

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

FENOUIL, Jean-César

Marseille a.1716 – London brd 9.I.1755
Portraitist; *agréé* (2.VII.1740), but not *reçu*, at the Académie royale; he exhibited five oil portraits at the Salon de 1740. Curiously the Académie set him portraits of d'Ulin and Le Clerc as his *morceaux de réception*, but these were reassigned to Nonnotte a few months later, with no replacement pieces ordered; Fenouil was never fully admitted. A small number of oil portraits or genre pieces by this mysterious artist (whose career was divided between Paris, London, Lyon and Marseille) have appeared at auction, and his 1751 portrait of Prévaille is at the mBA, Marseille. The quality is variable, and there is a certain quirkiness to them. Three pastels are recorded, but without images.

Several prints after his work provide some clues. A full-length portrait of the young Louis le dauphin c.1740, engraved by Gilles-Edme Petit, reworks Audran's portrait of the young Louis XV after Gobert onto which Fenouil's design for the new face has been superimposed. Fenouil's portrait of Mlle Sallé in a fanciful dress holding a dove was engraved by Petit as a genre piece, *L'Après-dîné: La dame à la promenade*, and reengraved as a mezzotint by John Tinney in London; the face is derived from the La Tour pastel exhibited in 1741 (but not seen in public after, nor engraved). A portrait of Saïd Mehmet Effendi, the Ottoman ambassador in 1741, wears the same outfit as in the Aved 1742 portrait (we do not know what costume appeared in La Tour's lost portrait), but is known from an engraving made in Lyon by a little-known engraver Claude Seraucourt (1677–1756). Even the painting of Prévaille could be read as a reference to La Tour's autoportrait à l'index.

Beyond disclosing his native city, records are silent as to his birth and a great deal of confusion over his biography is found (here, 2021, partly rectified, mainly from parish records: references to Henri, Paul or Pierre Fenouil all seem to refer to the same artist). His parents were César Fenouil (1651 – Marseille, La Major 8.X.1716) and his wife, Susanne de Mezières (c.1670–p.1748): on 3.VIII.1691 at the French Chapel of the Savoy, London, “Caeser de Fensuil [sic], of St Anne's Westminster, gent., bachelor, about 38” married “Susanne Aimée de Mazieres...about 20” (Armytage, *Allegations for marriage licences*, 1890), with a M. de Voutron standing in for her deceased parents. She was evidently connected with Benjamin de Mazières, sgr de Voutron, a Huguenot from La Rochelle, whose daughter Françoise-Suzanne married Moyse Véridet in Dublin in 1683 (La Touche, *Registers of the French conformed churches of...Dublin*, 1893). Benjamin de Mazières's sister Marie-Françoise married Charles-Casimir de La Rochefoucauld a.1679. Among the portraits Fenouil exhibited in 1740 were those of M. et Mme de Mazière.

We do not know when precisely the painter was born, but his sister Henriette married “aged 50” – but evidently older than that – in Marseille, La Major, 28.IV.1768: the register indicated that she had been born in London but had settled in Marseille at an early age. This suggests that Jean-

César was her younger brother and was born quite close to his father's death. She had previously married, in the same church, a Joseph Bouffier, on 6.II.1748; that register entry also stated that she had been born in London but had been settled in Marseille for more than 30 years.

It is probable that the artist was in Rome c.1729. The graffito “C Fenouil 1729” appears on the chimney of the chambre d'Héliodore in the Vatican, along with those of many other French artists. No doubt he is the same youthful “Fenouil” shown in an anonymous double portrait with Bouchardon made in Rome around the same time.

He was recorded in Lyon in 1738 (according to Bénézit, without reference). There, at Saint-Nizier, on 26.VI.1745, he married Anne Girardon (Lyon 25.III.1727 – Scy, Lorraine, 29.I.1808); she was the daughter of a Joseph Girardon, a marchand de soie in Lyon. Their first child, a daughter Claudine, was baptised in Lyon, St-Paul-St-Saturnin, 9.IV.1746.

By 1747 he seems to have been living in Marseille: another daughter, Anne, was baptised at Saint-Ferréol 25.VIII.1747 (“le père absent”, but presumably travelling). At the baptism of a son, Pierre-Bernard-Joseph on 8.XI.1750 he was described as “académicien de Paris, bourgeois de cette ville.”

Around 1750 Fenouil was connected with the newly established académie de Marseille under the patronage of the duc de Villars, with Beaufort, Dandré-Bardon and Kapeller; Fenouil was appointed director of the associated école de dessin, usually reported as created in 1752. A manuscript *Liste des professeurs, des adjoints et des élèves de l'Académie de peinture et de sculpture de Marseille*, dated 25.IX.1752 (Marseille, Bibliothèque municipale, archives de l'Académie..., MS 988, to. 1, f°2-3, ACARES) starts with his name as directeur: “M^r Fenouille Peintre du Roy”. However during 1754 he was replaced as directeur by Dandré-Bardon for unknown reasons, and he travelled to London.

His widow married Charles Beaudesson in Metz, Saint-Gorgon, 24.II.1756 (and remained in the area until her death more than half a century later): the somewhat unusual parish register entry providing details of her first husband's death in “St Martin's, Westminster”, London. He was in fact buried at St Martin-in-the-Fields on 9.I.1755, and his will, dictated to a notary in Marseille on 12.III.1748 (where again he is referred to as a bourgeois de Marseille), was proved in London by his wife, named as heir and executrix with clawback provisions should she remarry.

A son, an exact homonym born after the will was made, was an avocat en parlement when he married Julie Hebert in Metz, 18.I.1780, aged 29, and in 1788 was remarried to Louise Lajeunesse; he became directeur des contributions directes at Chamont, where he died 28.XII.1831 aged 82.

Bibliography

André Alauzen & Laurent Noet, *Dictionnaire des peintres et sculpteurs de Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur*, Marseille, 2006; Bénézit; Olivier Bonfait & al., “L'Académie de peinture...de Marseille 1753 1793”, *Rives méditerranéennes*, 56, 2018; Nicolas Lesur, tweet 29.IX.2021 signalling Roman

sources; Stéphane Loire, “Poussin chez Raphaël, 1627...”, in Cavina & al. 2001, p. 270; Natalis Rondot, *Les Peintres de Lyon*, Paris, 1888; Sanchez 2004; Juliette Trey, “The portraits of Bouchardon”, in Bouchardon exh. cat., 2016–17, p. 58f

Pastels

J.3116.101 Pierre-Philippe CANNAC D'HAUTEVILLE, baron de Saint-Légier (1705–1785), directeur des coches à Lyon; & pendant: J.3116.102 épouse (∞ 1727), née Andrienne Huber (1704–1777), pstl (château d'Hauteville). Lit.: Grand d'Hauteville 1932, p. 134 n.r.

J.3116.103 Jean-François GAO, pstl, 56.7x45 (Versailles, 30.XI.1997, Lot 38 n.r., est. fr6–8000)