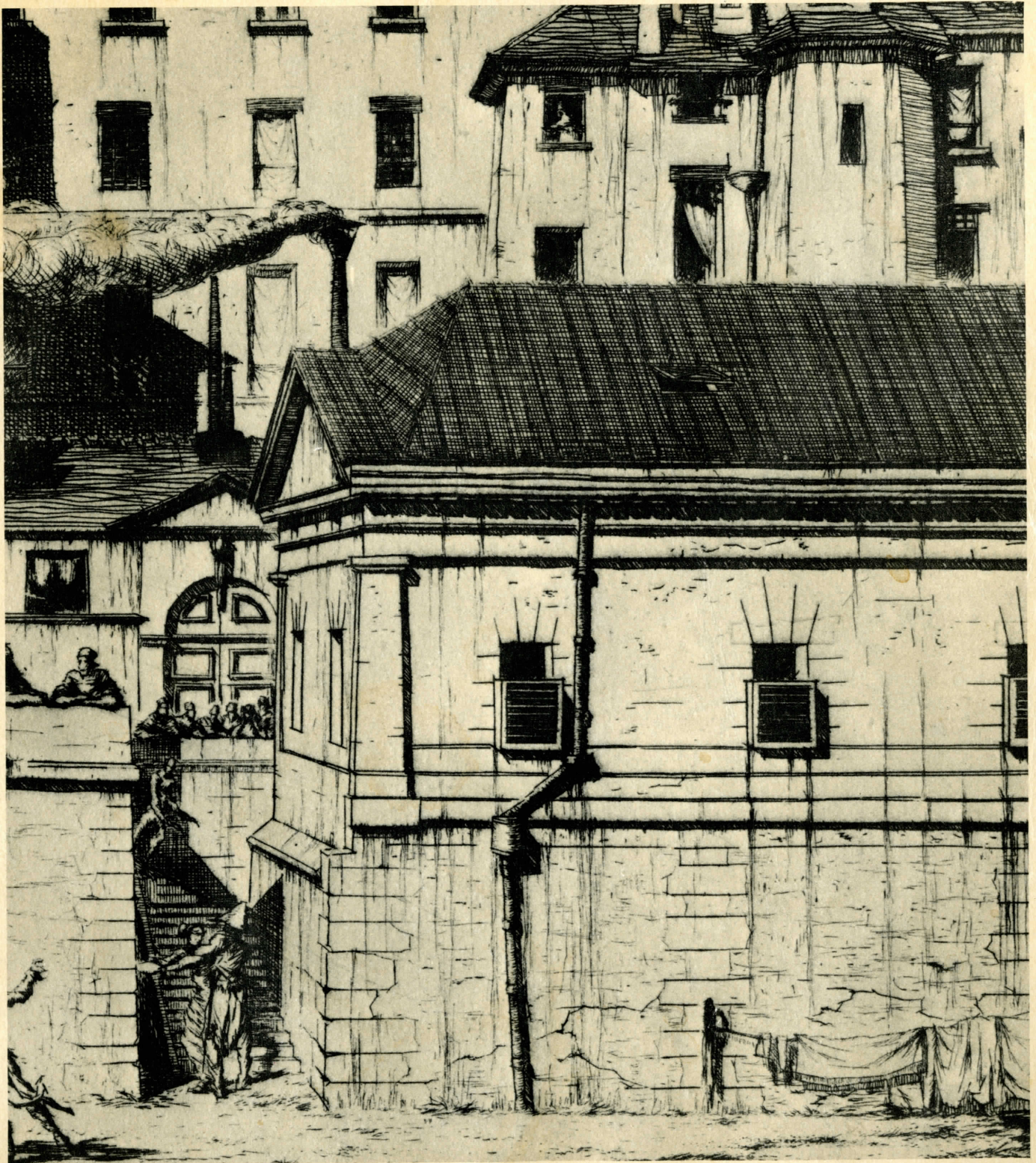


CHARLES MERYON

PRINTS & DRAWINGS



CHARLES MERYON
PRINTS
&
DRAWINGS

CATALOGUE BY JAMES D. BURKE

TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART · TOLEDO · OHIO

29 September · 27 October, 1974

YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY · NEW HAVEN · CONNECTICUT

21 November, 1974 · 19 January, 1975

ST. LOUIS ART MUSEUM · ST. LOUIS · MISSOURI

14 February · 6 April, 1975

The Apse of Notre-Dame of Paris

Burty described this great panorama very well:

The towers of the basilica, seen from below the *Pont de la Tournelle*, dominate the apse and the buttresses. At left, the three arches of the *Pont aux Choux*, above which one sees the old structures of the hospital, and immediately at left the new construction.

The view of Notre-Dame, previous to all help which photography can give to draughtsmen today, is a magisterial sight. The church of Notre-Dame seems also to have exerted a great attraction on the dreamy spirit of the artist. It has dictated to a poet one of the beautiful books of our generation; it has inspired in Meryon his most beautiful plate.¹

Meryon was obviously flattered with this allusion to Victor Hugo, and wrote in *Mes Observations*, "I am most honored by this comparison which the author makes of my work with one of the great names of our era, but only in accepting it with the humility due from my part."²

Meryon's interest in this subject precedes this etching by several years. A recently discovered drawing of a view of Notre-Dame with the tower of Saint-Jacques at the right at the Yale University Art Gallery (Cat. 67) can be placed stylistically between his drawings of the Pacific voyage (ending in 1846) and his early work on the *Eaux-Fortes sur Paris* (1850). It is the only drawing known of a Paris subject earlier than the *Eaux-Fortes sur Paris*. Precise rendering of the scene, characteristic of his mature works, is present, and the whole effect is more atmospheric than the more linear works of the 1850s. The dominant structures are

1. *Burty II*, 1863, pp. 83-84. 2. *Mes Observations*, no. 50.

Gothic, both the cathedral and tower; significantly, they are the primary elements in *Le Stryge* (DW 23).

The inspiration for the finished etching of 1854 may have begun with this drawing of the cathedral, later enlarged and broadened. It may equally depend on a painting of an almost identical view by Johan Barthold Jongkind (1819-1890), executed in Paris in 1848-1849.¹

In preparation for the etching, the first study is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (A.C. 8515), with inset framing lines to indicate the final borders. These same elements are carried over to the finished drawing, now in a private collection in New York (Fig. 4) with border lines again shown. This is a superb drawing, vibrant in line and complete in every detail except shading.²

The first state from the Rosenwald Collection, National Gallery of Art (Cat. 68), is incomplete in the sky, the buildings of the city and part of the cathedral itself. Shading is now added and completed in the next states. The finished fourth state, from the Cleveland Museum of Art (Cat. 69), was published by Meryon in 1854. Like several, but not all, impressions of this and the previous state, it is carefully inked and wiped. A delicate film of ink covers the entire surface of the plate, but is wiped off to accentuate the roof and transept of the cathedral, and the embankment beside and under the bridge. Thus the direction of the light is given added emphasis, softening, with the color of ink and paper, the more linear effect of the etching. These are most emphatically opposed in the seemingly deceptive Gosselin copy (Cat. 70).

Meryon's poem to accompany this plate, *O Toi Dégustateur* (DW 39), was never published and exists in rare examples:

O thou who savored each Gothic morsel,
Look upon Paris, proud edifice that our great and pious kings
Wished to build for the Master
In testimony of deep repentance.
Although very large, it is alas, still too small, some say,
To enclose the chosen of our least sinners.

1. Jongkind's painting and its preparatory drawing (dated September 1848) are now in a private collection in Paris; V. Hefting, *Jongkind*, Exhibition catalogue, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede, 1971, nos. 7 and 122, and C. Gottlieb, "Observations on Johan-Barthold Jongkind as a Draughtsman," *Master Drawings* V, no. 3, (1967) pp. 296-303. Jongkind can be considered as a source or intermediary for some of Meryon's devices, notably the water-level view and the idea of monumental views of Paris in more or less realistic format and style; see V. Hefting, *ibid.*, nos. 7, 8, 12 and 14. 2. The Paris drawing is reproduced by *Delteil*, 1907, no. 38; *Bradley*, 1917, p. 225, and in *Paris 1968*, no. 734. In addition, nine studies of individual details are in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (A.C. 8527). The finished drawing, in pencil, came from the MacGeorge Collection, and is reproduced by *Bradley*, 1917, p. 227.

67.

View of Notre-Dame with the north side of the Île de la Cité, ca. 1848-1849
Graphite pencil on cream paper washed with gum arabic
212 x 388 mm. (8-3/8 x 15-1/4 in.)

INSCRIPTIONS: Inscribed in pencil at lower right: *Paris*

PROVENANCE: J. Niel; H. Destailleur (both inscribed verso); Claude Aubry,
Paris; Shepherd Gallery, N. Y. 1973

Lent by the Yale University Art Gallery, Everett V. Meeks, B.A. 1901, Fund
(1973.59)

68.

First state, unique

Etching: black ink on white laid paper

Plate: 165 x 300 mm. (6-1/2 x 11-13/16 in.)

WATERMARK: *Cribot*(?)

PROVENANCE: J. Niel; J. J. Heywood; B. B. MacGeorge (L. 394); A. Curtis;
A. W. Scholle (L. 2923a)

Lent by the National Gallery of Art, Rosenwald Collection (B 21968)

69.

Fourth state

Etching and drypoint: dark brown ink on fine ivory laid paper

Plate: 166 x 300 mm. (6-1/2 x 11-13/16 in.)

WATERMARK: *DT*

INSCRIPTIONS: From left across bottom in margin: *C. Meryon - del. sculp. mdcccliv*
Imp. Rue Neuve St. Etienne-du-Mont 26

IMPRESSIONS: Baltimore; Boston w; Boston PL w; Cleveland *J. Whatman*;
Cincinnati; Chicago; Cambridge w; Detroit; London; Minneapolis 3; New
Haven w; New York w; New York PL; Paris w; Princeton; Philadelphia;
Williamstown

Lent by the Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Collection (42.751)

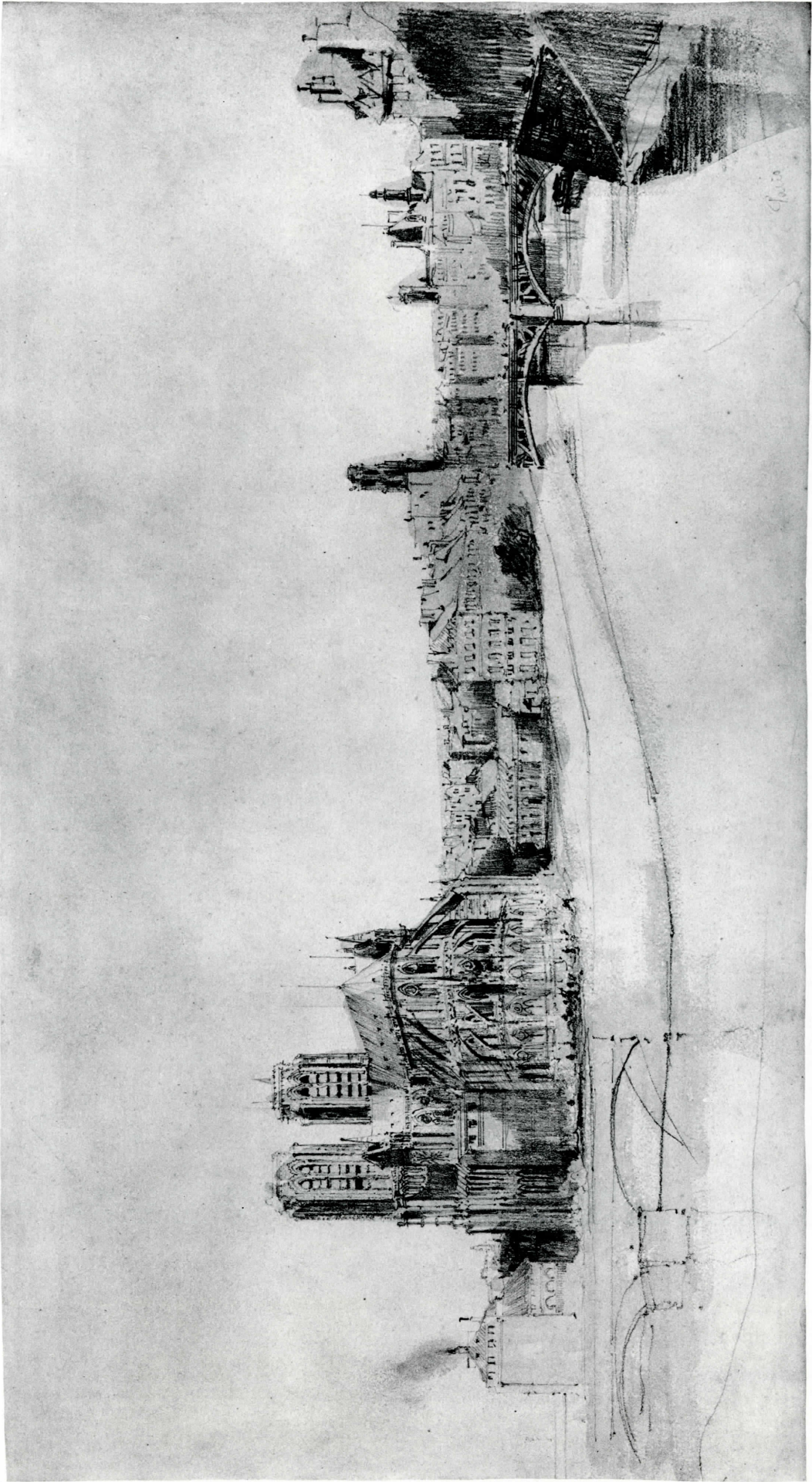
70.

Edmond Gosselin

L'Abside de Notre-Dame, copy of the third state of Meryon's print

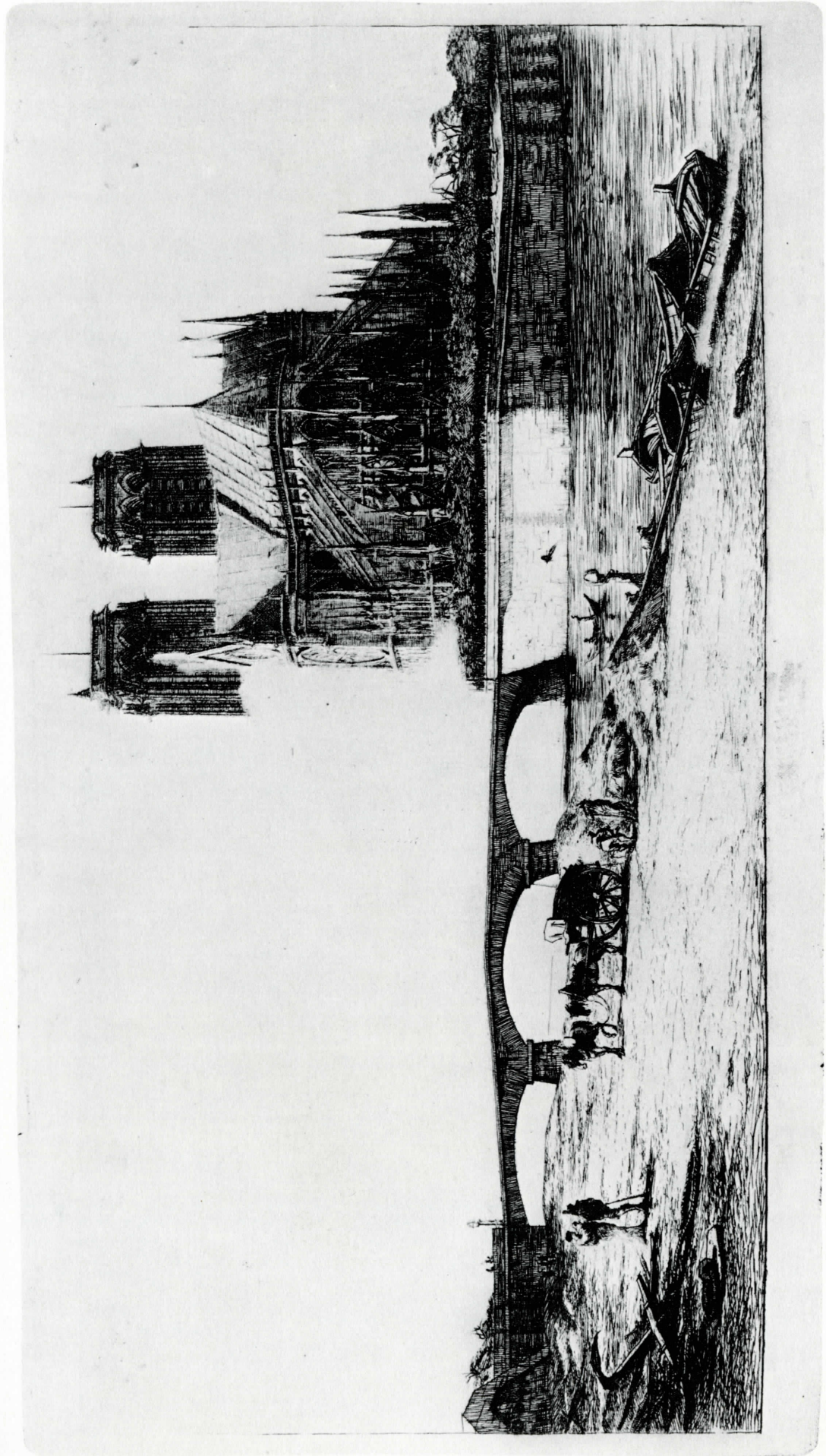
Etching: brown ink on white paper

Plate: 166 x 293 mm. (6-1/2 x 11-9/16 in.)



Cat. 67

L'Abside de Notre Dame: Drawing of Notre-Dame with the north side of the Ile de la Cité
Yale University Art Gallery

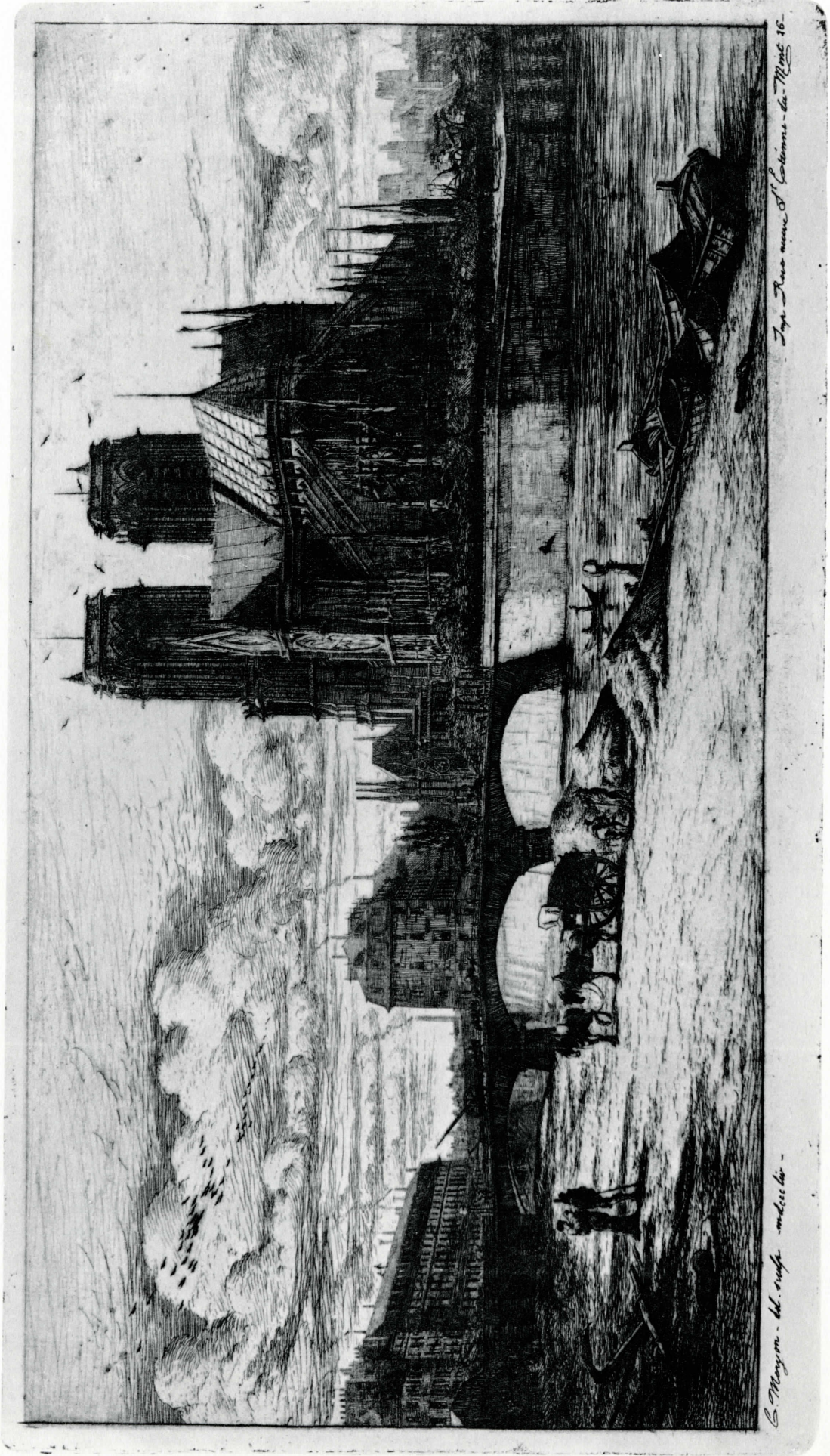


Cat. 68

L'Abside de Notre-Dame

DW 38, first state

National Gallery of Art, Rosenwald Collection

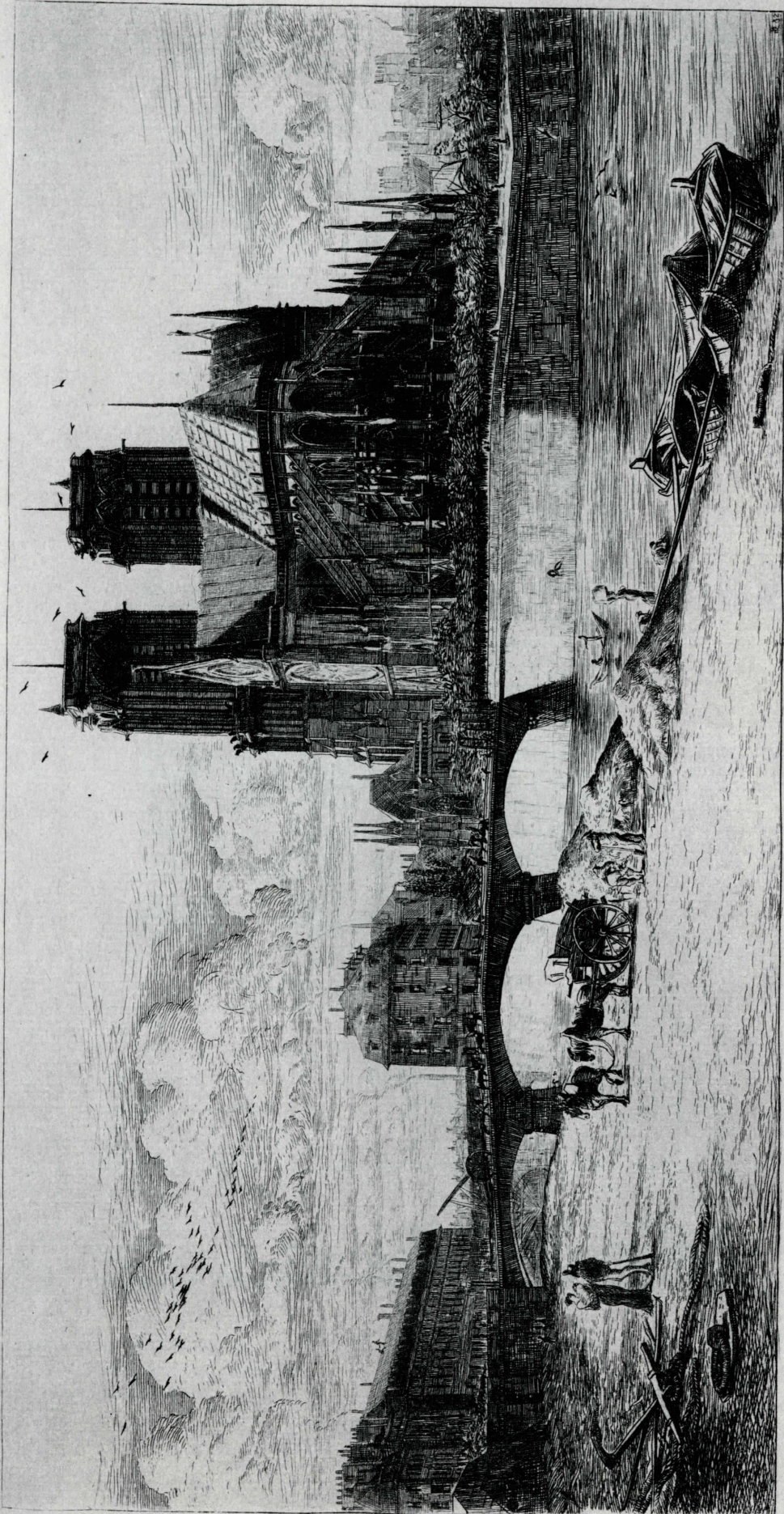


Cat. 69

L'Abside de Notre-Dame

DW 38, fourth state

Cleveland Museum of Art



Cat. 70

Edmond Gosselin: *L'Abside de Notre-Dame*
Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University