

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

MABILE, Mlle

f.l. Paris c.1767

Mystery surrounds the artist Mlle Mabile or Mabile known only from her pastel of the explorer Mannevillette. Before the discovery of the Patas engraving, we speculated that the artist might be Pougin de Saint-Aubin (*q.v.*; the technique suggests it was made in Paris); Mlle Mabile could well have been a pupil, as Patas was associated with the cabinet of another Pougin subject, Poullain de Saint-Foix. The date of the work can be fixed between 1767, the year in which Mannevillette received the cordon noir of the order of Saint-Michel, and 1781, when the engraving was published; the sitter's age points to the earlier end of this range.

It seems probable that she was a close relation (perhaps a sister or daughter) of Jacques-François Mabile, an officer of the Compagnie des Indes who lived in Port Louis, Île Maurice (then called Île de France) in 1753 when the *Puisieux* arrived carrying Mannevillette and the equally celebrated abbé de La Caille. Their mission, which took nine months, was to map the island, and to do this they set up an observatory at Mabile's house in the rue des Tribunaux. According to another document in the Archives nationales, Mabile was involved in the "facture de dentelles et de tableaux". He was still in Île Maurice when he married a Françoise-Charlotte Gourdel in 1754. A manuscript brevet, signed by Louis XVI at Versailles, 22.v.1775, records his promotion to Conseiller honoraire au Conseil supérieur de l'Île de France, carrying the rights to "entrée, séance et voix délibérative tant ès audiences qu'aux autres assemblées publique et particulière". The family was from Paris; further documents reveal that Jacques-François was a minor in 1730 at the death of his father died, a marchand épicier, bourgeois de Paris. One sister, Charlotte, also a minor, was recorded, and might be the pastellist.

Bibliography

Albert Pitot, *L'Île de France: esquisses historiques*, Port-Louis, 1899, p. 63; AN Registres de tutelles, Y4458, .viii.1730; AN MC ET/1/454, 6.xi.1751; manuscript auction, Brussels, Godts, 6.xii.2011, Lot 338

Pastels

J.507.101 Jean-Baptiste-Nicolas-Denis d'APRÈS DE MANNEVILLETTE (1707–1780), hydrographe et navigateur, portant l'ordre de Saint-Michel, pstl, 80x63.5, p.1767 (desc.: Stockholm, Bukowskis, 24–27.v.2005, Lot 454 repr., attr. Perronneau, est. SKr 40–60,000; Stockholm, Bukowskis, 28.xi.–2.xii.2006, Lot 501 repr., est. SKr 35–40,000, SKr 30,000). Lit.: Jeffares 2006, p. 577C*i*, Éc. fr. Φ v



Photo courtesy Bukowskis

~grav., "Melle Mabile pinx./Patas Sculp.", pour le supplément du *Neptune oriental*, 1781 (Le Havre, Bibliothèque municipale; Paris, musée de la Marine). Lit.: *Revue catholique de Normandie*, xvii, 1907, p. 224; Olivier Chapuis, *À la mer comme au ciel: Beautemps-Beaupré et la naissance de l'hydrographie moderne (1700–1850)*, Paris, 1999, p. 230 repr.