

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

MEYER, Jeremiah

Tübingen 1735 – London 1789

Also Jeremias Majer. The son of a portrait painter to the Herzog von Württemberg, the famous miniaturist came to London around 1747 and studied with Zincke 1757–58. From at least 1761 he was making portraits of the royal family. He became a British citizen in 1762, and two years later was appointed miniature and enamel painter to the king and miniature painter to the queen. He became a founder member of the Royal Academy in 1769. He is said to have made some pastels, which are carefully drawn and very highly finished.

In 1761 the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts offered a premium of 20 guineas for the best drawing of the King in profile, “for the purpose of having a die engraved from it”. Meyer won the competition, but his work (“drawn from memory” in an unspecified medium and now lost, but known from the engravings made by Spooner and Watson) seems to differ very little from one version of a painting by Allan Ramsay, showing the king in the same embroidered coat. Another version of the Ramsay, also facing left, is in a plain red coat, which Meyer also uses in a 1761 enamel sent by the king as an engagement present to the future Queen Charlotte (it appears on her wrist in various portraits). It seems clear that the anonymous pastel sold in 1968 (previously assigned to Liotard, and showing similarities with the work of Vispré) is related in some way to these images, although, given the change in orientation it does not simply derive from the prints. It is not the work of Ramsay, but it is possible (but currently unverifiable) that it could be a first sketch by Meyer.

Bibliography

Edinburgh 2008; Edwards 1808, p. 159; Hofstetter 2008; Ingamells 2004, p. 196; Pappé & al. 2008; Sée 1911; Smart 1999, pp. 121f

Pastels

J5348.101 GEORGE III as Prince of Wales (1738–1820), in red coat, with Garter ribbon, pstl, 54.5x40.5 (London, Christie’s, 4.XII.1925, Lot 65, as by Sharples, 6 gns; Harcourt. London, Sotheby’s, 10.XII.1968, Lot 81 repr., as Liotard). Lit.: adv. *Burlington magazine*, CX/788, .XI.1968, p. xxxi repr., sale advertised as 12.XII.; Jeffares 2006, p. 773Cii; R&L p. 435, ??Liotard [new attr., ?] Φ

Photo courtesy Sotheby’s

~?related enamel bracelet (George III; don: Charlotte von Mecklenburg-Strelitz)

~enamel, 5.2x4.4 ov., sd “JM 67” (Royal Collection, inv. RCIN 421851)

~grav. C. Spooner, in reverse, c.1750–67. Lit: Chaloner Smith 17.ii

~grav. J. Watson

