

Valade, *Mme Pinson de Ménerville*

NEIL JEFFARES



[Jean Valade](#)

Mme Pinson de Ménerville,
née Marie-Anne-Catherine
Bouette (–1762)

Pastel on five sheets of
paper, 75.7x59.6 cm, oval

Signed in pencil, middle left
(almost invisibly) “Peint
par/Valade/1751”



Private collection

PROVENANCE: [The sitter’s son, Louis-Marie-Pomponne Pinson de Ménerville (1755–1841); his daughter, Mme Jean-Thomas de Maussion, née Élixa Pinson de Ménerville (1794–1879); her adopted daughter, Mme Léon-Stanislas Héron de Villefosse, née Anne de Maussion (1842–1874); her son, Jean-Félix-Marie Héron, baron de Villefosse; by descent.] New York, Christie’s, 12 January 1995, Lot 102

EXHIBITIONS: [possibly Salon de 1751, no. 92 (“Portrait de Madame ***”)]

LITERATURE: [possibly René Crozet, “Notes sur le pastelliste Jean Valade”, *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire de l’Art Français*, 1943

(1947), pp. 35–46, no.5;] Neil Jeffares, “Jean Valade’s portraits of the Faventines family”, *British Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, Autumn 2003, xxvi/2, p. 245, n. 60; Jeffares 2006, p. 530, reproduced

GENEALOGY: [Pinson](#)

ACCORDING TO THE LABEL, Cathrine Bouette was the wife of Louis-René Pinson de Ménerville, argentier ordinaire de la petite écurie du roi et de M^{me} la Dauphine, no doubt the subject of the miniature she wears on her wrist.¹ Considerable confusion has

¹ For biographical sources, see Michel Antoine, *L’Administration sous Louis XV: dictionnaire*, François Bluche, *L’Origine des magistrats...*, *dictionnaire*, Paris, 1956, p. 349; Borel d’Hauterive, Albert Révérend, *Annuaire de la noblesse de France*, Paris, 1851; Thierry Claeys, *Dictionnaire biographique des financiers en France au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 2009, II, p. 743f; R Crozet, “Notes sur le pastelliste Jean Valade”, *Bulletin de la Société de l’histoire de l’art français*, 1943 (1947), pp. 35–46; Adrien Maquet & Adolphe Dion, “Nobiliaire et armorial du comté de Montfort”, *Mémoires et documents publiés par la Société archéologique de Rambouillet*, 1879–1880, V, pp. 49–516; E Grave, “Supplément au nobiliaire et armorial du comté de Montfort-l’Amaury”, *Mémoires de la Société archéologique de Rambouillet*, 1906, XIX, p. 1–260; Fr. Alex Aubert de La Chesnaye des Bois et Badier, *Dictionnaire de la noblesse*, Paris, 1872; Mme de Ménerville, *Souvenirs d’émigration*, Paris, 1934, pp. 13ff, 32, 230; Robert de Roton, *Les Arrêts du Grand Conseil portant dispense du marc d’or de noblesse*, Paris, 1951, pp. 125, 260f. A “dossier volumineux et intéressant”, sold for Fr25, was catalogued by J. Depoin, “Bibliographie des autographes...”, *Mémoires de la Société historique et archéologique de l’arrondissement de Pontoise et du Vexin*, 1897, XIX, pp. 32f, no. 515; it included “inventaires mobiliers et appositions de scellés, faits après les décès de Marie Pouette, épouse de

surrounded the identification of various members of this family: both father and son were called Louis-René; the office of argentier was in the family for over 130 years; and the son married at least three times. Mme Trope-Podell included a portrait of Mme Pinson de Ménerville as no. 81 in her 1993 catalogue.² The sitter, shown with a fan, seated in a wing chair, is evidently not the same as the present subject; identified as Félicité Aubry (also married to a Louis-René Pinson de Ménerville) in the 1993 exhibition catalogue, Mme Trope-Podell identified her instead as Marie-Claude Pinson de Ménerville (1698–1783), Louis-René I's sister, in the 1994 sale catalogue.

Marie-Claude and Louis-René I were the children of Jean-Baptiste Pinson, the *intendant* of Louise de Kéroualle (the mistress of Charles II who was made Duchess of Portsmouth and duchesse d'Aubigny), *prévôt des bandes, maréchal général des logis et contrôleur du régiment des gardes françaises*, and Marguerite Guyon (the widow of Pierre Pomponne, *avocat à Paris*, who owned the Ménerville property which passed to the Pinon family in 1750). Marie-Claude married (at Perdreauville, Yvelines, near Ménerville, on 8 May 1716) Louis-Paul Pinon d'Avord (Paris 1689–1779), *conseiller au Parlement*, younger brother of Anne-Louis I Pinon de Quincy, of a large family of *parlementaires*. They had two sons, Anne-Louis Pinon, marquis de Saint-Georges (c.1718 – c.1812), a cavalry commander, who distinguished himself at Fontenoy, and Louis-Vincent Pinon, known as *le chevalier* Pinon (Château de Boisbouzon, Cher 1724 – Coulommiers 1809), captain of the Caraman dragoons, *chevalier de l'ordre de Saint-Louis*. Valade exhibited at the Salon of 1751 for the first time; he showed four works, no. 91 being the portrait of “M. le Chevalier Pinon, Capitaine au Régiment de Caraman”, while no. 92 was “Portrait de Madame ***”, possibly the present work.

Four years later, Valade, now a full academician, sent eleven portraits to the 1755 Salon, among them the portrait of Louis-René Pinson de Ménerville (no. 120). This is more likely to be the father Louis-René I, since the picture may well have been commissioned to commemorate the father's ennoblement in June 1754 or his elevation to the *ordre de Saint-Michel* in 1755. Two years later, Louis-René I acquired the château d'Autouillet, Yvelines, from Mme de Pompadour's *valet de chambre* Le Masle. In addition to the office argentier des petites écuries du roi, held by the family for 130 years, they were appointed to the equivalent position for the Maison et écuries de Madame la Dauphine when this was established by Phélypeaux in 1747 at the time of Marie-Josèphe de Saxe's marriage to the dauphin. Among the duties this entailed, we find, in 1761, Louis-René taking a lease on her behalf of the hôtel de la Roche-Sur-Yon (no. 13, quai Malaquais) from the prince de Conti to locate the *écuries de la dauphine*.³ Louis-René I died on 17 December 1767 in Paris, rue Saint-Niçaise,⁴ on the present place du Carrousel; the hôtel d'Uzès et de Crussol housed the stables of Anne d'Autriche from 1653, and the *petites écuries du roi* from 1770 until the Revolution.⁵ His wife Marie-Magdeleine Aubry died on 19 June 1757, according to the register of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois, Paris.

The subject of this pastel is evidently the “Marie-Anne-Catherine Bouëtte, épouse Louis-René Pinson de Ménerville”, whose death only a few years (21 September 1762) later is recorded in the same parish register. She was a member of the Bouëtte family from Rouen: unlike the better-known Bouëtte de Blémur branch of the family, which was able to supply five degrees of nobility to obtain the admission of two of their girls at Saint-Cyr (implying also financial insecurity), this side of the family was very comfortable, but of recent social standing. Catherine's grandfather Daniel (–1724) was a mercier-grossier, but assembled enough money by his death in 1724 to purchase the position of conseiller-secrétaire de France, contrôleur royal à la chancellerie

René Pinson, sieur de Menerville, argentier de la Maison de M^{me} la Dauphine, – de Louis-René Pinson de Menerville, ancien trésorier de la Petite Écurie du Roi. – etc. (Cat. Voisin 1895, no. 16,872).”

² This pastel appeared in a Paris sale (Drouot, 16 June 1987, Lot 8); was in a private French collection in 1993; was sold again in Paris (Drouot, 12 July 1994, Lot 248); and was again in a private collection in France in September 1994.

³ AN MC XCII 638, 15 June 1761; see also Jacques Hillairet, *Dictionnaire historique des rues de Paris*, Paris, 1963, II, p. 91.

⁴ The Almanachs royaux (list of chevaliers de Saint-Michel) from 1762 on show his address as that of the rue Niçaise. He is dropped from the 1769 Almanach.

⁵ Hillairet, *op. cit.*, I, p. 279.

de Rouen, which carried the right of nobility. His son Daniel II Bouette, sgr de Pissy-les-Rouen (1689–) became mayor of Rouen in 1737; he is shown, looking every inch noble, in a magnificent pastel by Joseph Vivien (fig. 1; a family resemblance with his daughter may be seen in the heavy brows, pronounced nose and sensual mouth). In 1713 he made an important marriage to Françoise Judde or Jude, sister of a secrétaire du roi de la Grande Chancellerie,



Figure 1

Nicolas-Michel Judde, chevalier de Saint-Michel; her family provided a dowry of 58,780 livres, of which 48,000 was paid immediately; while he contributed 50,000 livres of capital. In accordance with the exalted pretensions of the family, there were 95 witnesses to the marriage contract.⁶ His daughter was married 35 years later, 6 October 1748, by contract⁷ prepared by her mother's cousin, M^e Jacques Judde, notaire à Paris.⁸ The dowries now were higher: Louis-René brought 120,000 livres tournois, while his bride matched this, thanks to the generosity of her uncle, the chevalier de Judde,⁹ who added diamonds to the value of 6000 livres tournois. Of these sums only 30,000 livres were communal (i.e. heritable by the other party). Louis-René's office as argentier ordinaire de la Dauphine was valued at 25,000 livres. His position as argentier des petites écuries du roi carried a stipend of 2000 livres p.a. from 1762, while that at the Maison et écuries de Madame la Dauphine carried 3000 livres p.a. from 1763.

In 1755, a son was born: Louis-Marie-Pomponne Pinçon de Ménerville (1755–1841), conseiller (1775), then président (1780) à la cour des aides au parlement de Paris, conseiller à la cour de cassation (1815), mort doyen; chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur (1821). Catherine died while Louis-Marie-Pomponne was an infant, leaving him a very large fortune (presumably the balance of 90,000 livres excluded from the communauté des biens, perhaps increased by Bouette legacies), by which he was independent of his father. In fact he financed his father, who appears to have been beset by financial problems: by 1782 he had had to sell the seigneurial lands at Autouillet, to one Barthélémy Pasquès de Salegnac.¹⁰ Louis-René II remarried before 1766, when his second son, Charles, was born. Charles had the right of inheritance of his father's position as argentier de la petite écurie du roi.¹¹ This second wife was almost certainly the Félicité Aubry who died on 17 August 1769 (she is recorded as épouse, not veuve, Louis-René Pinçon de Ménerville, and so cannot have been married to Louis-René I). Louis-René II married for a third time shortly after his son's marriage in 1786 to Élise Fougeret (1768–p.1814), daughter of Jean Fougeret, receveur général des finances (1734–1794),¹² and a friend of David's subjects the Rilliet sisters; the marriage contract was signed by the king and queen. On their marriage, Louis-René II gave the couple 260,000 francs as well as “de très beaux diamants” (could these perhaps have

⁶ Angela Groppi & Gabrielle Houbre, “Femmes, dots et patrimoines”, *Clio*, 1998/7, pp. 124f.

⁷ AN MC XLVI 318. See also Mathieu Marraud, *De la ville à l'État: la bourgeoisie parisienne, XVII^e–XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 2009, p. 450.

⁸ Jacques's father, Michel Judde (1668–1748), marchand mercier, bourgeois de Paris, was godfather to Michel-Nicolas. His posthumous inventory (AN MC XCV 195, 1748, repr. Wildenstein 1956) includes an interesting picture collection.

⁹ Nicolas-Michel, chevalier de Judde (c.1695–1770) was a notorious rake, whose interest in prostitutes was well known, and closely monitored, by the police. He had a particular taste for flagellation, and shared the services of one Mlle July, who charged one louis to whip him, with the marquis de Sade and the philosopher Helvétius (see Helvetius, *Correspondance générale*, IV, 1981, p. 298). He died unmarried at the age of 75, leaving his fortune to his three nephews, Nicolas Judde de Grainville, grand-maître des eaux et forêts de Soissons, Nicolas d'Houppesville de Neuville, conseiller au parlement de Normandie, and Catherine's brother Claude-Nicolas Bouette; they renounced the legacy (AN MC XLVI 431–32). Perhaps she declined to be seen wearing his diamonds for this reason, or perhaps they were not thought sufficiently fashionable.

¹⁰ Archives de Seine-et-Oise, no. 2891, cited in Marquet & Dion, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

¹¹ Dufort de Cheverny (*Mémoires*, I, 65ff) describes the Petites-Ecuries at this time, but does not mention the Pinçon family.

¹² Mme de Fougeret, née Anne d'Outremont, Élise's mother, was a subject of Mme Vigée Le Brun and the founder of the *Société de charité maternelle*, a charity founded in 1784 to provide care for destitute legitimate children; it received royal funds from 1789, and Marie-Antoinette was appointed honorary “foundress”. Its accounts for 1790 were the last before its reorganisation in 1801 (Sigismond Lacroix, ed., *Actes de la commune de Paris*, Paris, 1894–98, 1^{er} série, VII, pp. 243–47) The Fougeret couple were painted by Roslin in 1769 (sold Paris, 18 December 1996).

been the Judde gift?); on his death in 1790, they inherited a small house at Gentilly, near Paris, which had a fine garden, and where they spent the first couple of years of the Revolution before leaving France in October 1791 for Belgium, the Netherlands and London. Here they lived in Manchester Square (and enjoyed the support of Edmund Burke¹³), before returning to France in 1797. Mme de Ménéville's *Souvenirs d'émigration* were finally published in 1934.¹⁴ According to her, Louis-Marie's financial independence freed him from his new step-mother's tyrannies, which his half-brother did not escape. Although their three daughters survived the Revolution, their son Louis-Léopold-Gustave, who bore the names of three kings none of whom survived him by long, died in infancy (a Jacobin doctor having to refuse to attend this aristocrat). The Ménéville lands and property presumably descended through Charles to the next generation – Charles-Louis Pinson de Ménéville (1808–1876), who was premier président au cour d'appel d'Alger in 1874.

The provenance of the portraits has not yet been traced precisely before the 1995 sale, but it is likely that both pastels descended via Anne de Maussion-Pinson de Ménéville who married Léon-Stanislas Héron de Villefosse (1840–1881), and thence by descent to the baron Héron de Villefosse who sold the pastel of Marie-Claude Pinson de Ménéville (no. 81 in the 1993 exhibition catalogue) in Monaco in the 1980s. This hypothesis is supported by the provenance of the Vivien portrait of Catherine's father, first located in the same Héron de Villefosse collection, and which must have belonged to Catherine after her father's death.

Although this pastel differs from no. 81, the pastels are of similar dimensions, are framed identically, and were both made up from smaller rectangular sheets. The Louis XVI moulding of the frames suggests that the making up was later, a suggestion supported by the poorer quality of the draughtsmanship of the additions – evident in the lace squares – as well as small variations in the pigments used – for example, the ultramarine strokes in the lace, although a few of these are carried over into the main picture. It was not unusual for rectangular portraits to be made up in this way. A good example is Boucher's portrait of *Mme de Pompadour à sa toilette* in the Fogg Art Museum, a picture which the present work echoes in some ways: the original rectangular bust, dated 1750, was first extended, then ovalised at some time before 1780 while in the possession of its owner, the marquis de Marigny.¹⁵

Neil Jeffares

¹³ Hans A. Schmitt; John C. Weston, Jr, "Ten letters to Edmund Burke from the french translator of the *Reflections on the Revolution in France*", *The Journal of Modern History*, xxiv/4, December 1952, pp. 406–23. In a footnote M. de Ménéville is identified as treasurer of the Charité maternelle and as living in Paris at 12 rue Bourtibourg as late as 20 February 1791.

¹⁴ Her sister, Angélique de Maussion, also left memoirs, entitled *Rescapés du Thermidor*.

¹⁵ Alden R. Gordon & Teri Hensick, "The picture within the picture", in *Apollo*, February 2002, pp. 21–30.