

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

LUBIN, Jacques

Paris c.1655 – p.1709

While almost all art history reference works continue to give the portrait engraver Lubin's dates as 1637–c.1695, they overlook the research of Duplessis and Jal which demonstrated that he was probably born later and was still alive, in Rochefort, in 1703, although thought then to be ill. However a three year old daughter was buried there (paroisse Saint-Louis) on 10.XII.1709 with no indication of her father being dead. Her mother, née Anne Vigneron, was Lubin's second wife, and at their marriage in Rungis, Val-de-Marne, on 8.I.1699 (contrat, 6.XI.1698) Lubin's age was given as c.40 (according to Jal). A more accurate figure may be the 17 given in the contrat d'allouage with Étienne Gantrel (16.II.1673, AN MC/XLIII/147); there is however no record of a previous apprenticeship. Lubin's first wife Anne Sauvé died in .IX.1690, leaving at least four children; they were connected with several families of Parisian engravers. Lubin's acte de décès has not been located, and it seems likely that he left Rochefort after the death of his protector in 1710. These actes describe Lubin as a garde de la prévôté de l'hôtel du roi, or hoqueton, a regiment not normally associated with artists; he is also described, on the basis of stylistic similarity rather than documentation, as a pupil of Edelinck.

Such few details of his career as are known are to be found in the correspondence of the collector Michel V Bégon (1638–1710), intendant de Rochefort from 1688, with his friend Esprit Cabart de Villermont (c.1628–1707), gouverneur de Cayenne, published in Duplessis 1874. Lubin played a key role in connection with Charles Perrault's series of *Hommes illustres* which Bégon initiated. His concept required engraved portraits of his subjects which he wanted to be copied from the collection he had assembled at Rochefort or when necessary taken from life. In a letter of 8.II.1689 expresses the hope that the engraver to be sent to Rochefort “sache faire des pastels afin qu'il puisse graver les portraits qui ne l'ont jamais été, que je trouverai dans des couvents, ou chez les parents de ceux dont je veux faire l'éloge.”

In a further letter of 3.IV.1689 Bégon mentions a pastel of Cabart's son which has apparently been sent to demonstrate the engraver's skills, but Bégon found that “le pastel n'en est pas délicatement fait et j'en ay plusieurs qui sont incomparablement plus beaux”; nevertheless “il ressemble et je me souviens bien qu'il a de l'air de M^r vostre fils.” In spite of his reservations, by 30.IV.1689 he had engaged Lubin who was to set out for Rochefort immediately: he has been relieved to learn that Lubin “a fait les pastels des Pères Petau et Sirmond.” It is unclear why “pastels” were used, as Lubin seems to have copied existing engravings of these theologians to produce his own prints.

The suggestion by “G. D.” (possibly Georges Dubosc) in 1918 that Lubin was also responsible for 52 portraits of famous people and 32 family members in Bégon's inventaire

seems unjustifiable (all were noted as in “bordure dorée”, but not behind glass as was usually noted in such inventaires).

Bibliography

G. D. [?], *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LXXVIII, 1918, 413; Duplessis 1874; Jal 1872; Le Comte 1702, III, p. 433; Richard Manning, “Jacques Lubin and French printmaking in the *Grand Siècle*”, MA thesis, Courtauld, 2017

Pastels

J.5004.101 Le fils d'Esprit CABART DE VILLERMONT, pstl (Michel Bégon 1689). Lit.: Jal 1872, p. 172 n.r., citing letter by Michel Bégon to Cabart père of 3.IV.1689

J.5004.2 [Denis] PETAU [(1583–1652), jésuite], pstl. ?A/r Lasne (FD 1115)

J.5004.3 [Jacques] SIRMOND [(1559–1651), jésuite], pstl. ?A/r Vermeulen (FD 2400)