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# The Basilica of St. Vincent DePaul: Architecture of the Catholic Renouveau in Paris

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# THE BASILICA OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

ARCHITECTURE OF THE CATHOLIC RENOUVEAU IN PARIS









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September 30–November 30, 2011  
DePaul University Art Museum  
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Chicago, Illinois 60614

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Over twenty-five years ago, a group of young men and women in Paris  
fought to bring the Catholic Church back to its roots. Their vision  
was to create a new kind of Catholicism, one that was relevant to the  
modern world. This book tells the story of their struggle and the  
resulting architecture of the Catholic Renouveau in Paris.

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a View of the Street*, 1861, tinted lithograph. Special Collections and  
Archives, DePaul University Library (cat. no. 22)



THE BASILICA OF ST. VINCENT DEPAUL  
ARCHITECTURE OF THE CATHOLIC RENOUVEAU IN PARIS

WITH ESSAYS BY

MICHAEL KIENE  
SIMONE ZURAWSKI

DePaul University Art Museum



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Seen from the outside, the basilica of St. Vincent de Paul in Paris gives an impression of classical balance and solidity: its symmetrical square towers flank a colonnaded porch with a low pediment, and the entire edifice seems compact and firmly planted on its hilltop site. In the interior the nave is strongly marked by parallel rows of sturdy columns that lead the eye to the apse, and the structure of the building remains visible despite the mural paintings, mosaics, and elaborate geometric patterning on every surface, floor to ceiling. Similarly, it seems likely that the brightly painted murals originally installed on the façade did little to soften the foursquare quality of the exterior.

No doubt the basilica's emphatic aura of permanence and its classical references relate to its status as one of the first churches built in Paris after the French Revolution, but the design also encodes aspects of the architect's personal history, urban development in Paris, intellectual debates of the time, and above all the history and purpose of the Congregation of the Mission, or Vincentians. This exhibition, which examines the intertwined narratives of the building's history, finds a logical home at DePaul University, a Vincentian institution. Similarly, the museum's practice of interdisciplinary approaches to art is well suited to the complex meaning and context of the basilica, and is reflected in the many hands contributing to the project.

First and foremost we thank Simone Zurawski, Associate Professor in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture and guest curator of the exhibition. Her contagious enthusiasm and formidable knowledge of Vincentian art have shaped every aspect of the project. Michael Kiene, Professor of Art History at the University of Cologne and an expert on Jacques-Ignace Hittorff, has helped to identify objects for display and has contributed a perceptive essay to the catalogue. Fr. John Rybolt, C.M., a historian specializing in

the formative era of the Congregation, has offered personal observations on Vincentian history, and Fr. Edward Udovic, C.M., has facilitated the project in countless ways. Alex Papadopoulos, Associate Professor in the Department of Geography, has literally set the basilica on the map, providing a short video perspective on its site and urban environment. Laura Fatemi has designed an exhibition that richly complements its subject, and Christopher Mack has produced the handsome catalogue.

We are grateful for the generous cooperation of lenders to the exhibition, and in particular to the Rev. Bruno Horaist, Pastor at the Basilica of St. Vincent de Paul, Paris; Jack Brown and Christine Fabian at the Burnham and Ryerson Library, Art Institute of Chicago; William Hennessy and Catherine Jordan Wass at the Chrysler Museum, Norfolk; Rita Wagner, Curator of Graphic Arts at the City Museum of Cologne; Irene Bischoff, head of Historic Collections at the University and Municipal Library, Cologne; Nina Fenn and Michael Heinzelmann at the Archaeological Institute, University of Cologne; Kathryn deGraff in Special Collections, DePaul University Library; and Daniel Imbert and Lionel Britten in the Department of Cultural Affairs of the City of Paris.

Dr. Zurawski's research has been funded in part by a grant from the Humanities Center at DePaul University. Finally, we acknowledge with gratitude the support of the Vincentian Endowment Fund, whose encouragement and generosity have made the exhibition possible.

—Louise Lincoln

Director



## THE VINCENTIAN PRESENCE IN PARIS AND CHICAGO

JOHN E. RYBOLT, C.M.

The Congregation of the Mission (the “Vincentians”) came to the United States in 1816 at the invitation of the first bishop of the Louisiana Territory to staff a seminary for his immense diocese. By 1818 they had founded St. Mary’s of the Barrens, in present-day Perryville, Missouri. They were soon joined by the Daughters of Charity, which St. Vincent also founded with the help of St. Louise de Marillac. From that time, the members of the Congregation in the United States answered numerous calls from clergy and laity to staff their seminaries and parishes and to preach parochial missions. Our spiritual ancestors did so because they looked, as we do, to our founder St. Vincent de Paul as the source of inspiration.

DePaul University in Chicago, the best-known institution bearing his name, began as a parish and school in 1875 and within twenty years had developed into a university. The present parish church of St. Vincent de Paul, begun in 1892, is an remarkably imposing structure and an impressive monument to the devotion of the parishioners. From this parish flowed generations of students in catechism classes, at the grade school, a nearly forgotten girls’ high school, the DePaul Academy for boys, and, of course, the University. Leaders in secular and religious life, nourished here, have also been influenced by the majesty of the church: its marble altars, stupendous stained glass windows, vast spaces, and the sumptuous pipe organ.

In this impression, it resembles the great Parisian Church of St. Vincent de Paul, which also dominates its surroundings. Pilgrims are surprised—as Vincent would be—to see him sculpted on the front of the church in the classical attitude of a Greek god: a tall figure at the center of the pediment. Inside, as we examine the mosaics of the apse, we see only his back, not his face. Vincent is focused on Jesus, to whom he is presenting poor children. Not

to show his face in the church dedicated to God in his honor is strange but simultaneously rich in allusions to his accustomed humility and attention to the Savior. Today, this aspect of the humble Vincent is more attractive than the Vincent in triumph that we see on entering.

It is this Vincent, a man of his time endeavoring to make sense of the Gospel, whom his followers venerate. We find in him an example of authentic living that we wish to emulate. His memory, elaborated in two great churches in Paris and Chicago, is the golden cord that binds them together.



Figure 1: Photographer unknown, St. Vincent de Paul Church, Chicago, 1918. Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University Library



## THE BASILICA OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL BEHIND THE SCENES IN TIME AND PLACE

SIMONE ZURAWSKI

The stately Basilica of Saint Vincent de Paul expresses, in fact proclaims, the rebirth of Paris after the devastation of the Revolution: it embodies the optimism of the *renouveau*, or renewal, of the Church in France, and towers over a brand-new neighborhood, quite literally from its hilltop promontory. With the support of the kings Louis XVIII and Charles X, who restored the Bourbon monarchy to power beginning in 1814, the linking of that religious and liturgical movement with civic development spurred the rebuilding of the capital as a modernized Catholic city. In sharp contrast, a single parish was established in the eighteenth century, namely, Saint Pierre en Gros-Cailou (whose church was initially designed in 1776 by Jean-François Chalgrin). Once secured in the Bourbon Restoration, the religious public works projects were continued past the downfall of Charles X into the July Monarchy of Louis-Philippe d'Orléans (1830 to 1848), thence after its demise under Napoléon III to the end of his Second Empire in 1870.

Throughout this temporal arc, a number of prominent churches of the *ancien régime* were being artistically renovated in a range of strategies that typified the nineteenth-century vogue for all things Raphael. The finest examples are found in Saint Germain-des-Prés, whose choir and nave walls were freshly painted by Hippolyte Flandrin (1842-1861); and the Holy Angels Chapel of Saint-Sulpice (1854-1861), which features Eugène Delacroix's monumental wall paintings on plaster, *The Fall of Jacob* and *Heliodorus Driven from the Temple*. But the wholly new churches, which were constructed with the benefit of experimental technology, signalled more emphatically the triumph of the Throne and Altar (however shaky its alliance) over the darkest challenges—economic, political, and social—that were set in motion in 1789 through the swiftly spreading violence, anti-clericalism, and vandalism of ecclesiastical properties.



Figure 2: Felix Benoist and A. Bayot, *Basilica of St. Vincent de Paul with a View of the Street*, 1861, tinted lithograph. Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University Library (cat. no. 22)

The role of the government in raising a generation of new churches was guaranteed by virtue of their inclusion in the review process for building, which was administered between 1802 and 1848 by the state-run Council on Public Architecture (*Conseil des bâtiments civils*). A striking example of a neighborhood parish church is Notre-Dame de Lorette, which Hippolyte Lebas raised in the ninth arrondissement after winning the competition called by the City of Paris in 1823; similarly, Victor Baltard built the domed Church of Saint-Augustin (between 1860 and 1871) in the eighth arrondissement, perhaps as the intended tomb site for Napoléon III. They feature the stylistic and stylish eclecticism grounded in the historic past that had governed the teaching of theory and practice at the Ecole nationale des Beaux-Arts. And their architectural shells, or *fabriques*, prove that the drawing boards were becoming just as animated with Neomedieval and Neobyzantine designs as Neoclassical



ones, whose endurance in Paris, especially, may be characterized as evergreen. Moreover, the spaces were filled with an equally new generation of decorations, furnishings, and precious vessels whose fabricators aspired to visual unity or *alliance des arts*, however contrived it was in fact, since they followed the complicated (and fluent) aesthetic claims, and aims, of the buildings themselves. Indeed, this renaissance in the sacred industrial arts (say, in the form of chalices and candelabra) was matched by the rich commissions in large-scale altarpieces, stained glass windows, and sculpture. In the more fortunate churches these were executed by fashionable academic artists and formed a widely dispersed, permanent arena for the public appreciation, and criticism, of their works, a point that of course prompts thoughtful comparison with the transitory (and cluttered) Salon exhibitions. It can no longer be questioned that this gleaming portfolio of religious architecture and décor contributed its collective might to reawaken the cultural landscape of the city.

The showpiece was the Basilica of Saint Vincent de Paul, whose design and execution were framed by the pragmatic bonds struck between the restored Church and the restored monarchy(ies) in all but its full span, from about 1815 to 1870. It was the first and only parish in Paris dedicated to the universally beloved, yet ultra-French “Apostle of Charity,” who had founded the Congregation of the Mission in 1625 and thereafter, in 1633, had cofounded the Company of the Daughters of Charity with Saint Louise de Marillac. The history of the Basilica began in 1824 under the architect Jean-Baptiste Lepère (cat. no. 6), who handed over the enterprise four years later to his fiercely ambitious and opinionated son-in-law, Jacques-Ignace Hittorff. A celebrated champion of Classicism who nonetheless ventured to employ armatures of steel (fig. 3), Hittorff steered the *fabrique* and luxurious décor of the Basilica to the pinnacle of his flourishing career, while his other municipal schemes helped bring about the look of Paris as we know it.

I now wish to focus attention on the importance of the site, or *emplacement*, of Hittorff’s Basilica, which just prior to the Revolution was occupied by the first Vincentian

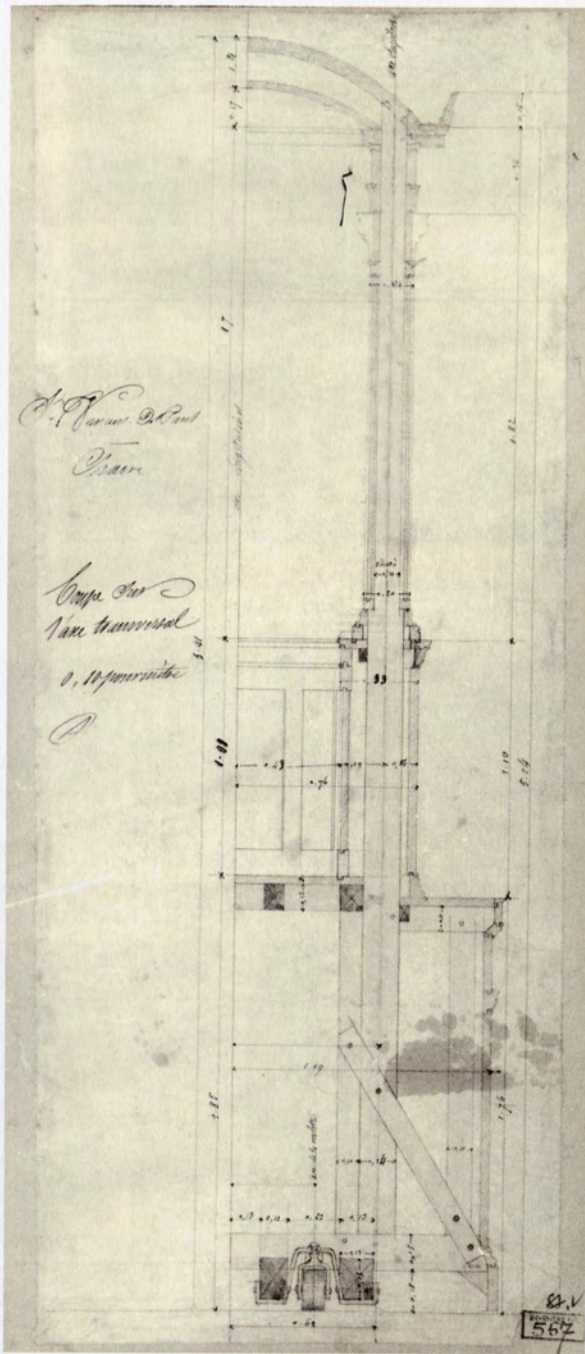


Figure 3: Jacques-Ignace Hittorff, *Drawing for structural elements of the pulpit, Basilica of St. Vincent de Paul, Paris*, n.d. Wallraf-Richard-Museum, Cologne, photo by Erich Schild





Figure 4 (top): Artist unknown, *Église de Saint Lazare*, 18th century, engraving. Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University Library (cat. no. 2)

Figure 5 (bottom): Jacques-Ignace Hittorff, *Façade of the Basilica*, pl. 24 from *Restitution du Temple d'Empedocle...* 1851. The Art Institute of Chicago, Collection of Ryerson and Burnham Libraries (cat. no. 19)

motherhouse of Saint-Lazare. Founded as an Augustinian priory and leprosarium in the middle ages, perhaps as far back as the ninth century, Saint-Lazare (fig. 4, cat. no. 2) fell into shambles during the French Wars of Religion in the late sixteenth century and was rescued in 1632 when the archbishop of Paris transferred its Seigneurial ownership to the still-youthful Vincent de Paul. He duly rebuilt the venerable estate to function as both the motherhouse for the Congregation of the Mission and as the hub of the missions themselves, and his successors extended his legacy into the largest single property of Paris, the Palais du Louvre included! Located in the far northwest quadrant, the present-day tenth arrondissement, the intact quadrilateral of Saint-Lazare (fig. 6, cat. no. 1) may be tracked from rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis (the main road at the east), Boulevard de La Chapelle at the north, and rue du Poissonnière at the west, which is sealed at the south by rue du Paradis.<sup>1</sup>

The best access onto the site is the pediment of the Basilica (fig. 5), where Saint Vincent stands tall and Zeuslike as though overseeing his sprawling orchards and fields, the excellent landlord and farmer's son that he was. Above all else, he sowed premium wheat with the objective of feeding the poor, thus implementing a key mission that became the responsibility of each superior general until Saint-Lazare was nationalized in the Revolution. Significantly, the motherhouse was the only legally-designated *Clos* of the city, in reference to the enclosure walls that protected the valuable farmlands. Once the Revolutionary State razed those walls and carved up the tremendous acreage, a horde of rapacious real estate speculators in-waiting raced in to replace the wheatfields with a neighborhood of four- and five-story edifices. From an outsider's view, the dense encrustation they formed blends in with the vintage structures, especially due west in the *Nouvelle France* quarter (on and near rue du Poissonnière), which had seen the residential building boom of the late eighteenth century hit the perimeter of Saint-Lazare, the grandest landlord of all.<sup>2</sup>

That shift in land ownership offers a stunning case study in the dismantling of the *ancien régime* in Paris, in just over two decades. Yet to be told, however, is the story of how the



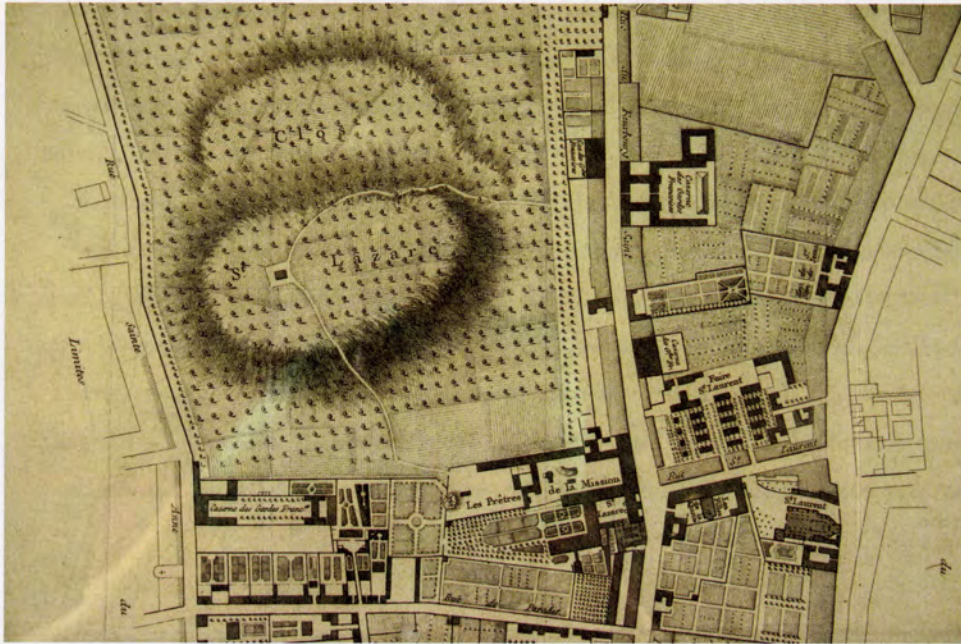


Figure 6: Jean-Baptiste Michel Renou de Chauvigné (“Jaillot”), “Plan du Quartier Saint-Denys,” from the *Plan de Paris*, 1773, engraving. Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University Library (cat. no. 1) (The location of the Basilica in present-day Paris is shown on the schematic map on p. 15)

actual site of the Basilica was shielded from private hands, likely by city officials in the Bourbon government. Imbedded deep within the arable grounds, the *butte*, or hill, was occupied by a fieldhouse Vincent de Paul had built for his rowdy students and for refreshing the field workers and visitors taking a stroll.

This unique history of Saint-Lazare, which was anchored in its urban-based farmland, also involves the deep if less visible political undercurrents that bound the priests to the Bourbon monarchy and guaranteed their prestige, because they instrumentally provisioned the starving populace throughout the long stretches of warfare and famine that afflicted France in the *ancien régime*. Moreover, beginning with Vincent de Paul’s special friendships with Louis XIII and his spouse Anne of Austria, each superior general had negotiated, with his



king, partnerships that enabled the Vincentian Double Family (made up of the priests of the Congregation and the Daughters of Charity) to meet the religious and social needs of the realm. Their charities and missions evolved into a network of effective service organizations with attendant physical facilities, based on models set by Saints Vincent and Louise, most famously hospices for foundlings (the *enfants trouvés*). We must also take into account the massive institutions for which the Vincentians had served as the exclusive chaplains and spiritual directors by royal decree, commencing with Louis XIV. The most famous of them are the Hôtel des Invalides, a city within the city of Paris that was built to house and morally instruct the war veterans; and the royal château in Versailles, which replaced Paris as the capital in 1685, and where the Vincentians were considered ecclesiastical officers of the household.

Their manifold contributions and their unbroken history of personal ties to members of the Bourbon family reaped a bounty of royal support that proved consequential during Vincent's



beatification (1729) and canonization (1737). And by the time the process of sanctification was concluded, his gravesite in the Congregation's tiny Gothic church had become a national shrine with the ardent endorsement of the monarchy: Vincent de Paul was even considered the royal family's second saint (alongside its ancestor, Saint Louis-King Louis IX). Saint Vincent's reclining body, garbed in the priestly vestments he wore in life, was installed in a priceless silver and crystal reliquary casket that was displayed before thousands of pilgrims per year. This corporeal presence in the chapel, which was located on the main road of rue du Faubourg Saint-Denis and open to the public, helped to elevate Saint-Lazare even further as a powerhouse of the French Church and Kingdom.

Those two politically charged zones—the wheatfields and the chapel—were located at opposite ends of Saint-Lazare. And in respect to the structural core dominated by the gigantic *corps-de-logis* (of which there is much to say), we must concentrate on the final Vincentian chapter of the property, immortalized in a print (fig. 7, cat. no. 3) after Jean-Louis Prieur's drawing, which shows the pillage outside the principal entry portal on 13 July 1789, that is, on the eve of the storming of the Bastille. Before long the Revolutionary government seized Saint-Lazare and converted all of the buildings on or near the main street into a prison, which went through several manifestations until the last of the original walls were demolished in 1940. Once the penal system(s) took possession, not even the restored Bourbon kings were able to retrieve the chapel of Saint-Lazare, which meant the latter-day memorial to their *Père* Vincent was destined to be sited elsewhere: on the *butte* of the rapidly disappearing farmland.

In conclusion, I wish to mention the church of Saint Vincent de Paul in Chicago (fig. 1), whose twin towers and Vincentian iconography carved on the tympanum were arguably inspired by the impressive entrance block of Hittorff's Basilica. Located at the edge of the DePaul University campus, this beautiful American version was built by James J. Egan and Charles H. Prindeville for the priests of the Congregation of the Mission, and was dedicated in 1897. Our alertness to this previously overlooked connection between the premier

Vincenian monuments of the two cities may, in turn, stimulate a call for research on the bounty of artistic ideas that would have flowed from Paris in the heyday of the Beaux-Arts movement to the other historical Catholic churches of Chicago. For, as in the City of Light, this collection similarly altered the urban scene in the neighborhoods, at the grassroots level, and truly deserves to be incorporated into the greater treasury of Chicago architecture that is the envy of the modern world.

1. One may explore Saint-Lazare as it appeared in August 1783 in a diorama fabricated by Jeffrey Wrona, along with an adjacent display of photographs, contemporary maps, and other visual materials, that I have assembled on the third floor of the John T. Richardson Library of DePaul University.

2. A fine example is the Hôtel Benôit de Sainte-Paulle, which was raised by Samson-Nicolas Lenoir (1773 to 1776) for Mlle Marie-Louise O'Murphy, the Irish-born favorite among Louis XV's mistresses and François Boucher's models!



Figure 7: Berthault, engraver, after Jean-Louis Prieur, *Pillage de la maison, Saint Lazare*, 1789, engraving. Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University Library (cat. no. 3)



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## JACQUES IGNACE HITTORFF AND THE GENESIS OF A PARISIAN LANDMARK

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MICHAEL KIENE

The architect Jacques-Ignace Hittorff achieved one of the most remarkable artistic careers of the nineteenth century, linked to distinguished European scholars, artists, and royal houses and embodying some of the broad contradictions of the age. The son of a humble Cologne tinsmith, he moved to Paris at the age of eighteen to attend the *École des Beaux-Arts*, the present-day *École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts*. His architectural career began in the final years of the first Empire, around 1812, barely two years after his arrival in the French capital: in cooperation with his teacher and mentor François-Joseph Bélanger, Hittorff was involved in the design of the *Halle au blé*, the Paris grain market, which was one of the earliest cast-iron constructions in modern architecture in France.

Through connections at the *École* he began to move in elevated circles of government and the royal court. From 1817 onwards Hittorff was inspector of the *Menus-Plaisirs du Roi*, the royal office that oversaw lavish court festivals. A year later he became Architect of the King and together with his teacher Bélanger and a friend, Jean-François-Joseph Lecoq, a director of the *Menus-Plaisirs*.<sup>1</sup>

Politically dextrous, Hittorff served a series of very different rulers, and was influential in shaping the urban landscape of nineteenth-century Paris at a time when Napoleon's conquests had made it the artistic showpiece of the world. He laid out some of the most famous squares and avenues of Paris: the Champs-Élysées (1834-1843), the Place de la Concorde (1833-1853)<sup>2</sup> and the Place de l'Étoile (1853-1868), and even designed the Bois de Boulogne (1852-1855). Indeed, the "look" of public spaces in Paris, with grand boulevards and ornate street lamps, was shaped by his designs (fig. 8).

Vincenian monuments of the two cities may, in turn, stimulate a call for research on the bounty of artistic ideas that would have flowed from Paris in the heyday of the Beaux-Arts movement to the other historical Catholic churches of Chicago. For, as in the City of Light, this collection similarly altered the urban scene in the neighborhoods, at the grassroots level, and truly deserves to be incorporated into the greater treasury of Chicago architecture that is the envy of the modern world.

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Figure 8 (top): *Place de la Concorde, Paris*, from James D. Shepp and Daniel Shepp, *Shepp's Photographs of the World*, about 1891

Figure 9 (bottom): Moritz Oppenheim, *Portrait of Hittorff in Sicily*, 1824, oil on panel, City Museum of Cologne





Figure 10: Photographer unknown, *Jacques-Ignace Hittorff and Elisabeth Hittorff*, possibly 1860s; photograph courtesy of Konrad Adenauer, Cologne

In his academic training Hittorff assimilated the principles of Beaux-Arts design, and he extended his interest in classicism by traveling to Sicily from 1822 to 1824, exploring and sketching at archaeological sites (fig. 9, cat. no. 4). Above all, he became interested in the use of color in ancient art, and following his travels he published two volumes on the subject (cat. nos. 19 and 25). He was one of the first modern scholars to recognize that Greek architecture and sculpture were originally painted brightly; he played a prominent role in the impassioned debates on the topic and to support his argument he kept some souvenir specimens of polychromed stone fragments from his travels (cat. no.5).

Along with his serious study of ancient sources, Hittorff also paid careful attention to technical innovations of all kinds.<sup>3</sup> Paradoxically, he published his case for classical

polychromy in his 1851 book on color at the Temple of Empedocles in Selinunte that used the new technique of chromolithography, enabling him to illustrate his concept in color (cat. no. 19). His design for the Gare du Nord railroad station in Paris (1859-1865) made liberal and innovative use of structural iron, although the façade and interior are pure Beaux-Arts.<sup>4</sup>

The building that best represents his aesthetic and research interests, his pursuit of innovative technology, and his deft political positioning, however, is undoubtedly the Basilica of St. Vincent de Paul in Paris, the focus of the present exhibition. This was no ordinary parish church: it was located on a hill dominating at the edge of the rapidly expanding northern area of the city. The new *quartier*, now the tenth arrondissement, was formerly occupied by the motherhouse of the Congregation of the Mission, founded by St. Vincent de Paul.<sup>5</sup> The building was sacked during the French Revolution, and the rebuilding of a church honoring Saint Vincent de Paul embodied the Restoration of the Catholic Bourbon monarchy and the role of the church in the post-revolutionary society. The twin-towered church dedicated to a saint revered by the Bourbon family was to be the dominating artistic showpiece of the rapidly growing Nouvelle France neighborhood.

The initial commission for the church was given in 1824 to the architect Jean-Baptiste Lepère (1761-1844), whose daughter was married to Hittorff in the same year. Lepère made initial drawings (cat. no. 6) and the cornerstone was laid at a ceremony patronized by the royal family (cat. no. 10), but the project languished during economic and political crises and by the early 1830s Lepère had given the project over to his son-in-law.

At about the same time Hittorff, together with his colleague Lecoq, had suggested a church in a project for the Hospital of Saint Vincent de Paul next to the saint's birthplace in the city of Saint Vincent de Paul in Gascony in the southwest of France in the diocese of Dax.<sup>6</sup> The building project was supported by the Duchess of Berry, Ferdinande-Louise de Bourbon (1798-1870), Princess of Both Sicilies, widow of Charles d'Artois and mother of the heir to the throne, Henri d'Artois.





Figure 11: Jacques-Ignace Hittorff and Jean François Joseph Lecointe, *Vue Perspective de L'Hospice des Incurables de St. Vincent de Paul*, 1828, engraving. University and Municipal Library, Cologne (cat. no 12)

Engravings of the buildings he envisioned in Dax are included in the exhibition (fig. 11, cat. nos. 11 and 12) and show several features he later returned to in drawings for the St. Vincent basilica in Paris, such as the portico of the façade and the tower above the apse. Ultimately the portico was realized in the Paris project, although the tower over the apse was not. The sudden end of the Bourbon dynasty in 1830 brought an end as well to the project in Gascony.<sup>7</sup>

After the July Revolution of 1830, however, the Paris Basilica project continued, and the Minister of the Interior for the new King Louis-Philippe appointed Hittorff a second time as chief architect. Hittorff was recommended to the king by the international traveller

and savant Baron Alexander von Humboldt, who had met Hittorff in Paris. Humboldt subscribed to the publications of Hittorff and introduced artists newly arriving in Paris to Hittorff; they shared interests in technology and archeology. Humboldt showed copies of Hittorff's designs for this church to the architecture-loving future King Frederic William IV of Germany who, perhaps stimulated by the plans, subsequently insisted on finishing the long-dormant cathedral of Cologne, the German equivalent of the Catholic *Renouveau* in France.<sup>8</sup>

Consecrated in 1844, i.e. almost at the end of the reign of Louis-Philippe, the Basilica of St. Vincent embodied the architectural principles of this period, strongly influenced by neoclassical models. Many Parisian churches of the first decades of the century resemble temples, with a portico on the façade. But Hittorff's study of archeological sites gives his design for the Basilica more precision in proportions and detail.

Its two towers, 55 meters high, rise over an intricate series of ramps and steps like those of the Trinità dei Monti and its Spanish Steps in Rome. On October 21, 1844, four years before the next revolution that banished Louis-Philippe, Archbishop Denis Auguste Affre, who had already presided at the 1824 ceremony to mark the beginning of building, dedicated Saint Vincent de Paul. The construction went on for twenty years, with interruptions. We are fortunate that extensive plans for the church have survived, all of them notable for their precision and clarity: engravings of Lepère's original scheme (cat. no 6), Hittorff's initial plans preserved in a beautiful volume in the parish of Saint Vincent de Paul in Paris (cat. no 15), and the final stages documented in detail drawings.<sup>9</sup> These drawings, included in the present exhibition, make it possible to trace the evolution of the design, and the modifications that were necessary to appease the public disapproval fostered by the clergy and by Hittorff's archenemy Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann. Hittorff redesigned when inevitable, and adapted his concept as necessary in order to get it through.





Figure 12 (top): Jacques-Ignace Hittorff, *Design for ornament in the sanctuary arch, showing symbols of the Eucharist, Basilica of St. Vincent de Paul, Paris, n.d.* Wallraf-Richard-Museum, Cologne, photo by Erich Schild

Figure 13 (bottom): Jacques-Ignace Hittorff, *Design for baptismal font and holy water stoups, Basilica of St. Vincent de Paul, Paris, n.d.* Wallraf-Richard-Museum, Cologne, photo by Erich Schild

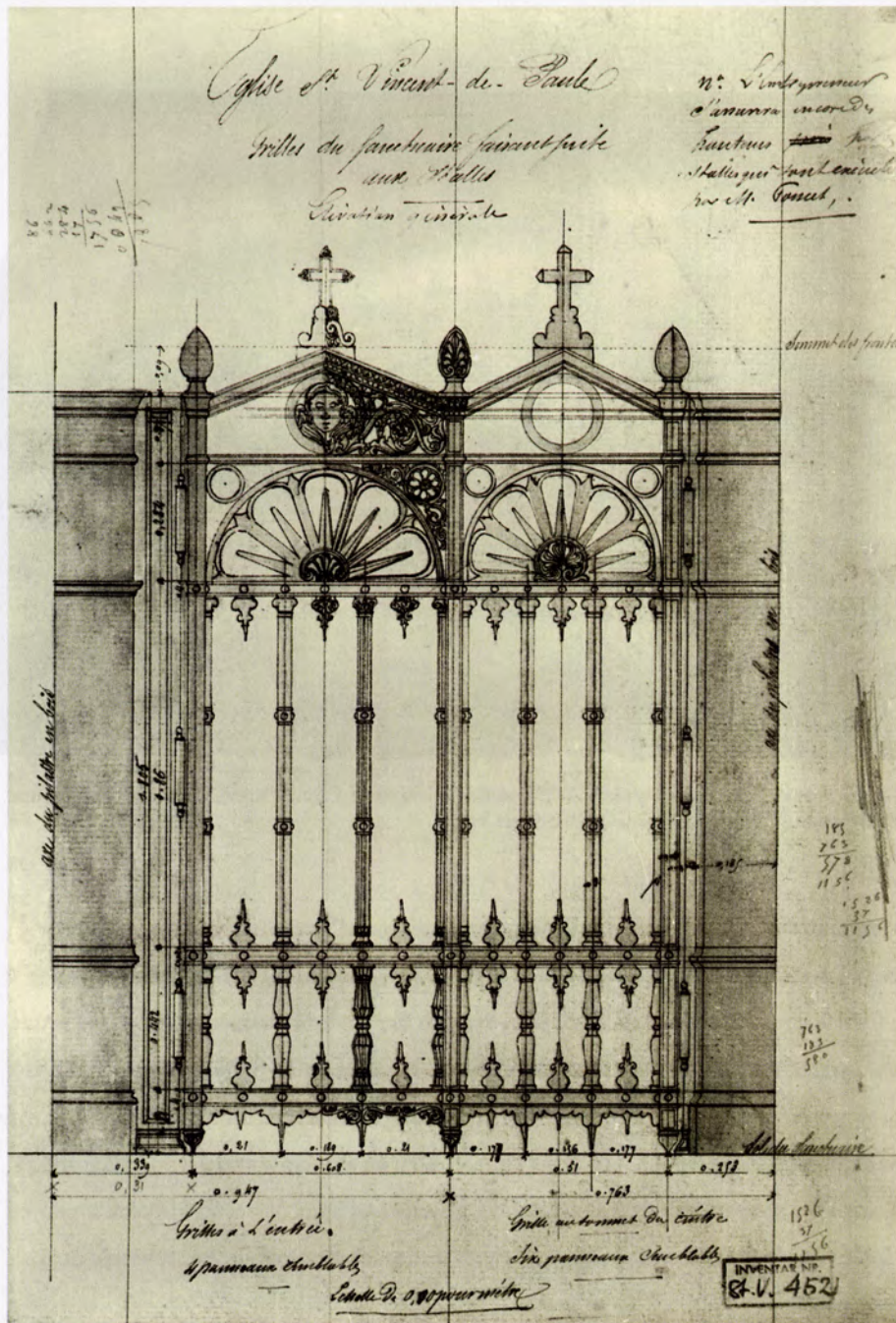


Figure 14: Jacques-Ignace Hittorff, Design for grillwork for the sanctuary, Basilica of St. Vincent de Paul, Paris, n.d. Wallraf-Richard-Museum, Cologne, photo by Erich Schild



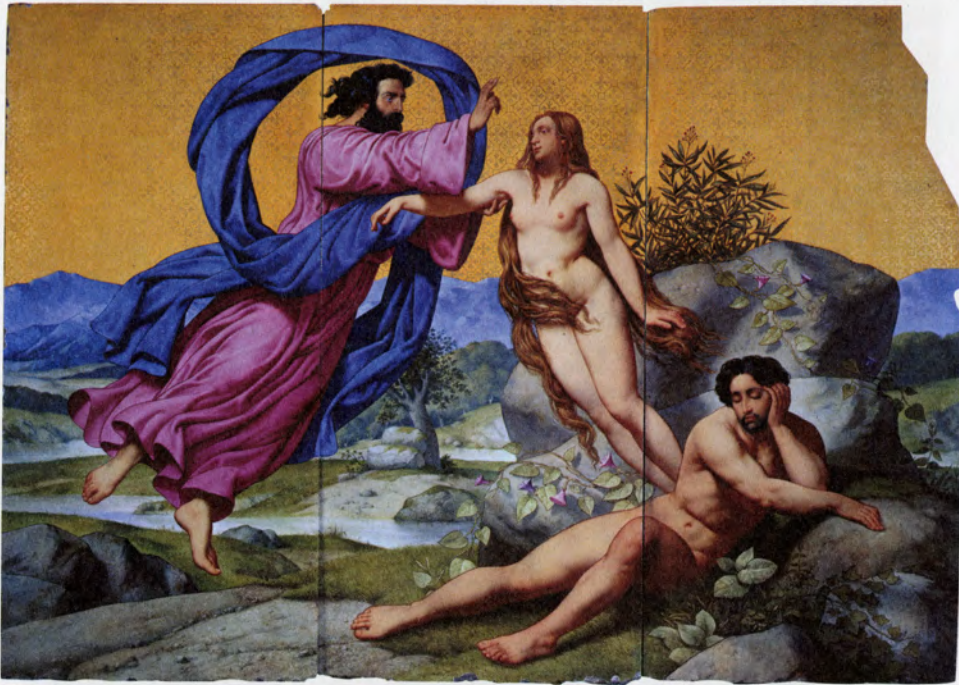


Figure 15: Jacques Jollivet, *The Expulsion*, 1859, enamel on lava stone. City of Paris, Conservation des oeuvres d'art religieuses et civiles, photo © COARC/Roger Viollet

The twin-towered façade at Saint Vincent was a revival of French Gothic design. It was already a feature of Notre Dame in Paris (1163-1345), but also of the Trinità dei Monti, the French church in Rome; in Paris Jean-Nicolas Servandoni reintroduced a post-Gothic twin-towered façade into the architecture of the church at Saint-Sulpice (1631-1732). The next example would be the victorious designs of Hippolyte Lebas for a basilica with a twin-towered façade in the 1801 Grand Prix competition, an academic exercise in which the projects were not realized, and thereafter the Basilica of Saint Vincent. Hittorff employed an Ionic temple portico on the Basilica, which was much admired for its archaeological correctness.<sup>10</sup>

His most radical reference to classical architecture on the church, however, was also a technological innovation: he introduced polychromed painting on the façade, using the newly invented technique of *lave émaillé* (enamel on slabs of lava stone). The painter Jules Jollivet (1794-1871) designed the intended program of Old and New Testament images, which can be seen in Hittorff's drawing for the façade (fig. 5). In 1846 the first panel by showing the Holy Trinity was placed over the main entrance, and a few years later Hittorff published a description of its iconography.<sup>11</sup>

By 1859 the remaining panels were in place but they provoked a storm of criticism from parishioners offended by the multiple nude figures. Jollivet himself published a defense of the principle of exterior ornament and of his designs (cat. no. 21). Finally all the panels, including the seemingly unobjectionable Holy Trinity, were taken down in the beginning of 1861 and have been kept ever since in the art storage of the city of Paris. The ensemble had been on view on the façade for less than two years. In 2009 the Holy Trinity was remounted in its original location over the entrance.

\* \* \* \*

There was a general tendency in the nineteenth century to aspire to a coordinated expression in all artforms. Richard Wagner (1813-1883) is perhaps the best-known advocate of the practice, approaching opera as what he termed *Gesamtkunstwerk*, integrating music, stage design, costuming, and ambiance into a coherent aesthetic. In Paris, there was a similar impetus towards what was variously described as a *travail d'ensemble*, *alliance des arts*, or *œuvre d'art total*, claimed by the architects of the Basilica. Hittorff's interpretation of the approach was particularly ingenious, in that he cited antique models for such artistic synthesis. In the practice of Greek architecture he found references to harmonious collaboration of various crafts in what he termed "ensembles." Hittorff and Lepère insisted



in particular on the principal ingredient for this new art concept, the “unity of design.”<sup>12</sup> Consequently they designed every part of the building: Hittorff’s drawings include plans for ceiling and wall ornamentation, candelabra, prie-dieux, baptismal fonts, and hanging lamps. He coordinated the contributions of other prominent artists and designers, commissioning so many that he prepared an index to organize his correspondence with them.<sup>13</sup> Among them are many celebrated academic artists, including William-Adolphe Bouguereau, François Rude, Hippolyte Flandrin, and Jules Jollivet. Hittorff even suggested—as architect—the key issues of content and iconography to Jollivet and others who carried out work for the church interior. The unusual wealth of decoration is Hittorff’s spectacular contribution to the ecclesiastical architecture of Paris. For contemporary visitors Hittorff in effect transferred the beauty of Byzantine-influenced churches of Sicily and of Rome to Paris.

Hittorff and Lepère viewed the design in its entirety in ambitious terms. A sense of their aspiration can be read in their attempt to enlist the support of Baron Haussmann, who was responsible for the initial commission and the funding of the Basilica: they wrote with characteristic bravado: “Put the inevitable difficulties in this perspective: your name will be attached to works that may in the future attain the renown of Periclean Athens, the interiors of the Vatican or the cloisters of the Carthusian monastery.”<sup>14</sup>

1. (*architecte du Roi/de Sa Majesté*). Hittorff was rewarded with an annual salary of 3,500 francs, free housing and royalties for special commissions. From 1818 until 1823 Hittorff was also *architecte de Monsieur* and from 1819 until 1823 Architect of the Museum, the Louvre.

2. Hittorff lost the competition for the design of the Place de la Concorde in 1828, but in 1833, following the dethronement of the Bourbon family, the commission was awarded to him, his previous loss now ironically proving an advantage.

3. In the course of his career Hittorff was elected to some of the most prestigious academies and scientific associations in Europe and the Americas, probably as a result of his interest in technology. In Washington D.C., he was elected in 1844 as a member of the National Institution for the Promotion of Science, founded in 1840 as the heir to the mantle of the Columbian Institute for the Promotion of Arts and Sciences, later renamed National Institute and eventually a part of the Smithsonian Institution.

4. It was the last and largest project of his career, and he was assisted in this building by his son Charles-Joseph, and an American student, the second American citizen studying architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts, Henry Hobson Richardson.

5. The history of the land and its connection to the Congregation of the Mission is discussed in the previous essay and at greater length in a forthcoming book on the Lazarists from ca. 1632 through 1800 by Simone Zurawski.

6. The designs by Hittorff and Lecointe were published in Paris in 1828 by Godefroy Engelmann.

7. Paul-Marie Gallois raised the chapel of the Berceau between 1851 and 1864, which was built on the site of Vincent de Paul's birthplace. The history of its construction merits a separate study.

8. For details cf. my epilogue for the reprint of Johann Georg Niedenhoff, *Gedenkbuch der durch Sr. Majestät unsern König am 4. Sept. 1842 feierlichst vollzogenen Grundstein-Legung zum Ausbau des hohen Domes zu Köln*, Köln 1842, edited and epilogue by Michael Kiene. Weilerswist 2009, esp. p. 109.

9. The enormous bulk of 800 mostly unpublished and now inaccessible detailed drawings for the church is in the Wallraf-Richard-Museum at Cologne. It is documented thanks to the inventory of Erich Schild (*Der Nachlass des Architekten Hittorff*, Dissertation, Aachen 1956, p. 139-160, 226, 234). I would like to recall with gratitude the memory of the great and generous scholar Professor Schild. During our meetings in Aachen in 1995 he generously passed his knowledge and remembered the vicissitudes of the Hittorff drawings during the war. Erich Schild was also a very talented photographer: he made a major contribution in documenting the Hittorff drawings, which have been so severely damaged in the meantime that most can no longer be shown. Professor Schild photographed the significant drawings and passed his negatives to us. These photographs, together with the projects preserved in the Royal collection in Berlin, those in the University Library of Cologne and in the parish of Saint Vincent de Paul in Paris, enable some detailed but limited insights into the development of Hittorff's architectural design during the 25-year completion of the Basilica of St. Vincent.

10. *“Le portique ionique d'architecture grecque de l'église Saint Vincent de Paule est un des premiers édifices, à Paris, ou le style des monuments d'Athènes ait été consciencieusement étudié”* [“The Ionic portico derived from Greek models at Saint-Vincent-de-Paul is one of the first buildings in Paris where the monuments of Athens have been conscientiously studied”]: N. A. Thumeloup, *Leçons élémentaires d'architecture*, Paris 1842, p. 92.

11. “The paintings of the portico have to offer subjects taken from Old and New Testament; but for the composition over the main entrance there will be the Holy Trinity, accompanied with four prophets and four evangelists, which are ready. This painting was made by Mr. Jollivet; according to the designs of this conscientious artist I have commissioned him for all paintings.”

12. Hittorff and Leperé, 1842, p. 350-351.

13. The Vincentian Archives at DePaul University hold the contract with the sculptor François Rude for execution of the high altar; many other contracts issued by Hittorff are in the Municipal Archive in Cologne.

14. *Mémoire présenté par MM. Lepère et Hittorff, architectes, à M. le Préfet de la Seine*, Paris 1842, p. 18. A copy with handwritten annotations and (post-publication) corrections is preserved in the university library of Cologne: call no. K5/83. A pre-print version was in the Municipal Archives of Cologne, call no. Best. 1053, Nr 6, fol. 91-100 (squeezed in after fol. 101). The original report may have been destroyed with the collapse of the whole archive in March 2009. A limited replacement is the security microfilm, available in the Digital Municipal Archive: [www.historischesarchivkoeln.de/struktur.php?lang=de&modus=show&a=3&b=15&c=227](http://www.historischesarchivkoeln.de/struktur.php?lang=de&modus=show&a=3&b=15&c=227).



## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

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1. Jean-Baptiste Michel Renou de Chauvigné  
(“Jaillot”)  
“Plan du Quartier Saint-Denys,” from the *Plan de Paris*, 1773  
engraving, 40.4 x 77 cm  
Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University Library
2. Artist unknown  
*Eglise de Saint Lazare*, 18<sup>th</sup> century  
tinted engraving, 11.3 x 8 cm  
Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University Library
3. Berthault, engraver, after Jean-Louis Prieur  
*Pillage de la maison, Saint Lazare*, 1789  
engraving, 17.5 x 23.7 cm  
Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University Library
4. Moritz Oppenheim  
German, 1800-82  
*Portrait of Hittorff in Sicily*, 1824  
oil on panel, 50 x 32.5 cm  
City Museum of Cologne
5. *Roof tile with applied color*  
Selinunte, Sicily, probably 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE  
ex-collection Jacques-Ignace Hittorff  
earthenware and pigment, 9 x 10 x 2.8 cm  
Archaeological Institute, University of Cologne
6. Jean-Baptiste Lepère  
French, 1761-1844  
*Sketch for the Basilica*, 1824  
engraving, 50.5 x 33.3 cm  
University and Municipal Library, Cologne
7. Jacques-Alexandre Basnier  
French, dates unknown  
*Chalice*, between 1819 and 1838  
silver vermeil, 35 x 10 cm (diam. of cup)  
City of Paris, Conservation des oeuvres d’art religieuses et civiles
8. Jacques-Ignace Hittorff  
French (born Germany), 1792-1867  
*Design for a round table*, between 1824 and 1837  
watercolor, 50.2 x 33 cm  
University and Municipal Library, Cologne
9. Jacques-Ignace Hittorff, designer  
Hachette et Cie., manufacturer  
*Center Table*, 1833  
enamel on lava with mahogany and ormolu base, 75.2 x 81.3 cm (diam.)  
Museum Purchase, Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, Virginia
10. Maker unknown  
*Container for the ceremonial cornerstone with the seal of King Louis XVIII*, 1824  
wood and silver, 67.5 x 35.5 x 19 cm  
City of Paris, Conservation des oeuvres d’art religieuses et civiles



Cat. no. 7, photo © COARC/Roger Viollet



Cat. no. 8, University and Municipal Library, Cologne

11. Jacques-Ignace Hittorff  
 Jean François Joseph Lecoite  
 French, 1783-1858  
*Vue Perspective de l'Arbre du Presbytère et de  
 L'Église Paroissiale de St. Vincent de Paul*, 1828  
 engraving, 27.6 x 24.5 cm  
 University and Municipal Library, Cologne

12. Jacques-Ignace Hittorff  
 Jean François Joseph Lecoite  
*Vue Perspective de L'Hospice des Incurables de St.  
 Vincent de Paul*, 1828  
 engraving, 39.5 x 30.5 cm  
 University and Municipal Library, Cologne

13. Jacques-Ignace Hittorff  
 Jean-Baptiste Lepère  
*Saint-Vincent-de-Paul* (set of 6 drawings for the  
 Basilica), about 1837  
 pen, ink, and watercolor,  
 each about 48 x 31.4 cm  
 University and Municipal Library, Cologne

14. Jacques-Ignace Hittorff  
*Sts. Vincent and Valerius*, about 1833  
 watercolor drawings, 33 x 50.7 cm  
 University and Municipal Library, Cologne





Cat. no. 10, photo © COARC/Roger Viollet

15. Jacques-Ignace Hittorff  
*Élévation de l'église St. Vincent de Paul*, about  
 1833  
 watercolor drawing, 54.3 x 39.5 cm  
 City of Paris, Conservation des oeuvres d'art  
 religieuses et civiles

16. W.B. Clarke, cartographer, and J. Shury,  
 engraver  
*General Plan of Paris* (showing "Église  
 projetée"), 1834  
 London, Chapman & Hall  
 engraving, 41 x 57 cm  
 Special Collections and Archives, DePaul  
 University Library

17. Jacques-Ignace Hittorff  
*Architecture moderne de la Sicile*, 1835  
 Paris, Renouard  
 printed book, 56 x 42 cm  
 The Art Institute of Chicago, Collection of  
 Ryerson and Burnham Libraries

18. Cartographer unknown  
*Plan de Paroisse, Saint Vincent de Paul*, 1840  
 printed map, 116 x 87.5 cm  
 City of Paris, Conservation des oeuvres d'art  
 religieuses et civiles



Cat. no. 23, Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University Library



19. Jacques-Ignace Hittorff

*Restitution du temple d'Empédocle à Sélinonte*,  
1851

Paris, Firmin Didot

printed book, 61 x 46 cm

The Art Institute of Chicago, Collection of  
Ryerson and Burnham Libraries

20. Pierre-Jules Jollivet, designer

French, 1794-1871

*Panels with Biblical scenes*, 1860

enamel on lava stone (enlarged color

photographs of the originals)

City of Paris, Conservation des oeuvres d'art  
religieuses et civiles

21. Pierre-Jules Jollivet

*De la peinture religieuse a l'exterieur des églises: à  
propos de l'enlèvement de la décoration extérieure  
du porche de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul*, 1861; and  
*Peinture en émail sur lave: sa raison d'être et sa  
défense contre les obstacles opposés à son adoption*,  
1862

Paris: A. Wittersheim

printed book, 39 x 55 cm

Special Collections and Archives, DePaul  
University Library

22. Felix Benoist and A. Bayot

*Basilica of St. Vincent de Paul with a View of the  
Street*, 1861

Paris: H. Charpentier

tinted lithograph, 24.6 x 36.1 cm

Special Collections and Archives, DePaul  
University Library

23. Jean-Baptiste Arnaut

*Vue Intérieur de L'Église St. Vincent de Paul*, n.d.

engraving, 24.5 x 35.8 cm

Special Collections and Archives, DePaul  
University Library

24. Hippolyte Flandrin

French, 1809-64

*Frise de la nef de l'église de St. Vincent de Paul*,  
n.d.

Paris: Lemercier

printed book, 39 x 55 cm

Special Collections and Archives, DePaul  
University Library

25. Jacques-Ignace Hittorff

*Architecture antique de la Sicile*, 1870

Paris, E. Donnaud

printed book, 59 x 46 cm

The Art Institute of Chicago, Collection of  
Ryerson and Burnham Libraries







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