Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

BARBIER, Gilles-Paul

Paris bpd 20.IV.1768 – St Petersburg 1828
Painter, miniaturist and lithographer, said to have worked in Paris, London and St Petersburg. His origins, hitherto obscure and confused by a number of homonyms, are revealed by two documents in the registres de tutelles (AN). These show that he was baptised at Saint-Sulpice, 20.IV.1768, the son of a marchand-bonnetier, Antoine Barbier, and his wife, née Marie-Claude Duperray. Both were dead by 1790, leaving two minor children, Paul, and his sister Marie-Anne-Sophie. Their relations included several marchands-bonnetiers, and also (a cousin) Antoine Renou, secrétaire de l'Académie royale de peinture.

Gilles-Paul Barbier was enrolled in the école de l'Académie royale on 20.II.1780, under Renou, "aged 12". He was was awarded successively third, second and first medals at the Académie royale between .IV.1781 and .X.1782. Evidently he emigrated to London, as he exhibited portraits, subject pieces (in unspecified media) and miniatures at the Royal Academy in London between 1792 and 1795 (from 9 Berkeley Street, 128 New Bond Street, 46 Conduit Street and 31 Margaret Street), and was the "Monsieur Barbier, an ingenious young painter, now in England" through whom Sir Joshua Reynolds communicated with the secretary of the Académie royale (Barbier's cousin) to ascertain whether the Mona Lisa was still in the cabinet du roi. He may have been the "Mons. Barbier, gone abroad", whose household furniture (but no pictures) at his villa, Fair Lawn House, Acton Green, was advertised for sale at Christie's, 12–13.VIII.1796.

A number of portraits in various media survive from his Russian period (the collector Henri Brocard assembled a large group of his drawings), but these are mostly nineteenth century although he is said to have arrived in St Petersburg around 1796. Apparently he married a housekeeper in the imperial laundries, and he taught drawing at the court. His subjects included portraits, genre pieces and mythological subjects.

He is not to be confused with either of the painters called simply Barbier in the *Almanach du commerce de Paris* in 1805: at rue de Sèvres, 19 was the history painter, Jacques-Luc Barbier-Walbonne, while at quai des Augustins, 55 was Le Barbier, l'aîné (*q.v.*).

Bibliography

Bénézit; Cahen 1993; Michael Burrell, "Reynolds's Mona Lisa", *Apollo*, .IX.2006, n.25; Foskett 1987; Algernon Graves & William Vine Cronin, *A history of the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, 1901, p. 16; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; Saur; Алексей Савинов & Наталья Семенова, "Русский коллекционер Генрих Брокар", *Наше наследие*, 93/94, 2010; AN Y5192A, Y5196A, registres de tutelles, 8.VII.1790, 4.XI.1790

Pastels

J.125.101 John William STEERS [(1743–1826) of the Inner Temple, collector of Hogarth, godfather of Georgiana, dau. of John Henderson of Montague Street], crayons, sd "P. Barbier, 1793" (John Henderson, FSA, 1865). Exh.: London 1865, no. 2712

J.125.102 Young in white dress with orange bandeau and shawl, pstl/ppr, 64x52.6 ov., sd → "P.B…/1797" (New York, Bonhams, 21.IV.2009, Lot 91 repr., Éc. fr., est. $3–4000, b/i) [new attr., ?; signature illegible] φα
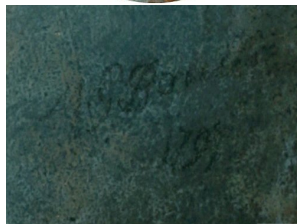

J.125.103 Jeune fille, pstl/pchm, 47.5x38, s ← "P. Barbier 1803" (Boris Wilnitsky 2022) φ

J.125.104 Frau in weißem Kleid und rotem Umhang, pstl/pchm, 43x34, sd → "Barbier/1804" (Wilhelmine Marie Herzogin von Württemberg, Schloss Friedrichshafen; Stuttgart, Siebers, 15–17.XI.2023, Lot 2174 repr., est. €500; Boris Wilnitsky, as of Anna Federovna von Brimmer, née Kamenskaya) φδκ

J.125.105 Jeune fille, pstl/pchm, 40.3x32.3, s ← "P. Barbier" (Hermitage, inv. OP-43539. All-Union Society "Antiquariat"; acqu. 1939). Exh.: St Petersburg 2001, no. 1 repr. Lit.: Каменская 1960, no. 1 repr. A/r Greuze pnt. (Hermitage. *Olim* Yusupov Palace) Φ
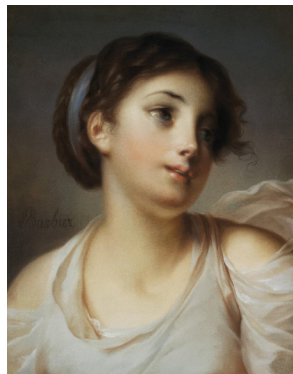
J.125.108 Deux enfants, lisant, pstl/ppr, 58x51, sd "P. Barbier 1811 mai" (Moscow, Pushkin Museum, inv. 3019. M. B. Benediktov, Moscow; acqu. 1937). Lit.: Данилова 1995, p. 307 repr., *olim* attr. Barbier-Walbonne φ