IV. Continuation of suit by Tommaso del Verrocchio against Lorenzo di Credi.

5 Novembre 1490

Dicta die.

Compari dinanzi etc.

Maso di Michele del Varochlo tessitore di drappi, herede ab intestato di Andrea del Verrocchio suo fratello nella decta causa che pende tra decto Marchio et Lorenzo d'Andrea dipintore. Et insistendo in tutte le cose dette e quella domanda lanò nero; uno scaldaletto; otto plateletti di stagno; 8 quadri; dodici scodelle; una letiera dipinta; una tavola da mangiare; una pancha da tavola; una gabanella di panno monachino fine; dodici scodelini; una letiera; tre plateletti di stagno; libre 2, 1938/39, 80. 2 Michelangelo, I, Princeton, 1947, 166.

Note on Michelangelo's Pietà:

Irving Lavin

Having provided edification, in a starry blue firmament, to thousands of visitors who floated past, it seems almost an impertinence to note that the presence of Michelangelo's Pietà at the New York World's Fair also proved fruitful to scholarship. With the kind permission of the Archdiocese of New York, photographs were taken of the sculpture from the sides and rear. Unfortunately, conditions were not ideal and the quality of the results is uneven. A selection of the better views is here reproduced (Figs. 1-4). The entire series of eighty-one negatives has been placed in the files of the Fogg Art Museum and is available for study and non-commercial reproduction.

The opportunity was also seized to make a close study of the Virgin's left hand and thus bring a step closer to solving a problem that has been ranking for some time. In 1938/1939 Rudolf Wittkower published a document showing that in 1736 the sculptor Giuseppe Lironi restored four fingers of the hand; he received nine scudi for having "rifatto le quattro dita alla mano sinistra della Maria SS.ma della Pietà."2 Wittkower seems to have assumed that Lironi actually made new fingers, and in so doing created the famous open gesture, with its rhetorical appeal to the spectator. Subsequently Tornay perceived that fragments of the original fingers remained, and he defended Lironi's restoration as essentially correct.2 Most recently, Pope-Hennessey has also main-

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* Evidently lapsus calami for Maso.
** Evidently lapsus calami for Andrea di Michele.

 MICHELANGELO'S SAINT PETER'S PIETÀ: THE VIRGIN'S LEFT HAND AND OTHER NEW PHOTOGRAPHS

IRVING LAVIN
tained that everything save possibly the index finger is in the position Michelangelo designed.3

With minor reservations the evidence bears out the latter opinions. As can be seen in the new photographs, only the marble of the fourth finger is different from that of the rest of the hand (Figs. 5, 6). The other fingers (including the thumb, cf. Fig. 7), though broken, are preserved in their entirety and cannot have been in positions significantly different from those Lironi gave them. One can only speculate as to the accuracy of the restoration of the fourth finger. As Tolnay noted, the hand corresponds most closely to the first dated copy of the statue, Salamanca's engraving of 1547.4 Assuming that the fourth finger still existed when the print was made, then Lironi's restoration seems to have been reasonably conscientious in this respect, too.

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4 Tolnay, op. cit., fig. 176.
1–4. Michelangelo, Pietà (photos: Magda Vasiliev, New York)
5–7. Michelangelo, Pietà, details of the Virgin’s left hand (photos: 5, 6, Magda Vasiliov, New York; 7, Giordani, Rome)