

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (Seville, 1617-1682)

IGNACIO CANO RIVERO

Ecce Homo

Circa 1675

Oil on canvas

56 x 44 cm

Inscriptions / Label on the back, attached to the frame:

"Grundy & Smith. Ancient & Modern Printsellers."

It was possibly attached to a previous frame and then transferred to the new one.

Provenance / GP Dudley Wallis Collection, Christie's Sale, London, 21 July, 1972, lot 111, Esq. , "Christ as the Man of Sorrows", B.E. Murillo, 58.5 x 43 cm (23 x 27 in.); acquired by Nando for \$ 957 (380 Gns.); Christie's Sale, London, South Kensington, 19 April, 2000, No., 172 as "Circle of Bartolomé Esteban Murillo / Ecce Homo"² ; Granados Collection, Madrid, until 2017; Spanish private collection.

Exhibitions / *Splendor of Andalusian Baroque*, CajaSur Foundation, Caja Sur Museum Exhibition Hall, Córdoba, from 30 October to 2 December, 2007. Hospital de la Caridad, Seville, from 15 December, 2007 to 20 January, 2008; *Baroque Spirit*, Caja de Burgos. La Casa del Cordón, Burgos, from 22 February 22 to 4 May, 2008; *Demeanors*, Caja Segovia Social Work, Torreón de Lozoya, Segovia, from 1 July to 7 November, 2011.

Literature / Palencia, José M., *Esplendor de barroco andaluz (Splendor of Andalusian Baroque)* exh. cat., 2007, p. 74; Palencia, José M., *Espíritu barroco (Baroque Spirit)* exh. cat., 2008; Martínez Leiva, G. y Rodríguez Rebollo, A., *Semblantes (Demeanors)* exh. cat., 2011.





Fig. 1 / *Ecce Homo*, half-length figure of Christ in front view, c. 1520-1530, engraving colored by hand, London, British Museum.

The Ecce Homo Iconography (Fig. 1)

The life of Christ is one of the most inspiring and cultivated stories in the history of Western painting; more specifically, the episodes that describe his passion and death. For the Christian faith Jesus is God who becomes man, who by his death on the cross and later resurrection, redeems the whole human race. He took human nature with all its consequences, including suffering. The transcendence of these facts in the history of Christian salvation, as well as the drama of the scene that is narrated in detail in the Gospels, make these passages the centerpiece of the highest levels of artistic expression, not only in painting, but also in literature or music.

Christ represented as Ecce Homo is a particularly moving scene of the Passion of Christ. This expression – Ecce Homo¹ – is taken from the words spoken by Pilate when he presented him before the people prior to being sentenced to be crucified, as illustrated by the Gospel of Saint John. To assess the emotional impetus of the scene that takes place, we must place ourselves in the moment that precedes those words. The immediately preceding hours have passed in the preparatory Passover supper, in which Jesus announces his death, turned in by one of his apostles. After supper he retires with the apostles to a secluded place, where knowing what the next hours bring, the agony takes place in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, where he is captured at night by a crowd that leads him as a prisoner before the Jewish authorities. He remains silent, facing the accusations, because *the high priests accused him of many things, and Pilate asked again: “Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of.” But Jesus did not answer anything, so Pilate was surprised.*² His meekness was in contrast with the false accusations and the screaming that surrounded him. *Each Passover, the Prefect used to grant the people the freedom of a prisoner, the one they wanted.*³ On this occasion, knowing Pilate that he had been delivered out of envy, he asked: *“Who do you want me to release, Barabbas or Jesus, the one called Christ?”*⁴ *The chief priests and the elders succeeded in persuading the people to ask for the release of Barabbas and the death of Jesus.*⁵ So they responded: *“Barabbas!”*⁶ The innocent Jesus is condemned when compared to a dangerous prisoner, who had been put in jail for a rebellion in the city, and for a murder,⁷ whom the crowd hailed to release, calling for Jesus to face his death sentence on the Cross.

The malice of the people is merciless against Jesus. *Pilate said unto them: “And what am I going to do with Jesus, the one called Christ?” And they all said: “Crucify him!” – 23 “Why, what evil hath he done?” Pilate asked. But they kept screaming louder: “Crucify him!”*⁸

Pilate, finding no guilt in him, timidly tries to calm an enraged mass by increasing the bodily suffering and humiliation of Jesus, ordering him to be beaten.⁹ Bloodied by the lashes, the cruel mockery then begins. Since the words for which he was condemned were recognizing himself as King of the Jews, *the soldiers wove a crown of thorns, put it on his head and dressed him in a purple robe*¹⁰ *and in his right hand they put a cane like a scepter;*¹¹ *and, approaching him, they said: “Hail, King of the Jews.” And they slapped him,*¹² *and after spitting on him, they took the cane and hit him on the head.*¹³

After the whipping and the mockery by the soldiers, Pilate leaves again and insists that he finds him innocent. However, he shows him again in front of everyone. Showing Jesus, as he had been dressed by the soldiers, with the crown of thorns and the purple robe, he tells the people: *Ecce Homo: “Here is the man.”*¹⁴ This expression is only used by Saint John. *When the chief priests and the guards saw him, they shouted: “Crucify him, crucify him!” Pilate said unto them: “You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no crime in him.” Then he handed him over to be crucified.*

The rich description of the episode where the Ecce Homo iconography is formed contrasts with the little context usually offered by the figure of Christ presented in these paintings. The representation of Christ as Ecce Homo is part of the medieval tradition.

The iconographic studies distinguish between two models that reflect this moment described in the Gospels: the *Ostentatio Christi* and the *Ecce Homo*. While the first type shows Christ accompanied by other figures at the moment of being shown to the people, in the Ecce Homo only the figure of Christ appears. This theme was popularized in northern Europe and later appeared in Italy, particularly in the north, where the two variants of the iconography were cultivated. There is a clear precedent in

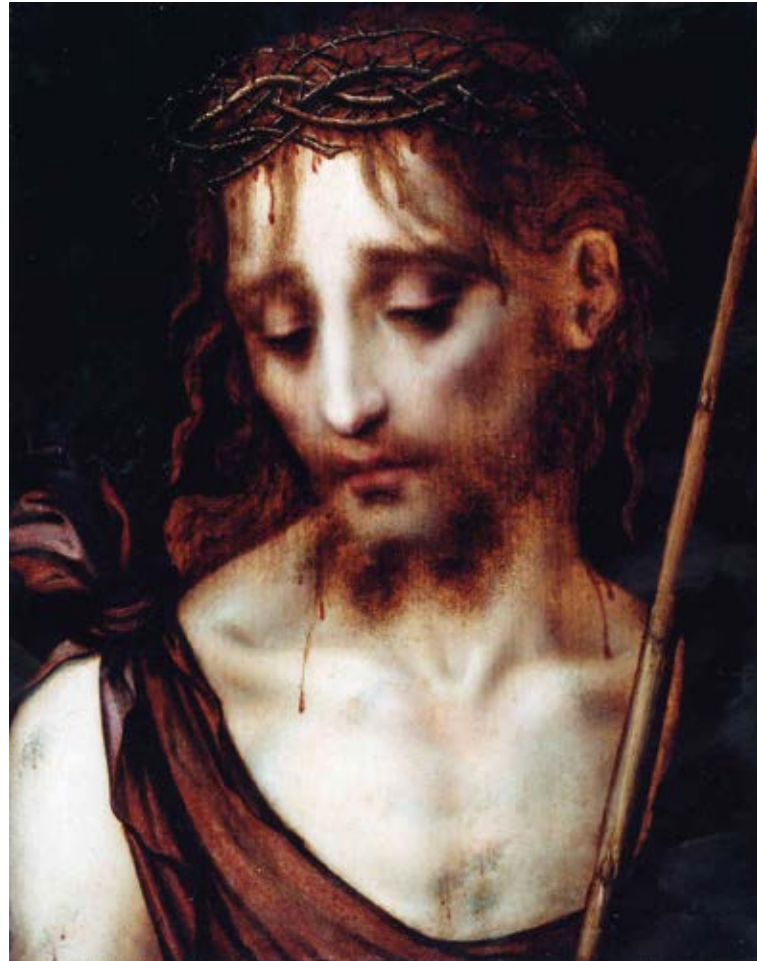
Spain in the paintings of Titian, present in the royal collections; this is accepted by historians, from Jameson to Panofsky.

This type of representation derives from a devotional rather than a narrative painting, which knows how to adapt to the Spanish spirituality developed in the 16th and 17th centuries. We may put forward two significant examples that represent the two different currents of Spanish spirituality of the second half of the 16th century: St. Ignatius and St. Teresa, both of whom encourage the prayer of contemplation, where a significant part of the experience is what St. Ignatius called “The composition of place, that is, trying to imagine the context and the sensitive features of the scene.” The Spanish spiritual literature of the 16th and 17th century mentions on outstanding occasions the contemplation of the Ecce Homo scene: Fray Alonso de Orozco and Lope de Vega himself.¹⁵ Lope de Vega experienced a process of spiritual conversion, which was reflected in his work. In *Soliloquios amorosos de un alma a Dios (Loving Soliloquies of a Soul to God)*, written years before Murillo’s work, he dedicates a poem to the contemplation of the Ecce Homo figure presented in the same way that Murillo’s work was able to capture it. It is a work in which religious and amorous fervor are mixed, where there is an emphatic appeal to the death-life contrast in a tone of emotional – and at the same time sober – intimacy, which agrees with the image that Murillo expresses, although ignoring aspects of the Ignatian composition of place in relation to imagining the scenario where the scene takes place. The painting, on the other hand, dispensing with everything superfluous, evokes that same intimacy, by describing the image of Christ, which awakens in the viewer the effect of the sensation of being contemplated and contemplating at the same time in the strict first person, as Christ requests a contemplative dialogue with the person who contemplates him. The severe image, in its contained drama and beauty, is presented in a resounding and direct foreground, which omits details that may distract from that amorous dialogue, reducing the presence of the wounds and instruments of martyrdom or pain and therefore displaying greater tenderness in the figure represented. At the same time, the dark background surrounding the figure makes it possible to dispense with any reference to the spatial context, which facilitates the encounter between Christ and the viewer.

Iconographic precedents of Murillo's *Ecce Homo*

In relation to the most direct iconographic precedents, although it is a widespread theme in Northern Europe, as indicated by the extensive dissemination of pictures on the passion of Christ recorded by the German painter Albrecht Dürer and whose image of *Ecce Homo* will be taken as an inspiration for this iconography, we must focus specifically on two painters apparently far from the place – Seville – where Murillo practically worked all his life, but nevertheless their influence remained in the production of the master (Fig. 2). The work of Morales had a great impact in Spain in the second half of the 16th century, because he knew how to incorporate into the artistic scene a new devotional painting arising from the spirit of the Counter-Reformation, which appealed to an emotional and contemplative attitude, as opposed to a narrative and doctrinal painting that also followed the indications of the canons of the Council of Trent. There is no doubt that the work of Morales and, particularly, his influence, reached Seville -where he apparently spent his time learning-, where Murillo could see it. Within the work of Morales, it is possible to highlight some works that represent the image of *Ecce Homo*, where we find a visual language that could leave its mark on this type of representations of the passion of Christ by Murillo. The influence of Morales could be noted both due to his work and the works that show his influence. Both possibilities were feasible in Seville, where works of Morales are preserved (Cathedral, Convent of San José de las Teresas or Church of Santa María la Blanca, where Murillo had an important commission).

Titian cultivated the iconographic theme of *Ecce Homo* repeatedly (Figs. 3 a & b). However, in particular there is a work that he gave to Carlos V and that could have had a particular impact on the Spanish artistic scene. Of all the representations of the *Ecce Homo* cultivated by the Italian painter, it is the one that is most similar to the work of Murillo. It is a work of particular simplicity and intimacy. During his stay in Madrid in 1658, it is likely that Murillo saw this painting in the royal collections. However, there were also numerous printed engravings of the work of Titian in Europe that could serve as a source of inspiration.



Despite the similarity of elements that appear in the works, the interpretation of Titian grants importance to the representation of the physical qualities of the body of Christ, typical of the Italian Renaissance, which is completely absent from the work of Murillo. The face expresses serene resignation and the look is submissive, but his eyes are more open than in other examples, following a typology that is closer to the images of the Nazarene. The artist emphasizes the dramatic character of the representation by trimming the figure on a dark background, where he dispenses with any spatial context.

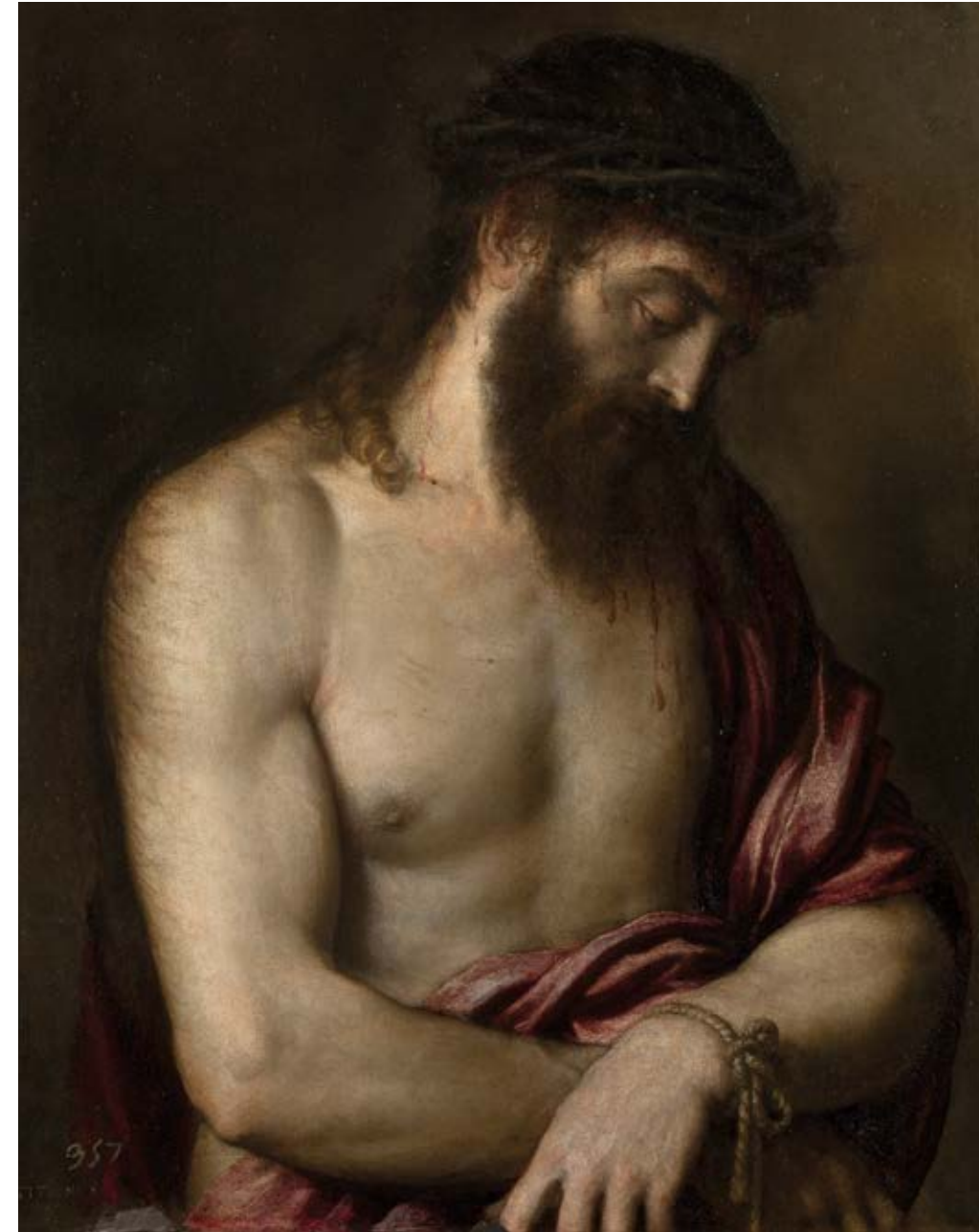


Fig. 2 / Luis de Morales, *Ecce Homo*, c. 1565, oil on board, 23.5 x 15.3 cm, Arango Collection.

Fig. 3a / Titian, *Ecce Homo*, c. 1548, oil on board, 69 x 56 cm, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado.

Fig. 3b / Titian, engraved by Luca Bertelli, *Ecce Homo*, 1560-1580, London, British Museum.



Fig. 4 / Adriaen Isenbrant,
Ecce Homo and Mater
Dolorosa, New York, The
Metropolitan Museum of Art.

This devotional theme showed an important variant by linking the figures of *Ecce Homo* and *Mater Dolorosa* (Fig. 4), as can be seen in some of the existing or known examples of prints. These images were disseminated since the end of the Middle Ages in Flemish painting, although the model became more relevant in Italy, highlighting the version of the two themes by Titian. These versions were the ones that belonged to Charles V. Under the reign of Phillip II they were moved to El Escorial.

Murillo's *Ecce Homo*

Murillo's contribution in the representation of the *Ecce Homo* is observed in the different variants of this same iconographic theme throughout his career. Due to stylistic issues, we believe that this is a theme that he worked on in all its variants since the mid-1660s, which he cultivates more frequently at the end of his career. There is not one of these iconographic representations that may technically be characterized by the technical features from the beginning of his work, but on the contrary they are more related to the development of the expressive value of his work.

Several pairs of *Ecce Homos* and *Mater Dolorosas* by Murillo have been preserved, which show the master's own quality in their craftsmanship. There are examples of these works kept in the Museo Nacional del Prado (Figs. 5 & 6), bought by Charles IV in 1782, and also those that were sold in in 2013 and 2015 (Oils on canvas, 67 x 50.5 cm, Sotheby's Sale (Figs. 7 & 8), 9 April, 2015, London, lot 553), painted in two ovals, which came from the collection of the Dukes of Frías, Madrid; or those that are the property of the Dukes of Villahermosa in Pedrola.¹⁶ (Cf. Valdivieso 2010, No...). Furthermore, at least another pair of paintings may be documented by the existing engravings, those of the Duke of Villahermosa, although the existence of several versions does not allow to identify with any certainty the paintings, which were sold in the 18th century. There is documentary evidence that there were other pairs of *Ecce Homo* and *Mater Dolorosas*, according to Angulo (Figs. 9 & 10).¹⁷

Regarding the *Ecce Homo* denomination, it must be said that they are named this way in the descriptions or titles of the works, and this is

also indicated afterward in some sales catalogues. There is a very diverse classification that increases the difficulty to clarify and identify paintings that, while bearing a similar title, refer to very diverse representations. Under that name we have the representation of the Holy Face, Christ as *Ecce Homo* in full-length, half-length and represented as a bust or torso.

There are several examples preserved of the so-called *Holy Face* or *Veronica Veil*, but of varying quality. They are those that Curtis indicates with the numbers 203, 204 and 205. The first of them refers to the engraving that represents what could have been the painting that was in the base of the main altarpiece of the church of the Capuchins of Seville before being cut to reduce it to an oval shape. On a napkin suspended by its two upper corners, which are formed in round knots acting as rosettes, we see represented the face of Christ crowned with thorns, turned slightly to the left, the eyes low, the beard short, and the hair falling below the chin. It is a thick and careless line engraving, signed by "R. O." in 1792, in Spain. It represents the Holy Face, which is the name given in Spain to the representation of the face of Christ on the Veronica Veil.

No. 204 is confusingly named *Ecce Homo*, as are the following two works. Curtis in 1883 records it as part of the collection of Lord Overstone, London. This is a work identical to the previous one, except that the napkin is only slightly marked, and its corners and edges are not visible. Oval. Veronica Veil, 19 x 15 in. Acquired from Julian Williams by Richard Ford, who sold it to Lord Overstone in 1836. Exhibited at the British Institution in 1851 and in Manchester in 1857, where it is photographed by Caldesi & Montecchi and reproduced here.¹⁸ Mentioned in the *Guía de Forasteros de Sevilla* (*Foreigners' Guide to Seville*), 1832. It will later form part of the S. Jones Lloyd Collection (Wickhan Park, Surrey).¹⁹

The one that Curtis lists with No. 205 belonged to A. J. Beresford-Hope, London. It is a painting apparently identical to the one that appears in the aforementioned engraving but with the corners and edges of the Veronica Veil. This full-length painting was acquired from Henry Gally Knight, who – according to Curtis – probably brought it from Spain around 1810.



Figs. 5 & 6 / Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Ecce Homo* and *Mater Dolorosa*, oil on canvas, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado.

Figs. 7 & 8 / Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Ecce Homo* and *Mater Dolorosa*, oil on canvas, Sotheby's Old Master & British Paintings 29 April 2015 Lot 553.

Figs. 9 & 10 / Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Ecce Homo* and *Mater Dolorosa*, oil on canvas, Caylus.



From Seville it was moved to Gibraltar to safely preserve it during the French invasion, according to its sales catalogue in New York in 1925;²⁰ around that date it is taken to England by Henry Gally Knight, who sells it to collector AJ Beresford-Hope, London; 30 January, 1925: Anne E. Croft sale at Christie's, lot 18. Purchased by Kendal for £ 78.15;²¹ 1925: New York, Ehrich Galleries, where it had an elaborate frame.

Similar paintings are found at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes of Buenos Aires, painted on a plain background, without any tensions at the bottom of the canvas depicted and without the presence of knots. It is the work of a workshop. An old copy, of lesser quality, may be found in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Its interest lies in the fact that it represents the complete composition. Attributed to the school of Murillo with the title *Holy Veronica Veil* (Fig.11), c. 1700.²²

As for the model in which the figure of Christ appears in full length, only two copies are known: the one existing in the Museo de Murcia (Fig. 12) and the one sold in 2007 at Coll & Cortés, currently in a particular collection. Both are practically identical, although in the one from the Museo de Murcia it is noticeable that there has been some workshop collaboration.²³ These works show a different sensibility, because the descriptive reflection of the figure reduces the intimacy of the images that show the expressive face of Christ in the foreground. Murillo has used in this case the same scenario that he uses for several of the representations of Virgin and the Child: a dark background with a stone element that serves as a seat.

They appear in the foreground, in a closeness that only allows to show the face. This allows to identify them in the old descriptions that did not include images. They are mutually diverse paintings, with the face of Christ looking in different directions, and the result of fertile creativity, such as those that are currently in the Museo Soumaya Cwollection in Mexico City (Fig. 13), or the one auctioned on 8 December, 1995.²⁴ It comes from the Louis Philippe collection, and was auctioned in 1853, with the number 76. Known by Collier's 1853 lithograph, edited by Goupil, which allows it to be identified with certainty.²⁵



Fig. 11 / School of Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Holy Veronica Veil*, Jerusalem, Israel Museum.

Fig. 12 / Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Ecce Homo*, oil on canvas, Murcia, MUBAM.

Fig. 13 / Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Ecce Homo*, oil on canvas, Soumaya Museum.

It is the same model as the Ecce Homo of the Dukes of Villahermosa, in Pedrola, which is paired with a Mater Dolorosa. In comparison to other representations, the head is turned slightly to the right and the look upward and the hair falls on the shoulders; the red mantle covers the shoulders and is tied to the front in a knot, with the ends projecting upward. Curtis takes the information from Stirling and wrongly identifies its origin in the Chapel of Nuestra Señora del Pilar of the Cathedral of Seville, as is the case with another copy that was part of the collection of the king Louis Philippe, which is an issue that has been clarified by Angulo.

There is also a copy, similar to the Ecce Homo of the Museo Nacional del Prado, which is paired with the Mater Dolorosa, auctioned in 1991 at Christie's. It comes from the collection of Cardinal Fesch and did not enter the British market, except for the aforementioned sale. Its material history is well known and the work is identified. Apparently Angulo saw it in its original state and verbally attributed it to the master without any objection,²⁶ although he did not proceed to its publication.

On the other hand we have the representations of the models that also appear in a close plane, but where, apart from the head, the torso and part of the arms and the hands also appear, like that of the Colomer Collection, whose material elements are fully drawn (Fig. 14).²⁷ Its great quality is evident, and its careful technique makes it one of the greatest achievements of Murillo within the iconography of the Passion of Christ. Many subsequent copies are known, which indicates that this painting was soon known and admired. The print of M. Alegre of 1798 shows that this painting corresponds to a Mater Dolorosa, still unidentified, which has also been reproduced in a workshop replica, with a possible intervention by the master.

The model that appears in half-length is perhaps the most repeated version, since it is the one that was more disseminated and has more workshop and follower copies, and even replicas by Murillo himself. The undisputed copy of the master is that of the Museo El Paso (Fig. 15)²⁸ that comes from the Cathedral of Seville. Its material history is very well known²⁹.



Fig. 14 / Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Ecce Homo*, oil on canvas, Colomer Collection.

Fig. 15 / Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Ecce Homo*, oil on canvas, El Paso, El Paso Museum of Art.

Fig. 16 / Follower of Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Ecce Homo*, oil on canvas, August Heckscher Collection.



The copy in the August Heckscher Collection recently attracted attention (Heckscher Museum) hitherto attributed to a follower of the master (Fig. 16).³⁰ Likewise, the copy deposited in a church in Bristol should also be taken into account. As Hugh Bristocke points out,³¹ one of them could be the one that belonged to Lord Zetlands in Aske, which was visited by Richard Ford in 1851 (a visit he later reported to Stirling). Both copies are ignored by both Angulo and Valdivieso.

One of them is possibly the one belonging to the Fran Hall Standish Collection and afterward to Thomas Birchall, Preston, Lancashire,

which could be photographed.³² It was part of the exhibition in Manchester, 1867, in the National Exhibition of Works of Art, at Leeds, 1868, and the Royal Academy, 1872.

Finally, as an example of the difficulty of attributing works in artistic literature, we have the painting that Curtis indicated as part of Lord Ashburton's collection in London. It was acquired by General Sebastiani as a painting by Murillo in 1815, although recently its authorship has changed, being attributed to Luca Giordano.

An Ecce Homo from the hand of Murillo

The Ecce Homo by Murillo that belonged to the Granados collection shows Christ, who appears represented from the torso, just from under the chest. The light, which bathes the effigy from above, is concentrated on the upper part of the face and shoulder of the figure of Jesus, concentrating the viewer's attention on these points. His body appears slightly rotated presenting itself in three quarters, while the head is turned to one side, diverting the gaze to the side, thus creating a rupture in the frontal nature of the theme. In the same way, compositional verticality is also subtly broken by the face slightly inclined and by the mantle, of an intense red tone, that breaks diagonally the composition, while from the knot that sustains it, the shades of its folds are described in all directions, creating an effect of compositional complexity, within the apparent simplicity. The cane that is held by an almost imperceptible hand gives the painting a touch of color that separates it from a total two-color. This balance is commonplace in Murillo's work, both in simple compositions and in the most ambitious ones.

Indeed, the hand holding the cane seems to rest on the edge of the canvas, which is a particularly original technique within the Ecce Homo works painted by the master, establishing a spatial reference that fulfills a double mission, on the one hand introducing the viewer in the scene and at the same time facilitating the communication between the representation of Christ as Ecce Homo and the viewer himself, who in turn becomes a subject who is also being observed – called – by Christ, which decisively intensifies the devotional character of this painting. In this way the hand that holds the cane becomes a counterpoint between the two realities, that of the painting, which becomes a *trompe l'oeil*, and the one that looks from the outside. This reflected vision of two realities, where the viewer remains as a subject contemplated by Christ who looks at him pitifully, is a technique that Murillo used in many of his most famous creations. Let us recall the Baroque play of his windows in compositions as beautiful as the *Family on the Step*, located in the hallway of a house, in the Fort Worth Museum, Kimbell Art Museum (Fig. 17); *Women at the Window*, in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, also in the United States (Fig. 18); and *The Young Fighting Cock Trainer (El Gallero)* of the Abelló collection (Fig. 19).

Fig. 17 / Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Family on the Step*, oil on canvas, Fort Worth, Texas, Kimbell Art Museum.

But Murillo does not use these techniques only in his so-called genre painting but also in religious painting, as we may see.

His intention is not only to give more drama to the composition, but to incorporate the viewer into the scene represented. He does so also in the aforementioned full-length *Ecce Homo* that belonged to Coll & Cortés and the replica of the Museo de Murcia. That scenario with a dark background with a lighter stone seat allows us to consider its primitive location in a badly lit chapel, which made devotees doubt if it was a painting or sculpture, truth or fiction, thus multiplying their visual effect on the viewer. This is a technique that Murillo used in many of his Virgins and Child, especially in the well-known *Virgin of the Napkin*, where the figures of Mary and the Child peek through a window, perfectly visible after the restoration of this masterpiece in the Museo de Sevilla. In the same way in the work that concerns us, Murillo moves the hand of Christ that holds the cane toward the viewer, not only to create a new space between the figure and the one that contemplates it, but very likely moving the hand forward on the frame of the painting. The different technique used by the master in the hand, brighter and simpler, would confirm this hypothesis.

The work in question is comparable to other Ecce Homo of the master in terms of intimacy and emotion, but his technique is particularly light and vaporous, with a very light, soft and almost transparent brushstroke in the shadows that are distributed over the face and torso. The red color of the mantle is particularly intense and gives the composition a remarkable chromatic intensity, while drawing an oblique line that dominates the composition, by dividing it into two sloping areas that divide the canvas, those of the mantle and the shoulder. The knot on the canvas centers the composition in the lower area, driving the viewer's attention from the hand that holds the cane, which Murillo barely sketches. The face is immersed in a sweet melancholy that expresses the moral suffering caused by the episode that is taking place. A moral rather than physical pain, where Murillo leads us by not allowing us to see any wound. Only a few thin, particularly whitish drops of blood gently cross the upper area of Christ's breast on his skin.





Fig. 18 / Bartolomé Esteban
Murillo, *Women at the Window*, oil
on canvas, Washington, National
Gallery of Art.

Fig. 19 / Bartolomé Esteban
Murillo, *The Young Fighting Cock
Trainer (El Gallero)*, oil on canvas,
Abelló Collection.

The dark background that surrounds the figure, almost black, establishes a strong contrast with the lights of the composition, which is especially marked in this representation, more than in the rest of the *Ecce Homo* paintings made by the master. Specifically, the elements that stand out are the particularly white skin of the illuminated areas of the figure and the red color of the mantle, which is a tone so characteristic of the author, also used in the mantles of other representations of this same iconography. The light is presented in a diffuse way, projected from the upper left area, focusing on the shoulder and the face. The crown of thorns, made with clear brushstrokes, is barely shown on the forehead. In the photographs it may be seen that the canvas is in an optimal state of conservation and that time has been kind to the delicate glazes distributed throughout the representation. In spite of the contrasting illumination proposed by Murillo in this work, the contrasts are both harmonious and gradual. The brushstroke is soft, particularly transparent in some elements, and the figure appears ethereal to merge with the dark background.

This presentation, which Murillo uses with a subtle delicacy, is aimed at devotion, that is, at reflection or at the thoughts that emerge from the contemplation of the image. The preceding events, narrated in the Gospel, which mark one of the most moving episodes of the life of Christ, have disappeared from any formal reference other than the contemplation of the very figure of Jesus, who shows himself voluntarily suffering in order to fulfill his Father's will. These features, which give off lightness and softness, are typical of the last years of the artist's activity, making it possible to date the work around 1675.

Murillo’s “Ecce Homo”

HE was a man of sorrows, and he knew
All bitterness; and such a noble face
He had: in some holy and quiet place
He came to thee, Murillo, and he drew
The shrouding veil away; still, gazing through
And through thee, with such melancholy eyes
And drooped lids; until his image grew
Into thy soul, with glow of natural dyes.
So didst thou with a delicate pencilling,
Of seeming Art, yet of divine constraint,
That human visage on thy canvas paint,
God-lit, revealed in thy visioning;
Weaving a thorny crown and agony
About his head, then writing “this is He.”

Thomas Ashe
Poems, 1859

George P. Dudley Wallis, owner of Murillo’s *Ecce Homo*

Christie’s catalogue of the sale of 21 July, 1972 displayed works of several vendors, among which GP Dudley Wallis, Esq. appears on the cover. The catalogue assigned five works to this same owner, from lot 108 to 112. Under lot number 111, it lists *Christ as the Man of Sorrows*, by Murillo, measuring 58,5 x 43 cm. The corresponding addendum adds that the painting was acquired by a buyer named Nando in the list of buyers and the buying price was 380 Gns. / \$ 957.

We do not know if the painting comes from the family inheritance, or if it is an acquisition of George P. Dudley Wallis, who in any case was, in addition to museum curator, a seasoned collector. The label attached to the frame of the painting, in any case, indicates its passage through Manchester around the last quarter of the 19th century, where the work could have been acquired, or at least re-framed. In that case it was acquired by George Wallis, father of the last Wallis owner. Another possibility is that the seller himself acquired

it during his stay in Manchester between 1922 and 1932, when he moved from Manchester to live in London. They are conjectures and hypotheses, which in any case reveal a more than interesting origin of the work.

Several members of the Wallis family left a great impact on the cultural and educational life of the Midlands of the 19th and early-20th centuries. During the 20th century, there have been very few publications on the impact of this family on British museum culture and arts education. In addition to professionals involved in the development of several museums as important as the Victoria and Albert Museum, or the Birmingham Museum, the Wallis family were tireless collectors of objects from various fields. We should also note the generous donations made to the museums where they were involved, particularly in Wolverhampton, their homeland.

In the 1850s, George Wallis (1811-1891) was the director of the newly founded Birmingham School of Design. George Wallis studied art at the Royal Manchester Institution, and was very interested in industrial design. He participated in the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the Universal Exhibition of 1867 in Paris. In 1857, he left Birmingham to go to London and served as curator at the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria & Albert Museum). In 1884, he organized the industrial and fine arts exhibition of Wolverhampton and Staffordshire. In 1889, when George Wallis was already a respected curator at the South Kensington Museum, he delivered two objects to the newly founded Wolverhampton Museum & Art Gallery. George Wallis firmly established the “circulation of art” system, which included loans to provincial museums and provided them with publications on modern art. George Wallis died in 1891.

The children of George and Matilda were born in different places that reflect the commercial activities of Wallis throughout the country. Whitworth was educated in London, Paris, Hannover and Berlin. Sir Whitworth Wallis (1855-1927) was the first director of the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery. Appointed Curator in 1883, he continued as *keeper* of the Museum until his death in 1927. He was knighted in 1912. Whitworth Wallis was for many years the successful and respected Director of the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery.

George Wallis’s eldest son, George Harry (1847-1936), was trained and worked with his father at the South Kensington Museum. In 1872, he supervised a temporary exhibition of art and design in Nottingham, which contained a large number of artifacts on loan from the South Kensington Museum. Following the success of this exhibition, the permanent Museum and Art Gallery of Nottingham Castle was opened in July 1878, and George Harry was appointed to be its first director and curator.

After settling in Nottingham, in 1880 George Harry married Kate Watson Carey. They had two daughters and a son, George Dudley, born in 1883.

George P. Dudley Wallis represents the third generation of museum curators of the Wallis family. He started as curator at the Holburn Art Museum, Bath, in November 1913 where he stayed until 1917. He was described as “a young man who used to be inactive, but who nevertheless was useful in the refurbishment of the new building, the relocation from Charlotte Street and the preparation for reopening in June 1916. He left a year later to join the army.” Soon he also became known as a collector: in 1917, in the pages of *Burlington Magazine* there was a discussion on a 16th century box of marquetry from his collection.

In 1922, he was appointed Curator of the Gallery at the Whitworth Institute in Manchester, founded in 1889. At the Whitworth Art Gallery, George P. Dudley Wallis became a respected and authorized curator. In 1920, he played a decisive role in the acquisition by the Nottingham Museum of two 17th century carriages, which are supposedly the oldest preserved in the world. In 1932, his research on a fragment of an early Islamic textile was mentioned in *Burlington Magazine*. Two engravings of 1528 by Lucas van Leyden in the collection of the Whitworth Art Gallery are another reminder of his curatorship.

Around 1936, he retired from Manchester and returned to London. His collection was gradually sold and today can be found in many museums around the world. His collection was varied, but particularly focused on contemporary English painting. Wallis had an important collection of modern British paintings, including works by Walter Sickert,

Christopher Wood and Sir Matthew Smith, some of which were sold in these halls on 18 April, 1951. Holburne’s predecessor in Holburne, Hugh Blaker, had also combined his role as curator of historical artifacts with his love of avant-garde art. However, the sales show his fondness for both old painting and sculpture. There is evidence that some of the old paintings were inherited from his family but some of them were also his own acquisitions.

The objects that formed his art collection were gradually sold, as they appear in the successive auctions since 1932 where he appears as a seller. Today you can find works that he owned in many museums around the world: the York Art Gallery acquired the painting ‘Roses’ by Adolphe Monticelli-Joseph (1824-1886), a popular French artist who had been admired by the young Cézanne and Van Gogh; there is a drawing by John Everett Millais in the British Museum (No. 1967, 1014,127) and an 1864 watercolor by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, ‘The Wedding of Saint George’, is in the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia; The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington DC has the sculpture ‘Forms and Light’ by Ossip Zadkine (1890-1967), a famous French sculptor of Russian origin. George Dudley Wallis acquired it in Paris, directly from the artist. In 1935, he organised an “Exhibition of Paintings and Sculptures by Ossip Zadkine” at the Whitworth Art Gallery and included it in the exhibition. *View in Lyons*, by William Marlow (1740-1813) , today at the Manchester Art Gallery was sold in 1932. A painting by William Hodges (1744-1797) “Tomb and Distant View of Rajmahal Hills” (1782) was bought by Dudley Wallis c. 1925-30 and sold at Christie’s, on 24 July, 1959, and it is now at the Tate Gallery. There is also evidence of other outstanding old art works that were part of his collection, such as the *Portrait of Albrecht van Habsburg, Archduke of Austria* (1559-1621), c. 1620, from Peter Paul Rubens’ workshop, which was sold at Sotheby’s, London, 18 April, 1951, lot 123, or drawings by Giuseppe Cesari, Knight of Arpino³³, and among them stands out a copy of *The Supper at Emmaus* by Velázquez, whose original is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which also indicates certain fondness for Spanish religious painting, to name a few examples of his intense activity in the art trade. This is the background of the family that owns the painting.

NOTES

1. in the original Greek it is ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος (*idou ho anthrpos*).
2. Mc 15, 1.
3. Mt. 27, 15.
4. Mt. 27, 17-18.
5. Mt 27, 20.
6. Mt 27, 21.
7. Lc 19.
8. Mt, 27, 23.
9. Jn 19, 1.
10. Jn 19, 2-3.
11. Mt 29.
12. Mt 30.
13. Jn 19.3.
14. Jn, 19, 5.
15. Lope de Vega, *Soliloquios amorosos de un alma a Dios (Loving Soliloquies of a Soul to God)* (1626). Si tus penas no pruebo, Jesús mío, vivo triste y penado; dámelas por el alma que te ha dado, que si este bien me hicieras, ¡ay Dios cómo veré lo que me quieres! Quiéreme bien en dámelas lo muestra, que es ley entre amadores partir, como los gustos, los dolores; que no es partir al justo tener Tú los dolores y yo el gusto Mas ¿qué te pido yo que Tú me quieras, si Tú, mi bien, me quieres de suerte que por darme vida mueres. Yo soy quien no te quiero, pues viéndote a la muerte no me muero... (If I do not suffer your sorrows, dear Jesus, I dwell in sad contrition; grant them to me from your divine soul, for if you are good to me, my dear God, I will know your affection! If you grant them to me, it will show how much you love me, for it is the law that lovers should share both joys and pains; it is no just distribution that You should suffer pains while I enjoy pleasures. Nonetheless, how can I ask You to love me, if you, my dear Benefactor, love me so that in doing so you give your own life for the purpose. I am the one who does not love you, because in the sight of your own death I do not die...).
16. Angulo, 1981, No. 251-252.
17. Angulo 1981, No. 255-258.
18. Caldesi & Montecchi, Photographs of the Gems of the Art Treasures Exhibition, Manchester, 1857.
19. Cf. Catalog of the exhibition *Murillo and the Capuchins of Seville*, Museum of Fine Arts of Seville, 2017.
20. Ehrich Galleries, New York, 1925.
21. Angulo, 1981, vol. 2, pp. 68-69.
22. Oil on canvas, 64 x 51.5 cm. Donated by David Wapinsky, New York, to The American Friends of the Israel Museum. Inv. : B94.0644 501/171.
23. Angulo, 1981, No. 250.
24. Angulo, 1981, No. 251, in the Louis Philippe sale, 1853, No. 76. Curtis, 1883, No. 206
25. Colier, 1853 The inscription tells us that the original, painted in 1650, was in the Espagnole Museum (Louis Philippe Gallery), in Paris. H. Rose, 8.8x7, 1853. G. Barry, lith., 21x18 (Goupil et Cie.).
26. Curtis, 1883, No. 200. It belonged to William C. Cartwright, Esq., Aynhoe, Northamptonshire. Christ the Savior looks up instead of down, and more red fabrics are seen. Brown background, 13 x 9 in. Taken to England by John Blackwood. It belonged to the British Institution, 1839. Christie's London, Important and Fine Old Master Pictures. 13 December, 1991. Roma, Prince Sciarra Colonna; 1841, Roma, Cardinal Fesch; 1923. Larchmond, Nueva York,

- Eugen Boross; 20 April, 1939, Nueva York, Lawchoski sale at American Art Association, No. 24 Lewis Lawlor purchases it for \$ 5,000 ; 1965, Jacksonville Exhibition, Cummer Gallery; borrowed by Gerald C. Paget; May 31, 1989, New York, Christie's sale, as property of a New York collector. It is sold for \$ 60,500; 13 December, 1991, Christie's sale No. 250, as the property of a “gentleman”. Sold for £ 14,850.
27. Angulo, 1981, No.253. Don José Antonio de Aragón, XIV Duke of Villahermosa (1785-1852), Madrid, in 1798; Rev. Richard Ridgeway Parry Mealy (1801-1870), Perfeddgoed, Bangor; posthumous sale, London, Christie's, 11 June, 1870, lot 113, for 130 guineas, to Colnaghi, London; Sir Francis Cook, Viscount of Monserrate (1817-1901), Doughty House, Richmond, Surrey, in 1883, in the Hall of the organ; inherited by his son Sir Frederick Cook, 2nd Baronet (1844-1920), Doughty House; passed on to his son Sir Herbert Cook, 3rd Br (1868-1939), Doughty House; passed on to his son Sir Francis Cook, 4th Br (1907-78), Doughty House and Cothay Manor, Somerset; passed on to his wife Brenda, Lady Cook, who sold it ('Property sold at the address of Brenda, Lady Cook'), London, Christie's, 8 December, 2005, lot 19; acquired by the current owner. 2015 Sales, Colomer collection.
 28. Chapel of Our Lady of the Pillar, Cathedral of Seville, given to Luis Felipe, King of France, by the Dean and Chapter of the cathedral in 1838; Christie & Manson, London, May 6-7, 13-14, 20-21, 1853, lot 240 (Marquis of Breadalbane, Taymouth Castle, Perthshire for 160 gns.); Robert Baillie-Hamilton, Langton House, Dunse, Berwickshire, Scotland, by descent; possibly included in Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 8 July, 1927, lot 113 (to Arkwright for 441.05?); Thomas G. Morgan Grenville, London, in 1926, by descent (also known as the T. Morgan-Granville-Gavin Collection); Christie's, London, 18 June, 1954, lot 29 (to Koetser for £ 1470); sold to SH Kress Foundation in 1955 and deposited in the Art Museum of El Paso, El Paso, Texas, United States.
 29. Angulo, 1981, v. 2, pp. 217-18 (247).
 30. August Heckscher Collection. 39 x 29 in., Inv. 1959.155.
 31. Hugh Brigstocke, p. 452.
 32. CALDESI, photography, in the series of photographs from the Manchester exhibition. 1867.
 33. Herwarth Rörtgen Cavalier Giuseppe Cesari D'Arpino: Die Zeichnungen III - I Disegni III, p. 487.
 34. Email from Amina Wright, the Curator of Holborne Museum of Art from 2 October 2007, with reference to: Lutz Haber. The First 75 Years of the Holburne Museum: Bath History, Vol. V.
 35. *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 1932. Vol. 60, No. 349. Pp. 185-187.

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Technical Review

ICONO I&R

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (Seville, 1617-1682)

Ecce Homo

Circa 1675

Fact Sheet

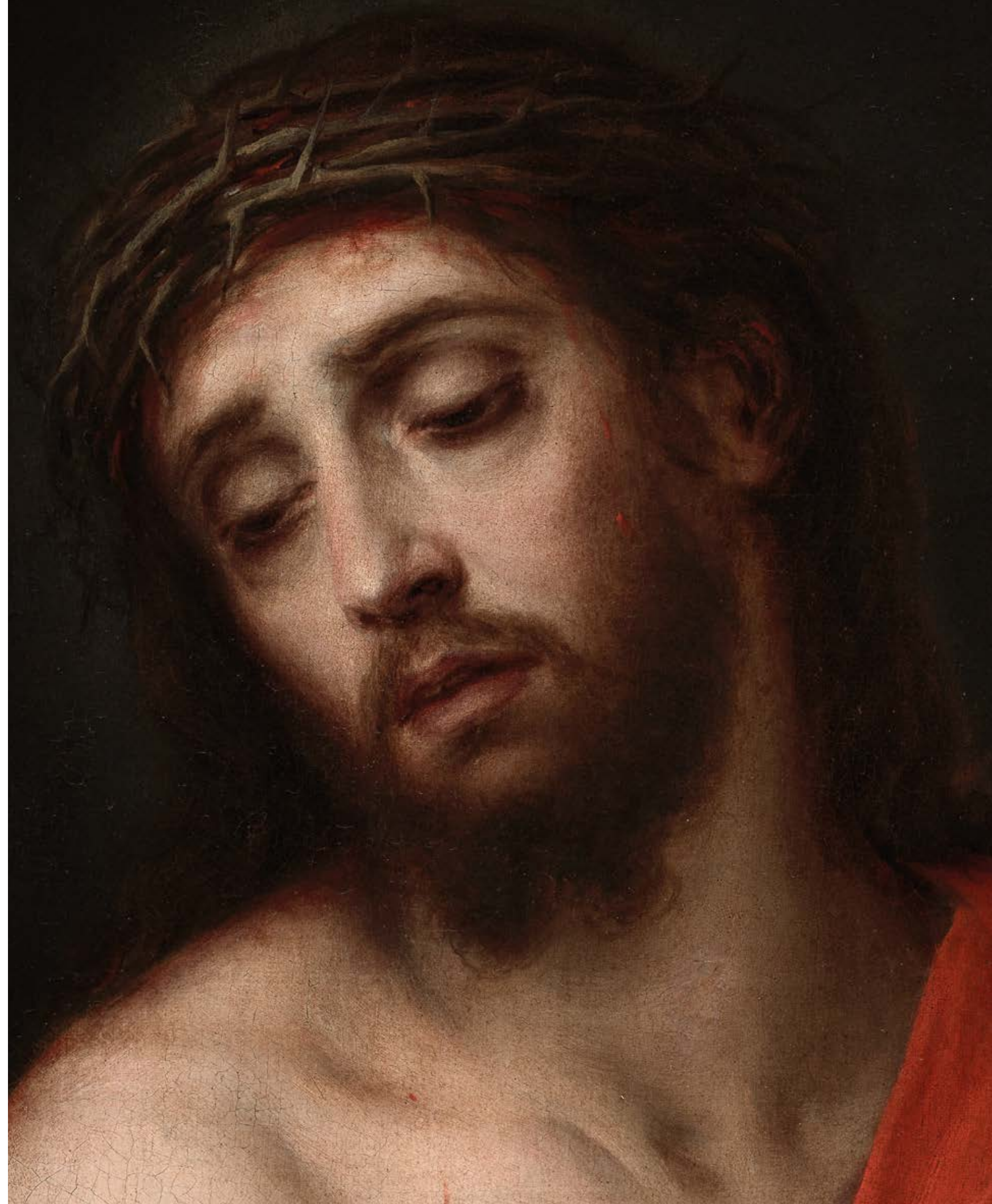
Representations of *Ecce Homo*, together with the *Immaculates*, can be considered among the most iconic Spanish Baroque paintings. Fulfilling the demands of his time, Murillo has notable examples of these religious paintings. These were mainly carried out during his mature period, and he always infuses them with a high level of quality and a careful record of his process. The case we present – introduced by Ignacio Cano’s complete study – is a magnificent example of this.

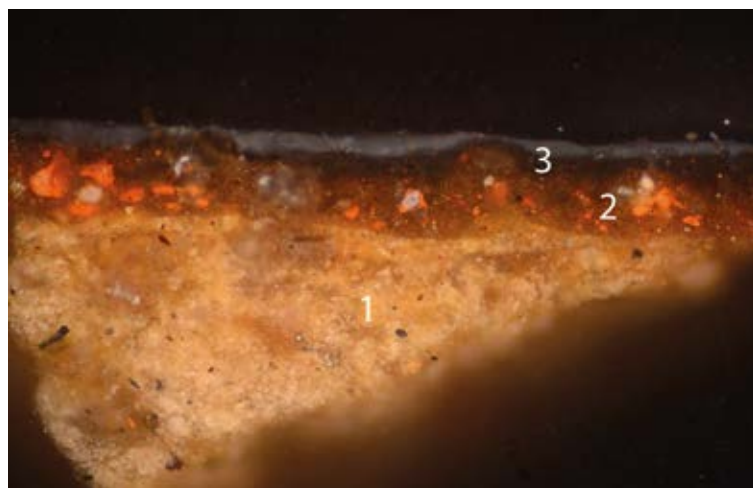
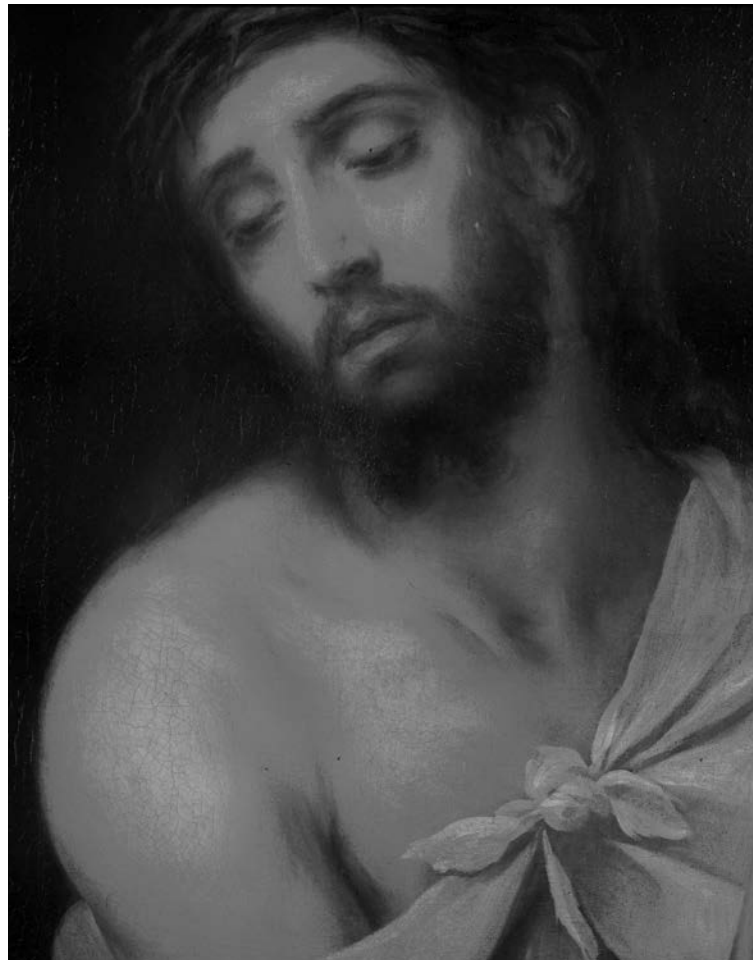
Murillo’s technique varied little over the course of his career. What did change, in contrast, were stylistic aspects: for example, it is well known that his style evolved from a clear solidity of volume and tone towards a more diluted style of painting, vaporous and with a clear “atmospheric” effect. As Cano has shown, the *Ecce Homo* studied here can be included in this late phase of the 70s.

The original dimensions of the canvas Murillo used remain intact, although the fabric has been subsequently enlarged on the top and bottom edges: approximately two centimeters on the top and one on the bottom. This addition could have taken place when the canvas was relined in order to fix the canvas onto a specific frame.¹

The canvas has been primed in the traditional manner used in Sevilla for the whole of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century: a brown ochre ground bound with linseed oil. The color is composed primarily of ochre earth, smaller quantities of red earth and other minerals associated with these, such as quartz, dolomite, pyrite, calcite and micas. He also tends to include small quantities of white lead and, occasionally, ground glass which was used for their drying effects in oily mediums.² This clay-like material is called *earth of Seville* in Pacheco and Palomino’s treatises upon art and art procedures.³

The next step of the work was a preliminary sketch or drawing upon this ground layer. Over the last few decades we have begun to obtain precise facts about this phase of Murillo’s work. The images obtained by infrared methods occasionally indicate light, very brief strokes that delineate certain details of the composition. An examination using imaging techniques is made difficult due to the presence of a dark underlying ground and the fact that Murillo probably had not used a carbon-rich medium to carry out the sketches. In the infrared photography of this work, one can observe hints of these strokes on the nostrils and tip of the nose as well as on the lips (Fig. 1).⁴





It is also clear that when Murillo used a light ground upon the earth of Seville ground layer, it has been possible to see a rich and thorough underlying drawing, as is the case in the outline for *Saint Anthony with the Child* of the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum in Berlin, whose whereabouts became unknown in 1945.⁵ This may indicate that the previous drawing made by the artist is more extensive and detailed than we can imagine, and that it simply cannot be registered by infrared methods because the material used does not contain a significant amount of carbon, as is the case in earths, organic brown or umber.

Interestingly, certain areas show a brownish-orange priming color. This was probably given to increase the warmth and energy of the underlying layer, thus playing with effects of transparency. It is not an opaque covering layer, as it shows a high amount of binding media. This layer is shown throughout the dark background and underneath the red tunic. It is a good example of the meticulous technique and resources of the Sevillian master (Fig. 2).⁶

The micro-samples taken of the work's surface show evidence of a loose and direct rendering. Thin paint layers are used – two at the most – and an exact mix of pigments is employed in order to obtain the desired color and tonality. The radiography clearly shows a diluted, almost ethereal brushwork. This makes it difficult to differentiate some of the elements and details on certain parts of the anatomy of the suffering Christ. Thus, for example, the left hand holding the cane barely shows up on the radiography. Such is the ear as well, which is indistinguishable in the X-ray image, showing a fluid and almost watercolor-like rendering under infrared light (Fig. 3). In this element one can see that the artist corrects the morphology along the way, this being one of the few areas of the work where *pentimenti* can be detected (Fig. 4).

In regards to the chromatic range, which is obviously determined by the colors of the image represented, Murillo employs a palette limited to a small number of pigments, mainly earths of different colors.⁷ He mostly uses these in flesh tones, although he adds small amounts of vermilion to accentuate rosy tones and azurite in order to give them a bluish hue in areas that approach zones of shadow.



Fig. 1 / Digital detail of the face under infrared light.

Fig. 2 / Cross-section, taken of the dark background, on the left edge. The layer 2 corresponds to the orange priming.

Fig. 3 / Radiographic and infrared detail of the ear area.



Fig. 4 / General radiograph of the work.

The dark tones of the hair and beard are based mainly upon the use of umber and organic brown, as well as important amounts of azurite.⁸

The red vestment tied across the Christ chest is an element of great intensity regarding its color. It is composed with a large amount of vermillion and white lead, with smaller amounts of azurite. The dark areas of the folds, as is customary of Murillo, are carried out with glazes which combine organic red lacquer and a large amount of azurite in order to enhance the shadows with a delicate purplish tinge.⁹

The cane he holds with his left hand has been painted with a combination of pigments typical of Murillo for these colorings: lead-tin yellow (called *genulí* at the time), yellow ochre and white lead.¹⁰

As we have mentioned before, the artist works with few color layers. This shows a confident and skillful execution. However, in some micro-samples one sees that the painter worked quickly, applying fine brushstrokes without waiting for the previous layer to dry (*wet-in-wet*); this is also seen in the *Self-Portrait* at the National Gallery in London, a work of this same period.¹¹





NOTES

1. The impossibility of testing the fibers of the support material has prevented us from identifying the plant species used to make the canvas. Its density, measured by radiography, has a count of 12 x 11 threads per cm² (vertical-horizontal). The work has been correctly glue pasted relined with adhesive at some point in the 19th century in the United Kingdom. The stretcher is the common used there, with double keys. It has a label from Manchester Grundy & Smith, the seller of art and restoration materials. In this regard, see <https://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/directory-of-suppliers/g>.
2. The ground layer was analyzed through optical microscopy and scanning electron microscopy with energy-dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (SEM/EDXR). For the pictorial layers, as well as to obtain additional data about the priming, energy-dispersive X-ray fluorescence was used (EDXRF).
3. For the topic of Sevillian grounds, see Illán, A, Romero, R. and Sáenz de Tejada, A., Características de las preparaciones sevillanas entre 1600 y 1700: implicaciones en el campo de la restauración y de la historia del arte. II Congreso GEIIC Barcelona 2005, pp. 197-205; for the topic of grounds used by Murillo, see Muñoz Rubio, María V., Paz Calatrava, F., Murillo joven: aportación al conocimiento de su técnica, in the catalogue: “El joven Murillo”, Seville/Bilbao 2009, pp. 157-185.
4. The infrared image was obtained through a Nikon D70 camera with a CCD sensor that was modified, eliminating the passthrough filter, halogen lighting and IR filtration. Similar underdrawing have been observed in the Self-Portrait of the Frick Collection in New York. See Mahon, D. and Centeno, S.A., Murillo's *Self-portrait* of ca. 1650-55, in “Murillo, the Self-Portraits” The Frick Collection, New York 2017 pp. 116-120. In this same publication, and referring to the portrait *Juan Arias de Saavedra*, María Álvarez de Gracián and Jaime García-Maiquez also mention the detection of very brief lines in certain details of the face.
5. See A discovered Murillo from Dudley House, Caylus, Madrid 2011; pending publication, Romero, R. and Illán. A., Metodologías y materiales en las técnicas de dibujo subyacente en los siglos XVI y XVII, symposium “Pintura, dibujo y escultura en los siglos XVI-XVIII. Nuevas aportaciones”, University of Valladolid, September 28, 2018.
6. This layer, which does not exceed a thickness of 30-40 µm, shows a large amount of minium, ochre earth, black carbon and a scarce amount of white lead. See Sánchez-Lassa, A., *San Pedro en lágrimas*. Aproximación a la técnica de Murillo, in “Las lágrimas de san Pedro en la pintura española del Siglo de Oro” *Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao*, 2000 pp. 71-81.
7. Following is the range of identified pigments in this work: white lead, yellow ochre, lead-tin yellow, vermilion, red earth, red lacquer, azurite, bone black, carbon black, brown earth, organic brown, verdigris and umber. Calcite and quartz have been detected in the layers of color for their use as adulterants.
8. The abundant use of organic brown is shown clearly in the cross-sections and in the EDXRF analyses, obtaining in these spectrums highlighted calcium peaks at 3.69 and 4.01 KeV and the presence of potassium at 3.31 KeV, with important amounts of copper at 8.05 KeV. The analyses suggest the additional presence of bone black in these areas.
9. Although analyses was not carried out to identify the specific colorant for the red lacquer, we were able to conclude that it comes from an insect (probably cochineal) and was precipitated in a substrate of calcium sulfate and alumina.
10. The presence of lead-tin yellow were confirmed by the presence of the typical lead peaks and by an incipient peak of tin at 3.44 KeV. The presence of yellow ochre in the color mixture serves to accentuate the iron peak at 6.40 and 7.06 KeV, just like the silica and aluminum at 1.74 KeV and 1.55 KeV, respectively.
11. Keith, L., Murillo's self-portrait of ca. 1670, in Op. Cit. 2017 New York, pp. 121-123.

