

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

BOATON, Pierre-François de

Longirod 1734 – Berlin 1794

The son of a Huguenot father, Pierre de Boaton and his wife, Françoise de Mestral (from a leading family in the Vaud, which included the ambassador and collector Mestral de Saint-Saphorin), he became a soldier in the Tscharner regiment, service de Sardaigne. He resigned in 1768 with the rank of capitaine-lieutenant, and soon after moved to Berlin where he was appointed gouverneur of the Académie royale des gentilshommes, a military school. The position left him with free time, which he decided to devote to painting. He decided to specialise in pastel, “qui lui parut plus convenable à un simple amateur”. He was taught by Paul Joseph Bardou (*q.v.*), and at his studio the chevalier de Boaton met his future wife, Mlle Royer. His biographer describes how in their early married life one of their occupations was to “faire une suite de tableaux en pastel qui plusieurs d’entre nous ont plus d’une fois contemplés avec plaisir.” He also developed literary pursuits, and his translation into French verse of Geßner’s *Tod Abels* earned him a place in the Berlin Académie. In 1780 he resigned his teaching post and soon after became tutor to the son of David Schickler, a wealthy businessman. He accompanied his charge to London in 1792, but illness forced his return to Germany, his wife dying at Perleberg before they reached Berlin.

Bibliography

Friedrich von Castillon, “Éloge de M. de Boaton”, *Mémoires de l’Académie royale des sciences et belles-lettres...de Berlin*, 1796, Berlin, 1799, pp. 22ff