

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

HAMILTON, William

London bpt 23.VI.1751–2.XII.1801

Hamilton's father, also William, was an assistant to Robert Adam; the architect took the young painter with him to Italy, where he studied under Antonio Zucchi but "was too young to receive any material benefit from [the trip]". ("Monzu Hamilton – studente inglese – 15" was recorded in the Piazza Mignanelli in 1767.) Back in London in 1768, he was admitted to the Royal Academy Schools on 14.II.1769. He exhibited portraits and other paintings at the Royal Academy from 1774, becoming an associate in 1784 and a full RA in 1789. He worked on book illustration for Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery, and between 1780 and 1792 he specialised in theatrical portraits and scene painting (Drury Lane, Covent Garden etc.).

On 25.X.1779, at St George's Hanover Square, he married Mary (c.1762–1837), the daughter of Captain Peter Aylward. The couple befriended Thomas Lawrence (*q.v.*) on his arrival in London from Bath; he made pastels of the couple in 1788, and the following year a chalk drawing of Mary now in the British Museum. Hamilton's sister was Maria, Lady Bell (*q.v.*).

From 1782 Hamilton's studio was in Dean Street, Soho (nos. 61 and 63 are cited in various sources, although the *Survey of London* records him as the rate-paying occupant of no. 83 from 1784 to his death). His portrait by George Dance (1793) is in the Royal Academy, as is Singleton's group portrait of the Royal Academicians in which he is included. After Hamilton's premature death, his widow wrote to the Royal Academy (15.III.1802) requesting to be placed on the list of those eligible to receive assistance from the charity fund, adding (24.VII.1802) a statement of means corroborated by John Flaxman and Thomas Lawrence. Three year later, she was remarried, to John Charles Denham (1777–1867), secretary of the Globe insurance Company and an amateur artist; his mother was the miniaturist Mrs Denham.

William Hamilton's pastels are said to be similar to the portraits of Romney, worked in a broad and slick style; but few have survived, and it is difficult to assess the accuracy of records that may refer to chalk drawings or to pastels by Hugh Douglas Hamilton – or overpromotions by the dealers of the day.

Bibliography

Bénézit; Brieger 1921; Grove 1996; Highfill & al. 1982, VII, pp. 64ff; Ingamells 1997; Myrone 2022; Sée 1911; Waterhouse 1981; Wright 2006; Royal Academy archives; Yale University Library, *Guide to the John Charles Denham album*, GEN MSS 831

Pastels

J.3756.101 Col. BEST, in hunting costume, m/u, 84x65 (London, Christie's, 23.VII.1937, 10 gns; M. Wilson)

J.3756.102 Marchioness of ELY, [née Jane Myhill (–1807)] in a green dress, pstl/ppr, 27x20.5 (Émile Gross; Xavier Haas; New York, Anderson, 13–14.I.1927, Lot 119 repr.). Exh.: Paris 1919c, no. 32 [attr.] φαδ



Mrs HARTLEY in the role of Jane Shore (Edward J. Duveen 1911) [v. H. D. Hamilton]

Mrs LA TOUCHE (Edward J. Duveen 1911) [v. H. D. Hamilton]

J.3756.106 Adelaide PAYNE, in white muslin dress, with red sash, white wrap over head, pstl, 80x65 (Liverpool, Lady Lever Art Gallery, as a/r Wm Hamilton. Robert Dell 1911; Eugene Cremetti; London, Christie's, 15.VI.1923, 250 gns; Gooden & Fox). Exh.: Paris 1911, no. 63. Lit.: Sée 1911, p. 137; Brieger 1921, repr. p. 190; *Connoisseur*, LXVI, 1923, p. 233, all as autograph [attr.] Φαδ



J.3756.108 ~cop. XIX^e, pstl, 89x70 (Chicago, Susantin's, 21.II.2015, Lot 1486115 repr., manner of "William Gainsborough", unknown, est. \$600–800) φπν



J.3756.11 Mrs SIDDONS, née Sarah Kemble (1755–1831), pstl, 58.5x41, sd "W. Hamilton RA 1793" (John Whitehead 1868. London, Christie's, 14.XII.1971, Lot 54 n.r., 250 gns). Exh.: London 1868, no. 97

J.3756.111 Mrs SIDDONS, standing in a landscape holding a book, 51x33 (London, Christie's, 21.II.1933, as by "Hamilton", 9 ½ gns; Pearson)

J.3756.112 Mrs SIDDONS and her son, as Isabella in *The Fatal Marriage*, pstl, 61x44.5 (General Sir James Willoughby Gordon, of Northcourt; Rt Hon. Lord Burgh; London, Christie's, 9.VII.1926, Lot 20 n.r., 19 gns; Clifford). Lit.: Highfill & al. 1982, XIV, p. 57 n.r. ~grav. J. Caldwell 1785



J.3756.115 Mrs VESEY, née Emily La Touche (–1854), playing the harp; & pendant: J.3756.116 Elizabeth La Touche, later Countess of Lanesborough (1764–1788), and one of her sisters reading in a landscape, pstl, 73.7x53.3, old label verso "Miss La Touche by Hamilton" (desc.: Capt. Charles Colthurst Vesey, Lucan House; Swithland Hall; London, Christie's, 20.III.1979, Lot 120 n.r., as by H. D. Hamilton, £750. Dr Tony Ryan, Lyons House; London, Christie's, 14.VII.2011, Lot 71 repr., attr., est. £6–8,000, b/i; Castlecomer, Mealy's, 4–5.X.2011, Lot 1056 repr., est. €4–6000). Lit.: Strickland 1912, n.r.; Jeffares 2006, p. 231Aii, as ?attr. H. D. Hamilton. Old label as by William Hamilton [attr.] Φαδσ/φαιδσ





J.3756.119 Lady, crayons (Miss Talbot 1865).
Exh.: London 1865, no. 1787

J.3756.12 Child, pstl, 23x18 ov., 1766 (London, Christie's, 28.VII.1909, Lot 58, 13½ gns; Sabin) [?attr.; cf. H. D. Hamilton, misread date]

J.3756.1205 L'enfant aux colombes, pstl. Exh.: Paris 1919a, no. 112 [?attr.]

J.3756.121 The bird cage: two ladies, opening a cage with a white bird, pstl, chlk/ppr, 72.5x54.5, s "W. Hamilton" (Martin Colnaghi; Émile Gross; Xavier Haas; New York, Anderson, 13–14.I.1927, Lot 122 repr.). Exh.: Paris 1919a, no. 113 [?attr.] φαν

