

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

TONELLI, Sig.ra Luigi, née Anna Nistri

Florence c.1763–22.VII.1846

Portraitist in miniature and pastel, and watercolourist. At some stage before 1785 she married the violinist Luigi Tonelli (a noted virtuoso, he published a *Metodo completo pel violino* with Ricordi in Milan c.1800). It appears she had early ambitions to become a singer: according to a report in the *Gazzetta toscana* (12.II.1780), the royal family showed their appreciation of the performance of the 16-year-old, “una sì vaga ed abile dilettante, la quale applicandosi sotto esperto Maestro, dà sicure speranze di divenire una delle più rinomate Donne nel canto, per esser dotata dalla natura di tutte quelle doti che necessarie sono per divenire eccellente.” However she seems to have abandoned music for painting. She seems to have received her early artistic training in Florence, possibly from Giuseppe Piattoli (*q.v.*): a conversation piece of the family of Granduca Pietro Leopoldo, executed in collaboration with Piattoli and Giuseppe Fabbrini, is known from an engraving (where her name is recorded as “Torelli”, perhaps a confusion with Sig.ra Torelli, née Lucia Casalini, painter and mother of the artist Stefano Torelli), dated 1785, by Giovanni Battista Cecchi and Benedetto Eredi.

Works such as the portrait of the collector Henry Blundell, who was in Rome in 1790 collecting marbles, are evidently closely connected with Hamilton, as is the portrait of Jane Ormsby. Tonelli came to the attention of Lord Clive during his travels in Italy; he had also employed Hamilton to make pastels of members of his family, and Tonelli was said to have been his pupil in the notice that appeared in the *World* (28.IV.1794). From 1794 she taught drawing to his children, living in London, where she exhibited (from 97 Norton Street) at the Royal Academy in 1794 and 1797. Evidently she also came into contact with the Biddulph/Myddelton family of Chirk Castle, not far from Lord Clive’s Powis Castle. A group of letters written to Harriett Anne Bisshopp, Baroness Zouche (1787–1870), who was related to several of the artist’s sitters, describe Tonelli’s travels around Britain 1795–1800 (West Sussex Record Office, Parham/2/3/2/3).

Tonelli accompanied the Clive family to India between 1798 and 1801, embarking on a journey of more than 1000 miles around southern India with Lady Clive and her daughters. Her employer called her “a treasure in every way”, even if her accommodation requirements were much more difficult to satisfy than expected. Several watercolour portraits of the Rajah of Tanjore, from life, were made on this trip; she sent one to Lord Clive, apologising that “the work is very bad but I hope your Lordship will excuse it on account of the Likeness”. An elaborate watercolour of Tipu Sultan enthroned, executed in .VII.1800, also required an apology as she “had no good place to paint in” and that it was “the first thing of the sort she ever did”.

It seems that all the portraits or landscapes she made on this trip were in watercolour or miniature rather than pastel. She is mentioned in three letters written in Madras in .II.1799 by the

wife of General Harris, née Anne Carteret Dickson, to her husband: in this she explains that Tonelli had taken Grant Richardson’s bungalow to paint in, and chafed “twelve guineas for likeness in the manner of Lady Clive’s and thirty guineas the miniatures”. She herself was to commission one of the 12 gns (the medium is unclear, perhaps watercolour), while her daughter Anne, Mrs Lushington, sat for a miniature.

Newspaper reports (*Calcutta gazette*, 9.IV.1801) list Mme Tonelli with Lady Clive and her daughters as sailing on the Castle Eden from Madras to Dover, where they landed 1.XI.1801. Soon after reaching London that month, Tonelli returned to her own family in Florence.

In 1806 the American agent in Paris, Filippo Mazzei, engaged her to bring up his daughter Elisabetta. He provided a description of the family to Thomas Jefferson (letter, 20.VII.1806) with a view to their emigrating to the USA, praising the father, a violinist “the peer of any other”, the two children (born c.1789–90), and the mother who “sings and plays the piano like an expert; knows very well her own language, French, and English; draws and paints with excellent taste; is accomplished in embroidery and all needlework; and knows geography quite well.” Jefferson’s response highlighted the expense of living in a major city, which may have deterred the family; by 2.XI.1807 they were in Pisa with Mazzei, while in 1809 they seem to have settled in Florence. Mario Praz saw a pastel by Anna, dated 1812, in Florence. It is unclear if she was the Signora Tonelli to whom Shelley tried to repay a debt in Florence in 1819, only to be told by a servant that the family had gone to England.

Bibliography

Archer 1987, pp. 133f; Chu 2018; Graves 1905; Ingamells 1997, *s.n.* Clive; Mazzei 1983, III, pp. 427 & *passim*; Mario Praz, *La casa della vita*, 1979, p. 236; rKD; Nancy K. Shields, *Birds of passage: Henrietta Clive’s travels in South India 1798–1801*, London, 2009; Fabio Sottili, “Giuseppe Piattoli e Giuseppe Antonio Fabbrini in una corale incisione raffigurante la famiglia del granduca Pietro Leopoldo”, *Imagines*, 10, .IV.2024, pp. 226–61; Waterhouse 1981; *The Clairmont correspondence*, ed. Marion Kingston Stocking, 1995, I, p. 133f; Kent Archives, Maidstone, Harris papers, U624/C21

Salon critiques

Anthony PASQUIN [John Williams], [Royal Academy 1794], *Memoirs of the Royal Academicians*, London, 1796:

No. 348. *Ariadne*. Signora ANNA TONELLI.

This is the portrait of the Duchess of Caserta, an Italian lady of high rank, who being said to resemble this bust, assumed the character at a masquerade in Italy. The head-dress is eminently graceful; but, though coloured, it retains something of the marble.

Anon., *World*, 28.IV.1794

Signora Anna Tonelli, the Florentine, and Pupil to the Crayon Hamilton of Rome, as many of our Readers may remember, has four Crayons in the Anti-Chamber, which, for an *Improvvisatore*, promise much.

Anon., “Royal Academy”, *Morning chronicle*, 8.V.1794: 348, *Ariadne*. Signor ANNA TONELLI.— This is the portrait of the Duchess of Caserta, an Italian lady of

high rank, who being said to resemble this bust, assumed the character at a masquerade in Italy. The head-dress is eminently graceful, but though coloured it retains something of the marble.

Pastels

J.722.101 SELF-PORTRAIT, m/u, Royal Academy 1794, no. 337

J.722.1015 Robert ANDERSON (1764–1837), physician, of Brighton, half-length, wearing a black coat and with powdered hair; & pendant: J.722.1016 spouse (∞ 1788), née Frances Gosling (1768–1850), half-length, wearing a white dress and blue headdress, pstl, 22.5x19.2 ov. (desc.: Pamela Bruce-Clarke (1915–1989). PC, The Grange, Wendover; Woolley & Wallis, 2.X.2024, Lot 177) [new attr.] φv



J.722.102 LEWIS BAGOT (1740–1802), bishop of Bristol, Norwich and St Asaph; & pendant: J.722.103 spouse, née Mary Hay (1754–1799), pstl, 24.2x20.8 ov., sd *verso* “Anna Tonelli fece in Londra 1797” (Bath, Holburne Museum, inv. 2014.4/5. Legs Joseph Ken Mundy 2014). Exh.: Bath 2016 φσ





1.722.104 =? (Bishop) crayons (desc.: Mrs Hankins, née Mary Anne Hay, Wyeland House, near Hereford 1856). Lit.: Canon Raines, "The vicars of Rochdale", in *Remains historical and literary connected with the Palatine counties of Lancaster and Chester*, II, 1883, p. 302 n.r.

1.722.105 Mr BALDWIN, m/u, Royal Academy 1794, no. 338

1.722.106 The Misses BARRY, portraits, m/u, Royal Academy 1795, no. 435

1.722.107 =?The Misses Elizabeth, 1.722.108 Lucy and 1.722.109 Mary BARRY, in white, pink and yellow dresses, 3 pstl, 48x39 (London, Christie's, 7.VII.1916, Lot 37, anon., 34 gns; E. Wertheimer)

?Lord Algernon Percy, 1st Earl of BEVERLY, in a red coat and blue waistcoat, pstl, 26x20.5 ov., c.1780 (Col. A. E. Jelf-Reveley, *Bronygdader, Dolgelly*, 1957; F. J. Jelf-Reveley *Will Trust*; London, Christie's, 2.III.1976, Lot 80 n.r., as by Hamilton). Lit.: Steegman 1957, p. 215, no. 4 n.r., attr. Tonelli [v. Hamilton]

1.722.111 Charles BIDDULPH, 2 portraits; & pendant: 1.722.112 Thomas Biddulph, pstl, 25.5x20 (Biddulph; London, Sotheby's, 9.XII.1931, Lot 58; Box) φ

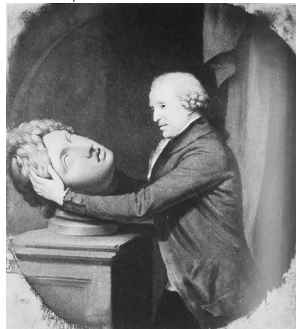


1.722.115 John BIDDULPH, in blue coat, pstl, 24x20 (Biddulph; London, Sotheby's, 9.XII.1931, Lot 57; Box) φ



Photo courtesy Christie's
Bisschopp, v. Bysschop

1.722.12 Henry BLUNDELL of Ince (1724–1810), art collector, pstl, gch./ppr, 52x46.2 (Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery, inv. 2519. Don Liverpool Royal Institution 1948). Exh.: Liverpool 1988, repr. Lit.: *Walker Art Gallery: old master drawings and prints*, 1967, p. 38, no. 2519 φ



1.722.122 Cecil BYSSHOPP [or Bisschopp] (1783–1813) and his sister Katherine Annabella, later Lady Brooke Pechell (1791–1871), with their dog, pstl, 28x36 ov., c.1795 (Parham Park, no. 241). Lit.: *Guide book*, n.d., p. 13 repr. φ



1.722.124 Lady Charlotte Susan CAMPBELL (1775–1861), author, lady-in-waiting to Queen Charlotte, ∞ 1818 Edward John Bury, seated, with a book, ov., m/u, 1795 (Swallowfield 1905). Lit.: Russell 1905, repr., opp. p. 186 φ



~?study, pstl, 9.5x7.5, sd verso "Anna Tonelli/fecit in Londra/1795" (Dorchester, Duke's, 15.IV.2010, Lot 115 repr., as English sch., 1785, ?of Anna Tonelli, est. £50–100; Dorchester, Duke's, 21.IV.2010, Lot 414 repr., as English sch., est. £20–40) φδν



1.722.129 Duchess of CASERTA as Ariadne, m/u, Royal Academy 1794, no. 348. Lit.: Pasquin 1796a

1.722.13 Lady Susan CLINTON, née Charteris (c.1774–1816), pstl, 26.5x23.4 ov. (desc.: PC 2011) φ



1.722.132 Hon. Robert Henry CLIVE (1789–1854), of Oakley Park, in a dark blue coat, pstl, 24.5x19.7 ov., sd verso 1794 (Powis Castle, National Trust, inv. 1180773). Lit.: Steegman 1957, p. 270 n.r.; Gore 1969, p. 251 n.r.; Powis Castle guidebook, 1991, no. 108 n.r. φ



1.722.134 William CLIVE (1745–1826), MP, brother of 1st Lord Clive, pstl, 24.5x19.7 ov., sd *verso* 1797 (Powis Castle). Lit.: Steegman 1957, p. 270 n.r.; Gore 1969, p. 251 n.r.; Powis Castle guidebook, 1991, no. 111 n.r.; Jeffares 2006, repr. Hamilton, Earl of Powis in error

1.722.135 Mrs William CLIVE, née Elizabeth Rotton, gch., 24.5x19.7 ov. (Powis Castle). Lit.: Steegman 1957, p. 270 n.r.; Gore 1969, p. 251 n.r.; Powis Castle guidebook, 1991, no. 112 n.r. *Clive, n.q. Northumberland; Williams Wynne*

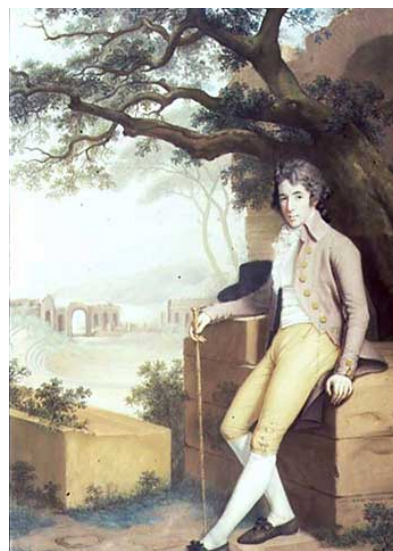
1.722.137 Countess COWPER, née Hannah Anne Gore (1758–1826), and her sister, Emily Gore (1755–1832), pstl, a/r “Monsieur Amilton” [Hamilton] (George, 3rd Earl Cowper, inv. p.m. for export license from Florence to England, 9.III.1790, no. 53; Countess Cowper; her sister, Emily Gore; shipped to England, .IX.1827). Lit.: letter, Rev. Thomas Brand to Earl of Ailesbury, 8.VI.1793, “[Lady Cowper] has just sent for the copy Anna Tonelli made of her beautiful picture by Hamilton. I carry it this morning to the Quercia to show Lady Bruce, who has some curiosity to see her”; Ingamells 1997, p. 411; Ellis 2005, pp. 49, 61 n.59, 70f n.r.

1.722.1373 The children of the Hon. Penn Assheton CURZON (1757–1797) and Baroness Howe (1762–1835), George Augustus William (1788–1805) and his sister Marianne (1790–1820), 24x30 ov., sd 1794 (desc.: Edward Curzon, 6th Earl Howe of Gopsall Park and Penn House; Colchester, Reeman Dansie, 27–28.VI.2023, Lot 1184 repr., est. £1500–2500) φ



1.722.13735 Mrs Richard Lovell EDGEWORTH, née Honora Sneyd (1751–1780), pstl/ppr, 23.3x18.2 ov. (desc.: Charles Sneyd Edgeworth; Guy Peppiatt Fine Art, cat. 2025, no. 58). ?A/r earlier portrait [new attr.] φ

1.722.1374 [olim 1.375.1449] Music lesson: Amelia (1784–1864) and Harriet (1782–1837) HARDING-NEWMAN, granddaughters of Robert Harding-Newman, by a spinet and harp, pstl/ppr, 44.5x49.5 ov., inscr. *verso* “H D Hamilton RHA” (London, Christie’s, 16.III.1923, Lot 18 n.r., 41 gns; L. Douglas. London, Christie’s, 27.IV.1934, Lot 5 n.r., 12 gns; ?Martin/?Mallin. Dr W. R. Schweizer; London, Sotheby’s, 4.XI.1964, Lot 44; PC; desc.; all as by Hamilton Guy Peppiatt Fine Art, cat. 2025, no. 46) [new attr. 2025] φ



?Hugh Percy, 2nd Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND (1742–1817), in a scarlet uniform, pstl, 23x18 ov., c.1780 (Col. A. E. Jelf-Reveley, *Bronyngader, Dolgelly*, 1957). Lit.: Steegman 1957, p. 215, no. 5 n.r., attr. Tonelli [v. Hamilton]

1.722.141 Duchess of NORTHUMBERLAND, née Lady Charlotte Florentia Clive (1787–1866), wife of 3rd Duke, sister of the 2nd Earl of Powis, in a white dress with pink sash, pstl, 24.5x19.7 ov., c.1797 (Powis Castle, National Trust, inv. 1180504). Lit.: Steegman 1957, p. 270 n.r.; Gore 1969, p. 251 n.r.; Archer 1987, no. 227 n.r.; Powis Castle guidebook, 1991, no. 110 n.r. φ



1.722.143 Jane ORMSBY (1750–1802), daughter of William Ormsby, pstl, 24x19 ov., c.1780 (Lord Harlech, Brogyntyn, 1948–a.1957; Lord Harlech, Glyn Cywarch; Bonhams, 29.III.2017, Lot 411 repr., est. £1500–2500, £3800 [=£4750]; Rafael Valls, cat. 2018, no. 26). Exh.: Cardiff 1948, no. 85 n.r. Lit.: Steegman 1957, p. 76, pl. 12C φ



1.722.145 Maria Susannah ORMSBY (1745–1827), daughter of William Ormsby, pstl, 24x19 ov., c.1780 (olim Brogyntyn; Lord Harlech, Glyn

Cywarch; Bonhams, 29.III.2017, Lot 412 repr., est. £800–1200, £3000 [=£3750]; Rafael Valls, cat. 2018, no. 26). Lit.: Steegman 1957, p. 76 n.r. φ



1.722.146 William ORMSBY (–1781) of Willowbrook, Co. Sligo, in a blue coat with light red collar; & 1.722.147 pendant: spouse, née Hannah Wynne (–1798), pstl, 24x19 ov., c.1780 (Lord Harlech, Brogyntyn, 1948–a.1957; Lord Harlech, Glyn Cywarch; Bonhams, 29.III.2017, Lot 154 repr., est. £1200–1800, £4000 [=£5000]; Rafael Valls, cat. 2018, no. 26). Exh.: Cardiff 1948, no. 84 n.r. Lit.: Steegman 1957, p. 76 n.r. φ



1.722.148 Mr PALMER, m/u, Royal Academy 1795, no. 481

Percy, v. Beverley

Edward Clive, 2nd Baron Clive, 1st Earl of POWIS (1754–1839), 1794 (Earl of Powis, Powis Castle, 1957). Lit.: Steegman 1957, p. 270 n.r. [confusion with Hamilton]

1.722.151 Edward Herbert Clive, 2nd Earl of POWIS (1785–1848), pstl, 24.5x19.7 ov., sd *verso* 1794 (Powis Castle, National Trust, inv. 1180774). Lit.: Gore 1969, p. 251 n.r.; Archer 1987, no. 224 n.r.; Powis Castle guidebook, 1991, no. 107 n.r. φ



1.722.152 Miss Rebecca PROBERT (1763–1827), dau. of John Probert, in white muslin dress, powdered hair, pstl, a/r Hugh Douglas Hamilton pnt. (Powis Estate, dep.: Powis Castle). Lit.: Peter Moore, *Guide to the pictures at Powis Castle*, 2016, p. 31 n.r.

1.722.153 ~repl., pstl, 24.5x19.7 ov., *olim* sd ↘ (London, Christie's, 28–29.VII.1926, Lot 9 n.r., as Miss Probert, sd Anna Tonelli, 7 gns; Parsons. New York, Sotheby's, 31.I.2018, Lot 195 repr., as unknown sitter, by J. H. W. Tischbein, est. \$4–6,000, \$2200) [new attr. 2018] φ



1.722.155 Mrs ROBINSON, née Rebecca Clive (1760–1795), gch., 24.5x19.7 ov., inscr. *verso* “Anna Tonelli copied at Walcot 1797”, ?a/r Hamilton (Powis Castle, Blue Drawing Room, National Trust, inv. 1180505) Lit.: Gore 1969, p. 251 n.r.; Powis Castle guidebook, 1991, no. 109 n.r. φ



1.722.156 Charlotte SNEYD (1756–1829); & pendant: 1.722.1565 Mary Sneyd (1760–1838), pstl, 21.5x16.5, inscr. *verso* “Charlotte Sneyd”/“Mary Sneyd” (Washington, NGA, inv. 2018.89.1/2. Arthur Ackermann, New York. David Tunick, Inc. New York; acqu. Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fune 2018). Exh.: Washington 2019. A/r Adam Buck watercolours, 1790 (Dublin, Adam's, 5.XII.2006, Lot 81 repr.) φ



Sneyd, v.q. Edgenworth

1.722.157 Mr R. WESTMORELAND, m/u, Royal Academy 1795, no. 495, as a young gentleman

1.722.158 Lady Harriet WILLIAMS-WYNN, née Clive (1786–1835), sister of the 2nd Earl of Powis, wife of Sir Watkins Williams-Wynn, 5th Bt, in a white dress with pink sash, pstl, 24.5x19.7 ov., sd *verso* 1797 (Powis Castle, National Trust, inv. 1180775). Lit.: Steegman 1957, p. 270 n.r.; Gore 1969, p. 251 n.r.; Archer 1987, no. 226 n.r.; Powis Castle guidebook, 1991, no. 109 n.r. φ



1.722.16 Gentleman, m/u, Royal Academy 1794, no. 347

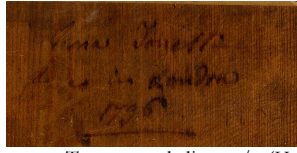
1.722.161 Gentleman, m/u, Royal Academy 1794, no. 398

1.722.162 Young lady, m/u, Royal Academy 1795, no. 472

1.722.163 Young man, pstl, 23x19.2 ov., inscr. *verso* “Anna Tonelli *face* in Londra 1795” (Felbrigg Hall, National Trust). Lit.: Maddison 1995, p. 42 n.r. φ



J.722.1643 [olim J.375.21122] Gentleman in a brown coat, pstl, 27x23 ov. (Donnington Priory, Dreweatts, 16.X.2024, Lot 336 repr., attr. H. D. Hamilton, est. £500–700, £380) φ



J.722.17 Two young ladies, m/u (Horace Walpole; desc.: Earl Waldgrave; Strawberry Hill, George Robins, 25.IV.1842 & seq., p. 118, no. 69 n.r.)



J.722.165 Young girl in a white dress with a white bonnet tied with a blue ribbon, pstl, 25x19 ov., 1784 (London, Christie's, 10.VII.1990, Lot 89 repr., est. £400–600, £650 [=£715]. Newbury, Donnington Priory, Dreweatt Neate, 27.IX.2006, Lot 44 repr., est. £300–500, £3500) φ



J.722.167 Lady in white dress with white headdress, pstl, 24x20.5 ov., inscr. *verso* "Anna Tonelli/fecit in Londra/1796" (Nottingham, Mellors & Kirk, 3–4.III.2011, Lot 621 repr., as unknown sitter by Tonelli, est. £200–300, w/d; Nottingham, Mellors & Kirk, 9–10.VI.2011, Lot 713 repr., as of Tonelli by Hugh Douglas Hamilton, est. £1000–2000, £1200) φ

