

JENS JUEL  
1745–1802

141. *Portrait of Princess Louise Augusta of Denmark  
in Turkish Dress (1785–86)*

(*Portræt af prinsesse Louise Augusta i tyrkisk dragt*)

Oil on canvas, 17¾ x 13⅓ in. (45 x 34 cm)

Not signed or inscribed

PROVENANCE: A Jutland manor house; Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 846, 2014, lot 12, ill.

LITERATURE: Ellen Poulsen, *Jens Juel. Katalog*, 1–2, Copenhagen 1991, no. 383, ill. in *Katalog*, vol. 2, p. 234; *Den store danske encyklopædi*.

During her lifetime, it was already known that Louise Augusta (1771–1843) was not the daughter of the King of Denmark, Christian VII (1749–1808), but a fruit of the liaison between the queen, the English-born Caroline Mathilde (1751–1775), and Johann Friedrich Struensee (1737–1772), personal physician to the king. Nevertheless, she was officially considered a Danish princess from birth. The king's power was absolute, but he was neither interested in nor able to rule the country because he suffered from schizophrenia. He was surrounded by courtiers, advisors, and ministers, all of whom vied for his power. The insecure king behaved erratically, even out in town. Hoping to mitigate these spectacles, his handlers expedited a marriage, which took place in 1766. Well more than a year later, Caroline Mathilde bore a successor, Frederik (1768–1839), who would become King Frederik VI.

In 1768, a physician named Struensee was engaged to escort the king on a several-month journey abroad, including visits to the French and English courts. By listening to the fantasies of the king and seeking to understand him, Struensee won his trust and was appointed to a modest position at the Danish court after their return. In 1770, the king invited Struensee to meet the queen, and the two speedily began a love affair. Contrary to previous court practice, Struensee became a part of the family. Among others, he dined with the king and queen in the evening, and the king began to function better in ruling the country. Struensee realized he could lose his power and position, so in 1771 he instituted a “cabinet rule,” where decisions on matters of state no longer required the king's signature. With inspiration from French Enlightenment philosophers, he hastily initiated a radical reformation, during which the introduction of freedom of the press was the most controversial. After a masked ball in January 1772, Struensee was arrested, and in April convicted and executed for *lèse-majesté* (treason). The miserable queen was exiled and never again saw her children. Princess Augusta grew up without her mother and became closely attached to her brother Frederik. She was both painted and drawn, right from birth. Juel's first portrait of her is from 1784 (Royal Collection, London), and he painted her frequently after that.

This full-length portrait of the princess in Turkish attire is from 1785–1786 according to biographer, Ellen Poulsen. It is one of a number of almost identical paintings in the same size. At masquerades in the European royal houses and on the theater stage, “the Turk” had become a recurrent character from the beginning of the 1700s, easily recognized by moustaches, turbans, and balloon pants.<sup>1</sup> A masquerade participant with turban can be seen in a grand ceiling painting at Frederiksberg Castle, just outside of

Copenhagen. The remarkable painting is an expression of the Western fascination with the exotic. It also characterizes the work of the Danish artist Melchior Lorck (1526/27–1583), who traveled in Turkey (1555–1559) with an ambassadorial group from the Holy Roman Empire and brought home a great many drawings of Turkish architecture, military, attires, and tombs that would provide designs for graphic prints. At that time the expanding Muslim Ottoman Empire, with its capital in Istanbul, was a force feared in Europe, where Muslims were considered a threat to Christianity. In 1529, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1494/95–1566) lay siege to Vienna, and in 1683, the city was again in danger of being conquered. Wars with Turkey continued in the 1700s, but gradually the threat to Europe weakened, and the Turkish influence became safe and considered merely an exotic element.

Portraits of Europeans in Turkish costumes are seen in the 1600s, and especially in the 1700s, in several European countries. Around 1700, the Turk appears in plays performed by the Italian troupes in France, among other places, e.g., *Harlequin grand vizier* (1688). An embassy from the Ottoman Empire to France (1720–1721) gave new inspiration to the theater, which is reflected in paintings by Antoine Watteau (1684–1721). In 1733, Voltaire (1694–1778) wrote his Eastern tragedy *Zaïre*, which was performed in Copenhagen in 1767 on the king's order and ran for several seasons. Christian VII himself played the main character at several performances at the Court Theatre of Christiansborg Castle. He also performed in Turkish attire in a carrousel, a tournament held during his brother-in-law Prince William's visit to Copenhagen in 1769.

Turkish music in Western Europe also inspired the great composers of the time, among them C. W. Gluck (1714–1787) and W. A. Mozart (1756–1791). It was music of the Turkish elite soldiers, the Janissaries, and their use of timpani, drums, and wind instruments that made up the era's new music, which became known as "alla turca." Several operas with Turkish themes were performed in Copenhagen, some at the Court Theatre, some at the Royal Theatre. The mother of Christian VII, the English-born Queen Louise, had been a student of G. F. Händel (1685–1759) and became fond of operas; she promoted this art form in Copenhagen, and her interest was passed on to her son. In the 1770s and the 1780s, the play *Suleyman II* was performed, from which there exist drawings by Peter Cramer (1726–1782) showing the actors in Turkish costumes. There is also a portrait by Jens Juel depicting Marie Cathrine Preisler (1761–1797) playing the part of Roxelane (Ellen Poulsen no. 241). Additionally, in 1776, Willibald Gluck's *La rencontre imprévue*, from 1764, which also has elements of Turkish music, was performed. It was in the same period that the Danish explorer Carsten Niebuhr (1733–1815) published accounts from his travels in Arabia and surrounding countries. Turkey was in vogue.

It is in this context that the portrait of the princess in Turkish attire should be seen. She is painted in full figure, wearing a yellow silk dress that is open at the sides, with a close-fitting buttoned bodice and a thin white petticoat. At her waist she wears a belt adorned with two blue medallions on the buckle. Over all is a short-sleeved blue velvet coat with an ermine lining. Below her ankles, which are crossed, she wears flat, pointed gold shoes. She wears a tiara, and over this, a gauzy turbanlike veil fastened with a brooch that may be set with diamonds. In her right hand she holds a mask. She sits by a table holding an exquisite bouquet of flowers—a decorative touch typical of Juel.

In the rest of Europe, it had long been common to paint the noble ladies of the time in this kind of apparel, though most often wearing balloon pants. According to the Danish costume researcher Ellen

Andersen, the style was called *circassienne*, which is a traditional folk costume from Circassia in Caucasus.<sup>2</sup> Among the most well-known are Carle van Loo's (1705–1765) two paintings of the mistress of the French king Louis XV, Marquise de Pompadour (1721–1764), in Turkish apparel from 1754. We do not know if Jens Juel was familiar with them, but copper-engraved replicas of them circulated under the titles “La Sultane” (“The Sultana”) and “La Confidente” (“The Confidante”). They were painted as overdoors in her bedroom, decorated in Turkish style at Château de Bellevue, which the king had built for her just outside of Paris, and the interior is depicted in the paintings. One of them shows Pompadour taking a cup of coffee, brought to her by a black female slave. The other shows her sitting on a low divan by her embroidery, conversing with a friend who is likewise in Turkish attire.<sup>3</sup> It was more comfortable than the laced corsets of the rococo era and was featured in the fashion journals of the time.

During his studying trip, Jens Juel copied a painting of a lady in Turkish attire (Ellen Poulsen no. 156) by the Italian Pietro Longhi (1701–1785). During his stay in Geneva late in the 1770s, he painted portraits of ladies in similar costumes: *Jeanny Françoise Turrettini, née Boissier* (1777, Ellen Poulsen, no. 177), *Suzanne de la Rive, née Tronchin* (1777, Ellen Poulsen no. 166 and 167), and *Jacqueline H.E. Sénebier, née Morsler* (1778, Ellen Poulsen no. 177). In Geneva, the Turkish was especially topical, as Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702–1789), called “the Turkish painter,” in 1776 had returned to his hometown after a career with several European princely houses. He had lived in Constantinople (Istanbul, 1738–42), painting and drawing the unfamiliar apparel and interiors. When he returned to Europe, he continued to wear Turkish attire and even grew a long beard, quite unfashionable at the time. Liotard was known for his portraits of Europeans in Turkish costumes; in 1753, while a French court painter, he painted Madame Adelaïde de France (1732–1800), daughter of Louis XV. In Geneva, Jens Juel had the opportunity of seeing Liotard's works.

Princess Louise Augusta sits beside large red velvet pillows at her left, and on her right, a European-height table with a heavy Asian covering. The fur-adorned coat, the belt with medallions, and the mask echo portraits of many of European ladies. Despite being small, the painting is a typical royal portrait, with traditional set pieces, heavy drapery, and a background of impressive columns.

However, the composition was not originated by Jens Juel. There exist an aquarelle drawing (National Gallery of Denmark, inv.no. 12753) (Fig. B) and a similar miniature (Rosenborg Castle, inv.no. 19-161) by Cornelius Høyer (1741–1804) that both depict the sister of Christian VII, Princess Louise of Denmark (1750–1831), married to Carl, Landgrave of Hessen-Kassel (1744–1836) in Turkish attire with balloon pants. She too sits with a mask in her hand by a table with a flower bouquet, and in the background a drapery is seen. Jens Juel most likely did not know the works of Cornelius Høyer, which were painted in 1772 at Gottorp Castle in Schleswig, where the princess lived with her consort. Juel was still abroad when the miniature was displayed at the Salon at Charlottenborg in 1778. One must therefore conclude that the compositions of Jens Juel and Cornelius Høyer must have come from an older design.

The portrait of Louise Augusta in Turkish attire is known in two versions:

I. The painting described by Ellen Poulsen (no. 383, fig. A).

II. The painting in the Loeb collection that exists in more replicas, as is common for the work of portrait painters such as Jens Juel. They are listed below.



FIG. A *Princess Louise Augusta of Denmark in a Turkish Dress* (1785–86)  
 Oil on canvas, 17½ x 13 in. (44.5 x 33 cm)  
 Not signed  
 Private collection  
 Ellen Poulsen no. 383



FIG. B Cornelius Høyer (1741–1804)  
*Princess Louise of Denmark in a Turkish Dress*, 1772  
 Indian ink and watercolor, 5¼ x 3¾ in. (134 x 94 mm)  
 Statens Museum for Kunst, Department of Prints and Drawings

Ellen Poulsen, however, does not account for the difference between the two. In her catalogue (no. 383), the composition is identical to the Loeb collection picture, apart from the fact that the princess sits on European furniture, a gilded neoclassical bench on which a small red pillow with a golden tassel lies. Her silk dress has a high waist with a draped bodice, and the belt with red and blue decoration on the buckle is placed just below her bosom. Her shoes are red, and the thin, white veil over her hair is fastened with a golden ribbon.

The Loeb collection's painting (II. 1) is very similar to another (II. 2), except that the position of the head and the expression of the face are a bit different. None of these is identical with no. II. 3, II. 4, II. 5, or II. 6. Ellen Poulsen refers to no. II. 4 and mentions several other replicas, but as her pieces of information are fragmentary and no photographs exist, it cannot be determined whether or not they are identical to any of the remaining in the listing below:

I. 1. Ellen Poulsen, 1991, no. 383 (Fig. A). Oil on canvas, 17½ x 13 in. (44.5 x 33 cm). Not signed. In 1991 owned by a member of the Wolffhagen family, Denmark.

II. 1. Oil on canvas, 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 13 in. (45 x 34 cm). Not signed. Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 846, 2014, lot 12, ill. Provenance: a Jutland manor house. Loeb collection no. 141.

II. 2. Oil on canvas, 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 13 in. (45 x 34 cm). Not signed. Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 850, 2014, lot 26, ill. Provenance: a Danish estate since the 1850s. Unknown private owner.

II. 3. Oil on canvas, 17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (44 x 35 cm). Not signed. Arne Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 208, 1967, lot 148, ill. p. 25. Unknown private owner.

II. 4. Oil on canvas, 17<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 13<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (44.5 x 33.5 cm). Not signed. Provenance: Henrik Valdemar Nørgaard (1869–1931), owner of the estate Rye Nørskov; Auction Henrik Nørgaard, II, 1931, lot 1836 (no measurements); 1944 industrialist Knud Neye (1885–1945); Arne Bruun Rasmussen, Auction 409, 1980, lot 4, ill.; purchased by Schleswig-Holsteinisches Landesmuseum, Gottorp (inv. no. 1980-349).

II. 5. Oil on canvas, 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (45 x 35 cm). Kunsthallen, Auction 307, 1974, lot 96 (ill. p. 13). In the auction catalogue, the provenance is mistakenly registered as Knud Neye, whose painting (II. 4) was not sold until 1980.

II. 6. Oil on canvas, 16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 13<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in. (41.8 x 34.6 cm). Not signed. Provenance: antique dealer Albert Petersen, Copenhagen. Purchased from him in 1904 by the Museum of National History Frederiksborg (inv.no. A 1725). Not in Ellen Poulsen 1991. It seems to be a copy rather than a work by Jens Juel.

E. F.

<sup>1</sup>Maria Elisabeth Pape, *Die Turquerie in der bildenden Kunst des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Köln 1987; Nicholas Tromans, *The Lure of the East*, London 2008; Bent Holm, *The Taming of the Turk. Ottomans in the Danish Stage*, Copenhagen 2011 (Danish edition Copenhagen 2010), upon which our information concerning European fascination with anything Turkish is based.

<sup>2</sup>Ellen Andersen, *Moden i 1700-årene*, Copenhagen 1977, pp. 196–197. Circassia, which in the 1700s was a part of the Osman Empire, is today a part of Russia.

<sup>3</sup>Most of the palace is torn down, and the aforementioned paintings were purchased by Empress Catherine the Great of Russia at the end of the 1700s and exist today in The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.