Constant Troyon, *Cattle Pasture in the Touraine*, 1853

**Artist**  
Constant Troyon, French, 1810–1865

**Title**  
*Cattle Pasture in the Touraine*

**Object Date**  
1853

**Alternate and Variant Titles**  
*Pasturage in the Touraine, near Château-la-Vallièrè, Vaches au Pâturage, La Prairie*

**Medium**  
Oil on canvas

**Dimensions (Unframed)**  
39 5/16 x 51 5/16 in. (99.9 x 130.3 cm)

**Signature**  
Signed and dated lower left: C. TROYON. 1853.

**Credit Line**  

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**Catalogue Entry**

**Citation**

*Chicago:*


*MLA:*


*Cattle Pasture in the Touraine* shows an area of rich farming land in the Loire Valley around the town of Tours, in the center of France. In the foreground, two large cattle, one standing and one seated, are both seen from behind. The central standing animal, with red pied markings, is perhaps of the Normande breed, and the brown creature in repose is possibly a Limousin. Other cattle are further back to the left, and a flock of sheep are to the right, overseen by a shepherd—or property manager—on horseback and in a blue work smock and black cap. The bleating sheep evoke the sounds of this rural scene.

Troyon here probably represents the property around the château of Vivier-des-Landes, near the village of Château-Lavallière, on the north banks of the Loire River. This was a large château, approximately twenty-five miles northwest of Tours, which was the home of his pupil, the landscape painter, Léon-Félix Loyer (d. 1899), also a student of Théodore Rousseau (1812–1867). The wealthy Loyer family had acquired the château in 1852.¹ Troyon’s early biographer, Henri Dumesnil, noted that Troyon spent the summer of 1853 here.² He provided teaching advice to his young pupil and found rich source material in the lush landscape around the château. Troyon returned to Vivier-des-Landes regularly throughout the 1850s and often depicted the agricultural

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life around the property. He also often represented Loysel’s hunting dogs.

*Cattle Pasture in the Touraine* shows not only Troyon’s mastery of animal anatomy—he was acclaimed as an *animalier*, a specialist in animal painting—but also his importance as a landscape painter. Much of the canvas is devoted to the cloud formations as well as the play of light outlining the bodies of the cattle. In fact, Troyon first came to prominence as a landscape painter in the 1840s, regularly showing ambitious landscapes at the Paris Salon from 1844 to 1848. Such works often depict sites in the Forest of Fontainebleau, as in the large-scale scene of tree felling shown at the 1848 Salon and acquired by the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lille. Early on in his career, he had trained at a Sévres porcelain factory, decorating porcelain with picturesque rural scenes. Troyon was particularly known for rendering effects of hazy, evanescent dawn light, as seen in his later, large-scale easel paintings *Boeufs allant au labour, effet de matin* (Oxen Going to Plow, Morning Effect; 1855; Musée d’Orsay, Paris) and *Departure for Market* (1859; Hermitage, Saint Petersburg). In *Cattle Pasture in the Touraine*, he shows his ability to render a more dramatic effect. Light breaks through the rolling cumulus clouds, revealing a peak in the blue sky, and falls on the animals’ backs. Dark clouds suggest a recent or imminent rain shower.

Although *Cattle Pasture in the Touraine* is grounded in the careful study of nature, it also shows Troyon’s debt to the art of the past, notably the seventeenth-century Dutch artist Aelbert Cuyp (1620–1691), whose work he had closely studied on a trip to the Netherlands in 1847. Cuyp was well known for his facility in painting cattle, at times almost humanizing them and animating their forms through luminous light effects. There were also major examples of work by Cuyp in the Louvre, including a view in which cattle are seen similarly facing an expanse of sky (Fig. 1). Troyon could also have seen the Dutch artist’s work in Parisian private collections, such as those of Paul Périé or Benjamin Delessert. Troyon also studied the meticulous renderings of cattle anatomy in paintings by the Dutch artist Paulus Potter (1625–1654) during his Holland trip, but he apparently found those too detailed.

Troyon painted *Cattle Pasture in Touraine* at a time when he was enjoying significant interest from international collectors. Troyon was a shrewd marketer of his work, and he arguably enjoyed more commercial success in his lifetime than any other Barbizon painter. He regularly showed his work internationally, notably at the Belgian Salon. At the beginning of May 1853, he traveled to England for two weeks to meet with the prominent art dealer Ernest Gambart, with the intention of developing a market among British collectors. On his return, he attended the 1853 Paris Salon, where his three pictures, including *Vallée de la Touque* (private collection), a Normandy view, enjoyed widespread critical praise. Troyon subsequently visited Touraine in the summer, producing several pictures in addition to *Cattle Pasture in the Touraine*.

Troyon’s paintings were much admired by the nineteen-year-old Claude Monet (1840–1926), who saw several of his works at the 1859 Paris Salon. He responded particularly to Troyon’s rendering of the changing moods of nature, describing the “marvelous” *Return to the Farm* (Musée d’Orsay, Paris) with “a magnificent sky... a lot of movement, wind in the clouds: the cows, the dogs are all of a complete beauty.”

Despite his commercial success, Troyon suffered mental problems and entered an asylum in his final years. *Cattle Pasture in the Touraine* was reproduced as a print (Fig. 2) in his obituary, written by Paul Mantz for the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in 1865. That this particular work was chosen to illustrate Troyon’s œuvre suggests its importance in the artist’s output. Mantz described it
thus: “We have here a superb Troyon, ambitiously conceived, vigorously executed, and absolutely full of this luxuriant vitality that the master gave as much to his animals as to his blades of grass.”

In 1865, the painting was owned by Maurice Cottier (1822–1881), a prominent figure in the Paris arts club, the Cercle de L’Union Artistique. It was exhibited in Paris in 1883 in a major show organized by the prominent dealer Georges Petit, A Hundred Masterpieces from Parisian Collections. Later, the picture entered the prominent collection of the Scotsman Alexander Young (1828–1907). In 1919, it was acquired by one of the leading galleries Knoedler and Co, which subsequently transferred the painting to its New York branch. It passed through a few owners before being purchased by the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in 1931. The painting’s provenance, moving from France to Britain to the United States, highlights the international appeal of Troyon’s work, and specifically this fine example, which sums up his abilities as both animalier and landscape painter.

2. Dumesnil noted that “il travailla beaucoup à son retour, pendant l’été qu’il passa presque tout entier en Touraine, sur la rive gauche de la Loire, non loin de la Sologne, au Vivier-des-Landes [sic], dans la propriété de son ami, M. L.” (he [Troyon] worked a lot on his return [from his May 1853 visit to England], during the summer that he spent almost entirely in Touraine, on the left bank of the Loire, not far from Sologne, at Vivier-les-Landes, on the property of his friend, M. L.). Henri Dumesnil, Troyon: Souvenirs intimes (Paris: H. Laurens et Rapilly, 1888), 76–77. Dumesnil was mistaken in saying that the château was on the left bank, since it is to the north of the Loire, and thus on the right bank.

3. Dumesnil, Troyon, 67: “Après être allé en Normandie et en Brie, Troyon se rendit plus tard en Touraine, au château du Vivier-des-Landes, auprès de Château-la-Vallière, chez un autre ami, M. L., qui faisait de la peinture et auquel il donna des conseils. Il vint là pendant sept ou huit ans” (After having gone to Normandy and Brie, Troyon went later to the château of Vivier-des-Landes, near Château-la-Vallière, the home of another friend, M. L., who painted and to whom he gave advice. He went there for seven or eight years).

4. Herding Cattle Before the Storm (19th-Century European Art including The Orientalist Sale, Sotheby’s, New York, April 18, 2008, no. 63), and A Seated Basset Hound (19th-Century European Art, Sotheby’s, New York, November 3, 2015, no. 41). In the accompanying catalogue entries, it is noted that Troyon first visited Loysel in 1854, but his trips in fact date to 1853. See also Hound Painting (1860; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) and Gamekeeper and Dogs (1854; Musée d’Orsay, Paris), and also Game Warden Driving his Dogs into the Forest (1854–56; Musée d’Orsay, Paris), where the forest worker has the same blue smock.

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**Fig. 2. Illustration:** [Louis Hippolyte?] Mouchot, engraver: Noël-Eugène Sotain (1816–1874), after Constant Troyon, La Prairie, 1865, wood engraving, dimensions unknown. Reproduced in Paul Mantz, “Troyon,” Gazette des Beaux-Arts 18 (May 1, 1865): 405

Simon Kelly
July 2019

**Notes**

5. In 1841, Périard had acquired Cuyp’s well-known *Vaches au bord de la mer* (Cows by the Sea; unlocated) for 18,100 francs at the collection sale of Alphonse-Claude-Charles-Bernardin, Comte Perregaux. See *Catalogue Raisonné des Tableaux de Diverses Écoles, Composant la précieuse galerie de feu M. le Cte Perregaux* (Paris: Maulde et Renou, December 8–9, 1841), annotated copy in the library of the National Gallery, London. For Delessert’s collection, including major works by Cuyp, see “Collections particulières de Paris, M. B. Delessert.” *Les Beaux-Arts* 1, no. 21 (1843): 342.

6. Dumesnil, *Troyon*, 54. For Troyon, Potter's focus on individual animals did not allow sufficient attention to “the ensemble and unity of a work” (l’ensemble et l’unité d’une oeuvre). Troyon offered a similar criticism of the work of English animal painters, even the noted artist Edwin Landseer (1802–1873), on his trip to England in 1853. He considered their painting “too precise, too meticulous, not seeing the masses enough” (trop précis, trop méticuleux, ne voyant pas assez les masses). The landscapes of John Constable offered an exception to this criticism. Dumesnil, *Troyon*, 75–76.

7. He showed at the Belgian Salon regularly, beginning in 1845. In 1851, he showed six paintings in an exhibition orchestrated by two important Belgian dealers, Arthur Stevens and Gustave Coëtceaux.

8. Troyon’s retrospective exhibition at the 1855 Exposition Universelle was a great success. The French State had commissioned *Les Boeufs allant au laboue, le matin* in 1854 for the large sum of 14,000 francs. His work was also bought by Russian collectors in the 1850s, notably Kushelev-Bezborodko, hence the important paintings by Troyon now in the Hermitage, including *Departure from Market*, shown at the 1859 Salon.


**Technical Entry**

Technical entry forthcoming.

**Documentation**

**Citation**

**Chicago:**


**MLA:**


**Provenance**

Maurice Cottier (1822–1881), Paris, by 1865–1881 [1];

Inherited by his wife, Jenny Cottier (née Conquéré de Monbrison, 1828–1903), Saint-Avertin, France, 1881–at least 1889 [2];

Alexander Young (1828–1907), Blackheath, London, by July 24, 1906 [3];

Purchased at Catalogue of The Very Important Collection of Modern Pictures and Water-Colour Drawings chiefly of the Barbizon and Dutch Schools, being the third and remaining portion of The Celebrated Collection of Alexander Young, Esq. (Deceased), Christie, Manson, and Woods, London, June 30, 1910, lot 116, as Vaches Au Pâturage, by Thomas Agnew and Sons, stock no. 3422, as Vaches au Pâturage, June 30, 1910–July 9, 1912 [5];

Purchased from Agnew by Thomas McLean’s Gallery, London, July 9, 1912 [6];

With Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, stock no. 2237, by October 22, 1919;


Returned by Mrs. Crawford to Knoedler and Co., New York, stock book 7 and sales book 12, no. 15275, November 1921–January 22, 1931 [8];

Purchased from Knoedler by Findlay Galleries, Kansas City, MO, January 22, 1931 [9];


Notes


[2] When Maurice Cottier died on November 9, 1881, he left all of his property to his wife, with the exception of six paintings destined for the Musée du Louvre after her death. See “6e Observation: Décès de M. Cottier, Son Testament; Etat Liquidatif de la Succession de M. Maurice Cottier, 13 mai 1882 et actes à suite [jusqu’au ] 20 octobre 1883,” unpaginated, MC/ET/XVIII/1678, Archives nationales, Paris. Thanks to Glynnis N. Stevenson, project assistant, NAMA, for performing this research. In 1889, multiple newspapers announced this bequest from Cottier’s collection to the Louvre, and they included a painting by Troyon entitled Pâturage de la Touraine, près Château-Lavallière that seems to match the Nelson-Atkins picture. See, for example, “Dernières Nouvelles,” Le Temps, no. 10364 (September 21, 1889).

However, the painting is not listed in Maurice Cottier’s will, nor is there a Troyon painting currently in the collection of the Musée du Louvre or the Musée d’Orsay that fits this description. It seems likely that the newspapers cited the Troyon by mistake, and it was retained by Mme Cottier.

[3] Alexander Young was a Scottish-born, London-based accountant and art collector. He may have owned and lent the painting to the 1893 exhibition 13th Annual Whitechapel Fine Art Exhibition at St. Jude’s School in Whitechapel, London. See “French Pictures in the East End,” New York Herald, no. 20.667 (March 22, 1893): 1, cited as “striking examples by Troyon.” No exhibition catalogue has been located to confirm which paintings these were.


The contract allowed for the paintings to remain in Young’s Blackheath house until Agnew found buyers. When Young died on August 15, 1907, his executors and administrators continued in the agreement on his behalf.

Although no mention is made of Messrs. Wallis and Son in this contract, the London Times reported that Wallis was also a purchaser of Young’s collection; see “The Alexander Young Collection,” Times (London), no. 38,086 (July 31, 1906): 12.

According to Frances Fowle, sometime after Young’s death, Agnew divided Young’s collection into three parts, the first two of which were sold to private buyers on both sides of the Atlantic. The third part was eventually auctioned at Christie’s on June 30, 1910. See “Alexander Young 1829–1907,” in Frances Fowle, Impressionism and Scotland (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland,
2008), 136. The Troyon painting was sold on the first day of the 1910 sale.

[5] Agnew and Sons bought the painting from the sale they organized, probably indicating that they purchased Young’s share and took sole ownership of the painting.


[9] See Knoedler and Co. records, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, stock book 8, p. 6, no. 15275.

Related Works

Constant Troyon, A Cowherdess in a Summer Landscape, 1863, oil on panel, 11 x 14 1/8 in. (28 x 36 cm), illustrated in 19th Century European Paintings (Amsterdam: Sotheby’s, October 16, 2007), 55.

Constant Troyon, Cattle and Sheep, ca. 1850–1865, oil on panel, 13 3/8 x 18 7/8 in. (34 x 48 cm), National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, NGI.4281.

Constant Troyon, Cattle in Stormy Weather, 1857, oil on mahogany panel, 15 3/4 x 23 in. (40 x 58.3 cm), The Wallace Collection, London, P359.

Constant Troyon, A White and Red Ox, ca. 1853, oil on panel, 18 1/4 x 21 3/4 in. (46.4 x 55.3 cm), illustrated in The Valuable Paintings Collected by the Late Dr. Leslie D. Ward (New York: American Art Galleries, January 13, 1911).

Reproductions


Alfred-Alexandre Deauney (1830–1895), after Constant Troyon, Pasturage in the Touraine near Chateau La Valliere, ca. 1883, etching, plate: 9 x 11 3/8 in. (22.9 x 28.9 cm), New England Art Exchange, Peterborough, NH.

Exhibitions

Cent Chefs d’Œuvres des Collections Parisiennes, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, opened June 12, 1883, no. 96, as Pâturage de la Touraine, près Château-la-Vallièrè.


References


“Nouvelles Diverses,” Journal des débats politiques et littéraires (September 21, 1889): unpaginated, as Pâturage de la Touraine près Château-Lavillières.

“Dernières Nouvelles,” Le Temps, no. 10364 (September 21, 1889): unpaginated, as Pâturage de la Touraine près Château-Lavillières.

“Gazette du Jour,” La Justice, no. 3538 (September 21, 1889): unpaginated, as Pâturage de la Touraine près Château-Lavillières.

“Nos Informations,” Le Soir, no. 7364 (September 21, 1889): 2, as Pâturage de la Touraine près Château-Lavillières.

“Au Musée du Louvre,” La Petite République Française, no. 4910 (September 22, 1889): 2, as Pâturage de la Touraine près Château-Lavillières.


“Échos,” La Soleil, no. 26 (September 22, 1889): unpaginated, as Pâturage de la Touraine près Château-Lavillières.

“Échos et Nouvelles,” La République Française, no. 6,492 (September 22, 1889): unpaginated, as Pâturage de la Touraine près Château-Lavillières.

“Échos,” Le Voltaire, no. 4096 (September 22, 1889): unpaginated, as Pâturage de la Touraine près Château-Lavillières.


“Informations,” Le Petit Moniteur Universel, no. 266 (September 23, 1889): unpaginated, as Pâturage de la Touraine près Château-Lavillières.

“Plats du Jour,” Le Radécal, no. 266 (September 23, 1889): unpaginated, as Pâturage de la Touraine près Château-Lavillières.

“Hier,” La Petite Presse, no. 8512 (September 25, 1889): unpaginated, as Pâturage de la Touraine près Château-Lavillières.


“La Quinzaine,” Gazette Anecdotique, Littéraire, Artistique et Bibliographique, no. 18 (September 30, 1889): 162, as Pâturage de la Touraine près Château-Lavillières.

“Chronique des Musées,” La Revue des Musées, no. 49 (October 1889): 4, as Pâturage de la Touraine près Château-Lavillières.


Arthur Hustin, Constant Troyon (Paris: Librairie de l’art, 1893), 48, 78, as Pâturage de la Touraine.


Catalogue of The Very Important Collection of Modern Pictures and Water-Colour Drawings chiefly of the Barbizon and Dutch Schools, being the third and remaining portion of The Celebrated Collection of Alexander Young, Esq. (Deceased) (London: Christie, Manson and Woods, June 30, 1910), 78, (repro.), as Vaches au pâturage.


“Çà et là,” La Croix, no. 8867 (July 2, 1910): unpaginated, as Vaches au pâturage.

“Lettres, Sciences et Arts,” L’Univers, no. 15.251 (July 2, 1910): 4, as Vaches au pâturage.

“Nouvelles de L’Étranger,” Le Temps, no. 17900 (July 2, 1910): unpaginated, as Vaches au pâturage.

Le Progrès de la Somme, no. 12577 (July 3, 1910): unpaginated, as Vaches au pâturage.

“Échos,” Le Soleil, no. 185 (July 4, 1910): unpaginated, as Vaches au pâturage.
“Informations,” Le Journal, no. 6491 (July 5, 1910): 2, as Vaches au pâturage.


“Les Nouvelles,” Journal de la Manche et de la Basse-Normandie, no. 683 (July 6, 1910): 3, as Vaches au pâturage.

“Petites Nouvelles des Lettres et des Arts,” Comédia, no. 1010 (July 6, 1910): 2, as Vaches au pâturage.

“Échos et Nouvelles,” Supplement L’Abelle de Fontainebleau, no. 27 (July 8, 1910): unpaginated, as Vaches au pâturage.


La Gazette de France, no. 279 (July 18, 1910): unpaginated, as Vaches au pâturage.


“Mouvement des Arts,” La Chronique des Arts et de la Curiosité, no. 28 (August 13, 1910): 224, as Vaches au pâturage.

“Chief Pictures and Drawings Sold,” American Art News 8, no. 35 (September 17, 1910): 2, as Vaches au Pâturage.

“Art Sales of the Season,” Art Journal, no. 72 (1910): 310, as Vaches au pâturage.


M[@]nna K. P[owell], “Art: Crowds Filled Art Institute Gallery Yesterday for the First of Season’s Exhibitions—Paintings for Nelson Gallery Attract Most Attention,” Kansas City Times 93, no. 239 (October 6, 1930): 10, as Pasturage de la Touraine.


“Newly Acquired Masterpieces to be Added to the Nelson Gallery Collection,” Kansas City Star 51, no. 207 (April 12, 1931): 8, (repro.), as Pasturage in the Touraine near Chateau Levelleris [sic].


“Nelson Gallery of Art Special Number,” Art Digest 8, no. 5 (December 1, 1933): 22, as Pasturage in the Touraine.


The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art | French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945
Nelson Gallery of Art and Mary Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, 1941), 168, as Pasturage in the Touraine.

"An Exhibit of Paintings," Kansas City Times 121, no. 289 (December 4, 1958): 9, as Pasturage in the Touraine.


