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# New Findings on the Life and Work of Claude Simpol

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In 1939, Hélène Adhémar published the first study on the painter Claude Simpol (ca. 1666–ca. 1710), drawing attention to the influence of his compositions on Antoine Watteau (1684–1721).<sup>1</sup> Little research followed the appearance of this article, but in the past few years the artist has begun to emerge from the shadows. In 1996, four genre scenes in the Metropolitan Museum that were originally thought to be the work of Bernard Picart (1673–1733) (Figures 1–4) were reattributed to Claude Simpol,<sup>2</sup> and in 2008, Jamie Mulherron reinstated Simpol as the designer for a series of sixteen pastoral prints, *Les divertissemens et les occupations de la campagne*, formerly given to Jacques Stella.<sup>3</sup> Having identified some fifty drawings and four paintings by Simpol, and discovered a number of archival documents that concern him, I would like to take the recent acquisition by the Metropolitan Museum of *July: Amusements on the Water* (Figure 5), a design for the *Divertissemens* series, as an opportunity to present a brief survey of the current state of research on the artist.

Although it is impossible to confirm the date of Simpol's birth, we know that he was born in Clamecy, a town in the present-day Department of the Nièvre, in Burgundy.<sup>4</sup> His marriage contract has been found and tells us that he was the "son of Nicolas Simpol, a saddle merchant in Clamecy . . . and Charlotte Vesard."<sup>5</sup> Simpol must have left his native Burgundy by late 1683, for he is documented in Paris in the following year, competing for the *grand prix* of the Académie Royale de Peinture et Sculpture, which sent the winners to the Académie de France in Rome for further training.<sup>6</sup> As a pupil of the history painter Louis de Boullogne the Younger (1654–1733),<sup>7</sup> Simpol must have benefited from the advice of both Louis and his older brother Bon Boullogne (1649–1717), with whom he lived between 1680 and 1687. Simpol did not win the prize in 1684,<sup>8</sup> but was awarded the second prize on his next attempt, in 1687 (the

subject was the Deluge).<sup>9</sup> Although Simpol was received as a master painter at the Académie de Saint-Luc on March 23, 1695,<sup>10</sup> his career at the Académie Royale did not go beyond the level of a certification (*agrégé*), earned on April 30, 1701, with his sketch for *Dispute Between Mars and Minerva*.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, his delay in submitting a reception piece caused his candidacy to be annulled in 1709.<sup>12</sup> Simpol's drawings for the *Divertissemens* were commissioned by the engraver and publisher Jean Mariette (1660–1742), probably about 1690, and must be among the artist's early productions. As we shall see, the careful and precise depiction of form in these designs offers a contrast with the more painterly, summary style of his drawings from the turn of the eighteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

In 1703, Simpol was commissioned to execute the *May*, a large painting emphasizing devotion to the Virgin that was donated annually by the goldsmiths' guild to the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris. Representing Christ with Martha and Mary, it was among the last of the *Mays* painted for Notre-Dame, as the tradition was abandoned in 1707 (Figure 6). Many of these works were lost after the French Revolution, but ironically, Simpol's picture, which appears to be his only major religious commission, is well documented. A preliminary drawing for it is in the Louvre, Paris,<sup>14</sup> and there are two *petits du May*—autograph reductions ordered by each of the two goldsmiths when the commission was signed. One of these is in the Musée Carnavalet, Paris,<sup>15</sup> and the other recently appeared on the Paris art market.<sup>16</sup>

Another known commission by Simpol involves three paintings executed for the Ménagerie at Versailles between 1702 and 1703, when he participated in the decoration of the newly built royal palace;<sup>17</sup> in 1703, he received a payment of 600 livres for his work there.<sup>18</sup> Although the decorations were dismantled, some of the painted panels have been discovered at the Château de Fontainebleau, where they were deposited about 1860. A painting preserved at Fontainebleau under the title *Le jeu du tiers*, or *Les trois tas* (Figure 7), corresponds with an early description of the work Simpol produced for the Ménagerie.<sup>19</sup> Although the



1. Claude Simpol (French, ca. 1666–ca. 1710). *Three Women Bathing*, ca. 1700. Pen and gray ink, brush and gray wash, heightened with white over traces of graphite, contours incised, 3 x 4 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (7.5 x 11.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1963 (63.167.5)



2. Claude Simpol. *Lady with a Pocket Mirror*, ca. 1700. Pen and gray ink, brush and gray wash, heightened with white over traces of graphite, contours incised, 3 x 4 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (7.5 x 11.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1963 (63.167.3)



3. Claude Simpol. *A Man and a Woman Smoking Tobacco*, ca. 1700. Pen and gray ink, brush and gray wash, heightened with white over traces of graphite, contours incised, 3 x 4 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (7.5 x 11.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1963 (63.167.4)



4. Claude Simpol. *A Picnic Party*, ca. 1700. Pen and gray ink, brush and gray wash, heightened with white over traces of graphite, contours incised, 3 x 4 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (7.5 x 11.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund (63.167.6)





5. Claude Simpol. *July: Amusements on the Water*, ca. 1690. Black chalk, pen and black and brown ink, brush and gray wash, heightened with white gouache, 9 x 12 in. (22.7 x 30.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harry G. Sperling Fund, 2011 (2011.491)

picture does not closely reflect either Simpol's *May* or his drawings, this can no doubt be explained by its problematic condition.<sup>20</sup> Up to this point, the corpus of Simpol's paintings has been limited to his *May* and *Le jeu du tiers*. We may, however, be able to attribute an additional group of four paintings to the artist; they were sold in 1993 under the name of Michel-Ange Houasse (1680–1730) (Figures 8–11).<sup>21</sup> In style, iconography, and dimensions, these decorative panels relate directly to *Le jeu du tiers* commissioned for the *Ménagerie*, and one might reasonably wonder if they were part of the same series.<sup>22</sup> In each picture a children's game—the kite (in two panels), the swing, and the see-saw—is depicted in a spontaneous and playful manner. Simpol's inclination toward rounded form makes his work particularly well-suited to the representation of children.

Although Mireille Rambaud published documents in 1971 relating to the family of Simpol's wife, Hélène Denis,<sup>23</sup> there has been no notice given to the fact that Denis was the daughter of the harpsichord maker and organist Louis Denis (1635–1718). Louis himself was born into a well-known family of harpsichord makers, and one of his daughters married the organist Louis Marchand (1669–1732),

known for attempting to rival Johann Sebastian Bach during a trip to Dresden in 1717.<sup>24</sup> These interesting bits of information may shed light on the importance of musical subject matter to Simpol, as well as to Picart, the draftsman with whom he later shared a number of related projects and commissions. Marriages between families of painters and musicians were rare in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France, and the union of Claude Simpol and Hélène Denis may well have occasioned exchanges between the two arts. This scenario is all the more likely as the harpsichord is the musical instrument that best lends itself to painted decoration. A "harpsichord lid representing a landscape" was, in fact, among the dozen or so paintings in the possession of Louis Denis in 1706.<sup>25</sup> By this time Simpol and Picart had probably known each other for at least a decade. Both men were called upon by Mariette to execute the designs for several print albums and would thus have been familiar with each other's work.<sup>26</sup>

In 1696 Mariette commissioned from Picart the drawings for a series depicting actors from the *commedia dell'arte* (twelve plates entitled *Douze modes du théâtre italien*); these were distinct from the same artist's designs for

6. Claude Simpol. *Christ with Martha and Mary*, 1703–4. Oil on canvas, 14 x 10 ft. (4.3 x 3 m). Musée des Beaux-Arts, Arras (inv. D938.30 [MI323]). Photograph: Musée des Beaux-Arts, Arras



7. Claude Simpol. *Le jeu du tiers*, 1702–3. Oil on canvas, 37¾ x 22⅞ in. (96 x 58 cm). Musée National du Château de Fontainebleau (inv. 7834). Photograph: Gerard Blot, Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY; Château, Fontainebleau, France



*Figures de modes*, also of 1696, representing the minor trades, musicians, smokers, and ladies and gentlemen posed in different attitudes.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to the drawings for the *Divertissemens* that Mariette commissioned from Simpol in the early 1690s, the publisher turned to him again about 1700 for the *Différents sujets* series, depicting—among other things—actors, musicians, game playing, couples on horseback, and more smokers.<sup>28</sup> The four drawings at the Metropolitan Museum (Figures 1–4) were designed for the latter series. As a group, these print albums document the culture of the period, providing a glimpse of the manners, dress, and characteristic activities of people from different walks of life. The subjects are not only represented in costumes specific to various trades, but are shown in attitudes of work, rest, and even “gallant” conversation. Simpol’s drawings have very often been confused with those of Picart. Their very painterly style, however, permits us to distinguish them from Picart’s designs, which are comparatively flat; the stylistic difference

is apparent if we compare drawings from the *Figures de modes* in the Louvre’s “Album Bernard Picart”<sup>29</sup> with related works by Simpol.

Being older than Picart, Simpol may have influenced his collaborator, for example, in his decision to include two musicians in the series: *Shepherd Playing the Bagpipe* and *Viola da Gamba Player* (Figure 12). Notably, the viola da gamba player was taken up again by Picart in his famous *The Concert*, the first state of which was published in 1708 (Figure 13).<sup>30</sup> By then the harpsichordist had become the central motif, possibly owing to the artist’s contacts with the Simpol family, and it will come as no surprise that the composition was intended to decorate a harpsichord lid.<sup>31</sup> The influence of Picart’s *The Concert* on Watteau is often mentioned, but the idea of combining musicians with amorous couples in a park must have originated in the family environment of Simpol. As it happens, in 1706, all of Louis Denis’s harpsichords and spinets were moved from his home in Paris to his country house in Corneille, a town





8–11. Claude Simpol. *Children's Games*, ca. 1703. Oil on canvas, each 36 $\frac{5}{8}$  x 14 $\frac{5}{8}$  in. (93 x 37 cm). Private collection. Photograph: Sale, Sotheby's, London, July 7, 1993, lot 280

northwest of the capital. Perhaps Denis gave concerts here in this natural setting in the presence of his brother-in-law, or even with Simpol's collaborator, Picart, in attendance.

It is clear that Watteau was especially receptive to Picart's *The Concert* and that he closely studied the albums of prints based on the drawings of Picart and Simpol, as Adhémar has demonstrated.<sup>32</sup> I wish to draw attention, however, to another even more ambitious album in which Simpol played a major role: the erroneously titled "Album Mathieu Elye," in the Louvre.<sup>33</sup> The seventy-eight sheets of this album, acquired for the Crown at the Mariette sale in 1775–76, record costumes worn by the royal family and the French aristocracy, as well as other European aristocrats. While the faces sometimes appear stereotyped, an effort was made to include some true portraits: Louis XIV<sup>34</sup> is recognizable, and the names of some of the models are indicated, such as *Grand Prior of Vendôme*.<sup>35</sup> One composition bears a particularly interesting annotation, a direct reflection of eighteenth-century customs: "the duke of Savoy has only his natural hair and no wig."<sup>36</sup>

On the basis of the album's single signed sheet—bearing the signature of the Franco-Flemish painter Matthieu Elye (1658–1741)—the entire collection of drawings has been attributed to Elye since its acquisition by the Louvre in the eighteenth century.<sup>37</sup> In fact, the album contains the work of several artists, as is evident in the variety of techniques

(red chalk, pen and ink, and watercolor) and styles. It could be that some of the drawings are by Picart; this seems to be the case with *Portrait of a Lady of the Court in Front of a Grove at the Château de Versailles*.<sup>38</sup> In addition to such stylistic similarities, *Man Leaning on a Staff*<sup>39</sup> owes much to *Horseman with Muff Covering Himself with His Cloak* included in Picart's *Figures de modes*.<sup>40</sup> Surprisingly, François Verdier (1651–1730) also seems to have participated in this project: the very last illustration is characteristic of his style.<sup>41</sup> As for the fifty-five compositions in oil on paper that constitute the greater part of this album, they are the work of none other than Claude Simpol. The three examples that represent his contribution here display a painterly handling in which the figures stand out against a light background (Figures 14–16).<sup>42</sup> A similar technique is used in the series in the Metropolitan Museum and in the four religious compositions in the Louvre.<sup>43</sup> This may also be said of *St. John the Evangelist on the Island of Patmos Writing the Revelation*, acquired by the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, with an attribution to Michel Corneille II (1642–1708), although it is typical of Simpol.<sup>44</sup> The detail of the twisted tree topped by light foliage seems to be a stylistic signature of the artist. To this group of rediscoveries, we can add a very similar *Saint Barbara* in the Musée de Grenoble that was given an incomprehensible attribution to Jean André (1662–1753) (Figure 17).<sup>45</sup>



12. Bernard Picart (French, 1673–1733). *Viola da Gamba Player*, ca. 1695–96. Pen and ink, gray wash,  $4\frac{3}{4} \times 3\frac{1}{8}$  in. (12 x 8 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Arts Graphiques (inv. 32360bis). Photograph: Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY; Louvre, Paris, France

Inasmuch as the “Album Matthieu Elye” originally belonged to Mariette, it seems likely that he had plans to publish the designs. Although we cannot identify any engravings made from them, the reverses of Simpol’s drawings show traces of red chalk, indicating that the images were transferred. Some (but not all) of the other drawings in the group also reveal signs of transfer. The project, which even included depictions of ancient Roman emperors, must have been a fairly ambitious one. Yet the lack of historical coherence (there are no figures from the Middle Ages), or of geographic balance (there are few Asian figures), clearly reveals the incompleteness of a project that might have served as an album of universal costume. Perhaps the extraordinary breadth of the project made it difficult to complete.

Under the circumstances, it is hard to maintain the view advanced by Mulherron according to which Simpol enjoyed “considerable success” at the turn of the century.<sup>46</sup> We have seen that after having failed as a painter, Simpol was forced to restrict his activity to drawing. The unfinished state of the project referred to here as an “album of universal costume” seems to be further evidence of his lack of success. Mariette’s own testimony, which Mulherron quotes, supports this: “His disaffection for work, his poor conduct which continually reduced him to want, were an obstacle to it.”<sup>47</sup> The artist’s financial difficulties are confirmed by documents in the archives. Thus in 1691, upon marrying Claude Simpol, Hélène Denis received from her parents a trust of 1,000 livres that provided a yearly dividend of 50 livres.<sup>48</sup> However, a document dated March 1695 shows that the couple had repurchased a third of the capital (335 livres).<sup>49</sup> The same need for liquidity can be inferred from a document



13. Drawn and engraved by Bernard Picart. *The Concert*, 1709. Engraving,  $11\frac{7}{8} \times 20\frac{1}{8}$  in. (30.3 x 51.2 cm). Paris, Cité de la Musique (E.986.1.32). Photograph: Collection Musée de la Musique/cliché Jean-Marc Anglès





14. Claude Simpol. *A Marshall on Horseback*, ca. 1705. Oil and ink on paper, 10 x 7 in. (25.5 x 17.7 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Arts Graphiques (inv. 33800). Photograph: Suzanne Nagy, Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY; Louvre, Paris, France



15. Claude Simpol. *A Sultana*, ca. 1705. Oil and ink on paper, 10 x 7 in. (25.5 x 17.7 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Arts Graphiques (inv. 33818). Photograph: Suzanne Nagy, Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY; Louvre, Paris, France



16. Claude Simpol. *Portrait of Emperor Titus*, ca. 1705. Oil and ink on paper, 10 x 7 in. (25.5 x 17.7 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Arts Graphiques (inv. 33840). Photograph: Suzanne Nagy, Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY; Louvre, Paris, France



17. Claude Simpol. *Saint Barbara*, ca. 1705. Oil and ink on paper, 9 7/8 x 7 1/8 in. (25 x 18 cm). Musée de Grenoble (MG D2133). Photograph: Musée de Grenoble

dated June 29, 1695: Simpol and his wife sold a share of the trust to their landlord—in the rue de Coq—in order to pay their overdue rent.<sup>50</sup>

Following more repurchases, the trust was liquidated on March 28, 1701.<sup>51</sup> The postmortem inventory of Simpol's belongings is an eloquent witness to the couple's difficult financial situation.<sup>52</sup> Since it is dated July 26, 1728, it was at first thought to provide the date of the artist's death. In fact, Rambaud's publications show that in January 1711, Hélène Denis was already described as the "widow of Claude Simpol."<sup>53</sup> In 1728, she lived in a single room in the rue Saint-Thomas du Louvre, amid furniture appraised at the strikingly small sum of 200 livres. A sad testimony to Simpol's later activity as an artist, the room contained six paintings, which were appraised at a total of only six livres.

Although the influence of Peter Paul Rubens, Northern art, Giulio Campagnola, and Claude Gillot on the work of Watteau is often noted by art historians, the roles played by two of Watteau's French predecessors, Simpol and Picart, are less frequently mentioned. My study of Simpol's life and work, including his collaboration with Picart in the creation of engravings with gallant subject matter, and a discovery of the association of his wife's family with music and musicians, provides further background to Watteau's development. The fact that the painter Jean-Baptiste Joseph Lebel, author of the two "fêtes galantes" in the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, was actually Simpol's son-in-law serves to confirm the existence of stylistic influences between Simpol and Watteau.<sup>54</sup>

## NOTES

1. Adhémar (1939) stressed the "similarities in conception and sentiment" between a number of Simpol's designs and the works of Watteau and noted that "the quality of lightness and gracefulness of the engravings [after Simpol] seem to define the influence of the artist on his époque and particularly on Watteau." Years later, Adhémar (1977) presented additional information on Simpol. I thank Perrin Stein, curator, Department of Drawings and Prints, MMA, for sharing bibliographic information, as well as Ariane de La Chapelle, research engineer, Graphic Art Department, Musée du Louvre, Paris, for her helpful discussion of technical details.
2. This attribution was made by Blaise Macarez, who discovered the engravings associated with the drawings in the Albertina, Vienna, as well as the reference to Simpol as designer of the compositions among the original notes of Pierre-Jean Mariette, son of the publisher and engraver Jean Mariette. See Holmes in Stein and Holmes 1999, pp. 3–5. In 1992 the British Museum, London, acquired a religious composition by Claude Simpol: *The Virgin and Child with St. Anne* (1992,1003.1). Note that each of the Metropolitan Museum drawings is inscribed on the mount with *B. Picart.f.1716* in an eighteenth-century hand.
3. See Mulherron 2008, supplemented by Grasselli 2009, which identified the subject of a genre scene by Simpol.
4. Mariette 1851–60, vol. 5 (1858–59), p. 222.
5. Marriage contract of Claude Simpol and Hélène Denis, October 6, 1691, Minutier Central, IX, 511, Archives Nationales, Paris.
6. Montaiglon 1875–92, vol. 2 (1878), p. 277 (May 13, 1684), as S<sup>t</sup> Paul.
7. Mariette 1851–60, vol. 5 (1858–59), p. 222.
8. Simpol's submission was *Enos Invoking the Name of the Lord*. Gregor Brandmüller was awarded the first, or *grand prix*, and the second prize went to Jacques Foacier; see Montaiglon 1875–92, vol. 2 (1878), p. 283 (September 2, 1684).
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 357, 362 (October 11, 1687).
10. Guiffrey 1915, p. 449.
11. Montaiglon 1875–92, vol. 3 (1880), p. 313. The minutes state that Simpol was received in the "community of master painters."
12. *Ibid.*, vol. 4 (1881), p. 78 (March 2, 1709).
13. Perhaps Simpol's name is omitted on the engravings as inventor because he had not yet been received as a master painter. Including his name in this context before 1695 would have been an infringement of guild regulations. Such an explanation would confirm a precocious date for the *Divertissemens* series.
14. Louvre, inv. 23760.
15. Musée Carnavalet, inv. P.2650.
16. *Importants tableaux anciens*, sale, Piasa/Drouot-Richelieu, Paris, December 13, 2006, lot 77; the work was identified as "circle of Louis de Boullogne" in *Old Master Paintings and Frames*, sale, Sotheby's, Amsterdam, May 8, 2001, lot 199.
17. Mabile 1975, p. 99, fig. 11.
18. Engerand 1899, p. 495.
19. Adhémar 1939, p. 70; Mulherron 2008, p. 30.
20. The painted surface reveals numerous small losses as well as some flaking. I thank Vincent Droguet for kindly providing me with photographs of the picture.
21. *Old Master Paintings*, sale, Sotheby's, London, July 7, 1993, lot 280 (as Michel-Ange Houasse).
22. According to an early source (see Engerand 1899, p. 494) the two additional paintings that the Ménagerie commissioned from



- Simpol represented a game of hide and seek, and *L'huître et les plaideurs*, or "two men disputing who will be the oyster, with a young man who gives them each a shell," from a fable by La Fontaine. Might the artist have benefited from a supplementary commission from the Ménagerie, or are we dealing here with an entirely different decoration?
23. Rambaud 1964–71, vol. 2, pp. 385–86.
  24. On the Denis family, see Samoyault-Verlet 1966; on Louis Marchand, see the entry on him in *Nouvelle biographie générale*, vol. 33 (Paris, 1863), p. 470.
  25. Inventory of Marie Bellesme, wife of Louis Denis, Paris, August 18, 1706, Minutier Central, IX, 566, Archives Nationales; reference cited in Rambaud 1964–71, vol. 2, p. 386.
  26. Adhémar 1939, pp. 73–74.
  27. See note 29 below. Fourteen prints from the *Figures de modes* series are in the Department of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum: 1871,1209.2056, 2685, and 2797; and 1874,0808.2224–31, 2234–35, and 2243.
  28. Adhémar 1939, pp. 67–68. The series of forty-three prints was engraved by Gérard-Jean-Baptiste Scotin, probably during the first decade of the eighteenth century; a drawing belonging to the *Différents sujets* series has reappeared on the art market (see Katrin Bellinger Kunsthandel, Munich, catalogue, November 2011, where it is referred to as *Two Elegant Figures in a Landscape*; it is in fact titled *Two Duellists*).
  29. Drawings from the *Figures de modes* series in the "Album Bernard Picart" in the Louvre are: *Horseman with Muff Covering Himself with His Cloak* (inv. 32359); *Woman Holding a Telescope* (inv. 32359bis); *Young Horseman with a Hat in His Hand* (inv. 32359ter); *Man Playing a Viola da Gamba* (inv. 32360bis); *Horseman Seen from the Back* (inv. 32360quater); *Musketeer* (inv. 32361ter); *Milkmaid* (inv. 32364bis); *Standing Nobleman Wearing a Tricorn* (inv. 32365bis); *Horseman with a Muff* (inv. 32365ter); *Woman with Her Hands in a Muff* (inv. 32365quater); *Servant Carrying a Pail of Water* (inv. 32368); *Peasant Girl Spinning Wool* (inv. 32368bis); *Shepherd Girl Holding a Crook* (inv. 32368ter); and *Shepherd Playing the Bagpipe* (inv. 32368quater). Each of these drawings is reproduced in the set of prints owned by the British Museum (see note 27 above).
  30. Paris, Cité de la Musique (E.986.1.32). This design may be the first impulse in the creative process that launched Picart's *The Concert*. A preliminary drawing for the entire composition is preserved in the Albertina, Vienna (see Widauer 2004, p. 209, F.2013, pl. 43); and a study for the couple at the bottom left is in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (see Whiteley 2000, no. 452, ill.).
  31. A painted adaptation appeared in a sale at Nagel Auktionen, Stuttgart, March 26 and 27, 2001.
  32. Adhémar 1939 and 1977.
  33. All the drawings in this album are preserved at the Louvre under the attribution of "Anonymes français du XVIIIe siècle" [anonymous French artists of the 18th century] (inv. 33777–850). It is interesting that two of the drawings, *Portrait of the Maréchal de Tallard* (inv. 33795) and *Portrait of a Court Lady* (inv. 33819), were exhibited as the work of Simpol in 1967 (see Bacou 1967, no. 268). Although one would expect stylistically similar drawings in the album to be attributed to the same artist, this is not the case; for example, inv. 26542, a drawing that closely reflects the style of Simpol, is catalogued under the name of Matthieu Elye (see note 42 below).
  34. Louvre, inv. 33790.
  35. Louvre, inv. 33797.
  36. Louvre, inv. 33778.
  37. The fiftieth drawing in the album, inv. 26540, is signed "M. Elye Inv. et Fec." The artist's name is also written "Elyas," "Elie," and "Elias."
  38. Louvre, inv. 33810.
  39. Louvre, inv. 33809.
  40. Louvre, inv. 32359, cited in note 29 above.
  41. Louvre, inv. 33850.
  42. To Simpol we can attribute with certainty inv. 33778–92, 33795–806, 33811–14, 33829–33, and 33836–49. The drawing catalogued under Matthieu Elye's name that belongs to the same album (inv. 26542) should be added to the list. The bust of the emperor in Simpol's *Portrait of Emperor Titus* (Figure 16) derives from Aegidius Sadeler's print after *Portrait of Titus* by Titian (see Department of Prints and Drawings, The British Museum, 1878, 0713.2654).
  43. The religious works in the Louvre are *The Establishment of the Eucharist* (RF. 2374), *Christ on the Cross* (inv. 33730), *The Washing of the Feet* (inv. 32840), and *The Kiss of Judas* (inv. 32839), all preserved under Simpol's name. In addition, I reject the unfounded attribution of *Baptism of Christ* (inv. 33663); since this drawing was acquired from Jabach in 1671, Simpol cannot have been its author.
  44. Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, 1986.454.
  45. Musée de Grenoble, MG D2133. See Kazerouni, Brejon de Lavergnée, and Delaplanche 2001, no. 52; the author of the entry believed he saw stylistic differences among Simpol's Louvre drawings (see note 43 above) and suggested that certain works might be ascribed to the painter Jean André. In truth, this remarkably coherent group of drawings can only be assigned to Simpol. A close examination of the only known drawing by André (Albertina, Vienna), which betrays the influence of Jean Jouvenet (1644–1717), rules out such a hypothesis.
  46. Mulherron 2008, p. 25.
  47. Mariette 1851–60, vol. 5 (1858–59), p. 222.
  48. Mentioned in the clauses of the marriage contract, October 6, 1691, Minutier Central, IX, 511, Archives Nationales.
  49. Mentioned pursuant to the marriage contract cited in the previous note.
  50. Transfer of the trust: Claude Simpol and Hélène Denis to Annibal Dancé, June 29, 1695, Minutier Central, IX, 524, Archives Nationales. The contract stipulates that the artist and his wife were to leave their lodgings the following day.
  51. Mentioned pursuant to the marriage contract cited in note 48 above.
  52. Minutier Central, LIX, 202 (July 26, 1728), Archives Nationales. This is one of the very few notarized inventories that does not adhere to the principles of a postmortem inventory. The document may have been drawn up for the purpose of liquidating the former joint ownership of the couple.
  53. The date of Simpol's death must lie between 1709, when Simpol's presentation at the Académie Royale was annulled, and December 1710, when Hélène Denis is cited as being the widow of Claude Simpol (see Rambaud 1964–71, vol. 2, p. 386).
  54. In his article on Jean-Baptiste Lebel, Martin Eidelberg (2004, pp. 76–79) wonders if there may be some kinship between this painter of fêtes galantes and the family of Claude Simpol. In fact, the discovery of Simpol's postmortem inventory (see note 52 above) confirms such a connection: married to Anne-Louise de Simpol, Jean-Baptiste Lebel is cited in this document as Claude Simpol's son-in-law.

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