

## Palestrina Pietà

There are well-founded doubts about whether this sculpture is actually the work of Michelangelo. The fact that it was completely ignored by the artist's old biographers and was mentioned for the first time in 1736 when it was found in the mortuary chapel of the Barberini in Palestrina, raises doubts that are confirmed by a direct examination of the group. The excessive frontality of the work, the use of a piece of marble that was previously part of an architectural decoration (as can be seen from a number of carvings still visible behind it), forcing the sculptor to interrupt the figures at the back, the distinct lack of proportion between the parts of Christ's body, and a certain academicism in the application of the Michelangeloesque technique of *nonfinito* are objective facts that it would be difficult to ascribe to the master's own hand. Yet, it seems plausible to suggest that the work was made by someone in Buonarroti's circle and under his direct supervision, perhaps with the artist giving directions, making suggestions, and even intervening personally in some places, such as the bust of Christ.