



Artist in Residence:
Working Drawings by
Luigi Gregori (1819–1896)

The Snite Museum of Art

Detail, *Luigi Gregori Seated with Foliage*, ca. 1890
Photo Credit: University of Notre Dame Archives.



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The Snite Museum of Art
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Ceiling of the Crossing in the Basilica from the Sacred Heart. Reproduced with permission of Steve Moriarty/University of Notre Dame Archives.

Overleaf: Luigi Gregori, *Saint John the Evangelist*, 1876–78, watercolor and gouache over black chalk on wove paper, Snite Museum of Art.



Acknowledgments

The Snite Museum of Art regularly enjoys the services of bright, capable, and affable graduate students who assist curators with cataloging artworks, organizing exhibitions and, occasionally, writing essays for exhibition catalogs. More rare are interns such as Sophia Meyers, who passionately undertake their projects and amaze the staff with their casual intelligence, extraordinary efficiency, and fine writing. For these reasons, Curator of European Art Cheryl Snay and I are very grateful to Meyers for undertaking with Associate Professor Robert Randolph Coleman first the cataloging, and now the exhibition and publication, of our collection of Luigi Gregori drawings.

In 1874, Notre Dame's founder, Rev. Edward Sorin, CSC brought Vatican artist Luigi Gregori to campus as director of the Art Department. During his tenure, Gregori adorned the Church of the Sacred Heart (now a basilica) and the Main Building with extensive mural decorations.

Coleman first conceived of an exhibition of Luigi Gregori's preparatory drawings for these large-scale decorative programs. He also provided invaluable direction to Meyers, and his preface provides an essential introduction to Gregori and the Italian drawing tradition.

Thanks also to Cheryl K. Snay, curator of European art, for her indispensable contributions to the success of this exhibition and publication; she supervised the exhibition development and oversaw its installation. Meyers and I are particularly appreciative of her patient and thoughtful editing.

Associate Director Ann Knoll and Registrar Robert Smogor provided assistance with organizing and cataloging the drawings. Exhibitions Coordinator Ramiro Rodriguez, Chief Preparator Gregory Denby and Exhibition Designer John Phegley intalled the exhibition. Photographer and Digital Archivist Eric Nisly prepared images for this catalog and interactive panoramas of the Basilica and Main Building that enhance the understanding and the enjoyment of the exhibition. We very much appreciated his advice on integrating technology into display strategies.

Assistant Director Charles Lamb of the University of Notre Dame Archives provided access to primary source material and thoughtfully lent objects for the exhibition. Similarly, the staffs of the Indiana Province Archives Center and the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana shared their collections and advice.

We are especially grateful to Pamela Johnson who liaised with the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Bologna for a much-needed image.

Through the combined efforts of these many individuals and institutions, we are now able to show the development of the Gregori murals by thoughtful presentation and interpretation of his preparatory drawings.

Charles R. Loving

*Director and Curator, George Rickey Sculpture Archive
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Preface

In June 1874, while in Rome and at the recommendation of the Vatican, University of Notre Dame founder Father Edward Sorin engaged artist Luigi Gregori (1819–1896) as director of the university’s art department. As a result of Gregori’s relocation from Rome to the American Midwest, Notre Dame eventually became heir to a large number of the artist’s works. Almost 500 of the nearly 4,000 drawings in the University’s Snite Museum of Art were created by the Bolognese-born painter, and the museum’s extensive collection has made it possible for art historians to gain a fresh perspective on Gregori’s artistic ideas and concerns.

During his years at Notre Dame, Gregori designed and/or painted a number of works for the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, the Main Building, and Washington Hall (fig. 1).¹ These paintings, with the exception of the ones in Washington Hall, which were destroyed during renovations, are well-known to almost everyone who has lived and/or worked at Notre Dame, or has visited the campus. In contrast, for over a century, Gregori’s works on paper were known to only a few. Now, thanks to the tireless efforts of Sophia Meyers (ND MA, ‘10), who has researched, inventoried, and cataloged the museum’s Gregori drawings, the images can provide new insights into the artist’s oeuvre, revealing how indebted he was to artistic academic traditions and how he developed his ideas for what were to become the visual trademarks of Notre Dame’s early history and culture.

I was first introduced to this large body of drawings in the mid-1980s by Snite Museum Chief Curator Stephen B. Spiro, who showed me a few boxes of Italian drawings, which had been inventoried and matted. Most of the works were ascribed to anonymous artists, although some appeared to be by a single hand. We realized that a great deal of time and work would be required to



Figure 1. College of Notre Dame du Lac with view of Basilica, Main Building, and Washington Hall, ca. 1892. Photo Credit: University of Notre Dame Archives.

discover the identity of this artistic personality. Eventually, it became clear that many of these drawings were the works of Luigi Gregori. While examining the drawings, I also realized that six of these anonymous sheets were copies of drawings conserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, Italy, images from a collection of drawings that I was in the process of cataloging and inventorying.² Further study revealed that some of the Gregori drawings at the Snite Museum were copies after works by Raphael, Fra Angelico, Domenichino, Veronese, and other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italian masters (fig. 2). It occurred to me that Gregori might have made these copies in order to use them as references for his paintings at Notre Dame.³ I also wondered if Gregori had intended to use these drawings as instructional models for his Notre Dame students.

In 2007, I returned to the same boxes of drawings in order to begin sorting the works on the basis of graphic or drawing style and handling of media, i.e., the manner in which the artist used black chalk, pen, pencil, and other media. I also asked Snite Museum Director Charles Loving and Associate Director Ann Knoll about the possibility of mounting an exhibition of Gregori's drawings, with the goal of showing an underexposed, yet important, part of Notre Dame's artistic history. Art History Master's student Sophia Meyers, who was inventorying works in the Snite Museum, took charge of the project and began a systematic analysis of the Gregori Collection. During the course of her studies at Notre Dame, Meyers had studied Italian Old Master drawings, and was well acquainted with the fundamental role that draftsmanship, or *disegno*, had played in the conceptualization and execution of art in Italy during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. The Snite Museum's exhibition and the accompanying catalog are the result of her diligent and intelligent analysis of the works seen here.

In order to place Luigi Gregori's practice in its historical context, it is useful to understand his training and methodology in the context of *disegno* and art's academic tradition. Gregori's artistic training as a boy in Bologna was based on the time-honored tradition of *disegno*, the draftsman-based creation of art that had its origins in Italian fourteenth-century artists' workshops. In the middle of the sixteenth century, painter, architect, and biographer Giorgio

Vasari (1511-74) famously pronounced what was already the accepted wisdom of his day, that *disegno* was the foundation, the measure, the idea, and the parent of all the arts:

Since *disegno*, father of our three arts, Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting, originating in the intellect, extracts from many things a universal judgment, acting as a form or idea of all things in nature, unique in what it measures, not only in the bodies of humans and animals, but also in plants, buildings, sculpture, and painting, it knows the proportion of the whole to its parts and of the parts to each other and to the whole.⁴

According to Vasari, it was Giotto (ca. 1277-1337) who first revitalized art and corrected the "mistakes" of the previous generation. Vasari relates the story (probably apocryphal) of how the ten-year-old Giotto, while tending his flock of



Figure 2. Luigi Gregori, *Lamentation and Male Martyr*, after Perugino, mid-19th century, black chalk on white wove paper, 14 x 15 1/4 in; 35.5 x 39 cm (sheet), Gift of the Artist AA2009.056.155.

sheep, was discovered by the painter Cimabue (ca. 1272–1337) as the boy was drawing on a rock with a sharpened stone. Cimabue was so impressed by the youth's gifts that he took the boy into his workshop and trained him in the arts of drawing and painting.⁵

By the late fifteenth century, in Florence in particular, the expansion of bourgeois patronage increased the demand for a broad range of subjects in art. With more patrons requesting decorations for sacred and secular spaces, master artists needed larger workshops and more systematic working procedures. One such master was Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449–94). During the 1480s and 1490s, his monumental frescoes in Florentine churches evolved through a design process that began with quick compositional sketches and continued with studies of figural groupings, individual figures, and also – depending on the requirements of the commission – portraits. This working method was adopted by other artists, including Raphael, whose great frescoes in the Vatican Palace, painted during the early years of the sixteenth century, required a highly organized workshop which was capable of carrying out complex decorative schemes. Raphael's design process appears to have begun with compositional drawings, followed by studies from live models that helped the artist establish individual poses and gestures. Afterward, more detailed red chalk nude figure studies based on the live model were made. Next, black chalk studies were executed to fix drapery patterns. Then, still more detailed studies of individual figures were drawn. Finally, the cartoon itself – the finished composition which was to be the basis of the final work – was executed. In some instances, auxiliary cartoons for specific heads were produced in order to create more expressive faces. Most Central Italian Renaissance artists followed a similar design procedure.

Tuscan artists were trained in a workshop tradition that taught a wide range of skills, for a single artist could be expected to produce paintings, sculptures, and buildings. It is no wonder then, that for Vasari, an artistic polymath, *disegno* was the parent and unifying principle of all the arts. Design required clarity in the execution of form, with contour as the preeminent ingredient. *Disegno* was the first step towards the making of a work of art, and it would be the point of departure even for three-dimensional models such as clay or terracotta *bozzetti* for sculpture or *bozzetti* made of wood for architecture.

Not surprisingly, it was in Florence that artists first established their own academy. The Accademia del Disegno, founded by Vasari, was modeled on the literary Accademia Fiorentina (founded in 1542), and was intended to confer the same kind of dignity and social stature already afforded to Florentine men of letters. In January 1563, Duke Cosimo I de' Medici approved the constitution of the Accademia del Disegno, and its artists were immediately brought into the service of the state. Now, the principles that defined *disegno* as fundamental in the making of art were officially sanctioned, and they helped to formulate a style that represented the taste and the public image of the duke.

During the late sixteenth century, Roman artists still lacked the professional status enjoyed by their Tuscan counterparts, and their plight prompted Federico Zuccaro (1540/42–1609) to reform the Roman Accademia di San Luca, modeled on Vasari's Florentine academy. Zuccaro became the Academy's first director, with Federico Borromeo as its Cardinal Protector. Zuccaro believed that good art could be achieved on the basis of sound art theory, and his lectures on the subject were codified in a treatise *L'idea de' pittori, scultori ed architetti* (The Idea of Painters, Sculptors, and Architects) [1607]. His perception and understanding of *disegno* went well beyond Vasari's:

First of all, I declare, that *disegno* is neither material, nor a body, or an accident of any matter, it is form, idea, order, rule, final cause, and object of the intellect in (through) which what is the essence of things is expressed, and this is found in all external things whether human or divine. . . .⁶

For Zuccaro, who was influenced by the writings of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, *disegno* was an outward manifestation of an original idea formed in the artist's mind by God ("Dio") and by a sign ("segno"). By the time of its publication in 1607, Zuccaro's treatise was the clearest and most systematic exposition of the metaphysics and aesthetics of Mannerism.⁷

Throughout history, numerous European states, including the Holy See, have recognized the importance of the art academy as a means of training artists, controlling the production of art, and producing an official style.⁸ The city of Bologna, where Gregori was born and where he trained as an artist,

was no exception. At the end of the sixteenth century, Ludovico Carracci and his cousins Annibale and Agostino, descendants of the Raphaelesque tradition, founded a private art school in Bologna which they called the *Accademia degli Desiderosi*, also known as the *Accademia degli Incamminati* and later, as the *Accademia del Disegno* or *Accademia dei Carracci*. Ludovico was the guiding spirit (classes were taught in his rooms), but it was Annibale's art that had the most far-reaching influence. Annibale was a devoted naturalist whose work was tempered by the classical forms and styles of Greco-Roman antiquity and the Roman High Renaissance. The Carracci were persistent reformers (they viewed the mannerist art of the previous generation as lax and corrupt), and they trained a host of young artists, including Domenichino, Guido Reni, Francesco Albani, Giovanni Lanfranco, and Sisto Badalocchio, to create an art that is generally known as "Classical Baroque." The work of these and many other artists who were products of Bolognese training would influence the classical academic tradition in Europe well into the nineteenth century. In 1706, Bolognese artists made the first formal efforts to create a state-sponsored art academy at the Palazzo Fava, but it was not until 1711 that Pope Clement XI officially sanctioned an academy housed in the Palazzo Poggi. This institution was later renamed "Clementina," in the pope's honor. In 1868, Gregori was appointed Honorary Professor of History Painting of the *Accademia Clementina* (now better known as the *Accademia di Belle Arti*).

Gregori's path to that distinguished position began at an early age, with an apprenticeship to painter/engraver Giovanni Battista Frulli (1765–1837) in 1833, an experience which no doubt taught the fourteen-year-old artist the rudiments of painting and would have included intensive training in draftsmanship. Frulli was a *Professore di Figura* at Bologna's University and *Accademia di Belle Arti*, and he was also an honorary member of the Roman *Accademia di San Luca*. From 1840 to 1843, the young Gregori was enrolled in the *Accademia di San Luca*, where he studied *disegno* under Tommaso Minardi (1787–1871). Minardi was *Professore del Disegno* at the Roman academy from 1822 to 1858, and in 1834, he gave a highly controversial lecture "*Delle qualità essenziali della pittura italiana*" (On the Essential Qualities of Italian Painting) which challenged time-honored academic traditions.⁹ Notwithstanding, Minardi was

an influential master for many Roman artists of the younger generation. For him, the paintings of Giotto, Fra Angelico, and Raphael were to be the foundation of a new, spiritually charged style, and he became the leading exponent of *Purismo*, an artistic movement influenced by the German Nazarenes. *Purismo* devoted itself to the creation of mystical and religious subjects, works that were shaped by a highly linear or contour drawing style. Minardi's influence on Gregori was long-lasting, and remains evident in Gregori's mature works; many of his drawings and paintings of religious subjects were executed in the deliberate linear or contour style of the Roman *puristi* of his generation.

Over a hundred years after his death, the rediscovery of the drawings of Luigi Gregori has revealed an artist indebted to artistic traditions that had their origins in Central Italian Renaissance workshops and academies. Well into the nineteenth century, the practical, intellectual, and even spiritual aspects of *disegno* continued to be the guiding force for the creation of history subjects and devotional themes.

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Notes

1. See Thomas J. Schlereth, *The Notre Dame Main Building: Fact and Symbol, 1879–1979* (Notre Dame: Archives of the University of Notre Dame, 1979); Thomas J. Schlereth, *A Spire of Faith: The University of Notre Dame's Sacred Heart Church* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Alumni Association, 1991); and Mark C. Pilkinton, *Washington Hall at Notre Dame: Crossroads of the University, 1864–2004* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011).
2. See Robert Randolph Coleman, "The Legacy of Federico Borromeo's *Accademia del Disegno* in America," *Studia Borromaeica* 22 (2008): 449–480. *The Inventory-Catalogue of the Drawings of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana* is a project co-sponsored by The Medieval Institute and the Department of Art, Art History, and Design, University of Notre Dame. The on-line inventory makes available codicological and iconographical information regarding 8,323 drawings conserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, accessible at: <http://www.italnet.nd.edu/ambrosiana/ita/cercare.html>

3. Coleman, 2008, 467-477.
4. “*Perché il disegno, padre delle tre arti nostre, Architettura, Scultura e Pittura, procedendo dall’intelletto, cava di molte cose in giudizio universale, simile e una forma ovvero idea di tutte le cose della natura, la quale è singolarissima nelle sue misure; di qui è che non solo nei corpi umani e degli animali, ma nelle piante ancora, e nelle fabbriche e sculture e pitture, conosce la proporzione che ha il tutto le parti, e che hanno parti fra loro e col tutto insieme.*” Vasari-Milanese, 1906, vol. 1, 168-169.
5. Ibid., 370-371.
6. “*Et principalmēte dico che Disegnō ne è materia, non è corpo, non è accidente di sostanza alcuna; ma è forma, idea, ordine, regola, termine, & oggetto dell’ intelletto, in cui sono espresse le cose intese; & questo di trova in tutte le cose esterne tanto divine quanto humane.....*” Federico Zuccaro, *Scritti d’arte di Federico Zuccaro*, edited by Detlef Heikamp (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1961), 153.
7. S.J. Freedberg, *Painting in Italy 1500-1600* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1971), 647.
8. The number of art academies that appeared from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the 1780s is remarkable: Milan (1620), Paris (1648), *Académie de France*, Rome (1666), the formal aggregation of the *Accademia di San Luca and Académie de France*, Rome (1677), Turin (1678), Berlin (1697), Bologna (1710), Lisbon (1720), Stockholm (1735), Ferrara (1737), Madrid (1744), Copenhagen (1754), Naples (1755), Venice (1756), Parma and St. Petersburg (1757), London (1768), and Mexico City (1785).
9. Tommaso Minardi, “*Delle qualità essenziali della pittura italiana dalla suo rinascimento fino all’epoca della perfezione*” in *Scritti del Cavaliere Prof. Tommaso Minardi sulle qualità essenziali della pittura italiana dal suo risorgimento fino all sua decadenza*, edited by Ernesto Ovidi (Rome: Salviucci, 1864), 1-41. For Minardi’s lecture in an English translation, see Joshua C. Taylor, *Nineteenth-Century Theories of Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 173-194, esp., 176-194.

Seeing Purity in Painting: A Fresh Look at the Career of Luigi Gregori (1819–1896)

A *Notre Dame Scholastic* article of 1881 declared, “We take a just pride in the fact that in no College or University in the country is the art of painting carried to such a state of perfection as at Notre Dame.”¹ This statement commends the paintings of Luigi Gregori, a professor and artist-in-residence at the College of Notre Dame du Lac from 1874 to 1890. During his tenure, Gregori enjoyed great success as a painter. In 1876, Gregori became a member of the Chicago Art Academy and exhibited works at their annual exhibitions.² Gregori received commissions for paintings across the country, and in 1878 opened a Chicago art gallery.³ His murals on the Notre Dame campus excited national attention. The fame of the paintings in the Basilica brought Gregori commissions at other churches in the Midwest including the decoration of the Church of the Assumption, the first Italian-speaking parish in Chicago.⁴

Although Gregori experienced celebrity status while at Notre Dame, his legacy has been lost through the passing of time and changes of taste. The canon of nineteenth-century Italian painting is unfamiliar to many art enthusiasts in America contributing to a lack of interest in Gregori’s work.⁵ Overshadowed by French Impressionism, Italian art is absent from most textbooks or simply considered an offshoot of Romanticism. A deeper understanding of this artistic milieu, however, informs a more balanced approach to Gregori’s oeuvre. This essay examines Gregori’s career and artistic production in order to situate his work at the Basilica and in the Main Building within the broader context of nineteenth-century art and history. A fuller understanding of his paintings illuminates an important chapter in the construction of a visual identity for Notre Dame, a Catholic college founded in 1842 at “the Crossroads of America,” as Indiana was called then.

Gregori’s Training and Early Career (1819–74)

Gregori was born in the northern Italian city of Bologna, a metropolis known for its academic and artistic heritage. At the age of fourteen Gregori became an apprentice to the local artist Giovanni Battista Frulli (1765–1837).⁶ In Frulli’s workshop, Gregori studied the art of antiquity as well as the native Bolognese pictorial tradition, particularly the art of the Carracci family (16th century) and Guido Reni (1575–1642). After Frulli died in 1837, Gregori left Bologna to travel Italy in the service of Prince Pignatelli of Monteleone. During these three years, Gregori expanded his artistic education by studying Italian masters from Milan to Naples. The final stage of Gregori’s training landed him in Rome where he enrolled at the famous Accademia di San Luca in 1840. There he studied under Tommaso Minardi (1787–1871) who was a prolific draftsman and one of the most important artists in the city.⁷

Minardi’s contribution to nineteenth-century art is his foundation of *Purismo*, a religious art movement dedicated to the emulation of early Renaissance themes and styles.⁸ Trained as a Neoclassicist, Minardi became disenchanted with the academic study of antiquity and its arid classical themes. He devoted himself to religious art and took Quattrocento painting as his muse. From 1822 until 1858, Minardi promoted his revolutionary ideas as a professor of drawing at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome. In a lecture of 1834, Minardi contended that art by early Renaissance artists, such as Giotto (1267–1337) and Perugino (1450–1523), exemplified aesthetic purity and essential artistic expression.⁹

Minardi’s theories paralleled those of the German group the Nazarenes led by Johann Friedrich Overbeck (1789–1869). Based in Rome, the Nazarenes

emulated Northern and Italian Renaissance aesthetics to create inspirational religious paintings.¹⁰ Both the Nazarenes and Minardi advocated not just an aesthetic trend but also a religious art movement.¹¹ By emulating Quattrocento masters, they believed modern artists could reignite the power of devotional imagery in a growingly secular age.¹² Turning away from the complicated spiritual assemblages of Baroque miracles and visions, Minardi and the Nazarenes looked to the sacred art of the early Renaissance for its easily interpreted aesthetic language, compositional clarity, and narrative structure.¹³ The term *Purismo*, or purity, was first applied to art by the writer Antonio Bianchini, and in 1843 Bianchini wrote the *Purismo* manifesto, *Del Purismo nelle arti*, which was signed by Minardi, Overbeck, and the Italian sculptor Pietro Tenerani (1798–1869).¹⁴

Gregori was heavily influenced by Minardi's teachings, and devoutly studied fourteenth-century artists such as Perugino (1450–1523) and Fra Angelico (1395–1455). Gregori's drawings demonstrate his extensive academic study of



Figure 1. *Madonna and Child*, mid-19th century, black and red chalk on beige wove paper, 19 1/2 x 14 13/16 in; 49.5 x 37.7 cm (sheet), Gift of the Artist, AA2009.056.181



Figure 2. Pope Pius IX, 1846, lithograph, Photo Credit: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican State.

Renaissance art, and include copies after Old Masters as well as studies for new paintings designed to be purposely reactionary (fig. 1). Rather than adhering to the dominant neoclassical themes of the early nineteenth century, Gregori explored sacred subjects and devotional imagery in his search for visual perfection.

Upon completing his training at the Accademia di San Luca, Gregori remained in the Eternal City, and became an artist-in-residence at the Vatican. An early commission for the Papal state was a portrait of Pope Pius IX (1846–1878), which was produced as a print in 1846 memorializing the recent Papal coronation (fig. 2). Unfortunately for Gregori, Pius IX rarely commissioned new art during his papacy, but instead focused his efforts on restoring Rome's already extant treasures.¹⁵ In keeping with this agenda, Gregori became a collection specialist and restoration artist for the Vatican holdings of Renaissance paintings.¹⁶ Gregori also assisted two members of the Papal Court, Giampietro Campana and Mar-

cello Masserenti, with their personal collections of early Renaissance art.¹⁷

Aside from his role at the Vatican, Gregori continued to pursue independent artistic endeavors. In 1856 he won a gold medal at the Esposizione in Bologna for his history painting *Saint John Rebuking Herod* (location unknown) (fig. 3).¹⁸ In 1868 the Bologna Accademia di Belli Arti made Gregori an honorary professor of history painting.¹⁹

Gregori's Life in America (1874–91)

In the summer of 1874 Gregori's life and artistic career drastically changed when Father Edward Sorin, the president of the College of Notre Dame du Lac, visited the papal court. At that time, Sorin was searching for an art professor; and on the recommendation of the Vatican Curia, he hired Gregori.²⁰ It seems like an odd professional decision to go from the center of the artistic world to the wilds of Midwestern America. Why exactly he made that choice



Figure 3. Luigi Gregori, *Saint John the Baptist Rebuking Herod*, 1856, oil on canvas. Photo Credit: Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna.



Figure 4. Sacred Heart Church, ca. 1880. Photo Credit: University of Notre Dame Archives.

or if he even had a choice is not clear. As stated earlier, Gregori did not produce much original art for Pope Pius IX and, perhaps, this was his chance to become a more independent artist. Rome was also a tumultuous place during the second half of the nineteenth century; civil war and economic upheaval often threatened the authority of the Vatican. Whatever the reason, for seventeen years Gregori taught drawing classes, history painting, and art criticism at the small northern Indiana campus.

During the fall of that first year, Father Sorin hired Gregori to design the decorative program for the Sacred Heart Church, now the Basilica of the Sacred Heart (fig. 4). The church was begun in 1868 under the direction of Father Edward Sorin and financed by the Congregation of the Holy Cross (CSC).²¹ The current structure was built over an earlier church to accommodate an ever-growing college community. It was erected in three stages: the nave or main aisle (1868–75), the transept (1876–86), and the apse extension (1887–92).

Gregori's outline for the interior decoration is described in a letter from that year.²² In the letter Gregori explains every element of the interior adornment, from gilded column capitals to a large-scale mural of the Coronation

of the Virgin. He dedicated the program to the glory of the Virgin, and his scheme was meant to emphasize her role in salvation (fig. 5). The dating of Gregori's work in the Basilica follows the completion of architectural sections; the main nave was decorated from 1874–76, the crossing and transepts from 1876–78, and the apse extension from 1887–90. Due to the scope of the project, the CSC also hired the Leipziger Decoration Artists and the muralist William Binsack of Indianapolis to assist Gregori.²³ The paintings are *fresco al secco* executed with a pigment-casein mixture applied to limewater-soaked plaster.²⁴

Separate from the decoration of the church, the CSC commissioned Gregori to paint fourteen Stations of the Cross for the nave (fig. 6). The paintings illustrate scenes from Christ's journey to Calvary, the site of his crucifixion. The series begins with the Roman Prefect Pontius Pilate of Judea condemning Christ to death, and it ends with Christ's body being placed in a tomb. They provide a form of progressive meditation, imitating a sacred pilgrimage where the viewer can contemplate Christ's suffering.²⁵ Gregori painted the Stations in oil on wood panel, an early Italian painting technique, and he worked on them



Figure 5. *Saint Bernadette and the Lady of Lourdes*, 1887, pigment with casein on plaster. Basilica of the Sacred Heart, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.



Figure 6. *Fifth Station of the Cross*, 1874–77, oil on panel. Basilica of the Sacred Heart, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.

from 1874 to 1877.²⁶ The Stations are exemplars of the Italian painting tradition, and they represent the most successful work of Gregori's American career.²⁷

Gregori trusted *Purismo* and his knowledge of Renaissance sources to guide his decoration of the Basilica. His paintings rely heavily on foundations laid by Fra Angelico, Perugino, and Raphael (1483–1520). Gregori was confident that imitating these masters only improved his artistic vision. As a pupil of Minardi, Gregori also believed religious art was reinvigorated by the evocation of an earlier, purer spiritualism. Gregori's paintings in the Basilica have a distinctly anti-modern quality; they exhibit simple compositions, sparse backgrounds, and a clear, linear style. Gregori even executed many of the murals with a faux-mosaic background, or a drawn tesserae pattern on gold ground, which recalls early Christian or Byzantine church decoration. The overall aesthetic reflects Gregori's desire to follow a former artistic heritage. It is only when one accounts for his as-

sociation with the *Purismo* movement that the Basilica designs can be accurately assessed and achieve their rightful place in history of visual culture.

In 1880 Father Edward Sorin commissioned Gregori to create an extensive decorative program for the first floor of the new Main Building (fig. 7). The building had been constructed during the summer of 1879 after a fire razed a previous structure earlier that year.²⁸ From 1881 until 1884, Gregori executed a *Life of Christopher Columbus* mural cycle for the entrance hallway (fig. 8). Christopher Columbus was a Genoese sailor who made cross-Atlantic journeys for the Spanish monarchy. He made four voyages to the islands of Cuba, Haiti, and San Salvador in search of a Western route to India. The scenes Gregori designed begin with the portrait *Christopher Columbus, Discoverer* in the front vestibule and conclude with the *Death of Columbus at Valladolid, May 20, 1506* at the end of the hall. Private donors, such as professors and community members, paid for the murals, and the paintings were completed as funds became available.²⁹



Figure 7. Advertisement for the College of Notre Dame du Lac featuring the New Main Building, *Notre Dame Scholastic*, September 20, 1879. Photo Credit: University of Notre Dame Archives.



Figure 8. Luigi Gregori, *The Reception at Court*, 1880–84, pigment with casein on plaster, Main Building, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.

The decoration of the Main Building continued from 1886 until 1890 when Gregori designed an allegorical composition for the interior of the dome. The illusionistic ceiling painting is open to the first-floor rotunda. At the center of the composition is a female personification of Religion surrounded by Philosophy, History, Science, Fame, Music, and Poetry.³⁰ Painted inside the high interior of the dome, the composition was executed by an outside decoration firm, but based on a bowl Gregori painted as a model (fig. 9).³¹ There is evidence that Gregori planned to paint other Catholic leaders of the Americas in the Main Building corridors.³² Although never executed, these intended murals underscore the general decorative scheme meant to commemorate Catholicism's contribution to Western thought and the founding of America.

Memorializing Columbus's "founding of the New World" might bewilder the twenty-first-century viewer. Europe's conquest of the Americas is no longer heralded as the march of progress, but an event that destroyed the already established civilizations of two continents. During the late nineteenth century, however, Columbus symbolized divine destiny and maverick independence. Washington Irving's popular novel *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828) reintroduced Columbus as a national hero.³³ In this first major English



Figure 9. Luigi Gregori, *Religion Surrounded by the Arts*, 1886–90, tempera, gesso, wood.

biography of Columbus, Irving distanced the explorer from Spanish greed and emphasized Columbus's desire to provide the native inhabitants with law, order, and religion.³⁴ Renaissance explorers, like Columbus, also justified America's manifest destiny westward.³⁵ As an article of 1855 from the *Washington National Intelligencer* proclaimed, "The present is emphatically the age of discovery. At no period since the days of Columbus and Cortez has the thirst for exploration been more active and universal than now."³⁶ The nation's celebration of Columbus culminated in the Chicago World Columbian Exposition of 1893. The event commemorated the 400th anniversary of Columbus's landing as well as solidified the explorer as an important figure in American history.

Contemporary artists responded to this zeal for Columbus, and his journey dominated visual culture in the United States.³⁷ From representation in government buildings to popular prints, Columbus became an iconic figure.

The Main Building murals certainly reflect contemporary trends to memorialize Columbus's expedition, but it is important to briefly address the specifics of Gregori's work within the context of Notre Dame's campus. As the famous Catholic explorer of the Americas, Columbus was inspirational to the Notre Dame community. Columbus's discovery story symbolized the contribution of Catholicism to United States history, a subject dominated by Protestant traditions. In their own expeditions, the founders of Notre Dame forged their way through the northern Indiana wilderness and proselytized the Potawami Native Americans (fig. 10). The Knights of Columbus organization continues to promote Catholic heritage today. In light of this, Notre Dame was not commissioning a patriotic display of an American icon, but commemorating the founder of the Catholic faith in the Americas.



Figure 10. Luigi Gregori, *Father Edward Sorin Performing a Wedding for the Potawami*, 1880s, pigment with casein on plaster, Saint Edwards Hall, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.

Responding to his audience, Gregori treats the Columbus series like a religious cycle celebrating the life of a saint. His designs emphasize Columbus's piety by carefully choosing scenes, poses, and details that reveal a divine inspiration. The religious character of the paintings warranted their publication in the English translation of Francesco Tarducci's *The Life of Christopher Columbus* (1890).³⁸ Tarducci's biography of Columbus emphasized the explorer's spirituality and reclaimed his Italian-Catholic heritage. Overlaying Gregori's imagery with Tarducci's descriptions reinforces the intended interpretation of both works. Like Tarducci, Gregori constructed a unique pictorial biography of Columbus that presented the explorer as a Christian role model for the Catholic community at Notre Dame.

Gregori Beyond the Notre Dame Murals

Gregori's family and friends played an important role in his life at Notre Dame. Gregori had two sons, Constantine and Pio, and a daughter, Fannie. Trained as an artist, Constantine helped Gregori execute frescoes at the Cathedral of Raphael in Dubuque, Iowa. Fannie was in the United States for most of Gregori's tenure. She was fluent in English, which allowed her to act as her father's translator. An important member of Gregori's circle was James Edwards, Notre Dame's first librarian. Edwards supported Gregori's artistic career by acting as the artist's agent; he solicited patrons for Gregori across the United States. Gregori also had a favorite pupil, Paul Wood. Sadly, the youth's promising career ended when Wood was killed in a Chicago hotel fire at the age of 19.⁴⁰

Gregori's career in America came to an end in 1890 when his wife Maria Louisa died, and he decided to return to Italy. Gregori attempted to establish a career in Florence, but economic crisis and political strife made the art market unstable. Unfortunately, Gregori's health prevented him from seeking work elsewhere in Europe, and he continued to work primarily for American clients and exhibitions. He sent paintings to the art exhibition at the 1893 World's Fair, and his *Twelfth Station of the Cross: The Crucifixion*, won a gold medal.⁴¹ In failing health and unable to continue painting, Gregori died in Florence in 1896.

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Notes

1. This is an article introducing Gregori's Columbus Murals in the Main Building. "A Thing of Beauty," *Notre Dame Scholastic*, November 12, 1881, University of Notre Dame Archives (UNDA).
2. "Art Notes," *Notre Dame Scholastic*, January 15, 1876, UNDA.
3. "Art Notes," *Notre Dame Scholastic*, April 23, 1878, UNDA.
4. Denis McNamara, *Heavenly City: The Architecture Tradition of Catholic Chicago* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2005), 5.
5. For a fundamental text on nineteenth-century painting overlooking Italian painting, see Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, *Nineteenth-Century European Art*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2010).
6. The primary source of Gregori's biography is a eulogy letter from his daughter Fannie to Professor James Edwards in which she provides a detailed account of her father's life. See Fannie Gregori to James F. Edwards, November 13, 1896, James Farnum Edwards Papers (EDW), Calendared Material XI-1-n A.L.S.- 6pp-12mo-{2}, University of Notre Dame Archives (UNDA).
7. An early source on Minardi's workshop documents Gregori's study under Minardi. See Ernesto Ovidi, *Tommaso Minardi e la sua scuola* (Rome: Pietro Rebecca, 1902), 116.
8. Italo Faldi, "Il Purismo e Tommaso Minardi," *Commentari: Rivista di Critica e Storia dell'Arte*, I (1950): 238-46.
9. For the lecture translated into English, see Joshua Taylor, *Nineteenth-Century Theories of Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 173-194.
10. For the latest work on the Nazarenes, see Cordula Grewe, *Painting the Sacred in the Age of Romanticism* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).
11. Thomas Buser, *Religious Art in the Nineteenth Century in Europe and America*, vol. 1 (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 185.
12. Buser, *Religious*, 188.
13. Buser, *Religious*, 14-19.
14. Taylor, *Nineteenth-Century*, 175.
15. For an overview of projects under Pope Pius IX, see Paolo Cacchiatelli, *Le Scienze e le Arti sotto il Pontificato di Pio IX* (Rome: Tip. Delle Belle Arti, 1860-63).
16. "The Van Dyke Painting," February 26, 1887, *Freeman's Journal*, Luigi Gregori Papers (GRG), Folder 10, UNDA.

17. For information on Gregori's involvement with the Museo Campana, see *ibid.* The Museo Campana is now owned by the French State. For information on his involvement with the collection of Massarenti, see Don Marcello Massarenti to Luigi Gregori, June 13, 1874, GRG, Folder 4, UNDA. The Massarenti collection was sold to Henry Walters, now the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.
18. Renzo Grandi, Dall'Accademia al Vero; *La pittura a Bologna prima e dopo l'Unità* (Bologna: Grafis, 1983), 60.
19. James Grant Wilson and John Fiske, ed., *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, vol. 2 (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1888), 759. James Edwards submitted this encyclopedia entry on the behalf of Gregori.
20. Employment contract signed by Luigi Gregori, Father Edward Sorin, and Marcello Massarenti, June 13, 1874, GRG, Folder 4, UNDA.
21. For the historical details of the Basilica this essay relies on Thomas J Schlereth, *A spire of faith: The University of Notre Dame's Sacred Heart Church* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Alumni Association, 1991).
22. Luigi Gregori to Congregation of the Sacred Heart with notes from Father Sorin, Sorin Folder 1, Documents Pertaining to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, Indiana Province Archives Center, Notre Dame, IN.
23. "Local Items," *Notre Dame Scholastic*, May 20, 1876, University of Notre Dame Archives (UNDA).
24. Thomas Schlereth, *Spire of Faith* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Alumni Association, 1991), 35.
25. "Stations of the Cross," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., vol. 13 (Detroit: Gale, 2003): 499-501, Gale Virtual Reference Library, accessed August 11, 2010, doi: GALECX3407710647
26. This dating is based on *Notre Dame Scholastic* articles from December 19, 1874 to August 25, 1877, UNDA.
27. A number of the Stations were exhibited at Gregori's 1877 solo show in Chicago. The Twelfth Station, the Crucifixion, was awarded a gold medal at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. "Gregori and His Work," 1896, Luigi Gregori Papers (GRG), Folder 10, UNDA.
28. For the historical facts of the Main Building, this essay relies on Thomas J Schlereth, *The University of Notre Dame; A Portrait of Its History and Campus* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976) and Schlereth, *A Dome of Learning: the University of Notre Dame's Main Building* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Alumni Association, 1991).
29. "A Thing of Beauty," *Notre Dame Scholastic*, November 12, 1881, University of Notre Dame Archives (UNDA).
30. Schlereth, *History and Campus*, 242.
31. *Congregation of the Holy Cross Council Book*, October 25, 1889, Indiana Province Archives Center, Notre Dame, IN.
32. Professor James F. Edwards, "Letter Concerning Catholic Mission," undated, James Farnum Edwards Papers (EDW) Box 30, Bishops Hall Memorial Papers, Folder 5, 1880s-1908, UNDA. Preliminary studies for these paintings have not been identified.
33. Rosella Mamoli Zorzi, "The Celebration of Columbus in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Washington Irving's *Life of Columbus*," in *The American Columbiad; Discovering America, Inventing the United States*, ed. Mario Materassi (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1996), 61-75.
34. Zorzi, "Celebration of Columbus," 62.
35. Amy Uhry Abrams, "Visions of Columbus: The 'Discovery' Legend in Antebellum American Paintings and Prints," *American Art Journal* 25, no. 1/2 (1993): 86.
36. William H. Truettner, "The Art of History: American Exploration and Discovery Scenes, 1840-1860," *American Art Journal* 14, no.1 (Winter, 1982): 10.
37. For a general discussion of the artistic representation of the Columbus saga, see Thomas J. Schlereth, "Columbia, Columbus, and Columbianism," *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 3 (Dec., 1992): 946-954.
38. The novel was translated and published by H.F. Brownson of Detroit. See Father Daniel Hudson to Henry F. Brownson, June 29, 1890, Daniel E. Hudson Papers (HUD), Calendared Material III-3-d-A.L.S.-3pp-12mo.-{4}, UNDA.
39. This fresco project took place from 1883-1886. Luigi Gregori to Reverend Ernest van Dyck, July 1883, GRG, Folder 1, UNDA.
40. Samuel Wood to James Edwards, January, 16, 1892, EDW, Calendared Material XI-1-j - A.L.S. - 4pp. - 12mo. - {1}, UNDA.
41. "Gregori and His Work," 1896, GRG, Folder 10, UNDA.

Catalog



1 *Study from a Classical Cast of a Foot*

mid-19th century

black chalk on white wove paper

11 3/8 x 17 1/4 in; 29 x 44 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.200

In Gregori's oeuvre there are numerous drawings after classical casts like this rendering of a foot. Gregori illustrates the same mold from the side and front, demonstrating his dexterity at foreshortening. Executed with meticulous crosshatchings, this study emulates the clean lines of antique statuary.

Drawing after antiquity was typical of artistic training during the nineteenth century. From the Renaissance forward, Italian artists studied classical sculpture to learn the idealized anatomy and perfect human proportions of ancient art. When Gregori began his career, Neoclassicism was the dominant artistic movement, and his first teacher, Giovanni Battista Frulli (1765-1837), was keenly interested in antiquity. Known as an accomplished draftsman and engraver, Frulli's graphic style was rigid and linear in imitation of classical aesthetics. In this drawing, Gregori illustrates the Neoclassical style to perfection.

2 *Profile of a Woman with a Head Scarf and Earring*

1845

black chalk with white heightening on wove paper

Inscriptions: CL: "L. Gregori" in black chalk; CL: "[illegible] 1845
Rome" in black chalk

12 3/8 x 7 7/8 in; 31.5 x 20 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.139

Gregori accepted many commissions for portraits as a way to supplement his income from the Vatican. This head study of a female sitter was produced while Gregori was in Rome. This finished drawing is highly refined as well as signed and dated. The subject wears a traditional Italian bonnet, which was folded and pinned at the crown of the head. Gregori uses white chalk to create raking highlight across the sitter's face, illuminating and defining her soft features. Through his handling of light and shade, Gregori crafts a sensuous, elegant portrait.





3 *Lamentation and Male Martyr, after Perugino*

mid-19th century

black chalk on white wove paper

14 x 15 1/4 in; 35.5 x 39 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.155

This sheet has two studies: a precise copy of Perugino's (1440-1523) *Lamentation* (Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, Florence) and a male martyr in the style of Perugino. The two drawings are a testament to Gregori's skills as a copyist as well as his admiration of fifteenth-century artists. This admiration stemmed from his involvement in *Purismo*, a nineteenth-century art movement that emulated the aesthetics of the early Renaissance.

While enrolled at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome, Gregori studied with Tommaso Minardi (1787-1871), the leader of the Roman *Purismo* movement. Minardi believed his contemporaries should study the artists of the early Renaissance in order to return purity and essentialism to painting. Minardi and his followers, including Gregori, readily copied from Pre-Raphael artists, and applied this older aesthetic to their own art.

The paintings of Perugino inspired the *Purismo* artists. Perugino was a favorite artist of the Church, and most importantly the teacher of Raphael (1483-1520). Purists believed by studying Perugino they could achieve Raphael's perfection.



Perugino, *Lamentation*, 1495, oil on panel, Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, Florence. Reproduced with permission of Alinari/Art Resource, NY.

4 *Madonna and Child*

mid-19th century

black and red chalk on beige wove paper

Inscriptions: BL: "Gregori" in black chalk

19 1/2 x 14 13/16 in; 49.5 x 37.7 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.181

Signed in the lower left corner, this work is an original piece by Gregori, but it evokes the Renaissance typology of the Madonna seated with Christ Child. In keeping with his *Purismo* training, Gregori's Madonna and Child recalls the quiet simplicity of fifteenth-century religious imagery. Christ is calmly seated on his mother's lap blessing the viewer as she looks serenely at her miraculous Son. Squared for transfer to canvas or panel, this piece was likely a late study for a painting meant to seamlessly recall the art of the Old Masters like Raphael (1483–1520).





5 *Saint John the Baptist Rebuking Herod*

before 1856

black chalk and black ink on wove paper

9 1/2 x 12 in; 21.5 x 30.5 cm (image)

10 2/3 x 15 1/5 in; 27 x 38.5 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.124

This drawing relates to Gregori's most celebrated painting in Italy, *Saint John the Baptist Rebuking Herod*, 1856 (location unknown), for which he was awarded first prize for history painting at the Bologna Exhibition in 1856. Because of its didactic function, history painting was considered the most important of artistic genres during the nineteenth century. Widely acclaimed, this painting earned Gregori honorary professorship at the Bologna Accademia di Belle Arti in 1858.

This drawing illustrates Saint John the Baptist at the court in Galilee criticizing King Herod Antipas for his inappropriate marriage. Herod had wed Herodias, his niece and brother's ex-wife. At the left of the drawing, Saint John points an accusatory finger at Herod who sits on a throne with his wife.

When comparing the drawing with the final painting, differences emerge. The most significant change appears in the treatment of the background. In the painting Gregori inserted a passage into a courtyard with lotus columns, opening the composition and adding an exotic, Oriental setting.



Saint John the Baptist Rebuking Herod, 1856, oil on canvas, Location unknown. Photo courtesy of Mi.B.AC.- Photo Archive Superintendence of Bologna BSAE.

6 *Saint Peter and Saint Paul*

1874–78

watercolor and gouache over black chalk on wove paper

11 1/2 x 7 1/4 in; 29.2 x 18.4 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

1977.005.020.DD

This colorful drawing is a study for two monumental paintings of Saint Peter and Saint Paul that flank the main entrance to the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Considered the founders of the Catholic Church, Saint Peter and Saint Paul are a frequent pairing in Catholic art. Both were fundamental in establishing Church doctrine and proclaiming the teachings of Christ.

Gregori situates Saints Peter and Paul in Gothic arch niches. The background is a bright gold ground covered by small squares representing a mosaic motif. On the right side of the drawing, stands Saint Peter holding the keys of heaven in one hand and the Book of Life in the other. At the left side of the drawing, Saint Paul holds the sword of his martyrdom in his right hand and the Book of the Law. The two figures are imposing in their strong stances and brightly colored togas.

Gregori uses multiple watercolor washes and gouache, an opaque form of watercolor, to develop energetic drapery that draws the eye to the figures. The final paintings on view in the Basilica have a faux-mosaic background and exhibit the dynamic colors Gregori signaled in this preparatory study.





7 *Ceiling Study of Two Putti*

1875–76

watercolor and gouache over black chalk on wove paper

6 3/4 x 6 1/2 in; 17.1 x 16.5 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA1995.082.033

Study for Two Spandrels with Saint Paul the Hermit and Mary Magdalene

1874–76

graphite with gouache and watercolor on wove paper

4 1/8 x 9 1/4 in; 10.5 x 23.5 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.050

Study for Saint Cecilia Spandrel Figure

1874–76

watercolor and gouache over black chalk on wove paper

7 5/8 x 5 1/2 in; 19.4 x 14 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

1977.005.020.H

These drawings relate to the decoration of the nave of the Basilica. In a letter from 1874 Gregori describes his vision for this space, and his testimony helps decipher his designs. He divided the ceiling into panels along the vaulting, and painted it sky blue, evocative of the heavens. In each panel, Gregori imagined an alternating pattern of angels playing musical instruments and cherubs holding stars representing the twelve virtues of the Virgin Mary. For the area above the side aisles, he envisioned spandrel figures reclining above the physical architectural arches similar to those in Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. Unlike the sculpted spandrel figures of Roman precedents, however, Gregori's figures were to be painted as a faux-mosaic.

The nave designs are some of Gregori's earliest work on campus and demonstrate his graphic style at that time. The studies have a loose but controlled

line that is energetic and in some cases playful. Bright color also appears to be a characteristic of his work during this period; he makes vibrant hues with a signature combination of watercolor and gouache. He also gives depth to his studies with a technique called *cangiante*, or color change, to create highlights and shadows. This is most clear in the drawing of Saint Cecilia where the folds of drapery on her skirt change color from blue to yellow.

The drawings also show that Gregori worked on a small scale, even for a large project. His decoration of the nave was likely his first attempt at a major fresco scheme; as he continued to work in the church, his studies grew larger.



8 *Christ and the Apostles on the Sea of Galilee*

ca. 1877

graphite with traces of brown paint on wove paper

17 5/16 x 16 1/2 in; 44 x 41.9 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.082

Moses and the Brazen Serpent

ca. 1877

pen with brown ink, watercolor, and gouache over black chalk on wove paper, squared for transfer

33 1/2 x 24 3/16 in; 85.1 x 61.5 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

1977.005.020.G

In the first phase of the church decoration (1874–77), Gregori produced two large murals for the south entrance wall: *The Brazen Serpent* and *Christ and the Apostles on the Sea of Galilee*. The paintings originally flanked the nineteenth-century pipe organ, but the pair was destroyed in 1978 to make room for a larger instrument. All that remains of the works are Gregori's preparatory drawings for the subjects.

The Brazen Serpent is taken from the Old Testament narrative (Numbers 21:4–9) and tells of God sending a plague of biting snakes to the Israelite encampment as a punishment. The terrified residents ask their leader, Moses, to pray for relief from the pestilence. Responding to the prayers, God instructs Moses to make a bronze serpent, place it on a pole, and that whoever looks on it will be healed. Gregori's depiction of the scene shows Moses, in the background, pointing to a snake on a cross. In the foreground, victims writhe in pain ensnared by the tortuous reptiles. The drawing is highly finished in full color with a detailed, faux-tapestry border.

Christ Saves the Apostle Peter illustrates a New Testament subject from Matthew 14:22–32. One evening when the apostles are fishing, Christ goes out to their boat miraculously walking on the water. In response to this unbelievable event, the Apostle Peter says, "If it is you, tell me to come to you on the water." Christ



Holy Card of Father Edward Sorin's Rescue, 1877.
Reproduced with permission from University of
Notre Dame Archives.

says, "Come." The apostle momentarily does walk afloat, but grows scared and starts to sink. Christ immediately saves Peter and asks, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" At the right of the drawing, Christ effortlessly stands on the water as he reaches out to the flailing Peter who is waist-deep in the stormy sea. The design is carefully executed in graphite with a smooth classical line that recalls the work of Raphael.

Both stories have been interpreted as a prefiguration of Christ's role as savior. The paintings, however, commemorated a contemporary story of survival in the life of Father Edward Sorin. Crossing the Atlantic in 1876, Sorin was rescued from the sinking steamship, *L'Amérique*. Gregori executed *Christ Saves the Apostle Peter* shortly after the event in 1877, along with a prayer card commemorating the rescue.¹

Notes

1. Information regarding this rescue, prayer card, and subsequent mural commission, see Thomas J. Schlereth, *A Spire of Faith: The University of Notre Dame's Sacred Heart Church* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Alumni Association, 1991), fig. 106.



**9 *Fifth Station of the Cross;
Simon of Cyrene Carries the Cross***

1874–77

graphite and brown ink on wove paper

3 11/16 x 5 5/8 in; 9.3 x 14.3 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.008

***Fifth Station of the Cross;
Simon of Cyrene Carries the Cross***

1874–77

watercolor over black chalk on wove paper

13 x 10 in; 33 x 25.4 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA1995.082.031

***Eighth Station of the Cross;
Christ Meets the Women of Jerusalem***

1874–77

watercolor and pen with brown ink over graphite on wove paper

8 1/4 x 6 1/4 in; 21 x 18.9 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA1995.082.068

***Ninth Station of the Cross;
Christ Falls for the Third Time***

1874–77

watercolor and gouache over graphite on wove paper

9 3/4 x 7 1/4 in; 24.8 x 18.4 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

1977.005.020.B

These four studies are preliminary sketches of the Stations of the Cross series that line the nave of the present-day Basilica. When initially developing the Stations, Gregori first rapidly worked out the compositions on either tracing or scrap paper. One of these sheets for the Fifth Station of the Cross, illustrating when Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry Christ's cross, explores two possible compositions. At the left, the scene is shown from the side with Christ in profile and Simon behind him. At the right of the drawing, Gregori develops a frontal composition; Christ walks prominently ahead with Simon at his side. Both drawings were first executed in graphite, with brown ink added to further develop the frontal composition.

Once he decided on a composition, Gregori produced the design on a larger scale with added detail and color. In the second study for the Fifth Station, color moves the viewer's eye from Christ's bright blue robe to Simon's striking yellow tunic to the red swath wrapped around the centurion's neck and then back. Finished drawings, such as this, were submitted to the Congregation of the Holy Cross for approval before the painting began.



10 *Saint John the Evangelist*

1876–78

watercolor and gouache over black chalk on wove paper

10 x 7 in; 25.4 x 17.8 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA1995.082.048

Gregori's design for the ceiling of the crossing—one of the most significant spaces within a Catholic church—relies on conventional iconography. Depictions of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John signal one of the functions of the space, the proclamation of the word. Gregori adds to this group four Old Testament figures: Moses, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and King David, who provide a counterpoint to the four evangelists

Here, Saint John sits on a cloud with his leg crossed and a book on his lap. He holds a stylus in his right hand, and glances up, pausing from writing his gospel. Behind his right shoulder hovers an eagle, the symbol of his divine inspiration. This is a highly developed study with strong, clean lines as well as a colorful combination of watercolor and gouache. The faux-mosaic pattern used in the nave decoration is carried over into the crossing.



Ceiling of the Crossing in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. Reproduced with permission from Steve Moriarty/University of Notre Dame Archives.

11 *Pope Pius IX at Sacred Heart Church*

1876

graphite with watercolor and gouache on paper

University of Notre Dame Archives.

In 1876, Father Sorin commissioned this watercolor from Gregori. It illustrates Pope Pius IX attending mass at the Sacred Heart church. The sanctuary is brightly lit and filled with members of the Notre Dame College community. The pope kneels at the center of the composition.

However, Pope Pius never visited Notre Dame, making this an entirely imaginary scene. Sorin commissioned this painting to commemorate the founding of the “Guardian Angels of the Sanctuary.” This group of congregation members prayed for the pope’s health and the safekeeping of the Papal States.

Overall, this is one of Gregori’s most accomplished works on the Notre Dame campus. He composes a convincing interior filled with details and scale figures. Having produced a portrait of the pontiff before coming to the United States, he accurately portrays Pius IX, even on this small scale. Gregori’s watercolor work is particularly delicate. The color palate is muted, but light and celebratory.

While in Rome during the spring of 1876, Father Sorin brought this drawing to an audience with Pope Pius IX. The pope enjoyed the drawing, and he wrote on the piece: *Benedicat Deus omnes qui ambulant in semita mandatorum suorum* [God bless all who walk in the path of His commands].





12 *The Marriage of the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph*

1876–78

pen and purple ink with watercolor and gouache over graphite on
wove paper

11 1/4 x 9 in; 28.6 x 22.9 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

1977.005.020.EE

The Annunciation

1876–78

watercolor and gouache over graphite on wove paper

7 1/2 x 6 3/8 in; 19.1 x 16.2 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

1977.005.020.L

The Nativity

1876–78

watercolor and gouache over graphite on wove paper

9 x 11 1/4 in; 22.9 x 28.6 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

1977.005.020.A

The Presentation of Christ at the Temple

1876–78

graphite and red chalk on wove paper

16 1/4 x 14 1/4 in; 41.3 x 36.2 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.081

From 1876 until 1878, Gregori worked on a series of murals depicting the Life of the Virgin to fill the upper register of the transept. The narrative starts with the Birth of the Virgin and concludes with the Assumption of the Virgin. Despite their large scale, these paintings are difficult to study from ground level.

Placed high on the wall, they are often obscured by glare. Gregori's drawings for the series provide an opportunity to view his designs in greater detail. The studies displayed here best illustrate Gregori's design process and reveal his reliance on Renaissance art.

Gregori's extensive study of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italian art is most evident in the Life of the Virgin series. Through copying he learned the themes, iconography, and graphic style of the Renaissance masters. Gregori assimilated this knowledge into his designs for the murals. The drawings of the Nativity and The Annunciation, for example, rely on conventional imagery, poses, and compositions. In some cases Gregori directly imitated the great Renaissance artist Raphael. His *Marriage of the Virgin* drawing emulates Raphael's *Sposalizio; Betrothal of the Virgin*, 1504 (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan) in its balanced composition. Similar to this important masterpiece, Gregori constructs a harmonious composition focused on Joseph placing a ring on Mary's finger at the center. For the *Presentation of Christ* mural, Gregori quotes the positioning of the Christ Child in Raphael's predella for the *Coronation Altarpiece*, 1504 (Pinacoteca, Vatican Museum). By invoking these important paintings, Gregori connects his art to the great Italian pictorial tradition as well as creates a continuum between the celebrated religious art of the fifteenth century and his own.



Raphael, *Presentation in the Temple*, predella panel for the *Coronation of the Virgin Altarpiece*, 1503–04, Italian, 1483–1520, oil on panel, Pinacoteca, Vatican Museums, Vatican City. Reproduced with permission from Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.



Raphael, *Marriage of the Virgin*, 1504, oil on panel, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, Italy. Reproduced with permission from Scala/Art Resource, NY.



13 *Coronation of the Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven*

1887

watercolor and gouache with pen and black ink on wove paper

21 1/4 x 20 1/2 in; 54 x 52 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA1995.082.070

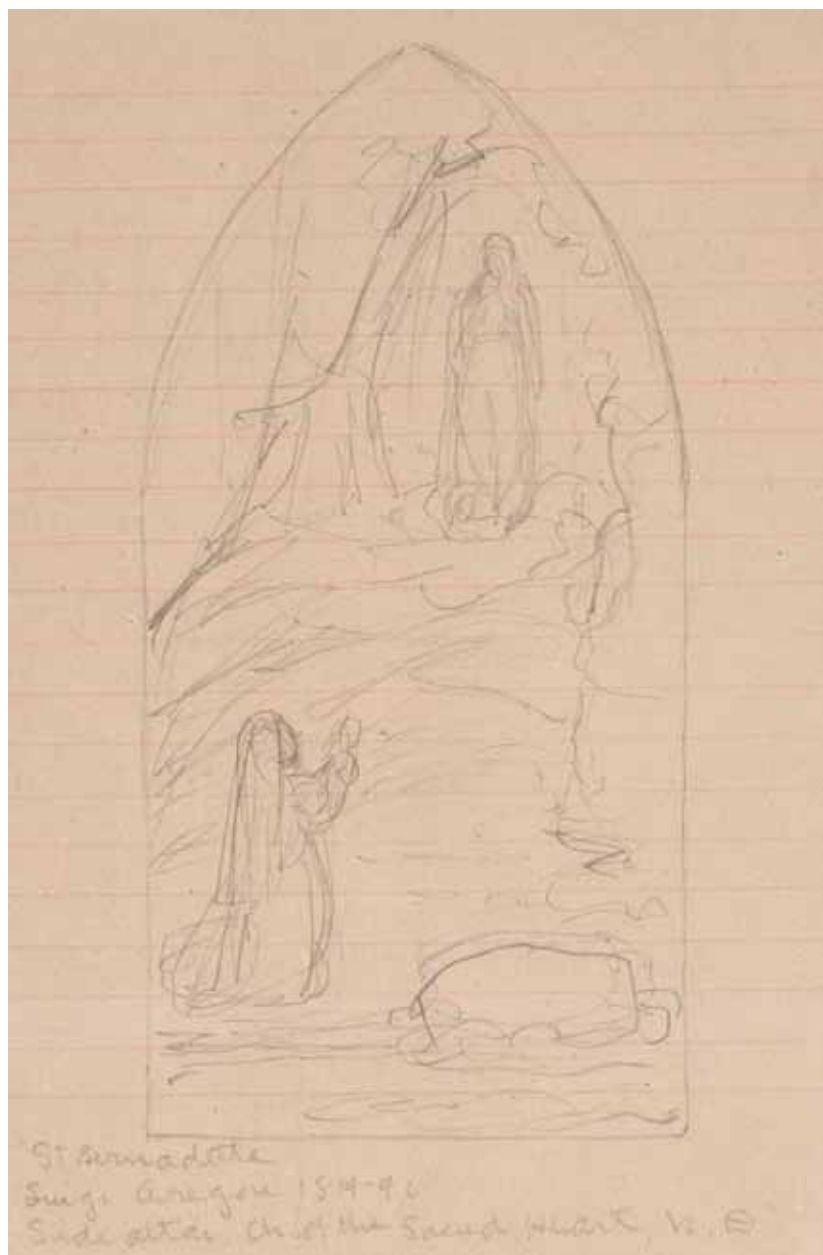
This preparatory study corresponds with the mural at the entrance into the Lady Chapel or apse extension. Gregori suggested a mural representing the Coronation of the Virgin in his letter of 1874 outlining the decoration of the church. The dogmatization of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 by Pope Pius IX likely influenced Gregori's decoration theme, which emphasized the Virgin's role in Christian salvation. It was not until this last design phase that Gregori's full vision was achieved. The drawing and subsequent painting are very simple, but they provide a clear theological interpretation of the Virgin's place in the Catholic religion.

The Virgin's triumphant coronation is a symbolic theme with no literary basis. Gregori's composition is based on artistic prototypes, and likely fifteenth-century depictions, which include Mary being crowned in the presence of the Holy Trinity. At the top center of the composition sits the Virgin Mary being crowned with a tiara of roses by God the Father at her left and Christ at her right. At the top of the arch, the dove of the Holy Spirit descends on the scene, completing the presence of the Holy Trinity. Two groups of seated figures flank this central composition. Holding scrolls and quills, the figures are likely Old Testament writers or characters that anticipate Mary's role in the New Testament.

Executed in watercolor and gouache, the drawing testifies to the importance of color in Gregori's designs. The central group is primarily dressed in a sky blue. The prophets exhibit more striking color combinations like purple with yellow or red and green. Each of the color splashes moves the viewer's eye around the composition.

Detail from *Saint Bernadette and the Lady of Lourdes*, 1887,
pigment with casein on plaster. Basilica of the Sacred
Heart, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.





14 *The Virgin Mary Appearing to Saint Bernadette at Lourdes; (verso) Death of Saint Joseph*

1888–91

graphite on notebook paper

8 1/2 x 3 1/8 in; 21.6 x 13.7 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA1995.082.006

The Death of Saint Joseph

1881–91

black chalk on lined notebook paper

7 x 3 1/2 in; 18 x 9 cm (image)

8 1/4 x 5 3/8 in; 21 x 13.7 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA 2009.056.371

In the last decoration phase (1887–91) of the church, Gregori designed murals for the apse extension behind the main altar, or the Lady's Chapel. These two drawings relate to the large-scale paintings *The Death of Saint Joseph* and *The Virgin Mary Appearing to Saint Bernadette at Lourdes* on the east and west side aisles of the chapel. Both drawings are early studies executed in graphite on notebook paper. Although not colorful or particularly detailed, the studies demonstrate how Gregori started even his large compositions at a small scale with loosely defined figures and minimal landscape features.

The recto of drawing AA1995.082.006 depicts the vision of Saint Bernadette, a miraculous event from the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1858 Bernadette, a young peasant girl, had visions of the Virgin Mary at a grotto in Lourdes, France. At the left of Gregori's very sketchy drawing, Saint Bernadette kneels on the ground and gestures towards the Virgin Mary who appears at the top right of the composition.

The second, more defined drawing shows *The Death of Saint Joseph*, an apocryphal legend derived from "The History of Saint Joseph the Carpenter." According to this story, Christ and the Virgin were at Joseph's deathbed. At the

bottom of the drawing lies Saint Joseph flanked by the Virgin and Christ consoling him in his time of passing. A multitude of singing angels surrounds the Holy Family. The dove of the Holy Spirit illuminates the composition from above.

Nineteenth-century devotional trends show these two subjects were highly venerated at the time of the construction. Devotion to Saint Joseph increased during the papacy of Pope Pius IX (1846–78). Pius IX was personally devoted to Saint Joseph and declared him the patron of the Catholic Church. Similarly, Lourdes became an important pilgrimage site at the end of the century and received official ecclesiastical recognition in 1867. Devotion to Saint Bernadette by the Notre Dame community is further evidenced by the construction of a replica of the Lourdes grotto in 1898 behind the church.



Reconstructed Lourdes Grotto behind the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, 1898. Reproduced with permission from University of Notre Dame Archives.



15 *The Exaltation of the Holy Cross*

1887–91

watercolor and pen with red ink over graphite on wove paper

45 x 36 in; 114.3 x 91.44 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA1995.082.018

This large-scale drawing corresponds to the illusionistic ceiling painting in the Lady Chapel. Designed and executed from 1887–1891, it constitutes the last of Gregori's work on campus. At the center of the drawing hovers the cross of Christ's crucifixion supported by angels. A holy host carrying the instruments of Christ's passion surrounds the cross. Stepping out from the center of the drawing one sees a great number of figures seated in an ellipse-shaped cloud structure, like an auditorium. Gregori fills this auditorium with saints, prophets, and figures from the Bible.

The scale of the drawing, its condition, and the presence of transfer lines speak to its function as a working drawing. Gregori's assistants used it to translate a complicated design into a finished painting. A drawing such as this would have been important, as Gregori's age and ailing health prohibited him from climbing scaffolding.¹ Paint splatters dot the sheet suggesting it was used as a working guide.

The subject, the Adoration of the True Cross, celebrates the finding of the relics associated with Christ's passion.² According to Church history, the True Cross was found in 325 AD by Saint Helena (ca. 250–330 AD), the mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine, and Saint Macarius (d.c. 336), the bishop of Jerusalem. These two important figures can be found at the top center of the drawing, depicted kneeling in adoration. Fragments of the cross were among the most sought-after objects of veneration. The Basilica possesses such a relic and houses it in the Reliquary Chapel to the right side of the apse.

Notes

1. For evidence of Gregori's health issues, see Sister M. Aloysius to James F. Edwards, August 31, 1888, EDW Calendared Material XI-1-f, A.L.S. 4pp-12mo-{1}, University of Notre Dame Archives (UNDA).

2. Fernand Cabrol, "The True Cross," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 4 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908), New Advent, accessed August 13, 2010, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/045291.htm>.

**16 *Father Sorin and the Potawatomi Indians,
Study for St. Edward's Hall***

late 19th century

graphite on tracing paper, laid down on card squared for transfer

9 x 10 in; 22.9 x 25.4 cm (sheet)

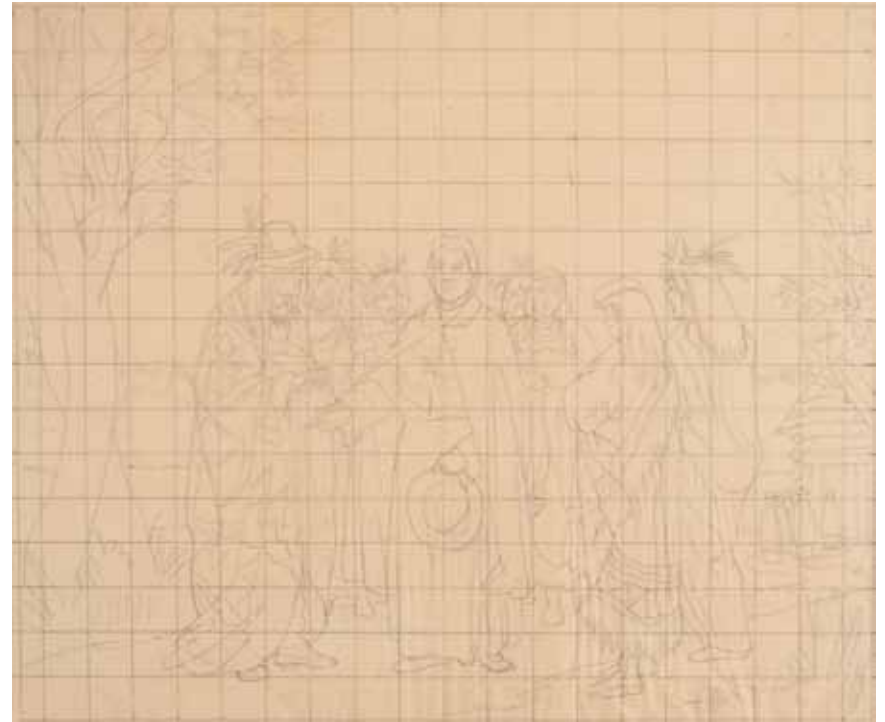
Gift of the artist

1995.082.040

As the famous Catholic explorer of the Americas, Columbus was inspirational to the Notre Dame community. In their own expeditions, the founders of Notre Dame forged their way through the northern Indiana wilderness and proselytized the Potawatomi Native Americans. This drawing relates to a mural in the Gregorian Room located on the second floor of Saint Edward's Hall. The mural was rediscovered in 2006 and still remains one of Gregori's lesser-known works. The subject is unique to the history of Notre Dame, and marks the founders' peaceful relationship with the Potawatomi.

The scene commemorates a wedding Father Sorin performed for the tribe. Sorin stands with a group of Native Americans in the woods outside the historic Log Chapel at the back right.

Gregori carefully executed this drawing with clear lines and refined details. The dress of the Potawatomi is elaborate and perhaps based on first-hand observation. Although it lacks Gregori's characteristic flourish of color, the drawing is the approved composition for the finished mural.



Father Edward Sorin Performing a Wedding for the Potawami, 1880s, pigment with casein on plaster, Saint Edward's Hall, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.





Reverend Thomas E. Walsh,
CSC Reproduced with permission from University of
Notre Dame Archives.

17 *Christopher Columbus, Explorer*

1880–84

black chalk on paper

5 1/2 x 3 in; 14 x 7.6 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

1977.005.020.M

This sketch relates to the monumental portrait of Columbus in the first floor vestibule of the Main Building. In the drawing, Gregori develops Columbus's stance with his hand on hip and elbow bent outward. In Renaissance portraiture, this arm position, termed *akimbo*, symbolized power and prestige. Columbus exudes confidence in this strong stance. His other hand rests on a globe signaling his accomplishments.

During the nineteenth century, Columbus's appearance was disputed.¹ No portrait of the explorer was widely considered "authentic." This created a serious dilemma for artists commissioned to represent this famous figure. Preparations for the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago even included a committee designated to determine an authoritative representation of Columbus, and no consensus was ever reached.²

For the Main Building murals, Gregori based Columbus's portrait on Father Thomas Walsh, the contemporary president of Notre Dame (1881-93).³ Walsh's age and northern European physique provided an appropriate model for the famed explorer.

Notes

1. Hugh Honour, "L'image de Christophe Colomn," *Revue du Louvre et des Musées de France* 25 (1976): 255-267.

2. Judy Sund, "Columbus and Columbia in Chicago, 1893: Man of Genius Meets Generic Woman," *The Art Bulletin* 75, no. 3 (Sept., 1993): 444.

3. Thomas J. Schlereth, *The University of Notre Dame; A Portrait of Its History and Campus* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), 242.

Detail from *The Reception at Court*, 1880–84, pigment with casein on plaster,
Main Building, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.





18 *Christopher and Diego Columbus at the Gate of the Convent of La Rabida*

1880–84

graphite and black ink with brown wash on paper

11 5/16 x 5 1/16 in; 28.8 x 12.9 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.011

Christopher and Diego Columbus at the Gate of the Convent of La Rabida

1880–84

graphite and brown ink on tracing paper

7 3/4 x 4 3/4 in; 19.7 x 12.1 cm (image)

8 1/16 x 6 5/8 in; 20.4 x 16.8 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.010

Christopher and Diego Columbus at the Gate of the Convent of La Rabida; (verso) Father Perez Blesses Christopher Columbus Before His Journey

1880–84

black ink with watercolor and gouache over black chalk and graphite on
wove paper

7 3/4 x 4 3/4 in; 19.7 x 12 cm (image)

10 1/2 x 10 1/2 in; 26.7 x 26.7 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

1977.005.020.BB

Christopher Columbus's stop at the convent of La Rabida was a turning point in his career. In the mid-1400s, Columbus sought support for his exploration of a western route to India in the royal courts of Europe. Having been rejected by Portugal and Italy, Columbus headed for Spain with his youngest son, Diego. Columbus was hoping to drop off his son at Huelva where his brother-in-law lived. On the way Diego became weary from travel. Seeking shelter and nourishment, Columbus stopped in the port town of Palos at the Franciscan monastery Santa Maria de la Rabida. It was during this stay at La Rabida that Columbus met Father Juan Perez, a former confessor of Queen Isabella, and a future ally at the Spanish court.

This episode in Columbus's biography is not often illustrated, and numerous preparatory studies attest to Gregori's struggle designing the La Rabida mural. He initially worked with only graphite to simply lay out a composition. He then added washes and ink in order to provide further definition to his ideas. Gregori continued to refine the scene through the postures of Diego and Columbus. He particularly worked on the pose of Diego to make the boy a sympathetic figure. Finally, Gregori added color to make his final composition before executing the mural.



19 *Father Perez Blessing Christopher Columbus before His Journey*

1880–84

graphite on wove paper

9 1/16 x 6 in; 23 x 15.2 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.041

Father Perez Blessing Christopher Columbus before His Journey,

1880–84

watercolor and gouache over pen and brown ink on wove paper

7 3/4 x 5 3/4 in; 19.7 x 14.6 cm (images)

10 x 7 in; 25.4 x 17.8 (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA1995.082.024



On Friday, August 3, 1492, Columbus and his ships set sail. The fleet left from the port at Palos where the La Rabida monastery was located. Underscoring Columbus's religiosity, some biographers describe a mass and consecration of the vessels before his departure. Gregori illustrates Columbus kneeling in front of Father Perez receiving a blessing for his journey. In the background are other members of Columbus's crew and the outline of ships.

These drawings show Gregori's development of the theme. The first composition is a rough sketch with *pentimenti*, or earlier drawings, visible. Gregori had difficulty with the gesture of Father Perez's hand over the head of Columbus. The second drawing shows the continued refinement of the departure at Palos scene. Here he finalized the positions of Columbus and Father Perez. He has also added more figures of monks from La Rabida. In the background, one sees a clearer picture of the ships and crew members ready to sail.

20 *The Mutiny at Sea*

1880–1884

graphite on printed paper

7 x 4 1/2 in; 17.7 x 11.4 cm (image)

9 x 6 in; 22.8 x 15.2 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.045

The Mutiny at Sea

1880–84

watercolor and gouache over graphite on wove paper

9 1/16 x 6 5/16 in; 23.1 x 16 cm (image)

10 5/8 x 7 7/8 in; 27 x 20 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.077

These are two studies for the Main Building mural, *The Mutiny at Sea*. According to Columbus's diary the crew became mutinous on October 10. The fellow sailors felt they were headed nowhere, and demanded a return to Spain. In a moment of determination, Columbus told the crew "that their complaints were useless; happen what might, the Catholic sovereigns had sent them to find the Indies, and they must accomplish the undertaking."

The simple black chalk drawing presents a quickly composed study on a sheet of scrap paper. At the left stands Christopher Columbus with his back against the ship's mast as the mutineers surround him. In the background are the ropes of the ship's sails. Gregori uses very rapid, imprecise lines to develop a composition that he will later refine. With color and added detail, the second drawing represents the final design for *The Mutiny at Sea* mural. Gregori depicts Columbus as the calm, rational figure amidst the rebellious crew who angrily approach their captain.





21 *Christopher Columbus Taking Possession of the New World*

1880–84

black ink over graphite on trace paper

16 3/4 x 25 9/16 in; 42.5 x 65 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.080

Gregori's preparatory study and subsequent mural of *Columbus Taking Possession of the New World* is particularly indebted to the American history paintings of Columbus's "Landing," which were very popular during the nineteenth century. A prominent example is John Vanderlyn's (1775-1852) *Landing of Columbus*, 1837-47 in the Capitol Rotunda, Washington, D.C. Following Vanderlyn and other artists, Gregori places Columbus at the center of the composition surrounded by his grateful Spanish compatriots and the bewildered indigenous people.

Nineteenth-century Columbus historians disagreed about the exact details of the landing. In the famous biography by Washington Irving, Columbus claims the land in the name of Spain and, specifically, of Ferdinand and Isabella. He plants the flag of Spain along with the appropriate court standards. Vanderlyn's painting illustrates this account of Columbus's actions. There were other biographies, such as *The Life of Christopher Columbus* by Francesco Tarducci, which described religious rituals performed after the disembarkation such as claiming the land in the name of God, a mass, and/or the erection of a wooden cross.

The Notre Dame campus newspaper, *The Scholastic*, ran an article on November 12, 1881, describing the future Columbus mural scenes, and in regard to the landing of Columbus it states,

Here will be represented Columbus and his followers, who have disembarked, to the great wonder and surprise of the Indian inhabitants of the New World. Also the planting of the cross, and the taking possession of the country in the name of Christ and of the cross, which Columbus did, and not in the name of the Kings of Spain alone, as some historians have it.

As shown in this drawing, Gregori depicts Columbus not planting a flag, but a large, wooden cross. Columbus exhibits the *orans* position with hands raised and spread apart. This pose symbolizes prayer or supplication, and dates to the early Christian art of the Roman catacombs. Columbus's posture helps the viewer to read the scene not as a claiming of the land, but a moment in which Columbus called upon his God in thanksgiving and support.



John Vanderlyn, *The Landing of Christopher Columbus*, 1846, oil on canvas, Capitol Rotunda, Washington D.C. Reproduced with permission from United States Capitol Historical Society.



22 *Native America in Headdress with Bull Horns*

1880–84

graphite on wove paper

13 1/2 x 8 7/16 in; 34.3 x 21.5 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.042

A Study of Native American Pottery

1880–84

graphite on wove paper

11 13/16 x 3 3/4 in; 30 x 9.5 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.033

Tapestry Study for the Life of Columbus Murals

1880–84

graphite with gouache and watercolor on wove paper

11 13/16 x 3 3/4 in; 30 x 9.5 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.032

These three drawings are studies for the *Reception at the Court of Barcelona* mural centered on the west wall of the Main Building entrance hall. As a reproduction of the mural shows, Columbus is the focus of the painting. He introduces a group of Taino, native Haitians, to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. Other members of the Spanish court stand behind the monarchs, and this group includes a self-portrait of Gregori as well as other members of the Notre Dame community. Throughout the painting Gregori placed spoils of Columbus's successful journey: pottery, gold figurines, pineapples, sugar cane, and exotic birds. This mural received very high praise from Gregori's contemporaries. In 1892, it was reproduced as a 10-cent commemorative stamp for the Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

There are no full-scale studies of the mural in Gregori's drawing collection at the Snite Museum; it is possible that he gave the drawings away as gifts due to

the fame of the mural. Studies for specific figures and objects, however, remain in the collection. The three studies shown here are each elements of the design: a Taino figure, a pottery study, and an example of the colorful tapestry border on the mural. The costume of the Taino figure and the pottery study appear to be drawn from a collection of Native American objects at Notre Dame. In using this collection, Gregori's designs are not representative of pre-Columbian Haitian society, but are a conglomeration of ethnic styles. Gregori's actions are typical of Western artists who often treated Native Americans as a visually monolithic group without distinct cultural separation.



The Reception at Court, 1880–84, pigment with casein on plaster, Main Building, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.



Columbian Exposition Issue Stamps, 1893. Reproduced with permission from University of Notre Dame Archives.



23 *Francesco Bobadilla Betrays Columbus*

1880–84

graphite on tracing paper

14 3/4 x 24 1/16 in; 37.5 x 61.2 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

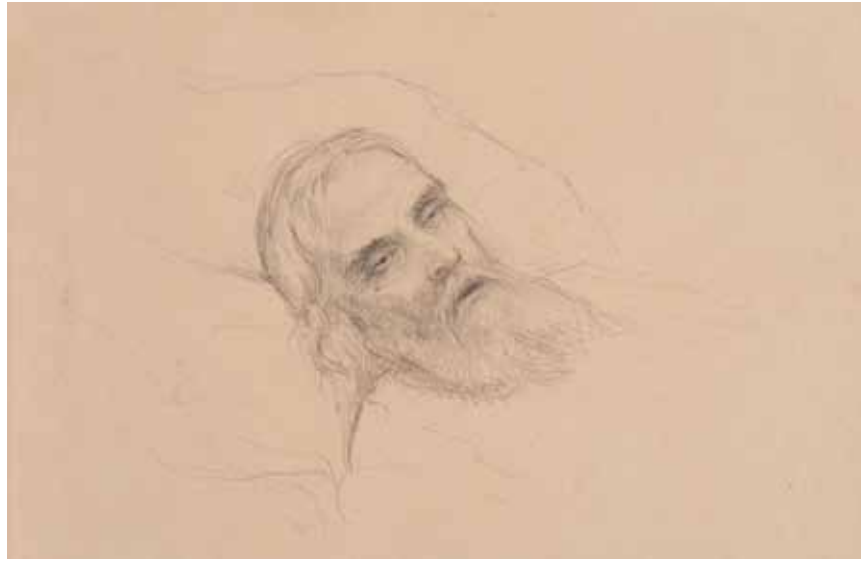
AA2009.056.083

During his first exploration of the Caribbean in 1492, Columbus established the settlement of La Navida on Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic). He left a group of Spanish sailors, his two brothers Bartholomew and Diego, and the native Taino tribe in charge of the encampment. For four years, Columbus struggled to maintain control of this settlement. News of the turmoil in Hispaniola reached the Spanish monarchs who sent the national Chief of Justice, Francisco de Bobadilla, to investigate the colony. Bobadilla determined that Columbus and his brothers had mishandled the situation. He charged Columbus with cruelty towards the inhabitants, personal hoarding of resources, and thwarting missionary efforts to convert the Taino. He arrested Columbus and his brothers, and sent them back to Spain with the damning report. Eventually, Christopher Columbus was acquitted of the charges and returned for a fourth voyage; but he was forbidden to return to Hispaniola.

At the center of the drawing Columbus is seated in shackles after being imprisoned by Bobadilla. At the left Spanish soldiers enter the room to take the explorer back to Europe. On either side of Columbus two Taino demonstrate support for the explorer and distress at his arrest. Columbus's journal never mentions any personal relationship between the explorer and the inhabitants of Hispaniola, suggesting that the caring relationship Gregori depicts is entirely invented to separate Columbus from Bobadilla's charges of cruelty and enslavement.



Detail from *The Reception at Court*, 1880–84, pigment with casein on plaster, Main Building, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.



24 *Head Study of Father Sorin for The Death of Christopher Columbus*

1880–1884

graphite on paper

4 x 6 in; 10.2 x 15.2 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

1977.005.020.O

The Death of Christopher Columbus

1880–84

black ink and graphite on tracing paper

11 13/16 x 14 7/8 in; 30 x 37.8 cm (image)

13 3/4 x 17 3/16 in; 35 x 43.7 cm (sheet)

Gift of the artist

AA2009.056.088

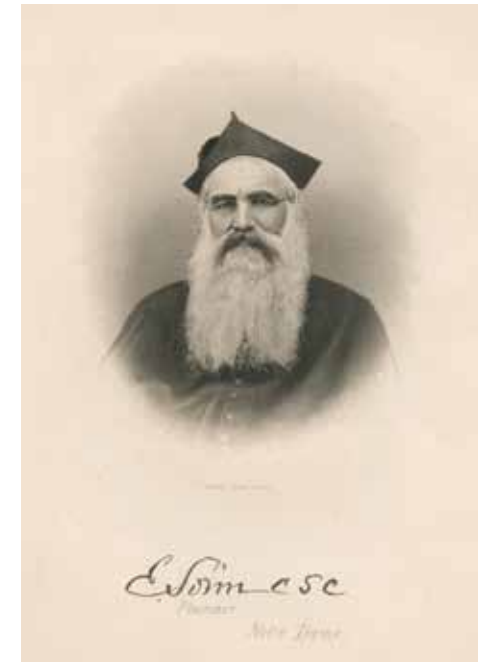
These two preparatory studies are for the final mural in the Main Building series, *The Death of Columbus*. After an unsuccessful fourth voyage to discover India, Columbus retired to a monastery in Valladolid, Spain. At the age of 54 he died with little money, few friends, and his death barely acknowledged by contemporaries.

Father Sorin served as a model for Columbus; and two other members of the Notre Dame Community, Father Louis Neyron, a science professor, and Brother Albeus Clarke, C.S.C., have been identified among the religious surrounding the deathbed.¹ Set within a monastic cell, the drawing includes details that help the viewer understand Columbus's legacy. At the left corner sits Columbus's trunk and globe as evidence of his important discovery. On the walls hang a crucifix and an icon of the Madonna and Child, representing the explorer's faith.

Notes

1. Thomas J. Schlereth, *The University of Notre Dame; A Portrait of Its History and Campus* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), 242-43.

**Father Edward Fredrick Sorin, CSC.
Reproduced with permission from
University of Notre Dame Archives**





25 *Religion Surrounded by the Arts*

1886–90

tempera, gesso, wood

This unusual model is the only known extant work for the illusionistic fresco *Religion Surrounded by the Arts* in the dome of the Main Building. At the center the personification of Religion sits encircled by Philosophy, History, Science, Fame, Music, and Poetry. The painting was celebrated as the crowning achievement of Gregori's career; and the Notre Dame community hosted a grand unveiling ceremony that included music composed specifically for the event. *The Chicago Daily Inter Ocean* reported, "The wonderfully majestic effect of grouping and coloring is pronounced by many to be even superior to the work of Brumidi in the Capitol at Washington. A burst of enthusiasm from the assembled spectators saluted the unveiling of the groups."

Made of tempera paint on gesso, Gregori painted this wooden bowl as a guide for the decoration firm hired to paint the interior of the dome. The choice of a bowl, rather than a cartoon or large-scale drawing, allowed Gregori to imitate the distortion caused by the curvature of a spherical interior. Not simply dinnerware converted into a canvas, the bowl is constructed with rings of wood pieced together, suggesting that this unique piece was constructed to imitate the dimensions of the Main Building dome.



Program for the Unveiling of the Rotunda at the Main Building, 1890. Reproduced with permission from University of Notre Dame Archives.

Opposite: Luigi Gregori, *Religion Surrounded by the Arts*, 1886–90, pigment with casein on plaster, Rotunda. Main Building. University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana. Photo by Matt Cashore, © AgencyND.



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