

# TOMASSO BROTHERS

## FINE ART



**Florentine, 16th century**

Eagle

Pietra arenaria stone  
83 cm (32  $\frac{3}{4}$  in.) high  
69 cm (27  $\frac{1}{8}$  in.) wide

Revered and portrayed in different cultures since time immemorial, in Renaissance Italy the eagle was traditionally a symbol of divine power, as rooted in the iconography of the ancient god Zeus/Jupiter, famously adopted by the triumphant Roman military and, subsequently, Christendom's Holy Roman Empire. Interestingly, the present work bears strong compositional similarities with an ancient Roman marble eagle formerly owned by Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill and now in the collection of the Earl of Wemyss and March at Gosford, unearthed in Rome in the mid eighteenth century and dated to the first century AD. Its sharp gaze pointed upwards and its fiery claws facing the viewer, our eagle appears to be about to spread its wings, the long feathers hinting at their full might. Modelled in the round and carved in the warm, sandy arenaria stone that is characteristic of Florence, this eagle would have stood proudly as an emblem of its owner's power.

**Provenance:**

Palazzo della Gherardesca, Florence  
Orlando Collection, Limestre

**Literature:**

#### Related Literature

G. Jackson-Stops (ed.), *The Treasure Houses of Britain: Five Hundred Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1985, pp. 319–20, no. 244