

La Tour's Stuart copyists: The Kamm family and others¹

NEIL JEFFARES

LET US CONGRATULATE the Scottish National Portrait Gallery on its recent purchase of the Allan Ramsay painting of Bonnie Prince Charlie – and Bendor Grosvenor, who recently identified it in his television programme: for an account of this see his [blog](#). In his 2008 [article](#) in the *British Art Journal*, Grosvenor finally sorted out a long-standing confusion between the two pastels by Maurice-Quentin de La Tour of Bonnie Prince Charlie and his brother Henry, Cardinal–Duke of York, and it is these images that relate to what I want to discuss here. I shall refer to the sitters as Charles and Henry rather than as Charles III or Henry IX (or in the Stuart vocabulary of the time the Prince (of Wales) and Duke (of York)), but Grosvenor's re-identification of the SNPG's (slightly less) recently acquired pastel of the former as the latter raised a controversy almost as heated as British regnal numbering. The fact is that both brothers looked like one another (despite the difference in age) to within a tolerance below the inaccuracies of eighteenth century portraiture, and the identification requires evidence, not perceived resemblance.



Figure 1 La Tour, Henry, Duke of York (Edinburgh, SNPG)

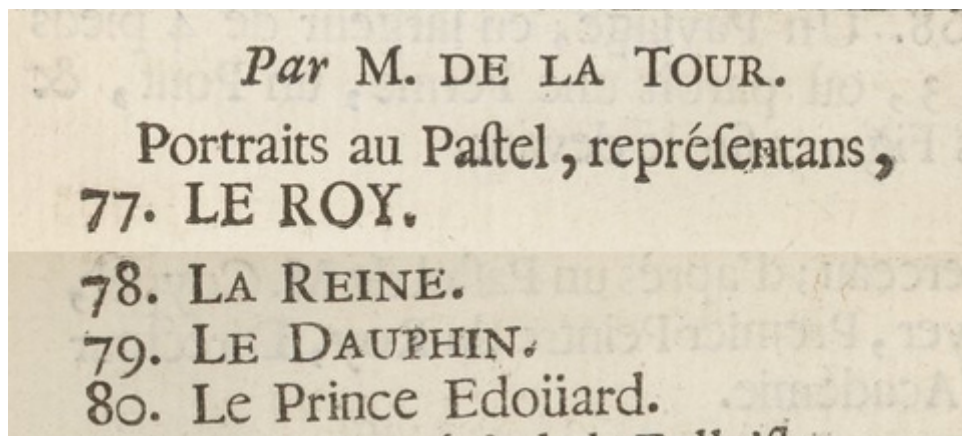
The National Galleries of Scotland have now conceded the point, and the pastel appears on their [website](#) as of Henry (James's “youngest” [sic] son). There is no need for me to repeat the careful and detailed arguments in the 2008 article; in the response by Edward Corp the following year ([link](#) for those with JSTOR subscriptions); or indeed in the original Corp article in the *Burlington Magazine* in 1997. There are also well known Stuart iconographies, among them Nicholas 1973,

¹ This essay first appeared as a post on my blog, neiljeffares.wordpress.com, on 2 April 2016. It may be cited as Neil Jeffares, “La Tour's Stuart copyists: the Kamm family and others”, *Pastels & pastellists*, <http://www.pastellists.com/Essays/LaTourCopyists.pdf>.

Sharp 1996, Nicholson 2002 to which I refer below (full details in my [bibliography](#)). Further there is a relevant, if very brief, footnote on pp. 312f of Laurence Bongie's 1986 excellent study of Prince Charles in France (on which see also my article on [Mlle Ferrand](#)). But even a bibliography of Jacobite iconography is too vast a subject for this post.

I need only remind you that the SNPG pastel of Prince Henry was exhibited in the Salon of 1747 (among the "Plusieurs portraits au Pastel, sous le même N° [111]", although "Monsieur le Duc d'Yorck" was identified by the critic abbé Le Blanc). This itself is a little curious, because the pastel shows the prince in military guise, although Henry had already (25 May 1747, three months before the Salon opened) reached Rome having decided to abandon such a role in favour of the Church: he was created a cardinal weeks later. It was likely to have been made after Henry's arrival in Paris, shortly after the victory at Prestonpans in September 1745, while he was trying to raise support for the Jacobite rebellion, but before his departure for Boulogne in December that year.

A pastel of Charles was exhibited in 1748 but is now lost:



(Charles was called prince Edouard in France because they already had a prince Charles – de Lorraine.) The numerous copies show that the portrait must have been extremely similar to the earlier pastel, with which it has been repeatedly confused (it does however seem that all the contemporary copies relate to the portrait of Charles rather than his brother). Its timing too was curious: when the salon opened, Charles was to be expelled from France under the terms of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (although not signed until 19 October 1748, its terms were already known). One minor curiosity is that both pastels are reminiscent of La Tour's portraits of Louis XV: that of Henry, with the raised arm reminiscent of Rigaud, closer to the 1745 pastel of the king, while Charles follows the more conventional pose of the 1748 pastel – the parallel with which would not have escaped visitors to the salon, or those who looked at the livret (the progression of type, from all caps for the king, to cap and small cap for his queen and heir, to cap and lower case for the foreigner was not however accidental).

Apart from Charles, all of these portraits will be found in the La Tour articles in the *Dictionary*. For Charles we have to content ourselves with the copies in other media, of which perhaps the most reliable is the slavish engraving by Michel Aubert:



Since Aubert died a few years later and the print created while artist and sitter were still alive, its documentary value is indisputable, and I think this is enhanced rather than diminished by the fact that he didn't reverse the sash of the Garter: my guess is that he thought it was the Saint-Esprit as worn by the Dauphin, which he also engraved after La Tour in 1747.

One puzzle raised by Corp is easily disposed of: the green ribbon of the Order of the Thistle in the Edinburgh pastel has faded to blue simply because that was what happened to mid-eighteenth century green pastel. The colour was notorious (and the reputation of the famous Swiss pastel maker Bernard Stoupan rested on his ability to produce a stable green): it was usually made by mixing blue and yellow pigments, but while the former was stable, the latter was a vegetable extract from the buckthorn tree which was sensitive to light. My Twitter followers will remember some of the other examples, among them Liotard's portrait of the [maréchal de Saxe](#), whose green uniform now appears blue. And I shan't begin to speculate as to the significance of the tide marks visible around Henry's head, which possibly relate to alterations made by La Tour (don't go there...).

But in the discussions of these Stuart portraits a vital role is played by the various copies that were made at the time. Jacobite portraiture, for obvious reasons, is both highly complicated and of greater interest to British scholars than to French specialists, and perhaps that is why several confusions have arisen which should be addressed (even if the outcome is to restore rather than to remove question marks). Indeed not all these copies have survived, and the hazard of discussing ill-documented lost copies of lost works (which may indeed be after quite different portraits) is obvious. But I would direct readers in particular to Corp's entirely justified health warning about the reliance placed on the typescript notes assembled by Clare Stuart Wortley in the 1940s, a document which she was unable to complete before her death and which includes several tantalising references to correspondence which cannot be verified. Perhaps like Fermat she was right; but let us hope the letters are found with less effort than a proof of his theorem.

One of the difficulties is where a copyist is named in the source, but a later commentator supplies a forename, often from the nearest reference book. Thus (I suspect) when we are told that in September 1747, Prince Charles sat for a miniature portrait by Georges Marolles, can we

rely on the “Georges”? I am not aware of any miniaturist of this name, and I suspect the reference should be to Antoine-Alexandre de Marolles, a well-known miniaturist who worked for the French royal family and is represented in Chantilly (see Lemoine-Bouchard 2008 for more).

One of the engravings derived from the La Tour portrait of Charles is by Petit fils (not Gilles-Edme, but Gilles-Jacques Petit) after Mercier (1753).



Corp 1997, who reproduces it (fig. 36), judiciously puts a ? before the predictable identification of “Philip Mercier” which now appears without qualification in most sources (the same picture is evidently the source of the Ab Obici Major mezzotint). But it is biographically and stylistically improbable that the English Huguenot painter (born in Berlin) would have made a copy after La Tour for the Irish Jacobite Colonel O’Sullivan to be engraved in Paris by Gilles-Jacques Petit. It seems to me far more probable that the artist concerned was Claude Mercier, the pastellist who might well have spent some time in La Tour’s studio. His work, which is entirely French, is usually signed “C. Mercier” and inevitably given to Charlotte Mercier, Philip’s daughter, despite the absurdity discussed in my [article](#) on him. It is not improbable that the unknown man now in Mapledurham was another Jacobite. As for Mercier’s copy of the La Tour, that (like so many of these works) is lost: O’Sullivan later fell out with Charles, not over the colonel’s incompetence on which many blame the disaster of Culloden, but over a mistress.

But a particularly important piece in the jigsaw is a miniature (with various repetitions) which has caused great confusion. One of these (whether it is the “primary” version can be debated) is apparently signed “J. Kamm 1750” on the reverse.



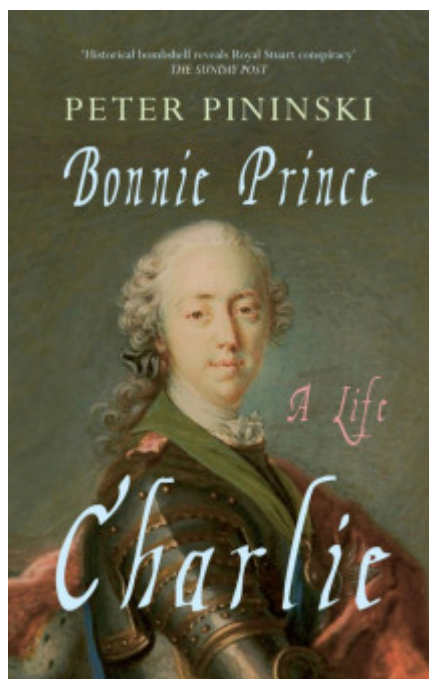
It belonged to Donald Nicholas who reproduced it in his 1973 iconography on the prince. It, and all the related miniatures (which although unsigned appear to be by the same hand), now appear as by “John Daniel Kamm” (sometimes as Jean-Daniel Kamm, and with various dates for his birth and death almost always wrong), and immediately provoked my suspicion as to whether this is the right Kamm, or simply the one found in the first reference book that came to hand.

Here is what we know about Johann Daniel Kamm. Like his father, Johann Peter Kamm, he was a potier d'étain (a somewhat grander profession than it sounds following Louis XIV's decree that solid silverware be surrendered to the treasury, but not an orfèvre). Johann Peter's wares included highly decorated objects of museum quality (e.g. Kunstgewerbemuseum, Dresden). Johann Daniel specialised in commemorative medals, of which one of the best known (signed I D KAMM) marked the exhibition of Clara, the Dutch rhinoceros, in Strasbourg in 1748 (you may know her from Oudry's painting, the



centrepiece of a Getty exhibition in 2007). Far later (1779) he issued a medal to mark the inauguration of the mausoleum to Maurice de Saxe (signed D KAM: note the D again). His last known work was dated 1790. He died in Strasbourg in 1793, having married there in 1758, and his career seems to have been conducted in that city.





There is however some evidence that he visited Paris, most readily found in Johann Georg Wille's journal. This is particularly relevant since the other important portrait of Charles at the time of the La Tour was by Tocqué (given it is said to his mistress the princesse de Rohan, née Marie-Louise-Henriette-Jeanne de La Tour d'Auvergne (1725–1781)), and it was engraved by Wille at around the same time as the miniatures were produced; further there is a signed miniature by Kamm after the Tocqué (reproduced in Piniński's recent biography, fig. 3, detail on the cover shown here).

Wille's journal refers to visits of his friend Kamm to Paris in the 1770s. Although it is the editors who supply Kamm's forenames, Wille refers to exchanging medals etc. (supporting the identification as Johann Daniel), and evidences Kamm's links with Silbermann the organ builder. The Silbermann-Archiv has numerous references to this Kamm: he was in Paris in the 1750s and made a sketch of the organ at Notre-Dame for Silbermann.

But despite this I can find no evidence that Johann Daniel Kamm was a miniaturist or even a portraitist (although the engraved portraits on medals requires some drawing skills). Wille doesn't refer to him as an apprentice or as an engraver.

I confronted essentially the same problem when cataloguing Perronneau's work. In the Salon de 1750, he exhibited a lost pastel described simply as:

136. M. Kam, en habit de velours noir,

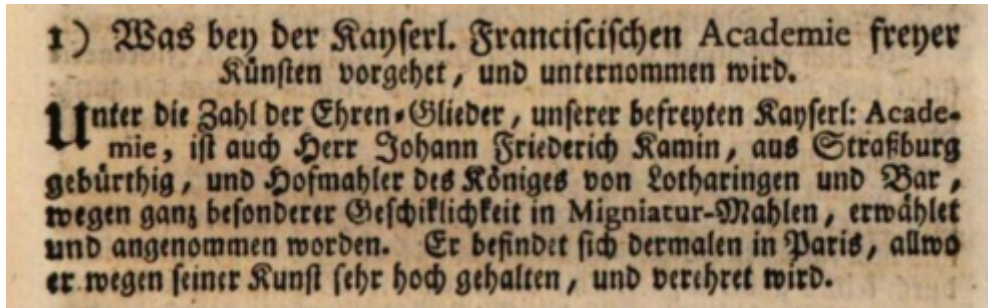
I decided in 2006 that this was more likely to be the portraitist and miniaturist Jean-Frédéric Kamm, who was *reçu* at the Académie de Saint-Luc in 1759 (when he lived in Paris, rue du Colombier). When Dominique d'Arnoult published her catalogue raisonné on Perronneau recently, she followed this identification, and unearthed entries in the Chantilly accounts for Kamm's work for the maison de Rohan-Soubise, at the same time that Perronneau worked for them:

Peintres en portraits: Kamme – De celle de onze cent quatre livres payee au Sr Kamme peintre du Roy de Pologne sur les ordres par Ecrit de S.A. pour des portraits par lui faits Sçavoir : 3 mars 1752 600 lt. ; 28 juin – 504 ; 1104 lt.

It may not be coincidence that Prince Charles had close connections with the Rohan family, and his mistress in 1748 was of course the princesse de Rohan: but even more suggestive is the reference to J. F. Kamm in 1752 as "peintre du roi de Pologne", i.e. Stanisław Leszczyński. This is because, soon after the liaison with the princesse de Rohan, Charles Edward turned his attentions to the princesse de Talmont – who had previously been Stanisław's mistress (and was closely related to both her lovers). And it was she who badgered George Waters, Charles's banker, to borrow the La Tour pastel so that it could be copied. Only three days would be required, she pleaded, for a copy to be made by M. Le Brun (not identified in the Jacobite sources, but surely Michel Le Brun, brother-in-law of Jean-Baptiste Van Loo). In fact she had the portrait for far longer. The Le Brun copies are not known, if they ever existed; and there is

every reason to suspect that she might have engaged the services of the *peintre du roi* de Pologne.

But how, you may ask, do I explain how Johann Friedrich Kamm copied Tocqué's portrait when it was Johann Daniel who was so close to Wille? The copy of course was probably made from the painting, not the print; but probably while it was in Wille's studio. But in fact we can demonstrate that Wille knew and supported Johann Friedrich as well as Johann Daniel Kamm. This comes from an announcement in the German journal *Wochenstück*, 24. Mai 1756, S. 161 :



This reports J. F. Kamm's appointment as an honorary member of the Kaiserlich Franciscianischen Academie freier Künsten und Wissenschaften in Augsburg. Just a month before (29 April 1756), it was Wille himself who was appointed "als ein Ehren-Glied, und Consiliarius Academicus" – and impossible to imagine that his academic advice had not extended to recommending his protégé.

So, in contrast to Johann Daniel, there is clear evidence that Johann Friedrich Kamm was a talented miniaturist who worked for royal houses and was in Paris at the right time. One would have thought that he was obviously the "J. Kamm" who signed both miniatures. But it isn't quite that simple.

Several sources cite, with not a little confusion, a letter from Waters to the prince, written we are told in 1749, referring to miniatures by one Kamm. Most recently Corp 2009 notes that the letter is not to be found where it is supposed to be in the Stuart papers, and cannot be located. This is particularly frustrating since the description of it given by Clare Stuart Wortley is as follows:

In the year 1749, George Waters writes to Charles about copies of his portraits being made by Jean Daniel Kemm. Copies presumably from the La Tour portrait.

If "Daniel" appears in the Waters letter, then evidently I am wrong – but not if it is Stuart Wortley's gloss. The misspelling of Kamm looks as though she is quoting directly (unlike Nicholas, who refers to John Daniel Kamm). But until the letter is located the issue cannot be resolved.

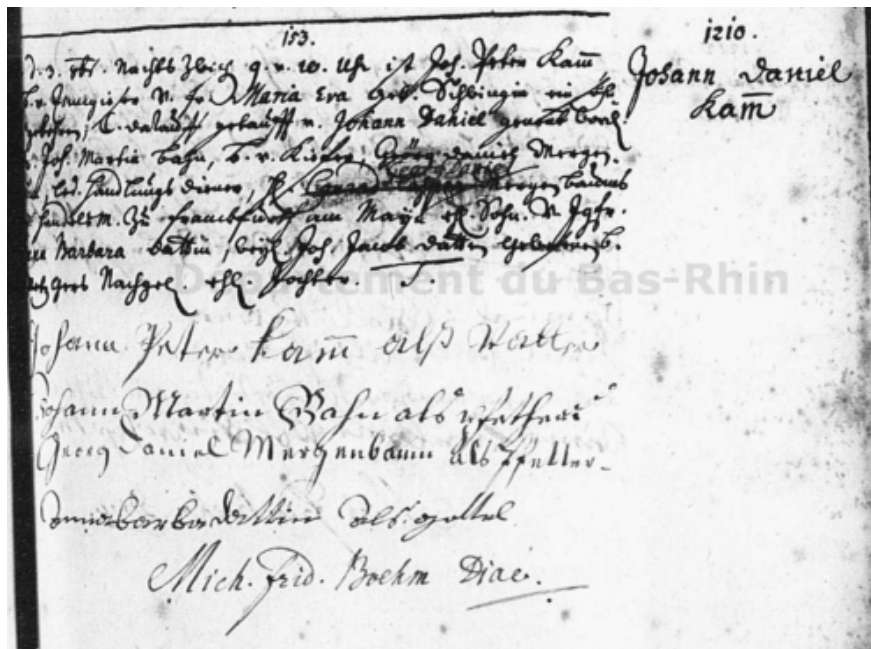
There is one further question to be asked. How were these Kamms related? It's not as simple as you might think. The matter is complicated by the existence of a third artistic Kamm: Jean (*tout simple*) Kamm, who is recorded as a pupil of Doyen enrolled in the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris from June 1767 (aged 19 years 9 months, so born in September 1747), "from Alsace" (which usually means born there). He was still on the books two years later, but is otherwise completely unknown. However two further details are recorded: in 1767 his address was "chez M. du Plessis médecin rue du Colombier vis à vis l'hôtel d'Holande"; while in 1769, it was "chez M. Cadet chirurgien rue du Maille."

The significance of the first address is not so much that "M. du Plessis" was a well-known freemason, Nicolas Huet-Duplessis, since at that time everyone was, and it doesn't mean he was

a Jacobite, but that the “rue du Colombier” is the same address as that recorded in the registers of the Académie de Saint-Luc when Johann Friedrich Kamm was *reçu* in 1757. Coincidence perhaps? But the second address is even more interesting: [Aglæ Joly](#), the wife of Claude-Antoine Cadet, de l’Académie de chirurgie, was a miniaturist and pastellist, while their daughter Henriette-Thérèse married the important enamellist and pastellist [Jean-Baptiste Weyler](#) (Strasbourg 1747 – Paris 1791), the son of another strasbourggeois butcher and his wife, née Maria-Salomé **Kamm**.

All of which suggests that Johann Friedrich and Jean were very closely related. And indeed the *Nouveau dictionnaire de biographie alsacienne* tells us that they, and Johann Daniel, were all brothers. But curiously they do not provide the dates for either Johann Friedrich or Jean, and having spent some hours among the parish records I fear that the statement may be overconfident.

Kamm may not be a common name outside Strasbourg, but the family of butchers who lived there at least from the seventeenth century were very numerous. Almost all the boys were given the first name Johann, followed most often by Daniel, Michael, Christoph etc.; all the girls were called Maria (don’t ask me what sect of Lutheranism this was), followed by Salome, Ursula or Catharina. So creating a reliable genealogy turns out to be far trickier than normal. ([Here](#)’s where you start.) This compounded by the fact that there were rather a lot of different parishes in Strasbourg, and the fact that (for me at least) the German handwriting of the period is sometimes tricky. Here for example is Johann Daniel’s baptismal entry (which is much easier to read than most of the other entries):



Suffice it to say that (as far as I can see) none of the Johann Friedrichs share these parents, nor does Johann or Jean born in September 1747. And since Johann Daniel’s mother was born in 1690, it seems rather improbable that Jean can have been a full brother.

But then Jacobite enthusiasts always like a note of mystery. I note that the Royal Archives at Windsor are to close for several months for refurbishment. Is it too much to hope that some of Clare Stuart Wortley’s documents will resurface?

Neil Jeffares