

Noli me tangere

Bronzino (?)

after Pontormo

In Florence in 1531, Michelangelo made a cartoon for Alfonso d'Avalos, Marchese del Vasto and general of Charles V. It depicted the moment at which, after the resurrection, Christ appeared to Mary Magdalen while she was standing at the empty tomb. Mistaken at first for a gardener (in fact Christ is portrayed with a hoe in his hand), Mary Magdalen then recognizes the Savior. He commands her not to touch him but to go and tell the disciples of his resurrection. The drawing, now lost, was immediately turned into a painting by Jacopo Pontormo at the suggestion of Michelangelo himself, who followed the work closely and assured the general that there was no more skillful painter in Florence. According to Vasari, the work «was judged a rare thing for the grandeur of Michelangelo's design and the coloring of Jacopo.» At that time several copies were made of Pontormo's painting, now in a private collection in Milan. One of these, of considerable quality, was very likely painted by Pontormo's pupil Bronzino (Florence, Casa Buonarroti).