

MAZZA

Giuseppe Maria MAZZA
(Bologna 1653-1741)

Rest on the flight with angels

Terracotta

110 x 81 cm.

The reverse has a number of contemporary annotations and drawings in red chalk, including one of a similarly posed Virgin and Child. It is suggested that these drawings are in fact counterproofs from the paper laid down to prevent the terracotta adhering to the workbench whilst drying.

This exceptional-sized oval terracotta relief is not only evidently Bolognese, but also very plausibly attributable to Giuseppe Mazza. Its most distinctive physiognomy, the pear-shaped head of the Christ-Child, is exactly that of the putto in the signed group of the Putto and Baby Satyr exhibited by this gallery in 1982 (cf. Seven Centuries of European Sculpture, no. 24). Otherwise, the affinities of this relief are rather with Mazza's large-scale works in stucco - cf. for instance the features of the St. Joseph with those of the statue of St. Joseph in Santa Cristina in Bologna, and the Virgin and her drapery with the Virgin of the Annunciation in the Annunziata in Pesaro (cf. Eugenio Riccomini, Ordine e Vaghezza: Scultura in Emilia nell'età Barocca, Bologna 1972, pls. 221 & 252-54) - than with his more intimate and small-scale terracotta groups and reliefs.

Both the size of the relief and the monumentality of the figures within it suggest that this relief may be a relatively late work, in which Mazza was responding to his visit to Rome in 1722, and to his warm reception by Rusconi. The kneeling angel, furthermore, is reminiscent of angels in the oeuvre of Mazzuoli.

Not the least interest of this terracotta resides in the spontaneous sketches on the back; unfortunately, nothing seems to be known of Mazza's hand as a draughtsman, to determine whether these too are by him.

Exh: Heim Gallery, London, Summer exhibition 1983, no. 28.