Two pastels of the Journu family by Perronneau

NEIL JEFFARES

Jean-Baptiste Perronneau
Mme Antoine MOLLÈS, née Angélique Journu
Pastel on blue paper, 60x48.5 cm
Signed, in pencil, upper right: “P.”, c.1756

Jean-Jacques Perronneau
Mme Antoine MOLLÈS, née Angélique Journu
Pastel on brown laid paper, 61.5x49.0 cm
Signed, in pencil, upper right: “Perronneau”; date, almost illegible, inscribed upper left: “1757”

Jean JOURNU Maisonneuve 1757
Pastel on brown laid paper, 61.5x49.0 cm
Signed, in pencil, upper right: “Perronneau”; date, almost illegible, inscribed upper left: “1757”


LITERATURE: Bénézit (1999); Dominique d’Arnoult, “Séances de pose chez Jean Baptiste Perronneau en 1759 pour les portraits au pastel de Pierre Honoré Robbé de Beausset et de Charles Nicolas Cochin”, conférence à Saint-Quentin, Colloque La Tour,

THE JOURNU FAMILY\(^1\) were merchants in Bordeaux; their rise from relative obscurity to wealth, political and judicial influence, and finally a peerage during the course of a century was not untypical of the families who were among the most important patrons of pastellists. Claude Journu (1680–1742) was the son of a Lyon merchant who moved to Bordeaux at the start of the century; in 1710, still a marchand-droguiste, he married Jeanne Ollivier (fig. 1 shows Perronneau’s oil painting, now in the Fogg), the heiress of a fur trader who brought a dowry of some 2000 livres. At his death thirty-two years later he had become a wealthy négociant, largely from the sugar refining business he established in the faubourg Sainte-Croix, and had built a new house on the rue de la Rousselle to house his spice and drugs businesses. His second son Bonaventure (fig. 2, also in the Fogg), the leading light of the next generation, developed the business much further. By the middle of the century, the Journu firm, now known as B\(^e\) Journu & Cie, included Bonaventure and his brothers Jean, known in the family as Maisonneuve,\(^2\) Jean-Baptiste, dit le Hollandais, Louis, dit Montagny and Olivier. They owned six ships, of up to 700 tons, operating the slave and sugar trades from the port of Bordeaux.

In 1742 Bonaventure married Claire Boyer-Fonfrède, the daughter of a négociant-armateur. Although she had a relatively modest dowry of 12,000 francs, the marriage brought together the two most important Catholic families in Bordeaux, a union strengthened when Bonaventure’s sister Marie-Angélique married Pierre Boyer-Fonfrède in 1759. The business affairs of the Journu and Boyer-Fonfrède families were closely intertwined, and extended over an international network in which Amsterdam was particularly important (as it was for other Bordeaux merchants such as the Nairac family). Bonaventure’s brother Jean-Baptiste, known as le Hollandais (fig. 3 shows Perronneau’s pastel) was located there from 1740. The family’s prosperity led to Bonaventure’s election as consul de la bourse des marchands in 1770.

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\(^2\) The forenames of Jean, dit Maisonneuve and Jean-Baptiste, le Hollandais are interchanged in several sources (Butel, Meaudre de Lapouyade and the consular records in the Archives de la Chambre du commerce de Guînne) but the family records are confirmed by Maisonneuve’s death certificate (9 November 1805, *Greffes des tribunaux de la Gironde*, 4E897, no. 491).
firm’s focus shifted towards ship commissioning, and in 1773 the sugar-refining business was sold to the Nairac family, their Protestant rivals (the Journu were not merely Catholics, but staunchly so: one of the brothers was a chanoine, while a sister became an abbess). After the American war, Bordeaux became an important centre for the slave trade, and both the Journu and Nairac families were active. The journal of Paul-Alexandre Brizard, captain of the Patriote, a 312-ton Journu slave-trader, provides a graphic account of the difficulties of the long sea voyages.

Just before his death in 1781, Bonaventure bought the office of conseiller-secrétaire du roi en la chancellerie près le parlement de Dijon, for 72,000 livres, conferring nobility on himself and his heirs. The family had amassed a number of properties in the vicinity of Bordeaux, including the maison de Quadrille built by the four brothers heading the family firm (it subsequently belonged to the Dames du Sacré-Cœur); but Bonaventure commissioned a superb hôtel built by the brothers Durand, pupils of Victor Louis, at 3 cours du Chapeau-Rouge, beside that built for his brother-in-law Pierre Boyer-Fonfrède and forming part of the complex designed by Victor Louis in the 1770s which later became the préfecture de Gironde and included the hôtels Legrix and Saige. In contrast to its neighbours, Bonaventure had his hôtel decorated in an opulent and ostentatious style; Victor Louis nevertheless approved, describing the house as the “bijou” of Bordeaux. Here Bonaventure installed his collections of natural history (he was known as Journu le naturaliste) and painting (Raphael, Murillo as well as the Flemish masters mentioned below), and including almost all the Perronneau family portraits. The cabinet de curiosités attracted the attention of the collector Jacques-François-Bertrand, chevalier de Courtois d’Arcollières (1717–1769), who stayed with the Journus for a year before returning to Beaucaire where he was inspired to establish his own collection in 1752. The Journu collection was later (1801) described by the visiting German painter Lorenz Meyer:

[La] collection du négociant et sénateur Journu-Auber...renferme un choix de tableaux de chevalet par Peter Neef, Van der Meulen, Van de Velde, Greuze, Dietrich, Batoni et autres. De Batoni, Journu possède la Mort d’Antoine, connue par la gravure de Wille, et, de Vernet, les Quatre heures de la journée, quatre peintures incomparables, exprimant bien la puissante facture et le style enchanteur et troublant de ce peintre rare...A la manière dont est présenté cette galerie, sans doute peu considérable, on sent que le propriétaire en a réuni les tableaux con amore. A côté se trouvent une bibliothèque choisie et une collection d’histoire naturelle, collection si facile à faire dans une ville maritime, grâce aux relations avec les capitaines de navire.

Bonaventure’s son Bernard Journu-Auber, who inherited his collections, became régent of the Banque de France (1800), comte de Tustal (1808), and pair de France (1814). His net worth was estimated at some 40,000 livres at the time of his marriage in 1775 into the Auber family of sugar planters in Santo Domingo; Geneviève-Monique brought a dowry of 150,000 livres, while Bernard’s own parents gave him 100,000 livres. When his father-in-law died in 1780, Bernard left his investment in Santo Domingo, unwisely as it turned out: this part of his fortune vanished in the great hurricane of that year. Bernard carried on his father’s enthusiasm for collecting, retaining the family’s picture collection, including portraits not only by Perronneau but adding works by Lacour and Mme Capet; in 1804 however he donated his enormous collection of shells, sponges, reptiles, mammals and birds to the city, forming the nucleus of the musée de

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4 He remained in correspondence with Bonaventure and his brothers, over 60 letters surviving in the family files together with Courtois’s manuscript Essai sur l’histoire naturelle, la physique &c., ou Catalogue raisonné du cabinet de M. de Courtois..., 1757.
5 Maurice Meaudre de Lapouyade, Voyage d’un allemand à Bordeaux en 1801, Bordeaux, 1912, pp. 44f.
6 Portraits of Bernard Journu-Auber, sd 1777; and of Geneviève and Hippolyte Journu-Auber, sd 1783.
l’histoire naturelle de Bordeaux.

In 1788, Bonaventure’s second son Antoine-Auguste Journu d’Artiguevieille, baron de Saint-Magne married Marie-Victoire du Temple, who brought a spectacular dowry of 800,000 livres, including the baronnie of Saint-Magne. By 1789 Auguste and Bernard’s combined fortune was estimated at 1.4 million livres, and the brothers made a “don patriotique” of 105,000 livres. However this was to little avail; Auguste was arrested in 1793 and guillotined in 1794 charged with “d’avoir manifesté beaucoup d’orgueil avant la Révolution et s’être targué de la noblesse achetée nouvellement par son père”. Specifically he had refused to negotiate assignats issued by the Revolutionary government, calling them “pétards” (firecrackers).

Bernard and Auguste lived together in the hôtel Journu. When Auguste was guillotined, his goods were confiscated and an inventory of the joint contents of the hôtel was made by the district commissaires. This does not mention any portraits. It appears that Bernard was astute enough to move these to Sadirac before confiscation, so that almost all the Journu portraits remained in the possession of Bernard’s descendants (until 1918), and none in the younger branch of the family. Bernard’s daughter and sole heir, Geneviève, married (in 1793) Jean-Baptiste-Jacques Legrix de La Salle, the future deputy for the Gironde, from a legal family brought to prominence by his father Jacques Legrix de La Salle, chevalier, président trésorier de France au bureau des finances de Guienne.

Perronneau made several trips to Bordeaux between 1756 and 1769. In 1767 in the course of one visit, Perronneau painted the large canvas of Bonaventure (fig. 2) and, in pastel, the portraits of his sister, Marie-Angélique (fig. 4; not to be confused with her elder sister, also Angélique), and her husband Pierre Boyer-Fonfrède. In 1769 he painted, in oils, Claude Journu’s widow (fig. 1) and Jacques, abbé Dumoncœy (fig. 5, also now in the Fogg), the fifteenth child, vicar-general to the bishop of Metz, exhibited at the 1769 Salon (nos. 50 and 51).

But it was in the course of his 1756/57 trip that Perronneau executed the series of portraits which many regard as the high point of his art. On this occasion he stayed in the rue de la Rousselle beside the hôtel built by Claude Journu. Although Claude had died in 1742, his widow and most of the 16 remaining children still lived in the house. A group of eight pastels executed during this visit descended from Bonaventure’s collection through the Legrix de La Salle family, where they were seen at the château du Petit Verdus at the end of the nineteenth century by Charles Marionneau, who described the best known work in the series, the superb pastel of Bernard-Olivier (fig. 6). This portrait of *le jeune homme aux trois roses* was executed in

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7 Some portraits of Claude Journu and his wife, dated to 1725–30, also believed to have been lost, were in the possession of Yves Legrix de La Salle in Paris.
9 Born 23.VIII.1724, he was baptised the same day as Bernard, but was known as Bernard-Olivier. His death is widely reported as 1764 (possibly based on Meaudre de Lapouyade’s inference that he died “before 1764”, since he was omitted from his mother’s
1756 (Olivier had followed his brother Louis, dit Montagny, to Marseille, but had returned to Bordeaux by then) and is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Camille Groult\textsuperscript{10} bought it (at some stage before 1896) from Louise Legrix de la Salle. When Robert de Montesquiou saw it, he is said to have exclaimed “Oh, ce jeune homme...on l’embrassera!”; the story is probably derived from the account he gave in 1916, where he described the pastel as the “perle, entre tous les perles du musée Groult”.\textsuperscript{11} This was evidently one of the two Perronneaus of whose acquisition Groult boasted to Edmond de Goncourt (\textit{Journal}, 8 January 1890):

Et il me conte cette bizarre, cette original acquisition: « Deux Péronneau, deux Péronneau,…, vous les verrez chez moi…achetés à quatre ou cinq heures de Bordeaux, achetés dans une propriété à laquelle on n’arrivait qu’au moyen d’une mauvaise carriole…» Le marché conclu et lui se disposant à les porter dans la voiture, la femme, qui venait de les lui vendre, lui disant: « Il y a encore une condition: ce sont mes anciêtres...et je ne consentirai à les laisser sortir de la maison que la nuit tombée. » Et elle le promenait dans les vignes jusqu’aux crépuscule. Ne trouvez-vous pas quelque chose de joliment superstitieux dans l’arrangement de cette femme pour que ces portraits de famille ne puissent se voir sortir de chez eux?

This story is still told in the Journu family, with Louise Legrix cast as the punctilious vendor of two Journu portraits. In the version related by Montesquiou (who does not give the sitter’s name), the request for the picture to be taken away at night is purely to mitigate the vendor’s distress at its departure; but in recognition of Groult’s acquiescence, she presented him with Journu’s gold-topped malacca cane which Groult had hung from the frame.

A further five pastels, mostly it seems executed on Perronneau’s 1756–57 visit, were acquired from their descendants by the dealer Demotte in 1918. They were the pastels of an abbé, thought to be of the Journu family; that of Pierre Agard; and the National Gallery portrait (fig. 7) of his sister Marthe, Mme Jacques Legrix de La Salle, whose son married Journu-Auber’s daughter; the portrait of Jean-Baptiste, \textit{le Hollandais} (fig. 1), and the portrait of Angélique Journu. Born 10 October 1720, the sixth child, in 1742 (the year of her father’s death) she married Antoine Molles (or Molle), bringing a relatively modest dowry of 15,000 livres. He was a négociant à Bordeaux and a business partner of the Journu in a number of ventures – for example, Journu & Molles participated as underwriters in a syndicate arranged by Nicolas Beaujon to insure the \textit{Thézée} in 1747 on a voyage from La Rochelle to Quebec, transporting 320 tons of sugar. Among the other members of the syndicate were other Perronneau clients:

\textsuperscript{10} In 1994 it was in the possession of M. Bordeaux-Groult, grandson of Camille Groult.

Montuy, Balguerie, de Gorsse. Evidently the Journu and Molles families remained close: Molles signed the Journu–Auber marriage contract in 1775. He also seems to have played an important role in the église Saint-Michel, where he was “grand ouvrier”. This seems to have required him to keep accounts for the church and the important building works executed there in the 1768–77 period. He was also involved in the renovations to the Alary/Micot organ in the church, and in the selection of a new organist in 1774, when he was described as living in the rue du Pont-Saint-Jean.

Antoine Molles predeceased his wife. Her death certificate was issued the day of her death, 22 ventôse an X (22 mars 1802), curiously in the name of Marie Journu, and giving her age as 88 instead of 82; the witnesses were neighbours rather than relatives who may not have been fully informed. She died at her home, 9 rue d’Abadie, in the same parish (Saint-Michel) where she had been married sixty years before.

The portrait of Angélique Journu, still in its cadre d’origine, framed identically to that of her younger brother Jean-Baptiste, le Hollandais (fig. 3), was among the group acquired by the dealer Demotte in 1918. There it was seen and described by Vaillat & Ratouis de Limay: “une femme dans une harmonie de rose, avec un décolleté en carré, généreusement ouvert et sur lequel tranche, d’une manière piquante, un ruban noir, noué autour du cou; le visage est gracieusement incliné, avec des yeux à la fois tendres et rêveurs, une expression légèrement ironique, un grand front, auréolé de cheveux poudrés et relevés sur lesquels se pose légèrement une coiffe aérienne de dentelle.” In their short article in Le Figaro artistique in 1924, they noted that it was “plein de charme mélancolique”. They contrasted it with the pastel of Marthe Legrix, of far poorer quality, decidedly lacking the “désinvolture” and “brio” of the Angélique and the girls’ brothers. The two pastels were still together when they passed from Demotte to the Matthiesen Gallery c.1949, before being acquired by the Galerie Cailleux in Paris. They were acquired by a private client, but appeared together at auction in Paris in December 1957 where the pair again disappeared into a private collection.

Dominique d’Arnoult describes the work as follows (2014, p. 259):

Le visage est travaillé en hachures à peine perceptibles dans les parties les moins chargées de pastel, le front et les pommettes offrant un aspect fondu. L’harmonie colorée gris-rose de la robe contraste avec le hâle du visage allongé aux yeux bruns, à la bouche aux commissures légèrement relevées. Le modèle est coiffé d’un petit bonnet bordé de dentelle aux fuseaux sur la chevelure poudrée, maintenu par un ruban du même rose que celui du devant du corps de la robe à la française de soie grise et porte un ruban de volours noir au cou.

What about the remaining two pastels noted by Marionneau at Le Petit Verdus? They may not even have been by Perronneau. The confusions cannot now be resolved for certain, although d’Arnoult’s 2014 monograph has suggested a number of possible identifications of Journu portraits among anonymes. The portrait of a young man in a blue silk coat, almost illegibly dated 1757, probably had a different provenance and had lost its identity by the time it surfaced in 1988. (The undated label on the back identifying a former owner as Mme Le Hideux could refer to a number of individuals, of which the most likely seems to be Mme Robert Lehideux, née Odette Vyau de Lagarde (1910–1982), of the château de Moncley; her niece is married to Pierre Bordeaux-Groult.) The familial resemblance to other members of the Journu family (particularly with Jean-Baptiste, le Hollandais; with Bonaventure; and with Jacques, le chanoine) was immediately apparent, and the date (and style of execution) all pointed strongly to its being one

12 Contrats d’engagement, Archives départementales de la Gironde à Bordeaux, transcribed by Christophe Chauvin.
13 Claude-Charles Marionneau, Description des œuvres d’art qui décorent les édifices publics de la ville de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, 1861, p. 333.
15 A similar moulding recurs on his pastel of an unknown lady, signed and dated 1768 (Paris, PIASA, 18 December 2013, Lot 48), no doubt also from Bordeaux.
16 It had been noted independently by Mme Brigitte de Boysson, conservateur au musée des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux, who had considered the purchase (private communication, 22 July 1994), and been in contact with baron Journu, the current head of the family. Baron Journu notes that the resemblance with various Journu portraits is striking; they share the same, very characteristic,
of the remaining brothers. On the basis of the likely age of the sitter at the likely time of execution, baron Journu concludes that the most likely candidates for this portrait is Jean-Baptiste Journu Maisonneuve; if so, it would complete the series of Perronneau portraits of the principals in the firm at that time. Since he (possibly alone of Claude’s sons) was still living in 1793, his belongings would not have been included in the group protected from confiscation by Journu-Auber and thus might not have descended with them.¹⁷

Little is known of this brother. As an active member of the business he travelled widely in France and abroad, often in discomfort: a 1754 letter¹⁸ from Bonaventure to their collector friend, the chevalier de Courtois, described a carriage accident on their way to Beaucaire. Bonaventure suffered extensive injuries, while Maisonneuve experienced “un transport au cerveau pendant 24 heures”, from which he nevertheless made a full recovery. After the death of his eldest brother Bernard in 1760, Jean took charge of the firm, jointly with Bonaventure, Louis and Olivier. After the Seven Years’ War he was sent to Santo Domingo to look after the family’s investments. He lived with Jean-Baptiste le Hollandais in what was later known as the Maison Mabit, a house in the Saint-Rémy parish facing the rue Louis built by Saige but of which the brothers obtained the usufruct in 1776 (it subsequently expired in 1813).¹⁹ In 1765 and 1779 he was one of the three elected juges-consuls de la chambre de commerce de Guienne, and in 1763 and 1780 he was one of the directeurs du commerce de Guienne. His responsibilities are illustrated by a story about that the schemings of the heirs of one of the dominant families: Journu asked Dupré de Saint-Maur, the intendant (1776–87), to intervene; this lead to a public confrontation in the chambre de commerce before Journu in which the merchant, Pierre Ménoire, had “répondu d’une manière si peu satisfaisante que l’intendant luy aurait dit d’aller vers ses parents ou ses amis, plus sages et prudents, pour se conduire par leurs avis”.²⁰ Journu’s social position was maintained by his attendance at the Grand Théâtre de Bordeaux.²¹ He did not marry.²² Féret says that he was “doué d’une haute intelligence” – a feature which seems amply confirmed by Perronneau’s portrait.²³

D’Arnoult notes that pastels lend themselves to the depiction of shot silk as here, applying “deux couches successives au pastel, comme il s’agissait de jus” to achieve this effect:²⁴

Le faire du peintre est particulièrement éblouissant dans ce pastel grâce au contraste d’une physionomie au teint coloré de type méditerranéen, aux traits accusés, et au rendu tout en lumière, sans affectation, du tafetas changeant de l’habit et de la veste, par superposition translucide de tons bleus et roses, graduellement assombris ou reflétés à droite.

In the Salon of 1757 Perronneau exhibited (no. 56) “plusieurs portraits en pastel”; no further description or critique allows one to determine if any of the Journu portraits was included, but it would not be surprising if that year he chose to include works from a series described by Maurice Meaudre de Lapouyade as “parmi les meilleures œuvres de l’artiste.”

Neil Jeffares

¹⁷ The Mme Lehideux referred to on the back of the frame has not been identified; she might be connected with the art collector and banker Jacques (1871–1945), a member of the Banque Lehideux (founded in 1842, it engaged in trade finance with Argentina and China and survived until 1956); his wife was Suzanne Simon (1876–1964); Their son François Lehideux (1904–1998), a supporter of maréchal Pétain, married the niece of the car manufacturer Louis Renault. Hélène, Mme Michel David-Weill, is the granddaughter of Roger Lehideux, Jacques’s brother; while a sister Claire married Pierre Thureau-Dangin (1873–1932). No connection with the Journu family is known.

¹⁸ I am grateful to Bertrand Journu for a transcription of this letter of 17 July 1754 (private communication, 2013).


²¹ Jacques d’Welles, Le Grand Théâtre de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, 1950, p. 44.

²² His death certificate cited above mentions “Jean Journu surnommé en famille Maisonneuve, âgé de quatre vingt trois ans, ancien consul et juge du tribunal de commerce et Bordeaux, célibataire, demeurant rue de la Comédie &c.”

²³ One of his younger brothers, Louis Journu de Montigny carried on a correspondence with the African explorer James Bruce between 1774 and 1776, in which he mentions that his brother (unspecified) had expressed a desire to meet him (James Bruce, Travels to discover the source of the Nile…, Edinburgh, 1813, I, p. cccxxvii.

²⁴ Arnoult, op. cit. 2014, pp. 107, 124, 259.