

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

LIOTARD, Jean-Michel

Geneva 22.XII.1702–15.V.1796

Liotard's twin brother worked as an engraver and draughtsman. Far less is known about his career and œuvre despite an evident talent. Jean-Michel followed his brother to Paris in 1725; ten years later he moved to Venice. During that period he worked for the engraver Audran, and engraved six plates after Watteau for Jullienne. Few documents are known (we do not know what form of contract he had with Audran, but it may well be one of allouage), but an account of his earnings over four years is in the V&A archives (*n.* Jeffares 2016a), revealing an income of some 600 livres per annum for four years.

In 1735, at the invitation of Joseph Smith, Jean-Michel went to Venice, where he engraved several large plates after Ricci and Cignani which were published in 1743 (but the inference in modern sources that he remained there until 1742/43 seems unsatisfactory); according to the 1788 edition of Orlandi's *Abeccedario...*, he returned to Paris. Two plates after Boucher appear to have been engraved in or before 1744 (Jean-Richard), suggesting he was in Paris then; he may also have made a detailed *ricordo* of Boucher's *Venus sur les eaux*, a 1740 painting which comte Tessin took to Stockholm in 1741 but which was later engraved in Paris by Moitte (*n.* Jeffares 2022d). He is next recorded in Geneva on 27.XI.1746, when he married Marie Desprez. He was back in Paris from 1748 to perhaps 1752, making further exquisite drawings for engravings, "sehr aufgesucht, und theuer bezahlt", among them Daullé's undated print after Tocqué's 1740 portrait en pied of Marie Leszczyńska, according to Leu and Füllli. By 1757 he had retired to Geneva, continuing to make drawings but eventually dying in extreme poverty.

Although his drawings closely resemble Jean-Étienne's, only one pastel is suggested to be by him, and its strangeness is compounded by its being a version of a chalk drawing, neither of which much resemble the rest of his œuvre; this however is largely explained by their being copies of a painting by Santerre of which numerous versions exist, as well as an engraving by Claude Bricart (1711).

Bibliography

Füllli 1770, III, p. 170f; Hans Jacob Leu, *Allgemeines Helvetisches...Lexikon*, 1757, p. 160f; R&L pp. 717–37

Pastels

J.4912.101 La Géométrie, pstl/pchm, s "J M^t Liotard" (Jussy, château du Crest [Yves Michel]). Charles Humbert (1813–1881); famille Humbert-Guigonat 1886; desc.: PC 2018; Geneva, Piguët, 12.XII.2018, Lot 1318 repr., est. SwFr5–8000, SwFr35,000). Exh.: Liotard 1886, no. 66. A/r pnt. Jean-Baptiste Santerre (*olim* Darmstadt, Landesmuseum). Lit.: Lesné 1989, no. 45; Santerre 2011, p. 69 repr.; other versions (Tours, mBA, inv. 1794-1-17) φ



~version, deux crayons, sd "Liotard Desprès 1762" (Hentsch-Coindet 1886). Exh.: Liotard 1886, no. 67. Lit.: R&L, no. JML36, fig. 894