NEW YORK: JANUARY 25 – FEBRUARY 1
Annual exhibition at Mitchell-Innes & Nash:
British Art: Recent Acquisitions & Thomas Gainsborough: The Landscape of Refinement

LONDON: FEBRUARY 17 – FEBRUARY 28
Thomas Gainsborough: The Landscape of Refinement

MAASTRICHT: MARCH 14 – 23
TEFAF: The European Fine Art Fair

LONDON: JULY 4 – JULY 11
Master Drawings & Sculpture Week
London Art Week

LONDON: OCTOBER 16 – OCTOBER 19
Frieze Masters
The gallery is open by appointment, Monday to Friday.
The entrance is in Old Burlington Street.

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Our annual catalogue relies entirely on the works we have in hand and it is this serendipity that gives each of these volumes an individual character. We hope, nonetheless, that our offering for 2014 demonstrates a consistency in the quality and the interest of the works of art that we delight in handling.

This year the catalogue seems to have three distinct groupings: a selection of paintings, drawings and sculpture made in or inspired by Italy. This includes the most fascinating ruinscape by Arthur Devis, an extremely powerful and important drawing by Joseph Wright of Derby, beautiful watercolours by J.R. Cozens and Flaxman’s exceptional carving of the Adoration of the Magi, a masterpiece of European neo-classicism.

A group of portraits, including: Francis Cotes’s wonderful pastel of Mary Colebrooke in its equally marvellous frame; representative examples of panels by Daniel Gardner and Hugh Douglas Hamilton. Charles James Fox, the giant of late eighteenth-century politics is depicted in Hamilton’s pastel made for the sitter’s cousin, the 1st Duke of Leinster, as well as by Thomas Lawrence, in what is possibly the most psychologically engaging of all the portraits of this larger than life figure. Lawrence’s early masterpiece of 1796, his study of Arthur Atherley, demonstrates all the qualities that was to make this future President of the Royal Academy the most renowned portraitist in Europe.

Another theme is ‘on the spot’ landscape studies. The sequence of Turner sketchbook pages of 1824 show this great artist at his most incisive and they demonstrate the various techniques that he was able to employ with such prowess whilst working en plein air. This is a quality demonstrated in Edward Lear’s great drawing of the Cedars of Lebanon executed twenty years later, in a watercolour study which he considered one of his masterpieces.

This year this catalogue is accompanied by a second volume devoted to the work of Thomas Gainsborough.

I am extremely grateful to Jonny Yarker who has researched and written many of the entries in this catalogue and to Deborah Greenhalgh who, as always, has dealt with all other details of its production with her usual efficiency.

Lowell Libson
William John Bankes 1786–1855

Two Wings of an Altarpiece

Watercolour and gouache on vellum: 22 ¼ x 7 ½ inches · 565 x 188 mm
Painted circa 1804.

Collections

This remarkable pair of panels were made by the great connoisseur and collector William Bankes to decorate the Gothic ‘chapel’ he created in his set of rooms at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1803. The ‘chapel’, elements of which still survive in the south range of Trinity’s Great Court, was the whimsical creation of Bankes, the richest and most exuberant of a remarkable group of undergraduates, which included George Gordon, Lord Byron. Bankes would go on to become one of the greatest art collectors of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, but more than this, he proved himself to be one of the most innovative decorators of the period, creating a series of unprecedented interiors at his Dorset house, Kingston Lacy. These panels, along with the surviving interior of the ‘chapel’ itself, give a remarkable early insight into his artistic inventiveness and tastes.

In a letter to his grandmother, Bankes explained the disposition of his rooms at Trinity shortly after matriculating in November 1803, noting he had a large drawing room:

about the size of one of the front rooms in Palace Yard [the Bankes’s London home]. It is uncommonly neatly, though not expensively, furnished, and my bedroom is very suitable to it with all its accoutrements. I have also a third room which has no fireplace and I use it rather as a light closet than a dwelling room. Three of my windows look into the quadrangle and one looks backward with a view of Caius College, Trinity Hall and King’s Chapel … My library is a very great and useful ornament to my rooms, which are now as well furnished as any in college.1

It was in the ‘light closet’, which Bankes called his ‘Chapel’, that he created a remarkable essay in early neo-Gothic design, inserting a theatrically molded Gothic ceiling painted with armorial escutcheons, the vaulting supported by angel-headed bosses, on the walls he had painted a screen of Gothic decoration and the plain seventeenth-century College windows fronted with faux-Gothic tracery. The furniture of this small room – which Bankes himself christened the ‘Chapel’ – also included an altar.

It is clear that the interior achieved a degree of celebrity during Bankes’s residence in College. Writing in 1822, the year Bankes had been elected MP for Cambridge University, the great Trinity scientist Adam Sedgwick noted: ‘Our representative Bankes is certainly a very extraordinary man, and possesses a wonderful fund of entertaining anecdotes. When an undergraduate he was half suspected of being a Papist; and he almost frightened Dr Ramsden to death, by building in his rooms an altar at which he daily burned incense, and frequently had the singing boys dressed in their surplices to chant services.’2

According to Byron, Bankes was fond of ‘profane jests’ and this certainly seems to explain the spirit of Bankes’s rooms: the false ceiling, painted decoration, incense and choir boys in costume. It was an interior designed in full sympathy with those created by Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill and – perhaps more potently – William Beckford at Fonthill, which was close to the Bankes’s estate, Kingston Lacy. Indeed Bankes’s sense of the theatrical was legendary and much commented upon by contemporaries, the poet Thomas Moore noted that having ‘fitted up some of his rooms in imitation of a Catholic Chapel and used to have the Singing Boys in dress suitable to the occasion, come and sing there for him, and it was constantly asked “what...
the devil does Sir Bankes do with those singing boys?'" 

Bankes was a talented amateur artist and a large number of drawings from his Continental travels survive at Kingston Lacy, underlining his ability as a draughtsman and his intense interest in Gothic architecture. Bankes's spare, minutely observed studies of tracery and funerary monuments accord in style to the present panels. Surviving correspondence from Bankes's uncle, Sir William Wynne, reveals the antiquarian sources for his decoration. Wynne sent him prints of Durham and Exeter cathedrals, noting: 'I apprehend what you have already … will supply you with as many Gothick ornaments as can well be employed in the intended improvements of your rooms.'

The iconography of these panels is completely in tune with both Bankes's scholarly interest in architecture and his sense of humour. The left hand panel comprises a kneeling knight, in a gilded tunic with the Bankes coat of arms – composed of four fleur-de-lis – hanging round his neck and behind him a bunch of lilies. Issuing from the figure’s mouth is a Latin inscription – ‘Dominus Labiis Mea Apertis’ [‘Thou O Lord wilt open my lips’] – taken from the first line of the Office of Matins. Above the kneeling figure on the left hand panel can be read as a self-portrait of Bankes himself. In the context of Bankes's role as the 'father of all mischief', as Byron called him, and the elaborate setting of the present panels in his rooms at university, they demand to be read as a joke, perhaps underscoring Bankes's obvious lack of virtue.

The survival of a pair of these narrow panels beg the question of their original position and function within the ‘Chapel’ of Bankes’s rooms at Trinity. One proposal has been that they formed part of an early English screen which belonged to Bankes and which is now on loan to St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds. Another is that they were used to flank an existing work or another panel made by Bankes which has been subsequently lost. In their sophistication and playfulness they are an exceptional survival from Bankes’s earliest known essay in interior decoration and are an important survival of early neo-Gothicism.
The Education of Achilles

Pen and brown ink over pencil on paper
13 ¾ x 10 ⅝ inches · 350 x 270 mm
Stamped lower left with an unidentified collector’s mark: ‘CHB’
Drawn in 1772

The drawing is a fluid and confident line study depicting his initial idea for the Yale picture, which illustrates the story of the young Achilles being instructed by the centaur Chiron. Chiron was renowned for his goodness and wisdom and was the teacher of a number of celebrated heroes in the classical world. Here he instructs the youthful Achilles in the use of weapons, in the arts, symbolised by the lyre, and in mathematics, represented in the painting by a Euclidean diagram traced on the ground at the end of Achilles’ robe. As William Pressly has pointed out, in spirit Barry’s picture is more closely attuned to the tragic characterisation of the mature Achilles found in Homer’s Iliad rather than to the less gloomy accounts of his early education found in Pindar’s Third Nemean Ode, Statius’ Achilleid, and Philostratus the Elder’s Imagines. The present drawing offers important evidence of Barry’s initial idea and significantly the sources of his inspiration for the composition.

Writing to Burke in April 1769 Barry noted:

The object of my studies is rather contracting itself every day, and concentrating upon a few principal things, compositions of one, or a few figures, three or four at most, turning upon some particular of beauty, distress, or some other simple obvious thing, like what is to be seen in the antique groups, or like what is told of the Greek painters, which exactly corresponds with what we find in the statues that remain of them.”

James Barry travelled to Italy in 1766 with the single aim, as he wrote to his friend and patron Edmund Burke, of ‘forming myself for a history painter’. In practice this meant studying the greatest sculptures of antiquity and Italian art to develop a visual language which could be deployed in historical compositions of his own. Barry designed a number of important history paintings whilst in Italy including his great painting of The Education of Achilles now in the Yale Center for British Art. Whilst the painting, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy shortly after Barry’s return to Britain in 1772, seems likely to have been painted in London, the present important, previously unpublished, preparatory drawing was probably made in Italy. In its combination of visual and literary sources, it represents an extraordinary distillation of Barry’s self-conscious fashioning as a ‘history painter’. 2

James Barry RA 1741–1806

The Education of Achilles
some particular of beauty, distress or some he depicted: ‘a few figures … turning upon
the ceiling of the Stanza della Segnatura. For Barry, Raphael was the
Raphael painted on the ceiling of the Stanza
della Segnatura. For Barry, Raphael was the
is closely modeled on the figure of Apollo
figure of Achilles, seen almost in profile,
conventionally celebrated master.

immediate influence may have been a
ancient painting of the same subject-matter
of Achilles

As William Pressly has pointed out Barry’s
critical of the fresco in a letter to Burke.
The Education of Achilles

‘compositions of one, or a few figures’ and

Barry turned to the two great sculptures
of Achilles
of Achilles

Because Barry turned to the two great sculptures

of Polyphemus, c.1508–11

Neither a prolific nor a particularly
certain draughtsman, Barry made two
preparatory studies for The Education
of Achilles: the present sheet and a drawing
now in the Ashmolean. This underlines
the importance of the composition to Barry’s
development as a ‘history painter’. The present
sheet is the most fully developed and
ambitious of the two studies and is strikingly
different from the finished painting, giving
important insight into the gestation of the
project. Barry has carefully delineated the
musculature of Chiron’s chest emphasizing
its importance to his future work.

Barry knew and admired the works of both
sculptors.

Barry had heard news of the newly
founded Royal Academy from amongst
others in his first President, Sir Joshua Reynolds,
in his arrival in Rome. He must therefore
have been aware of the importance of a new
public forum for the exhibition of historical
works in London and begun to prepare
works specifically for this market and The
Education of Achilles was amongst his earliest
exhibits, being shown at the Academy in
1774. This sheet is therefore an important
record of an early historical design by Barry
made in preparation for perhaps the most
significant painting of his early career.

BEQUESTED
London, Burlington Fine Arts Club
Exhibition of the French School of the 18th Century, 1937, no.63, as ‘Cardinal York.

NOTES
Louis-Gabriel Blanchet
1705–1772

Portrait of a Gentleman
Oil on canvas
30 x 22 inches · 760 x 572 mm
Signed L. Blanchet, upper left
Painted in the mid 1740s
RECEIVED
London, Burlington Fine Arts Club
Exhibition of the French School of the 18th Century, 1937, no.63, as ‘Cardinal York.

During the eighteenth century portraitist in
Rome developed a distinctive, cosmopolitan
style as practitioners from outside the city
dominated the field: the Frenchman Pierre
Subleyras, the Lucchese Pompeo Batoni,
the Bohemian Anton Raphael Mengs and
Austrian Anton von Maron. One reason for
this diversity was Rome’s prominence as a
place of artistic and educational pedigree
for young artists and travellers from
other European nations undertaking the
‘Grand Tour’. The present exceptionally
fine portrait is illustrative of the distinctive
French style as well as the mode of ‘Grand
Tour’ portraitist, made by the celebrated
French portraitist Louis-Gabriel Blanchet, it
probably depicts a foreign visitor to the
city proudly holding a book, a prop suggestive
of both learning and the implicit educational
function of travel in the mid-eighteenth century.
Blanchet occupies an important – if
now neglected – position in the development of
portraiture in Rome during the first half
of the eighteenth century and this portrait
is a strikingly assured and finely executed
example of his early work.

Blanchet was born in St Etienne in 1705,
the son of a súdit du chevalier de Monnier
Blouin, himself the principal valet of Louis
xvi. In 1729 he served second place in the Prix
de Rome competition, missing out on the
first prize to his friend Pierre Subleyras.
This success enabled him to move to Rome
and study at the Académie de France à Rome,
situated in Palazzo Mancini on the Corso,
which was then under the direction of the
painter Vleughels. Blanchet’s earliest
dated portrait depicts Vleughels’s brother-
in-law, the Roman painter Giovanni Paolo
Panini. The portrait of Panini which is dated
1736, demonstrates how Blanchet’s earliest
works were a careful combination of the
rich palette of Italian Maratteschi painters,
such as Marco Benefial and the grand visual
language of Baroque French portraiture.

Blanchet soon established a thriving
portrait practice and was encouraged by the
patronage of the Duc de Saint-Aignan,
the French ambassador, who had arrived in
Rome in 1724.

Among the seven paintings acquired by
the Duc de Saint-Aignan was the double
portrait of the Reverend Fathers François
Jacques and Thomas Lecoeur of 1754 (Musée

Louis-Gabriel Blanchet
Giovanni Paolo Panini, 1736

Courtesu of Colnaghi, London and Bernheimer, Munich
des Beaux Arts, Nantes), mathematicians who contributed to the scientific reputation of the Minim convent of S. Trinità, they are depicted amidst telescopes, an armillary sphere, and celestial globe. Blanchet’s portraits of two rich Lyonese, the brothers Claude Telémaco D’Amorante and Louis Telémaco de Montferrand of 1758 (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon and The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore), underline his elegant, luminous, and colourful style of painting. 5 Blanchet is most famous for his portraits of members of the exiled Stuart Court. In 1736 he graduated from the Académie, but decided not to return to France, instead Blanchet remained in Rome; the annual census (Stati delle anime) reveal that he shared lodgings with Pierre Subleyras. 6 Following the death of the painter Antonio David in 1727, Blanchet was commissioned by King James III (the Old Pretender) to paint copies of portraits of his sons by Jean-Etienne Liotard. 7 This contact with the Stuart Court resulted in a number of commissions from other Jacobites resident in the city and probably brought Blanchet to the attention of other British Grand Tourists. 8 Blanchet’s portraits of the Stuart princes look similar to the work of his most celebrated contemporary, his friend and fellow Academician Pierre Subleyras. Subleyras arrived in Rome in 1736, having won first prize in the Prix de Rome in 1727, according to Vleughels’s correspondence, he quickly distinguished himself as a portraitist also attracting the patronage of the Duc de Saint-Aignan. 9 A portrait he executed in

Pierre Subleyras
Horatio Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford, c. 1746
Oil on canvas · 38.1 x 29 inches · 97 x 73.7 cm
© Leeds Museums and Galleries (Temple Newsam House) / The Bridgeman Art Library

Louis-Gabriel Blanchet
Portrait of a gentleman, c.1739
Oil on canvas
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nîmes, France / Giraudon / The Bridgeman Art Library
Irish painter James Barry in 1766. Plans and books as well as a portrait of the architect Jacobite court. In 1753 he painted a portrait of British painters and travellers outside the antique sculpture or an interior view giving an unusual intensity to this work.

This accomplished portrait perfectly demonstrates the qualities which made the French painters trained in the 1720s the leading portraitists in Rome in the middle of the century. The masterful handling of costume demonstrates why the work of painters like Blanchet and Subleyras had such a great impact on their Italian contemporaries, particularly Pompeo Batoni. Although the sitter has not, so far, been identified, this painting is a highly stylish Grand Tour portrait and probably depicts a traveller in Rome.

The portrait: the sitter’s identity, as with many of Blanchet’s Roman works, is unknown – also shows strong similarities with Blanchet’s earlier portrait of Panini, particularly in terms of the pose and handling. The sitter is shown seated facing to the right in a similar blue-coat with gold frogging, which contrasts to the voluminous russet cloak which suggests a classical Roman toga. As Bowron has noted writing about the portrait of Panini it is these elements which demonstrate: Blanchet’s usual confident command of light, color and texture. 9 This sitter’s hand is shown resting on a book, but unlike in later portraits by Blanchet, the spine of the book is left blank and in contrast to his later works, the back ground is not ornamented with vegetation, antique sculpture or an intimate view giving an unusual intimacy to this work. 10

Blanchet was in contact with a number of British painters and travellers outside the Jacobite court. In 1753 he painted a portrait of the architect William Chambers, shown in an oval with a number of architectural plans and books as well as a portrait of the Irish painter James Barry in 1756. 11 Blanchet painted numerous English tourists, including a fine portrait of Henry Willoughby, Lord Hildesdon and Henry, 1st Baron Ainsdale of Wansford. 12 But Blanchet’s greatest impact on British painters was through his innovative landscape drawing, he was one of a number of French painters living in Italy who pioneered the use of drawing plein air studies in black and white chalks on blue or grey paper, which had an enormous impact on artists such as Richard Wilson and his Danish follower Johan Mandelberg, whose portrait Blanchet painted (Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen).

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Notes

1. Blanchet has received only one dedicated scholarly article: Olivier Michel, “Un pittore francese a Roma, Louis-Gabriel Blanchet,” Strenna dei romanisti, 57, 1996, pp. 47–64.
Pastel
25½ x 29½ inches · 650 x 750 mm
Signed and dated F Cotes pxt 1766, lower left
In the original important English rococo frame.

Collections
Probably Sir George Colebrooke, the sitter’s uncle;
By descent, 2013.

Literature

With respect to Crayon Painting, the present age has produced an uncommon instance of excellence in one of our own Countrymen. I mean the late Mr. Francis Cotes… it seems to be universally allowed by all good judges, that as a Crayon Painter, this celebrated artist excelled most of his Contemporaries.¹

The spectacular, previously unpublished portrait of Mary Colebrooke is one of Francis Cotes’s finest and most complex pastels, made at the height of his career. Signed and dated 1766 and housed in a magnificent English Rococo frame, the portrait remained unknown to scholars until 2013. Cotes, one of the most celebrated portraitists of the mid-century, a founder member of the Royal Academy and widely patronised by London society, was enjoying a reputation equal to that of Reynolds at the time of his premature death in 1770. As his pupil James Russell observed, it was ‘universally allowed that as a Crayon Painter, Cotes excelled most of his Contemporaries’, who included Rosalba Carriera, Jean-Étienne Liotard and Jean Baptiste Perronneau. Although Russell’s comments should be read as an assertion of Cotes’s superiority over his British contemporaries, particularly Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough something suggested by his magnificent portrait of Mary Colebrooke, in which Cotes proves that he was fully master of the ‘Grand Manner’ in pastel portraiture.

Born in London in 1726, Cotes was of Irish extraction (his father had been mayor of Galway in 1716). He spent his working life in Britain and was apprenticed to the successful portraitist and print-seller George Knapton in 1747. His earliest works appear similar in style and execution to those of Knapton, and another of Knapton’s pupils, Arthur Pond. By 1755 Cotes had established a successful portrait practice, enabling him to take a lease on a house at 33 Cavendish Square. Situated on the south side of the square, it was described in the sale catalogue after his death as a ‘Large and commodious House, with an elegant Suite of Five Rooms on the First Floor, and Coach Houses and Stabling’. The house, located in a fashionable part of London, was remodelled by Cotes to include, in addition to his own studio, a room for pupils to paint in, and a gallery or ‘Shew Room’. It was from this address that Cotes is listed exhibiting at the Society of Artists throughout the 1760s and the present picture may well be identifiable as the ‘portrait of a lady; in crayons’ he exhibited in 1766.²

An unusually large and ambitious pastel, it shows the sitter, Mary Colebrooke, eldest daughter of Sir James Colebrooke, aged 16 in a landscape leaning against a herm of Flora. Cotes has dressed Mary Colebrooke in loose, classicising costume: a pink shift, tied with a blue and yellow sash and adorned at the sleeves with elaborate jewels. Cotes used the same costume for his portrait of Mrs Child exhibited at the Society of Artists the same year and now in the collection of the Earl of Jersey.³ The modish pose, setting and costume were staples of fashionable portraiture in the mid-1760s. The idea of posing a beautiful young sitter in a sylvan landscape, with the suggestion of a classical setting – in the form of the sculpted herm – was one that had been made fashionable by Joshua Reynolds. In the same year Reynolds produced a portrait of Emily Wynyard, which is strikingly similar to Cotes’s portrait. Around 1766 Cotes produced some of...
his most spectacular works in pastel. The present highly sophisticated composition can be compared with the portrait of Frances Ann Hoare at Stourhead, Wiltshire. The composition, scale and approach all suggest that the present work should be viewed as one of Cotes’s most accomplished and successful pastel portraits.

In his Elements of Painting with Crayons, published in 1777, John Russell outlined the method of executing pastel portraits he learned from Cotes. We therefore have a remarkable exposition of Cotes’s working practice. In line with contemporary painting, the ‘animal’ of the sitter was essential, if a young Lady express more vivacity than in the majestic beauty of a middle-aged Woman.” Cotes has accordingly portrayed Mary Colebrooke outside, her hand casually holding a flower and resting on the herm of Flora. After explaining the rudiments of preparing the paper, which was generally blue in colour and supported on canvas, Russell discusses the method of taking the sketchof drawing with a sketch, before laying in the features. This having been completed, the painter uses a ‘Crayon of pure Carmine’ to ‘carefully draw the Noyed and Edge of the Nose, next the shadow, then, with the fairest Carmine Teint, lay in the highest light upon the Nose and Forehead, which must be executed broad.’ Once this ‘dead colouring’ was finished, the painter was instructed to ‘sweeten the whole together, by rubbing it over with his finger.’ Then the background, applied only very thinly closest to the head, to aid the illusion of volume, and finally the finishing ‘teints’ ‘vermilion’ on the forehead, the cheeks ‘a few touches and finally the finishing ‘teints’: ‘vermillion’

eyes ‘the most difficult feature to execute’, he advised using a sharpened pastel and the ‘finger as little as possible’. All these characteristic elements can be seen masterfully deployed by Cotes in his portrait of Mary Colebrooke. Edward Edwards recorded that Cotes charged ‘twenty guineas for a three-quarter, forty for a half-length, and eighty for a whole length;’ Edward Johnson has pointed out ‘three-quarter length’ refers to pictures 30 x 20 cm.” According to Edwards the present portrait would therefore have cost as guineas, although the arboreal evidence of other portraits of the same date suggest it would have been slightly more. In line with other pastellists of the period, Cotes would have offered frames and glases at an additional cost. The evidence suggests that Cotes generally supplied three types of frame: a standard Carlo-Marata pattern, an English Palladian frame and a French-inspired rococo frame, which as Jacob Simon has pointed out, was an anglicised version of the type favoured by Jean-François Léraud. This last type – which Cotes used for his portrait of Frances Hoare – was notably less decorated than the frame Cotes used for the portrait of Mary Colebrooke. Whilst the general pattern is the same, it has been embellished with carved floral swags of outstanding quality and the picture frame is sculpted to a far higher standard suggesting the frame-maker was instructed directly by the patron rather than Cotes. In this case, this is likely to have been the sitter’s uncle, Sir George Colebrooke of Gatonby Park in Surrey.
ALEXANDER COZENS 1717–1786

A small pool with willow trees

Brown washes on laid paper
8 x 11½ inches · 208 x 291 mm
Signed on original mount lower left: Alex. r Cozens
Drawn circa 1770.

collections
Miss Aynscombe, niece of George Chaloner;
Katherine Townshend, her cousin, who married the Rev. Thomas Bisse;
Col. T. C. Bisse Chaloner (1789–1872), son of the above, who married Henrietta de Salis;
The Rev H. J. de Salis (1828–1915), brother-in-law of the above;
Major O. J. de Salis, great grandson of the above, 1982;
Leger Galleries, London, 1982;
H. L. Dannhauser, to 2013.

Exhibited

In an age addicted to the systematisation of the natural sciences Alexander Cozens’s preoccupation was paradoxically seen as both unexceptional and obsessional as his friend, patron and pupil William Beckford when speaking of Cozens noted that he was ‘Almost as full of Systems as the Universe’. The complicating factor was the number of variables which he developed during a long career which saw the publication of only a few elements of his philosophy regarding the aesthetics of nature and its depiction. Indeed, one subscriber to his 1778 ‘Principles of Beauty’ was to write hoping that ‘it has spoke more intelligibly to you than it seems to do to most people’. In the headings that Cozens was to produce for his 1795 ‘The Various Species of Composition of Landscape’ he was to list no.12 as ‘A lake, or a piece of water’ surrounded in Taste.

In spite of the apparent simplicity of his theories Cozens enjoyed his activities as a drawing master and had a large and loyal roster of clients throughout his career. Cozens’s ultimate importance, for he inspired no ‘school’ of professional followers other than his son, was his influence on more than a generation of collectors and arbiters of taste through his teaching activities. In 1770 Edmund Burke published what was perhaps the most important work of the period on aesthetics, his ‘Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful’ and it was this work that helped Alexander and subsequently his son, John Robert, to develop a visual language to convey the emotional responses that Burke discussed on.

The present drawing executed, entirely with the brush in brown ink, is typical of the ‘beautiful’ effects that Cozens strove to achieve through the dynamics of a balanced composition. John Robert Cozens was to develop his father’s aesthetics specifically in the treatment of trees within the landscape in the soft-ground etchings of 1789 published as Delineations of the General Character, Ramifications and Foliage of Forest Trees. Cozens’s influence can especially be seen in the work of Gainsborough who would undoubtedly have had access to Alexander Cozens’s work.

1 Harriet Lister to John Grimston, Grimston papers, Humberside County Record Office, 42/148.

| 34 |
JOHN ROBERT COZENS 1752–1797

On the Arve in Savoy

Watercolour over pencil
9¼ x 14¼ inches · 238 x 363 mm
Signed lower left: J. Cozens
Inscribed on the original mount:
On the Arve in Savoy
Painted circa 1776

Collections
Professor J. H. Abram
Norman D. Newall,
and by descent, 1979;
Private collection, 2013.

Literature
C. F. Bell and T. Girtin, 'The Drawings
and Sketches of John Robert Cozens',
Walpole Society, Vol. XXIII, 1935, no.4ii.

Exhibited
Manchester, Whitworth Art Gallery,
Watercolour Drawings by J. R. Cozens
and J. S. Cotman, 1937, no.47.

This atmospheric Alpine view was painted
during John Robert Cozens's first, hugely
influential Continental trip. Travelling in the
company of the great collector and connois-
seur Richard Payne Knight, Cozens set out
for Italy in August 1776, first undertaking a
short Alpine tour. It was in the monumental
landscape of the Alps, that Cozens saw at
first hand the ideas of the sublime in nature
which he had learnt from his artist father,
Alexander Cozens and other theorists, such
as Edmund Burke. The watercolours Cozens
produced over his two months in France
and Switzerland are regarded as some of
the most compelling of the eighteenth century
and as Kim Sloan has noted, in them:
Cozens had finally lifted watercolour painting
out of the topographical recording of nature, to
a new level where it was capable of fulfilling the
serious intentions of art as oil painting.

Cozens and Payne Knight followed
a typical round trip from Geneva which
included visiting Bonneville, Cluse,
Sallanches, Mont Blanc, Chamonix and
Martigny. In a contemporary guidebook, the
area was described in the following terms:
The overhanging rocks of a prodigious height,
and torrents pouring down in sheets from their
very summits, are such wonders of Nature, as
it is impossible to look upon without a mixture
of astonishment and awe.

This combination of 'astonishment and
awe' were precisely the feelings Cozens
captured in the views he made for Payne
Knight. The present sheet shows a view on
the river Arve in Savoy close to the town
of Sallanches. It is based on one of the
watercolours Cozens made for Payne Knight
which later passed to the British Museum.
The British Museum drawing is inscribed on the
back: 'Banks of the Arve near Salinche
in Savoy August 26 – 1776', making it one
of Cozens's earliest Alpine views.
As Kim Sloan has noted: 'upon entering the Arve
valley lined with mountains … Cozens
immediately seems to have found the
landscape which evoked a strong personal
response.' Cozens has taken evident
delight in the towering rock formations
on the right of the composition, placing
the escarpment almost at the top of the
composition, encroaching far into the space
generally reserved for the sky. The view
shows a debt to Alexander Cozens's theory
of composition which demanded that
masses should alternate on either side, thus
the peaks on the left are shown as lower
and less densely vegetated. The economic,
almost monochrome palette adds to the
drama of the scene, giving the masses of
the mountains an almost menacing quality.

The present drawing is probably a
slightly later version made by Cozens either
en route to Italy or once he was installed in
Rome. Recent work has shown that very
few watercolours were made 'on the spot'
by British artists travelling on the Continent
and from the visual evidence it seems likely
that Cozens's alpine watercolours were
based on a series of drawings which no
longer survive. But rather than detracting
from the atmosphere or verisimilitude
of the sheets, this detachment serves to
amplify the initial response to the land-
scape. Cozens was deeply affected by the
sublime nature of the Alpine scenery, but
he mediated his response through the
compositional theories of his father and
contemporary literary and poetic asso-
ciations. Thus the finished watercolours,
produced in his studio in Rome, become
a more concentrated expression of his
memories on seeing the original scenery and a clearer record of the emotions he felt. In the present watercolour – and the surviving Payne Knight sheet to which it is related – Cozens has heightened the escarpment on the right to add to the sense of ‘astonishment and awe’.

Preserved in its original wash-lined mount, the present drawing is an important and beautiful example from Cozens’s first great series of landscape watercolours. A visual essay on responses to the sublime in nature, Cozens’s View on the Arve and other sheets from this Alpine trip, had an enormous impact upon the next generation of landscape artists in Britain, including J. M. W. Turner and Thomas Girtin.

NOTES


John Robert Cozens
Banks of the Arve near Sallanches in Savoy, 1776
Watercolour · 9 x 13½ inches · 229 x 347 mm
Inscribed and dated verso
© The Trustees of the British Museum

John Robert Cozens
Between Sallanches and Servoz, Mont Blanc in the distance, 1776
Watercolour · 9 x 13⅞ inches · 232 x 352 mm
Dated and numbered verso
© The Trustees of the British Museum
The approach to Martigny, Rhone valley, Valais

Most British travellers to Italy during the eighteenth century went overland, crossing the Alps at Mont Cenis, rather than risking the journey by sea. The landscape of Switzerland therefore formed an essential component of the Grand Tour. It is not surprising therefore to find that from the mid-century the spectacular scenery began to receive attention from travelling English writers, philosophers and, most impressively, painters. In 1770 William Pars produced a series of watercolours of a Swiss tour he undertook with his patron Henry Temple, Viscount Palmerston, and in 1776 John Robert Cozens set out for Italy with the connoisseur Richard Payne Knight. Whilst Pars’s somewhat pedantic views betray their purpose as scientific observations, Cozens’s alpine views, made in the company of Payne Knight fully embody in their breadth, drama and atmosphere the proto-Romantic fascination with the sublime.

The present monumental sheet is a version of Cozens’s most successful and enduring Alpine view. Depicting the Rhone Valley in the canton of Valais, near Geneva, this watercolour perfectly embodies the emotional response to landscape articulated by the Irish politician and philosopher Edmund Burke. In his 1757 treatise, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Burke noted in a section on ‘vastness’:

I am apt to imagine likewise, that height is less grand than depth; and that we are more struck at looking down from a precipice, than looking up at an object of equal height.

This idea of an instinctive response to landscape that was not classically ‘picturesque’ but nevertheless inspired great feeling formed the bedrock of Cozens’s response to Continental scenery. In the binary established by Burke, Cozens’s views nearly always address the sublime rather than the beautiful. Here the small Swiss dwellings and tiny group of mounted figures in the foreground are dwarfed by the monumental landscape, the towering escarpment to the right and the expanse of the Rhone Valley dissolving towards the distant mountains. Whilst Burke’s influence may account for the intellectual context for Cozens’s view, compositionally it owes a great deal to the work of his father, Alexander Cozens. Alexander Cozens had made his own pioneering Grand Tour in 1746 and articulated his own approach to the art of composition in his *Various Species of Landscape* of 1760. Cozens senior attempted to reduce all nature to a series of general landscape types, or ‘species’ for the use of the artist. In the present work, John Robert Cozens has used his father’s general compositional plan, neatly framing the view of the Rhone Valley with the massed hills to the right and the clump of trees to the left and deliberately emphasising the meander of the river below to suggest distance. But unlike his father, who was not interested in topography, John Robert Cozens remained highly attuned to the realities of the landscape he portrayed: indeed his genius lay in his ability to transmute topographical studies into highly evocative and poetic essays on the sublime.

The present watercolour is based on a large squared pencil study, dated August 30th 1776, which formed part of a volume entitled *28 Sketches by J. Cozens of Views in Italy* now in the Sir John Soane’s Museum, London. The Soane Museum study is inscribed ‘Approach to Martignac Pais de Valais’ and was made on the spot, whilst he was travelling to Italy.
in the company of Richard Payne Knight. A smaller wash drawing derived from this in the Leeds City Art Gallery bears the inscription: 'Pays de Vallais / near the Lake Geneva.' This information suggests that the scene depicts a southward view of the valley between the east end of the lake and Montreux, where the travellers are likely to have turned up the valley towards the north-east, in the direction of Sion, capital of the canton. An old label formerly attached to the mount reads: 'The Valley of Sion, Switzerland.' This is likely to be a misconception as two of Cozens’s other versions of the view show the sun centrally placed, high in the sky, consistent with the southerly direction. Made at the beginning of their tour together, Cozens must have been conscious of the marketability of his Italian views carefully preparing the squared drawing for use in making a finished watercolour, either once settled in Rome or back in Britain. On the back of the Soane drawing Cozens made a list of the eight names of patrons who commissioned finished watercolours of this subject along with the price, 18 guineas each.’ Bell and Girtin suggest the list was compiled over a period of time. The patrons listed are: Sir R. Hoare, Mr Windham, Mr Wigstead, Mr Sunderland, Mr Chalie, Mr Walwin and Sir Frederick Eden.  

With the exception of the watercolour presented here, and the one commissioned by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, none of the others can be traced back to the collectors in Cozens’s list. The present work is the largest, and only signed example of this composition. A label formerly attached to the reverse of the watercolour reads Cozens or Payne/Deverell to my Father/Given me by Mrs Deverell. Another Cozens watercolour also formerly in the collection of N. D. Newall was also inscribed on a label in the same hand as belonging to Mrs Deverell and signed by William Eden. It was acquired by Newall at the same time and from the same source as the present watercolour. It seems likely, therefore, that the William Eden was Sir William Eden, 4th Bt the second son of Sir Frederick Morton Eden, and that Sir Frederick Morton Eden made a journey to Italy in 1790 and, very likely ordered this view from Cozens on his return, the artist adding his name to those who had already acquired versions. 

In spite of his short career, John Robert Cozens developed the theoretical exercises of his father into what John Constable, when speaking of his work, characterized as ‘poetry.’ A poetic conception of landscape which had a transformative impact upon the work of the next generation of British watercolourists, particularly J.M.W. Turner and Thomas Girtin who both copied Cozens’s work under the supervision of Dr Thomas Mumm. This monumental work, preserved in its original mount which is inscribed on the bottom left ‘In Cozens’, was made when he was at the height of his powers. It perfectly captures the poetic appeal which fired the imagination of the later generation of British landscape artists, while also remaining one of the quintessential images of the Grand Tour.
Oil on canvas
24⅜ x 29 inches · 620 x 737 mm
Signed and dated AD evis 1736, lower centre
Collections
Probably Anthony Devis, half-brother of Arthur Devis;
Ellin Devis, Arthur Devis’s daughter; a gift from the above;
Ellin Devis Marris, adopted daughter of the above; by bequest in 1820;
Arthur Tooth & Sons Ltd (as by Panini);
Private collection, UK, 1987;
The Leger Galleries, 1987;
The Hon. Simon Sainsbury, acquired from the above in 1987;
Sainsbury sale, Christie’s, 18th June 2008, lot 205 [the literature cited incorrectly in Christie’s catalogue entry applies to the painting listed by D’Oench (1979) as no.272];
Private collection, 2013

Literature
Ellen Gates D’Oench, Arthur Devis (1712–1787); Master of the Georgian Conversation Piece, A Dissertaiton Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Yale University in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 1979, cat no.272.

Arthur Devis is best known as a master of conversation pieces and full-length portraits in small scale, described by Sacheverell Sitwell as ‘the perfect small master of the school.’ His work as a painter of landscapes and architectural capriccios is less well known. This previously unpublished ruinscape, made in the manner of Giovanni Paolo Panini, sheds important light on his early career and crucially, his working methods. Signed and dated 1736, Devis evidently retained an affection for the painting, incorporating it into at least two of his interior conversation pieces. This catalogue entry contains important new information on Devis’s early career and art training in the north-west of Britain in the 1730s, as well as reproducing extracts from the unpublished will of Devis’s daughter.

Born in Preston, Lancashire, in 1712 Devis’s early training took place in the north-west where he worked with the Flemish painter Peter Tillemans. Tillemans seems to have spent time at Knowsley Hall in Lancashire in 1728–9, completing a number of spectacular landscapes depicting the house, park and James Stanley, 10th Earl of Derby’s racecourse.1 It is clear from the surviving correspondence of the 10th Earl that Knowsley, with its substantial collection of old master paintings, became an important base for artists in the region.2 We know at least one other of Tillemans’s pupils, Edward Coppock, stayed at Knowsley learning to draw, and in 1736 George Stubbs arrived to copy paintings supervised by his master, Hamlet Winstanley. According to Stubbs’s earliest biographer, Onas Humphry, the first picture he attempted to copy at Knowsley was a ruinscape by Giovanni Paolo Panini.3 It is highly suggestive that at the same date Devis was also completing a work strongly influenced by the Italian painter Panini. Further investigation reveals that the present painting, which is not a copy of any existing Panini design, but is in fact a composition directly derived from a drawing by Hamlet Winstanley that is contained in a sketchbook now in the Warrington Museum and Art Gallery. Winstanley had visited Italy in 1723–1725 and filled a sketchbook with topographical landscape drawings and subsequently produced a number of capriccio studies derived from those accurate drawings. One such sheet depicts the Castel Sant’Angelo behind a classical church and campanile identical to the buildings on the right hand side of Devis’s painting. Devis’s use of such an idiosyncratic set of structures seems certain to have derived from Winstanley’s drawing adding further to the supposition that Devis trained at Knowsley and continued to have contact there throughout his early years in nearby Preston.

Turning to the painting itself, it appears to be a conventional digest of classic Roman monuments, arranged to form a fanciful ruinscape. On the far left of the composition...
are the three columns of the Temple of Castor and Pollux from the Forum in Rome; in the left foreground is the remains of a torso of Venus, prominently in the background is Trajan’s Column and behind is the dome of Santa Maria dei Loreto; to the right a profile of the Capitoline and on the far right the group of buildings borrowed from Winstanley’s drawing. Standing amongst the ruins is a group of figures, in vaguely classical costume, in discussion. The works of Giovanni Paolo Panini were extremely fashionable amongst British collectors from the mid-1730s onwards, Devis’s painting and more importantly his conduit, in the form of William Atherton and his wife Lucy, c.1743. Anthony Devis was one of the more talented artists competing for patronage in London in the 1740s without having travelled to Italy it would have served as a powerful testamement of his Continental sophistication to master fashionable Italianate models. For an ambitious and highly talented artist competing for patronage in London in the 1740s without having travelled to Italy it would have served as a powerful testament of his Continental sophistication and abilities to master fashionable Italianate models.

Given the squarish format of the present painting it seems likely that it was designed as an overdoor. This is confirmed by Devis’s inclusion of elements from the present composition in at least two of his earliest conversation pieces. The profile of the three columns from the Temple of Castor and Pollux, Venus’s torso and standing figures are visible in a painting placed above a door on the right-hand side of Devis’s early masterpiece the Crewe Conversation Piece. Painted in about 1735, it is widely regarded as Devis’s most important early work. The present painting is also visible hanging over the mantelpiece in his painting of William Atherton and his Wife Lucy (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool). D’Oench raised the possibility that this view may relate to a work by Devis, but did not explicitly link it with the present painting despite the picture hanging in the Allotrians Conversation Piece precisely replicating the right-hand side of the present composition. The existence of another raincape by Devis in the manner of Panini of a similar size, also signed and dated 1736 (last recorded on the London market in 1939), makes it highly likely that the present picture is one of the pair mentioned in the first part of Devis’s will. The present painting it seems likely that it was designed

Arthur Devis
The Crewe conversation piece, 1735,
and detail (right)
Oil on canvas · 28¼ x 50 inches · 724 x 1270 mm
Private collection

Oil on canvas · 36 inches · 914 mm
Private collection

Oil on canvas · 32 inches · 812 mm
Private collection

Oil on canvas · 21 inches · 533 mm
Classical ruins with figures
Classical ruins with figures
The Crewe conversation piece
The Crewe conversation piece
The Crewe conversation piece

Ellin Devis’s will.

The existing of another raincape by Devis in the manner of Panini is important for our understanding of Devis’s early career. It raises the possibility of his contact with Hamlet Winstanley in about 1736 – and therefore with George Stubbs – giving a context for his early work at Knowsley and a crucial clue in understanding his work as a painter of decorative overdoors. Its presence in Ellin Devis’s will and appearance in a number of his most significant early composition also underscores the importance of the work to Devis himself. For an ambitious and highly talented artist competing for patronage in London in the 1740s without having travelled to Italy it would have served as a powerful testament of his Continental sophistication and abilities to master fashionable Italianate models.

Arthur Devis

NOTES
2 Ellen D’Oench, Arthur Devis (1724–1791), Master of the Georgians Conversation Piece: A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Yale University in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 1979, p.10.
7 Judy Egerton, Anthony Devis was Arthur Devis’s young half-brother, he practiced as a landscape painter in Preston and later London and may have retained the two captive paintings when Arthur moved to London in 1742. Other than nine landscape works in watercolour by Devis included in Tilleman’s sale in 1731 – which included copies after van Bloemen, Panini and Rici and all remain untraced – no other imitations or copies by Devis are known strengthening the identification of our picture as one of those mentioned in Ellin Devis’s will.
8 Exceptionally finely executed, this painting is important for our understanding of Devis’s early career. It raises the possibility of his contact with Hamlet Winstanley in about 1736 – and therefore with George Stubbs – giving a context for his early work at Knowsley and a crucial clue in understanding his work as a painter of decorative overdoors. Its presence in Ellin Devis’s will and appearance in a number of his most significant early composition also underscores the importance of the work to Devis himself. For an ambitious and highly talented artist competing for patronage in London in the 1740s without having travelled to Italy it would have served as a powerful testament of his Continental sophistication and abilities to master fashionable Italianate models.
JOHN FLAXMAN RA

The Adoration of the Magi

Marble

9 x 17 inches · 228 x 430 mm

Executed circa 1792–94

Collections

Private collection, since 2003

Exhibited

London, Tate Britain, Return of the Gods, 2008, no.9;

Literature

David Bindman, ‘John Flaxman’s Adoration of the Magi Rediscovered’, Apollo, 162, no.526, 2005, pp.40–45.;

This remarkable relief sculpture looks, at first sight, as though it was made in the twentieth century: the purity and economy of line produces an abstraction of form wholly without precedent in relief sculpture of the eighteenth century. Carved by John Flaxman in Rome sometime between 1792 and his departure in 1794, it represents a startling distillation of his fascination with both Greek art – particularly vase painting – and the sculpture and painting of the Italian quattrocento. Scholars have long discerned these influences in Flaxman’s pioneering illustrations to Homer and Dante, the publication of which represented a watershed in the development of European Neo-Classicism, but it is only with the recent rediscovery of the present relief that their full realization in his sculpture can be appreciated. As such, this highly personal and intimate piece deserves not only a place as one of Flaxman’s most important works in marble, but as one of the most sophisticated and extraordinary sculptures made in late eighteenth-century Europe.

Unknown to scholarship until 2003 when it was rediscovered on the art market, and first published by the leading Flaxman authority David Bindman in Apollo Magazine in 2005, the relief has already generated a great deal of interest having been exhibited in Oxford at the Ashmolean; Berlin in a dedicated exhibition at the Bode Museum and London at Tate Britain. The design had long been known from drawings in the British Museum and Yale Center for British Art and a plaster cast of the original model in the collection of the Sir John Soane’s Museum, London, but these studies gave no sense of the finished marble, which because of its extraordinary quality and startling individuality, Bindman has concluded was one of the very few sculptures Flaxman finished entirely himself, without studio assistance. Despite the subject-matter being religious, the tender and intimate character of the design suggests that it was a highly personal work, possibly made for Flaxman’s wife, rather than as a commission. This note offers a brief adumbration of the artistic and cultural context of the production of Flaxman’s relief as well as its known history.

Flaxman, Neo-classicism and early Italian art

Flaxman arrived in Italy with his wife in 1787 at a highly important moment in the development of European taste. Connoisseurs, collectors and other artists were beginning to notice and explore early Italian art, discerning in works of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries new and appealing qualities. Flaxman’s own early Italian notebooks are filled with observations on monuments not on the conventional itinerary of most Grand Tourists, which tended to focus on antiquities and works from the High Renaissance and Baroque. Flaxman was particularly attracted to quattrocento sculpture and painting. Whilst in Florence in November 1787, Flaxman recorded seeing a fresco by the fifteenth-century painter Lorenzo di Credi of The Assumption on the exterior wall of the convent adjacent to S. Croce, observing: ‘this composition is simple & grand, the character innocent & beautiful & the folds of the draperies marked with intelligence.’ For Flaxman the simplicity and grandeur of early Italian sculpture and painting became a highly important influence on his own style.
These were qualities Flaxman had already encountered and explored in Etruscan vase painting. Before his departure for the Continent, Flaxman had been employed by Josiah Wedgwood to translate designs from ancient vases onto Wedgwood’s ceramics. Flaxman had relied upon drawings of Etruscan vases in the collection of Sir William Hamilton, the British Minister in Naples, prepared by the Baron d’Hancarville. The Etruscan designs disseminated by Hamilton, d’Hancarville and Wilhelm Tischbein had a demonstrable impact upon Flaxman’s work. Scholars have long appreciated the economy of line and frieze-like arrangement Flaxman took from the vases, particularly in his pioneering illustrations to Homer and Dante. Flaxman’s trip to Italy was partially funded by Wedgwood and once in Rome he initially followed a conventional round of study, making a number of drawings from antiquities. His Roman sculptures reflect this initial interest and he produced a number of compositions, most famously the Fury of Athamas for Frederick Hervey, 4th Earl of Bristol, which synthesised elements of the most noted Roman sculpture with subjects from antiquity. The Fury of Athamas relied for its composition on the ancient figure of Niobe in the Uffizi and Laocoon in the Vatican. Whereas the Fury of Athamas recalls the sophistication of Canova’s most heroic figure groups, the Adoration of the Magi for the Uffizi and Leicesters in the Vatican. Whereas the Fury of Athanas recalls the sophistication of Canova’s most heroic figure groups, the Adoration of the Magi for the Uffizi and Leicesters in the Vatican. A fact Flaxman later reinforced in his Lecture ‘On Composition’, delivered at the Royal Academy in his capacity as Professor of Sculpture, ‘it must be remembered, the work is sculpture, which allows no picturesque additions or effect of background; the story must be told, and the field occupied by the figure and acts of man.’ It was undoubtedly the clarity of action, stripped of all ‘picturesque details’, which stimulated Flaxman’s attraction to early Italian sculpture and paintings.

Flaxman had studied at the Royal Academy Schools in the 1770s, would undoubtedly have known the casts and shortly after arriving in Florence made a study from Ghiberti’s doors themselves. But Patch’s enthusiasm for early Italian art was reflected by his understanding of sixteenth and seventeenth century works. In his life of Masaccio he included engravings of heads from Filippino Lippi’s frescoes on the Brancacci Chapel and his appreciation of Ghiberti was limited to the later, more decorated Gates of Paradise rather than the earlier north doors. Flaxman, by contrast examined the New Testament scenes on the northern doors, making a series of studies in a sketchbook now at the Yale Center for British Art. As Hugh Brigitte has pointed out, these drawings focused on the low relief narrative but tend to ignore the physical context of each scene and to exclude naturalistic details in the immediate background. A fact Flaxman later reinforced in his Lecture ‘On Composition’, delivered at the Royal Academy in his capacity as Professor of Sculpture, ‘it must be remembered, the work is sculpture, which allows no picturesque additions or effect of background; the story must be told, and the field occupied by the figure and acts of man’. It was undoubtedly the clarity of action, stripped of all ‘picturesque details’, which stimulated Flaxman’s attraction to early Italian sculpture and paintings. For the rest of his Italian trip, he sought out great works of
the recent and quattrocento his sketchbooks show how he studied Cavallini’s mosaics in St. Maria in Trastevere; in 1792 he copied two relief panels by Donatello and Ghiberti from the great font in the Baptistery at Siena, in 1794 he copied two panels, The Agony in the Garden and Christ Returning to the Apostles from Duccio’s Maestà, a thirteenth century work which had long been neglected by scholars and artists.

Flaxman’s activity was in part inspired by seeing the young traveller William Young Ottley in 1792. Ottley, the son of a wealthy merchant family, was an ardent collector and draughtsman. He was employed in Rome by the French antiquarian Jean Baptiste Séroux d’ Aguincourt to make drawings for his illustrious survey of monuments, the Histoire de l’Art par les Monuments depuis sa decadence au 4me Siècle jusqu'à son renouvellement au de l’Art par les Monuments depuis sa decadence.

Ottley was working in Rome by the French antiquarian Jean Baptiste Séroux d’ Aguincourt to make drawings for his illustrious survey of monuments, the Histoire de l’Art par les Monuments depuis sa decadence au 4me Siècle jusqu'à son renouvellement au de l’Art par les Monuments depuis sa decadence. He was employed in Rome by the French antiquarian Jean Baptiste Séroux d’ Aguincourt to make drawings for his illustrious survey of monuments, the Histoire de l’Art par les Monuments depuis sa decadence au 4me Siècle jusqu'à son renouvellement au de l’Art par les Monuments depuis sa decadence.

Flaxman and each other a love of early Italian art. Ottley copied two of Flaxman’s drawings from the Yale sketchbook of Ghiberti’s relief panels from the Baptistery doors, retaining them in his own collection. It was possibly through Ottley that Flaxman became acquainted with the Italian engraver Séroux d’ Aguincourt was employing to make plates for his work, Tommaso Piroli. Piroli would in turn be employing to make plates for his work, Tommaso Piroli. Piroli would in turn be responsible for Flaxman’s great series of large engravings from Homer and Dante.

Flaxman therefore has a very real claim for being at the forefront of the rediscovery of the Italian ‘Primavos’. His Italian sketchbooks are full of drawings of Roman and medieval sculptures, but he was confirmed in his interest in early Italian art by the commission he received from Thomas Hope in 1792 for a series of illustrations to Dante’s Divine Comedy. These caused him to look particularly at what he believed to be the art of Dante’s time, at the trecento as well as the quattrocento. He studied almost all the major masters of both centuries available to him in both cities – the venerable sages who mastered Philosophy and the Arts of Design – and he also travelled to Osuna, from where he drew from Signorelli and Maiani. But despite Flaxman’s fascination with early Italian painting, his sensitive appreciation of the qualities of ‘simplicity’, ‘grandeur’ and ‘intelligence’ he found in the works he saw; his role in the revival of interest in early Italian art has been constantly downplayed, largely because very few of his surviving works could be read as consciously ‘primavos’. While scholars such as David Irwin have identified echoes of early Italian painting in his engravings – particularly the series of illustrations to Dante – they are difficult to trace in his sculpture.14 This marks the rediscovery of the Adoration of the Magi a highly significant, paradigm shifting one for the history of European neo-classicism.

The Adoration of the Magi

The small relief of the Adoration of the Magi – only 9 x 12 inches – is the emblem of those artistic characteristics he sought in early Italian art. The maestros clocs of both Virgin and Magi and their relationships draw the eye to the central feature of the relief; by concealing and negating the body beneath, they deny the Greek heritage that was responsible for Flaxman’s other Italian work. They evoke more than anything the monumental gravity of Masaccio’s frescoes, which are themselves notably sculptural in their forms, and Ghiberti’s handling of New Testament subjects from the northern trecento. Flaxman recorded his admiration for the group that contained what David Bindman has suggested was the closest precedent for his relief, Jacopo della Quercia’s bas-relief of the same subject on the west facade of San Petronio in Bologna. 14 The Virgin and Child are also close to figures in Flaxman’s drawings for The Divine Comedy, most notably for the figures of The Child Cacciaguida held by his mother in the illustration to Paradiso, Canto 11. The composition precisely embodies those qualities which Flaxman most admired in early Italian painting; it is deceptively simple, intensely focused on the narrative at hand and stripped of all extraneous detail. The three Magi are shown kneeling, the bulk of their forms expressed as a single body and covered, the folds of their drapery forming the small figure of the Christ child. The only ornament is a small wreath placed between the kneeling Magi and the Holy group. Flaxman carved the relief in shallow relief – although conceiving the formula pioneered by Donatello, where incised lines are used to add greater recession – instead the bowed head of the Virgin, and deep vertical cliffs of the Virgin’s drapery and fine Magi providing the areas of greatest contrast.

The precise circumstances for the production of the Adoration of the Magi are unknown. An unusually large number of studies survive for the relief, along with a cast and the preparatory sketch, there are several large-scale record drawings, whilst scholars such as David Irwin have identified echoes of early Italian painting in his engravings – particularly the series of illustrations to Dante – they are difficult to trace in his sculpture. This marks the rediscovery of the Adoration of the Magi a highly significant, paradigm shifting one for the history of European neo-classicism. The precise circumstances for the production of the Adoration of the Magi are unknown. An unusually large number of studies survive for the relief, along with a cast and the preparatory sketch, there are several large-scale record drawings, whilst scholars such as David Irwin have identified echoes of early Italian painting in his engravings – particularly the series of illustrations to Dante – they are difficult to trace in his sculpture. This marks the rediscovery of the Adoration of the Magi a highly significant, paradigm shifting one for the history of European neo-classicism.
Flaxman may have intended the design to be part of what proved to be an abortive sequence of reliefs depicting the life of Christ. There are two other New Testament designs that can be considered with it: The Flight into Egypt and The Three Marys at the Sepulchre both now owned by University College London, and there is a possibility that plaster versions of the three compositions could have constituted the three sketch(es) in Bas Relief from the New Testament exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1797. Certainly, Flaxman did on other occasions put together a series of religious compositions. He produced finished drawings for The Acts of Mercy and The Lord’s Prayer, clearly with the intention, not realised in his lifetime, of publishing them in an engraved form, but also using them as a quarry of ideas for future funerary monuments.

Bindman has suggested that it might have been made for his wife, Nancy, for whom he often made special works, such as the illuminated story of Bacchus—this is beautiful to the greatest sitting under a Vine & nursing the Infant Dirce—about 6 Inches in the Diameter—of a Dirce lost, and described by Mrs Flaxman as of medallion sold to Thomas Hope and now in the British Museum. Although the marble version at present is considered to have been made for someone close to him, and Flaxman did on other occasions put together a series of religious compositions. He produced finished drawings for The Acts of Mercy and The Lord’s Prayer, clearly with the intention, not realised in his lifetime, of publishing them in an engraved form, but also using them as a quarry of ideas for future funerary monuments.

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This remarkable polychromed terracotta portrait is an unusual addition to the corpus of early nineteenth-century British sculpture. This portrait has previously been identified as the Duke of Kent, the fourth son of George III and the father of Queen Victoria, albeit in a slightly idealized vein; however, recent research can now positively identify the sitter as Hugh Percy, 3rd Duke of Northumberland. It is evident that the present model was utilized by the Newcastle sculptors Christopher Tate and R. G. Davies for their full-length statue of the duke of c.1841 executed for the Master Mariners’ Asylum at Tynemouth for which the Duke had given the site, and a large quantity of the materials employed in its construction. The present work appears to be earlier than the commission which was entrusted to Christopher Tate of Newcastle-on-Tyne and completed on his premature death by his master R.G. Davies. A date in the first half of the 1820s would seem to stand based on historical and stylistic grounds and this is supported by the age of the sitter shown in our full-length portrait. Arrangements for the coronation of George IV in 1821 represented the apogee of the extravagance of the monarchy and provided a timely focus for the increasing taste for historicism and there was no greater outlet for this than the coronation and the ensuing procession and banquet in which the Duke of Northumberland played a prominent part wearing a fanciful Peers costume invented on antiquarian grounds for the ceremonies. Our terracotta portrait depicts the duke in a costume even more extravagantly ‘historical’ that has parallels with that seen in Christina Robertson’s portrait.
An attribution to Lucius Gahagan (1773–1855) seems probable on stylistic grounds. Gahagan appears to have been an adaptable sculptor working in marble, wax and plaster and his commissions included funerary monuments as well as small full-length statues including that of George III, known in bronze (Royal Collection) and plaster (Royal Collection and Rose collection) as well as in a painted plaster version of 1818 (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne). The present work can be compared with Gahagan’s statuette of Richard Braden, Bishop of Bath and Wells which is known in patinated plaster casts (National Portrait Gallery and another version) which demonstrates a similar handling especially in the elements of the drapery and passementerie. Lucius appears to have worked closely with his brother Sebastian who was responsible in 1824 for a full-length stature of the Duke of Kent (Park Crescent, Portland Place, London), and there also appears to be some confusion as to whether the smaller works attributed to his father, Lawrence Gahagan (c.1735–1820) should be given to Lucius. The most cogent account of Gahagan’s elusive career can be found in Ingrid Roscoe’s Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain.

The Duke, a Tory, sat in in the House of Commons before succeeding to the Dukedom in 1817. Charles Greville thought the duke: ‘a very good sort of man, with a very narrow understanding, an eternal talker, and a prodigious bore’, and Northumberland’s views were to become increasingly illiberal with the years. Nevertheless it was, in Peel’s view, an inspired choice: when Northumberland resigned along with the Wellington government in November 1830 he described him as ‘the best chief Governor who ever presided over her [Ireland’s] affairs.’

NOTES
Daniel Gardner 1750–1805

Lady Elizabeth Townsend

Pastel and gouache
20 × 15¾ inches · 510 × 400 mm · oval
In the original neo-classical, frame
Executed in 1776

Collections
The sitter;
Harriet Townsend, daughter of the above, who married Sir Grey Skipwith, 8th Bt.;
Sir Grey Skipwith, 11th Bt., to c.1920;
Mrs J. M. Dennis, 1954;
J. Leger & Son, London;
Mrs Gore Skipwith, acquired from the above, 1955;

Literature

Daniel Gardner’s portraiture occupies an unusual position within the history of British painting during the eighteenth century. By the late 1770s, Gardner was one of the most successful and prolific painters in London having created a hugely popular portrait formula; reproducing in pastel on small-scale the fashionable poses and conceits of full-sized works by Sir Joshua Reynolds and George Romney. Conversely, unlike the masters he imitated, Gardner’s success was achieved without the use of London’s exhibiting societies: he showed only one picture at the Royal Academy and never submitted a work to the Society of Artists. As a result Gardner has received comparatively little scholarly attention, although the range, importance and number of his sitters suggests that he was a significant member of the wider artistic community and his beautifully executed and engaging portraits are a fascinating testament to the success and adaptability of ‘Grand Manner’ portraiture.1 All these elements are visible in this hugely accomplished and finely handled portrait of Lady Elizabeth Townsend.

Gardner was born in Kendal in Cumbria and after leaving school worked with George Romney. Romney left Kendal for London in 1762, and Gardner followed in either 1767 or 1768, living initially at 11 Cockspur Street, very close to the Royal Academy Schools in Pall Mall which he joined in 1770. On leaving the schools, Gardner joined Joshua Reynolds’s studio as an assistant in exchange for further tuition. Gardner was therefore working for Reynolds at the moment he was experimenting with his grandest and most impressive exhibition portraits. Shortly after establishing his own practice, Gardner began to produce works in pastel which closely followed the fashions established by his former master, simply replicating poses and compositions on a more domestic scale. The present portrait, which depicts Lady Elizabeth Townsend, the daughter of Other Lewis Windsor, 4th Earl of Plymouth, was probably made on the occasion of her marriage in 1776 to Gore Townsend, perfectly illustrates Gardner’s working method. Lady Elizabeth Townsend is shown standing, in loose classical costume, in a wooded landscape in a pose which is directly modelled on Reynolds’s full-length portrait of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1776 and is now in the Huntington Art Collections, San Marino, California. Gardner adapted Reynolds’s pose slightly, placing a rose in the right-hand of Lady Elizabeth Townsend, but otherwise he precisely replicated the costume, setting and attitude.

Gardner developed a novel technique using pastel to approximate the appearance of oil. By combining pure pastel with a liquid vehicle he was able to create a range of textures, from the soft rendering of features and hair, to the more broadly handled landscape.2 In the present work the areas of greatest opacity, such as Lady Elizabeth Townsend’s costume, are all created using Gardner’s distinctive technique. The domestic scale of Gardner’s works, their charm and sweetness mean he was frequently commissioned to paint family groups and children. The present work is an extremely fine example of Gardner’s technique and manner, perfectly illustrating why he was such a successful artist. It was Gardner’s clever distillation of Reynolds and Romney’s style into a domestic scale which made him so popular with French and American collectors of the early twentieth century.

Notes

1 Gardner was the subject of an exhibition at Kenwood House: Helen Kapp, Daniel Gardner 1750–1805, exh.cat. London (Kenwood House), 1972 and a book: George Williamson, Daniel Gardner, London, 1921. But comparatively little has been written about him subsequently and he is omitted from standard accounts of eighteenth-century British art.
This characteristic pastel portrait by the Irish artist Hugh Douglas Hamilton depicts Charles FitzGerald, third son of James FitzGerald, 1st Duke of Leinster and his wife Lady Emily Lennox. Emily Lennox was a daughter of Charles Lennox, Duke of Richmond and great-granddaughter of King Charles II. Her sisters contracted a series of famous (and infamous) marriages resulting in a complex but close family network which stretched from Ireland to London.

The present portrait of Charles, a naval officer, who would be created Lord Lecale in his own right in 1800, and that of his first cousin, the Whig politician Charles James Fox (see p.55), were part of a remarkable group of pictures depicting members of the extended Leinster and Lennox families which decorated two of the greatest houses of eighteenth-century Ireland, Carton House and Castletown.1 In exceptionally good preservation, the present unpublished portrait is a charming example of Hamilton’s work and belongs to perhaps his most extensive and significant commission.

Hugh Douglas Hamilton was born in Dublin, the son of a wig-maker in Crow Street. He entered the Dublin Society School of Drawing about 1750 and studied under Robert West and James Mannin. He was a pupil there for some eight years, winning three premiums for the best drawings of 1756. His earliest recorded work for the FitzGerald family came in 1760, when he illustrated the frontispiece of the estate atlas of Kilkea, a manor owned by James FitzGerald, later 1st Duke of Leinster.2 Hamilton probably left West’s academy in the late 1750s and soon set up a flourishing business as a portraitist in pastels.

Hamilton’s small-scale, intimate pastel portraits were immensely popular. Their popularity rested on a combination of the luminous surface quality he achieved, the speed of execution (unlike oils, pastels required no drying time), portability and low cost. As a result of their popularity in 1764 Hamilton moved his practice to London, although he continued to preserve strong contacts with his native Ireland, returning periodically and sending works for exhibition at the Society of Artists in Dublin.

It was their comparatively inexpensive nature which was the most important factor in their popularity. Hamilton’s average price for a small oval portrait was a guinea according to his earliest biographer Thomas Mulvany.3 Compared with prices being charged by leading London portraitists for oil portraits...
HUGH DOUGLAS HAMILTON 1739–1808
The Right Hon. Charles James Fox (1794–1806)

Pastel over pencil 9 × 7 inches 229 × 180 mm
Drawn circa 1777

COLLECTIONS
William FitzGerald, and Duke of Leinster, the sister’s first cousin; By descent to Augustus FitzGerald, 3rd Duke of Leinster; by descent recorded at Carton House, Killarney in 1885; By descent until 2013.

LITERATURE
Catalogue of Pictures and Antiquities at Carton, 1885, pp.33–35, no.16.

Hugh Douglas Hamilton
William Robert Fitzgerald, later and Duke of Leinster (1749–1804), c.1773
Pastel and pencil 8 ⅛ × 6 ⅜ inches · 202 × 162 mm
Photo © National Gallery of Ireland

This finely rendered and highly sensitive portrait of the Whig politician Charles James Fox was drawn by the Irish portraitist Hugh Douglas Hamilton for William FitzGerald, and Duke of Leinster. Fox and Leinster were first cousins, their mothers having been two of the notorious Lennox sisters, daughters of Charles Lennox, 2nd Duke of Richmond and granddaughters of King Charles II. The present pastel was one of a series of thirty-six commissioned by the Duke of Leinster to decorate a room at his Irish seat, Carton House. The survival of this previously unpublished work offers fascinating evidence of pastel portraits and their use in commemorating personal and familial ties during the eighteenth century. More than this, as a very fine, highly sensitive and...
private portrait of one of the most famous figures of the eighteenth century it is an important addition to both Hamilton’s output and Fox’s iconography.

Probably made in 1777 on one of Fox’s visits to Ireland, it was commissioned by his first cousin William FitzGerald, Duke of Leinster. As Ruth Kenny has recently explained, Hamilton’s small-scale pastel portraits ‘functioned as personal documents, reinforcing familial and social ties in an affectionate rather than in a genealogical way… they operated on a network rather than lineal system and built up a more complex, layered picture of a family and its social life than any single work could achieve.’

This idea of the personal network the Duke of Leinster created is confirmed by a nineteenth-century inventory of the pictures of Carton House, which lists some thirty-six pastels in the ‘Duke’s Study’. It is an idea given added weight by the survival of a series of copies of the Carton Hamiltons. A version of the present portrait of Fox survives at Carton, the home of another of Leinster’s first cousins, Thomas Conolly; in turn had a version of Hamilton’s portrait of Conolly, thus reinforcing the strong ties between the two families.

Simply portrayed, bust-length, against a monochrome background, Hamilton’s portrait of Fox eliminates all extraneous details and props. Unlike the more celebrated portraits of Fox, such as Reynolds’s half-length portrait of 1778 (Holkham Hall, Norfolk), which shows him with his hand resting on a draft of the India Bill, Hamilton’s depiction concentrates on Fox’s animated features. Finely finished in Hamilton’s characteristic manner, the present picture is an extraordinary testament to the ties of family which governed eighteenth century Britain.
VICTOR-MARIE HUGO 1802–1885

Landscape

Pen and brown ink and wash, with gum arabic

1½ x 4⅜ inches · 38 x 112 mm

Signed and dated, lower left, Victor Hugo. 1842

Collections
Ian Woodner, 1990;
Dian Woodner and Andrea Woodner, by descent to 1993;

Engraved
Etched by Louis Marvy, 1847

Théophile Gautier, the writer and critic, observed in June 1837: Victor Hugo is not only a poet, he is also a painter and one whom Louis Boulanger; Camille Roqueplan or Paul Huet would not disavow as a father… If he were not a poet, Victor Hugo would be a painter of the first rank… He excels in mixing in his sombre and wild fantasies the chiaroscuro of a Goya with the terrifying architectural effects of a Piranesi. 1

Victor Hugo, the great French Romantic poet, novelist, and playwright, although best known today for his novels was in addition to his abundant literary output a prolific draughtsman, producing over 2,000 drawings during his lifetime. As opposed to his written work, published to great critical acclaim and known by a wide contemporary audience, Hugo generally considered his drawings as a private activity, created for his own pleasure and enjoyment, and not intended for public consumption although they achieved considerable fame amongst artistic circles in his lifetime. Despite Gautier’s public praise, most were unaware of Hugo’s drawings during his lifetime, as he never exhibited them publicly. The present work is a comparatively early and extraordinarily intense example, perfectly capturing the confluence of Goyesque chiaroscuro and terrifying architecture of Piranesi, first noted by Gautier.

The first exhibition of Hugo’s drawings took place in Paris in 1888. Greater awareness has come with subsequent exhibitions in the 1970s and 1980s. The great majority of Hugo’s drawings are today in the Maison de Victor Hugo in Paris and in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Hugo’s drawings fall loosely into several different categories – the early caricatures; the naturalistic landscapes of the 1840s and 1850s; the fantasy, or imaginary, landscapes of the 1840s and 1850s, often showing castles and towers, and the loose and abstract works, including ink-blots (taches), of the 1850s and 1860s. 2 The present sheet, simply entitled, Landscape; is a relatively early and naturalistic work, signed and dated by Hugo, 1842. It depicts a real landscape, probably somewhere around Paris, where the artist was living at the time, developed into a Romantic fantasy.

In his 1837 essay, Gautier observed that: ‘when he travels [Hugo] he sketches everything that strikes him. The ridge of a hill, a broken-line, a strangely formed cloud, a curious detail on a door or window, a ruined tower, an old belfry, these things he notes; then at evening, in the inn, he inks in his pencil sketch, puts in shadows and colouring, strengthens it, brings out an effect that is always boldly selected.’ This explication of Hugo’s working method gives a vivid idea of the combination of direct observation and emotional response to the landscape discernible in the present drawing. The richness in the application of ink and its skilled and assured handling are reminiscent of the landscape drawings of Rembrandt, while the areas of velvety texture and calligraphic lines suggest Hugo’s interest in etchings. The importance of our sheet to Hugo is evident in that it was one of four drawings he gave five years later, in 1847, to the engraver, Louis Marvy, in order for Marvy to make etchings of the subjects to be used as prizes in a lottery. An etching of 1847 after the present sheet, in reverse and also entitled, Landscape, is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. 3 In technique – the summarily yet confident execution – the present drawing places Hugo firmly within the orbit of other French Romantic painters of the period, particularly Paul Huet, whom Gautier had observed, would not ‘dissuade’ Hugo as a father. Indeed, Delacroix was to observe that if Hugo had decided to become a painter instead of a writer, he would have rivaled the artists of their century.

NOTES

3 For Hugo’s work of the 1840s, see F. Rodari et al., Shadows of a Hand: The Drawings of Victor Hugo, exhibition catalogue, New York: The Drawing Center, 16 April – 13 June 1998, fig. 7, illustrated.
Sir Thomas Lawrence PRA 1769–1830

Arthur Atherley

Oil on canvas
24½ x 20 inches · 622 x 508 mm
Painted in 1791

Collections
Andrew Coventry, acquired in Edinburgh in 1860;
By family descent, to 2013.

Literature
Michael Levey, Sir Thomas Lawrence, exh.cat. London (National Portrait Gallery), 1979, p.29;
Kenneth Garlick, Sir Thomas Lawrence: A complete catalogue of the oil paintings, 1989, p.141, under catalogue no.50.

This exceptional painting was made by Thomas Lawrence in preparation for his early masterpiece Arthur Atherley (Los Angeles County Museum of Art). Lawrence exhibited his painting of Atherley at the Royal Academy in 1792 at a key moment in his early career and it marked his transition from precocious youth to mature master. The present preliminary study shows how determinedly Lawrence pursued this path. The sketch – showing Atherley in a blue coat, rather than the distinctive red one which features in the final portrait – is a remarkably assured essay, both in virtuosic technique and penetrating characterisation. In the boldly direct pose, starkly lit from one side, Lawrence created one of the most intense portraits of the late eighteenth century. In the present sketch this is amplified by the sparse use of paint and unfinished quality, which isolates and focuses attention on the head. Last on the market in 1860, the present painting has remained in the same family and has never previously been exhibited, reproduced or fully published. As such it is an immensely important addition to Lawrence’s œuvre, shedding new light on his working practice at the outset of his career.  

Thomas Lawrence was the outstanding British portraitist of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the third President of the Royal Academy and a hugely influential European master, whose paintings had a profound impact upon Continental portraiture. Born in Bristol in 1769, the son of an excise officer, he was celebrated as a child prodigy, producing pastel portraits first in Devizes and then Bath, before moving to London in 1789. After studying at the Royal Academy Schools, Lawrence rapidly established himself as artistic heir to Reynolds, exhibiting 14 portraits at the Academy in 1790, including celebrated full-length depictions of Queen Charlotte (National Gallery, London) and the actress Elizabeth Ferrer (Metropolitan Museum, New York). The following year he was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, at the age of only 22. 

At some point in 1791 Lawrence began his painting of Arthur Atherley. Atherley was the son of a Southampton-based banker, also called Arthur, and was in his last year at Eton College. Whilst the provenance of the Los Angeles painting suggests it was a family commission – it descended in the Atherley family until acquired by Joseph Duveen on behalf of William Randolph Hearst in 1928 – Lawrence clearly saw it as an opportunity to consolidate his public successes on the walls of the Royal Academy at the annual exhibition. This was a prospect given an added boost by the death of Reynolds in February 1792, which resulted in the position of Painter in Ordinary to the King falling vacant. As a plan of the hang at the exhibition of the Royal Academy, made by Thomas Sandby, shows, Atherley was well placed on the west wall of the Great Room at Somerset House, slightly to the left of one of the main doors. Lawrence therefore transformed the commission into a major statement of his artistic abilities, at a crucial moment in his career. It was a project that would have demanded multiple sittings, and even multiple canvases, as the appearance of the present painting demonstrates. 

In 1790 Lawrence observed that: ‘I should think it is always better that the picture, whatever it is, be first accurately drawn on the canvas.’ We know from contemporary accounts that this was the case. In 1794 Joseph Farington recorded: ‘this morning I sat to Lawrence when He drew in my portrait with Sir Thomas Lawrence PRA
Arthur Atherley, 1792
Oil on canvas · 62⅜ x 52⅜ inches · 1584 x 1330 mm
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California, Gift of Hearst Magazine

[ 40 ]
Lawrence seems to have used liquid, light brown paint to work out Atherley’s pose, traces of which can be fairly seen in the lower sections of the canvas. Lawrence normally used a canvas with a white or off-white ground, precisely as he did in his portrait of Atherley. In providing advice on painting in 1910 to the amateur artist Lady Field-Lower, he explained ‘I always endeavored to paint a picture as light as possible even at first colouring’, adding ‘Now when an artist endeavours to paint bright at first, the next time he comes he will try to make it still more and so on, till by this struggle with himself he will at last gain a degree of brilliancy as unexpected as it must be gratifying’. During the second sitting black chalk on the Canvass, which employed Lawrence would colour the face, bringing it more or less up to completion, before working on the background and costume in subsequent sessions. The present canvas was designed as a bust-length portrait and has not the status of the current work, is it a second version or the first sketch? The unfinished status of the present work is probably explained by Lawrence’s desire to preserve the character and life-like quality captured in his first sittings. Lawrence’s earliest biographer Andrew Cunningham, noted ‘I always endeavored to find multiple positions in the overcrowded walls of the Academy. Whilst the present picture was listed by Garlick notes...notes

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| 64 |


For Lawrence’s comments were published in John Burnet, The Discourses of Jonathan Reynolds, Illustrated by Explanatory Notes & Notes by John Barrow, F.R.S. London, 1816, p.57.


For Lawrence’s understanding of colour and his great desire to triumph on the overcrowded walls of the Academy. In staff John Burnet published his Practical Treatise on Painting, in which the author praised Thomas Gainsborough’s portrait of Gainsborough Dupont(1), then known as the ‘Blue Boy’ and now in The Huntington, for disperring Reynolds’s rule that cool colours (blue, grey or green) should never predominate in a composition. Lawrence wrote to Burnet disagreeing with him, observing that ‘I should instances for the ascendency of white objects, which can never be departed from with impunity, and again the union of colour with light. Maxentus as the execution of that picture is, I believe to have a never-changing impression on my eye that the Blue Boy of Gainsborough is a difficulty boldly combated not conquered.’ Lawrence’s comments were published in John Burnet’s edited edition of Reynolds’s Discourses: The Discourses of Dr. John Reynolds, Illustrated by Explanatory Notes & Notes by John Barrow, F.R.S. London, 1816, p.57.


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Oil on canvas
30 x 25 inches · 763 x 635 mm
Painted in 1800

collections
Major-General, the Hon. George Walpole (1758–1835), painted for him at St Anne’s Hill, Chertsey, November 1800;
Henry Richard Vassall-Fox, 3rd Baron Holland, (1773–1840) a gift from the above;
Lady Mary Elizabeth Fox, daughter of the above (Lady Mary Elizabeth Lilford (née Fox) become the sole heiress of the Holland family in 1859);
Thomas Powys, 3rd Lord Lilford, husband of the above, d.1861;
John Powys, 5th Lord Lilford, d.1945;
George Vernon Powys, 7th Lord Lilford, 2013;
Sidney F. Sabin, acquired from the above in 1961;
Private collection, 2013.

literature:
Kenneth Garlick, Sir Thomas Lawrence, London, 1964, p.37;
Kenneth Garlick, Sir Thomas Lawrence PRA, 1769–1830, exhibition catalogue, 1961, cat. no.36;
Kenneth Garlick, A Catalogue of the Paintings, Drawings and Pastels of Sir Thomas Lawrence, The Walpole Society, 1964, p.81;
Kenneth Garlick, Sir Thomas Lawrence; a complete catalogue of the oil paintings, Oxford, 1990, cat. no.371;

exhibited
London, Royal Academy, Sir Thomas Lawrence PRA, 1769–1830, 1961, no.36.

His features, in themselves, dark, harsh, and saturnine, like Charles II, derived a sort of majesty from the addition of two black and shaggy eyebrows, which sometimes concealed, but more frequently developed, the workings of his mind … His figure, broad, heavy, and inclined to corpulence, appeared destitute of elegance or grace, except the portion conferred on it by the emanations of intellect.
Sir Nathaniel Wraxall, 1815

The great Whig politician Charles James Fox was one of the most frequently depicted figures of the second-half of the eighteenth century; his features – ‘dark, harsh and saturnine’ – being familiar from countless paintings, miniatures, busts and satirical cartoons. For over thirty years Fox’s politics pursued an increasingly radical ideology, supporting American independence and the power of parliament over King George III, as such he became a cult figure not only in aristocratic Whig circles, but to democratic campaigners across the world. Fox’s image was therefore mass produced and widely disseminated, but never was he as sensitively or compellingly portrayed as by Thomas Lawrence in the present little-known picture. Painted in 1800, this portrait is the last great painting of Fox before his death in 1806. Although a concentrated study, the lively touch and insightful depiction of character confirm that this work belongs to Lawrence’s period of masterly productivity which would culminate in the celebrated series of portraits made after the victory of the Napoleonic Wars. It is rare that a portrait combines so recognisable a sitter with a painter of such celebrity and yet because of its descent in various private collections has remained virtually unknown having only

Horace Hone after Lawrence
Charles James Fox
Enamel on copper · 1¾ inches high
Signed, inscribed and dated 1807
Lowell Libson Ltd
been exhibited once, at the Royal Academy in 1810. Charles James Fox belonged to a grand Whig family and early in his political life he became a prominent and staunch opponent of George iii, whom he regarded as an aspiring tyrant; he supported the American Patriots, even dressing in the colours of George Washington’s army. Briefly serving as Britain’s first Foreign Secretary in the ministry of the Marquess of Rockingham in 1782, he returned to the post in a coalition with his old enemy Lord North in 1783. However, the King forced Fox and North out of government before the end of the year, replacing them with the twenty-four-year-old William Pitt and Fox spent the following twenty-two years facing Pitt and the government benches from across the Commons. In 1797, after the suspension of habeas corpus and the extension of the law of treason and the ignominious defeat of Fox’s motion and the extension of the law of treason and of the India Bill, 11 Lawrence, Fox, as in Nollekens’s bust of 1802, is shown with his own hair cut short, in the manner of Roman Republican portrait busts and significantly contemporary Revolutionary France. This radical departure may have been a piece of conscious self-fashioning, as at this date, Fox was calling himself the ‘English Brutus’ in his correspondence. 12 Fox felt that he had been defeated by the rising tyranny of Pitt whom he saw as the new Augustus, a feeling Lawrence communicated in his portrait by showing him stolidly isolated, with a look of resignation. The present picture therefore appears as an expression of the ‘cruel Fox’ celebrated in the Temple of Liberty at Wolburn.

Lawrence’s portrait also commemorates the political friendship which was so central to the ‘cruel of Fox’. The painting was commissioned not by the heavily indebted Fox, but by Major General George Walpole, a Whig earl who served as Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, when Fox was Foreign Secretary in 1806. Walpole was a devoted Foxite and presented Lawrence’s portrait to Fox’s heir and nephew, Henry Richard Vandyck Fox, 3rd Baron Holland. Lawrence’s portrait therefore fits precisely into the same context as Nollekens’s busts: it commemorates Fox in the mode of a Roman Republican standing up to tyranny and was commissioned by a friend and political ally. As with the Nollekens bust there is evidence that Lawrence was asked to paint replicas. His bank ledgers reveal that he was paid for a copy by Edward Burne-Jones, an old school friend of Fox’s, in 1810. 12 There was also a copy of the portrait included in Lawrence’s studio sale listed as being by his assistant and pupil John Simpson.

This little known portrait by Lawrence is perhaps the most expressive, sympathetic and powerful images of Fox. In his virtuoso and fluid use of paint, Lawrence imparts a remarkable sense of humanity to the politician’s features. Given the present painting’s date, its format and provenance, it demands to be reconsidered as not only as important evidence in Fox’s careful fashioning of his image after 1810, but as one of the finest portraits of the sitter ever executed.

John Jones, after Sir Joshua Reynolds The Rt Hon Charles James Fox, 1714–1806 © The Trustees of the British Museum

Nollekens’s (1738–1824) Charles James Fox Mezzotint · 20 x 359 mm © National Portrait Gallery, London

NOTES
2 Although a number of later pictures of Fox survive – including a full-length portrait by John Opie now at Holkham Hall which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1844 – none have the gravity or power of earlier works. For the iconography of Fox see: John Ingamells, National Portrait Gallery Mid-Georgian Portraits, 1730–1770, London, 2004, pp.176–178.
6 John Komornicky-Rowe, The Temple of Liberty at Wolburn Abbey, Apollo, cxxx, July 1959, pp.91–92.
9 The posthumous sale of the contents of Lawrence’s studio includes two studies for the head of C. Fox in canvas. These may have been the initial studies made at St. Ann’s Hill in November 1806. Christie’s, 4th June 1923, lot 15.
12 This version is recorded by Garlick as a copy of the present work. See Kenneth Garlick, Sir Thomas Lawrence: a complete catalogue of his oil paintings, Oxford, 1949, cat.no.317. This version was incorrectly identified as the primary ver- sion, Goff 506, by John Ingamells, National Portrait Gallery, London, 2005, pp.70–71.
13 Christie’s, 18 June, 214, lot 79.
Edward Lear 1812–1888

The Cedars of Lebanon

Pencil, pen and ink and watercolour
14¾ × 21¼ inches · 375 × 540 mm

Inscribed, dated and numbered:
The Cedars // Lebanon // 20.
21 May 1858

Collections
Franklin Lushington, from the artist
by gift or purchase;
Sir John Witt,
and by descent to 2013

Literature
Vivien Noakes, Edward Lear, 1979, repr.
opposite p.141;
Vivien Noakes, Edward Lear 1812–1888, exhibi-
tion catalogue, 1985, p.112 and reproduced in
colour p.70

Exhibited
London, Arts Council, Edward Lear, 1958,
no.34;
London, Gooden & Fox, Edward Lear, 1968,
no.66, (on loan);
of Edward Lear, 1983, no.86, (on loan);
London, Royal Academy of Arts, Edward
Lear 1812–1888, 1985, no.40

Edward Lear arrived in Beirut from Jerusalem on
11 May 1858 and a few days later described in
letter to his sister his approach to the cedars:
So fine a view I suppose can hardly be imag-
ined – more perhaps like one of Martin’s ideal
pictures: the whole upper part of the mountain
is bare & snowy, & forms an amphitheatre
of heights, crowned a multitude of votive &
villages – full of foliage & villages most glorious
to see – and all that descends step by step to
the sea beyond! – Far below your feet, quite alone
on one side of this amphitheatre is a single dark
spot – a cluster of trees: these are the famous
Cedars of Lebanon. = Lebanon doubtless was
once thickly covered with such, but now there are
these only left. – I cannot tell you how delighted
I was with those cedars! – those enormous old
trees – a great dark grove – utterly silent, except
the singing of birds in numbers. Here I staid all
that day – the 20th & all the 21st working very
hard … only that there was a leettle drawback to
my pet cedars – & that was, that being 6000 feet
above the sea, & surrounded by high now peaks
the cold was o great I could not hold my pencil
well … 1

The cedars of Lebanon are generally
considered to be amongst the subjects that
inspired Lear to the greatest heights of
poetry and ambition in his paintings.
Indeed, Lear considered that the nine-foot
painting (now lost) of the cedars which
was based on the present ‘on the spot’
study and additional recourse to a group
of cedars in the grounds of Oatlands Park
Hotel near Weybridge, to have been his
most important work. Lear worked on that
painting in the winter of 1860–61 after his
return to England and on its completion
exhibited it at the Royal Academy in 1862
with a price of 700 guineas. In spite of Lear’s
regard for the picture it did not meet with
the reception he had hoped for and he was
to write to Chichester Fortescue in 1867,
the year in which it was purchased by Lady
Ashburton, that: ‘Sometimes I consider as to
the wit of taking my cedars out of its frame
and putting it in the border of coloured
velvet, embellished with a fringe of yellow
worsted with black spots, to typify the

Edward Lear, The Cedars of Lebanon
Oil on canvas · 26¾ × 44¾ inches · 68 × 113.5 cm
Painted for Charles Roundell
Courtesy of Peter Nahum at The Leicester Galleries, London
possible proximate propriety of predatorial panthers – and then selling the whole for florin and a half by auction. 'The painting is now known through a smaller replica commissioned by Lear’s friend Charles Roundell. Vivien Noakes has pointed out that in choosing the cedars, Lear could combine the biblical association of the subject with a subject drawn from nature. This was especially important as Lear considered that his particular strength lay in the depiction of natural history and often referred to his ‘poetical, & accurate topographical delineation’, emphasizing that the likeliness of his work was important to him. In a humorous reference to a painting of the Cedars, Lear wrote that the picture was ‘so advanced that millions of sparrows are said to sit – (I never saw them myself,) on the window ledges, pining with hopeless despair at not being able to get inside.’

Franklin Lushington the first owner of this watercolour was the object of Lear’s most fervent and most painful friendship. Lear first met the young barrister in 1849 in Malta where Franklin’s elder brother Henry was Chief Secretary to the government and then toured southern Greece with him. Lear developed an undoubted passion for him that Lushington did not reciprocate. In 1855, he was appointed judge to the Supreme Court of Justice in the Ionian Islands, and Lear went with him to Corfu where he settled for some years. Although they remained friends for almost forty years until Lear’s death the disparity of their feelings for one another constantly tormented Lear. On his death, Lear left all his papers to Lushington, who later destroyed most of them.

The present sheet numbers amongst the masterpieces of Lear’s large drawings made on tour. The subject evidently had great emotional resonance for him and the intricate and loving execution and level of finish lavished on the present sheet underlines that fact. Lear made another large ‘on the spot’ drawing of the cedars dated 21 May 1858 (Victoria & Albert Museum). A similarly sized carefully worked-up replica of the present watercolour which was made for Miss Clare Perrystone of Ross-on-Wye and was on the London art market in 1996.3

Notes
1 Letter to Ann Lear, 26 May 1858, Private collection.
3 Christie’s, July 9, 1996, lot 64, £91,700.

Edward Lear, The Cedars of Lebanon
Pen and ink and watercolour · 13¼ x 21½ inches
Inscribed and dated and numbered:
The Cedars, Lebanon. 21 May, 1858
© Victoria & Albert Museum.

Edward Lear, The Cedars of Lebanon
Watercolour with scratching out and gum arabic · 4⅝ x 7¼ inches · 117 x 184 mm
Signed with monogram
Painted c. 1860

Collections
Private collection, acquired in the 1960s

This carefully finished watercolour is one of the most beautiful examples of the small watercolours that Lear made, often on speculation on his return from his tours, with the intention that they could be purchased immediately from his studio rather than engaging in the often lengthy process of executing a commission. Sometimes these small pictures are unfairly regarded as inferior works on account of Lear’s comment when he referred to them as his ‘Tyrants’ and, indeed, there are many small watercolours of inferior quality where one can understand Lear’s frustration in being tied to his studio. This particularly beautiful view of the cedars numbers amongst the most careful and gem-like of his smaller works. Our watercolour dates from the early 1860s and uses the monogram form of his signature that he first adopted in late 1858. This treatment of his favourite subject appears to be derived from the ‘on the spot’ study in the Victoria & Albert Museum.
WILLIAM MARLOW 1740–1813

Rome from the Tiber

Pencil and grey, blue and pink wash
13⅞ x 21 inches · 354 x 534 mm
Signed: W Marlow (lower left)
Drawn in the 1770s

Collections
Christian B. Peper
and by descent, 2012.

This fine drawing, showing the dome of St Peter’s Basilica, the Castel Sant’Angelo and Ponte Sant’Angelo viewed from the Tiber, exemplifies Marlow’s ability as a topographer as well as a being a fine example of Grand Tour draughtsmanship.

Marlow’s early works, like those of Samuel Scott, his master, clearly show the influence of Canaletto who visited London in 1746. Marlow’s early success is evinced by the painter Thomas Jones who recorded in his Memoirs for 1769 that when he was beginning his own career Marlow was one of the artists ‘in full possession of the landscape business’, and later the Royal Academician Edward Garvey recalled to Joseph Farington that when he had first arrived in London in the 1760s he found Richard Wilson and William Marlow especially successful, and that ‘Marlow’s work captivated him so much that … he thought that as a Young Man he would rather be Marlow than Wilson.’

According to an obituary notice which appeared following his death in January 1813, Marlow ‘went on his travels to France and Italy in 1765 by the advice of the late Duchess of Northumberland.’ His patron was Elizabeth Seymour-Percy, wife of Hugh Smythson, 1st Duke of Northumberland and one of Canaletto’s great patrons, thus reaffirming Marlow’s links with the Italian vedute painters of the previous century. A group of eight Italian paintings of Tivoli, Aretzra, and scenes in the Bay of Naples survive at Alnwick Castle confirming the duchess’s sponsorship of his tour of France and Italy. The earliest note of his departure is found on a drawing of an English river scene inscribed ‘William Marlow the Author of this Drawing is now studying in Italy – July 8th 1765’, the only other dated record of his absence occurs in Richard Hayward’s list of artists in Rome in February 1766. The itinerary he followed through France and Italy is well documented by drawings and paintings, including an album containing a series of Italian views now in the Tate. The studies contained in the Tate album, formerly in the Oppé collection, formed the basis for a large number of works produced after his return from the Continent. It is highly likely that the present sheet is one such watercolour: A pen and ink drawing in the Tate album shows the identical composition, one which was extremely popular during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries amongst Continental view painters. Taken from the west bank of the

William Marlow
Rome: Castel S. Angelo and St Peter’s, c.1765
Pencil and ink · 4¼ x 5 ⅛ inches · 108 x 130 mm
© Tate, London 2013
Tiber, somewhere between the Teatro di Tor di Nona and the Arco detto di Parma and showing three of the most renowned sights of the city – the Ponte Sant’Angelo topped with Bernini’s sculpted angels, the three domes of St Peter’s Basilica and the monumental brick, Castel Sant’Angelo – it was one of the most popular views of Rome drawn by amongst others Gaspar Vanvitelli, Giuseppe Zocchi, Bernardo Bellotto, Claude-Joseph Vernet and Giovanni Battista Piranesi. It was probably for precisely this reason, and as a favorite amongst collectors and travellers, that Marlow took such care in preparing the Tate study, which was designed to be used for finished watercolours back in London.

Indeed from 1766 Marlow largely specialized in producing watercolours and paintings of Continental subjects. He showed his first such pictures at the Society of Artists in 1767, and the great majority of his 134 paintings and watercolours exhibited with the Society of Artists, the Free Society of Artists, and the Royal Academy from then onwards were of French and Italian subjects together with London views which continued the Canaletto–Scott tradition. The present watercolour is a tonally subtle translation of the Tate sketch – the areas annotated on the Tate sheet with colour notes, such as ‘dark’ on the building to the far left correspond precisely to the present drawing – Marlow keeps colour to a minimum, instead modelling the view in washes of brown, grey and blue. Away from Rome Marlow was freed from the necessity of topographical accuracy, to dress the view with fanciful trees on the left and figures in the foreground.

Marlow exhibited several views of Rome at both the Society of Artists and Royal Academy and in addition to the present watercolor there are four large scale oil paintings by Marlow of the same view, the most impressive of which is now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The enduring popularity of such compositions amongst English collectors enabled Marlow to move his studio from Leicester Fields to the manor house at Twickenham in 1775, where he died in 1813.

NOTES
A rocky shore with distant sailing boats

Watercolour and gouache · 11¼ x 16 inches · 286 x 406 mm
Painted c. 1849

Collections
A. H. Palmer, the painter’s son; The Richmond family; Stephen Spector, New York; Davis Galleries, New York; Edwin P. Rome, acquired from the above, 1968; And by descent, 2013

Literature
Raymond Lister, Catalogue raisonné of the works of Samuel Palmer, 1988, no. 499, repr.

Exhibited
New York, Davis Galleries, 19th century English Watercolours, 1968, no. 32.

In the years following his return to London from Shoreham, Palmer was constantly exploring the possibilities of what he could achieve in watercolour, his chosen medium, looking for an avenue by which he could be true to his artistic ideals whilst finding a commercial voice. From the mid-1840s Palmer repeatedly made studies of the sea and coastline many of which have been traditionally identified as having been executed on his occasional visits to North Devon. He was evidently fascinated by the dazzling effects of light on water as his small plein air studies demonstrate, and he frequently included the device of a setting sun on water in many of his major compositions.

Christina Payne has recently underlined Palmer’s abiding interest in the connection between land and sea and has reconsidered Palmer’s relationship with the marine painter James Clarke Hook.1 Certainly, marine themes increasingly play an important part in the works of Palmer’s middle years and especially so after the death of his eldest son.

This rare and highly worked watercolour is one of the most atmospheric treatments of a coastline by Palmer. The particular and intense treatment of the foreground may be compared with the drawing of Waves breaking upon the shingle, Cornwall (National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa) which, although executed in a different medium, demonstrates a similar response to the forms and textures shown in our work. In the present watercolour, tentatively identified as being at Margate on the basis of an old inscription on the verso of the drawing, Palmer has produced one of his most carefully worked exercises in which he treats the sky, the sea and the foreground shingle beach with loving and compelling intensity. Palmer explained his fascination thus:

‘Why, from childhood onwards, are we ever dreaming of capes and caves, and islets and headlands, and the marriage of the land and sea?’2

This drawing was used by Lord David Cecil to illustrate his A. W. Mellon Lecture series at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, entitled ‘Visionary and Dreamer: Two Poetic Painters. S. Palmer and E. Burne-Jones.’ His lecture was later published and illustrated with a small selection of images of works in public collections.

Notes
In 1787 Reynolds wrote to his friend and patron, Charles Manners, 4th Duke of Rutland:
The greatest news relating to virtu is Alderman Boydell’s scheme of having pictures of the most interesting scenes of Shakespeare, by which all the painters and engravers find engagements for eight or ten years; he wished me to do eight pictures, but I have engaged only for one. He has insisted on me taking earnest money, and to my great surprise left upon my table five hundred pounds – to have as much more as I shall demand.

Boydell’s Shakespeare Gallery was one of the most elaborate schemes for the promotion of contemporary art undertaken during the eighteenth century and given his celebrity, as the founding President of the Royal Academy and leading theoretician on painting, Reynolds’s involvement was clearly crucial for its success. Reynolds chose as his ‘one’ canvas a subject from Macbeth, for which the present sheet is the first recorded study.

Contemporary newspapers reported that Reynolds had chosen ‘The Pit of Acheron’ as his subject, this was the setting of Act 4, Scene 1, in which Macbeth visits the witches to have confirmation of their prophecies and they summon horrid apparitions to allay his fears. Reynolds was clearly enthralled by the opportunity to depict the supernatural machinery introduced by Shakespeare: thunder, a cavern, witches round a cauldron conjuring apparitions at the demand of Macbeth. The scale of the canvas Reynolds was given by Boydell, recorded in his Pocket Book as ‘Cloth 8f. 6 high / 12 f. – long’, combined with the prestige of the commission probably prompted Reynolds to produce a number of ink sketches of the composition before beginning the painting itself. A compositional study survives at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University showing Macbeth with the witches; the present previously unrecorded and unpublished study clearly precedes the Beinecke sheet being a preliminary idea for the figure of Macbeth, and must be considered the earliest surviving drawing for scheme.

In contrast to the finished painting, now at Petworth House, West Sussex, where Macbeth is shown from behind, clearly fearful of the witches apparitions, Reynolds originally planned him as a heroic Baroque general, right arm outstretched commandingly silencing the witches. The change in character from triumph to fear suggests the contemporary cultural shift in the reading of Shakespeare. Early in the century producers and critics had been unwilling to integrate the witches with the ‘real’ characters in the play. Consequently they were presented separately from the main drama, as a divertissement, performing comic dances with broomsticks and singing songs. By the 1780s they were reinstated into the main drama and seen as integral participants. In painting this shift meant Macbeth was seen as offering episodes which perfectly
accorded with Edmund Burke’s definition of the sublime. Painters such as Henry Fuseli, who specialised in capturing scenes of the supernatural, began to depict episodes from the play, including Act 4, Scene 1. Reynolds clearly saw the potential for depicting a savage landscape and all the supernatural paraphernalia of Shakespeare’s text. For the figures he turned to a host of old master sources, including Michelangelo and in the pose of Macbeth, as it was realised in the final painting, according to J M W. Turner, Leonardo da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man, although as Martin Postle has pointed out, he is closer to James Barry’s Satan from his etching of Satan summoning up his Legions. The final painting was the subject of a dispute between Reynolds and Boydell and remained in Reynolds’s studio until his death in 1792 when it was sold, along with this study, at his studio sale. Today Macbeth and the Witches is wholly legible only in Robert Thew’s 1802 engraving, the picture itself having darkened considerably over the past 200 years.

On a pen and ink study of Hecate (Private Collection), also made for Macbeth, there is an inscription, in the same hand as the present sheet, noting: ‘Sir Joshua seldom made any sketches with a pencil, or pen, and when he did so, was usually very careful, to destroy them immediately; such sketches therefore and by chance have been preserved on account of their rarity.’

This fluid and confident pen and ink study is an extremely rare example of a figure sketch directly related to one of Reynolds’s most important historical compositions. In its strength, pose and drama it undermines Reynolds’s reputation as a poor draughtsman.

NOTES
2 This inscription is recorded in M. Postle, Sir Joshua Reynolds: The Subject Pictures, Cambridge, 1995, p.267.
I remember the time when Vauxhall (in 1776, the price of admission being then only one shilling) was more like a bear garden than a rational place of resort, and most particularly on the Sunday mornings ... Rowlandson the artist and myself have been there, and he has found plenty of employment for his pencil. The chef d’œuvre of his caricatures, which is still in print, is his drawing of Vauxhall, in which he has introduced a variety of characters known at the time.


The print of Thomas Rowlandson’s Vauxhall Gardens is one of the graphic masterpieces of the eighteenth century. It depicts the celebrated pleasure grounds in London populated by a mix of famous and infamous characters, from the Prince of Wales (later George IV) to the celebrated brothel-keeper Mrs Barry (the ‘Old Bawd of Broad Street’) and has become one of the quintessential images of recreation and urban life in London. The present impression is a remarkably rare extremely early impression which fully displays the depth of tone Francis Jukes was able to achieve with aquatint. The date, quality, beauty and outstanding condition of the present impression make it both a highly decorative and desirable print and a fascinating document of one of the eighteenth century’s most distinct phenomena: the pleasure garden.

Vauxhall Gardens, on the south bank of the Thames, entertained Londoners and visitors to London for two hundred years. From 1730, under the management of Jonathan Tyers, property developer, impresario and patron of the arts, the gardens grew into an extraordinary business, a cradle of modern painting – with supper boxes decorated with paintings by Francis Hayman and Hubert Gravelot in the 1730s – architecture, sculpture, and music. A pioneer of mass entertainment, Tyers had to become also a pioneer of mass catering, of outdoor lighting, of advertising, and of all the logistics involved in running one of the most complex and profitable business ventures of the eighteenth century in London.

By the 1750s the site comprised a series of tree-lined walks, pavilions in the latest Rococo taste (these included a Chinow Temple, Gothic Obelisk and Turkish Tent) and large provision of supper rooms for dining and a rotunda seventy feet in diameter for indoor performances. The gardens attracted large numbers of Londoners – in 1749 a rehearsal of Handel’s Music for the Royal Fireworks, was attended by 12,000 people – from a cross-section of London society. Frederick, Prince of Wales was an early patron, along with many leading fashionable celebrities and musical performers, many of whom gave concerts in the gardens. Most importantly the modest entrance fee – as Angelo noted only a shilling – made it accessible to London’s burgeoning middle and artisanal classes. The diarist James Boswell observed of Vauxhall’s appeal:

[It] is peculiarly adapted to the taste of the English nation; there being a mixture of various show — gay exhibition, music, vocal and instrumental, not too refined for the general ear; — for all of which only a shilling is paid; and, though last, not least, good eating and drinking for those who choose to purchase that regale.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Rowlandson should have been a frequent visitor to, and to quote Angelo again, found there ‘plenty of employment for his
The Pilgrimage to Canterbury
THOMAS STOTHARD RA 1755–1834
Pen and ink over pencil with watercolour on Whatman Turkey Mill paper watermarked 1833 4 × 12½ inches · 99 × 318 mm

Literature

Subject Engraved
Louis Schiavonetti and James Heath, after Thomas Stothard, The Pilgrimage to Canterbury, 1804–17, etching and engraving 15½ × 37¾ inches · 408 × 953 mm
A fine impression on India paper with the engraved word ‘Proof’ accompanies the watercolour. First issue lettered proofs of this nature are of far superior quality to the normal lettered print impressions which lack the word ‘Proof’ and which have been re-printed from the plate up to the present day.

The present watercolour is Stothard’s final version of his most famous picture, begun in the last year of his life and left partially completed at his death in 1834. The Pilgrimage to Canterbury was one of the triumphs of early nineteenth-century history painting, exhibited all over Britain in 1817, admired by the public and critics alike and transformed into a best-selling engraving. Walter Scott endorsed it as ‘executed with the genius and mechanism of art patronage in England circa 1800, 1996, p.47’

Most contemporary evidence, in particular accounts by John Thomas Smith in Sofahome and His Times and by Allan Cunningham in his Lives of Eminent British Painters support the view that Stothard was the true originator of both this concept and its design. Both of these authors assert that Blake visited Stothard while the latter was working on his Chaucer design and stole the concept from Stothard. If true, it would seem that Blake then rushed to finish his engraving of the subject by 1810, ahead of plate after Stothard’s painting – a view which would fit with Blake’s continuing precarious financial predicament. Recent evidence suggests that Blake’s plate was in fact a blatant plagiarism of Thomas Stothard’s work.

Though Stothard continued to be productive into the 1830s, the watermark of 1817 dates the picture to very close to the accident in which he was hit by a carriage in the autumn of that year, leading to his disablement and ultimate death in 1834. In its clarity and freshness the present watercolour is a magnificent miniature version of Stothard’s greatest work, a perfect distillation of Chaucer’s characters. Its popularity involved Stothard in a bitter controversy with his friend, William Blake. In brief, Blake claimed that Cromek commissioned Louis Schiavonetti to engrave Thomas Stothard’s composition, but when Schiavonetti died in 1810 he had completed only the etched state of the plate. The plate was finally completed by James Heath and was published on 1 October 1827 and was also enormously popular. It captured the contemporary appeal for Chaucer’s work and the range of social and character types it celebrated. The highly energetic frieze-like composition acted as a compendium of Chaucer’s characters. Its popularity involved Stothard in a bitter controversy with his friend, William Blake. In brief, Blake claimed that Cromek commissioned from him a painting illustrating Chaucer’s story of the pilgrimage to Canterbury and after seeing his fresco sketch, Cromek withdrew the commission. According to Blake, Cromek then proceeded to commission from Stothard a similar painting based on what he had seen in Blake’s sketch.

In his preparatory sketch, Stothard enlarged the pilgims and their horses ld their expressions and costume in pen and ink, in a manner typical of his later works. Heightened with white, the final colouring of the Pilgrims and their horses has been left only partially completed, allowing an intense scrutiny of the elderly Stothard’s disciplined line. The original composition of Canterbury Pilgrims was commissioned by the engraver Robert Cromek in 1806. The painting was first exhibited at Cromek’s house in London, then shown throughout England and Scotland, drawing large crowds at the admission price of one shilling per person and by May 1807 he could claim that three thousand people had seen and praised it. Cromek commissioned Louis Schiavonetti to engrave Thomas Stothard’s composition, but when Schiavonetti died in 1810 he had completed only the etched state of the plate. The plate was finally completed by James Heath and was published on 1 October 1827 and was also enormously popular. It captured the contemporary appeal for Chaucer’s work and the range of social and character types it celebrated. The highly energetic frieze-like composition acted as a compendium of Chaucer’s characters. Its popularity involved Stothard in a bitter controversy with his friend, William Blake. In brief, Blake claimed that Cromek commissioned from him a painting illustrating Chaucer’s story of the pilgrimage to Canterbury and after seeing his fresco sketch, Cromek withdrew the commission. According to Blake, Cromek then proceeded to commission from Stothard a similar painting based on what he had seen in Blake’s sketch.


The Pilgrimage to Canterbury
THOMAS STOTHARD RA 1755–1834
The Pilgrimage to Canterbury
THOMAS STOTHARD RA 1755–1834
Pen and ink over pencil with watercolour on Whatman Turkey Mill paper watermarked 1833
4 × 12½ inches · 99 × 318 mm

Literature

Subject Engraved
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A fine impression on India paper with the engraved word ‘Proof’ accompanies the watercolour. First issue lettered proofs of this nature are of far superior quality to the normal lettered print impressions which lack the word ‘Proof’ and which have been re-printed from the plate up to the present day.

The present watercolour is Stothard’s final version of his most famous picture, begun in the last year of his life and left partially completed at his death in 1834. The Pilgrimage to Canterbury was one of the triumphs of early nineteenth-century history painting, exhibited all over Britain in 1817, admired by the public and critics alike and transformed into a best-selling engraving. Walter Scott endorsed it as ‘executed with the genius and mechanism of art patronage in England circa 1800, 1996, p.47’

Most contemporary evidence, in particular accounts by John Thomas Smith in Sofahome and His Times and by Allan Cunningham in his Lives of Eminent British Painters support the view that Stothard was the true originator of both this concept and its design. Both of these authors assert that Blake visited Stothard while the latter was working on his Chaucer design and stole the concept from Stothard. If true, it would seem that Blake then rushed to finish his engraving of the subject by 1810, ahead of plate after Stothard’s painting – a view which would fit with Blake’s continuing precarious financial predicament. Recent evidence suggests that Blake’s plate was in fact a blatant plagiarism of Thomas Stothard’s work.

Though Stothard continued to be productive into the 1830s, the watermark of 1817 dates the picture to very close to the accident in which he was hit by a carriage in the autumn of that year, leading to his disablement and ultimate death in 1834. In its clarity and freshness the present watercolour is a magnificent miniature version of Stothard’s greatest work, a perfect distillation of Chaucer’s characters. Its popularity involved Stothard in a bitter controversy with his friend, William Blake. In brief, Blake claimed that Cromek commissioned Louis Schiavonetti to engrave Thomas Stothard’s composition, but when Schiavonetti died in 1810 he had completed only the etched state of the plate. The plate was finally completed by James Heath and was published on 1 October 1827 and was also enormously popular. It captured the contemporary appeal for Chaucer’s work and the range of social and character types it celebrated. The highly energetic frieze-like composition acted as a compendium of Chaucer’s characters. Its popularity involved Stothard in a bitter controversy with his friend, William Blake. In brief, Blake claimed that Cromek commissioned from him a painting illustrating Chaucer’s story of the pilgrimage to Canterbury and after seeing his fresco sketch, Cromek withdrew the commission. According to Blake, Cromek then proceeded to commission from Stothard a similar painting based on what he had seen in Blake’s sketch.

In his preparatory sketch, Stothard enlarged the pilgims and their horses ld their expressions and costume in pen and ink, in a manner typical of his later works. Heightened with white, the final colouring of the Pilgrims and their horses has been left only partially completed, allowing an intense scrutiny of the elderly Stothard’s disciplined line. The original composition of Canterbury Pilgrims was commissioned by the engraver Robert Cromek in 1806. The painting was first exhibited at Cromek’s house in London, then shown throughout England and Scotland, drawing large crowds at the admission price of one shilling per person and by May 1807 he could claim that three thousand people had seen and praised it. Cromek commissioned Louis Schiavonetti to engrave Thomas Stothard’s composition, but when Schiavonetti died in 1810 he had completed only the etched state of the plate. The plate was finally completed by James Heath and was published on 1 October 1827 and was also enormously popular. It captured the contemporary appeal for Chaucer’s work and the range of social and character types it celebrated. The highly energetic frieze-like composition acted as a compendium of Chaucer’s characters. Its popularity involved Stothard in a bitter controversy with his friend, William Blake. In brief, Blake claimed that Cromek commissioned from him a painting illustrating Chaucer’s story of the pilgrimage to Canterbury and after seeing his fresco sketch, Cromek withdrew the commission. According to Blake, Cromek then proceeded to commission from Stothard a similar painting based on what he had seen in Blake’s sketch.

The three sketchbook pages offered here belong to a larger group recently acquired by Lowell Libson that were formerly part of a sketchbook used by Turner in 1824, during his final visit to Farnley Hall, near Otley. This was the home of Walter Fawkes (1769–1825), who was the most significant patron of the first half of Turner’s career. As well as acquiring several important oil paintings, such as *The Dort Packet-Boat from Rotterdam becalmed* (1818, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven), and the complete set of fifty views of the Rhine resulting from the 1817 tour, Fawkes commissioned many watercolours of his Yorkshire home and the surrounding estate. Turner had been a regular visitor there since 1808, but his stay at Farnley in 1824 (between 19 November and 14 December) proved to be his last because Fawkes died the following October, aged only 56. After that Turner could not be persuaded to visit the place again.

The book was then less than half full. But in preparing for a tour of the Alps in 1836, Turner packed it with the other materials he took with him. He was travelling that year with Hugh Andrew Johnstone Munro of Novar (1797–1864), a Scottish landowner, who was already establishing himself as the most notable collector of Turner’s later works. The tour was intended to lift the spirits of the young Munro, and conferred on him the exceptional status of being one of only a handful of people permitted to travel with Turner. As an amateur artist, he also benefited from the impromptu advice Turner offered when they were sketching in the Val d’Aosta. At some stage in the journey Munro found the Farnley sketchbook among his things. He recalled: ‘I shewed it to Turner, who, after looking over it, again put it into my hands. I suppose it had been originally put up to enable him to make use of the unused up paper in it.’ Though this was clearly Turner’s intention, none of the subjects in the sketchbook can be linked with the 1836 journey. But in giving the book to Munro, Turner was making a telling gesture, linking the two crucial friendships that had supported his work. Significantly, this was apparently the only time he ever gave away a sketchbook. Indeed, he generally went out of his way to prevent anyone seeing inside his working notebooks.

After leaving Munro’s collection, when his estate was settled, the book belonged to the etcher John Postle Heseltine (1843–1929). A note he added in the front of the book indicates that he mistakenly thought the watercolours and sketches had been made as late as 1831, during Turner’s extensive tour of Scotland. Turner had then stayed briefly at Munro’s home, Novar House, in Evanton, which was perhaps one of the factors that induced Heseltine to link the book with this year.

After Heseltine’s death, the book was sold at Sotheby’s (29 May 1935, lot 366). It was subsequently exhibited in Birmingham, where the Art Gallery and Museum, were encouraged to buy it. However, it thereafter entered the collection of Allon Dawson of Leathley Grange, Otley (1887–1965), with whose family it remained.

The Farnley-Munro sketchbook was made up of the standard Whatman paper that Turner habitually used and originally constituted 40 pages, though ultimately Turner painted or sketched on just half of these. Most of the images were painted on the 1824 trip to Yorkshire, but two sheets were used for views of Indian temples,
perhaps in connection with a plan to illustrate Thomas Moore’s Lalla Rookh, or they may have been inspired by the visit he made to the oriental splendour of the Royal Pavilion in Brighton that year. Another notable feature of the book is its concentration on studies of the sky and atmospheric effects, such as rainbows or stormy skies. These subtle and dramatic sketches of cloud formations should perhaps be related to the new interest in meteorology, and specifically the writings of Luke Howard (1772–1864), who had provided the first classification of cloud types. It is well known that in the early 1820s, cloud studies formed a distinct aspect of the work of John Constable. But Turner was similarly obsessed with the sky, if not in quite such a precise, quasi-scientific way as his rival. Indeed, the watercolour with a tiny f.8 verso, sketched in a larger format, the observations made in the ‘Skies’ sketchbook (Turner Bequest c81v, Tate), which was in use in 1819. Turner’s biographer, Alexander J. Finberg, in an article for the Connoisseur in October 1929, was the first to link the images in the sketchbook with the last trip to Farnley. He comments there that the brooding sunset on the first sheet of the book lacks enough detail to link it with a specific location. However, the pencil sketch on the verso, in conjunction with those made in the vicinity of Farnley Hall on the following sheets, induced him to state ‘we need have no hesitation in deciding that the sunset on the opening page represents the view looking over the Lake Tiny at Farnley’. While this identification remains quite possible, the wide road in the foreground of the image could suggest that the effect was seen while Turner was en route up to Yorkshire. The building seen in silhouette on the right of the image might help to determine the precise location, but it is difficult to establish its scale: it could be a great church, or a barn. None of this detracts from the power of the image, which can be compared with some of the finest colour studies in the Turner Bequest (see TB cc1v, f.30, Tate 938847) (fig.1).

As Finberg noted, the pencil sketches on f.4 of the book are much easier to link with Farnley. When making the view on the front of the sheet, Turner held his book so that the pencil sketch was the first image, apparently planning to make a series of images moving down the page (as he did in other notebooks). Here Farnley Hall can be seen on the crown of the hill in the far distance, above the junction of the River Wharfe with its tributary, the Washburn, entering the main stream from the right (page 97).

Turning the page over, he made a view of a ruin of a farm building with a distant bridge (page 98). The sketch afterwards served as the basis for a watercolour, still in private hands, which has been called both Lindley Bottom and Guy Barn, Bank and Ford, with Lindley Bridge (see Andrew Wilson, The Life and Work of J.M.W. Turner, Fribourg 1979, p.57a, no.644, dated c.1820) (fig.2). The tall trees, which form such an elegant repoussoir on the right of the finished watercolour, did not fit on the confines of f.4 verso, by this time Turner had set out most of his composition. Accordingly, he rolled his page back to add them to the back of f.5, completing his scene there (page 100).

Two further Farnley subjects can be found on f.8, sketched in opposite alignment (figs. 2-3). One of these depicts the bridge outside the Wharfedale leading up to Lindley Hall, another local property belonging to the Fawkes family. Once again, this is a subject that Turner developed as a finished watercolour (see Wilton 1979, p.372, no.624, dated 1818). The other pencil sketch on f.8 shows a group of men up among the rocks of Caley Crags on the Wharfe valley (fig.3). One of the figures appears to be steadying something that could be either a gun or a telescope. Fawkes and his guests often went shooting on the nearby moors known as the Chevin. This part of the sheet is marked by a blot of black wash, which may have been where Turner toned his brush while working on the image on the facing page, which showed a stage coach under a cloudy wintry sky, possibly at Wakefield (private collection, the watercolour is reproduced in Finberg’s article).

A related study of contemporary modes of transport can be found on the other side of f.8, where Turner painted a wonderfully atmospheric image of a team of horses (or cattle) pulling a wagon down the hill from a windmill (fig.4). Framing the whole scene is the arc of a huge rainbow, in its form, but not its individual colours, represented as a beam of light on the unpainted paper (Another sheet later in the book also depicted a rainbow among stormy clouds, f.35, private collection). The location of the mill in this haunting image is likely to be somewhere reasonably close to Farnley, but has not yet been pinpointed. In painting the scene, Turner used a limited range of inky tones similar to those in many of the wash sketches he ‘Old London Bridge’ sketchbook at the Tate (Turner Bequest c4v, Tate). In both cases, the use of this restrained palette can be related to the work he was doing around this time on the experimental designs that were engraved in mezzotint, and which are misleadingly known as the ‘Little Liber’. Turner had worked on a long series of 70 sepilcutional landscape mezzotints published as Liber Studiorum between stay until his departure for Italy in 1819. The later group – the ‘Little Liber’ – are primarily studies...
of effects, like those in this book, and have been
breathtakingly dated, but seem likely to have
been under way by 1824. Indeed some pencil
calculations by Turner that were written
inside the front cover of this sketchbook
seem to relate to the project.

The following page of the sketchbook (f.9) also
utilized the dark washes for its
rising foreground and for a tree, or shrub
[page 95]. But beyond that the distant view is
painted in pure prismatic colours: yellow for
the area beside the river and for the bridge
crossing it, blue for the shadows beyond the
right hand foreground; and a glowing red for
the moorland receding to the horizon. The
close is again near Farnley, with one of
the bridges over the Wharfe.

Turner’s Farnley studies continued at the
other end of the sketchbook, suggesting
that he flipped it round to begin again there.
This enabled him to work on the sheet on
the right hand side of each page opening,
his preferred method in his sketchbooks.

There were originally 5 studies of the River
Washburn in this part of the book that were
painted either wholly or primarily in brown,
or sepia coloured washes. Most obviously,
these recall the designs Turner had made for
the Liber Studiorum plates. But during 1824
he would have seen the British Museum’s newly
acquired large group of drawings by Claude
Lorrain, which were also painted in warm
earthy tones. Many of these feature shady
groves contrasted with sunlit glades, and
seem to be an influence on the views Turner
made on the Washburn while at Farnley (see
Ian Warrell, Turner et le Lorrain, exhibition
catalogue, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nancy,

One of these Washburn studies shows a
curve in the river, with the bank of the oppo-
site shore projecting across the foreground
from the right side to create a snaking
diagonal of light through the image [fig.5].
Restricting himself to his brown wash,
Turner creates a rich range of tones and
half-tones, suggesting rocks in some places,
brooky trees elsewhere, and drawing the eye
upwards to the feathery foliage of the trees
lining the river banks. He obviously enjoyed
the shaded waters of this stream, probably
spending time there pursuing his passion for
angling. On an earlier visit to Farnley he had
produced two larger watercolour studies of
a similar character (see Wilton 1979, p.31, nos.
234, 235; both Yale Center for British
Art, New Haven). Two related sepia studies
from this book were exhibited by Agnew in
1987 (nos. 33, 41), while another sheet that
seems to have been part of this group is now
in the British Museum (1861,0810.31) [fig.6].
The latter is titled Huntsmen in a Wood,
and has until now been lumped with the
Liber Studiorum, when in fact it is a
summation of this group of studies, using its depiction of
the trees bordering the Washburn to frame
the church at Leathley. Like other sheets in
the book, it has two pencil sketches on its
verso, both of which seem to show the rocks of
Caley Crags, like the scene on f.8.

The final sheet in this series is a view
of Leathley Church, seen from the south,
where the Washburn flows into the broader
waters of the Wharfe [fig.7]. This beautifully
subtle study is laid in over very faint pencil
lines, indicating that Turner was setting out
to record more diligently than elsewhere the
specifics of the scene. His delicate use of the
brush, and his fingertips, skillfully applied
the paint to create a natural sense of depth,
simultaneously leading the eye towards
the brilliantly lit tower of the church (for a
comparable work in the Turner Bequest,
see TB CCIII N, Tate).
JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER RA 1775–1851

Plein air study: the Wharfe Valley from the Chevin looking towards Otley Bridge & Farnley Hall

Watercolour
7 7/8 x 10 1/2 inches, 197 x 267 mm
with a pencil sketch verso
From the Farnley Munro sketchbook (folio 9)

Collections
H.A.J. Munro of Novar, a gift from Turner in 1836, (d. 1865);
Isabella Munro-Johnstone, sister of the above, d. 1873;
Hon. Henry Butler, husband of the above, d. 1879;
Henry Alexander Munro-Butler-Johnstone, son of the above, sold by 1880;
John Postle Heseltine, d. 1929;
Mrs J.P. Heseltine, wife of the above, d. 1935;
Lt. Col. Christopher Heseltine, sale, Sotheby, 3–5 June 1935, (an album of sketches by Turner, £170);
Allon Dawson, acquired c.1935;
By family descent, 2013

Literature
A. J. Finberg, 'Turner’s newly identified Yorkshire sketchbook', The Connoisseur, October 1935, pp.185–7;

This richly evocative colour study demonstrates Turner’s preoccupation with how best to communicate climate, light and landscape with watercolour wash. Technically inventive and highly informal, this sheet depicts a view close to Farnley Hall. David Hill has recently confirmed the viewpoint in this plein air study as being the steep West Chevin road, looking north-east over the bridge towards Farnley Hall itself. Hill also points out that Turner had made a drawing over ten years earlier of the same view from the same viewpoint in the ‘Woodcock Shooting’ sketchbook of c.1812–13 (Tate Britain, TB CXXIX 40a). It was probably made en route to Farnley or on an excursion from the house.

By 1824 Turner had spent a great deal visiting the Fawkes family at Farnley Hall and would have been intimately acquainted with the approaches to and from the house. It is clear from the surviving sketchbooks, finished watercolours and anecdotal details that Turner took an active part in the life of the household when staying. Turner seems to have been particularly keen on shooting, accompanying Fawkes and his party onto the neighbouring moors, as his earliest biographer Walter Thornbury noted:

It was on one of these occasions that, returning from shooting, nothing else would satisfy Turner but driving the present Mr Fawkes home a rough way, partly through fields, and in a tandem. Neal I say that this precarious vehicle was seen approved, amid shouts of good-humoured laughter! And henceforward, for that reason, Turner was known at Farnley by the nickname of ‘Over-Turner’.1

As Ian Warrell has pointed out, in the essay in this catalogue, the Farnley Hall sketchbook demonstrates Turner’s preoccupation with meteorology and light effects on landscape. This rich watercolour study is also technically innovative. Turner has saturated the page with water and then applied broad watercolour washes to the damp paper, imparting a diffuse, indistinct quality to the landscape. The highly atmospheric study is anchored by the solitary topographical element, Otley Bridge, in the middle-distance. Turner’s familiarity with the moors around Farnley and his love of the landscape prompted him to make this impressive and highly impressionistic study. Although now famous for these highly suggestive and modern looking studies, Turner would never have intended for sheets such as this to be exhibited. The majority of such works were contained in his sketchbooks – this page has not been trimmed and the stitching holes from the sketchbook binding are visible on the left-hand side – most of which remained in his studio at his death in 1851 when they were left to the nation. This sketchbook is the only example known to have been given away by Turner in his lifetime. He gave it to his friend and patron, Hugh Monro of Novar. In 1854, Gustav Waagen commented on the ‘perfect treasury’ of drawings by Turner in the Munro collection. It was acquired after Monro’s death by John Postle Heseltine, one of the greatest collectors of Turner’s work in the late nineteenth century. The present sheet is therefore not only a highly sensitive and technically innovative celebration of Turner’s friendship with Walter Fawkes, but in its provenance links two of the greatest collectors of Turner’s work.


[ 36 ]
JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER RA 1775–1851

View on the Washburn looking towards Lindley Bridge

Pencil
7½ x 10¾ inches, 197 x 267 mm
Verso: Farnley Hall from the River Wharfe
From the Farnley Munro sketchbook (folio a and a verso)

collections
H.A.J. Munro of Novar, a gift from Turner in 1836, (d. 1865);
Isabella Munro-Johnstone, sister of the above, d. 1873;
Hon. Henry Butler, husband of the above, d. 1879;
Henry Alexander Munro-Butler-Johnstone, son of the above, sold by 1880;
Mrs J.P.Heseltine, wife of the above, d. 1939;
Lt. Col. Christopher Heseltine, sale, Sotheby, 3–5 June 1935, (an album of sketches by Turner, £170);
Allon Dawson, acquired in 1935;
By family descent, 2013

Literature
A. J. Finberg, ‘Turner’s newly identified Yorkshire sketchbook’, The Connoisseur, October 1935, pp.185–7;

It was this fine sheet from the 1824 sketchbook which enabled A. J. Finberg to link it definitively with Turner’s trip to Farnley Hall in Yorkshire. Farnley, situated west of York near Otley, was the home of Walter Fawkes, the most important patron of the first half of Turner’s career. Fawkes acquired nearly 200 watercolours and six oils from the artist in the period between 1808 and 1810, spending a total of £3,500 in the process.1 But Fawkes was more than a generous patron; Turner seems to have been completely accepted into his family life and his activities in Yorkshire seem to have been as much social as artistic. Walter Thornbury reported that there he shot and fished and was as playful as a child.2

Turner used folio a of the sketchbook to record his first sight of Farnley Hall. Turning the page so it was portrait, rather than landscape, and working from the outer edge of the page, Turner was apparently planning to make a series of images moving down the page, a method for making rapid sketches which he had used before. The drawing depicts Farnley Hall on the crown of the hill in the far distance, above the junction of the River Wharfe with its tributary, the Washburn, entering the main stream from the right. On the verso of the sheet, Turner made a view on the Washburn of a farm building with a distant bridge. Turner was evidently planning an expansive, panoramic landscape, as the trees on the left-hand side spilled on to the verso of folio 1. The sketch afterwards served as the basis for a watercolour, still in private hands, which has been called both Lindley Bottom and Guy Barn, Bank and Ford, with Lindley Bridge.3

These confident and incisive pencil studies demonstrate Turner’s ability to capture the familiar Yorkshire landscape with a remarkable economy of line. In contrast to the two watercolour studies from the sketchbook, Turner here shows his sensitivity to form and tone without the use of colour. Walter Fawkes, at Farnley Hall between 16th November and 26th December 1824, Turner was unable to bear returning to Farnley after Fawkes’s death in 1825, making the recto study of the hall Turner’s last record of the house he had spent so much time in the first decades of his career.

notes

verso: Farnley Hall from the River Wharfe
JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER RA 1775–1851

A plein air study at sunset: Farnley, Yorkshire

Watercolour
7 ¼ × 10 ½ inches, 187 × 267 mm
with a pencil sketch verso.
From the Farnley Munro sketchbook of 1824
(folio 1, with a pencil sketch verso, continuing the sketch on f. 2 verso)

Collections
H. A. J. Munro of Noray, a gift from Turner in 1836, (d. 1865);
Isabella Munro-Johnstone, sister of the above, d. 1873;
Hon. Henry Butler, husband of the above, d. 1879;
Henry Alexander Munro-Butler-Johnstone, son of the above, sold by 1880;
John Pate Heseltine, d. 1929;
Mrs J. P. Heseltine, wife of the above, d. 1935;
Lt. Col. Christopher Heseltine, sale, Sotheby, 3–5 June 1935, (an album of sketches by Turner, £170);
Allan Dawson, acquired in 1935;
By family descent, 2013

Literature
A. J. Finberg, ‘Turner’s newly identified Yorkshire sketchbook’, The Connoisseur, October 1935, pp. 185–7;

This highly atmospheric watercolour depicts a sunset at Farnley and was the first page in the sketchbook, and is one of the most highly finished and evocative sheets. A. J. Finberg identified the location, on the basis of the pencil study of Farnley Hall on f. 2, as a ‘view looking over Lake Tiny at Farnley’. As Ian Warrel discusses in his essay in this catalogue, this identification remains quite possible, the wide road in the foreground of the image might suggest that the effect may have been seen while Turner was en route up to Yorkshire. The building seen in silhouette on the right of the image might help to determine the precise location, but it is difficult to establish its scale. None of this detracts from the power of the image, which can be compared with some of the finest colour studies in the Turner Bequest.

Turner visited Farnley Hall on a number of occasions between 1808 and Walter Fawkes’s death in 1825. As a result, Turner became extremely familiar with the surrounding landscape. As Turner’s early biographer Walter Thornbury noted Farnley Hall looks down on the Wharfe, the river that flows beneath the walls of Bolton Abbey, one of Turner’s favourite scenes. These roundel scarps that he all his life delighted in, and to some semblance of which he ever modeled the eternal Alps, stretch in a misty and sun-barred line opposite the peacock-guarded terraces of the fine old Carolan hall.1

Whilst the present watercolour probably shows the moorland near Farnley Hall, rather than the ‘scarps’ or steep slopes on the river Wharfe, Turner’s familiarity with the landscape afforded him the freedom to produce this highly concentrated study of a brooding sunset without concerning himself too much with details of topography. Turner
has captured the prismatic quality of the setting sun with feathery brush-strokes of watercolour contrasting it with the inky silhouette of trees on the horizon, which all contributes to impart a remarkable sense of atmosphere to the study. The immediacy of this plein air work is emphasised by the abraded area on the left, caused by wetting the paper and then scratching out, it is not clear if this was done by accident or design. This watercolour study belongs to Turner’s most experimental and intense body of colour sketches. It shows both his technical mastery of watercolour as a medium and the intensity of his response to the familiar Yorkshire landscape.

As Ian Warrell outlined in his introductory essay these studies were originally part of a now dismembered sketchbook that Turner gave to his close friend Hugh Munro of Novar. A piece of paper pasted inside the front cover of the sketchbook recorded in Munro’s hand:

When I traveled in 1836 with Turner through France, Switzerland and the Val d’Aosta I found this sketchbook amongst my things – I showed it to Turner, who after looking over it, again put it into my hands – I suppose it had been originally put up to enable him to make use of the unused paper in it. It was Finberg’s supposition that Turner’s housekeeper had included the partially used sketchbook in Turner’s luggage in 1836 as she noticed that it was only half-filled and that when he looked at it again on tour, overcome by poignant memories, he made the uncharacteristic gesture of giving it to Munro, Fawkes’s successor as Turner’s confidant. The sketchbook then passed to John Postle Heseltine, one of the greatest collectors of English drawing at the end of the nineteenth century. This sheet therefore not only represents the mature Turner exploring atmospheric effects in watercolour, but links three of the greatest connoisseurs of Turner’s work.

Despite his large graphic output comparatively few drawings by West relating to specific portraits survive. The present sheet, a sensitive study for the painting of Mrs Shute Barrington of 1808, is therefore an important addition to West’s oeuvre, being published here for the first time.

By 1800 West, who had been elected the second President of the Royal Academy of Arts on the death of Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1792, was one of the most prominent painters in Britain. Although his practice was largely historical – he had been made historical painter to King George III in 1772 and was responsible for decorating the interiors of Windsor Castle with paintings of scenes from British history – West was also a successful and productive portrait painter. The present study is for the portrait of Jane Barrington, now in the Cummer Gallery of Art, Jacksonville, Florida, which is signed and dated 1808. The sitter was born Jane Guise in 1733, the daughter of Sir John Guise, Bt., she married the Hon. Shute Barrington, then Bishop of Llandaff in 1770. Barrington was subsequently made Bishop of Salisbury and finally Durham in 1791, where Jane Barrington died in 1807.

In the finished portrait Mrs Shute Barrington is depicted seated, her left hand resting on a bible, with a distant view of the west front of Durham Cathedral visible through the window. There has been some confusion over the precise date of the finished portrait; William Roberts suggested that it was executed at the time of the Barrington’s marriage, the view of Durham and West’s signature being added in 1808, whilst von Erffa and Staley noted that the handling of the portrait was consistent with West’s work in 1808. This supposition is supported by the present drawing which includes Durham Cathedral, confirming the whole composition was conceived at the same moment, a fact further supported by our discovery of a receipt for the painting dated January 1809 and preserved in Durham Cathedral Library, which is printed here for the first time.

The unusual circumstances of the commission probably prompted the completion of this sensitively handled drawing. The study is rendered in black chalk on grey prepared paper, heightened with white chalk and has an immediacy and engaging quality lost in the finished painting. West completed similar studies for other portraits where the sitters were no longer living, for example his 1797 portrait of Peter Beckford,
the seventeenth-century ancestor of William Beckford. The newly discovered letter from Barrington to West suggests that Mrs Shute Barrington was being painted as a pendant to an existing portrait of the Bishop which was being reframed to make them a pair. Von Erffa and Staley, without knowing this document, suggested the portrait was painted with one by Sir Thomas Lawrence now at Meriton College, Oxford on the basis of their identical dimensions. This drawing therefore throws important light on West’s working method, as well as being a highly significant addition to his known work.

Durham Cathedral Library and Archive4 Add Ms 295 /6-b Shute Barrington to Benjamin West, 20 January, 1809

Car: Square 26 Jan. 1809

The Bishop of Durham presents his respects to Mr West, & sends here with a draft on Messrs.

The Bishop of Durham presents comps to Mr

20 January, 1809: Shute Barrington to Benjamin West,

Add Ms 255/6a-b

Barrington’s portrait may be ready.

Bishop desires that the new frame for Bishop

Drummond for an hundred guineas: which he

West, & sends here: with a draft on Messrs.

The Bishop of Durham presents comps to Mr

3

20 January, 1809: Shute Barrington to Benjamin West,

Add Ms 255/6a-b

Barrington’s portrait may be ready.

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4

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Add Ms 255/6a-b

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Bishop desires that the new frame for Bishop

Drummond for an hundred guineas: which he

West, & sends here: with a draft on Messrs.

The Bishop of Durham presents comps to Mr

West’s portrait of

2

1738–1820 Painted for Bishop Shute Barrington,

West’s portrait of

2

1738–1820 Painted for Bishop Shute Barrington,

West’s portrait of

2

1738–1820 Painted for Bishop Shute Barrington,

West’s portrait of

2

1738–1820 Painted for Bishop Shute Barrington,

West’s portrait of

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back in Rome make it clear that Wright must have executed a number of drawn studies of Vesuvius whilst in Naples, of which the present sheet must be one.

Wright’s interest in Vesuvius was a natural one. The fragment of a travel diary which survives in Derby Local Studies Library reveals that he was studious in viewing the royal collections in Naples, visiting the ancient towns destroyed by the volcano, Herculaneum and Pompeii, and the great museum founded to house the discoveries from their excavation at Portici. It seems almost certain that he met Sir William Hamilton at this date. Hamilton was the British Minister Plenipotentiary to the court at Naples and one of the most noted connoisseurs and natural historians resident in Italy. In the 1770s he was in the midst of preparing his great illustrated publication on Vesuvius, The Campi Phlegraei, which appeared in 1776. Hamilton’s own copy, preserved in the British Library, contains an inscription claiming that Wright was actually involved in producing the illustrations. Whilst this cannot be substantiated, it suggests that Hamilton may well have facilitated Wright’s access to the volcano and acted as his guide. This may in turn explain a comment in one of Wright’s letters to his brother, where he asks: ‘when you see Whitehurst tell him I wished for his Company when on Mount Vesuvius, his thoughts wou’d have enter’d the bowels of the mountain mine skimed over the surface only.’ John Whitehurst was a fellow of the Royal Society, geologist and instrument maker who was passionately interested in volcanoes and whose theories and knowledge would perhaps have made
him a more appropriate companion for Hamilton than Wright.\textsuperscript{13}

Hamilton’s publication was prompted, at least in part, by the enormous interest in Vesuvius amongst scientists and virtuosi across Europe. No less fascinated were the countless Grand Tourists who visited Naples stimulating a flourishing trade in images and accounts of the volcano, its activities and victims. It was a market Wright was keen to exploit. Seven drawn studies by Wright of Vesuvius survive in total, all but the present sheet, held in the Derby Museum and Art Gallery. All but one of these studies, which will be discussed below, show the volcano during the day. They are either strictly topographical, such as the Terrain near Vesuvius, a black chalk drawing which concentrates on the rock formations (the caldera) adjacent to the summit, or show Vesuvius in the wider landscape of the plain. The present drawing is therefore unique in showing the volcano erupting and significantly, depicting this activity at night. Wright shows Vesuvius from its foothills looking south, the Bay of Naples on the right of the composition, the promontory to the left is Sorrento, and the island to the right of it is Capri. The drawing is the only one of Wright’s surviving studies to capture the theatricality and drama inherent in the scene, a quality which was essential to its contemporary appeal.\textsuperscript{14} Once back in Britain Wright paired paintings of Vesuvius with one of a fireworks display at Castel Sant’Angelo in Rome – known as La Girondola – commenting in a letter from Bath in 1776: ‘As to the picture of Vesuvius the Town rings with commendation of it … I have just now finished a companion to it. The Exhibition of a great fire work from the castle of St. Angelo in Rome, the one is the greatest effect of Nature the other of Art that I suppose can be.’\textsuperscript{15} Wright eventually completed some thirty paintings of Vesuvius erupting, by far his most popular and commercially successful subject. It therefore seems remarkable that the present drawing, his most complete and dramatic study of the volcano, has received so little critical attention, especially as the

\begin{table}
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\begin{tabular}{ll}
Joseph Wright of Derby & \textit{Study of Terrain near Vesuvius, 1774-5} \\
& Black chalk over pencil · 13⅝ x 19 inches · 346 x 483 mm \\
& Derby Museum and Art Gallery
\end{tabular}
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\begin{table}
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\begin{tabular}{ll}
Joseph Wright of Derby & \textit{Vesuvius, 1774} \\
& Black chalk over pencil · 14⅝ x 20⅛ inches · 372 x 511 mm \\
& Derby Museum and Art Gallery
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
survival of this sheet raises several impor-
tant questions about Wright’s technique. Nothing has been written about Wright’s reliance on ‘models’ for producing later repetitions of popular compositions. If we accept that Wright completed no ‘on the spot’ painting of the eruption of Vesuvius then the present drawing must be seen as the most substantial and significant surviv-
ning study Wright made of the subject and one which stayed by him for the next twenty years as he completed new iterations of the subject.14

While three sketchesbooks and a number of powerful independent studies from nature survive from Wright’s Grand Tour, the present drawing is unusual in being a highly worked-up compositional study for a painting. Only three other drawings of comparable finish and complexity survive from Wright’s Italian stay. They comprise a pair of sheets depicting a grotto in the Gulf of Salerno in the morning and evening (private collection) and another nocturnal view of Vesuvius (Derby Museum and Art Gallery). The two views of grotto corre-
spond directly to two pictures completed in Italy in 1774.15 More instructively, the two drawings were used by Wright back in Britain as the model for historical works.

Amongst the large number of pictures Wright sold to Philips recorded in his Account Book, are three watercolours: ‘A sketch of Mount Vesuvius Evening to S. Philip’, ‘a sketch in the same manner’, and ‘a sketch in the same manner’ (these last two are almost certainly a small oil work as opposed to a drawing). See Benedict Nicolson, Joseph Wright of Derby: Master of Light, New Haven and London, 1984, p.101.

NOTES
2 Wright’s time in Rome has received compar-
atively little attention from scholars, the present drawing has only been published by Benedict Nicolson. See under literature.
8 Among the most complex discussion of Wright’s Vesuvius pictures see Benedict Nicolson, Joseph Wright of Derby: Master of Light, New Haven and London, 1984, p.76. See Judy Egerton, Joseph Wright of Derby, exh. cat., London (Tate Gallery), 1990, pp.107 and 112.
9 For Whitewash and its relationship with Wright and his landscapes, see: David Frankel, Fields of Radiance: the scientific and industrial sources of Joseph Wright, 1734–1819, Dennis Congreve and Stephen Daniels, The Iconography of Landscape, Cambridge, 1988, p.55.
10 This was a fact recognised by Nicolson, who noted that Vesuvius is seen: ‘by moonlight with a view over the still sea, where he is not so much concerned with the tumult of rock, as with the mazy smoke across the foreground’. Nicolson, Joseph Wright of Derby: Master of Light, New Haven and London, 1984, p.307.
11 The present author has difficulty accepting the small gouache study of the erupting Vesuvius in the Derby Museum and Art Gallery, which has no provenance beyond the early twentieth century. It was accepted by Nicolson and Egerton, but has never been the subject of serious consideration.
14 For Whitewash and its relationship with Wright and his landscapes, see: David Frankel, Fields of Radiance: the scientific and industrial sources of Joseph Wright, 1734–1819, Dennis Congreve and Stephen Daniels, The Iconography of Landscape, Cambridge, 1988, p.55.
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This rare drawing depicts an elephant fight at Lucknow and was made by Johan Zoffany during his residence in the city in the 1780s. Only a small number of Zoffany’s Indian drawings survive making the discovery of this previously unrecorded example a highly important addition to Zoffany’s oeuvre. More than this, it is a beautifully sensitive rendering of a Moghul court entertainment, made by a European artist.

Johan Zoffany departed for India in 1783, as Paul Sandby noted, where he ‘anticipates to roll in gold dust.’ He was given permission to travel by the East India Company in the capacity of a portrait painter and he must have hoped that his success at the Courts of Europe in the previous decades would be replicated in British controlled Calcutta. Indeed the roll call of patrons he did attract suggests that his financial predicaments were correct, shortly after arriving, he produced portraits of Warren Hastings, Elijah Impey, Claude Martin, Asaf-ud-Daula. Although he established a successful practice amongst Europeans in Calcutta, his most engaging and important work emanated from the time he spent ‘up-country’.

Zoffany left Calcutta for Lucknow in 1784 where he remained until 1786. Lucknow was the capital of Awadh, outside the territory administered directly by the East Indian Company, although within its sphere of influence. Ruled by the Nawab Viceroy of the Moghul Empire, Asaf-ud-daula, it was the home to a cultured and splendid court which included a number of prominent Europeans, most significantly Colonel Claude Martin and Lieutenant-Colonel John Mordaunt. Zoffany painted official portraits of Asaf-ud-daula and his chief minister Hasan Reza Khan and undertook his most famous Indian
composition in the city: Colonel Mordaunt’s Cock Match. This monumental, multi-figure composition depicted a cockfight held between birds owned by Asaf-ud-daula and his favourite, Mordaunt. It depicts the court at play, incorporating portraits of the principal courtiers and members of the European diaspora in Awadh, including a self-portrait of Zoffany himself, the painter Ozias Humphry and Claude Martin.

Zoffany returned to Lucknow on the eve of his departure from India on 28 December 1786. This monumental, multi-figure composition depicted a cockfight held between birds owned by Asaf-ud-daula and his favourite, Mordaunt. It depicts the court at play, incorporating portraits of the principal courtiers and members of the European diaspora in Awadh, including a self-portrait of Zoffany himself, the painter Ozias Humphry and Claude Martin.

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of studies listed as ‘drawings in chalks, illustrative of the country and manners of India’ by Mr Zoffany: ‘The lot descriptions include “twenty-one Elephants and Horses’ and ‘Seven, Natives of India’, one lot in particular is listed as ‘Thrice, Elephants Fighting, and a View’. This is almost certainly the lot which included the present drawing which depicts a fight between two elephants, rendered in Zoffany’s customary mixed chalks on blue paper. The sheet depicts a magnificent spectacle at the court of Asaf-ud-daula, the ruler of Awadh and was almost certainly made at Lucknow. We know that such entertainments were a frequent part of the life of the court. As Lord Cornwallis, the Governor General of India noted disapprovingly of Asaf-ud-daula: ‘The principal amusement of this dismissive view was not shared by many of the courtiers, cock-fighting, elephants and horses.’

We know that such entertainments were a frequent part of the life of the court. As Lord Cornwallis, the Governor General of India noted disapprovingly of Asaf-ud-daula: ‘The principal amusement of the court was combats held between large animals … India drew out in specialities of the court were combats held in Britain to help create an Indian compositional. The Tiger Hunt at Chandosagnor, Death of a Royal Tiger (Victoria Memorial Hall Calculus) of 1778–79. Zoffany transposed the two figures in the foreground of the present drawing directly into the foreground of the Tiger Hunt. This remarkable sheet of Elephants Fighting therefore remained an important memorial of Zoffany’s time in India and particularly in Lucknow amongst the cultivated friends he made there, but also a record from which he could draw once he was established back in London.

We are grateful to Charles Greg and Dr Martin Postle for their help with this catalogue entry.

NOTES
8. William Daniell, Elephants Fighting at Lucknow (in progress) Private collection © Lock and Leven, Edgar Collection, The Bridgeman Art Library
11. Johan Zoffany A Dying Hindu brought to the River Ganges, 1788. Black and white wash, 27.5 x 36.4 inches · 700 x 925 mm Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, New Haven.

Johann Zoffany 1733–1810

Portrait of an unknown man

Oil on canvas laid down on panel, 6 x 4½ inches · 152 x 115 mm, oval
Painted in the 1770s

This highly engaging, previously unpublished portrait by Johann Zoffany represents an important addition to his œuvre. Exceptionally finely painted, the portrait study is unfinished and thus provides us with some information about Zoffany’s working method. Zoffany’s wide ranging training and career encompassing Germany, England, Grand Tour Italy and India has recently received much scholarly attention: a biography appeared in 2010 followed by a comprehensive survey of his works by Mary Webster in 2011, the same year in which a major exhibition of over a hundred of his works was held at the Yale Center for British Art and Royal Academy of Arts in London. This attention has prompted a reassessment of Zoffany’s role as one of the most versatile and acute observers of British society, but also as one of the finest portraitists of the eighteenth century.

The identity of the sitter of the present portrait has, thus far, proved elusive. Given the immediacy, confidence and most importantly scale of the likeness, it seems likely to be a study for one of Zoffany’s conversation pieces rather than a full-size portrait. Stylistically it probably dates from the 1770s, the decade Zoffany was at the height of his powers, when he executed several of his most enduring compositions including Portrait of the Academician of the Royal Academy and Tribune of the Uffizi. In preparation for the first of these monumental canvases, commissioned by King George III to commemorate the foundation of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, Zoffany made a series of small-scale oil studies, at least one of which survives. In February 1774 Zoffany went to Bath to paint Thomas Gainsborough for inclusion in the conversation piece, the resulting portrait study remained with the sitter’s family until it was presented to the National Gallery in 1856 and subsequently transferred to the Tait in 1910. Like the present picture, the portrait of Gainsborough is fluidly painted and left unfinished, the sitter is seen animatingly looking to the right and would have served as a model for inserting the head into the finished conversation piece. Along with Gainsborough—who seems likely to have refused inclusion on the grounds of his growing animosity towards the hanging committee—the brothers George and Nathaniel Dance were also omitted from the group. Sadly the history of our work goes no so far as to the identity of the sitter, the painting is first recorded in the collection of the nineteenth-century landscape painter Robert Gillon who does not seem to have any obvious connection to a known Zoffany sitter or patron. The quality of the present work makes its anonymity particularly tantalising.

For Zoffany friendship was frequently expressed through portraiture and the intimate scale and unfinished nature of the present work reinforces the idea that it was the study of someone he knew well. We know Zoffany was in the habit of painting oil studies during theatrical performances, a fact confirmed by the rare survival of two studies of David Garrick as Abel Drugger in The Alchemist at the Drury Lane, and this head may be the result of studying one of his friends from the theatre. The partially painted canvas reveals Zoffany’s characteristic off-white ground, which is visible at the bottom of the canvas, beneath the sitter’s white stock. Fluid lines of light brown paint are also clearly visible and these are characteristic of Zoffany’s method for blocking in the features and poses of his sitters. The head itself is bought up to an extraordinarily high level of finish, the features are handled with characteristic delicacy, adding unblendable passages of highlight to impart a vitality to the expression. The portrait, which was cut down at some point and laid down on a mahogany panel, retains its outstanding condition and directly demonstrates the vivacity and inescapable which Zoffany drew with the brush.

We are grateful to Dr Martin Postle for confirming the attribution of the painting to Zoffany.

NOTES
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