

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

ISABELLE de Bourbon-Parme

Madrid 1741 – Vienna 1763

Isabelle-Marie-Louise-Antoinette de Bourbon-Parme, or Maria Isabella di Borbone, was the granddaughter of Louis XV and daughter of Madame Infante, who in 1739 had married Felipe, a younger son of Philip V of Spain. Following the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748 Felipe became duc de Parme, and moved there the following year; his wife and daughter made an extended trip to Versailles where they were painted by Nattier. In 1760 she married Erzherzog Joseph (she died before his accession as emperor) and moved to Vienna (another painting by Nattier was sent to Vienna in 1758). Other portraits included pastels by Lion, Liotard and Roslin.

Several gouache drawings (one after a Troost print) at Schönbrunn (erroneously described as in pastel in some older sources) are signed “Marie fecit...” and assumed to be by her sister-in-law Maria Christina until Vienna 2017b when they were recognised as the work of Isabelle. Isabelle is more likely to be the “archiduchesse Marie” who paid 450 florins for 4 months’ lessons with Pierre-Joseph Lion (*q.v.*) during his stay in Vienna 1760–68.

She was remarkably accomplished as a musician, linguist, embroiderer as well as practising as an amateur pastellist; she was taught by Giuseppe Baldrighi (*q.v.*). In 1759 she presented a large pastel of *Carità romana* (described by one source as a “mediocrissima opera”, while another called it “un monument précieux de son goût & de ses talens”) to the Accademia in Parma; the subject was a free copy of Baldrighi’s *morceau de réception* at the Paris Académie in 1756 (formerly in the Louvre, it is now in Angers), and was no doubt executed under his direction as he had returned to the Parma court. Madame Isabelle obtained boxes of pastels from Paris through the banker Claude Bonnet. She is also recorded as having been made in 1789 (posthumously) an honorary member of the Akademie in Vienna. Her *Meditazioni cristiane* were published posthumously in 1764. She was the subject of pastels by Liotard, Lion and Roslin (*qq.v.*); an inscribed copy of the head of the Liotard (*q.v.*) might possibly be from her hand.

Bibliography

Bédarida 1927, p. 294 Füllli 1806; Joseph de Laporte, *Le Voyageur français*, 1782, xxv, p. 231; Nagler 1835–52, *s.v.* Elisabeth; Parma 2012; Ernest Sanger, *Isabelle de Bourbon-Parme*, 1991; Vienna 2017b

Pastels

- J.4148.101 Jeune femme lisant (Vienna, Albertina, inv. 13636)
J.4148.102 Tête de jeune femme (Vienna, Albertina, inv. 13637)
J.4148.103 Une Vierge en prières, pstl, 65x48.7, inscr. “Elisabethae principis parmensis Iosephi archiducis austriacae conjugis optimae Opus. 1763” (Vienna, Galerie impériale, Cabinet blanc 1781). Lit.: Mechel 1784, p. 142, no. 2; Winckelmann 1796, p. 268
J.4148.104 Carità romana, pstl/ppr, 79x59, c.1758 (Parma, Galleria Nazionale, inv. 537. Don

artista: Accademia 1759). Lit.: Corrado Ricci, *La R. Galleria di Parma*, 1896, p. 175f; Giuseppe Massera & Nino Albarosa, *Cantabilis harmonia*, 1985, pp. 32ff; Parma 2012, p. 117 repr. A/r Giuseppe Baldrighi, pnt., *morceau de réception* 1756 (Angers, mBA. Du Tillot 1758) ☐



~grav. Simon-Jean-François Ravenet (1737–1821) 1760. Lit.: Parma 2012, p. 118 repr.

J.4148.107 Paesaggio, m/u (Rome, Accademia di S. Luca). Lit.: *Guida per visitare la Galleria e le sale della insigne accademia romana di belle arti*, Rome, 1882, no. 181 n.r.