

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

MORISON, Colin

Deskford, Banffshire 16.XII.1734 – Rome
2.v.1809

Painter, dealer and antiquary. The son of Walter Morison, a minister, and Elisabeth, née Ker, was born in Scotland in 1734 (not 1732 as in older sources) and baptised two days later. He travelled to Italy in 1754 and remained in Rome for over fifty years. He was probably (Ingamells) the “Mr Morrison” by whom Nevay sent a letter to Edinburgh in 1768 on one of a number of visits home. While there is no other indication of him using or making pastels, there is no other obvious candidate for the figure referred to in a letter from Hugh Gordon of Aberdeen to James Ross (11.II.1773, National Records of Scotland, Gordon papers, GD44/43/84): “Mr Peacock does not think that Morisson the painter makes up crayons well”; notes the “need to purchase them from a Swiss or German who lives somewhere about St Martin’s Lane, London” (no doubt he refers to Jean James Bonhôte); and “suggests that the duke should write to London for a set.” In the Seafeld papers (National Records of Scotland, GD248/954/5) is a letter from Colin Morison in Rome, dated 18.IX.1755, offering thanks for Lord Deskford’s favour, and reporting that he was continuing to study under Mengs, and was engaged in copying two figures of Plato and Aristotle from Raphael’s School of Athens. He adds that “Mr Hope had had his portrait done by Mengs and also purchased from Mengs ‘The seasons painted in crayons’ for Lord Hopton, extremely fine of the kind”. This was presumably John Hope, Earl of Hopetoun, and the Seasons presumably an unrecorded set by Mengs.

Bibliography

Elisabetta Giffi, *Colin Morison (1734–1809) antiquaria, storiografia e collezionismo tra Roma e Aberdeen*, Rome, 2016; Ingamells 1997; letter from Morison, 1765, National Records of Scotland, Seafeld papers, ref GD248/954/5