

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

CUNLIFFE, Margaret, Mrs Thomas Brooke

Liverpool 16.II.1762 – Chester 16.XII.1826

Miss Cunliffe was an amateur exhibitor of a crayon picture at the age of 12. A pastel dating from three years later is signed by Margaret Cunliffe, making it very probable that the pastellist was Margaret (1762–1826), one of the daughters of Sir Robert Cunliffe, Bt of Acton Park (1719–1778), the subject of a portrait by Cotes, and his wife, née Mary Wright (1721–1791), who sat to Gainsborough c.1762. In 1780 she married Thomas Brooke (1760–1826) of Church Minshull, Chester, MP for Newton, high sheriff of Cheshire in 1810, brother of Sir Richard Brooke, Bt of Norton, who married her elder sister Mary. Both the Brooke brothers, but not it seems their wives, sat to Gainsborough c.1782. The 1778 example is a copy of the Reynolds painting acquired from the artist in 1782 by the Duke of Rutland and later destroyed by fire; Cunliffe may have seen it in Reynolds's studio but more likely copied the 1775 engraving by John Raphael Smith. Among the changes one notes the landscape format and the omission of the goat and the infant's feet.

Cunliffe also painted portrait miniatures; one of her son Henry (1796–p.1848), c.1798, is in a private collection (Cynthia Walmsley, Wigs on the Green, pr. comm. .2022).

Bibliography

Belsey 2019; Burke's *Baronetage*

Pastels

J.2528.101 A picture, crayons, Society of Artists 1775, no. 337

J.2528.102 Rape of Ganymede, pstl, 63.5x90, sd v "Margaret Cunliffe 1778" (London, Christie's, 16.III.1928, Lot 6, as 'The Infant Jupiter', 21 gns; Blumenthal. London, Christie's, 1.III.1935, Lot 4, 6 gns; Graves). A/r Reynolds pnt., Royal Academy 1774, no. 225 (Duke of Rutland). Lit.: Mannings 2000, no. 2098 p

