

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

LEFÈVRE, Jean-Baptiste

Paris a.1719–p.1780

Unrelated to the painters Claude Lefebvre and Robert Lefèvre (*qq.n.*), a large family of artists in Paris was associated with the Académie de Saint-Luc. They spelt their name inconsistently Lefèvre, Lefeure, Le Fèvre, Lefebvre, Le Febure etc. The genealogy drawn from various documents in the Archives nationales lists at least a dozen maîtres peintres, although these no doubt included decorative artists and house painters. One of several brothers, the most important of his generation was a directeur de l'Académie de Saint-Luc, Jean Lefèvre, who died in 1744 leaving a widow, Angélique-Martine Berthelot, and nine children, of whom six were still minors, listed in the registre de clôtures for his posthumous inventaire (AN Y5326, 24.XII.1744).

Of these the only one to exhibit pastels was the eldest, Jean-Baptiste Lefèvre, presumably aged at least 25. The next was André-Claude-Martin Lefèvre d'Orgeval (also born a.1719, active c.1751–72; his forename is given as Henry in the 1744 registre), a miniaturist by whom number of miniatures are known, in a style broadly related to Nattier (his bankruptcy in 1763 revealed unpaid debts from numerous members of the aristocracy). (A pastellist listed in 1776 may have been Lefèvre d'Orgeval's son André-Simon-Auguste, *q.v.*) Both Jean-Baptiste and André-Claude-Martin's signatures appear on the 1744 registres de tutelles, but are very similar. A third brother, born after 1719, was Jean-Baptiste-François. The youngest child, Angélique-Félicité, became in 1760 the second wife of Jean-Nicolas Vernezobre (*q.v.*); Jean-Baptiste Lefèvre acted (with Pougin de Saint-Aubin, *q.v.*) as expert in the appraisal of the Vernezobre business following the death of pastel-maker's first wife (AN MC CXXII/711, 11.III.1760). Probably an aunt was the Marie-Madeleine Lefebvre (–1713) who, in 1679, married Jean Dupouch (–p.1713), maître peintre, quai Pelletier, and was the mother of La Tour's teacher Claude Dupouch (1690–1747). Dupouch's sister Gabrielle was married to a Pierre Pierre dit Latour ou "Delatour" (1707–1743), maître peintre à Paris. Among the family friends attending weddings of the Dupouch family 1724–31 were the sculptors Jean-Baptiste and Jean-Louis Lemoyne.

Jean-Baptiste Lefèvre was probably the "Lefèvre fils" who executed several religious paintings for Marie Leszczyńska at Versailles in 1741 and 1742 and is presumably the author of four oil portraits in Versailles dating from 1738 to 1768. Another Jean-Baptiste Lefèvre was *reçu* (par chef-d'œuvre) in 1755, possibly the younger brother, Jean-Baptiste-François. Accounts at Chantilly indicate a Lefebvre le Jeune (probably Lefèvre d'Orgeval) who was paid 762 livres for four miniatures in 1754, and another 336 livres in 1761 for a portrait of the prince de Condé; while his brother, Lefebvre l'aîné, "peintre du roi au pastel", received 408 livres "pour deux portraits de S.A.S. par luy faits les 22 avril et 15 mai 1761, dont un pour l'abbesse de Conflans". The 1761 accounts refer to a total for pictures by the brothers "tant en huile que pastel et

mignature"; similarities between the surviving paintings, pastels and miniatures suggest they worked closely together.

Lefèvre was *reçu* maître peintre-sculpteur (comme fils de maître et par expérience) 10.IX.1751, conseiller 1756, professeur by 1769. He was frequently called upon to provide legal reports for disputes at the Châtelet over portraits in oil and miniature. He was listed in the *Almanach des peintres* of 1776 (p. 116), and exhibited oils and pastels at the Salons de Saint-Luc of 1753, 1756, 1762, 1764 and 1774, his address being quai Pelletier (shared with his brother Lefèvre d'Orgeval), at the stationery shop *A la couronne d'or*. This is presumably the "maison quai Pelletier où pend pour enseigne le drapeau de la ville par Charpentier et du Motteau" leased for six years to "Jean-Baptiste Lefevre, peintre, professeur de l'Académie de Saint-Luc et Marie-Genève Lemenu", 10.III.1761 (AN MC/XXX/366). Lefèvre and Genève Lemenu had married on 13.I.1740 at Saint-Gervais; she was the daughter of a maître horloger, Étienne Lemenu, and the widow of another, Louis-Melchior Balthazar.

Lefèvre took on several apprentices: among them, in .VIII.1756, the 16-year-old Claude-François Langlois (transferred a few months later to François Le Doux, another peintre-doreur); in 1761, Guillaume-Maurice Tanchon; and later the genre painter Gabriel-Jean-Louis Rabigot (c.1753–1834) for five years from 18.II.1769 (brevet d'apprentissage, AN). Rabigot later married Elisabeth Trinquesse (Saint-Méry, 15.I.1780); Jean-Baptiste Lefèvre witnessed the contract two days previously, the last record we have for the pastellist.

Even from the small group of oils and pastels that have survived, it is clear that Lefèvre's work was uneven in quality. Working in the conventions for portraiture familiar in Tocqué or the Van Loo, his portraits, whether in oil or pastel, often include accessories such as books or letters; costumes are meticulously detailed and attract more interest than the bland physiognomies he gives his sitters. His portrait of the marquis de Paulmy shown at the 1774 Salon de Saint-Luc was attacked because it was copied from another painter, and he was dismissed as a mediocre copyist while having some talent in his own right.

The signature on a painting of Marie-Thérèse Bouchardon, "JB Lefebvre Pinxit x^{brc} 1747" does not however correspond with the pastellist's spelling or handwriting as found on the 1748 pastel "Lefeure p^{sit} 1748" or the legal documents such as the 1744 tuition (AN Y4630) or the estate inventory for Mme Vernezobre, these last three being quite consistent.

A Lefèvre who exhibited miniatures at the Salon de la Correspondance in 1779 did so from the rue des Bons-Enfants, maison de M. d'Ennery, suggesting he may have been descended from Nicolas Lefebvre, peintre, recteur of the Académie de Saint-Luc, and a cousin of Jacques-Charles Allais (*q.v.*). Several homonyms studied under Vien: Dominique Le Fèvre des Forges (1727–1769) was a pupil at the Académie royale from 1756, winning first prize in .IV.1757, and was sent to Rome; Étienne Le

Fèvre was a pupil at the Académie royale from 1758 to 1765, under Vien (he may be the Lefevre awarded medals in .VII.1759 and .X.1759, and possibly again in 1765); Alexandre Le Fèvre, born in Paris around 1743, the son of a draper, studied at the Académie under Vien from 1765; a Lefebvre was awarded first prize by the Académie royale in 1775; a citoyenne Lefebvre exhibited miniatures at the Salon de 1793.

Bibliography

Various AN documents; Bénézit; Chantilly 2007; Engerand 1900; Goulon-Sigwalt 1995; Guiffrey 1915, pp. 39, 70, 355f; Hofstetter 2008; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; Pappe & al. 2008; Ratouis de Limay 1946; Wildenstein 1921, pp. 97f; Wildenstein 1966

GENEALOGIES [Lefèvre peintres](#)

Salon critiques

Anon., *Lettre à M. le marquis de *** sur les peintures et sculptures exposées à l'hôtel de Jabac en 1774*, par M. J.... de l'Académie de peinture et de sculpture de la ville de ..., La Haye (Paris), 1774:

Monsieur Le Febure n'ayant mis qu'une copie, on ne peut juger de son mérite tel qui a du talent quand il suit sa marche, est souvent un mediocre copiste.

Anon., "Exposition des peintures, sculptures & autres ouvrages de MM. de l'Académie de St Luc, faite le 25 août 1774 & jours suivants, à l'hôtel Jabach..."; *Mercur de France*, x.1774, p. 185:

Les portraits peints à l'huile, au pastel ou en miniature par MM. le Noir, le Fèvre, Nicolet, Garand, Glain, Darmancourt, Bornet, Naudin, Lallié, Rabillon, de Saint Jean, par Mlles Navarre & Labille, ont fait connoître les talens de ces différens artistes.

Anon., *Il n'y a pas de règle sans exception, ou Le Bavard sur l'exposition... de Saint-Luc 1774*:

Il me semble que lorsque ce sont nos ouvrages que nous voulons exposer en public, on desirait supprimer les copies. Est-ce qu'il y a ici, dit mon maître d'un air étonné, eh, par bleu, regarde le no. 19? Il est vrai que c'est le portrait du protecteur de cette academie qu'on pouvait se dispenser d'y mettre, et qui surement avait d'autres affaires que de se prêter a des seances, a la bonne heure, dit-il, mais il fallait le copier mieux, et avec plus de grace que cette petite femme, ajoutai-je, d'après Boucher, qu'on voit dans toutes les boutiques des marchands, et que M. Bonnet d'Auval donne apparamment comme de lui.

Pastels

J.47.101 AUTO PORTRAIT, pstl, Salon de Saint-Luc 1753, no. 129

J.47.102 M. Belissen [Jean-Paul de BELLISSEN], chevalier, secrétaire général de l'ordre hospitalier du Saint-Esprit [à Montpellier, commandeur de la commanderie de la Fauvette], Salon de Saint-Luc 1753, no. 124 (Paris, 6.XII.1924, H4850)

J.47.103 [?]Auguste-Louis BERTIN de Blagny (1725–1792), conseiller d'État, trésorier général, associé de l'Académie des inscriptions 1749, intendant des deniers des Ordres royaux 1758, pstl, 74x60 (Cailloux 1984. Paris, Drouot, Couturier, éc. de Nicolay, 31.III.1999, Lot 8 repr., éc. fr., est. H15–25,000. Lille, Mercier, 1.XII.2019, Lot 283 repr., goût de La Tour, inconnu, est. €1000–1500; Saint-Martin-Boulogne, Enchères Côte d'Opale, 14.VII.2021, Lot 121 repr., est. €600–800; Saint-Martin-Boulogne, Enchères Côte

d'Opale, 23.x.2021, Lot 136 repr., est. €1500–2500). Exh.: Paris 1984c, no. 24 repr., as by La Tour [new attr., ?] Φαδν



J.47.106 M. BRUNAN, frère de [M. de l'Isle], m/u, Salon de Saint-Luc 1756, no. 77

J.47.107 Mme de CHALANGE en Savoyarde, pstl, Salon de Saint-Luc 1753, no. 122

J.47.108 M. CHANDERLOS, pstl, 65x54, Salon de Saint-Luc 1756, no. 70

J.47.109 Louis V Joseph de Bourbon, 8^e prince de CONDÉ (1736–1818), pstl, 1761 (maison de Condé: abbesse de Conflans). Lit.: Chantilly 2007, p. 32 n.r.

J.47.11 Louis V Joseph de Bourbon, 8^e prince de CONDÉ, pstl, 1761 (maison de Condé). Lit.: Chantilly 2007, p. 32 n.r.

Emmanuel-Félicité de Durfort, duc de DURAS (Galerie Frederick Chanoit, 2003, as by Jean-Baptiste Lefèvre) [v. Valade]

J.47.112 M. DURIEUX, m/u, 61x50, Salon de Saint-Luc 1756, no. 71

J.47.1124 M. de Rozeville [Alexis-Thomas-Édouard FOSSART DE ROZEVILLE (1706–1768), avocat au parlement de Paris, pstl/2 fls ppr bl./toile/châssis, 91.5x72.8; & pendant:

J.47.1125 épouse, née [Marguerite-Angélique] Collignon de Fréneuse [(1727–1762)], pstl/2 fls ppr bl./toile/châssis, 91.5x72.8, c.1751 (Louvre inv. RF 29662/29661. Legs Laveissère 1947). Exh.: Paris 1963b (*Madame*), attr. La Tour; Paris 2018, attr. Frey [?]. Lit.: Monnier 1972, no. 72/71 n.r./repr., as by La Tour; portrait of d'Albespierre repr. erroneously; Salmon 2018, no. 61/62 repr., attr. Frey [?]; Jeffares 2018e; [Jeffares 2018g](#); Jeffares 2018h; Salmon 2019, p. 65 n.r., rejecting Lefèvre; Anne Doridou-Heim, “Dans la famille Bouchardon...”, *Gazette Drouot*, 9.IX.2021, n.r. [new attr., ?], new identification 2006] φανσ



J.47.113 La marquise de GUERCHY, née Marie-Françoise du Roux de Sigy (–1806), pstl, 40x33 (duc d'Harcourt). Exh.: Paris 1984e, no. 101 n.r. [unclear which Lefèvre]

J.47.1134 M. de *** [Claude-Éléonore de LA FRENAYE (1696–1778), conseiller du roi], quartinier de la ville [de Paris 1752–54]; & pendant: J.47.1135 son épouse [née Marie-Geneviève de Dessus Le Moutier], pstl, Salon de Saint-Luc 1753, no. 121

J.47.114 M. de L'ISLE, jouant de la flûte, m/u, Salon de Saint-Luc 1756, no. 76

J.47.115 Le marquis de PAULMY, protecteur de l'Académie de Saint Luc [Antoine-René de Voyer, marquis de Paulmy d'Argenson (1722–1787), ambassadeur, secrétaire d'État à la Guerre 1751, 1757–58; chancelier de la reine 1775; chancelier de Saint-Lazare 1757; grand trésorier-commandeur du Saint-Esprit 1758; de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres 1756, de l'Académie française 1748; protecteur de l'Académie de Saint-Luc 1774], a/r Louis-Michel Van Loo, m/u, Salon de Saint-Luc 1774, no. 19

Rozeville, v. Fossart

J.47.12 Homme à la veste brodée tenant ses gants, pstl, 74x60, sd “Lefèvre/1743” (Paris, PIASA, 15.VI.2001, Lot 99 repr., est. ₣30–40,000, ₣28,000) φ



J.47.122 Homme, pstl, 64.5x54, sd ✓ 1746 (Paris, Drouot, Ader Tajan, 15.V.1992, Lot 160 n.r., est. ₣10,000)

J.47.123 Homme, pstl, 73.5x59.5, sd “Lefèvre/pxit 1748” (Geneva, mA, 1986-11. Don Pierre Mérillon, Thônex, 1981). Exh.: Geneva 1987, no. 26, repr. Lit.: Loche 1996, no. 128 φσ



J.47.126 Femme en corsage de velours bleu, bordé de fourrure, tenant un livre, 64x53, sd ✓ “Lefebvre p^{xiii} 1746” (Mme X...; Paris, Drouot, 1.XII.1926, Lot 5 repr., as sd 1745, ₣7000. Paris, Drouot, Ader Tajan, 15.V.1992, Lot 161 n.r., est. ₣8000; Paris, Drouot, Ader Tajan, 25.XI.1993, Lot 12 n.r., Éc. fr., est. ₣6000. Douai, Patrick Declerck, 16.XI.2003, Lot 258, est. €1100–1500, as sd 1746; Paris, Drouot, Libert, 23.VI.2004, Lot 64 n.r., est. €1200–1500. Lille, Mercier, 26.XI.2017, Lot 298 repr., est. €1500–2000. Paris, Drouot, Lombrail, Teuquiam, 21.XI.2018, Lot 20 repr., est. €1000–1200). Lit.: Ratouis de Limay 1946, “assez médiocre” φ

J.47.129 Mme ***, pstl, Salon de Saint-Luc 1753, no. 123

J.47.13 Femme à la robe bleue tenant un livre, pstl, 54x45 (Argenteuil, Regis Thiollet, 6.III.2001, Éc. fr., suiveur de Nattier, vers 1760). Lit.: *Gazette Drouot*, 2.III.2001, repr. p. 143 [new attr., ?] φ

J.47.13 Femme à la robe bleue tenant un livre, pstl, 54x45 (Argenteuil, Regis Thiollet, 6.III.2001, Éc. fr., suiveur de Nattier, vers 1760). Lit.: *Gazette Drouot*, 2.III.2001, repr. p. 143 [new attr., ?] φ

J.47.13 Femme à la robe bleue tenant un livre, pstl, 54x45 (Argenteuil, Regis Thiollet, 6.III.2001, Éc. fr., suiveur de Nattier, vers 1760). Lit.: *Gazette Drouot*, 2.III.2001, repr. p. 143 [new attr., ?] φ



J.47.132 Femme à la robe bleue tenant un éventail, pstl, 72x59 [c.1750] (Saint-Cloud, Guillaume Le Floch, 8.11.2015, Lot 13 repr., attr., est. €2–3000; La Maison du Roy, Saint Ouen) [new attr. 2014, ?] φαν



- J.47.136 Homme; & pendant: J.47.137 son épouse, tenant des fleurs, m/u, 61x50, Salon de Saint-Luc 1756, no. 73/72
- J.47.138 Jeune enfant, m/u, 55x46, Salon de Saint-Luc 1756, no. 74
- J.47.139 Quatre portraits, m/u, Salon de Saint-Luc 1762, no. 35
- J.47.14 Plusieurs portraits, m/u, Salon de Saint-Luc 1764, no. 13