

Prolegomena to *Pastels & pastellists*

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Prolegomena

to

Pastels & pastellists

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I. FOREWORD

PASTEL IS IN ESSENCE powdered colour rubbed into paper without a liquid vehicle – a process succinctly described in 1760 by the French amateur engraver Claude-Henri Watelet (himself the subject of a portrait by La Tour):

Les crayons mis en poudre imitent les couleurs,
Que dans un teint parfait offre l'éclat des fleurs.
Sans pinceau le doigt seul place et fond chaque teinte;
Le duvet du papier en conserve l'empreinte;
Un crystal la défend; ainsi, de la beauté
Le Pastel a l'éclat et la fragilité.¹

It is at once line and colour – a sort of synthesis of the traditional opposition that had been debated vigorously by theoreticians such as Roger de Piles in the previous century. It is, simultaneously, bright and matt, fragmentary and smooth. It has a unique texture and luminosity – the *éclat des fleurs*, the dust from butterflies' wings² – derived from the light-reflecting facets of individual particles of pastel pigment, filler and binder. For the English pastellist Francis Cotes, “Crayon pictures, when finely painted, are superlatively beautiful and decorative in a very high degree in apartments that are not too large; for having their surface dry, they partake in appearance of the effect of Fresco and by candle light are luminous and beautiful beyond all other pictures.”³ In a century when the human figure had moved to a central position (although portraitists still occupied a rank below history painters in the hierarchy of the academies), when unparalleled sums were spent on sumptuous clothing, a medium which is capable of creating the illusion of human flesh, powdered wigs, silk dresses and velvet coats was the perfect means to capture the spirit of the age. According to Chaperon, the author of an eighteenth century treatise on pastel, among various types of painting, “aucun autre n'approche autant de la nature. Aucun ne produit des tons si vrais. C'est de la chair, c'est Flore, c'est l'Aurore.”⁴ Many others have commented on the tactile, or even haptic, attractions of pastel: Mme de Graffigny⁵ so admired the silk coat in La Tour's Duval de l'Épinoï J.46.1724 at the 1745 salon that she was “prêt à tater l'étoffe, rien n'est si admirable”; while Robert de Montesquiou wanted to kiss Perronneau's *jeune homme aux trois roses* J.582.1429.⁶

Pastel may be quicker to apply than oil paint, but it is also harder to correct: “Le pastel ne veut pas être tourmenté, trop de travail lui ôte sa fleur.”⁷ That lends a certain immediacy to its images – a spontaneity which retains the *première pensée* of an artist's sketch even when finished, framed and hung: and that merit too was fully prized in the age of Rousseau. Unlike in oil painting, the colours a pastellist works with do not change after drying; and the directness of the medium is even symbolised by the contact of the artist's flesh with the same substance that forms the image, in contrast to the distance embodied in the handle, ferrule and bristles of a brush.

¹ Watelet 1760. Full details of references given in abbreviated form will be found in the [BIBLIOGRAPHY](#) of the online site, www.pastellists.com. Hyperlinks shown in [SMALL CAPS](#) are references to files listed as tabs on the index page, dispensing with the need to provide the full url in printed copies of this document. Cross-references to the relevant artist article (which may be found on the [ARTISTS](#) page) are omitted on each mention of an individual pastellist. Specific pastels are given unique J numbers in the form J.123.456.

² Famously Diderot referred in his Salon de 1765 to “cette poussière précieuse que le peintre en pastel dépose sur sa toile, et qui s'en détache aussi facilement que celle des ailes du papillon”; *v. infra*, §IV.10. Butterfly wings were also the subject of Landriani's method of fixing (*v. §IV.8 infra*), while their colour inspired the entomologist Ignaz Schiffermüller to devise a system of colour in his *Versuch eines Farbensystems* of 1771.

³ Cotes 1797.

⁴ Chaperon 1788, p. 13.

⁵ Letter of 7.IX.1745 to Devaux.

⁶ Journu family legend, cited in [Jeffares 2013g](#).

⁷ Petit de Bachaumont 1750.

Despite the remarkable achievements of Vivien and La Tour in producing full-length pastels on an unprecedented scale, oil painting continued to be preferred for the official *portrait en pied* – possibly because the fragility of large, expensive sheets of glass was still a consideration, but with the result that the eighteenth century pastel portrait usually showed the subject, bust length, with few if any accessories, against an indeterminate background, or occasionally in an intimate domestic setting. There are few group portraits, battle scenes are rare – but self-portraits abound. There are numerous pendants of husbands and wives – many no doubt made at the time of their marriage, and myriad portraits of children and unindividuated young women. Pastel never made significant inroads into modes of painting other than the portrait: there are virtually no history pictures, only one major artist (Pillement) systematically made landscapes⁸ in pastel, and there are relatively few still lifes or genre pictures in the medium. The reasons for that appear to be largely negative: there was simply no compelling reason to use pastel where there was no impatient sitter, and no obvious textural advantage; the difficulty of obtaining a stable green was another particular problem for landscapes.

In these Prolegomena we aim to summarise the main headings under which pastel may be approached, progressing through materials and methods to an historical survey of the principal artists who used the medium. The chapters are intended as introductory guides to the primary texts, detailed articles and worklists of the *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800* (which may be accessed through the index of [ARTISTS](#)) and to the supporting reference material also included on the [Pastels & pastellists](#) website (these are cited indiscriminately as “the *Dictionary*” below; references to Chapter, §, *supra* and *infra* are restricted to these Prolegomena). The thematic approach in this document necessitates some overlap and repetition in the interests of readability. (Reproductions of pastels which may be found in the *Dictionary* articles are normally omitted here; numbers in the form [j.n.m](#) are references to the entries in those articles, which may be located with the search facility on the home page, or with Google.) The philosophy of a *Dictionary* at least in part is a recognition that information is often too broad and too voluminous to be reduced conveniently to a single narrative, and these Prolegomena do not set out to contradict that.

⁸ Vigée Le Brun also made several hundred, but these impressionistic sketches were executed during her travels, mostly in the nineteenth century.

 II. THE WORD

PASTEL IS A WORD with a variety of senses; in this chapter we discuss the etymology and uses of the term, its cognates and synonyms.

In the *Dictionary* it is primarily used to mean ground pigment mixed with fillers and binders, reconstituted into a solid stick and applied to a rough or roughened surface to create pictures. The substance, the medium and the method are all termed “pastel”, while the stick itself, as well as the picture, is “a pastel”.⁹ Since the point of mixing ground pigment with fillers is to create something soft enough to cover area rather than merely scratch lines, the method should really (and was in the eighteenth century) be termed *painting* in pastel (for Félibien¹⁰ the object was to “faire des portraits ou autres choses qui semblent estre peintes”); but because the support is usually paper, some pedants insist on calling it a form of drawing. It follows that the singular is preferable to the plural: “in pastels” suggests discrete crayons, used independently, rather than as a medium which produces a continuous, graded surface. Pastels can of course be used graphically, as they predominantly were in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and again in the nineteenth and twentieth; but it is as a form of painting, practised widely across Europe in the eighteenth century, that pastel excites our interest and merits attention *sui generis*. Usage in eighteenth century France was normally to regard pastel as painting, not drawing.¹¹ Although the drawing/painting debate can be avoided by referring to the pictures with the noun alone,¹² the word is seldom used on its own to refer to the activity: “pastel painting” is more frequent than “pastel drawing”. The phrase “Pastel chalks” is to be avoided.

In the eighteenth century, pastellists were “peintres en pastel” or “crayon painters”. “Pastelliste” occurs at least as early as 1842, in Henri Martin’s *Histoire de France*. Both “pastellist” and “pastelist” are accepted spellings in current British usage. The full *Oxford English dictionary* (“OED”) lists the first appearance of the word (with two *ls*) in *The Times* in 1881 (in relation to Whistler¹³), but among earlier examples is Henry Murray’s *The art of painting and drawing in coloured crayons* (London, 1856, pp. 33, 38). Successive editions of the *Concise Oxford dictionary* have oscillated between either as the preferred form, with the -ll- form currently favoured, in spite of general rules on -ll- forms, because of the word’s (supposed) French origin. The -l- form is generally preferred in America.

The derivation of “pastel” itself is surprisingly confusing, and no simpler because it can mean the same as “crayon” – although a crayon usually means something else (such as a lead pencil or a Conté crayon), but a “crayon painting” or a work “in crayons” usually meant a pastel. In early texts, “dry colour” was used. (Although *пастель* is the usual term in Russian today, “сухими красками” was the term still used by the Académie des beaux-arts in St Petersburg in 1800.¹⁴) The

⁹ The use as a noun is much preferable to awkward and contentious phrases such as “pastel drawing”, used frequently for example in the Oxford DNB.

¹⁰ Félibien 1676, in [TREATISES](#).

¹¹ Among numerous examples, the passage in the *Journal économique*, .VII.1751, p. 64 is typical: discussing portraits in oil, and then in pastel, the author continued: “A ces Ouvrages de Peinture nous en joindrons deux de Dessin.”

¹² With the possible exception of legal documents: the US Internal Revenue Service had to consider, in 2004 (case reference TAM-100284-03/CC:PSI:B4) whether an item in H’s estate described merely as “Pastel attributed to –” fell under the section in the will dealing with “all oil paintings”. The decision was based on rather technical considerations. In a quite different case under English law, *Duke of Leeds v Earl Amberst*, Chancery, 1844, the interpretation of the Duke of Leeds’s will depended on whether the word “portrait” could properly include either an equestrian painting with several figures or a picture of the named sitter in crayons; it was held that both could. Reference was made to Richelet’s dictionary (1732 ed.), where portrait was defined as “[*Imago picta, effigies.*] Ce mot se dit des hommes seulement & en parlant de *peinture*. C’est tout ce qui représente une personne d’après nature avec des couleurs.”

¹³ “Mr Whistler’s Venice pastels”, *The Times*, 9.II.1881, p. 4; the article however criticises the artist for referring to his sketches as “pastels” when in fact they were “sketches in black chalk touched with colour in crayons”, – “precisely the reverse of pastel” as traditionally understood.

¹⁴ See, e.g. П. Н. Петров, *Сборник материалов для истории Императорской С.-Петербургской Академии художеств за сто лет ее существования*, I, 1864, p. 415.

Latin for pastel painting, had the term been required, would have been *xerographia* (borrowing from the Greek).¹⁵

The word “pastel” is said to be derived from the Italian *pastello*, a diminutive of the Latin *pasta*, or paste; *pastello*, meaning a crayon made of pigment, is probably an extended use of *pastello*, meaning a little cake (perhaps as early as the fourteenth century). According to the OED, the word appears in this sense before 1571: in fact, although Leonardo refers several times to “colorire a secco”, the word *pastello* appears c.1493–97 in his Codex Madrid,¹⁶ against the diagram of a mould “per far pastelli”. Leonardo is widely but erroneously credited with the invention of the technique; but he does seem responsible for the use of the term. Lomazzo described Leonardo’s technique as *a pastello* in 1584. *Pastillum* is “dough paste”,¹⁷ but *pastillus* (“lozenge”, particularly with medicinal properties) is the normally cited source in this disputed etymology; *pastellus* exists in post-classical Latin, but as a variant of *pastillus* rather than *pastillum*.

The first English use of the word is in Richard Haydocke’s 1598 translation of Lomazzo: “Pastilles, which are roules with sharpe points made of colours, first ground into powder.” (The spelling¹⁸ is a clue to the correct English pronunciation of the word, /ˈpɑːstl/, with the emphasis on the first syllable; in America /pæˈstəl/ is prevalent.) It reappears in 1612, in Henry Peacham’s *Gentlemans exercise*, “To draw with drie colours, you may make long pastils, which you shall doe by grinding red lead, or any other colour with strong wort.” Norgate’s lengthy and important descriptions date from c.1628 but were in manuscript. By the middle of the seventeenth century the word was well established: Sanderson writes “Of Croyons or Dry-Colours, by Pastils or Powders” (1658), while John Evelyn (who was portrayed by Nanteuil) has “Rubbing in the shades with Pastills and dry Compositions” in 1662; as in Latin and French, however, there was a parallel pharmacological sense, now spelled *pastille*. In John Harris’s *Lexicon technicum* of 1704, “pastills” were defined as “Odoriferous Tablets, or Trochisks made up of Perfumes or Odorous Bodies with Mucilage of Gum Tragacanth” – which was one of the binders traditionally used in artists’ pastels.

The derivation of crayon is much simpler: from the French *crayon*, derived from *craie*, which in turn comes from the Latin *crēta*, for chalk. *Cryons* appears in Carel van Mander’s influential *Het schilder-boeck* of 1604; *cryoons* is the spelling adopted in Edward Luttrell’s unpublished *Epitome of painting* (1683), and suggests that the word was pronounced /ˈkrɪɔ̃ns/ rather than the modern English /ˈkreɪɔ̃ns/. Pepys however (*Diary*, 15.v.1663) writes “croyon”. In Randle Cotgrave’s *A dictionarie of the French and English tongues* (London, 1611), pastel is not defined in our sense, but “crayon” is given, as “dry painting; or, a painting in, or Picture of, dry colours”, as well as “the first draught, or lineaments of a Picture”; but he also includes another sense, of “the Table whereon a Painter mingleth (such) colours”. The earliest example in the OED for its use in the plural, *crayons*, to denote pastel, is in Jonathan Richardson’s *Two discourses* (London, 1719), p. 174, although it was extensively used before in art treatises (as early as c.1628 in Norgate, followed by Sanderson, Huygens etc.) and general works (Hans Sloane, *Voyage to the islands of Madera...*, London, 1707, p. lxx).

The equivalent term to pastellist, crayonist, is much less common. The OED records the first use in 1884, in an American periodical, although Daniel Wray used “crayonnist” in an unpublished letter (cited §XI *infra*) in 1749, while an 1840 article on Ozias Humphrey called him “the Crayonist”.¹⁹

¹⁵ See Johann Gottfried Haas, *Vollständiges latein-deutsches und deutsch-lateinisches Handwörterbuch*, Leipzig, 1804, II, p. 405.

¹⁶ *Codex Madrid I*, c.1493–97, fol. 191r. For bibliographic details of this and other sources cited, see [TREATISES](#) and [BIBLIOGRAPHY](#). Chapter III provides an overview of treatises before 1800 from the point of view of content as opposed to the purely linguistic discussion here.

¹⁷ The spelling in Lewis & Short.

¹⁸ Dossie 1758 has “pustils”, although he generally refers to crayons.

¹⁹ Anon., “A flit through the old Royal Academy”, *The polytechnic journal*, II, 1840, pp. 113ff.

The word appears even earlier, to describe William Hoare, in an article in German in 1817.²⁰ George Vertue’s “crayoneer”, used pejoratively in his notebooks both of Arthur Pond (1741) and of Robert Edge Pine (1742), was not taken up more widely and is not to be found in the OED.

In France the word *pastel* originally referred to herb and dyestuff woad, or *guède* (*Isatis tinctoria* L.), which was prepared into tablets known as *pastilles*. The obvious confusion can be found, for example, in a footnote to the entry for *Isatis tinctoria* in Antoine-Nicolas Duchesne’s *Manuel de botanique contenant les propriétés des plantes...* (Paris, 1764, p. 32, n.1) where it states:

Il y a apparence que c’est de cette matière que l’on a fait des crayons de pastel bleus, & qu’ensuite les crayons de pastel de diverses couleurs ont gardé le même nom, qui s’est aussi étendu au genre de peinture qui les a employés.

The word *crayon* however referred to drawing sticks: so Norgate (*Miniatura*, 1648: ed. 1997, p. 101 & n.248) says: “The busines I meane is Crayon when it speakes French, but Dry Colours in English.” But fairly rapidly, while preserving the alternative significance of woad, France adopted the word *pastel* as the preferred term for a crayon made of pigment paste (1676) and then for a picture made in pastel (1694). It is perhaps significant that, in giving Prince Rupert’s recipe, the mysterious Sieur d’Emery refers to crayons (published in 1674, with a new edition in 1684 and in English translation 1685, as “Creyons”). Alexander Browne uses both terms, but prefers cryons, while the closely connected text of William Salmon (1672) refers throughout to “Pastils or Crions”, suggesting a misunderstood general instruction to the printer.

The entry in the fourth edition of the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française* (1762) is:

PASTEL. s.m. Sorte de crayon fait de couleurs pulvérisées, mêlées, soit avec du blanc de plomb, soit avec de la céruse ou du talc, & incorporées avec une eau de gomme. On fait des pastels de toutes sortes de couleurs. Dessiner au pastel. Peindre en pastel. On appelle aussi Pastel, Ce qui est peint avec le pastel. Les pastels de Nanteuil. C’est un curieux; il a beaucoup de pastels chez lui. Il a des pastels de toute la Cour. Il a toute la Cour en pastel. Voilà un beau pastel.

Essentially unchanged through successive editions from the first (1694), a few minor alterations are noteworthy. “Peindre en pastel” was added in the second edition (1718), although the first already had “ce qui est peint avec le pastel”. The artists chosen to illustrate “les pastels de ...” included (with Nanteuil) Dumoustier in editions 1–3; he was dropped in the fourth, while the fifth (1798) replaced Nanteuil with “la Rosalba” and “Latour”. Rosalba survived until the seventh edition (1878), but was dropped in the next (1935); Latour survives, alone, in the current (ninth edition), but is now spelled “Quentin de La Tour”.

Early pastels could only achieve anaemic hues.²¹ Although a full range of colour was available by the late seventeenth century, already the word had begun to be used to indicate paleness (thus Paul Scarron, in *Typhon, ou La Gigantomachie*, 1644), perhaps by confusion with the dye: *Isatis tinctoria* produces the same dye, indigo, as *Indigofera tinctoria*, but in a lower concentration.²² (The term “bleu pastel” refers to this light blue colour which, coincidentally, might in English be termed pastel blue.) That sense persisted, and was encouraged by the efforts of amateur artists who used pastels for sketching, as they might use chalk. The celebrated pastel-maker Bernard Stoupan supplied “pastels pour dames, propres à peindre en petit les fleurs, figures & paysages”, consisting of 100 crayons instead of the regular assortment of 152.²³ “Just what ladies do when they paint for amusement”, Sir Joshua Reynolds said, attempting to put down his dangerously successful rival Liotard. (Horace Walpole delivered a damning assessment of Reynolds’s own materials: “his

²⁰ Anon., “Der Maler Samuel Woodforde”, *Leipziger Kunstblatt*, 27, 6.xi.1817.

²¹ Full texts and bibliographic references for many of these examples are in the [FLORILEGIUM](https://neiljeffares.wordpress.com/2013/09/02/the-toxicity-of-pastel/). See also several posts on my blog, <https://neiljeffares.wordpress.com/2013/09/02/the-toxicity-of-pastel/>, and <https://burlingtonindex.wordpress.com/2014/01/29/pastels-in-the-burlington-magazine/>.

²² Indigo is now synthesised, and woad is no longer commercially harvested.

²³ *Almanach général des marchands, négocians et commerçans de la France et de l’Europe* (Paris, 1772), s.v. Lausanne, p. 166. A shade card with samples of over 80 colours was sent to Caroline Luise by agent Henning in a letter of 2.VIII.1746; it is reproduced in [TREATISES](https://www.treatises.com/).

colours seldom stand longer than crayons.” Walpole in turn was the subject of a *Biographical sketch, in fugitive crayons*, 1799.) George Vertue (1742) deplored pastel painting in the strongest possible language: “all this is the depravity of skill, and lowness of Art by which means the unskillfull are deceivd— & pay for their Ignorance... the want of Ambition in Art thus shows its declining State... small pains & great gains... is this darling modish study”; while half a century later Pasquin used equally vigorous language to condemn “crayon painting” as “a facile pursuit, which no eminent genius will practice willingly.”²⁴

Perhaps a more insidious linguistic hazard arose in metaphorical uses. The verse form encouraged contributions such as the anonymous²⁵ *To Flavella, occasioned by her picture in crayons, sent as a present, but damaged by carriage* (1750); here the damaged work “still represents/Precarious beauty’s transient fate.” Much the same theme was exploited by the German poet Friedrich Justin Bertuch in *Nänie, auf ein zerbrochnes Pastell-Gemälde* (1777).²⁶ So familiar was the trope of pastel deterioration that Mlle Fontette de Sommeroy wrote of one character that “Son visage, qui conservoit d’antiques traces de beauté, avoit l’air d’un pastel dégradé.”²⁷

After about 1800 very few artists continued to use pastel for painting, as such; it reverted to being a graphic medium, in which the paper was not covered, and the visual impression accordingly pale and etiolated. Huckleberry Finn, who recorded his first encounter with pastels, noted that “they was different from any pictures I ever see before”, despite thinking, inexplicably, that they were “blacker, mostly, than is common”, but concluding nevertheless that “I didn’t somehow seem to take to them, because if ever I was down a little they always give me the fan-tods.” (But Robert Lowell reverted to the normal sense when he described “a pastel-pale Huckleberry Finn”.)

By the nineteenth century, the stock idea of pastel was conveyed in the English novel. Jane Austen reserved this unsound activity for her dimmer or more vapid characters such as Miss Darcy or Mrs Elton. George Eliot talked of “portraits in pastel of pearly-skinned ladies with hair-powder”, while Thackeray, more robustly, observed “what awfully bad pastels there were on the walls.” Pastel has certainly inspired some purple passages in French literature,²⁸ ranging from Arsène Houssaye’s *La Tour et Mlle Fel* (*Princesses de comédie et déesses d’opéra*, 1858) to poems by Théophile Gautier (*La Comédie de la mort*, 1835) and Paul Verlaine (poem XVI in the *Lucien Létiinois* sequence in *Amour*, 1888), while Marcel Proust (and Henry James) used eighteenth century pastel portraits as metaphors for decayed gentility or *tempus acti*. “Pastel”, a little-known song by Georges Bizet, is rather charming, but not because of the words by Philippe Gille.

By the early twentieth century, pastel, and the promotion by dealers of weak, late English examples, inspired the polemic of writers such as Lionel Cust who attacked the “the repellent exaggerations of the pseudo-classical, namby-pamby style which was unfortunately so much in vogue”.²⁹

The word itself took on a specific literary use. A volume of *Pastels in prose* appeared in New York in 1890, with an introduction explaining the term, adding that “the very life of the form is its aerial delicacy, its soul is that perfume of thought, of emotion...”. That life was extinguished by the response of another critic: “The French pastel is really a little study ... of a trifling topic which

²⁴ *Notebooks* III, XXII, pp. 109f; Pasquin 1996c, p. 121. Both passages are discussed in Chapter IX.

²⁵ The anonymity of the initials JH are easily penetrated: this is by John Hawkesworth (1720–1773), associate of Dr Johnson and member of the Society of Arts.

²⁶ Published in *Der teutsche Merkur*, 1777.

²⁷ *L’Oreille: conte asiatique*, 1789, I, p. 129.

²⁸ Some of these appear in the [FLORILEGIUM](#), but many more are discussed in Maxine G. Cutler, *Evocations of the eighteenth century in French poetry, 1800-1869*, Geneva, 1970.

²⁹ In his review of Robert Rene Meyer-Séc’s *English pastels* (*Burlington magazine*, September 1911, p. 361).

lacks complexity.” A different US newspaper later cut to the chase, defining the genre as “saccharine bits of wispy fluff”.

In 1975 Ronald Reagan rallied his supporters offering to raise “a banner of no pale pastels, but bold colors which make it unmistakably clear where we stand”. The language still resonates in France where intellectuals fight over the standard – or disclaim it. One writer (Jean Baudrillard), in a tirade against modernity, even felt that there was something immoral or dishonest about pastels which increasingly replace natural colours in modern life.

A 2004 paper³⁰ on women’s prisons used the term “pastel fascism” to mean “control glossed over and concealed by a superficial façade of false benevolence and concern for the lives of inmates.”

³⁰ Barbara H. Zaitow, “Pastel fascism: reflections of social control techniques used with women in prison”, *Women’s studies quarterly*, XXXII, 3/4, 2004, pp. 33–48.

III. TREATISES

PASTELLISTS FROM Luttrell to La Tour, Liotard, Russell and Vigée Le Brun left important accounts of their methodology, in documents ranging from letters to published treatises.³¹ A great many more treatises on the art of pastel painting were produced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by professional colourmen, scientists and amateurs. The anonymous *Traité de la peinture au pastel*, published in Paris in 1788 by M. P. R. de C., now identified as the magistrate and amateur pastellist Paul-Romain Chaperon,³² is perhaps the most important, and certainly the most often cited, but the earlier texts provide important insights into the development and use of the technique. Following this can easily be confusing as some texts simply copy (often word for word) earlier ones, and modern authors occasionally cite later compilations instead of original sources. The principal texts are set out in [TREATISES](#), and should be consulted directly. This chapter provides a broad overview.

Although three texts of Leonardo are frequently cited (and already mentioned in Chapter II) as marking the invention of pastel (which he credited to Jean Peréal), his influence was indirect rather than through these unpublished documents; Lomazzo (1584) mentions the use by Leonardo and others, but does not give a prescription for others to follow. Petrus Gregorius, in his *Syntaxeon artis mirabilis* of c.1583, provided the first practical recipe for making pastels, mixing ground pigment with fish glue, gum arabic, fig juice or whey. Peacham's description (1612) is cursory: ground pigment mixed with wort, perhaps with milk.

By far the most important early account is that given by Edward Norgate in the various versions of his *Miniatura*, known from a confusing variety of manuscript copies which largely follow either the version from around 1628 (intended for the use of the expert Sir Theodore Turquet de Mayerne), or its substantial revision in 1648 (where however many of the passages about pastel were omitted, as presumably of no use to the broader audience to whom the revision was directed). Of particular interest is his description of three methods of using “dry colours or crayon”: (a) the early French crayon portrait (as practised by Dumonstier), in which powdered colours are rubbed into paper with stump (*v. infra*); (b) the use of sticks made up as Peacham describes; and (c), his preferred method, the use of pastels and natural chalks on paper prepared with a wash (applied by sponge) of colour matching the complexion of the subject; natural black and red chalks are used for the passages that require precision, as they may be sharpened more precisely than the pastel sticks. The paper is ordinarily “blewe” (parchment is also recommended) with the colours applied with the sticks and then rubbed in with finger, stump or sponge (Norgate refers to this as “sweetening”, a term later³³ used by Russell and others). Norgate demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the need to get the composition of the pastels right, across the full colour spectrum, so that they are all neither too hard nor too soft.

It is fairly clear however that these recipes were available only to the initiated. Thus Prince Rupert (*v. Dictionary, s.v. Ruprecht von der Pfalz*) communicated his secret method to Wallerant Vaillant

³¹ Luttrell's *Epitome* and Russell's *Elements* are included in the [TREATISES](#) (as is Caroline Luise's account of Liotard's working method); La Tour's important letters the marquis de Marigny, 1.VIII.1763, and to Belle de Charrière, 14.IV.1770, are in the [Chronological table of La Tour documents](#). A great deal of interesting information is mentioned in Carriera's correspondence, published in Sani 1985 (Burns 2007 contains a useful thematic index), although it is not as systematically expounded as one might wish. Brusatin & Mandelli 2005 printed as *Maniere diverse per formare i colori* a manuscript treatise in the Venice state archives (Archivio Privato Gritti, busta n.45, fasc. n.18) as by Rosalba Carriera; it is cited in numerous subsequent sources as evidence of her technical interest. It has nothing to do with her (or with pastel), but is a handwritten copy of Francesco Agricola's 1784 *Trattamenti sulle vernici* Vigée Le Brun's “Conseils sur la peinture du portrait”, published with her *Souvenirs*, were probably written c.1830, but may be assumed to describe studio practice from the eighteenth century; although pastel is only explicitly mentioned once, much of the advice applies to either medium.

³² While it may seem surprising that a magistrate in Libourne should demonstrate the author of the treatise's intimate knowledge of Paris as well as having a professional knowledge of the preparation of colours, the identification is confirmed in an almost contemporary history of the town by another Libourne magistrate, Jean-Baptiste-Alexandre Souffrain (*Essais historiques et notices sur la ville de Libourne...*, Bordeaux, 1806, III/3, p. 511).

³³ The first use recorded in the OED is in 1688 by Randle Holme (*Academy of armor*) in relation to shadows in glass painting. Dryden's translation of Du Fresnoy (1695) uses the term in relation to Correggio's treatment of light and shadow.

(*q.v.*) in 1653, but the “secret très estimable...trouvé par M. le prince Robert” first appeared in print in d’Emery’s *Recueil des curiositez rares et nouvelles*, 1674 (it was described in more detail in Luttrell’s 1683 *Epitome*, but this too was a private manuscript). Vaillant was taken to Paris in 1659, and it seems unlikely to be coincidence that he and Nanteuil both turned to this medium at the same time.

Thus when Christiaan Huygens visited Sir Peter Lely in London, it was only with great difficulty that he extracted the secret of making pastel; but again this remained buried in private correspondence. One of the earliest printed sources is an anonymous London publication, *The excellency of the pen and pencil*, of 1668; although reprinted in 1688, it has been largely overlooked. It appears to derive from the work of William Faithorne (another important figure in the development of pastel: during his exile in Paris, following the English civil war, he was able to acquaint himself with the latest Continental practices); but the passage on pastels relates closely to the better known, and somewhat longer, texts of Alexander Browne and William Salmon. Browne’s *An appendix to The art of painting in miniature or limning, directing... also the several ways of making cryons or pastils, with the several ways of working with them* appeared in 1675. The relationship between Salmon and Browne’s texts is complicated: the supplement to Browne, which first appeared in 1675, seems to pre-date the Salmon’s longer version, as the two versions of his *Polygraphie* from 1672 and 1685 demonstrate.

It is perhaps curious that all of these texts were in English. It is not until 1684, with the appearance of Roger de Piles’s *Les Premiers Elémens de la peinture pratique*, that an account of the “la peinture en pastel” appeared in French,³⁴ but even this was far shorter than the preceding English texts. It appeared in an English translation, with an introduction by Buckeridge, in 1706.

By the start of the eighteenth century, publishers recognised the demand for more information. The popular seventeenth century *Traité de la peinture en miniature* credited to Boutet was reissued in 1708 with an anonymous³⁵ *Traité de la peinture au pastel, avec la méthode de composer les pastels*. It appears to show an awareness of some of the English treatises, but adds a somewhat theoretical account of “primitive colours”. There are useful notes as to which colours to use for different purposes, which paper to use, and directions for the construction of a pastel box (with compartments following the theoretical colour order, as well as space for bottles of ground powder to be applied with a stump: *v.* §IV.7). It was reprinted essentially unchanged by Jombert 1767.

In 1731, John Peele at Locke’s Head published, at the price of 1s., *The art of drawing and painting in water-colours*; two more editions appeared in 1732, and a fourth in 1735. Chapter XIV offered “Curious directions for drawing with crayons”, while the next chapter was on the “Use and nature of dry crayons”. The treatise was otherwise focused on watercolour, but included a number of recipes for preparing colour said to have come from Robert Boyle’s unpublished papers which the author had been shown by the famous scientist’s great-nephew, the late Lord Carleton. In 1732 Peele published the *Method of learning to draw in perspective, made easy and fully explained*, which included “the art of drawing in crayons, with receipts for making them after the French and Italian manner...chiefly from the manuscripts of the great Mr Boyle”. Dedicated to Lady Walpole (an amateur artist; presumably Sir Robert’s wife, née Catherine Shorter), this reached its third edition by 1735. What was described as the fifth edition was published by I. Jackson in Dublin in 1749 under the title *Arts companion, or A new assistant for the ingenious*. This included chapter III from the *Method*, while chapter IV was chapter XIV from the *Art*. It is unclear whether Boyle had any involvement in the sections on pastels. A large part of the text (the entire third chapter) coincides precisely with much of the entry in Barrow’s *Dictionarium polygraphicum*, 1735.

³⁴ Overlooking the short definition of pastel in Félibien’s *Des principes de l’architecture...*, 1676, p. 683, cited in the Avertissement to the 1708 edition of “Boutet” as the only reference to pastel in the literature.

³⁵ As Kuehni 2010 has shown, the section on pastel is almost certainly by a different author than the earlier treatise.

In France most of the literature in the mid-eighteenth century concerns methods of fixing pastel (*v.* §IV.8 *infra*). Articles appeared in a number of dictionaries and encyclopaedias, among them Jaucourt's in the *Encyclopédie*, which included the much-cited verses by Watelet. A little more detail was included in Pernety's *Dictionnaire portatif de peinture, sculpture et gravure*, Paris, 1757. Jombert's reworking of de Piles, *Éléments de peinture*, published in Paris, 1767, essentially follows the anonymous pastel treatise in Boutet 1708. Much later Blanquart de Septfontaines gave a more thorough account of making pastels for the *Encyclopédie méthodique. Arts et métiers mécaniques* (1782–91), while Lacomb wrote the article on fixing pastels. But none of these provided anything like the wealth of detail included in Robert Dossie's comprehensive account in *The handmaid to the arts*, London, 1758. Cotes's notes were not published until long after his death, but John Russell's *Elements of painting with crayons* (1772; second edition, 1777) was influential in England.

Treatises also appeared in other languages. Günther 1762 acknowledged the help of his friend Professor Lowitz, who had lent him works in English and French. Günther's approach was of greater detail and prescription in the use of specific colours for different stages of the pastel, and the labelled colour charts provided instructions for painting by numbers.

Lalande (1769) provided a detailed account, mainly about fixing methods. Le Pileur d'Apligny's more general *Traité des couleurs matérielles et de la manière de colorer* (Paris, 1779) drew on a number of sources, including English treatises. But Chaperon's *Traité de la peinture au pastel*, published in Paris in 1788 under his initials, represented the definitive account of eighteenth century practices in France at least. Pierre-Barthélemy de Constant de Massoul's more general *A treatise on the art of painting, and the composition of colours* (1797) offered the English a French view on this subject.³⁶

³⁶ For a biography of this unlikely colourman, see my <https://neiljeffares.wordpress.com/2017/02/11/constant-de-massoul-soldier-emigre-and-colourman/>, posted 2017.

 IV. THE OBJECT

PASTELS ARE EXECUTED on a flat surface which is mounted in various ways, but the most common arrangement is on paper, pasted on a stretched canvas. Each of these elements is relevant both to an understanding of what is involved and to how it affects the finished work, and to the identification of artists and the history of that work. This chapter provides an account of the manufacture of pastels before 1800 considered under each component; Chapter V, *infra*, revisits these themes from the point of view of modern conservation.

IV.1 The strainer

From the late seventeenth century,³⁷ apart from very small works, the vast majority of pastels were executed on a surface mounted on a wooden frame or *strainer*. The word is used in contrast to the more familiar *stretcher* employed today: the strainer is a rigid frame of four pieces of wood fixed together. A (keyed) stretcher, or *châssis à clés*, has moveable bars that can be expanded by hammering wedges, or keys, into the corners: the system was devised to maintain tension in stretched canvases, and was introduced (according to Pernety 1757) by the mid-eighteenth century.³⁸ Initially used for very large canvases, stretchers became more common at the end of the eighteenth century; but their use with pastels is very rare (the canvases are smaller, and the wedges cannot safely be used once a pastel has been finished) and is usually an indication that the work is a later fake. (Unlike paintings which were frequently relined, the transfer of a finished pastel from one support to another is virtually impossible without visible damage.³⁹) There are exceptions: a large Coypel pastel from 1743 ([J.2472.171](#); New York, MMA) is on a keyed stretcher, as are a number of larger La Tour pastels, including the président de Rieux (1741; [J.46.2722](#)) and the marquise de Pompadour ([J.46.2541](#)).⁴⁰ And by 1797 Constant de Massoul (a colourman whose knowledge of pastel was second hand) thought that “there must be wedges upon the angles of the frame, to allow the cloth to be stretched, when it has loosened.”⁴¹

Most strainers are made of pine or spruce: larger ones may have central bars fixed to the middle in one or both directions, while some have diagonal cross-bars (*écharpes* in French) at the corners (examples include a 1748 pastel by Glain, [J.351.126](#), or the unseen pastel depicted in Chardin’s 1779 *autoportrait au chevalet*; in La Tour’s œuvre, pastels as different as Deschamps [J.46.162](#) and Maurice de Saxe [J.46.2865](#)). During the eighteenth century, limited attention was given to the appearance of parts of a work which would not be visible, and strainers were often constructed out of inferior or poorly finished components. Joints may be mitred or more often square cut, lapped or butt (the equivalent joints in outer frames are usually more elaborate, with mortise and tenon, slotted or spline or keyed joints common). They can be very roughly cut or quite highly finished; in general

³⁷ Nanteuil had used paper mounted on cardboard, a description of pasting process being provided by Tempesti (see Burns 2007, p. 46). However some sheets of his seem to be loose, and have pin marks suggesting they were originally fixed to a drawing board.

³⁸ Pernety 1757, p. xc. A diagram showing one is included in the *Recueil de planches sur les sciences, les arts liberaux et les arts mécaniques*, 1771, VIII, article “Peintures en huile...”, planche V.

³⁹ Russell 1772, p. 20, describes how Cotes transferred a pastel by Rosalba to a different canvas without damage, by soaking the canvas and thus wetting the paste. Among examples where the transfer has been less successful may be cited Liotard’s Nelthorpe ([J.49.2138](#); Bath, Holburne Museum); Perronneau’s Robbé de Beauveset ([J.582.1706](#); Orléans, musée des Beaux-Arts) and La Tour’s princesse de Rohan ([J.46.273](#); Stockholm, Nationalmuseum). Lord Mountstuart, who gave MacArdell’s original self-portrait in crayons to James Granger, “unluckily tore it in getting it off the Canvas”. See also §IV.8 below for La Tour’s use of glass supports which may have been replaced.

⁴⁰ New York 2011, p. 20; information from Michelle Sullivan, Getty, 2019. Valérie Luquet, “Les supports utilisés par Perronneau et les pastellistes au XVIII^e siècle,” lecture, Colloque international, Jean-Baptiste Perronneau, Orléans, 22.VI.2017 noted two examples among the larger La Tour pastels at the Louvre, Frémin ([J.46.1819](#)) and Dumont le Romain ([J.46.1681](#)). Despite the later addition to the right edge of the former, it does seem most likely that the main chassis is original; it measures 92x72.5 cm (Salmon 2018, p. 160; see also Jeffares 2018g for an analysis of the provenance and likely date of alterations). The latter suffered from the artist’s repeated attentions throughout his life, and its condition does not preclude a later transfer. For a discussion of the pastel of Mme de Pompadour ([J.46.2541](#)) see my [ESSAY](#).

⁴¹ Constant de Massoul 1797, p. 110 (in [TREATISES](#)).

the carpentry was not of high quality. In at least one case, a maker's stamp (Infroit) has been found, indicating that some strainers were supplied by *maîtres-menuisiers*.⁴² In some cases bark from the tree remains.⁴³ Some care was required however to ensure that the inner edge of the battens touching the reverse of the canvas or parchment was not so sharp as to leave an impression, and these were occasionally bevelled or rounded.

Pernety⁴⁴ provided a list of the standard “*toiles de mesure*” available ready primed from Parisian *marchands de couleur*, priced in sols; they should not be assumed to be reliably standardised⁴⁵ (although the names have persisted from 1757 until today):

toile de 30	33¾x27 po.	91.4x73.1 cm
toile de 25	30x24 po.	81.2x65.0 cm
toile de 20	27x22 po.	73.1x59.6 cm
toile de 15	24x20 po.	65.0x54.1 cm
toile de 12	22½x18½ po.	60.9x50.1 cm
toile de 10	20½ x17 po.	55.5x46.0 cm
toile de 8	17x14 po.	46.0x37.9 cm
toile de 6	15x12 po.	40.6x32.5 cm
toile de 5	13x10 po.	35.2x27.1 cm
toile de 4	12x9 po.	32.5x24.4 cm
toile de 3	10x8 po.	27.1x21.7 cm

The aspect ratios (height divided by width) vary between 1.2 and 1.33 (for the smallest), but are mostly (and for the most popular middle sizes) approximately 1.22. English shapes are typically longer, with a ratio of 1.33 (*v. §IV.16 infra*).

Neither the type of wood nor the dimensions were completely standard, but as a general rule, wider, machine-finished mahogany components are indicators of later work. The appearance of the wood in original eighteenth century strainers can often be surprisingly bright: perhaps sealing works reduces the level of oxidation one might expect from exposed surfaces in furniture from the same period. While dendrochronology might seem to be a useful tool in detecting frauds, the angle at which the wood is cut from the tree (and the smaller surface area than is revealed in wooden panels for painting) usually means that rings are only visible from the ends, which, even if uncovered, rarely if ever present enough rings to enable the technique to be applied.⁴⁶

Oval strainers, except for the smallest, usually have cross bars (horizontal and vertical); they tend, like oval frames, to be made from four components with joints at the 45° lines. The standard sizes do not seem to have been published, but on one example [J.4798.102](#) the size (21 pouces 4 lignes by 16 pouces, or 57.8x43.3) was painted on the strainer suggesting it was bought ready made. Since, unlike straight pieces for rectangular frames, these components cannot follow the grain, they are subject to stresses from humidity changes that can easily result in their failure over two hundred years, although it is the opening of joints seen on the front of oval frames that is more familiar.

For non-standard strainers, see §IV.8 *infra* (La Tour's use of two sheets of glass as a capsule, but this seems to have been employed for works executed on strained canvas, cut from the strainer before encapsulation); §IV.2.7 for copper plates etc.

⁴² Valérie Luquet, *ibid.*

⁴³ Shelley 2005, p. 106.

⁴⁴ Pernety 1757, p. 353. There is a misprint in the height of the *toile de 10* that he quotes, which I have corrected (and supplemented with dimensions of the *toile de 5* and *3*) from a twentieth century supplier's chart (RG frames) and rounded into modern cm. A summary of these standard sizes will be found in the [ABBREVIATIONS](#) file.

⁴⁵ In a random selection of 30 French eighteenth century rectangular pastels, only one third were found to correspond to these measures to a tolerance of 4 mm.

⁴⁶ Derek McCormick, private communication, 2014.

Cardboard in various forms has been used particularly for smaller works. A surprising number of the La Tour pastels in Saint-Quentin, including some larger works, are found to be mounted on cardboard which may at first appear to be original – as for example when Dupouch [J.46.1694](#) was unframed for conservation in 2010: however we know from earlier records (e.g. Fleury 1907) that when it was reglazed in 1897, there was a label (now missing) attached to the châssis, implying that its mounting then was conventionally on a strainer. Despite the losses that can occur on transferring to a different secondary support, later restoration campaigns occasionally employed this approach, hoping the rigidity of the card would add stability.

IV.2 The support

To non-specialists it may be confusing that it is the paper, not the canvas, that is referred to as the (primary) “support” (the OED is of little help, defining support in this context as “The solid surface or material on which a painting is executed”). However it is termed, the choice of surface to which the pastel is applied is critical. As with all friable or pulverulent materials (charcoal, chalk etc.) there needs to be a certain texture to the support in order for the pastel to adhere.

IV.2.1 *Marouflage*

While it is possible to work on sheets temporarily fixed to a drawing board, the preferred method, at least from the beginning of the eighteenth century,⁴⁷ was to work on the paper after it had been mounted on canvas, in a process known as “marouflage”; this provided an elasticity to the surface which aided the compression of the chalk into the paper surface. It also allowed those artists who sometimes applied pastel wet to do so without leaving cockled areas of the surface as would appear on loose sheets of paper; the tension in the canvas would suffice to keep the surface flat.

All the indications⁴⁸ are that the canvas was first stretched over the strainer, fixed with glue or paste⁴⁹ and then tacked in place around the sides, with the corners folded as neatly as possible.⁵⁰ (The canvas itself requires no treatment, although it is sometimes primed with oil, as discussed below.) The wet paper is then pasted over this assembly, usually overlapping the sides and sometimes extending to the reverse of the strainer; while drying, it will create the necessary tension. One modern source suggests, however, that the regular method was to apply the paper to the canvas before either was fixed to the strainer; consequently the heads of the tacks go through both layers (so that where tacks are hidden by paper, the work is likely to be a later fake).⁵¹ In Chaperon’s method, the tacks would be below the paper: but in practice, these iron tacks rust and burn their way through the paper to appear on the outside, providing a different explanation of the normal appearance. The discriminant would be the structure of the folds in the corners (which would be far bulkier if the paper were pre-attached to the canvas), but these are seldom observable. Some artists (e.g. John Russell) cut the paper to the front surface of the canvas so as to avoid having to fold it at all. Canvases varied widely in quality, and may be of some help in attribution: Russell typically used consistently a fairly tight weave, with a thread count of about 20x16 threads/cm. Lower thread counts are often found, even in works of La Tour or Perronneau, sometimes as low as 10x8 /cm.⁵² La Tour seems to have used canvas of a finer weave for his royal portraits.

⁴⁷ Many sheets by Nanteuil seem to have been mounted later. The earliest surviving Vivien, the pastel of Richelet [J.77.301](#) dating from before 1689, is mounted on an oak panel, although his subsequent work is conventionally supported on strained canvas.

⁴⁸ See for example Chaperon 1788, pp. 331f; Carrington Bowles 1773/1802, p. 53 (also in [TREATISES](#)) describes the process in detail, indicating how the canvas is to be laid over the paper and pressed from behind etc.

⁴⁹ Chaperon (§316) recommends “colle d’amidon”, starch paste, made from wheat or hair powder. Surprisingly Pile & White 1995 reported that FTIR “suggests” the marouflage used animal glue; however Townsend 1998 (p. 26f) noted that most historic papers have been sized with animal glue, and it is very difficult to distinguish between this and the paste used to attached the sheet to the canvas.

⁵⁰ See Mayer 1991, pp. 296f for the neater way of doing so.

⁵¹ Salmon 2004a, p. 54f.

⁵² In the case of one Perronneau [J.582.1626](#), executed in Bordeaux, the canvas is a piece of loose hessian with a thread count as low as 3x3 /cm in places.

All of this is normally done before the pastel is commenced. Indeed artists' suppliers would sell canvases so lined ready for use: the marchand papetier René Coiffier, for example, carried “vingt-deux toiles à pastel de toutes grandeurs” among his extensive stock of artists' materials.⁵³ Russell, however, reporting a discovery made by Cotes, suggests that the best practice is to do a preliminary drawing of the subject in “dead-colour” before the paper is pasted to the canvas, the advantage apparently being that when the work is continued after pasting down the pastel will adhere better and the colours will be deeper. There is nothing to suggest that other pastellists did this; but the presence of pinholes on paper that has been pasted down (as is very occasionally seen) might be consistent with such a preliminary stage rather than evidencing later transfer. These rules are of course subject to exceptions: Ducreux, for example, habitually used his own discarded académies to line oval strainers, acting in place of canvas as secondary support for the paper on which he then worked in pastel.⁵⁴ There are a few other cases where paper has been used as the sole support, pasted over a straining frame (probably when wet and sized for strength) instead of canvas.⁵⁵ The hazards of working on such a support will be obvious.

For glass secondary supports, *v.* §IV.8 *infra*.

IV.2.2 *Types of paper*

The surface of the paper might need to be roughened in some way. This may simply be a mechanical attack with a knife, razor or pumice-stone to abrade the surface (and smooth out any large imperfections), but in other cases might involve some kind of sizing, and could even involve the glue and ground pumice-stone preparation also used for direct painting on canvas (*v.* §IV.2.8).

Although wove paper was invented by 1757 (by James Whatman), it was not in general use until much later,⁵⁶ and is of no relevance to the eighteenth century pastel. The papers employed were all produced using pulp from beaten rags formed into sheets in a mould, a rectangular frame with a network of wires that left chain marks on the surface of the paper. Russell recommended that the side with less visible lines be used to paint on. Paper came in various finishes: the finest and cleanest rags were used to produce white paper for writing and printing. But for pastel the rougher texture associated with coarser rags was more suitable, in particular the velour paper the long fibres of which presented an excellent vehicle for holding pigment.

IV.2.3 *Paper colour*

The paper for pastel was usually blue, but occasionally brown or even white. The required texture normally appeared in brown or blue paper which had numerous functions such as wrapping (blue was said to be particularly favoured for wrapping sugar so as to emphasise its whiteness). By the mid-eighteenth century blue colourants were added to the rag pulp to produce more intense and consistent colours: the dyes used included smalt, or ground blue glass, indigo, woad or Prussian blue. Blue and red silk fibres were included⁵⁷ in paper pulp intended for use with pastel in France from the 1750s and England the following decade. Constant de Massoul noted that Carriera and La Tour used a “blue Dutch paper”. John Russell, in the second edition of his *Elements* (1777, p. 21: see TREATISES), added a curious footnote, suggesting that La Tour (“lately a Painter of note in Paris” – this was 1777) often used “with great success” smalt grounds, prepared by strewing smalt dust over paper brushed with gum water, brushed to remove any loose particles when dry.

⁵³ Inv. p.m. 25.1.1810, AN MC/LII/743.

⁵⁴ Examples include Dusaulx (i.285.342), Méhul (i.285.595) and Thibault Laveaux (i.285.467).

⁵⁵ Two examples in Russell's œuvre are both weak enough to be secondary versions or studio copies.

⁵⁶ Krill 1994 is a useful general source on paper; see also Bower 1996 and Bower 2002.

⁵⁷ Krill 1994, pp. 4, 7, 13; Krill 1996, pp. 72–74 gives an account of the stationer John Stackhouse Style's introduction of a “silk paper”, modelled on French paper of the time, intended for drawing with chalk or pastel; the development was sponsored by the Society of Arts. It continued to be sold by retailers such as Dorothy Mercier.

As early as 1628 Norgate noted that “The ordinary Manner of working in Crayon is upon a Blewe Paper”, while *The excellency of the pen and pencil*, an anonymous treatise which first appeared in 1668, instructed: “Provide your self also of fine Blew paper; some light-coloured, other some more sad; as also with Paper of divers other colours, which now is very common to be sold in many places.” According to “Boutet” 1708 [pp. 168f],

On a déjà dit au commencement, que cette sorte de Peinture se pratique sur du *Papier Gris*, on se sert aussi de *Papier Bleuâtre*, il les faut choisir l’un & l’autre assez *forts* & d’un *grain fin & égal*; il doit être *fort* afin de pouvoir souffrir que l’on repasse dessus avec des *Pastels* autant de fois qu’il est nécessaire; & d’un *grain fin & égal*, afin que le travail en soit plus délicat & plus beau; il doit enfin avoir un *grain*, afin que le *Pastel* s’y attache d’autant plus facilement, & y tienne mieux, ce qui n’empêche pas que l’Ouvrage étant achevé, on ne doive y mettre une glace, de peur que quelqu’un y passant la main, ou autre chose ne vienne à l’effacer, & aussi pour le préserver de la poudre & de la fumée, que l’on ne pourroit pas ôter sans enlever en même tems le *Pastel* & l’Ouvrage./Nottez que l’on doit attacher son papier sur un petit ais uni & mince, en y collant par derrière les bords dudit papier.

The significance of the colour arises because optically an image in a warm colour drawn on a cool background appears to advance towards the viewer, an effect which artists usually find helpful. This may be more relevant with early “pastels” where sheets were prepared with washes in the technique Norgate describes: but it is disputed whether enough of this show-through is relevant where eighteenth century pastels are concerned, since the whole sheet is usually covered with opaque pastel.⁵⁸ Nevertheless La Tour described an experiment in treating his paper with yellow ochre mixed with egg yolk to facilitate the elimination of show-through of the blue colour:

mettre avec une brosse une légère teinture d’ocre jaune à l’eau simple, bien délayée ensemble avec un peu de jaune d’œuf sur du papier bleu; cela empêche le lourd qu’il est difficile d’éviter par la quantité de couleurs nécessaires pour couvrir le bleu du papier.⁵⁹

In a few cases artists went to the further trouble of priming the canvas onto which the paper would be pasted: Vivien for example used the same deep red as he would have used as a ground for oil painting.⁶⁰ Some later sources⁶¹ recommend that the canvas be primed with oil, with the intention of protecting the finished pastel from humidity.⁶²

IV.2.4 Joins

Although large sheets of paper were available from early on, it is common to find two or more smaller sheets joined together on the same strainer. Sometimes this was the result of an artist working say on a head on a smaller sheet for convenience, such as La Tour’s full-length Mme de Pompadour or the heads of each of Canova and Tresham in Hamilton’s *Canova’s studio* (V&A version); but more often it was simply a question of availability of paper of the right finish for anything beyond say 60x50 cm.⁶³ La Tour’s practice is discussed in §III.2 of [La Tour](#); for the montage showing the 16 sheets of the président de Rieux, see [Jeffares 2010c](#).

Larger oval pastels usually had a rectangular sheet for most of the surface, touching the oval boundary in four points, each of the four outer segments being additions; the chords normally ran horizontally and vertically (but occasionally were positioned at 45°). Care was required to disguise the joins, usually by a small area of overlap, and to ensure joins did not fall across the face or other areas where they would be particularly noticeable. These joins can sometimes be confused with

⁵⁸ Günther 1762 (§2) nevertheless thought this was a fundamental objection to the use of blue paper, and recommended pastellists only used parchment.

⁵⁹ In a letter to Belle de Charrière, 14.IV.1770; see [Chronological table of La Tour documents](#).

⁶⁰ Examples noted by the author and by Valérie Luquet (private communication, 2017). It is possible of course that Vivien, who also painted in oil, simply used canvases in his studio which happened to have been primed.

⁶¹ Such as Watelet & Lévesque 1791, p. 709.

⁶² This may however increase the dangers during transportation by altering the resonance frequency and amplitude under vibration.

⁶³ Burns 2007, pp. 71ff. Several examples were studied in the Los Angeles 2018 exhibition, including La Tour’s président de Rieux and Louis XV (1.46.207). Many of Hamilton’s larger works use the same technique.

the rope marks where paper sheets have been folded and hung to dry during the paper manufacturing process.⁶⁴ They can frequently present conservation problems today (*v. §V.7 infra*).

IV.2.5 Watermarks

Because the sheets were normally pasted down and covered completely with pastel, very few watermarks have been recorded.⁶⁵

IV.2.6 Parchment

Other supports have included vellum or parchment, ideal for the very smooth effects sought by a Liotard, and much favoured by German pastellists.⁶⁶ In France, Pierre Bernard preferred it, and Lenoir and Perronneau occasionally used it; among the British, Hayter was a notable enthusiast, while John Russell, in the 2nd edition of his *Elements* (1777, p. 21), while acknowledging the attractive soft effect it offered, warned of its propensity to mildew in Britain's unfavourable climate. But most French pastellists⁶⁷ disliked it, and one authority⁶⁸ expressed their disapproval:

Cette sorte de canevas plaît aux personnes qui ont moins le vrai goût de l'art que celui du léché, & qui regardent une propreté froide comme le premier mérite d'une peinture. ... La couleur ne mordant point sur le fond, reste moins épaisse, & plus foible, mais comme elle est aussi plus unie, elle plaît davantage aux mauvais connoisseurs; & c'est, pour les mauvais artistes, un avantage qui n'est point à dédaigner.

Either side could be used: normally the “dos”, or outer side, was used for pastel, while the “chair”, or inner side, was preferred for miniatures as it was smoother.⁶⁹ But the smooth side could be used for pastel, provided it was prepared, usually with a razor or pumice stone, to provide the bite needed to allow the pastel to adhere. The chemistry of the bonding of pastel with animal skins differs from that with paper, and may contribute to the unique luminosity achieved with this support. Despite this, cataloguing of pastels frequently confuse paper and parchment supports, and should generally be treated with caution, particularly when based only on inspection through glass. An irregular pattern of animal veining is sometimes visible in raking light, but rarely interpreted correctly. It is practically impossible to tell the species of animal (cow, sheep or goat) from which vellum or parchment has been prepared from its appearance. The term “parchment” is used to refer to either in the *Dictionary*.

It was essential to extract as much of the grease as possible before use (this problem was among Russell's main objections, but Hayter seems to have had his vellum rolled repeatedly to render it “calcareous”, or chalky). Even so parchment was more prone to mildew than paper.

In order to stretch the parchment over the strainer, it is necessary to wet it, but important to wet only the *chair* side, as any water on the *dos* side will cause it to dry out and lose its special surface. Lalande describes the technique of moistening the reverse after the pastel has been sketched in, which he says refreshes the colour. Günther 1762 (§4) gives detailed instructions on how the skin should be nailed to the strainer during the stretching process.

Liotard pioneered a technique that had previously been used in Swiss miniatures of painting, in strong primary colours, directly on the back, particularly to highlight faces. He used this also on

⁶⁴ Burns 2007, p. 110.

⁶⁵ See Burns 2007, pp. 107f, for an IV mark on J.21.2429 (Carriera); the same mark appears on J.656.112 (Saunders). J.113.185 (Ashfield) shows the arms of Amsterdam; J.224.102 (Chevalier) has the A and C of an Arches watermark; J.4.288 (Hoin) the remnants of D. & C. Blauw; J.64.1794 (Russell) is also watermarked.

⁶⁶ See Günther 1762 (§§ 1–2), as noted above.

⁶⁷ In view of the widespread errors in describing supports, both in sale catalogues and monographs, caution is recommended in generalising. La Tour, for example, is widely thought never to have used parchment: but one version of Dachery in Saint-Quentin (J.46.1583) was found to use that support when examined in 2006 by Florence Herrenschildt.

⁶⁸ Watelet & Lévesque 1791, p. 709.

⁶⁹ See Lalande 1762. The English terms are more often *hair* and *flesh*.

his coloured chalk drawings, as did his brother Jean-Michel Liotard. It was used by at least one other pastellist in Liotard's immediate circle,⁷⁰ and again much later by John Downman.⁷¹

Although the normal arrangement with parchment is to fix it directly to the strainer with no canvas or other lining, there are some (usually smaller) examples where a very fine sheet of vellum is mounted directly on canvas, or with an intermediate layer of paper. In these cases the vellum does not stretch around the sides. Liotard uses this, sometimes covering the whole sheet of vellum with a further thick preparation so that its existence is hard to detect. Liotard frequently used several pieces of parchment, usually overlapping; the joins can cause problems.⁷² Among numerous examples of this practice, the Belle Chocolatière [J.49.1342](#) and Morelli [J.49.17565](#) have been studied in detail.⁷³ In one case, Perronneau reused an oval strainer on which he had already started, but abandoned, a pastel on paper maroufflé sur toile, but stretched a piece of vellum over it and started afresh.⁷⁴

IV.2.7 Copper plates

Even in the seventeenth century, experimentation abounded. Luttrell used copper plates prepared for mezzotint engraving as a support for pastel; Gerard de Laresse (*Het groot schilderboek*, 1707) compared the use of pastels on dark paper with the “black art” described in Alexander Browne's *Ars pictoria* of 1669 in which white chalk is applied to a rocked copper plate covered with charcoal. This technique allowed Luttrell to obtain deeply saturated colours with graded half-tones that are pastel painting in every sense of the phrase.⁷⁵ This was repeated on a far larger scale by Alexis Loir much later in his 1779 *morceau de réception*, the portrait of Clément Belle [J.495.106](#), where the rigidity of copper was perhaps thought to have conservation advantages over the flexibility of canvas. In practice these metal supports did not become widespread: one obvious disadvantage is the weight, which is likely to exacerbate shock levels during handling (the rigidity of the support may also compound these). There was also a problem of enhanced sensitivity to humidity, which could cause a reaction with the salts in certain pigments, and was prone to the formation of verdigris.⁷⁶ Curiously wood panel, once the preferred support for oil painting, seems almost⁷⁷ never to have been used, with or without preparation, despite the apparent advantage of rigidity.

IV.2.8 Prepared canvas

It is however possible to use pastels directly on specially prepared canvas, working on a coating of some form of gesso, perhaps ground marble and pumice stone or chalk and glue. Pastels made with this technique are often misdescribed in sales catalogues – for example, a number of works by Pillement, in some of which surface damage like the craquelure in oil paintings is the most obvious indication where the sides are not visible. Chaperon discusses this technique in his §323:

A Rome, quelques Peintres en pastel font enduire une toile avec de la colle de parchemin, dans laquelle ils ont jetté de la poudre de marbre & de la pierre ponce bien tamisées. Ils unissent ensuite ce canevas avec la pierre ponce pour emporter les inégalités. Ils ne couvrent la toile de cette espèce d'enduit, que lorsqu'elle est déjà tendue sur le chassis. Le pastel prend très-bien dessus, & cette méthode réussit au mieux.

⁷⁰ An anonymous lady in a costume resembling those of the Bayreuth court, sold Frankfurt, Döbritz, 8.XI.2014, Lot 202 ([J.92.2064](#)).

⁷¹ Roethlisberger 1990.

⁷² Gombaud, Sauvage & van Leeuwen 2014 considers one case ([J.49.1292](#)) where the two sheets of parchment are pasted to canvas.

⁷³ See Liotard 2018 and San Francisco 2021, p. 14, fig. 3.

⁷⁴ [J.582.1943](#), discovered underneath Mme Fuet ([J.582.1345](#)) by Valérie Luquet in 2017; see Perronneau 2017. The motivation may have been less economy than the difficulty of obtaining oval strainers locally.

⁷⁵ He was able to do so using less gypsum than required by other supports, as we learn from a comment in the continuation of his *Épitome* (p. 66), probably written under his direction by his cousin Dorothy Wynne: “these cryoons formerly was made up with 3 parts plaister of paris, & now for his cryoons to work upon Copper: he makes but one part of plaister of paris.”

⁷⁶ Watelet & Lévesque 1791, p. 710.

⁷⁷ An exception is Liotard's *Vénus endormie* ([J.49.2574](#)). Loir exhibited “Deux Têtes d'Enfants peintes en Pastel sur bois” in the Salon de 1759; while the Italian miniaturist Toppino advertised that he also painted in oil on copper and in pastel on wood (*Journal de Rouen*, 16.IV.1790).

La toile, au reste, peut être préparée de la même manière sans poudre de marbre ni de pierre-ponce, mais avec une forte couche de craie mêlée avec la colle.

Constant de Massoul likewise describes a preparation of “the best Flanders’ Glue, and Pumice-stone sifted through tiffany” boiled and applied to the cloth with a brush. These or similar recipes were known much earlier. The Rosalba self-portrait ^{J.21.0106} in the Uffizi, from 1709, is painted on rough canvas covered in gesso, but with an intermediate layer of paper;⁷⁸ perhaps this was because she wished to avoid visible joins in paper sheets that would be required by a larger format than she usually employed. In a number of cases (e.g. Bessborough ^{J.49.1119}, 1754, and Phipps ^{J.49.2192}, 1774) Liotard worked with such prepared canvases (*v.* §IV.10 *infra*). The technique had been pioneered in 1753 by Reifenstein, who visited Liotard in 1761. Liotard’s recipe for preparing paper similarly, including ground pumice stone and fish-glue, was provided in a manuscript found among his papers. Innovations continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with materials such as the “toiles anti-ponce” that received awards in the “universelle” and “départementale” exhibitions in the mid-1850s.

These preparations were intended for use with conventional pastels; it was also possible to prepare supports for use with special, self-fixing crayons (*v.* §IV.7 *infra*).

IV.3 Scientific investigations

Only a limited amount of information about pastel pigments and materials has so far been collected by modern scientific analysis.⁷⁹ Townsend 1998 provides a useful summary of the work until 1998, very little of which related to pre-1800 pastels; its discussion of Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) omits Pilc & White 1995, where the technique is applied to a La Tour pastel. Stratis & Salvesen 2002 contained a number of relevant articles, and Перова 2006 should also be mentioned. Proceedings of the triennial meetings of ICOM have included a number of relevant papers. Of particular note among the recent literature are the studies by Wallert & al. 2016, Gombaudo & Sauvage 2016, which analysed Liotard’s pastels and compared them with the shade card of Stoupan’s pastels sent to Caroline Luise in 1746⁸⁰, and Gombaudo & al. 2017, which investigated pastels by La Tour and Valade using photography (within and beyond the visual spectrum), as well as Fourier transform infrared and Raman spectroscopy and enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA). A detailed investigation used of the *Schokoladenmädchen*, including the use of x-ray fluorescence techniques, was reported by Schölzel 2018. Gombaudo in Versailles 2021 examined a group of pastels by Wallerant Vaillant. Three pastels by La Tour were the subject of a thorough analysis in Brunel-Duverger & al. 2023, applying the non-invasive techniques used in the previous papers by Gombaudo and Sauvage (combining x-ray fluorescence spectroscopy XRF with reflectance imaging spectroscopy in the visible and near infrared range vnir-ri, fibre optic reflectance spectroscopy for the short-wave infrared swir and FTIR in the mid-infrared range). Mention should also be made of the survey of the Bordeaux pastels from various approaches in Birot & al. 2014. An earlier paper by Caggiani & Colomban 2011 analysed some much less important pastels (of doubtful authenticity) with non-invasive Raman spectroscopy without removing the pastels’ glazing: this was sufficient to detect the presence of chrome yellow, demonstrating that the works were later than had been thought.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Xavier Salomon (private communications, 6.IV.2022 and 28.I.2024) was the first to notice this; the literature had previously assumed it was on paper.

⁷⁹ A thorough investigation of oil pastels used by Edvard Munch was published by Jacopo La Nasa & al., *Nature: scientific reports*, 30.III.2021, x1/1, 7152, but many of the materials are later than those with which this work is concerned.

⁸⁰ Reproduced in [TREATISES](#).

⁸¹ The synthesis of chromates of lead was published by Vauquelin in 1809. The same element, chromium, detected by x-ray fluorescence spectroscopy, led to the same conclusion for a 19th century pastiche of a woman in Louis XV costume in Bordeaux (Birot & al. 2014, fig. 3).

Inspection with infrared or ultraviolet light is rarely as informative as it can be for oil painting (where restorations painted over varnish⁸² show up as darker areas in UV); but UV can show the presence of lead white (used by many eighteenth century pastellists), which fluoresces white in UV, while zinc white (which should⁸³ not be present in an eighteenth century pastel) fluoresces a characteristic green.⁸⁴ Multispectral analysis of increasing sophistication offers a noninvasive approach to identifying layers as well as to confirming that the same pigment is used in different areas where they show the same reflectivity in different wavelengths.

Caution is required where later restoration may have taken place.⁸⁵ In one case, a later “signature” on an eighteenth century pastel was detected with spectroscopy as blanc fixe, an artificially produced barium sulphate introduced from c.1820.

It can also be difficult to distinguish between pigments and the chemicals used in the manufacture or the preparation of supports, particularly where parchment is involved. One should also note the inherent bias in that Liotard’s work appears to have been subject to a disproportionate number of recent investigations; this artist was self-taught, and his practices may not reflect those of mainstream pastellists of his period.

IV.4 The ingredients: pigments, binders and fillers

Although natural chalks (principally⁸⁶ black, white or sanguine) have been used since art began, instructions for making pastel, including the specific use of chalk or white lead both to modify the hues of natural minerals and to soften the stick to permit tonal rather than graphic application, date back to the late sixteenth century; the earliest surviving recipe is that of Petrus Gregorius of Lyon (1574). The difficulties with natural chalk are both the restricted palette and its unsuitability for colouring broad areas: its texture ensures that it is essentially a graphic technique for producing lines. “Crayons de couleurs”, or coloured chalks, allow other pigments to be bound together with a vehicle such as wax or oil (they are in effect artificial, reconstituted chalks), but, while extending the range of tonality beyond natural stones, they are still better suited to drawing than painting.⁸⁷

The true innovation of pastel is its soft consistency, which permits the artist to create broad expanses of graded and modelled colour. To achieve this, three ingredients are required: the ground pigment itself; a second, uncoloured (white) material such as kaolin or gypsum that can also be ground, and which bulks out (and reduces the colour saturation of) the pigment, known as the filler (or extender; “charge” in French); and thirdly some kind of adhesive substance, called the

⁸² A rather curious report by Geraldine Keen appeared in *The times* on 7.XII.1970 entitled “The philosophy of fakes: the story of a painting which has obstinately remained genuine in spite of rigorous scientific testing”, and concerned a pastel offered at Sotheby’s on 16.XII.1970 as a painting by Nattier, but which apparently was a pastel version of La Tour’s Marie Leszczyńska, covered in a fixative that acted as varnish, over which lips, eyebrows and highlights on the dress had been added later, showing up as such under UV light. As the investigators had difficulty both in recognising that this was a pastel rather than an oil painting, and did not immediately recognise the Louvre original, it is difficult to attach too much importance to the conclusion of this report, that the work might have been an autograph study by La Tour.

⁸³ Zinc white was first suggested as a pigment in 1782 by Guyton de Morveau; patents were issued in 1794, but the main use was after 1834. Chaperon 1788 (§68) discussed it, evidently as a very new invention. Wallert & al. 2016 (but delivered in 2013) note the earliest known use of tin white – in Liotard’s *Vue de Genève* (1.49.2597), but the dating of that picture, usually reported as c.1765, is uncertain; R&L note that it must have been drawn before 1776 when the observatory was built. Given Liotard’s propensity to work on pictures over a long time, even that date is not an absolute *terminus ante quem* for Liotard’s use of the pigment; and subsequently Sauvage & Gombaud 2015 also reported both tin white and zinc white in the 1746 pastel of Bouer (1.49.1158). While tin white is described by Mayer 1991 as not a painting pigment, being avoided owing to its propensity to discolouration, Liotard may have learned of its use and pearlescent effect in enamel painting. (The presence of elemental zinc and tin in the National Gallery’s supposed Perronneau (1.582.189) doesn’t contribute to the evidence given the uncertainty over its authenticity.)

⁸⁴ Titanium dioxide, present only from c.1920, fluoresces rose or rose-violet. Care is required as the vehicle affects the fluorescence: see Marie L. Carden, “Use of ultraviolet light as an aid to pigment identification”, *APT bulletin: the journal of preservation technology*, XXIII/3, 1991, pp. 26–37.

⁸⁵ Burns 2007, p. 118f thus explains the presence of zinc white in a Rosalba pastel (Philip Duke of Wharton).

⁸⁶ But other colours occur naturally, including a wide range of yellow ochres and even blue: Cennini (1857, p. 29) described finding natural seems in the Colle di Valdelsa: “io vidi vene di più ragioni colori: cioè ocria, sinopia scura e chiara, azzurro e bianco”. See also Burns 2007, fig. 11 & *passim*.

⁸⁷ The matter is discussed at some length in Burns 2002 and Burns 2007; see also Sauvage 2010. Artificial chalks may be further subdivided into natural, but reconstituted, chalks; and synthetic chalks, where the pigment is a chemical produced in the laboratory.

binder (“liant” in French), such as gum or glue. The principal objective was to achieve the softness required to give adhesion, as the basic gypsum/clay aggregate produced sticks which scratched the paper, and various forms of white chalk seem to have been preferred. Dezallier d’Argenville noted⁸⁸ “Depuis quelques années on fait des craions plus fermes qu’à l’ordinaire. Ils servent à faire de petits paysages dans des tabatieres, aussi finis que la mignature.”

While it may seem simple to combine these, in practice there were huge difficulties in producing the desired properties. Ideally artists needed a set of pastels with uniform consistency, soft enough to paint areas rather than merely scratch lines, but with good adherence, light fastness and chemical inertness (some well known pigments reacted with other substances, while others oxidised rapidly). Some binders were too brittle, others were ineffective. The need to maintain uniformity of these properties throughout a set of crayons with hues ranging from the palest to the darkest was the challenge that is discussed again and again throughout the literature from Norgate to Constant de Massoul.⁸⁹ It is unnecessary to summarise all the approaches; what is clear is how much commitment is required if the artist is to make these himself, and, as a number of authors mention, the commercially available crayons could not always be trusted to have followed the diligent stages in washing and purifying that, for example, Chaperon insists were required to remove potentially noxious impurities. (Impurities could also arise from ill-prepared supports or even from sweat from the pastellist’s fingers.) While these authors had every motive to exaggerate the hazards, it is notable that La Tour described a technique for removing salt traces from chalks and pastel using a knife and even a hot iron passed close to the pastel.⁹⁰ Similarly the engraver and portraitist Isaac Jehner explained his decision to abandon pastel to the medium’s liability to fade due to defects in the crayons.⁹¹ The Swiss antiquary Rodolphe Valltravers writing⁹² in 1775 noted that Charles Pache’s “colours” (he must have meant pastels, for which Pache was only known) were being resold adulterated:

The Colormen, who buy his Colours, and sell them as genuine, at the same Price, or cheaper than himself, mix them with their own bad colors, and hurt him much.

IV.4.1 *Pigments*

The pigments themselves are the same as those used in oil or watercolour painting, and are selected with exactly the same criteria of stability and colour-fastness. They are ground using the same equipment – Chaperon begins his treatise by describing the *porphyre*, or slab of porphyry, on which this is done.

Pigments may be animal, vegetable or mineral, and may occur naturally or be the product of the laboratory (e.g. Prussian blue⁹³, from c.1704; but the vast majority of synthetic pigments were created after the eighteenth century). Although ill-chosen materials will fade in sunlight (particularly vulnerable are the yellow and red lakes), most pastels do not in fact deteriorate when displayed sensibly; moreover the surface of the paper is less exposed when covered by pigment than in a watercolour drawing, so disintegration of the support through bleaching is rarely a problem (see §V.6.1 *infra*).

The treatises contain innumerable lists of pigments which there is no need to repeat here. Even the seventeenth century manuals contained not only numerous ingredients, but suggested combinations (in some cases further refined into suitable mixtures for different degrees of

⁸⁸ Letter to Jean-François Séguier of 4.I.1753.

⁸⁹ Dossie 1758, p. 181ff is one of a good many explanations of the challenge. Günther 1762 (§13), however, rejected the idea that all the crayons in a set must have the same hardness.

⁹⁰ Letter to Belle de Charrière, 14.IV.1770, cited *supra*.

⁹¹ *Fortune’s football*, 1806, p. 42, cited *infra*, §IX.6.

⁹² Letter to John Grimston of 7.II.1775 (East Riding of Yorkshire Archives, DDGR/42/25).

⁹³ See Barbara H. Berrie, “Prussian blue”, in E. W. Fitzhugh, ed., *Artists’ pigments*, 1997, pp. 191–218.

“shadowing”). But it is notable that Chaperon confined his requirements to fewer than a dozen essentials. These are the basic stocks he recommended, including their modern names and colour index numbers:⁹⁴

- 6 pounds of *blanc de Troies*, white chalk⁹⁵ (at 1 sou per pound, Paris prices in 1788);
- 1 pound of *ochre jaune*, yellow ochre [natural yellow iron oxide, PY43] (12s./lb);
- 1 pound of *ochre de rue*, brown ochre [darker iron oxide PY 43, or possibly raw sienna PBr 7] (16s./lb);
- 4 oz. *stil-de-grain*, yellow or gold Dutch pink [a fugitive yellow lake made from buckthorn berries from Avignon] (£1 10s./lb);
- 6 oz. *cinabre*, cinnabar (in stone form, to avoid being supplied with minium) [vermilion, mercuric sulphide, PR 106] (£8/lb);
- 2 drachms⁹⁶ of *carmin*, carmine [made from cochineal NR 4] (£24/oz.);
- 3 oz. of *laque*, fine carmine lake [a resin with a deep brownish red colour, now known as shellac NR 4] (£2 10s./oz.);
- 4 oz. *bleu de Prusse*, Prussian blue [ferric-ferrocyanide, discovered by Diesbach in Berlin, 1704; PB 27] (£2/oz.);
- 1 pound of *terre d'Ombre*, raw umber [PBr 7, found in Italy or the Cévennes] (10s./lb);
- 2 pounds of *terre de cologne*, Cassel earth [similar to Vandyke brown, a deep, almost violet brown PBr 8] (£1/lb);
- 2 pounds of *noire d'ivoire*, ivory black, made from charred bones, mixed with wood charcoal [PBk 9] (£1 10s./lb).

Note that Chaperon included no green pigment, recommending instead that yellow and blue pigments be mixed. Green earth, like Bremen blue, was readily available, but to be avoided for pastels. Green was in fact a notoriously difficult colour for pastellists: the yellow/blue mixes often combined good blue pigments with fugitive yellow lakes, so that greens turn to blue over time (see §V.6.1 *infra*). Much of Bernard Stoupan's fame rested on his discovery of a stable green for pastel.⁹⁷ Lowitz also claimed to have done so.

Chaperon insists that this palette is all that is necessary – although he goes on to describe many other pigments which were also available – advising that (his §46) “L’opulence ne consiste pas à posséder beaucoup, mais à savoir user de ce qu’on a. Le pastel est riche avec peu.”

Stoupan's shade card sent to Caroline Luise von Baden in 1746 (investigated in Gombaud & Sauvage 2016) provides an excellent basis for analysing earlier practice. The principal pigments were (a) whites: lead white; (b) flesh tones: vermilion and ochre; (c) yellows: various ochres, umber, and orpiment; (d) reds: vermilion, red ochre; (e) greens: green verditer; other copper based pigments; indigo and ochre mix; (f) blues: Prussian blue; possibly azurite or other copper-based pigment, and mixes; (g) blacks: black ochre.

Liotard however, whose practice was idiosyncratic, employed a far wider range of pigments, which he may have made himself. Including among the whites for example, Gombaud & Sauvage detected bismuth white, tin white and zinc white.

Brunel-Duverger & al. 2023, performing a similar analysis on a smaller sample of La Tour pastels from the mid-century, found (a) whites based on calcium with some lead, suggesting calcite and

⁹⁴ See, for example, Mayer 1991.

⁹⁵ R. J. Gettens & al., “Calcium carbonate whites”, in Ashok Roy, ed., *Artists' pigments*, 1993, p. 219, cites the National Gallery “Perronneau” (1.582.189) as unusual in using chalk as a white pigment, suggesting that gypsum is more commonly recommended as a white pigment in pastels. However the work is thought to be a fake (for different reasons).

⁹⁶ “gros”, or one-eighth of an ounce [3.824g].

⁹⁷ Two of the four greens in the Henning shade card of Stoupan pastels sent to Caroline Luise in 1746 were analysed by Gombaud & Sauvage 2016 and identified as green verditer and a mixture of indigo and iron oxide (yellow ochre).

kaolin, although lead white was not specifically identified; (b) reds, mainly vermilion and red ochre; (c) browns, from umber; (d) yellows, including yellow ochre and yellow lake, the latter in places mixed with indigo; (e) blues: azurite and Prussian blue; and (f) dark tints, from bone black. The menu is remarkably similar to the results from the Stoupan sample.

The manufacture of pigments was a specialised business. In the 1805 *Almanach du commerce de Paris...*, 56 firms of makers and vendors were listed: of these four specialised in Prussian blue, three in other blues, and four in blacks.

IV.4.1.1 Grisaille pastel

Note should be made also of the occasional use of grisaille pastel, works executed entirely in black, grey or white chalks, often on blue paper. (Pillement specialised in blue monochrome pastel, but for different reasons.) The origins may go back to the work of Wallerant Vaillant, and the exploration of tonal values rather than hues relate to the engravings for which they were often intended as studies. The technique was much favoured by Thomas Frye, F. R. West and his pupils at the Dublin school (among them the Healy brothers), but it was also employed by artists as different as Joseph Wright⁹⁸ and Fragonard.⁹⁹ Whether the materials they used were strictly pastel or simply various kinds of soft black chalk¹⁰⁰ – natural, fabricated or artificial – is not always easy to determine. It is clear that by the middle of the eighteenth century shortages of natural chalks of the right consistency led to a great deal of experimentation with artificial materials which are not strictly pastel, among them the soft brown chalks used by Boucher, the inventions of Delafosse, Dumarest, Nadaux, Conté etc.¹⁰¹ The technique led seamlessly into the soft black chalk drawings of artists such as Jacques-Antoine-Marie Lemoine and Isabey, and the experiments in lithography at the beginning of the nineteenth century (see §IV.9 *infra*). As a functional definition it may be tempting to exclude all grisaille drawings without colour from the term “pastel”; alternatively one might include those where the black pigment is a pure carbon (such as ivory black) as found in most pastel recipes, and exclude those where the black is derived from ground minerals such as schist. The distinction may require scientific analysis (schist is rich in silicon which should be detectable with spectroscopy), but among the distinctions one might observe the degree of friability and adherence to cover sheets in albums etc.

IV.4.1.2 Crayons de couleur

Of course there are a large number of drawings using coloured chalk, or crayons de couleur, ranging from simple black or red to the trois crayons technique particular popular in eighteenth century France. Some of these may be enhanced with touches of pastel. Occasionally drawings of this kind (by artists such as Boucher) were referred to in contemporary auction catalogues as in “demi pastel”. While traditional white chalk is almost pure calcite (with mineral impurities), coloured chalk is usually based on gypsum.

IV.4.2 Fillers

Although tobacco pipe clay (sepiolite, closely related to kaolin and to fuller’s earth, although technically distinct from each) and gypsum (plaster of Paris, made from ground alabaster) are the best known, a number of other materials were used, including lead white (or lead carbonate

⁹⁸ Barker & al. 2009, notably the third part, where Marjorie Shelley describes the medium as pastel. The technical analysis reveals the use of bone black (essentially carbon) and calcium carbonate (chalk) in various proportions, extended with anhydrous calcium sulphate and gypsum.

⁹⁹ Dupuy-Vachey 2019, using the term pastel to cover a range of drawings. The attribution of this group, which was acquired by the Louvre in 2020, has been disputed, but the presence of a watermark on one of the sheets dating the paper to 1776 indicates when the technique was used.

¹⁰⁰ The term “black chalk” is used here to describe the naturally occurring mineral (a silica-carbon-alumina schist) traditionally used for drawing and known in French as pierre noire, among many other terms; it was largely replaced by artificial crayons c.1800. See e.g. Timothy D. Mayhew, Margo Ellis & Supapan Seraphin, “Natural black chalk in traditional old master drawings”, *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation*, XLIX/2, 2010, pp. 83–95.

¹⁰¹ Jacoby 1992, p. 264 *et passim*. The comte de Fourcroy & Pierre Bayen 1794 gave a detailed account of the features and shortcomings of the methods of “citoyen Lafosse” (here identified as Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Delafosse), Bachelier and “Desmarais” (Dumarests; *v. Lomet* 1799) before describing Conté’s invention.

hydroxide), ceruse (a form of lead white synthesized by exposing lead to vinegar), chalk, talc and starch. Brunel-Duverger & al. 2023 identified the filler used by La Tour in three mid-century pastels as a mixture of calcite and gypsum, with a lead-based material, probably lead white, and some kaolinite. For Dossie 1758 (followed by the anonymous authors of the *Secrets concernant les arts et métiers*, 1790), pearl white, or “blanc de perle” (pulverised mother-of-pearl, containing bismuth nitrate), was superior to all these. Plaster of Paris is too hard, lead white too brittle, while pipe clay seems to drain the life out of colours. Spanish white (a mixture of chalk and calcinated alum) was useful with animal or vegetable pigments (which were more prone than minerals to react adversely with chalk). Russell mentions only “whiting”, by which he must mean a preparation of finely powdered chalk.

IV.4.3 Binders

Petrus Gregorius listed a number of binders, including fish glue, gum arabic, fig juice and whey (which he preferred). Dossie preferred gum tragacanth to gum arabic, because it mixed better and avoided the formation of a crust on the outside. Early on, substances such as ale-wort, gum tragacanth, fish-glue, oatmeal, candied sugar and honey were added to the possible choices.¹⁰² According to Hayter, Morland used gin to make his crayons, which were widely considered excellent. Some of these ingredients were tried fresh, others fermented or rotten: the essential chemical characteristic is that they are all polysaccharides, or carbohydrate polymers, whose long molecular chains provided the required bonding to hold the crayons together in usable form. The binder is not supposed to act as a fixative to provide the adhesion to the paper,¹⁰³ but it is difficult to believe that they play no role in this function.

Olive or linseed oils were occasionally tried but these do not normally have the drying and adhesive properties required (one suggestion was to dip crayons formed with plaster of Paris in these oils to remedy its excessive cohesiveness). Possibly inspired by its use with waxes in encaustic painting, Dossie 1758 mentioned turpentine, a solvent extracted from pine resin. As explained in his *Receipts...* (but not his *Elements*), Russell used it in making crayons to obtain an unparalleled depth of colour while preserving “all their softness”; the family secret¹⁰⁴ extended to moistening the crayons with fresh turpentine before use. Jelgerhuis also mentions turpentine in his 1794 instructions; Lalande 1769 however discouraged it, believing that it darkened colours, and that it evaporated in a few days, leading to changes in colouring as well as preventing the colours from fixing properly, so that they could be removed with the finger.

Some fillers such as tailor’s chalk (talc) had binding properties,¹⁰⁵ while some pigments naturally carried their own gum, in which case water alone might be used to form the crayons.

IV.5 Optical properties

With pastels, a “pigment volume concentration” of up to 90% can be achieved, while oil painting typically produces less than half this level.¹⁰⁶ Importantly the vehicle – linseed oil – that surrounds the same particles of pigment in an oil painting, making up the difference in the concentration, alters the refractive index and reflectivity of the pigment, providing a far less immediate visual effect. This is how pastel achieves its uniquely matt but brilliant impact. The role of the filler in providing a uniform texture is often overlooked.

¹⁰² Pilc & White 1995 (p. 83) reported only gum, and not honey, in the investigation of La Tour’s *Henry Dawkins*.

¹⁰³ See Burns 2007, p. xix. Mayer 1991 (p. 344f) seems to disagree.

¹⁰⁴ Revealed in Francis Webb’s annotations to his copy of Williamson 1894.

¹⁰⁵ Carriera is said to have preferred it to gum arabic, but this seems to read too much into her letter to Giovan Battista Casotti of 26.IV.1718 where she writes “Sappia dunque che quelli che pretendono haver cognitione per fabricarne non li legano con goma, ma con gesso da sartore o scagliola”: this suggests that she was unaware of best manufacturing practice, which may account for why the pastels she tried to make were too hard, and why she relied on obtaining pastels from Rome or (better) Paris.

¹⁰⁶ Lavédrine & al. 2009, p. 42. Good accounts of technical aspects of pastels will be found in Nepova 2006 and Shelley 2011.

The unusual optical properties of pastel have long been evident. In an early scientific treatise (1747), abbé Noël-Antoine Pluche compared the reflections of light from a clock, a candle, a sheet of glass and a pastel, noting that the image of the pastel was “nette, parce qu’il donne son propre arrangement à une grande quantité de lumière réfléchie.”¹⁰⁷ In a completely different experiment, pastel was enlisted to demonstrate the properties of primary colours: pastels crayons of matching intensities of yellow, red and blue were each ground finely. Nine parts of blue and eight of red produced a violet; with the addition of seven parts yellow, the mixture became grey, not black, because of the inclusion of white binder which prevented the mutual cancellation expected from “primitive colours”.¹⁰⁸

IV.6 Toxicity

There is relatively little information on the toxicity of pastel pigments,¹⁰⁹ which seems to have been considerably less of an issue for pastellists than for oil painters. Chardin is said to have turned to pastel late in life because of an intolerance of oil painting; the same reason is sometimes given for La Tour’s preference much earlier (although the evidence is unclear, and this may be no more than speculation).

Treatises on oil painting such as Watin’s *L’Art du peintre, doreur, vernisseur...* (Paris, 1773), which included a lengthy chapter on “Observations sur les maladies appellées Coliques des Peintres, & précautions à prendre pour s’en garantir lorsqu’on employe les couleurs”, revealed an awareness of the serious hazard run by those working with heavy metal compounds (Tronchin had written a treatise on it). Yet pastellists who worked with materials such as lead white and who habitually sweetened their work with their fingers (which oil painters did not) must have ingested significant levels of these poisons. It is impossible to say if these played any role in the maladies of artists such as Francis Cotes.

Those involved in the grinding of pigments (whether to be mixed with oil or made into pastels) faced more serious hazards. The Académie de Saint-Luc and the company of marchands-épiciers were long in dispute over the right to supply artists’ materials (see §IV.9 *infra*); one of the arguments raised by the Académie was the toxicity of the pigments which were ground by hand. On 23.x.1775 Jean-François Chevalier applied to comte d’Angiviller for a reward of 3600 livres for designing a “moulin à broyer les couleurs”; his application was supported by hospital reports of 272 admissions in the preceding 21 months.

IV.7 Compression

A vital technique in the use of pastels is how to get the material to stick to the surface. Although fixing methods (*v. infra*) were available and occasionally used, some basic form of adhesion is necessary before there is anything to fix; and for many eighteenth century pastels, this was the only form used. It relied on the compression of the pastel sticks into the support, and may have been facilitated by natural chemical bonding that ensued from this process. Fibres from roughened paper, natural substances in parchment etc. may all play a role, as perhaps the binders with which the pastel sticks were composed.

¹⁰⁷ *L’E Spectacle de la nature...*, 1747, v, p. 563. Many of the plates were provided by the pastellist Madeleine Basseporte (*q.v.*). A portrait of Pluche was engraved after Blakey (*q.v.*).

¹⁰⁸ Étienne-Claude, baron Marivetz & Louis-Jacques Goussier, *Physique du monde*, Paris, 1784, IV, p. 439.

¹⁰⁹ Guides for current studio practice recommend elaborate precautions, including use of respirators and protective clothing, as well as ventilation and use of high-efficiency particulate arrestance (“HEPA”) vacuum cleaners; these would not have been available in the eighteenth century. Among modern studies may be cited Woodhall Stopford’s “Risk assessment for exposure to respirable dusts generated from the use of chalks and pastels” issued in 2003 by Duke University Medical Center. It examined dust production during use of pastels and use of vacuum cleaners, and estimated that pastel artists would be exposed to an average inhalation dose of respirable dust of 3 µg/day. The main concern in the report was inhalation of cadmium, which was a sufficiently small percentage of the dust to represent a low risk. The element is unlikely to have been present in pre-1800 pastels. But lead, which is not mentioned in the Duke University study, was widely present before 1800, and could be ingested orally.

As early as 1628 Norgate discussed three ways of using “drye colours”. Noting what has become the standard form of using pastel in the form of sticks made of bound pigment, he also describes his preferred method involved using paper prepared with a flesh-tone wash (other writers describe this as applied with a wet sponge). The one he disliked, used by Dumonstier (and presumably Clouet and others), involved simply applying ground pigments with a stump of some form:

[Dumonstier’s] manner is to rubb in severall Collours (being first reduced into powders and kept in severall little boxes or papers) upon the paper which is commonly White. this hee doth with certayne stubbed pencells, the ends filled with Cotten or bumbast. His worke is reasonable neate, but not lasting, there being noething to bind on the Collours, which commonly faules off, and the worke lost or defaced in a shorte tyme after.

This method of applying ground pigment continued to play a (small) role in pastel. On the evidence of the box containing stumps and bottles of ground pigment it has been suggested¹¹⁰ that the early nineteenth century pastelist Mrs Cay made her pastels exclusively with this technique. But it seems more plausible that she also used conventional sticks kept in another box which (like almost all pastellists’ boxes: but *v.* Chapter VI *infra*) has been lost; indeed these bottles may contain the waste from sharpening pastel crayons (*v.* §.VI.1 *infra*). The anonymous pastel treatise known as “Boutet” (1708) recommends that a compartment in a pastelist’s box be reserved for bottles of ground pigment to be applied in this way as part of the technique, while the *Secrets concernant les arts et métiers, par une société d’artistes* (Paris, 1791) regards stump as a method for applying colours which are too expensive to make up into sticks.¹¹¹ Watelet & Lévesque 1791 (p. 710) note either the separate compartment, or separate box, for these powdered colours with a collection of paper stumps; and among the applications they suggest blending over a first coat of normal pastel where the exact tint sought was not available made up.

Sharples, and no doubt other artists using the physionotrace and similar mechanical drawing devices, seeking to obtain particular precision with profiles, found the stump technique useful for making the sharp-edged outlines. An alternative approach with the same objective was *découpage* – figures are drawn on a separate sheet, cut around the profile and fixed onto a backing sheet. An early proponent was Nathaniel Bermingham, whose background was in heraldry; it was taken up by Lucas Bateman and Susannah Sledge, but never enjoyed broad popularity.

When using conventional pastels various methods of compression were possible. Norgate comments “with your severall Pastills Rubb in the Collours. and with your Finger end sweeten and mix them together, driving them one into an other after the Fassion of the Oyle paynters”, and it is clear that the finger remained the tool of choice for pastellists throughout the eighteenth century. In Caroline Luise’s account of Liotard’s methods, the only tool allowed to compress the pastel was the pastel stick itself. (The *porte-crayon* was not used with pastel: *v.* §VI.1 *infra*.) To produce “extremely soft or delicate” effects with his wax crayons, Thomas Keyse recommended the use of a “Glass Instrument or Burnisher”, but this was not in use with conventional pastels. Carrington Bowles suggests that “Having thus outlined your Object completely [with chalk], the Crayons may be rubbed in; but Care is required concerning the proper Colours; then soften or blend them together with your Finger or Fitch.” The use of leather stumps or paper rolls is less clear, although during the late eighteenth century the technique became very popular in chalk drawing: as Mme de Genlis noted,

On dessinait jadis sans employer l’estompe, et il fallait beaucoup *de main* et d’habitude pour bien faire les ombres; maintenant l’estompe épargne toute peine, et l’on n’oublie jamais la manière de s’en servir. La peinture en pastel était une espèce de travail à l’estompe.

One of the problems is that stumps can only be used for a single colour if pigment transfer, with unfortunate muddying results, is to be avoided, and their main use may have been for laying in

¹¹⁰ Burns & Roy 2014. The question could be resolved by seeing whether any binders are present in the finished pastels she made; this investigation has so far not been made.

¹¹¹ Dossie 1758, pp. 194, 200, confirms this, in particular for carmine.

backgrounds in pastels. While Russell is cited (Shelley 2005) as the authority for the use of leather stump, in fact he recommends its use only for this purpose. Elsewhere the finger is to be used in sweetening; and in important areas such as the eye, “it will be a good general rule for the Student to use his *Crayon* in sweetening as much, and his finger as little as possible.” Chaperon is clear (p. 224f): “L’on appuye même un peu le petit doigt sur l’ouvrage, après avoir appliqué le pastel sur le canevas pour l’y faire mieux adhérer. On s’essuie les doigts, on prend un autre crayon”, emphasising the importance of ensuring no contamination between colours.

It is by no means clear that increased compression resulted in better adhesion. Pastels by Liotard, whose uniform flatness was achieved with severe compression,¹¹² nevertheless suffer particularly from losses.

IV.8 Fixing

The major problem was how to fix the pictures: pastel is no more than dust rubbed into paper, and it will fall off if shaken too vigorously. Mechanical bonding with fibres in the paper and chemical reactions between ingredients in the support or the crayons, perhaps including the pastel binders, were key to the survival of most pastels, and the initial compression when the sticks were applied was a vital technique for pastellists to master. But its conspicuous fragility led to constant demands for new methods and processes of fixing pastel; during the second half¹¹³ of the eighteenth century such “discoveries” abound.¹¹⁴ While the major cause of loss was transportation, discussed more fully in §IV.18 *infra*, pastels could deteriorate even when left alone, particularly if poorly made. Liotard was notoriously inconsistent, particularly in regard to the red lakes he used which are often found with extensive losses. This was specifically noted in a letter of 17.VI.1777 from Pierre-Nicolas Grassot to Liotard reporting damage to his pastel ^{J.49.1613} executed just seven years previously, where he reported not only pastel falling from the background onto the face and clothing, but also “la chute du pastel des levres qui en laissant le velin à découvert et par conséquent trop de blanc”, which thus “altère le dessein et la ressemblance.” The report also confirms that Liotard had not used any effective form of fixing (presumably by 1770 he had concluded that none was satisfactory).

The basic requirements for a successful method were set out succinctly in the prospectus¹¹⁵ for Abraham Fischer’s method:

1°. Que la maniere de le fixer soit si sure qu’aucune partie de la Peinture ne soit altérée ou perdue. 2°. Qu’après la fixation les couleurs conservent la vivacité & la veludité qu’elles ont eues auparavant. 3°. Que la Peinture soit si bien fixée, qu’on puisse la transporter avec sureté par mer & par terre. 4°. Que les couleurs ne palissent, ne crevent, ni se détachent &c. 5°. Que si ce dernier cas arrive par quelque accident, l’endroit gâté puisse facilement être refait & rétabli.

A longer, historical account of these developments is given in my essay on [Loriot, Pellechet, Jurine: the secrets of pastel](#).¹¹⁶ Perhaps surprisingly the main problem was less the selection of the fixing chemical (which in almost all recipes turned out to be a mixture of fish glue and alcohol) than the choice of a safe method by which to apply it to completed pastels. (It is sometimes overlooked

¹¹² Shelley 2002, p. 6, fig. 1.5.

¹¹³ Burns 2007 traces interest to the salon commentaries of Le Blanc and La Font de Saint-Yenne in 1747. But the concern is evident implicitly from earlier texts, and was presented as well known in Charles-Étienne Pesselier’s *Lettre au sujet du portrait de Sayd-Pacha*, (1742, p. 14), where the artist’s work was described as “périssable”.

¹¹⁴ Among the innumerable new crayons and processes, many discussed in the pages of the Académie’s *Procès-verbaux*, one may cite the development of encaustic painting, often confused with pastel (*v.* Vincent de Montpetit) and the *pastels à l’huile*, in which Roslin and Bachaumont played a part, but which were probably due to Pellechet and his daughter Mme Danican (*Procès-verbaux*, IX, 176).

¹¹⁵ *Journal des sçavans*, XLIX, .XI.1770, pp. 253–62. Good accounts are to be found in Lalande, Chaperon etc.

¹¹⁶ In the [ESSAYS](#) section. The [Index of inventors, writers and SUPPLIERS](#) contains a more complete list of all these pioneers than is needed here.

that fixing was also used by artists themselves¹¹⁷ as an intermediate layer during the drawing process, allowing further application of pastel which would otherwise become muddy.)

Direct immersion (although occasionally recommended, particularly if done very rapidly¹¹⁸) simply resulted in water marks and more extensive damage, particularly since some pigments would lose adhesion. The fixative could not be brushed on directly, as this would result in mechanical abrasion of the delicate surface. Chaperon's preferred method was to cover the surface of the pastel with a thin silk cloth of tiffany and to apply the liquor through this.

The celebrated process invented by the engineer Loriot by 1753,¹¹⁹ and which seems to have been considerably more successful than any of the other processes, created a fine spray, using a metal rod drawn against the bristles of a stiff brush dipped in the liquor and held near the pastel; this required patience and a great deal of skill to avoid spattering the pastel with drops large enough to cause staining. It was copied by others but with little success.¹²⁰ The exact method was even employed to preserve butterflies, by a M. Landriani,¹²¹ “& a très-bien réussi”: it is unclear if he was influenced by Diderot's observation of the parallel (Salon de 1765, *v. infra*).

The principe di Sansevero developed a method (which he communicated to Lalande and which then appeared in the *Encyclopédie*) in which the liquor was painted on the back of the canvas and soaked through. A letter published by the Rennes magistrate Charles-Élisabeth Maugé in the *Journal économique* (1770) simply talks of brushing the liquor onto the back of the paper, and seems not to have envisaged pastels on paper already “maroufflé” on canvas. His liquor was just candied sugar dissolved in vinegar or brandy, the former preferred if the work was on strong paper of the kind used by engineers to make plans, the latter if on the thinner paper normally used for pastels.

Despite the claims, there was widespread scepticism at the time. The abbé Laugier¹²² prudently noted:

On assure à la vérité que depuis peu on a trouvé le secret de le fixer; mais je ne sçais si cette découverte est aussi précieuse qu'on l'annonce. Le tems & l'expérience nous l'apprendront.

The weaknesses with all these methods were widely discussed.¹²³ The fish-glue which most recipes employed would not easily be absorbed (the reason why alcohol was added was to facilitate absorption, but even so the effect was not uniform between different colours); any liquid coating changed the optical properties of the pigments, and resulted in perceptible darkening (despite claims to the contrary). But this effect itself was not uniform: mid-tones darkened more than others, and the effect was to destroy colour balance. Since one of the great merits claimed for pastel over oil painting was that the medium did not have to dry, so that the artist could see his final result while he was working, this was a vital disadvantage, and one which could not easily be allowed for in the choice of colours (as one source recommended). Occasionally a chemical reaction might occur between the fixing liquor and a specific crayon: this could explain the rust-coloured tide marks found on some fixed works. More seriously, the methods all, to varying degrees, could result in debonding particular pigments (lakes in particular were vulnerable), and

¹¹⁷ As Shelley 2005 has demonstrated with La Tour and Perronneau.

¹¹⁸ For example, Le Pilleur d'Apligny 1779. Mayerne and Hoogstraeten (see Burns 2007, p. 147f) described similar processes for chalk drawings that are unlikely to have been suitable for pastels. There is an excellent survey of various methods of fixing in the anonymous 1790 *Secrets concernant les art et métiers*, par une Société d'artistes, Paris, 1790; this includes a method of rapid immersion for no longer than a “coup d'œil.”

¹¹⁹ Loriot's invention was certified by Lépicié on behalf of the Académie royale in a letter printed in the *Mercure de France*, .1.1754, pp. 156ff.

¹²⁰ Bernard Stoupan of Lausanne seems to have developed a method also involving an atomised solution, but his mixture used egg white instead of fish-glue. We have only Reifenstein's report to Caroline Luise von Baden (.v.1761) that he had seen a pastel by Handmann fixed with it.

¹²¹ Reported in F.-G. Deschamps's *Dix-huitième notice de l'Almanach sous-verre des associés, rue Saint Jacques, à Paris...*, 1785, p. 287, no. 48. The inventor was presumably Marsilio Landriani (1751–1815).

¹²² Laugier 1771, p. 159.

¹²³ For example, in Watelet & Lèvesque 1791, p. 710f.

many of the descriptions acknowledged that the process had to be followed by rubbing the finger over all the affected areas to rebond the particles. Such interventions, particularly when the fixing was not carried out by the artist himself, cannot have been satisfactory.

Other fixing methods depended on using special materials to make the pastel in the first place.

A number of misconceptions about fixing arise in the literature. Among these is the idea that Liotard fixed his pastels: it appears from the much-quoted 28.VI.1763 letter¹²⁴ to Lord Bessborough about this that the opposite was the case (he was recommending Jurine if Bessborough wanted to fix the pastels Liotard had already supplied). Further, in Liotard's London 1773 exhibition, one item was explicitly described as "en pastel fixé",¹²⁵ while the list sent to d'Angiviller 8.V.1785 mentions two more, suggesting that his other pastels were not fixed. Significantly these included Apollon et Daphné and Les Trois Grâces, his two earliest pastels, done in Rome in 1736–37; the third was a lost "copie peinte en pastel fixé" of Isabelle de Bourbon-Parme, presumably, but not certainly, autograph. The scientific investigations¹²⁶ so far have not found conclusive evidence of the presence of the standard ingredients of fixing mixtures in Liotard's pastels.

There are numerous references in the literature to La Tour having invented a method of fixing. In the posthumous sale of the pastels (mostly now found in Saint-Quentin) announced by his brother, the preface states that "Tous les Tableaux en pastel sont fixés par l'Auteur, et sont d'une fraîcheur comme s'ils venaient d'être peints", but that statement should be read with caution in view of the prejudice work in pastel encountered at that stage. Visual evidence from a number of his portraits (e.g. the autoportrait and Restout at Saint-Quentin) reveal tide marks indicative of local fixing. The preparation with egg yolk described in his letter to Belle de Zuylen of 1770 has been found in several works.¹²⁷ An investigation of his portrait of the princesse de Rohan revealed the presence of sturgeon glue, suggesting that he had discovered the essential ingredient of Loriot's technique far earlier than thought hitherto.¹²⁸

La Tour certainly experimented repeatedly, and not always satisfactorily; but at one stage his dissatisfaction with these experiments was such that he seems to have resorted to sandwiching his pastels between two sheets of glass, sealed together.¹²⁹ The purpose may also have been intended to protect the pastel from mould.¹³⁰ The disadvantages are obvious, given the notorious fragility of glass of the period, and it had been thought that no example had survived.¹³¹ However at least

¹²⁴ The essential part of the text was printed in Loche 1980, p. 201, and published in full by Anderson 1994 without it seems acknowledgement of the prior appearance. Liotard refers to 9 of his own pastels fixed by Jurine; 3 Jurine had fixed for Mr. Chaloner (did these include Liotard's portrait of him, J.49.122 ?; he was surely William Chaloner of Guisborough) and 60 other portraits in Geneva, unattributed.

¹²⁵ This is in the French version of the catalogue only, not reported in R&L.

¹²⁶ Schultz & Petersen 2011, which presents the results of enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay applied to several Liotard pastels in the Rijksmuseum (Les Trois Grâces among them). I am grateful to Cécile Gombaudo and Leila Sauvage for drawing this paper to my attention. Practical problems with this approach include the degradation of the proteins over time and the difficulty of distinguishing fixatives from the possible use of fish-glue in preparing the surface before painting (a practice of Liotard and others) or even its incorporation in the pastel sticks themselves (as in the earliest recipe for pastel by Petrus Gregorius, and later treatises such as the anonymous *Arts companion, or A new assistant for the ingenious*, 1749). A further complication is that fixatives could be applied from the front or back of the work, or as an intermediate layer.

¹²⁷ Gombaudo & al. 2017 found indications in pastels by La Tour and Valade at the Nationalmuseum, and cited a similar discovery by Benoît de Tapol in the pastel of Laideguive (J.46.1969). See also Shelley 2005.

¹²⁸ Gombaudo & al. 2017. Unless the fixative was added in a later restoration campaign; the pastel was transferred to a new support at some stage. Similar investigations of pastels Liotard is known to have fixed (Schultz & Petersen 2011) did not reveal any surviving traces.

¹²⁹ Numerous sources, of which the earliest may be Pernety 1757, p. cxxvii; see also Watelet & Lévesque 1791, p. 709.

¹³⁰ When mould began to appear on the Perronneau portrait of La Tour at Saint-Quentin, the authorities considered opening the packing, exposing the reverse to sunlight, and then sealing it hermetically between glass sheets to protect against the recurrence of mould: registre des délibérations de l'École gratuite, V, séance de 19.X.1909.

¹³¹ This may however have been the technique used by the Portuguese artist José Malhoa (1855–1933), eleven of whose pastels were studied with a view to reframing by Francisca Figueira & Rita Fontes, "An evaluation of three mounting conditions for pastels", *ICOM Committee for Conservation, 12th triennial meeting*, Lyon, 1999, preprints, 1, pp. 52–54, who concluded that the method of encapsulation between glass is "not necessarily the worst option".

two La Tour pastels used the system: Jean Monnet ^{J.46.2377} (Saint-Quentin) of 1756 and Lord Coventry ^{J.46.1565} of 1752.¹³² It appears that the latter, and probably the former, work was originally executed on paper marouflé onto a strained canvas, but the frame subsequently removed and the flattened primary and secondary support placed between two sheets of glass with sufficient convexity to avoid direct contact between the pastel and the inside of the front glass. Both had paper labels affixed to the back of the canvas behind the rear sheet of glass, apparently in La Tour's hand. Since these works were some four years apart, it is likely that a number of other La Tour pastels were originally mounted in this way but have subsequently been remounted, whether from breakage or other conservation considerations. Consequently evidence of later supports may be less decisive as a determinant of authenticity than for other artists (see §IV.2.1 *supra*).

George Romney was yet another artist who attempted to develop a satisfactory fixing method; but found it “attended with so much difficulty, that he was not tempted to make any more experiments.”¹³³

For others the search for a means of fixing pastel was misconceived:¹³⁴

Nous avouons que cette recherche ne nous sourit guère, et qu'un pastel fixé par une substance gommeuse, ou par tout autre procédé qui peut avoir l'apparence du vernis nous semble un contre-sens, presque une profanation. Irez-vous enlever son duvet à la pêche, et sur la joue d'une fraîche jeune fille; mettez-vous un enduit qui détruit le velouté dont la nature l'a revêtue? Non certainement; et bien alors comment pouvez-vous désirer trouver une préparation qui enlève au pastel sa plus charmante imitation de la nature, c'est-à-dire son velouté, son flou, son vaporeux, ce duvet soyeux et léger qui nous charme et nous plaît dans le pastel, parce qu'il nous transmet l'une des qualités les plus attrayantes de la jeunesse et de la beauté.

A succinct summary of the problem was provided by the poet Ezra Pound in a letter to a friend: “great artists don't like it cause it bitches the colour.”¹³⁵

IV.9 Suppliers and costs

In view of the difficulties and complexities of the manufacturing process set out in so many of the treatises, it is hardly surprising that many pastellists preferred to buy ready-made crayons from reputable sources. These were available from quite early: for example, Ralph Thoresby noted in his diary in 1677 that he obtained a set of sixty crayons for 2s. 6d. in the Strand in London. A number of these suppliers are listed in the [Index of inventors, writers and SUPPLIERS](#), and no doubt represent only a small proportion of those sources.¹³⁶ Biographies of some of the major names will also be found among the artist articles, including one on Bernard Stoupan, the supplier based in Vevay, near Lausanne whose fame extended throughout Europe.

The first pastels Rosalba Carriera saw were Flemish, but although the colours were good, they were too hard, so she preferred those she obtained from Rome;¹³⁷ soon after she found those made in Paris best of all, and she engaged the help of friends such as Nicolas Vleughels to obtain

¹³² The thick glass sheets used in both appear to have an industrial quality that suggests much later manufacture when each is considered on its own (Henry Hamel, cited Séverin 1993, p. 167, seems to have recommended the technique for Saint-Quentin: but this doesn't prove that Monnet was reframed in response, or rather inspired his thinking). But the chance of two independent later uses seems very remote, particularly given the autograph inscriptions and early lining paper found on Coventry. La Tour's invention is conceptually similar to developments in encaustic and glass painting by artists such as Vincent de Montpetit, Jouffroy and Vispré, which in turn may have been inspired by the investigations of Antoine-Nicolas Martinière (1706–1784), maître émailleur pour les horlogers à Paris, presented to the Académie des sciences, 4.II.1769. The dates suggest that it was La Tour's process that inspired these rather than the converse.

¹³³ John Romney, *Memoirs of the life and works of George Romney...*, London, 1830, p. 123.

¹³⁴ Jean-Pierre Thénot, in *Le Pastel appris sans maître*, Paris, 1856, p. 41.

¹³⁵ Letter to Viola Baxter Jordan, 5.V.1933 (Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, YCAL MSS 175).

¹³⁶ But the numbers are unlikely to have been great at any stage. Even in 1850, Guillaumin's *Dictionnaire universel...* stated that there were only eight makers in Paris.

¹³⁷ See the letter to Giovan Battista Casotti of 26.IV.1718 as well as earlier letters of 5.VII.1704, from Felice Ramelli, and those from 1705 on from Christian Cole.

them.¹³⁸ There were difficulties however in sending even the crayons by post owing to their fragility: in a letter of 28.X.1718 Crozat wrote that he would send the next box lined with cotton; he suggested that it might be easier to send her the recipe so that she could make her own: “je ne croy pas que cela soit bien difficile” (it appears however that Carriera disagreed). The problem persisted: in a letter of 13.V.1745 Mariette apologised for having sent her “des pastels tout brisés et nullement dignes d’être mis entre vos mains.” He made up by sending her a range of pastels, each individually wrapped, including a number of novel colours. In a letter of 2.IV.1735 from cavalieri Gabburri, it emerges that Carriera obtained pastels from Paris to share with the young Florentine pastelist Giovanna Messini. A different problem arose when Saint-Non sent a set of pastels to Algarotti in Parma, the box broke in transit, spreading pastel dust over the duc de Parme’s latest Parisian perruques.¹³⁹

Pastels were available ready made, even in Venice, but at a price. According to Casanova, the young but impoverished contessa Lorenza Maddalena Bonafede showed him her drawings c.1740; when he asked why she didn’t take up pastel painting, she explained that a single box cost the prohibitive amount of 2 zecchini.¹⁴⁰ Günther (1762, §26) offered boxes from 2 Thaler upwards, the basic selection including the colours shown in the two tables in his book; larger boxes were proportionately more expensive, but more so if they included quantities of the purest and most expensive colours – “Carmin, Ultramarin, Chinesisch Roth, Lack” etc.

Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d’Argenville, who commissioned Jean-François Séguier to find anecdotes for his life of Rosalba, wrote to him several times in 1753 concerning the pastels Séguier (in Turin) wanted him to obtain in Paris. An occasional user, Dezallier was surprised by the increase in prices for a box of assorted colours (he recommended separate assortments for portraits and landscape or history) since he last bought them, some six years previously when each box cost 12 livres; now they cost 30, before packing and transport costs. Ultramarine would cost more, but Prussian blue would do just as well in pastel.

Although it is unclear whether commercially produced or made by the artist, “cent cinquante douzaines de crayons, de pastels de diverses couleurs” appeared in Nanteuil’s posthumous inventory¹⁴¹ of 1678, valued at six sols la douzaine, or 45 livres in total. Another indication of price was from the detailed inventory of the firm of Mesard in Paris prepared when the father Denis transferred the business to his son Jean in 1751. Although not specialists in pastel (they were better known as printsellers and publishers), they held six “boetes a pastel asortie” valued at 8 livres each, and “trois cent crayons de pastel a deux sols chaque”, 30 livres in total. (Presumably the boxes held at least 80 sticks.) The father was described as a “marchand épicier” and “maître peintre”. Of course Mesard were probably retailers rather than manufacturers of pastel, a conclusion one can infer from the posthumous inventory of the luxury stationer René Coiffier who died in 1810: despite extensive laboratories and equipment for the production of his special “crayons noir de velours”, when it came to pastels, his stock (which included “quatre boîtes de pastels de différentes grandeurs”, ₣10; various “étuis à pastels”, one holding 50 crayons (₣4), one 25 and three a dozen each) was evidently bought in, as he owed “Mad^e Giraud pour fourniture de pastels” ₣19.75. He also stocked “22 toiles à pastels de toutes grandeurs” (₣4).

According to the *Dictionnaire universel de commerce, d’histoire naturelle et des arts...*, 1742, col. 1133, “Ce sont les Marchands Epiciers, qui vendent ces Couleurs, soit en gros, soit en detail; soit toutes broyées, & mêlées avec de l’huile, soit en pierre, en pain, ou en poudre, suivant leurs qualités.” Several editions of a *Catalogue des marchands épiciers* in Paris were issued by Prault (e.g. 1759, 1765).

¹³⁸ His letter to her from Modena, 16.XI.1712.

¹³⁹ Bédarida 1927, pp. 258, 277.

¹⁴⁰ *Mémoires de Casanova*, éd. La Pléiade, 1958, I, p. 149; original manuscript, BnF, folio 107r ff.

¹⁴¹ Published by Lorient in 1884; reprinted in Adamczak 2011, p. 314.

Nevertheless not all makers were *épiciers*, although their details largely remain obscure. Jean-François Girault (c.1721–p.1770), a marchand fripier (and grandfather of the Girault who appears as a pastel supplier in the mid-nineteenth century), is only known to have made pastels because he is described as a “faiseur de crayons de Pastelle” in the registre de clôtures des inventaire of his first wife, in 1768.

Caroline Luise’s agent in Paris, Pierre-Philippe Maelrondt (1710–1794), described in a letter of 10.III.1753 a visit from the pastel-maker Moule (probably Louis Moullé (1719–1797), marchand *épicier* of 43 rue Saint-Honoré) in which he bought for the Markgräfin a box of 202 assorted pastels for 84 livres; they were vetted by Perronneau.¹⁴²

Among the other suppliers in eighteenth century Paris should be mentioned Cochin’s ward Geneviève Cellier; Claude-Alexandre Meunier; and the German engraver Joseph-Ignace-Isidore Huber, whose firm eventually became known under the names of Macle and Roché. Many of these businesses have complex evolutions over generations. Some were involved in the development of new procedures and compositions.

A particularly valuable document is the posthumous inventory carried out several years after the death of the first wife of Jean-Nicolas Vernezobre (*q.v.*).¹⁴³ This provided a valuation of his stock, undertaken by the pastellists Jean-Baptiste Lefèvre and Claude Pougin de Saint-Aubin: there were 6534 “crayons en pastels a cinquante livres les cahier prisés entre les boites dans lesquels sont enrangées”, valued in total at 330 livres 14 sols. It also provided an invaluable list of two dozen debtors who owed relatively small amounts for crayons they had purchased (about half were already known as pastellists, and several others known hitherto only as artists in other media). A smaller number of creditors include marchand de couleurs.

Boxes even of used pastels were of value. In the posthumous sale of Gabriel Huquier (9.XI.1772 & seq.), Lot 1137, “Une boîte renfermant des crayons de Pastel” fetched 7 livres, higher than many other lots. In Mengs’s posthumous inventory (f.504v, Roettgen 1999, p. 569) “sette scattole di Pastelli assortiti” were valued at 140 scudi – a considerable sum at the time (twice the value of Mengs’s coach).

The costs of transporting boxes of pastels was not insignificant: in Joseph Vernet’s notes of daily expenses he recorded¹⁴⁴ (1766) “Ce que j’ay depencé pour le port de la caisse du pastel que M. Brevet m’a envoyé de La Rochelle est 4 l. 03 s.”. Earlier the royal maître à dessiner Jacques-Augustin de Silvestre disclosed to Desfriches (letter of 26.V.1763) that it cost 3 livres to send to Orléans the two boxes with a complete set of Stoupan’s manufacture costing themselves 52 livres; they were imported from Lausanne by the concierge de l’Académie, Michel Chipault, dit Phlipault. Dezallier d’Argenville told Séguier in his 1753 correspondance to allow 10–12 livres for packing in double boxes, lined with straw, covered in waterproof waxed canvas and an outer “toile serpillière” designed to protect against jolts of the carriage.

Although pastels were frequently sold in complete boxed sets, there was an obvious need to supply individual sticks to compensate for uneven usage. Thus another of Stoupan’s agents in Paris, the Swiss clockmaker François Meyer, added a note to his advertisement¹⁴⁵ that “On trouve aussi chez lui des crayons détachés desdits Pastels afin de pouvoir assortir les couleurs des personnes qui ont acheté ci-devant de ces Pastels.” One of Mrs Keating’s arguments in seeking a bounty first from the Society of Arts and then the Royal Academy was that the importers of Swiss pastels in London (she referred to Galliard) would only sell full or half sets, at a price that prohibited amateurs and

¹⁴² Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe FA 5 A Corr 43, 33; transcription in Perronneau chronological table of documents.

¹⁴³ AN MC CXXII/711, 11.III.1760.

¹⁴⁴ Lagrange 1864, p. 397.

¹⁴⁵ *L’Avant-Coureur*, 12.VII.1773, p. 435f.

beginners from taking up the art. She told the Society of Arts in 1782 that she charged 3 gns for a box containing a set of 12 dozen of her Swiss crayons (she had previously charged 4 gns). Curiously many of Stoupan's importers, in England (Bonhôte, the Paches & al.) and elsewhere (e.g. Eck in Frankfurt) were essentially importers of Swiss luxury goods – textiles, silks and lace haberdashery – rather than colourmen.

One advantage of making one's own pastels was control over the ingredients; adulteration was no doubt a problem where expensive materials were involved. Thus when Christian Cole was in Rome in 1705 ordering pastels for Rosalba Carriera “of the most beautiful blue, yellow and red”; as they were expensive, he insisted on their being made in his presence. Similarly John Russell took the greatest care over his ingredients, and as his manuscript *Receipts...*¹⁴⁶ demonstrates, he experimented constantly with how to make them up to obtain the effects he wanted, including the use of his secret ingredient (fresh turpentine). His daughter Ann evidently assisted with these experiments, adding her comments throughout the notebook.

Henrietta Johnston's difficulties in obtaining pastels in America in the first decades of the eighteenth century were documented in correspondence; the availability of materials of the right consistency may not only have limited her output but also may have affected what she did produce. When half a century later Copley started to use pastel, he wrote to Liotard in an attempt to secure a supply of Swiss pastels, but seems to have contented himself with those obtained from London. Francis Hopkinson had the distinction of employing both Franklin and Jefferson in Paris to send him pastels.

A letter of 1802 from Philipp Otto Runge, a former pupil of Juel, in Dresden informed his brother that he was about to despatch a parcel of pastels for Juel who was unable to obtain them in Lübeck or Kiel.¹⁴⁷

By the end of the eighteenth century, Constant de Massoul noted that “They are made very good at Lausanne, Vevai, Nuremberg, and Paris.” In Mme de Genlis's *Manuel du voyageur*, the traveller was instructed in how to ask “Avez-vous des pastels de Lausanne? J'en voudrais de petits et de gros” and “L'assortiment est-il bien complet?” in six languages.¹⁴⁸

IV.10 Alternative processes

During the eighteenth century there was considerable interest in the reinvention of encaustic painting as thought to have been practised by the ancients. The Swiss painter and writer Johann Heinrich Müntz was particularly interested in the technique, which he thought could be used to fix pastels.¹⁴⁹ While experimenting with pastels in Kassel early in 1753 (*v.* §§IV.2.8; IV.7 *supra*), Johann Friedrich Reifenstein investigated the use of wax pastel applied directly to canvas prepared with a coating of ground glass rather than paper. He found that pigments mixed with deer fat and wax enabled stronger colours to be made with a consistency that could be used more satisfactorily than the normal recipes. The method is described in *Le Pileur d'Apligny* 1779 and the *Encyclopédie méthodique* of 1782–91; through his contacts with Liotard he may have had some influence on the preparation of supports for conventional pastel. For what seems to have been a very similar invention by the Göttingen astronomer Tobias Mayer in 1757, see Günther 1762; it seems Professor Mayer died before it was perfected. But the pastels Johann Georg Christoph Günther

¹⁴⁶ An extract is included in [TREATISES](#).

¹⁴⁷ Philipp Otto Runge, *Hinterlassene Schriften, Herausgegeben von dessenältesten Bruder Daniel Runge*, Hamburg, 1840/41, II, p. 155; cited Slotsgaard 2019, as unavailable in Copenhagen.

¹⁴⁸ Paris 1810, pp. 148f.

¹⁴⁹ An English translation of his *Encaustic, or, Count Caylus's method of painting in the manner of the ancients: to which is added a sure and easy method for fixing of crayons* appeared in 1760.

had already made (Schloß Weikersheim) in 1752/53 seem to incorporate a waxy material that had a glossy appearance and facilitated minute hatching.

Thomas Keyse's wax crayons received a bounty from the Society of Arts in London in 1764.¹⁵⁰ Detailed instructions for the preparation and use of wax crayons were added by John Payne to the third edition of his *Art of painting in miniature, on ivory* (London, 1800), an "art not only useful, but much admired, although at present in a State of Infancy". He recommended the use of Russian wax, the purest and hardest available, to be mixed with ground pigments, of which only ten were suggested. Compound tints were to be obtained by use of watercolour washes. The wove paper had to avoid excessive coarseness, leaving discrete marks of the crayons, or excessive fineness, with insufficient bite.

Another process was invented by Jean-Antoine Pellechet, an engineer and Lorient's brother-in-law. After his death it was promoted by his widow, who persuaded Bachelier and Roslin to try it (or perhaps a refinement of the technique) in works shown at the 1765 Salon.¹⁵¹ This new *pastel à l'huile* involved priming a sheet of taffeta with oil so that the pastel takes on the appearance of oil painting. Diderot, dismissing Bachelier's efforts, nevertheless praised Roslin's *tête de jeune fille*,¹⁵² whose vigour appealed to him more than "cette poussière précieuse que le peintre en pastel dépose sur sa toile, et qui s'en détache aussi facilement que celle des ailes du papillon."¹⁵³ The invention did not however take root; the surface of these works lacks the flowery bloom and subtle luminosity that are so much valued in pastel, and presents instead a sticky gloss; but it is indicative of the fascination which many of the leading pastellists retained with the technical processes of their medium.

The enigmatic chevalier de Saint-Michel developed a secret method which he tried to market by lottery; it seems to have been a synthesis between the Pellechet–Lorient ideas (although Chaperon dismissed it as nothing more than Sansevero's method), using specially prepared support and pastels which harden into a cementitious surface that retains much of the special luminosity of normal pastel. The main limitation seems to have been the need to use only specific pigments.

In his 1794 manuscript treatise on the manufacture and use of pastels, *Onderrigting in het maaken van pastel, crayon en de manier, hoe daar meede te werken en wat daartoe behoort*, Rienk Jelgerhuis describes a method of impregnating a sheet of paper with glue or varnish before drawing on it, then floating it on a bath of hot water so that the glue melts and causes the pastel to bond with the paper. Not only is this difficult to use in practice, but most surviving Jelgerhuis pastels show the oxidised tidemarks one would expect from such immersion.¹⁵⁴

IV.11 Wet pastel

While pastel was perceived as an ideal medium for capturing flesh and fabric, it was more difficult to use than oil paint for depicting hard or precise objects such as lace, gold braid or metal buttons. A considerable number of pastellists resorted to wet application for such areas, ranging from highlights on buttons (La Tour) to broad areas of flesh (Rosalba) or drapery (Lundberg). La Tour used the technique only very occasionally; while artists of the English school mixed their media much more liberally, with Gardner an extreme example (in some of his larger works, only the faces are depicted in dry pastel). Luttrell (1683) noted that Ashfield had used this technique "but twas only for some beautifull Draperies and that only in the infancy of his practice before his experience

¹⁵⁰ The only surviving example, dated 1763, appears to have darkened considerably.

¹⁵¹ See my [ESSAY](#) on [Lorient, Pellechet, Jurine: the secrets of pastel](#) for the background and further details.

¹⁵² J.629.184 (Stockholm, Nationalmuseum); once thought to depict Mme Roslin.

¹⁵³ Diderot used the phrase twice: this in his Salon de 1765, and again, contrasting La Tour with Chardin, in his Salon de 1767. (Both texts in my [EXHIBITIONS](#).)

¹⁵⁴ See Leeuwen & al. 2012.

had taught him better.” These applications are not always immediately obvious, but brushmarks, flows of pigment and even pockmarks from evaporating air trapped in the liquid medium can all betray the technique.¹⁵⁵ The appearance is that of gouache (and the result often described as such); but it may simply be that the tip of the crayon has been moistened before use, while larger areas with brushmarks may be the result of grinding pastel crayons and mixing with water or alcohol before application (Gardner is reputed to have used brandy).

IV.12 Use of pastel with similar media

As noted above, a number of artists added touches of what is often described as gouache to facilitate the rendering of highlights or broad areas of flesh. Whether this was in fact gouache or wet pastel is unclear. Similarly, particularly among earlier writers, use of natural chalks for sharp outlines was recommended, as the chalks could be sharpened more readily. But the difficulty was that natural chalk often stands out prominently in a picture where the other material is all pastel: the absence of the filler which provides the uniform appearance and texture for the other colours is immediately noticeable. For the same reason it seems likely that pastellists went to the trouble of using complete sets of pastel from a single source rather than mixing crayons made with different fillers and binders.

Pastel was rarely if ever used with oil paint, although it was apparently chosen by Carlo Maratti to restore Raphael's *Amore e Psiche* fresco series in the Villa Farnesina, with the intention of reversibility.

IV.13 Copies and repetitions

A good many portraitists produced more than one version¹⁵⁶ of their pastels. Such replicas were usually produced at the same time as the primary version, but occasionally artists would retain a studio *ricordo* from which further finished versions might be made. Zeno's letter to Marmi of 3.XII.1729 mentions of Rosalba Carriera that “Essa tiene una gran galleria dove serba copia di tutti i ritratti da sé fatti.”¹⁵⁷ (These were not necessarily autograph repetitions: according to Mme Soares's 1742 letter¹⁵⁸ to Sir Horace Mann, Rosalba refused to make copies, which, she said, were never successful.) The collection at Saint-Quentin contains many such examples from La Tour's studio. There is an extended discussion in my La Tour catalogue (see §III.5 of [La Tour](#) as well as the catalogue entries for the individual works) concerning these repetitions and the difficulty of classifying them: suffice it here to note that there is now compelling evidence¹⁵⁹ that the famous iconic self-portrait in Amiens [1.46.1128](#), which was universally assumed to be autograph, is a studio repetition by La Tour's pupil Jean-Gabriel Montjoye. In the case of La Tour's studio we have a good many names of possible copyists (listed *loc. cit.*), but as with other pastellists little evidence of their actual role or contractual status. The small exhibition at the musée Cognacq-Jay Paris 2023b included a number of works which raised such questions.¹⁶⁰

The vocabulary of repetitions is confusing. The Dictionary uses the term “repl.” for an autograph repetition, “cop.” for a copy by another hand, and “version” for a work which is possibly

¹⁵⁵ Burns 2007 has an extended discussion of Rosalba's practice.

¹⁵⁶ On the broader question of copies, see Scott 2018 for a recent discussion.

¹⁵⁷ Principessa Trivulzi's letter of 26.VI.1741 also appears to imply that Rosalba kept versions of her portraits from which repetitions could be ordered without further sittings.

¹⁵⁸ 17.III.1742; PRO, State Papers, S.P. 105/282 ff. 122–3;

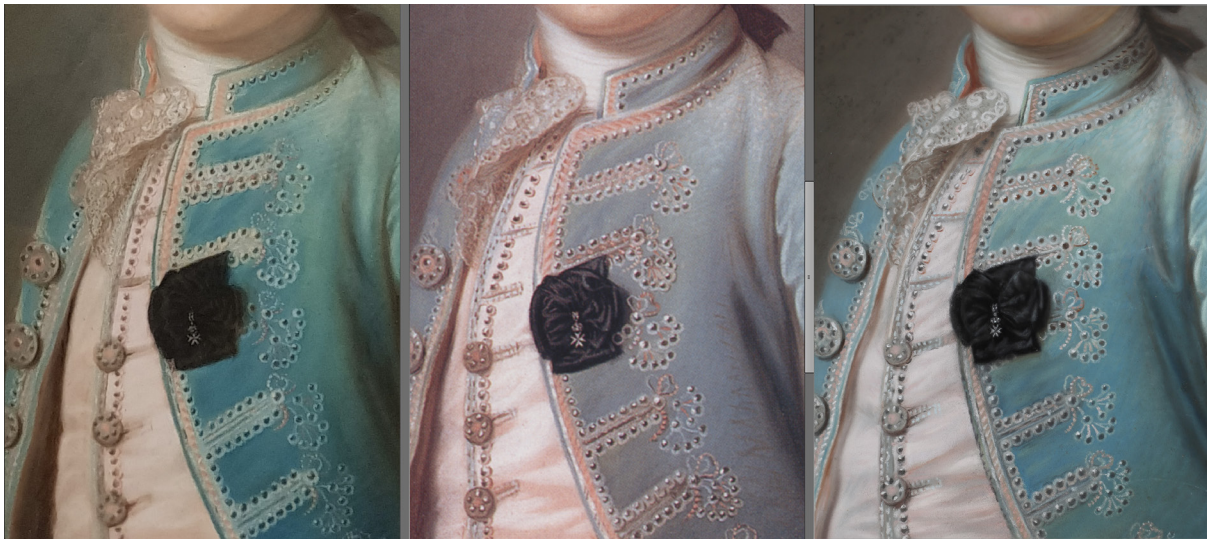
¹⁵⁹ Uncovered in [Jeffares 2019h](#).

¹⁶⁰ Discussed in [Jeffares 2023b](#).

autograph or a contemporary copy.¹⁶¹ Fortunately the description “copie retouchée” rarely if ever arises in connection with pastels.¹⁶²

Sometimes the versions were all in pastel, but sometimes versions in pastel and oil were produced: detailed invoices survive for works such as Perronneau’s prince d’Ardore (J.582.1026) and Vigée Le Brun’s duc d’Orléans and Mme de Montesson (J.76.314, J.76.305 &c.). Liotard, perhaps uniquely, made repetitions of several of his most important pastels after an interval of many years: Mme Necker J.49.2132, again in pastel, and Le Déjeuner Lavergne J.49.1795, in oil.¹⁶³

Versions often display considerable differences in quality; prices even for autograph repetitions in whichever medium were usually far lower than for the initial portrait. For royal portraiture the purpose was political or diplomatic: a production line for gifts to ambassadors occupied government departments such as the Bâtiments du roi¹⁶⁴ or Menus plaisirs. Boze’s accounts for three years provide detailed evidence of his repetitions of his royal portraits. The level of variation between these autograph répliques may be assessed by comparing the passementerie in three versions of his 1785 portrait of the duc d’Angoulême (left to right: Louvre J.177.115; Versailles J.177.117; private collection J.177.118):



The powerful might also bestow their images upon associates or higher servants (e.g. the Boze J.177.118 above was presented to the prince’s sous-gouverneur, the marquis d’Arbouville), as of course would families (much later copies might be made when estates were divided, or when originals were sold to dealers who offered a copying service). Portraits were lent to other artists for copies to be made. Correspondence in the Stuart papers in the English royal archives reveals how Rosalba Carriera’s 1737 portrait of Prince Charles was sent from Venice to Vienna to be copied, but that “noe good painter” could be found to come to the agent’s house to do so in secret.¹⁶⁵ Famous pictures (particularly those in public collections such as the Louvre, Saint-Quentin¹⁶⁶ or

¹⁶¹ The reviewer of the 2006 edition of the *Dictionary* who considered this categorisation as “not entirely satisfactory” seems to have missed the point: art historians are not omniscient, and should not conceal uncertainty.

¹⁶² The ambiguities are discussed in the case of *Countess of Wemyss & Anor v. Simon Dickinson Ltd*, High Court (Chancery Division) 2022 concerning an oil painting by Chardin.

¹⁶³ For his (idiosyncratic) reasons for making such labour-intensive, meticulous copies, see Jeffares 2015c and Jeffares 2018n.

¹⁶⁴ An 11.VIII.1756 letter from Marigny to Mlle de Bracq, dame pour accompagner Mesdames les Cadettes, concerns a portrait of Madame Louise by “le sieur Dufrey” (Franz Bernhard Frey, *q.v.*) commissioned by the princesse to present to her on her imminent retirement.

¹⁶⁵ Correspondence between James and Owen O’Rourke, cited in article on [Carriera](#) with references.

¹⁶⁶ A number of artists specialised in copying the La Tour pastels in Saint-Quentin during the late nineteenth or early twentieth century: Adolphe Deligne and Jules Degrave, both directors of the École gratuite there, as well as by their pupils, Émile and Charles Queuin, Jules Chevreux, Charles Escot, Raphaël Bouquet and Raymond Casez among many.

Dresden¹⁶⁷) were copied as student exercises. Portraits that were to be engraved had first to be copied, as described by Voltaire in his letter to Berger, .VII.1738, cited §VI.3 *infra*.

It is worth citing at length the correspondence¹⁶⁸ arising from the Danish king Frederik V's plans to remodel Christiansborg Slot in 1765, as it illustrates popular concerns about the durability of pastel and the importance of the artist's personal involvement in copying. The plans including a room to be devoted to a collection of portraits of European rulers. For a portrait of the Swedish king Adolf Fredrik, enquiries were made in Stockholm through the Danish ambassador Joachim Otto von Schack, who reported back (23.IV.1765) that no competent artist could be found "si j'excepte le *Sieur Lundberg* qui depuis 20 ans ne peint plus qu'en pastel, et qui a entièrement négligé la peinture en huile." He suggested asking Lundberg to supervise a copyist in oil. When the problem was addressed again by the foreign minister J. H. E. von Bernstorff in 1766, Schack had found Pasch to do the king's portrait. By 1773 a similar problem had arisen in the search for a portrait of Sofia Magdalena, queen to the new Swedish king Gustav III and sister of Christian VII of Denmark, who continued his father's plans for a collection of royal portraits; Gyldenkrone sent a lengthy response to the new minister Greve A. P. Bernstorff. No existing portrait was good enough to be copied, but—

le celebre peintre en pastel nommé Lomberg [Lundberg] a enfin obtenu l'avantage de tirer le portrait de sa Majesté en pastel et qu'il a reussi au mieux; l'original restera a ce que ce peintre m'a dit entre les mains de la Reine ou du Roi, son epoux, et elle en a ordonné deux copies, dont on ignore la destination.

Gyldenkrone suggested that her brother establish whether one of the copies was to be sent to him before commissioning a further copy: that could be done without the queen's consent, by Lundberg himself in pastel, there being no local painter able to do it in oil (apparently Pasch might not yet have been paid for the portrait of Adolf Fredrik). Alternatively an oil copy could be made elsewhere, but that would require the Queen's consent and the embarrassment of deciding who should pay. Bernstorff replied by asking Gyldenkrone to get Lundberg to make another copy, if one was not already intended for Christian, but that Lundberg worked as fast as possible but made the copy entirely with his own hands; this was to be explicitly stipulated in the contract, Lundberg's "reputation de l'exactitude n'étant pas égale à celle des talens." Nevertheless the king's intention was to have a copy in oil from the pastel made by Peder Als, one of the greatest painters in Europe "dont le coloris brillant peut rendre fidelement le pastel, superieurement agréable dans les commencemens, mais trop peu constant et trop sujet à perdre la vivacité des couleurs." Gyldenkrone established that the copies were probably destined for two court ladies, so he commissioned Lundberg to make another, "sous promesse sacrée, que tout l'ouvrage sera en pastel de ses propres mains, qu'il me sera livré en trois mois et qu'il y mettra tous les soins possible." The price including glass was 3000 Daler, his usual price for royal portraits, plus an extra 5–600 Daler if a frame were required. Lundberg also offered to take back the least successful version if it turned out that one of the existing copies was after all destined for the king. Nevertheless Lundberg did not deliver the copy by his deadline, Gyldenkrone complaining "ce peintre qui ne tient jamais parole n'a à peine commence, et s'en excuse par l'ouvrage qu'il vient d'achever d'un portrait du Roy qui a parfaitement bien reussi."

One curious case concerns the famous Rosalba pendant double pictures of *La Paix et la Justice* [J.21.1564](#) and *La Poésie et la Philosophie* [J.21.1573](#). Originally executed in 1726–27, they were commissioned by cardinal de Polignac and taken to France where they passed through the sales of Pasquier and Tallard: at the latter, in 1756, they were acquired by "Silvestre" for Marie-Josèphe de

¹⁶⁷ Perhaps the most curious example is the set of a dozen or so, mostly Habsburg related, pastels copied after originals in Dresden for the Hungarian collector Graf János Pálffy.

¹⁶⁸ Andrup 1917.

Saxe; according to an annotation¹⁶⁹ on a copy of the Tallard sale catalogue, “Silvestre à Mme la Dauphine qui apres les avoir fait fixé en a fait présent au Roy de Pologne Electeur de Saxe, acheté a la vente de M. Pasquier 2416 [livres]”; they duly appeared in Dresden (although only one was actually listed in Riedel & Wenzel 1765, both were in the *Catalogue des tableaux de la Galerie électorale à Dresde*, 1804, p. 314). However in the posthumous sale of Jacques-Augustin de Silvestre (maître à dessiner des Enfants de France, a position he inherited in 1767 from his father Nicolas-Charles Silvestre, who was surely the Silvestre acting for Marie-Josèphe in 1756), Paris, 28.II.–25.III.1811, Lot 65 purported to include the two pendants, as autograph Rosalbas, *ex* Polignac and Tallard collections (they sold for Fr201). It seems likely that while fixing the originals Silvestre père took the opportunity to make (or have made) good copies (of sufficient quality for Regnault-Delalande to catalogue them as the originals), possibly those which surfaced much later.¹⁷⁰

Often these copies were very precise replicas, and there has been much speculation as to how they were produced when the originals were in pastel: similar copies of oil paintings were typically made by direct tracing¹⁷¹ which would have destroyed the surface of a pastel (although Günther 1762, at his §§47ff, provides a detailed prescription for making oiled paper from which to take transparencies from Pergamenttafeln, his term for pastels, while Chaperon’s instruction for brushing fixative onto pastels through a tiffany cloth suggests that laying transparent materials directly on the pastel surface may not then have been regarded with such alarm as today). Russell 1772 explained how to make copies using pounced tracings taken from the glazed pastel:

The Picture being placed upon the Easel, let the Outlines be drawn on the Glass with a small Camel’s Hair Pencil dipped in Lake, ground thin with Oils, which must be done with great exactness: After this is accomplished, take a Sheet of Paper of the same size and place it on the Glass, stroking over all the lines with the hand, by which means the colour will adhere to the paper, which must be pierced with pin-holes pretty close to each other. The paper intended to be used for the painting must next be laid upon a table, and the pierced paper placed upon it; then with some fine-pounded Charcoal, tied up in a piece of lawn, rub over the pierced lines, which will give an exact Out-line; but great care must be taken not to brush this off till the whole is drawn over with sketching Chalk, which is a composition made of Whiting and Tobacco-pipe Clay, rolled like the *Crayons*, and pointed at each end.¹⁷²

Russell himself made several versions of some of his pastels, while a good many more were produced by several of his children, Ann in particular leaving a number of copies that have been taken for her father’s work. Later on, when his work returned to favour at the end of the nineteenth century, unscrupulous dealers produced copies, sometimes “signed”, which continue to be found in major museums. Some of these arose out of the practice of dealers such as the Wertheimers of inducing descendants to part with family pictures with the offer of cash plus a copy of the work in question.¹⁷³ While some were execrable, others have been described as better than the originals. Other major pastellists, from La Tour to Carriera, no doubt suffered similar indignities. While later copies were no doubt created for commercial purposes, so that the greatest risk is with works by the most saleable names (La Tour and Russell have more than their fair share), minor names such as Glain were also vulnerable. Accessibility to an original was key. Works in the great collections (notably the Louvre, Saint-Quentin and Dresden) were also set pieces for students, as occasionally revealed by stamps on the reverse of canvases.

It should also be noted that replicas by other artists were not always exactly to scale (e.g. La Tour’s Saint-Quentin version of the abbé Pommyer is approximately 90% of the primary version), while

¹⁶⁹ Reported Getty Provenance Index online, consulted 31.X.2023; presumably from the Bibliothèque de l’Institut de France copy, but this is not clear.

¹⁷⁰ They do not however appear in Nicolas-Charles Silvestre’s inventaire après décès (AN CXIII 437, 25.v.1767).

¹⁷¹ See Dossie 1758 for a summary of the procedures for pictures other than pastels.

¹⁷² Russell 1772, pp. 20f.

¹⁷³ Another example was the purchase of a group of pastels and other works from the marquis de Berenger by Édouard Jonas in 1913; he paid 50,000 francs and supplied exact copies of the pastels and frames before reselling (most of) the originals to Ernest Cognacq.

in other cases (some of Liotard's *ricordi*) the correspondence is astonishingly accurate locally but results in misaligned parts (e.g. ear to elbow) on a global scale, indicating that they were made freehand. The role of the Geneva tracing of the Belle Chocolatière remains uncertain, but it seems likely to have been made later, in Dresden (in relation to early reproductive prints), and thus not to be autograph.¹⁷⁴ The statistics are widely divergent: some artists seem never to have made repetitions, while those who were most often copied were also those credited (rightly or not) with the most autograph repetitions (La Tour, Liotard, Carriera).

A further aspect of copying should be mentioned. Even major pastellists were not above copying the work of other painters. Sometimes these were student pieces – artists from La Tour to John Russell copied Rosalba in their early stages, and Rosalba herself copied works such as the head after Cagnacci; surprisingly she seems also to have been willing to make copies of portraits by other artists (Stephan Mack, in Vienna, sent her a copy of his portrait by Frans van Stampart in the hope that she could turn it into a better portrait: letter of 1731). Liotard, who commenced his career with much resentment at being required by Massé to copy others' work, in later life (perhaps when original commissions dried up), devoted much energy not only to copying his own works from much earlier (Mme Necker; le Déjeuner Lavergne), but also offered to copy a portrait of Catherine the Great to produce one “qui seroit plus ressemblante et beaucoup mieux peinte.”¹⁷⁵

While chalk drawings (particularly in sanguine) were widely copied by taking counterproofs during the eighteenth century, pastel as a medium is unsuited to this process. It was not until the late nineteenth century that techniques were developed (derived from lithography) to enable artists such as Cassatt and Renoir to make pastel counterproofs.

IV.14 Restoration

One of the claimed advantages of fixing pastel was that the process destroyed mould, a problem evidently as widespread soon after the pastels were made as it remains today when the works are not kept sufficiently dry (see §V.6.2–3 *infra* for a discussion of modern conservation). Darker colours were more prone to it than others (one author thought that the use of ivory black was responsible), and pastels on vellum were more at risk than those on paper. Impure pastels and of course water damage would also give rise to salt stains, for which La Tour¹⁷⁶ describes treatment involving removal with a knife and the use of hot irons close to the pastel to remove any residual traces. Cotes and Russell both similarly describe the removal of mould with a knife. It is also clear that some pastels suffered more serious damage that required more invasive intervention. Liotard in particular seems to have used imperfect materials, so that Pierre-Nicolas Grassot had to complain about falling pastel from his 1770 portrait [J.49.1613](#) only a few years later, as noted above; while the painter Frédéric Dumesnil (*q.v.*) had to repaint two imperial portraits by Liotard [J.49.1488](#), [J.49.2001](#) for the duc d'Ardenberg in 1752: this took 7½ days at a charge of 24 fl. 9s. 9d.

IV.15 Glazing

Unlike drawings, pastels had to be glazed to protect them from contact with fingers and dust, from humidity and from insects.¹⁷⁷ They were intended to be framed and displayed. Oil paintings required no glazing, and so could be as large as desired; but methods of producing glass were vital to existence of pastel. Both terms “glace” and “verre” seem to have been in use throughout the

¹⁷⁴ Marcel Roethlisberger came round to this view in unpublished correspondence with me and in a letter of 24.iv.2017 to the curator at Dresden (*v. Jeffares 2023c*).

¹⁷⁵ Letter to Prince Dmitri Galitsyn of 12.III.1763, published Karp 2024; see Liotard article in the Dictionary.

¹⁷⁶ In his 1770 letter to Belle de Charrière, *ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ There is extensive evidence of damage from adult insects and larvae provided by characteristic damage as well as carcasses. (Burns 2007, p. 48, cites the damage in the lower left corner of Nanteuil's Uffizi self-portrait.)

eighteenth century, often interchangeably, but the former term was sometimes restricted to higher qualities of product.¹⁷⁸

From the time of the Syrians in the first centuries AD to the Venetians, and in Normandy from 1330, until the end of the seventeenth century, glass (for windows, mirrors etc.) had been made by processes which were inherently limited as to size. The oldest technique, crown glass, involved spinning blown glass into large, flat discs, which with skill could exceed 1 metre in diameter; but as the central boss could not be used, the largest rectangular sheet that could be cut from these discs was much smaller (say 40x50 cm). A development was the use of blown cylinders which could be cut and flattened, but the results were not optically true, and in any case widths in excess of about 30 cm were apt to break with handling.

In 1688, the Italian glassmaker Bernard Perrot (Bernardo Perrotto, 1640–1709), who had settled in Orléans, discovered the process of making molten glass flow onto smooth iron tables where it was rolled and cooled. Under the influence of Colbert, Louis XIV granted a charter to Nicolas du Noyer for the Manufacture royale des grandes glaces (Saint-Gobain), which commenced production using this process in 1691.¹⁷⁹ Saint-Gobain retained its monopoly on the production of flat plate glass (which was mainly used for mirrors) until 1790. The manufacture involved two stages: molten glass was cast by being poured onto large tables; and secondly the sheets were ground and polished. The first, casting step was carried out at Saint-Gobain (Aisne), where there were local supplies of soda. The grinding and polishing took place at Reuilly, near the faubourg Saint-Antoine.

Dr Johnson provided an account of the manufacture of mirrors in a notebook of his brief trip to France in 1775 included by Boswell. The initial steps were presumably the same as for picture glass:

Monday, Oct. 23. – We went to see the looking-glasses wrought. They come from Normandy in cast plates, perhaps the third of an inch thick. At Paris they are ground upon a marble table, by rubbing one plate on another with grit between them. The various sands, of which there are said to be five, I could not learn. The handle, by which the upper glass is moved, has the form of a wheel, which may be moved in all directions. The plates are sent up with their surfaces ground but not polished and so continue till they are bespoken, lest time should spoil the surface, as we were told. Those that are to be polished are laid on a table covered with several thick cloths, hard strained, that the resistance may be equal; they are then rubbed with a hand rubber, held down hard by a contrivance which I did not well understand. The powder which is used last seemed to me to be iron dissolved in aqua fortis. They called it, as Baretto said, marc de l'eau forte, which he thought was dregs. They mentioned vitriol and saltpetre.

Tables of prices¹⁸⁰ show that sheets as large as 110x50 pouces or 297x135 cm were available (for 2750 livres, 17 times the price of a 1 sq metre sheet, although it is only four times the area). The scale of some of Vivien's pastels demonstrated that it was not the technology but the expense of these large sheets of glass (which often cost more than the frames or the pictures they protected) that restricted their use.¹⁸¹ The early eighteenth century saw the largest pastels ever produced: Vivien's pastel of Max Emanuel at Mons ^{J.77.285} (1706) measures 215x146 cm; La Tour's président de Rieux ^{J.46.2722} (c.1741), which Mariette thought the largest pastel ever made, was 201x150 cm (the Louvre's celebrated Mme de Pompadour ^{J.46.2541} is a mere 177.5x136 cm), while John Russell's group portrait of Lady Johnstone and her children ^{J.64.1901}, at perhaps 185x140 cm, was evidently not (as the Oxford DNB claimed) the largest pastel ever made.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Thus, in the marquis de Féline sale (Paris, 27.III.1775), Lot 132 consisted of twelve pastels, "partie sont sous glace, les autres verre blanc." But in the 1763 sale of Nattier's studio contents, the terms "glace" and "verre" are used interchangeably for successive lots (p. 7).

¹⁷⁹ See Savary's *Dictionnaire universel de commerce...*, Geneva, 1742, II, p. 634ff, *s.n.* Glace. Letters patent were issued in 1665 and registered at the parlement 12.I. and 23.III.1666. See also Burns 1997 and references therein.

¹⁸⁰ Augustin Cochin, *La Manufacture des glaces de Saint-Gobain de 1665 à 1865*, 1865, p. 85 & *passim*.

¹⁸¹ In a letter to Carriera of 24.IV.1722, Gerard Michel Jabach in Livorno discusses a glass of 50 by 40 pouces (135x108 cm), possibly for a mirror, which he has ordered from Amsterdam and which he is to send to her. Sea transport involved less vibration than roads.

¹⁸² Until my correction, 2014. The ODNB still gives the measurements as 185x140 cm which have not been verified, and may include the frame.

There were several attempts to replicate Saint-Gobain's monopoly, although the cost of setting up the equipment required was a major barrier to entry. In England the British Plate Glass Company was established by act of parliament of 1773 using the French technology transmitted by former workers at Saint-Gobain; employing capital of £40,000, its factory at Ravenshead commenced production in 1786. In France, the verrerie de Saint-Quirin had been established in the 1730s making window glass (too small for use in larger pastels) in the 1730s; Hugues Drolenvaux was granted lettres patentes in 1750 for a process of producing sheets of white glass suitable for prints and pastels.¹⁸³ Around 1769 they developed a method of making *glace soufflée* (blown plate glass), which could be polished and used for pictures or mirrors: this too required large levels of capital investment, the water-powered polishing machines “de Wirtemberg” alone cost 1,000,000 livres. Although it still relied on blowing instead of the sophisticated casting process over which Saint-Gobain retained a monopoly, there was nevertheless a dispute as to whether the Saint-Quirin process infringed the Saint-Gobain patent which was not resolved until 1785.¹⁸⁴

But for the most part pastel remained a medium for pictures in smaller format throughout the century. Pastels were almost invariably framed “close”, i.e. with no mount, and instead a fillet or spacer was used between the surface of the paper and the glass (hidden in the rebate of the frame behind the sight edge); but this was less for technical restrictions as for financial and functional reasons (for what were conceived as paintings rather than drawings). (However when the celebrated mounter Jean-Baptiste Glomy inserted a notice in the *Mercure de France*, .IV.1771, p. 206, in response to competition, he warned amateurs of the need for his long experience to mount certain drawings, “principalement ceux où il y a du pastel”, “sans quoi ils risquent d’être gâtés.”) Expense however did in part drive the search for fixing methods that could allow glazing to be dispensed with altogether.

A decree of 15.VIII.1752 imposed a duty on glass for pastels:

Ordonne au surplus Sa Majesté que les Verres blancs coulés en table sans boudines, propres à estampes & peintures en pastel, continueront de payer à l'entrée du Royaume, tant des Cinq Grosses Fermes, que des Provinces réputés étrangères, trente livres de quintal; & qu'à cet effet les Marchands & Voituriers seront tenus de les mettre dans des caisses séparées, & de déclarer le poids desdites caisses, sous peine de confiscation, & de pareille amends de trois cent livres.

Gautier-Dagoty's little-known critique¹⁸⁵ of the 1755 salon includes an interesting discussion of the effect of glass on La Tour's pastel of Mme de Pompadour [J.46.2541](#):

L'harmonie de ce Portrait surpasse les compositions en huile de ceux de M. Michel Vanloo & de M. Tocqué: c'est, dit-on, la glace qui a cet avantage; elle met tout d'accord, & laisse une unité que l'on perdrait entièrement, si le Tableau étoit à nud. Des demi-Connoisseurs qui ont déjà écrit sur le Salon, ont prétendu au contraire que la glace étoit noire, & qu'elle gâtoit le Tableau. On voit bien que ces Auteurs n'ont pas vû comme moi le Tableau sur le chevalet. Le Pastel & la Peinture en caustique sont des Peintures froides & sèches que l'on ne peut vernir; la glace seule peut adoucir ces Peintures féminines, & leur donner une certaine chaleur suave que l'huile porte naturellement en lui-même; les yeux mâles sentent la beauté de cette composition; le beau sexe seul peut s'accommoder du Pastel & de l'ancoustique.

In the 11.VII.1803 sale catalogue where the pastel was offered for sale (Lot 335), Paillet and Delaroche were careful to note that “ce morceau ... est recouvert par une belle glace blanche fait

¹⁸³ Philippe Macquer, *Dictionnaire portatif des arts et métiers*, 1756, II, p. 685, noted that “Le verre en plats pour la consommation de Paris, vient de la forêt de Lions en Normandie, où il y a quatre verreries établies: savoir, à Eroutieux, à la Haye, la Verrerie neuve & l'Holandele. On fait dans beaucoup d'autres endroits du verre à vitres, mais qui se débite dans les Provinces. On fait de deux espèces de verre à vitres, un qui a une légère couleur, & un autre qui est parfaitement blanc; ils se vendent l'un et l'autre à la somme ou au panier. Le verre blanc s'emploie dans les beaux appartemens, & pour mettre sur des tableaux, sur les pastels & sur les estampes; celui qui a de la couleur est employé dans les bâtimens pour les croisées.”

¹⁸⁴ Kenneth Margerison, “P. L. Roederer: political thought and practice during the French Revolution”, *Transactions of the Americal Philosophical Society*, LXXIII/1, 1983, pp. 16–19.

¹⁸⁵ *Observations sur l'histoire naturelle, sur la physique et sur la peinture*, Paris, XIII, 1755, p. 58f; see [EXHIBITIONS](#) for the full text. The document was overlooked in the Collection Deloynes, McWilliam & al. 1991, B&W and Arnoult 2014, and first republished in the *Dictionary* in 2015.

exprès à Saint Gobin.” Similarly La Tour’s ruined pastels of Restout ^{J.46.2687} and Dumont le Romain ^{J.46.1681} were denuded of their frames, perhaps to obtain their glass: they were listed among the revolutionary seizures from the ci-devant Académie on 9.XII.1793, when they were inventoried in the Premier Garde-meuble with this note: “Ces deux tableaux sont perdus par l’auteur même qui, trop vieux, voulut les retoucher: on peut compter que les glaces”. In the 21.VII.1796 inventory, Phlipault noted that by then they were “sans bordure”.

La Tour’s unfinished portrait of the family of Louis XV, or Marie-Josèphe de Saxe and her son ^{J.46.2259}, was relegated to a side room according to the inventory of the École gratuite de dessin at Saint-Quentin carried out on 24.IV.1815, the glass being “en trois parties”: it is unclear if this was a deliberate economy or the result of breakage.

The lawyer and engineer Claude Bernier de Saint-Martin wrote to La Tour in 1764 describing the various problems with finding suitable glass for pastels.¹⁸⁶ That made in France used Spanish soda which rendered it dark and greenish, while flint glass, developed in England, was weak, unless supplied in thick sheets. To avoid the colour problem, pastellists tried to use thinner sheets, but this put their work at risk from glass breakage. The glass from Saint-Quirin, which was known as verre de Bohème, was excellent (practically colourless) apart from its annoying undulations, which were disagreeable and annoying for viewers, and even made the picture invisible from certain angles. Bernier’s proposal was to straighten this type of glass with the machine he used to make curved sheets. Alternatively he suggested an even better plan: to provide the sheet with a deliberate, regular bulge (“bombe”); these were already in use for protecting wax and plaster medallions. This route resulted in greater strength, and also dealt with the spacing problem without resulting in the pastel frame having to be too deep and projecting untidily from the walls of the room. He proposed to use a curve that would result in a space of 8 to 10 lignes (18 to 23 mm) at the centre of the largest canvas.

See §IV.8 *supra* for La Tour’s use of two sheets of glass as a capsule to protect pastels without the need of fixative, reported by Pernety in 1757 and in use by 1752. While the front sheet had to meet the normal requirements for light transmission, the rear sheet was required to have the physical strength required to support the structure. The two surviving examples use sheets of up to 13mm in thickness, and were evidently hammered manually from molten sheets, giving them the appearance of later industrial glass.

An idea of the scarcity of the product may be gleaned from an advertisement¹⁸⁷ in Toulouse by a certain M. Peyronnet, who offered “verre de Bohème” in various sizes, suitable for “toute sorte de Voitures, Chaise à porteur, Croisées, Portraits au pastel & Estampes”: if he didn’t have the right size in stock, he required a delay of only two months to obtain it.

This useful entry for “Glaces” appeared in the *Almanach général des marchands, négocians et commerçans de la France et de l’Europe* for 1772 (Paris, Valade, 1779), pp. 349–50:

Les Manufactures de Glaces établies en France depuis moins de 80 ans, y ont fait les progrès les plus rapides & les plus brillans; à la place des Glaces soufflées qu’on recevoit autrefois d’Italie, & dont la plus grande dimension étoit de 40 à 50 pouces de hauteur, on envoie aujourd’hui en Italie & dans tout l’Univers commerçant, des glaces de 90 & de 100 pouces.

La Manufacture des Glaces coulées & soufflées est établie à St. Gobin. Voyez St. Gobin.

Mais c’est à Paris que les glaces reçoivent la perfection nécessaire pour entrer dans le commerce. Le travail qui leur donne cette perfection consiste dans le poliment & dans le teint.

¹⁸⁶ A version was published in the *Mercur*, .VI.1764, pp. 158ff. See [TREATISES](#). There is also a discussion in Pierre Le Vieil, *L’Art de la peinture sur verre et de la vitrerie*, Paris, 1774, p. 233f.

¹⁸⁷ *Affiches, annonces &c. de Toulouse*, 10.VII.1782.

Les Glaces destinées simplement à orner des voitures, à éclairer des appartements, à couvrir des pastels, n'ont besoin que de poliment: celles qui n'ont éprouvé que cette opération s'appellent glaces en blanc.

Dans la vente des Glaces en blanc, on se règle sur les pouces & les lignes de hauteur & de largeur : on ne compte les lignes que dans les petites glaces appellées de numero ; les glaces de numero sont celles qui on moins de 14 pouces sur 12.

Les glaces de numero se divisent en huit.

N° 8, 6 pouces 6 lignes, sur 4 pouces 9 lig.

N° 10, 7 p... 3 lig... sur 5 p.

N° 12, 7 p... 10 lig... sur 5 p... 10 lig.

N° 17, 8 p... 7 lig... sur 6 p... 8 lig.

N° 20, 9 p... 5 lig... sur 7 p... 4 lig.

N° 30, 10 p... 4 lig... sur 8 p... 7 lig.

N° 40, 11 p... 6 lig... sur 6 p... 6 lig.

N° 50, 12 p... 6 lig... sur 10 p... 6 lig.

Les glaces au-dessus de ce numero, s'appellent glaces de volume réglé, les plus grandes sont de 100 pouces sur 60. Ces magnifiques glaces se vendent 3000 livres; les autres baissent graduellement de prix jusqu'aux 14 pouces, qui ne valent que 6 liv. 4 sols. Pour cette gradation voyez les Tarif des glaces qui est public & connu.

Le poliment, ou l'adouci se donne dans un vaste atelier, établi au Fauxbourg st. Antoine.

Directeur, M. GALLOIS, rue de Reuilly.

IV.16 Frames

Pastels are almost invariably framed for protection. The dangers of removing pastels from their frames have always been known, so, in a good many cases, pastels have come down to us in their original frames, frequently with the original glass and occasionally with backing boards that have never been unsealed.¹⁸⁸ However, in the case of major names such as Carriera, La Tour and Perronneau, a good many frames were changed in the early years of the twentieth century when their work became fashionable and dealers sold their pastels as de luxe objects to extremely wealthy collectors who would not have been satisfied with the rather modest *cadres d'origine*.¹⁸⁹

Many, probably most, artists arranged the framing and glazing of their works before they left the workshop, although in some cases these may have been replaced by owners seeking a uniform appearance for their collections, in much the same way as they would have rebound books. One can see both practices with the pastels made for the Stuart family in exile: accounts¹⁹⁰ show the five pastels by Fratellini were invoiced by the artist including itemised charges for the glass, the canvases and the frames (“custodi di pino nero”). For the three Liotard pastels delivered in 1737, separate payments were made to the joiner (“Senti falegname”) and gilder (“Vasselli indatore”). Several letters from Carriera indicate that she sent pastels, carefully encased, to recipients for them to have framed (this is revealed for example in letters to her from Crozat, 7.VI.1721 and Vleughels, 29.XII.1721 and 9.VI.1736): these may be the simple black travelling frames still found within more elaborate gilt frames such as those in Dresden. Voltaire, when his portrait was to be engraved in 1738, was reluctant to lend the original, but knew that the réplique could not leave the artist's studio until framed and glazed: “On ne veut point envoyer mon portrait en pastel; mais m^f de La Tour en a un double. Il n'a qu'à y faire mettre une bordure et une glace. Je mande à M. l'abbé Moussinot qu'il en fasse les frais.”¹⁹¹ With Lundberg's repetitions of the Swedish queen Sofia Magdalena (*v. §IV.14 supra*), the cost of the glass was included in the price, but the charge for the

¹⁸⁸ There is now an extensive literature on frames: see for example Mitchell & Roberts 1996; Simon 1996; Burns 1997; Harden 1998. Henry Vial's *Les Artistes décorateurs du bois* remains an important reference for individual craftsmen.

¹⁸⁹ Examples in Perronneau's œuvre include original frames on two Bordeaux pastels, Gorse J.582.1364 and Mme Molles J.582.1626, both extremely simple baguettes, while the original frame on J.582.1041 is visible in the background of the photograph of Marius Paulme in his sale catalogue.

¹⁹⁰ See the extracts quoted with references in the articles on [Fratellini](#) and [Liotard](#) extracted from Stuart Wortley 1948.

¹⁹¹ Letter to Berger, 3.VII.1738.

frame was specified separately, if required, implying that the glass was attached to the strainer independently (perhaps in a simple frame, or a montage paquet assembly with glass, spacer, strainer and backboard taped together – *v. §V.6.3 infra*).

Another consideration may have been (although there is no specific evidence of pastels where this arose) the bizarre system of excise duties levied on pictures during the eighteenth century: thus Flemish pictures entering France were taxed *ad valorem* if framed, but merely by weight if not.¹⁹² But generally pastels were supplied to clients already framed, the frame selected by the artist and invoiced inclusively. There are very few public advertisements such as that inserted by Louis Thibault de Montigny in *L'Avant-Coureur* offering to frame pastels under glass in gilt frames – and even that notice covered prints and plans as well, and was intended to sell his composition frames.¹⁹³

When pastels were supplied to clients with frames, there is little evidence about the dealings between artist and framer: for conservation reasons (for the same considerations that remain today), it is likely that the frame was delivered and fitted at the artist's studio rather than the unprotected pastel being sent to the framer's workshop. One example may be Labille-Guiard's portrait of Pajou, later her *morceau de réception* at the Académie (and now in the Louvre). It is signed and dated 1782, but the frame is stamped by Claude Pépin who died on 13 January in that year. An elaborate fronton with sitter's name sits on a standard sized ("toile de 20") frame.

There is some evidence that pastellists kept frames ready for use: on 19.I.1786, the contents of La Tour's logement in the Louvre were auctioned off, and included "Pastels, Ustensiles de peintre, bordures dorées et cartes géographiques, le tout provenant du cabinet de M. de La Tour, peintre du Roi." When La Tour made a *réplique* of his pastel of Rousseau to give to the writer, he paid for the frame and glass, expenditure which Rousseau thought it his duty to reimburse (letter to Le Nieps, 9.I.1763). Diderot commenting on the abbé Lattaignant in the Salon de 1767 mentions its "petit cadre de bois noir", and in relation to the pastels shown in 1769 mentions "Quatre chefs-d'œuvre renfermés dans un châssis de sapin, quatre Portraits", implying a single frame for the four works. Most of the preparations in the artist's atelier were described in his brother's 1806 testament as in "cadres noirs".¹⁹⁴ This is confirmed by the inventory of the École gratuite de dessin at Saint-Quentin carried out on 24.IV.1815, reporting the larger pastels as in gilt frames, but ending "56 têtes d'études, avec verres et cadres noircis, dont un plus grand que les autres." They were still there until just before 1867 when the Goncourts wrote: "C'est dans ces cadres noirs qu'on les retrouvait encore, il y a quelques années, au musée de Saint-Quentin."

Such simple ebonised frames were of course rarer in prestigious collections. Thus when the royal collections of the musée now known as the Louvre were inventoried¹⁹⁵ in 1824, the "cadre ovale en bois noirci" containing Mme Filleul's *duc d'Angoulême* [J.316.106](#) (now deposited in Versailles, then in the Chalcographie royale) was explicitly noted, the others all being presumed to be giltwood.

When Robbé de Beauveset sat to Perronneau, he reported to Desfriches (letter, 6.VIII.1759) "La glace et la bordure sont, je pense, une affaire de 30 ou 36 livres; il n'est pas naturel que Perronneau les tire de sa poche; j'en ferai les avances."

¹⁹² Michel 2007, p. 133f.

¹⁹³ *L'Avant-Coureur*, 27.I.1772, pp. 52–54.

¹⁹⁴ Little is documented about La Tour's frames: see Jeffares 2018m.

¹⁹⁵ This appears in the working draft, Archives des musées nationaux, 1DD66; the final version (1DD78) omits the comment on the frame. In both cases the pastel was catalogued as anonymous.

For the most part framemakers remain anonymous. Few posthumous inventories or financial accounts survive from which to identify clients or payments.¹⁹⁶

Early English pastels (by Hoare, Pond etc.) were often in Kentian frames (some of the best were made by Isaac Gosset); by the time of Cotes, French-inspired rococo frames were fashionable. Russell preferred Maratta frames; but all these were used also for oil paintings. In France a fairly standard rectangular “pastel frame” was widely used throughout the reign of Louis XV: it had an ogee moulding, with cabochon back-edge, gadrooned top edge, sanded frieze and leaf sight. Apart from the moulding another national difference was the aspect ratio: a typical French pastel might have a sight size of 61x50 cm (“toile de 12” in the system explained in §IV.1 *supra*), with a ratio of 1.22, while an English frame of a similar height might be narrower, say 45 cm, the ratio typically being 1.33.¹⁹⁷ A wider range of mouldings appeared in the 1760s, and an increasing number of them were oval. But none of these was exclusively used for pastels, and the practice of artists such as Vigée Le Brun who supplied her clients with framed works in both media was to use the same frames.

While the best frames were carved and gilded, there were some surprisingly early examples of stuc doré, or composition frames. Several examples bear a stamp “Ornements de composition DL”, possibly the Sieur de Launay, quai de Gesvres recommended by Petit de Bachaumont for his composition frames at this time.¹⁹⁸

Elaborate picture frames were of course widely used in the baroque and rococo eras. The great pastel collection in Dresden (*v.* §VIII.1 *infra*) was equipped (by 1752) with uniform “Dresden Gallery” frames, mostly carved by Matthias Kugler and Joseph Deibel.

French rococo frames in particular achieved an extraordinary level of sophistication and beauty. They were made by craftsmen who belonged to one (or sometimes more than one) of the crafts of ébéniste, menuisier, sculpteur or doreur. In eighteenth century Paris, marks by some two dozen makers – maîtres menuisiers or ébénistes – have been identified.¹⁹⁹ They are however rarely identifiable: few frames are stamped, and documents rarely survive identifying the framers: this was especially the case with pastels where frames were supplied by the artist. The few exceptions include several royal commissions handled by the Bâtiments du roi, including frames for La Tour’s portraits of the king, queen, dauphin and dauphine by Louis Maurisan. Among pastels few reached the ambition of that for La Tour’s président de Rieux (for which however no document identifies the maker, although René Gimpel²⁰⁰ suggested it might be to a design by Caffiéri): as one critic noted,

ce Tableau sera toujours un chef-d’œuvre en son espèce; et pour vous doner une idée de son Prix, on prétend que la Glace et le Cadre coutent seuls cinquante lotiis.²⁰¹

But by 1753 the abbé Le Blanc felt the need to attack the prevailing fashion for ostentatious expenditure on elaborate gilt decorations surrounding third-rate pictures: a “contraste ridicule” which resulted from a reluctance to pay more for the picture than for the “cartouche bizarre qui

¹⁹⁶ This may be because the businesses were not sufficiently profitable, and estates were renounced to avoid the assumption of debts. One of the best-known framers, Étienne-Louis Infroit, was certified as incapable in 1771; but the inventaire taken at the time has been mislaid in the Minutier central (2018).

¹⁹⁷ The reason for this is unclear. A pure conjecture is that the narrower English frame may have involved less waste from cutting locally produced glass.

¹⁹⁸ The suggestion is due to Bruno Hochart (private communication 2018). An example is the imposing pastel of Orry by La Tour (J.46.2431). For de Launay, see also Pons 1987, p. 42.

¹⁹⁹ To the 22 listed in Harden 1998 may be added Jean-Baptiste Detroulleau (1737–1780) and Louis Boussard (Brunno Hochart, private communication, 8.III.2018).

²⁰⁰ *Journal*, 4.XII.1918.

²⁰¹ Anon., *Lettre à Monsieur de Poiresson-Chamarande, lieutenant général au baillage et siège présidial de Chaumont en Bassigny, au sujet des tableaux exposés au Salon du Louvre*, s.l., s.d. [1741].

lui sert de bordure”.²⁰² By the time of Louis XVI’s accession, a neo-classical sobriety had set in. But for the most part pastel frames, being domestic and of smaller scale, were less prone to excess than oil paintings. For the same reasons as discussed below, a concern to avoid ridicule prevailed in France. When the French traveller de Beaunoir visited Mainz in 1789, he spotted a group of pastels by Urlaub “dans des cadres de la plus grande richesse, mais la bordure magnifique ne nuit pas au tableau” – a comment indicating that such concerns were not far from his mind.²⁰³

The taste for oval frames was particularly prevalent in rococo France. This was primarily for aesthetic reasons – the oval was seen as a fashionable alternative to the rigid rectangle that had prevailed for centuries. The choice of an oval provided an opportunity to demonstrate the skills of Parisian *maîtres-menuisiers* in the construction of these sophisticated luxury objects (ovals raise considerably more technical and conservation difficulties²⁰⁴ than rectangular frames). In the case of portraits they also provided a neat visual solution as to how to deal with empty corners; the giltwood oval frame was seen as a sophisticated advance on the *trompe-l’œil* painted stone oculus which artists from Hogarth to Perronneau sometimes adopted.²⁰⁵

In Paris the ovals were geometrically perfect ellipses during the eighteenth century; earlier seventeenth century examples, and those in Scandinavian countries throughout the eighteenth century, were often fatter shapes. The practical manufacturing difficulties in eastern Europe, Russia and even Germany meant that oval pastels were often made on rectangular strainers with rectangular frames so that only an oval slip need be cut; octagonal frames were often used as a simpler alternative.²⁰⁶ In Britain small carved oval frames were commonly found with pastels, usually mounted on card, from the middle of the second half of the century. Later the spandrel frame emerged: pastels could be executed on rectangular strainers, the corners hidden behind giltwood spandrels with foliate decoration.²⁰⁷ By the 1790s these evolved into a common neoclassical motifs, often a single flower, rosette or star. The model is found in pastels by Russell (infrequently from late 1780s) and Hamilton, from his Italian period (mid-1780s and later), but is also widely found on pastels by Tischbein, Schröder and his German followers.

²⁰² Anon. [abbé Jean-Bernard Le Blanc], *Observations sur les ouvrages de MM. de l’Académie de peinture et de sculpture, exposés au Salon du Louvre en l’année 1753 et sur quelques écrits qui ont rapport à la peinture, à M. le président de B***, s.l., 1753, p. 155f.* The passage is discussed in Pons 1987, p. 43 and n.18. It anticipates to some degree Kant’s remark in *Kritik der Urtheilskraft* (1790, §14: *Gesammelte Schriften*, Berlin, 1913, v, p. 226): “Besteht aber der Zierath nicht selbst in der schönen Form, ist er wie der goldene Rahmen bloß, um durch seinen Reiz das Gemälde dem Beifall zu empfehlen, angebracht: so heißt er alsdann *Schmuck* und thut der ächten Schönheit Abbruch.”

²⁰³ Alexandre-Louis-Bertrand Robineau, dit de Beaunoir, *Voyage sur le Rhin*, Neuwied, 1791, p. 11. The frames on these pastels do not seem particularly ostentatious today.

²⁰⁴ As with oval strainers, oval frames experience shrinkage problems to a far greater degree than rectangular ones: while a straight piece of wood can be cut along, or across, the grain for a consistent response to climate changes, the four pieces of a traditional oval frame unavoidably include pieces cut at varying angles to the grain.

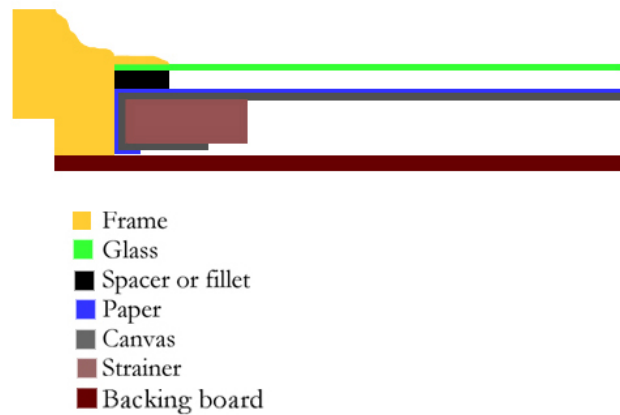
²⁰⁵ The appearance of the stone oculus in Perronneau pastels from around 1757 must have seemed retrospective even then (La Tour employed it with irony in his 1737 self-portrait “à l’œil de bœuf”), but he continued to use it into the 1780s (the feature is not uncommon in Dutch portraiture of the time; Bernard used it in his Viennese pastels, but in France it appeared mostly in the work of minor artists such as Barat, Grasson or Pougin). Perhaps this reflected the tastes of the provincial clientèle he courted (only a quarter of his portraits were made in Paris), but it may also have been a response to the Parisian aesthetic that favoured oval pictures, for which the construction of frames and even strainers may have been more difficult in the provinces than in Paris.

²⁰⁶ Earlier examples of octagonal frames date back to the seventeenth century: for example, in the posthumous inventory of conte Federico Beroaldi were found “Trè ritrattini di trè Pittori disegnati come di Pastello con Cornice à ottofaccie dorata” (Bologna, 1695, f. 6; repr. Raffaella Morselli, *Collezioni e quadre nella Bologna del Seicento*, 1998, III, p. 93).

²⁰⁷ Pastels with plain sanded spandrels include the 1766 Valade pendants J.74.183 & J.74.184; but the French do not seem to have favoured the decorated spandrel. The earliest examples seem to be on oil paintings: a Reynolds self-portrait of 1773 (see Nicholas Penny, “Reynolds and picture frames”, *Burlington magazine*, XI.1986, fig. 46) or Angelica Kauffman pendants of Sir Robert & Lady Harvey (Yale Center for British Art). Stubbs’s 1781 oil self-portrait (London, NPG 4575) seems to be the earliest example of the single flower motif favoured by Hamilton. By 1786 Tischbein was using these frames on his pastels of the ruling family in The Hague.

IV.17 Traditional assembly

The traditional arrangement for mounting and framing a typical eighteenth century pastel is as shown in this simplified diagram:



Ideally the rebate should be deep enough for the whole strainer to fit inside (it will often need to be extended or commonly the backing is held in place by angled brackets), but first a sheet of glass is placed next to the sight edge, then a wooden spacer or fillet is cut to lie within the rebate. The pastel sits behind the spacer, isolated by acid-free lining paper or thin card; and finally a backing board is fitted and closed up. Lining tape (not shown in the figure) or other arrangements are made to ensure the pastel is protected from dust and insect infestation (the adhesion of lining tape can fail over long periods, and should be relied upon for neither mechanical support nor dust exclusion). Backing boards were sometimes omitted, which left the pastel vulnerable to damage with careless handling evidenced by losses in the central area where the support has been pressed onto the glass. More often card was used; the same problem of pastel–glass contact still arose where the card was too flexible. Both are useful deterrents to the unfortunate practice of auctioneers, transportation firms and even framers of writing directly on the back of canvases.²⁰⁸ In some cases (larger rectangular strainers and most ovals), cross-members attached to the strainer provided additional rigidity.²⁰⁹ In a few cases, metal sheets were used for backing, either mild steel (on some Russell pastels) or copper (e.g. [J.46.2508](#) before restoration); these were no doubt intended for protection, but greatly add to the weight of the picture, increasing the risk of damage during transport.

There are numerous variations of this basic configuration, some original, others modern (see Chapter V).

Even making a spacer to separate the pastel from the glass is more complicated with oval frames: in place of the rectangle's four thin lengths of wood, applying pressure evenly to the strainer, original assemblies for ovals often involved a few widely spaced pieces of cork, or in some cases lengths of thick cord pinned around the boundary. An alternative solution involved card or thin sheets of wood, sufficiently flexible to wrap round (and be fixed with pins to) sections of the oval strainer to project outwards, resting on the glass. Rectangular works are also often found with just six or eight short spacers (of wood, card or cork) instead of a continuous structure of fillets with mortised corners: the latter is preferable as it distributes the pressure more evenly, and the geometry should make it impossible for the spacers to fall if adhesives fail. (This may not be

²⁰⁸ Very few pastels are inscribed with artists' or sitters' names. (Several examples in William Hoare's hand are known, giving the name and address of the subject. La Tour seems to have attached a few labels directly to the back of several works, but these have mostly been lost.) Disassembling to view the back of canvases directly is however a useful precaution where later work is suspected; art suppliers' stencil marks can provide objective proof of such suspicions.

²⁰⁹ In one case (a large pastel by Pillement), a network of strings across the strainer was presumably intended to supplement this protection.

possible if bulky corners project further than the main runs of the strainer.) In at least one example four nails, hammered incompletely into the corners of the strainer through the paper, stand proud to act as spacers: the objections to such a system do not need to be listed.

Bernier's recommendation of convex glass (see §IV.15 *supra*) was not widely adopted.

IV.18 Transport during the eighteenth century

Flavella was not alone in being damaged in transit.²¹⁰ In a letter of 14.VIII.1705, Kurfürst Max Emanuel of Bavaria wrote to Gräfin d'Arco about glass broken during the transport of her pastel portrait:²¹¹

Le peintre Vivien, Madame, fait un voyage a Paris, c'est par luy que je dois vous remercier d'un si parfait ouvrage, comme est votre portrait en tant l'auteur. il est arrive a Bruxelles, mais la glace m'a ete case...

Two days later he wrote again:²¹²

Pour les glaces je ne scay ce qui manque cela ce pora bien remmettre apre la Campagne, les portrets de Vivien sont chère (...) et je croins que les pastelles ne durent pas.

Rosalba Carriera's international fame resulted in a correspondence that provides much information about the transport of her pastels. When she sent these to clients in Paris and elsewhere, she sometimes packed them carefully in cases without the glass.²¹³ When they were not so packed, accidents could happen: in his letter to her of 20.I.1720, Pierre Crozat reported unpacking a case sent by Zanetti—

dans laquelle j'ay trouvé une demy figure de femme sous une glace de cristal, qui a eu le sort de s'estre trouvée entre cent morceaux. Ce qui est facheux est que le tableau en a fort souffert...

A number of Carriera pastels are found with apotropaic “santini”, small woodcuts with devotional images often of the Tre Magi, enclosed between the strainer and primary support; these she thought would protect the works in transit.²¹⁴ When Carriera was ready to send her morceau de réception to the académie, Crozat took care to write to her (11.VIII.1721) setting out in detail how best to pack the work (without glass), with the case carefully marked not to be opened except in his presence. He recommended the pastel be shipped from Venice via London rather than travelling by road: “Il est certain que la voye de la mer est la plus assurée pour le transporter” – provided of course that her friend (presumably Christian Cole) supervise the opening in London. The following year (letter, 22.XI.1722) Crozat received two female heads from her: one was given to Rigaud, the other he retained, fearing that it had been damaged in the journey, but when Vleughels removed the glass, they found that the damage was simply pastel dust on the inside of the glass.

In a letter to Carriera of 14.IV.1714 from Düsseldorf, Theodorus Hartsoecker (son of the celebrated microscopist) allayed her concerns that her pastel had not suffered in transit, “car en ce cas là on auroit au moins trouvé tant soit peu de poussière sur le miroir”. Similarly she was concerned that the pastel she had sent to the Gran Principe Ferdinando de' Medici might have been damaged, as Lord Molesworth reported (6.VIII.1712) that it had been concealed in a wardrobe, but Georg

²¹⁰ See Chapter II *supra*.

²¹¹ Börsch-Supan 1963, p. 192.

²¹² Munich, Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Kasten schwarz, 352/2, 8290, cited Ioana Herbert blog, vivien.hypotheses.org/278, 28.1.2012.

²¹³ See letters to her from Crozat, 7.VI.1721 Vleughels, 29.XII.1721 and 9.VI.1736 cited *supra*.

²¹⁴ One was found behind Winter in the Royal Collection; the 9.V.2017 press release provides details, citing a letter of Pier Caterino Zeno to Cav. Marmi of 3.XII.1729 explaining her practice. The original text is: “È particolarmente divota, e data all' opera di pietà; e à divozione distinta ai tre Santi Magi, che portaronsi all' adorazione del bambino Gesù nella grotto di Betlemme. Una volta mi raccomandò certo ritratto da spedire a mio fratello a Vienna; e diedemi una cartuccia co' suddetti tre Magi adoratori; e disse che a quelli raccomanda l' andata felice di quell ritratto; soggiugnendo, che ogni qualvolta aveva con tali immaginette accompagnate le sue pitture, sempr'erano giunte a salvamento.” (G. Campori, ed., *Lettere artistiche inedite...*, Modena, 1866, p. 196). For other examples, see Henning & Marx 2007, p. 56 (29 of the surviving pastels in Dresden have them); J.21.2259, now in the Fogg, was also formerly in Dresden; and J.21.1727, in the Louvre, repr. Salmon 2018, fig. 11.

Engelhart Schröder was able to reassure her (4.IX.1715) that the picture was on display and in perfect condition.

As the correspondence of Crozat and Dezallier d'Argenville cited in §IV.4 supra demonstrates, the transportation of boxes of pastel crayons was itself hazardous and the sticks need special precautions to avoid being reduced to dust during the journey from “le coup des cahots”.

Another hazard facing goods travelling in the eighteenth century was seizure. Thus when in 1747 the ship *Empéreur Romain* was captured by the corsaire *Le Conquérant*, it was taken to Brest where the ship and its contents were auctioned. Among them was one case, containing 2 large paintings, 4 smaller, 2 large books of prints, and another case, “contenant un seul portrait de pastel”, evidently packed with care.²¹⁵

In 1747 Oudry sent a pastel (a precious landscape which he had exhibited at the Salon) to comte Tessin as a mark of his friendship and esteem. In the accompanying letter²¹⁶ he wrote:

J'ai fait fermer la caisse et toutes les séparations avec des vis, parce que les coups de marteau détruisent entièrement le pastel en le faisant tomber. ... Quand le tableau en sera tiré, il sera à propos de prendre un canif, de couper tout autour le papier qui est colle derrière pour tenir le pastel à la bordure, ôter le tableau, essuyer bien la glace, et remettre le pastel et aussi recoller les bouts de papier, parce que le transport détache toujours quelque partie qui s'attache à la glace et ternit l'ouvrage.

Unfortunately the pastel was last recorded in the Swedish royal collection in 1911, and we cannot assess just how severe the losses were.

Even on short journeys (such as Paris to Versailles) the dangers were obvious. When the duc d'Aumont wrote to the Menus-Plaisirs to commission copies of La Tour pastels of the dauphin and dauphine ([DOCUMENTS](#), 1.VII.1761), he explicitly noted that “il faut les ménager dans le transport.”

The risks from hammer blows were apparently well known: the inscription²¹⁷ on the reverse of Liotard's 1768 pastel of Lord Albemarle requests “ne point toucher a la peinture/ny aucun coup de Marteau”; in 1755 the invoice he submitted²¹⁸ for a version of Madame Infante noted “Il faut observer quand on mettra une bordure au tableau de la fixer avec des visses, a fin qu'il ne receive aucun coupe de marteau.” The German pastellist Conrad Geiger put it more succinctly (on the *verso* of [J.343.139](#)): “An Pastellmahlerey darf nicht geklopft werden.” Inscribed on the back of Nanteuil's 1670 pastel of Louis XIV now in the Uffizi is “Ce faux fond/conservé l'ouvrage ainsi il ne faut/jamais l'oster/Il se faut empêcher de/hurter ce tableau et de le/manier rudiment.” Perronneau inscribed this more optimistic observation on the back of one of his pastels (Mme Schweighäuser [J.582.174](#), 1767):

Si il arrivoit que l'on voulu transporté en voiage ce tableau il faudroit faire une caisse ou bouette qui ne ferma qu'avec des crochets et non avec des clouts parcequ'il ne faut pas frappe crainte de gatter le pastelle et lier la caisse avec une corde et bien l'emballé alors on ne risque rien.

Another example is provided in correspondence concerning pastels by Katherine Read for the Duke and Duchess of Argyll. In a letter to the Duchess, dated 2.VII.1771, Read reveals that the pastel is being shipped from London to Edinburgh, but for the last part of the journey, the road from Edinburgh to Hamilton Palace (over 40 miles), a letter from the Duke of Argyll to his agent insists that to avoid damage the pastel “be carried on a man's back”.²¹⁹

²¹⁵ *Les Affiches de Paris*, 25.IX.1747.

²¹⁶ Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek, inv. F363, 12.VIII.1747.

²¹⁷ R&L 432, label reproduced, fig. 634.

²¹⁸ González-Palacios 1996, p. 382; not in R&L.

²¹⁹ Duke of Argyll, *Intimate society letters*, London, 1910, I, p. 138; letter of 16.VIII.1771 from Argyll to his agent John Davidson in Edinburgh (Laing MS 2, 511, University of Edinburgh, cited Kenny 2013, p. 153).

Further evidence on the transportation of pastels in the 1760s can be found in the Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe (available online), including invoices for pastels by Perronneau, Boucher and Rosalba acquired for Caroline Luise and despatched to her. Two Boucher heads in pastel were purchased with a Boucher landscape in oil; the bill included a frame for the oil, while the pastels were acquired (and shipped) inclusive of glass and gilt frames. The Rosalba, bought after a Paris auction, was surely already framed and glazed; to the 720 livres price was added 15 livres for “la caisse, emballage en toile grasse”. A further 3 livres 10 covered “droite de sortie, passeport et plomb” and 6 livres 10 “au Crieur, port, raport et lettres”. Eberts charged a 5% commission on top.

When Liotard’s family collection was being dispersed, Jacques Guignonat wrote to Liotard fils to express his concerns about packing, unable to find anyone capable of packing such delicate objects with the necessary skill, and asking if it would be best to remove the pastels from their frames for the journey from Geneva to The Netherlands.²²⁰

As to who would bear the risks during transportation, no doubt there were numerous disputes. In the invoice²²¹ issued by the framer Beaumont for two versions of Perronneau’s prince d’Ardore, the frame with glass for the pastel version was charged at 52 livres, while the simpler frame for the oil was 14 livres; the packing and transport was 7 livres 10. To this was added 23 livres for “Remis une glace qui a ette Cassé”, but this sum was deducted from the total, apparently by the client. Other transportation documents for works sent to Brussels for the Lorraine family are marked “sans être garant de la rupture des Glaces ni des choses fragiles”.²²²

When 11 pictures (mostly pastels by La Tour) were sent to Paris to be auctioned on behalf of the École gratuite de dessin in Saint-Quentin in 1810, their accounts tell us that the costs of packing were Fr29.90 and carriage Fr11.05 (they travelled “par Roulage et Voiture”). It was five years before the unsold pastel of Jean-Jacques Rousseau was returned to Saint-Quentin; this time the charges were for Fr6.50 packing and Fr3.85 for carriage.

Other transportation hazards were faced by all works of art, but pastels often came off worse than say oil paintings. Thus the version of Liotard’s Belle Liseuse acquired by the duc de Richelieu and now in Dresden has clearly suffered from falling into a river on its journey from Lyon.²²³ When the shipment of paintings belonging to John Law was sent by sea from Venice to Amsterdam, the ship was wrecked just outside Venice and the cases submerged: consul Le Blond wrote to Law’s son William informing him that the pastels of his father and himself were ruined, but two years later later (19.IX.1732) he wrote again²²⁴ to inform Law that—

Depuis que j’en vous ay escrit, M^{lle} Rosalba a entrepris de reparer le Portrait de feu M. Votre Pere et le votre, en quoy elle est parfaitement reussie, de maniere que vous ne vous appercevres pas qu’ils ayent resté un instant dans la mer, ainsy il faut convenir que l’abilité de cette fille est inimitable et unique, et que rien ne luy est impossible en ce qui regarde son metier.

An account of the damage to John Russell’s Great drawing of the moon [J.64.3758](#) during its transport to Oxford, and the inaccuracies in its repair by the artist’s daughter, is given in Stone 1896. Less severe was the damage suffered in transit by Sharples’s pastel of Alexander Hamilton which Talleyrand acquired in the US and shipped back to Paris: but when Hamilton’s grieving widow sought to acquire it, Talleyrand’s secretary Théophile Cazenove (himself the subject of a pastel by

²²⁰ Letter of 10.I.1794; repr. R&L, p. 859.

²²¹ Arnould 2007, fig. 5.

²²² Arnould 2014, p. 142, document of 1.VIII.1760 (this does not seem to be the Perronneau works discussed there).

²²³ Trivas 1940, p. 91.

²²⁴ Documents in Regional Historisch Centrum Limburg, Maastricht, Papieren Law, no. 80; see Jeffares 2020f.

Perronneau) wrote back from Paris describing the damage already suffered, and taking the precaution of having it copied (in oil) before sending it back:

The picture being painted *in pastel*, time and crossing the sea has degraded it, still the likeness remain; & at the view of it, your tender and afflicted heart will bleed to much, I fear... In fear the original picture should not reach you with my present letter, I have ordered a copy of it, in oil painting, which I'll sent by an other opportunity.²²⁵

Unsurprisingly little evidence has survived documenting the costs of transport or hanging of pastels. But in 1755 two men were paid 15s. 6d. for “taking Down 9: picters of the Royall Family at Pallmall” and 6s. in 1756 “for takeing Doune, and hanging up Pickters of the Royall Family, in the Green Dressing Roome” at Leicester House – probably Liotard’s portraits of Augusta Princess of Wales and her children.²²⁶

iv.19 Wartime transport

Chief amongst cases where pastels have had to be moved for non-discretionary reasons were wartime removals. The La Tour pastels from Saint-Quentin were sent to Maubeuge in 1917; the episode is well documented, most recently in the exhibition catalogue *Saint-Quentin 2007: Vernezobre* [1.46.3054](#) was damaged by a screw carelessly used to secure it during transportation.²²⁷ In World War II, they were evacuated again, first to the château du Rocher in Mézangers (Mayenne), where they were housed by the marquise de Chavagnac; and then in 1944, to the château de Sourches (Sarthe), before being returned to Saint-Quentin, 3.IX.1945. There a campaign of restoration was undertaken by Léon Lepeltier.²²⁸

Less well known was the fate of the Louvre pastels during World War II. While La Tour’s Mme de Pompadour was sent (with many of the Louvre’s paintings) to the château de Chambord,²²⁹ it was recognised that many of the best pastels were too fragile to travel any distance. An attempt to store them several dozen of in two climate-controlled underground vaults of the Banque de France (which had been leased from 1938 for this purpose) had to be abandoned in 1940 due to detrimental conditions (especially humidity control after the bank’s air-conditioning system broke down) and difficulty in monitoring them. There are conservation reports noting the resulting damage, mostly minor spots of mould. The Banque de France was also used to store pastels belonging to Jewish private collections before being confiscated by the Germans.²³⁰ The National Gallery in London made use of the Manod slate quarry in Wales for their more important pictures. They also looked after two major La Tour pastels belonging to Calouste Gulbenkian. His pastel of Marie Sallé was sent to Manod, while Duval appears to have remained in Trafalgar Square.²³¹

The Liotard 2018 catalogue²³² contains details of the fate of the Dresden pastel collection during several conflicts. In the Seven Years’ War, in 1759, all the pictures in the gallery were stored in Königstein where it soon became evident that humidity was a problem, and Riedel, the gallery

²²⁵ The letter, dated 9.IX.1805, was among the Hamilton manuscripts sold in New York, Sotheby’s, 18.I.2017, Lot 1066. It is unclear which version of the Hamilton this is, or whether it survived.

²²⁶ Millar 1963, p. 190, citing disbursements in the Duchy of Cornwall records, XXXVII(1) and XXXVIII(1).

²²⁷ A report in the *Cambridge daily news*, 22.I.1918, described the injuries sustained by a fifteen-year-old French boy (Lucien Chauvin, of Avranches) who used a crayon from a box of pastels found in a German trench; the crayon had been filled with explosive.

²²⁸ See Coural & al. 2008.

²²⁹ See Gerri Chanel, *Saving Mona Lisa*, London, 2018, based on archival research. I am most grateful to the author for sharing details of these documents, principally from the Archives des musées nationaux ser. R6, which includes the list of 23 eighteenth century Louvre pastels deposited with the Banque de France on 28–30.VIII.1939.

²³⁰ Thus the Hirsch family lost three La Tour pastels: Belle-Isle and his wife and an inconnu: see Meaux 2018. Similarly a pastel by Huet was taken from Georges Wildenstein’s vault in the Banque de France: see New York 2005a, no. 139. Arthur Veil-Picard’s Mlle de La Boissière (now in the Louvre) was taken from vault 63 in the Banque de France; transferred to the Jeu de Paume on 29.X.1940 before being taken to Germany (errproject.org daabase, consulted 2018).

²³¹ See my [ESSAY](#).

²³² Notably in articles by Roland Enke, pp. 95ff, and Elisabeth Schlesinger, pp. 115f.

inspector, had to “die auf die Vestung mitgenommenen besten Stücken derer Pastelle wieder anhero schaffen, welches auf einem Lastschiff transportiert wurde, aus Ursach da die Pastelle oben zu feucht stunden u. Schaden leiden.” The following year the windows of the Pastellkabinett were damaged by shelling, and it was bricked up for protection. Riedel promised Graf Brühl that the pastels would be moved back to Königstein if necessary, and 171 pastels were again packed up in crates with lids “jedes besonderes eingeschraubet, u. mit aller möglichen Behutsamkeit eingelegt.” In the event the pastels stayed in Dresden. (In 1838 the famous Liotard Schokoladenmädchen [J.49.1342](#) was damaged when taken down for inspection and rehung carelessly.)

On 28.VIII.1939 all German museums, including the Gemäldegalerie, were to be closed and their works stored. Sixty-four pastels were taken to Schloss Weesenstein, while others were taken to the fortress at Königstein. At the end of the war a number of pastels were taken to Moscow and only returned to Dresden in 1956. A “Sowjetische Gemälde-Pass”, dated 30.IX.1955, provided some details of condition.

IV.20 Artists’ conservation instructions

In addition to the labels mentioned above warning of transportation risks, a number of artists had labels printed with general guidance on conservation (humidity and light being frequently identified). Examples include Lawrence and Russell: the texts will be found in the artist articles.

Among less frequently noted conservation issues, a letter from Marie Fel to La Tour’s brother, dated 5.I.1785,²³³ refers to a report by the enamellist Pierre Pasquier concerning “les dangers, et le domage que la fumée pourroit causer aux pasteles de M. de La Tour”: it perhaps refers to those in his house at Chaillot, and invites the chevalier to visit and “faire fermer les écartemens du mur”.

IV.21 Photography

Photography provides an invaluable record of the condition of pastels, framing and presentation from the mid-nineteenth century on. In 1875 the registre des délibérations at the École gratuite de dessin at Saint-Quentin record the application and (after due consideration of the logistics) permission to photograph 30 of the pastels by Hendrycks; they were included in Desmaze 1877. Three years later Braun & Cie were permitted to photograph the eight pastels lent to the Paris 1878 exhibition while still at the Trocadéro; permission was on the explicit condition that they not be removed from the frames. They were again photographed in colour during the German occupation in 1917. MacFall 1909 already included colour reproductions of pastels, but with many of these early images the degree of manual intervention required by the engraving process can give misleading indications of condition.

With modern cameras and photo-editing software high-quality images can be readily obtained without removing the glass. If studio light sources are available to illuminate evenly from different directions, direct images can be taken. If not, worthwhile images can still be taken with flash at an angle to avoid reflections, the resulting distortions then being corrected digitally.

²³³ Reprinted in chronological table of La Tour [DOCUMENTS](#).

V. CONSERVATION AND TRANSPORT TODAY

IN THIS CHAPTER we review some of the particular considerations of interest to collectors and conservators today.²³⁴ In particular, the debate about how to move pastels safely (the biggest threat they face) has not yet been resolved: exactly the same concerns expressed in the eighteenth century (*v.* §IV.18 *supra*) remain. All the standard sources recognised the difficulties.²³⁵

From the vast historical documentation of pastel conservation concerns, a useful perspective on the issues can be taken from two sources at very different periods. In a letter of 28.X.1718, Crozat wrote to Carriera expressing concern that the four heads he had just received, although in good condition, were nonetheless at risk: “il faut un très grand soin pour les conserver”: he goes on to ask if she could not use pastels “dont la couleur fût plus solide”, noting however that Barocci heads, made very similarly, had lasted well.

Little has changed in three hundred years, as is clear from evidence submitted to the Scottish parliament by Jeremy Warren of the Wallace Collection in 2013:

Any honest curator or conservator would tell you that pastels, for example, are about the most fragile and difficult objects to look after in museums. I was asked to try to find a home for a very important pastel portrait as a gift, but two major museums turned it down because they simply could not cope with the hassle of trying to look after pastels.²³⁶

Two concepts are crucial in differentiating risks to pastel from those to works in other media. The first is the possibility of cumulative, invisible damage with pastel which leads ultimately to degradation. Second is that while pastels are exposed to the same hazards as other works of art – for example the risk of dropping a pastel may be no different from that of dropping an oil painting (obviously the greatest care should be taken both cases), the risk calculus is fundamentally changed by the different consequences of doing so. Shock will have no impact on an oil painting (unless the paint surface has delaminated); even when glazed, the glass can be safely taped, and if untaped glass fractures, the resultant abrasions to an oil painting can usually be repaired satisfactorily. The consequences for a pastel are far graver.²³⁷ It is not the probability of damage, but the implications of the results that differ.

It is sometimes thought that the concerns in this chapter are exaggerated, and that there is little evidence of actual damage from transportation. We return to this question later, but it is worth noting that the problems of lending, transportation and even static conservation all revolve around the questions of adhesion, and the multifactorial hazards which require a holistic understanding and response. The discussion is necessarily interwoven throughout the following sections, and links back to the original structural issues considered in Chapter IV.

²³⁴ This chapter is not intended as a manual for conservation. For a useful modern survey of museum practices, see Voßkamp 2013. Burns 2007 contains a short appendix with a guide to the modern sources on pastel conservation (although there seems to have been a rapid growth in the literature since then); Sauvage 2010 gives a more comprehensive overview. The literature on paper conservation generally is enormous, and a good many of these publications mention pastel. However it is important to note that many of the treatments suitable for other works on paper cannot safely be applied to pastel: for example, aqueous immersion. This can be a particular problem with later pastels where acidic paper supports have been used, and some interventions must be cautiously undertaken: see for example Lory & al. 2012.

²³⁵ See for example the Unesco guide, *Museums and monuments, X: Temporary and travelling exhibitions*, Paris, 1963, p. 94 (“As pastels are particularly subject to damage in transit because the surface is so delicate, they are generally eliminated from travelling exhibitions”); Keck 1967, p. 31: “pastels simply should not travel”; or Nathan Stolow, *Conservation & exhibitions. Packing, transport, storage, and environmental considerations*, London, 1987, p. 220 (“unfixed pastel paintings are rarely lent because of the danger of pigment loss and smudging”) & *passim*.

²³⁶ At the committee stage of the Burrell Collection (Lending and Borrowing) (Scotland) Bill, 9.IX.2013.

²³⁷ Even the process of cleaning glass can lead to fracture with serious consequences: Richard Moroz, “Aqueous treatment in pastel conservation”, *Restaurator*, XVIII/1, 1997, p. 33 reports one instance resulting in the paper support tearing across the face of the portrait. There are a great many more unreported cases. Broken glass can slide across the surface and remove a great deal of pastel even where the paper is not directly cut.

v.1 Evolution of museums' policies on lending

The problems of protecting pastels in transport are particularly relevant in the case of elective events such as loan exhibitions, where many museums operate a strict refusal policy. There is nothing new in this: in 1894 George Williamson noted in his introduction to the Russell loan exhibition at the Imperial Institution that only owners in or about London were asked to lend to the exhibiton because of the risk of damage.

In 1860, the Société des antiquaires de Picardie requested the loan of La Tour pastels from Saint-Quentin for the Amiens 1860 exhibition. The bureau de l'École gratuite de dessin, while recognising the historical connection with Amiens, unanimously refused to lend, minuting their reasoning: "considérant que le transport des pastels, qui sont de leur nature très fragiles, les expose à de grands dangers et peut leur nuire sensiblement."²³⁸ In 1875 the Saint-Quentin again refused to lend the La Tour pastels to an exhibition in Paris of works belonging to provincial museums. Three years later, planning the universal exhibition of Portraits nationaux in Paris in 1878, the marquis de Chennevières, directeur des beaux-arts, wrote to Saint-Quentin again requesting the loan of ten of their pastels. The registre des délibérations of the École records a vigorous debate recognising the particular hazards to the pastels from travel, resolving to obtain detailed advice before consenting. At the session of 24.I.1878 it was resolved that only those pastels known to have been fixed should be lent. Raoul-Arthur Duquenne (1834–1909), professeur de l'École, was asked if it was possible to tell which had been fixed: his view was that, in the absence of specific information, La Tour had fixed all the small portraits, but not the larger ones such as d'Argenson; Rousseau, in particular, was in a particularly fragile state. Nevertheless eight pastels were lent, transported to Paris by rail (instructions were given for d'Argenson to be the subject of "soins exceptionnels et tout particulier", and several smaller pastels were substituted for the larger requests). In 1885 seven pastels were lent to the inaugural exhibition of the Société des pastellistes français, but detailed conditions were imposed on supervised door-to-door transportation, including that the packing cases not be fixed with nails etc.²³⁹ In 1899 a proposed La Tour exhibition in the École des beaux-arts in Paris, intending to borrow all 87 pastels from Saint-Quentin, was blocked by the curators there on grounds of risk.²⁴⁰ Again in 1906 Saint-Quentin refused to lend to an exhibition at Tourcoing;²⁴¹ Théophile Eck asked the bureau to reconsider, at least lending the Perronneau portrait of La Tour: he was overruled on the grounds that previous loans had resulted in "une certaine fatigue et un appauvrissement des tons, causés par la trépidation et les manutentions du voyage."²⁴² Following the war and the removal of the pastels to Maubeuge in 1917 (see §IV.19 *supra*) and the subsequent exhibitions of the works at the Louvre and the Tuileries, the authorities in Saint-Quentin felt more willing to lend, and did send six to the 1927 exhibition in Paris. But plans to lend the collection for an exhibition at New York proposed by Joseph Breck of the Metropolitan Museum immediately were vigorously debated by Saint-Quentin, approved by a narrow majority (on the basis of advice from Jean Guiffrey that the risks were manageable), opposed by others not at the meeting, and finally dropped when Breck was unable to raise the funds required from American donors.²⁴³ By 1935 Saint-Quentin was receiving so many requests for loans that the président obtained permission to refuse without consulting the bureau; where a request came from a source that could not be refused, a meeting would be held to consider,

²³⁸ Registre des délibérations de l'École gratuite, IV, f° 20.

²³⁹ Registre des délibérations de l'École gratuite, IV, séance de 18.III.1885.

²⁴⁰ See the anonymous article in the *Journal de Saint-Quentin*, 3.II.1899 (reproduced in La Tour, [CRITICAL FORTUNE](#)), attributed to Élie Fleury in Cabezas 2009a.

²⁴¹ Letter Paul Delcroix, 18.VII.1906; Archives municipales de St-Quentin, dossier 1 R 84.

²⁴² Registre des délibérations de l'École gratuite, V, séance de 17.VII.1906.

²⁴³ Registre des délibérations de l'École gratuite, VI, séance de 17.X.1927 and subsequently, pp. 142–49.

but in no case would more than three pastels be lent.²⁴⁴ Such a request came in 1937, to lend five pastels to the Paris 1937a exhibition: the bureau refused, minuting among the reasons the unique installation at Saint-Quentin designed to exhibit La Tour's work in an appropriate salon setting, and resolving never to expose their pastels to the risks of transport.²⁴⁵ This position was maintained ("une règle infrangible qui n'est susceptible d'aucune exception") despite pressure from Léon Blum, président du Conseil, to whom they replied:²⁴⁶

C'est un art infiniment délicat qui n'a rien de la solidité de la peinture, et ils [les pastels] ont déjà beaucoup souffert des divers déplacements qui leur ont été infligés au cour de leur existence. Il a été remarqué que, si soigneusement et précautionneusement que sont fait le transport, il laisse toujours quelque trace fâcheuse dans la fleur de cette poussière coloriée que La Tour, malgré ses incessants recherches, n'a jamais trouvé le moyen de fixer avec l'adhérence desirable.

The impossibility of lending pastels was not questioned in the Chardin (1978) or Boucher (1986) exhibitions (and, after considering the issue carefully, Versailles decided not to include pastels in their Nattier exhibition in 1999), although the scientific consequences were deplored, and – since they are self-reinforcing – serve to maintain the neglect of this field. Henri Loyrette put it succinctly in his preface to Jean-François Méjanès's 2002 monograph on La Tour's Mme de Pompadour, denied its star turn at the Versailles/Munich/London exhibition on the subject: "la poudre fragile du pastel n'autorise ni vibration ni donc mouvement." There were of course exceptions: four Liotard pastels from Winterthur travelled to Berlin, Los Angeles, New York, London and Geneva in 1993–95 (and were again lent to Edinburgh and London in 2015).

Considerable experience in handling nineteenth-century pastels has now been built up, but even here (where the risks are significantly lower) caution is required. A detailed scientific investigation (involving *inter alia* microphotography of the insides of glass, before and after movement) was carried out on nine Degas pastels exhibited at Tate Liverpool and the Burrell in Glasgow in 1989; all involved air-cushioned road travel only. Norville-Day & al. 1993 concluded that "pastels are so delicate that moving them is risky and likely to result in some damage no matter how much care might be taken."²⁴⁷ In contrast however a pastel by Degas was reported as safely travelling by air to New Zealand; the loan was approved by the National Galleries of Scotland on the basis of Degas's particular technique, involving multiple layers of fixative.²⁴⁸

Whether earlier works (which usually involve thicker layers of material than nineteenth century works, and are usually – and should be assumed to be – unfixed) can safely be moved, and if so how, remains in dispute. Norville-Day's conclusion would apply *a fortiori* to such works. A document entitled *General principles on the administration of loans and exchange of works of art between institutions*, issued 1995 originally by the Réunion des musées nationaux (revised 2002, and adopted by the Bizot Group of some 67 major museums worldwide), observed that the potential dangers

²⁴⁴ Registre des délibérations de l'Ecole gratuite, VI, séance de 26.VII.1935.

²⁴⁵ Registre des délibérations de l'Ecole gratuite, VI, séance de 21.IV.1937.

²⁴⁶ Registre des délibérations de l'Ecole gratuite, VI, séance de 4.V.1937.

²⁴⁷ This paper established beyond doubt the dangers of taping glass during transport.

²⁴⁸ Evidence given by Graeme Gollan, Senior Paper Conservator, at the committee stage of the Burrell Collection (Lending and Borrowing) (Scotland) Bill, 3.X.2013, paper BC/S4/13/4/A, instancing to two different lending cases, both post-1800, to support his proposition that each pastel loan request should be independently assessed. (Some conservators would regard multiple layers of fixative as a concern.) The other example, a pastel by Sisley, was refused because microscopic particles were found inside the glazing. At the committee hearing of 19.IX.2013, however, the Convener reported that "The conservators have suggested that it is always dangerous to move pastels because the pastel itself does not stick to the paper and no way has been found of making that happen." See above for Jeremy Warren's evidence to the committee. According to a report in *The Australian* (8.X.2016) relating to the Burrell loan to the Degas exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria in 2016 "special care was given to the two travelling Degas pastels lent to the NGV (the only ones assessed as robust enough to travel out of a collection of 14) because of the medium's notoriously fragile properties: they travelled horizontally in temperature-controlled, shock-resistant crates designed to minimise vibration." Thirteen Degas pastels were transported from the Burrell to The National Gallery, London, in 2017: all but one travelled horizontally, in museum cases with several pastels per case; Plastazote foam was used to line each layer, the softer grade used for the outer case.

of damage were “very real” and concluded that “unfixed pastels are usually too fragile to travel.”²⁴⁹ The Bizot Group principles have been revised in part, but no further guidance has been given about pastels.

The La Tour tricentenaire celebrations in 2004 were marked by simultaneous exhibitions of pastels at various locations, with the Louvre, Chantilly and other museums displaying their own collections with a common catalogue, *De poudre et de papier* (a model for future pastel exhibitions which seems not to have been attractive to organising institutions), while the main retrospective, La Tour 2004a, was held at Versailles, in order, it was said, to benefit from superior climate control equipment than that available in Saint-Quentin. Many of the 50 pastels exhibited were lent by the musée Antoine-Lécuyer, but a good many travelled from further afield, some by aeroplane. The Boze retrospective in Martigues in the same year included some 28 pastels, all but one of which travelled considerable distances by road or air.

Following these international exhibitions of eighteenth century pastels, the Commission des prêts et dépôts de la Direction des musées de France commissioned a report asking whether the prohibition on loans of pastels should be reconsidered.²⁵⁰ The report advised against this: because each pastel is a complex and vulnerable object, sensitive to shock, vibration and hygrometric variations, and because each exposure to vibration contributes to fragility, all loans of pastels should be avoided (“formellement déconseillé”).

Not to lend remains the policy of the Louvre, indisputably the greatest collection of eighteenth century pastels.²⁵¹ There is nothing new in this, nor was the policy confined to its own works: in 1891, when a Perronneau pastel was offered to the Louvre by an owner in the Gironde, the directeur des musées nationaux reported²⁵² to the minister that “Le transport d’un pastel étant toujours chose périlleux, un des conservateurs du Louvre ira...l’examiner chez M. du Mas de Paysac.” Reviewing the history of travel (voluntary or not) of the La Tour pastels at Saint-Quentin, and noting in particular that degradation from transport is often not immediately perceptible, Cabezas 2009a came to the same conclusion. Brunetti 2009, in the same journal, wrote of the “quasi-impossibilité d’éviter entièrement ces risques.”²⁵³ A number of potential exhibitions of eighteenth century pastels were quietly shelved or abandoned around this time. A strict non-lending policy is essentially followed by most of the other major collections of eighteenth century pastels, including (apart from the Louvre and Saint-Quentin) the Rijksmuseum and museums in Geneva, Warsaw, Dresden, New York etc.²⁵⁴

Despite these principles, significant numbers of pastels have travelled to recent exhibitions, lent or borrowed by major institutions. Carriera 2007b included 38 pastels from collections in Italy, France, Germany, England and Ireland. New York 2011 involved only a small number of pastels

²⁴⁹ Stratis 1997 considered that neither unfixed pastels nor pastels executed on paper that has been adhered to canvas, stretched and wrapped around a strainer should be lent. It is unclear whether her advice to the organisers of the Liotard 2015 exhibition was based on a change of mind.

²⁵⁰ Coural 2009b. An extract from the report and the oral presentation on 11.VI.2009 by Natalie Coural and Michel Dubus appeared in Coural 2009a, p. 27.

²⁵¹ The Département des arts graphiques also successfully resisted suggestions in 2015 that the reserve pastel collection be removed to a remote site at Liévin along with the other reserves (see reports in *La Tribune de l’art*, 11.VI.2015 etc.).

²⁵² Archives des musées nationaux, cabinet des dessins, letter of 20.X.1891.

²⁵³ I am not aware of any subsequent publication presenting scientific research refuting their conclusions. See Voßkamp 2013 for a broad overview of museums’ approaches, as well as the excellent articles by Cabezas 2009a and Herrenschmidt 2009 concerning the La Tour exhibition. At the Liotard exhibition in London in 2015 however the publicity material claimed that the “safe handling” of the “pastel paintings” [sic] “has been ensured through important developments in both the understanding of the medium’s physical properties and advances in methods of art transportation.” These have not (so far) been published.

²⁵⁴ In his evidence to the Scottish parliament, 18.IX.2013, also in connection with the Burrell Collection bill, Neil McGregor, perhaps the greatest proponent for the scientific and cultural value of lending, noted that “the best argument...seems to me to be the practice of all the world’s great museums”, and conceded that there are some objects which are not fit to travel. In the appended statement of the British Museum’s own practices, it was noted that “the BM has historically not collected pure pastels and does not have any of the classic pastel artists such as Liotard or Perronneau in the collection.” In contrast 19th and 20th century pastels, being fixed, were eligible to be lent. A small pastel by Gainsborough was mentioned, presumably the coloured chalk drawing of the Duke of Montagu lent to Edinburgh in 2008.

travelling long distances. More recently, Karlsruhe 2015, Vigée Le Brun 2015 and Liotard 2015 all included international loans. (Warsaw 2015 – perhaps the largest ever exhibition exclusively devoted to pastel – included only works from the museum’s own collection.) Despite the observation²⁵⁵ by Roethlisberger & Loche that “Une exposition représentative des pastels est irréalisable au vu de la fragilité de ce médium”, Liotard 2015 displayed 28 pastels in Edinburgh, with a further 8 added in London: all travelled by road²⁵⁶ (the museums in Amsterdam, Dresden and Geneva withheld pastels, lending only works in other media). It is notable however that while Vigée Le Brun 2015 included some 32 pastels at the Grand Palais,²⁵⁷ the American leg (Vigée Le Brun 2016) included only 5 pastels.

Many factors explain why this is happening. The positive side may be an increased interest in what has for long been an unpopular field. But the other factors include a lack of awareness of, or disbelief in, the special risks at director or curatorial level; a disregard for the views of paper conservation staff (compounded by their belief in the inevitability of lending and a preference to assist rather than block); a rapidly proliferating model of museum funding which relies on the temporary exhibition for revenues; a culture of reciprocity among museum lenders; the ignorance and goodwill of private collectors; and the availability of government indemnity schemes to remove accountability and market price for the risk from the organisers (but *v.* §V.15 *infra*).

V.2 Shock and vibration

The eighteenth century literature demonstrates a constant hunt for methods of fixing pastel, an impossible quest since successful fixatives alter the optical properties of the medium (see Chapter IV). Fixing is not normally considered an acceptable intervention by modern conservators.²⁵⁸ It is safest to assume that pre-1800 pastels have not been fixed and remain especially vulnerable to damage from shock and vibration.²⁵⁹ Shock is a sudden, instantaneous force in a single direction, while vibration involves the transfer of energy from a cyclical source over a longer period. There is no certifiably safe level of either: shock levels below 0.5g are usually thought not to present any immediate hazard (however *v.* §§V.3–4 *infra*), but this is a level likely to be greatly exceeded when they are moved with all but the most careful handling.²⁶⁰

Shock and vibration can occur most obviously during transportation (see below), but are also issues when pastels are being moved for any purpose. During conservation screw fixings should be used; pins may not be hammered (as Oudry, Liotard and Perronneau noted in the documents cited §IV.18 *supra*), nor may staples or nail-guns be applied. Even the type of tyres fitted to a museum trolley can have a measurable impact on shock levels when rolled over floors.²⁶¹ Shock and vibration can also occur *in situ*, from nearby construction work, street traffic, musical, dance or

²⁵⁵ R&L 2008, p. 17.

²⁵⁶ The round trip from Vienna to Edinburgh is over 4000 km.

²⁵⁷ Two pendant pastels, purchased shortly before the exhibition, and one drawing with touches of pastel were exceptionally lent by the Louvre and allowed to travel the very short distance to the Grand Palais.

²⁵⁸ See however Gombaudo, Sauvage & van Leeuwen 2014, where fixative of an historical recipe (sturgeon glue in a 0.25% solution in water and ethanol) was applied to the surface of a pastel by Liotard (unspecified, but apparently J.49.1292).

²⁵⁹ Even in the rare cases where contemporary documents indicate that a pastel has been fixed (see Chapter IV for cases involving Loriot and Jurine, and pastels by Liotard, Cotes and Perronneau), it may be that the fixative was applied in insufficient quantities or has simply degraded over time so as to offer little or no protection today. It should be unnecessary to say that conservators should not think of applying modern fixatives to pastels, but this is recommended in some sources.

²⁶⁰ Based on personal communications with David Saunders (British Museum, describing investigations carried out also at the National Gallery), 2006 and Ross Merrill (Washington, NGA), 2006. Shocks are often accompanied by vibration which may offer more serious hazards but is less easy to detect or measure. In an important report for the conservation research group at the British Museum (no. 1999/6, published as “Vibration damage levels for museum objects”, 13th Triennial Meeting, Rio de Janeiro, preprints, pp. 90–95), David Thickett found several instances of damage (including severe loss of pigment in one case) to objects with pre-existing weaknesses during demolition work for the Great Court Project. These occurred at far lower levels of vibration (0.2g, equivalent to a peak particle velocity of 1.6 mm/s) than expected to cause damage, and demonstrated distant transmission that contradicted exponential decay models.

²⁶¹ Esser 2011, confirming the conclusion reached by Stratis 1997.

gymnastic events. Even such matters as the hanging system, the display on pedestals and the exposure to visitor footfall (particularly on wooden parquet floors) can give rise to unexpected levels of vibration or shock.²⁶² When in 1912 a new omnibus service was introduced in the faubourg Saint-Honoré, Henri de Rothschild's famous La Tour pastel of Duval de l'Épinoy was sufficiently jeopardised that he built a new house in a quieter neighbourhood.²⁶³

Sophisticated forms of damping shock and vibration have been developed for various engineering applications. As a general principle these seek to interpose some form of shock absorber which converts part of the transmitted energy into harmless heat; for vibration, typical approaches interpose devices with a natural frequency below that of the source (it is imperative to avoid resonance effects which occur when the frequencies match). While there are many sophisticated solutions to specific problems, the multiplicity of sources (particularly during transport) preclude any universal solution.²⁶⁴ In a review of 40 years' research on the topic of protecting paintings from such risks, Kracht & Kletschkowski 2017 conclude that the strategy of vibration reduction through packaging is unreliable: "most of these solutions amplify the input instead of reducing the incoming noise." There are inherent problems too because of the natural resonant frequencies of canvases. Such problems are only likely to be exacerbated for pastels (which are not discussed in Kracht & Kletschkowski 2017), where in addition to all the problems to which oil paintings are exposed must be considered the additional dynamic system of the bonding of pastel pigments to their support: systems for which natural resonances have not been determined.

V.3 Phenomenological models for damage

It is natural to assume that the effects of shock and vibration will be immediately apparent, as debonded pigment will fall from the surface and, even if blank areas of the paper are not immediately visible, the pigment dust should be seen lying on the lower spacer.²⁶⁵ Unfortunately this is not a reliable indicator: the outcome may not be a neat binary alternative of damage/no damage. Pigment can be loosened without falling immediately, and the nature of the adhesion (at micro- and macro-scopic levels) is both highly complicated and imperfectly understood (but *v.* §V.4 *infra* for one approach): it is not even clear if the problem belongs to physics, chemistry, biology or crystallography – if indeed there is a single problem – or whether the answer is the same for all pastels of all ages on all supports, or is so idiosyncratic that it is not admissible to a single solution.

The variety of techniques employed by different artists makes inference from samples unreliable (although it is clear that some artists' work was more fragile than others). It is logically easier to demonstrate that there is a risk than to prove that there isn't. Proof of the effectiveness of any proposed solution would strictly require destructive testing of a sample from each class of object – but individual variation means that there are as many classes as there are surviving pastels. Even if this standard were relaxed, evidence gathered from transportation protocols would have to be consistently gathered (in practice many exhibitions with stated protocols have been willing to waive requirements to accommodate the requests of individual lenders) from many hundreds of specimens observed over a long-term time scale (to allow for the emergence of latent damage).

²⁶² Kracht & Kletschkowski 2017 summarises research into oil paintings; the risks apply *a fortiori* to pastels. Recently a number of museums (including the MMA in New York, the Louvre and the V&A) have started to hold gymnastics classes in the galleries. In July 2017 the National Gallery trustees debated the impact of vibration within the gallery from a motor racing event in Trafalgar Square; steps had been taken where necessary to remove items from display during the event.

²⁶³ See [ESSAYS](#); also the passage on the tambourine effect from Moreau-Vauthier 1913, p. 106 discussed below under Transport.

²⁶⁴ Läubli & al. 2014 demonstrates that protective cushioning systems developed for art transportation may effectively dampen severe shocks, but are ineffective (and often counterproductive) in relation to vibration. All foams exhibit resonance behaviour. This is likely to be a particular hazard with pastels mounted on strained secondary supports. See also Sauvage & al. 2018.

²⁶⁵ See for example Keck 1967, p. 31: "If a pastel is hung on a wall where a door is apt to slam shut, the chalk will shake free with the shock, and the picture will get fainter and fainter while its chalk pigments collect in a line of rainbow dust at the bottom of the frame!"

Fatigue: Although this is an area in which research is progressing,²⁶⁶ one theory likens the adhesion of pastel subjected to vibration to the behaviour of metal in aeroplanes, where nothing is seen until failure occurs after a certain number of cycles. Metal fatigue produces catastrophic results: whether the same phenomenon occurs with pastel has yet to be proved. The approach is best understood in terms of a Wöhler diagram or S–N curve, in which cyclic stress S required to failure is plotted against duration, or number of cycles N: the curve falls steeply initially, but the question is whether there is a horizontal asymptote (known as an “endurance limit”), and if so whether it lies safely above the stress levels encountered in practice. Whether the relevant “stress” is shock levels (acceleration) or vibration (frequency or amplitude?) is unclear.

Diminished luminosity: A second theory notes that (based on subjective assessment) pastels can sometimes show subtle changes in appearance (notably a dulling in luminosity) without any noticeable loss of particles. This may be due to microscopic displacement of the reflective surfaces of the pigment, and arises after travel (and possible heating to high temperature – as in the *Quorum* v *Schramm* case cited below, §V.6.4). Whether it accelerates debonding is unclear, but it is thought to occur at far lower levels of shock or vibration than those needed to observe significant levels of falling particles. Evidence is currently anecdotal (if admissible in English courts), based on subjective assessments of appearance that are difficult to capture in photography.

Both these models could explain the apparent contradiction between evidence of the effect of single journeys and the observed condition of many pastels today. Either model should give concern to those who think there is no special danger in moving pastels, as they undermine the evidence they rely on; but they may continue to believe that the endurance limit will not be met and may not accept claims of changes in luminosity. It is difficult however to ignore the evidence from transfer onto the inside of glass (see §V.5 *infra*).

While research on mitigating shock and vibration is focused on methods for reducing measurable parameters, any comfort that might be derived from remaining within safe harbour limits that such research might establish is undermined by the absence of a clear link between these particular hazards and the actual mechanisms explaining the debonding and degradation. In particular the need to subject samples to very extreme levels of shock and vibration to cause pastel to fall in the laboratory suggests that these are not the sole explanations of deterioration. Common sense indicates that they should be minimised, but prudence dictates that there is no safe level at our current level of understanding.

V.4 Fundamental models for adhesion

There is a surprising void at the heart of pastel literature concerning the basic mechanism for adhesion, although an understanding of this would seem to be a first step in mitigating hazards in transport.²⁶⁷ Evidently however there are multiple mechanisms at work, and a danger that measures to protect against one hazard increase others.

The principal mechanisms for adhesion seem to be (a) physical interlocking or mechanical entrapment of pastel particles within the mesh of fibres from the support; (b) chemical bonding, perhaps involving polysaccharide chains (*v.* §IV.4.3 *supra*); and (c) adhesion forces found in fine cohesive powders, including van der Waals and electrostatic forces.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁶ Notably by a group at the Rijksmuseum. I am grateful to Leila Sauvage for drawing this work (the results of which are eagerly awaited) to my attention. Some initial steps in the methodological framework are set out in Wei, Sauvage & Wölk 2014, but conclusions are still awaited at the time of writing (2021).

²⁶⁷ See Sauvage & al. 2018.

²⁶⁸ For a useful discussion of these, see for example Jürgen Tomas & Sebastian Kleinschmidt, “Improvement of flowability of fine cohesive powders by flow additives”, *Chemical engineering & technology*, 2009, XXXII/10, pp. 1470–83.

The importance of van der Waals forces relative to gravitational forces (and shock levels which in practice are usually of the same order of magnitude, perhaps up to 10g) depends crucially on pigment size and separation. In particular the ratio of van der Waals to gravity forces can be roughly estimated²⁶⁹ in practice as

$$F_{\text{vdw}} / F_G = (0.1 \text{ mm} / d)^2$$

where d is the particle diameter. In other words particles need to be smaller than 0.1 mm (100 μm or microns) in diameter for van der Waals effects to dominate gravity; between 10 and 100 μm , they are slightly adhesive; below 10 μm they may be considered adhesive or very adhesive.

Particle diameters are not known with precision for pre-1800 pastels. An estimate based on modern samples suggests that they are of typically in the range 0.1–10 μm depending on pigment.²⁷⁰ The efficacy of the adhesion (and its resistance to shock) depends crucially on the diameter, and the difference in observed condition among pre-1800 pastels today and even between different colours may be due to particle size.

While the above formula might seem to suggest that if all the particles were of 10 μm diameter, they would remain in place against a shock of up to 100 g (and thus be immune to the roughest treatment), this ignores several issues apart from the imprecision of the sizing. While the particles may cohere, it is less clear what holds the whole mass of particles to the paper, and the potential for entire cohesive lumps to behave as a single particle cannot be ignored. For this reason all shock and vibration recommendations based on conventional dynamic behaviour must continue to be observed.

v.5 Electrostatic effects

It is well known that pastel is vulnerable to lifting by low levels of electrostatic forces.²⁷¹ This can be seen if adhesive tape is used to protect glass from breakage during transport: when the tape is peeled off, particles of pigment can often be found adhering to the inside of the glass, or even be observed jumping from the surface of the picture onto the inner surface of the glass (this is another reason why deeper spacers should be used than framers often think: a 6 mm gap is an order of magnitude better than 2 mm since the force obeys an inverse square law).

Pigment transfer onto the inside of glass is routinely observed when an old assembly is opened, even with standard glass which has never been taped. Often the pastel surface appears to remain intact. Pigment is spread uniformly to the edges, indicating that the transfer has not been the result of contact (which would be denser at the middle). Individual colours show different propensities to such transfer (often the effect is more visible against a black than a white surface, as lighter colours seem to be more mobile). Whether the effect is due to shock alone or to triboelectric effects is uncertain, but experiments with modern samples suggest that robust handling (including repeated shaking and flexing of the paper) removes far less pigment than a close pass with a charged object. The micrographs²⁷² below (at approximately 100 \times magnification) show some

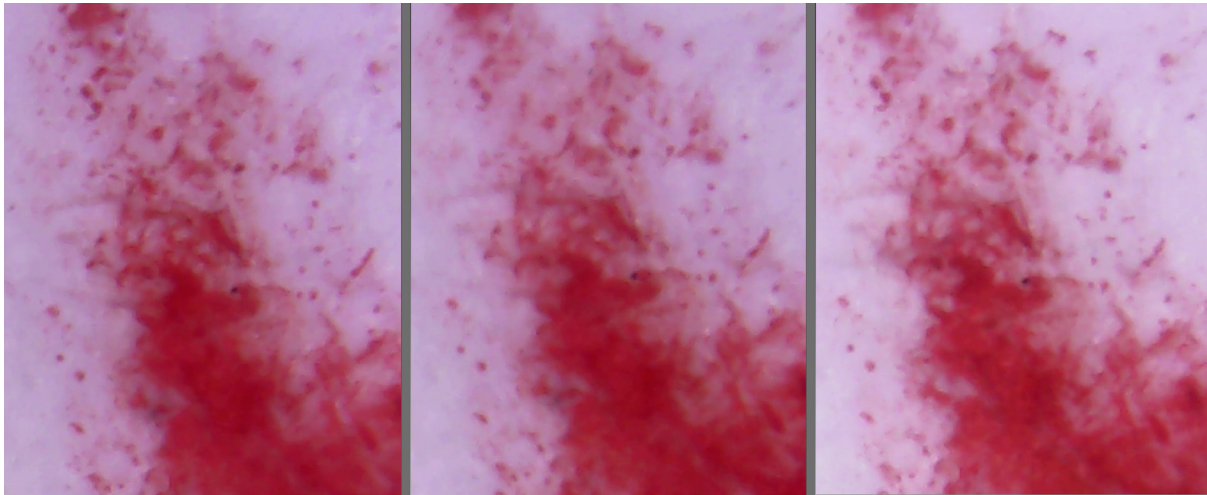
²⁶⁹ Equation 7 in Tomas & Kleinschmidt, *ibid.*

²⁷⁰ “Other paint pigments such as carbon black in its smallest physical form, iron (Prussian) blue and phthalocyanines have sizes as small as 50 nanometers but most demonstrate a size range of 0.1 to 10 microns depending upon type and use.” (Philip E. Plantz, “Pigment particle size using laser diffraction technology”, Microtrac application note SL-AN-30 revision C; see also handprint.com). Similar information is given in Kosek 1995, p. 17: “The sizes of pigment particles range from less than a micrometer, like zinc oxide (0.25 μm – 1 μm), titanium white (0.5 μm – 1 μm), or indigo (0.25 μm –0.1 μm [sic]), to relatively large particles, like smalt (10 μm –50 μm), terre verte (up to 60 μm), or sienna (10 μm –60 μm). The most common sizes of pigments fall into the range 1 μm to 10 μm and less often between 5 μm and 20 μm .” An estimate using a photomicrograph of Unison Red 9 particles lifted from a sample using electrostatic forces suggests particles can be up to 12 μm in diameter.

²⁷¹ See for example Norville-Day & al. 1993. Shelley 1987 (pp. 38, 85 & *passim*) is clear that acrylic sheeting, even with antistatic coatings, should never be used with pastel; it is unclear that more recent products have entirely overcome this concern.

²⁷² Experiments by author, 11.V.2018, using a digital microscope. Each image is 0.5mm in width. The very shallow depth of field makes sharp focusing extremely difficult. The sample used was Unison Red 9 applied to white uncoated 80gsm office paper. Background colour is uncorrected. Static electricity was generated with human hair and a plastic pocket comb.

pastel on paper (a) before; (b) after flexing; and (c) after removal of particles with static electricity. While isolated particles still adhere well, losses were greater where layers of pastel accumulate. While it is difficult to detect losses of pastel from large cohesive masses, it is often easier to find isolated particles on the inside of glass or on charged rods that have removed them.



The implications of the electrostatic properties of pastel for conservation and transportation are extensive (*v. §§V.8–10 infra*). In particular current packing arrangements may exacerbate the problem, by juxtaposing soft foam with glass or backboards where vibration may cause rubbing leading to the creation of static: even though this may be remote from the pastel surface, the discharge of that electricity may be unpredictable. Various materials have been designed for the transportation of electrostatic-sensitive devices (“ESDs”) and components. Metal-coated plastic bags can create Faraday cages to insulate the object from charge: but the surface may not be appropriate to put in direct contact with gilt frames, and the bags will not prevent the creation of static within the package, whether from any lining used or even the materials in the pastel itself. Special pink anti-static polyurethane foam sheets are used in the electronics industry, but while these can dissipate electrostatic charge they do not prevent it arising from other components. Black conductive foam is preferred for other ESD applications, and it is unclear which is the better choice with pastels.

Pastel’s susceptibility to electrostatic forces was the theory behind an idea put forward²⁷³ in 1978, in which the pastel is placed in front of an electrically charged plate which maintains a constant charge and is intended to hold the pastel particles in place. Perhaps because of the practical requirements for constant electricity (with battery powered backup for outages) the technique has not been adopted.

V.6 Ideal display/storage conditions

Pastels are intended to be hung on walls like other paintings (display considerations are discussed further in §XII.6 *infra*). If stored, they should still be kept vertical, on walls or fixed shelving (not on, or even near, sliding racks²⁷⁴ which are regularly pulled out).

V.6.1 Lighting

Light levels for any works on paper should be controlled (a level of 50 lux is widely accepted as standard, although of course the duration of exposure is also important); there is normally less of

²⁷³ Victoria S. Blyth, “Electrostatic stabilizing plate: an alternative method for flaking tendencies of works of art in pastel”, *The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works preprints*, 6th annual meeting, Fort Worth, 1978; cited in Margaret Holben Ellis, *The care of prints and drawings*, Nashville, 1987, p. 90; US patent 4257083).

²⁷⁴ For an account of the vibration levels these can cause (including to works on adjacent racks), see Kracht & Kletschkowski 2017 and the references cited.

a problem with pastels than with drawings and watercolours where the paper is exposed and can be bleached and become brittle with exposure to too much light, a process known as photolytic degradation.²⁷⁵ (The acidity of the paper is also a key factor in its ageing; since most pastel materials are alkaline, they can act as a buffer and mitigate deterioration through acid hydrolysis.) No work of art should ever be in direct sunlight. Most pigments in eighteenth century pastels are light fast: the exceptions are the lakes, such as the red (favoured by artists from Liotard to Cotes) which has often faded from crimson to a pale pink or grey (the same effect is found in Reynolds's oil paintings); the yellow, made from vegetable dyes, which was often mixed to produce green, also tends to fade, leaving so much foliage a naked blue.

Thus the “fauteuil couvert de damas vert” of La Tour's Mlle Sallé [J.46.2842](#) noted by the critic in 1741 is now completely blue. Two examples in Liotard's œuvre are the coats of George III (Royal Collection), faded from red to neutral, and of Maurice de Saxe, in the uniform of the Saxe-Volontaires, faded from green to blue in both the Amsterdam and Dresden versions, to different degrees. The cause has been assumed to be light, but a recent examination of the George III out of its frame indicates that there is no difference in fading under the concealed areas.²⁷⁶ The fading of these vegetable dyes may simply be age related (it is also possible that the very small concealed area has been abraded). Sometimes the evidence is given by early copies or version in different media, e.g. with Mrs Cotes [J.243.272](#). In other cases (examples by artists ranging from Cotes to La Tour), unframing reveals areas of the original colour demonstrating that light is the cause. This for example was minuted in Saint-Quentin when the Perronneau of La Tour [J.582.1474](#) was unframed by Paul Vigna in 1919 to deal with mould; the colour change on the pink waistcoat particularly evident.²⁷⁷ Such changes are irreversible.²⁷⁸

The questions of optimal lighting for exhibitions are discussed in §XII.6 *infra*. The growing popularity of LED and other light sources, often driven by energy consumption considerations, raise both aesthetic and conservation issues, although usually museums are aware of the need to control light emissions at different wavelengths.

V.6.2 Humidity

Humidity levels are important: a relative humidity level in the range 40–50% is ideal, but rapid variations and extremes are the main enemy. In an English climate with central heating, humidifiers will be needed in winter (whenever the external temperature is below say 5°C this becomes especially important) and dehumidifiers in summer (particularly with wet weather). Basements should generally be avoided. Insufficient humidity can result in pastel debonding. There are several consequences of excessive humidity, including the growth of mould (*v.* §V.6.3 *infra*). Actual condensation, like flood damage, is almost impossible to repair satisfactorily: water marks and the dispersion of salts etc. can seriously disfigure a pastel: see also the examples of flood damage reported §IV.18 *supra*.²⁷⁹

Variations in humidity can also lead to warping both of frames and of strainers. The latter can first appear either as cockling in the support, or as “draws”, or ripples radiating from the corners of the picture. These can occur during exposure to low relative humidity, and may disappear when moderate relative humidity returns. In some cases however they can lead to tearing of the support

²⁷⁵ See for example Pilc & White 1995, p. 83.

²⁷⁶ 2015: private communication, Alan Donnithorne, Royal Collection, 14.I.2016.

²⁷⁷ Saint-Quentin, registre des deliberations, v, p. 312, 16.XI.1919.

²⁷⁸ However Caroline Corrigan (in Carlo James & al., *Old master prints and drawings: a guide to preservation and conservation*, Amsterdam, 1997, p. 73) observes that “This fading is practically always superficial. The color can be recovered by revealing the underlayer using the tip of a fine sable brush, but this sort of extremely delicate intervention should be done, if ever, only by a very experienced conservator.” This would not be universally approved.

²⁷⁹ An additional problem can be the caking observed in Daniels 1998.

(this can also arise from friction between ill-fitting strainers and frame rebates).²⁸⁰ While the majority of pastels are on strainers, those on board are less prone to damage; mounting on strainers has been identified as one of the principal causes of deterioration of pastels.²⁸¹

Maintaining climate control during international travel is a particular challenge. Smaller packing cases, favoured for other reasons (*v. §V.12 infra*), may be more exposed to fluctuations than triple lined cases depending on how and where they are loaded onto vehicles.

V.6.3 Mould, oxidation and microclimate assemblies

Mould readily grows on pastels (it often shows a preference for black areas, and works on parchment are more vulnerable). The dangers have been well known from the earliest times: see §§IV.14, 20 *supra* for eighteenth century artists' techniques and instructions. A more scientific approach to paper conservation was begun in the first quarter of the twentieth century.²⁸² The discovery of "champignon" on the La Tour pastels in 1929 led to the appointment by Henri Verne of a commission to determine the best procedures; the members were Lucien Aubert, Jean-Gabriel Goulinat and Paul Vigna. They recommended that pastels suffering from "variole noir" should be cleaned and given new frames.

Microbial deterioration can result not only from airborne sources, but from constituents of the support or pastel crayons.²⁸³ When in 1943 pastels from the Louvre collection were found also to have grown "moisissures", Germain Bazin recommended fumigation: Lucien Aubert advised using carbon tetrachloride which would have no effect on the colour or glues.²⁸⁴ Fumigation with thymol used to be the technique of choice (and even appeared to have some apparent fixing effect on pastels), but is not now approved (there are concerns over its toxicity, and suggestions that it can accelerate ageing in paper). Aubert also recommended manual removal of mould by René Longa.²⁸⁵ The removal of dust with fine brushes, a light current of air or a specially adapted vacuum cleaner is regularly undertaken by skilled conservators, but it is a hazardous procedure.²⁸⁶

It is thus important for pastels to remain in a sealed environment at all times. Opinions differ as to whether this should be a completely airtight "microclimate" box or assembly, in which the pastel is encased in an integrated, sealed structure (faced with the glass) resting within the rebate of the frame; this can help mitigate fluctuations in humidity, but can also lead to build-up of excessive humidity if not carefully monitored. The alternative is to use gummed paper tape for all joins, ensuring a dust-free environment, and physically excluding any fungal or insect infestation. (While seals on backboards can be inspected regularly, particular care is needed with traditional assemblies to ensure that the lining paper sealing the glass is still effective: this can only be checked by opening the pastel.) One arrangement which is commonly found is the "montage paquet" in which the spacers are pinned or glued directly to the face of the pastel, the glass in turn rests on the spacer and is held in place by tape extending from the front of the glass round the sides to the backing board, creating a sealed unit.²⁸⁷ It is often found where dealers have removed pastels from original frames, and is used by some museums: it is however particularly unsatisfactory should it

²⁸⁰ Although post 1800, examples are illustrated in Choi & Makin 2013.

²⁸¹ See for example Birot & al. 2014.

²⁸² See Coural & al. 2008.

²⁸³ See for example Anthony H. Rose, *Microbial biodeterioration*, 1981.

²⁸⁴ See Coural & al. 2008.

²⁸⁵ Coural & al. 2008.

²⁸⁶ Gombaudo, Sauvage & van Leeuwen 2014 describe a method using a vacuum cleaner and a glass Pasteur pipette with a 1 mm diameter end. Many conservators simply use a fine brush to remove the mycelia spores and dust particles.

²⁸⁷ This arrangement is illustrated in fig. 4 of Voßkamp 2013.

subsequently become necessary to clean the inside of the glass, as it can be difficult to take apart safely. Numerous pastels bear the traces of cuts from scalpels inflicted during such operations.

It should be noted that the montage paquet is not necessarily a microclimate assembly. The key distinction is the method of sealing. Where traditional materials which are permeable to air (cardboard backing, standard brown gummed paper tape) are used, even when fully dust resistant, adjustments to external humidity levels occur quite readily. It might be thought that the process of applying wet tape, either to a montage paquet or a traditional assembly, would lead to excessive humidity being sealed in, but simple experiments with mock-ups indicate a return from 90% to 45% RH within eight hours.

Another problem that can arise, or be exacerbated, by excessive humidity or just long exposure to the atmosphere is the oxidation of certain pigments, lead white in particular. Where this is confined to small spots, treatment with hydrogen peroxide suspended in ether may be an effective solution.²⁸⁸

V.6.4 *Extreme heat*

Excessive heat can also cause problems, ranging from inadequate humidity to damage to primary and secondary supports. The case of *Quorum A S v Schramm* [2001] EWHC 494 (Comm), heard in the English High Court, concerned a pastel by Degas exposed to very high levels of heat as a result of a warehouse fire ten years before. The analysis of different types of damage, at paragraphs 83ff of the judgment,²⁸⁹ is particularly interesting in relation to the possibility of latent damage which is either invisible or revealed in a loss of brilliance that may be apparent only to the expert eye. The court accepted evidence from one of the experts that—

The heat and the humidity had caused molecular change, the effect of which depended on the extent of the heat and the humidity. In simple terms, he considered that the heat and humidity were similar in effect to an oven and the crystals were cooked and became like flour; in consequence, they lost their adhesion and shine... Loss of adhesion: The pastel appeared in good condition, but with time each particle of pigment would fall away. He did not consider that long term damage would have been visible in 1995 [four years after the fire].

V.6.5 *Mitigating shock in permanent locations*

Minor *in situ* shock and vibration can be mitigated to some extent²⁹⁰ by the simple expedient of placing a small (2.5 cm) cube of soft plastic sponge²⁹¹ between the wall and the bottom of the frame. Vibration can still travel down the picture chain, but two degrees of freedom are damped; shock from neighbours' building work etc. is most likely to be in a horizontal direction.²⁹² The sponge also helps keep air circulating round the work and avoids humidity being trapped; this is particularly relevant if pastels are hung on external walls (if so, temperature differentials should be monitored to ensure there is no risk of condensation forming on the glass).

²⁸⁸ The Getty's La Tour preparation for Silvestre was treated with hydrogen peroxide suspended in ether, as revealed in their exhibition *The secret life of drawings*, 2011. Such an approach may be more difficult with full pastels.

²⁸⁹ Available on the BAILII website. An account of the case will now be found in many textbooks on insurance law or tort.

²⁹⁰ My experiments suggest an attenuation of about 60% using Gemini Tinytag shock meter; these were not carried out to laboratory standards, but they are in line with the results reported in Saunders 1998 for foam damping during transport (comparing shock levels sustained by a painting compared with its outer case). However other experiments suggest that foam and other damping mechanisms can on occasion create resonance effects which exacerbate rather than attenuate the effects (Saunders, noted above).

²⁹¹ Ideally Plastazote LD33 (Cécile Gombaud, private communication, 2015). Plastazote is a closed-cell, cross-linked polyethylene, the cells filled with nitrogen; polyethylene foam ages better than polyurethane, and is an effective replacement for PVC and polyurethane foams as well as for neoprene and natural rubber. Foams are broadly divided into shock-absorbing "cushioning" foams and spring-like "upholstery" foams (mostly polyurethane), which rebound, creating further shock and vibration. But open-celled polyurethane foam has superior vibration damping to closed-cell polyethylene foam and is typically employed in acoustic insulation. Typically polyurethane (as produced in dimpled or alveolated sheets) is softer and spongy, and while it offers superior impact absorption at lower levels, the stiffer polyethylene actually performs better in drop tests at the higher shock levels likely to cause severe damage.

²⁹² Vleeshouwer 1913, p. 185 recounts a story of a pastel destroyed by a nail being hammered into the opposite side of the wall of a building.

V.6.6 *Summary of early modern conservation practices*

The lack of interest in pastel during the early nineteenth century may have protected them from interventions we would not now regard as appropriate. For example, as an indication of different attitudes to conservation in earlier periods, one may cite the suggestion by Philippe de Chennevières (1888, p. 333) concerning the La Tour pastels of Restout [J.46.2687](#) and Dumont le Romain [J.46.1681](#), “en assez fâcheux état”: namely that “si détériorés qu’ils soient par le temps et l’abandon, j’imagine qu’un adroit pastelliste, – et il n’en manque pas dans notre temps, – les pourrait remettre en état de figurer dans la série de nos portraits d’artistes.” Fortunately this was not pursued.

In 1910, Émile Théodore, conservateur au palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille, gathered information on international museums’ practices for conserving old master drawings. The response from Théodore Eck, conservateur at Saint-Quentin, relating to the La Tour pastels there, is worth reproducing at length:²⁹³

Nous avons constaté, et cela à deux reprises, de très légers champignons blancs dans les parties sombres de deux de nos La Tour. Nous les avons fait disparaître sans nuire à l’œuvre. Pour ce faire, il faut avoir la main légère; il suffit de l’extrémité du petit doigt qui effleure à peine le pastel.

Dans les années 1900, le musée de Saint-Quentin a procédé à un nouvel encadrement des pastels dans leurs anciennes bordures, en employant les mêmes verres protecteurs; en somme, a été refait un travail effectué en 1849, sans aucun apport nouveau, soit de cadre soit de glace, soit de carton.

Dans la feuillure des cadres ont été placées des bandes de carton suffisamment épaisses pour isoler d’un centimètre au moins le pastel proprement dit du verre appelé à le protéger. En raison de la valeur des pastels, nous avons scellé au dos avec huit carnets de cire rouge de larges bandes de toile.

Quant au mode de conservation de nos La Tour, je n’en connais pas de plus efficace qu’une visite journalière des salles, et 18° de chaleur la nuit comme le jour. L’été, des jalousies de fer à lames mobiles, dont on peut graduer l’inclinaison suivant la marche du soleil, nous permet de les protéger de façon heureuse.

V.7 Supports and structure

Mostly this chapter concerns pastels of conventional construction as described in Chapter IV. Some pastels – especially seventeenth century ones, or those of smaller dimensions – are not mounted on canvas and strainers, but may be pasted on board or even made on loose sheets of paper, like conventional drawings. Pastels have also been made on supports (*v.* §IV.2 *supra*) as varied as silk, prepared canvas and even copper plates, each of which present particular problems. Pastels on parchment are normally fixed onto strainers unlined, i.e. without an additional canvas support; parchment’s weight and uneven thickness can cause particular problems. Natural tensions in the skin, possibly exacerbated by changes in the humidity, can result in cockling and even tearing: these require complex and time-consuming interventions which should only be undertaken by the most experienced conservators. Paper which has been pasted to canvas in the traditional process of marouflage have often survived well, the tension in the paper created by drying serving to hold the whole object together.

A problem analogous to that with frames discussed below (again far worse with ovals) is the possibility of failure of the wooden strainer. When this happens with an oil painting, a straightforward repair can be made; with a pastel, however, the consequences can be catastrophic (particular care should be taken not to take a pastel out of its frame if the strainer shows any risk). It should also be noted that most strainers will have lost some tension since they were originally made: this can result in the canvas billowing during any movement, thereby loosening the bonding. The problem may be compounded by the loss of tension being uneven.

Even mid-sized pastels are frequently made on several sheets of paper joined carefully (*v.* §IV.2.4 *supra*). Such sheets are more liable to come adrift than single sheets wrapped around the edges of

²⁹³ Transcription by Florence Raymond in Coural & al. 2008.

the canvas/strainer, but can sometimes be carefully refixed to the support. (Where separate sheets become completely detached and pass over the surface of other sheets of the pastel, irreparable damage can occur.²⁹⁴) Joined sheets of parchment, without a support on which to rest, are far trickier: they are held together only by paste along the overlap, and can very easily separate with movement from transport or change in atmospheric conditions.

V.8 Spacers

One of the most important conservation considerations (and the one most often ignored) is the spacing between the surface of the pastel and the inner face of the glass: there needs to be a clear gap over the full area of the work, normally achieved by having a spacer or fillet (ideally of at least 6 mm for a 60x50 cm sized portrait) all the way round the border. This will normally be hidden behind the rebate, and the side edge blackened so that it is less visible. (Bernier 1764 – see §IV.15 *supra* – was concerned that the depth of the frame required to house uneven glass and spacers would project too far into the room; his alternative, convex glass, would not have provided much protection at the edges, although his recommended spacing in the centre, up to 18-23 mm, would be adequate.) A simple way to measure the gap without disassembling the work is to use a torch and observe the shadow of a particle of dust, an imperfection in the glass or a piece of paper placed on the front of the glass: moving the torch beam from an angle of incidence of 90° to 45° will show a lateral displacement on the surface equal to the distance from the surface to the spot; allow for the thickness of the glass (typically 2 mm). Inadequate spacing is a common problem (not only in historical assemblies: most framers today need special instruction) and can lead to serious problems when pastel surfaces meet glass: the danger is during transport, not only where careless handling pushes through the backing but also, particularly with larger works, where the support has lost tension, and movement occurs. (A simple non-invasive way to see if tension has been lost again uses the paper/45° light method on a central point in the picture while hanging vertically; this should be repeated with the pastel laid flat, face up. The difference in the lateral displacement measures the sag in the middle of the support under a force of 1g; if it is measurable, the pastel is not in a fit condition to travel.²⁹⁵) It can also occur with increased humidity when paper expands. If the humidity is so high that moisture condenses on the inside of the glass, the droplets may also bridge the physical gap.

The spacer should be made from a low-density wood such as obeche with little risk of resin seepage (museum mounting board can be used, but will need to be laminated – doubled or even tripled – to achieve the necessary depth). It should be cut and mitred to fit the rebate so that it is not in danger of sliding across the pastel if lining tape adhesive dries out. (Such damage is not uncommon.) It was common for spacers to be pinned in place, but pins often rust and can cause problems. Ovals present special difficulties. In older assemblies the spacing devices may be blocks of cork placed at intervals or even pieces of thick cord. These are often held in place only by pressure, and care is required when unframing such a pastel: in theory a pastel should never be placed face down,²⁹⁶ but (unless the tension has been lost to the extent risking pastel–glass contact on inversion) the risk of a spacer (or the glass itself) sliding over the front surface when released may be a greater concern.

²⁹⁴ For reasons including courtesy to current owners, actual examples are not illustrated in this public document, although the author has drawn on personal experience.

²⁹⁵ In the case of pastels with cross-bars fitted to the strainer, there is an equivalent risk of the support touching these bars in transit. The separation can only be evaluated by opening the back. Such impact is known to cause loss in oil paintings. Marks on the front of a pastel from strainer edges may have occurred during execution or in subsequent mishandling.

²⁹⁶ Shelley 1987, p. 39.

v.9 Glazing

The author's view is that original glass should always be preserved wherever possible; minor occlusions or other blemishes should be regarded as part of the work's charm, unless unfortunately located over a sitter's face.²⁹⁷ This is consistent with the Institute of Conservation's duty to "conserve cultural heritage [as] reliable evidence of the past."²⁹⁸ Several difficulties can arise, some of which (such as breakage) require the glass to be replaced. It is quite common in old glass²⁹⁹ to find "glass disease", which causes a fogging effect that cannot be reversed. The vocabulary can be confusing, but most cases with picture glass arise from the same phenomenon where non-silicate constituents of the glass (sodium oxide in soda glass or potassium oxide in potash glass) react with water vapour to form alkaline solutions; the hydroxides react with carbon dioxide to form carbonates, resulting in the appearance of a white powder on the glass or crizzling. Temperature and humidity facilitate this irreversible process. In the case of La Tour's full-length Mme de Pompadour (see §IV.15 *supra*), the original glass had to be abandoned when it developed similar symptoms.³⁰⁰ In theory glass can grow mould – fungal infestation from the *Aspergillus* genus or similar air-borne microorganisms³⁰¹ – but chemical glass disease is the more likely cause of the opacity in picture glass.

Hand-made sheets are rarely perfectly flat, but neither are frame rebates, and fillets may need to be sculpted to ensure a closer fit and proper, even support for the glass to avoid additional breakage hazard on refixing and transport. Hand-cut oval sheets of glass are especially at risk as the jagged edges can result in a single point taking all the pressure during transport if lining tape has lost its adhesion; this risk is compounded as the mechanical strength of oval frames is compromised by their construction (*v. infra*).

Some museums have had policies of systematic reglazing of pastels, often with materials that are no longer considered suitable for use with this medium. For example, in 1959 the National Gallery of Art in Washington replaced the glass on several of its pastels with Plexiglass.³⁰²

When replacement glass is required, there is some merit in using standard 2 mm picture float glass. There is a wide range of newer glazing materials³⁰³ on the market, said to have benefits ranging from ultraviolet light reduction to being shatter-proof. Some of these claims need to be examined carefully. Apart from price, the deficiencies of such products can be serious. Many are not colour-neutral; those that are for transmitted light will nevertheless yield distracting blue or green reflections of white light sources as a consequence of anti-reflective coatings. Laminated safety glass can be very much heavier than normal picture glass, with the consequence that frames can be compromised and the weight of the refitted picture can result in more severe shocks during transportation; this deficiency is compounded by the fact that many products are more flexible

²⁹⁷ Sometimes this arises because glass has been refitted upside down. Occlusions, which are often long pointed ovals in shape, normally are visible with their shadows in directional light; sometimes tiny spherical air bubbles in the glass are invisible, and only their shadows (caused by internal refraction) are apparent as small black spots.

²⁹⁸ The Institute of Conservation's Code of Conduct article 4.2, adopted 2014.

²⁹⁹ The requirement is for an imperfect ratio of ingredients. This is found more often in continental than in English glass (Alan Derbyshire, private communication, 2018). For a review of the phenomenon, its causes and management, see Jerzy J. Kunicki-Goldfinger, "Unstable historic glass: symptoms, causes, mechanisms and conservation", *Studies in conservation*, 9, .VI.2008, pp. 47–60.

³⁰⁰ Salmon 2018, p. 182f, drawing from Le Prat & Luquet 2013 which discusses the reports of Germain Bazin observing the glass while at Chambord in 1942. The subsequent description as "cynérèse" [sic], *recte* synérèse, or synaeresis (a spontaneous separation of liquid from within the glass), occurs only as Bazin's note of a telephone conversation with Jacques-Charles-Marie Cogniard (1903–1998), chef du laboratoire de la fabrication des billets à la Banque de France; the circumstances as well as the misspelling suggest this may have been a confusion.

³⁰¹ T. Ohtsuki, "Studies on the glass mould: On two species of *Aspergillus* isolated from glass", *Botanical magazine Tokyo*, LXXV 1962, pp. 436–42, where the mould was identified in glass lenses.

³⁰² See the conservation reports in the Kress Collection digital archive for La Tour J.46.1698 and Rosalba Carriera J.21.0901 and J.21.2. Just seven years later, in 1966, J.21.0901 had to be opened for the new glazing to be cleaned again.

³⁰³ A number of these products are mentioned in Voßkamp 2013 and Sauvage 2010. A good survey is Freemantle 2004. See also Sauvage & al. 2018 which summarises many conservators' views that no form of acrylic glazing should be used.

than glass, and to avoid contact with the pastel surface must be used in thicker sheets, particularly for larger works. They are not immune from breakage. Acrylic sheeting of any kind has a far lower melting point than glass, and while no work of art should ever be subjected to high temperatures, glass provides far better protection.³⁰⁴ The ageing properties of new materials may not be fully understood: degradation can lead to progressive discolouration, and in particular the risk of outgassing, where hazardous chemicals are released from the plastic over time. By far the biggest concern lies in the electrostatic properties of some of these new materials. While some very expensive products are marketed as “low static” the phenomenon is not eliminated (it is unclear if claims for the long-term anti-static performance and transparency of certain materials have been validated independently).

V.9.1 Glass cleaning

Problems can arise even when cleaning glass with a normal duster. While plastics are naturally triboelectric (*v.* §V.5 *supra*), this can also occur with normal glass.³⁰⁵ It has been suggested³⁰⁶ that this risk can be managed by undertaking the work within a stream created by an ionizing air blower (a machine developed for use in the manufacture of electronics components): this may or may not be the best solution in a restoration studio (the complexities of the electrostatic forces discussed above indicate caution), but is unlikely to be practicable in most private collections, and offers an additional hazard with temporary loans where gallery staff may ignore special stipulations.

V.9.2 Transportation without glazing

For safe transport, it might seem sensible to remove the glass and ship the pastel attached only to its strainer. This would permit the work to be packed in a very light container. The obvious difficulties are in how to secure the pastel within its box (wedges which touch the edge where the paper folds over the strainer risk weakening the most vulnerable part of the work), while preventing any possibility of the surface being touched (including by an over-zealous customs inspector). Maintaining precise climate conditions will also require additional care. Less obvious but of greater concern is that the presence of the backing board and glass seem to play an essential role in damping the vibration in the canvas.³⁰⁷ The air cushioning these components offer can be enhanced by ensuring the fit is tight so the air flow between the cavities is slow.³⁰⁸

It should be noted that even when small sheets mounted safely on conservation board with mount separating the work from direct contact, and where there is no glass present, offset can still occur. A good example is the pastel by Hugh Howard ([J.4068.101](#)) in the British Museum, evacuated to Wales, where the conservator (Edward Croft-Murray) annotated the card “This rubbing was due to insufficient packing when in transit to Aberystwyth 1939”: the figure shows the pastel with an inverted image of the card.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁴ For example in the circumstances that arose in *Quorum v. Schramm*, cited at §V.6.4.

³⁰⁵ Hans Wille, “Das Pastell”, IADA, no. 47, 3, 1973, pp. 625–27.

³⁰⁶ Leila Sauvage, “Bench-top ionizing air blower”, *Journal of paper conservation*, XIII/3, 2012, p. 38. Manufacturers’ cleaning instructions are easily forgotten years after specialist glazing has been fitted.

³⁰⁷ Bäschlin & al. 2011.

³⁰⁸ Such tightly fitted mountings are described in Michaela Ritter & Olivier Masson, “Deux propositions d’encadrement de pastel”, *Support/tracé*, 9, 2009, pp. 62–65.

³⁰⁹ I am most grateful to Richard Stephens for drawing my attention to the card and identifying the source (31.V.2018). In the letter by Ezra Pound cited above (to Viola Baxter Jordan, 5.V.1933), he notes “Pastels usually double in transit, so put a pasteboard in front of it, that will take the replica.”



v.10 Wadding and canvas vibration

Moreau-Vauthier³¹⁰ recommended (in addition to inserting cotton wool between strainer and canvas, and more between canvas and frame) lining the canvas with a second canvas with oil priming turned towards the strainer: this is intended to react to vibration in the opposite phase to the pastel, neutralising the effect by destructive interference; he further suggested mounting pastels on cardboard to avoid the “tambourine effect”. Polyester wadding has been used, directly supporting the reverse of the canvas or parchment; its electrostatic properties would seem to make it an unsuitable material for this purpose (its very high surface resistance places it very far away from animal skin in the triboelectric series); further it is unclear if compression or resonance effects could exacerbate vertical forces, so that the risk of damage from surface–glass proximity or physical contact might actually be worsened. Wadding of an indeterminate material was used to line Mme de Pompadour J.46.2541 in 2017, but as the pastel never moves out of its gallery the concerns are lower.³¹¹ Nevertheless wadding has been observed to expand over time (presumably from humidity), and can compress the secondary support, reducing its tension and ultimately risking glass-pastel contact.

v.11 Frames

Original frames (see §IV.16 above), as well as mounting, glass, backing etc. are all part of the work and should be preserved intact unless there are overriding considerations. Good French rococo frames are often worth more than the pastels they frame (no doubt many have been stripped out for this reason: leaving pastels unprotected out of their frames is probably the biggest cause of their destruction). But such frames can be very fragile, not just because fine details (e.g. decorative corners and especially ribbons projecting above the top rail) can easily be broken in handling, but also because carved giltwood frames have an inherent problem: the oak carcass has a tendency to shrink over long periods, while the hard gesso onto which the gilding is laid does not: this means that frames should only be handled on the flattest part.

Many original frames have been altered during misconceived restoration campaigns, such as the fitting of microclimate assemblies or *montages paquets* (see §V.6.3 above); simpler structures, in which thin battens are fixed to the sides of the strainer, projecting beyond its front surface but onto which the glass is taped; and a variant of these, known as the Lepeltier box (an L-shaped wooden moulding incorporates the spacer with outer wrap for the strainer: once favoured by the Louvre, but now rejected as the fitting involves enlarging, and thus weakening, the rebates in original

³¹⁰ Moreau-Vauthier 1913, p. 106.

³¹¹ The restoration was the subject of a video posted on YouTube by the sponsors Canson on 10.XI.2017.

frames). Composition frames, particularly favoured in the nineteenth century, are vulnerable to loss of large sections of decoration. They are also far heavier than carved wood frames, exacerbating the problem of shock in transportation.

As with any piece of period furniture, control of humidity levels is important.

While these problems are no different from damage to all period picture frames (and while it is relatively straightforward to repair them), the difference between pastels and oil paintings lies in the hazards pastels face when taken out of the frame. This should not be attempted in a gilding workshop, where a fine layer of gesso dust is likely to settle on any exposed surface. Pastels should be unframed by a skilled paper conservator and immediately stored flat in a dust-proof solander box before the frame is taken offsite.

V.12 Packing and stowage

Packing cases have to be fastened by hand (although staff in logistics companies will habitually reach for labour-saving power tools unless supervised). Triple-lined museum cases may seem to offer better transit protection than soft packing,³¹² but they become much heavier and harder to move without greater shock levels than careful hand transport which is only possible for smaller packages: it is in practice virtually impossible to ensure that a large case does not suffer shock when it reaches the end of a loading ramp. (However they offer superior climate control: *v.* §V.6.2 *supra.*) Stacking of cases is not recommended, as this is likely to result in excessive vibration at some levels. Whether cases should rest on some additional form of shock protection (whether foam or pneumatic, air cushions etc.) is debated.

V.12.1 Angle and orientation

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken into optimal orientation during transport, but the results are still inconclusive.³¹³ Common sense suggests that vertical travel aligned with the direction of motion will minimise the risks, as cornering is more within the driver's control than road bumps or rapid braking. Recognising that vertical shocks from dropping a packing case are the greatest risk, it is sometimes suggested³¹⁴ that horizontal packing is to be preferred because such shocks compress the pastel into the support: but this is the opposite of what happens (the shock is vertically upwards, projecting the particles away from the surface). The key question however is whether pastel's vulnerability to shearing forces is greater parallel or orthogonal out from the surface: the answer is likely to be specific to each work. Saunders & al. 1999 argued that horizontal transport was optimal; Esser 2011 investigated handling and transport strategies for the National Gallery of Denmark, and reached a similar conclusion on the basis of experiment. However the tests used simple samples of pastel applied mechanically to paper which does not appear to have been mounted on an elastic secondary support, so the results showing lower losses with horizontal transport on a museum trolley are some way from the real conditions of an eighteenth century pastel (with multiple thick layers of pastel) travelling on a lorry (where resonances may exacerbate movement in the middle of a large pastel travelling flat). While generally favoured, horizontal travel has not been universally accepted.³¹⁵ The compromise suggested for the Degas exhibition in 1989 was to make the pastels travel at 45°; this would seem to be an each-way losing bet, as resolving a horizontal or vertical shock will contribute 71% of its force at this angle. Further the packing cases become larger and far heavier, resulting in increased shock levels

³¹² Although Lukasz Lasyk & al., "Vibration as a hazard during the transportation of canvas paintings", Conservation and Access: Contributions to the London Congress 15–19.IX.2008, concluded that paintings wrapped in a tissue and transported in soft cardboard boxes were better cushioned from vibration than a painting rigidly fixed in a wooden case. More recently Läuchli & al. 2014 (supported by Kracht & Kletschkowski 2017) concluded that packaging systems were ineffective (and occasionally counterproductive) protections against vibration.

³¹³ The recommendation of Norville-Day & al. 1993 has still not been completed to universal consensus.

³¹⁴ Stratis 1997.

³¹⁵ Voßkamp 2013.

in handling. According to a podcast issued by the Royal Academy, loans to the Liotard 2015 exhibition were transported either flat or vertically according to the lenders' requests; private communications indicate that several lenders favoured travel at a near-vertical inclination of c.10°.

V.13 Air v other modes of travel

Even among the supporters of lending, however, opinion differs as to the advisability of air travel. The vibration levels experienced in air travel are obviously undesirable, particularly during take-off (although even higher *shock* levels are recorded during airport cargo handling procedures, and attract more concern perhaps because they are more readily measured). The organizers of the Liotard 2015 exhibition are understood prudently to have forbidden all air transport, and therefore not to have solicited loans from North America. In contrast, in evidence given to the Scottish Parliament, a senior paper conservator³¹⁶ regarded road travel and the handling of the case on the ground carried greater risk than the flight itself, and accordingly recommended air travel for one item. The Bizot Group guidelines also prefer air travel to long road journeys on account of the shorter exposure to vibration. The recommendation may seem counterintuitive, but is a logical consequence of numerous studies including Saunders 1998, who reported surprisingly low levels during air flight of what he termed "vibration" (the figures were however quoted in g; the relationship between vibration, velocity and acceleration depends on factors such as frequency, and causes widespread confusion).

The damage from vibration at different frequencies has yet to be investigated fully, and it is unclear whether aero-engine vibration can be directly compared with irregular road shocks. Saunders also reported shock levels of up to 10g in cargo-handling areas of airports. While museum and road handling risks can be mitigated as has been suggested³¹⁷ by a courier accompanying the work, it is difficult to see what action could be taken in the air, nor, with modern security arrangements, is it likely that a courier could influence the airside cargo-handling procedures.

No one recommends rail for pastels as far as I am aware, although numerous studies for perishable fruit and other industries indicate that rail vibration levels may be lower than expected. Air-ride suspension for large trucks may be an improvement on traditional leaf springs, but the compressors themselves generate vibration and the systems can malfunction. Hydraulic tail-lift equipment used on such vehicles can independently create significant levels of vibration: they can only be operated with the ignition running, with engines which create alarming levels of vibration when idling.

The choice depends on balancing the risk of a small number of very high level shocks in cargo areas against far longer exposure to vibration on the road: no one knows the answer at present.³¹⁸

V.14 Secrecy and underreporting of damage

The scarcity of evidence of actual damage from transportation is one of the barriers to general acceptance of the risks. This compounds the possibility of debonding which is not immediately visible (or too subtle to be observable from photographs). Reporting of either is biased by the reluctance of museums and owners to publicise damage. The culture of secrecy surrounding avoidable damage inhibits open discussion of the extent of the problem. There is however enough evidence from the compromised state of so many pastels today that damage has occurred, even if confidentiality obscures establishing a causal link to specific transportation operations.

³¹⁶ Graeme Gollan's evidence, 2013, cited above.

³¹⁷ Gollan, *ibid.*

³¹⁸ There is also a risk of too much comfort being drawn from scientific measurement of a single parameter (e.g. an accelerometer to assess multiple sources of vibration); conceptual deficiencies in models can include overlooking the multiplicity of hazards to which a specific work may be sensitive. Common sense should not be overruled.

There are other factors that result in underreporting of damage, or cognitive errors that have this effect. Conflicts of interest among those involved are obvious. “Survivor bias” is an issue in that many damaged pastels have been abandoned, and those that survive or are exhibited today (particularly in museums) are those which have not suffered so much. Estimates (*v. §VI.2 infra*) suggest that the proportion of pre-1800 pastels which have survived is lower than for work in other media. With signed works by the best-known artists the retention rate is higher: Perronneau is perhaps a good example, but of the 227 autograph pastels known today at least from photographs, perhaps half are in compromised condition, and another quarter might be considered ruined.³¹⁹

v.15 Insurance

An additional consideration relates to insurance and governmental indemnity programmes. Most of these specifically exclude pastels from cover due to inherent vice.³²⁰ Even where damage to pastels is covered, it may be difficult to establish loss where damage is not immediately visible or where the specific cause cannot be proved to be an insured risk as opposed to general wear. Accordingly the additional risk posed by pastel may not be fully reflected in higher premiums, since commercial insurers rarely pay out for such claims. Government programmes, funded by the taxpayer rather than the lender, borrower or carrier, put an even greater distance between those in control of the perils and the market price for that risk, and encourage what is known as moral hazard. In any case financial compensation is an inadequate response to damage to heritage assets.

v.16 Decisions before undertaking unavoidable travel

If exceptions are to be made, or travel must be undertaken, further decisions must be taken on all the issues discussed above. At what angle should pastels travel? Should glass be taped, replaced with toughened sheets, or removed altogether? Should some form of wadding between the backing and the canvas? What containers should be used? How should they be secured? Should they travel by air, road or rail? All these perfectly sensible questions, and the many intelligent suggested responses, do not currently meet with agreed answers or fully tested solutions. For the moment risk assessment will depend upon the skill and judgement of conservation and curatorial staff. Basic inspection of construction and measurements such as of the glass–pastel separation should be carried out, as well as the more obvious visual assessment of condition and friability. Each case is different, but the risks are greater for ovals, works on multiple sheets or on parchment, and compound greatly with size. The only safe advice is not to allow pastels to undergo unnecessary travel – in line with the policies of each of the half dozen European museums with the finest pastel collections.

³¹⁹ My subjective judgments.

³²⁰ The US Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Act of 1975 established the indemnity programme administered by the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities covering loans into and out of the US, and generally excludes both “pastels” and “works on parchment or vellum”.

VI. PASTELLISTS AT WORK

THE INFORMATION that we have about pastellists' working practices comes from a range of different sources. Chapter III discusses the treatises about pastel, many of which are set out in the [TREATISES](#) section of the website. Artists' correspondence provides further information. Visual evidence comes from the portraiture of the time.



Fig. 1 Arthur Pond (attr.), *Rhoda Delaval* (London, NPG)

VI.1 Depictions of pastellists at work

There are numerous depictions of pastellists at work during the eighteenth century, both in pastel and in other media. Some of these, such as Pesne's oil painting of Wilhelmine Markgräfin von Bayreuth, c.1750 (Sanssouci), simply show pastels among the attributes demonstrating the sitter's cultivation. Others offer valuable evidence of studio practice.³²¹

They also show various types of box for holding the pastels during their use.³²² Descriptions of these arise in the treatises from "Boutet" to Russell and Chaperon. Chaperon is the most detailed, recommending two or three trays of 15 to 20 inches in length, a little shorter in width, divided

into compartments of three inches in diameter [*sic*].

The pastels are laid on cotton or bran within the compartments, each of which should only be used for pastels of similar colours. This explains the account in Thomas Mulvany's biography of Hugh Douglas Hamilton, reporting the artist's claim that he was so busy that he had each evening to pick out the guineas "from amongst the bran and broken crayons, in the several crayon boxes into which, in the hurry of the day, he had thrown them."³²³

Georg Anton Urlaub's 1735 self-portrait ^{1.7298.101} shows him in a somewhat contorted pose, his coat dangerously close to the surface of the pastel he is working on, holding an improbably small box of pastels. The oil painting of Rhoda Delaval at work, attributed to Arthur Pond (NPG 5253; fig. 1), shows her seated before the easel in a far more credible composition: Russell would probably suggest that the pastel on the easel is a little too high, and may cause fatigue in her right arm, but she is comfortably seated with her pastels in her lap. This wooden tray



Fig. 2 Alexander Roslin, *Autoportrait avec sa femme*, 1767

³²¹ Reproductions of those in pastel will be found in the relevant artist's article in the *Dictionary*.

³²² A diagram showing one is included in the *Recueil de planches sur les sciences, les arts liberaux et les arts mechaniques*, 1771, VIII, article "Peintures en huile..." , planche VI. This also shows the porphyre for grinding pigment.

³²³ M. [Thomas James Mulvany], "Hugh Hamilton", *The Dublin monthly magazine*, 1/1, 1842, p. 69.

is properly divided into 12 compartments, although the colour arrangement may not be entirely as prescribed. Two depictions of Suzanne Roslin painting are known, both showing her with a little table with drawers for her pastels. In her self-portrait copying La Tour's *autoportrait à l'index* 1.63.101 she sharpens one of these, using a knife in the direction recommended by the *Arts companion* of 1749. In her husband's oil double portrait showing her painting the portrait of Peill (1767; Stockholm, Nationalmuseum, fig. 2), she has taken a dozen or so pastels from the open drawers and placed them in a smaller tray, thus allowing quite different colours to lie side by side (against all recommendations).

There is no description of the "Case, with numerous drawers, used by O. Humphrey to hold his crayons, &c." in the Upcott sale.³²⁴ In Pierre-Adolphe Hall's inventory was a "table d'acajou pour le pastel, 50 livres", which has survived: it takes the form of an *athénienne* with a covered receptacle at the top, but its connection with the medium is obscure.³²⁵

Ghezzi's 1739 caricature³²⁶ (fig. 3) of Alexis Loir in Rome shows the French pastellist seated at a table on which rests his hat, as well as a tray of pastels with at least nine compartments. He (improbably, certainly inadvisably) holds the pastel he works on (mounted on its strainer) with his left hand, closer to horizontal than vertical, the back resting on the table edge, while he holds the crayon in his right hand; he wears a coat with heavy sleeves and the lace cuffs of his shirt are perilously close to the pastel surface.



Fig. 3 Pier Leone Ghezzi, Alexis Loir at work, detail (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana)

Pastels needed to be sharpened more or less frequently according to the softness of the material and the accuracy of the work: but sharpened they were, and with considerable waste. Günther (1762, his §§.27ff) advocated collecting the dust in papers marked with the number of the colour: when sufficient was collected, he described how to recombine the dust into new crayons. If this is not possible, an alternative was to mix the dust with water and gum arabic to use as watercolour or gouache. No doubt this practice was common, and may have led to developments such as Gardner's use of ground pastel with brandy (§.IV.11 *supra*) or Mrs Cay's bottles of dry powder applied with a stump (§.IV.7 *supra*).

Very few original pastel boxes have survived from the eighteenth century. The V&A has a small wooden box storing a few ends of pastels said to have belonged to John Russell, but it does not appear to have been the box from which he worked.³²⁷ An empty pastel box (fig. 4, J.M.46.115) is said to have been left by La Tour at the slot Zuylen during his 1766 trip (it may have been intended specifically for travelling), and was given to the musée Antoine-Lécuyer (inv. LT 84) in 1919 by a descendant of Belle de Charrière.³²⁸ It measures 9x32.5x24.5 closed, and still has traces of blue pigment in one of the compartments.

³²⁴ London, Evans, 25.VI.1846, Lot 487.

³²⁵ Reproduced in Plinval de Guillebon 2000, p. 87, fig. 75.

³²⁶ Inscribed "Monsieur Alexis Loir Pittor Francese in Pastello il quale fece il ritratto al S. D. Pavolo Borghese il di 8 7bre 1739 fatto da Me Cav. Ghezzi il di et Anno sud.o" (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ott. Lat. 3117, f57r.

³²⁷ V&A P44-1925. It was nevertheless exhibited in Liotard 2015, and reproduced p. 25. It was exhibited again in London 2018 with a caption describing the contents as "pastels hand-made by John Russell with the assistance of his daughter Nancy, including a piece of paper with colour tests."

³²⁸ The son of Eugène-Jean-Alexandre, comte de Bylandt, who, in 1837, had married Belle's great-niece Maria Henrietta van Tuyll van Serooskerken (Gaggetta Dalaimo 2011, p. 55; see also *Bulletin de l'Aisne*, 27.XI.1919. I am most grateful to Hervé Cabezas for details of the box (see also Fleury & Brière 1954, p. 84). However its authenticity rests on family legend rather than tangible evidence; the box may be later.



Fig. 4 Box of pastels given by La Tour to Mme de Charrière (Saint-Quentin)



Fig. 5 Box of pastels supplied by Vernezobre in 1772 (private collection; photo Peter Schälchli, Zürich)

A box of similar size, 6x34x18.5 cm, supplied by Vernezobre in 1772 (private collection; fig. 5), still contains its original contents. It has fewer compartments.

Élisabeth Armand, later Mme de Saulces de Freycinet, showed herself (in her 1772 autoportrait, [J.6556.101](#); her tray of pastels is visible in the foreground, resting on a table where some of the pastels she is using sit on the projecting edge of the table) using a *Mahlstick*, or *appuye-main*, the use of which is described by Chaperon (his §26), who also notes that some pastellists use their little finger for the same purpose. Liotard's famous 1745 depiction of his patron and pupil Caroline Luise von Hessen-Darmstadt (Karlsruhe, [J.49.1198](#); fig. 6) not only shows her *Mahlstick* in use, but reveals the full height of her easel. Prudently she has removed her ermine lined mantle and wears a dress with sleeves ending at the elbows with *passementerie* rather less elaborate than the full pagoda lace that might jeopardise the pastel. Her tray of pastels is barely visible, resting on a low table beside her. Close inspection reveals that there are no compartments, but a large number of pastels are neatly arranged on what may be bran (as recommended to protect the crayons from breakage and keep them clean). These pastels are shorter and thinner than normal, about the size of modern Conté crayons. Close inspection reveals that the blank support she works on is a sheet of parchment pinned along the sides to the strainer, and that there is a further thin board behind the strainer, presumably to ensure that the back is protected while the work progresses.³²⁹



Fig. 6 Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Caroline Luise* (Karlsruhe)

Lord Mahon, later 3rd Earl Stanhope, was another student who was clearly influenced by Liotard (although correspondence reveals that he also had a drawing teacher, both of whom were mentioned in his mother's letter); in his self-portrait ([J.6922.101](#)) he holds his own pastel of his mother,

³²⁹ Other examples in oil include Pietro Longhi, painter (Stanford, inv. 1941.274); Vivien's Autoportrait (Munich, inv. 53/4989); another oil of Vivien painting a woman in pastel (London, Christie's, 3.XII.2008, Lot 153). An anonymous self-portrait, c.1800 (Museum voor Schone Kunsten Gent, inv. GENT 1964-B), shows a woman standing by her easel. Other pastels include F. J. Kaufmann's portrait of Melchior; self-portraits by Faustina Bracci, Gabrielle Capet, Rosalba Carriera and Jean Huber. An allegorical gouache by de Sompsois showing Mme du Barry painting Louis XV, surrounded by putti engaged in the fine arts, has one sitting on the floor, holding his strained canvas in one hand, reaching into a tray pastels lying beside him (1774; with Galerie Alexis Bordes 2016).

resting on a table, steadied by his right hand which also holds a blue pastel between thumb and forefinger; his tray of pastels, also on the table, reveals a limited palette reflected in the work.

One must of course be careful not to read too much into pastellists' self-portraits at work, as there is often an element of contrivance in the arrangements. Thus Elizabeth Ziesenis, by then surely Frau Lampe, shows herself in her oil self-portrait (fig. 6, Copenhagen) with a pastel of a lady and a miniature of a man, presumably her parents.³³⁰



Fig. 7 Elizabeth Ziesenis, *Selbstporträt* (Copenhagen)

All the evidence is that, rather than using a holder such as a porte-crayon, artists held the crayons directly: they were after all fashioned for this purpose, and were thicker than the natural chalks used in a porte-crayon: black, white and red chalks are almost always shown in the holders where artists are shown using the holder; they are then sketching an outline on canvas if not simply drawing on paper. An exception is Liotard's *autoportrait à la barbe* (1.49.1014, exhibited in 1752), where his porte-crayon has blue chalk at one end: this is probably for visual reasons rather than a reflection of studio practice. Some artists (e.g. Sharples) turned to natural chalks for

precision in profiles (*v.* §IV.7 *supra*), but it was impracticable to use the porte-crayon for multiple colours. The 1791 *Encyclopédie méthodique* explicitly states (*s.v.* Pastel) “on ne les manie pas à l'aide d'un porte crayon, mais avec les doigts”; and they explain that because of their consistency, pastel crayons need to be thicker than sanguine etc.³³¹

VI.2 Sittings

Descriptions of pastellists conducting their sessions range from Nanteuil (as described by Tempesti) to Perronneau (as discussed by Robbé de Beauveset, *v. infra*). Tempesti's testimony (in a manuscript entitled *Avverti e regole del maestro per ritrarre dal naturale in pastello* attached to Nanteuil's own *Maximes* on painting and engraving portraits, Biblioteca Marciana, Venice) is a particularly valuable account of his master's working methods, including his typical use of three sessions: in the first, he examined his subject and “pénétrait son esprit, tout en causant, de l'ensemble de sa physionomie, observant ce que sa figure devait donner à son portrait suivant l'éclat ou la qualité du personnage”. It was not until the third session that the portrait was given “l'expression et la vie”; during this session the master used all his wit to enliven his subject, seeking topics of conversation that would animate or amuse him, “estimant que les yeux reflétaient le cœur et que les mouvements du corps décelaient le caractère.” Such a technique was of course not restricted to pastellists: Vasari tells much the same story in relation to the execution of the *Mona Lisa*.³³²

This insistence on Nanteuil's psychological penetration of his subjects in an age preoccupied with spirituality foreshadows La Tour's approach a century later. La Tour's legendary ability to explore

³³⁰ I am most grateful to Veronika Gerhard (private communication, 11.XII.2015) for drawing this picture to my attention, and for suggesting the reattribution of the picture to Frau Lampe rather than her father to whom it is given in the Statens Museum for Kunst files.

³³¹ *Encyclopédie méthodique. Beaux-Arts*, Paris, 1791, II, p. 708.

³³² “Usovvi ancora questa arte, che essendo Monna Lisa bellissima, teneva mentre che la ritraeva, chi sonasse o cantasse, e di continuo buffoni che la facessino stare allegra, per levar via quell malinconico, che suol dar spesso la pittura a' ritratti che si fanno.” Vasari, *Le Vite...*, 1568 ed., repr. Milan, 1963, III, p. 403.

his subjects' souls was described by many authors: in the review of his obituary in the *Année littéraire*,³³³ the anonymous author mentioned that—

tandis qu'il ne semble occupé qu'à saisir la ressemblance de ses modèles, sa conversation vive, animée, spirituelle, charme l'ennui de l'attitude, et l'âme est peinte sur la toile avec autant d'énergie que les traits du visage.

One of the subjects over whom La Tour fussed to extremes was Belle de Zuylen, the future Mme de Charrière, who wrote to her friend Constant d'Hermenches in .VIII.1766 describing her three-hour sittings: “Je ne m'ennuie point, parce qu'il sait causer; il a de l'esprit, et il a vu bien des choses, il a connu des gens curieux.” (A month later he was still having difficulty with the eyes, and the first version was abandoned.)

Perronneau's approach to his sitters was described in three letters in 1757–59 by Robbé de Beauveset to his uncle Desfriches. The last of these noted again the artist's technique of animating the sitter:

Il a voulu que je lui récitasse des vers pendant sa composition, et je le voyais saisir avidement et transporter rapidement sur la toile tout le feu qui sortait de ma déclamation.

But the sessions were tiring, as Robbé complained:

Ah! mon cher oncle, que c'est un cruel métier d'être mannequin! Ce diable de Perronneau exigea, hier, de ma complaisance que j'endossasse la casaque de soye de mons Cochin qui, pendant ce tems-là était aux noces de M^{lle} Jombert, dont, par parenthèse, je n'ai pas été prié; il exigea, dis-je, en outre, que je tinsse le bras gauche tendu, ayant un porte-crayon entre l'index et le pouce, et que je restasse dans cette gênante attitude, la journée entière, mon dîner néanmoins prélevé sur ce tems-là. J'ai cru que le poids du levier que formait mon bras étendu emporterait ma clavicule. Jamais Spartiate n'a poussé si loin la patience. Je me suis tenu comme un terme dans cette gênante attitude, avec un beau serment cependant de refuser à jamais quiconque me proposerait de faire de ma carcasse un homme d'osier, et de me mannequiniser ainsi. ...

and again:

La séance de samedi m'a cruellement fatigué. Perronneau m'a tenu sur les jambes une demi-journée entière, toujours dans la même attitude. Mon nez lui a fait souffrir les douleurs de l'enfantement. Il dit qu'il renoncerait au métier, s'il fallait qu'il accouchât tous les jours de pareil nez. Il y trouve autant de finesse que Marcel trouve de choses dans un menuet. Il ne lui reste que l'habillement à achever.

The feeling was particularly noted by those who sat repeatedly, among them Benjamin Franklin, who replied to an admirer who wanted his portrait:³³⁴

I have at the request of Friends sat so much and so often to painters and Statuaries, that I am perfectly sick of it. I know of nothing so tedious as sitting hours in one fix'd posture.

Other artists employed the techniques of conversation and humour to put their clients at ease. Thus Schadow described Darbes at work:³³⁵

Da er mit seiner Komik, mit seinen drolligen Erzählungen und den theatralischen Gebärden immer in den Grenzen des Anstandes verblieb, so war er in Gesellschaften, unter den Künstlern insbesondere, immer angenehm.

Nothing could however replace the importance of personal friendship in portraiture. Just as Mengs was leaving for his second stay in Rome (1746–49), Friedrich August II. noted the particular perfection of the portrait of Domenico Annibaldi; Mengs explained that “c'est le portrait de mon ami, genre d'hommes que les Roi n'ont pas”, to which the Elector replied by asking him not to forget “de mettre l'ami dans mon portrait” in Rome.³³⁶

³³³ This review of Duplaquet's *Éloge* appeared in the revived *Année littéraire*, VIII, 1789, pp. 318–29; and was reprinted in *L'Esprit des journaux, français et étrangers*, XIX/3, mars 1790, p. 90.

³³⁴ Letter to Thomas Digges, 25.VI.1780; in *The papers of Benjamin Franklin*, XXXII, 1996, pp. 590–591.

³³⁵ Johann Gottfried Schadow, *Kunstwerke und Kunstansichten*, Berlin, 1987, p. 88.

³³⁶ Jean Auguste Lehninger, *Description de la ville de Dresde*, Dresden, 1782, p. 141.

Liotard, notoriously a perfectionist, could nevertheless adapt to the requirements of visitors. His portrait of Philip Yorke was completed in seven days in Paris in 1749, notwithstanding the difficulties his subject presented: “He tells me I have a difficult face to hit, & I will not answer that He will succeed better than others, but It shall not be my fault if He does not.”³³⁷ But when there was no immediate pressure from an impatient client, he could work far more slowly, as in the six months he spent in Vienna in 1777/78 making a copy of an earlier pastel of Mme Necker (*v.* §VI.5 *infra*).³³⁸

The fact that pastels did not need time to dry meant that portrait sessions could often be quicker than those required for oil painting, a feature which particularly appealed to royalty and other important sitters overwhelmed with demands for portraits (although this advantage is widely reported in the pastel literature, it does not, as so often claimed, imply that pastel portraiture takes less time than oil painting: simply that the sitting can be devoted entirely to the art and the interruptions fewer and shorter; either medium can take as much time as the artist chooses to achieve the desired finish). In a letter from Alexander Pope to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (c.1720), the poet asked her to sit for Sir Godfrey Kneller, but to minimise her inconvenience, he was to do her face “in crayons” at her house in Twickenham, to be transferred to canvas back at the studio. This too was how Vigée Le Brun made her portrait of Nicolas Beaujon, at what is now the Élysée palace rather than her own studio.³³⁹

The small ovals which Hugh Douglas Hamilton continued to make in his early years in Italy might be thought to have required only a few sittings, but John Ramsay’s diary records at least six sessions, each of one or two hours, from 27.IV.1784 before the diary ran out a week later; it is unclear if the portrait was complete by then.

An anonymous example, possibly Dutch, now in the musée Antoine-Lécuyer at Saint-Quentin (fig. 7) shows that the activity could be sociable, although the spectator on the right could be a teacher (the variety of materials for other modes of drawing and painting displayed on the table suggest this many not be an entirely realistic scene).



Fig. 7 Anon., *A pastellist at work* (Saint-Quentin)

Russell’s account of the sequence of executing the pastel portrait also emphasises the importance of getting the nose right, as does Chaperon, who points out (his §232) that this is the part of the

³³⁷ Philip Yorke, later Earl of Hardwicke, letter to his wife, 7.X.1749 (Bedfordshire and Luton Archives, L30/9/113/26–30, kindly signalled by Natasha Simanova, private communication, 14.VII.2020). However Yorke later states that Liotard put it too large a case, implying that the portrait was a miniature, not a pastel.

³³⁸ See Jeffares 2015i.

³³⁹ See Jeffares 2008.

face that we look at most often, and accordingly the most difficult to capture convincingly in portraiture.

Once the pastel is finished it would normally be immediately glazed and framed, to protect it from damage. In theory that would make it less likely to be subsequently altered. But there are many examples of later intervention. La Tour was notorious for reworking his pastels, often far later (such as his retrieval of his portrait of Restout from the Académie royale: *v.* Jeffares 2021f). Three particular reasons seem often to have led to later alterations to portraits, whether in oil or in pastel, although whether by the original artist may not always be easy to determine: the addition of later chivalric orders, usually for men;³⁴⁰ the alteration of unfashionable hairstyles, particularly when the high-piled styles of the 1770s became de rigueur;³⁴¹ and the ovalisation of portraits, again popular in the 1760s.³⁴²

VI.3 Artists' inventories

Archival documents such as artists' posthumous inventories and sale catalogues can provide some information about working practices, particularly of French artists. In addition to completed pastels or work in progress, there can be information about materials, tools, frames or storage. Boxes of pastels were sufficiently valuable to be itemised, and in some cases (e.g. La Tour's will) bequeathed specifically to pupils or other practitioners. Lay figures or mannequins appeared in other documents: those by Nicolas Ansiaume (also a pastellist) were particularly prized.³⁴³ "Plusieurs toiles à peindre au pastel" indicated that artists prepared stretched canvases before starting to work.³⁴⁴

Another example is that of Pierre Mérelle le fils, who worked both in pastel and oil. The inventaire (14.X.1782, AN MC XXVIII/497) by Jacques Charlier, Johann Anton de Peters and Guillaume Voiriot was relatively perfunctory, but there is more detail in the catalogue of the posthumous sale which took place at the hôtel Bullion, 27.I.1783 & seq. (Basan): the "ustensils de peintures" included (Lot 403): two mannequins; (404): an ebony pantograph; (405): "divers lots de crayons de pastel...ainsi que des morceaux de velin propres pour le pastel"; (408): "une boîte à couleurs avec plusieurs tiroirs remplis de pastels"; (410): "divers chassis de différentes formes & grandeurs, garnis de velin, propres pour le pastel."

One of the most interesting examples is the section devoted to "Meubles de peintre" in Charles-Antoine Coypel's posthumous sale (Paris, 27.III.1753, Lots 492–503). In addition to "Sept Tiroirs remplis de Pastels de meilleurs Fabriques; telles que celles de Moule, Charmeton & autres. Plus, un petit corps d'Armoire, contenant quatre Tiroirs, pareillement remplis de Pastels, lesquels se détailleront lors de la Vente" (Lot 502), there was a full suit of armour ("meuble nécessaire à un Peintre, & sur-tout à un Peintre de Portraits"), five mannequins, and several miniature "theatres" designed to allow the artist to assess the distribution of light on a landscape.

³⁴⁰ For example, Liotard's Jean Maritz [J.49.2084](#), probably made in 1746, while the cordon noir was only reçu in 1758. See also the discussion of Labille-Guiard's pastel of [Gibert](#) [J.44.193](#).

³⁴¹ F.-H. Drouais's Mlle de Verrières (see Baetjer 2019, no. 71) or the duchesse de Ruffec attributed to Allais (Ribeton 1992, no. D.25) are examples in oil, in pastel, Perronneau's Mme Legrix [J.582.1522](#). The practice was widespread, and by no means confined to pastel: a letter from the jeweller Vincent to prince Xavier de Saxe of 17.III.1782 acknowledges his commission to alter miniatures of himself and his morganatic wife "en changeant la coiffure de Madame la Comtesse pour la mettre à la mode", and points out the difficulties of doing so (Archives de l'Aube, Correspondance du prince Xavier, EE 1825/4).

³⁴² For an example in oil, Boucher's Mme de Pompadour (Boston); in pastel, Valade's Mme Pinson de Méneville [J.74.287](#). Not all these transformations were contemporary: a 1786 rectangular pastel by Thévenin appears to have been cut down to fit behind an oval frame within the last century.

³⁴³ One in the inventory of Louis-Joseph Lefebvre (17.II.1799, AN MC XXVIII/590) was valued at 60 francs, ten times as much as a landscape by Boucher. In the 1777 marriage contract for Rosalie Boquet, Mme Filleul (*q.v.*), a complete list of her belongings included items relating to painting of which the first listed was "Un Mannequin à ressorts propre à la peinture".

³⁴⁴ Also in the Lefebvre inventaire, *loc. cit.*

Pierre Simon (5.VI.1710) kept “six boetes de goberges servant à metre les pastelles estimées 30 sols” and “un corps de tiroir et une grande boete de sapin dans lequel corps de tiroir se sont trouvés des pastelles” (15 livres). Voltaire’s letter to Berger, 3.VII.1738 (cited §IV.13 *supra*) indicates that La Tour’s studio replica of his portrait was kept unframed; how it were protected is less clear.

VI.4 Equipment: physionotrices &c.

Some artists employed equipment of various types. It was said that, before starting a portrait, Maurice Mouton would measure all the details of his subjects with a wooden compass; but his ultra realist approach inspired ridicule. Towards the end of the eighteenth century there was a wave of interest in various machines intended to produce likenesses automatically. These included the “physionotrace” of Chrétien and Quenedey in France, and Storer’s Royal Accurate Delineator, used by Bateman and others in England. The devices could produce silhouettes, in cut paper etc., or of course they could be coloured in various media including pastel. Vast numbers of these were produced by artists such as Mrs Harrington, by whom few examples are known (but presumably were similar to the output of Susannah Sledge). Profiles in cut paper had earlier been developed by Nathaniel Bermingham. While many of the products of such devices can be easily spotted because of their formal, rigid nature, they may also have been employed by artists such as James Sharples; more surprisingly, Johann Heinrich Schröder was said by Bruun Neergaard to have done so. It is also possible that pantographic machines were used by copyists to make exact or reduced-scale images, although pastel surfaces made the methodology more complicated (see Copies in Chapter IV above).

VI.5 Rates of production

How long did a pastel take? The evidence indicates the widest possible range (*v.q.* §VI.2 *supra*). Vast numbers of itinerant pastellists advertised that they could create a pastel in a single session of perhaps half an hour. No doubt the results were of limited accomplishment, and the evidence above indicates that major pastellists required considerably longer. The question relates also to estimating the size of pastellists’ œuvre, and how much has been lost. There is little to suggest that the 4000 pastels which Jean-Baptiste Colson made over 24 years would have required lengthy attention, any more than Rienk Jelgerhuis’s 7763 portraits, but Saint-Michel’s claim to have made over 6000 pastels in a career of nearly 30 years is plausible.³⁴⁵ Although instantly recognisable, only about 1.5% of these have survived. John Saunders’s numbering system provides a more detailed chart of his progress around Britain (no. 1978 in 1758 was probably not his last). There is no reason to doubt the statement on the back of Weyler’s pastel of Bouvyer, an army officer, that it was done in two hours.

Reliable statistics for the survival of pre-1800 pastels are not easy to construct, but some order-of-magnitude estimates may be made from numbers in the *Dictionary*, the few known worklists left by pastellists and statistical sampling of appearances on the art market. These suggest that the 18,000 images currently catalogued in the *Dictionary* represent fewer than 3% of the professionally created works of the period, a proportion probably considerably lower than for work in other media.

As noted above (§VI.2), the literature frequently mentions that pastel unlike oil does not require time to dry, so that the work need not be interrupted and requires fewer séances de pose. But at the other end of the spectrum Archibald Skirving required up to 50 sittings for a portrait. By charging commensurately, he effectively priced himself out of the market. We also have the evidence from his correspondence of how Liotard progressed with the copy he made of his own portrait of the future Mme Necker seated with a book. The original work was delivered to his rooms in the Hofburg by 19.XI.1777. The copying occupied “bien du tems” (and there were few other commisions on this trip); there was no sitter to delay things, and it is clear from his regular

³⁴⁵ Few if any of Mrs Harrington’s 30,000 likenesses will have been in pastel.

reports that he proceeded systematically and had a clear, if over-optimistic, sense of his rate of progress: by 6.I.1778, he had done “nearly half”; a month later, “J’ay fini le haut de la figure, les fruits, la soucoupe, le verre et le vin, la table est presque faite, j’aurai encore à finir le bas de l’habit, la main et le livre.” By 14.II.1778, it was three-quarters done, and would require more than a month to finish. In the event it was not until 9.V.1778 that it was finished, and could be sent to the sitter’s husband; the work was not heard of again.³⁴⁶

VI.6 Studios

In many cases pastellists’ premises doubled as working studios and as showrooms where the finished products were displayed. Daniel Gardner insisted that sitters should not see their portraits until completed, and he had an expanding frame made to fit over his easel, which he fastened with lock and key to prevent their doing so.³⁴⁷

Some pastellists (e.g. Coypel, Hamilton, Liotard, Valade) were also significant collectors of or dealers in old master or other pictures, and their collections may have played a role in the practice of some of these artists. Cotes and Humphry both took expensive houses, tastefully furnished. The little we know of Perronneau’s trip to London suggests that the cost of his house in Suffolk Street may have been exorbitant.

An important description is that of William Hoare of Bath’s studio by the travel writer (and granddaughter of the physician and botanist Richard Richardson) Dorothy Richardson (1748–1819) during her journey³⁴⁸ to Bath in 1770: this lists the pictures in each room, starting with pastels of the artist’s four children in the first room and progressing to another where crayon portraits and fancy pieces alternated with three-quarter length oil portraits.

Fanny Burney also provides an account of her visits to Katherine Read’s studio in 1774 and 1775, with much less detail about the pictures. As with sittings at oil painters’, the social function could be taken to unexpected levels: it was at Read’s that Lady Susan Fox-Strangways took the opportunity of her sitting on Saturday 7.IV.1764 to elope with the penniless actor William O’Brien.

³⁴⁶ See Jeffares 2015i.

³⁴⁷ According to Williamson 1921, p. 43.

³⁴⁸ This manuscript is included in her copy of the *New Bath guide* of 1770, and is transcribed in Belsey 1987 (and also the Hoare article in the online *Dictionary*) who however was unable to trace the author. Marcia Pointon, in *Strategies for showing: women, possession, and representation in English visual culture, 1665–1800* (Oxford, 1997, pp. 89–130) included a chapter on Richardson based on the five volumes of travel writing now in the John Rylands Library; but she was unaware of Richardson’s trip to Bath. James Hamilton’s 2017 biography of Gainsborough quoted from the Bath manuscript without identifying the author further than Belsey had done.

VII. THE INSTITUTIONS

ARTISTS WORKING BEFORE 1800 faced a rather different environment than today. In this chapter we review the institutional structures in which pastellists worked and were trained. The analysis is necessarily national. In many cases portraiture was a protected trade, run by a guild which had rights to approve and award masterships, usually on the basis of approved “masterpieces” completed after apprenticeship and journeyman status. Variants of such a system prevailed in most European countries, often dating back to mediaeval times, but during the eighteenth century they were largely replaced by a different type of institution.

Academies have a far longer history than the Enlightenment with which they are often associated; a full discussion is beyond the scope of this work.³⁴⁹ Initially these were professional institutions established to put their members onto a higher level (both intellectually and socially³⁵⁰) than the old trade guilds which already regulated crafts in most countries (in some cases taking over the control functions of those guilds, and often providing experts qualified to give evidence in legal suits). The conflict between academy and guild was played out in more than one country and in various fora (including the law courts).

Most academies expanded into a training role, establishing schools of drawing and painting with life classes (giving the name of “academy” to nude drawings), examinations and the practice of membership (or reception) by submission of a masterpiece (*morceau de réception*); traditional apprenticeships had similarly involved the submission of a masterpiece as a requirement of admission to the guild. Academies, to a far greater extent than guilds, were involved in the organisation of public exhibitions, the most important (and often the only) opportunity for professional artists’ work to be seen by the general public.

A number of common themes are found in the organisation and development of academies in Europe. There was a notable geographical proliferation: many new foundations arose, particularly in the later eighteenth century. The election of foreign and visiting members helped the spread through Europe of phenomena such as pastel. Many observed a rigid hierarchy of genres, where history painting was considered more important than portraiture etc.; this was a reflection of their elevated intellectual aspirations. The importance of pastel within the academy also varied enormously. Many academies involved, and sometimes admitted, patrons and amateurs, and a higher proportion of their works were in pastel than those of professional artists. No academy was exclusively devoted to pastel, nor was it anywhere the dominant medium (although it may have been widely used in teaching).

Of course a great deal of teaching took place outside the academies, whether in the form of professional apprenticeships (the opportunities for which were more limited in pastel than in oil, since major artists did not have the same need for the mechanism of a studio) or as lessons given to wealthy amateurs and their children. A number of private schools also emerged, mainly known today from newspaper advertisements, many of which will be found referred to in specific artist articles in the *Dictionary*.

VII.1 The Netherlands and Belgium

In the Low Countries, trade guilds played the dominant role, and continued to do so during the eighteenth century. The *Antwerp* Sint-Lucasgilde, or Guild of St Luke (the name used in almost all cities, from a fifth century legend that the apostle painted the Virgin Mary), goes back to 1382,

³⁴⁹ There is extensive literature on the subject, with a good overall introduction in the *Grove art online*. For the specific relevance to pastel, see the individual notes on each city, with some eminent pastellist members, in the file [TOPOGRAPHY](#).

³⁵⁰ A number of painters were honoured with chivalric orders by their sovereigns. Few of these were however pastellists. Whether La Tour declined the order of Saint-Michel is discussed in my [Tropes in La Tour biographies](#).

encompassing a number of related trades. In 1663 David Teniers established the Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten van Antwerpen. From 1756 Beschey was dean of the guild, which was disbanded in 1773; he became professor-director of the Academie. Antwerp's first public exhibitions, or Salons, were not held until 1789, while Ghendt's started in 1792 (Bruxelles did not start until 1811). However the Société d'Émulation in Liège held exhibitions from 1779.

The Sint-Lucasgilde in *The Hague* existed from the fifteenth century, encompassing a number of related trades as well as fine art. A group of dissatisfied painters established the rival Confrerie Pictura in 1656; its records of payments for admission (typically 18 guilders) are supplemented by a manuscript register³⁵¹ compiled by one of its members, Pieter Terwesten, in 1776 (with additions to 1809) including useful information on each master. In 1682 the Haagsche Teekenacademie was formed as a drawing school; it was later incorporated into the Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten, Den Haag.

Ancient guilds existed in Delft, Rotterdam and many other cities. In *Haarlem*, the Sint-Lucasgilde was founded 1496 and reorganised in 1631. Pieter Teyler's collections formed the nucleus of the Teylers Foundation, the earliest public Dutch art museum, opened in 1784 with Wybrand Hendriks as curator.

Although the Sint-Lucasgilde in *Amsterdam* dates back to 1579, the first public drawing school was the Stadstekenacademie founded in 1765. Willem Writs (1732–1786), a watch and instrument maker, and a group of friends formed the Amsterdam society Sapientia et Libertate in 1771. Six years later this grew into the Maatschappij Felix Meritis, which moved in 1789 to a building at Keizersgracht 324, a “temple of the Enlightenment”, promoting the arts and sciences. Hodges and Tozelli were among its members.

Utrecht's Sint-Lucasgilde, founded in 1611, included framemakers and dealers as well as painters until in 1644 the Utrechtse schilderscollege was established, encompassing a drawing school.

Apart from its ancient Sint-Lucasgilde, *Leiden* had a Tekeningenacademie, founded in 1694 and run by the van Mieris family until the 1760s; in 1799 it was transformed into the society Ars Aemula Natura.

The Illustre School te *Maastricht* ran from 1683 to 1784. *Middelburg* had an ancient guild, as well as a Middelburgse Teeken Akademie by the 1780s. The Academie Minerva was formed in *Groningen* in 1798 to teach drawing and other skills.

The Académie libre des beaux-arts de *Bruges* was founded by a group of painters and amateurs in 1720 and took over the Loge des Bourgeois, a building dating back to the fourteenth century. Joseph van den Kerckhove was first professor, directing the drawing school; but it closed on his death four years later. Mathias de Visch (1702–1765) took over and reopened the academy in 1739, developing the Italianate and French genre styles. The building was burned down in 1755. De Visch died in 1765, and was succeeded by Garemijn who resigned in 1775 after a difference of opinion with his colleagues. He was replaced by Paul Joseph de Cock. Maria Theresia conferred the title “royale” on the Académie, which continued to be supported by Joseph II. and Napoléon.

VII.2 Italy

Italy, in many ways the spiritual home of the cultivated academy, had fewer examples of institutions in continuous existence than might be expected.

The Accademia e compagnia del disegno was founded in *Florence* in 1563 as a teaching institution; as early as 1706 (on the feast day of S. Luca) it held public exhibitions in which some pastels (by Luti) were shown. Further exhibitions including pastels took place in 1715, 1724, 1729, 1737 and

³⁵¹ Haags Gemeentearchief, Confrerie Pictura en Tekenacademie, cote 0164-01.

1767, but they were not regular.³⁵² The institution was succeeded by the Accademia di belle arti di Firenze in 1784 which had numerous foreign members.

The academy founded in *Bologna* in 1582 by the Carracci, known as the Accademia delli desiderosi or delli incamminati, was one of the most important teaching institutions in Italy. It became the Accademia Clementina in 1711.

The Accademia di San Luca of *Rome* was founded in 1593. Simon Vouet was president in 1624. In 1705 Rosalba Carriera was admitted on merit rather than as an *accademica d'onore*, the title normally given to women artists. In 1726 it took over the Accademia del nudo established by the cavaliere Conca around 1706. The Accademia degli arcadi, a literary academy founded 1690, included poets, composers etc.; it held meetings on the Bosco Parrasio on the Janiculum from 1723. Several foreign academies had branches in Rome. The Villa Médicis housed the Académie de France or École royale des beaux-arts à Rome, founded by Colbert in 1667; its directors included Vleughels and Natoire. In 1758 Preciado de La Vega was appointed the first director of the Academia de España en Roma. Luti's studio included numerous pupils such as Arnulphy. Other prominent teachers included Batoni and Anton von Maron.

The Accademia dei ricoverati was founded in *Padua* in 1599; Élisabeth-Sophie Chéron was a member in 1699. The Accademia di San Luca of *Milan* was founded 1620 within the Biblioteca Ambrosiana. The Accademia di *Brera*, with its pinacoteca, was founded in 1776 under Giuseppe Parini. An *accademia del disegno* was founded in *Perugia* by Stefano di Amadei before 1644. In *Turin*, the ancient Università dei pittori, scultori e architetti became the Compagnia di San Luca in 1652, and adopted the name of Accademia di belle arti in 1678. In 1778 it was relaunched by Vittorio Amedeo III as the Reale accademia di pittura e scultura with Laurent Pécheux as director and Bernero among the professors; Berger was a pupil. Porporati, a member since 1773, was appointed director of the gallery in 1797.

Carlo Cignani founded an *accademia del nudo* in *Parma* c.1681. When the Accademia Clementina was formed in 1706, Cignani was elected *principe* in absentia for life. The Accademia di belle arti di Parma was founded in 1752; honorary members included Rosalba Bernini, Isabelle de Bourbon-Parme and contessa Maggi. The court painter Baldrighi played an important role from 1756; his pupils included Ferrari and Cunningham. The Accademia *veronese* included Rotari as a member in 1734. The Accademia di belle arti of *Naples* was founded by Carlos III in 1752 as the Reale accademia del disegno.

The Accademia veneziana in *Venice*, or Veneta pubblica accademia di pittura, scultura e architettura, was established in 1756 with Piazzetta as its first president; Nogari was a founder member and president in 1762–63; Pavona beat Canaletto in the competition in 1763. Betti was a member until 1783. Exhibitions took place in the Piazza S. Marco on Ascension day and, more formally, in Campo S. Marco on 16 August. Few pastels are recorded.

VII.3 France – Paris

Throughout France community or craft guilds of painters and sculptors had survived, often from mediaeval times, and they continued to enjoy legal protection for their monopoly.

In *Paris* a system of working for the court by *brevet* (which circumvented the guild monopoly) largely fell into desuetude in the eighteenth century, although it probably still covered the pastellists employed by the Bâtiments du roi and Menus plaisirs: these were effectively government departments geared to producing portraits and miniatures intended as diplomatic gifts etc.

³⁵² See Borroni Salvadori 1974.

The Académie de Saint-Luc³⁵³ was a craft guild with a history dating back to the fourteenth century. Admission was nevertheless closely regulated (so that the irregular admission of Pierre Davesne, *q.v.*, caused considerable disturbance). It enjoyed the patronage of two members of the d'Argenson family, the marquis de Paulmy and the marquis de Voyer, and conducted public exhibitions. The rival Académie royale de peinture was founded in 1648 by Le Brun, who was recteur and chancelier; it received a royal warrant in 1655.³⁵⁴ There were initial discussions about merging the two bodies, but these broke down in 1654 and the académies remained in conflict. Mignard, premier peintre du roi, recteur, chancelier and directeur of the Académie de Saint-Luc, refused to enter his rival Le Brun's Académie royale.

Both bodies held public exhibitions: the salons of the Académie royale were held regularly in the Louvre (where it was housed) from 1737. Based on the number of livrets sold each year (rising from just under 8000 in 1757 to nearly 22,000 in 1787) has been estimated that annual attendance for the salon was of the order of 50,000, or well over 1000 visitors each day.³⁵⁵ The salon which took place in the Palais-Royal in 1673 appears to have been the first public exhibition anywhere to include a pastel – a female portrait by the now-forgotten Jean Garnier).

The seven salons of the Académie de Saint-Luc were held between 1751 and 1774, shortly before its dissolution (under pressure from the more influential Académie royale) in 1776.³⁵⁶ While these salons were held externally at various locations, giving the impression that the Académie de Saint-Luc had only a virtual existence, it did maintain premises (albeit far humbler than the Louvre), in a five-storey building in the Cité, 11 rue du Haut-Moulin, paroisse Sainte-Marie-Madeleine. The thirteenth-century chapelle Saint-Luc had originally been dedicated to saint Symphorien (and was built on the ruins of an even earlier chapelle de Sainte-Catherine), but after the abolition of that parish the building was ceded to the guild in 1704; they refurbished and decorated it, adding a painting of saint Luc over the altar.³⁵⁷ According to the 1776 dissolution inventaire, above the chapel and sacristy, on the second and third floors, were a tribune and some pictures; the bureau was on the fourth floor; a studio for life class was above, fitted with three rows of benches in an amphitheatre.³⁵⁸ Provision of free life classes was an important part of the function of an académie, and essential for the exemption from the *taxe de l'industrie* and other exemptions it enjoyed.³⁵⁹ The property was confiscated by the state in 1790, and sold 4 brumaire an IV; it became a private house until the whole area was demolished to make way for the Hôtel Dieu de la Cité c.1867. Figure 1 shows the chapelle Saint-Luc, clearly marked on the south side at the bend of the rue du Haut-Moulin in the 1754 *Plan détaillé de la Cité* by abbé Delagrive. Figure 2 shows a photograph taken by Charles Marville just before demolition, looking west along the rue du Haut-Moulin; the

³⁵³ The *communauté des maîtres-peintres et sculpteurs parisiens* had existed since before 1391. Its hostilities with the Académie royale commenced in the seventeenth century. In 1705 the Communauté established a school which became known as the Académie de Saint-Luc in 1723. It was exempt from the *dixième de l'industrie* tax levied on businesses (arrêt du conseil d'état, 27.XII.1729) until 1741 (*v. Corbon 1914*). Formal Salon exhibitions only started in 1752 (*v. Guiffrey 1915; Walczak 2010*). Guiffrey summarises the fragmentary documentation and membership lists; the 1764 list on which he bases much of his information is no longer known, while a few of the annual membership lists are digitized on the AN website.

³⁵⁴ Among various accounts of the Académie royale, that of Michel 2012 should be singled out, although it is not designed as a handbook of factual data: that is more the intention of Gudrun Valerius, *Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture 1648–1793: Geschichte, Organisation, Mitglieder*, 2010 (which is not widely available, and has its own imperfections). Sandt 2019 covers a number of different topics. Tours 2000 is very helpful. The *Procès-verbaux* and older references, such as Vitet 1861, are of use and are easily consulted online.

³⁵⁵ Van de Sandt 2019, p. 198.

³⁵⁶ Nevertheless a receipt from the communauté shows that Vigée Le Brun include for her annual capitation fee of 55 livres 8 sols 4 deniers as late as 1789 (AN F/7/5651/9). In the same file is an admission ticket issued the same year by the Académie de Saint-Luc to visit the engravers' exhibition at Saint-Jean-Porte-Latine (6.v.1789).

³⁵⁷ Guiffrey 1915 omits the early history of the building; see Jacques-Antoine Dulaure, *Histoire physique, civile et morale des environs de Paris...*, 6^e éd., Paris, 1837, VI, p. 207; see also Félix & Louis Lazare, *Dictionnaire administratif et historique des rues et monuments de Paris*, Paris, 1844–49, p. 472.

³⁵⁸ Summarised in Guiffrey 1915, pp. 93f.

³⁵⁹ See Guichard 2002.

chapelle Saint-Luc is just beyond the bend at the end of the road, but the photograph gives an impression of the narrow streets and rather less glamorous environs compared with the Louvre.

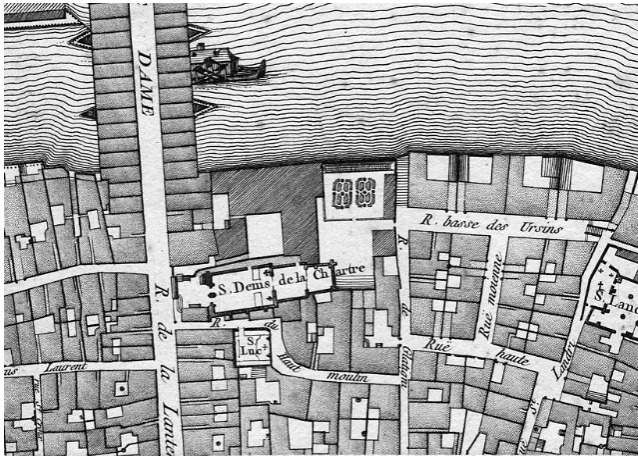


Fig. 1 Abbé Delagrive, Plan détaillé de la Cité (1754)



Fig. 2 Rue du Haut Moulin, c.1865

The statistics suggest that the less prestigious academy was of greater significance for portraiture and for pastellists, reflecting the more vocational role of its artists.³⁶⁰ At the Académie royale, portraits made up about a quarter of the pictures exhibited, and about a quarter of the portraits were in pastel – that is, about 7% of the total number of pictures exhibited at these salons throughout the century. At the salons of the Académie de Saint-Luc, however, pastels made up half the portraits, which in turn made up half the pictures shown, so pastels represented a quarter rather than a sixteenth of the output.

Both salons were the subject of contemporary journalism, although those in the Louvre attracted a great deal more attention; the number of reports increased vertiginously towards the end of the century. Although these documents have been the subject of a vast amount of academic attention, in relation to portraiture and to pastels in particular the value in most of them lies often in nothing more than a few details (names of sitters, description of medium etc.) omitted from the livrets (commentary is usually trite and stereotyped); nevertheless the pre-1800 [EXHIBITIONS](#) file contains a transcription of every passage that has been found relating to pastels, including several not found in modern bibliographies (the coverage of Paris salons in foreign press is often overlooked). Even Diderot is not at his best with pastel.

By the middle of the century, the enthusiasm for pastel led to a reaction by the oil painters who dominated the Académie royale de peinture. One widely overlooked salon critique, the letter to the author of the *Jugemens sur quelques ouvrages nouveaux* (IX, 1745, pp. 291ff), alleged that a cabal of académiciens had formed; jealous of La Tour's success, they had propagated the idea that pastel was an inferior medium. At some stage around 1746 decisions were taken to limit the aspirations of the pastellists by requiring *morceaux de réception* to be in oil. These decisions were not minuted in the *Procès-verbaux* at the time;³⁶¹ but Gougenot 1749, in a footnote about Alexis Loir (1712–1785), notes that his progression to reception as a pastellist was blocked “parce qu’il y avoit été résolu de ne plus recevoir de Peintre en Pastel”. While the footnote was added to the 1749 edition, it plainly expands the remark in the 1748 edition, “Quand de jeunes sujets se présenteront avec de tels talens,

³⁶⁰ Out of the 1650 pictures recorded at the seven Salons de Saint-Luc, nearly 400 were pastels. The 22 official Salons under the Ancien Régime included approximately the same number of pastels out of a much larger total of pictures. Nearly 90 pastels were in the 1752 Salon de Saint-Luc alone, while the number of pastels included in each of the official salons never exceeded the 25 shown in 1763. These numbers involve some guesswork, both as to the numbers of pictures included in descriptions such as “plusieurs portraits sous le même numéro” and as to the medium in which some works were executed.

³⁶¹ Or elsewhere as far as I am aware; Michel 2012 (p. 104) comes to the same conclusion, citing only the indirect mention in Gougenot 1749, p. 120f. For the reduction in the price of portraits imposed by Tournhem in 1747, see below.

l'Académie ne sévira plus sans doute plus contre le Pastel.”³⁶² That this antipathy was well known is evidenced in a comment by Voltaire in a letter to Lekain (30.VI.1764), probably referring to Lenoir: “vous saurez qu'on ne veut point de portrait en pastel à l'académie; nous pensons tout différemment à Ferney.” The formal existence of these rules is further evidenced by the minute when Loir was finally *reçu*, 27.II.1779, the *Procès-verbaux* explicitly adding “sans déroger...aux délibérations précédemment faites relativement au pastel”. The effects of these strictures are evident from the *livrets*. Some artists simply dropped out; others turned to the Académie de Saint-Luc.

Membership of the humbler institution was also significantly larger: the *Annuaire* de 1764 listed the protecteur and vice-protecteur, four directeurs, six recteurs (half painters, half sculptors), 36 active and 34 retired professeurs, 821 maîtres (who included artisans, house painters and decorators as well as artists), 11 widows of former directors, 91 widows and 97 “demoiselles” (presumably dependant daughters of deceased members) making up a total community of 1140 names. By 1786, despite the dissolution, another list indicated 239 new maîtres since 1771, 741 previously listed “maîtres, veuves et demoiselles”, 33 specialised maîtres, and “une quarantaine de demoiselles peintres.” In contrast the *Almanach royal* for 1766 listed at the Académie royale 1 protecteur, 7 actual, associate and former directeurs, recteurs; 8 honoraires amateurs and 9 honoraires associés libres; 21 professeurs and associates; 11 conseillers; 47 academicians. Of these only Mme Vien was female. It is often reported that the Académie royale limited the number of women admitted to four: the actual regulation, passed 28.IX.1770 (at the end of the month in which Mme Roslin was admitted), imposed the limit with exceptions to be made for “talens extraordinairement distingués” if unanimously approved; the problem seemed to be lack of suitable candidates.

The regulations gave the Académie de Saint-Luc an effective monopoly, at least in theory: for example, Article III of the *Nouveaux reglemens accordez aux directeurs, corps & communauté de l'académie de saint Luc...*, issued in 1738, provided that—

Pourront & auront seuls lesdits Maîtres ainsi reçus la faculté d'exercer dans toute l'étendue de la Ville, Fauxbourgs & Banlieue de Pais, lesdits Arts de Peinture, Sculpture, Dorure & Marbrerie, faire & fabriquer à la plume avec encre ou crayon, au pinceau, à huile, à fresque, détrempe & en pastel, tous Desseins lavez ou non lavez, Tableaux, Portraits, Ornemens, Miniatures, Grisailles, Camayeux, Mosaïques, & généralement tous Ouvrages de Peinture sur papier, carton, vélin, toile, canevas, étoffes, métaux, pierre, marbre, cailloux, agathes, lapis, yvoire, émaux; cristaux & autres matières.

The Académie de Saint-Luc pursued transgressions with varied levels of enthusiasm. Liotard was obliged to exhibit there during his visit in 1753.³⁶³ Jean-Baptiste Pourvoyeur (*q.v.*), an élève protégé at the Académie royale, relied upon an ancient privilege accorded to apprentices of artists housed in the Louvre to become masters without the normal requirements and fees imposed by the guild. He was sued by the maîtres-peintres de l'Académie de Saint-Luc for infringing their monopoly. He initially lost at the Châtelet in 1762, but on appeal, the artists resident in the Louvre, mostly painters of the Académie royale, seeing their own position under threat, came to his rescue: Cochin enlisted the help of the avocat-général Séguier to secure victory. Despite this Pourvoyeur adopted pseudonyms for his later press advertisements.

Louise-Élisabeth Vigée (not yet Mme Vigée Le Brun), the daughter of an adjoint à professeur of the Académie de Saint-Luc, found that setting up as a portraitist was against the law, and in 1774 had to seek the protection of the Académie de Saint-Luc, where she was *reçue* (par mérite) in 1774 on delivery of a morceau de réception. The case of the Mlles Surugue concerned whether minor

³⁶² Michel goes further (*loc. cit.* and pp. 237, 239), suggesting the measure was a ruse to deflect the application of Liotard. This seems improbable as Liotard had only just returned to Paris, and the strictures remained long after he ceased to be a threat, and were presumably in place at the time of Loir's agrément in 2.IV.1746 and that of Perronneau, 27.VIII.1746, when he was set two oils.

³⁶³ See note above concerning the Académie royale's strictures against admitting pastellists. Liotard's admission to the Académie de Saint-Luc is not recorded, but *v. infra*. He had competed unsuccessfully for the 1732 prix at the Académie royale, six years after his apprenticeship ended.

trades such as illumination (apparently hand colouring prints in watercolour or gouache) were covered by the Académie's monopoly; Cochin thought it unreasonable to ask people to pay 600 livres for a maîtrise which entitled them to earn only 12 francs a day.³⁶⁴ In 1775, one André-Joseph Salmon (*q.v.*) had his tools and pictures confiscated by an officer of the Châtelet on the application of the Académie de Saint-Luc (that they were licentious may have been an additional spur to action), but succeeded in recovering them when the Académie was suppressed. After this, the need for an outlet for younger artists was filled by a succession of ephemeral salons, among them the Salons de la Jeunesse, held in the place Dauphine,³⁶⁵ the Salon du Colisée in 1776; and Pahin de La Blancherie's Salon de la Correspondance with its accompanying *Nouvelles de la république des lettres et des arts*.

For artists in the Académie royale, the greatest privilege was the award of lodgings in the Louvre. There were some 28 of these "Illustres" at any one time, housed underneath the Grande Galerie since the days of Henri IV; but many of the artists singled out for this honour during the reign of Louis XIV were concerned as much with the decorative arts as with the grand history painting that figures more prominently in modern studies of eighteenth century art. Very few pastellists enjoyed this privilege: among them were Coypel, Chardin, La Tour and Silvestre. Vivien was accommodated in the Gobelins, although he made portraits of many of the illustres in 1704.³⁶⁶ The award was made by brevet: La Tour's was granted 10.III.1745 (see La Tour [DOCUMENTS](#)), filling the place of a deceased valet de chambre-horloger du roi; five years later he was granted a superior set. Loriot was granted no. 7 in 1770, between La Tour and Montucla, the censeur royal. Despite several applications, both Marigny and d'Angiviller rejected Perronneau's requests for lodgings in the Louvre. Ducreux was awarded an apartment in 1793, but unable to take possession immediately. Labille-Guiard made repeated requests from 1785, but d'Angiviller considered the Louvre an unsuitable place for women (he was particularly opposed to establishing a school for young ladies there); she was in compensation granted a pension of 1000 livres, and eventually (1802) a studio in the Collège des Quatre-Nations.

The role of the Académie changed radically when the doors of the official Salon du Louvre were thrown open to all following the Revolution. The decrees or laws of Allarde and Le Chapelier passed 2.III.1791 and 14.VI.1791 effectively abolished all the monopolies of trade guilds, corporations or communities in all walks of life.

The Académie royale had a strong teaching function, dominated by the École royale des élèves protégés with influential teachers such as Vien; annual prizes were awarded. There were a number of other drawing schools in Paris, among them the École de la rue Montmartre, where Vien taught David, and the École gratuite de dessin founded by Bachelier in 1765. A number of other specialised institutions taught drawing, and trained or employed pastellists: among them were the École des ponts et chaussées (founded 1747, directed by Jean-Rodolphe Perronet until 1794); and the Institution des sourds-muets (founded by the abbé de l'Épée c.1760).

Other institutions connected with pastel included the Manufacture royale des Gobelins (founded under François I^{er}; Le Brun established an école de modèle vivant,³⁶⁷ suppressed in 1792) and the

³⁶⁴ See the correspondence in Guiffrey 1915. The terms of membership of the Académie de Saint-Luc were set out in arrêts du Conseil of 3.XI.1767 and 2.II.1768 [[ark:/12148/bpt6k1043191c](https://doi.org/10.12148/bpt6k1043191c)]. The sons and sons-in-law of former directors would thenceforward pay 63 livres at reception; sons, sons-in-law and husbands of the widows of maîtres, 153 livres; apprentices, 300 livres; "aspirans", 403 livres (there were particularly complicated rules also for women, depending on their husband's status).

³⁶⁵ The origins of the place Dauphine exhibitions go back to the early eighteenth century. However pastellists may have been reluctant to exhibit their work in the open air: the *Mercure de France* noted "on dédaigne d'exposer aux injures de l'air des morceaux précieux en tout genre" (VI.1725, p. 1403; cited Sandt 2019, p. 65).

³⁶⁶ See my [ESSAY](#) on Thuret for a discussion of the situation in 1704, based on the lists in Germain Brice, *Description nouvelle de la ville de Paris*, 5^e éd., 1706, I, pp. 99ff. In the 9^e éd., 1752, the lists are found from p. 167on, but are very outdated (Thuret who still appears had died in 1738). Scott 2016 reproduces contemporary plans showing the layout.

³⁶⁷ According to abbé de Fontenai (*Dictionnaire des artistes...*, 1776, I, p. 10), "le directeur fait dessiner & peindre au pastel, deux heures par jour, ceux qui sont destinés & attachés à la fabrique de la manufacture. Il est encore permis à tous ceux qui le desirent, d'y aller prendre des leçons." This may

Sèvres Manufacture royale de porcelaine employed several pastellists; Bachelier was directeur, while Caton, a porcelain painter, made pastel portraits. At Beauvais, the directeur, Oudry, established an extramural free drawings school for young inhabitants of Beauvais; he published³⁶⁸ a prospectus including a provision which probably reflected broad practices in artistic training:

Et pour mieux inculquer les principes qui regardent la couleur, ceux des Ecoliers qui auront fait des progress bien saillans dans l'Art du Desseing, seront exercés en l'étude de ladite couleur, en travaillant au Pastel & d'après les Tableaux de Sa Majesté.

The title of peintre du roi³⁶⁹ was used somewhat confusingly. It did not of course mean that the artist had painted the king, from life or otherwise: as d'Arnoult remarks, “Perronneau, peintre du roi, n'a pas peint le roi.” It could be conferred by brevet (the only route before the foundation of the Académie royale, and used also by Nanteuil) as well as by membership (strictly *réception* rather than *agrément*) of the Académie royale: so for example Liotard, who prints the qualification in the livret of the salons de Saint-Luc in which he exhibited, presumably derived the right from having been engaged to paint the royal family directly (through the Maison du roi or Bâtiments du roi). As a pupil (*alloué*, not *apprenti*) to Massé,³⁷⁰ he may have been eligible to take advantage of an arrêt du parlement de Paris of 14.V.1664 which permitted pupils of academicians who had completed three years of training to claim maîtrise in any town in France, including Paris.³⁷¹ It has been suggested that the abuse of the title was widespread, and that the Académie royale seems to have done little to protect it: Charles-Germain de Saint-Aubin noted in his memoirs that at the time of his marriage, in 1751, “Je pris alors le titre de Dessinateur du Roi, que personne ne me contesta.”³⁷² No doubt in informal contexts abuses occurred; but a search of the documents indexed in the Minutier central suggests otherwise: the unfamiliar names are largely those of employees at the Gobelins and similar institutions.³⁷³

The Académie royale enforced religious qualifications quite strictly, with a number of expulsions of protestant artists (some of whom were readmitted on abjuration) in 1681. Otherwise, as the records of the Académie make clear, the protestant members – Boit, Lundberg, Schmidt, Rouquet and Roslin – were all admitted by specific royal command.³⁷⁴

VII.4 France – provinces

Outside Paris, institutions were slower to get off the ground, although the guild monopoly still applied. The local guild of painters in Cambrai jealously guarded theirs, as the pastellist Gossuin (*q.v.*) discovered in a legal case that hinged on whether pastel was painting or not.

The first regional French institution on the model of the Paris Académie, the académie de peinture de *Lyon* was established in 1676 on the initiative of Thomas Blanchet with support from Coysevox.

have been a reference to Clément Belle, professeur de dessin des ouvriers et apprentis de la manufactures des Gobelins, appointed in 1763 after the death of Sébastien Le Clerc.

³⁶⁸ *Mercur de France*, .IV.1750, p. 168ff.

³⁶⁹ That of Premier peintre du roi was however quite specific: a position held by one artist at a time, it conferred nobility on the holder and his descendants.

³⁷⁰ Marandet 2003b mistakenly terms the contract he published as one of apprenticeship. For the distinction, see Thillay 2002, pp. 185ff: an “alloué” was typically a compagnon or journeyman who had already served an apprenticeship. A comparison of the contract with that of La Tour, also discovered by Marandet, shows the difference: La Tour was apprenticed aged 15 for six years with a premium payable, Liotard aged 21 for three years with no payment.

³⁷¹ Vitet 1861, p. 274; see also Antoine Schnapper, “L'Académie: enseignement et distinction des mérites”, in Tours 2000, p. 68. The Procès-verbaux include a number of seventeenth-century cases where the issue of the necessary certificate for this procedure was minuted; the absence of later minutes may indicate that the procedure had fallen away, or no longer required minuting.

³⁷² The manuscript is reproduced in Goncourt 1880, I, p. 400; see also Michel 2012, p. 112. In the marriage contract of 6.I.1751 (AN MC CV/1235) he is indexed simply as dessinateur.

³⁷³ Among other examples is that of Henry-Philippe-Bon Coqueret, peintre du cabinet du roi, who is listed as an elector for Versailles as “peintre du roi” (*Journal de Versailles*, suppl., 8.V.1790).

³⁷⁴ Vitet 1861, *passim*.

According to the *Almanach civil, politique et littéraire de Lyon* for 1754, an Académie des beaux-arts was established in 1713 for the purposes of holding concerts and lectures concerning the fine arts; it received royal letters patent in 1724. In 1758 it merged with another society to form the Académie des sciences, belles-lettres et arts de Lyon; this was dissolved in 1793. A salon was held in 1786. Members included Barat and Lonsing. An École royale gratuite de Lyon or École publique de dessin ran between 1756 and 1793 and enjoyed the patronage of Jacques de Flesselles, intendant de Lyon; Nonnotte was its leading light. Berjon, leader of the Lyon flower painters, taught there.

The Académie de *Nîmes*, founded in 1682, was primarily devoted to local history, but commissioned portraits such as that of its secrétaire Séguier made by Barat.

The Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture de *Bordeaux* was established in 1691 but became inactive c.1709. A new Académie de peinture, sculpture et architecture civile et navale was established in 1768, with founder members including Batanchon, the first recteur, and Dambielle; the amateur Lienau also played a role in establishing the statutes. Exhibitions were held between 1771 and 1787. It received a royal patent in 1779.

The Académie de peinture et de sculpture de *Nancy* was established in 1702 by Leopold I^{er} and was run by Claude Charles until its closure in 1737. It was revived by Stanisław Leszczyński. During the revolution it was suppressed and its collections transferred to the musée de Nancy.

The Académie de peinture et sculpture de *Marseille* was established in 1753; its founders included Kapeller, who was directeur-recteur from 1771, succeeded by Coclens van Wyck. Bachelier became directeur perpétuel. Associates included Marianne Loir and Arnulphy in 1783.

An Académie de peinture et sculpture was established in *Valenciennes* in 1782.

Throughout France in the reign of Louis XVI, regional drawing schools proliferated, often with links to traditional académies. Some of these initiatives started earlier: Bernard Dupuy du Grez established an École publique de dessin in *Toulouse* which closed on his death in 1720. MM. Rivalz, Crozat and Cammas persuaded the capitouls to fund such a school from 1726, turning it into a perpetual institution in 1738. In 1746 the Société des beaux-arts was established; five years later this was awarded a royal charter, becoming the Académie royale de peinture, sculpture et architecture, with 72 members, regular exhibitions and numerous students.

The Académie des sciences, belles-lettres et arts de *Rouen* received letters patent in 1744. It played a less significant role than the École royale, gratuite et académique de dessin, de peinture, de sculpture et d'architecture founded by Descamps on an Enlightenment model, influenced also by the Dublin Society schools; it was officially recognised in 1749, and was responsible for the education of hundreds of artists.

The Académie des belles-lettres, sciences et arts de *Dijon* was established in 1765; Greuze was among its members. The École de dessin founded by Devosge in 1767 produced numerous pastellists. An école de dessin was established in *Aix-en-Provence* in 1765 with funds from the duc de Villars; Arnulphy was appointed assistant director. Wyrsh established the École de peinture et de dessin de *Besançon* under the patronage of M. de Lacoré; courses commenced in 1774. Lenoir succeeded Wyrsh in 1786, the intendant demanding “un artiste de réelle valeur”; however the school was never raised to the level of académie. The school received a new lease of life when Jourdain took over in 1807. A drawing school was established in *Clermont-Ferrand* by Gault de Saint-Germain; Degeorge studied there from 1793.

An École gratuite de dessein was established in *Lille* in 1755, closely followed by schools of architecture and mathematics. Watteau de Lille was the best-known teacher; it numbered Dupont-Watteau, Masquelier, Jacquerie and Dusillion among its students. An Académie des arts was established in due course, with a grande salle built in 1766; here annual salons were held between 1773 and 1788. There were strict rules for admission and submitting morceaux de réception (a

certain Lemoine, *q.v.*, who exhibited pastels at the salon de Lille in 1773, caused complaint since “[il] a joui trois ans des prérogatives attachés au Corps des Supplians, sans pour cela avoir fini son morceau de reception”). An École publique et gratuite de dessin was established in *Nantes* in 1757, run by Volaire père who gave lessons to “tous ceux qui se présentent, rue de Briard”. Hussard became director in 1791. The École municipale de dessin de *Troyes* was established in 1773; Batanchon was professeur. Joseph Melling established and directed an école de dessin at *Strasbourg* in 1776. An École gratuite de dessin was in existence at *Saint-Malo* by 1789; Peynaud was directeur for some 18 years.

Not all of these ventures prospered. The Société des beaux-arts de *Montpellier* was formed in 1779 (Villiers was among some thirty associés fondateurs); it arranged exhibitions (in 1779 and 1784) and provided teaching and prizes. The vicomte de Saint-Priest was président and lent a number of pictures to the 1779 salon. Gamelin was appointed directeur in 1780, but soon resigned. Financial difficulties also contributed to its demise in 1787. The École royale-académique de peinture in *Poitiers* held exhibitions in 1776 and 1777.

Other educational establishments followed. An École académique was established in *Reims* in 1677. Clermont, dit Ganif taught at the drawing school from 1762. An Académie de dessin was founded in *Mons* in 1780 but closed in 1794. It was followed by École centrale du département de *Jemappes* 1797, of which Hallez was named professor in 1796. The first Maison d'éducation de la Légion d'honneur was established in *Écouen* by Napoléon in 1807 along the lines of Saint-Cyr. Mme Campan was headmistress, with Mme Swagers as drawings teacher. The abbaye de Penthemont included a girls' school for the nobility; several pupils received lessons from Jean-Baptiste Antoine (*q.v.*).

VII.5 Switzerland

Calvin established an academy in *Geneva* in 1559. An École publique de dessin was opened in 1751; Ferrière and Firmin Massot were pupils. Although Liotard was based there from 1757, he played no part in teaching. In 1769 the painter and portraitist Nicolas-Henri de Fassin, with support from Tronchin, taught young artists om Geneva.³⁷⁵ The Société des arts was founded in 1776; members included Arlaud-Jurine. *Bern* had a drawing school since the 1680s, when Joseph Werner established one. Johann Grimm's drawing school was taken over by Aberli in 1747.

VII.6 Germany

Germany's political structure of “Kleinstaaterei” meant that practices varied widely across the nation, and often depended on the ruler's personal enthusiasm for the arts. In the baroque period, painting had been used as part of a political programme of Ansehen und Pracht, particularly by the Wittelsbach family in Bavaria, Köln and Bonn.³⁷⁶ At a far more domestic level, the prolific Bach family of musicians and painters played a major role at the court of *Meiningen*. Christiane Luise Gräfin zu Solms-Laubach was an amateur pastellist in *Laubach*; she was a pupil and correspondent of Chodowiecki. But the development of academies as opposed to patronage by princely courts was a different matter.

Among the oldest was the *Nürnberg* Akademie der bildenden Künste, or Malerakademie, was founded in 1662 and directed by the astronomer Georg Christoph Eimmart, succeeded in 1705 by Johann Daniel Preißler who also founded a Zeichenschule für Handwerkslehrlinge in 1716.

In *Berlin*, the Academie der Mahler-, Bildhauer- und Architectur-Kunst was founded in 1696; it was renamed the Königlich-Preußische Akademie der Künste und mechanischen Wissenschaften in 1704, and in 1790 became the Königliche Akademie der bildenden Künste und mechanischen

³⁷⁵ R&L, p. 25.

³⁷⁶ See [ESSAYS/Gerimberghen](#).

Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Romandon was one of its first professors in 1696. Vertue gives an account of it in his notebook.³⁷⁷ Pesne was appointed director in 1722, succeeded by Lesueur in 1756, Rode from 1783 and, from 1797, Chodowiecki; his correspondence is a major source of information about numerous resident and visiting artists in Berlin. But the interest in pastel came quite late: in the mid-1770s Bergius reported only two artists competent in the medium (Bardou and Krüger), and that there were few connoisseurs interested in it (Bardou left for Warsaw at this time). Annual salons along the Paris model were conducted from 1786, and with them a revival of interest in pastel. A Künstler-Vereins zu Berlin existed around 1800; Tangemann was a member.

Friedrich August II.'s enthusiasm for Carriera led to the formation of one of the great pastel collections in *Dresden*. The Gemäldegalerie became a fertile teaching ground for pastellists, with numerous copies after Mengs, Liotard etc. A Zeichen- und Malerschule had been established in 1680, one of the earliest in Germany; under August der Starke this became an academy in 1697 (Louis de Silvestre was director from 1726), named in 1764 the Allgemeine Kunst-Academie der Malerey, Bildhauer-Kunst, Kupferstecher- und Baukunst. Exhibitions were held there from 1764 on. An account appeared in the *Zeitung für die elegante Welt*, 21.VII.1807, of Napoleon's visit to the Pastellkabinett, where he noted the Mengs Amor and the maréchal de Saxe. The *Leipziger Kunstakademie* was founded in 1763 with Oeser its main teacher. It held exhibitions annually, from 1764, during the fairs. From 1773 it held joint exhibitions with the Dresden Akademie.

Caroline Luise Markgräfin von Baden-Durlach, a pupil of Liotard, was an enthusiastic and talented amateur; her work was guided by Melling, court painter in *Karlsruhe* from 1757. Her widower Karl Friedrich von Baden founded a Zeichenakademie in *Baden-Baden* in 1785, placed her collections (which now form the nucleus of the Kunsthalle) at its disposal; Becker was its director and Hofmaler in the court of Baden. Friedrich der Große's sister, Wilhemine Markgräfin von Bayreuth, established *Bayreuth* as a cultural centre, building or reconstructing palaces, theatres and opera houses, as well as founding the university at Erlangen, which started as the Academia Fridericiana in 1742. An amateur pastellist herself, she assembled a collection of pastels at Bayreuth by Roslin, Liotard and Hagelgans around 1750. Reuß taught at the Akademie 1756–63.

In *Augsburg* the Kaiserlich Franciscianischen Akademie freier Künsten und Wissenschaften published a periodical, *Die reisende und correspondirende Pallas*, from 1755, directed by Johann Daniel Herz von Herzberg.

The Académie de peinture et de sculpture de Cassel (*Kassel*) was founded in 1777 by the Landgraf Friedrich II. as part of his efforts to establish industry and scholarship after the Seven Years' War. It held exhibitions from 1778 at least to 1782.³⁷⁸ J. H. Tischbein taught there; his daughter Amalie, Frau von Apell was made an honorary member in 1780. Böttner was Direktor after 1781. The constitution was probably not untypical of many of these European institutions. Membership was in three categories: full; a second class, reserved for painters who specialize in portraits, landscapes or flower pieces, pastellists, enamellists, engravers – and ladies; and a third class, which included students and members of the public, “[die] geschmackvolle Künste ausüben”. “Liebhaber” were in the first rank, according to the Satzung, but were treated as in the second in reports.

The Kurfürstlich Pfälzische Akademie der Maler-, Bildhauer- und Baukunst was founded in *Düsseldorf* in 1773 by Carl Theodor. Die Staatliche Zeichenakademie *Hanau* was established by Wilhelm IX. von Hessen-Kassel in 1772 for the purposes of training gold and silversmiths; Westermayr was a pupil. Peter Anton Verschaffelt was director of the *Mannheimer Kunstakademie*;

³⁷⁷ Notebook A.y, *Walpole Society*, 30, 1951–52, p. 164. The reference to learning “a good handling of their Crayons” for near-beginners is unlikely to signify pastel.

³⁷⁸ Few documents survive, and the lists of pastellists exhibiting in 1779 and 1780 in the EXHIBITIONS file are derived from the typed copy in Wilhelmshöhe of a report in the *Fürstl. Hessen-Casselische Staats- und Gelehrten-Zeitung*, 11.III.1780, pp. 1–8. I am extremely grateful to Veronika Gerhard for providing me with the relevant extracts (2015). For the constitution, see Hermann Knackfuß, *Geschichte der Königlichen Kunstakademie zu Kassel. Aus den Akten der Akademie zusammengestellt*, Kassel, 1908.

pupils included the pastellists Mannlich and Moosbrugger. An academy was founded in Breslau (*Wrocław*) by Friedrich Wilhelm II. in 1791, with Carl Bach as first rector.

VII.7 Austria and Eastern Europe

A private academy was opened in *Vienna* by Peter Strudel in 1688, and recognised by Leopold I. in 1692. Karl VI. reestablished it in 1726 with Jacob van Schuppen as head. A rival Kupferstecherschule was founded by Jakob Matthias Schmutzer 1766. In 1772 Kaunitz merged all the art schools into the “k. k. freye, vereinigte Akademie der bildenden Künste”. Under Joseph II. a system of examination and reception pieces was introduced. Frau Beyer was admitted 1771. Teachers included Füger and Lampi. The Militäarakademie was established by Maria Theresia in 1752; Albrecht was Zeichenlehrer c.1785.

Prague’s Akademie für bildende Kunst was established in 1799, with Bergler its first director.

In *Warsaw* Stanisław August engaged Bacciarelli to head his fine arts programme in 1766. Although plans for an Academy of Fine Arts were not implemented, Bacciarelli established a large workshop at the royal castle.

Russia was slow to follow European artistic trends, its first forays into pastel relying on visiting artists. The Académie des beaux-arts in *St Petersburg* was created in 1757, with a Western outlook. The institution was transformed under Catherine II and her director, Ivan Betskoï; it undertook a teaching role analogous to that of the famous Smolny Institute for Noble Maidens established by Catherine II in 1764. When Stanisław August Poniatowski inspected the school in 1797, the imperial family was presented with works in embroidery, drawing and pastel. Torelli was appointed professor in 1762; Lampi taught Borovikovsky there from 1795. The Académie promoted many foreign pastellists: Boucher was made an associé libre honoraire, as was the duquesa de Huéscar before 1766 and Vigée Le Brun in 1800, the year in which her daughter, Mme Nigris, was appointed (“назначенная”) by the Académie, giving her the right to teach.

VII.8 Scandinavia

The Kungliga akademi för die fria konsterna was established in *Stockholm* in 1735, under the influence of Tessin. Lundberg became director in 1776; Pasch was professor and director c.1800.

Det Kongelige Danske Akademi for de Skønne Kunster was founded in *Copenhagen* in 1754: its earliest directors were Nicolai Eigtved (1754), Jacques-François-Joseph Saly 1754–71, and Gustav Pilo 1771–72. Als, Darbes and Høyer also taught there.

VII.9 Britain

A number of (mostly ephemeral) teaching establishments existed in *London* from the seventeenth century on. Kneller founded an academy of painting in 1711 at his house in Great Queen Street; Luttrell and Jonathan Richardson Sr were active there, but it ceased to operate soon after moving to St Martin’s Lane in 1720. A second St Martin’s Lane Academy was set up by Hogarth and others in 1735; Hayman and Dandridge were active, and Vanderbank taught Pond there. The Society of Dilettanti was set up in 1732. The Duke of Richmond’s academy (a cast gallery at Richmond House in Whitehall) flourished for about 10 years from 1758. Among more minor establishments, William Burgess’s Maiden Lane academy taught a number of pastellists. William Shipley set up a private academy in 1753 (advertised in the *London chronicle*, 23.IV.1757), initially based in his house in Craig’s Court, Charing Cross, but from 1756 in Castle Court, Strand. Confusingly in 1754 Shipley also founded the “Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce” (known as the Society of Arts, later, from 1908, the Royal Society of Arts; it was *not* the Royal Society, nor the Royal Academy of Arts), and used the same rooms for teaching his pupils (but the institutions were separate). The Society offered premiums to pupils from 1755 (Shipley did not serve on the

committee awarding these prizes). Premiums and bounties were also awarded for inventions (the former were for competitions, the latter were unsolicited).

A group of artists staged a first public exhibition in the Society's great room at Denmark Court, the Strand in 1760.³⁷⁹ The following year, somewhat confusingly, a schism occurred: what became the Free Society of Artists continued in the Strand, holding exhibitions from 1761 to 1783, while the newly established rival Society of Artists of Great Britain commenced its annual exhibitions in Spring Gardens; it became the Incorporated Society of Arts when it received its royal charter in 1765, and was dissolved in 1791.³⁸⁰

The Royal Academy of Arts was founded in 1768; it too held annual exhibitions. Attendance figures show that in 1769 some 14,008 people attended the Royal Academy exhibition, while 14,980 visited the Society of Artists show in Spring Gardens (attendance ranged from 13,000 in 1761 to a high of 22,906 in 1767). By 1780 attendance at the first Royal Academy exhibition in Somerset House was 61,381 (significantly higher than the Paris salon – *v. §VII.3 supra*).³⁸¹ The Royal Academy Schools were established at the same time, and awarded travelling scholarships.³⁸² Public auctions were initiated by Edward Millington in 1692; Christie's was established in 1766.

Outside London, there was much less activity than in other parts of Europe. The *Edinburgh* Trustees' Academy opened in 1760 with its first director William Delacour; he was succeeded in 1767 by another Frenchman, Pavillon, until 1771. The printsellers Andrew and Robert Foulis established the Foulis Academy of Fine Arts in *Glasgow* in 1753, with support from Colonel Joseph Yorke and others. The pupils drew in crayons, chalk or ink from casts or prints. The academy closed in 1775. The Society of Encouragement of the Arts, Painting and Design in *Liverpool* was founded in 1773 by a group of amateurs including William Roscoe; it held exhibitions from 1774.

There was vigorous interest in pastel in Ireland. The *Dublin* Society for improving Husbandry, Manufactures and other Useful Arts and Sciences was founded in 1731 (it became the Royal Dublin Society in 1820); one of the founders, Rev. Dr Samuel Madden (1686–1765), instituted a system of annual premiums for painting, sculpture and similar crafts along the lines of those in the academies of Rome and Paris. The Dublin Society school of drawing was first established in George's Lane, Dublin in the early 1740s along the model of the Académie royale, with the students progressing from copying set drawings to models and life studies. Later, ornamental design, sculpture and architecture were added. Robert West taught drawing from 1744, and was appointed director when, in 1757, the school became more formally organised and relocated to Shaw's Court off Dame Street. In 1763 he was suspended on account of mental illness, and although reinstated in 1770, he died soon after. Among other teaching establishments Guillaume Bertrand opened a drawing school on Arran Quay, 1765. The Society of Artists in Ireland organised the first public art exhibition in George's Lane, Dublin, in 1765. Subsequent exhibitions were held annually from the Society's own rooms, in William Street. A schism occurred in 1774 with the formation of a rival Academy of Artists.³⁸³

Despite the evident health of the teaching of drawing in Ireland, Twiss 1776 was able to state with confidence that there were “no other [collections] in the whole island” apart from those of the earls of Charlemont, Ely and Moira, Lady St George and Messrs Stewart and Joseph Henry.

³⁷⁹ Papers for this as-yet unnamed forerunner of the Society of Artists were published in the *Walpole Society*, 1917.

³⁸⁰ There is now an extensive literature on the rival societies and the Royal Academy: see for example Hargraves 2005; Saumarez Smith 2012. A list of the 211 artists who subscribed the Roll Declaration of the Incorporated Society of Artists of Great Britain in 1765 is printed in William Sandby, *The history of the Royal Academy of Arts...*, London, 1862, I, pp. 39f.

³⁸¹ See Brewer 1997, pp. 237ff.

³⁸² A list of the pupils from the RA registers was published in Hutchison 1960.

³⁸³ See Gilbert 1859, III.

Although British colonies such as India offered attractions to travelling pastellists (until the market became saturated), no formal institutions were established except in America. Portraiture was important in *Boston* in the eighteenth century, but institutions emerged rather late. The Athenaeum was established in 1807. The Columbian Museum was founded by Daniel Bowen in 1795, and displayed waxworks, natural history specimens and curiosities as well as paintings by Robert Edge Pine and others. It was destroyed by fire twice but reopened. In *Philadelphia*, Du Simitière opened his American Museum of natural history specimens, coins and printed ephemera to the public in 1782; most of the works on paper were acquired by the Library Company of Philadelphia in the auction after his death.

VII.10 Spain and Portugal

Madrid's Real academia de bellas artes de San Fernando was founded in 1752 following a decree 1744. Gian Domenico Olivieri was the first sculpture director; his daughter was admitted in 1759. Honorary members included the female artists Carrón and Carranque. The duquesa de Osuna's tertulia, or salon, was an important centre for Enlightenment thinking in Madrid, and in Spanish society noble patronage played an important role.

The Real academia de bellas artes de San Carlos de *Valencia* was formed in 1768 in succession to the Academia de bellas artes de Santa Bárbara. Josefa Mayans was named directoria honoraria in 1776; S.ra Ferrer was appointed Académica de mérito in 1795; López y Portaña was vice-director after 1790, and Planes was paintings director.

The Academia real de bellas artes de *Lisboa* succeeded a drawing school started in 1781; Bartolozzi was director from 1802.

VIII. EARLY EXHIBITIONS, PATRONAGE AND COLLECTIONS

FEW ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE original displays of pastels survive. This chapter surveys what we know of those early displays, and covers the quasi-public early royal collections, the arrangements in public exhibitions and what is known of some private collections. Most of the literature (based, for example, on estate inventories, travel journals³⁸⁴ etc.) suggests that pastel portraits were reserved for the private apartments³⁸⁵ of owners rather than the state rooms, which may simply reflect the scale of the works as much as any particular decorative taste. Thus Tempesti's pastels were grouped together in a dressing room by Vittoria della Rovere in the Villa Poggio Imperiale according to a 1695 inventory.³⁸⁶ But in a passage we revert to below (Chapter IX), Allan Ramsay, in his fictional *Dialogue on taste*, has his Lord Modish giving pride of place in his drawing room to his pastel by La Tour.³⁸⁷

VIII.1 Royal collections

Among the earliest specialised collections of portraits was the celebrated series of artists' self-portraits which included numerous pastels and works in coloured chalk (e.g. Rosalba, Fratellini, Glain, Cambruzzi, Hamilton; those by Holbein, Nanteuil, Vivien and Liotard are visible in Fig. 1) among a collection mainly of oils. Commenced by Leopoldo de' Medici in the mid-seventeenth century, uniform frames and sizes and symmetrical hanging were employed in the gallery in the Uffizi devoted to the collection; it is now housed in the Vasari corridor.



Fig. 1 Artists' self-portraits in Uffizi; from album of Benedetto Vicenzo De Greyss, 1748 (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek)

³⁸⁴ Among those relevant to pastel should be mentioned Johann Bernoulli, James Boswell, Edward Gibbon, Johann Georg Keyßler, Joseph-Jérôme Lefrançois de Lalande, Richard Twiss etc.

³⁸⁵ Curiously the amateur pastellist John Norris Hewett (1743–1790) bequeathed four of her best works to be chosen by Mr and Mrs Warde on condition that they were not to be placed in bed chambers.

³⁸⁶ Cited Burns 2007, p. 141, where there is a wider discussion of the question of private apartments.

³⁸⁷ *A dialogue on taste*, 1762, pp. 56f; see [FLORILEGEUM](#).

The great collections such as those in Dresden are known from contemporary verbal descriptions. Sadly there is no surviving view of the famous room in the Dresden gallery housing 157 Carriera pastels against green damask walls; indeed the only known early interior seems to be an anonymous print of the Italian paintings in the interior gallery as they hung in 1830 (up to five deep), although the Cabinet des pastels is clearly marked on the plan in Heinecken's *Recueil d'estampes d'après les plus célèbres tableaux de la Galerie Royale de Dresde*, 1757 (fig. 2). The effect must have been enhanced by the provision (by 1752) of uniform "Dresden Gallery" frames (*v.* §IV.16 *supra*). Arriving at Dresden during his tour of Germany in 1750, Jonas Hanway³⁸⁸ noted—

But the greatest delight which his POLISH majesty takes, is in a small gallery, all of portraits in crayons; the greatest part are of persons with whom the king was acquainted in his travels, particularly in ITALY. Most of those pieces are performed by signiora ROSALBA, and are certainly very beautiful. Among these pictures they shew one of a certain ITALIAN lady, who is reported to have wasted the estates of half a dozen ENGLISH lords, and as many ENGLISH gentlemen; but this seems to arise from accidents which have happened in past times.

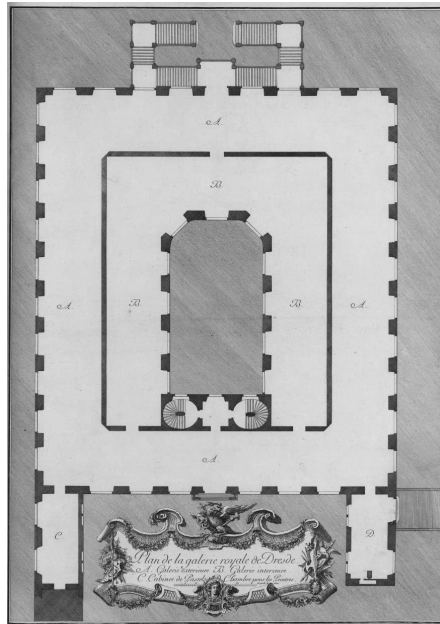


Fig. 2 Galerie royale de Dresde (Heinecken 1757)

Boswell, who was "luxuriously entertained for two hours" in the collection in 1764, noted just that he "saw also a chamber full only of Crayons". Bianconi's better informed description³⁸⁹ noted in particular that "I pasteli sono tutti d'egual grandezza, come eguali tutti sono le cornice coperte d'oro, ed i lucidi cristalli, che le ricoprono."

The separation of the pastels from the rest of the collection in Dresden Gemäldegalerie was exceptional. A much smaller group of pastels by Rosalba and others were displayed in the sala dei pasteli at the Ca' Rezzonico in Venice. The remarkable collection of the amateur pastellist Caroline Luise von Baden, which included numerous pastels, integrated them among other cabinet paintings.³⁹⁰ The imperial collections in Vienna included a group of pastels by Gabrielle Bertrand-Beyer in the Gelber Salon at the Schönbrunn, although other pastels are in the Miniaturenkabinett, and in the Hofburg. There were also several examples of homogeneous groups of pastels as a decorative scheme, among them the also 18 Pillements in the Blaues Pastellzimmer at Laxenburg

³⁸⁸ *An historical account of the British trade over the Caspian sea...*, London, 1753, II, p. 224; the passage was copied by Thomas Nugent. See also Rolsan Enke, "Das 'Kabinett der Rosalba'", in Liotard 2018, pp. 88–97.

³⁸⁹ A more detailed account is given by Giovanni Lodovico Bianconi, *Elogio storico del cavaliere Anton Raffaele Mengs...*, Milan, 1780, pp. 12ff; see also Henning & Marx 2007.

³⁹⁰ See Karlsruhe 2015, where the inventories are reproduced, and the collections recreated.

(Maria Theresia commissioned a red room two years later, executed by Johann Christian Brand); elsewhere the Pastellzimmer and adjacent Altes Musikzimmer in the Neues Schloß, Bayreuth, or the Sompsois group of 11 pastels in the Chinese Palace at Lomonosov. When the Erzherzogin Maria Anna sent a group of seven pastel family portraits to Klagenfurt, she was careful to instruct Baron Herbert to place them in two adjacent rooms on the ground floor.³⁹¹

When the Dresden Akademie started its exhibitions in 1766, a pastel self-portrait by the dowager Kurfürstin, Maria Antonia Walpurgis, was displayed on an easel in the innermost of the five rooms devoted to the exhibition: the effect was that³⁹²

das Auge des Kenners, mit so viel grösserer Theilnehmung auf sich, als es, wenn es die wichtigsten Kunstwerke in diesem Zimmer betrachtet hatte, allemal auf das erste zurück zu gehen, sich gleichsam genöthiget fand.

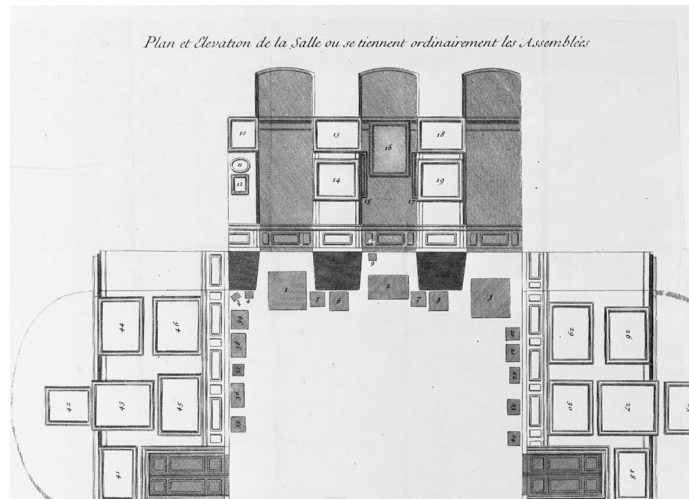


Fig. 3 Académie royale, salle de l'assemblée, 1715 (Guérin)

In the collections of the Académie royale in Paris, for example, this was not the approach. Nicolas Guérin's *Description de l'Académie* (Paris, 1715) provides an exact layout of the Académie's portraits (fig. 3), showing Vivien's Girardon opposite Antoine Coypel's 1715 self-portrait (no. 17), placed in an alcove between two large Rigauds in the salle d'assemblée;³⁹³ although the recess is partly obscured by two sculptures in Jean-Baptiste Martin's *Assemblée général* (Louvre), it appears that both portraits are also partly hidden by Santerre's *Suzanne et les vieillards* in the middle, which is tilting forward. A second pastel by Vivien, Robert de Cotte, is no. 9, between Le Fèvre's portrait of Colbert and a mythological piece by Houasse, again in a recess in the outer, first room. These recesses may have been chosen to minimise light exposure, but, as the piece by the Amateur de Province³⁹⁴ makes clear, the Académie's location of the *Carriera Nymphe*, which it received six years after Guérin was published, was less than ideal. His views were ignored, as we can see from Constant Bourgeois's *Exposition des dessins dans la galerie d'Apollon, an V* (Louvre, inv. RF 29455; it dates to slightly later than the 1797 scene depicted), where the pastel is clearly visible in full light, fifth from right, second level (fig. 4; beside it, between the pillars, is Vivien's Robert de Cotte, which remains in its cadre d'origine, while that of the Rosalba was changed later).

³⁹¹ Kernbauer & Zahradnik 2016, p. 121. The Erzherzogin's posthumous inventory included some 64 pastels in gilt or part gilt frames, presumably mostly in the Pastellzimmer and adjacent study; only a dozen or so remain at Klagenfurt.

³⁹² Anon., "Vermischte Nachrichten", *Neue Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste*, II/2, 1766, p. 154.

³⁹³ Nicolas Guérin, *Description de l'Académie*, Paris, 1715. The arrangements are discussed in number of publications, notably by Udolpho van de Sandt, "Note sur les collections de tableaux et leur présentation dans les salles de l'Académie", in Tours 2000, pp. 69–79 and again in Williams 2015, pp. 120ff. Dezallier d'Argenville's *Description sommaire* of 1781 is also useful.

³⁹⁴ "Lettre d'un amateur de Province sur le secret de fixer le pastel", *Journal économique*, .II.1758, pp. 63–65, in Treatises.



Fig. 4 Bourgeois, Exposition des dessins...an V (Louvre)

Generally pastels took a far smaller role in the collections (as well as the [EXHIBITIONS](#)) of the Académie royale (the inventaire de l'an II included only 13 pastels out of 521 pictures³⁹⁵) than they did in the Académie de Saint-Luc, where the far smaller collection³⁹⁶ included 14 pastels (by Bernard, Lallié, Lenoir, Liotard, de Lorge, Monperin, Morel, Vigée and Voiriot; curiously a number of pastellists such as Pougin de Saint-Aubin, Glain and Vigée Le Brun were represented in oil.

Similarly in the royal apartments at Versailles, pastels had to vie with oil paintings. In Louis-Jacques Durameau's 1784 inventory, only nine pastels were included in the rooms whose displays were illustrated: they were all by La Tour, and all of the royal family (fig. 5).

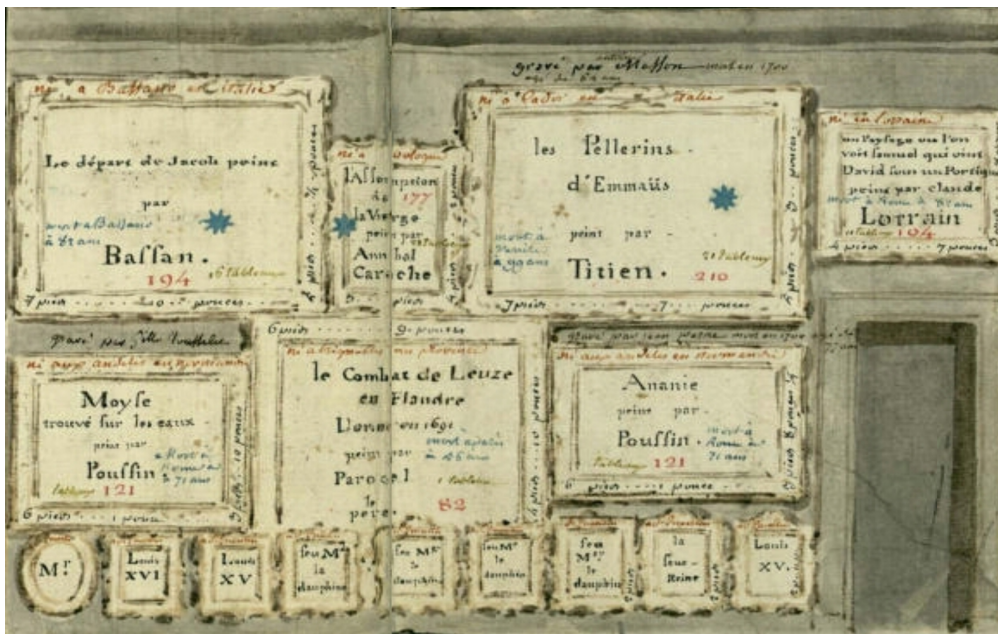


Fig. 5 Durameau, *Inventaire des tableaux du cabinet du roi...à Versailles* (1784), pièce 5

³⁹⁵ Fontaine 1910, p. 268.

³⁹⁶ Inventaire conducted at dissolution in 1776; see Guiffrey 1915, pp. 94ff.

From an annotated copy of the inventory, we know that the pastels were all in good condition, apart from one of the Dauphins, which was beginning “se moisir”. The measurements were given as 84x52.5 cm, which seems unlikely. There were three portraits of the deceased dauphin, two of Louis XV, and one each of the deceased queen (Marie Leszczyńska), dauphine (Marie-Josèphe), Louix XVI and “Mr” (Monsieur, le comte de Provence). A further 14 anonymous copies (of which three were in pastel) were recorded in the magazine of the Bâtiments du roi at Versailles.³⁹⁷

In 1747 Louis XV agreed to send a number of his pictures to Paris for public exhibition in the former apartments of the Queen of Spain (Louise-Élisabeth, Mlle de Montpensier) in the palais de Luxembourg. Arrangements were not completed until 1750, when the collection was opened for two days a week from 14.X.1750 with a catalogue prepared by Jacques Bailly, garde des tableaux du roi. What appears to have been a temporary arrangement³⁹⁸ became permanent: the catalogue was reissued frequently until 1779, when the gallery was reclaimed for the comte de Provence. It included two pastels by Vivien, in the Salle du Trône, along with highlights of painting from the French school.

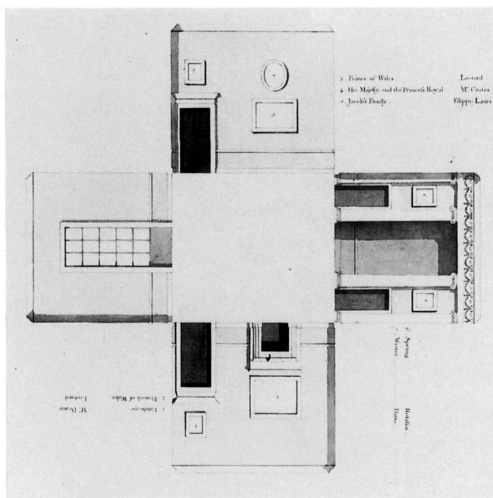


Fig. 6 George III's bed chamber (Buckingham House)

More typical of the use of pastels was George III's picture hang at Buckingham House c.1776 (fig. 6).³⁹⁹ Here the few pastels in the royal collection were gathered into the king's bed chamber, where they hung together with a religious painting by Filippo Lauri and a landscape by an unknown Mr Deane. The pastels were by Liotard (2, 3, Princess and Prince of Wales), Cotes (4, Queen Charlotte and the Princess Royal), and Carriera (6, 7, Spring and Winter); curiously they were all placed over doors or at higher level than the oil paintings.

VIII.2 Public exhibitions

Few pastels can be made out among the sketches made of the Paris salons (famously those of the indefatigable Gabriel de Saint-Aubin) or the exhibitions of the Royal Academy (known for example from the print by Martini) during the eighteenth century, but they were evidently displayed among the oil paintings of similar sizes. Thus for example the critic in the *Journal encyclopédique* discussing Mme Roslin's portrait of Pigalle in the 1771 salon noted that “Il se soutient de pair avec les portraits à l'huile, au milieu desquels il est placé.” Among the few exceptions should be mentioned Saint-Aubin's tiny image of La Tour's pastel of Louis-Joseph-Xavier, duc de Bourgogne from the Salon de 1761, no. 47 (fig. 7). The sketch on his copy of the salon livret, repeated slightly larger on the title page, is the only clue we have as to the pastel's appearance, although insufficient to make out exactly what he holds. Of similar documentary value is the Martini print of the Royal Academy 1787, where no. 158, Hugh Douglas Hamilton's lost “portrait of two ladies” (Countess Cowper, and her sister, Miss Gore) can be rendered legible with the aid of photo-editing software (fig. 8).

³⁹⁷ See Castluccio 2009 etc.

³⁹⁸ It excited salon critiques from Sireul, the abbé Gougenot and two anonymous authors; see EXHIBITIONS; Robert W. Berger, *Public access to art in Paris*, University Park, Pennsylvania, 1999, p. 218f.

³⁹⁹ Russell 1987; fig. 53 and commentary.



Fig. 7 La Tour, duc de Bourgogne, Salon de 1761 (Saint-Aubin)



Fig. 8 H. D. Hamilton, Two ladies, Royal Academy 1787 (Martini)

One of the differences between the salons at the Louvre and the exhibitions at the Royal Academy was discussed by the Gentleman in Paris writing in the *Morning chronicle* (19.IX.1783): “Here the light comes not from the top, as at Somerset House, but through large windows on one side of the room; so that some of the paintings are obscured.” The problem was of long standing: La Tour’s Mme de Pompadour exhibited in 1755 was initially placed so as to reflect light in its glass, and had to be moved overnight.⁴⁰⁰ Five years after the *Morning chronicle* review, d’Angiviller submitted a memoir to the king (2.XI.1788) proposing top lighting, recognising that the current arrangement provoked “une veritable murmure public sur l’impossibilité de voir la très majeure partie des tableaux.”⁴⁰¹ The project was implemented the following year, and considered a great success; but later (14–15.XII.1789) the top light was damaged in a storm and the old windows reopened.

Public auctions were also an opportunity to see pastels, and some of these were recorded by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, and in some cases again provide the only evidence of the appearance of certain pastels.

The role of public exhibitions, and the contemporary critical response to them, has been the subject of extensive academic research. Given artists’ frequent recourse to the formula “plusieurs portraits sous le même numéro” in the livrets (whether to protect the identity of some sitters, or to permit last minute changes of selection), these critiques are often the only source of information about which pictures were included; while the published sources have been virtually fully mined, unpublished documents continue to yield further information.⁴⁰² Apart from the obvious effects on the reputation of artists and the prices they were able to command, there were some less obvious results: for example, the struggling Mrs Noel attempted to enlist Farington’s support for her work to be shown at the Royal Academy in 1804 because of its importance for her teaching: “her scholars judged of her ability in the Art from that circumstance”.

VIII.3 Private collections

In contrast to the relatively sparse hang in George III’s bed chamber, and perhaps with considerable imaginative licence, we have the Roman picture gallery of Cardinal Silvio Valenti Gonzaga (1690–1756), shown in a 1749 painting by Giovanni Paolo Panini (now in the Wadsworth

⁴⁰⁰ See Sandt 2019, p. 214.

⁴⁰¹ See Sandt 2019, pp. 180f.

⁴⁰² Mme de Graffigny’s correspondence in particular revealed new facts about La Tour’s exhibits, discussed in [Jeffares 2017g](#).

Atheneum), where it is just possible to make out the set of Carriera's *Four Continents* (lower right) which appear to be the only pastels included (fig. 9).



Fig. 9 G. P. Panini, Gonzaga collection, 1749 (Wadsworth Atheneum), with detail showing Rosalba *Four Continents*

Other invaluable records of display practices include the remarkably meticulous record of the private collection of Jean de Jullienne assembled by his cousin and heir Jean-François de Montullé, made c.1756 and including a list of the 367 pictures in the collection with floor plan and elevations of each of the walls (now in the Morgan Library, inv. 1966-8). Figure 10 shows one wall of the *Cabinet de M. sur la Cour*, in which six pastels (three by Carriera, two by Jeanne Natoire and one by Alexis Loir) are arranged around a landscape by Salvator Rosa.⁴⁰³ Again it is clear that one of the leading connoisseurs of his day saw no difficulty in mixing media any more than genre or size.



Fig. 10 Pastels in the Jullienne collection c.1756

Pastels could also be displayed more discreetly: the Duke of Leinster hung the 28 small oval portraits by Hamilton above the bookcases in his study at Carton.⁴⁰⁴

We return to the great private collections of later periods in Chapter XII.

⁴⁰³ The album has been studied with specific reference to the pastels by Andreas Henning, in London 2011, and by Tillerot 2010; see also [COLLECTORS](#).

⁴⁰⁴ See FitzGerald 1936, fig. 8.

IX. THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF PASTEL PORTRAITS

WHY DID PASTEL REACH ITS apogee in eighteenth century France? Why did some sitters choose to be portrayed in pastel rather than oil? Why did it all come to such an abrupt end with the Revolution? The answers to these questions, explored in this chapter, lead us in particular to see the special relevance of this medium to the portraiture of specific social classes such as the magistrature⁴⁰⁵ (as can be seen from a perusal of the *livrets* for the Paris exhibitions during the eighteenth century) and why representation in this recently fashionable genre (in preference to traditional portraiture) became de rigueur for the intellectual élite, for many Enlightenment personalities and for newly ennobled financiers. Discussion of such themes requires some awareness of the broader rôle of portraiture.⁴⁰⁶

IX.1 The objectives of portraiture before photography

Most of us are drawn to art – in whatever genre, portraiture, history painting or still life – because it provides us with a unique form of inner experience. Ezra Pound’s concept,⁴⁰⁷ “An ‘Image’ is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time”, applies equally to portraiture as to poetry. Freud’s doctrine of “affective contagion”, which allows artists to share their intense feelings with others (and is close to Leo Tolstoy’s concept of real art as a mental union of perceiver and artist),⁴⁰⁸ inspired Roland Barthes⁴⁰⁹ to describe the process of “induction”:

Le corps qui va être aimé est, à l’avance, cerné, manié par l’objectif, soumis à une sorte d’effet zoom, qui le rapproche, le grossit et amène le sujet à y coller le nez: n’est-il pas l’objet scintillant qu’une main habile fait miroiter devant moi et qui va m’hypnotiser, me capturer?

That skill, of representation that stops you in your tracks and compels attention, is the essence of good portraiture: as true today as it was in the eighteenth century.

It has also been noted that portrait painting in particular has a special position in the history of art because the brain has devoted a whole cortical region, located in the fusiform gyrus, to facial recognition.⁴¹⁰

As with all portrait painters before the invention of photography they were unburdened by the existential questions of representation: obtaining a good likeness was unselfconsciously a clear and specific target – indeed disputes about their success filled the Châtelet⁴¹¹ and are a rich source of information about obscure painters who had fallen out with their clients and better established ones called in to provide expert testimony. (The conventional phrase “capturing a likeness” distracts from a more serious, Barthesian point: in a successful portrait, it is the sitter who captures the viewer.) Allan Ramsay, in his fictional *Dialogue on taste*, picks up the verisimilitude of portraiture which his character Colonel Freeman equates to the naturalness in the eyes of the unsophisticated:⁴¹²

I have reason to be convinced by a thousand experiments, that the leading principle of criticism in poetry and painting, and that of all the learned principles which is the most unexceptionably true, is known to the lowest and

⁴⁰⁵ See Jeffares 2017s for a discussion of pastel portraits of *parlementaires*.

⁴⁰⁶ This section is not of course intended to provide a full history of the social function of portraiture in all media or epochs.

⁴⁰⁷ *Poetry*, I, March 1913, p. 6.

⁴⁰⁸ See, for example, Peta Mitchell, *Contagious metaphor*, London, 2012, *passim*. It is only one step to move from contagion between perceiver and artist to that with the sitter in a portrait.

⁴⁰⁹ Roland Barthes, *Fragments d’un discours amoureux*, 1977, p. 163.

⁴¹⁰ Semir Zeki, “Visual art and the visual brain”, Woodhull lecture, 1995, *Proceedings of the Royal Institution of Great Britain*, LXVIII, 1997; see also his *Inner vision: an exploration of art and the brain*, Oxford, 1999.

⁴¹¹ See Georges Wildenstein, *Rapports d’experts 1712–1791, procès-verbaux d’expertises d’œuvres d’art extraits du fonds du Châtelet*, Paris, 1921.

⁴¹² *A dialogue on taste*, 1762, pp. 56f; see [FLORILEGEUM](#).

most illiterate of people. Your Lordship has only to hide yourself behind the screen in your drawing-room, and order Mrs. Hannah to bring in one of your tenant's daughters, and I will venture to lay a wager that she shall be struck with your picture by La Tour, and no less with the view of your seat by Lambert, and shall, fifty to one, express her approbation by saying, they are *vastly natural*.

A fairly sophisticated analysis can also be found in Louis Tocqué's lecture given to the Académie royale in 1750.⁴¹³ Eschewing the idealisations of earlier generations of portraitists, Tocqué recommended scrupulous realism: "ne vous écartez jamais des formes, si désavantageuses qu'elles soient; la beauté du pinceau peut leur prêter des graces." But to do this one must use a broad touche, "hardie et nourrie", to capture fleeting expressions, not the minute treatment, "cette sorte de fini, miserable fruit d'un travail où l'intelligence et le goût n'ont aucune part." To modern eyes of course all eighteenth century portraits are dominated by conventions: conventions of composition and of accessories (less central, and so less hackneyed, with simple pastel busts than in the official *portraits d'apparat* almost always executed in oil), as well as technical conventions of just how paint or pastel is applied to the support to create those representations.

IX.2 Demographics – sitters

The *Dictionary* covers (across all countries) somewhat more than 14,500 named sitters, of whom some 56% are male. Based on a sample of the records, the breakdown of social status was as follows:⁴¹⁴

Statesmen, politicians, courtiers: 45%; Diplomats: 2%; Administrators, financiers: 8%; Lawyers: 3%; Merchants, industry: 2%; Military and naval: 14%; Religion and church: 6%; Science, medicine: 3%; Visual arts: 7%; Architects: 1%; Theatre, music: 4%; Writers: 4%; Tradesmen, peasants, servants: 1%.

A slightly different breakdown can be made of the 400 or so named sitters exhibited in the Paris salons (Louvre and Saint-Luc) between 1704 and 1789:

Royalty: 11%; Church: 5%; Military: 17%; Magistrates: 7%; Finance: 8%; Diplomats: 1%; Visual arts: 31%; Architects: 3%; Performing artists: 11%; Writers, scientists etc: 6%

While it is no surprise that many of the sitters in the portraits by the major eighteenth century pastellists were wealthy (peasants might figure in a genre picture, but did not commission portraits), a more subtle social classification emerges from a careful study. As with all portraiture before 1800, the majority of subjects are those from the upper ranks of society (mostly noble or royal), while among the bourgeoisie, only the intelligentsia and arts are well represented.

Many of those portrayed, particularly in pastel, did not come from the old, established nobility but rather from new orders – see §IX.4 below for a further discussion. Although collecting (*v.* §VIII.3 *supra*) in the eighteenth century is a theme that has been widely explored in academic research in recent years, less attention has been devoted to those families who commissioned portraits more intensively than others. For example, the 1780 inventory after the death of the bankrupt fermier général Louis-Antoine Mirleau de Neuville and his wife revealed sixteen pastels and only one oil among the family portraits. These unexpected concentrations are explored in the [ICONOGRAPHICAL GENEALOGIES](#) on this site. They are often relating to the concept of a house artist, a good example being Valade who formed such a relationship with the Faventines, Lamoignon and Pinson families.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹³ Published by Arnauld Doria, "Le discours de Tocqué à l'Académie", *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de l'art français*, 1929, pp. 255–92; see also Édouard Pommier, *Théories du portrait*, Paris, 1998, pp. 339ff.

⁴¹⁴ Care is required in interpreting such data, which are subject to bias of various types (for example, the wife of a ruler will usually be a courtier, while that of an industrialist is often unclassified).

⁴¹⁵ These are respectively explored in Jeffares 2003, of which there is an expanded version [online](#); Jeffares 2017s; and [Jeffares 2011b](#).

IX.3 Demographics – pastellists

The online edition of the *Dictionary* now includes more than 3000 articles on pastellists. With all reservations as to the difficulties of analysing imperfect and inconsistent records of this kind, some salient demographics emerge from the data. For the purposes of this analysis, the artists were divided into significant (artists for whom a minimum of 10 records or 4 images are known); minor (known pastellists with a smaller known œuvre); amateur; and unverified (artists who may have worked in pastel according to unverifiable sources). A small group of articles contain anonymous pastel copies of works by artists who did not work in pastel; these are omitted below. Of the remaining 2057 pastellists (analysed as in 2010), some 11% were significant, 66% minor, 14% amateur and 10% unverified. Of the minor artists, fewer than half can be credited with any work that can be located today or is known from a photograph.

Of the 224 significant artists, 37 are known from a pastel œuvre of more than 50 photographic images; 38 from between 21 and 50 images; 54 from 11–20; and the remaining 95 from 10 or fewer images. The breakdown between schools, across all levels, was as follows:

American, Canadian: 3%; English: 15%; Scottish: 1%; Irish: 3%; Dutch: 6%; Flemish: 2%; French: 32%; Swiss: 2%; German: 17%; Austrian, Hungarian, Central European, Baltic and Polish: 3%; Scandinavian: 2%; Russian: 1%; Italian: 11%; Spanish: 1%.

These figures include significant variations of levels between schools. For example, a disproportionate number of the Russian and Spanish records are of amateurs (43% and 32% against an overall 14%).

Twenty-two pastellists (1%) were royal (no doubt including a number of artists receiving extensive help from their tutors), while 74 were noble (ignoring honours bestowed for artistic achievement). Eleven were monks or nuns; at least ten (and probably many more) were freemasons; five were deaf-mutes.

The *Dictionary* has entries for some 500 female pastellists: thus the medium arguably represents a particularly fruitful line of enquiry for the study of women artists in the eighteenth century. This arises partly because the barriers to entry were lower for media like pastel or miniature compared with oil painting, where successful practitioners usually ran large studios (particularly history painting), requiring the support of assistants and apprentices necessitating legal contracts often restricted to males. While some 17% of the pastellists were female overall, the figure varies significantly in the subgroups. Many were the sisters or daughters of artists, but in almost every case their brothers or fathers were better (or at least better known) artists. Women made up less than 10% of the significant artists, while accounting for 45% of amateurs. They represented half the recorded Spanish artists but only an eighth of the Dutch and just over a fifth of the English and French schools. There are of course inevitable biases in the data, reflecting varied cultural traditions – for example, in relation to the admission and recording of honorary members in academies (particularly in Spain, the appointment of noble or royal amateur ladies was a strategy for securing patronage). It is also notable that no woman seems to have made a career as an itinerant pastellist, the route that supported so many minor as well as major pastellists (including Liotard and Perronneau),⁴¹⁶ but one evidently frowned upon in some quarters: John Sanders advertised that he did not wish to be considered “as an itinerant painter, being desirous of gaining the Esteem and Respect of those on whom he will be happy to rely.”⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁶ Susanne Caron left Paris for The Netherlands, apparently because she found the competition too intense. She soon married, but seems to have stopped work; she and her husband then departed for Suriname and then the Rio Demerary. Vigée Le Brun might be considered an exception, but her travels were prompted by the Revolution rather than in search of business. Carriera’s trips were undertaken with great reluctance.

⁴¹⁷ Advertisement in the *Norfolk chronicle*, 23.VIII.1777.

IX.4 The pastel in the Ancien Régime

Although the word “pastel” occurs nowhere in the voluminous *Mémoires* of the duc de Saint-Simon, it is there that we should turn to understand the forces that led to its popularity and to answer the questions that have puzzled art historians. Contrary to popular belief, the social hierarchies in Ancien Régime France were far more fluid than in other countries during the Enlightenment.⁴¹⁸ The hierarchies of the day were shifting away from a system based rigidly on lineage – a system which Saint-Simon was already defending in a rearguard action at the beginning of the century, but which had already taken irreversible damage from the policies introduced by Louis XIV in response to the Fronde. The king’s determination to prevent the highest ranks of the nobility from acquiring again the power to challenge the monarchy led him to transfer responsibility for the administration to other social groupings. Wealth ceased to be the preserve of the traditional *noblesse de race*. Of course many of these *robins*, civil servants and financiers were able to use their wealth⁴¹⁹ to gain some admittance to noble society, but – as Saint-Simon succinctly put it⁴²⁰ – “les rois font des anoblis, mais non des nobles”; and these new men continued to be regarded with distaste as not really *gentilhommes*.

What was required was not merely a warrant from the king, but to live like the real nobility – even perhaps more like the nobles than the nobles themselves. Some parts of society were less rigid: under the influence of the Régent, for example, the fashionable world of music and the Opéra, as well as the various salons famous throughout the eighteenth century for their exaltation of *esprit*, were more open to those with wealth, wit or creative genius: the cult of the étoile (a curious form of meritocracy) was well under way three hundred years ago. Ancien Régime France conferred the greatest respect on those who achieved distinction in the arts and sciences. Writers and philosophers – members of an international *république des lettres* – musicians, actors and actresses all belonged to an élite for which the only admission ticket was intellectual or artistic distinction. This social ambiguity was explained by the marquis de Luchet in his description of Mme Vigée Le Brun, under the pseudonym Charites:⁴²¹

Son état la place dans une des classes de la société, son talent la place dans une plus élevée, ses goûts & ses complaisances la portent plus haut encore. Elle est bien par-tout, puisqu’elle est par-tout sous les auspices du talent & de la gaieté.

A letter which appeared on the manuscript market some years ago expresses perfectly the symbiosis between artist and sitter which is at the heart of this chapter: written by Valade in 1776 to Jean de Sénac, fermier général and lecteur du roi (brother of the better-known Sénac de Meilhan, but himself a noted art collector whose posthumous sale in Paris included several pastels):

Les artistes ont en cela d’avantageux qu’ils doivent à leurs talents la faveur d’être familiers avec les Rois ainsi que les plus grands seigneurs, ensuite Messieurs les Financiers; ils savent toujours les approcher avec le respect qui leur est dû, plus ils ont de goût et plus ils nous considèrent: c’est là qui nous tient lieu de fortune.

In this emerging social structure in which the wealthiest were hungry to demonstrate not only their wealth, but their taste, it was essential in doing so that they not become the butt of Molièresque *bourgeois gentilhomme* humour. This meant espousing the most fashionable and sophisticated form of portraiture available: one which demonstrated that they were ahead of, not merely apeing, the old nobility – or, in Paul Hazard’s memorable phrase, that they were thinking like Voltaire, not like

⁴¹⁸ Among many excellent studies of these phenomena, see Roland Mousnier’s *Les Institutions de France sous la monarchie absolue, 1598–1789*, Paris, 1974.

⁴¹⁹ This mechanism of purchase of ennobling offices was widely referred to as “savonnette à vilain” – soap to wash away the filth of base birth.

⁴²⁰ *Écrits inédits*, p. 393.

⁴²¹ *La Galeries des dames françaises*, London, 1790, p. 83.

Bossuet.⁴²² And it was Voltaire who commissioned the then virtually unknown La Tour to portray him in pastel in 1735.⁴²³

What better way to display one's espousal of the Enlightenment than to have one's own portrait executed in the most fashionable medium (which had the added advantage of requiring shorter and fewer poses de séances)? And without derogation one could take the further step of exhibiting the result publicly – at the salons of the Académie royale de peinture, failing which the Académie de Saint-Luc would do.⁴²⁴

It was a corollary of these objectives that the portraits themselves had to be above reproach. It took that famous observer of the animal kingdom, the comte de Buffon, to note that “le style est l'homme même”;⁴²⁵ if one's self was on display, the competition for the best presentation of it was intense. It was to meet these demands that the portraitists of this era had to develop a level of skill, of breathtaking craftsmanship, finish and sophistication that ensured that their clients' displays would not lead to ridicule however absurd their clients' titles (which Proust likened to vagrants' fantasies derived from the names of railway stations where they slept) or however recent the money that paid for these commissions.

The need for pastels to be glazed, and the expense of glass at the time when each sheet had to be blown into a cylinder, then cut and flattened by hand, resulted in ensembles of complicated workmanship of considerable physical fragility. That sense of vulnerability itself contributed to a sense of preciousness. Diderot's biblical rebuke to his friend La Tour, “Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris”;⁴²⁶ can be read today on various levels.⁴²⁷

To understand the popularity of portraits of the great and good, one can turn to contemporary salon critics. In a famous passage La Font de Saint-Yenne 1753 railed against–

cette foule d'hommes obscurs, sans nom, sans talens, sans réputation, même sans phisionomie; tous ces êtres qui n'ont de mérite que celui d'exister, ou dont la vue de l'existence n'est due qu'aux erreurs de la fortune; enfin tous ces personnages géans à leur propres yeux, & atômes à ceux du public par leur entiere inutilité à l'Etat & aux citoyens, quel droit ont-ils d'y être placés?

More temperately Beaucousin 1769 explained:

Mais ç'a sur-tout par les Portraits des Grands-Hommes, que les Législateurs ont excité dans les cœurs des sentimens pour le bien. Les traits de ces Personnages estimables, rappelés à la mémoire, renouvellent dans l'ame la vénération due à leurs belles actions, & font naître en nous une vive émulation de ne pas leur demeurer trop dissemblables. Nous devons donc faire grand état de nos Artistes distingués qui s'appliquent au Portrait.

IX.5 Vivien and Carriera

Pastel had of course been available for portraiture since the middle of the seventeenth century, pioneered by the genius of Robert Nanteuil who used the medium for portraits intended to be engraved to accompany academic theses. It had been taken to unprecedented heights by Joseph

⁴²² Paul Hazard, *La Crise de la conscience européenne 1680–1715*, Paris, 1935, preface.

⁴²³ For the La Tour portrait of Voltaire, see Cabezas 2009.

⁴²⁴ Roughly this point – in relation to the interest of the new patrons in sponsoring and acquiring paintings, although not specifically either to portraits or pastels – is made in Thomas Crow's *The intelligence of art*, Chapel Hill, 1999, p. 80.

⁴²⁵ The words appear in the abbé Pierre's 1896 edition of “Sur le Style”, discours de réception, Académie française, 25 août 1753 – but not in the official text issued by the Académie itself (although they are a convenient summary of his point).

⁴²⁶ Genesis 3:19 (echoed in Milton, *Paradise lost*, x:208), cited Salon de 1767 in relation to La Tour, but Diderot also used the phrase in the “Entretien entre d'Alembert et Diderot”, *Œuvres complètes de Diderot*, Paris, 1875, II, pp. 105–21; it was popularised in secondary sources (e.g. Ratouis de Limay 1946, p.13f; Dayot 1904) deriving from Dréolle de Nodon's *Éloge*. See also Ecclesiastes 12:6–8: “antequam rumpatur funis argenteus et recurrat vitta aurea et conteratur hydria super fontem et confringatur rota super cisternam/et revertatur pulvis in terram suam unde erat et spiritus redeat ad Deum qui dedit illum/vanitas vanitatum dixit Ecclesiastes omnia vanitas.”

⁴²⁷ In view of the hazards posed to pastels by vibration (*v.* Chapter V), Diderot might have been interested in “promession”, an alternative to burial or cremation in which human remains are disposed of by ultrasonic destruction of the freeze-dried corpse.

Vivien, who extended the range of colour and format which (together with the technical development of large sheets of glass) allowed the medium to offer a direct challenge to oil painting. In 1699, the newly ennobled Samuel Bernard turned to Vivien for a very sophisticated commemoration ([J.77.151](#), musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen) of this rite of passage: one which subtly avoided the trappings of wealth and power and presented instead a psychological inquiry (with almost Jansenist severity) into his strength of personality. But arguably Bernard was too far ahead of his time in this. Vivien's extraordinary talent was appreciated particularly in an inner circle of practising artists: among grand patrons, his support came from Max Emanuel, Kurfürst von Bayern,⁴²⁸ and from his brother-in-law, the Grand Dauphin, whose circle at Meudon was, as Saint-Simon explains, not particularly fashionable.

Thus, although Vivien had provided all the necessary artistic ingredients, the great vogue for pastel only took hold a few years later, when the Venetian pastellist Rosalba Carriera made her famous trip to Paris in 1720–21 and carried off the prizes, not by superior talent, but by winning over important patrons all the way up to the new king. No further technical developments were required: but there is no more striking example in the history of art of a medium becoming fashionable so suddenly. The call was made for French artists to emulate her – for reasons perfectly articulated sixty years before by the founder of French opera, Pierre Perrin, in the dedication to Colbert of his *Recueil de paroles de musique*:⁴²⁹

En verité Monseigneur, j'ose vous dire qu'il y va de la gloire du Roy et de la France de ne pas souffrir qu'une Nation, par tout ailleurs victorieuse, soit vaincüe par les etrangers en la connaissance de ces deux Beaux-Arts, la Poesie et la Musique.

One of the immediate responses was by the painter Jean-Baptiste Van Loo, who, as Dandré-Bardon explained,⁴³⁰ presented to the Académie in 1722, along with a history painting–

aussi les portraits de *Mesdames de Prie et de Sabran* qui lui avoient déjà fait dans le public, un honneur infini, autant par la variété, la ressemblance, l'ars qui règnent, que par la multitude des copies qui en furent répandues. Ces ouvrages au pastel étoient au pair des plus beaux que nous conussions alors en France dans ce genre. Nous voyons avec plaisir combien ce talent s'est perfectionné de nos jours. Preuve bien sensible, que le progrès du génie sont illimités et que la France se charge du soin d'en donner l'exemple à l'Univers et à la posterité!

Van Loo however quickly reverted to oil, leaving the scene to others – most notably to arguably the greatest pastellist of all time, Maurice-Quentin de La Tour. Not long after his portrait of Voltaire, La Tour was commissioned by Gabriel Bernard de Rieux, son of the famous financier who himself was the son of a minor painter, to produce a portrait in pastel [J.46.2722](#) that is surely one of the marvels of western art of any age.⁴³¹ Here was no suggestion that the président had overstepped his social position: the quality and sophistication of the picture simply disarmed any such criticism.⁴³²

Thus, at least in France, the story of the *dix-huitième* pastel is the pursuit of the exquisite, a concept which (as Guillaume Glorieux⁴³³ has argued) was legitimised by Bernard Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, whose publication in France in 1740 was taken as a justification for a short century's display of conspicuous consumption, of the *douceur de vivre* or the plain obscene displays of *luxue insolent* that

⁴²⁸ Probably acting under the guidance of the prince de Grimberghen, brother of the famous connoisseur Mme de Verrue. Max Emanuel's Wittelsbach relatives also patronised Vivien, but insisted he work in oil, a medium in which his talent was far less exceptional than in pastel. See Neil Jeffares, "Between France and Bavaria: Louis-Joseph d'Albert de Luynes, prince de Grimberghen", *The court historian*, XVII/1, .VI.2012, pp. 61–85.

⁴²⁹ Pierre Perrin, *Recueil de paroles de musique*, 1662: dedication, 1660 to Colbert, avant-propos: reprinted Louis Auld, *The "lyric art" of Pierre Perrin, founder of French opera*, Henryville, 1986, III.

⁴³⁰ In his éloges delivered in 1753; reprinted in the catalogue Nice 2000, pp. 29–39.

⁴³¹ For more about this pastel, see [Jeffares 2010c](#) and the sources cited there.

⁴³² The président de Rieux is now in Los Angeles, but the potency of its magic ability to confer nobility has not been lost (see below).

⁴³³ *À l'enseigne de Gersaint: Edme-François Gersaint, marchand d'art*, Paris, 2002.

brought about a revolution.⁴³⁴ And for exactly the same reason the appetite for pastel vanished with that cataclysm. As a very practical consideration in times of war, miniatures were a much more portable form of portraiture. The Revolution brought about a return to a classicism that was better served by the Davidian style of history painting than by the essentially rococo texture of pastel which was more suited to the *douceur de vivre* of the Ancien Régime than to the austerities of the Empire. In a letter⁴³⁵ of 5.IV.1810, Vivant Denon, directeur général du musée Napoléon writing to the duc de Frioul, grand maréchal du palais, explained, in answer to a request to nominate an art teacher for the Empress, “La peinture en pastel étant très peu durable, ce genre ne cesse d’être cultivé.”

IX.6 England

In England, different themes governed the evolution of interest in pastel. In the first half of the century, the dominant influence was the aristocratic Grand Tour with its compulsory visit to Venice to be portrayed by Rosalba Carriera. The legacy of those trips rarely extended beyond the portraits themselves or a set of the Four Seasons, if not from Carriera herself perhaps from one of her British imitators such as Arthur Pond. Much later Hugh Douglas Hamilton’s clients in Rome were drawn from a new generation of British Grand Tourists. Networks such as the Society of Dilettanti or the Divan Club allowed patronage to be disseminated.

Other artists developed what we would now call franchises with particular social groups. Apart from William Hoare, whose Bath practice in some ways offered a similar leisure product, Francis Cotes was the only serious British portraitist working in pastel by mid century: anti-French feeling with the outbreak of the Seven Years’ War reinforced a prejudice against pastel from Reynolds and others, and prevented the development of the phenomenon in the way that happened in France. Hostility was not new: in 1742 George Vertue recorded:⁴³⁶

Crayon painting...looking pleasant and covered with a glass large Gold Frames was much commended for the novelty – and the painters finding it much easier in the execution than Oil Colour readily came into it...But all this is the depravity of skill, and lowness of Art by which means the unskillful are deceived – and pay for their Ignorance...the want of Ambition in Art thus shows its declining State. Small pains and great gains, is this darling modish study.

This affected not only domestic pastellists but also visitors: Liotard made a great impact in his first British trip 1753–54, but was less successful on his return in 1773, while Perronneau’s trip in 1761, just a year after the Battle of Quiberon Bay, was disastrous.

Sir Joshua Reynolds’s disapproval is well known (his comments on Liotard are repeated everywhere⁴³⁷); Benjamin West’s attitude is discussed at some length in the *Dictionary s.v.* Copley: the young American artist, still in Boston (1766), was advised by his London correspondent that Sir Joshua Reynolds “condemns your working either in Crayons or Water Colours”, words which “are confirmed by the publick Voice”. West advised Copley “and make it a rule to Paint in that way [in oil] as much as Possible, for Oil Painting has the superiority over all other Painting.” Copley responded to West on 12.XI.1766: “I shall be glad when you write next you will be more explicit on the article of Crayons, and why You disprove the use of them, for I think my best portraits done that way.” West did not agree; and while Copley continued for some time to admire the effect of pastel, his own antagonism was later evident when John Raphael Smith’s admission to the Royal Academy was discussed in 1802: Copley opposed his candidacy on the grounds that “Crayon

⁴³⁴ In his *Discours sur les sciences & les arts* (for the Académie de Dijon, Geneva, 1750, p. 37), Rousseau noted that “D’autres maux pires encore suivent les Lettres & les Arts. Tel est le luxe, né comme eux de l’oisiveté & de la vanité des hommes. Le luxe va rarement sans les sciences & les arts, & jamais ils ne vont sans lui.”

⁴³⁵ Lettre no. 1763, 5.IV.1810, Archives des musées nationaux, registre *AA7 p.179, Denon.

⁴³⁶ *Notebooks* III, XXII, pp. 109f.

⁴³⁷ See for examples Liotard 2015 *passim*.

painting was not to be admitted into the Class of Painting”. This, according to Farington (*Diary*, 1.XI.1802), “caused a laugh”, since pastels by Cotes and Russell were hanging in the meeting room. Russell’s training and facility in the medium, and lack of success when he attempted oil painting, left him unchallenged as the dominant British pastellist of the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century, even though this delayed his progression from associate to full member of the Royal Academy for 16 years.

A slightly different perspective is found in the 1806 autobiography⁴³⁸ of the engraver and portraitist Isaac Jehner, who explained his move to Lille in 1777: the prospects for an engraver were not good, and his practice as a portraitist was—

confined to crayons, or watercolours, chiefly the former; the liability of which to fade at that time, from the defect in the crayons made it become more unfashionable; this determined me to attempt painting in oils – but where to start?

Pasquin similarly felt no inhibitions in dismissing pastel: he attacked Humphry for turning to “crayon painting, which is a facile pursuit, which no eminent genius will practice willingly”;⁴³⁹ while reviewing a pastel exhibited by John Russell in 1794, “Crayon painting at best, is but an unworthy pursuit, and in the prosecution of which a vigorous mind would feel impatient and disdainful.”⁴⁴⁰ The Napoleonic wars probably reinforced hostilities to an already outdated medium. An anonymous article in the *British press* (28.V.1803) attacked pastellists (aiming at Russell) in the strongest terms:

The artists who accustom themselves solely, or principally, to crayon colours, are generally deficient in the depth, chasteness, and harmony that characterise good oil pictures. In the present state of the Arts, we are surprised that any man of taste and judgment should persist in this species of colouring; and are equally surprised that a crayon-painter should ever be justly entitled to academical honours.

Pastel in Britain effectively died with Russell in 1806.

IX.7 Other social networks

At least in terms of a surviving œuvre, John Russell was the most prolific pastellist of the eighteenth century, with some 600 works known today. Overwhelmingly they come from families connected with the Methodist movement.⁴⁴¹ This seems to be an isolated example: religion was no longer a powerful engine in artistic society of many countries in Enlightenment Europe.

In addition to the development of academies discussed above (Chapter VII), other learned societies grew up throughout Europe which encouraged scientific curiosity or “emulation”, and in many cases portraiture resulted. The growth of freemasonry toward the end of the eighteenth century was particularly notable, and many pastellists are known to have been masons or the wives or children of masons (and probably a good many more whose membership has not yet come to light). Among these were major names such as La Tour and Perronneau, as well as dozens of minor figures.

⁴³⁸ *Fortune's football*, 1806, p. 42, cited Alexander 2021, p. 503.

⁴³⁹ Pasquin 1796c, p. 121.

⁴⁴⁰ Anthony Pasquin [John Williams], *Memoirs of the Royal Academicians*, London, 1796.

⁴⁴¹ Among the numerous sources cited in the Russell article, see in particular Matthews 2005.

X. PORTRAIT, GENRE AND NON-PORTRAIT SUBJECTS

THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY of the pastels in the *Dictionary* are portraits of individuals, no doubt as a result of the unique suitability of this medium for the depiction of human flesh. But a number of artists have used pastel in other genres, which are indexed in [SUBJECTS](#). (This is not an index of attributes which appear within portraits; they may be located with a keyword search on the *Dictionary* site.)

The broad categories include allegorical and mythological (where the influence of Rosalba Carriera survived throughout the eighteenth century); religious (popular in Spain and Italy, and often the subject of choice for amateurs to present to the academies in those countries); history and literary subjects are usually single figures (as pastel does not lend itself to large narrative scenes); theatrical scenes, much favoured in The Netherlands (Troost). The use of pastel for landscape was limited by the difficulty of obtaining stable greens (*v.* §IV.4.1 *supra*). (When Russell exhibited a *View of Guildford* in 1790, the critic noted that it confirmed their “opinion, that crayons are not adapted to landscape”.) Pastels were also very widely used for making copies of old master paintings: no doubt many of these were undertaken for educational purposes.

Sometimes the boundary between portraiture and genre is obscure. The index of [SUBJECTS](#) does not include portraits of identifiable subjects depicted in historiated guise in the vocabulary popularised by artists including Nattier, Hubert Drouais or Lundberg. Writing in 1748, the abbé Gougenot commented (prematurely) on the vanishing of this genre:

On s'étoit, il y a quelque tems, imaginé y répandre plus de dignité & de variété, en donnant des habillemens historiques ou Pastoraux aux objets que l'on avoit à peindre; mais on est présentement revenu de ce mauvais goût. [note de l'auteur: On en est redevable à M. de la Tour, qui le premier s'est fait une regle de peindre ses Portraits avec les habits ordinaires.] En effet outre que ces déguisemens faisoient tort à la ressemblance, ou du moins empêchoient qu'on ne la fâisît au premier coup d'œil, quelque parfaite qu'elle fût en elle-même; les Portraits étant faits pour rester dans les familles comme des monuments précieux, ils y doivent perpétuer la mémoire, non-seulement des personnes qu'ils représentent, mais encore des habillemens du tems.

No doubt the popularity of such pictures, and of Carriera's mythological goddesses, was the opportunity to depict naked flesh. (It has also been argued that mythological portraits ranked as history painting in the academic hierarchy.) According to one author (West 2004, p. 60):

In the hands of talented artists like Jean-Étienne Liotard the soft tones of pastel could mimic the texture of flesh and enhance the immediacy of the portrait image. Because they rendered the person both lifelike and seemingly touchable, miniatures and pastels potentially had an erotic or fetishistic quality and were collected obsessively.

West 2015 goes further, interpreting the expression of lustful feelings in “the most explicit letter” from one correspondent as going beyond the formulaic and social, citing Jean Baudrillard in support. The letters were however written to Rosalba Carriera, an elderly, pious spinster of famously plain appearance (“molto brutta”, the Emperor Karl VI is reported as saying: Zanetti 1781) who included religious woodcuts (*santini* – *v.* §IV.18 *supra*) to protect even her partly clad nymphs. While there were numerous licentious miniatures (and a good many gouaches and prints), very few pastels were explicitly pornographic (those of André-Joseph Salmon being a notable exception). Indeed, given pastel's suitability for depicting flesh, it is curious that there are hardly any nudes or académies. A partial explanation lies in the prudery at the official salons, remarked by Pahin de La Blancherie (*Nouvelles de la république des lettres et des arts*, 28.XII.1779, p. 61) in relation to a history painting of a bather by Bounieu reputedly banished from the salon. He adds:

Nous ne pouvons nous empêcher de présenter ici un aperçu sur les effets des nudités qui deviennent si communes. Les personnes honnêtes en sentent l'indécence; les Ministres de la Religion la proscrivent; mais une autre manière de l'envisager, les rend encore condamnables. Si l'on ôte à la nature & son voile & son secret, n'est-ce pas lui ôter son charme? Nous nous arrêterons là. Les âmes délicates & sensibles nous ont compris, & ce n'est point l'occasion de dissenter avec les autres: la sévérité des mœurs nous paroît, pour un Etat, bien préférable à toute autre considération.

Pastel was sometimes used to execute uniform series of portraits, often with purposes that did not require particular aesthetic merit. The tradition of “Beauties”, collections of portraits of beautiful women, often at court, perhaps dates back to the English Stuart court of the late seventeenth century but materialised in pastel with the famous series of “beautés” by Boucher seen by Bernoulli in Basel and admired by Caroline Luise von Baden. They may include genuine portraits or pictures that are labelled portraits but are given real or sometimes fictitious names of individuals they do not depict. Rotari’s genre pictures of girls, executed both in pastel or oil, are best understood in the context of the Russian palaces where they were densely hung, notably the 328 oil paintings in the Cabinet of Fashions and Graces (Кабинета мод и граций) in the Peterhof. Of course this category is very close to the allegorical sets (of Seasons, Elements, Continents etc.) for which Rosalba was famed.

A similar appetite was fulfilled by series of Great Men or Notables, comprising famous people rather than kings. These became popular towards the end of the eighteenth century: in pastel, series were conceived by Weyler, although of course other artists such as Sharples based their practice on repetitions of portraits of famous people. This may be seen as an extension of La Tour’s desire to send portraits of the famous to the Salon (particularly that of 1753), itself often considered as a response to contemporary critiques of the exhibition of portraits of insignificant people; but La Tour’s portraits were always individual rather than components of a suite – even when he depicted members of the royal family.

A specific dynastic purpose was met (more often in oil than in pastel) by series of portraits of rulers. In pastel one might cite the curious series of 22 pastels of kings of France, from Louis IX to Louis XIV (Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, salle de lecture de la Réserve). This is a series of works [J.9.2097](#) of uniform size, 49x40 cm, except for that of the last, Louis XIV, a larger 53x42cm, as he was alive when they were made c.1680–82. They were commissioned by Père Claude du Molinet, “au naturel, sur les originaux les plus fidèles qui se sont pu rencontrer dans Paris”.⁴⁴² Of greater interest aesthetically is the group of grisaille pastels [J.323.1901 ff](#) by Fragonard executed to illustrate the *Histoire de la maison de Bourbon*; the purpose here was to illustrate a book rather than decorate a palace.

⁴⁴² A similar series of 49 kings of France in coloured chalk and gouache by Henri Bellange was sold in London, Christie’s, 10.VII.2001, Lot 101; no doubt there were many others.

 XI. PRICES AND PAYMENT

A NUMBER OF MODERN SOURCES suggest that pastel's popularity was due to its being cheaper than oil painting. This chapter explores what we know of the charges pastellists made for their work when they were originally commissioned, and attempts to give some indication of what those sums might represent today.

Of course minor pastellists would charge less than established oil painters; and all artists adjusted their prices to the format selected, so that a pastel head would be cheaper than an oil *portrait en pied*. But examples from Perronneau to Boze and Vigée Le Brun where pastel and oil versions of the same portrait were supplied do not indicate that pastels were cheaper, even when the additional cost of glass was excluded. Moreover, the best pastellists were known to be expensive. In a letter of 7.IX.1749,⁴⁴³ Daniel Wray wrote to his friend Philip Yorke to advise him on things to be done in Paris, mentioning the sculptor Bouchardon and adding:

Call in too at Chardin's, who paints little pieces of common-life, and upon Liotard (but he is the Colonel's painter), admirable in crayons. All one praise we allow these artists; but we believe, when you have heard their Prices you will be able to convince people that Oram and Scot and Pond are not extravagantly paid.

Several weeks later Wray added: "Give me leave to correct a mistake in my last letter. The Crayonist whom I meant to commend (from Hogarth's testimony) is La Tour. I confounded him with Liotard the Miniature-painter."⁴⁴⁴

Most of the price data come from auction records, and details of prices paid on primary commissions is sporadic (few pastellists' account books⁴⁴⁵ have survived). Estate inventories in France often included pastels without values, as "portraits de famille, pour mémoire". Advertisements carrying prices were usually placed by itinerant artists (a great many will be found throughout the *Dictionary*).

It is almost meaningless to compare prices during the eighteenth century with those of today: currency exchange rates and inflation introduce powerful distortions into the statistics. Even for long periods in the eighteenth century, when rates were relatively stable, there were large cost of living differences between London and the Continent. But for broad illustration,⁴⁴⁶ the UK retail price inflation rate from mid-eighteenth century to 2015 is about 200; between 1796 and 1914, the factor is closer to 100. Before 1914, £1 was roughly equal to FFr25 or \$4.50.

During the eighteenth century by far the highest price recorded was probably the 48,000 livres demanded, but not received, by La Tour for his portrait of Mme de Pompadour. Adjusting this using these principles to 2015£ values⁴⁴⁷ equates to only £362,000. Apart from this example, very few eighteenth century records indicate prices exceeding say 1200 livres (2015£: £10,000), a level reported for a number of other artists from Carriera and Mengs to Boze. But these are still significantly short of the 100 louis d'or (2015£: £19,000) Nanteuil famously received for his pastel of Louis XIV in the mid-seventeenth century.

⁴⁴³ British Library, Add. MS 35401, f.121 v.

⁴⁴⁴ See also the letter to Yorke from his wife cited in the Liotard article.

⁴⁴⁵ Among those for whom records survive are Carriera, Pond, Lion and Boze.

⁴⁴⁶ These figures are based on prices paid in local currencies, exchanged into sterling at the contemporary rate, and adjusted for inflation using a retail prices index (note that this does not produce the same number as inflating in the local currency before exchange). More detailed rates than those in this sentence are used in the computations underlying the numbers quoted (the Bank of England publishes inflation figures from 1750; the literature on historic exchange rates is vast, and our data are taken from various sources). Adjusting for inflation in luxury goods or in the cost of building a stately home would of course produce far higher numbers.

⁴⁴⁷ This section was last updated throughout in 2015. UK RPI inflation from end 2015 to end 2022 adds another 38%.

Ashfield charged as much as £10 (2015£: £2000) for his small heads in the 1670s; Luttrell, thought to have been his pupil, priced his pastels (according to the hand-bill issued for his 1710 raffle) at a mere 15s. each, “well fitted up with Frames and Glasses fit for Closets”.

Birochon invoiced Lord Polwarth for 17 pastels in the Cambrai series (1725), at 50 livres tournois (2015£: £400). He was paid in instalments, receiving 22 louis (of 16 livres each) for the first amount.

Carriera's prices ranged from 10 zecchini to a typical 22 for Lord Portland in 1727 (2015£: £2150). Sometimes she would charge more – 40–50 zecchini, but throw in a Jeune tyrolienne with the customer's own portrait; repetitions in various sizes were also often supplied at the same time. Feldmarschal von der Schulenburg paid 100 zecchini for his portrait alone in 1738. Typically she would add say 3 zecchini for a gilt frame. Sets of the *Four Seasons* were more expensive – about 200 zecchini. The set supplied to Clemens August von Bayern were bought by Jullienne in the 1760s for 4000 livres.

Arthur Pond's accounts provide a wealth of detail of his prices, as well as the cost and charges he made for supplying frames and glass. Typically for pastels he charged between 5 and 10 guineas, with a further 1½ to 3½ guineas for frame and glass (Mrs Harrison's portrait in 1737 was put in an architrave frame and glass for only 1 guinea, while the French ambassador Lestevenon was fitted with a black frame and glass for only 8s.). In one case, for a Nottingham client, he added an additional 10s. for packing. George Vertue noted that Hoare charged 5 gns for a pastel, or 8 gns framed and glazed in 1738; much later a set of four of his fancy pictures were invoiced to Lady Ailesbury for 60 gns including frames and glass. In 1762 Henry Hoare commissioned William Hoare to make a copy of a painting at Wilton then thought to be by Rubens, for £200 (2015£: £40,000: close to the highest price Liotard obtained in his lifetime).

In 1768, the year in which he helped found the Royal Academy, Cotes charged 25 guineas (2015£: £4000) for a head in pastel (and a further three guineas for an Italian burnished frame, and £1 5s. for the glass), and for oils, 20 gns for a head, 40 for a half-length and 80 for a full-length portrait. And while the extra work involved in painting a full-length oil might seem to be reflected in the price, the use of assistants for painting landscapes and drapery presumably provided an early form of financial leverage to increase an artist's commercial return – which was why Cotes probably shifted to oils despite being more comfortable in pastel. Similarly the far less talented but socially successful Katherine Read was charging £20 for single figures by 1772 (and had sought and obtained the French equivalent (480 livres) of 20 gns each for her two portraits of Enfants de France for the Bâtiments du roi in 1764); three years later her prices were 30 guineas for single figures and 150 guineas for a full length in oils. In the same year, the far less successful Ann Forbes, who had already turned to oils for almost all her portraiture, was charging 15 gns for a head in either medium. She had been told it was possible to make £700 a year from portraiture, but found it difficult to complete enough work to approach anything like this figure.

At the height of his career, Russell charged 30 gns (2015£: £4000) for a “head” (i.e. his commonest bust-length, 61x46 cm), and as much as £150 for large full-length groups (the 1797 account for the portrait of Mrs Jeans and her children was for 75 gns, with a further £12/9/- for the frame and glass, by Benjamin Charpentier) – Reynolds charged very similar prices. In 1788 Gardner charged Mrs Marton 20 gns plus 2½ gns for frame and 3½ gns for glass. Skirving however charged exceptionally high prices of up to 100 gns, linked to the need for up to 50 sittings.

Typically for French pastels the best records are from the Bâtiments du roi (the accounts published by Engrand 1900 provide a useful source of information, although they are not complete), and include both major figures and minor copyists or portraitists working from existing iconography. An important benchmark for portrait prices was established in a letter of 13.V.1747 (probably to Lépicié) in which Tournehem announced a change in the price structure for paintings, lowering those for portraits: “Je n'entends payer dorénavant les portraits en grands et les plus riches que

4.000 livres, ceux jusqu'aux genoux 2.500 livres, et ceux en buste 1.500 livres."⁴⁴⁸ La Tour returned to the subject with his letter to Marigny of 1.VIII.1763. Roslin's 15.VI.1767 invoice for his portraits of the deceased dauphin and of Madame Victoire made in 1765 reveals that he charge 2000 livres for a large scale oil of Louis, with two bust length pastels, one "fini d'après nature" each at 1000 livres (2015£: £8500); while both oil and pastel versions of his sister cost 1000 livres; the five frames, with glass for the three pastels, came to an additional 900 livres.

The typical prices for pastels were perhaps 300 livres (2015£: £2500). Coypel typically charged 300 livres, but was paid 600 livres for an allegorical *La France recevant dans ses bras M. le duc de Bourgogne* commissioned by the queen in 1752. But Frey was paid 720 livres for pastels of each of Mesdames Adélaïde, Louise, Sophie and Victoire in 1764. Boze's account books confirm similar numbers: 300–400 livres for routine portraits, somewhat more for royal commissions, of which the highest was 1200 livres for the comtesses d'Artois et de Provence (1785). Repetitions would be at a slight reduction, e.g. 360 livres.

The prices charged by artists from the Académie de Saint-Luc were typically lower. Pougin de Saint-Aubin charged 144 livres for two pastels of the marquis de Bérenger's children in 1764, and an invoice he issued earlier that year itemised three undescribed portraits at 5 louis each, four frames (2 louis each) and 3 glasses (1 louis), a total of 26 louis or 624 livres. At the lower end of the market, François Lauraire, running a boutique in Paris, supplied 48 pastels for a total of 827 livres to a certain sieur Goiran in Bordeaux, who, unable to pay for them, served nine months in prison in 1770. Another approach was taken by the musician and playwright Le Bègue d'Olgiband de La Grange, who set up a lottery for the disposal of ten pastels, offering to do portraits of the unsuccessful ticket holders for a further 36 livres.

Perronneau was paid only 144 livres for principe di Ardore in 1749; by 1752 however he was paid 600 livres for a pastel of the princesse de Condé.

La Tour of course could command more. The pastel of Prince Charles Edward Stuart shown in 1748 received 1200 livres; repetitions were then made. Marigny commissioned a pastel of the future Louis XVI in 1762 for 2400 livres. But even non-royal portraits were expensive: the Bâtiments du roi 1744–47 recorded payments of 1500 livres each for the chevalier de Montaigu and the duc d'Ayen.

Lion's accounts for his trip to Vienna in the 1760s reveal an unusual commission for the Kaiserin's private apartments of 20 landscapes in pastel, for an amount of 4100 florins (2015£: £50,000). Most of the portraits listed without description were probably in pastel, and generally range in price between 200 and 400 florins.

Liotard's receipt for the Belle Chocolatière reveals a price of 120 zecchini – about 864 livres, in 1745 (2015£: £12,000). He had already received 54 zecchini for the three pastels and a miniature of the Stuart family (perhaps 100 livres each). Liotard was commissioned by Augusta, Princess of Wales to make a series of pastels of the royal family (now in Windsor); a receipted memorandum, dated 15.VIII.1755, shows that four of these pastels, inclusive of frames and glass, cost 108 guineas (2015£: £5000 each).⁴⁴⁹ Liotard sold his showpiece pastel, *Le Déjeuner Lavergne*, to the future Lord Bessborough for 200 guineas in 1755 (2015£: £40,000).

Mengs received 100 louis d'or (2015£: £19,000) for the two allegorical pastels commissioned by the marquis de Croismare in 1754.

But at the other end of the scale, the pages of the *Dictionary* are filled with advertisements from minor figures charging derisory sums for their no doubt inferior work: Mrs Adams, for example,

⁴⁴⁸ Cited Jean Locquin, *La Peinture d'histoire en France de 1747 à 1785*, 1912, p. 6.

⁴⁴⁹ Royal Archives Add. MS 55448; reported Millar 1963, p. 190 and (independently) R&L p. 432. The amount is given incorrectly (as 180 guineas, by transposition) in New Haven 2017 and inexplicably as 18 guineas each without frame or glass in Liotard 2015.

advertising “Likenesses of grown People and Children in Crayons”, for 7s. each, Frame and Glass included, or “if painted on vellum, 8s.” (1778; 2015£: £40). Anspach’s prices for his characteristic small oval portraits were f7 glazed and framed, f5 unframed (2015£: £80).

Hugh Douglas Hamilton, a far more accomplished pastellist, started with prices as low as 6 gns in the 1760s (2015£: £1000); entries in the Duke of Montagu’s expenses book show that he paid 7½ gns for a portrait and frame in 1771 and again the following year.

Thomas Lawrence started his career in Bath, producing small oval pastel heads for a guinea each. His initial pricing strategies are revealed in his 1787 letter⁴⁵⁰ to Mary Hartley’s mother:

I must now acquaint you, Madam, with the motives which induced me to make the addition in my price. When I had the honour of being first known to you, four guineas was the sum I had received for nearly a year; some little time before I left Bath, it was raised to five. When I arrived in town, I was advised by my family and friends, to make a distinction between those portraits, where only the head was seen, and those in which the arms were introduced; which advice I the more readily took, from knowing my expenses to be rather heavy, the lodging I am now in, being three guineas the week; but more particularly from this reason – the necessary time to be bestowed on the finishing of crayons, (which I attempted,) was such that from proof I found my receipts were more when I painted for two guineas and a half, than they were when I had five. At the same time that I inform Miss Hartley of this, I must blame my own imprudence, in not making myself acquainted with the prices of the painters here, as it is my wish ever to be clear from the charge of presumption, which I fear I have incurred.

I am much honoured and obliged in the Duchess Dowager of Beaufort, and Mrs. M. Townshend, interesting themselves in my behalf, and Madam, if (it) should be your advice, and your concurrence should attend it, the lowering my price shall immediately be done, with the greatest readiness and pleasure.

Among other pricing anomalies, in the 1730s Goupy’s copies were valued more highly than his original works. The Prince of Wales paid 50 guineas (2015£: £11,000) for a Bacchus and Ariadne in 1738, while John Hedges obtained portraits of two ladies for 16 gns. The Earl of Oxford paid 50 gns for a repetition of the Belisarius in the Royal Collection.

However valuable the social relationships between artists and their patrons (explored in Chapter VIII above) must have been, the question of collecting payment was often difficult for artists at all levels: La Tour’s Mme de Pompadour is an extreme example, but numerous law cases heard in the Châtelet suggest similar difficulties.⁴⁵¹ The lack of resemblance often cited by customers as grounds for repudiation may well have been a pretext in many instances. Since practising artists were usually appointed by the court as experts, a certain bias may have entered the proceedings.

A letter from Ozias Humphry to Lady Mulgrave of 16.X.1779, prompted by one of the disputes over payment which dogged his career, explained that it was the custom to ask for half payment for a portrait on commencement, citing this as the practice of Reynolds, Cotes, West, Zoffany, Stubbs and Peters, and assured her that the price asked was the same as that paid by Lord Craven.

It is easier to understand the difficulties for portraitists collecting payment during the French Revolution. Boze successfully took legal action (at the Tribunal du 6^e arrondissement, 22.V.1792) against the émigré comte de Provence for non-payment of 6000 livres for his portrait en pied (a similar action against M. & Mme Darragon for 1200 livres for two portraits of Mme Darragon was heard on 22.IV.1792, while one against the maréchal de Castries on 26.IX.1792 failed when the defendant produced a receipt showing that the 60 louis had already been paid). However there was nothing new in these suits: records of the Châtelet include numerous previous examples, among

⁴⁵⁰ Letter to Mrs M. Harley, 26.VI.1787: see Warner 1830, p. 472f.

⁴⁵¹ Wildenstein 1921 is the main source of these reports which, when they refer to pastels, are mentioned in the relevant artist article. See for example Pierre Duval and his portrait of Mlle Adam adjudicated by N.-N. Coypel and Colson in 1732.

them the steps Montjoye had to go to to recover 144 livres for a 1783 portrait of Mme Charlet for which La Tour was appointed expert.⁴⁵² La Tour was involved in several more such cases.⁴⁵³

All of these numbers adjusted for inflation to today's prices are vastly lower than what the best examples have achieved in the secondary market (see Chapter XIII below).

⁴⁵² See [DOCUMENTS](#), 8.XI.1783 and 10.I.1784.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, re Marteau's estate, 4.IV.1757; Renou, 13.VIII.1774, acting with Greuze; and Viel, 26.XI.1783, acting with the pastellist Jean Valade.

 XII. COLLECTING AND CRITICAL FORTUNE POST 1800

THE SOCIAL FACTORS THAT LED to the enormous popularity of pastel in Ancien Régime France led even more abruptly to its decline, with the Revolution. In Britain too interest in the medium evaporated with the death of John Russell in 1805. Only in provincial Germany, which had been late to the game, did interest continue in a seamless transition from rococo to Biedermeier. As a mainstream medium for leading artists, pastel disappeared until its rediscovery, as a completely different material, by the Impressionists. That story is beyond the scope of this work.

There is however a quite different narrative which we pick up in this chapter: that of how collecting interest in the eighteenth century pastel revived much later, particularly in the Belle Époque, only to wane again by the end of the First World War. On a very broad level this may be seen as following trends in wealth inequality.⁴⁵⁴

XII.1 Collectors

To understand this phenomenon a broader investigation of collecting is required. There are detailed notes on some 1300 of the most important [COLLECTORS](#) on the *Pastels & pastellists* website. Just over fifty amassed more than a dozen pastels. Among them were important royal collectors such as Friedrich August (I. and II.), the duc d'Orleans, Caroline Luise von Baden, Charles de Lorraine and Clemens August. The great French eighteenth century collectors included Blondel de Gagny, Crozat, Jullienne, Lempereur, Livois, Mariette, Marigny, Paignon Dijonval, Proli, Tallard and Vassal de Saint-Hubert (Tessin formed much of his collection in Paris), as well as artists and amateurs such as Coypel, Ducreux, Grimod, Lemoyne, Natoire, Saint-Non. Mention should also be made of dealers such as Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Le Brun; there are contemporary descriptions and illustrations that show his hôtel constructed between the rue de Cléry and the rue du Gros-Chenet as a multi-purpose exhibition space for a major collection rather than a stock room: “une galerie proper à recevoir une collection de tableaux précieux et autres objets d’art que je rassemblais depuis vingt ans”.⁴⁵⁵ In England Bessborough and Fawkener were known for their Liotard holdings, while Walpole and Dawkins had mixed groups.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, French collectors again dominated: Decourcelle, Doucet, Ganay, Goncourt, Groult, Houssaye, La Béraudière, Laperlier, Marcille, Petit de Meurville, Piot, Rothschild and Veil-Picard all formed important collections, while in England Coates, Colonel Johnston, Rotch, Thursby-Pelham and Wellesley are less well known. Antiquaires, or collector–dealers, such as Kraemer, Stettiner, Wertheimer and Wildenstein, should also be noted.

What is to be said of those who collect pastels? “C’est un curieux; il a beaucoup de pastels chez lui.”⁴⁵⁶ It is clear that, even by 1694 when the first edition of the Académie française’s *Dictionnaire* appeared, there was a recognition of something special about a collection of pastels, and that such a collection could evidence that its possessor was a “curieux”. A *curieux* is “celuy qui prend plaisir à faire amas de choses curieuses & rares; ou celuy qui a une grande connoissance de ces sortes de choses”, while adjectivally, *curieux* defines one “qui a beaucoup d’envie & de soin d’apprendre, de

⁴⁵⁴ Books such as Thomas Piketty’s *Le Capital au XXI^e siècle*, 2014 provide valuable data with which to make a comparison with the price data analysed below. The significance of any correlation is a different question.

⁴⁵⁵ Le Brun’s introduction to the Raymond sale, 1811; see Darius A. Spieth, *Revolutionary Paris and the market for Netherlandish art*, Leiden, 2018, p. 147.

⁴⁵⁶ This example also appears under the head-word Pastel in each of the editions of *Le Dictionnaire de l’Académie française* from the first (1694) to the fifth (1798); “C’est un curieux”, but not the remainder of the sentence, is dropped subsequently. Although it sounds like a citation rather than an *exemple forgé*, I have been unable to identify any source. There is however a curious parallel with a speech by Madame Merle in Henry James’s *The portrait of a lady* (188; p. 225 in the London 1968 ed. by Leon Edel), instancing what might be said to define Ralph Touchett: “He’s very cultivated,” they say: “he has a very pretty collection of old snuff-boxes.”

voir, de posséder des choses nouvelles, rares, excellentes &c.” When Liotard announced his presence in the *Public advertiser* in London, his notice was addressed “To the Curious”.⁴⁵⁷

There are hints of mental pathologies in this language which are amplified in the many studies that have been made of collecting in general. Curiously, despite suggestions that collectors specifically acquired pastels obsessively or fetishistically, few of these collections were devoted to pastels exclusively or even dominantly: Yves Carlier de Fontobbia and three living cases are the only private collections devoted (almost) exclusively to pastel that come to mind; the obsession seems to have been with collecting rather than with the medium. If anything is to be learned by studying those who have collected pastels, it is surely that the range of motives, the breadth of other interests, the mixture of genres, the manner in which they have acquired money, and even the level of affluence they have required to pursue their interest, simply cannot be reduced to any single theme.

While private collections, particularly in Ancien Régime France, have been the subject of much academic research; and some of the critical tools – Lugt’s extraordinary survey of marques de collections, or the study of the special mounts which Mariette prepared for his drawings – are not relevant to framed pastels. Nevertheless some conclusions can be drawn about collecting and prices in the broader social context discussed below.

XII.2 The rediscovery of the dix-huitième

It is important to note that the revival of interest in eighteenth century art, which today we associate with the Goncourt brothers, was a more complicated phenomenon than it may at first seem. In particular pastel was not always included, and the way the fashion took hold was not the same in England say as in France.

An excellent account of the establishment view of eighteenth century French art may be found in the various essays in the proceedings of a 2008 colloquium entitled *Delicious decadence – the rediscovery of French eighteenth-century painting in the nineteenth century*.⁴⁵⁸ It is perhaps not insignificant however that the volume contains virtually no mention of pastel, although many of the collectors discussed did include pastel among their interests. A revealing passage⁴⁵⁹ arises in an essay on Thoré-Bürger’s rehabilitation of Watteau, Chardin and even Fragonard on the basis of their thick, vigorous brushwork, anticipating Impressionism; for him and his left-wing Republican views, finish, and presumably the aesthetic of pastel, would have been anathema. However the rediscovery involved connoisseurs and collectors who approached the subject from a range of different directions. A number of those in France, among whom the Goncourt brothers are the best known, were interested in pastel to varying degrees.

There is no doubt that a key role in the reevaluation of eighteenth century pastel was played by the collection in the Louvre, which has always been dominated by La Tour. Originally a few pastels were interspersed with other pictures in the Grand galerie, but an arrangement which persisted into the twentieth century (see fig. 7 below) seems to have been in place from the reorganisation⁴⁶⁰ of 1834, the Grande salle des pastels being no. 14 of the salles des dessins, on the first floor of the northern side of the Cour carrée.⁴⁶¹ Enthusiastic descriptions by Arsène Houssaye (1849), Sainte-

⁴⁵⁷ 11 January 1754.

⁴⁵⁸ Christoph Vogtherr, Monica Preti & Guillaume Faroult, eds., *Delicious decadence – the rediscovery of French eighteenth-century painting in the nineteenth century*, Farnham, 2014. Of particular relevance to the present discussion are the essays by Frances Suzman Jowell, Humphrey Wine and Stephen Duffy.

⁴⁵⁹ Frances Suzman Jowell, “‘Ah! que c’est français!’ Thoré-Bürger and eighteenth century French art”, *op. cit.*, pp. 71–86, p. 84.

⁴⁶⁰ See Salmon 2018, p. 36 (and Jeffares 2018g for further comments on pastels in the Louvre). For other accounts of the hang of pastels in the Louvre at earlier stages, see Guérin 1715 and Dezallier d’Argenville 1781. Although Reiset 1869 provides the name of some of the artists whose pastels hung in various rooms, only O’Shea 1874 gives specific pastels for each.

⁴⁶¹ The position is now occupied by room 52 of the Napoléon III apartments.

Beuve (1852), Champfleury (1853), Julien de La Rochemore (1853), Théophile Gautier (1855) and the Goncourts (1867) emphasised the dominance of La Tour and his Mme de Pompadour in particular (although La Rochemore thought Rosalba's jeune fille au singe even better). Gautier also discussed the recent decorations by M. Desnuelles, praising his good taste in subordinating his ornamentation to the pictures, "et de n'employer que des nuances adoucies, des tons passés, des ors rouges, verts ou fauves, de façon à ne pas éteindre ce qu'il devait faire valoir."⁴⁶²

The Goncourts' own collection contained a small number of examples of which the most important was a pastel they bought at Drouot as by La Tour but which they thought was by the other pastellist – Perronneau – whom they regarded as working in the manner of the English school (it is in fact by Vigée Le Brun⁴⁶³). In a revealing passage in Reynaldo Hahn's diary,⁴⁶⁴ after a visit "au Louvre avec Marcel" to see the pastels of Chardin and La Tour, he records an encounter with Edmond de Goncourt after dinner chez Alphonse Daudet–

Sur le canapé, Goncourt me parle longuement de peinture. ... Je lui raconte ma visite au Louvre, le questionne sur les pastellistes. Il admire surtout Perronneau, le place très au-dessus des deux autres et le considère comme le peintre de l'école anglaise, "bien que personne ne s'en soit jamais aperçu", ajoute-t-il avec un petit ricanement. Il n'a aucune envie de voyager, de voir des pays.

(As Guillaume Apollinaire noted, "il n'y a pas de comparaison à établir entre les pastellistes anglais du XVIII^e siècle et les pastellistes français de la même époque."⁴⁶⁵) Curiously although the Goncourts included essays on Chardin and La Tour in their *L'Art du XVIII^e siècle*, they wrote only a short passage on Perronneau (in the La Tour article), in which they correctly identified M. Groult's boy⁴⁶⁶ by Perronneau: "rien d'aussi franchement charmant".

Among the numerous great collectors of pastels of this era, Camille Groult and Jacques Doucet stand out. The watercolours made by Karbowski in 1905 to record the celebrated collection of Jacques Doucet in the rue Spontini (later broken up at auction⁴⁶⁷ in 1912) show us the famous couturier's approach; as figs. 1 and 2 reveal, pastels by La Tour were again hung with paintings by Chardin and Reynolds.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶² Gautier 1855, p. 70.

⁴⁶³ See [ESSAYS, Beaujon](#).

⁴⁶⁴ *Notes. Journal d'un musicien*, Paris, 1933, pp. 19ff, 26 November 1895. See [FLORILEGIUM](#). Hahn and Proust did not see any Perronneau pastel during their visit, nor did Proust mention Perronneau in his unpublished article on "Chardin and Rembrandt" which he wrote at that time. It was not until after the opening of the Cent pastels exhibition in 1908 that Perronneau's name appeared in Proust's novel – in *Le Côté de Guermantes*, at which he was at work at the time.

⁴⁶⁵ *L'Intransigeant*, 8.IV.1911, p. 1. See [FLORILEGIUM](#).

⁴⁶⁶ Now in the Art Institute of Chicago, inv. 1995.283, once identified as l'enfant Lemoine.

⁴⁶⁷ At Galerie Georges Petit, officiated by the legendary commissaire-priseur Fernand Lair-Dubreuil (1866–1931). See *Gazette Drouot*, 13.I.2017, pp. 138–43, with a photograph of the Doucet sale. For an account of how Doucet developed a taste for the XVIII^e, by seeing two pastels by La Tour in Degas's studio, see Félix Fénéon, *Œuvres plus que complètes*, Geneva, 1970, I, p. 393.

⁴⁶⁸ The Karbowski watercolours are now in the bibliothèque de l'INHA. A photograph of the grand salon appeared in Doucet's Far East sale, Georges Petit, 28.XI.1903 (reproduced Nogent sur Marne, Libert, 26–30.VII.2005, Lot 133). Another photograph appeared in *L'Illustration* in 1907.

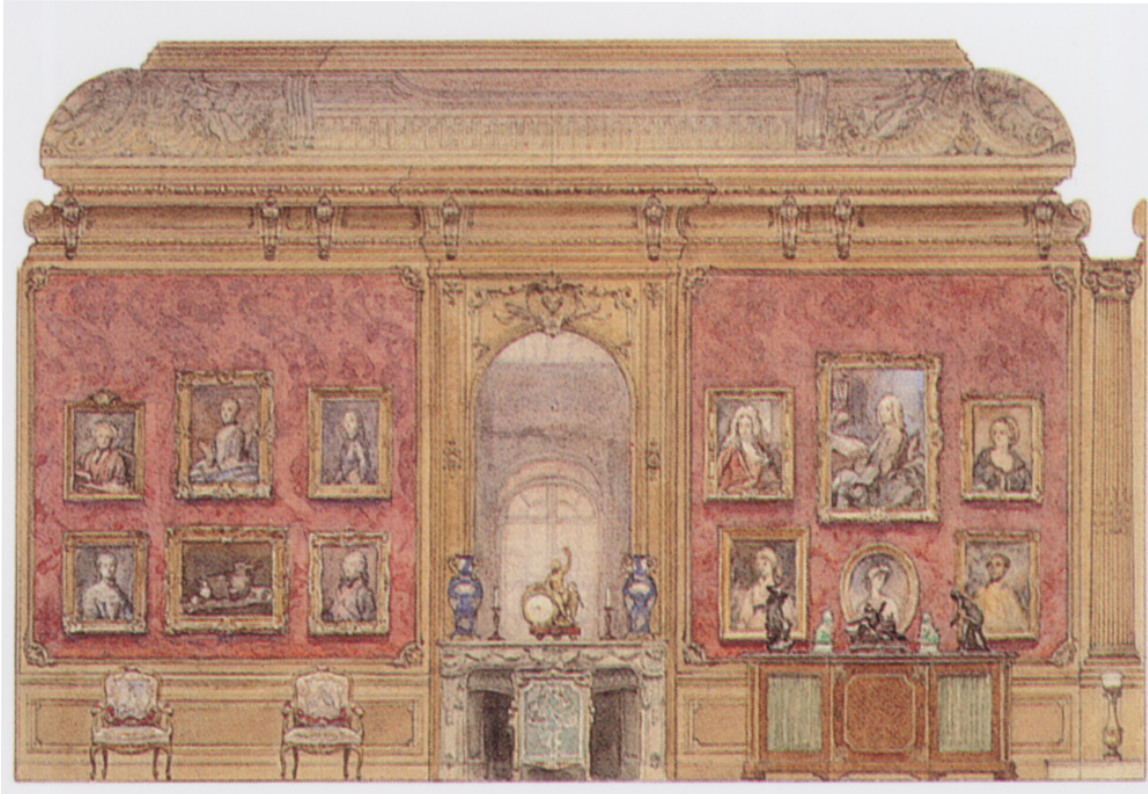


Fig. 1 Karbowski, Collection Jacques Doucet, 1905



Fig. 2 Grand salon, rue Spontini, 1903

While in many respects the approach taken by the other legendary collector of that era, Camille Groult, was rather different, he too had no difficulty juxtaposing pastels, oils and drawings of disparate sizes hung at different levels (fig. 3 shows oils, pastels and préparations by Perronneau and La Tour in the central hall in the hôtel de l'avenue Malakoff, from the supplement to *L'Illustration*, 19.1.1908).



Fig. 3 Collection Groult, 1908

For the retailer Gabriel Cognacq, his personal collection (“les bijoux de sa galerie”) was displayed (fig. 4) at the Samaritaine de Luxe to “attirer la clientèle” as one contemporary article noted,⁴⁶⁹ contrasting the approach of this (unnamed) “collectionneur notoire, directeur d’un magasin de nouveautés du boulevard des Capucines” with that of the New York department store, Wanamakers, which had just opened an aeroplane section: “autre pays, autres méthodes.”



Fig. 4 Gabriel Cognacq pastels at the Samaritaine, 1925

This was the period when the major revival in interest in pastel took place, epitomised by the public exhibitions of 1908 (Cent pastels) and 1927, both of which were recorded in various photographs (figs. 5, 6).

⁴⁶⁹ *L'Opinion, journal de la semaine*, 24.X.1925, p. 25.



Fig. 5 Exposition de Cent pastels, galerie Georges Petit, 1908

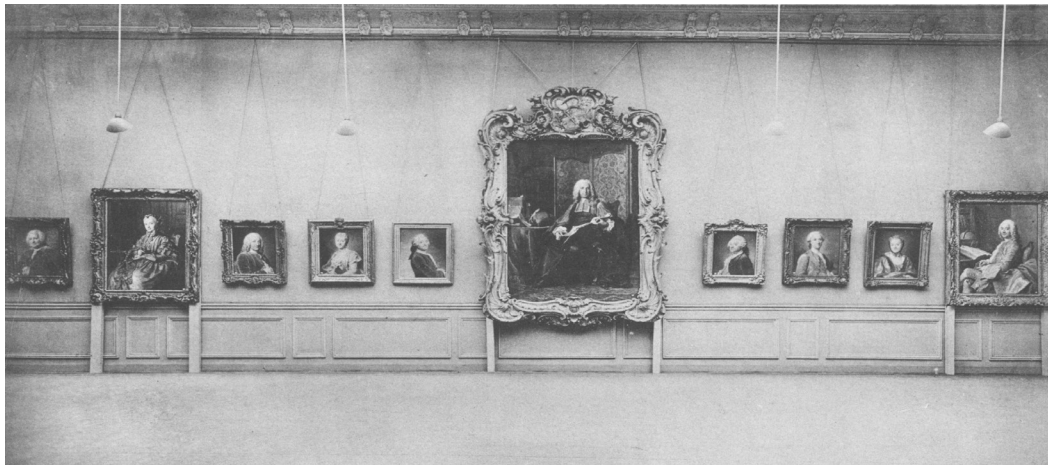


Fig. 6 Exposition de Pastels français, hôtel Jean Charpentier, Paris, 1927

A similar approach to display was found in French museums of the day. The Louvre, for example, displayed its La Tour pastels two deep in this photograph (fig. 7) published⁴⁷⁰ in 1919:

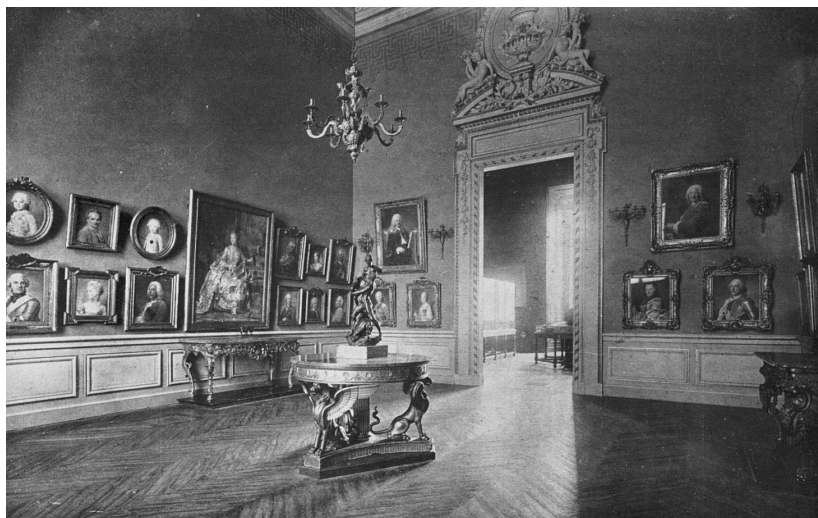


Fig. 7 Grande salle des pastels in the Louvre, c.1918

⁴⁷⁰ Arsène Alexandre, "Pour que le Louvre soit parfait", *La Renaissance de l'art français...*, .1.1919, p. 239. I am grateful to Ólafur Þorvaldsson for signalling this image (Twitter, 14.1.2017).

XII.3 Britain

There are other, sometimes insidious, reasons for the present neglect of pastel, particularly in Britain. The great eighteenth century English collectors (and their legacies in the various museums and stately homes in Britain) assembled Poussin and Claude, but virtually no eighteenth century French artists. While Paris had the collections in the Louvre, there was (and remains to this day)⁴⁷¹ no great public collection in Britain to stimulate interest in pastel. In the nineteenth century, the English painter Benjamin Robert Haydon expressed a common view by decrying pastel, along with watercolour and coach-painting, as the three poisons of art.⁴⁷² Collectors in Britain showed little interest until the late nineteenth century. Even then, the reviewer of the 1894 Russell exhibition in *The Times*,⁴⁷³ recognised the superiority of the best of the French school:

Some of the best of them [John Russell's pastels] are here, contributed by the Queen, by a variety of private owners, and by the descendants of the artist, who have always had a proper estimation of the value and charm of his works. The Queen's two pictures, and such portraits as those of Miss Faden (101), of Charlotte Chaplin (75), of Mrs King, wife of the Bishop of Rochester (73), and of Dr Francis Willis, the first organizer of lunatic asylums (22), are of a high order of merit. They cannot, indeed, be put on a level with the works of Latour or Perronneau, men whose searching insight into character and whose delicacy of hand entitled them to be ranked in quite a different class of artists; but Russell was, in his way, a considerable figure, and we are glad to know more of him, through this exhibition, than has been possible before.

Lord Hertford, who formed his collection in mid-nineteenth century Paris, shared the taste of those critics like Thoré-Bürger (*v. supra*) who were just waking up to the merits of Watteau but unable to make the leap to Perronneau. So it is no accident that there are no pastels⁴⁷⁴ in the Wallace Collection. Critics at the time of the opening of the Wallace Collection in 1900 were aware of this: thus Claude Phillips—⁴⁷⁵

The idea still sticks that the French art of this time is mainly naughty, artificial, and decorative; that it may be admired, but with a certain contempt and a turning away of the shoulder, with a certain reservation of one's better self for better things.

But here it has apparently found no favour. We must still, outside the Louvre and France generally, look for Chardin at Potsdam and Berlin, in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg, and in the little gallery of Carlsruhe, which contains a splendid series of his fruit and still-life pieces. Again we have nothing by the great pastelliste Maurice Quentin de la Tour, or by Perronneau; nothing by Pesne, or Tocqué, or Roslin.

The moral reaction to the conspicuous consumption of that period was widely entrenched, and the second wave of enthusiasm led to a possibly even stronger rejection of the perceived superficiality and frivolity of the rococo, particularly in Anglo-Saxon circles, and especially in the main centres of the teaching of art history. Combined with the genuine concerns about the conservation of pastels, museums throughout the world have eschewed pastel, with very few exceptions.

XII.4 Germany

While Germany accounted for few of the major pastel collections made after 1800, it is notable that a significant number of the Nazi era seizures, for example by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg for the Führermuseum in Linz, were of eighteenth century pastels: La Tour and

⁴⁷¹ The largest groups of pre-1800 pastels in a British public collection are probably those in the V&A (technically the national collection for the medium) and the NPG (each with just over 60). Neither normally has more than a handful on display. The Royal Collection is considerably more numerous, but pastels are only occasionally included in temporary exhibitions. The collection at Stourhead is notable, but is dominated by a single artist (Hoare).

⁴⁷² B. R. Haydon, *Lectures on painting and design*, 1844, I, p. 324.

⁴⁷³ 3.V.1894, p. 4.

⁴⁷⁴ A handful of pastels belonging to Sir Richard Wallace in his house in the rue Laffitte passed on his death to John Murray Scott and did not enter the Wallace Collection.

⁴⁷⁵ *The Art Journal*, 1901, LXIII, p. 5f; cited in part in Stephen Duffy, "French eighteenth century painting in England and the opening of the Wallace Collection", *op. cit.*, pp. 141–58, p. 146. *The Daily telegraph*, 23.VI.1900 similarly noted that "The great omission in the French series is Chardin.... Maurice Quentin de la Tour, the greatest of the pastellistes, is also absent."

Perronneau dominated the lists which also included works by John Russell, Louis Vigée and his daughter, broadly corresponding with the tastes of the great Paris exhibitions of 1908 and 1927.

XII.5 America

American railroad barons and property tycoons – who themselves it may be said turned to art to wash away the taint of their fortunes – founded museums that, during the last century, acquired the major works of Western art that European museums were no longer able to buy. Most bought the safe but largely predictable portraits by Gainsborough and Nattier that grace their walls. But, particularly in the last decades, American museums have increasingly turned their attention to pastel in contrast to almost all European institutions that continue to neglect this field.

To see a representative collection of French eighteenth century pastels outside France (the main collections are those of the Louvre, Saint-Quentin, Orléans) one must go to the United States (the Getty, the Met, the National Gallery of Art or Chicago). (In recent years both Karlsruhe and Stockholm have made important acquisitions.)

XII.6 Display today

Today however the challenges presented by pastels (in terms of conservation as well as aesthetics) often lead to approaches to hanging and display beyond those of Groult or Doucet. Some technical considerations on display are discussed in §V.6 *supra*.

The leading collections in the world (see [MUSEUMS](#)) usually group their pastels together, avoiding competition with oil paintings, allowing the softer medium to speak more clearly and, on a practical level, permitting control of light levels. The historical problems of lighting in eighteenth century exhibitions – whether through windows or top lighting – and the resulting reflections were mentioned in are discussed in §VIII.2 *supra*. The exhibition of the pastels from Saint-Quentin in the Louvre in 1922 (among the Collection Chauchard) was an occasion for lighting improvements (principally in the selection of dark or neutral colours for different surfaces, with natural light passing through prismatic glass in windows obscured up to c.2 metres) developed by the museum in Whanagui, New Zealand: these “revealed fresh beauties to those who had previously seen them in the ill-lighted rooms,”⁴⁷⁶ although only after overcoming the initial impression that a salon had been transformed into a *salle d'étude*, if not an operating theatre. During the twentieth century the availability of electric lighting resulted in new approaches to lighting in museums, permitting further such transgressions.

The optimal height for display of any picture recommended by most sources is for the optical centre of the work to be at eye level, approximately 158 cm from floor level for average viewers. Sir Charles Eastlake wrote⁴⁷⁷ that “To see pictures with anything like comfort or attention, they should be disposed in one row only, and that opposite the eye, or on an average about 5 feet 6 inches [166 cm] from the floor to the centre of the canvas.” His average figure is higher than he intended: even today the average height of museum visitors is 166.5 cm (averaging male and female figures, typically 12.5 cm apart, as provided in numerous sources such as government building regulations), and eye level is about 155 cm or 158 cm with shoes. In view of the delicacy and size of these portraits, it is particularly important for pastels to be hung no higher than this: arguably it is the optical centre of a portrait, where the sitter’s eyes are located, that should be placed at this level. The intimacy is easily lost if eye-to-eye contact is not possible – as implied by Francis Cotes’s famous injunction (cited *supra*) to hang pastels “in apartments that are not too large”.

⁴⁷⁶ Fleury 1922b. See also the articles on the lighting of picture galleries by S. Hurst Seager in the *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 13.I.1923, pp. 121ff, and 20.XII.1924, pp. 91ff; the latter article includes a proposal for top side-lighting for the museum at Saint-Quentin drawn by Paul Bigot.

⁴⁷⁷ *Hints on household taste in furniture, upholstery, and other details*, 1869, p. 168.

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Until recently the Louvre continued to display pastels in the Couloir des poules⁴⁷⁸ (figs. 8, 9) in isolation from the paintings and drawings in the collection; various wall colours were attempted.



Fig. 8 Couloir des poules, musée du Louvre, c.2010 (left) and 2014 (right)

In 2018 a major exhibition of (almost all) the Louvre pastels took place in the temporary galleries in the Rotonde Sully. Wall colour and hang did not meet with universal approval (fig. 9).



Fig. 9 Pastels in the Louvre 2018 exhibition

At Orléans the Cabinet des pastels also included some sculpture (fig. 10); the 2018 arrangement replaced the somewhat austere wall colour with a brighter look that seems more sympathetic than that chosen for the Paris 2018 exhibition.



Fig. 10 Cabinet des pastels, musée des Beaux-Arts d'Orléans, c.2014 (left) and 2018 (right)

The following year, Saint-Quentin made a fundamental transformation of the hang in the three pastel rooms at the musée Antoine-Lécuyer. Abandoning the policy of displaying almost all the 90 or so original La Tours together, the decision was taken to show only some two dozen at a time

⁴⁷⁸ Salmon 2018, p. 40, dates the use of the Couloir des poules for pastels to the Grand Louvre project, c.1993.

(fig. 11). New lighting was introduced, the wall colour changed from a neutral hue to various shades of blue to green, and one of the three rooms was devoted to post-1800 works.



Fig. 11 2^e salle des pastels, musée Antoine-Lécuyer, Saint-Quentin, c.2018 (left) and 2020 (right)

Debates may remain about whether to mix different national schools or periods: American museums tend to take a broader approach than those in Europe. At the Getty, different schools and periods are mixed (fig. 12).



Fig. 12 Pastels on display at the J. Paul Getty Museum

The approach to temporary exhibitions is also variable, particularly as regards the choice of directional or ambient light.⁴⁷⁹ In 2015 for example, the Liotard exhibition in Edinburgh (Scottish National Gallery) took place against walls of an ultradeep violet colour with theatrical LED lighting (fig. 13). This is increasingly popular with designers, and has the merit of reducing overall light levels for conservation; but the effect of raking light on pastels can be unfortunate in revealing surface imperfections. (With great care, and the right space, directional spots can be used to great effect, as in the London 2017 exhibition where Rosalba's *Four Seasons* were lit from ceiling mounted spots at an angle of c.45°, slightly to one side, avoiding both viewers' shadows and condition issues.) In contrast, the Karoline Luise exhibition showed a number of pastels in a conventionally toplight gallery against sage-green walls (fig. 14).

⁴⁷⁹ Some of these points are discussed in my post <https://neiljeffares.wordpress.com/2015/01/26/whats-wrong-with-art-exhibitions/>.

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Fig. 13 Liotard in Edinburgh, 2015 (exhibition publicity)



Fig. 14 Karoline Luise in Karlsruhe, 2015

As noted above, wall colour can be extremely important, and some favourites with designers are often unsatisfactory (mid-blues, which can be very flattering for old master drawings, are often highly unsatisfactory with French eighteenth century pastels). At the Perronneau retrospective in Orléans in 2017 (fig. 15), an enfilade used a sequence of pastel colours to demarcate different zones in what might otherwise have been a disorienting sequence; the images found on social media found these colours peculiarly difficult to capture accurately.



Fig. 15 Perronneau in Orléans, 2017

Two shows in 2021/22 both reverted to the blue spectrum for wall colour, with very different effects between the ultra-cool grey-blue for San Francisco 2021 (fig. 16, left) and the deep blue, with strong directional lighting, in Munich 2022 (fig. 16, right).

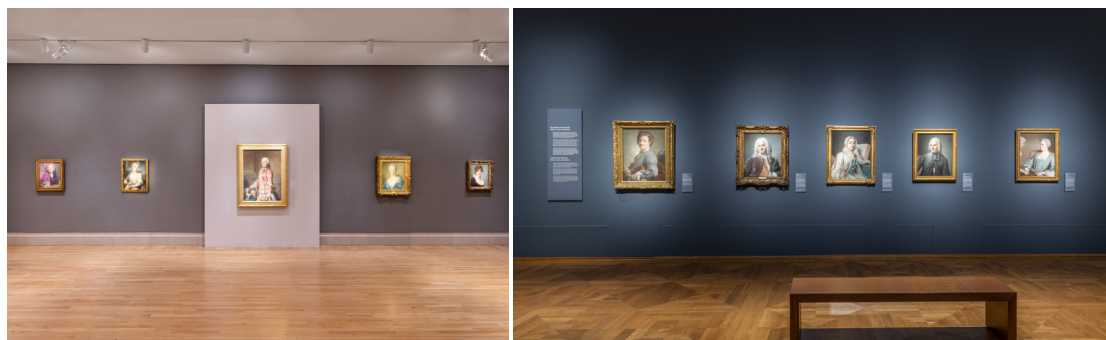


Fig. 16 Pastel exhibitions in San Francisco, 2021, left, and Munich, 2022, right

What many of these shows have confirmed is the importance of condition, and the manifold problems in the surviving *œuvre* of all eighteenth century pastellists. However strong a pastel may have originally been, in any calculus of wall power today it is the product (not the sum) of quality and condition that matters.

XIII. PRICES POST 1800

MUCH OF THE DISCUSSION about collecting and taste in the period after 1800 can be found reflected in the prices achieved by pastels. This chapter picks up the investigation of artist's prices started in Chapter XI, but considers the secondary market for the resale of pastels. For the most part the public data are derived from auction sales. In assessing their significance it should be noted that they are subject to the same distortions arising from fluctuating exchange rates and inflation as discussed above in relation to eighteenth century prices, exacerbated by two world wars and several periods of hyperinflation (e.g. when the new franc was introduced in 1960).⁴⁸⁰

Prices for pastels collapsed at the end of the eighteenth century and only really revived with the second wave of interest towards the end of the nineteenth century. One should note that in the field of old master drawings, many sheets by Michelangelo, each of which would now be priced in millions, sold for a few hundred pounds in the late nineteenth century. But the prices of paintings of similar pre-eminence to pastels seem to have moved significantly faster.

The prices for pastels in early nineteenth century sales were extraordinarily low. After the death of La Tour's brother in 1807 it proved practically impossible to sell his pastels at auction⁴⁸¹ over the next few years: Rousseau was bought in at 30 francs against an estimate of 150 francs (2015£: 500).⁴⁸² The explanation of the poor result reported to the *École gratuite de dessin* (the vendors) was that "la nature des tableaux au pastel avait été un obstacle insurmontable a une plus haute elevation des prix. Ces tableaux sont actuellement également dédaignés par le marchand et par l'amateur." At the Silvestre sale in 1811, the pendant pastels of Chardin and his wife, now the jewels in the Louvre collection, together reached just 24 francs.

Even by the middle of the century prices remained depressed for pastels. The Perronneau 1746 man known as the marquis d'Aubais was sold in the Laurent Laperlier sale (Paris, 11–13.IV.1867) for Fr48 (2015£: 500); it was subsequently sold in the Marius Paulme sale (Paris, 13–15.V.1929) for Fr70,000 (2015£: 156,000). The three La Tour pastels in the 1867 Laperlier sale reached sums between 200 and 225 francs, while the oils did better (a Prud'hon *Andromaque* from 1817 reached 11,000 francs; the twenty Chardins canvases had a mixed fate, reaching sums between 250 and 8850 francs).⁴⁸³

The first real signs of revival in prices were in the Mme Denain sale (Paris, 6–7.IV.1893), where La Tour's Mlle Sallé reached Fr18,000 (2015£: 81,000). Four years later Mme Rouillé achieved Fr31,550 (2015£: 148,000), reaching Fr365,000 (2015£: £665,000) in the Bardac sale in 1920 and Fr1 million (2015£: £2.1 million) in 1926. La Tour's value was already well known by 1896, when General Pitt-Rivers asked for information about prices of a pastel attributed to him; he was told "this is very valuable because De la Tour is quoted very well in Paris – about a thousand pounds."⁴⁸⁴

As noted above other La Tour pastels achieved high relative prices at the same time. The splendid La Tour Duval de l'Épinoy was not immediately recognised when it was originally sold locally in Beaumont-la-Ronce, 26–28.IV.1903, Fr5210; but it was acquired soon after by Jacques Doucet for Fr120,000. In the Doucet sale in 1912, it sold for Fr600,000 (2015£: £2.5 million), double the

⁴⁸⁰ The classic study analysing art market prices is Reitlinger 1961; the literature is now exceptionally large.

⁴⁸¹ See the *Régistre des délibérations de l'École gratuite de dessin de Saint-Quentin* in [DOCUMENTATION](#), 11.V.1810; inaccurate summaries in Dréolle de Nodon 1856, pp. 119ff (where Rousseau was said to have reached only 3 francs, repeated later in many articles); Brière 1932a etc.

⁴⁸² As noted above, the 2015 equivalents have not been recalculated with each edition of these Prolegomena. To end 2022 a factor of 38% is required for UK RPI inflation.

⁴⁸³ The prices were reported in *La Chronique des arts*, 21, 28.IV.1867, pp. 122, 129.

⁴⁸⁴ By M. Cavini, of 24 King Street, St James's, enclosed with letter of Sir Thomas Grove, 11.X.1896. The pastel from the Pitt-Rivers collection may in fact have been the Perronneau once identified as of M. Miron.

estimate, and reported at the time as the highest price ever paid for a pastel. (Its subsequent purchase by Calouste Gulbenkian was for an even higher sum.⁴⁸⁵) Writing in the *Burlington magazine*, Robert Dell, its first editor, revealed typically British fury:

Is it in accordance with common sense that a masterpiece by Fragonard [le songe du mendiant] should fetch 137,500 francs, and a masterpiece by Latour, who can hardly be counted the equal of Fragonard, 660,000? The truth is that prices have no sort of relation to artistic value.

He was not alone: writing in her *Journal*, Marguerite de Saint-Marceaux⁴⁸⁶ noted on 2.VI.1912 “il y a d’adorables choses” at the sale; but a week later this turned to anti-Semitism:

Les prix atteints par les bibelots de la vente Doucet révoltent les braves gens. Acheter 600 000 francs une tête de Latour, l’accrocher à son mur, immobiliser de tels capitaux es tune manière de rendre les infortunés criminels. C’est la lute de l’argent chez les juifs, la dispute de tribu à tribu.

Prices relative to other pictures reached a zenith in the first quarter of the twentieth century, when works by La Tour fetched prices comparable with canvases of Fragonard or Watteau, and in excess of fine paintings by Rembrandt or Chardin.⁴⁸⁷

Another spectacular price was the £48,000 (Fr1.2 million at the time, 2015£: £2.4 million) agreed by Nathan Wildenstein with the Greek shipowner Nicolas Ambatielos for La Tour’s *président de Rieux* in 1919 (Clemenceau saw it earlier that year, and said “c’est le plus beau pastel que j’aie vu...il devrait rester en France”); however, Ambatielos became bankrupt before payment was made, and the picture returned to Wildenstein where it remained until Maurice de Rothschild bought it for an undisclosed sum in 1930. It was sold to the Getty in 1994, also for an undisclosed sum.

By 1959 at the Chrysler-Foy sale one of the La Tour *préparations* sold for \$11,000 (2015£: £81,000).

At the same time as the early interest in La Tour, prices of English pastels also took off. Lawrence’s pastel of Mrs Boucherett with two of her children, which took him all of three weeks to complete, achieved 1000 gns (2015£: £122,000) in the Angerstein sale at Christie’s, 4.VII.1896; this was reported as the highest price ever paid at auction for a pastel. It was soon exceeded by Russell’s *Persian Sibyl*, for which Charles Wertheimer paid 1100 gns (Christie’s, 1.VII.1899; 2015£: £133,000). Many transactions were not in the saleroom: another Russell, the *Agar family*, was bought by one dealer from the family for £150, and resold to Asher Wertheimer for £1500 – figures only revealed by a 1913 court case between two of the three intermediaries concerning unpaid commission.⁴⁸⁸ The 1908 sale of the Gardner portrait of Lady Fawkener for 1250 gns (2015£: £140,000) brought the artist out of obscurity. These prices were not sustained, and it was not until 1993 that a British pastel reached a level equivalent to six figures today. Since then Hugh Douglas Hamilton and chalk drawings by Gainsborough and Wright of Derby have become popular.

Perhaps the most surprising performer has been Liotard. Although known for high prices when he was working, what some consider his masterpiece, *Le Déjeuner Lavergne*, sold in 1801 for £89 (2015£: £6600); in 1835 for £31 (2015£: £3500); in 1916 for £1260 (2015£: £114,000); and in 1918 for £1450 (2015£: £89,000). In 2020 it was accepted by the National Gallery in lieu of £8.76 million of tax. No other Liotard reached the inflation-adjusted 1916 level until the 1986 purchase by the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston for a reported SwFr 2 million (2015£: £2,144,000).

⁴⁸⁵ See [ESSAYS, Duval](#) where we estimate that the apportioned 1943 purchase price equates to some £4 million in 2015 value.

⁴⁸⁶ *Journal 1894–1927*, ed. Myriam Chimènes, Paris, 2007, p. 706.

⁴⁸⁷ The appendix in Gimpel 1963 includes paintings such as Fragonard’s *Le Billet doux* (Fr420,000 at the Cronier sale in 1905; 2015£: £1.8 million), \$250,000 in 1919 (2015£: £2.8 million); Watteau’s *Deux cousines* (Fr220,000 in 1918; 2015£: £538,000); and Rembrandt’s *Titus* (\$40,000 in 1919; 2015£: £446,000).

⁴⁸⁸ *Dyson Lister v. N. S. White*, reported in *Yorkshire post*, 26.XI.1913, p. 9.

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Thereafter some 16 Liotards have sold for over £100,000, dominating the tables by number and value (a Gainsborough coloured chalk drawing currently heads the individual highest price in money of the day paid at auction: the \$2.3 milion paid in 2013 equates to 2015£: £1.6 million). Liotard's market value coincides with the burgeoning literature devoted to him.

XIV. HISTORICO-GEOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

THE [ACTIVITY TABLE](#) INCLUDES (in a format that can be sorted by date, school etc.) details of pastellists with a known œuvre of four or more pastels; it consists of approximately 275 artists from more than a dozen national schools (just over a third are French).⁴⁸⁹ Of these 44 pastellists left more than 50 pastels each. They are a small subset of the total number of artists included in the *Dictionary*, numbering some 3000 artists.⁴⁹⁰ In this chapter we attempt to put these pastellists and the relationships between them (of training or influence) in an historical and geographical context, without repeating the material discussed in the other chapters of these Prolegomena. The brief comments are expanded in the relevant artist articles which are too numerous to be indicated.

XIV.1 Origins – Italy

It is often said⁴⁹¹ that the story of pastel begins with Rosalba Carriera's trip to Paris in 1720, but this is of course nonsense. Drawings in coloured chalks have a long and distinguished history, going back at least to the end of the fifteenth century.⁴⁹² Leonardo da Vinci's famous 1499 portrait of Isabella d'Este (now in the Louvre) was executed in coloured chalks on cardboard, and the inclusion of the yellow (which may or may not have been pastel or just a naturally occurring ochre) with the more conventional black and red chalks is often said to have been inspired by the arrival in the Milanese court of the French artist Jehan de Paris (Jean Perréal, c.1455–1530), who had travelled there with Louis XII. This tradition of two- or three-chalk drawings heightened with pastel flourished particularly in France with the work of Jean Clouet (c.1485–1541) and the Dumonstier family, of whom Daniel (1574–1646) was perhaps the most gifted, while his son Nicolas (1612–1667) was the first painter to be *reçu* (received as a member) by the Académie royale as a “peintre en pastel”, in 1663.

In Italy pastel seems to have grown up in different schools. In Venice, Jacopo Bassano (c.1510–1592) and Federico Barocci (c.1535–1612) developed a distinctive style in pastel studies on blue paper designed to capture the key elements of an intended composition in oil. Barocci in particular used coloured chalks with an unprecedented directness and naturalism, and achieved a range of tonality and *sfumato*, through stumping, that belonged more to painting than draughtsmanship as conventionally understood. These works were referred to as pastels by his biographer Bellori

⁴⁸⁹ The [TOPOGRAPHICAL INDEX](#) provides a more detailed account of geographical activity.

⁴⁹⁰ As at August 2022. The vast majority of entries in the *Dictionary* concern artists whose involvement with pastel was less significant: for some an extensive œuvre in the medium has been lost, but most were simply artists who preferred other media or whose achievement was so modest that their works were not preserved. Numerous entries refer to artists reported as working in pastel, but who in all probability made only chalk drawings. The articles include several for artists who did not use pastel at all, but whose works were copied in pastel at the time. It is difficult to reconcile these figures with a statement which originates in Bury 1971 (p. 8). “When La Tour began his career there were few pastellists in Paris. Towards 1780, it is said that there were 2,500 artists working in this medium.” It has been repeated widely with a number of variants: Shelley 2002, p. 10; Shelley 2005, p. 109 (where the estimate is brought back to mid-century Paris and cited to explain La Font de Saint-Yenne's 1747 remark), and appeared in the publicity for the New York 2011 exhibition as “by 1750, some 2,500 artists and amateurs were working in pastel in Paris alone”. Notwithstanding my comment in Jeffares 2011, p. 501, n.7, the remark continues to be propagated (e.g. Kenny 2014). While it is impossible to provide an accurate quantification of the number of amateurs (or possibly even to define the term), the number of professionals can be assessed by reference to the total number of members of the académies (see Chapter VII), by far the biggest number belonging to the Académie de Saint-Luc. The total number of maîtres in 1764 of 821 included many other trades as well as oil painters. It seems unlikely that more than 200–300 pastellists were seriously active in Paris in 1750, perhaps doubling every generation until the Revolution. Inconclusive support for the lower numbers is provided by *Almanach de commerce de Paris*: the edition for An VIII (1799–1800) lists only 200 professional painters in all genres in Paris: of these only 32 were described as portraitists, 26 as miniaturists (pastellists are not mentioned as such).

⁴⁹¹ Perhaps first in Desmaze 1854, p. 9: “L'art du pastel était déjà inventé; faut-il l'attribuer à l'Allemand Alexandre Thiele où à l'Italienne Rosalba? C'est une fille d'Italie au gracieux nom, qui inventa un art destiné surtout à reproduire la finesse des traits féminins.” The reference to Thiele arose in a note at Lot 111 in the sale of baron Heineken (Paris, 12.XII.1757), and seems then to have been picked up in Duchesne 1801 (copied by Millin 1806), who reported that the inventor of pastel is not known; “les uns l'attribue à Thiele, né à Erfort en 1685, et mort en 1752; et d'autres à mademoiselle Heid, née à Dantzick en 1688, et morte en 1753.” Paillet de Montabert 1829 copies this as “Les Allemands prétendent cependant que ce fut Alex. Thiele qui, l'an 1685, en fut l'inventeur. D'autres attribuent cette invention à Mlle Heid, née à Dantzick en 1688, et morte en 1753”. Subsequent sources such as the 1911 edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* report two of those credited in the development of pastel as “Mme Vernerin and Mlle Heid (1688–1753), both of Danzig”, presumably confusing her married name for a different artist.

⁴⁹² For the early development of pastel and the technical aspects mentioned here, see Chapter IV and the sources cited there.

(1672). Giovanni di San Giovanni (1592–1636), and in turn Volteranno (1611–1690), worked with media such as portraits in fresco on tiles, and it is possible that experiments with mixing chalks and fillers led to the development of soft pastel, with its ability to colour broad areas rather than simply make lines for drawing. The specific relevance of pastel to portraiture also began to emerge around this time, the quality of softer, subtly coloured pastel being seen as a more accurate depiction of sitters' faces than the hard chalks favoured by the school of Clouet (Turquet de Mayerne's 1620 treatise refers to "crayons de toutes couleurs principalement pour visages", while listing numerous binders and bases that extend the range of textures available). Other techniques, such as stumping, came into use at this stage.

Barocci's techniques were taken up in the eighteenth century by the Florentine Benedetto Luti (1666–1724), who worked in Rome and produced independent head studies using delicate and luminous pastel (reds, yellows and blues predominating) with subtly modelled shadows and sophisticated lighting. While it is easy to assume that it was from these that Rosalba Carriera's art grew (they may well have inspired her Florentine rival Giovanna Fratellini, 1666–1731), it appears that the Venetian's first introduction to pastel came from a visiting French artist.

XIV.2 France – Nanteuil, Vaillant

Among the French school in the seventeenth century, Robert Nanteuil (c.1623–1678) is a key transitional figure in his use of the medium for finished portrait drawings (many of which were also intended for engraving). In 1658 he was "dessinateur et graveur ordinaire du roi". Nanteuil's tonality is limited and subdued, possibly because of his focus on the engraving. He was secretive about his techniques for the fabrication of pastels even to his student Domenico Tempesti (1655–1737), who nevertheless provided a description of Nanteuil's working methods which anticipated those of La Tour in the following century. Concentrating on extracting the character and *esprit* of his subjects, Nanteuil employed witty conversation to animate their faces – as important a tool as observation. The enormously influential Charles Le Brun (1619–1690) used pastel in formal drawings of Louis XIV, as well as in more finished portraits such as the pendants of Israel Silvestre and his wife, while also using pastel to heighten his numerous chalk drawings. At the same time, the Vaillant brothers (religious émigrés from Lille, their family moved to Amsterdam) followed a similar development to Nanteuil: it is probably no accident that Nanteuil commenced the use of pastel *after* he had met Wallerant Vaillant (1623–1677) in Paris c.1659. Vaillant had attended the coronation of Kaiser Leopold I. in Frankfurt in 1658, where he met Prince Rupert from whom he is said to have learned the recipe for pastel, involving the addition of kaolin to mineral pigments, as well as the technique of mezzotint engraving. Bernard Vaillant (1632–1698) used pastel more systematically than his brother, pushing the art so far that his works are often confused with those of Nanteuil. The third quarter of the seventeenth century was also a crucial period for the development of a wider range of colours. Many of these were already available to Wallerant Vaillant; his decision to employ a very limited range was possibly due more to aesthetic predilection (the debate between colour and line was at its height) than technical availability: Christiaan Huygens purchased 54 crayons from Lely's supplier in 1662. By the time of du Pradel's 1692 Paris directory, the *Livre commode...*, only three pastellists were thought worthy of mention: Vivien, Jacques Verselin, of whom little is known, and César Desgranges, of whom there is even less.

XIV.3 England in the seventeenth century

Nanteuil's influence may have helped create a pastel school in England, as the engraver William Faithorne (1616–1691) studied with him in Paris when exiled during the Civil War. Another minor transnational pastellist was the Dutchman Isaac van Wessel, active in England in the 1670s. Sir Peter Lely is normally credited with founding the English seventeenth century school, although his drawings mainly had touches of pastel, and it was his pupil John Greenhill (1649–1676), followed by the very gifted Edmund Ashfield (1640–1679), who left a small body of exquisite

portraits, while his pupil Edward Luttrell (c.1650–1737) used the medium more extensively, producing works of inconsistent achievement. Connections between pastel and engraving were significant (see Chapter IV).

XIV.4 France in the early eighteenth century

The tradition of using pastel to enhance chalk drawings was continued into the eighteenth century by artists such as Antoine Coypel (1661–1722), who brought a sense of informality and intimacy into his studies of children, and François Lemoyne (1688–1737), whose few pastel studies include the miraculous *Tête d’Hébé* (British Museum). His pupil François Boucher (1703–1770) remained essentially a draughtsman rather than a pastellist in terms of the orientation of this *Dictionary*, although it is not always possible to make this distinction in records from old sale catalogues, and it would be a great mistake to overlook the handful of real pastels which he did make.

There is one sense in which the turn of the eighteenth century marked a departure, namely the technological development that allowed the production of large sheets of flat glass (see §IV.15). These permitted pastels to be made in a grand format that offered a serious alternative to portraits in oil. The real inventor of the pastel portrait – conceived as a final painting in chalk – was Joseph Vivien (1657–1734). Vivien studied under Le Brun, but we know only a few of the pupil’s works from that period, and cannot easily explain the evolution from what was essentially a graphic art under Le Brun to the fully developed colourism of the mature Vivien from the 1680s. His numerous baroque portraits (he sent two dozen to the 1704 Salon alone) remain unsurpassed in technical achievement.

As is argued in Chapter IX, despite Vivien’s technical mastery, pastel only caught the public imagination a few years later, for social reasons, during the 1720–21 trip to Paris of Rosalba Carriera (1673–1757). She produced small head and shoulders portraits, even smaller “*têtes de jeunes femmes*” and sets of allegorical themes. The key elements of her art were colour (achieved through delicate harmonies of browns and greys, pinks, blues and whites), and grace, essentially the *sfumato* effect of stumping, achieved probably by rubbing the chalk onto the paper with the fingers. A narrow repertoire of compositional tricks, stock props such as flowers in the hair and faintly mythological *déshabille*, and a predominance of female subjects for these historiated works (although her clientèle for Grand Tour portraits were almost all male) all confirm the narrow confines of her ambition, and it must be admitted that her portraits rarely reveal any great level of draughtsmanship – as the Goncourts observed, her art was based on giving her portraits “un souffle de ressemblance dans une fleur de couleur.”⁴⁹³ But her immediacy is such that one feels that the pastel she used to depict her subjects’ faces is the very same powder they would have used as make-up (indeed this may have been literally true).⁴⁹⁴ Her *sfumato* is certainly a very different result from the polish which Vivien gave his works in his attempt to recreate the finish of oil paint, although both techniques set out to conceal the natural hatchings of chalk strokes which became the hallmark of other pastellists.

Some of the interest in Carriera today is no doubt due to her gender. Many and complicated reasons affected the ability of women to succeed as artists; but it is worth noting that pastel (and miniature) offered greater opportunities than oil painting, particularly of large history pictures, which typically required the support of an organised studio normally reserved for men with mainstream careers in the art machine. Indeed links between pastel and miniature have been close

⁴⁹³ Goncourt & Goncourt 1873, “La Tour”, I, p. 267.

⁴⁹⁴ The rôle of make-up in painting was first noted by Roger de Piles, and its self-referential possibilities have been the subject of recent scholarly attention (see Hyde 2000 and Burns 2002). A pastel realisation of such an image is of course the ultimate self-referential achievement.

since Holbein: as early as 1648 Norgate noted that an artist practising one was likely to do both; while the *Almanachs des peintres*⁴⁹⁵ of late eighteenth century Paris are filled with examples.

Despite the polarity between the art of Vivien and that of Carriera (and the social factors responsible in France for the latter's meteoric success, discussed in Chapter IX above), the influence of both is apparent in the work of the Swede Gustaf Lundberg (1695–1786), who came to France in 1717. Lundberg was converted to pastel by Carriera on her 1720 trip, and was also undoubtedly influenced by Vivien; when Vivien died in 1734, La Tour was still unknown and Lundberg filled a vacuum. His own work is both uneven and varied: over his long career he produced works in many different styles, which, together with the endless variants and studio repetitions, makes establishing his œuvre a challenge – particularly for the works he did in Paris, where he remained into the 1740s; while after his return to Stockholm he adopted a native, provincial style continued with little development by followers such as Jonas Forsslund (1754–1809).

Lundberg even taught Stanislaw Leszczyński, a proficient amateur pastellist. Other royal practitioners included Louis XIII, who executed pastels under the eye of Simon Vouet; the regent, Philippe, duc d'Orléans, who was taught by Jacques-Antoine Arlaud, and gave him a “teste peinte en pastel”; Carriera's pupil, Elisabetta (Isabella) Farnese; Anna van Oranje (and two of her sisters); Marie-Antoinette and her more talented sister, Maria Christine; Friedrich der Große and his sister Wilhelmine, Markgräfin von Bayreuth. Their more important contributions were often as patrons and collectors. Liotard's pupil Caroline Luise von Baden was an altogether more serious artist, with a technical accomplishment beyond that of many professional artists.

Charles Coypel (1694–1752) must be considered one of the most original pastellists operating in France in the second quarter of the century. His own enthusiasm for the theatre is not only reflected in the subject matter of some of his works, but also accounts for the somewhat histrionic poses he chose, as well as for the visual devices such as the *trompe-l'œil* stone openings he favoured. The religious theme of some of his work, in response to the piety of his patron Marie Leszczyńska, is also unusual in pastel portraiture in France (though less so in Spain or Italy).

Jean-Marc Nattier (1685–1766) was possibly the most fashionable portraitist working in Paris in the middle of the century. Although he is almost always thought of as an oil painter, he also executed pastels during a period of around ten years from the mid 1740s, but of these, only a few dozen are known. In these, Nattier emulates the finish of Vivien (who had exhibited pastel portraits of Nattier's parents, themselves both artists, in the 1704 salon) to obtain stunning technical effects; dynamic poses and strong, warm colours allow him to achieve a level of psychological penetration as profound as in any of his oils.

Maurice-Quentin de La Tour (1704–1788) was known as an eccentric and wit as well as a genius, and stories abound concerning his exorbitant fees, his impatience if kept waiting and his repartee with Louis XV – all of which reflect his sense of the importance of the great artist in society which would shock no one today. In terms of sheer technical bravura, it is difficult to envisage anything to match the enormous pastels of the président de Rieux or of Mme de Pompadour. The former, exhibited in the Salon of 1741, stunned the critics with its achievement: this was, after all, “just” a pastel, but the miracle planted La Tour firmly centre stage, where he was to remain for nearly forty years, with an inexhaustible stream of commissions from the royal family, the old nobility, the *noblesse de robe* and the *nouveaux riches* financiers – not to mention the artists and intellectuals he numbered among his friends, and among whom he was perhaps at his best as a portraitist. This virtuosity was not achieved without struggle: La Tour was a precursor of the tortured artist of the nineteenth century, agonising over endless *préparations* in which he attempted to capture the soul of his sitter, and continuing to work for decades on portraits that did not satisfy him, often to their

⁴⁹⁵ By abbé Jean-François Brun, dit Le Brun, not (as is frequently reported) Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Le Brun.

detriment. That quest for perfection may have developed into the madness which took over the last years of his life. La Tour left a body of work which, through the range of its subjects and the skill of its execution, dominates the field. Unsurprisingly a large number of these works are self-portraits. His fame throughout Europe was enormous. By no means all, but a reasonable proportion, of the 990 entries in Wildenstein's catalogue are his; but the task of separating the originals, autograph replicas, studio copies (by his many pupils and followers) and later copies continues: for example, recent provenance research on his iconic *autoportrait au jabot* in Amiens, hitherto universally considered autograph, has revealed that it was almost certainly a repetition by his pupil Jean-Gabriel Montjoye (1725–1800).

XIV.5 France in the mid eighteenth century

By the middle of the century, the pastel was fully in vogue in Paris – for the critic La Font de Saint-Yenne, it had become an excessively fashionable craze. Such was the enthusiasm for the new medium that a rearguard action was fought by the oil painters who dominated the Académie royale de peinture, and by around 1746 decisions were taken to limit the aspirations of the pastellists by requiring *morceaux de réception* to be in oil (see Chapter VII). This increased the importance of the rival Académie de Saint-Luc where no such constraints applied. It also resulted in talented artists such as Alexis Loir (1710–1785) pursuing an itinerant career largely outside Paris.

The salons of both institutions were filled with pastels by *petits-mâîtres* such as Hubert Drouais (1699–1767; a prolific pastellist, whose works were never signed and are almost all now lost – or at least miscatalogued: we have uncovered a small group which seem to be by him); Jacques-Charles Allais (1705–1760; his biography has only recently been established, but his œuvre includes a number of worthy portraits); Louis Vigée (1715–1767, an artist whose work comes up much more often than most in the salerooms, no doubt reflecting the lustre of his daughter; while lacking her undoubted genius, his portraits display a rococo elegance). Léon-Pascal Glain (1723–1789) is an excellent example of an artist who can so easily be dismissed; among his surviving signed works are several quite dreadful examples – as well as the portrait of Lady Grimston, which is as pretty as any work from the bigger names. Ratouis de Limay placed the portraitist Simon-Bernard Lenoir (1728–1798) at the forefront of neglected pastellists of the eighteenth century; associated with the Académie de Saint-Luc for many years, he produced numerous portraits of subjects drawn from the aristocracy, the theatre and the intellectual bourgeoisie. But among the *livrets* we find several other prolific pastellists of whom practically nothing survives: Pougin de Saint-Aubin exhibited nearly sixty pastels, almost all lost (save for a couple of dozen we have rescued); Vialy (two dozen), Barrère, Davesne and Lefèvre (more than a dozen each). Of some of these, we have tantalising clues in the form of engravings which in some cases have allowed us to propose authors for certain anonymous works.

Other pastellists, such as Chevalier and Mérelle, were known to have made copies after artists such as Boucher, Liotard and Nattier. The question of copies is a significant issue in the *Dictionary*, and the mechanisms for making them in the eighteenth century is discussed in Chapter IV. Sometimes we have autograph replicas made by artists to satisfy the needs of their clients to provide copies to their friends and relatives. Perhaps workshops existed in some cases, although we suspect that this was never on the scale of those of painters such as Rigaud. Artists also copied other masters' work (often from another age, with Rembrandt one of the most popular sources for pastellists from Chardin to Hoin), partly to learn, and partly to pay homage. The tricky subject of fakes and pastiches also arises, particularly with Carriera and Boucher: these range from slavish replicas to independent works of art in a genre (see Chapter IV).

Not all pastellists were trained in Paris, although many naturally gravitated to the capital. The undeservedly neglected Pierre Bernard (1704–1777), although born in Paris, was (unusually among pastellists) trained in the Académie de France in Rome, pursuing much of his career in Marseille. Other portraitists active in the south using the medium were Claude Arnulphy (1697–178) and

Louis-René Vialy (1680–1770). A number of artists had their origins in Alsace: Charles-Alexis Huin (1732–1786) produced distinctively neat portraits, while François-Bernardin Frey (1716–1806) is perhaps best known for his work at the *Bâtiments du roi*, much of it portraying Mesdames de France who had become weary of La Tour’s erratic time-keeping.

A host of more minor figures worked for the *Menus plaisirs du roi*, effectively a government department dedicated to producing portraits and miniatures for the royal palaces and as gifts to courtiers and ambassadors.⁴⁹⁶ Some of these, such as Jean-Martial Frédou (1710–1795), also did original works of merit in addition to the endless repetitions of royal iconography for which they were employed. Many of these artists worked both in pastel and in miniature, and large numbers of artists advertised their skills in both forms – particularly in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when miniature was in its ascendancy. Miniaturists such as Hall, Sicardi and Dumont all made pastels; of these, only Hall’s œuvre in pastel is beginning to be understood.

Some major artists also turned their hands occasionally to pastel. Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725–1805) and Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806) were both immensely talented painters and prolific draughtsmen who occasionally produced autograph pastels; Greuze in particular, like Boucher (*v. supra*), was very widely copied and imitated at the time and later, giving rise to a vast number of regrettable pastel copies and pastiches.

The two greatest specialist pastellists of the middle of the century were of course La Tour and Perronneau. With this pair, Jean Valade (1709–1787) exhibited the most pastels in the Paris salons from 1751 to 1769. Diderot dismissed him with a typically succinct piece of art criticism: “rien”. But Valade’s work has great charm and a sense of colour that capture the social aspirations of many of his clients, the *nouveaux riches* and newly ennobled financiers who acquired their titles through the purchase of obscure offices. Even when his work is not signed, his distinctive style is easily identified, which is rare among pastellists.

The works of Jean-Baptiste Perronneau (c.1716–1783) share this merit of being instantly recognisable. His exquisitely nuanced portraits show an advanced sense of colour, deconstructing his palette with bold strokes like the use of green shadows on faces which anticipate the impressionists’ work of a hundred years later – he was, for Albert Besnard, “un moderne égaré chez les anciens”. His failure to hold his own against the mercurial La Tour despite skills which many consider superior reflects to some extent the social structure of the Ancien Régime; his talents were better received among the bourgeois clientèle of Bordeaux, Orléans and Amsterdam. Almost all his sitters show a Watteau-esque melancholy which may not have been popular with sitters; but it is more difficult to explain the widespread neglect today of a figure Edmond de Goncourt placed “très au-dessus de [La Tour et Chardin]”.⁴⁹⁷ His endless peregrinations through Europe (Daniel Roche called him a “gyrovague”) was a not untypical fate for pastellists, and by no means only the incompetents: Bernard, Lion, Loir and Vivien spent long periods outside Paris. The market for portraiture was not large, and few provincial towns could provide the steady stream of clients required for permanent residence.

XIV.6 Other European pastellists in the eighteenth century

A similar fate befell the Swiss artist Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702–1789) although in his case it is easier to understand. A short period in Paris was less successful than his journeys to the Levant and to The Netherlands, and he met with hostility from the French establishment.⁴⁹⁸ His huge

⁴⁹⁶ See, for example, Hugues 2003. The *Bâtiments du roi* played an equivalent function in relation to portraits to decorate the public apartments or for presentation to ambassadors, but these tended to be in oil and so are less relevant.

⁴⁹⁷ According to Reynaldo Hahn’s account of a conversation with him in 1895: Reynaldo Hahn, *Notes. Journal d’un musicien*, Paris, Plon, 1933, pp. 19ff

⁴⁹⁸ See Jeffares 2015e.

natural talent never quite overcame some of the limitations of the autodidact – although he did excite the jealousy of established artists such as Sir Joshua Reynolds (*v. supra*). But at the same time his distinctive personal style – noticeable in the unique lighting of all his pictures and the uniform high finish of his surfaces – developed in a way that would not have been possible in the tightly disciplined studios of the French masters. Liotard's reputation today is as high as anyone's – indeed his pastels consistently fetch far more than any others at auction; and he is one of the very few pastellists to whom monographic exhibitions have been devoted. In his old age – he continued to use pastel into his 80s – he turned to still life, and the perspective in some of these bizarre pastels anticipates the works of the Cubists 150 years later.

Although not narrowly a “Swiss artist”, Liotard must have inspired compatriots such as Joseph Petitot (1771–1824) and Jacques-Samuel-Louis Piot (1743–1812), who portrayed the Swiss bourgeoisie with competence and occasional brilliance, while Benjamin-Samuel Bolomey (1739–1819) showed a more international flavour derived from his travels to Paris and The Netherlands. The gifted miniaturist François Ferrière (1752–1839) produced a handful of pastels. An earlier figure in the Swiss school whose work should not be ignored was Emmanuel Handmann (1718–1781), while Jean-François Guilibaud (1718–1799) also produced worthy portraits. The alpine landscapes of Mme Vigée Le Brun (*v. infra*) fall strictly into the nineteenth century but serve to indicate the breadth of her art.

Elsewhere, in southern Europe, a similar level of individuality to that of Liotard is found in the extraordinary work of Lorenzo Tiepolo (1736–1776), a member of the Italian family of artists. In addition to some portraits, during his stay in Spain he executed a group of pastel genre scenes that are almost Caravaggesque in intensity and mystery. As with Carriera's trip to Paris half a century previously, Tiepolo sparked an interest in pastel in Madrid, and a number of, mainly amateur, artists produced work in pastel.

Another giant who operated outside France was Anton Raphael Mengs (1728–1779). The pastels he made at the start of his career in Dresden indicate a prodigious talent as a pastellist, which was never fully developed as he switched to oil painting. But his influence is no doubt apparent in the enormous number of German pastellists in the second half of the century. The numerous autonomous states, each with its own court and royal family, led to a proliferation of portraiture, most of which is frankly dreadful. A typical example was the court of Saxe-Meiningen, where Gottfried Friedrich Bach (1717–1785), a relative of the composer, combined the roles of musician and painter to the court. His son Johann Philipp (1752–1846) is supposed to have left 985 pastel portraits of members of the various courts he served; he was part of the great expansion of interest in pastel in Germany which occurred later, and is discussed below.

The Tischbein family included a number of active pastellists, while members of the Hirschmann dynasty are difficult to separate individually. Paul Joseph Bardou (1747–1814) left pastels in the courts of Warsaw, Berlin and St Petersburg of sufficiently varied styles that he was previously thought to be two homonyms. The outstanding figure in Warsaw was however the Frenchman Louis Marteau (c.1712–1804); the gifted Aleksander Kucharski (1741–1819) and Anna Rajecka, Mme Gault de Saint-Germain (c.1754–1830) worked mainly in Paris. Also active in Poland, Austria and Eastern Europe were figures such as Joseph Pitschmann (1758–1834), Gustav Taubert (1755–1839) and Anselm Wagner (1766–1806) in Transylvania.

The Italian Pietro Rotari (1707–1762) similarly pursued a peripatetic career, working in Venice, Rome, Vienna, Dresden and St Petersburg, where his endless genre pictures of young women picked up a genre left off by Carriera but with a Liotard-like polish. There were of course other domestic Italian pastellists, if fewer than might have been expected; notable were Francesco Pavona (1695–1777) and Giuseppe Nogari (1699–1766).

Russia itself produced few pastellists of note, but welcomed visitors, including Georg Friedrich Schmidt (1712–1775) as well as the French miniaturist Pierre-Jean de Sompsois (c.1710–1808);

Loir and Perronneau also visited, although no evidence has survived, while much later the legacy of Vigée Le Brun's emigration is more tangible.

The Low Countries have a long tradition in pastel, dating back to the Vaillant brothers. The series of portraits of delegates to the conference at Cambrai in 1725 by Birochon is of some interest, not least because at one stage they were thought to be early works by La Tour. Later portraitists in pastel included Oets, Izaak Schmidt and Bolomey, as well as Cornelis Troost (1696–1750), who made a striking series of pastels illustrating theatrical scenes. Charles Howard Hodges (1764–1837), who had emigrated from England, made some fine portraits in Amsterdam at the turn of the century. Earlier, a number of important pastellists made visits to The Netherlands, among them Liotard, Perronneau, Darbes and Glain. The Belgian Pierre-Joseph Lion (1729–1809) exemplifies the peripatetic career of the pastellist: he left his native Dinant to train in Paris in the 1750s, moving to Vienna in the 1760s and returning to Belgium after a stay in London; his pastels have caught attention in each location but the œuvre as a whole has not hitherto been studied. Lion and Liotard both also visited Vienna, as did Rotari and Ducreux, and, later, Tischbein and Vigée Le Brun. Vienna seems to have depended on these international visitors; few domestic pastellists are known.

XIV.7 England in the mid eighteenth century

The other major school in Europe was that in England, which was influenced less by France than by Italy (which is to say by the legacy of Carriera). Arthur Pond (1701–1758), George Knapton (1697–1778) and William Hoare of Bath (1707–1792) all travelled to Italy; their return, in the late 1720s or early 1730s, led to a resurgence of pastel in eighteenth century England. As in France, this was not universally welcomed amongst other artists (see Chapter IX).

While pastellists such as Hoare enjoyed a limited success among their clientèle (setting up in Bath gave him a captive audience among visitors with leisure during their stays), Knapton's pupil Francis Cotes (1726–1770) took the medium to a higher level; some of his pastels rival work being done in France by the middle of the century, although he never quite achieved the bravura of La Tour. Artists such as Katherine Read (1723–1778) chose to go to Paris to study with La Tour (although this training is not immediately evident from most of her portraits, but that did not prevent her extraordinary popularity with society ladies back in England), while other figures who worked in England included visitors such as Lion, Liotard and Perronneau. Liotard's success and Perronneau's failure, reversing their ranking as perceived in Paris, reflect the relative sophistication of the two markets, although the timing of Perronneau's visit – during the Seven Years' War, when anti-French feeling ran high – did not help his case.

XIV.8 France in the late eighteenth century

The death of Louis XV in 1774 marked the end of an era in France in artistic as well as historical terms. The careers of both Perronneau and La Tour were drawing to a close. Among the pastellists influenced by La Tour who should have continued his work, Suzanne Giroust, Mme Roslin (1734–1772) was one of the most talented. She was to become one of only a handful of women admitted to the Académie royale until the Revolution, but she died tragically young. Her husband Alexander Roslin (1718–1793) produced some early pastels in Bayreuth, as well as some much finer examples when he later occasionally returned to the medium.

One of the giants of the outgoing generation of painters was Jean-Siméon Chardin (1699–1779), the magician of the still life. For reasons which may have to do with an allergy to oil paint, he took up pastels in the last years of his life, and left a handful of some of the greatest portraits ever painted in any medium: works which belong with other autumnal fruit of ageing genius, from Rembrandt's self-portraits to Beethoven's late quartets. This was the opposite trajectory to Liotard, who turned to still life in his last years after a lifetime of portraiture.

Outside Paris, pastels flourished in the various regional Salons that were established during the third quarter of the century (see Chapter VII). Often, as at Dijon, these were associated with the new *écoles gratuites de dessin*, and the lists of exhibitors at the Dijon salons consisted of pupils of the dominant figure Claude-François Devosge. Of these, only Claude Hoin (1750–1817) and Pierre-Paul Prud'hon (1758–1823) achieved prominence, probably as a result of their subsequent training. In contrast, the prolific pastellist Charles-Nicolas Noël (1729–1798) from Lille never achieved widespread recognition, and despite being signed his works have largely disappeared. The Salons in Toulouse were also remarkable for the number of pastellists recorded, even though almost all their work is now lost.

Joseph Ducreux (1735–1802) has a claim to being more than just La Tour's pupil. Like his master he was obsessed by discovering the inner soul of his sitters – in many cases, his own, since self-portraits represent a substantial part of his œuvre. He also studied oil painting with Greuze, and from an early age his records show how active he was in painting leading members of French society (although some of these may have been repetitions or copies, perhaps after La Tour). The development between his portraits of the young Marie-Antoinette, which he made on a trip to Vienna in 1769, and his later portraits of Revolutionary figures encapsulates the change of mood between the third and fourth quarters of the century.

The artist Joseph Boze (1744–1826) is best known for his brilliant self-portrait (in the Louvre), and for his images of the royal family, the many repetitions of which are recorded in his account books. He was never a member of the Académie royale, and when he finally exhibited at the open salons after the Revolution, his portraits were much criticised for their cool tones and dryness – attacks from which his career never fully recovered. Throughout the century the criticism of public exhibitions (particularly those in the Louvre) played a key role in artistic life. In Paris, the presiding figure was of course Diderot, whose views could make or break an artist's career; but other critics, usually writing anonymously in the various journals, were often influential and today are of interest not least because they sometimes provide the only clue as to the identity of works shown at the Salons.

Élisabeth-Louise Vigée Le Brun (1755–1842) was an artist of huge talent as well as being an effective self-publicist. Her skills as a pastellist are less well known than her numerous canvases. But the range of her work in pastel is extraordinary, extending from the feminine grace of the duchesse de Guiche to the Perronneau-esque handling of colour in the portrait of Montbarrey (Versailles). Her pastel of Beaujon once belonged to the Goncourts: they thought it was by Perronneau, and likened his work to that of Reynolds and the English school.

An important female artist of the period, and the strongest rival to Mme Vigée Le Brun, was Adélaïde Labille-Guiard (1749–1803); they both joined the Académie in 1783. She married a M. Guiard at an early age, and signed thereafter Labille f[emme] Guiard, although she separated from him almost immediately. When the Revolution introduced divorce, she married the painter Vincent, with whom she had lived for years. Labille-Guiard studied with La Tour, and herself taught a number of pupils, all female. Unlike Vigée Le Brun, Labille-Guiard stayed in France during the Revolution, and painted many of the leading Revolutionary figures (such as Robespierre) as well as aristocrats and royalty. Among her numerous pupils (all female), Gabrielle Capet (1761–1818), who lived with Labille-Guiard and Vincent, stands out as almost a lone figure at the start of the nineteenth century, excepting perhaps the dijonnais Hoin and Prud'hon (*v. supra*); the latter's pastels divide into the portraits he did for a short period in the 1790s and the impressionistic studies using pastel which look forward to the nineteenth century.

XIV.9 Europe in the late eighteenth century

By this stage the great age of the pastel portrait in France was drawing to a close for the reasons discussed in Chapter IX. Outside France the demise of pastel was less sharply marked: in Germany

and elsewhere, a continuous tradition led into the nineteenth century, and figures such as the Dane Jens Juel⁴⁹⁹ cannot be ignored as minor (in Denmark pastel had earlier been used by Peder Als (1726–1776) and Cornelius Hoyer (1741–1804), and the technique was later pursued by the long-lived Christian Horneman (1765–1844)).

In the last decade of the century, the leading German pastellist was undoubtedly Johann Heinrich Schröder (1757–1812), whose influence was enormous. Other figures active in Germany at this time were Johann Friedrich Dryander (1756–1812), Conrad Geiger (1751–1808), Friedrich Erhard Wagener (1759–1813) and Johann Lorenz Kreul (1765–1840). Johann Friedrich August Darbes (1747–1810) was also gifted, and the versatility of his work reflects his international career (he worked in Denmark, Russia, Poland and The Netherlands as well as in Germany). Daniel Caffé, working in Leipzig, produced pastels that belong to the nineteenth century in their bourgeois, Biedermeier feel. Becker, Schwartz and Lauer also left important work, including iconic images of Königin Luise of Prussia. The Berlin Akademie started regular exhibitions, modelled on the Louvre salons, from 1786; the *livrets*⁵⁰⁰ indicated the breadth of interest in pastel in Germany, and the range of works from simple portraits and conversation pieces to copies of old masters. Dresden was also an important centre, with the collection in the Gemäldegalerie serving as a training ground for artists such as Christian Leberecht Vogel (1759–1816), Dora Stock (1760–1832) and Johann Heinrich Schmidt (1749–1829); many copies after Mengs and old masters were exhibited in shows from 1764 on. Few of these works have survived.

XIV.10 England in the late eighteenth century

In England following the death of Cotes, the last quarter of the century saw the emergence of numerous minor practitioners, among them Lewis Vaslet (1742–1808), François-Xavier Vispré (c.1730–1792), William Peters (1741–1814) and Edward Francis Cunningham (1741–1793). A good many artists exhibited in public, at the Society of Artists, the Free Society and the Royal Academy; they included a number of women artists apart from Katherine Read (*v. supra*), among them Mary Benwell (1739–1811), Mary Black and Margaret King whose work remains virtually unknown. There were also numerous practitioners of semi-automated profile machines; Lucas Bateman (1752–1790) is a typical example, but most of these works languish unattributed. Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788) made a small number of highly prized portraits in coloured chalk, without belonging to a definable tradition.

The prolific Daniel Gardner (1750–1805) developed an idiosyncratic style with studied informality; it is not even clear whether he can properly be described as a pastellist (although some of the earliest works may have been drawn exclusively in that medium). By scraping pastel sticks to a powder which he mixed with alcohol Gardner recreated gouache, and his works look much more like gouache than pastel. The mixture of media he developed, and the deliberately unfinished look was taken up by British artists from John Downman (1750–1824) to George Chinnery (1774–1852) and John James Masquerier (1778–1855), and continued seamlessly into the nineteenth century, in contrast to the fairly precise end to the purer tradition practised in France. When the exhibition of English pastellists took place in Paris in 1911, a great many of the exhibits seem in fact to have been gouaches or watercolours heightened with pastel, and while these do not properly belong in this work, some are included to avoid confusion (a particular problem given the number of erroneous attributions prevalent at the time).

In John Russell (1744–1806) England found its true genius in the medium. To Russell belongs (by some way) credit for the largest number of surviving pastels (we have catalogued over 600 pastels

⁴⁹⁹ Two other important Danish artists had used pastel earlier in the century: Als and Hoyer. Darbes was probably the most influential pastellist working in Copenhagen in the 1770s.

⁵⁰⁰ The influence of French culture on Germany at the time is illustrated by the schizophrenic spelling in the *livrets* of the Berlin Akademie/Akademie, where Pastell and Pastel are both used.

known at least from photographs, significantly more than the numbers for each of the next most prolific pastellists Carriera, La Tour and Liotard). Russell's strong religious convictions (which as it happened provided the basis of a network of clients among the dissenting middle classes) and his intellectual curiosity mark him out from most of the artists of the day: although they shared the same telescope maker (Peter Dolland), Russell's lifetime obsession with astronomy was considerably more profound than La Tour's dabbling. Using pigments with a far higher level of saturation than before, he achieved a depth of colour associated previously only with oil painting (he made his own pastels, the secret ingredient being turpentine). He combined this with expert stumping to give a vaporous look derived ultimately from Carriera, and in complete contrast to the followers of Gardner.

After Russell the pure pastel tradition died out; there was perhaps little more to be done. Sir Thomas Lawrence commenced his career as a teenage pastellist, but abandoned the medium early on advice; Ozias Humphry, a gifted miniaturist, took it up after his sight was compromised, but met with less success than he felt he deserved. The prolific John Raphael Smith should also be mentioned, while Charles Hayter (1761–1835) was something of an anachronism.

XIV.11 The Dublin school

The Italian rather than the French influence is also evident in the work of some of the Irish school, whose development is chiefly due to the Paris-trained Robert West, director of the Dublin Society's art school, established in the mid-1740s (Chapter VII). Among the Irish pastellists he trained or influenced were his son Francis Robert West, Thomas Hickey, the Healys, Watson, Pope, George Lawrence and Forrest, a number of whom worked in grisaille (a soft black chalk or charcoal often referred to as pastel, but possibly not pastel at all: *v. §IV.4.1.1 supra*). By far his most important pupil was Hugh Douglas Hamilton (1740–1808). Charming though his small oval portraits can be, it his full-length portraits of his clients as Grand Tourists in Rome that show his considerable talent to best advantage. As well as Anna Tonelli, it seems likely that he influenced the Scottish artist Archibald Skirving who spent eight years in Rome, leaving a handful of strikingly original pastels, but who remained an isolated figure; no significant Scottish school of pastellists was established.

XIV.12 America

The outstanding American artist (in pastel and oil) was John Copley (1738–1815), who moved to London in 1774 and remained there – but gave up pastel on the advice of Reynolds and Benjamin West (for the reasons set out in Chapter VIII). Other figures active in America include the early émigrée French pastellist Henrietta Johnston (whose minor talent has received disproportionate attention), and a number of other pioneers of whom Benjamin Blyth is perhaps the best known; numerous portraits of sea captains are to be found in the smaller New England museums and no doubt private collections. Later, several members of the Sharples family were responsible for huge numbers of portraits. Two other prolific pastellists in the USA were Saint-Mémin and Gerrit Schipper, but they worked mainly in the nineteenth century. There was a small Canadian school with Dulongpré and others. Apart from Copley these pastellists are of little interest outside America, where however their works are actively collected, fetch high prices and have been the subject of detailed scientific investigation not applied to works of far greater aesthetic achievement.