

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

ROMNEY, George

Dalton-in-Furness 26.XII.1734 – Kendal
15.XI.1802

One of the most fashionable portrait painters in London in the fourth quarter of the century. Romney 1830 relates a story that it was Daniel Gardner's mother who detected the talent of the young Romney. Aged 21 he was apprenticed to a local painter, Christopher Steele, who was said to have trained with Carle Van Loo in Paris c.1750. According to Sée, all the pastels attributed to George Romney were either by his brother Peter or by William Hamilton. Kidson 2015 catalogues more than 1850 oil paintings, but in an appendix lists only four certain and two possible pastels; several more are included as "versions" of main catalogue entries, but it is not always clear if these are considered autograph.

The brown pastel studies of his wife Mary would have been made between 1755, when they met in Kendal, and 1762, when Romney abandoned his family to move to London. Romney's son left memoirs with an interesting account of the artist's pastel copy of his portrait of Edward Wortley Montagu; this version was made "with a view to ascertain how far he should be able to fix that fugitive manner of painting". It was apparently made during the trip to Italy which Romney made with Ozias Humphry 1772–75. Although the (undisclosed) procedure resulted in a successful outcome, it was "attended with so much difficulty, that he was not tempted to make any more experiments." It is not until around 1792 that he returned to the medium, with the portraits of the writers Charlotte Smith and William Cowper – the latter a work of the highest accomplishment, although its technique remains graphic in concept (the subject wrote a sonnet to the artist on "his picture of me in crayons, drawn at Eartham" in 1792). A curious, informal profile of the artist's biographer William Hayley uses coloured chalk and wash directly on canvas which has been mounted on board; the result looks more like an oil sketch than a pastel.

When in 1798 Romney visited the north again, he is said to have turned once more to crayons as he had no oil colours with him.

Monographic exhibitions

Romney 1977: *Drawings by George Romney*, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, 1977; other locations 1978. Cat. Patricia Jaffé

Romney 2002: *George Romney 1734–1802*, Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery, 8.II.–21.IV.2002; London, National Portrait Gallery, 30.V.–18.VIII.2002; San Marino, Huntington Art Gallery, 15.IX.–1.XII.2002. Cat. Alex Kidson

Bibliography

Bénézit; Chamberlain 1910; Cross 2000; Grove; Kidson 2015; Oxford DNB; Romney 1830; Waterhouse 1981; Ward & Roberts 1904; Wright 2006

Drawings with pastel or coloured chalk

J.6246.101 SELF-PORTRAIT, wearing spectacles, crayons, 1799 (William Hayley 1809). Lit.:

Ward & Roberts 1904, II, p. 134, no. 2; Ingamells 2004, p. 410 n.r.; Kidson 2015, p. 846 n.r.

~grav. Caroline Watson 1809

J.6246.103 Mary COCKERELL, William Hayley's mistress, m/u, a.1797. Lit.: Kidson 2015, p. 846 n.r., as ?watercolour or pstl

~cop. Tom Hayley 1797

J.6246.105 William COWPER (1731–1800), poet, pstl/white ppr, 57x47, 1792 (London, NPG 1423. William Hayley (1745–1820), poet; Rev. Dr John Johnson (–1833) of Yaxham, Norfolk; his son, Henry R. Vaughan Johnson 1868; his widow Cecilia; acqu. 1905). Exh.: London 1868, no. 777; London 1956, no. 665; Tulsa 1993, no. 38 repr.; Romney 2002, no. 137. Lit.: Cowper, sonnet; letters to Mrs Courtenay, 25.VIII.1792, "extremely like", Lady Heketh, 26.VIII.1792; Ward & Roberts 1904, II, p. 34–35; Ingamells 2004, pp. 127ff, repr. clr; Kidson 2015, p. 846 n.r. Φ



Photo courtesy National Portrait Gallery, London

~grav. William Blake 1802; C. Watson 1805; Roffe 1814; & al.

J.6246.109 ~cop. Frank Nowlan 1905. Lit.: British picture restorers at npg.org.uk

J.6246.11 [P]Lady FLORENNE, pstl/ppr, 55x45, sd initials ↓ 1788 (Prague, Meissner Neumann, 21.IV.2001, Lot 300 repr., est. CzKr420–480,000) [P?attr.] φπδν



Lady HAMILTON, née Amy Lyon, "Emma Harte" (1765–1815), pnt. (PC 2015; dep.: Travellers Club). Lit.: Kidson 2015, no. 1511

J.6246.113 ~cop., pstl/ppr, 71.2x52 (San Francisco, FAM, inv. 69.30.177. [P]Rev. Mr John Romney; Miss Elizabeth Romney); Martin H. Colnaghi; Jules Porgès; Émile Gross; Xavier Haas; New York, Anderson, 20–21.I.1927, Lot 120 repr., as autograph. Don Dr T. Edward & Tullah Hanley,

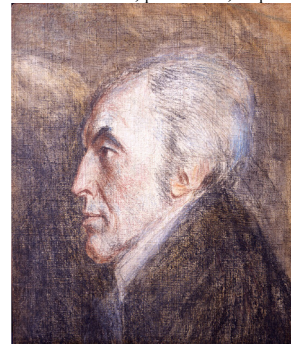
Bradford, Pennsylvania). Exh.: Paris 1919a, no. 185 n.r.; Berkeley 1974. Lit.: Jennifer Watson, *The paintings of Emma Hart (Lady Hamilton) by George Romney*, MA thesis, Oberlin College, 1974, appendix, no. 14a; Kidson 2015, no. 1511a repr., as version i.e. cop. [P?] φκ



J.6246.1132 ~version, pstl, 46x38 (London, Christie's, 13.VII.1903, Lot 37 n.r., attr., £4)

J.6246.114 Lady HAMLIN WILLIAMS, née Diana Anne Whitaker, ∞ 1789 Sir James Hamlyn Williams, 2nd Bt, of Edwinstford and Clovelly, in white dress and veil, blue sash, in the attitude of prayer, pstl, 76x63.5 (London, Christie's, 10.VII.1897, Lot 43 n.r.; Charles Wertheimer)

J.6246.115 William HAYLEY (1745–1820), poet, the artist's biographer, mixed media/prepared canvas, 37.5x31, c.1792 (Mr Barrett, Lymm Hall, Cheshire, label verso. Philip Mould Historical Portraits 2004; Essex PC 2015). Lit.: Kidson 2015, p. 846 n.r., as pstl φ



J.6246.117 ~?study for bust of Hayley in pnt., Flaxman modelling the bust of Hayley (New Haven, Yale centre for British Art)

John HENDERSON (*Francis Wellesley, Woking; cat. no. 143; London, Sotheby's, 28.VI.1920, Lot 676*) v. Gardner

J.6246.12 Mrs George ROMNEY, née Mary Abbott (1727–1823), the artist's wife, brown pstl, touches of black/ppr, 20.0x15.9, c.1755–62 (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, inv. 902a. Don Charles Fairfax Murray 1917). Exh.: Romney 1977, no. 1a repr.; Cambridge 1992 φ



J.6246.122 Mrs George ROMNEY, brown pstl, touches of black/ppr, 20.0x15.9 (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, inv. 902b. Don Charles Fairfax Murray 1917). Exh.: Romney 1977, no. 1b repr.; Cambridge 1992 ϕ



J.6246.124 James ROMNEY (1745–1807), lieutenant-colonel, East India Company, the artist's brother, pstl, 46x38 (Elizabeth Romney; London, Christie's, 25.V.1894, Lot 176). Lit.: Ward & Roberts 1904, II, p. 135; Kidson 2015, p. 846 n.r.

J.6246.125 Mrs Benjamin SMITH, née Charlotte Turner (1749–1806), poet and novelist, pstl, 58x48, executed at Eartham, .VIII.1792 (Kendal, Abbot Hall Art Gallery. The sitter's great-niece, Miss Lucena Smith, dau. of Nicholas Smith, by 1868. Legs 2006). Exh.: London 1868, no. 779. Lit.: Oxford DNB, as in NPG; *The collected letters of Charlotte Smith*, ed. Judith Phillips Stanton, Bloomington, 2003, p. 104, 106 "there is no portrait of me but one in Crayons in possession of a Friend who does not like either to have it copied in his house or to part with it for that purpose", letter, 25.III.1794; Ward & Roberts 1904, II, p. 144; Kidson 2015, p. 846 n.r.; Derbyshire 2019, fig. 2.1 ϕ



~grav. P. Condé, frontispiece to *Elegiac sonnets, and other poems*, 1797

J.6246.126 Miss Elizabeth TALVER, pstl, 54.5x44.5 (Colonel Borradaile 1889). Exh.: London 1889b, no. 226 n.r.

J.6246.127 Mrs Martha TALVER, pstl, 54.5x44.5 (Colonel Borradaile 1889). Exh.: London 1889b, no. 225 n.r.

Countess of THANET, née Mary Sackville (1746–1778), pstl (Knole), v. Humphry

Edward WORTLEY MONTAGU (1713–1776), author and traveller, half-length, pnt., executed in Venice c.1775 (the artist; acqu. Earl of Warwick, 50 gns)

~repl., pnt. (acqu. John Milnes, Wakefield, 1788, 40 gns)

J.6246.131 ~repl., head, pstl, 56x51 (don: Mary Cockerell, Eartham). Lit.: Kidson 2015, no. 906d n.r.

~grav. John Condé

J.6246.133 Earl in der Uniform eines Kapitäns, pstl, 31x26 ov. (Stuttgart, Bernd Rieber, 15.IV.1999, Lot 1056 n.r., attr., est. DM1650, b/i) [Attr.]

Anon. related pastels

The Beaumont family, pnt., 1777–79 (Tate, inv. N03400)

cop., Thomas BEAUMONT (1751–1782), of the 4th Dragoons, son of Richard Beaumont of Whitley Beaumont, watercolour, 43x33 (John Inshaw Rodway (1880–1966), *Eldoret, Ascot, 1955*; Thomas Beaumont, *Chichester, 1962*; desc.: PC 2018). Lit.: letter to National Gallery, 9.I.1955; *Country life*, 7.IV.1955, p. 903 repr.; Kidson 2015, no. 73e =73f n.r., as pstl ϕ

