

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

MESSINI, Sig.ra Ferdinando, née Giovanna Tacconi

Florence 1717–1742

The wife of the pastellist Ferdinando Messini (*q.v.*), known as Messinia. According to Gabburri, she worked in oil and fresco and made copies, but “molto più fa spiccare il di lei genio e il suo gran talento nei ritratti a pastelli e nei quadri di sua idea”; he compares her work to Rembrandt and Jacob Jordaens. Her pastel copies after Raphael and Titian were much in demand, particularly among English grand tourists. Krock’s “ritratto, in età di anni 26, fu colorito dal naturale, a pastelli, dalla Brava virtuosa Giovanna Messini, la quale fecelo somigliantissimo a segno, che non gli manca se non la parola”; it is difficult to reconcile the dates with the date of birth implied by Gabburri. The Latin inscription on a memorial, erected by her husband in the church of SS. Annunziata in Florence, confirms that she died at the age of 26 in 1742; it notes her skill in portraits “siccis coloribus” (i.e. in pastel) both from nature and copied after other masters.

She is mentioned in a letter to Rosalba Carriera (2.IV.1735) from cavaliere Gabburri in Florence: it seems Rosalba has obtained a supply of pastels from Paris which she will share with her. Soon after, on 7.V.1735, Gabburri writes again: Francesco Landi has also taken up Sig.ra Messini, and both appeal to Rosalba to look at two samples of her work. She is to copy Gabburri’s portrait of Rosalba, and Landi will lend her some of his precious crayons. It may be, but this goes beyond the evidence, that she was a pupil or copyist of Rosalba.

Bibliography

Gabburri, *Vite di pittori*, pp. 625-II-C064V, 1364-III-C176V; Sani 1985; Turner 1993, p. 223

Pastels

J.5342.101 AUTORITRATTO, pstl, Florence 1737 (Gabburri)

J.5342.102 Hendrick KROCK/Krogk (1671–1738), painter from Copenhagen, pupil of Carlo Maratta, age 26, pstl (Gabburri)

J.5342.103 =?pstl, Florence 1737

J.5342.104 Testa di S. Paolo, pstl, Florence 1737

J.5342.105 Madonna della seggiola, pstl, a/r Raphael, 1741, original size [Ø71]

J.5342.106 Cristo della moneta, pstl a/r Titian, 1741, original size [120x94]