

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

LE ROY, Joseph

?Paris 1728 – Grenoble 1797

The pastellist Joseph Le Roy survives in footnotes as the teacher of Henri Beyle, dit Stendhal (1783–1842). Le Roy was a portraitist in oil and pastel; a few landscapes, some in gouache, included scenes from Grenoble where he settled in 1787 (“une vue du cours de l’Isère” and “les environs de la porte de France”). He also restored pictures and taught. An early manuscript note states that “il a beaucoup de talent et s’est fait connaître avantageusement en cette ville [Grenoble] et ailleurs, loge rue Neuve, vis-à-vis la petite porte des Jacobins.” During the Terror, he tried to change his name to Roley, according to documents in the Archives de Grenoble; but his enthusiasm vanished with the fall of Robespierre. Stendhal, who took lessons from him at an early age (before joining the École centrale, i.e. in the early 1790s), described Le Roy as a “Parisien fort poli, sec et faible, vieilli par le libertinage le plus excessif”. He taught the young Stendhal only to draw “des yeux de profil et de face, et des oreilles à la sanguine d’après d’autres dessins gravés, ce me semble, à la manière du crayon”, although the future writer’s imagination was caught by a gouache landscape with nude bathers of which the author provides us with a sketch.

It is uncertain if he should be conflated with the pastellist Leroy recorded in La Rochelle in 1781, producing portraits in oil, pastel and in miniature. He may have been active also in Russia, and is possibly a confusion with Touzé (*q.v.*) – but not if the 1763 example is by the same artist. This has a torn label with an inscription of which the remains read “Par Le Ro[y]...”; juxtaposed and running on to it, the sitter, who was an officer in the coast-guard in the Calvados area, has added his own details in a different hand.

Another report, by a contributor to *L’Intermédiaire* in 1907, suggested that the pastellist was the friend of Clodion at the École française de Rome mentioned in Thirion, *Les Adam et Clodion*, 1885; this is no doubt a confusion with the (much younger) miniaturist Joseph Le Roy (1768–1829), who gave his address in 1795 as “faubourg Honoré, no. 13, ou chez le c. Suvée, au Louvre”.

Bibliography

Paul Arbelet, *La Jeunesse de Stendhal*, 1919, pp. 297ff; Bénézit; A. Desc, *L’Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, LV, 1907, 894; Maignien 1887, p. 216; Musset 1895, p. 392; Ratouis de Limay 1946; Thieme & Becker; Stendhal, *La Vie de Henri Brulard*, 1890, passim

Pastels

J.4808.101 M. DU CHEVAL DE LA BULOTIÈRE [(1721–p.1763), lieutenant-général du guet dans la capitainerie garde-côte de Grandcamp], pstl, 50x36, inscr. *verso* “J’ay esté peint le 9 may 1763. Par Le Ro ? / a L’age de 42 ans par conséquent / né le 8 avril 1721 / Du Cheval de La Balotière” (Limoges, Constanty, 27.VI.2009, est. €200–300) *qa*



J.4808.103 Pastel, sd Le Roy 1776. Lit.: Desc 1907

J.4808.105 Marine: effet d’orage, naufrage; & pendant: vue prise près de Tivoli, au-dessous des Cascatelles; des figures de baigneuses animent les premiers plans, pstls a/r Vernet, sd Leroy 1780 (Laroque; vente p.m., Paris, 18–20.V.1835, Lot 227/228 n.r.)