



The Flight into Egypt

Date

ca. 1520-1530

Primary Maker

Battista Dossi

Medium

oil on wood

Description

The Flight into Egypt is representative of a new genre of painting, the cabinet picture, which originated in the early sixteenth century. Small-scale easel paintings such as this were produced for private consumption and therefore were not constrained by conventional expectations in regard to content. In The Flight into Egypt, the biblical event is illustrated in a novel fashion that conveys the familial intimacy of the Holy Family. Whereas in earlier Italian art Joseph is always shown on foot leading the mule on which Mary and the Christ Child ride, here he rides his own mule and carries the sleeping Christ Child in a wooden cradle. Joseph turns in the saddle to face Mary and points vigorously to the trail, whereas she appears to be forewarning him that a closed gateway lies directly in their path. Like Garofalo, Dosso and his younger brother, Battista, worked chiefly in Ferrara for the Este court. Painted after Battista's return from Rome, where he worked in Raphael's shop from 1517-1520, The Flight into Egypt is one of many collaborative undertakings by the two painters.

Dimensions

Sight: 24 1/2 x 31 3/4 in. (62.2 x 80.6 cm) Framed: 33 1/2 x 46 x 4 in. (85.1 x 116.8 x 10.2 cm)