

Baptism of Fire

TERRACOTTA MASTERPIECES
SPANNING THREE MILLENNIA



COLNAGHI

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Edited by
Donald Johnston

FOREWARD

The title of the current exhibition, *Baptism of Fire*, was deliberately chosen because it evokes both the idea of a creative beginning as well as the technical method of production. Terracotta – literally ‘cooked earth’ – is created from a clay that is rich in iron oxides which, when fired in a kiln, usually results in a distinctive orange/brown colour. It has been an important medium since the earliest days of domestic production as well as artistic expression. Known to have been used to create pots, urns and small-scale figures as early as the Harrapan civilisation of the Indus Valley between 3300 and 1300 BC, it has remained desirable due to its malleability, its durability, and the way in which it is able to record the freshest of artistic details.

Terracotta is prized for its versatility, and can be used in a myriad of different ways. It can be modelled by hand, where a craftsman or artist builds up the work of art by adding small pieces of clay piece by piece. These works often have the freshest details, and one can sometimes detect traces of the creation of the piece by looking at the underside or the reverse where one might see the joins between the individual lumps of clay, or detect the imprint of a wooden board on which the piece was originally fashioned. These works are therefore unique. Terracotta can also be cast, either by pressing the clay into a mould, or by diluting the clay with water to the point that it can be swirled around the interior of a mould. In the latter process, once the liquid element is drawn out, the remaining mixture hardens against the form of the mould, thus reproducing the original. The advantage of cast works of art is that they can be created in multiples.

In rare instances, terracotta has been known to be carved while in its soft or ‘leather’ state. Perhaps most intriguing of all the processes used for terracotta is an amalgam of more than one process, where elements of a work of art are cast from a mould, but then modified by hand before firing.



This process seems to have been used, for example, in the creation of the celebrated ‘Terracotta Army’, created to protect the tomb of the first emperor of China Qin Shi Haung in the late 3rd century BC. Analysis suggests that there are ten basic types of head that were cast for members of the army, but that each one was then individually modified so that no two are exactly the same, and possibly represent individual portraits. In the modern era, portraitists working in terracotta such as John Michael Rysbrack (1694-1770) are thought, on occasion, to have taken a mould of a sitter’s facial features, and then create the rest of the bust around this original likeness.

Once fired, the clay became a durable – although not impervious – material that could be left in its natural state or coloured using pigments and varnishes, or glazed surfaces. The former technique was more often reserved for works that were intended for an interior setting such as churches, as the coloured surfaces were more susceptible to wear and damage from the elements. Glazed terracotta was often used for exterior architectural tiles and decorative elements, and it was notably used by the Florentine sculptural dynasty, the della Robbia, in the 15th and early 16th centuries. They specialised in figures, altarpieces and architectural elements, the colours of which remain as vibrant today as when they were first created.

Although commonly used to create domestic items such as urns, bowls and cups in the ancient world, it was perhaps in the field of sculpture that the physical properties of terracotta were used to their greatest advantage. Like wax, the clay that became terracotta was easily manipulated by the hands of a sculptor and could be used to resolve compositional difficulties during the creative process. However, unlike wax, terracotta could be fired, and therefore became a much more durable record than wax, which was more susceptible to breaks and the effects of heat.

Small sculptural works in terracotta were therefore often used as an aid to the sculptor who wished to finalise a composition before committing to the creation of the same work in the more expensive and time-consuming media of bronze or marble. They could also be used as presentation models for a patron in order to get his or her approval before proceeding to the final commission. This latter process is clearly the case in the creation of the pair of adoring angels attributed to Moratti in the present exhibition. The integrally modelled bases have been clearly marked with notches to create a scale which would guide the sculptor in the creation of the final marble or bronze works of art.

Although there was clearly a utilitarian element to the creation of many works in terracotta, from the renaissance it became increasingly apparent that these works did not need to have a function or be merely a step in the creation of a later, ‘ultimate’ work of art. Connoisseurs began to recognise the beauty of these works, which are often considered to be fresher, and more closely associated with the creative process of celebrated sculptors. Small works by sculptural geniuses such as Giambologna and Bernini became sought after in their own right.

The present exhibition brings together an impressive array of objects covering a huge range of periods and artistic styles, as well as many of the methods of production described above. From the terracotta head of the panther of the 5th century BC, with its powerful snarl and the carefully articulated tufts of hair in the ears, to the graphic beauty of Picasso’s homage to *Le Dejeuner sur l’Herbe*, these works testify to the enduring attraction of a medium that has spanned millenia.



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SOUTH ITALIAN GREEK

Fragmentary Head of a Panther

Circa late 5th century BC

Terracotta; on a modern metal and ebonised wood base

6 in. (15.2 cm) high

11 ³/₄ in. (29.8 cm) high, overall

PROVENANCE

Collection of Robert Laurent (1890-1970), by 1956.

Purchased from the above by Dr. Otto J. Brendel, while both Laurent and Brendel taught at Indiana University, 1942-1956.

Collection of Dr. Otto J. Brendel.

By descent to Mrs. Cornelia Foss.





Fig. 1. *Head of a Panther*,
Hellenistic Greek circa
3rd-2nd century BC, marble,
Private Collection, USA.

This dramatic head of a panther has an important academic provenance. Its most arresting feature is the open mouth with teeth individually and prominently articulated. It is carefully modeled, with the eyes rendered with heavy lids and incised pupils. The whiskers and wrinkles of the snout are deliberately indicated, as are tufts of hair emanating from inside the ears. Another notable feature is the stippling of the surface especially evident on the forehead between the ears, done while the clay was still soft and evidently indicating the spots of the feline's fur. These would have been accentuated with color in the original condition of the piece. There are scattered patches of a white slip or wash on the head, most noticeably at the top and sides, as well as within the proper left ear. Other pigments would have been added on top of this white layer. The overall freshness of the sculpture is due to the free working of the head while the molded but not yet fired clay was still malleable.

The hollow head has been filled with plaster at the back to facilitate its modern mounting. The open mouth reveals a hollow interior, suggesting that the head could conceivably have been a waterspout gargoyle. The use of terracotta lion heads as gargoyles is well attested in Magna Grecian architectural sculpture.

This large terracotta head was always considered by Otto Brendel, its previous owner and distinguished scholar of Roman and Etruscan art, to be an Etruscan work, but more recent scholarship has placed it within the coroplastic tradition of the South Italian Greek cities. The original purpose of the sculpture is still open to question. It is possible that the piece served as a votive or comes from an architectural setting such as a pediment or, as mentioned, a waterspout. The head may be compared to marble examples of Hellenistic and later creations (for a head, see fig. 1, or for a relatively complete marble panther recently bequeathed to the Metropolitan Museum of Art see fig. 2).





Fig. 2. *Monumental Statue of a Panther*, Greek, circa 323-331 BC, marble, Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, accession no. 2021.40.1.

Two notable Etruscologists, Dr Mario Iozzo, Director of the Florence Archaeological Museum, and Professor Richard De Puma, University of Iowa, Emeritus, and author of the recent comprehensive Etruscan volume of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2013), were consulted regarding this piece, both of whom suggest that the sculpture might well be South Italian Greek rather than Etruscan.

SOUTH ITALIAN GREEK

Fragmentary Head of a Bearded God

Circa 4th century BC

Terracotta, with traces of polychromy; on a modern wood and metal base

10 ⁷/₈ in. (27.5 cm) high

18 ³/₄ in. (47.5 cm) high, overall

PROVENANCE

With Dr. Herbert A. Cahn, Münzen und Medaillen A.G., prior to 1981.

With André Emmerich, New York, 1981.

Hesperia Arts Auction, New York, 27 November 1990, lot 48.

With Royal-Athena Galleries, New York, 1991.

Collection of Frank H. Pearl (Washington, DC), 1991-2012.

His posthumous sale, Christie's, New York, Antiquities, 5 December 2012, lot 158.

Jean-Louis Domercq.

Private Collection (USA), 2013-2023.

LITERATURE

André Emmerich Gallery, Inc., *Classical Antiquities: An exhibition organized in cooperation with Dr. Herbert A. Cahn, Münzen und Medaillen A.G., Basel and Derek Content Inc., Crow Hill, Houlton, Maine. exh. pamphlet, November 14 – December 30, 1981* [reproduced].

Royal-Athena Galleries, *Art of the Ancient World*, vol. VI, part II (1991), no. 55.



The present sculpture is a life-sized head representing a male god. He is depicted with centrally parted hair, with upswept locks rolled back over the tops of his ears and behind them. His almond-shaped eyes and thick, contoured lids confront the viewer with a calm, forward gaze. The brows are slightly arched, merging with the bridge of a long, straight nose, its tip overhanging the downturned moustache. The full lower lip protrudes and is surrounded by an ample beard, comprising individual locks assembled into corkscrew curls. Some original pigment survives in the hair, especially at the back.

This head illustrates the vigorous independent tradition of Italic Greek sculpture, differing from contemporary mainland Greek representations of gods in several important ways. Perhaps most notably, the treatment of the hair is archaicising; the long hair combed back from the face and tied in a chignon is a coiffure characteristic of the Archaic Greek style, and the parallel curls of the beard are also out of phase with the more realistic style prevalent in the later fifth and fourth centuries BC of mainland Greece. The facial features, however, are contemporary, resembling those typical of the early fourth century BC.

The prototype for this figure would most likely have been made in bronze, with the ringlets of the beard cast separately and attached. The replication of this effect in terracotta is quite remarkable, and attests to the high level of skill and specialisation of Tarentine workshops of the period.





ETRUSCAN

Fragmentary Head of a Woman

Late 4th to early 3rd century BC

Terracotta, with traces of original polychromy; on a modern base
8 ½ in. (22 cm) high

PROVENANCE

With Galerie Segredakis, Paris, 1952.

Purchased from the above by M. Descrieres, 1952.

Given by the above to a private collector (?) in the 1950s.

Thence by descent until 2017.





Fig. 1. *Etruscan Statue of a Young Woman*, Late 4th-early 3rd century BC, terracotta, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

This incredibly rare life-size Etruscan terracotta head, which once perhaps stood in its complete form in a sanctuary, is an exceptional example of the sophistication of Italic artists, who at this time began to fuse native traditions with ones imported from Greece.

She is depicted wearing a veil, which covers her hair with the exception of the front, where thick, curly hair, centrally parted, flows down around the sides of the head. Beneath the veil, an elaborate headband decorated with round rosettes is visible. The face is round and symmetrical, with no indications of age beyond a classicising youthfulness. The slightly curved brows meet at the long, straight nose. Her deep-set almond-shaped eyes are hooded under heavy lids, with pupils and irises incised. Her full mouth is held slightly open. It is clear that many details of the head were worked by free hand rather than made in a mould. For example, the decorative florets on the headdress seem to have been modelled separately and then attached, while the remnants of incision visible in the locks of hair indicate a sculptor worked the clay while it was wet before a final firing process.

The closest comparable example is an Etruscan terracotta statue of a woman which entered the collection of the Metropolitan Museum, New York in 1916 (Acc. no. 16.141). Both examples possess similar full, oval-shaped faces, and the rosettes on the hairband of both are so close that it is possible that they came from the same mould. From this close parallel, it is possible to extrapolate more about the original appearance of the present head. She probably wore a mantle and was richly decorated in jewellery, including necklaces moulded in terracotta and possible further attachments made of glass or gold. The distinctive style of this head, in particular the style of the headband, indicates it is likely from a city called Lavinium, an Etruscan site eighteen miles south of Rome. This head offers insight into one of the cultures that would come to shape the visual language of Republican Rome throughout the following two centuries.



DONATO DI NICCOLÒ DI BETTO, KNOWN AS DONATELLO

(Florence circa 1386 – 1466 Florence)

San Lorenzo (Saint Lawrence)

Circa 1440

Terracotta, originally painted
29 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (74.5 cm) high
24 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (62 cm) large, from elbow to elbow
Width at the base: 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (47 cm)

PROVENANCE

Originally Borgo San Lorenzo (province of Florence), in the lunette over the main door of the 'Pieve' (main church) of San Lorenzo, until 1888.

With Stefano Bardini (1836-1922), Florence, until 1889, by whom sold to Johann II, Prince of Liechtenstein (1840-1929). Liechtenstein Summer Palace, Rossau, Vienna, until 1938.

Thence by descent within the collections of the Princes of Liechtenstein, Vienna and/or Vaduz.

Sold by the above, Sotheby's, Amsterdam, 18-20 February, 2003, lot 194 (as 19th century, in the Renaissance style), where acquired.

EXHIBITED

Liechtenstein Summer Palace, Rossau, Vienna, 1889-1938.

St Petersburg, Musée du Baron Stieglitz, *Exposition rétrospective d'objets d'art, sous le haut patronage de Sa Majesté Impériale l'Impératrice Alexandra Féodorovna, au profit des blessés de la guerre*, 1 February – 30 April 1904.

Florence, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, *Donatello e Verrocchio: capolavori riscoperti / Donatello and Verrocchio: Rediscovered Masterpieces*, 21 October 2016 – 26 February 2017.

Rome, Museo di Palazzo Venezia and Palazzo del Vittoriano, *Voglia d'Italia: il collezionismo internazionale nella Roma del Vittoriano*, 7 December 2017 – 4 March 2018.

New York, Colnaghi Gallery, *Renaissance: Six Italian Masterpieces Rediscovered*, 5 November 2021 – 25 February 2022.

Venice, Ca' d'Oro, *Da Donatello a Alessandro Vittoria, 1450-1600: 150 anni di scultura nella Repubblica di Venezia*, 22 April – 30 October 2022.



LITERATURE

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- W. BODE, '[Die Fürstlich Liechtenstein'sche Galerie in Wien], [6]: Die französische Schule, Die altniederländische und die altdeutsche Schule, [Über Umstellungen und Erweiterungen der Sammlungen]', in *Die Graphischen Künste*, 18, 1895, pp. 109-129 (pp. 122, 128-129; identified as 'dem Donatello ganz nahe stehend' / very close to Donatello).
- W. BODE, *Die Fürstlich Liechtenstein'sche Galerie in Wien*, Vienna, 1896, pp. 124, 131 (identified as 'dem Donatello ganz nahe stehend' / very close to Donatello).
- W. SUIDA, *Moderner Cicerone: Wien*, vol. 2: *Die Gemäldegalerie der K.K. Akademie d. Bildenden Künste, die Sammlungen Liechtenstein, Czernin, Harrach und Schönborn-Buchheim*, Stuttgart, Berlin and Leipzig, 1904, p. 69 (identified as 'aus der Nähe Donatellos' / from the circle of Donatello).
- A. PRACHOFF, *Album de l'Exposition rétrospective d'objets d'art de 1904, à St-Petersbourg, sous le haut patronage de Sa Majesté Impériale l'Impératrice Alexandra Féodorovna, au profit des blessés de la guerre*, St Petersburg, 1907, p. 9 and fig. 2 (identified as by Donatello).
- U. PROCACCI, 'Opere d'arte inedite alla Mostra del Tesoro di Firenze sacra', in *Rivista d'arte*, 15 (series 2, 5), 1933, pp. 224-244 and 429-447 (p. 434 and note 1, and p. 438, fig. 6; only on the two later copies of the bust in the Pieve of Borgo San Lorenzo).
- 'Of Royal and Noble Descent': *Sotheby's, Amsterdam, 18, 19 and 20 February 2003*, Sotheby's, Amsterdam, 2003, p. 69, no. 194 (identified as '19th century, in Renaissance style').
- F. CAGLIOTI, 'Donatello misconosciuto: il 'San Lorenzo' per la Pieve di Borgo San Lorenzo', in *Prospettiva*, 155-156, 2014, pp. 2-99 (identified as by Donatello).
- T. VERDON, 'Pulchritudo et Virtus: il *San Lorenzo* di Donatello / *Pulchritudo et Virtus: The San Lorenzo* by Donatello', in T. Verdon, ed., *Donatello e Verrocchio: capolavori riscoperti / Donatello and Verrocchio: Rediscovered Masterpieces*, Florence, 2016, pp. 12-23 (identified as by Donatello).
- F. CAGLIOTI, 'Donato di Niccolò di Betto detto Donatello . . . , San Lorenzo . . . ', in E. Pellegrini, ed., *Voglia d'Italia: il collezionismo internazionale nella Roma del Vittoriano*, exh. cat., Naples, 2017, pp. 312-315, cat. no. 6.8 (identified as by Donatello).
- F. CAGLIOTI, 'Donatello e la terracotta', in A. Nante, C. Cavalli and A. Galli, eds., *A nostra immagine: scultura in terracotta del Rinascimento, da Donatello a Riccio*, exh. cat., Padua and Verona, 2020, pp. 34-65 (p. 45 and note 27 [p. 63], p. 49, fig. 14, and p. 52; identified as by Donatello).
- F. CAGLIOTI, 'Desiderio da Settignano ritrattista: "una testa del Chardinale di Portoghallo", ovvero il 'San Lorenzo' nella Sagrestia Vecchia di San Lorenzo a Firenze', in *Prospettiva*, 181-182, 2021 (*Ad Alessandro Bagnoli. Scritti di amici*), pp. 47-59 (p. 50 and note 16 [p. 58], and p. 54, fig. 6, identified as by Donatello).



Donatello's *San Lorenzo* is one of the very few completely new and therefore noteworthy additions made this century to the catalogue of the greatest sculptor of the Italian Renaissance (for a longer essay that includes sources for all references made in this text see Caglioti, 2014, *op. cit.*). Its historical significance is highly compelling for at least two reasons, which relate as much to the material used (terracotta) as to the bust format and the location for which the work was originally intended.

I shall return to these aspects at the end of this entry, but first there are the intriguing vicissitudes of the *San Lorenzo* over the last century and half to consider, as well as the material changes it has undergone, and its unusual critical fortune. As is almost always the case in art history, these strands are tightly interwoven and help to understand why it was not until 2014 that the authorship and importance of the *San Lorenzo* was revealed, despite the fact that at the end of the nineteenth century it was known to and passed through the hands of some of the main figures involved in dealing and collecting Italian Renaissance art in Europe: most notably those of Stefano Bardini, Wilhelm Bode and Johann II, Prince of Liechtenstein.

The *San Lorenzo* was sold in 1889 by Bardini to Johann II, one of the richest, most discerning and sensitive collectors and patrons of his time, and a regular client of the dynamic, even unscrupulous Florentine antiquarian. The bust bore no indication of provenance nor an attribution, and its price was therefore set at a level reflecting this lack of information. However, the provenance was well-known to the seller, who chose to keep it to himself given that the *San Lorenzo* was from the façade of a renowned public church in the Florence area. This fact remained concealed, and came to light only in 2014.

Wilhelm Bode, the indefatigable director of the Berlin Museums, drew close to attributing the bust. As well as being the foremost art connoisseur of his era and an uncontested pioneer of Italian Renaissance sculpture



Fig. 1. *Cardinal James of Portugal*, later identified as San Lorenzo, Desiderio da Settignano, terracotta, (originally painted), between 1459 and 1462, Sagrestia Vecchia, Basilica of San Lorenzo, Florence.

studies, he was also a direct contact of Bardini, thanks to his role in acquiring works of art for the Berlin Museums and in advising Johann II and other major collectors influenced by his taste. Bode judged the *San Lorenzo* a 'treffliche Halbfigur' (an outstanding half-figure), 'dem Donatello ganz nahe stehend' (very near to Donatello), without ever committing to even a tentative attribution to the master (Bode, 1895, *op. cit.*, pp. 122, 128-129, and Bode, 1896, *op. cit.*, pp. 124, 131). This lack of vision explains why, although a passionate admirer of Donatello, he did not rush to purchase the object for the public collections in Berlin, allowing it to pass to his second choice of buyer, Johann II.

Bode's attitude is easily clarified by the fact that, at that time, there was already another terracotta portrait of the young Roman deacon and martyr of Spanish origin that was deemed to hold a central role in the *oeuvre* of Donatello: the famous half-bust in the Sagrestia Vecchia of the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Florence (fig. 1). The substantial presence of this terracotta among the presumed autograph works of Donatello remained undebated until 1957-1958, when Horst W. Janson and Margrit Lisner, arriving at the same conclusion simultaneously and independently, recognised it as a masterpiece by Desiderio da Settignano (H.W. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, 2 vols., Princeton, 1957, vol. 2, pp. 236-237 and pls. 489-491; and M. Lisner, 'Die Büste des heiligen Laurentius in der Alten Sakristei von S. Lorenzo: Ein Beitrag zu Desiderio da Settignano', in *Zeitschrift für Kunstwissenschaft*, 12, 1958, pp. 51-70). Since then this shift of authorship has been accepted several times in studies, and is now definitively confirmed thanks to a payment made in 1462 which demonstrates that the *San Lorenzo* (significantly also known as *San Leonardo* because, unlike Donatello's *San Lorenzo*, this youth in deacon's vestments has no other iconographical attributes) was originally a portrait of James of Portugal (1433-1459), cardinal deacon of Sant'Eustachio. The representation of this prince of the Church who was also a prince of the royal house of Portugal, celebrated for his austerity and his virginity, was modelled by Desiderio either in 1459, when James,

who was on his way through Florence, died prematurely and was buried there, or soon after his death. It must then have been transferred to the basilica of San Lorenzo through the intervention of one of the patrician Florentine families (such as the Medici, the Martelli or the Cambini) who had chapels there and had been closely connected to James. Installing the bust in the church was enough to transform a secular portrait into a devotional one and a cult object, without any material adjustment, and so guaranteeing its survival for centuries (Caglioti, 2014, *op. cit.*, p. 8 and notes 16-19 [p. 82], and p. 15, fig. 11; Caglioti, 2021, *op. cit.*).

At the time that Desiderio's *San Lorenzo* was conclusively dropped from Donatello studies, in 1957-1958, no one remembered or knew of Johann II's *San Lorenzo*, even though it had been on public display in the Liechtenstein summer palace at Rossau near Vienna until 1938. It had even been given particular prominence by the prince among the countless treasures shown in those sumptuous rooms. Johann II had made other purchases from Bardini which, unlike the *San Lorenzo*, had been paid for as autograph works by Donatello but which had then turned out to be flawed, in style or quality. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a similar downgrading was reaffirmed for the *San Lorenzo* each time the specialists (of whom there were few) and the guidebook authors (of whom there were many) had the opportunity to review the Liechtenstein collections without any editorial control from the family (I refer by way of example only to Suida, 1904, *op. cit.*, p. 69, unillustrated). Meanwhile, Johann II, swept up in his personal and genuine taste, began to believe the *San Lorenzo* to be a work by Donatello and, as such, chose it to represent his passion for collecting at a major retrospective exhibition organised in St Petersburg in 1904 under the patronage of the Tsarina Alexandra Fjodorovna in aid of soldiers wounded in the war between Russia and Japan (Prachoff, 1907, *op. cit.*, p. 9 and fig. 2).

In order to reflect the prince's disposition, authors in his circle, whether biographers of Johann II or those cataloguing the Liechtenstein



Fig. 2. *San Lorenzo*, Donatello, circa 1440, terracotta, here having been repainted by an Austrian restorer in 1955.

collections, repeated the attribution to Donatello, which can only be traced within their bibliographies. After the palace at Rossau was closed to the public in 1938, the *San Lorenzo*, which had never featured in studies on Italian sculpture of the Renaissance, disappeared even from the Liechtenstein literature. It resurfaced only in 2003 in Amsterdam, at a Sotheby's auction of art objects being disposed of by the dynasty. Ahead of the re-opening of the Rossau palace to visitors in 2004, the present Liechtenstein family had decided to refocus and expand traditional strands of their centuries-old collecting activities (for example, the European Baroque), scaling down such areas as the sculpture and applied arts of the early Italian Renaissance, which had been of special interest to Johann II.

At the 2003 auction the *San Lorenzo* was offered as 'an Italian polychrome terracotta and plaster bust of St. Lawrence, 19th century, in Renaissance style', 'inspired by the bust of St. Leonard by Donatello in the Old Sacristy, San Lorenzo, Florence' ('*Of Royal and Noble Descent*', 2003, *op. cit.*, p. 69, lot 194, with photograph). The cataloguing description was indeed careless, given that it was almost fifty years since it had been established that the half-bust in the Sagrestia Vecchia was not by Donatello, but also because the two works have nothing in common beyond the material of which they are made, their age and place of production (at least in my opinion), and the fact that each shows a young deacon. Nevertheless, the even more eccentric dating of the Liechtenstein *San Lorenzo* to the nineteenth century might paradoxically have seemed likely, as the appearance of the terracotta bust was now remarkably different to its state when with Bardini, and then with Johann II. In 1955 (the date added to the lower part of the back in the hollow inside the torso) it had unnecessarily and inexplicably been repainted, and a 'restorer' had made some changes to the details of the ecclesiastical vestment, which he had completely misunderstood. In doing this he removed some distinctive features of Donatello's ingenious invention (fig. 2).



Thanks to the photographs taken for Bardini and the Liechtenstein collection between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth (fig. 3), it is possible to see that at that time the *San Lorenzo* showed mild but unmistakable signs of having been exposed at length to the elements (in particular the flaking of the skin surface of the tonsure). The beautiful adolescent deacon, animated by a fervid and heroic vocation for martyrdom worthy of comparison with such memorable masterpieces by Donatello as the *San Giorgio* from the Orsanmichele in Florence and the *San Daniele* in the basilica of the Santo in Padua (figs. 4 & 5), was so fixated on what lay before him – both his own glorious sacrifice and his public audience – that he was unaware that the knots and tassels of his dalmatic vestment were coming untied on the right side of his chest. It was not until almost two centuries later that Gianlorenzo Bernini would arrive at such modes of expression in his sculpture, in the ecclesiastical robes of Cardinal Scipione Borghese and other great prelates. In 1955, however, the clumsy ‘restorer’ detached the higher of these tassels slipping down the chest of the *San Lorenzo* and repositioned it further up at the same level as the upper tassel on the left side. The tip of the martyr’s palm held in his right hand had at some point been broken and the traces of its absence were still visible between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the area of the new attachment. So, in similar vein, the ‘restorer’ covered them by gluing the higher tassel on top and partially filling in the tip of the palm.

A much more expert intervention carried out on the *San Lorenzo* after the 2003 sale removed the unattractive repaint of half a century earlier. Since the job was done without the guidance of old photographs, care was taken not to correct the plastic details. At the same time some segments of the cords of the dalmatic on the front and back, that had been already missing by the end of the nineteenth century, were filled in.

In 2014 I published the first photographs of the *San Lorenzo* as part of my reconstruction of the history of the bust, not just from 1889 onwards,

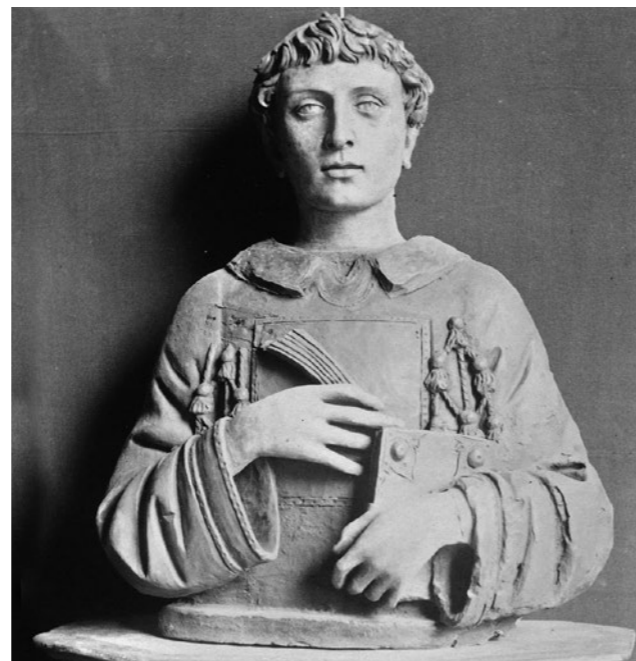


Fig. 3. *San Lorenzo*, Donatello, circa 1440, terracotta (originally painted), here situated in Stefano Bardini’s shop in Florence between 1888 and 1889.

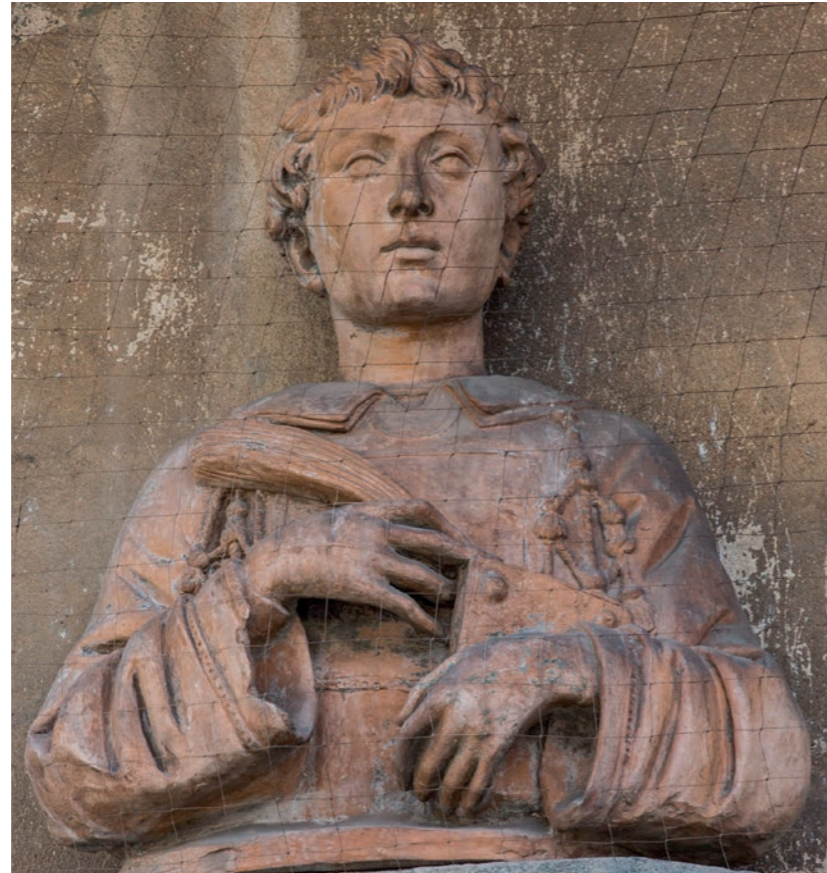


Fig. 4. *San Giorgio* (detail), Donatello, circa 1415-1417, marble, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.



Fig. 5. *San Daniele* (detail), Donatello, circa 1447-1448, bronze, Basilica del Santo, Padua.

but from much earlier. The ‘Pieve’ of San Lorenzo in Borgo San Lorenzo (fig. 6), at the heart of the Mugello area in the northern part of the province of Florence, is key to both parts of the story. A prominent Romanesque building (with much earlier origins), the ‘Pieve’ (that is, a chief church in a large rural district) gave its name of San Lorenzo to the village (‘Borgo’) that grew up around it. During the fifteenth century it was mainly entrusted, for both its spiritual and temporal care, to a succession of senior Florentine clerics attached to the chapter of canons of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, or even to the papal Curia in Rome. The case of the latter is true for Leon Battista Alberti, who was ‘pievano’ (dean) of Borgo, possibly from 1449, until his death, in 1472.



Amongst the furnishings added to the church during the early Renaissance is a *San Lorenzo* in terracotta that has provided the few scholars researching the topic with some trouble, since there are two versions of it that are almost twins. The first version, currently unpainted, is set in the lunette above the main door (figs. 6 & 7). The second is a variant in painted polychrome, which was for a long time kept in the sacristy and is now placed upon the third altar in the righthand nave (fig. 8). It has never been possible to determine which is the original and which the replica. Piecing together the views of the very few experts who have referred to the Borgo *San Lorenzo* after venturing into this part of Tuscany, off the beaten track of international tourism, we discover that in 1892 Hans Semper, the author of the first Donatello monographs (1875, 1887), thought that he could see in the exterior terracotta (then painted grey) a sculpture 'by Donatello or his workshop', in stone (Semper, 1892, *op. cit.*, p. 426).

Fig. 6. The 'Pieve' of San Lorenzo in Borgo San Lorenzo.

Fig. 7. *San Lorenzo*, after Donatello, 1888-1889, terracotta (originally painted in imitation bronze), façade of the 'Pieve' of San Lorenzo in Borgo San Lorenzo.



By contrast, in 1933, Ugo Procacci, who, as an official of the Florentine Soprintendenza, had a thorough knowledge of the contents of the ‘Pieve’, believed that the terracotta inside the church (of which Semper was unaware) was the original and that the *San Lorenzo* on the exterior must be a ‘nineteenth-century cast’ taken from it. Procacci considered the polychrome bust to be in the manner of Donatello and hoped that he might be uncovering the work of a ‘notevole artista della sua cerchia’ – a gifted artist in his circle, disfigured by later repaintings (Procacci, 1933, *op. cit.*, p. 434 and note 1, and p. 438, fig. 6). But the attempts made in the meantime to salvage a Renaissance original from beneath the layers of pigment have not produced the hoped-for results. In fact, the clumsiness of the modelling (of the ears for example) is enough to condemn the polychrome *San Lorenzo* at first glance – and with no hope of reprieve. The bust on the façade, however, is much more successful and expressive, even if on close inspection it betrays the simplification so typical of many replicas.

The conundrum of the two *San Lorenzo* twins at Borgo is ultimately solved thanks to the Liechtenstein *San Lorenzo*, which, apart from declaring itself by virtue of its quality, is, following careful consideration, revealed to be the prototype for both the Borgo versions. Knowledge of the existence of all three objects is all that was needed to come to this conclusion, but even though I had been brooding over this certainty for many years after seeing in 1990 two old images of what was then the Liechtenstein *San Lorenzo* in the historic photo library of the Museo Nazionale del Bargello (Planiscig collection; Caglioti, 2014, *op. cit.*, esp. p. 13, fig. 9, and p. 17, fig. 13), I had to wait for the direct examination of the work after 2003 to resolve any doubts. The context and circumstances in which the link between the three terracottas originated are finally explained by a number of documents collated from Florentine public historical collections, including the former state Soprintendenza per i Beni Artistici, the Archivio Arcivescovile



Fig. 8. *San Lorenzo*, after Donatello, 17th or 18th century, polychromed terracotta, interior of the ‘Pieve’ of San Lorenzo in Borgo San Lorenzo.

and the Archivio Storico dell’Eredità di Ugo Bardini. Together they demonstrate that by 1865 the ‘Pieve’ of Borgo had, for some long time, kept the inferior polychrome bust (which is now in the church) in the sacristy, while an *alter ego* ‘in uncoloured terracotta’ was set above the main door. In 1874 the latter was described as ‘very old’, on account not only of the effects of the weather on it, but also of the consistent way it related to the lunette (which was later remodelled following an earthquake in 1919). Documents from 1889, 1893, 1904, 1914 and 1931 testify that in 1888 the exterior version ‘venne radicalmente restaurato sotto il vicario spirituale di questa chiesa canonico Vittorio del Corona’ (was radically restored during the incumbency of Canon Vittorio del Corona as the dean of Borgo) (1914) in a way that it was ‘deturpato dall’applicazione... di una tinta a polvere d’argento’ (disfigured by the application . . . of a paint made of powdered silver) (1889), ‘a imitazione [di] bronzo antico’ (in imitation of antique bronze) (1914), which was then re-applied in 1906 (1914). The bust above the main portal of the ‘Pieve’ still bears traces of this false bronzing, which are not visible but are definitely there, although the terracotta has been stripped of most of it in recent decades, re-emerging perfectly intact. This indicates that the present *San Lorenzo* is not the one considered ‘very old’ in 1874, and ‘radically restored’ in 1888. The so-called ‘restoration’ can mean only that the original was replaced with a copy, as was common at that time for outdoor sculptures.

In 1888 precisely, Bardini, an antique dealer so skilful that he was one step ahead of scholars in exploring lesser-known areas like the Mugello, sent one of his agents, Domenico Magno, to Borgo San Lorenzo in search of artworks. In 1889 Magno was in correspondence with Canon Vittorio del Corona: it appears that the priest had recently been engaged in some sort of commercial exchange with him and had been left feeling suspicious or at least annoyed. The coincidence in the timing between the ‘radical restoration’ of the *San Lorenzo* on the façade of the



‘Pieve’, Magno’s trip to Borgo, his business meeting with the priest, the arrival of a *San Lorenzo* with Bardini and its almost immediate onward consignment to Prince Johann II, is too perfect to allow room for doubt. The relationships in the dimensions and detailing, but also in quality and style, between the three terracotta busts considered here, confirm that the *San Lorenzo* which emigrated to Vienna was the same one which had been set above the main door of the ‘Pieve’ and that it was substituted in 1888 with a copy, made for this purpose, according to Bardini’s customary methods (which he used elsewhere in the Mugello). The version that was subsequently installed on the façade (height 66 cm), while smaller than the ex-Liechtenstein one (height 74.5 cm), has the same vestment trimmings, the same gospel cover and almost the same dimensions as the one in the church (height 64 cm), but the openness of his face and his spiritual demeanor could never have been obtained without the luminous example of the Liechtenstein *San Lorenzo*. The inevitable conclusion, therefore, is that the anonymous sculptor, employed by Bardini in 1888 to make the copy that is now set on the façade, had ample opportunity to handle both the original, and the old version in the sacristy that was derived from it. They were both sent to Florence for a few weeks by Canon Del Corona. It is unclear whether the priest knew of the original’s substitution with the copy commissioned by Bardini, and whether he authorised it in good faith, or if he also, secretly, took the opportunity to gain some financial advantage for his church or himself. In any case, the new *San Lorenzo* was clearly executed in accordance with the following principles: not to take a cast from the original terracotta for fear of damaging it; to follow the format and details of the old polychrome replica to achieve a complete image with nothing missed out, in order to give the impression that the ‘Pieve’ retained two identical versions – one a precise copy of a surviving prototype; to paint the fake one grey to match the stone portal on the façade and to conceal its very recent manufacture. None of this prevented the skilled craftsman, working in 1888, from getting closer to the character of the original than to the sacristy terracotta, which further perfected the



Fig. 9. *David* (detail), Donatello, circa 1435-1440, bronze, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

deception (for a second, modern version of the *San Lorenzo*, now in the Princeton University Art Museum, with possibly similar origins connected to the activities of Bardini, see Caglioti, 2014, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-42 and notes 83-86 [p. 91], and pp. 48-49, figs. 87 and 89).

If the ex-Liechtenstein *San Lorenzo* is systematically considered alongside Donatello’s mature corpus of work, a striking series of stylistic similarities and common technical and formal detailing emerge. To begin with, the bust has been subjected to an almost imperceptible but decisive anamorphosis, to allow the saint to loom over the heads of the faithful from the lunette of the ‘Pieve’. This is a quintessential ‘must’ in Donatello’s art, from the *San Marco* in Orsanmichele (circa 1411-1413) to the *San Giorgio*, from the stone *Annunciation* over the former Cavalcanti altar in the basilica of Santa Croce in Florence (circa 1433-1435) to the bronze *David* in the Bargello (circa 1435-1440), and so on. Since there is no space here to present either in words or illustrations all this, nor to note all the anatomical and physiognomic comparisons which are possible, or those parallels relating to gesture or clothing or iconographical attributes, the reader is referred to a fuller account (Caglioti, 2014, *op. cit.*). I confine myself to selecting just one example, that is the face of the bronze *David* (fig. 9). The two youths look like brothers or even twins, which, along with many other affinities, suggests a date for the *San Lorenzo* of around 1440, the end of the long period when Donatello was intensively working for the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore and at the high-point of the first major phase of his relationship with the Medici.

There is no reason to imagine that the *San Lorenzo* (documented in 1865 above the main portal of the ‘Pieve’ consecrated to him, and noted soon after as a feature that had been there for ever) should have changed its location or position over the centuries. The person responsible for the commission of such an object must have been the rector of the church,

and the date of around 1440 indicates that the most likely candidate for this task is the Florentine Jacopo di Giovanni Ugolini. Little known until now, he is especially suited to having engaged Donatello for the *San Lorenzo* as he was simultaneously a canon of Santa Maria del Fiore and an important and longtime official in the papal Curia. The Curia was then based in Florence rather than Rome, and gravitated, therefore, to the Duomo itself, the main site of Donatello's life and activity throughout those years. Pope Eugene IV, who was himself a patron of the supreme sculptor, nominated Ugolini to the 'Pieve' of Borgo in October 1437. Ugolini, in contrast to the majority of his predecessors and successors, was a conscientious advocate of the church: his coat of arms appeared there on the capitals of the sacristy (demolished in 1932-1933) behind the tribune, and still remains above the portal of the tribune itself (fig. 10), which at one time led into his apartments (also demolished ninety years ago). To summarise, Ugolini was the last in a line of high prelates who, in the third and fourth decades of the fifteenth century, made Donatello the sculptor *par excellence* of the Roman Curia.

Donatello was one of the protagonists in the re-emergence of terracotta as a favored sculptural medium, after centuries in which Western artistic civilisation had abandoned a practice that was so common in the ancient world. His intense commitment to using this material, also for public functions, dates from his early youth right up to his extreme old age, and his contemporaries recognised and admired this output from early on. The following terracottas by his hand survive: numerous examples of the Virgin and Child for private devotion (spread out over his career); six *putti* atop the aforementioned stone *Annunciation* in Santa Croce in Florence; and the so-called *Forzori Altar* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, that is a model of about 1450 for a monumental project, possibly the bronze altar of Saint Anselm of Lucca for the Cathedral in Mantua. This clearly appears to be a modest group when considering the huge quantity of clay preparatory models that the master and his collaborators would



Fig. 10. Jacopo di Giovanni Ugolini's coat of arms above the portal of the tribune of the 'Pieve' of San Lorenzo in Borgo San Lorenzo, circa 1440.

have made over the many decades during which he was working on a very wide range of sculpture in marble and bronze. To all this one should add that already between 1409 and 1412 the young sculptor had produced a half-colossal terracotta statue of Joshua for one of the tribune buttresses around the future dome of the Cathedral in Florence, which vanished between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (for Donatello's overall contribution to sculpture in terracotta, see Caglioti, 2020, *op. cit.*). The ex-Liechtenstein *San Lorenzo* expands our knowledge of the variety of Donatello's activity in terracotta, both iconographically and typologically, and it also allows us to recover a very rare work that was intended for public display in the open, as the *Joshua* was.

There are no full and systematic studies on the origin and development of half-figures of saints and other holy characters in Italian sculpture between the late medieval and the early modern era. Their diffusion does surely go back much further than Donatello. The colossal marble busts in the gothic aedicules on the exterior around the Pisa Baptistery, above the second order of blind arcading, are just one example that predates the fifteenth century. They are in part by the hands of Nicola and Giovanni Pisano and their workshop (circa 1270-1280). After precedents such as these, the *San Lorenzo*, from the lunette above the external architrave of a church portal, stands out because it is among the oldest busts in terracotta to have survived – if not actually the oldest. And although it was conceived for a precise architectural setting, the result is a self-contained and entirely autonomous image. Considered as such, it is an equal to the portrait busts which were promoted as a common genre in the fifteenth century for the first time since the classical era. Significantly, however, all the earliest firm examples of this phenomenon postdate the *San Lorenzo*.

Francesco Caglioti
August 2021

GUIDO MAZZONI

(Modena circa 1450 – 1518 Modena)

Pair of Busts of Princely Children

Circa 1496-1497

Terracotta, parcel-gilt and polychrome
12 ¾ in. (32.5 cm) high, the Laughing Child
12 in. (30.5 cm) high, the Crying Child

PROVENANCE

(Possibly) commissioned by, or presented to, King Henry VII (1457–1509) and therefore by descent to Henry VIII, where probably listed in inventories of his collection in 1542 and 1547. Private Collection, Belgium.

INVENTORIES

(Probably) *Inventory of Whitehall Palace of the collection of King Henry VIII, 1542* (as ‘oone Picture of a Morian boye made of erth with a Garment of white and blewe sett in a box; [...] oone Picture made of Erthe of a Morian boye with a grene Garment; oone Picture made of Erthe of a Morian boye with a white Garment’).

(Probably) *Inventory of the collection of King Henry VIII, 1547*, as ‘a picture of a Morian boye made of earthe with a garment of white and blewe; [...] a picture of a Morian boye in a garment of blewe and white; a picture of a nother morian boye in a garment of yellow and blewe with a redde cappe’.



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This extraordinary pair of busts of princely children, shown in contrasting states of laughing and crying, is among the most remarkable recent discoveries in Renaissance art. They are directly related to a bust, believed to depict Henry VIII as a child, in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle (RCIN 73197, figs. 1 & 2). The present busts likely depict Henry VIII and his elder sister Margaret Tudor, who went on to become Queen of Scotland, which makes them the earliest known portraits of both monarchs. All three works are convincingly attributed to Guido Mazzoni, a sculptor who enjoyed fame across Europe for the realism and emotional intensity of his sculptures – features that emerge strongly in these three works.

The two busts, which have emerged together from a Belgian collection, have been left in an untouched state. Conservation treatment undertaken on the Royal Collection bust in 1988 revealed the original colour scheme, including a green glaze over an incised layer of tin foil, intending to imitate cloth of gold. Conservation of the present busts would likely reveal the layers of original polychromy.

Mazzoni, also known by the name Paganino, was one of the most celebrated Italian artists north of the Alps. Born around 1450 in Modena, he was documented as a stage designer, mask-maker, sculptor, painter, and goldsmith. His artistry earned him fame and admiration, and when Duke Ercole I d'Este conceded him privileges, he stated it was 'for the many and marvellously made works [...] I saw with my very own eyes' (quoted in Anisio, *op. cit.*, p. 178). His career took him to the court of Naples, where he became a favourite of Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, and he later travelled to Paris with Charles VIII of France. Around 1500 he is documented as working on the tomb of the English king Henry VII and, although there has been some debate about whether or not he actually travelled to England, recent scholarship has suggested that he did, in fact, make the journey (Larson, *op. cit.*)



Fig. 1 & 2. Our Pair of Busts of Princely Children with the Royal Collection's Bust of a Boy (middle), Guido Mazzoni, circa 1498, terracotta, parcel-gilt and polychrome.



Fig. 3. *Studies of a child's head, said to be Henry VIII of England*, Follower of Sir Anthony Van Dyck, circa 1640, oil on canvas, formerly Dorotheum, Vienna.

Any understanding of the present sculptures should begin with an examination of the bust of a laughing boy in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle mentioned above, widely identified as *Henry VIII when a Young Boy*. That bust corresponds closely to the newly discovered busts discussed here in subject, size, stylistic features, and facture. The astonishingly expressive sculpture in the Royal Collection was first documented during the reign of James II (r. 1685-1688), when it was kept at Whitehall Palace (Balthoe, *op. cit.*, p. 102), and was painted by a follower of Van Dyck in circa 1640 (fig. 3). The present busts were put side-by-side with the Royal Collection bust in the laboratory at Windsor Castle on 27 October 2021. The size, facial features, rendering of clothing and headgear, polychromy, and facture of the three terracotta busts are so close as to leave no doubt about their shared authorship. The two busts underwent thermoluminescence analysis in June 2021 by Oxford Authentication which confirmed that the busts were last fired 400 to 600 years ago.

The Surveyor of the King's Pictures Lionel Cust first proposed the attribution of the Windsor bust to Guido Mazzoni in 1925 (*op. cit.*). This attribution has not been seriously disputed since that time, and the discovery of the new pair of busts lends it even more strength. In particular, the crying child possesses features that are found only in Mazzoni's most accomplished works. The tension of the child's cheek muscles and pudgy lips are strikingly close to those of the adolescent John the Evangelist from Mazzoni's *Lamentation* in Busseto. Her furrowed brow, pointed chin, and thick curls are very close to those of the *Suor Pappina* in Modena, and the painted tears are thick, three-dimensional dabs of white paint like those of the Virgin in Busseto.

The Windsor bust has regularly been identified as a portrait of Henry VIII as a child. This proposal was first advanced by Helen Dow (*loc. cit.*) and tentatively accepted by many scholars. The discovery of the new busts lends support to this hypothesis and the identity of the crying child can also be strongly suggested. The sumptuous clothing present in the three portrait busts, such as the gilded hairnets and the extensive use of gold thread and collar of astrakhan in the *Crying Child*, is extremely unusual in Renaissance portraiture, and is almost without exception a sign of princely status.

Mazzoni worked for two royal families in Northern Europe: the Valois and the Tudors. The children depicted in the busts are clearly of approximately the same age; of all the children born into these families while Mazzoni was in their employ, only two were close enough in age to be the children depicted here: Margaret Tudor (1489-1541) and the future Henry VIII (1491-1547). Painted portraits of both sovereigns (Margaret would become Queen of Scotland) in adulthood seem to confirm these identifications.





The possessions of Henry VIII, including his collection of paintings and sculpture, are listed in inventories compiled in 1542 and 1547, each recording tens of thousands of objects (Starkey et al, *op. cit.*). In 1542, among the terracotta sculptures were 'oone Picture of a Morian boye made of erth with a Garment of white and blewe sett in a box; [...] oone Picture made of Erthe of a Morian boye with a grene Garment; oone Picture made of Erthe of a Morian boye with a white Garment' (Hayward, *op. cit.*, 2004, vol. II, pp. 97, 167). The 1547 inventory mentions 'a picture of a Morian boye made of earthe with a garment of white and blewe; [...] a picture of a Morian boye in a garment of blewe and white; a picture of a nother morian boye in a garment of yellow and blewe with a redde cappe'. The identification of the busts with the objects mentioned in these sources is uncertain, considering certain incongruencies, yet it is striking that three busts are mentioned in the inventories and three busts with similarly coloured clothing survive today. The term 'Morian' may be a reference to Moorish, which can today be interpreted to be a reference to either 'eastern' ethnicity, or a state of heightened emotion.

The appearance of these characterful portraits represents an important art historical discovery, both because they are early examples of child portraiture, and because they almost certainly represent two youthful members of the Tudor dynasty. Their undoubted connection to a documented bust in the Royal Collection, further enhances their status.



LUISA ROLDÁN

(Seville 1652 – 1706 Madrid)

Virgin of the Immaculate Conception

Circa 1690-1706

Terracotta, polychromed; on an octagonal parcel-gilt, polychrome wood base with scrolling feet

20 ½ in. (52 cm) high

29 in. (73.7 cm) high, overall



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This splendid terracotta comes from the hand of Luisa Roldán (1652–1706), one of the most remarkable sculptors of Spain’s *siglo de oro*. Born in Seville, she learned her craft from her father, Pedro Roldán, who ran a major workshop and executed important projects there. She subsequently embarked on an independent career in which she created figures for altarpieces, processional images, and small devotional groups. After beginning in her native city, she turned her attention to Cádiz carving major statues for the cathedral there (1684-1687), before moving to Madrid in 1688 or 1689. In the capital, King Charles II granted her the title of Royal Sculptor – *Escultor de cámara* – an unprecedented achievement for a woman artist at the time.

In this terracotta, Roldán portrays a favourite Spanish subject, the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, the doctrine which affirms that Mary was conceived without original sin. She wears a white robe under a blue mantle onto which her hair falls. Holding her arms crossed over her chest, she stands, almost motionless, on a crescent moon which three putti support. These angelic creatures add a playful note as they turn and look at each other. With his upraised arms, the one in the middle causes the Virgin’s robe to move in response to his gesture. The contrast between the energetic cherubim and the serene figure above them underscores Mary’s rapt absorption, as if lost in prayer.

The *Immaculate Conception* not only shows Roldán’s characteristic delicacy of touch, but it is her only known depiction of the subject. This stands out even more when one considers that she spent her career creating religious images exclusively. Although scholars have not established a date for the piece, it probably comes from her years in Madrid (1688/1689-1706) when she turned to terracotta as a way to market her art. In this medium, she expressed moments ranging from idyllic sweetness to religious ecstasy or bloody violence. Because previous authors often overlooked this variety, they frequently underestimated her achievement (for surveys in English of her work at this time, see Leneghan 2016 and Hall-van den Elsen, 2021, *ops. cit.*). A sculpture such as this attests to the greater breadth



Fig. 1. *Immaculate Conception*, Juan Martínez Montañés, 1629-31, parcel-gilt polychrome wood, Seville Cathedral.

of her career, while also revealing how she reworked subjects to offer her version of a recognised type.

When Roldán created the *Immaculate Conception*, the subject had an iconography which the clergy, the faithful, and artists all accepted. The path by which they reached this consensus during the seventeenth century offers a glimpse into popular devotion and changing aesthetic preference. In the late fifteenth-century, many selected the meeting of the Virgin’s parents at the Golden Gate, the moment when the church taught that she was conceived without original sin. But over the course of the sixteenth century, it gradually lost ground to images which represented the Virgin more directly. In these, artists joined the Assumption of the Virgin (in which she ascends to heaven after her death) with the woman who appears in the Book of Revelation, ‘clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars’ (Revelations 12:1). Gradually, a type emerged which depicted her floating in heaven and accompanied with prescribed attributes. In his treatise, *Arte de la Pintura* (1649), Francisco Pacheco, Diego Velázquez’s father-in-law and a painter in his own right, outlined this formula: a young girl of twelve or thirteen years with beautiful features, crowned with stars and standing on a crescent moon (Pacheco, *op. cit.*, pp. 481-484).

From this point, Spanish sculptors would follow Pacheco’s formula while recasting it within their style. Roldán could thus have seen many examples not just in her native Seville but throughout Andalucía, including those by artists such as Juan Martínez Montañés (Seville Cathedral, fig. 1), Alonso Cano (Granada Cathedral) and Pedro da Mena (Cordoba Cathedral).

Like these artists, Roldán renders the established type faithfully yet distinctively. She imbues the central figure with graceful elegance and youthful innocence. By depicting a younger woman than usual, she evokes Mary’s serenity and purity. Unlike so many contemporary examples whose draperies billow out while she clasps her hands in prayer, Roldán’s figure seems motionless, as if transfixed, as she holds her arms across her chest.



Fig 2. *Immaculate Conception*,
Bartolome Esteban Murillo,
1662, oil on canvas, Chapter
Room, Seville Cathedral.

These features stand out more when one compares the terracotta to paintings by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (Madrid Museo del Prado, Seville Cathedral Chapterroom, fig. 2). Although he portrays a young woman, he fills the scene with an almost ecstatic energy that contrasts vividly with Roldán's sculpture.

Although today some may find such differences overly subtle, a viewer at the time would almost certainly have noticed them given the strong devotion to the Immaculate Conception. While the doctrine found adherents throughout Spain in the fifteenth century, the intensity picked up in the seventeenth century when the energetic (and litigious) archbishop of Seville, Pedro de Castro Vaca y Quiñones (1534-1623) actively promoted the cause in his diocese and eventually persuaded Philip III to petition the papacy in favour of the doctrine. As the king and his descendants, Philip IV and Charles II, increasingly identified themselves as Catholic monarchs defending the faith, they championed the Immaculate Conception, advocating that it be made official dogma. This would finally reach its ultimate affirmation when Pope Alexander VII officially declared 8 December to be the feast day of the Immaculate Conception and confirmed a ban on any opposition to the doctrine.

In such a climate, the *Immaculate Conception* would have elicited powerful emotions from contemporary viewers. Rendering the subject exquisitely and distinctively, Roldán shows the Virgin lost in quiet prayer, while the playful cherubim below her evoke a heavenly setting and her virtue. In doing this, the sculptor creates her own interpretation of the subject so that even if few people today appreciate the fervent devotion that the artist and her contemporaries felt for this doctrine, we can all admire her splendid artistry.

Patrick Lenaghan.
The Hispanic Society of America



**ATTRIBUTED TO FRANCESCO MORATTI
(OR MARATTI), CALLED IL PADOVANO**

(Padua circa 1669 – 1719 Rome)

Two Angels Kneeling in Adoration

Early 18th Century

Terracotta; each on an integrally modelled base
15 ½ in. (40 cm) high, each

PROVENANCE

Private collection, Amsterdam, before 1995.

Bruce Livie, Munich.

With Daniel Katz Gallery, London.

Private collection.

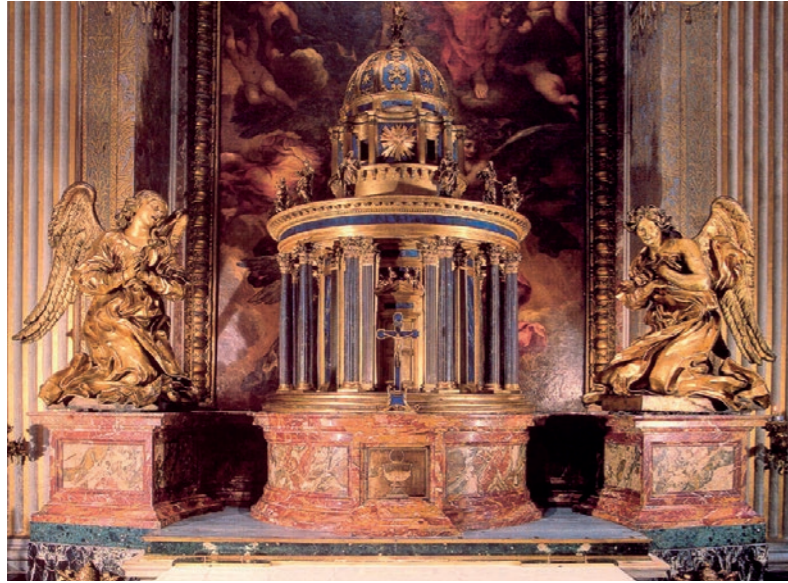
LITERATURE

A. RICCOBONI, *Roma nell'arte: La scultura nell'evo moderno, dal quattrocento ad oggi*, Rome, 1942, pp. 270-271.

C. FACCIOLI, 'Dello scultore Francesco Moratti, detto 'Il Padovano'' in *L'Urbe*, N.S. 37, no. 3-4 (1974), pp. 8-18.: nos. 3-4

R. ENGGASS, *Early Eighteenth-Century Sculpture in Rome*, University Park, 1976, 115, pls. 81-87.





This beautiful and emotionally intense pair of highly finished terracotta angels was clearly made for presentation to a potential client, in preparation for a commission, probably to be executed in marble. The style is undoubtedly Roman and suggests a sculptor in the first or second generation of followers of Bernini and Algardi. The angels' poses of loving adoration – even their respective praying and folded hands – recall those of the locus classicus for such angels, the splendid pair in gilt-bronze made by Bernini for the Cappella del Santissimo Sacramento off the right aisle of St Peter's, Rome, of 1675 (fig. 1).

Their intended size when finished can be calculated quite precisely from the scale carefully incised along the upper edge of the angel to the viewer's right. Assuming this to be in Roman *palmi* ('hand-spans'), their width at that point would be 67 cm, and the height of the angels themselves (without the pedestal) about twice that, nearly five feet. They must therefore have been models for monumental statues.

The most likely author of the statues presented here was Francesco Moratti (whose surname was spelt in various ways). Moratti came from Padua, where he was a pupil of the Genoese sculptor Filippo Parodi. According to a contemporary biographer, they fell out because Parodi feared Moratti's competition, and so the promising young sculptor left for Rome around 1690.

Fig. 1. *Angels*, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 1674, gilt-bronze, Chapel of the Santissimo Sacramento, Saint Peter's, Rome.





Fig. 2. *Flying Angels*, Francesco Moratti and Pietro Papaleo, circa 1695-1699, Chapel of Saint Ignatius Loyola, Church of the Gesù, Rome.

Fig. 3. *Funerary Monument for Francesco Erizzo*, Attributed to Francesco Moratti, 1700, marble, Basilica di San Marco, Rome.

There he received a number of major commissions. In 1697 he took over the carving of one of the large *Flying Angels* for the Chapel of Saint Ignatius Loyola in the Gesù (fig. 2) from Pietro Papaleo. He also produced a major narrative group of *Saint Francis de Sales* with an angel for the church dedicated to this saint. These angels closely resemble the present pair. The wings of the right-hand angels in both the Gesù and here are spread to the viewer's right, with bold swathes of drapery settling around the midriff. The wings of the left-hand angel accompanying *Saint Francis de Sales*, on the other hand, resemble those of the left angel in the pair presented here; in both cases, the wings are closed so as not to interrupt the angel's downward look and the silhouette to the viewer's left.

Another pair of similar (although flying) angels attributed to Moratti support a portrait medallion on the tomb of Francesco Erizzo (d. 1700) in the Basilica of San Marco, Rome (fig. 3). The deceased was the young son of the representative of the Republic of Venice in Rome, supporting the attribution of this tomb to Moratti. Moratti would go on to produce four statues for the Abbey of Montecassino, one of them depicting Pope Clement XI (1703-1709); *Saint Simon*, one of the great Twelve Apostles in the church of Saint John Lateran (1708-1715); and the Berniniesque *Triton Fountain* in Piazza Bocca della Verità, from 1717 until his death in 1719. Moratti was thus one of the most important sculptors of the late Roman Baroque era.



JEAN-ANTOINE HOUDON

(Versailles 1741 – 1828 Paris)

Greyhound (Levrier)

Early 19th Century

Terracotta; on a later wooden base with metal label inscribed 'J A HOUDON'

12 in. (30.3 cm) high; 11 in. (28 cm) wide

13 in. (33.5 cm) high; 14 ½ in. (37 cm) wide, overall

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, France.

EXHIBITED

Exposition du Centenaire de Houdon, Paris, Galeries Buvelot, 1928, no. 77.

LITERATURE

G. GIACOMETTI, *Un lévrier: terre cuite Originale de J. A. Houdon*, Paris 1904.

A. DAYOT, Review of: Giacometti 1904, in *Supplément illustré de l'Art et les Artistes* 4, no. 20 (1907), p. XXVII.

G. GIACOMETTI, *Le statuaire Jean-Antoine Houdon et son époque*, vol. III, Paris 1913, pp. 70-72.

L. RÉAU, 'Les expositions du Centenaire de Houdon', in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, Paris, 1928, p. 342.

G. GIACOMETTI, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Houdon*, Paris, 1929, vol. II, pp. 215-216.

L. RÉAU, *Houdon: sa vie et son oeuvre*, Paris, 1964, vol. II, p. 58, no. 194.

H. H. ARNASON, *Sculptures of Houdon*, London, 1975.

H. C. FRICK, Research Files on Jean Antoine Houdon, Works of Art, 'Greyhound', undated.





Jean-Antoine Houdon is considered the greatest of all French neoclassical sculptors, renowned for his exquisite portrait busts and statues that captured the essence of his subjects with remarkable realism and emotional depth. At the time of the sculptor's birth in 1741, Houdon's father was a member of the Comte de Lamotte's household. In 1749, when Houdon was eight years old, the Comte's residence was leased to the French Crown to serve as an *Ecole des Élèves Protégés*, a school for the most talented pupils of the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture. As Houdon's father retained his post in the house, the young Houdon was surrounded by budding artists of both painting and sculpture, which was a catalyst for Houdon's interest in art. Working diligently, his reputation continued to grow and by 1764 he had won the prestigious Prix de Rome, providing him with the opportunity to embark on a journey to the Eternal City to study at the French Academy.

Upon returning to Paris in 1768, Houdon came to the fore as one of the most promising sculptors of the age. Reflecting his elevated status as a *membre agréé* of the Académie in 1769, he took up residence in one of the workshops in the Faubourg du Roule in March 1772. Regularly exhibiting at the Salon, Houdon cultivated the patronage of the highest echelons of society, as demonstrated by his portraits of the Marquis de Miromesnil, of the acclaimed musician Christoph Willibald Gluck, and of fashionable women such as Madame de la Houze, the Comtesse du Cayla, along with Madame Adélaïde and Madame Victoire, the two daughters of King Louis XV.

In 1777, Houdon achieved full recognition as an Academician and forged a connection with the Masonic Lodge of the Nine Sisters, a prominent gathering place for artists and intellectuals. This affiliation brought him into contact with Benjamin Franklin, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. Their acquaintance deepened, leading to Houdon accompanying Franklin to America in 1785. It was during this sojourn that Houdon created his iconic portrait of Franklin.



In the New World, Houdon also became acquainted with Thomas Jefferson, another founding father and one of the authors of the Declaration of Independence. Notably, it was this encounter that led to the creation of Houdon's monument to George Washington, of which several versions survive, with the original housed in the State Capitol of Richmond, Virginia.

The sculptor returned to Paris the following year, in 1786, where his career continued to flourish. The turmoil of the Revolution, which broke out in 1789, temporarily disrupted the workings of the Académie but, undeterred, Houdon sought new patrons during this turbulent period, including the financier Jacques Necker and the astronomer and politician Jean-Sylvain Bailly – two exponents of the more moderate and initially successful Revolutionary faction – both of whom he sculpted in 1790.

Fig. 1. *The Atelier of Jean-Antoine Houdon*, Louis-Léopold Boilly, circa 1804, oil on canvas, Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Paris.

With the return of stability, Houdon continued to be recognised as one of the most important sculptors of his era, and he died in Paris at the end of a successful career in 1828.

Although Houdon is more recognised for his insightful portraits, it is also recognised that sculptures of animals formed a small sub-category within his oeuvre. A terracotta model of a spaniel-type dog can be seen to the left of Louis-Léopold Boilly's painting of Houdon's workshop of circa 1804 (fig. 1). Furthermore, Houdon was known to have exhibited 'Several Animals in Marble' in the Salon of 1777. A marble group of an eagle atop a deer kid exists in an aristocratic collection in France. Additionally, the sale of works directly from the sculptor's studio both during his lifetime (8 October 1795) and after his death (15-17 December 1828), included various animals beyond dogs, such as birds and deer.

In 1904 Georges Giacometti conducted a meticulous study of the present greyhound sculpture, resulting in an almost hundred-page publication in which he confidently attributed the work to Houdon (Giacometti, *op. cit.*). Giacometti's detailed analysis of the sculptor's technique, combined with an examination of the terracotta's exceptional quality and artistic characteristics, provided compelling evidence supporting the exclusive attribution of this sculpture to Houdon. As a further key piece of evidence Giacometti pointed out the presence of a greyhound in Boilly's painting of Houdon's studio. The painting provides an intimate portrayal of the sculptor's life, prominently featuring his wife and three daughters, along with an obedient greyhound situated in the lower right corner. Giacometti astutely observed that the dog likely belonged to Houdon and his family rather than Laplace, as it is depicted without a collar (*ibid.*, p. 29). According to Giacometti, if the dog belonged to Laplace and had accompanied him to Houdon's studio, it would have been portrayed wearing a collar – a detail that Boilly would not have overlooked. Giacometti concluded that



the greyhound sculpture in question is, in fact, a reduced model of Houdon's own dog.

Indeed, Houdon's renown for capturing accurate physiognomy in his portraits of contemporaries, friends, and family members adds weight to the notion that the present work, an exceptionally detailed model of a greyhound, could be a meticulous representation of a dog with which Houdon had a personal connection. The detailed craftsmanship of the sculpture may reflect not only Houdon's skill in portraying physical attributes but also his ability to convey a sense of familiarity and personal connection with the subject, potentially making it a poignant representation of a cherished companion.

Since Giacometti's publication, the work has been positively identified as a sculpture by Houdon, most notably by Helen Clay Frick (1888-1984), daughter of the industrialist and art collector Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919). Helen Clay Frick developed a personal and enduring interest in Houdon. Motivated by her passion for the artist, she dedicated over fifty years to researching Houdon's works, with the ambitious goal of compiling a catalogue raisonné. Although this comprehensive catalogue was never completed, Frick included the present work in her extensive research on Houdon. Her commitment to documenting and understanding Houdon's oeuvre is evident through the inclusion of charming early twentieth-century photographs of the sculpture in her research material.

The present work, with its elongated, slender neck and well-defined musculature, serves as a testament to Houdon's characteristic attention to detail. In capturing the essence of nature, Houdon displays an impeccable ability to merge physical reality seamlessly with the spirit of the subject.



CHARLES ADRIEN PROSPER D'ÉPINAY

(Pamplemousses, Mauritius 1836 – 1914 Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire)

Portrait of Sarah Bernhardt as Hermione

Circa 1903

Terracotta

Signed to the reverse 'D'EPINAY'; on a circular ebonised wood socle

58 cm (22 ¾ in.) high

78 cm (30 ¾ in.) high, overall

PROVENANCE

Private collection, South of France, until 2019.

LITERATURE

F. THIÉBAULT-SISSON, 'L'art élégant. Prosper d'Épinay', in *La Nouvelle Revue*, 49, (1887): pp. 830-849.

C. VENTO, 'Prosper d'Épinay', in *Les Peintres de la femme*, Paris 1888, pp. 213-228.

P. ROUX-FOUJOLS, '*Prosper d'Épinay (1836-1914) sculpteur*' PhD diss. (Université Paris IV) 1994.

P. ROUX-FOUJOLS, *Prosper d'Épinay, un sculpteur mauricien à la cour des princes*, Mauritius 1996.

A. BLÜHM, "'Une beauté Sauvage'" Prosper d'Épinay's *Head of Medusa*, in *Van Gogh Museum Journal* (1996): pp. 133-144.

N. GUIBERT, *Portrait(s) de Sarah Bernhardt, catalogue de l'exposition Sarah Bernhardt ou le divin mensonge*, exh. cat. Paris (Bibliothèque nationale de France) 2000.

J. LORCEY, *Sarah Bernhardt: l'art et la vie*, Biarritz 2005.



In the period which became known as the *Belle Époque*, European society – in France perhaps more than anywhere else – was going through an enormous transition. Social mobility increased for members of the wealthy bourgeoisie who, nevertheless, continued to try to emulate their aristocratic forebears. Culturally, it was an era when attendance at the theatre and at the *salons* was virtually mandatory for members of the *beau monde* with social ambitions. And this cultural world was dominated by a few powerful artists and intellectuals, among whom Sarah Bernhardt held a special place.

Bernhardt (1844-1923), the illegitimate daughter of a Dutch-Jewish courtesan, had a lengthy career as a French stage actress. She was feted by European royalty, and toured North and South America as well as Australia. She was also an accomplished painter and sculptor with over fifty surviving works, several of which are today in major museums. However, despite her great success, she led such an extravagant and eccentric lifestyle that she often had to depend on the generosity of wealthy male lovers, including Henri, Hereditary Prince de Ligne, with whom she had a son at the age of twenty. Her acting career spanned the period of the 1860s until the early age of movies. Plagued by ill health but still considered a star, she continued to work to great acclaim until the end of her life.

In 1903, Bernhardt was at the height of her powers and one of the most famous women of the day. In that year she took on the role of Hermione from the play *Andromache*, written in 1667 for the court of Louis XIV by the great French playwright Jean Racine. Hermione, driven to desperation after having been rejected by Pyrrhus, commissions Orestes to murder him. The price is that she will marry Orestes who is in love with her. However, Hermione repents, and when she hears that Pyrrhus has died, she scorns Orestes and runs off to kill herself over Pyrrhus' body. Orestes, tormented with visions of Hermione and the Furies, is driven insane.



Fig. 1. *Head of Medusa* (so-called *Medusa Rondanini*), Hellenistic or Augustan Roman copy after Greek original by Phidias (5th century BC), Munich, Glyptothek.







The present bust depicts the vision of Hermione in her moment of wrath, face hardened with anger and her hair writhing expressively with ‘hissing snakes’. It is a work by the celebrated sculptor Prosper d’Épinay (1836-1914), who had already sculpted Bernhardt several times during the course of her career. Known as the ‘Sculptor of sovereigns’ due to his success sculpting portraits of royalty and high society, d’Épinay has here created a portrait that is both rooted in antique sources such as the *Rondanini Medusa* (fig. 1), and thoroughly modern in its simplicity and expressive power. It harkens back to an earlier representation d’Épinay had executed in 1866 of the *Head of Medusa* – also in terracotta – which is now in the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (fig. 2).

The bust of *Hermione* therefore represents a portrait by one of the most important sculptors of *Belle Époque* France, depicting Sarah Bernhardt, a woman famed for pushing the boundaries – both artistically and socially – of the role of women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Fig. 2. Charles Adrien Prosper d’Épinay, *Head of Medusa*, 1866, Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum.

VINCENZO GEMITO

(Naples 1852 – 1929 Naples)

The Siren Fountain ('La Fontana della Sirena')

1920

Terracotta; signed and dated to the side of the base 'V Gemito 1920' and further inscribed to the reverse 'La fontana della Sirena'; on a modern shaped wood base.

3 7/8 in. (9.9 cm) high

6 1/4 in. (15.9 cm) high, overall

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist in 1923 by Riccardo Fainardi, Gaiano.

Thence by descent.

Private collection, Italy.

LITERATURE

C. AFELTRA, *Vincenzo Gemito, La Lettura*, fasc. 4, 1929, p. 268.

A. SCHETTINI, *Gemito*, Milan, 1944, p. 39, pl. 51.

F. BELLONZI, *Appunti sull'arte di Vincenzo Gemito*, Rome, 1952, p. 29.

C. SIVIERO, *Gemito*, Naples, 1953, pp. 90-91.

L. GAMBARA, *Le ville parmensi*, Parma, 1966, p. 327.

S. SUSINNO, ed., *Da Canova a De Carolis: acquisizioni e restauri delle collezioni dell'Ottocento della Galleria nazionale d'arte moderna*, Rome, 1978, p. 66.



Recently brought back to the attention of the international public thanks to the important retrospective at the Petit Palais, Paris, and the Museum di Capodimonte, Naples (*Gemito – Le sculpteur de l'âme napolitaine, 2019-2020*), Vincenzo Gemito is rightly considered by critics as one of the most original Italian sculptors active between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Gemito's bibliography has mainly focused on his early production: that is, on the period between his training at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Naples, and the mental crisis that seized him in 1887, forcing him to inactivity for more than twenty years. His twentieth-century production, on the other hand, is still substantially unexplored and sometimes superficially labelled as a phase of classicist revival.

Despite the obsession with antiquity, Gemito's work from the first two decades of the twentieth century is, on the contrary, marked by moments of unexpected creativity. This is demonstrated by the small terracotta entitled by the artist the *Siren Fountain* (*La fontana della Sirena*), signed and dated 1920, which is notable for the freshness of the modelling, left in an almost sketchy state, and for the attention to finely tooled details. The sensuality of the terracotta, even more sophisticated due to its diminutive format, is a distinctive feature of Gemito's sculpture, which culminates in the creation of the small precious sculptures on which he worked between the 1910s and 1920s.

Although a recent rediscovery, the *Siren Fountain* was published for the first time by Alfredo Schettini in the Gemito monograph published in Milan in 1944 (*op. cit.*) – although with the incorrect date of 1918 – which was reiterated in more recent publications. Schettini gave great relevance to the small sculpture, reproducing it on a full page, and gave a rare testimony of the genesis of the artwork: the artist was in the park of Villa Lucia, then frequented by leading Neapolitan artists and intellectuals, when he was inspired by the vision of a young woman in which he

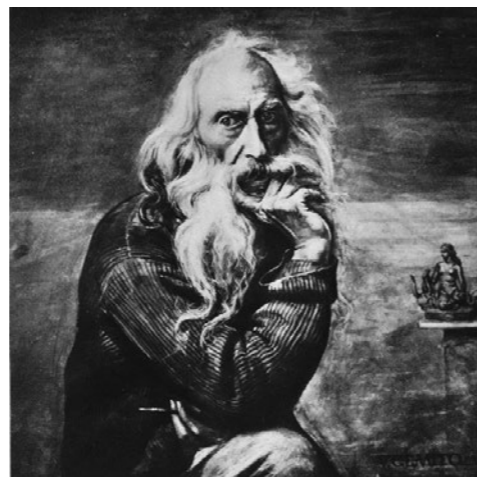


Fig. 1. *Self-portrait*, Vincenzo Gemito, 1920, location unknown.



Fig. 2. *Nude portrait of Giuseppina, the artist's daughter, as a Siren*, 1911, pen, ink wash, and white heightening on paper, backed with card, Gallerie d'Italia, Naples.

seemed to recognise the siren Parthenope. He asked her to pose nude for him, but the girl, 'a demure virgin', refused the proposal, so Gemito modelled the sculpture in his studio using only his imagination.

The enthusiasm shown by the sculptor in the realisation of this small masterpiece is also documented by the Neapolitan painter Carlo Siviero, a friend of the artist who, in his 1953 monograph (*op. cit.*, p. 91), refers to letters sent to him by Gemito in which he told him about his newfound inspiration and his 'intent on modelling a little mermaid'. Further proof of the importance the artist attributed to the *Siren Fountain*, it is worth mentioning the unlocated *Self-portrait* from 1920 in which, behind the bearded sculptor, one can see the very same terracotta, awaiting its final touches (fig. 1).

In this work Gemito approaches for the last time, as far as we know, the subject of the Siren Parthenope whose death – according to some versions of the legend – resulted in the founding of Naples. In some drawings made between 1911 and 1912, the artist already portrayed his daughter Giuseppina as a siren, naked and with the attribute of the lyre (see, for example, fig. 2). The theme of the siren seems to have been a recurring fascination for Gemito. Indeed, he would write directly to King Vittorio Emanuele III: 'It was the Siren who told me to stay in Rome, to work here on the new works ... And I, both in my sleep and in my wake, listen to the Siren. I obey, of course, only the Siren who speaks to me from the bottom of the sea or the bottom of my soul, not those who call me from cars or steamships. I was not born a traveller and my only journey is my dream as an artist' (*Afeltra, loc. cit.*).

The *Siren Fountain* probably entered the collections of the Emilian painter Riccardo Fainardi in October 1923, when Gemito gave him a declaration of authenticity in which he stated: 'The little Siren in terracotta just 9 or 10 centimetres tall is uniquely original, and has never been reproduced in any material, so that this one you possess there are no others.'

For memory / Naples 10 October 1923 / Vincenzo Gemito' (fig. 3).
Fainardi owned a villa in Capri, in the bay of Marina Piccola, where he
went annually looking for pictorial motifs. During his vacation periods
between Naples and Capri he met the elderly Gemito, from whom he
probably bought the work, which he then kept in his villa in Gaiano,
protecting it in a glass bell as the most precious of treasures.

Manuel Carrera
February 2020

Al signor Biscarolo Fainardi
La piccola Sirena
in terra cotta grande
appena 9. + 10 centimetri
è unicamente originale,
e non è stato mai riprodotta
in nessuna materia; il che
questa che voi possedete non
ce ne sono altre.
Per memoria Napoli 10
ottobre 1923
Vincenzo Gemito

Fig. 3. Certificate of
authenticity from the
sculptor.







La fontana della Birra

PABLO PICASSO

(Málaga 1881 – 1973 Mougins)

Le Dejeuner sur L'herbe

Conceived in 1964

Terracotta rectangular plaque, painted in black and engraved

Proof aside from a numbered edition of 50 with the *Empreinte Originale de Picasso and Madoura Plein Feu* stamps on the reverse

20 1/8 x 24 1/8 in. (51 x 61.5 cm)

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, United States.

LITERATURE

M.-L. BERNADAC in *Late Picasso: Paintings, Sculpture, Drawings, Prints 1953-1972*, exh. cat., Musée national d'art moderne, Tate Gallery, Paris and London, 1988.

G. BLOCH. *Pablo Picasso. vol. 3, Catalogue of the Printed Ceramics, 1949-1971*, Editions Kornfeld et Klipstein. Bern, 1972, p. 141, no. 163, illustrated.

G. RAMIÉ. *Picasso's Ceramics*, Secker & Warburg, London, 1975, p. 290, no. 640, illustrated, and p. 257.

A. RAMIÉ. *Picasso, Catalogue de l'œuvre gravé céramique 1949-1971*, Paris 1988, no. 517.

B. LÉAL, C. PIOT and M.-L. BERNADAC, *The Ultimate Picasso*, New York, 2003.

K. ROTH in *Picasso in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, G. Tinterow and S. Alyson Stein, eds., exh. cat., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2010, p. 317, no. C1, illustrated.





‘Manet’s concern was to relate a painting to a painting: Picasso’s was to relate a painter to a painter. What was at stake was not only his own power as a painter but his power as a demiurge: the power to metamorphose certain objects in the world of reality which are also, and equally, paintings in a museum. Manet had freed him from the past and given him a new creative impulse’ (Bernadac, *op. cit.*, p. 72).

Conceived and executed in 1964, Pablo Picasso’s *Le déjeuner sur l’herbe* (A.R. 517) enacts a seminal artistic dialogue between two major figures in modern art history.

Upon his first encounter with Édouard Manet’s 1863 *Le Déjeuner sur l’herbe* in 1932 (Musée d’Orsay, Paris, see fig. 1), Picasso famously stated: ‘I tell myself, tribulations for later.’ (quoted in Léal, Piot and Bernadac, *op. cit.*, p. 430). Over three decades, he produced around forty variations of Manet’s composition, culminating in a diverse oeuvre that includes twenty-seven paintings, drawings, prints, and ceramics. This extensive body of work reflects Picasso’s desire to bring to modernity the long-lasting art historical discourse culminating in Manet’s masterpiece, deeply rooted in the works of masters such as Titian, Rembrandt, Velázquez, and Delacroix.

Fig. 1. *Le Déjeuner sur l’herbe*, Edouard Manet, 1863, oil on canvas, Musée d’Orsay, Paris.



In the present work, Picasso reconceptualises Manet's scene, depicting three of the four original figures while playing with their reciprocal placement, scale, and compositional narratives. Immersed in a pastoral setting composed of trees and other natural elements, the characters take centre stage, accompanying their conversation with an accentuated gestural expressiveness. Each of the figures operates as an independent entity, absorbed in their actions, creating an atmosphere of quiet intimacy. The act of dining outdoors evokes the simple, pastoral life Picasso experienced when he lived in the southern French countryside. In this work, food is indeed a central motif, emphasising its agency as a vital necessity for the body and as a vehicle for social interaction. Through solid outlines and clear shapes, Picasso re-appropriates the essence of the original composition. This approach aligns with his broader stylistic evolution, particularly in the 1960s, when he adopted a more abstract aesthetic language. If the female forms exhibit graceful curves, highlighting their femininity and sensuality, the male figure is rendered with angular and straight lines. Adding a further interpretative layer, this deliberate graphic expedient serves to underscore contemporary societal roles and perceptions of gender. The inclusion of the fully clothed male figure alongside nude women resonates with Manet's original scandalous juxtaposition, retaining the provocative spirit of this confrontation while situating it within a modern context. Picasso had long shown a great interest in the theme of the nude, yet this terracotta appears to relate in part to the theme of the artist and his model which would come to figure so often in his work.

Picasso's *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* stands as a profound example of the artist's ability to engage critically with historical works, by masterfully bending the medium to his creative flair. As an artist's proof, this rectangular terracotta plaque is distinct from the limited edition of fifty and its designation as *Exemplaire Éditeur* highlights its unique position, as publisher's proofs were often retained within the artist's studio as a personal reference.

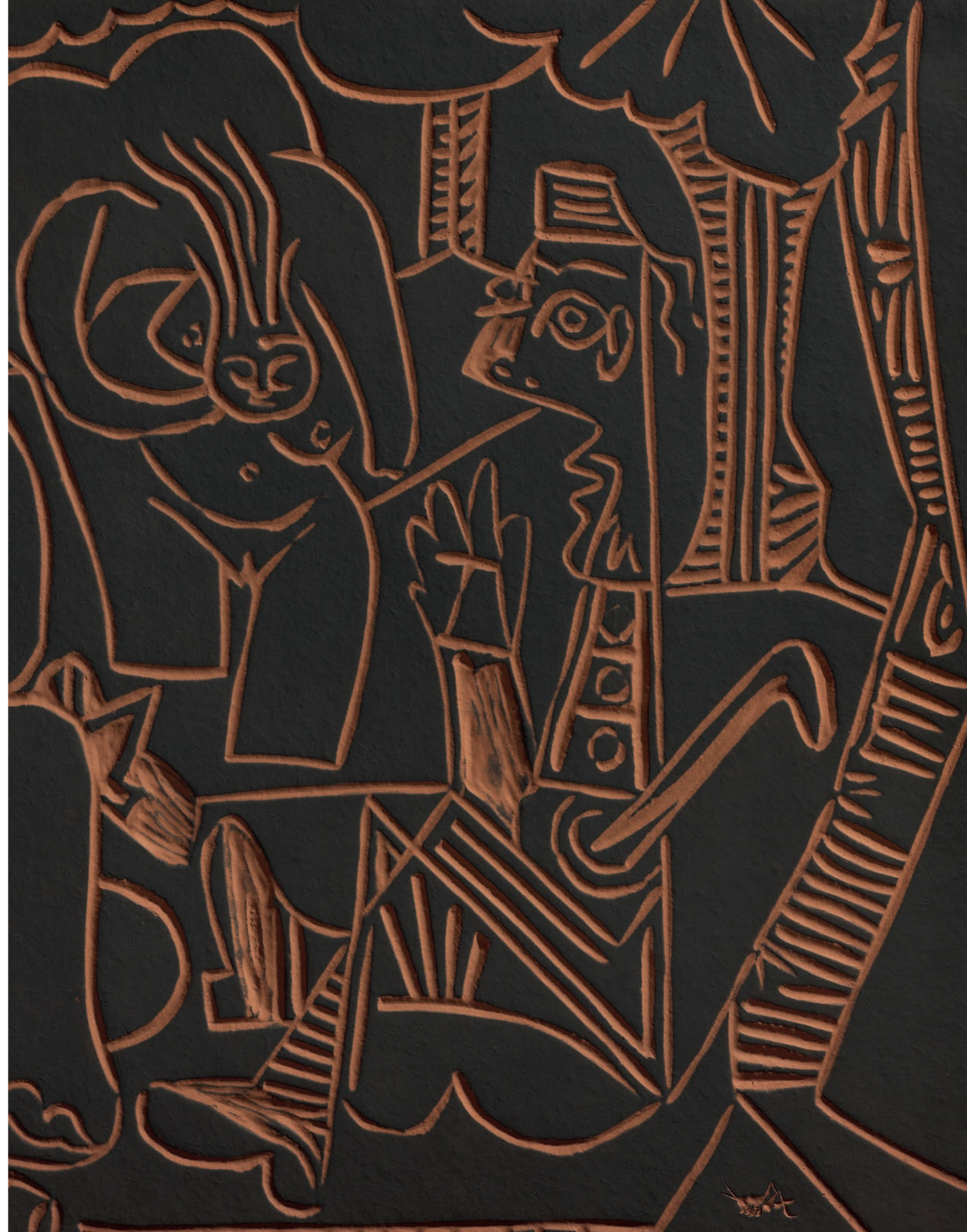


PHOTO CREDITS

Fragmentary Head of a Panther

Fig. 1. Hellenistic Greek Head of a Panther

© Freeman's | Hindman Chicago auction catalogue
Antiquities & Ancient Art, 27.05.2021, 10am

Fig. 2. Public domain

Fragmentary Head of a Woman

Fig. 1. Public domain

San Lorenzo (Saint Lawrence)

Fig. 1. *San Lorenzo*, Desiderio da Settignano

© Maria Brunori and Paola Rosa

Fig. 2. *San Lorenzo*, Donatello

Courtesy Of Sotheby's Amsterdam

Fig. 3. *San Lorenzo*, Donatello

© Fototeca Musei Civici Fiorentini

Fig. 4. *San Giorgio*, Donatello

© Photographic Department of the Uffizi Galleries

Fig. 5. *San Daniele*, Donatello

© Alinari Archives, Florence – courtesy of Fondazione

Alinari per la Fotografia

Fig. 6. The 'Pieve' of San Lorenzo

© Bruno Bruchi, Siena, and Francesco Caglioti,
Florence

Fig. 7. *San Lorenzo*, after Donatello

© Bruno Bruchi, Siena, and Francesco Caglioti,
Florence

Fig. 8. *San Lorenzo*, after Donatello

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Fig. 9. *David*, Donatello

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Fig. 10. Jacopo di Giovanni Ugolini's coat of arms

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Pair of Busts of Princely Children

Fig. 1. Follower of Sir Anthony Van Dyck

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Paintings, 10.11.2020, 4pm

Virgin of the Immaculate Conception

Fig. 1. *Immaculate Conception*, Juan Martínez Montañés

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Fig 2. *Immaculate Conception*, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo

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Two Angels Kneeling in Adoration

Fig. 1. Public domain

Fig. 2. Public domain

Fig. 3. Public domain

Greyhound (Levrier)

Fig. 1. The Atelier of Jean-Antoine Houdon,

Louis-Léopold Boilly

© Paris, Les Arts Décoratifs

Portrait of Sarah Bernhardt as Hermione

Fig. 1. Head of Medusa from Glyptoteque in Munich

© Carole Raddato.

Fig 2. Head of Medusa, Charles Adrien Prosper
d'Épinay

© Van Hogh Museum Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh
Foundation)

The Siren Fountain (La Fontana della Sirenà)

Fig. 1. Public domain

Fig. 2. Nude portrait of Giuseppina, the artist's
daughter, as a Siren

Archivio Patrimonio Artistico Intesa Sanpaolo
/ foto Speranza Digital Studio, Napoli

Fig. 3. Public Domain

Le Dejeuner sur L'herbe

Fig. 1. *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, Edouard Manet

© Grandpalaisrmn (Musée d'Orsay, Paris) / Benoît
Touchard / Mathieu Rabeau

Tony Fisher

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Arturo Sánchez

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COLNAGHI

Colnaghi London
26 Bury Street
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United Kingdom
www.colnaghi.com



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