



The Simons, father and son, engravers and lithographic printers in Strasbourg (1802–1881): a high point in French lithography

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Born in Strasbourg on 22 August 1774, Frédéric Sigismond Simon was trained as a silversmith and goldsmith by his father, Jean-Georges.¹ He recalled in 1828 that his father had a thorough understanding of his craft and ‘gave him an education that even enabled him to switch from engraving to lithography’.² Frédéric opened his copper-engraving workshop in 1802, producing ‘vignettes, letterheads, trade cards, price lists, and circulars’³ – in short, what we today call jobbing printing or printed ephemera – only to discover that the introduction of lithography would lead to an unexpected change. Accordingly, he made an initial application to the French Minister of the Interior on 26 March 1823 for a licence (‘brevet’) to practise as a lithographic printer: he wanted to ‘convert his engraving and copper-plate printing workshop for which he is licenced’ to the new process.⁴ The establishment was to be registered under the name ‘Simon père et fils’. This application was rejected on the grounds that there were already two lithographic establishments in Strasbourg, those of Boehm and Levrault. Frédéric respected them, but felt that ‘having never learnt either drawing or engraving they have to rely on their employees for such work’.⁵ Nevertheless, Boehm, who had worked with Oberthür senior⁶ in the early days of the latter’s press, had become Strasbourg’s first lithographic printer when he obtained his licence in 1818.

The Prefect of the department of Bas-Rhin supported an application from Frédéric Sigismond Simon to become the third lithographic printer in Strasbourg in 1828, emphasizing competition from outside the Rhine area as a reason for doing so: ‘the constraints put on the establishment concerned have especially favoured this branch of industry among our neighbours, who exploit it to their advantage’.⁷ The Prefect made his own position

1. These two Simons from Strasbourg should not be confused with Jean Nicolas Victor Simon, a lithographer registered in 1832 and working in Baume-les-Dames (Doubs) (Archives nationales de France, F/18/1904), and Charles Simon, born 8 July 1813 in Toulon (Var), a lithographer working in Marseilles (Archives nationales de France, F/18/1869).

2. Archives nationales de France, F/18.2046.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. Dominique Lerch, ‘Une famille de lithographes et ses implantations: la famille Oberthür à Strasbourg, Bischwiller et Rennes, vers 1818, vers 1893’, *Le vieux papier* 341 (1996), 289–304.

7. Archives nationales de France, F/18.2046.



Fig. 1. Trade advertisement of Émile Simon, [ca 1835], engraved on stone (using a stone also printed in Jean Midolle's *Écritures anciennes* ... (1834–1835)). Image reduced from 259 × 338 mm. (Collection of Sally de Beaumont).

clear, and was supported by the Mayor of Strasbourg and a delegation from the department of Haut-Rhin. And from 1828 to 1833 Frédéric Simon plied his trade as a lithographic printer: the time was right, he noted, because his establishment had been in a 'state almost entirely ruined by the introduction of lithography'.⁸

FRÉDÉRIC ÉMILE SIMON

In 1833 Frédéric Sigismond Simon retired, making way for his son Frédéric Émile, who was born on 8 April 1805 and died in 1881.⁹ Not yet thirty years old, Simon junior was relatively young to take on the responsibility of running a lithographic establishment. A large trade-card, seemingly issued within a few years of his succession, is lettered 'IMPRIMERIE LITHOGRAPHIQUE | E. SIMON Fils, rue du Dôme à STRASBOURG | PLANS, GRAVURE, DESSIN | IMPRESS. EN COULEURS' (Fig. 1). It shows in *trompe l'oeil* form a range of documents representing the kind of work he undertook, or at least hoped to attract. Over the years Émile diversified with the granting of several different

8. *Ibid.*

9. See the obituary notice for Émile Simon in *Revue alsacienne* (1881). A copy of the obituary was preserved by Edouard and Rodolphe Reuss in their 'Epicedia alsatica' archive (Bibliothèques de la ville et de la communauté urbaine de Strasbourg).



licences to practise – as a copperplate printer in 1852,¹⁰ as a bookseller in 1853¹¹ and as a letterpress printer in 1861.¹² These licenses provided a full range of opportunities, from the setting of type and relief printing, alongside lithography for illustrations and decorative work, through to the sale of books and prints. Gaining his licence to practise as a letterpress printer was something of an achievement, since six such printers were already working in Strasbourg at the time. Émile Simon shows himself to have been the inventor of the artistic process of

lithochromy and polychromy using a combination of horizontal lithographic presses and vertical presses for relief printing to reproduce works of art, such as oil paintings, watercolours, sumptuous ornaments, and fine and luxury works¹³

Among the illustrated works he produced using the process are *Pfingstmontag* by J. G. D. Arnold (1850), and the *Description minéralogique et géologique du Bas-Rhin* by Auguste Daubrée (1852), works that Simon disseminated primarily through his own bookshop.¹⁴

In a letter to the Minister of the Interior dated 16 May 1861 he set out the focus of his research as ‘the recent introduction of lithographic processes to the realm of letterpress printing, to which he has made a modest contribution’, arguing that

The costly process of wood-engraving has already been and will to a large extent continue to be replaced, either by lithographic transfers to zinc plates, inked lithographically and etched in relief, or by drawing directly onto such plates, which previously were only used for lithography.¹⁵

10. Rémond, Dien and Chardon aîné & fils in Paris, vouched for his abilities in copperplate printing (Archives nationales de France, F/18/2046).

11. In 1853 the illegal sale of a work came to the notice of the administration. A regularization of the procedures for seeking permission to work as a bookseller was then proposed, the Prefect of Bas-Rhin considering that ‘the submissions of those vouching for their loyalty to the government, and for their morality and capability, have to be favourable.’ If such regularisation were introduced – and it was in the same year – he believed that it would open the way for the

‘extinction of clandestine hawking’ (Archives nationales de France, F/18/2046).

12. The response of a rival in Chalon-sur-Saône, Antoine Landa, suggests that Simon had already achieved recognition at a national level: ‘Mon concurrent direct, la maison qui a le plus de similitude avec la mienne, Emile Simon de Strasbourg, vient d’être nommé typographe’ (‘My immediate competitor, the establishment which has the greatest similarity to mine, that of Emile Simon of Strasbourg, has just been granted the right to work as a letterpress printer’) (letter to the Directeur de l’Imprimerie et de la Librairie at the Ministre de

l’Intérieur, 24 October 1861, Archives nationales de France, F/18/2065).

13. ‘... lithochromie et de polychromie par combinaison des presses lithographiques horizontales et de presses typographiques perpendiculaires pour la reproduction d’œuvres d’art, telles que peintures à l’huile, aquarelles, ornements de luxe, d’ouvrages spéciaux et deluxe’ (Archives nationales de France, F/18/2046).

14. Archives nationales de France, F/18/2046.

15. *Ibid.*



16. '... ayant pour objet le commerce de gravures, lithographies, estampes, articles de peinture, papier, fournitures de bureau, objets d'art et autres articles de ce genre' (Series U, Archives du Bas-Rhin, especially U 2230, 261, 2 December 1843).

17. Referred to and reproduced by Michael Twyman, *A history of chromolithography: printed colour for all* (London: British Library, 2013, p. 428 and fig. 347). Additional details about the partnership have been taken from this source.

18. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinet des estampes et de la photographie, SNR3 Simon. An inventory is annexed.

19. Archives of the Institut national de la propriété intellectuelle (hereafter INPI), 15 rue des Minimes, Courbevoie, where I received a warm welcome from the person in charge, Steeve Gallizia. A thesis by Jérôme Baudry, 'Une histoire de la propriété intellectuelle: les brevets d'invention en France 1791–1844: acteurs, catégories, pratiques' (École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2014), is well worth consulting (but is not held by INPI).

20. Tanya Szrajber, drawing on the archives of the CNAM (Conservatoire national des arts et métiers), raises the question of the import of lithographic machines in 'New documents on early lithography', *Print quarterly* (September 1997) 289–302.

21. Archives nationales de France, F/18/2007, and Charles J. Bolender, 'Joseph Bazin et Félix Louis Jacques: une imagerie sarregueminoise éphémère', *Les cahiers lorrains* 3–4 (2010), 60–69.

22. INPI, 1BB2921.

Simon's business interests expanded too. On 2 December 1843 he went into partnership with several other businessmen to form the 'Magasin Bernard, Simon & Cie' in Strasbourg, initially for five years, 'its aim being to trade in engravings, lithographs, prints, artists' materials, paper, office goods, works of art and similar items'.¹⁶ The arrangement brought together the former house of Bernard, the lithographic establishment of Simon and the book-sellers and stationers Schmidt & Grucker, though the last two of these parties were to continue with their existing businesses independently. A fine chromolithographed document, printed by Simon and dated 30 March 1844, announces the arrangement above the names of 'J^{te} [Jeanette] BERNARD. E^{le} SIMON Fils. CH^s SCHMIDT. G. GRUCKER père'.¹⁷ Gustave Grucker, the son of G. Grucker, was to manage the business.

On the lookout for something else new, Émile Simon published *Cathédrale de Strasbourg d'après le Daguerrréotype*,¹⁸ which was engraved on steel by 'Wagner' (probably Friedrich Wagner, 1803–1876) in 1845. In 1855 Simon took out a patent for 'cartégraphie', which was used for a portrait of Isac Hofstetter, a brewer in Bellelay, who had been assassinated at Plainfaing (Vosges) on 18 December 1854. Cartégraphie was a 'new process of taking transfers and printing from any drawing made with lithographic crayon or ink on ordinary paper' (Fig. 2).¹⁹ In the same period he was awarded the Légion d'honneur at the Paris Exposition universelle of 1855. He had already received a silver medal at the Exposition des produits de l'industrie française in 1839 for a work by Jean Midolle discussed below.

There is little information on the techniques Simon junior employed, or about the machines he used, although there is evidence that he was on the lookout for bargains in the second-hand market.²⁰ For example, in 1852, Joseph Bazin, a lithographer in Sarreguemines went into bankruptcy. It was Simon, one of his creditors, who bought up whatever was 'useful for lithography'.²¹ Essential information about the processes he used can be gleaned from the patents he deposited (now at the Institut national de la propriété industrielle), which gave state protection to his discoveries for fifteen years.

LIST OF FRÉDÉRIC ÉMILE SIMON'S PROCESSES AND PATENTS (FROM THE INPI)

1846 'Appareil à copier les reliefs' ('Apparatus for simulating relief surfaces').²²



Fig. 2. 'Essai de Cartégraphie' by Émile Simon ([1855?]) signed '*Dessiné à la plume sur papier ordinaire par Bossert*'. (Bibliothèque nationale de France).



1846 'Procédé propre à produire des ornements faisant mosaïque, de toute couleur et de toute forme, sur les pierres masses lithographiques ou calcaires, applicables à tout genre d'usages, tels que meubles, objets de fantaisie, parquets'²³ ('Process for producing ornaments in the form of mosaics in any colour or shape, on solid lithographic or calcareous stones, suited to all applications, such as furniture, fancy objects and parquet flooring'). In the patent of 3 December 1846, Simon junior described his invention thus:

After having polished the stone, the drawing is made ... and these parts preserved with a coating of varnish. The stone is then surrounded with a wax border and acid poured over it ... after the parts have been eaten away by the acid to a depth consistent with the delicacy of the drawing, the acid is removed and the stone thoroughly washed. The etched parts are then filled either with stucco, using a bituminous material, or with another material capable of hardening and being coloured. This material having been hardened, the whole surface is polished, leaving the parts of the drawing hollowed out by the acid filled with the material in a form ... in which the 'mosaic' seems to become an integral part of the stone.

1847 'Procédé propre à produire des ornements faisant mosaïque ... [as 1846]'.²⁴ In a certificate of addition of 18 October 1847, Simon extended his patent to cover 'all stones, whatever their composition, provided that it is capable of being attacked by acids and susceptible to receiving a mosaic-style drawing.'

1849 'Procédé de lavis aquatinte lithographique. Brevet d'invention de 15 ans, rue du Dôme'²⁵ ('Process for producing lithographic washes. 15-year patent for an invention, rue du Dôme'). On 8 October 1849 Simon wrote:

The invention rests on the idea of treating a wash drawing with a coating which could produce a grain, either by breaking it up, or otherwise, so that the whole surface can be prepared without the drawing losing its effect, finally, remaining as it was, it takes on the look of an aquatint. Rosin dissolved in spirits of wine is one of the means ...

1851 'Procédé de lavis aquatinte lithographique'²⁶ ('Process for producing lithographic washes'). On 15 February 1851 Simon described a method for 'the application of the same process [as patented in 1849] to the printing of watercolours and prints'.

23. INPI, 1BB4740.

24. INPI, 1BB4740(1).

25. INPI, 1BB8965.

26. INPI, 1BB8965(1).

1851 'Procédé de lavis aquatinte lithographique E. Simon'²⁷ ('E. Simon's process for producing lithographic washes'). Patent for an invention of 14 August 1851. Simon states that

The product differs ... in its essentials from that of ordinary chromolithography in that its plates, being made with the hair brush and in washes, imitate fully water-colour painting, while chromolithography is merely the result of plates printed from flat tints, hatching, ink stippling, crayon, the stump, or coloured crayon work for halftones. These products are different ...

1855 'Procédé d'autographie sur papier ordinaire et préparé. Brevet d'invention de 15 ans'²⁸ ('Process for reproducing handwriting done on ordinary and prepared paper. Patent for 15 years').

1855 'Procédé d'autographie sur papier ordinaire et préparé'²⁹ ('Process for reproducing handwriting done on ordinary and prepared paper'). Certificate of addition for the foregoing.

1856 'Procédé de lavis aquatinte lithographique E. Simon'³⁰ ('E. Simon's process for producing lithographic washes'). 1 August 1856. A certificate of addition for the patents of 1851, for reproducing oil-paintings by 'Eléo-lithochrome'. The process

made it possible to print all tones of the same colour by means of a single impression. The plates and the printing are done as for 'aquarelle' [his method of imitating water-colours], the printing being done on unsized paper, prepared paper or prepared canvas. On completion of the printing, the paper impressions are stuck to the canvas either with starch or gelatine, and passed through a press under great pressure in contact with a plate engraved with hollows to throw [parts of] the oil colours into relief and to attach the paper firmly to the canvas; [they are] then stretched on canvas like an oil painting and subsequently varnished.

Working from the rue du Dôme in Strasbourg, Simon junior engaged in a programme of research between 1845 and 1856 which testifies to his focus on innovation. Furthermore, in 1849 and 1850 he developed a 'product for the manufacture of writing ink in the form of sticks, called Simon's ink'.³¹

An inventory of the work deposited by Simon junior (following legal requirements) by no means covers all his productions. Collectors will no doubt have items to add,³² but having inspected numerous works in the Bibliothèque nationale de France and listed 415 of them, it is possible to identify certain tendencies or trends in the material produced.

26. INPI, 1BB8965(1).

27. INPI, 1BB12113.

28. INPI, 1BB23084.

29. INPI, 1BB23084(1).

30. INPI, 1BB12113.

31. INPI, 1BB8965.

32. Two plates by Simon and three by Jean Midolle are found among other lithographs collected by Ferdinand Reiber. See Rodolphe Reuss, *Catalogue de la collection d'alsatiques (estampes et livres) de Ferdinand Reiber* (Strasbourg: Noiriel, 1896), and also in *Catalogue de la bibliothèque de livres et d'estampes de feu M. Armand Weiss* (Mulhouse: Société industrielle de Mulhouse, 1909).

SUBJECTS COVERED IN SIMON JUNIOR'S COMMERCIAL PRINTS
AND PRINTING

Without doubt religious subjects, represented by fifty-seven plates, more than an eighth of the whole, play an important part. Worth noting is a souvenir produced on the occasion of the *Pèlerinage d'Ittenwiller*, near Barr (Cosmas and Damian), in 1863, and some portraits of clerics and rabbis. A pious Jewish print, showing Moses handing over the tablets of the law to the children of Israel, is also worth noting. Drawn by F. Hagen in 1833 and published by Simon, it was available from the Jewish bookshop of Kuppenheim, 14 quai des Tanneurs in Strasbourg.³³ We can detect a touch of Napoleonic propaganda in the *Fontaine d'alliance*, illustrating the arrival of Marie-Louise (1810), and even in 1842 with *Joséphine impératrice des français*, printed for the publisher Léotard.

Similarly, a charitable strand can be identified with, in 1838, *Au bénéfice de la veuve du maçon Muster et de ses sept enfants*, or even in 1858 with *Stephansfeld en 1834, se vend au profit de l'oeuvre du patronage des aliénés indigents*, or again in 1861 with the *Programme du Théâtre de Wissembourg au bénéfice des pauvres*.

Illustrations, sometimes in incomplete series, include plates for the *Courrier du Bas-Rhin* in 1850, and also another by Goutzwiller, the master of Henner of Altkirch, for the *Revue d'Alsace*. By contrast, two series of illustrative plates show scientific applications: some thirty-one *Feuilles de raisin et raisins de différents cépages* in 1852, as well as, from 1847, twenty anatomical plates accompanied by portraits of teachers in the Faculté du médecine de Strasbourg.³⁴ In total these illustrations account for about one eighth of the whole.

Without having made a detailed breakdown – since a single sheet may carry many different labels – a further eighth can be attributed to the varied field of publicity (especially if one includes labels, of which there are at least twenty-seven; see Fig. 6): heating apparatus of Boyer in Colmar (1836); *La terrine de foie gras aux truffes du Périgord* for Albert Heinrich of Strasbourg; wooden flooring of Girard in Soleure (Switzerland); toilet paper (1856); *Les pipes en vrai merisier* (sic) of Hochapfel near Strasbourg; the *Mousseux de Champagne* or the *Meursault*; the *Hôtel de l'Europe à Bâle* or the *Brasserie Gruber* (Bordeaux, Brussels, Antwerp, Paris, Marseilles, Lyons, Rochefort) in 1867. Nine items alone are devoted to breweries, brewers and brewery displays. And even fifteen plates to the *Haute nouveauté* of Dollfus-Mieg, plus a pharmaceutical advertisement for the treatment of colds and stomach and chest ailments.

33. Cabinet des Estampes, Strasbourg. Image described as no. 266 in the 'Catalogue de l'Exposition de la Bibliothèque Municipale de Strasbourg', *Imprimerie et édition à Strasbourg au XIXe siècle* (Strasbourg: Bibliothèque Municipale, 1975). The use of this image within the Jewish community is evident from its discovery by Claire Descomps and her team while working through the genizah of Bergheim (Haut-Rhin). Communication from Malou Schneider.

34. Jean-Marie Le Minor has highlighted the work of various professors of anatomy at the Faculté de médecine in Strasbourg by drawing attention to anatomical plates published as loose sheets from the sixteenth century, engraved on copper, cut on wood or lithographed. Of particular interest are the plates produced in 1847 by E. Simon for Charles Ehrmann (1826–1867), *Observations d'anatomies pathologiques* (see Jean-Marie Le Minor and Henri Sick, *Anatomie(s) & pathologies: les collections morphologiques de la Faculté de médecine de Strasbourg* (Berhardswiller: I. D. L'édition, 2009), pp. 39, 96). In 1868 Baillièrè published *Nouveaux éléments d'anatomie*, printed throughout by the letterpress printing house of Silbermann in Strasbourg. See also Jean-Marie Le Minor, *Les sciences morphologiques médicales à Strasbourg du XVe au XXe siècle* (Strasbourg: Presses Universitaires, 2002).

Simon junior established a commercial link with several towns. In Altkirch, the print Boehrer published of the sack of Durmenach, which was printed by Simon in 1848, seems to have been a great commercial success.³⁵ With the publication in Barr of a *Souvenir* (9 August 1863), which included portraits of Jacques Dietz, a manufacturer and mayor of Barr, and another of A. G. Venator, a doctor in the town, Simon took on a job in direct competition with Emrich, who set up in the town in 1845 after leaving Strasbourg. Emrich's son recognized and acknowledged Simon's capabilities.³⁶ Strasbourg and its businesses was the theme of an album of 1836, *Strasburger Helje*, and many plates of its cathedral were also published there. Simon, with his base in the town, captured much of this market. He also worked on other local projects, for example *Strasbourg: vue prise de la Porte des Pêcheurs*, which was published by Fietta, a print dealer of Italian origin who had set up in Strasbourg. As far as work relating to Haguenau is concerned, we have in 1862 the *Monument érigé en honneur de St Arbogast*, in 1864 a souvenir of the *Inauguration du chemin de fer vicinal de Niederbronn à Haguenau*, and in 1867 the *Exposition internationale de houblon, bière, du matériel de brasserie*. Simon had to break into the market, because, as was the case in Barr, there was already a lithographic printer working there. Mulhouse is represented by two items, but, in addition, as we have seen, work Simon undertook for the local industrial empire of Dollfus-Mieg, should not be forgotten. Though our sources cannot explain why, Simon also had a foothold in the commercial life of Guebwiller and penetrated its industrial heart, even though a good lithographic printer, Brückert, was already working there. The *Cité ouvrière* by Émile Muller, a civil engineer, was published in Guebwiller by J. J. Bourcart & fils, with a series of plates, one of which was printed by Simon.³⁷ He also published a *Vue d'Altkirch*, which was lithographed by Sandmann. In Wissembourg, the bookseller F. C. Wentzel was licenced from 1833 to sell but not to publish. He had an image of the Virgin Mary published by Pellerin, probably in 1837, soon after he obtained his licence to print lithographically in February of that year. He also printed and sold a pair of plates that had been prepared by Simon junior, portraits of *Ludwig der Erste König von Bayern* (Fig. 3) and *Th[erese]. Königin von Bayern*. In return Simon found himself competing with Wissembourg printers when publishing a *Programme du théâtre au bénéfice des pauvres* in 1861.

Some items Simon printed (magazines, pamphlets and plates) relate to inventions, such as a portable pendulum of Alphonse

35. Musée Alsacien, Strasbourg, referred to by Malou Schneider and Elisabeth Shimmels in 'Etre lithographe dans une petite ville de marché: les Boehrer à Altkirch (1821-vers 1880) et la mise à sac d'un village juif, Durmenachen 1848', *Annuaire de la Société d'histoire du Sundgau* (2015), 191-214.

36. Archives nationales de France, F/18/2047.

37. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinet des estampes et de la photographie, plate 23.



Fig. 3. Lithographic portrait of Ludwig I, drawn on stone by Émile Simon, printed and sold by F. C. Wentzel ([1837?]). Reduced from 375 × 270 mm.



Coanet, a cloth-stretcher ('tendeur à étoffes') of 1862, and to buildings, including views of the factories of Graffenstaden, and even an explanatory view of the construction of a *Pont en maçonnerie*.

Simon's work for the children's market is represented by a *cerf-volant* (a decoratively-printed kite) of 1850, and especially by eighty drawing models of 1853, which account for almost a quarter of his deposited items.

An examination of public and private collections supplies further information, such as a link with the mid-nineteenth-century French lithographer Lemer cier.³⁸ The item in question is a portrait of *Sophie Spielmann, épouse Kubn*,³⁹ drawn after nature by 'Patout', which comes from the series *Assemblée nationale: galerie des représentants du peuple* ('Législatives' 1849).

38. Corinne Bouquin, 'Recherches sur l'imprimerie lithographique à Paris au XIX^e siècle: l'imprimerie Lemer cier (1803–1901)' (thesis, Université de Paris I, Sorbonne, 1993).

39. Cabinet des estampes, Strasbourg, A 510, 'Lettres, dépliants, manuscrits'.

SIMON, PUBLISHER OF MIDOLLE

Simon's greatest achievement in chromolithography was a sumptuous publication by Jean Midolle.⁴⁰ The life of Midolle has been discussed by François Pétry.⁴¹ According to the wording on a lithographic portrait of Midolle in one of his publications, he was born in 1794 in Besançon, or nearby in Choucenne. We then find him working as a writing-master at Belfort, where he ran a calligraphy school. His first publications were printed by Simon junior, and were commented on favourably by the trade journal *Le lithographe* in 1838. Between 1830 and 1837 Midolle worked intermittently as an artist, writer and designer in Geneva, where he also taught calligraphy.⁴² With an interest in the practise and history of calligraphy, Midolle scoured numerous collections in libraries, consulting a variety of manuscripts in Paris, Brussels, Ghent, Lyon, Strasbourg, Nantes, Rennes, Rome, Munich, Florence, Zurich, Geneva and Trèves, as well as religious texts in churches (gospels, missals and lapidary inscriptions). It should be noted that when his *Recueil ou alphabets des lettres initiales historiques et fleurons d'après les 14^{ième} et 15^{ième} siècles* was published in Ghent by Gustave Jacquain in 1846 his son was also involved; thanks to Michael Twyman, we learn of correspondence from the son dating from 1853.⁴³

However, it is the splendid *Écritures anciennes d'après des manuscrits & les meilleurs ouvrages ... gravées & publiées à la lithographie d'Emile Simon fils* (Strasbourg: E. Simon, 1834–1835) which concerns us here (Fig. 4 and 5). The main work consists of forty plates drawn by Simon and put on stone by Emile Lemaître. To these should be added two supplementary works – *Galerie. Compositions avec écritures anciennes et modernes*, and a third series of calligraphic specimens entitled *Spécimen des écritures modernes*, each consisting of forty plates – making 120 plates in all. The plates were the work of at least five people: Simon; Lemaître,⁴⁴ who was then working for Simon having previously spent some time with Godefroy Engelmann in Mulhouse; Auguste Ehrhardt for some of the alphabet plates; Fasoli,⁴⁵ who contributed plate 4 of the *Spécimen des écritures modernes*; and Midolle himself. They include a Napoleonic touch in plates 10 and 17 of the *Galerie*, with their references to recollections of glory and misfortune. The three works seem to have been issued in paper wrappers bearing the title *Oeuvres de Jean Midolle* and, according to Twyman, were also brought together in a single volume as *Album du moyen-âge* (1836). Soon afterwards the three works were reviewed in the first volume of *Le litho-*

40. See also a print of the 'Cathédrale de Strasbourg' of [1850?] in the Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg (NIM 03574). I am grateful to François Pétry for having drawn my attention to this artist and calligrapher, who is still recognized today (see Michel Wassikoffs, *Histoire du graphisme en France* (Paris: Les Arts Décoratifs, 2005), p. 19).

41. François Pétry, exhibition 'Et lettera' (Strasbourg: Médiathèque André Malraux, October 2011).

42. Midolle's work was published by Triebelkorn in Saint-Gall (Switzerland) in 1840. His teaching in Geneva is referred to in a collective study, *Die Lithographie in der Schweiz und die verwandten Techniken ...* (Berne: Verein Schweizerischer Lithographiebesitzer, 1944), pp. 136–139.

43. Twyman (2013, note 17), pp. 88–90. Other English works refer to Midolle, as Bamber Gascoigne does in *Milestones in colour printing 1457–1859* (Cambridge: University Press, 1997, pp. 26–28), whose chronology of chromolithography points to 1834–1836 in Strasbourg and 1837 in Mulhouse (the home-town of Engelmann, who took out a patent for the technique in this year, but had practised it before 1837).

44. Licenced to work as a lithographic printer in 1846 (Archives nationales de France, F/18/2046).

45. Licenced as a lithographic printer in 1844 after having been granted French citizenship (he was born in Hensingen in the Grand Duchy of Baden in 1813).



Fig. 4. Chromolithographed title-plate of the *Galerie* of Jean Midolle's *Ecritures anciennes ...* (1834–1835). Leaf reduced and cropped from 270 × 390 mm. (Musée de l'imprimerie et de la communication graphique, Lyons).

The fine execution of the plates, and the purity of the impressions show just how close lithography is to rivalling engraving. Nothing is more graceful than the specimens printed in two, three and four colours; the harmony of the shades and the brilliance of the colours ensures that in the hands of artists as skilful as M. Simon,⁴⁶ colour lithography is destined to produce masterpieces.⁴⁷

part in the production of this master-piece: 'Whatever the merits of the lithographic artist, the outcome would be nothing if the printer had not applied his intelligence and care to producing quality impressions, especially in the case of chromolithographs ...'.

47. *Le lithographe: journal des artistes et des imprimeurs* 1 (1838), 31–32. Under the editorship of Jules Desportes, teacher of lithography at the Institut royal des sourds-muets in Paris, the same journal

referred in 1842 to the *Méthode d'enseignement du dessin et de l'écriture lithographique* of Mainberger in Strasbourg (*Le lithographe* 3 (1842), 125–126, 256). Among the journal's founding subscribers were Engelmann and Lemerrier; later subscribers included the following names from Alsace: Baffray (Colmar), Brückert (Guebwiller), Hahn and Vix (Colmar), Helbig (Sélestat), Lippmann (Verdun), and Wentzel (Wissembourg).

46. Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, *Peintures murales des chapelles de Notre-Dame de Paris* (Paris: A. Morel, 1870), p. 14, gives credit to trade printers for their

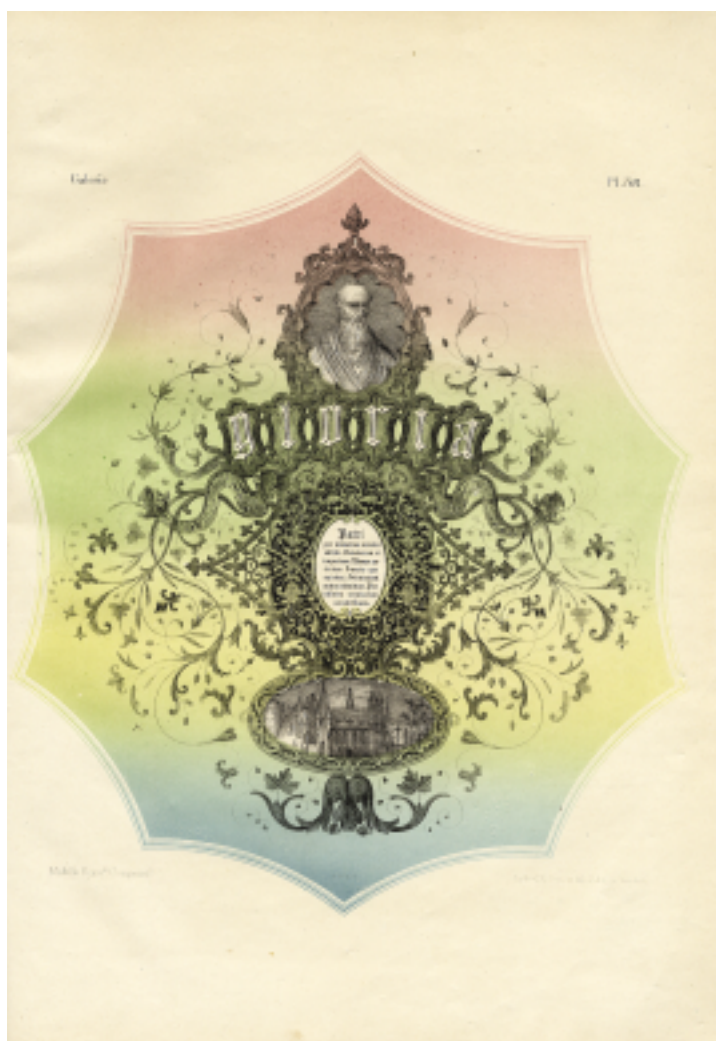


Fig. 5. Plate 38 of the *Galerie* from Jean Midolle's *Ecritures anciennes ...* (1834–1835). Leaf reduced from 390 × 270 mm. (Musée de l'imprimerie et de la communication graphique, Lyon).

PHOTOGRAPHY: A TURNING POINT

As a publisher, Simon junior could be studied equally for his interest in the new process of photography, the more so because it illustrates his great technical curiosity. Thanks to a collection of *Alsatiques photographiques*⁴⁸ it is possible to draw attention to this niche field in publishing. We know through the correspondence of Brion and the sale of Charles Winter's photographs by Fietta in Strasbourg that a new market had opened up for such work.⁴⁹

The following examples of Simon's photographic work have been found:

Strasbourg Cathedral, after a daguerreotype, appears in a booklet, *Principaux monuments de Strasbourg*, which includes a plan of the town and six steel engravings.⁵⁰

48. Christian Kempf, *Les Alsatiques photographiques* (Strasbourg: Vent d'Est, 2015), p. 279.

49. Dominique Lerch, 'Italianische Bilderhändler in Elsass und Lothringen: die Perlasca und Fietta vom Ende des 18. bis ins 20. Jahrhundert', *Bild, Druck, Papier* (2015), 88–104.

50. Cabinet des estampes, Strasbourg; Kempf (2015, note 48), p. 296.



A town plan and fourteen steel-engravings by Wagner, two of them after daguerreotypes, appear in *Vue de Strasbourg et de ces principaux monuments*.⁵¹ Moreover, Wagner's engravings were reprinted from 1844 by a combination of Simon, Bull and Grucker, by Silbermann or Schmitt, and even by Fischenbach.⁵²

L'Alsace et Bâle artistiques dessinées d'après nature et lithographiées, 20 planches imprimées à deux teintes (1854) turns out not to be a collection of lithographs but original mounted photographs.

THE RETURN OF THE FATHER: THE SON RETIRES?

Frédéric Sigismond Simon had handed over his business to his son Émile in 1833. But ten years later, on 29 April 1843, when he was sixty-nine, Frédéric took over the business of Louis Laurent Havard,⁵³ who had obtained a licence to set up a lithographic press on the recommendation of Carl, Deputy for the department of Bas-Rhin. Frédéric remained in business for only five years because, in turn, he was replaced by Jules Achille Nicolet on 15 July 1848, Frédéric Emile and Decker & Hahn of Colmar vouching for the competence of this newcomer. Thus it seems that between 1843 and 1848 there were two separate Simon lithographic establishments, one run by the father, one by the son.

On 14 July 1868 a licence to work as a lithographer in Strasbourg was granted to Émile Haberer. He had been a student in Strasbourg, and then worked as principal artist and lithographic writer for Simon. His application for a licence records that he was employed '... for more than nine years in the studios of Simon, one of the most important lithographers in Strasbourg. [and that] For a long while he tried to obtain a licence in the town by transfer, but his attempts having failed, he is applying today for a completely new licence'.⁵⁴ Lithographs in the Cabinet des Estampes, Strasbourg, reveal that Haberer succeeded Simon junior, with Hubert as an associate, probably on Simon's death in 1881.⁵⁵

SIMON JUNIOR, AN EXPERT IN COLOUR REGIONALLY AND AT A EUROPEAN LEVEL

We have to thank Michael Twyman for an exceptional study of Simon's published work, and particularly for an examination of his use of colours. Some of the earliest examples of five-colour work are to be found in the plates Simon printed for *Fables et poésies choisies de Théophile-Conrad Pfeffel*, translated from the Alsatian by

51. Kempf (2015, note 48), p. 299.

52. Lerch (2015, note 49).

53. The Cabinet des estampes, Strasbourg, holds lithographs printed by Havard (from drawings by Gabriel Guérin) and others printed by Frédéric Simon.

54. Archives nationales de France, F/18/2045.

55. See also, in the Cabinet des Estampes, Strasbourg, a calendar for 1888 printed by Haberer.

Paul Lehr (Strasbourg: Silbermann & L. Durivaux, 1840). This book includes a fine lithographic title-page in a style that recalls that of Engelmann's *Album chromolithographique* (1837). There is a vignette on each of its four part-titles, printed in a combination of red, blue, green, gold and black, the final one without the blue. In each case the black workings were 'engraved' on stone and the blue dusted with powdered pigment. A common feature is that part of the black working of each image was kept free of colour, thereby revealing the essence of the drawing. The book establishes a clear link between the two main colour printers in Strasbourg, Simon junior and Gustave Silbermann,⁵⁶ who had just begun his experiments in printing in colour from relief surfaces. Simon was responsible for the chromolithographed pages of *Fables et poésies*, which were made after drawings by Georges Zipélius, a wallpaper-designer and decorative painter. Silbermann co-published the book and printed its text, which is surrounded by decorative borders, the colour of which varies from one spread to another.⁵⁷

We know that around the time Simon went into partnership with Bernard in December 1843 he added beige and sepia to his palette of colours. Ten years after the early death in April 1839 of Godefroy Engelmann (one of the founders of French lithography and the inventor of chromolithography),⁵⁸ Simon junior had become the finest lithographer in Alsace. The publication of Midolle's work assured his fame, which is underlined by Twyman in his *A history of chromolithography*; Twyman calls him 'the region's leading chromolithographer'.⁵⁹ Simon's reputation was acknowledged by the award of the Légion d'honneur, by medals obtained at exhibitions (for example in 1855 at the Exposition universelle, when France was recognized for its achievements in lithography through the work of Lemer cier, Dopter,⁶⁰ Engelmann, Oberthür⁶¹ and Simon, although at the London exhibition of 1851 Simon had a lower profile.⁶²

56. Henri Silbermann of Strasbourg (1801–1876) took over from his father (who is recorded in 1788 as a letterpress printer) in 1833, and obtained a licence to work as a bookseller in 1856. A contributor to all the major European exhibitions (London 1851, 1862, Paris 1855, Turin 1859), he was awarded the Légion d'honneur in 1849. With Louis Henri Brevière, a wood-engraver at the Imprimerie royale,

he produced trials of printing in colour (gold and silver). At this period, the champagne houses of France were putting out their label printing to Frankfurt for a total sum of 15,000 francs. In an attempt to capture this market Silbermann obtained a licence to work as a lithographic printer in 1867, thanks to the support of the Prefect of Bas-Rhin, who wrote: 'In addition, Mr Silbermann owns

one of the largest presses in the provinces; the leader in the field in France, he has been engaged in relief printing in colours, and the volumes and plates that have left his workshops demonstrate that this manufacturer, a master of his art, has not stopped in his path towards progress' (Archives nationales de France, F/18/2046). Worthy of mention are a geological map of his, printed in nine colours, and his sheets of colour-printed images of soldiers, 120,000 of which were sold at 10 centimes a sheet in France, Germany and England (*Annales de l'imprimerie* (1851), 146–147; see Jean-Pierre Klein, *Les petits soldats de Strasbourg* (Schirmeck: Gyss, 1985).

57. Twyman (2013, note 16), pp. 146–147.

58. Léon Lang, *Godefroy Engelmann imprimeur lithographe: les incunables 1814–1817* (Colmar: Alsatia, 1977).

59. Twyman (2013, note 17), p. 429.

60. Dominique Lerch, 'Une grande entreprise d'imagerie de dévotion: la famille Dopter (1831–1879–1896)', *Images militantes, images de propagande (édition électronique)*, edited by Christian Amalvi. [Arles], *Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques (CTHS)*, 2010. Available at: <http://cths.fr/ed/edition.php?id=5483>.

61. Lerch (1996, note 6).

62. Twyman (2013, note 17), p. 429.



Fig. 6. Chromolithographed label for a champagne bottle. An example of Simon's commercial work in the medium.

It is evident therefore that French lithography needs to reposition this small group of Alsatian lithographers, several of whose names illuminate the history of lithography and chromolithography, and to consider them alongside the lithographers of Paris, Lyons, Toulouse and Bordeaux. All this is to assume that as much credit is given to lithography and chromolithography as to the well covered fields of book-history, publishing and letterpress printing. Such credit is owed to these Alsations as much for their invention as for their achievements, whether in ephemera and jobbing printing (civil, religious, official or commercial, as in Fig. 6), book illustrations or pictorial prints.

(Translated by Michael Twyman)