

# Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

## **WILKES, Mary “Polly”**

London 5.VIII.1750–12.III.1802

There are several references in the correspondence of John Wilkes to his daughter's activity as an amateur pastelist. In a letter to his friend Humphry Cotes from Paris, 30.IV.1764, he wrote “I mean to send my mother-in-law a drawing of miss Wilkes's, and her mother something in crayons. She has really made a very happy progress.” Writing to Polly herself from Naples, 9.IV.1765, he described his pleasant lodgings, adorned with “your crayons of the woman's head, and a basket of fruit; and your picture by Mr Fossier.” A few months later, Wilkes stayed in Geneva, and evidently befriended Liotard, who was trying to persuade Rousseau to grant him an interview; Rousseau however made it clear that he didn't wish to encounter Liotard and Wilkes together, and the interview did not take place. Back in Paris (1.XI.1765) Wilkes reported to Polly that [Louis-Denis] Fossier (*q.v.*) dined with him last week, and sent his compliments. Later (12.VI.1770), when Polly was staying in Paris, Wilkes referred to a pastel of her by [Pierre] Cézeron (*q.v.*) executed for Mme de Chantereine, and recommended that “you avail yourself as much as you can of your being at Paris to take lessons from [him]”. In addition to the well-known Zoffany double portrait of father and daughter (London, NPG), Polly's estate included a pastel of herself by Hoare (*q.v.*), and a number of portraits of the duchesse de Châtillon and of her daughters.

### **Bibliography**

Arthur H. Cash, *John Wilkes*, New Haven, 2006;  
*Correspondence of the late John Wilkes*, ed. John Almon, London, 1805, II, pp. 70. 153; IV, pp. 49, 52; V, p. 114