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ROYAL “MATRONAGE” OF WOMEN ARTISTS IN THE LATE-18TH CENTURY

By Heidi A. Strobel

During the last quarter of the 18th century, Queens Charlotte of England (1744-1818), Marie Antoinette of France (1755-93), and Maria Carolina of Naples (1752-1814) turned to women artists for a variety of artistic projects. They created an informal network, commissioning paintings from some of the same prominent artists, among them Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807), Adélaïde Labille-Guiard (1749-1803), and Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun (1755-1842). Evolving conceptions of queenly duties and gender contributed to this flourishing of “matronage.” Either by birthright, necessity, or desire, royal females assumed a more visible role in the public eye during the second half of the 18th century. Catherine the Great (1729-96) and Maria Theresa (1717-80) ruled the Russian and Austrian empires, respectively, while Charlotte and the sisters Maria Carolina and Marie Antoinette, all consorts, exercised a significant amount of power because of their husbands’ unwillingness or inability to rule.¹ Besides supporting male artists, these three queens commissioned female artists to produce conceptions of royal femininity that united both the private and public roles that they were expected to fulfill.

While Enlightenment writers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau fought the merging of private (primarily feminine) and public (chiefly masculine) spheres of activity, traditional conceptions of these domains were in flux.² In intellectual circles, women often presided over salon gatherings, where the elision of class and gender roles occasionally occurred. Furthermore, the French and American revolutions contributed to a profound, albeit temporary, disruption of the social order, which further blurred the boundaries between the feminine and masculine spheres.³ While Charlotte, Maria Carolina, and Marie Antoinette chose female artists to portray them during a time when gender was particularly at issue, the visions of femininity that they cultivated were unique and tailored to bolster their popularity in their adoptive courts.

Charlotte’s upbringing had a profound influence on her decision to support female artists in England.⁴ As a young girl in the German province of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, she had access to a rich intellectual background and was acquainted with a network of migrating artistic families who traveled between various German provinces, Scandinavia, and the rest of Europe. Friedericke Elisabeth von Grabow, a German poet, and Gottlob Burchard Genzmer, a natural historian and close friend and schoolmate of Johann Winckelmann, were Charlotte’s tutors. Her education emphasized art, natural science, and theology, fields that remained lifelong pursuits. Von Grabow taught Charlotte poetry, geography, German literature, French, Italian, and a smattering of Latin and Greek.⁵ She also took drawing, dancing, and music lessons, interests that she would share with her future husband, George III.⁶

In 1761, the English king proposed marriage to his third cousin after viewing a portrait of her that was likely produced by the German artist Esther “Eva” Denner (act. 18th c.).⁷ Charlotte’s nuptial journey was celebrated in a variety of ways. For example, the German poet Anna Luise Karsch (1722-91) celebrated the philanthrop-

ic princess in verse,⁸ while many artists, among them Mary Benwell (1739-aft. 1800) and Catherine Read (1723-78)—who wished to earn the patronage of the royal couple—sent unsolicited portraits of the young queen to the royal family. Engraver Charles Spooner popularized Benwell’s c. 1762 painting of Charlotte intent on her reading, *The Studious Fair* (Fig. 1). The revenue from this print and later commissions enabled the artist to purchase her husband’s military rank in 1792.⁹

Impressed by Read’s pastel portrait of her, Charlotte commissioned several more, as well as portraits of her two eldest sons. While these works do not survive, Charlotte’s encouragement provided Read with the cachet of royal approval, which led to other requests from the royal household and London art patrons. For example, in 1766 she completed a pastel of Elizabeth Venable-Vernon (1746-1826), the queen’s lady of the bedchamber and close friend. Venable-Vernon was also the wife of Charlotte’s Lord Chamberlain, Earl Harcourt, who was in charge of the queen’s artists, actors, and musicians.¹⁰ Unlike Benwell, the Scottish-born Read was from a wealthy family that could afford to send her to the continent for training. In the 1750s Read studied pastel with Maurice Quentin de la Tour in Paris and, while in Rome, viewed the antiquities of the art connoisseur Cardinal Albani. Peter Grant, one of Read’s Roman patrons, described her success in an undated letter to the artist’s brother, Alexander:

At the rate she goes on, I am truly hopeful she’ll equal at least if not excel the most celebrated of her profession in Great Britain, particularly in “crayons” for which she seems to have a great talent. Was it not for the restrictions her sex obliges her to be under, I dare safely say she would shine wonderfully in history painting, too, but as it is impossible for her to attend public academies or even design or draw from nature, she is determined to confine herself to portraits.¹¹

Unable to participate in the lucrative field of history painting, Read relocated to London, where she was celebrated for her portraits in pastel, a medium popularized by Rosalba Carriera (1675-1757). Benwell and Read, both of whom exhibited at but were not allowed to join the Royal Academy, utilized Charlotte’s advocacy as a way of supplementing their economic possibilities in London.

Read’s success also provided matronage opportunities for other female artists, like Caroline Watson (1761-1814), who came to Charlotte’s attention after she engraved Read’s 1765 portrait of the Prince of Wales. Watson was eventually appointed the queen’s official engraver.¹² In 1765, Charlotte commissioned Josiah Wedgwood to produce a set of cream-colored china, which she had helped to design. Wedgwood wisely named his china “Queen’s ware,” which helped ensure the popularity of this service.¹³ Thus, four years after her arrival in England, Charlotte was a significant source of royal patronage.

As part of her ongoing efforts to fashion herself as a benevolent nurturer of the royal family and the fine arts, Charlotte commissioned Angelica Kauffman to paint *Queen Charlotte Raising the*

Genius of the Fine Arts (1767). This painting followed the success of Kauffman's portrait of Augusta, Duchess of Brunswick (George III's sister) and her child, which was painted ten days after the artist's arrival in London. According to contemporary accounts, the king's mother was so pleased with this painting that she visited the artist in her newly appointed Soho studio.¹⁴ Popularized by a 1772 mezzotint by engraver Thomas Burke, *Queen Charlotte Raising the Genius of the Fine Arts* (Fig. 2) depicts Charlotte as a guardian of the fine arts and the royal family.¹⁵ Kauffman portrays Charlotte clasping a myrtle wreath destined for a successful artist in her right hand, while she places her left hand on the sleeping genius, modeled after her eldest son, George (later George IV). They are surrounded by the attributes of sculpture, architecture, geometry, music, history, poetry, and theory, and in the background of the painting is a temple to Apollo.¹⁶ The Georgian viewer would have understood Kauffman's reference to Charlotte's maternal role, for she had given birth to five children (four sons and one daughter) by the time this painting was completed.¹⁷

Kauffman's painting symbolized both the public and private roles of the English queen, who quickly became a source of artistic support and fulfilled her duty to provide an heir to the throne. The artist's simultaneous depiction of Charlotte's regal and domestic qualities was part of a changing way of representing the royal family. During George III's reign, a new type of royal mystique emerged that unified both the ordinary and regal qualities of the royal family. A variation of the myth of the king's two bodies, it held that the king had both a public, immortal body that embodied his rulership and a more transitory one that related to his quasi-private life as a mortal man.¹⁸ George III and Charlotte cleverly commissioned paintings that emphasized both the royal family's ritual splendor and bourgeois domesticity from Kauffman, as well as from Johann Zoffany, Thomas Gainsborough, and Benjamin West. Such images augmented the family's popularity with the British public, which empathized with the domestic happiness of the "farmer-king" and his large family. Kauffman's representation of Charlotte as queen, mother, and philanthropist brought a modern conception of the British monarchy closer to the people.

For viewers uncomfortable with a depiction of a queen in the public role of art patron, the allegory in *Queen Charlotte Raising the Genius of the Fine Arts* allowed multiple interpretations. The domestic scene of Charlotte and her eldest son represented two interwoven aspects of the queen's personality: her roles as royal mother and as matron of the arts. While the painting represents Charlotte's early attempt to fashion herself as a worthy consort for the English king, it also cleverly represents her as an accessible maternal figure. Additionally, the image promoted Charlotte's practice of matronage, for she supported at least 16 female artists during her lifetime, some of whom were employed as tutors for her large family.¹⁹ Kauffman's iconography continued to be associated with the queen, for in 1799, Royal Academy member Francesco Bartolozzi



Fig. 1. Charles Spooner after Mary Benwell, *The Studios Fair* (Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz) (c. 1762), 1767 mezzotint, 13³/₄" x 10". National Portrait Gallery, London.

created *Charlotte as Patroness of Botany and the Fine Arts*, a print that reiterated the queen's roles as a patron of art and botany and nurturer of the royal family.²⁰

In *Queen Charlotte Raising the Genius of the Fine Arts*, Kauffman has represented Charlotte as a patron of the fine, rather than decorative arts, although she was a considerable supporter of both fields. In addition to painting and sculpture, she collected wax models, embroidery, and Asian-inspired furnishings. Another Kauffman painting that Charlotte owned, *Morning Amusement* (1773), depicts a young woman in orientalizing costume at work in one such field—embroidery, a genre very popular with Charlotte and her daughters. Benjamin West highlighted the queen's partiality for embroidery in *Queen Charlotte with Charlotte, Princess Royal*, commissioned by the royal couple in 1777. The painting depicts Charlotte and her eldest daughter in the midst of an embroidery project. On a table next to them are a Raphael print, a bust of Minerva, and a piece

of sheet music, references to their other cultural interests.²¹

Produced on the eve of the founding of the Royal Academy, *Queen Charlotte Raising the Genius of the Fine Arts* belies the idea of Charlotte as a passive bystander in her husband's art program. The painting was also Kauffman's clever way of flattering the king and queen, who were then involved with the formation of the Royal Academy. Kauffman and Mary Moser (1744-1819), whom Charlotte also employed, were the only two women among the founding members of this organization. Although Kauffman and Moser were Academy members, they did not have the privileges of their male peers.²² They could not hold professorial positions and mostly voted in absentia. Nevertheless, the queen's patronage not only supplemented the incomes of female artists, it also helped them achieve a degree of mainstream acceptance. Indeed, Charlotte's portrait signified Kauffman's professional success in England—the artist displayed the commission documents above the entrance to her studio. Similarly, on the continent, Kauffman and French artist Vigée-Lebrun supplemented their restricted Academy memberships with matronage from queens Maria Carolina of Naples and Marie Antoinette of France, daughters of Maria Theresa of Austria.

Following Kauffman's 1781 marriage to the Italian painter Antonio Zucchi, the couple moved to Zucchi's homeland. The next year they traveled to Naples, after Maria Carolina and her husband, Ferdinand IV, commissioned portraits of their growing family and, where, in circumstances similar to the English court, public and private concerns soon found their way into Kauffman's art.²³ During this initial visit, the queen, an amateur artist, provided Kauffman with lodging in her palace and requested drawing lessons for her young daughters.²⁴ The artist began to work for Maria Carolina during a period when the queen's popularity had reached its nadir; she was being criticized for transgressing typical female behavior because of her public activities. After producing a male heir in 1775, Maria Carolina had become a member of the Neapolitan State Council, which gov-

erned Naples while her husband pursued his love of hunting.²⁵ In 1784, she oversaw the replacement of her rival, Council member Bernardo Tanucci, who had held the post of prime minister for 33 years, with one of her favorites, the Englishman John Acton, rumored to be her lover. In an effort to revive her reputation, the queen approached Kauffman, who had already demonstrated her ability to depict the public and private aspects of an 18th-century queenship, to produce several history paintings for her, including *Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi* and *Julia, Wife of Pompey* (Fig. 3), both 1785.

For the subjects of these paintings, the queen and the artist chose Roman heroines, Cornelia (160-100 B.C.E.) and Julia (c. 75-50 B.C.E.), both celebrated for their dual allegiances to family and state.²⁶ The story of Cornelia was an appropriate subject for a Neapolitan commission, since legend had it that she lived near Naples. Eighteenth-century writers such as Rousseau viewed her as the epitome of the good mother, for she considered her children to be her finest jewels. After her husband's premature death, Cornelia educated their two surviving sons, Tiberius and Caius, who later achieved great success as Roman senators and soldiers.²⁷ Kauffman painted this popular subject for three patrons during the 1780s.²⁸

In contrast, the subject of Julia is unique—no other contemporary representations of Julia exist, with the exception of a 1775 sketch also by Kauffman. Given her early interest in the circumstances of Julia's life, Kauffman seems to have been waiting for an opportunity to do a large-scale painting depicting the only child of Julius Caesar.²⁹ In 59 B.C.E., Caesar arranged a strategic marriage for his daughter to the much older Roman general Pompey, who formed part of Caesar's triumvirate. Although Julia was Pompey's fourth wife, he fell passionately in love with her. His enemies criticized him for loving his wife too much and thus neglecting his civic duties to the Roman republic. While pregnant with Pompey's child, Julia received inaccurate news that her husband, who was not a popular statesman, had been killed. Kauffman's painting depicts the dramatic moment when the heroine sees her husband's bloody shirt. After this shock, she fainted and suffered a miscarriage. The following year, Julia became pregnant again but died in childbirth. Without her presence, the union between



Fig. 2. Thomas Burke after Angelica Kauffman, *Her Majesty Queen Charlotte Raising the Genius of the Fine Arts* (1767), 1772 mezzotint, 18½" x 15". The Royal Collection, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Caesar and Pompey disintegrated into civil war.³⁰ Why would images of *Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi* and *Julia, Wife of Pompey* appeal to Maria Carolina? Cornelia's primary duty was to raise her sons to be good statesmen. Like Cornelia, the Neapolitan queen also had a primary role in the education and upbringing of her children. Both Pompey and Ferdinand neglected their public roles, albeit for different reasons. Although Maria Carolina was not a widow like Cornelia, Ferdinand's laziness forced his wife to assume a position of leadership in the family and government. Like Cornelia (and Maria Carolina), Julia was a virtuous woman whose identity as wife and mother was interwoven with her duty to the Roman state. Furthermore, Kauffman's painting of *Julia* underlined similarities between her match with her father's rival and the political exigencies related to Maria Carolina's marriage.³¹ As the mother of 17 children, Maria Carolina would have also responded to the maternal theme in both *Cornelia* and *Julia*, for she believed that "the highest felicity on earth is the happiness of being a mother. I have had seventeen living children; they were my only joy. Nature made me a mother; the queen is only a gala-dress, which I put off and on."³² Kauffman's 1784 portrait of the royal family emphasizes the importance of maternity to the queen, whose pose and gesture foreshadows the artist's subsequent depiction of Cornelia. The display of these three paintings, especially in a royal reception chamber, strove to soften the image of Maria Carolina as a domineering female who interfered with the Neapolitan State Council.³³

Kauffman's commissions for Maria Carolina and Charlotte addressed the issue of appropriate public and private activities for late-18th-century consorts. While there is no evidence of communication between these two queens regarding Kauffman, Maria Carolina was aware of the artist's work in England, for she decorated her palaces with engravings of the artist's paintings. Another female artist, Vigée-Lebrun, received Maria Carolina's support because of her sister's previous sponsorship of the painter.³⁴ Close in age, Maria Carolina and Marie Antoinette were raised together at the Austrian court of their mother, Maria Theresa, where they became aware of the importance of the arts in the royal household and were introduced to female intellec-



Fig. 3. Angelica Kauffman, *Julia, Wife of Pompey* (1785), oil on canvas. Kunstsammlungen zu Weimar, Schlossmuseum.

tuals and artists.³⁵ Although Vigée-Lebrun's commissions had failed to restore Marie Antoinette's honor, she and Kauffman were moderately successful in improving Maria Carolina's reputation in Naples. For Maria Carolina, who commissioned Vigée-Lebrun to paint portraits of the Neapolitan royal family, the artist also represented a link to her imprisoned sister. Some of the family portraits that Maria Carolina requested from the pro-monarchy artist, such as *Portrait of Maria Christina* (1791), were compositionally similar to paintings that Vigée-Lebrun had done for the French queen. Recent research by Roworth and Mildener suggests that these paintings were commissioned by Maria Carolina for another sister (her daughter's namesake), Maria Christina. Maria Christina, as the Archduchess of Sachsen-Teschen and the wife of Albert, governor of the Austrian Netherlands, also had to negotiate traditional views of femininity in the public and private spheres.³⁶

While Maria Carolina's commissions from Kauffman and Vigée-Lebrun addressed her domestic role, some of Vigée-Lebrun's paintings for Marie Antoinette represented the queen's efforts to distance herself from her familial and national duties. The French queen cultivated a distinct brand of femininity marked by a preoccupation with fashion and a taste for sensuality. For example, in 1783, Vigée-Lebrun exhibited *Marie-Antoinette en chemise* (Fig. 4) at the Salon, where it was immediately criticized for its representation of the king's wife *en chemise*, a fashionable semi-transparent dress of white muslin. The queen's chic and expensive French dressmaker, Rose Bertin (1744-1813), had imported the *robe en chemise* from England.³⁷ Because of its simple lines and relatively minimal decoration, this dress connoted simplicity and leisurely pursuits. The queen's detractors viewed this garment, which they also called *chemise à la reine*, as part of her ongoing effort to disregard court etiquette.³⁸ In the public's eye, the *robe en chemise* was connected to the queen's pleasure grounds at Versailles, Petit Trianon, where she often wore this casual garment. The Petit Trianon was a feminine realm, inhabited by Marie Antoinette and her friends, who spent lavish amounts of money on clothing and entertainment and were rumored to engage in promiscuous sexual practices. With its imposing architecture and gardens, Versailles represented the absolutist, masculine ruler of France, while the Petit Trianon symbolized the invasion of these grounds by a foreign, feminine influence. In this suspect environment, she ignored her duties to her husband and children. Vigée-Lebrun's 1783 portrait, which was removed from the salon because of the public uproar, emphasized the queen's association with these pleasure grounds.³⁹ These traits were most apparent in Vigée-Lebrun's commission, but not so much with the other female artists in her employ, portraitist and still-life painter Anne Vallayer-Coster (1744-1818) and miniaturists Marie-Christine Vagliengo Campana (act. late-18th, early-19th centuries), and Aglaé Joly



Fig. 4. Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *Marie-Antoinette en chemise* (1783), oil on canvas. Private Collection, Germany.

Cadet (act. late-18th century).⁴⁰

Despite (or possibly because of) the criticism of *Marie-Antoinette en chemise*, in 1785 Vigée-Lebrun began to work on *A Portrait of Marie-Antoinette and Her Children*. This portrait was commissioned to celebrate the maternal virtues of the queen, whose popularity continued to plummet. Her involvement in the scandalous Diamond Necklace Affair and its ensuing trial (1785-87) caused the Parisian press to question the queen's sexual and financial practices, while the French finance minister was forced to resign.⁴¹ Realizing that it was necessary to present herself in a more matronly light, Marie Antoinette requested more conservative dresses from Bertin, such as the one she wears in this portrait, which shows the queen surrounded by her children, Marie-Thérèse Charlotte and Louis Charles, the namesake of his godmother, Maria Carolina of Naples. Dauphin Louis Joseph points to an empty cradle that symbolized the recent death of the infant Princess Sophie.⁴² The inclusion of the large jewelry box behind the royal cradle

was likely an allusion to the story of Cornelia, implying that the queen viewed her progeny, rather than her possessions, as her real wealth. Vigée-Lebrun's portrait, however, suffered in comparison to more informal portraits of maternity, such as the artist's *Self-Portrait with Daughter Julie* (called *Maternal Tenderness*, salon of 1787) or Kauffman's *Family of King Ferdinand IV and Queen Maria Carolina* (1784). Finally, the queen's unpopularity forced Vigée-Lebrun to delay the hanging of the portrait at the 1787 salon until after its official opening. Instead of enhancing the queen's reputation by depicting her as a happy and devoted mother, the circumstances surrounding this painting underlined the public's low esteem for the queen.⁴³

Academy member and aspiring history painter Labille-Guiard was at the center of another circle of matronage at the French court. In 1783, Labille-Guiard was appointed court painter to Marie-Antoinette's chief critics, the aunts of Louis XVI, Mesdames Adélaïde, Sophie, and Victoire. Labille-Guiard also opened her studio and home to a number of female artists, among them Gabrielle Capet and Carreaux de Rosamond, both of whom are elegantly depicted in her 1785 *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils* (front cover). At the 1787 Salon, Labille-Guiard exhibited a portrait of Marie Antoinette's daughter, Madame Elizabeth, and portraits of the Mesdames.⁴⁴ In *Portrait of Madame Adélaïde de France* (1787; Fig. 5), Labille-Guiard included several iconographic motifs that signified the less corrupt reigns of Louis XVI's predecessors. The king's aunt, for example, is seen next to portraits of her deceased parents and brother. Above her head, an antique bas-relief panel illustrates the life of Louis XV, culminating in a heroic deathbed scene.⁴⁵ The Neoclassical depiction of Madame Adélaïde was in stark contrast to the feminine ideals of pleasure and sensuality that were present in Vigée-Lebrun's portraits of the queen. Gendered terminology was used

to differentiate the styles of these two artists, whose work was shown at four of the same salons. Paintings by Vigée-Lebrun, who was closely connected to the French queen, were often described with feminine adjectives associated with the Rococo period, such as “charming,” “graceful,” “pretty,” and “seductive.” In contrast, words such as “hard,” “strong,” and “noble” emphasized Labille-Guiard’s adherence to the more austere Neoclassical style; yet images such as her *Self-Portrait with Two Pupils* demonstrate that she conceived her practice in very feminine terms.⁴⁶ Labille-Guiard fashioned a type of femininity that celebrated aristocratic dignity without raising the issues of dangerous sexuality or frivolous morals.

During the 18th century, women artists often pursued portraiture because it was lucrative and did not require the anatomical knowledge acquired by male students at the official academies, to which women did not gain admittance until the end of the next century. Yet many women of the period aspired to be history painters and had female patrons who enhanced their professional goals. Kauffman and other female artists were invited into the royal households to instruct Charlotte’s and Maria Carolina’s many daughters in the arts. Kauffman also proved especially adept at portraying a type of femininity that met the public and private needs of her female sponsors. Finally, these relationships were fruitful because these queens felt, perhaps, an affinity for the female artists in their employ, for they were also women participating in a predominantly masculine field during a time when traditional definitions of gender were changing.

In art-historical accounts of the late-18th century, queenly patronage is often considered only in conjunction with that of their spouses. Yet it is important to recognize that women such as Charlotte, Maria Carolina, and Marie Antoinette had independent resources and often were the conduit to royal support both within their households and among European courts. Charlotte and Maria Carolina commissioned female artists to construct a new model of femininity that united qualities of leadership and domesticity. In contrast, Marie Antoinette’s commissions, particularly from Vigée-Lebrun, were related to the queen’s interests in luxury and fashion and largely avoided the issue of domestic responsibilities. Although these three royal women fashioned different self-images for diverse purposes, they nonetheless turned to women artists to execute new representations of the queen. This fact alone suggests that they were united in their belief that femininity was a subject for women artists to define. ●



Fig. 5. Adélaïde Labille-Guiard, *Portrait of Madame Adélaïde de France* (1787), oil on canvas, 107½" x 73½". Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky.

NOTES

1. Charlotte’s husband, George III, began to suffer from porphyria in 1789, a disease that caused intermittent mental and physical problems for the rest of his life. Historians have criticized Louis XVI of France (husband of Marie Antoinette) and Ferdinand of Naples (husband of Maria Carolina) for their ineffectual leadership. For more information on these rulers and their shortcomings, see Ida Macalpine and Richard Hunter, “The ‘Insanity’ of King George III: A Classic Case of Porphyria,” in *Porphyria—A Royal Malady* (London: British Medical Association, 1966), 1-16; Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California, 1992), and Harold Acton, *The Bourbons of Naples (1734-1825)* (London: Methuen, 1956).

2. Rousseau began to receive a pension from King George in 1766. Clarissa Campbell-Orr details the relationship between the philosopher and the English court in *Queenship in Britain 1660-1837: Royal Patronage, Court Culture and Dynastic Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University, 2002), and “Queen Charlotte as Patron: Some Intellectual and Social Contexts,” *The Court Historian* (December 1999), 183-212. Campbell-Orr also provides a thorough analysis of Charlotte’s religious, scientific, and literary interests and the female intellectual circles in the royal household.

3. For a consideration of changing gender roles during the late-18th century, see, among others, Joan Landes, *Women in the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, 1988).

4. Except for Olwen Hedley’s 1975 study, *Queen Charlotte* (London: John Murray), most biographies of Charlotte were written immediately after her 1819 death and primarily rely on anecdotes and personal reminiscences rather than primary sources. Upon Charlotte’s instructions, most of her personal documents were destroyed following death. Only Charlotte’s diaries from 1789 and 1794 and her letters to the dukes of Mecklenburg-Strelitz survive. See the Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, British Library (T.S. Blakeley Collection), and the Mecklenburg Archives, Schwerin.

5. Hedley, *Queen Charlotte*, 139. Charlotte was the fifth child of Charles, Duke of Mirow, and Elisabeth Albertina of Sachsen-Hildburghausen, and was named for her aunt, Sophia Charlotte, wife of Frederick I of Prussia and cofounder of the art and science academies of Berlin. After she became the English queen, Charlotte continued her interests in the natural sciences by appointing Jean André de Luc, a natural historian and founder of modern geology, as her Reader in 1774. Other female intellectuals employed in Charlotte’s household included Mme de la Fite, also one of the queen’s Readers and the author of a series of educational treatises inspired by the royal princesses, and Fanny Burney, author of the novels *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, who began her position as Charlotte’s Second Keeper to the Robes on July 17, 1786.

6. Jane Roberts, ed., *George III & Queen Charlotte: Patronage, Collecting and Court Taste* (London: Royal Collection, 2004) provides a

reassessment of Charlotte's role in the progress of the royal couple's intellectual interests. The contents of Charlotte's private library indicate that she, like her husband, was an avid consumer of publications in the fields of art, science, literature, history, education, and many others.

7. Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Künstler*, IX (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1909), 75. Esther ("Eva") Denner was the daughter of portrait and miniature painter Balthasar Denner, who executed commissions for the courts of Mecklenburg-Strelitz and Schwerin. Denner and his children also worked at the Dutch, Danish, and English courts, and completed projects for the German duchies of Hanover, Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, and Holstein-Gottorp. This painting was commissioned by Charlotte's great-aunt, Princess Albertina Louise of Schwarzburg-Sonderhausen, who lived with the royal family. This attribution is based on archival information in Mecklenburg-Schwerin, which is the repository for both the Strelitz and Schwerin courts.

8. Karsch was well known during the 18th century and worked for Frederick the Great of Prussia.

9. Ellen Clayton, *English Female Artists*, II (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1876), 360; Thieme and Becker, *Lexikon*, III, 361.

10. Victoria Manners, "Catherine Read and Royal Patronage," *Connoisseur* (March 1932), 35-40.

11. A. Francis Stuart, "Miss Katherine Read, Court Paintress," *The Scottish Historical Review* (1905), 40-42.

12. Gordon Goodwin, *British Mezzotinters: Thomas Watson, James Watson, Elizabeth Judkins* (London: A.H. Bullen, 1904), 77-78; Delia Gaze, *Dictionary of Women Artists*, II (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), 1430. Caroline Watson received her appointment in 1785. Her engraving of Read's portrait was eventually moved to Frogmore, where Charlotte kept much of her favorite artwork.

13. Robin Reilly, *Wedgwood*, I (London: Stockton Press, 1989), 49-51, 200-01; II, 579-84. The queen, who visited Wedgwood's Greek Street showroom in 1774 and 1779, also requested two more sets of china from his factory, one for each of her eldest sons.

14. Angela Rosenthal, "Kauffman and Portraiture," and Wendy Wassing Roworth, "The Art of Painting," in *Angelika Kauffmann: A Continental Artist in Georgian England* (London: Reaktion Books, 1993), 190, 37, 42-43, 104. Kauffman, frustrated by the lack of patronage in Rome, traveled to England following the invitation of Lady Bridget Wentworth, the wife of the British consul in Rome.

15. Oliver Millar, *The Later Georgian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, I (London: Phaidon, 1969), 58-59; Bettina Baumgärtel, *Angelika Kauffmann 1741-1807: Retrospektive* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Verlag Gerd Hatje, 1998), 159-60; Angela Rosenthal, letter to the author, May 16, 2000. Charlotte also commissioned a portrait from Kauffman in late 1767, the location of which is unknown. It likely disappeared after a 1916 New York auction in which it changed hands.

16. The symbols of the seven fields in the painting are a square, compass, globe, lyre, papyrus (representing both historical writing and poetry), and a book open to a theoretical passage.

17. Baumgärtel, *Angelika Kauffmann*, 159-60. Kauffman's husband, Antonia Zucchi, stated that the Prince of Wales was the model for the genius figure. According to Baumgärtel, the genius was painted over a portrait of the prince.

18. Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London: Vintage, 1996), 247-48. Colley maintains that during the Georgian period, the British public was increasingly enthusiastic about celebrating the monarchy and supported a variety of ways of doing so. She observes that this celebration of regality was especially apparent following the downfall of the French monarchy in 1793.

19. In addition to Kauffman, Benwell, and Read, Charlotte employed Mary Moser, Catherine Andras, Mary Black, Anne Damer, Charlotte Jones, Mary Knowles, Mary Linwood, Anne Foldstone Mee, Margaret Meen, Caroline Watson, Marie Anne Bourlier, Mary Delany, and Patience Wright.

Marcia Pointon's "Working, Earning, Bequeathing: Mary Grace and Mary Moser-Paintresses," in *Strategies for Showing: Women, Possession and Representation in English Visual Culture, 1665-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1997), 131-71, remains the definitive study of Charlotte's patronage of Mary Moser.

20. Bartolozzi's print was part of the preface to a botanical publication by Robert John Thornton dedicated to Charlotte, *The New Illustration of the Sexual System of Carolus von Linnæus* (1799). The print was based on William Beechey's 1793 portrait of the queen, which portrays Charlotte in front of Frogmore with three of her dogs. For a comprehensive discussion of the queen's support of miniature painters, among them Beechey's wife, Anne Jessop Beechey (1763-1834), see Marcia Pointon, "'Surrounded with Briliants': Miniature Portraits in Eighteenth-Century England," *Art Bulletin* (March 2001), 48-71.

21. Millar, *Later Georgian Pictures*, I, 129.

22. For more information on the foundation of the Royal Academy, see David Solkin, *Painting for Money: The Visual Arts and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University, 1992), 259-61, and Sidney C. Hutchison, *The History of the Royal Academy 1768-1968* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1968). On December 10, 1768, the king signed the Instrument of Foundation of the Royal Academy that established a society for the promotion of the arts of painting, design, and architecture. Although the Academy was not established until 1768, artists had been meeting with the king about its formation since June of 1767. While there is a plethora of information about the king's role in the formation of the Royal Academy, Rosenthal, "Kauffman and Portraiture," 104, indicates that the queen was also involved. However, in my culling of the Academy's archives, I found no documentation of Charlotte's involvement.

23. Peter Walch, "Foreign Artists at Naples: 1750-1799," *Burlington Magazine* (April 1979), 248. According to Walch, Maria Carolina and Ferdinand favored artists of Germanic descent such as Kauffman.

24. For additional biographical information about Maria Carolina, see Amadei Bordiga Amalia, *Maria Carolina d'Austria e il Regno delle Due Sicilie* (Napoli: Cooperativa Editrice Libreria, 1950), and André Bonnefons, *Maria-Caroline reine des deux-Siciles 1768-1814* (Paris: Perrin & Co., 1905).

25. According to Harold Acton, *The Bourbons of Naples (1734-1825)* (London: Methuen, 1956), 175-92, Ferdinand continued to neglect his duties, despite missives from his father, King Charles of Spain, demanding that he resume his public responsibilities.

26. Bettina Baumgärtel, in "Die Siedlern-Malerinnen der Goethezeit. Mehr als hübsche Talente," *Kunst und Antiquitäten* (May 1994), 8-13, describes Kauffman's paintings *Cornelia* and *Julia* as pendant pieces of propaganda for the queen, but she does not relate them to Maria Carolina's circumstances or explain the need for ideological artwork in Neapolitan society.

27. For the story of Cornelia and her children, see, among others, Mika Kajava, "Cornelia Africana f. Gracchorum," *Arctos; acta philologica fennica* (1989), 119-31. Cornelia was a favorite subject among late-18th-century artists. For example, David used the stories of Cornelia and Brutus in an allegory for an Opéra curtain created in 1793 and 1794. Cornelia was undoubtedly an attractive subject to artists because she provided a feminine counterpart to the celebration of traditional masculine values in paintings such as David's *Oath of the Horatii* (1785).

28. For a comprehensive discussion of how Kauffman tailored the different versions of the *Cornelia* theme to suit her various patrons, see Wendy Wassing Roworth, "Ancient Matrons and Modern Patrons: Angelika Kauffman as a Classical History Painter," in Melissa Hyde and Jennifer Milam, eds., *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2003), 188-210. (See review, p. 57) In 1785, Kauffman also painted versions of *Cornelia* for Prince Poniatowski of Poland and the British banker George Bowles, who became one of Kauffman's best patrons.

29. Victoria Manners and George C. Williamson, *Angelika Kauffmann, R.A. Her Life and Works* (1924; reprint, New York: Hacker Art Books,

1976), 148-49. Kauffman's preparatory drawing for *Julia* is in the Print and Drawings Collection in the Albertina Museum, Vienna. It is unknown what classical source Kauffman consulted for the *Julia* and *Cornelia* commissions. Charles Rollin's *Histoire Romaine*, the first edition of which appeared in Paris in the 1730s, was a popular source among Neoclassical artists.

30. Mary Beard and Michael Crawford, *Rome in the Late Republic* (London: Duckworth, 1999), 98-101.

31. By arranging Maria Carolina's marriage to the Neapolitan king, Maria Theresa maintained a certain degree of control over this kingdom, which had been an Austrian territory until 1734.

32. Acton, *Bourbons of Naples*, 506. Like Maria Carolina, Cornelia had many children, only three of whom survived past infancy. Similarly, pregnancy played an important role in *Julia*'s short life.

33. It is unclear where these pendant paintings hung or who saw them, but given Maria Carolina's appreciation of Kauffman's work, it is possible that they were hung in a room where Maria Carolina worked or entertained. They would have sent a powerful message about the loyalty and fecundity of the queen and served an ideological function, counteracting the negative attitudes toward Maria Carolina's public position and domineering relationship with her husband. Maria Carolina may have also sensed, particularly with her sister on the shaky French throne, the need for a new type of representation for a female monarch.

34. Early-20th-century biographies of the sister queens, such as Catharine Mary Charlton Bearn, *A Sister of Marie Antoinette: The Life-Story of Maria Carolina, Queen of Naples* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1900), and Jeanne Louise Henriette Campan, *Memoirs of the Private Life of Marie Antoinette* (New York: Tudor, 1934), indicate that the sisters kept in contact with one another throughout the 1780s. For example, in 1787, Maria Carolina unsuccessfully attempted to arrange a marriage between her eldest son and her sister's daughter, Madame Royale. However, I found no discussions of artistic patronage in their correspondence.

35. See, especially, Antonia Frasier, *Marie Antoinette: The Journey* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 3-25. Maria Theresa had a lifelong relationship with Maria Antonia Walpurgis (1724-80), after whom Marie Antoinette was named. Maria Antonia, who lived with the Austrian royal family, was a respected artist, composer, and poet. This relationship may have been a prototype for the princesses' subsequent encouragement of female artists. For their correspondence, see Woldemar Lippert, *Kaiserin Maria Theresia und Kurfürstin Maria Antonia von Sachsen Briefwechsel 1747-1772* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1908).

36. Roworth, *Angelika Kauffmann*, 200. According to Roworth, the fact that Kauffman's preparatory drawing for *Julia* was in the collection of Albert von Sachsen-Teschchen (Christina's husband and founder of the Albertina) strengthens the probability that these history paintings were eventually sent to Maria Christina.

37. Frasier, *Marie Antoinette*, 149; Jacques Peuchet, *Mémoires de Madame Bertin sur la reine Marie Antoinette* (Paris: Bossange Frères, 1824), 175.

38. Mary Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman: Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun and the Cultural Politics of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996), 143-47, 165-68. Unlike court attire, the *robe en chemise* was comfortable and did not hinder movement. Marie Antoinette was also criticized for disregarding the separation of the sexes during the royal mealtimes and refusing to use the heavy traditional makeup favored by the French women at court.

39. *Ibid.*, 172-74; Hunt, *Family Romance*, 93, 105. In 1783, Marie-Antoinette started to receive criticism for the considerable costs associated with the decoration of the Petit Trianon. Some of these expenses included the installation of a *jardin-anglais* and a *hameau*. Although the predominance of women at the Petit Trianon appears to have fostered the accusations of lesbianism, the press attacked Marie-Antoinette's promiscuity with both men and women as early as 1774. Because queens were not allowed to rule in France, Hunt posits that the rule of the king's two bodies did not apply to a queen, which allowed for a large number of highly sexualized

representations of the queen.

40. Eik Kahng and Marianne Roland Michel, *Anne Vallayer-Coster: Painter to the Court of Marie-Antoinette* (New Haven: Yale University, 2002), 82, 92, n. 50-51. Mme Cadet painted the queen in 1787 and Campana produced portraits with her husband, Vittoriano Campana, who held the position of Painter of the Cabinet of the Queen. Marie Antoinette was a witness at Vallayer-Coster's 1781 wedding and provided the artist with an apartment in the Louvre.

41. The queen's popularity reached its pre-Revolutionary nadir between 1785 and 1787 with the Diamond Necklace Affair and the resignation of finance minister Charles-Alexandre de Calonne. Cardinal de Rohan, a noble, wished to restore himself in the queen's eyes by obtaining a necklace for her. Tricked by the Countess de la Motte and a prostitute who disguised herself as the queen, the cardinal ordered this jewelry without paying for it. He was subsequently charged with theft and tried by the *Paris Parlement*. The ensuing trial encouraged a rumor that Marie Antoinette had traded sexual favors for the necklace. Her reputation also suffered after Calonne's departure from government service.

42. Fraser, *Marie Antoinette*, 224, 240, 255-56; Joseph Baillio, *Elisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun 1755-1842* (Fort Worth: Kimbell Art Museum, 1982), 75-76. This painting was commissioned by the Académie Royale's director, Charles Claude Flahaut d'Angiviller. Vigée-Lebrun was paid the astronomical sum of 17,000 livres for the portrait of the queen and her children. It is unclear whether d'Angiviller or the queen specified the iconographical motifs in the portrait.

43. In "The Cradle is Empty: Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, Marie Antoinette, and the Problem of Intention," Hyde and Milam, *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity*, 164-87, Sheriff describes the ambiguity of various components of this painting, such as the empty cradle and heraldic decoration and shows how these multifaceted elements have occluded contemporary and current interpretations of the painting. Once the painting was exhibited at the salon, some critics nicknamed it "Madame Deficit," while others refrained from comment, instead praising Vigée-Lebrun's *Maternal Tenderness*.

44. Hyde, "Under the Sign of Minerva: Adélaïde Labille-Guiard's *Portrait of Madame Adélaïde*," in *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity*, 139-63; Jean Cailleux, "Royal Portraits of Madame Vigée-Lebrun and Madame Labille-Guiard," *Burlington Magazine* (March 1969), v, and "Portrait of Madame Adélaïde of France, Daughter of Louis XV," *Burlington Magazine* (March 1969), iii. Labille-Guiard's 1785 *Self-Portrait* brought her to the attention of Madame Adélaïde, who wanted to, but ultimately did not purchase this portrait for 10,000 livres. The king's aunt did, however, commission multiple copies of figure 5, including one for her own collection.

45. Adélaïde is shown with a plan of the convent at Versailles, of which she was director. For a consideration of portraits of Adélaïde and her sisters, see Milam, "Matronage and the Direction of Sisterhood: Portraits of Madame Adélaïde" in *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity*, 115-38.

46. Sheriff, *The Exceptional Woman*, 262-63; Roger Portalis, "Adélaïde Labille-Guiard," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* (November 1901), 355. In addition to the salons of 1783, 1785, 1787, and 1789, Vigée-Lebrun and Labille-Guiard both exhibited at the Académie before becoming members in 1783. They also exhibited during the same years at the Académie de Saint-Luc and the Salon de la Correspondance. Although other female artists exhibited at these salons, for instance, Vallayer-Coster, the Parisian art world created an artificial competition between Labille-Guiard and Vigée-Lebrun, which mounted with each salon. Unlike Vigée-Lebrun, Labille-Guiard successfully negotiated the changing tides of patronage brought about by the Revolution. In the 1791 salon, she exhibited eight portraits of deputies of the National Assembly, including Robespierre.

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Pl. 12. Romaine Brooks, *Muriel Draper* (1938), oil on canvas, 46" x 30". Gift of Carl Van Vechten to the Yale Collection of Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.



Pl. 13. Kiki Smith, *Born* (2002), lithograph, 68 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 55 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Pl. 14. Lavinia Fontana, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (1600), oil on canvas, 51 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 43". Museo Davia Bargellini, Bologna.



Pl. 15. Josefa D'Obidos de Ayala, *Salvator Mundi* (1680), oil on canvas, 43" x 28 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Convent of St. Carmen, Colubra, Portugal