

SARTORI, Felicita, Frau Franz Joseph von Hoffmann

Pordenone c.1714 – Dresden 1760

The daughter of a notary in Pordenone, she received her early training from her uncle, the engraver Antonio dall'Agata, in Gorizia. (There seems to be no justification for the spelling Felicita which is widely found, including here until 2023.) He arranged for her to join the studio and household of Rosalba Carriera (*q.v.*) in Venice, around 1728. The circumstances of this are mired in legend: Séguier 1752 described the ruse of her joining as a servant in his letter to Dezallier, who wondered if it could be true (Dezallier d'Argenville 4.1.1753). Carriera's reputation was at its peak, and the demand for repetitions of her work in pastel and miniature was supposedly shared by Sartori and Carriera's sisters. Although Sartori remained close to Carriera throughout her life, she was invited to Dresden around 1741 by August III.'s counsellor Franz Joseph von Hoffmann (the subject of a pastel by Mengs); she accepted, and the following year she married Hoffmann – but only after the Empress ennobled her to overcome the courtier's reluctance to marry beneath his social station. After his death in 1749, her movements are unclear; one source suggests she remarried and moved to Bamberg, while others suggests that she was still in Dresden in 1753 where, according to Mariette, she died in 1760.

Sartori's surviving authenticated works seem all to be miniatures, many drawn from celebrated pastels by her teacher (some are erroneously described as in pastel); some oil copies after Rosalba are also recorded. Her early biographer, known only as Abate N.N., mentions that she learned pastel, but seems rapidly to have specialised in making miniature copies. The extent of her work in pastel is unclear, and it would not be surprising if some of the numerous pastel répliques of Carriera are by her pupil. Some 19 miniatures have survived in Dresden, made after her move. An interesting indication of her earlier work is found in a notice published in London in 1789 by abate Sartori (the subject of a pastel by Carriera, and perhaps her anonymous biographer) seeking to sell a number of pictures by Rosalba (5 works) and by her pupil Felicita Sartori (11, including a black chalk drawing, two small oils, a number of "ritrattini", no doubt miniatures, and the three items listed below which may be in pastel). This confirms that the abate was Felicita's brother, but there is some confusion with Giambattista Sartori, who married Lucietta Pellegrini, compounded by the inclusion in the 1789 notice of two small portraits (miniatures?) by Felicita Sartori of "a young sister of Felicita" and of "abate Sartori, brother of Felicita", which would appear to correspond with the Rosalba pendants of Giambattista and Lucietta.

Bibliography

Bénézit; Levati 1822, V/II, pp. 124f; Manzano 1884–87; Mariette 1851–60; Filippo Pedrocchi, in Turin 2003; Puhlmann 2003; Sani 1989; Sani 2003; Sastres 1789; Séguier 1752

Pastels

J.655.101 AUTO PORTRAIT, pstl/ppr, 55x45 (Köln, Lempertz, 18.V.1996, Lot 1069 repr., est. DM8000, b/i) ☐



J.655.103 Clorinda SARTORI, pstl (Lodovico Alvisè Manin; acqu. 1777, 55 zecchini with 7 others, as Rosalba; palazzo dei Manin ai Servi, inv. c.1777, no. 34, as by Rosalba; inv. 7.XII.1799, no. 32, as Felicita Sartori, 3 zecchini). Lit.: Tormen 2009, p. 245

J.655.104 Milord WALPOLE, in abito di maschera, m/u, a.1741 (abate Sartori 1789). Lit.: Sastris 1789, p. 64 n.r., "ritratto bellissimo" [?Copy of Carriera, *Lord Boyne*]

J.655.105 Gentiluomo, pstl/ppr, 61x46 (Milan, Sotheby's, 4.VI.2003, Lot 132 repr., est. €6–8000; Swedish PC; Uppsala Auktionshammare, 14.VI.2023, Lot 617 repr., est. SwKr20–30,000, SwKr175,000. London, Sotheby's, 3.VII.2024, Lot 35 repr., est. £20–30,000, £18,000 [=£21,600]) ☐



Photo courtesy Sotheby's

J.655.108 Inverno; & ?Estate, m/u, a.1741 (abate Sartori 1789). Lit.: Sastris 1789, p. 64 n.r.

J.655.109 Cleopatra, pstl (Lodovico Alvisè Manin; acqu. 1777, 55 zecchini with 7 others, as Rosalba; palazzo dei Manin ai Servi, inv. c.1777, no. 32, as by Rosalba; inv. 7.XII.1799, no. 28, as Felicita Sartori con assistenza della Maestra, Cleopatra, 5 zecchini). Lit.: Tormen 2009, p. 245