

Daniel Chodowiecki



Portrait of Daniel Chodowiecki, painted posthumously by Adolph von Menzel in 1859

Daniel Niklaus Chodowiecki (16 October 1726 – 7 February 1801) was a Polish - German painter and printmaker with Huguenot ancestry, who is most famous as an etcher. He spent most of his life in Berlin, and became the director of the Berlin Academy of Art.

1 Family

He was born in the city of Danzig (Gdańsk) in Poland, and in a letter “in typical Berlin humor” wrote, “that he moved to Berlin, Germany, which shows for sure, that he is a 'genuine Pole'.” He kept close to the Huguenot scene, due to his ancestry. His grandfather Bartholomäus Chodowiecki had lived in the 16th century in Greater

Poland. Gottfried Chodowiecki, Daniel’s father, was a tradesman in Danzig and his mother, Henriette Ayer born in Switzerland, was a Huguenot. Daniel’s grandfather Christian had been a tradesman in the city as well. When his father died, both Daniel (aged 16) and his younger brother Gottfried Chodowiecki went to live with their uncle in Berlin, who offered to educate them, and where Daniel received an artistic training with the painter Haid in Augsburg. His brother also became a painter.

2 Art



Minuet in the park, 1760s (National Museum in Warsaw).



Cartoon etching by Chodowiecki, 1781, on the Partition of Poland

Soon Daniel was able to earn a living by painting. He was admitted to the Berlin Academy in 1764 and became vice-director under Bernhard Rode in 1788. He had found his true calling and became the most famous German graphic artist of his time. His works include several thousand etchings, usually rather small, and many drawings and paintings. His book illustrations embrace almost all the great classics. His prints represent in great

detail the life of the bourgeoisie during the *Zopfstil* period, a time between **Rococo** and **Classicism**. In 1797 Chodowiecki was appointed director of the Academy of Arts in Berlin, where he died on 7 February 1801. The bulk of his work was in illustrating scientific books by **Basedow**, **Buffon**, **Lavater**, **Pestalozzi** and others. He also painted many portraits of Polish gentry and was interested in Huguenot and Polish history as well, making some paintings on the topic. He was in tune with the developing spirit of the age, and many works reflect the cult of **sensibility**, and then the revolutionary and German **nationalist** feelings of the end of the century.

In **printmaking**, he is credited with the invention of the deliberate *remarque*, a small sketch on a plate, lying outside the main image. These were originally little sketches or doodles by artists, not really meant to be seen, but Chodowiecki turned them into “bonus items” for collectors.

Chodowiecki, though speaking only French and German^[1] (due to his offices in the Huguenot French community in Berlin he often spoke French), many times also declared his Polish allegiance and had his son Isaac Heinrich, born in Berlin, painted as a very young child with a Polish outfit and haircut. After **Partitions of Poland** Chodowiecki wrote to Gräfin Solms-Laubach: “From father’s side I’m Polish, a descendant of a brave nation which will soon vanish”.^[2] In a letter to Józef Łęcki, the Polish astronomer, he wrote: “*I consider it an honour to be a genuine Pole, even though I am now living in Germany*”.^[3] Because of his mother’s and his wife’s Huguenot descent he was very close to the Huguenots of Berlin. Nearly all his life and career was spent in Germany, writing in German and living in Berlin from the age of almost 17.

One of his most popular books is “Journey from Berlin to Danzig” (**German**: “*Die Reise von Berlin nach Danzig*”, 1773) with many illustrations. He purchased a horse rather than going by stage coach. This was his first return after 30 years absence and he went specifically to see his elderly mother and sisters in Danzig again. He made only one more trip to Danzig afterwards, to his mother’s funeral. He describes and illustrates towns and people in Pomerania and Prussia on the way.

Chodowiecki is buried at the *Französischer Friedhof* cemetery in Berlin.

3 References

- [1] Hartmut Boockmann, Ostpreussen und Westpreussen, Siedler 2002, ISBN 3-88680-212-4
- [2] Charlotte Steinbrücker: Listy D. Chodowieckiego. Berlin, 1921.
- [3] Charlotte Steinbrücker: Listy D. Chodowieckiego. Berlin, 1921.

- Wolfgang Plat, *Die Reise nach Danzig, Mit Daniel Chodowiecki durch Pommern*

4 External links

- 541 images of works at the LA County Museum of Art
- Gallery of works by Chodowiecki at www.malarze.com
- Gallery of works by Chodowiecki’s brother - Gotfried at www.malarze.com
- Works at www.bildindex.de
- Chisholm, Hugh, ed. (1911). "Chodowiecki, Daniel Nicolas". *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press.

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5.1 Text

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Daniel Chodowiecki - Hörbeitrag



Berliner Moden 1780

"Daniel Chodowiecki, Maler und Kupferstecher, war der berühmteste Buchillustrator des 18. Jahrhunderts. Ob Lessings *Minna von Barnhelm*, Goethes *Leiden des jungen Werther* oder Schillers *Räuber*, Chodowiecki hat sie alle mit seinen Abbildungen veredelt..."

In einem **Beitrag des WDR** aus der Reihe "Zeitzeichen" gibt es eine interessante Darstellung über das Leben und Wirken Daniel Chodowieckis zu hören.



Die Leiden des jungen Werther



Kabale und Liebe



Abschied des Calas von seiner Familie



Der Friede zwischen Oestereich und der Turkey
La paix entre l'Autriche et la Turquie

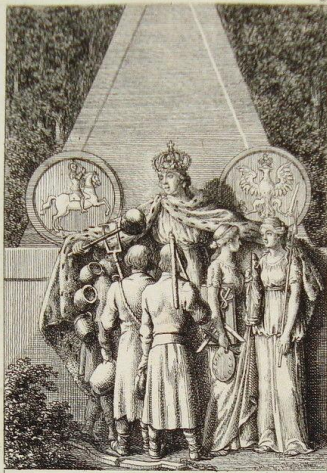


*Die neue Polnische Constitution.
La nouvelle Constitution Polonoise.*



Verählung des Herzogs von York.
Nériage du Duc d'York.

G. Kneller del. et fecit.



Die neue Polnische Constitution.
La nouvelle Constitution Polonoise.



Der Friede zwischen Oesterreich und der Türkei.
La paix entre l'Autriche et la Turquie.



*Vermählung des Herzogs von York.
Mariage du Duc d'York.*

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