

# LEO CADOGAN RARE BOOKS

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## **[ANATOMICAL CHRIST ON CROSS].**

*[Italy] [eighteenth century].*

Wax model of Christ crucified, c.22 cms. from top of hand to toe and c.19.5 cms. in width, attached to a wooden cross, c.40.5 cms. x c.21.2 cms. Central panel to chest of figure, c.4.5 cms x c.2.1 cms., as discussed below, hinged with cloth. Some abrasion, loss to Christ's hands, one of which has been refastened to cross, one of which is no longer fastened (the feet with original fastening). The cross newly varnished to front.

*Wax representation of Christ crucified on cross, with torso and much of ribcage a hinged panel behind which are carefully modelled bones and entrails. Although rare and unusual, and evidently borrowing from a non-religious genre of sculpture - medical anatomical models - such an iconography fulfils a mainstream devotional purpose of making emphatic the corporality of Christ as he is put to death. There are at least two other located examples known (in the Museo di San Martino in Rio, Emilia Romagna, and apparently at a museum in Sicily), while a wax anatomical model of the entombed Christ is located at the Deutsches Medezinhistorisches Museum in Ingolstadt. Our item more broadly shows the visual fascination of contemporary religious groups with the intricacies of the body, which can be seen elsewhere in the anatomical waxworks of such a figure as Giulio Gaetano Zumbo (1656-1701), who was a Jesuit - or indeed in the Capuchin order's custom of making displays in their crypts with bones and cadavers. The exterior of our Christ is of a high finish and bears similarity to contemporary works in wood or ivory. The same similarity was noted regarding the work at San Martino in Rio. The entrails behind the panel have a certain naturalism to them and are likely to borrow directly or indirectly from a printed source.*

Exhibition publication, 'Anatomia del sacro, il crocefisso in cera del Museo di San Martino in Rio' (2013) - downloadable at <http://online.abc>.

regione.emilia-romagna.it/l/libri/pdf/Anatomia\_del\_sacro.pdf. See also the blogpost of September 13, 2016 by Cali Buckley, 'Other objects #4: wax Jesus figures' (<https://ivoryladies.wordpress.com/2016/09/13/other-objects-4-wax-jesus-figures/> - last viewed 15 July 2018), with interesting photos of other examples, not all of which we have yet been able to match with a located item. With thanks to Deborah Coltham for her help and advice.

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