
Ribot, Théodule(-Augustin)

(*b* Saint-Nicolas-d'Attez, Aug 5, 1823; *d* Colombes, Sept 11, 1891).

Gabriel P. Weisberg

<https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T071875>

Published online: 2003

French painter. After his father died in 1840 Ribot trained himself as an artist while working as a bookkeeper in Elbeuf, a small village near Rouen. In 1845 he married and moved to Paris, where he worked as a decorator of gilded frames for a mirror manufacturer and became a pupil in the studio of Auguste-Barthélémy Glaize. He painted architectural backgrounds for Glaize and made his own studies from the nude model. Around 1848 he went to Algeria, where he worked as a foreman. After his return to Paris in 1851 he practised a variety of trades to support himself, colouring lithographs, decorating window-shades, painting signs and making copies of paintings by Watteau for the American market. It was not until the late 1850s that he began to produce his own paintings, working on realistic subjects at night by lamplight. This circumstance inspired his interest in the chiaroscuro effects that were to characterize his later paintings.

After the Salon rejected his work in 1859, Ribot exhibited canvases in the studio of his friend François Bonvin. In 1861 the Salon finally accepted several paintings depicting cooks, all of which were subsequently bought by Parisian collectors. Ribot won medals at the Salons of 1864 and 1865, and his *St Sebastian* (1865; Paris, Mus. d'Orsay) was purchased by the state for 6000 francs. This and other paintings of comparable subjects, for example *Torture by Wedges* (or *Torture of Alonso Cano*, 1867; Rouen, Mus. B.-A.), showed him to be an artist dedicated to the Spanish masters of the 17th century, in particular Ribera. He painted religious subjects, genre scenes and still-lives, working in a limited number of muted tones to produce canvases reminiscent of Rembrandt and Frans Hals.

Ribot exhibited at international exhibitions in Amsterdam (1865), Munich (1869) and Vienna (1873), and in local exhibitions throughout France. During the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71) his studio in the Parisian suburb of Argenteuil was sacked by the invading Prussians, and many of his drawings and paintings were destroyed. In later years he tended to concentrate on portraiture. His numerous portraits of his family and friends, such as that of his daughter (exh. Salon 1884; Reims, Mus. St Denis), were also executed in a style inspired by Rembrandt. In the late 1870s he fell ill, moved to Colombes and stopped painting. He was awarded the Légion d'honneur in 1878 and a special award at the Exposition Universelle, Paris (1878).

Bibliography

L. de Fourcaud: *Théodule Ribot: Sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris, 1885)

Exposition Th. Ribot au Palais National de l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts (exh. cat. by R. Sertat, Paris, 1892)

G. P. Weisberg: 'Théodule Ribot: Popular Imagery and *The Little Milkmaid*', *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, 63 (1976), pp. 253–63

The Realist tradition: French Painting and Drawing, 1830–1900 (exh. cat., ed. G. P. Weisberg; Cleveland, OH, Mus. A.; New York, Brooklyn Mus.; St Louis, MO, A. Mus.; Glasgow, A.G. & Mus.; 1980), p. 309

See also

France, §III, 5(v): Painting graphic arts, c 1814–c 1914: Development and influence of Impressionism

External resources

Ribot, Thodule: Breton Fishermen and their Families, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) [_<http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/110001907>](http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/110001907)

Ribot, Thodule: Le Garon de Cuisine, Minneapolis Institute of Arts (Minneapolis, MN) [_<http://collections.artsmia.org/art/1594>](http://collections.artsmia.org/art/1594)

Ribot, Thodule: Landscape (23.50.47), Minneapolis Institute of Arts (Minneapolis, MN) [_<http://collections.artsmia.org/art/9288>](http://collections.artsmia.org/art/9288)

Ribot, Thodule: The Little Milkmaid, c. 1865, Cleveland Museum of Art (Cleveland, OH) [_<http://www.clevelandart.org/art/1973.31>](http://www.clevelandart.org/art/1973.31)

Ribot, Thodule: St Sebastian, Muse d'Orsay (Paris) [_<http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/index-of-works/resultat-collection.html?no_cache=1&S=0&zoom=1&tx_damzoom_pi1%5Bzoom%5D=0&tx_damzoom_pi1%5BxmlId%5D=009101&tx_damzoom_pi1%5Bback%5D=en%2Fcollections%2Findex-of-works%2Fresultat-collection.html%3Fno_cache%3D1%26S%3D0%26zsz%3D9>](http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/index-of-works/resultat-collection.html?no_cache=1&S=0&zoom=1&tx_damzoom_pi1%5Bzoom%5D=0&tx_damzoom_pi1%5BxmlId%5D=009101&tx_damzoom_pi1%5Bback%5D=en%2Fcollections%2Findex-of-works%2Fresultat-collection.html%3Fno_cache%3D1%26S%3D0%26zsz%3D9)

Ribot, Thodule: Christ among the Doctors, 1823, Muse d'Orsay (Paris) [_<http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/index-of-works/resultat-collection.html?no_cache=1&S=0&zoom=1&tx_damzoom_pi1%5Bzoom%5D=0&tx_damzoom_pi1%5BxmlId%5D=078228&tx_damzoom_pi1%5Bback%5D=en%2Fcollections%2Findex-of-works%2Fresultat-collection.html%3Fno_cache%3D1%26S%3D0%26zsz%3D9>](http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/index-of-works/resultat-collection.html?no_cache=1&S=0&zoom=1&tx_damzoom_pi1%5Bzoom%5D=0&tx_damzoom_pi1%5BxmlId%5D=078228&tx_damzoom_pi1%5Bback%5D=en%2Fcollections%2Findex-of-works%2Fresultat-collection.html%3Fno_cache%3D1%26S%3D0%26zsz%3D9)

Ribot, Thodule: The Good Samaritan, 1865, Muse d'Orsay (Paris) [_<http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/index-of-works/resultat-collection.html?no_cache=1&S=0&zoom=1&tx_damzoom_pi1%5Bzoom%5D=0&tx_damzoom_pi1%5BxmlId%5D=075472&tx_damzoom_pi1%5Bback%5D=en%2Fcollections%2Findex-of-works%2Fresultat-collection.html%3Fno_cache%3D1%26S%3D0%26zsz%3D9>](http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/index-of-works/resultat-collection.html?no_cache=1&S=0&zoom=1&tx_damzoom_pi1%5Bzoom%5D=0&tx_damzoom_pi1%5BxmlId%5D=075472&tx_damzoom_pi1%5Bback%5D=en%2Fcollections%2Findex-of-works%2Fresultat-collection.html%3Fno_cache%3D1%26S%3D0%26zsz%3D9)