ARMSTRONG, Augustus

fl. England 1704–43

Vertue notes a portrait of Henry Tilson (*q.v.*) which belonged (possibly at the time of Tilson's death, in 1695; the passage ambiguous, the source Andrew Hay) to a "Mr Armstrong painter". Later he mentions that Armstrong was familiar with Cooper's portraits of Cromwell. Croft-Murray & Hulton identify Vertue's Mr Armstrong with the Nicholas Armstrong or Armestrong of St Giles in the Fields, Westminster, apprenticed in 1671 to one William Mills, a painter-stainer, and with a draughtsman of that name, author of a group of crayon portraits at Narford Hall, the Norfolk mansion rebuilt by the collector Sir Andrew Fountaine. However those pastels (one of Sir Andrew engraved by Edwards, the other four of members of his family, signed by "Armstrong") are early eighteenth century, and the style resembles a portrait (medium unknown) of a doctor, Robert Poole, known from a 1743 print by John Faber, in which the artist is identified as "Aug^{s} Armstrong".

Of the "grand Duke of Tuscany; Duchess of Buckingham and Marquis of Carnarvon", the crayons mentioned by Chambers, the first at least is attributed to Tempesti (*q.v.*) in the Narford 1753 inventory. In the 1738 inventory, however, the "Great Duke of Tuscany" has a pendant, the "Queen of Bohemia" (presumably the Winter Queen, Charles I's mother), which is unlikely to be by Tempesti.

Among the portraits of Sir Andrew Fountaine's ancestors was "his own picture twice"; in this inventory neither artist nor medium is specified; of the library, we are merely told that there are "Pictures round the Room over the Bookcases 3 Cabinets between the windows, one of them prettily adorn'd with little pictures." (The series of 31 portraits of figures from Titian to Dr Richard Mead is discussed in West 2013, without reference to pastels.)

The dating of the Narford group is uncertain. Sarah, Mrs Fountaine is not wearing black, so the portrait was perhaps made during her husband's lifetime (Andrew Fountaine Sr died in 1707). Her daughter Elizabeth married Edward Clent in 1704, the inscription implying the portrait was earlier.

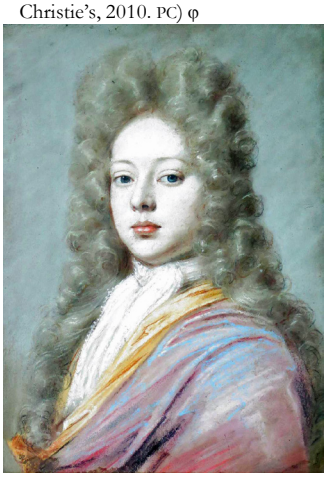
No other reference explicitly to Augustus Armstrong has been found. The name is unusual, but it seems improbable he was the pauper of this name buried in High Wycombe in 3.VIII.1746. An Augustus, or Augustine, Armstrong, of whom little is known beyond an address in Great Ormond Street, married Mary, daughter of the poet Charles Cotton (1630–1687), before 1709; Mary died in 1723, leaving two children; "Augustin Armstrong, gentleman", then of the parish of St Paul, Covent Garden, was sole heir and executor of the will of his son Charles proved in 1745 (Charles was baptised on 11.XI.1709 at St-Martin-in-the-Fields; when he made his will in 1743 he was a clergyman on board the *Torbay* under Captain John Gascoigne). One of her sisters was Katherine, Lady Lucy; another, Olive, was the wife of George Stanhope, Dean of Canterbury, whose will mentioned a number of unattributed family portraits in crayons.

Bibliography

Croft-Murray & Hulton 1960, pp. 480f; John Chambers, *General history of the county of Norfolk*, Norwich, 1821, p. 642; A. Fontaine, *Portraits of the Fountaine family at Narford*, 1869, p. 38–39; Narford Hall inv., 17.IX.1738, artworld.york.ac.uk [15.III.2013]; West 2013

Pastels

J.1112.121 Edward CLENT (1677–1755), brother-in-law of Sir Andrew Fountaine, half-length, with a white lace stock, and a reddish silken mantle, pstl, 26x18.4, inscr. *verso* "Edward Clent Esq/of Knightwick/in Worcestershire/by Armstrong" (desc.: Narford; London, Christie's, 12.XI.1996, Lot 11 [part], est. £4–6000, £10,350. London, Christie's, 2010. PC) φ



J.1112.122 Edward CLENT, bust-length, in a blue tunic, pstl, 26x18.4, inscr. *verso* "Edward Clent" (desc.: Narford; London, Christie's, 12.XI.1996, Lot 11 [part], est. £4–6000, £10,350. London, Christie's, 2010. PC) φ

J.1112.124 Mrs Edward CLENT (∞ 1704), née Elizabeth Fountaine (1685–1737), sister of Sir Andrew, bust-length, her hair curling over her shoulder, pstl, 26x18.4, inscr. *verso* "Elizabeth Fountaine/afterwards/Mrs CLENT" (desc.: Narford; London, Christie's, 12.XI.1996, Lot 11 [part], est. £4–6000, £10,350. London, Christie's, 2010. PC) φ

J.1112.051 Anthony COPE (1694–1749), of New Bond Street; & pendant: spouse [née Anne Dashwood (1696–p.1737)], crayons (Antony Cope; legs: nephew, Sir Monnoux Cope, 7th Bt (1696–1763)). Lit.: "Some recollections of a visit to Bramshill", *The Patrician*, VI, 1848, p. 119

J.1112.091 Mrs Andrew FOUNTAINE, née Sarah Chicheley (1640–1726), mother of Sir Andrew Fountaine, bust-length, in a brown dress, pstl, 26x18.4, inscr. *verso* "Mrs Fountaine/Daughter of Sr. Thomas Chichley/of Wimple/By Armstrong" (desc.: Narford; London, Christie's, 12.XI.1996, Lot 11 [part], est. £4–6000, £10,350. London, Christie's, 2010. PC) φ

J.1112.101 Sir Andrew FOUNTAINE (1676–1753), crayons, 26x18.4 (desc. family, Narford) φ

~grav. William Camden Edwards (1777–1855) for *Norfolk portraits*, Norwich, 1841–45 φ

J.1112.161 [*olim* J.347.108] ?[??]Charles, 6th Duke of SOMERSET (1662–1748); & pendant: J.1112.162 [*olim* J.347.109] ?Duchess, née Lady Elizabeth Percy (1667–1722), dau. of Joceline, 11th Earl of Northumberland, pstl, c.25x20 [c.1710] (Syon House, Duke of Northumberland, inv. no. 328/329)[new attr. 2023] φαδσν