

Among the “infinite number” of wooden Crucifixes, which Giorgio Vasari claimed for the Florentine sculptor Baccio di Giovanni Sinibaldi da Montelupo (1468/69-in or before 1536)¹, two documented crosses are extant. One is the Crucifix originally installed above the entrance to the monks’ choir in S. Marco, Florence, for which Baccio was paid on 16 October 1496²; the Crucifix is now in the chapter house of the convent of S. Marco (fig. 1). The second is the Crucifix donated on 3 March 1502 (st. c.) by Amaddio d’Amaddio del Giocondo, *confratello*, to the Compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino, which had its seat in the cloister of S. Maria Novella³; the Crucifix is currently located above the church’s High Altar. By contrast, the Crucifix at the High Altar of S. Lorenzo recorded in a payment of 11 July 1499, whose author, according to Francesco Albertini, was Baccio⁴, and a Crucifix for SS. Annunziata, for which Baccio was paid in 1505 (st. c.)⁵, have disappeared. Vasari named further Crucifixes, of which one is extant and two are lost. The Crucifix, held to be more beautiful than the others, that he saw above the High Altar in the Badia di SS. Fiore e Lucilla in Arezzo, is still in the church (fig. 2)⁶, but those he cited in the Florentine church of S. Pier Maggiore⁷ and the convent of the Murate⁸ are not preserved. In addition, a host of other Crucifixes has been attributed to Baccio or his circle⁹ — so many, in fact, that it might be thought otiose to add another, were it not for the exceptional quality of our new Crucifix (fig. 3), which proves it, not only to be autograph, but a work of Baccio’s maturity.

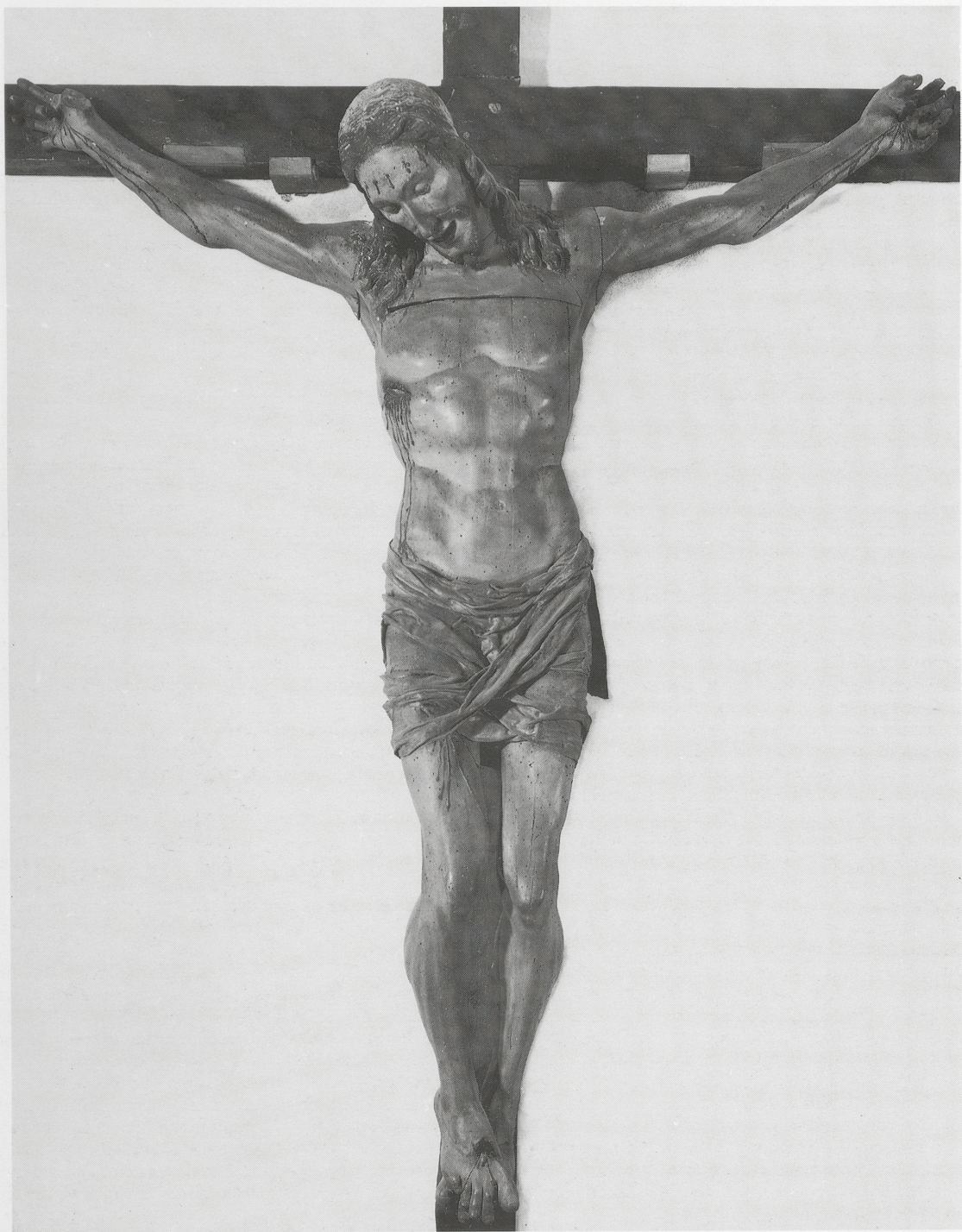
Since its restoration between March and November 1996, the Crucifix has hung in the sacristy of the Cathedral of S. Martino at Lucca. Before that, and apparently at least since 1923, the Crucifix was located above the second altar dedicated to the SS. Crocifisso in the left or north aisle in the Lucchese church of S. Cristoforo (*in cornu Evangelii*).¹⁰ At one time, the Crucifix belonged to the Compagnia della Fratta. Whether it is this Crucifix or another, almost twice as large, from the end of the thirteenth century (now in the Museo Nazionale di Villa Guinigi at Lucca, but formerly in S. Cristoforo)¹¹, that episcopal visitations of 1575 and 1651 refer to in connection with the aforesaid altar of the SS. Crocifisso in S. Cristoforo¹², cannot be determined. No attributions of our Crucifix have ever been made and apart from brief mentions in a few Lucchese guidebooks, the work is quite unpublished.

The figure from our Crucifix measures ca 120 cm in height by 110 cm in width. The Christ is made of a soft wood, hypothetically identified as lime; the tree’s central trunk furnished head, chest, and legs. Vertical seams at the shoulders mark the insertion of separately carved arms, which are fixed to the torso with cylindrical dowels. The loin cloth is not a carved imitation, but rather a real piece of sheer linen of very fine weave, which was soaked in gesso and, while still wet, applied with animal glue to the figure.¹³ Where locks of hair rested on the figure’s chest, they were originally modeled in stucco; the remainder of the hair is wood. The figure is carved in the round and finished in the rear. After carving, the surface of the Christ was primed with a mixture of gesso and animal glue, then painted with tempera; polychromy provided the fine details of body hair and drops of blood and accentuated the modeling in the face and head of hair. In the loin cloth there remain traces of green stripes on a light ground. The cross, to which Christ was originally appended, is lost; the original crown of thorns, which accounted for the drops of blood visible on Christ’s forehead, is missing too.¹⁴

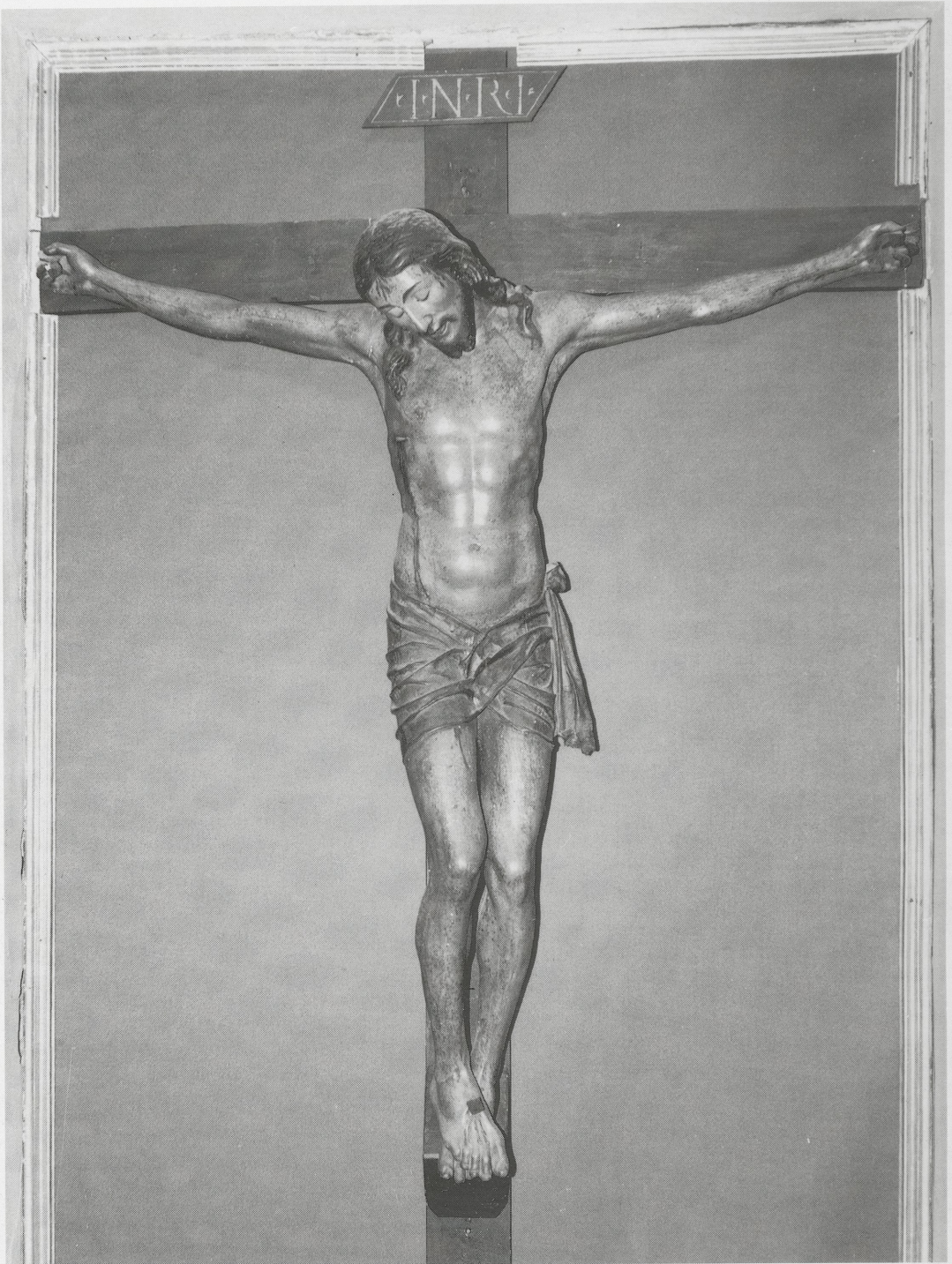
Numerous features link the Lucca Crucifix to Baccio da Montelupo’s other secure works. As in the Crucifixes from the convent of S. Marco and the Badia at Arezzo, arms are only very slightly pendant. The torsion of the figure is minimal, for the barely perceptible twisting of the upper torso towards the observer’s right increases only a little at the waist. The canon in all is defined by a long torso and relatively short legs. It is significant that neither here, nor in any of Baccio’s other Crucifixes, is the anatomy of Christ’s torso indebted to antique schemata. Characteristic of Baccio are Christ’s very flat breast and nipples which, displaced far to either side, barely project. Much more prominent, in fact, than the breast or the arched contour of the rib cage are the abdominal muscles; by contrast, the iliac crest and inguinal ligament are inconspicuous. The extraordinarily muscular legs of the Lucchese Christ compare closely to those of the Christ in S. Marco; though tendons are sharply defined, there is no hint of veins. Feet typically are very short and broad and display a marked swelling below the outside of the ankle and above the attachment of the first toe to the foot. Loin cloths in Baccio’s other Crucifixes as well consist of a piece of thin cloth dipped in gesso. Although the cloth adheres to the underlying form almost throughout, the criss-crossing folds, gathered on one hip, give no hint of genitals, which probably were never carved.

Christ’s dolichocephalic head is analogous to that of the S. Marco Christ (figs. 4, 5). On the crown, the hair of both, with its uniform surface, adds little to the volume of the head. Beneath a very high forehead, hairless brows spring from the pinched bridge of the nose to arch high above the eyes. Although eyes are closed, the upper boundary of the deeply indented eyeballs is clearly defined. Noses are long and thin; cheekbones are low, widely-spaced, and extremely prominent; the broad mouth is opened, and in both, the short cleft beard forms two nearly identical points.

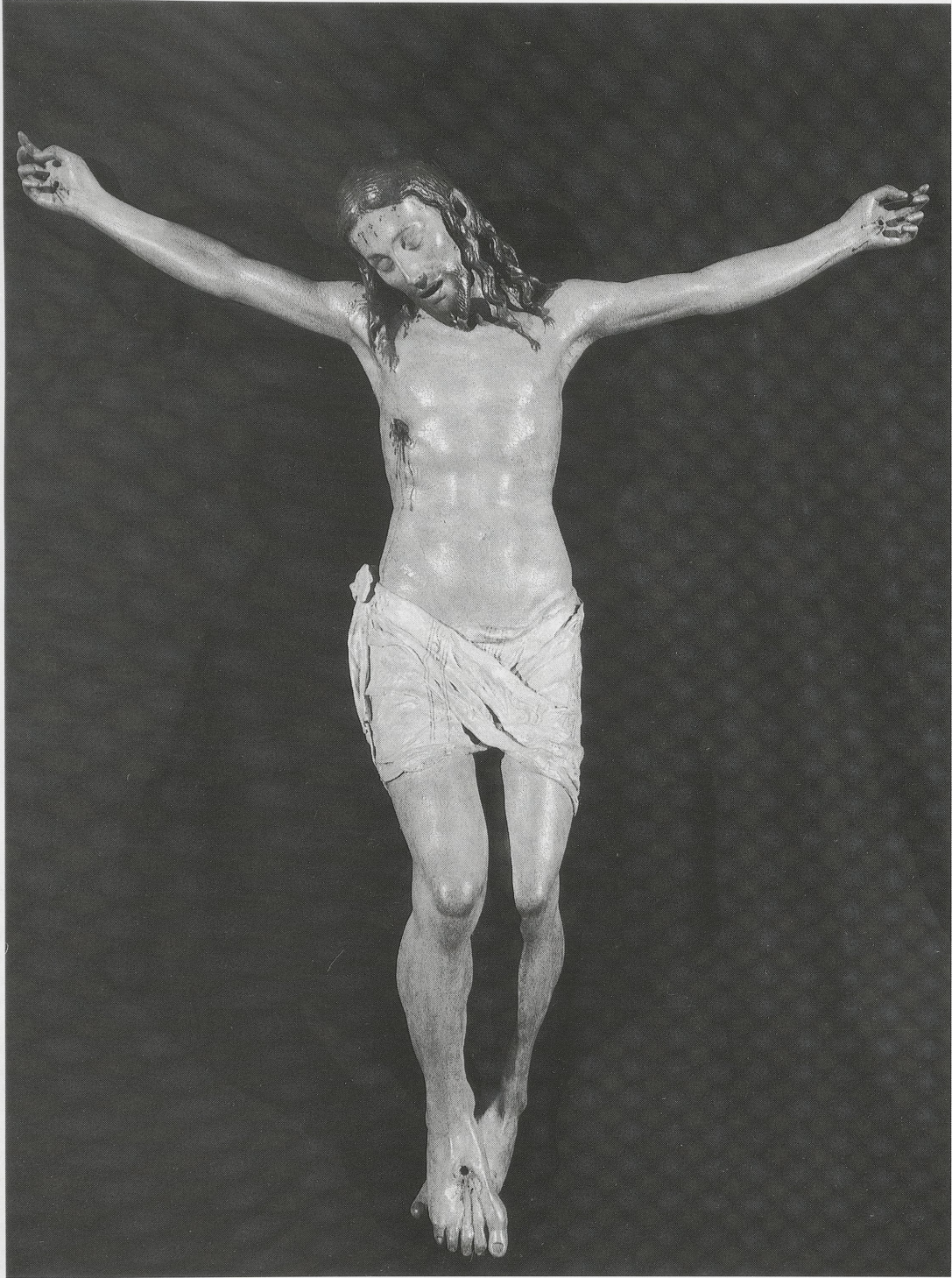
Can we infer from its location that our Crucifix was made during Baccio’s Lucchese sojourn? That Baccio spent his last years, until his death in or before 1536¹⁵, at Lucca, we learn from Vasari, who wrote: “venutogli a noia lo stare a Fiorenza, trasferendosi a Lucca, lavorò molte opere di scultura e d’architettura in quella città, dove molto più attese alle fabbriche che alle sculture. Et infra queste il bello e ben composto tempio di San Paolino,



1 Baccio da Montelupo, Crucifix. Florence, Convent of San Marco, chapter house.



2 Baccio da Montelupo, Crucifix. Arezzo, Badia di SS. Fiora e Lucilla.



3 Baccio da Montelupo, Crucifix. Lucca, Cathedral of S. Martino, sacristy.



4 Baccio da Montelupo, Crucifix (detail). Florence, Convent of San Marco, chapter house.

5 (following page) Baccio da Montelupo, Crucifix (detail). Lucca, Cathedral of S. Martino, sacristy.

avvocato de' Lucchesi, con buona e dotta intelligenza di dentro e di fuori ornato. E dimorando continuo in quella città fino agli anni della età sua LXXVIII, finì il corso della vita, et in San Paolino predetto gli fu data onorata sepoltura.¹⁶ When Baccio contracted for the Tabernacle of the Sacrament for the church of S. Lorenzo in near-by Segromigno Monte on 11 September 1518, however, he was still resident in Florence.¹⁷ He was living there again in the summer of 1522, when his son Raffaello came home to recover from an illness.¹⁸ On the other hand, Baccio's responsibility for the construction of the new church of S. Paolino at Lucca must have required his regular attendance. Although the construction of S. Paolino was decreed on 9 March 1515¹⁹, Baccio had not yet been entrusted with the work at the end of May 1519.²⁰ If the testimony of his son is accurate²¹, Baccio was temporarily in Lucca not long after the death of Silvestro Gigli, bishop of Worcester, on 18 April 1521, to begin work on the prelate's tomb destined for S. Michele in Foro; Baccio returned to Lucca in the latter part of 1522 to finish the work on the tomb that Raffaello had left outstanding when, fever-stricken, he had abandoned Lucca. Baccio was there still or yet again on 3 January 1529, when he granted Raffaello power of attorney.²²

Despite the presence of both Baccio and his Crucifix at Lucca, however, we cannot automatically conclude that the Crucifix was executed there, for an object of this kind was easily moved — indeed, was often intended to be carried in procession. Nevertheless, a dating of the cross towards the end of the sculptor's career — to the period when he apparently was settled in Lucca — is supported by Christ's near stylistic kinship with the last documented example of Baccio's sculpture — the tabernacle of 1518-19 in Segromigno Monte (fig. 6) — and by the figure's relative distance from its counterpart in Baccio's early S. Marco Crucifix. The proportions and anatomy of the Christ in Lucca parallel those of the Christ in Segromigno, by comparison with which, the proportions of the S. Marco Christ seem elongated. As in the Segromigno Christ, the upper torso of our figure has been shortened, while his chest and shoulders have been narrowed; his lower torso, below his waist, on the other hand, has been



lengthened to some degree and considerably widened, and his thighs are fuller — changes, in every case, which produce a more effeminate canon. Also conducive to this end is the figure's greater fleshiness which, as in the Segromigno Christ, blurs the boundaries between muscles and adds to the figure's bulk; by contrast, the distinction and salience of the individual muscles of the Christ at S. Marco recall the articulated contours of an athlete.

The bony structure, too, obtrudes far less insistently in our figure. As a result, the longer and smoother contours of the silhouette are less variegated. The adoption of heavier proportions, of more generalized contours and more gradual transitions between discrete anatomical features, needless to say, was not peculiar to Baccio's artistic development, but was characteristic of most of the art of the period and indeed distinguishes the painting as well as the sculpture of the first decades of the Cinquecento from that of the late Quattrocento. So too does the muted expression of pain, which a comparison of the Lucchese and S. Marco Christs reveals (figs. 4, 5). In short, the style of the Christ at Lucca proves it a work of the High Renaissance; as such, it is unique among the Crucifixes made by Baccio and a rarity in Cinquecento Tuscany.

NOTES

For their kind assistance, I am indebted to Maria Teresa Filieri, Marco Gazzi, Serena Padovani, and John Turner.

¹ *Vasari-Bellosi/Rossi*, p. 675.

² *Francesco Filippini*, Baccio da Montelupo in Bologna, in: *Dedalo*, VIII, 1927-28, p. 534; *Riccardo Spinelli*, in:

- L'officina della maniera (exhibition Florence 1996-97), cat. ed. by *Alessandro Cecchi/Antonio Natali*, Venice 1996, pp. 90 f., no. 9; *John Turner*, *The sculpture of Baccio da Montelupo*, Ph. D. Diss., Brown University, Providence 1997, pp. 117-119, no. 2A.
- ³ *Jacques Mesnil*, *La Compagnia di Gesù Pellegrino*, in: *Riv. d'arte*, II, 1904, p. 72; *Walter Paatz*, *Ein wiedergefundener Kruzifixus von Baccio da Montelupo*, in: *Flor. Mitt.*, III, 1919-32, pp. 360 f.; *Turner* (n. 2), pp. 119-122, no. 3A.
- ⁴ *Francesco Albertini*, *Memoriale di molte statue e picture sono nella inclyta cipta di Florentia*, Florence 1510, cited from the reprint ed. by *Herbert Horne*, Letchworth 1909, p. 11; *Margrit Lisner*, *Holzkrufixe in Florenz und in der Toskana von der Zeit um 1300 bis zum frühen Cinquecento*, Munich 1970, p. 82; *James Beck*, *Desiderio da Settignano (and Antonio del Pollaiuolo): Problems*, in: *Flor. Mitt.*, XXVIII, 1984, p. 214.
- ⁵ *Cornelius von Fabriczy*, *Sculture in legno di Baccio da Montelupo*, in: *Miscellanea d'arte*, I, 1903, p. 67, doc. 1; *Lisner* (n. 4), p. 82.
- ⁶ *Vasari-Bellosi/Rossi*, p. 675; *Alessandro Del Vita*, *Di un Crocifisso di Baccio da Montelupo ritrovato nella chiesa di S. Fiora e Lucilla in Arezzo*, in: *Riv. d'arte*, VII, 1910, pp. 90-92; *Turner* (n. 2), pp. 123 f., no. 4A.
- ⁷ *Vasari-Bellosi/Rossi*, p. 675; *Paatz*, *Kirchen*, vol. IV, p. 637.
- ⁸ *Vasari-Bellosi/Rossi*, p. 675; *Paatz*, *Kirchen*, vol. IV, p. 348.
- ⁹ *Ibidem*, vol. I, p. 485; vol. II, pp. 151, 276, 311, 507 f., 610; vol. III, pp. 27, 36, 88, 312, 313; vol. IV, pp. 21, 22, 126, 304, 317; vol. V, pp. 58, 303; *Alessandro Parronchi*, *Il Crocifisso di S. Spirito*, in: *Studi urbinati di storia, filosofia e letteratura*, XXXV, 1961, pp. 19-21; *idem*, *Il Crocifisso, già in Santo Spirito, in idem*, *Opere giovanili di Michelangelo*, Florence, vol. I, 1968, p. 63, n. 26; *Lisner* (n. 4), pp. 83-85; *Luciano Bellosi*, in: *idem*, ed., *Il Museo dello Spedale degli Innocenti a Firenze*, Milan 1977, pp. 228 f., no. 14; *Walfredo Siemoni*, *Arte e devozione medicea nella chiesa dei SS. Quirico e Lucia all'Ambrogiana. Un inedito di Francesco Gambacciani*, in: *Miscellanea storica della Valdelsa*, XCVII, 1991, pp. 72-74; *Riccardo Gatteschi*, *Baccio da Montelupo, scultore e architetto del Cinquecento*, Florence 1993, pp. 36-39, 56-60, 72; *Manola Rosadini*, in: *Maria Grazia Ciardi Dupré Dal Poggetto*, ed., *La bottega di Giuliano e Benedetto da Maiano nel Rinascimento fiorentino*, Florence 1994, pp. 55 f., no. 13; *Turner* (n. 2), pp. 142 f., no. 2B.
- ¹⁰ *Giovanni Barsotti*, *Lucca sacra: guida storico-artistico-religiosa di Lucca*, Lucca 1923, p. 137; *Giorgio Giorgi*, *Le chiese di Lucca: S. Cristoforo*, Lucca 1970, p. 12, p. 27 no. 7, p. 28 no. VI. *Isa Belli*, *Guida di Lucca*, Lucca 1953, p. 176 and *Isa Belli Barsali*, *Guida di Lucca*, Lucca 1970, 2nd edition, p. 124, on the other hand, located the Crucifix in the sacristy of the church. The Crucifix does not figure at all in *Enrico Ridolfi*, *Guida di Lucca*, Lucca 1877, pp. 152 f. or *idem*, *Guida di Lucca*, Lucca 1899, pp. 163 f.
- ¹¹ For which, see *Andrea De Marchi*, in: *Scultura lignea*, Lucca 1200-1425 (exhib. Lucca 1995-96), cat. ed. by *Clara Baracchini*, Florence 1995, vol. I, p. 53, no. 2.
- ¹² Lucca, Archivio Arcivescovile, *Visite pastorali*, filza 26, 1575, c. 86r: "Visitavit altare Crucifixi quod est lateritium, et nullum habet titulum nec Rectorem" and *ibidem*, filza 43, c. 572r-v, 14 December 1651: "Ab eadem Parte [a parte sinistra introitus ecclesiae] est altare SS. Crucifixo dicatum lateritium ... In nicla est Imago Christi Crucifixi sculpta in ligno cum duabus statuvis collateralibus." For the church's altars in the testimony of episcopal visitations, see also *Maria Teresa Filieri*, *Lucca nelle sue chiese: i luoghi della pittura*, in: *La pittura a Lucca nel primo Seicento* (exhib. Lucca 1994-95), cat. ed. by *Clara Baracchini/Maria Teresa Filieri*, Lucca 1994, pp. 64 f., no. 9.
- ¹³ This means of making the loin cloth was not at all uncommon in Tuscan Crucifixes of the late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento. For this, see *Peter Stiberc*, *Polychrome Holzskulpturen der Florentiner Renaissance: Beobachtungen zur bildhauerischen Technik*, in: *Flor. Mitt.*, XXXIII, 1989, p. 212.
- ¹⁴ Almost all of this information, as well as the description of the condition of the work, come from the report, submitted in May 1998, by the Crucifix's restorer, Marco Gazzi, to the Soprintendenza per i Beni Ambientali, Architettonici, Artistici e Storici per le Province di Pisa, Livorno, Lucca e Massa Carrara at Pisa. Prior to its restoration, the figure presented several losses. Parts of the last four fingers of Christ's proper right hand, all of the middle finger of his left hand, the wood and stucco termination of his locks of hair at right and left, and all of the first toe and part of the second and third toes of his right foot, were missing. These losses were made good during restoration. A vertical crack, which opened on the proper left side of the figure's torso, was filled in. The hole in the nape of Christ's neck, meant for the attachment of a halo, is not original.
- ¹⁵ *Gaetano Milanese*, in: *Vasari-Milanese*, vol. IV, [1568] 1879, p. 548, n. 1.
- ¹⁶ *Vasari-Bellosi/Rossi*, p. 675.
- ¹⁷ *P. Guidi*, *La "Pietà" di Lammarì e la "Pietà" di Segromigno*, in: *Arte cristiana*, III, 1915, pp. 69 f., n. 1.
- ¹⁸ This information comes from the *Autobiografia di Raffaello da Montelupo* published by *Gaetano Milanese*, in: *Vasari-Milanese*, vol. IV, p. 557: "a Lucca, dove m'ero fermo a finire una sepoltura del vescovo de' Gigli in Santo Michele, che la faceva mie padre, il quale mi lasò a finire la figura del morto e una Nostra Donna 'nun tondo di mezzo rilievo, e lui se n'andò a Fiorenza. Così vi stetti un ano o poco più. Feci queste cose, e ci avevo preso tanto chredito, che si no mi fussi malato, arei fatto di molte opere d'importanza: mi prese una terzana,



6 Baccio da Montelupo, Tabernacle of the Sacrament (detail). Segromigno Monte (Lucca), S. Lorenzo.

me n'andai a Fiorenza, dove stetti, senza levarmi mai di letto, un anno intero.

In questo ch'i stetti a Lucca, si levorono le parti, che furono quelli Pogeschi, dove fu uciso il gonfalonieri [Girolamo Vellutelli] in palazzo da un mess. Vincenti di Poggio [11 July 1522], e così andò tuta Luca a romore e a l'arme. Poco doppo questo caso, mi parti' malato, e, come ò ditto, andai a Fiorenza con gran dispiacere di mio padre e madre. Mi raccolsono, e fatomi medicare, non posei mai insino a l'altr'anno guarire: dove fu forzato mie padre tornarsene a Lucca a metere in opera la ditta capella e sepoltura, come si vede al presente, com'ò ditto, nella chiesa di Santo Michele sulla piazza maggiore di Lucca.

In questo mezzo, sendo guarito, morse papa Adriano [14 September 1523] e fu fatto papa Clemente, della casa de' Medici [18 November 1523]."

¹⁹ Isa Belli Barsali, Problemi dell'architettura religiosa a Lucca nel '500, in: Città italiane del '500 tra Riforma e Controriforma, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi (1983), Lucca 1988, p. 147.

²⁰ Paola Barocchi/Renzo Ristori, eds., Il carteggio di Michelangelo, Florence, vol. II, 1967, p. 193, no. CDXXXVII, and p. 195, no. CDXXXIX.

²¹ See above, n. 18.

²² Turner (n. 2), pp. 243 f., doc. 21, citing ASF, Notarile Antecosimiano, Protocollo 1529-35 (Pietro Paolo Spigliati), c. 245r. The Luccese document in which Raffaello was named his father's proxy is recorded in the above document of 3 November 1530 indited at Florence.

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