

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

TIRMAN, Alexandre

Saint-Quentin 1724–1.IX.1790

Also Tirmane; Tirmant (the latter appears on his burial entry, Sainte-Pécinne, Saint-Quentin, 2.XI.1790). Three of the known pastels are inscribed “Tirman le jeune” (one includes his forename, Alexandre). Alexandre Tirman’s parents were Joseph Tirman “maistre peintre” and his wife, Marianne-Joseph Plouvier. (In the parish register for Saint-Jean, Saint-Quentin, is an entry on 9.IX.1726 for the death, aged 4–5 years, of Jean-Quentin Tirman, the pastellist’s brother.)

Théophile Eck, conservateur of the musée at Saint-Quentin, was mistaken in identifying the pastellist with the homonymous peintre-décorateur. Tirman l’aîné is known for his inept 1768 restoration of a seventeenth century oil painting of the Grand’place at Saint-Quentin (his added figures from the Compagnie de canonniers-arquebusiers were completely out of proportion). It was probably this Tirman that Mme de Genlis engaged to decorate her theatre at Genlis. His conceit (he was convinced that he had the talent of Raphael and Rubens) and gullibility afforded Mme de Genlis much pleasure over the eight months while he executed the commission. She also describes his making a portrait of her (medium unspecified): apparently she applied a great deal of make-up, decked herself in flowers and arranged her hair in long unpowdered tresses, giving her the appearance of a Gorgon. This description might, allowing for exaggeration, correspond to the anonymous pastel at Chantilly (*v.* Éc. fr.). However it seems that she was writing around 1763 (during her inconvenient pregnancy); she says that Tirman was then 50 years old, and, after he return from Genlis to Saint-Quentin (to his wife and two daughters – she does not mention a son or brother), lived another 12 years – while the pastellist was still alive in 1783 when he was appointed an external member of the jury of the prize established in Saint-Quentin by La Tour. In the registre de délibérations de l’École gratuite de dessin, 1.IV.1783 (F° 38r), Tirman was described as “peintre et eleve de M. de La Tour.”

Bibliography

Bénézit; Théophile Eck, “Un peintre Saint-Quentinois. Plaisante aventure”, *Mémoires de la Société académique de Saint-Quentin*. XVI, 1913, pp. 291–97; *Mémoires inédits de Mme de Genlis*, Paris, 1825, I, pp. 218ff; Quentin de La Fons, ed. Ch. Gomart, *Histoire particulière de la ville de de l’église de Saint-Quentin*, 1856, II, p. 54n; Séverin 1993, p. 10

Pastels

J.717.101 [Charles-Georges-Alexandre] LECAISNE [(1730–), échevin de Saint-Quentin], à l’âge de 28 ans; & pendant: J.717.102 épouse (∞ 1758), née Marie-Jeanne Desains (1735–1811)], grand-mère de Louis Le Caisne, grande-tante d’Henri Martin, à l’âge de 23 ans, pstl/ppr, 46.5x38.2, inscr. *verso* “J’ai été peinte le vingt-sept fevrier mil sept cent cinquante neuf...par le sieur Tirman le jeune, peintre à Saint-Quentin”, 1759 (Saint-Quentin, musée Antoine-Lécuyer, inv. 2002.8.1/2 FA. Palais

de Justice a.1917). Exh.: Maubeuge 1917, no. - /113 [new identification] Φσσ



Photos courtesy musée Antoine-Lécuyer, Saint-Quentin

J.717.106 Homme de qualité, pstl, 54x46, sd *verso* “12 septembre 1757” (Paris, Lenormand Dayen, 11.XII.1992, Lot 17 n.r., est. Fr–12,000, Fr11,000)

J.717.107 Un abbé, pstl, 43.5x36, sd *verso* “Alexandre Tirman pinxit ano. 1761”; inscr. “Peint par Tirman le jeune le 3 avril 1761” (PC 2010) φ

