

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

CROMMELIN, Isaac-Mathieu

Saint-Quentin 1730 – Saint-Germain-en-Laye
1815

Administrator, writer and amateur artist from an important Huguenot family (Hodges made a number of pastels of his Dutch cousins). He was brought up in Saint-Quentin but from 1764 was based at Autun as administrator of a tobacco warehouse (*entreposeur du tabac*), in which capacity he was recorded on 3.IV.1774 as a member of the masonic *Loge St Jean du rite ancien*. He had moved to Guise by 1780 (not 1783 as most sources have – he is shown at Guise in the records of the masonic *loge L'Humanité* in .VI.1780; Maurice-Quentin de La Tour was also a member), where he collected salt taxes (*receveur des gabelles*). In 1792 he became administrator of public works at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. During the Revolution he was arrested and imprisoned for some time. An amateur pastelist, during his stay in Autun he encountered Devosge and Étienne-Guy Charton (1694–1768), a pupil of Oudry, who encouraged his artistic activities. In his memoirs he describes making a careful copy of La Tour's portrait of a monsieur J..., *receveur du parlement de Dijon*, whose daughter, in Autun, wanted him to copy it. Her brother, an officer in the guards, then commissioned a second copy. (It seems possible that the La Tour subject was *président* Joseph Joly de Bévy, whose daughter Françoise married, in 1749, Pierre-Marie de Naturel, *comte de Valetine*, who lived at Blanzay, near Autun; one of her brothers was a colonel d'infanterie. The Crommelin family were related to the Joly de Bammerville family; Protestants originating in Poitou, they settled in Saint-Quentin like the Crommelins. Pierre-Louis-Samuel, *écuyer* and Louis-Jean-Samuel, *officier de louveterie* were both members of *l'Humanité*.) In prison at the *château* of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Crommelin managed to obtain a room with a magnificent view which he painted in pastel, giving the result to Mme Lemaire.

Bibliography

Brazier 1961, p. 125; Michaud; *Mémoires de J.-M. Crommelin, de Saint-Quentin, dernier de sa race en France*, c.1806, pp. 76, 186; repr. as *La Société d'Autun au milieu du dix-huitième siècle*, ed. Harold de Fontenay, 1872

Pastels

- J.2516.101 Monsieur J..., *receveur au parlement de Bourgogne*, pstl, a/r La Tour (comm., fille du sujet c.1764)
J.2516.102 ~repl. (comm., fils du sujet)
J.2516.103 Vu des jardins du *château* de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, pstl (Mme Lemaire c.1794)