

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

MERCATI, Andrew

Italy 1724 – London 18.I.1791

Mercati, described as a drawing master, at Mr Brunet's, Princes Street, Cavendish Square, exhibited landscapes, trompe-l'œil ("deceptions") and a head, in watercolour, chalk or crayons, at the Free Society between 1767 and 1769, but has escaped the standard reference books. He was evidently the Andrew or Andreas Mercati whose obituary appeared in various newspapers, among them the *Gentleman's magazine*, 1.1791, p. 94 (the *Star* has Andreas):

Aged 66, the celebrated Andrew Mercati, of Rome, of an antient and honourable family at Florence, who, with a natural genius, aided by a liberal education, arrived at the highest degree of eminence. Before the age of twenty, he was unrivalled in the science of fencing, and was elected an Arcadian Poet. Exclusive of these, for his excellence in the arts of drawing and painting, he had the honour of invitations from four different Sovereigns, viz. the Empress of Russia, the Kings of Spain, Naples and England. To this country he gave the preference, where he met with the reception generally the reward of superior merit. He died insolvent.

Andrew Mercati was married to an Elizabeth Harvey at St George's, Hanover Square, 19.VI.1764.

The painter Thomas Jones (*q.v.*) records in his memoirs (*Walpole Society*, XXXII, 1946–48, p. 11) that, around 1766, he "entered with some other young Artists, at the fencing school of one *Mercati*, a Neopolitan." However at the commencement of the following year, "the party which had entered at *Mercati's* fencing school, not approving of his method of teaching, left it, and went in a body to that of the well-known little Welshman *Davies*."

Andrew Mercati appeared in Wakefield's *Directory* (1790) as Drawing Master & Mounter to his Majesty, the address being "13 Padding Street" [sic]; this is confirmed by records of the Sun Fire Office for 21.XII.1790, where "Mercati, drawing master" occupied "13 north side of Paddington Street". Mercati was probably the drawings dealer in Marylebone High Street who sold two chalk landscape drawings by Richard Wilson to the collector Benjamin Booth in 1788 (*Walpole Society*, 1998, p. 20).

A possibly unrelated John Mercati had a shop at 23 Wigmore Street, one of the businesses appointed to receive donations for an indigent widow in an appeal in the *Morning post*, 7.X.1780 (see also *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London*, 1917, XI, p. 123); John was buried in St Marylebone, 12.IX.1794. He might be the Jean Mercadie who appears in the rate books for St Martin's Street from 1744.

Pastels

J.5312.101 Landscape, crayons, Free Society 1768, no. 142

J.5312.102 Mount Vesuvius, crayons, Free Society 1768, no. 144