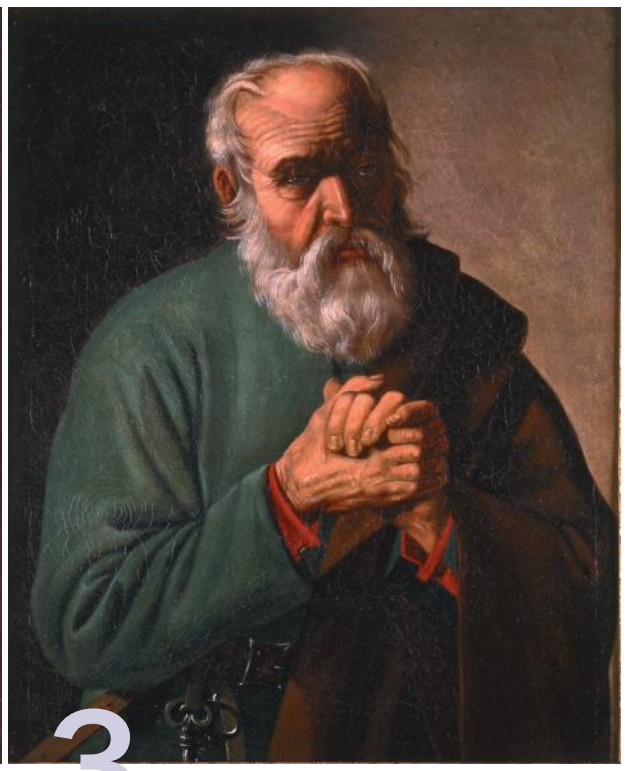




1.



2.



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The Apostles of Georges de La Tour

1. Georges de La Tour, *Saint Jude Thaddée*, 1620-1630, Oil on canvas
2. Georges de La Tour, *Saint Jacques le Mineur*, 1620-1630, Oil on canvas
3. Georges de La Tour, *Saint Pierre*, vers 1900, Oil on canvas

The series of the Apostles of Albi comprises eleven pictures from the Sainte Cécile cathedral; two works are from the hand of the artist dated around 1620-1630, *Saint James Minor and Saint Jude Thaddaeus* and nine copies after Georges de La Tour (1593-1652) possibly date from the early nineteenth century.

FROM PARIS TO ALBI

This group of twelve *Apostles and Christ giving his blessing* was mentioned for the first time in the cathedral of Sainte Cécile, on March 8th 1698, during the pastoral visit of Charles le Goux de la Berchère, archbishop of Narbonne. It was mentioned again after the Revolution in 1795 but attributed to Caravaggio (1571-1610). Between these two dates, the pictures decorated the chapel dedicated to Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist. The series was bought in the 17th century by canon Jean-Baptiste Nualart from Abbé François de Camps, a renowned Parisian collector and close associate of Hyacinthe Serroni who became archbishop of Albi in 1676. Fond of the archbishop's memory, Canon Nualart designated the chapterhouse of Sainte Cécile as his "universal and general heir". He died on July 3rd 1694 and the works were given to the cathedral. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the originals were judged to be in bad condition, two were conserved and restored, and the others were replaced by copies probably made around 1820. That same year, the restoration of several chapels was undertaken by Louis Guidi at the request of the cathedral trust. On January 27th 1821, the Toulousain Alexandre du Mège, in charge of checking and estimating the work, mentioned "outlines of figures retouched", "draperies redone" and "heads repainted" in his report. In 1823, Jacques Bosia who restored Jacques Blanchard's *The Handing of the Keys to Saint Peter* conserved in the cathedral, also worked in the Saint John

chapel. Either Guidi or Bosia could therefore be the makers of the copies if indeed these are from the nineteenth century, a hypothesis which remains to be confirmed.

THE ALBI APOSTLES

The museum accession date of the series is uncertain. The originals of *Saint Matthew* or *Saint Bartholomew* and *Saint John the Evangelist* have disappeared along with any copies which existed. In 1938 and 1939, at the instigation of Georges Huisman, the director general of the Beaux-Arts, then of René Huyghe, at the time chief conservator of the Louvre museum, the canvases which were listed as "school of Georges de La Tour" were sent to Paris to be restored and relined. In 1972, for the Georges de La Tour retrospective at the Orangerie in Paris, the works were studied, and *Saint James the Minor* and *Saint Jude Thaddaeus* were recognised as originals. Three other originals from Albi were recovered: in 1941, *Saint Philip* bought by the Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk (United States) and in 1991 *Saint Thomas* (National Museum of Western Art of Tokyo, Japan) and *Saint Andrew* (private collection, Switzerland). *The adoration of the shepherds*, an early replica of Georges de La Tour's painting kept in the Louvre museum since 1926, completes this set. Until 1938 it was housed in the chapel of Albi's prison, built on the site of the former Convent of the Cordeliers.