

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

PELLECHET, Jean-Antoine

Vercel 16.IV.1721 – Fribourg 14.IV.1758

Le Sr Pellechet was the inventor of a type of oil pastel, a method of preparing canvas or silk so that special pastel could be applied directly, analogous to Reifenstein's process. (There is no evidence that he drew with them himself.) On 2.VI.1764, a subcommittee consisting of Hallé, Bachelier, La Tour and Roslin reported on this method on the application of Pellechet's widow: "le résultat est que ce pastel s'attache et prend toute la consistance d'un tableau peint à l'huile"; the procedure was easy to apply, and the results stable. A certificate was issued, and Mme Pellechet wrote to Marigny offering to sell the invention to the crown; she enclosed a printed prospectus offering prepared materials giving chez Mlle Sellier or Cellier (*q.v.*; she was Cochin's cousin) as the address. Cochin wrote to Marigny confirming that the artists' reports were favourable, La Tour in particular having tested the method; its principal use was for painters who wanted pastel studies to be passed among students for copying without damage. In view of veuve Pellechet's health, a pension for her and her five daughters was recommended. The Académie's certificate was renewed on 6.XII.1783 on the application of Pellechet's relative, Marie, Mme Danycan de l'Épine, who was able to demonstrate that the 1764 samples had not degraded.

Mme Danycan can be identified as Marie-Françoise Pellechet (1743–p.1789), wife of Noël-Hélène-François Danycan de l'Épine (1723–1763x75), a retired capitaine de dragons who lived at the château de La Ville-Fumée, paroisse de Plelo, in Brittany, and had inherited from his father, the armateur Noël Danycan de l'Épine (1656–1735), mining concessions at Châtelaudren. These led to complex litigation in the 1760s against Joseph Paris Duverney in which Antoine-Joseph Lorient (*q.v.*) was also involved. After Danycan's death, his widow renounced her husband's estate, but obtained an order reclaiming her trousseau worth 945 livres 11 sous and a sum of 600 livres for mourning clothes (Archives des Côtes-du-Bord, c.1780).

Although not verified in parish records from Vercel or Pontarlier, it seems probable that Mme Danycan's father, Jean-François-Xavier Pellechet, was the brother of the inventor, Jean-Antoine Pellechet, ingénieur, inspecteur des travaux en ciment des maisons royales, originaire de Pontarlier, whose papers (now in the Archives départementales des Yvelines) included numerous documents relating to Lorient (*q.v.*), who was also from Pontarlier and had married Anne-Marie Pellechet in Courtemaîche, Jura, 2.X.1746. Jean-Antoine Pellechet was born in Vercel in 1721 to François Pellechet and Marguerite Roch (a François Pellechet, possibly Jean-Antoine's brother, was curé in Courtemaîche). He married Anne-Denise Guyon in Pontarlier on 19.II.1743 (Jean-François-Xavier Pellechet was a witness, although the relationship was not specified); the male descendants included four generations of architects and inspecteurs des bâtiments. After Pellechet's early death, in 1758, Anne-Denise was admitted to the merchants of the town of Pontarlier. Mme Lorient

was sister to Jean-Antoine Pellechet and Mme Danycan's aunt. Jean-Antoine's son, Marc-Augustin Pellechet (1743–1764), enrolled as an élève at the École de l'Académie royale, initially under the protection of Challe, later of Cochin; the register shows him living "ché M. Lorio machinier du roy, son oncle, au Louvre, pres l'ateleir de M. Amedée Van Loo." He died in the rue Guénégaud, described as a "dessinateur" (he may well have used pastel, but there is no proof to justify a separate entry), his pauper's funeral at Saint-André-des-Arts was unattended by relatives (fichier Laborde). Valade's portrait of Lorient descended to Jean-Antoine Pellechet's great-great-grandson.

It is possible that his discovery of the special pastel procedure owed something to his experience working with cement.

Bibliography

"La veuve Pellechet et le secret à faire le pastel au huile inventée par son feu mari", 23.II.1767, AN O/1/1911 14; letter Cochin to Marigny, 14.III.1767; Ratouis de Limay 1946, pp. 141f; Chatelus 1991, p. 70

GENEALOGIES [Cellier, Lorient, Pellechet](#)