GOUPILGRAVURE

An analysis of the 1891-published
'photogravure' reproduction of
John Millais' 1853-5 painting of
John Ruskin

Roger Farnham

Presentation slides
with speaker's notes

Historical Group Research Day
of the Royal Photographic Society
Sheffield Hallam University
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The 1891 photogravure of John Ruskin

Roger Farnham



I'm Roger Farnham
a retired engineer, now an enthusiastic photo-historian
For almost as long I was an engineer I was, still am a printmaker, particularly photo-mechanical processes, of which **photogravure** is the most enduring**.**

I'm going to talk about this example published in 1891.

Typical understanding of photogravures

- late-*ish* 1800s?
- *Camera Work*
- that *Linked Ring* lot
- didn't Thomas and James Craig Annan meet 'your man' in Vienna?
- look just like proper photographs . . but got something special
- photogravure gazumped Woodburytypes
- 1886: PH Emerson published some, branded as Autogravures

- but there are a number of processes, and the Ruskin picture is not the Klic process

Here's my perception of photohistorians' understanding of photogravure
Alfred Stieglitz championed it from the 1890s onwards
Some members of the *Linked Ring* were enthusiastic about it
'Your man' who the Annans met in 1883 was **Karel Klic** who in 1879 announced his version of photogravure, which in turn was based on Talbot's process
PH Emerson published some, labelled as Autogravures
There's something special about, particularly when they're printed on Japanese paper
And some of you probably blame the process for killing off the Woodburytype
Emerson was the first to published some; labelled as Autogravures, made by the Autotype Company.

However, the Ruskin photogravure was **not** made using Karel Klic's process.

Modern photogravure

- polymer photogravure
- used by fine art printmakers
- currently (2020): show by Cornelia Parker at the Cristea Roberts Gallery in London, *Through a Glass Darkly*

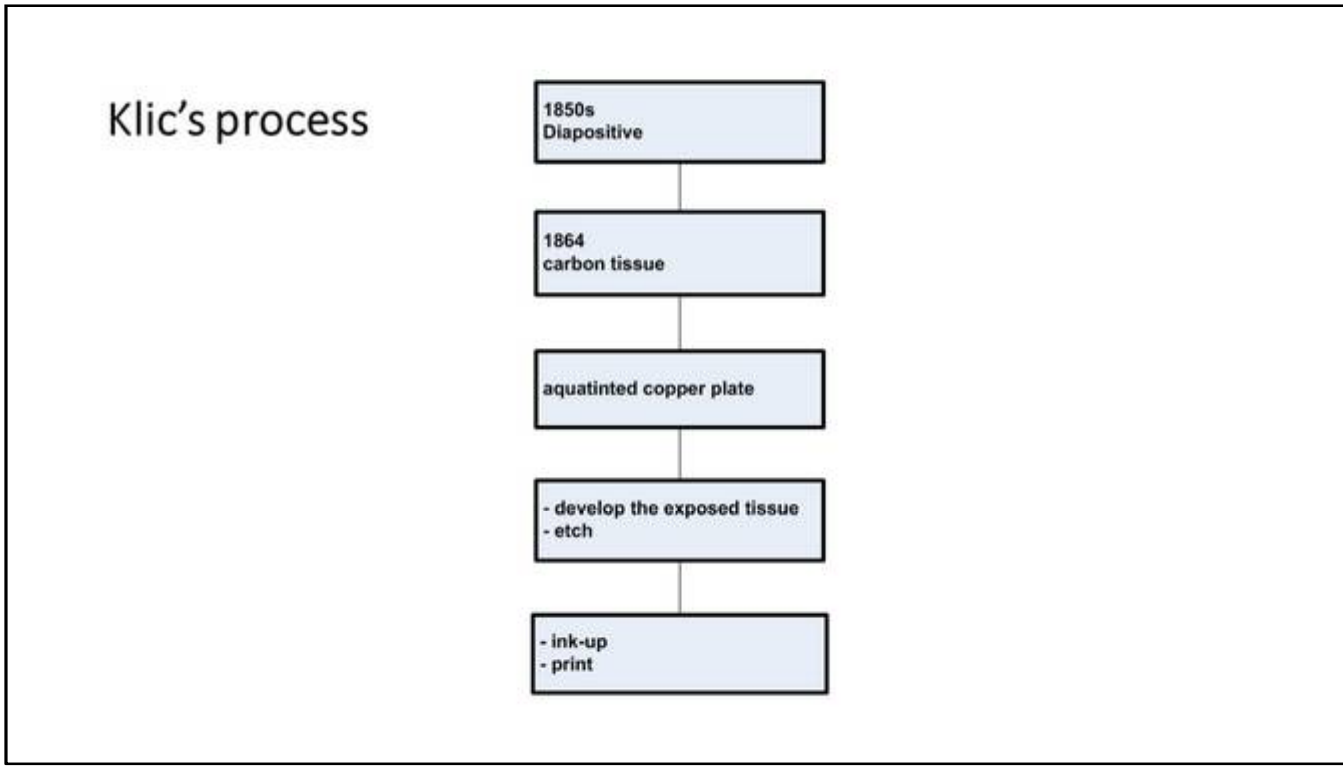


Cornelia Parker
Silver Bullet Teapot, 2015
from *Thirty Pieces of Silver (Exposed)*
published by Alan Cristea Gallery
printed and proofed at Thumbprint Editions

Courtesy of Cristea Roberts Gallery

we should also acknowledge a more recent form of photogravure

Here – pointing - RA and Turner Prize shorted listed in 1997, Cornelia Parker has used the modern ***polymer*** *photogravure process to make recent work. The 'found' glass plate negative printed here is still a negative in the final print - all the photogravure processes require a* ***diapositive*** *for a positive print.*
Polymer printing plates were actually developed for commercial relief printing, but clever printmakers adapted it to work as an intaglio plate.
The plate is pre-coated with a light-sensitive emulsion, but to create a photogravure, it requires a diapositive rather than a negative, and a second exposure to a stochastic grain screen to introduce half tones.



This Klic's process

It needed a positive transparency - that was easy to do once the wet colloidon process was available

Boxes 2-4

A number of innovators had experimented with coating plates with light sensitized gelatine, which would then be contact exposed, but without real success
Joseph Swan's carbon tissue was the solution – a gelatine image, already exposed was transferred to the plate, developed on the plate,
creating a relief image which was then used as an acid resist during etching.
Klic also cracked the problem of creating halftones, by putting an aquatint on the plate.

If there had been FAQs in 1891 . . .

- Don't early photogravures usually look quite 'photographic'?
  - *it's a Goupilgravure (Boussod, Valadon &C^ie was Goupil)*
  - *predates the 'usual' photogravures normally seen*
- Surely Ruskin was a much older man in 1891
  - *well-spotted: it's a reproduction of the picture Millais painted in 1853-4*
- Wasn't Goupil a French Company? Is there a British connection?
  - *yes*
- Wasn't Ruskin a bit iffy about photography? Did he approve of photo-mechanical printing?
  - *mmmmm*
- Is this the famous Millais painting?
  - *See the reading list at the end*



If there had been frequently asked questions in 1891

Bullet 1
I agree that it looks different – we'll explore that
Goupilgravure predates Klic's process

Bullet2
This is Ruskin 35 years earlier

Bullet3
We'll come to the British connections later

Bullet 4
In 1873 his Oxford lectures on wood and metal engraving were published as ***Ariadne Florentina*** which was illustrated with **collotype plates**
He loved engraving – he called it the **first of the arts**; but he considered etching to be 'an **indolent and blundering method at the best**'. - the qualities of etching which appeal to me!

Bullet 5
About that Millais painting: I'm not going there

that painting

- in the Ashmolean in Oxford since 2013
- but privately owned in 1890
  - *Ruskin gave it to his friend Sir Henry Acland in 1871*
- quite photorealistic[1]
  - *Ruskin encouraged the emerging PRB - Millais being his then favourite - to be true to nature*



Wikimedia Commons

[1] A term not coined until 1969 in a review by Louis Meisel of an exhibition at the Whitney Museum (NY), 'Twenty-two Realists'

Bullet 1
In Oxford since 2013

Bullet 2
Privately owned in 1890 when it was photographed to make the plate
Acland had been 'on location' in the Trossachs with Ruskin & Millais in 1853; he's in the film version (*Effie Gray*, releaded in 2014)

Bullet 3
I imagine Ruskin would have approved of modern photorealism paintings

that painting

- now in the Ashmolean in Oxford
- but privately owned in 1890
  - *Ruskin gave it to his friend Sir Henry Acland in 1871*
- quite photorealistic[1]
  - *Ruskin encouraged the emerging PRB – Millais being his then favourite - to be true to nature*
- why doesn't the photogravure look, and feel more like the painting?
  - *C'est un Goupilgravure*



[1] A term not coined until 1969 in a review by Louis Meisel of an exhibition at the Whitney Museum (NY), 'Twenty-two Realists'

Bullet 4
And magically photogravure

As to its aesthetics, all I can say is

Cest un Goupilgravure
and shock horror . . there has been manipulation

. . . personally I prefer the photogravure

Adolfe Goupil

- 1806-1893
  - published reproductions of artworks
  - *initially as partner in Rittner & Goupil, then Goupil, Vibert & Mainguet*
  - *Goupil & Cie, 1850* [1]
  - *later again in partnership with various sons-in-law inc. Léon **Boussod** & René **Valadon**, & (uncle) Vincent van Gogh*
- . . . and photography . .
  - *early exploration of using daguerrotypes*
  - *photo-litho 1853*
  - *in house photographic studio in 1860*
  - *carbon prints*
  - *Woodburytypes **1867***
    bought the rights for France => Photoglytie
  - *Ateliers Photographiques, 1869, Asnieres*
  - a few photography albums c 1870



1 http://www.encyclopedias.biz/encyclopedia-of-19th-century-photography/

So who was Goupil?

He became a partner to a M. Rittner; when Rittner died he took on other partners
By 1850 he was his own man.

The Boussod , Valldon name appeared when sons-in-law became partners and wanted to make their own mark.
But the Goupil brand endured

He tried out the daguerrotype process: not best suited for his requirements

Paris was the birth place of photo-lithography: Alphonce Poitevin in the 1850s

Note that Goupil purchased Woodbury's process

And, apparently they published some albums of straight photography

The **encylopedias.biz** piece is the best summary



LA VIERGE AU DONATEUR

Painted by JOHN VAN EYCK

Reproduced in Phototgravure by *BOUSSOD & VALADON*

This is one of the best known pictures in the Louvre, where it has occupied a conspicuous position in the Salon Carré for many years. The perfection of its execution, and its marvellous preservation, give it a perpetual freshness. It is the youth of art, but what a sound and vigorous youth! Even now, after lasting four hundred years, the picture has a longer life before it than many works of the present century.

The combination of architecture and landscape is so beautiful, that it has been imitated in reality. The present writer has dined on a summer evening in a loggia, which was purposely copied from this picture by a lover of architecture, who happened to possess some old Romanesque capitals, and made this use of them. The view was like one of Titian's landscapes in the mountains of Cadore. Another example is at the castle of Beauregard, on the Saône, where the ground-floor between the wings is replaced by three open renaissance arches, which frame in a marvellous manner the landscape that an old rhyme affirms to be 'the fairest league in France.' It has sometimes been thought that Van Eyck's landscape was suggested by the Saône at Lyons, and the river-island with the buildings upon it by the 'Ile Barbe.' I have often rather regretted that the kind of landscape-painting here begun was not quietly developed afterwards in the same direction instead of being completely abandoned. Had it been still cultivated, at least in principle, those landscape-painters who desired to draw with the care and absence of exaggeration displayed, for example, in the hands of the kneeling 'donateur' in this picture, might have done so without blame, whereas in an age when exaggeration is the fashion in landscape, unexaggerated work is thought to be both feeble and eccentric

This is a typical offering from **1885** Van Eyck's Virgin and child and Chancellor Rolin. Goupil had a contract with the Louvre which allowed his company to reproduce major works. Apparently Goupil had a studio in the Louvre

The picture's provenance is in English, because this was sold in the **USA** Goupil had opened an office in NY in 1848

We'll have a closer look at this one later

The Goupil (photo)gravure process

- literature on Goupil's process
  - *Luis Nadeau[1], Tissander[2], Eder[3] and others namecheck* ***Rousselon***
  - *Alfred Brothers[4] (1892) provides the earliest* ***technical*** *information*
- 1886 *Magazine of Art* provides the most useful comparison:
  - *photogravure or héliogavure . . image transfer as a* ***bitten*** *OR* ***electro-deposited metal plate***
  - *and also telling its readers about (Goupil's major new competitor) the Berlin Photographic Company[5]*
- Henri Rousselon (1822-1902)[6]
  - Goupil's engineering manager
  - an addition to the gelatine which created a grain 1872[7]
  - hard enough to transfer to the mould

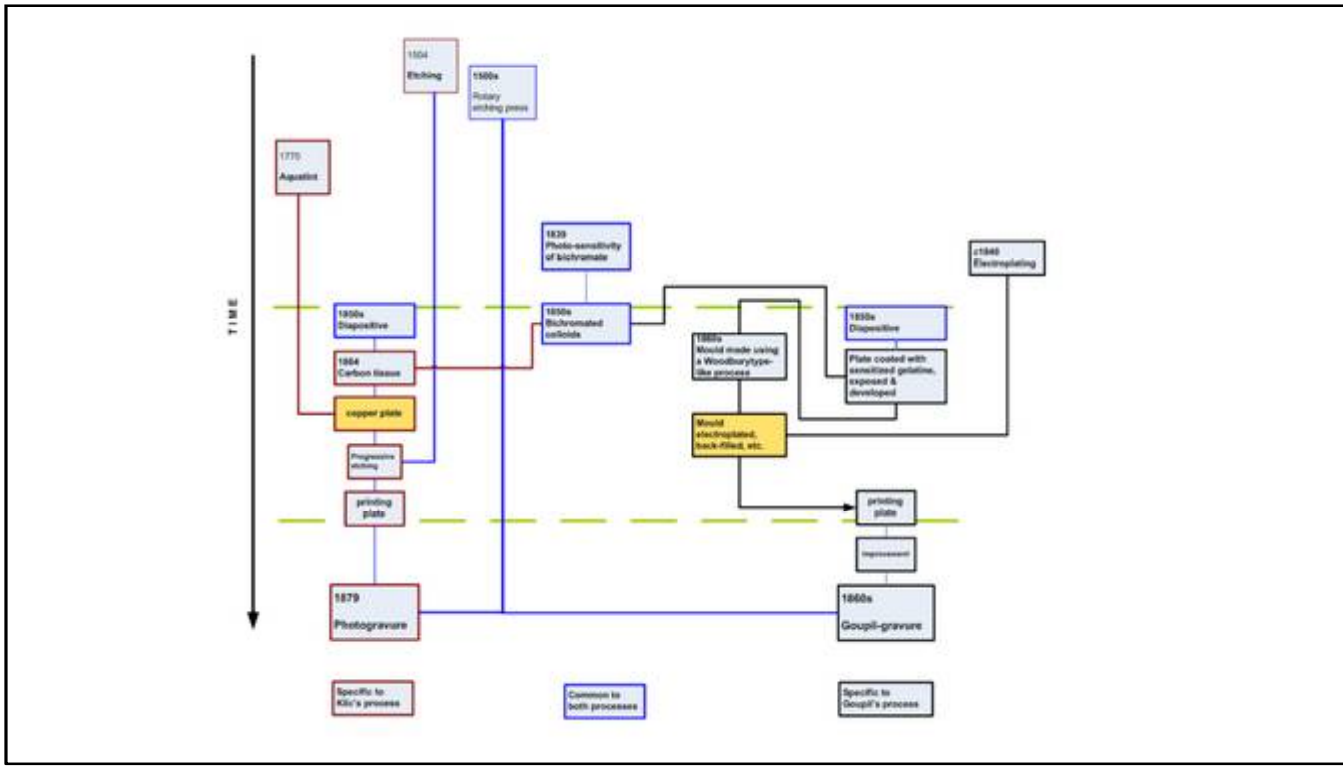
1 *Encyclopedia of Printing, Photographic, and Photomechanical Processes*, entries for Goupil, & Rousselon. Atelier Luis Nadeau, 1990
2 Gaston Tissander, *History of Photography*, translation by John Thompson, Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle, 1876 pp196-7
3 Josef Maria Eder, *History of Photography*, translated by Edward Epstean, Columbia University Press, 1945
4 *A Manual of Photography*, 1892-9, Charles Griffith & Co
5 Berlinner Photographische Gesellenschamp; also had offices in New Bond Street, close to Goupil's
6 http://www.encyclopedias.biz/encyclopedia-of-19th-century-photography/
7 *Presented to the Societe Francaise de Photographie*

There's not a lot in the literature

Bullet 1
In 1876, Tissander claims Rousselon has reproduced nature. Eder has a little. Nadeau is the go-to source on photo-mechanical processes, but it's a short entry.
Brothers has 37 plate-examples of contemporary processes including Goupilgravure, collotype and Woodburytype; its Klic process photogravure is by Swan Electric

Bullet 2
It's actually the *Magazine of Art* which 5 years earlier provides the most concise comparison, describing two processes:
Bitten, meaning **etched** ie Klic's process deposited, or described as **grown** by some later commentators; Goupil's process
Their Klic exemplar was BPC was, like Goupil, a publisher

Bullet 3
Goupil's engineering manager seems to have come up with the process
He's added a mystery ingredient to the gelatine emulsion, still a secret
Exposed bichromated-gelatine is remarkably tough stuff



This is a comparison of the two processes, Klic's process on the LHS, Goupil on the RHS

Klic generally as the previous slide with the addition of the other technology which he exploited

The bits in blue are in both processes: bichromated gelatine, a relief image, a printing press

Goupil's process uses the Woodbury moulding process
Folloed by
Electroplating, electrotyping - 'stove blacking' which is graphite was used as the conductive surface

Goupil's process takes much longer; maybe twice as long, days, particularly to copper plate the mould

Goupil needed to install their own dynamo-generators

All a much more expensive processes

The British connection

- Joseph Wilson Swan 1828-1914
  1864 carbon tissue[1]
- Walter Bentley Woodbury 1834-1885
  1866 *Woodburytype*[2]

Goupil labelled their Woodburytypes as photoglypties

1 Patent 503, Feb 1864
2 Patent 2338, 1866 Date 'chosen' by *Cassell's Cyclopedia of Photography* published in 1911

Bullet 2

The Woodburytype final print was a 'gelatine relief print' made by pouring liquid pigmented gelatine into a mould
But we haven't got time to go there

I've put a footnote in for the date because everybody's got an opinion

Swan & Woodbury had a long running legal battle over who did what first.
Swan also had a long running battle with Thomas Edison but final agreed on the Swan-Edison Company

Swan's other patents

- 1864 Carbon tissue as we know it
- 1865 Patent No 1791
  - an electrotyping variant
  - Swan's family claim this predates Woodbury process
- Swan produced 47 patents

Woodbury's other patents

- 1864 Patent No 2338
  - included electrotyping
- - **1866** four more
  - Woodburytype process as we know it
  - electrotyping process changed to the mould being made by pressing the gelatine relief image into a lead plate, the actual process used
  - 3 ton/in^2 press required!
- 1879 Stannotype variation
- Woodbury produced >30 patents

See Peter McCallion, *The Development of Methods for the Reproduction in Continuous Tone of Digitally Printed Colour Artworks* PhD thesis 2017, Centre for Fine Print Research, UWE for an in depth research on Woodbury & Swan

Commentary

BL's patents database has 47 entries for Joseph Wilson Swan
Woodbury had 30 in a shorter lifetime

Recently Peter McCallion recreated Woodbury's process as part of his PhD project at Bristol CFPR

Some of Goupil's competitors

- Berlinner Photographische Gesellenschamp
  Berlin Photographic Company
- Meisenbach, Riffarth & Co

both of the above also supplied the German art journals

- Annan & Swan
  - T&R Annan
  - Swan Electric
- Can we tell the difference?
  - not with an X6 lube
  - scan at 4800dpi to get 4800/300 = X16 magnification
    . . . . and look at what?

Let's look at examples of Goupil's competitors, who made Klic photogravures

BPC was the company the MoA declared in 1886 had matched the quality of Goupilgravures
Meisenbach was also became a major player

Remember that Klic spoke German and had successfully marketed his process in the early 1880s

Annan & Swan were not publishers; after Thomas Annan's early death in 1887, James Craig Annan returned to the Glasgow business; the Swan side evolved into **Swan Electric**

Bullet 4
So how does one tell the difference between the processes
A lube won't do it
Here's my patent process. Scan a small section of your photogravure at 4800dpi

Camera Work Eduard Steichen, *The Man that resembles Erasmus*





Camera Work 42-43, 1913 Image size: 16.5 x 17 cm

X16

Let's use Camera Work as a benchmark
I needed a picture with a head, so here's a Steichen
Don't ask the British Library for this service

Goupilgravure Luke Filde *Venetian flower girl*





Frontispiece from Alfred Brothers, *A Manual of Photography*, 1891-9 Image size: 8 x 12 cm

This is the **frontispiece** from Alfred Brothers 1892 book. He seems to be using a Goupilgravure as his benchmark for photo-mechanical processes?

Note the manual engraving work here, here and here. This is roulette work.

Goupilgravure Jan van Eyck, *The Virgin and Child with Chancellor Rolin*





Goupil publication, 1885 Image size: 12.5 x 13 cm

Let's go back that 1885 Goupilgravure

Note the manual engraving here – Chancellor Rollin's black hat – and here – this collar

Berlin Photographic Company Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *The Old Story*



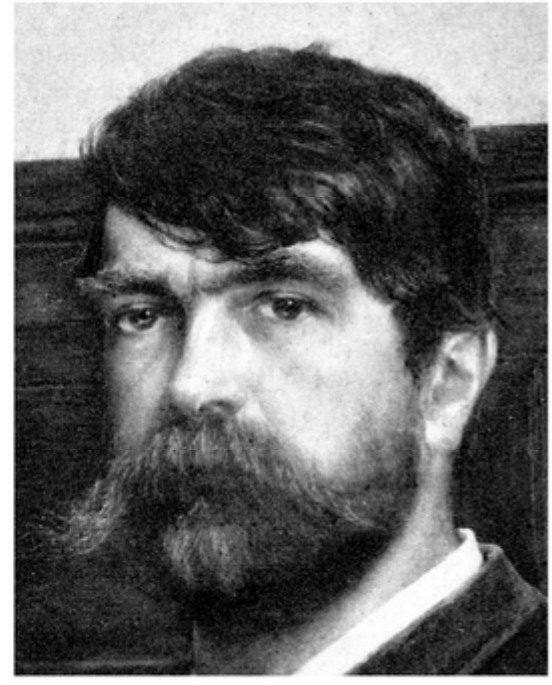


Magazine of Art 1892 Image size: 24 x 11.5 cm

This is by the BPC, the company which the MoA wrote about in 1886.
The painter is Lawrence Alma-Tadema; Goupil published a lot of his work. See Verhoogt
This may have been BPG building its catalogue by stealing an established Goupil artist.

Meisenbach, Riffarth & Co Curt Stoeving, *Carl von Groszheim*





Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst (Journal for Fine Arts), 1893 **Plate** size: 15 x 24.5 cm

Meisenbach were also based in Berlin. Again a reproduction of a painting.

And no funny business.

This is the president of the Prussian Academy of Arts

At this time Joseph Swan was a still director of Meisenbach.

Boussod, Valadon & C[ie] (Goupil) Millais, *John Ruskin*





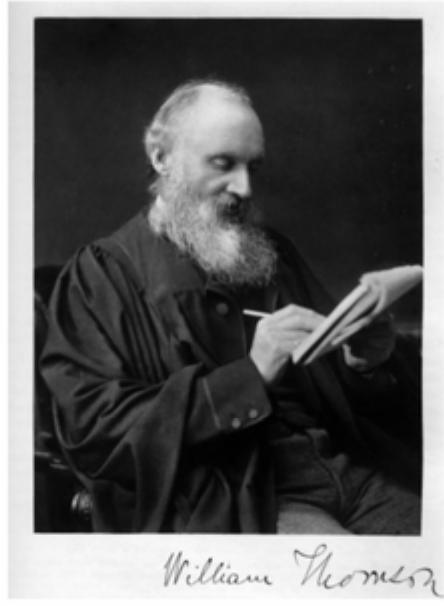
Magazine of Art, 1891 Image size: 16 x 19 cm

And back to Mr Ruskin

I haven't put ***After*** in front the original artist's name; it really should have been captioned as *After* Millais

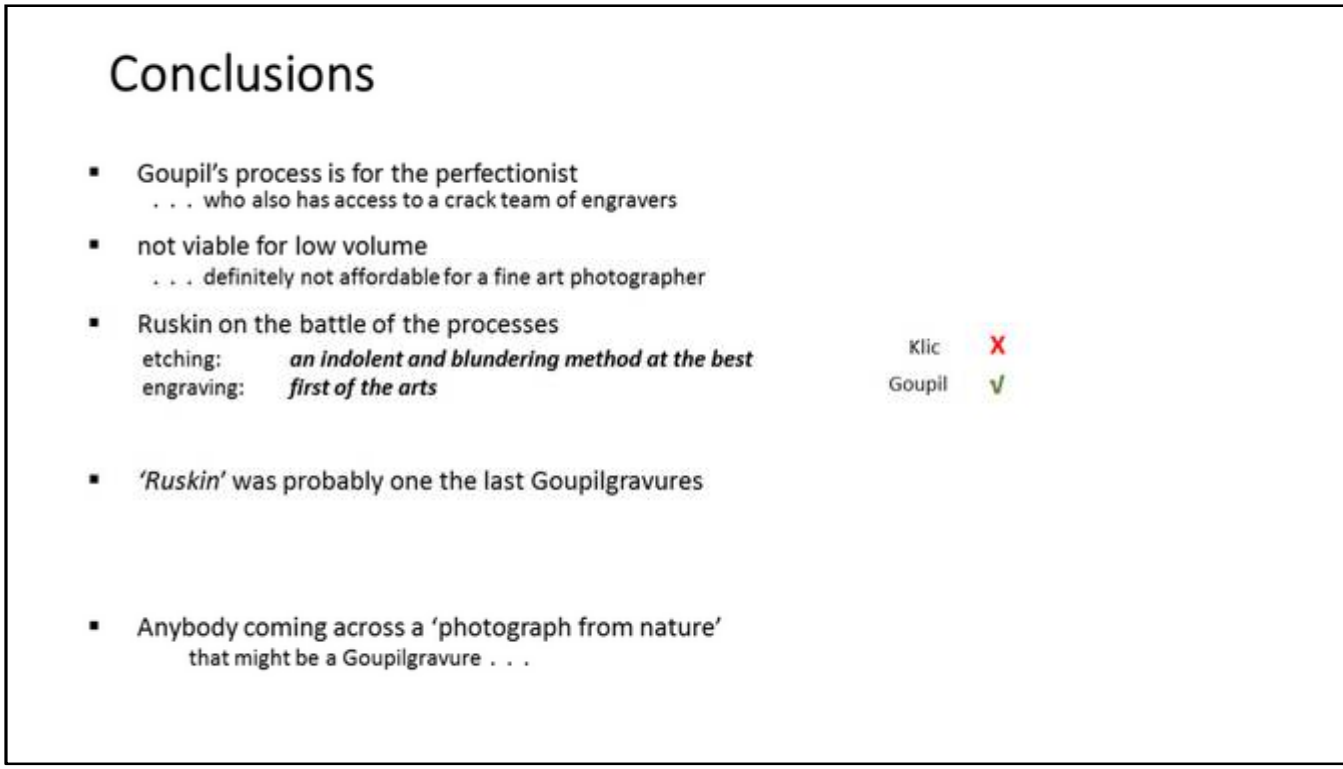
It has changed quite a lot, but I believe that Ruskin must have approved it.

T&R Annan *William Thompson (Lord Kelvin)*



T&R Annan & Sons & James Macklehose & Sons, *University of Glasgow Old and New*, 1891 **Plate** size 18.5 x 25.5 cm

It's only appropriate that I finish with an Annan photogravure, which is what started this photogravure odyssey with Harry Magee many years ago.
This is from 1891, in a book with many (Klic-process) photogravures, both portraits and 'from nature'



Bullets 1&2
Goupil's process is for large scale operation, for a perfectionist, who has a team of skilled engravers ready to improve the plate
Definitely not viable for low volume, particularly not for a fine art photographer

Bullet 3
As mentioned ealier, Ruskin had definite views on printmaking:
etching was 'an indolent and blundering method at the best'
If he knew that Klic's photogravure process involved **etching** he is likely to have disapproved
whereas
Goupil's **engraved** improvements would have satisfied his engraving '**first of the arts**' criterion

Bullet 4
A transition point in photogravure
Four years later Klic's **rotogravure** process would cause even more disruption to Goupil

Further reading

From the footnotes

1 Luis Nadeau, *Encyclopedia of Printing, Photographic, and Photomechanical Processes*, Atelier Luis Nadeau, 1990
2 Gaston Tissander, *History of Photography*, translation by John Thompson, Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle, 1876 pp196-7
3 Josef Maria Eder, *History of Photography*, translated by Edward Epstean, Columbia University Press, 1945
4 Alfred Brothers, *A Manual of Photography*, 1892-9, Charles Griffith & Co
~~5 Berlinner~~
6 http://www.encyclopedias.biz/encyclopedia-of-19th-century-photography/

John Easton, *Postage Stamps in the Making*, Faber & Faber, 1948 4th edition – major rewrite based on original work by FJ Melville

Sir Joseph Wilson Swan, FRS, A Memoir by MES & KRS, Ernest Benn, 1929

That painting

Alastair Grieve, *Ruskin and Millais at Glenfinals* (sic), The Burlington Magazine, 1996

Phyllis Rose, *Parallel Lives: Five Victorian marriages*, Chatto & Windus, 1984, the chapter entitled *Effie Gray and John Ruskin*

Effie Gray, feature film, 2014, director: Richard Laxton; screenplay: Emma Thompson

Glen Finglas and a Victorian Scandal, https://www.lochlomondtrossachs.org.uk/park-stories/glen-finglas-and-a-victorian-scandal

On the Victorian art market, Goupil in particular

Gerry Beegan, *The Mass Image: a social history of photomechanical reproduction in Victorian London*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008

Robert Verhoogt, *Art in Reproduction: nineteenth century prints after Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Jozef Israels and Art Scheffer*, Amsterdam University Press, 2007

Pamela Fletcher & Anne Helmreich, *The Periodical and the Art Market: Investigating the "Dealer-Critic System" in Victorian England*, Victorian Periodical Review, Winter 2008, John Hopkins University

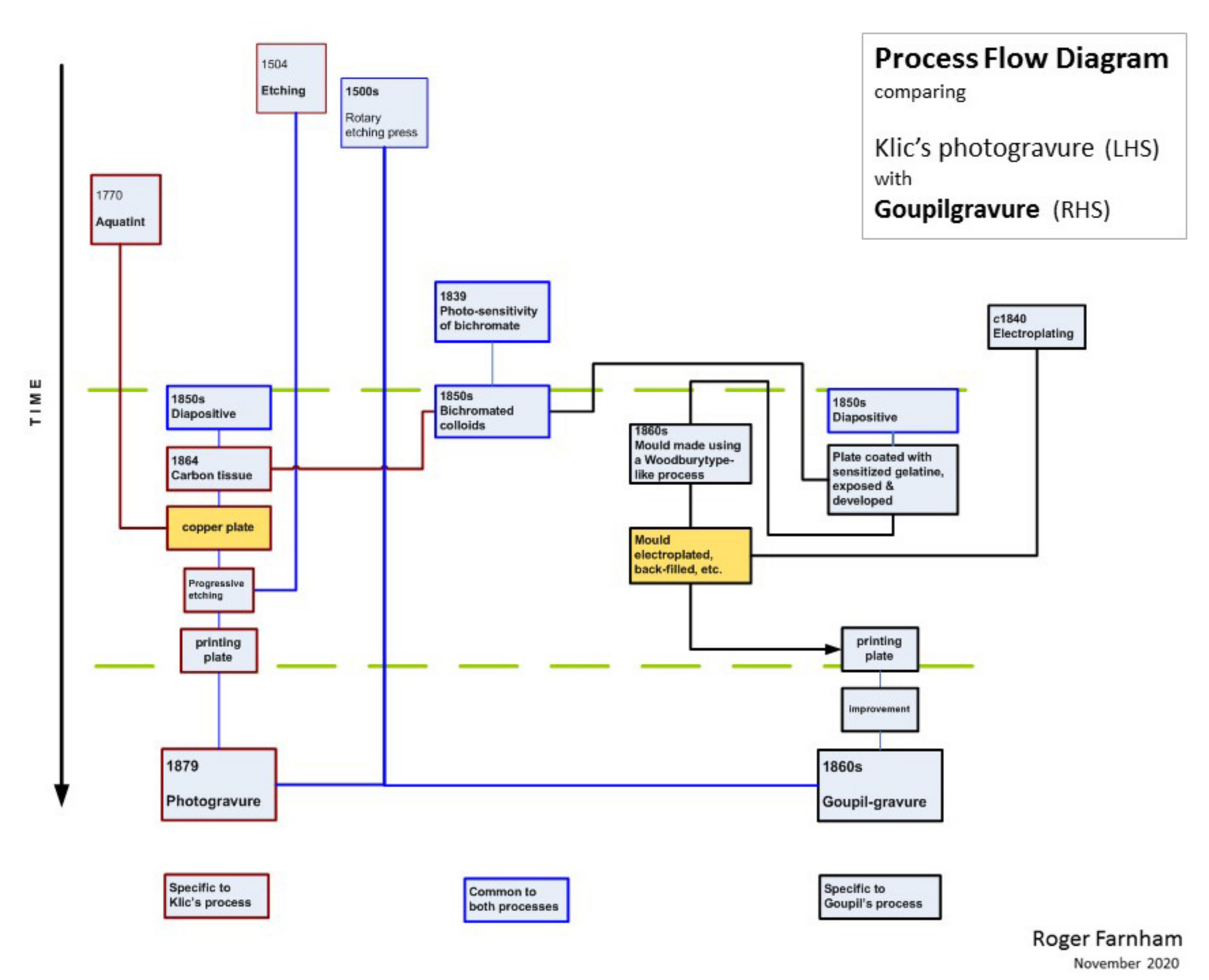
On Klic's photogravure

www.photogravure.com Mark Katzman's wonderful website

Farnham & Magee: KLIC: Life Art Invention 2015; articles in PH 148 (2005), 179 (2017) & 180 (2018); **blueprint** 2013 catalogue pp14-16 *The carbon process and photogravure*

Maybe this slide can be part of post-symposium, maybe via the group's pages on the website

I'll just draw your attention to one of these: - pointing at - **Easton**'s book is actually very appropriate as the stamp-printing industry was using electrotyping technology from very early days.


Process Flow Diagram
comparing
Klic's photogravure (LHS)
with
Goupilgravure (RHS)
TIME
1504
Etching
1500s
Rotary etching press
1770
Aquatint
1839
Photo-sensitivity of bichromate
c1840
Electroplating
1850s
Diapositive
1850s
Bichromated colloids
1850s
Diapositive
1860s
Mould made using a Woodburytype-like process
1864
Carbon tissue
Plate coated with sensitized gelatine, exposed & developed
copper plate
Mould electroplated, back-filled, etc.
Progressive etching
printing plate
printing plate
improvement
1879
Photogravure
1860s
Goupil-gravure
Specific to Klic's process
Common to both processes
Specific to Goupil's process
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