

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

HARCOURT, George Simon, Viscount Nuncham, 2nd Earl

Cokethorpe 1.VIII.1736 – London 20.IV.1809

Son of the British ambassador in Paris; an amateur pastelist, he took lessons from Knapton in the 1750s together with his sister Elizabeth (*g.n.*), later wife of Sir William Lee. Sloane 1982 reproduces a letter to Elizabeth sent from Vienna, 14.IX.1755 (while on his grand tour with Viscount Villiers, guided by the poet William Whitehead), in which he mentions that he awaits guidance from Knapton to the finest galleries. He also reports that he was attempted all sorts of painting since leaving England, with little success in watercolour, “but for Crayons I have without a Master or any instructions some landscapes that were more tollerable, particularly one large one of a veiv [sic] upon the Rhine, which I have never seen since the instant I finished it, & I believe it is torn or lost, Landscapes in Crayons are things almost unknown & I never knew but Knapton & the D. of Weimar that did them so that I fear I shall even find difficulty in Italy to get and instructor.” Some months later (10.II.1756), from Rome, he writes again: “I have painted a large picture in crayons, & am going to do its companion, I think I have succeeded, tollerably considering it is the first regular one I have done in that way, & as I never had the least instructions; it is much more easy to do than in oyles, but never looks near so well as you have hardly any greens, but I might make something tollerable in time was I not obliged to invent & have nothing in that style of painting to copy from, which must always be the case for those colours are so improper for Landscapes that I ever met with but one or two painters who knew how to do them; & those were only for their amusement, & to try the experiment.”

Bibliography

Sloane 1982, p. 182f; Sloan 2000; Wright 2006