



CHAPTER 5

Getting Established in the New World

Constantino Brumidi arrived in New York only a few months after his release from prison in Rome, ready to begin a new career in the United States. He later said he emigrated as much for artistic opportunities as because of his political exile, “desiring a broader field and more profitable market for his work.”¹ He had promises of church commissions through American clergymen he knew in Rome, and he probably heard about the construction at the Capitol from expatriate American artists such as

Thomas Crawford, who served with him in the civic guard. In the two years between his arrival in the New World in the fall of 1852 and his coming to Washington, D.C., in late 1854, he obtained commissions in New York, Massachusetts, and Mexico City. The turning point in his career was his introduction to Captain Montgomery C. Meigs, who superintended the construction of the United States Capitol extensions and gave him the

Fig. 5-1. Fresco with profile relief portrait of George Washington in Brumidi’s first room in the Capitol. The Italian artist was hired as the artist of the Capitol after proving his ability to work in true fresco, to paint the illusion of three-dimensional forms, and to create American subjects and symbols. H-144.

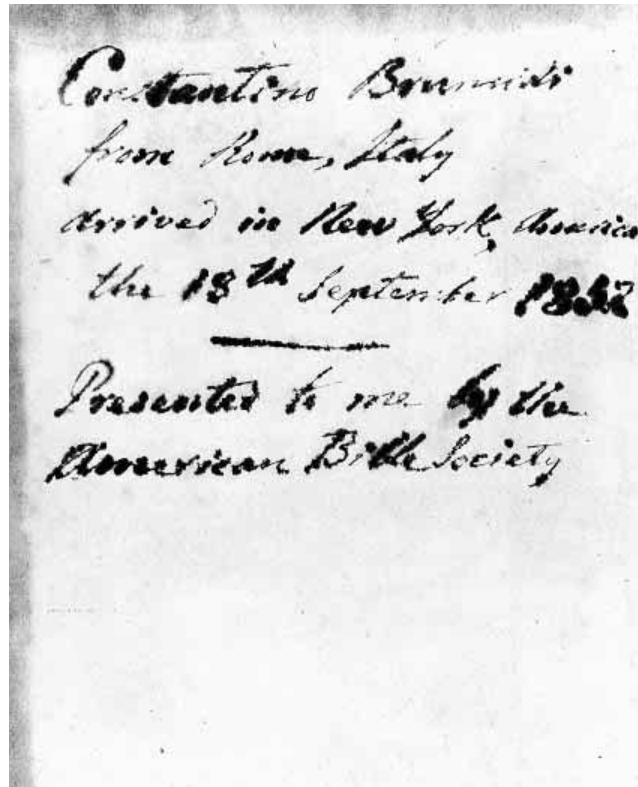


Fig. 5-2. Inside cover of Brumidi’s Bible. The artist recorded the date of his arrival in the United States. Architect of the Capitol.

opportunity to paint the first frescoed room in the Capitol (fig. 5-1).

As recorded in the Bible given to him by the American Bible Society upon his arrival (fig. 5-2), Constantino Brumidi landed in New York on September 18, 1852, coincidentally the fifty-ninth anniversary of the laying of the cornerstone of the Capitol by George Washington. His commitment to his new country was clear, for, at the end of November, he filed a statement of intent to become a United States citizen.²

During the next two years, Brumidi earned his living chiefly by painting portraits and decorating private houses in the northeastern United States. He immediately made connections with prominent families. His earliest known American portrait, dated 1852, is of Boston merchant Emery Bemis.³ The next year, he signed and dated a finely detailed portrait of Eveline Fessenden Freeman (fig. 5-3), daughter of the U.S. marshal for Massachusetts, who in 1860 would marry Thomas U. Walter’s assistant Edward Clark. Brumidi’s portraits are lifelike, well composed, and skillfully painted in a style that shows his neoclassical training and his skill at convincingly depicting varied textures of skin and fabric.

For the Bennitt family of New York he painted portraits and, in 1853, three allegorical images, *Progress, Freedom,*



Fig. 5-3. Eveline Fessenden Freeman. *Miss Freeman, depicted by Brumidi in finely rendered lace and satin, later married Edward Clark, future Architect of the Capitol. Architect of the Capitol.*

and *Plenty*, for their house in South Hampton, Long Island; these are his earliest documented domestic murals (fig. 5-4).⁴ Brumidi continued to paint for domestic settings throughout his career, although few examples are securely documented or intact.

In 1854, before coming to Washington, Brumidi traveled to Mexico City; he was there by May and left in December.⁵ There he executed his first church commission in the New World, a Holy Trinity, a large altarpiece or mural, for the cathedral in Mexico City. This work was mentioned in numerous nineteenth-century articles about Brumidi, but its present location is unknown. The commission was an outgrowth of the strong ties between the art academies in Rome and Mexico City. The best Mexican artists went to study at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome, and some of Brumidi's former colleagues at the Villa Torlonia taught or exhibited at the Academia Nacional de San Carlos de México.⁶ While in Mexico City, Brumidi sketched Aztec idols and the large calendar stone then displayed at the cathedral; he later incorporated these objects in the scene "Cortez and Montezuma at the Aztec Temple" for the frieze in the Capitol.⁷

Five paintings by Brumidi were exhibited at the Mexican academy in January 1855, among them a portrait and



Fig. 5-4. Progress. *Painted for a private home, Progress rides on a dolphin and wears a headdress with feathers and a star, suggestive of America. The cherubs hold symbols of commerce and liberty, while the steam ship Baltic and a locomotive appear in the distance, all motifs Brumidi later painted in the Capitol. Architect of the Capitol, donated through the United States Capitol Historical Society by Howard and Sara Pratt.*

large canvases of the Assumption of the Virgin and the Immaculate Conception. In December 1856, he exhibited a nine-foot-high Holy Trinity, possibly the altarpiece itself, as well as a smaller version, probably an oil study for it.⁸ These paintings must have been submitted for the exhibition by friends, for there is no evidence that Brumidi returned to Mexico after he left for the United States on December 12, 1854.⁹

The Holy Trinity for the cathedral in Mexico City was only the first of numerous major church commissions Brumidi undertook in the New World. He painted murals and altarpieces in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Havana after he began working at the Capitol. American clergymen whom Brumidi had met in Rome were instrumental in his being selected for work in new churches being built in the United States. One supporter was John Norris, who studied for the priesthood in Rome from 1848 to 1851, and with whom Brumidi, before his arrest, had hoped to travel to America. Brumidi painted Norris's portrait and those of Norris's mother, sister, and brother-in-law, Andrew J. Joyce, with whom Brumidi stayed when he first came to Washington.¹⁰ Brumidi may also have been helped by his acquaintance with the first American archbishop, John Hughes of New York, who



Fig. 5-5. St. Charles Borromeo Giving Holy Communion to St. Aloysius Gonzaga. Brumidi's altarpiece, inspired by a seventeenth-century painting of the subject, includes a self portrait, in the center distance, and the features of the designer of the church, Father Benedict Sestini, in the priest at the far right, while Mrs. Stephen Douglas is thought to be the model for St. Aloysius's mother. St. Aloysius Church, Washington, D.C. Photo: Page Conservation, Inc.

was in Rome in 1851. Hughes collected art and preached at many of the churches where Brumidi painted.¹¹ Brumidi's closest and longest personal connection was with the Reverend Benedict Sestini, S.J., who came from Rome to Georgetown University. He became a lifelong friend of the artist and was instrumental in securing at least two of Brumidi's church commissions. He recommended Brumidi to the Church of St. Ignatius in Baltimore. He also designed the Church of St. Aloysius in Washington, D.C., for which Brumidi painted the altarpiece, in which he included Sestini's portrait (fig. 5-5). Father Sestini was the

priest called to Brumidi's deathbed.¹² It is clear that Brumidi's connections with the Roman Catholic Church were important throughout his life.

Brumidi's earliest known church commission in the United States was for St. Stephen's Church in New York. This commission was initiated before he left Italy, and he mentioned it when he was introduced to Montgomery Meigs at the Capitol in late 1854. Brumidi postponed work for the church to paint his trial piece at the Capitol, but by 1855, he had created the design for *Martyrdom of St. Stephen*. The immigrant artist had thus



Fig. 5–6. Montgomery C. Meigs, c. 1861. *In his role as supervising engineer, Meigs oversaw the art program carried out by Brumidi.* Lola Germon Brumidi Family Album, United States Senate Collection.

within a few years established himself as the artist of the most important ecclesiastical and political monuments then being constructed.

On December 28, 1854, only two weeks after leaving Mexico, Brumidi was in Washington, D.C., and had arranged an introduction to Captain Montgomery C. Meigs (1816–1892), the engineer in charge of decorating as well as constructing the Capitol extensions for the War Department (fig. 5–6). The intermediary, according to Meigs’s journal, was an “old gentleman,” sculptor Horatio Stone, who served with Meigs on the vestry of St. John’s Episcopal Church in Lafayette Square. Stone was

about the same age as Brumidi, whom Meigs similarly described as “a lively old man.” Stone had established himself as a sculptor in Washington and in 1856 would be commissioned to create a marble sculpture of John Hancock for the Capitol. (Ironically, he later formed the Washington Art Association, which attacked Brumidi’s work in the Capitol.¹³)

Brumidi’s arrival in Washington enabled Meigs to realize his grand plans for decorating the extensions with murals in addition to sculpture. Meigs felt a strong sense of mission about his role in decorating the Capitol: “Although an engineer and ‘nothing more’ I have some feeling for art, some little acquaintance with its principals [*sic*] and its precepts and a very strong desire to use the opportunities & the influence which my position, as directing head of this great work, gives me for the advancement of art in this country.”¹⁴ Even before Brumidi’s appearance, Meigs had already envisioned fresco painting like that of Raphael and Michelangelo on a grand scale for the interior of the Capitol. The engineer had great confidence in his own artistic judgment and taste, as is shown in comments in his journals. He had a deep and long-standing personal interest in art and had studied art at West Point with Seth Eastman and possibly with painters Charles Leslie and Robert Weir, who taught drawing there during his student years.¹⁵ His own landscape drawings and watercolors are more than competent (fig. 5–7). He was always interested in increasing his knowledge about art. Meigs also consulted experts in the field of art, such as collector Gouverneur Kemble, who solicited advice for him from painter John Chapman, and he corresponded about the art program with the German-born painter Emanuel Leutze.¹⁶ At every opportunity he visited galleries and artists’ studios and studied art books. He was familiar with the murals of Pompeii through books. In 1854, he went to the Astor Library in New York to see a set of books of Raphael’s works in the Vatican reproduced in color, and he was especially impressed with the loggias. Meigs commented: “I have never seen color engraving of these works before. They are very beautiful, rich and harmonious in color, simple and beautiful in design. I wish I could see the rooms themselves. This book will give us ideas in decorating our lobbies.”¹⁷ Thus, when Brumidi, who had worked in these very Vatican loggias, appeared in Washington, he must have seemed like the answer to Meigs’s prayers.

Not surprisingly, Meigs determined that the content of the decoration for the Capitol should be American history, an idea he expressed in a letter to sculptor Thomas

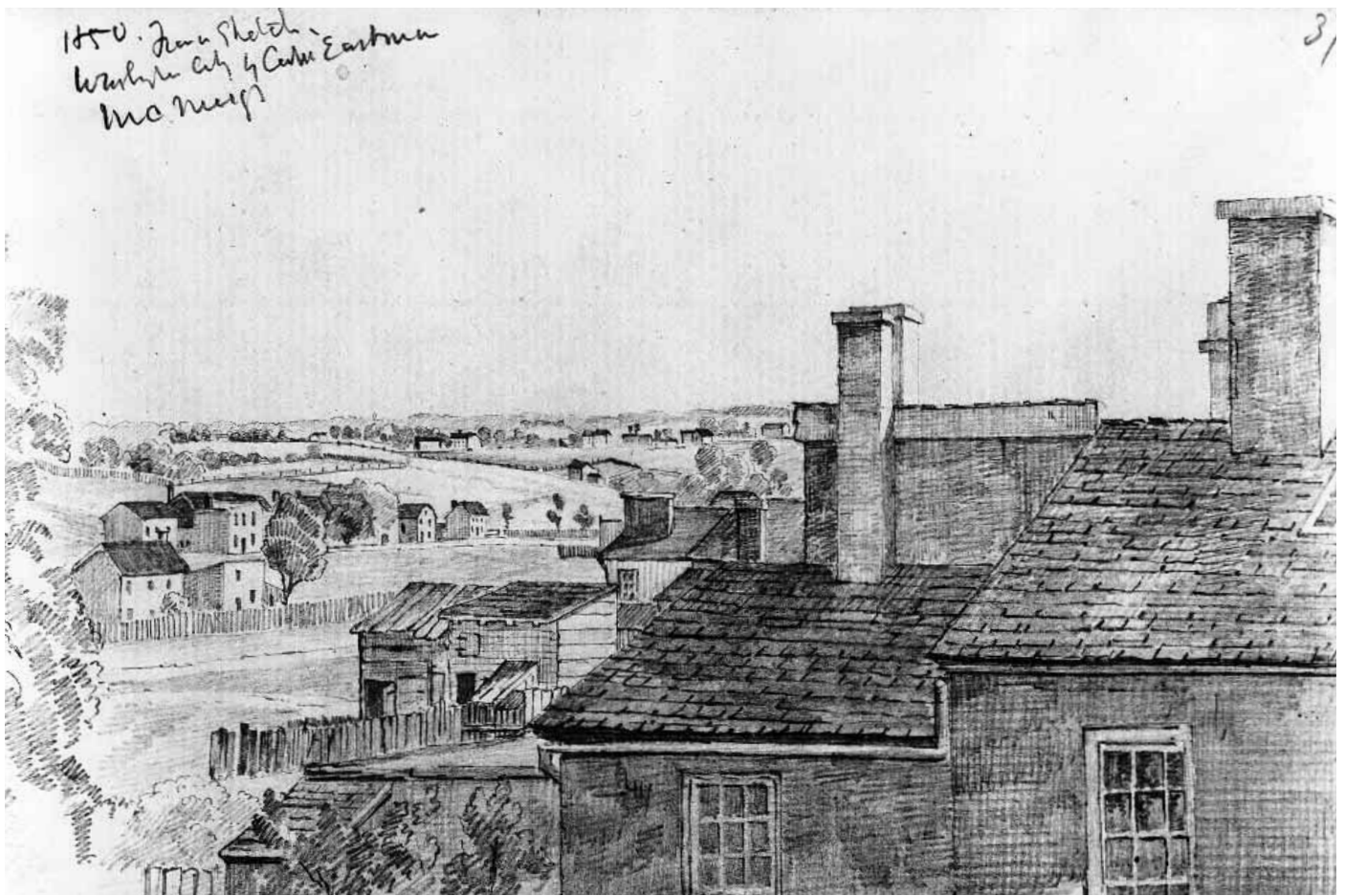


Fig. 5–7. Montgomery C. Meigs, *From a Sketch, Washington City by Capt Eastman*. This drawing shows Meigs’s skill and documents his reconnection with his drawing instructor Seth Eastman. Department of Political History, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Photo: Smithsonian Institution.

Crawford: “In our history of the struggle between the civilized man and the savage, between the cultivated and the wild nature are certainly to be found themes worthy of the artist and capable of appealing to the feeling of all classes.”¹⁸ Meigs was not convinced, however, that any American painters were capable of carrying out his vision, which was of more concern to him than the nationality of the artists. His biographer Russell Weigley commented:

Meigs was trying in his own way to make the art of the Capitol a distinctively American art; but he conceived of the American quality of art as a characteristic of the work of art, not necessarily of the birthplace of the artist. The proposition that the art of the United States Capitol ought to be American art commanded widespread agreement from the American public, government, and press. What constituted an American art was not so clear. To Meigs, the main

test seemed to be that the subject matter be American, if not the spirit and manner.¹⁹

Unfortunately, Meigs’s ideas about the iconographical program were undoubtedly conveyed to Brumidi in person and were not recorded, even in Meigs’s personal journal. Meigs’s recently transcribed private journal does, however, give us a vivid description of his first meeting with Brumidi on December 28, 1854, and the painting of Brumidi’s first fresco (see Appendix A). The engineer failed to catch the Italian painter’s name, but remembered him as “a lively old man with a very red nose, either from Mexican suns or French brandies.” Their discussion was conducted in “bad French,” the language they had in common.²⁰ Despite their difficulty in communicating, Brumidi made a positive first impression on Meigs.

Meigs was impressed with Brumidi’s credentials, which included his training at the academy in Rome and his experience in fresco in the splendid house of the banker Torlonia, and with his confidence in his skill. Brumidi told him of pending religious and secular commissions, one for a church, undoubtedly St. Stephen’s in New York, and another for a hotel. When told he would need to start a sample piece soon, so that the members of Con-

gress could see it, Brumidi “laughed and said that the church would be there always, Congress would pass, and he would paint this first.”²¹ Meigs immediately thought of a lunette in his temporary office in the new House extension as a good location for a trial piece. Meigs later summarized this meeting:

. . . in a fortunate moment an Italian artist applied to me for employment as a painter of fresco. He asked the use of a wall on which he might paint an example of his skill, saying that he could not carry fresco paintings with him, had executed none in the U. States to which he could refer me, but if I gave him the opportunity he would paint one at his own expense. I hesitated but at length told him that the room in which I then sat, which had only a rough coat of brown plaster, might be assigned to the Committee on Agriculture, and he might paint in the lunette of the wall a subject relating to agriculture, provided the sketch he should submit seemed to me worthy.²²

Although tempered with caution in this account, Meigs’s optimism about this recent immigrant’s ability to carry out a grand decorative plan would prove to be fully justified.



Fig. 5–8. Sketch for *Calling of Cincinnatus from the Plow*. Brumidi prepared this oil sketch of his first fresco for the Capitol for Meigs’s approval. Estate of Edna W. Macomb.

Photo: Diplomatic Reception Rooms, U.S. Department of State.

Meigs chose the theme of Cincinnatus called from the plow to be dictator of Rome, “a favorite subject with all educated Americans, who associate with that name the Father of our Country,” for what Brumidi called “the first specimen of real fresco introduced in America.”²³ The subject was appropriate because of the planned use of the room by the House Committee on Agriculture and its connection with George Washington. Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus was a Roman hero of the fifth century B.C., a farmer, soldier, and statesman. George Washington was often compared with Cincinnatus and was, in fact, the first president of the Society of the Cincinnati, which was formed by officers of the Continental Army. The choice of this subject must have delighted Brumidi, for he had already painted a lunette of the same subject in Rome.²⁴

Before beginning the fresco, Brumidi prepared an oil sketch of the scene (fig 5–8). In his journal, Meigs commented positively on the sketch: “It is good and shows skill in drawing and composition and coloring, much greater than I expected.”²⁵ Once the sketch was approved, Brumidi created a full-size cartoon, with which Meigs was less satisfied, feeling the artist had drawn the figures carelessly and out of proportion (perhaps not understanding the use of foreshortening): “I pointed out some defects, which he did not seem to be quite pleased at my doing. I told him that he would have many critics, as the American painters would all look with jealousy at him and at his works and that they would find all the fault they could.”²⁶

Meigs’s journal entries describing the painting of the room (Appendix A) give us remarkable step-by-step details of Brumidi’s working procedures and progress; we even learn that Meigs caught cold from the dampness created by the wet mortar.²⁷ The master mason, Alexander B. McFarlan, applied the mortar for Brumidi. Meigs recorded that the artist began to paint in fresco on January 24, 1855. Brumidi worked cautiously, completing only half of a figure in a day, and sometimes having to cut out and redo sections with which he was not satisfied. Meigs noted that Brumidi put the finishing

Fig. 5–9. House Appropriations Committee room. Brumidi proved his ability to design murals, his skill in executing fresco, and his artistic talent in the first room he painted in the Capitol. H-144.





touches on the fresco on March 17, 1855, after four weeks of work, at which point he signed and dated the lunette at the lower right.²⁸ Meigs was pleased with reactions to the fresco: “The experiment was successful. No better picture yet adorns the walls of the Capitol, and I was relieved from much anxiety by finding that our Legislators visited and admired the picture and were much interested in its progress and in the process then first seen in this country of the noble art of fresco painting, and that even strict economists and men from the western wilderness expressed their satisfaction and encouraged me to go on.”²⁹

In addition to members of Congress, other government officials and art connoisseurs viewed the Italian artist’s progress. Among the important people Meigs brought to see Brumidi’s accomplishments were President Franklin Pierce, Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, Senator Stephen Douglas, financier and art collector William Corcoran, and painter Daniel Huntington. Congressman Richard Stanton, Chairman of the House Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, expressed great admiration for Brumidi’s work.³⁰ On March 20, Davis authorized Meigs to pay Brumidi, who had been working at his own expense, \$8 per day retroactively, thus officially approving the work and allowing him to proceed with the decoration of the rest of the room.³¹ Captain Meigs wrote in his official report to the secretary of war: “One of the rooms of the basement [first floor] of the south wing is now being painted in fresco. This will enable Congress to see a specimen of this the highest style of architectural decoration. It is the most appropriate and beautiful mode of finishing the building. . . .”³²

Once he had won the approval to go ahead, Brumidi painted more quickly, assisted by painter Louis Franze and laborer Michel Long. Meigs gave his full support, including the use of a separate “painting room” for preparation of cartoons and assistance in researching Revolutionary uniforms.³³ By the end of March 1855, Brumidi had made the sketch of *The Four Seasons* for the ceiling. In early June, after two months of working the cartoons, the artist was ready for the scaffold to be erected.³⁴ After almost a year of working on the ceilings and walls, in early April 1856, Brumidi completed the decoration of the room and the key was turned over to the Speaker of the House. Meigs judged: “I think that whatever committee takes possession of it will have a hard time with the public who throng to see it.” He reported the total cost

of decorating the room as \$3,700, of which Brumidi earned \$2,632 for 329 days of work.³⁵

The beautifully decorated room attracted great congressional interest, and several committees were allowed to meet there. In May 1856, for example, it was used by the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, which was chaired by Brumidi’s admirer Congressman Stanton, “when permitted to do so by the crowd of persons attracted there from day to day.”³⁶ In July, Meigs noted that “the fresco painting . . . is evidently popular with the Members. Of committees, no less than 4 committees have met in this room.”³⁷ The public also continued to show great interest in the frescoed room. By 1857, it had become such a tourist attraction that during recesses of Congress it was necessary to have a person on duty all day just to admit visitors.³⁸ Even in the 1880s, it was visited by thousands of people a year.³⁹ The Agriculture Committee occupied the space intended for it until 1922, when the room was assigned to a subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations. Recently, H-144 has been converted to a hearing room by the Appropriations Committee.

Brumidi’s first room in the Capitol (fig. 5–9) is one of the most beautiful he ever executed. It is particularly pleasing because he was able to complete his entire scheme without interruption. Brumidi demonstrated his understanding of the Renaissance tradition and created aesthetic and thematic harmony and balance. His trompe l’oeil illusionistic effects are completely convincing. The room seems to be filled with live figures, carved sculpture, and gilded frames that look three-dimensional but are actually flat.

On the ceiling, Brumidi depicted figures representing the Four Seasons floating on clouds above stone arches (fig. 5–10). On the east is Spring, represented by the youthful Flora, Roman goddess of flowers, who drops blossoms into the room below; she is framed by billowing pink drapery and surrounded by cherubs, one of whom is crowning her with a wreath. On the south is Summer, represented by Ceres, goddess of agriculture, who is shown with a sheaf of wheat and a sickle, flanked by cupids with a scythe and cornucopia. Representing Autumn on the west is Bacchus, the god of wine, who carries his traditional thyrsus (a pinecone-tipped staff) and accepts a bunch of grapes while being transported by a cloud in a procession led by cherubs with ancient cymbals and a tambourine. Finally, Boreas, the bearded god of the north wind, commands the cherubs to create Winter’s wind and snow.⁴⁰ Between the framed vaults are illusionistic carved stone reliefs of garlands, cherubs, and eagles. In the Renaissance tradition, Brumidi painted the forms as if illuminated by the light from the actual windows in the room.

Fig. 5–10. *The Four Seasons.* *Figures personifying spring, summer, autumn, and winter appear to float on clouds above the arches in the ceiling. H-144.*



Fig. 5-11. *Calling of Cincinnatus from the Plow.* The fifth-century B.C. Roman hero at the center of the east lunette, standing by his oxen-drawn plow, receives a helmet and sword from a white-robed priest. H-144.

In the east lunette (fig. 5-11), Cincinnatus, in the weight-shifted (*contrapposto*) stance of classical sculpture, is being approached by a priest. Two of the Roman soldiers hold fasces, the symbol of authority of the Roman government, which had been adopted as the mace of the House of Representatives. In the distance at the left is an idealized view of Rome, while at the right a curly-haired boy, for which Meigs's son Monty posed, and a dog observe the event.⁴¹ The rake held by the boy is inscribed "1855 C. Brumidi." The composition is beautifully balanced, and the palette of reds and violet with touches of blue played against the earthy browns and greens creates a subtle harmony.

Across from Cincinnatus, in the west lunette, Brumidi painted a parallel story, *Calling of Putnam from the Plow to the Revolution* (fig. 5-12). In 1775, the American Revolutionary hero Israel Putnam rushed to command the defense of Breed's Hill in Charlestown, Massachusetts (later called the Battle of Bunker Hill). Brumidi's composition was based on a lithograph (fig. 5-13). Published about 1845, the print made an intentional comparison with Cincinnatus.⁴²

On the south wall, Brumidi created a small framed illusionistic painting showing the traditional method of harvesting grain with a sickle, under a trompe l'oeil relief profile portrait of George Washington, which is flanked by allegorical figures representing America (see fig. 5-1). On the opposite wall (see fig. 7-7),

Thomas Jefferson's relief portrait is over a scene showing the modern mechanical McCormick reaper, as suggested by Meigs, who arranged for Brumidi to examine the machinery.⁴³

Finally, the lower part of the room was painted in fresco with the illusion of arched carved moldings on the stone-colored walls.⁴⁴ These walls were later covered with oil-based paint, but the original configuration of the moldings was preserved.

Over the years Brumidi's first frescoes for the Capitol were obscured by disfiguring grime and overpaint on the lunettes; a long crack in the mortar on the north wall also gave the room high priority for conservation. Soot from the fireplace under the west lunette darkened the scene of Putnam. After a small fire, restoration in 1921 included scrubbing the lunettes with abrasive caustic and heavily repainting them in oil. The repaint on the lunettes later darkened further, and the scenes were repainted again in 1930. Fortunately, the ceiling and agricultural scenes were left basically untouched.⁴⁵

Conservation treatment carried out in 1987 and 1988 included cleaning the surfaces of grime, repairing the crack, and reattaching flaking paint on the gilded trompe l'oeil frames (fig. 5-14). The most difficult task was the removal of the heavy overpaint from the frescoes. A study of the lower walls revealed that the stone-like colors had been changed, but that the general pattern of the moldings is original. The flat areas were repainted to match the original color as closely as possible to help restore the overall color harmony of the room, whose beauty can now be more fully appreciated.



Fig. 5-12. *Calling of Putnam from the Plow to the Revolution.* Brumidi painted the American Revolution hero across the room from *Cincinnatus*, with horses instead of oxen, and with a drummer mounted on a rearing horse pointing him toward the battle in the distance. H-144.

Fig. 5-13. Artist unknown. *General Putnam Leaving his Plow for the Defence of his Country.* Brumidi took the major elements for his lunette from this lithograph. He changed the relative proportions and positions of the figures and simplified the landscape to create a more harmonious composition. Yale University Art Gallery. The Mabel Garvan Collection.

Photo: Yale University Art Gallery.



Fig. 5-14. *Calling of Putnam during conservation.* Disfiguring grime and overpaint have been partially removed. H-144.

Photo: Bernard Rabin.



Notes to Chapter 5

1. “Constantino Brumidi,” *Daily Critic*, c. 1880. Request of CB to Cardinal Secretary of State Giacomo Antonelli to go to New York, October 19, 1851, ASR/SC.

2. Brumidi’s “Intention to become a Citizen of the United States,” NARA/RG21.

3. The companion portrait of his wife, Susan Pickering Bemis, is undated. Correspondence in the NMAA curatorial files shows that the donors believed that Mr. Bemis’s portrait was done from life while Mrs. Bemis’s portrait was done “from memory and photographs,” Madelon Chandler Benton to William Truettner, curator, NMAA, March 11, 1976.

4. *Progress* is signed and dated 1853. The canvases of *Progress* and *Plenty* have the stamp of a New York preparator.

5. John Black, U.S. Consul to Mexico, certified on the back of Brumidi’s document of intent to become a citizen that it was presented to him in Mexico City on May 5, 1854, NARA/RG 21.

6. The Academia Nacional de San Carlos de México was chartered in 1785. During a reorganization in 1843, the directorship had been offered to Brumidi’s colleagues Francisco Coggetti and Francisco Podesti. Among the Italians listed in the exhibition catalogs for the academy are F. Podesti in 1853 and 1855, F. Coggetti in 1854, and M. Capalti in 1856. Manuel Romera de Terreros, ed., *Catalogos de las Exposiciones de la Antigua Academia de San Carlos de Mexico, 1850–1898* (Mexico: Imprenta Universitaria, 1963), pp. 134, 186, 161, and 246.

7. “Brumidi’s Life Work.” *Washington Post*, April 11, 1879. The twelve-foot-diameter stone is now in the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.

8. Manuel Romera de Terreros, editor, *Catalogos*, 186, 187, 189, 192, 248, 249. In the exhibition opening January 1855, Brumidi exhibited in the section of works sent from outside the academy a full-length Immaculate Conception, 59 by 40 inches (no. 22); a half-length Virgin in an oval, copied after Isabey, which was for sale (no. 24); a Virgin with Christ Child and Saint John, 29 by 23 inches (no. 47); an Assumption of the Virgin, 100 by 72 inches (no. 73); and a portrait of Señorita Doña Elena Basadre, 39 by 31 inches (no. 161). In December 1856 he exhibited a Holy Trinity, 34 by 25 inches (no. 70), and a larger version, 111 by 79 inches (no. 93).

9. List of All Passengers, taken on board the steamship *Onzaba*, at the port of Vera Cruz, bound for New Orleans, December 12, 1854, NARA/RG 36, Passenger Lists and Indexes, New Orleans, courtesy of Kent Ahrens.

10. Charles Fairman noted that Brumidi painted portraits of the Norris family and the Joyce family in Washington, *Congressional Record*, 71st Cong., 2d sess., January 29, 1930, p. 3. No evidence supports Fairman’s statement that Norris (1825–1869) came with Brumidi from the Vatican to New York and Washington, since Norris left Rome in late 1851 and was sent to Wisconsin, see Norris’s obituary “In Memoriam,” *National Intelligencer*, January 15, 1869. The portraits are now in the collections of Mr. and Mrs. George Gardner Herrick and others (see Appendix C). According to Washington city directories of 1850 and 1853, Andrew J. Joyce, blacksmith, is listed at addresses near 14th and Pennsylvania Avenue.

11. CB petition to leave for the U.S. to paint churches, June 4, 1851, ASR/SC. John R. G. Hassard, *Life of John Hughes (1797–1864): First Archbishop of New York* (New York: Arno Press), 1969, p. 496.

12. Father Benedict Sestini, S.J., (1816–1890) was born in Florence, entered the Society of Jesus in Rome in 1836, and was ordained there in 1845, so that he and Brumidi may well have been acquainted in Italy. Father Sestini taught mathematics and astronomy at Georgetown Col-

lege until 1869, when he moved to the Scholasticate at Woodstock. In 1870, Brumidi gave his friend a painting of the Holy Family in Egypt, now at St. Aloysius, for the chapel at Woodstock, Maryland. “Fr. Benedict Sestini,” *Woodstock Letters*, vol. 20, 1890, pp. 259–263, courtesy of Father George Anderson, S.J. CB to B. Sestini (in Italian), Nov. 11, 1855, Georgetown University Archives.

13. MCMJ, January 30, 1855 (A–410). Meigs mentions Mr. Stone or Dr. Stone over a dozen times in his journal; these are plausibly all references to Horatio Stone (1808–1875). Another Washington artist with the same last name, William James Stone (1798–1865), an engraver who had studied under Hiram Powers in Italy in 1847, and who might have met Brumidi then, is a possible but less likely candidate.

14. MCM to J. Durand, editor of *The Crayon*, October 11, 1856, AOC/LB.

15. MCMJ, September 23, 1856 (B-297). The suggestion that Meigs also studied drawing with Robert W. Weir appears in Russell F. Weigley, “Captain Meigs and the Artists of the Capitol: Federal Patronage of Art in the 1850’s,” *Records of the Columbia Historical Society of Washington, D.C. 1969–1970* (Washington, D.C.: Columbia Historical Society, 1971), p. 293.

16. On February 28, 1854, the painter John Chapman wrote to Gouverneur Kemble from Rome, who forwarded his letter to Meigs. Chapman discussed fresco painting, emphasizing the importance of the artist’s ability to create a cartoon and downplaying the need for experience in the fresco technique. Meigs copied Chapman’s letter in shorthand and sent the original on, as instructed, to Senator Pearce, AOC/CO. Emanuel Leutze to MCM, February 14, 1854, AOC/CO.

17. MCMJ, August 28, 1854 (A–225).

18. MCM to Thomas Crawford, August 18, 1853, AOC/LB.

19. Weigley, “Captain Meigs,” pp. 293–95.

20. MCMJ, December 28, 1854 (A–358).

21. *Ibid.*

22. MCM to J. Durand, October 11, 1856, AOC/LB.

23. *Ibid.*; CB to Justin Morrill (copy given to EC), November 30, 1874, AOC/CO.

24. Drawing for lunette, private collection, Rome. Courtesy of Alberta Campitelli.

25. MCMJ, January 24, 1855 (A–400). The oil sketch included a design for the facing lunette which was not used. It showed classical allegorical figures, including one dressed as an Indian to represent America, similar to the one he painted on the south wall.

26. MCMJ, February 12, 1855 (A–426).

27. MCMJ, February 25, 1855 (A–457).

28. March 17, 1855, Pocket Diary, MCM Papers, LC.

29. MCM to J. Durand, October 11, 1856, AOC/LB.

30. MCMJ, February 21 (A–443), March 17 (A–493), March 20 (A–497), May 19 (A–556), May 29 (A–564), April 2 (A–513), 1855. Other members noted by Meigs who viewed the work were [Lewis D.] Campbell of Ohio and [E. Wilder] Farley of Maine.

31. MCMJ, March 20, 1855 (A–497).

32. *Annual Report of Capt. M.C. Meigs, in charge of the Capitol Extension*, October 14, 1855, 34–1, House Ex. Doc. No. 1, pt. 2, pp. 113 and 115.

33. MCMJ, April 7, 1855 (A–517). MCM to [George] Washington P[arke] Custis, January 19, 1856, AOC/LB.

34. Brumidi had finished the sketch for the four seasons by March 30, 1855. He worked on the cartoons in April, and on April 28, the govern-

ment paid Antonio DeVoto to model for him for five days. By June 6 the cartoons were completed and the scaffold was being erected, MCMJ, March 30, 1855 (A-508); AOC/Capitol Complex: Vouchers, 1855; MCMJ, June 6, 1855 (A-576).

35. MCMJ, April 11, 1856 (B-159); MCM to Carstens, April 12, 1856, AOC/CO; and "Statement of Cost of finishing Agricultural Committee Room," undated, AOC/LB. Louis Franze received \$624.00 and Michel Long received \$300.00. Painting materials cost \$130.50. The total cost of the work, including payment to Brumidi, was \$3,686.50.

36. May 26, 1856, *Congressional Globe*, 34th Cong., 1st. sess., Appendix, p. 619.

37. MCMJ, July 25, 1856 (B-238).

38. MCM to General William Cullom, Clerk of the House of Representatives, March 23, 1857, AOC/LB.

39. J. L. Graves to Jefferson Davis, September 5, 1885, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

40. The significance of the traditional directional orientation of the seasons was pointed out by Francis V. O'Connor (see chapter 10).

41. MCMJ, March 14, 1855 (A-486) and March 15, 1855 (A-489). Meigs's wife Louisa had suggested that Brumidi use their son Monty to pose for the boy in the corner, who has a very different appearance in the oil sketch.

42. Laura K. Mills, *American Allegorical Prints: Constructing an Identity*. New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1996, pp. 6-7. Sculptor Henry Kirke Brown visited Brumidi at work and may have been influ-

enced by the figure of Putnam for the farmer in his design for the House pediment, according to Thomas P. Somma, *The Apotheosis of Democracy, 1908-1916* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995), p. 28.

43. MCM to a Mr. Engle at the Agricultural warehouse, February 5, 1856: "Be good enough to show Mr Brumidi one of the McCormick reaping machines. I wish him to introduce a sketch of one in the decoration of the Room of the Com^{ce} on agriculture," AOC/LB.

44. Although Walter later remembered the walls being painted in "distemper," TUW to Boulton, February 5, 1863, TUW/PA (AAA reel 4141), the technical study and paint analysis performed by Constance Silver and Frank Matero in 1988 revealed that the walls were done entirely in fresco and that the designs presently seen follow the original patterns. The original moldings were left untouched behind the mantel mirror and were revealed when the mirror was removed for conservation. In 1874 Emmerich Carstens was paid \$200 "For painting in Panel the walls of Agricultural Committee Room, House of Representatives," AOC/Annual Repairs U.S. Capitol, 1866-1898, C to F, book 2. This work may have been a touch-up to the original. The walls were painted over in oil after a fire in 1920, "Blaze in Capitol Does Damage to Committee Room," *Evening Star*, December 18, 1920, part I.

45. Charles Moberly restored the room after a wastebasket caught fire. "Blaze in Capitol Does Damage to Committee Room," *Evening Star*, December 18, 1920; Will P. Kennedy, "Moberly Restoring Brumidi Decorations at the Capitol," *Evening Star*, August 14, 1921. The second layer of overpaint on the Putnam lunette appears to be by George Matthews and to date from c. 1930.