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Afterlife of a Renaissance Sculpture: Reception History of Michelangelo's Pietà

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**Afterlife of a Renaissance Sculpture:
Reception History of Michelangelo's *Pietà***

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts
of
Bard College

by
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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Introduction

In the year 2018, when I stood inside the Chapel of the Pietà in St. Peter's Basilica, staring at Michelangelo's marble piece showing the Virgin Mary holding the dead Christ on her lap, I was surrounded by tourists from almost all of the continents on Planet Earth. Unlike believers who sat on the bench in front of us and prayed to or meditated on the image for a longer time, the tourists, who made up the majority of the population in this chapel, made swift actions: they walked up to the sculpture as close as possible, took its picture with their phone cameras, and left to see something else in the basilica without a comment or moment of reflection.

When Michelangelo finished this devotional image, the *Pietà*, in the year 1499, and installed it as the tomb sculpture of a French cardinal in Rome, he would not have thought that his *Pietà* would one day be recognized as one of the "must see" sights in St. Peter's Basilica by such a diverse audience. He also would not have thought that this audience would come only to see it, not to appreciate its spiritual or aesthetic value very much, so that the sight of it would exist as a snapshot on their phone which they could pull out to entertain friends and family. In fact, from the moment the *Pietà* was first displayed to the public, Michelangelo could no longer control what people's opinions on it. In the more than 500 years of its existence, the unchanged¹ marble sculpture was received by viewers with different cultural backgrounds and living experiences, who all made unique meaning out of the *Pietà* in ways they saw fit.

¹ The *Pietà* remains unchanged in its general appearance, but small alterations, which are invisible to viewers now from behind the sheet of bullet-proof glass, have occurred. For a detailed condition report before 1969, see Charles De Tolnay, *Youth*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, Michelangelo (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 145-146. For that of later years and photographs, see Robert Hupka, *Michelangelo: Pietà* (Angers: Éd. Arstella, 2000).

The *Pietà* (fig. 1) is a marble sculpture in the round by Michelangelo Buonarroti, made between 1498-99. It was commissioned by a French patron, Cardinal Jean Bilhères Lagraulas, the former abbot of Saint-Denis in Paris and the cardinal of Santa Sabina in Rome.² Based on the surviving contract, it was finished in one year and displayed in the church of St. Petronilla, which does not exist now, in 1500.³ Since the time of its completion, the sculpture has been moved to three different locations within the basilica: the first move was to the chapel of the Madonna della Febbre in the old St. Peter's.⁴ The second move was to the choir of Sixtus IV. The third and the last move, happened in 1749, was to the first chapel on the north side of the new St. Peter's, known today as Capella della Pietà, where the sculpture still sits.⁵ Other than these moves, the *Pietà* has traveled once outside of the Vatican when it was exhibited in the Vatican Pavilion at the 1964 New York World's Fair. The sculpture suffered critical damage in May 1972, when an insane man attacked the sculpture by hitting it with a hammer 15 times. Several regions of the sculpture, including the Virgin's entire and arm, were knocked off. Although some pieces of the original marble were lost during this attack, the sculpture was afterwards restored in its entirety, so none of the damage is visible now. This event resulted in the installation of bullet-proof glass in front of the sculpture's altar, and visitors may now experience the sculpture only through the glass from afar.⁶

Today Michelangelo's *Pietà* is the most well-known depiction of the subject of Virgin Mary holding her dead son, yet it is far from being an early representation of this image type.

² Michael Hirst and Jill Dunkerton, *The Young Michelangelo* (London, Great Britain: National Gallery Publication, 1994), 47.

³ Jurkowlanec, "A Miracle," 176.

⁴ This move was caused by the destruction of St. Petronilla, which was attached to Old St. Peter's, for Bramante's rebuilding plan of the basilica.

⁵ De Tolnay, *Youth*, 147.

⁶ Robert Hupka, *Michelangelo: Pietà* (Angers: Éd. Arstella, 2000), 78.

Texts recounted the scene as early as the 10th century, when a description of Mary holding the dead Christ on her lap appeared in a Greek devotional text. The same theme, described slightly differently, appeared in Germany in a Good Friday meditation in the thirteenth century. At the same time in Italy, the moment was meticulously described in a popular devotional book: “the Lady supports the head and shoulders in her lap...out of the abundance of her tears, she washed the face of her Son...then she wiped His face and, kissing His mouth and eyes...”⁷ Although this image was invented by individuals during their private, imaginative devotions, and it was described differently in each devotional text, the scene includes the Mother and dead Son quickly attracted the attention of more Christians, and artists began to render the scene visually all around Europe.⁸ The visual illustrations in different geographical areas took various approaches. When this moment was first illustrated in Byzantine art in the 12th century, it included not only the Mother and the Son but also participants of the Entombment, namely Joseph, Mary Magdalene, and Nicodemus. Then, in the 13th century, it entered both German and Italian art at about the same time. In Germany, it was commonly illustrated in wood with the name of *Vespervilder*, an image type that only included the Mother and the Son in a seated position (fig. 2). In Italy, on the other hand, it commonly appeared in paintings as the *Lamentation* (fig. 3), which, like the Byzantine version, also included characters who were present at Entombment. Later, during the 14th century, the French adopted this subject from the Germans and widely

⁷ Frederick Hartt, *Michelangelo's Three Pietàs*, illus. David Finn (New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, 1975), 20-21. Isa Ragusa, trans., *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, ed. Isa Ragusa and Rosalie B. Green (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 342-344.

⁸ Ziegler points out that this vast number of works themed with Pietà is testified by the fact that after the iconoclasm movement, which happened during the Reformation Era and destroyed countless religious images, many Pietà images survived regardless of their locations. Joanna E. Ziegler, *Sculpture of Compassion: The Pietà and the Beguines in the Southern Low Countries, C.1300-c.1600* (Bruxelles [Belgium]: Institut historique belge de Rome, 1992), 15-16.

illustrated it in stone with either just the Mother and the Son or with the addition of Joseph and Mary Magdalene. In the latter case, the Virgin was often shown in a seated position with Christ held either in her arms or on her lap.⁹ Michelangelo's *Pietà* is close in form to the French type. It is also carved of stone, as was the prevalent practice in all regions of France at the time. The French cardinal who commissioned the sculpture provides a concrete link between the French tradition and Michelangelo's composition.

There is little scholarship on the general reception history of Michelangelo's *Pietà* past its Renaissance reception. Recently, two articles were published by Grażyna Jurkowlaniec, faculty member of the Art History Institute of University of Warsaw, which aimed to determine 1) the reason behind the coronation of Michelangelo's *Pietà* in 1637 and 2) Michelangelo's role as a "revolutionary inventor of devotional images," both focusing on the reception history of the *Pietà* and its religious meaning before or around Michelangelo's time.¹⁰ While Jurkowlaniec's works serve as excellent examples of usage of reception as evidence for art historical arguments, they focus on reception of the *Pietà* during a narrow period of time. This essay intends to present three significant moments in the general reception history of the *Pietà* spanning five centuries. By doing so, it will articulate the fact that the meaning of *Pietà* changes dramatically with the difference between audience groups that are receiving it, for they, coming from different backgrounds, offer their own unique interpretations of the artwork and retell its story based on their own needs.

⁹ Hartt, *Michelangelo's Three*, 20-22.

¹⁰ Academia, "Grażyna Jurkowlaniec," Academia, accessed April 30, 2020, <https://uw.academia.edu/GrazynaJurkowlaniec>.

The essay comprises three chapters: each discusses a group of spectators that differs from each other historically, geographically, and culturally. The first chapter opens with a visual analysis of the *Pietà* and then focuses on its Renaissance reception by artists living in Michelangelo's time, demonstrating two polemic opinions among these artists. The second chapter analyzes the reception of the *Pietà* among British aristocrats who traveled to Rome between the 17th and the 19th centuries, historically corresponding to the period of the Grand Tour. The third and final chapter considers the three kinds of audience groups that were involved in the 1964 New York World's Fair, where the *Pietà* was on display in the Vatican Pavilion, including the Vatican, the fair committee, and the general visitors to the fair. The essay concludes with a brief summary of its content and possible topics to further explore.

Chapter I: The Contemporary Reception of the *Pietà*

The *Pietà* is a free standing sculpture in carrara marble. It is 174cm tall, 195cm wide with the greatest width of the base, and 64cm deep with the greatest depth of the base. Located in the Chapel of the *Pietà* in St. Peter's Basilica, the *Pietà* has been placed on a pedestal of red marble, surrounded by a white band on its top, since the 18th century. The piece is set in front of a wall of yellow marble, against which is placed a cross of white marble, thus creating the visual effect of a setting under the cross on which Jesus was crucified (fig. 4).¹¹

The sculpture depicts two figures and two objects that construct the context. A young female, representing Virgin Mary, sits straight-up on a chunk of rock with open legs under her garment, and her right foot is slightly elevated. An adult male with unobvious, proportionally reduced body size, representing the dead Christ, lies limply on the Virgin's lap with his right side facing the spectator. On the tilted support of the Virgin's lap, Christ's hip lies in the opening between the Virgin's legs, with his head hanging over her right arm, his upper body supported by her right hand under his right armpit, and his thighs resting on her left leg. His right foot is placed on the rock and his left foot is supported by a short and slim stump. In this position, the Virgin's body, with her complex garment and the base of the rock, roughly corresponds to the shape of a triangle while the body of Christ appears to be a polygonal line that intersects the triangle from middle left to bottom right. Thus, Christ's body imposed a dramatic effect on top of the steady background of the Virgin's triangular figure. The sculpture's composition and subject were not revolutionary novelties at Michelangelo's time, for visual depiction of the scene of *Pietà*, which shows the Virgin holding her dead Son on her lap, has been prevailing in

¹¹ De Tolnay, *Youth*, 147.

Renaissance Italy. However, Michelangelo's unusual treatments of details in this sculpture placed it in the center of discussion among Renaissance artists.

Ascanio Condivi and Giorgio Vasari, two biographers and acquaintances of Michelangelo, provide accounts of contemporary opinions on the *Pietà* including both praise and criticism. These documents tell us that positive opinions about the sculpture tended to focus on its beauty, its spiritual effect, and the seamless combination of these two qualities. Condivi says, "The statue of Our Lady... is... of such great and rare beauty that no one sees it who is not moved to pity. It is an image truly worthy of that humanity with which the Son of God and so great a mother were endowed..."¹² Thus, he attributed the contemporary applause for this sculpture to its uncommon beauty and its emotional power of moving the viewers to sympathize with the scene.

The rarity of the beauty in Condivi's account arguably comes from Michelangelo's inventive method of art-making, which corresponds to what Condivi highlights as "humanity." Before Michelangelo, Renaissance artists relied on mathematical and geometrical rules to determine visually pleasant proportions and composition, for they took these constant formulas as the design of God and believed them to be the key to understanding nature, divinity, and obtaining beauty in *disegno*.¹³ Michelangelo is known to depart from this tradition. Keeping the rules of proportions only in his head, he instead worked with his hands without rulers or

¹² Ascanio Condivi, *The Life of Michel-Angelo*, ed. Hellmut Wohl, trans. Alice Sedgwick Wohl, 2nd ed. (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 24.

¹³ For usage of math in the process of art-making during the Medieval and Renaissance times, see Leon Battista Alberti and Martin Kemp, *On Painting*, trans. Cecil Grayson (London; New York: Penguin Books, 1991); Robert Bork, *The Geometry of Creation: Architectural Drawing and the Dynamics of Gothic Design* (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2016).

compasses and looked for “other pleasing proportions” in the “artist’s inspired judgement.”¹⁴ As a result, the *Pietà* was freed from strict rules of math but spawned from humanity, which allowed Michelangelo to solve the problem of proportions that plagued previous images of *Pietà*: the awkward position and proportions of representing the full body of an adult man on the lap of a relatively slim woman. In previous centuries, artists had dealt with this challenge in a number of ways. In one example, the Röttgen *Pietà* (fig. 5), the anonymous artist decided to diminish the scale of the body of Christ, leaving his head too large for the body. Perugino, for his treatment, included two additional figures supporting the head and feet of Christ while placing Christ’s hip on the Virgin’s lap (fig. 6). However, Michelangelo solved this problem perfectly, as Leo Steinberg points out, by visually enlarging the Virgin figure with folded, heavy headdress, soft garment of her upper body that, being bound by a band running from her left shoulder to the right side of her waist, brings mass to her chestal area, complex drapery on her lower body, which visually serves as a massive support for Christ’s body, and the expanding cloak on her back. The sculptor also slightly reduced the body size of Christ proportionally, yet this fact is seamlessly hidden by his body’s polygonal position. In this way, Michelangelo brought an unprecedented harmony to his *Pietà* without rigidly sticking to mathematical calculations and a “real” scale of Jesus respective to Mary.¹⁵ The *Pietà* was then recognized as a “rare beauty” by people like Condivi who had experienced the traditional solutions to the composition.

While Condivi saw the *Pietà* as a work of uncommon aesthetic achievement, he also recognized its power as a devotional image to render its viewers sympathizing with the scene.

¹⁴ Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art through the Ages: A Global History*, 14th ed. (Wadsworth: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2013), II:610.

¹⁵ Leo Steinberg, *Michelangelo's Sculpture: Selected Essays*, ed. Sheila Schwartz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), 6-7.

This power is highlighted by the Virgin's facial expression and gesture which simultaneously indicate sorrow and grace. Looking down at her son's body, the Virgin does not show any dramatic expression on her face. Her eyebrows are relaxed, eyes are half-closed while looking downward, lips closed but not clenched, and no muscle on her face appears to be tightened. The contrast between her pacific expression and the tragic death of her Son on her lap precisely evoke a deep feeling of sorrow, for it is a sorrow so profound that no expression is suffice to depict it. In the meantime, the Virgin does a presenting gesture as her left hand extends to the side with fingers slightly stretching out, simultaneously showing her acceptance of inevitable faith and presenting her son's body to the viewers, as if telling them, "yes, my son is dead, and I accept it because he died to save you." The coexistence of sorrow, a human emotion, and a graceful acceptance of fate, a divine gesture, on the *Pietà* contrive its power of moving its viewers "to pity."

Meanwhile, the scientific accuracy in the *Pietà* as a result of mastery of human anatomy is also applauded. Vasari remarks that the dead body of Christ is a highlight of the artwork, for the detail "in the muscles, veins, and nerves stretched over their framework of bones... The lovely expression of the head, the harmony in the joints and attachments of the arms, legs, and trunk, and the fine tracery of pulses and veins are all so wonderful..."¹⁶ Disliking the tradition of making Christ's wounds (especially the side wound) prominent, Michelangelo reduced their effect to no more than biologically accurate depictions of breaches in skin, but instead used his knowledge of anatomy in small locales to emphasize the lifelessness of Christ's body.¹⁷ The fact

¹⁶ Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists (Volume I)*, trans. George Anthony Bull (n.p.: Penguin, 1987), 336.

¹⁷ For Michelangelo's concept about ideal treatment of human figures, see Frederick Hartt, *Michelangelo's Three Pietás* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1975), 24.

that Christ no longer has control of his body is elicited by his awkwardly contorting upper body and the flesh around his right armpit that is pressed outward between the Virgin's supporting hand and his own weight. Meanwhile, his feeble left arm, which rests in the gap between his body and the Virgin's, and his right arm that hangs from his shoulder also indicate his death. Lastly, his right leg appears to be sliding off the Virgin's lap since no muscle is holding it in its position. Thus, Michelangelo depicts the body of Christ as both an ideal and a dead body, and this coexistence of scientific accuracy and artistic expressiveness is thought as a "miracle," for even nature itself, from which Renaissance artists drew much of their inspiration, is unlikely to produce a creature like this, Vasari says.

On the other hand, at the same time as such positive assessments, there simultaneously appeared other opinions which rejected the spiritual and religious value of the *Pietà*, which generally faulted Mary's youth. The opinions come from a group of artists who demonstrated their opinion with written texts and their own copies of the sculpture, thinking that Michelangelo's *Pietà* was the result of being "concerned only with art, but not with piety."¹⁸ Instead of the Holy Mother grieving over the death of her Son, they saw, in Steinberg's words, "an exceptionally beautiful youth lying naked in the lap of a girl."¹⁹ The Virgin Mary was considered too young and beautiful to be the grieving mother of a man in his thirties, and the body of Christ was also believed to be too lively for a man who died on crucifixion. To these, Michelangelo defends himself from a religious perspective, as documented in Condivi's biography for him, by claiming

...women who are chaste remain fresher than those who are not... more so a virgin who was never touched by even the slightest lascivious desire... I will go further and say that

¹⁸ Steinberg, *Michelangelo's Sculpture*, 1.

¹⁹ Steinberg, *Michelangelo's Sculpture*, 1.

this freshness and flowering of youth... may also conceivably have been given divine assistance in order to prove to the world the virginity and perpetual purity of the mother. This was not necessary with the Son... in order to show that the Son of God truly assumed human form... and submitted to all that an ordinary man undergoes, except sin...²⁰

Yet this claim did not convince the protestors of his sculpture. A 1523 copy of the *Pietà* by Lorenzetto, for example, demonstrates the artist's objection by making Christ's head limply fall forward on his chest and showing his arms and fingers more rigid while marking the Virgin's face with wrinkles to make her appear older (fig. 7). The copy made by Giovanni Montorsoli (fig. 8) renders the Virgin emaciated, changing her position from being upright in the middle to leaning toward her right, and making her staring at her Son's face, a gesture close to French rendering of the subject which highlight the sadness of the Virgin (fig. 9). Last but not the least, two prints after Michelangelo's *Pietà* increase the stiffness and rigidity of Christ's dead body so that his deadliness is prominent, and make the Virgin look more plain than she is in Michelangelo's sculpture (fig. 10-11).

Thus, within decades of creation of the *Pietà* and Michelangelo's lifetime, we see distinct opinions evolve in the circle of Italian artists. Coming from different points of view, some of them saw the sculpture as an unprecedented masterpiece of art which perfectly integrated aesthetic and spiritual values, and others thought of it as a piece that only appealed to visual pleasure but bore no appropriate religious meaning. In the following chapters, we will see that the difference of opinions about this sculpture were not resolved by the passing of time. Rather, as if taking on the difference between immediate responses to the *Pietà* during its own time and passing it down to future generations, two groups of audiences with different backgrounds in regions, cultures, eras, and desires formed opposite views of the sculpture. Specifically, the 20th

²⁰ Condivi, *The Life*, 24-27.

century visitors to the 1964 New York World's Fair, similar to people like Vasari and Condivi, saw the *Pietà* as a masterpiece of art and religious object, and they took a step further to treat it as an icon of Christianity and a representative of the Vatican; on the other hand, the British aristocrats who went on the Grand Tour between the 17th and the 19th centuries, as we'll see in the next chapter, had little regard to the *Pietà* because it did not correspond to their concept of appropriate religious object nor appeal to them as an artwork worthy of extensive study.

Chapter II: British Reception of Michelangelo's *Pietà* during the Grand Tour

As Michelangelo's debuting piece in Rome, the *Pietà* seems to have always been the subject of attention and respect throughout history. As discussed in the previous chapter, Michelangelo's *Pietà* already obtained considerable fame and became the center of vital discussions among artists at the time of its creation. Similarly, in the next and final chapter, we will see that when the statuary group debuted in the U.S. at the 1964 New York World's Fair, it attracted millions of visitors and was discussed as representative of Christianity and the Vatican. In the 21st century, moreover, its reputation as a must-see for tourists to the Vatican City was firmly established, for its name was mentioned in the same line with the Vatican Grotto, St. Peter's Tomb, and Bernini's Baldachin.²¹ Perhaps to modern reader's surprise, there is a period of time in history when this statuary group received so little attention from one of the most influential groups of visitors to Rome, compared to other artifacts in the St. Peter's Basilica, that we might even use the word "neglect." This period of neglect corresponds to the period of popular elite European tourism known as the Grand Tour.

The Grand Tour is a term attributed to the traveling activities of Europeans, primarily the British elite and aristocracy, between the 17th and the 19th centuries. With its homeland's isolated location, and the desire to connect with the Continent politically, culturally, and economically, the ruling class of Britain made a steady commitment to long and thorough trips to France, Germany, Italy, and other regions in Europe. This activity had its origins in the 16th century, with official trips sponsored by the Queen that aimed to train a group of officials who

²¹ For example, see the tourist guiding website of *Roma Experience*, published by a member of the European Tourism Association. Roma Experience, "A Guide to St. Peter's Basilica: Everything You Need to Know," Roma Experience, accessed April 29, 2020, <https://www.romaexperience.com/st-peters-basilica/>.

would not be limited by “patriotic Englishness” but would use their knowledge of foreign cultures and courts to England’s advantage.²² As the political environment between England and the Continent became relaxed overtime, and the wealth and power of British aristocracy grew, the Grand Tour was established as a fashion among wealthy British, and it reached its heyday in the 18th century. Countless British travelers flocked to the Continent to acquire the final touch of their liberal art education, which included “a broadened mind as well as a good command of foreign languages, a new self-reliance and self-possession as well as a highly developed taste and grace of manner.”²³

In the age before steamboats and railway, the hardship of traveling overseas and across foreign lands made the British Grand Tourists put serious effort into preparing for the trip and planning the itinerary.²⁴ They would study languages and guide books to learn of their destinations before setting off; have a tutor accompany them to ensure the quality of their trip; and brought enough commodities, including clothing, medicine, cooking spices, and money, in order to spend a relatively comfortable one to four years in foreign lands, learning the languages, knowledge, and manners they needed.²⁵ Meanwhile, instead of taking a standardized route, each Grand Tourist followed a different path based on his or her own interest. These tourists might arrive at different towns and take note of a variety of aspects of their journeys. Even when they all visited one central destination, such as Rome, each Grand Tourist focused on different aspects of what that place had to offer. They would see the same scene and go through the same

²² Christopher Hibbert, *The Grand Tour* (New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969), 10-11.

²³ Hibbert, *The Grand*, 15.

²⁴ It needs to be noted that, once the Grand Tour became a trend, a sort of tourist industry was established to ease the hardship of the trip. As a result, a vast number of Grand Tourists chose to go on an easy journey for the sake of being recognized as someone who has been on a Grand Tour, thus significantly degrading the quality of their journey, just like how modern tourism is.

²⁵ Hibbert, *The Grand*, 10-25.

experience yet, with different traveling purposes in mind, documenting their journey with distinct interpretations, comments, and critics.²⁶ It is also noted that, while the Grand Tourists would pay attention to many aspects of their destinations, spanning from the political situation in a village to the architectural style of a city's hall, they also had much interest in historical sites, artifacts, and fine art which eventually led to Britain's immense collection of these treasures.

Therefore, given the diverse accounts and perspectives of the Grand Tour recorded in so many travel logs, it is surprising that almost nothing is said of the *Pietà*, which was known at the time to be a piece by the revered artist Michelangelo. This is all the more puzzling given its location in St. Peter's Basilica, a site visited and commented on by almost every Grand Tourist. In the number of widely read writings published for the Grand Tour, the authors who visited Rome would give extensive and detailed accounts of architecture, artifacts, and fine arts in the Vatican and St. Peter's Basilica, noting their historical and aesthetic values. Yet these same publications attributed no more than a brief mention, or in some cases no mention at all, to the *Pietà*. This chapter will consider this common neglect of the *Pietà* among British Grand Tourists, using records in popular Grand Tour travel guides, journals, and letters as well as 20th century secondary sources. It will argue that the British Grand Tourists sought completion of their education of Classics in Rome, and that this interest drove them to focus on antiquities, architecture, and paintings over the *Pietà*, which is a sculptural work possibly considered inferior in its Classical value. It will also suggest that the difference between British Protestantism and Roman Catholicism prevented travelers from appreciating the *Pietà*: its depiction of a scene that

²⁶ This variety of interest which results in varied content in different travel journals is also mentioned by de Seta in his essay about the 18th century Grand Tourists. Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bignamini, eds., *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1996), 15.

the Bible doesn't include and its focus on the role of Virgin Mary did not suit the Protestant sensibilities of these visitors.

Phenomenon: They Didn't Pay Much Attention to It

For many British Grand Tourists, Rome was the climax of their journey. Its long history as the capital of the Roman Empire and the seat of the Pope had filled it with countless antiquities, art, and treasures, that attracted the British aristocrats to come and expand their realm of knowledge. A glance of what motivated them to depart on such a long and harsh journey to this eternal city is in Thomas Nugent's widely read travel guide, *The Grand Tour*:

1. churches, 2. palaces, 3. villa's, 4. colleges 5. hospitals, 6. piazzas, 7. columns, 8. obelisks, 9. paintings, 10. bridges, 11. aqueducts and fountains, 12. pagan temples, 13. theatres and amphitheatres, 14. triumphal arches. 15. baths, 16. catacombs and sepulchres, and 17. circus[es].²⁷

Churches are listed on top of the list, indicating that though the British might disagree with Roman Catholicism, they valued these delicately designed architectural monuments that contained not only relics of saints but also tasteful and valuable artifacts. Because of this appreciation of architecture and the artistic treasures of the church, the new St. Peter's Basilica, which stood as "the most noble and majestic structure of that kind in the universe," was visited by almost all Grand Tourists. At the time of these visits, the *Pietà* stood within the main body of the basilica, though being moved from chapel to chapel before its final settlement in 1749. Yet despite this, in reading the accounts of the Grand Tour one observes that the *Pietà*, an artistically remarkable statue by the architect of St. Peter's Basilica, Michelangelo Buonarroti, did not

²⁷ Thomas Nugent, *The Grand Tour* (London: Printed for S. Birt, 1749), III:213-214, accessed April 29, 2020, <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=gYAUc2g2HGkC&hl=en&pg=GBS.PA42>.

receive much attention. At most, it was treated as one of the many many nice objects in the basilica, and more often its existence was completely overlooked.

In the earliest travel literature that uses the word “Grand Tour,” *The Voyage Of Italy* published in 1670, Richard Lassels demonstrates this oversight that would be inherited by many travel writers to come. In the 22 pages that are dedicated to St. Peter’s Basilica, Lassels talks with much praise to the sacredness of this church. He mentions the High Altar, the Baldachin, and the side chapels that contain important religious objects like St. Peter’s Chair and the tombs of popes and martyrs. Meanwhile, he documents detailed measures of the church, including the piazza, the building, pillars, the main vault, and the Baldachin, as if doing an architectural report. He also dedicates one section to “some prime pictures” in the basilica, noting both their content and their painters. However, of the monumental marble piece that depicts the dead Christ lying on his mother’s lap, Lassels writes no word. Infact, he only turns his attention to a handful of statues in the church, providing no more than a brief sentence about what they represent and never mentioning the names of the sculptors. It is as if, compared to the religious objects and the paintings in the basilica, Lassels merely recognizes the statues as decorative objects instead of artworks that deserve special attention.²⁸ His inclination is not in solitude. This emphasis on architecture and paintings over the *Pietà* and other sculpture is shared by general travel writers in the 18th and the 19th century.

In one of the most influential and extensive travel guides written in the 18th century, Thomas Nugent’s *The Grand Tour*, the *Pietà* is mentioned in just one sentence. In this series of four volumes aimed at covering all possible aspects of the journey, including a place’s

²⁸ Lassels, *The Voyage of Italy*, 26-48.

geographical features, history, politics, religion, currency, agricultural productions, etc., Nugent shows a similar interest in St. Peter's Basilica as Lassels. He gives the construction history of the church, notes the estimated prices of the adornment on St. Peter's chair, and he provides a meticulous documentation of various scales of the church that is almost sufficient for making an architectural plan. Regarding paintings in the church, we are hinted that they are also of great interest because Nugent gives his only referencing suggestion about St. Peter's Basilica to "the travellers who delights in paintings and architecture [in St. Peter's Basilica]," advising them to consult another book specifically on these subjects. After mentioning all these topics, in one long paragraph Nugent provides a list of more than thirty "other admirable pieces" and tombs, buried in which is one sentence about the *Pietà*: "the dead *Christ* of alabaster by *Michael Angelo* is a stupendous work."²⁹ Once again, we see the interest in architecture and painting completely overwhelming that in the *Pietà* and other statues like it.³⁰

In the first half of the 19th century, when the Grand Tour was firmly established as an indispensable part of life for British aristocrats, John Chetwode Eustace's *A Classical Tour Through Italy* served as a general guide for travelers to Italy. The main focus when talking about St. Peter's Basilica, likewise, is the architecture. Instead of describing the building with numerous measurements, Eustace chooses to give a bird's-eye-view plan of the church, and he describes the building from an aesthetic point of view. He comments on the magnificence of the piazza and the church's front view, the coexistence of grandness and beauty in its floor, pillars, High Altar, and the dome, and the unity of countless treasures and decorative elements that adored the church. Other than these, Eustace pays reverence to religious objects such as the High

²⁹ Nugent, *The Grand*, III:217.

³⁰ Nugent, *The Grand*, III:218.

Altar and the sepulchres of the apostles, yet he gives no account of the altarpieces, whether paintings or statues, in the side chapels, which included the *Pietà*. In place of them is a comment section on the church's pictures and statues depicting figures that are or are not documented in the Holy Scripture, disliking some choices of having legendary figures or imaginary scenes in the form of pictures and statues on display in the church.³¹

Explanation: What the British Sought in Rome

The neglect of *Pietà* in British Grand Tour travel writings spans more than two hundred years, and it was not a coincidence. In other words, it was not the case that everytime a British travel writer visited the St. Peter's Basilica, the *Pietà* had happened to be absent. The fact that its presence was also overlooked in writings that dedicated to artifacts, such as the 17th century *An Account of Some of the Statues, Bas-reliefs, Drawings and Pictures in Italy, &c. with Remarks* by Jonathan Richardson and the 19th century *Remarks on antiquities, arts, and letters, during an excursion in Italy in the years 1802 and 1803* by Joseph Forsyth, suggests the oversight was a result of choice.³² It was because the British, who received education of Classics and Protestantism, had their eyes for Roman antiquities, architecture and paintings that carry Classical values and religious artifacts strictly bound to the guidance of Holy Scripture. As for the *Pietà*, which is an alabaster sculpture made by 24-year-old Michelangelo in 1499, depicting a

³¹ John Chetwode Eustace, *A Classical Tour through Italy*, 6th ed. (London: J. Mawman, 1821), II:122-149, accessed April 29, 2020, <https://archive.org/details/classicaltouritaly02eust/page/121/mode/1up>.

³² Jonathan Richardson, *An Account of Some of the Statues, Bas-reliefs, Drawings and Pictures in Italy, &c. with Remarks* (J. Knapton, 1722), xxxvi-xlvi, 293-295, accessed March 4, 2020, <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=4WYGAAAAQAAJ&hl=en&pg=GBS.PA293>. Joseph Forsyth, *Remarks on Antiquities, Arts, and Letters, during an Excursion in Italy in the Years 1802 and 1803* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1813), 195-199, accessed April 29, 2020, <https://archive.org/details/remarksonantiqui00forsrich/page/195/mode/1up>.

scene that is nowhere to be found in the Bible, it did not interest them very much. When it occasionally did, the British treated it as a purely aesthetic object among countless others that adored the basilica without appreciating its intended religious value.

In *The Voyage of Italy*, Richard Lassels states, “No man understands Livy and Caesar like him... who hath made exactly the Grand Tour of France and the Giro of Italy.”³³ Thus, the 17th century British professor of Classics and travel guide of young English noblemen establishes a connection between a trip to Italy and a broad mind, good taste, and manners. By the 17th century, on top of the relaxed political tension between Britain and the Continent, the revived appreciation for Classical values and the wealth of art in Italy attracted the aristocrats of Britain.

Under this context, Rome became the central destination for Grand Tourists because of its antiquities and its dense concentration of treasures. It was, first of all, the site of the ancient capital which the British saw as a model of successful governance. John Ingamells points out that many young English noblemen who were familiar with Classical literature had strong passion for antiquities in ancient Rome, for they took the ancient capital as a predecessor of the political success in their homeland. One significant example is the Acts of Union in 1707, which brought England and Scotland into one kingdom after a hundred years of separation and conflict. Ingamells notes that British travelers who took proud of the act looked to Augustus, who also brought unity to the Roman Empire after a lasting conflict, as model, and “set out to confirm the heritage by treading that same Forum in Rome where ‘Romulus stood, or Tully spoke, or Caesar

³³ Richard Lassels, *The Voyage of Italy of a Complete Journey through Italy* (Paris: John Starkey, 1670), I:xxv, accessed April 29, 2020, <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=65FCAAAAcAAJ&hl=en&pg=GBS.PP25>. Because Lassels’ text is the first one that uses the word “Grand Tour,” it is mentioned in many secondary sources about the Grand Tour. For example, see Hibbert, *The Grand*; Wilton and Bignamini, *Grand Tour*; Geoffrey Trease, *The Grand Tour* (n.p.: Hold, Rinehart and Winston, 1967).

fell.”³⁴ Joseph Addison’s comment on the experience of seeing Roman antiquities provides evidence for this, for he says “...a man who is in Rome can scarc[ly] see an object that does not call to mind a piece of a Latin Poet or historian.”³⁵ For him, antiquity is the living testament of the feat of the ancient Romans which allows him to study “a concept based on familiar Latin texts invested with moral and historical authority.”³⁶ Thus, the British travelers paid reverence to Roman columns, temples, baths, and triumphal arches above all else.

Secondly, when the British travelers took their mind off the ancient wisdom, and if they were not totally absorbed by local entertainments such as the theatres, brothels, and horse racing, they would study more recent arts with the purpose of cultivating taste. Hornsby points out that among the “élite, the would-be connoisseurs and the gentlemen of taste,” art was an elevator of their “Taste,” which, when accumulated to a certain level, would transform into “Virtue,” and this power of art was taken seriously among the aristocratic circle.³⁷ Based on the focal points of their travel writings mentioned above, it appears that the British related this power of elevating virtue with architecture, which is a form of art closely related to the ancient sites in Rome that bear “morale and historical authority.” Meanwhile, there appeared to be an interest to have art, especially painting, “revived” in England, as the 1722 influential travel guide *An Account of Some of the Statues, Bas-reliefs, Drawings and Pictures in Italy, &c. with Remarks*’ front page exclaims to its patrons:

³⁴ Ingamells, “Discovering Italy: British travelers in the Eighteenth Century” in ,21 quote Everyman (ed.), *The Autobiography of Edward Gibbon*, London 1911, p.122.

³⁵ Joseph Addison, *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy, &c. in the Years 1701, 1702, 1703* (London: J. and R. Tonson, 1767), 177, accessed April 29, 2020, <https://archive.org/details/remarksonseveral00addi/page/176/mode/2up>.

³⁶ Wilton and Bignamini, *Grand Tour*, 21.

³⁷ Clare Hornsby, ed., *The Impact of Italy: The Grand Tour and Beyond* (London: British School at Rome, 2000), 4.

There are few Countries in the world whose Air has Ever been agreeable to... [the Art of Painting], and Now she Languishes wherever she resides, even in her Own Beloved Italy.

May she under the Influence of Your Royal Highnesses Revive, and Flourish here in England!³⁸

Given these two specific interests, the scarce documentation of the *Pietà* in British travel literature becomes reasonable. The *Pietà* did not represent antiquity to these travelers. It was also not in a medium valued by the British as tasteful and virtuous on par with architecture and painting. Therefore, even if the travel writers saw the *Pietà* in person, they did not include it in their list of recommendations for their readers who were prospective travelers. After all, a couple of years of traveling was a short time for anyone wishing to understand an entire civilization, and their time was recommended to be spent on artifacts closer to the Classical past that held higher virtuous value than the *Pietà*.

Another less prominent reason was that, though the *Pietà* is objectively a splendid piece of art, its religious aspect was distasteful to the British. The *Pietà*, as mentioned before, is an invented concept that does not exist in the Holy Scripture, and it was only popular on the Continent of Europe in Catholic regions, primarily in Germany, France, and Italy. Indeed, the English visitors to Rome during this time did not have a specific term for the *Pietà* image type. They occasionally refer to it as the “dead Christ” or the “dead Christ and the Virgin,” describing the characters rather than a familiar image type. The above-mentioned critique by Joseph Forsyth of artifacts that depict “legendary” or invented content on display in St. Peter’s basilica also suggests that the British may have disliked the *Pietà* because of its religious content.³⁹

³⁸ Richardson, *An Account*, x.

³⁹ Nugent, *The Grand*, III:217. Lady Anna Riggs Miller, *Letters from Italy: Describing the Manners, Customs, Antiquities, Paintings, &c. of That Country : in the Year MDCCLXX and MDCCLXXI : to a Friend Residing in France*, 2nd ed. (London: Edward and Charles Dilly, 1827), 1, accessed May 2, 2020, <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=8ScwAAAAYAAJ&hl=en&pg=GBS.PA201>.

Furthermore, the dispute between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church over the religious place of the Virgin Mary, which is still ongoing in the 21st century, was certainly present at the time of the Grand Tour. Since the *Pietà* put great emphasis on the figure of the Virgin, the British Grand Tourists may have dismissed it as a non-canonical depiction and thus overlook it as a significant religious object.⁴⁰

In this way, the *Pietà* was overlooked both as an artwork and a religious piece by British Grand Tourists. Yet this overlook did not last long. When it comes to the 20th century, as we'll see in the next chapter, the sculpture would be received by another group of spectators, differing from previous ones in time, place, class, and culture, in ways that would be unimaginable to the British Grand Tourists. This group comprise American businessmen, religious community in the Vatican City, and millions of people with distinct background in country, race, culture, age, and profession during the occasion of 1964 New York World's Fair, and, though each of these three divisions of viewers had different interest in the *Pietà*, it treated the *Pietà* as an icon of Christianity and an international representative of the Vatican City.

⁴⁰ Ruth Gledhill, "Cracks in Anglican Dissent over Mary," *Times (United Kingdom)*, May 17, 2005, 5, <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezprox.bard.edu/eds/detail/detail?vid=1&sid=45d14e3f-3c51-4ca9-8e67-ebf17c7af45c%40pdc-v-sessmgr01&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=7EH0412458764&db=nfh>. <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezprox.bard.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nfh&AN=7EH0412458764&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Chapter III: Reception of Michelangelo's *Pietà* during the 1964 World's Fair

On the morning of March 28, 1962, Pope John XXIII gave consent to the proposal of the Archbishop of New York, Cardinal Spellman, to exhibit Michelangelo's *Pietà* at the 1964 New York World Fair. In April, 1964, the sculpture was shipped across the Atlantic ocean and presented in the Vatican Pavilion at the International Area of the Fair, located in Flushing Meadows, where it received millions of curious visitors in two open seasons.⁴¹ The most lively part of this trip, however, did not begin with *Pietà*'s first public appearance in New York. Following almost instantly after Pope John XXIII's consent, excitement, resentment, applause, and protests were stirred up regarding this decision and the value of the sculpture. The discussions and debates did not quiet down until the *Pietà* returned to the Vatican, in perfect condition, in 1965..

The story of the *Pietà* the 1964 New York World's Fair is worthy of attention because it was a rare occasion in the sculpture's history. A religious object such as the *Pietà*, as famous as it already was before 1964, was exposed to the sight of not just artists, the religious faithful who visited St. Peter's, the travellers on the Grand Tour, and the art historians who studied Michelangelo, but also New York businessmen, the committee of a World's Fair, and millions of commoners who all looked at this event from distinctly different perspectives. Hence, for a rare occasion, discussions around the *Pietà* were not shaped only by platforms such as academic and religious journals, which serve primarily scholars and the religious community, but also by the opinions of wider media, corporate and civic entities involved in the World's Fair. The similarities and differences of these opinions, mostly concerning the value, the accessibility and

⁴¹ For more details about this agreement and more about Cardinal Spellman, see Josef Vincent Lombardo, *Michelangelo: The Pietà and Other Masterpieces* (New York, U.S.: Pocket Books, 1965), 49.

the preservation of the sculpture, fascinatingly reflected the significance, value, and attention afforded by an artwork regarded as “masterpieces” in the 1960s. Therefore, in order to explore these aspects, this chapter will analyze the content, pattern, and literary/rhetorical devices used in newspaper articles, magazine reviews, the Fair’s guide book, and some official documents that concerned the exhibition of the *Pietà* at the 1964 New York World’s Fair..

In Need of a Masterpiece

The *Pietà*’s one and only trip outside of the Vatican was tightly related to the special occasion of the 1964 New York World’s Fair, for this fair had a special need for an attraction like the *Pietà*. The Fair was located at Flushing Meadows in Queens, NY, opened for two seasons between April, 1964 and November, 1965. Just like the *Pietà*’s trip, as this chapter will show later, the fair was surrounded by controversies and problems from beginning to end that affected its reputation and financial records. To begin with, this proposal of a “world’s fair,” drawn up by several New York businessmen who wanted to hold one in memory the 1939 New York World’s Fair, did not pass sanction by the Bureau of International Expositions, an international organization that has been in charge of world expositions like this since 1928.⁴² The fair has violated several rules of the BIE including holding more than one international expositions in the same country within 15 years (Seattle had just held one 1962) and unreasonably charging its participants for rent. As a result, many member countries of the BIE,

⁴² Since Great Britain held the first “World’s Fair,” the Great Exhibition, in 1851, many countries hosted their own internationally cooperated exhibitions. However, without a mutual monitor, each country had made their own rules to regulate the expo(s), thus causing confusion and inconvenience. As a solution to this problem, the Bureau of International Expositions was established in 1928 in order to supervise the quality of international expositions held in different countries and regulate each expo with commonly recognized rules. BIE, "Member States," Bureau International des Expositions, accessed April 3, 2020, <https://www.bie-paris.org/site/en/the-member-states-of-the-bie>.

including Britain, France, and the USSR, were absent in this supposedly “international” event.⁴³ Instead, participation was filled by countries that were lesser in international influences such as the Vatican and Japan, as well as American incorporations such as IBM and Ford and several states which sponsored their pavilion individually. Without the traditional, influential participants from Europe, the fair had to rely on novelties brought by countries that previously had little chance of participating, American culture and technology, and major attractions such as a marble sculpture by Michelangelo to gain popularity.⁴⁴

Another problem was the fair’s financial issue. The person in charge of running the fair was Rober Moses, the ambitious and lavish builder of New York City. When he took this job, Moses saw that the World’s Fair at Flushing Meadows would be a perfect and lucrative stepping stone for building a grandiose city park, which he had been dreaming of doing for decades. Hence he organized the fair with the thought of making it a permanent park for New Yorkers and invested vast amounts of money in construction, maintenance, security, public relations in order to build his reputation internationally. His goal was to make enough surplus for the building and maintenance of the permanent park, but in the meantime, he borrowed most of the money needed for the fair. Therefore, the fair committee needed as many attractions as possible in order to have as much visitors as possible to obtain a surplus, so a well-known piece such as the *Pietà* was highly desirable.⁴⁵

⁴³ Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Knopf, 1974), 1094.

⁴⁴ NYSL, "Welcome to the Fair! The 1939 and 1964 New York World's Fairs," New York State Library, last modified January 17, 2017, accessed April 3, 2020, <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/collections/worldsfair/>.

⁴⁵ This was one of the major fiasca of the fair, for the actual number of visitors was only about 60% of the expectation. Caro, *The Power*, 1102-1103.

The Coming of a Masterpiece

The idea of having the *Pietà* at the show was first proposed by Roland L. Redmond, then president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. For a fair with the given situation, this idea, which was eventually realized by Cardinal Spellman, could not be better at timing. Whether the decision that the Vatican would have a pavilion of its own came first or whether it came after the decision to bring the *Pietà* to the fair is unknown, yet at the end of the day, the Vatican Pavilion at Flushing Meadows turned out to be one of the most-visited pavilions during the 1964 World's Fair because of this famous sculpture.⁴⁶ This was surely because of the existing reputation of the Vatican, St. Peter's Basilica, Michelangelo, and the *Pietà*, and for those who were not previously familiar with their importance, that reputation was rectified by the targeted promotion of the fair.

It can be assumed that in the pre 1964 World's Fair America, and specifically New York, general audiences were more familiar with the name Michelangelo than with his specific works. The first article of *The New York Times* about the fair's exhibition of the *Pietà* was titled "Fair to show Michelangelo Art," with the word "Pieta" first appearing only in the subtitle.⁴⁷ This editor's choice to use "Michelangelo Art" instead of "the *Pietà*" as the headline to attract the reader's attention shows that the artist was more widely known than his artworks in New York in the 1960s. Meanwhile, the two-column article was accompanied by a black-and-white image of

⁴⁶ The Christian community did not have its own building in the 1939 New York World's Fair. Instead, there was the Temple of Religion, which was themed with unity and understanding between American Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. Courtney Bender, "The Architecture of Multi-faith Prayer: Temple of Religion, New York World's Fair (1939-1940)," *Reverberations: New Directions in the Study of Prayer*, last modified August 4, 2014, accessed April 3, 2020, <http://forums.ssrc.org/ndsp/2014/08/04/temple-of-religion-new-york-worlds-fair-1939-1940/>.

⁴⁷ The 1965 movie *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, adopted from the 1961 biographical novel with the same name, would introduce more people to the theatrical life of this sculptor. Before that, Michelangelo was probably simply a name, which people would know that had something to do with good art. "Fair to Show Michelangelo Art," *The New York Times*, March 29, 1962, accessed April 3, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1962/03/29/83221544.html?pageNumber=24>.

the *Pietà* in its full (fig. 12). This photograph was likely the first opportunity for many members of the American general public to see the *Pietà* before its arrival in New York. It thus served as an introduction of the sculpture.⁴⁸ The purpose of this article was to establish a deep impression on the sculpture among the general public. After attracting the reader's attention with the headline and the image, the editor sold to its readers the fame and importance of the *Pietà*: it was identified as "Michelangelo's famous statuary group," said to be "precious" and "the only statue that bears Michelangelo's signature," and introduced as "one of Michelangelo's masterpieces of expressiveness."⁴⁹ For the majority that were not previously familiar with the *Pietà*, the editor sent out a clear message with this rhetoric: it is an important work and it is worthy of their attention.

Beginning with this article published on March 29, 1962, almost all following articles on *The New York Times* about the *Pietà* made the same rhetorical choice. Regardless of the issues with which the articles dealt, be it protests against this art loan or the insurance report of the sculpture, words such as "famous," "masterpiece," and "priceless" were used right before the word "*Pietà*" or "sculpture."⁵⁰ Moreover, in the guidebook of the fair, the *Pietà* was further identified as "the most important work of art at the fair," "finest example of Christian Art," and a

⁴⁸ "Fair to Show."

⁴⁹ "Fair to Show."

⁵⁰ See "Florentines' Hoax Protests Art Loan," *The New York Times*, April 2, 1962, accessed April 3, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1962/04/02/84786896.html?pageNumber=12>. Gay Talese, "Fair Sees 'Pieta' as Top Feature," *The New York Times*, April 11, 1962, accessed April 3, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1962/04/11/86703263.html?pageNumber=45>. German Selgiman, "Shipping of 'Pieta' Queried," *The New York Times*, April 23, 1962, accessed April 3, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1962/04/23/102747178.html?pageNumber=27>. "Pieta's Trip to Fair Fought as Perilous," *The New York Times*, January 20, 1964, accessed April 3, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1964/01/20/97160692.html?pageNumber=85>.

“masterpiece.”⁵¹ With all these advocates, one can safely say that even if the significance of this sculpture was not known to the general audience before the fair, it was so at the dawn of the event because of the press’s repeated rectification. In other words, before the 1964 New York World’s Fair officially started, Michelangelo’s *Pietà* was *made* to be a famous, important masterpiece through these rhetorical framing on popular media.

On the other hand, though the editors felt the need to advertise this specific work of Michelangelo to their American readers, they appeared to be confident about a certain quality of the sculpture to be impactful. There were other important art loans from the Vatican included in the same trip, such as the the third century sculpture, the *Good Shepherd*, which was probably more precious than the *Pietà* in certain ways, as it represents one of the earliest sculptural images of Jesus and one of the first recognizable motifs of Christian art; here were also other components, such as a replica of St. Peter’s tomb and a slide show of the Sistine Chapel (which was also associated with Michelangelo), that made up the final Vatican Pavilion exhibition. Yet in all the articles that include information about the *Pietà*, everything else was mentioned like sidenotes to this sculpture. No image of the *Good Shepherd* was in the first article, for instance.

⁵² It was as if the editor was sure that something about the *Pietà* alone would be sufficient to indicate the importance of this art loan and exhibition, and people’s attention would be drawn by this sculpture alone.

⁵¹ "1964 & 1965 Official Guidebook and Souvenir Map Entries," New York World's Fair 1964/1965, last modified March 8, 2007, accessed April 3, 2020, <http://www.nywf64.com/vatican01.shtml>.

⁵² “Fair to Show.”

The *Pietà* as a Masterpiece

The *New York Times* editors were not alone with this confidence in the power of the *Pietà*. Different groups of participants in this event, including the fair, Cardinal Spellman, the Vatican, and those who favored or disliked the whole event, shared a belief in the impactful power of the *Pietà* despite their distinct perspectives.

In a small volume that was published “on the observance of the 400th anniversary of Michelangelo’s death and in celebration of the Vatican Pavilion of the Holy See at the New York World’s Fair,” Josef Vincent Lombardo explains the motivation behind the proposal of exhibiting the *Pietà* at the fair.⁵³ He says,

Impelled by the desire to give all Americans the joy and exhilaration of seeing Christianity’s greatest statue, Cardinal Spellman... assessed the tremendous impact the *Pietà* would have on American taste, art and culture. For the Christian World it is also an eloquent documentation of Christian faith...Spellman was mindful of the far-reaching influence of the *Laocoön*... had on European taste and art...Spellman foresees a similar influence exerted by the *Pietà* in this country.
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Therefore, from the perspective of the president of the Met and the Archbishop of New York, the *Pietà*’s original purpose as a religious, devotional object to inspire prayer was no longer significant. Instead, he expected that the sculpture would have artistic and cultural impact on the American society. To him, the *Pietà* was a magnificent piece of art that represented an implied, higher taste in aesthetics and culture, which he believed to be lacking among Americans in the

⁵³ While validity of this work is subjected to question, for the author claims that all translation was made by himself, his analysis and critique are relying upon his own research and study in Italy, and he uses rather limited amount of resources, I believe the final, shortest chapter that documents the *Pietà*’s journey at the 1964’s New York World’s Fair to be reliable. This is because the author was a contemporary of the event and has consulted a fair amount of experts and resources related to the event at the time, according to his paragraphs of thanks and bibliography. Lombardo, *Michelangelo: The Pieta*.

⁵⁴ Lombardo, *Michelangelo: The Pieta*, 51.

1960s. He did not think that this sculpture would convert every American viewer to Christianity, but he expected that it would leave an tasteful, aesthetic impression on them.

This perspective was also taken by the aforementioned, first article in *The New York Times* about the exhibition. In the image that accompanied the article, the spectator's eye level falls on the shoulder of Madonna, which is an unusual perspective. Viewers who saw the *Pietà* in St. Peter's Basilica could not have seen it from this angle due to its high base. Moreover, the newspaper image contained only the sculpture but not any indication of the background setting, zooming in so much that the left feet of Madonna and the left foot of Christ were cut off by the border.⁵⁵ By doing so, the photographer separated this sculpture from its usual context, showing it just by itself, like an image of an object for a museum or an auction catalogue. Therefore, this very first article has already eliminated the intended religious and spiritual meanings to a great extent, presenting it as an aestheticized object instead.

Furthermore, we see a separation of art from religion in the 1960s media treatment of the *Pietà* as well. In all of *The New York Times* articles that followed through the two-year trip of the sculpture, instead of words such as "religious" or "Christian," the name "Michelangelo" usually served as the prefix of the word "Pietà," "statuary group," or "art piece."⁵⁶ Despite the fact that the *Pietà* had never left the Vatican, and that it had always been displayed in Christian chapels in manners that abided by the church's requirement, its status of devotional object was apparently overlooked by many Americans in the 1960s. For people without Christian background or exposure, the sculpture was not different from a piece placed in the white box of modern

⁵⁵ "Fair to Show."

⁵⁶ Prominent example would be the aforementioned first article.

museums, only the “museum” of this sculpture, the St. Peter’s Basilica, had a much longer history and was much more furnished than, say, the Museum of Modern Art.

Nevertheless, this is not to say that the *Pietà* bore no religious significance during this trip, at least not so to everyone. The very fact that Pope XXIII agreed to lend the sculpture to the fair was likely a religious gesture. For him and for his successor, Pope Paul VI, under whom the actual shipping process was carried out, the power of the *Pietà* was a religious one.

The *Pietà* as the Representative of Christianity

On January 25, 1959, the newly elected Pope John XXIII announced the celebration of an ecumenical council. To the eyebrows that were raised by this sudden decision, the Pope explained that the council was necessary because “in the last fifty years, there were profound transformations, both social and political; there [also] matured new and grave problems, which demanded a Christian answer.”⁵⁷

Looking back at those years, one can easily grasp the anxiety and necessity for a “Christian answer” which the Pope saw to be a stake. The first half of the twentieth century was filled with the two World Wars, the Holocaust, the Great Depression, the innumerable countries that shifted their centers of politics, and the quick progression of science and technology. These rapid and forceful changes arguably created gaps of understanding among people with different cultural identities, different citizenships, and even different ages. It is with the Second Council of

⁵⁷ Vincenzo Carbone, "Vatican Council II: Light for the Church and for the Modern World," The Holy See, accessed April 3, 2020, http://www.vatican.va/jubilee_2000/magazine/documents/ju_mag_01051997_p-21_en.html.

Vatican, therefore, that Pope John XXIII intended to resolve “the crisis, caused in modern society from the decaying of spiritual and moral values.”⁵⁸

When Cardinal Spellman was received by the Pope on the morning of March 28th, 1962, seven months before the start of Vatican II, the preparational work for the council was going full-speed.⁵⁹ With the purpose of this coming council in mind, Pope John XXIII must have seen that sending the *Pietà* to the 1964 New York World’s Fair would be a great opportunity and a prominent gesture for his intention to unite the modern life and the “spiritual and moral values” of Christianity. He knew that, on its surface, the World’s Fair would be an occasion focusing on everything but Christian spiritual elevation; yet he must also have known or was convinced that, just like its slogan said, the fair would provide the opportunity for a “Peace through Understanding” among its various groups of visitors.⁶⁰ This was because visitors of the fair would not be just American-born Americans. The component of the New York City population, for example, had a large portion of immigrants from all around the world, let alone that of the entire United States and of people who would travel from out of the states to see the World’s Fair. Therefore, at an occasion where millions of people from different places would share the same experience, the *Pietà* would be a perfect representative for the Vatican. For 1) the subject of the *Pietà* represents one of the most illustrated, most moving, and most representative images of Christianity, 2) the sculpture itself had a strong association with the Vatican because of its long history of residence in St. Peter’s Basilica, and 3) the artistic and spiritual power that resides in the *Pietà* would make a strong impression of the former two points on all of its viewers,

⁵⁸ Carbone, "Vatican Council," The Holy See.

⁵⁹ Carbone, "Vatican Council," The Holy See.

⁶⁰ Bill Young, "The Story of the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair, an Essay by Bill Young," New York World's Fair 1964/1965, accessed April 3, 2020, http://www.nywf64.com/fair_story01.shtml.

especially the majority of that public who would not have a chance otherwise to see the sculpture in person. By lending the *Pietà* to the fair and thus making the Vatican Pavilion one of the most visited places at the fair, the Pope expected that it would efficiently carry out his intention of uniting Christianity and modern, secular life once again. Therefore, Pope John XXIII gave his consent to the Cardinal's proposal, and he and his successor, Pope Paul VI, who inherited both Vatican II and this art loan from him, maintained this decision regardless of heated protest against it.

For its part, the fair had done its best to match the Pope's intention. The fair put in plenty of effort designing the setting of the exhibition, aiming to present the sculpture in the way that Michelangelo has intended and, as the exhibition designer Jo Mielziner said, as a devotional image and not merely an art work.⁶¹ Unlike its placement in the St. Peter's Basilica, which was made perfectly horizontal in 1749 as opposed to the slightly tilting base on which it was originally set, the fair exhibition's curator made adjustments. The base used at the fair allowed the sculpture to incline forward and to the right as a whole, making it easier to view the face of Christ and, as the engineer of the Vatican Pavilion explained, "the result will be to increase the statue's drama... just the way Michelangelo intended."⁶² Other assisting techniques at the exhibition also helped to increase the sacredness of the sculpture group. In the final design that was revealed to the public, the sculpture

occupies a sort of blue-velours-lined grotto, bathed in the beams of 50 spotlights. Toward the darker wings, 400 hanging half-watt blue lights gently twinkle, serving as automatic votive lamps. Behind the sculpture looms a 25-ft.-high theatrically draped cross, like a pious afterthought, while piped-in Gregorian chants tranquilize the atmosphere.⁶³

⁶¹ "Fair Will Revise Display of Pieta," *The New York Times*, February 23, 1964, accessed April 4, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1964/02/23/290250612.html?pageNumber=59>. "Outcry over Pietà," *Life*, June 5, 1964, 55-56.

⁶² "Fair Will."

⁶³ "Blue Grotto," *Time*, May 1, 1964, 72.

From a photograph of the scene (fig. 13), one can see that the room which housed the sculpture was made dim in order to make the sculpture stand out under the spotlights. Behind a transparent sheet of the bullet-proof glass, the *Pietà* was placed at the foot of a draped cross. Contrasted by the dark blue background, the carrara marble at the foot of a cross, which appeared to be pure white under the spotlight, shone with an aura of holiness.

In order to make sure that the crowd in the room would not be a hindrance to the viewing experience, the engineers installed moving platforms on three tiers of conveyor belts to carry visitors through the exhibition room, allowing them to see the sculpture for about a minute or so each time. For those who wished to gaze at it in a still position, they also installed a fourth, fixed platform which was about 24 feet away from the sculpture was provided as well.⁶⁴

With the curatorial design, the light effect, the Gregorian chant played in the background and the slowly moving platforms, one can imagine a still, heavy, sorrowful and, most importantly, spiritual atmosphere in the exhibition room. Indeed, the *Pietà* and the Vatican Pavilion as a whole were presented to the public with genuine spiritual intention. This intention was also explicitly spelled out in Robert Moses' speech after the unveiling of *Pietà*, "As the unisphere symbolizes the world of industry," he said, "so the 'Pieta' and the other exhibits from the Holy See represent the world of the spirit."⁶⁵ And it can be said that the exhibition design was effective in carrying out this purpose. During the unveiling ceremony, according to a news report, the applause for the *Pietà* soon died down because something seemed inappropriate in applauding in front of such a spectacle; during the exhibition, it was noted that "Some visitors

⁶⁴ "Blue Grotto," 72.

⁶⁵ Robert Alden, "Pieta' Unveiled in Glow of Blue," *The New York Times*, April 20, 1964, accessed April 4, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1964/04/20/106960361.html?pageNumber=1>.

bow their heads, almost everyone is quiet” during their one-minute voyage in front of the *Pietà*.⁶⁶ Many positive commentaries on this effort were heard, too. A viewer said that “She (the *Pietà*)’s the most magnificent thing I’ve ever seen; some said that the sculpture could be seen better at the Vatican Pavilion, because the lighting in St. Peter’s wasn’t as good.”⁶⁷

On the other hand, despite the Vatican’s intention of uniting modern life and the spiritual value by generously lending and showing the *Pietà* at the fair, and despite the tremendous amount of money and effort spent by the fair to ensure the exhibition to carry out this spiritual message, many viewers also did not buy it. Countless critiques were raised by different groups of people. One reporter of *The New York Times* wrote harshly of the viewing experience:

...in seeing the “*Pietà*” here in New York I could feel nothing but a sense of violation... the “*Pietà*” ...has been wretched from its harmonious architectural surroundings in the Vatican and placed behind a transparent vacuum... the statue looks somehow helpless and cold... the *Pietà* has the air of waiting, of enduring the well-intentioned indignity until it can go back home where it belongs.⁶⁸

These words were quoted in several critiques published in different places, all centering one opinion: the *Pietà* does not belong to the New York World’s Fair. Words such as “violation,” “homeless,”⁶⁹ and “hermetically sealed”⁷⁰ were used to suggest the feeling of the *Pietà* was sent to, or rather “wretched” and chased to, the fair by force and against its will (endowing the figures of Mary and Christ here with their own will); it was also commented that the sculpture was moved to a context empty as a “vacuum,” contrasting with the original, fully religious setting of St. Peter’s; lastly, it is said that by staying in such an out-of-place context, the *Pietà* was

⁶⁶ Alden, "Pietà' Unveiled." "Outcry Over," 55-56.

⁶⁷ "Blue Grotto," 72. "Outcry Over," 55-56.

⁶⁸ John Canaday, "Setting for the 'Pietà': A Critique," *The New York Times*, April 20, 1964, accessed April 4, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1964/04/20/106960497.html?pageNumber=24>.

⁶⁹ Brooks Atkinson, "Critic at Large," *The New York Times*, April 23, 1964, accessed April 4, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1964/04/23/106962446.html?pageNumber=30>.

⁷⁰ John Leo, "A Pious Disaster," *Commonweal*, May 15, 1964, 255-256.

humiliated both by the exhibitors and the viewers. The last comment stemmed from the observation that the exhibitors were all about “the missed opportunities, the free-floating showmanship, [and] the great jumble of art unencumbered by any idea about the Church,”⁷¹ and the viewers just “flow in through the rear doors, glide by the *Pietà*... and rush out the rear doors of the building to stand in line for an hour to see the General Electric exhibit,” having no idea how to appreciate the sculpture’s beauty and value.⁷²

One can argue, however, that these commentaries proved the Vatican’s intention to be valid. From the critic’s wording we can see a clear distinction between spiritual experience and modern, industrial life, for a religious piece, such as the *Pietà*, could be viewed as out of place at a place like the 1964 New York World’s Fair (at where the world’s largest cheese and Disney sponsored shows were also on display), a setting starkly contrasted St. Peter’s Basilica where everything was made with religious intention. This opposition of religion and secular life was exactly what Pope John XXIII was worried about, and it was with the hope of using the *Pietà*’s presence to change this division that Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI agreed to this art loan. It is therefore disappointing that, after hearing these critiques, the Vatican possibly felt it was too soon to push modern life to adapt the spiritual practice again, and it banned the outside loan of all of its art for “cultural and aesthetic motive” and “other purely worldly motives” in early September, 1965⁷³ After the *Pietà* was returned to the St. Peter’s Basilica in November, 1965, “by the order of Pope Paul VI it will never travel again.”⁷⁴

⁷¹ Leo, "A Pious," 255-256.

⁷² R. S. Feuerlicht, "God and Man at Flushing Meadow," *Reporter*, August 13, 1964, 54.

⁷³ "Vatican Forbids Art Loan Abroad," *The New York Times*, September 10, 1965, accessed April 4, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1965/09/10/96718246.html?pageNumber=40>.

⁷⁴ "The *Pieta*, after Hazards, Is in Place in St. Peter's," *The New York Times*, November 14, 1965, accessed April 4, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1965/11/14/98461421.html?pageNumber=23>.

Influence Shown Afterward

Ultimately, the 1964 New York World's Fair ended up with a hideous financial report. The fairground was left not with Moses' grandiose park but with only the Unisphere and a couple of commemorative sites. Meanwhile, the *Pietà*, by papal order, may never be seen again by people who cannot/will not go to St. Peter's Basilica. Yet one would not say that this ambitious trip was a complete fiasco, for the *Pietà*'s showcase in New York had a notable influence on the interest of American academic studies of both the sculpture itself and Michelangelo. Before 1964, the number of English studies and publications about the *Pietà* and Michelangelo was limited, and there were no American publications on it at all.⁷⁵ The major studies of Michelangelo, such as the five-volume *Michelangelo* by Charles de Tolnay, were mostly conducted in non-English language before the *Pietà*'s trip to New York. This situation changed after 1964. America-based scholars such as Frederick Hartt and Leo Steinberg published their influential books and essays on Michelangelo's works in the 1970s and 1980s, and countless English journal articles discussing the *Pietà* specifically also continuously appeared till this day. While it would be careless to say that the *Pietà*'s exhibition in the U.S. was the direct cause for the bloom of American scholarly studies on Michelangelo and this sculpture, it has certainly boosted the general interest in the subject.

Meanwhile, The *Pietà*'s trip have acted as an generator of American interest in traditional and Classical art, and it would be unfair not to overlook its influence on the success of the 1983

⁷⁵ The only two English publications in my knowledge before 1964 were both published in Britain, where influence from Italy was profound. See John Addington Symonds, *The Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti* (New York: Modern Library, 1928); Rudolf Wittkower, "A Note on Michelangelo's Pieta in St. Peter's," *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2, no. 1 (July 1938): 80, <https://doi.org/10.2307/750034>.

Met exhibition *The Vatican Collections: The Papacy and Art*. Although Pope Paul VI placed a strict ban on Vatican art loan, presumably because of the negative reaction to the *Pietà*'s loan, the Vatican's attitude changed during the two decades after the fair. During those years, the relationship between the Vatican and American art collectors became more intimate, the need for more oversea visitors came to be urgent for the Vatican, and the visibly increased American interest in art exhibitions was testified by both the years-long effort of the Met's artifact exhibition and the success of the Tutankhamun artifacts exhibition in the U.S. during 1976-1979. As a result, the Met exhibition was approved by Pope John Paul II, and it curated hundreds of Vatican artifacts that were the "very best of each period of their collection," proved to be one of the most popular art exhibitions in the U.S. which exerted significant influence on its American and international audiences.⁷⁶ The wish of Cardinal Spellman and Pope John XXIII, which was to enhance the American taste for good art and to reintroduce religious spirit into modern life using the power of art, seemed to be eventually carried out by the *Pietà* as an appetizer and the grandiose main course of the Met exhibition.

⁷⁶ Stephen S. Hall, "The Art of the Popes Comes to America," *The New York Times*, January 16, 1983, accessed April 4, 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1983/01/16/161514.html?pageNumber=241>.

Conclusion

The reception of Michelangelo's *Pietà* greatly differs in three significant moments in its history. During Michelangelo's lifetime, the audience group consisted of Renaissance artists who have viewed the sculpture in person, and there formed two polemic opinions on the sculpture among them: some artists revered it as a miraculous artwork that splendidly represented spiritual value and humanity while the others completely rejected the *Pietà*'s role as a devotional image because, in their opinion, the depictions of Virgin Mary and Christ were religiously inappropriate. Next, between the 17th and the 19th centuries, the audience group of British Grand Tourists mentioned almost nothing about this sculpture in their travel literature, though almost all of them had visited St. Peter's Basilica. This intentional neglect of the *Pietà* appears to be a result of their appreciation for antiquities, architecture, and paintings over all other form of art and their opposition to Roman Catholic Church's emphasis on Virgin Mary's role, which led them to either overlook the sculpture or took it as a piece of visual art instead of religious image. Finally, in the occasion of the 1964 New York World's Fair, where the *Pietà* was shipped to and exhibited for two seasons, the fair committee, the Vatican, the protestors of the sculpture's shipment and the visitors to the fair each demonstrated different interest in the *Pietà* yet share the common recognition of it as a famous, artistically and spiritually impactful, masterpiece of Classical art.

This reception history of the *Pietà* speaks of the ever-changing nature of an artwork's meaning. Once an artwork is publicized, its creator (in the *Pietà*'s case, its patron, too) cannot limit its meaning to his or her original intention. Instead, the audience who views the artwork determines its meaning based on their own interpretation, which is fundamentally influenced by

each viewer's living experience. In Michelangelo's time, the *Pietà* was received by people who lived in the same historical and similar social context with the artist, obtained Renaissance art theories and skills, and received Roman Catholic education. Thus, they discussed the *Pietà* as a recent creation of art which fell into the category of religious objects, and the *Pietà* meant either an excellent or an inappropriate religious object to them. In the occasion of 1964 New York World's Fair, however, this sculpture was received by American businessmen, art history scholars, religious communities across the western world and countless fair visitors with varied backgrounds living five centuries after Michelangelo. They looked at the sculpture from a financial, academic, religious, and entertaining point of view, so the *Pietà* meant to them as a money-maker, an art historically significant object, an appropriate or inappropriate religious piece not based on its content but based on the doctrines of different Christian sects, and a must see spectacle regardless of the viewer's citizenship, race, age, class, and profession. Therefore, the reception history of the *Pietà* shows the meaning of artwork is not static, but always changes with shifts of time, places, and spectators.

Moving on from the reception history of the *Pietà*, we might further consider how the new meanings of art from the past can create impact in the present and the future. For example, the Lincoln Memorial (fig. 14), dedicated to the 16th president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, made use of 20th century reception of Greek architecture. The architect of the memorial, Henry Bacon, chose to imitate the form of ancient Greek temple of Parthenon (fig. 15) in the design of the Lincoln Memorial because, even though the Parthenon was dedicated to ancient Greek goddess Athena, who did not have any logical connection to Abraham Lincoln, it was one of the most well-known architecture of ancient Greek civilization. Meanwhile, 20th

century Americans received the ancient Greek civilization as the origin of, or in the most general sense, an equal to, democracy, which Abraham Lincoln famously fought for.⁷⁷ Thus, by building the Lincoln Memorial in the image of the Parthenon, Bacon used the 20th century American-made meaning of the temple, also known as a symbol of democracy, and created an architecture reminding people of Lincoln's defense of democracy as well as serving as the 20th century American symbol of democracy. From such case, we see that while it is important to be clear of the origins of artworks from the past, it's also advisable to pay attention to their new meanings that later generations endow on them, for the impact of these new meanings are not to be overlooked in the study of past art for the purpose of creating new and influential artworks suitable for present and future era.

⁷⁷ NPS. gov, "Lincoln Memorial Design and Symbolism," National Park Service, last modified April 18, 2020, accessed May 2, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/linc/learn/historyculture/lincoln-memorial-design-and-symbolism.htm>.

Figures



Figure 1. Michelangelo Buonarroti. *Pietà*. 1499. Alabaster. In St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican.
(*Pietà*, photograph, Wikiart, accessed April 30, 2020,
<https://www.wikiart.org/en/michelangelo/pieta-1499>.)



Figure 2. *Vespervilder*. 1375-1400. Wood. In the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY. (*Pietà (Vesperbild)*, photograph, The Met, accessed April 30, 2020, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/470603>.)



Figure 3. Giotto. *Lamentation*. c.1304-c.1306. Fresco. In Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua, Italy. (Lamentation (The Mourning of Christ), photograph, Wikiart, accessed April 30, 2020, <https://www.wikiart.org/en/giotto/lamentation-the-mourning-of-christ-1306-1>.)



Figure 4. Michelangelo's *Pietà* in Chapel of the Pietà, St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican.
(*The Pietà*. Photograph. Accessed May 1, 2020.
<http://stpetersbasilica.info/Altars/Pieta/Pieta-chapel.jpg>)



Figure 5. *Röttgen Pietà*. c. 1360. wood. In Rheinisches Landesmuseum, Bonn, Germany. (Heinz, Ralf. *Pietà Roettgen*. December 2, 2012. Photograph. Accessed April 29, 2020. https://www.flickr.com/photos/ralf_heinz/8297481802/in/album-72157632308738387/.)



Figure 6. Perugino. *Pietà*. Late 1490s. Tempera on Panel. In the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy.
(SCALA, *Pietà*, photograph, accessed April 29, 2020,
https://library.artstor.org/#/asset/SCALA_ARCHIVES_1039488715.)

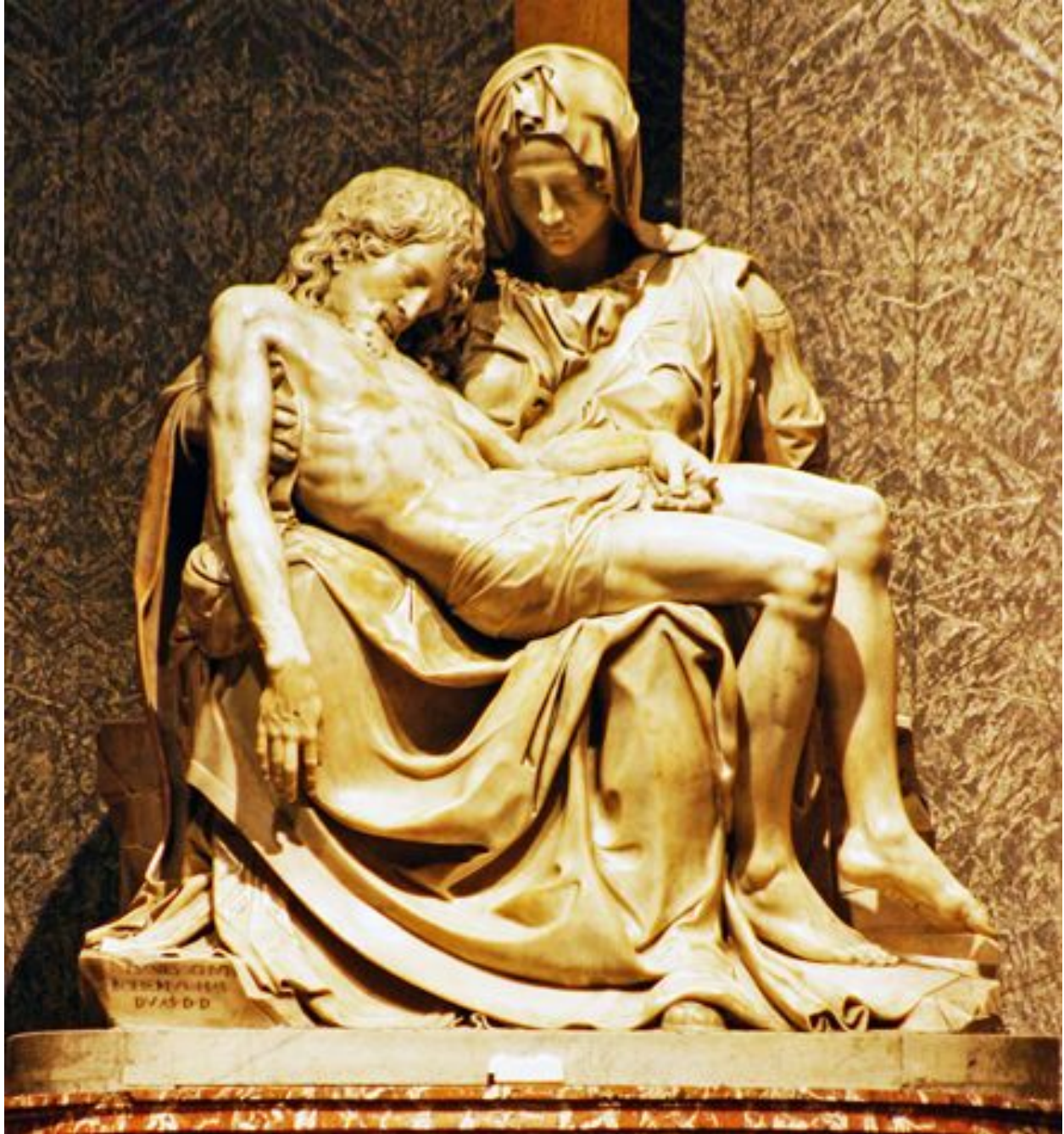


Figure 7. Lorenzetto. Copy of Michelangelo's *Pietà*. 1532. Marble.
(*Pietà*, photograph, Accessed May 2, 2020,
<http://www.pisma.it/wordpress/kirchenfuhrer/zu-den-werken-von-salviati-saraceni-lorenzetto-und-sermoneta/>)



Figure 8. Giovanni Montorsoli. *Pietà*. 1543-46. Marble.
(From Leo Steinberg, *Michelangelo's Sculpture: Selected Essays*, 4)



Figure 9. *Pietà*. Saint-Aulaire, in church.
(From William H. Forsyth, *The Pietà in French Late Gothic Sculpture: Regional Variations*,
122)



Figure 10. Antonio Salamanca. Print after Michelangelo's *Pietà*. 1547. Print.
(From Leo Steinberg, *Michelangelo's Sculpture: Selected Essays*, 5)



Figure 11. Adamo Ghisi. Print after Michelangelo's *Pietà*. 1566. Print.
(From Leo Steinberg, *Michelangelo's Sculpture: Selected Essays*, 5)



Michelangelo's "Pietà," which will be exhibited at the Holy See pavilion at the 1964-65 New York World's Fair.

Figure 12. Photograph of the Pietà on NYT article.
(Michelangelo's "Pietà." March 1964. Photograph. Accessed April 29, 2020.
[https://search-proquest-com.ezprox.bard.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/116029691/E8AF2FCCB8014FC9PQ/1?accountid=31516.](https://search-proquest-com.ezprox.bard.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/116029691/E8AF2FCCB8014FC9PQ/1?accountid=31516))



Figure 13. Michelangelo's Pietà in the Vatican Pavilion.
(October 13, 2007. Photograph. Accessed April 29, 2020.
http://www.nyu.edu/classes/bkg/wf/blog/2007/10/the_pieta_in_the_night_sky.html.)



Figure 14. Henry Bacon. Lincoln Memorial. 1922. Architecture. Washington, D.C.
(Tetra Images/Getty Images, Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., photograph, tripsavvy,
June 7, 2019, accessed May 2, 2020,
<https://www.tripsavvy.com/lincoln-memorial-photos-1039261>.)



Figure 15. Parthenon. 438 BC. Architecture. Athens, Greece
(Serendigity, *The Parthenon Athens*, August 26, 1978, photograph, accessed May 2, 2020,
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/68686051@N00/2416778389>.)

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