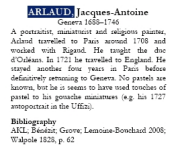
Jacqués Antoine Arlaud

(1668 - 1743)

Place of Birth: Geneve, Switzerland
Place of Death: Geneve

A portraitist, miniaturist and religious painter, Arlaud travelled to pParis around 1708 and worked with Rigaud. He taught the duc d'Orléans. In 1721 he travelled to England. He stayed for another four years in Paris before definitively returning to Geneva. No pastels are known, but he seems to have used touches of pastel in his gouche miniatures. (e.g. his 1727 autoportrait in the Uffizi).



ARLAUD Jacques-Antoine
Geneva 1688–1746
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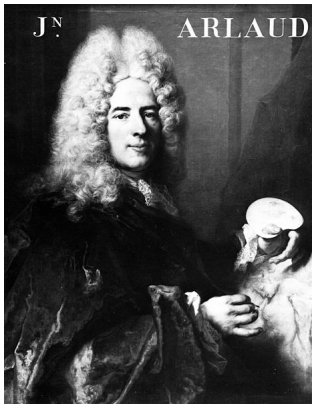
Bibliography
AKL Beaulieu; Gerve; Lemoine-Bouchard 2008; Walpole 1828, p. 62

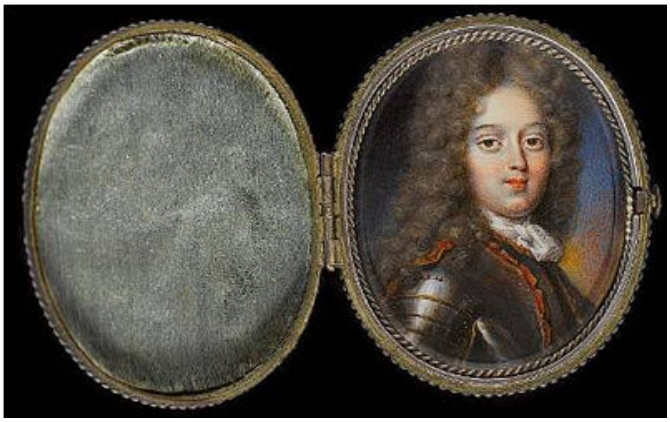


BENJAMIN and JACQUES ANTOINE ARLAUD are believed to have been brothers and natives of Switzerland; they were the great uncles of Louis Ami Arlaud who worked in the latter part of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, and are thought to have lived in Geneva and to have been the sons of a watchmaker who came from Auvergne. Little is known about Benjamin's life but it is thought that he worked for a time in Amsterdam before coming to England. The exact date of his arrival is not known, nor do we know the year in which he died, but it is believed that he continued to work until about 1731. Miniatures by him are scarce; one is at the Victoria and Albert Museum and another in the Wallace Collection, while the National Museum at Munich possesses several, and a limited number are in private collections. I have a fine example depicting a man in a full bottomed wig, which shows excellent modelling and draughtsmanship of the face. The unknown gentleman portrayed is wearing an attractive cherry red coat which looks well against the blue background characteristic of earlier miniaturists. A pinkish brown shading can be seen on the curls of the wig, and the face is shaded with a greenish grey and red brush stroke; a red line delineates the contours of the face, nose and eyelids, and a slightly amused expression on the face of the sitter almost suggests that he and the artist were sharing a joke. A letter written by Basil Long in May 1927, and now in my possession, attributes this miniature to Arlaud, an opinion since confirmed by Graham Reynolds. His works are not always signed but those that are generally have the signature on the back, followed by the date.

The elder brother, Jacques Antoine Arlaud (1668–1746) was a very successful miniaturist and his work was well drawn. Started on a career of classical studies in which he showed considerable brilliance, he decided to take up miniature painting and was employed by a firm of jewellers at Dijon. His work met with such success that in 1688, when he was only about 20 years old, he went to Paris where he was soon accepted and given employment. Here he became friendly with the two eminent French painters, Largillière and Rigaud. Largillière has been called the Van Dyck of France, and Jacques Arlaud appears to have studied his technique. He was provided with rooms in the Château of St Cloud by the Duc d'Orléans who, on the death of his uncle Louis XIV (1638–1715), acted as Regent, and favours were showered upon him. In 1721 he came to England with a letter of introduction to the Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen Caroline. He brought with him a copy in miniature of 'Leda and the Swan' after Michael Angelo or Correggio, and is supposed to have sold it in London for £600, but there is no record so far of any miniatures painted by him during his visit to England. After returning to Paris he finally settled in Geneva, the place of his birth, and having apparently amassed an ample fortune, lived there until his death in 1746. Largillière painted a portrait of him which is in the gallery at Geneva, and examples of his work are in H.M. the Queen's Collection at Windsor, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Wallace Collection and the Louvre. He is also known to have painted religious and mythological subjects. He tended to use a red and grey shading on the faces of his sitters.

His signatures are usually in full, and Basil Long mentions one signed in a sprawling hand 'Jacobus | Antonius | Arlaud | Genevensis | pingabat | ad vivum | in

Paintings by Jacqués Antoine Arlaud



A young Gentleman, wearing gold-studded armour, the scarlet lining trimmed with gold, white jabot and full-bottomed powdered wig