

# Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

## Online edition

### **ANSIAUME, Nicolas**

Léry, Normandie 1729 – Paris 1786

Nicolas Ansiaume, or Ansiome, died in Paris in 1786, was said to be a pupil of La Tour by the owners of the Messier portrait (a later chalk drawing of the astronomer by Ansiaume also exists), a suggestion supported by the terms of La Tour's first testament of 20.X.1768: "M<sup>rs</sup> Restout, Montjoye, Ensiaume partageront mes crayons de pastels et couleurs et toutes mes études qui ne seront pas sous verre ou glace et qui ne sont pas collez sur des cartons ou des toiles". The hand appears to be the same as that of the "Ansionce" who provides some biographical information on the back of the pastel of an unknown woman some 10 years earlier. He is described somewhat imaginatively as "peintre de l'Académie royale" in the document published by Guiffrey. According to this, Ansiaume was a peintre en pastel, living in the rue de Richelieu, à l'hôtel des Deux-Siciles. In 1785 the pastellist Boze recorded a debt of 624 livres to Ansiaume for the hire of a mannequin used in his portrait of Louis XVI. Ansiaume left some 5680 livres in cash and a valuable library; his heirs included the children of Pierre Allais (*q.v.*), whose widow was born Marie-Françoise Ansiaume (Nicolas Ansiome, peintre was godfather to Pierre-Nicolas Benjamin, son of Antoine Allais, according to the records at Saint-Sulpice, 9.IV.1784). Guiffrey thought Ansiaume was nothing more than a painter of mannequins, but we now know better. A miniature *Ruine d'architecture* painted by "le sieur Anteauce" was in the inventaire de l'Académie de Saint-Luc on its dissolution and could be another product of this obscure artist.

### **Bibliography**

B&W, p. 74; Boze 2004; Guiffrey 1885, pp. 114–116, doc. CCCXVI; pp. 187f, doc. CCCLXIII; Herluison 1873

### **Pastels**

Charles MESSIER (1730–1827), astronome, pstl, 56x46, 1771 (Paris, Observatoire, inv. P.Po 33. Legs Mme veuve Callon, née Messier 1944). Lit.: *Le Pays lorrain*, 1932, p. 425 repr. A/r Desportes pnt., 1771 (*olim* Nantes PC) [Croix de la Légion d'honneur added p.1806]

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Homme, âgé de quarante ans environ, de mi-corps, de  $\frac{3}{4}$  à dr., les yeux regardant le spectateur, perruque poudrée, catogan ramené sur l'épaule dr., habit bleu foncé, la main g. repliée dans le gilet de soie fond jaune à fleurs, cravate blanche, jabot et manchettes de dentelle, pstl, 56x46 (comte de L... [Paul Sohège]; Paris, Drouot, Bernier, Sortais, 1.IV.1909, Lot 23 n.r., as by Ansiome)

Femme au bonnet, pstl, 45x36, inscr. verso "Fait par Monsieur/Nicolas Ansionce/natif de leri en normandie agé de 31 ans en janvier 1761" (Monaco, Sotheby's, 20–21.II.1988, Lot 248 repr., est. fr5–7000, fr5550) ❖



Photo courtesy Sotheby's