This exhibition is presented in collaboration by the British Museum, the Museum of New Mexico Foundation and the New Mexico Museum of Art, a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs.

New Mexico Museum of Art

The British Museum

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THE BIRTH, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST FROM MICHELANGELO TO TIEPOLO

New Mexico Museum of Art

This exhibition presents a selection of Italian prints and drawings from the British Museum in London. Dating from the 1400s through the 1800s, the pieces tell the story of the life of Jesus Christ. The works focus on three key episodes from the Bible, starting with Christ’s birth in Bethlehem, shifting to his crucifixion on the hill of Golgotha, and ending with his resurrection.

Different artists interpreted these familiar subjects in a variety of ways, developing their own methods to engage, excite, and instruct their audiences. Some of these compositions were intended to be seen in public churches, where they helped educate congregations in the stories of the Bible. Others were meant for private devotional study, enabling a wealthier owner to appreciate unusual perspectives on familiar themes.

**Christianity in Pictures**

Christian subjects were central to Italian artists’ work during the period covered by this exhibition (1400s to early 1800s). At the time, the Catholic Church patronized and supported the arts since religious art was a vital way to communicate the stories of the Bible.

Most artists would have learned the scriptures from church sermons, religious dramas, and works by older masters. Unlike artists in the new Protestant communities in Northern Europe, Italian artists did not base their work on direct readings of the Bible. Catholicism did not encourage private Bible-centered devotion.

However, artists always found ways to reinterpret old religious themes. These works show artists experimenting with composition and narrative to create clear and accessible images for a wide audience. Capturing innovative or unusual aspects of these familiar themes also helped an artist to stand out from his peers.

**St. Louis**
He was King Louis IX of France, born in 1214 and dying in 1270. Louis was a follower of St. Francis of Assisi and known for his piety and devotion to the poor. He invited hundreds of poor subjects to his palace every day where they served and attended to their needs. He personally led two Crusades to the Holy Land. He founded the beautiful Church of St. Chapelle in Paris where he placed the supposed Crown of Thorns.

**St. Mary Magdalene**
Mary is identified as a Jewish woman who was a devoted follower of Christ, witnessing his crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. She was reported to be a repentant prostitute who revered Christ. In art, she is shown as washing Christ’s feet with her tears and drying them with her hair. In return, Christ forgives her and absolves her of all her sins. According to the Gnostic Gospel of Mary, after Christ’s death she acted as a spiritual guide spreading his teachings.

**St. Paul**
He is considered to be the most important figure in the development of the Christian Church after Jesus. He appears in many books of the New Testament where he is identified as a Greek Jew from Asia Minor with the original name of Saul of Tarsus. On the road from Jerusalem to Damascus he had a vision of God in a blinding light and subsequently recognized Christ as the promised Messiah, the son of God. He travelled, preached, and converted many people during his lifetime, founding various churches throughout Asia Minor and Europe. According to the Apocrypha (Christian writings not included in the New Testament), he was martyred by being beheaded on the order of Emperor Nero.

**St. Peter**
Peter was one of the original Twelve Apostles and the first leader of the Early Church. He was originally a Jewish fisherman with the name of Simon. He was deemed to be the outstanding member of the Apostles and is acknowledged to be the first in the line of Popes. Christ is reported to have given him the keys to the kingdom of Heaven and therefore, he is frequently shown as being present at the Gates of Heaven during the Last Judgement. According to the Gospel of Luke, Christ made the prophecy that Peter would deny knowing Him three times. However, he was forgiven as Peter was the first person to be greeted by Christ after the Resurrection. Historically, he was crucified upside down by Nero in 64CE.

**St. Sebastian**
According to legend, Sebastian served as a member of the Praetorian Guard to Emperor Diocletian. When he was revealed to be a Christian, Diocletian ordered him to be tied to a stake and shot with arrows (287 CE). Miraculously, he is reported to have survived and later confronted Diocletian. This time the Emperor had him beaten to death and his body thrown into the sewer. He is known as the patron saint of soldiers and athletes. Renowned artists such as Botticelli, Mantegna, and El Greco have painted him as a young man pierced by arrows.

**St. Thomas**
According to the New Testament, Thomas was one of the original Twelve Apostles. Therefore, he probably lived during the 1st century CE. He is known as “Doubting Thomas” because he denied the act of Jesus’ Resurrection. Later he verified it, by supposedly touching Jesus’ wounds. Subsequently, he proclaimed Christ as the Son of God.
St. John the Baptist

He is the namesake of the New Mexico Museum of Art’s Auditorium and is known throughout the world as the patron saint of animals and the environment. He was born in Italy in 1181 into a wealthy family and at first led a life of self-indulgence. According to legend, he received visions from God and heard the voice of Christ telling him to serve the Church by living in poverty. He is also reported to have received the stigmata, which beheaded her, and the palm leaf of a martyr.

St. Francis of Assisi

He is the author of the Gospel of St. John in the New Testament. He was one of the first of Christ’s apostles or disciples, remaining at the foot of the Cross during the Crucifixion. After Christ’s death, he was charged with the care of the Virgin Mary taking her to Ephesus in Turkey. He was responsible for many conversions and is recognized as a founder of the Christian Church.

Resurrection

The term literally means a rebirth or a reawakening after death. It is the Christian belief that God raised Jesus after the Crucifixion and transported him to Heaven.

St. Catherine of Alexandria

She is a very popular saint who lived during the 3rd to 4th century CE. She was a Christian princess who protested against religious persecutions. She believed that she was a Bride of Christ. Catherine was tortured by being rotated on a spiked wheel. The wheel broke and she was beheaded. The most famous painting of her is St. Catherine of Alexandria (1598-1599) by Caravaggio, showing her with the broken wheel, the sword which beheaded her, and the palm leaf of a martyr.

St. Jerome

He was born in the 4th century CE in what is now Croatia or Slovenia. He converted to Christianity and claimed to receive holy visions. After living as a hermit in the desert for four years, he was ordained as a priest. He is known for translating the scriptures from Hebrew to Latin. Identified as the patron saint of archaeologists and scholars, he is often depicted with a skull which represents the mind and thought.

St. John the Baptist

He was born during the first decade BCE in Judea. John was a Jewish prophet who preached of God’s Final Judgment and baptized those who repented of their sins. He even baptized Jesus Christ. According to sources in the Four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, he was arrested by Herod, the Ruler of Judea. John was beheaded as a result of Herod’s coercion of the Jewish Law. Herod’s step-daughter Salome demanded the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

St. John the Evangelist

He is the author of the Gospel of St. John in the New Testament. He was one of the first of Christ’s apostles or disciples, remaining at the foot of the Cross during the Crucifixion. After Christ’s death, he was charged with the care of the Virgin Mary taking her to Ephesus in Turkey. He was responsible for many conversions and is recognized as a founder of the Christian Church.

Birth

The first people to visit Christ in Bethlehem are shepherds from the hillsides, who hear about his birth from angels. Next to visit are the Magi, three wise men from the east. They come to worship him, following the light of a new star that appeared on the night he was born. The shepherds represent Christ’s acceptance by the people, but the Magi reflect the broader impact of his mission.

These early episodes from Christ’s story offered artists a variety of opportunities and challenges. The Adoration of the Shepherds allowed for a humble genre scene, while the exotic Magi gave the chance to show sumptuous costumes and pageantry. But artists had to think carefully about the composition. Should they focus on the newborn child’s humanity or divinity? Was there a way to suggest both? How could they draw the viewer’s attention to the baby, and savior, at the heart of the drama?

GREGORIO DE’ FERRARI

The Nativity 1675

Pen and brown ink, brown wash, heightened with white, on light brown paper. The Genoese artist Gregorio de’ Ferrari shows the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph adoring the infant Christ immediately after his birth. The shepherds and Magi have not yet arrived. This is an intimate family moment. Yet the peaceful scene is given drama by strong, swirling pen lines, to draw the eye into the center, and by Ferrari’s striking use of white to convey the radiance of the Christ Child.

CIRCLE OF PIETRO PERUGINO

The Adoration of the Shepherds 1500–10

Brush drawing in brown ink, over black chalk, pricked for transfer. In this this preparatory drawing for a painting of the same size, shepherds, who have come to worship the infant Christ, kneel in the background. In this formal, symmetrical composition, they appear smaller than the Holy Family, following the rules of perspective. The drawing’s contours have been pricked, showing that it was used as a 1:1 scale drawing (a cartoon) to transfer the composition onto the canvas.
PARMIGIANINO

The Adoration of the Shepherds 1524
Red and black chalk, touches of pen and brown ink
This is one of many drawings that Parmigianino made of the same subject. They were probably designs for a lost or unrealized private devotional work. In this lively and informal drawing, Parmigianino’s shepherds stride in from the left, pointing excitedly at the infant Christ. The Holy Family are caught unaware as the Virgin Mary bathes her child. A charming domestic image such as this would have been inappropriate for an altarpiece, but ideal for a devotional work meant to be worshipped at home.

JACOPO CARAGLIO

The Adoration of the Shepherds, after Parmigianino 1526
Engraving
The engraver Jacopo Caraglio made several prints after Parmigianino’s designs. Using curved lines, Caraglio emphasizes the excitement of the shepherds, who include both men and women. The curves also draw the eye towards the tiny figure of the infant Christ at the center. Caraglio skilfully captures Christ’s vulnerability and humanity. The blazing star in the sky alludes to his divinity and the imminent arrival of the Magi.
Museum No. W.1.40

MAURO GANDOLFI

The Adoration of the Shepherds, after Gaetano Gandolfi 1829
Pen and grey ink, gray wash, over black chalk
This drawing was made in preparation for a print, which was never engraved. Three centuries after Renaissance artists experimented with different ways to present this subject, Gandolfi returned to a highly formal composition. A shepherd and his family worship the infant Christ with wonder and awe, the mother pointing him out to her child. The Holy Family is posed and calm, separated from their worshippers by rays of light, which divide sacred from worldly space.

GIULIO CAMPI

The Adoration of the Shepherds 1547
Black chalk with yellow, white and brown bodycolor, faintly squared for transfer, on gray paper
In this piece, Campi uses shadows to emphasize the divine light that shines on the infant Christ and those immediately around him. The dynamic figures and

Joseph of Aramathea
He is described in the Four Gospels of the New Testament as the man who removed Christ’s body from the cross, wrapped it in linen, and buried it in what was purported to be his own tomb. Joseph was granted this honor because he was rumored to be the uncle of Mary and therefore Christ’s great uncle. This scene is usually described as the “entombment” in artistic images.

Longinus
He is identified as the Roman centurion who pierced the side of Jesus with a lance when Christ was on the Cross. Longinus was the commander of the soldiers assigned to watch over the Crucifixion and verify Christ’s death. Longinus is also described as being present at the Resurrection, when Christ reportedly rose from his tomb. Longinus became a follower of Christ, was baptized, left the army, and became a proselytizing monk. He was later martyred and canonized as St. Longinus. His figure can be seen in artistic images such as The Crucifixion, The Descent from the Cross, and The Resurrection.

Lunette
This is a half-moon shaped space located at the intersection of an arch and a cornice, usually above a window or door. The space can be empty or used to display paintings or relief sculptures.

Magi
The Magi are also called the Three Wise Men or the Three Kings and were described in the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament. They saw a star in the East which guided them to Bethlehem where they paid homage to Jesus after his birth. Gaspar brought frankincense, Balthasar brought myrrh, and Melchior brought gold as gifts for the child.

Mary
Mary, or the Virgin Mary, was the mother of Jesus Christ. She was described as having been visited by the Archangel Gabriel who announced that she would become the mother of the Son of God.

Mary Salome
She is identified in the Gospel of Mark as one of the three Marys, comprising the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, and herself. She was a witness to the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ. She is traditionally known as the mother of John the Evangelist.

Messiah
In the Old Testament, the Messiah is the anointed leader promised by God to be the deliverer of the Jewish people. He will be a descendent of King David and will protect the Jewish nation. He will gather all the Jews back to the Land of Israel and will usher in an era of world peace with an end to all suffering and hatred. According to Judaism, the Messiah has not yet arrived. According to Catholicism, Jesus Christ, as the anointed son of God, is the Messiah who is the savior of the world.

Nativity
This is a traditional representation of the birth of Christ in a manger or stable in Bethlehem. The usual figures are the Holy Family, the Three Magi, shepherds, and attendant animals such as donkeys, sheep, or camels.

Nicodemus
He appears in the Gospel of John and is identified as a Pharisee, a member of a Jewish tribe, and one of the Sanhedrin, the ruling Jewish council. He visited Jesus at night and recognized Him as sent by God. He is sometimes shown as witnessing the Crucifixion and helping Joseph of Arimathea bear Christ’s body away from the cross.
Adoration of the Shepherds
Shepherds are shown arriving at the stable in Bethlehem shortly after the birth of the Christ child. The shepherds were told about this miraculous birth by an angel.

Apostle
Literal translation from Greek meaning emissary. The term derives from the Greek of the New Testament and was used for Jesus's original Twelve Apostles, as well as a wider group of early Christian figures. The word may be used for early associates of the founder of a religion, who were important in spreading his or her teachings.

Bethany
This is a town on the eastern slope of Mt. Olive, close to Jerusalem. In the New Testament, it is identified as the place where Christ performed the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. The Book of John (11:1-44) reveals that Jesus delayed coming until four days after the burial of Lazarus “so that the Son of God may be glorified.”

Bethlehem
The Biblical birthplace of Jesus is a major destination for Christian pilgrims. For Jews, Bethlehem is notable as the burial place of Ruth and the birthplace of King David. Currently, it is a Palestinian site south of Jerusalem on the West Bank.

Cherubim
Members of a winged order of angels described in the Bible as attendants of God. They are traditionally depicted with four faces and four wings.

Golgotha
According to the Bible, it is where Christ was crucified. It is also known as Calvary, a term which was translated in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark as “place of the skull.”

Heroic Nudity
This is a concept in classical Greek and Roman art which indicates that the subject of a painting or a sculpture is either a hero or a divine being. The technique is quite idealized and somewhat unrealistic as when ancient warriors were shown as being nude during combat.

Holy Family
The child Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and St. Joseph are the members of the Holy Family.

Holy Trinity
Traditional Catholic orthodoxy maintains that God has three divine forms: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All these forms are believed to be co-eternal and co-equal. The Holy Spirit is usually represented in art as rays of light originating in Heaven or as a dove also illuminated by celestial light.

Joseph
He was married to Mary and was Jesus’ earthly father. He was a carpenter and taught Jesus these skills. According to the Book of Matthew in the Bible, an angel visited him in a dream and told him that his wife would give birth to the Son of God.

asymmetrical background disguise the rather conventional composition. The Holy Family is shown at the center of an arch-shaped crowd, which draws the eye towards Christ. In the foreground fragments of classical sculpture allude to Christ’s triumph over the non-Christian Roman world.

Museum No. 1941.108.14  Provenance: Sir Thomas Lawrence (L. 2445). Dr Alfred Schaar.

LEANDRO BASSANO
The Adoration of the Shepherds  1570–90
Black and white chalk, on light brown paper
Leandro Bassano often placed sacred scenes in modest, everyday contexts and here he emphasizes Christ’s humble birth. The stable is ruined and overgrown. The devout shepherds have brought not only their animals but bundles and baskets of simple possessions. By placing the Holy Family on the right, Bassano produces the effect of a frieze. Our eyes travel along the procession of shepherds before alighting on the tiny figure of Christ, cradled within a curve of bodies.


CARLO MARATTI
The Adoration of the Shepherds  1651–56
Black chalk, with brown wash, heightened with white, on brown prepared paper
This is a study for a frescoed lunette in the church of St. Isidoro in Rome. Maratti painted the fresco in a chapel dedicated to St. Joseph, who is given an unusually prominent place in the right foreground. Two shepherds balance him on the left. Yet Maratti keeps the focus on the central figures of the Virgin and Child by bathing them in a blaze of divine light and using a dark color scheme in the rest of the picture.


CAMILLO PROCACCINI
A shepherd playing bagpipes  1590–94
Black and red chalk
Here, Procaccini studies a humble shepherd, using black and red chalk to achieve the strong contrasts of nocturnal lighting. The figure appears in a finished painting inside the church of St. Francesco Grande in Milan. Although only a portion of the bagpipe-player is seen in the finished crowd of adoring figures, Procaccini takes great care with his study. The drawing underlines the visual and symbolic significance of light in this episode of Christ’s birth.

**Attributed to Francesco Roselli**

*The Adoration of the Magi*  1470–90

Engraving

Renaissance artists enjoyed the chance to show the three Magi travelling with their striking entourages. In this early Florentine print, the Holy Family are almost overshadowed by the crowded entourage, with its camels, cheetahs and textiles. The infant Christ gives a blessing, while the oldest Magi prostrates himself at his feet. Although the artist acknowledges Christ’s humanity with the simple stable, Roselli is more interested in showing Christ’s divinity as a precocious infant and the Son of God.


**Giacinto Gimignani**

*The Adoration of the Magi*  1626–81

Pen and brown ink, with gray-brown wash over red chalk, squared for transfer

This dramatic drawing has been squared for transfer. Humble figures, perhaps shepherds, watch the Magi with awe. The lively, frieze-like composition carries the eye from left to right, towards the Virgin and Child and St. Joseph. They are not in a stable, but in a ruined Classical structure, representing Christ’s triumph over the non-Christian Roman world.

Museum No. 1946,0705.14  Presented by Dr Carl Robert Rudolf

**Giovanni Battista Tiepolo**

*The Adoration of the Magi*  About 1753

Etching

Light and texture fascinated the Venetian artist Tiepolo. Here, he responds to the challenge of representing the procession of the Magi in an upright format. He uses progressively fainter lines to suggest the entourage trailing away into the distance. The Virgin, perched in the ruins of a modest shelter, receives a sumptuously dressed Magi. The child wriggles on her lap, indifferent to the visitors. Above, a shaft of divine light breaks through the clouds, accompanied by cherubim.

Museum No. 1919,1220.2  Presented by Charles Hazelwood Shannon

**Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo**

*The Adoration of the Magi*  About 1760

Pen and gray and black ink

The son of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, Domenico echoed many of the themes that had interested his father, adding his own eccentric vision. Here the Magi arrive to visit the infant Christ in a tumult of figures, including pages, dogs, and cupbearers. The Holy Family is tucked away in the shadows of a rough landscape. However, he does not share later artists’ interest in anatomical accuracy. His focus is on the ornamental quality of the drawing, embodied by the elaborate furled draperies and the detailed halo, which combines the cross with the circle of eternity.


**Attributed to Andrea Bregno**

*Design for an altarpiece surmounted by a figure of the Risen Christ*  1462–64

Pen and brown ink, over black chalk

This rare design for a sculpted altarpiece incorporates a tabernacle, a recess in which the consecrated Host is kept. The patron of the piece, Cardinal Alvise Trevisan, appears as a tiny figure kneeling center right. Four saints flank the tabernacle—St. Lawrence, St. Louis, St. Paul, St. Peter. The figure of the Resurrected Christ appears on the very top of the altarpiece, alluding to the triumph of the soul over the body.

Museum No. 1860,0616.38  Provenance: Sir Thomas Lawrence (without his mark). Samuel Woodburn; his sale, Christie’s, London, 5 June 1860, lot 393 (as Mino da Fiesole).

**Lattanzio Gambara**

*The Ascension*  About 1570

Pen and brown ink, heightened with white, on blue-gray paper, squared for transfer

This rare drawing shows the triumph of the soul over the body. Seen from below, Christ ascends to heaven, his face hardly visible and his musculature emphasized by the fall of light from above. Gambara influenced the work of Correggio, who had experimented with similarly dramatic foreshortening. Gambara uses the drawing to explore the potential of such a pose, which is given extra energy by the draperies swirling around Christ’s legs. Yet Gambara evidently felt it was too extreme, as he reduced the foreshortening in the final fresco.

Museum No. T.13.39  Bequeathed by William Fawkener

**Fra Bartolommeo**

*Drapery study for Christ in Judgement*  1499–1500

Gesso and brown and white pigment, on dark gray prepared linen

In this remarkable drapery study, Fra Bartolommeo plans the figure of Christ for his fresco of the Last Judgment in Florence. The artist worked from fabric that had been soaked in plaster, to hold its folds, and draped over a wooden mould. This may explain the broad, sculptural quality of the drapery here. The fall of light from upper left adds to the monumental effect. The drawing is on linen rather than paper.

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rather than agitated, emphasizing the slow wonder of the disciples rather than their comment on the scene, and a servant brings a bowl of soup. The mood is calm instance, a dog and cat squabble in the foreground, the innkeeper and his assistant the Venetian artistic tradition, which places sacred banquets in lively settings. For
displayed nearby. It is an early work by Torchi and shows the strong influence of
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In this early drawing, Parri Spinelli shows the Risen Christ swathed in cloth that
over the elaborate folds of the drapery, and the naturalistic rendering of

ALESSANDRO TURCHI

The Supper at Emmaus 1600–14
Pen and brown ink, over black chalk

Turchi’s vision of the Supper at Emmaus is more sedate than Antonio Gionima’s, displayed nearby. It is an early work by Torchi and shows the strong influence of the Venetian artistic tradition, which places sacred banquets in lively settings. For instance, a dog and cat squabble in the foreground, the innkeeper and his assistant comment on the scene, and a servant brings a bowl of soup. The mood is calm rather than agitated, emphasizing the slow wonder of the disciples rather than their shocked joy;

Museum No. 1902.0617.3 Provenance: Baron Dominique Vivant Denon (L. 779).
William Esaile (L. 2617).

GIOVANNI BATTISTA PASQUALINI

The Incredulity of St. Thomas, after Guercino 1621
Engraving

After the Supper at Emmaus, Christ reveals himself to the rest of his disciples. All are overjoyed, except St. Thomas, who is unwilling to accept the Resurrection without proof. This print was a collaboration between Pasqualini and another Italian artist, Guercino. Typically, Guercino presents a staid version of the subject, with little emphasis on the physicality of Christ’s wounds, but here Christ invites Thomas to touch his injuries.


JACOPO DE’BARBARI

The Risen Christ About 1498
Engraving

Depictions of the Risen Christ were often used as shorthand for the victory of the Christian church. The innovative printmaker Jacopo de’ Barbari shows Christ with his cross of victory, his hand making a gesture of blessing. His tripartite halo refers to the Holy Trinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Although at first glance it seems a simple image, great care has been taken over the elaborate folds of the drapery, and the naturalistic rendering of Christ’s torso.


PARRI SPINELLI

The Risen Christ 1435–45
Pen and brown ink

In this early drawing, Parri Spinelli shows the Risen Christ swathed in cloth that drapes over his arm like a classical toga. Spinelli portrays Christ partly nude in allusion to his human frailty and the wounds he received during the Crucifixion.

shelter. The bristling penwork, which seems to have been drawn quickly to capture an idea, adds to the energy of the scene.

Museum No. 1946.0713.917 Presented by Count Antoine Seilern
Provenance: Sir Thomas Lawrence (L. 2445). Samuel Woodburn; his sale, Christie’s, 8 June 1860, part of lot 948. Sir Thomas Phillips. Thomas Fitzroy Fenwick.

CRISTOFANO ROBETTA

The Adoration of the Magi, after Filippino Lippi 1500–10
Engraving

The Florentine printmaker Robetta often blended Italian and German influences in his work. This composition is largely based on an altarpiece by Filippino Lippi, but Robetta adds other details. The ox and donkey and the hat just above the signature are taken from prints by Martin Schongauer. Using a broadly symmetrical composition, Robetta focuses attention on the Virgin and Child at center, placing them at the apex of a triangle formed by the kneeling Magi. Two rough pillars, representing the stable, frame the Holy Family.

Museum No. 1868.0822.21 Bequeathed by Felix Slade

CRISTOFANO ROBETTA

The Adoration of the Magi, after Filippino Lippi 1500–10
Copper printing plate

This Renaissance copperplate was used to print Robetta’s nearby Adoration of the Magi. It is one of the largest plates that he engraved. Trained as a goldsmith, Robetta created a remarkably detailed composition and achieved nuanced effects through a variety of sophisticated engraving techniques. The plate is double-sided, with Allegory of Love engraved on the back. Secular and sacred subjects sat easily side by side in the Renaissance workshop.


BENOZZO GOZZOLI

Studies for kneeling angels for the Journey of the Magi 1459–63
Pen and brown ink, brown wash, heightened with white and touches of gold, on pink prepared paper

This rare drawing is the only surviving study by Gozzoli for his masterpiece, The Journey of the Magi. Here, Gozzoli makes studies for angels, using delicate highlights and wash to create a sense of three-dimensionality. In the final version, located in the Chapel of the Magi in Florence, the procession of the Magi winds around three walls of the chapel, culminating in a recessed altar. Angels in a garden face inward towards the chapel’s altarpiece of The Nativity.

TADDEO ZUCCARO  
*Design for a chapel with scenes of the Adoration of the Magi and the Resurrection  1550–60*  
Pen and brown ink, brown wash, over black chalk  
This design for a chapel shows how artists had to think about the architectural context of their pictures. Two scenes of the Adoration of the Magi, in the main panel on the left and the lunette above, sit alongside the altar, shown here on the right. Another lunette of the Resurrection sits above the altar itself. The beginning and the end of Christ’s earthly life are represented in close proximity, connecting these two powerful moments in the history of Christianity.  
Museum No. 2007,7018.2  
Presented by Charlotte Gere  
Provenance: Grizel, Countess Sanhope.  
Anonymous sale; Sotheby’s, London, 27 February 1963, lot 1 (as Lorenzo Sabbatini).  
Colnaghi, London.  
John Gere.

AGOSTINO CARRACCI  
*The Rest on the Flight into Egypt  1572–1602*  
Pen and brown ink  
A member of the prolific Carracci family of Bologna, Agostino was a gifted draftsman and printmaker. He had a particular fondness for landscapes. Here, he has chosen an episode from Christ’s infancy that allows him to revel in the details of a richly wooded, mountainous landscape. There is no attempt at historical accuracy—the scene looks like neither Judaea nor Egypt. St. Joseph sleeps while the Virgin and Child pick flowers; all three dwarfed by the verdant landscape around them.  
Museum No. 1946,0713.717  
Presented by Count Antoine Seilern  
Provenance: Sir Thomas Lawrence (L. 2445).  
Samuel Woodburn; his sale, Christie’s, 8 June 1860, part of lot 198.  
Sir Thomas Phillipps.  
John Malcolm of Poltalloch.  
Colonel John Wingfield Malcolm.

**DEATH**  
The Crucifixion represents the emotional heart of Christ’s story. Having been betrayed by his own disciple, Christ is rejected by his people and condemned to die. After his death, he is taken down from the cross and mourned by his friends and family.  
Depictions of the later episodes of the Passion, or the final period of Christ’s life, were deeply evocative, allowing viewers to meditate on Christ’s suffering and sacrifice. The artist had many decisions to make. Should they show Christ’s human agony, or instead foreshadow Christ’s resurrection and the meaning of his sacrifice? Should the Virgin Mary be portrayed in despair or quietly confident of God’s good faith? Should Christ be alone or with the two thieves crucified alongside him? And how could the artist represent the deep grief of Christ’s friends at the moment after his death, when all seems lost?  
alarm from the fallen stone doorway. Cades uses powerful diagonals to suggest the upward motion of Christ.  
Museum No. 1979,0721.34  
Provenance: Vincenzo Camuccini.  
Rafael Vals.  
Sotheby’s, London, 28 June 1979, lot 190.

FRA BARTOLOMMEO  
*Study for the Salvator Mundi  About 1516*  
Black chalk, traces of red chalk, heightened with white, on gray paper  
Rising in triumph from the sarcophagus, Christ is the embodiment of the Salvator Mundi, the Savior of the World. This preparatory drawing shows the vigorous early stages of compositional planning. Fra Bartolommeo, a Dominican monk, shows putti embracing each other around the tomb. These cherubim are representatives of the peace heralded by the Resurrection. Christ’s dramatic s-shaped pose is emphasized by the curved arch behind him and his billowing mantle, creating a composition full of movement.  
Museum No. 1895,0915.528  
Presented by Sir Thomas Lawrence (L. 2445).  
Samuel Woodburn; his sale, Christie’s, 4 June 1860, lot 175.  
Sir John Charles Robinson.  
John Malcolm of Poltalloch.  
Colonel John Wingfield Malcolm.

DOMENICO PIOLA  
*Noli Me Tangere  1642–1703*  
Pen and brown ink, brown wash, heightened with white  
This drawing shows the Risen Christ’s first encounter. Christ has risen from the dead but has not yet revealed himself to his followers. He encounters St. Mary Magdalene when she comes to tend his tomb. She finds it empty. She mistakes Christ for a gardener before understanding the truth of his Resurrection. Piola focuses on her moment of realization. Divine light falls strongly from the left onto Christ’s body and the face of the enlightened Magdalene.  
Museum No. 1951,0728.1  
Presented by Colnaghi  
Provenance: Pierre Jean Mariette.  
Richard Payne Knight.

ANTONIO GIONIMA  
*The Supper at Emmaus  About 1720*  
Pen and brown ink, brown wash, heightened with white  
Following his revelation to St. Mary Magdalene, Christ encounters two more disciples in the village of Emmaus. Mistaking him for a fellow traveler, they dine together. Gionima focuses on the moment that Christ reveals his true identity, using a fall of strong light to indicate divinity and realization. The two disciples at the table are only partly illuminated, as comprehension dawns. The Bolognese artist emphasizes the sacramental aspect of the story, with Christ posed like a priest at Mass.  
Museum No. 2011,7053.1  
Presented by the Ottley Group.
LUCA GIORDANO  
**The Transfiguration**  1692–1702  
Black chalk, brown wash  
Luca Giordano was renowned for his speed and energy as a painter, qualities that appear in this vigorous drawing. It shows the moment in which Christ is taken up into glory on Mount Tabor to speak to the prophets Moses and Elijah. Using brown wash to emphasize the shadows, Giordano leaves bare paper to act as the dazzling highlights.  
Museum No. 1950.1111.52  
Provenance: Robert van Audenaerde (?). R H Hilditch.

STUDIO OF NICCOLO VICENTINO  
**The Resurrection, after Raphael**  1520–27  
Chiaroscuro woodcut, printed from three blocks in pink, red and black  
Chiaroscuro printmaking was originally a German innovation. Multiple woodblocks were used to create colorful images with tone rather than line. This print conveys the dramatic moment in which the Risen Christ steps out of his sarcophagus, carrying the cross of victory. On the left, Roman soldiers flee in terror, but the slanted sarcophagus lid hides the events from the holy women who approach, in mourning, from the right.  
Museum No. W.4.13

DOMENICO CAMPAGNOLA  
**The Resurrection**  1520–30  
Pen and brown ink  
This dramatic image of victory by the Venetian draughtsman and printmaker Campagnola shows Christ rising from his tomb in a moment of wind-whipped drama. His loincloth and flag of victory unfurl in the breeze, while the heads of cherubim appear in the clouds. In Campagnola’s version, the Roman soldiers do not flee in terror. Instead, they sleep in front of the sarcophagus, deaf and blind to the promise of salvation that Christ represents.  
Museum No. 1895,0915.837  

GIUSEPPE CADES  
**The Resurrection**  1785–90  
Black chalk and charcoal, with stump  
The late eighteenth-century artist Giuseppe Cades studied the Renaissance masters, particularly Michelangelo. The monumental quality of this image is testament to their influence. Christ bursts from the tomb, an angel behind him and a radiant light shining on his face. His heroic nudity also references Renaissance and Classical forms. In the foreground, soldiers stagger back in

MICHELANGELO  
**The Three Crosses**  1521–24  
Red chalk, touches of wash  
In this powerful drawing, Christ is nailed to the cross between the two thieves. The picture is composed of two triangles—the mourners at the foot of Christ’s cross form one, and the three crosses the other. This composition draws the eye upward to the body of Christ. Probably designed for a work of private devotion, the piece was intended to evoke compassion and encourage meditation.  
Museum No. 1860,0616.3  

FILIPPO LIPPI  
**The Crucifixion About 1460**  
Pen and brown ink, over traces of leadpoint, on orange-pink prepared paper  
This drawing goes beyond the Crucifixion story told in the Bible, creating an image designed specifically for worship. The two thieves are removed from the scene, focusing attention on Christ alone. He is accompanied not only by his friends but also by later saints—St. Francis of Assisi kneels on the left, and St. Jerome on the right. Lippi attempts to create a sense of interaction and movement that is very different from earlier, more static depictions of the Crucifixion.  
Museum No. 1936,1010.9  
Presented by the National Art Collections Fund  
Provenance: Charles Rogers (L. 625); his sale, T. Philipe, London, 18 April 1799, lot 408 (as Stefano Marceselli). William Young Ottley; his sale, Mr Scott Junior under the direction of T. Philipe, London, 20 April 1803, part of lot 42 (as Stefano Marceselli). Professor William Bateson (L. 2604a); his sale, Sotheby’s, London, 23 April 1929, lot 44 (as Gozzoli). Henry Oppenheimer; his sale, Christie’s, London, 10 July 1936, lot 115.

GIULIO CLOVIO  
**The Crucifixion About 1568**  
Black chalk on two joined sheets  
The Croatian artist Giulio Clovio spent most of his life in Italy. He was profoundly influenced by the monumentality and emotional intensity of Michelangelo’s works. This preparatory study for a print shows Christ on the cross flanked by four figures, probably Nicodemus and the Virgin Mary on the left, and St. Mary Magdalene and Mary Salome on the right. Christ is drawn on a slightly larger scale than his companions, his body twisted to emphasize his vulnerability as well as his heroic nudity.  
Museum No. 1860,0616.19  
ANDREA BOSCOLI

**The Crucifixion**  About 1599

Pen and brown ink, with brown wash, heightened with white (partly discolored), over black chalk, on blue-gray paper

In this preparatory drawing, Boscoli has created a scene of two halves. The busy lower half evokes the drama of the jostling crowd, where Roman soldiers bet for Christ’s possessions. In contrast, above the tumult of the crowd, Christ and the two thieves are surrounded by empty space. The thief on the right has already died, unrepentant, and is hidden in shadow. The good thief on the left begs Christ’s forgiveness and is illuminated by a ray of redeeming light.


CAMILLO PROCACCINI

**The Transfiguration**  1587–90

Etching

Here, Procaccini translates a subject defined by light into the linear language of printmaking. This scene shows Christ’s appearance to his apostles on Mount Tabor, accompanied by prophets Moses and Elijah. The Bible specifically describes Christ’s dazzling glory and the bright light surrounding him. Procaccini uses soft stippling to convey the gradations of light and shadows.

Museum No. U.5.132
ANNIBALE CARRACCI

The Christ of Caprarola 1597
Etching, engraving and drypoint
Carracci's vision of the Lamentation is intense and intimate. It shows the figures on the hill of Golgotha, the place of the Crucifixion. The bases of the crosses are in the background. Christ lays in the lap of the Virgin Mary, who has collapsed into the arms of one of the holy women. St. John the Evangelist cradles Christ's arm, while comforting St. Mary Magdalene. Christ's body, brightly illuminated and laid out on his shroud, dominates the foreground.

Museum No. U.1.132

JOSE DE RIBERA

The Lamentation About 1624
Etching and drypoint
The Spanish artist Ribera, who worked in Naples, was deeply influenced by the raw and emotive religious tradition of his homeland. Where other artists might show the beauty of Christ's body, Ribera emphasizes its fragility. A skeletal Christ lies beneath the cross, his legs emaciated and his ribcage prominent. St. John the Evangelist supports the Virgin Mary, and St. Mary Magdalene weeps at Christ's feet. The bundled forms of the other figures only accentuate the slender, stretched body of Christ.

Museum No. W.6.97 Bequeathed by Sir Hans Sloane

GIULIO ROMANO

The Entombment 1535–40
Pen and brown ink, with brown wash, heightened with white (partly discolored) over black chalk, indented for transfer
In this depiction of the Entombment, Christ's body is placed in a sarcophagus inside his tomb. The Virgin Mary and Christ's friends have their last glimpse of his body, while Joseph of Arimathea waits with a jar of precious oil to anoint the body. The drawing dates from the end of Romano's career, after he had become a court artist in Mantua. The unusual perspective of the sarcophagus and the rusticated stonework of the tomb echo the designs that he made in Mantua for his Gonzaga patrons.


FLORENTINE SCHOOL

Christ as the Man of Sorrows with an angel and the Instruments of the Passion About 1500
Engraving
This unusual print combines narrative with symbolism and reflects earlier Northern European and Italian styles. In the foreground, Christ is shown with his wounds wearing a Crown of Thorns, his thumb presses into the gash on his

CIRO FERRI

The Crucifixion 1662
Brush drawing in brown wash, heightened with white (partly discolored) over black chalk, indented for transfer
This drawing was made to illustrate a missal, or a liturgical book used in Catholic services, commissioned by Pope Alexander VII. The drawing shows the Crucifixion as a moment of both grief and hope. St. John the Evangelist and St. Mary Magdalene kneel at the foot of the cross, while the Virgin Mary stands steadfast on the right. Christ is illuminated by a burst of divine light from the clouds behind him, which frame his body and foreshadow his resurrection.


SCHOOL OF ANDREA MANTEGNA

The Descent from the Cross 1470–1500
Engraving
After the Crucifixion, the body of Christ is lowered gently from the cross. Made in the style of the influential Andrea Mantegna, this print sets the scene in a rocky, barren landscape, echoing Christ's lifelessness. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea strain against the weight of Christ's body. The Virgin Mary, who has collapsed in her grief, is comforted by other holy women. A Roman soldier with a lance, probably Longinus, watches the scene.

Museum No. Kk,8.14

GIACOMO ROCCA

Figure study for the Dead Christ About 1575
Red chalk
The sole focus on Christ's body makes this study for a fresco unusual. Although finished, his body is isolated from all other context. Even his halo is only suggested by a brisk sweep of chalk. Red chalk was often used for figure studies because it was especially good at suggesting the softness and weight of flesh. Here it helps to create the sense of a powerful male body overcome by death.


PERINO DEL VAGA

The Descent from the Cross About 1523
Red chalk
Christ's body is lowered to the ground at the foot of the cross. Perino keeps the composition at a low level—the mourners are mainly seated or reclining, echoing the slumped body of Christ. On the left are two figures who were not present at
the Crucifixion: a kneeling patron in clerical dress, possibly Giovanni Battista Brancionio dell’Aquila, and St. John the Baptist, dell’Aquila’s name saint.

Museum No. 1854.0628.13  Provenance: Samuel Woodburn; his sale, 19 June 1854, lot 574 (as Parmigianino).

THE LAMENTATION OF CHRIST

The Lamentation is the name given to the period immediately following Christ’s crucifixion. After his body has been lifted down from the cross, Christ’s friends and family gather around. The group usually includes his mother, the Virgin Mary; his favorite disciple, St. John the Evangelist; and his devoted follower, St. Mary Magdalene. Artists sometimes chose to include more figures from the Passion, or add later Christian saints, who acted as witnesses to the grief of the mourners.

JACOPO PALMA IL GIOVANE

The Lamentation 1612–13
Pen and brown ink, with brown wash, over red chalk

The Lamentation is usually depicted in landscape format, with Christ’s body displayed lengthways. Here, Palma il Giovane experiments with an upright format for the subject. Palma may have used this preparatory drawing to work out how to centralize Christ’s body in the finished work—an altarpiece. His aim was for Christ to be directly behind the consecrated host when it was raised by the priest during Mass. The body of Christ is held almost vertical by his disciples, strongly illuminated from the front, surrounded by deep shadows.


ANDREA DEL SARTO

The Lamentation with four saints 1528
Black chalk, on light buff paper

The broadly circular composition centers on the Virgin Mary, who cradles Christ’s body in her lap, reminding us that he was a son as well as a savior. Four saints surround her, only one of whom—St. Mary Magdalene—was at the Crucifixion. The others were probably requested by the patrons. They include St. Peter with his key, kneeling at lower left; St. John the Baptist with his cross at upper left; and St. Sebastian with his arrows at upper right.


JACONE

The Lamentation 1533–53
Pen and brown ink, over black chalk

Jacone was a pupil of Renaissance master Andrea del Sarto in Florence. He is notable for extravagant compositions and sensuous distortions of the human body. Here, Christ’s friends and family mourn his death. Jacone shows Christ’s body bent almost into a circle, the pose emphasizing the suffering he had endured. The other figures struggle to support his weight or crumple in sorrow, their torment expressed in the contorted composition.


GIOVANNI DE’ VECCHI

The Lamentation with Saints Nicholas and Catherine of Alexandria 1550–1600
Brush drawing in brown and mauve wash, heightened with white, over black and red chalk, on buff paper, squared for transfer

This dramatic scene shows the lower half of a chapel design by the Roman artist Giovanni de’ Vecchi. The upper part, depicting the Resurrection, is displayed nearby. Here, de’ Vecchi presents the Lamentation in a highly staged manner, with Christ’s body supported by a tableau of grieving figures. The scene is flanked by St. Nicholas and St. Catherine of Alexandria, probably the patron saints of the chapel. The striking technique creates a powerful three-dimensional effect with high contrasts between light and shade.

Museum No. 1920.1116.3  Provenance: John Rushout, 2nd Baron Northwick, and by descent to Captain Edward George Spencer-Churchill; his sale, Sotheby’s, London, 1-4 November 1920, lot 79 (as Battista del Moro).

GIOVANNI DE’ VECCHI

Design for a chapel decoration with the Resurrection and two prophets 1550–1600
Brush drawing in brown and mauve wash, heightened with white, over black and red chalk, on buff paper

This is the upper part of a design for a chapel. The lower part, depicting the Lamentation, is shown nearby. De’ Vecchi divides the scene in three. The center shows Christ flying upward in triumph. Roman soldiers cower beneath him, apparently having fallen backward from the force of his eruption from the tomb. Two prophets sit on top of the lunette, acknowledging the Old Testament figures who predicted the life and resurrection of a Messiah.

Museum No. 1920.1116.2  Provenance: John Rushout, 2nd Baron Northwick, and by descent to Captain Edward George Spencer-Churchill; his sale, Sotheby’s, London, 1-4 November 1920, lot 78 (as Battista del Moro).