when observing the varied casts. See W. Gramberg (1973): *Das Kalvarienberg-Relief des Guglielmo della Porta und seine Silber-Gold Ausführung von Antonio Gentile da Faenza*. Intuition und Kunstwissenschaft. Berlin.
- 19 W. Gramberg (1973), *op. cit.* (note 18), pp. 449-460.
- 20 W. Gramberg (1973), *op. cit.* (note 18), p. 453.
- 21 The provenance of this object is recorded in a dedication at the foot of the frame: *Questa imagine del Santissimo Crocifisso fu donata in questo quadro per Gregorio Papa XIII alla Serenissima Signora Bianca Capello Medici Gran Duchessa di Toscana con privilegio dell'indulgente e gratie infrascritte a Sua Alt. Ser. Concedute l'anno della salute MDLXXX...* (This image of the Most Holy Crucifix was given in this frame by Pope Gregory XIII to Her Serene Highness Bianca Capello Granduchess of Tuscany, with the privilege of the indulgences and graces listed below conceded to Her Serene Highness in the year of Salvation 1580...). See R. Coppel (2012): *op. cit.* (note 2), *Mount Calvary*, p. 106.
- 22 J. Zarco Cuevas (1930-31): *Inventario de las alhajas, relicarios, estatuas, pinturas, tapices y otros objetos de valor y curiosidad donados por el rey Felipe II al Monasterio de El Escorial. Años 1571-1598 (I) y (II)*. *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, vol. XCVI-XCVII, Madrid, fourth batch in 1584.
- 23 Budapest Museum of Fine Arts, Inv. 51.927.
- 24 A. B. Chadour (1980): *Antonio Gentili Und Der Atarsatz Von St. Peter*. Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, doctoral thesis, pp. 174-76.
- 25 W. Gramberg (1964): *Die Düsseldorfer Skizzenbücher des Guglielmo della Porta*, 3. vols., Berlin, pp. 61-66.
- 26 Michael Riddick (2017): *El Greco's Roman Period and the Influence of Guglielmo della Porta*. RenBronze.com

- 27 Charles Avery (1998): *Sculpture: Bronzetti, Placchette, Medaglie: La Spezia Museo Civico Amedeo Lia* (I cataloghi del Museo civico Amedeo Lia), Silvana Editoriale, Milan, p. 289, no. 209.
- 28 The probable function for the *Flagellation*, as a relief intended for paxes, is evident by its size as well as the generous border surrounding the scene for the purpose of nesting conveniently behind a frame.
- 29 For a discussion of the attribution of the MET's *Risen Christ* pax, see Stefanie Walker (1991): A Pax by Guglielmo della Porta. *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, 26, pp. 167-176; and for a discussion of the *Flagellation* relief's attribution to Guglielmo, see: R. Coppel (2012): *op. cit.* (note 2), *Flagellation of Christ*, pp. 83-87.
- 30 Victoria & Albert Museum Inv. A.1-1977.
- 31 Ernst Bange (1923): *Die Bildwerke des Deutschen Museums. Die Bildwerke in Bronze und in anderen Metallen*. Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin, no. 1863, pp. 57-58.
- 32 Museo Nazionale del Bargello Inv. 753
- 33 LACMA Inv. M.85.103.
- 34 Ulrich Middeldorf (1935): Two wax reliefs by Guglielmo della Porta. *The Art Bulletin*, vol.17, no. 1, March, p. 95.
- 35 It shouldn't be ruled out that the finished model could instead be the product of Jacob Cornelis Cobaert following after Guglielmo's design. Cobaert is documented as being responsible for modeling the series of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* reliefs after Guglielmo's designs. See G. Baglione (1642): *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 100-01.
- 36 Hampel auction, 23 June 2007, Lot 803.
- 37 S. Walker (1991): *op. cit.* (note 29), p. 173.
- 38 Called *Giglio*.
- 39 SMART Museum, Inv. 1973.54
- 40 Wolfgang Fritz Volbach (1948): Antonio Gentili Da Faenza and the Large Candlesticks in the Treasury of St. Peter's. *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 90, no. 547, pp. 281-286
- 41 See figures 4-6, Michael Riddick (2017): *A Renowned Pietà by Jacob Cornelis Cobaert*. Renbronze.com
- 42 Chadour dubs this possible assistant the "Master of Ornamentation." A.B. Chadour (1982), *op. cit.* (note 11), pp. 133-93.
- 43 For the inspiration of Gentili on these modern craftsmen see Gordon Campbell (ed.) (2006): *The Grove Encyclopedia of Decorative Arts*, Vol. 1. Oxford University Press, p. 417.
- 44 The original relief is lost or replaced by a 16th century cameo bust of a woman mounted on hard stone. It is to be wondered if this was intentional or a later replacement and if such a cameo may have once passed through the hands of Cesar Targone, a goldsmith active in Guglielmo's circle who also was a dealer of such objects. For the example of this frame and hardstone see Christies auction, 23-25 February 2009, Lot 470 (ex-collection of Yves Saint Laurent et Pierre Bergé).
- 45 For a discussion of these reliefs see Jeremy Warren (2014): *Medieval and Renaissance Sculpture in the Ashmolean Museum*, Vol. 3: *Plaquettes*. Ashmolean Museum Publications, UK, nos. 504-06, pp. 1045-48
- 46 AD&A Museum, Inv. 1964.377.
- 47 Anthony Geber (1989): Name Inscriptions: Solution or Problem? *Studies in the History of Art*, Vol. 22. *Italian Plaquettes*. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC., pp. 251-52
- 48 A *Custos*, or custodian and guardian, was a religious superior in the Franciscan Order (FRANCISVS), and typically one assigned to preside over a province.
- 49 Émile Molinier (1886): *Les Bronzes de la Renaissance: Les Plaquettes*. 2 Vols. Paris, France. Vol. 2, no. 695, p. 171.
- 50 Wilhelm Vöge (1910): *Die deutschen Bildwerke und die der anderen cisalpinen Länder*. 2nd ed. Berlin: Reimer, no. 818.
- 51 E. Bange (1923): *op. cit.* (note 31), no. 1485, plate 28.
- 52 Maria Stahr (1994): *Plakiety renesansowe : Muzeum Narodowe w Poznaniu*, Poznań, no. 137.
- 53 Arthur Sambon (1914): *Sammlung Dr. A. Sambon*, Jacob Hirsch auction, 9 May 1914, Lot 131.
- 54 Ulrich Middeldorf (1944): *Medals and Plaquettes from the Sigmund Morgenroth Collection*. Donnelley & Sons Co., Chicago, IL., no. 184, p. 28.
- 55 Morton & Eden auction, 18 April 2001, Lot 600 (cataloged as Netherlandish, end of the 16th century).
- 58 Palazzo Madama Inv. 1273/B.
- 57 Sothebys auction 21 April 1988, Lot 207.
- 58 A.B. Chadour (1982), *op. cit.* (note 11), p. 173.
- 59 W. Vöge (1910): *op. cit.* (note 50), no. 789.
- 60 E. Bange (1923): *op. cit.* (note 31), no. 1477, plate 34.
- 61 Hamburger auction 22-23 Sep 1913 (Faure collection), no. 697, plate XXI.
- 62 Ingrid Weber (1975): *Deutsche, Niederlandische und Französische Renaissanceplaketten, 1500-1650*. Bruckmann Munchen, Germany, no. 664, plate 180, pp. 290-91.
- 63 Louvre Inv. OA 9194.
- 64 Probably British Museum Inv. 1915,1216.179. Exhibited in 1995 (*Renaissance medals and plaquettes of northern Europe* [no. 82]) as influenced by Abondio but of German early 17th century origin.

- 65 *Sechs Sammler Stellen Aus*, Exhibition Catalogue, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, 7th April-11th June 1961.
- 66 Gramberg's example of the *Pietà with John the Evangelist* was recently sold on the art market: Rotherbaum Auktionshaus, 28 June 2019, Lot 36. Gramberg had acquired it from the Rosener collection in Berlin.
- 67 Located in an unidentified church in the Diocese of Avezzano.
- 68 See note 35.
- 69 The rock crystal features Muzio's signature: MVZ/IVS.D – ZAGAROLI.F. along the lower left margin.
- 70 A. B. Chadour (1980): *op. cit.* (note 24), pp. 38-45.
- 71 For the most recent discussion on this plaque see J. Warren (2014): *op. cit.* (note 45), no. 256, pp. 791-92.
- 72 See John Pope-Hennessy (1965): *Renaissance Bronzes from the Samuel H. Kress Collection. Reliefs, plaquettes, statuettes, utensils and mortars*. Phaidon Press, London, no. 29, fig. 375, p. 13; Valentino Donati (1989): *Pietre Dure e Medaglie del Rinascimento – Giovanni da Castel Bolognese*, Ferrara, pp. 106-07; and most recently cited by J. Warren (see note 71).
- 73 Francesco Liverani (1870): *Maestro Giovanni Bernardi da Castelbolognese, intagliatore di gemme*. Faenza, pp. 26-28.
- 74 Lisa Sciortino (2014): *Et Verbum Caro Factum Est*. Exhibition catalog, Museo Diocesano Monreale, 27 Nov 2013-23 Feb 2014.
- 75 G. Vasari (1568): *op. cit.* (note 15), vol. 5, p. 373.
- 76 Alessandro had apparently saved the crystals for an important project, eventually deciding to incorporate them on the *Altar Service*. This calculated ambition may have been the result of showcasing his *ingegno*, in which the taste and vision of the patron was just as important as the *disegno* of an object. This may also explain why Alessandro was quick to donate the masterpiece to the institution he served. For a discussion on patrons and *ingegno* see Luke Syson and Dora Thornton (2001): *Objects of Virtue: Art in Renaissance Italy*, British Museum Press, London, pp. 135-81 or C.D. Dickerson III (2008): The "Gran Scuola" of Guglielmo della Porta, the Rise of the "Aurifex Inventor" and the Education of Stefano Maderno. *Storia dell'arte*, 121, pp. 25-71.
- 77 The rock crystal features Muzio's signature: MUZIU S.Z.A.F.
- 78 For a discussion of Muzio's stylistic tendencies versus those of his mentor, see A.B. Chadour (1982): *op. cit.* (note 11).
- 79 Michael Riddick (2016): *Michelangelo's Pietà in Bronze*. Renbronze.com., fig. 8.
- 80 Ludovico del Duca, together with that of Antonio Gentili, appears both as admirable experts in a document of February 1600, presented by Orazio Censore for works performed in S. Giovanni ("Giacomo") in Laterano. See A. Bertolotti (1881): *op. cit.* (note 16), p. 186.
- 81 Dorotheum auction, 24 Nov 2008, Lot 47.
- 82 Inv. Nos., 1928,0310.91.6 and 1928,0310.91.8.