

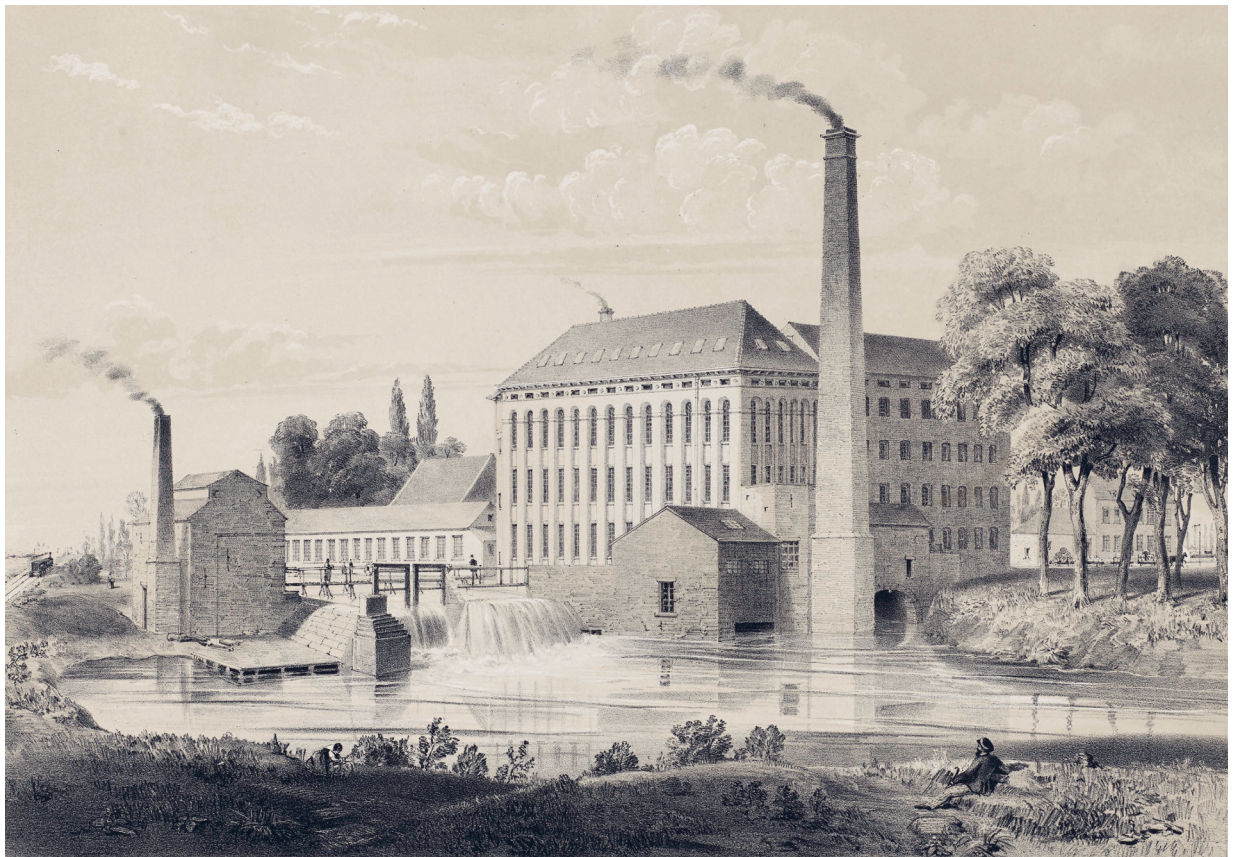


fig. 1 Cotton spinning mills, flour mills, and oil mills in Eizingen, near Halle. *Filature de coton, moulins à farine & à l'huile*, lithograph by Adrien Canelle from *Belgique industrielle*, 1855, plate 1.

A Picturesque Garden
as Production Facility

In his *Guide pittoresque du voyageur en Belgique* of 1838, Alexandre Ferrier describes the Belgians as a people whose simple, economic, patient, and hardworking nature largely accounts for the prosperity of their country.¹ This claim opens the introduction to his guidebook, which outlines the social context supposedly creating the conditions that really matter to the traveler: the cultural landscape, evoked by Ferrier through the descriptions of his visits to the nation's main cities and their most picturesque sites and buildings. Ferrier does not pay any further attention to prosperity and industrialization beyond these introductory remarks, casting them as self-evident conditions requiring no explanation. The limited consideration of industry is characteristic of numerous Belgian albums and travel guides from the first half of the nineteenth century. This negligence hints at a particular challenge the rapid industrialization of Belgium posed to the creators of travel guides and albums: how to reconcile such change with the ambition to represent and advertise picturesque and historic sites?

Ferrier did point out that Belgian industrialization received international attention and acclaim.² Indeed, the Belgian government actively promoted the industrial conditions that characterized Belgium. In 1841 it set up an industrial museum in Brussels. In 1847, on the occasion of the Exposition de l'industrie in Brussels, the museum's first director, Jean-Baptiste Ambroise Marcellin Jobard (1792–1861), declared that Belgium embodied the necessary though as yet underexploited potential to “become a rich and powerful center of production” and “the model workshop of the continent.”³ This “workshop” attracted travel writers and journalists who wanted to see industrial developments with their own eyes and report on it in the written press or in the books they published afterward about their travel adventures.⁴ Some of them were intrigued by how the country's industrial development was administered and steered politically, as Michel Chevalier describes in his travel report on industrial policy in Europe, which includes detailed textual overviews of industrial conditions in Belgium.⁵ Other authors were keen to transmit their lived experience to the reader in a more vigorous manner. The French author and literary critic Désiré Nisard wrote detailed and lively descriptions of his journey through the industrialized Meuse valley in and around Liège, including a visit to the steel factory of John Cockerill in Seraing and a descent into the coal mine of Nouvelle-Espérance. These were published as short stories in the *Revue de Paris* and the Belgian newspaper *L'Indépendant*, and collected a few years later in Désiré Nisard's book *Souvenirs de voyage*.⁶ That industrialization, which was also the driving force behind the construction of the railway network, was crucial for the development of tourism, enabling quick and efficient tours of the country, as various guidebooks for railway passengers in the second half of the nineteenth century illustrate.⁷

At the same time, the industrial landscape, and particular its visual representation, did not easily fit into the tourist imaginary of the country. Industry gave rise to hitherto unseen infrastructure, immense technical installations, and large-scale factory buildings without historical precedents, which lent themselves to anything but picturesque conventions; they could not simply be deemed “suitable as a subject for a painting.”⁸ As a consequence, visual representations of industry in albums and illustrated guidebooks are rare, especially considering how important industrial

development was in the discourse on Belgium. The impressive album *Voyage pittoresque dans le Royaume des Pays-Bas* by Jean-Joseph De Cloet, published in 1825, a visual survey of the kingdom's most characteristic picturesque scenes through 202 lithographs, dedicates no more than four images to industrial sites.⁹ In *La Belgique monumentale et pittoresque* from 1844 only two images refer to industry. The first shows Le grand Hornu, one of the first modern mining complexes of the early nineteenth century, where workers were housed alongside the coal mining installations. The second image is a drawing of a family of miners—father, mother, and children as workers—that embodies the industrious character of the Belgians of which Ferrier speaks.¹⁰

fig. 1

A major album of two hundred lithographs of industrial establishments, *Belgique industrielle*, published in 1855, on time for the Paris Exposition universelle, by the Brussels publisher Jules Géruzet, was able to negotiate that tension between the conventions of picturesque representation and the celebration of industry. Resolving this tension was not merely a matter of graphic representation or the picturesque representation of Belgium; it also involved acknowledging socio-cultural changes. These can be traced in various publications on industrial development, as well as in uses of the relatively new medium of landscape lithographs. Together with the *Livre des adresses de l'industrie Belge*, also published by Géruzet in 1855, *Belgique industrielle* contributed to shaping an image of Belgium as a “model workshop” by foregrounding the industrial apparatus as a showcase for the nation. However, *Belgique industrielle* deals with far more than just industry. The connection, established in the publication, of the new industry with the well known world surrounding it, facilitated by the large scale of the lithographs and the attention the artists lavished on their subjects, would lend the industrial future of Belgium added and enduring momentum.

Géruzet's *Belgique industrielle* and *Livre des adresses*

Géruzet's *Belgique industrielle* has received considerable attention in historiography, in contrast to the publisher's *Livre des adresses*. Nevertheless, the two books are closely related, both instruments to guide the traveler-entrepreneur through industrial Belgium. While *Belgique industrielle* employs large-scale lithographs of industrial establishments to evoke a landscape of industry, the *Livre des adresses* is a list of the most important factories of the nation. Like *Belgique industrielle*, this small travel guide was published on the occasion of the Exposition universelle that took place in Paris from May 15 to November 15, 1855.¹¹ This world's fair was housed in a number of pavilions in the center of Paris along the Champs Elysées, the Palace of the Industry its main building. Officially titled Exposition universelle des produits de l'agriculture, de l'industrie et des beaux-arts, the exhibition was intended to surpass the first similar event at the Crystal Palace in London four years earlier. Belgium was prominent at the Paris fair, covering a surface area that was surpassed only by France, the United Kingdom, the German states, and Austria.¹² This massive presence, 698 companies and entrepreneurs, is no surprise, since France was a crucial market for Belgian products, which included a large percentage of the coal excavated in the mining basins in the south of Belgium.¹³

fig. 2

Among the Belgian entrepreneurs and companies attending the fair was Jules Géruzet (1817–1874), the publisher of *Belgique industrielle* and the *Livre des adresses*.¹⁴ Géruzet's presence there (along with two other Belgian lithographers, Edouard-Alexis Daveluy from Bruges and G. Jacqmain from Ghent¹⁵), and the publication of the address book and the album seem to have been the culmination of Géruzet's labour and investment in the preceding years.¹⁶ Géruzet had been working in Brussels as a publisher since 1839, and from beginning in the early 1850s, he had

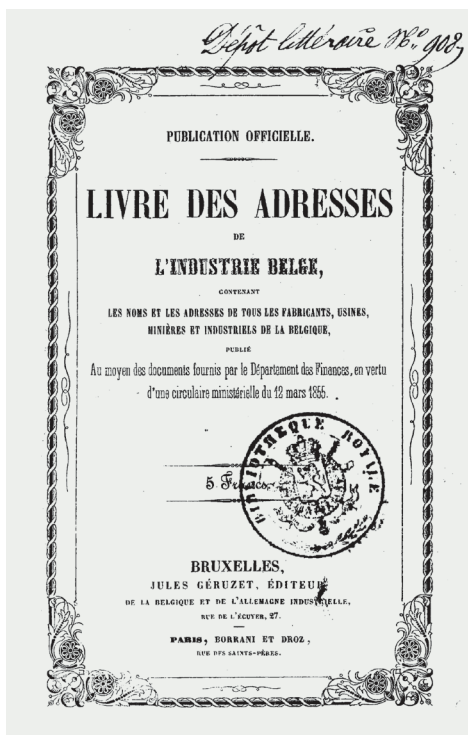
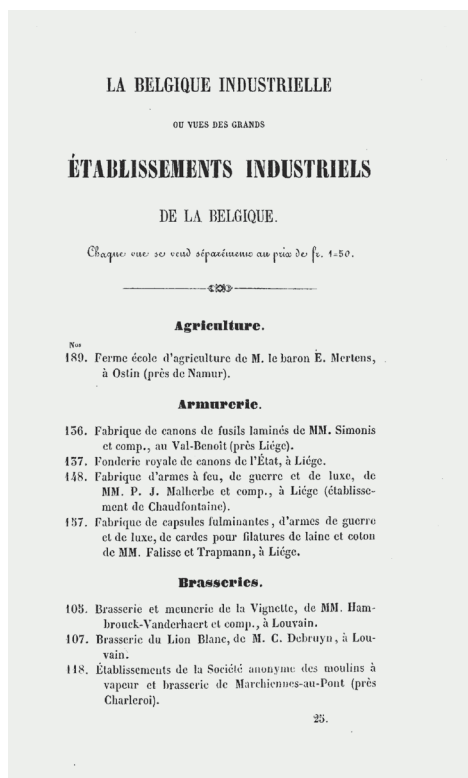
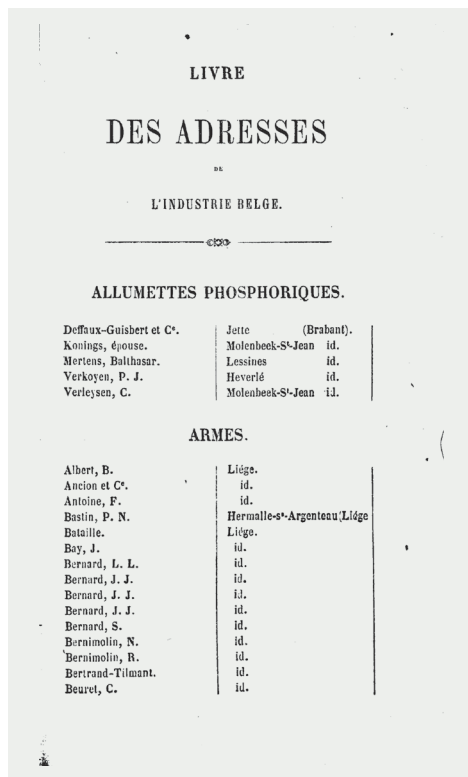


fig. 2 The *Livre des adresses de l'industrie Belge*, published by Jules Géruzet in 1855.



commissioned a number of artists to make drawings for the series of lithographs for *Belgique industrielle*. The majority were done by Adrien Canelle (89 drawings), Edwin Toovey (81 drawings), and Guillaume Victor van der Hecht (23 drawings), with a few others by Antoine Claessens (2), Antoine Voncken (2), and Gustave Gerlier (1).¹⁷ The lithographs were produced by the firm Simonau & Toovey in Brussels, founded by Gustave Simonau and William Toovey (brother of Edwin) around 1844. The firm published an impressive number of albums on various topics until the late 1860s, such as monumental and picturesque views from various European countries, annual overviews of the nobility (“Annuaire de la noblesse”), illustrated studies of animals, and catalogues of religious art objects. Simonau & Toovey gradually optimized the technique of lithography, winning several awards for their high-quality albums.¹⁸

Although with this album G  ruset delivered his masterpiece, high production costs probably made it unsuitable for large-scale distribution. The production of the two hundred drawings was expensive and time consuming. Fieldwork was required by the producers of the lithographs to depict the extensive industrial sites and the surrounding landscape—as evidenced by many lithographs where an artist is working in the foreground, with a view on the factories and environment. Albums with bound lithographs were generally commissioned by wealthy companies, such as the Vieille Montagne zinc factory, which had published its own album of thirty lithographs made by Adolphe Maugendre in the same period as *Belgique industrielle*.¹⁹ G  ruset’s album of Belgium’s industrial sites was likely financed, at least in part, by the companies depicted—one image for each company, meaning two hundred companies were involved. The lithographs were a means to enhancing their status.²⁰ Being portrayed in a lithograph enshrined each company within a series of images that supposedly showed the “canon” of Belgian industry. Today, individual lithographs are held by many libraries, while only a few copies of the entire album are preserved.²¹

The album is in fact a compilation of the two hundred lithographs with almost no text. A map of Belgium on the first pages indicates the locations of the companies, guiding the reader on an imaginary journey paired with the images of the industrial sites. The map is accompanied by a table of contents that identifies all companies and categorizes their different types of industry.²² The only other text in the album consists of brief descriptions of the companies (owners and products) and their locations, as captions beneath each lithograph.

The *Livre des adresses*, Géruzet's second publication produced on time for the fair, provides an important additional apparatus to *Belgique industrielle*. The purpose of the *Livre* was to help entrepreneurs and industrialists in their search for trade in the Belgian market.²³ After a brief general introduction, 300 pages devoted to companies follow, organized in two types of register. The first is an alphabetical listing of industrial categories, ranging from "Allumettes phosphoriques," "Armes," "Brasseurs," and "Briques" to "Verreries" and "Zinc (laminaires de)."²⁴ The names of companies within each category are listed alphabetically in a column on the lefthand side of the page, with their location (only the town or village, no street names) on the right. Intended as an instrument for the entrepreneur or industrialist, the list reveals the rich and extensive range of products the nation had to offer to visitors of the world fair. The connection of the *Livre* with *Belgique industrielle* is made explicit in the second method of organization: a simple list of the companies depicted in the lithographs.²⁵ With this list, much shorter than the list produced via the first method, this small but ambitious travel guide acts as a kind of back-catalogue by referring to Géruzet's main achievement as a publisher.²⁶ The *Livre* duly mentions that the lithographs are sold individually, at 1.50 francs each.

A comparison of the two registers in the *Livre* sheds additional light on the composition of *Belgique industrielle*. While the companies of the *Livre* are evenly distributed over the Belgian territory, most establishments depicted in *Belgique industrielle* are situated in the south of the country, where the coal mines and the steel and glass industries were the driving force behind industrialization. The textile industry in the north is almost entirely absent. To distinguish the many factories in the south, the overview map in *Belgique industrielle* contains two larger-scale insets by which to more easily situate the lithographs from the regions of Mons-Charleroi and Liège-Verviers. The overall image of industrial Belgium in the album thus coincides to a large extent with the so-called Sillon industriel, the industrial basin stretching along the Sambre, Meuse, and Vesdre rivers, from Mons, Charleroi, and Namur to Liège and Verviers. However, the prominence of this highly industrialized region does not mean that only the most prestigious, productive, or technologically advanced companies are included in the album. It depicts small family businesses next to the large companies in which the Belgian banks invested their money. Some of the companies in the album existed for only a short period, while others were still at the forefront of Belgian industry one hundred years after the publication of the album.²⁷ In this sense, the album does not present a top two hundred of the most performative companies but rather served as a platform to present the Belgian production apparatus, which grew organically in cities, along navigable watercourses, and in coal basins, as a coherent and efficient ensemble that could guarantee prosperous further development of the nation. Among the pictures are large industrial sites with buildings and installations specifically dedicated to production, as well as companies that operated in large barns or converted abbeys for the purpose. Some of the prints focus on the company buildings while others attempt to contextualize the companies as part of a picturesque landscape, where factories are part of a setting of well-designed gardens, forests, meandering rivers, and scenic views.²⁸

According to the historians Bart Pluymers and Suzy Pasleau, the period from 1830 to 1850 was the end of the (first) Industrial Revolution, characterized by the consolidation of an industrial-technical structure that had to prepare the nation for the future. It is this consolidated structure that is revealed in *Belgique industrielle* and presented to the international market economy as a coherent and appealing production facility; the world fair in Paris was an important springboard from which to launch this framing.²⁹ In this framing, the historical coincidences that initiated the industrial development—the presence of ores, coal, and labour force on the one hand and the technical equipment of the industrial revolution that made it possible to exploit the territory more rapidly on the other hand—are thematized and brought together, while other potentially disturbing elements are left out. The album creates the image of an environment where picturesque characteristics and unrestrained industrial development seem to co-exist in harmony and dialogue. It is in this exercise of assembling a historical moment that the lithographs in the album *Belgique industrielle* play a crucial role, appealing to both the eye *and* the imagination of the viewer. This imagination is stimulated through the multiple ways companies—i.e., their industrial buildings—are contextualized in the lithographs, rendering visible the relationships between factories and human figures, soil and landscape, nature and infrastructure. They situate depictions of existing infrastructure in an idealized, abstracted, or “refurbished” context that creates a starting point for potential narratives about the depicted factories, allowing the beholder to approach the industry from different angles. Some narratives appeal to the imagination, others are more down to earth. The lithographs thus occupy a particular position between reality and fiction, merging the concrete with the fantastic.

In 1995, a new version of *Belgique industrielle* was published, edited by Bart Van der Hertten, Michel Oris, and Jan Roegiers. It includes annotations, providing context for many of the two hundred lithographs for the first time.³⁰ The interpretation of the architecture situates the buildings between “La ville idéale de Chaux” by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux and the “Cité industrielle” by Tony Garnier.³¹ This new edition reads the industrial buildings in the lithographs against the background of a richly variegated set of (pre-)industrial references, with Nikolaus Pevsner’s book *A History of Building Typologies* of 1976 as a guide for characterizing the architecture of industrial Belgium.³² Although such reading of the lithographs is extremely seductive, as the many and often noncommittal reuses of images drawn from *Belgique industrielle* from the 1980s onward demonstrate, it remains to be seen whether this kind of interpretation reveals the precise stakes in *Belgique industrielle*.³³ Perhaps the meaning and significance of *Belgique industrielle* resides in the medium of the lithograph itself and in the context in which the lithographs were published rather than in the architecture they depict. After all, the album itself is short on any explicitly stated architectural ambition.

Alternative keys for reading the album are provided by the activities of Jean-Baptiste Ambroise Marcellin Jobard.³⁴ During the 1820s, Jobard had published a few comprehensive and important albums with lithographs, depicting the picturesque highlights—monuments, castles, ruins—of the Low Countries, which met with great success. Immediately after he published *Voyage pittoresque* by De Cloet in 1825, Jobard produced a second album of over two hundred plates, *Châteaux et monuments des Pays-Bas faisant suite au Voyage Pittoresque*.³⁵ In 1830 he made preparations for the *Album pittoresque des Pays-Bas faisant suite au Voyage Pittoresque*, which remained unfinished.³⁶ Very little is known about his relationship with Gêruzet, a Brussels contemporary and competitor. However, as Marie-Christine Claes has found, in a newspaper article from *Le Courrier belge* of September 26, 1839, Jobard writes about a recently published book by a certain Louis Labarre (allegedly a sworn enemy of Jobard). This book was published by Gêruzet, whom he names for the occasion as “imprimeur de toutes les niaiseries de la littérature incomprise” (“publisher of all the nonsense of misunderstood literature”).³⁷

Shortly after the publication of this damning statement, Jobard became the first director of the industrial museum in Brussels. As a strong advocate for a far-reaching industrialization of Belgium, over the following decades he produced numerous publications on industrialization, including the *Bulletin du Musée de l'industrie* (for which he was responsible from 1841 to 1861). In the 1850s Jobard also reported extensively on “new inventions” presented at the Paris World Fair of 1855.³⁸ Jobard’s remarkable *Comment la Belgique peut devenir industrielle: Dialogue sur l’organisation de l’industrie*, published in 1846, forms an important point of reference, as does his publication of De Cloet’s *Voyage pittoresque*, for an enriched understanding of *La Belgique industrielle* as a collection of lithographs thematizing industry.

Jobard's *Comment la Belgique peut devenir industrielle* is structured as a fictitious dialogue between father and son. In a twenty-four-page conversation, the father teaches his son about the unprecedented—and according to him still underused—potential of Belgian industry, but he also elaborates on the risks of industrial development for factory owners and investors. Although this discussion at times comes across as particularly childlike and moralizing to the contemporary reader, theirs is a weighty dialogue about substantial state affairs. The very fact that this literary form, an amusingly written dialogue on an economic theme, is being used reveals how, in the middle of the nineteenth century, people like Jobard were looking for ways to draw attention to industry

and create some necessary impetus for a new industrial world whose future was promising but also highly uncertain. During the conversation, the father points out that Belgium is by no means as industrialized as people from other European countries would like to believe. According to the father, the praiseworthy Belgian products on display at international exhibitions are all too often still being made according to traditional methods, in “attics without many tools,” not a process of the kind that would elevate Belgium to a prominent position in the industrial world.³⁹ What is at stake for the father is not the quality of the labor itself but the availability of industrial infrastructure and equipment.

Published a decade later, *Belgique industrielle* can be read as a visual response to the father’s concerns, in that it portrays Belgium as an impressive army of companies and industrial infrastructure, ready to meet the needs of the international market taking shape at the first world’s fairs in London and Paris. The album also responds to a second concern, argued by the father. It would be extremely detrimental to industry, he says, if the land—with all its resources—were to be conceived as a garden that belongs to everyone, where everyone can harvest the fruits of the plants that another has sown. In such a garden one is as unlikely to plant a strawberry bush as to set up an industrial enterprise.⁴⁰ It is precisely this view of the Belgian territory that the images of *Belgique industrielle* reinforce: the buildings of industry giving shape to an industrial Belgium fully occupy the image that is dedicated to them, and by doing so they seem to gain control over the world surrounding them. From the industrial building emerges a number of storylines that fill the entire scene: sometimes the infrastructure that serves a factory extends into the surrounding landscape, sometimes the buildings fill the frame completely, without a glimpse of what happens outside industry. In this way, consciously or not, Géruzet’s album visually banishes other storylines, not to mention ideologies, from the picturesque and highly productive garden of industry. The possible ideological undertones of this gesture are made explicit by the father in Jobard’s dialogue: “C’était pour te le rappeler et te faire bien comprendre que l’industrie est un nouveau monde à partager, et qu’on ne peut le laisser en proie au communisme, si l’on veut qu’il soit cultivé.”⁴¹

fig. 5, 6

To cultivate this new industrial world, the makers of *Belgique industrielle* explore the limits of their new visual medium and its evocative power—in images, not words. The album is not only an imaginary tour through a nicely polished version of mid-nineteenth century industrialized Belgium; it is also a subtle tool by which to reframe a tumultuous era. Despite the wide vistas in individual lithographs that suggest a worldly outlook on the nation’s territory and the everyday life unfolding there, the album is a particularly hermetic construction: much of the everyday reality of the period is not reflected in the images—at least not in a directly accessible way. The idealization that is proper to the genre of the picturesque view is activated at a time when Belgian industrialization became not only consolidated but also highly contested. Pressing social issues are present in the images precisely because they are pertinently absent. The representation of various production sites as garden-like settings for factory buildings or as village-like rural landscapes suspended any possible belief that industry would interrupt a long history of the land, of its cultivation and its social conventions. The industrial apparatus seems to grow from the soil, as if part of the “natural history” of any given place. It is comparable to the cherry tree that Jobard mentions, set within an orchard, where the focus is not revolution or the turning upside down of old habits. The cherry orchard, the garden, the countryside—all focus on production and self-preservation, the same focus *Belgique industrielle* adopts in its representation of industry.

fig. 5 The garden in front of the flannel factory in Francmont, near Verviers. *Fabrique de flanelles*, lithograph by Guillaume Van der Hecht, from *Belgique industrielle*, 1855, plate 60.

fig. 6 The rolling mills, blast furnaces, forges, foundries, and factories in the rural village landscape of Montigny-sur-Sambre, near Charleroi. *Laminoirs, hauts-fourneaux, forges, fonderies et usines*, lithograph by Adrien Canelle, from *Belgique industrielle*, 1855, plate 74.



5



6

The versatile—and exceptional—modus operandi of the lithographs in *Belgique industrielle*, published by Géruzet, comes into sharp relief when it is compared with the earlier *Voyage pittoresque* by De Cloet and published by Jobard. Reading *Belgique industrielle* as a sequel to *Voyage pittoresque*, where industry is notably absent, shows how the lithographs in Géruzet's album develop a more sophisticated visual approach, better able to capture visually the complex industrial developments of the mid-nineteenth century.

The structure of *Voyage pittoresque* is strikingly similar to that of *Belgique industrielle*: a sequence of around two hundred lithographs preceded by a map showing the locations of the various views. The combination of map and lithographs allows one to make a journey, but strictly speaking neither publication is a travel report. However, as its title indicates, De Cloet's book aims to evoke a picturesque tour around the country, whereas Géruzet's title only announces views ("vues") of Belgium's industry. De Cloet's lithographs are paired with a page of text on the facing page, while Géruzet's publication contains only short identifying captions. The two also vary in the way each image tells its story.

Each lithograph in *Voyage pittoresque* appears to have a single main subject. A simple "one-two" exercise is performed: a main theme (church, castle, cave, landscape, ruin, monument) is flanked or accompanied by a smaller scene in the foreground or at the edge of the image (people strolling through, a carriage or a ship passing by, a bridge over the river). Main theme and sub-theme can talk to each other or stand on their own, but they do not open up the conversation to other elements in the image. The image is built up around the main object that defines the storyline of the lithograph and is thus in some way emphasized or idealized.

The lithographs in *Belgique industrielle* operate in a completely different manner. Several narratives co-exist within the pictorial space and provide context for the industrial buildings. In the multitude of detail and variety of scenes, industry is embedded within a larger story, each lithograph making real the prospect of an industrial Belgium, not a picturesque setting.⁴² The lithographs are not simply elaborated or enriched architectural drawings (perspectives, facades) that show the "grandeur" of the architecture of the industrial buildings. Rather, the buildings are the points of convergence between the various storylines and connect different scenes in different lithographs throughout the album.

The larger storyline in *Belgique industrielle* can be told in part because of the larger size of the lithographs, 59 centimeters across, considerably wider than those in De Cloet's album, around 21 centimeters across. But the surface area of lithographs not only allows for more content. Both the 1995 reprint of *Belgique industrielle* and De Cloet's album of 1825 reveal the effect of smaller lithographs. The reprint is considerably smaller than the original, each lithograph being 35 centimeters wide, which allows the human eye to obtain a better overview of the entire scene. The images can thus be read like pages of a book. The same goes for *Voyage pittoresque*, whose images are even smaller, the attention of the reader more deliberately guided. Sharp contours of buildings and activities concentrate attention on the foreground, while the background tends to be less detailed and even blurred.

Opening the original album of *Belgique industrielle* is a very different experience. A visual spectacle unfolds. Glancing at a lithograph, one does not know where to look, due to the quantity and precision of detail that the much larger size allows. The potential of the lithograph technique is exploited to its fullest capacity. The reader—beholder is probably a better word in the case of this album—constantly needs to change viewing distance, which turns the act of looking at the album's lithographs into a highly physical experience. The reader looks closely at some small

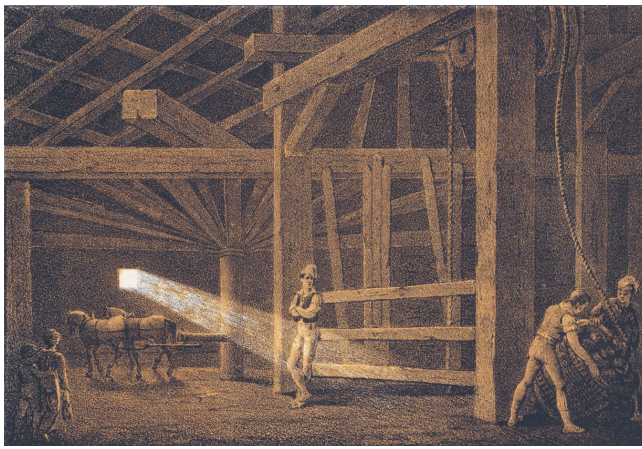


fig. 8 Laboring at a coal pit near Charleroi. *Fosse à houille près de Charleroi*, lithograph by Jean-Baptiste Madou after a drawing by General Anton de Howen, from *Voyage pittoresque* by De Cloet, 1825, plate 48.

scene, then takes a step back to get an overview, before zooming in again on some other scene elsewhere in the lithograph. While the industrial buildings and sites are the central theme, they can never be separated entirely from numerous surrounding smaller scenes of action, drawn with a sense of precision.

For example, one image in *Belgique industrielle* is of an open landscape in Marchienne-au-Pont, near Charleroi. This is the region where the coal industry developed over the course of the nineteenth century, and this lithograph shows the beginning of this process. The three largest smoking chimneys, left, centre, and right, rise next to buildings that cover the entrances to coal mines. No element dominates this indeterminate landscape, which creates a rather desolate impression. In the foreground, in what appears to be the shadow of a cloud, a farmer is ploughing a piece of land. A sunken railway line and the bridge that crosses it indicate the investments that have been made to open up this barren land, where the wealth is to be found underground. In the middle ground, left and right from the chimney of the coal mining facilities, are some blocks of buildings with many windows, probably workers' housing. In the margin of the various coal mines, scenes unfold, on a tiny scale, that betray the activity in this landscape: wooden beams are prepared for shoring up the galleries in the mine; a cart is being loaded or unloaded; a horseman is on his way to one of the mines; beyond the chimney in the left foreground, several ships are waiting on a waterway to be loaded or unloaded; on the bank, a few smoking ovens for the production of coke from coal can be seen. That is how *Belgique industrielle* represents the coal industry: as a collection of small scenes of activity, some showing more traditional practices of working on the land, others more innovative or industrial.

In *Voyage pittoresque*, De Cloet provides only one scene about the coal industry in Belgium, from the region around Charleroi. This lithograph shows the grim dark space built above a mine pit, horses and men working to bring up the coal. The message is clear, simple, and direct. Some thirty years later, the lithograph from *Belgique industrielle* on a similar topic requires time, associations, and reflection on part of the beholder. It necessitates a close look at one corner of the litho, followed by a close look at another corner on an entirely different subject. The story—in its totality—becomes comprehensible only in the process of moving from one scene to another. However, the increased complexity that results from it also comes with a risk. It is the risk of ending up with a fragmented story for those beholders who do not engage with the image as intended by the artists and publisher—a story that cuts the architecture loose from the world. This story reduces *Belgique industrielle* to a set of remarkable industrial buildings in what is intended to be read as an authentic landscape. The increased complexity increases the risk of misinterpretation and puts the burden on the beholder to move through *Belgique industrielle*.

The image and its margins

In her extensive study of the depiction of landscape in nineteenth-century albums and books in Belgium, Lut Pil writes how the lithographic album functions as a “kaleidoscopic multitude” where “the focus is not on the individual image, but on a multitude of images that resemble, interact with and differ from each other.”⁴³ This is definitely the case for the De Cloet album, where the topics of the lithographs do not always correspond with the harsh reality that is captured in the accompanying texts. *Belgique industrielle* is a different genre from that point of view, impossible to view independently of the media of the mid-nineteenth century. Looking at *Belgique industrielle* requires the beholder to take a position in a broader socio-cultural field.

The lithograph of the cloth factory of Ywan Simonis along the Vesdre river in Surdents, near Verviers, for example, based

following pages

fig. 7 A landscape with the coal mines of the Compagnie de Saint-Martin in Marchienne-au-Pont, near Charleroi. *Charbonnages de la Compagnie de Saint-Martin*, lithograph by Adrien Cannelle, from *Belgique Industrielle*, 1855, plate 94.

fig. 9 A cloth factory in the Vesdre river valley, near Verviers. *Fabrique de Draps de M. Ywan Simonis*, lithograph by Guillaume van der Hecht, from *Belgique industrielle*, 1855, plate 39.

fig. 10 The main building of the Lodelinsart coal mine, worked by the Société anonyme des Charbonnages Réunis. *Société anonyme des Charbonnages réunis, à Charleroi*. *Charbonnage de Lodelinsart*, lithograph by Adrien Cannelle, from *Belgique industrielle*, 1855, plate 123.

fig. 11 A cloth factory in Verviers. *Fabrique de draps de M. G. J. Laoureux à Verviers*, lithograph by Guillaume van der Hecht, from *Belgique industrielle*, 1855, plate 46.



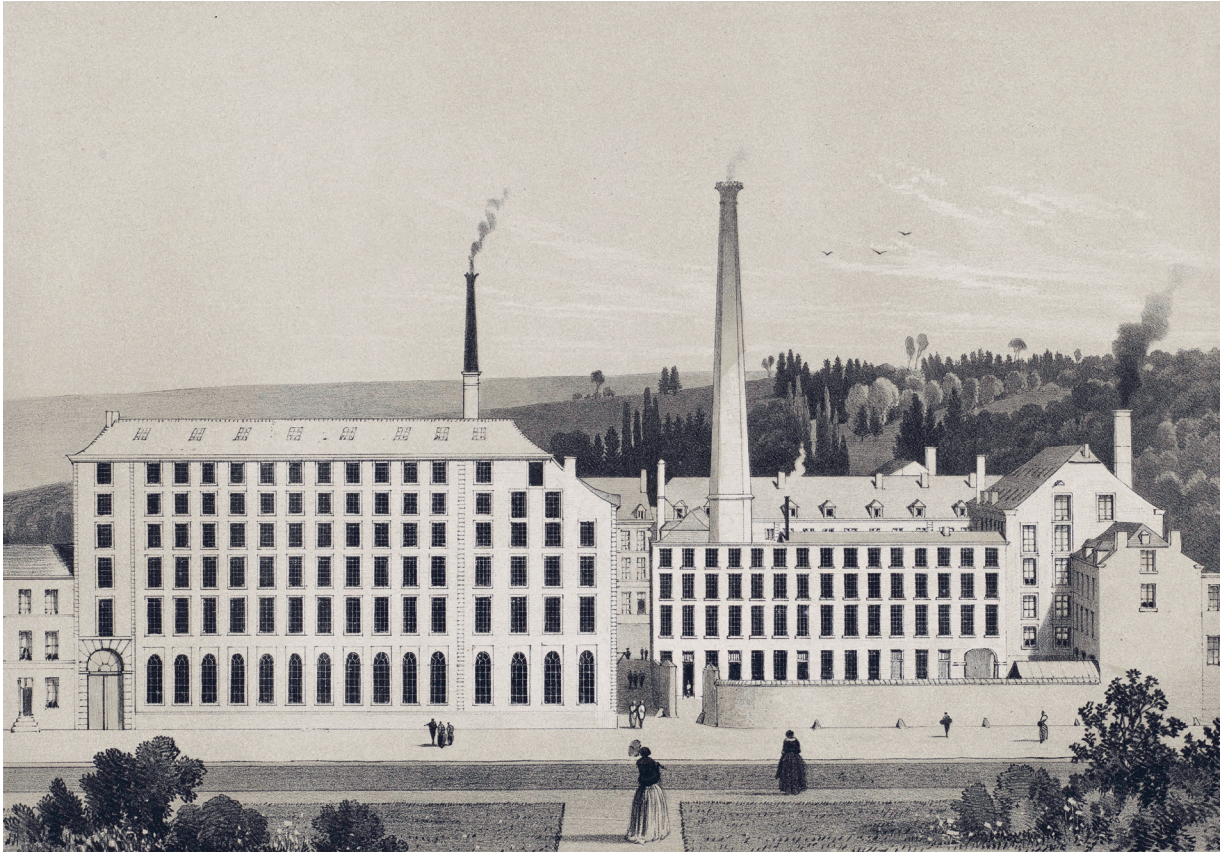
7



9



10



11

fig. 9

on a drawing by van der Hecht, eliminates many details in the representation of the buildings and the landscape, resulting in a particularly clear and orderly image. All the scenes of the image co-exist without conflict and the beholder is kept at a (safe) distance—far from the turmoil that industry might cause on the site. At the center of the image, the facade of a tall factory building is clearly lit, the brightest point in the landscape. This building's features refer to industry as well as to the local architecture of barns: several floors with a gabled roof, large windows, and a high smoking chimney at both ends of the building. Several smaller buildings cluster around the main building, and the whole structure dominates the middle of the valley, a victory of industry over nature. Several other storylines unfold in the margins of the factory, embodied by unknown characters whose form is almost unrecognizable. In front of the main building, in the foreground, two women and a child stroll in a park or garden area. When viewed in isolation, this scene seems entirely unrelated to a site of industry. In the small square courtyard along the Vesdre river, in the shadow of the main building and small buildings reminiscent of workers' houses, the artist has roughly indicated the tiny forms of people. To the left of and beyond the buildings, between the wooded hillside and the river, the landscape has been transformed to create a railway line that disappears further to the right in a tunnel under the hill. On the high road to the right, also carved out of the hillside, pedestrians and a horse cart pass by under a row of trees. While the right bank of the Vesdre, along the factory side, is controlled by a raised quay wall, the other bank remains in its natural, unspoiled state. The train and the new road versus the classical garden and the picturesque riverbank across from the factory seem to suggest that industry brings changes while also safeguarding traditional values. Other lithographs from the album focus almost entirely on industrial buildings that completely fill the frame of the image. The outside world exists only in the margins, and it enters the image indirectly through references—passersby, remnants of demolished buildings, the horizon. The landscape as such is no longer visible or has been completely pushed back, reduced to a few glimpses on the horizon. In these lithographs the scale of buildings and installations is exploited to the full to convince the viewer of the power of industry, with impressively large chimneys, high or elongated facades, and factories consisting of a conglomerate of different buildings. However, despite the depiction of impressive industrial machinery, these lithographs transmit a sense of rest. The world is at ease.

fig. 10, 11

Not a single element in these peaceful lithographs reveals to the beholder that these same buildings were the birthplace of the debates about the labor conditions of workers, then in full swing in Belgium and across Europe. In 1843, the Belgian government set up a commission to investigate these conditions. Its devastating report was published in 1848.⁴⁴ In 1843, Edouard Ducpétiaux revealed the miserable living conditions of many workers in his book *De la condition physique et morale des jeunes ouvriers et des moyens de l'améliorer*.⁴⁵ Like the report, it dealt with hygienic issues and placed the body of the worker at the center of a search for a renewed balance between humanity and society. The lithographs of *Belgique industrielle* betray no interest in this new balance; the human body—in particular, the body of the worker—is scarcely present. Its absence is in line with observations Karl Marx made around the time he lived and worked in Brussels, between 1845 and 1848, to write the *Communist Manifesto*. In his analysis of industrialization as a development that was alien to humankind,⁴⁶ he wrote, the multiplied productive force, which arises through the co-operation of different individuals as it is determined by the division of labour, appears to these individuals ... not as their own united power, but as an alien force existing outside them, of the origin and goal of which they are ignorant.⁴⁷

It is this environment of a fast-growing industry, which Marx characterizes as inhumane, that is central to the story in *Belgique industrielle*. Even the slowly emerging awareness of the ecological impact of industry on the human being is kept entirely absent from the album. In the 1840s, citizens (farmers, workers) formulated the first important accusations against the pollution caused by industry in southern Belgium.⁴⁸ These accusations resulted in investigations, lawsuits, and the first precarious public debate that possibly influenced or conditioned the appearance of the factories in *Belgique industrielle* in some slight correction of reality or by mitigating the conflicts that emerged in these industrial landscapes.⁴⁹

The lithograph as a medium with a picturesque tradition was a welcome tool by which to stage Belgium as a model workshop with a strong cultural-historical value—leaving such inconvenient or controversial topics as labor conditions or pollution out of the picture.⁵⁰ In so doing, *Belgique industrielle* presents a very different worldview from that presented by traveling reporters attracted by the industrial development occurring across Europe. These writers saw different issues than the artists commissioned by Géruzet. They did not fail to mention, with pompous and at times heavy-handed language, both sides of the coin called industry. During his 1835 tour through the industrialized Meuse valley, Désiré Nisard wrote down what he heard from workers and factory owners. On the one hand, he hailed industry as the sole entryway into the future:

Liège a deux sortes de monuments: ses églises et ses fabriques; mais la même vie n'anime pas les unes et les autres. La vie des églises, c'est seulement la conservation, une lutte silencieuse et soutenue contre la mort; la vie des fabriques, c'est le mouvement, l'activité, le progrès.⁵¹

At the same time, the reality he came across forced him to maintain a critical distance. After the intense experience of his descent into the mine at Nouvelle-Espérance, Nisard aptly wrote,

Voir l'ouvrier de trop loin donne des illusions, le voir de trop près donne des désenchantements, deux choses qui sont peu propres à inspirer de bons jugements. La vraie philosophie est au milieu: c'est celle qui n'exagère ni le bien ni le mal, et qui songe à pourvoir au sort de l'ouvrier bien plus avec l'idée de ce qu'on lui doit qu'avec celle de ce qu'il mérite.⁵²

Reaching a new middle ground

Nisard's reflection succinctly captures how the unprecedented industrial apparatus challenged observers to take a position in the face of the spectacle of industry. They needed to attempt to grasp this new reality of the factory, where the proper balance between illusion and disenchantment, as Nisard calls it, could not be separated from the balance between prosperity (of the nation) and welfare (of the individual). In the changing perceptions, in literature and the written press, of "Belgians and their industry" between 1780 and 1850, analyzed by Amélie Favry, writers, poets, intellectuals, and journalists were all trying to come to grips with a world undergoing industrial development. Industry, they knew, could not be unequivocally labeled as good or bad. There were doubts about the benefits of these impressive factories but also hope, in the promise of wealth and new opportunities that the factories offered.⁵³

This ambiguity is reflected in how the appearance of industry was judged and appreciated. An industrial site could be completely in harmony with the landscape from afar, while close by it could unfold as a ferocious scene of fire and noise. Both aspects—harmony and ferocity—were inextricably linked to the factory and were not necessarily considered to be in opposition. Observers moved back and forth to grasp industry with all its vices and virtues.⁵⁴ The new factories were often seen as positive additions to the scenery, because they brought stability to the

landscape and kept people at work, which distracted them from other things. According to Favry, these ideas strongly influenced the (positive) aesthetic appreciation of industrial buildings, even when most observers took the negative side effects of industrial development into consideration as well. The outcome was the “construction” of a kind of consensual yet vaguely defined middle ground: “Sans trancher l’épineuse question de la qualité esthétique des fabriques, nombre d’observateurs nuancés ou indécis restreignent en effet leurs discours dans le registre de *l’intéressant*, du *remarquable* et du *curieux*.”⁵⁵

This is the cultural context from which *Belgique industrielle* was produced and published, and it is evident in how the images and the album fulfill the publication’s goal. Although the album is produced to show the luster of industrial development, it does not impose an overarching storyline about industrialization, nor does the album attach the new industrial era to any generalized aesthetic categories. Also, in the absence of any written discourse, the lithographs in this album do not add up to a strictly defined narrative. Instead, the images allow spectators to find their own position—even explicitly inviting them to do so. The elements presented in these lithographs are informed by earlier pictorial traditions and albums but do not coincide with them. By taking the picturesque route, the viewer can find something “interesting, remarkable or curious,” to paraphrase Favry.

fig. 12

This strategy can be read very clearly in the lithograph that shows the blast furnaces of La Providence in Hautmont-sur-Sambre, which enables beholders to position themselves in various ways in relation to the industrial scene. In the center of the picture the factory rises up out of a rugged landscape on the far shore of the Sambre river. The main production halls are backed by the blast furnaces, a tower construction for the supply of those blast furnaces (which looks like a Romanesque church tower), and a series of smoking chimneys, all of which dominate the image ground. But the lithograph also offers ways to escape from this harsh scenery or to approach it more gently, from the margins. In the foreground, the light catches the remnants of an old wall, in which a small closed door provides access to the new industrial landscape that unfolds behind it. In the background to the left, a picturesque setting unfolds, an old arched bridge over the Sambre leads to a stately mansion next to the factory, possibly the director’s house. In the distant background to the right is a wooded hill and some small houses, in front of which a train passes. Characteristic of the work of the lithographer Canelle is the abundance of detail—many details drawn with fine lines—to bring the image to life. This gives the overall image a kind of busy heaviness but also allows the buildings to blend, at least visually, into the surroundings, making it easy for the beholder to switch from one element to another, moving back and forth between scenes of the picturesque and of bustling industry, similar to the shifting viewpoints of writers and reporters.

Allowing this multitude of viewpoints to exist in a single image, which is a major device in all the lithographs in *Belgique industrielle*, especially when compared to De Cloet’s book, for example, disarms the industry of them, rendering industry supportive of many storylines and viewpoints at once. Those who do not like the smoking chimneys can find solace in the greenery. Those who believe industrial architecture disrupts the landscape can trace resemblances between factories and vernacular buildings. On barren land and territory, where precedents of cultivation or inhabitation are absent, the architecture of the industrial compound sets founding examples. For each argument against an industrial future, the lithographs seem to offer a counter-argument precisely because of their comprehensive scenery that allows the world to co-exist with industry. In this highly pragmatic gesture lies Gêruzet’s unique contribution to an industrial age in the making, halfway through the nineteenth century.

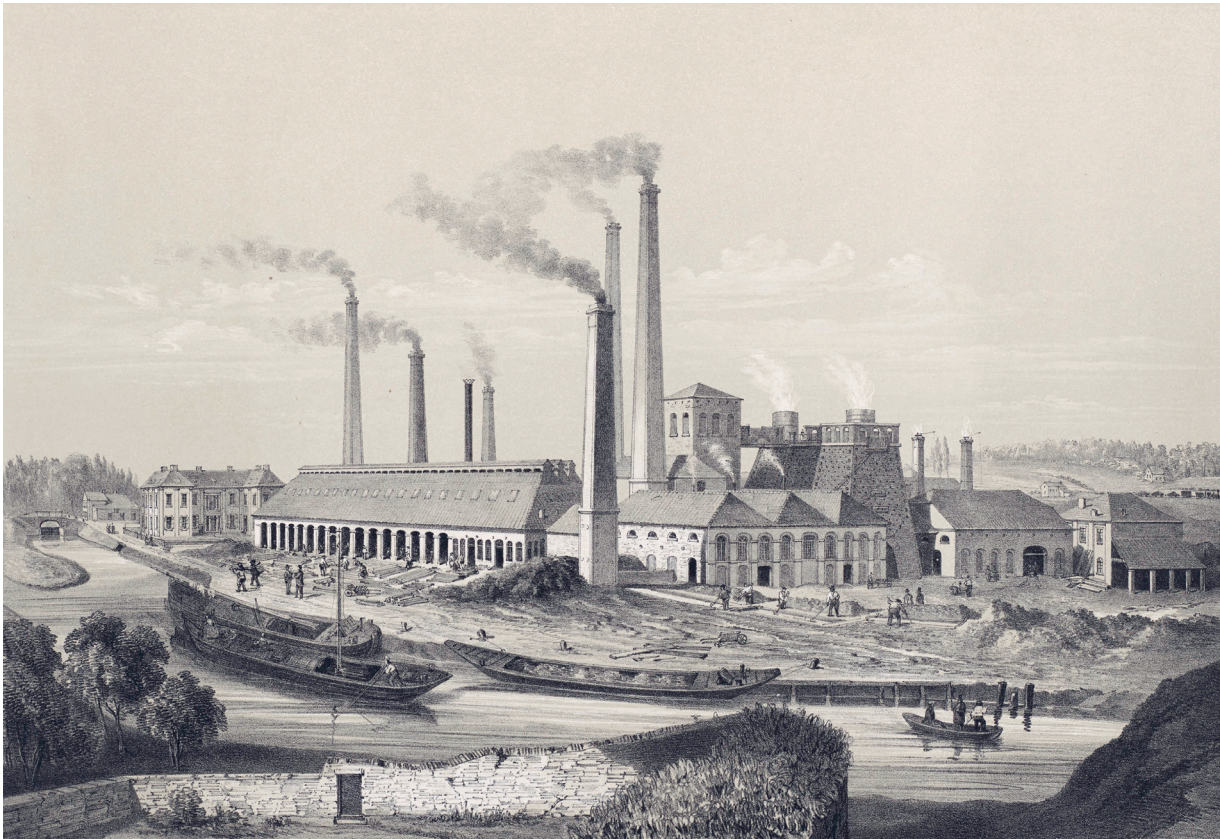


fig. 12 The steel mills of S. A. de la Providence in the spatial context of Hautmont-sur-Sambre. *Société anonyme de la Providence de Laminoirs, Hauts-Fourneaux, Forges, Fonderies et Usines à Marchienne-au-Pont*, lithograph by Adrien Canelle from *Belgique industrielle*, 1855, plate 128.

1 Alexandre Ferrier, *Guide pittoresque du voyageur en Belgique* (Brussels: Hauman, 1838), 3.

2 Ferrier, *Guide pittoresque*, 5–6.

3 Jean-Baptiste Ambroise Marcellin Jobard, *Exposition de l'industrie belge* (Brussels: Chez l'auteur, 1847), 1–2.

4 For an overview, see Amélie Favry, "Les Belges face à leurs industries (1780–1850): Points de vue sur un paysage inédit," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 85, no. 3–4 (2007): 781–804.

5 Michel Chevalier, *Essais de politique industrielle: souvenirs de voyage, France, république d'Andorre, Belgique, Allemagne* (Paris: Librairie de Charles Gosselin, 1843).

6 Favry, "Les Belges face à leurs industries"; Désiré Nisard, *Souvenirs de voyage. Mélanges*, vol. I (Paris: Delloye et Lecou, 1838), 329–416. On Nisard's writings, see also Maarten Delbeke's contribution to the present volume.

7 Pieter Uytendhove, "De paradox van de immobiele toerist," in *Te kust en te kuur. Badplaatsen en kuuroorden in België 16de–20ste eeuw*, ed. Ronny Gobin (Brussels: Algemene Spaar- en Lijfrentekas, 1987), 194–217.

8 Steven Jacobs, "The Photoresque: Images between City and Countryside," in *Beyond the picturesque*, ed. Steven Jacobs and Frank Maes (Ghent: S.M.A.K., 2009), 24–64.

9 Jean-Joseph De Cloet, *Voyage pittoresque dans le Royaume des Pays-Bas* (Brussels: J.B.A.M. Jobard, 1825).

10 H.G. Moke et al., *La Belgique monumentale, historique et pittoresque* (Brussels: Jamar et Hen Editeurs, 1844).

11 *Livre des adresses de l'industrie belge, contenant les noms et les adresses de tous les fabricants, usines, minières et industriels de la Belgique* (Brussels: Jules Géruzet Éditeur, 1855), ii.

12 *Exposition des produits de l'industrie de toutes les nations: Catalogue officiel, publié par ordre de la commission impériale* (Paris: E. Panis éditeur, 1855).

13 Bart Pluymers and Suzy Pasleau, "Het kleine België: een grote industriële mogendheid," in *Nijver België: Het industriële landschap omstreeks 1850*, ed. Bart Van der Herten, Michel Oris, and Jan Roegiers (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet, 1995), 34. According to Pluymers, France absorbed 98 percent of Belgian coal exports during this period.

14 Further research is required to get a precise overview of what exactly Géruzet presented at the fair.

15 *Exposition des produits*. For information about Daveluy and Jacqmain, see Marie-Christine Claes, "Répertoire des Lithographes actifs en Belgique sous la période hollandaise et le règne de Léopold Ier (1816–1865)," Brussels: KIK-IRPA, 2012 (Updated 2022). Online at http://balat.kikirpa.be/lithographes/claes_lithographes.pdf.

16 Around 1860 the entrepreneurial Géruzet began to focus more on the new medium of photography and became proficient in portrait photography. Jan Roegiers, "Een boek en zijn makers," in *Nijver België: Het industriële landschap omstreeks 1850*, ed. Van der Herten, Oris, and Roegiers, 20.

17 Roegiers, "Een boek en zijn makers," 20. According to Roegiers, eighty lithographs were ready in 1852. An overview map from 1854 shows 161 companies that had produced lithographs by that time. See also Claes, "Répertoire des lithographes," 17–178.

18 Laurence Meunier, "Les imprimeurs-lithographes Simonau & Toovey," *In Monte Artium. Journal of the Royal Library of Belgium* 7 (2014): 193–216.

19 Adolphe Maugendre, *Société anonyme des mines et fonderies de zinc de la Vieille Montagne: album de 30 vues dessinées d'après nature & lithographiées* (Paris: Auguste Bry, 1850–51). Several company sites of Vieille Montagne are also included in *Belgique industrielle*.

20 Roegiers, "Een boek en zijn makers," 20.

21 The Royal Library of Belgium (KBR) in Brussels holds two versions of *Belgique industrielle*, in which the two hundred lithographs are bound respectively in two and four parts.

22 In the map from 1854, held at the Royal Library of Belgium (KBR) in Brussels, only 161 lithographs are indicated instead of the two hundred included in the album. This could

mean that the initial intention was not to produce an album but rather to sell the lithographs as separate images of industrial Belgium.

23 *Livre des adresses de l'industrie belge*, ii.

24 "Phosphoric matches," "weapons," "brewers," "bricks," "glassware," and "zinc (rolling mills of)."

25 *Belgique industrielle: vues des établissements industriels de la Belgique* (Brussels: Jules Géruzet Éditeur, 1855).

26 Roegiers, "Een boek en zijn makers," 19.

27 The companies S. A. Cockerill, S. A. Iwan Simonis, S. A. Métallurgique Espérance-Langdoz, and S. A. Vieille Montagne can be found in the following overview: *Cent premières entreprises belges* (Brussels: Centre international de gestion et d'organisation, 1962). For a comparison, see Van der Herten, Oris, and Roegiers, eds., *Nijver België: Het industriële landschap omstreeks 1850* (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet, 1995).

28 Lut Pil, "Het industriële België tot pittoresk landschap gebundeld," in *Nijver België: Het industriële landschap omstreeks 1850*, ed. Van der Herten, Oris, and Roegiers, 23–24.

29 Pluymers and Pasleau, "Het kleine België," 33.

30 Van der Herten, Oris, and Roegiers, *Nijver België*.

31 Luc Verpoest, "Industriële gebouwen in de negentiende eeuw," in *Nijver België: Het industriële landschap omstreeks 1850*, ed. Van der Herten, Oris, and Roegiers, 53–57.

32 Nikolaus Pevsner, *A History of Building Types* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976).

33 Axl Föhl, "La Belgique Industrielle. Das wallonische Belgien als historische industrie-landschaft," *Bauwelt* 43 (1983): 1714–1723; Guido De Brabander, ed., *De industrie in België: Twee eeuwen ontwikkeling* (Brussels: Nationale Maatschappij voor Krediet aan de Nijverheid, 1981); Guido Deseyn, *Bouwen voor de industrie* (Ghent: MIAI, 1989); Colette Piérard, *La Sambre: Chronique d'une normalisation* (Namur: Editions MET, 1997); Christine Renardy, ed., *Le château Cockerill à Seraing: Témoin d'une aventure industrielle de deux cents ans* (Namur: Institut du Patrimoine Wallon, 2017).

34 Marie-Christine Claes, "J. B. A. M. Jobard (1792–1861), visionnaire de nouveaux rapports entre l'art et l'industrie, acteur privilégié des mutations de l'image en Belgique au XIX^e siècle" (PhD diss., Université Catholique de Louvain, 2006–2007). For a short overview, see Marie-Christine Claes, "Marcellin Jobard (1792–1861), een visionair met humanitaire ambitie," *Science Connection: Magazine van het Federaal Wetenschapsbeleid*, no. 20 (Feb. 2008), 20–23.

35 Lut Pil, *Landschap in veelvoud: België en de enscenering van het pittoreske landschap in het negentiende-eeuwse album en boek* (Ghent: Snoeck, 2020), 111.

36 Pil, *Landschap in veelvoud*, 114.

37 Claes, *J. B. A. M. Jobard*, 486.

38 Jean-Baptiste Ambroise Marcellin Jobard, *Les nouvelles inventions aux expositions universelles* (Bruxelles et Leipzig: Emile Flatau, 1857).

39 Jean-Baptiste Ambroise Marcellin Jobard, *Comment la Belgique peut devenir industrielle. Dialogue sur l'organisation de l'industrie* (Brussels: Librairie Périchon, 1846), 7.

40 Jobard, *Comment la Belgique peut devenir industrielle*, 14.

41 "It was to remind you of that and to make you well understand that industry is a new world to be shared, and that we cannot leave this world in the hands of communism if we want it to be cultivated." Jobard, *Comment la Belgique peut devenir industrielle*, 18.

42 Pil, "Het industriële België," 23–24.

43 Pil, *Landschap in veelvoud*, 26.

44 Ministère de l'intérieur de la Belgique, *Enquête sur la condition des classes ouvrières et sur le travail des enfants* (Brussels: Royaume de Belgique, Ministère de l'intérieur, 1846–1848).

45 Édouard Ducpétiaux, *De la condition physique et morale des jeunes ouvriers et des moyens de l'améliorer* (Brussels: Meline, Cans et Compagnie, 1843).

46 Edward de Maesschalck, *Marx in Brussel, 1845–1848* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2005).

47 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (Moscow: Progress Pu-

blishers, 1968), transcription of Chapter 1, "A Critique of the German Ideology" [1845], at Marx/Engels Internet Archive, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/ch01a.htm>.

48 Julien Maréchal, *La guerre aux cheminées: Pollutions, peurs et conflits autour de la grande industrie chimique (Belgique, 1810–1880)* (Namur: Presses universitaires de Namur, 2016), 325–326.

49 Charles de Freycinet, *Rapport sur l'assainissement des fabriques ou des procédés d'industries insalubres dans la Belgique et la Prusse-Rhénane et en France* (Paris: Dunod, 1864); L. Bronne, *De la guerre aux usines: Et du droit d'octroi sur les houilles industrielles* (Liège: Imprimerie de H. Dessain, 1856); Julien-Etienne Remont, *Rapport au collège des bourgmestres et échevins de la ville de Liège concernant les renseignements recueillis à Londres sur les travaux d'assainissement et d'utilité publique de cette capitale* (Liège: D. Avanzo & Cie., 1853). One of the most polluting companies of the period, the Vieille Montagne zinc factory, on its own initiative, hired an artist to publish a full album of lithographs, revealing the various branches of the company to the world in their most civilized, picturesque and harmless form: "S.A. des mines et fonderies de zinc de la Vieille Montagne," *Album des usines et établissements de la société, par Adolphe Maugendre* (Paris: Auguste Bry, 1851; 1855).

50 Pil, *Landschap in veelvoud*, 9–10.

51 "Liège has two kinds of monuments: its churches and its factories; but they are not animated by the same kind of life. The life of the churches is one of preservation, a silent and sustained struggle against death; the life of factories is one of movement, activity, progress." Nisard, *Souvenirs de voyage*, 401.

52 "To see the worker from a distance leads to illusions, to see him from too nearby leads to disenchantment, both of which are hardly suitable for inspiring good judgments. True philosophy stands in the middle: it is the philosophy that exaggerates neither good nor evil, and that thinks of providing for the worker's fate based on the idea of what is owed to him rather than on the idea of what he deserves." Nisard, *Mélanges*, 392.

53 Favry, "Les Belges face à leurs industries."

54 Favry, "Les Belges face à leur industries," 792–793.

55 "Without settling the delicate question of the aesthetic quality of the factories, many nuanced or undecided observers restrict their discourse to the range of the *interesting*, the *remarkable* and the *curious*." "Les Belges face à leur industries," 783; italics in original.

Provenance figures

fig.1 KU Leuven Libraries – Special Collections RD247.

fig.2–4 KBR/Royal Library of Belgium – Stacks – Il 5.486 A

fig.5–7 KU Leuven Libraries – Special Collections RD247.

fig.8 Ghent University Library, BIB.ACC.003547, CC BY-SA 4.0.

fig.9–12 KU Leuven Libraries – Special Collections RD247.