

Too Many Wounds: Innocenzo da Petralia's Excessive Crucifixes and the Normative Image

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In June 1637 a wooden crucifix newly made for the Reformed Friars Minor of the convent of San Damiano in Assisi caught the eyes of several critics, including two representatives of the local inquisition **FIGURE 1**. One of the local inquisitors together with the guardian of Santa Maria degli Angeli, Fra Stefano da Bettona, were convinced that this image, which the San Damiano friars wanted to use for public devotion, was able to provoke 'scandal' because there were too many wounds and bruises, and too much blood, on Christ's body. This made the image 'altogether different from the other crucifixes we use to see in churches,' *difforme* and *scontrafatto*. In particular, Fra Stefano deemed the image not to be displayed in public 'because if it were successful, all the other crucifixes could be removed from churches.'¹ This information is reported in a letter, which the general inquisitor of Umbria, Fra Vincenzo Maria Pellegrini (responsible for Assisi), sent from Perugia to the cardinals of the Holy Office in Rome. Already informed about the troubles, the cardinals had previously sent to the same Pellegrini a *memoriale* submitted to them by the San Damiano friars in defense of the image.² Involving also the bishop of Assisi, Tegrino Tegrini (1630–41), who, as we shall see, was rather in favour of keeping the image, the Holy Office initiated a larger enquiry into the works of the author of this crucifix, the wood sculptor and reformed lay friar minor Innocenzo da Petralia (from his hometown, Petralia Sottana in Sicily).³

Relatively well known among historians of the Roman inquisition, this inquest consists in a file (later classified as an enquiry into a 'bloody image of the crucifix painted by fra' Innocenzo [...] in Assisi and in Pesaro'), which can be studied and analysed from several perspectives.⁴ Alejandro Cifres has discussed the historical details and the theological implications of the episode, while the historian Maria Pia Fantini has developed a compelling analysis of the anthropology of censorship in this case.⁵ However, the case has not yet been the object of an in-depth art-historical study.⁶ The specialized studies available on Innocenzo da Petralia and his works have not so far fully taken into account this documentation, since they mostly predate the wider circulation of this archival material.⁷

I will focus on the significance of this episode for the development of a study on the normativity of sacred images.⁸ For such a study, this case is extremely important, not only because it concerns the central image of Christianity, but also because it is one of the few inquisitorial trials into the work of a sculptor, if not the only one we know at present. A close analysis of the Petralia case provides art historians with new tools, viewpoints, and historical language, which allows us to study in new ways the tensions between different types of visual norms, emotions, and artistic techniques, in particular those techniques (or styles) through which an artist could push the limits of realistic effects.⁹ Most importantly, it provides new material for a reflection around the notion of the visual norm.

The short abstract of the story presented above already shows what was at stake in this episode. First, an invoked norm, allegedly both theological and visual, that the Sicilian crucifixes would have violated. Second, the power of this image to set a new standard, thus causing not only conflicts between local and central authorities and between different religious communities, but also, the alleged 'removal' of all the previous crucifixes. Presenting a small part of a larger research project, I will focus in particular on three points.



First, the ambivalent effects of this excessive image and the legal function of drawings submitted to court. Second, the geography of this type of crucifix and the point of view of the artist. Third, a comparison between the efficacy of the Petralia crucifixes and a previous crucifixion drawing, which will prompt some comments around the notion of the 'normative image'.¹⁰

Image Autopsies: Drawing as Visual Defence

Innocenzo da Petralia (born between 1602 and 1603) had learnt the traditional art of sculpting and painting wood in Sicily, together with fellow sculptor Franciscan master Umile da Petralia (d. 9 February 1639, in Sant'Antonino, Palermo).¹¹ In 1635, Innocenzo contributed a cross of cypress for a crucifixion by Umile for Collesano, near Palermo.¹² Shortly after, probably before 1636, Innocenzo left Sicily for a series of commissions in central Italy. His itinerary, which was quite unusual for a local artist of this type, but it was not uncommon for artists who were linked to religious orders, included at least Rome, Assisi, and Gubbio, the area of Pesaro in the Marche, and later the island of Malta.

The first and most prominent work he produced outside Sicily was certainly the one he made for the church and convent of San Francesco a Ripa, in Rome **FIGURE 2**. Since 1579, this church in Trastevere had hosted the

FIGURE 1. Innocenzo da Petralia, *San Damiano Crucifix*, 1637. Assisi, Church of San Damiano.



FIGURE 2. Innocenzo da Petralia, *San Francesco a Ripa Crucifix*, 1637. Porretta Terme (Bologna), church of Santa Maria Maddalena.



FIGURE 3. Innocenzo da Petralia, *Gubbio Crucifix*, 1637. Gubbio, Convent of San Girolamo.

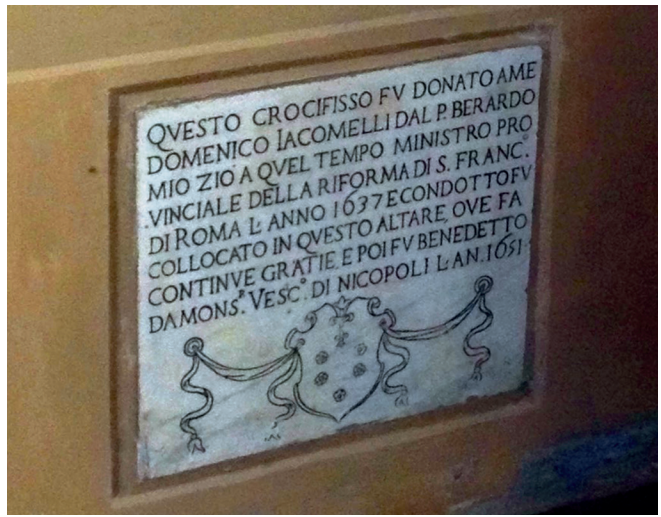
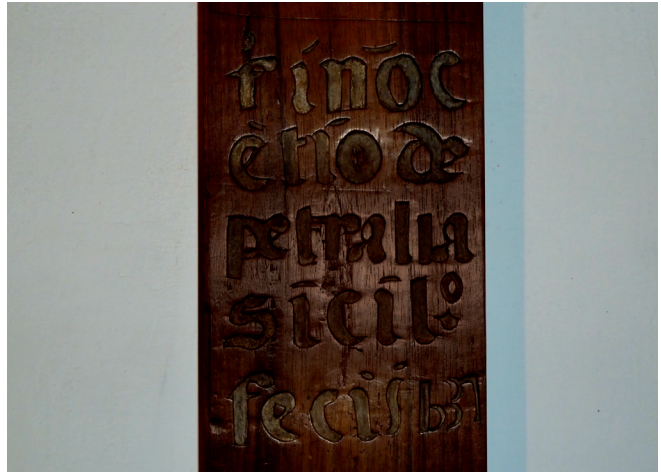


FIGURE 4. Innocenzo da Petralia, detail of signature on the *Gubbio Crucifix*, 1637. Gubbio, Convent of San Girolamo.

FIGURE 5. Epigraph appended on the left of the *San Francesco a Ripa Crucifix*, 1651. Porretta Terme (Bologna), church of Santa Maria Maddalena.



convent of the Reformed Franciscans, who refurbished the building, with important commissions (including, years later, Gianlorenzo Bernini's *Ludovica Albertoni*). Fra Innocenzo worked for this church and convent at the time when the vice-procurator of the Reformed Franciscans in Rome was Friar Ascanio Mariani from Assisi, who appreciated his work very much and subsequently sent the sculptor to Assisi; in Rome, Mariani was also instrumental for the San Damiano friars to present their defensive *memoriale* to the Holy Office.¹³ Even if we do not know much more about the circumstances leading to this first commission in Rome (we do not know why or by whom he was called to Rome), it seems certain that Petralia's work for this important Roman church was pivotal for his subsequent brief but very intense career in central Italy.¹⁴

Reading through the inquisitorial files, and so adopting the perspective of the inquisitors, we are surprised by the number of the other crucifixes that, after the denunciation of the one in San Damiano, were subject to the scrutiny of the Holy Office. The investigation developed in several phases between 1 August 1636 and 15 September 1638.¹⁵ To the astonishment of the inquisitors, and of the modern scholar, it emerged that, in the short period between 1637 and 1638, the Sicilian lay friar had produced not just one, but several similar

(but not identical) objects. He had worked for a large number of patrons of different social standing in Rome (in San Francesco a Ripa), Umbria, in the convent of San Damiano in Assisi and that of San Girolamo in Gubbio, where he proudly signed a further work in 1637 **FIGURES 3, 4**, and in the Marche, where he was reported to have executed in the convent of San Giovanni Battista at least four or five works, for different religious and lay patrons.¹⁶

Received with the highest enthusiasm by many, all these works immediately faced criticism not only in Assisi, but also in Rome, and subsequently in Pesaro. Innocenzo's crucifixes enjoyed full support from the vice-procurator of the Reformed Franciscans Friar Ascanio, but the provincial minister of the order decided to send away the San Francesco a Ripa crucifix, shortly after its completion in 1637, to a remote village in the Apennines, Porretta Terme. There, in the church of Santa Maria, an epigraph from 1651 still recalls this 'gift' and the 'continuous graces' made by the crucifix **FIGURE 5**.¹⁷ It is worth noting that, though the work arrived in Porretta already in 1637, it was blessed only in 1651. We must suppose that during the intervening fourteen years the object faced an ambiguous status, even though the *grazie* celebrated in the epigraph are described as 'continuous'. Whether the decision to get rid of the crucifix in Rome was motivated by aesthetic concerns or by direct or indirect knowledge of the investigation already taking place in Assisi remains unclear; however, it seems plausible that the two events are not independent of the each other. Whatever the reason, the image made for one of the most prominent Franciscan churches in Rome was sent off to the middle of the

FIGURE 6. Angelo da Pietrafitta, *San Francesco a Ripa Crucifix*, 1686. Rome, church of San Francesco a Ripa.

Apennines. Interestingly enough for the present argument, fifty years later (around 1686) a new crucifix, different in style but exactly of the same type, executed by the Calabrian sculptor Fra Angelo da Pietrafitta, replaced the Roman image sent into exile **FIGURE 6**.

The *memoriale* written by the San Damiano friars in defense of the Assisi crucifix was sent also to Bishop Tegrini of Assisi, who on 3 August 1637 wrote back to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, the renowned patron of the arts, who was also the secretary of the Roman Inquisition at the time. Bishop Tegrini argued that the Reformed Friars Minor should be allowed to keep the image, because ‘one cannot deny that this figure moves the mind of everyone who looks at it to great devotion and extraordinary compassion for the passion of Christ’.¹⁸ Another source, a local chronicle from the San Damiano convent, which seems to resonate parts of the original defensive *memoriale*, describes the San Francesco a Ripa crucifix as ‘perfectly beautiful and devout’ (*di intera bellezza e devozione*).¹⁹ The same chronicle narrates that, when the local inquisitor ordered the image confined for forty days in the room where it was created, this order ‘originated a great distaste, above all among the noblewomen, for the reason that they cannot see it’ (*causò grandissimo disgusto, massime a gentildonne per non poterlo vedere*).²⁰

The first question to address must therefore be why these crucifixes provoked such an extreme difference of reactions. Can we know something more about the actual effects produced by these manufactures on different viewers? Thanks to the inquisitorial interest, which these images were exceptionally provoking, the art historian can sit upon a rare vantage point from which it is possible to explore in some detail the actual functioning of what he or she could define, not too anachronistically, as examples of hyperrealist art. The modern stylistic category of ‘hyperrealism’, even if it is not obviously part of the period language, is of interest for a study on image normativity insofar as the prefix ‘hyper-’ points to an overcoming of a standard, which in this instance would be the ‘real’. Of course, not even ‘real’, or ‘realism’, are period words, but we can still try to use this modern label as an analytical tool to study the function of seventeenth-century crucifixes.

The already quoted letter from Bishop Tegrini specifies that the work in Assisi was *carved* in white poplar and *painted* with colours true to life (*è di rilievo di legname di albuccio ricoperto di colori al naturale*).²¹ The technique of Innocenzo was indeed a very traditional one, known from at least two centuries in Sicily.²² The Petralia crucifixes are characterized by a detailed anatomy and a complexion that, though it slightly changes from exemplar to exemplar according to the specific choices of the artist (the crucifix in Rome looks more robust and fleshy, whereas the ones in Assisi or Gubbio are more emaciated), presents overall a similar structure of the figure, which is always repeated. In particular, the wounds and bruises of Christ always follow the same organization: in addition to the wounds on the hands, feet, and chest, we see a very large central laceration, bruised knees, and other bruises along the body, along with signs of ropes at the ankles and wrists. What characterizes in particular the crucifixes by Innocenzo, and those by Fra Umile, is the excessive amount of painted blood, and especially the blood flow, which pours from the wound on the chest, and seems to be emphasized through the use of mixed materials (red paint, red lacquer, and wax).

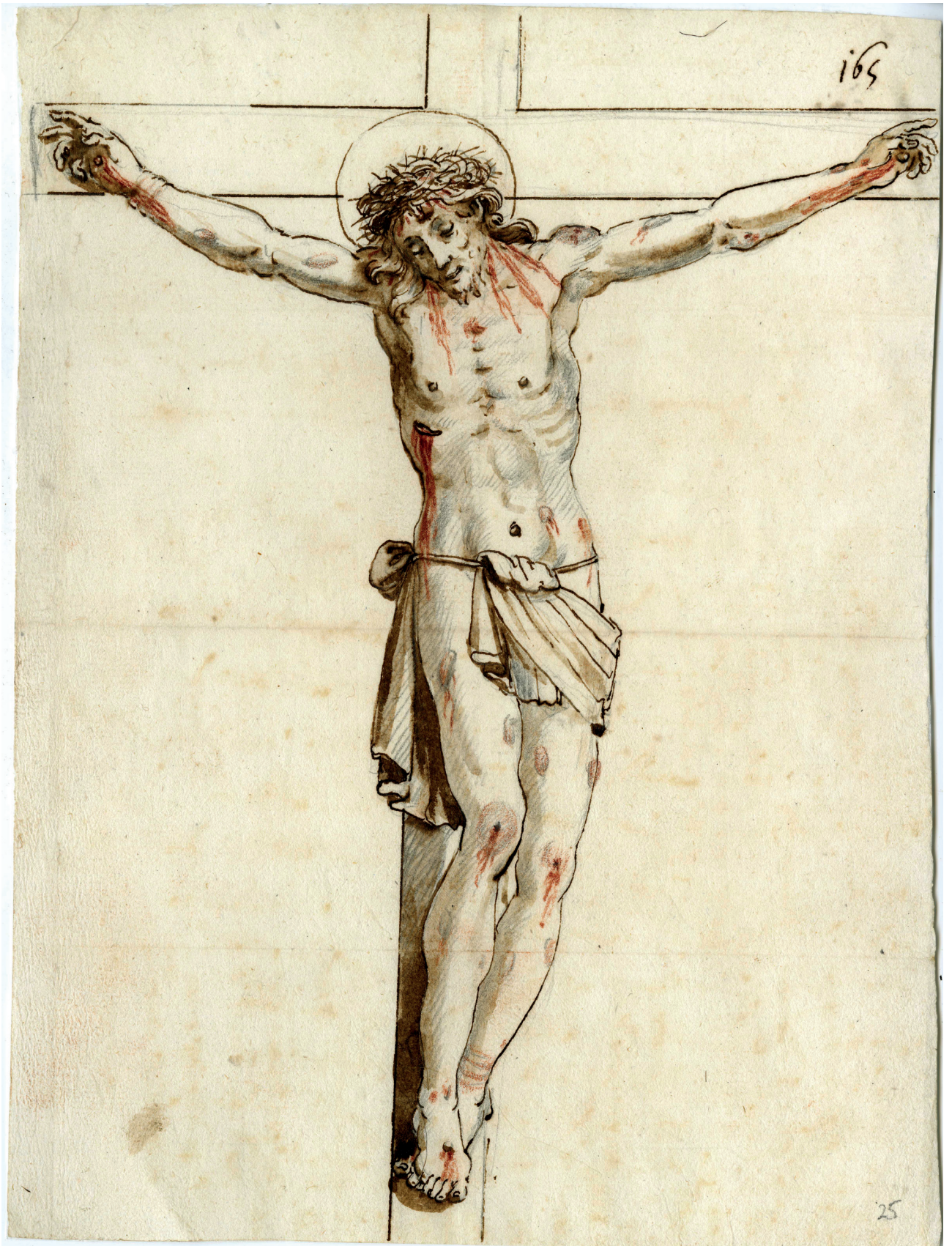


FIGURE 7. Umbrian artist, copy drawing of the *San Damiano Crucifix*, 1637. Vatican City, Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede.

What is of interest here are the modalities through which this particularly complex conformation of the image together with the precise whole map of wounds and bruises on the flesh and body of the crucifixes were transmitted to the Holy Office in Rome. In order to examine the case, the inquisitors needed precise information on the general appearance of the image and body of Christ and also the position and number of the wounds. Since the objects were too big to be sent over, the local inquisitors and bishops gathered different verbal and visual descriptions to forward to Rome.

In Assisi, two strategies for this communication were deployed: one visual and one verbal. Bishop Tegrini asked a local 'painter', whose name is not given, to make a *ritratto* or copy drawing of the image, which was then sent to Rome **FIGURE 7**.²³ In this copy drawing, the body of Christ appears to be much more idealized in comparison to the original sculpture. Not only is Christ's appearance softened, but the wounds and bruises on his body are rendered much less ugly and bloody. The drawing still conveys the original and exact map of bruises and wounds, but it does so in a very lightened manner. In particular, the amount of visible red blood is rendered in the drawing in a much gentler manner than it appears on the sculpted image; the central laceration in the chest, which is so prominent in the San Damiano sculpture, is diminished. Since the drawing was sent on the bishop's initiative, it could have been the result of a tactical move on his part to save the image; or the idealization might have been due to the maker of the drawing who looked at the wooden image through the lenses of a style more in tune with Renaissance models. Certainly, this is a case in which style and stylistic choices change drastically the effect of an image.

In his turn, the inquisitor Vincenzo Maria Pellegrini sent not an image, but a detailed written description of the same San Damiano crucifix. This written description, which was entrusted to a notary of the Inquisition, constitutes a proper forensic examination of the image that is an 'official examination of all the sores, wounds and bruises' ('solenne processo in tutte le piaghe, ferrite e lividi'). In this text, the notary describes at length every wound, every streak of blood, and every bruise on the flesh of the image as if these were real injuries on a real dead body. The extreme accuracy of this long description, which goes as far as describing the wounds on the back,²⁴ results in a proper 'autopsy' of the image of Christ's dead body.²⁵ The agents of the Inquisition, who arrived to describe the image with a judicial preconception assuming nonconformity, were completely caught up in the fiction created by the artist. They write, for example:

On the forehead, above the left eye there is a bruise of three inches, which inflates the flesh [...]. A spine from the [...] crown enters the flesh at the far extremity of the left ear, and, from the puncture of that spine, a large amount of blood comes out, which abundantly flows in three directions, that is, towards the shoulder, the ribs and the chest.²⁶

If we look again at the image, after reading this text, we start to understand one of the reasons why it looks so unsettling: the holes and the wounds with their thick clusters of blood appear to be almost isolated, disembodied from the *corpus*, as if they had a separate life of their own.²⁷

The image autopsy goes even further. Just like a forensic physician or a modern coroner, the notary also gives with medical precision the *causes* for the damage to the image, which is treated exactly as if it were a real corpse. For instance: “There are two notable wounds, one around the ankle, made, as it seems, from the binding of a rope, and they make the aforementioned leg and foot notably bigger than the other.”²⁸ In other words, the signs of abuse (more or less evident in the various crucifixes, according to the different works and audiences) are because Christ’s limbs have been bound; that he had fallen on his knees on its way to the Calvary, and so forth. The detached notary’s report provides us the best evidence for the ‘efficacy’ of the artist’s hyperrealist fiction. Furthermore, it helps us to understand what viewers were meant to see on the cross: the physical effects of all the different stages of the story (the Passion), shown in a synthetic way, at once, on the body of a single suffering image.²⁹

The contrast between this autoptic and forensic report (‘solenne processo’) carried on the body of the image and the drawing provided by Bishop Tegrini is striking. On 13 August 1637, Pope Urban VIII decided to remit the issue to the judgment of the bishop (who was ordinarily in charge of investigating on images), asking only not to permit a solemn procession in the act of the inauguration of the image.³⁰ It is therefore possible to argue that in this instance the plea of the bishop together with the submitted drawing, with its softer shape and diminished rendering of the wounds and blood, had a positive effect in softening the judgment.³¹ This means that, in this case, the drawing acted not as a mere intermediary of the conformation of the image, but rather as an argument in defense of this same image. Therefore, it would be reductive, and probably wrong, to consider this drawing just as neutral ‘evidence’ used in the trial.³² The role of this drawing is in fact more similar to a witness for the defence.

The Geography of Visual Norms and the Voice of the Artist

The second act of the story took place in Pesaro and Rimini. In March 1638, Innocenzo is at work in the convent of San Giovanni Battista di Pesaro. A fellow brother, Marco da Scapezzano, spontaneously denounces his presence and activities to the father inquisitor general of Rimini, Fra Agostino da Correggio. The type of ‘synthetic’ image represented by another of the Petralia crucifixes — which, the defenders in Assisi claimed, ‘was made according to the Revelations of St Bridget’³³ — was rejected in the following, crystal clear terms by Agostino da Correggio:

The universal practice of the holy Church of sculpting and depicting crucifixes that conform to the traditional and ordinary practice of the same holy Church is time-honoured [...]. And, although we must imagine in our minds that Christ [...] was entirely covered in blood on the cross [*fosse tutto sanguinolente sopra della croce*], due to the many strokes he received from the evil ministers, the holy Apostles would not allow him to be depicted or sculpted so full of blood [...], probably because such crucifixes do not cause devotion, but only terror and fright.³⁴

Leaving aside other considerations concerning the media-specific stronger efficacy of images, as opposed to that of texts (e.g. Saint Bridget's revelations) or the imagination (a topic I would like to develop elsewhere), I will focus on my second main point: the geography of visual norms in Europe. *Pace* the Pesaro inquisitor, it is possible to argue that there was no such a thing as a universal 'theological' norm that could apply to the image of the crucifix. Considering the known instances of contested images of the crucifix, it is in fact debatable whether the limits of acceptability were established on 'theological' grounds, or rather iconographic and 'aesthetic' concerns. In 1305–6 London, a fork-shaped carved cross, probably imported from Germany (Conyhope Cross), was deemed to be a *crux horribilis* not only because of the lack of a proper cross-arm for the gibbet, but possibly also because its aspect appeared extraneous and was disconcerting to local viewers.³⁵ We have the impression that, in this realm, the limits of the 'normal' were constantly shifting, according to different ideas, viewpoints, and, above all, visual traditions, innovations, and geographies (rather than chronologies). Catholic art theorists were alternatively attacking or defending — as in the case of a passage by one of the interlocutors in Giovanni Andrea Gilio's *Dialogo degli errori de' pittori* — the 'deformities' of the crucifix.³⁶ Gilio's passage from 1564 would have provided indeed a perfect letter of recommendation for the later crucifixes by Fra Innocenzo.

In the Petralia case, the supporters of the image, in particular a Franciscan friar preaching in Pesaro, claimed that 'in Spain there were many similar crucifixes, which are making and made *many miracles*'.³⁷ At the present state of the research, it is not entirely clear whether the preacher was referring to a specific class of Spanish objects or not. We cannot exclude that his remark was only a generic reference to Spanish polychrome sculptures of the suffering Christ, of which the preacher might have had notice.³⁸ However, the reference, in an official sermon, to the many miracles effected by these images in the past and in the present might point to something more specific. Perhaps the preacher was aware of examples such as the famous Cristo de Burgos, a medieval crucifix covered by wounds, which was deemed to be miraculous and whose effect of reality was enhanced by the cow skin covering the surface of the sculpture.³⁹ However, it would be wrong to think that it was the intention of Petralia to conform to the class of objects to which the Cristo de Burgos pertains. The image in Burgos does not provide a strict iconographic parallel. Furthermore, as several other examples in Italy (first of all, il *Volto Santo* in Lucca) and in Spain, the image in Burgos was traditionally attributed to Nicodemo, while the crucifixes by Innocenzo da Petralia do not pertain to this tradition. On the contrary, they are proudly produced and recognized as the work of this precise sculptor, who signs his works (e.g. in Gubbio, **FIGURES 3, 4**) and is pursued exactly because, in Rome and in central Italy, he is perceived as a disturbing innovator.⁴⁰

It is important to stress, once again, that it was not the artist himself who mentioned the Spanish models in his defense; it was, instead, the Franciscan



FIGURE 8. Innocenzo da Petralia's crucifix from the Franciscan church of Santa Maria del Gesù ('Ta' Giezu') in procession, 2013. Malta, La Valletta.



FIGURE 9. Peruvian (Chachapoyas),
Lenten curtain, before 1775. New York,
American Museum of Natural History.

preacher who made the connection, showing an awareness of the complex cartographies of the image of the crucifix. For this type of suffering Christ, strands also came from northern Europe. Today, the same church of San Giovanni Battista in Pesaro hosts also a fifteenth-century crucifix attributed to Johannes Teutonichus or Paolo 'alamanno', which fra Innocenzo might have seen.⁴¹ The geographical map of the particular type of crucifix he produced extends, actually, even beyond continental Europe, from Malta to New Spain. Malta was the place where, far away from Rome, but at the centre of diplomatic exchanges between European elites in the Mediterranean Sea, Petralia ended his career, with a few extremely dramatic works, including one at La Valletta, which nobody there ever contested **FIGURE 8**. At the other end, and most probably via a Spanish mediation, a Peruvian Lenten curtain shows exactly the same synthetic type, offering an initial basis for a larger circulation and map **FIGURE 9**.

As for Fra Innocenzo, most probably he was simply following and elaborating on a type of crucifix that was well established in Sicily, as we have seen. Characterized not only by the two lacerations on the knees and by the signs of the binding laces at the ankles and wrists, but, in particular, by the central hole in the chest, this sculptural type was widely spread across the island since at least the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth.⁴² The type was not exclusive of sculpture, but was known also in other media, as is shown by an altarpiece signed and dated 1514 by the Augustinian Friar Simpliciano da Palermo, now in the deposits of the Galleria Regionale della Sicilia **FIGURE 10**. The altarpiece was originally painted for the female Benedictine monastery of Saint Mary Magdalene in Corleone.⁴³ Surrounded by Mary with the pious women, Saint John, Mary Magdalen embracing the feet nailed to the cross, and a small male donor figure, we see a crucifix with the same 'additional' hole in the chest, which corresponds exactly to the type later depicted by Innocenzo da Petralia.

The question then concerns more the geographies of visual norms in Europe than a theological conflict around the image of the crucifix. This visual geography was clearly variable even inside Catholic Europe. Thanks to the documentation of the Holy Office, it is possible to demonstrate how, for our artist, this type of crucifix was absolutely 'normal'.

The file preserves evidence from both the hand and the voice of the artist, which makes this dossier extraordinary. The drawing submitted by the bishop of Assisi was not the only one to be sent to Rome. A second watercoloured sheet is preserved in the file **FIGURE 11**. This astonishing watercoloured drawing was sent from Pesaro, where, as we have seen, the investigation had continued. Still at the orders of the central office in Rome, Agostino da Correggio

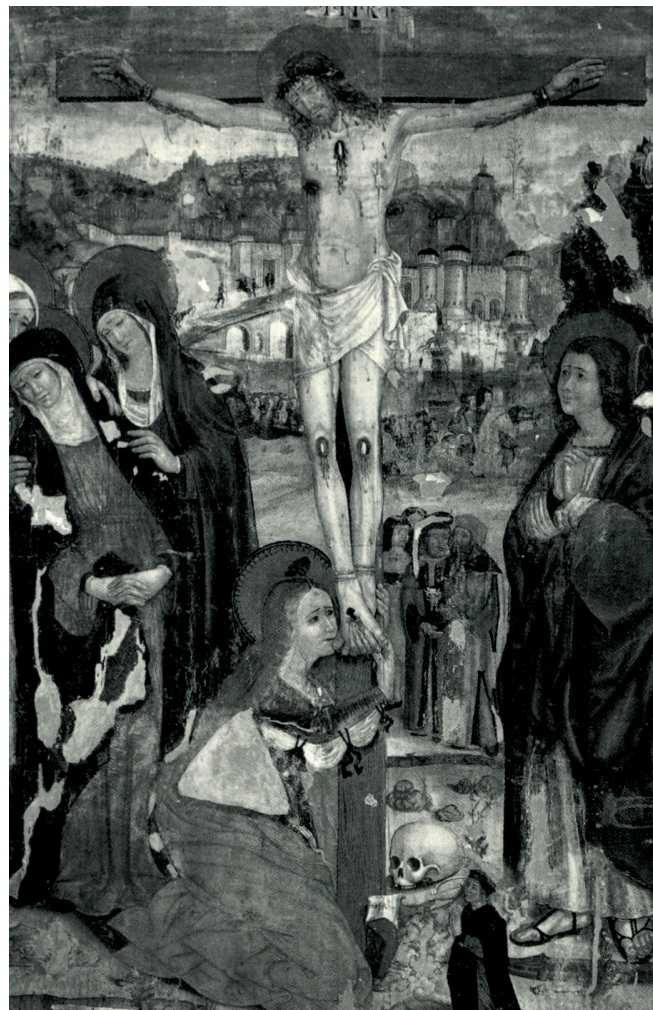


FIGURE 10. Simpliciano da Palermo, *Crucifixion, with Mary and the Pious Women, Saint John, Mary Magdalen, and a donor*, 1514. Palermo, Galleria Regionale della Sicilia.



FIGURE 11. Innocenzo da Petralia, copy drawing of the *Mosca Crucifix*, 1638. Vatican City, Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede.

had asked the artist himself to ‘make a drawing, or copy, of the crucifix made by him, which was exhibited in the Mosca chapel’ in the Reformed Franciscan church of San Giovanni Battista in Pesaro.⁴⁴

This autograph copy drawing, executed between the 15 and 22 April 1638, appears to be iconographically identical to the model (most probably the one now in Gradara), but stylistically much less true to life.⁴⁵ The streams of blood painted *al naturale* on the white poplar flesh of the carved image, which seem almost real in the sculpture, are translated in the drawing in a very stylized and almost abstract way, like a sort of watercoloured spiral rays. If we compare the two drawings, the one made by the anonymous painter in Assisi and the one executed by Fra Innocenzo, the contrast is striking **FIGURES 7, 11**. They seem to refer to two almost completely different images. The three symmetrical blood spirals dropping on each side of the shoulders and all the other details in the Petralia drawing rather correspond with almost scientific exactitude to the detailed written notary autopsy from Assisi. Not only does this drawing exactly convey the structure and map of wounds, but it also starkly renders through its clarity the suffering of the image, in particular the precise use of watercolour red for the blood and of grey crayon for the bruises.⁴⁶

It is therefore clear that the artist did not try to conceal in any way the alleged excessive character of the work. On the contrary, he presented it very proudly to the inquisitors, thus revealing his understanding of the norm for crucifixes. The viewer is particularly struck by the contrast between the wounded and suffering body of the image and the lively and charming rococo putto joyfully flying above it. Most interestingly, when asked in Assisi by the vicar of Inquisitor Pellegrini why he had portrayed Christ so wounded, bloodied, broken, and beaten, he answered — certainly under pressure — that ‘he made this for the sake of proportion’: ‘domandandoli per qual causa più in un luogo, che nell’altro haveva moltiplicate le piaghe, i lividi, et i tumori, e’ li rispose che ciò haveva fatto per la proportione.’⁴⁷ The use of this art-theoretical term (*proportione*) in this context is puzzling. We will never know whether or not he really considered his crucifixes to be ‘in proportion’, and what he meant by that; however, by looking at the drawing we are able to recognize a careful and almost symmetrical rendering of all the wounds, bruises, and blood streams on the suffering body. On the one hand, the use of this word shows that the friar was convinced that this was the correct way to execute the image of the crucifix;⁴⁸ on the other, it could also show that he had learnt at least some bits and pieces of art theory before starting to sculpt his many images of the suffering Christ.

Images of the Crucifix and the Crucifixion of Images: The ‘Normative Image’

The question is why did Innocenzo’s art, ‘normal’ in Sicily and elsewhere, provoke such a strong reaction in Umbria, in the Marche, and in Rome? First of all, it is arguable that the objection was not fundamentally based on theological grounds, but mainly on visual and aesthetic motifs. The alleged main theological argument — that the image showed *more than five* wounds —

emerges clearly only from one document in the entire dossier: an extremely moving letter in support of the image, written to Cardinal Barberini by Suor Maria, the sister of the duchess of Pesaro, Livia della Rovere. Both noblewomen owned one crucifix each (respectively, two smaller and more refined exemplars), and their letters indicate a particularly aristocratic and female attachment to this extreme image.⁴⁹ From the San Damiano chronicle quoted above, we already learned that, when the vicar of the Inquisition in Assisi ordered that the controversial image should be kept out of sight for forty days, this 'caused enormous displeasure, especially among the *gentildonne*'. In particular, in her moving *supplica*, the sister of the Pesaro duchess, who was a nun, wrote that the inquisitor wanted to take her beloved crucifix away with the excuse that the image shows 'many other wounds beyond the five'.⁵⁰ The tone of the letters, however, betrays the nun's scepticism about the theological and iconographic position on the number of Christ's wounds. To Suor Maria, this point sounded like an academic remark when compared to the spiritual comfort that the image was able to dispense.

The objections were in fact more of an aesthetic or even an ethic order. The image is considered 'unusual' because it appears to be too much abused with painted blood, and is therefore 'scontrafatta' (ugly, deformed) and too terrible because it frightens instead of causing devotion, which clearly contradicts the opinion of the supporters of the image. In light of these objections, the puzzling defensive answer provided by the artist used one of the central terms of Renaissance art theory (*proportione*), may also look like an attempt on his part to evoke an ideal type of the image of Christ, which the inquisitors, whether run-of-the-mill or more refined (such as Francesco Barberini), might have had in mind. In fact, the central Italian inquisitors were looking at Petralia's works with eyes familiar with the Umbrian and central Italian development of religious art. This could have enhanced their sense of shock and disturbance before Innocenzo's crucifixes.

This observation leads to a second, and stronger reason for the refusal of the image. The main objection against the image was the one I already mentioned in my opening, which was formulated by the guardian of Santa Maria degli Angeli: 'if it were successful, all the other crucifixes could be removed from churches'. Of this argument, we find at least two other formulations. According to Inquisitor Pellegrini, his own intention in writing to Rome was 'to avoid any innovation against the ancient and common style of the Holy Church in the matter of the image of the Crucifix, without the licence of the Holy Congregation, in order not to deprive of the due cult the other similar images in the succession of time' ('acciò all'altre simili imagini in successione di tempo non si togliesse il dovuto culto').⁵¹

Finally, in the *Storia del crocifisso della Chiesa di S. Damiano* the critics of the image in Assisi said that, because of its success, 'il crocifisso di S. Rufino perderebbe il credito, et non avrebbe più concorso'.⁵² San Rufino was the cathedral of Assisi, and the crucifix in it was preserved in a chapel built in 1561.

We could tentatively call such a powerful image 'a normative image'. That is, one that has the potential to 'destroy' all the previous images (therefore, in a certain sense, it is also an 'iconoclastic image'),⁵³ but, at the same time, by doing this, it is also able to establish a new regime, and therefore it is potentially *normative*. Already in the Middle Ages, but more frequently in the

Renaissance and the early modern times, there are several other images of this type. I have already mentioned the Conyhope Cross, which in 1305–6 in London was suppressed because ‘it had done its job too well.’⁵⁴ I will briefly evoke only another prominent example: the famous drawing of *Christ on the Cross*, produced by Michelangelo Buonarroti for Vittoria Colonna around 1538–41, now in London **FIGURE 12**.

After all the broken and bleeding Christs I have discussed so far, it comes as a relief to look for a moment at the undamaged body represented in Michelangelo’s black chalk drawing. Very differently from the *dolorosus* type, Michelangelo portrays a much more bodily and heroic conception of Christ’s resistance to suffering and death.⁵⁵ Still, this image may be considered extreme and almost disturbing for the emphasis on the torsion and the excessive expressivity of the body.

Notwithstanding what may seem an unfair juxtaposition between Michelangelo’s crucifix and the ones made by our much more obscure Sicilian sculptor, this comparison allows us to compare their efficacy (and, in this case, also their gendered efficacy, that is, the effect they had in particular on aristocrat female viewers). In one famous passage, Vittoria Colonna describes the effects of the contemplation of this image.⁵⁶ She scrutinized the drawing at length with the help of a candle, a magnifying glass, and a mirror. After this very close ‘autopsy’ of this ‘most alive’ image, she let Michelangelo know that this crucifix ‘has certainly crucified in my memory all the many depictions I have ever seen.’⁵⁷

Playing with the rhetorical inversion of ‘image of the crucifix’ and ‘crucifixion of images’, this comment can be compared to the claim of the Assisi inquisitor that were the San Damiano crucifix ‘successful, all the other crucifixes could be removed from churches’. With all the differences between the two cases, in both instances we can observe the same conflict between all previously known images and a single new one, which is believed to have the power to kill all others, establishing a new visual standard. In both cases, the perpetrator (and the legislator) is the artist.

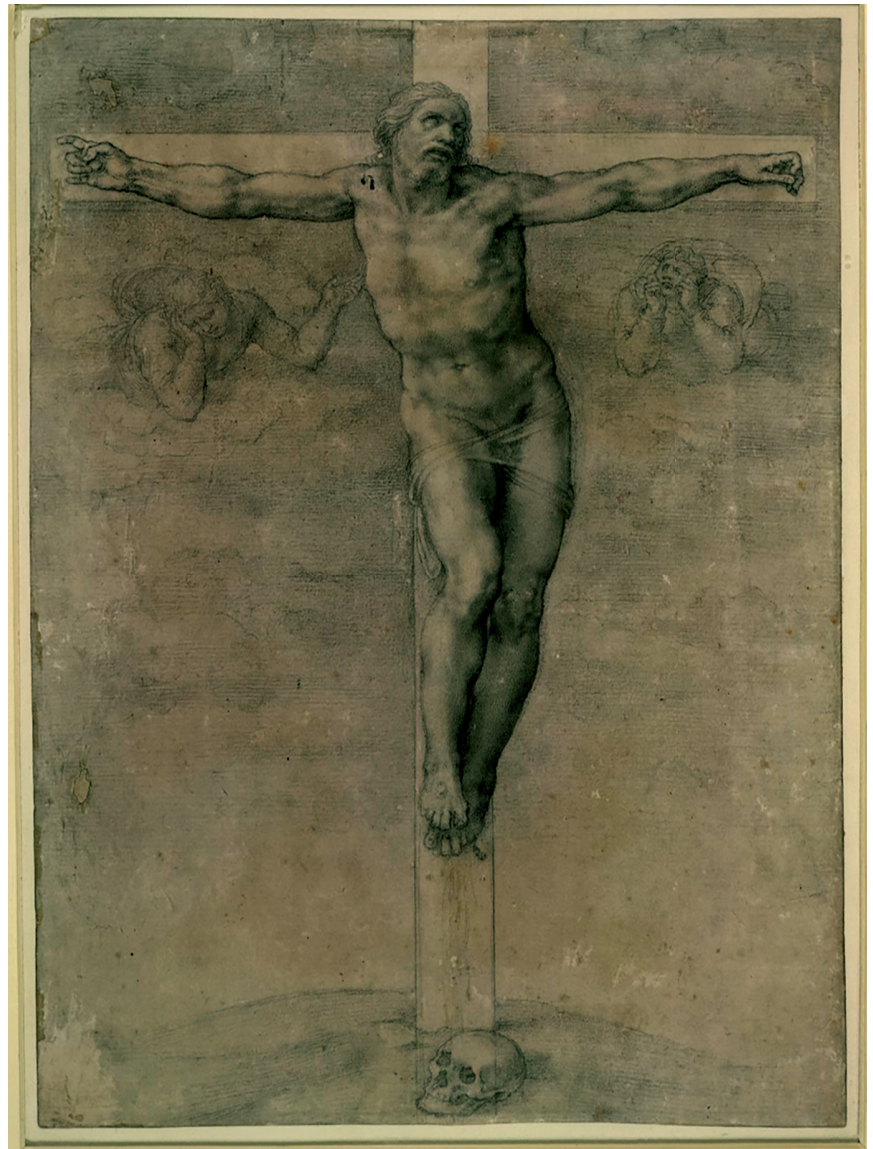


FIGURE 12. Michelangelo, *Christ on the Cross*, black chalk, 1538–41. London, British Museum.

Appendix The Autopsy of an Image

ACDF, St. st. H 3 b, 2, ff. 19r–21v

Die 14. junii 1637

Pater vicarius generalis Sancti Offitii Perusiae frater Augustinus de Imola sacrae theologiae magister accessit ad conventum Sancti Damiani fratrum ordinis sancti Francisci reformatorum prope, et extra Assisium una mecum notario infrascripto et admirando reverendo patre lectore jubilato, et guardiano Sanctae Mariae Angelorum fratre Stephano de Bietonio de mandato reverendissimi patris inquisitoris generalis totius Umbriae ad effectum visitandi et inspiciendi imaginem Sanctissimi Crucifixi noviter fabricati et ad presentiam admirandus reverendissimi patres videlicet fratris Demetrii de Abastia guardiani et fratris Nicolai de Perusia vidit et adnotavit prout ergo notarius quae vidi et adnotavi cum praedictis ut infra videlicet.

Un crucifisso grande sopra della croce representante Christo morto.

Nella fronte sopra l'occhio sinistro un livido che rileva la carne di lunghezza tre dita, e dalla grandezza di detto livido escono fuori due spine della corona, che li soprastanno all'occhio.

Nell'ultima estremità de l'orechia sinistra entra una spina della medesima corona, e dalla pontura di detta /19v/ spina esce tanta copia di sangue che abbondantemente si diffonde in tre parti, cioè verso la spalla, le coste, et il petto.

Sopra la spalla sinistra vi si scopre notabilmente rilevata la carne con livido nella somità del qual livido si vede rotta la carne e ne esce il sangue.

Nella parte detta il pesce di detto braccio si scorge un livido di lunghezza tre dita verso la parte inferiore, e n'esce poca quantità di sangue. Passata la congiuntura di detto braccio verso la mano vi apparisce un altro livido di minor grandezza e n'escono alcune stille di sangue. Sotto detto livore immediatamente vi è un livido grande, come in forma circolare et apparisce rotta la carne con qualche effusione di sangue. Vicino alla detta mano nel polso vi è rottura di carne come piaga da la quale esce il sangue, e sopra di essa immediatamente vi è rottura di carne con effusione di sangue, finalmente viene la piaga fatta dal chiodo nel luogo solito con l'effusione di molto sangue.

Sotto il detto braccio immediatamente nel fine delle costole verso /20r/ la schiena nella parte superiore vi è una piaga insanguinata e con l'effusione di sangue. Nell'istessa parte più abasso ma verso il corpo vi apparisce una piaghetta; e poco lontano un livido et d'ambi doi ne scaturisce copia di sangue.

Sotto la spalla sinistra un livido con due gocce di sangue.

Nel mezzo del petto una piaga con gran copia di sangue, qual piaga è di forma come circolare.

Non molto distante ma dalla parte destra vi è la piaga ordinaria della lancia con notabile copia di sangue che s'alza sopra la carne et alcune gocce di sangue che s'alza sopra la carne, et alcune gocce d'acqua.

Fra il collo e la chioma dalla parte destra esce copia di sangue. Nella parte medesima fra le coste e la schiena vi è un livido grande con elevatione di carne et alcune goccie di sangue.

Sopra il braccio medesimo vi si scorge una spina dalla cui puntura esce sangue.

Poco sopra nel pesce un livido con apparitione di tre goccie di sangue.

Passata la congiuntura e sotto il braccio vi sono due piaghe; una grande e l'altra piccola e l'una e l'altra gietta sangue se ben più la grande che la piccola. /20v/ Doppo ne seguita la piaga ordinaria del chiodo con notabile effusione di sangue.

Nel fine del braccio verso la mano appariscono tre lividi che circondano il braccio, che appariscono fatte da fune che habbino legato il detto braccio.

Nella coscia destra nella parte superior vi è un livido dal quale escono alcune goccie di sangue.

Nella parte più inferiore di detta coscia vi è un altro livido, e ne scappano molte goccie di sangue.

Il ginocchio apparisce notabilmente elevato, gonfio, e livido con apertura nella somità de detto ginocchio, et effusione di sangue.

Sotto il ginocchio nella parte di fuori della gamba vi è livido e tumore con l'elevatione di carne e poca effusione di sangue, sì come nell'istessa gamba nella parte di dentro vi apparisce livido e tumore simile.

Nel collo del piede che apparisce livido, vi sono tre piaghe notabili, se ben una un poco minore dell'altre ma però ne esce sangue alla quali seguita la piaga ordinaria /21r/ del chiodo.

Nella coscia sinistra verso la parte di dietro vi è livido tumore e poca effusione di sangue sì come dirimpetto vi è un simile tumore livido et effusione.

Nel ginocchio vi sono tre buchi che fanno piaga con notabile effusione di sangue, poco più abasso doi lividi dall'una e l'altra parte della gamba con tumore e poca effusione di sangue.

Nella parte di fuori della detta gamba sotto il sudetto livido vi è rottura di carne che fa piaga ed effusione di sangue.

Sotto immediatamente detta rottura seguitano lividi notabili, uno al collo del piede fatto come apparisce da legatura di fune et ingrossano detta gamba e piede più dell'altro notabilmente.

Nel filo della schiena vi è una piaga di lunghezza sei dita in circa e di profondità dua ed molta copia di sangue.

Quae omnia ego notarius infrascriptus cum suprascriptus nominatis testibus vidi et adnotavi ad conventum Sancti Francisci etc.

Frater Zenobius Massinis Sancti Offitii notarius.

[on the back]

Accepi cum litteris patris inquisitoris Perusiae die 3. augusti 1637.

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1 'Havendomi significato il mio vicario d'Assisi con sua lettera delli 6 del passato che li Frati Minori osservanti riformati di San Damiano di detta città havevano fatto un nuovo crocifisso totalmente diverso dalli altri crocifissi, che si sogliono vedere per le chiese e che lo volevano portare solennemente in processione per il quale effetto havevano anco dalla santità di N. S. S. un'indulgenza, io li risposi che ordinasse a detti frati che non portassero detto crocifisso in processione e non l'esponessero a publica adoratione senza licenza speciale di cotesta Sacra Congregazione; come fece. E perché la parte reclamava, mandai il mio padre vicario generale, acciò vedesse detto crocifisso, e me ne desse relatione. Egli si trasferì al convento di San Damiano insieme con il padre guardiano della Madonna degli Angeli (che parimente li faceva istanza, acciò si desse licenza di poter esporre detto crocifisso stante la miseria di detti frati, quali per non avere alcun concorso alla loro chiesa, quasi si morivano di fame) et havendo visto il crocifisso, ne prese la relatione che qui inclusa mando a V. Em.za et in oltre mi riferì che il detto p. guardiano degl'Angeli restò scandalizzato in haver visto d. crocifisso, così difforme e giudicò non esser bene in alcuna maniera che si esponesse, perché se avesse hauto concorso, si potevano togliere dalle chiese gl'altri crocifissi'; Vincenzo Maria Pellegri, General Inquisitor of Umbria to a cardinal of the Roman Inquisition, 1 August 1637, Archivio Storico della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede (hereafter ACDF), St. st. H 3 b, 2, f. 18. The secretary filing and resuming this letter in Rome used the wording 'un crocifisso scontraffatto' to designate the object (*ibid.*, f. 18v). All translations are mine.

2 At present, we have only an indirect knowledge of the original defensive *memoriale* by the San Damiano friars: see the references to it in both a subsequent passage from the same letter quoted above (for which see note 34, below) and in another letter in the file (for which, see note 18, below).

3 Thanks to the discovery of a signed *pergamena* inside a statue of the Immaculate in the church of San Biagio in Enna, it was possible to ascertain the provenance of Fra Innocenzo from Petralia Sottana, and not Soprana, as formerly believed; see Paolo Russo, "Una 'Immacolata Concezione' di frate Innocenzo da Petralia ed altri inediti della scultura in legno del Seicento nella Sicilia centro-meridionale", in *Scritti di Storia dell'Arte in onore di Teresa*

Pugliatti, ed. by Gaetano Bongiovanni, Rome: De Luca, 2007, 81–86 (p. 81).

4 ACDF, St. st. H 3 b, 2: 'Circa sanguinolentam imaginem crucifixi depictam a fratre Innocentio Laico ordinis min. observ. in Civitatibus Assisii et Pisauri'. This inquest was first mentioned by Maria Pia Fantini, "Pouvoir des images, pouvoir sur les images: Rites de dévotion et stratégies de censure par l'Inquisition romaine (XVIe–XVIIe siècle)", in *Inquisition et pouvoir*, ed. by Gabriel Audisio, Aix-en-Provence: Presses Universitaires de Provence, 2004, 269–86; and Chiara Franceschini, "Arti figurative e Inquisizione: Il controllo", in *Dizionario storico dell'Inquisizione*, ed. by Adriano Prosperi, John Tedeschi, and Vincenzo Lavenia, Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2010, I, pp. 102–5.

5 Maria Pia Fantini, "Il sangue dei crocifissi: memoria, mimesis, censura di un dettaglio sintomatico", in *Dieci anni dall'apertura dell'archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede: Storia e archivi dell'inquisizione*, Rome: Scienze e Lettere, 2011, 603–63; Alejandro Cifres, "Fra Innocenzo da Petralia, reo dell'Inquisizione: fra critica d'arte e censura teologica", *Frate Francesco: Rivista di cultura francescana*, 79:1 (2013), 97–137.

6 The brief mention of this case in Felipe Pereda, *Crimen e ilusión: El arte de la verdad en el Siglo de Oro*, Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2017, pp. 317–22, derives from the authors and essays mentioned above.

7 Guido Macaluso, "Frate Innocenzo da Petralia Soprana, emulo del Pintorno", *Archivio Storico Siciliano*, s. 3, 18 (1969), 147–215; Grazia Maria Fachechi, "Frate Innocenzo da Petralia Soprana, scultore siciliano itinerante fra Roma, Umbria e Marche", in *L'arte del legno tra Umbria e Marche: Dal Manierismo al Rococò*, ed. by Cristina Galassi, Perugia: Quattroemme, 2001, 135–42; *Manufacere et scolpire in lignamine: Scultura e intaglio in legno in Sicilia tra Rinascimento e Barocco*, ed. by Teresa Pugliatti, Salvatore Rizzo, and Paolo Russo, Catania: Maimone, 2012, pp. 224–30. See also Rosolino La Mattina, *Frate Innocenzo da Petralia: Scultore siciliano del XVII secolo fra leggenda e realtà*, Caltanissetta: Lussografica, 2002.

8 The Petralia case provided the starting point for the larger ERC project titled "The Normativity of Sacred Images in Early Modern Europe" (LMU, Munich), of which this collective volume is one of the first results. For a first and partial presentation of this project, see the introduction to this volume and Chiara Franceschini, "Volte santi e Trinità triforini: Ricerche in corso sullo statuto delle immagini nei procedimenti

del Sant'Uffizio", in *L'Inquisizione romana e i suoi archivi: A vent'anni dall'apertura dell'ACDF*, ed. by Alejandro Cifres, Rome: Gangemi, 2019, 279–301.

9 My use of '-ism' categories, especially 'realism' and derivatives, can be certainly contested and would require a larger discussion. Here I use these words in a commonsensical way, trying to let these abstract concepts react with the available documentation.

10 These points do not exhaust the possible issues and lines of investigation, which are raised by this case; see Fantini, "Il sangue dei crocifissi"; for a different interpretative focus.

11 Cifres, "Fra Innocenzo da Petralia", p. 130.

12 Giocchino Di Marzo, *I Gagini e la scultura in Sicilia nei secoli 15. e 16.: Memorie storiche e documenti*, 2 vols, Palermo: Tip. del Giornale di Sicilia, 1883, II, pp. 419–20 (doc. 334), and Macaluso, "Frate Innocenzo da Petralia Soprana", p. 153.

13 'In quel tempo fu di tutto dato avviso dal guardiano al predetto padre Ascanio, il quale [...] abbracciò nondimeno sì ardentemente questo negozio, che fu rimessa la cosa alla Congregazione del Sant'Offizio'; see *Storia del crocifisso della chiesa di S. Damiano in Assisi "trascritta fedelmente dalla relazione contemporanea che leggesi nel libro manoscritto delle memorie del Convento conservato nell'archivio di detto luogo a foglio 21 tergo a 22" dal P. Antonio Cristofani* (hereafter *Storia del crocifisso*), in Macaluso, "Frate Innocenzo", pp. 202–4.

14 Perhaps the removal of the image had something to do with the fact that the church was to become the centre of a *provincia* of the Reformed Friars Minor. See Father Benedetto Spila da Subiaco, *Memorie storiche della provincia riformata romana*, 3 vols, Milano: Tipografia Artigianelli, 1890–1896, III, p. 95: 'Urbano VIII colla Bolla *Injuncti Nobis*, in data dei 12 maggio del 1639, eresse in Provincie le Custodie della Riforma, ad ai 16 Aprile del 1640 si celebrò in San Francesco a Ripa il primo capitolo provinciale, chiudendosi con il citato P. Berardo da Bologna la serie dei Custodi'.

15 The several stages of the investigation have been very clearly reconstructed by Cifres, "Fra Innocenzo da Petralia".

16 Cifres, "Fra Innocenzo da Petralia", p. 108, n. 31, and see note 37, below.

17 This is the text of the epigraph: 'Questo crocifisso fu donato a me Domenico Iacomelli dal P. Berardo mio

zio a quel tempo ministro provinciale della Riforma di San Francesco di Roma l'anno 1637 e condotto fu collocato in questo altare ove fa continue gratie e poi fu benedetto da mons. Vescovo di Nicopoli l'anno 1651'. Philippus Stanislaus was the bishop of Nicopolis, in Bulgaria, since 1648.

18 'Con la benignissima lettera di V. Em.za R.ma ricevo il memoriale dato dal guardiano di S. Damiano di questa città alla S. Congregazione del S. Offitio et per informazione di quanto in esso si contiene dico a V. E. che il crocifisso fabricato da un padre siciliano della medesima religione è di rilievo di legname di albuccio ricoperto di colori al naturale, come V. E. potrà vedere dal congiunto disegno che ho fatto cavare puntualmente dal medesimo crocifisso veduto, et incontrato da me con quella maggior diligenza che richiede un negotio di tanta qualità, et non si può negare che questa figura non muova l'animo di ciascuno che la mira a gran divotione et a commiseratione non ordinaria della passione del nostro Salvatore, che è quanto mi occorre dire a V. E.' (ACDF, St. st. H 3 b, 2, f. 29r).

19 *Storia del crocifisso*, in Macaluso, "Frate Innocenzo", p. 202.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 203.

21 See above note 18.

22 For previous crucifixes of the same type (executed in both wood and *mistura*, that is, papier-mache), see, among other examples, *Manufacere et scolpire in lignamine*, pp. 56–57, fig. 13 (crucifix from the end of the fifteenth century, Oratorio di San Vito in Palermo) and p. 76, fig. 25 (Vincenzo Pernaci, Crucifix, 1539, Museo Diocesano di Monreale, deposit).

23 See, again, note 18, above.

24 'Nel filo della schiena vi è una piaga di lunghezza sei dita in circa e di profondità dua ed molta copia di sangue'. See the Appendix at the end of this chapter for a complete transcription of this document. The expression 'solenne processo in tutte le piaghe etc.' is in *Storia del crocifisso*, p. 203.

25 Here 'autopsy' need not be intended as a metaphor, nor as a mere epistemological notion (compare with *Autopsia: Blut- und Augenzeugen: Extreme Bilder des christlichen Martyriums*, ed. by Carolin Behrmann and Elisabeth Priedl, Padeborn-Munich: Fink, 2014), but as a proper legal action (from the point of view of the Inquisition officers) on the body of the image.

26 'Nella fronte sopra l'occhio sinistro un livido che rileva la carne di lunghezza tre dita, e dalla grandezza di detto livido

escono fuori due spine della corona, che li soprastanno all'occhio [...]. Nell'ultima estremità de l'orechia sinistra entra una spina della medesima corona, e dalla pontura di detta spina esce tanta copia di sangue che abbondantemente si diffonde in tre parti, cioè verso la spalla, le coste, et il petto' (see complete transcription in Appendix).

27 Compare with Angela Mengoni, *Ferite: Il corpo e la carne nell'arte della tarda modernità*, Colle Val d'Elsa: SeB, 2012, passim; but I am not following the same semiotic line of interpretation of the 'wound'.

28 See Appendix.

29 Compare with the description of one of the later Innocenzo's crucifixes in Malta in "Traslazione del SS.mo Crocifisso dalla Chiesa di Sant'Agata alla chiesa cattedrale fatta da M.r vescovo, e dal Reverendissimo Capitolo li 3 mag. 1648", in Macaluso, "Frate Innocenzo", pp. 206–7, doc. no. 4: 'Nella chiesa cat.le di Malta nella cappella laterale al coro alla parte sinistra vi è l'immagine miracolosa di Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo Crocifisso [...] la cui statua è di sette palmi, ed è di maniera pendente in croce, che dal peso del corpo squarciato, e livido l'un e l'altro piede dimostra risaltati delle giunture, nell'istesso modo tiene aggranciate le mani tutte anche livide, e squarciate; ha le braccia molto sottili, perché slogate, e svenate, sostengono il peso del corpo morto, il quale rilasciatosi in giù sporge molto in fuori della croce. Le giunture delle ginocchia, tutte le coste dell'una e dell'altra parte disgiunte fra di loro, e sol coperta di sottilissima pelle si mirano al vivo. Si vede al destro lato la santissima piaga larga quattro diti; alquanto aperta grondante sangue, va la fessura fin dentro il cuore, e in tutta la cavità della piaga si vedono vivissimamente le fibre pendenti con alcune gocce di sangue ed umore.'

30 'Illustrissimus remittit hoc negocium arbitrio ordinarii, et hoc tum, ne permittat solennem processionem fieri in actu exhibitionis' (ACDF, St. st. H 3 b, 2, f. 29v).

31 A similar hypothesis is advanced by Cifres, "Fra Innocenzo da Petralia", p. 106: 'non è perciò da escludere che tale disegno abbia influito positivamente nel giudizio degli inquisitori'.

32 For a comparison with other drawings examined by the Holy Office and an initial discussion of the functions and meanings of drawings in the inquisitorial context, see Franceschini, "Volti santi e Trinità triformi", pp. 290–95.

33 This detail is present in both the first letter addressed from Vincenzo Maria Pellegrini to the Holy Office (see note 1, above): 'e volendo il d. mio vicario vedere se il crocifisso era fatto secondo le rivelazioni di S.ta Brigida, come dicevano,

et espongono nel memoriale li detti frati, interrogò il fabbricatore di esso, che è un frate laico del medesimo ordine, domandandoli per qual causa più in un luogo, che nell'altro haveva moltiplicate le piaghe, i lividi, et i tumori, e' li rispose che ciò haveva fatto per la proportione' (see later in the chapter about this puzzling answer), and in *Storia del crocifisso*. It is to assume that the *Storia del crocifisso* corresponds in its contents to the lost *memoriale*.

34 'L'uso universale in S. Chiesa di scolpire, e dipingere crucifissi conforme il consueto, et ordinario d'essa santa Chiesa, egli è immemorabile, et essendo cosa di tanto rilievo come d'effigiare Christo nostro salvatore, rappresentante il principal mistero, col quale ha operato la nostra salute, si deve stimare che, conforme alle traditioni che sono immemorabili in S. Chiesa, habbia hauto origine dall'apostoli o da altri santi, che furono al tempo d'essi apostoli. Et sebene dovemo presupporre nella nostra mente, che Christo nostro salvatore fosse tutto sanguinolente sopra della croce, per le tante battiture, che li furono date dagli empi ministri, niente di meno li santi apostoli, o altri santi loro coetanei, non lo fecero dipingere, né scolpire sanguinolente, così mossi et ispirati dallo Spirito Santo, come stimarsi deve; forse perché detti crucifissi non apportano devotione né spirito, ma solamente terrore e spavento' (ACDF, St. st. H 3 b, 2, ff. 36r-v).

35 Paul Binski, "The Crucifixion and the Censorship of Art around 1300", in *The Medieval World*, ed. by Peter Linehan and Janet L. Nelson, London: Routledge, 2001, 342–60, in particular p. 350 for the observation that 'it seems possible that the Conyhope Cross was problematic not only because of its general form as a symbol, but also in a more fully aesthetic sense'. The cross was shaped like a fork, as in the German type of *Gabelkreuz*.

36 Giovanni Andrea Gilio, *Due dialogi*, Camerino: Antonio Gioioso, 1564, p. 39, laments the way in which artists depict the 'person of our Saviour': 'With regard to the person of our Saviour, there is another abuse [*abuso*], one which seems impossible to rectify. [Contemporary artists] don't know or don't want to know how to express the deformities [*defformità*] that were in Him at the time of his passion, when he was flagellated, when he was shown to the common people by Pilatus saying "Ecce homo", when with much pain he was nailed to the cross, that is, when – according to Isaiah – there was not anymore a man's form in Him'. The conclusion is that: 'It would cause much more contrition [*compunzione*] to see him bleeding and deformed than to see him beautiful and delicate' ('Soggonse M. Troilo: "Un altro abuso anco io trovo circa la persona del nostro Salvatore, il quale non par che ammandare si sappia: et è questo,

che non sanno o non vogliono sapere esprimere le deformità che in lui erano al tempo de la passione, quando fu flagellato, quando fu da Pilato mostrato al popolo, dicendo "Ecco l'uomo", quando con tanta angustia stava fitto in croce, dicendo Isaia che in lui non era più forma d'uomo. Molto più a compunzione moverebbe il vederlo sanguinolento e diffornato, che non fa il vederlo bello e delicato"). This passage applies in particular to the Michelangelo-esque figure in the *Flagellation of Christ* by Sebastiano del Piombo in San Pietro in Montorio (see the essay by Piers Baker-Bates, chapter 11, in this volume), but the remark may be easily applied to the drawing of *Christ on the Cross*, which Michelangelo made for Vittoria Colonna; for which see later in this chapter.

37 'Quando detto crocifisso fu esposto per doi o tre giorni che fu lasciato scoperto, vi fu stravagante concorso di popolo, et quelli padri fecero predicare nella quale predica il predicatore disse ch'in Spagna vi erano molti crucifissi fatti in questo modo che facevano o haveano fatto gran miracoli; aggiungo che parimente intendo come la ferita che ha questo crucifisso nelle gambe rappresenta che quelle siano rotte nell'ossa, et che in esso non si scorge altro che pelle et ossa. Io non son andato *supra factum* per non commovere il popolo, e non sapere la sua intentione per la quale causa anche non ho fatto altro circa di frate Innocentio, quale fa quattro crucifissi a particolari, come nella lettera che li mando con l'informazione pigliata' (Frate Agostino da Correggio to Cardinal Barberini, Rimini, 27 March 1638; ACDF, St. st. H 3 b, 2, f. 27v).

38 Scholars who have worked on Fra Innocenzo and Fra Umile da Petralia have tried to suggest parallels between Fra Umile's works and Spanish models, such as the *Cristo de las injurias* in the Cattedrale di Zamora or various sculptures by Gregorio Fernández (in particular, the one from the church of the Vera Cruz di Valladolid); see Simonetta La Barbera Bellia, "Iconografia del Cristo in croce nell'opera di uno scultore francescano della Controriforma: Fra Umile da Petralia", in *Francescanesimo e cultura in Sicilia (secc. XIII–XVI)*, Palermo: Officina di studi medievali, 1987, 400, and Paolo Russo, *Scultura in legno nella Sicilia centro-meridionale, sec. XVI–XIX*, Messina: Società messinese di storia patria, 2009.

39 This connection is developed by Pereda, *Crímen e ilusión*, p. 323. However, we have no documents to affirm that Petralia 'estudia y reproduce el saturado realismo de los crucifijos españoles esperando vincular así sus creaciones a una estirpe milagrosa' (pp. 365–66). It should be in fact repeated that, in the inquisitorial documentation, the connexion with the Spanish crucifixes is *not* proposed by Innocenzo da Petralia itself, but only by the

Franciscan preacher in Pesaro.

40 A later case in which an imported image was causing a similar inquisitorial reaction is the Cristo de Tacoronte in Tenerife in the Canary Islands, which was a copy of the *Cristo de la Victoria* in Serradilla and was the object of an inquisitorial contestation in 1662. I hope to be back on this on another occasion.

41 Matteo Mazzalupi, "Don Paolo alamanno: un contributo per la questione di Johannes Teutonichus", in *Pittori ad Ancona nel Quattrocento*, ed. by Andrea De Marchi and Matteo Mazzalupi, Milano: Motta, 2008, 322–331: p. 322, figg. 5–6, 12.

42 See note 22, above.

43 Teresa Pugliatti, *Pittura del Cinquecento in Sicilia: La Sicilia occidentale, 1484–1557*, Naples: Electa Napoli, 1998, pp. 231–33, fig. 228.

44 'Andarò a Pesaro conforme alli comandi di vostra Eminenza et in compagnia di quel signor Vicario episcopale, farò che frat'Innocentio minore osservante faccia un disegno, o copia del crucifisso fatto da lui et esposto nella capella del signore Mosca, et la mandarò a vostra Eminenza. Parimente eseguirò le sue commissioni circa la persona del signor cavaliere Tomaso de Nobili da Jesi, et al suo tempo gliene darò il dovuto aviso, et per fine li faccio humilissima riverenza, et bacio le sante vesti' (Fra Agostino da Correggio to Cardinal Barberini, Rimini, 15 April 1638; ACDF, St. st. H 3 b, 2, f. 33r); and 'In esecuzione delli ordini di vostra eminenza, monsignor vicario episcopale et io siamo andati insieme alla chiesa di S. Giovanni Battista di Pesaro, quale è chiesa de' padri franciscani minori osservanti riformati, et ivi nella capella del Mosca havemo ritrovato il crucifisso scolpito da frate Innocentio siciliano laico del detto ordine, del quale havemo fatto fare il disegno in tutto rappresentante detto crucifisso, che per questo ordinario mandiamo a vostra eminenza con il nostro parere nel colligato foglio' (Fra Agostino da Correggio and Giovan Antonio Mangili to Cardinal Barberini, Pesaro, 22 April 1637; *ibid.*, f. 35r).

45 The identification of the work now in the church of San Giovanni Battista in Gradara with the one depicted in the sheet and previously in the Mosca Chapel in San Giovanni Battista in Pesaro has been very convincingly suggested by Cifres, "Fra Innocenzo da Petralia", pp. 113–14.

46 On the values and uses of red on such crucifixes and the shock provoked by the excessive use of this colour, see the useful observations by Fantini, "Il sangue dei crucifissi", *passim*.

47 See note 33, above.

48 An additional interpretation of this word could be that the friar meant 'in proportion', also to the suffering of Christ. However, this reading, although very suggestive (I would like to thank Andrew Stuart for it), is slightly unlikely from the linguistic point of view, given the mere reference to 'proportione', without further specifications.

49 Both works were smaller in scale and more refined with an ornamental twist, indicating that Innocenzo was adapting his work to different patrons and audiences (I intend to elaborate more on this point in another instance).

50 'Sotto colore [...] che in detta sacra imagine vi appariscano moltr'altre piaghe, oltre le cinque' (from Pesaro, 30 July 1638).

51 'Di ovviare che non s'innovasse contro l'antico e commune stile di santa chiesa cos'alcuna circa l'immagine del S.mo Crocifisso senza espressa licenza di cotesa Sacra Congregazione acciò all'altre simili imagini in successione di tempo non si togliesse il dovuto culto, la qual cosa pare che anco in qualche maniera appartenga all' Inq.re' (ACDF, St. st. H 3 b, 2, f. 18).

52 *Storia del crocifisso*, p. 202.

53 I owe this suggestion on the 'iconoclastic image' to Michael Cole.

54 Binsky, "The Crucifixion and the Censorship of Art", p. 343.

55 See the observations made by Una Roman D'Elia, "Drawing Christ's Blood: Michelangelo, Vittoria Colonna, and the Aesthetics of Reform", *Renaissance Quarterly*, 59:1 (2006), 90–129.

56 The interpretation of this text is still controversial, because, at first sight, it seems also to refer to a painted copy of the drawing. Nevertheless, there is general agreement that the passage I am about to quote refers to this drawing, and not to a painted copy of it (which, in any case, has not yet been securely identified among the many existing replicas and copies).

57 'Ha crucifixe nella memoria mia quante altre picture viddi mai': *Il carteggio di Michelangelo*, edizione postuma di Giovanni Poggi, ed. by Paola Barocchi and Renzo Ristori, Florence: S.P.E.S. (formerly Sansoni), 1965–1983, IV, p.104.