Neil Jeffares, *Maurice-Quentin de La Tour: life and work*

Saint-Quentin 5.IX.1704–16/17.II.1788

This Essay is central to the La Tour fascicles in the online Dictionary which are indexed and introduced here. The work catalogue is divided into the following sections:

- Part I: Autoportraits
- Part II: Named sitters A–D
- Part III: Named sitters E–L
- Part IV: Named sitters M–Q
- Part V: Named sitters R–Z
- Part VI: Unidentified sitters

Follow the hyperlinks for other parts of this work available online:

- Chronological table of documents relating to La Tour
- Contemporary biographies of La Tour
- Tropes in La Tour biographies
- Besnard & Wildenstein concordance
- Genealogy

Contents of this essay

I. BIOGRAPHICAL THEMES 3
I.1 The name 3
I.2 Early biographies and sources 4
I.3 Family background 5
I.4 Early years 7
I.5 Early works 9
I.6 La Tour at the Académie royale 10
I.7 The galeries du Louvre 11
I.8 La Tour's other residences 11
I.9 Royal portraits 13
I.10 Stuart commissions 14
I.11 The self-portraits 14
I.12 La Tour's clientèle 14
I.13 Later years – health etc. 16
I.14 Marie Fel 16
I.15 Fees 16
I.16 Finances 17
I.17 La Tour's friends: artists, legacies 18
I.18 Pupils 19
I.19 Science and literature 21
I.20 Philanthropy and freemasonry 21
II. THE WORK 24
II.1 From préparation to portrait 24
II.2 Resemblance 25
II.3 Compositions 26
II.4 Larger compositions 26
II.5 Accessories 28
II.6 Faces and intelligence 29
II.7 Finish 30
III. TECHNICAL ASPECTS 32
III.1 Scientific investigations 32
III.2 Materials 32
III.4 Engravings 36
III.5 Copies; pupils 36
III.6 Frames 38
III.7 Early methods of transport and conservation 39
III.8 Questions 40
IV. CRITICAL FORTUNE 41
IV.1 The vogue for pastel 41
IV.2 Responses to La Tour at the salons 41
IV.3 Contemporary reputation 42
IV.4 Posthumous reputation 42
IV.5 Prices since 1800 45
General references etc. 46

MAURICE-QUENTIN DE LA TOUR was the most important pastellist of the eighteenth century. Matisse bracketed him with Rembrandt among portraitists.[1] "Célèbre par son talent & par son esprit"[2] – known as an eccentric and wit as well as a genius, La Tour had a keen sense of the importance of the great artist in society which would shock no one today. But in terms of sheer technical bravura, it is difficult to envisage anything to match the enormous pastels of the président de Rieux J.46.2722 or of Mme de Pompadour J.46.2541.[3] The former, exhibited in the Salon of 1741, stunned the critics with its achievement: this was, after all, "just" a pastel, but the miracle planted La Tour firmly centre stage, where he was to remain for thirty years, with a stream of commissions from the royal family, the old nobility, the *noblesse de robe* and the *nouveaux riches* financiers – the most powerful, the wealthiest, the most famous and the best informed sitters of ancien régime France – not to mention the artists and intellectuals he counted as his friends, and among whom he was perhaps at his best as a portraitist.

This virtuosity was not achieved without struggle: La Tour was a precursor of the tortured artist of the nineteenth century, agonising over so-called préparations[4] in which he attempted to capture the soul of his sitter, and continuing to work for decades on portraits that did not satisfy him, often to their detriment. Unsurprisingly a good number of his works are self-portraits where the sitter's patience was not an issue. That quest for perfection may have developed into the madness which took over the last years of his life.

His œuvre consists almost entirely of pastel portraits, both final works and associated préparations in chalk, occasionally with some pastel; he did not work in oil or miniature, draw other than in chalk, nor make prints. He exhibited more pastels (and more portraits) at the official Paris salons than any other artist during the eighteenth century – although, even allowing for losses, he was far less productive than some other pastellists. He spent virtually his entire career in Paris, unlike rivals such as Perronneau and Liotard who travelled widely to secure business and establish their reputation.

La Tour's fame throughout Europe in his lifetime was enormous. His importance has since inevitably made him the subject of much scholarly attention. This has yielded limited information about some of the most interesting questions. The apparent wealth of salon criticism turns out to be largely

[1] Marie-Alain Couturier, *Se garder libre: journal, 1947–1954*, 1962, p. 119; *v. infra* for critical fortune and FLORILEGEUM for full text.
[2] The phrase is Charles Palissot de Montenoy's, in a gloss on a letter of Voltaire of 11.XII.1765 in his 1792 edition.
[3] J numbers refer to the catalogue or Dictionary: those commencing J.46. to the La Tour catalogue, J.I.46., J.IF.46., and J.M.46. to the ICONOGRAPHY and other J numbers to the online *Dictionary of pastellists*.
[4] Hoisington 2016, p. 60, points out that La Tour called these works études, and suggests the word *préparation* was first used in this sense by the Goncourts: in fact Champfleury anticipated them in 1855.

repetitive, although this has not prevented it (and some of the better known portraits) being overanalysed from fashionable academic slants. The biographical details of a handful of more or less contemporary sources have been endlessly repeated and embellished, and inferences from casual observations developed beyond sense.

The basic biographical facts – mostly gathered in the late nineteenth century by art historians and archivists such as Charles Desmaze, Champfleury, Georges Lecocq, Maurice Tourneux, Élie Fleury and Gaston Brière – were largely consolidated in Georges Wildenstein's 1928 monograph ("B&W"[5]), together with a body of work which, through the range of its subjects and the skill of its execution, dominates the field. By no means all of the 990 entries in Wildenstein's catalogue are by La Tour – but there are a great many omissions and confusions about the status of repetitions. The extent of the book's errors and omissions may be gleaned from our B&W Concordance, which includes numerous pastels reattributed here to artists from Vivien to Vigée Le Brun.[6]

B&W has not hitherto been superseded in scope, despite the more accurate and far better illustrated works by Christine Debrie and Xavier Salmon and the discoveries presented in the 2004 exhibition at Versailles.[7] Salmon 2024 has the best selection of reproductions but it is not a catalogue raisonné; it adopts a structure making it difficult to use as a reference tool and a style which the general reader may find challenging.[8] The challenge of securely establishing the full œuvre has nevertheless largely been ignored, with scholars, daunted by the virtual impossibility of establishing a reliable chronology,[9] showing little interest in this task, concentrating instead on analysing a small number of well-known works or focused on embedding La Tour into academic theses about the Enlightenment, the role of artists and the social structure implied by portraiture.

While scientific investigations offer some promise of deeper insight into La Tour's technique, the main tool for establishing authenticity remains connoisseurship, and the primary resource the body of information we gather in the catalogue and in our expanded and updated version of B&W's chronological table of DOCUMENTS (documents that can be found there are referenced below by date alone to avoid a plethora of footnotes). They constitute the only accurate biography of the sitter.

Here is a link to the index page for the various files comprising this online La Tour monograph and catalogue raisonné. Much of the most important information is contained in the essays on specific works, summaries of which are embedded in the work catalogue (divided into six fascicles), and is not duplicated in this essay (nor is duplicated information that belongs in other parts of the online *Dictionary*, whether pastels by other artists, general information on the medium, or indexes of sitters etc.). In this work the emphasis is on facts, works and documents, not on theories or anecdotes.

[5] Essentially written by Georges Wildenstein with a short introduction by Albert Besnard, whose name nevertheless appears on the title page as co-author.

[6] The B&W catalogue includes a great many works in upper and lower case type, indicating that no opinion on attribution is expressed (shown below as "?attr." after the B&W number, equivalent to an absent φ in our classification); unsurprisingly they include a number of works by different artists. These misattributions, copies and undecidable "œuvres mentionnées" (including repeated records of the same work) make up the bulk of the 990 numbers in B&W, as they do within the 1900 works with J.46. numbers in this work. Fewer than 300 of these are universally accepted as fully autograph, and even this number includes numerous préparations.

[7] The only book published in English, by Adrian Bury, is of very limited value (it even reproduces a work by a different artist on the cover).

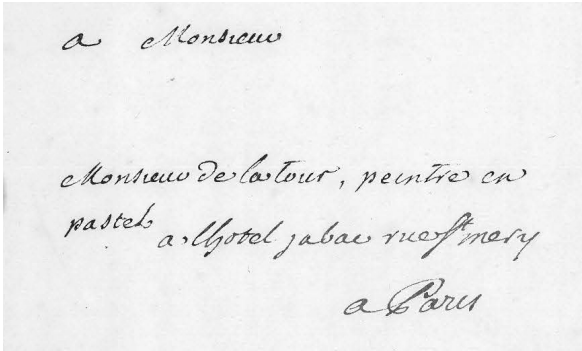
[8] See Jeffares 2024c.

[9] As Debrie 1991, p. 20, rightly observed, "il est hasardeux, voire impossible, de déceler dans la production de La Tour une œuvre de ses débuts d'une œuvre plus tardive." Tourneux 1904 was similarly candid: "La Tour n'a pas … pris le soin de dresser la liste des portraits qu'il exécutait sans les dater ni les signer; aussi leur nombre total et leur chronologie rigoureuse nous échapperont-ils toujours."

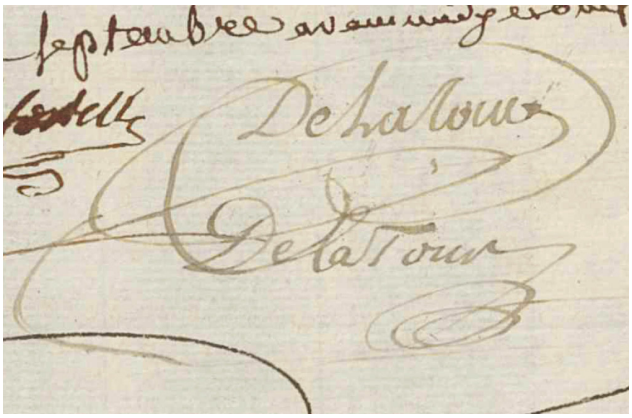
I. BIOGRAPHICAL THEMES

I.1 The name

A somewhat pointless debate (often based on category confusions between printing conventions, particles indicating nobility and post-Napoleonic legal controls on names) over the proper spelling of his name (de La Tour, de Latour, Delatour etc.) has already taken too much space (see Jeffares 2017x); the "Delatour" which appears in some contemporary documents[10] may be more strictly accurate, but "de La Tour" is accepted so widely[11] that the solecism, if such it be, is followed here. An entirely typical document is the 20.IX.1770 contract to purchase the house at Auteuil: there is no more reason to print Delatour today based on the manuscript "DelaTour" than there is to print Delavalette instead of the standardised "de La Valette" to which no one objects. Roettiers engraved his name as DE LA TOUR on a medallion. D'Alembert called him Latour, while Voltaire addressed him as *de la tour*:[12]


a Monsieur
Monsieur de la tour, peintre en
pastel a l'hotel jabac rue St Merry
a Paris

One should note that the flexibilities of handwriting allowed subtleties such as the discernible gaps between the nevertheless cursive De_la_tour seen in a letter to Belle de Zuylen, or the distinct capital in DelaTour on his 29.XI.1774 expert report, found again in the codicil to his will, on the Académie register, 27.VI.1778, and on a great many more documents. There is little doubt that the artist's preference was for this form, invariably with a capital T and usually with some small degree of space around the la.[13] La Tour's brother Charles also signed De_La_Tour in a document of 12.IX.1761 which provides a representative example of the artist's signature (the pastellist's below his brother's):



A similar progression may be seen in his father's increasingly elaborate penmanship: by the time (28.III.1726) of the baptism of the pastellist's half-brother Jean-François, his father was clearly separating the particle from "La Tour", as did his own father Jean de La Tour, a maître maçon. Jean's signature is found in numerous parish registers, usually accompanied by his monogram (which may also be his mason's mark), JLT in a circle.

In the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, La Tour appears among the artists mentioned to illustrate the phrase "Les pastels de …": in the fifth (1798) to eighth (1935) editions, as "Latour", and in the current 9th edition, as "Quentin de La Tour".

As to whether a hyphen should appear between the artist's forenames, that too is a matter of modern printing convention rather than historical fact ascertainable from documents. "Maurice-Quentin" is certainly not a compound name in the sense that say Jean-Baptiste is; indeed in several documents, the artist is referred to as Maurice DelaTour or Maurice-Q. DelaTour.[14] In this work we hyphenate all French forenames to distinguish them from family names, irrespective of whether they are compound names: this is in line with official recommendations.[15] A sensible alternative is to hyphenate no forenames (this is what appears in most period manuscripts – although not in printed genealogical sources). But the increasingly widespread habit of hyphenating only compound forenames (such as Jean-Baptiste) is deplored: it is virtually impossible to apply the rule consistently, as there is no means of ascertaining today which names were regarded as compound at the time. Rules limiting compound forms to two names only are also an anachronistic imposition on people living before the Revolution.

Unrelated homonyms

The name La Tour in its various forms is of course extremely common, both as a family name and as a surname linked to land found among the nobility. A full directory is however unnecessary as very few of these are likely to cause confusion, and identifications of La Tour pastels are not based on his signature. The chronological gap with the most famous

[10] The surviving holograph documents include the name slips on some of the Saint-Quentin préparations; the labels on the versos of Monnet J.46.2377 and Coventry J.46.1565; the wills; the letter to d'Agay de Mutigney of 21.IX.1781; and the expert reports of 29.XI.1774 and 26.XI.1783.

[11] Debrie 1991 and Debrie & Salmon 2000, as well as the major retrospective La Tour 2004; he is indexed under L in all standard art historical dictionaries, the BnF and the Getty Union List of Artist Names.

[12] *Circa* 1735. The envelope but not the letter is in the New York Public Library; see DOCUMENTS, 1735.

[13] One exception may be noted: the label on the *verso* of Coventry J.46.1565, which I now believe to be autograph, idiosyncratically has "Maurice Q Delatour".

[14] On the labels on the versos of Monnet J.46.2377 ("Maurice DelaTour") and Coventry J.46.1565 ("Maurice Q Delatour"); and the expert report of 26.XI.1783 ("Maurice DelaTour").

[15] See for example the *Lexique des règles typographiques en usage à l'Imprimerie nationale* (3e éd., p. 151) or the BnF Catalogue général. The convention is also adopted by standard works on genealogy (e.g. La Chesnaye des Bois, Père Anselme or Jougla de Morenas).

painter of this name, Georges de La Tour (1593–1652; *q.v.*), is large enough to resolve any misattribution (while noting Maurice-Quentin's copy of a figure from a Georges de La Tour painting, J.46.3774).

Some prints expressed to be after La Tour or Delatour may however refer to later homonyms.

Virtually nothing is known of Pierre Pierre, "dit Latour" or "Delatour" (1707–1743), maître peintre à Paris, who was brother-in-law of La Tour's teacher Dupouch (*v.* §I.4 *infra*); he was the son of Louis Pierre dit Latour, employé dans les fermes du roi. The address in his 21.I.1731 marriage contract with Gabrielle-Catherine Dupouch (AN MC/XXIV/637) was rue de la Pelleterie (when he was described as an "ouvrier travaillant à la peinture"), and the same address is given in the registres de tutelles after his death (AN Y4609B, 21.III.1743).

This makes it unlikely that he was the author of two oil portraits, J.46.31495 and J.46.3164, improbably attributed to Maurice-Quentin de La Tour on the basis of inscriptions and dates of 1736 and 1737 with an address in the rue Saint-Jacques opposite the Jésuites (now the Lycée Louis le Grand); one of these is after Delobel. Perhaps these are by Jean-Charles Latour, peintre, rue Saint-Jacques, known only from a consentement connected with a debt relating outstanding rent on a house in the rue de l'Arbalète, 11.XII.1750 (AN MC/ET/XVIII/584).

Although too young to be responsible for the 1736–37 portraits, mention should be made of the obscure Flemish religious and portrait painter and draughtsman Jean or Jan Latour (1719–1782) who was active in Rome, Paris, Spa and Liège, and was in London c.1760–68.[16]

Another case is the miniaturist and pastellist Mme Philippe-François Delatour, née Marie-Élisabeth-Jeanne Simons (1750–1834, *q.v.*), mother of the artist Alexandre Delatour (1780–1858).

The draughtsman Louis Brion de La Tour (1758–1803, *q.v.*) might also be a candidate for the Latour, miniaturist who was in London in 1794–95, advertising his newly invented Physigraph in the *Times*, 3.IV.1794, and in partnership with Constant de Massoul (*Morning chronicle*, 16.V.1795).

I.2 Early biographies and sources

Before looking at the artist's life, it is necessary to review the reliability of previous narratives. The early accounts of La Tour are set out in CONTEMPORARY BIOGRAPHIES. Mariette's sensible account, written in 1772, is the most useful, but is not without error. Duplaquet's eulogy is overblown and second-hand – written posthumously at the invitation of the administration of the École gratuite de dessin (which the artist had founded in his native Saint-Quentin).[17] He was not the bureau's first choice[18] of biographer, and it is most likely that he set about his task by talking to those who had known the artist only in his last years, so much of the information may have derived (indirectly) from La Tour's own stories. While Bucelly d'Estrées adds useful detail, his account is too late to be reliable (he was just 10 years old when La Tour died[19]), and is not independent of Duplaquet. The volume produced by Dréolle de Nodion (1856) was little more than a scrapbook of second- or third-hand material gathered by a professional journalist during his time at Saint-Quentin.

In a separate article (Jeffares 2014m) I have adopted a phylogenetic approach to analysing the propagation of tropes and errors through these sources, a fundamental step in winding back to the solid facts, if disappointingly thinner than recent monographs might lead us to expect. Even trivial errors are illuminating in this textual approach. For example, La Tour was born in 1704, but Duplaquet's periphrasis puts this (correctly) as "5e année du siècle"; this is picked up erroneously as 1705 by the journalists who follow. Duplaquet, expanding the limited material available to him, also embellishes: in Diderot's version of the story of La Tour's confrontation with Perronneau, the La Tour self-portrait is that with the *chapeau clabaud*, but Duplaquet substitutes the *autoportrait à l'index*, so as to add ridicule to Perronneau's inadequacy. Mariette tells us of La Tour's intellectual pretensions, and how he studied Bayle's dictionary before presenting half-digested ideas in intellectual gatherings. Duplaquet has him as "le Peintre Philosophe; avide de tout savoir", and adds that he studied mathematics and geometry during the two years he devoted to mastering drawing, while for Bucelly d'Estrées he had "vastes connaissances en littérature, il était bon mathématicien et bon géomètre".

The conclusion from a detailed examination of these tropes is that all the biographers after Duplaquet relied heavily on him, or on the anonymous review which appeared in the *Année littéraire* in 1789 on which *The Times* obituary was closely based, although it does seem that the author of the piece in the *Almanach littéraire* also went back to Duplaquet directly. None of these three interesting documents seems to have been known to B&W, and while the third was referred to by Méjanès 2002, he quoted only from the shortened version that appeared in Michaud's *Biographie universelle* in 1824, the signatory to which was too young to have been the author of the original article.

In contrast there is no linguistic evidence of direct influence from Mariette's text, which was not published until the 1850s and was probably not seen directly by Duplaquet – although naturally many of the anecdotes, which were probably freely in circulation, reappear in some form.

The stories illustrating La Tour's awkward character and eccentricities are too numerous and too unreliable to be repeated here.[20] The legends (exorbitant fees, impatience when kept waiting, insolent repartee with the king etc.) can largely be found in these early biographies; they usually reflect

[16] *v.* DOCUMENTS, 19.V.1768 for a catalogue of his collection assumed to be Maurice-Quentin de La Tour's in the Getty Provenance Index. If the oil double portrait of a lady and daughter, signed and dated 1780 (London, Christie's, 2.II.1951) is by him, there is no risk of confusing his work with La Tour's.

[17] Besnard & Wildenstein inexplicably write "Duplaquet avait connu personnellement l'artiste et écrivait deux ans après sa mort"; the eulogy was delivered a few months after La Tour's death, and passages such as that on p. 66 ("Ceux qui l'ont fréquenté dans sa retraite vous diront mieux que moi") indicate that Duplaquet did not claim to know him personally. The préparation of an inconnue, called Mme Masse, J.46.2351, which belonged to Duplaquet was most probably presented to him by the artist's brother in recognition of the éloge.

[18] Frère Barron, religieux jacobin at Saint-Quentin, who was asked first, declined, the minutes of the École gratuite of 6.III.1788 reporting that "il lui étoit impossible par rapport à sa station de prononcer loraison funebre de M. de la Tour": it is unclear if this implied some reservation about the artist's piety.

[19] Although Debrie 1991, p. 15 (following Tourneux 1904a, p. 6) states that in 1834 he was one of the few surviving people who had heard Duplaquet's oration, she and Tourneux have probably confused the biographer Albert-Quentin-Marie-Catherine, chevalier Philippy de Bucelly d'Estrées (1777–1850) with his father, Albert (1745–1809), an administrateur at the École de dessin from 1783 (*v.* DOCUMENTS, c.1806).

[20] They are found in virtually all the La Tour literature, with more or less caution, and often overanalysed in academic theses.

the self-confidence of the autodidact extending himself beyond the sphere of his genius (stories abound of his intellectual pretensions and ridicule), or the genuine concern for talented artists to be recognised (and recompensed) in a society whose hierarchies were based on birth and wealth.

When La Tour told Mme de Graffigny that he had burned his famous pastel of Mme de Pompadour (8.VII.1748), she concluded that he was mad ("un maître fol"). Mme de Genlis's story (undated, post 1756[21]) of La Tour's riddle about how he got from Paris to Passy without walking, swimming or using any horse or carriage (the solution: he jumped into the Seine and held onto a boat that dragged him there) merely shows him to have been tiresome.

Perhaps the most puzzling story comes from three of the earliest, and (one would imagine) most reliable, sources: Diderot's comments from his *Salons de 1763* and *1767*; Mariette's biography, written in 1772; and Marie Fel's letter to the artist's half-brother Jean-François de La Tour, written at the time of the La Tour's death. Diderot and Mariette both mention the reported conversation between La Tour and Louis XV in which the artist criticised the state of France's navy ("nous n'avons point de marine etc."): it is impossible to imagine that this happened twice, nor that it was not related to a specific naval engagement. Diderot reports this exchange as occurring "en 1756" (he is quite specific, and is writing only a few years later), and while La Tour was "faisant le portrait du roi" (the known examples are between 1745 and 1748). Mariette, however, relates the incident as occurring while La Tour was working on the portrait of Mme de Pompadour when the king was present: "C'étoit dans le temps que les Anglois avoient détruit notre marine et que nous n'avions aucun navire à leur opposer." Since the portrait of Mme de Pompadour was exhibited in 1755, this cannot refer to naval engagements during the Seven Years' War, but almost certainly situates the incident to the War of the Austrian Succession, probably to the second of the two engagements at Cape Finisterre in 1747. In Marie Fel's version, based on a story La Tour himself told her and which omits any reference to the navy (but which may nevertheless derive from that discussion), La Tour was painting Mme de Pompadour when the king arrived, "fort triste", following the battle of Rossbach. Since that battle took place in 1757, two years after the portrait was finished, the story cannot be trusted. But it suggests that La Tour himself was the source of these three (and no doubt many other) anecdotes, and that he retold them repeatedly, embellishing and updating them – if not completely inventing them – with great freedom. If so, legends such as the visits to Cambrai and England which may have had the same source are probably equally unreliable.

Another particularly stubborn trope is that La Tour was offered the ordre de Saint-Michel, but turned it down, on the grounds that "il ne connaissait de noblesse que celle des sentimens, et de prééminence que celle des talens" (as Bucelly d'Estrées puts it, turning Duplaquet's phrase). The story's earliest appearance is in Duplaquet, who makes it even less credible by saying that the offer was made twice, but is recited by almost all later authors.[22]

Other stories no doubt have some element of truth. We can readily believe that La Tour was proud of being a Picard without having to rely on the abbé Duplaquet, as the artist signed a letter (of 24.IV.1774) "avec la franchise et la cordialité d'un Picard." So it is all the easier to accept that he may well have disapproved of the submissive pose of Brittany in Lemoyne's allegorical sculpture of the king at Rennes as recounted by the abbé Soulavie[23] much later, reporting that La Tour told him that "[Lemoyne] en [de la figure de Bretagne] fit une devergondée qui s'acroupit & se pâme devant le Bien-Aimé." La Tour, Soulavie explained, "étoit un artiste célébre par son genie créateur de l'art du pastel, & par son amour de la liberté."

Of more value is the short account given by Marie Fel, attempting to remember the stories she had given to the connoisseur and author Antoine-Nicolas Dezallier d'Argenville (1723–1796). He was the son of Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville, the author of the *Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres*, 1745–52; Antoine-Nicolas himself published a *Vie des fameux architectes et sculpteurs* in 1787, and seems to have been planning a life of La Tour for the purposes of which he was gathering stories from those who knew him, according to Marie Fel. (Mariette, who was d'Argenville's second cousin, may well have heard these stories.) No sign of d'Argenville's life of La Tour remains, although it is not impossible that he contributed the review of Duplaquet to the *Année littéraire*. It seems likely that this and the other derivatives were written by one of the administrators of the École gratuite who had asked Duplaquet's consent to reuse his material, as he reveals in his preface. This saint-quentinois bias naturally focuses on La Tour's local philanthropy and affection for his native town, to which he only returned when forced by senility. It probably means that many of the anecdotes come from La Tour himself at a stage where nothing he said could be trusted.

Herodotus, faced with similar obstacles (*Histories*, II:24), felt he must provide his own views rather than merely condemn his sources. That can only safely be done here in a few cases where reliable, independent sources have been uncovered. The conversations recorded by Mme de Graffigny, overlooked until published in Jeffares 2017g, therefore represent a major addition to our understanding of the artist and our ability to distinguish fact from the legends built on self-narrativization. But other sources have gone unnoticed: the crucial evidence in the *Mercure* of the abbé Mangenot's copy of the Amiens self-portrait (until Jeffares 2019h); or the copies evidencing La Tour's changes to his Académie pieces (until Jeffares 2021f).

I.3 Family background

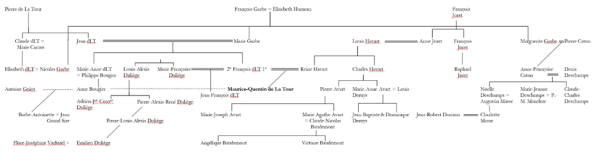
B&W's chronological table (the basis of the greatly expanded collection of DOCUMENTS here) commenced with discoveries by Georges Grandin, conservateur du musée de Laon, of what appear to be La Tour ancestors in that town going back to 1596. However the genealogy presented in B&W contained numerous gaps and errors which have only recently been rectified. The entry for the marriage between François de La Tour and Reine Havart was only found in 2016, while the documents Grandin reports for François's birth and parents' marriage (for which he gives no parish) were only located in the Archives de l'Aisne (in the parish of

[21] This and other stories will be found in the file of contemporary BIOGRAPHIES.

[22] Delpuech 1946 (p. 8) even suggests that the offer was made by Mme de Pompadour for her portrait, but notes that Maurice Bicking, avocat à la Cour d'appel, dated it to 1750. No document is however cited.

[23] *Mémoires du maréchal de Richelieu*, 1793, VII, p. 279.

Saint-Michel, Laon) in 2016. Components missing from B&W included the relationships between La Tour and a number of people whom he mentions in his wills.



Abbreviated pedigree of the La Tour and related families

A schematic tree (above; click on the hyperlink to display in full screen) shows the most important relationships; while more detailed genealogies, with source citations other than the standard usuels, are given for the La Tour, Deschamps, Garbe, Havart, Joret, and Masse families.

Parish records for Saint-Michel, Laon indicate that the artist's grandfather Jean de La Tour was literate and a respected member of the community in that he appears as witness or parrain on numerous deeds or parish records. His eldest son François (the artist's father) was a musician, a "chantre", or cantor, at Saint-Quentin. (He is said to have previously served in the army, as trompette in the duc du Maine's company in the élite régiment des carabiniers: but this relies on a single document from 1684 in which his forenames are given as Jean-François, and should probably be disregarded as the family name is so common.) He is also referred to as an ingénieur-géographe according to a document which has not been located, and is also probably a confusion[24], although his aerial perspective view of Saint-Quentin presented to the Église royale there in 1712 is preserved in the musée Antoine-Lécuyer J.IF.46.501.[25] By 1719 François was a maître écrivain (his cousin Denis Deschamps, maître écrivain in Laon, fought a legal case over his exercise of this protected profession; Denis's brother Pierre was also a maître écrivain, in Vailly-sur-Aisne).

Families could ascend and descend the social hierarchy: what is noteworthy is that La Tour retained contact with so many of his relatives who remained in humble occupations. (That said, it is also remarkable that the only member of his family he portrayed for certain was himself – repeatedly.[26]) The fact that La Tour mentions a large number of his "cousins" in his wills (made in 1768 and 1784) suggests that the exact relationships are worth exploring, and a number of links have now been established from parish records (Jeffares 2016j). The family circumstances were clearly artisanal, if educated, rather than haut bourgeois, on both sides. Of La Tour's mother Reine little was known until Jeffares 2016j demonstrated that she came from Noyon, where her father Louis Havart was a tapissier and her mother Anne Joret (aunt of the Raphaël Jorret mentioned in La Tour's will) came from a family of tailleurs. Reine was the niece of Charles Havart, a tapissier who settled in Saint-Quentin. Pierre Avart (as the name was spelt in Saint-Quentin, but not in Laon) was surely his son, but was a mere manouvrier, or labourer; his daughter Agathe married Claude-Nicolas Baudemont, a mulquinier or weaver (parents of the young girls who were mentioned in La Tour's will, as also was Agathe's aunt Joseph [sic]); Pierre's sister married Louis Deruÿs or Deruis (various misspellings arise from the numerous illegible occurrences in parish registers), whose father was a Latin teacher but who was himself first a manouvrier and then a jardinier, while his son Jean-Baptiste was another mulquinier.

On his father's side there were several connections with the Garbe family of blacksmiths. La Tour's paternal grandmother Marie was the daughter of François Garbe (1610–1678), maréchal ferrant in Laon; her brother Nicolas married Elisabeth, Jean de La Tour's niece, while Marie's sister Marguerite married Pierre Caton, a tapissier in Laon; their daughter Anne-Françoise married écrivain Denis Deschamps (mentioned above), father of La Tour's subject chanoine Claude-Charles Deschamps; one of the canon's sisters, Noëlle, married an Augustin Masse, marchand de tabac à Paris: their daughter Charlotte Masse married Jean-Robert Dorison (1731–1803), an employee at the bureau des huissiers de la Grande Chancellerie and the son of a tailor from Saint-Denis (Dorison's sister, also Charlotte, married a Michel Deschamps, perruquier à Saint-Denis). La Tour attended that wedding, and Dorison would later play a role in arranging funds for the prize La Tour established at Amiens, and as late as 1794 would represent Jean-François de La Tour in legal documents in Paris. Confusingly Augustin Masse seems not to have been related to the marchand orfèvre, Grégoire III Masse[27], who, in 1752, married the sister of François-Charles Dufloquet, comte de Réals, a senior cavalry officer: that Mme Masse was another La Tour subject, but not a relative.

This environment of tailleurs and tapissiers (textiles were the lifeblood of Saint-Quentin at the time) may well have cultivated the eye of the pastellist. From the silks and satins of his sitters' costumes to the carpets depicted with such precision and understanding in the portraits of Mme de Pompadour and the président de Rieux, La Tour's understanding of fabrics and textiles was profound.

Charles de La Tour

Of La Tour's eight siblings only four survived to adulthood; none married. Two of his brothers also broke away from this family background, not necessarily explained by the artist's influence at court. His elder brother Charles (1702–1766) had obtained a position as directeur des vivres en Italie by 1736, before the artist had any such power. Charles, whom La Tour evidently admired (see his letter to Marigny of 21.VII.1766, after Charles's death), seems to have caught the eye of the war minister d'Angervilliers and was sent to Corsica for several years in 1738 in a senior capacity. It is notable too that while Charles mentioned two other brothers (Adrien-François and Adrien-Honoré, both of whom remained in Saint-Quentin) in his will of 26.XI.1755, he omitted his half-brother Jean-François, perhaps because his future was already secure.

Jean-François de La Tour

Jean-François (1726–1807), known later as the "chevalier de La Tour", was to become an officer in the élite regiment of

[24] See DOCUMENTS, 1596–1704 where the point is discussed. It appears to refer to the lost baptismal extract presented by Jean-François de La Tour to the military authorities, and is not found in the original baptismal entry. It may be have been a misreading or an embellishment, possibly of Mariette's statement that his father wanted the pastellist to become an ingénieur.

[25] There is nothing in the elaborate annotation of J.IF.46.501 to identify the author as an ingénieur or géographe (see DOCUMENTS, 1712). A confusion may have arisen with the later and unrelated Brion de La Tour, who was ingénieur-géographe du roi. The authenticity of the son's drawing (J.46.3754) is uncertain: *v.* §I.4.

[26] The authenticity of the portraits said to be of either of his brothers or the Duliège portraits that belonged to Flore Warluzèle cannot be verified: *v. infra.*

[27] Augustin is not mentioned in the inventory of Grégoire Masse l'aîné (1648–1709).

gendarmes bourguignons[28], but the evidence of his military career is incomplete. He is named as a gendarme at his aunt's marriage on 7.XI.1746, and as lieutenant in that regiment in La Tour's 1768 will and in the 1775 conveyance of his mother's house, though his name does not appear in any edition of the État militaire, nor is there a file on him in the Service historique de la Défense, Vincennes.[29] It is also clear that he was known to Joseph-Henry Costa de Beauregard's uncle, Antoine-Victor-Augustin d'Auberjon, comte de Murinais (1731–1797), who was major in the gendarmes bourguignons 1760–66: by 18.I.1767 Murinais had obtained from him a letter of recommendation for his nephew to visit the pastellist.[30] Jean-François stated in a letter of .II.1789 that he had retired from the service some 15 years previously.

All of this is broadly consistent with the éloge in Charlet 1807, which tells us also that Jean-François served at the battle of Fontenoy (17.V.1745) in the gendarmes bourguignons: he was wounded in the thigh but continued in action. He would have been just 19 at the time, and presumably had enlisted in the ranks, perhaps with the pastellist's influence (although the great series of military portraits were made in the following years, La Tour had already portrayed the duc d'Ayen, capitaine in the gardes écossaises). At Minden (1.VIII.1759) his horse was shot from under him. At Freiburg (29.X.1762), heading a troop of 25 men, he held the enemy at bay, allowing his men to re-form. On 23.II.1766 he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant en pied in the regiment by royal brevet rather than by purchase (the brevet records that he was entitled to the same privileges as though he occupied the rank by charge). He was awarded the Saint-Louis either at the same time or very soon after (it is not mentioned in the brevet).[31] He retired in 1778 according to Charlet. It is of course his role after that, and in particular his involvement with the collection now in Saint-Quentin after his brother's death, that gives him special significance here. It is also not widely known that, around the time of his brother's death, the elderly chevalier de La Tour contemplated marriage, to a lady known only by her initials, Ad. D. (see Jeffares 2019g); had the match taken place, it seems unlikely that the La Tour collection would now be in Saint-Quentin.

Les Duliège

Neither La Tour nor any of his siblings married, and there were no direct (legitimate) descendants. La Tour's step-mother had a brother, Louis-Alexis Duliège, one of whose sons, abbé Adrien-Joseph-Constant, was a chaplain in Saint-Quentin and became executor to Jean-François, chevalier de La Tour, the artist's half-brother. The abbé Duliège too had no children, but his brother, Pierre-Alexis-René Duliège (a tailleur d'habits in Saint-Quentin), did. Desmaze's mention of a group of pastels (which included portraits of Mme de Pompadour and cardinal de Tencin in addition to some family portraits, as well as a group of documents that Desmaze published as the *Reliquaire de La Tour*, 1874) that descended to "Mme Varenne" is inaccurate and was only unravelled in Jeffares 2019g. Flore-Joséphine Warluzèle, as her name appeared at her baptism in 1820, was not related to La Tour. She married, apparently for the second time, Henry-Léopold Sarrazin, in 1872.[32] At a previous marriage (to Alphonse-Auguste Varennes) in 1866, she was described as the widow of Émilien Duliège, but the relationship may have been informal as it is not elsewhere documented.[33] Émilien was the grandson of Pierre-Alexis-René Duliège, and thus the great-nephew of the abbé Duliège. A group of études de têtes (among them Louis XV and the dauphin) was apparently offered to the Louvre by his father, Pierre-Louis-Alexis Duliège (a libraire in Paris), 24.VI.1825, but rejected. Dréolle de Nodon 1856 noted that that Duliège had died several years before he was writing, and that his widow retained a part of the "belle collection faite par son mari" (perhaps suggesting they had been purchased rather than inherited), the others having been sold. Those belonging to Mme Warluzèle appear to have been acquired by Desmaze himself after 1873, and were given[34] to the Ville de Saint-Quentin for the musée in 1891, but most of the works seem to have disappeared soon after his death.[35] There is thus no means of establishing whether they were correctly attributed or identified.

Yet another group of four pastels "provenant de la succession de M. de la T***, de Saint-Quentin" was auctioned in Paris, 28.II.–1.III.1842. It is tempting to think they were those disposed of after the death of Pierre-Louis-Alexis Duliège, but the correspondence with pastels still in the Saint-Quentin collection makes this improbable: it is unclear if they were a failed attempt to dispose of the works still in the musée Antoine-Lécuyer, some miscatalogued copies, or a group of duplicates given away by Jean-François de La Tour before the 1806 list was made.

I.4 Early years

La Tour was born and baptised in Saint-Quentin (paroisse Saint-Jacques) on 5.IX.1704. His godparents, both called Méniolle, were the wife of a former mayor of Saint-Quentin and, perhaps her nephew, a bourgeois de Noyon (where the artist's mother came from; the Méniolle family also had connections in both towns); neither seems to have played any later role in his life. In a letter to comte d'Angiviller of 4.VII.1778, the artist told him that destiny had led to his being born on the same date, day of the week and hour as Louis XIV: La Tour may well have been born at 11 a.m., but while

[28] An ordinary soldier in this regiment had the army rank of officer, a convention similar to that of certain Guards regiments in the British army.

[29] Private communication, 15.VII.2019.

[30] The young comte de Costa seems not however to have been given the letter, and no visit is recorded in his letters home.

[31] Fleury 1904; *v.* DOCUMENTS. Curiously neither Mazas nor Colleville & Saint-Christo list any promotions in 1766, but both are notoriously incomplete. Awards of the distinction for long service were not unusual.

[32] Sarrazin was a bordelais merchant with no obvious connection to the Geneva family including Edouard Sarasin (1843–1917), owner of two La Tour pastels, who Clouzot 1920 suggested was related to her.

[33] Émilien Duliège's death certificate (Paris 12e, 14.XII.1861) described him as "célibataire"; it was witnessed by Joseph-Florimond Warluzèle, Flore's brother who should have known of any marriage.

[34] A report in the *Journal des villes et des campagnes*, 7.XI.1893, reports the gift of manuscripts, letters and portraits; a month later, 17.XII.1893, the same journal reported that Théophile Eck had just arranged to display them in a special "vitrine". The *Journal de Saint-Quentin*, on 4.I.1901, printed Eck's summary of the legacies and donations for 1900 (when Desmaze died), including a list of Desmaze's pictures with their Duliège provenance; a little more detail had appeared in the two articles in the *Journal de la ville de Saint-Quentin*, 7.XII.1900.

[35] Elie Fleury made a declaration of loss of items during the First World War, including a "pastel de De La Tour acheté avec son testament et ses papiers de famille", valued at F500, the pastel annotated "fatigué"; there was also a miniature "provenant de la succession de De La Tour", valued at F100 (Dommages de Guerre, 22.XII.1921, Archives départementales de l'Aisne, AD 02, Sér. 15 R 1215, dossier no. 5481, Fleury). If these came from Desmaze, the miniature might be J.46.19888.

5.IX.1704 was a Friday, the Sun King was born on 5.IX.1638, a Sunday.

According to Mariette, information no doubt derived from the artist himself, La Tour drew from a young age. His father wanted him to become an engineer, but his short-sight made this impossible. A perspective view of Saint-Quentin J.46.37539 which belonged to an early biographer (Hordret 1781) was nevertheless said to have been made by him in 1718 and presented to Nicolas Desjardins, the newly appointed principal au collège de Saint-Quentin; the support for this is thin, and thinner still the conflation with the awkward gouache J.46.3754 which at some stage appeared in the collection at Saint-Quentin. More credible however is Mariette's statement that as a child he drew unceasingly, copying prints and being inspired in particular by some académies drawn by the painter Guy-Louis Vernansal (1648–1729) which a pupil had brought to Saint-Quentin.

Realising that Paris was the centre of the art world, La Tour left his native Saint-Quentin by the age of 15. According to tradition, on his arrival in Paris he sought advice from the engraver Nicolas Tardieu (1674–1749) who sent him to several artists: Delaunay and Vernansal also turned him down. Mariette identifies the former as "Delaunay, qui tenoit boutique de tableaux sur le quai de Gesvres": this allows us[36] to identify him as Pierre Delaunay (1675–1774), possibly the artist mentioned in Rigaud's atelier between 1702 and 1708, later a maître peintre in the Académie de Saint-Luc, and one of the experts at the inventaire of Dupouch's mother in 1713 (*v. infra*): might he have directed the young La Tour to his master?

It was Louis de Boullongne (1654–1733) who is reputed to have shown the most interest in La Tour's raw talent when shown some of the youth's attempts (just before his own death): the Premier peintre du roi–

> à travers des défauts, sut y lire ce qu'il y avoit de bon, c'est-à-dire ce tact et ce don de la nature qui saisit du premier coup les traits d'un visage et s'assure de la ressemblance. Il demanda à voir l'artiste; il l'encouragea. "Vous ne sçavez ni peindre ni dessiner, lui dit-il; mais vous possédez un talent qui peut vous mener loin; venez me voir."

The story is told by Mariette; it may have originated in the anecdote of Marie Fel which she mentions in her undated letter to La Tour's brother after the pastellist's death, but which she had much earlier told Dezallier d'Argenville, who in turn may have told Mariette, his cousin. What is often overlooked is her reference to "son arivée à Paris, sa vie dissipée" before being rescued by Boullongne's recognition of his potential. Perhaps this was just a reference to the Bougier incident (*v. infra*), but it may indicate a broader pattern of behaviour.

His initial training was under the painter Claude Dupouch (1690–1747), not Spoede – a confusion arising from Mariette (was he given the name orally?), but not rectified until recently, despite the fact that Jean-François de La Tour identified his brother's master in his will (and on a label attached to the back of J.46.1694 uncovered when the glass was replaced in 1897). (Curiously Spoede, *q.v.*, is known to have worked in pastel, while there is no evidence that Dupouch did so.)

Marandet 2002 published the six-year contract of apprenticeship with Dupouch from 12.X.1719, which indeed was arranged by Tardieu, and included substantial penalties for unnotified absences. Dupouch's output included history and religious paintings and some portraits, all of fairly modest achievement; he also probably dealt in pictures. On 25.III.1747 he was appointed[37] by the Ranc family regarding the administration of the estate of Hyacinthe Rigaud. He was the son of Jean Dupouch (–p.1713), maître peintre, quai Pelletier, and his wife Marie-Madeleine Lefèbvre (–1713) who was connected with the pastellist Jean-Baptiste Lefèvre (*q.v.*) and with the father of Vernezobre (*q.v.*). (At the posthumous inventory for Claude Dupouch's mother, 24.I.1713 (AN MC/IX/582), the experts appointed to value the pictures were André Tramblin and Pierre Delaunay – *v. supra*.) Unusually for so obscure a painter, Dupouch was noble. He was also well connected in the art world. In 1711 he married (with Jacques de Lajoue as his witness) Jeanne-Anne Petit, daughter and widow of minor painters (Charles de La Fosse had been parrain to a son born in 1691 to her first marriage). After her death (1743) Dupouch was connected with, possibly married to, the portraitist and niece of Oudry, Nicole de Saint-Martin (*q.v.* and *v.* Lefèvre genealogy). (Coincidentally Dupouch's sister Gabrielle was married to a Pierre "Delatour" (1707–1743), maître peintre à Paris, but his original name was Pierre Pierre, "dit Latour": *v.* Homonyms *supra*. When another sister, Madeleine, married the comte de Lionne in 1731, Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne (1704–1778), sculpteur, attended as one of her friends; while his father, Jean-Louis Lemoyne (1665–1755), sculpteur, attended the burial in 1724 of Dupouch's brother-in-law, César Paulmier de Lionne.)

La Tour is said (but the cliché is applied to most pastellists of this era) to have devoted himself to pastel following Carriera's visit to Paris in 1720–21. There is no evidence, or suggestion in legend, of their meeting; but at some stage he made two not very accomplished copies after her best-known pastels, one of which, in the Louvre since 1722, has a composition that may have vaguely inspired that of his own 1737 autoportrait à l'index,[38] while the other, now in Dijon, may have been copied after it was acquired in 1732 by Jean de Boullongne (perhaps at the same time as La Tour's portrait of Mme de Boullongne J.46.1337 mentioned by Marie Fel, made while Louis de Boullongne was still alive), but was more likely copied earlier, when it belonged to the comte de Morville, who also owned the Rembrandt that may have inspired some of La Tour's early compositions (*v. infra*).

La Tour's exposure to the work of French pastellists at this time is also hard to assess. La Tour would surely have known the great Vivien pastels belonging to the Académie, and may well have had access to the numerous Vivien pastels of French artists: although Vivien died on a trip to Germany, he was still based in Paris.[39] Even if the influence is undocumented, visually La Tour's approach to portraiture is far closer to Vivien's than to Rosalba's. La Tour is also likely to have access to private collections such as those of the

[36] *V.* James-Sarazin 2016, I, p. 600.

[37] Wildenstein 1966, p. 55.

[38] Hoisington 2016, p. 71f, argues that the copy of Rosalba's *Nymphe de la suite d'Apollon* was made c.1735 at the time of La Tour's agrément to the Académie; but its crude finish suggests a somewhat earlier date. Indeed its handling demonstrates a fundamental antipathy to Rosalba's *sfumato*.

[39] Hoisington 2016 disputes the claims for Vivien's influence on p. 36 of her thesis, but seems to change her view on p. 114 n.117. (Only three of the five pictures Vivien exhibited in 1725 were pastels.)

Boullongne family. A number of other pastellists were active in Paris in the later 1720s: Charles Coypel and Lundberg were perhaps the best known, but other major artists such as Boucher (a pastel of whose wife La Tour exhibited in 1737), Lemoyne and the Van Loos occasionally used the medium.

Duplaquet also appears to be the source for the suggestion that La Tour turned to pastel at this time because his health had suffered from exposure to oil paint (another cliché often applied to pastellists). If so (La Tour's rebellious personality offers a simpler explanation), perhaps that was the motivation for breaking his apprenticeship, which had evidently happened by the end of 1722, since his cousin Anne Bougier (an illiterate tricoteuse de bas) bore his illegitimate son the following August, and testified that La Tour was living at Saint-Quentin.

La Tour's part in that incident, which came back to haunt his later years (*v. infra* for his charitable foundation), is known from Anne's testimony at her trial for concealing her pregnancy, an offence treated as infanticide under an edict of 1566. In this she stated that she was 22, just three years older than La Tour (she was fined only 3 livres); her baptismal entry (La Fère, 8.III.1700, located only in 2019) in fact confirms that she was four and half years older than the artist. Anne's mother, Marie-Anne de La Tour, was just 12 when she married Philippe Bougier in 1695 (like his brother-in-law François, the 26-year-old widower was also a chantre in the church); their first child, also a daughter, was born two years later, in 1697. Tourneux 1904a confused the matter by conflating Anne Bougier with a Marie-Anne Bruge, Mme Bécasse who died in 1740 aged 45; although the age would explain her mother's early marriage, the spelling, as well as a 1728 baptismal entry for the Bécasse couple, contradicts the identification.

A document published here in 2022 (DOCUMENTS, at 4.XII.1725, 20.I.1749 etc.; Jeffares 2022c) shows that two years later, in 1725, Anne Bougier gave birth to another illegitimate child, Barbe-Antoinette, identifiying the child's father as a shoemaker, Antoine Guiot. Barbe-Antoinette married Jean Grand Sire, an illiterate tisserand, in Laon in 1749, and moved to La Fère; La Tour's will mentions "Mme veuve Grand Sire, a La Ferre". There she died in 1792. But the matter is complicated: Barbe-Antoinette had met Grand Sire in Dieppe where she bore him an illegitimate child in 1747; her mother, Anne Bougier, was marraine. In that document Barbe-Antoinette's father was stated to be a deceased "Jean de La Tour".

La Tour is often said to have attended the congress of Cambrai in 1724–25. These reports all originate with Duplaquet (the English newspaper cited in Debrie & Salmon 2000, p. 27 n.12 as independent confirmation is the 1790 *World* obituary which is drawn exclusively from Duplaquet and reappears as the éloge later published in the *Almanach littéraire* in 1792). Duplaquet elaborates that he portrayed the wife of the Spanish ambassador (B&W's carelessness with "ambassadrice" has been universally copied: Lorenzo Verzuso Beretti-Landi seems not to have been married) in pastel (another contradiction within Duplaquet's narrative); and that he travelled afterwards to London with the British ambassador who provided him with accommodation; according to Mariette, La Tour moved on from London and returned to Paris because his travelling companion had died. (This might conceivably refer to Lord Whitworth, who after Cambrai returned to his house in Gerard Street, London where he died on 23.X.1725.)

However the evidence for a trip to London, and its duration, appears thin; the Cambrai pastel series is I think correctly attributed to Birochon (*q.v.*), a case strengthened by the discovery (2023) of the original invoice for the pastels. A miniature J.46.1326 said to have been made by La Tour of François Boucher in Rome in 1723 is certainly wrongly described, and the vague similarity with one of Birochon's pastels (of a Mr Rennell, J.155.122) pure coincidence. Tourneux 1904a (p. 27) states that the London trip was certain, offering as proof the pastel J.46.3767 La Tour copied after a painting thought to be by Murillo in the National Gallery in London, although that picture, of which several versions are known, could well have been copied in Paris.

While it seems fairly plausible that La Tour got to London, his attendance at Cambrai is probably a simple confusion.[40] (The Birochon series, being in pastel, might simply have been attributed to La Tour for that reason alone, and Duplaquet extrapolated erroneously.) As for the duration of his stay, Mariette indicates only a few months, while it has been inferred that he stayed until 1727 from Duplaquet, who states that he arrived in Paris at the age of 23, but as Duplaquet also seems to imply that this was his first appearance in the capital, his statement should be disregarded. (Another report of La Tour being in London in 1751, in a letter from his pupil Katherine Read, *q.v.*, to her brother, is not credible: her informant probably referred to Alexis Loir.[41]) In any case La Tour was back in Paris by 1727, where he remained except for a trip to Holland in 1766 (he was absent for at least seven months) and his return to Saint-Quentin at the end of his life.

As well as Dupouch, La Tour also received advice from Jean Restout (1692–1768), peintre, chancelier de l'Académie royale, who he thought "avoit la clef de la peinture".[42] La Tour later described him to Diderot (Salon de 1769) as the only artist of stature who was able to communicate effectively:

> Il m'avoua qu'il devait infiniment aux conseils de Restout, le seul homme du même talent qui lui ait paru vraiment communicatif, que c'était ce peintre qui lui avait appris à faire tourner une tête et à faire circuler l'air entre la figure et le fond en reflétant le côté éclairé sur le fond, et le fond sur le côté ombré; que soit la faute de Restout, soit la sienne, il avait eu toutes les peines du monde à saisir ce principe, malgré sa simplicité; que, lorsque le reflet est trop fort ou trop faible, en général vous ne rendez pas la nature, vous peignez; que vous êtes faible ou dur, et que vous n'êtes plus ni vrai ni harmonieux.

I.5 Early works

Lépicié's publication in 1734 of an engraving of La Tour's pastel of Richer de Roddes de La Morlière J.46.2718 provides the starting point for his securely accepted work, although he was by then 30 years of age. (The portrait of Mme de Boullongne mentioned by Marie Fel must have been made in 1733 or before, but is lost.) Prints of Fontenelle and the actor Thomassin (*v. infra*) must also date to this period. It is not

[40] Adrian Bury conducted an exhaustive search for any evidence of La Tour in London for his 1971 monograph, but was forced to conclude that none could be found.

[41] We know Loir was in London then because Jullienne told David Garrick so in Paris according to the actor's diary entry for 1.VI.1751.

[42] Rouxelin's "Éloge de M. Restout", read before the Académie de Caen, 5.V.1768.

immediately clear on what legal basis La Tour practised before his agrément at the Académie royale in 1737; his apprenticeship had been with a member of the Académie de Saint-Luc, but he is not recorded as a member himself.

Unresolved questions remain about his early steps. A pastel of the comte de Manissi (*v.* Éc. fr., J.9.219; it is remarkably similar to a pastel of a magistrate of the Mesgrigny family, J.9.2269), inscribed *verso* "Latour pinxit/1730", has some elements in common with both the early préparation of Voltaire J.46.3116 (Saint-Quentin) and one of the two "Birochon" groups; but, although an argument can be advanced based on elements such as the drawing of the mouths, the application of the pastel is quite different (particularly in the drapery, it shows little promise of La Tour's ability – although the flat fur and deep shadows in the blue fabric are arguably not far from the handling of Richer de La Morlière J.46.2718). Its attribution remains tantalisingly borderline.

Although there is no documented connection, it may be more than coincidence that a number of his subjects in the early 1740s seem also to have been painted (first) by Aved: Richer de La Morlière, Saïd Pacha, possibly the Dureys, Rameau, Racine, Crébillon.

The circumstances which led Voltaire to commission his portrait from a virtually unknown artist (*v.* Cabezas 2009b) may have depended on the fortunate proximity of La Tour's atelier in the hôtel Jabach to his neighbour, the abbé Moussinot, Voltaire's agent in Paris. The sittings took place in April 1735; the portrait, its copies and its engravings transformed the pastellist's reputation. La Tour remained in communication with Voltaire for some years.[43]

Possibly slightly earlier is La Tour's first portrait of his friend, the abbé Huber (Jeffares 2014j), a member of a Swiss family of bankers who had converted to Catholicism and was taken up by cardinal de Rohan in the 1720s and by Chauvelin. An adventurer who belongs (and actually appears) in the pages of Smollett, from the 1730s he was close to Le Riche de La Pouplinière, Paris de Montmartel and Philbert Orry; in the absence of documents (beyond Huber's will, which named also Mme Geoffrin and the abbé Le Blanc) we can only speculate how such contacts may have helped La Tour. The abbé left La Tour, "que j'ay toujours chéri comme mon enfant et dont je respecte autant la vertue que j'admire les talents", an apparently valuable estate when he died in 1744, but this proved onerous and was disclaimed in favour of an annuity of 2000 livres, which in turn remained under discussion with the executor until 1770.[44]

Another early work must have been the lost portrait of the Italian comedian known as Thomassin, who died in 1739. It is known only from an etching by the obscure T. Bertrand, who it is here suggested (2018) was Thomas Bertrand, son of the sculpteur Philippe Bertrand (1663–1724), an associate of René Frémin (both were *reçu* at the Académie royale in 1701), the subject of one of La Tour's most brilliant early pastels J.46.1818.[45]

I.6 La Tour at the Académie royale

Agréé 1737, *reçu* 1746, conseiller 1751, La Tour exhibited regularly at the Salons until 1773, omitting only 1765 (in 1759 he appeared in the livret but withdrew his exhibits as he was dissatisfied with the hang, according to Diderot): about 120 pastels in all, some three-fifths of which are known today. (For contemporary responses to La Tour's exhibits, *v.* critical fortune, *infra*.)

The procès-verbaux at the Académie say very little about the session (25.V.1737) where "le sieur *Maurice-Quentin de La Tour*, Peintre de portraits en pastel, aïant fait apporter de ses ouvrages" was *agréé*: some 33 academicians were present, no voices were recorded against him, and it was simply minuted that the Académie "reconnu sa capacité." There is no record of which pastels La Tour showed the assembly, although it is entirely plausible that Voltaire J.46.3095, of which La Tour retained a version, was among them; it is also likely that the two pastels he exhibited at the salon a few months later were already finished, viz. Mme Boucher J.46.1328 and the Autoportrait à l'index J.46.1001.

His set pieces were selected the following week: they were to be portraits of François Lemoyne and Jean Restout. Lemoyne committed suicide a few days later, and Jean-Baptiste Van Loo was nominated instead: but his departure to London and later return to his native Provence created a further hurdle, before La Tour finally submitted Restout alone for his reception. Thus it was not until 1746 that La Tour was finally *reçu*.

Later (31.X.1750) he also presented the portrait of Dumont le Romain as a gift; it is often erroneously described as a morceau de réception – Salmon 2018, p. 169, argues that La Tour needed to present a second piece to advance to the level of conseiller, but there is no obvious mechanism for this within the rules of the Académie, and he may instead have given it in order to be able to retrieve the Restout which he wanted to "improve".

From a letter of 19.II.1740 from the duc d'Aumont, in charge of the Menus plaisirs, we know that Madame Adélaïde borrowed La Tour's portrait (perhaps the 1737 self-portrait), possibly to be copied – but evidencing royal interest at an early stage. (Madame Adélaïde herself was only eight at the time, and it is tempting to suggest that she herself was to copy the work.) His dominant position was already established by the 1741 Salon, where he exhibited the monumental portrait of the président de Rieux J.46.2722. La Tour's relationship with de Rieux was established as early as 1738, when he was commissioned to portray the niece of the magistrate's wife, Mlle de La Fontaine-Solare J.46.2926; and the artist became an habitué of de Rieux's château de Passy. Perhaps it was in allusion to this that the composers Forqueray père et fils interwove, effectively as a trio within a minuet, a piece called La Latour into one entitled Le Carillon de Passy in the IVe Suite of their 1747 volume of *Pièces de viole mises en pièces de clavecin.*

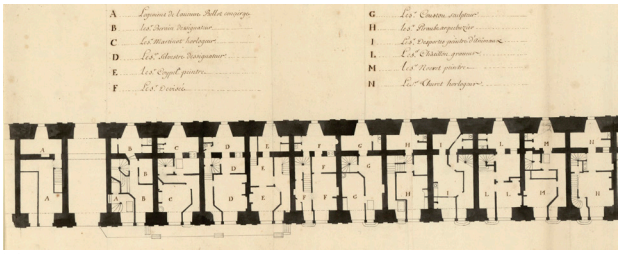
[43] The reported letter from Voltaire to La Tour of 24.VII.1775 is however a confusion with an unidentified homonym.

[44] This appears to be the legacy Duplaquet refers to (p. 45) as waived generously by La Tour in favour of the testator's impecunious relatives.

[45] Frémin had been sculptor to Felipe V in Madrid until 1738; Thomas's brother André was based in Valsain (La Granja de San Ildefonso) by 1746, later succeeding Frémin as sculpteur de sa Majesté catholique. It is not impossible that the Bertrands introduced La Tour to Frémin. Thomas was described as a graveur à l'eau-forte in 1735; by 1743 he was working in "taille douce" before switching to painting.

I.7 The galeries du Louvre

La Tour was granted a "logement", or apartment, in the galeries du Louvre, in 1745. Very few pastellists enjoyed this privilege: the others were Coypel and Chardin (neither worked exclusively in the medium). Vivien was accommodated in the Gobelins, although he made portraits of many of the *illustres* (those enjoying the privilege of logements) in 1704. The award was made by brevet: La Tour's was granted 10.III.1745, filling the place of a deceased valet de chambre–horloger du roi.[46] Five years later he was granted a superior set,[47] moving from the third (marked C in contemporary plans – see DOCUMENTS for references) to the eighth (H) logement, the brevet being erroneously reported in numerous secondary sources[48] as an appointment to the rank of "peintre du roi", to which of course he was already entitled.



The apartments appear on the plans to be similar in size, but slightly different in layout: both were over five levels, with cellar, ground floor, first, mezzanine and second floors; while the gross area of each floor was up to 85 sq. m., in practice, corridors and walls reduced the net usable space to perhaps half that level. The light source in the principal rooms was northerly. La Tour's immediate neighbours included Silvestre until 1750, and later Nollet and Loriot, and Desportes and Pasquier; but other La Tour subjects who were also *illustres* included Restout, Lemoyne, Chardin, Dumont le Romain and Cochin.

La Tour required additional space, and when the occupant of the tenth logement, the enamellist Jean-Adam Mathieu, died in 1753, it emerged that La Tour had been using a room in his studio which was hung with his pictures (*v.* DOCUMENTS, 8.V.1753).

Confusingly on 4.VII.1778 La Tour wrote to d'Angiviller for permission, and four days later entered into a contract, to sublet Greuze's logement (the sixteenth) for a term of 3, 6 or 9 years (at La Tour's choice), for 800 livres per annum. The letter, which is hard to follow, suggests he needed a second logement because of the diversity of his interests and difficulty of organising his possessions in a small space. The lease cannot have been taken up for long: indeed on 4.II.1780 Greuze's logement was ceded to Allegrain.[49]

La Tour retained the eighth logement until 5.XII.1785, when a brevet de survivance for it was granted to Robert Robin (1741–1799), valet de chambre–horloger ordinaire du roi et de la reine.[50] The pastellist had by then retired to Saint-Quentin. A sale of the contents of his logement took place on 19.I.1786: the only record is a short notice in the *Affiches, annonces, avis divers*, offering no descriptions of the pictures in pastel and oil or drawings (although the prints were described as after Van Dyck, Rubens, Marc-Antoine [Marcantonio Raimondi] and other masters); among the studio equipment were a grand mannequin, gilt frames and geographical maps.

I.8 La Tour's other residences

The "maison natale" of La Tour in Saint-Quentin was the subject of a detailed inquiry by Basquin 1935, who published a map based on a 1750 plan.[51] La Tour was born in the Petite-Place Saint-Quentin, near the ruelle Coliette, just south of the basilica known as the Collégiale (roughly where a car park is now to be found: the small shaded area on the left of the plan); and he died in a house about 60 paces away, at 657 rue de Tugny (subsequently renamed rue De La Tour), at the corner of the rue Granville (the larger rectangle near where the modern post office is still to be found). The area is unrecognisable today, the streets relocated following the damage in the First World War, as shown in the superposed plan II in Basquin 1935:

[46] Claude Martinot (1691–1744), a member of an extended dynasty of royal clock-makers of which Balthazar (1636–1714) was perhaps the best known. Claude's father Henri (1646–1725) married Elisabeth, daughter of the sculpteur François Girardon. His inv. p.m. was conducted in his logement at the Louvre 9.XII.1744. In 1734 he married Marie-Jeanne-Madeleine Richer (1707–p.1768), the daughter of a notary whose death, in 1731, led to a family council at which Jeanne's friends included Jean Jullienne etc. Their marriage contract was signed by Charles Coypel. After Martinot's death Coypel and Louis de Silvestre appeared in the registres de tutelles (AN Y5705A, 2.III.1751) looking after the interests of the children. Their son Jean-Claude Martinot, hérault de l'ordre de Saint-Louis, married Louis Tocqué's daughter Catherine-Pauline.

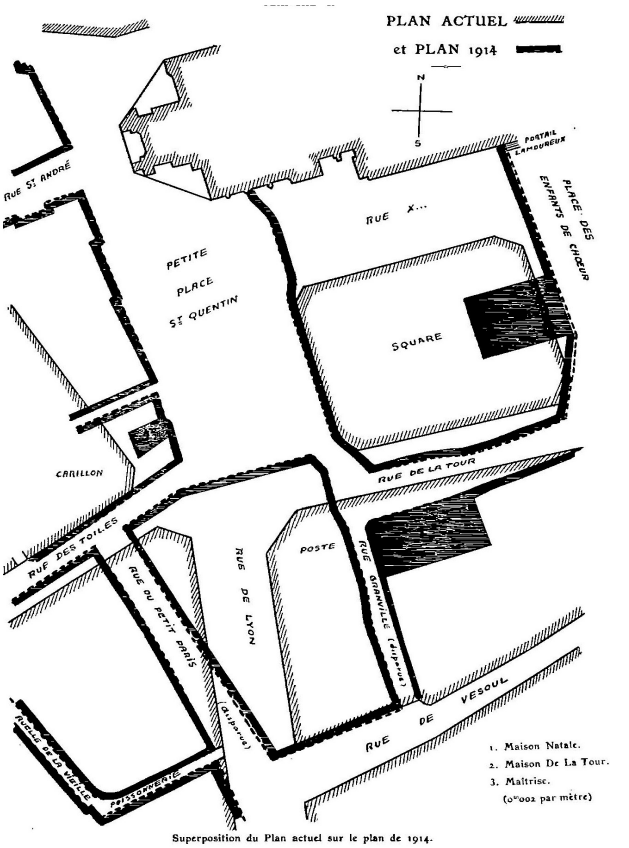
[47] This time replacing an engineer, Alexandre d'Hermand. For a description of the geometry of the logements, see Maskill 2016; the plan he reproduces, which shows all five levels of the logements, must be later than the 1710 he suggests: "le Sr Devisée" of the 1713 plan has been replaced by "veuve Devisée": the widow of the historiographe Jean Donneau de Visé (1640–1710) was confirmed as occupant from 1713.

[48] E.g. Gomart 1859, who compounds the error: "Bientôt un brevet du 4 avril 1750 le nomma peintre du roi en pastel, et en 1775 il obtint un logement au Louvre."

[49] According to Guiffrey 1873, pp. 90, 91, 96, 99, 178ff. Greuze was awarded this logement on 6.III.1769, in place of the arquebusier Jean-Baptiste La Rose. There is nothing to indicate that the logement was withdrawn from Greuze because subletting was not permitted, nor whether d'Angiviller had given his permission (his response was given orally according to Tourneux).

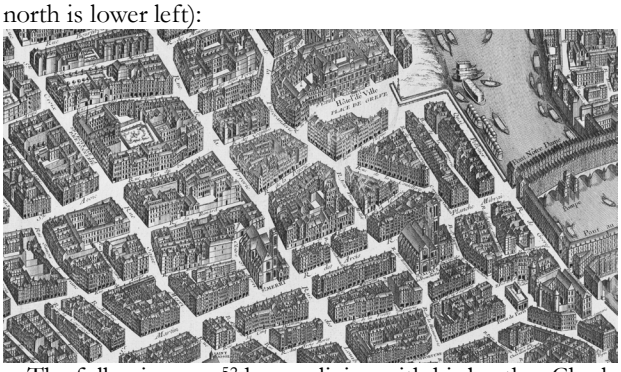
[50] On Robin's death the logement was assigned to Isabey, but it cannot be the space depicted in Boilly's 1798 painting of Isabey's studio as sometimes thought (*v.* Boilly 1988, p. 53).

[51] Collart 1999 is a useful guide to the topography of Saint-Quentin.

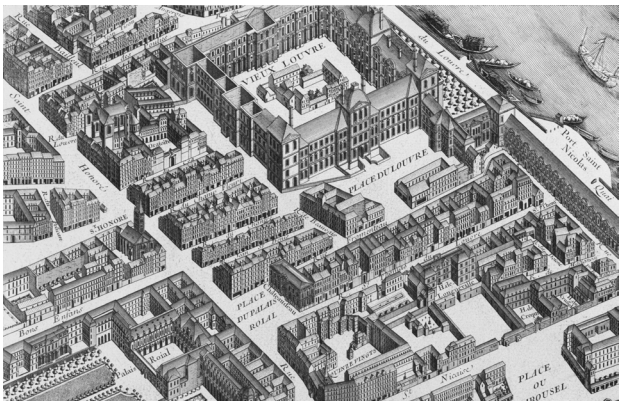


Superposition du Plan actuel sur le plan de 1914.

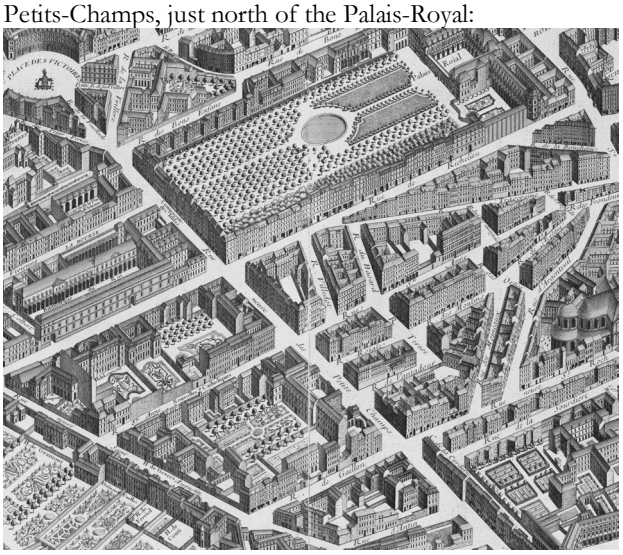
When La Tour arrived in Paris he presumably lodged with Dupouch, "rue et paroisse Saint-André des Arts". By the time of Voltaire's letters of .IV.1735, he was in the hôtel Jabach, at 42 rue Saint-Merri, in the block crossing with the rue Saint-Martin, as seen in the plan Turgot at that time (note that north is lower left):



The following year[52] he was living with his brother Charles "au coin des rues Saint-Honoré et Jean-Saint-Denis paroisse Saint-Germain" according to a document of 31.X.1736. The address is probably the same as that in the undated letter from Laroque to Duché cited above, "rue Saint-Honoré, a coin de la rue du Chantre": the thirteenth century rues du Chantre and Jean-Saint-Denis were both merged into the rue de Rivoli, a little further from the Palais-Royal than the rue des Bons Enfants, opening before the Louvre.[53]



By 18.XI.1743, La Tour was living in the rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs, just north of the Palais-Royal:



Two years later he moved to the Louvre, as discussed above.

As well as the logement in the Louvre, La Tour later had a country house at Auteuil. His purchase of this by contract of 20.IX.1770, which was never completed (for reasons discussed in Finances below), is fully documented, but it is less clear exactly when he first leased the property: B&W list this as "vers 1750". Subsequently numbered 59 rue d'Auteuil, near the Bois de Boulogne, it was originally 24 Grande-Rue, Auteuil and later became 40 rue Molière. Previous owners included Philippe Le Fort (–1745), an échevin de Paris in 1732 who had made his fortune selling fabric and lace; his widow, née Jeanne Ducrot (1672–1752), from whom it was inherited by her niece; Pierre Grassin (1689–1762), directeur général des monnaies de France; and the Chicoyneau de La Valette family, from whom La Tour leased and then bought the house, before selling it on to Mme Helvétius when unable to complete his purchase as described in the DOCUMENTS. However his first occupancy must be much later than B&W suggest, as Mme de La Valette had previously leased the property to Marie-Françoise-Camille, marquise de Sassenage, who spent lavishly on the decoration, including payments totalling 2868 livres to the house painter Pierre Allais by 1770.[54] In 1854 it was purchased by prince Pierre Bonaparte, and it there in 1870 that the prince killed the journalist Victor Noir in a dispute over arrangements for a duel. A drawing[55]

[52] The oil portrait J.46.3164 improbably attributed to Maurice-Quentin de La Tour bears an inscription and date of 1736 with an address in the rue Saint-Jacques, for which there is no independent corroboration. We suggest it was by a homonym, perhaps Pierre Pierre dit Latour (*v. supra*).

[53] *v.* Hillairet 1997, II, p. 350.

[54] Archives du château de Sassenage, G350-7.

[55] Reproduced in G. Bertin, "Le cimetière d'Auteuil", *Bulletin de la Société historique d'Auteuil et de Passy,* 1908, p. 189. However it is difficult to reconcile this with the property appraised in 1768.

of the house was made before it was partly destroyed in 1871; the garden was subsequently much reduced in size.

Annexed to the purchase contract was a detailed appraisal of the property carried out on 12.I.1768 and reproduced in full in DOCUMENTS (the valuation then was 28,500 livres, but the purchase price was 30,000). It reveals the house to be very substantial, far larger than one person might need: it may well have attracted La Tour to have a country house close to his wealthier customers in nearby Passy where clients such as de Rieux and La Pouplinière lived, and which he had frequented for some years (e.g. comte d'Egmont's invitation of 30.VIII.1742). In the purchase contract it is indicated that "Ledit S. Dela Tour a dit avoir parfaitte Connoissance" of the property, but this was the standard formula (indeed repeated in the 1772 sale to Mme Helvétius) rather than proof that he had indeed already been a tenant for some time. In fact on 1.VII.1770, more than a month before contracting to buy the property, La Tour had puchased the furniture from the marquise de Sassenage, for 11,500 livres. His total investment was thus to be 41,500 livres.

After 1772 it seems that La Tour occupied a house in Chaillot as a neighbour of Marie Fel. Her own property (where she died) was at Grande rue de Chaillot. An undated letter (*v.* DOCUMENTS, c.1780) from Fel to La Tour calls him "mon très cher voisin" and discusses a dinner they are jointly giving; in his 1784 will he left her everything he had at Chaillot (apart from a few specified items). A somewhat confusing letter from Fel to Jean-François de La Tour, of 5.I.1785 (after La Tour had gone to Saint-Quentin), indicates that Jean-François had sent her a list of the furniture at Chaillot: she was undecided whether to return, or to stay in her apartment in Paris, but she told the chevalier that Pasquier had advised that something must be done to protect La Tour's pastels from the smoke. This suggests they occupied adjacent properties with a common chimney (Pasquier had also occupied the neighbouring logement to La Tour's in the galeries du Louvre).

On 27.III.1775 La Tour and his half-brother Jean-François sold the house of their step-mother/mother in Saint-Quentin, "une certaine Maison bastiment, lieu et heritage, circonstancer et depandancer, situés en cette dite ville de Saint Quentin, rue du petit Paris, paroisse de Saint André, tenante d'une lizière a la rue de la vieille poissonnerie d'autre lizière avec la maison appartenant a l'Hotel Dieu dudit Saint Quentin, d'un bout parderriere au Sieur Dela Marliez et d'autre bout pardevant sur ladite rue du Petit Paris pour desdites Maison." The description of the location between the rue du Petit-Paris (demolished to make way for the rue de Lyon) and the rue de la Vieille Poissonnerie (both of which were bounded on the north by the rue des Toiles) locate the house near, but not on, the site of the maison natale proposed by Basquin 1935.

Documents from 11.X.1784 concern the acquisition by Jean-François de La Tour of a new house on canonical land for La Tour's return to Saint-Quentin and where he died (at 657 rue de Tugny, indicated in the plan above). Work continued on the house after his arrival. As with the house at Auteuil, we have a very detailed appraisal which was carried out in accordance with the decrees of the Assemblée nationale on 16.XI.1790: the house was valued at 9300 livres. There is also a shorter description in an advertisement for its sale in the *Journal de Saint-Quentin* (26.II.1837: *v.* DOCUMENTS), where it is described as "grande et belle… convenable à un rentier ou à un négociant." While there were a good many outhouses and smaller bedrooms upstairs, the principal rooms were the grand salon, salle à manger and grande chambre à coucher.

From 26.IX.1758 La Tour and his brother Charles were involved in a property speculation with Pierre Salles: this was never La Tour's residence, and the affair is discussed further below in Finances.

I.9 Royal portraits

Despite the interest shown by Madame Adélaïde in 1740 (*v. supra*), La Tour's work for the Bâtiments du roi seems to have commenced c.1744, according to the accounts summarised in Engerand 1900 (pp. 269–71: *v.* list *infra* and DOCUMENTS). Portraits of three courtiers were commissioned at 1500 livres each, among them the duc d'Ayen, later duc de Noailles and a future maréchal de France (1775), who was aide de camp du roi at the time. Evidently successful, the commissions were followed by eight pastels of the royal family for 12,000 livres (two of the king, two of the queen, three of the dauphin and one of the deceased dauphine), made 1746–49 and paid 1752. In that year La Tour was also granted a pension of 1000 livres by the Bâtiments du roi. Later portraits included several of the second dauphine, Marie-Josèphe de Saxe, the first in 1747, now known only from a miniature copy (La Tour also portrayed her half-brother, Maurice de Saxe, at the same time, and other members of the Saxe family when they later visited Paris). Under Marigny, directeur des Bâtiments du roi from 1751, fewer portraits were commissioned, and La Tour had already displayed a temperament unsuited to such service. For the history of the commission of the monumental portrait of Marigny's sister, see the full ESSAY. The duc de Berry (later Louis XVI) and comte de Provence were nevertheless commissioned in 1762, but royal commissions fell away after the death of the dauphin in 1765.

Nevertheless, La Tour's work remained on display in the royal apartments at Versailles, as shown in Louis-Jacques Durameau's 1784 inventory.[56] Among the numerous oil paintings, only nine pastels were included in the rooms whose displays were illustrated: they were all by La Tour, and all of the royal family.

A coloured chalk drawing of an Amour avec le globe du monde à ses côtés[57] bears a later inscription suggesting it was the work of Louis le dauphin (1729–1765) under the direction of La Tour, "maître du prince". Its rather basic

[56] Durameau, *Inventaire des tableaux du cabinet du roi…à Versailles* (1784), pièce 5.

[57] Besançon, mBA, inv. D.1549: *v.* Chatelain 2018, no. 210.

execution would suggest the author was a child at the time, and none of the elements confirm La Tour's involvement. A caricature by him, signed and dated 1747, shows no more connection with the pastellist.[58] The dauphin's sisters were however known to have made some pastels, under the direction of Madeleine Basseporte (*q.v.*), so it is not impossible (Madame Adélaïde borrowed one La Tour's pastels in 1740, perhaps to copy it: *v. supra*).

I.10 Stuart commissions

Apart from work for the French and Saxon royal families, La Tour was commissioned to make portraits of the exiled Stuart princes which have subsequently caused much confusion. The connection is unknown, although it has been suggested[59] that Paris de Montmartel, who was involved in the Jacobite cause, may have been instrumental; La Tour had exhibited his portrait in 1746.

A pastel of Henry, Duke of York J.46.3158 must have been made some time in advance of the 1747 salon where it was exhibited: it shows the prince in military guise, although Henry had already (25.V.1747) reached Rome having decided to abandon such a role in favour of the Church: he was created a cardinal weeks later. It was more likely to have been made after Henry's arrival in Paris, shortly after the victory at Prestonpans in .IX.1745, while he was trying to raise support for the Jacobite rebellion, but before he left Paris in .XII.1745 for Boulogne, where he remained until .V.1746 when he was permitted to serve at the siege of Antwerp as aide-de-camp to the comte de Clermont; at the conclusion of that siege, in .VII.1746, Henry was sent to Navarre.[60] (It is probably mere coincidence that La Tour exhibited in the same salon pastels of Henry, Clermont and Maurice de Saxe, who took Brussels at the beginning of 1746.)

A pastel of Charles Edward Stuart J.46.1447 was exhibited in 1748 (as "prince Edouard", to distinguish him from prince Charles de Lorraine) but lost: the numerous copies show that the portrait must have been extremely similar to the earlier pastel of his brother, with which it has been repeatedly confused. Its timing too was curious: when the salon opened, Charles was to be expelled from France under the terms of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (although not signed until 19.X.1748, the preliminaries had been agreed and its terms were already known). Both pastels are close to La Tour's portraits of Louis XV: that of Henry, with the raised arm reminiscent of Rigaud, closer to the 1745 pastel of the French king J.46.207, while Charles follows the more conventional pose of the 1748 pastel J.46.2089.

I.11 The self-portraits

La Tour's many self-portraits occupy a central place in his œuvre. Perhaps surprisingly they never show him working with pastel crayons. But his own face was a source of lifetime fascination – indeed there are several examples where he seems to have projected his own features onto his subjects', at least as judged from other portraiture. The numerous self-portraits are listed in Autoportraits, and range over the period from 1737 to perhaps 1770. Their accuracy may be compared with a relatively small number of images of him by other artists in this ICONOGRAPHY. Nothing better illustrates the difficulties of establishing a chronology for La Tour's work than this series: to take J.46.115 alone, Hoisington 2016 argues for 1737, Méjanès for c.1740 while most sources accept Salmon's verdict (Paris 2018) that it is "daté légitimement des années 1755–1760."

His were not the first self-portraits in art (or even in pastel), any more than Rousseau's *Confessions* were the first autobiography in literature; but the degree of self-obsession in both surely reflected the mood of the time: the ultimate expression of the *ens representans*. Like Ovid's Narcissus, "et placet et video; sed quod videoque placetque, non tamen invenio"; "iste ego sum."

While much theoretical attention[61] has been given to these self-portraits (in particular to his portrayal as the smiling philosopher Democritus – although as our discussion of J.46.1001 shows, this interpretation was not published until ten years after the portrait was exhibited), relatively little discussion has been devoted to the simple mechanics of their production. Did La Tour use a mirror, and if so how was it arranged? (The 1737 autoportrait à l'index is lit from the right, suggesting a mirror was used; while the autoportrait à la toque d'atelier is lit from the left, as are almost all his portraits of other sitters.) Do the tiny facial blemishes (a small naevus on one cheek) appear on the correct side of his face? Unfortunately his other portraitists seem to have been too discreet to tell us.

The artist's follower, if not pupil, Ducreux not only had the same penchant for self-portraiture, but managed himself to take on the appearance of his master in one example (J.285.149) sufficiently to have confused président Sérot and Champfleury (in a letter of 1874).

Among other artists who copied or were closely influenced by La Tour's self-portraits were Katherine Read, Suzanne Roslin and arguably Liotard; see the catalogue for others.

I.12 La Tour's clientèle

La Tour's subjects ranged from the royal family, whom he depicted in majestic poses with somewhat idealised faces, to his circle of artistic and intellectual friends, whose portraits in contrast reflect spontaneity and warmth. While the portrait of Duval de l'Épinoy J.46.1724 might seem regal in its grandeur, Mariette tells us that the secrétaire du roi treated La Tour as a friend (this is confirmed in the abbé Le Blanc's letter of 8.IV.1751, where the critic sent his regards also to be transmitted to Le Riche de La Pouplinière). The line between friend and client may not always have been rigid, nor completely mutual (*v. infra* for Marmontel's view).

La Tour's clientèle extended to many of the leading figures from the worlds of diplomacy, war, politics, finance, music and literature.[62] The closest parallel with such a range among contemporary portraitists is with the sculptor Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, whose busts Louis Réau (1927) divided into six neat categories: the royal family, the court, magistrature and finance, savants and physicians, writers, and artists and actors. (Réau 1950, comparing Pigalle with Chardin, noted that "les bustes frémissants de vie de J.-B. Lemoyne évoquent irrésistiblement les pastels de La Tour.") A name-check

[58] Versailles, inv. dess. 1232; exh. Versailles 2021, no. 28.
[59] Hoisington 2006, p. 144, citing Dubois-Corneau 1917, pp. 257f.
[60] Bongie 1986, p. 130.
[61] See for example Denk 1998; Popelin 2020.
[62] These categories have provided the basic structure for recent studies of his work; however to pursue them properly requires the prosopographic approach only possible in the context of the complete catalogue with supporting genealogies essayed here; hyperlinks in the sitters' names in the worklist connect to those documents.

confirms that perhaps 20 subjects sat to both artists. We also know, from the abbé Soulavie's fictitious *Mémoires du maréchal de Richelieu* (*v.* DOCUMENTS, c.1744) that La Tour was "intimately" acquainted with both Lemoyne and with Philbert Orry at the time their negotiations over the monument de Rennes must have taken place 1744/45; while La Tour may once again have embellished the account on which Soulavie relied, it is unlikely that he would have fabricated the story entirely.

Although Lemoyne, working in such a different medium, can hardly be regarded as a competitor (no more than Carmontelle or Cochin, whose drawn profiles have a similar overlap in sitters), his portrait busts do provide a useful yardstick by which to judge the accuracy of La Tour's much lauded resemblance (discussed further below), against that of the two other pastellists who (at least from today's perspective) dominated in the middle of the eighteenth century – Perronneau and Liotard.

However convenient for the biographer, it is a mistake to try to group all La Tour's sitters from a specific class and treat them all as one. Among the clergy, for example, often discussed as though La Tour had some special relationship with them by virtue of their calling, one finds on closer analysis relatives, monks, confessors, presumably of real piety, as well as scientists, writers or even financiers for whom the petit collet was a liberation from certain social rules, or magistrates whose entry into parlement was facilitated by the clerical route. In at least one case (abbé Soulavie) marriage took place as soon as the Revolution permitted.

It is also clear that the choice of clients for La Tour was as important as the choice of artist for the client: the prestige from exhibiting a portrait of a great man was enormous, as is clear from d'Alembert's account of the pastel that La Tour did not make of Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu (1689–1755) in his eulogy on the philosopher published a few months after his death:

> M. de la Tour, cet artiste si supérieur par son talent, & si estimable par son desintéressement & l'élévation de son ame, avoit ardemment desiré de donner un nouveau lustre à son pinceau, en transmettant à la postérité le Portrait de l'Auteur de l'Esprit des Lois; il ne vouloit que la satisfaction de le peindre, & il méritoit, comme Apelle, que cet honneur lui fût réservé: mais M. de Montesquieu, d'autant plus avare du tems de M. de la Tour que celui-ci en étoit plus prodigue, se refusa constamment & poliment à ses pressantes sollicitations.[63]

Again, in a letter to Mme du Deffand of 27.I.1753, d'Alembert wrote that "La Tour a voulu absolument faire mon portrait", suggesting that, while he may have wanted to overcharge wealthy financiers, he was as anxious to establish his credentials as painter of the intelligentsia as many of them were to have their portraits shown in public. The point was particularly evident from the eighteen portraits La Tour exhibited in 1753. It was probably a concern from his earliest appearances at the salon, although he may then not have been in a position to command the famous to sit for him. We do not know for example whether Frère Fiacre, who appeared in 1739, did so for the benefit of the publicity it would give for raising funds for his convent, or whether La Tour wanted the kudos from portraying a face "fort répandu dans le monde", which any child would recognise according to the critic. Whichever it was, despite the costume and the tire-lire, this was not – nor did La Tour ever make – a genre piece in the manner of Greuze or even of John Russell.

To understand the popularity of portraits of the great and good, one can turn to contemporary salon critics. In a famous passage La Font de Saint-Yenne 1753 railed against–

> cette foule d'hommes obscurs, sans nom, sans talens, sans réputation, même sans phisionomie; tous ces êtres qui n'ont de mérite que celui d'exister, ou dont la vue de l'existence n'est due qu'aux erreurs de la fortune; enfin tous ces personnages géans à leur propres yeux, & atômes à ceux du public par leur entiere inutilité à l'Etat & aux citoyens, quel droit ont-ils d'y être placés?

More temperately Beaucousin 1769 explained–

> Mais ç'a sur-tout par les Portraits des Grands-Hommes, que les Législateurs ont excité dans les cœurs des sentimens pour le bien. Les traits de ces Personnages estimables, rappellés à la mémoire, renouvellent dans l'ame la vénération dûe à leurs belles actions, & font naître en nous une vive émulation de ne pas leur demeurer trop dissemblables. Nous devons donc faire grand état de nos Artistes distingués qui s'appliquent au Portrait.

The narratives of the versions of La Tour's portraits of Jean-Jacques Rousseau remain confused despite numerous iconographical studies as well as a good many contemporary documents, from the former's testaments as well as the latter's correspondence. (La Tour's name also appears among the recipients of presentation copies of a number of Rousseau's books – Rousseau asked his agent personally to present copies of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and of *Émile* to the pastellist in 1761 and 1762 – and they remained friends for many years.) The finest surviving pastel may be that in Saint-Quentin from the artist's studio, which may or may not be the primary version shown in the Salon of 1753. Rousseau promised an (autograph) copy of it to Mme d'Épinay in 1757, the artist planning to bring it to Montmorency, but before the réplique was ready, Rousseau had quarrelled with Mme d'Épinay, and instead he gave it to the duc and duchesse de Luxembourg. In 1762 Rousseau told Mme de Verdelin that La Tour had only made two versions, of which he knew only the location of the Luxembourg pastel; the other might be the one she had seen with Jullienne. Two letters from Rousseau's printer Pierre Guy dated .XII.1763 make it quite clear that the Cathelin engraving showing Rousseau in Armenian dress was based on a version altered by La Tour himself, copied from clothing worn by real Armenians he had summoned; of this version no trace is now known (although it seems plausible that La Tour reused the costume for his portrait of Vernezobre, J.46.3054, which seems to have been described in Jean-François de La Tour's work list as "un Arménien"). La Tour gave this or another version to Rousseau in 1764; it travelled from Paris to Môtiers securely wrapped so that Mme Alissan de La Tour was unable to inspect it when she facilitated its despatch. This was later said to have been given to Mme Boy de La Tour (the version now in the musée Jean-Jacques Rousseau at Montmorency), but an alternative narrative is that Rousseau sent it to Earl Marischal in Potsdam in 1765. La Tour's image was the only portrait of him that met with Rousseau's approval ("M. de la Tour est le seul qui m'ait peint ressemblant" he wrote to Rey in 1770, dismissing the suggestion that Liotard's small pastel be engraved), and he distributed so many copies of the La Tour engravings that by 1765 his publisher had run out of

[63] D'Alembert, "Eloge de M. le président de Montesquieu", *L'Encyclopédie*, V, p. xv; *Mercure de France*, XI.1755, p. 112. See DOCUMENTS, .XI.1755.

copies. A vast number of copies in pastel and oil are known, of varied quality.

What did La Tour's clients themselves think of their portraits? We can of course infer something from the demand, prices etc., but there is surprisingly little direct documentation of their reactions. Mme de Charrière's testimony once again is relevant, as is a letter from Mme Gelly of 1.IX.1753 direct to the artist expressing her satisfaction.

While pastel portraiture appealed in particular to the recently ennobled or moneyed classes, and more to the noblesse de robe than to the noblesse de l'épée (see Jeffares 2017s), La Tour's reputation meant that the oldest established aristocracy also turned to him. The stinging criticism (on several levels) of Maurice Barrès[64] is hard to dismiss completely: "La Tour … fait l'insolent, mais ne domine pas; c'est un valet qui observe les invités, ce n'est pas Saint-Simon." The proverb "Il n'y a pas de grand homme pour son valet-de-chambre" inevitably comes to mind, although it is doubtful that La Tour would have regarded himself comfortably even as a Jeeves.

It is also a mistake (*pace* Réau 1927, cited above) to imagine that the clientèle divides into completely discrete groups: some of the highest ranking courtiers and financiers had liaisons with the actresses and singers of the day – among them the maréchal de Saxe and Mme Favart or the comte de Clermont and Marie Sallé. It is impossible now to determine whether La Tour's portraits of them were connected. Nowhere is this point better illustrated than with the history of Mlle Puvigné, as explored in Jeffares 2021a: the dancer's liaisons connected the worlds of the oldest nobility, the richest fermiers généraux, actors and dancers. So many of these were connected to La Tour in so many ways that an exercise of tracing patronage from shortest links to links to previous clients will be inconclusive. As these connections were irregular, and only discoverable from police reports, the links between sitters that emerge from the iconographical genealogies on this site that cover so many of La Tour's clients remain incomplete.

We also have the enigmatic record in the private accounts of prince Xavier de Saxe that (in .VI.1759) the Saxon ambassador paid 2 louis d'or to "les domestiques de M. de Latour, peintre", quite probably an inducement for the sitting to be arranged with a possibly reluctant artist notorious for his disdain for royal sitters. We know nothing about these servants,[65] nor whether their faces might be found among their employer's numerous préparations of inconnus.

I.13 Later years – health etc.

The deaths of the dauphin in 1765 and of his widow two years later marked the end of La Tour's work for the royal family, and a general falling-off in his output occurred throughout that decade. In a letter concerning the abbé Huber's legacy (6.XI.1770) he alludes to an injury to his eye of which nothing more is known, but which may have caused him to make his first will in 1768. (This cannot be the defective vision of indeterminate cause inferred from the discussion of distances and angles in La Tour's 1763 letter to Marigny[66]; nor the short-sightedness from his childhood mentioned by Mariette; a much later letter from Marmontel to the artist, 19.XII.1783, refers to "l'état de vos yeux", which might be a simple reference to presbyopia. It is also unlikely to refer to the allergy to oil paint as Duplaquet suggested, *supra*, if indeed that was a factor in La Tour's preference for pastel.) It may be assumed that La Tour consulted his friend Pierre Demours about his condition, and it is possible that this was the occasion of the 1764 portrait of the ophthalmologist (J.46.1614).

It is evident from the artist's surviving correspondence, which includes a number of what he aptly termed "jérémiades", and from numerous contemporary accounts, that La Tour's bizarre personality amounted to a psychiatric illness (perhaps today it might be diagnosed as bipolar disorder, but there may be elements of autism or even Alzheimer's as well), which towards the end of his life had become disabling. That ultimately led to his retiring to Saint-Quentin under the care of his half-brother and the distressing accounts of his interdiction for mental incapacity (*v.* DOCUMENTS, 15.I.1785). But the signs were apparent much earlier, from the outlandish letters to Marigny or from Mme de Graffigny's conversations with the artist in 1748. Even in 1750, Mme de Pompadour wrote to her brother that La Tour's "folie augmente à chaque instant."

I.14 Marie Fel

La Tour's iconic portrait of the opera singer Marie Fel (J.46.1766) remains one of his most celebrated works; an earlier portrait (J.46.1763) is more elaborate. Both are discussed in the catalogue. He is said to have had a liaison with her which lasted more than 30 years. One of her later letters refers to a recollection of the time when she sang at a concert at Amiens when Chauvelin was intendant there, putting the start of their friendship to before 1751. In 1782 she accompanied La Tour on a pilgrimage to Rousseau's tomb at Ermenonville (she and La Tour both subscribed to Soulavie's published account). After senility forced La Tour's retreat to his family in Saint-Quentin in 1784, Marie Fel continued to correspond with his brother, advising him in 1785 of the risk of smoke damage to La Tour's pastels at Chaillot (*v. supra*). When she died at Chaillot in 1794, she left everything to Jean-François de La Tour, with Pasquier as executor; as the miniaturist was then imprisoned, La Tour's relative Jean-Robert Dorison (*v. supra*) acted for him.

There is no doubt from this correspondence about the genuine affection between the artist and the singer, but there is nothing to allow the modern biographer to enter the bedroom.

I.15 Fees

The best contemporary records of payments for pastel portraits are from the Bâtiments du roi (the accounts published by Engerand 1900 provide a useful source of information, although they are not complete), and include both major artists and minor copyists or portraitists working from existing iconography.

La Tour of course could command more than the standard Bâtiments rate. The pastel of Prince Charles Edward Stuart shown in 1748 received 1200 livres; repetitions were then made. Marigny commissioned a pastel of the future Louis

[64] See CRITICAL FORTUNE, 1890.

[65] Much later, Marie Fel's letter of 8.VII.1789 to Cambronne-Huet mentions a servant, Mulér, whom she offers to take into her service, apparently from that of the chevalier de La Tour.

[66] Lanthony 2009, p. 4.

XVI in 1762 for 2400 livres. But even non-royal portraits were expensive: the Bâtiments du roi 1744–47 recorded payments of 1500 livres each for the chevalier de Montaigu and the duc d'Ayen. An important benchmark for portrait prices was established in a letter of 13.V.1747 (probably to Lépicié) in which Tournehem announced a change in the price structure for paintings, lowering those for portraits: "Je n'entends payer dorénavant les portraits en grands et les plus riches que 4000 livres, ceux jusqu'aux genous 2500 livres, et ceux en buste 1500 livres."[67]

La Tour returned to the subject with his letter to Marigny of 1.VIII.1763 (a few months after the end of the Seven Years' War, which imposed massive financial burdens on the state). In 1762 his portrait of the duc de Berry was estimated at 2400 livres, but when finally settled, in 1765, an order for 3000 livres was issued (La Tour's letter to Marigny of 7.X.1763 suggests that he had agreed to reduce the price of each royal pastel from 3000 to 2000 livres); however, this was not immediately payable in cash, and Cochin, writing on La Tour's behalf (7.X.1765), obtained an advance of 1200 livres.

La Tour's concern for talent to be recognised by the wealthy led to his taking a Robin Hood approach, believing that, as Marie Fel put it, "les riches devoit payer pour les pauvres." Famously for the (second) Pompadour pastel he demanded the unprecedented price of 48,000 livres, but this was not paid in full: the story is discussed in Jeffares 2019e, but it seems that an amount of 24,000 livres was paid. This was not the sole example of overcharging: soon after his portrait was painted, Voltaire fulminated that La Tour demanded a further 4800 livres (possibly a misreading of 1800, but still a very large amount) for two copies he thought worth 10 écus. In the story Mariette recounted about the portrait of Mme de Mondonville, La Tour's standard fee, which he demanded despite her having told him in advance that she could pay only 25 louis, was double that sum, or 1200 livres.

The payment of 200 livres for Laideguive, reported by Floding to Tessin (letter, 23.XI.1761), must have been at a concessionary rate, reflecting the notary's services to La Tour (perhaps in relation to the Salles affair – *v. infra*).

It was not unusual for established artists, particularly portraitists, to be called upon to act as expert in valuations for probate or to advise upon disputes between painters and their clients. La Tour was involved in several such law cases (*v.* DOCUMENTS; the cases concerned Marteau's estate, 4.IV.1757; Renou, 13.VIII.1774, acting with Greuze; Montjoye, 8.XI.1783 and 10.I.1784, acting with the miniaturist Alexis Judlin; and Viel, 26.XI.1783, acting with the pastellist Jean Valade). In the last, concerning a miniature, La Tour and his colleague Valade directed that their valuation fee be donated to the poor of the parish (Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois).

I.16 Finances

As noted above, in 1752 La Tour received a pension of 1000 livres p.a. "en considération de ses services" from the Bâtiments du roi, which continued until 1.I.1779 (it was brought to an end in 1780 for unstated reasons, but plainly La Tour no longer needed it). Confusions in the royal accounts obscure the financial success of La Tour's business, which is perhaps more evident in the investments he made: two annuities amounting to 6300 livres per annum on capital of 63,000 livres were purchased in 1765 alone, and La Tour's 1768 will lists income of 19,750 livres (although by then his accounts may not be accurate).

Apart from his earnings as an artist, La Tour also inherited money from his brother Charles (1766)[68] as well as from the abbé Huber. The latter's legacy proved to be extremely complicated. Huber died in Paris on 16.IV.1744, naming La Tour as his légataire universel (*v.* DOCUMENTS, 16.IV.1744 and 6.XI.1770 for details). He had been involved in the import of tobacco from Virginia, and his affairs involved George Fitzgerald Sr and Jr, Irish Catholics allied to Paris de Montmartel, as well as an Andrew Smith, in charge of a machine for processing fabric with a royal monopoly; Isaac Vernet was Huber's executor, and the estate became embroiled in disputes with Smith and the Fitzgeralds which were still continuing in 1770.

The absence of any account books or of an inventaire après décès (La Tour revoked his wills before his death, and everything passed to his brother without the need for an inventaire) makes it difficult to analyse his finances or wealth precisely. As is reported below, his philanthropic donations exceeded some 90,000 livres – somewhat larger than the size of Perronneau's entire estate, but rather smaller than Rigaud's succession of 222,823 livres. Rigaud's fortune was earned over 63 years, during which his total revenues amounted to 499,100 livres.[69] In contrast La Tour's productive career was significantly shorter, and while some of his pictures attracted premium prices, he was far less prolific than Rigaud, and had lower overheads.

The absence of an inventaire also means we know little about his assets beyond of course the collection of pastels now in Saint-Quentin. He seems however to have owned few pictures by other artists (many or all were probably gifts from the artists – *v.* Friends, *infra*), and none of great importance. Nor do we know which if any his brother may have disposed of before his own death nearly 20 years later. While the core of the La Tour pastels remain in Saint-Quentin, the abbé Duliège may well have received more than the handful of pictures and documents Desmaze found with Mme Warluzèle (*v. supra*).

The Salles affair

The property speculation by Pierre Salles which La Tour and his brother Charles financed in 1758 (advancing 53,594 and 26,585 livres respectively), leading to losses and claims on the guarantor (*v.* DOCUMENTS, 12.IX.1761), confirm a considerable level of affluence, as well as carelessness (La Tour was unable to produce evidence of payments received) and determination (the guarantor, a judge, had the La Tour claim set aside, forcing the brothers to take legal action).

La Tour and his brother Charles both lent substantial amounts to the financier Pierre Salles (–1774), rue Beaubourg. Salles, whose family seems to have originated in Valleraugue, Languedoc (his parents were Jacques Salles, banquier, bourgeois de Paris, and Anne Noguier; an uncle was also called Pierre, bourgeois de Nîmes, and married to Anne Noguier's sister Marie), married (in 1744) Marie-

[67] Cited Jean Locquin, *La Peinture d'histoire en France de 1747 à 1785*, 1912, p. 6.

[68] Testament of 26.XI.1755 (*v.* DOCUMENTS). The smaller bequests of 200 livres each to his brothers Adrien-François and Adrien-Honoré would have fallen away as both had died.

[69] James-Sarazin 2016, pp. 631, 624.

Marguerite-Catherine-Joséphine-Anatolie Machart (1731–1802), daughter of an avocat en parlement; his brother was Jean Salles du Fesq (–1754), avocat du roi, deputé du Languedoc auprès du conseil du commerce, négociant (he went bankrupt[70] with losses of 2 million livres and committed suicide on 19.VI.1754).[71] Pierre Salles and a lawyer, Armand-Claude Le Franc de Jettonville, formed a company in 1742 to acquire and develop a plot of land which had belonged to Hardouin-Mansart. Salles had a two-thirds share, and was responsible for raising all the construction costs for the seven hôtels to be built. By 1748 problems may have arisen (perhaps difficulties with the foundations in view of the proximity of the Seine[72]), and the company was dissolved, Salles acquiring all seven properties for 615,000 livres (the estimate for the *licitation* was 350,000, and the only other bidder was his former partner). They were a speculative development, intended to be let. Among them were the two buildings in which the La Tours were interested: the hôtel de Salles and the adjacent building, which became the hôtel Hocquart, both designed by the architect Jean Damun (Blondel's son-in-law); they shared a garden, the hôtel de Salles facing onto the rue de Bourbon, the present rue de Lille, while the other, which faced onto the rue de l'Université, was acquired by Louis-Jacques-Charles Hocquart (1698–1783), trésorier general de l'artillerie (brother-in-law of the famous collector Pierre-Jacques-Onézime Bergeret). The hôtel Hocquart was leased to the comte de Lannion, lieutenant-général des armées du roi; later residents included the comte de Vaudreuil, the princesse de Lamballe, Jérôme Pétion de Villeneuve and Suzanne Daru.

Charles de La Tour had settled an annuity on Salles on 9.VI.1747, and presumably induced his brother to join the financing. Charles lent 26,585 livres 5 sols, due 31.XII.1758, while Maurice-Quentin lent twice as much: 53,594$^{\#}$ 10^{s} 4^{d}, of which 5408$^{\#}$ 10^{s} 4^{d} was due 31.XII.1758 and the balance, 48,186$^{\#}$ 8^{s} 8^{d} on 6.III.1759. The properties were mortgaged as security. When Salles sold one of the houses to the highest bidder (by *licitation*), Hocquart, on 10.I.1759, the La Tour brothers became subrogated to a claim on Hocquart which seems to have been unpaid. By 21.III.1759 final demands had been ignored, but by a deed of 17.V.1759 payment of the Salles and Hocquart debts within one year was guaranteed by a judge, président de La Fortelle. When he too defaulted, the La Tour brothers granted another extension, this time securing additional guarantees from La Fortelle's son and his wife. The last known document (*v.* 1764) records a substantial part payment by La Fortelle; it is not known whether further amounts were recovered. Nevertheless it must be clear that the concentration of risk on such a project, particularly given Salles's history, cannot have been prudent for the artist.

The house purchase at Auteuil

The perception of La Tour's wealth may have been a little more complicated. On 20.IX.1770 La Tour bought the house at Auteuil of which he had been a tenant for some years (*v. supra*), selling it on 30.IV.1772 for 30,000 livres: in fact he was forced to cede the property since he had been unable to raise the outstanding purchase price, which was paid by the purchaser to the original vendor. The vendor was Michelle-Narcisse Jogues de Martinville, who had taken over her husband's affairs following his interdiction for mental incapacity; the bureaucracy over this arrangement meant that La Tour's default was harder to manage than might be expected from this family of fermiers généraux, promoted by Mme de Pompadour and connected to the Sanlot and other families in La Tour's clientèle. Mme de Martinville had borrowed the money she expected to receive from La Tour as well as a further sum of 30,000 livres to buy another house in Paris; it was essential that Mme Helvétius's payments ended up in the right hands to protect her title. Further complexities arose from the interdiction of the vendor's husband, the inheritance of the vendors of the other property etc., all of which were only finally settled in 1774. The separate purchase of unspecified moveables for an apparently large amount of 12,000 livres presumably included the furniture La Tour had purchased from the marquise de Sassenage for 11,500 livres in 1770. Thus La Tour's second foray into property dealing may not have been as unprofitable as it might seem.

I.17 La Tour's friends: artists, legacies

As noted above, some of La Tour's best portraits were of his friends, although the boundaries between friends and clients were not always clear. Marmontel, whom La Tour regarded as a friend, considered listening to the artist's nonsense as the price for having his portrait painted by him:[73]

> La Tour avait de l'enthousiasme, et il l'employait à peindre les philosophes de ce temps-là; mais le cerveau déjà brouillé de politique et de morale, dont il croyait raisonner savamment, il se trouvait humilié lorsqu'on lui parlait de peinture. Vous avez de lui, mes enfants, une esquisse de mon portrait; ce fut le prix de la complaisance avec laquelle je l'écoutais réglant les destins de l'Europe.

Diderot evidently disagreed: in a remark in the Salon de 1765, noting that Chardin and Greuze spoke eloquently about their art, added "La Tour, en petit comité, aussi fort bon à entendre." One wonders if the dinner he mentioned in a letter to Damilaville with La Tour and Naigeon took place in the summer of 1765.

La Tour's genuine altruism towards his fellow artists was evidenced by the story told by Cochin in his life of the modest and unassuming Parrocel, where in 1743 La Tour intervened to secure him a royal pension (in the 1746 Salon, no. 55, Parrocel exhibited a sketch belonging to La Tour, perhaps a token of gratitude. La Tour's friend, the abbé Huber, who had no other pictures (apart from the La Tour portrait of him), bequeathed to Orry his "beau dessin de Parrocel dont il est capable de connoitre le merite": one may well conjecture that he acquired it through La Tour's influence.

La Tour had a small collection of paintings by his friends: among those mentioned in his brother's will were works[74] by Carle Van Loo, Wouwermans, Greuze, and Chardin). Apart from Cochin, the intimate circle around Parrocel included also Silvestre and Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne (La Tour's

[70] The litigation extended as far as London – *Ex parte* Oursell, re Julian.

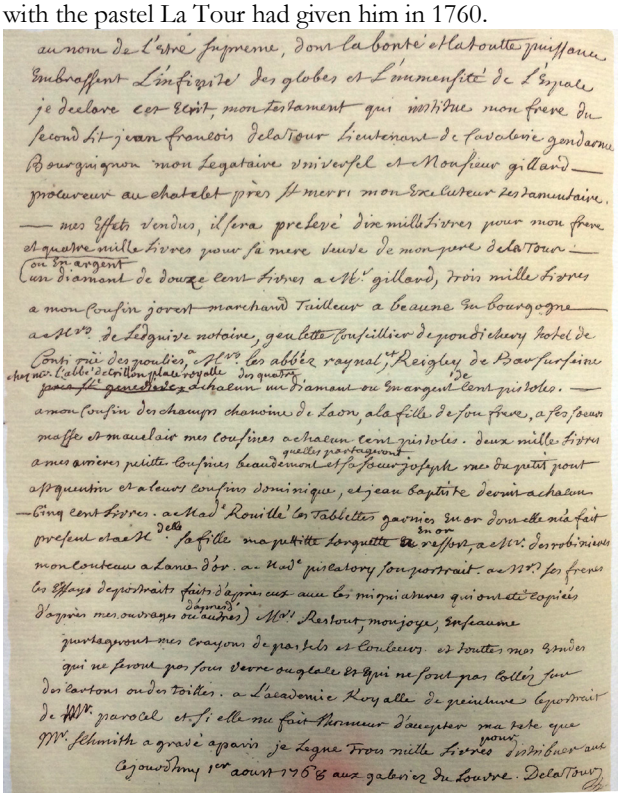
[71] It is possibly mere coincidence that in 1746 Pierre Salles lived with the abbé Gilles-François Novy in rue Beaubourg, the address (until 1744) of the abbé Pommyer.

[72] E. Coyecque, "La maison mortuaire de Turgot", *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de Paris*…, 1899, pp. 36ff, conjectured thus.

[73] Jean-François Marmontel, *Mémoires*, éd. J.-P. Guicciardi & G. Thierriat, 1999, p. 205.

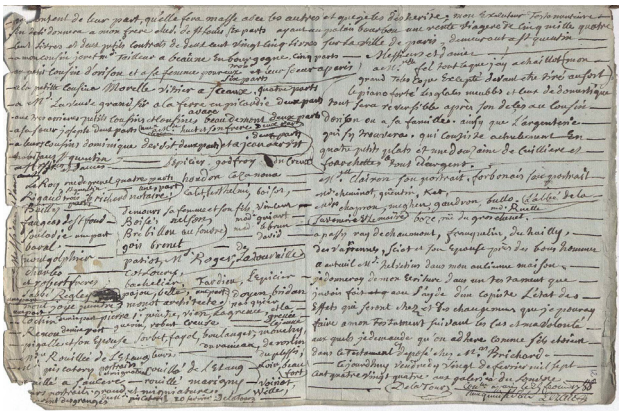
[74] Reconstructing the collection might seem a simple task, but the subsequent losses and confusions in the records at Saint-Quentin make his more difficult. See the LT Concordance.

friendship with whom is attested in Vigée Le Brun's *Souvenirs*[75]; it may date back to his apprenticeship with Dupouch, who was close to the Lemoyne family, *v. supra*). Lemoyne owned a copy of La Tour's portrait of Parrocel, portrayed La Tour, and was portrayed by him twice; the second of these was included in the Salon de 1763 "sous le même numéro" with another of La Tour's intimate friends, the abbé Pommyer.[76] When Pommyer wrote to La Tour in 1762, he mentioned Chardin and his wife; and it was Chardin with La Tour who were deputed to inform the magistrate of his election as associé libre of the Académie in 1767. In 1774 when Chardin retired from the Académie he presented them with the pastel La Tour had given him in 1760.

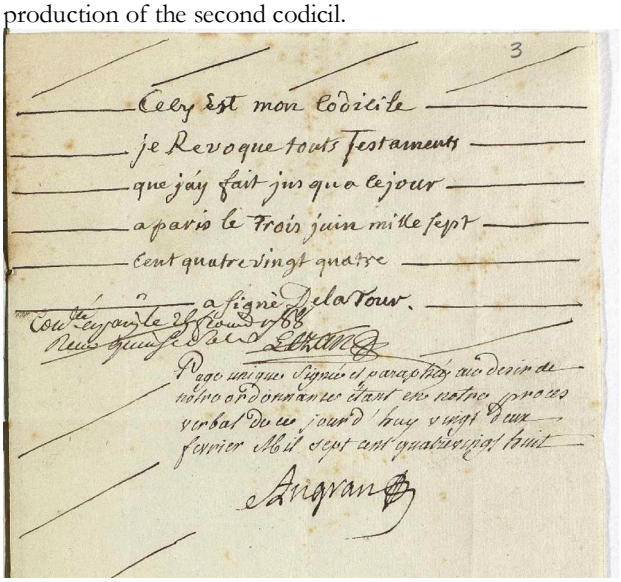


La Tour's first will (page above) was made in 1768 and made numerous bequests to family members and fellow artists. On 25.VI.1783 he nominated a dentist, Furcy-Georges Le Roy, as executor in place of the abbé Pommyer (whose initial appointment is unrecorded), on the grounds that the magistrate was far too busy to undertake the role.

In .II.1784 he made a much longer will including a very large number of beneficiaries, ranging from Marie Fel to Benjamin Franklin (both of whom were portrayed around this time by Ducreux, *q.v.*). While the names included clients and friends, in places it looks as though La Tour was simply listing every member of the Académie royale as well as other groups of famous scientists etc. The will is so chaotic that even the total number of beneficiaries – at least 112 – is uncertain. Of these some 50 were identifiable as artists; it is unlikely that La Tour was close to all or even most of these.



The writing was so erratic (page 3 above) – in contrast to the hand known from earlier documents – that it was criticised by the magistrates examining the document after his death. Four months later, in .VI.1784 (and possibly in retaliation for the methods employed to induce him to return to Saint-Quentin), La Tour issued (in several copies) a revocation of all his wills and codicils, sending sealed copies to notaries in Saint-Quentin and Paris. This led to a series of notarial examinations in the days after his death, when Le Roy and Brichard, the Paris notary, first produced the 1784 will and then Jean-François de La Tour had it set aside on production of the second codicil.



I.18 Pupils

As early as 1736 when Voltaire's portrait was to be copied, we learn that Voltaire knew the copy was to be made by a female artist, who however has not yet been identified.[77]

Numerous claims to have been his "pupil" require sceptical evaluation (and possibly indicate no more than having been granted the privilege of watching the master at work), although the suggestion that Ducreux was his "only pupil" cannot be correct.

The evidence of their association is thin. The claim rests on the description of Ducreux as "élève de Latour" in the livret of the 1796 salon, long after La Tour's death and not included in previous (or subsequent) catalogues of

[75] The passage probably dates to c.1773, and is included in DOCUMENTS at that date.

[76] See Jeffares 2001.

[77] Hyde 2016 has suggested that La Tour "was among the first male artists (in France) to take women as students, starting around the middle of the eighteenth century": that claim goes too far, although the statistics of female painters reflect both their preference for pastel over oil and an increase in mid-century.

exhibitions where Ducreux exhibited. (At Ducreux's previous public appearances, he termed himself "premier peintre de la Reine", in 1780, or "de l'Académie impériale de peinture de Vienne", in 1786, neither of which would have assisted his cause in 1796, but it is interesting to note that he thought La Tour's name would help.) The earliest secondary reference to Ducreux as "le seul élève de Latour" appears to be in Arnault & al., *Biographie nouvelle des contemporains* (1822, VI, p. 123). Dinaux 1852 mentions Ducreux and Liotard as La Tour's two principal pupils, a claim repeated by Champfleury 1855 (Dréolle de Nodon 1855 pointed out that Liotard was too old). There is no documentary evidence (e.g. to suggest an apprenticeship) before the brief mention in La Tour's second will. Salmon 2018 argues that the encounter may have been as late as 1783, when La Tour was senile and Ducreux could only have been shown his work (which he would already have seen at the salons) rather than see him working. But it is perfectly possible that Ducreux visited La Tour's studio as early as the 1760s, and the roll call of eminent families Ducreux portrayed from the start of his accounts (1762 on) suggests that work was directed to him from a studio such as La Tour's. One suspects that Ducreux's work lists contain a number of lost copies of La Tour portraits, as well perhaps as other commissions the master was unwilling to undertake himself.

Among the other pastellists La Tour is supposed to have taught one can name also Ansiaume, Labille-Guiard, J.-A.-M. Lemoine, Montjoye, Neilson, Read, J.-B. Restout, Mme Roslin, as well as more obscure figures such as Mlle Allais, Damance and Tirman (*qq.v.*). Even Boze was among the artists named in his later will which mentions virtually every artist he had met – some 50 names in all. Nevertheless it must be noted that not a single document evidencing apprentissage or allouage has been found in the Minutier central or any other archive (albeit that La Tour's own apprenticeship deed only came to light in 2002): these arrangements were mostly, if not all, informal; we do not even know if they were paid. No pupil is listed as his student in the manuscript Listes des élèves de l'Académie royale, albeit these only survive for the period 1758–76 and after 1778; as a conseiller he would not have as close an involvement in teaching as the professorial history painters.[78]

As to what each learned from La Tour there is limited evidence, but a memorandum from Garnier d'Isle to Le Normant de Tournehem of 10.VIII.1749 concerning the appointment of Jacques Neilson to run the basse lisse workshop at the Gobelins reveals not only that La Tour had taught him "le pastel où il réussit très-bien" but that he had acquired "la nuance et l'intelligence des couleurs et parfaitement bien le dessin."

Other mentions include the cryptic mention by Cochin in a letter to Descamps (30.V.1780) of the painter Rémi-Furcy Descarsin "dont par parenthèse j'ai vu chez M. de La Tour d'assez bonnes têtes."

To these suspects one might add the lengthy list of artists to whom La Tour bequeathed "leur portraits et miniatures" in his will (were these their original portraits, his portraits of them, or their copies of his works?). Copyists such as Mlle Navarre (in pastel), Mlle Duneufgermain (in oil), Coqueret, Frédou (mostly in oil) and engravers such as Georg Friedrich Schmidt (*qq.v.*) must also have frequented his studio. Charles Prévost, who copied La Tour pastels in oil in 1746 for the apartments of Mme de Pompadour, was based in Versailles, but his memorandum charged "pour avoir été… à Paris peindre deux têtes du portrait du Roi chez M. de La Tour."[79] Anne Féret, Mme Nivelon (1711–1786),[80] who also lived in Versailles, was sent La Tour's pastels of the dauphin and dauphine for her to copy the heads for full-length portraits in oil. Amateurs such as Belle de Zuylen, Mme de Charrière visited, and Diderot also described watching him at work. Schmidt's 1742 engraving of the artist's autoportrait à l'œil de bœuf was evidently distributed to a number of the pastellist's friends, as it was greeted with verses from both the abbé Mangenot and Thomas Laffichard. The self-portrait of the obscure pastellist Jean-Louis Lambert J.4448.101, dated September 1742, shows a direct – and immediate – homage to La Tour, uniting features from the lost autoportrait au chapeau en clabaud shown a month earlier at the Salon de 1742 and the well-known autoportrait à la toque d'atelier, thought to date from the same period, but does not prove he worked in La Tour's studio. Similar echoes are felt in the tiny output of the mysterious painter and pastellist Jean-César Fenouil (*q.v.*): a portrait of Préville grimaces and points as in the autoportrait à l'index, while the face of Mlle Sallé for his print is taken from a La Tour pastel.

Even more tenuous perhaps is the link with Claude Maucourt, secrétaire to the président de Rieux in 1739 when La Tour's J.46.2722 must have been underway; he later turned his hand to portraiture and became a pastellist (although little of La Tour's influence is evident). Maucourt's father-in-law was the marchand graveur, Antoine Humblot (–1758), by whom two chalk drawings (of La Tour and Rousseau, no doubt copies of the pastels) were included in the 1808 Lamy sale, where Humblot was described as a pupil of La Tour.

We should also note the numerous miniatures after La Tour portraits, often by artists whose names are unknown. Among those whose identity can be established were the Kamm family (see Jeffares 2016g). It seems probable that another regular copyist was Jean-Adam Mathieu (c.1698–1753), peintre en émail, in whose logement in the galeries du Louvre La Tour himself took a room (*v.supra*): Mathieu copied his pastel of Charles Edward Stuart (J.46.14584) and possibly others.[81] We also have two uniquely interesting oil copies made by the Polish painter Tadeusz Konicz, dit Kuntze (1727–1793), made during his 1756 stay in Paris where he made oil copies (now in Wilanów) of artists' portraits in the Académie royale, including after La Tour's pastels of Dumont le Romain and Restout, showing them before their disastrous alterations (*v.* §II.4).

Today connoisseurs are appalled by the idea of a copy by another hand. It is a mistake to assume La Tour's contemporaries had the same prejudice: for example, Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne's sale on 26.VIII.1778 included two items (lots 33, 36) which were explicitly described as pastel copies after La Tour's portraits (of Rousseau and Parrocel).

[78] ENSBA, MS 45 and MS 823. I am most grateful to Antoine Chatelain for conducting a detailed search to confirm this, 24.IX.2021. One pupil, Marc Le Sueur (1736–1795), under Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne's protection, turned from sculpture to pastel and oil portraiture: one wonders who directed his study.

[79] Brou 2013, p. 44.

[80] Her biography established in Jeffares 2020a.

[81] Among those inventoried at his death (Guiffrey 1884, p. 168) were enamels of the king, queen, prince de Condé, duc and duchesse d'Orléans and Mme de Pompadour. The Cottin sale included an enamel of Saïd Pacha (Paris, Helle & Glomy, 27.XI.1752, Lot 634).

The quality of the pastel copies by pupils has remained largely a matter of speculation. Jean-Gabriel Montjoye (*q.v.*), for instance, whose own independent work is of limited achievement, nevertheless is identified as the author of a copy of La Tour's autoportrait given to the abbé Mangenot in 1755: that appears to be the pastel now in Amiens, which hitherto (until Jeffares 2019h) was universally assumed to be autograph and widely believed to be the masterpiece exhibited in the salon of 1750. It is perhaps noteworthy that Montjoye was one of the three artists La Tour nominated in this 1768 will to divide his pastel materials and unframed studies. Montjoye would later exhibit La Tour pastels from his cabinet at the Salon de la Correspondance in 1787; perhaps they too were copies he had made.

Voiriot, not listed as a pupil, nevertheless made a number of lost copies of La Tour pastels which appeared in his parents' estate inventory (1747: both were of pastels La Tour had exhibited in the salon of 1739, where Voiriot might have seen them), as well as a copy of the La Tour portrait of the dauphin commissioned for the "service du roi" in 1752 (150 livres; medium unspecified; Voiriot also copied a Nattier royal portrait for the same price); later he produced a surviving pastel copy of the Rousseau portrait, of considerable merit. That an established artist produced copies of La Tour's pastels over a period of at least six years gives an indication of the depth of this industry, unique among eighteenth century pastellists.

The mechanics of copying are taken up further below.

I.19 Science and literature

In a letter to Aignan-Thomas Desfriches of 18.V.1785, the Swiss textile-maker Emanuel Ryhiner-Leissler (1704–1790) recalled a dinner some 25 years earlier "chez M. de la Tour le célèbre peintre en pastel, qui m'ayant accroché et retenu par un bouton de mon habit me fit suer sang et eau en me parlant astronomie où il n'entendoit rien, tout comme moy, à ce que j'appris ensuite." La Tour owned several telescopes by Dolland which he mentioned in his will, with rather bizarre provisions for their disposal by ballot. Unlike the English pastellist John Russell (*q.v.*) he does not seem to have used them for any constructive purpose (beyond perhaps a general curiosity about "l'infinité des globes et l'immensité de l'espace" discussed below, under Freemasonry).

Also in the second will was a pianoforte, left to Mlle Fel; was it his (there is no other evidence of his being musical, unless one counts the pieces by Forqueray (1747) or Duphly (1756) bearing his name), or was he simply listing property that was already Fel's?

La Tour's interests in scientific matters were superficial, if broad ranging (in Élie Fleury's phrase, "il avait une incompétence universelle"[82]) – including apparently an interest in petrified tree roots under the Seine. This can be traced through to research by the abbé Soulavie (but perhaps La Tour's attention was secured by the difficulties with the foundations in the Salles development discussed above, §I.16). Similarly the interest in the Montgolfier brothers may have been stimulated by Pierre Barral, an engineer who had surveyed Corsica where La Tour's brother Charles had served.

It seems that La Tour even had aspirations as a writer: when Jacques Necker arrived in Paris around 1750 to join the banque Vernet, La Tour, who knew Isaac Vernet (he was abbé Huber's executor), showed Necker a comedy which he had written "tourmenté de la folie de bel esprit", to Necker's embarrassment. It is sadly absent from our DOCUMENTS.

Equally absent is the article on painting which Diderot thought La Tour had promised him for the second edition of the *Encyclopédie*, but which never materialised.[83] Much as he might have wished to be, La Tour cannot really be described as an influential Enlightener, to use the term adopted in a recent study.[84]

I.20 Philanthropy and freemasonry

La Tour's philanthropic initiatives dominate his life from 1776 on. For the detail of these, refer to the DOCUMENTS. They included plans for prizes in anatomy, perspective and figure drawing presented to the Académie royale to be funded by a donation of 10,000 livres, but never embraced with much enthusiasm by the Paris institution. In contrast the authorities in Saint-Quentin (encouraged by the artist's brother Jean-François who had retired there) were enormously supportive of his ideas for the creation of an école gratuite de dessin as well as donations for the benefit of poor women in confinement and old artisans in Saint-Quentin unable to earn their living. La Tour was careful to stipulate, however, in rather detailed provisions governing the benefactions, that the recipients should not be immoral or of bad character; thus having in 1776 settled two amounts of 6000 livres for women in confinement and incapacitated workers, just over a year later he required the payments to the latter to be redirected towards the former.

Unsurprisingly his continuing attempts to manage his benefactions led to lengthy quarrels with the municipal authorities. In 1778 he also settled a further amount of 6000 livres with a view to establishing the école de dessin at Saint-Quentin. The municipal authorities immediately spent all 18,000 livres on pressing matters, and the elaborate documentation for putting his foundations onto a secure legal footing involved the purchase of annuities that would produce secure income hypothecated to fund the annual awards. These were to be calculated at "denier vingt", i.e. a yield of 5%.

The mutual distrust is evidenced by a document[85] minuting the deliberations of the conseil de la ville de Saint-Quentin in general assembly at an extraordinary meeting held on 16.IV.1779. In it the mayeur gave an account of La Tour's offer and the conditions he attached, which the council (the mayeur was supported by 17 votes to 1) could not accept, specifically La Tour's requirement that half the members of the administrative board be citizens who were not municipal officers: this the mayeur argued in the strongest terms undermined the authority of the council. The genuine objection was that La Tour's philanthropy was not without benefits for himself, through the control his arrangements

[82] Fleury 1904, p. 33.

[83] *L'Encyclopédie*, V, p. 645.

[84] Ritchie Robinson, *The Enlightenment*, 2020. It is notable that La Tour does not figure at all in Robinson's book (nor in many other standard texts), while a great many of his sitters do (in others, such as Dan Edelstein's *The Enlightenment: a genealogy*, 2010, it is the pastel of Mme de Pompadour that is mentioned). And if La Tour makes it into Daniel Roche's *La France des Lumières*, 1993 (*v.* CRITICAL FORTUNE), he would have been appalled by being bracketed with Liotard in his appearance.

[85] Registre de la chambre, Saint-Quentin, archives municipales, F 35, f° 20v/24r.

would give him. The subtext appears to have been a snobbery that La Tour was waving a cheque book to buy equal influence with the elected officials when he, or his representative, was merely "un particulier sans qualité, sans caractere" (i.e. not noble). La Tour in turn had retaliated by accusing the council of harbouring Protestant tendencies which he thought were at the root of the antipathy – a view which appears to have been entirely unfounded, although (given historic issues in the town) a dangerous accusation. (It is however difficult to infer any specific religious or doctrinal allegiance from La Tour's friendships with clerics.[86])

The episode also reveals both paranoia and a reactionary view that contradicts the image many writers wish to find of La Tour as a beneficent, Enlightened thinker.

Nevertheless La Tour's philanthropic donations to Saint-Quentin were said to amount[87] to 90,174 livres 3 sols 4 deniers, yielding interest of 3,714# 14s 2d.

The aims of these foundations were quite broad: the Amiens prize was to be awarded to the citizen of Picardie who had done "la plus belle action d'humanité" during the year, failing which, whoever had discovered the most useful health remedy, or mechanical invention in the field of agriculture, manufacture, arts or commerce in the province or in the whole kingdom. In the first year it went to an inventor of a machine to stretch cloth whose benefits included that it could be run by two children. The following two years it was awarded for rescues from flooding.

Documents in the archives of the Académie d'Amiens show what was required to found an annual prize of 500 livres. On 23.I.1783 La Tour purchased perpetual annuities from a Paris stockbroker for a sum totalling 35,020 livres, intended to produce an income of 885 livres, of which 549# 15s was for the Amiens prize (allowing for costs and deductions to yield a clear 500 livres annually) and 335# 5s for the École de dessin in Saint-Quentin. (The complexities of the documentation arise because it was necessary to purchase in the secondary market annuities previously created and based on different yields – "deniers", or reciprocal yields, of between 20 and 40 times.) For the former, the next step was a contract, on 2.V.1783, by which La Tour reconstituted the annuity; this was followed on 10.V.1783 by a deed of gift from La Tour to the Académie d'Amiens, and on 15.VI.1783 by a letter of ratification of these steps sealed at the Chancellerie.

La Tour's philanthropy may relate to his links with freemasonry, which remain somewhat obscure: some sources suggest his connection dates back to around 1745, but this is unevidenced – although one of his sitters (1747), the comte de Clermont J.46.1554, had been grand maître de la Grande Loge de France (it would later become the *Grand Orient*) from 1737, and was associated with a number of other figures in La Tour's circle, notably three of Clermont's secrétaires des commandements, Louis de Cahusac (*v. s.n.* Fel *infra*), Antoine Gelly (*v. s.n.* Mme Gelly) and Paradis de Moncrif (*q.v.*). Mondonville, Jélyotte and Marmontel were also freemasons. La Tour may have attended sessions of the Paris lodge *Les Neuf Sœurs* (founded in 1773), whose members included Franklin, Greuze, Houdon, Pajou and Marmontel. It is however simplistic to associate freemasonry with the Enlightenment: out of 140 contributors to the *Encyclopédie*, it has been estimated that at most four belonged to Paris lodges.[88]

The language of La Tour's 1768 will ("au nom de l'etre suprême, dont la bonté et la toutte puissance embrassent l'infinite des globes et l'immensité de l'espace etc.") has a decidedly masonic ring to it (as do the later will and his 1770 letter to Belle de Zuylen), and includes phrases to be found in the scandalous book *De la nature*, published anonymously in 1761 by the freemason Jean-Baptiste-René Robinet (1735–1820).[89] The artist's brother Jean-François de La Tour attended a meeting of the *Saint Jean* lodge in Saint-Quentin on 8.X.1773. Probably initiated by the saint-quentinois physician Louis-Francois Rigaut (if not by Jean-François, or even Savalette de Lange, several members of whose family were portrayed by the artist), La Tour was made an honorary member of the masonic lodge *L'Humanité* at Saint-Quentin (his appointment appears to date from 5.VII.1774 according to the entry in the registre[90], but in fact he does not appear in the membership lists[91] until 5.VII.1779), along with Jérôme de Laval, professeur de dessin at the École gratuite in Saint-Quentin, and Joseph-Marie Néret, receveur au grenier de sel and another local philanthropist. The first documented reference to La Tour as a franc-maçon appears to be in a speech of 7.X.1778 in which the masonic orator linked La Tour's gift in aid of femmes en couche to the Queen's first pregnancy.

La Tour was asked to provide a portrait for the lodge; Néret was only able to obtain from Paris an engraving, which he describes as "rare, d'un des meilleurs portraits du f∗∗ [frère] de la Tour", accompanied by a disappointingly banal reply from La Tour, dated "A l'Or∗∗ de Paris, le 3e jour du 6e mois 1781". It was decided to wait until the following year, "quand ses fondations seroient faites", to ask La Tour for his bust. This request was honoured, but only in plaster; it was decided nevertheless to place it in the temple, opposite that of Savalette de Lange, the founder of the lodge. On this occasion (1782) La Tour was elevated to the grade of Vénérable honoraire.

Similar requests proceeded from the École gratuite who displayed La Tour's bust annually during the prize ceremonies – probably a plaster cast of the Lemoyne terracotta J.I.46.205 now in the musée Antoine-Lécuyer.

[86] Gouzi 2000, pp. 133, 185 n.386 infers that Dom Jourdain knew La Tour, and perhaps suggests that he was among the group of artist friends of Dom Jourdain supportive of his maurist and Jansenist leanings; but that does not seem warranted by the letter from Jourdain to Desfriches of 4.XII.1763 (not 1785 as Gouzi prints).

[87] This is the figure given in Desmaze 1854b, p. 298 (and repeated in Goncourt 1867, p. 23n.); it is unclear how it is made up (it mentions an initial donation of 18,000 francs to the école gratuite, supplemented regularly, to an amount calculated (presumably in a specific document) of 16 thermidor an IX – 4.VIII.1801). It excludes the Académie royale benefaction, and probably that for Amiens, although the 500 livres Desmaze cites for 1783 may be the same sum. Further confusion concerns the mixture of interest and principal, capitalised at different rates (deniers). In the absence of the 1801 document it is impossible to verify the computation.

[88] Ritchie Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 370, citing studies by Robert Shackleton and Frank A. Kafker.

[89] For Robinet as freemason, *v.* José A. Ferrer Benimeli, "Diderot entre les jésuites et les francs-maçons", *Recherches sur Diderot et sur l'Encyclopédie*, 1988/4, p. 62. *De la nature* scandalised the Catholic church, and was attributed initially to Diderot or Helvétius. However Voltaire denounced him in a letter of 8.IX.1766: "Ce Robinet est un faussaire. Il est triste que de vrais philosophes aient été en relation avec lui."

[90] Only one of the registers of the loge *L'Humanité* has survived, in the Bibliothèque municipale de Soissons.

[91] As V.∴ F.∴ Latour, Conseiller de l'academie roiale de peinture, maitre honoraire et associé libre, 3e classe. The tables of membership are however in the BnF, cote FM² 409.

It is difficult to assess fully the possible effects of these contacts which remain largely undocumented. For example, we don't know how, in Montjoye's lawsuit over the portrait of Mme Charlet in 1783/84, the experts included not only La Tour, but the obscure miniaturist Alexis Judlin: his father-in-law was a freemason and secretary to the chevalier d'Éon, and on his arrival in Paris he was supported by Blin de Sainmore, co-founder of the Société philanthropique with Savalette de Lange.[92]

It is clear that masonic doctrines captured La Tour's imagination and are reflected in his wills and letters as well as in his charitable foundations.

[92] See Jeffares 2021e.

II. THE WORK

La Tour's works are never signed.[93] He left no account books. It remains today easier to identify his work on the basis of pose, expression and composition than on handling as such. For the lawyer Beaucousin, writing about the 1769 Salon, La Tour's works could not be recognised by their style or handling, but only by their extreme perfection which he compared to the clarity of Pascal's thinking.

Despite the annotation on a copy of the 1743 livret (often attributed to Mariette) claiming that the portrait of René Frémin was completed in seven days, La Tour never employed the rapid, graphic attack of his rival Perronneau. La Tour's laboured, perfectionist technique was discussed in illuminating correspondence – in particular in letters to Marigny, 1.VIII.1763, and Belle de Zuylen, 14.IV.1770. In his report to Marigny suggesting a reply to the 1763 letter, Cochin's advice was that, while it contained much that could not be disputed, La Tour exaggerated the difficulties of pastel, while oil painters also faced challenges he overlooked.

La Tour's results were achieved through an individual style that synthesizes the graphic tradition practised by artists such as Perronneau or Vigée with the stumped, painterly finish of Vivien or Nattier.

II.1 From préparation to portrait

La Tour proceded through a series of préparations to study various aspects of his sitters' expressions, aiming to enliven his portraits with fleeting glimpses of their personalities rather than relying on the mythological or official trappings employed in contemporary portraiture to symbolise social status.

These studies often commenced with simple monochrome outlines; a second préparation would then add colour, often setting the face against a shaded halo, leaving the rest of the paper uncovered. The effect is enhanced often by his use of strong light and harsh contrasts, all intended to be toned down in the final works. Eyes often lack catchlights, enhancing a feeling of abstraction. Even eye colour is unreliable (or at least differs between préparation and final portrait).

It is trite to comment that these préparations can in some ways be more impressive than the final works[94] – a valid reaction today to their modernity, or at least timelessness, the faces often unencumbered by ancien régime costumes, and the boldness of the hatching often approaching abstract art. Some critics (e.g. Wakefield 1984) have argued that the success of the préparations is, at least in part, because La Tour's weakness as a draughtsman (first identified by Louis de Boullongne but never subsequently corrected) is not exposed – although as these drawings rely on line rather than colour for their effect, this is an odd suggestion (La Tour's difficulty with perspective is another matter). It is more credible to follow Diderot's general explanation of the capacity of the imagination to respond to the inchoate, and privilege the sketch for its potential.

There are few cases where all the versions have survived, but the two different images of Silvestre provide examples of first J.46.296 and finished stages J.46.2935, and first J.46.2966 and second J.46.2963 stages:

For another example, here are the two stages of the actress Mlle Dangeville, J.46.1598 and J.46.1595; again the final pastel escapes us, but the transformation from line to colour, from the fall of light to the modelling of flesh, from abstract shape to living object is evident:

No doubt other pastellists made preliminary studies, but few have survived. Our knowledge of La Tour's use of the préparation is in large part due to the collection preserved at Saint-Quentin, the impact of which on so many artists and writers (see CRITICAL FORTUNE) has given them a legendary status. La Tour's own view of them may be inferred from the fact that some (e.g. J.46.2237 or J.46.1359) were made on sheets that had already been used for another purpose, at a time when he was already financially secure and had no need to economise on materials.

La Tour's approach to his sittings was foreshadowed a century earlier, in an age preoccupied with spirituality, by Nanteuil's insistence on psychological penetration of his

[93] Lord Coventry, J.46.1565, appears to be the exception, but this may be a later inscription. Both it and Jean Monnet J.46.2377 have labels attached to the *verso* which appear to be autograph.

[94] Diderot poses the question "Pourquoi une belle esquisse nous plaît-elle plus qu'un tableau?" in the Salon de 1767, in relation to sketches by Hubert Robert, but his analysis is equally applicable here.

subjects. La Tour's legendary ability to explore his subjects' souls was described by many authors: his most widely quoted *mot* about his sitters in fact seems to have been invented by Louis-Sébastien Mercier:[95]

> Ils croyent que je ne saisis que les traits de leur visage; mais je descends au fond d'eux-mêmes à leur insu, & je les remporte toute entiers.

In the review of his obituary in the *Année littéraire*,[96] the anonymous author mentioned that–

> tandis qu'il ne semble occupé qu'à saisir la ressemblance de ses modèles, sa conversation vive, animée, spirituelle, charme l'ennui de l'attitude, et l'ame est peinte sur la toile avec autant d'énergie que les traits du visage.

The process in relation to one portrait, that of Belle de Zuylen (Mme de Charrière) which La Tour undertook on his trip to The Netherlands in 1766, is unfolded not only in his own letters but those of the sitter herself. La Tour worked, not in Slot Zuylen, but Groenesteyn nearby (the property of Belle's uncle) where Belle went each morning for a three-hour session (nevertheless her copy, J.22.101, of his portrait of her, J.46.1482, is rudimentary). La Tour engaged her attention through his lively and witty conversation. After a month however he was still having difficulty with the eyes: he abandoned the first version of the portrait, and made another (presumably that now in Geneva). The first préparation, J.46.1487, which came to light only in 2015, gives some indication of what was lost in the Geneva pastel. La Tour made another préparation five years later, in Paris, but no finished portrait seems to have emerged.

There are few other descriptions of La Tour at work, setting aside the anecdotes discussed below: but Diderot's account (Salon de 1767) described more sober behaviour than his reputation might lead us to expect:

> J'ai vu peindre La Tour, il est tranquille et froid; il ne se tourmente point; il ne souffre point, il ne se halète point, il ne fait aucune de ses contorsions du modeleur enthousiaste, sur le visage duquel on voit se succéder les images qu'il se propose de rendre, et qui semblent passer de son âme sur son front et de son front sur la terre ou sur sa toile. Il n'imite point les gestes du furieux; il n'a point le sourcil relevé de l'homme qui dédaigne le regard de sa femme qui s'attendrit; il ne s'extasie point, il ne sourit point à son travail, il reste froid, et cependant son imitation est chaude.

The palette in his finished portraits was somewhat conventional, the predominant colours being pinks, blues, greys and whites; colour, while often bold, is always controlled. Typically blue hatching is used on temples and jowls. Often La Tour adds linear, zig-zag highlights of directly applied strokes over patches of stumped colour, providing apparently spontaneous touches of sheer brilliance whose effects derive from the optical reflection characteristics of pastel (to borrow William Empson's phrase, "The careless ease always goes in last"). His unrivalled mastery of the textures of the human face, fabrics and accessories in no way detracted from the overall conception or psychological penetration of his finished works; balance is always maintained.

Lighting in the finished works is subtle (but almost always from high, on the left), frequently using the technique he learnt from Restout of "faire tourner une tête et à faire circuler l'air entre la figure et le fond en reflétant le côté éclairé sur le fond, et le fond sur le côté ombré" (*v.* §I.4 *supra*). Backgrounds are usually of graded darkness, without accessories; but in a few of his more important pastels, overcast skies are shown, and in several others an outdoor landscape is seen in an opening in the upper right.

For Caravagisme, *v.* §II.4 *infra*.

II.2 Resemblance

During the eighteenth century a fundamental requirement of all portraiture was resemblance. Theories of aesthetics promoted by Roger de Piles, Charles Batteux and Jean-Baptiste du Bos all equated beauty with verisimilitude, the perfect imitation of nature which would make the same impression on viewers as the object depicted would have done. Obtaining a good likeness before the advent of photography was unselfconsciously a clear, specific and even contractual requirement – disputes about artists' success filled the Châtelet, including several where La Tour himself served as expert. It was also the quality most widely praised in relation to his own portraiture: the word "ressemblance" is found some forty times in contemporary salon critiques of his submissions. We can assess this today only indirectly, by comparison with others' portraits of the same sitters where they exist (the entries in the catalogue try to list the more important examples), in various media (as mentioned above, many of La Tour's sitters overlapped with those of Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne); and also, in a few cases, the internal consistency within La Tour's œuvre on the rare occasions where he has made different portraits of the same sitter (rather than repetitions of the same image).

La Tour's ability to offer a persuasive icon can often conceal a remarkable departure from what others saw: there is so much life in, and so much consistency between, the two portraits of Maurice de Saxe (J.46.2865 and J.46.2892) that we immediately conclude that this is what the soldier really looked like. We note too the cases where La Tour seems to have imposed what might seem like genetic characteristics from one sitter (maybe even his own) on another (e.g. Voltaire). That Lord Coventry J.46.1565 looks like de Saxe J.46.2865, and Lady Coventry J.46.1567 like La Camargo J.46.1386, can only partly be explained by the brevity of their sittings in Paris.

Perhaps the most important example of La Tour's difficulty in obtaining a likeness (or at least one that is found in other artists' work) is that of Mme de Pompadour J.46.2541, discussed at length in Jeffares 2019e, where surprising differences are found with a consensus derived from her rich iconography.

[95] Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, 1781, I, p. 256f; éd. 1783, pp. 101f; see also *Almanach littéraire, ou Étrennes d'Apollon*, 1782, p. 76. It has since been very widely quoted (usually unsourced), notably by the Goncourts.

[96] This review of Duplaquet's *Éloge* appeared in the revived *Année littéraire*, VIII, 1789, pp. 318–29; and was reprinted in *L'Esprit des journaux, françois et étrangers*, XIX/3, .III.1790, p. 90.

La Tour's own difficulties with the portraits of Belle de Charrière are discussed in several places. Yet another example is that of Marie Fel, where the differences between the two portraits are so great that the identity of the larger portrait J.46.1763 has been questioned (despite the evidence of her brother's score as an accessory). It is arguable that La Tour had particular difficulty with female portraits, which occupy a smaller part of his output than they do with artists such as Nattier.

On the other hand, the portrait of the abbé Pommyer J.46.2518 is a good example where La Tour's image fits well into a series of portraits made by different artists over the course of some 60 years (see Jeffares 2001). Only the disagreement over eye colour surprises (art historians often attach too much importance to this as an invariant trait when considering the identification of sitters: even among La Tour's own self-portraits there is considerable variation in how they appear).

II.3 Compositions

If La Tour's handling of the chalks was varied, the same cannot be said of his compositions, to which the critics of the 1748 Salon objected as surprisingly (and boringly) uniform for an artist of such talent. When he departed from the portraitist's standard three-quarters bust, he repeated his ideas: Marie Fel J.46.1763, Mme de Mondonville J.46.1423 and Mlle Ferrand J.46.1798 display an idée fixe that reappears against very different accessories. Roussel J.46.282 and Philippe J.46.2508 are almost identically posed, as are Coventry J.46.1565 and the Jacquemart-André inconnu J.46.3192. While many portraitists re-used successful poses for different clients, La Tour was not above doing so in public, even for prestigious clients: Marie-Josèphe de Saxe, in the pastel exhibited in 1761, holds her fan in exactly the same way as her mother-in-law shown in 1748 (thus unusual poses offer no assistance in chronology).[97] His restraint may have been intentional: La Tour is supposed to have said: "Il faut semer un tableau d'effets et non pas l'en paver."[98]

There is a good deal of discussion in recent literature, deriving ultimately from La Tour's own account in his letter to Marigny, of the question of distance between the artist and sitter. La Tour needed to sit a couple of feet from his subjects (presumably because of his myopia – *v.* §I.13 *supra*), but this caused him problems with perspective and even the disturbing fact that the sitters' eyes no longer seemed to be looking in the same direction.

Evidencing the care the artist took with his poses are the radical alterations he occasionally made to the figures' orientation: see the discussion about secondary supports below.

La Tour (aside from two juvenile copies after Rosalba) never embraced the mythological genre of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries such as Nattier or Hubert Drouais: the abbé Gougenot (1748, p. 115), applauding the demise of historical or pastoral garb, suggests "On en est redevable à M. de la Tour, qui le premier s'est fait une regle de peindre ses Portraits avec les habits ordinaires." It is perhaps curious then that La Tour showed (according to Diderot, *Salon de 1763*) so much interest in the two Mengs pastels of L'Innocence J.53.292 and Le Plaisir J.53.297 when he saw them at dinner with the baron d'Holbach. Apart from the legendary confrontation with Perronneau, there is very little other information about La Tour's views on contemporary pastellists.

II.4 Larger compositions

La Tour made a number of ambitious portraits en pied, enriched with accessories and backgrounds which have attracted much attention (not least because scholars enjoy the puzzles they set). In some of these larger compositions errors of perspective are evident, a deficiency of which La Tour himself was well aware: he alludes to it in the postscript to his letter to d'Angiviller of 4.VII.1778. It has been suggested[99] that the complex array of chalk lines found in some of these – most notably the Dauphine et son fils J.46.2259, but also the président de Rieux J.46.2722 – were made not with a view to transfer for copies or engravings, nor even for transfer from preparatory drawings, but to verify "l'échelle de perspective", a technique apparently practised by Restout.

That difficulty may account for certain choices in the compositions. For example, although many of his sitters were musicians, their instruments rarely appear – and those that do often reveal the weakness. Dumont le Romain's guitar in J.46.1677 and its body sides are the only error in this great masterpiece. The ribs of Mondonville's violin betray the same difficulty in both versions, J.46.1414 and J.46.1415, despite being partly corrected in the latter. But it is the problems with Mme de Mondonville's clavecin in all versions that are most instructive. Firstly La Tour does not attempt to show her with either of the double-keyboard instruments she is known to have owned. (Other artists may well have been intimidated by the issues: Duplessis's Gluck and the painting it inspired, Vigée Le Brun's Paisiello, resort to obscured keyboards, depicting their composers in a state of divine inspiration; but Nattier rose to the challenge, in the group portrait of his own

[97] The dauphine's pose may however have been an intentional tribute to her mother-in-law.

[98] Quoted in a theatrical review by PJ in *L'Artiste*, XIV, 1837, p. 135, the original source unknown.

[99] See Hoisington 2016, p. 119, n.133, citing Gouzi 2000, p. 146, and also Nancy Yocco's acquisition condition report on de Rieux for the Getty (17.IV.1994).

family, as well as in the pastel of Pancrace Royer.) La Tour's attempt betrays two weaknesses: the spacing of the sharp keys, which should be in alternate groups of 3 and 2 (J.46.1423 comes closest, the other versions incoherent); and the perspective of the keyboard which requires a precise solution that works for the orthogonal sets of hard lines. In J.46.1423, the top of the instrument and the line of the keys recede, the angle of convergence is a little too large: but in J.46.1427, what may have been an attempt to correct this minor issue has resulted in the receding lines actually diverging, quite incorrectly.

Huber J.46.1902, Duval de l'Épinoy J.46.1724 and Perrinet de Jars J.46.2482 are perhaps precursors, but the monumental portraits of the président de Rieux J.46.2722 and Mme de Pompadour J.46.2541 are on a scale of their own, exceeded (in ambition thought not in physical scale) by the portrait of the dauphine and her son J.46.2259 (and that unfinished, perhaps because he lost interest) – La Tour's only foray into the territory of group portraits with multiple figures. These were rare in French eighteenth century portraiture; but, although also unusual in their output, both Perronneau and Liotard found the challenge more interesting. Although the significance of each accessory in these monumental pastels has been analysed widely, questions remain, both with Mme de Pompadour and with Marie-Josèphe de Saxe et son fils – notably to what extent the interiors shown were real, and how much made up, or inventively combined, by La Tour himself. Did he for example change the colour scheme of apartments in Versailles from white and gold to the pale blue-green we see here simply because it worked better visually with the medium he was using?[100]

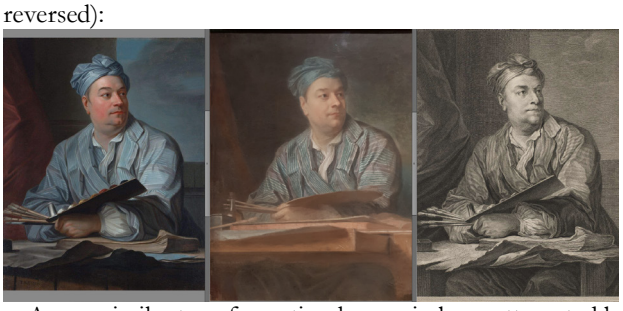
La Tour also made far fewer pendants than most of his contemporaries: for the painter of the bourgeoisie, the marriage portraits of husband and wife were bread and butter, but the painter of celebrity disdained the convention. Mondonville J.46.1412 and his wife J.46.1422 were made six years apart. The Roussel pendants (J.46.282 and J.46.2821) were better balanced than the Grimods (J.46.1867 and J.46.188), where the artist seems to have conceived of two individual portraits without thinking through the difference in scale.

One feature that was widely prevalent in eighteenth century portraiture was the stone oculus. A hangover from the seventeenth century print, La Tour employed it with irony in the 1737 self-portrait "à l'œil de bœuf" – but he never used it again. In contrast, Perronneau used it frequently in pastels from around 1757, when it must already have seemed retrospective, and he continued to use it into the 1780s. While other artists turned to oval frames as an alternative solution to the aesthetic question of how to fill the corners in a rectangular portrait, La Tour never felt this need, confident in his ability to light the face and draw the eye away from the problem (see Frames, *infra*).

La Tour's compositions rarely sought the dramatic effects of baroque art. Exceptions include the unusual poses on chairs – Dupouch (1739), J.46.1693, Huber J.46.1902, and Laideguive J.46.1969 all hint at *sprezzatura* rather than the theatre that Coypel sought. (Laideguive perhaps even hints at Frans Hals's 1626 portrait of Isaac Abrahamsz. Massa, a pose the painter himself repeated on a number of occasions.) The carefully sectioned hands in Frère Fiacre J.46.1803 and Marguerite Le Comte J.46.2005 may however allude to the portrait prints of the previous century with their fourth wall effects achieved with billowing mantles flowing over ledges.

The Louvre pastel of Dumont le Romain J.46.1681 was engraved by Flipart probably c.1770, just before it was borrowed by La Tour to "improve" it, and probably at the same time as Moitte engraved the pastel of Restout J.46.2687 which he was to present as his morceau de réception in 1771. Both prints have similar wording of the inscriptions, and it seems likely La Tour's attention was focused on what he regarded as their deficiencies during the engraving procedures.

There are extensive differences which provide fascinating information about La Tour's concerns. We can dismiss any suggestion that these were the whims of the engraver since the print matches closely the oil copy made in 1756 by the Polish artist Tadeusz Kuntze.[101] The effect of these differences, notably in the table, is radically to change to viewpoint to provide a *di sotto in sù* perspective (unique in the œuvre) which served to make the portrait both more intimate and more reverential (here Kuntze/La Tour/Flipart reversed):



A very similar transformation has again been attempted by La Tour on the Restout, where once again the accuracy of Moitte's 1771 engraving can be measured by its correspondence with the Kuntze copy of 1756:

Here it is harder to work out what La Tour wanted to do or why. There seems little logic in rounding the corners of the canvas on the easel. The destruction of the elaborate patterns in the textiles seems particularly regrettable, if presumably unintentional. But the most significant alteration is the transformation of the portfolio into a table whose baize covering drapes over the sitter's legs and transforms this three-quarter length portrait into a more intimate and personal half-length. The distant monuments to Pompadour and de Rieux are dismantled for these friends.

Some authors have related various of La Tour's self-portraits to the prevailing interest in Rembrandt in early eighteenth century French art. In fact the most striking parallel is less with either the autoportrait à l'index J.46.1001 or

[100] Green it seems was the dauphin's favourite colour: see Émilie Szymski, *Les Appartements du Dauphin Louis-Ferdinand, fils de Louis XV et de la Dauphine Marie-Josèphe de Saxe au château de Compiègne, 1737–1766*, École du Louvre, thesis, 2014, p. 86 *& passim*.

[101] See Jeffares 2021f. Karpowicz 1966 went unnoticed including by me until after my essay was posted. His account of the substitution is however hard to follow.

even the autoportrait au chapeau en clabaud J.46.1087 than with the portraits he made incorporating ledges: those of Mme Boucher J.46.1328 exhibited in 1737 (at least if we accept J.46.133 as a guide to its composition) and the very similar portraits[102] in the next two years Mlle de La Fontaine Solare J.46.2926 and Mme Restout J.46.2708. All of these clearly relate to the famous Rembrandt Girl at a window (1645; Dulwich Picture Gallery), known as La Crasseuse in France.[103] Its trompe-l'œil realism was described enthusiastically by its quondam owner, Roger de Piles, and again (in similar terms) by Blondel d'Azincourt, in his 1749 manuscript[104] *Première idée de la curiosité*, just after his father had purchased it:

> RIMBRANT a fait des choses surprenantes. Un jour il peignit sa servant que l'on appelle La Crasseuse (elle est actuellement (en 1749) chez Mr Blondel de Gagni avec L'enfant prodigue de Teniers et nombre d'excellens morceaux flamans dans une collection de choix de goût et de grande dépense), elle est appuyée sur la tablette d'une fenetre et ayant fait son tableau de la meme grandeur que sa croisée il la plaça de façon que les voisins firent pluseurs questions a cette figure tant elle imitoit parfaitement la nature. On ne s'apercut de cette qu'en voiant deux ou trois jours de suite la servante dans la même situation.

La Tour probably saw it (along with the Rosalba he copied, J.46.3788) when it belonged to the comte de Morville: it was one of "deux têtes de Rembrandt" in his inventaire of 1732. The immediate impact of the composition is seen in Louis Vigée's 1744 pastel of his mother J.758.375, evidently dressed to repeat the composition, but inverted and so probably after the print.[105]

The portrait of abbé Huber lisant J.46.1902 is also a conscious tribute to what is called Rembrandtisme. The sole example of a candlelit scene, its caravaggisme may have been rehearsed in the clever adaptation of a Rubens painting of the Magus Gaspard into the Saint-Quentin Diogène J.46.3785, holding a lantern in place of the bowl of gold; the lighting effects are not fully adjusted. We know too that the pastellist had some early exposure to his namesake's work: the Saint-Quentin copy J.46.3774 he made of one of the musicians in Georges de La Tour's *La rixe de musiciens* (Getty) which was in Paris before 1750.[106]

The autoportrait à la toque d'atelier J.46.1101 continues this tradition via Rigaud.

II.5 Accessories

While a handful of La Tour's most important compositions include elaborate background details, and others include oudoor skies, many have completely plain, graded areas. These smaller portraits are not however entirely free from accessories, contrary to some critics' suggestion. A number include chairs, which were presumably studio props, and if so may assist in dating the works. The most famous is the humble slat-backed chair for Rousseau, but that was clearly selected for this client alone. The other chairs are mostly upholstered in red or blue damask. That in Dupouch (1739), J.46.1693, with its lightly undulating top and double row of tacks, probably reappears in the Aix homme au livre J.46.2817, also from the late 1730s. A reasonably plain carved wood back appears in Nollet (1753), J.46.2424, as well as in the primary version of Pommyer J.46.2518. (The chair is omitted in the studio *riccordo* of Pommyer.) A more elaborate decorated giltwood frame seems to be identical in Mme His J.46.1893 and Lady Coventry (1752), J.46.1567.

Four of La Tour's largest pastels include terrestrial globes: Mme de Pompadour's seems to have been her own, but the models in Marie-Josèphe de Saxe et son fils, the président de Rieux and Duval de l'Épinoy seem to be the same. They are open respectively on Europe (France), the Caribbean, Africa and the Atlantic – though with what significance may be debated. Duval's globe (and possibly the others), judging by its size, brass fittings and dotted lines marking the tropics and ecliptic, could be the model supplied by the abbé Nollet in 1728.

Another accessory that seems to take on special significance in La Tour's work is the book, often of music, sometimes handsomely bound (Orry J.46.2431, with his arms prominently displayed: the bibliophile), in the process of actually being read (uniquely, abbé Huber J.46.1902), or being immediately reflected upon (Mlle Ferrand J.46.1798: the savante, or Mme Rouillé J.46.274), or interrupted (the princesse de Rohan J.46.273: the music lover), or furtively consulted ("Mme Louise", the nun J.46.2183, might be expected to be reading a work of devotion rather than a musical score). It can be big (Dumont le Romain J.46.1681) or small (Voltaire J.46.31); open (Laideguive J.46.1969) or with just a finger holding a place (Orry J.46.2431). Mme Rouillé J.46.274 and the abbé Huber J.46.1902 have additional books in piles; Mme de Pompadour J.46.2541 has them in neat upright rows and flat on the table; the président de Rieux J.46.2722 has paper book marks to show that his volumes are in use. Mlle Sallé's J.46.2842 are still in the book case, practically invisible – but nothing in a La Tour portrait is unseen (except, nearly, the folio in veau fauve, edge on, hidden behind the bust of Louis XV leaning on the mirror – and so unseen twice – in the Dauphine and her son, J.46.2259).

Many of the volumes are dog's-eared: this visually gives the illusion of reality, while symbolically denoting the directness of the sitter's engagement; these are working materials, not unopened presentation volumes for show alone. We know that La Tour himself was presented with books by Paradis de Moncrif[107] and Rousseau (*v. supra*). While Mlle Ferrand's copy of Newton has been adapted by La Tour from the real edition (as he similarly enlarges some of Mme de Pompadour's volumes to give them greater visual presence), his depiction of the score in Marie Fel's copy of her brother's seventh cantatille is similarly reduced. The earliest example is probably the famous 1735 portrait of Voltaire J.46.31, possibly at the sitter's request. The parade of intellectuality in Mme de Pompadour was too much for one critic (Pierre Estève 1755b), who thought such distractions in a "portrait d'un Philosophe" inappropriate in the representation of "une belle

[102] And presumably also Mme de Laleu (J.46.1975), which may relate to what appears to be a pastiche, J.9.6183.

[103] The provenance is confused in early accounts; *v.* the Rembrandt database on rkd.nl [accessed 6.VI.2021].

[104] INHA, MS 34, fos 17–18; unpublished (omitted from Colin Bailey's partial transcription, *The art bulletin*, .IX.1987, LXIX/3, pp. 431–47).

[105] The exact date of Surugue's engraving of Mlle de La Fontaine Solare is uncertain, although it was catalogued in 1751; it is however in the opposite sense to the La Tour pastel.

[106] Rosenberg 2004 traced it to the 14.IV.1750 sale by the widow of Pierre d'Hariague; it was not specifically listed in his 1735 inventaire (perhaps it was one of the undecribed genre pictures), but may well have been on the Paris art market in the 1730s.

[107] A volume of Moncrif bearing a dedication to La Tour is in the musée Antoine-Lécuyer (inv. LT 96), along with an inkwell, LT 95, both said to have belonged to La Tour when presented to the library of the École gratuite on 3.XII.1928 (Délibérations, p. 196) by Jules Hachet, who had had them since 1868. Another volume presented by Moncrif to La Tour is known.

femme". Modern critics[108] have taken the opposite line, suggesting that showing Mme de Mondonville displaying rather than performing her music (or Ferrand contemplating rather than calculating, or Pompadour with but not engaged in her various attributes) was somehow demeaning or gendered (even if M. de Mondonville also holds rather than plays his violin).

Of course La Tour was not the first to show his sitters with books, but while sitters in portraits by Rigaud (Robert de Cotte, Bossuet etc.) rest their hands on closed books whose significance is symbolic, La Tour shows his readers in a more intimate engagement with their volumes. They are, in the sense explored by Michael Fried in his seminal 1980 monograph *Absorption and theatricality*, absorbed in their books. Fried relates this activity primarily to the "age of Diderot", *viz.* the 1750s on, but acknowledges (p. 195) La Tour's abbé Huber J.46.1902 as an earlier example, harking back to Rembrandt and other seventeenth century masters.

At least 20 La Tour pastels have books or scores (not counting repetitions or copies). For comparison, in Perronneau's pastels, although half a dozen show artists holding porte-crayons with portfolios of drawings, Noverre is the only sitter with a large volume (it may be a book or a portfolio, but is presumably a score); the oil of Perronneau's brother reading stands alone in the œuvre. Liotard, who employs accessories more readily than either, has fewer than half a dozen pastels with books, and an equal number with letters. By contrast La Tour never includes pet animals (apart from dogs), and avoids over-used devices such as the "Au Roy" letter much favoured by jobbing portraitists of the period. The implication is clear enough: La Tour is the painter of the intellect, of minds that are at home among the volumes that epitomise their interests.

II.6 Faces and intelligence

Even when not explicitly bibliocentric an even rarer quality of La Tour's portraits is their ability to capture, or at least convey, the sitter's intelligence. When Beaucousin in his commentary on the 1769 salon compared La Tour to Pascal, the analogy resonated[109] precisely because La Tour's clarity offered an objective correlative of this quality:

> [La Tour] est, selon moi, en peinture, ce qu'est Paschal en diction. Comme celui-ci rend la pensée aussi pure, aussi lumineuse, aussi sublime qu'il l'a conçue; celui-là représente l'objet nettement, fidélement, identiquement tel qu'il l'a voulu peindre.

It is notable that Lavater[110] chose a La Tour pastel (of Paradis de Moncrif J.46.2437) to illustrate this, adding this commentary:

> Es ist kein Mensch, kein Menschenbemerker, der dieß Gesicht leicht in die Klasse der Dummköpfe verweisen wird. Den feinen Weltmann, den Mann von Geschmack wird niemand weder in dem ganzen Geschichte, niemand im Blick, in der Nase besonders, auch mit in dem Munde verkennen.

In the first French translation[111] (1781), the text was rather freely embellished:

> Les grâces de l'Original ne se retrouvent pas dans cette copie, cependant on reconnoît dans la forme du front, dans l'extrémité de l'os au dessus de l'œil droit, dans l'obliquité & la pointe du nez – une expression de goût & de délicatesse – Mais il faut en convenir, la Nature en formant ce visage, annonçoit une plus haute destination que celle de produire des Ouvrages de pur agrément.

Much discussed, particularly among later critics, is La Tour's use of the smile. Sometimes he went too far, as when Gautier-Dagoty 1753b questioned the "affectations de joye" of Manelli. In a way this sits oddly with La Tour's focus on intelligence: in other artists' hands the two can be contradictory. Arguably the 1737 autoportrait à l'index also breaks the boundary between intelligent benevolence and the Abderitan stupidity implied by the later description of the artist as Democritus, as discussed above.

From Champfleury to Matisse, La Tour's smiles have defied analysis: are they the essence of his portraiture, or are they artificial betrayals? Gombrich[112] contrasted his approach with Roger de Piles's advice to painters which emphasised that "when the sitter puts on a smiling air, the eyes close": La Tour defied this, leaving the eyes open:

> And yet the very combination of slightly contradictory features, of a serious gaze with a shadow of a smile results in a subtle instability, an expression hovering between the pensive and the mocking that both intrigues and fascinates. True, the game is not without its risk, and this perhaps explains the degree to which the effect froze into a formula in the eighteenth century portraits of polite society.

Perhaps this is just an example of what was aptly termed "the smile of reason" by Kenneth Clark in a chapter on Enlightenment art in which La Tour is mentioned only for portraying female salonnières "without flattery, but with a penetrating eye for their subtlety of mind."[113] But La Tour's focus is significantly different from that of his contemporary rivals.

La Tour is also the master of showing (often in only the tiniest glimpse) teeth, a phenomenon in eighteenth century portraiture that has received some attention recently. There are many smiles with visible teeth in earlier portraiture, from Boucher to Perronneau and Mme Roslin, but as Colin Jones[114] notes, La Tour made "numerous subtly animated portraits, in which the teeth floated tantalisingly in and out of

[108] Goodman 2000 and others.

[109] Perhaps even with La Tour himself: he refers to "Paschal" in his 6.XI.1770 letter to Vernet written the following year.

[110] Johann Caspar Lavater, *Physiognomische Fragmente*, ed. J. M. Armbruster, Winterthur, 1783, I, p. 60.

[111] Johann Caspar Lavater, *Essai sur la physiognomonie*, translated Caillard & al., The Hague, 1781, I, p. 230.

[112] E. H. Gombrich, "The mask and the face…", in *Art, perception and reality*, Baltimore, 1972, p. 21. See CRITICAL FORTUNE.

[113] *Civilisation*, London, 1969, p. 251f; see CRITICAL FORTUNE for the full passage. It is unlikely that Clark referred to previous English uses of the phrase (in an 1856 poem by Ralph Waldo Emerson or in a 1783 verse paraphrase of Horace by the Rev. Dr John Duncan), but he may have been aware of Jean-Raoul Carré's 1932 monograph on *La Philosophie de Fontenelle: ou, Le Sourire de la raison* – perhaps an allusion to the phrase in a 1796 éloge de La Fontaine by J. de Sales. In the television series, Clark discusses Fontenelle as he introduces the phrase, and accompanies it with half a dozen La Tour pastels.

[114] Colin Jones, *The smile revolution in eighteenth century Paris*, Oxford, 2014, p. 130 *& passim*.

focus". He brackets the dental exposure in his Democritian self-portrait J.46.1007 with those by "odd-ball artists" such as Liotard and Ducreux. In fact a much more subtle example is the portrait of Duval de l'Épinoy J.46.1724 where La Tour employs a trick whose magic is only revealed *de visu*: it does not work from a photograph, however high the resolution. As the pastel is approached, the expression suddenly changes – at a distance of about one metre – from a wry, quizzical, almost cynical ambiguity, to one of pure pleasure. This is effected by the inclusion of the sitter's two top front teeth in the slightly opened mouth: they are virtually, but not completely, invisible in the pastel, but are not perceptible at a distance or in reproduction. Among other examples are Mmes Dangeville J.46.1595;"Graffigny" J.46.1855; Le Comte J.46.2004; Inconnue no. 2 J.46.3415; Paris de Montmartel J.46.2451; Roussel J.46.282; and of course Manelli J.46.2202. The trick was used by other artists – notably by Vigée Le Brun, one of whose hallmarks it became, but never with quite so much subtlety.

Other authors[115] have emphasised La Tour's capture of the momentary by focusing on soft tissue rather than bone structure, the sparkle in the eye of particular importance (as can be seen in the dead effect of some preparations when the catchlights are omitted); the sense of movement can be intensified by slight facial asymmetries. Both ideas reinforce the view that character itself is mobile and transient.

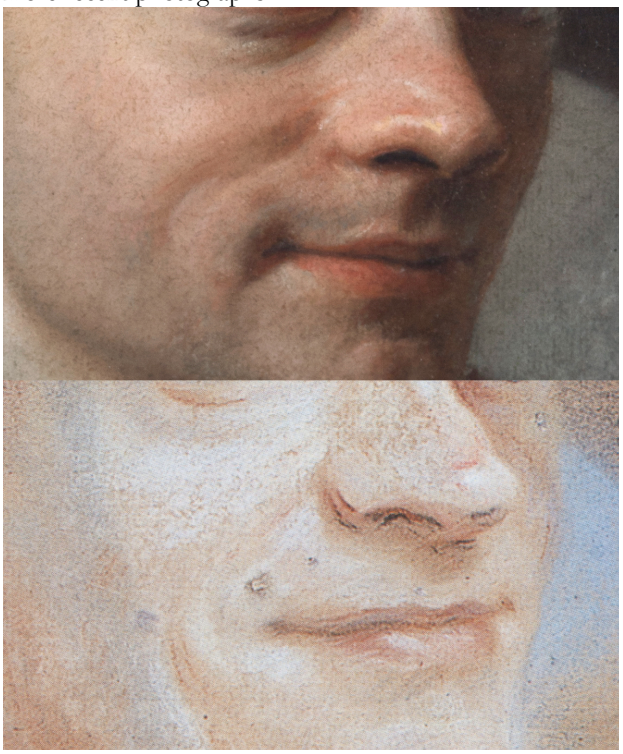
II.7 Finish

La Tour eschewed the extreme deconstructionist approach evident in Chardin and Perronneau, but the degree to which his hatching is allowed to remain visible ranged widely from the smooth, "caressée" style of the duc de Villars to the brutal Davidian style which is "plus soucieuse de vérité que de charme" (Ratouis de Limay). Indeed it is La Tour's portrait of Chardin that exhibits an extreme case of the bold hatching (a decade before Chardin himself produced the pastels that made this technique famous): a Louvre conservation report of 1943 attributed the appearance to lead-white restorations which had oxidised combined with rubbing which had revealed underdrawing, and dismissed the work as beyond repair. In another example, from 1757, the white strokes on the face and highlights on the embroidered gilet use lead white for particular brilliance. But this range does not seem to correspond with specific periods in his career, and is even found in works done at the same time ("M. de La Tour, qui observe mieux la nature, ... varie comme elle" according to the abbé Le Blanc reviewing the 11 quite different submissions to the 1747 Salon), thus providing little assistance with the dating of his works, which (other than by relation to salons or other external points) remains exceptionally difficult.

In the 1746 Salon, for example, his portraits of Restout J.46.2687 and Montmartel J.46.2448 were contrasted: the first, intended for connoisseurs, used deliberate hatching; while the universal appeal of the second was due to a more finished effect. One notes that La Tour later retrieved Restout to rework it (*v. infra*), and the version of Montmartel from the Salon has not surivived.

The contrasted techniques are well illustrated by the pastels of Chardin and Louis XV in the Louvre:

The differences between the tight and free handling in two autoportraits, J.46.1101 and J.46.1096, are also illustrated[116] in Moreau-Vauthier 1913, the juxtaposition here recreated with more recent photographs:



The point is also discussed in the article on "Finir", in the *Encyclopédie* (VI, 1756, p. 818, signed Paul Landois):

> FINIR, v. act. désigne *en Peinture* un tableau où il n'y a rien d'indécis, & dont toutes les parties sont bien arrêtées. Il se dit aussi quelquefois d'une façon de peindre, où l'on n'apperçoit pas les coups du pinceau ou touches qui forment les objets. Un tableau peut être extrèmement *fini*, & néanmoins fort mauvais. On dit, ce peintre seroit excellent s'il *finissoit* davantage ses tableaux: c'est un grand génie, mais il ne *finit* rien.

The critic Baillet de Saint-Julien explained at some length why the use of deliberate hatching (by both La Tour and Perronneau) designed to be seen at some distance was justified in the imitation of nature, in much the same way as a dramatist would exaggerate emotions in the theatre. By the Salon of 1753, 17 of the 18 pastels shown displayed a new style, according to the critic Pierre Estève, in that their colours were not fully blended, and had to be viewed at a distance; this seems just to have been a development of the tendency already observed in earlier salons, and the objection was dismissed as imaginary by another critic who argued that any differences reflected the diversity of La Tour's subjects.

[115] Notably Percival 1999, p. 86f.

[116] Moreau-Vauthier 1913, pl. xii, opp. p. 104.

In his 1769 critique, Beaucousin praised the pastels of Perronneau "quoique le Faire de l'Artiste y disparoisse moins entièrement que dans l'exécution de M. de la Tour."

By the time of the *Encyclopédie méthodique* (I, 1788, p. 471) the article by Levesque on "Léché" decries excessive polish as for "le peintre…toujours petit & minutieux", who thereby distances himself from the natural; the article cites Sir Joshua Reynolds with approval.

III. TECHNICAL ASPECTS

For general information on the materials and methods of the eighteenth century pastel, the discussion in my PROLEGOMENA provides a broad context within which there are many references to La Tour. Some of this material is summarised below.

III.1 Scientific investigations

Only a limited amount of information about pastel pigments and materials has so far been collected by modern scientific analysis. Among the papers specifically analysing La Tour pastels are Shelley 2005, which examined in detail the Met. Garnier d'Isle, J.46.1827; Pilc & White 1995, where Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) was applied to a La Tour pastel (Dawkins J.46.1612); and Gombaud & al. 2017, which investigated pastels by La Tour (the princesse de Rohan J.46.273 and Voltaire J.46.3121) using photography (within and beyond the visual spectrum), as well as FTIR and Raman spectroscopy and enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) which requires microsamples from the works and is therefore not widely used. Inspection with infrared (IR) or ultraviolet (UV) light is rarely as informative as it can be for oil painting (where restorations painted over varnish show up as darker areas in UV); but UV can show the presence of lead white (used by many eighteenth century pastellists, including on occasion La Tour), which fluoresces white in UV.

A number of these techniques were used by Brunel-Duverger & al. 2023 to study three La Tour pastels in Saint-Quentin (J.46.1766, J.46.1903 and J.46.2082), applying the non-invasive techniques used in the previous studies on Liotard's work by Gombaud and Sauvage: they combine x-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF) with reflectance imaging spectroscopy in the visible and near infrared range (VNIR-RIS), fibre optic reflectance spectrsocopy (FORS) in the short-wave infrared SWIR and Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) in the mid-infrared range.

It is hard to draw firm conclusions from the small samples studied so far, and the database of pigment and other material information so far available for eighteenth century pastels remains too small to form a basis for attribution or exclusion.

III.2 Materials

Paper

In common with most contemporary pastellists, La Tour used paper as the primary support for his pastels and préparations. (But even this preference was not rigid, as it has recently emerged that at least one[117] of the pastels in Saint-Quentin is on parchment which La Tour was previously thought never to have used.) The papers used were not the highly sized smooth papers intended for writing, but more coarsely finished and lightly sized sheets intended for wrapping. They were made from rags, usually blue (of a light blue–grey shade derived from indigo), but occasionally brown (brown is often reported where the original blue has become discoloured); neutral grey, buff and whitish brown papers were also available made from mixed fibres. Sometimes exposure to light has obscured the evidence, but for finished pastels mounted on a strainer the sides usually provide reliable evidence of the original colour.

All such paper was hand made, on frames which left regular patterns of chain and laid lines; La Tour rubbed these down (as well as imperfections such as knots and creases), leaving an irregular network of loose fibres which were excellent for holding pastel without leaving a distracting grid pattern. Either the "felt side" or the "wire side" (the later taking the impression from the metal mould frame directly leaving more prominent marks) might be used; La Tour mostly preferred the former, so that chain lines re harder to detect (and are then not reported in the catalogue entries). Constant de Massoul noted that La Tour used a "blue Dutch paper". John Russell, in the 2nd edition of his *Elements* (1777, p. 21: see TREATISES), added a curious footnote, suggesting that "Le Tour" [*sic*] ("lately a Painter of note in Paris" – this was 1777) often used "with great success" smalt grounds, prepared by strewing smalt dust over paper brushed with gum water, brushed to remove any loose particles when dry.

Show-through from a bright blue support was at least a question in theory, although it is debatable whether this was really a problem where the whole sheet is usually covered with opaque pastel. Nevertheless La Tour described[118] an experiment in treating his paper with yellow ochre mixed with egg yolk to facilitate the elimination of show-through of the blue colour:

> mettre avec une brosse une légère teinture d'ocre jaune à l'eau simple, bien délayée ensemble avec un peu de jaune d'œuf sur du papier bleu; cela empêche le lourd qu'il est difficile d'éviter par la quantité de couleurs nécessaires pour couvrir le bleu du papier.

One of the most obvious examples of this is the préparation J.46.149 for his portrait of the recipient of the letter, Belle de Charrière. Other examples included the finished portraits of the princesse de Rohan J.46.273 and Laideguive J.46.1969. The purpose of this procedure was at least in part to reduce the amount of pastel required to cover the paper opaquely: this reduced the amount of salt present in the pastel material, which, being hydrophilic, attracted mould.[119]

Although large sheets of paper were available from early on, it is common among eighteenth century pastels to find two or more smaller sheets joined together on the same strainer. Often[120] this was simply a question of availability of paper of the right finish for anything beyond say 60x50 cm, but La Tour made a particular practice of working on a head on a smaller sheet for convenience, as in the full-length Mme de Pompadour. In that case several layer of paper were applied over a hole in the canvas for reasons that are discussed at length in Jeffares 2019e. Care was required to disguise the joins, usually by a small area of overlap, and to ensure joins did not fall across the face or other areas where they would be particularly noticeable. He also used single sheets on slightly larger mountings as discussed below.

Secondary support

As is explained in the PROLEGOMENA, the classic construction of any eighteenth century pastel is expected to involve the paper being pasted, or "marouflé", on canvas already fixed to a wooden frame known as a strainer (a stretcher, or châssis à clés, in contrast, has moveable keys at

[117] Dachery J.46.1583, identified by Florence Herrenschmidt while conserving the work in 2006.
[118] In a letter to Belle de Charrière, 14.IV.1770.
[119] Gombaud & al. 2017, p. 6.
[120] Burns 2007, pp. 71ff. Several examples were studied in the Los Angeles 2018 exhibition, including La Tour's président de Rieux and Louis XV J.46.207.

the corners allowing it to be expanded to take up lost tension in the canvas: they were rare in the eighteenth century). The purpose of the arrangement goes beyond mere convenience: the tension in the canvas aids the pastellist in getting a "bite" to hold the particles on the paper. (Préparations, on loose sheets, were different.) The paper is affixed to the canvas before work starts, and if large enough is wrapped around the edges of the strainer, creating additional tension when the paste dries. Surprisingly Pilc & White 1995 reported that FTIR "suggests" the marouflage (on Dawkins, J.46.1612) used animal glue; however Townsend 1998 (p. 26f) noted that most historic papers have been sized with animal glue, and it is very difficult to distinguish between this and the paste used to attached the sheet to the canvas. The adhesive may have been a paste from vegetable-derived starch, or the sturgeon glue that was also used in fixatives (*v. infra*), so also causing difficulties in scientific analysis.

La Tour normally uses strainers made quite simply from a light wood such as deal, sometimes with no reinforcement, but often with short diagonal crossbars in the corners, or with horizontal and/or vertical central bars. The carpentry is rarely of high quality. In a few cases (Rousseau J.46.277 and Dachery J.46.1583 in Saint-Quentin: curiously Jean-Francois de La Tour mentions them in his will as having similar frames, raising the possibility that they were both remounted at one stage) he used strainers made in a dark wood (probably oak) with carefully mitred corner crossbars of half the depth of the strainer: either on its own might seem suspicious. Some of the royal pastels now in the Louvre have carefully chamfered battens; but one example (Garnier d'Isle, J.46.1827) still has the tree bark on parts that do not touch the canvas or jeopardise the surface of the pastel. The royal pastels also seem to be executed on canvas of a finer weave than his other work.

An examination of La Tour's supports (those in Saint-Quentin and the Louvre are best documented) shows that he breaks all these rules. As a detailed analysis reveals, it is far from the case that all genuine La Tours will be found on blue paper, marouflé sur toile, still on the original strainer. Several of his early, larger pastels are on keyed stretchers ("châssis à clés"). These include the président de Rieux J.46.2722 which, like Mme de Pompadour, also has several layers of paper over the canvas: in this case that may be required because there is a vertical seam joining two canvases running the whole height of the work, about one-quarter the way through.

In a surprising number of cases, perhaps to effect radical alterations to the figures' orientation, La Tour made additions to the strainers to extend the work (there are a number of examples of Liotard making similar alterations, but few other cases are known). For example,[121] Villars J.46.3087 has had wedge-shaped additions to the strainer allowing the sheet to be rotated clockwise by about 3°, while the primary support for Mme Rouillé J.46.274 has been similarly rotated in the opposite direction. The marquis de Voyer J.46.31441 has an inclined exposed strip at the top suggesting a similar, if more minute, repositioning. A more extreme example, rotated clockwise by about 7°, is the attributed inconnue J.46.2986 known as Mme de Stael. An even greater inclination, again clockwise by about 10°, is shown in the central sheet of Marie Fel J.46.1763; here the back of the chair is no longer horizontal, indicating that the sheet was rotated after the composition was commenced and taken as far as the drawing of the chair, but before the inclusion of the table.

That these rotations are found both in préparations and in finished works, and include some autograph repetitions, suggests that this was not the result of careless start on an unmounted sheet but more likely a deliberate attempt to distract the eye from the mechanical tyranny of the (normally horizontal) paper chain lines which La Tour may have felt were likely to present a visual distraction (just as he had suggested the coat of yellow ochre to reduce see-through).[122]

A surprising number of the La Tour pastels in Saint-Quentin, including some larger works, are found to be mounted on cardboard which must be original (e.g. Frère Fiacre J.46.1803). The arrangement is also found on other La Tour portraits, particularly from the 1730s and 1740s. The sheets are typically 3–5 mm in thickness, and of an indeterminate brownish or grey hue. The construction is so anomalous in eighteenth century practice that some of these examples have been understandably assumed to be later transfers.

In a few cases it is possible the board mounting may not be original – as for example when Dupouch J.46.1694 was unframed for conservation in 2010: however we know from earlier records (e.g. Fleury 1907) that, when it was reglazed in 1897, there was a label (now missing) attached to the châssis, implying that its mounting then was conventionally on a strainer. Another example is the princesse de Rohan J.46.273, discussed by Gombaud 2015; it appears that the work must have been removed from a strained canvas since there were worm holes on the blue paper at the sides testifying to an infestation prior to its remounting on cardboard. Intriguingly some where the paper has been marouflé sur toile have been cut from the original strainers and, at some stage, laid on board with the canvas still attached.

Some of these modifications may have occurred in later campaigns of restoration (or even just in reframing), but it is suggested that some may have been done by La Tour himself for glass encapsulation (explained in Fixing, *infra*), which subsequent conservators may have removed, replacing the glass backing with cardboard or a new strainer.

That La Tour was responsible for at least some of these non-standard assemblies (e.g. direct mounting on cardboard) is arguably evidenced by the mention in his 1768 will, bequeathing to several artists "touttes mes études qui ne seront pas sous verre ou glace et qui ne sont pas colléz sur des cartons ou des toilles" – but the mention of "cartons" might only refer to smaller préparations executed on loose sheets.

La Tour pastels seem to show these anomalies far more frequently than genuine work by his rivals, and what would often be taken as indications of inauthenticity in their work should be assessed with caution with his. In short some of the simplest tools for identifying fakes are unreliable in La Tour's case.

Underdrawing

It is generally very hard to obtain information about underdrawing in pastels from the techniques used to analyse oil paintings: this is due to the opacity of the top layers of pastel and the likelihood that underdrawing would have used white chalk invisible to IR photography or indistinguishable

[121] Valérie Luquet, "Les supports utilisés par Perronneau et les pastellistes au XVIIIe siècle", conférence, colloque Perronneau, Orléans, 22.VI.2017. Several of the Louvre pastels show similar additions.

[122] Russell advised painting on the felt side for this reason, but without considering rotation as a mitigant.

from the materials in the upper layers. However Gombaud 2015 notes the use of a black wet carbon-based medium applied with a brush to delineate features around the eyes and mouth of the princesse de Rohan J.46.273. Similarly an IR reflectogram of Dawkins J.46.1612 appears to reveal some underdrawing in the face and an alteration to the profile of the sitter's left shoulder.

Pigments

Gombaud 2015 also found in the princesse de Rohan J.46.273 a number of specific pigments typical of eighteenth century practice as documented in Chaperon 1788: for the flesh areas, a combination of red and yellow iron pigments with white calcium carbonate; vermilion with white for the cheeks; while in the blue drapery as many as five different combinations of Prussian blue mixed with copper-based, greenish, pigments (perhaps azurite) or with carbon black in the darkest areas. Dark areas and shadows typically employ brown ochres or umber earths. Lead white with its brilliant visibility was typically restricted to highlights in eyes, buttons etc.: for example in the Silvestre préparation J.46.296 where it is revealed by discolouration through oxidation; it was also used in combination with vermilion to mouth and cheeks, where its presence is revealed in UV light. Red lakes, being sensitive to light, have faded where used on their own for draperies, but are sometimes combined with vermilion when any fading is less obvious. Brunel-Duverger & al. 2023 noted bone black, calcite, vermilion, red ochre, umber, yellow ochre, yellow lake, azurite and Prussian blue in three Saint-Quentin pastels. La Tour did not have a reliable green pigment, although a handful of pastels have greenish backgrounds probably achieved with copper-based blues with yellow ochre.

Supplies of pastel crayons

There is frustratingly little evidence as to if or where La Tour obtained his pastels, or whether he made them himself. Pastels were of course readily available commercially in Paris, but even by the end of La Tour's career, as a number of authors mention, the commercially available crayons could not always be trusted to have undergone the diligent stages in washing and purifying that, for example, Chaperon insists were required to remove potentially noxious impurities. (Impurities could also arise from ill-prepared supports or even from sweat from the pastellist's fingers.) While these authors had every motive to exaggerate the hazards, it is notable that La Tour described a technique for removing salt traces from chalks and pastel using a knife and even a hot iron passed close to the pastel.[123] Preventing the build-up of salt was also an object of his use of the yellow ochre/egg preparation described in his letter to Belle de Zuylen of 1770 discussed above.

It seems most likely however that La Tour did not regularly make his own pastels. Had he done so, it is highly probable that he would have included the vast practical difficulties this entails in his 1.VIII.1762 letter to Marigny identifying all the frustrations and hurdles to the art of pastel. On the other hand, in his 1768 will he specifically bequeathed to three artists "mes crayons de pastels et couleurs" (as well as his unframed studies): as he did not use oil paint, "couleurs" is likely to refer to the pure or ground pigment not yet made into pastel. Perhaps like some other pastellists he used tiny quantities of pure pigment with stump for highlights (see PROLEGOMENA, §IV.7).

Some of La Tour's pastels are catalogued as being in "pastel with gouache". These are references to areas (usually small spots or highlights) applied wet with a brush, but the material is unlikely to be true gouache: rather the artist was probably using ground pastel crayons mixed with water (or possibly alcohol). La Tour used the technique only occasionally, at the start of his career, and mainly for depicting hard or precise objects such as lace, gold braid or metal buttons. In some cases, such as a small area over the artist's proper right eyebrow in the Saint-Quentin autoportrait, it is difficult to be sure if the patch is autograph or the result of a later intervention.[124]

We should also be careful not to believe the numerous puffs by pastel makers who advertised that La Tour used their materials. Thus in the *Mercure* for .II.1746 Mlle Charmeton advertised her "excellens crayons dont le célébre M. de la Tour & autres fameux Peintres en ce genre font actuellement usage par préference à tous autres", while much later (5.VII.1781) he formally endorsed André Nadaux's crayons. While La Tour was obviously close to the pastel-maker Vernezobre (and in turn Dupouch), his name does not appear in the 1760 list of customers (*v.* Jeffares 2018f).

Fixing

As an inveterate experimenter, La Tour devised many approaches to the question of fixing pastel. Some of his failures are evident visually, such as the watermarks on his famous autoportrait à la toque d'atelier J.46.1101 and a number of other examples in Saint-Quentin.

There are numerous references in the literature to La Tour having invented a method of fixing. As early as 1745, when La Tour exhibited pastels of the king, dauphin and others at the salon, the critic in the *Mercure* thought it necessary to report that La Tour–

> a eu le bonheur de trouver un vernis qui sans altérer en rien la fraicheur & la fleur de son Pastel, le fixe de façon que l'ébranlement le plus violent ne le peut déranger, ce qui assurera à ses Portraits une durée dont ils sont si dignes par leur beauté.[125]

La Tour's invention was taken up by other contemporary writers (Le Blanc 1747; Petit de Bachaumont 1750, who noted that "[La Tour] s'est entêté d'un vernis qu'il croit avoir inventé, et qui très-souvent luy gaste tout ce qu'il a fait"; Pernety 1757 etc.). It is even mentioned in the second, 1764, edition of Dossie's *Handmaid to the arts*, p. 232:

> There are several methods of fixing crayons now practised, one of which is said to be that of Mr La Tour, the famous French painter in crayons. But all these methods are at present kept as close secrets in the hands of persons who practise them. None of them, however, go much farther than to prevent the colours from being shaken off by the concussion of carriages, or other accidents that may shake the place where they are hung.

In his letter of 17.VII.1751 La Condamine (surely writing to La Tour) likened the preservation of his pastel to the complexion of a 16-year-old girl, adding:

> Votre vernis pour les pastels est un beau Secret, mais si vous en pourriés trouver un pour conserver les originaux vous auriés un second droit a l'immortalité qui seul pourroit faire oublier le premier.

[123] Letter to Belle de Charrière, 14.IV.1770, cited *supra*.

[124] The area was noted during conservation by Leila Sauvage in .XI.2020.

[125] Anon. 1745a, p. 135.

In the posthumous sale of the pastels (mostly now found in Saint-Quentin) announced by his brother, the preface states that "Tous les Tableaux en pastel sont fixés par l'Auteur, et sont d'une fraîcheur comme s'ils venaient d'être peints", but that statement should be read with caution in view of the prejudice work in pastel encountered at that stage. Visual evidence from a number of his portraits (e.g. the autoportrait J.46.1101 and Restout J.46.2691 at Saint-Quentin) reveal tide marks indicative of local fixing. Microscopic examination in other cases (e.g. the Met. Garnier d'Isle J.46.1827) has shown La Tour's use of intermediate layers of fixative used as a working tool to enable him to isolate certain parts of the drawing as he proceeded (Shelley 2005). The preparation with yellow ochre and egg yolk has been found in several works.[126] An investigation of his portrait of the princesse de Rohan revealed the presence of sturgeon glue, suggesting that he had discovered the essential ingredient of Loriot's fixing technique far earlier than thought hitherto.[127]

A confusing exchange in various mid-nineteenth century publications alludes to a letter in the possession of Frédéric Villot, conservateur au Louvre, apparently by La Tour and providing details of his fixing method. This is hinted at in the article by Jules Boilly[128] publishing La Tour's letter of 24.IV.1774. Guiffrey 1885 (pp. 208ff) and Tourneux 1885 (p. 84) evidently thought Villot had a further letter (presumably giving a more coherent account), but if so it has never been discovered. The footnote in the Goncourt article (1867, p. 37) prompted the pastel maker Henri Roché to write to Saint-Quentin in 1904 to enquire about it; an undated response[129] from Colette Bernard reported to him that Jules Degrave thought Villot never owned the letter, but offered his own thoughts on La Tour's fixing method, which consisted of a mixture of water and starch ("lait d'amidon") which La Tour mixed in a copper vessel which apparently had once belonged to Villot.

La Tour certainly experimented repeatedly, and not always satisfactorily; but at one stage his dissatisfaction with these experiments was such that he seems to have resorted to sandwiching his pastels between two sheets of glass, sealed together.[130] The backing sheet was a thick (approximately 1.5 cm) and extremely heavy piece of glass. The disadvantages are obvious, given the notorious fragility of glass of the period, and it had been thought that no example had survived.[131] However at least two La Tour pastels use (or used) the system: Jean Monnet J.46.2377 (Saint-Quentin) of 1756 and Lord Coventry J.46.1565 of 1752.[132] It appears that both works were originally executed on paper marouflé onto a strained canvas, but the frame was subsequently removed and the flattened primary and secondary support placed between two sheets of glass with sufficient convexity to avoid direct contact between the pastel and the inside of the front glass. Both works have labels fixed to the back of the canvas behind the rear glass sheet written in a hand similar to La Tour's, although on balance probably not his. Since these works were some four years apart, it is likely that a number of other La Tour pastels were originally mounted in this way but have subsequently been remounted, whether from breakage or other conservation considerations. Consequently evidence of later supports may be less decisive as a determinant of authenticity than for other artists.

Pastel box

An empty pastel box J.M.46.115 is said to have been left by La Tour at the slot Zuylen during his 1766 trip, and was given to the musée Antoine-Lécuyer (inv. LT 84) in 1919 by a descendant of Belle de Charrière.[133] It measures 9x32.5x24.5 cm closed, and still has traces of blue pigment in one of the compartments. It may have been intended specifically for travelling, but otherwise seems improbably small for regular use.

Size and glass

The early eighteenth century saw the largest pastels ever produced: Vivien's pastel of Max Emanuel devant la ville de Mons J.77.285 (1706) measures 215x146 cm; La Tour's président de Rieux J.46.2722 (c.1741), which Mariette erroneously thought the largest pastel ever made, was 201x150 cm, while the Louvre's Mme de Pompadour J.46.2541 is a mere 177.5x136 cm. The need for large sheets of glass was the technical (and economic) limitation on size.

Gautier-Dagoty's little known critique[134] of the 1755 salon includes an interesting discussion of the effect of glass on La Tour's pastel of Mme de Pompadour:

> L'harmonie de ce Portrait surpasse les compositions en huile de ceux de M. Michel Vanloo & de M. Tocqué: c'est, dit-on, la glace qui a cet avantage; elle met tout d'accord, & laisse une unité que l'on perdroit entiérement, si le Tableau étoit à nud. Des demi-Connoisseurs qui ont déjà écrit sur le Salon, ont prétendu au contraire que la glace étoit noire, & qu'elle gâtoit le Tableau. On voit bien que ces Auteurs n'ont pas vû comme moi le Tableau sur le chevalet. Le Pastel & la Peinture en caustique sont des Peintures froides & sèches que l'on ne peut vernir; la glace seule peut adoucir ces Peintures féminines, & leur donner une certaine chaleur suave que l'huile porte naturellement en lui-même; les yeux mâles sentent la beauté de cette composition; le beau sexe seul peut s'accommoder du Pastel & de l'ancoustique.

The problem of display and lighting of glazed works was of long standing: La Tour's Mme de Pompadour was initially placed in the 1755 salon so as to reflect light in its glass, and had to be moved overnight.[135] In the 11.VII.1803 auction catalogue where the pastel was offered for sale (Lot 335), Paillet and Delaroche were careful to note that "ce morceau

[126] Gombaud & al. 2017 found indications in pastels by La Tour and Valade at the Nationalmuseum, and cited a similar discovery by Benoît de Tapol in the pastel of Laideguive (J.46.1969). See also Shelley 2005.

[127] Gombaud & al. 2017. Unless of course the fixative was added in a later restoration campaign; the pastel was transferred to a new support at some stage.

[128] *Archives de l'art français*, 15.VII.1852, p. 149.

[129] I am most grateful to La Maison du Pastel (Isabelle Roché and Margaret Zayer) for sharing their archives.

[130] Numerous sources; see Watelet & Lévesque 1791, p. 709.

[131] This may however have been the technique used by the Portuguese artist José Malhoa (1855–1933), eleven of whose pastels were studied with a view to reframing by Francisca Figueira & Rita Fontes, "An evaluation of three mounting conditions for pastels", *ICOM Committee for Conservation, 12th triennial meeting*, Lyon, 1999, preprints, I, pp. 52–54, who concluded that the method of encapsulation between glass is "not necessarily the worst option".

[132] La Tour's invention is conceptually similar to developments in eleudoric and glass painting by artists such as Vincent de Montpetit, Jouffroy and Vispré, which in turn may have been inspired by the investigations of Antoine-Nicolas Martinière (1706–1784), maître émailleur pour les horlogers à Paris, presented to the Académie des sciences, 4.II.1769. The dates suggest that it was La Tour's process that inspired these rather than the converse.

[133] The son of Eugène-Jean-Alexandre, comte de Bylandt, who, in 1837, had married Belle's great-niece Maria Henrietta van Tuyll van Serooskerken (Gaggetta Dalaimo 2011, p. 55; see also *Bulletin de l'Aisne*, 27.XI.1919. I am most grateful to Hervé Cabezas for details of the box (see also Fleury & Brière 1954, p. 84). However its authenticity rests on family legend rather than tangible evidence; the box may be later.

[134] *Observations sur l'histoire naturelle, sur la physique et sur la peinture*, Paris, XIII, 1755, p. 58f; see EXHIBITIONS for the full text. The document was overlooked in the Collection Deloynes, McWilliam & al. 1991, B&W and Arnoult 2014, and first republished in the *Dictionary* in 2015.

[135] See Sandt 2019, p. 214.

… est recouvert par une belle glace blanche fait exprès à Saint Gobin." Similarly La Tour's ruined pastels of Restout and Dumont le Romain were denuded of their frames, perhaps to obtain their glass: they were listed among the revolutionary seizures from the ci-devant Académie on 9.XII.1793, when they were inventoried in the Premier Garde-meuble with this note: "Ces deux tableaux sont perdus par l'auteur même qui, trop vieux, voulut les retoucher: on peut compter que les glaces". In the 21.VII.1796 inventory, Phlipault noted that by then they were "sans bordure".

La Tour's unfinished portrait of the family of Louis XV, or Marie-Josèphe de Saxe and her son J.46.2259, was relegated to a side room according to the inventory of the École gratuite de dessin at Saint-Quentin carried out on 24.IV.1815, the glass being "en trois parties": it is unclear if this was a deliberate economy or the result of breakage.

The lawyer and engineer Claude Bernier de Saint-Martin wrote to La Tour in 1764 describing the various problems with finding suitable glass for pastels.[136] That made in France used Spanish soda which rendered it dark and greenish, while flint glass, developed in England, was weak, unless supplied in thick sheets. To avoid the colour problem, pastellists tried to use thinner sheets, but this put their work at risk from glass breakage. The glass from Saint-Quirin, which was known as verre de Bohème, was excellent (practically colourless) apart from its irregular undulations, which were disagreeable and annoying for viewers, and even made the picture invisible from certain angles. Bernières's proposal was to straighten this type of glass with the machine he used to make curved sheets. Alternatively he suggested an even better plan: to provide the sheet with a deliberate, regular bulge ("bombé"); these were already in use for protecting wax and plaster medallions. This route resulted in greater strength, and also dealt with the spacing problem without resulting in the pastel frame having to be too deep and projecting untidily from the walls of the room. He proposed to use a curve that would result in a space of 8 to 10 lignes (18 to 23 mm) at the centre of the largest canvas. Did La Tour pay any attention – or was the concept of the convex sheets part of his thinking in the glass capsule idea (see Fixing, *supra*)?

Once the pastel is finished it would normally be immediately glazed and framed, to protect it from damage. In theory that would make it less likely to be subsequently altered. However Voltaire's letter to Berger of 3.VII.1738 indicates that La Tour's studio replica of his portrait was kept unframed; how it was protected is less clear. But there are many examples of later interventions.

Alterations

La Tour is notorious for ruining his works by later alterations in an attempt to improve them. The portraits of Restout J.46.2687 and Dumont le Romain J.46.1681 in the Louvre (now damaged beyond repair) attest to this, with the Académie royale's procès-verbaux evidencing his borrowing the works long after they were completed. It is often said that this occurred after senility had set in, but the habit was ingrained far earlier, as we can see from Mme de Graffigny's correspondence (*v. supra*) as well as Katherine Read's 1751 letter (relevant to La Tour even if she was misinformed that he had travelled to London, *v. supra*):

> I don't doubt of his getting money by his great merit and great price, not from his quantity of work, unless he leaves off that custom of rubbing out which he practised but too much, although I can scarce blame it in him as a fault, as it proceeded from an over delicacy of Taste and not from a light headedness as was alleged, for he has no more of that about him than is natural to and becoming a French man.

III.4 Engravings

Unlike many of his contemporaries, La Tour seems to have had limited interest in popularising or making money through the systematic dissemination of engravings of his works, although the importance of several subjects (Voltaire, Rousseau in particular: several dozen different lifetime engravings of the former were made, and a great many later ones) ensured their popularity then and later, and the medium may well have assisted his early steps (*v. supra* for Lépicié's 1734 engraving of Richer de La Morlière and for prints of Fontenelle and the actor Thomassin; however Nicolas Tardieu did not engrave his work). But the variety of engravers employed (among them Aubert, Beauvarlet, Cathelin, Dupin, Flipart, Moitte, Petit, Surugue and Wille) suggest that no longer term business association was envisaged. Some were personal friends – for example, Georg Friedrich Schmidt, whose portrait La Tour made; he also made that of Gravelot, whose only contribution to the *œuvre gravé* was the ornaments for a print of Löwendal.

III.5 Copies; pupils

A good many repetitions of La Tour's works were made in his lifetime: some are evidently autograph (and it by no means follows that the first version is the best). Salmon however was surely correct in observing that La Tour only made one version of each stage of his préparations (copies, particularly of those in the Saint-Quentin collection, abound); but a number of late nineteenth/early twentieth century critics were over-enthusiastic in rejecting second versions of finished works on the grounds that "the original" was in a museum (usually Saint-Quentin, where many of these critics were based). La Tour himself reused his own compositions, and even facial features, for other sitters. Other related portraits may be contemporary copies by unrelated artists: at the Menus plaisirs, for example, between 1749 and 1751 a certain "Aubry peintre" (probably Louis-François Aubry, *q.v.*) made a number of pastels of members of the royal family (for prices between 288 and 300 livres each – AN O[1] 3001), quite likely after La Tour's models.

A substantial proportion however were probably made by pupils working under La Tour's guidance – although we remain ignorant of exactly how this was organised. Unlike most pastellists La Tour evidently had a substantial studio, and the practices and names of those involved have yet to be fully uncovered (*v.* §I.18 *supra*). When La Condamine wrote to La Tour (17.VII.1751), he reminded him of an offer to have made "une copie de ce portrait par quelqu'un de vos élèves" (he knew he could not expect an autograph repetition); that he first needed to return his portrait to La Tour for this purpose indicates that *riccordi* were not kept of all his work.

We remain ill informed as to the exact process of replication before photography. Russell and others have given accounts of tracing procedures for glazed works, but

[136] A version was published in the *Mercure*, .VI.1764, pp. 158ff. See TREATISES.

whether these were used in practice is unclear. It should also be noted that repetitions were not always exactly to scale (e.g. La Tour's Saint-Quentin version of the abbé Pommyer is approximately 90% of the primary version), while in other cases the correspondence is astonishingly accurate locally but results in misaligned parts (e.g. ear to elbow) on a global scale, indicating that they were made freehand.

Even pictures in the "fonds de l'artiste" at Saint-Quentin may not be immune from confusion with studio copies created in La Tour's lifetime, and possibly students' work at the École gratuite de dessin. In 1835 the conservateur at Saint-Quentin, Louis-Nicolas Lemasle, who had introduced a system of seals to protect the La Tour pastels, was accused by his predecessor, Édouard Pingret, of having substituted copies of La Tour pastels for the originals, but the accusation was held to be without foundation – although René Le Clerc, in a notebook made c.1950 when he was conservateur at Saint-Quentin, listed a number of pictures he considered to be poor modern copies, substituted for stolen originals (he was particularly disturbed by the more vigorously worked faces such as Père Emmanuel J.46.1742). Three years later Pingret repeated the accusation, in relation to the portrait of Manelli J.46.2202, having seen an identical work in a Paris dealer's – probably the copy Dréolle de Nodon recorded as belonging to Quentin Dufour around this time (see Saint-Quentin 2012b, pp. 90f). Patoux 1894 denounced Le Blanc J.46.1996, Monnet J.46.2385 and Louis XV J.46.2082 as fakes. Fleury and Brière subsequently questioned four of the works in the collection.

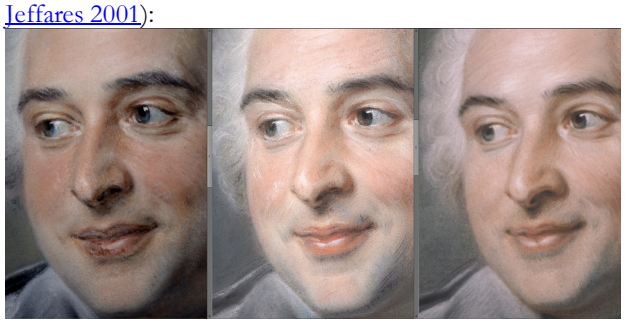
During the nineteenth century numerous copies of the Saint-Quentin pastels were made. Some were set pieces for the annual competitions at the École gratuite de dessin – for example, abbé Pommyer was set in 1858 (registre des délibérations, 17.II.1858). A request to make copies by a young artist called Briatte led to an extended discussion of the system for permissions (registre des délibérations, 30.VIII.1877). Copies were not always in pastel: in an exhibition of the Société académique de Saint-Quentin in 1850, Charles Quentin, professeur de dessin in the town, exhibited "miniatures peintes sur ivoire, d'après les pastels de M. de Delatour" [sic]. A group of nine copies, made by an unnamed artist c.1860, was sold in Paris, 6.VI.1916. A report in the *Journal de Saint-Quentin*, 12.V.1868, p. 3, noted that the pupils' submissions that year including copies in oil for the first time.

In a 1904 letter to Maurice Tourneux, Élie Fleury questioned the integrity of the collector Alphonse Mennechet de Barival (brother of the administrator of the École gratuite at Saint-Quentin) and challenged the authenticity of some of the pastels Saint-Quentin acquired from him. Later Fleury (1908) warned readers of copies by Adolphe Deligne and Jules Degrave, both directors of the École gratuite at Saint-Quentin, as well as by their pupils, Émile Queuin, Jules Chevreux and Charles Escot; artists such as Raphaël Bouquet[137] and J. Wells Champney also produced high quality work during the late nineteenth or early twentieth century (Raymond Casez[138] was less accomplished, while Dréolle de Nodon mentions an Auguste Williot by whom only oil landscapes are known), while numerous unidentified hands have produced fakes that are sometimes difficult to detect. (Mme Claude Latour, convicted in 1947 of faking paintings by Utrillo, implausibly claimed to be the great-great-granddaughter of the pastellist; but there is no evidence that she attempted to forge his work.)

Curiously no one (until here, in 2020) seems to have pointed the finger at the rather clumsy pastiche in Saint-Quentin J.46.2869 with the maréchal de Saxe's head stuck onto the marquis de Voyer's body: this has been treated (as recently as in the La Tour 2004 exhibition catalogue) as a genuine préparation for the Louvre pastel. As it has the Mennechet paraph, it has presumably been part of the collection since the mid-nineteenth century.

In some cases copies (whether later or weak contemporary studio repetitions) are only unmasked when the originals emerge: such was the case with the two versions of Philippe J.46.2508 and J.46.2509.

The Decourcelle/Fribourg/Melbourne version of Pommyer J.46.28524 was considered autograph from its first appearance at the Cent pastels exhibition in Paris 1908a until after its acquisition in 1966 before the re-emergence of the sitter's own version, J.46.2518; here the comparison with the Saint-Quentin réplique J.46.252 (left) reveals precisely the degree of freedom La Tour permitted himself in recreating rather than imitating his own work (centre), while the Melbourne pastel (right) slavishly follows each minute stroke from the original (see the discussion in the updated article Jeffares 2001):



On its own, and before the reemergence of Pommyer's own version, the Melbourne copy is persuasive, and illustrates the difficulty facing the cataloguer. Further examples include the portraits of Dachery: two slightly different portraits in Saint-Quentin (J.46.1583 and J.46.1586) have each spawned the very precise copies J.46.1584 and J.46.1589.

Others are sufficiently accomplished that they can appear superior to the autograph versions, and are only detectable with certainty when the construction and materials are examined.[139] But given La Tour's propensity to use non-standard supports such as cardboard instead of proper strainers, or to remove canvases from strainers to put into glass capsules, the physical evidence is not always as clear-cut as one might want. Growing knowledge of La Tour's technical idiosyncracies make earlier classifications unreliable.

A rather different question arises with the portraits of d'Hogguer by La Tour J.46.1896 and Perronneau J.582.138, discussed at some length in our catalogue entry for the former, where, among a number of improbable theories, it is suggested that La Tour "reinterpreted" Perronneau's earlier portrait of the Dutch banker in a mode which is evidently not that of a copyist. And while neither work can be considered

[137] More than 40 copies by Bouquet alone have been identified; no doubt a great many more exist, most missing the labels he attached to the backs.

[138] An article in *L'Aisne nouvelle*, 15.V.1947, brackets Casez with a certain M. Dantan, followers in the tradition of Degrave, Maurice Pointet and Delvigne.

[139] See Salmon 2004a.

a perfect specimen of its author's skills, the comparison of the two speaks volumes about the technique, finish and even concept of a portrait between these two great rivals (the Perronneau on the right):

The question of modern copies also arises more widely, particularly in relation to major names, from Carriera to John Russell. Accessibility to an original was key. Works in the great collections (notably the Louvre, Saint-Quentin and Dresden) were also set pieces for students, as occasionally revealed by stamps on the reverse of canvases. Vast numbers of copies and pastiches of La Tour's préparations in particular pass through the salerooms, and a good many copyists' names are known (they are indexed in SUPPLIERS). Most are execrable, though some are quite competent; the few that might deceive seem to have been made c.1900 when values of La Tour pastel were at a relative high.

III.6 Frames

Little is documented about La Tour's frames (see Jeffares 2018m). In the case of such a major artist, a good many frames were changed in the early years of the twentieth century when his work became fashionable and dealers sold his pastels as de luxe objects to extremely wealthy collectors who would not have been satisfied with the rather modest *cadres d'origine*. This may have been more of a problem for Perronneau whose regionally sourced frames were often very inferior, while some of La Tour's original frames were certainly of the highest quality.

Among pastels few reached the ambition of that for La Tour's président de Rieux (for which however no document identifies the maker, although René Gimpel[140] suggested it might be to a design by Caffiéri): as one critic noted,

> ce Tableau sera toujours un chef-d'œuvre en son espéce; et pour vous doner une idée de son Prix, on prétend que la Glace et le Cadre coutent seuls cinquante loüis.[141]

But by 1753 the abbé Le Blanc felt the need to attack the prevailing fashion for ostentatious expenditure on elaborate gilt decorations surrounding third-rate pictures: a "contraste ridicule" which resulted from a reluctance to pay more for the picture than for the "cartouche bizarre qui lui sert de bordure".[142] By the time of Louis XVI's accession, a neo-classical sobriety had set in. But for the most part pastel frames, being domestic and of smaller scale, were less prone to excess than oil paintings.

The taste for oval frames was particularly prevalent in rococo France, but almost entirely absent from La Tour's œuvre (the principal exceptions are Paris de Montmartel J.46.2451, the comte de Provence J.46.2624 and the Aix inconnu au livre J.46.2817; the lost Mme Duret J.46.1719 from the 1740 salon was also described as in an oval frame). This is not just a question of dates: Vivien often used ovals; La Tour's visual sense however did not run in this direction.

Few frames are stamped, and documents rarely survive identifying the framers: this was especially the case with pastels where frames were supplied by the artist. The few exceptions include several royal commissions handled by the Bâtiments du roi, including frames for La Tour's portraits of the king, queen, dauphin and dauphine by the sculpteur Louis Maurisan. Pons 1987 noted that Maurisan submitted an invoice in 1748 for frames for portraits of Louis XV and Marie Leszczyńska, citing "le tems de Maurisan pour les desseins dont un par Mr de la Tour", but the frames in the Louvre may not correspond to those described. In 1749 he made a limewood frame for the portrait of the new dauphine.

There is some evidence that La Tour kept frames ready for use: on 19.I.1786, the contents of his logement in the Louvre were auctioned off, and included "Pastels, Ustensiles de peintre, bordures dorées et cartes géographiques, le tout provenant du cabinet de M. de La Tour, peintre du Roi." When La Tour made a réplique of his pastel of Rousseau to give to the writer, he paid for the frame and glass, expenditure which Rousseau thought it his duty to reimburse (letter to Le Nieps, 9.I.1763).

Diderot commenting on the abbé Lattaignant in the Salon de 1767 mentions its "petit cadre de bois noir", and in relation to the pastels shown in 1769 mentions "Quatre chefs-d'œuvre renfermés dans un châssis de sapin, quatre Portraits", implying a single frame for the four works. Most of the préparations in the artist's atelier were described in his brother's 1806 testament as in "cadres noirs". This is confirmed by the inventory of the École gratuite de dessin at Saint-Quentin carried out on 24.IV.1815, reporting the larger pastels as in gilt frames, but ending "56 têtes d'études, avec verres et cadres noircis, dont un plus grand que les autres." They were still there until just before 1867 when the Goncourts[143] wrote: "C'est dans ces cadres noirs qu'on les retrouvait encore, il y a quelques années, au musée de Saint-Quentin." But, like so many other frames (including that of Mme de Pompadour), they have been changed. A campaign of reframing many of the larger Saint-Quentin pastels seems to have been effected in the mid-nineteenth century; in 1897 there was a programme of "revitrage" which may have involved new frames.[144]

Today most of the Saint-Quentin pastels are found in one of three styles: Louis XV swept frames for many of the larger, a narrow Louis XV pastel frame for the mid-sized and some smaller, often with a brown card mount rather than close-

[140] *Journal*, 4.XII.1918.

[141] Anon., *Lettre à Monsieur de Poiresson-Chamarande, lieutenant général au baillage et siège présidial de Chaumont en Bassigny, au sujet des tableaux exposés au Salon du Louvre*, s.l., s.d. [1741].

[142] Anon. [abbé Jean-Bernard LE BLANC], *Observations sur les ouvrages de MM. de l'Académie de peinture et de sculpture, exposés au Salon du Louvre en l'année 1753 et sur quelques écrits qui ont rapport à la peinture, à M. le président de B****, s.l., 1753, p. 155f. The passage is discussed in Pons 1987, p. 43 and n.18. It anticipates to some degree Kant's remark in *Kritik der Urtheilskraft* (1790, §14: *Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin, 1913, V, p. 226): "Besteht aber der Zierath nicht selbst in der schönen Form, ist er wie der goldene Rahmen bloß, um durch seinen Reiz das Gemälde dem Beifall zu empfehlen, angebracht: so heißt er alsdann *Schmuck* und thut der ächten Schönheit Abbruch."

[143] Goncourt 1867, p. 127, n.1.

[144] Fleury & Brière 1920, p. 17.

framed, and a Louis XVI profile frame with a reeded top rail decorated with fasces, again with card mounts.

While the design of the frames for Dawkins J.46.1612, "Jullienne" J.46.1947 and Henry Benedict Stuart J.46.3158 are identical, the aspect ratios are sufficiently different to challenge the tempting inference that La Tour supplied these himself. The variation in sizes, not only of the frames but of the supports and the additions La Tour frequently made, indicate that there was no production line of standardised dimensions.

III.7 Early methods of transport and conservation

The need to take particular care of pastels was well known at the time these works were made: letters or other documents for artists from Rosalba to Oudry all attest to this.[145] When the duc d'Aumont wrote to the Menus-Plaisirs to commission copies of La Tour pastels of the dauphin and dauphine (DOCUMENTS, 1.VII.1761), he explicitly noted that "il faut les ménager dans le transport." When 11 pictures (mostly pastels by La Tour) were sent to Paris to be auctioned on behalf of the École gratuite de dessin in Saint-Quentin in 1810, their accounts tell us that the costs of packing were ₣29.90 and carriage ₣11.05 (they travelled "par Roulage et Voiture"). It was five years before the unsold pastel of Jean-Jacques Rousseau was returned to Saint-Quentin; this time the charges were for ₣6.50 packing and ₣3.85 for carriage.

In 1860, the Société des antiquaires de Picardie requested the loan of La Tour pastels from Saint-Quentin for the Amiens 1860 exhibition. The bureau de l'École gratuite de dessin, while recognising the historical connection with Amiens, unanimously refused to lend, minuting their reasoning: "considérant que le transport des pastels, qui sont de leur nature très fragiles, les expose à de grands dangers et peut leur nuire sensiblement."[146] In 1875 the bureau at Saint-Quentin again unanimously refused to lend the La Tour pastels to an exhibition in Paris of works belonging to provincial museums. Three years later, planning the universal exhibition of Portraits nationaux in Paris in 1878, the marquis de Chennevières, directeur des beaux-arts, again wrote to Saint-Quentin requesting the loan of ten of their pastels. The registre des délibérations of the École de dessin records a vigorous debate recognising the particular hazards to the pastels from travel, resolving to obtain detailed advice before consenting. At the session of 24.I.1878 it was resolved that only those patels known to have been fixed should be lent. Raoul-Arthur Duquenne (1834–1909), professeur de l'École, was asked if it was possible to tell which had been fixed: his view was that, in the absence of specific information, La Tour had fixed all the small portraits, but not the larger ones such as d'Argenson; Rousseau, in particular, was in a particularly fragile state. Nevertheless eight pastels were lent, transported to Paris by rail (instructions were given for d'Argenson to be the subject of "soins exceptionnels et tout particulier", and several smaller pastels were substituted for the larger requests). In 1899 a proposed La Tour exhibition in the École des beaux-arts in Paris, intending to borrow all 87 pastels from Saint-Quentin, was blocked by the curators there on grounds of risk.[147]

Chief amongst cases where pastels have had to be moved for non-discretionary reasons were wartime removals. The La Tour pastels from Saint-Quentin were sent to Maubeuge in 1917; the episode is well documented, most carefully in the exhibition catalogue Saint-Quentin 2007: Louis Gillet, writing in 1919, argued that "les pastels de La Tour servirent la propaganda boche; c'est ce qui les sauva."[148] This was echoed in a contemporary journal[149] recording the inauguration by General von der Marwirz on 1.VI.1917of the exhibition the Pauvre Diable where "les merveilleux pastels de La Tour" were displayed to visiting dignatories of neutral countries: "ne fallait-il pas les impressionner en leur faisant constater la généreuse, la vigilante administration allemande qui assure l'instruction aux petits Français et met en sécurité leur patrimoine artistique!!!" Nevertheless Vernezobre (J.46.3054) was damaged by a screw carelessly used to secure it during transportation.[150] In the Second World War, they were evacuated again, first to the château du Rocher in Mézangers (Mayenne), where they were housed by the marquise de Chavagnac; and then in 1944, to the château de Sourches (Sarthe), before being returned to Saint-Quentin, 3.IX.1945.

There a campaign of restoration was undertaken by Léon Lepeltier in 1946–47:[151] some 20 of the pastels were unframed, the glass cleaned with alcohol, mould removed by hand, with some retouching in pastel. This of course was not the first campaign of restoring the Saint-Quentin pastels. In 1820 seals were affixed to the backs, their integrity confirmed in an inventory of 1835. In 1897 a "revitrage" of most of the pastels was undertaken, during which a number of seals were found not to be intact; allegations of theft and substitution had been made by Lemasle against his predecessor at the École de La Tour, Pingret (*v.* §III.5 *supra*).

Less well known was the fate of the Louvre pastels during World War II. While La Tour's Mme de Pompadour was sent (with many of the Louvre's paintings) to the château de Chambord,[152] it was recognised that many of the best pastels were too fragile to travel any distance. An attempt to store several dozen of them in two climate-controlled underground vaults of the Banque de France (which had been leased from 1938 for this purpose) had to be abandoned in 1940 due to detrimental conditions (especially humidity control after the bank's air-conditioning system broke down) and difficulty in monitoring them. There are conservation reports noting the resulting damage, mostly minor spots of mould. The Banque de France was also used to store pastels belong to Jewish private collections before being confiscated by the Germans.[153] The National Gallery in London made

[145] See PROLEGOMENA, §IV.18.

[146] Registre des délibérations de l'Ecole gratuite, IV, f° 20.

[147] See the anonymous article in the *Journal de Saint-Quentin*, 3.II.1899 (reproduced in La Tour, CRITICAL FORTUNE), attributed to Élie Fleury in Cabezas 2009a.

[148] Gillet 1919, p. 133.

[149] Georges Dubut-Masion, *Journal d'un bourgeois de Maubeuge*, Tourcoing, 1923, p. 195f.

[150] See also Kott 2006; Cabezas 2009a and references therein.

[151] See Coural & al. 2008 and especially the note by Hervé Cabezas on p. 183.

[152] See Gerri Chanel, *Saving Mona Lisa*, London, 2018, based on archival research. I am most grateful to the author for sharing details of these documents, principally from the Archives des musées nationaux ser. R6, which includes the list of 23 eighteenth century Louvre pastels deposited with the Banque de France on 28–30.VIII.1939.

[153] Thus the Hirsch family lost three La Tour pastels: Belle-Isle and his wife and an inconnu: see Meaux 2018. Similarly a pastel by Huet was taken from Georges Wildenstein's vault in the Banque de France: see New York 2005a, no. 139. Arthur Veil-Picard's Mlle de La Boissière (J.46.2926, now in the Louvre) was taken from vault 63 in the Banque de France; transferred to the Jeu de Paume on 29.X.1940 before being taken to Germany (errproject.org database, consulted 2018).

use of the Manod slate quarry in Wales for their more important pictures. They also looked after two major La Tour pastels belonging to Gulbenkian. His pastel of Marie Sallé was sent to Manod, while Duval appears to have remained in Trafalgar Square.[154]

Among less frequently noted conservation issues, a letter from Marie Fel to La Tour's brother, dated 5.I.1785,[155] refered to a report by the enamellist Pierre Pasquier concerning "les dangers, et le domage que la fumée pourroit causer aux pasteles de M. de La Tour": it perhaps refers to those in his house at Chaillot, and invited the chevalier to visit and "faire fermer les écartemens du mur".

As an indication of different attitudes to conservation in earlier periods, it is worth citing the suggestion by Philippe de Chennevières (1888, p. 333) concerning the La Tour pastels of Restout J.46.2687 and Dumont le Romain J.46.1681, "en assez fâcheux état": namely that "si détériorés qu'ils soient par le temps et l'abandon, j'imagine qu'un adroit pastelliste, – et il n'en manque pas dans notre temps, – les pourrait remettre en état de figurer dans la série de nos portraits d'artistes." Fortunately this wasn't pursued.

In 1910, Émile Théodore, conservateur au palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille, gathered information on international museums' practices for conserving old master drawings. The response from Théodore Eck, conservateur at Saint-Quentin, is worth reproducing at length:[156]

> Nous avons constaté, et cela à deux reprises, de très légers champignons blancs dans les parties sombres de deux de nos La Tour. Nous les avons fait disparaître sans nuire à l'œuvre. Pour ce faire, il faut avoir la main légère; il suffit de l'extrémité du petit doigt qui effleure à peine le pastel.
>
> Dans les années 1900, le musée de Saint-Quentin a procédé à un nouvel encadrement des pastels dans leurs anciennes bordures, en employant les même verres protecteurs; en somme, a été refait un travail effectué en 1849, sans aucun apport nouveau, soit de cadre soit de glace, soit de carton.
>
> Dans la feuillure des cadres ont été placées des bandes de carton suffisamment épaisses pour isoler d'un centimètre au moins le pastel proprement dit du verre appelé à le protéger. En raison de la valeur des pastels, nous avons scellé au dos avec huit carnets de cire rouge de larges bandes de toile.
>
> Quant au mode de conservation de nos La Tour, je n'en connais pas de plus efficace qu'une visite journalière des salles, et 18° de chaleur la nuit comme le jour. L'été, des jalousies de fer à lames mobiles, dont on peut graduer l'inclinaison suivant la marche du soleil, nous permet de les protéger de façon heureuse.

III.8 Questions

There remain many unanswered questions about La Tour's work and methods. Some are questions to which modern science might provide answers but for others our information is adequate only to offer uncertain or incomplete replies – despite the evidence to be found in La Tour's own correspondence (i.e. far more than we have for other pastellists). Where did he work? What lighting system did he use? How did he arrange his canvas or support his loose sheets for preparations? Why are so many of the pastels on cardboard? What sort of container did he hold his pastels in? Where did he obtain his materials? Which of the portraits were fixed, and by what methods? How long did each portrait take ("seven days" for Frémin, *v. supra*, scarcely seems credible), over how many sittings, where? Is it safe to extrapolate from the single testimony of Belle de Zuylen? How much work could be done without the sitter present? What role did assistants play in the primary versions? Where and how were the replicas and copies made? What were the finances of his business? Between the much-quoted prices asked for a handful of specific works and the size of his fortune at death are a host of missing accounting details from overheads to the simplest of all questions – how many pastels did he produce?

[154] See my ESSAY.

[155] Reprinted in chronological table of La Tour DOCUMENTS.

[156] Transcription by Florence Raymond in Coural & al. 2008.

IV. CRITICAL FORTUNE

IV.1 The vogue for pastel

Although Joseph Vivien had provided all the necessary artistic ingredients, the great vogue for pastel only took hold some years after his success (notably the salon of 1704, where he exhibited two dozen pastels), when the Venetian pastellist Rosalba Carriera made her famous trip to Paris in 1720–21 and carried off the prizes, not so much by superior talent, but by winning over important patrons all the way up to the new king. No further technical developments were required: but there is no more striking example in the history of art of a medium becoming fashionable so suddenly. The call was made for French artists to emulate her – for reasons perfectly articulated sixty years before by the founder of French opera, Pierre Perrin, in the dedication to Colbert of his *Recueil de paroles de musique*.[157]

> En verité Monseigneur, j'ose vous dire qu'il y va de la gloire du Roy et de la France de ne pas souffrir qu'une Nation, par tout ailleurs victorieuse, soit vaincüe par les etrangers en la connaissance de ces deux Beaux-Arts, la Poesie et la Musique.

One of the immediate responses was by the painter Jean-Baptiste Van Loo, who, as Dandré-Bardon explained,[158] presented to the Académie in 1722, along with a history painting–

> aussi les portraits de *Mesdames de Prie* et *de Sabran* qui lui avoient déjà fait dans le public, un honneur infini, autant par la variété, la ressemblance, l'ars qui règnent, que par la multitude des copies qui en furent répandues. Ces ouvrages au pastel étoient au pair des plus beaux que nous connussions alors en France dans ce genre. Nous voyons avec plaisir combien ce talent s'est perfectionné de nos jours. Preuve bien sensible, que le progrès du génie sont illimités et que la France se charge du soin d'en donner l'exemple à l'Univers et à la posterité!

Van Loo however quickly reverted to oil, leaving the scene to others – most notably to La Tour. Not long after his portrait of Voltaire, La Tour was commissioned by the président de Rieux, son of the famous financier who himself was the son of a minor painter, to produce a portrait in pastel that is surely one of the marvels of western art of any age.[159] Shown in 1741, it was described by Mariette as an "ouvrage de la plus longue haleine et qu'on n'en avoit point vu au pastel de pareille taille." Here was no suggestion that the président had overstepped his social position: the quality and sophistication of the picture simply disarmed any such criticism.[160]

IV.2 Responses to La Tour at the salons

In each salon[161] from 1738, La Tour was always the object of critical discussion, and almost always praised beyond his rivals. Mariette went on to describe the portrait of Duval de l'Épinoy shown at the 1745 Salon as "le triomphe de la peinture en pastel". Generally the praise was lavish, with occasional reservations, as when Gautier-Dagoty 1753b questioned the "affectations de joye" of Manelli (*v. supra*), its juxtaposition with the academicians and philosophers merely exacerbating the incongruity.

Some care is needed in reading these critiques, whose main value in some cases is the information they provide about lost pastels not described in the livret. For example, the abbé Le Blanc's extravagant praise in the salon de 1747 was noted by abbé Gougenot (1748) cynically as having been "dictées autant par des principes de reconnaissance que d'équité". Mariette went further: his annotation on his copy of Le Blanc 1747 implied that La Tour was rumoured to have bribed Le Blanc with his own portrait to induce him to attack La Font de Saint-Yenne's *Réflexions*.[162]

One widely overlooked salon critique, an anonymous letter in the *Jugemens sur quelques ouvrages nouveaux*,[163] even alleged that a cabal of académiciens had formed; jealous of La Tour's success, they had propagated the idea that pastel was an inferior medium.

Also overlooked until recently (*v.* Jeffares 2017g) are the references to La Tour in the correspondence of Mme de Graffigny with her friend Devaux. Writing of the Salon de 1742 (which she visited with Nicolas Vennevault, *q.v.*), she picked out La Tour pastels as masterpieces, "surtout le sien, peint avec un chapeau à point d'Espagne, detroussé d'un coté, qui lui fait un ombre sur le visage. C'est un morceau parfait: je ne pouvois m'en arracher." The anonymous critic in the *Mercure*[164] picked out this "portrait inimitable de l'Auteur, dans le goût du Rimbrand." Six years later Graffigny was horrified when she asked him about the piece: it had been intended for the Uffizi, he told her (this appears to be the only mention of this plausible commission; the pastel there J.9.1992 purporting to be of and by La Tour is unconvincing), but he had foolishly shown it to Louis XV, whose enthusiasm was not what La Tour hoped for; accordingly he tore it to pieces. (It is notable that this is the portrait Diderot mentions – in his Salon de 1767 – as having been shown in the famous confrontation between La Tour's self-portrait and Perronneau's; later authors have all assumed it was the autoportrait au jabot shown in 1750.)

At the same encounter (7.VII.1748), Graffigny asked to see La Tour's large pastel of Mme de Pompadour, which had already (earlier than most researchers had known) become famous. La Tour told her that he had also destroyed that ("Il l'a encore brulé parce qu'il avoit donné un faux trait"), although it was of a size to have commanded a fee of 10,000 livres. Whether La Tour should be taken literally is unclear (it is notable that when he told Mariette that he had burnt his portait after attempting unsuccessfully to fix it, Mariette didn't completely believe him). The pastel now in the Louvre was not exhibited until 1755; it shows the addition of a new head on a separate sheet.

La Tour's willingness thus to destroy his work (even if it had reached an advanced stage) out of a sense of perfectionism was legendary at the time. Duplaquet noted,

[157] Pierre Perrin, *Recueil de paroles de musique*, 1662: dedication, 1660 to Colbert, avant-propos: reprinted Louis Auld, *The "lyric art" of Pierre Perrin, founder of French opera*, Henryville, 1986, III.

[158] In his éloge delivered in 1753; reprinted in the catalogue Nice 2000, pp. 29–39.

[159] For more about this pastel, see Jeffares 2010c and the sources cited there.

[160] The président de Rieux in now in Los Angeles, but the potency of its magic ability to confer nobility has not been lost.

[161] Some of the documents mentioned here and in the next sections are reproduced in CRITICAL FORTUNE; others will be found in DOCUMENTS.

[162] Crow 1985, p. 7.

[163] "Lettre à l'Auteur", *Jugemens sur quelques ouvrages nouveaux*, IX, 1745, pp. 291–94.

[164] Omitted from B&W and ignored in the subsequent literature, such as the discussion of Perronneau's Rembrandtism in Arnoult 2014.

straightforwardly, that "Cette sévérité met un prix infini à ses Portraits"; it is possible to read this with modern art-world cynicism as an early example of an artist manipulating the market value of his work.

Diderot admired La Tour and his unrivalled ability to understand the mechanism of physiognomy and gaze; but his phrase, "machiniste merveilleux", has been repeated uncritically. The full sentence was "Ce peintre n'a jamais rien produit de verve, il a le génie du technique, c'est un machiniste merveilleux"; Diderot thus hints at an emotional vacuum. His biblical rebuke to La Tour, "Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris",[165] can be read today on various levels.

We should note too that La Tour's work was also shown outside the formal salons. Diderot was not the only visitor to gain admittance to the artist's studio to get a preview. For example, the portrait of d'Alembert, intended for the 1753 salon, and presumably still in La Tour's studio, was shown to all the writer's friends who competed to compose verses to put below it, as we learn from d'Hémery's journal, 30.III.1753. During his 1753 visit to Paris, the young Stanislaw Poniatowski was it seems one of many anxious to visit the artist: "Le peintre en pastel, La Tour, tout difficile qu'il est, m'avait accordé l'entrée dans son atelier."[166]

IV.3 Contemporary reputation

During his lifetime La Tour enjoyed an unequalled reputation (although among foreign and provincial academies, curiously only the Académie d'Amiens elected him an honoraire). Already by 1742 his celebrity was such that the visiting Ottoman ambassador Mehmed Said Paşa (who had been portrayed by Coypel on his 1721 trip with his father) demanded a portrait by him (the report in the *Mercure* noted already the patience the sitter required to sit for La Tour). In a letter of 7.IX.1749, the English antiquary Daniel Wray wrote to his friend Philip Yorke to advise him on things to be done in Paris: "Call in too at Chardin's, who paints little pieces of common-life, and upon Liotard (but he is the Colonel's painter), admirable in crayons", acknowledging however that they were more expensive than British artists like Pond. Several weeks later Wray added: "Give me leave to correct a mistake in my last letter. The Crayonnist whom I meant to commend (from Hogarth's testimony[167]) is La Tour. I confounded him with Liotard the Miniature-painter." Among those who did were the Earl of Coventry and his bride, Maria Gunning, who stayed in Paris for at most three months in the summer of 1752, long enough for La Tour to paint both their portraits (but perhaps not long enough for the artist not to need to base the faces on his pastels of Maurice de Saxe and La Camargo – leading Franche 1906 to imply that the pastels were fake).

By 1762, when the Scottish painter Allan Ramsay (*q.v.*) published his fictional *Dialogue on taste*, a La Tour portrait had become a byword in England for "vastly natural" resemblance:[168]

> I have reason to be convinced by a thousand experiments, that the leading principle of critcism in poetry and painting, and that of all the learned principles which is the most unexceptionably true, is known to the lowest and most illiterate of people. Your Lordship has only to hide yourself behind the screen in your drawing-room, and order Mrs. Hannah to bring in one of your tenant's daughters, and I will venture to lay a wager that she shall be struck with your picture by La Tour, and no less with the view of your seat by Lambert, and shall, fifty to one, express her approbation by saying, they are *vastly natural*.

It is perhaps surprising that relatively few English Grand Tourists stopped to have their portraits painted by him: apart from the Coventrys and Henry Dawkins, perhaps Lady Hervey (J.46.1891). But war between the countries was a barrier during much of La Tour's career.

In 1752 the marquis d'Argens was able to write "nous possédons aujourd'hui un artiste, qui est infiniment supérieur dans l'art de peindre au Pastel, à tous les peintres qui l'ont précédé, & qui vivent aujourd'hui; c'est le célébre la Tour, dont les portraits ont la force & la vérité de ceux de Vandeick."

In contrast to his rivals, even those of the stature of Perronneau and Liotard, La Tour was able to remain in Paris virtually throughout his career. (The prince de Ligne exaggerated his powers of persuasion when he wrote to Voltaire on 1.VI.1766 "J'ai persuadé, il y a quelques jours à M. de Lattour, Le grand maitre en pastel, d'aller vous faire sa Cour, et de nous la faire, par un portrait meilleur que tous les autres.")

But by the end of his life, La Tour's work had lost its dominance. When d'Alembert died (1783), his posthumous inventory (carried out with Watelet in attendance) valued the famous La Tour portrait of him together with another picture, also unattributed, at just 20 livres, while a large pastel of Friedrich der Große (perhaps by Cunningham) was valued at 120 livres; it, and other portraits (such as the Mlle Lusurier oil), were specifically bequeathed in d'Alembert's will, but the La Tour was not mentioned explicitly and fell into the residual estate.

IV.4 Posthumous reputation

La Tour's reputation suffered after his death, except perhaps in his native city of Saint-Quentin (La Tour is to that town what Shakespeare is to Stratford-upon-Avon). Although the École gratuite de dessin fell into desuetude during the Revolution, the inhabitants launched a petition in 1801 to reestablish it, as happened in 1805; the chevalier Coupé de Saint-Donat published an obituary in the *Journal des arts*. But elsewhere neglect was profound: when some of the pastels from La Tour's studio were offered for sale in 1810 after his brother's death, the prices achieved were derisory (for details of this confused sale and his brother's previous attempts to dispose of the collection, *v.* DOCUMENTS).

[165] Genesis 3:19 (echoed in Milton, *Paradise lost*, X:208), cited Salon de 1767 in relation to La Tour, but Diderot also used the phrase in the "Entretien entre d'Alembert et Diderot", *Œuvres complètes de Diderot*, Paris, 1875, II, pp. 105–21; it was popularised in secondary sources (e.g. Ratouis de Limay 1946, p.13f; Dayot 1904) deriving from Dréolle de Nodon's *Éloge*. See also Ecclesiastes 12:6–8: "antequam rumpatur funis argenteus et recurrat vitta aurea et conteratur hydria super fontem et confringatur rota super cisternam/et revertatur pulvis in terram suam unde erat et spiritus redeat ad Deum qui dedit illum/vanitas vanitatum dixit Ecclesiastes omnia vanitas."

[166] *Mémoires du roi Stanislas-August Poniatowski*, St Petersburg, 1914, I, p. 101.

[167] Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth: high at and low, 1732–1750*, 1982, pp. 182f suggests that the La Tour portrait which most directly influenced him was Le Président de Rieux, citing Hogarth's *Archbishop Herring* as evidence. Simon 2007, pp. 28ff, is more circumspect.

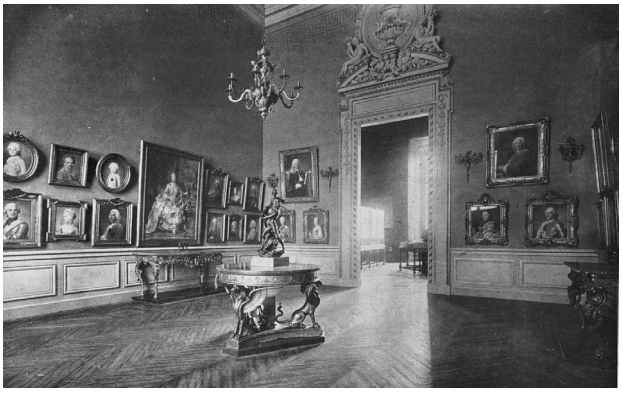
[168] *A dialogue on taste*, 1762, pp. 56f; see FLORILEGEUM. It is curious that Alastair Smart's 1992 monograph on Ramsay, which has multiple references to La Tour's influence on his subject, chose to illustrate this with two La Tour works: one a print after Mlle de Fontane Solare, and the other an oil copy of his autoportrait à l'index.

Lecarpentier included La Tour in his *Galeries des peintres célèbres*, 1821, despite his disapproval of the medium of pastel; while Jarry de Mancy 1841 included him in his dictionary of philanthropists, considering that the pastellist "ne peut être compté parmi les grands peintres français." Yet his importance was not lost on artists: Gérard is reputed to have told the miniaturist Auguste-Joseph Carrier, on seeing a La Tour préparation, "On nous pilerait tous dans un mortier, Gros, Girodet, Guérin & moi, tous les G, qu'on ne tirerait pas de nous un morceau comme celui-ci." (Blanc 1865).

When eleven préparations, including portraits of Voltaire, Rousseau and Mme de Pompadour, were offered to the Louvre in 1835, Alexis-Nicolas Pérignon (1785–1864), commissaire expert des Musées royaux, reported (Archives des musées nationaux) that they were difficult to value as they could only have been of use to the artist himself. Earlier (29.X.1829), in another report, Pérignon noted that "les ouvrages de Latour n'ont pas un cour élevé dans le commerce", and that if conserved the portrait of Maria Theresia[169] he was offered would only be worth F300–400. But "les portraits au pastel tels beaux et tel bien executés qu'ils soient, sont d'une très petite valeur quand ils ne representent pas des personnages connus."

This echoed an earlier report (24.VI.1825) on the offer by Pierre-Louis-Alexis Duliège (nephew of La Tour's executor, abbé Duliège; his son Émilien left a group of pastels to his partner, Flore-Joséphine Warluzèle, seen by Desmaze in 1873: *v. supra*) to the Louvre of a group of head studies, "faites presto", among them heads of Louis XV and the dauphin, which would hardly fetch F10 each at auction and were deemed "sans valeur commerciale." Again, on 14.VI.1817, Pérignon commented on three pastels by La Tour offered by the marquise de Ferrières, that they had "beaucoup de mérite comme tous ceux de Latour, mais ce genre de peinture étant peu en faveur dans ce moment", the value of all three was at most F150–200. Nor was this view confined to the saleroom: in a review of marine paintings in the 1836 salon, an artist's obscurity was blamed on his choice of the pastel medium, just as had happened to La Tour, "dont quelques beaux pastels on été exhumés des greniers du Louvre, où la moisissure avait épargné Mme de Pompadour et quelques autres, pour l'ornement du musée historique de Versailles."[170]

With the help of the Goncourts and other enthusiasts for the dix-huitième, La Tour's importance was reestablished by the end of the nineteenth century. There is no doubt that a key role in the reevaluation of the ancien régime pastel was played by the collection in the Louvre, which has always been dominated by La Tour. In the 1824 inventory listing 69 pastels in the Louvre, 11 were given as by La Tour (two of these were in fact by Lundberg, while two other La Tours were listed among the maîtres inconnus). (Of the 156 numbers in Salmon's 2018 catalogue, 20 are given to La Tour.[171]) Among those displayed in the prestigious Galerie d'Apollon were the La Tour pastel of Chardin J.46.1436, so bold that it was later mistakenly thought to be damaged beyond displayability. Originally a few pastels were interspersed with other pictures in the Grand galerie, but an arrangement which persisted into the twentieth century seems to have been in place from the reorganisation[172] of 1834, the Grande salle des pastels being no. 14 of the salles des dessins, on the first floor of the northern side of the Cour carrée.[173]



This process commenced in the middle of the century, with enthusiastic descriptions of the pastels in the Louvre by Arsène Houssaye (1849), Julien de La Rochenoire (1853), Champfleury (1853), Théophile Gautier (1855) and the Goncourts (1867), all of which emphasised the dominance of La Tour and the portrait of Mme de Pompadour in particular.

In 1837 the musée de Saint-Quentin opened, and started to exhibit the collection of La Tour pastels left to the École de dessin. It was located in the former Fervaques church in Saint-Quentin, a multi-purpose space which housed the town library, the Société académique, the chambre des notaires etc.[174] In 1849 an inventory was taken, published in catalogues issued from 1856 (many of the sheets still bear the paraph "Mt" here identified as that of Félix Mennechet, the school's administrator). The entry in Gulhermy's *Description des localités de la France* for Saint-Quentin, which he visited in 1855, records that the salle du musée "renferme plus de cent portaits au pastel de la main de Latour."[175] Visits to Saint-Quentin were noted by artists such as Gauguin, Matisse and Mary Cassatt and writers including Maurice Barrès and Anatole France.[176] The young art historian Anatole de Montaiglon wrote an impassioned letter to his friend Robert Wheaton from Saint-Quentin in 1845.[177] Degas copied La Tour; Jacques Doucet is said to have been inspired to collect eighteenth century pastels by seeing some La Tour heads at Degas's. For Matisse, "les deux plus grands portraitistes sont Rembrandt et La Tour, pour la vérité. Les autres, c'est toujours un peu du théâtre."

[169] This was not on grounds of inauthenticity, although it is most unlikely that La Tour portrayed the Empress.

[170] A. Jal, "Des marines exposées au Louvre", *Annales maritimes et coloniales*, p. 777f.

[171] For a concordance of all the Louvre pastels with the *Dictionary*, see here. For a concordance with La Tour works in the Louvre and Saint-Quentin, see here.

[172] See Salmon 2018, p. 36 (and Jeffares 2018g for further comments on pastels in the Louvre). For other accounts of the hang of pastels in the Louvre at earlier stages, see Guérin 1715 and Dezallier d'Argenville 1781. Although Reiset 1869 provides the name of some of the artists whose pastels hung in various rooms, only O'Shea 1874 gives specific pastels for each.

[173] The position is now occupied by room 52 of the Napoléon III apartments.

[174] Alexandre-Eusèbe Poquet, *Histoire de l'abbaye de Fervaques à Saint-Quentin*, Paris, 1878, p. 53.

[175] Manuscript, BnF, NAF 6108, tom. XV, f° 303 *verso*. Among the historical portraits he noted was the portrait of the dauphine with her son, the duc de Bourgogne, whom he confused with the earlier generation of the Grand Dauphin's wife and son.

[176] Among the enormous volume of travel writing, one might note Vleeshouwer 1913, pp. 185–87.

[177] Manuscript, Morgan Library (there is an incomplete translation in *Memoir of Robert Wheaton*, 1854, pp. 45ff); for text, *v.* CRITICAL FORTUNE; where there are also references for the other passages cited above.

The Louvre continued to exercise its influence. Marcel Proust, according to his friend Reynaldo Hahn[178], visited in 1895, and found, by comparison with the pastels by Chardin, "La Tour moins profond et plus séduisant." Proust nevertheless advised another friend – Douglas Ainslie – to visit Mme Straus and not to miss her La Tour masque (of Voltaire J.46.3121).

Among the numerous great collectors of pastels of this era, Camille Groult and Jacques Doucet stand out. The watercolours made by Karbowski in 1905 to record the celebrated collection of Jacques Doucet in the rue Spontini (later broken up at auction[179] in 1912) show us the famous couturier's approach; pastels by La Tour were again hung with paintings by Chardin and Reynolds.[180]

Since the revival of interest in pastel, the literature has burgeoned, with innumerable articles in French journals (among many examples, Jean-Louis Vaudoyer, *Le Gaullois*, 7.VI.1919: "Il n'y a pas…un peintre qui soit plus foncièrement français que Maurice-Quentin de La Tour", arguing for the supremacy of La Tour over Perronneau notwithstanding the attempt to prove otherwise in the Cent pastels exhibition of 1908, where notoriously a good many of the "La Tour" pastels were not autograph) and tributes ranging from serious scholarship to ephemera such as Arsène Houssaye's plays, a long poem by Herni Galoy (*Visite nocturne au musée de Saint-Quentin*, 1905; 2e éd., 1933) and even several novels inspired by La Tour (from *Pastel vivant*, by Paul Flat, 1904, or *L'Énigme du pastel*, by Jean d'Agraives, 1930, to *Marquise au portrait*, by Barbara Lecompte, 2014). Typical perhaps is a piece by Ouida (1862) based on a story told by the La Tour pastel on her wall (evidently modelled on the Marie Fel in Saint-Quentin): La Tour's reputation for psychological enquiry lends itself to this once popular genre. Henri Lavedan's *Les Portraits enchantés* (1918) even served a political role, depicting an imbecilic Kaiser encountering the La Tour portraits at Saint-Quentin (the German seizure of the works during the war was inevitably felt deeply in France).

Ratouis de Limay, responding to Diderot's criticism, admits that La Tour excelled at capturing the outer life of his subjects, their "mondanité" rather more than their thoughts; others will grant that La Tour made his sitters appear to be talking, or just about to do so. This trope is found also in Hourticq's 1943 text in an exhibition catalogue, while Starobinski cleverly contrasted this with Perronneau's sitters, who appear to be listening to music. Hourticq also took up the comparison with Perronneau, whom he acknowledged as a more elaborate colourist, while La Tour's strength was in capturing "la tension de la pensée"; ultimately "de beaux rubans et des dentelles ne peuvent nous intéresser autant qu'une pensée en pleine action." There remains a group of influential art historians, from Roberto Longhi on, who prefer Perronneau to La Tour (for example Pierre Rosenberg, in his *Dictionnaire amoureuse du Louvre*, 2007: "Je suis de ceux qui préfèrent les pastels de Perronneau à ceux de Maurice Quentin de La Tour"), hinting that there is something stilted, tricksy or even false about La Tour; there are others no doubt who find this a fashionable view to espouse.[181]

What then are we to make of La Tour? Without accepting Brieger's assessment of La Tour as the finest French painter (Rosenberg would name Poussin, with which it is impossible to disagree), one recognises in him the portraitist who brought the most virtuosity, the most verve (*pace* Diderot) to the interpretation of human physiognomy. Michael Levey (1993) was in no doubt about the importance of his portraits, "virtuoso achievements…which retain an impact of vivacity and vitality, unequalled except by the busts of Lemoyne."

After a period of intense study, how do we answer Diderot's essential question: "Obtiendrait-on d'une étude opiniâtre et longue le mérite de La Tour?" As we sift through pages of contemporary salon critiques, detailed enquiries into sitters' biographies and social standing, followed by acres of what is termed "critical fortune", are we any the wiser? Perhaps to some extent what is absent tells us as much. Searching through the broadest possible literature, the surprise is not that there is so much discussion of La Tour in certain (mostly French) circles, but that he doesn't always make it into the very top tier, even of portraitists. No history of world culture would omit Chardin, Fragonard or David – but many mention La Tour only as a footnote if at all. This is not the place he would have expected for himself, nor that which his contemporaries would have anticipated.

To some degree this can be attributed to the disregard in which portraiture, and pastel in particular, is regarded in most academic spheres, a topic I have discussed elsewhere (*v.* PROLEGOMENA). That is the only way in which one can explain the nearly complete omission[182] of his name from the 2014 colloquium proceedings *Delicious decadence: the rediscovery of French eighteenth century painting in the nineteenth century* – a work devoted to the legacy of the Goncourts (while Boucher, Chardin, Fragonard, Greuze, Watteau and even Lancret each appear dozens of times). But that isn't a complete explanation. Even the competitions with his best rivals, which seemed settled in his favour so decisively in his lifetime, are no longer agreed: if it is easier (for some) to admire La Tour than Perronneau, it is easier (for others) to love Perronneau than La Tour. And the charlatanry that disqualified Liotard from serious consideration in the Paris of the mid-eighteenth century is no obstacle to the pedestal he now occupies in many serious circles. This of course is to accept the tyranny art history imposes of hierarchies and rankings, with the consequential legitimisation of oblivion for the also-rans. Again I have written elsewhere about the narrow-mindedness of this approach which closes our minds to the astonishing depth of talent among the pastellists in ancien régime Paris.

But there are other factors which have worked against La Tour, some perhaps in ways that might not have been anticipated. He published nothing. He barely travelled. Until

[178] See CRITICAL FORTUNE for text.

[179] At Galerie Georges Petit, officiated by the legendary commissaire-priseur Fernand Lair-Dubreuil (1866–1931). See *Gazette Drouot*, 13.I.2017, pp. 138–43, with a photograph of the Doucet sale. For an account of how Doucet developed a taste for the XVIIIe, by seeing two pastels by La Tour in Degas's studio, see Félix Fénéon, *Œuvres plus que complètes*, Geneva, 1970, I, p. 393.

[180] The Karbowski watercolours are now in the bibliothèque de l'INHA. A photograph of the grand salon appeared in Doucet's Far East sale, Georges Petit, 28.XI.1903 (reproduced Nogent sur Marne, Libert, 26–30.VII.2005, Lot 133). Another photograph appeared in *L'Illustration* in 1907.

[181] Fleury 1911 commented: "Depuis quelques temps, les pastels de De La Tour ne sont pas en hausse dans les ventes publiques et il y a une tendance à pousser Perronneau, 'son rival', comme disent les critiques mal renseignés. Perronneau n'a jamais été le rival du pastelliste saint-quentinois." He went on to attribute the relative performance in the saleroom to the preponderance of fake La Tours.

[182] The only mention (p. 147, passed over for the index) is in an article in the *Daily Telegraph* of 23.VI.1900, noting the absence from the newly opened Wallace Collection of La Tour, "the greatest of the pastellistes".

relatively recently, no substantial body of his work has been visible in public collections outside Paris and Saint-Quentin (and being in pastel not always on view). The fog of anecdotes, much of which I argue was at least heavily embellished by his own vanity, has been at best a diversion from an intense study of the portraits themselves. Admirable though his quest for perfection may have been, it has resulted in a rather smaller œuvre than might have been expected, and this has become submerged under the masses of versions and copies that encumber a catalogue that has any pretension to completeness.

La Tour's ability to create very powerful portrait imagery – sufficient to allow weaker versions to be taken for originals – is the trap that has clouded our assessment of his genius. For ultimately he is to be judged not by his intellectual pretensions, his eccentricities, his philanthropy nor even his reputation or influence as an artist, but by his ability to put in front of us pictures that stop us in our tracks, force us to look and to think, and make us reflect on the magnificence of portraiture as a testament of human interaction at its most sensory.

IV.5 Prices since 1800

Much of the discussion about collecting and taste in the period after 1800 can be found reflected in the prices achieved by pastels at auction. This is discussed in more detail and in a broader context in §XIII of the PROLEGOMENA.

Prices for pastels collapsed at the end of the eighteenth century. After the death of La Tour's brother in 1807 it proved practically impossible to sell his pastels at auction[183] over the next few years – just as Pérignon had indicated: Rousseau was bought in at 30 francs against an estimate of 150 francs. The explanation of the poor result reported to the École gratuite de dessin (the vendors) was that "la nature des tableaux au pastel avait été un obstacle insurmontable à une plus haute élévation des prix. Ces tableaux sont actuellement également dédaignés par le marchand et par l'amateur." The three La Tour pastels in the 1867 Laperlier sale reached sums between 200 and 225 francs. The first real signs of revival in prices were in the Mme Denain sale (Paris, 6–7.IV.1893), where La Tour's Mlle Sallé reached Fr18,000. Four years later Mme Rouillé achieved Fr31,550 (in the pre-sale valuation conducted in 1890, Eugène Féral dismissed the pastel as "genre de La Tour" and valued it at a mere Fr300), reaching Fr365,000 in the Bardac sale in 1920 and, in 1926, Fr1 million (equivalent today to over £2 million in inflation-adjusted money). La Tour's value was already well known by 1896, when General Pitt-Rivers asked for information about prices of a pastel attributed to him; he was told "this is very valuable because De la Tour is quoted very well in Paris – about a thousand pounds."[184]

As noted above other La Tour pastels achieved high relative prices at the same time. The splendid La Tour Duval de l'Épinoy was not immediately recognised when it was originally sold locally in Beaumont-la-Ronce, 26–28.IV.1903, Fr5210; but it was acquired soon after by Jacques Doucet for Fr120,000. In the Doucet sale in 1912, it sold for Fr600,000 (equivalent today to perhaps £3 million), double the estimate, and reported at the time as the highest price ever paid for a pastel. (Its subsequent purchase by Calouste Gulbenkian was for an even higher sum.[185]) Writing in the *Burlington magazine*, Robert Dell, its first editor, revealed typically British fury:

> Is it in accordance with common sense that a masterpiece by Fragonard [le songe du mendiant] should fetch 137,500 francs, and a masterpiece by Latour, who can hardly be counted the equal of Fragonard, 660,000? The truth is that prices have no sort of relation to artistic value.

Prices relative to other pictures reached a zenith in the first quarter of the twentieth century, when works by La Tour fetched prices comparable with canvases of Fragonard or Watteau, and in excess of fine paintings by Rembrandt or Chardin.[186]

Another spectacular price was the £48,000 (Fr1.2 million at the time) agreed by Nathan Wildenstein with the Greek shipowner Nicolas Ambatielos for La Tour's président de Rieux in 1919 (Georges Clemenceau saw it earlier that year, and said "c'est le plus beau pastel que j'aie vu…il devrait rester en France"); however, Ambatielos became bankrupt before payment was made, and the picture returned to Wildenstein where it remained until Maurice de Rothschild bought it for an undisclosed sum in 1930. It was sold to the Getty in 1994, also for an undisclosed sum.

By 1959 even La Tour's préparations were saleable (at the Chrysler-Foy sale one sold for $11,000).

Today La Tour remains in demand, although his rival Liotard sometimes outpaces him in the saleroom. And neither achieves the prices seen for old master oil paintings, let alone contemporary art. Perhaps Robert Dell was right.

[183] See the Régistre des deliberations de l'École gratuite de dessin de Saint-Quentin in DOCUMENTS, 11.V.1810; inaccurate summaries in Dréolle de Nodon, pp. 119–20; Brière 1932a etc.

[184] By M. Cavini, of 24 King Street, St James's, enclosed with letter of Sir Thomas Grove, 11.X.1896. The pastel from the Pitt-Rivers collection may in fact have been the Perronneau once identified as of M. Miron.

[185] See ESSAYS, Duval where we estimate that the apportioned 1943 purchase price equates to some £4 million in modern money.

[186] The appendix in Gimpel 1963 includes paintings such as Fragonard's *Le Billet doux* (Fr420,000 at the Cronier sale in 1905, $250,000 in 1919); Watteau's *Deux cousines* (Fr220,000); and Rembrandt's *Titus* ($40,000 in 1919).

Exhibitions, general references etc.

Salon critiques and other texts will be found in DOCUMENTS, CONTEMPORARY BIOGRAPHIES *or* CRITICAL FORTUNE. *For full reference details to other sources cited, see the Dictionary* BIBLIOGRAPHY *and* EXHIBITIONS P.1800.

Monographic exhibitions

La Tour 1917, v. Maubeuge 1917

La Tour 1930: *Exposition des pastels de M. Q. de la Tour (1704–1788) appartenant au musée de Saint-Quentin et au musée du Louvre*, La Société du XVIIIe siècle, Paris, Salle de l'Orangerie, 12.VIII.–25.IX.1930

La Tour 1981: *Pastels de Maurice-Quentin de La Tour*, Paris, musée du Louvre, cabinet des dessins [no cat.]

La Tour 2004a: *Maurice-Quentin de La Tour, le voleur d'âmes*, Versailles, 13.IX.–10.XII.2004. Cat. Xavier Salmon

La Tour 2004b: *Une vie et une œuvre dans un fonds d'atelier*, Saint-Quentin, musée Antoine-Lécuyer, 16.VI.–13.XII.2004. Cat. Hervé Cabezas, in Salmon & al. 2004

La Tour 2004c: *Maurice-Quentin de La Tour au musée du Louvre*, Paris, musée du Louvre, 15.IX.2004 – 10.I.2005. Cat. Jean-François Méjanès, in Salmon & al. 2004

In addition La Tour pastels made up a substantial proportion of a number of other exhibitions: groups of at least 20 appeared in Paris 1878, Paris 1885a, Paris 1908a, Paris 1927a, Paris 1949 and Paris 2018.

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GENEALOGIES La Tour, Deschamps, Duliège, Garbe, Havart, Joret, Masse; SCHEMATIC TREE