

**VISPRÉ, Victor**

Besançon 20.V.1727 – Paris 25.IX.1781

Early records confuse the careers of Victor Vispré with his brother, the pastellist F.-X. Vispré (*q.v.*). Victor's family background was established from parish records (here from 2022, with a further update in 2023 when his brother's baptismal record was located). Victor was baptised the day after his birth at Saint-Pierre, Besançon.

As noted in the entry for his brother, the Vispré family had connections in Pontarlier, and it is thus possible that Victor spent time in the town where the important glass painter Pierre Jouffroy (*q.v.*) was located in 1743.

It was probably Victor who advertised in the *Affiches, annonces et avis divers* in 1755 as “Vispré, de Besançon, peint d'après nature sur des miroirs de toilette et sur autres glaces des fleurs, des fruits et des oiseaux...toutes sortes d'ornements chinois”. He (usually credited erroneously to his brother) also published *Le Moyen de devenir peintre en trois heures, et d'exécuter au pinceau des ouvrages des plus grands maîtres, sans avoir appris le dessin* (1755; repr. 1756; review in the *Mercur*, .XII.1755, pp. 142f), where his address was given as “rue Pavée, près la Comédie Italienne vis-à-vis la rue François, dans la maison du Chapelier” (p. 96). The difference in the addresses indicated to Geysant & Heymer that the author of *Le Moyen...* was François-Xavier, but the subject matter suggests otherwise; in its catalogue of painting methods, pastel is mentioned only in passing. Further, François-Xavier seems already to have been in England when the reprint appeared. A letter in the *Journal de Paris*, 25.V.1777 (reprinted in *La Feuille sans titre* of 5.VI.1777) also identifies the author of an article attacking Montesquieu that had appeared in the *Feuille de M. de la Harpe* under the name of V, mistaken for Voltaire as the Vispré who had written an *Art de peindre*: the dates suggest that this must be Victor.

Victor was in Paris in 1755 at the time of his first marriage, to a Marie Cézérac, fille d'Antoine & de Catherine Collin from Besançon: the marriage contract was executed in Paris of 26.V.1755 (AN MC/RE/CI/3), but the religious ceremony, at Saint-Jacques-la-Boucherie, did not take place until 14.VII.1755 (Fonds Andriveau). Their son, Antoine-Nicolas Vispré (1757–1821), doreur sur métaux, was born in Paris.

Victor was received as a master in the guild of painters at The Hague in 1762, no. 259 in Pieter Terwesten's 1776 register, which noted that he “schilderde verscheide soorten van vrugten op glas”. He seems to have retained some connection with The Netherlands, as a new edition of his *Moyen de devenir peintre...* was published in Amsterdam in 1766 and a Dutch translation appeared in the Ghent *Nieuwen almanac der konst-schilders...* in 1777. It also appeared in a German translation in Christian Friedrich Prange's, *Die Schule der Malerey*, Halle, 1782, and in Portuguese in 1801.

Victor was in London from 1763, and was probably the “Vesperies, a foreigner...occasionally employed to paint fruits and flowers” by Allan Ramsay in the early 1760s

(Cunningham 1859, IV, p. 37). He exhibited at the Free Society from 1763 to 1778 and at the Royal Academy 1770–72 (eight fruit pieces, all in oil upon glass; sent from Mr Augibaud's [*sic*], St Martin's Lane: Charles Angibaud was, like his famous grandfather, an apothecary). An advertisement in the *Public advertiser* on 31.III.1773 offered to dispose “on moderate terms” his “pictures representing Fruit, painted in Oil on Glass”, the artist being soon to leave England; admission 1s. to the show at the Dolphin, James Street, Covent Garden.

He travelled to Dublin in 1776; François-Xavier was also there, at least in 1777. His progress between various Dublin addresses can be traced from the advertisements he placed in local newspapers (*Saunders's News-letter*, the *Hibernian journal*, the *Dublin evening post* etc.) not for his portraits, but (although the notices mentioned that he was an artist) for bottles of a medicine called Extract of Saturn for which he had the sole licence to import to Britain and Ireland from Thomas Goulard in Montpellier granted in 1776 and renewed in 1778. (The original British licensee was Georges Arnaud de Ronsil, a French surgeon who had died in London in 1774; it is probable that Vispré became involved through Angibaud.) He was at 35 Great George Street in 1777–78, moving to 55 Stephen Street in .XII.1778; and to Kennedy's Lane in 1780. The last such advertisement appeared in the *Dublin evening post* on 27.I.1781. Ten months previously, on 17.III.1780, his second wife Elisabeth Fischer or Fisher died, aged 29 (registers of the French non-conformist churches, Dublin; no marriage record has been found, nor the death of Marie Cézérac). Goulard's concoction was a toxic mixture of lead acetate and lead oxide; it is impossible to say today if this contributed to the death of Vispré's wife, or his own.

Evidently he returned to France early in 1781. Victor Vispré, “peintre” died in Paris on 25.IX.1781 and was buried the following day in Saint-André-des-Arts, aged 53, natif de Besançon. He was recorded as the husband only of Marie Cézérac, perhaps because the acte de décès was witnessed by their son Antoine-Nicolas Vispré.

Victor's works may well be confused with François-Xavier's; those listed in the London exhibitions all seem to have been painted on glass. He may be the author of two fruit pieces in this medium recorded in the cabinet of Blondel de Gagny. As for the Vispré “pastel” of peaches from the Marigny collection (and pendant to a “pastel” by Portail), neither artist nor medium can now be determined with certainty.

**Bibliography**

Bénézit; Edwards 1808, p. 160; Geysant & Heymer 2009; Geysant & Heymer 2013; Hébert 1766, I, pp. 36–81; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; Strickland 1913; Fichier Laborde

GENEALOGIES [Vispré](#)

**Pastels**

[J7632.101](#) Une jatte de pêches, un verre de vin, dessin (Mme de Pompadour, inv. p.m., item

1257; Marigny, inv. p.m., item 712, 24 livres with another). Lit.: Gordon 2003, p. 123, as pastel