

# Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

## Online edition

### CAROLINE LUISE Markgräfin von Baden, née von Hessen- Darmstadt

Darmstadt 11.VII.1723 – Paris 8.IV.1783

Caroline (or Karoline: a form she did not use) Luise von Hessen-Darmstadt married Karl Friedrich Markgraf von Baden-Durlach (1728–1811) in 1751. She was a keen amateur, influenced to take up pastel by Liotard, whom she probably met in Frankfurt at the coronation of Franz I. Stephan in 1745. Liotard then travelled to Darmstadt where, over the course of some six weeks, Caroline Luise took lessons from him. Liotard's protocol on how to plan and execute a pastel is in Lauts 1977; several versions exist of Liotard's portrait of the Markgräfin (a reduced version has been attributed to her but has also been questioned). Seeking to obtain the best pastels, Caroline Luise sent an unidentified J. Henning (apparently in the service of the Darmstadt court: the signature seems to start with the same JWH monogram used by Johann Wilhelm Hien, *q.v.*) to Switzerland: his letter of 2.VIII.1746, sent from Geneva, enclosed a shade card with 105 samples (with 89 different shades) of pastels by Bernard Stoupan (*q.v.*) in Lausanne (*v. TREATISES*).

Caroline Luise made numerous copies of works by Boucher (from whom she acquired a series of pastel heads thought Eberts in 1759–61, the *Galerie des Beautés*, thought to number nine pastels of ladies, among them Mmes Skjoldebrand, van Höpken, de Pompadour, possibly not all autograph) as well as a number of old masters, working proficiently in pastel, drawing, oil, engraving and miniature, probably under the guidance of Joseph Melling (*q.v.*). Among her correspondents was Voltaire, to whom she sent examples of her work. He responded in a letter of 2.II.1759:

La lettre dont votre altesse sérénissime m'honore est un bienfait nouveau qui me remplit de reconnaissance, et un nouveau charme qui m'attache à elle; vos pastels, Madame, votre plume, vos bontés, vous font des sujets ou plutôt des esclaves dans un pais libre.

In a letter of 17.VIII.1758 from Karlsruhe, she wrote to Voltaire, referring to a portrait (presumably of him, but possibly of herself):

Votre pastel est en train. Jamais je n'ai travaillé avec plus de plaisir. Je m'abandonne à l'idée charmante que cela vous empêchera d'oublier une personne qui vous est tout acquise. C'est peut-être une illusion, mais ne me l'ôtez point, monsieur, j'en suis trop charmée.

In a further letter of 4.II.1763, announcing the imminent despatch of another volume of his life of Peter the Great, Voltaire wrote: "ma plume ne vaut pas vos crayons, et mes peintures ne valent pas vos pastels."

Evidently remaining interested in Liotard, she acquired the Tête de la Vierge which he had exhibited in the Académie de Saint-Luc of 1752 (a curious picture for the Protestant artist to have exhibited, or for the Lutheran princess to acquire); it remained in her collection but is untraced after her posthumous inventory. However she herself copied it, as we know from

a letter from Charlotte Sophie Gräfin Bentinck to Caroline Luise of 27.XII.1758, after her return to Vienna from a visit to Karlsruhe, in which she praised the princess's "superbe tête de la Vierge", calling it a "beau chef d'œuvre" and inviting her to present it to Maria Theresia; its fate is unclear.

In contrast to other royal or noble amateurs, Caroline Luise can be seen to have mastered pastel (and also oil and chalk drawing) to a high, professional standard, showing great skill in recreating detail (some of which is now lost in the originals). Her pictures were certainly not "just what ladies do when they paint for amusement" (to borrow Reynolds's jibe against her teacher), and her equal mastery of the messier craft of oil painting reinforces her difference from the ladies admitted as honorary members of so many European academies with a token submission in pastel. Her taste, with its penchant for Northern school cabinet paintings, was consonant with this meticulous craftsmanship. It is surely not coincidence that when Perronneau produced a replica of his famous Mlle Huquier in the Louvre for the Markgräfin, he worked in an entirely different technique than normal, smoothing away his graphic strokes to produce a fully blended alternative that would appeal to a pupil of "point-de-touches" Liotard.

It may seem puzzling that so accomplished a pastellist should have confined her output to copies: but this is misunderstand her objectives. Pastel painting was an amatrice's means of deeper engagement with the pictures she loved rather than an end in itself.

Caroline Luise was admitted to the Danish Kunstakademi in 1763, with a *Tod der Kleopatra* after Netscher as reception piece. She formed the collection which is the nucleus of the Kunsthalle at Karlsruhe, sending Reifenstein (*q.v.*) to acquire paintings by Bloemart, de Troy and Rembrandt from Liotard's private collection (other pictures included at least five Chardins, acquired through Joullain or from Aved). When Boswell visited Karlsruhe in 1764, the Markgräfin showed him "a Venus in Crayon of her own painting" which Boswell thought "extremely fine", later noting that she "paints to perfection and has a general taste for the fine arts". Her posthumous inventories (transcribed under her entry in the index of collectors) included some 100 pastels, mostly unidentified but including works by Pillement and Perronneau; the number of unfinished items suggests that many were her own work (*v. German sch.*).

In 1764 at the de Troy sale her agent Johann Heinrich Eberts (1726–1803) acquired a Rosalba pastel (*La Poésie*): it had sold for less than 600 livres a few minutes before his arrival, but Eberts managed to buy it for 720 livres, such was his determination: he warned her in his letter of 30.IV.1764 that—

Elle le trouvera d'abord froid, mais à l'examen ce n'est plus un Pastel, c'est un guide, un Corrège, et j'ensuis si content que si à la vente je l'eusse vu de si près je l'aurais infailliblement poussé à 50 Louis de pareille s'étant payé à Melle Carrera, et à des ventes plus de 100 Louis d'or. Votre Altesse

Serenissime mieux que personne au monde, saura a apprecier ce beau morceau.

Her correspondence (published in 1933, ed. G. Kircher) extended across Europe. Between 1766 and 1768 she was kept abreast of developments in Paris by Claude Pougin de Saint-Aubin (*q.v.*), although curiously he has little to say about pastel.

The subject of numerous publications, including a biography by Jan Lauts (1990), Caroline Luise's work, collections and circle were given encyclopaedic coverage in the 2015 exhibition and associated publications. In 2016 an online database of her correspondence and collections was launched by the Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, the Staatlichen Kunsthalle Karlsruhe and the Università della Svizzera italiana.

### Monographic exhibitions

Karlsruhe 1983: *Caroline Luise*, Karlsruhe, 1983

Karlsruhe 2015: *Die Meister-Sammlerin. Karoline Luise von Baden*, Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, 30.V.–6.IX.2015. Cat. Holger Jacob-Friesen, Pia Müller-Tamm & al. [Karlsruhe 2015]. Aufsatzband: Frank & Zimmermann 2015

Karlsruhe 2015b: *En Voyage – Die Europareisen der Karoline Luise von Baden*, Karlsruhe, Generallandesarchiv, 17.VI.–16.X.2015. Cat. = Karlsruhe 2015

### Bibliography

www.karoline-luise.la-bw.de; Baden Baden 1981; Boswell 1953, pp. 175, 283; Boswell 2008, p. 219; Boucher 1986, pp. 288ff; Chardin 1979; "Lettres sur les Salons de 1773, 1777 et 1779 adressés par Du Pont de Nemours à la Margrave Caroline-Louise de Bade", *Archives de l'art français*, II, 1908, pp. 1–128; Kircher 1933; Lauts 1977; Lauts 1984; Lauts 1990; Loche 1980; Patrick Michel, "Caroline Louise de Bade", in Paris 2005b, pp. 65–74; Reuter 2015; R&L, pp. 346–53; Sauvage 2015; Vey 2002; Vey 2006

*v.g.* TREATISES

### Pastels

J.2.101 AUTOPORTRAIT, en habit rouge, avec ordre russe de Sainte-Catherine, pstl, 37.8x44.6 ov., c.1780 (Baden-Baden, Neues Schloß, K 429). Lit.: Kircher 1958, no. 479 n.r., ?Autoportrait

J.2.102 [?]SELBSTBILDNIS, pstl/pchm, 26x21.5 ov. (Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle, inv. 1974. German art market; acqu. 1938). Exh.: Baden-Baden 1981, no. 6.1.1 n.r.; Karlsruhe 1983, no. 171 n.r. Lit.: Lauts 1966, p. 161 repr.; R&L p. 352f. A/r Liotard [attr.] φ



J.2.104 ?SELBSTBILDNIS or ?VOLTAIRE, pstl, 1758 (sent to Voltaire 1758)

J.2.105 Die kranke Frau, pstl/pchm, 37.5x30.5, 1757 (Baden-Baden, Neues Schloß, 1981). Exh.: Baden-Baden 1981, no. 6.1.2 n.r.; Karlsruhe 2015, no. 87, repr. p. 137. A/r Frans van Mieris d. Ä. pnt., 1667 φσ



J.2.107 Der Tod der Kleopatra, pstl/pchm, a/r Caspar Netscher, 55.2x44.5, sd ✓ "Fair par Caroline Louise Margrave de Bade Dourlac 1764" (Copenhagen, Kunstakademi, inv. KS 30). Exh.: Karlsruhe 1983, no. 176 repr. cl.r; Karlsruhe 2015, no. 98, repr. p. 133. Lit.: Lauts 1980, pp. 200ff repr. φσ



J.2.109 Jeune femme, regardant de face, les bras appuyés sur une balustrade d'un balcon de pierre, coiffure poudrée, manteau de velours bleu garni de fourrure, manches garnies de dentelles, corsage ouvert en pointe, ruban noir au cou, les mains cachées dans un manchon rouge, pstl, 26x21 (don de l'artiste: Jean-Étienne Liotard 1746; vente p.m., no. 188, D/25 6r; desc.: Tilanus 1897). Exh.: Liotard 1885, no. 10, as by Liotard. Lit.: Humbert, Revilliod & Tilanus 1897, p. 109, ?a/r Liotard; I&R 84 n.r.; R&L, pp. 139, 350 n.r.; Jeffares 2009 [?a/r La Tour, marquise de Sesmaisons; cf. Stanislaw Leszczyński, marquise de Bassompierre]

J.2.11 Tête de la Vierge, pstl, a/r Liotard, J.49.2491 (Caroline Luise; vue 1758 par la comtesse Bentinck; Caroline Luise, inv. p.m., 29–30.VI.1784, no. 410, Mater Dolorosa, ebauchirt). Lit.: Lauts 1977, p. 53; Lauts 1984; R&L p. 351 n.r.

J.2.111 Schäferszene, pstl/pchm, 52.5x44.5, c.1760 (PC 1981–2015). Exh.: Baden-Baden 1981, no. 5.2.3 n.r., Karlsruhe 2015, no. 93, repr. p. 1341. A/r Netscher pnt., 1681 φσ



J.2.113 Venus und Amor, pstl/pchm, a/r van der Waerff, 37.5x30.5 (?seen by Boswell 1764; Baden-Baden 1981; PC 2015). Exh.: Baden-Baden 1981, no. 6.1.13, repr. p. 63; Karlsruhe 2015, no. 90 repr. Lit.: Brieger 1921, repr. p. 214, as in Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle, as Pan und Flora, a/r Caspar Netscher φσ



J.2.115 La dévote, pstl, 1754 (Caroline Luise; don: M. de Vanolles, Intendant d'Alsace)

J.2.116 ~?repl., Eine Betschwester, pstl (Caroline Luise inv. p.m., 29–30.VI.1784, no. 557). Lit.: Lauts 1984

J.2.117 Ein Frauenzimmer, mit säugendem Kind; & J.2.118 Das nehmliche Stück wiederum, pstl (Caroline Luise inv. p.m., 29–30.VI.1784, no. 426/427). Lit.: Lauts 1984, ?cop. a/r Pieter Cornelisz van Slingeland, pnt., Stillende Mutter, Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle)

J.2.119 ~?Ein Frauenzimmer, ein Kind säugend en pastel (Caroline Luise inv. p.m., 29–30.VI.1784, no. 591)

J.2.12 Spitzeklöpplerin, pstl, 1764 (Caroline Luise inv. p.m., 29–30.VI.1784, no. 513, as "Frauenzimmer von Pastell, an der Klippellade"; inv. 1829, no. 77). Lit.: Lauts 1984, ?a/r G. Dou pnt. (Karlsruhe)

J.2.121 Klein Portrait, pstl (Caroline Luise; inv. p.m., 29–30.VI.1784, no. 404)