

Sophie Charlotte, Queen of Prussia (1705)

Abstract

Sophie Charlotte (1668-1705), the daughter of Duke Ernst August of Braunschweig-Lüneburg (r. 1679-98), was the second wife of Elector Frederick III of Brandenburg (who eventually ruled as King Frederick I of Prussia). Unlike his father, Frederick William (“the Great Elector”), Frederick spent lavishly on Baroque pomp and display. Sophie Charlotte, “the philosophical queen,” was responsible to a considerable extent for soft-pedaling the Calvinist discipline of her husband’s father. Under her influence, the Brandenburg court was transformed into a free-spending and luxury-loving venue. Yet her expenditures, like her husband’s, gave a welcome boost to the arts and sciences. Together with the philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), she co-founded the Berlin Society of Sciences (1700), the precursor to the Prussian Academy of Sciences. Sophie Charlotte also commissioned the palace named after her, Berlin’s Charlottenburg.

Source



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