

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

CANY, Jean-Baptiste de

fl. Paris 1671–1707

Also spelt de Cani. Painter of portraits and religious subjects (such as the tableau votif given to the chapitre de Notre-Dame in 1671, or the chalk *Visitation*, Louvre, Inv 25137), some of which are known from engravings; he was also active as a copyist. A religious picture (presumably in oil), signed and dated J. de Cany 1707, was exhibited in Amiens in 1860 (no. 11), extending the artist's activity from the 1693 normally given. He was the son of the landscape painter and sculptor referred to as Cany père (both seem to have been Jean de Cany, but the son is often referred to in the secondary literature as Jean-Baptiste), who died in 1672: "monsieur de Cany, maistre peintre et sculpteur", buried 28.I.1672 at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, aged 55. From Rouen, Cany père had married a Jeanne Aubert in 1641. On 2.III.1654, at Saint-Barthélemy, was baptised Louis (a brother of the pastellist), "fils de Jean de Cany, maître peintre, et de Jeanne Aubert"; the godparents were Louis Contesse, receveur et payeur des rentes de l'Hôtel de ville, and the daughter of Hilaire Pellerin, maître peintre. A few months later, "Jean de Cany, maître peintre et bourgeois de Paris, demeurant rue de l'Arbre secq, paroisse Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois" appeared in a property document at the Châtelet de Paris (AN Y224, 20.V.1672) as representative of the sisters of Guillaume Aubert, ancien procureur de la nation de Normandie et régent au collège du Plessis-Sorbonne à Paris. He was no doubt the "Jean de Cany, peintre de l'Académie royale" who appeared as parrain to the daughter of Pierre Bigeon, at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, 18.II.1674. On 15.X.1677 (AN MC/ET/II/263) a Florent du Fossé was apprenticed to "Jean de Cany maistre peintre et sculpteur à Paris...quai Pelletier."

An inventaire was prepared for Jean de Cany on 9.VII.1714 (AN MC/XLVI/218) at the request of his executor, Louis-Robert Cornuot. It includes over 200 paintings, as well as a great many drawings and prints, many copies, and mostly of religious and similar themes, mostly unframed, valued at low levels by M. Deuillène, sculpteur et peintre. Only one pastel is mentioned, valued at 20 sols (the entry is illegible in part; it may be a potrait of the deceased's father, and it is not explicitly attributed). He appears to have died some time before, perhaps in 1712, and no heir was identified.

The Welbeck portrait of a Spanish Capuchin is a typical subject. Mariette dismissed him as a "peintre froid...dont le principal talent étoit de copier avec une grande propreté" while noting "sa vertu et la douceur de ses mœurs". This moral uprightness is also found in a 1200-page manuscript *Réflexions d'un chevalier de Malte sur la grandeur et les devoirs de son état* by a chevalier de Cany, identified tentatively by Engel as Jean-Baptiste Le Marinier de Cany de Beauvalet, younger son of a Norman family, received into the Ordre de Malte with his brother in 1666 (the de Cany estate was later sold to his maternal grandfather, Pierre I^{er} de Becdelièvre). The

connection with the knights of Malta would also offer a clue as to how the picture came into the possession of Matthew Prior: he was attached to the British embassy in Paris when, in 1713, a diplomatic crisis developed concerning the treatment of English sailors in Malta. Negotiations took place between Prior and the bailli de La Vieuville, the order's ambassador in Paris, and proceeded with courtesies on both sides. However it is unlikely that chevaliers de Malte would be drawn from the Parisian bourgeoisie.

Bibliography

Bénézit; Claire-Éliane Engel, *L'Ordre de Malte en Méditerranée, 1530–1798*, Monaco, 1957; Claire-Éliane Engel, *Knights of Malta*, 1963; Goulding 1936, p. 433; Heim Gallery, exh. cat. 6.VI–31.VIII.1979, no. 10; Bruno Guillois, "Jean de Cany, peintre: un élève de Laurent de La Hyre?", actes du colloque *Jacques Thuillier. Pensée et écriture de l'art* (Paris, INHA, 2015), [in press, not seen]; Bruno Guillius, notice on Jean de Cany, in *Galerie Michel Descours, Varia*, c.2020, cat. pp. 16–19; Mariette 1851–60; Rambaud 1971, II, pp. 906, 963; abbé de Vertot, *Histoire des chevaliers hospitaliers de S. Jean de Jérusalem*, Paris, 1727

Pastels

J.1954.101 Bernard de Porto-Moriso, general of the Capuchins [Don Benito BERNARDO DE PORTO MAURICIO, minister general of the Capuchin order of Friars Minor 1678–84, vicario generale de Buenaventura de Recanati 1684–85], head and shoulders, to left, in light brown habit, pstl/ppr, 56x44.5 ov., s ← "De Cany f.", 1671 (Matthew Prior (1664–1721), inv. 1721, as Du Vivier, valued £3; Harley, Welbeck). Lit.: Portland & Fairfax Murray 1894, no. 15 [?= no. 196]; Goulding 1936, no. 15; Wright & Montgomery 1945, no. 13 n.r. ~cop, pnt., 56x51 (Welbeck). Lit.: Goulding 1936, no. 196

J.1954.111 Le portrait [du père] de M. DE CANY en pastel, dans sa bordure de bois doré (artist; inv. p.m. 1714, 20 sols) [attr.; cf. De Cany père]