

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

BIROCHON, Guillaume

fl. The Hague 1696–1726

According to the archives of the Haagsche Teekenacademie, Birochon was a pupil of the Huguenot painter Jean-Henri, or Jan Henrik, Brandon in The Hague 1696–98 (Brandon also taught Hendrik van Limborgh, *q.v.*). It is possible that he was the G. Birochon involved with the opera in The Hague from before 1706 (he seems to have lent money and supplied costumes, and was accused of financial irregularities, together with his wife) to around 1718 (when he was granted a three year monopoly on the production of French plays). The pastellist was taken up by Beretti-Landi, the Spanish ambassador to Switzerland (1703–16), The Hague (1716–21) and Brussels, and whom he accompanied in 1724 to the conference at Cambrai which had been running from 1721 in an attempt to settle the differences between Spain and Austria. The ambassador and his painter stayed in Cambrai for a year, until its end in 1725. Birochon travelled to Brussels with Beretti-Landi, who died suddenly in .vi.1726, and was buried in the church of the Récollets. Birochon returned to The Hague, where his wife was still living. Beretti-Landi's posthumous sale took place in The Hague (according to Lugt; Pinchart has Brussels), 30.vii.1726, and included (as well as Birochon's own portrait of him) a number of pictures restored by Birochon. These details emerge from the papers concerning legal proceedings which Birochon took against the mortuary officials for non-payment of his fees.

It has been assumed that the group of pastels which came on the market in 1979 were commissioned by Lord Polwarth, who became 2nd Earl of Marchmont in 1724, and was one of the British representatives at Cambrai. He is known to have been interested in acquiring portraits of his contemporaries (for example a portrait of the Queen of Denmark was dispatched from Copenhagen via Hamburg in 1724, according to his papers, which however do not mention the Birochon series). The Earl returned home to Marchmont with "a curious memento of his labours in the form of a series of pastel portraits representing the envoys of the different countries" (they descended via his son-in-law Sir William Purves to Sir John Hume-Campbell, who sold the Marchmont estates in 1912). Alternatively it seems possible that the series was commissioned by Beretti-Landi, and Marchmont bought them at the 1726 sale.

The Marchmont series remains a remarkable testimony to the conference at Cambrai, where limited diplomatic progress was achieved, and the delegates probably welcomed portraiture as a diversion. Birochon was influenced by the baroque sobriety of Vivien (as well as by Brandon, to judge from his 1701 painting of Jacques Vulson de Saint Maurice at Kasteel Zypendaal) as well as by the smaller, more intimate format of Carriera's compositions. Heads are often attached to bodies in improbable combinations, reminiscent of English 17th century portraiture. Nevertheless these portraits have a liveliness and distinctive character; colours are strong and vivid, and used

with no hint of the limited palette (although the same purple, pink, ochre and blue recur). The dynamic and varied compositions include several which are repeated.

Of the pastels in Lord Marchmont's collection, only that of Beretti is signed. They are uniformly framed, probably locally, and divide into two groups: some (Beretti-Landi, the Whitworths, Vincenti etc.) show a softer, less polished finish, while those in the other group have characteristic elongated eyes, tightly drawn mouths and luminous flesh tones. This has led to speculation that the works are not all by one hand, and, in view of the reports that Maurice-Quentin de La Tour was in Cambrai at the time, it has plausibly been suggested that he is responsible for one group – presumably the second. With the possible exception of the Saint-Quentin preparation for Voltaire, there is nothing in La Tour's secure œuvre (which starts in the mid-1730s) to link him stylistically with the Marchmont series. (Distinctions can be made from several apparently similar pastels: among them the pastels of the comte de Manissi and of "Marivaux", *n. Éc. fr.*)

Birochon would not be the first artist to work in several styles, and the confusing differences may have arisen because the artist had fewer sittings in some cases, while other pastels may have been drawn from existing portraits rather than taken from life. Corsini relates to a pastel (by a different hand) in the Palazzo Corsini which has been (not wholly convincingly) attributed to Tempesti (*q.v.*); he is shown however wearing only a cuirass rather than the full armour of a capitano della guardia dei trabanti. The unknown sitter in a red mantle looks as though he derives from a lost portrait by Rosalba; the portrait of Beretti-Landi, which is dated 1725, corresponds to an engraving of 1720 (which might itself derive from an earlier Birochon portrait, perhaps the one in the 1726 sale if that is not Marchmont's); the Tynninghame painting of Marchmont himself, although not as accomplished as the pastel, may indicate a common source which served as a model: this would explain the angry nocturnal sky background (varied backgrounds in the others may have similar explanations).

Some of the reproductions were incorrectly captioned in various publications, including Jeffares 2006.

Bibliography

Bénézit; Edwin Buijsen, *Haagse schilders in de Gouden Eeuw*, 1998, p. 287; Burns 1997; Christie's 1979 catalogue; La Tour 2004a, pp. 67ff; Maskill 2004, p. 60; Obreen 1877–1890, IV, p. 167, 172; Alexandre Pinchart, "Archives des arts...", *Messager des sciences historiques de Belgique*, 1868, pp. 349f; Jean-Jacques Quesnot de la Chénée, *L'Opéra de La Haye*, Cologne, 1706; Pierre Rosenberg, in Debrie 1991; Saur; Margaret Warrender, *Marchmont and the Humes of Polwarth*, Edinburgh, 1894, p. 85

Pastels

Lorenzo Verzuso BERETTI-LANDI, marchese di Castelletto Scazzoso, comte de Cereto, marquis de Saint-Philippe (1655–1725sa),

secrétaire d'État et premier ministre des Gonzaga de Mantua, puis à Venise, Pologne, Allemagne et Rome, ambassadeur de Philippe V en Suisse 1703–16, puis en Hollande 1716–21, de l'Académie de Crusca, chev. Sant'Iago 1702, collectionneur (the subject; The Hague, 30.vii.1726)

=/?repl., pstl, 53.5x43, sd 1725 (comm. Lord Polwarth, later Earl of Marchmont (1675–1724); desc. at Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.xii.1979, Lot 151 part, £480. Heidelberg, Kunstantiquariat Arno Winterberg, Auktion 22, 10–11.iv.1981, Lot 957, est. DM 3200, b/i). Lit.: Jeffares 2006, p. 59C, as of San-Estevan ◻



Photo courtesy Christie's

~grav.: Picart 1720

~grav. anonyme, "Laurentius Verzuso/Marquis de Beretti Landi./Königl. Spansicher Ambassadeur im Haag", p.1716

Le chevalier de Camilly, ministre de Malte à Cambrai [Pierre BLOUET DE CAMILLY (1666–1753), chevalier de Malte, grand bailli de l'ordre de Malte, grand-croix de Saint-Louis, ambassadeur au congrès de Bade en 1714, à celui de Cambrai en 1723, premier vice-amiral de France], pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.xii.1979, Lot 152 part, as Birochon; London, 5.vii.1983, Lot 18, attr. La Tour)

Abate marchese Neri Maria CORSINI (1685–1770), cardinal 1730, collector, in a cuirass, pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.xii.1979, Lot 152, one repr., as Birochon; London, 5.vii.1983, Lot 18, attr. La Tour) ◻



Photo courtesy Christie's

~pstl, with full armour (Palazzo Corsini, Florence), v. *Tempesti*

Il conte Annibale de MAFFEI (1666–1735), patrizio di Modena, gentilhomme de la chambre du roi de Sardaigne, vice-roi de Sicile 1714, pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 155 part; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1981, Lot 252 part n.r.; London, Christie's, 4.VII.1984, Lot 269 part n.r., all as Birochon; London, Christie's, 3.VII.1990, Lot 247 part n.r., attr. La Tour, est. £200–400)

Alexander Hume, Earl of MARCHMONT (1675–1740), KT 1725, in armour, wearing the light-blue ribbon of the Thistle, pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 157 part n.r.; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1981, Lot 252 part n.r.; London, Christie's, 4.VII.1984, Lot 269 part n.r., all as Birochon; London, Christie's, 3.VII.1990, Lot 247 part n.r., attr. La Tour, est. £200–400, all as sitter unknown; English PC 2011). Lit.: Jeffares 2006, p. 60Bii, unidentified; Francis Russell, "Dictionary of pastellists before 1800", *Country Life*, 8.VI.2006, p. 143 n.r., identified **Ⓢ**



Photo courtesy owner

~pnt., 75x62, in painted ov., inscr. *verso* with identity (desc.: John George Baillie-Hamilton, Earl of Haddington, Tynninghame, East Lothian; Sotheby's, 28–29.IX.1987, Lot 546 repr., attr. John Alexander)

L'abate [Giovanni Battista] Paretti [PARETTI, of Genoa, envoy of the duca di Guastalla to Cambrai, resident of the duca di Modena in Madrid and London 1727–46, pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 156 part, with Vincenty, London, 8.VII.1980, £420, with Vincenty English PC 2011) **Ⓢ**



Photo courtesy owner

[Johann Christoph] Pentterrieder [von PENDTERRIEDTER Freiherr auf Adelshausen (1678–1728), Reichshofrat], envoyé de l'Empereur, pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 153 part) **Ⓢ**



Photo courtesy Christie's

Conrad Alexandre, comte de ROTTEMBOURG [Rothenbourg] (1684–1735), plénipotentiaire français à Cambrai, mécène de Chardin, pstl/ppr, 53.5x43, with study of a lady, *verso* (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 155 part n.r.; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1981, Lot 252 part n.r.; London, Christie's, 4.VII.1984, Lot 269 part n.r., all as Birochon; London, Christie's, 3.VII.1990, Lot 247 part n.r., attr. La Tour, est. £200–400; English PC 2006). Lit.: Rosenberg 1983c, p. 68, fig. 42, as sd 1723; Jeffares 2006, p. 60Bi, unidentified **Ⓢ**



Photo courtesy Christie's

Dominic-Claude Barberie de SAINT-CONTEST (1668–1730), conseiller d'État, plénipotentiaire à Cambrai, pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 154 part; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1981, Lot 253 part n.r.; London, Christie's, 4.VII.1984, Lot 269 n.r., all as Birochon; London, Christie's, 3.VII.1990, Lot 247 part n.r., attr. La Tour, est. £200–400)

Mme de SAINT-CONTEST, née Marie-Françoise Le Maistre (1670–1736), pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 154 part; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1981, Lot 253 part n.r.; London, Christie's, 4.VII.1984, Lot 269 part n.r., all as Birochon; London, Christie's, 3.VII.1990, Lot 247 part n.r., attr. La Tour, est. £200–400)

Le comte de San-Estevan-Del-Puerto [Manuel de Benavides y Aragón, X conde y 1. duque de SANTISTEBAN DEL PUERTO, 5. marqués de Solera (1682–1748), plénipotentiaire de Philippe V à Cambrai, grande de España, chev. Saint-Esprit 1729], pstl/ppr, 53.5x43, inscr. *verso* "Mr. Comte de Saint Estevan" (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 151 part, £480. Heidelberg, Kunstantiquariat Arno Winterberg, 17.X.1980, Lot 723, est. DM 1600, DM1500). Lit.: Jeffares 2006, p. 59Bi, as of Beretti-Landi **Ⓢ**



Photo courtesy Christie's

Ottavio, conte di SANSEVERINO D'ARAGONA (–1725), ministre de Parme, pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 152 part, as Birochon; London, 5.VII.1983, Lot 18, attr. La Tour)

Le comte de Spylleberg [Pomponius Graf von SPILLENBERG], representative of the duca di Guastalla at Cambrai, pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 155 part; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1981, Lot 252 part n.r.; London, Christie's, 4.VII.1984, Lot 269 part n.r., all as Birochon; London, Christie's, 3.VII.1990, Lot 247 part n.r., attr. La Tour, est. £200–400)

Robert SUTTON of Scofton (–1776), nephew of Sir Robert Sutton (1671–1746), KB, diplomat, secretary to the British Embassy at Cambrai, pstl/ppr, 54.0x43.5, c.1724 (London, NPG 5419. Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 150 part n.r., with Lord and Lady Whitworth, £650; Martin Edwards, Ludlow; acqu. 1981). Lit.: Ingamells 2009b **Ⓢ**



Photo courtesy National Portrait Gallery, London

M. Vincenti [Giovanni Maria VINCENTI (1671–1746), residente veneto, cancellier grande 1726], pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 156 part. London, 8.VII.1980, £420, with abbé Paretti; English PC 2011) **Ⓢ**



Photo courtesy owner

Charles, Baron WHITWORTH (1675–1725), diplomat, pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (London, NPG 5417. Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 150 part repr., with Lady Whitworth and Sutton, £650; Martin Edwards, Ludlow; acqu. 1981). Lit.: Ernst Schütz, *Die Gesandtschaft Großbritanniens am immerwährenden Reichstag zu Regensburg...*, 2007, fig. 1 ◐



Photo courtesy National Portrait Gallery, London

Lady WHITWORTH, née Magdalena Jacoba de Sallengre, comtesse de Vaulgramont (-1734), pstl/ppr, 54.6x43.5, c.1724 (London, NPG 5418. Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 150 part n.r., with Whitworth and Sutton, £650; Martin Edwards, Ludlow; acqu. 1981). Lit.: Burns 1997, p. 12 repr. ◐



Photo courtesy National Portrait Gallery, London

Leopold Victorin Reichsgraf von WINDISCH-GRAETZ, Baron Waldstein u. Imthall (1686–1746), envoyé de l'Empereur, pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 153 part)

Reichsgräfin von WINDISCH-GRAETZ, née Marie Ernestine zu Strassoldo (1695–1766), pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 153 part)

Homme en manteau rouge, pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 157 repr., as a/r Carriera; English PC 2011) ◐



Photo courtesy owner

Officier en uniforme bleue, pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 157 repr.; English PC 2011) ◐



Photo courtesy owner

~version, miniature (Saint-Quentin, musée Lécuyer, inv. LT 90). Lit.: La Tour 2004a, p. 69, fig. 9

Dame en robe bleue, pstl/ppr, 53.5x43 (Lord Marchmont; sold 1912; James Swinton; London, Christie's, 11.XII.1979, Lot 157 part n.r., as Birochon; English PC 2011) ◐



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