

# THREE SPANISH TERRACOTTAS IN THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM<sup>1</sup>

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Polychromed terracotta works produced in Spain from the late fifteenth century onwards are generally assumed to be freshly modelled, exhibiting implicitly or explicitly the «fingerprints of the sculptor»<sup>2</sup>. Many of them are actually wholly or partly cast from moulds, and by analysing the way they were made, much may be inferred about workshop practices. Three Spanish terracottas in the Victoria and Albert Museum, dating from different periods, illustrate through their very diversity the complexities of modelled and cast terracottas.

The earliest to be discussed is a polychromed terracotta figure of a saint, signed by Pedro Millán (active 1487-1506)<sup>3</sup>. A youthful saint is shown wearing armour, under a cloak held by an elaborate clasp, trampling a dragon-like creature underfoot. His shoulder-length hair is held by a band adorned with a fillet. He leans towards his right, and originally held a lance in his right hand, which entered the dragon at his feet, and with which he appeared to support himself; this is now missing, and has been since the figure was first published in 1884<sup>4</sup>. On the shield a cross standing on a crown of thorns surrounded by a vine is depicted in relief. The

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Paul Williamson and Anthony Radcliffe for their helpful comments during the preparation of this article.

<sup>2</sup> C. f. Charles AVERY, «Terracotta: the fingerprints of the sculptor», (Introduction to) *European Terracotta Sculpture from the Arthur M. Sackler Collection*, Washington, 1981, p. 16. Although the piece cited here discusses Italian modelled terracottas, works from other countries and periods are frequently assumed in other publications to be modelled rather than cast, not always with justification.

<sup>3</sup> Victoria and Albert Museum, inv.no. A6-1943. Ht. 91 cm. Said to have come from the Dominican Convent of S. Florentina at Ecija (Seville) (see J. HERNANDEZ DIAZ *et al.*, *Catálogo Arqueológico y Artístico de la Provincia de Sevilla*, III, Seville, 1951, p. 327, note 541); Don José de Irueta Goyena Collection, 1884-before 1923; «Private Collection, Seville» (so described in V. VON LOGA, *Spanische Plastik*, Munich, 1923, pp. 14-15) (perhaps Irueta Goyena Collection) 1923-before 1927; whereabouts unknown 1927-1943 (J. PIJOAN, *History of Art* (translated by R. L. ROYS), II, Barcelona, 1927, p. 446, says it «has now been carried off to a foreign land»); sold by P. Pelosi at Sotheby's, London, 16th April, 1943, lot 98; bought by Dr. Burg ( £ 60); bought from Dr. Burg by the National Art-Collections Fund in 1943 ( £ 400) and presented by the Fund to the Victoria and Albert Museum in the same year. In Maria Elena GOMEZ-MORENO, *Breve Historia de la Escultura Española*, (2nd ed.) Madrid, 1951, p. 62, the piece was mistakenly said to be in America.

<sup>4</sup> See J. GESTOSO Y PEREZ, *Pedro Millán*, Seville, 1884, frontispiece.

armour is thought to be based on Italian, probably Milanese, armour of about 1480<sup>5</sup>.

Previously described as *St. Michael*, the iconography suggests the more likely identification is *St George*, primarily because the saint is without wings<sup>6</sup>. The work is signed in gothic lettering: «pō millā» on the lower part of the shield. The same signature appears on other works by Pedro Millán: on the girdles of two seated monks near the jambs of the West Door of Seville Cathedral, and on the Virgin of the Pillar also in Seville Cathedral<sup>7</sup>. Millán was almost certainly a native of Seville, and specialised in terracotta; other documented works by him in this material include the glazed reliefs of saints for the portals of the church of Santa Paula in Seville, whose indebtedness to contemporary della Robbia glazed terracottas, as well as to Iberian ceramic tiles, has been remarked upon<sup>8</sup>.

Although the present piece has been dated c 1480-86, none of Millán's works is securely dated, and this figure can only be put within his documented period of activity (1487-1506)<sup>9</sup>. The rich detail on the shield and armour, the elegance of the pose, and the finely featured face of the saint are all stylistic indications that Pedro Millán is the author of this piece, even were it unsigned<sup>10</sup>. Although all but the later layers of polychromy have been largely lost, minute surviving remains of pigment and gold leaf indicate the original colours included gold and ultramarine, and the work must have seemed a radiantly coloured chivalric figure, perhaps designed to stand in a niche, or against a pillar in a church, as it is unworked at the back<sup>11</sup>.

Despite its fresh appearance, there are indications that the *Saint George* was almost certainly cast from a mould: through the large opening in the flat slab of

<sup>5</sup> I am grateful to Anthony North for his comments on the identification of the armour.

<sup>6</sup> See W. BRAUNFELS (Ed.), *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie*, VI, Rome, 1974, p. 380: «Unter d. ca 55 Drachekämpferhll. nimmt Georg n. d. Erzengel Michael i. Abendl. d. 1. Platz ein, alle anderen hll. Reiter verdrängend». See also the whole entry on St George in this volume (pp. 366-390), and E. KIRSCHBAUM (Ed.), *Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie*, III, Rome, 1971, pp. 256-266, for the entry on the Archangel Michael. The figure was described as St. George in the Sotheby's sale catalogue of 1943 (see note 3), and a letter from Sir Eric Maclagan to Sir Robert Witt, Chairman of the National Art-Collections Fund, of 7th June 1943, a copy of which is held at the National Art-Collections Fund, notes, «It is generally described as St Michael, but I am inclined to think in spite of the long hair that it must be intended for St George». In subsequent publications it is nevertheless described as St Michael, e. g. M. THRING, «A Statuette by Pedro Millán of Seville», *Burlington Magazine*, LXXXIII, 1943, pp. 253-5; A. DURAN SANPERE and J. AINAUD DE LASARTE, *Ars Hispaniae*, VIII, *Escultura Gótica*, Madrid, 1956, p. 368; Florentino PEREZ-EMBED, *Pedro Millán y los orígenes de la Escultura en Sevilla*, Madrid, 1973, pp. 41, 42, 54, 66, 73-76. M. E. GOMEZ-MORENO, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.* in note 3, calls the piece St George or St Michael.

<sup>7</sup> PEREZ-EMBED, *op. cit.*, figs. 2, 3, and 10.

<sup>8</sup> See PEREZ-EMBED, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-73, and figs. 16-18.

<sup>9</sup> GESTOSO, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-57 dated the piece c. 1480-86, but PEREZ-EMBED, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-76 rightly said that adequate reasons were not given for this dating.

<sup>10</sup> A particularly close comparison of the facial type, and the leaning slender figure can be found in the signed *Man of Sorrows* in the Museo de Bellas Artes in Seville. See PEREZ-EMBED, *op. cit.*, fig. 11.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the same artist's *Virgin of the Pillar* in Seville Cathedral mentioned above (illustrated in PEREZ-EMBED, *op. cit.*, fig. 10).

clay attached to the back, it can be seen that the figure is hollow. The clay is of an even thickness of approximately 2.5 centimetres, something which could not have been achieved had the figure been modelled and then hollowed out<sup>12</sup>. The original model is likely to have been of solid, modelled clay, probably constructed over an armature support. A plaster mould must have been made from this model, the undercutting necessitating a mould made in pieces<sup>13</sup>. The original clay model would have been spoilt by this process (fragments of the plaster would have become embedded in it, and if brass fences or «shims» were used, cuts would have scarred the surface), and would have been discarded. The mould too was probably abandoned after use<sup>14</sup>. When the separate cast pieces of clay were removed from their individual moulds, they would have been joined together using wet clay to make the complete figure, and the joins disguised by modelling. Other surfaces, such as the face and shield, might have been touched up by modelling at the same time. This cast figure would then have been fired, and finally painted. In this case, the reason for casting was almost certainly to reduce the risks of damage during the firing process, rather than for reproductive purposes. As suggested above, the technique of casting probably employed in this case meant that both the original model and the mould were only used once; certainly no other versions of the figure are known. A modelled terracotta, even if it has been hollowed out, is likely to be of an uneven thickness, and in a figure of this comparatively large size there would be a strong possibility that it would crack during firing<sup>15</sup>.

The second piece has not been previously published, despite its evident high quality. It is a polychromed terracotta relief depicting *The Lamentation*, mounted in a painted and gilt wood frame<sup>16</sup>. The Virgin supports the supine body of Christ at the foot of the cross. She leans back, her head sideways over her left shoulder; Christ's body is twisted, with his left arm stretched back behind him, and his legs slightly bent. In the landscape behind, a man is seen carrying away a ladder on

<sup>12</sup> Plaster infill at the back of the figure perhaps indicates a break which occurred during firing. I am grateful to John Larson, Anne Brodrick and Richard Cook for their comments on the way in which this piece was made.

<sup>13</sup> For a brief description of the making of a mould, see [Giorgio VASARI], *Vasari on Technique*, translated by L. S. MACLEHOSE, ed. G. BALDWIN BROWN, New York, 1960, pp. 158-9.

<sup>14</sup> For this reason, such a mould is known as a waste-mould. For a description of this process using brass fences, see J. W. MILLS, *The Technique of Sculpture*, London, 1976, p. 53. See also John LARSON, «A Polychrome Terracotta bust of a Laughing Child at Windsor Castle», *The Burlington Magazine*, CXXXI, n.º 1038, September, 1989, pp. 620-621.

<sup>15</sup> See LARSON, *op. cit.* in note 14, p. 620. For the technical aspects of firing terracotta, see also M. GREENACRE, «A Technical Examination of Some Terracottas by Michael Rysbrack», in Katharine EUSTACE (ed.), *Michael Rysbrack Sculptor 1694-1770* (exhibition catalogue), Bristol, 1982, pp. 50-51. Greenacre cites in addition (*op. cit.*, p. 59, note 20): MILLS, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-51, 53-55; John LARSON, «Carrier-Belleuse, a technical study of his terracotta sculpture», *French Sculpture*, Bruton Gallery, Somerset (exhibition catalogue), London, 1981.

<sup>16</sup> Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. no. 91-1864. Measurements with frame: Ht. 45 cm.; W. 55 cm.; Depth: 6 cm. Measurements without frame: Ht. 30.5 cm.; W. 40 cm. Bought for £4 on 22nd December, 1863 by John Charles Robinson in Madrid (on behalf of the then South Kensington Museum) from don José Calcerrada. (Victoria and Albert Museum records, J. C. Robinson report Reg. no. 2931, dated 15th February, 1864).

the right, while on the left a figure is bending over the tomb, seen through an opening in the hillside. The crown of thorns and a cloth are resting on the trunk of a small bush to the left. Painted in the distance are the towers and buildings of Jerusalem. The frame is inscribed in gold: QVOS OMNES QVI TRANSITIS./ PERVIAM. ATENDITE ET VIDE[T]E SI EST./ DOLOR SIMILIS, SICVT. DOLOR MEVS / QUINET TVAMIPSIVS ANIMAM PENE[T]R[A]BIT GLADIVS (Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow. And why will not the sword pierce your soul also?)<sup>17</sup>. The bottom of the frame is elaborately shaped, with scroll-like corners at the lower edge, and shallow curves scooped out of the upper edge, giving the effect of a cartouche.

There are breaks in the terracotta by the root of the tree on the right, and Christ's left foot is missing. Remains of sealing wax on Christ's left leg indicate an old repair. Minor breaks can be seen at the top of the terracotta. The wood frame is chipped in places and a sliver is missing on the lower left. The paint is flaking in places<sup>18</sup>. Fragments of the original polychromy lie beneath the now muted tones of the surface, and indicate that the relief was originally much brighter than its present appearance suggests. Traces of azurite, a brilliant blue, were found in the Virgin's robe, and gold leaf was certainly present elsewhere on the robe, on the trees behind, and on the ground beneath the Virgin's hand. A layer of red bole found over the preparatory gesso, and dating from the time when the relief was first polychromed, indicates that gold leaf may have been present over the whole surface, over which paint would have been applied and then scratched through to reveal patterns of gold (a technique known as *estofado*)<sup>19</sup>. The terracotta was overpainted at least twice, once probably in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, and once in the nineteenth century<sup>20</sup>. The frame too seems to have been overpainted; one of the original gold letters of the inscription is visible<sup>21</sup>.

Other versions of this relief are in the Museo Arqueológico in León, in the Museo Diocesano y Catedralicio in Valladolid, and in the Camón Aznar Collection formerly in Madrid, and now Zaragoza. With the exception of the Camón Aznar relief, they are virtually identical in size<sup>22</sup>. The mannerist style of the composi-

<sup>17</sup> The first part of the inscription (up to «sorrow») is from Lamentations, 1, 12. The present author has not been able to trace the source of the final sentence, which is inscribed along the bottom of the frame. The Latin appears to be corrupt and may be the result of a later re-painting of the lettering. Infrared photography did not reveal an alternative wording beneath the present surface; I am grateful to Stanley Eost for undertaking this. I am grateful to Caroline Elam and Rowan Watson for their comments on the Latin inscription.

<sup>18</sup> The piece was recently cleaned by Sarah Boulter. I am grateful to her for her comments on it.

<sup>19</sup> Red bole is normally used as preparatory layer for gold leaf. Samples of polychromy were analysed by Josephine Darrah, to whom I am grateful for her helpful comments.

<sup>20</sup> The first re-paint contains at least one colour (bice) which was not generally used after the eighteenth century. The second repaint, which is in parts thick, and of duller colour, must have been applied before the relief was acquired by the Museum in 1864.

<sup>21</sup> The inscription now visible appears to be the same as the earlier one.

<sup>22</sup> Juan José MARTIN GONZALEZ, *Juan de Juni: Vida y Obra*, Madrid, 1974, pp. 115-117. According to Martín González (*op. cit.*, 1974, p. 378), the measurements of the relief in León are: Ht. 30 cm.; W. 39 cm. M. Gómez-Moreno states that the measurements are Ht. 31 cm.; W. 40 cm. (M. GÓMEZ-MORENO, *Catálogo Monumental de España: Provincia de León*, (1906-1908), Madrid,

tion, with its elongated, contorted figures, is typical of the work of Juan de Juni (b.c. 1507; d. 1577), to whom the versions in the Museo Diocesano y Catedralicio in Valladolid and in the Museo Arqueológico in León respectively have been attributed<sup>23</sup>. In particular, a *Pietá* in the Cathedral at Salamanca, almost certainly dating from around 1540, is closely comparable<sup>24</sup>. A further close comparison is provided by a figure group of the Virgin with the dead Christ attributed to Juan de Juni in the Museo Marés, Barcelona<sup>25</sup>.

Martín González has argued that the «original» version by Juan de Juni himself is the one in Valladolid, which may in turn be identical with the relief mentioned in the inventory of the belongings of Juana Martínez, of the parish of S. Ildefonso in Valladolid. This inventory was made on 10 January, 1613, shortly after the death of Juana Martínez. She was the widow of Isaac de Juni, Juan de Juni's illegitimate son, himself a sculptor. The inventory lists a relief in terracotta of the *Descent from the Cross*, although it must remain speculative whether this is indeed one of the reliefs under discussion, as Martín González notes<sup>26</sup>. Palomino stated that the ver-

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1925, p. 313). The discrepancy of 1 cm. in height and width must be due to manual error. Martín González gives the same measurements (30 × 39 cm.) for the one in Valladolid (MARTIN GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, 1974, p. 379). These measurements are sufficiently close to those of the London relief (30.5 × 40 cm. according to the present author's measurements) to suggest the pieces are actually identical in size, and apparent differences are due to manual errors of measuring (see below, note 23). However the measurements of the version in the Camón Aznar collection are: Ht. 25 cm.; W. 35 cm. This was kindly communicated by Belén Díaz de Rábago Cabeza. The measurements given by Martín González are virtually the same: Ht. 25 cm.; W. 34 cm. (*ibid.*, p. 378). The difference must again be due to manual error in measuring a slightly irregular piece. The Camón Aznar relief was also published in *Museo Camón Aznar, Obra Social de la Caja de Ahorros de Zaragoza, Aragón y Rioja, Zaragoza, 1979*, unnumbered plate.

<sup>23</sup> The difficulties arising from trying to distinguish autograph from workshop versions of these reliefs can be seen from the fact that Martín González ascribed the one in León to Juan de Juni in Juan José MARTIN GONZALEZ, *Juan de Juni y su Epoca* (exhibition catalogue), Valladolid Museo Nacional de Escultura (Iglesia de la Pasión) and Madrid, Salas de la Dirección General del Patrimonio Artístico y Cultural, 1977, p. 51, cat. no. 2, and p. 96, pl. 2. He cited GÓMEZ-MORENO (*op. cit.* in note 22), p. 313. There Gómez-Moreno described the piece as: «bajorrelieve de barro policromado: in su tamaño, 31 por 40 centímetros; roto. Obra de Juni, conocida por otro ejemplar igual que hay en San Martín de Valladolid; representa la Piedad, con paisaje y figurillas por fondo». Martín González also attributed the Valladolid relief to Juan de Juni in the text of his monograph, contrasting it with the León and Camón Aznar pieces, which were said to be «after» the Valladolid relief (MARTIN GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, 1974, pp. 115-7). However in the catalogue at the end of the monograph, Martín González described the León version as a product of Juni's workshop (MARTIN GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, 1974, p. 378), but by implication both the Valladolid and the Camón Aznar versions are listed as autograph; they are included in the catalogue of works without the word «taller» (workshop) (MARTIN GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, 1974, pp. 378 and 379). In correspondence, Sr. Martín González has confirmed that he believes the Camón Aznar relief to be workshop. This example is discussed further below.

<sup>24</sup> Martín González has pointed this out. See MARTIN GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, 1974, pp. 133-142 and fig. 101.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 118-120, fig. 80.

<sup>26</sup> The wording of the inventory is «una echura de una ymagen de barro de medio rrelieve del descendimiento de la cruz». This is quoted in J. MARTI Y MONSO, *Estudios históricos-artísticos relativos principalmente a Valladolid*, Valladolid, 1898-1901, p. 369, which is cited in MARTIN GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, 1974, p. 115. An earlier inventory dating from December 1596 to May 1597 lists «122 piezas de barro todas modelos de su mano ansi ystorias come figuras pequeñas de las por acabar». See M.

sion now in Valladolid (then in the church of S. Martín in Valladolid) was cast by «algunos escultores» which was why various other versions existed<sup>27</sup>. However, with one probable exception, the known surviving pieces are probably contemporary with one another, whereas the theory that copies were made by other artists implies that they were made at a slightly later date, perhaps after Juan de Juni's death in 1577. There is no perceptible difference in the definition of the forms in the examples in Valladolid, León and London, although the polychromy varies in quality. The Valladolid, León and London pieces are all of the same size; the Camón Aznar version is approximately 5 cm smaller in both height and width. This piece will be discussed separately below<sup>28</sup>. It also seems likely that the other three known versions are cast, and not modelled; there are no physical signs to suggest any one was made differently from the others<sup>29</sup>. In addition, these works seem to have been made for display, rather than for study reasons. (Palomino's comment could be read as implying that other artists made copies for their own use, in adulation of Juan de Juni). This can be inferred from the fact that the surviving versions are polychromed, and that in all cases polychromy contemporary with the reliefs survives at least in part, and that wood frames are extant on all but the Valladolid version<sup>30</sup>. For these reasons, it seems possible, and even probable, that the composition was always intended to be reproduced in multiples, and that the versions in Valladolid, León and London should be accorded equal status, no one of them necessarily being closer to (or further from) the work of the sculptor than any of the others. Having modelled an «original» in clay, which was probably then fired in order to harden it, Juan de Juni could have had made in his workshop a mould of this, from which were cast numerous copies<sup>31</sup>. These were then painted, framed and sold to customers<sup>32</sup>.

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A. FERNANDEZ DEL HOYO, «Datos para la Biografía de Juan de Juni», *Boletín del Seminario de Estudios de Arte y Arqueología*, LVII, Valladolid, 1991, p. 339.

<sup>27</sup> Palomino states: «En la iglesia de San Martín de dicha ciudad [Valladolid] hay una historieta de barro cocido del Descendimiento de la Cruz, que le han vaciado algunos escultores por ser cosa tan peregrina». Antonio PALOMINO, *El Parnaso Español*, [1714] in F. J. SANCHEZ CANTON, *Fuentes Literarias para la historia del Arte Español*, IV, Madrid, 1923-41, p. 76, cited in MARTIN GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, 1974, p. 115.

<sup>28</sup> See above, notes 16 and 22.

<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately the author has not been able to examine the backs of any of the reliefs. (The frame on the London version could only have been removed at great risk to the terracotta). The front of the version in the Victoria and Albert Museum has been closely studied, but the author has only seen briefly those in Valladolid and León, and has not seen (except in reproduction) the version in the Camón Aznar Collection. This comment is therefore based in part on the fact that MARTIN GONZALEZ, (*op. cit.*, pp. 115-7) does not discuss any physical dissimilarities that would suggest one of the reliefs was modelled rather than cast. In correspondence Sr. Martín González has kindly communicated that because the Camón Aznar version is likely to be workshop, it is not reproduced in his monograph.

<sup>30</sup> The wood frames are not decorated in the same way: the León version is inscribed «O mater Dei, memento mei...», while the Zaragoza piece is painted to imitate marble (perhaps a later repainting). See MARTIN GONZALEZ, *op. cit.*, 1974, pp. 116-117.

<sup>31</sup> The piece from which the mould was made is likely to have been fired in order to harden it. J. W. Mills notes, «Although it is possible to make a piece-mould from clay it is not as precise as that taken from a hard surface». MILLS, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>32</sup> The painting is likely to have been carried out in Juan de Juni's own workshop, rather than to have been sub-contracted. See MARTIN GONZALEZ, 1974, p. 58.

The relief mentioned in the 1613 inventory (if it does have any connection with the present pieces) may be a fifth version which has been subsequently lost, or it may be identical with one of the surviving examples in Valladolid, León or London. Although Juana Martínez lived in Valladolid, insufficient evidence exists to suggest it is the piece now in Valladolid.

The relief in Zaragoza is a reduced version of the composition of the other three; it does not seem to have been cut down, despite the fact that it is about 15% smaller than them. This could be accounted for by postulating that it is an aftercast. If a mould had been made from one of the surviving (larger) reliefs, and clay was pressed into this, and then fired, the shrinkage caused by the firing would account for the difference in size<sup>33</sup>. This would also explain why the forms are less clear, because it was made at one remove. It may be contemporary with the other pieces, but it is more likely to date from a later period, after the original mould (used for the other pieces) was lost or destroyed.

The London version should be assigned to the workshop of Juan de Juni, and can be tentatively dated to the 1540s, approximately contemporary with the Salamanca relief mentioned above. It was probably a devotional object, intended to be hung in a chapel or church, or in a private house. The inscription on the frame reinforces its devotional purpose. While this attribution detracts from the idea of a unique work of art, and from the conception of the artist as personally producing all his work, it conversely illuminates the way in which workshops operated, and increases our knowledge of the kinds of objects which were being produced. Such pieces were ready-made items, rather than commissions from individual patrons.

The third work to be discussed is the polychromed terracotta group of *The Virgin Appearing to S. Diego of Alcalá*<sup>34</sup>. The Virgin and Child are shown presenting the cross to a kneeling Franciscan saint, thought to be S. Diego of Alcalá, accompanied by two angels, one kneeling, one standing. Six cupids' heads nestle around the Virgin's feet. All the figures except the saint rest on clouds, indicating that this is an ecstatic vision experienced by the saint, as has been pointed out by Catherine Hall-van den Elsen<sup>35</sup>. The polychromed and partially gilt terracotta group is set on a gilt and gessoed wood base, which is almost certainly original. Some of the original colour survives, although parts of the group have been re-painted, and it has suffered some damage<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> I am grateful to John Larson for his comments on this.

<sup>34</sup> Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. no. 250-1864. Bought by John Charles Robinson from Soriano of Madrid in 1864 for £ 5 11s. 7d. (530 reals). Ht. 51 cm (with wood base); 36 cm (without base); W. 66 cm. (with base); 54.5 cm. (without base); Depth 41.5 cm. (with base); 31.5 cm. (without base).

<sup>35</sup> HALL-VAN DEN ELSSEN, Catherine: *La Vida y las Obras de Luisa Roldán*, (unpublished M. A. thesis), La Trobe University, Bundoora, Australia, p. 100.

<sup>36</sup> The group may have been broken in two at the front at one time; the cross held by S. Diego has been broken and repaired. A photograph taken in 1925 (museum negative no. 55171) shows the broken cross, and areas which were subsequently re-painted, which include parts of the Virgin's robe, S. Diego's habit, and the floor area in front of the group. Other areas of damage are the missing wings of the standing angel, and the broken left wing of the kneeling one. One foot of the Christ Child is missing, the other is chipped; the Virgin's head is cracked at the back.

Although at one time the iconography was uncertain, the identification of the saint as S. Diego of Alcalá must be correct<sup>37</sup>. He was a Franciscan friar (c. 1400-1463), one of whose miracles occurred when he was accused by a fellow friar of stealing bread from the convent to give to the poor. When his robes were searched, the hidden bread was miraculously transformed into roses<sup>38</sup>. Rose petals can be seen in the folds of the Franciscan habit of the saint represented here.

Beatrice Gilman Proske was the first to attribute the group to Luisa Roldán (c. 1656-1704), when she catalogued the works by that artist in the collection of the Hispanic Society in New York<sup>39</sup>. In later articles she stated that it was likely to be a workshop product, as its quality was ostensibly lower than autograph works<sup>40</sup>. Sánchez-Mesa Martín and other have supported the attribution to Luisa Roldán<sup>41</sup>. Comparisons with signed works by the artist reveal similar characteristics. The composition of the group in the Victoria and Albert Museum is closely comparable with the signed *Mystic Marriage* in the collection of the Hispanic Society: in particular, the relation of the Virgin and Child to the kneeling saint (S. Diego of Alcalá and S. Catherine respectively), the positions of the angel holding the cross in the London group and the S. Joseph in the New York group, and the face and pose of the angels on the left of each group. Despite the view of Gilman Proske, the quality of the present piece does not suggest that it is by a different hand from pieces known to be autograph, although arguably a degree of workshop collaboration may have occurred in all Roldán's output, including signed works. In her unpublished MA thesis, Catherine Hall-van den Elsen states that she believes the present work is autograph, and notes that comparisons with signed works (notably the New York *Mystic Marriage*) confirm this<sup>42</sup>.

Many of Luisa Roldán's small terracottas were made during the Madrid

<sup>37</sup> The saint was thought at different times to represent St. Francis (when first acquired by the Museum in 1864), and later St. Anthony of Padua. John Charles Robinson believed the scene depicted St. Francis at Portiuncula. According to this legend, the saint rolled himself in thorns, and the blood shed was transformed into roses (Victoria and Albert Museum records); other versions of this story are listed in L. RÉAU, *Iconographie de l'Art Chrétien*, Paris, 1958, III, pp. 530-531. See RIANO, J. F.: *Catalogue of Art Objects of Spanish Production in the South Kensington Museum*, London, 1872, p. 1; GILMAN, Beatrice: *Catalogue of Sculpture (Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries) in the Collection of the Hispanic Society of America*, New York, 1930, p. 294, note 2; GOMEZ-MORENO, María Elena: *Ars Hispaniae, XVI, Escultura del Siglo XVII*, Madrid, 1963, p. 311; SANCHEZ CANTON, F. J.: *Ars Hispaniae, XVII, Escultura del Siglo XVIII*, Madrid, 1965, p. 46.

<sup>38</sup> REAU, L.: *Iconographie de l'Art Chrétien*, III, Paris, 1958, p. 385.

<sup>39</sup> GILMAN, *Hispanic Society*, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

<sup>40</sup> GILMAN PROSKE, Beatrice: «Luisa Roldán at Madrid» (parts I-III), *The Connoisseur*, CLV, nos. 624-626, 1964, pp. 128-132, 199-203, 269-273. The present piece is mentioned in Part III on p. 269, and illustrated in fig. 19.

<sup>41</sup> SANCHEZ-MESA MARTIN, Domingo: «Nuevas Obras de Luisa Roldán y José Risueño en Londres y Granada», *Archivo Español de Arte*, XL, n.º 160, pp. 325-331; HALL-VAN DEN ELSEN, *op. cit.*, pp. 98ff.

<sup>42</sup> HALL-VAN DEN ELSEN, *op. cit.* p. 98: «Entre las obras en barro atribuidas a Luisa Roldán y no firmadas, la más conforme al estilo de la escultora es la de la colección del Victoria and Albert Museum...» She later states, «A pesar de la falta de una firma... ésta me parece atribuible a Luisa. La comparación con otras obras firmadas por Luisa (sobre todo *Los desposorios místicos de santa Catalina* de c. 1691, Hispanic Society, Nueva York)... lo confirmará». *Ibid.*, p. 100.



period<sup>43</sup>. The present work is undocumented and undated; however, Roldán had formed a connection with the Franciscan convent dedicated to San Diego of Alcalá, at Alcalá de Henares, from 1697 to 1701, when she was working on a commission for Carlos II. This was a figure of Christ carrying the Cross (an *imagen de vestir*) which was intended for the convent. In fact, the death of Carlos II in 1700 prevented the sculpture from reaching its destination, and it was eventually given to the convent of Clarisas de Sisante at Cuenca, after the death of Roldán<sup>44</sup>. As S. Diego of Alcalá is rarely represented in sculpture, it seems reasonable to assume that Roldán's initial commission for the convent may have led to her being asked to carry out a further small-scale work, showing their patron saint. If so, the present piece may date from about 1697 to 1701. Catherine Hall-van den Elsen also suggested a possible connection of this group with the convent at Alcalá de Henares in her thesis<sup>45</sup>, but has proposed that stylistically the group accords more closely with works probably executed around 1691-2 (the New York *Mystic Marriage* (undated) and the *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* dated 1691 in the collection of the Condesa Ruiseñada at San Sebastián)<sup>46</sup>. She points out the similarity of composition of the complex groups, and the details of the bent toes of the male figures in the New York group and the angels to the left in the present one and the Ruiseñada groups<sup>47</sup>. The present group ought therefore to be dated c.1691-c.1701.

In the publications to date on Luisa Roldán's oeuvre, no discussion has been given as to whether she modelled or cast her works. It is assumed that all her terracottas are modelled<sup>48</sup>. Nevertheless, many of her works bear strikingly similar features, in terms of compositions, and individual figures; moreover, within the same works repetitions of certain motifs can be seen. Casting clearly facilitates reproduction, and may have been a technique used in some of these pieces.

The similarities between the group in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the *Mystic Marriage* in the Hispanic Society remarked on above may be due simply to the homogeneity of Luisa Roldán's style, rather than because she employed moulds. However, in order to test the theory that moulds might have been used, the overall dimensions, and certain details of each piece were measured for com-

<sup>43</sup> See CEAN BERMUDEZ, J. A.: *Diccionario Histórico de los más ilustres Profesores de las Bellas Artes en España*, Madrid, 1800, IV, pp. 235-239; GILMAN PROSKE, *Connoisseur*, *op. cit.*; MARTIN GONZALEZ, Juan José: *Escultura Barroca en España, 1600-1700*, Madrid, 1983, pp. 177-184.

<sup>44</sup> PALOMINO, Antonio: *El Parnaso Español* [1714] in SANCHEZ CANTON, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 362, cited in GILMAN PROSKE: *Connoisseur*, *op. cit.*, pp. 621-2 and notes 27-8. See also MARTIN GONZALEZ, *Escultura Barroca*, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

<sup>45</sup> HALL-VAN DEN ELSEN, MA thesis, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>46</sup> For the Ruiseñada group, see GILMAN PROSKE: *Connoisseur*, *op. cit.*, fig. 7.

<sup>47</sup> Personal communication, 1990.

<sup>48</sup> See GILMAN PROSKE: *Connoisseur*, *op. cit.* above and SANCHEZ-MESA MARTIN, *op. cit.* above. GILMAN PROSKE (*Connoisseur*, *op. cit.*, Part III, note 53) records that the three pieces by Luisa Roldán in the collection of the Hispanic Society «were examined by optical —emission spectrography an X— ray diffraction, in order to find out whether there were differences in the material used, with the possibility that wide differences might indicate more than one workshop». The results indicated that almost certainly only one workshop was active. Gilman Proske does not however comment on an investigation of the possibility of moulds being used.

parison. The face of the Virgin in both groups, and those of the angels on the left, were compared. The results were inconclusive: the overall height and depth of the groups were very close, while the width differed markedly; the measurements of details proved to be similar, but not identical, with variations from two to eight millimetres<sup>49</sup>. Because they were only measured manually, differences might be explained by the inaccuracies of this method of measuring, and possibly by varying degrees of shrinkage during firing. Slight disparities in appearance, for example in the hair of the angels on the left of each group, could be due to the fact that these heads were finished by hand, after they had been removed from the moulds. Nevertheless, on this evidence, it seems far from certain that moulds were used for analogous parts of different groups made in Luisa Roldán's workshop<sup>50</sup>. More likely is the possibility that moulds were used for repeated parts of the same group. On the present piece, the heads of the cherubim have the same dimensions as one another<sup>51</sup>. Perhaps for aesthetic reasons as well as for the sake of improved efficiency of production, moulds were employed for repeated features of the same group. There are no physical signs of casting on this piece, so this suggestion must remain hypothetical, supported by the circumstantial evidence that Luisa Roldán's prolific output implies workshop methods which would ensure speed of completion<sup>52</sup>.

As has been remarked, «clay sculpture, when it is fired into a permanent form, preserves a wealth of evidence as to the individual working methods of sculptors»<sup>53</sup>. Working methods included not only modelling, but casting from moulds, and the works discussed above illustrate the variety of purposes for which casting was used.

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<sup>49</sup> The overall measurements were (of the *Mystic Marriage*): Ht.: 36.5 cm.; W.: 45 cm.; D.: 29.5 cm. This group lacks a base. The comparative measurements of *The Virgin and Child with S. Diego of Alcalá* (without its base) were: Ht.: 36 cm.; W.: 54.5 cm.; D.: 31.5 cm. The greater width and depth of the London piece is partly explained by the floor area around the figures, which is much shallower in the New York group.

The measurements of the face of the Virgin of the Victoria and Albert Museum group were: Ht.: 50 mm.; W.: 38 mm. Those of the Virgin in the *Mystic Marriage* were Ht.: 42 mm.; W.: 32 mm. Those of the face of the angel on the left of the Victoria and Albert Museum group were Ht.: 42 mm.; W.: 31 mm., while those of the angel on the left in the *Mystic Marriage* were Ht.: 40 mm.; W.: 29 mm.

<sup>50</sup> Other compositions showing close similarities are two groups in the Diputación Provincial, Guadalajara: *St. Joachim and St. Anne with the infant Virgin*, and *The Holy Family* (Gilman Proske, *Connoisseur*, III, figs. 14 and 15), the quality of both pieces indicating workshop collaboration; Catherine Hall-van den Elsen has remarked (in correspondence) on the pinched quality of the faces of St Joachim and St Joseph respectively. Also closely similar to each other are three groups of *The Education of the Virgin*, one formerly in the Freiherr von Stumm collection (sold by G. Deneke, Berlin, October 4th, 1932), one in the collection of the Condesa de Ruiseñada, San Sebastián, and one in the collection of the Marqués de Perinat, Madrid (*ibid.*, figs. 11, 12, 13). These pieces are also lower in quality than Luisa Roldán's autograph works.

<sup>51</sup> The measurements of the cherub heads are: Ht.: 3.6 cm.; W.: 2.6 cm.

<sup>52</sup> Catherine Hall-van den Elsen has traced a letter written by the artist to Carlos II, in which Luisa Roldán states she is attaching a list of some eighty works she has done in the last ten years. (This was kindly communicated by Ms Hall-van den Elsen in correspondence).

<sup>53</sup> See LARSON, John: «The Conservation of Terracotta Sculpture», *The Conservator*, IV, 1977, p. 38.



*St. George* by Pedro Millán (active 1487-1506). Polychromed terracotta. Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. no. A6-1943. Reproduced courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

LAMINA II



*The Lamentation* by Juan de Juni (c. 1507-1577). Polychromed terracotta. Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. no. 91-1864. Reproduced courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum.



*The Virgin appearing to S. Diego of Alcalá* by Luisa Roldán (c. 1656-1704). Polychromed terracotta on a wood base. Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. no. 250-1864. Reproduced courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

LAMINA IV



*The Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine* by Luisa Roldán. Polychromed terracotta. The Hispanic Society of America, inv. no. D820. Reproduced courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America, New York.