

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

HEWETSON, Christopher

Kilkenny c.1737 – Rome 15.XI.1798

The Irish sculptor was active in Dublin, where he worked with John Van Nost, and, from 1765, in Rome. The only reason an entry appears in this work is because the *London evening post*, 9.VII.1771, printed the extract of a letter from Rome, dated 11.VI.1771, according to which “several English gentlemen” wanted to persuade “the Sovereign Pontiff to permit the English limner Whiston, to take his bust in crayons from the life, in order to execute it afterwards in marble, assuring His Holiness at the same time, that every English virtuoso will glory in having a copy of it in his apartment.” “Whiston” is unrecorded as sculptor, draughtsman or traveller in Italy – and the reference must be to Christopher Hewitson, whose bust of Lorenzo Ganganelli (1705–1774), Pope Clemente XIV from 1769, is known in at least five marble versions: that in the V&A is dated 1773, others 1771 and 1772. The standard sources to date (2024 when the article on Whiston in this work was revised) suggest the commission came through the influence of Thomas Jenkins or of the abbé Grant. While the letter does not settle that debate by identifying the “several English gentlemen”, it provides hitherto unremarked suggestion of Hewetson’s possible working practice. No pastel has however survived.

Bibliography

D. Bilbey, *British sculpture 1470 to 2000, a concise catalogue of the collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum*, London 2002; *Dictionary of Irish biography*; Ana María Suárez Huerta, “Will and inventory of Christopher Hewetson (c1737–1798)”, *British art journal*, xv/2, 2014, pp. 3–17; Ingamells 1997; Strickland 1913