CUNNINGHAM, Edmund Francis, called Calze

?Kelso 1741 – Berlin 28.IV.1793

Edmund Francis Cunningham, known as Calze; his forename appears incorrectly as Edward in most art reference books (following Edwards 1808), and there is a great deal of confusion about his biography, including conflations with Italian homonyms. Cunningham's father is said to have been exiled from Scotland after the '45, and his son is assumed to have adopted the name Calze as a reference to Kelso, assumed to be his place of origin (but see below).

A much older Francesco Calza, a religious painter and sculptor, from Bologna, was already recorded in the Accademia Clementina in Bologna by 1740, and was in Venice in 1772–76, back in Bologna in 1787–91. He can be distinguished from the pastellist by different handwriting (*Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*).

The pastellist may have studied in Parma before being introduced to Mengs in Rome in 1757 by Andrew Lumisden. In Mengs's studio he would have found not only Scottish painters such as Willison and Nevay but also the antiquary James Byres. He also studied with Batoni in Rome. By 1762 he was established at Parma, studying under Baldrighi (*q.v.*); a nude study dated 1763 is in the Accademia di Belle Arti. He is also said to have worked in the studio of Francesco de Mura in Naples; he may be the "Edward Cunyngham" recorded as in Florence on 10.I.1767 (*Gazzetta Toscana*, as "Cunyngham") and Venice on 3.V.1767 (Archivio di Stato di Venezia, inquisitori di stato 759, both cited Ingamells 1997; it is unclear if the forename has been transcribed correctly). In a note in his travel diary in Prussia in 1790 (cited *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*), Gastone Della Torre Rezzonico, secretary of the Parma academy from 1769, noted that "Il nostro piacentino Calza ritrovai mutato a Berlino nel sig. Kuningham, pittore inglese, e con tal nome si veggono segnate molte stampe de' suoi quadri", confirming that the Piacenza Calze was the pastellist.

He was in London when the *St James's chronicle* reported (15.XII.1767) that the Tripolese ambassador, having been cured by Dr Bartholomew Dominiceti, an Italian quack of Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, had presented him with his portrait "drawn by the famous Painter, Master Calza, which cost Fifty Pounds." We can identify the ambassador as Amh. Hamet Aga Toza Effendi, from the list of patients in Dominiceti's *Medical anecdotes*, 1781. In 1768 he made three portraits of members of the Lennox/Fox family, presumably still in London.

The striking pendants of the dunkerquois Louis-Adrien Thiery and his wife (made in Paris, 1768) show considerable promise, and perhaps the influence of Valade, whose pendants of M. & Mme Faventines, exhibited in the Salon of the previous year, have the same poses. A full-length painting of Christian VII, king of Denmark, in Paris was commissioned in a contract of 8.XII.1768, for 4800 livres (Ayres 2022, p. 161). A derived miniature for the duc de Duras was also commissioned.

On 11.V.1769 Calze was back in England, when the *Whitehall evening post* reported–

> Last Friday Mr Calze, an Italian artist, was introduced to the Queen, at her Majesty's Palace, to deliver a portrait in crayons of the King of Denmark, which his Majesty did Mr Calze the honour of sitting for whilst he was at Paris, as a present for her Majesty, who received Mr Calze very graciously, and expressed the highest approbation of his work.

Since no version of the Calze portrait is known, it is difficult to know if the anonymous pastel J.85.113345 is correctly attributed to him (by Ayres 2022); it seems more likely a derivative from the widely copied Kauffmann image.

He exhibited at the Royal Academy in London from 1770 on, from an address opposite St James's Square, 1770; 34 Gerard Street, 1771–73 (where he took as lodger the Bohemian painter Martin Ferdinand Quadal); Great Marlborough Street, 1773. Here he made a series of portraits of beauties (Polly Jones, Kitty Hunter etc.), medium unknown (more likely oil than pastel in view of the complex accessories), engraved by Valentine Green and published by Boydell.

It appears from some sources that he was permitted to inherit his father's estate, and he resumed the use of his name; but that is not confirmed by the subsequent documents which continue to refer to him as Calze. His return to England was facilitated by his patron, Thomas, later 2nd Lord Lyttelton (1744–1779), known as the "wicked Lord Lyttelton", whom he had met in Parma and with whom he travelled back to London; Lyttelton lived at Cunningham's old lodgings, 34 Gerrard Street, from 1776. He was the son of the amateur pastellist Lady Lyttelton (*q.v.*) and George, 1st Baron Lyttelton (1709–1773) of whom Cunningham made several portraits. According to Edwards, Cunningham's "profligacy and want of principle obliged him to leave England, but not before he had ill-treated his patron, who compelled him to atone for his improper conduct in one of the courts of Westminster Hall." However official reports of the case (*Calze* v. *Lord Lyttelton* 1774 2 Black. Rep. 954) confirm Walpole's view of the peer's "detestable character", "ingratitude, profligacy…and want of honour and decency", as the judge held that "every possible delay had been used to keep the plaintiff [Calze] out of a just debt". An exchange of letters and pamphlets reveal that Lyttelton called Calze a servant, while the artist claimed to be a gentleman, pleading that "as an Artist I had studied under Sig. Baldrighi, and was patronized by the Duke of Parma", and accusing Lyttleton of malice and perjury. Nevertheless Calze was obliged to apologise in court to prevent Lyttleton's action for a libel in the *Morning post* of 14.II.1774 from procceding further (*Middlesex journal*, 3.XII.1774); in an anonymous response to the letter, Calze was accused of demanding money from clients for works he had voluntarily reclaimed to repair or improve.

It was round about 1775 that the French writer Robert-Martin Lesuire (1737–1815) visited London, where, according to his own account, he took lodgings with Calze in Great Marlborough Street. He was introduced to him by Vincenzo Valdrè (1740–1814), the Italian artist who had known Lesuire in Rome and who had studied with Baldrighi at the same time as Calze. Lesuire described Calze as a "peintre plaisantin, intrigant, mauvais sujet", who lived with a "douce et honnête" young woman who used his name. He agreed to board with them for a guinea a week including food. He relates numerous encounters with young women instigated by "le vilain Calze". Lesuire's stay ended when he cryptically reported that "Calze fit, dans sa maison, des bêtises qui m'empêchèrent de rester chez lui."

About this time Calze had become involved in property development. Among other projects, in 1774 he took over (still using the Calze name) what is now no. 48 (formerly no. 43) Great Marlborough Street, and rebuilt it as "a large Place of Entertainment for the Publick … called the Cassino". This was undertaken in conjunction with the infamous Italian singer Theresa Cornelys (on 11.III.1775 Calze granted her a 12 year lease of Munday's Court, near Carnaby Market, for £330 p.a.).

Shortly after he became involved with the development of Stratford Place, off Oxford Street, initiated by Edward Augustus Stratford, 2nd Earl of Aldborough (1736–1801). Aldborough, an Irish peer whose cashflow was erratic, is said to have learned of the site from the painter George Barret; he developed the first nine plots himself, but in 1776 he granted leases on the west and east sides of the square to Calze.

To finance his development of the plots, Calze mortgaged his interest in No. 10 to Ann Bontine, a widow, of Great Marlborough Street where Calze himself now lived. Mrs Bontine died soon after, in 1778; in her will (proved 12.XI.1778), she left her own daughter, Joan, Mrs Thomas Ewing, a mere one shilling, and everything else to "Edmund Francis Calze…painter and architect". There was evidently a close relationship, although research into the genealogy reveals a 30 year age difference. Her daughter Joan Bontine was born in Cardross, Dunbartonshire in 1735, Nicol Bontine (1709–1740) and "Nancie" Cunningham, born in Cardross in 1713, the daughter of James Cunningham and Dorothea McAdam. It seems probable they were close relations of Calze: Ann may have been his aunt. If so the connection with Kelso may be questionable, as it is quite remote from Cardross.

A substantial quantity of building materials delivered in 1777 caused Calze's bankruptcy when Aldborough was unable to continue his advances (Calze had alredy received some £5400 in the year to .II.1777). Among his creditors when he was finally declared bankrupt (in .VII.1777) was a bricklayer who had worked on the casino. Calze's leasehold interests in Stratford Place were put up for auction on 6.IV.1778. On 5.VII.1779 Calze was indicted at the Old Bailey for concealment (London Metropolitan Archives, CLA/047/LJ/10). Notices to creditors were advertised in the press in .VIII.1779, describing the bankrupt as a "builder, dealer and chapman."

Litigation continued for some years. He appeared in court in the Middlesex Assizes complaining about the conduct of his own lawyer in earlier litigation in Westminster Hall in .II.1786 in which he had acted as plaintiff and as executor of the will of Ann Bontine against Aldborough; his lawyer's negligence in failing to produce the will led to the failure of Calze's suit and his liability for cost of £42 to the other side (a summary of the case is reported in John Wentworth, *Complete system of pleading,* 1797, II, p. 326f).

Previously, on 2.X.1776, he signed an allegation for marriage to an Ann Deyman of St Marylebone, aged 22; he was "Edmund Francis Calze, of the Parish of Fulham, a Batchelor of the age of 33 years." It appears that the marriage did not take place (perhaps because Miss Deyman became aware of his financial situation); the following summer Ann Deyman, of Wells Street, St Marylebone, only daughter and heiress of Peter Deyman of Exeter, married John Desmadryl of Kingston. Three years later, on 23.I.1781, Calze married Margaret Simpson or Simson at St James's Piccadilly; the witnesses were Isabella Cowan and John Benefold. In the allegation signed the previous day, Calze declared his age as 30. In both allegations he is a bachelor. All these documents give his name as Edmund Francis Calze.

It is unclear at what stage he left London. He was in Russia in 1783 where he made a drawing of the reception of the notorious Duchess of Kingston by Catherine the Great; since the Duchess sailed for St Petersburg in 1777 it has been assumed that Cunningham left London then, but for the next five years he continued to exhibit at the Royal Academy under the name of "Calza, il Bolognese", from 11 Bentinck Street, Soho (1777), from Mr Hayman's, 23 Queen Street, Golden Square (1778), from Mr Pasquier's, King Street and Mount Street (1779–81). The thin disguise may have been an attempt to evade his creditors, but the accommodation addresses may mean that he had left the country. It may be that he accompanied the Duchess on her second trip in 1779. It is possible that an introduction was provided by Lesuire's brother Louis-Antoine-Bernard (1734–1808), premier peintre to the Duchess of Kingston and to Catherine II. It seems that he became associated with Richard Brompton (1734–1783), an English pupil of Mengs who was active as a portrait painter in Russia at the time. Cunningham made a copy of the Roslin painting of Catherine II, later engraved by Charles Townley but not published until 1786. The composition of a Sleeping Venus, probably in oil, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1781, no. 250, was criticised in the *St James's Chronicle*, while recognising that "the Face is pretty and the whole is touched with Spirit."

In 1784 the pastellist travelled to Berlin, where his "English style" in both portraits and history paintings was very fashionable. He executed a series of pastels for Friedrich der Große's troop review and the reception of the Duke of York in 1785. According to Thiébault, who describes Cunningham as an "amateur anglais, fort loin d'être sans talent, mais ayant surtout celui d'attraper la ressemblance", the king granted him sittings on 21, 22 and 23 May during these reviews; "autant peintre n'en eut jamais autant et n'aurait mieux profité de ce bonheur". The resulting pastel, taken to Paris by Thiébault's father, attracted the fancy of the maréchal de Richelieu. The following year his three-quarter length pastel portrait of Prinzessin Friedrike von Preußen was given pride of place in the first exhibition of the Berlin Akademie, of which Calze was made a member in 1787; he appeared in the 1786 livret as "Herr Cunningham, Bildnismahler auß London". Gottlieb Döpler (*q.v.*), who had travelled to London and Russia, became a pupil of Cunningham at the Berlin Akademie. Cunningham was awarded the Merentibus (gold medal) in 1792, and was called on to decorate the Queen's apartments and the royal box in the theatre at Charlottenburg with mythological and historical scenes. Many of these Berlin works were destroyed in World War II, although the prints issued by Johann Marc Pascal survive. Apparently his behaviour in Prussia was again "improper", and he was forced to leave Berlin; but this seems unsubstantiated.

Some sources say that he later returned to London, where he died in penury, but this incorrect. This notice appeared in the *Erlangische gelehrte Zeitung*, 40, 17.V.1793, p. 320:

> Am 28sten April starb in Berlin der berühmte Bildniß- und Historienmahler, Herr Cunningham, aus Calze in Schottland gebürtig, alt 52 Jarhe.

"Margarethe Simpson", widow of Edmund Cunningham, died aged 93 in Berlin, Mohrenstr. 65, on 2.III.1841, and was buried four days later in the Evangelische Dreifaltigkeitskirche, Berlin. A drawing by Johann Gottfried Schadow of Étienne Mayet, Inspektor der Seidenmanufakturen, and Mme Cunningham, c1795, is in the Nationalgalerie in Berlin.

[The artist has been erroneously conflated with the Cunningham to whom Sir Joshua Reynolds wrote in Lille in .XI.1785 concerning two paintings by Rubens which Reynolds wanted to buy and restore. We can identify this Cunningham as the rentier Anthony Cunyngham (1746–1828) from Hampton, son of Daniel and Elizabeth Hodges, and married to "Henriette Rocke" (1758–), from Bitterley, Shropshire, both resident in rue des Bouchers, Lille from 1782, according to parish register entries for their children.]

Calze's pastels reveal the influence of both the French and Italian schools. The later ones seem to have been executed quite rapidly, perhaps with gouache, and do not show much development of the artist's natural talent. The 1772 critic noted the "dinginess" characteristic of all his work. Waterhouse thought his court portraits "peculiar in colour and coarse in execution". Chodowiecki noted, in relation to a family portrait painted in Russia, that "the drawing is not bad, the composition unremarkable, the colouring untrue and harsh, his hand heavy and rough" but conceded that he "uses crayon better than oil paint."

There are numerous engravings of his work, by Bromley, Cunego, Gabrielli, Green, Haas and Townley.

Bibliography

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Salons critiques

ANON. 1772b, "Catalogue of pictures…now exhibiting at the Royal Academy", *The London chronicle*, 2.V.**1772**, p. 428:

36. Portrait of a Gentleman, in crayons, by E. F. Calze. This *Gentleman*, from that *Dinginess* which so remarkably predominates in all Mr Calze's productions, may be truly said to be – a very *dirty Fellow*.

Pastels

J.253.101 Hans Rudolf von BISCHOFSWERDER (1740–1803), Freimaurer, pstl, c.1790 (Munich PC 1964). Lit.: Berckenhagen 1964, no. 400 repr. Φ

J.253.103 General Sir Robert BOYD (1710–1794), commander of Gibraltar, pstl, 68x50 (*olim* Berlin, Schloß, GK I 40825. Feldherrengalerie, 1793; Schloß Charlottenburg; Schloß Berlin; Neue Kammern; Neues Palais; removed to USSR 1946; not located. Lost Art-ID 026204)

J.253.104 Tsaritsa CATHERINE II. (1729–1796), m/u

~grav. Charles Townley

J.253.106 CATHERINE II., m/u

~?cop., pnt. (Paris, Drouot, Coutau-Bégarie, 18.VI.2012). Lit.: *Gazette Drouot*, 8.VI.2012, p. 117 repr.

J.253.108 General Isaak Franz Egmont Graf von CHASÔT (1716–1797), pstl, 70x53 (*olim* Berlin, Schloß Monbijou, Hohenzollernmuseum, GK I 42564; lost a.1945)

J.253.109 CHRISTIAN VII, konge af Danmark (1749–1808), pstl, Paris, 1768/69 (don: Queen Charlotte of England). Lit.: Ayres 2022, as = J.85.113345 [?; possible but uncertain]

J.253.11 Mrs Alured CLARKE, née Catherine [Kitty] Hunter (c.1740–1795), ∞ 1770 Sir Alured Clarke, KB, pstl, Royal Academy 1771, no. 22

~grav. Valentine Green 1771

Courlande, v. Kurland

J.253.113 Wilhelm Christopher von DIEDE (1732–1807), Danish envoy at London, Royal Academy 1770, no. 25

J.253.118 FRIEDRICH, II. der Große, König von Preußen (1712–1786), pstl (Potsdam, Neues Palais, GK I 42558)

~?grav.: Domenico Cunego (1726–1803)

J.253.12 FRIEDRICH II., pstl (Dieudonné Thiébault (1733–1807), écrivain, membre de l'Académie de Berlin; don: maréchal-duc de Richelieu (1696–1788); sa veuve; don: Thiébault). Lit.: Paul d'Estrée, *La vieillesse de Richelieu (1758–1788)*, Paris, 1921, p. 259 n.r.;

Thiébault 1893–95, I, pp. 73f, repr., "au pastel fixé" φ

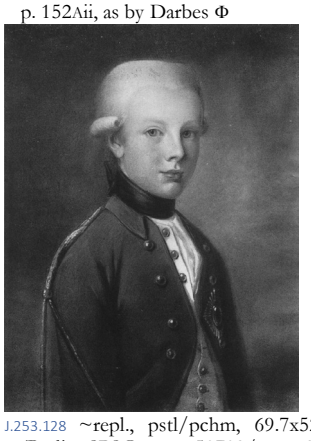
J.253.122 FRIEDRICH August Herzog zu Braunschweig-Öls (1740–1805), pstl (Potsdam, Neues Palais, GK I 42559)

~grav. Charles Townley

J.253.124 FRIEDRICH Wilhelm II. König von Preußen (1744–1797), m/u

~grav. Charles Townley

J.253.126 FRIEDRICH Wilhelm III. König von Preußen (1770–1840), pstl, 1783 (Potsdam, Sanssouci. Berlin, SMBPotsdam, Marmorpalais, GK I 2917, a.1945, 1994). Lit.: Brieger 1921, repr. p. 323, as by Darbes; Börsch-Supan 1994, p. 10 repr.; Jeffares 2006, p. 152Aii, as by Darbes Φ



J.253.128 ~repl., pstl/pchm, 69.7x52.5, c.1783 (Berlin, SPSG, GK I 50702/CK II 2049). Exh.: Berlin 1997, no. I.38 repr. φ

J.253.13 Countess of GRANDISON, née Lady Gertrude Seymour-Conway (1750–1793), as Viscountess Villiers, m/u

~grav. John Finlayson 1773

J.253.132 Prinz HEINRICH Friedrich Christian Ludwig von Preußen (1771–1790), pstl, 73x53 (*olim* Berlin, Schloß Monbijou, Hohenzollernmuseum, GK I 42567; lost a.1945). Lit.: Brieger 1921, repr. p. 199 Φ

J.253.134 ~?repl., pstl/pchm, 66x49, sd ↖ "Cunningham P. 17[9]3" (Berlin, SPSG, GK I 50714/CK II 7948). Exh.: Berlin 1997, no. I.42 n.r.

J.253.1344 Henry Fox, 1st Baron HOLLAND (1705–1774); & pendants: J.253.1345 spouse, née Lady Caroline Lennox (1723–1774); & J.253.1346 young man of the Fox or Lennox family, pstl, 60x48.8, sd → "Calze/1768"/-/- (don: Guillaume-Alexandre Pigault (1699–1786) de Calais, ancien secrétaire d'ambassade Londres, 1768–84; desc.: Pigault de Beaupré 1845; PC 2026; Vezin-le-Coquet, Ouest Enchères Publics Nantes & Rennes, 17.X.2026, Lot 384/385/386 repr., est. €2–4000 each) [new attr. 2026] φδν

J.253.135 [General Georg Ernst von] HOLTZENDORF [(1714–1785)], pstl, Berlin 1786, no. 309

J.253.136 ?Polly Kennedy, alias JONES (–1781), courtesan, mistress of Sir Charles Bunbury, m/u

~grav. Valentine Green 1771

J.253.138 La duchesse de Courlande [?Herzogin von KURLAND, née Franciszka von Corvin-Krasińska (1742–1796)], pstl, 74x63.5 (Mme Petrowska 1911. New York, Kende Galleries at Gimpel Bros., 13.XII.1941, $30). Exh.: Paris 1911, no. 27. Lit.: Sée 1911, repr. p. 349; Перова 2006, p. 25 repr. [?attr.; ?pastiche] Φπδν

J.253.14 Herzog LUDWIG Friedrich Alexander von Württemberg (1756–1817), pstl (Potsdam, Neues Palais, GK I 42560)

J.253.141 George, 1st Baron LYTTELTON (1709–1773), pstl, 61.3x48.6 (C. G. Smith, Lockbury Street, London, 1933. London, Phillips, 26.IV.1955 [not 1855], Lot 116. London, Bonham's, 12.VI.1969, Lot 226, as Cotes; PC, Dallas; Lawrence Steigrad Fine Arts, New York, 2008; London, Christie's, 5.VII.2011, Lot 133 repr., est. £1000–1500, £1500). Lit.: Kerslake 1977, pl. 492, anon. φσ

~version, pnt., half-length (Boconnoc). Lit.: Kerslake 1977, pl. 493

J.253.144 General [Wichard Joachim Heinrich von] MÖLLENDORF [(1724–1816)], pstl, Berlin 1786, no. 306 (Berliner Schloß 1793–1863)

~grav. Charles Townley 1786

J.253.146 Gustaf Adam von NOLCKEN (1733–1812), Swedish envoy to England, crayons, Royal Academy 1772, no. 36

J.253.153 General RODIG, pstl, Berlin 1786, no. 307

J.253.156 Louis-Adrien THIERY (1722–1777), entrepreneur des travaux du roi, échevin à Dunkerque; & pendant: J.253.157 2e épouse (∞ 1763), née Catherine-Thérèse-Angélique Devinck (1735–1769), pstl/ppr, 62x50.5, sd →/? "Calze 1768" (London, Christie's, 4.VII.1984, Lot 147 repr., est. £7–8000) Φ

Photos courtesy Christie's

J.253.158 Ahmet Aga TOSA Efendi, ambassador of Tripoli to London, m/u, 1767 (comm. sitter; don: Dr Dominiceti). Lit.: *St James's chronicle*, 15.XII.1767, p. 4 n.r.

J.253.161 Generalmajor Adolf Detlev von USEDOM (1726–1792), pstl, 70x53 (*olim* Berlin, Schloß Monbijou, Hohenzollernmuseum, GK I 42563; lost a.1945)

J.253.162 Friederike Luise WILHELMINE Prinses van Oranje-Nassau, née Prinzessin von Preußen, pstl/pchm, 70.2x52.3 (Berlin, SPSG, GK I 50703/GK II 2048). Exh.: Berlin 1997, no. I.38 n.r.

J.253.163 Major Erich Magnus von WOLFFRADT (1735–1799), pstl, 70x53 (*olim* Berlin, Schloß Monbijou, Hohenzollernmuseum, GK I 42564; lost a.1945)

J.253.166 Prinzessin Friedrike von Preußen [Friederike Charlotte Ulrike Katherina, Duchess of YORK (1767–1820)], ein Kniestück, pstl, Berlin 1786, no. 1

J.253.167 Duchess of YORK, m/u
~grav. Amedeo Gabrielli 1792

J.253.169 General Hans Joachim von ZIETEN (1699–1786), pstl, Berlin 1786, no. 308 (Berliner Schloß 1793–1863)

J.253.17 =?/version, pstl, 68x51.5, 1787 (Graf Zieten-Schwerin, Wustrau, 1906; PC 1921). Exh.: Berlin 1906, no. 2305. Lit.: Brieger 1921, repr. p. 198 Φ

~grav. Charles Townley 1786

J.253.173 Gentleman, crayons, Royal Academy 1771, no. 23

J.253.174 Gentleman, crayons, Royal Academy 1771, no. 24

J.253.175 A boy, crayons, Royal Academy 1778, no. 33

J.253.176 Lady, crayons, Royal Academy 1770, no. 26

J.253.177 Portrait, crayons, Royal Academy 1780, no. 328

J.253.178 Portrait, crayons, Royal Academy 1780, no. 332