

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

POPE, Alexander

Cork 1763 – London 1835

Member of a family of artists including his father, Thomas Pope, his uncle, Justin Pope-Stevens, and his elder brother Somerville, who later adopted his uncle's surname. The standard sources all suggest that Pope was born in Cork in 1763, but there are a number of difficulties with this date: it makes it improbable for him to have been trained by Hugh Douglas Hamilton as tradition and eye suggest; it implies an unlikely age gap with his first wife, who would have been more than twice his age when they married; and it is contradicted by the earliest biographer (Pryse Lockhart Gordon, writing in 1830), who indicates that in late 1778 he had recently "come of age", which would usually have referred to the age of 25. A simple misreading of 1753 for 1763 is possible; but Gordon at the time was himself only 18, and may have regarded a companion of nearly 16 as mature.

Pope moved to Dublin early. From 1776 he was enrolled at the Dublin Society school as a pupil of West. He exhibited drawings and crayons at the Society of Artists in William Street, Dublin in 1777 and again (from 29 Bolton Street) 1780. In 1778 he was in Cork, charging an Irish guinea (£1 2s 9d) for crayon portraits; he executed a series of these pastels] of the officers of the 67th regiment stationed there (between 1775 and 1785), under the patronage of Charles Crosbie, lieutenant-colonel from 1778. They were "more gaudy than nature, and generally *beaux idéal* rather than *portraits*" according to Gordon 1830. If as is reported he was a pupil of Hamilton, he must have been in London at some stage before Hamilton left for Italy in 1779.

On 9.VIII.1785 in Dublin Pope married the actress Elizabeth Younge (a.1745–1797). Himself a talented actor, he played at Covent Garden from 1785. His success was such that he took up acting professionally, appearing in tragic roles at Drury Lane and the Haymarket, while continuing to send work as an honorary exhibitor at the Royal Academy between 1785 and 1821. In 1798, less than a year after the death of his first wife, he married another actress, Maria Ann Campion (1775–1803) in London. In 1807 he married his third wife, Clara Maria Leigh (1767–1838), the widow of Francis Wheatley (*q.v.*); she, was also an artist, exhibiting a portrait of the singer Catalani at the Royal Academy in 1812.

Pope's pastel portraits are certainly influenced by Hamilton's rapid technique, but his figures tend to have disproportionately large heads, attenuated bodies and stylised, rosebud mouths (reminiscent of West and found also in Gardner's work) and he often adds natural sky backgrounds and shows heads resting on hands. Most distinctive however is his use of a black chalk hatched grid to model faces, and the free use of such chalk in hair. According to J. T. Smith, keeper of prints and drawings at the British Museum, he produced "some excellent portraits in crayons, of persons of the first fashion, many of them little inferior in every respect to those of the celebrated Francis Cotes". Pope also worked in miniature, and after

c.1800 almost exclusively made full-length watercolours in the mode made popular by Henry Edridge. His portrait of Grattan, which was engraved, was well known.

Bibliography

Bénézit; Breeze 1985; Crookshank 1969; Crookshank & Glin 1978; Crookshank & Glin 1994; Dublin 1969; Foskett 1987; Pryse Lockhart Gordon, *Personal memoirs*, London, 1830, I, pp. 323–30; part repr. in *Dramatic magazine*, 1830, II, pp. 368–70; Oxford DNB; Schidlof 1964; *See* 1919b; John Thomas Smith, *A book for a rainy day*, 3rd ed., London, 1861, p. 152; Strickland 1913; Waterhouse 1981

Pastels

SELF-PORTRAIT, pstl/ppr, 25.5x20.5 ov., sd \ "A Pope/1791" (London, Sotheby's, 4.VII.2002, Lot 124, est. £3–4000, b/i. Gorry Gallery, exh. 5–19.II.2003, no. 1). Exh.: Comerford 1999, no. 63, pp. 32, 39 repr., 49. Lit.: Strickland 1913, II, pp. 253–56; Ashton 1997, pp. 41, 354–57 ◊



Photo courtesy Sotheby's

John, Baron BOWES (1690–1757), lord chancellor of Ireland, crayons (Royal Dublin Society. Justin Pope; acqu 1800, £12/10/-). Lit.: Strickland 1913, n.r.

John BOYDELL (1719–1804), engraver and print-seller, Lord Mayor of the City of London 1790, pstl, 25.5x20 ov., sd 1791 =? Royal Academy 1791, no. 163 (Sir Edward Coates; London, Sotheby's, 22.VI.1922, Lot 4 with pendant, n.r., 60 gns; Lee; London, Sotheby's, 25.VI.1930, £16; Hammond. =?London, Christie's, 16.XI.1965, Lot 181). Lit.: Ingamells 2004, p. 68 n.r.

~grav.: J. Condé 1792, "Lord Mayor of London 1791", *European magazine*

Mrs BOYDELL, in a white dress with red trimmings, pstl, 25.5x20 ov., sd 1791 (Sir Edward Coates; London, Sotheby's, 22.VI.1922, Lot 4 with pendant, n.r., 60 gns; Lee) [If of Mrs John BoydeLL, née Elizabeth Lloyd (–1781), this would be posthumous]

Harvey Christian COMBE (1752–1818), of Cobham Park, MP, alderman and mayor of London, crayons

~grav.: John Baker 1798. Lit.: *Gentleman's magazine*, 1848, p. 201 repr.

Colonel Charles CROSBIE, of the 67th Foot, c.1778

Mrs CROUCH [née Anna Maria Phillips (1763–1805), singer], pstl, Royal Academy 1787, no. 119

~grav. Ridley, *European magazine*, .XI.1805, opp. p. 323

George DAUNT (1712–1786), surgeon, crayons (Royal Dublin Society. Sitter; son-in-law, Thomas Pleasants (–1818); legs)

Lady DUCIE [née Lady Frances Herbert (1775–1830)], watercolour, p.1800. Lit.: *See* 1919, repr., as pstl; Crookshank & Glin 1978, fig. 161 ◊



Robert GORDON (c.1720–1784) of New Grove, County Cork, son of John Gordon of Kernborough; & pendant: spouse, née Anne Cunninghame (1721–1786), pstl (London, Christie's South Kensington, 2.VI.2009, Lot 616 n.r., with two others, est. £1200–1800) ◊



Miss Gordon, later Mrs George GUN-CUNNINGHAM, and the future General Sir Amos Norcott (1777–1838), pstl (London, Christie's South Kensington, 2.VI.2009, Lot 616 n.r., with three others, est. £1200–1800)



Mrs George GUN-CUNNINGHAM of Mount Kennedy, née Jean Gordon (–1831), daughter of Robert Gordon, pstl, 22.8x18.8 ov. (London, Christie's South Kensington, 2.VI.2009, Lot 616 repr., with three others, est. £1200–1800) ◊



John Philip KEMBLE (1757–1823), holding a volume labelled Hamlet, pstl, 27.3x21.5, sd *verso* 1783 (Royal Collection RCIN 452379). Lit.: Crookshank & Glin 1978, fig. 160, ?Kemble φ



~version pstl/ppr, 25.4x20.3 ov. (London, Garrick Club, 387. ?Charles Mathews). Exh.: ?London 1833b, no. 313. Lit.: Ashton & al. 1997, no. 387 φ



~version, miniature/ivory, 6.2x5.2 ov. (London, Christie's, 29.XI.2011, Lot 115, as unknown sitter by Henry Edridge & John Miers)

Norcott, v. Gordon

Mrs Jane PENRO, pstl, 24x19, sd → "A. Pope/Del' 1782" (Prinknash Abbey Park, Gloucestershire, Simon Chorley, 26.VI.2008, Lot 78 repr.) φ



Mrs Thomas RAIKES, née Sophia Maria Bayly (–1822), crayons, p.1802. Lit.: Thomas Raikes, *Journal...*, London, 1856, II. p. 161

[?]Mrs William SIDDONS, née Sarah Kemble (1755–1831), actress, full length, facing half right, pstl, 27x21.5, 1785, Royal Academy 1785, no. 112 (Royal Collection RCIN 452378). Lit.: Highfill & al. 1982, XIV., pp. 48f n.r., as 1783, "bears little resemblance to Mrs Siddons"; Ingamells 2004, p. 435 n.r. φ



Anna Maria TREE (1801/2–1862), actress [*olim* ?Mrs Alexander Pope, née Clara Maria Leigh, Mrs Wheatley], pstl, c.1820 (London, Garrick Club, inv. 301. Legs Mrs Pope 1838). Lit.: Sée 1919b, repr., as of Mrs Pope; Adams 1936, as of Tree φ



~grav.: as Miss A. M. Tree, for *La Belle Assemblée*
An officer, crayon, sd 1781

Wife of an officer, crayon, sd 1781

Lady with a white bonnet, pstl/ppr, 25x20 ov., sd "Alex Pope 1783" (Dublin, NGI, inv. 7474. Stanhope Shelton Pictures Ltd, London; acqu. 1972). Lit.: Le Harivel 1983, repr. φ



Lady in white and brown dress, pstl, 25.5x20 ov., sd ✓ "A Pope/1790" (London, Christie's, 18.III.1913, Lot 34, 17 gns; Edward Gallery. ?=London, Sotheby's, 8.XI.1961, Lot 62/1. ?= Drifffield, Dee Atkinson & Harrison, 15.IX.2006, Lot 424 n.r., est. £40–60) Φ



Photo courtesy Sotheby's

Lady, pstl, 28x20, 1805 (London, Christie's, 21.III.1919, 70 gns)

Small portraits in crayons, Dublin 1777

Small portraits in crayons, Dublin 1780, no. 142