

Alexander Roslin, *M. & Mme de Fries*

NEIL JEFFARES

[Alexander Roslin](#)



Johann Reichsgraf von Fries (1719–1785); & Reichsgräfin, née Gräfin Anna d'Escherny (1737–1807)

Pastel on paper, 92x67.3 cm (*Graf*)/90x72 cm (*Gräfin*)

Vienna, 1778

Private collections

PROVENANCE: Both pastels: Andreas Achenbach (1815–1910), Landschaftsmaler, Düsseldorf; vente p.m., Berlin, Lepke, 17.XI.1910, Lot 90 repr.; Arthur Sambon; Paris, Georges Petit, 25–28.V.1914, Lot 217 repr.; Arnold Seligmann, Rey & Co., New York; Kleinberger Gallery, New York; New York, American Art Association, 18.XI.1932, Lot 64, all as by Liotard. (*Gräfin*): Swiss PC, acqu. 1966, as by Liotard; Swiss art market 2001; PC 2008. (*Graf*): Nelson Eddy, Los Angeles; desc.: New York, Sotheby's, 31.I.2009, Lot 47 repr., as by Roslin; Victor Shafferman (1941–2009); New York, Christie's, 21.VI.2012, Lot 1184 repr., attr. Roslin

LITERATURE: August Graf Fries, *Die Grafen von Fries, eine genealogische Studie*, 2^e ed., Dresden, 1903, pastel (*Graf*) repr. opp. p. 66; (*Gräfin*): photo in BnF Fonds Albert Pomme de Mirimonde (Collection de documents iconographiques. Boîte 15, Musiciens isolés (du XVIII^e au XX^e siècle). I, France); Jeffares 2006, pp. 439Ciii (*Graf*), 441Aii (*Gräfin*, inconnue), attr. Roslin; R&L p. 645, fig. 723 (*Graf*)/724 (*Gräfin*), as by Roslin; *Dictionary of pastellists* online, [J.629.129](#) / [J.629.13](#)

RELATED WORKS: Two pendant paintings, oil on canvas, possibly seen by Liotard in Roslin's studio in Vienna, 12.IV.1778 (desc.: sitters' daughter, Ida, Reichsfreiherrin zu Wolfsthal; Schloß Wolfsthal 1951; PC 1999). Lit.: August Graf Preysing, "Das Familienbildnis der Grafen Fries", *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Wien*, IX, 1951, pp. 91–109, Abb. 2 (*Gräfin*); Hans Wagner, *Wien von Maria Theresia bis zur Franzosenzeit: Aus den Tagebüchern des Grafen Karl von Zinzendorf*, Vienna, 1972, p. 137 ("Bildnisse des Vaters und der Mutter von Roeslin", seen Zinzendorf in Palais Fries, 7.V.1789); August Graf Fries, *Die Grafen von Fries, eine genealogische Studie*, Vienna, 1884, p. 54, as attr. Grassi; Vienna 1980, p. 256 n.r.; Lundberg 1957, I, pp. 204, 310; III, no. 504 n.r.; Christian Steeb, *Die Grafen von Fries: eine Schweizer Familie und ihre wirtschaftspolitische und kulturhistorische Bedeutung für Österreich zwischen 1750 und 1830*, 1999, pp. 91f, 333, Tafel 6/7

GENEALOGY: [Fries](#)

CHEZ MADAME DE FRIES, qui nous reçut fort poliment, il n'y avait aucun étranger invité. Après le repas qui fut très bon, madame de Fries nous chanta en s'accompagnant de la harpe. Elle chante avec tant d'âme & a une si belle voix qu'elle nous enchanta. Elle

prononce les paroles avec tant de netteté & tant de grâce qu'elle ravissait." So wrote Jean-Étienne Liotard, son of the famous pastellist, in his diary for 5 January 1778:¹ a passage that could not more perfectly describe this pastel of Mme de Fries, and which also may be responsible for the tangled web of confusion over its attribution persisting since its appearance on the market in 1910 with its pendant. For the artist responsible was not (in my view) the Swiss pastellist, but the Swedish portraitist Alexander Roslin, and the work, as we shall see, is in a sense a product of the struggle for supremacy between these artists. Three months later, still in Vienna, Liotard and his son visited Roslin's studio, and Jean-Étienne fils records² the polite reception they received from the "fort habile" artist, admiring the "parfaitement bien peint" satin in Roslin's portrait of the Archduchess Marie Christine (fig. 1) as well as the "plus grande ressemblance" in his portrait of "M. de Fries". Roslin "parut bien content de notre visite", as well he might be, having seen off one of the most formidable competitors of the era.



Fig. 1. Roslin, *Marie Christine* (Vienna, Albertina)

Liotard himself describes the battle in his own letters. To François Tronchin, he writes³ from Vienna on 14 February 1778 (with rather more erratic spelling than his son), complaining about the lack of business: "personne ne se presente pour etre peint ny a Mr Roslin il a peint une Archiduchesse...on ne me fait peindre aucune Archiduchesse je crois qu'on est persuadé que je ne les ferois pas assez belles toute la grande Noblesse est pour M^r Rossselin. ... j'ay fait mon possible pour faire quelque portrait au Baron de fries il n'a pas voulu quoi que M^e la baronne le souhaitta fort et quelle m'avoit donné rendez vous pour un de ses enfants. il est entierement porté pour M^r Roslin qui doit peindre sa femme en ayant fait un portrait a Paris qui ne ressembloit pas." To his wife, writing the same day:⁴ "toute la noblesse est portée pour [Roslin] surtout le Prince Gallizin et Mr fries a qui j'ay voulu faire le portrait de sa femme ou de ses filles que Madame son epouze souhaittoit il ne l'a pas voulu etant excessivement engoué de M^r Roslin."

Family tradition has attributed to Liotard the oil versions of these pendants (figs. 2/3) in Schloß Wolfsthal in 1951 (where they must have descended from the sitters' younger daughter, Ida, Reichsfreiherrin zu Wolfsthal); such a surprising suggestions may either be because Liotard's attendance at Mme de Fries's salon was known, which seems unlikely as the documents were not published until 1954,⁵ or more likely because it was known that there were pastel versions of the portraits in another branch of the family (although they have not been traced before 1903). The portrait recorded in Roslin's studio was presumed to be in oil, so the pastel of the baron was even conjectured to be Liotard's copy after Roslin. Further confusion is sown by a letter from Mme Liotard to her eldest son, dated 13 October 1778,⁶ indicating that after all Liotard was engaged to paint for the baron: "Mr le Baron de Fries envoie 50 bouteilles de vin de Hongrie à ton Papa pour le portrait qu'il a fait pour lui": while the wine was excellent,⁷ her son thought the baron "un grand Vilain et de la trempe de Necker" (who had recently paid badly for the

¹ Reprinted in R&L, p. 890.

² *Ibid.*, p. 891.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 749.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 750.

⁵ The visit was the subject of an article by Michel N. Benisovich, "Roslin et Liotard: un document inédit", *Konsthistorisk tidskrift*, XXIII, 1954, 1/2, p. 27–28.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 645.

⁷ Fries had extensive interests in the wine business, and in 1772 he imported the Blue Portuguese vine to Bad Vöslau, creating the first vineyard with production on an industrial scale in this area. Fries sent some tokay to Voltaire in 1767.

repetition of the pastel of Mme Necker). But there is nothing to indicate what Liotard executed (unless it was “un des enfants” of the baronne), or even whether it was in pastel. The state of thinking about the attribution is admirably summarised in this discussion by Graf Preysing in 1951 which, although describing the oil versions, deserves to be quoted *in extenso*:

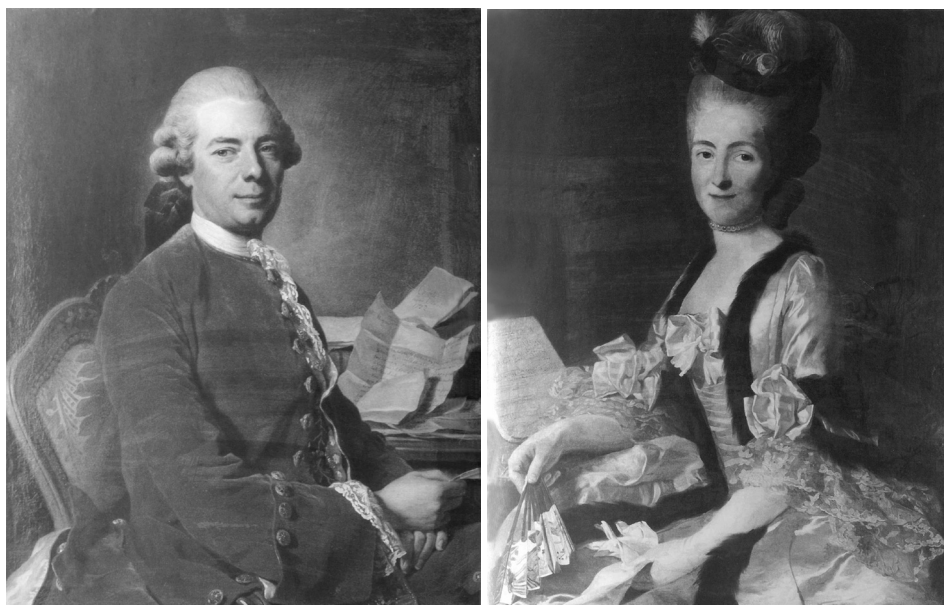
Johann Fries ist oft von Meisterhand gemalt worden und eine ganze Reihe vortrefflicher Bilder ist uns erhalten. Bis auf eines, dessen Autorschaft unsicher ist, drängen sie sich fast alle in sein letztes Lebensjahrzehnt zusammen; kaum eines scheint erhalten, das uns das Aussehen des jungen, kühn aufstrebenden Mannes zeigen würde. Auf seinen späteren Bildern erscheint er immer allein, nie in der Familiengruppe, von drei Meistern ersten und internationalen Ranges porträtiert. Die Reihe der Friesischen Ahnengalerie beginnt mit einem aus zwei separaten Gegenstücken bestehenden Doppelbildnis Johanns und seiner Gattin (Abb. 2), die zwar unsigniert, in der Familientradition aber immer als Werke Liotards galten. Und das anscheinend mit voller Berechtigung, denn aus Leischings Arbeit über „Die Bildnisminiatur in Österreich“ erfahren wir, daß tatsächlich zwischen dem Schweizer Hugenotten J e a n E t i e n n e L i o t a r d und seinen Landsleuten Fries in Wien lebhaft Beziehungen bestanden haben. Nach den Briefen Liotards an seine Frau hat das Friesische Paar bei seinem letzten Wiener Aufenthalt 1777 eine besondere Vermittlerrolle gespielt. Gleich der erste Weg nach der Ankunft führte Liotard zu „Baron et Baronne de Fries“, denen er Briefe und Empfehlungsschreiben aus der Heimat zu übergeben hatte, Briefe aus Genf, das auch die zweite Heimat der Gräfin war (deren Mutter, eine Pourtalès, aus Genf stammte) und die sicher von Jugend an mit der Stadt und ihrem Meister vertraut war. So ist es mehr als wahrscheinlich, daß Liotard es war, der damals die herrlichen Pastellbildnisse seiner Freunde und Gönner schuf. Beide erscheinen in sitzender Stellung und nach barocker Mode von den Gegenständen ihrer besonderen geistigen Welt umgeben. Er, der große Mann der Wirtschaft, angetan mit einem reichen roten Staatsfrack, lehnt sich mit dem einen Ellbogen leicht an den Schreibtisch hinter ihm, dessen sichtbare Stellen von einem Wust malerisch gehäufte Geschäftsbriefe bedeckt sind, von denen einer in seiner Hand eben durchgelesen wird. Der zweifellos bedeutende Kopf erscheint hier mit unschönen, etwas knolligen Gesichtszügen, und so werden sie wohl auch gewesen sein, denn Liotard sah scharf und der berühmte, in Damensalons berüchtigte „Maler der Wahrheit“ war durchaus kein Schmeichler. Ist das Bild des Grafen von einer für Liotard bezeichnenden sachlichen Nüchternheit erfüllt, so hat der Künstler bei dem Gegenstück, dem Bildnis der Gräfin, ihrer französischen Herkunft und Geistigkeit mehr Konzessionen gemacht.

Gräfin Fries zeigt sich uns so, wie sie gewesen sein dürfte. Glückselig und im vollen Genuß ihrer Stellung und ihres Vermögens, vornehm und geschmackvoll gekleidet, in grauer zobelbesetzter Toilette, lehnt sie am Spinett mit aufgeschlagenem Nottenblatt, in der einen Hand den handschuh, in der anderen den halbgeöffneten Fächer. Das Ganze von jenem typischen eleganten Schwung (Abb. 2), der die Damenportraits des französischen 18. Jahrhunderts auszeichnet und dem auch ein Liotard, der sonst durch seine sachlich nüchterne Individualität hervorrage, in diesen Porträts verfallen ist. Auffallend ist dabei wie sehr dieses Bild an ähnliche von der Hand Roslins erinnert, der gerade in dem selben Jahr 1777 als sein erfolgreicher Rivale in Wien Aufsehen machte. Alles äußere Drum und Dran tritt aber zurück hinter der bewußten Betonung des geistigen Gehaltes der dargestellten Persönlichkeit, die uns liebenswürdig und klug ansieht, voll französischem Esprit, voll Selbstbewußtsein und Eigensinn; sollte nicht hinter diesen feinen Zügen jener spitze und spöttische Sarkasmus lauern, den sie mit ihrem zweifellos verehrten Landsmann und Nachbarn von Ferney, mit Voltaire teilte?

In recent discussions of the pastels, their compositions are so clearly Roslin (as Preysing concedes) rather than Liotard that it has been assumed that the earlier literature had simply mistakenly given them to Liotard since Roslin was not a pastellist. But little account has so far been taken of the existence of two versions of these works, although the oils (still in the family collection, making it still odder that they should have been overlooked) were both published by Steeb in 1999 in small black and white photographs.

It is clear that the both versions are very close (although the harp in the background of the pastel is virtually invisible in the oil), allowing for the condition of the paintings and limitations of the photography, which make an assessment of priority hazardous. It is impossible not to recognise that these compositions are pure Roslin (comparisons with the portrait of the archduchess Marie Christine, fig. 1, admired by Liotard at the same time, are convincing, as are Roslin's other paintings from this period). Nor is there anything in the early literature to identify the pastel versions: the Liotard reference could be to either version of M. de Fries, while Zinzendorf's note of his visit to the Palais Fries, 7 May 1789, simply recorded “Bildnisse des Vaters und der Mutter von Roeslin”. It may be suspected that had he seen the pastel versions, which are on an

unusually large scale for the medium, he would have noted the fact.⁸ There is nothing to indicate how the pastels came into the 1910 estate sale of the Düsseldorf landscape painter Andreas Achenbach (1815–1910),⁹ but a reproduction of the portrait of the baron in the second (1903) edition of August Graf Fries's genealogical study of his family appears to be of the pastel rather than the oil, suggesting that it was still in the family at that period (although no details of source are provided).



Figs. 2/3 Oil versions (Schloß Wolfsthal)

Thus, as far as the documentation is concerned, three logical possibilities remain: the pastels were made by Roslin himself, either as the principal versions or as immediate repetitions; they were made by Liotard after Roslin; or they were made by a third hand, either contemporaneously or at any stage up to 1903. In my view, on connoisseurial grounds, only the first of these hypotheses is tenable, and the level of finish of the pastels suggests that they may well have been the primary works from which the oil replicas were made.¹⁰ It would seem likely (although so far no inventorial proof has been located) that the pastels were passed down through Moritz's line, senior to his sister's Wolfsthal inheritance, adding some weight to the primacy of the pastel versions.

It is true that most of Roslin's work was in oil, and that after his marriage to the gifted pastellist Suzanne Giroust his own use of the medium was greatly reduced, perhaps in deference to her mastery or for sentimental reasons after her death in 1772.¹¹ And it is also true that many elements in the present pastel recall the work of Liotard, from the minute attention to accessories such as the fan and the sheet of music and the extreme delicacy of the hatching barely visible on the chin, to the use of a carmine lake (on his coat and, less prominently, the back of her chair) whose lack of adhesion notoriously let Liotard down so often: perhaps Roslin obtained it from the same supplier. Other elements however – the light reflections on the fabric,

⁸ From the photographs it seems that the oil versions also have different dimensions from one another, with the Gräfin having a wider aspect ratio, as with the pastels, which have different frames (which may not be original). It does not seem that either set were pendants in the strictest sense.

⁹ There may have been lots from other sources in the sale.

¹⁰ It is unclear if any inventories might come to light to explain which versions were visible: for example, it may be that the oil versions were displayed in the public areas of the Palais Fries when Zinzendorf saw them, with the pastels reserved in the private apartments, as was frequently the arrangement in noble collections.

¹¹ As Xavier Salmon has argued in the Roslin 2007 exhibition catalogue (pp. 52ff). Neither Salmon nor the other contributors mention the present works which I reproduced in the Roslin section in the 2006 edition of the *Dictionary of pastellists* – unless they are the pastels which Salmon criticises as having “no direct kinship with Roslin's work”.

the fur, the reddish outline to the hand, and especially the bravura handling of the lace – mimic precisely Roslin’s own work in oil in a manner which one can easily see him replicating in pastel.

There is an important example in his portrait of Fredrik Adolf, Hertog af Östergötland, of which both an oil and a pastel version were made in 1775.¹² Both are signed and dated, and it seems are very similar in finish, making the determination of priority as difficult as for the earlier example of the 1767 portraits of Louis le dauphin (fig. 4; the pastel, like the present work but unusually in Roslin’s œuvre, is unsigned). As with the duc d’Orléans, exhibited in 1757, Roslin seems to have given equal attention to the pastel versions, which, in view of the lower demands they made on the sitter’s patience, may well have been the ones made directly from life. And while Roslin’s early work in pastel was less than fully accomplished, his later work showed his capacity to replicate the careful finish of his oils, as in the bravura treatment of the lace.



Fig. 4. Roslin, *Louis le dauphin* (Versailles)

These pendant pastels of M. & Mme de Fries were I believe executed in 1778 surely as a deliberate demonstration of his continued mastery of the medium, possibly in response to a direct challenge from Liotard or more likely as a response to the conflicting demands of his most exacting patrons: the baron, already convinced of Roslin’s genius, and his wife, whose preference for Liotard may partly have been because he came from Geneva, but may also have been due to his use of a medium particularly favoured by the fashionable intelligentsia to whom she belonged.

It is worth examining her credentials for membership, starting with that musical evening in January 1778. Did she not play the two airs from *Armide* which Gluck himself had sent her, in a letter of 26 November 1777 (reproduced in the appendix), after some of the early performances of *Armide* in

Paris, which had met with a mixed reception:

On m’a si tracassé sur la musique, et j’en suis si dégoûté, qu’à présent, je n’écris pas seulement une note pour un louis; concevez par là, Madame, le degré de mon dévouement pour vous, puisque j’ai pu me résoudre à vous arranger pour la harpe les deux chansons, que j’ai l’honneur de vous envoyer.¹³

While the artist’s rendition of the sheet on her music table (not, *pace* Preysing, a spinet) is not terribly precise,¹⁴ we can identify the music as *Armide*’s aria *Venez, venez haine implacable* from Act III, scene III of the opera (perhaps the most famous piece in the work). Her harp, with its foliate volute and forepillar, is similar to models by Jean-Henri Naderman, luthier to Marie-Antoinette.¹⁵ Gluck was not only a personal friend (his wife also sent “mille tendres compliments”) but also the business partner of her husband in the Afflisio affair,¹⁶ in which the composer lost 30,000 florins to a swindler in 1769 (the baron nevertheless remained Gluck’s banker). Gluck himself

¹² Lundberg 1957, no. 388 (oil) and 389 (pastel).

¹³ Pierpont Morgan Library, Mary Flagler Cary Music Collection, autograph manuscript MFC G 5675, F 912; published in Jacques-Gabriel Prod’homme, *Écrits de musiciens*, Paris, 1912, p. 419. A photographic reproduction, translation, and a discussion of the significance, appears in Patricia Howard, *Gluck: an eighteenth-century portrait in letters and documents*, Oxford, 1995, pp. 181f.

¹⁴ The form of the “squiggles” is close to the similar sheet of music held by Mme Roslin in the 1770 painting by her husband (Institut Tessin, inv. NMTiP 319). I am most grateful to Dr Patricia Howard (private communication, 13.1.2013) for deducing from the sheet that the piece was in F major and for deciphering the opening phrase.

¹⁵ As the casework was made by a maître-menuisier rather than a luthier, it is not possible to make a definitive attribution from the picture alone; Cousinot and Louvet made similar instruments (Beat Wolf, private communication, 13.1.2013).

¹⁶ For an account, see Howard, *op. cit.*, or Elisabeth Grossegger, *Gluck und d’Afflisio: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Verprachtung des Burgtheaters 1765/67–1770*, 1995.

was the subject of Duplessis's famous portrait in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (1775), for which the artist made a spectacular pastel study.

Anna's musical gifts were shared by other members of her family. She was the daughter of Jean d'Escherny, bourgeois de Neuchâtel, négociant et consul du roi de Pologne à Lyon, where she was born on 9 August 1737. Her brother François-Louis d'Escherny (1733–1815), conseiller d'état du roi de Prusse, chambellan du roi de Wurtemberg, was a noted writer, musicologist and *philosophe*, particularly associated with Rousseau and Diderot.

In 1764 she married Johann Fries, a Swiss banker whose father had been a rich stocking-maker in Mulhouse. Fries came to prominence by supplying the imperial army during the War of the Austrian Succession. He obtained the exclusive right to manufacture fustian in Fridau in 1751, and soon established silk and wool factories in Austria and Bohemia; he also had interest in mining, and established a brass foundry. Between 1752 and 1776 he had the licence to produce imperial thaler, carrying a right to one-third of the seigniorage (the difference between the face value of the coins and their intrinsic worth), thus enabling him to become one of the richest bankers of his time. The Bankhaus Fries was established in partnership with Johann Jakob Gontard of Frankfurt. Notwithstanding his Protestant religion, Maria Theresia appointed Fries Kommerzienrat in 1752, Ritter in 1752, Freiherr in 1762 (the date shown in the letter he holds in his portrait), and Hofrat in 1771, and he was promoted to Reichsgraf¹⁷ by Joseph II. in 1783. In 1761 he acquired the Schloß Vöslau near Vienna, creating a park in the English style and engaging Johann Ferdinand Hetzendorf von Hohenberg to carry out extensive modifications. In 1784 Hetzendorf von Hohenberg also built for Fries the palace in the Josefplatz in Vienna now known as the Palais Pallavicini.¹⁸ The following year Fries was found drowned in a lake in the gardens at Bad Vöslau, perhaps by accident but more likely suicide.

His widow appears in the writings or correspondence of such figures as the prince de Ligne,¹⁹ Mme de Staël and Benjamin Constant (who was repelled by her old age during a rehearsal of Racine, and described her as “la véritable Andromaque conservée dans de l'eau-de-vie”).²⁰ But she kept up appearances: an 1801 letter²¹ from her brother mentions a lost parcel containing a packet of harp strings and a batch of chiffon, worth 400 livres: his sister complained that by the time it was found, the fabric would be out of fashion. Mme Vigée Le Brun, who knew her as a widow in Vienna, also noted her theatrical performances, as well as the excellent singing of her daughter Sophie, Gräfin von Haugwitz, whom she portrayed as Sappho with a lyre (Jaroměřice, zámek). Vigée Le Brun also painted her sister, Gräfin von Schönfeld with her young son, and made a pastel of their brother, Moritz Christian Reichsgraf von Fries (1777–1826), a less capable banker than his father, but an important patron of the arts²² and collector.²³ He sat also to Gérard and Mosnier (as well as to an obscure pastellist, Bodemer), and married into the princely house of Hohenlohe.

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¹⁷ At the time of the portrait – and in Gluck's letter, addressed to “Madame la comtesse de Fries” – and, while her husband was at this stage still only a Freiherr (becoming a Reichsgraf only in 1783), Mme de Fries retained the Imperial courtesy title of Gräfin to which the d'Escherny family had been raised.

¹⁸ See Christian Steeb, *Die Grafen von Fries: eine Schweizer Familie und ihre wirtschaftspolitische und kulturhistorische Bedeutung für Österreich zwischen 1750 und 1830*, 1999.

¹⁹ *Mélanges militaires, littéraires et sentimentales*, 1923, XXV, p. 176.

²⁰ Anna de Fries bought La Chablière, a house near Lausanne, in 1801, and thereby fell in with Constant and de Staël. She is mentioned extensively in their correspondence and journals.

²¹ The letter, dated 6 thermidor an 9 [26.VII.1801], was on sale by Traces Écrites, Paris, in 2012.

²² For example, he supported Haydn and Beethoven, and was the dedicatee of numerous pieces from Beethoven's Spring sonata and seventh symphony to Schubert's *Gretchen am Spinnrade*. It may be debated whether his excessive generosity or his lack of commercial flair caused the bankruptcy of the house of Fries in 1826.

²³ According to Wurzbach's *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*, 1858, he owned a library of 16,000 volumes, coin and mineral collections, ancient and modern sculpture, including by Canova, and a picture collection of some 300 old master paintings (Raphael, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Guido Reni, Poussin, Dürer) and 100,000 drawings and prints.

Appendix

Gluck's letter to Anna von Fries

Madame

On m'a si tracassé sur la Musique, et j'en suis si dégoûté, qu'à présent je n'écrirais pas seulement une note pour un Louis; concevez par là Madame, le degré de mon dévouement pour vous, puisque j'ai pu me résoudre à vous arranger pour la Harpe les deux chansons, que j'ai l'honneur de vous envoyer. jamais on a livré une bataille plus terrible, et plus disputée de celle que j'ai donnée avec mon opéra *Idomene* les cabales contre *Iphigénie*, *Orphée* et *Ulcès* n'étoient que des petites rencontres entre les troupes légères en comparaison. L'Ambassadeur de Naples pour assurer un grand succès à l'Opéra de Piccini, est insupportable pour cabaler contre moi tant à la cour, que parmi la Noblesse, il a gagné Marmontel, la Harpe, et quelques académiciens pour écrire contre mon système de Musique, et ma manière de composer, M^r l'Abbé Arnaud, M^r Suard et quelques autres ont pris ma défense, et la querelle s'est échauffée au point, qu'après des injures ils seroient venus aux faits, si les amis communs n'auroient pas mis l'ordre entre eux; le journal de Paris qu'on débite tous les jours en est plein, cette dispute fait la fortune du rédacteur, qui a déjà au delà de 2500 abonnés dans Paris. Voilà donc la révolution de la Musique en France, avec la pompe la plus éclatante, les enthousiastes ne disent: Monsieur, vous êtes heureux de jouir des honneurs de la persécution, tous les grands génies ont passé par là, je les enverrai volontier au Diable avec leur beaux discours.

la fait est, que l'Opéra qu'on disoit d'être tombé, a produit en 7 représen-
 = tations, 37200 livres, sans compter les loges louez par l'Année, et sans
 les abonnées. hier 8^{me} représentation on a fait 5767 livres, jamais
 on a vu une plaine si terrible, et un silence si soutenu, le parterre
 étoit si serré, qu'un homme qu'avoit le chapeau sur la tête, et à que la
 sentinelle disoit de l'ôter, lui a répondu, venez donc vous-même à me
 l'ôter, car je ne puis pas faire usage des mes bras, cela a fait rire,
 j'ai vu des gens en sortant les cheveux délabrés, et les habits baignés,
 comme s'ils étoient tombés dans une rivière; il faut être François, pour
 acheter un plaisir à ce prix-là; il y a 6 entrées dans l'Opéra qui
 font le public à perdre la contenance, et de s'en porter. Venez y Madame
 à voir tout ce tumulte, il vous amusera autant que l'Opéra même,
 je suis au désespoir de ne pouvoir pas encore partir à cause du mauvais
 chemin, ma femme a trop de frayeur. je vous prie de faire mes com-
 = plimens à Monsieur le Baron, et à Monsieur Gontard, je suis
 avec la considération la plus parfaite

Madame

P. S: ma femme vous fait mille
 tendres complimens.

Paris 16 Novembre
 1777.

votre très humble et très Obeissant
 serviteur le Chevalier Gluck

MFC 05675.F912