

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

REGNAULT, Nicolas-François

Paris 1738 – Belleville 1799

Considerable confusion surrounds the pastellist N.-F. Regnault, active between 1759 and 1773, whom Ratouis de Limay described as “un artiste capable d’une virtuosité toute ‘latourienne’, dessinateur remarquable et très habile coloriste, un peu froid peut-être.” He can in fact be identified with the painter, miniaturist gouachiste, engraver and botanical illustrator who was married to the botanical illustrator Marie-Geneviève-Charlotte Tondu de Nangis (1746–1802) when a sale to the Nation by “Nicolas-François Regnault, de l’Académie de peinture et sculpture” was advertised in the *Affiches* 14.IV.1793.

He was described as “Nicolas François Regnault, peintre, habitant Belleville” in his inv. p.m., made 2.XI.1799 (AN MC XCIII/227), which reveals that the couple married in 1768. Although the illustrator’s date of birth is given in most sources as 1746 (the earliest perhaps being Huber & Rost 1804), which hitherto precluded his being identified with the pastellist, research in 2016 confirmed that Nicolas-François Regnault was in fact born Paris 22.VIII.1738, paroisse Saint-Sulpice (état civil reconstitué, confirmed by his age, 16, on 14.VIII.1754, when his mother’s inventory was closed); his father, Nicolas Regnault, was valet de chambre du président Chauvelin and the second husband of Catherine Chenot (1702–1754), femme de chambre; her first husband, Claude Delozières (–1734) was valet de pied de la petite écurie du roi. Delozières descendants (including a Jacques-Antoine Demachy) were witnesses to the 1799 inventaire, along with Nicolas-François’s sister, Marie-Renée, who married a Louis Brigeault of Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

Nicolas-François Regnault, who normally used his second name, and often signed documents “F. Regnault”, was probably the François Regnault, peintre, *reçu* 28.IX.1763, rue Saint-Honoré, vis-à-vis la Barrière, chez un fourreur. The records of the Académie de Saint-Luc in 1764 (Tableau, p. 89) list François Regnault, rue Montmorency, the address he used later. He appears in 1772, as peintre de l’Académie de Saint-Luc, rue Croix des Petits Champs, as a cousin of the minor Marie-Françoise Morin (daughter of Charles-Dominique Morin, entrepreneur des bâtiments, and Marie-Renée Pleney, both dead; they had married in 1749) through his wife (registres de tutelles (AN Y4963A, 1.IV.1772; AN Y4964B, 10.V.1772); the Morin connection is confirmed by the 1768 marriage contract (recited in the inv. p.m.).

With his wife he published works such *La Botanique mise à la portée de tout le monde* (1774) in which he engraved her drawings. A series of advertisements for his prints after Fragonard and his own inventions appeared in the *Mercure de France* and the *Catalogue hebdomadaire*, the earliest it seems on 18.X.1783, in which the prints were offered from the artist’s house “rue de Montmorency, no. 22”, or “chez l’Auteur & Delalande, même maison, rue de Montmorency”. Delalande is later known as

Regnault-Delalande (*q.v.*) but does not seem to have been a son-in-law; perhaps he was adopted.

“Nicholas-François Regnault, peintre en miniature, rue Montmorency, no. 22”, aged 55 on 6.I.1793 was elected administrateur du Conseil définitif du département de Paris; by 18.IX.1793 he had moved to Belleville (Sigismond Lacroix, *Le Département de Paris et de la Seine pendant la révolution*, p. 230, 234). By 17.IX.1794 he was “juge-suppléant au Tribunal du IV^e arrondissement.

There were few pastels, and no boxes of crayons, in the posthumous inventory (quite possibly he had abandoned the medium long ago), but there were in the attic “deux études ovales deux portraits au pastel aussi par le défunt” (in a group valued at fr12).

Homonyms include a Nicolas-François Regnault, orfèvre metteur en œuvre, rue du Harlay, 17.X.1762; a Jean Regnault, peintre de Saint-Luc, was listed in the rue des Cordeliers in 1766 (his wife, Antoinette Bonnet, died 26.II.1755, rue de la Coutellerie); a Nicolas-Denis Regnault, peintre de l’Académie de Saint-Luc, rue de Charenton, was *reçu* 23.IX.1747 as peintre-vernisier (he requested a posthumous inventory for a Lecrayay femme Lepeni (11.VII.1754, AN MC XXVIII.238); a Pierre Regnault, peintre de l’Académie de Saint-Luc, appears in legal documents of 12.VII.1751, including an apprentissage to one Pierre-Germain Paradis (AN MC ET/XXXVIII/390). A Nicolas-Martin Regnault, peintre et graveur, 711 rue de la Réunion was 55 years old when arrested in the Revolution (Soboul & Monnier 1985, p. 339).

Bibliography

Inv. p.m., 2.XI.1799 (AN MC XCIII/227); registres de clôtures d’inv. p.m., 14.VIII.1754 (AN Y5274); Bénézit; Faroult 1999, p. 144; Antony Griffiths, “English prints in eighteenth-century Paris”, *Print quarterly*, XXII/4, .XII.2005, pp. 375–96; Guiffrey 1915; M. Huber & C. C. H. Rost, *Manuel des curieux et des amateurs de l’art*, Zurich, 1804, VIII., p. 289; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; Portalis & Béraldi; Ratouis de Limay 1946; Trudon des Ormes 1899, p. 127

Pastels

J.613.101 Maximilien-Joseph-Léopold-Philippe GARDEL l’aîné (1741–1787), maître de ballets, pstl/ppr, 100x81, sd sur la harpe “F. REGNAULT 1765” (Louvre inv. MI 1080. Héritiers Gardel; don par Gardel d’un pastel de son oncle [sic] 5.I.1869). Exh.: Paris 1949, no. 66; Paris 1957a, no. 72; Paris 1963b; Paris 1964b, no. 354; Paris 1980b; Paris 2018. Lit.: Archives des musées nationaux, sér. D 8, cabinet des dessins; Both de Tausia 1879, no. 1910; Bellier de La Chavignerie & Auvray, as by Regnault Delalande; Ratouis de Limay 1925, p. 40, pl. 43; Bouchot-Saupique 1930, no. 82; Ratouis de Limay 1946, pl. LXIV/98; Monnier 1972, no. 102; Albert P. Mirimonde, *L’Iconographie musicale sous les rois Bourbons*, 1977, II, fig. 22; Benoît Dratwicki, *Antoine Dauvergne (1713–1797)*, Wavre, 2011, p. 382 repr.; Salmon 2018, no. 125 repr. ⚪



J.613.103 Mlle LACOUR, pstl (Richard de Lédans; Paris, Benou, Regnault-Delalande, 3–18.XII.1816, Lot 520 n.r. with 11 others)

J.613.104 Homme à la veste de brocart à fleurs, pstl, 57x48, sd → “Regnault[?]/1759” (baron E. Léonino 1927–33. Paris, Laurin, Guilloux & Buffetaud, 10.VI.1980, Lot 21 repr., as Nicolas-François Regnault, fr21,000). Exh.: Paris 1927a, no. 122, pl. LXXXVII-127; Paris 1933b, no. 46 n.r. Lit.: Ratouis de Limay 1946, pl. LXIV/97 ⚪



LARGER IMAGE

J.613.107 Homme en robe de chambre rose, 78x67 ov., sd ← “N. F. Regnault/1773” (Henri Parguez 1927). Exh.: Paris 1927a, no. 123, pl. LXXXVIII-128 ⚪



LARGER IMAGE

J.613.11 Jeune fille, étude, pstl, 32.5x27.1
(Guérard, conseiller du roi; Paris, Rigaux,
Joullsin, 9.III.1778 & seq., Lot 244, as by F.
Regnault) [?attr.]

Portraits in unspecified media

J.613.112 Man with order of the Garter, aged 50-
60 [?3rd Earl of Albemarle], scarlet velvet coat
over cuirass, m/u, 58.5x49, sd F Regnault,
pinxit 1771 (Quidenham Hall). Lit.: Duleep
Singh 1928, II, p. 162 no. 64

J.613.113 Lady to left, grey eyes, light brown hair,
long tress over left shoulder, pearls in hair,
tulle veil over head, grey-blue dress, five
roses at breast, aged 30 [?Countess
Albemarle], m/u, 58.5x49, Regnault, 1770
(Quidenham Hall). Lit.: Duleep Singh 1928, II,
p. 162 no. 65