

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

FAVART, Mme Charles-Nicolas-Justin, née Marie-Geneviève Bellot Paris c.1753–21.VI.1833

Marie-Geneviève Bellot (as her name appears in her marriage contract, inventaire après décès etc., although the erroneous Maurice-Geneviève Bellot is widely found, perhaps by confusion with the engraver Maurice Blot, 1753–1818), was the daughter of Étienne Bellot, bourgeois de Paris, and his wife, née Marguerite Dupois (they were married by contract 29.VII.1741, AN MC II/485; both as minors). As she was no doubt the Mlle Bellot noted at the Place Dauphine in 1772, she was thought to have been c.1756 (Marandet's estimate; she was still a minor in 1776), but her age at burial was given as 80 (*v. infra*), the age was probably supplied by her son, and seems the most reliable figure available; her dates first published here in 2023). A brother, Gabriel-François, born 12.III.1755, Paris Saint-Eustache, died 23.VI.1757 in Le Plessis-l'Évêque where he had been sent out to nurse with a Marguerite Leroy, Mme Rousseau; the same fate befell a sister, Adélaïde-Marguerite, 4.I.1761.

We learn from the 1800 Salon livret that she was pupil of Bachelier, a pastel of whom, incorrectly attributed to Vigée Le Brun, has an inscription on the back by the (unnamed) artist's son; her name is given as the artist in an older record of a sale by "M. F...", 26–27.XII.1863, conducted at the same time as her son sold the Favart library, and surely the same work (*v. infra*). It may well date to the mid-1770s, and is evidently earlier than the other surviving works.

She was living with her parents in the rue de Bondy, paroisse Saint-Laurent on 23.XI.1776 when (at Paris, Saint-Laurent) she married Charles-Nicolas-Justin Favart (1749–1806), the son of the playwright Charles-Simon Favart and his wife, the famous actress, Justine du Ronceray (her brother was an artist who used pastels by Vernezobre in 1760). At the time of the marriage, her husband was secrétaire de l'intendance de Paris. Soon afterwards he turned to a career as a dramatist and became a member of the Comédie-Italienne, but he left the theatre by 1796, when he became bibliothécaire du Tribunal (he is not to be confused with the avocat Favart de Langlade who was a *tribun*) and subsequently, until his death, of the Sénat. He also became maire de Belleville, the village where his father had a country house. The marriage contract is of considerable length, but more revealing perhaps is a letter from Favart père to his son, written just six weeks before the wedding:

J'ai trouvé une lettre de Mlle Bellot qui se plaint douloureusement de ce que vous ne lui écrivez pas, et remarque sur le papier la trace de ses larmes. Vous faites donc le petit cruel. Vous vous laissez aimer sans daigner répondre aux tendres sentiments que vous inspirez; ce procédé n'est pas d'un galant homme.

The family she married into already had an important iconography, including pastels of her late mother-in-law by Boucher, La Tour, Legendre and Liotard, while the family collection included the La Tour portrait of Maurice de Saxe (Geneviève's mother-in-law was his mistress up to the time of her husband's birth).

In 1788 her portrait of the linguist and educationalist Valentin Haüy (now known only from an engraving) received an unusual acknowledgement, as related by Cousin Jacques (*Courrier des planètes*, 36, 4.IX.1788, p. 18f):

Madame Favart a fait dernièrement le portrait de M. Haüy, Interprète du Roi, instituteur de l'éducation des aveugles, rue Notre-Dame-des-Victoires. Ces enfants ont fait présent à leur maître de ce portrait, peint au pastel comme Madame Favart sait peindre, c'est-à-dire dans la plus grande perfection. Les aveugles, pour témoigner leur reconnaissance à Madame Favart, ont soutenu dimanche 3 août un exercice public, où j'ai assisté, avec une très-brillante société. Ils ont joué à la fin une petite pièce en l'honneur de la charmante artiste, qu'ils voulaient remercier; MM. Favart père et fils, assistaient à cette pièce; lorsqu'ils ont vu leur nom fêté par la sensibilité, & d'une manière si touchante et si naïve, ils n'ont pu s'empêcher de verser des larmes, & toute l'assemblée en versait de même. Les trois Favart, si aimés du public, étaient présents; le nom de la célèbre Mme Favart n'a pas été oublié non plus; & le motif des acteurs, leur situation, le zèle dont ils étaient animés, tout concourait à rendre le spectacle un des plus intéressants qui aient jamais parlé à mes sens.

Mme Favart, who also worked in miniature and in oil, exhibited pastels at the Salons of 1800 (rue du Lycée, no. 1086, au Palais du Tribunat, as the Palais-Royal was then known) and 1808 (rue du Lycée, no. 1), and was listed in the *Almanach du commerce de Paris* in 1805 (rue des Saints-Pères, 123).

Her only child, Antoine-Pierre-Charles Favart (1780–1867), was baptised at Saint-Eustache, 7.X.1780, when his parents were living in rue Montorgueil: the parrain was Pierre Rousseau (1716–1785), conseiller aulique de l'Électeur palatin, founder of the *Journal encyclopédique*. Antoine became an artist and playwright, and later a diplomat – in 1815 he was appointed secretary to the duc de Caraman in Vienna, and he was the French consul in Russia in 1852. He edited his grandfather's *Mémoires*, and added annotations to many of the surviving family documents, including the Bachelier portrait and the La Tour portrait of the maréchal de Saxe J.46.2865, in the same hand. Favart fils exhibited history paintings at the salon from 1806 to 1812, and again much later, in 1838 and 1839. He enrolled as an élève in the école de l'Académie royale in Paris on 2.X.1794, aged 14, as a pupil of Suvée who had also known (and perhaps taught?) his mother, and with whom Suvée conducted an extended correspondence during his stay in Rome from 1801 (Jules Guiffrey, "Joseph-Benoît Suvée. Correspondance inédite", *Archives de l'art français*, XLVII, 1910, pp. 305ff; see also Join-Lambert & Leclair 2017, p. 168).

Mme Favart was widowed in 1806. In 1833 she was recorded as drawing a pension of 300 livres on the civil list (awarded for her husband's rather than her own work: *Liste générale des pensionnaires de l'ancienne liste civile*, p. 34). She died 21.VI.1833 at 21 rue Coquenard (where she lived as a subtenant of a Madeleine-Victoire Lepointre, Mme Payot, the house owned by a M. Bonardi) and was buried the next day in the cimetière de Montmartre (where the entry in the registre journalier d'inhumation is the sole evidence of her age: Archives de Paris). Her inventaire après décès was conducted 28.VI.1833 (AN

MC/ET/CXI/548) and included just "neuf cadres renfermant des portraits, pastels et gravures, représentant des portraits de famille et comme tant non sujets à l'estimation." Her son was her sole heir. In his 1863 sale, although the Bachelier pastel was the only work attributed to her, five other pastels (by Hallé, Rosalba and Roslin) could conceivably have included pastel copies by her after these artists. The sale also included work by Du Ronceray (*q.n.*) as well as a dozen studies by Suvée.

Ratouis de Limay knew only the portrait of her father-in-law, "œuvre révélant de solides qualités de dessin et de coloris." It is of higher quality than the other pastels we have added to her œuvre, and was at one time attributed to Labille-Guiard (the description in the 1800 salon livret is however conclusive). The Maradan engraving, here associated with the pastel, cites no source, but since Mme Favart's pastel is posthumous, it may have predated and guided her work. The pastel (previously catalogued as by Favier, a non-existent pastellist) of Mme Gois, the wife of the sculptor whom Labille-Guiard portrayed, reinforces this association; it also, in its style and the outdoor setting, reveals the influence of Claude Hoin (*q.n.*), who was also closely linked to the Gois family.

Bibliography

Bellier de La Chavignerie & Auvray; Bénézit; Philippe Dally, *Belleville, histoire d'une localité parisienne pendant la Révolution*, Paris, 1912; Andrea Fabiano, "Alcune riflessioni sui rapporti tra la famiglia Favart e Carlo Goldoni in occasione del ritrovamento dei versi composti dal commediografo veneziano per Maurice-Geneviève Favart-Bellot", in *Tra libro e scena – Carlo Goldoni*, ed. Carmelo Alberti & Ginette Herry, Venice, 1996, p. 49–60; Jal 1872; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; *Lettre de la miniature*, 12, .v.2012, pp. 3f; Amédée Marandet, "Manuscrits de la famille Favart", *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire du théâtre*, 1922; Ratouis de Limay 1946; Sanchez 2004, *s.v.* Belot; Saur; Schidlof 1964

GENEALOGIES [Favart](#)

Salon critiques

ANON. 1773c, *L'Avant-Coureur*, 28.VI.1773, no. 27, p. 417:

On a aussi vu plusieurs portraits au pastel peints avec facilité par Mlle Medard, & quelques autres portraits de Mlles Belot, Texier, &c.

Pastels

J.309.101 [=J.309.1015, J.309.102] Jean-Jacques BACHELIER (1724–1806), pstl, 38x31, inscr. verso "Portrait peint par ma mère sous les conseils de M. Bachelier qui fut son premier maître" (Le fils de l'artiste, Antoine-Pierre-Charles Favart (1780–1867) = M. F...; Paris, Drouot, Mareschal, 26–27.XII.1863, s.n. n.r. =Couvreur, marchand de curiosités; vente p.m., Paris, Drouot, Pillet, Delestre, 1–2.XII.1875, Lot 212 n.r., éc. fr. Paris, Drouot, Ader Tajan, 31.III.1993, Lot 235 repr., as by Vigée Le Brun, est. H20,000, H23,000; M. X; vente p.m., Paris, Drouot, PIASA, 7.XII.2011, Lot 50 repr., as by Vigée Le Brun, est. €5500–6500, €14,000 [=€17,851]). Lit.: Bachelier

2000, no. 3 repr., c.1780; Jeffares 2006, p. 578*ai*, anon. [new attr.] Φνσ



J.309.1025 Docteur Baignières [Jean-Baptiste Baignières (1744–1802), docteur en médecine, beau-frère du sculpteur Lucas de Montigny], pstl, sd “Madame Favart/fecit 14 août 1788” (M. Baignères 1894; desc.: PC 2024). Exh.: Paris 1891, no. 464 n.r.

J.309.1027 Jérôme BEREGEROT (1748–1806), avocat au parlement, secrétaire général des Droits réunis, pstl, 58x49, sd → “Mde Favart/pinxit 1806” (Paris, Piasa, 17.v.2023, Lot 188 repr., est. €1200–1800; Paris, Drouot, Millon, 23.xi.2023, Lot 41 repr., est. €600–800, €1700) φ



J.309.103 DELAMARE, pstl, 54x43, inscr. verso “Monsieur Delamare / rue de Choiseul / chez (?) Madame Favart 1806” (Saint-Cloud, Le Floch, 8.x.2017, Lot 20 repr., as éc. fr. c.1790, est. €400–600) φδν



J.309.104 COUSIN, avocat au parlement de Paris, pstl, 32x24 ov., sd ← 1788 (Châlons-en-Champagne, musée Garinet, inv. 921.3.2) Φδ



Photo courtesy musée Garinet

J.309.108 Le feu citoyen FAVART père [Charles-Simon Favart (1710–1792)] composant sa comédie *L'Anglais à Bordeaux* (1763), pstl, 92x73, Salon de 1800, no. 141 (Béziers, mBA, inv. 82-4-1, no. 5321. A.-P.-C. Favart, consul de France; Mlle Marie Favart. Henry Pannier, Paris, 1897; Paris, Charpentier, Baudoïn, 22.vi.1939, Lot 7 n.r., H4500. Acqu. 1982). Exh.: Paris 1908a, no. 26, pl. 19, as by Labille-Guiard; Paris 1927a, no. 17, pl. LXXXIX-130. Lit.: Humbert, Revilliod & Tilanus 1897, no. 48 n.r., as by Liotard, c.1763; Lemoisne 1907, repr., as by Labille-Guiard; Ratouis de Limay 1946, pl. LVIII/88 φ

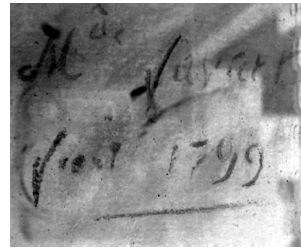


LARGER IMAGE

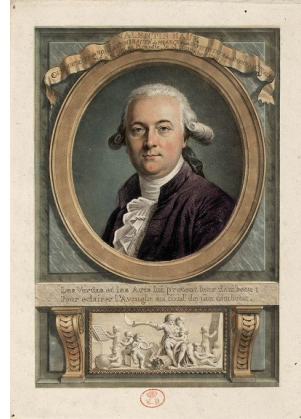
~grav. François Maradan (Versailles, inv. grav 2857, as of Nicolas Favart) [new association]

J.309.111 ~?version, pstl (Albert Carré 1908). Exh.: Paris 1908c, no. 555 n.r., attr. Mme Favart

J.309.112 [?]Mme Edmé-Étienne-François GOIS, pstl, 74.5x55.5, sd ∨ “M^{de} favart/fecit 1799” (Versailles, Martin Chausselat, 20.xi.2005, repr., as inconnue, sd Favier 1799, est. €2500–3500. La Tour Camoufle, Paris, 2009). Lit.: Jeffares 2006, p. 179*ai*, as inconnue, by Favier Φ



J.309.115 Valentin HAÛY (1745–1822), l'inventeur des caractères typographiques pour les aveugles, instructeur, pstl, 1788 ~grav. Sergent



J.309.118 [La marquise] de MONTALEMBERT [née Marie-Joséphine de Comarieu (1750–1832), salonnière, veuve de Marc-René, marquis de Montalembert] posant deux vers sur le buste de son mari, Salon de 1800, no. 142

J.309.119 Le citoyen N... en pied, pstl, 90x71, sd “Mme Favart/fecit 1800”, Salon de 1800, no. 143 (Paris, Sotheby's, 27.vi.2002, Lot 131 repr., est. €30–40,000) Φσ

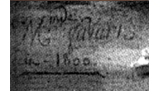
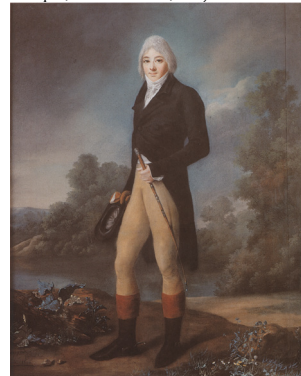


Photo courtesy Sotheby's

J.309.1192 Homme en redingote gris, gilet jaune, pstl, 60x49, sd → “Mde Favart/pinxit [?]1804” (eBay 2024) φ



J.309.121 Jeune dame en robe blanche, pstl, 61x50, sd √ “M^{de} favart/fecit 1802” (Paris, rue Rossini, Chayette & Cheval, 7.III.2019, Lot 10 repr., as portrait ou autoportrait, est. €600–700. Paris, Piasa, 17.V.2023, Lot 254 repr., est. €1000–1500; Paris, Drouot, Millon, 23.XI.2023, Lot 42 repr., est. €800–1000, €800) [the sitter is too young to be the artist] φ



J.309.122 Une dame avec ses enfants dans une paysage, pstl, 78x92 (PC 2021) [new attr., ?] φαυ

J.309.123 Quelques portraits, m/u, Salon de la Jeunesse 1772

J.309.124 Pluseurs portraits, m/u, Salon de 1800, no. 144

J.309.125 Deux portraits, pstl, Salon de 1808, no. 213

J.309.126 Pastel (Paris, Galerie Charpentier, 22.VI.1939)