

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

CUNNINGHAM, Edward Francis

Kelso 1742 – ?London 1794

Edward Francis Cunningham, also known as Francesco Calze or Calza (i.e. from Kelso); his father was exiled from Scotland after the '45. He may have studied in Bologna and Parma before being introduced to Mengs in Rome in 1757 by Andrew Lumisden. In Mengs's studio he would have found not only Scottish painters such as Willison and Nevay but also the antiquary James Byres. He also studied with Batoni in Rome. By 1762 he was established at Parma, studying under Baldighi (*q.v.*); a nude study dated 1763 is in the Accademia di Belle Arti. He is also said to have worked in the studio of Francesco de Mura in Naples; later he moved to Venice and Paris. A painting of the King of Denmark in Paris may have led to commissions from the nobility. The striking pendants of Louis-Adrien Thiery and his wife (1768) show great promise, and perhaps the influence of Valade, whose pendants of M. & Mme Faventines, exhibited in the Salon of the previous year, have the same poses.

Cunningham was back in England where he exhibited at the Royal Academy in London from 1770 on, from an address opposite St James's Square, 1770; 34 Gerard Street, 1771–73 (where he took as lodger the Bohemian painter Martin Ferdinand Quadal); Great Marlborough Street, 1773. Here he made a series of portraits of beauties (Polly Jones, Kitty Hunter etc.), medium unknown (more likely oil than pastel in view of the complex accessories), engraved by Valentine Green and published by Boydell. It appears that he was permitted to inherit his father's estate, and he resumed the use of his name. His return to England was facilitated by his patron, Thomas, later 2nd Lord Lyttleton (known as the "wicked Lord Lyttelton"), son of Lady Lyttelton (*q.v.*) and George, 1st Baron Lyttelton, of whom Cunningham made several portraits (and who lived at Cunningham's old lodgings, 34 Gerrard Street, from 1776). According to Edwards, Cunningham's "profligacy and want of principle obliged him to leave England, but not before he had ill-treated his patron, who compelled him to atone for his improper conduct in one of the courts of Westminster Hall." However official reports of the case (*Calze v. Lord Lyttelton* 1774 2 Black. Rep. 954) confirm Walpole's view of the peer's "detestable character", "ingratitude, profligacy...and want of honour and decency", as the judge held that "every possible delay had been used to keep the plaintiff [Calze] out of a just debt". The effects on Cunningham's cash flow may have contributed to his later departure from London, but in fact he had become involved in property development around this time. Among other projects, in 1774 he took over (still using the Calze name) what is now no. 48 (formerly no. 43) Great Marlborough Street, and rebuilt it as "a large Place of Entertainment for the Publick ... called the Cassino". It was another two years before his debts caught up with him, and he abandoned the house, unable to pay the rates. Among his creditors when he was finally declared bankrupt (in .VII.1777) was a bricklayer who had worked on the casino.

It is unclear at what stage he left London. He was in Russia in 1783 where he made a drawing of the reception of the notorious Duchess of Kingston by Catherine the Great; since the Duchess sailed for St Petersburg in 1777 it has been assumed that Cunningham left London then, but for the next five years he continued to exhibit at the Royal Academy under the name of "Calza, il Bolognese", from 11 Bentinck Street, Soho (1777), from Mr Hayman's, 23 Queen Street, Golden Square (1778), from Mr Pasquier's, King Street and Mount Street (1779–81). The thin disguise may have been an attempt to evade his creditors, but the accommodation addresses may mean that he had left the country. It may be that he accompanied the Duchess on her second trip in 1779. It seems that he became associated with Richard Brompton (1734–1783), an English pupil of Mengs who was active as a portrait painter in Russia at the time. Cunningham made a copy of the Roslin painting of Catherine II, later engraved by Charles Townley but not published until 1786.

In 1784 he travelled to Berlin, where his "English style" in both portraits and history paintings was very fashionable. He executed a series of pastels for Friedrich der Große's troop review and the reception of the Duke of York in 1785. According to Thiébault, who describes Cunningham as an "amateur anglais, fort loin d'être sans talent, mais ayant surtout celui d'attraper la ressemblance", the king granted him sittings on 21, 22 and 23 May during these reviews; "autant peintre n'en eut jamais autant et n'aurait mieux profité de ce bonheur". The resulting pastel, taken to Paris by Thiébault's father, attracted the fancy of the maréchal de Richelieu. The following year his $\frac{3}{4}$ length pastel portrait of Prinzessin Friedrike von Preußen was given pride of place in the first exhibition of the Berlin Akademie, of which Calze was made a member in 1787. He was awarded the Merentibus (gold medal) in 1792, and was called on to decorate the Queen's apartments and the royal box in the theatre at Charlottenburg with mythological and historical scenes. Many of these Berlin works were destroyed in World War II, although the prints issued by Johann Marc Pascal survive. Apparently his behaviour in Prussia was again "improper", and he was forced to leave Berlin. Some sources say that he later returned to London, where he died in penury; genealogical records suggest that he is the Edward Cunnighame, aged 56, buried at St Leonard's, Shoreditch on 28.XII.1794 (although the age does not precisely tally).

His pastels reveal the influence of both the French and Italian schools. The later ones seem to have been executed quite rapidly, perhaps with gouache, and do not show much development of the artist's natural talent. Waterhouse thought his court portraits "peculiar in colour and coarse in execution". Chodowiecki noted, in relation to a family portrait painted in Russia, that "the drawing is not bad, the composition unremarkable, the colouring untrue and harsh, his hand heavy and rough" but conceded that he "uses crayon

better than oil paint." There are numerous engravings of his work, by Bromley, Cunego, Gabrielli, Green, Haas and Townley.

He has been confused with the Cunningham to whom Sir Joshua Reynolds wrote in Lille in .XI.1785 concerning two paintings by Rubens which Reynolds wanted to buy and restore (this was no doubt the Cunningham who fled to Lille in 1782 to escape his debts to a Sr [perhaps Sir William?] Forbes who was unable to enforce the debt in the parlement de Flandres, and was spotted there again by Elizabeth Gooch in 1785).

Bibliography

Bénézit; Sir William Blackstone, *Reports of cases determined in the several courts of Westminster-Hall from 1746 to 1779*, 2nd ed, London, 1828, II, p. 954; Börsch-Supan 1994; Brieger 1921; Chodowiecki 1919, p. 410; Chodowiecki 1928, p. 48; Cockayne 1959, VIII, p. 312; Anthony Glenn Cross, *By the banks of the Neva*, Cambridge, 1997; Edwards 1808, p. 42; P. Ettinger, "Inostrannyye khudozhniki v Rossii: E. F. Kanningkhem", *Среди коллекционеров*, 10, 1922, p. 25; Füßli 1806; Ingamells 1997; Peter J. M. McEwan, *Dictionary of Scottish art & architecture*, 1994; Nagler 1835–52; Oxford DNB; Пепова 2006, p. 24f; Roettgen 2003, p. 412; Saur; Sée 1911; Streidt & Feierabend 1999; *Survey of London*, XXI/XXXII, 2, 1963, pp. 262–63, XXIV, 1966, p. 398; Thiébault 1893–95, I, pp. 73f; Waterhouse 1981

Pastels

Hans Rudolf von BISCHOFSWERDER (1740–1803), Freimaurer, pstl, c.1790 (Munich PC 1964). Lit.: Berckenhagen 1964, no. 400 repr.

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General Sir Robert BOYD (1710–1794), commander of Gibraltar, pstl, 68x50 (*olim* Berlin, Schloß, GK I 40825. Feldherrengalerie, 1793; Schloß Charlottenburg; Schloß Berlin; Neue Kammern; Neues Palais; removed to USSR 1946; not located)

Tsaritsa CATHERINE II. (1729–1796), m/u

~grav.: Charles Townley

General Isaak Franz Egmont Graf de CHASOT (–1800), pstl, 70x53 (*olim* Berlin, Schloß Monbijou, Hohenzollernmuseum, GK I 42564; lost a.1945)

Mrs Alured CLARKE, née Catherine [Kitty] Hunter (c.1740–1795), ∞ 1770 Sir Alured Clarke, KB, pstl, Royal Academy 1771, no. 22

~grav.: Valentine Green 1771

Courlande, v. Kurland

Wilhelm Christopher von DIEDE (1732–1807), Danish envoy at London, Royal Academy 1770, no. 25

FRIEDRICH II. der Große, König von Preußen (1712–1786), pstl (Potsdam, Neues Palais, GK I 42558)

~?grav.: Domenico Cunego (1726–1803)

FRIEDRICH II., pstl (Dieudonné Thiébault (1733–1807), écrivain, membre de l'Académie de Berlin; don: maréchal-duc de Richelieu (1696–1788); sa veuve; don: Thiébault). Lit.: Paul d'Estrée, *La vieillesse de Richelieu (1758–1788)*, Paris, 1921, p. 259 n.r.; Thiébault 1893–95, I, pp. 73f, repr. φ



FRIEDRICH August Herzog zu Braunschweig-Öls (1740–1805), pstl (Potsdam, Neues Palais, GK I 42559)

~grav.: Charles Townley

FRIEDRICH Wilhelm II. König von Preußen (1744–1797), m/u

~grav.: Charles Townley

FRIEDRICH Wilhelm III. König von Preußen (1770–1840), pstl, 1783 (Potsdam, Sanssouci, Berlin, SMBPotsdam, Marmorpalais, GK I 2917, a.1945, 1994). Lit.: Brieger 1921, repr. p. 323, as by Darbes; Börsch-Supan 1994, p. 10 repr.; Jeffares 2006, p. 152aü, as by Darbes φ



~repl., pstl/pchm, 69.7x52.5, c.1783 (Berlin, SPSG, GK I 50702/CK II 2049). Exh.: Berlin 1997, no. I.38 repr. φ



Countess of GRANDISON, née Lady Gertrude Seymour-Conway (1750–1793), as Viscountess Villiers, m/u

~grav.: John Finlayson 1773

Prinz HEINRICH Friedrich Christian Ludwig von Preußen (1771–1790), pstl, 73x53 (*olim* Berlin, Schloß Monbijou, Hohenzollernmuseum, GK I 42567; lost a.1945). Lit.: Brieger 1921, repr. p. 199 φ



~?repl., pstl/pchm, 66x49, sd ~ "Cunningham P. 17[9]3" (Berlin, SPSG, GK I 50714/CK II 7948). Exh.: Berlin 1997, no. I.42 n.r.

[General Georg Ernst von] HOLTZENDORF [(1714–1785)], pstl, Berlin 1786, no. 309

?Polly Kennedy, alias JONES (–1781), courtesan, mistress of Sir Charles Bunbury, m/u

~grav.: Valentine Green 1771

La duchesse de Courlande [?Herzogin von KURLAND, née Franciszka von Corvin-Krasińska (1742–1796)], pstl, 74x63.5 (Mme Petrowska 1911. New York, Kende Galleries at Gimpel Bros., 13.XII.1941, \$30). Exh.: Paris 1911, no. 27. Lit.: Sée 1911, repr. p. 349; Петрова 2006, p. 25 repr. φ



Herzog LUDWIG Friedrich Alexander von Württemberg (1756–1817), pstl (Potsdam, Neues Palais, GK I 42560)

George, 1st Baron LYTTTELTON (1709–1773), pstl, 61.3x48.6 (C. G. Smith, Lockbury Street, London, 1933. London, Phillips, 26.IV.1955 [not 1855], Lot 116. London, Bonham's, 12.VI.1969, Lot 226, as Cotes; PC, Dallas; Lawrence Steigrad Fine Arts, New York,

2008; London, Christie's, 5.VII.2011, Lot 133 repr., est. £1000–1500, £1500). Lit.: Kerslake 1977, pl. 492, anon. φ



~version, pnt., half-length (Boconnoc). Lit.: Kerslake 1977, pl. 493

General [Wichard Joachim Heinrich von] MÖLLENDORF [(1724–1816)], pstl, Berlin 1786, no. 306 (Berliner Schloß 1793–1863)

~grav.: Charles Townley 1786

Gustaf Adam von NOLCKEN (1733–1812), Swedish envoy to England, crayons, Royal Academy 1772, no. 36

General RODIG, pstl, Berlin 1786, no. 307

Louis-Adrien THIERY, pstl, 62x50.5, sd "Calze 1768"; & pendant: épouse, née Catherine-Thérèse-Auguste Dewinck, pstl, 62x50.5, sd "Calze 1768" (London, Christie's, 4.VII.1984, Lot 147 repr., est. £7–8000) φ



Photos courtesy Christie's

Generalmajor Adolf Detlev von USEDOM (1726–1792), pstl, 70x53 (*olim* Berlin, Schloß Monbijou, Hohenzollernmuseum, GK I 42563; lost a.1945)

Friederike Luise WILHELMINE Prinses van Oranje-Nassau, née Prinzessin von Preußen, pstl/pchm, 70.2x52.3 (Berlin, SPSG, GK I 50703/GK II 2048). Exh.: Berlin 1997, no. I.38 n.r.

Major Erich Magnus von WOLFFRADT (1735–1799), pstl, 70x53 (*olim* Berlin, Schloß Monbijou, Hohenzollernmuseum, GK I 42564; lost a.1945)

Prinzessin Friedrike von Preußen [Friederike Charlotte Ulrike Katherina, Duchess of YORK (1767–1820)], ein Kniestück, pstl, Berlin 1786, no. 1

Duchess of YORK, m/u

~grav.: Amedeo Gabrielli

General Hans Joachim von ZIETEN (1699–1786), pstl, Berlin 1786, no. 308 (Berliner Schloß 1793–1863)

=?/version, pstl, 68x51.5, 1787 (Graf Zieten-Schwerin, Wustrau, 1906; PC 1921). Exh.: Berlin 1906, no. 2305. Lit.: Brieger 1921, repr. p. 198 φ



~grav.: Charles Townley 1786

Gentleman, crayons, Royal Academy 1771, no. 23

Gentleman, crayons, Royal Academy 1771, no. 24

A boy, crayons, Royal Academy 1778, no. 33

Lady, crayons, Royal Academy 1770, no. 26

Portrait, crayons, Royal Academy 1780, no. 328

Portrait, crayons, Royal Academy 1780, no. 332