Group - The dead Christ with the Virgin, St John and St Mary Magdalen; a Pieta.

Object: Group
Place of origin: Florence (made)
Date: ca. 1510-1515 (made)
Artist/Maker: Robbia, Andrea della, born 1435 - died 1525 (workshop of)
Materials and Techniques: Terracotta
Museum number: 409 to :5-1889

Public access description
The figure of the Dead Christ is supported by the Virgin and St John the Evangelist, with St Mary Magdalen. The group was made in five pieces. The figure of Christ, with the hands of St John and the Virgin attached was cut in two to fit into the kiln for firing. The Magdalen was broken during the original firing, probably due to air being trapped in the clay which expanded when heated. This prevented a second firing for the tin-glazing and the figure was therefore painted instead. On acquisition the group was stated to have been "formerly in a private chapel in Siena."

Descriptive line
Group, terracotta, lamentation over the dead christ.

Physical description
Group in terracotta, partly covered with polychrome enamelling and partly pigmented. The group is made of five separate pieces, which fit imperfectly at the base. The legs of Christ and the figures of the Magdalen and the Virgin have been broken and repaired. In the centre foreground is the semi-recumbent figure of the Dead Christ, supported by the Virgin, who kneels behind, supporting his head with her right hand and holding his arm with her left. To the right kneels St Mary Magdalen, with her right hand on her breast and a jar of unguent in her left. To the left is St John the Evangelist, with the head turned to the spectator, supporting the right shoulder of Christ. The whole group rests on a shallow base enamelled in dull green. The flesh areas are pigmented throughout, as is the whole surface of the Magdalen, the red cloak of St John the Evangelist, and the red dress of the Virgin. Enamelled areas comprise the loin-cloth of Christ (white), the cloak of the Virgin (blue with a green lining tied by a yellow strap), her belt (yellow), her coif (white), the robe of St John the Evangelist (blue), and the lining of his cloak (yellow).

Dimensions
Depth: 67 cm, Width: 152 cm, Height: 87 cm

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Object history note
Purchased in Siena for £474. 13s 9d.

Historical context note
Stated to have been "formerly in a private chapel in Siena.

URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O170626/the-dead-christ-with-the-group-robbia-andrea-della/