

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

GRASSON, Jean-Pierre

Montélimar 2.III.1746–8.I.1825

As conjectured in 1919, the painter appearing in *Le Puy-en-Velay* in 1775 is indeed the same as the Jean-Pierre Grasson cited as a member of the Société des arts de Genève. In .VI.1767 he enrolled at the school of the Académie royale in Paris under the protection of Pajou but as a pupil of Briard, with whom he was living in the Cour du Louvre. In 1774 he was in Saint-Agrève, where he married an Anne Blache, daughter of a local négociant; his deceased father, also Jean-Pierre (1724–1768), was described as a “peintre”, a profession shared by a number of members of the family, including the brothers Louis and Pierre in 1701. The pastellist was the eldest of 17 children of Jean-Pierre and Marguerite Aubert. He was greffier du tribunal de Montélimar in parallel to his career as an artist. His brother Joseph (1759–), also a painter, was better known as a journaliste.

A pastel of a magistrate from a château near Chambéry suggests that he travelled widely in the south-east, as far as Savoy. He is recorded as founding the masonic lodge La Paix in his native Montélimar in 1787 after his return from Switzerland and Romans in the Dauphiné, where he had belonged to two lodges. He immediately incurred opprobrium for having unselectively divulged a secret codeword: “Il le donne même à des femmes”, according to his accusers. His lodge came under renewed criticism from the masonic network in 1789, where it was asked “Quels sont les orientes que le Sieur Grasson prétend faire venir à son secours? Ira-t-il en chercher à Grenoble à 22 bonnes lieues de sa demeure?” In the same year he made a portrait of a lawyer in Valence. On 21.IX.1789, Grasson made an impassioned speech to his loge in Montélimar:

La patrie est depuis longtemps agitée par des convulsions violentes, vous le savez. Des maux qui paraissent incurables l'ont affligée de toute part. Le frère s'est armé contre le frère, le sang a coulé dans plusieurs provinces, et la nation, par l'iniquité des méchants, a été réduite à deux doigts de sa perte. Dans les temps malheureux de trouble et d'anarchie, nos temples ont été déserts. Les ouvriers, entraînés par divers intérêts, ont dans presque tous les Orients abandonné leurs Ateliers et suspendu leurs travaux [...]. Mais un jour nouveau vient d'éclairer l'Orient de la France et nous présage une régénération prochaine. Le calme renaît par la sagesse de l'Assemblée Nationale et la justice de l'auguste monarque, proclamé le Restaurateur de la Liberté française.

Toutes les classes des citoyens s'empressent à l'envi de réparer les pertes de la nation. Les Maçons ne peuvent le céder en générosité aux profanes, car leur premier hommage appartient à la divinité, mais le second à la patrie.

Grasson's quarrelsome propensity no doubt surfaced again in 1815, when he filed a complaint against the président of the tribunal de Montélimar to which the artist himself was greffier.

Two of Grasson's sons were also freemasons: Jean-Jacques-Joseph, lieutenant-colonel de cavalerie, and Jean-Bapstie-Louis-Casimir, avocat à Grenoble. All Grasson's pastels show their sitters within a stone oculus: while this was not

an uncommon trope, his insistence may be a subtle allusion to freemasonry.

Bibliography

Bénézit; René Favier, “Le mouvement des idées et la sociabilité des Lumières”, *De pain et d'espérance. 1788–1988, Grenoble et le Dauphiné à la veille de la Révolution*, G.-H. Luquet, “La franc-maçonnerie et l'église en France au XVIII^e siècle”, *Grand Collège des Rites, bulletin*, 43, .VI.1955; La Musée dauphinois, Grenoble, 1988, p. 144–165; J. Brun-Durand, *Dictionnaire biographique... de la Drome*, Grenoble, 1901, I, p. 394, II, p. 203; *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, 1919, 447; L.P.R., “Sur quelques loges du Bas-Dauphiné”, *Revue historique de la révolution française*, III, 1912, pp. 58ff, 246, 415 & *passim*

Pastels

J.3574.101 Homme, de la famille ?BERTRAND DE LA PEROUSE, au gilet brodé rose, épitoge rouge fourrée d'hermine, pstl, 59x49 ov., sd √ “GRASSON / pinxit / 1781” (château de Caramagne, Savoie. Lyon, Anaf, 11.IV.2006, Lot 75 repr., est. €2000–2800, €2000) φδ



J.3574.103 Homme de la famille de CHIVRE, en habit rouge, pstl, 77x67, sd “peint... 1786” (A la Cour des Adieux, Fontainebleau) [new attr.] φν



J.3574.104 Jean-Salomon FAZY (1771–1814), pstl/ppr, 46x36.5 ov., sd “grasson pinxit/1777” (Geneva, Pignet, 10.XII.2018, Lot 3768 repr., est. Swfr300–500) φ



J.3574.105 Joseph-Antoine de GALLIER, sgr de Châlons (1747–1802), officier de dragons de Condé, capitaine de cavalerie, chev. Saint-Louis, pstl, 47x34, sd √ “grasson pinxit” / √ “1788” (Paris, Artprecium, 23.VI.2011, Lot 31 repr., est. €1500–2000) φ



J.3574.107 Henry-Louis de LA BRUYERE (1755–p.1800), capitaine au régiment de Vexin infanterie, épouse de Marie-Emilie-Yolande Petity de Saint-Vincent, en habit brun; & pendant: J.3574.1071 sa belle-mère, Mme veuve Henry-Hyacinthe Petity de Saint-Vincent (∞ 1748), née Marie de Vex (1722–p.1800), au bonnet, ruban bleu, pstl, 52x40, sd 1800 (Montpellier, Hôtel des ventes, 24.VI.2023, Lot 160 repr., est. €200–300) φ



J.3574.108 François-Marcellin PINET DE L'AVOCE (1759–1825), avocat, juge, maire de Valence 1803–18, commissaire des guerres, pstl, 57x47, d v "1789" (PC 2012) φ



J.3574.109 Michel-Henry RIVOYRE; & pendant:
J.3574.1092 [épouse, née] Marie-Anne Chapon, pstl, 49x37, sd v "Grasson/pinxit /1788" (Compiègne, Le Coënt & Wolf, 23.X.2021, repr., est. €600–800) φ



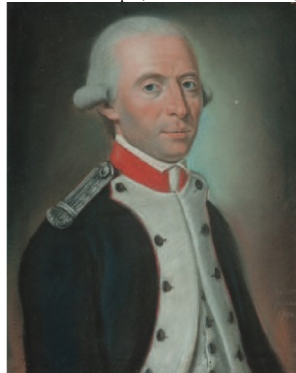
J.3574.1095 [?]Louis VACHÉ, schweizerische Offizier, pstl, 56.6x45, sd 1790 (Luzern, Galerie Fischer, 6–7.VII.1925, Lot 190 n.r.)

J.3574.11 Young lord, pstl/ppr, 61.5x46 ov., sd "Grasson, 1781" (New Orleans Auction, 13.VI.1998, Lot 1075 repr., English sch., est. \$1400–1800. Austin, Texas, Austin Auction Gallery, 23.VI.2019, Lot 1228 repr., est. \$400–600, \$400) φ



J.3574.1102 Homme en redingote bleu, pstl, sd "Grasson/pinxit/1785" (PC2022) φ

J.3574.1104 Offizier aus der am 13. Juli 1789 geschaffenen französischen Nationalgarde, 1790, pstl/ppr, 58.5x44.5, sd "Grasson/pinxit /1790" (Bern, Galerie Stuker, 14–17.V.2013, Lot 1030 repr., est. SwFr500–700, SwFr400) φ



J.3574.1106 Dame en robe rose, pstl/ppr, 55.5x44.5, sd → "Grasson/pinxit/1785" (Hôtel des ventes du Marais, 13.X.2021, Lot 29 repr., as sd 1735, est. €200–300) φ



J.3574.111 Dame en robe bleue, tenant une rose, pstl, 69.5x54.5, sd v "Grasson/pinxit/1787" (Auxerre, 9.VI.2019, Lot 3095 repr., as sd 1797, est. €1000–1200) φ



J.3574.112 Dame en robe bleue, pstl, 62x50 (Paris, Drouot, Mathias, Baron Ribeyre, 25.X.2013, Lot 53 repr., with another pnt., est. €200–300; Laurence Helmer & Maison James Antiquaires, Saint-Ouen) [new attr.] φ



J.3574.114 Jeune femme en robe verte, pstl, n.s. [c.1785] (Nantes, Couton Veyrac Jamault, 24.III.2015, Lot 32 repr., Éc. fr. XIX^e, est. €150–200) [new attr., ?] φ



J.3574.116 Dame en robe bleue, pstl, 65x53, n.s. [c.1780] (Mme M... ; vente succession, Ariège, 25.VI.2016, Lot 165 repr., Éc. fr., est. €60–80) [new attr., ?] φ av



J.3574.1161 Dame en robe bleue, pstl (Montpellier, Hôtel des ventes, 24.X.2020, Lot 285 repr., Éc. fr., est. €50–80) [new attr., ?] φ av



J.3574.118 Officier subalterne portant la croix de Saint-Louis, n.s., n.d.; & pendant: J.3574.119 épouse, femme en robe mauve, pstl, pstl/ppr, 58x43, sd v Grasson [illisible], v 1768 (Saint-Étienne, Carlier & Imbert, 10.X.2009, Lot 111

repr., est. €1800–2000; Saint-Étienne, Carlier & Imbert, 26.XI.2015, Lot 50 repr., as by Masson, est. €300–400) [new attr.] φ



J.3574.121 Homme; & pendant: J.3574.1211 femme, pstl, 60x46, 1783 (Paris, Drouot, Bignon, 9.III.1942, Lot 19 n.r.)

J.3574.122 Homme en habit noir; & pendant: J.3574.123 femme en robe bleue, pstl, 53x41, sd ✓ “Grasson pinxit” √ “1785”/n.s. n.d. (Paris, Drouot, Brissonneau, Daguerre, 13.VI.2012, Lot 12 n.r., as sd 1783, est. €3–4000; Paris, Drouot, Brissonneau, Daguerre, 17.V.2013, Lot 24 n.r., as sd 1783, est. €1500–1800; Nice, Million Riviera, 11.XII.2018, Lot 290 repr., est. €1500–2000) φ



J.3574.126 Homme en habit noir; & pendant: J.3574.127 Femme au chien, pstl, 66x49.5, sd ✓ “Grasson Pinxit”, √ “1787” (Paris, Drouot, Coutau-Begarie, 3.VI.2009, cadres a vu rect., €2–3000. Doullens, Denis Herbette, 26.VII.2009, Lot 47 repr., éc. fr., inconnus, cadres à palmettes, vu 65x47 ov., est. €3500–4000) φ



J.3574.133 Portrait, pstl, sd “Grasson pinxit 1778” (Grenoble). Lit.: Gaston Joubert, *Dictionnaire biographique de la Haute-Loire*, 1982, p. 193 n.r.

J.3574.134 Homme; & pendant: J.3574.135 Femme, pstl (Paris, 9.III.1942, H750)