CONSTANT DE MASSOUL, baron de Constant, Pierre-Barthélemy-Marie-Reine-Joseph-Alexandre, dit

Lyon 1.VIII.1755 – Paris 1813

The son of Pierre Constant de Massoul (1721–1796), chevalier de Saint-Louis, comptroller général de l’infanterie de Provence, lieutenant of the rade de Nîmes, from a family long established in Provence (à Nîmes, de la famille de Massoul, chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur). He served in the French Revolution, later serving as a military engineer in the British Army, and finally as a diplomat in the service of the British crown. He was a member of the Royal Society of Arts and the Royal Academy of Sciences, and his works on pastel painting were published in London in 1795.

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Online edition

Neil Jeffares, Dictionary of pastellists before 1800

Constant also acknowledges observations from the artists: D. B. and J. B... The author stated that he had had “little practice [himself] in Crayon Painting”; but it seems likely that he had at least an amateur competence in a number of the fields he describes. One client must have been John Russell (q.v.), whose second posthumous sale (25.III.1807, Lot 126) included “nine bottles of Messoull’s colours.”

Constant remained in exile in London until at least 1799 (when a newspaper was issued following him to travel to Hamburg, although it is unclear whether he went). It has not hitherto been noticed that Constant was associated with the firm of P. C. Lambertye, said to have been established in 1788 at 8 rue d’Orléans-au-Marais (now Charlot today although the earliest references date from after his return to Paris); the firm was later taken over by Lambertye’s pupil Richard Panier in 1822, and, in 1850, by Jacques-Michel Paillard. It offered “coulures en tablettes et en poudre, très-bien préparées; coffrets en carton, décorés d’une manière agréable; papiers vellins d’une grande beauté...”

The initials P.-C. do not correspond to any recorded member of the Lambertye family, and may be a reference to Constant himself (to avoid open derogation).

He died in Paris, at this same address, 5 rue de l’Espérance (see above). His widow moved to Poitiers with other members of her family in 1814 (Guilhaum 1886, p. 351: her son Barthélemy, baron de Constant died in Poitiers in 1867); she was given a pension of 1200 livres (Listes générales des pensionnés...1835).

Bibliography

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Genealogies Constant