

Valade, M. & Mme Faventines de Fontenille

NEIL JEFFARES



[Jean Valade](#)

Jean-Maurice FAVENTINES de Fontenille (1692–p.1755); et son épouse, née Marie Baudard de Sainte-James
Pastels on blue paper, 65x54.5 cm, oval

Each signed in on the backing sheet, “Peint par J. Valade 1766”

Private collection

PROVENANCE: The sitter’s niece, Clémence de Faventines, Mme Daudé d’Alzon; her daughter Marie, vicomtesse de Puységur; their granddaughter Marie, comtesse Robert Suarez d’Aulan; by descent; Monaco, Sotheby’s Old Master Paintings, 20 June 1987, Lot 393, reproduced; M. P. L., château du Castelet, Provence; Marseille, Hôtel des Ventes Prado Falque, S.C.P. Fleck-Raymond, 20 May 2000, Lot 184

EXHIBITIONS: Salon de 1767, no. 50 (“Etudes en Pastel des deux portraits du numéro précédent. Tableaux ovales en Pastel”); Poitiers 1993, nos. 40, 41

LITERATURE: René Crozet, “Notes sur le pastelliste Jean Valade”, *Bulletin de la Société de l’histoire de l’art français*, 1943 (1947), pp. 35–46, nos. 36^{bis}, 36^{ter}; Marc Sandoz, *Jean Valade, essai de catalogue*, manuscript, Louvre documentation, nos. 51, 52; Marie-Hélène Trope, *Jean Valade: Peintre ordinaire du Roi 1710–1787*, exhibition catalogue, Poitiers, 1993, nos. 40, 41, reproduced; *Gazette Drouot*, [13] May 2000, reproduced p. 170; Neil Jeffares, “Jean Valade’s portraits of the Faventines family”, *British journal for eighteenth century studies*, Autumn 2003, xxvi/2, pp. 217–250, reproduced p. 226; Neil Jeffares, “A l’ombre de La Tour : quelques pastellistes des deux Académies”, conférence, Colloque La Tour, Saint-Quentin, 22 October 2004; Jeffares 2006, p. 528, reproduced; Philippe & Nicole Baudard de Fontaine, *Ces messieurs Baudard de Sainte-James, trésoriers de la marine*, Paris, 2007, p. 21 reproduced; Laurent Puech, *Pierre Faventines, financier des Lumières*, Le Vigan, 2010, pp. 103, p. 196, reproduced

RELATED WORKS: (I) M. et Mme Faventine de Fontenille faisant de la musique, oil, 1.63x1.28, sd 176[], Salon de 1767, no. 49 (Maisons-Laffitte, formerly château d’Yville; on loan to musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen; Strasbourg, Gersaint, 17 November 1989, Lot 289; acquired by Caisse Nationale des Monuments Historique by preemption), Trope 36 reproduced; (II) copy in oil, 1.68x1.31, M. Suarez d’Aulan, Trope 37; M. de Fontenille: (III) pastel, 0.63x0.52 (famille d’Assas; Strasbourg, Gersaint, 17 November 1989, Lot 291), Trope 38, possibly pendant to Trope 5; Mme de Fontenille: (IV) pastel, sd 1765 (Paris, Drouot, 18 March 1987, Lot 6, reproduced) Trope 5; (V) pastel, sd 1768 (M. Veillard from 1940 to at least 1966) Trope 42

GENEALOGY: [Faventines](#); [Baudard](#)

THE FAVENTINES FAMILY originated in Le Vigan in the Languedoc.¹ Jacques Faventines's beginnings were as a wool merchant in this small cévenol town. The business prospered, and in 1704 Jacques was *contrôleur des greffes de l'hôtel-de-ville*. By the 1720s the family had moved into silk production (improving the techniques for rearing silkworms²), and their textile factory was the most important employer in the region. The eldest son Pierre Faventines (1695–1776)³ had wider ambitions, establishing a trading house, or merchant bank, in Lyon with his brother Jean; this expanded too rapidly, and went bankrupt in 1730. There were a number of other brothers:⁴ of François we know only that in 1720, he robbed his elder brother of “actions [in John Law's infamous *Compagnie d'Occident*] et autres effets considérables” of which he was unable to take advantage.⁵ Undeterred by these setbacks, Pierre found an alternative path to power and wealth, abandoning the textile business to his brothers and pursuing a purely financial route which was facilitated by his association with another local family, the Peyrencs. They set an example which Faventines echoed in many respects: both left the provinces for the capital, married within the wealthy bourgeoisie, acquired great riches from varied activities not open to the nobility and used their funds to acquire the land, titles and noble offices of the aristocracy they systematically displaced.

As was not unusual in Le Vigan, the Peyrenc and Faventines families were both divided by religion. Indeed, Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret has argued that the presence of both religions in the Languedoc created an environment which explains the extraordinary number of talented financiers who came from this region – names such as Crozat, Laborde, Grimod, Ogier, Castanier.⁶ At the end of the seventeenth century, there were strong pressures on Protestants to convert, including the confiscation of goods, although in Gard, the *intendant* confined himself to redistribution to Catholic members of the family (so that a certain François Faventines found his inheritance seized and allocated to the homonymous merchants in Le Vigan). These pressures led to widespread emigration, with routes to Geneva and Germany well established and professionally managed (for those who could afford the smugglers' services). The most detailed information however comes from the law cases, including that arising from the departure of four young friends, including a Roussy and a Faventines, to Lyon. Their parents hired a M. Poujol to pursue them, no expense spared, but subsequently refused to reimburse the detective's costs of 257 livres; Poujol was advised in his law suit to recover the monies by yet another relative, M^e

¹ This essay is a slightly expanded version of my 2003 article. Two major studies must be noted, which I have not acknowledged on each occasion where I have used material from their original sources. Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret, *Les Financiers de Languedoc au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 1970, includes an extensive study of the financial operations of this family based on the boxes of Faventines papers in the Archives départementales du Gard (“AD Gard”). Yves Durand, *Les Fermiers généraux au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 1971, studied the Faventines box T656 in the Archives nationales. Neither presents the full picture, and Chaussinand-Nogaret mentions only the Lavagnac version of the double portrait which was then believed to be by Carle van Loo. In addition to the references below, other sources of information about this family include Père Anselme, *Historique Généalogique et chronologique de la Maison Royale de France, des Pairs, grands officiers de la Couronne, Chevaliers, Commandeurs et Officiers de l'ordre du Saint-Esprit*, tom. 9^e, par M. Pol Potier de Courcy, Paris, Firmin-Didot, 1879; Edmond Bouvy, *Vie du père d'Alzon*, Paris, 1922; Thierry Claeys, *Dictionnaire biographique des financiers en France au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 2009, I, p. 841–43 Emmanuel Gay, in *Cévenol*, 29 January 1927; Jehan et al., *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, XLVI, 842; XLVII, 21, 69, 347; XLVIII, 294, 357; Fr. Alex Aubert de La Chesnaye des Bois et Badier, *Dictionnaire de la noblesse*, Paris, 1872; as well as private communications from Father Jean-Paul Périer-Muzet and Laurent Puech. M. Puech, who mounted the exhibition *La Folie Faventines, un voyage au Vigan en 1770*, Le Vigan, musée Cévenol, 24 June – 31 October 2004, published the definitive study of *Pierre Faventines, financier des Lumières* in 2010.

² “Nous aurons vraisemblablement plus de cocons qu'il n'y en a jamais eu: ainsi la soie sera abandonnée selon tous les apparences” wrote one of the sons in 1724 (cited in Chaussinand-Nogaret, *op. cit.*, p. 218).

³ *Écuyer, marquis de Roquefeuil, vicomte d'Alzon, seigneur de la Canourgue, Boulièche, Espéries et autres places, intendant de la duchesse de Bourbon, trésorier de la maison et des affaires des princes de Bourbon, trésorier receveur et payeur des gages de la chancellerie du parlement de Bourgogne, fermier général*.

⁴ Jacques married Jeanne Saubert, from a local family; Paul-Annibal, a merchant in Lyon, married Antoinette Philippon; their daughter Élisabeth's second marriage (in 1768) was to Jacques-François d'Assas Montdardier, *capitaine au régiment de Condé-cavalerie*; Étienne-Philippe, seigneur de Bellegarde (Le Vigan 1712 – Aix, p.1771), *contrôleur des actes, directeur des domaines*, Aix; while Clément Faventines was *caissier général des fermes, généralité de Provence, Dauphiné et Lyon*.

⁵ AD Gard, I E 1827, 1829.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

Valette.

François-Marie Peyrenc, seigneur de Salze (1675–after 1747), was a close relative: his mother-in-law Marie Roussy was probably the sister of Faventines’s mother, Marguerite Roussy,⁷ while his niece Jeanne Saubert married Faventines’s brother Jacques in 1724. The most prominent member of the Peyrenc family was François-Marie’s younger brother Abraham, marquis de Moras (1684–1732). Their origins in Le Vigan were humble, although whether the father was a surgeon or a wig-maker is disputed.⁸ Abraham left Le Vigan early, but evidently not for reasons of religious scruple. He is said to have been employed as *valet de chambre–barbier* to François-Marie Fargès de Polizy, a supplier of provisions to Louis XIV’s army, and in 1715 he seduced and married his very wealthy employer’s sixteen-year-old daughter. Abraham became *chef du conseil*, or *intendant*, to the duchesse de Bourbon, and followed a legal route to nobility (*maîtres des requêtes* 1722, *conseiller au grand conseil*) before his involvement with John Law and the *système mississipien* led to his increasing his fortune to legendary proportions (60 million livres). Unlike most other investors, he sold at the right time, and ensured that the duchesse de Bourbon did likewise. He became a director of the Compagnie des Indes. His immense fortune was spent on a magnificent house in the place Vendôme (no. 25), whose pier-glasses now enhance the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York,⁹ and, subsequently, the even more magnificent hôtel de Peyrenc de Moras (later known as the hôtel de Biron, it now houses the musée Rodin). Designed by Jacques Gabriel, the execution was entrusted to Jean Aubert (both architects had been associated with Madame la duchesse’s palais de Bourbon, and Aubert would go on to work at Chantilly); the result was “la plus superbe maison qu’il y eut à Paris” according to Barbier, enhanced by artists including Largillierre, Rigaud, Natoire, Pater and Lépicié, with eighteen overdoors by François Lemoyne. The decoration of the personal apartment of its owner was entrusted to Coppel and Boucher. Its contents were catalogued in fascinating detail in a complete inventory drawn up when in 1737 Peyrenc’s young widow leased the house to the duchesse du Maine for the enormous rent of 100,000 livres per annum.¹⁰ Abraham’s son François-Marie Peyrenc (1718–1771), *conseiller au parlement de Paris*, *intendant d’Auvergne*, *contrôleur général des finances*, *secrétaire d’État à la marine*, married the daughter of Jean Moreau de Séchelles (1690–1760), *ancien intendant du Hainaut*, *contrôleur général des finances*, another Valade subject.¹¹

Abraham Peyrenc de Moras died in 1732. “Madame la duchesse n’était pas bien triste de la mort de son intendant” according to Mathieu Marais;¹² nevertheless Pierre Faventines’s position as *intendant* to the duchesse de Bourbon must surely have arisen as a result of his association with the Peyrencs, the marquis de Lassay (Madame la duchesse’s lover) and possibly with others associated with Law. I assume he was appointed in succession to Peyrenc.¹³ On 30 July 1732, the Compagnie des Indes appointed¹⁴ Faventines *commandant* of the island of Marotte, near Madagascar, of which they sought to take possession; Peyrenc’s death rescued him from what would have been a very different career by the needs of the Bourbon-Condé family to manage their huge estates. Some ten years later, he succeeded Montreuil as *trésorier de la maison et des affaires*

⁷ I suspect that the three Roussy girls in this article were daughters of noble Pierre de Roussy, probably the wealthiest merchant in Le Vigan, who died in 1725.

⁸ His descendant, the marquis de Lordat, *Les Peyrenc de Moras*, Toulouse, 1959, says that Barbier invented the malicious libel (*Journal*, Paris, 1885, II, 362: “on dit qu’il avait plu à la fille de Fragès, n’étant encore rien et qu’il lui avait fait un enfant, ce qui a obligé Fragès de lui faire épouser sa fille”), which has since been promulgated widely. Lordat is not himself an entirely reliable source.

⁹ Katie Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, New Haven, 1995.

¹⁰ See Colin B. Bailey & al., *The loves of the gods*, exhibition catalogue, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, 1992, pp. 268ff; J. Vacquier, *Ancien hôtel du Maine et de Biron en dernier lieu établissement des dames du Sacré-Coeur*, Paris, 1909; Jean-Luc Bordeaux, “François Lemoyne et la décoration de l’hôtel Peyrenc de Moras”, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1971, pp. 65–76; Jean-Luc Bordeaux, *François Le Moyne and his generation*, Paris, 1984, pp. 116ff.

¹¹ Known only from the engraving by Lempereur (Trove 75).

¹² *Correspondance inédite de Mathieu Marais avec le président Bouhier de 1724 à 1737*, Paris, 1868, lettre LI^e, 21 November 1732, IV, p. 442f.

¹³ AD Gard, E 1762, 1819, 1820, cited in Chaussinand-Nogaret, who describes the circle of Law and Peyrenc in detail. I have not found any documentation confirming the date of the appointment. One must assume that Faventines met with the approval of comte d’Argenson, chancellor du duc d’Orléans and responsible for all such appointments.

¹⁴ AD Gard, I E 1825, 30 July 1732, also in Chaussinand-Nogaret, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

des princes de Bourbon,¹⁵ giving him virtually the status of *fermier général*. Faventines also acquired from the Peyrenc family the office of *trésorier receveur et payeur alternatif et mitriennal des gages en la chancellerie du parlement de Bourgogne*,¹⁶ a position equivalent to that of *secrétaire du roi* and carrying the personal right to nobility. Created in 1707 but left vacant until one Pierre Poirier was able to raise the price in 1719, the office was subsequently acquired in 1724 by the younger François-Marie Peyrenc, who sold the office to Faventines in 1748.¹⁷

John Law's economic views were passionately embraced by Faventines, who wrote "le Roi ferait un grand bien au commerce en augmentant la monnaie qui circule", rejecting as absurd any suggestion that this would lead again to bankruptcy: "le Roi et le peuple français sont aujourd'hui plus éclairés sur l'administration des finances qu'ils ne l'étaient autrefois."¹⁸ Faventines received Law's brother William in Le Vigan in 1747.

Faventines's exposure to the Condé family was clearly of enormous importance to him. The young Louis V Joseph de Bourbon, 8^e prince de Condé (1736–1818), was sufficiently impressed to write to him in 1751, "Je désire avec ardeur trouver l'occasion de vous marquer que j'ai toujours présent ce que vous avez fait pour moi."¹⁹ With this endorsement, Faventines promptly set about building an appropriate dwelling in Le Vigan. This enormous²⁰ hôtel de Faventines d'Assas (fig. 1), covering some 32x20 metres, was designed by the local architect François Tureau; it was finished in 1753 at a cost of 53,060 livres. The neoclassical building is decorated with grotesque masks on the keystones of the windows, of which there are more than 100, while the garden façade has an elaborate ironwork staircase. One would like "la faire rouler à Paris où elle tiendrait bien sa place".²¹ Confiscated in the Revolution, it passed through a number of hands, being used as a prison and town hall before it was repurchased by the d'Assas family in 1850. Around 1922 it was acquired by a local agent, Émile Brugueirolles. The house was bought by the bishop of Nîmes in 1935 with the intention of turning it into a seminary; the furniture was sold at auction and no permanent use for the building has yet been found.²²



Figure 1

In 1721, Pierre Faventines married Élisabeth Astruc de Ganges, the niece of Jean Astruc (1684–1766), *médecin consultant* of Louis XV, professor of medicine at Montpellier; he taught also in Paris, where he became regent of the faculty and a member of the Académie des Sciences.²³

¹⁵ AD Gard, I E 1888, 3 April 1742.

¹⁶ André Bourée, *La Chancellerie près le parlement de Bourgogne de 1476 à 1790*, Dijon, 1927, p. 279ff. There seems to be some confusion about the exact sequence of ownership of this office between the Peyrenc brothers, Faventines and Jacques Valette, another relative.

¹⁷ The connection continued: François Peirenc de Saint-Cyr provided Pierre Faventines's younger brother Clément with a *cautionnement* against an indemnity from Pierre, who described himself as "intéressé dans les affaires du roi", 5 January 1751 (AN MC XCV 207).

¹⁸ AD Gard, I E 1762.

¹⁹ AD Gard, I E 1829, 14 January 1751.

²⁰ Often described as a copy of the château de Puteaux, it is in fact rather larger (it is on four floors, while the original was on three); the Faventines did not acquire Puteaux until 1766.

²¹ AD Gard, I E 1840, Mme de Bonneil to Faventines, September 1756.

²² Laurent Puech, *Sites et monuments*, no. 155, 1996, pp. 11–12.

²³ *Docteur en médecine* 1703, *professeur aux universités de Toulouse* 1712, *puis de Montpellier* 1717, *inspecteur des eaux minérales de Languedoc* 1721, *médecin ordinaire du duc d'Orléans* 1726, *médecin consultant du roi* 1730, *membre de l'Académie des sciences* 1743; in 1718 he married Jeanne Chaunel (Michel Antoine, *Le Gouvernement et l'administration sous Louis XV*, Paris, 1978). It is possible that Élisabeth may have been his daughter (as most sources have), or sister, but the dates do not fit, and the liquidation of her daughter-in-law's estate refers to a legacy from Élisabeth's uncle after 1762. The genealogy of the Astruc family has been the subject of vigorous

Of Huguenot origin, he was renowned as polymath and exegetist; his *Conjectures sur les Mémoires originaux...* (Brussels, 1753) suggested that Moses combined two previously independent stories of the Creation in the book of Genesis, a view which was heretical at the time (and which led to the destruction of most copies of the book²⁴), but which was highly influential. Of considerable wealth, Astruc was one of the “sept sages” of Mme de Tencin’s salon in the rue Vivienne, described for example in Marmontel’s *Mémoires*. Astruc’s *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire de la faculté de médecine de Montpellier* (1766) has a frontispiece engraved by Daullé after a portrait by the pastellist Louis Vigée of 1756.²⁵ Astruc’s son became a judge in Toulouse,²⁶ while a daughter married Étienne de Silhouette (1709–1767), who was famously *contrôleur général des finances* for a few months in 1759.²⁷ Silhouette had been secretary to the maréchal de Noailles, of whom Valade exhibited a portrait in the 1769 Salon (no. 54, now lost). We have seen Valade’s connections with the duc d’Orléans, to whom Astruc was *médecin* (and Mme de Tencin mistress).

Faventines did not sever his connections with his local town; indeed, his connections in the Cévennes, in Geneva and amongst the Huguenot community in London (where his cousins the Roussy brothers had settled) formed vital hubs in an international financial operation.²⁸ In 1729, he settled a fund to provide corn for the poor²⁹ – although the donation was rather modest compared with that of the impoverished Countess of Lincoln, who gave 20 louis d’or (worth 480 livres) to the poor of Le Vigan, whither she had travelled following the death of the seventh earl in the interests of the health of her four frail children (Le Vigan was perceived as healthy and Protestant).³⁰ Faventines was responsible for taxes in the domaine of Tournay which Voltaire leased in 1758 from Charles de Brosse under a rather complex arrangement. The imposition of the *centième denier* on this scheme by Faventines led to a protracted legal wrangle between Voltaire and Brosses, Chauvelin, and others. By 10 August 1760, he tried to enlist Mme d’Épinay’s help in getting her husband to speak to “ce terrible Faventine” about the matter. A year later (1 November 1761) he wrote to Fabry complaining that “le terrible M. de Faventine s’oppose furieusement à la liberté de notre pauvre pays[;] c’est un home contre lequel on aura bien de la peine à se defender.”

Pierre and Élisabeth had ten children,³¹ of whom the eldest, Pierre-Jacques Faventines (1723–

debate (see Charles Bost, “Les pasteurs Astruc. Le père de Jean Astruc”, *Bulletin – Société de l’histoire du protestantisme français: études, documents, chronique littéraire*, 1917; Charles Bost, “Les ‘Prophètes’ du Languedoc en 1701 et 1702. Le prédicant-prophète Jean Astruc, dit Mandagout”, *Revue historique*, CXXXVI, 137).

²⁴ Voltaire, *Correspondance*, ed. Besterman, Paris, 1993, III, V, VIII; *Dictionnaire philosophique*, Voltaire called him Stentor and “ce braillard”.

²⁵ Portalis & Béraldi 37. Among other portraits of Astruc is one in the Faculty of Medicine at Montpellier (*Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, 20 February 1909, col. 241).

²⁶ Other members of the family later obtained positions in the *fermes*, no doubt under Faventines’s influence. Jacques-Philippe Astruc managed the fortune of the prince de Guéménée until his bankruptcy; he was then *directeur général des fermes*. Another brother became *intendant de l’École militaire de Saint-Cyr*.

²⁷ History has not been fair to Silhouette. The technique of drawing profiles using the outlines of shadows which bears his name does not do so, as is often remarked, because of the brevity of his tenure of office – the one-day chancellorship of the elder Maupeou would displace this record – but from Silhouette’s actual interest.

²⁸ Chaussinand-Nogaret, *op. cit.*, p. 162, reproduces a map showing the circulation of letters of credit drawn on Faventines in the period 1730 to 1745; it encompasses Montpellier, Nîmes, Marseilles, Barcelona, Cadiz, Bayonne, Bordeaux, Nantes, Vannes, Morlaix, Saint-Malo, Rennes, Rouen, Paris, Beauvais, London, Saint-Quentin, Lille, Gand, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Geneva, Genoa (and thence to the Levant) and Lyon.

²⁹ The income was 33 livres 6 sols in 1730 (Archives du Vigan, GG29; see Ferdinand Teissier, *Inventaire sommaire des Archives communales du Vigan antérieures à 1790*, Nîmes, 1890).

³⁰ Lady Lincoln wrote from Montpellier to her brother: “I design going to Vigan on Tuesday where I have taken the same house I had last summer; it begins to be pretty hot here; and I believe the air of that place is at all times better than this.” (British Library manuscript collection, Add 33064, ff 379, 10 May 1730 old style). She stayed in Le Vigan until 1734, a few months after the death of her daughter Lady Ann. Lord Lincoln had “only £500 per annum” according to Oliphant, *Jacobite Lords of Gask* (London, 1870) and “lived [in Bedfordshire] in an obscure manner for want of what to support him in his dignity” according to the Earl of Ailesbury’s *Memoirs*, but was left an estate by Lord Torrington, taking pity on one of “the poor quality in England”; see G. E. C., *The Complete Peerage*, London, 1929, vol. VII, p. 700. The second son, Henry Fiennes Clinton, survived to become ninth Earl of Lincoln, reputedly Horace Walpole’s lover, and second Duke of Newcastle (see Teissier, *ibid.*; Timothy Mowl, *Horace Walpole, the great outsider*, London, 1996, p. 39).

³¹ It is not clear if one of these is the subject of the portrait (previously considered to be by Valade, but correctly rejected by Mme Trope) in the Suarez d’Aulan collection of a Monsieur de Faventines (died in 1805), oil on canvas, 0.95x0.74, signed “Vallade fecit

1768), *capitaine au régiment de Condé-cavalerie, chevalier de l'ordre de Saint-Louis* (1762), predeceased his father; he had married his cousin Anne, who lived on to 1794 and played an important rôle in Le Vigan. Jean-Louis-Maurice Faventines de Fontenille (1726–1793), *marquis de Roquefeuil, vicomte d'Alzon, seigneur de Mont-Saint-Père*, was the second son. He was born in Le Vigan, and his godparents were his cousins Hannibal de Roussy and Jeanne Saubert. He followed his father to Paris in the early 1730s, and entered the prestigious college of Louis-le-Grand in 1739 where he shone, displaying “le feu et l'enjouement” of his father, “avec un raisonnement très solide” according to the vicomte d'Alzon.³² By 1747, he was sworn in as an *avocat au parlement de Paris*. But his father's ambitions were beyond the bar, and Jean-Maurice was sent to his uncle Bellegarde in Aix, where he was *directeur des domaines des fermes*. Jean-Maurice learned well from this strange uncle, whose eccentricities (such as prohibiting women in his house) he catalogued in a correspondence³³ with his father; and his stay in Aix was not made any happier by an unfortunate accident which deprived him of the use of a leg.

The family's influence advanced significantly in 1756, when François-Marie Peyrenc was appointed *contrôleur général des finances* in succession to his father-in-law. A relative wrote to Faventines père “tous les gens qui reviennent de Paris m'assurent que vous avez un grand crédit auprès du contrôleur général, que vous êtes le bras droit et qu'il fait peu de choses sans vous consulter”.³⁴ The following year Peyrenc added the office of *secrétaire d'État à la marine*, but these positions exceeded his abilities, and he resigned in 1757. Nevertheless, Faventines was sufficiently well established to turn his attention to the acquisition of appropriate noble titles.

The name of Roquefeuil (of which Faventines was marquis) is reputedly connected with Jeanne d'Arc and the oil millionaire John D. Rockefeller; the territory, in the Rouergue, descended from Béranger de Roquefeuil (1448–1530), together with the *château-fort* of Bonaguil, to François-Gaspard de Montpeyroux, *lieutenant-général des armées du roi*, then *maître de camp général de la cavalerie légère de France*, and thence to his sister, Jeanne-Baptiste de Montpeyroux, comtesse de Langeac, who, in 1719, sold the châteaux of Bonaguil and Blanquefort (and probably the seigneurie de Roquefeuil) to Jean-Antoine de Pechpeyrou-Beaucaire to settle her debts.³⁵ Beaucaire married, in 1708, Marie-Thérèse de La Roche-Fontanilles de Gensac, and thereby acquired the title of marquis de Fontenille which seems not to have been used by the family after 1728. Their son Fabien in turn sold Bonaguil in April 1761, to Dame Marguerite de Fumel de Giversac, and it seems probable that Faventines acquired the title of marquis de Fontenille from the same source shortly before this time: a document³⁶ in the Archives nationales shows this title being used in January



Figure 2

17..” [sic], exhibited *Collections privées de Béziers et de sa région*, juillet–septembre 1969, no. 71, reproduced; Trope R10 n.r.; or indeed whether this is the same as the portrait of Jacques Faventines de Salze, oil on canvas, 0.97x0.72, also in the Suarez d'Aulan collection (according to unpublished documents in the Musée de la Ville de Poitiers (Trope 100, not reproduced).

³² Letter to Pierre Faventines, AD Gard, I E 1827, 1 October 1750.

³³ AD Gard, I E 1825.

³⁴ Bonnail to Faventines, AD Gard, I E 1830, 2 August 1756.

³⁵ La Chesnaye des Bois, *op. cit.*, erroneously assumes that Beaucaire was the heir of the elder branch of the Roquefeuil family on its extinction around 1730.

³⁶ *Tontine*, AN MC RE xcv 7; 8 January 1761. On the same date Jean-Maurice's brother is the subject of a *tontine* in which he is described as Faventines de Bellegarde. It is possible that the Faventines family acquired the title of marquis de Fontenille through the Puysegur connection (see below): the last representative of the senior branch of the Chastenet family, Anne-Thérèse, dame de Puysegur married, in 1717, Gilles-Gervais de la Roche Fontenille, marquis de Gensac; their son restored the château de Puysegur in 1735. The château de Beaucaire, built originally in the twelfth century overlooking the Rhone on the Languedoc border, might also have come into the Faventines' possession through this route, but seems in fact to have come from the Fronton connection.

1761 by Faventines's son Jean-Maurice (he was usually referred to simply as M. Faventines or as M. de Fontenille – the name we use in this article, to distinguish him from other members of his family).³⁷

In 1766, Pierre Faventines acquired virtually all the lands and the titles of the impoverished, but noble, Daudé d'Alzon family in Le Vigan. Legal documents nevertheless continued to refer to the Daudé party as “vicomte d'Alzon” rather than Faventines. The links between the families go back to Jacques Faventines's marriage around 1685 to Marguerite Roussy, whose sister Madeleine married Jean Daudé, mayor of Le Vigan, who became the first vicomte d'Alzon in 1747.

After his thorough preparation by his uncle, Jean-Maurice became *adjoint* to his father in 1764, entitled to one-quarter of the firm's profits. Having established a succession to the next generation, Faventines *père's* remaining task was to ensure that his children – and Fontenille in particular – made appropriate marriages. In 1762, Jean-Maurice married³⁸ Marie Baudard de Sainte-James (1742–1784), the daughter of Georges-Nicolas Baudard de Vaudésir, seigneur de Sainte-Gemmes (1712–1771), *receveur des tailles à Angers, trésorier général des colonies*, and his wife Marguerite-Catherine Baudry de la Gaucherie (1710–1777).³⁹ In 1748 Vaudésir bought for 86,510 livres (including the land, château and contents) the estate of Sainte-Gemmes-sur-Loire, near Angers (where Marie was born), the name of which his son adopted (and amended to the faintly ridiculous “Sainte-James”); it was elevated into a barony in 1756. It is tempting to think that the anonymous oval pastel portrait ambiguously labelled “Baudard de Vaudésir/Seigneur de St-James” (fig. 3)⁴⁰ should be attributed to Valade and thus form part of our series, but there is insufficient stylistic similarity; an attribution to Simon-Bernard Lenoir is plausible.⁴¹ To judge from the label, the sitter's costume and apparent age (as well as his brown eyes), it must have been executed in the 1750s. The familial resemblance is striking.

Vaudésir was a close friend of the writer Jean-François Marmontel (1723–1799), who describes a visit to Sainte-Gemmes around 1760: they met the finest of *angevin* society, including the pompous Pierre-Ambroise Roussille, prior of Champigné-sur-Sarthe, *chancelier* of the

³⁷ Among variant spellings widely found are Faventine, Faventines, Favantine; and Fontenille, Fontenille. Jean-Maurice's elegant handwriting does not dispel the difficulty, as the flourish after the final e may or may not be a terminal s. An armorial book-plate in the collection d'ex-libris of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, cabinet d'estampes, prints “De Faventines de Fontenille” (according to the comte de Lavergne, *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, 1903, XLVII, 21).

³⁸ The marriage took place in Paris, Saint Eustache, on 12 July after execution of a prenuptial contract on 6 July 1762 (AN T656). This lengthy and complex document was signed by various members of the family, whom we identify as follows: Faventine de Fontenille [Jean-Maurice, groom]; Marie Baudard de Vaudésir [bride]; Astruc de Faventine [Mme Pierre Faventines, née Elisabeth Astruc de Ganges, mother of groom]; Baudry de Vaudésir [Mme Georges-Nicolas Baudard de Vaudésir, née Marguerite-Catherine Baudry de la Gaucherie, mother of bride]; Faventine [Pierre Faventines, father of groom]; Baudard de Vaudésir [Georges-Nicolas Baudard de Vaudésir, father of bride]; Faventine Monvalliant [*sic*, Mme Jean-Louis de Fabre de Montvaillant, née Agathe de Faventines, sister of groom]; Baudard de S^{te} James [Claude Baudard de Sainte-James, brother of bride]; Montvaillant [Jean-Louis de Fabre de Montvaillant, brother-in-law of groom]; Dubois de Beaumanoir [Mme Hélie de Beaumanoir, née Jeanne-Louise du Bois, Mme Baudard de Sainte-James's aunt]; Sauvé Dubois [Mme Julien-François Thibault Dubois, née Marie-Juliette-Charlotte Sauvé, Sainte-James's future mother-in-law]; Beaumanoir [Joseph-Daniel-Esprit Hélie de Beaumanoir]; Blanchard de Beusenvaux [Joseph-Benoît Blanchard de Beusenvaux, grandson of the bride's aunt Mme Jean-Claude Blanchard, sgr d'Eschardot, née Madeleine-Louise Baudard].

³⁹ Marie Baudard brought not only a dowry of 200,000 livres and a trousseau worth 10,000, but great promise through her connections. For information on all the Baudard family, see Denise Ozanam, *Claude Baudard de Sainte-James*, Geneva, 1969. I am also indebted to Philippe and Nicole Baudard de Fontaine, who have generously provided me with extensive historical and genealogical information about Sainte-James and his family (private communications); see also the forthcoming work by Philippe & Nicole Baudard de Fontaine, *De Bodard à Baudard de 1789 à nos jours*, Paris, 2002.

⁴⁰ With comte Bertrand d'Aramon when it was shown in the 1927 Paris exhibition of pastels, no. 147 (see Émile Dacier & Paul Ratouis de Limay, *Pastels français des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*. Paris et Bruxelles, 1927, no. 123). In 1824 Pauline-Marie-Georgine du Bois de la Touche married Camille-Élisabeth, marquis d'Aramon, *chevalier de Saint-Louis* (1788–1847); she was the niece of Louis-Auguste Thibault Dubois and Julie-Augustine, Mme de Sainte-James, and the pastel (and probably the Valade portraits of Julie-Augustine and Louis-Auguste) must have descended through this branch.

⁴¹ An alternative attribution to Drouais's pupil Catherine Lusurier (1752–1781) has been suggested by Joseph Baillio (private communication, 23 August 2001); confirmation must await further research on her work. For Lusurier, see Helen Ashmore, “Catherine Lusurier (1752–81): A woman painter in eighteenth-century Paris”, *Apollo*, May 2001, pp. 34–40. As far as I am aware, no pastels by her are known (that with Cailleux in *Exposition du pastel français du XVII^e siècle à nos jours ... chez Monsieur André J. Seligmann*, Paris, 1933, no. 33 has subsequently been reattributed to Mme Liszewska-Therbusch).

académie d'Angers, whom they compared to the abbé Beau-Génie of the *Mercurie galant* and sent up unmercifully. Vaudésir was in Marmontel's eyes "homme d'esprit et homme sage qui sous une épaisse enveloppe ne laissait pas de réunir une littérature exquise, beaucoup de politesse et d'amabilité."⁴² Vaudésir accumulated enough money from his two main businesses in Angers (the manufacture of sail-cloth and armaments) to acquire the office of *trésorier général des colonies françaises d'Amérique* in 1752 for the sum of 600,000 livres, and the family moved to Paris (rue et porte Saint-Honoré) soon after. In 1761, Vaudésir leased a Paris house (rue Neuve-Saint-Eustache, neighbouring Marmontel) from the widow of *président* Etienne-Jean-François-Marie d'Aligre de Boislandry.⁴³ In 1764, he acquired the Vaudésir estate. At his death in 1771, his estate was valued at 2,905,082 livres, 12 sous, 6 deniers.

In 1766, the Faventines acquired the château (or "folie") de Puteaux on the banks of the Seine, near Paris (fig. 3). Built for the then duc de Guiche (Antoine V de Gramont (1671–1725), 5^e duc de Gramont in 1720) by Pierre Cailleteau "Lassurance", around 1700, it appears in the background of François de Troy's portrait⁴⁴ of Guiche's wife Marie-Christine de Noailles and their daughter around 1705. It came into use most notably with Antoine VII-Antonin, 7^e duc de Gramont (1722–1801), who created⁴⁵ a private theatre, seating 500, where he and his mistress Madeleine Fauconnier played the principal rôles in ballets and operas written or produced by Gramont's former music teacher, the celebrated violinist Jean-Marie Leclair *l'aîné* (1697–1764).⁴⁶ Gramont's extravagant lifestyle forced him to sell Puteaux (for 120,000 livres) in April 1751, some eight years before his unsatisfactory marriage to the impossible Béatrix de Choiseul.⁴⁷

The purchaser was Louis-Jean-Marie de Bourbon, duc de Penthièvre (1725–1793), who, recent studies⁴⁸ have shown, was an inveterate purchaser of property. The duc de Luynes has left us with a description of the house on the occasion (in June 1752) of the queen's dining there. Despite not being completed to the original scale, the house was "parfaitement bien bâtie" and "ornée de cheminées de marbre et de glaces"; it was constructed "double", i.e. with a central corridor rather than a single series of rooms; there was "un vestibule sur le double, un salon. A

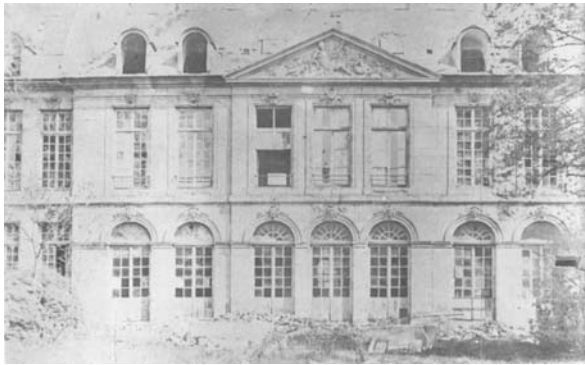


Figure 3

gauche de ces deux pièces, une grande galerie qui donne sur la terrasse, et qui est belle et agréable; à droite du vestibule, une grande salle à manger, sur le double de laquelle est un assez belle appartement. C'est tout ce qu'il y a en bas. [...]. Il y a sur le retour un fort bel escalier; en haut un corridor.... La maison de Puteaux, suivant le plan qu'avoit fait M. de Gramont, n'est que le tiers de ce qu'il vouloit faire.... Il devait y avoir une avant-cour avec un bâtiment de chaque côté, une aile pareille à celle qui existe

aujourd'hui, et un grand corps de logis pour communiquer de l'un à l'autre; ce corps de logis aurait été fort différent de celui que M. de Gramont avoit bâti en attendant, et dans lequel est la

⁴² *Mémoires*, p. 215.

⁴³ AN MC CXV 742, 25 June 1761; he took an interest for his life and that of his wife.

⁴⁴ Bayonne, fonds Gramont, inv. 23; see Olivier Ribeton, *Les Gramont*, 1992, p. 82 reproduced.

⁴⁵ A delightful picture of these entertainments is painted by Jean Delay, *Avant mémoire*, III, *La Fauconnier (à Paris, sous Louis XV)*, Paris, 1982; he also includes plans of the land drawn up in connection with a boundary dispute between Gramont and his neighbour, the duc de Chaulnes: it seems that Chaulnes wanted to take the alley between their gardens, but, his "démarches de politesse" having failed, he resorted to law, leading to a "procès assez vif et long, et M. de Chaulnes ne put obtenir la ruelle qu'il désirait" according to the duc de Luynes, *Mémoires*, XII, p. 53; cited in Raymond Ritter, *La Maison de Gramont 1040–1967*, Lourdes, 1968, II.

⁴⁶ See article by Neal Zaslaw in *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, London, 1980.

⁴⁷ AN MC xxxv 666, 29 April 1751.

⁴⁸ See Jean Duma, *Les Bourbon-Penthièvre (1678–1793)*, Paris, 1995, pp. 59ff.

porte d'entrée." However, the gardens were fully realised: the house being "sur le bord de la rivière; le jardin est assez grand et parfaitement bien planté, même assez orné; il y a sur la droite un petit bois couvert, fort joli, enfermé de treillage, et qui forme deux jardins particulier sur le même côté de la maison. Au bout du jardin, en terrasse, est un potager de quatre arpents, entouré de murailles et de grilles, et dont le terrain est un peu plus bas que le jardin."⁴⁹ Some fifteen years after acquiring Puteaux, following a number of deaths in his immediate family, Penthievre had become a lonely figure,⁵⁰ and decided to sell the house to Faventines, for 130,000 livres.⁵¹

Faventines used Puteaux both for informal relaxation – a friend wrote⁵² that life there was so agreeable that one "attendait avec impatience les jours qu'on devait y passer" – and (as well as the hôtel at Le Vigan) as the scene of grand receptions for friends such as the marquis de Lassay and the physiocrat Gournay whose free-market ideas (he coined the phrase "laissez faire, laissez passer") chimed in with those of Law and Faventines. To support this lifestyle, there were 140 beds, of which 95 were for servants.⁵³

Two versions survive of Valade's masterpiece, the 1767 double portrait of *M. et Mme Faventines de Fontenille faisant de la musique*, the primary version of which (fig. 4) was left by Fontenille in the château d'Yville; it was acquired by preemption in 1989, and is now at Maisons-Laffitte.⁵⁴ The interior shown is surely that of the château de Puteaux, and the painting celebrates not so much the union of these people (which had occurred some five years previously) but their latest acquisition – the *maison de plaisance* that had belonged to the Gramont and Bourbon families. The *fermier général* is seated before a *bureau-plat* by André-Charles Boulle, dated around



Figure 4

⁴⁹ Duc de Luynes, *op. cit.*, XI, p. 111–112; XII, p. 52–53.

⁵⁰ Although Duma (*ibid.*) says that the precise reasons for the sale are not known, the letter of 28 August 1766 from Penthievre to the marquis de Verteillac (published by Honoré Bonhomme, *Le duc de Penthievre*, Paris, 1869, p. 59) makes clear the mental state of someone uninterested in a *maison de plaisance*: "Je vous suis très-obligé, Monsieur, de la part que vous avez prise à mes alarmes sur la maladie de mon fils, et à la douloureuse situation dans laquelle sa convalescence m'a trouvé. Je suis bien loin de me regarder hors de peine. L'état de ma mère continue à me tenir dans la plus grande inquiétude; elle reçut avant-hier Notre-Seigneur pour la seconde fois..."

⁵¹ It was finally demolished in 1881.

⁵² AD Gard, I E 1840, unsigned, undated letter.

⁵³ H. Thirion, *La Vie privée des financiers au XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 1895, p. 332.

⁵⁴ *M. et Mme Faventines de Fontenille faisant de la musique*, oil on canvas, 1.63x1.285, sd 176?, Salon de 1767, no. 49 (Maisons-Laffitte, château de Maisons, inv. ML 606). In the château d'Yville until 1979; on loan to the musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen; Strasbourg, Pavillon Joséphine, Gersaint, expert Turquin, 17 November 1989, Lot 289. Literature: Jean Feray, *Architecture intérieure et décoration en France des origines à 1875*, Paris, 1988, pp. 304f, reproduced; Alexandre Pradère, "Boulle, du Louis XIV sous Louis XVI", *L'objet d'art*, no. 4, février 1988, p. 31, reproduced; Trope 36. The other version is of similar dimensions; the detail is somewhat simplified, and it is not clear if it is an autograph replica: *M. et Mme Faventines de Fontenille faisant de la musique*, oil on canvas, 1.67x1.31 (formerly Suarez d'Aulan collection, château de Lavagnac). Exhibited: Béziers, *Collections privées de Béziers et de sa région*, July–September 1969, no. 67 (as by Carle van Loo). Literature: Trope 37; Chaussinand-Nogaret, *op. cit.*, reproduced (as by Carle van Loo).

1710. The *cartonnier*, perhaps⁵⁵ by Jean-François Leleu (1729–1807; *maître* 1764) or Joseph Baumhauer (–1772; *ébéniste privilégié du roi* c.1749), is strikingly similar to the model made for La Live de Jully (now in Chantilly), in a famously *avant garde* neoclassical style; it supports a mantel clock, also by Boulle, showing Love Triumphant over Time (by flying away with Time’s scythe).⁵⁶ Mme de Fontenille, seated on a Louis XV *lit de repos*, plays the guitar, while Monsieur looks on apparently conducting from the open score. The painting is unified by Valade’s remarkable sense of colour; the vertical blue hanging to the left of the picture as well as the red cloak lying on the stool provide a vital balance to the greys of the walls and Madame’s dress. Among the folios lying carelessly around the room a sense of informality conveyed by the crumpled letters on the floor fights in vain with the most disconcerting aspect of this conversation piece: the enormous height of the room, and the sense that these characters do not entirely fill the space. Modern viewers may struggle too with the ambiguity of the marquise’s pose: are her legs parted simply to fend off the pet spaniel, or is there an erotic subtext?

How did the Fontenille come to engage Valade to paint this extraordinary work? I think a rôle was probably played by the architect Jean-Baptiste Chaussard⁵⁷ (1729–1818), whose work for Fontenille on the château de Puteaux extended over a period of 25 years, as evidenced by receipts (from 1766 to 1790) for various works ranging from minor repairs to extensive improvements involving stone masons, sculptors, carpenters etc.⁵⁸ Chaussard acted as supervisor and carefully controlled the costs, while Fontenille seems to have paid the not insignificant bills promptly. Fontenille could have come across the relatively obscure Chaussard following his work assisting Contant d’Ivry on the Ferme des Tabacs in 1759. Chaussard was also associated with another eminent architect, Jean-Michel Chevotet; Chaussard married his daughter Anne-Michelle in 1765, and Valade portrayed her seven years later.⁵⁹ Chevotet had married Anne-Catherine Rémond in 1741; her sister Louise-Gabrielle married Valade in 1752. The links between Valade, Chevotet and Chaussard were evidenced by the commission of the tomb of maréchal de Belle-Isle undertaken by Chaussard for the church at Vernon in 1766, while Valade exhibited his *portrait allégorique du maréchal de Belle-Isle*, as well as a portrait of Chaussard, in the 1767 Salon.⁶⁰ Chaussard was a witness on Valade’s death certificate, in 1787.⁶¹

The link with Valade seems to have been forged around this time.⁶² The pastel portrait of Marie Baudard, dated 1765, three years after her wedding, appears to be the first of Valade’s portraits of this family, and seems to have served as prototype for the subsequent four portraits of her alone as well as for the double portraits of her with her husband.⁶³ The number of these portraits of Mme de Fontenille make her probably Valade’s most important patron – and, conversely, this series of images represents the lasting legacy of a woman of whom we otherwise have only a shaky signature on a marriage contract. One wonders why Marie never sat again: was it the vanity of a not very beautiful woman, whose chief attraction in the first portrait was her twenty-three years, as one might reuse a treasured passport photograph long after it was taken;

⁵⁵ I am grateful to Edgar Harden and to Philippe Kraemer for the suggestions.

⁵⁶ A preliminary drawing by Boulle is in the Musée des arts décoratifs, Paris; a similar clock is in The Wallace Collection (see Peter Hughes, *The Wallace Collection, catalogue of furniture*, London, 1996, I, pp. 381, 382, n. 27).

⁵⁷ For Chaussard generally, see article by Laurence Baudoux in *Chevotet, Contant, Chaussard: Un cabinet d’architectes au siècle des lumières*, ed. Jean-Louis Baritou, Dominique Foussard, Paris, 1987.

⁵⁸ AN T656.

⁵⁹ Pastel, signed and dated 1772 (Trope 19). This was sold in Paris, Rieunier–Bailly–Pommery, 4 December 2000, Lot 97, reproduced.

⁶⁰ Nos. 48, 53 (Trope 8, 18). I agree with Mme Trope in rejecting the chalk drawing of Chaussard in Orléans (Musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. 1130; Trope R3) as not by Valade.

⁶¹ 12 December, cloître Saint-Honoré; see Ratouis de Limay, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

⁶² An alternative link may be through Valade’s teacher, Coypel, who was close to the marquis de Calvière, whose son married Fontenille’s niece in Le Vigan in 1770.

⁶³ Pastel, 0.655x0.55 oval, on five sheets, signed on the base of the pillar “J. Valade f./1765” (Paris, Nouveau Drouot Salles 5, 6, Pierre Cornette de Saint-Cyr, exp. Herdhebut, Latreille, 19 March 1987, Lot 6 reproduced; Paris, Christie’s, 21 March 2002, Lot 159), Trope 5. The date has been incorrectly transcribed as 1763, but there is no bar on the top of the last digit, which is how Valade writes the digit 5 (see for example the portrait of Mme Louis-René Pinson de Méneville).

or was it simply the indolence of wealth? The latter would provide a key to this whole series: having found M. Valade's formula agreeable, why bother trying a new portraitist? After all, if M. de La Tour had looked for their soul, and come back empty-handed.... It seems that the family remained loyal to Valade until his death, and only in the following generation (1786) did they engage Mme Vigée Le Brun to portray Mme de Fontenille's niece.

The present pendant pastel studies of M. et Mme de Fontenille from the 1767 Salon⁶⁴ and the other versions to which they relate⁶⁵ offer an interesting insight into Valade's working methods. The differences between the portraits of the marquise are small: she wears a miniature of her husband, with an identical pearl setting, on her left wrist in the double portrait, but on her right in the preliminary study; the bouquets she holds are the main differences between the oval pastel versions; the dresses differ between the silk ruched gown in the painting and the rectangular pastel and the fur-lined winter gown in the oval pastels. What is most distinctive about these works is Valade's palette: continuing the predilection of his master Coypel for warm, earth pigments, he builds almost all of these portraits in brown ochres and siennas. Where contemporaries such as La Tour or Perronneau would have used a purer Naples yellow for flesh tones, Valade substitutes a yellow ochre; and where expanses of white lace need highlights of cobalt blue, which even Coypel would have employed in clean touches on the top surface, Valade's use is carefully blended with other chalks to ensure that nothing detracts from the mellow effect he seeks, and which gives his sitters their characteristic *bonhomie*. It is this warm palette which makes the images of his sitters come forward from the plane of the picture, contributing to the sense of intimacy – an optical effect which is far more successful in the pastels than in the oil version, in part because they are less ambitious, and in part because the pastels allowed Valade to enhance the impact by careful choice of paper of a cool, blue tone. Inscribed in white chalk on the top right of the medium-blue sheet for the pastel of Monsieur, underneath the spandrel, are the words “trop clair”, which may perhaps be an allusion to Valade's experiments in fixatives for pastel.⁶⁶ The decorative qualities of these pictures and their place in the interiors of their owners must surely have concerned Valade.⁶⁷ The frame for the Maisons version of *M. et Mme de Fontenille* is a masterpiece of gilt-wood carving of the era. Even the framing of the two studies for this work is of interest. The oval pastels are placed into conventional rectangular gilt-wood pastel frames using gilt card slips. The frames themselves are surmounted by composition bows: not inappropriate for rococo art, but rarely found on frames of this size, and adding an unusual femininity to frames that otherwise would be identical to those used by La Tour or Nattier. But it is the slips that surprise us: thick card, the oval sights cut by hand, with no great precision, and the whole surface then gilt with highly burnished edging and sanded spandrels. On recent restoration of minor cracking of the slips, the restorer was unable to restrain an instinct to tone these down to match the outer frames: the gilding simply reflected the *nouveau richisme* of their sitters.

⁶⁴ *M. de Fontenille, Mme de Fontenille à l'ailette*, both pastel, 0.61x0.52 oval, signed on back and dated 1766, Salon de 1767, no. 50 (“Études en Pastel des deux portraits du numéro précédent. Tableaux ovales en Pastel”) (Suarez d'Aulan family collection; Monaco, Sotheby's, 20 June 1987, Lot 393. M. P.L., château du Castelet, Provence; Marseilles, Hôtel des Ventes Prado Falque; Fleck-Raymond, 20 May 2000; London, private collection): Trope 40, 41.

⁶⁵ The pastels of M. de Fontenille, pastel, 0.63x0.525 oval (the sitter's niece, d'Assas family; Strasbourg, Gersaint, 17 November 1989, Lot 291 reproduced), Trope 38 (considers as pendant to Trope 5); Mme de Fontenille (Trope 5), discussed above; Mme de Fontenille, pastel, sd 1768 (M. Veillard 1940, 1966), Trope 42.

⁶⁶ See the note on the portrait of Lorient, above.

⁶⁷ Examples include the ovalisation of the 1751 portrait, 0.76x0.60 oval, previously rectangular (London, private collection. Christie's, New York, 12 January 1995, Lot 102; not in Trope) of Mme Louis-René Pinson de Méneville, née Catherine Bonette, surely to match the later portraits Valade made of this family.



Figure 5



Figure 6

Valade's two portraits of Pierre Faventines, an important pastel dated 1768 (fig. 5) and an oval derivative, each with their pendants of Mme Faventines, celebrate Faventines's status as the Croesus he had become. Shown in the classic pose of the *homme sérieux* at his bureau,⁶⁸ he is reading *Contes moraux* (1761) of Marmontel, a writer with whom the family had several links. The *cartonnier* and the setting appear to be those depicted in the portrait of his son two years previously, but the *bureau-plat* has been moved and the Boulle clock on the *cartonnier* has been exchanged for the more fashionable urn, perhaps in reaction to the somewhat incongruous mixture of decorative styles in the 1767 painting. In the pendant portrait of Mme Faventines (fig. 6), we see an interior lined with blue damask, matching the upholstery of the chairs found in all the portraits. Inevitably, and as with her daughter-in-law, she wears the miniature portrait of her husband on her wrist, and has an important watch suspended from her waist; she holds a snuffbox, and is at work at her embroidery frame (reminiscent of Aved's portrait of another *languedocien* financier's wife Madame Crozat in Montpellier, as well of course as the Drouais portrait in the National Gallery of Mme de Pompadour, when she wished to be depicted as a new Mme de Maintenon⁶⁹). The painting above her, in an oval frame, is a landscape perhaps in the manner of Patel, and echoes the glimpses of earlier pictures that one finds in Dutch painting in the golden age; its frame however is right up-to-date, as indicated by both its architrave moulding with triple bead and bobbin decoration and its recent gilding. The portraits are signed by a label on the reverse, in which Valade has written in monumental Roman capitals "PEINT PAR/I. VALADE/1768" within an elaborate decorated oval, emphasising the importance of these works in his *œuvre* – as does the selection of the impressive garlanded giltwood frames with shoulders and feet.

Faventines *père et fils* conducted business initially from the rue Vivienne, but, by 1768, are recorded at the *rue et vis à vis les Filles Saint-Thomas* (possibly the same building, as the streets intersect). In 1776, the firm had moved to the rue d'Antin. Next year, following the death of Faventines *père*, the firm's address is given in the *Almanach royal* as rue Louis-le-Grand (the next street), but it reverted to the rue d'Antin in 1778 and all subsequent years until the 1792 edition replaces the section with a list of the commission for the liquidation of the *fermes*. Jean-Maurice succeeded, not only to his titles at Roquefeuil and Alzon, but also as *fermier général des états de Provence et Languedoc* – although not without some intrigue: it seems that Turgot, *contrôleur général des finances*, attempted to restrict Fontenille to his father's three-quarters share, and sought to bring in two new associates to share the balance. Fontenille responded vigorously by threatening to break off relations with those who sought his share; within a month, Turgot had been

⁶⁸ Trope, *op. cit.*, compares this portrait to Tocqué's depiction of the comte de Saint-Florentin (c. 1748) in Marseille, but there are numerous other parallels. The portraits were in the 2011 exhibition *Paris: life & luxury in the eighteenth century*, at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles and elsewhere.

⁶⁹ I am grateful to Xavier Salmon (private communication) for drawing my attention to the political significance of this portrait.

dismissed, and Fontenille kept the full position.⁷⁰

Although Fontenille's offices entitled him to personal nobility, as the son of a first generation noble, he had not yet attained a status which could be inherited, and was not exempt from the *marc d'or* (the payment of 25,000 livres for the transfer of the office of *fermier général* was recorded in February 1776; his total funds were stated as 1,560,000 livres). Another consequence of his father's death was the need to deal with the inheritance within the family, and in particular with his cousin Anne, widow of his elder brother Pierre-Jacques. The hôtel Faventines d'Assas in Le Vigan had been built on land brought to the family by her, but her modest house had been demolished to build the château with money supplied by Faventines *père*. Fontenille presented a complex settlement⁷¹ analysing the sources of finance; the result was that he retained ownership of the property, while his sister-in-law had rights of occupation to be shared with her mother-in-law. One suspects that the deal was highly favourable to him.

In 1779, Fontenille bought the *seigneurie* of Mont-Saint-Père (Aisne, on the banks of the Marne, near Château-Thierry) for 760,000 livres from the family of Calonne's wife, who had just died in childbirth; the property had been the residence of Joseph Pâris Duverney (1684–1770), and had passed to his son-in-law Louis Marquet, Calonne's father-in-law. Several months later, Fontenille acquired the *baillage* of Château-Thierry.⁷² On the death of Mme de Fontenille the estate passed to her brother Sainte-James (she also left 3000 livres for the poor of Mont-Saint-Père), and a description survives from its subsequent sale in April 1789 to the comtesse de Bussy: the property comprised the château, with “salle de Comédie, théâtre, orangerie, beaux et vastes appartements, entouré d'un parc avec parterres à l'anglaise, terrasses, rochers, potagers, bassins, arbres de toutes espèces...”⁷³ The price of 890,000 livres may not have included the furniture, valued at 41,059 livres in 1784.



Figure 7

As well as the châteaux at Mont-Saint-Père, Puteaux, and Le Vigan,⁷⁴ Fontenille owned two adjacent houses in the rue d'Antin in Paris. Initially sub-let from Boutin, then purchased in 1783 from the widow of Guillaume Thierry, *trésorier de France à Paris*, for an annuity of 9,300 livres per annum, the Paris house had been built in 1720 by Jacques Gabriel.⁷⁵ It has

⁷⁰ Fontenille explained the position in a letter from Paris to his sister-in-law: “Vous souhaitez savoir où j'en suis relativement à ma place de fermier général. J'ai reçu, il y a trois jours, une lettre de M. le Contrôleur Général des finances qui me marque que le roi m'a accordé les trois quarts de la place de fermier général dont mon père était pourvu et qu'il donne l'autre quart à deux de mes confrères. Je n'ai rien répondu à cette lettre, mais ma compagnie écrit, le lendemain du jour que j'ai reçu ma lettre, à M. le Contrôleur des finances pour lui faire des représentations sur l'injustice qu'on me faisait et sur l'impossibilité où était la compagnie d'adhérer à de pareils arrangements. Elle envoya chercher ceux en faveur de qui on veut m'enlever et leur dit que c'était un vol qu'on me faisait et que s'ils ne renonçaient pas à cette disposition du ministre on n'aurait aucune liaison avec eux. Le ministre n'a encore rien répondu et j'ai lieu de penser qu'il laissera tomber cette affaire qui ne peut se terminer que par ma signature que je ne donnerai qu'à la dernière extrémité. Ma compagnie a pris cette affaire comme lui étant personnelle et me saurait mauvais grès de céder volontairement au ministre. Tous les adjoints sont attaqués dans ma personne et ce sont eux que ma compagnie défend en prenant mon parti.” (AD Gard, I E 1832, 4 April 1776).

⁷¹ AN T656, Le Vigan, 25 July 1776.

⁷² The territory of Mont-Saint-Père was bought on 27 March 1779 from Louis Marquet, seigneur de Mont-Saint-Père, *ancien receveur général des finances de Bordeaux*, François-Nicolas Guillaume, *conseiller au parlement*, and his wife Mme Jacqueline Henriette Marquet, and Charles-Alexandre de Calonne, *chevalier, conseiller du roi, intendant de Flandres et Artois*, “comme tuteur et gardien noble de M^{re} Charles-Louis-Henry de Calonne son fils mineur et de défunte Dame Josephine Anne Marquet son Epouse”. See Xavier de Massary, “La terre, les seigneurs et le château de Mont-Saint-Père au XVIII^e siècle”, *Mémoires de la Société historique et archéologique de Château-Thierry*, xxxvii, 1992, pp. 15ff. Fontenille bought the baillage de Chateau-Thierry on 30 July 1779.

⁷³ AN MC XCV 385, 26 October 1784; IX 829, 4 April 1789; Z^{1a} 854, 4 March 1789.

⁷⁴ As well as properties at Mirabel, Lauture, Saint-Brix and La Cagalaise and lands at d'Alzon, Roquefeuil, Aresne, and la Valette (see H. Thirion, *op. cit.*, p. 332).

⁷⁵ The house was at no. 5, rue d'Antin (correspondence was still being addressed to no. 5 into the 1790s); the other house referred to in the lease was adjacent. According to Jacques Hillairet, *Dictionnaire historique des rues de Paris*, Paris, 1970, I, p. 93, no. 5

survived in a detailed description of the decoration,⁷⁶ indicating a taste for grandeur and symmetry:

La demeure comprenait un corps de logis sur la rue avec rez-de-chaussée, deux étages carrés de deux croisées chacun, comble au-dessus, une aile sur la gauche dans la cour de même élévation. Le principal corps de logis formait retour de cette aile, avec deux étages; la face principale était sur le jardin avec cinq croisées à chaque étage et une croisée en retour sur la face principale. Un autre corps renfermait écuries et remises. La salle à manger se trouvait au premier étage sur la rue. Une corniche ceinturait le plafond. Le sol était carrelé de liais blanc et noir. Les deux croisées étaient séparées par un trumeau en chêne avec bordure unie, dont le haut était cintré, chantourné et sculpté en agrafe au milieu. Ce trumeau était couvert d'une glace et faisait face à la porte d'entrée. Porte et glace étaient surmontés de tableaux représentant des bustes de femmes. On y découvrait un poêle en terre cuite vernie et émaillé et, de chaque côté de la porte, une niche pour la fontaine avec table de marbre de Flandre et cuvette. Chaque niche était revêtue de liais imitant le marbre, le fond peint à fresque de fleurs et de guirlandes, le milieu de chaque niche décoré de guirlande de cuivre à deux branches, avec ornements de roseaux, et deux bobèches à bougies. Le poêle était placé dans une niche, elle-même symétrique d'une autre, fausse, dont la fresque figurait le pendant du poêle émaillé.

Les chambranles autour des niches étaient de chêne peint en marbre et les quatre panneaux à côté du poêle et vis-à-vis, ainsi que les quatre pilastres en retour, avaient des peintures sur toile représentant «diverse compagnie ou rafraîchissement et divertissement champêtre» dans le goût chinois. Tout le reste de la pièce était dissimulées dans les lambris, une de chaque côté des fontaines et une dernières à gauche près de la croisée. Enfin, la porte s'ouvrait à deux vantaux sur le grande escalier.

Le salon, du même style, avait un plafond orné d'une agraffe à chaque angle, une cheminée de marbre griotte d'Italie, glaces à cadre doré. Seuls changeaient les tableaux, qui, ici, figuraient des enfants, et la couleur des lambris, peint partout en blanc de Roy.

We also have details of the establishment in 1783 from the provincial archives:⁷⁷ in the salons, sofas and chairs were covered in Aubusson or Beauvais tapestries. In the stables were six horses, a berlin, a cabriolet and a *désobligeante*. The cellar included casks of Burgundy, Sauternes, white Bordeaux, Volney and wine from the cap Breton, along with bottles of malmsey, red and white Malaga, Alicante, Canary and muscat wines. The safe held 32,000 pounds of silver. Staff included



Figure 8

a porter, a maître d'hôtel, two *femmes de chambre*, a cook, an office-boy, three maids and two coachmen – an establishment which cannot have diminished in importance even in the dangerous times ahead, as illustrated by the receipts Fontenille retained: a fortnight's bread bill for the rue d'Antin in April 1792 was 94 livres (for some 200 loaves or 600 pounds).⁷⁸

The rise of Necker in the late 1770s, with his attempts to reform, was not welcomed by the *fermiers généraux*. Fontenille wrote⁷⁹ to a sister-in-law “Monsieur Necker fait toujours parler de lui. Il donne le dernier coup de massue aux financiers en la personne des receveurs généraux qu'il supprime entièrement...c'est un belle désolation dans ma compagnie”, but he welcomed Necker's successor Joly de Fleury, “homme de mérite et que le public attendait depuis longtemps”; he was the brother of

belonged to the Denis d'Alence family between 1731 and 1791; it is now the site of a bank. It is possible that some confusion may have arisen in the construction of the avenue de l'Opéra in the nineteenth century.

⁷⁶ AN T656, cited Durand, *op. cit.*, p. 500f.

⁷⁷ Ad Gard, I E 1840, 14 July 1783.

⁷⁸ AN T656.

⁷⁹ AD Gard, I E 1832, 27 May 1781.

Guillaume-François-Louis Joly de Fleury, *procureur général*, who had provided Fontenille with *lettres d'émancipation* much earlier.⁸⁰ Business could continue as usual.

Fontenille's brother-in-law Claude Baudard de Sainte-James⁸¹ (1736–1787) inherited a vast fortune from his father, and, in 1764, married his cousin (fig. 7) Julie-Augustine (1749–1813), daughter of Julien-François Thibault Dubois (1722–1768)⁸² and Marie-Juliette-Charlotte Sauvé (1727–1788).⁸³ Thibault Dubois was secretary to comte d'Argenson (who in 1721 was *intendant* of Tours, where Thibault Dubois's father had been mayor);⁸⁴ his wife was the daughter of d'Argenson's protégée, the dame Sauvé who was *première femme de chambre du duc de Bourgogne*.⁸⁵ In 1751, a major scandal arose when she was imprisoned on the charge of attempting to assassinate her charge, by leaving gunpowder in his cot. Despite this, Dubois rose to be *premier commis des guerres*,⁸⁶ and he survived the disgrace of d'Argenson in 1757. When Choiseul became minister of war in 1762, Dubois was ennobled and became *chef des bureaux de la guerre* and *secrétaire général des Suisses & Grisons*.⁸⁷ The witnesses included the duc de Choiseul, his sister, Béatrix de Gramont, his brothers and cousins, and the prince and princesse de Beauvau. Dubois was able to provide his daughter with a dowry of 160,000 livres, of which 10,000 was her trousseau. Vaudésir provided his son with capital of 300,000 livres from his inheritance, and promised him the succession of his offices. Sainte-James already had the benefit of his father's office of *trésorier des colonies* from 1758. A few weeks after his father's death in 1771, the office was abolished, and Sainte-James received compensation of 660,000 livres; a new position, *trésorier alternatif de la Marine et des colonies réunis*, for which he had to raise 1,200,000 livres, was created for him the following year. However the position allowed him to manage a budget of 14 million livres, and brought him an income of 500,000 livres per annum. Sainte-James became deeply involved in the Caisse d'Escompte, a precursor to the Banque de France. Unlike his brother-in-law, he did not confine his investments to real estate and financial instruments, but invested heavily in numerous manufacturing, mining and business enterprises such as the Compagnie française de Commerce du Nord (2.4 million), the Compagnie des Eaux de Paris (1.9 million) and the fonderie royale de Montcenis (1.7 million).

We have previously suggested that Mme de Sainte-James might be the subject of one of Valade's three submissions to the Salon of 1769, viz. no. 55, "Le Portrait de Madame de S^{te} ***". We know that this was an oval pastel, but it was not mentioned by any of the critics.⁸⁸ Saint-Aubin's

⁸⁰ A document which Fontenille kept to the end of his life; AN T656, 1 June 1754.

⁸¹ Among many studies of Sainte-James may be cited Ozanam, *op. cit.*; G. C. Leroux-Cesbron, "Le baron de Sainte-James et sa folie de Neuilly", *Revue de Paris*, 1 February 1925, pp. 665–682; and the article by Roger-Armand Weigert in *Dictionnaire de biographie française* (Paris, 1933–). See also the references cited below for the Folie.

⁸² Himself the son of Julien Thibault Dubois (– before 1761), *sieur d'Ardrée, trésorier de l'extraordinaire des guerres*, who had married Sainte-James's aunt Marthe-Marie (1700–1772) in 1721.

⁸³ Portrait by Roslin, oil on canvas, 0.64x0.53, formerly in the collection of Camille Groult (Gunnar Lundberg, *Roslin: liv och verk*, Malmö, 1957, cat. no. 168, reproduced, pl. 44). The couple married in 1746, according to the inscription on the reverse of this painting which erroneously records the sitter's dates as 1733–1791. Another version of the work, now in the Kristianstad Museum, was acquired at auction, Paris, 16 June 1924; the vendor was Carl U. Palm (1864–1954) (Lundberg, *op. cit.*, no. 169).

⁸⁴ It is quite possible that d'Argenson, as *chancelier du duc d'Orléans*, was the link between the Dubois family and the Faventines; they were witnesses to Fontenille's marriage in 1763, before Sainte-James married Julie-Augustine.

⁸⁵ "Elle était, dit-on, fort aimée de M. le comte d'Argenson, qui avait une bonne maison où elle donnait à souper non seulement à M. le comte d'Argenson, mais à des seigneurs", according to Barbier (*Journal*, III, p. 302f).

⁸⁶ "Dubois, la correspondance pour les opérations militaires, avec les Officiers généraux employés sur les côtés, & chef des Bureaux ci-après", *Almanach royal*, 1762; see also SHAT, Y^a 28. Voltaire wrote to Julien-François on 17 January 1765 soliciting a commission for a M. Dupuits, who had married Voltaire's protégée, Mlle Corneille.

⁸⁷ Dubois died suddenly on 19 January 1768, apparently of an apoplexy while he was preparing for the hunt. Choiseul immediately offered his position to abbé Barthélemy, according to Mme du Deffand's letter to Walpole of 24 January 1768. Writing of an earlier stroke suffered by Dubois, Mme du Deffand called him an "homme très important, estimé et aimé...il sera difficile de le bien remplacer" (letter of 9 November 1767). The duc de Croÿ, *Journal inédit*, Paris, 1906, describes Dubois as "mon bon ami, qui conduisait tout le militaire et l'avait mis sur un tout autre pied" (II, p. 240); Croÿ also suggests that Dubois died of the effects of an operation on a cyst (*ibid.*, p. 299).

⁸⁸ See Jean Seznec, *Diderot Salons*, Oxford, 1967, IV, p. 28. The livret gives the size as 3 pieds de hauteur sur 2 pieds 4 pouces de largeur, i.e. 0.97x0.76; but even this information is not to be relied upon, since the same dimensions are given for no. 56, which is almost certainly the portrait of the marquis Jean-Georges-Louis-Marie Le Franc de Pompignan (1760–) (Bayonne, Collection Gramont, inv no. 61), which in fact measures 0.63x0.53 (see Olivier Ribeton, *Les Gramont...*, Biarritz 1992, p. 186).

thumbnail however does not seem to correspond closely. A portrait of Sainte-James by Valade, one version of which is signed and dated 1771 (fig. 8)⁸⁹, shows the financier shortly after he had succeeded to his father's titles. About the same time, he joined the masonic *Loge des Amis réunis*. Founded by Savalette de Langes in 1771, the lodge included numerous contacts, among them Antoine-Jean-François Mégret de Sérilly (1746–1794), *trésorier général de l'extraordinaire des guerres*, with whom Sainte-James's business affairs became closely intertwined; and the polymathic *fermier général*, composer, author and publisher Jean-Benjamin de Laborde (1734–1793), who was to draw heavily on his friend's credit when, for example, he was ruined by the expenses of Mlle Guimard. But it was Fontenille, not Sainte-James, who seems to have first become involved with the charlatan Giuseppe Balsamo, the *soi-disant* conte di Cagliostro (1743–1795), in an uncharacteristic lapse of judgement. In 1780, Fontenille's wife became gravely ill, and they went to Cagliostro in the hopes of a magnetic cure. By April "elle n'en avait pas encore éprouvé de grands effets mais elle était un peu mieux", Fontenille wrote to his sister-in-law. Cagliostro took full advantage of the opportunity to enmesh both Fontenille and his brother-in-law, and lured them to Strasbourg: "Ma femme a vu le comte de Cagliostro qui est venu passer huit jours à Paris avec M. le Cardinal de Rohan. Il n'a pas voulu lui donner de remède et lui a dit qu'il fallait qu'elle fût à Strasbourg. Cet homme n'a pas du tout le jeu ni l'air d'un charlatan, j'en ai été fort content et sous une quinzaine de jours nous pourrions bien nous rendre auprès de lui."⁹⁰ Mme de Fontenille was not cured, dying four years later. But Cagliostro succeeded in hooking her brother Sainte-James, whom he made "grand chancelier" and Laborde "grand inspecteur" in his *Loge de Rite égyptien* in 1785.⁹¹ Sainte-James played a significant role in the *affaire du collier* (the necklace of 540 diamonds and 100 pearls by which cardinal de Rohan hoped to ingratiate himself with a queen who thought the object irredeemably vulgar); he had already lent 820,000 livres to the unfortunate jewellers Böhmer and Bassange when he was approached by cardinal de Rohan to finance (against his promise of the *cordons rouges*) the first instalment of 100,000 livres demanded by the jewellers. Sainte-James's concerns for the recovery of his original loan, communicated to the abbé de Vermond, precipitated the discovery of the scam.

The bust of the charlatan as Enlightenment *philosophe* (possibly commissioned by cardinal de Rohan, now in Washington)⁹² was executed in 1786 by Jean-Antoine Houdon (1741–1828). The subject's hypnotic gaze is captured without relying on the elaborate wig or enormous diamonds (supposedly made with his philosopher's stone) with which he bedecked himself; Houdon also manages to convey a sense of eerie malevolence that clearly escaped Fontenille. Although it has been suggested that Cagliostro met the sculptor through the *Loge des Neuf Soeurs*, of which they were both members,⁹³ in fact Sainte-James may have been the link.



Figure 9

⁸⁹ A version in oil on canvas, signed and dated "Valade 1772", dimensions and present location not known, descended through Baudard's daughter Marguerite into the Chastenet de Puysegur family, and thence to the comtesse de Lorgeril. Although it was reproduced in the early 1900s, it is omitted from Trope, *op. cit.*, and I owe its discovery to M. and Mme Baudard de Fontaine; it has now been reproduced in Gabrielle Joudiou, *La Folie de M. de Sainte-James*, Paris 2001, and Olivier Blanc, *L'Amour à Paris*, Paris, 2002. M. Xavier Salmon has found two further portraits of Sainte-James by Valade (private communication, December 2001); one of these, in pastel, signed "Valade 177[1]", is reproduced in Robert Lepeltier, *Restauration des dessins et estampes*, Fribourg & Paris, 1977, may be the primary version.

⁹⁰ AD Gard, I E 1832, 27 April 1780; 12 July 1780. Puech, *op. cit.*, provides more details of her constant ill health.

⁹¹ See Mathieu Couty, *Jean-Benjamin de Laborde*, Paris, 2001, p. 219; Chaussinand-Nogaret, *op. cit.*, p. 286n.

⁹² *Giuseppe Balsamo, conte di Cagliostro*, 1786, marble, 0.629x0.589x0.343 (without base), signed on truncated right arm "houdon / f. / 1786." (Washington, National Gallery of Art, Samuel H. Kress Collection 1952.5.103). Thought to have belonged to cardinal de Rohan, it was acquired by Lord Hertford, passed to Sir Richard Wallace and entered the NGA via the Seligmann firm.

⁹³ Arnason, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

Houdon had already (1781) portrayed Mégret de Sérilly's wife.⁹⁴ Sainte-James is known to have owned a terracotta *Diane chasseresse* by Houdon, but the existence of Houdon's portrait bust (fig. 9) was dismissed by Louis Réau;⁹⁵ it has remained unpublished in the family collection (descending to the comtesse de Lorgeril's sister, the comtesse de Féligonde) until now. It would appear to belong to the mid-1780s, and shows a much older Sainte-James than the Valade.

Mme de Fontenille's death in 1784 raised complex issues of succession. Her will somewhat enigmatically made her brother the sole heir (apart from a bequest of 100,000 livres to her daughter Mme de Malartic and some small bequests to servants), but her husband the executor.⁹⁶ Fontenille seems to have extracted a good settlement from his brother-in-law, applying the same techniques of tracing the finance provided for the purchase of his late wife's assets; the final division of her estate of 2,892,346 livres 2 sols 2 deniers was 1,775,649/18/6 to Fontenille and 1,116,696/3/8 to Sainte-James. There were a relatively small amount of personal items in the inventory; for example, her jewellery amounted to only 25,000 livres. The estate inventory shows her husband's fortune as in excess of 3.5 million livres.

Having continued to live with his parents after his marriage, it was not until 1777 that Sainte-James moved to the place Louis-le-Grand, shortly to be renamed place Vendôme (originally no. 3, now no. 12) – an area frequented by rich *fermiers généraux* and bankers. The house, for which he paid 286,000 livres, had belonged to the *fermier général* Jean-Hyacinthe-Emmanuel Hocquart de Montfermeil (1727–1778), and consisted of three storeys with a frontage of 24 metres; six arcades with pilasters and ashlar stone facings completed the imposing façade. Bélanger undertook the interior decoration⁹⁷ for Sainte-James, including Corinthian columns in the *grand salon* which echo those of Mansart's exterior, while his client's office was reflected in the compass set into the ebony and citronwood marquetry floor; in the gilded interlaced dolphins harnessed with strings of pearls on the double doors, surmounted with friezes of shells, crabs and seaweed; and by the four circular overdoors⁹⁸ depicting *Neptune dieu de la mer* and similar themes by Jean-Jacques Lagrenée *le jeune* (which alone cost 100,000 écus). Sainte-James's cabinet was decorated with a portrait *en pied* presented by the subject, the late Louis XV, to his father-in-law Thibault Dubois, while his wife's boudoir cost more than the 5000 louis spent on the dining room.⁹⁹ When sold in 1788, the house achieved the remarkable price of 347,000 livres; it subsequently housed a number of distinguished tenants, including Chénier and Chopin, and is now the headquarters of the jewellers Chaumet.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Née Anne-Marie-Louise Thomas de Pange de Domangeville (1763–1799). The marble, signed and dated 1782 in the Wallace Collection, was preceded by a terracotta shown in the 1781 Salon. Two further busts, signed and dated 1780, are noted in Hjørsvadur H. Arnason, *The sculptures of Houdon*, London, 1975, p. 113, n. 151. Mme de Sérilly's boudoir, by Rousseau de La Rottière with bronzes by Gouthière (c.1778), is preserved in the Victoria & Albert Museum (inv. 1736-1869); another room from the hôtel de Sérilly (104, rue Vieille-du-Temple, demolished 1867), with panelling by Gilles-Paul Cauvet, is in the Vanderbilt's house "The Breakers".

⁹⁵ Louis Réau, *Houdon*, Paris, 1964, I, p. 335: "Suivant des traditions assez vagues, qui demanderaient confirmation, Houdon aurait modelé les bustes de deux autres financiers dont l'opulence était proverbiale: Baudard de Saint-James, trésorier général de la marine et des colonies, et le Bordelais Beaujon;" see also II, p. 78, no. D.10 "contestée ou erronée"; II, p. 12, no. 5: *Diane chasseresse*. "En 1787, une *Diane* en terre cuite est mentionnée dans un procès-verbal de scellés et un inventaire des meubles et effets de Baudard..."

⁹⁶ Will of 26 October 1784 (AS fichier gl DC6 262 f° 90). An extremely intricate "Liquidation et partage entre Monsieur Faventine fermier général et Monsieur Baudard de Ste James de la succession de Mme Faventine", 6 May 1785, assesses her estate to work out the settlement between her widower and her brother (AN T656).

⁹⁷ See Thierry Sarmant & Luce Gaume, *La Place Vendôme*, Paris, 2002; John Whitehead, *The French Eighteenth Century Interior*, London, 1992, pp. 68–69; Diana Scarisbrick, *Chaumet: master jewellers since 1780*, Paris, 1995. The hôtel was largely rebuilt in 1858, and only the grand salon remains (it was listed as an historic monument in 1927). Another room from the hôtel, with fireplace (signed M. Donville Marcuiller 1776), mirrors, wall panels and entrance doors, was formerly in the De Young Museum, San Francisco, and was recently sold at auction (San Francisco, Butterfields, 25–26 June 2001, Lot 6695, reproduced).

⁹⁸ Marc Sandoz, *Les Lagrenée II, Jean-Jacques Lagrenée (le jeune) 1739–1821*, Paris, 1988, pp. 216, 232, nos. 105-A 1°: Plafond, oeuvres incertaines; 2° Quatre dessus de portes, toiles, circulaire (1m20): a) *La France reçoit les richesses de la mer*; b) *Neptune dieu de la mer*; c) *Le départ du navigateur*; d) *Mercur et Flore*, reproduced plate VIII; no. 145: travaux préparatoires.

⁹⁹ *Correspondance secrète*, VIII, p. 219, from Versailles, 6 August 1779.

¹⁰⁰ Of whom Sainte-James is said to have been a patron. The firm was founded by Marie-Etienne Nitot in 1780 and came to prominence under Napoléon. It did not adopt the name of Chaumet until 1907.

Sainte-James was said to lack intellectual refinement. Mme Vigée Le Brun regarded him as a latter-day Monsieur Jourdain, describing receptions at his house where the rotund and rubicund Sainte-James received at least forty to dinner with “plus de bonhomie que de grâce”.¹⁰¹ This was perhaps not entirely fair: Sainte-James’s scientific interests were expressed in a natural history cabinet¹⁰² (echoing that of another *languedocien* financier, Joseph Bonnier de la Mosson, in the Nattier portrait in Washington), and the library included some 1600 volumes (his copy of the *Encyclopédie* was kept in the country).¹⁰³ Although his friend was clearly not unbiased, the generous dedication by Laborde in his translation of *Voyage de Swinburne* testifies I think to a genuine friendship with a sophisticated intellectual: “A mon ami S.-J.! O le meilleur des Amis! Je vous dois ma tranquillité; ce doux bonheur de la vie. Je vous dois bien plus encore, celui d’une femme aussi aimable que respectable, qui, n’ayant pas mérité de partager mes infortunes, s’y est volontairement associée pour m’en adoucir les rigueurs; et celui d’un enfant chéri que nous élevons à vous bénir tous les jours de sa vie. Les services que vous nous avez rendus ne peuvent être surpassés que par la reconnaissance dont nos coeurs sont pénétrés, et par le plaisir que j’ai à vous rendre ce témoignage public, quoique mystérieux. Si votre modestie, l’une de vos vertus, m’empêche de mettre ici votre nom et le mien, vous n’en serez pas moins reconnu de tout le monde; des uns parce qu’ils connaissent l’excellence de votre coeur, et des autres parce que celle de votre réputation est parvenue jusqu’à eux; tous vous nommeront dès qu’ils me verront vous désigner comme le plus généreux et le plus bienfaisant des hommes. Si tous ceux que vous avez obligés vous eussent offert un semblable tribut de reconnaissance, quelle bibliothèque pourrait être jamais aussi nombreuse que la vôtre.”¹⁰⁴

Three small oval pastels of Sainte-James’s children in the family collection only came to light in 2007.¹⁰⁵ They represent the two sons Georges (1765–1819), himself trésorier de la marine in 1804, and Maurice (1768–1832), known as Monsieur de Vaudésir, and the daughter Marguérite (1766–1837). Evidently the work of Valade, they must have been executed in the late 1770s (before the birth of the third son Alphonse), when the pastellist had greatly reduced his activity. They underline the special relationship he had with this family.

In 1781 the 15-year-old Marguérite married Armand-Marc-Jacques de Chastenet, marquis de Puységur (1751–1825), a member of the family celebrated for introducing Louis XIII to armagnac, and himself known both as a playwright¹⁰⁶ and scientist – a pupil of Mesmer, he is credited with the discovery of hypnotism.¹⁰⁷ Clearly Puységur did not share Mme Vigée Le Brun’s views of his father-in-law, and probably enjoyed his visits to the place Vendôme with the attractions of his father-in-law’s cabinet of scientific curiosities as well as the proximity of

¹⁰¹ Élisabeth-Louise Vigée Le Brun, *Portraits à la plume*, in *Souvenirs*, Paris, 1986, II, p. 312f.

¹⁰² See L.-V. Thiéry, *Guide des amateurs et des étrangers voyageurs à Paris*, 1787, I, p. 128, describing the place Vendôme:

“Autre cabinet d’Histoire Naturelle.

La maison, no. 5, située au côté gauche de la place, est occupée par M. Baudard de Sainte-James, l’un des Trésoriers des dépenses du département de la Marine. Cette maison est remarquable par un magnifique sallon, dont le plafond & les dessus de portes ont été peints par M. la Grenée, le jeune, Peintre du Roi. Ce sallon est très-richement décoré d’après les dessins de M. Bellanger, Architecte de M^{gr} Comte d’Artois, dont nous avons déjà eu occasion de citer les talens. M. de Ste. James est aussi possesseur d’un cabinet d’Histoire naturelle, où il a rassemblé une suite de mines d’or, d’argent & de tous les métaux & demi-métaux, des pétrifications, cristaux, marbres, &c. Une collection d’oiseaux exotiques, une suite très-variée de crabes, une collection de coquilles bien conservées, beaucoup d’habillemens, d’armes, indiennes, &c. &c.”

¹⁰³ Bibliothèque Paul Marmottan Ms. Rés. O. 3020, cited Ozanam, *op. cit.*, p. 133. At Sainte-James’s request, seals were affixed to the houses in the place Vendôme and at Neuilly in February 1787, and the inventory survives. Despite its length, we are left tantalised by descriptions such as “un tableau portrait” in the Appartement de M. de Sainte-James; there were no fewer than 77 “estampes sous verre” in the immediate ante rooms. The contents of the cellars, shared with the marquis de Puységur, are however catalogued in great detail.

¹⁰⁴ *Voyage de Henri Swinburne dans les deux Siciles en 1777, 1778, 1779 et 1780, traduit de l’anglais par un voyageur français* [Jean-Benjamin de Laborde], Paris, 1785, tome I, p. 3; cited in part in Couty, *op. cit.*; and in full, Jacques de Visme, *Un favori des dieux: Jean-Benjamin de La Borde (1734–1794)*, Paris, 1935, p. 135f.

¹⁰⁵ See Philippe & Nicole Baudard de Fontaine, *Ces messieurs Baudard de Sainte-James, trésoriers de la marine*, Paris, 2007, pp. 129, 132, 134, reproduced.

¹⁰⁶ His comedy *Le Juge bienfaisant du marquis* was first performed at the Théâtre du Marais by the Comédiens de l’Odéon in 1799.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, Pascal Michel, “Les Mémoires de Puységur”, in *Revue de Parapsychologie*, January 1985, which discusses Puységur’s *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire et à l’établissement du magnétisme animal*, Paris, 1785 and later writings.

Mesmer, another *Vendômien* who should be regarded as rather more than a sophisticated Cagliostro. The marquise de Puységur was portrayed¹⁰⁸ by Mme Vigée Le Brun in 1786; dressed as a milkmaid in a red peasant's bodice and a large rustic straw hat, she reflects the fashion set by Marie Antoinette in her Trianon period, under the guidance of Rose Bertin.¹⁰⁹

Sainte-James was an obvious target for the author of the *Mémoires secrets*, who deplored his “luxe insolent [qui] présageait tôt ou tard la ruine”.¹¹⁰ The most conspicuous example of this was surely the “folie Sainte-James”¹¹¹ which he had built by François-Joseph Bélanger at Neuilly in response to his neighbour, the comte d'Artois, who had just had the jardins de Bagatelle constructed in 60 days to win a bet. Of course, both of these clients were following the fashion for the picturesque or English garden of M. de Wolmar's *Élysée* in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) – taken up by Carmontelle for the duc de Chartres's Monceau and widely imitated.¹¹² Sainte-James's instructions to Bélanger were to do “ce qu'il voudrait, pourvu que ce fût chère”. The main building itself, constructed in 1777, was neoclassical and sober, but the extravagance was reserved for the gardens, including a 43 metre long artificial rock; Sainte-James was accordingly known as the “homme au rocher” (the phrase¹¹³ was coined later by the king, who remembered having seen the immense rock being drawn by over forty horses – at the time he maintained an “eloquent silence” on being told the destination of the consignment). The park extended on both sides of the avenue de Madrid, with two tunnels connecting the halves. Water was pumped from the Seine by a machine to feed a network of canals which ran through the park, with a Chinese pavilion, dozens of bridges, grottoes and other buildings, as well as a *Silène* and a *Satyre* by Pajou¹¹⁴ (subsequently in the collection of Robert de Montesquiou and now in the musée de Picardie, Amiens) and numerous other statues. Among these must be noted the *Vertumne et Pomone*¹¹⁵ by the sculptor Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne II (subsequently in the collection of Rodolphe Kann, and now in the Louvre), traditionally reported as celebrating the love of the king and Mme de Pompadour who had played Ovid's heroine in a representation at Versailles in 1749.

The construction of the secondary buildings began in 1780 under the direction of the architect Jean-Baptiste Chaussard (no doubt selected to replace Bélanger¹¹⁶ on the

¹⁰⁸ Snite Museum, Notre Dame University; previously with the Knoedler Gallery in New York in 1928 and acquired by Mrs Fred Fisher, who donated it to the Snite.

¹⁰⁹ Madge Garland, “Rose Bertin: Minister of Fashion”, in *Apollo*, January 1968, p. 45.

¹¹⁰ See Louis Petit de Bachaumont et al., *Mémoires secrets*, xxxiv, 2 December 1787, p. 104 [in London edition, 1789].

¹¹¹ Among numerous pictures of the folie, the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Estampes, Va 220) has plans and original drawings by Bélanger, some of which (together with work by Chaussard) are reproduced in J.-Ch. Krafft, *Recueil d'architecture civile*, 1812, plates 97-114; comte Ernest de Ganay, “L'Art des jardins”, *Revue de l'art ancien et moderne*, 1922, pp. 392-8, reproduces two pendant gouaches of the buildings and gardens by Louis Moreau l'aîné (0.275x0.40; probably from Bélanger's collection, 15 June 1818, no. 125; later with David David-Weill; see Moreau exh. cats., Wildenstein, 1923, nos. 18, 19; and Galerie Cailleux, 1957, no. 76, 77) and Chatelet; see also Jean Stern, *A l'ombre de Sophie Arnould: François-Joseph Bélanger*, Paris, 1930, I, 131-47; abbé Bouillet, “La folie de Saint-James”, *Réunion des sociétés des Beaux-arts des départements*, xviii, 1894, pp. 731-47; Baritou, Foussard, *op. cit.*; Kerstin M. Gjesdahl, “Une ‘Folie’ parisienne conservée: la folie Saint-James”, *L'Information d'histoire de l'art*, 7^e année, January-February 1962, pp. 68-79; Alan Braham, *The architecture of the French Enlightenment*, London, 1980.

¹¹² See Michel Gallet, *Paris Domestic Architecture of the 18th Century*, London, 1972, pp. 102f. For a general survey of these gardens, see Eleanor DeLorme, *Garden Pavilions and the 18th Century French Court*, London, 1996, and *Bagatelle dans ses jardins*, ed. Martine Constans, Paris, 1997.

¹¹³ *Mémoires secrets*, xxxiv, p. 149, 14 February 1787.

¹¹⁴ See *Pajou: Sculpteur du Roi 1730-1809*, exhibition, Paris, musée du Louvre, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 20 October 1997- 24 May 1998; cat. by James David Draper and Guilhem Scherf, no. 24 and fig. 22. Since these sculptures are dated 1758, it is again unclear if Sainte-James, his father or an unrelated party commissioned them. Pajou worked for the *fermier général* Fontaine de Cramayel as early as 1759.

¹¹⁵ Stone, 1.63x1.50x0.60 m; signed “Par J. B. Lemoyne/1760” (Paris, musée du Louvre, RF 2716). The initial history of this work is unclear; it is first mentioned in 1786. It was acquired by Kann on the Paris art market in 1904; sale, Paris, 1908, no. 90; Georges Hersent; his widow left the group to the state in 1952. It was deposited in the *Élysée* Palace until 1984. The traditional identification of the sitters has recently been questioned. See Louis Réau, *Les Lemoyne*, Paris, 1927, pp. 56f, 140, no. 21, fig. 29; Jean-René Gaborit et al., *Musée du Louvre: Sculpture française II – Renaissance et temps moderne*, Paris, 1998, II, p. 465; Guilhem Scherf, “Madame de Pompadour et la sculpture”, in *Dossier de l'Art*, February 2002, pp. 61-73.

¹¹⁶ Sainte-James continued to use Bélanger: for example, in 1785, he was commissioned to restore the château de Mont-Saint-Père; while in September 1785, Bélanger bought (and partly leased back) a plot at the corner of the rue Neuve-des-Capucins and the rue Chantereine in Paris; he was instructed to build another Folie there, which subsequently became the Printemps

recommendation of Sainte-James's brother-in-law); he was responsible for the remarkable *cabinet d'histoire naturelle* surmounted by a cupola and the extensive greenhouses praised by the ambivalent *Mémoires secrets*: "Ces jardins, au surplus, sont d'un gout si bizarre, qu'après les avoir parcourus dans le plus grand détail, il n'en reste qu'une idée confuse, & l'on ne peut en rendre compte faute d'ensemble & d'un plan d'unité bien conçu. Les serres chaudes sont l'article sur lequel tout le monde s'accorde & qui réunit l'admiration générale: elles sont d'une espace nouvelle, tout-à-fait à jour, entourées & couvertes de glaces, ou du moins de verres très épais. La pompe à feu, une rivière entière, les cascades, des grottes, un rocher énorme, une galerie souterraine tapissée de mousse, des gazons de la verdure la plus exquise, des bronzes, des marbres, des statuts antiques: on est frappé de tant de merveilles; la nature & l'art semblent s'y disputer de prodigalité."¹¹⁷ The folie itself is now a school, but too much (four-fifths) of the park has disappeared to leave a real impression of how it appeared in the eighteenth century – as an eighth wonder of the world.¹¹⁸

emporium; see Jean Stern, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 142ff, 209. A letter of 6 December 1785 to Bélanger (Académie royale de Belgique, collection du baron Stossart, reprinted in Stern, *loc. cit.*), shows the Trésorier still relying on Bélanger's advice on further enhancements at Neuilly, and reveals some of the hazards of the architectural profession: it seems that a mason, whose bill was cut back by Bélanger for defective work, was creating considerable difficulties which Sainte-James reassured Bélanger would not diminish his confidence in him.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3 June 1787, XXXV, p. 192–3.

¹¹⁸ Numerous descriptions of the Folie exist, most deriving from the extensive description in the almost contemporary L.-V. Thiéry, *Guide des amateurs et des étrangers voyageurs à Paris*, Paris, 1787, I, pp. 33–39 of "une charmante maison de campagne appartenante à M. de Sainte-James, Trésorier-général de la Marine.

Maison & jardins de M. de Sainte-James

Cette maison, rétablie & décorée depuis peu sur les dessins de M. Bellanger, premier Architecte de Mgr Comte d'Artois, a le milieu de sa façade sur la cour, ornée d'un joli péristyle d'ordre ionique, élevé sur quelques degrés. Sur la façade du côté du jardin, est un perron à deux rampes, dont les extrémités sont terminées par des piédestaux qui portent des lions dans le genre antique, & exécutés en marbre bleu turquin. Ce perron, recouvert par un petit péristyle dans la manière des Chinois, est très-bien traité; il domine sur les jardins & sur les environs, de manière que le spectateur aperçoit devant lui un paysage délicieux, agréablement terminé sur la droite par le superbe *pont de Neuilly*, & sur la gauche par le *mont Valérien*.

Le jardin, traité dans le genre pittoresque, offre des sites charmans & agréablement variés par les contours d'une rivière factice, disposée de façon que la rivière de *Seine* semble en faire la continuation de tous côtés. L'on communique par des ponts de pierre ou de brique à plusieurs isles formées par cette rivière.

Une de ces isles, nommé *l'isle de Magnolias*, a dans son milieu un bosquet orné d'un groupe de marbre blanc, représentant Zéphire & Flore, & de trois vases de marbre posés sur des fûts de colonnes: chacun d'eux contient un jet dont l'eau, retombant en nappe, inonde en quelque sorte ce bosquet; puis suivant la pente du terrain, retourne à la rivière. Sur la droite de cette isle, la rivière forme une espèce de lac, au milieu duquel on a construit un *kiosque* dans le genre chinois, & orné de *bamboucs*. Ce pavillon isolé est élevé au-dessus du niveau de l'eau, & l'on ne peut y arriver qu'en bateau.

L'autre isle est un bosquet où l'on a placé, entre de grands acacias & de beaux magnolias, un buste d'Apollon en marbre blanc. On trouve, au-delà du lac, une monticule formée par des rochers, dont le sommet est couronné par un pavillon chinois: l'on y arrive par de petits escaliers pratiqués dans les rochers; on découvre de cette élévation tout l'ensemble du jardin, la Seine, le pont de Neuilly, &c. Le dessous est occupé par une glacière dont l'entrée forme une caverne pittoresque.

Une espèce de labyrinthe souterrain, placé dans les environs, offre un asyle contre les ardeurs du soleil. Une caverne sert de vestibule; elle conduit sous une voûte de mousse, où l'on desire pénétrer malgré l'obscurité qui y règne. A peine y a-t-on fait quelques pas, que l'on entend le bruit des eaux, qui tombent en bouillonnant sur des roches. Un jour mystérieux adroitement pratiqué dans l'assemblage des rochers, vous laisse apercevoir cette chute en avançant quelques pas: & l'on ne quitte qu'à regret cet endroit, dont on ne peut se lasser d'admirer l'effet. En continuant de se promener sous cette agréable voûte verte, on rencontre des bancs de mousse & de gazon qui invitent au repos; placés en face d'ouvertures disposées de distances en distances, ils vous offrent aussi autant de points de vue différens. A quelques pas de là l'on trouve un petit temple ou laiterie gothique d'un plan pentagone, qui ne reçoit le jour que par le milieu de sa coupole, soutenue par les cinq colonnes qui en marquent les angles. Après avoir respiré le frais délicieux de cet endroit & suivi les détours sinueux du chemin voûté, où l'on rencontre encore des chûtes d'eau, l'on sort de cet agréable dédale par un petit sallon rustique, dehors duquel on se trouve sur les bords de la rivière, près du kiosque. Le dessus de ce souterrain, formant une petite éminence, est planté en arbres de toutes espèces, comme sapins, pins, &c. ou autres arbres exotiques ou indigènes.

A l'endroit où la rivière termine son cours dans cette portion du jardin, elle s'enfuit à travers un groupe de rochers, sous la saillie duquel on a placé un banc de pierre, où plusieurs personnes peuvent être assises sans être mouillées par la nappe d'eau qui les couvre. De là elle va de précipiter très-pittoresquement dans une espèce de gouffre ou caverne spacieuse, sous laquelle elle coule ensuite dans un petit canal. Cette caverne ou voûte est construite sous un chemin public, & réunit par ce moyen ce jardin à une prairie appartenante aussi à M. de Sainte-James, située de l'autre côté du chemin, & qui va jusqu'à la Seine. Cette eau, après avoir encore prolongé son cours dans cette prairie, où l'on a pratiqué des promenades à l'ombre sous des allées plantées d'arbres à fleurs, va se perdre dans la Seine, près de la pompe à feu qui fournit sa source.

Non loin de la maison, près les murs de clôture, sur la rive gauche de la petite rivière factice, est une composition immense des rochers, formant une vaste voûture, ornée dans son milieu d'un corps d'architecture composé de six colonnes d'ordre dorique, dont deux en retour, & soutenant un fronton triangulaire; une autre petite voûture, fabriquée sous ce porche, fournit un volume d'eau qui retombe en nappe derrière les colonnes, dont les bases, cachées sous l'eau, forment le plus agréable reflet. Des escaliers

Neither the folie Sainte-James nor the jardins de Bagatelle were much admired by the Scottish gardener Thomas Blaikie in March 1783 when he visited the Folie following a meeting with Sainte-James and the comte de Vaudreuil:¹¹⁹ “I told him that as I was the friend of Mr. Bellanger I would go and see him as a friend but would not do anything against him; went however one day and planted the Lawen from the house towards the hothouses which pleased very much Mr. Belanger and Mr. St James; this Garden is certainly an example of extravagance more than of taste as Mr. Belanger has carried every thing to the Greatest pitch of extravagance; there is a Rock formed before the house or rather an arch of prodigious large Stones where the water seems to arrive, but this although at a great expence has nothing of nature or natural beauty being entermixed with hewen Stone and a litle temple in the midle in the Corinthian order and every thing equally ridiculous as there is neither elevation nor mountain to form this huge pile of rocks. There is another subteraneous walk lined with moss in imitation of that I formed at the hermitage at Bagatelle and in this they have made a fine subterraneous temple where the water falls; this in some circumstances is very elegant as a variety and the whole forms only an agreeable wilderness. And ended all this extravegance was the desire of the Compte Dartois who I heard say to Mr. Belanger ‘I hope you will ruin St James’ as ended that soon happened.” The folie cost somewhere between the 750,000 livres estimated by his heirs and upwards of the 1.7 million livres alleged by his detractors to have been spent on the rock alone: “Avec 400,000 francs de moins, M. de Sainte James aurait mieux réussi,” remarked the prince de Ligne¹²⁰, while for Krafft, “si les Bellanger sont rares, les Sainte-James le sont plus encore”.¹²¹ D’Artois quipped to his brother, “Sire, je voudrais bien que vous me donnassiez la charge de Trésorier général de votre marine, sans quoi je désespère d’égaliser en magnificence mon voisin”¹²² and to others “Je

à deux rampes, en pierre & brique, permettent de monter sur partie de ces rochers: leurs palliers sont ornés de candelabres de plomb soutenus par des chimères. De ces candelabres sortent des bouillons d’eau. D’autres escaliers pratiqués dans le roc, laissent gravir jusqu’au sommet de cette masse importante, sur laquelle est un réservoir contenant 260 muids d’eau. Les portes qui sont sous les massifs des principaux palliers, conduisent à des grottes souterraines, d’où l’on passe à une superbe salle de bains, qui se trouve directement au-dessous du réservoir: cette salle, décorée en stuc, a ses deux extrémités terminées en cul-de-four, & sa voûte ornée de caissons & rosaces. Le derrière de cette masse des rochers présente une architecture rustique du meilleur goût, & donne sur une charmante allée qui borde les murs de clôture.

Cette masse est placée d’autant plus ingénieusement de la part de l’Architecte, qu’elle se détache en partie sur le ciel, y forme un effet très-pittoresque, & cache adroitement la clôture du jardin de ce côté.

Au bas du flanc droit de la maison, est un bassin, dont l’eau jaillissant continuellement, fait entendre son agréable murmure de la salle à manger, qui est dans cette partie, & dont la vue s’étend sur une superbe pelouse terminée par deux berceaux de treillages formant le demi-cercle, & conduisant parallèlement aux serres chaudes qui occupent le fond. Sur la gauche, près des potagers, est un bassin dont le milieu forme un isle. Un saule pleureur planté dans le centre, & recouvert de treillages, en couvre le diamètre avec ses branches, & y forme une espèce de parasol. Derrière sont les potagers, bien entretenues, d’où l’on communique à une charmante basse-cour disposée en ménagerie, puis aux basses cours & commun de la maison. A droite de la pelouse, dans les bosquets, sont une balançoire, des vases de marbres, & des statues qui méritent attention. Auprès est une charmante allée en terrasse, sur le chemin; tous les arbres dont elle est composée sont étrangers & d’espèces bien variées: on y voit l’arbre du vernis, le Thuya ou arbre de vie, &c.

En face de la porte d’entrée de la maison, & de l’autre côté de la voie publique, est un très-beau potager, appartenant aussi à M. de Sainte-James. Son allée principale répondant à l’entrée de la maison, est ornée de vases de marbre blanc & de deux lignes d’orangers. L’on trouve à son extrémité une vigne à l’italienne, située dans une espèce d’isle carrée, formée par un fossé revêtu de pierre & rempli d’eau. L’on y aborde par un pont de pierre, & après s’être promené à l’ombre de cette charmante treille, un autre pont, dans la partie opposée, conduit au temple de Bacchus, construit dans les bosquets du fond. Son porche est couvert de chaume. Ce temple, dans le genre gothique, est de forme ronde; sa décoration intérieure consiste en une frise ornée d’un bas-relief, qui règne dans le pourtour. Entre les voussures en ogives soutenues par des piliers, sont des bas-reliefs en médaillons, dont les fonds colorés sont autant de camées précieusement traitées. Au milieu se voit un groupe de marbre blanc, représentant Bacchus & Erigone; son piédestal, décoré de bon goût, a la forme d’un autel antique. Des banquettes circulaires placées entre les colonnes et le mur, recouvertes en sparterie, y forment des bans imitant le gazon.

Ce tout ensemble offre un jardin où l’on a réuni l’agréable à l’utile: tout y est traité avec goût. Le choix & la variété des arbres & des plantes, tant indigènes qu’exotiques, nous ont fait voir ce local avec beaucoup d’intérêt.

Ce lieu, qui n’est ni chinois ni anglois, nous donne l’idée de la manière dont on peut traiter un jardin dans un genre pittoresque, sans emprunter ce mot d’anglois, qui ne caractérise point un genre.

¹¹⁹ Thomas Blaikie, *Diary of a Scotch Gardener at the French Court at the End of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. F. Birrell, 1931, pp. 180–1.

¹²⁰ *Coup d’oeil sur Beloeil et sur une grande partie des jardins de l’Europe*, ed. E. de Ganay, Paris, 1922, p. 226.

¹²¹ Krafft, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

¹²² *Mémoires secrets, loc. cit.* Another Choiseul protégé, Radix de Sainte-Foy, a former lover of Mme du Barry, had been trésorier général de la marine as well as surintendant de finances du comte d’Artois. That did not stop him getting into financial

voudrais bien faire passer chez moi un petit bras du ruisseau d'or qui sort du rocher de mon voisin.”¹²³

Sainte-James was a patron of the *maîtres doreurs-ciseleurs* François Rémond and Pierre Gouthière (1732–1813/14). Gouthière, who may be said to have established “le style Louis XVI” in ormolu *objets d'art*, had worked with Bélanger and Houdon on the jewel cabinet presented by Louis XV to the dauphine Marie-Antoinette in 1770. Sainte-James acquired a splendid clock with a mechanism by Robin (“l’auteur n’a rien laissé à désirer pour la perfection de cet ouvrage”) at the sale of the duc d’Aumont’s collection in 1782, using the dealer Le Brun to bid 4,223 livres.¹²⁴ But his main extravagance was for the courtesan Marguérite-Éléonore de Villemont (1747–1784), known as Mlle Beauvoisin, to whom he was introduced by Mme du Barry’s brother-in-law Jean du Barry “le roué”. She had trained as a ballet dancer at the Académie royale de musique, but was drawn into an easier career by Mlle Duthé. Taken up by the marquis de Sade, who notoriously passed her off as his wife on a trip to his Provençal home, the château de La Coste, in 1765,¹²⁵ she subsequently became the mistress of Choiseul, Gramont and Mégret de Sérilly¹²⁶ (among many others, according to police records of the time). By 1772 she was living with Hocquart de Montfermeil, the previous owner of 12, place Vendôme,¹²⁷ and was stalked by other *fermiers généraux* such as another Valade client (and of Pajou; he was also Laborde’s brother-in-law), M. de Cramayel “[qui] la lorgne de près”.¹²⁸ When Sainte-James took her up, she was past her prime; having turned to alcohol, she had lost her figure, and to retain her new client’s interest she adopted a regime based on vinegar which probably led to her early death.¹²⁹ The gardener Thomas Blaikie had also worked for her, in 1782: “From Mme de Coolen’s went to Meet Mr. Belanger at Mme de Bonvoissin which is about half a Mile further up the hill paste de Gates of Bellevue; this house of Mmm Bonvoissin is small but agreeably situated; here they have already made a sort of an English garden but nothing can be more ridiculouss. But Mr. Belanger who seems the confident of the Lady pretends to change the whole; this Lady is a kept Mistress and doubtless makes some of the nobility and financiers pay for those expenses; found Mr. St James Tresorier de la Marine here and I believe it is him who pays.” Indeed, he spent unimaginable sums on clothes and jewels for her: when they were auctioned after her death in 1784, the *Mémoires secrets* explained more fully: “Il est mort il y a peu de tems une courtisane du vieux serral, nommé M^{lle} de Beauvoisin. Obligée de donner à jouer pour se tirer d’affaire, elle avoit par ses charmes usés en l’art en dernier lieu de captiver M^r Baudard de Sainte James, Trésorier des dépenses du département de la marine. Ce magnifique seigneur, ayant plus d’argent que de goût, avoit fait des dépenses énormes pour elle: on estime qu’il faut qu’il lui ait donné en bijoux seuls & autres effets environ *quinze à dix-huit cens mille francs*, outre vingt mille écus de fixe par an. Sa vente est aujourd’hui l’objet de la curiosité, non-seulement des filles élégantes, mais encore des femmes de qualité. On y compte deux cens bagues plus superbes l’une que l’autre: on y voit des diamans sur papier, comme chez les lapidaires, c’est-à-dire non montés; ses belles robes montent à quatre-vingts; on parle de draps de trente-deux aunes, tels que la Reine n’en a point. Enfin

difficulties, which necessitated his selling the reversion of his magnificent hôtel (the current nos. 8–10, boulevard des Capucines) to Sainte-James in 1782; see Jacques Hillairet, *op. cit.*

¹²³ La baronne d’Oberkirch, *Mémoires sur la cour de Louis XVI et la société française avant 1789*, Paris, 1989, p. 655. The baronne was a close friend of Puységur, and so was allowed into the garden at Neuilly where she surprised the duc d’Orléans and Mme de Genlis whom Sainte-James had asked his servants to leave undisturbed.

¹²⁴ Baron Charles Davillier, *Le cabinet du duc d’Aumont et les amateurs de son temps*, Paris, 1870; sale, 12 December 1782, Lot 339.

¹²⁵ See Donald Thomas, *The Marquis de Sade*, London, 1992, pp. 68ff; *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, 1924, LXXXVII, 668, 780, 926.

¹²⁶ La Beauvoisin had a daughter by Mégret de Sérilly, and an unpublished source suggests that it was this (very young) girl whom Sainte-James installed at Neuilly.

¹²⁷ “M. le duc de Durfort a renoué avec Mlle Beauvoisin qui vit avec M. de Monfermeil parce que Mlle Duthé s’en va en Angleterre avec M. de Matowski...”, Camille Piton, *Paris sous Louis XV*, Paris, 1906, p. 57 [November 1772]; see also p. 38. La Beauvoisin owned at least three houses when Sainte-James bought 12, place Vendôme: Hocquart had built her a house in the rue Saint-Lazare in 1770; she already owned one in the rue Feydeau and had a country house at Bellevue.

¹²⁸ Piton, *op. cit.*, 2^{ème} sér., Paris, 1908, p. 157 [January 1765]; Valade portrayed *Mme de Cramayel jouant de la guitare*, c. 1760 (Trove 24).

¹²⁹ See Olivier Blanc, *L’Amour à Paris*, Paris, 2002, p. 282.

depuis la vente de la fameuse *Deschamps*, on n'en connoît pas en ce genre qui ait fait autant de bruit."¹³⁰

Apart from his personal expenditure, Sainte-James had business problems. Böhmer and Bassange acknowledged their debt in 1786 (now mounting to over 1 million livres), but could only repay it by assigning five years' revenues from Rohan's abbaye de Saint-Vaast. Sainte-James was also owed a large part of the debts of 14 million livres left by Choiseul on his death in 1785; Sainte-James and Beaumarchais were joint liquidators of the estate, whose debts were only paid in 1788. In fact, Sainte-James's downfall owed little to his personal extravagance; the economic forces that led to the Revolution were already at work, and his empire was built on large, illiquid assets, many of which got into difficulties. In 1785, the maréchal de Castries (another Choiseul protégé) authorised the formation of the Compagnie du Nord and allowed Sainte-James to float bills to finance it in his capacity as *trésorier*.¹³¹ However the state refused to ratify the contract in 1786, leading to the presentation of the bills to Sainte-James personally. By January 1787, he had supplied accounts to Calonne showing that, by his own estimation,¹³² the assets of the venture of 25 million livres comfortably exceeded its debts of some 20 million, and he demanded immediate settlement by the government; Calonne refused. The lack of personal liquidity forced him to suspend payments, and he offered to have the accounts examined and accepted voluntary imprisonment in the Bastille on 1 February 1787. He dined with Marmontel the evening before his incarceration, and was visited in prison by the comte de Vaudreuil, comte de Mercy and the bishop of Luçon. The *Commission de conseil* appointed duly declared him bankrupt and ordered the general liquidation of his effects under derisory conditions. The *Correspondance secrète*¹³³ assumed that "il a accéléré sa ruine en se livrant à ses goûts: filles fort cher, jardins anglais, agiotage, tout a contribué à détruire une fortune immense"; while the Cour des Comptes attributed the causes of his bankruptcy to "le luxe, l'avidité et surtout l'impunité".¹³⁴ His bankruptcy brought down his friend Mégret de Sérilly soon after, exacerbating the political repercussions.

Within three months of his imprisonment, the *Mémoires secrets* recorded with relish, "ce *Lacullus* qui naguères rendoit tout Paris témoin & envieux de son luxe & de sa somptuosité, succombant enfin à ses chagrins, est mort presque à l'aumône".¹³⁵ In fact Sainte-James was released on 29 March, and stayed with Fontenille in the rue d'Antin, where he died on 3 July.¹³⁶ Mme Vigée Le Brun noted that the Revolution "n'est point arrivée à temps pour punir M. de Sainte-James d'avoir étalé tant de magnificence."¹³⁷ Among the various assets auctioned after his death, ironically the folie was bought by the duchesse de Choiseul-Praslin for some 262,000 livres.¹³⁸ After the Revolution, his family had the enquiry reopened; his accounts were found to

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 22 November 1784, xxvii, p. 27–28.

¹³¹ Necker had already indicated his disapproval of the quantity of bills raised by Sainte-James to finance his personal expenditure: as early as 1780 he wrote to Maurepas, "Vous avez vu ... mon chagrin et mon étonnement de ce que Monseigneur de Sainte-James s'est permis de faire quatre millions de billets à mon insu et vous avez partagé ces sentiments. D'après une nouvelle conférence que j'ai eue avec lui ce n'est pas quatre millions, c'est vingt, tant en billets qu'en engagements contractés avec ordre de me les cacher et qui s'étaient point compris dans les états qu'il certifiait véritables. C'est un coup de bombe aussi inattendu qu'incroyable...". But it was Sartine, ministre de la Marine, not Sainte-James, who lost his job; see Leroux-Cesbron, *op. cit.*, p. 673.

¹³² His balance sheet (AN Marine C7 19) is reprinted in Chaussinand-Nogaret, *op. cit.*, p. 324ff. Inter alia, it shows loans to members of his family: Sauvé, 103,000 livres, and Blanchard et neveu, 545,000 livres.

¹³³ 2 February 1787, cited in Leroux-Cesbron, *op. cit.*, p. 678.

¹³⁴ *Remontrances de la chambre des comptes*, 11 February 1787, p. 13, cited in J. F. Bosher, *French finance 1770–1795*, Cambridge, 1970, p. 191.

¹³⁵ *Op. cit.*, 7 July 1787, xxxv, p. 309. We may speculate that his conditions of detention were closer to those of the marquis de Sade, who by then was kept in solitary confinement, than those of the cardinal de Rohan, discharged two years earlier after the *affaire du collier*.

¹³⁶ A story related by the duchesse de Vicence to Charles Brifaut, *Souvenirs d'un Académicien*, Paris, n.d. [1921], I, p. 265f, concerns Sainte-James's role in persuading Talleyrand to marry Mme Grand, would seem highly implausible given the dates – as Brifaut seems to have realised.

¹³⁷ Mme Vigée Le Brun, *loc. cit.*

¹³⁸ It subsequently passed through various hands, including the duchesse d'Abrantès, until bought by Dr Pinel in 1851, who transformed it into a nursing home (the alcoholic Toulouse-Lautrec was among the patients). He failed to sell the sculptures to the Louvre, and they were dispersed (see Draper & Scherf, *op. cit.*, p. 64).

be perfectly in order and his net worth was estimated at some 19 million livres. But the family's attempts to obtain recompense became mired in legal process and were finally struck out by the courts in 1866 on the principle of limitation.¹³⁹

Valade's pastel¹⁴⁰ of Sainte-James's widowed mother Mme Georges-Nicolas Baudard de Vaudésir (fig. 10) was executed in 1773 (a year after his painting of Sainte-James), and shows again the remarkable long nose of her two children. The early provenance of this work is not known, but when it emerged in 1926 it was accompanied by a copy¹⁴¹ of La Tour's portrait,¹⁴² now in Versailles, of an *homme en habit rouge*, said to be of the *fermier général* La Pouplinière. In 1777, the series continued with the pastel of Sainte-James's wife Julie-Augustine.¹⁴³ The Dublin portrait¹⁴⁴ supposedly by La Tour of another Thibault-Dubois (fig. 11) is here reattributed to Valade, and seems to belong to the same period.



Figure 10

Louis-Auguste Thibault-Dubois de La Touche (1750–1822), *chevalier de l'ordre de Saint-Louis, premier commissaire au régiment de la garde française*, was Julie-Augustine's brother;¹⁴⁵ he was in a position to lend 150,000 livres to Laborde in 1780, which he got back when Sainte-James once again bailed out his fellow mason. Here one finds the very different features of the Dubois family echoed in the portraits of the relatives. Whether Valade was the painter of inner thoughts may be disputed; but he certainly had the knack of capturing genes. We also note a number of stylistic parallels with other Valade portraits: the use of a bright white line at the edge of the wig; powdery, brown strokes to mark the folds in the sitter's coat, the precise handling of the lace jabot, and the warm earth tones of the face all confirm the attribution. Compositionally, this outstanding work displays its membership in the series by its incorporation of the plain column as the sole feature

¹³⁹ See Couty, *op. cit.*, n. 695.

¹⁴⁰ Pastel, signed and dated on the pedestal "J Valade/1773", 0.78x0.65. Musée de la Ville de Poitiers et de la Société des Antiquaires de l'Ouest, inv. 965.20. Paris, Petit, 10 December 1926, Lot 48. Paris, Charpentier, 20 June 1957, Lot 135 *bis* (Trope 7). There is a pastel repetition in the same museum (Trope 101).

¹⁴¹ Pastel, 0.77x0.62; Musée de la Ville de Poitiers et de la Société des Antiquaires de l'Ouest, inv 965.14.1. Paris, Georges Petit, 10 December 1926, Lot 49, as by Valade, pendant to Mme Baudard. 20 June 1957, Lot 135 *ter*. Trope R.14; Xavier Salmon, *Musée national du château de Versailles: Les pastels*, Paris, 1997, p. 105, fig. 2; Christine Debrie & Xavier Salmon, *Maurice-Quentin de La Tour: prince des pastellistes*, Paris, 2000, p. 168 n. 22.

¹⁴² La Tour, *Homme en habit rouge*, dit portrait d'Alexandre-Jean-Joseph Le Riche de La Pouplinière (1693–1762), pastel, 0.642x0.483. Versailles MV 8353. Joseph-Auguste Carrier; 6–7 April 1868, Lot 98. Le comte A. de Ganay; Paris, 16 April 1907, Lot 36; Henri Deutsche de la Meurthe; his daughter Mme Henri Goldet; don 1967. See Dacier & Ratouis de Limay, *op. cit.*, 1927, no. 39 bis, pl. 45; Salmon, *op. cit.* 1997, reproduced colour; Albert Besnard & Georges Wildenstein, *La Tour*, Paris, 1928, no. 205, fig. 122; Debrie & Salmon, *op. cit.*, p. 154, ill. 70. Note that the composition appears to be reflected in Valade's portrait of Sainte-James, and it is tempting to speculate that this subject may have been her husband Vaudésir (the La Tour portrait, taken in his lifetime, being copied to create a pendant to the image of the widow). However the blue eyes of the Versailles subject are not those of the Aramon pastel, and the connection is probably spurious.

¹⁴³ Trope 6.

¹⁴⁴ National Gallery of Ireland; purchased 1961 from Cailleux. It bears a label on the reverse identifying the sitter, giving his dates erroneously as Versailles 1745 – Paris 1822, and identifying his wife as Adrienne de Wilmott (Wilmot, daughter of the financier Michel Wilmot). I am most grateful to M. Samuel Gibiat for providing me with information in his thesis (*op. cit.*) on this family, resolving confusions from other sources. I understand (Jane MacAvock, private communication, July 2001) that Joseph Baillio independently proposed an attribution of this pastel to Valade in 1996 (private communication).

¹⁴⁵ The genealogy of the Dubois family is complicated by the multiplicity of families sharing the name. According to Chérin, the family's claims to nobility were doubtful ("preuves de noblesse douteuse", Bibliothèque nationale de France, Cabinet des titres, MSS collections, Collection Chérin, vol. 194; Nouvelles d'Hozier 313; both cited Henri JOUGLA DE MORENAS & Raoul de WARREN, *Grand Armorial de France*, Paris, 1908). "Thibault" appears to have been a Christian name, rather than a family name, used as early as 1474 by the seigneur de Bretteville. The La Touche seigneurie belonged to the Bernin d'Ussé family, and must have been acquired on the death of Henriette-Madeleine, marquise d'Ussé in 1778; her heirs included Mme de Fontenille (and her assets included claims on the prince de Guéménée, who was shortly made bankrupt). Her husband's great-grandmother, Catherine Coudreau (1638–1713), was the aunt of Julien-François Thibault Dubois's grandmother Françoise Coudreau de Lisle (1692–1714), Mme Nicolas Baudard.

of the background – repeating the device in the smaller portraits of the Faventines *père et fils*.¹⁴⁶ Since he only became a *chevalier de Saint-Louis* on 24 February 1792, the decoration must be a later addition by another hand.

Fontenille joined the Société philanthropique on 28 October 1785,¹⁴⁷ five years after this Enlightenment society had been founded by freemasons including the marquis de Saisseval and Savalette de Langes, who believed that philanthropy was the “premier devoir du citoyen”. By 1786 the society had 186 prominent members and from their subscriptions supported 316 beneficiaries, opening hospitals, soup kitchens, night refuges etc. Fontenille also maintained his association with his provincial relatives, links which were key to the subsequent provenance of the pictures. In 1786, comte Valentin Esterhazy returned to his native town of Le Vigan, and wrote several letters¹⁴⁸ to his wife describing his visit. “M. de Faventin, le fermier général, est ici; il est venu y marier une de ses soeurs [in fact, his niece Henriette Fabre de Montvaillant] au président de Fortin [Forton]; il est d’ici, y a une belle maison et beaucoup de biens, comme il en a partout” (31 October 1786). Listing the remarkable number of aristocrats in Le Vigan for the benefit of his wife, Esterhazy adds “M. de Faventin, fermier général, établi à Paris, mais né ici, est venu y voir ses deux frères qui y demeurent et marier sa nièce. La fortune des trois frères, surpasse de beaucoup toute celle de toute la ville réunie.” A few days later he described (not wholly accurately) the complex intermarriages between the Faventines, Daudé d’Alzon and Liron d’Airolles families:



Figure 11

Mme de la Condamine [in fact, he refers to Mme Louis Faventines de Montredon], soeur du maître de la maison [i.e. M. Liron d’Airolles], y était aussi. Elle a épousé le frère de Faventin, le fermier général, et elle est la seule des quatre belles-soeurs, qui ait des enfants. L’aîné de tous [Pierre-Jacques Faventines] avait épousé la fille [Anne] de son oncle [Jacques] et elle est établi ici; c’est elle qui est à la tête de tous les biens de ce pays et qui occupe une maison superbe, que le vieux père [Pierre Faventines] a fait bâtir, après avoir fait une grande fortune, et où il est venu mourir après avoir cédé sa place à son fils aîné [Pierre-Jacques]. Le fils étant mort sans enfants, la veuve est venue s’établir au Vigan avec les deux frères cadets [Louis et Clément] de son mari, faits tous deux comme des Z, et le second fils [Jean-Maurice] a eu la place de fermier général, la maison de Paris et a épousé Mme de Saint-James qui est mort sans enfants. Les deux boscots ayants vingt-six ans et se voyants appelés à une grande fortune, puisque leur frère aîné n’avait pas d’enfants, se sont mariés tous deux au Vigan par amour. L’un qu’on nomme Montredon [in fact Clément Faventines de La Condamine], a épousé Mlle d’Alzon et n’a pas d’enfants, et l’autre [Louis Faventines de Montredon] Mlle d’Ayrolle dont il a un fils [Jean-Maurice?] et une fille [Anne-Françoise] qui seront héritiers de plus de biens, qu’il n’y en a de reste dans tout le pays, à dix lieues à la ronde. Celle-là est grande, assez bien faite, et parle par les dents comme toutes les femmes de ce pays-ci.

From the marriage of Louis Faventines de Montredon with Jeanne-Françoise Liron d’Airolles came not only the son and daughter reported by Esterhazy in 1786, but two years later a second daughter, Marie-Jeanne-Clémence (1788–1860), who later married into the Daudé d’Alzon family. Other siblings and their children made important local alliances: around 1750, Marie-Anne Faventines (1727–before 1784) married the son of Jacques Valette, another *trésorier des officiers de la chancellerie du parlement de Dijon*; their daughter married, in Le Vigan in 1770, Charles-Joseph, marquis de Calvière. Agathe de Faventines (1729–) had married Jean-Louis de

¹⁴⁶ Trope 33 and Trope 40 respectively.

¹⁴⁷ *Calendrier philanthropique*, Paris, 1786–91; Savalette’s phrase is quoted by Duprat, in the *Calendrier*, 1787, p. xxx.

¹⁴⁸ *Lettres du comte Valentin Esterhazy à sa femme 1784–1792*, Paris, 1907.

Fabre de Montvaillant, *conseiller en la cour des comptes de Montpellier* in 1752, a match which somewhat disappointed Faventines père, despite the nobility of the family (which descended from Gaspard de Fabre, knighted in 1555 by Henri II in person).¹⁴⁹ Of their many children, Henriette is the most significant to our story; as we have seen, in 1786 she married Jean-Antoine, marquis de Forton, *président en la chambre des comptes de Montpellier*. In 1768, the daughter of Pierre Faventines's brother Paul-Annibal, Élisabeth, married Jacques-François, comte d'Assas de Ginestous-Montdardier (1733–1807), *chevalier de Saint-Louis*. D'Assas was, like his cousin Pierre-Jacques Faventines, a *capitaine au régiment de Condé-cavalerie* (and as a young lieutenant, witnessed the comte de Ségur's first duel, in Lille), positions no doubt obtained through Pierre's position as *intendant* to the duchesse de Bourbon. He is not to be confused with his relative, Jean-François, vicomte d'Assas (1760–1850), a rear-admiral in the French navy, also *chevalier de Saint-Louis*, who emigrated to Russia in 1793; he married, around 1806, Anne-Françoise Faventines de Montdredon (1783–1821), Clémence's sister. It was Jean-François who was the nephew of the chevalier d'Assas, the hero of the engagement at Clostercamps whose bravery was rescued from obscurity by Voltaire¹⁵⁰ and subsequently marked by Louis XVI's grant of a pension to the family (which Mirabeau contrasted with the more generous donation to the Polignacs: "Mille écus à la famille d'Assa pour avoir sauvé l'État, et un million à la famille de Polignac pour l'avoir perdu"); by a print engraved by Simonet after Moreau le jeune in 1785; and by a large bronze statue in Le Vigan by Gatteau (1830). The hôtel de Faventines in Le Vigan descended in this line, becoming the château d'Assas in the nineteenth century.

Yet another significant alliance in the 1780s followed from one made in 1759, when Jean-Maurice's youngest sister Jeanne-Élisabeth de Faventines (1740–1777) married Amable-Gabriel-Louis de Maurès, comte de Malartic (1729–), *premier président au conseil souverain de Roussillon*. In 1785, their daughter Charlotte-Marie married maréchal Pierre-Charles-Auguste Goujon de Gasville (1753–1829), *commandeur de Saint-Louis*, grandson of Jean-Prosper Goujon, marquis de Gasville (1684–1756), *intendant de Rouen*. He had acquired in 1722 the château d'Yville (Seine-Maritime) which had been designed for John Law by Jules Hardouin Mansart; the construction was started in 1708 but was interrupted by Law's fall, and it was only finished by the Rouen architect Jean-Jacques Martinet in 1735.¹⁵¹ This was an important alliance, linking the family to the influential baron de Breteuil among others; but the benefits were not one-sided – Fontenille bought his nephew Louis-Hippolyte, vicomte de Malartic, his commission in the *régiment des gardes* (he was later to become a *maréchal*).¹⁵²

In July 1789, Fontenille purchased the château de Lavagnac (fig. 12) from Louis-François-Joseph, prince de Bourbon-Conti (1734–1814). Situated near Pézenas in the Hérault region, this former Gallo-Roman villa was sold by the Church during the sixteenth century to the Grasset family and inherited by the Mirmands, who in the mid-seventeenth century restored and rebuilt the chateau dubbed the "Versailles of the south" due to the magnificence of the 70 metre west façade, with its extensive terraces, balustrades and turrets, as well as an immense park with lake, shady walkways and a slope down to the river. Inherited by the comte de Polastron (the father of Marie-Antoinette's favourite, the duchesse de Polignac), it was sold around 1770 to Louis-François, prince de Bourbon-Conti (1717–1776). When Fontenille acquired it from the new prince de Conti, he immediately set about further improvements, namely the two-storey Pompeian style atrium occupying the centre third of the north façade and which was completed

¹⁴⁹ See Gaston Vidal, *Mémoires historiques (1781-1815) du chevalier de Forton, officier de marine*, Montpellier, 1961, p. 91.

¹⁵⁰ Initially contacted by the chevalier de Lorry, Voltaire wrote to Choiseul on 12 November 1768; the letter was printed in the *Mercur de France* in April 1769. The story was retold in Voltaire, *Précis du siècle de Louis XV*, ch. XXXIII. D'Assas, a captain in the Auvergne regiment, was surrounded by an enemy reconnaissance force of Brunswick troops, who threatened him with bayonets if he made a sound; he immediately cried to his own troops as loudly as he could, "A moi, Auvergne, ce sont les ennemis!" and died a hero. The action has subsequently been assigned to a lieutenant Dubois, although d'Assas's bravery is not contested. Among the more curious celebrations of the incident are a story by Charlotte M. Yonge, a poem by Mrs Hemans, and a ship of the French fleet – subsequently used in the slave trade.

¹⁵¹ Base Mérimée.

¹⁵² See Vidal, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

in 1791. Two facing niches in the atrium contained copies of oil lamps discovered at Pompeii, while a chandelier designed by Mathurin Cherpitel hung from the dome. The four great faux marble columns remain, as does the floor, a limestone mosaic laid by Italian craftsmen.

Among the first signs of the Revolution in the region were the incident in September 1789 described by the chevalier de Forton,¹⁵³ whose brother and sister-in-law Henriette were returning to Beaucaire following a visit to Fontenille in Le Vigan. Passing through Sauve, the président and his wife were in their berlin with their children, while the chevalier de Forton followed with his friend, the chevalier d'Assas (Jacques-François, husband of Élisabeth Faventines), when a mule reared and caused an accident. Amidst cries of “Les aristocrates à la lanterne”, they sped on, but



Figure 12

were caught and taken to Quissac where, terrified, they awaited their fate at the hands of a ragged collection of over 200 national guards. Fortunately the commandant allowed them on their way. Some weeks later the family visited Fontenille in Paris, where they were offered “des logemens commodes et agréables” in the rue d'Antin. But “les malheureux événemens qui se passèrent bientôt sous mes yeux, rendirent bien

courte la joie que j'éprouvais au milieu de cette ville.” On 5 October, Forton learned from a postman the king and queen were moved to Paris, and seeing La Fayette and the heads of the slain *gardes du corps* persuaded him that the Revolution was now irreversible.

An extensive correspondence has survived in the file of papers seized from Fontenille during the Revolution (along with many other documents already cited); they are preserved in the Archives nationales (T656) with each file marked “*Faventine (Jean-Maurice) fermier général (condamné)*”. In 1789 and 1790, Fontenille made his patriotic contributions of some 59,000 livres (certified as exceeding one-quarter of his income) to the Revolutionary cause, but in vain. The net seems to have closed around him without his fully comprehending the danger. We can piece together the story from correspondence with his relatives, and in particular with his niece, Henriette de Forton, whose brother-in-law, the chevalier de Forton, was suffering from a liver complaint which obliged him to leave Paris for Beaucaire in June 1790 taking his mother, brother and sister-in-law. They travelled between Montpellier and Beaucaire, and kept in touch with Fontenille. In May 1791, the président de Forton acquired some property near Pézenas which had been seized as a *bien national*; Fontenille indicated his disapproval, and Forton (notwithstanding advice from priests¹⁵⁴ that the acquisition was morally defensible) decided to abandon it to ease his conscience (presumably this was not the château de Lavagnac). A month later, Henriette relates her mother-in-law's panic at the growing dangers, and discusses emigration.¹⁵⁵ On 29 June, the président de Forton reported that the “étonnante nouvelle” of the flight to Varennes had reached Beaucaire, and that the authorities had begun to arrest a number of people on very vague suspicions. The Fortons moved back to Montpellier in July 1791 in the expectation of staying in the larger town, but the massacre of the Montpellier royalists by

¹⁵³ *Mémoires*, p. 46.

¹⁵⁴ “Je vois avec chagrin, que vous n'approuvez point l'acquisition que nous avons faite, vous savez que c'est à la dernière extrémité que nous avons pris ce parti là, plusieurs ecclésiastiques engagent les honnêtes gens à acheter, bien persuadés que si les choses revenoit dans l'ordre, ils servient sûrement très disposés à rendre ce qu'ils ont comme en dépôt. Monsieur l'abbé Saurain m'a dit qu'il était persuadé que l'on pouvait acheter, ainsi que d'autres ecclésiastiques que mon mari a consulté.” Henriette de Forton to Fontenille, 18 May 1791 (AN T656).

¹⁵⁵ “Nous avons été au moment de quitter ce paï ci, on avoit rependu des propos effroyables contre les prétendus aristocrates, ma belle-mère avoit une peur terrible, comme depuis la révolution elle a souvent des terreurs paniques nous avons taché de la tranquiliser un peu [...] elle veut absolument sortir du royaume l'hyver prochain, comme elle a peur au point de devinir malade [...] Nous avons encore des messes mais l'on prétend qu'après la foire toutes les églises excepté les paroisses seront fermées. Cette persécution nous fera partir avec plus d'empressement.” Henriette de Forton to Fontenille, 18 June 1791 (AN T656).

General Montesquiou and his troops on 13 November made it too dangerous for such a prominent family to remain, and by 6 December the Fortons had reached Nice, and temporary safety, although the town was soon captured by Montesquiou.

Meanwhile, in Paris, Fontenille continued in his usual style. The American diarist Gouverneur Morris records calling on M. and Mme (perhaps a reference to one of Fontenille's nieces) de Fontenille in Paris on several occasions in 1791.¹⁵⁶ On 20 September 1791, Morris went "to Fontenille's where there is much Company and Play"; while a few weeks later, he saw him dining with the British ambassadress, the Countess of Sutherland.

On 23 May 1792, Fontenille's brother La Condamine wrote from Lyon to express his satisfaction that his brother's illness was finally cured. By September however the need to emigrate had become clear to all; a letter, possibly also from La Condamine, told Fontenille that only priests were able to obtain passports to cross into Savoy.¹⁵⁷ At the same time, Henriette, who had moved to Rouen (her brother-in-law was now back at sea), wrote three times in the course of four days that month, initially imploring him to come to Rouen, where she sought suitable accommodation for him, or alternatively to go to Lyon or Amiens;¹⁵⁸ two days later she felt that Amiens was the safest option. The following day, Mme de Malartic pressed Fontenille: "je vois avec peine, que vous ne vous souciez pas trop de venir nous joindre, cependant nous cherchons partout un logement qui puisse vous convenir..."¹⁵⁹

A list of *Émigrés de la Révolution française*¹⁶⁰ suggests that he emigrated on 6 October 1792; his last recorded town of residence was at Yville-sur-Seine (near Rouen) – evidently, the Gasville's château. In fact, however, Fontenille seems neither to have emigrated, nor to have gone to Rouen. Documents found in his papers indicate that he did go to Amiens, where, on 19 November 1792, he obtained a passport to go to Boulogne, which he reached by 27 November. If this was an attempt to emigrate, however, it failed – no doubt the authorities had blocked so obvious a route: by 27 January 1793 he had given up, and he obtained a medical certificate from two doctors in Boulogne advising him to return to Paris to preserve his health. On 15 April 1793 he obtained the vital certificate of residence in Paris (back at 5, rue d'Antin), declaring his trip to Boulogne, and valid for three months. A week earlier, his sister-in-law Mme de Montredon had written from Le Vigan expressing true concern about his health, sentiments echoed by her husband who wrote from Le Vigan on 2 May concerned about Fontenille's "rhumatisme" which he had had at Boulogne, and which he hoped in vain had been cured; he was however happy that Fontenille was being looked after by yet another niece, Henriette's sister Agathe-Dorothee,

¹⁵⁶ Gouverneur Morris, *A diary of the French Revolution*, Cambridge, Mass., 1939.

¹⁵⁷ "Nous avons été, mon très cher frère, fort anxieux sur votre compte et à notre tour vous vous en avons donné sur le notre par les évènements tragique qui sont arrivées dans les villes réciproques que nous habitons. Notre belle soeur de Faventine vous a raconté ce qui s'était passé à Lyon n'on a voulu sans doute imiter la capital...L'on donne des passeports qu'aux prêtres pour passer dans le paï étranger: c'est étonnant la quantité qui vont en Savoye où ils sont parfaitement bien reçu. Dieu nous le conservent sans doutes pour nous êtres utiles dans le temps que sa colère sera apaisée par les prières des bonnes âmes." Letter from Lyon, 13 September 1792. The hand seems different from La Condamine's other letter, but no other brother or brother-in-law seems to fit.

¹⁵⁸ "Je ne vous vois pas avec sécurité dans le lieu et au milieu des gens où vous êtes. Paris est tranquille, il est vrai, mais cette tranquillité est troublée à tous les instants, soit par une chose, soit par une autre; quand même elle ne le seroit par rien actuellement, ne devons-nous pas nous attendre que le renouvellement de la Legislature pourra faire de très grands mouvemens, et que ces mouvemens pourront se faire sentir aux environs. Ne peut-on pas aussi à chaque instant fermer les barrières et arrêter les passeports? Enfin vous savés tout ce qu'on peut craindre en pareil cas. J'ai un si grand desir de vous savoir éloigné, que j'aimerais mieux que vous furriés à Lion (quoique les tetes s'y échauffent aisément) et être privée quelque tems du bonheur de vivre auprès de vous (puisque vous croyés que je ne pourrers pas m'y loger) que de vous voir rester où vous êtes. On annonce toujours ici, qu'il arrivera les plus grands malheurs à Paris.... Mon cher oncle, nous vous chercherons un appartement; si au contraire vous voulés aller à Amiens, nous ne demandons pas mieux", letter from Rouen, 21 September 1792, partially cited in Durand, *loc. cit.*

¹⁵⁹ Letter of 25 September 1792; to which Henriette added the following postscript: "Je n'ajoute qu'un mot à la lettre de ma soeur, mon cher oncle, et cela pour vous dire si jamais vous en avés douté, qu'il n'y a pas d'oncle et qu'il n'y a pas de pere dans notre nouvelle république, plus tendrement et plus purement aimé que vous, de sa fille adoptive. Mes enfans partagent a sentiment, car hier faisait l'énumération des personnes qu'ils aimèrent, mon oncle étoit nommé après papa et maman... j'embrasse ma Cousine, et fais mille complimens à M^{de} F..."

¹⁶⁰ On the Minitel Service Généalogie; source not revealed.

comtesse de La Rochelambert.

What then happened? The *fermes* had been suppressed as early as 20 March 1791, but the *fermiers généraux* remained obvious targets for Revolutionary vitriol. They were incarcerated in the hôtel des Fermes and required to submit their accounts, which they finally did on 27 January 1794, claiming from the state only half the 20 million livres their accounts evidenced. The Convention reacted by rounding up all the *fermiers* on 5 May and executing all but a few *adjoints*: the outcome was inevitable, not least because a decree (of 10 March 1793) entitled the state to the assets of all convicts.¹⁶¹ There can be little doubt that had Fontenille still been alive in Paris at this stage, he too would have shared this fate;¹⁶² but in fact he died on 8 June 1793, in his “Maison de plaisance de ce lieu de Puteaux”, quite possibly of the illness his doctors mentioned.¹⁶³

* * *

Under Fontenille’s will,¹⁶⁴ his estate was divided into three, between his brothers Louis de Montredon and Clément de La Condamine and his sister Agathe de Fabre de Montvaillant. Some of the assets – for example, the château de Lavagnac – were the subject of lengthy litigation. A key figure in the subsequent provenance was¹⁶⁵ Marie-Jeanne-Clémence Faventines de Montredon (1788–1860), the daughter of Louis de Montredon and his wife Jeanne-Françoise Liron d’Aiolles, who was in fact adopted by her childless uncle Clément de La Condamine and his wife Louise-Marie-Joséphine Daudé d’Alzon (thus reuniting part of two shares of the estate). They narrowly escaped the Revolution: in October 1793, Clément, his wife and three other members of the family were arrested at Valence as fugitives; the authorities inquired of the municipality of Le Vigan, and were informed “que tous ces gens-là sont absent du Vigan depuis deux ans, que ce sont des aristocrates reconnues fanatiques à l’excès, qui ont entretenu, payé, logé, nourri des prêtres insermentés”. It is notable that those listed as aristocrats were the Faventines, not the Daudé d’Alzon family, whose social fall had been steep. Despite the vigour of the condemnation, the travellers were merely returned to Le Vigan and imprisoned until their release early in 1795.¹⁶⁶

Montredon had three children: in addition to Clémence, Jean-Maurice (one of three boys born just before the Revolution named after Fontenille), who died, celibate, in the hôtel Faventines d’Assas in 1850; and Anne-Françoise, vicomtesse d’Assas (1783–1821), through whom a number of the family portraits came into the d’Assas family and descended until the d’Assas family sale in Strasbourg in 1989.

Clémence married her aunt’s nephew André-Henri Daudé d’Alzon (1774–1864) in 1806; they lived in the château de Lavagnac from 1816. Their eldest son was père Emmanuel d’Alzon (1810–1880), founder of the religious order of the Assumptionists, while their youngest daughter Marie-Françoise Daudé d’Alzon (1819–1869) married Jacques-Anatole de Chastenot, vicomte de Puysegur (1813–1851) in 1837, continuing the links with this family; their granddaughter married comte Robert de Suarez d’Aulan in 1896, through whom a number of the pictures descended until the 1987 sale following the acquisition of the Lavagnac estate in 1986 by a Japanese company. A project to restore the estate by a US investment vehicle in the 1990s is only now (2010) edging towards completion.

Two hundred years after the dispersal of the extraordinary magnificence assembled by the

¹⁶¹ For an account of the trial of the *fermiers généraux*, see Durand, *op. cit.*, pp. 647ff; Couty, *op. cit.*, pp. 322ff.

¹⁶² H. Wallon, *Histoire du Tribunal révolutionnaire de Paris avec le Journal de ses actes*, Paris, 1881, has a complete list of those convicted.

¹⁶³ The statement that he died in June 1793 is published only in Vidal, *op. cit.*, p. 95, supported by the inscription on the back of the pastel (Trope 40), according to which Fontenille died in 1793. I am most grateful to M. A. Chabot of the Archives de la ville de Puteaux for providing me with a copy of Faventines’s death certificate, witnessed by his relatives Jean-Joseph-Antoine-Gaspard de La Roche Lambert, Jacques Valette and Étienne Malloet.

¹⁶⁴ I have not located this document, but the information is confirmed in Vidal, *loc. cit.*

¹⁶⁵ This portrait of Clémence by Boilly was in the château de Lavagnac, together with a pendant portrait of her husband.

¹⁶⁶ Emmanuel Bouvy, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

members of this extended family of *haute-bourgeoisie* it would require riches beyond even their level to recreate the grandeur of this, or any of the other, estates they acquired and enhanced. Executed over a period of some fifteen years, the sixteen or so portraits (including various repetitions and versions) which Valade made of members of the Faventines family and their relatives represent a substantial part of his recorded output, underlining the significance of this relationship to his career. Valade's progression through this series illustrates also the family's own development, where the enormous wealth created by one generation was used to acquire properties and titles which previously were the exclusive prerogative of the *ancienne noblesse*. This process, brought to a catastrophic halt by the Revolution, led to the dispersion of assets in the third generation reflected in the complicated provenance for many of the works discussed here. These portraits represent nevertheless the most coherent legacy of a once-powerful family whose titles are now meaningless; whose houses have largely either been demolished or lie derelict; and whose other effects have been scattered without trace.

Neil Jeffares

