

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

DAVRIL, Marie-Victoire

Paris 30.XII.1755 – Guibeville 13.VI.1820

Also d'Avril; Davril seems to be the commoner spelling in contemporary documents. Portrait painter in oil, pastel and miniature; she exhibited at both the Salon de la Correspondance (where her portrait in miniature by Mlle Frémy, *q.v.*, was also shown) and the place Dauphine in 1783. Vincent left the self-portrait of his wife Mme Labille-Guiard (*qq.v.*), Mlle Davril's teacher, to her: "Cet ouvrage dans lequel brille un talent aussi délicat que spirituel, ne peut, j'en suis assuré, qu'être précieux à Melle d'Avril puisqu'il lui rappellera les traits de l'amie qui lui fut si chère à tant et de si justes titres." She is named as Marie-Victoire Davrel in documents in the Archives nationales describing the purchase of a house at Pontault-en-Brie by Mme Labille-Guiard and Vincent jointly in 1792; of the 30,000 livres price, some 4000 was provided by Mlles Capet and Davril, living in the rue de Richelieu. The arrangement was finally unwound in an 8. "Ma bonne amie M^{lle} Davril demeurant à Paris place s. Michel" was one of the legatees in Mlle Capet's will of 1818; she received a life interest in capital of Fr10,000, the reversion to go to Victoire Perrier (1768–), the subject of a portrait by Vincent (1813) and a close friend of the household.

Mlle Davril's role in Labille-Guiard's household was underlined in another document (AN KK/381, f^o 129) recording the pension paid to another pupil, Pomponne Hubert (*q.v.*): these were paid (from 1788 to at least 1792) to "Mme Guiard sous la quittance de Mlle D'Avril qui tient sa maison".

Marie-Victoire Davril died in her maison de campagne at Guibeville, Corbeil. Her death certificate confirms that she was born in Paris on 30.XII.1755 (as found also in the État civil reconstitué): she was baptised the same day at Saint-Germain-L'Auxerrois. Her parents were Jean-Baptiste d'Avril, marchand de vin, and his wife, Marie-Catherine de La Mare, living in the rue Saint-Nicaise; her godparents were Adrien Busset, also a marchand de vin, and Marie-Catherine Espaulard, widow of her uncle Jean d'Avril, yet another marchand de vin (five months later she was remarried, to a marchand épicier, Antoine Boutron: that marriage contract, AN MC/LIII/349, 6.V.1756, clarifies the family relationships). The artist's grandfather was a wine merchant also called Jean Davril; an aunt, Marie-Madeleine married (in 1739) Edme-Philibert Cottin; another aunt, Marie-Catherine, was the mother of the landscape painter Lazare Bruandet (1755–1804) – the only family connection outside the circles of wine merchants and grocers.

The posthumous inventory of the artist's house at Guibeville and that in Paris, rue Sainte-Hyacinthe Saint-Michel, no. 1, was prepared 7.VII.1820 (AN MC/ET/XII/870). Apart from normal items of furniture there was 4410 francs in cash. The papers included documents relating to her cousin Edme-Jean Cottin (1750–1814), Edme-Philibert's son, also a wine merchant in Paris, to whom Mlle Davril was universal heir:

they had jointly owned other properties, including a maison de plaisance near Orléans.

Also named in the property documents in Mlle Davril's inventory was Jean-André-Henry Cottin, grandson of the banker and picture collector Jean Cottin, and apparently a cousin of Edme-Jean Cottin. The inventory includes very little to identify her as the pastellist, except "cinq tableaux, dessins & gouaches, sujets divers, sous vers dans leur cadres de bois doré, d'après MM. Vincent et Suvé; une autre tableau, peinture sujet Belisaire dans son cadre de bois doré, prises vingt francs." Béliisaire was a favourite subject for Vincent, and both named painters were closely connected with the pastellist and Mme Labille-Guiard.

Bibliography

AN; état civil, Guibeville; Cuzin 2013; Doria 1934; Greer 2001; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; Passez 1973; Ratouis de Limay 1946; Sanchez 2004; Wildenstein 1966, pp. 79f

Pastels

J.1174.101 AUTO PORTRAIT, Salon de la Correspondance, .VII.1783, no. 193