

Alonso  
Berruguete



# Alonso Berruguete

First Sculptor  
of Renaissance Spain

C. D. Dickerson III  
*and* Mark McDonald

*with*  
Manuel Arias Martínez  
Daphne Barbour  
Jonathan Brown  
Richard L. Kagan  
Wendy Sepponen  
Julia M. Vázquez

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON

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## Preface

Alonso Berruguete (c. 1488–1561) is surely the most underrated European artist of the sixteenth century. This is a bold assertion, which, I believe, is validated by this exhibition, the first dedicated to the artist in the English-speaking world. I confess that Berruguete has long been an obsession. I first encountered him during the late 1950s, and since then I have periodically returned to Valladolid and Toledo to admire his powerful, iconoclastic art.

I soon discovered that beyond the borders of Spain Berruguete was a well-kept secret. While I could not find the time to study this fascinating artist, I dreamed of bringing him to the attention of a wider public via an exhibition. After knocking on the doors of a number of museums, I received a positive response from the National Gallery of Art, whose curator of sculpture, C. D. Dickerson, was willing to assume the risks posed by a major show of this challenging artist.

I hasten to add that Berruguete has long been praised and studied by Spanish art historians. Furthermore, his name has become familiar to the Spanish population by dint of its use in public venues. Streets named in his honor are located in Toledo, Linares, Córdoba, and Alcalá de Guadaíra. An entire district in Madrid carries his name—el Barrio de Berruguete. Even wider diffusion was achieved via the use of his image on a postage stamp issued in 1962 and on the Christmas lottery ticket of 2012.

The reasons for his absence from the grand narrative of European art are many. Most important is that some of his best

works have been destroyed or dismantled or are difficult to access. Berruguete’s most ambitious altarpiece, the *retablo mayor* of the church of San Benito el Real in Valladolid, was removed from its site in the late nineteenth century. All but a few parts are preserved and displayed in the Museo Nacional de Escultura in Valladolid, but inevitably the powerful effect of the original is diminished. The choir stalls and archbishop’s throne in the cathedral of Toledo constitute another of his masterpieces, but the unusual format challenges all but the most determined art lovers.

Berruguete’s reputation has also been damaged by an enduring prejudice against polychromed wood sculpture. Long after the use of the medium had waned in other parts of Europe, Spanish artists continued to employ it, especially for altarpieces. (It was also commonly used in the American territories of the Spanish monarchy.) Polychrome sculpture was dealt a final blow in the age of neoclassicism, which privileged bronze and white stone and unpainted surfaces. The appreciation of color as an integral part of the sculptural medium demands its own set of critical tools.

Another strike against Berruguete is the process of fabricating altarpieces. Altarpieces were created by teams of artisans. True, the process was governed by a master, who provided the design and organized the subcontractors and workshop assistants. But inevitably this corporate practice reduced the importance of the master’s touch.

Berruguete was fully conversant with the requirements of traditional Castilian altarpieces. His father, Pedro (c. 1450–1504), was a leading painter who worked in the Hispano-Flemish style prevalent in Castile. (He may have also spent time in Italy.) He would have served as Alonso’s mentor. Rather than stepping into his father’s shoes, however, Alonso decided to go to Italy.

Much remains to be learned about Berruguete’s stay in Italy (c. 1506–1518). He is known to have been in contact with Michelangelo, and there is reason to believe that the Spaniard was fully integrated into the artistic circles of Rome. His main base of operations, however, was Florence. Unfortunately there is little information about his artistic production. But to judge from the few attributed paintings, it is apparent that he forged a highly personal manner that incorporated borrowings from Donatello, Michelangelo, classical antiquity, and the vibrant world of contemporary Florentine painting. His stay in Florence coincided with the emergence of mannerism. Two of the leaders of this vanguard movement, Jacopo Pontormo and Rosso Fiorentino, were born in 1494 and thus were only about six years younger than the Spaniard. Yet there is no mistaking Alonso’s work for theirs.

On his return to Spain, Berruguete was named *pintor del rey* to King Charles I, who later became Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. In due course it became obvious that this appointment provided more fame than lucre, and Berruguete turned to sculpture, a

favored medium of Castilian patrons. His first major commission was the gigantic altarpiece of the monastery of San Benito el Real in Valladolid, which he and his assistants completed in 1533. The altarpiece is a brilliant and totally original amalgamation of Italian Renaissance morphology adapted to Hispano-Flemish traditions and practices. Many of the narrative scenes and single figures pulsate with unbridled energy and emotion, twisting and turning as they deconstruct the norms of central Italian painting. They constitute a veritable encyclopedia of agony.

Berruguete also carved in alabaster, a medium that he made his own. The monumental *Transfiguration of Christ* that crowns the archbishop’s throne in Toledo cathedral resembles a flow of holy magma.

Berruguete has been styled as a mannerist, but that label is somewhat reductive. His is an art of extremes, both formal and emotional. He pushed his interpretation of Renaissance classicism to the limit. I am confident that this exhibition will secure a place of honor for this brilliant, inventive artist.

### Jonathan Brown

# Introduction

The title of this book — *Alonso Berruguete: First Sculptor of Renaissance Spain* — condenses Berruguete’s unique and far-reaching abilities as an artist. Born in the kingdom of Castile around 1488, he was an accomplished painter and draftsman in addition to being one of the most inventive sculptors of his generation.

While Berruguete is recognized today primarily for his work as a sculptor, during his lifetime he was widely respected for his activities in different media. This made him difficult to classify. In 1548 three individuals testifying in a lawsuit each used a different term to describe him: *ymaginario* (maker of images), *pintor* (painter), and *escultor* (sculptor).<sup>1</sup> That year in Lisbon, the Portuguese architect and writer Francisco de Hollanda made clear that *pintor* was the most accurate.<sup>2</sup> In his estimation of those artists he considered to be “eagles” because they soared above everybody else, Hollanda associates Berruguete not with the sculptors but with Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian, and the other great painters of modern times. Shortly after Berruguete’s death in 1561, attitudes toward him began to change. Writing in the early seventeenth century, the painter Luis Tristán described him as “equally excellent” in painting, sculpture, and architecture.<sup>3</sup> This remained the general view until 1917, when, in the first monographic study of the artist, Ricardo de Orueta took the position that Berruguete was a sculptor first and foremost because his surviving paintings were fewer and less attractive.<sup>4</sup>

Rethinking Berruguete’s relationship with sculpture lies at the heart of this book. Accompanying the first exhibition devoted to his art outside Spain, it follows his career from his childhood in Castile to his final years in Toledo, where he produced his last great work, the marble tomb of Cardinal Juan Pardo de Tavera. The stops in between include Italy, where he spent a decisive decade in his late teens and twenties; Zaragoza, where in 1518 he was appointed court painter to the new king, Charles I (the future Holy Roman Emperor Charles V); and Valladolid, where he moved in 1523 and created several of his greatest masterpieces in painted wood, including the *retablo mayor* (high altarpiece) of San Benito

el Real. Enriching the chronological narrative are discussions of important aspects of Berruguete’s life and practice: his complicated relationship with social status and wealth, his activity as a draftsman and use of prints, how he worked with his many assistants to create wood sculptures, and his legacy as an artist.

This book departs from the traditional approach to Berruguete in several ways. The first three essays reconsider his training, questioning when and how he learned to carve. The commonly held view maintains that he cannot have become the sculptor he evolved into unless he began his training early. A careful rereading of the documents challenges that assumption. There is overwhelming evidence that becoming a great painter was his overriding ambition until his late twenties, when he returned to Spain from Italy and began to work with Castile’s leading sculptor, Felipe Vigarny, on the paintings and sculptures for two important chapels — one in Zaragoza, the other in Granada. Might his time with Vigarny have been like an apprenticeship during which he developed his initial feel for carving and learned how to manage assistants in the creation of complicated works, such as the multistory altarpieces that would become his specialty? That Berruguete’s training as a sculptor was anything but routine might explain why some of his techniques as a carver seem makeshift, as Daphne Barbour describes in her essay, “Technique and the Mechanics of the Workshop.” Does it make more sense to think of Berruguete as a master designer who largely delegated the execution of his sculptures to assistants? The question has important implications for the connoisseurship of his works. Is there such a thing as a sculpture by Berruguete carved and painted entirely by his hand, and how would we know?

Asking new questions about Berruguete’s relationship with Italy is also central to this book. Since 1804, when Isidoro Bosarte credited Berruguete with having been the first Spaniard to shine the light of Italy on Spain, the dominant approach has been to understand how his work betrays the influence of Italy.<sup>5</sup> This was codified in 1924, when José Moreno Villa remarked that Alonso

Berruguete was the son not of Pedro Berruguete but of the *Laocoön*, implying that if Alonso had not gone to Rome and studied the famous antiquity, he would never have become the artist he did.<sup>6</sup> The fixation on Berruguete’s Italianness has led to the assumption that each of his works reflects a specific Italian source, whether the *Laocoön* or a modern masterpiece like Michelangelo’s *Battle of Cascina* cartoon. The search for sources has become something of a game. The danger with this approach is that it ignores Berruguete’s local context and how it inevitably contributed to his art. This book seeks a more balanced approach by recognizing that when his art is viewed from outside Spain, there is no mistaking it for anything but Spanish. With the changed perspective, new questions arise, including how Berruguete might have developed as an artist if he had remained in Castile and never traveled to Italy. The answer requires appreciating the flourishing artistic environment in Spain and understanding the many avenues by which the Italian Renaissance was being felt there. The eighth essay, “The Role of Prints,” for example, considers the importance of prints for transmitting compositions and other ideas from Italy and northern Europe to Castile.

A third focus is Berruguete’s activity as a draftsman. “Becoming a Draftsman and the Primacy of Drawing” begins by discussing drawing traditions in Spain and investigating his encounter with the practice of drawing in Italy. After establishing the context for his development as a draftsman, the essay turns to recognizing his style, or hand, and how it evolved between his earliest surviving sheets, which date to his time in Italy, and those from his maturity, which were often preparatory for his sculptures. A new rigor is applied to separating those drawings that seem to be uniquely his from those that can more plausibly be ascribed to his workshop or followers. A catalog of drawings following the essays summarizes the results, which are based on examination of the approximately thirty-five drawings that are most frequently ascribed to him.

This book relies on several terms that require defining at the outset. The term *Spain* is used to describe the kingdoms of León

and Castile in the center, extending north and incorporating present-day Andalusia in the south; Aragon to the east; and parts of Navarre in the northeast. *Renaissance* is used to describe a period of time rather than an artistic style, and the dates are different for Spain and Italy. *Renaissance Spain* refers generally to the sixteenth century, while *Renaissance Italy* also includes the fifteenth. The difference bears on entrenched notions of artistic development in the two places. *Italian Renaissance* captures the idea of a changed approach to art driven by a revival of ancient ideals, an increased awareness of the individual, and a new respect for nature. *Renaissance* becomes applicable to Spain at the point those qualities begin to be reflected in the art being produced there. The terms *Gothic* and *Hispano-Flemish* describe the dominant styles operative in Spain before the Renaissance. Both are defined in the first essay, “Beginnings in Castile.”

The need to be precise when using terms like *Renaissance* and *Hispano-Flemish* is especially pressing with Berruguete because of the extent to which his modern reputation is tied to perceptions that he was an agent of great artistic change in Castile, a trailblazer of the Spanish Renaissance. The many boundaries he pressed become clear over the course of this volume, especially through the illustrations, which take advantage of the ease with which works by different artists can be juxtaposed on a page. The exhibition also places Berruguete in context by including a selection of paintings, sculptures, and prints and drawings that represents the artistic world that he helped overturn. When book and exhibition are experienced together, his position as a new force in Spanish art becomes powerfully evident.

## C. D. Dickerson III and Mark McDonald

## Beginnings in Castile

C. D. Dickerson III

In 1504 the young Alonso Berruguete traveled from his birthplace of Paredes de Nava, on the plains of northern Castile, to Toledo, the most important religious center in Spain (fig. 2).<sup>1</sup> His mission was to help his mother's half brother collect money that was owed to his recently deceased father, the accomplished painter Pedro Berruguete, who had undertaken a series of frescoes in Toledo cathedral between the late 1480s and around 1500. Alonso had probably been to Toledo at least once before, perhaps as an apprentice to his father. However many times he had visited, he is likely to have always made a point of going to the cathedral to appreciate its great wealth of paintings and sculpture. In 1504 a survey of the interior decorations would have been highly instructive for a developing artist like Alonso. Certain works continued to be rooted in the local styles that had evolved in the Kingdom of Castile over the fifteenth century, while other works looked to the sixteenth and new styles arriving from Italy. With virtually nothing known about Alonso's formative years, this essay concentrates on the world of art in which he grew up, a world at a stylistic crossroads. The paintings and sculptures that Alonso would have seen in Toledo cathedral in 1504 offer a unique window on the rapidly changing art scene.

Alonso must have been fairly mature by 1504, or his uncle would be unlikely to have considered him worth the trouble of bringing to Toledo. Frustratingly, we do not know his precise age. Most probably he was born around 1488 and was thus in his mid-teens in 1504.<sup>2</sup> Even if he was slightly younger at the time, he was still more than old enough to have already committed to becoming an artist. In truth his education may have been considerably advanced. If he had followed the normal path of training for an artist of his generation, he would have been finishing an apprenticeship in an established workshop and beginning to contemplate how he might forge an independent career.<sup>3</sup> But in which medium? Born a painter's son, he surely grew up as a painter, learning his father's craft as he gained increasing responsibility in his workshop. The other reason to assume Alonso's initial training was as a painter is that according to the available evidence, as detailed in later essays, he was overwhelmingly focused on promoting himself as a painter through his early thirties. If he was learning the rudiments of wood carving on the side, it is difficult to reconstruct who was providing the instruction.

Fig. 1  
Pedro Berruguete, *The Virgin and Child Enthroned*  
(detail of fig. 10)



Fig. 8  
 Attributed to Domenico Fancelli  
 with other artists (Andrea  
 Sansovino?), *Tomb of Cardinal  
 Pedro González de Mendoza*,  
 c. 1503–1513, limestone,  
 Toledo cathedral



to have survived in the cathedral are the frescoes decorating the exterior facade of the chapel of San Pedro. But they are difficult to evaluate, located high overhead and in poor condition.

The most profitable avenue for understanding Pedro's mature style—the style in which the young Alonso inevitably trained—is to concentrate on his panel paintings, of which many survive in excellent condition. A superlative example is a small *Virgin and Child Enthroned* from around 1500 in Madrid's municipal collections (figs. 1, 10).<sup>17</sup> The crowned Virgin suckles her child in an arcaded throne room that combines three different architectural styles: Gothic, Italian Renaissance, and Moorish.<sup>18</sup> While Corinthian columns support the Roman arches on either side of the Virgin in imitation of an Italian Renaissance loggia, the background wall is distinctly Gothic, decorated with pointed arches, fine tracery, and spindly columnettes. The style of the wooden ceiling, or *armadura*, is neither Gothic nor Renaissance but reflects the legacy of the Moors in Spain, a detail that is likely to have occurred only to an artist with a deep familiarity with the traditions of the Iberian Peninsula.

In spite of those architectural details that bear the influence of the Mediterranean cultures of Renaissance Italy and Moorish Spain, the painting is most strongly connected with northern Europe in its overall pictorial sensibility. Its style is rooted in Flemish painting, which began to be known in Castile during the mid-1400s.<sup>19</sup> The means of transmission were twofold. In addition to Flemish paintings being imported to Castile from the Netherlands, there were also painters of northern origin who came to Castile to work, such as the immensely talented Juan de Flandes. The style's popularity was assured by the ruling elite, who built impressive collections of Flemish painting over the second half of the fifteenth century, acquiring choice works by many of the leading masters, including Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden.<sup>20</sup> Before long, local painters began appropriating the chief characteristics of the Flemish style, which resulted in the birth of the Hispano-Flemish style, as it is now called. Pedro's *Virgin and Child Enthroned* is filled with the qualities that so impressed Spaniards on seeing paintings like Rogier's celebrated Miraflores altarpiece, which had come to Castile by 1445, when King John II donated it to the Carthusian monastery at Miraflores (now Gemäldegalerie, Berlin).<sup>21</sup> Above all, Spaniards admired the optical clarity of the Flemish models, which was partly a function of the use of oil instead of tempera. Oil permitted greater

refinement because it could be applied with finer brushes. The technique encouraged painters to fill their scenes with the tiniest of realistic details, such as the glistening gems and grisaille figures of Adam and Eve that adorn the fronts of the flanking balustrades in Pedro's painting of the Virgin and Child. There was a related preference for depicting faraway objects with equal precision as near ones—no blurring for atmospheric perspective but a clear, evenly focused light that spreads to all corners of the picture plane.

Elongated figures and angular draperies are some of the other elements that Spanish painters took from their Flemish sources. These qualities are present in Pedro's *Virgin and Child Enthroned*, although they are less pronounced than in his earlier works, which could reflect the strengthening influence of Italian models. During the closing decades of the fifteenth century painters in Castile began turning their eyes toward Italy, recognizing that a new style of painting had been born there that stood to revolutionize their art. As painters like Pedro became aware of the innovations happening in Italy, the Hispano-Flemish style was submitted to a gradual process of updating. Figures became more Italianate in their naturalism and indebtedness to the idealized forms of classical sculpture, and a greater emphasis was placed on spatial illusionism. It could be that the highly resolved perspective in Pedro's *Virgin and Child Enthroned* is owed to his study of appropriate examples from Italy, where mastery of linear perspective was far more assured than in Spain. A key question is how deep his familiarity ran.

Pedro is widely thought to have worked in Italy from the early 1470s to about 1482. The evidence for the trip is ambiguous, however, consisting of only a single document. Dating to 1477, it mentions a Spanish painter with the first name of Pedro who was living in an annex of the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino.<sup>22</sup> That this person is Pedro Berruguete would seem to be supported by the fact that there was definitely an artist then active in Urbino who was practicing a style strikingly similar to Pedro's. But are the works executed in that style actually Pedro's and thus proof he was in Urbino? Among the complicating circumstances is that Pedro's presence in the city would have overlapped with that of Justus van Ghent, a gifted painter from Flanders whose style is easily confused with Pedro's. Although Pedro may have worked with Justus and learned to imitate his style, so too could have any of Justus's more talented assistants. The case in favor of Pedro's supposed stay

# The Experience of Italy

C. D. Dickerson III

The ten or more years that Alonso Berruguete spent in Italy — from around 1506 until 1518 — were decisive for his formation as an artist. During that period, in addition to studying the canonical works of antiquity and the modern masters — including Donatello, Masaccio, and Michelangelo — he succeeded in forging a career as a painter, rising to a position of some eminence in Florence. By the end of his stay there, he had also demonstrated a capacity to innovate. The several paintings that survive from his years in Italy, such as *Salome* (fig. 13), show that — together with Andrea del Sarto, Jacopo Pontormo, and other leading painters — he was at the vanguard of the artistic movement called mannerism. Frustratingly, the details of his time in Italy are few. Among the outstanding questions are whether he practiced carving while there and whether he ever worked in Naples. The one certainty is that his experiences in Italy moved him profoundly and form the bedrock of the revolution in the arts that he helped spearhead in Castile during the 1520s and 1530s.

The earliest document confirming Berruguete's presence in Italy dates to August 21, 1508, when he opened an account in the Florentine bank of the Salviati, a family with close ties to the Spanish community there.<sup>1</sup> Two letters by Michelangelo could allow us to place him in Italy a month earlier. On July 2, 1508, Michelangelo wrote from Rome to his brother in Florence that "a young Spaniard" wished to study his *Battle of Cascina* cartoon, then kept under lock and key in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, and that he should be allowed to see it because he was a "good young man."<sup>2</sup> On July 29, 1508, Michelangelo wrote again to his brother about the "Spaniard," who had evidently gone to Florence and tried to see the cartoon.<sup>3</sup> That Berruguete and Michelangelo knew each other is unquestionable. In a letter of 1512 Michelangelo refers to Berruguete by name.<sup>4</sup> It can reasonably be assumed that Berruguete is the "Spaniard" in Michelangelo's letters.<sup>5</sup> The identification makes sense in terms of chronology and place. Rome is very likely to have been Berruguete's first destination. As suggested in the previous essay, he may have traveled there in late 1505 with the bishop of Burgos, Pascual de Ampudia, thus arriving in early 1506.<sup>6</sup> It could easily have taken him a couple years of study before coming to Michelangelo's attention, winning his respect, and receiving the invitation to study his *Battle of Cascina*.

Fig. 12  
Alonso Berruguete, *Salome*  
(detail of fig. 13)

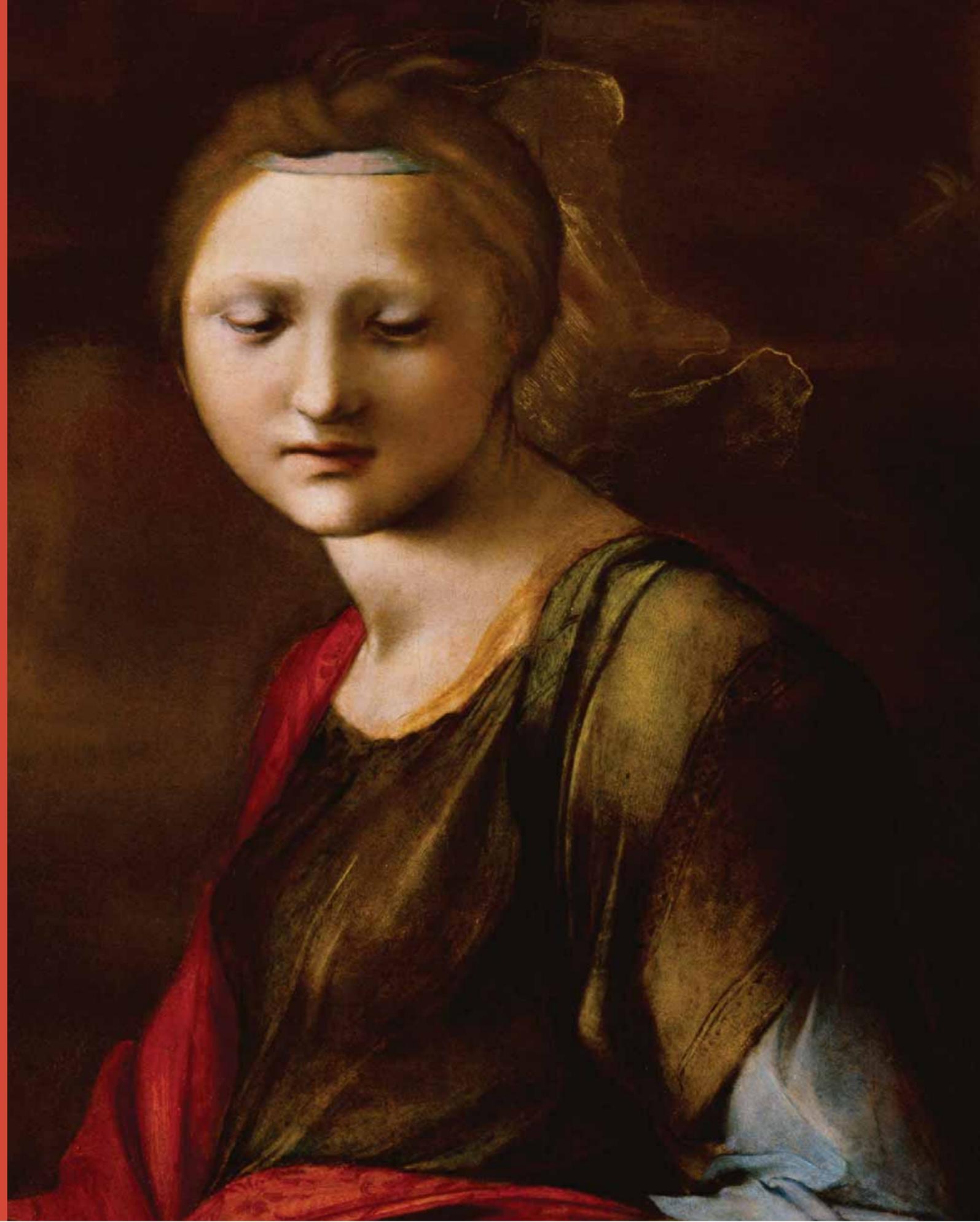


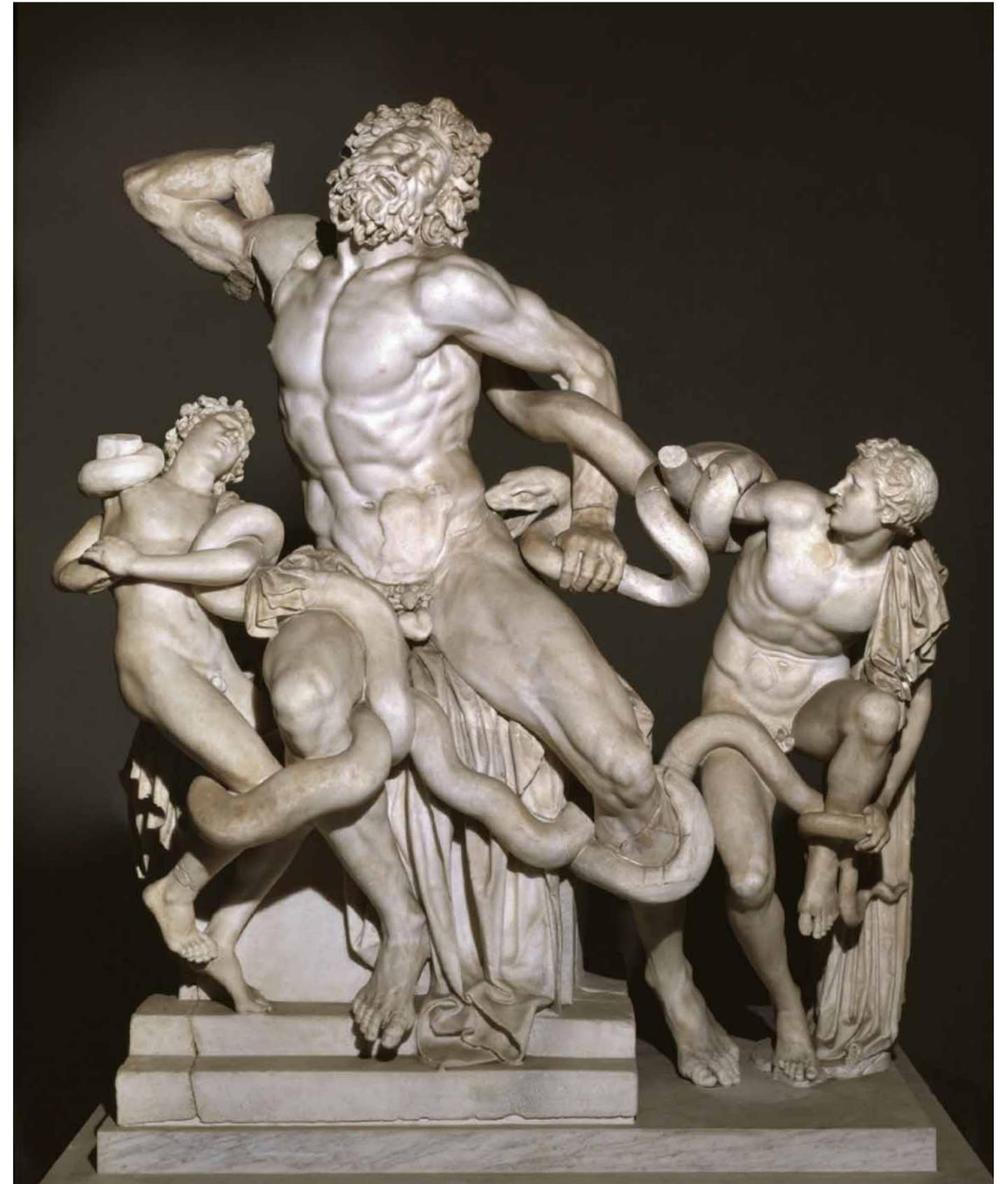
Fig. 15  
Alonso Berruguete, *The Sacrifice of Isaac* (detail), 1526/1533, painted wood with gilding, Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid



Fig. 16  
Michelangelo, *Ignudo* (detail from Sistine ceiling), 1508/1512, fresco, Sistine Chapel, Vatican City



Fig. 17  
Athanodoro, Agesandro, and Polidoro of Rhodes, *Laocoön*, first century BC, Musei Vaticani, Vatican City



Michelangelo—as well as with some of the artists closest to him, including Francesco Granacci—must have represented a powerful incentive to understand the master's style.<sup>16</sup>

In traditional accounts of Berruguete's time in Italy, his relationship with Michelangelo shares the spotlight with an episode recounted by Vasari involving the *Laocoön*, the famed antiquity unearthed in Rome in 1506 (fig. 17).<sup>17</sup> Vasari writes that the architect Donato Bramante convened a competition to see who could create the best wax model of the *Laocoön*.<sup>18</sup> Vasari suggests that the noted collector Cardinal Domenico Grimani may have instigated the competition in order to secure a bronze reduction of the sculpture for his collection, as it was at his request that the winning model was cast in bronze.<sup>19</sup> Four participants are named, although it is unclear from Vasari's description whether the competition was open to anyone or was by invitation only and limited to these four artists. In addition to Berruguete, the participants were Domenico Aimo, Zaccaria Zacchi, and the ultimate winner,

Jacopo Sansovino. When the competition took place is debated. Tommaso Mozzati has rightly emphasized that the competition need not be construed as a fixed moment in time.<sup>20</sup> Many months may have passed while the participants were sought and the entries were prepared and submitted. Berruguete was in Rome on September 11, 1510, when he received a note of credit from a bank there.<sup>21</sup> It is possible he made his model that year. Ultimately Raphael served as the judge, which underscores the prestige associated with the contest.

Whom Berruguete was competing against is noteworthy. If Bramante's goal was to enlist the best of the best in the world of central Italian sculpture, he was hardly successful. The only true star was Sansovino, although in 1510 he was the same young age as Berruguete, with hardly any works of true distinction to his name.<sup>22</sup> Aimo and Zacchi were about ten years older, but their careers had been unspectacular so far.<sup>23</sup> Thus, with respect to age and accomplishments, Berruguete fit in with the group. How he

# Return to Spain, *Pintor del Rey*, and Learning to Sculpt

C. D. Dickerson III

The third chapter in Alonso Berruguete's life begins with his return to Spain from Italy in 1518 and concludes with his decision to settle in Valladolid in 1523, the same year he began sculpting his first *retablo*. It was a period of movement for the artist, as he was tethered to the itinerant court of the new king, the future Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, whose favor he had managed to win shortly after arriving back in Spain. To Berruguete's presumed disappointment, the young king was preoccupied with other matters and did not have a string of career-defining commissions in store for him. Most of Berruguete's work for the monarch was of a routine, decorative kind, such as painting standards for the royal armada. There were two royal commissions that represent exceptions: a tomb and a painted altarpiece for the burial chapel of one of the king's most trusted advisers, Jean Sauvage, carried out between 1518 and 1520 in the church of Santa Engracia in Zaragoza, and a group of paintings for the Capilla Real, or royal chapel, in Granada, which Charles was transforming into a magnificent mausoleum for his parents and grandparents.

Except for a battered fragment of one sculpture, nothing from either project survives.<sup>1</sup> Even so, there is value in analyzing the first five or six years after Berruguete returned to Spain, as they represent the critical moments when he would have been trying to establish himself as an artist in a land with tastes and traditions different from those he had grown accustomed to in Italy. His decision to spend time in Zaragoza at the start of the period was extremely helpful in this regard. The city was already an important center for painting and sculpture, but the king's presence there in 1518 attracted new talent from elsewhere in the kingdom. Berruguete was privileged to observe these artists at close range and even collaborate with one, the sculptor Felipe Vigarny. As he surveyed the artistic landscape, he must first have appreciated the wide diversity of styles represented. Although the traditional Hispano-Flemish was slowly losing ground to the Italian, the trend was not so unmistakably linear as to have looked inevitable from his vantage in Zaragoza. There remained a deep-rooted appreciation for the Hispano-Flemish that artists were happily carrying on. This is clearly reflected in the strong taste in Castile and Aragon for multistory altarpieces, or *retablos*, decorated with painted sculptures in wood. Those artists who specialized in them, including

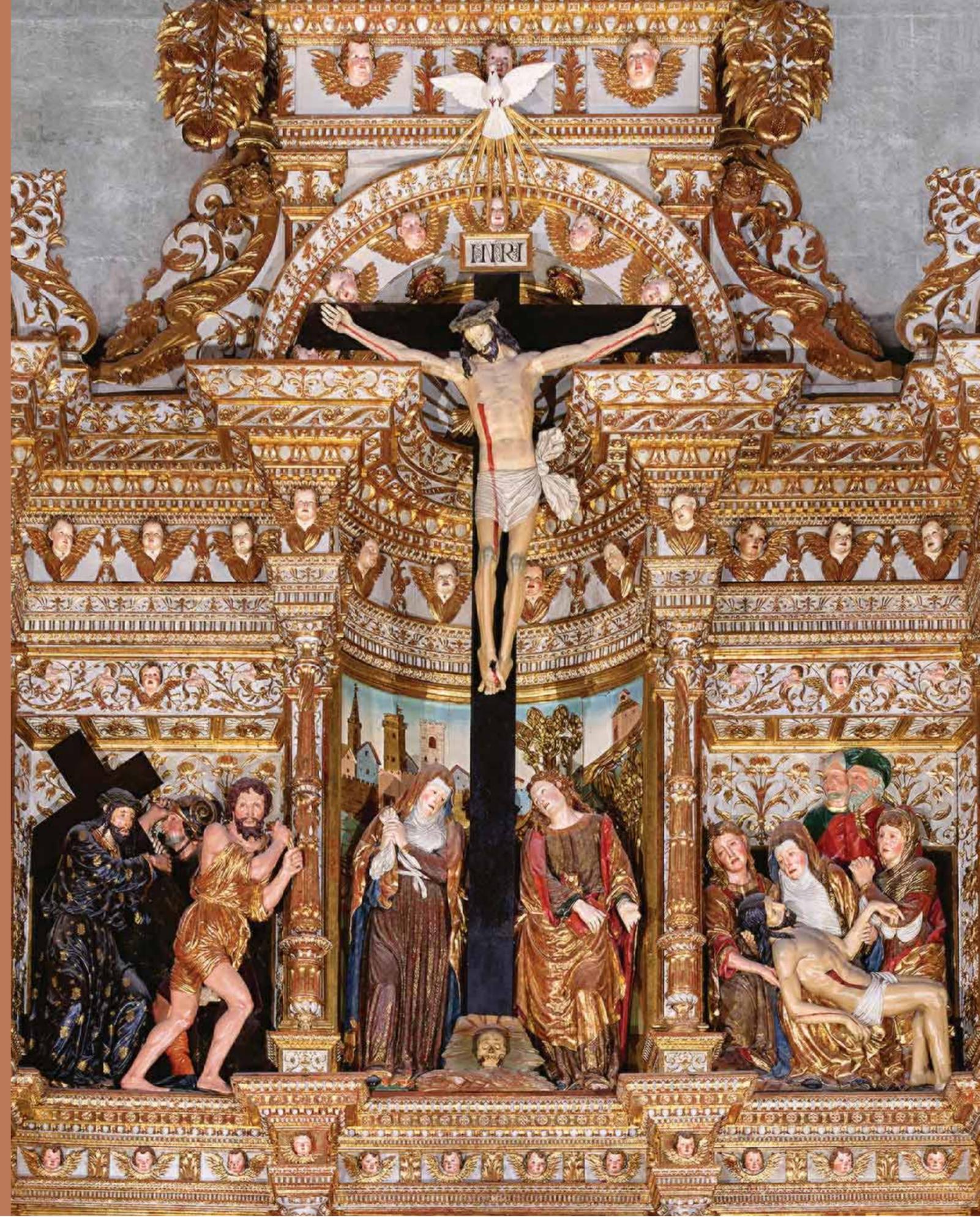


Fig. 29  
Felipe Vigarny (with Alonso  
Berruguete?), *Retablo mayor*  
of the Capilla Real, Granada  
(detail of fig. 38)

Fig. 32  
Damián Forment, *Retablo mayor*,  
1507–1519, alabaster, Basílica del  
Pilar, Zaragoza

in its combination of the Hispano-Flemish and the Italian.<sup>25</sup> In the central scene of the Assumption of the Virgin, several of the figures acknowledge the new classicizing standards of the Italian Renaissance. An able demonstration is the Saint James at left, with his solid bearing and twisting body, which is elegantly revealed (especially his projecting right knee) under the sweeping folds of his heavy drapery. In spite of such figures, however, the altarpiece's dominant character is Hispano-Flemish. This has mainly to do with the magnificent architectural frame, which is resolutely Gothic in style and tends to overwhelm the narrative scenes.

Forment was quick to rethink his approach. In 1519, less than a year after finishing the *retablo mayor* in the Basílica del Pilar, he undertook his first *retablo* with a frame of classical design, also the first of its kind in Aragon (fig. 33).<sup>26</sup> It decorates the high altar of San Miguel de los Navarros in Zaragoza. Corinthian pilasters and entablatures divide the altarpiece into a rectangular grid. A single bay with a classical pediment surmounts the structure, while there is a tall arched niche at lower center that contains a standing figure of Saint Michael. The main holdover from the Gothic (besides certain figure types) is the elaborately carved border that outlines the structure. But it is not overly invasive, which helps the figures strongly project. Whether Berruguete was the galvanizing force behind Forment's new style of classical *retablo* is difficult to determine. There is no obvious work by Berruguete that could have inspired Forment, unless he showed him a drawing. That Berruguete possessed skills as an architect is unquestionable, however. His *retablo* for the monastic church of San Benito el Real in Valladolid, completed during the early 1530s, is a masterwork of classicizing architecture (fig. 75). It was surely in Italy that he absorbed the basics of how to design a facade in the latest Renaissance style, which he appears to have gainfully deployed in his plans for Sauvage's burial chapel. Berruguete is not the only artist who could have steered Forment toward his new style of frame, however. Vigarny had already participated in designing and carving several *retablos* in Castile with similar kinds of classical frames, including the *retablo mayor* of Palencia cathedral (fig. 34).<sup>27</sup> Although the question of who inspired whom is unlikely ever to be answered, it helps draw out the fact that Berruguete was in the middle of a dynamic exchange of ideas involving the two leading sculptors in the kingdom, and the subject was the future of the *retablo*.

If Berruguete sensed a new kind of excitement building around sculpture during his time in Zaragoza, it was not only because of Forment and Vigarny. Two other sculptors of international repute—Domenico Fancelli and Diego de Siloe—also converged on Zaragoza in 1518–1519, helping to transform the city into something of a sculptural mecca for a short while. The preeminent Italian sculptor then active in Spain, Fancelli had arrived in Zaragoza by December 21, 1518, when he signed the contract for the tomb of Charles's parents, Philip of Burgundy and Joanna of Castile, which was planned for the Capilla Real in Granada.<sup>28</sup> Fancelli fell ill several months later and died in April. If Berruguete was able to take advantage of his presence in Zaragoza, he must have enjoyed discussing tomb design with him and gaining insight into his wide-ranging decorative vocabulary, which encompassed everything from fierce griffins to playful putti.

While working in Zaragoza, Berruguete would have had access to an even richer repository of decorative motifs in the person of Diego de Siloe, the sculptor from Burgos who was introduced in the previous essay (pp. 32–34). Sometime around 1517 Siloe left Naples, where he had worked for several years, and began a gradual return to Burgos, where he is first recorded on July 2, 1519.<sup>29</sup> His route of travel would have taken him through Zaragoza, where he must have stopped in late 1518 or early 1519. Even if he and Berruguete had already spent time together in Italy—as debated in the previous essay—Berruguete would still have benefited from exposure to his former colleague, who was about to undertake two works in Burgos cathedral of considerable ingenuity: the tomb of Bishop Luis de Acuña and the giant staircase known as the Escalera Dorada (fig. 35).<sup>30</sup> A distinctive feature of both is Siloe's generous use of the type of ornament known as grotesque, after the word *grotto*, which refers to the underground spaces in Rome such as Nero's Golden House (Domus Aurea), where artists at the beginning of the sixteenth century had discovered a style of ancient decoration characterized by fanciful figures and elaborate patterns of architectural and vegetal motifs.<sup>31</sup> Wonderfully bizarre decorations like the long-necked animals with nude males astride on the Escalera Dorada demonstrate how Siloe had so thoroughly absorbed the elements of grotesque decoration that he was prepared to contribute new ones of his own invention. Berruguete would reach a similar relationship with the grotesque, but Siloe



# The Quest for Status and Wealth

Richard L. Kagan

When Alonso Berruguete arrived in Valladolid in the fall of 1522, he was not singularly focused on landing choice commissions that would allow him to demonstrate his rising prowess as a maker of *retablos*. He had one eye on the court, which he saw as the surest path to his goal of acquiring wealth and securing a privileged position for himself and his family in Castilian society. His preoccupation with money and status affected his artistic career in numerous ways and can even be said to have taken a toll on it. As noted in the introduction to this volume, Francisco de Hollanda, in his influential treatise of 1549, identified Berruguete as one of the *águilas* (eagles) of modern art.<sup>1</sup> Although Hollanda was basing his opinion on Berruguete's artistic talents, he would not have been wrong to consider how Berruguete's social ambitions and mastery of self-promotion made him a "highflier" of a different kind. Berruguete soared above every other artist in Castile in the extent to which he was able to exploit his network in order to enrich himself and improve his position in society.

## Background

Berruguete's success story begins in Paredes de Nava, the small town in the kingdom of Castile (north of Palencia) where he was born around 1488. Located in a prosperous wheat-growing region known as the Tierra de Campos, Paredes was not especially large—its population hovered around three thousand in 1500. Yet it was a relatively wealthy community whose town council (or *concejo*) had the wherewithal to support a local *maestro de gramática*, or schoolteacher, perhaps the person who can be credited for teaching Alonso to read and write. The town's wealth can also be measured in its four parish churches, most notably Santa Eulalia, where Alonso's father, Pedro, was buried (fig. 41). Other local landmarks included the town's circuit of walls, an aging medieval fortress, and a large central plaza surrounded by a wooden arcade that sheltered vendors and customers at the town's weekly Friday market.<sup>2</sup>

Paredes's inhabitants lived close to the land as day laborers (*jornaleros*) and independent farmers (*labradores*). There was also a small cluster of larger landowners, some of

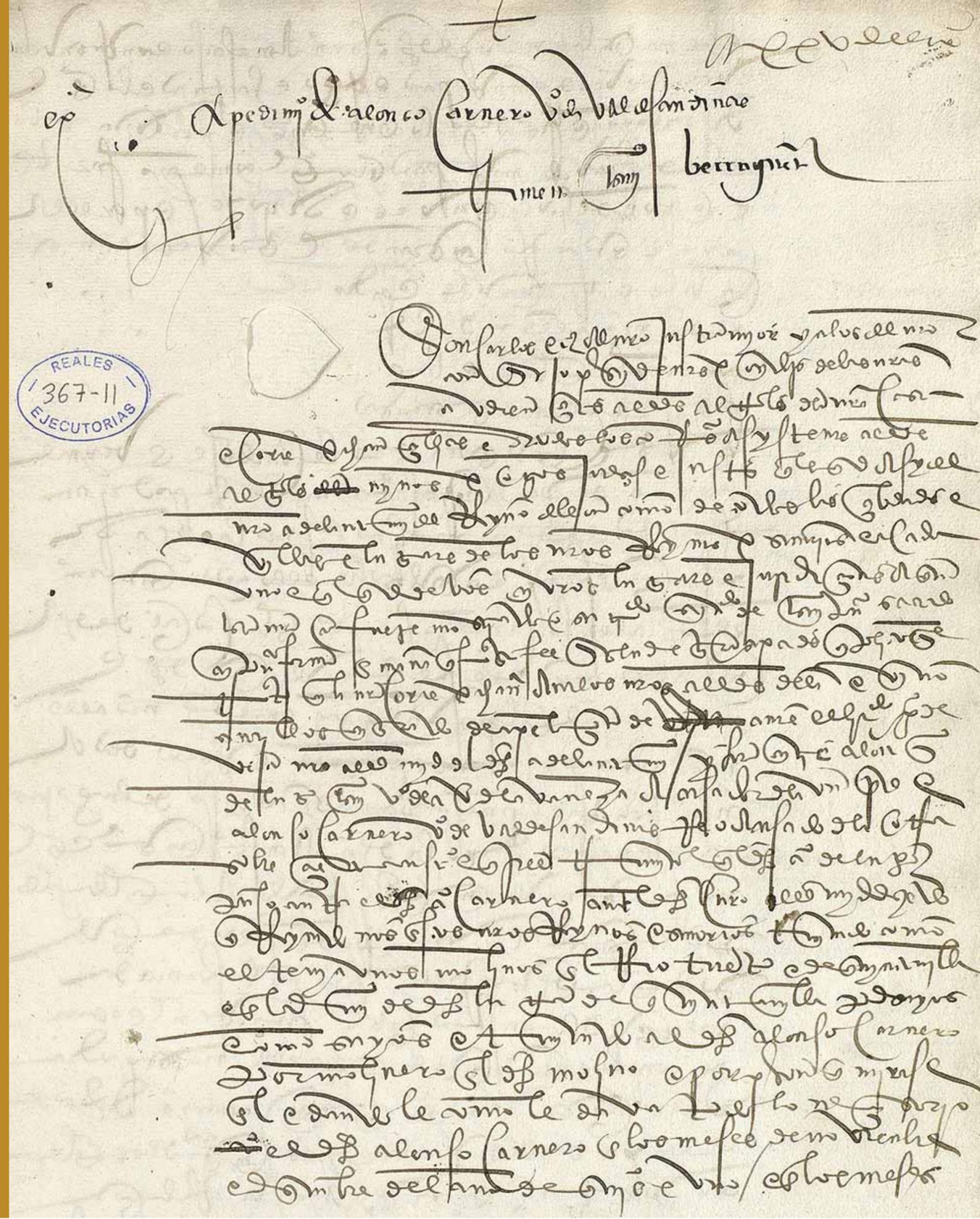


Fig. 40 Document authorized by Alonso Berruguete as *escribano* in the criminal branch of the Real Audiencia y Chancillería de Valladolid, January 25, 1524, Archivo de la Real Chancillería de Valladolid

Fig. 44  
Alonso Berruguete, *Retablo mayor*,  
1557–1563, painted wood with  
gilding, Santiago el Mayor, Cáceres

Petronila's amounted to 5,000 ducats, with 500 payable the very same day. Berruguete had enough cash on hand to manage the two initial payments but was slow to pay off the balances due. The resulting delay prompted a mini family crisis as the two brothers resorted to a lawsuit in order to force their new father-in-law to pay them in full, and eventually an agreement was reached.<sup>46</sup>

Notwithstanding this dispute, Berruguete still commanded the resources necessary to acquire the *señorío* that had escaped him after the deal over Villatoquite went awry. An opportunity to do so followed the accession of Philip II, Charles V's son, to the Spanish throne in 1559. The new king soon learned that, in addition to the monarchy, his father had left him a mountain of debt that he endeavored to shrink in various ways, including the alienation of more *señoríos* from the royal domain. Among those on offer was that of Ventosa de la Cuesta, a small hilltop village located just south of Valladolid. The price—5,120 ducats—was high, but Berruguete found the money to realize the purchase. At long last he was able to append the title "señor de la villa de Ventosa" to the family name.<sup>47</sup>

Berruguete's final step in estate planning was to create a *mayorazgo*, the time-honored method noble families used to safeguard their proprietary wealth. Castilian law entitled families to incorporate a third plus a fifth, or roughly 40 percent, of their total holdings into a *mayorazgo*, which was customarily intended for the eldest son. Yet the creation of a *mayorazgo* was no simple matter, as it inevitably involved both lawyers and notaries, along with a substantial amount of paperwork. Nor could it be done overnight. Berruguete's *mayorazgo* came to fruition only in April 1560, after almost five years of work.<sup>48</sup> It entitled Alonso, his eldest son, to annual rents totaling 500,000 *maravedís*, or slightly more than 1,300 ducats. Such a figure did not begin to compare with the 120,000 ducats of income of the Count of Benavente, Valladolid's wealthiest noble, but it was well above the annual income—55 ducats—of a master carpenter working in that city.<sup>49</sup> Put succinctly, it guaranteed Alonso a comfortable life. In addition, he received title to the *casa principal* and Berruguete's other properties in Valladolid, that of a much smaller dwelling (*casa pequeña*) the artist had purchased and used as a base in Madrid while working at the Alcázar, along with the *señorío* of Ventosa and attendant rents.<sup>50</sup> Berruguete's younger son, Pedro González Berruguete, was to receive annual rents totaling 100,000 *maravedís* (approximately 266 ducats), plus guaranteed lodging in

the family's house in Valladolid. In short, Berruguete, in keeping with the strategy his mother had initiated, succeeded in creating a legacy on which his family could rely.<sup>51</sup>

So how best to measure Berruguete's achievement? In his lifetime his reputation was inextricably linked to his art. Testifying in one of the many lawsuits in which the artist was regularly embroiled, one witness, apparently an assistant in his workshop, went as far as to describe his "master" as "the person who is the most skilled, talented, and expert in the art of sculpture and painting there is in Spain and even outside of it."<sup>52</sup> This assessment, though exaggerated, was not far off the mark, as Francisco de Hollanda's description of Berruguete as an "eagle" readily suggests. Another contemporary, the humanist writer and historian Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, had an equally high opinion of Berruguete. In his *Batallas y quinquagenas*, Fernández de Oviedo described Berruguete's work as "flawless" (*perfectísimo*), comparable to that of the legendary Greek sculptors of antiquity Phidias and Praxiteles. Fernández de Oviedo, who had evidently seen Berruguete's handiwork in the monastery of San Benito in Valladolid, also suggested that when it came to capturing an individual's likeness or spirit, no one did it better.<sup>53</sup>

These assessments help to account for Berruguete's reputation as an artist today, but there are other ways to measure his achievement. As Hernán González de Lara, an architect who knew Berruguete personally, once remarked, "In matters of finances, Berruguete is very attentive, when it suits."<sup>54</sup> What González de Lara meant by his comment is not altogether clear, although he was probably referring to Berruguete's readiness to demand high prices for his work, to litigate and defend his interests in court, and to pursue honors and wealth. Yet it is wrong, as many critics have done, to attribute the worldly side of Berruguete's character simply to vanity, let alone a desire for personal aggrandizement. In sixteenth-century Castile—indeed in most societies in early modern Europe—providing for one's family and lineage was an individual's main responsibility and regarded as a key measure of personal worth. The acquisition of rents, property, and other tangible assets was deemed necessary, even essential, to guaranteeing a family's future. For Berruguete his efforts, influence, and reputation were merely a means to an end, a way to advance the broader family agenda initiated by his mother and to achieve respect and stability for the Berruguete name.



# Becoming a Draftsman and the Primacy of Drawing

Mark McDonald

When Alonso Berruguete arrived in Italy around 1506, he would have witnessed the social prestige enjoyed by artists. He would also have encountered the Italian concept of *disegno*, with its dual meanings of “design” and “drawing” indicating independent intention, recognizing as it does the binary elements of intellectual and artistic practice. Drawing was regarded as the means of planning works of art, and Berruguete seems to have carried this understanding with him throughout his life. The clearest proof of this is that his surviving drawings form an exceptional corpus.<sup>1</sup> No other artist working in the Iberian Peninsula during the first half of the sixteenth century is known to have been as prolific or to have produced such a distinctive body of work. This has to do with the circumstances particular to Berruguete’s training, his subsequent practice as a painter and sculptor, and his role in leading a large workshop in Valladolid. His activity and standing as an artist present unique challenges for assessing the style, context, and function of his drawings. A summary of issues relating to drawing in Spain during the first half of the century provides an initial apparatus for achieving this task.

In Spain during the sixteenth century, drawing was a key preparatory stage in the creation of art, but what has survived is a fraction of what was produced. We must consider the implications of loss, something that affects all areas of artistic production but more so in the case of drawing because of the fragility of paper and the fact that sheets were often destroyed in the process of realizing a larger project. Even though there is not the abundance of material that we find in other parts of Europe, we are now in a stronger position to appreciate the complex history of drawing in Spain. Nevertheless, to describe the history and development of a medium based partly on what is presumed not to have survived is complicated. The task is made possible by considering the distinctiveness of the drawings that remain and looking at other sorts of evidence. This includes archival documents that prove the existence of drawings now lost, correspondence in which they are mentioned, and treatises in which the role of drawing based on knowledge of artistic practice is discussed and validated.

In recent decades our understanding of the history of drawing in Spain has changed. The traditional view that Spanish artists did not draw or were averse to the practice has been overturned, and in its place different narratives have emerged that do

Fig. 45  
Alonso Berruguete, *Seven  
Figures and a Design for  
Architecture* (detail of fig. 60,  
D13)

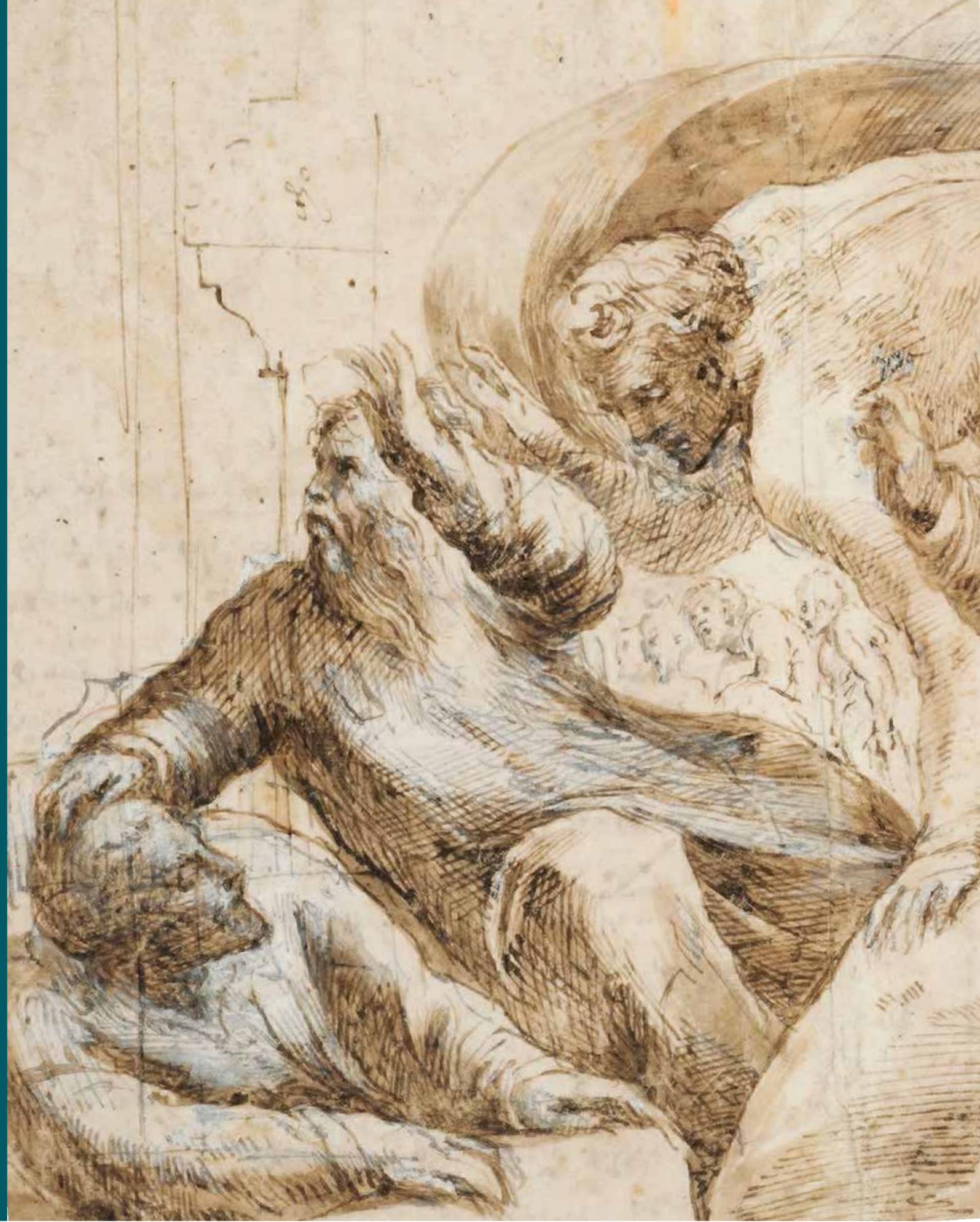




Fig. 47 (D2)  
Alonso Berruguete, *The Prophet Daniel* (after Michelangelo), c. 1512–1517, red chalk, Museo de Bellas Artes de Valencia, Colección Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Carlos

Fig. 48  
Unknown artist, *Study of the Madonna and Child* (after Donatello), 16th century?, red chalk, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Florence



light in the drawing, which conforms closely to Michelangelo's figure, supports this.<sup>17</sup> Its exact dating is uncertain, but if we accept the traditional position of around 1512–1517—assuming Berruguete made it while in Rome—then it is among the earliest known drawings of a single figure from the Sistine ceiling.

Two studies of the Madonna and Child in red chalk on a double-sided sheet, the recto after Donatello's bronze tondo in Vienna and the verso after his marble relief in Boston, present a more challenging attribution to Berruguete (fig. 48).<sup>18</sup> If *Man Carrying a Sack* and *The Prophet Daniel* are accepted as autograph—both copies that display considerable graphic ability—then it seems unlikely that the studies after Donatello are by the same hand. They are weak by comparison.<sup>19</sup> The critical fortunes of the sheet emphasize the difficulty in recognizing its author and, indeed, the uncertainty of Berruguete's proposed practice in Italy. The drawing is unusually large and might even date from a later period.

The other main technique used in Italy during the early sixteenth century was pen and ink. A drawing in this medium depicting Leda has been attributed to Berruguete on the basis of the inscription "Alonso Berugetta" on the verso in a later hand (fig. D16). Diego Angulo Íñiguez and Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez do not date the drawing but suggest that it was meant for a fountain, whereas Boublis assigns it to when Berruguete was in Italy and discusses its debt to Leonardo. The drawing again demonstrates the difficulty of assessing Berruguete's early work because without the inscription there would be no basis on which to assign it to him. No other pen-and-ink drawings by Berruguete from this period can be securely identified.<sup>20</sup> Early attributions should be taken seriously, and for this reason his authorship is maintained with the caveat of uncertainty in the absence of firm evidence.

How did Berruguete's long period in Italy manifest itself after he returned to Spain? Did he return armed with drawings that he prepared in Italy as a repository for future work? To what degree did the subjects and techniques of Italian drawings affect his subsequent practice in Spain? These are difficult, if not impossible, questions to answer. Many parallels have been drawn between what he is said to have seen in Italy and his artistic trajectory in Spain. The *Laocoön* and its influence, for example, have recently been the subject of an entire exhibition.<sup>21</sup> Drawings by Italian artists (Bandinelli, Michelangelo, Andrea del Sarto, Pontormo, and others) have also been compared with his sculpture, but without an apparatus to substantiate how their imagery was transmitted,

the links sometimes appear generic, and the drawings cannot convincingly be proposed as sources.<sup>22</sup> Drawing was nonetheless regarded as the basis of the arts, and Berruguete's commitment to it was central to his practice. This fact is reinforced by the repeated documentary references to his excellence as a draftsman (discussed below).<sup>23</sup> Throughout his career Berruguete fought to have his status and professional worth recognized, using his artistic mastery to support his claim.<sup>24</sup>

## Return to Spain

Establishing a chronology for Berruguete's drawings in Spain has proved difficult.<sup>25</sup> In this publication fifteen drawings are accepted as autograph and provide a basis for comparing other, less secure works. Eight more sheets are "attributed to Berruguete," reflecting the fact that they do not fit so easily with the definition of his style, while others are regarded as workshop. The variety of drawings by Berruguete and his assistants reflects their different functions.<sup>26</sup> Whereas the sheets themselves provide evidence of their purpose, documents also greatly augment our understanding of artistic practice during the period.<sup>27</sup>

## Master of the *Retablo*

Manuel Arias Martínez

In 1539 the writer Cristóbal de Villalón, a longtime resident of Valladolid, published the first critical acclaim for Alonso Berruguete in his book *Ingeniosa comparación entre lo antiguo y lo presente*. Villalón begins by commenting on Berruguete's skills as a painter, writing that his figures "are of such a quality that they seem on the brink of speaking, as though Nature has infused them with a soul." After singling out a work that is not only painted but also sculpted, the high altarpiece (*retablo mayor*) of the monastic church of San Benito el Real in Valladolid, the author adds: "Were Philip and Alexander [the Great] still alive, they would not have enough treasures to reward [Berruguete], and since they were far ahead of the men of the present day in their wisdom, they would still owe him money."<sup>1</sup> The passage underscores the considerable extent to which, already by the late 1530s, Berruguete's reputation as an artist was bound up with his *retablos*.

When Villalón penned his encomium, Berruguete had been living in Valladolid for almost seventeen years. It had been a demanding period for the artist, not least because of his continuing responsibilities as *pintor del rey* and his newer duties as an *escribano*, or notary, in the legal tribunal known as the Real Audiencia y Chancillería.<sup>2</sup> Yet the far more challenging part of his life was his blossoming career as a master of *retablos*. He would spend six years on the work that Villalón extolled, the *retablo mayor* of San Benito, which was in progress between 1526 and 1533 and unlike any altarpiece ever before seen in Castile. By 1539 Berruguete had produced three other *retablos* in and around Valladolid, as well as a fourth in faraway Baena (southeast of Córdoba). Although each is interesting in its own way, none represented the same opportunity as the *retablo mayor* of San Benito. Given an enormous space to fill and the resources to do it, Berruguete responded with a work worthy of Villalón's praise.

Berruguete's immediate path to San Benito passed through a small monastery located about twenty-five miles (forty kilometers) south of Valladolid, near the town of Olmedo. On November 2, 1523, he agreed to execute the main altarpiece for the chapel of the monastery of Nuestra Señora de la Mejorada.<sup>3</sup> Associated with the Hieronymites, the monastery was a favorite pilgrimage site of the kings and queens of Castile during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>4</sup> It also enjoyed the protection of the wealthy

Fig. 69  
Alonso Berruguete,  
*Old Testament Prophet*  
(Isaiah?) (detail of fig. 98)





Fig. 73  
Alonso Berruguete, *Ecce Homo*,  
c. 1524, painted wood with gilding  
and silvering, Museo Nacional de  
Escultura, Valladolid

Virgin, which pulses with nervous energy (fig. 71). Berruguete created a tightly compressed composition in which the midwives' twisting bodies and broad sweeps of drapery become the focus rather than Saint Anne, who stands in the rear with her arms wrapped tightly around her newborn daughter. If Berruguete were interested in achieving perfect narrative legibility, he would have placed Saint Anne at the center with the midwives around her and facing the viewer. Instead his goal was to convey the pitched emotions of the moment through a figural style that, in its emphasis on asymmetry and instability, evoked its own kind of tension. The midwife in the lower right, who adopts one of the most difficult poses, takes her inspiration from related figures in Michelangelo's *Doni Tondo* (c. 1504–1507) and Raphael's *Borghese Entombment* (1507).<sup>12</sup>

A different avenue for exploring Berruguete's maturation as a sculptor is the *Ecce Homo* that he carved while working on the altarpiece (figs. 72, 73).<sup>13</sup> Although it was never part of the *retablo mayor*, it also comes from the church of La Mejorada, where it was positioned in a side chapel.<sup>14</sup> Berruguete rethought the traditional presentation of the subject in important ways, the first being Christ's crossed legs, which were ultimately derived from ancient sculpture. He must have studied pertinent examples while in Italy, including a Roman statue of Mercury that he might have seen in the Belvedere Courtyard at the Vatican.<sup>15</sup> Berruguete lengthened the slender limbs beyond the norms of classical proportion, which serves to destabilize the composition and convey Christ's sense of helplessness before the mocking crowd. With his long, gaunt face and crossed arms, he slouches despondently, seeming to be in search of a place to rest the weight of his weary arms. Berruguete recognized that there were ways to elicit sympathy for his subject other than through explicit reference to Christ's physical torture. This went against the convention in Castilian sculpture, which was to cover Christ's body with scourge marks and blood, as exemplified by an *Ecce Homo* in Palencia cathedral from the 1490s that is by Gil de Siloe or one of his close followers (fig. 74).<sup>16</sup> The comparison with the earlier sculpture also underscores the degree to which Berruguete rethought Christ's pose, making it more relaxed and full of supple lines that lead the viewer's eye through a series of graceful curves, including those that constitute the many layers of Christ's loincloth.

To return to the *retablo mayor*, other notable features are the many inventive passages of grotesque ornament, such as the double lyres on the *banco*. As discussed elsewhere in this volume

Fig. 74  
Gil de Siloe or a follower, *Ecce Homo*,  
1490s, painted wood with gilding,  
Palencia cathedral



# Technique and the Mechanics of the Workshop

Daphne Barbour

The *retablo mayor* (high altarpiece) of the church of San Benito el Real in Valladolid was a massive undertaking requiring the services of numerous carpenters, painters, and sculptors. Analysis of the steps involved in carving the figures and decorating the surfaces makes clear that no artist could have created the many sculptures single-handedly. How directly involved was Alonso Berruguete in the process? Trying to separate his hand from those of his assistants and determine which parts of which sculptures he executed personally is fraught with uncertainty. Even the most reasonable conclusion — that the very best figures, such as *The Sacrifice of Isaac* (fig. 89), represent his direct work — rests on the assumption that as master of his workshop, Berruguete was more than the chief of design and lead painter but also the most talented sculptor. Putting aside the question of attribution, when the sculptures are considered from a purely technical perspective, several uncommon features emerge that seem to be characteristic of the way sculptures were produced in his workshop. Many figures, for example, were constructed in a makeshift manner from numerous pieces of wood. The use of this and several other techniques that can be considered untraditional may have been required in order to accommodate how Alonso Berruguete operated as a designer and the painterly approach he took to sculpture.

The conclusions reached in this essay are based on the study of the *retablo mayor* of San Benito, Berruguete's largest and most inventive altarpiece. The choice reflects the fact that the sculptures are unusually accessible, having been removed from their original location and now on view in the galleries of the Museo Nacional de Escultura in Valladolid. Furthermore, the surviving documents relating to the altarpiece provide substantial information about how it was made. The most important of these documents is the one signed by Berruguete on March 27, 1527, with the head abbot of the monastery of San Benito, Fray Alonso de Toro.<sup>1</sup> It represents a list of conditions that Berruguete was required to meet in order to fulfill his contract, which he had signed the previous year, on November 8, 1526.<sup>2</sup> Among the many items listed are the materials he was to use. The structure was to be built from good-quality pine and linden, while the sculptures were to be carved from walnut.<sup>3</sup> When decorating the draperies of the figures, Berruguete was obliged to use the technique of gold *estofado*

Fig. 95  
Alonso Berruguete,  
*The Sacrifice of Isaac*  
(detail of fig. 89)





Fig. 98  
Alonso Berruguete, *Old Testament Prophet (Isaiah?)*, 1526/1533, painted wood with gilding, Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid

*The Sacrifice of Isaac* is not the only sculpture from San Benito to be assembled from pieces of wood. Many of the single figures who strike less complicated poses, such as the *Old Testament Prophet (Isaiah?)*, who bends at his waist as he steps forward, also follow the assembly method (fig. 98). Two long pieces of wood were joined to form the prophet's torso, with a third (and possibly a fourth) attached at his lower right side to create his leg and drapery. The most obvious additions are the two crudely carved oblong pieces of wood that are fastened to the middle of his back (fig. 99). They are finished on the sides but left uncarved where they cannot be seen from the front. Cracks in the paint probably indicate other additions, including the right arm from beneath the bicep, the head, and the beard from beneath the chin.

In choosing to use a method of carving that relied on assembly, Berruguete was going against convention. In Castile, as in northern Europe, the block method dominated wood sculpture.<sup>21</sup> The method was rooted in the practice of carving an entire sculpture from a single block of wood. To prevent cracking, the blocks were often hollowed at back, which promoted drying, or seasoning.<sup>22</sup> Among the challenges of the block method is that sculptors must fit their designs within the block. Invariably, with certain subjects, such as the Crucified Christ, projecting elements, such as arms, must be added separately. For large reliefs or multifigure compositions, sculptors might also join blocks together. But even in these cases they were committed to preserving the integrity of the block insofar as it was possible.

There was at least one place in Europe around 1500 where the block method did not predominate: Florence. The reasons are germane to Berruguete's practice. During the early 1480s several young sculptors in the city who made a regular practice of sculpting in wood—including the Sangallo brothers, Antonio and Giuliano—began experimenting with the assembly method and achieving excellent results.<sup>23</sup> By the middle of the next century its use had become widespread in Florence's workshops. In the short section Giorgio Vasari devotes to wood carving in his treatise on artists' techniques (1550), he does not even suggest that there is an alternative to the assembly method: "When the sculptor wishes to carve a large figure, since he cannot carve it all in a single piece, he must join other pieces to it and add to its height and continue to enlarge it according to the form he wishes to make." Vasari then describes how the wood is held together with glue and dowels before the sculptor takes the resulting assemblage and carves it "according to his model."<sup>24</sup>

Fig. 99  
Alonso Berruguete, *Old Testament Prophet (Isaiah?) (from behind)*, 1526/1533, painted wood with gilding, Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid

That Vasari associates the assembly method with models is noteworthy. He also makes the connection at the start of his discussion: "He who wishes figures of wood to be executed in a perfect manner must first make for them models in wax or clay."<sup>25</sup> Here the implicit acknowledgment is that the assembly method is superior to the block method because it grants sculptors the freedom to be more ambitious with their designs. They knew that for any figure they designed, there were always ways to create an assembly of wood that would accommodate the shape. Here design took precedence over the material of the finished sculpture, which is unsurprising in an artistic culture like that of Florence, which privileged the art of design (*disegno*) and the principal means by which artists realized designs, through drawing and modeling. As is discussed in C. D. Dickerson's essay "The Experience of Italy" (pp. 18–34) and elsewhere in this volume, Berruguete spent much of the 1510s in Florence. There is no evidence that he was active as a wood-carver then, which raises the question of whether he noticed what was happening in workshops where the assembly method was being used. It is entirely possible that he developed it on his own after his return to Spain. Because it did not require special knowledge or materials, it was perfectly accessible to an artist who might think to question how wood sculptures were traditionally made. Furthermore, it represented the obvious solution to the problem of how to carve the designs Berruguete favored, characterized by complicated poses and swirling draperies, qualities that were ill suited to the block method. However he came to the technique, it was for the same basic reason that his counterparts in Florence adopted it: he was reluctant to let the natural properties of wood constrain his imagination and practice.

In this discussion Berruguete has thus far been portrayed as responsible not only for designing the sculptures on the *retablo mayor* of San Benito but also for carving them. We cannot, however, be certain which figures—if any—he carved himself. This is primarily because there are no surviving sculptures by him that can be reliably used as benchmarks for his carving style. All his firmly documented works (especially in wood) were the results of collaborations involving numerous assistants. By the nature of how his sculptures were made, they embody the work of different hands. Traditionally art historians have sought a way around the problem by equating Berruguete's hand with the highest-quality works. With respect to the *retablo mayor* of San Benito, this has meant that the best sculptures—those like *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, in which daring compositions achieve great emotional force—were thought to have been carved exclusively by him.



## The Role of Prints

Mark McDonald

An engraving attributed to Alonso Berruguete, *The Entombment of Christ*, is the only known print directly associated with him and one of the earliest known engravings made in Spain (fig. 107). It is related to a painting generally attributed to Berruguete dated around 1530–1540 in the parish church of Fuentes de Nava (west of Palencia) (fig. 108).<sup>1</sup> The differences between the painting and the print complicate their relationship. In the painting a man bending toward the Virgin replaces the figure of the angel with arms flung wide, and the perspective of the scene is different. Another painting by Berruguete that reuses several of the same figures has recently emerged.<sup>2</sup> The question is whether the print was based on the Fuentes de Nava painting or if it was the other way around. Although this is hard to answer, their shared visual lineage is clear. The print also relates to Berruguete's drawings, in particular in the agitated draperies and the swept-back hair of the figures in the upper right (figs. 53, 57, 58, 60).<sup>3</sup> There are also similarities in its graphic style: the long, sinuous engraved lines and areas of tight cross-hatching used to articulate passages of the garments and the areas of the sheet left in reserve. In its execution the print is amateurish and reveals an inexperienced hand. The background is rendered like a curtain through simple cross-hatching, and its effect and overall sensibility are not dissimilar to those of relief sculpture produced in Berruguete's workshop. Might the print have been intended to entice clients to commission a painting of the subject? This would help to account for there being two painted versions of the subject whose basic composition is recorded in the print. Whatever its actual purpose, the print demonstrates Berruguete's recognition of the value prints had for recording and disseminating compositions. Given his time in Italy, where prints were a staple of artistic practice, we would expect that they served as a central resource for him but, as discussed below, not in ways that are obvious.

The growth of print publishing in Italy and northern Europe during the sixteenth century forever changed visual culture.<sup>4</sup> Enormous numbers of prints enabled the spread of images and ideas at a speed that is hard to fathom but not unlike the way digital media have been disseminated in our time. The simple fact that prints are made in multiples meant that individuals could see the same thing in different places at the same time. Whereas many studies have addressed the development of printmaking in



Fig. 106  
Martin Schongauer, *The Flight into Egypt* (detail of fig. 111)



Fig. 109  
Marcantonio Raimondi,  
*The Descent from the Cross*,  
c. 1520–1521, engraving,  
The British Museum, London

Some paintings are exact copies of prints, whereas others borrow individual figures and modify the context.<sup>14</sup> For larger commissions, prints by more than one artist were used. The panels from the Ciudad Rodrigo altarpiece by Fernando Gallego and Master Bartolomé (1480s), for example, borrow figures from engravings by Schongauer and the Master I. A. M. of Zwolle.<sup>15</sup> Carmen Morte García has discussed the extensive use the sculptor Damían Forment made of German and Italian prints for his altarpieces from around the second decade of the sixteenth century.<sup>16</sup> Dürer in particular provided him with a rich repository. Dürer represented the second generation of German printmakers that emerged as prints by earlier artists such as Schongauer decreased in relevance, presumably due to changing tastes as well as reduced availability. Prints also provided a valuable source for manuscript illuminators, and there are numerous cases of prints being carefully copied in missals and songbooks.<sup>17</sup>

Whereas prints from the north dominated in the late fifteenth century, those by Italians—including Nicoletto da Modena, Marcantonio Raimondi, and Agostino Veneziano—were an important resource in the first decades of the sixteenth century.<sup>18</sup> This

reflects the rise of Italian printmaking from the second decade, especially in Rome. Around 1520–1521 Marcantonio produced an engraving after Raphael's drawing *The Descent from the Cross* (fig. 109).<sup>19</sup> The print proved enormously popular in Spain. An alabaster sculpture by Forment for the *retablo mayor* (high altarpiece) in Huesca cathedral (1520–1534), a painting by Juan de Bustamante in the parish church of Huesca (c. 1532–1542), a large polychrome relief attributed to Berruguete's follower Manuel Álvarez (c. 1550–1570; fig. 110), and other works in both mediums by different artists used the engraving as their starting point.<sup>20</sup> The painter Juan Soreda, who worked in Valladolid, is notable for his inventive use of Italian prints. Soreda provided paintings for the *retablo* of San Pelayo in the parish church of Olivares de Duero (near Valladolid, 1534–1537), for which Berruguete may have made sculptures.<sup>21</sup> The figure of the saint in Soreda's *Torture of San Pelayo* is based on Marco Dente's print of the Laocoön after Marcantonio.<sup>22</sup> The naked boy holding the decapitated saint's head in Soreda's *Martyrdom of San Pelayo* from the same altarpiece is taken from Marcantonio's print *David with the Head of Goliath* after Raphael from around 1510–1520. Other figures in the composition are from Gian Jacopo Caraglio's *Martyrdom of Two Saints* after Parmigianino from around 1524–1527 (or less likely Antonio da Trento's chiaroscuro print of the same composition, c. 1527–1530).<sup>23</sup> The combination of figures from different prints in the same composition shows how Soreda formed a coherent visual narrative using the graphic material he had at his disposal.<sup>24</sup>

We can only hazard a guess at the number of prints that arrived in Spain from the late fifteenth century, but occasionally documents provide some information. A document from 1532 records the delivery to Bernat Battle, a disciple of Forment, of sixty-six dozen "prints and parchments with drawings of images or figures... models of tombs and *retablos*."<sup>25</sup> It is impossible to know where these prints came from and whether they were all by foreign printmakers or if some might have been made locally. Given the dominance of foreign prints in Spain, the latter might seem unlikely, but a fascinating document from 1519 relating to a silversmith (*argentero*), Jerónimo Vidal from Zaragoza, indicates that he had blocks and a press for making woodcuts for Forment.<sup>26</sup> Presumably based on the master's drawings, these prints would have served as a repository for those working in the shop to transmit designs and for distribution to clients. Another passage in the document refers to the originality of the plates,

Fig. 110  
Manuel Álvarez, *The Descent from the Cross*, c. 1550–1570,  
painted wood with gilding, Museo  
Diocesano de Palencia



indicating Forment's claim to intellectual property.<sup>27</sup> Nothing similar from the early sixteenth century in Spain is known, but it suggests a practice that might have been more widespread and would certainly have been of value in a large sculpture workshop that had to ensure visual coherence in what it produced.

Prints have often been regarded as providing source material that artists uncritically accepted as authoritative. But many questions can be asked about how prints were used by artists in Spain: Why were some copied exactly and some partially, whereas others provided an opportunity to reinterpret iconography while retaining distinctive characteristics of the model? What did the different levels of appropriation signify? Did the inventions of a master like Dürer create a brand that carried a pedigree that reverberated with specific viewers and codified a taxonomy of types? Was there a premium placed on the knowledge that prints reflected the most up-to-date inventions and how might this have influenced the reception of the works based on them as "original" or "copy" if such distinctions existed? Questions of dependency and transmission underpin the complex role prints played in the visual economy of Spain and are important for addressing how artists approached the material.

A significant manifestation of print culture is collecting. We must distinguish between those collections in which prints were acquired for their intellectual and narrative value—often in the context of a library—and those recorded in artists' inventories, which were valued for their use as source material in creating works of art. The earliest known and most extensive Renaissance print collection in Europe was formed in Seville by the illegitimate son of Christopher Columbus, Ferdinand Columbus, who died in 1538.<sup>28</sup> Although now lost, it is known through an inventory that describes in detail some thirty-two hundred prints that Ferdinand bought during his travels around Europe, mainly on diplomatic missions for the Spanish Habsburgs.<sup>29</sup> A collection of this nature is very different from prints gathered as visual resources for artists. By definition a collection is intended to be preserved, whereas prints in workshops were subject to very different expectations and conditions. Despite the many prints that evidently arrived in Spain in the early sixteenth century, few have survived. This reflects two possibilities: the first is that in their capacity as source material they were regarded as merely utilitarian and destroyed in the process of realizing the primary object. The second is that without a subsidiary context that made their survival possible—such as being pasted

into a book or album or onto a panel—their fragility made them susceptible to loss, something that has also been noted with regard to drawings (see p. 64).

Documents relating to specific commissions and inventories of artists made after their deaths provide additional evidence for the presence of prints. Inventories in which prints are recorded appear mainly from the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>30</sup> This corresponds broadly to the growth of the print publishing industry. References to objects that might be prints in earlier inventories are complicated by the ambiguity of the language used to describe them. Terms pertaining to drawing were established early on, when the context for their use was clear.<sup>31</sup> In Spain a specific print vocabulary did not emerge until later in the century. In the Columbus inventory, *debujos* and related terms can sometimes be understood as referring to prints. Similarly, *pinturas* can refer to printed images in terms of subject matter and as

# Transforming the Choir of Toledo Cathedral

Wendy Sepponen

Toledo cathedral is where Alonso Berruguete sealed his reputation as Castile's most important sculptor of the first half of the sixteenth century. In 1537, five years after completing the *retablo mayor* (high altarpiece) in the church of San Benito el Real in Valladolid, he was approached about the cathedral's choir stalls, which had remained unfinished since the 1490s, when a first row of fifty-four seats was carved (figs. 123, 124). His invitation to participate in the project came from the archbishop of Toledo, Cardinal Juan Pardo de Tavera.<sup>1</sup> Shortly after being elected archbishop in 1534, Tavera began planning for a second row of stalls, turning to Felipe Vigarny for the initial designs. Eventually Berruguete was brought into the project and rewarded with an equal share in the enterprise, tasked with carving half the walnut stalls, while Vigarny was given the other. Over the next ten years, in addition to working on the stalls, which feature magnificent reliefs above the seat backs, he and Vigarny oversaw the execution of the elaborate alabaster enclosure that surmounts the stalls, which is decorated with seventy Old Testament figures carved in high relief. After Vigarny died in 1542, Berruguete continued to be involved with the choir stalls, receiving several more commissions. The first was for the monumental group of the Transfiguration of Christ that crowns the archbishop's throne (fig. 134). He concluded his work on the choir stalls with a group of sculptures on the exterior facade: a sculpted roundel of God the Father, reliefs of the Four Evangelists, and several groups of putti (fig. 135).

The reason the choir stalls are justly regarded as one of Berruguete's two masterpieces—along with the *retablo mayor* in San Benito el Real—is that *The Transfiguration of Christ* and certain reliefs above the seat backs perfectly express his groundbreaking style. His relief of the Old Testament figure Job, for example, is an image of pure torment, as Job resists giving in to Satan's punishments and being lured into renouncing God (figs. 122, 125). Although he is seated, his posture conveys a sense of incipient motion, an impression reinforced by the way his hands and drapery encroach on the frame. The tense muscles in his torso and limbs underscore his anxious expression. A particularly subtle detail is the flexed toes of his right foot, which appear to be preparing to spring his body into the air. Few sculptors before Berruguete had so effectively combined these qualities of anatomical precision, dynamic movement, and psychological insight.

Fig. 122  
Alonso Berruguete, *Job*  
(detail of fig. 125)

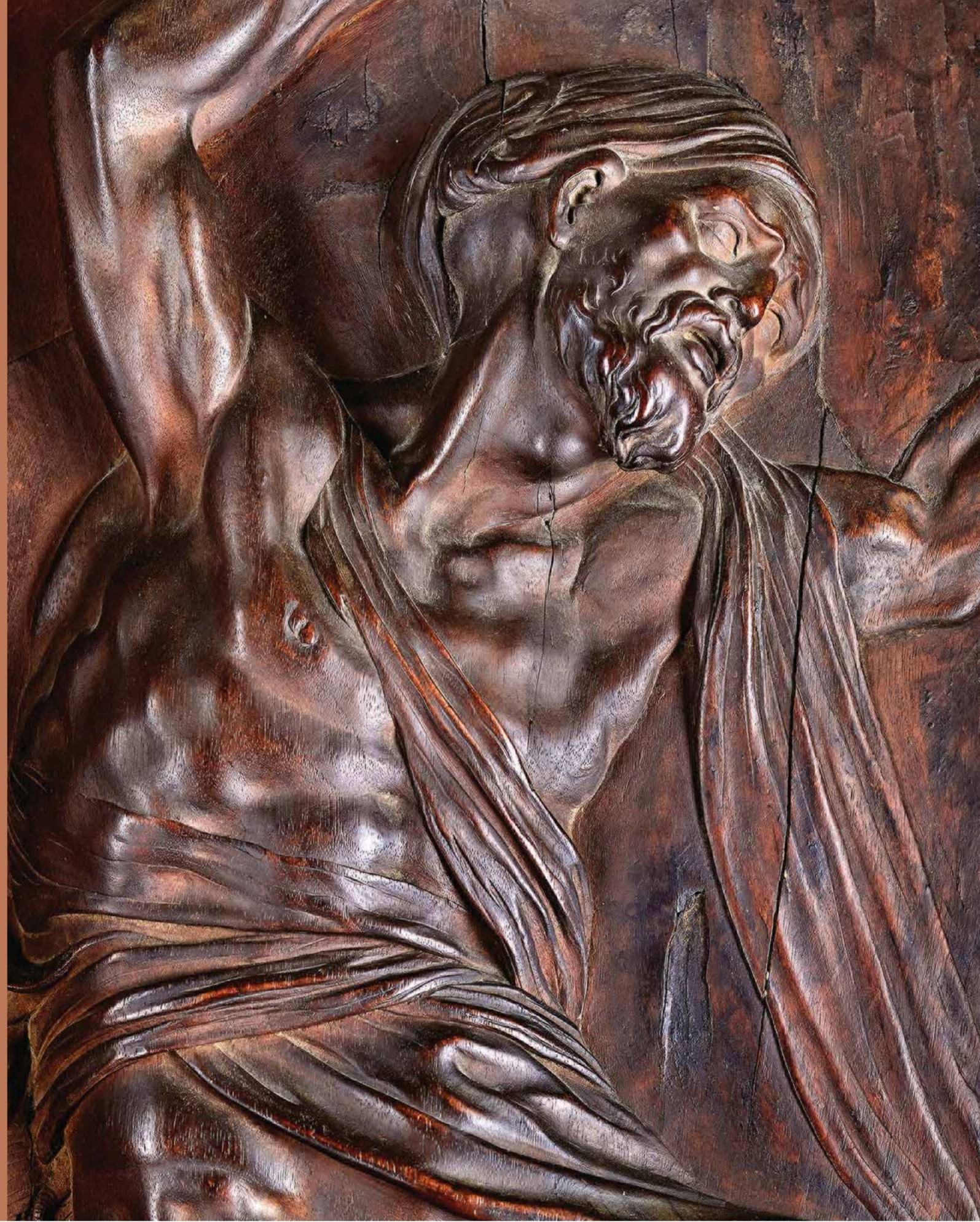


Fig. 132  
Felipe Vigarny, *Jacob Wrestling  
with an Angel*, 1539/1542, walnut,  
Toledo cathedral



Fig. 133  
Alonso Berruguete, *Methuselah*,  
1539/1543, alabaster, Toledo  
cathedral



In spite of the different hands present in the series, the reliefs are unmistakably Berruguete's in overall style. The figures — with their dynamic postures, incisive expressions, and tensed muscles — exhibit his characteristic attention to the human body and how it moves. The results were innovative for the Castile of his time, as demonstrated by Vigarny's reliefs on the opposite side of the choir stalls, such as *Jacob Wrestling with an Angel* (fig. 132). Here the interlocked figures press against the borders of the relief as they attempt to move. Whether they are wrestling or engaged in an uncomfortable embrace is uncertain. Their actions lack conviction, and their faces are plastic and unexpressive. Vigarny's primary focus seems to have been on the elaborate draperies, which underscores the degree to which his approach was largely decorative and thus so different from Berruguete's.

Throughout the time Berruguete was directing work on the stalls, he was also supervising the construction and decoration of the surmounting structure in alabaster. Decorated with thirty-five reliefs depicting figures from the Old Testament, the superstructure required its own team of specialized workers, which highlights the challenges of management that he faced. The alabaster for the project had already begun arriving in Toledo over the spring and summer of 1538, months before the contract for the choir stalls had even been signed.<sup>19</sup> Once Berruguete had established his workshop in Toledo, he must have had his portion of the alabaster transferred there. He most likely then organized one group of assistants to focus on carving the architectural elements, while another worked with him to realize the spirited reliefs. Drawings are presumably how he directed their carving — thus in the same manner as with the walnut reliefs on the stalls. (See p. 74 for a discussion of a drawing in the Art Institute of Chicago that may have been preparatory for one of the reliefs [fig. 54].)<sup>20</sup> Like the walnut reliefs, those on the superstructure form a cohesive group by style, even if some figures are more effective than others. *Methuselah* is as powerful as any relief in the series, which could be evidence that Berruguete took personal responsibility for its execution (fig. 133). Carved in exceedingly high relief, the screaming figure bends at his waist as he rushes forward. Lifting the sides of his robe to form wings, he looks as if he is about to burst from his niche and fly.

By the winter of 1542 enough parts of the stalls had been carved that installation could begin.<sup>21</sup> The finished reliefs and

## A Final Commission and Death

Julia M. Vázquez

Few works by Alonso Berruguete have elicited stronger reactions than his marble tomb of the powerful archbishop of Toledo, Cardinal Juan Pardo de Tavera, carved between 1554 and 1561 for the chapel of the hospital that Tavera had founded years earlier on the outskirts of the city (fig. 138). There is a single reason: the haunting likeness of the deceased cardinal, which has regularly been interpreted as a statement about death. The earliest known example, from 1848, happens to be in English and comes from the Scottish art historian William Stirling Maxwell, who quoted the book of Revelation: “On a richly decorated sarcophagus, the great churchman lies in his miter and robes; his gloved hands are crossed on his breast, and his fine and venerable features — worthy of a master’s chisel — wear the pure placid expression which belongs to ‘the dead that die in the Lord.’”<sup>1</sup>

Ricardo de Orueta, author of the first monograph on Berruguete, published in 1917, drew attention to the tomb’s deathly quality as well, describing the face as “the embodiment of death, which horrifies and frightens all humanity.”<sup>2</sup> Many decades later the filmmaker Luis Buñuel described the cardinal’s face as “a fixed image of death” in his diary and used the face to symbolize death in his film *Tristana* (1970).<sup>3</sup> In a key moment in the film the title character, played by Catherine Deneuve, climbs on top of the tomb, and as she stares into Tavera’s cold eyes, she realizes that death is also her destiny (fig. 139). Did the sculptor intend to make his patron look so ghostly that we are able to see him only as a personification of death? Although Berruguete died only weeks after finishing the tomb, his final illness appears to have come on suddenly, so it is unlikely that a sense of his own mortality had any bearing on his approach. Rather, the answer turns on conventions of portraiture and tomb design and Berruguete’s ongoing negotiations between the arts of Castile and those of Italy — negotiations that he was still pursuing at his death in 1561.

Berruguete signed the contract for Tavera’s tomb on August 20, 1554.<sup>4</sup> By then the cardinal had been dead for almost a decade. Although there are no records of any plans he made for his tomb while still alive, he seems to have given thought to where he wished to be buried: the Hospital de San Juan Bautista (now the Hospital Tavera), which represents his greatest act of charity (fig. 140). The building’s history is tightly

Fig. 137  
Alonso Berruguete, *Tomb of Cardinal Juan Pardo de Tavera* (detail), 1554–1561, marble, Hospital Tavera, Toledo, courtesy Fundación Casa Ducal de Medinaceli





# Charting a Critical Legacy between Myth and Reality

Manuel Arias Martínez

Even before his death in 1561, Alonso Berruguete had attained near-mythic status across the Iberian Peninsula. Among those who wrote admiringly about him are Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo — who in 1519 compared Berruguete to Phidias, Praxiteles, and Apelles — and Francisco de Hollanda, who in 1548 identified him as one of the “eagles” of modern painting alongside Michelangelo, Titian, and Raphael.<sup>1</sup> The use of hyperbole to describe Berruguete’s artistic achievements increased after he died. By the first decades of the seventeenth century, Berruguete was widely credited with having modernized Spanish painting and sculpture by providing the critical link with the arts of the Italian Renaissance. Writing in the early eighteenth century, Antonio Palomino de Castro y Velasco reinforced these earlier assessments by observing that Berruguete “was the first to extinguish in Spain the barbarous and ignorant manner that existed in the three arts.”<sup>2</sup> From that moment on, casting him as a national hero became a virtual obligation in Spain. Paradoxically, in the drive to enshrine him, his staunchest defenders — almost uniformly Spanish — have persisted in the view that if Berruguete had not drunk the waters of Italian art at their source, his place in Spanish art would be greatly diminished.

As was the case with Fernández de Oviedo, the earliest tributes to Berruguete typically took the form of comparisons to the ancients.<sup>3</sup> Cristóbal de Villalón, writing in 1539, imagined how Philip II of Macedon and his son Alexander the Great would have reacted to Berruguete’s celebrated altarpiece in San Benito el Real in Valladolid, claiming that neither would have had enough treasure to pay for it.<sup>4</sup> When Berruguete was not being compared to the ancients, he was being related to the best artists of modern Italy, although even then the arts of ancient Greece were usually invoked as the ultimate measure of artistic excellence. In his treatise on painting of 1548, Hollanda observes that “no nation or people (except for one or two Spaniards) can perfectly realize or imitate the Italian way of painting (which is the ancient Greek mode).”<sup>5</sup> He goes on to identify Berruguete and Pedro Machuca as his two exceptions who were Spanish.<sup>6</sup>

Appreciation for Berruguete deepened after he died, with greater emphasis placed on his relationship with Italy. Juan de Arfe, a goldsmith of exceptional talent who was



Fig. 152  
Miguel Jadrake y Sánchez  
Ocaña, *The Visit of Cardinal  
Tavera to the Celebrated  
Alonso Berruguete*  
(detail of fig. 155)



Fig. 153  
Gaspar Becerra, *Retablo mayor*,  
1558–1584, painted wood with  
gilding, Astorga cathedral

active in Valladolid during the second half of the sixteenth century, exemplifies the trend. In his influential treatise on anatomy, architecture, geometry, and zoology, *De varia commensuración para la escultura y arquitectura* (1585), Arfe asserts that Berruguete was among the first in Spain to compose his figures according to the Vitruvian system of human proportions, something he had learned in Rome.<sup>7</sup> Although we may be hard-pressed today to see Berruguete's figures as Vitruvian, it is true that they represented a unique style that exerted a powerful influence in Castile. Among the ways it was disseminated there was through the artists who trained in his workshop, including Manuel Álvarez, his nephew Inocencio Berruguete, Francisco Giralte, and Isidro Villoldo.<sup>8</sup> As these artists moved around Castile in search of work, they made a point of advertising their relationship to Berruguete in an effort to gain a competitive advantage over other sculptors. This is clear from a lawsuit of 1548 between Giralte and Juan de Juni over the commission for the *retablo mayor* of Santa María la Antigua in Valladolid.<sup>9</sup> Those who testified on Giralte's behalf called attention to the fact that he had been at Berruguete's side during the execution of the famed choir stalls in Toledo cathedral. Two of the witnesses, Miguel de Barreda and Gerónimo Vázquez, offered more pointed assessments of Giralte's close ties to Berruguete, claiming that he had been responsible for teaching Giralte the essentials of Italian art, resulting in a style that they said was preferable to the French style practiced by Juni.<sup>10</sup> In the end Juni was awarded the commission, but the lawsuit makes clear that Berruguete's style of sculpture, because of its debt to Italy, was greatly prized throughout Castile—at least at that time.

The situation would not endure for long. Even during Berruguete's lifetime, enthusiasm for his style had begun to wane. The main threat came from the much younger Gaspar Becerra, who had worked in Italy for more than a decade, from around 1545 until 1558, during which he had developed a style closely aligned with Michelangelo's.<sup>11</sup> On returning to Spain in 1558, Becerra settled in Valladolid and was awarded the commission that would secure his fame: the *retablo mayor* of Astorga cathedral (fig. 153). With this work, which is notable for its Michelangelesque figures, such as the putti swirling around the ascending Virgin, Becerra took over Berruguete's position as the most influential sculptor in Castile. Even Berruguete was forced to acknowledge Becerra's greatness. According to

Becerra's chief assistant, Pedro de Arbulo, when the cathedral's governing body asked Berruguete for his opinion of the altarpiece, Berruguete declared that the sculpture of the ascending Virgin in the central niche was "the best figure ever made in Spain."<sup>12</sup> Arfe, writing a couple of decades later, explained why Berruguete had lost his dominant position: "Succeeding [Berruguete] was Gaspar Becerra . . . who brought from Italy the manner that is now practiced by most artists, which is figures that are fleshier than those of Berruguete."<sup>13</sup> Even while acknowledging Becerra as representing the next chapter in Castilian sculpture, Arfe remained complimentary of Berruguete: "These two singular men banished the barbarism that existed in Spain, shedding new light on other skills that came after and continue."<sup>14</sup>

In Berruguete's immediate wake, Toledo was one of the places where his star shone especially brightly. El Greco and his follower Luis Tristán held Berruguete in high regard, as becomes clear with scrutiny of El Greco's copy of the second edition of Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* (1568). In the passage in which Vasari describes Berruguete's study of Michelangelo's *Battle of Cascina* cartoon, El Greco has underlined Berruguete's name: "Alonso Barughetta spagnolo."<sup>15</sup> How we are to interpret El Greco's practice of underlining names in the book is difficult to know, but it is tempting to assume that he was impressed to discover that Vasari had written about an artist from his adopted homeland. In the margins next to where El Greco underlined Berruguete's name, Tristán would later pen a short paragraph in which he praised Berruguete for his mastery of sculpture, painting, and architecture.<sup>16</sup> Surely years of going to Toledo cathedral and studying Berruguete's reliefs on the choir stalls fed this admiration, which also suggests that when we look at El Greco's art—or that of Tristán—Berruguete is present. This is probably truer with El Greco, who shared Berruguete's fascination with manipulating the proportions of the human body for expressive effect. Although he did not learn the approach from Berruguete, it is hard to deny some degree of artistic kinship. Even their relationship with the *Laocoön* bears on this supposition. It must have registered with El Greco through his reading of Vasari that Berruguete had won a certain amount of fame in Italy because of his participation in the competition involving the celebrated antiquity. Might the passage in Vasari have lain somewhere behind El Greco's decision to treat in painting *Laocoön* and His



# Catalog of Drawings by Berruguete and His Workshop

Mark McDonald

The criteria for attributing drawings to Berruguete and his workshop are presented in my essay “Becoming a Draftsman and the Primacy of Drawing,” in this volume. This catalog of drawings is divided into three sections. The first includes fifteen drawings that are regarded as autograph. The second part comprises eight drawings (and one engraving) attributed to Berruguete. These works are closer to his hand than the eleven regarded as workshop in the third section. The sheets from the third section betray Berruguete’s influence and have historically been associated with him. They vary in style and do not form a coherent group. Several might even date from later in the sixteenth century — after Berruguete had died — and reflect the continuation of his style (figs. D33, D34). Drawings that have been previously published as by Berruguete or his circle and do not appear in this catalog are here rejected. Most of these are acknowledged in “Becoming a Draftsman.” Not all the drawings in the following catalog are in the exhibition.

In order to trace the critical history of the sheets listed here, when an attribution has been doubted or a drawing given to a follower of Berruguete, the information is included in parentheses. Modern annotations on the drawings are not transcribed. Drawings not illustrated here may be found in my foregoing essays “Becoming a Draftsman” and “The Role of Prints.”

Section 1

## Drawings by Berruguete

D1

### *Man Carrying a Sack*

c. 1508–1510

red chalk

40.2 × 18 cm (15 <sup>13</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 7 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)

Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, Paris, Inv. 2706

Selected Bibliography: Boubli 2007, 137–140 (attributed); Boubli 2015, 146.

D2

### *The Prophet Daniel* (after Michelangelo)

c. 1512–1517

red chalk

39.9 × 28.1 cm (15 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 11 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)

Inscribed upper right in pen and brown ink: berruguete; on separate strip of paper across top in pen and brown ink: Alonso de Berruguete Escultor de los famosos de España y dependió en Roma (con Michael Angelo [in a different hand]) De cuya mano es este dibuxo q[ue] aquí abaxo esta

Museo de Bellas Artes de Valencia, Colección Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Carlos, 2453

Selected Bibliography: Angulo Íñiguez and Pérez Sánchez 1975, 1: no. 66 (doubtful); Espinós Díaz 2010, 158–159; C. T. Gallori in Faietti, Gallori, and Mozzati 2018, no. 2.8 (attributed).

D3

### *Design for the Decoration of a Galley*

c. 1520

pen and brown ink and wash

25.5 × 32.4 cm (10 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 12 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.)

Inscribed lower right in pen and brown ink: Torregiano, fec.

Private collection, New York, promised gift to The Hispanic Society of America, New York, ILo6.0001

Selected Bibliography: Sánchez Cantón 1930, 2: no. 98 (Pietro Torregiano); Angulo Íñiguez and Pérez Sánchez 1975, 2: no. 248 (Pietro Torregiano); Muller 2006, no. 1 (Pietro Torregiano); Arias Martínez 2011a, 79–80; P. Lenaghan in Codding 2017, no. 63.

D4

**Study of an Angel Facing Right**

after c. 1525  
pen and brown ink and gray wash over black  
chalk  
20.5 × 10.1 cm (8 1/16 × 4 in.), cut around the  
figure and attached to another sheet  
Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e  
delle Stampe, Florence, 3807 S

Selected Bibliography: B. Navarrete Prieto  
in Navarrete Prieto 2016, no. 3; M. Grasso in  
Faietti, Gallori, and Mozzati 2018, no. 1.8.



D4

D5

**Study of an Angel Facing Left**

after c. 1525  
pen and brown ink and gray wash over black  
chalk  
20.3 × 8.2 cm (8 × 3 1/4 in.), cut around the  
figure and attached to another sheet  
Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e  
delle Stampe, Florence, 3806 S

Selected Bibliography: B. Navarrete Prieto  
in Navarrete Prieto 2016, no. 3; M. Grasso in  
Faietti, Gallori, and Mozzati 2018, no. 1.7.



D5

D6

**Male Nudes**

after c. 1525  
pen and brown ink  
29.4 × 23.5 cm (11 3/16 × 9 1/4 in.), cut around  
figures and attached to another sheet  
Inscribed at bottom in pen and brown ink:  
Berruguete  
Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e  
delle Stampe, Florence, 10281 S

Selected Bibliography: Sánchez Cantón 1930,  
2: no. 101; Angulo Íñiguez and Pérez  
Sánchez 1975, 1: no. 63; Boubli 1994, 17;  
M. Zurla in Mozzati and Natali 2013, no. II.4;  
M. Arias Martínez in Navarrete Prieto 2016,  
no. 8; M. Grasso in Faietti, Gallori, and  
Mozzati 2018, no. 2.2.



D7

D7

**The Circumcision of Christ**

after c. 1525  
black chalk, pen and brown ink and gray wash,  
cut irregularly around the figures and attached  
to another sheet  
20.6 × 17.3 cm (8 1/8 × 6 13/16 in.)  
Inscribed in center in pen and brown ink: 12R  
Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e  
delle Stampe, Florence, 1265 F

Selected Bibliography: Petrioli Tofani 2014,  
3:1306, no. 21 (Berruguete or circle);  
B. Navarrete Prieto in Navarrete Prieto  
2016, no. 5; Arias Martínez 2017a, no. 67.

D8

**Job or Levi**

after c. 1525  
pen and brown ink  
25.3 × 11 cm (9 15/16 × 4 3/16 in.) (max.), trimmed  
irregularly  
The Art Institute of Chicago, The Leonora Hall  
Gurley Memorial Collection, 1922.50  
Selected Bibliography: Folds McCullagh and  
Giles 1997, no. 34.



D9

D9

**Study of a Man with Drapery on His  
Shoulder (recto)  
Study of Legs (verso) [not illustrated]**

after c. 1525  
pen and brown ink over traces of black chalk  
35 × 14 cm (13 3/4 × 5 1/2 in.)  
Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts  
graphiques, Paris, RF 42995  
Selected Bibliography: Boubli 1994, 18;  
Boubli 2002, no. 3.

## Works in the Exhibition

This list is divided into four sections, each organized chronologically. Protocols for dating are explained in the note to the reader, p. xiv. Unless otherwise noted, all works appear at both exhibition venues.

### Works Not by Alonso Berruguete

Delli brothers (Dello, Niccolò, and Sansone Delli)

#### *Christ at the Column*

c. 1440–1470  
pen with brown and black carbon ink, brush with gray wash, watercolor, and gouache on parchment, 40.3 × 30.4 cm (15<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 11<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 2004, 2004.137

Martin Schongauer

#### *The Death of the Virgin*

c. 1470–1475  
engraving, 26.1 × 17.2 cm (10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.)  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of W. G. Russell Allen, 1941.1.54

[Dallas only]

Martin Schongauer

#### *The Flight into Egypt*

c. 1470–1475  
engraving, 25.7 × 16.9 cm (10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 6<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in.)  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection, 1943.3.31  
figs. 106, 111

[Washington only]

Gil de Siloe

#### *Saint James the Greater*

1489/1493  
alabaster with paint and gilding, 45.9 × 17.4 × 12.5 cm (18<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 6<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 4<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection, 1969, 69.88  
figs. 3, 4

Francisco Gallego

#### *Acacius and the 10,000 Martyrs on Mount Ararat*

c. 1490  
tempera and oil on panel, 60<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 44 × 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (154.3 × 111.8 × 3.2 cm)  
Meadows Museum, SMU, Dallas, Algur H. Meadows Collection, MM.68.02

[Dallas only]

Spanish (Castile)

#### *The Miracle of the Palm Tree on the Flight to Egypt*

c. 1490–1510  
painted walnut with gilding, 126.4 × 92.7 × 26.7 cm (49<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 36<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> × 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in.)  
Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1938, 38.184  
fig. 113

[Washington only]

Pedro Berruguete

#### *The Virgin and Child Enthroned*

c. 1500  
oil on panel, 61 × 44 cm (24 × 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
Ayuntamiento de Madrid, Museo de San Isidro, Los Orígenes de Madrid  
figs. 1, 10

Fernando Yáñez de la Almedina

#### *Saint Sebastian*

c. 1506  
oil on panel, 69<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 32<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (176.2 × 83.5 cm)  
Meadows Museum, SMU, Dallas, Algur H. Meadows Collection, MM.76.02

[Dallas only]

Juan de Borgoña

#### *The Investiture of Saint Ildefonsus*

c. 1508–1514  
tempera and oil on panel, 98<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 81<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (249.6 × 207.6 cm)  
Meadows Museum, SMU, Dallas, Algur H. Meadows Collection, MM.69.03

[Dallas only]

Juan de Flandes

#### *The Adoration of the Magi*

c. 1508–1519  
oil on panel, 126 × 82 cm (49<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 32<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection, 1961.9.24

[Dallas only]

Juan de Flandes

#### *The Baptism of Christ*

c. 1508–1519  
oil on panel, 125.3 × 81.1 cm (49<sup>5</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 31<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection, 1961.9.25

[Dallas only]

Bartolomé Ordóñez

#### *The Lamentation of Christ*

c. 1518–1519  
walnut, 58.7 × 51 cm (23<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 20<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.) (with integral frame)  
Private collection  
figs. 36, 37

Master of Sigena

#### *The Adoration of the Magi*

c. 1519  
oil on panel, 156 × 130 cm (61<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 51<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
Meadows Museum, SMU, Dallas, Museum purchase with funds from The Meadows Foundation, with additional support provided by Susan Heldt Albritton, Gwen and Richard Irwin, and Catherine Blaffer Taylor, MM.2018.06  
fig. 30

Luis de Morales

#### *Pietà*

1550–1570  
oil on panel, 16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (41.3 × 29.8 cm)  
Meadows Museum, SMU, Dallas, Meadows Museum Acquisition Fund, MM.95.01

[Dallas only]

Juan de Morales

Pedro de Alarcón (?)

#### *Processional Cross*

c. 1566–1597  
silver, part-gilt, cast, repoussé, engraved and textured with punchwork, 39<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 26 in. (100 × 66 cm)  
Meadows Museum, SMU, Dallas, Museum purchase with funds generously provided by Jo Ann Geurin Pettus, MM.2015.03

[Dallas only]

### Paintings and Sculptures by Alonso Berruguete and/or Assistants

#### *Madonna and Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist*

c. 1514–1517  
oil on panel, diameter: 83 cm (32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
Museo di Palazzo Vecchio, Loeser Collection, Florence, MCF-LOE 1933-23  
fig. 19

[Dallas only]

#### *Salome*

c. 1514–1517  
oil on panel, 87.5 × 71 cm (34<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 27<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1890 n. 5374  
figs. 12, 13

#### *Ecce Homo*

c. 1524  
painted wood with gilding and silvering, 146 × 49 × 37 cm (57<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> × 19<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 14<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid, CE0728  
figs. 72, 73

#### *Crucified Christ* (Calvary group)

1526/1533  
painted wood with gilding, 309 × 215 × 57 cm (121<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 84<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 22<sup>7</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid, CE0271/049  
figs. 81, 82

#### *Finial*

1526/1533  
gilded wood, 69 × 45 × 5 cm (27<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>16</sub> × 1<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> in.)  
Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid, CE0271/084

#### *Finial with Grotesque Decoration*

1526/1533  
gilded wood, 67 × 114 × 7 cm (26<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 44<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in.)  
Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid, CE0271/082

The exhibition is organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and the Meadows Museum, SMU, Dallas, in collaboration with the Museo Nacional de Escultura, Valladolid.

#### Exhibition Dates

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