

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

HUBER, Jean

Chambésy 1721 – Lausanne 1786

A soldier, he served in Kassel and Piemonte between 1738 and 1746, when he returned to Geneva and entered Swiss politics. His life changed in 1754 when Voltaire arrived in Geneva; thenceforth he devoted himself to illustrating the life of the great master.

Gibbon encountered Huber in 1762, taken by Lord Mountstuart to see “quelques tableaux...qui ne sont pas grand chose”. He was then living in Plainpalais; in 1776 he moved to Collogny. Boswell was taken to see him in 1764: “a man of great variety of talents, in particular an amazing art of cutting paper.” In his will of 20.X.1768, later revoked, La Tour bequeathed to “M. Hubert, de Genève, qui a tant de talens différens, le portrait de M^r son oncle, l'abbé Hubert” (presumably the version now in Saint-Quentin).

On 8.X.1764 Liotard took Karl Graf Zinzendorf to see Huber: the diarist described “un homme qui découpe a merveille, même derriere le dos, mais qui par inconstance a quitté la découpure pour la peinture dont il ne s'acquitte pas si bien.” Nevertheless Zinzendorf mentions a portrait of the artist's mother reading a prayer book, and of his wife still young, “assez bons”, while in the self-portrait painting Voltaire, the writer's portrait was better than any he had seen.

On 10.VIII.1772 Voltaire recommended him to Mme du Deffand:

Puisque vous avez vu M^r Hubert, il fera vôtre portrait, il vous peindra en pastel, à l'huile, en mezzo tinto, il vous dessinera sur une carte avec des ciseaux, le tout en caricature. C'est ainsi qu'il m'a rendu ridicule d'un bout de l'Europe à l'autre. Mon ami Fréron ne me caractérise pas mieux pour réjouir ceux qui achètent ses feuilles.

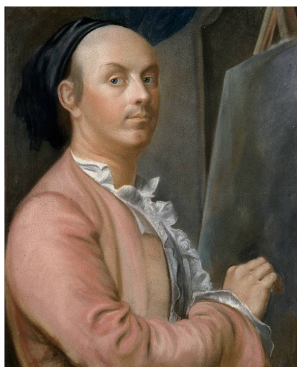
A couple of repetitions of Barat's 1775 portrait of the philosopher are probably simple confusions. If the pastel of the naturalist Charles Bonnet, a friend of Huber, is indeed by him, his portraiture must be considered more seriously than as that of an eccentric iconographer. Huber's son Jean-Daniel (1754–1845) was a landscape painter and printmaker.

Bibliography

Ann Arbor 2003; Apgar 1995; Jean Aubry, “Le démon de Genève”, *Revue de Paris*, 1, 15.VI.1936; Baud-Bovy 1903, pp. 45–74; Bénézit; Boswell 1953, p. 278; Boswell 2008, p. 314f; BuysSENS 1988; Georges Alfred Bonnard, *Le journal de Gibbon à Lausanne, 17 août 1763 – 19 avril 1764*, Lausanne, 1945, p. 270; Grove; Herdt 1978; Rigaud 1849, pp. 80–86; Zinzendorf 1764 [ed. H. Watzlawick & G. Klingenstein, forthcoming]

Pastels

J.407.101 AUTOportrait devant son chevalet, pstl, 61.5x49.5, c.1760 (Geneva, Société des Arts. Don Mme Trembley-Jaquet 1826). Lit.: Apgar 1995, pl. xii φ



J.407.103 AUTOportrait, pstl/ppr, 63x50, c.1773 (Geneva, mAHI, inv. 1890-7; dep.: Les Délices. Galerie Morganti; acqu. 1890). Lit.: Baud-Bovy 1903, pp. 45–46, pl. III; Brun 1908, II, p. 94; Jean-Aubry 1936, p. 602; BuysSENS 1988, no. 151; Apgar 1995, repr. φσ



J.407.105 ~repl., pstl, 65x51, c.1760–70 (Lausanne, musée historique, inv. I.32.Huber Jean.1). Lit.: Apgar 1995, pl. xi φ

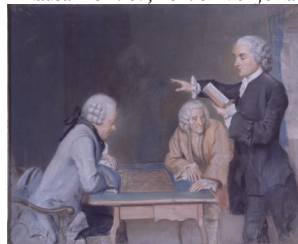


J.407.107 Charles BONNET (1720–1793), naturaliste, pstl, 62x51 (Saladin 1924). Lit.: Baud-Bovy 1924, pl. xii, attr. φσ



François-Marie Arouet, dit VOLTAIRE (1694–1778) (Geneva, mAHI, inv. 1938-1; dep.: Les Délices. Jean-Jacques de Sellon, Geneva?; de Loriol, Geneva? Antiquaire Laurent Rebjous; acqu. 1938). Lit.: BuysSENS 1988, no. 152, as by Huber [v. Barat] ~version, Voltaire lisant Sophocle (Paris, Drouot, Delorme, Collin du Bocage, 21.III.2007, Lot 53) [v. Barat]

J.407.111 François-Marie Arouet, dit VOLTAIRE (1694–1778) et [??]Jean-Jacques Rousseau [ou ?Abraham de Gallatin] jouant aux échecs avec leur ami Paul-Claude Moutou (1731–1787), pasteur à Genève, lisant, pstl, 61.7x48.6, c.1770 (Lausanne, musée historique, inv. I.32.collectif.2). Exh.: Lausanne 1987, no. 95. Lit.: Jeffares 2009 φδ



J.407.112 VOLTAIRE et les paysans, m/u (Mme Albert Vernet 1906). Exh.: Geneva 1906, no. 8

J.407.113 VOLTAIRE, m/u (Henri de Lessert 1906). Exh.: Geneva 1906, no. 9