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## Caroline Murat: Powerful Patron of Napoleonic France and Italy

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Caroline Murat: Powerful Patron of Napoleonic France and Italy

Brittany Dahlin

A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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## ABSTRACT

Caroline Murat: Powerful Patron of Napoleonic France and Italy

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Caroline Bonaparte Murat created an identity for herself through the art that she collected during the time of her reign as queen of Naples as directed by her brother, Napoleon, from 1808-1814. Through the art that she both commissioned and purchased, she developed an identity as powerful politically, nurturing, educated, fashionable, and Italianate. Through this patronage, Caroline became influential on stylish, female patronage in both Italy and France. Caroline purchased and commissioned works from artists such as Jean-August-Dominique Ingres, François Gérard, Elizabeth Vigée LeBrun, Antonio Canova and other lesser-known artists of the nineteenth century. Many of these works varied in style and content, but all helped in creating an ideal identity for Caroline. In all of the works she is portrayed as a powerful woman. She is either powerful by her settings (in the drawing room, or with Vesuvius in the background), her vast knowledge in the arts and fashion, her motherhood, her sensuality, or the way in which she is positioned and how she is staring back at the viewer within the works.

The creation of this identity was uniquely Caroline's, mimicking Marie de Medici, Marie Antoinette and Josephine and Napoleon Bonaparte, while adding her own tastes and agendas to the creation. Through this identity she proved herself to be as equally French as Italianate through dress and surroundings. She even created a hybrid of fashion, wedding the styles together, by adding black velvet and lace to a simple empire-waisted silhouette. Caroline proved herself as politician, mother, educated and refined woman, pioneer in fashion, and Queen through the art that she purchased and commissioned.

Key Words: Napoleonic France or Italy, female patronage, Caroline Bonaparte Murat, nineteenth century art

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## INTRODUCTION

This exhibit will introduce Caroline Murat, sister to Napoleon Bonaparte and once Queen of Naples, and the artists she patronized with the intent of creating an exhibition that highlights her contributions to the art and visual culture in France and Italy during the Napoleonic era (1799-1815). Caroline Murat was an authoritative figure in the cultural realm. Although similar exhibitions have been mounted in France and Italy within the last six months, I believe that this type of display needs to be readily available for the American university demographic. The English-speaking audience would benefit from becoming acquainted with Caroline Murat and her contributions to Napoleonic society. Caroline was a woman of power and influence both politically and socially. The art and fashion that she cultivated were markers of her identity and show her determination to be viewed as feminine, strong, nurturing, powerful, and a romantic lover. By using portraiture to elevate her reputation, like many powerful female influences before her time, Caroline embraced current trends in art and costuming as well as created her own style, the marriage of Parisian and Southern Italian trends.

*Josephine and the Arts of the Empire, (2005), The French Portrait 1550-1850 (1996), Symbols of Power: Napoleon and the Art of the Empire Style 1800-1815 (June 2007- October 2008), Portraits By Ingres: Image of and Epoch (January 1999- January 2000), The French Portrait: Revolution to Restoration (September-December 2005), Les Soeurs de Napoléon Trois Destins Italiens (September 2013-February 2014)* are some examples in recent years of a number of exhibitions devoted to portraiture of the Napoleonic era. Although they display works by some of the most prestigious patrons of the neoclassical movement, I believe that they are missing emphasis on a patron who had significant influence on Napoleonic trends both on and

off the canvas: Caroline Bonaparte Murat. Her influence and patronage entailed much more than that of taste, but of a political agenda as well.

Caroline's taste evolved over time and incorporated ideas from both French and Italian cultures. Many of Caroline's critics assumed that her developing patronage was not her own, but rather was influenced by her husband and/or Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, her favorite artist. But Caroline Murat was her own woman. I agree with Carol Ockman who says, "it is still difficult to separate that notion of agency from stereotypes about powerful women as unnatural."<sup>1</sup> Ockman points out the uncommon occurrence of a powerful and female patron. Caroline, one of the most powerfully influential women of her time both socially and politically, had the artistic preference to match.

The discovery in 1990 by Hans Naef of Ingres's painting *Caroline Murat as Queen of Naples* has generated renewed interest in this historical figure. As a result, this painting of Caroline is central to this exhibition on Caroline and her patronage. I have chosen to focus on this work because I believe it encompasses much of Caroline's sensibility as patron. Other works that I have chosen as supporting works are those that Caroline has accumulated as patron. These works include: *Grand Odalisque* (1814), *Sleeper of Naples* (1814), *Paolo and Francesca* (1814), and *Betrothal of Raphael and the Niece of Cardinal Bibbiena* (1814), as well as portraits that she had commissioned of herself and with her children. The portraits that she commissioned are comparable to those of other powerful historical figures such as Napoleon and Josephine Bonaparte, Marie Antoinette and Marie de Medici and need to be contextualized as such.

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<sup>1</sup> Carol Ockman, *Ingres's Eroticized Bodies Retracing the Serpentine Line* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 44.

Through patronage Caroline Murat created for herself an identity politically and maternally, as well as an identity as patron and an Italian resident. By doing this, she influenced visual culture through dress and art in France and modern-day Italy. This exhibit will enlighten a university community concerning the significant role Caroline played in defining the artistic style of the Napoleonic era. She brought a commanding intellectual, sensual and Italianate presence to the French Empire. She also added stylish and maternal contributions such as those that her sisters and sister-in-law, Josephine Bonaparte, offered. This marriage of interests makes Caroline unique in her patronage and a radical example for bold female art connoisseurs to come.

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Born in Ajaccio, Corsica, on the 24th of March in 1782, Maria-Annunziata (Caroline) was the seventh of eight children of the Bonaparte family.<sup>2</sup> The last of the girls under the name Bonaparte, Caroline was well accepted by her older brother, Napoleon, who took particularly great care of her. Napoleon himself decided to change Maria-Annunziata's name to Caroline, more fit for a stylish French woman of the 18th century.<sup>3</sup> Caroline was fortunate to be born at the tail end of the family and therefore received many more opportunities by request of her elder brother Napoleon than had her other sisters. Pulled out of genteel poverty, the Bonapartes were able to take part in luxuries such as education. Caroline was sent by Napoleon to gain an education to Madame Campan's school of St. Germain-en-Laye in Paris. Such an education would be proper for a young girl who would some day reign as queen. Madame Campan was a lady-in-waiting to Marie Antoinette and would be nothing but appropriate to mentor the young Caroline. By the time Caroline was a teenager she had blossomed into a beautiful young woman with poise and proper education.<sup>4</sup>

In her later teens Caroline attracted the particular attention of the general of Napoleon's Italian army, Joachim Murat. Caroline was equally as fond of this man of prestige as he was of her. Murat was more esteemed for his physical appearance than his military decisions, but Caroline was not bothered by his flaws. The attractive couple finally received consent from

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<sup>2</sup> Joseph Turquan, *The Sisters of Napoleon: Elisa, Pauline, and Caroline Bonaparte After the Testimony of Their Contemporaries*, trans. W.R.H. Throwbridge (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 212.

<sup>3</sup> Mario Giannattasio, *Le Due Caroline: Il Regno di Napoli tra Carolina di Borbone e Carolina Murat* (Napoli: Italy: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1999), 11.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Turquan, *The Sisters of Napoleon: Elisa, Pauline, and Caroline Bonaparte After the Testimony of Their Contemporaries*, trans. W.R.H. Throwbridge (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 213.

Napoleon with the encouragement of his wife at the time, Empress Josephine.<sup>5</sup> On January 20, 1800, eighteen year-old Caroline and thirty-three year-old Joachim tied the knot civilly. Two years later their marriage was made official during a religious ceremony at the same time as her brother Louis's wedding.<sup>6</sup>

In 1801, not even nineteen years of age, Caroline gave birth to her first child, Achille Napoleon. The following year, Caroline gave birth to Laetitia, and Lucien the year after that in 1803. In 1805 Caroline gave birth to her fourth and final child, Louise.<sup>7</sup> Child bearing was incredibly important to Caroline to expand the Murat-Bonaparte empire. Caroline, unlike Napoleon's wife Josephine, was able to produce heirs to her throne. During the early nineteenth century motherhood was praised and even stylish. Caroline was careful to promote herself as fashionable, and being represented as a mother was no exception.

In 1799 Napoleon appointed himself as First Consul and shortly thereafter placed his siblings in positions within his European Empire. In 1806 Napoleon appointed his eldest brother as King of the Two Sicilies, or Naples, Italy but quickly regretted his decision. He appointed Joachim and Caroline Murat as rulers in 1808. The Murats felt as though the Two Sicilies were not enough of a responsibility for their greedy ambitions, and Caroline in particular felt as though the crown of Naples was too small for her head.<sup>8</sup> Although the Murats were not immediately thrilled about their new responsibility, Caroline wasted no time in creating a home in Naples that was as equally as, if not more, stylish than her previous residence in Paris.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 218.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 219.

<sup>7</sup> Joan Bear, *Caroline Murat: A Biography* (London: Collins, 1972), front and back cover.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Turquan, *The Sisters of Napoleon: Elisa, Pauline, and Caroline Bonaparte After the Testimony of Their Contemporaries*, trans. W.R.H. Throwbridge (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 257.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 263.

Caroline was so invested in her lavish lifestyle and greedy endeavors that the family counsel teased her by calling her the “queen of Paris.”<sup>10</sup> Such extravagant activities in Naples consisted of turning their royal apartment into living quarters fit for a queen. Remodeling plans consisted of a large library, private theater, room for musical concerts, and dance and billiard halls.<sup>11</sup> Caroline decorated these quarters with art from the most illustrious of artists. Such artists include Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, François Gérard, and Antonio Canova. This patronage created a very specific identity for Caroline. It was an identity that was copied and created new trends in France and modern-day Italy.

Caroline and Joachim had a reputation of not being the most devout of Catholics, and it was reflected in the two-year postponement of her religious marriage after the civil union had already taken place. When it came time to make the move from France to Italy the Murats were not welcomed by the Pope, who feared upsetting Austrian powers and their broadly known angst towards the less religious Bonaparte kin, Caroline and Joachim.<sup>12</sup>

Napoleon was constantly attending to military duties and would be away from his main seats of power in Europe, but he had every bit of confidence in his youngest sister to take over. He once said this about her: “She has Cromwell’s head on a pretty woman’s body.”<sup>13</sup> Caroline herself knew that she would be able to manage the throne just as well as, if not better than, her husband. She once said, “When my husband comes back-- he will rule but I govern.”<sup>14</sup> She truly

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<sup>10</sup> Nicoletta D’Arbitrio and Luigi Ziviello, *Carolina Murat: La Regno delle Due Sicilie: Architetture, la Moda, l’Office de la Bouche* (Napoli: Edizioni Savarese, 2003), 7.

<sup>11</sup> Nicoletta D’Arbitrio, and Luigi Ziviello. *Carolina Murat: La Regno delle Due Sicilie: Architetture, la Moda, l’Office de la Bouche*. (Napli: Edizioni Savarese, 2003), 91.

<sup>12</sup> Frederick C. Schneid, *Napoleon’s Italian Campaigns* (Connecticut: Praeger, 2002), 147.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Carol Ockman, *Ingres’s Eroticized Bodies Retracing the Serpentine Line* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 44.

<sup>14</sup> Mario Giannattasio, *Le Due Caroline: Il Regno di Napoli tra Carolina di Borbone e Carolina Murat*, (Napoli: Italy: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1999), 18.

sought to maintain all the power of the throne to herself.<sup>15</sup> After Napoleon, it was known that Caroline was the most intelligent, greedy and pompous.<sup>16</sup>

As king of Naples Joachim spent much of his time away from the Two Sicilies, acting as commander of the Italian army. While in power, Joachim was unable to reign because he was taking part in various military duties, so he officially left all political powers to Caroline.<sup>17</sup> Even when Joachim was in Naples he didn't have much authority. Caroline ambitiously made alliances and developed relationships with neighboring rulers such as her sisters Pauline, Duchess of Guastalla, and Elise, reigning in Tuscany, as well as Count Von Mier in Austria.<sup>18</sup> This allowed Caroline to remain as queen, but it came at the cost of eventually disavowing her closest kin, Napoleon.

In 1814, the Murats chose to combine forces with the Sixth Coalition and Austria, turning their backs on the man who granted them so much power and authority in Naples.<sup>19</sup> There was continuous turmoil and Caroline had to make whatever moves it would take to maintain the throne. Unfortunately, these alliances didn't grant Caroline the stability she desired and in 1814 the Murats were forced to leave Naples immediately. She gathered her children hastily and left the royal quarters and almost all of their possessions.

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<sup>15</sup> J Joseph Turquan, *The Sisters of Napoleon: Elisa, Pauline, and Caroline Bonaparte After the Testimony of Their Contemporaries*, trans. W.R.H. Throwbridge (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 263.

<sup>16</sup> Mario Giannattasio, *Le Due Caroline: Il Regno di Napoli tra Carolina di Borbone e Carolina Murat* (Napoli: Italy: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1999), 11.

<sup>17</sup> Carol Ockman, *Ingres's Eroticized Bodies Retracing the Serpentine Line* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 45.

<sup>18</sup> Mario Giannattasio, *Le Due Caroline: Il Regno di Napoli tra Carolina di Borbone e Carolina Murat* (Napoli: Italy: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1999), 18.

<sup>19</sup> Milton Finley, *The Most Monstrous of Wars: The Napoleonic Guerrilla War in Southern Italy, 1806-1811* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 126.



Joachim almost lost his life in 1814, like Napoleon and Louis, for treason.<sup>20</sup> Soon thereafter, in 1815 he was killed by a firing squad in Calabria, the same land in which he ruled.<sup>21</sup> Caroline avoided such a terrible fate and was forced to escape. She safely lived with family in France and Italy until she passed away of stomach cancer at the age of 60.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 160.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 259.

<sup>22</sup> Mario Giannattasio, *Le Due Caroline: Il Regno di Napoli tra Carolina di Borbone e Carolina Murat* (Napoli: Italy: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1999), 106.

## CAROLINE MURAT'S ART PATRONAGE: AN OVERVIEW

In keeping with the artistic practices of other Bonaparte women, Caroline commissioned many portraits of herself and amassed a sizable collection of paintings and sculptures by the most famous neoclassical artists of the nineteenth century. Many of the commissions for Caroline's collection were for domestic display, and thus intended for private purposes. Others played a more public role. Caroline followed the ever changing and evolving style of Ingres from neoclassical to troubadour and orientalist. Caroline most eagerly led the way. Each trend tells the viewer of the wide variety of styles in which Caroline wished to indulge.

In the late eighteenth century the popularity of portraiture was taking over the salons. In fact, triple the number of portraits were being displayed in salons than had been in previous centuries.<sup>23</sup> Because of this growing popularity, it makes it obvious to have the portrait of Caroline as Queen of Naples as the central work of the exhibit. Caroline commissioned Ingres to paint this portrait upon her arrival in Naples in 1808. Many of the works displayed in this exhibit were commissioned during the years of Caroline's reign, 1808-1814, a time in which a powerful, assertive reputation was completely essential.

Caroline was well educated, being well versed in classical antiquity, Dante, and the Orient. A colorful palate was obtainable by only the most prestigious and well educated, and Caroline was the embodiment of it all through her patronage. The *Grand Odalisque* (1814) and *Sleeper of Naples* (1814) were paintings of Ingres purchased by Caroline for her husband. They were dripping with oriental accouterments. Sensual and luxurious, these paintings were for a

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<sup>23</sup> Tony Halliday, *Facing the Public: Portraiture in the Aftermath of the French Revolution* (New York: St Martins Press Inc., 1999), 30.

taste wealthy enough to afford such a lofty price tag. The troubadour taste of Paolo and Francesca (1814) and Betrothal of Raphael and the Niece of Cardinal Bibbiena (1814) allude to an interest in thirteenth-century literature. These works couldn't possibly have appeal to the typical queen brought up in a provincial French household. It was necessary to prove to herself and her court that her taste was that of a queen educated in the arts and literature. She proved herself by showing enough interest in these works to include them in her personal aesthetic.

This art created an iconography for Caroline that would develop an identity as a nurturing, stylish, cultured, educated, and influential woman, and declared her various social and political roles. In her portraits Caroline combined both masculine and feminine traits as a means to promote herself as a powerful politician. The masculine was developed by tying herself to portraits of other prominent rulers of France, such as Napoleon and Marie de Medici. In keeping with the feminine style and tradition, Caroline emulated Josephine Bonaparte, Marie Antoinette and fashion plates of the day.

There are several scholars who have contributed to the discussion of Caroline Murat's position as a key figure in Napoleonic art and culture. Sarah Betzer and Robert Rosenblum are more concerned with the stylistic attributes of the paintings of Ingres that Caroline collected and commissioned.<sup>24</sup> Both recognize her power as a patron, draw correlations between her collections and those of others, as well as make observations about iconography. Tony Halliday argues that Ingres promotes Caroline's power through creating a hybrid genre: history portraits.<sup>25</sup> This genre incorporated the prestige of history painting with the self-promotion of portraiture to

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<sup>24</sup> Sarah Betzer, *Ingres and the Studio* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), and Robert Rosenblum, *Ingres*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990)

<sup>25</sup> Tony Halliday, *Facing the Public: Portraiture in the Aftermath of the French Revolution* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1999), 8.

develop a representation of both reality and allegory. This genre had the ability to allow self-promotion and an overall daring and powerful demonstration of art patronage. All three scholars identify the marked interest that both Ingres and Caroline had in antiquity. These tastes displayed her elevated education and refined taste in art.

Heather Belnap Jensen introduces the maternal aspect of Caroline's power and the place for women patrons within the elite French and Italianate social circles and influences.<sup>26</sup> She argues for the significant role of women in Napoleonic France and Italy wherein Caroline and the other Bonaparte women were key cultural influences. She agrees with Carol Ockman that Caroline embodied female power in society but furthers the idea, arguing that she was uniquely positioned to promote such ideals in French and Italian high society.<sup>27</sup> In her work, Susan Siegfried also alludes to the idea that the prestigious Parisian woman's taste heavily influenced artistic fads and assisted in promoting the popularity of certain artists such as Ingres.<sup>28</sup> Tamar Garb argues that the powerful stature of Queen Murat, as found in Ingres's portrait of her, promotes a dominance of "environment, both exterior and interior, and . . . possess[es] an authority rarely conferred on women in nineteenth-century portraits."<sup>29</sup>

I am furthering the scholarship that has already been discussed by extending Heather Belnap Jensen's idea of patronage carrying a political, nurturing and fashionable identity by comparing it to other works, and discussing the different works commissioned. This thesis is a

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<sup>26</sup> Heather Belnap Jensen, "Staël, Corinne, and the Women Collectors of Napoleonic Europe" in *Staël's Philosophy of the Passions: Sensibility, Society and the Sister Arts*, eds. Tili Boon Cuillié and Karyna Szymenlo (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 255.

<sup>27</sup> Heather Belnap Jensen, "Staël, Corinne, and the Women Collectors of Napoleonic Europe" in *Staël's Philosophy of the Passions: Sensibility, Society and the Sister Arts*, eds. Tili Boon Cuillié and Karyna Szymenlo (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 252.

<sup>28</sup> Susan Siegfried, *Ingres: Painting Reimagined* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 137.

<sup>29</sup> Tamar Garb, *The Painted Face: Portraits of Women in France 1814-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 30.

compilation of scholarship on Caroline Murat, and in particular the portrait of Ingres, Caroline Murat as Queen of Naples (1814). I have furthered the scholarship on this portrait through translating texts in French and Italian and applying it where it has not been documented thus far in English. I will be analyzing works commissioned by Caroline Murat and comparable works as a means to promote her desired identity as powerful, nurturing and fashionable patron.

## POWER PORTRAITS

Through creating her political identity, Caroline carefully copied familiar rulers of France in the portraiture that she chose to commission. She used both male and female role models. By copying elements and styles of these portraits Caroline tied herself to these various rulers. Some rulers that Caroline emulated were Marie de Medici and Napoleon and Josephine Bonaparte.

### 1. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres

Napoleon as First Consul, c. 1804

Oil on canvas, 89 x 56 ¾” Musée des Beaux-Arts, Liège

Caroline mimics the historical portraiture of Napoleon by not only using his same court artists, but also by overtly employing similar symbols and shapes found within portraits like Napoleon as First Consul. Drawing correlations between herself and some of the most popular figures in the empire, Caroline used Napoleon as her artistic source for inspiration. Although she may have been plotting to betray her brother during the time she commissioned Ingres to paint her as Queen of Naples, she understood that as one of the most influential political figures of the time, Napoleon’s artistic choices garnered attention. Caroline artistically tied herself to her brother by employing specific visual cues that Ingres used in glorifying Napoleon in his paintings.

Ingres’s education, association, and reputation were attractive to Napoleon’s appetite for the finest possessions. In 1803, the year prior to the beginning of Napoleon’s reign as Emperor, Ingres received his first commission from Bonaparte, Napoleon as First Consul.<sup>30</sup> This work

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<sup>30</sup>Robert Rosenblum, *Ingres* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), 52.

advertised Napoleon's charitable donation to the city of Liège, which appears through the window behind Bonaparte. This painting is the predecessor to many propagandistic images by Ingres that were commissioned by Napoleon.

In Ingres's portrait of Napoleon, his stature is different from the biographical portraiture typical of his personal collection because he is not mounted on a horse or throne with full military regalia. Rather, he is standing in a private room during an important historical moment. Although there is still a sword at his side to indicate his status as regent,<sup>31</sup> his weapon of choice in the portrait is not a sword but a pen, a tool that more meaningfully and peacefully asserts his power.<sup>32</sup> Napoleon is urging the viewer to believe that he is a man of peace and intelligence.

Carol Ockman recognizes the similarities in both of Ingres's portraits of the Bonaparte siblings, but these observations can be taken one step further.<sup>33</sup> Brother and sister both stand in intimate, private quarters, where luxurious drapes frame symbolic landscapes behind them. Both figures stand between a writing table draped with a velvet table covering and a richly upholstered arm chair.<sup>34</sup> Caroline's hand gestures mirror those of Napoleon's. Napoleon has positioned one hand down on the writing table atop the immensely important document that confirmed the financial exchange of the First Consul—a document that marked a turning point in his career as emperor. He points his finger toward the document, so that the viewer is sure to know that he was the power behind salvaging Liège. Similarly, Caroline has her hand resting upon the table with her fingers extended, holding her spot in what looks to be a personal prayer or devotional

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<sup>31</sup> Phillip Conisbee and Gary Tinterow, *Portraits By Ingres: Image of An Epoch* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 46.

<sup>32</sup> Christopher Prendergast, *Napoleon and History Painting: Antoine-Jean Gros's La Bataille d'Eylau* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 9.

<sup>33</sup> Carol Ockman, *Ingres's Eroticized Bodies Retracing the Serpentine Line* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995,) 45.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

book, perhaps a breviary.<sup>35</sup> The breviary played a crucial role in proving that she was dedicated to the church, God, and her career.<sup>36</sup> This gesture can be compared to Napoleon, pointing to the document being signed in Napoleon as First Consul as a turning point in his career. Napoleon's other hand is placed under his jacket on his chest. This body language is recognized throughout the world and throughout history as a gesture specific to Napoleon. Likewise, Caroline's other hand is also touching an article of her own clothing, her sleeve, directing attention away from her body towards the table. Perhaps Napoleon's gesture is drawing attention to himself and Caroline is focusing her attention on God and church.

It is obvious to see similar strategies of representation in Ingres's portraits of both Napoleon and Caroline. As noted by Carol Ockman, in *Caroline Murat Queen of Naples*, Ingres used many of the same compositional techniques.<sup>37</sup> Also, there is a flawless Vaneyckian realism,<sup>38</sup> as well as traditional Northern characteristics such as heavy Burgundian draperies and jewel tones in Ingres's Napoleon portrait. Both Napoleon and Caroline are wearing yards of weighty velvet trimmed with lace sleeves, hearkening again to northern Vaneyckian tradition.

This propagandistic piece is an obvious choice for Caroline to emulate because she rules from the throne, taking peaceful political actions, while her husband fights on the battlefield with intelligence, grace, and strategy. The portrait of Caroline as Queen of Naples was produced during her short reign in Naples and completely finished before she was exiled. Caroline realized that a painting of this grandeur, with propagandist messages, could impact the viewer in similar

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Heather Belnap Jensen, "Staël, Corinne, and the Women Collectors of Napoleonic Europe" in *Staël's Philosophy of the Passions: Sensibility, Society and the Sister Arts*, eds. Tili Boon Cuillie and Karyna Szymenlo (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 252.

<sup>37</sup> Carol Ockman, *Ingres's Eroticized Bodies Retracing the Serpentine Line* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 55.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Rosenblum, *Ingres* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), 52.



ways to Napoleon as First Consul. Recognizing the importance of a painting that exhibits peace and integrity mingled with power and presence, Caroline put pressure on Ingres to finish her portrait.

## 2. Peter Paul Rubens

Education of Marie de' Medici, c. 1622-5

Oil on Canvas 394 x 295 cm, Louvre, Paris

## 3. Peter Paul Rubens

Presentation of Marie to Henri IV, c. 1622-25

Oil on Canvas 394 x 295 cm, Louvre, Paris

It was incredibly important to Caroline to connect herself with examples of portraits of the French rulers worthy of emulation, and Marie de' Medici was one of those figures of authority Caroline chose. Like Caroline Murat, Marie de' Medici was not easily accepted by the people she was appointed to rule. Marie de' Medici was Italian, married by proxy to the French King, and was disliked by the French people. Because of her Italian lineage and ties with the Pope, she was the ideal political match for the King of France, Henri IV.<sup>39</sup> Although much of her early life was lived in poverty, her ties to the Pope hugely aided her in being the appropriate choice as French queen. Insecurities arose as Marie tried to validate her value as wife, ruler, and mother.<sup>40</sup> Joining forces with popular court artist Peter Paul Rubens, Marie had the aid necessary for enhancing her reputation among the French people. Proving her beauty, grace and scholarly

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<sup>39</sup> Jacques Thuillier and Jacques Foucart, *Rubens' sLife of Marie de' Medici* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1967), 11.

<sup>40</sup> Sara R Cohen, "Rubens's France: Gender and Personification in the Marie de' Medici's Cycle," *The Art Bulletin* 85, no. 3 (September 2003), 490.

proWess, *The Education of Marie de' Medici* (1623) is a painting that represents the young French queen with a perfect balance of both feminine and masculine attributes.<sup>41</sup> It is part of a cycle of paintings completed by Rubens ten years after the death of her husband and a decade into her reign as regent.

The cycle consists of twenty-four machine-sized paintings that were displayed at the Luxembourg Palace to remind Marie de' Medici as well as prominent visitors and male figures within the court of the god-like ruler that she was.<sup>42</sup> Rubens was decidedly the perfect artist-diplomat to take on such a feat, for his specialties did lay in painting for women patrons and portraits of women.<sup>43</sup> To paint a whole cycle for Marie de' Medici would not only expand Rubens's portfolio of historical paintings, but also elevate Marie and virtually turn her into an icon. Being unwelcomed by the French people and exiled by her own son, Marie de' Medici was much less accepted than her visual history may attest.<sup>44</sup> Much like Caroline not being received by the Pope, Marie was determined to have her legend live on through connecting herself with truth and allegory. In 1620, she called upon Rubens to immortalize her in this cycle.

Ingres and Caroline Murat possibly drew upon Rubens' *Education of the Princess* and *The Presentation of Her Portrait of Henri IV* paintings from this series as they caught inspiration of how to represent the female ruler as powerful and beautiful. The representations of Marie de' Medici have a healthy balance of male and female characteristic that can be viewed as necessary for a strong female ruler to possess. The femininity in Marie's dress and fragile facial features

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<sup>41</sup> Geraldine A. Johnson, "Pictures Fit For a Queen: Peter Paul Rubens and the Marie de Medici Cycle," in *Reclaiming Female Agency: Feminist Art After Post Modernism*, eds. Norma Broude and Mary D. Gerard (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 103.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>44</sup> Sara R. Cohen, "Rubens's France: Gender and Personification in the Marie de' Medici's Cycle," *The Art Bulletin* 85, no. 3 (September 2003), 490.

are juxtaposed with a strong outward gaze.<sup>45</sup> Education in the arts and sciences and beauty and grace, as well as assertiveness, are traits that Marie de' Medici and Caroline Murat esteem, and this is represented in their art collections. Both the Marie de' Medici cycle by Rubens and Caroline's collections of history paintings hearken back to the troubadour past.

The education that Marie is shown as having as a young princess, in this cycle, is undeniably not a reality of the childhood of the queen. This is not only because of her humble upbringing but also because of the allegorical properties that give Marie divine qualities. Such qualities recall royal leaders of the past and their display of immortalization. Immortalization is accomplished by tying herself to the celestial through art.<sup>46</sup> Marie is bombarded with education concerning the earth and its sciences, the arts, music, literature and philosophy. Not just any mortal teachers would be appropriate for a queenly education. A queen should be taught by philosophers and gods, as well as the three graces. Seemingly not overwhelmed by her diverse and extensive training, she intently focuses on her scholastic pursuits as taught by the masculine looking goddess Minerva.<sup>47</sup> Marie made the conscious decision to direct her actions towards more masculine influences while her back is turned to the graces that so dominantly fill the space of the painting, thus establishing Marie as heroine.<sup>48</sup> The feminine dress and accouterments that adorn her young physique, however, allow for Marie to maintain femininity while taking part in more mannish endeavors. These traits are important to discuss when comparing her to Caroline

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<sup>45</sup> Geraldine A. Johnson,, "Pictures Fit for a Queen: Peter Paul Rubens and the Marie de' Medici Cycle" in *Reclaiming Female Agency: Feminist Art History After Postmodernism*, eds. Norma Broude and Mary D. Gerard, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 101-119.

<sup>46</sup> Jacques Thuillier and Jacques Foucart, *Rubens' Life of Marie de' Medici* (New York: Harry N. Abrams,1970), 11.

<sup>47</sup> Susan Seward, *The Golden Age of Marie de' Medici* (Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1982), 40.

<sup>48</sup> Jacques Thuillier and Jacques Foucart, *Rubens' Life of Marie de' Medici* (New York: Harry N. Abrams,1970), 27.

Murat because both women were not born into incredible wealth and power. It was something that they obtained later in life and made aggressive artistic efforts to do so.

In the *Presentation of Marie to King Henri IV* Marie's centrality within the painting cannot be missed. She confidently peers out at the viewer as King Henri swoons over Marie and her captivating presence. Marie is undeniably taking the masculine role within this painting as she controls the gaze. Perhaps it alludes to the power that she has over her husband, that he was captured by her before even meeting her in person. This shows that she, like Caroline Murat, has influence over her husband and therefore over the crown and kingdom. Rubens's display of Marie's aggressive pursuits establish her as the respected power and ruler of France. Although such a stance is primarily dominant and masculine, the lovely femininity of Marie has taken aback the king as he is caught in a stupor, mesmerized by her beauty. Any rumor of Marie and her level of attractiveness not being up to standard for French royalty has been totally dispelled by this rendition of the presentation of Marie to her betrothed. The sly half-smile on the milky white face of Marie is mirrored in Ingres's portrait of Queen Caroline, where she is shown with her gaze turned toward the viewer. Both women have large lace collars framing their faces to place emphasis on their gaze so boldly addressing the viewer. In her portrait as queen of Naples, Caroline did not choose to represent herself in white, neoclassical attire but rather to connect more with Italianate and Burgundian draperies like that of *Marie de' Medici* in the cycle by Rubens.

## NURTURING MOTHER AND FASHIONISTA

The Rousseauian ideals of motherhood popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were thoroughly embraced by Caroline. Such ideals relate to a more natural era, steering away from the exuberance of French rulers such as Marie Antoinette. Ideals focused on developing a tender relationship between a mother and child, which previously had been replaced by a wet nurse or nursemaid. Caroline valued this nurturing role and publicized it in portraits and sketches with her children. Popularity of this subject matter grew and became all the more reason for Caroline to embrace such a trend.<sup>49</sup> She made sure to be represented by spending time with her children in her personal living quarters in Naples.

### 4. Elizabeth Vigée-Le Brun

Portrait of Caroline Murat with Her Daughter Letizia, c. 1807

Oil on canvas, 736 x 1018 cm, Musée de Château de Versailles, Paris

Through creating her ideal motherhood identity Caroline copied other prestigious women in French and Italian society. Marie Antoinette was a woman that Caroline could mimic by ways of stylishness and motherhood. An artist that portrayed both Marie Antoinette and Caroline as feminine, fashionable, and nurturing was a woman artist that could so perfectly relate and portray such traits: Elizabeth Vigée-Le Brun. Scholars suggest that Caroline chose Vigée-Le Brun

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<sup>49</sup> Jensen, Heather Belnap. "Modern Motherhood and Female Sociability in the Art of Marguerite Gérard." *Reconciling Art and Mothering*. Ed. Rachel Epp Buller (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 15-30.

because François Gérard wasn't available.<sup>50</sup> Although this is a true fact, it is undeniable that Caroline chose Vigée-Le Brun to create a Rousseauian and nurturing identity similar to Marie Antoinette. Vigée-Le Brun was known for her perfection within her mother-daughter portraits, including self portraits. Caroline pursued Vigée-Le Brun quite aggressively and begged her as an artist many times before Vigée-Le Brun agreed.<sup>51</sup> Vigée-Le Brun even painted this portrait for the Queen at half the price and added Latizia into the portrait without charge.<sup>52</sup>

Vigée-Le Brun was not necessarily fond of Queen Murat. She never considered her to be a real queen, because she was forever loyal to her Bourbon patrons and didn't believe in any sort of legitimacy of the Napoleonic Empire.<sup>53</sup> Vigée-Le Brun especially didn't like Caroline because she was rude, flaky, and had poor manners compared to previous patrons. She was known to have said about Caroline, "I have painted real princesses who have never tormented me or kept me waiting."<sup>54</sup>

Despite this conflict between these two women, Vigée-Le Brun beautifully created a portrait of Caroline as stylish, stunning, and nurturing. Caroline is fashioned in a silk white empire waisted dress with short puffy sleeves, with the dress trimmed in gold detailing and topped with a red cape. This outfitting seems to be the standard style of dressing for the Bonaparte women during this time period, especially for portraiture. Little Litizia is staring up at her mother in awe, while Caroline lovingly places her hand upon Letizia's shoulder. With the

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<sup>50</sup> Maria Teresa Caracciolo and Charles Penwarden, *Les Soeurs de Napoleon: Trois Destins Italiens* (Paris: Hazan, 2013), Exhibition catalog, 152.

<sup>51</sup> Françoise Pitt-Rivers, *Memoirs: Madame Vigée-Le Brun*, trans. Siân Evans (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1989), 299.

<sup>52</sup> Gita May, *Elizabeth Vigée-Le Brun: The Odyssey of an Artist in an Age of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 178.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

little Letizia's dress mirroring her mother's in neoclassical and natural styling, she hopes to one day become like her mother. Vigée-Le Brun could not have created a more perfect maternal identity for Caroline.

## 5. François Gérard

Josephine Bonaparte, c. 1808

Oil on Canvas 217x 170 cm, Musée National du Château de Malmaison

Caroline and Josephine were sisters-in-law but had diverse backgrounds. Josephine was born of privilege and social status while Caroline was born in Corsica of more humble circumstances. The Bonapartes gained popularity with Napoleon's success, and the women especially used this to their advantage. Josephine's sense of style was so perfectly in tune with current trends that it is difficult to decipher if she patterned her wardrobe after stylish fashion plates, or if the fashion plates were styled after Josephine. Caroline, too, drew upon Josephine for inspiration for her stylistic endeavors as well as trends in portraiture.<sup>55</sup>

When she first met Napoleon, Josephine was one of Paris's most well-known socialites and fashionistas.<sup>56</sup> It was the flawless visual representation of self that attracted the Emperor and led him to later say that "All the fashions originated with her."<sup>57</sup> Her hair, dress and presence were daring and exciting. Marriage to Napoleon gave Josephine elite status in the fashion world. Napoleon's expansion of his empire and travel to exotic locales meant luxurious trinkets,

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<sup>55</sup> Cristina Barreto and Martin Lancaster, *Napoleon and the Empire of Fashion 1795-1815* (Milano: Skira Editore, 2010), 22.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

accessories, and textiles would return home to Paris and be gifted to the beautiful empress.<sup>58</sup>

These gifts expanded and elevated her visual aesthetic. The sumptuously soft red animal fur cloak in this image is adorned with bumble bees embroidered in gold thread, the emblem of the empire of Napoleon like that in *The Coronation of Napoleon*. Also hearkening to Northern tradition, a lavishly rich velvet drapery is hanging behind Josephine as a cloth of honor.

Josephine, like Caroline, makes obvious attempts to tie herself to Napoleon. Although he is not present with her in Gérard's portrait of Josephine, his crown lays prominently on a large, royal blue pillow by her side.

Caroline emulated Josephine by using the same artists. François Gérard, like Ingres, studied under the tutelage of Jacques-Louis David and was academically trained as a classicist. This training and style was in accordance with the taste of Napoleon and many of the members of the imperial family. In the work entitled *Josephine Bonaparte* of 1808, the Empress is fashioned in traditional court dress. The costuming of this portrait is identical to the dress of the Bonaparte women as worn in David's *The Coronation of Napoleon* by David in 1804.

As Josephine's favorite painter, Gérard was commissioned by the empress to create a number of paintings and portraits. This portrait of Josephine in 1808 by Gérard, per her request, is the painting which Gérard utilized as a standard for every other portrait of Josephine.<sup>59</sup> Rightly so, since this portrait is a reflection of Josephine's queenly stature and exquisite beauty. This portrait's popularity didn't remain only within the personal realm of the empress, but it was also

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid, 125.

<sup>59</sup> Eleanor P. DeLorme, *Josephine and the Arts of the Empire* ( Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2005), 140.



displayed in the Salon of 1808.<sup>60</sup> Josephine is fashioned with an empire waistline in a neoclassical white satin dress trimmed in golden ribbons, tassels, trimmings, and stitching. This dress was the conventional costume worn by herself and women of the court, as well as fashionable women in Paris and other European fashion centers. Fashion plates reflect the simple white empire waist dress, drastically contrasted against the popular styles of only a few decades previous. The unshackling of the female body by removing the corset and raising of the empire waist was a symbol of freedom to women in the new Napoleonic Empire and the liberties that would soon be in place.

## 6. François Gérard

Caroline With Her Children, c. 1808

Oil on Canvas, 237 x 191 cm, Private Collection

Caroline Murat was consistently overcome with jealousy toward her sister-in-law because of her fashion-forward appearance.<sup>61</sup> Sharing and recommending court artists was a favorite past time of the Bonaparte family, as they were all patrons of the arts. In trying to be as fashionable as Josephine, Caroline appointed Gérard to paint a portrait of her similar to that of Josephine's in 1808, after desiring to commission a work from him for years.<sup>62</sup> Gérard mastered the style *à la grecque*, was desired by prominent women throughout Napoleon's empire like the Empress Josephine and Mme. Récamier, and Caroline desired a prestigious association that

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<sup>60</sup> Carol Solomon Kiefer, *The Empress Josephine: Art and Royal Identity*. (Amherst, Massachusetts: Mead Art Museum, Amherst College, 2005), Exhibition catalog, 2.

<sup>61</sup> Cristina Barreto and Martin Lancaster, *Napoleon and the Empire of Fashion 1795-1815* (Milano: Skira Editore, 2010), 125.

<sup>62</sup> Maria Teresa Caracciolo and Charles Penwarden, *Les Soeurs de Napoleon: Trois Destins Italiens* (Paris: Hazan, 2013), Exhibition catalog, 152.

accompanied a name like Gérard.<sup>63</sup> He, like Ingres, was a student of Jacques-Louis David and had extensive classical training as well as sound reputation.<sup>64</sup> Gérard was interested in the commission by Caroline because he too had politically savvy ambitions.<sup>65</sup>

In Caroline's portrait, she was accompanied by her children. The neoclassical Rousseauian motherly ideals, fully embraced and esteemed by this time in the nineteenth century, place Caroline above Josephine. In *Caroline With Her Children*, Caroline is represented as mother. Belnap Jensen suggests that this portrait stands as a modern day Madonna, surrounded by her children.<sup>66</sup> Caroline was able to bear children for Joachim and therefore produce heirs to their throne, something that Josephine could not do for Napoleon. This was Josephine's second marriage and, although she was not totally barren, she was unable to have children as she aged.

Gérard's portraits seem to indicate the painstaking steps that were taken by Caroline to emulate Josephine as well as elevate herself above the Empress. Beginning at the top of the portrait and working down through the painting, there is opulent burgundy drapery hanging behind the sitters in a traditional Northern cloth-of-honor type of framing. Gérard was considered the French van Dyck because of the Flemish influences in his work in portraits.<sup>67</sup> The majesty that his portraits commanded were strong and powerful other qualities that Caroline was drawn to.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Kathryn Calley Galitz, *François Gérard: Portraiture, Scandal, and the Art of Power in Napoleonic France* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013), 18-37.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>66</sup> Heather Belnap Jensen, "Staël, Corinne, and the Women Collectors of Napoleonic Europe" in *Staël's Philosophy of the Passions: Sensibility, Society and the Sister Arts*, eds. Tili Boon Cuillié and Karyna Szmanlo (Lewisberg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 254.

<sup>67</sup> Kathryn Calley Galitz, *François Gérard: Portraiture, Scandal, and the Art of Power in Napoleonic France* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013), 38.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

Both of the women in the portraits painted by François Gérard are seated in royal thrones. The gestures of the women mirror one another as one arm is rested on the arm of the throne while the other is lightly laid upon the outside of the sitter's own leg. The same leg is positioned at a perpendicular angle while the other leg is slightly more relaxed, revealing the pointed gold slippers that adorn their feet. The accouterments decorating both of the women are almost identical, from crown to tear-drop earring, to the low décolletage, to necklace, and finally to the single gold bracelet on each of their wrists. Perhaps the most obvious of the similarities is the white satin empire-waist dress trimmed in gold with stiff lace around the sleeve and back-line to frame the women's faces with gentile femininity. Both portraits were painted in the same year, making it difficult to even claim which Bonaparte is copying whom, elevating Caroline all the more.

Caroline strategically had herself painted in the domestic realm with her children surrounding her. By placing herself in a painting with her family, she not only exhibited having something that her sister-in-law was not capable of producing for Napoleon, but she gained esteem as she was balancing her authority and quest for power with her less intimidating and respectable nurturing side. This type of fashioning began with Marie Antoinette, primarily by Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun. Gérard's portrait of Caroline updates this approach with a more modern style of dress. By updating Marie Antoinette's trend, Caroline solidifies a new trend by carrying it throughout Europe.

## 7. Comte de Clarac

Caroline in Grand Cabinet, c, 1808-13

Water color on paper, 47 x 39 cm, Private Collection

In efforts to create an identity for herself of a natural and nurturing woman, Caroline continued to favor being represented with her children at home in her own living quarters.<sup>69</sup> This casual setting, at her palace in Italy, brings the new Rousseauian style to the country in which she reigns. Although this work is rendered in a simple watercolor, done by a lesser known artist and exhibited in personal quarters, it adds perfectly to the collection of Caroline's commissioned works because of how it emphasizes Caroline as mother. She is representing herself dressed quite fashionably, in the country in which she reigns, and surrounded by her children.

The maternal representation of Queen Caroline Murat in Clarac's *Caroline in Grand Cabinet* by Clarac is soft and personal. This watercolor was painted by a Mme Clarac. She was close with Caroline and familiar with their personal living quarters in the Royal Apartment in the Royal Palazzo of Naples, more commonly known today as the National Library of Naples.<sup>70</sup> She was the tutor of Caroline's children.<sup>71</sup> Caroline is seated at the writing table given to her by her mother, the same table used in her Ingres portrait of Caroline as Queen of Naples.<sup>72</sup> She is positioned in the same room, at the same table, and in front of the same window, but Caroline is striving to exhibit diverse representations of her identity: powerful and nurturing.

Within this Clarac painting the elements are more soft and feminine. She is fashioned in a white muslin empire waist dress, with a low-cut back and an Egyptian shawl similar to that seen in David's *Countess Daru* (1810).<sup>73</sup> Her arms are bare and her posture is casual with undulating

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<sup>69</sup> Nicoletta D'Arbitrio and Luigi Ziviello, *Carolina Murat: La Regno delle Due Sicilie: Architetture, la Moda, l'Office de la Bouche* (Napoli: Edizioni Savarese, 2003), 125.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>71</sup> Maria Teresa Caracciolo and Charles Penwarden, *Les Soeurs de Napoleon: Trois Destins Italiens* (Paris: Hazan, 2013), 172.

<sup>72</sup> Phillip Conisbee and Gary Tinterow, *Portraits By Ingres: Image of An Epoch* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), Exhibition catalog, 146.

<sup>73</sup> Cristina Barreto and Martin Lancaster, *Napoleon and the Empire of Fashion 1795-1815* (Milano: Skira Editore, 2010), 141.

lines. This styling echoes Davidian recliners such as *Madame R camier* (1800), painted eight years previously. Caroline keeps herself connected to many other prominent women in high Parisian society, such as Countess Daru and Madame R camier by this neoclassical costuming.

The emphasis in this image by Clarac is not on Caroline, but rather on her surroundings. She is lovingly watching her children play as she has put her book aside, and it is nearly slipping out of her fingers. Her face is not even displayed in this watercolor. The viewer might not properly distinguish the Neapolitan queen from any other Parisian socialite if it were not for her being placed in the grand cabinet in the royal palace. The large palatial window and scene in which the queen assumes the role as spectator is emphasized, implying that she is fully aware of what is happening in the land which she and her husband rule. With her back turned, the viewer is automatically placed within the living quarters with Caroline and her children. There is no barrier obstructing the viewer from sitting on the seat opposite Caroline near the table. This placement and the queen's posture emit an atmosphere of comfort and relaxation. The royal palace is not a location typically frequented by the common citizen. In almost every other painting of Murat she is shown in a strong posture, gazing back at the viewer, exhibiting her awareness. In Clarac's soft painting, Caroline is watching her children while they play. She is much more concerned with domestic worries, as nurturer and mother first and foremost.

## POWERFUL PATRON

The controversial and orientalist paintings by Ingres, such as the *Grande Odalisque* (1814) and the accompanying companion piece of *Neapolitan Sleeper* (1808), boldly set Caroline as a strong patron of the arts. Significantly, both works were purchased by Caroline for her husband.<sup>74</sup> Ockman addressed the sensuality of Caroline's aesthetic tastes and how they are exhibited in her artwork. Her engagement with "sensualisme antique" blurs the lines between the masculine and the feminine and between the powerful and the sensual.<sup>75</sup> Caroline was comfortable in her embrace of sensuality in art and power as ruler and purchased the *Grande Odalisque* and the *Neapolitan Sleeper*. These purchases were intended to remain in the private quarters of the Murat estate. However, her patronage of these works was common knowledge and not accepted by the patriarchal aristocracy.

Moreover, like Marie de Medici, Caroline wished to promote herself as a tastefully educated woman with the perfect balance of strength, intelligence, beauty, and grace.<sup>76</sup> The troubadour style of Ingres' paintings purchased by Caroline flaunt her fine taste in fictional figures such as Dante's Francesca and Paolo. She truly understood and embraced the romantic ideals of the literature that influenced Ingres' subject matter and thus can be seen in the works which she has chosen to purchase and place within the walls of her home.

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<sup>74</sup> Carol Ockman, *Ingres's Eroticized Bodies Retracing the Serpentine Line* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 35.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 44.

<sup>76</sup> Geraldine A. Johnson, "Pictures Fit for a Queen: Peter Paul Rubens and the Marie de' Medici Cycle," in *Reclaiming Female Agency Feminist Art History After Postmodernism*, eds. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 101-119.

## 8. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres

Neapolitan Sleeper or Sleeper of Naples, c. 1814

Graphite drawing, 12.5 x 22 cm, Private Collection

## 9. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres

Grand Odalisque, c. 1814

Oil on canvas, 91 x 162 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris

As one of the key works to the Murat's patronage, the Grand Odalisque, has accumulated much discussion from the nineteenth century to today.<sup>77</sup> It created an identity for Caroline as a having a "feminine sensualized energy."<sup>78</sup> Scholars debate whether Caroline commissioned the Neapolitan Sleeper as a companion piece for the Grand Odalisque and as a gift to her husband Joachim or if he himself commissioned the work. While many scholars assume Caroline was not the patron of Grand Odalisque, Carol Ockman and Robert Rosenblum suggest that it was, in fact, Caroline who made the purchase.<sup>79</sup>

One may believe that Caroline herself purchased the works because she already had a comfortable rapport with Ingres. Caroline had a variety of artistic tastes and Ingres was a man of many talents. His work reflects the diverse taste of the nineteenth century. The Grand Odalisque and Neapolitan Sleeper are images that exhibit the sensual side of Caroline's aesthetic. This overt admittance of sensuality combined with enough boldness to purchase such works suggest

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<sup>77</sup> Heather Belnap Jensen, "Staël, Corinne, and the Women Collectors of Napoleonic Europe" in *Staël's Philosophy of the Passions: Sensibility, Society and the Sister Arts*, eds. Tili Boon Cuillié and Karyna Szmanlo (Lewisberg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 250.

<sup>78</sup> Carol Ockman, *Ingres's Eroticized Bodies Retracing the Serpentine Line* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 48.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, 86.

she was a strong woman with certain tastes. Such preferences may have been seen as inappropriate, and, if made public, would not have been a popular move for Caroline. These purchases were a romantic expression and gift for Caroline's husband, Joachim.

Carol Ockman argues that female spectatorship was possible and in this case completely true because of the overt sensuality and aggressive nature of Caroline. She argues that while traveling to Rome in 1809, Caroline purchased the Grand Odalisque and commissioned the Neapolitan Sleeper. Ockman suggests that the backward facing position of the Grand Odalisque is less licentious and more appropriate to female taste because it has a more subtle sensuality and is not as bold and offensive.<sup>80</sup> In the Grand Odalisque, the tastefully turned nude is gazing behind her back towards the viewer, aware of the voyeur and conscious of her surroundings and position, while the vulnerable sleeper of the Neapolitan Sleeper is exposed with frontal nudity. Ockman also argues that the patronage of such a sensual painting purchased as a gift indicates that Caroline is an assertive woman, a woman whose role in many aspects of her life is perhaps more dominant than even Joachim.<sup>81</sup> These arguments made by Ockman are extremely believable and supportive to the overall argument that Caroline promoted herself as a strong and bold woman.

The Grand Odalisque was highly sensual and a favorite of the Murats so much so that Caroline desired another work to go along with it to please her husband. Thus, she had Ingres produce Sleeper of Naples. This Titianesque nude is splayed on a bed opulently laid with soft and luxurious linens with open and inviting body language like that of Titian's Venus of Urbino (1538). The Neapolitan Sleeper did not gain as much popularity as the Grand Odalisque, perhaps

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<sup>80</sup> Carol Ockman, *Ingres's Eroticized Bodies Retracing the Serpentine Line* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 35.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 45.



either because it was deemed inappropriate for a woman to take part in such a patronage or for the frontal nudity. The work is either destroyed or lost: all that remains are the sketches.<sup>82</sup> These sketches display the erotic nature of a more modern Venus as she looks back at the viewer in a sensual manner.

The odd positioning of the nude's leg and the extremely elongated vertebrae give the already orientalized figure an ever more mysterious and enticing essence to the Western world. Sarah Betzer suggests about the Grand Odalisque that it is, "a figure sublimely suspended between the fashionable modern subject and the (monstrous) phantasmic antique."<sup>83</sup> The viewer cannot help but be mesmerized with this nude and her odd beauty. The invitation to the viewer to take part in the voluptuous and sumptuous nude was deemed appropriate by Ingres because a ten year old unsexed model was used that had not yet entered into puberty.<sup>84</sup> Therefore, it was perhaps advisable for Caroline to hang this painting in private quarters.

Ingres's Grand Odalisque was different from his traditional history or portrait painting, and it became the subject matter of which he painted, sketched, and made lithographs of many versions. It gained so much popularity that in 1814 it made its first appearance at the Salon (1819) and was well accepted for its likeness of the Venetian reclining nude.<sup>85</sup> The luxurious textiles strewn across the bed on which the orientalized woman reclines, drapery as well as her accessories and props (such as pipe and fan), are objects of Eastern origin. These exotic objects created a new yet academic take on the Venus of Urbino and became accepted by and in great

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<sup>82</sup> Phillip Conisbee and Gary Tinterow, *Portraits By Ingres: Image of An Epoch* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), Exhibition catalog, 99.

<sup>83</sup> Sarah Betzer, *Ingres and the Studio* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 9.

<sup>84</sup> Carol Ockman, *Ingres's Eroticized Bodies Retracing the Serpentine Line* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 36.

<sup>85</sup> Robert Rosenblum, *Ingres* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), 86.

favor with those of the most elite status.<sup>86</sup> The painting was displayed in the Salon after Caroline had commissioned it. So although it was displayed within the privacy of her own living quarters, many people in society were aware that it was a piece that belonged to the Murats. Ingres made many reproductions of various different mediums.<sup>87</sup> This work not only reflects the popular taste and impressive connoisseurship of the Murats and the identity that it created for them and their personal lives, but also as an obsession of Ingres's.

#### 10. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres

Paolo and Francesca, c. 1814

Oil on canvas, 48 x 39 cm, Birmingham, The Barber Institute

Carol Ockman tells us that Caroline Murat, as queen of Naples, commissioned Ingres to paint Paolo and Francesca (1814).<sup>88</sup> This is a work that will mold Caroline's identity not only as sensual lover but also as romantic and educated. Ockman reminds us that the story of Paolo and Francesca is that of an "innocent love".<sup>89</sup> It is a depiction of a moment of a sweet kiss on the cheek. This identifies Caroline as more than a woman of lust and sexuality but rather as a lover of the romantic troubadour. Robert Rosenblum suggests that this painting of Paolo and Francesca is reminiscent of thirteenth-century Florentine, troubadour literature. But the intricacies within the telling of the story in which Ingres uses "complex sexuality" that makes it so nineteenth-

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<sup>86</sup> Susan Siegfried. *Ingres: Painting Reimagined* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 96.

<sup>87</sup> Patricia Condon, et al. *Ingres: In The Pursuit of Perfection: The Art of J-A-D. Ingres*, ed. Bebra Edelstein (Louisville, Kentucky: J.B Speed Art Museum, 1983), 20.

<sup>88</sup> Carol Ockman, *Ingres's Eroticized Bodies Retracing the Serpentine Line* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 53.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 53.

century.<sup>90</sup> Such intricacies are shown by the reaction and emotion of Francesca, as the person within the painting that holds the most power. Susan Siegfried argues that it is the complex composition of Ingres that makes the painting representative of the nineteenth century.<sup>91</sup>

As a pupil of Jacques-Louis David, Ingres's familiarity with antiquity and history painting influenced how these paintings were executed. Art, literature, mythology, and philosophy inspired the subject matter of Ingres's works. In these works Ingres insisted on ensuring the perfect visual representation of the story of Paolo and Francesca so much so that at the bottom of his sketches he added the lines of Dante's epic story of the *Inferno*.<sup>92</sup> Lines from the appropriate canto were written underneath the sketch, almost as if the image could be placed within the literary work.<sup>93</sup> Words located underneath the cartoon read: "our caution and our hearts. For when we read how her fond smile was kissed by such a lover, he who is one with me alive and dead. Breathe on my lips the tremor of his kiss."<sup>94</sup>

Staying true to troubadour fashion, Ingres's aim was to remain close to the romantic and courtly feel of the story while exhibiting the appropriateness of a soft and innocent kiss upon the cheek of such a sinful love affair.<sup>95</sup> The slight smile on the lips of Francesca shows her desire to receive the kiss from her unbetrothed lover although her face is turned, indicating that he should kiss her cheek. The book that she holds in her right hand is slipping out as she is allowing herself to get wrapped up in these expressions of love or perhaps lust. Here we see the book had slipped

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<sup>90</sup> Robert Rosenblum, *Ingres* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990) 90.

<sup>91</sup> Susan Siegfried, *Ingres. Painting Reimagined* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 52.

<sup>92</sup> Patricia Condon, et al. *Ingres: In The Pursuit of Perfection: The Art of J-A-D. Ingres*, ed. Bebra Edelstein (Louisville, Kentucky: J.B Speed Art Museum, 1983), 70.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, 70.

<sup>94</sup> Dante Alighieri. *Inferno*, trans. John Ciardi (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1954), Circle Two Canto 5. 46-51, lines 50-51.

<sup>95</sup> Vincent Pomarède, Stéphane Guégan, Louis-Antione Prat, and Éric Bertin, *Ingres 1780-1867* (Paris: Musée Du Louvre Éditions Gallimard, 2006), 214.

out of the hand of Francesca and is falling midair, almost into the pool of red luxurious fabric that is her skirt.<sup>96</sup> The momentary photographic capturing reflects that in this intimate moment, in which this couple is so passionately drawn to one another, they are incapable of understanding their surroundings.<sup>97</sup> Paolo and Francesca are unaware of Francesca's husband, Gianciotto, lurking behind them with sword drawn, prepared to slay his unfaithful wife and her lover. Ingres fashioned many versions of this image via sketches and paintings after it was first commissioned by the queen.

The heavy Burgundian drapery and jewel tone color palate recall the Vaneyckian Italian scene such as the Arnolfini Portrait (1434). Ingres was gaining clout as an esteemed and talented painter, trained in all academic styles.<sup>98</sup> Such subject matter would not be of interest to an artist of lesser training. Shying away from his neoclassical Davidian training, Ingres moved from moral and true Greek and Roman stoicism and shifted toward the romantic ideals entertained in the times of the Italian Renaissance.<sup>99</sup>

The commissioning of this painting by Caroline exhibits her love of the visual aesthetic of the arts, but also of the literary. Paolo and Francesca's author, Dante, brought together the people by writing the Divine Comedy in the vulgate Italian, which was more easily accessed by those who inhabited the boot-like landmass that we now know as Italy. By acknowledging great Italian art and literary masters, she is embracing the new land in which she has been assigned to reign by her brother Napoleon. She is acknowledging that she is aware of the traditions of the

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<sup>96</sup> Patricia Condon, et al. *Ingres: In The Pursuit of Perfection: The Art of J-A-D. Ingres*, ed. Bebra Edelstein (Louisville, Kentucky: J.B Speed Art Museum, 1983), 74.

<sup>97</sup> Susan Siegfried, *Ingres Painting Reimagined* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 50.

<sup>98</sup> Robert Rosenblum, *Ingres* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1990), 90.

<sup>99</sup> Vincent Pomarède, Stephane Guégan, Louis-Antione Prat and Éric Bertin, *Ingres 1780-1867* (Paris: Musée Du Louvre Éditions Gallimard, 2006), 220.

land in which she rules thus proving to herself and those around her that she is in fact aware of the past, the present, and the future. This was a quality which made her, in her own mind, an effective leader.

#### 11. Antonio Canova

Bust of Joachim Murat, c. 1814

Marble, 63 cm, Musée Marmottan, Paris

#### 12. Antonio Canova

Bust of Caroline Murat, c. 1814

Marble, 63 cm, Academie des Beaux-Arts Marmottan, Paris

Caroline and Joachim were much like the other Bonapartes in their love for the artist Antonio Canova and his life-like neoclassical sculptures. Joachim reportedly purchased a work by Canova before Caroline did, but they were both active collectors of the artist. The busts of Caroline and Joachim that Canova sculpted resemble those of ancient Roman antiquity and create an identity for the Murats of powerful political influences like busts of old. They chose to steer clear of the idea of a grandiose and almost obnoxious sculptural representation of themselves like that of brother Napoleon and sister Pauline.

Napoleon commissioned Canova to sculpt himself in a nude and titanic representation of Mars the peacemaker, and it was completed in 1806.<sup>100</sup> This out of this world sculpture was even

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<sup>100</sup> Maria Teresa Caracciolo and Charles Penwarden, *Les Soeurs de Napoleon: Trois Destins Italiens* (Paris: Hazan, 2013), 12.

too annoyingly perfect for Napoleon and wasn't shown but rarely.<sup>101</sup> Pauline Borghese, sister of Caroline and Napoleon, also wanted herself immortalized and personified as a goddess, and so she commissioned Canova to create a sculpture as Pauline as Venus Victorious (1808). This sensualized representation was better accepted than her brother's large portrait and was shown in the Salon of 1808. Caroline and Joachim chose not to take such aggressive risks as their siblings.<sup>102</sup> Their tasteful busts didn't create controversy of any sort but fit comfortably within the collection of the Murats and the identity that they worked so hard to create for themselves.

Belnap Jensen argues that Pauline's commission of herself as Venus Victorious by Canova is more narcissistic and self-promoting as beautiful than having any political sway.<sup>103</sup> She also suggests that the Caroline collect and commissions works that are in accordance with her own personal agenda, and not just that of Napoleon's.<sup>104</sup> This is suggesting that Caroline's patronage, was to promote and create an identity specific to Caroline.

The tasteful busts of Caroline and Joachim are reflective of the classical as well as powerful and appropriate and far from the sensual, like Pauline. Being in Rome, it wasn't difficult for Canova to take on the commission for Caroline and Joachim, but upon preparing to ship the busts, a miscommunication arose which slowed the process.<sup>105</sup> Because of this mishap

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Christopher M.S. Johns, *Antonio Canova and the Politics of Patronage in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Europe* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 116.

<sup>103</sup> Heather Belnap Jensen, "Staël, Corinne, and the Women Collectors of Napoleonic Europe" in *Staël's Philosophy of the Passions: Sensibility, Society and the Sister Arts*, eds. Tili Boon Cuillié and Karyna Szmanlo (Lewisberg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 250.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 246.

<sup>105</sup> Nicoletta D'Arbitrio and Luigi Ziviello, *Carolina Murat: La Regno delle Due Sicilie: Architetture, la Moda, l'Office de la Bouche* (Napoli: Edizioni Savarese, 2003), 114.

it is difficult to say if the portrait busts of Caroline and Joachim made it to Naples before the execution of Joachim and exile of Caroline.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Christopher M.S, Johns, *Antonio Canova and the Politics of Patronage in Revolutionary and Napoleonic Europe* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 93.

## ITALIAN INFLUENCES

Caroline Murat, as Queen of Naples, fully embraced Italian culture and influences while she and her family spent seven years in the Two Sicilies. She, like many of the prestigious European crowd, developed an appreciation of Mount Vesuvius and its surrounding landscape. She was not afraid to depict the Neapolitan scenery within her portraits and did so frequently. One of her favorite places was her personal quarters in the Royal Palace in Naples, and she had several works painted within that room. The watercolor by Mme Clarac and Ingres's Portrait of Caroline as Queen of Naples are two featured in this exhibition.

Not only a woman of political power, Caroline was also at the top of the neoclassical movement in women's fashion. She daringly chose to represent herself adorned in the new style: an amalgamation of the neoclassical empire waist, simple hairstyle, and basic accessories, combined with the opulence of rich and heavy fabrics of the Baroque and Rococo. Adorned in thick textiles, long sleeves, and an extremely high neckline, Caroline is presented by Ingres as both powerful and modest, as well as beautiful and fashionable. She cannot be too powerful or sexualized but has to maintain a proper and reputable image so that her subjects will take her seriously. Carol Ockman says this in support of this idea: "As for the queen herself, she was caught in the bind between positive and negative stereotypes of womanhood; she apparently alternated between the roles of self-effacing and devoted wife and powerful political figure in her own right."<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Carol Ockman, *Ingres's Eroticized Bodies Retracing the Serpentine Line* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 44.



Caroline was a master of fashion. As Roland Barthes states: “Fashion must project the aristocratic model, the source of its prestige: this is pure Fashion; but at the same time it must represent, in a euphoric manner, the world of its consumers by transforming intra-worldly functions into signs (work, sport, vacations, seasons, ceremonies): this is naturalized Fashion, whose signifieds are named.”<sup>108</sup> Caroline masterfully presents herself for the appropriate occasion and country, clad in modern Italian trends. Although some scholars speculate the black worn in this painting is for that of mourning, it is also possible that Caroline and Ingres have chosen to represent her in typical clothing in Italy of this time.

Looking toward Napoleon and his Empress Josephine for inspiration, Caroline was able to incorporate Parisian trends with an Italian flare and make it her own. Supporting the idea of Caroline and the Bonaparte women and their overwhelming example of aristocratic European women, Cristina Barretto and Martin Lancaster suggest, “The direction fashion would take was influenced... by Napoleon and the state, and also by the divas of the day—the ladies whose lifestyles and manner of dress were admired, envied and emulated.”<sup>109</sup> Caroline was no exception to this grouping, and even set a standard for fashionable women.

### 13. Pierre-Jacques Volaire

The Eruption of Vesuvius, c. 1770s

Oil on Canvas 56x76 cm, Private collection

### 14. Joseph Wright of Derby

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<sup>108</sup> Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System* (London: The Trinity Press, 1985), 291.

<sup>109</sup> Cristina Barretto and Martin Lancaster, *Napoleon and the Empire of Fashion 1795-1815* (Milano: Skira Editore, 2010), 141.

Vesuvius From Portici, c. 1770

Oil on Canvas, 101x 127 cm, Huntington Library, Pasadena

The power and capability of destruction of a volcano such as Vesuvius was plainly understood by the people of Naples in the nineteenth century. Many artists and glamorous people throughout Italy were perfectly entranced with the volcano. Vigée-LeBrun herself endearingly referred to it as “my dear Vesuvius.”<sup>110</sup> Naples was gaining popularity for its beautiful landscape as well as its unpredictable scenery and recently renovated Pompeii. In the eighteenth century there were six eruptions, most of them being in the later years. Caroline Murat even took interest in the unpredictable mountain. She fully took advantage of the popularity of the eruption of 1700 and mimicked the smoke of the most recent eruption in the hat that she wore in the portrait that Ingres painted of her as queen of Naples. In doing so she showed herself as a powerful and unpredictable force as well as appealing to the people of the two Sicilies. This created an identity of phenomenon and strength. Naples, only being approximately five and a half miles away from the eruption, at the very least was impacted by its eruptions and its beautiful display of chaos and horror through dangerous lava and ash. Vesuvius so close to Caroline Murat that you could see the mountain across the water from the window of her personal quarters in the Royal Apartment.

William Hamilton became interested in every aspect of the volcano through uncovering cities obliterated by deadly volcanic matter. He also studied ash and discovered its nourishing properties, providing richness and nutrients for the ecosystem. Vesuvius gained popularity throughout the Italian peninsula as many artists, poets and authors took it to be the subject of

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<sup>110</sup> Françoise Pitt-Rivers, *Memoirs: Madame Vigée-Le Brun*, trans. Siân Evans (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1989), 108.

many of their creative endeavors.<sup>111</sup> Pierre-Jacques Volaire, being an artist that migrated to southern Italy due to fascination with this great volcano, became somewhat of an authoritative voice on the matters of Vesuvius.<sup>112</sup>

Volaire's interpretation of the mountain became less sublime and more realistic through inserting human figures in the foreground of the painting. This compositional tool could be interpreted as the attitude of this work not being foreboding of catastrophic consequences but rather focusing on the nutritional value in rebirth of plant life within soil from volcanic ash. As Vesuvius is a self-proclaimed symbol of Caroline, she is not only a powerful political force but she is a nurturing political force because she is woman and mother, who understands the present-day Italian and or Neapolitan culture.

Caroline Murat's symbolic emulation through her hat of the recently erupted Vesuvius in the landscape is noted as the volcano is seen through the window of the grand cabinet in the royal palace. In Pierre-Jacques Volaire's eruption of Vesuvius, the thick billowing smoke drifts upwards almost identically to the volcano in Ingres's work as well as is similar to the hat that sits atop Caroline's firmly grounded mountainous and triangular black figure.

Fascinated with and influenced by Volaire,<sup>113</sup> whose treatment emphasized light and the sublime, Joseph Wright of Derby was sure to incorporate dramatic illuminated features within his genre scenes, history scenes and landscape painting. The depiction of the eruption of Vesuvius is one of the most stunning and supernatural works produced in his oeuvre. The dramatic play of light and dark not only creates a mood of drama and terror, but the vignette of

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<sup>111</sup> Peter Walch, "Foreign Artists at Naples: 1750-1799." *Burlington Magazine* 121, no. 913 (April 1979) 247-252, 256.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, 251.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid*, 252.

darkness circling the mountain creates no diversion from the fantastically eye-catching scene of the eruption. Light is playfully dancing upon the life underneath the temperamental and unpredictable monster unaware of their terrible fate. The human reaction to the sublime is described by Burke as follows: “Fear robs the mind of its power to reason. The sublime reaches its highest degree in ‘astonishment, or the state of the soul, in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror.’”<sup>114</sup> Thus the appeal of looking at the sublime is both horrifying and breathtaking. Caroline, full of beauty and grace with nurturing qualities such as motherhood, was also, at times, a force not easily to be reckoned with. She was too strong and powerful for her own well-being, as manipulator of the throne and political genius.

15. Anonymous, Fashion Plate, Costume Parisien, no. 1628, c. 1805

Journal des dames et des modes, 1805.

16. Anonymous, Fashion Plate, Costume Parisien, no. 946, c. 1809

Journal des dames et des modes, 1809.

17. Anonymous, Fashion Plate, Costume Parisien, no. 55, c. 1809

Journal des dames et des modes, 1809.

18. Anonymous, Fashion Plate, Costume Parisien, no. 1204, c. 1812

Journal des dames et des modes, 1812.

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<sup>114</sup> Quoted in, W.P. Albrecht, *The Sublime Pleasures of Tragedy: A Study of Critical Theory from Dennis to Keats* (Wichita: The University Press of Kansas, 1975), 41.

19. Anonymous, Fashion Plate, Costume Parisien, no. 1219, c. 1812

Journal des dames et des modes, 1812.

20. Anonymous, Fashion Plate, Costume Parisien, no. 1367, c. 1811

Journal des dames et des modes, 1811.

21. Anonymous, Fashion Plate, Costume Parisien, no. n26, c. 1814

Journal des dames et des modes, 1814.

In the fight to be recognized as a fashion icon like Josephine, Caroline carefully educated herself on the most current trends of Parisian style. She strived to develop an identity of fashion forward by paving the way in creating and developing new styles. In Naples, the women were not as updated or as financially equipped with the means to be as fashionable as was the Parisian woman. Caroline was therefore determined to become a stylish pioneer for the Italian woman and prove to the Italian people that she, Caroline, could dress like a queen or empress while marrying Parisien and Sicilian trends. As Caroline was already not favored by the Italians and the pope, she had to prove to her people that she was fit to rule as their queen by understanding all aspects of their culture, fashion included. Giles Lipovetsky tell us, “Objects are merely ‘class exponents’ social signifiers and discriminants; they function as signs of social mobility and

aspirations.”<sup>115</sup> Caroline carefully constructed her identity by using fashion to promote her social as well as political rank.

These fashion plates are reminiscent of Caroline’s portraits. The white, neoclassical fashion plates are exactly like those that Caroline and her sisters and Josephine wear in David’s Coronation of Napoleon as well as in many of their portraits as well. Although these dresses are made of the finest fabrics and trimmed in intricate detail, they are significantly more simple and different from fashion trends just a decade previous. This style set the Bonaparte women apart from any typical Parisian women until the styles that they pioneered trickled down to the women not of the empire.

More typical fashion plates were those of women adorned in pastel or white muslins, satins, or silks, like those mentioned above. The commonality of these plates was due to the wide variety of audiences to whom they would have appealed. Fashion plates 1367 and 26 differ from the other traditional plates because of their purpose for only more formal wear as well as reflecting that of Sicilian or Moorish influences. Some scholars suggest that Caroline is mourning the death of her predecessor, Caroline of Naples, the death of her sister-in-law and fashion icon Empress Josephine.<sup>116</sup> But it is easy to see that the assumption is inaccurate, because it is not reflecting traditional Parisian wear but rather traditional Sicilian wear.

Sicilians, living in the southernmost part of Italy, were conquered by the Moors at one point in time and much of their influence is evident. The black lace and velvet is very traditional

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<sup>115</sup> Giles Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994, 134-242), 134.

<sup>116</sup> Alan Wintermute, *The French Portrait 1550-1850* (New York: Colnaghi, 1996), 70.

for a Neapolitan woman.<sup>117</sup> Caroline has chosen to present herself in a prestigious portrait, in the midst of personal devotion like any devout Catholic Sicilian woman should. It is not difficult to see that this type of modest costuming is an attempt to appease the Catholic Sicilian taste.

From the inscription on the bottom of the fashion plates we know that both of the dresses were constructed of heavy black velvet and trimmed in lace around the sleeves and collar. The dresses are akin to the floor-length smock in the portrait of Queen Caroline by Ingres, although the lace detail in the fashion plates is white and Caroline is covered in black from head to foot. Along with the matching textiles, an empire waist cut is a commonality in all three dresses. The high lace collar and long sleeves are echoed in Caroline's mourning frock. The extravagantly billowing hat is similar to the ostrich feathered hat that Caroline wears, drawing a correlation between her and the recently erupted Vesuvius in the background. The correlation exhibits not only an awareness of Italianate fashion but also symbolizes her power and control.<sup>118</sup>

Indeed, Caroline eventually turned her back on her brother. Amidst the turmoil, Napoleon tried to arrest Joachim for treason. Joachim, however, exclaimed in rebuttal, "Sire, we are not only close to volcanoes, but right on top of them,"<sup>119</sup> with allusions to the political turmoil which caused them to take action against Napoleon. It is possible that he was referencing the alliances that his wife had made with other, more dominant powers like Austria.<sup>120</sup> The alleged affair that took place between Caroline and ambassador and Count Von Mier—a union that actually saved

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<sup>117</sup> Maria Teresa Caracciolo and Charles Penwarden, *Les Soeurs de Napoleon: Trois Destins Italiens* (Paris: Hazan, 2013), 167.

<sup>118</sup> Phillip Conisbee and Gary Tinterow, *Portraits By Ingres: Image of An Epoch* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), Exhibition catalog, 146.

<sup>119</sup> John A. Davis, *Naples and Napoleon: Southern Italy and the European Revolutions (1780-1860)* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 159.

<sup>120</sup> Milton Finley, *The Most Monstrous of Wars: The Napoleonic Guerrilla War in Southern Italy, 1806-1811* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 126.

her life during her Austrian exile.<sup>121</sup> Caroline was similar to Vesuvius, the unpredictable and notorious force of nature, as she is perfectly depicted in Caroline Murat as Queen of Naples. This fashion plate is a great example of the same Vesuvian hat and influence as well as marriage between French and Italian trends of the early nineteenth century.

## 22. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres

Caroline Murat as Queen of Naples, c., 1814

Oil on canvas, 92x 60 cm, Private Collection, New York

After being refused by the pope, Caroline was sure to create an identity for herself as proof to Italy and France that she was in fact fit to rule as Queen of Naples. This portrait Caroline commissioned Ingres to paint during her reign as Queen of Naples. She desired to be represented as powerful, pious and fashionable. Ingres, known for having the most prestigious and beautiful of sitters, seemed appropriate for such a powerful commission.<sup>122</sup> She had purchased and commissioned many of his works in the past, and he was an artist that she favored above most. Ingres' dedication to perfection commanded a painstakingly slow and tedious process, and according to both Caroline and Ingres this painting was never finished.

In efforts to appeal to Naples, this portrait is clad with Italianate influence and esteem as well as Parisian luxury. Unlike the light and airy works done of Caroline with her children, this portrait brings a smart sense of presence and prestige. The white silks and muslins that were so chic in France were replaced by Sicily and Naples's Moorish influences with heavy velvets and

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<sup>121</sup> Mario Giannattasio, *Le Due Caroline: Il Regno di Napoli tra Carolina di Borbone e Carolina Murat* (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1999) 18.

<sup>122</sup> Aileen Ribiero, *Ingres in Fashion: Representations of Dress and Appearance in Ingres's Images of Women* (London: Yale University Press, 1999), 31.



lace.<sup>123</sup> This style also corresponded with Napoleon's call to return to moral order.<sup>124</sup> Coisinbee and Wintermute both suggest that Caroline is wearing black for the mourning of her sister-in-law.<sup>125</sup> We know that this is not the case because the portrait was commissioned in 1808, prior to the death of Josephine. This heavy black Neapolitan style carries on a trend that endures for half a century after Caroline's portrait has been painted, with some of Ingres most prestigious sitters and his contemporaries. For example, the portrait of Madame Paul-Sigisbert Moitessier, Standing (1851), is incredibly Neapolitan in style, textile and accouterment.

In regards to appearing more pious, Caroline had chosen to present herself in the royal apartment in Naples, having been caught in the action of reciting prayers. Belnap Jensen suggests that with her fingers between a breviary, a bell calling to prayer and a small prayer stool peeking from underneath her dress, it is undeniable that Caroline is taking part in traditional Catholic rituals.<sup>126</sup> Completely deserting the commonly low décolletage that accompanies the empire waist in the nineteenth century, Caroline presents herself modestly in a neckline that climbs completely to her chin. Her costuming is only appropriate for such pious rituals.

With her husband commanding the Italian Army, Caroline comfortably played the role of ruler in the domestic realm as well as commanded from the throne. She made executive decisions for both the palace and the Two Sicilies by making alliances with other strong political forces such as her siblings and Austria. The smoke, evidence of a recently erupted Vesuvius in the

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<sup>123</sup> Maria Teresa Caracciolo and Charles Penwarden, *Les Soeurs de Napoleon: Trois Destins Italiens* (Paris: Hazan, 2013), Exhibition catalog, 167.

<sup>124</sup> Kathryn Calley Galitz, *François Gérard: Portraiture, Scandal, and the Art of Power in Napoleonic France* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013), 26.

<sup>125</sup> Phillip Conisbee and Gary Tinterwow, *Portraits By Ingres: Image of An Epoch* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999) Exhibition catalog, 70.

<sup>126</sup> Heather Belnap Jensen, "Staël, Corinnne, and the Women Collectors of Napoleonic Europe" in *Staël's Philosophy of the Passions: Sensibility, Society and the Sister Arts*, eds. Tili Boon Cuillié and Karyna Szmenlo (Lewisberg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), 252.

landscape behind Caroline across the bay five miles east of the royal palace, is then repeated within the shape of the hat that sits atop Caroline's head.<sup>127</sup> When a volcano erupts, there is nothing that can be done to stop it; no one could possibly battle against it, like Vesuvius. A volcano is a force that cannot be reckoned with, and apparently neither is Caroline Murat. She was known to be a demanding patron and political leader, forever searching for advances in power.<sup>128</sup>

The artistic lineage of this portrait of Queen Caroline, once treasured as a perfectly rendered and propagandistic portrait of an assertive and effective queen of short reign, became a pretty portrait of an unknown woman with obsolete value and unfamiliar meaning until 1990 when German Ingres scholar Hans Naef rediscovered the lost masterpiece.<sup>129</sup> Since their evacuation from Naples, the art collection of the Murats has been difficult to trace. The painting was considered not finished, and Ingres was never even paid for the work.<sup>130</sup> Less than a century later, the descendants of the Bonaparte family demanded that the Neapolitan people return the art work that they believed to be rightfully theirs. But the request was denied.<sup>131</sup> It now sits in a private collection in the state of New York.

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 254.

<sup>128</sup> Joseph Turquan, *The Sisters of Napoleon: Elisa, Pauline, and Caroline Bonaparte After the Testimony of Their Contemporaries*, trans. W.R.H. Throwbridge (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 281.

<sup>129</sup> Hans Naef, "Un chef-d'oeuvre retrouvé: 'Le portrait de la reine Caroline Murat' par Ingres." *Revue de l'Art* (1990 no 1), 11-20.

<sup>130</sup> Alan Wintermute, *The French Portrait 1550-1850* (New York: Colnaghi, 1996), 70.

<sup>131</sup> *Revindica del Patrimonio Privato di Murate e Carolina Bonaparte: Questione di Competenza Innanzi alla Crote Suprema di Roma* (Napoli: Tipi Fratelli Orfeo, 1889), 10.

## CONCLUSION

Caroline Murat was an important figure in nineteenth century French and Italian politics, fashion, and art. As the sister of Napoleon and queen of Naples, she was thrust into a highly visible position in society that gave her an opportunity to create a unique identity for herself. Through her art patronage and well-developed fashion sense, she created that identity and had a major impact on the cultural trends of her time in the process. This exhibit presents Caroline Murat and her important influence on the art and fashion trends of nineteenth-century Europe to an American university audience.

The works in this exhibit demonstrate that, through the portraits and history paintings that she commissioned and purchased, Caroline was successful in developing an identity to her liking. She compared herself to great French figures such as Marie de' Medici and Napoleon and Josephine Bonaparte in the portrait that she commissioned Ingres to paint in 1814, Caroline Murat as Queen of Naples. This portrait suggests to the viewer that she is as prominent in society as Marie and the Bonapartes. Other works in this exhibition demonstrate that she desired to promote herself as a powerful political leader, trend setter, and nurturing mother who was secularly and sensually educated.

Caroline's contributions to culture during her reign as queen influenced art and fashion trends in France and Italy throughout the nineteenth century. The hybrid of French and Italianate styles, textiles, and literature became popular largely because of Caroline's influence. Caroline embraced Italianate trends in an effort to be accepted by the Neapolitan people. She also brought those trends back to France with her after her short reign as queen. The hybrid influences are reflected in the art which she accumulated during her years in Italy, 1808-14. It is important to

recognize that Caroline's patronage had such a significant impact on art collecting and commissioning in nineteenth-century France and Italy because of the fact that she was a young and female patron. The works in this exhibition are some of the most well-known pieces of art that she collected. These works also helped to create an identity for Caroline that will shape her reputation for many years to come.

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## IMAGES



Figure 1

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Napoleon as First Consul, 1804, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Liège.



Figure 2

Peter Paul Rubens, Education of Marie de Medici, 1622-5, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 3

Peter Paul Rubens, Presentation of Marie to Henri IV, 1622-5, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 4

Elizabeth Vigée-Le Brun, Portrait of Caroline Murat with her Daughter Letizia, Musée de Château de Versailles, Paris.



Figure 5

François Gérard, Josephine Bonaparte, 1808, Musée National du Château de Malmaison.



Figure 6

François Gérard, Caroline With her Children, 1808, Private Collection.



Figure 7

Comte de Clarac, *Caroline in Grand Cabinet or Caroline Murat in the Royal Palace, Naples*, 1808-13, Private Collection.



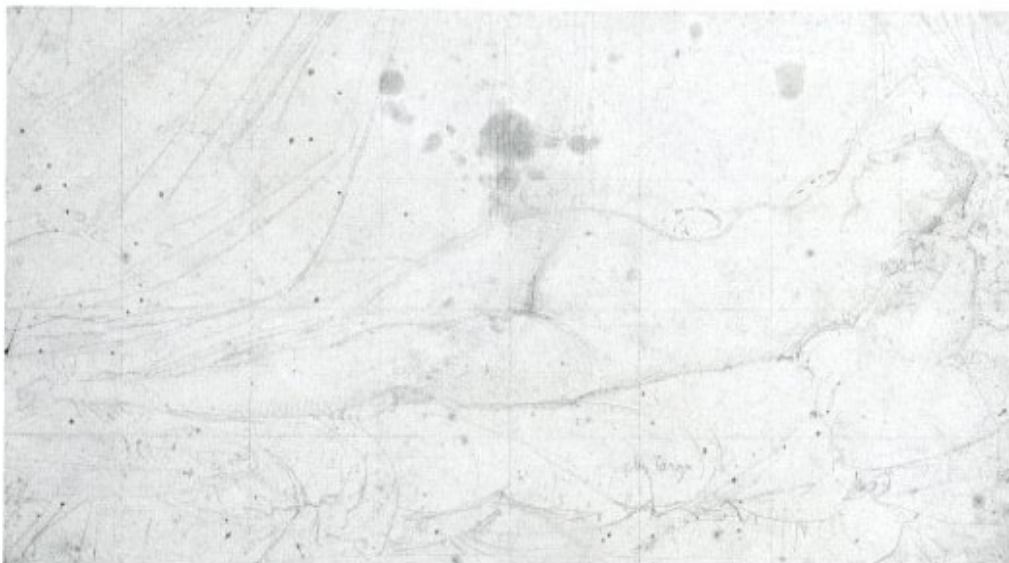


Figure 8

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Neapolitan Sleeper or Sleeper of Naples, 1814, Private Collection.

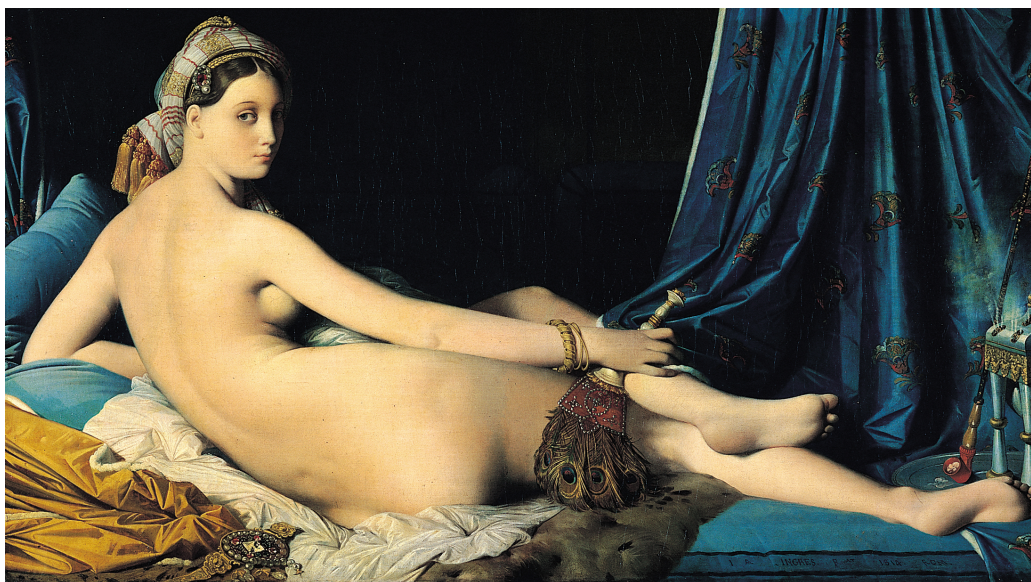


Figure 9

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Grand Odalisque, 1814, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Figure 10

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Paola and Francesca, 1814, The Barber Institute, Birmingham.



Figure 11

Antonio Canova, Bust of Joachim Murat, 1814, Musée Marmottan, Paris.



Figure 12

Antonio Canova, Bust of Caroline Murat, 1814, Academie des Beaux-Arts Marottan, Paris.



Figure 13

Pierre-Jacques Volaire, *The Eruption of Vesuvius*, 1770's, Private Collection.



Figure 14

Joseph Derby of Wright, *Vesuvius From Portici*, 1770, Huntington Library, Pasadena.



Figure 15

Anonymous, Fashion Plate ,Costume Parisien, no. 1628, Journal des dames et des modes, 1805.



Figure 16

Anonymous, Fashion Plate, Costume Parisien, no. 946, Journal des dames et des modes, 1809.



Figure 17

Anonymous, Fashion Plate, Costume Parisien, no. 55, *Journal des dames et des modes*, 1809.



Figure 18

Anonymous, Fashion Plate, Costume Parisien, no. 1204, *Journal des dames et des modes*, 1812.



Figure 19

Anonymous, Fashion Plate, Costume Parisien, no. 1219, Journal des dames et des modes, 1812.



Figure 20

Anonymous, Fashion Plate, Costume Parisien, no. 1367, Journal des dames et des modes, 1811.





Figure 21

Anonymous, Fashion Plate, Costume Parisien, no. 26, *Journal des dames et des modes*, 1814.



Figure 22

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Caroline Murat as Queen of Naples, 1814, Private Collection, New York

**SUPPORTING IMAGES**

Jean-Auguste-Dominic Ingres, Madame Antoinia de Vaucay nee de Nittis, 1807, Musée Condé, Chantilly.



Jean-Auguste-Dominic Ingres, Madame Moitessier, 1851, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.



Jacques-Louis David, Coronation of Napoleon, 1804, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Jacques-Louis David, Countess Daru, 1810, Frick, New York.



Jacques-Louis David, Madame Récamier, 1800, Musée du Louvre, Paris.



Titian, Venus of Urbino, 1538, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Cartoon sketch of Paolo and Francesca, Date Unknown, Musée du Louvre, Paris.