

# Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastelists before 1800*

## Online edition

### FREY, François-Bernardin

Guebwiller 1716–17.XII.1806

Ratouis de Limay provided an erroneous date for Frey's death, and also puzzlingly gave his forenames as Franz Bernhard, although the French form François-Bernardin appears on most contemporary documents. Little is known of Frey's origins and training, but he was the son of Philippe-Bernard or Bernardin Frey, magistrate and membre du conseil de Guebwiller, and his wife Marie-Sybille Thomas (1677–1756): her surname is partly obliterated on a document providing a division of their parents' estate between Frey and his brother, Jean-Michel Frey (1713–1806), vicaire du chapitre de Murbach, dated 1775 (Archives Haut-Rhin, Guebwiller, 10032), but is clear enough on his burial entry: François Bernardin Frey, Peintre, associé à plusieurs Académies de l'Europe, célibataire (17.XII.1806, aged 90 and 5 months). As confirmed by the 1775 document and other sources, Frey was in Paris from 1754 to 1777 (rue de Suresne), and worked for the Bâtiments du roi, becoming portraitist to Mesdames in place of La Tour (who refused to continue making portraits of the royal sitters in protest about their time-keeping). He was presumably the "Dufrey" referred to in a letter from Marigny to Anne-Marguerite de Braque (1678–1778), dame pour accompagner Mesdames les Cadettes, of 11.VIII.1756 (AN O<sup>1</sup> 1828 384; n. Jeffares 2017):

Madame Louise m'ayant aussi dit qu'elle voulait vous donner son portrait, fait par le sieur Dufrey, j'ai envoyé ordre pour que ce peintre le délivre afin qu'il vous soit remis sans aucun retardement.

The letter of course illustrates one of the functions for which these works were commissioned. Numerous copies, repetitions etc. of these images create considerable confusion (several of the pastels catalogued in B&W may be by Frey), and some of the images are related to paintings by F.-H. Drouais. A memorandum from "le Sr Frey, Peintre en pastel" concerning payment for "divers portraits" "pour Madame" dated 27.VI.1768 amounted to 4584 livres, forwarded to the Bâtiments du roi for payment; an amount of 2584 livres was paid on 5.VII.1775 (Maison du roi, O<sup>1</sup>1074).

It is likely that Frey made copies for other clients: the portrait of Euler, for example, raises questions about both about the opportunity and the age of the sitter and the date suggested by the costume which may be explained if it was an updated portrait drawn from an earlier image rather than from life.

Frey's early work in Strasbourg in the 1740s appears to have been fairly primitive. His style developed rapidly in Paris to the level required for royal portraiture. The technique is heavily stumped, with ochre flesh tones built up on a bed of blue chalk on greyish paper; fabrics and furs are rapidly executed in a fluid style that looks like paint but appears to be entirely in dry pastel. Backgrounds are sometimes olive green. A particular idiosyncrasy is to depict his sitters' pupils very small relative to the iris as though they were sitting in darkness.

A portrait of the baronne de Dietrich, which must date from the 1760s, is reminiscent of the work of Mme Therbusch (*q.v.*); its uncovered breast is a surprisingly rare appearance in pastel portraiture of the day.

Frey was also associated with the Académie de Saint-Luc, although he does not seem to have exhibited at the Salons. He served as an expert on the estate of the deceased Genevan painter Robert Mussard on 21.I.1777, described as François-Bernardin Frey, maître peintre, demeurant rue de Surenne, faubourg Saint-Honoré. He was listed in the *Almanach des peintres* of 1776 and 1777 (among the painters of talent unaffiliated to either academy) as Frey, peintre du duc de Deux-Ponts, hôtel de Deux-Ponts, rue des Moulins. In exchange for lodgings, his responsibilities on behalf of Christian IV. Pfalzgraf von Birkenfeld-Zweibrücken extended to copying portraits by Tocqué and negotiating the purchase of a Wouermans painting from Joullain, as emerge from the correspondence of Pachelbel, the Duke's Paris ambassador.

Two pastels after Frey's departure from Paris testify to his friendship with the younger painter Johann Christian von Mannlich (*q.v.*): he owned Frey's self-portrait as well as that of Barbara von Mannlich, both executed in 1781.

In an undated letter (of .VII. or .VIII.1785: Chodowiecki 1919, p. 457), Daniel Chodowiecki wrote to Anton Graff, adding in a final paragraph "Ein alter Mahler aus Strassburg wird auch bei Ihnen gewesen sein, ich hatte es ihm sehr eingenbunden, er heist Frey."

By 1789 he had returned to Strasbourg, where "François Bernard Frey, peintre privilégié" was recorded at Poêle de la Tribu des Cordonniers, an inn in the Kettengasse (Adolf Seyboth, *Das alte Strassburg...*, 1890, p. 108). As noted above, Frey died in Guebwiller in 1806; an imperial decree (no. 2838, Fontainebleau, 27.IX.1807) authorised the acceptance of a legacy of F7205.33 from Sr Frey for the hospice at Guebwiller.

Some secondary sources (probably drawing from Johann Friedrich Aufschlager's remark in *Das Elsaß: Neue historisch-topographische Beschreibung*, 1825, I, p. 264) credit Frey with the invention of a process for fixing pastel.

Gustave Labat described the two pastels sent to the exhibition of Cent pastels as "beaux échantillons du talent d'un artiste peu connu, mais d'une véritable valeur." One of these, exhibited in 1908 as of a comtesse de Bar (who, contrary to the 1908 catalogue, does not seem to have had a position at court), seems more plausibly (as suggested by Ólafur Þorvaldsson, private communication, 2019) to be of Madame Louise: apart from facial resemblance, she wears a medallion similar to that of saint Jean de la Croix shown in a different portrait of the princess by Nivelon (MV 7810).

Frey's "signature" appears on a number of works which may be later pastiches which have nothing to do with him. Several involve long tresses of hair bound with flowers; it is difficult to be sure which if any are genuine. Further there remains considerable confusion about his unsigned work. Records of lost royal portraits

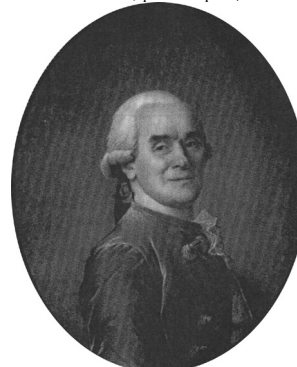
have inspired attributions to him of anonymous pastels of Mesdames de France, some of which are more credible than others (and for convenience are included below with appropriate qualification; one bears a complicated relationship to a Coypel pastel and an intermediate, later miniature). (Generally Frey's work is his own, even when drawn from other portraits; slavish copies of other portraits are less likely to be his.) Particular caution is required before basing identifications on small differences in eye colour, both because copyists were not always precise, and media can change over time.

### Bibliography

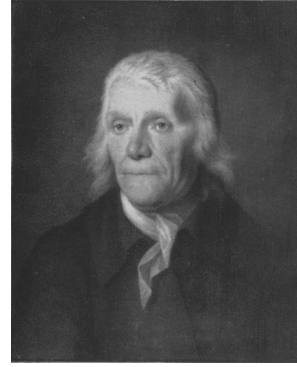
Bénézit; Engerand 1900; Guiffrey 1885, p. 70; Guiffrey 1915, p. 297; Labat 1909; Ratouis de Limay 1946; Roland 1961; Sanchez 2004; Saur; Sitzmann 1909–10, I, p. 526; Vallayer-Coster 2002, p. 227

### Pastels

J.329.101 AUTO PORTRAIT, de  $\frac{3}{4}$  vers la dr., en habit de velours gris à gros boutons, gilet broché or, jabot de dentelle, perruque poudrée; fond bleu, pstl, 72x54 ov., sd ← "Frey peint par lui-même 1781" (Mannheim, Städtisches Reiß-Museum, inv. 0318. Karoline von Mannlich. Mannheim art market; acqu. 1937–39). Exh.: Paris 1948b, no. 185 n.r. Lit.: Roland 1961, p. 58 repr.  $\phi$



J.329.101 AUTO PORTRAIT, pstl, 60x50, sd verso "Peint par Frey à l'âge de 81 ano 1797" (Bern, Dobiaschofsky, 5.V.–10.VI.1972, repr.)  $\phi$



J.329.103 Madame ADELAÏDE de France (1732–1800), pstl (comm. Bâtiments du roi, 1764, 720 livres). Lit.: Engerand 1900

J.329.104 ~repl., pstl, ?37x31, 1766 (comm. Bâtiments du roi, 400 livres. =?Alfred

Bégis/Charles Moisson a.1901, attr. La Tour).  
Lit.: Engerand 1900  
=?*pstl* (Paris, 20.III.1852, Lot 1). Lit.: B&W 2,  
?attr. [v. La Tour]

*La comtesse de Bar*, v. s.n. *Madame Louise*

J.329.109 M. de BERINGHEN [Henri-Camille, marquis de Beringhen, premier écuyer du roi (1693–1770)], gouverneur des pages de Louis XV, en habit rouge, avec le cordon du Saint-Esprit (baron Thomitz 1932). Lit.: Ratouis de Limay 1946, p. 177

J.329.11 La baronne de DIETRICH, comtesse du Ban de la Roche, née Amélie-Anne-Dorothee Hermani (1729–1766), pstl, 65x52 (baron A. de Dietrich 1908; desc.: Paris, Drouot, Rémy Le Fur, 30.XI.2011, Lot 171 repr., est. €1500–2000; PC Centre-Val de Loire; Paris, Artcurial, 20.III.2024, Lot 15 repr., est. €3–4000, €9840). Exh.: Paris 1908a, no. 18, pl. 12. Lit.: Labat 1909, p. 317 φ



LARGER IMAGE

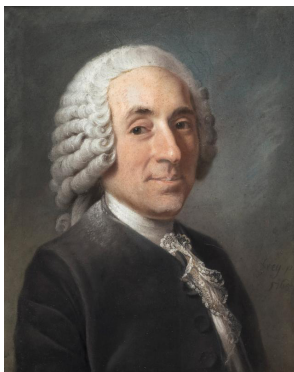
J.329.112 ?La marquise DU CHATELET, née Gabrielle-Émilie Le Tonnelier de Breteuil (1706–1749), pstl, 77x60.5, sd v “Frey 1758” (Paris, musée Jacquemart-André, inv. MJAP-P 1498. Demidov; Paris, 8–10.III.1860, Lot 398 n.r. A. Féret; Paris, acqu. 13.VI.1891, F700; [Léon Gaucher]; Paris, Drouot, Chevallier, 20–23.IV.1892, Lot 28 n.r., as ?Mme du Châtelet, H580; Levy). Lit.: Tourneux 1903, p. 56, as by Perronneau; Sainte Fare Garnot & al. 1998, p. 51 repr.; Gétreau 2011, no. 99 repr.; Salmon 2018, fig. 27 φσ



LARGER IMAGE

~grav. Kreutzberger, repr. *Le Musée artistique et littéraire*, 1880

J.329.115 Jean-Baptiste-François DUREY de Mesnières (1705–1785), président au parlement 1731, collaborateur des *Mémoires secrets*, pstl/ppr, 47x38.5, sd → “Frey pt/1765” (French PC 2004; Paris, Sotheby’s, 19.VI.2006, Lot 45 repr., est. €10–15,000, b/i; Paris, Sotheby’s, 19.VI.2007, Lot 21 repr., est. €5–7,000, b/i; Vendôme, Rouillac, 24.II.2008, Lot 23 repr., est. €800, €1700; Galerie Ratton Ladrrière) φσ



J.329.116 =?one of “les deux portraits en pastel de Monsieur de Meinieres, mon second mari” (Mme Durey de Mesnières, née Octavie Guichard (–1805), testament de 1797, legs: citoyen Belot, fils du sujet [Marie-Philippe-August Belot (1733–1803), juge, who predeceased the testator]). Lit.: Inguenaud & al. 2019, p. 198, unattributed

J.329.118 Leonhard EULER (1707–1783), Mathematiker, pstl, ov., s ✓, a.1766 (Bern, Dobiaschofsky, 17–18.X.1974, Lot 261). Lit.: Herbert Fleischner, *Eulerian graphs and related topics*, 1/1, 1990, p. vi repr. φ



M. [FOSSART] DE ROZEVILLE; & pendant: épouse, née Collignon de Frénese (Louvre inv. RF 29662/29661). Lit.: Salmon 2018, no. 61/62 repr., attr., v. s.n. *Lejèvre*

Madame LOUISE de France (1737–1787), en corps de robe richement orné, pstl, 65x 40.5, 1754 (700 livres). Lit.: Engerand 1900  
~2 repls., pnt., 1755

J.329.121 ~[=?one of these] repl., m/u, 1756 (comm. sujet, pour Mlle de Braque). Lit.: lettre de Marigny, 11.VIII.1756 (AN O<sup>1</sup> 1828 384), cited Newton 2006, p. 515 [new attr.]

J.329.1215 [olim J.329.106] [??]La comtesse de Bar [née Marguerite de Pionne]; ou plutôt Madame LOUISE de France, en robe de fraise écrasée à fleurs, pstl/pchm, 62x51, sd → “Frey px<sup>t</sup> 1755” (Versailles, inv. V.2024.38. Le comte Adhéaume de Chevigné 1908; desc.; acqu. .IX.2024). Exh.: Paris 1908a, no. 17, pl. 11, as of comtesse de Bar. Lit.: Labat 1909, p. 317; Alexandre Lafore, “Rosalba Carriera entre à Versailles?”, *La Tribune de l’Art*, 27.X.2024 φ



LARGER IMAGE

~cop., pnt., 60.3x50.2 (Oscar Bondy (1870–1944), Vienna; seized ERR 1938; restituted 1945; New York, Kende Galleries, 3.III.1949, Lot 89, as F. H. Drouais, dame de la cour); mount in Witt library annotated as of Madame Sophie

J.329.122 Madame LOUISE de France, pstl (comm. Bâtiments du roi, 1764, 720 livres). Lit.: Engerand 1900

[?]Madame LOUISE de France, m/u, ?attr.

=/?version, en robe bleue, tenant un éventail, pnt. (Vienna, Dorotheum, 24.III.2004, Lot 299 repr., attr. F.-H. Drouais; Vienna, Dorotheum, 29.IX.2004, Lot 333, as by Voiriot; Vienna, Dorotheum, 5.X.2005, Lot 295; Vienna, Dorotheum, 14.XII.2010, Lot 39; Vienna, Dorotheum, 16.VI.2011, Lot 231 repr., all as by Voiriot)

~appears in allegorical pnt., 87x114 (Versailles, inv. V.2015.1). Lit.: Gwenola Firmin, notice en “Enrichissement des collections de l’année 2015”, *Versalia*, XX, 2017, p. 28, no. 28, fig. 22

~cop. (tête), pnt., 66x55 (Yves-Alexandre de Marbeuf, évêque d’Autun, 1788. Claude Brunet; vente p.m., Paris, Drouot, Lair-Dubreuil, Bignon, 19.IV.1913, Lot 3 repr., as of Mme Victoire, atelier de Nattier)

J.329.1225 ~version, pstl/ppr, 65.5x55.5 (Épinal, Marquis, 16.XI.1997, anon., inconnue; PC 2019; Paris, Artcurial, 15.II.2022, Lot 10 repr., est. €3–4000, €3000 [=€3900]). Exh.: Versailles 2019, no. 10, as by Frey, as of Madame Louise [?attr. φ?αδν



J.329.123 Frau Johann Christian von MANNLICH, née Barbara Simon (1752–1794), en corsage gris décolleté, tournée vers la g., la longue chevelure retombant sur les épaules, pstl, 71x56 ov., sd ← “Frey pt. 1781” (Mannheim, Städtisches Reiß-Museum, inv. 0354. Karoline von Mannlich, the sitter’s daughter. Mannheim art market; acqu. 1937–39). Exh.: Paris 1948b, no. 186, inconnue. Lit.: Roland 1961, identified; Louis Réau, *Houdon*, Paris, 1964, p. 142 n.5 φ



J.329.125 ?MARIE LESZCZYŃSKA, pstl, 63.5x50 (B. Svenonius, Stockholm, as La Tour; sale, Bukowskis, c.1930, details n/k; Carl Ulric Palm; desc.: PC 2010; Stockholm, Bukowskis, 7–10.XII.2010, Lot 401 repr., est. SwKr20–25,000). A/r Van Loo pnt. (MV 8492) [new attr. 2010] φαν



J.329.126 MAX I. Joseph von Bayern (1756–1825), pstl, ov., 1784 (Munich, Residenz) φ



J.329.127 Jean-André SILBERMANN (1712–1783), facteur d'orgues et historien à Strasbourg, de ¾ à g., habit et gilet noirs, tenant un tricorne noir galonné d'or sous le bras g., fond bleu, à g. une colonne, pstl, 59x45, 1742; & pendant: J.329.128 épouse, née Anne-Salomé Mannberger (1725–1769), de ¾ à dr., corsage de soie bleu ciel, broche de grosses fleurs polychromes, fichu de dentelle fermé devant par trois roses, collier d'or à six rangs et ruban noir avec croix au cou; fond bleu, à g. un buisson, pstl, 59x45 (Strasbourg, musée des Arts décoratifs). Exh.: Strasbourg 1910, no. 580/581. Lit.: Haug 1938, no. 395/396, n.r. φ



Photos courtesy musée des Arts Décoratifs de Strasbourg

J.329.132 Madame SOPHIE de France (1734–1782), pstl, 1766 (comm. Bâtiments du roi, 1764, 720 livres). Lit.: Engerand 1900

J.329.133 =?pstl/ppr gr.-bl./toile/châssis, 57x44, 1766 (Stockholm, Auktionsverk, 19.V.1998, Lot 1460 repr., inconnue, attr. Glain, est. SKr10–15,000, SKr19,000; 25–26.X.1988, Lot 313 repr., as by Glain. US PC; Boris Wilnitsky Kunsthandel, Vienna, 2005, as La Tour, inconnue; PC). Lit.: Vallayer-Coster 2002, repr. p. 227, as Frey, Mme Sophie Φνσ



LARGER IMAGE ESSAY

J.329.136 ~repl., pstl, ?37x31, 1766 (comm. Bâtiments du roi, 400 livres. =?Alfred Bégis/Charles Moisson a.1901, attr. La Tour). Lit.: Engerand 1900

=?pstl (Legrand; 21.XI.1827, Lot 53. Bégis; 12.XI.1900, Lot 217). Lit.: B&W 493, ?attr.; v. La Tour

[?]Madame SOPHIE de France, en robe doublée de fourrure, m/u, Pattr.

~cop., pnt., 66x55 (Yves-Alexandre de Marbeuf, évêque d'Autun, 1788. Claude Brunet; vente p.m., Paris, Drouot, Lair-Dubreuil, Bignon, 19.IV.1913, Lot 1 repr., as Mme Adélaïde, atelier de Nattier)

J.329.137 [=J.9.1008 & J.9.5534] ~version, pstl/ppr, 66.5x54.5 (Raphaël Garreta; vente p.m., Rouen, Hôtel des ventes, M<sup>e</sup> Boivin, 16–17.III.1931, Lot 65 n.r. Paris, Artcurial, 14.VI.2005, Lot 16 repr., éc. fr., inconnue, est.

€1200–1500; PC 2019; Paris, Artcurial, 15.II.2022, Lot 11 repr., est. €4–6000, €11,000 [=€14,300]). Exh.: Versailles 2019, no. 11 repr., as by Frey, as of Madame Sophie [?attr.; ?identification]φ?α?δ



~version with same masquerade costume, earlier hairstyle, anon. miniature/tabatière, 3.8x7 ov., a/r Coypel, ??Mme de Graffigny J.2472.162 (Louvre, inv. OA 2210. Legs Philippe Lenoir 1874)

J.329.138 Frau von TÜRKHEIM, née Anna Elisabeth (Lili) Schönemann (1758–1817), P'amie de Goethe, pstl, ov., 1782 (Baronin von Türkheim, Schloß Dachstein; PC 2000). Exh.: ?Paris 1932c, no. 176. Lit.: *Der große Brockhaus*, 1954, IV, p. 741 repr.; Sitzmann 1909–10, II, p. 898 n.r., “ravissant pastel”; Astrid Seele, *Frauen um Goethe*, 2000, p. 57 repr.; as by Frey; Christine Ivanovic, *Das Gedicht im Geheimnis der Begegnung*, 2000, p. 700 repr.; *Goethe et Lili, variante inédite du poème Zurichseefahrt, 1775*, Strasbourg, BNU, 2000, repr., both as by Melling, citing letter by Mme Schönemann mère avec l'attribution à Melling; Ruth Istock, *Goethes Lili*, 2005, repr. cvr, as by Frey Φα



J.329.14 ~version, pstl (PC). Lit.: Hans Wahl & Anton Kippenberg, *Goethe und seine Welt*, Leipzig, 1932, p. 46 repr., anon. φα



~cop., miniature, 5.5x4.5 ov. (Frankfurt, Goethe-Museum, inv. II,77)

J.329.143 Madame VICTOIRE de France (1733–1799), pstl (comm. Bâtiments du roi, 1764, 720 livres). Lit.: Engerand 1900

J.329.144 ~repl., pstl, ?37x31, 1766 (comm. Bâtiments du roi, 400 livres. =?Alfred

Bégis/Charles Moisson a.1901, attr. La Tour).  
Lit.: Engerand 1900

=?pstl (baron Silvestre; 11.XII.1851, Lot 235, F80).  
Lit.: Be&W 523, ?attr. [v. La Tour]

J.329.145 Madame VICTOIRE, pstl (Mme veuve Craufurd; vente p.m., Paris, 21 rue d'Anjou-Saint-Honoré, Alexandre, Paillet, 18–20.II.1824, Lot 51 n.r., “par un peintre allemand”, H15) [new attr., ?]

J.329.146 Baroness VYURMER VON WEIDENTHAL, pstl, 63x52, sd “Frey...[?]1749” (Kiev, Korners, 24.IX.2011, Lot 141 repr., est. \$20–30,000; Shedevr Antiques 2019) φα



J.329.148 Femme, pstl, sd v “Frey, à Paris, 1760” (Moscow, Pushkin Museum, inv. Ж-2180).  
Lit.: Réau 1929, no. 529 n.r. φ



J.329.1485 Dame en Vénus, pstl/pchm, 79x61, sd “[?Mme] Demesiter/frey p 176...” (PC 2013; Paris, Thierry de Maigret, 17.XII.2013, Lot 51 repr., éc. fr. XIX<sup>e</sup>, suiveur de Frey, est. €800–1200) [?attr.] φασ



J.329.149 [olim J.9.519] Femme aux bouquets de roses, pstl, 65x54, [?]1791 (Sassenage, château). Lit.: Jeffares 2006, éc. fr. [new attr. 2020, ?] φαν



Photo courtesy collection château de Sassenage

J.329.1495 Dame en robe blanche, manteau bleu, pstl, 58x48, sd ← “Pxt par frey/à l’age de/85 ans, en/1800” (PC 2024) φ

J.329.151 Femme en blanc, ov. (Cailleux 1933).  
Exh.: Paris 1933b, no. 10 n.r.

J.329.152 Dame, 73x62 or 66x53? (Berlin, Henrici, 11.VI.1925, Lot 257 repr. Kaufman; Luzern, Fischer, 18–21.V.1938, Lot 1986) [new attr., ?] Φαν



J.329.171 Dame, 73x62 or 66x53? (?Sweden, details n/k, 22.V.1995, Lot ?, as circle of Vigée Le Brun) [new attr., ?] φαν



J.329.188 [olim J.9.6365] Jeune femme à la coiffure décorée de fleurs, pstl, 59x48 (Paris, Tajan, 22.VI.2009, Lot 155 repr., est. €1000–1500) [new attr. 2025, ?] φαν



J.329.191 [olim J.9.6864] Jeune dame en robe blanche, rubans rayé bleu, pstl, 58x46 (Paris,

Drouot, Delvaux, 11.XII.2019, Lot 52 repr., éc. fr., est. €700–900) [new attr., ?] φαν

