

A close-up photograph of a bronze sculpture depicting the Madonna and Child. The Virgin Mary is shown from the chest up, looking down at the Christ Child. Her hair is long and flowing, and her expression is serene. The Christ Child is visible in the lower right corner, looking up at his mother. The bronze has a rich, dark patina with visible cracks and texture.

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Girolamo Ticciati,
attributed to **Madonna and Child**







Girolamo Ticciati, attributed to
(Florence, 1676 - 1744)

Madonna and Child,
1747-1753 circa

Cast in red wax with a plaster support
made as a model for the Ginori porcelain
factory at Doccia; 33,5 x 19,5 cm

The wax high-relief of the *Madonna and Child* was published in 1982 by Klaus Lankheit in *Die Modellsammlung der Porzellanmanufaktur Doccia*. Lankheit identified this work as a model executed for the porcelain factory at Doccia which was made at the time when the factory was under the direction of its founder, marquis Carlo Ginori. These models presumably may have been used as samples to show to prospective buyers and therefore were not necessarily always produced in porcelain. From the accounting books of the factory we know that the collection of wax casts was started in the factory sometime between 1747 and 1758. Nevertheless, the documents that we have do not contain

enough information to allow us to identify the artist who created each of these casts which were used as models at Doccia, but we know that among those that were working for the factory there were sculptors like Vincenzo Foggini (son of Giovan Battista) and Giovan Battista Piamontini (son of Giuseppe), to mention the best known and, according to the receipts, perhaps also the most active ones.¹ A confirmation that these casts may have been made by artists hired by the factory is represented not only

¹ Lankheit 1982, pp. 91-162. See his notes in the margins of the *Inventario dei Modelli* relative to Giovan Battista Foggini and Giuseppe Piamontini. See also: Ginori Lisci 1963, pp. 58, 61; Balleri 2009, pp. 7-14; Zikos 2011, pp. 19-26.

by the receipts for payment but also by the fact that the colour of the wax, which appears to be the same for all of the casts owned by the Museo Richard-Ginori della Manifattura di Doccia (henceforth the Museo di Doccia). Since the colouring agent was added to the wax, it could vary greatly from one workshop to the next. Consequently, finding, as is the case here, that a series of casts derived from the works of various different sculptors who may not even have known each other, casts that have, with a few exceptions, the same dark brown colour suggests the possibility that they were all commissioned by the same person and for some unique purpose. This hypothesis is also confirmed by the presence, in most cases, of a plaster core which we believe to be an expedient to give greater stability to the casts which, presumably were going to be displayed in the gallery of the factory. Moreover the absence in some cases of “finishing” particularly in the high-reliefs, supports the hypothesis that the casts were used as samples and that they were made specifically for the factory. In fact, the presence of the marks left on their surfaces by the interstices of the dowels of the plaster moulds in which they were formed, are contrary to the rules for the preparation of casts using the lost wax technique.

To return to the *Madonna and Child* relief, this work presents all of the characteristics described above and, on the basis of a receipt dated June 22nd 1750 which mentions “[...] *piccola Madonna* (a little Madonna)”, Lankheit attributed it to Vincenzo Foggini.² Lankheit probably assumed that Vincenzo supplied the factory with wax casts of the works made by his father, and proposed Giovan Battista Foggini as author of the composition by associating the receipt with the entry in the *Inventario dei Modelli* (henceforth the *Inventario*) drawn up by the factory from 1791 until about 1806: “N. 107 *Un piccolo bassorilievo rappresentante un’immagine di Maria, con il Bambino Gesù di cera con forme*”.³

2 Lankheit 1982, p. 138 (38:107).

3 Lankheit 1982, p. 138 (38:107).

The connection of the high-relief with the entry in the *Inventario* is without doubt acceptable, because with the same description it also lists a wax mould which can be identified with the relief on the reliquary *Sacro Latte della Madonna* by Massimiliano Soldani Benzi in the Museum of the Collegiata in Montevarchi, which is about the same size as the one we are discussing.⁴

The part of Lankheit’s statement that raises doubts is his attribution to Giovan Battista Foggini. In the above mentioned entry in the *Inventario* there is no reference to the sculptor who, however, is mentioned in other entries to casts taken, for example, from compositions by Giovan Battista Foggini, Giuseppe Piamontini and Massimiliano Soldani Benzi.⁵

An examination of the document informs us that the sculptor was paid for having “*gettato [...] medaglie di cera rossa*” (cast medallions in red wax), and since there is a list of these medallions Lankheit was able to identify some of the casts which, in fact, all have an oval shape in common⁶ – as described in the document (“*medaglie*”) – with the exception of a “*piccola Madonna*”,⁷ which he identifies as the cast we are discussing. Bearing in mind these considerations and proceeding with a stylistic analysis of the relief in wax, I am inclined to attribute it to the Florentine sculptor Girolamo Ticciati (1671-1745).⁸ We have very little information concerning his activity but from the biography written by Francesco Maria Niccolò Gabburri we know that:

4 Lankheit 1982, p. 133 (33:65). For the reliquary, see Keutner 1976, pp. 143-147, fig. 6 and tav. II.

5 Occasionally among the entries in the inventory we find references to wax casts derived from the works of artists active between the 16th and 18th centuries (Lankheit 1982, pp. 17-18).

6 Lankheit 1982, p. 135 (35:82); p. 138 (38:106).

7 Lankheit 1982, p. 138 (38:107).

8 Bibliographic references on the activity of Ticciati: Lankheit 1962; Montagu, in *Gli Ultimi Medici* 1974, pp. 144-145, cat. 98; Brunetti 1974, pp. 22-24; Brunetti 1976, pp. 182-187; Casci 1986, pp. 87, 93, 97; Roani Villani 1984, pp. 70-74; Guicciardini Corsi Salviati 1989, pp. 32, 38, 42; Toderi, Vannel 1987; Giannotti 1995, pp. 105-122.

"Girolamo Ticciati Florentine citizen, talented poet and excellent architect and sculptor, pupil of Giovanni Battista Foggini. After having studied for a long time in Florence, Ticciati moved to Rome where he studied antiquities with great enthusiasm and learned a great deal. He returned to Florence and after a few years, in 1708 moved to Vienna where he stayed until 1712 while working for the Emperor Joseph, who appointed him court architect and sculptor and his design was used to build the great theatre near the Porta d'Italia. After the death of Emperor Joseph Ticciati returned to his native city where he made beautiful sculptures in marble and, in particular, the new main altar in the Church of San Giovanni, which was not only made following his design but he personally executed the statues on top of it as well as the high-reliefs that are around the chancel. He also sent marble statues that he had made to Prato, to the church of the nuns of S. Vincenzo for the altar of the Blessed Catherine of the noble family de' Ricci, and he also made two colossal statues for the new church at the Palace of Mafra in Portugal which were ordered by the king and were greatly praised by the professors and experts. But the most unbelievably beautiful of all is the statue representing *Architecture* sculptured in marble in 1736 for marquis Carlo Rinuccini and placed by him on the landing of the stairway in his palazzo. He also made another very beautiful statue in marble representing *Geometry* which is placed on the tomb of Galileo that was made in memory of that great man in 1737 in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence in front of the tomb of Michelagnolo Buonarroti. Next to this tomb, in 1739 he built another one in marble dedicated to the memory of Alessandro Galilei, a Florentine architect. Also worthy of admiration are the ten marble busts of the Medici sovereigns of Tuscany, along with that of the Electrice Palatine, starting with that of duke Alessandro de' Medici and ending with Francesco III of Lorraine, duke of Bar ecc. and grand duke of Tuscany. Among many other rarities possessed by marquis Carlo Rinuccini these busts can be admired in his palazzo in Florence. In the same year, Ticciati made four marble busts representing the four seasons which were sent to England by the minister of that king. Ticciati now lives in his native city and is about 63 years old this year (1739). He is one of the 12 instructors at the Florentine Academy of Design and also the beloved and worthy superintendent of the academy, a role that he had already filled to the great satisfaction and approval of everyone in the Accademia. In 1738 he made a gift to the Accademia of the most wonderful handwritten book entitled *Memorie dell'Accademia del Disegno raccolte da Girolamo Ticciati, provveditore della medesima ecc.* Of the

civility of his lineage, the purity of his morals and his literature there would be much to say in his praise but so as not to offend his modesty it is best to remain silent and hope that one day there will appear a writer more talented than I who can sing his praises to the world and celebrate the virtues of this great gentleman".⁹



I Girolamo Ticciati, *The Four Seasons*, 1725; Badminton Cabinet. Vienna, Liechtenstein Museum

To this lively and impassioned account of the activities of Ticciati we may also add the bronze statuette of the *Samaritan Woman at the Well*, signed and dated 1724 (Madrid, Royal Palace)¹⁰ and the series of the *Seasons*, in gilded bronze made in 1725 for *Badminton Cabinet* (Vienna, Liechtenstein Museum, fig. 1).¹¹ To come back to our high-relief, I would like to make some comparisons with an important work of Foggini in order to delineate the characteristics that are typical of the style of this sculptor and which I do not see in this high-relief. For example, a detail of the *Madonna and Child* in the marble relief with *The First Mass of St Andrea Corsini* (made by Foggini and installed in the Corsini Chapel in the Church of the Carmine in Florence in 1701, fig. 2). We can observe that Foggini's Child and also the cherubs that we generally find in his compositions have full, rounded faces and hair gathered into locks that fall in

9 Gabburri 1730-1741 circa, vol. III, c. 209r.

10 S. Bellesi, in *La principessa saggia* 2005, pp. 310-311, cat. 170; M. J. Herrero Sanz, in *Brillos en Bronce* 2009, pp. 293-295, cat. 86.

11 González-Palacios 1986, pp. 419-391.





2 Giovan Battista Foggini, *The First Mass of St Andrea Corsini*.
Florence, Santa Maria del Carmine, Corsini Chapel

a disorganized way that creates a sense of volume and movement. The drapery of the gown of the Madonna is crossed by folds which end or turn creating a flowing surface. The deepest folds, which are the longest ones, cross the figure horizontally. These characteristics are common to all of the compositions of the sculptor, as well as the extremely voluminous draping that practically erases the anatomy beneath it.

The Madonna in our mould has a gown that is defined by just a few deep furrows which follow the position of her leg and then move length-wise diagonally. They are very different from the folds in the works of Foggini. Since there are just a few of

them and they are concentrated into a few spaces they tend to be distended over the rest of the surface which adheres to the limbs of the figure and makes them more evident. The Child, on the other hand, is different from Foggini's both in the face that is longer and thinner and the hair that is less flowing and voluminous. The eyes are also quite different: they are deeper set and with puffy lids.

If we exclude a connection between the casts and Foggini, even though we realize that there are influences of his teacher in the composition, I propose that it be compared with works by artists of the circle of Foggini. For the characteristics described above which prevail in this work, as already mentioned, I would be inclined to attribute it to Ticciati. By examining works that are known with certainty to be by the sculptor, in fact, I identified other characteristics which are in common with our cast and which are in addition to the ones already described when comparing it with the reliefs by Foggini.

In the small bronze and also in the wax casts that we have (one of which was executed for the factory at Doccia) of *The Samaritan Woman at the Well* (fig. 3) one can recognize the long, deep folds both in the mantle of Christ resting on His knees, as well as in the drape around the waist of the Samaritan

3 Girolamo Ticciati, *The Samaritan Woman at the Well*.
Madrid, Royal Palace.





woman which falls tightly around her legs and reveals their shape. In the figure of the Samaritan Woman it is interesting to observe that the edges of the drapery seem to flutter as though they were moved by the wind and fold over creating serpentine creases which seem to have the function of closing the composition. Similar solutions can be observed in the Doccia mould both in the veil of the Madonna and the mantle hanging along the body. Besides this fabric which is perhaps comparable to heavy velvet, the Madonna, Christ and

4. Girolamo Ticciati, *The Ecstasy of St Caterina de' Ricci*. Prato, Basilica of San Vincenzo Ferrer and Santa Caterina de' Ricci.



5. Girolamo Ticciati, *Allegory of the Medici Family*. Florence, Villa Corsini al Prato.



also the Samaritan Woman have lighter weight clothing with dense folds that are deep but without creating a sense of volume.

Similar folds and drapery can be observed in the marble altar frontal representing *The Ecstasy of St Caterina de' Ricci* made by Ticciati in 1732 for the Basilica of San Vincenzo Ferrer and Santa Caterina de' Ricci in Prato (fig. 4). Also in this case, the gown of the saint, at the level of the legs shows deep folds that run length-wise and diagonally and reveal the shape of the limb underneath. The adult angel on her right has a fluttering drapery, although it is less evident than the cases previously described, and a fabric that is lighter with dense series of folds wrapped around one of her knees. The young angels at the top of the scene, on the other hand, reveal analogies with the Child in the wax relief.

The face of our Madonna also shows similarities with the female figures in the marble relief with the *Allegory of the Medici Family* in Villa Corsini al Prato dated around 1740 (fig. 5). In this relief we again find the same types of drapery described above for the wax relief especially on the leg of the figure that represents the Allegory of Florence. From these stylistic comparisons, one can deduce that the high-relief must have been made in the 1730s. The way that the head of the Madonna leans forward suggest that it was meant to be seen from below looking up.

Abstract from the fact sheet of Rita Balleri

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