THE LIMNER COMPANY



JEAN-BAPTISTE JAQUES AUGUSTIN (1759 - 1832)

Portrait miniature of Anne-Ferdinand-Louis de Berthier, Comte de Sauvigny (1782-1864), wearing blue coat with brass buttons, ochre waistcoat and white stock

Circa: 1805

1805

Watercolour on ivory

Ivory registration number: D7FAHSWC

Signed and dated, ‘Augustin 1805’

Circular, 73mm (2 $^{7}/_{8}$ inches) high

Anne Ferdinand de Berthier, called le comte de Bertier de Sauvigny, was the son of Louis Bénigne François Bertier de Sauvigny (1737–1789), Intendant of Paris under the Ancien Régime who was hanged from a lamppost outside the Hotel de Ville during the French Revolution. His mother was Joséphine Foullon de Doué (1747-1786), daughter of Joseph François Foulon, Baron de Doué (1715-1789), the Controller-General of Finances under Louis XVI. A deeply unpopular figure, de Doué was also hanged, with the ignominious distinction of being the first recorded person to have been lynched à la lanterne (from a lamppost) - his son-in-law was confronted with his severed head before he met his own brutal end.

Ferdinand was only 7 years old when these atrocities occurred. He emigrated in 1791, and some years later (presumably, considering his age) was serving in the counter-revolutionary Armée des Émigrés. He would later serve as a colonel under Louis Antoine of France, Duke of Angoulême (1775-1844) in the prince’s 1823 expedition to restore the Spanish king's absolute powers, known as the ‘Hundred Thousand Sons of Saint Louis’.

In 1810, de Sauvigny founded les Chevaliers de la Foi, a secret society for the restoration of the

Bourbon monarchy and Catholicism. The group had quite a reach with members - les Chevaliers - across France, from Flanders to Provence. Les Chevaliers became more openly politically active on Louis XVIII's accession in 1815, many becoming associated with the les Ultraroyalistes (ultra royalists). Said to be 'more royalist than the king', les Ultras became the dominant political faction under Louis XVIII and de Sauvigny one of their leading ministers. Les Chevaliers eventually disbanded in 1826.

De Sauvigny's political career proper began with the appointment as Prefect of Calvados from 1815-16, and at this time he also first served as a member of the Chamber of Deputies. From 1816-17 he was the Prefect of Isère. He was nominated as a member of the Conseil d'État from 1822-24, Chamber of Deputies for a second time from 1824-27, and again as a Conseiller d'Etat and from 1828-30. A book written in Paris in 1948 presumably by his descendent, G. Bertier Sauvigny, is titled, 'Count Ferdinand de Bertier (1782-1864) and the enigma of the Congregation'.

De Sauvigny married in 1805, the year to which the present miniature is dated and it may have been commissioned to mark the occasion. His bride was Thaïs Le Fèvre d'Ormesson (1789-1805) [2], daughter of Henri Lefèvre d'Ormesson (1751-1808), another politician. Their union brought together two prestigious families and the young couple lived between the castles of Bois-Herpin, Sauvigny and Ormesson. However, their marriage was tragically short-lived when Thaïs died just 8 months after their wedding.

In 1808, de Sauvigny was married again to Angelique Amélie de Baschi de Saint Estève (1788-1833), who haled from an ancient noble family of Italian descent and whose aunt by marriage was Madame de Pompadour. The couple had three sons together, Louis Ferdinand (1813-1893), Charles Louis Marie (1817-1905) and Alphonse (1830-1894). After Angelique's death, de Sauvigny married Marie Louise Pauline de Riencourt (1810-1871) in 1837, and with whom he had a further 3 children: Louis Marie Henri (1838-1916), Marie Anne Louise Valentine (1840-1875) and Marie Dieudonné Paul Emmanuel Bénigne Louis (1841-1858).

De Sauvigny died in Versailles on 5 September 1864 and is buried at the cemetery of Saint-Louis de Versailles.

The artist of the present miniature, Jean-Baptiste Jacques Augustin is considered, alongside Jean-Baptiste Isbaey (1767-1855), one of the greatest French miniaturists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; Augustin dubbed "the naturalist" and Isabey "the impressionist".[3] The pair of them were extremely influential: not only did they dominate the field with their own outputs, but they trained a huge number of artists from the next generation. Augustin alone taught over 400 pupils, including his much younger wife, the very talented Madeleine Pauline du Cruet de Barailhon) (1781-1865).[4]

Augustin had arrived in Paris in 1781 and quickly rose to prominence. His meticulous style and commercial mind brought him great success, particularly with his invention of a larger miniature format, the portrait en grande miniature.[5]

He seems to have enjoyed the patronage of aristocrats and royals of the Ancien Regime before the Revolution; Napoleon, who appointed him an official painter to the Imperial court; as well the restoration monarchy, being given the role of peintre ordinaire du Cabinet du roi by Louis XVIII in 1814, later peintre des Affaires étrangères, and in 1819, premier peintre en miniature de la Chambre et du Cabinet du roi.

[1] Information has come to light since this miniature's sale at Philip Mould & Co. leading to updates in the catalogue details, namely as the names of the sitter's father, grandfather and first wife.

[2] An oil portrait of Thais, painted the same year as the present miniature on the occasion of the couple's marriage, was offered at auction in Paris in 2009. It can be viewed online here https://www.gazette-drouot.com/lots/1225696-louis-lafitte-paris-1770-1828-

[3] Schidloff, Leo R., The Miniature in Europe in the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, vol.i (Druck: Akademische Druck -u. Verlagsanstalt), 1964, p.53

[4] https://tansey-miniatures.com/en/collection/10012 - accessed 24 April 2024

[5] Olausson, Magnus, Miniature Painting in the Nationalmuseum (Nationalmuseum, Stockholm), 2021, p.157

Literature:

Pappe, B., Jean-Baptiste Jacques Augustin 1759-1832 (Scripta Edizioni, Verona), 2015, pp. 44, 190, 294