
On the Provenance of Louis Tocqué's Sketch of Jean Marc Nattier

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Arnauld Doria's 1929 monograph is the principal source for the work of the portraitist Louis Tocqué, who was born in Paris in 1696 and died there in 1772. Doria's study is abundantly documented, but his catalogue is outdated,¹ and since he had limited knowledge of Tocqué's lifestyle and wealth, those subjects have remained obscure.² The discovery of the artist's postmortem inventory and several other notarized documents permits us to shed light on his late years and reconstruct the history of Tocqué's oil sketch of Jean Marc Nattier that belongs to The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figure 1).³ These records also offer information about the circle of artists frequented by Tocqué and presents an opportunity to reconsider his ideas about portraiture.⁴

Louis Tocqué was apprenticed briefly to the history painter Nicolas Bertin (1668–1736) and then to Jean Marc Nattier (1685–1766), his future father-in-law. Received at the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture in 1731 and admitted as a portraitist in 1734, Tocqué exhibited regularly at the Salons of the Académie from 1737, establishing his reputation in 1739 with the presentation of his portrait of the Dauphin, Louis de France, son of King Louis XV.⁵ In 1747 the painter married Marie Catherine Pauline Nattier, his master's daughter, which consolidated the friendship between the two artists. In the picture at the Metropolitan Museum, Tocqué presents an image of a respected master and friend, a man who looked kindly upon his son-in-law and former apprentice.

Tocqué's career was advanced by Abel François Poisson de Vandières, marquis de Marigny, director of the Bâtiments du Roi, who recommended him to Empress Elizabeth Petrovna of Russia.⁶ From 1756 to 1758 he worked as a court portraitist in Saint Petersburg, and then he occupied a similar position at the court of King Frederick V of Denmark.⁷ While in Copenhagen he was elected to membership in the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. As his reception piece

Tocqué submitted a highly finished portrait of Nattier (Figure 2) that is based on the Metropolitan Museum sketch.⁸ His father-in-law was named to the Danish Academy as well, presenting an elegant portrait of Tocqué.⁹

Upon his return to France in 1759, Tocqué settled with his wife and his only daughter, Catherine Pauline, in lodgings at the Louvre.¹⁰ The major family event of the 1760s was his daughter's marriage, on May 30, 1768, to the clock-maker Jean Claude Martinot. The marriage contract mentions the names of the witnesses.¹¹ Doria stressed the ties of friendship that bound Tocqué and the sculptor Jean Baptiste Lemoyne the Younger (1704–1778), one of the witnesses.¹² This association is confirmed by the fact that Louise Lemoyne, young daughter of the sculptor, attended the ceremony. One of Tocqué's last works was a portrait of Marie Thérèse Lemoyne, another of the sculptor's daughters.¹³ Contact with Jean Baptiste Lemoyne could have influenced Tocqué's style. While Nattier showed his sitters' heads in frontal view, Tocqué presented a more spatial dimension: his portraits, including the one at the Metropolitan, are often in three-quarter view and slightly *di sotto in su* (looking up from below).

Catherine Pauline Tocqué's wedding was also attended by three members of the Coypel family, including Philippe Coypel, younger brother of the history painter Charles Antoine Coypel (1694–1752). Louis Tocqué and Charles Antoine Coypel were friends and seem to have shared an intimate vision of portraiture. The feeling of closeness that characterizes Tocqué's portrait of Nattier at the Metropolitan also applies to the portrait Charles Antoine painted of Philippe Coypel in about 1732 (Figure 3). In addition, Tocqué and Charles Antoine may have used similar pictorial techniques. In the paintings of Charles Antoine there is a lack of sharpness that is due to the application of many layers of glazes, a feature of the technique of both Tocqué and Nattier.

Another witness at the wedding was Françoise Marguerite Pouget (1707–1791) (Figure 4), wife of the painter Jean Siméon Chardin (1699–1779). Here again it might be asked whether the acquaintance between the two artists

1. Louis Tocqué (French, 1696–1772). *Jean Marc Nattier* (1685–1766), 1762. Oil on canvas, 30½ x 23¼ in. (77.5 x 59.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Colonel and Mrs. Jacques Balsan, 1955 (55.205.1). Photograph: Juan Trujillo, The Photograph Studio, MMA





2. Louis Tocqué. *Jean Marc Nattier*. Signed and dated (lower left): *L. Tocqué 1762*. Oil on canvas, 31⁷/₈ x 25³/₄ in. (81 x 65.5 cm). Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen. Photograph: © Akademiraadet (Det Kongelige Akademi for de Skønne Kunster)/Det Kongelige Bibliotek



3. Charles Antoine Coypel (French, 1694–1752). *Philippe Coypel (1703–1777), the Artist's Brother*, ca. 1732. Oil on canvas, 29¹/₂ x 24 in. (75 x 61 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris (RF1968-5). Photograph: © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre)/Franck Raux

was limited solely to the fact that both were *peintres-académiciens* or whether the art of portraiture, which Chardin practiced at various stages of his career, was a subject of discussion between them. Tocqué's *intimiste* approach has much in common with the style of Chardin's portrait of Pouget (Figure 4). In addition to his sketch of Nattier at the Metropolitan, another example by Tocqué of this style of work is his portrait of Madame Dangé.¹⁴

Doria pointed out the extent to which Tocqué's production declined upon his return to France.¹⁵ After 1762 the artist no longer exhibited at the Salon. This development can be explained both by his age and by the wealth accumulated during his years abroad, which meant that he did not need to continue working as a painter. His prosperity is reflected in a number of documents. He provided his daughter with a dowry of 25,000 livres, and the inventory of his property, begun on February 17, 1772, showed that he held assets in the form of stipends totaling 68,000 livres,

from contracts mostly signed after 1759.¹⁶ The money from these annuity contracts (*constitutions de rente*) resulted from Tocqué's activity as a court painter in Russia and Denmark. His personal property was also valued high, at nearly 8,000 livres for just the silverware, rings, and gold *tabatières* (snuffboxes).

That there was no studio in Tocqué's vast apartment in the Louvre is thus not surprising. The works of art appraised there by the painter and art expert Julien Folliot seem only to have served as decoration. There were a few paintings, including a portrait by Alexis Grimou and one by Jean Baptiste Santerre (each appraised at 160 livres), as well as a *Portrait of a Man* by Van Dyck (appraised at 200 livres).¹⁷ Sculptures and prints were also displayed. Significantly, the framed prints all reproduced portraits by Tocqué himself, offering the visitor a sort of catalogue of his work. In the sitting room was an engraving by Jean Georges Wille after Tocqué's portrait of the duc de La Vrillière.¹⁸ In the painter's

4. Jean Siméon Chardin (French, 1699–1779). *Françoise Marguerite Pouget, the Artist's Wife*. Signed and dated: Chardin 1775. Pastel on paper, 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 15 in. (46 x 38 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris (25207). Photograph: Erich Lessing/Art Resource, New York



bedroom hung engravings of his portraits of the queen of France and Jean Baptiste Massé, as well as one of the empress of Russia.¹⁹ In the dining room Folliot noted “four portraits engraved after Monsieur Tocqué.” No further information is given, but it is very likely that three of the four represented the marquis de Marigny, Count Razumovsky, and Count Vorontsov.²⁰ These prints were listed in detail three years later in the posthumous inventory of Tocqué’s widow.²¹

Various family portraits also hung in the apartment. In keeping with ancien régime tradition, these were not appraised but instead mentioned only “pour mémoire” (for the record). Those hanging in the sitting room—intended for receiving guests—were probably among the finest. These included “three pictures painted on canvas representing the one M[onsieur] Nattier, father of said l[ady] Tocqué, the other s[aid] [Monsieur] Tocqué, the third s[aid] l[ady] Tocqué in their frames of gilded carved wood and . . . two terracotta busts representing s[aid] l[adies] Tocqué and Martinot.”²² As we shall see, one of the sculptures was by Jean Baptiste Lemoyne the Younger. As for the painting representing Jean Marc Nattier, there is reason to believe that it was by Tocqué and is identical with the painting at the Metropolitan Museum, which is known to have come from the artist’s descendants.²³ Although there were other family portraits in the bedroom, including “two pictures painted on canvas representing the father and mother of s[ai]d

W[idow] Tocqué,” the oil sketch of Nattier probably hung in the sitting room, given its importance to Tocqué.²⁴

The discovery of the will and the postmortem inventory of the painter’s widow, Marie Catherine Pauline Nattier Tocqué, both dated 1775, permits us to elucidate the provenance of the Metropolitan Museum’s painting.²⁵ Tocqué’s widow left her well-stocked library to her son-in-law, Claude Martinot. To her sister Madeleine Sophie Nattier, wife of the history painter Charles Michel Ange Challe (1718–1778), she bequeathed a “terracotta bust from the hand of the famous M. Le Moyne.”²⁶ To her sister Charlotte Claudine Nattier, wife of the lawyer François Philippe Brochier, she left the “portrait of [her] father in its original gilded frame from the hand of [her] husband, the head of which is finished, with the rest of the bust only roughly sketched.”²⁷ This description is similar to that made several days later in her postmortem inventory: “a picture painted on canvas representing s[aid] M[onsieur] Nattier whose clothes are only sketched in its gilded wood frame, said portrait cited for the record, given its nature, but the frame is hereby appraised at eight livres.”²⁸ And so the unfinished aspect of the Metropolitan Museum’s painting furnishes evidence that accords with information in the documents. Beyond expanding the painting’s provenance, this brief study provides an opportunity to revisit the work of Louis Tocqué, an artist too often upstaged by the more systematic production of his father-in-law, Jean Marc Nattier. Louis Tocqué’s quest to perfect the art of portrait painting was probably nurtured by discussions in a circle of friends about which we now know more.

NOTES

1. The following should be removed from Doria 1929: p. 93, no. 4 (late 18th century); p. 99, no. 51, fig. 66 (by Marianne Loir); pp. 110–11, no. 120, fig. 145 (of a much later date); p. 115, no. 159, fig. 63 (French, ca. 1730); p. 133, no. 276, fig. 10 (by Jean François de Troy); p. 133, no. 279, fig. 137 (not by Tocqué); p. 136, no. 297, fig. 3 (probably by Marianne Loir); p. 149, no. 433, fig. 132 (closer to Jean Marc Nattier); p. 153, no. 507, fig. 138 (by Marianne Loir); pp. 153–54, no. 513, fig. 71 (not by Tocqué); p. 155, no. 531, fig. 142 (copy after Tocqué); p. 155, no. 532, fig. 61 (French, ca. 1720); p. 157, no. 563, fig. 124 (not by Tocqué).
2. The loss of the *procès-verbal de scellés* (the report on property placed under seal) of Tocqué’s widow (1775) hampered the search for notarized family documents; its disappearance was noted by Jules Guiffrey (1883–85, vol. 3, p. 298).
3. Doria 1929, p. 128, no. 243.
4. The newly discovered documents include: A. Contract for the marriage of Louis Tocqué’s daughter, Catherine Pauline, to Jean Claude Martinot: Archives Nationales de France, Paris, Minutier Central des Notaires de Paris, étude (hereafter ANMC) XLV, 534, May 23, 1768. (The contract was signed on May 23; the ceremony was held on May 30.) B. Postmortem inventory of the estate of Louis Tocqué: ANMC XLV, 543, February 17, 1772. C. Last will and testament of Tocqué’s widow, Marie Catherine Pauline Nattier Tocqué: ANMC

- CXIII, 477, March 27, 1775. D. Postmortem inventory of the estate of Tocqué's widow, Marie Catherine Pauline Nattier Tocqué: ANMC CXIII, 477, April 10, 1775. E. Deed of liquidation of Louis Tocqué's property: ANMC XLV, 562, October 7, 1776.
5. Tocqué's reception pieces represent the history painter Louis Galloche (Musée du Louvre, Paris, 8168; Doria 1929, p. 110, no. 118, fig. 53) and the sculptor Jean Louis Lemoyne (Louvre, 8171; *ibid.*, p. 117, no. 169, fig. 33). His portrait of the Dauphin is also in the Louvre (8174; *ibid.*, pp. 102–3, no. 71, fig. 5).
Louis Tocqué delivered a lecture on portrait painting at the Paris Académie on March 7, 1750; de Montaiglon 1875–92, vol. 6, 1745–1755 (1885), p. 199. The speech was reread by Charles Nicolas Cochin on April 9, 1763; *ibid.*, vol. 7, 1756–1768 (1886), p. 217.
 6. Tocqué's portrait of the empress, signed and dated 1758, is in the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg (Doria 1929, pp. 106–7, no. 91, fig. 88).
 7. Among Tocqué's works in Denmark are pendant standing portraits of King Frederick V and his second wife, Queen Juliane Marie, now in Christian VII's Palace at Amalienborg, Copenhagen (*ibid.*, p. 109, no. 110, fig. 6, and p. 114, no. 147, fig. 7).
 8. Doria 1929, p. 128, no. 242, fig. 85.
 9. *Ibid.*, ill. facing title page.
 10. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
 11. ANMC XLV, 534, May 23, 1768. Among the witnesses were the still-life painter Claude François Desportes; Marie Madeleine Bérain, daughter of the ornamentalist; and Jacques Bailly, keeper of the king's paintings. Doria (1929, p. 87) published only the religious wedding certificate.
 12. Doria 1929, p. 25.
 13. *Ibid.*, pp. 117–18, no. 173, fig. 34.
 14. This work seems to have been much admired when it was exhibited at the Salon in 1753 (*ibid.*, pp. 61–62). The painting is at the Louvre (RF1480; *ibid.*, p. 102, no. 68, fig. 101).
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
 16. The dowry was noted in the marriage contract (ANMC XLV, 534, May 23, 1768). The sums of the various contracts appear in the documents in the postmortem inventory (ANMC XLV, 543, February 17, 1772) and in the deed of liquidation of the painter's property (ANMC XLV, 562, October 7, 1776).
 17. The portrait by Van Dyck had been bequeathed to him by the miniaturist and engraver Jean Baptiste Massé (1687–1767). See Campardon 1880, p. 141.
 18. The portrait of Louis Phélypeaux de La Vrillière, comte de Saint-Florentin, is in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Marseilles (Doria 1929, pp. 135–36, no. 292, fig. 96).
 19. "Portrait de la reine gravé d'après Monsieur Tocqué," "Portrait de Monsieur Massé gravé d'après Monsieur Tocqué," and "Portrait de l'Impératrice de Russie"; Postmortem inventory, ANMC XLV, 543, February 17, 1772. Painted in 1738–40, the portrait of Marie Leszczyńska, queen of Louis XV, was among Tocqué's most important official commissions (Louvre, 8177; Doria 1929, pp. 121–22, no. 210, fig. 15); it was engraved by Jean Daullé. That of Massé was engraved by Jean Georges Wille (*ibid.*, p. 125, no. 224, fig. 42). The painter of the portrait of the empress of Russia (see note 6 above) was unnamed, but it too was doubtless by Tocqué; it was engraved by Georges Frédéric Schmidt (*ibid.*, pp. 106–7, no. 91).
 20. ANMC XLV, 543, February 17, 1772: "quatre portraits gravés d'après Monsieur Tocqué." The portrait of the marquis de Marigny (Château de Versailles, MV 3776; Doria 1929, pp. 123–24, no. 219, fig. 95) was engraved by Wille and that of Count Kirill Razumovsky (Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow; *ibid.*, p. 133, no. 278, fig. 91) by Schmidt. Count Mikhail Vorontsov's portrait is known only from Schmidt's engraving (*ibid.*, p. 142, no. 338, fig. 77).
 21. ANMC CXIII, 477, April 10, 1775.
 22. ANMC XLV, 543, February 17, 1772: "trois tableaux peints sur toile représentant l'un M[onsieur] Nattier père de la dite d[ame] Tocqué, l'autre le d[it] S[ieu]r Tocqué, le troisième la d[ite] d[ame] Tocqué dans leurs bordures de bois sculpté doré et . . . deux bustes en terre cuite représentant les d[ites] d[ame] Tocqué et Martinot."
 23. Doria (1929, p. 128) cited a letter written by Adrien Raffard, a descendant of Nattier's through the Goupil family: "Jusqu'en 1924, nous avons conservé dans l'indivision un portrait inachevé de Nattier par Tocqué, probablement une ébauche du tableau de Copenhague" (Until 1924, we had joint ownership of an unfinished portrait of Nattier by Tocqué, probably an oil sketch for the painting in Copenhagen).
 24. ANMC XLV, 543, February 17, 1772: "deux tableaux peints sur toile représentant les père et mère de la d[ite] V[eu]ve Tocqué." In the same room were "deux petits tableaux peints en pastel représentant les frères et sœur de la d[ite] D[ame] Tocqué dans leurs bordures et cadres" (two small pictures done in pastel representing the brothers and sister of s[ai]d L[ad]y Tocqué in their frames); *ibid.*
 25. ANMC CXIII, 477, March 27, 1775, and ANMC CXIII, 477, April 10, 1775.
 26. *Ibid.*, March 27, 1775: "buste en terre cuite de la main du célèbre M. Le Moyne." Thus one of the busts mentioned in the painter's inventory (ANMC XLV, 543, February 17, 1772) was indeed by Jean Baptiste Lemoyne.
 27. ANMC CXIII, 477, March 27, 1775: "le portrait de [son] père dans sa bordure dorée original de la main de [son] mari dont la tête est achevée mais dont le reste du buste n'est qu'ébauché."
 28. *Ibid.*, April 10, 1775: "un tableau peint sur toile représentant le d[it] S[ieu]r Nattier dont les vêtements ne sont qu'ébauchés dans sa bordure de bois dorée, le dit portrait cité pour mémoire attendu sa nature mais la bordure est ici prise huit livres."

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