

# An Exceptional Allegorical Portrait by Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne

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THE ABILITY to seize on something more than a mere likeness is a basic premise of any truly memorable portrait. Since its conception, the bust of Mlle de Malboissière by Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne (Figure 1), together with her writings, was intended to “retrace the sensibilities and spirit” of someone greatly loved and admired and, according to the wishes of her family and friends, to keep her memory alive “eternally.”<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the passage of time and the misconception of art history have effectively defeated those purposes.

For more than six decades the brief account of the bust in Louis Réau’s 1927 monograph of the Lemoyne family of sculptors has remained unchallenged and was thought to be free of any inaccuracies.<sup>2</sup> In fact, Réau’s information about the sitter and the bust is not only inadequate but also largely incorrect. According to Réau, this is the image of a doubly pathetic figure. Mlle de Malboissière, the intelligent and highly cultivated daughter of the wealthy financier Jean-Antoine Randon, seigneur de Malboissière, was just embarking on the third decade of her life when she became engaged to Jean-Louis Dutartre. Fate, however, decreed otherwise, for shortly thereafter Jean-Louis became ill with the measles and died. At this point, Réau would have the reader imagine, M. Dutartre senior suggested to Geneviève that she sit for her portrait to the sculptor Lemoyne in order to distract herself from her grief. In other words, Réau conjures the image of an elegiac portrait of the fiancée in mourning. His version concludes with Geneviève also dying of the measles before Lemoyne had time to complete her effigy.

Réau gives as his primary reference a 1925 book by the comte de Luppé entitled *Lettres de Geneviève de Malboissière à Adélaïde Méliande 1761–1766*.<sup>3</sup> It is important to bear in mind that Réau cites this work

because, upon comparing his account to the information in Luppé’s volume, one realizes that Lemoyne’s biographer has altered most of the facts regarding the sitter and her portrait. Réau’s first factual manipulation concerns the young woman’s death, the second with the commission of her bust.

Luppé’s book is not the earliest work to publish Mlle de Malboissière’s letters; the entire collection was compiled in 1866 by the grandson of Adélaïde Méliande, the marquis de La Grange, in a volume entitled *Laurette de Malboissière: Lettres d’une fille du temps de Louis XV (1761–1766), publiées d’après les originaux et précédées d’une notice historique*.<sup>4</sup> The comte de Luppé acknowledges that La Grange has “done almost all the work, including the notes, except for the introduction.”<sup>5</sup> However, he points out that the marquis “arbitrarily gave Mlle de Malboissière the name of ‘Laurette,’ [a name] she is mostly known by, but which is not one of her given names.”<sup>6</sup> The comte de Luppé also indicates that the earlier publication, printed in an edition of only fifteen hundred copies, was difficult to obtain and thus almost unknown and never cited in bibliographies. This fact makes Luppé’s book not only a more easily accessible source on Mlle de Malboissière but also one that offers much more information.

A number of irrefutable facts in Luppé’s book contradict Réau’s version recounted above. First, we learn that the correspondence between the two friends stops at the end of July 1766<sup>7</sup> and that Geneviève’s last letters actually describe the course of her illness.<sup>8</sup> Second, the text from the parish register of Saint-Jean-en-Grève, Paris, clearly states that she died on August 22, 1766.<sup>9</sup> Finally, at the end of August 1766 a series of letters is sent to the marquise de La Grange (née Adélaïde Méliande) by various persons expressing their sympathy for her loss.<sup>10</sup> These include letters by the elder M. Dutartre and a short note by Geneviève’s mother, the grief-stricken Mme de Malboissière, who attempts to con-

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Figure 1. Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne (1704–1778), *Mademoiselle Geneviève Randon de Malboissière*, 1768. Marble, h. 80.2 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Jules Bache Collection, 1949, 49.7.73



Figure 2. Detail of the back cavity of the bust in Figure 1

sole Adélaïde by telling her that she would regard her henceforth as her own daughter.

Something that may help illuminate Réau's decision to give 1768 as the date of Mlle de Malboissière's death is the inscription on the work itself. The marble bust is inscribed on the upper rim of the back excavation "Mademoiselle Gen. Françoise de Malbossière [*sic*] née le 22 dec. 1746, decedée le 22 aoust, 1768" (Figure 2). On the lower rim it is signed and dated "par J.-B. Lemoyne 1768." Thus the artist signed and dated the portrait on the lower rim in his customary manner—"par J.-B. Lemoyne" and the date—a way of signing and dating that appears on almost every one of his busts.<sup>11</sup> The only other piece that bears the additional information of the sitter's name and her birth and death dates is that of the actress Mlle Dangeville. It is inscribed "Marie-Anne Botot Dangeville, née en 1714, morte le 29 février 1796." Mlle Dangeville's bust was completed about 1761 and exhibited at the Salon ten years later, while she was still alive. The sculptor could not therefore have carved the date of her death himself, either by the time that he finished it or by 1771. The additional information about her death must have been added not only after she died but also after Lemoyne's death in 1778. Similarly, the name and birth and death dates of Mlle de Malboissière must have been added considerably later by someone who confused her death date with the date when the sculptor finished the piece and also misspelled her name. As for Réau, he may have decided to follow the date of the bust's inscription

without checking its accuracy against the biographical data in Luppé's book.

As mentioned above, Réau wrote that M. Dutartre, Mlle de Malboissière's father-in-law-to-be, suggested that she have her portrait carved by Lemoyne during her period of bereavement for his son but that she too died before it was finished. The facts are, once again, quite otherwise. The circumstances of the commission can be securely established through the evidence provided in Luppé's volume. Among the letters Adélaïde received after her friend's death, and which appear in this collection, are a number by M. Dutartre senior. In one such letter, written on August 29, 1766, only a week after Mlle de Malboissière's death, he writes, referring to Mme de Malboissière's grief, that he "will work on the bust of that poor mother's dear daughter."<sup>12</sup> In addition, a slightly later note by M. Dutartre to the marquise de La Grange bears a postscript stating that "Vanloo [*sic*] finished yesterday, and Lemoyne is going to begin immediately."<sup>13</sup> Although it is not known what this sentence refers to, as Louis-Michel van Loo (1707–1771) had already delivered his portrait of Geneviève (Figure 3) in March 1766,<sup>14</sup> one may suppose that he may have been called upon to add some final touches or to incorporate the date of her death. In any case, this postscript lends support to the comte de Luppé's contention that Lemoyne worked "d'après le tableau de Van Loo."<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, in comparing the two portraits, one is struck by their similarities. Despite the fact that van Loo portrayed the sitter wearing a crown and holding a scepter, and possibly a dagger or sword,<sup>16</sup> and Lemoyne adorned her only with flowers, the head of the sitter in the painting is exactly like the head of the bust (Figure 4). This is especially noticeable in the young lady's particular expression, the precise turn of her head, her hairstyle, the slight ridge at the top of her nose, and the almost imperceptible double chin. Had the Lemoyne bust been commissioned during Mlle de Malboissière's lifetime, it would be difficult to explain why she did not mention this important event in her correspondence to Adélaïde Méliande. Her letters to this friend had conveyed minute details of her daily activities and had related the progress of the van Loo portrait with great consistency. But during her last couple of months, Geneviève limited her news to details of ill health and temporary recoveries. Furthermore, during the month of June, her letters were not mailed from Paris but from the château de



Figure 3. Louis-Michel van Loo (1707–1771), *Geneviève de Malboissière as Melpomene*, 1765. Oil on canvas. Paris, Cailleux Collection (photo: Cailleux Collection)



Figure 4. Three-quarter view of the bust in Figure 1

Fontenay-le-Vicomte, where she was spending some time, possibly to improve her health. No mention was made in her correspondence of the sculptor's visiting her in the country, as might be expected, since Lemoyne preferred to sketch his models directly in wax or clay.

What is definitely known about the bust's creation comes from another undated note written by M. Dutartre to the marquise de La Grange at almost the same time. In this note he mentions that he had asked Lemoyne to be at his Louvre atelier on Friday at four o'clock and that the sculptor sent him the "enclosed reply."<sup>17</sup> In the reply, which is reproduced in Luppé's book,<sup>18</sup> Lemoyne writes that he will be in his studio at the appointed day and time, but he regrets not being able to show M. Dutartre anything more than the plaster cast of the model, as he has sent the terracotta to the kiln. The sculpture seems, therefore, to have been commissioned after Mlle de Malboissière's death, most probably by M. Dutartre for the purpose of presenting it to Mme de Malboissière. This thoughtful gift would also have included her daughter's letters, literary works,

and translations, which were still in the possession of the marquise de La Grange. As indicated above, in his letter of August 29 to the marquise, M. Dutartre specified that these collected writings of Mlle de Malboissière should serve to recall the "sensibilities and spirit" of someone whom they both admired and were intended to ensure that her memory live on forever.<sup>19</sup>

Lemoyne was the sculptor of French society par excellence, producing well over one hundred busts. These include several portraits of King Louis XV, the royal family, and courtiers, as well as various prominent and learned persons.<sup>20</sup> From his youth, Lemoyne associated the principles and effects of painting with those of sculpture, and he was especially influenced by the painters François de Troy (1645–1730) and Nicolas Largillière (1656–1746). Later on in his career Lemoyne also observed the stylistic devices and iconography used by fashionable portrait painters; his own style resembled closely that of Maurice Quentin de la Tour (1704–1788). As Lemoyne was one of the earliest expo-



Figure 5. Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, *La Comtesse d'Egmont*, 1767. Terracotta, h. 73 cm. Stockholm, Statens Konstmuseer (photo: Statens Konstmuseer)

nents of female portraiture in sculpture, he frequently drew inspiration from contemporary painting depicting women according to stylish iconographic dictates. He continued to have close professional and personal ties to such painters as Noël-Nicolas Coppel (1690–1734) and Quentin de la Tour. As painting played the preeminent role in female fashionable portraiture, Lemoyne's equally stylish busts can best find parallels in painting. Consequently, working from Michel van Loo's portrait of Mlle de Malboissière must have been a familiar procedure for him. It would have suited both his method of sculpting in a "painterly" style and his custom of depicting society ladies in accordance with the way that painters did.

Unlike contemporary painters, however, Lemoyne did not usually do allegorical portraits.<sup>21</sup> Within the sculptor's oeuvre this category is limited to four examples. They include Mme de Pompadour as Pomona in *Vertumne et Pomone*, Mme Adélaïde as Minerva, and the actresses Mlle Dangeville as *Thalia* and Mlle Clairon as *Melpomene Invoking Apollo*.<sup>22</sup> These few instances can, then, be grouped

under the general term of "theatrical portraits." Lemoyne, like the majority of artists of the period, portrayed the subjects in their most characteristic role or as symbols of drama.<sup>23</sup> Thus, Mme de Pompadour was depicted as she appeared in 1749 at the Versailles Petits Appartements, playing opposite the king in a role that conflated reality and mythology.<sup>24</sup> The royal Mme Adélaïde was represented wearing a helmet à l'antique, emulating her favorite goddess.<sup>25</sup> The famous comedienne Mlle Dangeville was conceived as a symbol of Comedy by placing an ivy crown on her hair and attaching the smiling mask of *Thalia* on her shoulder.<sup>26</sup> Mlle Clairon, on the other hand, was crowned with laurel and was depicted raising her eyes heavenward, a distinctive expression she often employed in that role.<sup>27</sup>

It is to this category of allegorical theatrical portraits that the Metropolitan's bust seems to belong. The clue to its hidden meaning is to be found in the flowers that adorn the sitter. Mlle de Malboissière offers the viewer a three-quarter profile, her left eyebrow slightly raised as she gazes dreamily into the distance. On her lips is sketched the faintest of enigmatic smiles, betraying a kind of slightly amused detachment that was characteristic of fashionable *femmes d'esprit*. It almost seems as if she takes pride in keeping the full knowledge of her identity a closely guarded secret. A cloud of drapery circles her bust, and a garland of roses and rose laurel hangs loosely over her neck and shoulders, forming a floral parure of sorts, with the three roses on the top of her head. The presence of flowers may, of course, be completely incidental, used simply as accessories befitting a young woman, especially as Lemoyne frequently employed flowers for that purpose. In his 1767 terracotta bust of the *Comtesse d'Egmont* (Figure 5), for example, the celebrated beauty wears a garland of roses *en sautoir*, crosswise over her shoulder.<sup>28</sup> Alternately, Lemoyne favored a crown of roses, as in his signed and dated bust of an unknown *Young Woman* (Figure 6).<sup>29</sup> Similarly, roses and other flowers worn *en sautoir* and on top of the head are often seen in contemporary paintings of fashionable ladies, as in Jean-Marc Nattier's (1685–1766) *Marquise d'Antin* playing with her parrot (Figure 7)<sup>30</sup> and in a number of François Boucher's (1703–1770) well-known portraits, such as the 1746 portrait sometimes identified as *Mme Bergeret*<sup>31</sup> and *Mme de Pompadour* of 1756.<sup>32</sup>

Otherwise, flowers may have a symbolic meaning, since the mythological portrait, an eighteenth-century revival of the earlier *portrait déguisé*, was the





Figure 6. Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, *Bust of Young Woman*, 1774. Marble. Paris, Institut de France-Musée Jacquemart-André (photo: Bulloz)

type most in vogue at the time.<sup>33</sup> The renewed interest in mythology gave rise both to a large number of these paintings and to portraits in which the sitter was depicted as a mythological figure.<sup>34</sup> Works such as these repeatedly reflect an iconographic ambiguity, as if art were inventing, or extrapolating, from mythology. This flexible interpretation of mythology led, especially in portraiture, to the depiction of the subject in a role vaguely reminiscent of or loosely associated with a given mythological or historical character. Thus, one popular figure, Flora (Figure 8), could be practically indistinguishable, in terms of costume and accessories, from Hebe (Figure 9), another fashionable character. Indeed, Mlle de Malboissière could have been portrayed as Flora or as Hebe, the goddess of youth, since she died so young, “à la fleur de son âge.” On the other hand, flowers are also associated with the brevity of life, another possible explanation for representing her so conspicuously bedecked with them shortly after her death. Yet another possibility may be a reference to Virtue and Chastity. The prototype for the figure of Chastity is Tuccia (or Tuscia), the vestal virgin of ancient Rome, whose sacred fire

was tended by six young vestal virgins. In eighteenth-century portraiture, this was an extremely popular guise, Jean Raoux being the foremost “vestal painter.” However, in addition to flowers in their hair, vestal virgins usually wore a veil.<sup>35</sup> In the 1737 Salon Lemoyne exhibited a terracotta model of a “head of a vestal virgin crowned with flowers.”<sup>36</sup> Thus, the artist could have selected this symbol of chastity to represent a young woman who died unmarried.

If we lacked biographical information on the sitter, we might decide to attribute one of the above roles to the bust of Mlle de Malboissière. Fortunately, we need not speculate, for our knowledge of her is quite well informed. Besides the above-mentioned collection of letters, another book by the comte de Luppé survives, entitled *Les jeunes filles à la fin du XVIII siècle*.<sup>37</sup> According to Luppé, Mlle de Malboissière was extremely accomplished and a true intellectual. Her tutors were among the best of their time.<sup>38</sup> Fluent in Greek, Latin, English, German, and Italian from about the age of fifteen, she translated works of literature and poetry and often wrote to her friends in English or Italian.<sup>39</sup>



Figure 7. Jean-Marc Nattier (1685–1766), *The Marquise d'Antin*, Salon of 1738. Oil on canvas, 118 x 96 cm. Paris, Institut de France-Musée Jacquemart-André (photo: Bulloz)



Figure 8. Noel-Nicolas Coppel (1690–1734), *Madame de Bourbon-Conti as Flora?*, 1731. Oil on canvas, 138.1 x 106.7 cm. Sarasota, Florida, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art (photo: The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art)

Her true passion, however, was the theater. Her mother had retained a private box for her at the Comédie Française, which Geneviève began to attend at the age of five.<sup>40</sup> This love for the theater was further given free rein in the country, where she acted in small plays of her own composition, both at her family's château d'Hannencourt and at her fiancé's château de Bourdonné.<sup>41</sup> The eighteenth century held theater in the highest esteem, and, during the first decades, acting provided a kind of social "passkey" so that most young people enjoyed trying it. Practically everyone acted, and all the nobility, including the king, owned a private theater; the theater was, above all, a social activity.<sup>42</sup>

As van Loo's portrait of her attests, Mlle de Malboissière was a prolific writer, mainly of short plays.<sup>43</sup> One of these pieces was the one-act pastoral *Daphnis et Laurette*, written in August 1765 and based on Salomon Gessner's *Daphnis*.<sup>44</sup> Gessner's 1754 *Daphnis* was a poetic pastoral novel that was inspired in turn by the classical model of *Daphnis*

and *Chloe* by Longus. Apparently, Gessner's tale of love between the idealized figures of the shepherd Daphnis and the shepherdess Phillis sparked a large number of French imitations.<sup>45</sup> But it is important to note that whereas "Daphnis" was certainly a traditional literary figure, "Laurette" seems to have been a character invented by Mlle de Malboissière. A month after the work's completion, in September, Mlle de Malboissière and her fiancé performed the title roles of this play in an amateur château production.<sup>46</sup> Following that, she habitually styled herself in her correspondence under the nom de plume "Laurette," and she referred to her fiancé as "Daphnis" and as "my shepherd."<sup>47</sup> Thus, we see that the title of the marquis de La Grange's 1866 book, designating Mlle de Malboissière as "Laurette de Malboissière," far from being as arbitrary as Luppé thought,<sup>48</sup> reflects the marquis's more direct and intimate acquaintance, most probably via the reminiscences of his grandmother.

Tragically, on October 20, 1765, within a month of acting in *Daphnis et Laurette*, her fiancé died of the measles.<sup>49</sup> Beginning with the letter dated October 28, 1765, Geneviève appears heartbroken



Figure 9. Jean-Marc Nattier, *The Duchess of Chartres as Hebe*, Salon of 1745. Oil on canvas, 131 x 105 cm. Stockholm, Statens Konstmuseer (photo: Statens Konstmuseer)

over the death of “poor Daphnis.” She writes: “If it is true that our soul does not perish with us, it is possible that death does not deprive us of every sensibility, [and] this Daphnis whom we pity will taste the most pure happiness. . . . Never, Daphnis, no, never will you be erased from my memory; you will always be my guardian angel, my guide in [what is] good.” More poignantly, she recalls that, after the end of their performance and before departing from the château, Jean-Louis Dutartre’s uncle invited them to leave their shepherds’ outfits, their crooks, and all their other accessories behind, saying, “Daphnis and Laurette, you must keep all these for next spring.”<sup>50</sup> It becomes apparent then that immediately after the presentation of Geneviève’s pastoral play, the family and friends of the two young actors began to identify them with their respective stage characters.

Although Mlle de Malboissière was not a professional, she was a dedicated and serious amateur playwright and actress. Given that Lemoyne’s only other allegorical sculptures were of female performers, one may be justified in proposing that the Metropolitan’s bust was conceived as such an allegorical portrait and specifically as one depicting Mlle de Malboissière in the role of Laurette. As mentioned, M. Dutartre senior was directly involved in the bust’s execution and he intended to present it, along with examples of Mlle de Malboissière’s writings, to her mother.<sup>51</sup> Since M. Dutartre’s son had just died of the same illness that claimed Mlle de Malboissière’s life, what could be more natural than his requesting Lemoyne to portray the young woman in a guise emblematic both of herself and of her relationship with his son and one that would remind the two families of their respective children? By adorning her with flowers, Lemoyne encapsulated with simple mastery several facts one could associate with the sitter: her youth and chastity, her untimely death, and her favorite role of the shepherdess Laurette. The lack of other props, such as the shepherd’s crook, can be explained by the period’s general tendency to portray sitters in a manner that made only minimal reference to the assumed mythological or literary character (Figures 8, 9). Furthermore, the association with Laurette would reinforce Mlle de Malboissière’s link with M. Dutartre’s son, the unfortunate Daphnis. And in so doing the bust would be quite in keeping with the play on words that the playwright herself invented through the names of Daphnis and Laurette, which are actually synonymous.<sup>52</sup> Thus, besides roses and



Figure 10. Detail of the bust in Figure 1

berries, one can distinguish both the “double” and “simple” *laurier-rose* (or *laurelle*), the common rose laurel with pointed leaves, and either simple blossoms of five petals or double ones with more petals (Figure 10). The sculptor has repeatedly depicted the flower quite accurately, albeit in a somewhat stylized form.<sup>53</sup> No other Lemoyne bust bears this type of flower and leaf, and its presence here is significant: it serves to strengthen the impression that Mlle de Malboissière is portrayed as Laurette, the name itself indicating a likely corruption of *laurelle*.

Finally, taking the psychological implications of this portrait a step further, it may also be viewed in conjunction with *portraits déguisés*. Mlle de Malboissière may then be seen as a most fashionable figure, a shepherdess in the sense of eighteenth-century pastoral stories, plays, and paintings, just as *Daphnis et Laurette* was a pastoral play, in which the costumed fiancés played the roles of lover-shepherds. It is interesting to read that after playing in *Daphnis et Laurette*, Mlle de Malboissière was so happy that she “ate and slept like a real Laurette, like the inhabitant of a village.”<sup>54</sup>

Pastorals were very popular, the term “pastorale” referring to idealized depictions, not simply of the life of shepherds but of their alleged amorous activities.<sup>55</sup> This concept of lover-shepherds was nothing new in poetry or on the stage. Since the previous century, the favorite reading material of the précieux, and even of later generations of aristocrats,



consisted of pastoral and romantic novels, poetry, and plays, as, for instance, *L'Astrée* by Honoré d'Urfé (1607–1619) and *La Guirlande de Julie* by Montausier (1641).<sup>56</sup> The spirit that produced the *Guirlande* also led to the introduction of flowers in various forms of portraiture in the seventeenth century. A most telling example is the portrait by Claude Deruet, painted between 1641 and 1645, of Julie d'Angennes, who is elegantly dressed but holds a shepherd's crook, has a wreath of mixed flowers on her lap, and is surrounded by symbols of innocence, such as the rose, lambs, and the temple of vestal virgins in the background.<sup>57</sup> In the eighteenth century not only did the passion for pastoral literature continue but it also fired the imagination of such painters as Boucher and Lancret. Boucher, in particular, was called the “Fontenelle of painting,” for in his pastorals he followed that author's recommendations in presenting “the simplicity of pastoral love, without the poverty of peasant existence.”<sup>58</sup> His most immediate inspiration, however, came from the elegantly clad characters in the opéras comiques of his friend Favart.<sup>59</sup> Examples abound: his *Pasteur galant*,<sup>60</sup> *Charmes de la vie champêtre*,<sup>61</sup> *Printemps* (Figure 11),<sup>62</sup> and *L'École d'Amour*<sup>63</sup> all depict gracefully posed idealized types of lover-

shepherds and shepherdesses dressed in finery and surrounded by flowers.

It is in the context of the period's vogue for the pastoral ideal, in both art and literature, and within the prevailing preference for allegorical portraits that the bust of Mlle de Malboissière is best seen. In view of the fact that the sitter's play *Daphnis et Laurette* was a pastorelle and that she was romantically involved with her own “pasteur galant,” it is possible to interpret Lemoyne's portrait as representing Mlle de Malboissière in the guise of Laurette. In that case, the rare occurrence of this type of portrait within the sculptor's oeuvre heightens the significance of the Museum's bust.

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Figure 11. François Boucher (1703–1770), *Printemps*, 1755. Oil on canvas, 55 x 71 cm. New York, The Frick Collection (photo: The Frick Collection)

## NOTES

1. Comte de Luppé, *Lettres de Geneviève de Malboissière à Adélaïde Méliande (1761–1766)* (Paris, 1925) p. 340.

2. Louis Réau, *Une Dynastie de sculpteurs au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: Les Lemoyne* (Paris, 1927) pp. 98, 149, no. 105.

3. Ibid., p. 98.

4. The work is cited and commented upon by the comte de Luppé. See Luppé, *Lettres*, pp. i–iv.

5. The introduction was apparently written by the marquise de La Grange, the marquis's wife.

6. Luppé, *Lettres*, p. ii.

7. Ibid., pp. 333–334 and n. 4.

8. Ibid., pp. 325–334.

9. Ibid., pp. vii–viii and n. 5.

10. Ibid., pp. 335–346.

11. I have arrived at this conclusion by comparing all the Lemoyne bust inscriptions as they appear in Réau's book. A few exceptions are inscribed "Par JB Lemoyne" and have no date. Only rarely is there a piece where the name of the sitter is followed by Lemoyne's signature, as, for example, in "René-Charles de Maupeou, chancelier de France. J-B L. fecit 1768" and "M. Ange-Jacques Gabriel Premier Architecte du Roi par J-B L."

12. Luppé, *Lettres*, p. 340.

13. Ibid., p. 343.

14. Van Loo's portrait of Mlle de Malboissière depicts her as Melpomene, Muse of Tragedy (the portrait is now in Paris, Cailleux Collection). One is able to follow the progress of this portrait in her correspondence from July 29, 1765, when she had her first sitting at the painter's atelier, to March 1766, when it was delivered (see Luppé, *Lettres*, pp. 268–271, 274, 319). Mlle de Malboissière's letters reveal that it was her mother's idea to have her represented as a "figure of character," the painter having chosen this particular Muse himself. At the time, van Loo was also painting Mme de Malboissière as Thalia, Muse of Comedy (see Luppé, *Lettres*, p. 274).

15. Ibid., p. 349.

16. In van Loo's portrait Mlle de Malboissière is represented with these attributes of Melpomene, which were commonly accepted at the time (see James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* [London, 1974] p. 217). However, she wears a contemporary gown and is magnificently bedecked in rows of pearls. Wearing rows of pearls around the neck or looped around the corsage was very fashionable. In fact, Louis-Michel van Loo had similarly portrayed a number of ladies wearing pearls and tufts of feathers in their hair (see, for example, Hippolyte Gautier, "Un portrait de femme par L. M. Van Loo," *Les Arts* [Nov. 1911] pp. 30–32). One such portrait was of his own daughter dressed in floating draperies and holding a mask, likewise evoking a Muse (Baltimore Museum of Art).

17. Luppé, *Lettres*, pp. 345–346.

18. Ibid., p. 346 and n. 1.

19. Ibid., p. 340.

20. See Réau, *Les Lemoyne*, pp. 144–155. Réau enumerates 117 securely attributable portraits in existence at the time of his writing, 6 that may possibly be by Lemoyne, and 31 lost busts.

21. See van Loo's portrait of Mlle de Malboissière as Melpomene.

22. *Vertumne et Pomone*, 1760, Louvre; *Mme Adélaïde as Minerva*, n.d., Paris, formerly coll. Rodolphe Kann; *Mlle Dangeville as Thalia*, 1761, Salon of 1771, Comédie Française; *Mlle Clairon as Melpomene Invoking Apollo*, 1761, Salon of 1761, Comédie Française.

23. Michèle Beaulieu, "Le théâtre et la sculpture française au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Le Jardin des Arts* 15 (Jan. 1956) p. 170.

24. I.e., the *amours* of Louis XV with the mythological loves of Jupiter (see *Louis XV: Un moment de perfection de l'art français* [Paris, 1974] p. 80, ill. p. 55, fig. 76).

25. Réau wonders whether the terracotta bust of *Mme Adélaïde as Minerva* was a reference to Rubens's *Marie de Médici* or whether it was influenced by Nattier's mythological portraits. In either case, he writes that it was the favorite incarnation of Mme Adélaïde, who, unable to play Venus, had appropriated the goddess of wisdom (see Réau, *Les Lemoyne*, pp. 87–88, 146, no. 69, fig. 132). For our purposes, this piece, by virtue of its theatrical implications, can be considered as a type of theatrical portrait.

26. Réau, *Les Lemoyne*, pl. LXVI, fig. 103, no. 139.

27. Ibid., pl. LXVII, fig. 104, no. 137.

28. Ibid., pl. XLVII, fig. 72, no. 90, Salons of 1769 and 1771 (Stockholm, Statens Konstmuseer).

29. Ibid., pl. LXX, fig. 109, no. 144, 1774 (Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André). It is presumed to be the portrait of the princesse de Polignac.

30. Salon of 1738 (Musée Jacquemart-André).

31. Washington, National Gallery of Art.

32. Munich, Alte Pinakothek.

33. As early as the 16th century it had been common practice in France to commission portraits representing the sitter in the character and dress of a figure from history or mythology, thereby raising the level of the portrait to the higher genre of historical painting. Having gone out of fashion before 1600, the style was revived in the first half of the 17th century by the précieux (see Anthony Blunt, "The Précieux and French Art," in *Essays in Memory of Fritz Saxl*, D. J. Gordon, ed. [London, 1957] pp. 326–338). It then continued to flourish during the reign of Louis XIV, when it became very widespread with the works of such artists as Mignard and Noret (see, for example, in the 17th century, Claude Deruet's *Julie d'Angennes as the Shepherdess Astrée*, from the play "The Guirlande," 1641–45, and Mignard's *Mme de Montespan as Diana*, 1670–78, and *Marquise de Seignelay as Thétis*, 1691).

34. See Largillière's *Mme de Gueidan as Flora*, 1730, Raoux's *Françoise Pedrigeon*, *Mme E. P. Boucher, the King's Secretary*, as well as several paintings by Nattier.

35. *Vestals*, in the Braunschweig Museum, is such a painting by Raoux (illus. in Andor Pigler, *Barokkthemen, eine Auswahl von Verzeichnissen zur Ikonographie des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* [Budapest,

1974] III, p. 301, pl. 326), as is the portrait of an *Unknown Lady as a Vestal* by Louis-René Vialy (1756, Aix-en-Provence Museum).

36. This was one of the first two pieces exhibited by Lemoyne at the Salon as agréé, but it has disappeared (see Réau, *Les Lemoyne*, pp. 121, 153 no. 164, 155 no. 56).

37. Paris, 1925.

38. Her tutors were Jacques Audierne, Bartolommeo-Antonio Bertera, Mather Flint, Michael Huber, and Jacques-Christophe Valmont de Bomare (see Luppé, *Lettres*, pp. xxiv–xxv).

39. See *ibid.*, pp. xxxv, 176–178, 347–348, as well as *idem*, *Jeunes filles*, pp. 109, 157–160, 169.

40. Luppé, *Lettres*, pp. 17, 176–178, 203, 285, and *idem*, *Jeunes filles*, pp. 109, 121, 133.

41. Luppé, *Lettres*, pp. 148–155, 268–271, 282–283, and *idem*, *Jeunes filles*, p. 133.

42. Marian Hobson, *The Object of Art: The Theory of Illusion in Eighteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, 1982) p. 139.

43. Most of her thirty-two plays have not survived. For a complete list, see Luppé, *Lettres*, pp. 347–348.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 277–279, 282–283, 348. *Daphnis et Laurette* is among her lost works.

45. Initiated by Michael Huber (Bavarian author, professor, and translator of German literature into French, 1727–1804) and Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot (baron de l'Aulne, celebrated economist and intellectual, one of Huber's pupils, who became Louis XVI's finance minister, 1727–1781) in 1760, a veritable "cult" of Salomon Gessner (1730–1788) developed in France and lasted until the eve of the Revolution. During this time Gessner was allegedly more popular than any French classic, and even distinguished writers and poets drew inspiration from his books, which were often illustrated with his own etchings. It has been estimated that more than 150 French works were to some degree Gessner imitations, the Swiss author having managed to arouse, or renew, interest in pastoral or idyllic literature. Gessner's synthesis of Rococo sentimental moods with the contemporary taste for nature, charm, and virtue seemed to follow in the aesthetic set by the précieux, his idylls expressing perfectly the period's pre-Romantic sensibility. Most often, French imitators were drawn to his *Daphnis*, which was an apt vehicle for the portrayal of such emo-

tions and virtues (see John Hibberd, *Salomon Gessner, His Creative Achievement and Influence* [Cambridge, 1976] pp. 17–22, 30–31, 127–129, 132–133; and Paul Van Tieghem, *Le Prérromantisme* [Paris, 1929] pp. 207–301).

46. Luppé, *Lettres*, p. 283.

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 283, 289, 290, 292, 294, 297, 298.

48. *Ibid.*, p. ii.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 294–296.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 298.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 340.

52. That is, "daphne" and "laurel" are interchangeable terms for the same plant.

53. This bush, which is traditionally the symbol of victory and glory, is most prevalent in the Mediterranean region. (For illustrations and discussions, see, for example, *Larousse Grand Dictionnaire Encyclopédique* [Paris, 1984] VI, p. 6169, and *Larousse Grand Dictionnaire Universel du XIXe siècle* [Paris, 1982] X, pp. 256–258.)

54. Luppé, *Lettres*, p. 283.

55. Alastair Laing in MMA, *François Boucher, 1703–1770*, exh. cat. (New York, 1986) p. 175.

56. Blunt, "The Précieux," pp. 327, 336–337. The latter was a series of poems on individual flowers, contributed by all the poets who frequented the "chambre bleue," the famous salon at the hôtel of the marquise de Rambouillet. Between the poems, handwritten by Nicolas Jarry, were inserted paintings of each flower by Nicolas Robert. The work was presented to Julie d'Angennes, daughter of Mme de Rambouillet, by her suitor Montausier. (See also Robert Sabatier, *Histoire de la poésie française: La Poésie du XVIIe siècle* [Paris, 1975] III, pp. 119–123.)

57. Strasbourg, Musée des Beaux-Arts.

58. Laing, *Boucher*, p. 176.

59. *Ibid.*

60. Painted for the Hôtel Soubise, 1737.

61. Louvre, 1743.

62. New York, Frick Collection, 1755.

63. Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle, 1760.