



LUDOVICO CARRACCI

(Bologna, 1555 - Bologna, 1619)

The return from the flight into Egypt, with angels

inscribed on mount with Chatsworth inventory number: 417

red chalk, pen and brown ink, brown and grey wash heightened with white on light grey paper

185 x 154 mm

Provenance:

Dukes of Devonshire, Chatsworth

by descent to Andrew Cavendish, 11th Duke of Devonshire (1920-2004), Chatsworth

his sale, Christie's, London: 3 July 1984, lot 10 (£8,640)

Duke Roberto Ferretti di Castelferretto (1923-2005), Rome

his sale, Christie's, London: 2 July 1996, lot 25 (£18,600)

with Day & Faber, London

where acquired by the present owner in July 1996

Literature:

H. Bodmer, *Ludovico Carracci*, 1939, Burg bei Magdeburg, p. 148, no. 11

D. Mahon, *Mostra dei Carracci: disegni*, 1956, Bologna, p. 41. no. 38, fig. 14

B. Bohn, *The Drawings of Ludovico Carracci*, Ph.D. dissertation, 2 vols., 1982, New York, Columbia University, no. 168

D. McTavish, *Italian Drawings from the Collection of Duke Roberto Ferretti*, 1985, Ontario, p. 66, no. 27

V. Birke, *Italian Masters of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 40, part 1 (Commentary), 1987, New York, pp. 226-227, 4003.034

B. Bohn, 'Lodovico's Last Decade', *Master Drawings*, 1987, XXV, pp. 222-3, pl. 9

B. Bohn, 'Reviewed Work(s): Italian Masters of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. The Illustrated Bartsch by Veronika Birke', *Master Drawings*, 1988, XXVI, p. 375

M. Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection of Italian Drawings, Bolognese and Italian Schools*, 1994, London, p. 113, no. 525 (417)

B. Bohn, *Italian Masters of the Sixteenth Century, The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 39, part 2 (Commentary), 1996, New Canaan, pp. 144-6, no. 10

B. Bohn, *Ludovico Carracci and the Art of Drawing*, 2004, Turnhout, p. 422, no. 272

Exhibited:

Bologna, Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio, *Mostra dei Carracci: Disegni*, 1956, no. 38

Toronto, Art Gallery of Ontario and New York, The Morgan Library, *Italian Drawings from the Collection of Duke Roberto Ferretti*, 1985-86, no. 27

Rarer in the religious imagery of the 16th and 17th centuries than the *Flight into Egypt* and the *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, this drawing depicts the return of the Holy Family to Nazareth, where Christ, having fled the fury of King Herod as an infant, now returns from Egypt as an older child. Here, Ludovico Carracci has placed the Christ child on a donkey, which is led by Mary, followed by Joseph, and supported by angels. The compression of the figures into a small area in the foreground of the sheet and the description of the facial types and draperies has led Babette Bohn to suggest a dating of 1611-12 for the sheet, which largely accords with the earlier suggestions of Rudolf Wittkower (1600-1610), Sir Denis Mahon (c. 1610), Michael Jaffé (1610s), and David McTavish ("late in Ludovico's career").

The sheet displays evident compositional similarities with an engraving of the same subject by Francesco Brizio, a Bolognese pupil of the Carracci. Brizio's engraving differs significantly in certain details however, and it corresponds in orientation with the drawing and thus it is evident that the drawing did not serve as Brizio's final model for the print. In Brizio's engraving the donkey is moved behind the Holy Family and the Christ child stands on his own feet to emphasise his growth in the years between his arrival in Egypt and departure. Bohn suggests that Brizio drew compositional inspiration from Ludovico's drawing to create his own design, which is confirmed by an inscription at the lower left in the second state of Brizio's print: *Lodo car. in*. Brizio's Ludovico-inspired study for the engraving is now at the Szépművészeti Múzeum in Budapest.

SOLD