

Online edition

MURAT, Béatrix-Adélaïde de

Périgny 14.I.1772 – Poitiers 14.I.1833

The scarcely legible signature, Béatrix de Murat, on a competent work sold in 2011, eluded full identification until 2022. Despite the quotation of Venus's words adapted from the Dryden translation of Virgil, the pastel seemed to be of French execution. The level was not above that of a gifted amateur. Several other pastels, all unsigned, are similar enough to be attributed to the same hand; at least six are in identical frames. The work is similar to the pastels of Zaver (*q.n.*). The compositions are reminiscent of the larger miniatures of François Dumont. (An anonymous miniature of Aglaé de Polignac, duchesse de Guiche and her two brothers, in the musée Cognacq-Jay, inv. J766, could plausibly be by her as well.) Those sitters who have been identified all belong to the nobility.

The name however points only to one candidate: Béatrix-Adélaïde, comtesse de Murat. She was the daughter of Jean-Baptiste de Murat (1724–1786), capitaine d'une compagnie détachée de la Marine, in Louisiana, and Charlotte Locquet de La Pommeraye. They had married in New Orleans in 1751. Court papers (Louisiana colonial documents) show that, following the death of Charlotte's father and a legal dispute with his widow, the family plantation was offered for sale by auction in 1758: it was sold for 37,000 livres to Charlotte's mother and brother; the Murats then returned to France. They came from an ancient family in the Auvergne with estates in Belgium.

Béatrix was born 14.I.1772 in Périgny and baptised the following day with her elder brother, also Jean-Baptiste de Murat, and sister Elisabeth, just four years old, as godparents. Her eldest sibling Charlotte, dite Caroline, married the marquis de Pezay in 1776, and is best known from the group portrait by Vigée Le Brun (1787, Washington, NGA); Pezay was a soldier and littérateur who contributed to the *Encyclopédie*. (Mme du Deffand told Walpole, 18.XII.1776, that she didn't know why Pezay had married this "très belle Mlle de Murat, qui n'a pas un sou, presque point de parents: il n'en est point amoureux". After Pezay's sudden death in 1777, she wrote again, describing the widow as "très belle, très sage et très pauvre.") Béatrix and three other sisters, who presumably had fewer prospects of good matches, were chanoinesses-comtesses in chapitre de Salles-en-Beaujolais, an institution that only accepted girls from the highest nobility. Two of her sisters completed the acte de vêtue and became nuns, but Béatrix did not and remained in the "vie mondaine", becoming an "adoptée nièce" (rather than "sœur") on 23.IX.1788. The chapitre, which had a 12th century cloister, had an outstanding garden created in 1781 by Jean-François Désarnaud, while the salle capitulaire was decorated with murals and a collection of objets d'art. Nothing more is known of her education but it is likely that the pastels were made when she was still at the chapitre. She remained celibate and received a pension of Fr1500 in 1833 "en remplacement d'une pension de Fr6000 dont elle jouissait avant la révolution", just before her death in her house

in Poitiers, place de Saint-Hilaire, on 14.I.1833 (her age was stated incorrectly as 54 in the acte de décès). Her sisters Pauline-Marguerite and Henriette-Joséphine, with whom she shared the house, both predeceased her by a few years.

Bibliography

Liste general des pensionnaires de l'ancienne liste civile, Paris, 1833, no. 8908, p. 359; Jouglu; Eugène Méhu, *Salles en Beaujolais*, 1910

GENEALOGIES [Murat](#)

Pastels

J.5496.101 Dame de la ?famille D'ALBERT DE LUYNES, assise, tenant un livre, pstl, 59x49 (PC; Paris, Drouot, Thierry de Maigret, 14.IX.2018, Lot 58 repr., est. €700–1200) [new attr. 2014, ?] φαδν



J.5496.103 Mme DUPIN de Francueil, née Marie-Aurore de Saxe (1748–1821), et son fils Maurice (1778–1808), pstl, 49.8x60.5 (Paris, musée Carnavalet, inv. D.8333. Don Aurore Lauth-Sand 1923). Exh.: Paris 1977a, repr.; Paris 1984a; Paris 2004d, repr. Lit.: Charageat 1954, p. 13, fig. 11; Montgolfier 1982, no. 41 repr. [new attr.] Φανσ



Photo courtesy musée Carnavalet

J.5496.106 ~cop. moderne (Mme Lauth-Sand 1954). Lit.: Charageat 1954, p. 36 n.53 n.r.

J.5496.107 [??]Mme DUPIN de Francueil, née Marie-Aurore de Saxe, avec un homme, pstl, gch. 59x48, inscr. √ "Boze" (desc.: George Sand succession; acqu. c.1970; PC 2015; Paris, Sotheby's, 16.VI.2016, Lot 49 repr., as by Boze, inconnu, est. €3–4000, b/i) [??attr. Boze; new attr., ?] φανσ



J.5496.109 [?]La famille de Mme DUPIN de Francueil, née Marie-Aurore de Saxe, pstl, 59x48 (desc.: George Sand succession; acqu. c.1970 ; PC 2015; Paris, Sotheby's, 16.VI.2016, Lot 50 repr., Éc. fr. XVIII^e, est. €8–12,000, b/i) Exh.: Paris 2004d, h.c. [new attr., ?] φανσ



J.5496.111 Aglaé de Polignac, duchesse de GUICHE (1768–1803), dans les jardins de Trianon, 48x59, c.1780 (Bayonne, collection Gramont, inv. 57, château de Pau 2003). Lit.: Ribeton 1992, p. 20 repr. [new attr.] Φαν



Photo courtesy musée Basque

J.5496.112 ?La vicomtesse de LA PORTE DE RIENTZ, née Adélaïde Colombe Le Pelletier de Saint-Fargeau (c.1772–1790) [∞ 1789 Amador-François-Charles de La Porte de Riantz, vicomte de la Porte (1760–1835)], tenant un livre, pstl, 58x47 (PC 2024; Angers, Deloys, 20.XI.2024, Lot 224 repr., est. €2–3000) [new attr., 2024] φαδν



J.5496.113 [olim J.9.2219] ?MARIE-ANTOINETTE et ses enfants, pstl, 62x50.5 (Angers, Enchères Pays de Loire, 16.II.2003, Lot 61 repr., entourage de Vigée Le Brun, est. €2000) [new attr., 2020] φαδν



J.5496.114 La comtesse de MONTAUT, née Cécile-Marie Simonet de Coulmiers (1757–1814), en robe blanche, inscr. ΚΑΛΟΚΑΓΑΘΗ ΦΙΛΟΥΝΗ ΦΙΛΟΥΣΑ, pstl/ppr, 60.5x50.5, inscr. verso “Mademoiselle de Coulmiers...”, mère de la duchesse de Gontaut-Biron (desc.: sitter’s great-grandson, Robert Desprez de Gésincourt (1887–). Paris, Drouot, Artcurial, 7.II.2014, Lot 237 repr., est. €3500–4000; Paris, Drouot, Artcurial, 3.X.2014, Lot 407 repr., est. €2500–3000) [new attr.] φαν



J.5496.116 Mme Jacques-Christophe SCHERER (∞ 1782), née Jeanne-Andrienne-Amélie-Élisabeth Guillard de Grand-Clos (1766–1847), in a pink dress, standing by a waterfall, pstl, 58.5x47.5 (London, Christie’s South Kensington, 1.X.2014, Lot 321 repr. est. £1000–1500). Lit.: Grand d’Hauteville 1932, p. 134, anon. [new attr.] φανσ



J.5496.117 ?Charlotte von STEIN (1742–1827), en robe bleue, assise, pstl, 60x49 (Ahlden, Schloss, 12–13.V.2023, Lot 2943 repr., éc. fr. ou allemande, est. €1400–2800) [new attr.] φα?δν



J.5496.118 Jeune femme portant une guirlande de fleurs, pstl, 60x48, ?s ∨ [illegible] “beatrice de murat”, inscr. “and on thy succour and thy faith I rely”, Venus’s words adapted from John Dryden, translation of Virgil’s *Aeneis*, 1697, I, 940 (Paris, Drouot, Delorme, Collin du Bocage, 19.X.2011, Lot 57 repr., éc. anglaise XIX^e, est. €500–700) φν



J.5496.121 Jeune femme debout, pstl, 58x49, inscr. “Love and Friendship” (Beaune, Daniel Herry, 27.X.2013, Lot 56 repr., éc. anglaise, est. €400–450) [new attr.] φαν



J.5496.151 Couple assis dans un intérieur, pstl, 58x49 (Paris, Drouot, Pescheteau Badin, 27.III.2019, Lot 18 repr., éc. fr. c.1780, est. €400–600) [new attr.] φαν

