

# Discovery of the spring

## The story of the discovery of the spring of Lavey according by Rodolphe Toepffer

Rodolphe Toepffer, known as the first comic artist in history, suffered from a liver disease towards the end of his life. He drove to Lavey for a cure. His stay inspired him to an illustrated story about the discovery of the spring of Lavey. The teacher, writer and illustrator Rodolphe Toepffer from Geneva, son of a famous caricaturist, is considered the "father of comics". From 1827 he told stories in pictures in the form of sequences that inextricably linked text and illustration. Aware of the invention of a new art form, which he called "graphic literature", he wrote his first theoretical work on comics in 1845.

Toepffer founded a boarding school for young people. He took his pupils to school races across Switzerland and into the Alps. On these journeys, illustrated stories were created to entertain his young pupils.

At the end of his life, Toepffer, suffering from a liver disease, underwent a three-week cure in Lavey. This stay inspired him to illustrate stories with the title "Memories of Lavey 1843", which were published in the magazine "Last Zigzag Travels".

The lithograph shown [under historical images](#) shows an episode in the history of Lavey's spring as (re)discovered by Ravy and his servant. When in contact with the water, the servant is said to have shouted, "Master, I'm burning! So Toepffer told it in his story. Indeed, the SPA of Lavey-les-Bains is the hottest in Switzerland.

Lithograph by Rodolphe Toepffer (1799-1846), printed by Sonor in the 1920s. Rodolphe Toepffer was born on 31 January 1799 and died on 8 June 1846. He was a Swiss French language writer, illustrator and professor of aesthetics at the Geneva Art Academy.