

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

DAMAME DEMARTRAIS,

Michel-François

Paris 18.II.1757–26.IV.1827

A pastellist was recorded in Rouen in this notice in the *Journal de Rouen* for 7.VII.1780, p. 3:

Le sieur Damance, Peintre & élève de l'Académie royale de Paris, & de M. Delatour, peintre du Roi, offre, en cette Ville, ses talens aux personnes qui voudront l'employer; il peint le portrait à l'huile & en pastel, en un seul jour, en 2 séances; l'une de deux heures & demie le matin, & autant l'après diner. *Sa demeure est rue du crucifix, chez M. Caumont, Dégraisseur.*

No other record of an artist called Damance has been found, and the name is most likely a misprint. The only plausible candidate seems to be Michel-François Damame, peintre, dessinateur et graveur, not hitherto known as a pastellist.

Contrary to all standard sources (until here corrected, 2025), which give his birth as 1763, he was in fact born in Paris, 18.II.1757, the son of Henry-François, maître fourbisseur, and his wife, Marie-Françoise Chalié, herself the daughter of a peintre-doreur (état civil reconstitué). He enrolled in the école de l'Académie royale in Paris in 1772, “aged 16”, under Vien; he is again recorded separately in a later register, entering the école on 1.III.1779, aged 22, under Gois, and he appears there until 1785. He exhibited a Fête sur un canal at the place Dauphine in 1780. He exhibited têtes d'étude at the salon in 1796, as a pupil of David. Later he travelled to Russia; on his return he became professeur at the École centrale de la Dordogne. He exhibited again at salon between 1810 and 1819. An imperial commission (1813) was for a large drawing of the couronnement de Marie de Médicis. His work as a nineteenth-century topographical illustrator in watercolour and engraving is beyond the scope of this *Dictionary*. Later records add a surname, de Martreais, Demartrais or De Martait (Damane is also seen). He died in Paris, 19 quai Bourbon, 26.IV.1827, aged 70, consistent with the revised year of birth published here (Archives de Paris, tables des successions; inv. p.m., 9.V.1827, AN MC/ET/XVI/1057).

Although the tables state that he was celibate (and give the day of his death one day later than the inventaire declares), the acte de décès of a Michel Damame, aged 20 at his death in Saint-Germain-en-Laye on 2.XI.1835, records his parents as Catherine Petitbon and “François Michel Damame, Peintre”.

Bibliography

Bellier de La Chavignerie & Auvray 1882;
Bénézit; Sanchez 2004