

Vivien, Jacques Thuret

NEIL JEFFARES



[Joseph Vivien](#)

Jacques III Augustin Thuret
(1669–1738) [ZOOMIFY](#)

Pastel on paper, 73x61 cm, oval

1704

Private collection

PROVENANCE: Drouot, Cornette de Saint-Cyr, 13 December 2013, Lot 10

LITERATURE: Unpublished, apart from numerous references to Salon livret: Ratouis de Limay 1946, pp. 204, 209; Börsch-Supan 1963, no. 83; Nantes 1997, exh. cat., p. 306; *Dictionary of pastellists* online, [1.77.319](#)

ENGRAVED: Suzanne Silvestre, 0.25x0.19 (fig. 1), inscribed “Avunculo Charrissimo D. IACOBO THURET gratitudinia/et observantia pignus, laboris primitias, ejus effigiem aere a se incisam./Vivien pinx./Dicat et Consecrat Susanna Silvestre. 1710” Lit: Jacques Le Long & Fevret de Fontette, *Bibliothèque historique de la France*, 1775, IV, p. 274 (where the sitter is confused with a homonym, Jacques Thuret, vicaire-général du cardinal Barberini); E. de Silvestre, *Israël Silvestre et ses descendants*, Paris, 2^e éd., 1869, p. 106

RELATED WORKS: pendant of Mme Turet, Salon de 1704

GENEALOGIES: [Thuret](#); [Berain](#); [Hérault](#); [Silvestre](#)

AT THE SALON OF 1704 (the year following his promotion to the level of conseiller, the highest level open to a portraitist) Vivien showed an astonishing group of 24 portraits. These included not only the princely portraits (in which the compositions are dominated by elaborate, full-bottomed wigs) evidencing the technical brilliance for which he is known today, but also a second group of a dozen pastels showing a quieter side to his genius: portraits of fellow artists and their wives. Among them is the present pastel of Jacques Thuret, recognised from the engraving made by his niece (fig. 1). In this and some others (no doubt those of his closer friends), wigs are banished, replaced by simple turbans; harmonious colour and simpler compositions contribute to a more intimate effect. The pose, costume and colouring of Thuret echo the famous 1698 autoportrait au turban (Perpignan) of Hyacinthe Rigaud, the painter termed “le Van Dyck de la France” by Jacques Lacombe, borrowing



Figure 1

the phrase first used by Florent Le Comte of Vivien.¹ Irrespective of the comparison, the pastel serves as a reminder of the continuity of portraiture between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: in the years shortly after this portrait Largillierre, for example, produced a self-portrait (1707; Washington, National Gallery of Art) and a portrait of a man said to be Jean-Baptiste Rousseau (Rousseau (c.1710; versions in the Uffizi and National Gallery, London) with conspicuous similarities. The sitter's averted gaze, which may well relate to the lost pendant, visually connects it with the rococo rather than the baroque: and although Louis XIV's reign had another decade to run, the change of sensibility and the broader demand for portraiture in the new century was marked by the inclusion of some 200 portraits in the 1704 salon compared with the 50 shown in the 1699 event.

Only a handful of Vivien's 1704 pastels have so far surfaced. One, of the historian and author Claude-Charles Le Roy de Bacqueville de La Potherie (Douai, musée de la Chartreuse), is exceptionally shown in the grander mode. A pastel displaying the attributes of an artist is said to be of M. Silvestre² (fig. 2), while another, identified as of Mme Silvestre,³ was first sold with an oval male pendant; both however had remained in the family until 1999.



Figure 2

Through the Silvestres, Thuret was connected with the Berain, Hérault, Lemoyne, Roettiers and Hutin dynasties, as well as with minor pastellists such as Barrère and Louis Marteau.⁴ Just how the pastels were intended to be arranged remains uncertain: they mix rectangular and oval formats; compositions have broad sweeps of drapery of contrasting colours, possibly conceived together. The portraits of Mme Silvestre and of Thuret are both, unusually in Vivien's œuvre, lit from the right, reinforcing the possibility of a conscious plan for the display of these groups of pendants. All we are told in the Salon livret (although it goes further than the descriptions normally vouchsafed at this time) is:

III. TRUMEAU SUR L'EAU

Dix-huit Portraits peints en pastel par M. *Vivien*, conseiller.

...

Les douze autres portraits sont ceux de Messieurs De Fontenay, Nattier, Bacqueville, Turet et l'Allier, et de Mesdames leurs Epouses.

XVI. TRUMEAU SUR LA COUR.

Au-dessus, les Portraits de M. Silvestre et de Madame son Epouse, en pastel, par M. *Vivien*.

The names today may require more explanation than to the Salon audience. De Fontenay⁵ was the flower painter Jean-Baptiste I Belin de Fontenay (the miniaturist Samuel Bernard (1615–

¹ Florent Le Comte, "Description des peintures, sculptures & estampes exposées dans la grande galerie du Louvre dans le mois de septembre 1699", *Cabinet des singularitez d'architecture, peinture, sculpture et gravure*, III, 1700; 2^e éd., 1702, p. 219; Jacques Lacombe, *Dictionnaire portatif des beaux-arts*, Paris, 1759, p. 527f.

² New York, Christie's, 28 January 2000, Lot 51. A nineteenth century lithographic reproduction by Ephraim Conquy, captioned as a self-portrait by La Tour, indicates that the identification of the sitter may not have been a continuous tradition (copy in the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, Paris).

³ Dated 1704, it was Lot 50 in the 28 January 2000 sale; it had previously been sold at Paris, Beaussant-Lefèvre, 25 June 1999, Lot 33, where Lot 32 was an oval male portrait, plausibly a pendant.

⁴ A detailed scrutiny of the pedigrees of the Thuret, Berain, Silvestre and Hérault families is required to appreciate the profound interconnections at various levels. The principal links of this generation were between Jacques Thuret and his wife, Marguerite Berain; her brother Jean II was married to Louis Silvestre le jeune; his brother Charles-François Silvestre married in turn Thuret's sister Suzanne.

⁵ See August Jal, *Dictionnaire critique...*, Paris, 1867, p. 186. Helmut Börsch-Supan, "Joseph Vivien als Hofmaler der Wittelsbacher", *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, XIV, 1963, pp. 129–212, did not identify de Fontenay. Likewise, the marquise de Rafeteau printed in the livret is not, as Börsch-Supan writes, the "marquis de Rasetau" but the marquise de Raffetot, née Henriette-Françoise de Pertuis (1670–1710), of whom Saint-Simon tells us that she lived up to her nickname of *Belle et bonne*, and played an important role in Monsieur's court. Two other names remain undeciphered: Mademoiselle Moule may have been a relative of the elusive pastel maker M. Moule, but she might also be Marie-Thérèse-Albertine Moulle, daughter of Étienne Moulle, and a collector-dealer in paintings; while Mademoiselle de Bellefort may have been a member of the Gigault family, marquis de Bellefonds (occasionally misspelled).

1687), father of perhaps Vivien's most famous sitter, was a witness to Belin's recantation of Calvinism in 1685); his wife Marie, the daughter of Jean-Baptiste Monnoyer, perhaps the greatest painter in this genre (her sister Armande was married to Jean-Louis Lemoyne); Nattier was the portraitist Marc Nattier (1642–1705), father of Jean-Marc, while his wife, née Marie Courtois, was a miniaturist and pupil of Charles Le Brun. Van Cleve, added in the later editions of the livret, was the sculptor Corneille Van Clève (1645–1732). L'Allier, hitherto unidentified, was probably Pierre-Germain Lallié, tapissier ordinaire du roi, palais des Tuileries, later premier tapissier du Garde-Meuble.⁶ Many of these artists were among the "Illustres", granted lodgings in the Louvre. In the fifth edition of his *Description nouvelle de la ville de Paris*, published in 1706 (and so compiled shortly after the 1704 salon), Germain Brice⁷ lists 28 such artists of whom Vivien made portraits of at least eight. As both Brice's list and Vivien's selection make clear, the artists singled out for this honour during the reign of Louis XIV were concerned as much with the decorative arts as with the grand history painting that figures more prominently in modern studies of eighteenth century art.

The hang in 1704 evidently failed to take account of the extremely close relationships between the Silvestre and Thuret family. The identity of the Silvestre couple has hitherto been assumed to be Louis Silvestre, dit le jeune, and his wife, née Marie-Catherine Hérault, who were married early in 1704. The Vivien pastels could equally likely⁸ be of Thuret's sister and brother-in-law, Charles-François Silvestre (married since 1693), or indeed of the third brother, Louis Silvestre, l'aîné and Marguerite Charvilhat, also married at the start of 1704. The Silvestre family – of Scottish origin – played an important part in French art for many generations. The engraver Israël Silvestre, the subject of a pastel by Le Brun, was accorded lodgings in the Louvre in 1668. His eldest son Charles-François was maître à dessiner des Enfants de France, the three young ducs de Bourgogne, d'Anjou and de Berry who would later be portrayed by Vivien. Israël's second son, Louis l'aîné, was baptised in the presence of the Grand Dauphin. The fourth son, Louis le jeune, premier peintre du roi de Pologne, was the best-known artist in the family, and the subject of a pastel by La Tour (Saint-Quentin), another work that belongs to the same tradition of informal portraits of artists, as does the Mengs pastel of him, formerly in Dresden.

Jacques III Augustin Thuret (1669–1738), horloger du roi,⁹ was the son of Isaac Thuret, horloger ordinaire du roi, who was in charge of the upkeep of the scientific instruments at the Académie des sciences in Paris. This brought him into contact with many eminent scientists. In 1675 he built the first watch driven by a spiral spring, to the design of Christiaan Huygens (who was also interested in pastel). In the 1680s he worked with Ole Christensen Rømer on astronomical machines to demonstrate planetary motion and eclipses. By 1686 he was granted an apartment in the Grande Galerie du Louvre, and two years later commissioned Rigaud to paint his portrait, for 67 livres 10 sols (lost). His inventaire



Figure 3

⁶ Also Lallier; recorded in numerous documents in the archives nationales from 1701, he was a witness at the wedding of Jean Audran's son Michel in 1732. Other tapissiers in his family cannot be excluded. Lallié provided the "fauteuils" for the Académie française in 1713 (see Pierre Rosenberg, *Dictionnaire amoureux du Louvre*, 2007, p. 60). He was probably later engaged by the Wittelsbachs: see Dela von Boeselager, *Capella Clementina, Kurfürst Clemens August und die Krönung Kaiser Karl VII*, Studien zum Kölner Dom, VIII, ed. Barbara Schock-Werner & Rolf Lauer, 2001, p. 218; see also *Revue de l'art*, LXI, 1983, p. 60.

⁷ A diagram of the lodgements in the Louvre from around this time is reproduced in Maskell 2016.

⁸ The pastel sold in New York, 28 January 2000, Lot 51 as of Louis de Silvestre does not greatly resemble La Tour's subject (Saint-Quentin), even allowing for the passage of many years. Nor however can it be of François Silvestre, to judge from the engraving by Louis Desplaces after a 1710 portrait by Hérault. It is of course possible, if not probable, that Vivien executed pastels of more than the one Silvestre couple presented at the 1704 salon.

⁹ See E. de Silvestre, *Israël Silvestre et ses descendants*, Paris, 2^e éd., 1869; and Roger-Armand Weigert, *Jean I Berain*, Paris, 1937, which contain many useful documents and much information about the family.

après décès indicates a pronounced taste for painting and sculpture, with seventeen pictures by artists including Colandon, Lemaire, Bertina and Boyer.

In a later edition of Brice,¹⁰ Thuret is described as “savant dans les mathématiques, ce qui lui a donné de grandes lumières pour faire d’heureuses découvertes dans sa profession.”

Numerous clocks by one or other Thuret are known, many signed just Thuret. Racine is said to have owned one;¹¹ the inventaires après décès¹² of many of the great and good record his work, among them Samuel Bernard, who owned several; Jean Phélypeaux, intendant de Paris and brother of Pontchartrain, who owned four; Louvois; Colbert, archevêque de Rouen. A 1712 example in the musée du Conservatoire des arts et métiers belonged to Catherine-Henriette, Mme Le Bas de Montargis, daughter of another Vivien client, Jules Hardouin-Mansart. A clock, described as in the style of Boulle but with a J. Thuret label inside, said to have belonged to Maurice-Quentin de La Tour, is with the artist’s effects in the musée Antoine-Lécuyer at Saint-Quentin.¹³ One in the Blondel de Gagny sale in 1776, lot 1025, sold for 993 livres. A particularly fine example, signed by Jacques to designs by Jean Berain, with a case by Boulle (another “Illustre”), is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Others are in the Frick, the Gulbenkian and in Versailles. One in the Wallace Collection (fig. 3) shows Love triumphing over Time, the latter figure based on a model by another Vivien subject, François Girardon.

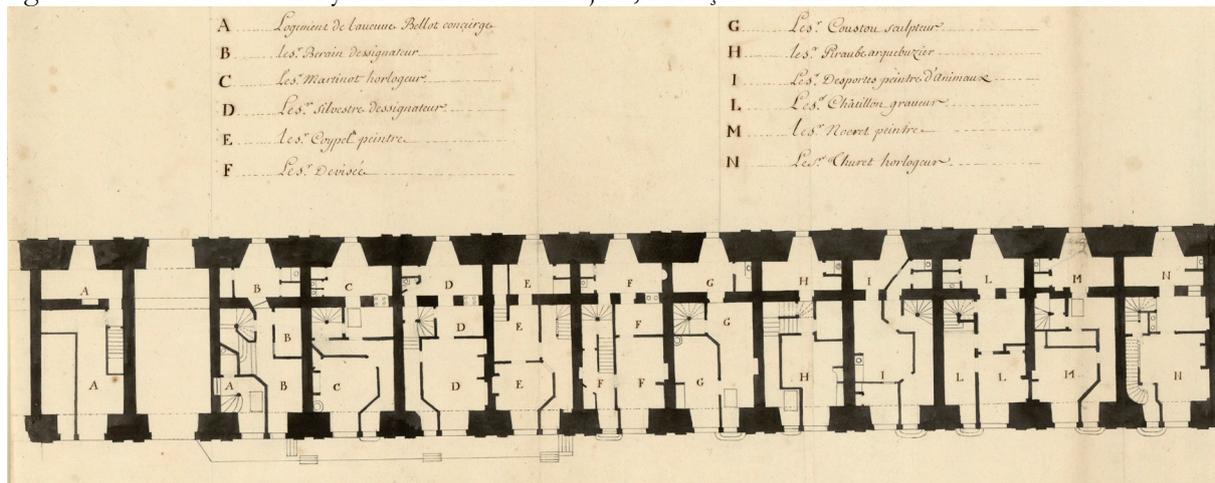


Figure 4

Jacques succeeded his father as horloger du roi, and in 1694 was granted the right to remain in the Louvre after his father’s death (which took place in 1706). Figure 4 shows the layout of these logements in the anonymous 1713 drawing:¹⁴ Thuret’s apartment is marked N, Berain B and Silvestre D. In 1703 he was godfather to his nephew, a child of his sister Suzanne and her husband, Charles-François Silvestre. The godmother was Louise-Catherine, dite Marguerite Berain from the dynasty of dessinateurs du roi: her father was Jean I Berain (1637–1711), dessinateur ordinaire du Cabinet et de la chambre du roi, who had been adopted by Charles Le Brun. Thuret and Marguerite Berain married a few months later: the contract was signed on 16 December 1703, and the ceremony took place on 8 January 1704 at Saint-Germain-l’Auxerrois. They would have only one child, a daughter who married a judge; her only child (Thuret’s only grandchild) in turn married Jacques-Augustin Silvestre (1719–1809), maître à dessiner des Enfants de France and the grandson of Charles-François Silvestre. Marguerite died on 20 March 1715, and was buried the day after at Saint-Germain-l’Auxerrois in the presence of

¹⁰ 9^e, éd., 1752, I, p. 167; evidently the work was not updated thoroughly for each edition, as Thuret had died 14 years before publication.

¹¹ According to the article in Wikipédia, consulted 30 December 2013 (the same article however references Pierre Thuret, *Histoire et généalogie des Thuret*, 1985, which in fact concerns a different family). In Racine’s inventaire après décès, 16 May 1699, this may be the “pendule faite par Christophe, à cadran, avec sa boîte d’écaille de tortue”, valued at 30 livres (vicomte de Grouchy, *Documents inédits relatifs à Jean Racine*, Paris, 1892, p. 21).

¹² Jean-Pierre Samoyault, *André-Chales Boulle et sa famille: nouvelles recherches, nouveaux documents*, Geneva, 1979, pp. 82ff.

¹³ Mentioned in Fleury & Brière 1954, p. 84 without reference to the label, disclosed only in the unpublished notebook of René Leclerc, curator at the musée from 1947.

¹⁴ Logemens des galeries du Louvre et les noms des particuliers qui les occupent (BnF, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530462885>).

Jean and Claude Berain, her brother and uncle, and of the sculptor Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, husband of her niece. Jacques Thuret died on 6 December 1738.¹⁵

Jacques Thuret acquired the copper plates for Jean I Berain's engraved work (some 119 engravings) at the auction among his children that took place after his death, undertaking however to "fournir à chacun des cohéritiers deux épreuves de chacune desdites planches, dont les frais de l'impression et du papier incombaient auxdites parties".¹⁶ A volume of *Ornemens inventez par J. Berain et se vendent chez ledit auteur aux galeries du Louvre* was published by Thuret in 1710, and included an engraving by Duflos¹⁷ of Vivien's portrait of Berain (fig. 5). Among the riot of emblems scattered around the image (many celebrating Berain's work for the Théâtre du Palais-Royal), the masked apotropaic figure¹⁸ underneath the oval in the engraving echoes of the central masque on the body of the clock (both of course are typical of the *grotteschi* in which Berain specialised), a device in turn perhaps picked up with a rococo interpretation by the fronton mounted on the frame of the pastel.

Two states of the Duflos engraving of the Berain are dated 1709; a third, with an altered, older, face bears the additional legend "Suzanna Silvestre Sculp. an. 1711." Vivien's pastel is lost, and the engraving was the basis of the bust of Berain made by Barthélémy in 1881 for the Opéra. The engraver was the precocious Suzanne-Élisabeth Silvestre (1694–1731);¹⁹ her first plate (after Rigaud) was engraved in 1707 at the age of 13. Her grandfather, Isaac Thuret, had been parrain at her baptism, and in 1710 she engraved the present pastel of her uncle (fig. 1). Some twenty plates are known, many after Van Dyck. In 1713, she would marry the sculptor Jean-Baptiste I Lemoyne, son of the ornamental painter Jean Lemoyne portrayed by Vivien, and uncle of the more famous Jean-Baptiste II Lemoyne (Thuret was among the numerous witnesses who signed the contract). She and her husband both died in 1731.

Jacques Thuret's inventaire après décès indicates a considerable level of comfort in his apartments in the Louvre. In addition to several clocks by himself or his father, there was a large library (reference, travel, poetry, classics, fiction, including several sets of *Don Quichotte*), and a respectable collection of pictures – although, unlike his father's inventaire, few attributions are noted. There was one "portrait dessiné par M^r de Nanteuil" (perhaps one of those recorded as in the possession of André-Charles Boullée in 1720), as well as a pair of portraits, "peint sur toile", showing Thuret himself and an equestrian portrait of Louis XIV. The present work is more likely to be in the group of "trois tableaux représentant des portraits de famille" included "pour mémoire" and not valued.



Figure 5

Neil Jeffares

¹⁵ Inventaire après décès, 12 December 1738 (MCLIII/289). As Weigert (*op. cit.*, I, p. 176) suspected, there is no relationship with a Louis-Armand-Eugène de Thuret, fils naturel du prince de Carignan; his name was an adaptation of his mother's, Gräfin von Thürheim.

¹⁶ The plates however did not appear in his inventaire après décès, and may have been disposed of at the auction of his furniture and effects that took place on 1 August 1731 (commissaire priseur: Harmois; not in Lugt; no trace of a catalogue subsists).

¹⁷ Marcel Roux & al., *Inventaire du fonds français, graveurs du XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 1955, VIII, no. 81.

¹⁸ The conceit occurs widely in mediaeval art (an example is in Basel Cathedral: Waldemar Januszczak, Twitter communication, 25 January 2015).

¹⁹ See E. de Silvestre, *op. cit.*, pp. 101ff & *passim*.