

## Madonna and Child

Michelangelo wrote a letter to his father asking him not to show this sculpture to anyone, not even during its transport to Bruges. For this reason, both Vasari and Condivi describe it incorrectly, one claiming it to have been in bronze, the other that it was a tondo. It is not known for whom it was carved around 1498. It is certain that in 1506, it already belonged to the heirs of Johann and Alexander Mouscron («Moscheroni»), who placed it in their chapel in the Belgian city's cathedral. Among those who had an opportunity to admire it here was Dürer, in 1521. As with the *Pietà*, the penitent face of the Madonna has been seen as a premonition of death, lacking as it does that expression of affectionate joy which is usually given to representations of the Madonna and Child. Instead we find an almost architectural solemnity and structural similarities to the *Charity* of Nicola Pisano's pulpit in Pisa. The extremely refined technique renders the marble as transparent as alabaster.