

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

VIEL, Charles-François

Paris 12.VI.1745–1.XII.1819

In the Salon de Marseille 1762, a “M. Viel, peintre” showed a portrait in pastel. Unfortunately Parrocel’s text is a little confusing; he explains that Viel was agréé à l’Académie de Marseille, a time at which he also refers to another member, the miniaturist and marine painter Pierre Rey-Vieilh from Marseille who exhibited also in Toulouse (nor is either to be confused with the artillery officer and draughtsman Raymond-Augustin Vieilh, dit de Varenne (1746–1821) who trained at the école de l’Académie in Paris). Parrocel further confuses the matter by discussing [Jean-Louis] “Viel de Saint-Maux, avocat au parlement, peintre et architecte”, admitted to the académie de Marseille in 1786 but confused with his brother, the architect Charles-François Viel, and suggesting that neither was to be identified as the 1762/63 exhibiter. There are further confusions between the brothers, both architects, painters and avocats au parlement, but, born in 1752, Jean-Louis (who enrolled as an élève in the école de l’Académie royale in Paris aged 15 under Pajou.) is too young to be the pastellist who is surely his elder brother.

The correspondence Parrocel cites allows us to follow Charles-François’s early career. From a family of parlementaires, he studied law at Aix in 1762, and took up painting as an amateur, only to abandon it later. In a letter to the secretary of the Marseille académie he wrote from Lyon, 30.V.1763, explaining the delay in submitting his reception piece, as he was still in Lyon, “accablé de portraits et d’autres petits ouvrages de mon genre...”, adding that he had made a number of studies after Bouché [Boucher] “qui m’ont fait un bien infini.” In a further letter from Paris, rue du Petit-Repoussoir, près la place Victoire, 4.I.1770, he told the Marseille Académie that the Académie de Saint-Luc in Paris had just received him as an amateur, “la peinture ne faisant plus aujourd’hui ma principale occupation.” He noted that he had been taken up by the marquis de Palumy, who had made him an écuyer and an avocat au parlement de Paris. Viel, architecte and associé libre de l’Académie de Saint-Luc, exhibited a miniature of Carle Van Loo in their salon de 1774, no. 2. By this stage Viel, having studied under Chalgrin, was a practising architect with a significant career (see Gallet 1995 for details). On 8.VII.1799 in Paris he married Marguerite-Jeanne Bridan; he died at his home, 288 rue Saint-Jacques, Paris.

Bibliography

Gallet 1995; Guiffrey 1915; Parrocel 1890; Lemoine-Bouchard

Pastels

[J.7567.101](#) Portrait, pstl, Salon de Marseille 1762