

Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*

Online edition

MORTIMER, John Hamilton

Eastbourne 17.IX.1740 – London 4.II.1779

Painter of history, literary, conversation pieces as well as of portraits. He was trained in London under Hudson and Pine, and exhibited at the Society of Arts 1762–77 (becoming its president in 1774), the Free Society 1763–67 and the Royal Academy 1778–79, becoming an associate in 1778. Not normally thought of as a pastellist, two drawings of Shakespearean characters, “relatively pale and subdued”, join a number of pen and ink sketches in a grangerized Shakespeare at the Huntington Library. They were published in 1973, but met with scepticism in a response pointing out that these, and several other pastels, were more likely copied after Mortimer’s etchings. There are related engravings by the artist. Mortimer’s pictures were variable in quality, the critic in the *Morning chronicle*, 27.IV.1778 calling one of his oils “shockingly bad”.

An unidentified “Pupil to the late celebrated Mr Mortimer” offered lessons in drawing and painting in oil, crayons and miniature in the *Oxford journal*, 24.VI.1784.

Bibliography

Alexander 2021; Marcia Allentuck, “New John Hamilton Mortimer drawings of Shakespeare characters”, *Burlington magazine*, CXV, .VIII.1973, pp. 530–35; John Sunderland, “Mortimer drawings”, *Burlington magazine*, CXVI/851, .II.1974, pp. 108f; Sunderland 1986, pp. 161, 164; Waterhouse 1981

Anon. related pastels

J.5478.101 Falstaff, from *Henry IV, part I*, pstl, 33.7x27.3 ov., 1775–76 (San Marino, Huntington Library). Lit.: Allentuck 1973, fig. 1 [Attr.] φα



J.5478.105 Lear, pstl, 35x27 (London, Sotheby’s, 22.XII.1977, Lot 205). Lit.: Sunderland 1986, no. 96.8e, cop.

J.5478.106 Falstaff J.5478.107 (2); J.5478.108 Richard II; J.5478.109 Bardolph, pstl, a/r Mortimer



J.5478.103 Poet, from *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, pstl, 33.7x27.3 ov., 1775–76 (San Marino, Huntington Library). Lit.: Allentuck 1973, fig. 60; Sunderland 1986, no. 96.1c, cop. [Attr.] φα