

Glain, Noël-Thomas Duguey

NEIL JEFFARES



[Léon-Pascal Glain](#)

Noël-Thomas DUGUEY [Zoomify](#)

Pastel on paper, 67x53.5 cm

Signed and dated on cross-bar of strainer
“Glain 1748”



Private collection

PROVENANCE: The sitter’s nephew, Thomas-Louis Duguey du Fay, prévôt général de la maréchaussée, province du Soissonnais. Possibly his son, Marie-Thomas Duguey du Fay (1775–1846); his widow, née Anne-Marie Chrétien de Sainte-Berthe (–1860). Enghien, Champin, Lombrail & Gautier, 5 May 1985, Lot 59. Paris, PIASA, 4 December 2002, Lot 98 reproduced, sitter unknown. Nice, Hôtel des ventes Nice Riviera, 28 November 2009, Lot 1 n.r., as sd 1760

LITERATURE: Bénézit; Jeffares 2006, pp. 209, 210, not reproduced; *Dictionary of pastellists* online, J.351.126

GENEALOGY: [Duguey](#)

NOËL-THOMAS DUGUEY, seigneur du Fay, who must have been born in the first few years of the eighteenth century to judge from his age in this portrait and the age of his siblings, was appointed avocat au parlement in 1736, and two years later succeeded his father Thomas Duguey as greffier and maître des Eaux et forêts. The system of governance of the rivers and forests (including hunting and fishing rights as well as timber etc.) in France goes back to the fourteenth century, when a grand-maître des Eaux et Forêts was appointed by the king to take administrative and legal responsibility for the conservation and prevention of abuses in relation to what were, and remained in the eighteenth century, extremely important sources of wealth. Various reforms took place, notably that of 1575 when Henri III stripped the grand-maître of his sole powers and divided the jurisdiction into seventeen départements, each with its own grand-maître. Colbert’s 1669 ordonnance put the system onto a more organised footing, establishing “maîtrises particulières”, “grand maîtrises” and “tables de marbres” for the resolution of disputes at the level of parlements.¹ One of the more important of these jurisdictions was that of Soissons, presided over by Étienne Rivié (1678–1748), to whom the Dugueys were closely attached. Rivié was the nephew and heir of a blacksmith, ennobled by Louvois it said for saving his favourite horse. Fortune followed: by 1704 Étienne Rivié was able

¹ The system is explained in Jean-Claude Waquet, *Les Grands Maîtres des eaux et forêts de France*, Geneva, 1978, which also has some information about the Duguey family. Other sources include various documents in the Archives nationales, e.g. the appointment of 9 May 1738, cote V/1/315 pièce 94.

to construct an imposing mansion² in the rue Saint-Marc in Paris, to designs by L'Assurance; it was sold to Desmaretz by 1712 and was later the property of the duc de Luxembourg (1752). Much of his wealth arose from his position as grand-maître des eaux et forêts de la généralité de Soissons (from 1712).

An arrêt du conseil (14 June 1723) refers, in relation to the maîtrise de Clermont-en-Beauvoisis, to “maître Thomas Duguey, greffier de la maîtrise, nommé par ledit sieur Rivié pour notable.” Thomas Duguey, from as early as 1724, had his own imposing property, in the town of Clermont (Oise): the maison de l'Écu was created from the hôtel de Saint-Christophle and the hôtel de l'Echiquier. His son remained close to the Rivié family, who settled property yielding 600 livres on “Noël-Thomas du Guey, avocat en Parlement, seigneur de Fay”.³ Duguey's position was variously described as greffier, maître and as secrétaire to Rivié; Duguey (who also lived in the hôtel Rivié, 30–32 rue du Sentier, Paris 2^e, neighbouring Mme de Pompadour) even described himself as Rivié's “intendant” to the commissaire come to attach the seals following Rivié's death in 1748.

It was in this year that he was portrayed by the 25-year-old Glain, then at the start of his career. The artist uses a vigorous, Latourien approach, particularly for the face, where a range of reds, ochres and oranges are applied on a blue-grey base which is allowed to show through around the eyes and hairline, and is strengthened again on the surface with the addition of a darker, mid-blue, which alternates with white and yellow ochres in broad cross-hatching on the sitter's right cheek, all of which combine to give the sitter a rustic appearance, perhaps in keeping with his profession. Elsewhere the pastel is applied more thinly: the area behind the sitter's left jaw is purposely stumped to create the light space (a trick La Tour learnt from Restout), while further to the right depth is added with more blue. The main sense of colour is provided by the sitter's mid-blue coat – the buttons on the cuff outlined only in black chalk – and orange waistcoat, embroidered in gold with white touches to capture the reflection of the light. Plain lace cuffs and jabot likewise draw the eye, while the bag-wig receives only perfunctory treatment with straight stabs of white chalk in two directions attempting to indicate the fall of light on silk in a manner found in many Glain pastels.

It is one of his earliest known portraits: a couple of pastels dated 1747 are known. Of more significance perhaps is the pastel Glain made the same year, of Jean-Baptiste-Nicolas Matigny de La Boissière, maître des eaux et forêts en la généralité de Soissons.⁴ Evidently these gave satisfaction: only a few years later, at the Salon de Saint-Luc 1752, he exhibited the portrait of “Mme Rivié” (no. 177), who must be Étienne Rivié's widow, Françoise-Anne-Marguerite de La Rivière-Paulmy (–1762), a relative of d'Argenson. (Their son, chevalier Charles-Jean-Madeleine Rivié de Ricquebourg (1729–1753), was unmarried when he died of smallpox.)

Among his other properties Duguey acquired the château du Fay in Maurecourt, where his great-nephew was born. This building, whose origins date to the time of the Vikings, was given by Henri IV to the comte de Lysle, premier louvetier, and included over 100 rooms. It was partly destroyed during the revolution. Among other documents in the Archives nationales is a receipt from a Jacques-François Gautier (maître menuisier 1731, rue Barre-du-Bec) dated 1761 suggesting that Duguey commissioned furniture of some quality.

Duguey seems never to have married. His sister Françoise married a procureur du roi en la police de Soissons, and in 1761 Duguey settled some land on his niece Geneviève-Adélaïde du Tour de Noirfosse (that is the last record we have of him). The main part of his estate however passed to his nephew Louis-Thomas Duguey du Fay (–1815), capitaine 1786, lieutenant-colonel de cavalerie 1789, prévôt général de la maréchaussée, province du Soissonnais, aux États-Généraux 1789. In 1767 he married Marie-Anne-Adélaïde Chrétien de Sainte-Berthe, daughter of a local dignitary and niece of his step-father, members of a family which traced its position in the town back to 1539; and their son, Marie-Thomas Duguey du Fay (1775–1846), chevalier de la

² Germain Brice, *Description de la ville de Paris*, 1752, p. 382.

³ *Inventaire sommaire des archives départementales de la Somme*, 1883, p. 189.

⁴ Bordeaux, Briscadieu, 23 November 2024, Lot 42, as inconnu; identified from old inscription.

Légion d'honneur, maire de Clermont married another member of the same family, Anne-Marie Chrétien de Sainte-Berthe (–1860). They had no children, and when his widow died, her fortune, estimated at 1,500,000 francs, was left to the town to be used to build the hospital which dominates Clermont today. It seems likely that the pastel was part of the assets dispersed at that time, although no trace of it is found until 1985.

Neil Jeffares