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Marie-Jeanne Buzeau, Madame Boucher (1716–96)

by COLIN B. BAILEY, *The Frick Collection, New York*

IN 1861 EDMOND and Jules de Goncourt delighted at their discovery of the true identity of Boucher's wife: '*Véritablement, presque jusqu'à nous, l'histoire n'a jamais été aux sources. En voici une petite preuve: la date de naissance, la date de mort de la femme de Boucher, tout cela est faux et contraire aux actes civils.*'¹ She had previously been confused with Marie-Françoise Perdrigeon, the wife of a secrétaire du Roi who died on 30th January 1734.² The brothers' discovery led to the publication of Boucher and Marie-Jeanne Buzeau's marriage certificate in the Saint-Roch parish archives.³ Following the fire in May 1871 that destroyed the parish records on deposit at the Hôtel de Ville, Paris, archivists and art historians did yeoman service in reconstituting the *état-civil* of eighteenth-century artists and craftsmen. Marie-Jeanne Buzeau's baptismal record in the parish of Saint-Nicolas des Champs, Paris, was published in the mid-1870s, as were the parish records relating to her husband's birth and death, and to the births, marriages and deaths of her children and their spouses.⁴ Yet while the Goncourts noted that Mme Boucher was '*fort vieille*' when she died, they were never able to document her death with an *acte de décès*.⁵ The partial publication of the official correspondence between the marquis de Marigny and the comte d'Angiviller confirmed that as late as May 1785 she was still in receipt of a royal pension; Alexandre Ananoff and Daniel Wildenstein later established that from 1st May 1785 the widow Boucher's pension was doubled to an annuity of 2,400 livres, implemented by royal edict of 1st December 1786.⁶ The archival discoveries made in the mid-1980s by Georges Brunel in the Archives nationales, Paris, brought to light a slew of important documents relating to the fortunes of Boucher and his wife (some of which are discussed in the present article), but none that verified the date or circumstances of Mme Boucher's death. As a result, biographical entries for Marie-Jeanne Buzeau record her as having been born in January 1716 and living until at least 1786.⁷ Publishing the terse documents that relate to her death provides an opportunity to rewrite Mme Boucher's biography and to collate and verify as much information as possible – published, archival and visual – in order to establish a more accurate account of her life and milieu.

Marie-Jeanne Buzeau died on Friday 30th December 1796 in her home on the rue de l'Égalité, section de Marat (the rue de Condé in the sixth arrondissement),⁸ ten days short of her eighty-first birthday. In the *extrait de sépulture* she is described as a '*rentière*' and notice of her death is given by her grandson and heir, the printer and publisher François-Jean Baudouin (1759–1838) – only child of her second daughter Marie-Emilie Boucher (1740–84) and the painter Pierre-Antoine Baudouin (1723–69).⁹ Sixteen months later, François-Jean Baudouin formally registered her succession on behalf of himself and the two other heirs: his half-brother Alphonse (b.1773) and half-sister Marie-Laure (b.1777), the issue of Marie-Emilie Boucher's second marriage to Charles-Étienne-Gabriel Cuvillier (1728–93), premier commis des Bâtimens during Marigny and d'Angiviller's administrations. Baudouin declared that his maternal grandmother's entire fortune consisted of nine hundred livres in *rentes perpétuelles* (life annuities) and that no further notarial record had been made.¹⁰

Born on 8th January 1716 to Jean-Baptiste Buzeau, '*bourgeois de Paris*', and Marie Anne Sedeville, the seventeen-year-old Marie-Jeanne Buzeau married François Boucher, the promising associate member of the Academy who was almost twice her age, bringing a dowry of 6,000 livres to the union. Her future husband's portion consisted of the same amount, '*provenant de ses gaines et épargnes en meubles et deniers comptants et autres effets mobiliers*'.¹¹ From the marriage contract of 12th April 1733, drawn up nine days before the religious ceremony at the church of Saint-Roch, we learn that Marie-Jeanne's mother had died and that her father had remarried; that all property then and in the future was to be held jointly (an indication of the couple's mutual affection);¹² and that Boucher's mother was illiterate.¹³

Initially, Boucher and his wife remained in the Bouchers' family house on the rue Saint-Thomas-du-Louvre.¹⁴ It was there that all three children were born: Jeanne-Elisabeth-Victoire (24th March 1735); Juste-Nathan (4th May 1736); and Marie-Emilie (7th April 1740).¹⁵ By 1743, Boucher and his family had moved to the rue de Grenelle-Saint-Honoré, '*vis-à-vis la rue des Deux Écus*',¹⁶ where they remained until

I am most grateful to Georges Brunel, Yoann Brault, Udolpho van de Sandt, Marina Ferretti-Boquillon, Guillelm Scherf, Madeleine Pinault-Sørensen, Pascal Torres, Alastair Laing, Mikhail Ahlund, Richard Beresford, Xavier Salmon, Nathalie Bouchard, Joanna Sheers, Richard di Liberto and Margaret Iacono. This article is for Anne and Udolpho van de Sandt.

¹ E. and J. de Goncourt: *Journal, Mémoires de la vie littéraire*, Paris 1989, I, p.684 (16th April 1861).

² *Idem*: *L'Art du dix-huitième siècle*, 3rd ed., Paris 1880–82, I, p.143.

³ *Idem*: *Boucher*, Paris 1862, p.6; reprinted in *idem*, *op. cit.* (note 2), I, p.143.

⁴ A. Jal: *Dictionnaire critique de biographie et d'histoire*, 2nd ed., Paris 1872, pp.127, 255–57 and 486–87; H. Herluison: *Actes d'état-civil d'artistes français*, Orléans 1873, pp.22, 48 and 110; J.-J. Guiffrey: 'Actes d'état-civil d'artistes français tirés des Archives nationales, publiés pour la première fois', *Bulletin de l'histoire de l'art français* (1876), p.53.

⁵ Goncourt, *op. cit.* (note 2), I, p.172.

⁶ M. Furcy-Raynaud: 'Correspondance de M. d'Angiviller avec Pierre', *Nouvelles*

archives de l'art français 22 (1906), pp.112–13 and 319–20; A. Ananoff and D. Wildenstein: *François Boucher*, Lausanne and Paris 1976, I, pp.144–46.

⁷ For the fullest to date, see the entry by M. Pinault-Sørensen in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon: die bildenden Künstler aller Zeiten und Völker*, Munich 1992–2004, XIII, p.296.

⁸ F. and L. Lazare: *Dictionnaire administratif et historique des rues et monuments de Paris*, Paris 1855, pp.291–92.

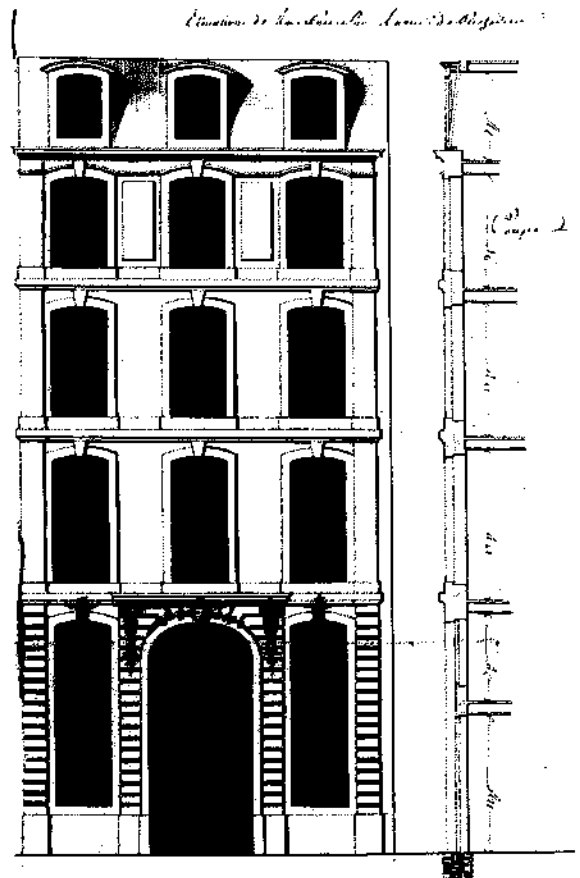
⁹ Paris, Archives de la Seine (hereafter cited as AS), DQ8–76, 'Table alphabétique des extraits de sépulture': 'Buzeau, Marie Jeanne, rentière, Vve Boucher, dnt de l'Académie de peinture, rue de l'égalité no.6, décadi, 10 nivôse, an 5. Son héritier est François-Jean Baudouin, imprimeur, place du Carrousel no.662, petit-fils.'

¹⁰ AS, DQ7–1798, 'Succession', '3 floréal an 6' (2nd May 1798): 'a déclaré que de la succession de la citoyenne Marie Jeanne Buzeaux [sic] leur grande mère maternelle décédée Vve de Boucher rue de l'égalité no.6 le 10 nivôse an 5 il dépendait neuf cent livres de rentes perpétuelles. Le dit comparant a dit que c'était tout ce qui dépendait de la dite succession.'

¹¹ Paris, Archives nationales (hereafter cited as AN), Minutier central (hereafter cited



1. Façade of 20 rue de Richelieu, Paris.
(Photograph by the author).



2. Elevation of the façade of François Boucher's house on the rue de Richelieu, by Jacques-Richard Cochois. 1746.
Pen and ink.
(Archives nationales, Paris; Minutier central, LXXXIII/400).

1748, efforts to procure them lodgings in the Louvre following the death of the sculptor Guillaume Costou the Elder having failed.¹⁷ In February 1748 Boucher and his wife took over the lease from Claude-Nicolas Crosnier, *caissier* of the duc d'Orléans, of 'le troisième appartement d'une maison nouvellement reconstruite à neuf' on the rue de Richelieu (now no.20; Fig.1) for an annual rent of six hundred livres.¹⁸ They jointly renewed the lease for three years in February 1750 at an annual rent of seven hundred livres.¹⁹ This was a commodious bourgeois residence comprising cellars, a ground floor, entresol and three floors with attics above (Fig.2). Acquired by the owner's father in 1732, the house had fallen into total disrepair and had been abandoned by its tenants in April 1746. Called in to assess the property, on 6th May 1746 the *architecte-expert* Jacques-Richard Cochois (active 1725–61) reported 'lad. Maison étoit vrayment en péril imminent, pourquoy notre avis seroit de la demolir entièrement'.²⁰ The owners chose to reconstruct instead, and Cochois submitted estimates for this

in December 1746. Inspection of the finished work took place between 20th July and 31st August 1747; Crosnier and his sister moved in in October, and remained there for four months. Thus it was of a very recently refurbished house that Boucher and his family took occupancy in February 1748. From plans attached to documents of December 1746, we learn that the third-floor apartment consisted of an 'antichambre' overlooking the street, a 'Salle de compagnie' (the largest room), a cabinet, bedroom and dressing room.²¹ The apartment included 'une cuisine et une chambre des domestiques au quatrième, un petit grenier au dessus des lieux d'aisance au cinquième, une cave et un caveau'.²² Boucher apparently considered it 'extremement petit' and in July 1748 was obliged to rent a small room on the fourth floor to house two of his students.²³ Conveniently, the house was on the same street as the Bibliothèque du Roi, in which Boucher had been granted a studio in March 1749 to work on tapestry cartoons for La Muette, and into which Jean Restout was to move in July 1752.²⁴

as MC), LIII/264, 'Mariage', 12th April 1733.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*: 'Lesd. Sieur et dñe future époux pour l'estime et l'amitié qu'ils ont l'un pour l'autre se sont par ces présents fait donation entre vifs mutuelle égale et réciproque.'

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 'Lad. Elizabeth Lemesle, mère dud. futur époux, qui a déclaré ne scavoir écrire ny signer.'

¹⁹ Whereas Boucher's marriage contract has the senior Bouchers living on the rue Saint-Thomas-du-Louvre, by the time of the religious ceremony their address is given as rue des Fouriers, paroisse Saint-Opportune; see Goncourt, *op. cit.* (note 2), I, p.143.

²⁰ See the chronology in A. Laing: exh. cat. *François Boucher (1703–1770)*, New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art) 1986, pp.17–21 and *passim*.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.23, citing Louis Petit de Bachaumont's 'Liste des meilleurs peintres, sculpteurs et graveurs' for 1743 (MS at the Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, Paris).

²² See Ananoff and Wildenstein, *op. cit.* (note 6), I, pp.28–29.

²³ G. Brunel: *Boucher*, London 1986, p.30; see AN, MC, LXXXIII/405, 'Transport de bail', 19th February 1748, for Boucher's sublet from Claude-Nicolas Crosnier and his

sister Marie-Marguerite Crosnier.

¹⁹ AN, MC, LXXXIII/413, 'Renouvellement du Bail', 20th February 1750 (contract between Boucher and his wife and Elisabeth de la Noe).

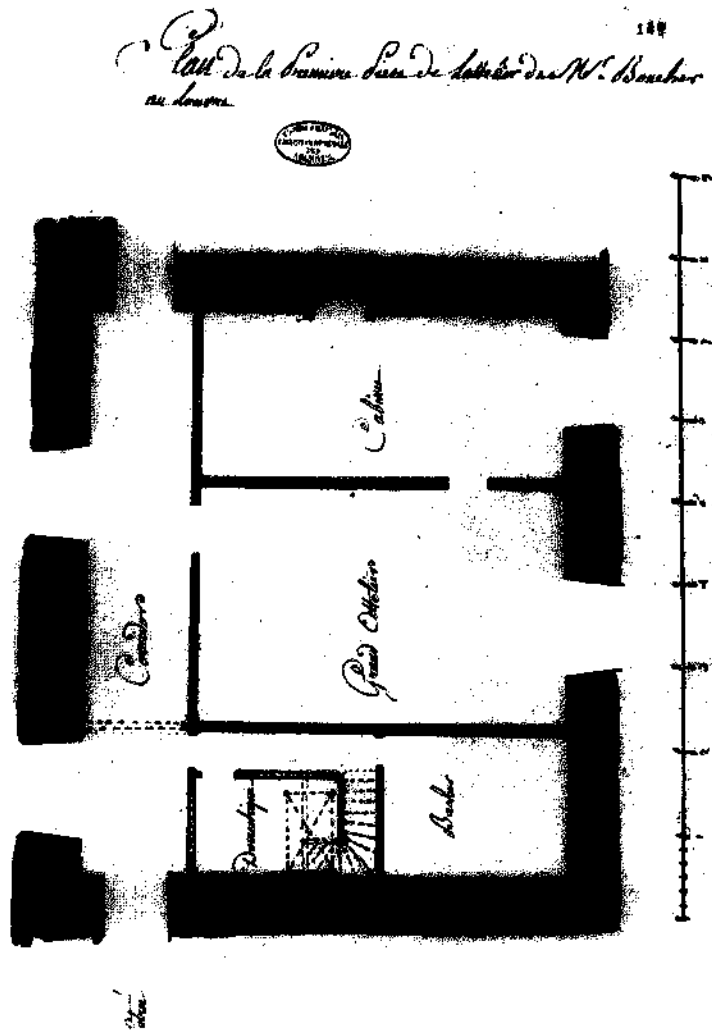
²⁰ AN, Z1j/752-2, visit of 9th April 1746. On Cochois, see M. Gallet: *Les architectes parisiens du XVIII^e siècle*, Paris 1995, p.134.

²¹ AN, MC, LXXXIII/400, 'Devis et marché', 14th December 1746; AN, Z1j/752-2, 'Visite de l'architecte expert Jacques Richard Cochois', 31st August 1747. For these unpublished archival references, I am indebted to Yoann Brault of the Centre de topographie historique de Paris at the Archives nationales, Paris.

²² See document cited at note 19 above.

²³ For Boucher's comment on the lodgings, see Mme Boucher's letter of 2nd July 1748, published by A. Laing: 'Trois lettres de François Boucher et de sa femme à l'auteur dramatique Favart', *Archives de l'art français* 29 (1988), p.20.

²⁴ See Ananoff and Wildenstein, *op. cit.* (note 6), I, p.43. For Restout's tenancy of this studio, see C. Gouzi: *Jean Restout, 1692–1768: peintre d'histoire à Paris*, Paris 2000, p.442.



3. Plan of Boucher's studio at the Louvre, Paris. 1752. Pen and ink. (Archives nationales, Paris; O1 1907/139).

Following Charles-Antoine Coypel's death on 14th June 1752, Boucher and his family were finally given accommodation in the Louvre. Coypel's double apartment passed to Charles-Nicolas Cochin as part of his sinecure as *Garde des Dessins du Roy* while his very large studio on the first floor of the aile de l'Oratoire (Fig. 3) went to Boucher.²⁵ On 22nd June 1752, well before it was made official, the well-connected miniaturist Jean-Baptiste Massé informed a Danish correspondent that 'M. Bouché a obtenu l'Atelier placé dans le Vieux Louvre. Il y pourra loger très commodément la famille. Car il

²⁵ T. Lefrançois: *Charles Coypel: peintre du roi (1694-1752)*, Paris 1994, p.122; C. Michel: *Charles-Nicolas Cochin et l'art des lumières*, Paris 1993, p.494.

²⁶ Letter to Joachim Wasserschlebe (1709-87), former secretary to the Danish Legation in Paris, reprinted in Ananoff and Wildenstein, *op. cit.* (note 6), I, p.54.

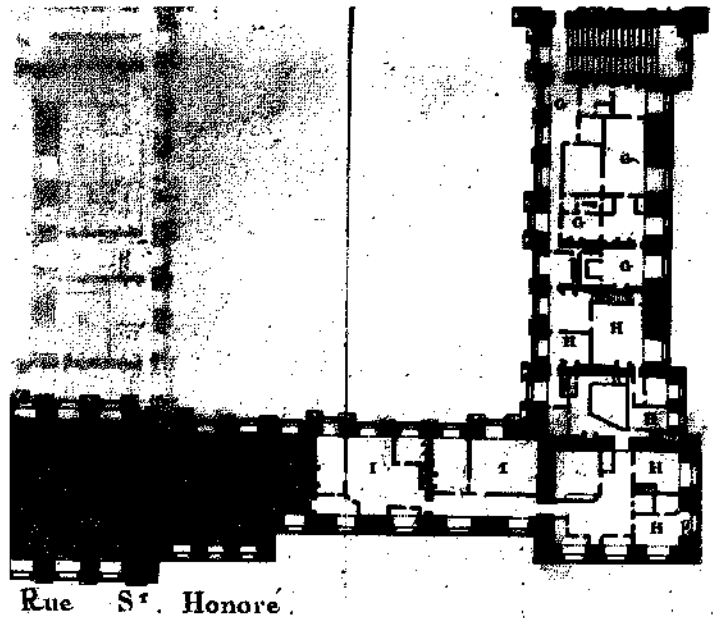
²⁷ M. Krohn: *Frankrigs og Danmarks kunstneriske forbindelse i det 18. århundrede*, Copenhagen 1922, p.6.

²⁸ AN, O1 1907/140, 'Dévis de la Dépense à faire à l'Atelier de Monsieur Boucher', 16th October 1752, De l'Isle to Vandières: 'Quant aux croisées qui ne sont que de vieux chassis s'il en veut de neuves, il compte qu'elles seront à sa charge, ce qui est bien quelque chose.'

²⁹ AN, O1 1907/145. Vandières ended his letter: 'Vous êtes le maître de vous y donner les commodités que vous jugez à propos, mais la dépense ne peut être prise sur les fonds du Bâtimens, attendu leur situation actuelle.'

³⁰ Ananoff and Wildenstein, *op. cit.* (note 6), I, pp.56-57.

³¹ J.-F. Blondel: *Architecture Française, ou Recueil des plans, elevations, coupes et profils des églises, maisons royales, palais, hôtels édifices les plus considérables de Paris*, Paris 1752-56, IV, p.36.



4. Detail of Boucher's apartment (indicated by the letter I) on the plan of the first floor of the Louvre in J.-F. Blondel: *Architecture Française, ou Recueil des plans, elevations, coupes et profils des églises, maisons royales, palais, hôtels édifices les plus considérables de Paris*, Paris 1752-56, IV.

est composé de plusieurs pièces très vastes'.²⁶ Cochin confirmed the news, adding, 'il y a dequoy le loger pourvu que le Roy en fasse les frais'.²⁷ Initially these expenses were quite modest, restricted to replacing the non-bearing walls, mezzanine floors and the kitchen staircase; Boucher proposed to cover the costs of the windows himself.²⁸ Yet Poisson de Vandières, the recently appointed *Directeur-général des bâtimens*, balked at requesting even 758 livres in additional funds, claiming, in a letter from Fontainebleau of 28th October 1752, that it might lower Boucher's standing with Louis XV: 'Ce qui pourroit vous nuire dans des occasions plus opportunes, et que le Roy ne me dit Mon Premier Peintre s'étoit contenté de son Atelier dans l'Etat ou il étoit, je ne pense pas que vous voudriez vous exposer à cet inconvenient'.²⁹

In the end Boucher spent over 9,000 livres of his own money to renovate his new apartment, although in December 1756 the Crown reimbursed him for just under half of this amount.³⁰ The spectacular results were praised by Jacques-François Blondel in the final volume of his *Architecture Française*, published that year: 'Ce célèbre artiste s'est pratiqué un fort beau logement, contenant une infinité de curiosités qui méritent l'attention des connoisseurs'.³¹ Blondel's *Plan du premier étage du*

³² W.S. Lewis, ed.: *The Yale edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, London 1937-71, VII, pp.283 and 304.

³³ M. Mniszech: 'Un gentilhomme polonoise à Paris en 1767: Notes de voyage du comte Michel Mniszech', *Revue Rétrospective* 6 (1887), p.109; Mniszech recalled seeing Boucher 'travaillant à un grand tableau, Apollon gardant les troupeaux d'Admète', which remains untraced.

³⁴ Champcenerz's apartment was situated on the north-west corner of the Cour carrée, by the guichet de l'Oratoire. It consisted of fifteen rooms on the ground floor, with eighteen in the entresol, and stables in the courtyard, and was inhabited by several branches of the family; see C. Aulanier: *Histoire du palais et du Musée du Louvre*, Paris 1947-71, IX, p.109.

³⁵ AN, O1 1673/52, Mme Boucher to Marigny, 30th December 1767. Duclos was an associate of Boucher's, having written *Acajou et Zirphile* in 1744 to serve as a text for his illustrations to Carl Gustaf Tessin's unpublished *Faunillane*, a novella inspired by the artist's wife; see note 49 below.

³⁶ AN, O1 1673/57, Soufflot to Marigny, 11th January 1768.

³⁷ AN, O1 1673/179, Tetry to Marigny, 5th June 1770; Houdon's marble portrait-

Louvre indicated the recent improvements (Fig. 4) and it was in these rooms that Boucher displayed his growing collection of paintings, objects and natural curiosities. Horace Walpole, with whom Boucher had dined at Mme Geoffrin's, visited him in his lodgings in February 1766 and noted the 'great quantities of shells, mosses, ores, Japan, china, vases, Indian arms and music etc'.³² The following year, a younger visitor from Poland, Count Michel Mniszech, praised the collection as 'un immense magasin de curiosités de l'art et de la nature, rangés uniquement pour le coup d'œil et n'offrant aucune suite, mais une multitude de pièces rares et bien conservés'.³³

For the rest of her marriage Mme Boucher remained a tenant of the Louvre. Towards the end of her husband's life the couple became involved in a dispute over the remodelling of the extensive neighbouring apartment occupied by Jean-Louis, marquis de Champcenetz, governor of the Tuileries (c. 1730–1812).³⁴ In December 1767 Mme Boucher added her complaints to those already voiced by Charles Duclos (1704–72) in his capacity as permanent secretary to the Académie française (whose rooms adjoined Champcenetz's quarters) regarding 'les inconveniens dangereux et desagréables qui pouvoient resulter des projets de Mr de Champcenetz s'ils avoient lieu'.³⁵ Sent to investigate, Soufflot reported back that Champcenetz proposed only minor alterations to the apartment following the death of his mother, and that nothing was planned 'qui puisse nuire à la solidité ou à la décoration du bâtiment, ni à ses voisins'.³⁶ There is no record of any further communication on this subject to Mme Boucher.

Boucher died in his lodgings in the Louvre on 30th May 1770, and almost immediately efforts were made to appropriate the apartment. On 5th June Contrôleur-Général Terray informed Marigny that the magistrate Aymard-Jean de Nicolay had requested that the dwelling be used as storage for the archives of the Chambre des Comptes, of which he was president.³⁷ Marigny had Soufflot look into the possibility of creating an attic storey as a depot, but he reminded Terray on 5th July that 'ce logement est celui du premier peintre de S. Mte et en conséquence est devolu à M. Pierre en faveur de qui le Roi vient de disposer de cette place'.³⁸ Pierre reimbursed Boucher's estate 4,800 livres towards the interior refurbishments, making the first of three payments of 1,600 livres to Mme Boucher in January 1771.³⁹ On 18th February of that year the sale of Boucher's collection of paintings, drawings and curiosities took place 'au vieux Louvre, dans l'appartement du défunt', raising 98,829 livres for his heirs.⁴⁰

bust of Aymard-Jean de Nicolay, marquis de Goussainville (1709–85), shown at the Salon of 1779, is in the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth (the preparatory plaster is in the Louvre, Paris).

³² AN, O1 1673/181, Marigny to Terray, 5th July 1770.

³³ AN, MC, XXXV/775, 'Partage de la communauté', 6th April 1773; 'Masse des biens', article 9, noting payment for 'boiseries en armoires, lambris, plaquages, portes et fenêtres, cheminées de marbre et de pierre de liais, glaces et autres ajustements et ornements'.

³⁴ Brunel, *op. cit.* (note 18), p. 35. Favart appraised the collection at three times this amount: 'Son cabinet, estimé cent mille écus, sera vendu à la fin de l'automne'; see C.S. Favart: *Mémoires et correspondance littéraire, dramatique et anecdotique*, Paris 1808, II, p. 247, letter to Giacomo Durazzo, 10th June 1770.

³⁵ See M. Furcy-Raynaud: 'Correspondance de M. de Marigny avec Coypel, Lépicié et Cochin', *Nouvelles archives de l'art français* 20 (1904), p. 201.

³⁶ AS, 5 Ri 1/1116, 'Reconstitution de l'état-civil', 11th October 1770.

³⁷ AN, O1 1673/202, Marigny to Louis XV, 22nd December 1770.

³⁸ J.-J. Guiffrey: 'Logements d'artistes au Louvre', *Nouvelles archives de l'art français* 2 (1873), p. 97.

Cochin's request that Mme Boucher be allowed to remain in a part of her former home fell upon deaf ears and she was granted smaller lodgings elsewhere in the Louvre.⁴¹ Following the death on 11th October 1770 of Mme Boucher's eldest daughter, Jeanne-Elizabeth-Victoire, widow of the history painter Jean-Baptiste Deshayes (1729–65),⁴² Marigny requested that 'le petit logement' that Jeanne-Elizabeth-Victoire had occupied 'dans la partie non achevée du Louvre' be granted to Mme Boucher's use.⁴³ Approval was forthcoming on 23rd December 1770, but it is unlikely that she remained a royal tenant for very much longer.⁴⁴ By September 1771, Marie-Jeanne BuzEAU had returned to the rue de Richelieu (to an unidentified address), and it was in her house there that the acts settling Boucher's estate were drawn up. We do not know at what point she finally relinquished the right bank to move to the rue de Condé; but it is worth noting that in 1788 Cuvillier is listed as living on the rue de Tourmon, and thus at the end of her life Mme Boucher would have been but a street away from her son-in-law and two of her grandchildren.⁴⁵

Marie-Jeanne BuzEAU's beauty was legendary. Advising Boucher on his commission for the Psyche tapestries for Beauvais, in 1740 Bachaumont recommended Raphael and Lafontaine as venerable sources, while identifying Mme Boucher as a 'living Psyche': 'Ce qu'il y a de mieux à faire, c'est de lire et relire la *Psyché de La Fontaine*, et surtout bien regarder *Madame Boucher*'.⁴⁶ It was at this time that Count Carl Gustaf Tessin, returning to Paris in July 1739 as Extraordinary Envoy to the French court, became infatuated with her.⁴⁷ Even before his own wife returned to Stockholm, he bought her snuff boxes and dresses, and commissioned a portrait of her in pastel.⁴⁸ In 1741 he had Boucher make drawings to illustrate his novella *Faunillane, ou l'Infante jaune*, 'pour avoir occasion de la voir souvent'.⁴⁹ 'Struck by her beauty and freshness' when he first met her in 1765,⁵⁰ Boucher's pupil Johann-Christian Mannlich recalled the comment of his patron, Duke Christian von Zweibrücken (1722–75), that in the 1740s 'elle étoit alors non seulement la plus belle femme de Paris, mais même de toute la France':

*Mon frère ainsi que bien d'autres, étoient éperdument amoureux d'elle: ils soupirent en vain, la jeune femme étoit aussi sage que belle, et peut encore être comptée au nombre des belles femmes de Paris; voilà la suite d'une conduite sage dans la jeunesse.*⁵¹

Such authentic testimony may have encouraged Boucher's earliest historians to view Mme Boucher as her husband's

⁴¹ *Almanach de Paris, contenant la Demeure, les Noms et Qualités des Personnes de Condition*, Paris 1788, p. 118: 'Monsieur de Cuvillier, rue de Tourmon, 17.'

⁴² P. Lacroix: 'Jugements de Bachaumont sur les meilleurs artistes de son temps', *Revue universelle des arts* 5 (1857), pp. 459–60.

⁴³ His infatuation may have been something of an open secret; Carl Harleman wrote to Tessin on 25th February 1745 that 'le pauvre Boucher et sa jolie femme' were among several artists 'qui me demandent la larme à l'œil de pouvoir aller trouver votre Excellence en Suède'; see G. von Proschwitz: *Tableau de Paris et de la cour de France, 1739–1742. Lettres inédites de Carl Gustaf, comte de Tessin*, Göteborg and Paris 1983, p. 34.

⁴⁴ G.W. Lundberg: *Svenskt Och Franskt 1700-tal*, Malmö 1972, p. 130. For the untraced 'Madame Bouchers Portrait i pastel, glas och ram' by an unnamed artist, valued at 50 livres and shipped back to Stockholm in August 1741, see F. Sander: *Nationalmuseum, Bidrag till Taflegalleriets Historia*, Stockholm 1872, p. 57.

⁴⁵ A. de Montaiglon: 'François Boucher', *Archives de l'art français* 6 (1858–60), p. 63.

⁴⁶ 'Frappé de sa beauté et fraîcheur'; see K.-H. Bender and H. Kleber, eds.: *Histoire de ma vie. Mémoires de Johann Christian von Mannlich (1741–1822)*, Trier 1989–93, I, p. 56.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, I, p. 56.



5. *A lady on her daybed* (previously known as *Presumed portrait of Madame Boucher*), by François Boucher. 1743. 54 by 67 cm. (The Frick Collection, New York).

principal muse and model,⁵² a view that also permeated the writings of the doyenne of Boucher studies in the twentieth century.⁵³ While it would have been unthinkable for the bourgeois wife of an Academician to model for such compositions, it seems, rather surprisingly, that Boucher also refrained from reproducing his wife's features (or those of any of his children) in either crayon or paint.⁵⁴ Two celebrated 'portraits' from the mid-1740s have recently been republished as genre scenes of coquettish subjects, commensurate with those 'fashionable paintings at which he excels' much in

demand at the beginning of that decade (but which Boucher eventually abandoned because of eye strain). The Frick Collection's *Presumed portrait of Madame Boucher* is now better understood to represent *A lady on her day bed* (Fig. 5),⁵⁵ while the 'portrait' of Mme Boucher in Sydney, retitled *A young lady holding a pug* (Fig. 6), is a mildly lascivious reprise of the theme of the morning *toilette*.⁵⁶

Yet if Boucher did not paint his wife's portrait, several other artists did. The earliest recorded portrait of her, a pastel by Maurice Quentin de La Tour, shown at the Salon of 1737

⁵² See P. de Nolhac: *François Boucher: premier peintre du roi, 1703-1770*, Paris 1907, p. 16.

⁵³ For a carefully argued example, see R.S. Slatkin: 'A Portrait by Boucher', in A.P. Wintermute, ed.: *François Boucher: his circle and influence*, New York 1987, pp. 10-13 (the pastel may indeed be by Boucher, but it is a genre subject, not a portrait of his wife).

⁵⁴ The present writer cannot accept the fine trois-crayons study of a *Young woman in a lace cap* (Jean van Caloen Foundation, Château de Loppem, Belgium) as a portrait of the seventeen-year-old Marie-Jeanne BuzEAU; see A. Laing: exh. cat. *The Drawings of François Boucher*, New York (Frick Collection) and Fort Worth (Kimbell Art Museum) 2003-04, no. 57. The 'portraits' of Marie-Emilie Boucher, Mme Baudouin (Musée Cognac-Jay, Paris, inv. no. 11; pastel in the Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. no. 24813), are refined pastorals of the mid-1750s which appear to use the same model; see T. Burrollet: *Musée Cognac-Jay, Peintures et Dessins*, Paris 1980, pp. 51-53. There are only two authentic portraits of Boucher's daughters, both untraced: Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne's terracotta medallion of Mme Baudouin, exhibited at the Salon of 1765, and F.-B. Deshayes's portrait of his sister-in-law, exhibited at the Salon of 1769 and identified by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin as 'la veuve Deshayes'; see L. Réau: *Une dynastie de sculpteurs au XVIIIe siècle: Les Lemoyne*, Paris 1927, p. 152, and E. Dacier: *Catalogues de ventes et Livrets de Salons illustrés par Gabriel de Saint-Aubin*, Paris 1909-21, II, p. 82. Two pastels in Poitiers, often considered portraits of Boucher's daughters, remain genre subjects by an anonymous artist; see M.-H. Trope: *Jean Valade, Peintre ordinaire du roi, 1710-1787*, Poitiers 1993, pp. 133-37 (nos. R.1 and R.9).

⁵⁵ C.B. Bailey, ed.: exh. cat. *The age of Watteau, Chardin, and Fragonard: Masterpieces of French genre painting*, Ottawa (National Gallery of Canada), Washington (National Gallery of Art) and Berlin (Gemäldegalerie) 2003-04, pp. 224-25.

⁵⁶ R. Beresford and P. Raissis: *The James Fairfax collection of old master paintings, drawings and prints*, Sydney 2003, pp. 37-39.

⁵⁷ A. Bernard and G. Wildenstein: *La Tour: la vie et l'œuvre de l'artiste*, Paris 1928, pp. 32 and 134, no. 36.

⁵⁸ C.A. Desmaze: *Le reliquaire de M.-Q. de la Tour, peintre du roi Louis XV: sa correspondance et son œuvre*, Paris 1874, pp. 74-75. The Goncourts published an excerpt from Desmaze's description in their 'Notules'; see Goncourt, *op. cit.* (note 3), I, p. 172.

⁵⁹ Sale, Lepke, Berlin, 10th December 1925, lot 149.

⁶⁰ Slatkin, *op. cit.* (note 53), p. 10; for references to this and other portraits of Mme Boucher, see Laing, *op. cit.* (note 54), p. 239, no. 57.

⁶¹ On Roslin's maiden appearance at the Salon of 1753, see, most recently, X. Dufestel: 'Deux portraits inédits du Comte de Caylus (1692-1765). Le tableau d'Alexandre Roslin et le médaillon en bronze de Louis-Claude Vassé', *Storia dell'arte* 104-05 (2003), pp. 101-18.

⁶² Count von Sparre monitored Roslin's progress on this portrait, informing his uncle, Count Tessin, 'il se donne tous les soins possibles pour qu'il luy fasse honneur... en effet c'est le plus beau Portrait qu'on puisse voir et il a gagné l'approbation de tous les connoisseurs'; quoted in G.W. Lundberg: *Roslin; liv och verk. Avec un résumé en français et le*

along with his celebrated *Self-portrait laughing*, has remained untraced.⁵⁷ Last seen in the 1870s in the collection of a descendant of the Cuvillier family in Bordeaux, the portrait was described in considerable detail, although not reproduced, in Desmaze's *Reliquaire de Maurice Quentin de la Tour*:

Madame Boucher est représentée de face, les bras appuyés sur un coussin ou draperie en velours bleu, comme sur le devant d'une loge. Elle est en robe de satin blanc, décolletée carrée, garnie d'une ruche de satin blanc, les manches à jabot sont garnie d'une ruche et d'un double rang de dentelles. Une étroite écharpe de dentelles est nouée autour du col; deux aborables mitaines blanches doublées de soie rose, sans doigts, et retournant légèrement sur la main, complètent cette toilette délicate; le bras droit est appuyé sur le coussin, le bras gauche le croise et la main gauche tient négligemment un éventail fermé.⁵⁸

A weak copy of this portrait was sold at auction in Berlin in December 1925 as La Tour's *Portrait of a young woman* (Fig. 7). While not corresponding in every detail to Desmaze's lengthy description, for the present it remains the only visual record of the lost pastel.

At the Salon of 1743, the Swede Gustav Lundberg showed a pastel portrait of Mme Boucher as a companion to that of her husband, commissioned as his *morceau de réception* in 1741. This work is also untraced and has occasionally been confused with the anonymous pastel portrait of Mme Boucher in its glass frame that Tessin had shipped home in August 1741.⁶⁰ In 1753 Buzeau sat to another Swedish artist for the first of two portraits exhibited at the Salon by Alexandre Roslin.⁶¹ One of the four paintings Roslin submitted to the Academy in July 1753 in support of his associate membership (and which were subsequently shown as his maiden *envoi* to the Salon of 1753), the *Portrait de Madame Boucher en habit de bal* (whereabouts unknown) portrayed her 'en domino allant en Bas et achevant sa toilette'.⁶² Critics praised the verisimilitude of the costume, noting that the silvery lace covering of the domino was 'rendu à miracle'.⁶³ This portrait also descended in the Cuvillier family, and was catalogued by Desmaze, who mistook the artist for La Tour, the sitter for Boucher's daughter, Marie-Emilie Cuvillier, and the medium for pastel. Notwithstanding these errors, his is the fullest description that we have of Roslin's first portrait of Mme Boucher, and might help one day in identifying this lost oil:

Sa tête est vue presque de face et le corps de trois quarts; la jeune femme paraît partir pour le bal ou le promenade. Enveloppée d'un camail de soie noire, elle porte à la main un masque de velours. Sa main gauche est cachée dans un manchon de velours bleu garni de martre à ses deux extrémités. Un large noeud de taffetas rose, servant d'attache à la pelerine, vient égayer et animer ces couleurs un peu sombres. La tête en pleine lumière se détache sur un fond gris bleu.⁶⁴

catalogue des œuvres, Malmö 1957, III, p.16, letter of 31st June 1753.

⁶¹ [Huquier, fils]: *Lettre sur l'Exposition des Tableaux du Louvre, avec des notes historiques*, Paris 1753, p.48: 'On ne peut trop louer l'art avec lequel le Peintre a rendu le pétillant de la gaze de l'argent dont le domino est garni'; abbé Leblanc: *Observations sur les ouvrages de MM. de l'Académie royale de peinture*, Paris 1753, p.38.

⁶⁴ Desmaze, *op. cit.* (note 58), pp.75–76.



6. *A young lady holding a pug*, by François Boucher. c.1745. 34 by 28 cm. (Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney).



7. *Portrait of a young woman*, here identified as a copy after *Portrait of Madame Boucher* by Maurice Quentin de La Tour. Pastel on paper, 64 by 52 cm. (Present whereabouts unknown).



8. Portrait of François Boucher, by Alexandre Roslin. 1760. 65 by 54 cm. (Musée national du château de Versailles).



9. Portrait of Madame Boucher, by Alexandre Roslin. 1761. 64 by 54 cm. (Neues Schloss, Bayreuth).

Roslin's later portrait of Mme Boucher (Fig.9) – shown at the Salon of 1761 as a pendant to that of her husband, painted the previous year (Fig.8), and recently acquired by the Neues Schloss in Bayreuth – has long been recognised as the only authentic surviving image of her.⁶⁵ It was sketched in its oval frame by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin on the page of the Salon *livret* (Fig.10), where husband and wife are dwarfed by the portrait of their protector, the marquis de Marigny. The painting was well received by Diderot, but considered less beautiful than it might have been by the abbé Lagarde, a close friend of the sitter and her husband.⁶⁶ Even accounting for the intervening decades (and for Boucher's deficiencies as a portraitist), comparison with the 'portraits' in New York and Sydney supports the view that they are works of a quite different genre.

That Roslin portrayed Mme Boucher singing (or about to sing) – her husband, closer to type, holds a pencil – is suggestive of her cultivation, while perhaps also alluding to her family's musical connections.⁶⁷ Tessin, at whose house Mme Boucher had performed a duet with the opera singer Marie Fel, informed his wife that she too 'sung like an angel'.⁶⁸ Twenty years later, it is as a music lover, rather than as a practitioner, that Roslin represents her, and this is consistent with her general interest in the arts. Far from being the draughtsman, engraver and miniaturist that she is credited to have been,⁶⁹ Mme Boucher's *œuvre* can be limited to a single drawing – a copy after Boucher's *Boy with a girl blowing bubbles* (Fig.12) painted shortly after their marriage, 'dessiné par Madame Boucher, retouché par son Mary' (Fig.11)⁷⁰ – and two prints, only one of which is known today (Fig.13). Inscribed

⁶⁵ P.O. Kriickmann, ed.: *Paradies des Rokoko: Galli Bibiena und der Musenhof der Wilhelmine von Bayreuth*, Munich 1998, p.185; *idem: Tätigkeitsbericht der Ernst von Siemens-Stiftung*, Munich 1998, pp.80–81.

⁶⁶ Dacier, *op. cit.* (note 54), VI, p.61; abbé P.-J. Bridard de la Garde: *Observations d'une Société d'Amateurs sur les Tableaux exposés au Salon cette Année*, Paris 1761, p.60: 'Le Portrait de Madame Boucher, est bien peint, bien ajusté et très-reconnoissable; cependant en le comparant à celui du mari, on s'apperçoit que le pinceau saisit toujours mieux l'humour que les graces.'

⁶⁷ Brunel, *op. cit.* (note 18), p.30, noted that Marie-Jeanne's brother, Jean Buzeau, was a *pensionnaire* of the Académie de musique and that Laurence Quénot, a witness at her wedding, was described in the documents as 'musicien'.

⁶⁸ 'Hier, Mlle Fel vint diner icy et chanta divinement avec Madame Boucher qui chante aussy comme un Ange'; see Von Proschwicz, *op. cit.* (note 47), p.286, letter of 21st January 1742.

⁶⁹ P. Bjurström: 'Marie-Jeanne Boucher', *Konsthistorik tidskrift* 56 (1987), pp.38–41.

⁷⁰ *Idem: French drawings eighteenth century*, Stockholm 1982, no.869; Boucher's *Boy with a girl blowing bubbles* appeared at Sotheby's, New York, 15th January 1987, lot 90. Bjurström went on to attribute to Marie-Jeanne Buzeau two watercolours by Boucher (inv. nos.870 and 871), even though they had both been acquired as Bouchers by Tessin (and annotated as such). Their status as autograph works by Boucher from the early 1730s has been restored in P. Stein and M.T. Holmes: *exh. cat. Eighteenth-*



10. *Livret du Salon de 1761* (detail), sketches by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin. (Bibliothèque nationale, Paris).



11. *Soap bubbles*, by Marie-Jeanne Buzeau. c.1733–34. Pen and grey ink and brown wash, 23 by 28 cm. (Nationalmuseum, Stockholm).



12. *Boy with a girl blowing bubbles*, by François Boucher. c.1733–34. 101 by 125 cm. (Private collection).

'*Boucher inv. uxor ejus Sculpsit*', it is after a pen-and-ink drawing by her husband (Fig. 14), which can be dated to the early 1740s.⁷¹ Buzeau should not be confused with the miniaturist 'Madame Boucher, qui travailla beaucoup pour les Menus Plaisirs',⁷² and who, alarmingly, seems to have reproduced several of Boucher's mythologies and pastorals.⁷³ It was either the latter Mme Boucher (or a third miniaturist of the same name!) who on 11th August 1779 exhibited '*Plusieurs portraits et autres objets en miniature*' at the Salon de la Correspondance; in Pahin de la Blancherie's newsletter this artist was listed as living at the rue de Grammont, '*le 4e porte cochère à gauche en entrant par la rue neuve Saint-Augustin*'.⁷⁴

An occasional copyist, an amateur draughtsman and engraver and a music lover, Mme Boucher also served as her husband's informal secretary, as in the case of her lost response to Carl Fredrik Scheffer explaining Boucher's failure to finish Tessin's fan;⁷⁵ her three letters to the playwright Charles-

Simon Favart (1710–92), published in 1988 by Alastair Laing;⁷⁶ and the correspondence with Marigny cited above. Following her husband's death, she became a matriarch of some means. With unusual despatch, she received an annual pension from the Crown of 1,200 livres, confirmed by Marigny on 26th July 1770, but this was by no means her only source of income.⁷⁷ From the unpublished *Notoriété* drawn up at the request of Boucher's heirs on 1st August 1770, we learn that no inventory was made after Boucher's death,⁷⁸ a point repeated in the document finalising the succession three years later.⁷⁹ While of considerable frustration to historians who might otherwise have learned more about Boucher's possessions (his collection, his library, his wardrobe, his contractual obligations), the absence of such a document reflects the unusual degree of trust in this particularly harmonious family.⁸⁰ Mme Boucher was empowered to recover all payments owed to her husband by the Crown on her family's behalf:

century French drawings in *New York collections*, New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art) 1999, pp. 26–28.

⁷¹ P.-J. Richard: *François Boucher: gravures et dessins provenant du Cabinet des dessins et de la Collection Edmond de Rothschild au Musée du Louvre*, Paris 1971, p. 125, no. 391 (*Two sleeping peasants*). For Boucher's drawing, which is close in style to the sketch of a *Mother with three children in a cornfield* (Kent County Council Arts and Museums, Maidstone), dated to the 1740s in Laing, *op. cit.* (note 54), p. 126, see exh. cat. *Dessins du musée de Darmstadt*, Paris (Musée du Louvre) 1971, no. 93. Buzeau's second print, *Cartouche surmonté de trois coeurs enflammés que soutiennent deux amours*, which was owned by the Goncourts, and is apparently signed 'Jane Boucher' – the same spelling of her middle name as in her marriage contract – has never been traced; see *Gravures du XVIIIe siècle ... composant la collection Goncourt*, Paris, 26th to 28th April 1897, lot 5.

⁷² P.A. Lemoisne: *L'Exposition de la miniature à Bruxelles en 1912*, Brussels 1913, p. 52.

⁷³ Ten miniatures by Mme Boucher after compositions by Boucher appeared in the Blondel d'Azincourt sale, Paris, 18th April 1770, lots 41–46, three of which were acquired by Cuvillier; the '*miniature agréable*' after Boucher's *Forge de Vulcain* in the La Live de Jully sale, Paris, 2nd May 1770, lot 139, was reattributed to Charlier by Remy and acquired by the miniaturist himself for 280 livres (annotations from the copy of the sale catalogue in the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, The Hague); the Goncourts, *op. cit.* (note 3), I, p. 144, mistakenly referred to eight miniatures in the Aved sale, Paris, 24th November 1766 (in which there are none). It should also be noted that there are no miniatures by Mme Boucher in Boucher's posthumous sale, Paris, 18th February 1771.

⁷⁴ See C.-M. Pahin de la Blancherie in *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres et des Arts* (11th August 1779): '*De la ressemblance et un bon ton de couleurs caractérisent ces Ouvrages, et distinguent Madame Boucher de la foule de femmes Peintres en ce genre.*'

⁷⁵ Not finding Boucher in his studio on 26th November 1746, Scheffer received a letter of explanation from his wife, which he forwarded to Tessin; see J. Heidner: *Carl Fredrik Scheffer. Lettres particulières à Carl Gustaf Tessin, 1744–1752*, Stockholm 1982, p. 148.

⁷⁶ Laing, *op. cit.* (note 23), pp. 19–22.

⁷⁷ AN, O1 1912/95, Marigny to Mme Boucher, 26th July 1770: '*J'ay mis sous les yeux du Roy, Madame, ce que M. Boucher meritoit par ses talens et par l'estime qu'il avoit acquise. Sa Mte qui luy avoit déjà donné des marques de sa bienveillance en le nommant son Premier Peintre a bien voulu dans ce moment vous faire ressentir de la protection dont Elle honore cet artiste en vous accordant une pension de 1200#. C'est avec un vrai plaisir que je vous en donne la nouvelle.*'

⁷⁸ AN, MC, XXXV/764, '*Notoriété: les héritiers de François Boucher*', 1st August 1770 (previously unpublished). Appearing were Pierre-Eustache Meunier, '*Conseiller du Roy, Substitut de M. le Procureur du Roy au Chatelet*'; Charles-Etienne-Gabriel Cuvillier, '*premier commis des Batiments du Roy*'; and Laurent-François Prault père, '*imprimeur libraire, Quai de Gevres*': '*Lesquels ont par ces presents attesté que M. François Boucher, Premier Peintre du Roy, ancien Directeur de l'Académie Royale, est mort à Paris le 30 Mai 1770, qu'après son décès il n'a pas été fait d'inventaire et qu'il a laissé pour seuls enfans de son mariage avec Marie Jeanne Buzeau Juste Nathan Boucher, architecte, demi. à Paris, rue Saint Jacques près les Mathurins, pisse Saint Benoît; Dlle. Jeanne Elisabeth Victoire Boucher, Veuve de Jean Baptiste Deshayes, Palais du Louvre; Marie-Emilie Boucher, Vve Baudouin. Lesquels ont constitué pour leur procuration générale et spéciale la d. Dame Vve Boucher, leur mère, à laquelle ils donnent pouvoir de recevoir des trésoriers de Batiments tout ce qui est du aud. Sr. Boucher à titre des pensions, appointements ou gratifications à raison des divers emplois qu'il occupoit sous l'administration de Monsieur le Directeur-Général des Batiments du Roy.*'

⁷⁹ '*Les parties étant toutes majeures et n'ayant pas jugé à propos d'en faire faire*'; document cited at note 39 above.

⁸⁰ As noted by Brunel, *op. cit.* (note 18), p. 36.



13. *Two sleeping peasants*, by Marie-Jeanne Buzeau after François Boucher. c.1740. Etching, 21 by 16 cm. (Musée du Louvre, Paris).



14. *Peasants sleeping*, by François Boucher. c.1740. Pen and ink over graphite, 21 by 16 cm. (Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt).

after his picture collection, this was the estate's largest source of revenue. Just over two months later the family suffered another loss with the death on 11th October 1770 of Boucher's eldest child, Jeanne-Elisabeth-Victoire, Deshay's widow.⁸¹ This couple had no surviving children – a son, Alexandre-Jean-Baptiste, had died aged sixteen months on 24th January 1766 – and Jeanne-Elisabeth's portion of her father's estate therefore passed jointly to her mother and brother and sister.⁸² Almost immediately, Mme Boucher began receiving money owed to her late husband and daughter.⁸³ She was sufficiently solvent at this point to lend her future son-in-law Cuvillier the substantial sum of 30,000 livres to be used in his continuing efforts to repay loans contracted by the marquis de Marigny, whose personal affairs he was administering. Cuvillier promised to discharge the loan within six months; by May 1772 only 18,000 livres had been repaid.⁸⁴

In October 1772 the Bâtiments acquitted its debt of 27,600 livres, 'pour honoraires en qualité de premier peintre de Sa M, pour arrearages de la pension qui lui avoit été accordée, et pour ouvrages'. This was to be paid to Mme Boucher (as from 1st July 1770)

as a *rente* of four per cent on the *aides et gabelles* and provided an annual income of 1,140 livres.⁸⁵ Before the estate was finally settled, on 19th February 1773 the family celebrated the marriage of Marie-Emilie Boucher to Charles-Etienne-Gabriel Cuvillier, a family friend of long standing. The bride brought 14,000 livres to the union; 9,500 livres from the public sale of her first husband Baudouin's possessions, with the remainder coming from works unsold at this time as well as from the income 'de quelques entreprises de gravure que la femme épouse a faites depuis son veuvage'.⁸⁶ (This sum did not yet reflect Marie-Emilie's inheritance of one third of her father's estate and one half of her sister's estate.) Cuvillier's portion of 24,000 livres was made in the form of a *rente* of 1,200 livres.⁸⁷ Six years later, Roslin painted the prosperous and stylish Mme Cuvillier holding a missive addressed to her husband at Versailles (Fig. 15).⁸⁸ The couple appeared as witnesses for the groom at the marriage of their distant relative Jacques-Louis David on 2nd May 1782, having petitioned d'Angiviller earlier in the year to allow him to take over (at no cost) the studio in the Louvre formerly occupied by Marie-Emilie's first husband and latterly by her brother.⁸⁹

⁸¹ See note 42 above; the date of her death was previously unknown.

⁸² AN, MC, XXXV/765, 'Notoriété: les héritiers de Jeanne-Elisabeth Boucher', 19th October 1770. The witnesses were S. Paul Anne Desmarois Lamarre, 'capitaine de l'infanterie, premier lieutenant de la Compagnie des bas officiers détachée pour la garde du Palais des Thuilleries', and Jacques Raux Raulaud, 'notaire au baillage de Versailles', 'étant ce jour à Paris'. It was noted that 'après son décès il n'a point été fait d'inventaire, et qu'elle a laissé pour ses seuls et uniques héritiers savoir quant aux meubles et aquets Dame Marie Jeanne Buzeau, et quant aux propres paternels Juste Nathan et Marie Emilie, son frère et sœur, chacun pour moitié'.

⁸³ As noted above, the sale of Boucher's collection realised a little less than 100,000 livres in February 1771; on 1st April the Maison du Roi made the final payment of 4,200 livres for six tapestry cartoons painted between 1765 and 1767 in the form of an annuity on the *aides et gabelles*; on 12th September, Mme Boucher's right to half of the income from Deshay's annuity on the *aides et gabelles* was notarised; see Ananoff and Wildenstein, *op. cit.* (note 6), I, p.138, and AN, MC, XXXV/769, 'Partage de rente', Mme Boucher to M. Deshay, 12th September 1771.

⁸⁴ AN, MC, XXXV/769, 'Obligation', Cuvillier and Buzeau, 12th November 1771. By 1774 Cuvillier had personally incurred debts of over 122,000 livres on Marigny's behalf; see AN, MC, XXXV/781, 'Etat déposé', 15th September 1774. He would be among the many creditors listed in the settling of Marigny's estate in January 1782; see A.R. Gordon: *The houses and collections of the Marquis de Marigny*, Los Angeles 2003, pp.511–15.

⁸⁵ Document cited at note 39 above, articles 7 and 8.

⁸⁶ AN, MC, XXXV/774, 'Mariage', Veuve Baudouin to Cuvillier, 19th February 1773.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*; in addition, a royal pension of 1,500 livres, awarded on 27th July 1773 'en considération de ses services comme premier commis des Bâtiments', served as a reversionary annuity for his wife; see Guiffrey, *op. cit.* (note 4), pp.57–58.

⁸⁸ Lundberg, *op. cit.* (note 62), III, p.93.

⁸⁹ A. Schnapper, ed.: *exh. cat. Jacques-Louis David: 1748–1825*, Paris (Musée du Louvre) and Versailles (Palais) 1989, p.507. On 30th January 1782 David was granted the atelier occupied by Juste-Nathan Boucher, who had died a fortnight earlier. As

Finally, on 6th April 1773, the property and income from Boucher's succession were apportioned among his widow and two children. While it does not offer the rich detail of an 'inventaire après décès', the document notarising the 'liquidation et partage' is suggestive of the affluence of Boucher's household and makes clear that the chief source of this affluence derived from Boucher's picture cabinet, rather than land or property.⁹⁰ The 'Masse des biens' of 152,618 livres consisted of 98,829 livres from the sale of Boucher's collection; 27,690 livres invested as an annuity at four per cent from the overdue payments from the Crown; and 6,843 livres from the sale of 'plusieurs sortes d'effets comme livres, papiers chinois, étoffes, montre, canne, dentelles etc'. Mme Boucher's diamonds were valued at 5,400 livres, her furniture and personal effects, including her wardrobe, at 4,880 livres, and her silverware and gold jewellery at 2,370 livres. The premier peintre Jean-Baptiste Pierre had paid the estate 4,800 livres, another 2,160 livres had been forthcoming from the Bâtiments du Roi, while the Academy had discharged an outstanding honorarium of three hundred livres.⁹¹

Boucher had died more or less debt free. Of the 14,643 livres owed by his estate, 9,400 livres were costs associated with the sale of his collection: 5,622 livres to the dealer Pierre Remy 'pour ses honoraires et déboursés à l'occasion de cette vente' and 3,778 livres to the huissier-priseur Guillot 'pour ses droits et expéditions à l'occasion de la vente'.⁹² Long before the modern auction system, the experts' commissions amounted to just under ten per cent of the sale's yield. Sundry personal debts conform to what we know of Boucher's pleasure-loving instincts: bills to the jewellers Jacqmin (348 livres) and Rouveau (504 livres), 506 livres to the marchand-mercier Poirier, 394 livres to the framer Dulac. Boucher's tailor, La Garde, was owed four hundred livres, his wig-maker, Bertholon, forty-eight livres. Finally, 373 livres were noted for the wages of a pair of domestic servants who were let go two weeks after Boucher died. The estate was also liable for 12,000 livres for settlements made on the heirs as part of their dowries.⁹³

After funeral and mourning expenses were accounted for, Mme Boucher's inheritance amounted to 109,227 livres, 66,238 livres of which had come from the sale of the collection. Her children received considerably smaller bequests: Juste-Nathan inherited 23,195 livres, his sister Marie-Emilie Cuvillier 20,195 livres. On 24th April, two weeks after this division of the estate had been formalised, Mme Boucher invested 30,000 livres 'en especes sonnantes ayant cour' with the Receveur-Général Pierre-Jacques-Onésyme Bergeret de



15. Portrait of Marie-Emilie Boucher, Madame Cuvillier, by Alexandre Roslin. 1779. 81 by 64 cm. (Present whereabouts unknown).

Grandcourt (a passionate collector of her late husband's work, and the patron who, later that year, took Fragonard and his wife on an ill-fated visit to Italy); from him she received an annuity of 3,000 livres.⁹⁴

Given this level of material comfort, it is somewhat surprising to find Cochin (and others) intervening so insistently with the Crown on the widow Boucher's behalf. As early as June 1770, in initiating the process of procuring a Crown pension, Cochin had informed Marigny that Mme Boucher was to be found 'dans un état de médiocrité', something that could easily be confirmed by 'M. Cuvilliers, qui semble digne de vos bontés'.⁹⁵

Mme Boucher's 'plight' was brought to the attention of the royal administration once again in the weeks following the death on 12th April 1785 of Carle van Loo's widow, Christine Somis. It was pointed out that Somis had received a pension of 2,400 livres and Pierre advised d'Angiviller that the

d'Angiviller noted to Pierre: 'J'ai pensé ne pouvoir mieux faire que d'accéder à la proposition que Mme Cuvillier m'a faite d'en disposer à M. David, son parent, dont les talents se sont montrés avec tant d'état au dernier Salon'; see Furcy-Raynaud, *op. cit.* (note 6), p.335. David's maternal great-grandfather, Louis Lemesle, had been Boucher's uncle.

⁹⁰ Brunel, *op. cit.* (note 18), pp.35-36, based his excellent account of Boucher's household and fortune on this document, which he discovered. Affluence, of course, is a relative term, and it may be that, at the end of the Ancien Régime, writers were likely to be better off than painters and designers. Boucher was certainly wealthier than Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier, the godfather of his eldest son, whose estate at the time of his death in July 1750 consisted of a capital of 49,000 livres and a house which later sold for 9,000 livres (but neither a collection nor any silver); see P. Fuhring, *Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier, Un génie du rococo, 1695-1750*, Turin 1999, I, p.45. By contrast, another friend and fellow tenant at the Louvre, Charles Ducloux, is known to have left 270,000 livres at his death, 'qui était vraiment beaucoup pour un académicien'; see *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, Paris 1933-2001, XI, col.1269.

⁹¹ Document cited at note 39 above, articles 1-10.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 'Etat des dettes de la communauté des biens'.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ AN, MC, XVIII/756, 'Constitution de rente', 24th April 1773, also published in D. Wildenstein: *Documents inédits sur les artistes français du XVIIIe siècle, conservés au Minutier central des notaires de la Seine, aux Archives nationales*, Paris 1966, p.20.

⁹⁵ Furcy-Raynaud, *op. cit.* (note 41), p.201. Marigny evidently took this request to heart, since in the draft of his letter of 5th July 1770 to Contrôleur-général Terray he noted: 'Je ne puis guère me refuser à continuer une partie de ce logement à la veuve de cet Artiste, qui ne lui laisse qu'un bien très modique'; see document cited at note 38 above. When he sought the king's permission to offer Mme Boucher alternative lodgings in the Louvre, Marigny justified his request by alluding to the relief that this would bring her in assuring 'une aisance dont malgré la pension que VM lui a accordée elle a grand besoin'; see document cited at note 43 above.



16. Boucher's great-grandchildren playing 'la main chaude', by Louis Delaville. 1799. Terracotta, 44 cm. high. (Musée du Louvre, Paris).

'right thing to do' would be to bring Mme Boucher's pension to the same level by augmenting her annuity by 'fifty louis' (1,200 livres).⁹⁶ On 4th May 1785 d'Angiviller informed the recipient of the increase:

*J'avois vu avec surprise, Madame, que lors de la perte que vous avez faite de M. Boucher, vous n'avez pas été traité aussi favorablement que l'avoit été Madame Vanloo, veuve comme vous d'un premier peintre de S.M. J'ai pensé que son décès étoit une occasion favorable pour vous procurer le complément de pension, tel que la mérite de M. Boucher et l'honneur que ses talents ont fait à la nation paroissent le demander. J'ai mis ces motifs sous les yeux de S.M. qui a bien voulu vous accorder en augmentation 1,200# en pension, pour que vous jouissiez à l'avenir de 2,400# de même Mad. Vanloo. Je m'empresse à vous donner la nouvelle en vous assurant de la satisfaction que je ressents d'avoir été porté de donner à la mémoire de M. Boucher cette preuve d'estime pour ses talents.*⁹⁷

Three days later Mme Boucher wrote a florid letter of acceptance, with the requisite allusion to her 'médiocre fortune'.⁹⁸

Towards the end of her life, Mme Boucher's fortunes diminished considerably, and with the onset of the Republic they probably plummeted to the mediocrity mentioned in the

official correspondence. In January 1788, as part of Loménie de Brienne's administrative reforms, the Crown reduced its payments to pension holders; Mme Boucher now received an annual subvention of 1,800 livres.⁹⁹ Notwithstanding this fact, the following year she participated in the massive patriotic outpouring to reduce the national debt, initiated by voluntary subscriptions from several districts of Paris. The most public manifestation of its kind had been the gift of jewels offered to the Assemblée nationale on 7th September 1789 by eleven 'citoyennes, femmes et filles d'artistes' led by Mmes Moitte and Vien.¹⁰⁰ Before the end of that month, Mme Boucher had donated silver weighing nineteen marcs, four onces, six deniers, a gift reported in the *Almanach des Françaises célèbres pour leurs vertus, leurs talens ou leur beauté*.¹⁰¹ While her donation may have been modest compared to those of the actress Mlle Clairon (ninety-one marcs) or the widow of the Introduceur des Ambassadeurs Mme de La Live de la Briche (eighty-nine marcs) – all contributions were dwarfed by Marie-Antoinette's, whose vaisselle weighed no less than 5,050 marcs – it was slightly more than that offered by the king's sisters. All were praised for their exemplary generosity.¹⁰²

Until 1792 Mme Boucher continued to receive a pension from the Trésor public, with contributions from the Liste civile – in 1790 this was reduced again to 1,200 livres, the following year she received slightly more, 1,666 livres – but there is no record of any payment for the last four years of her life.¹⁰³ As noted by her grandson Baudouin – a moderate Jacobin who, as 'imprimeur de l'Assemblée' and founding editor of both the *Journal des débats* and *Le Logographe*, played an active role in the early years of the Revolution – with the suppression of the Liste civile, her annual income had dropped to nine hundred livres, a shadow of her former opulence.¹⁰⁴

Having lost a husband, all three children and two sons-in-law before her death, one might assume that Mme Boucher's last years were sorrowful and blighted by material discomfort. This should be qualified by a family tradition that in old age she remained 'fort coquette et s'habillait avec un grand soin et suivant les modes', and counted David among her 'intimes amis'.¹⁰⁵ She must also have derived considerable solace from a brood of healthy and rambunctious great-grandchildren, immortalised in terracotta by Louis Delaville (1763–1841) who, three years after her death, exhibited at the Salon of 1799 a group portrait of them at play (Fig. 16).¹⁰⁶

⁹⁶ Furcy-Raynaud, *op. cit.* (note 6), p. 112, Pierre to d'Angiviller, 28th April 1785. Nolhac, *op. cit.* (note 52), p. 101, had correctly identified the reason for the doubling of Mme Boucher's pension.

⁹⁷ AN, O1 1918/133–34.

⁹⁸ 'Si la plus sensible et la plus tendre reconnaissance peuvent être le prix d'une grace, je trouve au moins dans mon cœur de quoi m'acquitter sur celle que vos bontés viennent de m'obtenir du roy. Sans me dissimuler son influence sur ma médiocre fortune, je me permets de vous avouer qu'elle me touche plus encore par le sentiment que vous daigner donner à la mémoire de mon mari et de ses talents. Une carrière plus prolongée luy eut enfin donné en vous Monsieur le compte [sic] un supérieur qui l'eut rendu heureux par une administration aussi éclairée et aussi favorable aux progrès des arts qu'elle est juste. Ce sentiment de ma part n'est pas nouveau, je ne fais que profiter d'une occasion assurément bien impvue de vous en faire hommage'; AN, O1 1918/135–36.

⁹⁹ AN, O1* 707/ no. 3226, 'Liste civile: Etat des Pensions dressé sur l'ordre des inscriptions', 1792.

¹⁰⁰ It was followed on 20th September by a donation from 'les dames et demoiselles du corps de l'Orfèverie'; see S. Lacroix: *Actes de la Commune de Paris pendant la révolution*, Paris 1894–1914, II, pp. 93 and 98–99, and J.-J. Guiffrey: 'Bijoux offerts à l'Assemblée Nationale par les femmes ou filles d'artistes', *Nouvelles archives de l'art*

français 2 (1886), pp. 125–27.

¹⁰¹ *Almanach des Françaises célèbres pour leurs vertus, leurs talens ou leur beauté. Dédié aux Dames citoyennes qui les premières ont offert leurs dons patriotiques à l'Assemblée Nationale*, Paris 1790, p. 261: 'Madame Veuve de M. Boucher, premier peintre du Roi.'

¹⁰² 'Nous avons voulu la marquer solennellement aux vertueuses citoyennes qui ont eu le courage d'immoler l'égoïsme & la vanité sur l'autel de la Patrie'; see *ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁰³ See document cited at note 99 above; the payments end in 1791.

¹⁰⁴ See document cited at note 10 above. For Baudouin's publishing career, see the entry in the *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, *op. cit.* (note 90), V, cols. 877–79. Louis XVI had subscribed to the daily *Le Logographe*, in which the debates of the Assemblée nationale were published verbatim.

¹⁰⁵ Desmaze, *op. cit.* (note 58), p. 77; Cuvillier also claimed a close association with the painter: 'Je suis certainement l'ami, et peut-être un peu l'allié du célèbre David'; see his response of 13th August 1789 to the editor of *L'Observateur*, published in P. Bordes: *Le Serment du Jeu de Paume de Jacques-Louis David*, Paris 1983, p. 135.

¹⁰⁶ M. Beaulieu: 'Œuvres inédites d'un sculpteur oublié: Louis Delaville (1763–1841)', *Bulletin de l'histoire de l'art français* (1978), pp. 306–09. Boucher's great-grandchildren would enjoy bourgeois (and *haut bourgeois*) status during the Restoration and July Monarchy as publishers, playwrights, army officers and a doctor's wife.