

ASPECTS OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF ARCHIBALD
SKIRVING (1749-1819)

Tanja Sundström

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ASPECTS OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF ARCHIBALD SKIRVING
(1749-1819).

by Tanja Sundström

Presented for the Degree of Master of Philosophy
Department of Art History
University of St Andrews

1994



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ABSTRACT

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the life and work of the Scottish eighteenth century pastellist and portraitist, **Archibald Skirving (1749-1819)**. It is divided into three chapters and is accompanied by an illustrated catalogue of works. The biography in chapter one contains a chronological survey of the artist's career which is related to wider issues of the period. The second chapter examines aspects of Skirving's oeuvre which concentrated almost entirely on portraiture. Representative examples are illustrated in the text. The final chapter examines Skirving's working procedure and his relationship with his patrons. This also focuses on contemporary criticism of the artist, personal as well as artistic, and concludes with contemporary accounts of Skirving, notably that provided by Thomas Carlyle. The illustrated catalogue comprises all known documented and attributed works, and includes a section of untraced works, engravings after the works of Skirving, and a list of what are now considered to be erroneous attributions.

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computer work, and my father for his French translations. I dedicate this to the memory of Mrs Leila Hoskins and to my family.

INTRODUCTION

Archibald Skirving (1749-1819) was one of Britain's finest pastel portraitists of the eighteenth century. His work has always been highly regarded within limited circles, but with biographical documentation scarce and the accessibility to his art extremely restricted, it is perhaps not surprising that he still remains, after almost two centuries, a much neglected artist. While many art historians may recognise his name, few can claim first hand knowledge or experience of his work, or produce significant facts about the man himself. Overall, he is recognised as a talented but obscure artist. The aim of this dissertation is to correct this situation through an analysis and reassessment of all available documentation, permitting a study of the artist's life and times and a closer examination of his work and studio practice. This is completed by an illustrated catalogue of all his recorded works, including commissions previously unknown or unavailable for public scrutiny.

Archibald Skirving worked mainly in Edinburgh, but also for extensive periods in London and Rome - becoming one of the last in a long line of Scottish artists to make the traditional study tour of Italy in the eighteenth century. His artistic career commenced late in life, having worked as a junior clerk in the Customs & Excise Office in Edinburgh for ten years. He took up the profession as a miniature portrait painter at the age of twenty-eight and went to work in London in 1777, where he exhibited specimens at the Royal Academy and to Sir Joshua Reynolds some years later. Encouraged by his

success, the artist eventually left for Rome where he soon took up pastel portraiture as his speciality. Returning to Edinburgh eight years later, he set up a prosperous but exclusive practice, depicting friends within the Edinburgh literati and nobility, eventually becoming one of the highest paid artists in Scotland, exceeding even Sir Henry Raeburn.

The documentation used in the dissertation is primarily based on the recent acquisition of manuscripts kept in the National Library of Scotland, largely containing receipts and inventories, and contemporary literary observations. It was recently discovered that an important private collection of Skirving material was accidentally destroyed in 1984 upon the death of its owner, a descendant of the artist. This would have provided an invaluable source of information for it contained the personal correspondence of Skirving, various notebooks kept in Edinburgh and Rome, several letters of introduction to artists in London and family correspondence in East Lothian, in all covering a span of some fifty years. Large areas of Skirving's life and career, especially his early movements in Edinburgh and in London, still remain obscure today, and the clues provided by the brief references in Basil Skinner's article on the artist in 1970, clearly indicate the extent of the loss.

CHAPTER ONE - A BIOGRAPHY

1. Edinburgh and the Scottish Enlightenment

In 1707 the Scots Parliament finally agreed to the Act of Union with England, hoping it would boost the country's weak economy. The advantages, however, at first appeared slow and minimal: Edinburgh lost its national status and although it maintained its position as the second city of Britain, resentment grew whenever Scottish interests were undermined. Riots were not uncommon, some due to food shortages, and political disputes often led to bloodshed, culminating in the disastrous Jacobite uprisings of 1715 and 1745. Eventually, Scotland's social and political infrastructure began to improve, and the birth of Archibald Skirving in the mid century coincided with this renewed prosperity. A brief introduction to the period reveals the working conditions of this Edinburgh artist who started his career in the late 1760s and ended with his death in 1819.

Edinburgh was at the time a small and compact town, enclosed within city walls with densely populated houses of ten to twelve stories high that branched out from crowded closes and wynds adjoining the mile long thoroughfare of the Castle in the West and the Canongate in the East, with the parallel Cowgate. It was a town still mediaeval in concept and form that provided few luxuries and conveniences in housing that were shared by all social classes. People lived on separate storeys of tall so-called 'lands', where labourers inhabited the

cellars, aristocracy, merchants or professional gentlemen the lower storeys, with shopkeepers and clerks above. Manual workers lived in the garrets. This democratic housing scheme allowed little privacy or light, and made street life busy, intimate, and extremely filthy. The steep streets and wooden gables impressed few visitors who instead noticed the appalling squalor and filth and the narrow streets full of 'gurgling gutters'.¹ Domestic refuse was poured straight out of the high windows at ten o'clock each night, accompanied by shouts of "Gardy loo" (Gardez l'eau) from the servants. A precarious journey at that time of night: 'the passengers beneath would agonisingly cry out "Haud yer hand"; but too often the shout was unheard or too late, and a drenched periwig and besmirched three-cornered hat were borne dripping and ill-scented home.'² The foul stench that followed was called "the flowers of Edinburgh" which lodgers attempted to neutralise by burning brown paper. A normal working day started at five, with breakfast of meat and ale consumed at eight and lunch at one o'clock. Street life was always busy during the day, with shops as overcrowded as the taverns. Carriages were seldom used due to the steepness of the streets, people walked instead, jostling with sedan-chairs carried by Highlanders, and genteel ladies in large hoops, wigs, hats and high heels.

By the mid eighteenth century, Edinburgh had a population of 60,000³ with living conditions slowly improving.

¹ Graham, H. The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century. London, 1901, p. 83.

² Ibid.

³ Evans, H. & M. John Kay of Edinburgh. Aberdeen, 1973, p. 5.

The Scottish economy finally picked up and stabilised with a flourishing tobacco trade and a new linen industry, the latter becoming the dominant export product in the country.⁴ Agriculture was slowly being replaced by industry. At the same time, a cultural, intellectual and political awareness grew. The circulation of philosophical and scholarly works on the Continent rapidly earned prestige and recognition that rekindled a national pride and identity. The famous literati, politicians and scientists of this period were numerous and influential, names include: David Hume, the philosopher, his colleagues Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart; social scientists such as Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, William Robertson and John Millar; politicians such as Henry Dundas, Lord Advocate, and literary figure-heads with Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, Henry Mackenzie and Alexander Fraser-Tytler. James Watt, the inventor of the steam engine, became a well-known scientist. The Scottish Enlightenment can be generally defined as:

‘an elite phenomenon which had its origins in the nation’s educational system, political history, close-knit society, economic development and international ties, and in the declining role of religion in social and intellectual life. Scotland’s contribution to this European movement lay notably in the fields of medicine, law, philosophy, ‘economics’, geology and history, its particular emphases being on ‘civic humanism’ (obligation, personal morality and social coherence), natural jurisprudence and the concept of ‘improvement’ in economy and society; the ultimate goal was an

⁴ Maclean, F. *A Concise History of Scotland*, London, 1991, p. 189

improved understanding of, and ability to shape, human society.’⁵

The achievements of Scottish artists and their patrons also contributed to the constructive formation of these ideals, exemplified by Allan Ramsay, who founded the Select Society which in 1755 changed its name to the Society for Encouraging Art, Science, and Industry; and the ideals encompassed in the architecture and interior decoration of the Adam family. Numerous literary circles and societies prospered, attended not only by the genteel but also by private gentlemen of intellect.

By the time Archibald Skirving had moved to Edinburgh in 1766, extensions and improvements to the town had progressed noticeably. Houses were being built on the south side of the town and soon occupied by the wealthy. In 1767 the Town Council awarded James Craig the gold medal for his design of the New Town of Edinburgh which specifically ‘planned to achieve in architecture and in the use of space the ideals of order, elegance, rationality, progress and proper social relationships represented by the Scottish Enlightenment’.⁶ The North Bridge was completed in 1772 and this allowed easier access to this new and fashionable district. By 1780 Craig’s new grid system of streets were undergoing construction with houses being built on Princes Street, George Street, and Queen Street.

⁵ Houston, R.A. & Whyte, I.D. ed. *Scottish Society 1500-1800*. Cambridge, 1989. (Quotation based on David Daiches’ booklet; *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 1986.)

⁶ Daiches, D. *The Scottish Enlightenment*. Great Britain, 1986, p. 21.

'From the old flats descended in gradual exodus persons of position and quality, who, instead of a modest rental of £15 or £20, were able now, through advancing wealth and larger incomes, to pay £100 for mansions which contrasted strangely with the mean and dirty abodes from which they emerged. They left those dwellings where there had been little cleanliness or comfort, where fetid air brought sickness and death to young lives, where infectious diseases passed like wildfire through the inmates of a crowded common stair, bringing havoc to many a household.'⁷

Towards the end of the century, Edinburgh presented a new and elegant image, with architecture and spacious street planning in the manner of the international classical style. General affluence and population growth provided and stimulated a larger market for resident artists, creating an exciting milieu of cultural activities.

2. Family in East Lothian

Archibald Skirving was born into an old and distinguished East Lothian family.⁸ His ancestry can be traced back to the fifteen hundreds, when 'Black' John Skirving of Plewland Hill, a retainer of the Keith family, carried the Earl Marshal's standard at the Battle of Flodden in 1513, and when

⁷ Graham, 1901, p. 125. (Source from Sir Walter Scott's Provincial Antiquities, Edinburgh).

⁸ Skirving family crest of a hand holding a buckle and motto 'Fit inde firmior.' Letter from Robert Skirving of Cobairdy to Lieut-Col. David Scot Skirving, March 1907. Courtesy of Andrew Skirving, 1993.

subsequently taken prisoner at Flodden Field, kept it hidden wrapped around his body for nine years.⁹ The Skirving families were farmers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, residing in the areas of Haddingtonshire, Spott and Stenton near Dunbar, and North and South of Haddington.¹⁰ By the end of the seventeenth century the prosperity of the independent farms declined and they became tenants of the Hopetoun and Wemyss families, later the dominant landowners with the Kinlochs of Gilmerton in East Lothian.¹¹

Archibald's father, Adam Skirving, was born at Muirton in 1719. By the mid-eighteenth century, this respectable and prosperous farmer¹² at the age of twenty-six became known all over Scotland as the author of the popular ballads of 'Tranent Muir' and 'Hey, Johnnie Cope'. These were composed shortly after witnessing the nearby Battle of Prestonpans in September of 1745 - where the Highlanders, led by Prince Charles Stewart, had fought with the Hanoverian troops commanded by Sir John Cope. With the royal army in retreat, Sir John Cope had fled the field to Dunbar, later to be acquitted of court-martial for his shameful conduct. This incident, however, became very well-known, as did the cowardice of a certain Lieutenant Peter Smith, publicly taunted in the satirical ballad of 'Tranent Muir'.¹³ Upon hearing of this

⁹ Mackintosh, A. ed, *Memoirs of Robert Scot Skirving*, Sydney, 1988, 23.

The standard is displayed in the Advocate's Library in Edinburgh.

¹⁰ Letter from Mr Andrew Skirving to the author, 17th July 1993.

¹¹ Sinclair, J. *Statistical Account of Scotland. 1792*. Edinburgh & London, 1835, p. 444.

¹² Described by Allan Cunningham as a 'remarkably handsome man, free and outspoken in his manners'. Johnson, James & Stenhouse, W. *The Scots Musical Museum*, vol. IV, Edinburgh, 1853, p. 189.

¹³ Allan Cunningham noted nineteen versions alone for this ballad (Maxwell, H. *Edinburgh - A Pictorial History*. London, 1916, p. 193) and described the author in 1825 as "one of the wittiest and most whimsical of mankind. Much of this peculiar character is visible in his song

apparently unjust accusation,¹⁴ Smith angrily sent a messenger to challenge Adam Skirving to meet him in Haddington, whose calm retort, often recorded with some glee, was: "Gang awa back and tell Mr Smith, I have nae leisure to gae to Haddington, but if he likes to come here, I'll tak a look o' him, and if I think I can fecht I'll fecht him, and if no - I'll just do as he did at Preston - I'll rin awa."¹⁵

Adam Skirving was greatly famed for his 'overflowing humour and ready wit', and several anecdotes have been preserved, Rev. Thomas Duncan of Athelstaneford relates an incident apparently characteristic of the farmer:

'It was in his time that umbrellas came into fashion. As was to be expected, the happy possessors of these inventions were proud to display them upon every occasion, seasonable or unseasonable. All this show displeased Skirving, and he resolved to take his own way of showing up the ridiculous nature of some of these vainglorious displays of the ingenious protection from sun, wind and shower. So one Sabbath morning he went to the barn, took a board used for lifting grain, placed a saddle-fork through the middle of it, hoisted it above his head, and strode off to the kirk of Athelstaneford, to the

where he sings the contest between the rebel and royal forces like one regardless of the result, who scorned one side and mocked the other, and derided them both together....It was for a long while the only song concerning those struggles which could be sung without giving offence to either side." (Cunningham, A. *The Songs of Scotland. Ancient and Modern.* vol. I, London 1825, p. 222). It was published several times and appeared in 'The Charmer', (vol. II, p. 249) in Edinburgh in 1751, under the title of "The Battle of Preston, to the Tune of Killiecranky", but also known as 'Tranent Muir.

¹⁴ Clubbe, J. *Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle*, Durham, N.C. 1974, p. 130.

¹⁵ Johnson, J. & Stenhouse, W. *The Scots Musical Museum*, vol. IV. Edinburgh, 1853, p. 180*.

For other versions, see Carlyle, Thomas. See above, 1974, p. 130; Green, Charles. *East Lothian*. 1907. Chapter 24; and Martine, John. *Reminiscences and Notices of Fourteen Parishes of the County of Haddington*. 1890, p. 28.

discomfiture of the dandies and the amusement of all sober and sensible kirk folks.'¹⁶

This farmer-poet who, according to his son Robert, later insisted he 'would rather ride twenty miles than put pen to paper',¹⁷ had been educated locally at Prestonkirk where his parents, Archibald Skirving and Grizel Howden, had first farmed Stenton and later Prestonmains,¹⁸ situated in the vicinity of the famous battle scene. Adam Skirving first farmed Prora¹⁹ and later became tenant of Garmilton (Garleton) and Clackmae, where he farmed wheat, barley and oats,²⁰ the three most common grains richly harvested in the county.²¹ On 25th November 1748, Adam Skirving married Jean, daughter of Robert Ainslie and Marion Cowden of Westfield, Haddington. Eleven months later, on 14th October 1749, their eldest son Archibald, the painter, was born on East Garleton,²² a farm situated two miles from Haddington on the road to Gosford. (Fig. 1) Archibald's younger sisters Katherine and Minny were born in 1751 and 1753 but both died in infancy. His brother Robert was born on 25th November 1757 and his sister Grizel, probably named after their grandmother who died young, was

¹⁶ Duncan, Rev. T. *Athelstaneford*, Edinburgh, 1934, p. 106.

¹⁷ Johnson, J. & Stenhouse, W. *The Scots Musical Museum*, 1853, p. 190*. (Quotation from Robert Skirving).

¹⁸ Family Tree in Haddington Library records Archibald and Grizel Skirving's farms as Muirton, Drem and Adminston.

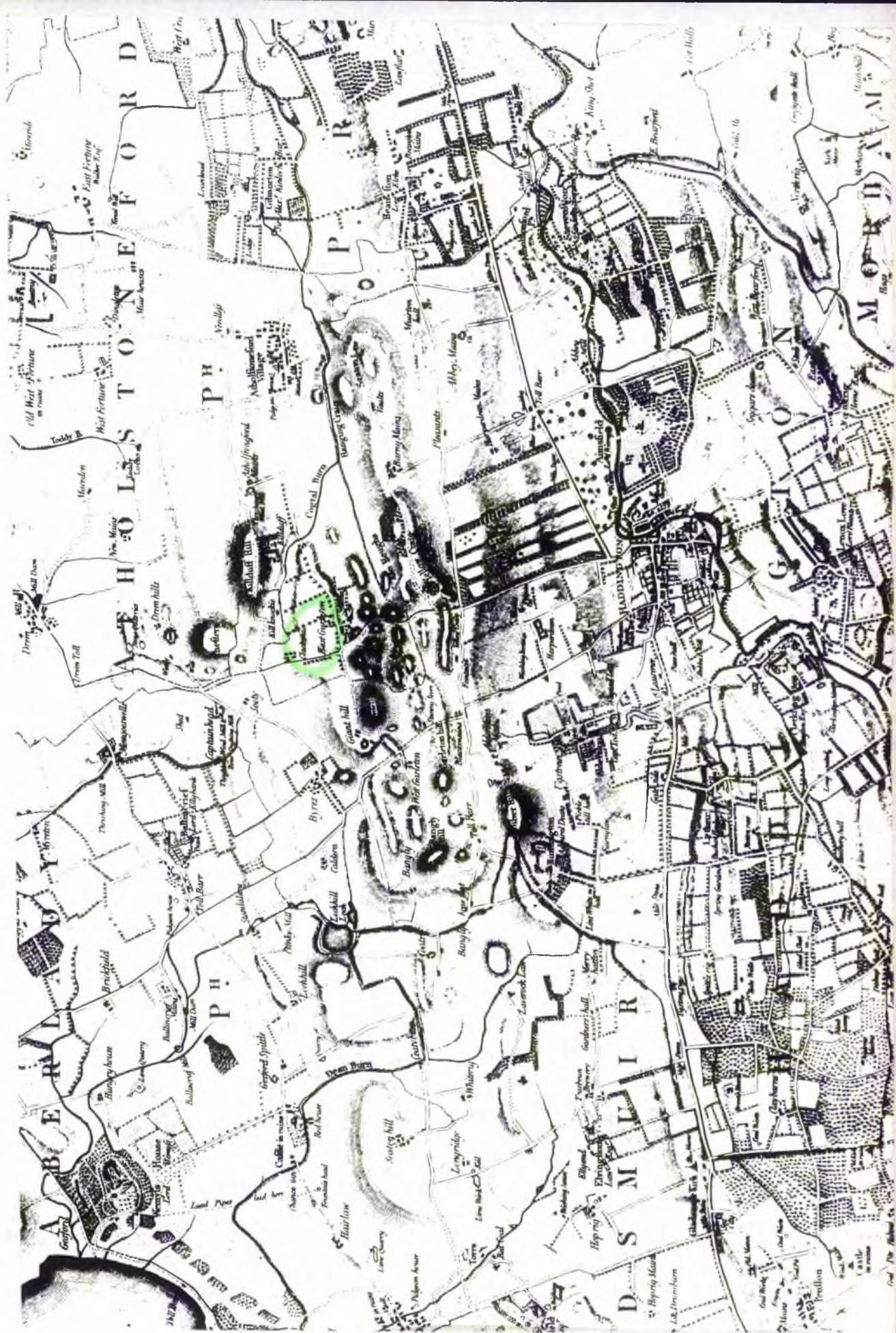
¹⁹ Johnson, J. & Stenhouse, W. *The Scots Musical Museum*, 1853, p. 190*.

²⁰ The Wemyss and March rental ledger of 1755. Courtesy of the Wemyss and March Estate Management Company Ltd.

²¹ Sinclair, J. *Statistical Account 1792*. DATE? Parish of Athelstaneford, p. 445.

Grain was purchased by corn-merchants in Leith, Edinburgh and Glasgow, and then distributed for sale within Scotland. p.446.

²² Duncan, Rev T. *Athelstaneford*, 1934, p. 108.



1) Map of Haddingtonshire, East Lothian, 1799.
Encircled: Garleton and Clackmae farms.

born 21st December 1760. Despite the age difference all three remained very close throughout their lives, . perhaps partly a result of the premature death of their mother, date unknown, whose life remains as obscure as the early years of her children.

After the death of his wife Jean, Adam Skirving remarried on 18th March 1768 to Christian Carnegie of North Berwick. Their first daughter, Elizabeth, was born a year later in February; Janet arrived in November of 1772; David in April 1774; and finally Martha (Magdalene), born February 1776. Two of the daughters were later to marry their cousins, the Carnegie brothers of Baldownie and Drylawhill, another an Ainslie of Merryhatton.²³ Archibald and Robert certainly attended school, their poetic inclinations and literacy vouched for in later years, but little is known of David, their younger half-brother, except that he later became a farmer. Apparently Archibald attended school at Prestonkirk,²⁴ which would have commenced at the age of five or six and ended at thirteen or fourteen. Instruction was given in English reading, grammar, possibly book-keeping, mathematics or arithmetic, though less likely were lessons in Latin, Greek and French offered in the near-by public schools of Athelstaneford in the 1790s.²⁵

In a letter to his friend George Cleghorn, dated October 1834, Robert Skirving describes how his father considered himself "a bad scholar, but became an indefatigable

²³ Skinner, B. 'Archibald Skirving and His Work.' Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian Field Naturalist Society. Haddington, 1970, p. 46; Mackintosh, A. ed. Memoirs of Robert Scot Skirving, 1988, p. 26.

²⁴ Skirving, Adam of Croys. Notes on the Skirving family, 1901. Haddington Library.

²⁵ Sinclair, J. ed. Statistical Account of 1792. 1975, p. 449.

reader, and knew more of history, geography, and astronomy, than was usual with those of his line."²⁶ He was also a keen sportsman who attended the Leith races on horseback almost every day, went out with the Amisfield hounds belonging to the Earl of Wemyss, enjoyed curling and was apparently so addicted to golf that he rarely went without a club in hand.²⁷ A most agile athlete, as his grandson, Dr Robert Scot Skirving, later recalled in his memoirs: "Between Garleton and Campton, on the roadside, there are, or were when I was a child, four huge stones to mark the limits of his record hop step and jump."²⁸

The Skirving children grew up in this lively and poetic milieu, in and around the mansion house of Garleton with its surrounding farmlands, dovecot, and the acre of land, house and yard belonging to the adjoining Clackmae farm.²⁹ (Fig. 2-5) Archibald, however, spent most of his early childhood alone, joined by Robert and Grizel at the age of eight and eleven, and by the time his father remarried in 1768, he had left home two years previously.

²⁶ Jamieson, J. & Stenhouse, W. *The Scots Musical Museum*, p. 190*.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 191*. Information from Robert Skirving of Croys.

²⁸ Mackintosh, A. ed. *Memoirs of Robert Scot Skirving*, p. 24. Another grandson, Adam Skirving of Croys, Dalbeattie, wrote in the *Haddington Advisor*: 'Adam was ...well known in his day as a genial man and local athlete, though his feats are exaggerated. I know these boulders on the roadside said to mark his hop, step and jump. If that was the intention, they have been tampered with, for no human being ever made, or ever will make, such a jump unless of the stature of Goliath of Gath, and Adam was not a giant though a good man to his inches. His height was 5 ft. 8in. His father Archibald, the tenant of Adniston, was the same sort of man. He went with a hawk on his head and a cane in his hand, the latter being useful for fighting the Highland shearers, as were common at the hiring at the port of Haddington.' *Haddington Advertiser*, 17.4.1903. 'An interesting Centenary.'

²⁹ Rental ledger for April/June 1791. MS, The Wemyss and March Estate Managements Company.



2) Garleton Farm, East Lothian. Detail of mansion house, 1993.
Copper plaque on wall: '18th Century.'



3) Garleton farmyard, 1993.



4) Garleton farm, opposite view of the Garleton Hills; a range of porphyrite hills in the N. of Haddington parish.



5) Garleton farm with the ruins of Garleton Castel, situated at the N. base of the range. The former seat of the Earls of Winton.

3. Edinburgh & the Customs House, 1766-1777

The minister of Athelstaneford, writing in the Statistical Account of 1792, relates how Archibald "from his earliest years discovered a remarkable genius for drawing and painting",³⁰ an interest and disposition possibly not encouraged as a valid career prospect, although Rev. Thomas Duncan states otherwise.³¹ On the contrary, when Archibald turned seventeen in 1766, his frugal father

"procured a clerkship for him in the custom-house with a small salary. He accompanied him to Edinburgh, saw him installed in his office, and presenting him with half-a-crown to buy a penknife, intimated to him that he was never to look to him for more - and he kept his word.³² Skirving, left to his own shifts, was obliged to adopt the most rigid economy to live within his very limited means. What originated at first from necessity, became in after life habitual, when he was comparatively rich."³³

Archibald's meagre salary as a junior clerk³⁴ at the Scottish Board of Customs, then situated in the Cowgate,³⁵ at least enabled him to study the arts in his spare time, drawing and painting miniatures in watercolour that were of 'considerable merit', recalls Henry Mackenzie, an acquaintance

³⁰ Sinclair, J. ed. *Statistical Account of Scotland. 1792*. 1975, p. 453.

³¹ Duncan, Rev T. *Athelstaneford*. 1934, p. 108.

³² The author states he 'had this anecdote from Mr Skirving himself, with whom he was well acquainted.' Cleghorn, G. *Ancient and Modern Art*. 1848, p. 202.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ It appears Skirving never advanced to the post of an excise officer., he is not mentioned in Mitchell's list of Excise Officers, 1966.

³⁵ Wilson, D. *Memorials of Edinburgh in the Olden Time*, Edinburgh 1860?, vol. II, p. 39. * Scottish Board of Customs was re-established in 1742 after its formation following the Act of Union of 1707.

of the artist. He specifically mentions two much admired miniatures, one of Adam Skirving and the other of Lady Eleanor Hume, daughter of Lord Hume.³⁶ Whether these were actually done during Skirving's employment at the Customs House is not certain, but by 1774, he had definitely acknowledged his interest in becoming a painter. One of two notebooks from this period, now lost, recorded instructions from The Handmaid to the Arts,³⁷ published in 1758. This was a comprehensive guidebook to various materials and techniques and included, at the time, the secretive method of colour preparation which, the author, Robert Dossie, wrote in his introduction;

'The present adulterate and imperfect preparation of the colours, from the sordidness and ignorance of the Jews, and other low people concerned in the preparation of them, is a disadvantage of the highest moment to such as paint.'³⁸

The additional profits made from his art were carefully saved, the prices he charged were low,³⁹ and with increasing experience and studies, gradually stimulated a growing demand for his work. As his artistic employment progressed, he began visiting noble homes for commissions. Skirving relates an incident from one of these visits in 1776, recorded in the second notebook mentioned above. Characteristically tinged with the bitter recollection and

³⁶ Thompson, H.W. ed. Anecdotes and Egotisms of Henry Mackenzie. 1927, p. 212.

³⁷ Skinner, B. Scotland's Magazine. January 1959, p. 43. Here the book is titled *The Handmaid of the Arts*.

³⁸ Dossie, R. The Handmaid to the Arts, London, 1758. p. viii.

³⁹ Cleghorn, G. Ancient and Modern Art. 1848, p. 203.

indignation of his later years, it is entitled *Sir John Dalrymple's Behavior to Me*:

'Being at Gilmerton, Athelstaneford Parish in the year 1776 painting some of that family which were often shown at table, Sir John being there one day took occasion to commend my works and particularly the picture of Mr Mackie which he said was equal to Rubens. - - - He said that if I would come and stay with him a few days he would give me employment - - - I afterwards returned to Edinburgh where I got acquainted with Professor Robison who took my pictures to the Poker Club of which Sir John is a member. When he saw them there he said, "Oh those are done by that strange fellow Skirving; he came and hung about my house for several days; Gad, I could not get rid of the fellow..."'⁴⁰

4. London & Edinburgh, 1777-1786.

At the age of twenty-eight, Skirving decided to resign his post at the Customs-house and travelled down to London in December of 1777. With him he carried two letters of introduction, authorship unknown. One was addressed to John Hamilton Mortimer (1741-1779),⁴¹ who had studied under Thomas Hudson - the master of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Joseph Wright of Derby. Mortimer had married in 1775 and retired to Aylesbury, but was apparently still busy as a painter in London for he became Vice-president of the Incorporated Society of Arts and exhibited at the Royal Academy a year

⁴⁰ Skinner, B. *Transactions*, 1970, p. 47.

⁴¹ Authorship unspecified by Skinner, *Transactions*, p. 47, but possibly written by someone he knew at the Trustees' Academy in Edinburgh.

after Skirving's arrival.⁴² No records or documents have been found that reveal exactly how, where, or with whom Skirving spent the next seven years in the City - studying the Fine Arts and intermingling with the art community - but it is conceivable that John Mortimer may have introduced him to the art market and English patronage. Virtually nothing is known of this period except that Skirving initially set himself up as a miniature painter, and as such, exhibited in 1778 three miniatures at the Royal Academy, established only ten years previously. His lodgings at the time were at Mrs Milward's, Little Brook Street, Hanover Square.⁴³ No other London residence is known from this period.

While in London, two important family events took place in East Lothian in 1782. His father purchased a house in Haddington and although Adam and his wife continued to reside at Garleton, Archibald was later to inherit it.⁴⁴ Towards the end of that year his brother Robert, then aged twenty-five, enlisted and was appointed a cadet in the Honourable East India Company on 18th December. Three months later, on 11th March 1783, sponsored by a Mr Mansfield, he set sail for India on the 'Earl of Oxford'; and, at the beginning of the nineteenth century was stationed as officer at the Court of the Nawab Sa'adat 'Ali at Lucknow.⁴⁵ He was to serve in the Bengal army for almost forty years, participating in the Second Mahratta War in 1803-4; at Aligarh, and the defence of Delhi, before

⁴² Lee, S. ed. Dictionary of National Biography, vol. 39, London, 1894, p. 129.

⁴³ Exhibition Catalogue of the Royal Academy, 1778, no. 284. The Royal Academy.

⁴⁴ Inventory of deeds, 1725-99. NLS, ACC. 10102.

⁴⁵ A poem found among papers belonging to an officer at Lucknow has been attributed to Robert Skirving. Yle, H. & Burnell, A.C. Hobson-Jobson. London, 1903, p. 130.

finally retiring as a Captain of Foot⁴⁶ in 1806.⁴⁷ When Robert first joined the East India Company, it had still been a trading concern, ruler of Bengal and a few coastal strips in 1785 - when he returned to Scotland, the whole subcontinent, with the exception of the North-West, had come under British rule. During all those years of absence, Robert and Archibald corresponded frequently. The brief extracts recorded in Basil Skinner's article⁴⁸ reveal a strong and affectionate friendship between the two men.

Although Skirving worked as a miniaturist in London, he may also have become interested in the fashionable medium of pastel portraiture. One artist who was successful in that area, and whom Skirving very likely met later in Rome, was the Irishman Hugh Douglas Hamilton.⁴⁹ Hamilton had moved to London in the early 1760s but was present during the first two years of Skirving's stay. Hamilton moved to Rome with his daughter in 1779 and remained there until 1792.⁵⁰ Unfortunately there are no records of any of Skirving's London works except his miniatures. Towards the end of his stay in London, Skirving managed to obtain an introduction to Sir Joshua Reynolds⁵¹, who, when presented with some examples of Skirving's miniature work, remarked; "I see, Mr Skirving,

⁴⁶ Robert Skirving appointed Captain in 1803.

⁴⁷ Hodson, Major V.C.P. *List of Officers in the Bengal Army, 1758-1834*. part IV, London, 1947, p. 110. Robert's name is also spelled Skirvin and Sherwin in early MS Army List. Oriental and India Office Collections, The British Library.

⁴⁸ Skinner, B. *Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian Field Naturalist Society*, 1970.

⁴⁹ Hamilton produced small oval pastel portraits, usually the size of 24 X 20 cm, much admired, and which, according to Skinner, Skirving similarly experimented with. See Skinner, *Transactions*, p. 48.

⁵⁰ Cullen, F. 'The Oil Paintings of Hugh Douglas Hamilton.' *The Walpole Society*, vol. 50, 1984. p. 165.

⁵¹ Cursiter, S. *Scottish Art*. 1949, p. 54. According to Cursitor, Sir Joshua Reynolds was so pleased with Skirving's work that the younger artist felt encouraged to study in Rome.

you have had no instructions in the style of miniatures now in vogue." According to George Cleghorn, Skirving admitted this was so, upon which Reynolds advised him 'to continue to copy nature as you have done.'⁵² Cleghorn dates this incident to around 1785, but Skinner records Skirving's return to Edinburgh in 1784.⁵³ Incidentally, Reynolds was abroad for most of the summer of 1785, on tour to Brussels, Antwerp and Ghent with Philip Metcalfe. Unfortunately nothing further is recorded of this conversation, nor can it be accurately dated.

Henry Raeburn was also in London in 1784 and apparently spent two months in Reynolds studio before leaving for Rome in July.⁵⁴ Skirving returned to Edinburgh that year, although exactly why and when he did so is not known. He settled there for two years, concentrating on portraiture in crayon, but still producing miniatures.⁵⁵ Some of the sitters of this period were notably of the Hume family; John Hume and Miss Hume of Ninewells, and a Mrs Lockhart. Again, little is known of his movements of this period. His brother Robert wrote in a letter from Bengal, dated August 9th 1786:

"Now that you have determined to remain in Edinburgh I hope you will find yourself much more at ease. - - - I'm very glad you paint only in crayons as it will not be so bad for your eyes nor confine your chest so much and I remember yon picture you did at Dunbar that pleased me exceedingly.

⁵² Cleghorn, G. Ancient and Modern Art. 1848, p. 203.

⁵³ Skinner, B. Transactions. 1970, p. 47.

⁵⁴ Irwin, F. & D. Scottish Painters at Home and Abroad. 1700-1900. 1975, p. 151. Source from Samuel Redgrave.

⁵⁵ Skinner, B. Transactions. 1970, p. 47. Letter from Robert to Archibald Skirving, Aug. 9th 1786.

If you chance to do the heads of my acquaintances, instead of rubbing them out, send them to me."⁵⁶

However, it seems Skirving's practice did not flourish, possibly due to a small demand for portrait miniatures⁵⁷ or to an increasingly difficult personality that scorned any artistic or personal subservience. A bitter reply was sent back to India that same year: "I have resolved to finish my career in Edinburgh to prevent the public doing it for me."⁵⁸ Determined to improve his talents and position, he finally decided to leave Scotland for Italy at the age of thirty-seven. 'Enthusiastic for Art-Culture'⁵⁹ he departed from Leith on 30th November 1786 and arrived in Tuscany ten weeks later.⁶⁰

5. The Years in Rome, 1787-1794

'In days of old, when travellers to Rome came by road, usually down from the north, the great moment of the whole, long, and often taxing journey, was the first glimpse of the city. Everyone eagerly awaited the moment when, reigning in his horses, and flourishing his whip, the coachman

⁵⁶ Skinner, B. *Transactions*, 1970, p. 47.

⁵⁷ MacMillan, D. *Painting in Scotland - The Golden Age*, 1986, p. 135. Skirving produced mainly portrait miniatures before his Italian visit in 1787.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁵⁹ Chubbe, J. ed. *Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle*, 1974, p. 132.

⁶⁰ Skinner, B. *Transactions*, 1970, p. 48. Skirving recorded his journey in verse of which three lines have been saved by Skinner: "In eighty-six, St. Andrew's Day, and without friends, alas,

To push my fortune I set out and sailed down by the Bass:
... And fully ten weeks strive, In Tuscany to arrive."

pointed ahead and cried: Ecco Roma - 'Look, there's Rome.'⁶¹

Archibald Skirving was one of the last of a long line of Scottish artists to visit Italy in the eighteenth century, a number exceeding fifty at least.⁶² His Italian tour commenced in February of 1787 and lasted for seven and a half years. Although very little is known of his movements, Skirving would probably, like the majority of British tourists and artists, have followed the well established route of the eighteenth century Grand Tour, visiting Paris and the four major cities of Italy; Venice, Florence, Rome and Naples. Very few tourists sailed directly to the Mediterranean, instead preferring the traditional crossing from Dover to Calais, then continuing by coach via Paris, Lyon, across the Alps to Turin and the South.

Having once arrived in Rome, Skirving would almost certainly have been shown around by the doyen of the Scots colony, the antique collector and dealer, archaeologist and artist, Gavin Hamilton,⁶³ who customarily performed this service to visitors. He may also have introduced Skirving to local patrons, academies, leading British figure heads of the art community; such as the two influential art dealers, James Byres and Thomas Jenkins, and indeed, to prospective customers. Skirving took up residence in the city centre and eventually made the acquaintance of the other resident

⁶¹ Vidon, H. The Pilgrim's Guide to Rome. London, 1975.

⁶² Skinner, B. Scots in Italy, Edinburgh, 1966, p. 25.

⁶³ Lord Gardenstone describes Hamilton in warm terms; 'Mr Gavin Hamilton's reputation has been long established as a first-rate artist. I can only add, that he is no less admired for the goodness and the benevolence of his heart..' Garden, Francis. Travelling Memorandums; made in a tour upon the continent of Europe, in the years 1786, 1787, and 1788. vol. III, Edinburgh 1795, p.156.

artists.⁶⁴ In late December of 1787 there were around fifty British tourists staying in Rome.⁶⁵ The fascination and magnetism of the visual pleasures of Rome were irresistible to travellers alike, whatever their intentions: pilgrims, political exiles, diplomats, tourists and artists. The city was highly valued and appreciated for the accessibility and splendour of its many art collections, architecture, sculpture, and the unique abundance of reminiscences of Classical Antiquity. Rome, the Eternal City, was generally considered the cultural paradigm and the primary source of inspiration for Western Europe in the eighteenth century. Other appealing virtues of Rome were the friendly people and the relatively cheap lodgings, food and entertainment.⁶⁶

The same year Skirving arrived in Italy, Henry Raeburn returned to Scotland after a two year study period. Very little is known of Raeburn's visit, making it impossible to establish whether the two artists met before Raeburn's departure. However, there were many other British artists that flocked around the Spanish Steps, the centre of the British art community: notably Flaxman, More, Durno, and Deare. According to Cleghorn, Skirving practised copying paintings and statues for self improvement, and was also "much employed in making copies in miniature of the works of the

⁶⁴ Resident artists in Rome between 1787-1794: Thomas Barker of Bath, 1792-1794; James Byres, 1758-1790; John Deare, 1785-1798; John Flaxman, 1787-1794; Gavin Hamilton, 1748-1751, 1752-1798; Hugh Douglas Hamilton, 1778-1792; Guy Head, c. 1780-1800; Christopher Hewetson, c. 1765-1798; Thomas Jenkins, 1753-1798; Angelica Kauffmann, 1763-1764, 1781-1807; Jacob More, 1773-1793; Henry Tresham, 1776-1790. Josneph Farington lists additional artists in 1790 as the miniaturists Day and Taylor; Durno, Fagan, Nevay, Parry, Grigion, Head, Irvine, Pye, Robinson, Smith, Tassaert as history painters; Foulis as portrait painter; Freebairn as landscape painter. Grieg, J. ed. *The Farington Diary*, vol. III, p. 53-4.

⁶⁵ Black, J. *The British and the Grand Tour*, 1985, p. 4.

⁶⁶ Hibbert, C. *The Grand Tour*, 1969, p. 144.

old masters",⁶⁷ a practice that many of his fellow colleagues resorted to, including Gavin Hamilton, Henry Tresham and Durno.⁶⁸ Copying the works of the old masters was a common and lucrative practice for most artists residing in Rome. These could be commissioned and painted after specific directions or publicly displayed for sale at the Capitol, for example.⁶⁹ Apart from miniatures, Skirving also produced small portraits⁷⁰ and life-size head and shoulders in pastel.⁷¹

One of the Scottish patrons that employed Skirving during his early years in Rome was Francis Garden (Lord Gardenstone) who made his tour of Europe in the late 1780s. Whilst in Rome in 1788, the two became well acquainted and Lord Gardenstone described the artist in his Travelling Memorandums as a 'young painter of merit'.⁷² He employed the artist as an art dealer and entrusted him with shipping home Gardenstone's entire natural history collection to London, leaving him in charge of several paintings purchased during the latter's stay. Upon the departure of Gardenstone, Skirving was supplied with instructions to purchase various cameos and pieces of alum from the Tofta mines. The specimens assembled in Rome and left in Skirving's care varied from a collection of semi-precious stones, small 'marbles, granites, jaspers, alabasters, &c. Some bunches of roman pearls, and ancient

⁶⁷ Cleghorn, G. Ancient and Modern Art. 1848, p. 203.

⁶⁸ Pressly, N. The Fuseli Circle in Rome - Early Romantic Art of the 1770s. 1979, p. 79.

⁶⁹ Garden, F. Travelling Memorandums, 1788. vol. III, 1795, p. 151.

⁷⁰ Forbes, W. Journal of a Continental Tour. vol. VI, f. 183. Dated April 1793. (NLS MS)

⁷¹ Cleghorn, B. Ancient and Modern Art. 1848, p. 203.

⁷² Garden, F. Travelling Memorandums. 1788, vol. III. 1795, p. 153.

coins; some small paintings, and some small boxes of cameos'.⁷³ More importantly, Lord Gardenstone purchased in 1788 two copies after Correggio by Skirving, and commissioned a miniature portrait of the 'worthy and ingenious painter Mr Gavin Hamilton'.⁷⁴ Although the whereabouts of these are unknown, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery has Skirving's life-size pastel of Gavin Hamilton that may have resembled the miniature. The pastel was included in Lord Gardenstone's collection and sent back to Scotland where it was duly engraved by Robert Scott for publication on a brief biography of the sitter, presented by Lord Buchan in the periodical The Bee in 1793.⁷⁵

Although many travellers in Rome desired to purchase mementoes of ancient remains, sometimes in the form of a bust, a bas-relief, or even a copy of some famous antique,⁷⁶ they were also interested in religious, mythological and historical paintings by the old masters - several which were fakes but easily sold to gullible and ignorant tourists. It was, nevertheless, a portrait of themselves that was generally deemed most essential, with the traveller preferably depicted in a classical setting, among ruins or with the Roman Campagna in the background, which could be skilfully supplied by fashionable artists like Batoni, David, Dupra, Masucci, Mengs, Nazzari, Rosalba and Trevisani.⁷⁷ Moreover, there was a choice

⁷³ Ibid., p. 154.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 153.

⁷⁵ The Bee, Edinburgh, 1793, p. 1.

⁷⁶ Gross, H. Rome in the Age of the Enlightenment, 1990, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Black, J. The British and the Grand Tour, 1985, p. 214.

of Scottish portraitists in Rome, like Ramsay and his pupil Martin.

Some of the English and Scottish artists working in Rome stayed for a brief study period, others for several years.⁷⁸ A few, like Gavin Hamilton and Thomas Jenkins, stayed for the remainder of their lives. Reynolds had made a visit in 1750 to 1752, and indeed, was so impressed by the city that he managed to inspire a whole generation of art students to head for Italy, possibly including Raeburn and Skirving in the mid 1780s. Architects and painters of landscape or portraiture alike found something in Rome and its surroundings to satisfy their artistic needs. Names like William Kent, Alexander Cozens, Jonathan Skelton, Richard Wilson, Wright of Derby, Francis Towne, Thomas Jones, Joseph Wilton and William Pars, are all familiar. The Scottish representation was just as distinguished with Robert Adam, Allan Ramsay and David Martin earlier in the century, joined by the Runciman brothers, Anne Forbes, John Brown, James Durno, and others in the latter half.

6. The Piazza di Spagna

For centuries the area between the Piazza di Spagna and the Piazza del Popolo had been the cultural focus of artistic and literary life of Rome.⁷⁹ Travellers lodged in penziones and hotels in the vicinity of the square that became the heart of

⁷⁸ Skinner, B. *Scots in Italy*, 1966, p. 25.

⁷⁹ Sutton, D. 'Magick Land.' *Apollo*, June 1974. p. 395.

the British colony. To the locals, it was known as the English Ghetto, where British travellers were mockingly called the 'milordi pelabili clienti' (milords easily fleeced and excellent customers).⁸⁰ The coffeehouses around the area, such as Caffè el Greco⁸¹ and Caffè degl'Inglesi, were exclusively for men. Artists could relax, read newspapers, play billiards⁸² and discuss views and ideas, exchange gossip, make contacts and acquire patrons and commissions in these popular meeting places. (Fig. 6) This centre of cultural exchange grew out of necessity as the British artists lacked any official headquarters or representation at the Holy See, unlike their French colleagues who had a large and distinguished Academy at their disposal which almost had the status of an embassy. The French Academy was situated in the Palazzo Mancini in the Corso,⁸³ and fortunately, British artists were permitted to attend the life classes regularly organised there. Allan Ramsay was one of several who took advantage of this valuable opportunity, Skirving possibly another. Accademia del Nudo, opened in the Capitoline in 1754, was also an option where members of the Academy of St. Luke gave instruction. St Luke's art competitions were also open to foreigners. Practising at private schools was also a valuable way of gaining access to the studios of Batoni, Mengs and Imperiali,⁸⁴ the great masters of portraiture in Rome. Although it is not known whether

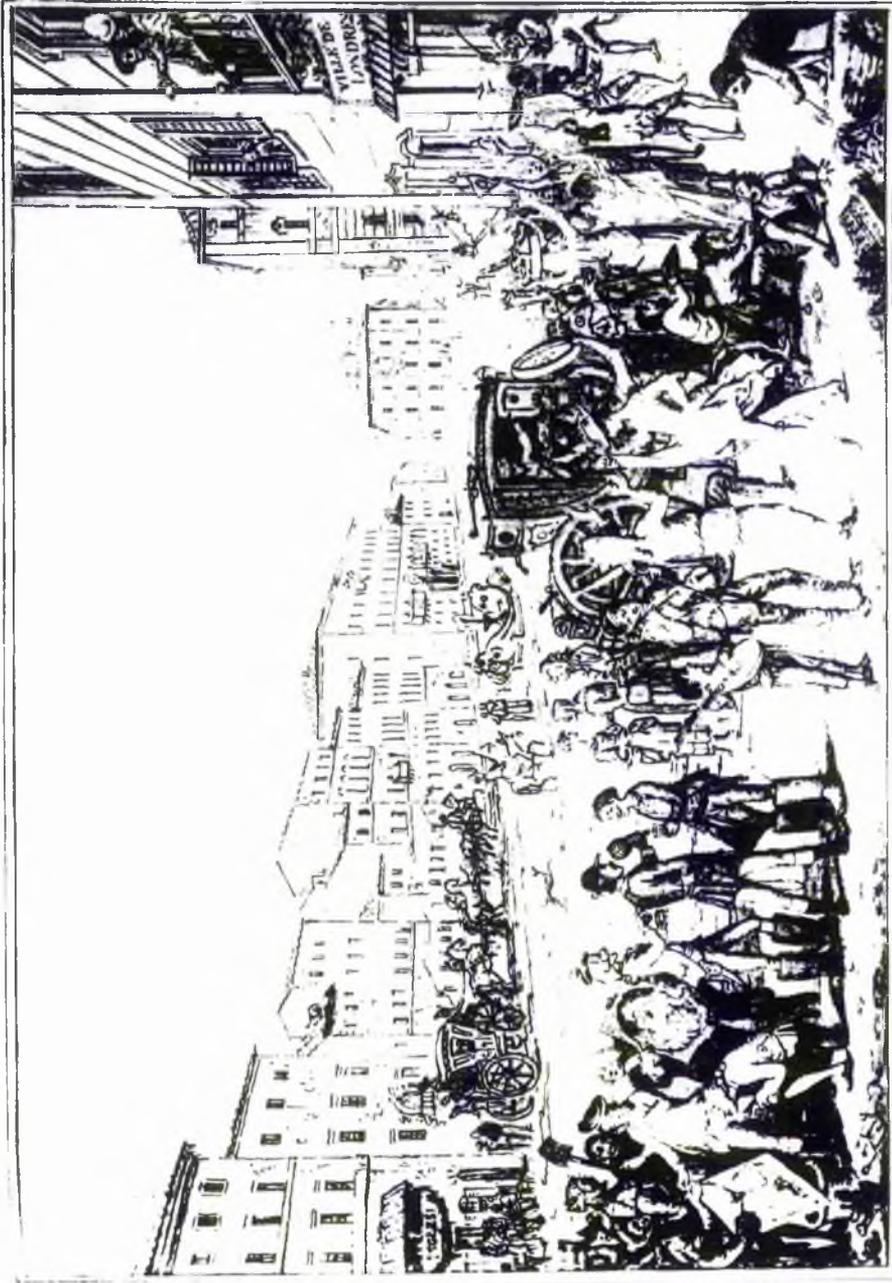
⁸⁰ Masson, G. *The Companion Guide to Rome*. London, 1965. p. 201.

⁸¹ Caffè el Greco, established in 1760 in the nearby Via Condotti, was created a national monument in 1953 and still exists today. Macadam, A *Blue Guide: Rome and Environs*. 1985. p. 157.

⁸² Stainton, L. *British Artists in Rome 1700-1800*. 1974, p. 9.

⁸³ Sutton, D. 'Magick Land.' *Apollo*. June 1974, p. 398.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*



6) The Arrival of a Young Traveller during the Carnival in the Piazza di Spagna, Rome, by David Allan.

Skirving formally entered an established studio upon his arrival, it seems he attended the French Academy classes. He took his studies very seriously and studied various handbooks on art. One of these, mentioned in a lost manuscript notebook he kept in Rome in 1789, was Thomas Bardwell's book Practical Treatise on Painting, first published in 1756.⁸⁵

For those who did not care to join a studio or paint exclusively, the art trade was a lucrative business and the most influential art dealers of antiques in Rome were James Byres, banker to many British tourists, and Thomas Jenkins, a political agent. Another leading figure was the well-liked Scotsman Gavin Hamilton; described to David Allan by Lord Cathcart as the 'unsolicited friend of every deserving artist'.⁸⁶ Hamilton played an important formative role in the development of neo-classicism, influencing, among others, Jacques-Louis David. Apart from his art dealings, he headed several archaeological excavations, such as at Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli, Gabii, and other sites. His many important findings of antique sculpture and vases sold to British collectors provided key works for many eminent private and later national collections; his most famous purchase of paintings being Raphael's *Ansidei Madonna* and Leonardo da Vinci's *Virgin of the Rocks* now in the National Gallery, London.

⁸⁵ Skinner, B. *Transactions*. 1970, p. 49. The notebook referred to previously belonged to Mrs Hoskins and is destroyed. Title and author given as *Practice of Painting*, by Thomas Bradwill.

⁸⁶ Sutton, D. 'Magick Land.' *Apollo*, June 1974, p. 422.

7. A Visit to Naples

Invited to paint the portrait of Sir William Hamilton,⁸⁷ Skirving travelled down to Naples on July 6th 1789 where he remained for five months - the date recorded by himself in a letter addressed to his brother Robert a year later. While there he was sure to have visited art collections and made the compulsory excursion to the excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii, commenced in 1775. He also "had the fortune to see a considerable eruption of Vesuvius";⁸⁸ a spectacular volcano most tourists would have ascended 'as a matter of honour'.⁸⁹ Naples at the time was the third largest city in Europe with a population of 300,000. At the court of Ferdinand I,⁹⁰ one of the leading figure heads, both politically and culturally, was the Scottish born diplomat and archaeologist Sir William Hamilton (1730-1803). As British envoy from 1764 to 1800, his collecting resulted in numerous donations of Greek and Roman vases to the British Museums in the 1770s to mid 1780s, including the *Warwick* and *Portland* vases.⁹¹

Skirving is known to have visited Hamilton's distinguished collection of paintings, with works attributed to Rubens, Veronese, Caravaggio, Titian, Teniers, Lorraine, Velasquez, Salvator Rosa and Tintoretto. Contemporary Italian artists were represented by Battoni, Carriera, Solimena, Fabris

⁸⁷ Cleghorn, G. *Ancient and Modern Art*. 1848, p. 203.

⁸⁸ Skinner, B. *Transactions*, 1970, p. 48. Letter dated 1790.

⁸⁹ Hibbert, C. *The Grand Tour*, 1969, p. 160.

⁹⁰ Ferdinand I, king of Naples between 1759 and 1825 and third son of Charles III of Spain.

⁹¹ Stephen, L & Lee, S. ed. *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. XXIV, p. 225. Sir William Hamilton.

and visiting artists such as Mengs, Gavin Hamilton, Romney, and Madame Le Brun. Skirving mentions a copy he made in crayon from one of the works there but which one is not specified. At the time of his visit, Hamilton resided in the Palazzo Sessa, overlooking the bay, where he

‘was always ready to welcome a wandering artist, help him find commissions, and introduce him to suitable patrons. . . . Of the many strangers who came to see him (other than the travelling British visitors and young men making their Grand Tour) some were quite obscure artists with nothing to recommend them but their work, others were men of impressive letters of introduction. All were equally welcome.’⁹²

One of the most renowned visits was made by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, then aged thirty-seven, and whose travel companion from Rome was the painter Wilhelm Tischbein. The latter liked the place so much he decided to remain there. Skirving later wrote a letter of introduction to Tischbein, dated 23rd March 1793, presenting Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, an old acquaintance from Edinburgh.⁹³

Prior to his return to Rome, or on another visit of a later, unrecorded date, Skirving executed a pastel portrait of William Hamilton, informally depicted ‘in his dressing-gown and night-cap’.⁹⁴ The sitter was so delighted with it he presented Skirving with two hundred guineas, a princely sum

⁹² Fothergill, B. *Sir William Hamilton - Envoy Extraordinary*. 1969, p. 229.

⁹³ Forbes, W. *Journal of a Continental Tour*. 1793, vol. VI.

⁹⁴ Cleghorn, G. *Ancient and Modern Art*. 1848, p. 203.

rarely offered even for oil paintings. Unfortunately, the Skirving portrait quickly disappeared and was not listed by James Clark in the shipment of Hamilton's collection of paintings to England in 1798.⁹⁵ The portrait appears to be unknown with the exception of Cleghorn's reference.

Back in Rome in December of 1789, he soon acquired a familiar and valued patron in Francis Charteris - Lord Elcho (1745-1808) - who had recently arrived in the city, having crossed the Alps in the company of his wife, children, and friends.⁹⁶ Lord Elcho knew the Skirving family intimately, as their landowner and close neighbour in East Lothian. His father, the seventh earl of Wemyss, had known Adam Skirving well it seems,⁹⁷ and Francis Charteris was only a few years his son's senior. Well pleased, Lord Elcho wrote to Robert Skirving on January 6th 1790; "I am happy to inform you that your brother has acquired one of the first character here for merit in his profession and for his general conduct. I hope to have in my power to be of great use to him in making his talents known, and - when they are - they cannot fail being esteemed."⁹⁸ He kept his word, for almost a year later, Archibald triumphantly wrote to India:

"I told you I had painted Lord Elcho's portrait. I did afterwards his cousin called Gordon, a Mr Cleghorn from St. Andrew's, Sir John Macpherson's for Mr (Mc)? Auley, a copy

⁹⁵ A complete catalogue of Hamilton's collection is enclosed in Fothergill's book on Sir William Hamilton. 1969. See his appendix.

⁹⁶ Clark, A. *An Enlightened Scot - Hugh Cleghorn 1752-1837*. 1992, p. 71.

⁹⁷ Johnson, J. & Stenhouse, W. *The Scots Musical Museum*, 1853, p.192.

⁹⁸ Skinner, B. *Transactions*, 1970, p. 49.

whereof I have to make for poet Hume. - - - I have likewise done another India gentleman yt [who?] was an architect."⁹⁹

Lord Elcho spent the winter of 1790 in Rome with Mr Cleghorn, a former professor of civil history at the University of St Andrews, who was travelling as tutor to the young Earl of Home on his Grand Tour of 1788-90. A more prominent customer was Sir John Macpherson (1745-1821), governor-general of India, born on the Isle of Skye. He returned to England in 1786 when created a baronet after years of service in India. In 1789 he resided in Florence where he was employed by Grand Duke Leopold as his financial and administrative advisor.¹⁰⁰ As with the portraits of Mr Gordon, a nephew of Lord Elcho's mother Susannah, née Gordon, and the India gentleman, Macpherson's pictures have yet to be found.

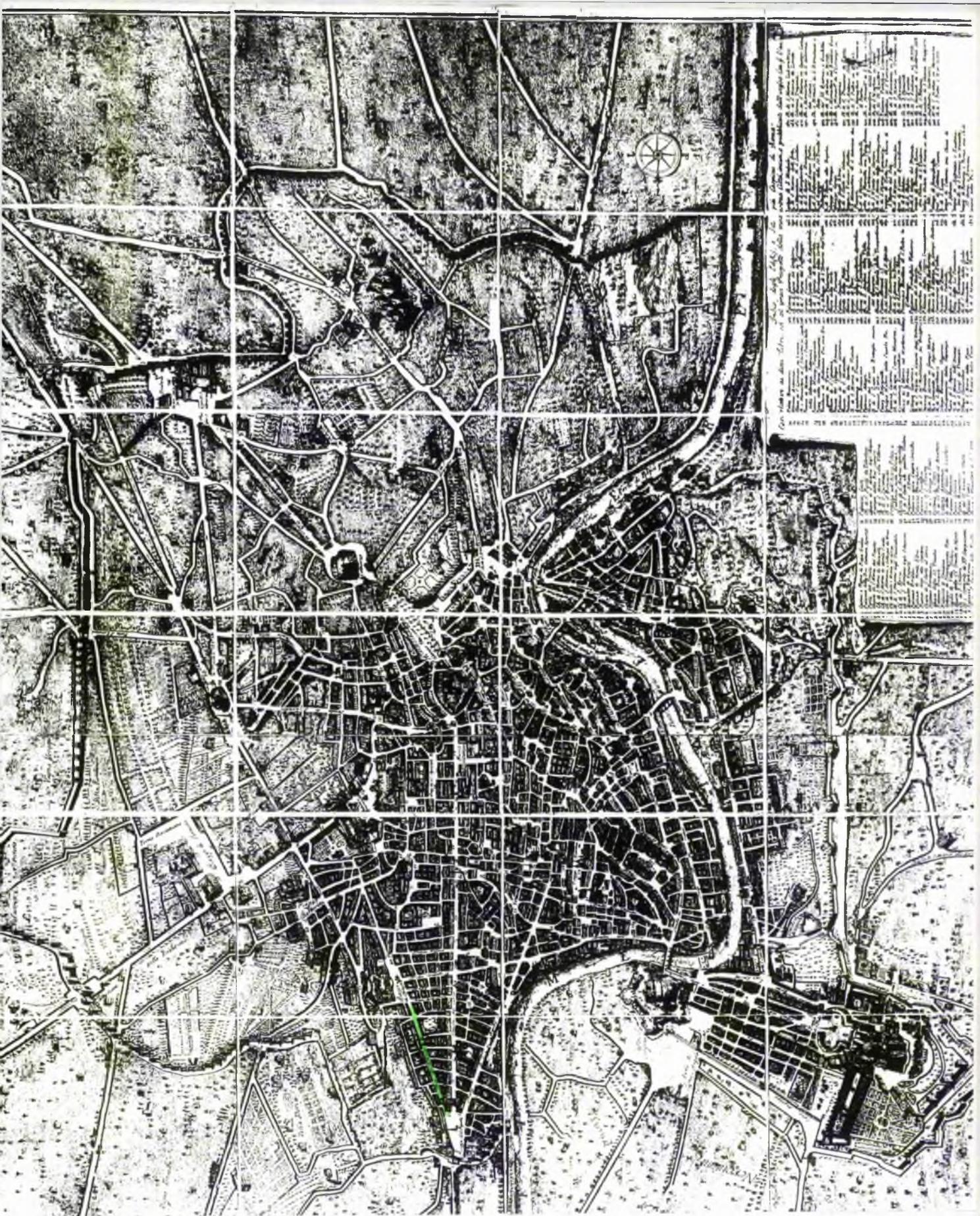
The next reference to the artist was made in 1790 when the English watercolourist and topographer, Joseph Farington, included him in a list of twenty-one British artists then resident in Rome, stating Skirving's lodgings were in the Palazzo del Babuino,¹⁰¹ not far from the Piazza del Popolo. (Fig. 7) Skirving's closest neighbour was James Irving, the history painter, living on Strada del Babuino.¹⁰² Other artists in the vicinity were Deare, Durno, Flaxman, and Foulis. Lord Gardenstone wrote in his Memorandums of the artistic circles in Rome; 'I am fond of the principal British artists presently in

⁹⁹ Skinner, B. Transactions. 1970, p. 48. Letter dated Rome, December 18th 1790.

¹⁰⁰ Stephen, L & Lee, S. ed. Dictionary of National Biography. vol. XXXV, 1893, p. 267. Sir John Macpherson.

¹⁰¹ Grieg, J. ed. The Farington Diary. vol. III. 1924, p. 54.

¹⁰² Strada, or Via, del Babuino was opened in 1525. It connects Piazza di Spagna with Piazza del Popolo. A famous street for artistic lodgers, Rubens lived here in 1606-08, and Poussin in 1624. The name derives from a 16th century fountain statue, placed beside the Church of Sant' Antanasio dei Greci, by Giacomo della Porta. Macadam, A Blue Guide: Rome and Environs. 1985, p. 157.



7) Map of Rome, by Guiseppe Vasi, 1781.
Encircled: Strada del Babuino.

Rome. They have high and various merit in different lines and live in liberal harmony together without jealousy.”¹⁰³ Skirving also seems to have integrated and prospered well, enjoying a respectable reputation. The banker, Sir William Forbes, mentioned previously, wrote of the artist in his travelling Journal on November 29th 1792; “we found here too a very ingenious Scotch artist of the name of Skirving, a miniature painter, with whom I had long acquainted at Edinburgh. I had been of some use to before his coming abroad.”¹⁰⁴ They met again for Skirving and Jacob More were later invited to dine with Forbes on May 7th 1793; after which the host described the artists as “both possessing great simplicity of character”.¹⁰⁵ Whether he actually commissioned anything from Skirving in Rome is not known.

Skirving returned to Scotland in 1794. Whether it was brought on by the political unrest in Europe, by homesickness or otherwise, can no longer be determined, but it can not have been prompted by lack of customers. Thomas Brand noted as many as 130 British tourists in Naples in February of 1793.¹⁰⁶ Two fragmentary references survive from his last months in Rome. One is a letter, contents unknown, written by Skirving to H.R.H. Prince Augustus, Duke of Sussex,¹⁰⁷ on March 5th 1794.¹⁰⁸ According to Skinner, the final

¹⁰³ Quotation unreferenced by Skinner in his notes on Skirving in the Paul Mellon Centre.

¹⁰⁴ Forbes, W. *Journal of a Continental Tour*, vol. II.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. VI, f. 30v.

¹⁰⁶ Black, J. *The British and the Grand Tour*, 1985, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ H.R.H. Prince Ernest Augustus, K.G., K.P., Duke of Cumberland and Tiviotdale (1771-1851), son of George III. Succeeded as King of Hanover, 20th June, 1837.

¹⁰⁸ Cumberland Papers, BM Adv. MSS 36497, f. 290. Courtesy of Sir Brinsly Ford, Paul Mellon Centre.

record is his name, signed in full, in a letter of thanks from members of the British colony again addressed to the Prince, dated Rome, April 20th, written in gratitude for his expressed interest in their concerns.¹⁰⁹ Skirving was ready to leave a month later.

8. The French Revolution

The political situation in Europe had been unstable for a long time, and although it did affect the flow of tourism and artists to some extent, it never subsided. In the late 1780s, threats of war and civil conflicts escalated, mainly between Austria and Prussia, but internal civil unrest also threatened the peace of France and Italy. The storming of the Bastille in July 1789 marked the beginning of the French Revolution and, by 1792, not only the Rhineland and the Austrian Netherlands were at war but France declared war on Austria, and Prussia against France. At the end of the year, the French royal family were imprisoned in Paris and France declared a Republic. The year 1793 saw the execution of Louis XVI and the formation of the First Coalition against France of Britain and her allies; Austria, Prussia, Netherlands, Spain, Sardinia, Tuscany and Naples. Marat was executed in Paris in July, three months later Marie Antoinette publicly so. The Reign of Terror ended a year later with the execution of Robespierre. Some semblance of order

¹⁰⁹ Skinner states in *Transactions*, 1970, that the source is Whitley MSS, Dept. of Prints and Drawings, BM. However, no evidence of this could be found. Sir Brinsley Ford recorded likewise, Skirving file, Paul Mellon Centre. It may be that Skinner's date is incorrect and that it is in fact the same letter that is dated March 5th 1794 (British Library).

was restored internally with the established Directory in 1795, only to be outmanoeuvred by General Bonaparte who, appointed commander of the French armies, entered Milan in 1796. That same year Spain declared war on Britain.

Although the French Revolution did not prevent tourists continuing their travels to France,¹¹⁰ Italy and the rest of Europe, their journeys were probably not undertaken without a certain amount of apprehension. Jeremy Black, on the topic of War and the Grand Tour,¹¹¹ explains how 'civil disturbances were more serious for tourists than the state wars earlier in the century. When countries had been at war they had been internally peaceful, and passports had been respected. Civil violence conjured up for many the fears of mob-rule and the destruction of civil government.'¹¹² The political events in Europe were naturally followed with great interest in Italy. Here the situation was stable and safe for the British resident compared to the traveller who had to cope with disrupted communications and currencies, besieged towns and dangerous roads littered with soldiers and thieves.

The opinions and support for and against the French revolution varied strongly within the British community in Italy, exemplified by Thomas Brand's letter to Wharton on May 1791:

'I too have had the news of Sr. Jemmy's trip to France. He wrote me a very long letter full of nonsense and mistaken zeal about the "mighty Revolution" which I answered

¹¹⁰ Black, J. *The British and the Grand Tour*. 1985, p. 95.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

immediately in two sheets labouring hard to correct certain republican and philosophical ideas which however I am afraid are incorrigible.'¹¹³

In Naples two years later, Brand again expressed his annoyance with the open display of support by several members of the community, led by the Dowager Countess Spencer, who, he described sourly was 'little better than a female Tartuffe'.¹¹⁴ Jeremy Black writes:

'The bloodier acts of the Revolution aroused in most a sense of horror that meant that many not only did not wish to visit France but that they did not consider it safe. As French armies spread across Europe new-modelling states, redistributing art treasures and defeating Britain's allies, Europe became an alien entity. Contacts were executed or forced to flee, British diplomatic representation withdrawn, old activities such as visiting nunneries, attending academies, being presented at court, and watching the ceremonies of court and religious society, ceased. Europe became less accessible, less comprehensible, and hostile'.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 95.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 95.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 96.

9. Great Britain & French Idealism

British political life was continually affected by the events of the French Revolution and Napoleonic rule for almost twenty-five years, from 1789 to 1815. The initial reaction to the fall of Bastille in 1789 had been a positive one for many intellectuals. The abolition of French feudalism and a new constitutional monarchy was welcomed by the majority of political leaders. Even George III agreed that the ultimate power of the Bourbons must be restrained and redistributed to some extent. The American War of Independence had inspired many a visionary of political freedom and democracy. Pitt, enthused by promised virtues, stated: 'the present convulsions in France must sooner or later culminate in general harmony and regular order... and thus circumstanced, France will stand forth as one of the most brilliant powers of Europe. She will enjoy just that kind of liberty which I venerate.'¹¹⁶ Fox regarded the fall of the Bastille as an admirable statement and the new French Constitution 'the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which has been created on the foundations of human integrity in any time or country.'¹¹⁷ Not all were seduced, however. Edmund Burke raged furiously against this 'abominable sedition'¹¹⁸ but it did not deter the radicals, idealists, and even artists who openly saluted the reforms; Josiah Wedgwood, William Blake, Robert Burns, Coleridge and Wordsworth were among those. Other believers showed their

¹¹⁶ Briggs, A. *The Age of Improvement*. London, 1959, p. 129. Quoted by Lord Rosebery.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

support in joining new and old society clubs in the name of reform. In 1792 a group of Whigs founded The Friends of the People, a society that was to spread to Scotland. The September massacres that shocked Paris and stunned Europe had little effect on them for in 1793, the London Society of Constitutional Information elected Saint-André an honorary member, among others. Jeanbon Saint-André was a powerful man who was later to cross paths indirectly with Skirving. Inspiration was eagerly sought from Paris and Thomas Paine - the honorary French citizen who had publicly opposed Burke's criticism in 1791. Paine's book on the Rights of Man had an enormous impact in 1793 and sold 200,000 copies alone.

The equivalent reform groups in Scotland were not only interested in political issues such as taxation and representation, but also social welfare, education and health for the poor. Unfortunately, the desired influence of social revolution did not occur in Britain. The upper classes feared loss of power and control and instead repression escalated. A Royal Proclamation denounced 'divers wicked and seditious writings' in 1792.¹¹⁹ Persecutions of individual reformers followed, commencing in Scotland in August 1793 with a series of trials led by Lord Braxfield. The Scottish Friends of the People was one of the groups targeted, and it was suggested that anyone associated with it, workers and servants, should be sacked. The society campaigned for universal suffrage but the leaders were found guilty of charges of seditious practices and convicted by the High Court of Justiciary. While fellow

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 135.

Scotsmen got away with accusing the Parliament as being fit for the gallows - Thomas Muir, Thomas Fysche Palmer, a Unitarian clergyman, and William Skirving, Secretary to the British Convention and a 'Tried Patriot and an Honest Man' were sentenced to seven to fourteen years of exile, to be deported to the Australian penal colonies. All three were accused of 'inflammatory writing calculated to excite the people to acts of outrage and violence'.¹²⁰ The harsh outcome of the trials created an outcry but led to no pardon of the men who had actually warned against the errors of Paine's popular book.¹²¹ A large obelisk situated against Carlton Hill and behind the Waverly, Edinburgh, commemorates the martyrs. Seditious pamphlets did circulate however, encouraging revolt against taxation and the Crown.

By 1792, public opinion had begun to swing against the revolutionaries. The radical societies were in minority and the bloody Terror in France, with the September massacres, the execution of Louis XVI and his family, left many reformers doubtful.¹²² That year France declared war on Austria and defeated the Austrian Netherlands. Pitt feared aggression from France which duly arrived in February 1793, at the same time as the declaration of war against Holland. Two years later, Pitt enforced an Act that forbade large public meeting without granted permission, but by 1796, public opinion condemned

¹²⁰ Palmer, T.F. A Narrative of the Sufferings of T.F. Palmer and W. Skirving. 1794. Cambridge, 1797.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6. William Skirving of Struthruddie was a distant relative of Archibald Skirving. While the former left Portsmouth for New South Wales, aboard the *Surprise Transport* Archibald was due to embark on his home voyage via Brest.

¹²² Mathieson, W.L. The Awakening of Scotland 1747-1797. 1910, p. 134.

French foreign policy.¹²³ Great Britain and France were once again locked into battle for the fifth time during the eighteenth century. A few weeks later, the Scottish clan heads were summoned for their usual quota of soldiers.

10. The Journey Home

Archibald Skirving finally left Rome, homeward bound, on May 22nd 1794. Samuel Smiles wrote in 1861¹²⁴ that he 'walked the whole way from Rome, but, while passing through France, the revolutionary war broke out, and he was apprehended and thrown into prison where he lay for nine months.' It is plausible that Skirving walked parts of the way through northern Italy, but Cleghorn, who knew Skirving personally, states that it was while sailing through the Straits of Gibraltar,¹²⁵ in the hope of avoiding a perilous journey through France, that the crew and passengers were captured by a French cruiser¹²⁶ on August 4th 1794.¹²⁷ A letter from James Smith, an American painter, and Jean-Bernard Duvivier, a French colleague, addressed to Cacault, the French representative of chargé d'affaires de la Republique in Italy, reveals that Skirving boarded a ship bound for England from

¹²³ Ibid., p. 136.

¹²⁴ Smiles, S. *Lives of the Engineers*, vol. II. London, 1861, p. 278.

¹²⁵ Gibraltar, a British dominion, was helpless in defending allied ships under attack from the French fleets of Brest and Toulon. The winds were so strong at times that ships were prevented leaving the shoreline. Hills, G. *Rock of Contention - A History of Gibraltar*. London, 1974, p. 359.

¹²⁶ Cleghorn, G. *Ancient and Modern Art* 1848, p. 203.

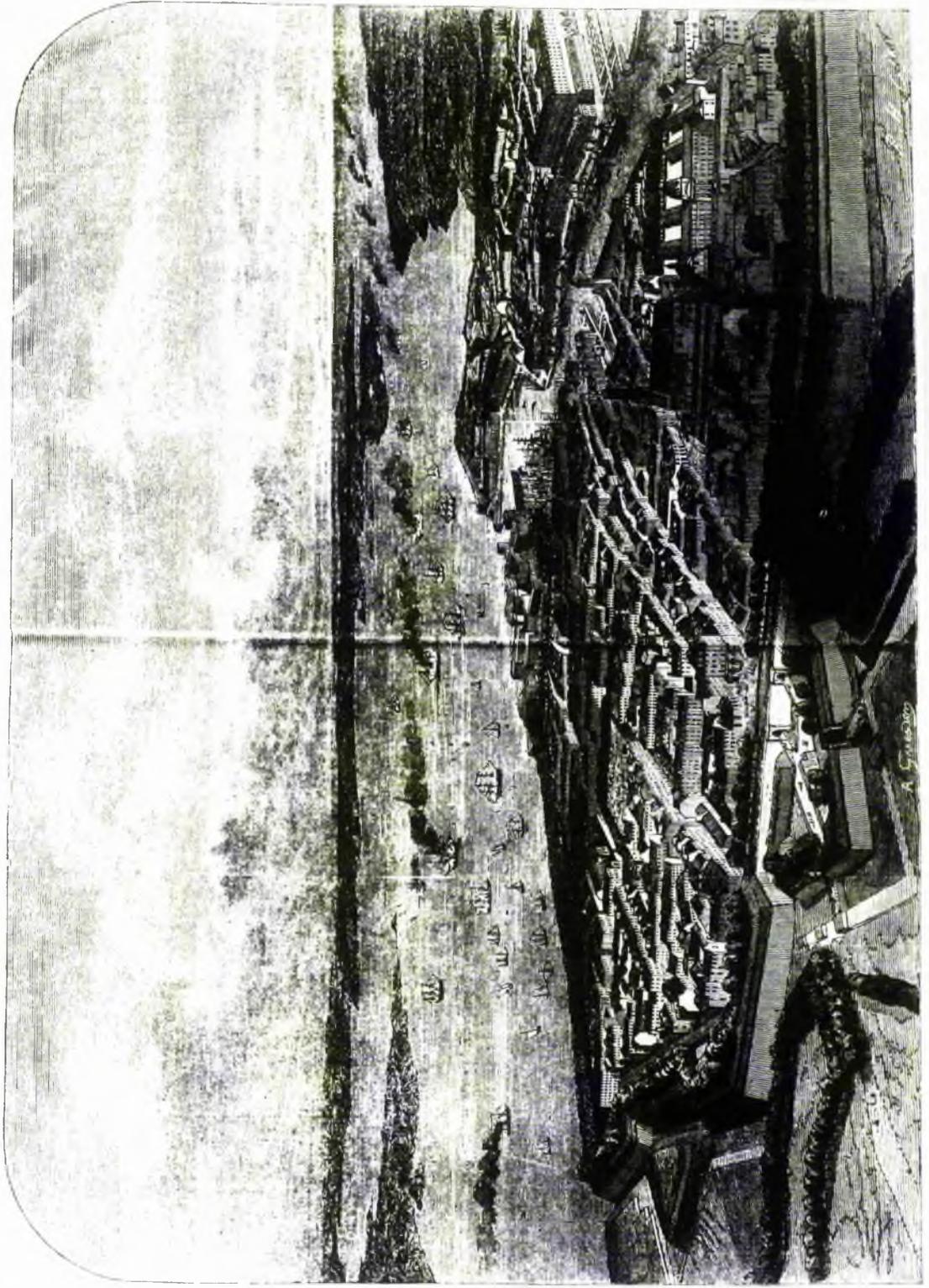
¹²⁷ Skinner, B. *Transactions*, 1970, p. 49.

Livourne in northern Italy. It carried a cargo of three hundred tons of marble and sixteen passengers. The vessel was captured in the Straits of Gibraltar by the French schooner *l'Atlante* and taken into the port of Brest¹²⁸ where Skirving was subsequently thrown in prison, to be interned for almost a year. It seems for some reason he was taken for a spy, possibly because of the drawing equipment he carried with him. Another artist captured with him was the Flemish sculptor De War. He had studied in Rome for eight years and was on his way to England, having been promised work there. Several people involved with the French Academy in Rome hoped to convince the French authorities to release the two artists.

Brest was an important military base facing the Atlantic, with a key role as the revolutionary bastion of the West and a vital supplier for the French navy. (Fig. 8) Around the time of Skirving's arrest, the town had a military population of 40,000 seamen and 8,000 soldiers compared to 26,000 civilians.¹²⁹ Officially governed from Paris, it demonstrated, however, continual political autonomy throughout this unstable period - much to the frustration of the Parisian authorities. Food conditions were severe and the town suffered great unemployment due to a decline in its main industry - shipbuilding. The Parisian massacres of the nobility and clergy culminated in 31 May to 2 June 1793, sparked by the execution of Louis XVI on 21 January 1793. In September of that year, Paris sent officials to restore order in Brest following various ship mutinies, and terror became necessary

¹²⁸ Correspondance des directeurs de L'academie de France à Rome, vol. XVI, p. 384.

¹²⁹ Gallo, Yves le Histoire de Brest, France, 1976, p. 10.



8) Panoramic View of Brest, 1850.

to enforce discipline. Its principal agent was Jeanbon Saint-André who arrived from the Comité de Salut Public in October 1793.¹³⁰ On 8 January 1794, three companies of revolutionary troops arrived in Brest and possibly remained stationed there during Skirving's arrest. A revolutionary tribunal was set up on 5 February in the former naval chapel, with citizen Ragmey from Paris acting as president.¹³¹

The conditions in Brest were appalling. Skirving's imprisonment and suffering was twice commented upon by staff at the French Academy. James Smith and Duvivier wrote to Cacault from Venice, September 15th, 1794, urging the release of 'our patriots and true friends of the Revolution':

'Citoyen, ...

Il nous paroît ausi de la justice et de la droiture de faire connoître en France que le nommé Shirvin, natif d'Écosse, qui a été pris sur le même navir, est paran de Shervin qui a souffert et souffert encore de la tiranie angloise une attrosse persécution pour la cause de la liberté. Cest artiste nous a toujours manifesté à Rome l'amour la plus grande pour la Révolution françois. La peine qu'il s'est donné pour délivrer notre ami Devare prouve ses sentiments patriotiques pour les amis de la cause commune de la liberté...

Salu et fraternité.

James Smith, B. Duvivier.¹³²

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 175.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 177.

¹³² Correspondance des directeurs de L'academie de France a Rome, vol. XVI, p. 385. (Letter 9515)

Translation as follows: 'It appears also for justice and uprightness to make known in France that the named Shirvin, naive of Scotlandm, who was takenon the same vessel, is (relative) of Sherwin who suffers and suffers still from the English tyranny a atrocious persecution for the cause of liberty. This artist has always shown us in Rome the greatest love/passion for the French Revolution. The trouble which he has takenupon himself to rescue our friend Devare proves his patriotic sentiments for the friends of the common cause of liberty.'

Meanwhile, a day later, Carault wrote independently to Buchot from Florence, September 16th: 'The Scottish painter taken with him [De War or Devare] appears also to merit consideration, following the witness that good patriots have given of his character and support [amour] for our revolution...' ¹³³ Concern for Skirving reached Paris and on 17th October 1794 Jean-Victor Colchen, head of division at the Foreign Ministry, wrote to Jean Dalbarade, admiral and commissioner of the Navy and the Colonies (1793-1795), to say that the imprisoned De War in the château Saint-Ange should be treated gently. He urges the same treatment for Skirving: 'I recommend also for your kind consideration that the Scottish painter Shirvin, if there is nothing which can be held against/destroy the favourable opinion of him collected on him by Cacault's testimony.' ¹³⁴

A week after Skirving's arrest on 4th August 1794, the political tribunal was suspended. During its brief period of existence, 180 people had been judged of which seventy were condemned to death, sixty-five acquitted and thirteen deported for hard labour. ¹³⁵ A guillotine had been erected on 9 February 1794. Political terror was accompanied by brutal persecution of the clergy. Those arrested were imprisoned in the chateau prison, renamed Fort-la-Loi. Under the command of Jeanbon Saint-Andre, the Terror in Brest was less violent compared to Rennes' three hundred and Nantes' several

¹³³ *Correspondance des directeurs de L'academie de France a Rome*, vol. XVI, p. 383. (Letter 9514)

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* vol. XVI, p. 388. Colchen to Dalbarade. (Letter 9519)

¹³⁵ Gallo, Y. *Histoire de Brest* 1976, p. 179.

thousand guillotined.¹³⁶ Luckily the tribunal in Brest did not last for long, the decision to suspend it was made on 7 August 1794, only a few days after Skirving's capture. It was finally dissolved on 7 October 1794. One of the first actions to be taken was to release of the prisoners of Fort-la-Loi. During a period of six months, from September 1794 to March 1795, some 190 prisoners were released, of these, 133 were nobles and parents of emigrants, such as priests who had been fiercely persecuted for their catholic faith.¹³⁷ Skirving may have been one of the last to be released in March 1795. Anti-terrorism commenced shortly afterwards. Jeanbon Saint-Andre fled to Paris but was later arrested and on 26 October 1795, general amnesty was announced by the Convention. Cleghorn states that Skirving remained interned for nearly a year¹³⁸, which would suggest a later date of around May or June, but other sources claim nine months.¹³⁹ Perhaps Skirving was released later than the others, facing serious charges as a foreign spy. He was finally repatriated to Portsmouth in the summer of that year, stopping over in London for a few months before continuing on his journey home. Cleghorn claims that while in London he executed several portraits in crayon.¹⁴⁰

Some of the horrors Skirving endured while in confinement are noted in Thomas Carlyle's reminiscences,

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 188.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 189.

¹³⁸ Cleghorn, G. p. 203. Skinner varies, stating in *Transactions*, p. 49, Skirving's internment lasted for some months, while in *Scotland's Magazine*, Jan. 1959, p. 44, for over a year.

¹³⁹ Smiles, S. *Lives of the Engineers*, 1861, p. 278.

¹⁴⁰ Cleghorn, G. *Ancient and Modern Art*, 1848, p. 203.

written some seventy-five years later, describing how Skirving; when

“fallen among Napoleon’s soldierings,’ was ‘seized as a spy, narrowly missed being shot at once; had then lain long in damp dungeons, in constant danger of his life; and, before deliverance could come, had got his nerves incurably exasperated; a condition which the contradictions of the world, on his return, especially which the shortcomings and obliquities of mankind, inexpressibly detestable to Skirving, had made worse instead of better, and fixed into permanency in the indignant man.”¹⁴¹

Cleghorn on the other hand, insists that the artist was ‘not idle during his captivity; having painted miniatures of the officers of the garrison’.¹⁴² Skirving did produce several miniatures of officers but the few recorded so far were produced some years later in Britain. No evidence have been found that could verify Cleghorn’s statement; but if correct, this suggests that Skirving’s position may later have improved, enabling him to leave the dungeon or at least produce work with the drawing equipment he may have brought from Rome. While Skirving was still in France, the parish minister of Athelstaneford, unaware of the artist’s serious predicament, wrote of Skirving’s success in Rome in the Statistical Account of 1794: “these several years past, he has been in Italy; and there is good reason to believe that he ranks among the first in that country.”¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Clubbe, J. ed. *Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle*, 1974, p. 132.

¹⁴² Cleghorn, G. *Ancient and Modern Art* 1848, p. 203.

¹⁴³ Skinner, B. *Transactions*, 1970, p. 46.

On his return home, the consequence of his traumatic stay were sadly expressed in the added eccentricity previously mentioned by Carlyle. Physically, he also developed an eye defect. The symptoms, described by Skirving in a letter, was later identified by an optician in the late 1950s as unocular diplopia;¹⁴⁴

"Both eyes are equally strong but small objects appear forked. At Brest, after getting out of prison my companion who would buy some pins at the gates remarked that they were all split; he never dreamed the defect was in his sight, and I cannot make a pen tolerable. Glasses would remedy this but they do not well to paint, for painting requires to see different distances."¹⁴⁵

11. Studio rooms in Edinburgh

Skirving reached Berwick on August 12th 1795. He moved back to his premises in Edinburgh, a flat he must have retained since his purchase on November 8th 1785 from Wemyss, Dickson and Walter Fergusson.¹⁴⁶ The flat was at No. 3, Southside, St. James's Square. Cleghorn writes: 'Having established himself in Edinburgh, his new style of portrait and the fidelity and skill with which it was executed, soon brought him into notice. He lived in lodgings, and had no show-room or gallery.'¹⁴⁷ Unlike other artists, notably Raeburn who set up a

¹⁴⁴ Skinner, B. 'The "Keel" Head of Robert Burns.' *Scotland's Magazine*. January 1959, pp. 49-50.

¹⁴⁵ Skinner, B. *Transactions*, 1970, p. 50

¹⁴⁶ Sale of contract in 1801, NLS, Acc. 10102.

¹⁴⁷ Cleghorn, G. *Ancient and Modern Art*, 1848, p. 203.

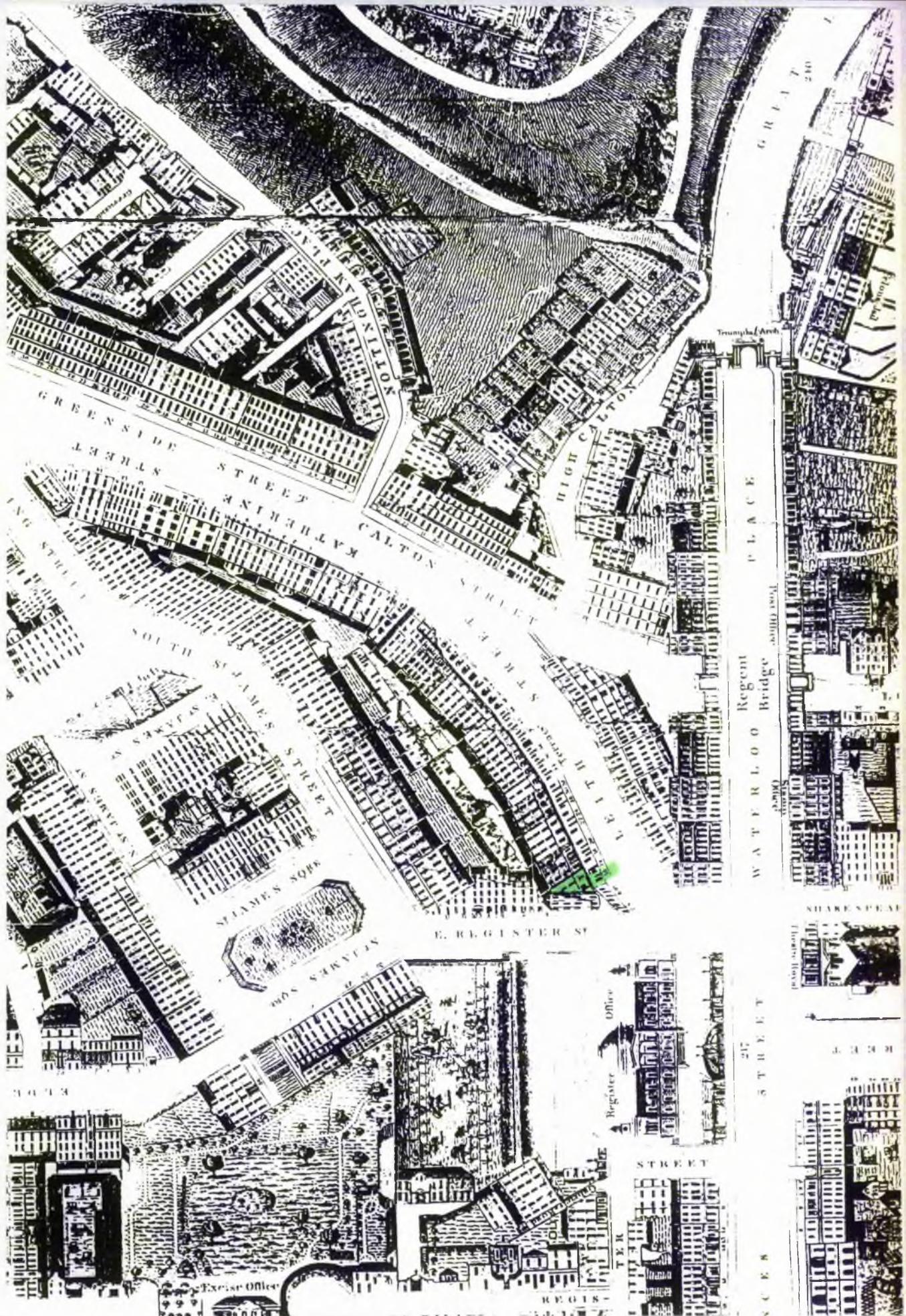
fashionable gallery on York Place, Skirving was not interested in publicising and exhibiting his work or himself, but quietly rented two rooms at No. 12, Leith Terrace for studio purposes. 'Those who wished to see his works were under the necessity of previously obtaining permission, when an hour was fixed to a minute, and if past that time they were not admitted', writes Cleghorn.¹⁴⁸ The studio on Leith Terrace, better known as Leith Street Terrace, led from east end of Princes Street to Leith Walk. (Fig. 9)

It seems that although greatly admired for his art, Skirving sometimes had personal difficulties in maintaining a favourable reputation and practice. His uncompromising and impatient moods with his customers, his over sensitivity, led to a decline in commissions. Refusing to acknowledge his own behaviour as the problem, he attributed the failing patronage to the insignificant location of his studio. "It is the humour of the people not to employ me because my lodgings are not expensive enough".¹⁴⁹ It was certainly a drawback for any artist trying to draw attention and customers by presenting a successful image, but Skirving would make no concessions. "This gives disgust to many who think I should take expensive lodgings for their entertainment."¹⁵⁰ Suspicion and resentment was also directed at some of his East Lothian neighbours whom he accused of malicious ridicule and public scorn. On June 17th 1802 he wrote to Robert:

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 203.

¹⁴⁹ Skinner, B. *Transactions*, 1970, p. 50.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 51.



9) Map of Kirkwood's Elevation of the New Town, Edinburgh.
 Encircled: No. 12, Leith Terrace Street.

"It would appear that my having obtained for myself some respect from the Public fills some individuals with spleen and those who circulate silly tales to my prejudice are generally of East Lothian breed. But there are two who wantonly injure me - George Rennie and Andrew Pringle. The first soon after my coming home, at Gifford Fair, pulled Robert Walker aside, told him that a cleg lighted on my back but my coat was so bare it was obliged to hang on by its mouth."¹⁵¹

Skirving became more reliant on old friends, patrons and relatives for commissions, his work exclusive to a small circle. Sir William Forbes patronised him and may have introduced him to prominent friends of the literati. Lord Meadowbank, the judge, sat for him, as did James Roberston, the orientalist, Principle John Hunter of St Andrews University, Adam Ferguson and Lord Woodhouselee all commissioned portraits. The Rev. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk probably knew the artist well and had a portrait painted in oil. Colonel John Cambell and his wife Lady Charlotte, sister of the Duke of Argyll, both sat for two large portraits in pastel.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

12. The Death of Adam Skirving

Adam Skirving died at Garleton¹⁵² in April 1803 at the age of eighty-four. He was buried in the churchyard of Athelstaneford, known locally as "Elshinford kirkyard", and an epitaph, composed by Robert, was carved in marble and set up on the family burial ground.¹⁵³ Archibald's version was discarded, it seems, but Robert recorded it in his letter to George Cleghorn in 1838: "He possessed a most comprehensive mind, retentive memory, ready wit, and cheerful heart. Was alive to praise: of middle stature, and unmatched agility, with a countenance of still superior character, and for the simplicity of his dealings, made frugality a compensation."¹⁵⁴ According to their father's will, made in 1797, the moveable estate was to be shared between Adam's wife and children.¹⁵⁵ Archibald inherited the house in Haddington. What assets Robert received is not known, but his brother, David (1774-1848), Adam's third son, took over the lease of Garleton and Clackmae

¹⁵² Mackintosh, A. ed. *Memoirs of Robert Scot Skirving*. Sydney, 1988, p. 24.

¹⁵³ *The Farmer's Magazine*, August 1810. vol. XI. Edinburgh, 1810. p. 308: Epitaph transcribed below for Adam Skirving, farmer, Garleton, died 19th April, 1803.

'In figure, in feature, and powers of mind,/ As perfect as most his peers;/ As gratefully held, as severely resigned,/ Life's lease, which was eighty-four years,

With low and with lofty, - frank, candid and fair;/ Soon bargain'd, and counted, and clear'd; -/ On folly, and vice, and imposture, severe -/ Yet neither hated nor fear'd.

With health, happy wit and good-humour endow'd,/ Content in his countenance glow'd;/ Not wishing to sow where another had plough'd,/ But trusting to reap as he sow'd.'

Also quoted by Martine, John. *Reminiscences and Notices of Fourteen Parishes in the County of Haddington*, 1890, p. 29. Authorship incorrectly attributed to Mr Goldie, then minister of Athelstaneford.

¹⁵⁴ Johnson, J. & Stenhouse, W. *The Scots Musical Museum*, 1853, p. 198*

¹⁵⁵ The Will of Adam Skirving, April/June 1797: Lease by the Earl to Adam Skirving. The Earl let to Adam Skirvine, whom failing to David Skirvine his third son and his Heirs, whom failing to the said Adam Skirvine's heirs ... the lands of Garmilton, Mansion House and Dovecot with the lands parsonage and vicarage; also the lands and Farm of Clackmae with a House, acre of Land and yard, all within the Parish of Athelstaneford and County of Haddington. ... Rent £250 sterling payable at Candlemas yearly. Manuscript courtesy of the Wemyss and March Estate Management Company Ltd.

in 1797 and maintained it until John White took over the tenancy in 1835.¹⁵⁶ David also farmed Mungowells and Campton where his children and grandchildren later grew up.¹⁵⁷

13. Settling down in East Lothian

In 1803 Archibald sold his flat on St. James's Square to Adam Wilson, lawyer, who purchased it for £600.¹⁵⁸ This was a large sum of money at the time, indicating extensive premises.¹⁵⁹ Sometime after the sale of his flat, finalised in 1803-4, Archibald moved in with Grizel and her children on Blanesburn farm. There he showed an interest and concern with local events and conditions, exemplified by a letter dated July 6th 1806 to Henry Davidson Esq., of Haddington, where he expressed concern for the dangerous working conditions for the local smith, requesting complete repair of the smithy.¹⁶⁰

Robert Skirving finally returned home to Scotland that year and Archibald wrote again to Henry Davidson on October 27th 1806:

"Sir, My Brother from India wishes to live with his Sister and me. At Blanesburn there is not accommodations, as you

¹⁵⁶ Rental ledgers from the Wemyss and March estate.

¹⁵⁷ Information courtesy of Adam Skirving of Croys, notes on the Skirving family, 1901. Haddington Library.

¹⁵⁸ Paid in two instalments; Whitsunday 1803 £200; the remaining £400 a year later. NLS, Acc. 10102.

¹⁵⁹ A new residence is not recorded, the only address mentioned in The Edinburgh Director of that year being Leith Terrace, which indicates that Skirving moved back to East Lothian to live in Haddington or on one of the family farms.

¹⁶⁰ NLS, Factors letters, MS 17 284, fol. 166.

know. Besides her health does not enable her to look sufficiently after her interest, and also an inconvenient place for the Education of her children. In the event of our being able to find a more suitable situation, we would be glad to know if G. J. Campbell would affront to our subletting the farm, for the remainder of the lease. I am Sir your most humble servant, Archibald Skirving."¹⁶¹

Although all three siblings probably shared a house for a while, Robert moved out in 1808 when he purchased the estate of Croys, Galloway, from a Mr Thomas Goldie, on March 1st 1808.¹⁶² Four months later, on July 20th, he retired from the Bengal army and took up permanent residence as a private gentleman.

Archibald, meanwhile, alternated residence between his house in Inveresk and his studio at Leith Walk. His artistic production between 1805-1810 is not recorded, however, two references were made to Skirving by Lord Buchan, David Stewart Erskine, residing in Edinburgh. Writing to Dr. Robert Anderson on November 8th 1807, he says:

"I am preparing some subsidiary notices to my memoirs of Gavin Hamilton in the 16 col. of the Bee & should be glad if Mr. Skirven of Leith Terrace can help me to any particulars as for example to give a cat. of the fine sketches & what Hamilton [disinterred] at Tivoli & Gabii - etc. Perhaps you may get introduced to Skirvene who is very retired & difficult of access but very clever."¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ NLS, Factors letters, MS 17 284, fol. 246.

¹⁶² Croys is situated three miles north of Castle Douglas and twelve miles from Craigenputtock on the West Coast.

¹⁶³ My thanks to Dr Iain Brown of the National Library of Scotland for bringing this to my attention. MS 22.4.17., fol. 64v.

Lord Buchan was an important patron and sponsor to many Scottish artists in Edinburgh, most notably John Brown, and enjoyed encouraging local artists. His reflections on Skirving, written in a letter of 1809, to his friend the Hon. Gilbert Elliot of George Street, reveal the artist's esteemed reputation:

"Two persons for whom I have always had the greatest respect, my Grandmother and the good Lady Huntingdon, used to say that when you have a regard for a Man, you should ask them to dinner - to meet a select & suitable Company. On the 10th of April I have assembled some artists, who prosper in this, not entirely by my means, for they have merit. Henning did a tolerable likeness of me, but never would take money for it - which was right. He knew the purpose for which I sat - the Earl of Buchan head is now to be seen at his lodgings. Kerts is a meritorious young man - in a few years I may make something of him - these people gain by conversation with men of rank & learning. Sherwin is a man of faculty & genius but shy, & I have not been able to draw him out by benefits (tho' penurious) or otherwise. He is much inclined to be a great man."¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ NLS, MS 11909, fol. 120.

14. Private Drawing Lessons

A few years later Skirving started giving private drawing lessons in crayon to children of local families and gentry in Edinburgh¹⁶⁵ and East Lothian. One employer was the Wemyss family of which Samuel Smiles relates a brief anecdote : 'He was at the Earl of Wemyss's house at Gosford¹⁶⁶ one day, when the Countess was conversing with him as to the acquirements of her daughters in art. The young ladies were meanwhile occupied in making grimaces at the odd man behind his back, forgetting that they were standing opposite a mirror, in which he could see all their movements. "The young ladies," observed the painter, "may have studied art, but I never saw such ugly faces as those they make," pointing to the glass before him.' ¹⁶⁷ The girls amusement could be explained by the artist's growing eccentricity in manner and appearance; he had by then taken to wearing his own home-made clothes,¹⁶⁸ topped with a white, broad-brimmed hat, and no neck cloth which was considered most odd at the time.

Another patron and close friend was Dr John Welsh of Haddington. Skirving became well acquainted with the doctor and his wife Grace Baillie, whom he portrayed although the medium and date remain unknown, but especially dear to him was their only daughter Jane, the future wife of Thomas

¹⁶⁵ Waterhouse, E. *The Dictionary of British 18th Century Painters*. 1981, p. 347.

¹⁶⁶ Gosford House is situated on the coast of East Lothian.

¹⁶⁷ Smiles, S. *Lives of the Engineers*. p. 278. Lord Elcho had six daughter.

¹⁶⁸ Archibald made all kind of things, "everything but his boots". Letter from Mrs Leila Hoskins to Dr Duncan Thomson, SNPG, c. 1981.

Carlyle. According to the writer,¹⁶⁹ Skirving first befriended the Welsh family in 1807 or 1808 when Jane was six or seven years old, and attended the local school in Haddington with David Skirving's daughter. However, the artist did not give Jane any drawing lessons until a few years later, when she went to school in Edinburgh, staying with a friend's uncle on George Street. It must have been sometime around 1812-1815. Thomas recalls with fondness the close friendship between the ageing bachelor and young Jane:

'He [Skirving] might well love and admire the bright ingenuous little Child; and delight to have her fluttering about him, and perching trustfully like a Bird of Paradise upon his wild tusks! His talk generally, even to her, was of rugged sincerity, oftenest with a dash of satire; but it was evident he liked her better and better.

When it came to school-years, & she had to go to Edinburgh for her teaching, he openly expressed his encouragements, his determination to help her himself, with his best art, in the matter of Drawing, at least. She went accordingly to his grim Hermitage [Leith Walk] several times; found the cheerfullest welcome; the place very dusty, littery, idle-looking; and the man intent rather on talking to her, than teaching with any diligence or clear method. Strange art-precepts he did give her here and there; which she could not then understand. The tasks he set her were impractical, his criticisms were rigorously severe. He liked far best to carry her about to the chosen Edinburgh friends he had, and shew her off, and set her talking &c; - which she herself, tho' but fourteen or so, and living at old Cousin Bradfute's (I suppose), under her own control, disliked, found to be unsuitable, mainly a waste of time in regard to Drawing; and soon altogether gave up; I rather think not

¹⁶⁹ Clubbe, J. ed. Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle. 1974, p. 135.

without some transitory indignation on the part of Skirving.
Who however, on reflecting, would not fail to approve.¹⁷⁰

Carlyle goes on to describe a fine mahogany drawing board, a handmade gift by Skirving to young Jane, which Carlyle prized 'far beyond Three-volume Novels, or California nuggets' as it could conveniently be transformed into a table.¹⁷¹

15. The Final Years

Towards the end of his life, Skirving made a final journey south, revisiting London in 1816.¹⁷² Shortly before or after his departure, his brother Robert married Jean Muirhead¹⁷³ at Spottes Hall, Dalbeattie, in county Kircudbright on June 10th. Archibald may have stayed for the wedding but he was supposedly already in London sometime in June to mid September.¹⁷⁴ With him, he carried three letters of introduction from Sir Walter Scott. One was addressed to Samuel Rogers,¹⁷⁵ the poet, whom Scott had first met at Beaumont's house in London.¹⁷⁶ Another earned him an audience with the distinguished connoisseur and influential art patron, Sir George

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Skinner, B. *Transactions*, 1970, p. 51.

According to Owen, F. & Brown, D. in *A Collector of Genius - A Life of Sir George Beaumont*, 1988, p. 225, Skirving made a London visit in 1812, but the source is unspecified and appears incorrect.

¹⁷³ Only daughter of Rev. Dr. James Muirhead of Logan, minister of Urr. Robert and Jean Skirving had three children, Adam, Mary and Jane.

¹⁷⁴ Skinner, B. *Transactions*, 1970, p. 51.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Stephen, L. & Lee, S. ed, *D.N.B.* vol. IV, 1885, p. 54. Sir George Beaumont.

Beaumont (1753-1827).¹⁷⁷ Described by one of his protégés some forty years later as a man genuinely interested in helping artists in need, and who 'delighted to give encouragement to any promise of ability, and assistance to any appearance of desert.'¹⁷⁸ In London, visitors 'fortunate enough to gain the entrée to the artistic circle would be driven in their host's carriage to view the collections of Beaumont or the banker Angerstein; or the even greater one of the Marquis of Stafford...'¹⁷⁹ Skirving was kindly favoured with both an interview with Beaumont and an invitation to inspect Stafford's renowned art collection.¹⁸⁰ This time Skirving also met John Henning, an acquaintance from Edinburgh;¹⁸¹ John Watson, the landscape painter Hugh William Williams, and the sculptor Turnerelli. Indeed, Skirving even mentions an encounter with Constable, then a young man, "whom I found very obliging".¹⁸²

A London incident often repeated is Allan Cunningham's visit with Skirving to the studio of portrait sculptor Sir Francis Chantrey (1781-1842). Chantrey was completing his bust of Edward Bird, the painter (1772-1819), when Skirving asks: "Well! - and who is that! - and what does he paint?" "Ludicrous subjects, Sir", was the reply. "Ludicrous

¹⁷⁷ Owen, F. & Brown, D. Collector of Genius - A Life of Sir George Beaumont. 1988, p. 225.

Beaumont was himself an amateur artist and had visited Italy with his wife in 1782. *D.N.B., vol. IV, London 1885, p. 56.

¹⁷⁸ Greaves, M. Regency Patron: Sir George Beaumont. London, 1966, p. 18.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁸⁰ Skinner, B. Transactions, 1970, p. 51.

¹⁸¹ Lord Buchan's letter of 1809. NLS MS 11909, f. 120.

¹⁸² Skinner, B. Transactions, 1970, p. 51. Source not quoted, information presumably derived from the lost correspondence of 1984.

subjects! - Have you sat?" "Yes - he has had one sitting; but when he heard that a gentleman with a white hat, who wore no neckcloth, had arrived from the North, he said, 'Go - go; I know of a subject more ludicrous still: Mr. Skirving is come!'"¹⁸³

Shortly before his departure from London, Skirving also met William Godwin, a novelist and historical writer. His visit is recorded in a letter from Mr Godwin to Archibald Constable, a celebrated Edinburgh publisher and bookseller, and is dated London, September 12th 1816: 'I had a morning visit from Mr. Skirving (author's footnote: an eccentric but very clever artist) who was to leave London in a day or two after. He sat, I believe, an hour, and I was a good deal entertained with him; he offered to lay me twenty bets upon passages in the poets, and other things, in which his memory, I daresay, was better than mine.'¹⁸⁴

Virtually nothing is recorded of the last few years of the artist's life but it seems little work was produced, although Skirving continued to keep his two rooms on Leith Walk, which cost him £13 every six months to rent,¹⁸⁵ and where he would sometimes stay in 'the dust and confusion', among his scattered collection of books, drawings and sketches, plaster casts and pictures.¹⁸⁶ He settled more permanently in East Lothian; either on his sister's farm,¹⁸⁷ or his house at

¹⁸³ Smiles, S. *Lives of the Engineers*, vol. II, 1861. For variations of this quotation, see *The Portfolio*, 1887, vol. XVIII, 'Scottish Painters', and *The Courier*, Haddington Library, reference by A. Skirving, 1901.

¹⁸⁴ Constable, T. ed. *Archibald Constable and his Literary Correspondents*. Edinburgh, 1873, p. 78. Source courtesy of Basil Skinner.

¹⁸⁵ NLS, Acc. 10102. Two rental payments to David Wilson, dated Edinburgh March 12th, and November 21st 1817.

¹⁸⁶ Cursiter, S. *Scottish Art*, 1949, p. 54.

¹⁸⁷ Cleghorn, G. *Ancient and Modern Art*. 1848, p. 205.

Inveresk, where he later died.¹⁸⁸ Skirving occasionally made trips to Edinburgh, possibly maintaining contact with old friends and visiting current exhibitions, such as the small exhibition of prints on the 'View of Rome', temporarily on display near Leith Walk in 1818.¹⁸⁹ The studio contents reveal Skirving's keen interest in collecting prints, several were Italian. On one of his visits that year he briefly encountered Thomas Carlyle, who was then lodging in the vicinity of Leith Walk.¹⁹⁰ Carlyle recorded the incident some seventy years later. Henry Mackenzie also remembered a similar meeting with Skirving and 'found him the same rude dogmatical being as ever.'¹⁹¹

Archibald Skirving died on 19th May 1819, of no prior illness,¹⁹² at the age of seventy. A letter written in May that year reveals an instantaneous death, possibly of heart failure: 'Poor man, he was nailing some boards in an old pigeon house in his sister's garden when he fell down and instantly expired.'¹⁹³ He died at his house in Inveresk where apparently his sister was also residing.¹⁹⁴ Like his father, the painter had lived in a most penurious manner, producing work more out of necessity than pleasure, it seems, yet he died a relatively wealthy man having retired around 1817 to live the life of a

¹⁸⁸ Cursiter, S. p. 54.

¹⁸⁹ An Explanation of the View of Rome taken from the Tower of the Capitol. ('Now exhibiting in A Large Temporary Building near the Head of Leith Walk.') Edinburgh, 1818.

¹⁹⁰ Masson, D. Edinburgh Sketches & Memoirs. 1892, p. 265. Carlyle's address in 1818 was No. 15 Carnegie Street, The Old Town.

¹⁹¹ Thomson, H. W. ed. Anecdotes and Egotisms of Henry Mackenzie. 1927, p. 212.

¹⁹² Sinclair, J. ed. Statistical Account of Scotland. 1791-1799, vol. II, 1975, p. 48.

¹⁹³ Skinner, B. Transactions. 1970, p. 51. Letter incorrectly dated as 5th May.

¹⁹⁴ The Will and Testament of Archibald Skirving, dated 20th July 1819. Register House CC8/8/145. Edinburgh Testaments, vol. 145, p. 157 v..

country gentleman like his brother Robert, even permitting the luxury of keeping a riding-horse.

He was buried next to his father in the corner of the west wall, near the graveyard entrance of Athelstaneford Church, where a new marble slab was erected - this time with a joint inscription for three generations of first-born sons of the Skirving family. Again it was composed by Robert as a personal tribute to his grandfather, father and brother. It can still be seen today with Adam's original tablet as a shelf underneath. The inscription on the latter is badly eroded and difficult to read, but it was certainly visible in late May 1821,¹⁹⁵ when Thomas Carlyle and Edward Irving, tutor and admirer of Jane Welsh, climbed the churchyard wall of Athelstaneford to pay tribute to the Skirving memorial. (Fig.10-13)

¹⁹⁵ Clubbe, J. ed. Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle. 1974, p. 131.



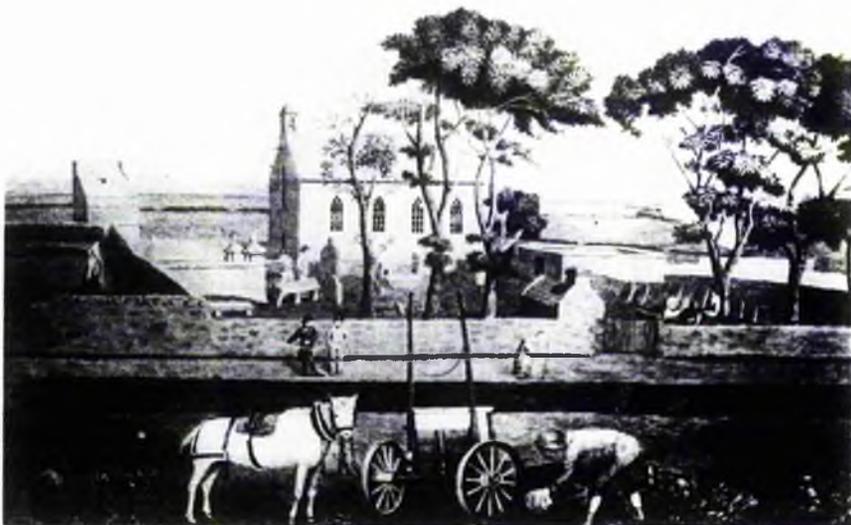
10) Athelstaneford Church, East Lothian, 1993.



11) The Skirving family burial ground, Athelstaneford, 1993.



12) Detail of Archibald Skirving's tombstone, Athelstaneford.



13) Athelstaneford Churchyard, oil on canvas, 1811. by N. Cormack

ARCHIBALD SKIRVING,
FARMER, MUIRTON,
ONE OF THE MOST ATHLETIC AND BEST TEMPERED
OF MEN,
LIVED ONLY 56 YEARS.

His Oldest Son, ADAM, Farmer, Garleton,
BORN, 1719, - DIED, 1803.

In Feature, in figure, agility, mind,
And happy wit rarely surpass'd,
With lofty or low could be plain or refined,
Content beaming bright to the last.

His first Son, and finest Semblance,
ARCHIBALD,
BORN, OCTOBER 1749,

BY PECULIAR EXCELLENCE ATTAINED EMINENCE
AS PORTRAIT PAINTER;
AND MIGHT HAVE LIVED IN AFFLUENCE,
HAD HE NOT AIMED AT PRIVATE INDEPENDENCE
BY SIMPLIFYING THE COMFORTS OF COMMON LIFE.

To beauty, virtue, talent, he would bow,
But claims from birth or rank would not allow;
Kept friends and foes at nearly equal distance;
Knew how to give, but not to take assistance.
At threescore-ten, when scarce begun to fail,
He dropt at once, without apparent ail.

16. The Descendants of Skirving

Upon the death of Skirving, the studio contents on Leith Walk were catalogued twice for the executory in 1819, first by William Bruce for the sum of £49, and then revalued by a friend of the family, the well-known painter George Watson who later became the first President of the Royal Scottish Academy. Some thirty-seven pictures were listed, along with several hundred drawings, in addition to some furniture and personal effects. Skirving's funeral expenses of £34 were deducted, in addition to various bills and debts to frame and glass makers etc. Remaining assets, entailing his house in Inveresk and Haddington, and cash sum of £3,808 went to his siblings. Some of the portraits in the studio were sold or collected by prior agreement, the rest may have been dispersed among relatives.

The artist never married and lacking heirs, bequeathed his savings to Mrs Grizel Ainslie and Captain Robert Skirving,¹⁹⁶ his main beneficiaries. His sister had apparently married Robert Ainslie of Consland Park, Inveresk, a year before her father's death in 1803.¹⁹⁷ She would then have been forty-two years old. The couple settled on Blanesburn Farm and had at least two children prior to 1806 when Grizel was described as a widow¹⁹⁸ with young children

¹⁹⁶ Archiblad Skirving's Testament, dated 20 July 1819. Register House CC8/8/145. COM Edinburgh Testaments, vol. 145, p. 157. Died at Inveresk 19th May 1819. According to the testament, his sister also resided at Inveresk at that time.

¹⁹⁷ Correspondance of Mrs Leila Hoskins to the SNPG, 1980.

¹⁹⁸ Cleghorn, G. Ancient and Modern Art, 1848, p. 205.

of school age.¹⁹⁹ Nothing further is known of what became of her family nor when her husband actually died. Robert had also married very late in life, aged sixty, but his three children, Adam, Mary and Jane, were born after Archibald's death and grew up at Croys in Kirkcudbrightshire. Robert fondly recalls the miniature portrait of his father²⁰⁰ that Archibald had produced in his youth, a treasured relic. He wrote to George Cleghorn "were I in town, I might probably put [it] into the hands of some engraver or lithographer. My brother David, had, or had another, very good likeness, set in a ring."²⁰¹ Robert's son Adam, later mentioned this ring a hundred years later, describing it as a "handsome memorial ring containing Adam's white hair and inscribed 'Adam Skirving, died 19 April 1803'."²⁰² The ring was initially worn by Adam Skirving's daughter Elizabeth. After her death in 1825, it went to the family of her brother David.²⁰³

Other recipients of Skirving's inheritance were the Skirving families of Ainslie and Carnegie in East Lothian.²⁰⁴ Very little is known of Archibald's half-sisters, apart from whom they married and when they died. Elizabeth, the eldest, married Rev. Alexander Carnegie (1762-1836) of Redhall, a minister of Inverkeillor. She died in 1825 aged fifty-six. Her

¹⁹⁹ Letter from Archibald Skirving to Henry Davidson, October 27th 1806. NLS: MS 17 284, fol. 246.

²⁰⁰ Previously owned by the descendants of David Skirving, ie. Mrs Leila Hoskins, until her death in 1984. Present whereabouts unknown. Mentioned in *Two Reminiscences* by Thomas Carlyle, footnote by John Crabbe, p. 132.

²⁰¹ Johnson, J. & Stenhouse, W. *The Scots Musical Museum*. vol. IV, 1853, p. 192.

²⁰² Notes on the Skirvings by Adam Skirving of Croys, 1901, Haddington Library.

²⁰³ Previously the property of Mrs Leila Hoskins, mentioned in *Scottish Field*, August 1949, p. 27.

²⁰⁴ Sinclair, J. ed. *Statistical Account of Scotland. 1797-1799*. vol. II, 1975, p. 48. Rev. William Ritchie of Athelstaneford noted that upon Skirving's death, he left 'considerable property to his relaives'.

sister Janet married Alexander's younger brother John of Edrom Newton (1775-1843), and died in 1853, aged eighty-one.²⁰⁵ Nothing is known of the youngest, Martha, except that she married William Ainslie of Huntingdon, Haddington, and had one son named John. David Skirving had taken over as tenant of Garleton after their father's death but resided at Campton with his wife and cousin, Elizabeth Carnegie.²⁰⁶ They married at Prestonkirk on March 4th 1801 and had two sons, James of Luffness and Adam of Newhall. Their daughter Jessie married their tutor William Leach, a young minister, and both emigrated to Canada where her husband became the first Vice-Principal of McGill's University. David Skirving later remarried to Margaret Lindsay Scot, a daughter of the minister in Haddington. They had one son, Robert (1821-1900), a famous naval surgeon in New South Wales and the author of The Memoirs of Dr. Robert Scot Skirving. In the early nineteenth century, the Skirving children continued the family tradition of experimenting with farming and showed a keen interest in agriculture. David's son, Robert Scot Skirving, wrote several articles on agriculture in East Lothian while living at Camptoun Farm. Another author was Archibald Ainslie of Peaston, a cousin.²⁰⁷

Except for the descendants of David Skirving, the offspring of Archibald's nieces and nephews remain untraced. Some probably still reside in East Lothian while others emigrated. Inquiries into the existence and whereabouts of the

²⁰⁵ Family tree by Adam Skirving of Croys, 1901. Haddington Library.

²⁰⁶ Mackintosh, A. ed. Memoirs of Robert Scot Skirvin. 1988, p. 26.

²⁰⁷ Grey, F. Bibliography of East Lothian. Edinburgh 1936, For publications see pp. 61 - 64.

families of Ainslies of Merryhatton and Carnegies of Baldownie and Drylawhill were made to local ministers around the Haddington area. Apparently there may be descendants of these families still residing in East Lothian, and it is possible that some of Skirving's lost drawings are in their ownership. Had more time been available, attempts to locate them would have been made.

The survival of several of the works recorded today in the files of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery is largely due to the care and the interest shown by Mrs Leila Hoskins and her sisters Miss Florence Scot Skirving and Estelle Routh, direct descendants of David Skirving. These three became the residuary legatees of their aunt Christina Ainslie Skirving,²⁰⁸ granddaughter of Robert Skirving of Croys²⁰⁹ and wife of their uncle, Owen Scot Skirving. A portfolio of drawings, several pastels, a few family portraits in oil, and various other relics produced by Archibald,²¹⁰ were equally divided into three: one part was quickly sold,²¹¹ the other two remained with the family. The full extent of the inheritance is sadly no longer known, the majority having been sold off or donated since the death of Mrs Leila Hoskins in 1984. A large amount of Skirving's work was also sold upon her father's death in 1953.

²⁰⁸ Letter from Mrs Leila Hoskins to Mr Andrew Skirving, dated May 1973. Information from Mr Skirving to the author, letter 17th May 1993.

²⁰⁹ Christina (Chrissie) Ainslie Skirving sold the Croys estate in the 1920s.

²¹⁰ Correspondence from Mrs Leila Hoskins to Dr. Duncan Thomson, 1981, SNPG: "I have a beautiful little box holding a gold coin with AS on it: George III 1791, with '1817' in ink inside." Described as a "treen" box.

²¹¹ Letter from Mrs Leila Hoskins to Mr Skirving, May 1973. Courtesy of Andrew Skirving, 1993. Mrs Hoskins would have attempted to purchase her sister's share had the auction not taken place on her niece's wedding.

Attempts to trace the auction proved unsuccessful but it took place at the family home at Kilchoman estate in Cheltenham.²¹²

Greatly interested in her family history and background, Mrs Hoskins also kept 'daubs', as she called them. These included pictures copied by 'the Watson in Edinburgh', probably referring to George Watson, which dealers always hoped her grandfather would buy.²¹³ More importantly, Mrs Hoskins also possessed a large amount of documentary material by and relating to Archibald Skirving; such as correspondence to and from his brother in India, notebooks from the 1770s and from his stay in Rome, etc. Sadly, all this was destroyed when Mrs Hoskins retired to a small flat. The papers were left forgotten in an old shoe box in the attic which was accidentally burnt by the new owners when clearing out the place. With it, Mrs Hoskins' twenty years of family research also went up in smoke. No photocopies or transcripts had been made of Skirving's letters since it was expected the material would go to the National Library of Scotland,²¹⁴ but brief extracts and notes were made by Skinner in the late 1960s for his article on the artist, published in 1970. Mrs Hoskins was then residing in a cottage in Devon, and Mr Skinner was able to examine her extensive collection, now lost except for various pictures donated to the National Galleries of Scotland in the early 1980s. These have contributed to the

²¹² Cheltenham Library could offer no additional information regarding the auction, neither could the Gloucestershire Art Gallery and Museum. Necessary access to Gloucestershire newspapers not available in Scotland.

²¹³ Letter from Mrs Hoskins to Mr Skirving, 1973. Information kindly given by Mr Skirving's son, Andrew Skirving, England, 1993.

²¹⁴ Information courtesy of Mrs Hoskin's cousin, Mrs Macintosh of New South Wales, Australia, 1993.

Basil Skinner was given access to the material for his article in 1970 but was unable to find his related notes in 1992.

largest collection of Skirving's work. In collaboration with her sisters, numerous chalk drawings were also exhibited for the first time at the SNPG in 1955.

Mrs Hoskins bequeathed three family portraits in oil to her uncle Dr Robert Scot Skirving of New South Wales in 1954.²¹⁵ His granddaughter, the last of the Australian line of Skirvings, wrote:

'I do not own any works by Archibald Skirving, more's the pity. Oddly enough, when I first visited the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in 1949 and asked an attendant to direct me to the Archibald Skirving self-portrait (the one in the black hat), he said: "Yurr name wouldna be Skurrven would it?" I said yes and he said I was very like the portrait. I am.'²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Archibald Skirving's self-portrait, and portraits of his father and step-mother. Donated to the National Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1956.

²¹⁶ Letter from Mrs Ann Macintosh of New South Wales to the author, dated 27th April 1993.

CHAPTER TWO - THE ART OF ARCHIBALD SKIRVING

Skirving worked in various media. He painted miniatures in watercolour on ivory and enamel; drew highly finished pastels on paper, vellum, and as his own speciality, on wooden board. He also produced numerous chalk drawings and sketches mainly in red but also black chalk, pen and ink, and one or two in pencil. A handful of large oil paintings in half-length have also been recovered, but these paintings are rather traditional and not of such a high quality as his pastels. Although the media varied, he limited his style, technique and subject matter, for throughout his career Skirving concentrated entirely on portraiture. A dozen of architectural and animal drawings executed in Rome constitute the only known exceptions. He eventually chose pastel as his forte with few subsequently to rival him. Starting his career relatively late in life, it seems he did not undertake any official art schooling, but gradually, through diligence and practice, became a talented and successful artist. Information is scarce regarding his work or activities, especially during his early career in Edinburgh and London until the mid 1780s, impeded by the fact that, as with many eighteenth century artists, Skirving rarely signed or dated his work. The limited number recorded so far consists of three dated miniatures of which two are signed; two signed and dated (1803) pastel portraits; and ten signed drawings with seven thereof dated. Based on these and Skirving's movements, his career can be largely divided into five periods; (1) Edinburgh 1760s-1777; (2) London and

Edinburgh 1777-1786; (3) Rome 1787-1794; (4) Edinburgh & London 1795-1800; (5) Edinburgh 1800-1819. Certain works will be highlighted in this chapter and it should be noted that when records are not available, the chronological order has been attributed by the author to facilitate an assessment of his stylistic development. The dates are occasionally based on the sitter's age and location at the time of the supposed portrayal, and when this reasonably fits a stylistic progression.

1. A Self-taught Artist

There is little evidence to suggest that Skirving ever received any formal art instruction, although he was sure to have come in contact with artists who did attend various art institutions, such as the Trustees' Academy in Edinburgh and later the French Academy in Rome. It is probable that Skirving was a self-taught artist.¹ Considering what was available at the time, this was not unusual. The Scottish Academy of St Luke, founded in Edinburgh 1729, was dissolved in 1731. Prominent pupils were Allan Ramsay, the Norie family of decorators, William Adam the architect, John Alexander, portraitist, and Richard Cooper - a most competent English engraver. The latter established his own Winter Academy in 1735 but it did not survive for long. The Foulis Academy, founded in Glasgow in 1753 by Robert and Andrew Foulis, printers and booksellers,

¹ George Cleghorn indicates this in *Ancient and Modern Art*, 1848, p. 202. Modern sources; Cursiter, S. *Scottish Art*, 1949, p. 54; Foskett, D. *Miniatures: Dictionary and Guide*; Fisher, S. *A Dictionary of Watercolour Painters 1750-1900*, 1972, p. 201.

became the first proper Academy of the Fine Arts in Scotland and attended by David Allan, James Tassie, and the 11th Earl of Buchan, among others.² Two years later, Allan Ramsay and David Hume founded the Select Society in Edinburgh. It soon became known as the Edinburgh Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Science and Manufacturers and primarily targeted tradesmen.

The Foulis Academy in the west and the Select Society in the east of Scotland did not however cater for the increasing need for greater improvement in design for Scottish manufacture and industry. The various prizes awarded and competitions held did not have the expected and desired result. Better education was needed for the advancements of the arts, and in 1760 the Honourable Board of Manufacturers and Fisheries set up a School for Drawing. Led by Lord Kames, it became known as the Trustees' Academy. The Frenchman William Delacour was the first Drawing Master appointed. He 'taught pattern design to apprentices in the linen trade as well as the art of drawing to students of more genteel origin, or higher ambitions'.³ Courses lasted four years, tuition was free, and some twenty students attended the classes, initially held for two hours in the mornings with an evening class added at some later date.⁴

Delacour remained at the school for eight years, replaced by his countryman Charles Pavillon, who continued the set programme until his death in 1772. Industrial design

² Irwin, D. & F. *Scottish Artists at Home and Abroad*. 1975, p. 86.

³ MacMillan, D. *Scottish Art 1460-1990*, Edinburgh, 1990, p. 118.

⁴ Brydall, R. *Art in Scotland*. Edinburgh, 1889, p. 144.

did not, however, appeal to his successor Alexander Runciman who had just returned from Italy. An eager student of antiquity, Titian, and the classical stories of Homer, he gradually redirected the school to conform to the Italian model. When replaced fourteen years later by David Allan in 1786, the Academy maintained Runciman's structure. John Wood briefly took over in 1797, to be followed a year later by John Graham who founded a separate Drawing Academy for fine artists. History painting was generally regarded as the highest form of art and although Scotland produced many talented portraitists, it was not an art form that was taught at the academies - only in private studios. Life drawing was naturally an essential component of the curriculum, needed for the heroic postures in history painting, but nude life drawing was not an option. Students were advised to go to London or Rome for this.⁵ Apart from design, the course included the traditional drawing from casts and copying prints, aspects that no doubt attracted artists like John Brown (1752-1787), portraitist and close friend of Alexander Runciman (1752-1789), and who later may have influenced Skirving in his portraiture.

None of the early Academy drawings by the students have survived and all records and registers were destroyed in the early nineteenth century.⁶ Whether these would have referred to Skirving in any way is not known; however, there is a link between the young artist and the Academy. One of the earliest portraits by Skirving is a self-portrait in oil. According to family tradition the painting was

⁵ Irwin, D. & F. *Scottish Artists at Home and Abroad*. 1975, p. 88.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

executed in 1769 by an artist called Revillon. No such artist existed under that name in Edinburgh but in 1955 the SNPG suggested to the owner, the late Mrs Leila Hoskins, that the name could be a distortion of Pavillon. Charles Pavillon was by then Master at the Trustees' Academy and may have given Skirving some guidance. Compared to another oil portrait of his step-mother Mrs Adam Skirving, possibly executed shortly before the self-portrait, the technique is more developed, with better defined character and draughtsmanship.

While employed at the Customs House in the early 1770s, Skirving taught himself the art of drawing through handbooks. One of these, The Handmaid of the Arts, is mentioned in a notebook of 1776.⁷ Another valuable guide in later years, recorded in the artist's manuscript notebook in Rome, was Thomas Bardwell's Practical Treatise on Painting in oil-colours.⁸ That Skirving relied heavily on the careful instructions offered by contemporary literature on art, can be deduced in the lack of experimentation and variation in style and ideas in his work, which are typically devoid of elaborate materials of attire, background landscape, complex poses and composition.

2. Edinburgh, 1760s-1777

⁷ Skinner, B. Scotland's Magazine, January 1959, p. 43.

⁸ Skinner, B. Transactions, 1970, p. 49. (Author and title given as Thomas Bradwill's Practice of Painting). Both notebooks destroyed in 1984.

Skirving practised drawing from an early age, was good at it⁹ but did not pursue his interest seriously, it seems, until his final years at the Customs House. All that has been recovered today is a possibly early pastel **Portrait of Unknown Girl** in half-length, set in an oval (B.II.12, Private collection). With little to compare from this period, it is difficult to date the work but the facial features and naive style share distinct similarities with Skirving's early miniature work.¹⁰ If correctly attributed to this period, this would mean a much earlier contact with pastel than previously thought. A more definite example of Skirving's youthful work is his **Self-portrait** in oil, executed in 1769 (National Gallery of New South Wales). The identity of the sitter has previously been regarded as uncertain, but the distinct features of the face, e.g. eyes and cleft in chin, resemble the oil portraits of Adam Skirving. It shows a young man in half-length, with dark hair and large eyes, looking straight towards the viewer, and dressed in simple attire with his right hand tucked into his vest. (Fig. 14)

Skirving painted two identical oil-portraits of **Adam Skirving** (SNPG and Nat. Art Gall. of New South Wales), one is probably the companion piece to **Mrs Adam Skirving**, Christian Carnegie, also in the collection in New South Wales. The purpose of the replica is not known but the Adam Skirving portraits remained in family ownership until 1956. All three are executed in oil, of the same size, format and colouring. According to Mrs Hoskins, the pair may have been marriage

⁹ Sinclair, J. ed. Statistical Account of 1794. vol. II. 1975.

¹⁰ See **Portrait of a lady**, V&A, dated 1780.(Cat. No. A.I.1)



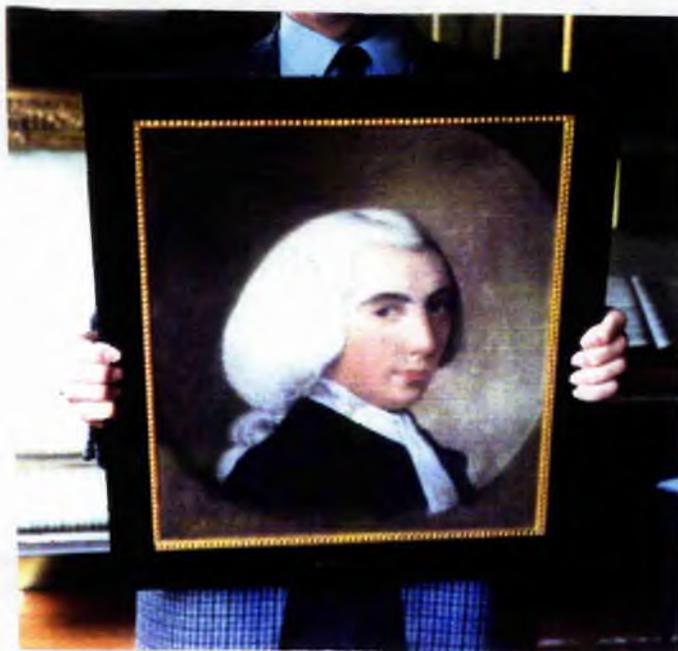
15) Adam Skirving (Scottish National Portrait Gallery)



14) Self-portrait (National Gallery of New South Wales)



16) Mrs Adam Skirving
(National Gallery of New South Wales)



17) Henry Dundas (Private collection)

portraits which would date them around 1767/68.¹¹ (Fig. 15-16) Thomas Carlyle saw one of the Adam portraits, possibly in the house of Robert Skirving, and he describes the face as 'full of rustic sagacity, humour and character... massive in type, broad-oval, thoroughly eupaptic, and with nothing of acquiline in it.'¹²

Several years later, in 1776, Skirving is recorded as having produced portraits of the Dalrymple family of North Berwick, East Lothian,¹³ a Mr Mackie, and possibly of his neighbours the Kinlochs of Gilmerton near Athelstaneford. None have been identified so far, however. The final portrait attributed to this period is the copy of **Henry Dundas**, 1st Viscount Melville (Private collection). The original is by David Martin and is dated 1770, it was previously kept at Melville Castle.¹⁴ Skirving's version in pastel is a detail of Martin's three-quarter length, also executed in the early 1770s. Dundas (1742-1811) is depicted in his late twenties wearing a wig and plain black gown carried by men of the law. Although a pastel, the surface is unusually rough and unfinished for Skirving. It is a simple and unpretentious portrait, set in a square gilt frame and glass, currently on loan to the Georgian House in Edinburgh. (Fig. 17)

3. The Portrait Miniature in Scotland

¹¹ Correspondence of Mrs Leila Hoskins to the SNPG.

¹² Clubbe, J. ed. *Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle*. 1974, p. 137.

¹³ Skinner, B. *Transactions*. 1970, p. 47.

¹⁴ Information courtesy of the SNPG.

It is known that Skirving produced several miniatures from this early period but few records have survived. The only known examples are attributed to his London years. The majority of British miniaturists and portrait painters assembled in London in hope of finding a niche in a rapidly growing art market, stimulated by the fashionable Grand Tour of Europe. Since the death of Samuel Cooper, the leading miniaturist of the previous century, the standard of British miniature had declined, but by the mid eighteenth century, the situation had improved remarkably with the demand for this more intimate art. Scotland, however, did not attract many miniaturists. The majority of Scots tried their luck in the south where they often remained for extensive periods. The relatively few who did work in Edinburgh and Glasgow were James Ferguson (1710-1776), John Donaldson, F.S.A. (1737-1801), John Bogle (1746?-1803), James Nixon, A.R.A. (c. 1741-1812), Peter Paillou Junior (c. 1757-d. after 1831), and William Smith (b. 1754). Another direct contemporary of Archibald Skirving and John Bogle was Charles Shirreff (b. c. 1750). The latter two became Scotland's most prominent and productive miniaturists of the eighteenth century, together with their younger countrymen, the Robertson brothers: Archibald (1765-1835), Alexander (1772-1841) and Andrew (1777-1845).¹⁵ Like Skirving, Raeburn (1746-1823) started his career as a miniaturist, abandoning the art around 1785. Few

¹⁵ Archibald and Alexander Robertson settled in New York while Andrew studied under Nasmyth and Raeburn, attending the Royal Academy Schools and taught drawing, miniature painting and portraiture. He later moved to London where he resided permanently. Goskett, p. 214.

examples of his work have been found however. Another well-known artist who produced miniature work was John Brown (1749-1787). These artists were later succeeded by Andrew Stewart (1773-1846), Alexander Gallaway (fl. c. 1794-1812), and William Douglas (1780-1832) at the turn of the century.

A British school of miniaturists began to evolve in the 1730s, taking up its position again after the Continental 'limners' that had dominated the market earlier in the century.¹⁶ It seems little schooling was available to Scottish miniaturists until the 1750s. James Ferguson had already moved to London by 1746,¹⁷ later joined by John Donaldson around 1760 who exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1775 and 1791. He moved to Newcastle in 1768, painting miniatures in enamel which Skirving also attempted. The only example known is his early portrait of Adam Skirving.¹⁸ A portrait of *An Unknown Lady*, painted on ivory, was attributed to Skirving by Country Life in 1988.¹⁹ It is here re-attributed to John Donaldson due to distinct stylistic similarities to a miniature of a lady, illustrated by Foskett.²⁰ Donaldson rarely signed his works either, and as with many Scottish contemporaries, attribution is difficult with few examples available. (Fig. 18-19)

One artist that Skirving may have encountered was John Bogle, son of an excise officer, who had studied art at the

¹⁶ Foskett, D. Miniatures: Dictionary and Guide. 1987, p. 197.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

¹⁸ Clubbe describes the miniature as painted on enamel. Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle. 1974, p. 137.

¹⁹ 'Collectors Questions.' Country Life, January 28th 1988, p. 82.

²⁰ Foskett, D. Miniatures: Dictionary and Guide. 1987, colour plate 16F, Unknown lady, watercolour on ivory, p. 203.

Foulis Academy in Glasgow. In 1767 he moved to Edinburgh and set up a practice as a miniaturist, exhibiting at the Society of Artists in 1768-1770. He then settled in London, exhibiting at the Royal Academy from 1772 to 1794, residing in Edinburgh from 1791 until his death in c. 1803. Allan Cunningham describes Bogle as "a little lame man, very poor, very proud and very singular." His miniatures are often very small in size, painted in neat stippling with soft colours.²¹

Charles Shirreff is another talented miniaturist who moved to London in 1768 where he attended the Royal Academy Schools a year later. That he was a deaf-mute did not prevent him from making a successful career in London and Bath in the 1770s to mid 1790s. He subsequently worked in Madras and Calcutta, returning to London in 1809, and later retiring to Bath where he died, date unknown. He produced mainly portrait miniatures but also used oil and crayon. Again, few miniatures are signed making attribution uncertain, but definite characteristics are the criss-cross hatching for modelling face and background. Foskett describes his portraits as precise and unflattering.²² The simplicity of his gentlemen portraits, often viewed in half-length, facing three-quarters to the left, are reminiscent of Skirving's images.²³

The work of James Nixon can also sometimes be confused with that of Skirving, such as with the reattributed miniature of *A Young Girl*.²⁴ The miniature was sold by

²¹ Ibid., pp. 203-4.

²² Ibid., pp. 209-10.

²³ See illustrated examples in Foskett's *Miniatures: Dictionary and Guide*, 1987, p. 205, plates 47 G and I.

²⁴ Ibid., see illustrations on p. 208, plate 48 C, signed 'N'.



18) Portrait of Unknown Lady.
Previously attributed to
Skirving. (Private collection)



19) Unknown Lady,
by John Donaldson.
(Private collection)



20) A Young Girl,
by James Nixon.
(Private collection)



21) Portrait of a Lady
(Private collection)

Christie's and Sotheby's as a Skirving, but a small capital N is visible in the left hand corner enabling correct identification.²⁵ (Fig. 20) Nixon attended the Royal Academy Schools in 1769 and later exhibited at various important art institutions and societies, the Royal Academy and British Institute among them. He was elected A.R.A. in 1778; appointed limner and miniature painter to the Prince Regent and the Duchess of York. In 1797 he moved back to Edinburgh. His work is described by Foskett as of high quality, reminiscent of Reynolds, painted in bright colours with the sitters faces modelled with cross-strokes, and little detail on the hair. The sitters are usually set against a dark background or foliage.²⁶

4. The Early Miniature Work of Skirving, 1777-1786

Although the majority of Skirving's contemporary miniaturists had already left Scotland by the 1770s, the artist began producing miniatures while employed at the Customs House. Henry Mackenzie mentions a miniature of Adam Skirving and Lady Eleonor Hume in connection with this period, but these were probably of a later date. However, Bonhams in London may recently have found one of his earliest miniatures. In 1992 three miniatures, a lady and two gentlemen, were attributed to Skirving by their resemblances to the V&A

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

miniature of Unknown Lady (A.I.1). Only the lady is illustrated in the sales catalogue but it confirms the connection.²⁷(Fig. 21)

Of the twenty-five years that Skirving apparently produced miniatures, a mere eighteen examples have passed through the London auction rooms.²⁸ For several of these the attribution is uncertain. Despite extensive and systematic research through all of Christie's and Sotheby's sales catalogues of miniatures covering the past thirty years, only a few have come to light. The art dealers consulted in London have not been able to add much to the small list of miniatures, although one had come across less than twenty during the past fifty years in the business.²⁹

The miniatures today attributed to Skirving cover the London years and roughly five years after his return from Rome in 1795. It is not known if Skirving produced anything in this medium after 1800, but he certainly continued for some years after his return to Edinburgh, despite his eye problem which appears to have improved.³⁰ With only three miniatures signed, two of which are dated, there is little material and evidence to substantiate a stylistic progression and attribute dating. Only one other dated miniature is recorded, that of Mrs Gray, exhibited at the South Kensington Museum (V&A) in 1865. No further records of it exists.

During the London years, Skirving depicted pretty women in white dresses with puff sleeves,

²⁷ Bonhams Miniature sale, 6th July 1992, pl. 74.

²⁸ Mrs Bette Viner, art dealer, letter to the author, 16th May 1993.

²⁹ Mr Bayne-Powell, art dealer, letter to the author; London 11th June 1993.

³⁰ Foskett states that Skirving abandoned miniature painting on his return to Edinburgh in 1796, incorrect. *Miniatures: Dictionary and Guide*. 1987, p. 208.

trimmed with lace, bows and waist sash, and often wearing large turbans on their heads, or powdered hair decorated with feathers and strings of pearls. The sitter is set against a cloud and sky background. The early colouring is in pastel shades, painted in neat stippling, clearly visible in the background and hair. Foskett notes that he 'used a pinkish white flesh colour, and painted his sitters' hair in soft waves rather than in detailed strands.'³¹ Of this period there are two similar female portraits that well illustrate this technique (sitters unknown) one belonging to the Victoria and Albert Museum, the other in a private collection.³² Both were probably executed in 1780 and shows the same sitter holding either a black domino mask (Private collection) or a letter in her hand (V&A). (Fig. 22-23)

Apart from Skirving's miniature work, no records have been found to indicate what else he produced in London. No doubt he drew and sketched as part of his studies but nothing has been recovered so far. That he chose to show Reynolds his miniatures when granted an audience, indicates a preference for this medium. The work produced in Edinburgh between 1784 to 1786 is largely unknown. However, five works are mentioned in one or two letter from 1785:³³ the miniatures of Miss Hume of Ninewells and Adam Skirving; and portraits of John Hume, Mrs Lockhart and her son, John Lockhart. The medium is unspecified.³⁴

³¹ Ibid.

³² These two are the only examples examined by the author, no others have been traced.

³³ Skinner does not specify if these are separate letters, one is dated 22nd August 1785.

³⁴ Skinner, *Transactions*, 1970, p. 55.



22) Portrait of a Lady (Victoria & Albert Museum)



23) Portrait of a Lady (Private collection)

5. Italy, 1787-1794

Financial difficulty was a common enough predicament for many a young artist arriving in Rome without the support system of contacts and patronage. Travelling scholarships were exceptionally few in number, only the Foulis Academy in Glasgow and the Royal Academy in London were able to offer limited opportunities.³⁵ The majority had to rely on hoarded savings, an inheritance or, more often, the kindness and generosity of sponsors back home. Lacking these, local patrons and tourism supplemented funds by purchases of the artists' own works or copies after popular masters. However, despite the constant influx of travellers, employment was not always available in abundance. Andrew Lumsden (1720-1801), Secretary to the exiled Jacobite court in Rome, noted in 1759; "Not one of ten students who come to Rome finds the smallest employment."³⁶ Training and practice took time and the middle-class traveller generally preferred to commission established artists as an assurance of good quality.

Gavin Hamilton held a secure and distinguished position, patronised by the elite of British nobility: the Duke of Dorset, Lord Egremont, Viscount Palmerston, Lord Shelburne, Lord Spencer, and the Scots Lord Hope and Sir James Grant. With other influential and well-connected antiquarians like Lumsden and Byres, Hamilton proved an invaluable source for commissions. Greatly admired by visitors and artists alike, he

³⁵ The Foulis Academy awarded travelling scholarships to five students over a brief period, two of these were William Cochrane and Archibald McLachlan. Skinner, B. *Scots in Italy*. 1966, p. 26.

³⁶ Skinner, B. *Scots in Italy*. 1966, p. 26.

guided and instructed the art community in contemporary taste and fashion, and many Scots sought his favour and advice, including Anne Forbes, William Cochrane, David Allan, Alexander Nasmyth, Henry Raeburn,³⁷ and towards the end, Archibald Skirving. It may have been Hamilton who introduced Skirving to Lord Gardenstone who was to employ his services repeatedly. Lord Elcho and Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo both knew Skirving previously from Edinburgh, but there were possibly others who supported the artist during his long stay. The travelling diaries of Lord Gardenstone and Sir William Forbes are the most detailed records of this period.³⁸

The mundane life for the artist was not always easy in such a cosmopolitan city. Competition, intrigue and ambition often caused clashes between residents and foreigners. In Rome the largest colonies were the French and German, among expatriate communities from all over the Continent, America and Scandinavia. Language barriers and alien social conventions had to be recognised and overcome by every arrival, and Catherine Read, Scotland's first professional female artist, who visited Rome in 1751-53, relates how payment was sometimes given in the form of medals and other such 'useless trinkets'. For, she writes to a friend, "you must know that the Italians despise people so much that are obliged to do anything for money".³⁹

Throughout the second half of the century, the average number of resident painters in the British art colony

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

was thirty. Approximately a third of these were usually Scots. Open to all nationalities was the Accademia del Nudo, tutored by the Academicians of St Luke on a monthly rota. British teachers were James Byres, Gavin Hamilton, Robert Mylne, Jacob More and Sir Robert Strange.⁴⁰ The other public focal point for art studies was the French Academy in the Palazzo Mancini. Allan Ramsay attended the school in the mid 1730s, along with Alexander Clerk and Cunyngham. Highly praised by Ramsay, it had 'so to speak, dried up the fairest springs of Italy and collected them in such good order that one might say that it is at the French Academy alone that Youth can profit in a study of the fine arts.'⁴¹ Aside from these two, there were several private schools and studios available. Common to both public and private schools, emphasis was invariably placed on mastering the pencil before the brush, and students sometimes spent years on endless practice in drawing and sketching in pencil and chalk. Subjects were usually statues, life-drawing and architectural surroundings and landscape. Once the student advanced to oils, copying the Old Masters was the norm. A frustrated Alexander Runciman wrote in 1767, "I've been buried amongst old statues, and very shortly I'll leave them for a while to go upon Titian for six months; after that I'll go to the antique again. The divill's in it if that plan of education followed with care don't produce something."⁴²

6. The Drawings

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 28.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 31.

⁴² As quoted by Skinner, B. *Scots in Italy*, p. 29.

"Who ever has great views, I would recommend to him whilst at Rome rather to live on bread and water than lose these advantages which he can never hope to enjoy a second time and which he will find only in the Vatican."⁴³
Reynolds.

Skirving studied art 'industriously' in Italy,⁴⁴ especially at the Vatican⁴⁵ with its statues and rich collections of Raphael and Michelangelo, and travelled to other collections in Italy, taking notes, advice, copying paintings, figures and buildings. Although the notebooks are lost, it was a standard procedure for any student of fine art. During his seven and a half years in Italy, Skirving must have produced a great number of drawings and sketches. Only fourteen examples have been found so far. Twelve are in the collection of the National Gallery of Scotland, presented by Miss Bruce of Edinburgh in 1938. The collection consists largely of red chalk drawings, one in black chalk and two in pencil. The additional three donated by Miss Bruce are portraits in pencil or ink but it is difficult to determine whether these were executed in Rome or Edinburgh. Another drawing from Rome was donated by Mrs Hoskins in 1973 and is dated Rome 1793. It shows four different views of a cast leg, reproduced in three colour variations of chalk and in pencil. This careful drawing may exemplify the studies made at the French Academy. (Fig. 24)

Skirving's drawings reveal a delicate handling, varied in technique and softness. They illustrate his interest in

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴⁴ Sinclair, J. ed. *Statistical Account of Scotland, 1791-1799*, vol. II. Edinburgh, 1975, p. 42.; Rev. Thomas Duncan, *Athelstaneford*, 1934, p. 108.

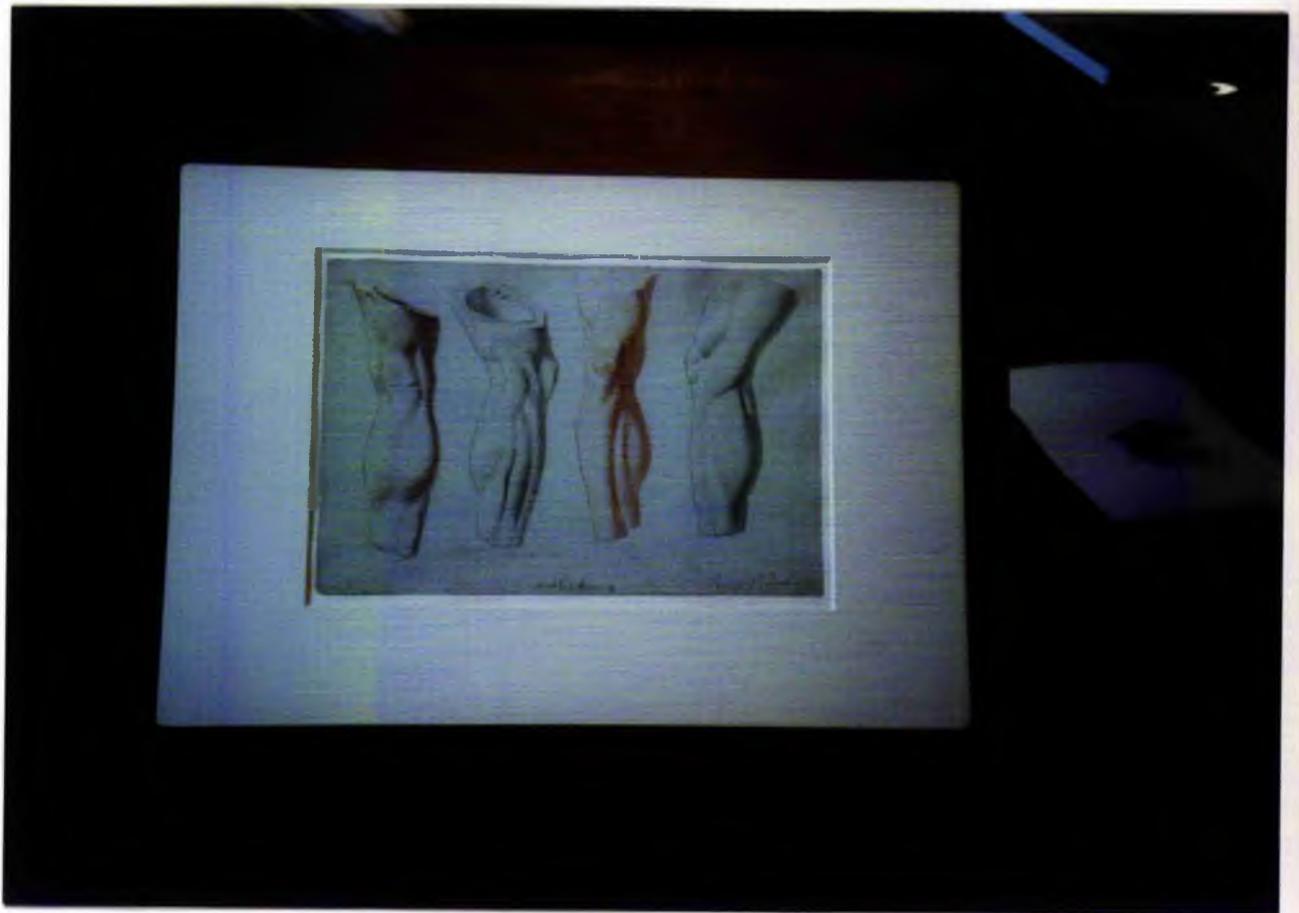
⁴⁵ Cleghorn, G. *Ancient and Modern Art*, 1848, p. 205.

architecture, local surroundings and animal life, interests not manifested elsewhere in his work. Several are sketches of the surrounding Vatican grounds with the dome of St Peter's appearing in detail or in the background. Some of his finer works are two finished drawings of an equestrian fountain (National Gallery) set in a park. (Fig. 25) The gentle handling of the red chalk detail almost glow ^{with} vibrancy, while the portrait of the Irish Franciscan monk, Father James McCormick (Private collection), is sketched with fluency and ease. The friar was a professor of divinity at the Church of Sant' Isidoro, located near the Via degli Artisti where Skirving must have worked.⁴⁶ (Fig. 26)

The finest work to survive from this Roman period is undoubtedly the detailed drawing of a family of tourists, signed and dated 1792.⁴⁷ It portrays a seated mother on the right with her small son standing next to her who is facing the viewer. Her husband opposite gazes over their heads, sketching something behind them. The gentle face of the young boy recalls the angel heads of Leonardo; the modelling is soft and delicate. This is the only family portrait attributed to Skirving and it is charming in its intimacy and sensitivity. Although the proportions are somewhat awkward, with the mother's elongated arm and the husband's hand pose, it remains one of the finest drawings he ever produced. Reminiscent of the

⁴⁶ Various Italian watermarks on the paper sheets establish that it was bought locally but attempts to identify them proved futile. Two have anchor watermarks, accompanied by capital letters within or underneath the enclosed circle, while another has a six edged star above. The latter is very similar to a date watermark of 1759 in the Architectural Library of Dubrovnik (plate 134, no. 1316. Anchor Watermarks. Vladimir Mosin. Amsterdam 1973, vol. XIII.

⁴⁷ Until recently in the collection of Mr Paul Oppé, its present location is today unknown. Apart from Skirving's acclaimed portrait of Robert Burns, it is one of his most exhibited works.



24) Drawings from a Cast (National Gallery of Scotland)



25) Ornamental Fountain with Sea Horses in a Garden
(National Gallery of Scotland)



26) Father James McCormick (Private collection)



27) British Tourists in Rome (Location unknown)

elegant clarity of Ingres Roman drawings of a somewhat later date.⁴⁸ (Fig. 27)

7. Roman Copies and Pastel Portraiture

Skirving is recorded by contemporaries as having produced several copies after the Old Masters. These were of miniature size or larger and were greatly admired. Lord Gardenstone commissioned two paintings after Correggio in 1789; a painting of *A Gypsy Girl* and *The Gamesters*, but since neither belong to the accepted oeuvre of Correggio, it is not known what these may have looked like. Similarly, the theme of Skirving's pen and ink drawing of *Galatea*, supposedly after Guido Reni, can not be identified. Skinner noted the latter's presence in David Laing's collection in 1879.⁴⁹ None of the portrait miniatures have been found, nor the miniature copies after Old Masters. However, a miniature copy of the *Madonna della Sedia*, after Raphael, was catalogued in Sir William Hamilton's collection in Naples in 1799.⁵⁰ No artist's name is given in connection with the miniature, but the size, c. 3 inches, and subject fits Skirving's speciality. If indeed by him, it would have been made prior to his visit to Naples in 1789.

Skirving turned seriously to pastel portraiture while in Rome. He prospered well in this medium, a popular

⁴⁸ Stainton, L. *British Artists in Rome 1700-1800*. 1974, No. 18.

⁴⁹ Laing, D. *Catalogue of the Collection of Rare and Curious Drawings...* sold by Auction, December 1879. No. 297. This source was checked but Skirving's drawing was not included in the sale of the 22nd & 23rd Dec.

⁵⁰ Fothergill, B. *Sir William Hamilton*, see Appendix. The complete catalogue, assembled by James Clark for shipment to London in 1798/99, is enclosed in Fothergill's book.

vogue that had been introduced by Rosalba Carriera who had inspired a number of artists to take it up, including Catherine Read and Anne Forbes. The earliest documented pastel portrait by Skirving is of **Sir William Hamilton** in 1789. As this was especially invited by the envoy, it suggests an established practice by 1788, with time to build up a reputation as a pastellist. According to George Cleghorn, Hamilton was depicted in his night-gown and cap.⁵¹ Sadly, it has disappeared without a trace.

Eleven pastels have been recorded from the Roman period but only five have been found so far. One example is the portrait of **Gavin Hamilton** (SNPG). Lord Gardenstone commissioned the portrait whilst in Rome and it was delivered to his collection in Scotland at least a year before it was engraved in The Bee in 1793.⁵² Delicate in colouring, it has an unusually soft modelling, and is more elaborate in detail than the other Roman portraits. The sitter is wearing an artist's turban in white and is depicted with slightly parted lips, an unusual feature for Skirving's portraiture, only repeated in the attributed portrait of Isabella Fraser-Tytler of a much later date. Hamilton is dressed simply but carries the presence and quiet dignity of a man of intellect. (Fig. 28)

Skirving's **Italian Self-portrait** (SNPG) is an interesting one in that it clearly resembles John Runciman's self-portrait (SNPG) in a black felt hat.⁵³ The two artists never met for Runciman died a year after joining his brother

⁵¹ Cleghorn, G. Ancient and Modern Art, 1848, p. 203.

⁵² The Bee, 1793, p. 1.

⁵³ John Runciman (1744-68/9). Self-portrait, 1767, signed. Oil on canvas, 68.7 X 55.6 (27 1/16 X 21 7/8)

Alexander in Rome in 1768. Runciman's portrait in oil has almost the same posture, with his hand held to his chin. It is forceful and full of emotional drama, whereas Skirving preferred a more direct and penetrating portrayal. Skirving faces the viewer with confidence and self-assurance, his face shadowed beneath the large felt hat. The massiveness and shape of his hand, uplifted towards the silk scarf, recalls the powerful elegance of Michelangelo's figures in the Sistine Chapel. It is his second and last self-portrait known to us. (Fig. 29-30)

In a letter of 1790,⁵⁴ Skirving mentions having produced portraits of Sir John Macpherson, of which he made an additional copy for Hume, the poet; two of an unknown India gentleman; Lord Elcho, and his cousin Gordon. A portrait of Lord Elcho's son, Francis Wemyss, who accompanied his parents and sister to Rome, was probably also executed in 1790 although Skirving does not mention it in his letter. The portrait of Lord Elcho may have been a model to the full-length in oil by Sir Henry Raeburn (Private collection). The head is almost identical although the colouring in the sitter's attire vary. (Fig. 31-32) It is not known when Raeburn executed his. As with several other portraits of Skirving, this reveals a strong link between the two Scottish portraitists.

The same letter of 1790 also refers to a portrait of Mr Hugh Cleghorn of St Andrews. This was reproduced for the first time in Cleghorn's own travelling diary of Europe,

⁵⁴ Skinner, B. *Transactions*, 1970, p. 48.



29) Self-portrait (Scottish National Portrait Gallery)



28) Gavin Hamilton (Scottish National Portrait Gallery)



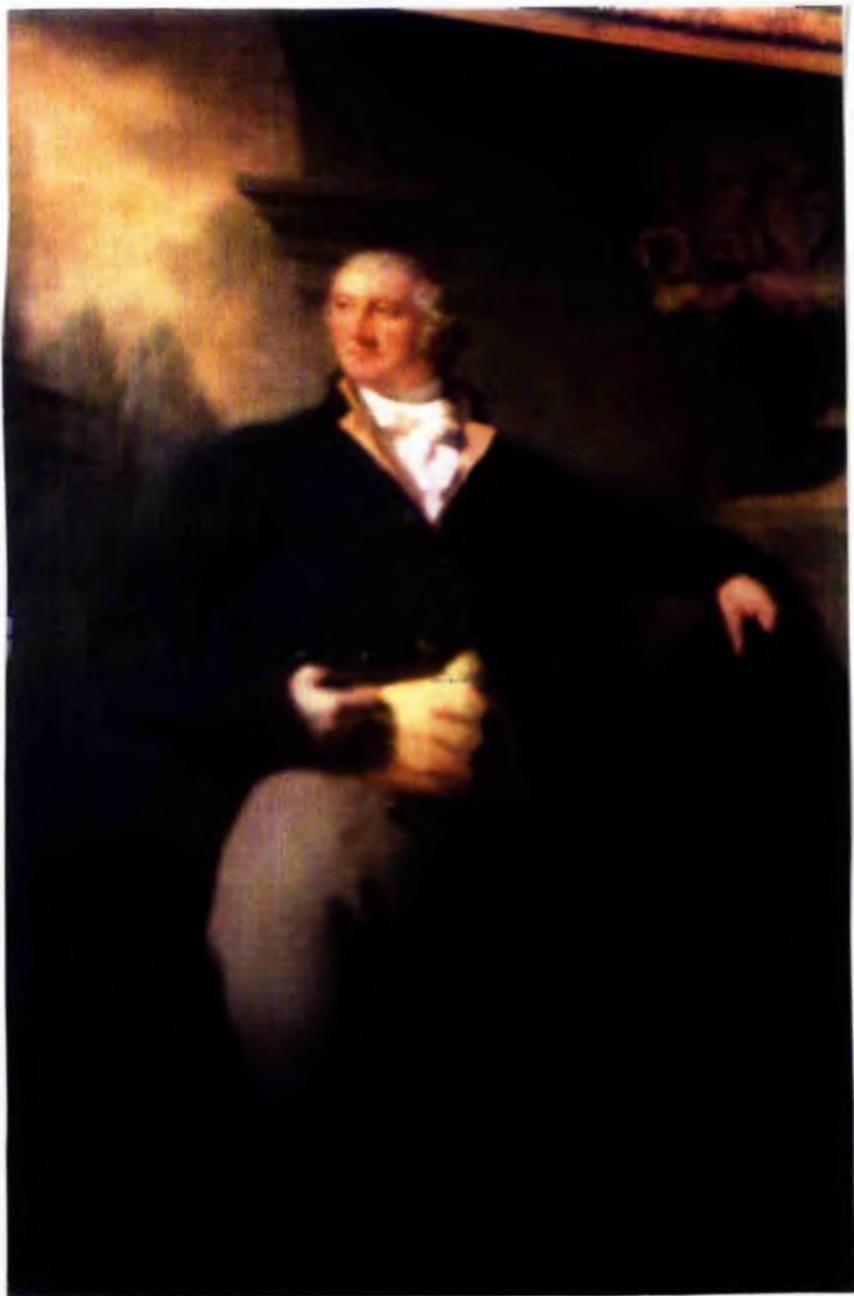
31) Lord Elcho (Private collection)



30) John Runciman, Self-portrait
(National Galleries of Scotland, loan)



33) Hugh Cleghorn (Private collection)



32) Lord Elcho, by Sir Henry Raeburn (Private collection)

compiled by Aylwin Clark in 1992.⁵⁵ The sitter is seen in half-length, facing left with his head turned towards the viewer, dressed in simple brown attire with white neckcloth and unpowdered hair tied back with a black ribbon.

(Fig. 33)

8. Artistic Influences in Rome

When in Rome Skirving must have come into direct contact with numerous artists, some of whose work and style undoubtedly influenced his pastel portraiture. One of these was probably Hugh Douglas Hamilton, the Irish pastellist who had learnt the medium while at art school in Dublin. Both had worked in London in the late 1770s and probably knew of each other's work. According to Sir William Forbes, Skirving produced small pastel portraits,⁵⁶ which were Hamilton's speciality. Skinner suggests a studio connection between the two artists,⁵⁷ possibly based on two small oval portraits in his ownership. These, however, have here been stylistically attributed to Hamilton,⁵⁸ who produced oval portraits of small figures in half or full-length, whereas Skirving appears to have concentrated on head and shoulders. He developed this form into life-size portraits,⁵⁹ exemplified by the Gavin Hamilton

⁵⁵ Clark, A. ed. *An Enlightened Scot. Hugh Cleghorn, 1752-1837*. Scotland, 1992. Photographed by St Andrews University photographer and listed as by unknown artist.

⁵⁶ Forbes, W. *Journal of a Continental Tour*. vol. VI, f. 183, dated April 1793.

⁵⁷ Skinner, B. *Transactions*, 1970, p. 49.

⁵⁸ Mr & Mrs Thomas Glendinning, (Cat. No. E.8 & E.9)

⁵⁹ Cleghorn, G. *Ancient and Modern Art*, 1848, p. 203.

pastel. The technique also varied. Skirving had a smooth, even and highly finished handling. Hamilton had a looser style, less pure in use of colour and with defined chalk strokes.

Like many Scottish artists, Skirving was highly influenced by French artists and the fashionable neo-classicism in Rome, possibly enthused by leading artists like Gavin Hamilton, Alexander Runciman, Johann Winkelmann, and Jacques-Louis David. Skirving's name has been linked several times with David (1748-1825). In 1881 The Times reported that Skirving had studied in his atelier.⁶⁰ David had studied in Rome from 1775-1780, and again from September 1784.⁶¹ It is, however, improbable that the two artists actually met, for David was arrested in Paris on 2nd August 1794, a mere two days before Skirving's arrest on the coast of Gibraltar. While Skirving was confined in Brest, David sat imprisoned in Paris. David did, however, set up a studio in Rome which was subsequently attended by French students that continued in his manner. One of these was François-Xavier-Pascal Fabre (1766-1837). Fabre matured from a history and landscape painter into a neo-classical portraitist, engraver and collector.⁶² On the recommendation of Vien, David's former master, Fabre entered the studio of David in 1783 where he met the other apprentices Girodet, Gauffier and Germain Drouais. At the age of twenty-one, he won the grand prize of Rome in 1787 and set off to Rome where he worked until 1792. During these years he produced mainly academic and landscape studies, but his

⁶⁰ The Times, 4th November 1881.

⁶¹ D'Amat, R. ed. Dictionnaire de Biographie Française. Paris, 1965, vol. X, p. 357.

⁶² Pellicer, L. 'François-Xavier Fabre in his Museum.' Apollo, January 1987, p. 12.

later style of portraiture is clearly similar the neo-classicism of Skirving. There appears therefore to be a potentially stronger link between Fabre and Skirving, than between David and the Scotsman. Skirving's French influence was also strengthened by his attendance at the French Academy in Rome, where the staff knew of the Scotsman and his Revolutionary sympathies. With the Revolutionary war approaching, Fabre settled in Florence in 1793 and remained there until 1825, catering for the portrait demands of the English society and tourists in the city.⁶³

9. Eighteenth Century Pastel Portraiture

Eighteenth century pastel painting never caught on in Scotland as it did in England and on the Continent. The use of crayon was first introduced into England from France in the late 1660s and was primarily used by Edmund Ashfield and Edward Lutterell. Pastel drawing gradually became highly fashionable in London on the subsequent return of three English artists from Rome in the 1730s; Arthur Pond (c. 1705-58), George Knapton (1698-1778), and William Hoare (c. 1707-92) of Bath.⁶⁴ The vogue lingered on until the turn of the century, while in France it carried on throughout the nineteenth century. Not everyone immediately approved of this 'novel'

⁶³ 'Fabre as History Painter.' *The Burlington Magazine*, 1975, p. 155.

Fabre became a well-known mecenant, and a honorary member of the Academies in both Florence and Geneva. Upon his death in 1837 he donated his entire collection to the Musée Fabre in Montpellier, his home town. *Dictionnaire de Biographie Française*, Paris, 1975, p. 388 (vol.?) by Roman D'Amat & R. Limouzin-Lamothe.

⁶⁴ Waterhouse, E. *Painting in Britain 1530 to 1790*. 1988, p. 334.

medium. George Vertue wrote in 1741 that 'the want of ambition in art thus shows its declining state' by the temptation of 'small pains & great gains'.⁶⁵ By the mid-century, this 'novel' medium was firmly established, primarily through the influence of French artists and local success.

Knapton became the teacher of Francis Cotes (1726-70), sometimes called the father of English pastels.⁶⁶ Cotes became a most successful pastellist, upgrading the value and appreciation of pastel to the level of oil painting. He was greatly influenced by the early eighteenth-century Venetian pastellist, Rosalba Giovanna Carriera, and by Anton Raphael Mengs, but created a distinct style of his own. Horace Walpole praised them, saying that 'if they yield to Rosalba's in softness, they excel hers in vivacity and invention.'⁶⁷ Around the mid century, Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702-89), a Swiss artist, arrived in London with a realism in portraiture that was 'too like to please those who sat to him.' Liotard remained in London from 1753 to 55, where his business went well the first year, less so the second when his realism was not the fashion. Walpole explains that freckles, 'marks of the small pox, everything found its place, not so much from fidelity, as because he could not conceive the absence of anything that appeared to him.'⁶⁸

The mid eighteenth century became the golden age of pastel drawing, with masters like de Latour, Perronneau,

⁶⁵ Waterhouse, E. Painting in Britain 1530-1790. UK 1969, p. 233. (from Verue, vol. III, 109/10).

⁶⁶ Adair, V. & L. Eighteenth century pastel portraits. London 1971. p. 155.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Waterhouse, E. 1988, p. 335.

Boucher, Chardin and Liotard on the Continent. Francis Cotes and his pupil John Russell (1745-1806) became the finest representatives of the medium in Britain, along with other contemporaries such as François-Xavier Vispré from Besançon, who worked in London between 1760 to 1789, and Hugh Douglas Hamilton. The miniaturists John Downman and Ozias Humphry (1742-1810) became very successful, as did Daniel Gardner (1750-1805), an artist who mixed pastel and gouache. Two male portraits previously attributed to Skirving are by Gardner.

In Scotland, the first pastellist of any note was Catherine Read (1723-78) who had studied in Paris and Rome, and later worked in London and India in the 1770s. Anne Forbes (1745-1834), her colleague and countrywoman, also produced pastel portraits, as did David Martin, Ramsay's assistant. Martin's pastel work has been described as elegant but dry.⁶⁹ All became successful artists but it is Skirving who is indisputably Scotland's closest equivalent to Cotes and Russell. Although there were only a limited number of artists working in this medium in Scotland, Skirving's position as a pastellist of high rank has rarely been appreciated. His name is always excluded from historical reviews on British pastel and crayon portraiture. His manner has been described as "a trifle tight, and indicates the miniaturist."⁷⁰ Admittedly, there is a certain element of controlled and pedantic mannerism but his work can also contain extraordinary verve and vitality that far outshine many of his contemporaries.

⁶⁹ See, R.R.M. English Pastels 1750-1830, London, 1911.

⁷⁰ See, R.R.M. p. 322.

10. Pastel as a Medium

It is not surprising that the powdery texture of pastel greatly appealed to the Georgian society where both men and women constantly used cosmetic powder on hair and face. The velvety softness of the medium offered an alternative to the polished shine of oil and allowed a new breadth and lightness in execution hitherto unknown. Even highly finished pastels such as Skirving's work are pleasantly matt, yet full of vibrant colours, which, as The European Magazine enthused in 1797, 'by candle light are luminous and beautiful beyond all other pictures.'⁷¹

When carefully framed and protected from humidity, pastels, surprisingly, are the most permanent form of painting as regards to colour preservation. Pastels consists of pure colour pigments that are loosely held together by a very weak binding medium to allow the powdery texture to adhere to paper easily. Since the medium was little used in Scotland, Skirving must have also learnt this technique from various books on art. Similar to painting techniques, the work is built up in layers, to be blended and manipulated like oil. The materials and instruments used by pastellists include stretched but unprimed canvas (i.e. not coated in white), textured paper, a soft graphite pencil, charcoal, pastels, gelatin, a sable brush, and a double-ended stump of rolled chamois leather.⁷²

⁷¹ Shaw-Taylor, D. The Georgians, Eighteenth Century Portraiture and Society. London, 1990. p. 20.

⁷² Stephenson, J. The Materials and Techniques of Painting. London, 1989. p. 168.

The standard process of pastel painting begins with a preliminary drawing, using first a graphite pencil and then charcoal where surplus is blown away and darker areas lightened up with a bristle brush. Highlights are made in white pastel, or preferably the palest tint of each colour, before colour is shaded in. Three-tone pastels are usually employed to build up colour and structure. A coloured sketch is produced before making up the support to save time and material if a fault occurs. A composite support is then made up of unbleached calico mounted onto a stretching frame. Freshly made gelatin is then brushed thinly over the front of the taut canvas and over the reverse of the paper that is then carefully placed on to one corner of the canvas and evenly smoothed over to avoid trapping air bubbles. The support is then turned over and set down on a clean sheet of paper and again smoothed by hand. It has then to set and dry for at least a day.⁷³ Once dry the canvas is placed on an easel gently sloping forward to enable the chalk dust to fall away from the picture.⁷⁴

John Russell worked in this way and Skirving very likely learnt the same technique. In several of his portraits the gelatin is visible in the background and it may be that Skirving spread it on too thickly. Several such examples are the portraits of Lord Elcho and son, Mrs Margaret Fraser-Tytler, Lady Charlotte Campbell, and *Portrait of a Man*. (B.II.11, Present location unknown). John Russell, anxious that his pastels would preserve well, would sometimes attach

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Meyer, R. *The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques*. London, 1991. p. 350.

instructions on the reverse of the canvas; "Should a Spot of Milldew appear, a Leather Drawing Stump or Cork Pointed will take it off instantly, but this will never happen from being placed in a damp situation."⁷⁵ This was a necessary precaution since pastels are easily attacked by "mildew", a microscopic parasitic fungi that appears as blue, crimson or yellow mould that slowly eat through the paper fibres. The Skirving portrait of Hugh Cleghorn, 1790, is greatly damaged in this way, covered by some thirty holes.

11. Late Eighteenth Century Works, 1795-1800

It has generally been assumed that Skirving settled permanently in Edinburgh upon his homecoming in 1795, where he remained with the exception of a London visit in 1816. However, by piecing together some of the works that Skirving may have executed during this period, it appears that Skirving did in fact return to London to work there for a couple of years in the late 1790s. 'Towards the close of the eighteenth century he came to London, and devoted his talents chiefly to the painting of portraits in chalk and crayon, not forgetting to exercise himself in the delicate art of painting miniatures in watercolour. After a few fruitful years in London studios he returned to Edinburgh.'⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Adair, V. & L. *Eighteenth century pastel portraits*, 1971, p. 154.

⁷⁶ Duncan, Rev. T. *Athelstaneford*, 1934, p. 109.

Other sources: Williamson, G. *Bryan's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers*, vol. V, 1905, p. 88; *The Glasgow Herald*, 30th October 1909, p. 11. 'Burns Portraits.'; Letter in the SNPG, see the Skirving file on Robert Burns; letter dated 13th September 1890, from R.C. Hall to Sir Theodore Martin.

Skirving started working in Edinburgh in late 1795 but may not have formally set up a studio on Leith Walk until his spacious flat on St James's Square was sold in 1803. Instead he must have kept his practice there in the flat until c. 1797. The works here attributed to this brief period are the drawings of Professor James Robertson (A.IV.9, SNPG) in pencil; Portrait of Unknown Man, dated 1797 (A.II.10) in red chalk; William Berry of 1797, after Delacour (A.IV.3, SNPG), and the Robert Burns portrait (SNPG). An untraced portrait of Mr Brown of Boggs is dated 1796.⁷⁷ At least four pastel portraits can be dated to this period; two of John Campbell and his wife, Lady Charlotte Campbell, with the latter unfinished, (A.II.1 & 2, Present location unknown) of around 1795. Only the head and elaborate turban is completed in detail, everything below her neck was rubbed out.

Of a somewhat later date are the two portraits of the Drummond family (Private collection). Probably commissioned by George Drummond,⁷⁸ they portray his sister Mary Drummond Pringle (1719-1867) (A.II.10) and his son Henry Home Drummond (1783-1867) (A.II.5). These are here dated between 1796-8 for the life-size portrait of Mrs Pringle is said to be a copy after Danloux.⁷⁹ Henri-Pierre Danloux (1753-1809) was a Parisian artist who had worked in Rome until 1780 and then at Lyons. In 1791 he fled from France and the Revolution to settle in London where he remained until 1800. He became a successful artist, quickly

⁷⁷ Skinner, B. *Transactions*, 1970, p. 54.

⁷⁸ Information courtesy of the owner.

⁷⁹ West Register House, Skirving - Drummond file.

adapting to English tastes in portraiture but also working in Scotland in 1796 where he possibly remained until 1798.⁸⁰ His visit dates the Mary Pringle portrait to around 1796-8, which would fit the age of her nephew, then aged between thirteen or fifteen. The plain veil of Mary Pringle, devoid of all detail, suggests it is a copy, for Skirving would have preferred some detail, as can be seen in the Henry Drummond portrait. Danloux's version of Mrs Pringle has not been found. (Fig. 34)

A new oil painting by Skirving was discovered in 1957 when a descendant of the sitter sent a photograph from Philadelphia, USA, to the National Gallery in Edinburgh for identification. It is the portrait of Dr Benjamin Bell (1749-1806) (Present location unknown), previously believed to be Raeburn's portrait of Dr Bell, executed in oil portrait in 1790/1. It was stylistically reattributed to Skirving as a copy after Raeburn by the Keeper of the National Gallery which later proved to be a correct assumption for Raeburn's original was here found to reveal the same sitter in identical posture, clothes and surroundings, but seen from side view rather than Skirving's frontal presentation.⁸¹ (Fig. 35)

This is a significant portrait because it constitutes an direct link between the two artists, for Raeburn's influence appears in another work probably executed shortly afterwards. Raeburn's studio on York Place, near Nasmyth's, was not completed until 1798, but Skirving must have come in contact with several of his works. Raeburn's influence is

⁸⁰ Simon, R. *Portrait in Britain and America*. (1680-1914). 1987, p. 173.

⁸¹ Raeburn illustration found in *Art News*, 28th March 1931. 'Portrait of Dr Bell.' Ehrlich Gallery, New York sale 2nd April 1931 (71), dated c. 1790/1. No measurements specified for either versions.



34) Mary Drummond Pringle & Henry Home Drummond
(Private collection)



34) Dr. Benjamin Bell, by Sir Henry Raeburn
(Location unknown)



35) Dr. Benjamin Bell (Location unknown)

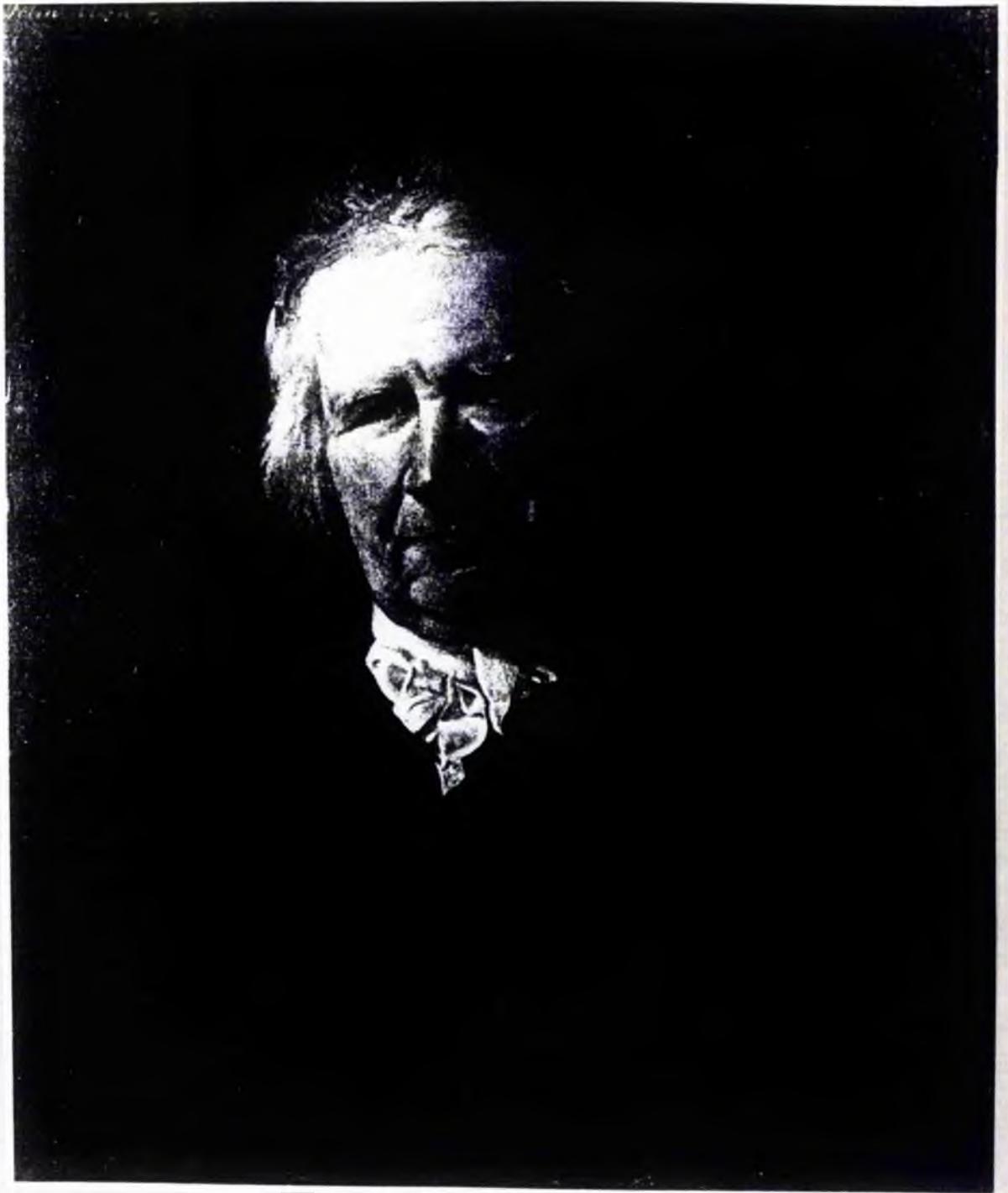
noticeable in Skirving's more relaxed and freer style in the pastel of **John Clerk of Eldin** (1728-1812) (Private collection). It represents the culmination of Skirving's eighteenth century career, an outstanding portrait that has been compared to the finest of British eighteenth century pastels.⁸² It is a portrayal of an elderly man, seated frontally in life-size bust length, and reveals an extraordinarily vivid and sensitive study of intimate character that no photograph can do justice to. It may have been the reason for Skirving's trip to London, for it was subsequently exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1799. The face Skirving has portrayed corresponds with the Lord Cockburn's description as 'an interesting and delightful old man; full of the peculiarities that distinguished the whole family - talent, caprice, obstinacy, worth, kindness, and oddity; a striking-looking old gentleman, with grizzly hair, vigorous features, and Scotch speech.'⁸³ (Fig. 36)

The final oil painting attributed to Skirving is the portrait of **Rev. Alexander Carlyle** (1722-1805), minister of Inveresk. (Fig. 37) Sir Walter Scott called him 'the grandest demi-god I ever saw, ... commonly called Jupiter Carlyle, from having sat more than once for the king of gods and men to Gavin Hamilton.'⁸⁴ Hamilton never painted Carlyle but David Martin did in 1770, when Carlyle's Autobiography ends: "It looks like a cardinal, it is so gorgeously dressed. It is in pink

⁸² MacMillan, D. Scottish Art 1460-1990. 1990, p. 151.

⁸³ Stephen, L. ed. D.N.B. vol. XI, London, 1887, p. 42. Quotation by Lord Cockburn, *Memorials of his Time*, p. 282.

⁸⁴ Burton, J.H. ed The Autobiography of Dr Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805. Edinburgh, 1910, p. 595.



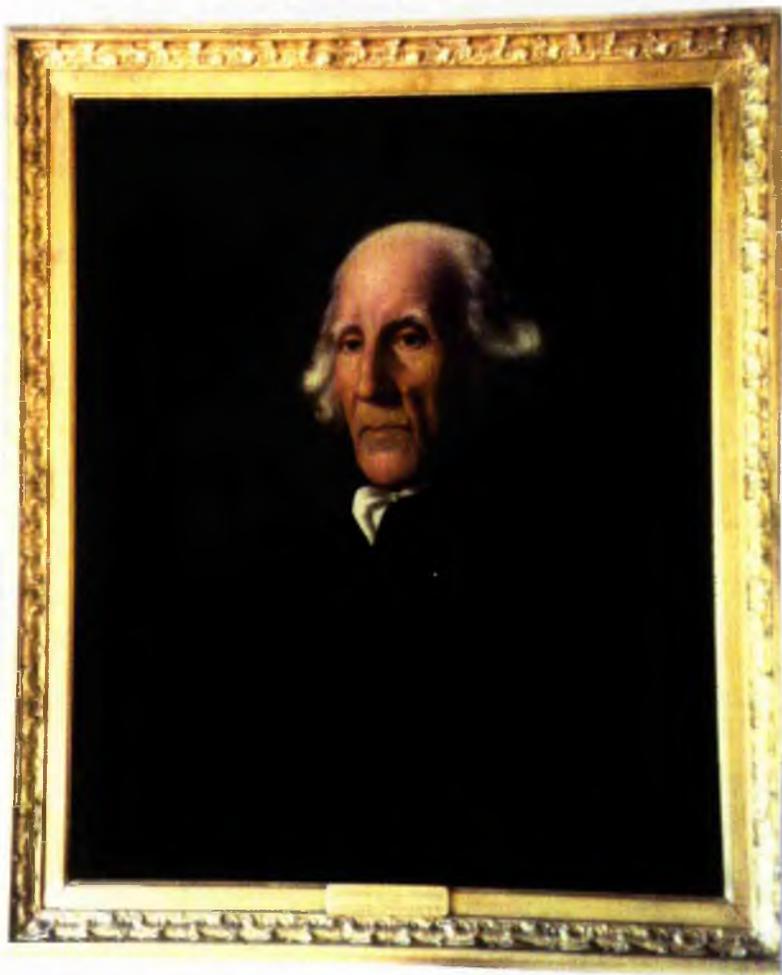
36) John Clerk of Eldin (Private collection)

damask night-gown, in a scarlet chair." Many years later, in 1796, Raeburn produced his version, as did John Henning who executed a bust of him in 1805 as well as a drawing. Skirving's portrait of Carlyle is the opposite of Martin's elaborate and rich one. Dressed in sober black, with a background as dark, it is only his white hair and face that illuminates the picture. The artist has captured the sitter's 'portly figure, his fine expressive countenance, with an aquiline nose, his flowing silver locks, and the freshness of the colour of his face.'⁸⁵ As the Chief Commissioner Adam described him, the portrait reveals a quiet dignity and presence that is greatly lacking in the replica of it recently discovered in the Baird flat at the Georgian House, Edinburgh. The artist has previously not been identified but it is here stylistically attributed to George Watson, who is known to have produced several 'daubs', copies, after the work of Skirving.⁸⁶ Watson's version illustrates a heavier handling, less clean brush strokes,⁸⁷ and with a duller tone that is less transparent than Skirving's, lacking depth in colour. Watson usually employed a browner colour scheme, a significant fact that clearly identifies this copy as by him. (Fig. 38) Another similar version is Raeburn's portrait of Carlyle (SNPG, PG2724), painted in 1796. The resemblances are striking in choice of representation, and it would appear that Skirving took the idea from Raeburn. Both Martin's and Skirving's paintings were later engraved, but of the latter, no

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 596.

⁸⁶ Correspondence of Mrs Leila Hoskins, SNPG.

⁸⁷ Caw, J. *Scottish Painting: Past and Present* 1908, p. 80.



38) Rev. Dr. Alex. Carlyle, by George Watson
(National Trust for Scotland)



37) Rev. Dr. Alexander Carlyle
(Scottish National Portrait Gallery)

further information is known.⁸⁸ Skirving later produced a black chalk drawing of Rev. Carlyle, seen in profile as a much older man, slumped forward, possibly dated 1800-5. (B.IV.2)

The above mentioned works have here been dated between 1795-1797, for around 1798 Skirving went to work in London. Two untraced pastel portraits of the Scottish banker, Mark Sprot (1743-1808) and Mrs Sprot, née Joanna Stewart of Physgill (?-1828), may be attributed to this period (Present location unknown). The exact movements of Mr Sprot at this time are not known but he became a successful and extremely wealthy banker in London and a prominent member of the Stock Exchange. The location of the originals are today unknown, but they were carefully recorded in mezzotint by the London engraver William Ward. Unfortunately no date is given but both are illustrated in the catalogue. A copy was made of Mark Sprot by an unknown artist, possibly by Skirving himself considering the quality of the replica. It is recorded in a colour laser print but no further data is known. (Fig. 39)

It seems Skirving remained in London at least until 1799 and during these two years, he continued to produce portrait miniatures in watercolour. Several male portraits have been attributed to this period; two gentlemen, of which one is dated 1798 (A.I.3), and three officers. These reveal developments in style, technique, and depiction of physiognomy and may well indicate the miniature work Skirving produced in Rome and, supposedly, in Brest. One of

⁸⁸ Burton, J.H. ed. *The Autobiography of Dr Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805*. Edinburgh, 1910. Burton describes the engraving as 'not of much merit.' p. 597.

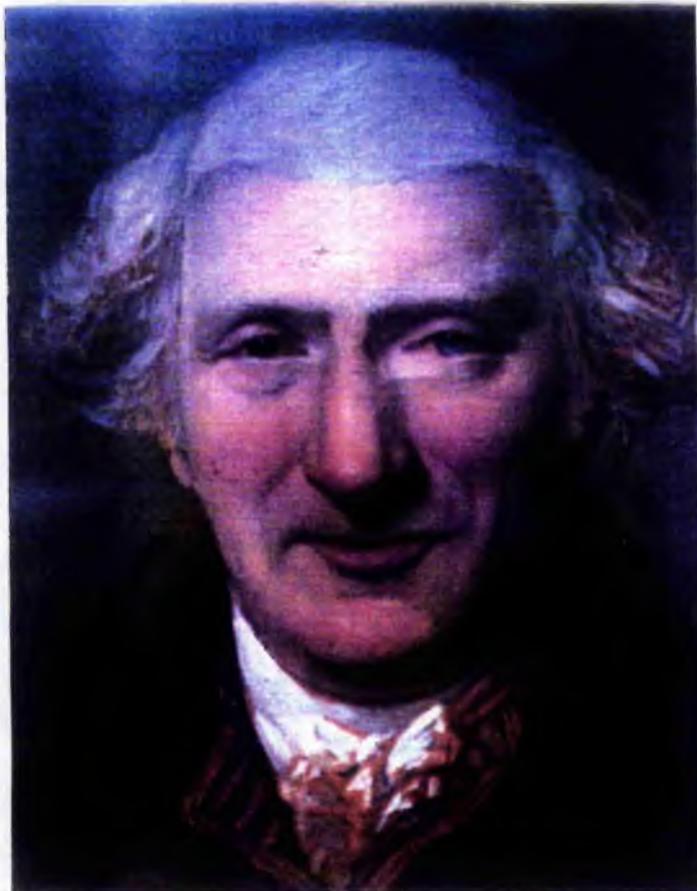
his finest female miniatures dates from this period, *Portrait of a Lady* (B.I.5, Present location unknown). The sitter is dressed in white with a large turban and bow. The colouring is now much clearer with a delicate elegance and assurance lacking in the earlier female portraits. It was probably executed in London as a copy after Charles Robertson's version of c. 1790.⁸⁹ Charles Robertson (1760-1821) was an Irish miniaturist who worked principally in Dublin with the exception of several years spent in London between 1785-92 and a visit in 1806. It appears to have been a popular motif, as a similar version has here been found by Sampson Towgood Roch(e), an Irish deaf-mute miniaturist (1759-1847).^{*} This artist worked in Bath from 1792 to 1817, and may have seen the miniatures while visiting London. (Fig. 40-42)

12. The "Keel" Head of Robert Burns

Skirving produced the most important work of his career around 1796-7 with the "keel" head of *Robert Burns* (1759-1796) (SNPG). While the majority of his works quickly fell into obscurity after Skirving's death, the red-chalk drawing of the poet is today appreciated world-wide and holds an esteemed position in Scottish pictorial history. Executed in Edinburgh, it is a direct copy after Alexander Nasmyth's famous rendering of Burns of an earlier date. Nasmyth's oval bust portrait in oil, 15 X 12 in., is one of six authenticated works produced in the

⁸⁹ Schidlof, L. *The Miniature in Europe*, vol. II, p. 760; vol. IV, p. 489, No. 1000.

* Christie's, 14th Oct. 1992.



39) Mark Sprot, attributed to Archibald Skirving
(Location unknown)



40) Portrait of a Lady (Location unknown)



41) Portrait of a Lady,
by Charles Robertson
(Location unknown)



42) Portrait of a Lady,
by Samuel Roch(e)
(Private collection)



43) Robert Burns (Scottish National Portrait Gallery)

presence of Burns. Nasmyth was commissioned in 1787 by William Creech, the publisher, who desired the portrait to be engraved by John Beugo for Creech's Edinburgh edition of Burns' Poems. Nasmyth left the portrait uncompleted, relieved to have caught the likeness so well for a non-portrait painter. Beugo duly engraved it, with some corrections made when encountering Burns. The sitter was greatly pleased with Beugo's version. Nasmyth produced two additional replicas, one in 1792, commissioned by George Thomson, the collector of Scottish songs; the other is a small full-length, known as the "Auchendrane" portrait, produced in 1828. Other artists who came to portray the poet were Peter Taylor, a house- and coach painter in Edinburgh; Alexander Reid who painted a miniature in 1795; and John Meir who produced a silhouette in 1787.⁹⁰

Skirving executed his drawing in red chalk on tinted paper. It is an enlarged version of Nasmyth's second version of 1792 and illustrates the detailed head in almost life-size, turned three-quarters to the left, with only a plain neckcloth and coat collar faintly indicated. (Fig. 43) It was for a long time regarded as an authentic original, despite the obvious similarities with the Nasmyth portrait, but Skirving had captured a liveliness and realism lacking in the other portraits. Experts have argued for and against this theory but there was never any proof a definite meeting between the sitter and artist. The Glasgow Herald held an open debate in a series of articles in 1890 in which the then owner, Sir

⁹⁰ Skinner, B. Burns: Authentic Likenesses. 1990, p. 5.

Theodore Martin, argued: "It is clear to any one familiar with art, that no such portrait as Skirving's could have been made by a man who had not studied Burns' face from life. Many of the best artists of the day have seen the portrait on my wall, and they are all of this mind."⁹¹ In an earlier issue he wrote:

"My own feeling is that no one who knows the original [Skirving's drawing] will care for any other portrait of Burns. Nasmyth has refined away the characteristics of the face, and, fine as his work is, it cannot bear comparison with Skirving's work, where you have the rustic and the poet given with a living reality so great that, seeing it, you seem to have seen Burns himself... No one can look at the eyes in Skirving's portrait but must see what infinite possibilities of expression are latent in them, just as they are in the full sensitive mouth. As a drawing, the manipulation is in the highest style of the greatest masters of chalk drawing. I value the Skirving portrait so highly as I do because I feel that from it we can learn how Burns looked, with all the passion, pathos, tenderness and humour by which he fascinated all with whom he came in contact."⁹²

Mr R.C. Hall, on the other hand, argued that "as to Skirving's portrait, of course it is based on Nasmyth's, and made to look what he *conceived* more realistic, from what he gathered from Gilbert [Burns] and his sisters, for he never saw Burns, and could not have been his friend, as The Times said in 1881."⁹³ The discussions continued in The Scotsman in 1933, for

⁹¹ 'Portraits of Burns.' The Glasgow Herald. 8th September 1890, p. 4.

⁹² 'Portrait of Burns.' The Glasgow Herald. 6th September, 1890, p. 10.

⁹³ The Glasgow Herald. 4th September 1890, p. 10.

admirers of Burns were still reluctant to accept it “merely as an idealised poetic conception based on the Nasmyth picture”.⁹⁴

The dispute was finally settled in 1966 when Skinner discovered in Devon a direct reference among the manuscripts of the artist. In a letter to his brother Robert, dated 17th June 1802. Skirving writes; “I have been repeatedly offered 30 [guineas] for a keel head of Burns, but it is not finished, and still with me, it is taken from a picture (for I never saw him) in the hands of one I despise.”⁹⁵ (Fig. 44) The owner he is referring to is George Thomson, his argument with him is not known. The word “keel” used in Skirving’s letter derives from ‘keelivine’, an old Scottish work for chalk.⁹⁶

Despite having been offered a good sum of money for the chalk drawing, the artist was reluctant to part with it. Perhaps he hoped to complete it or produce a copy of it in crayon for he never signed the drawing. In 1816 Skirving finally did decide to sell it, possibly influenced by the first publicly held Burns Celebration in Edinburgh in 1816, commemorating the poet’s birthday on 25th January. One hundred members dined together at MacEwan’s Rooms; among them Walter Scott. It was decided the celebration should be held triennially.⁹⁷ Scott quickly learnt of Skirving’s decision and wrote from Edinburgh 30th May 1816 to his close friend and poet, Samuel Rogers in London.

⁹⁴ Erskine Dods, J. ‘Burns Portraits.’ *The Scotsman*, 4th September 1933. p. 11.

⁹⁵ Copy of letter sent in to the SNPG by Mrs Leila Hoskins. The only sheet to be saved of the lost material of 1984. It was sent in to settle the argument over the connection between Burns and Skirving.

⁹⁶ Skinner, B. *Scotland’s Magazine*. January 1959, p. 44.

⁹⁷ Gilbert, W.M. ed *Edinburgh in the Nineteenth Century*. Edinburgh, 1901, p. 62.

on Little Water which he bought conjunctly, with one Hunter, originally from Herperdeon, and who it is said, tired of life, and left Patrick a few Thousands. Arch? still in Canada, Done well. John went to America, but I never hear of nor from him. John Rennie is the one you see in the news. David Merryless lost a ship, by fire, in India, at present in the Mediterranean. his second voyage. James Dods lost a ship in the west Indies, no news since: and not a word of his brother John. Robert Penrice at Haddington, Cleary, frugal, idle, his mother paying for her partiality to Alex? who, after trying the writer, Gocer, Spirit and Corn dealing, is, I fear, no better than when he began: does not speak to James Shirreff, W Kinzie nor me, and all on different scores. They have been, at least, in 13 hours together. Franklin's Poor Richard says, 3 removes are equal to a fire; by this rule, they have been 4 times burnt out. I have been repeatedly offered 30 guineas for a breed head of Burns, but it is not finished, and still with me, it is taken from a picture (for I never saw him) in the hands of one I despise. I have ^{been} paid 30 for heads in Creyons, and that only twice, a Lord Meadowbank and his son. but am offered more than that for a picture of Burns's Highland Mary, which I am sorry to part with. The chance is, it will be in London, long before your return. I am much pleased with it. - I work a little every day, but it does not make 12 hours per week, so in this you are right: what I meant of my sight was, that both eyes were equally strong, for you remember I complained of the right one, but small objects, when near

'My dear Rogers, - Mr. Skirving of Edinburgh, an unrivalled artist as a painter of crayons, is going to London with the only good portrait of Burns. I think you will like to look at it, and perhaps you may be even disposed to purchase it, provided the artists intention of selling it holds good till he gets to London. Mr. Skirving is a man of great genius [original spelling] in his art and is in circumstances of perfect independance although his dress unless he should rectify it when he gets [to] London would argue something very deficient. In fact both his dress and address require all the allowance which genius knows how to make for the caprices and eccentricities of its brethren. Do not give yourself any trouble with him beyond what is exactly in the way of a lover of art.'⁹⁸

Scott was a great admirer of Burns whom he had had the fortune to meet at the house of Professor Adam Ferguson in 1786-7, when aged fifteen.⁹⁹ Keen that it should not disappear without a trace, he ended the letter to Rogers with; "I should think Mr. Sharpe would like to look at the Ayrshire ploughman. If Skirving *does sell* it, which appears to me very problematical, I wish this unique representation of our great poet to fall into good hands. If I had not been buying a sort of Oxmoor like Tristram Shandy and building hedging ditching & draining, Rob should never have crossed the Border."¹⁰⁰ What difficulties should arise in connection with the sale are not explained. Samuel Rogers' reply of 13th July 1816 offers no clues, merely thanking Scott for the

⁹⁸ Grierson, H.J.C. ed. The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, 1815-1817. London, 1933, p. 243.

⁹⁹ The Scotsman, 12th September 1933, p. 11.

¹⁰⁰ Grierson, H.J. 1933, p. 243.

"introduction to Robert Burns, & to the Magician who has raised him again to life. To speak seriously, the Portrait is admirable, tho' I confess it would have affected my mind still more, if he had sat for it. The Artist too struck me exceedingly. Such simplicity of manners I never saw; & he has great genius!"¹⁰¹

The 'Magician' returned to Edinburgh with the portrait where it remained in his studio until his death. In the preface of the Works of Robert Burns, 1866, Skirving would apparently request that his "more notable visitors" write their favourable impressions of either the portrait or the sitter on the reverse of the drawing. Apparently the reverse is 'covered over with remarks of a very curious character.'¹⁰² This statement was brought to the attention of the SNP but since no other source verifies this, it has not been checked. Similar treatment was given to another of Skirving's favourites, the profile portrait in chalk of his close East Lothian friend **John Rennie**, the engineer.¹⁰³

John Rennie purchased the portraits of Burns and of himself upon the death of Skirving in 1819. He died three years later and they passed on to his son George Rennie. When he died in 1881, his wife auctioned them at her residence in Belgrave Square, London. It was acquired by Sir Theodore Martin, a lawyer and man of letters in London, for the sum of £40, who at the time expressed his intention of bequeathing it to the SNP upon his death. His residuary legatee sold it to the

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

¹⁰² The Works of Robert Burns, Blackie and Sons, 1866, Preface.

¹⁰³ Rennie is described as an intimate friend in The Glasgow Herald, 30th October 1909, p. 11; and Samuel Smile's Lives of the Engineers, p. 278.

Board of Trustees in Edinburgh in 1910 for £500, James Caw of the SNPG handling the transaction.¹⁰⁴

'This eminent son of Athlestaneford well deserves a niche in the temple of our parochial fame. His artistic genius has shed a glory over a far wider region than even national bounds can either acclaim or appraise. For one work alone - his immortal portrait of Scotland's national bard - he may be assured the honour and gratitude of prosperity.'¹⁰⁵

Rev. Thomas Duncan of Athelstaneford.

Prosterity has indeed revered Skirving's image of Burns. With innumerable reproductions supplied by Burns clubs and masonic lodges all over the world, the Nasmyth and Skirving portraits "have attained the status of national symbols, like the thistle, the saltire cross and the lion rampant."¹⁰⁶ The Skirving portrait continually reappears on club jewels, badges, tokens, letter heads, envelopes, tickets, etc. The portrait has also appeared on stamps; in 1959 S. Zainea designed a 55 bani stamp for Rumania; Gordon Huntley reproduced it for Britain's 4d stamp in 1966; while Fraser Haston used it on slogan postmarks for the Burns Heritage Trail in 1975. It has also been reproduced on Wedgwood's polychrome earthenware plates.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Correspondance of Sir Theodore Martin and James Caw, SNPG file on Burns.

¹⁰⁵ Duncan, Rev. T. *Athelstaneford*, 1934, p. 108.

¹⁰⁶ Skinner, B. *Burns: Authentic Liknesses*, 1990, p. 15.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

In connection with Skirving's letter to Robert in 1802, the artist mentions the imaginary portrait, now lost, of one of the poet's former sweethearts, known as the 'Highland Mary'. Reputed to have been the daughter of Archibald Campbell, a Clyde sailor, she is thought to have died in childbirth around 1784. Burns wrote several poems to her memory and is thought to have been the father.¹⁰⁸ Skirving writes that he was offered more than thirty guineas for the 'Highland Mary', the same amount he had been offered for the Burns portrait. He goes on: "which I am sorry to part with. The chance is, it will be in London long before your return: I am much pleased with it." The portrait is mentioned by Cleghorn who wrote that Skirving 'seldom attempted any thing fanciful or poetical - but his "Highland Mary" was very successful, and attracted much attention.'¹⁰⁹

13. Pastel Portraits of the Nineteenth Century

Around the turn of the century Skirving began producing profile portraits in chalk and pastel on wooden boards, a highly unusual, if not original idea, that worked surprisingly well. One such example to have survived is the preparatory sketch in chalk and wash on mahogany, signed and dated, of the Hon. Charles Napier of Merchiston (1731-1807), executed in 1800 and presently in the Kelvingrove Art Collection. (A.IV.6) The artist produced several portraits in the same technique.

¹⁰⁸ Information courtesy of Mr Andrew Skirving, letter to the author.

¹⁰⁹ Cleghorn, G. *Ancient and Modern Art*, 1848, p. 204.

William Chalmers and Son, a firm of frame makers in Edinburgh, commissioned eight such boards from joiners for Skirving in March 1816, which suggests it had been a success for the artist to continue with this mode for so many years. Jessy Harden (1776-1837) wrote in her diary of 23rd July 1802;

"Skirving breakfasted with us & amused us by drawing our profiles with chalk on boards being in very good humour. I expect he will begin my Father's picture very soon now - we were in the midst of jelly making too wh. made his visit not so convenient."¹¹⁰

Her father was **Robert Allan** (1745-1818). His wife had died in 1799, but the children that may have been portrayed thus were **Agnes** (1774/5-1859), **Janet (Jessy)** (1776-1837), **Thomas, F.R.S.** (1777-1834), **Helen** (1784-1853), and **Catherine** (1786-1825), then aged sixteen.¹¹¹ The portrait of Robert Allan may have been executed in pastel on paper, or possibly board, as were the two pastels of **Mr Benjamin Yule** (1740-?) and his wife **Marion Yule, née Sprot** (1750-1808) (Private collection). These two are the only surviving examples of pastel on board known today and may well date from this period. (Fig.s 45-46)

Some of Skirving's finest portraits executed in the nineteenth century are notably the three female pastels of **Mrs John Wilson** (1753-1824) (SNPG), **Mrs Johnston of Hutton Hall** (NG of S), and the **Portrait of an Old Lady**

¹¹⁰ The diaries of Jessy Harden, NLS, MS 88 34, f. 67.

¹¹¹ Foskett, D. John Harden of Brathay Hall, Kendal, 1974, p. 63.



45) Benjamin Yule (Private collection)



46) Marion Yule (Private collection)

(Private collection). These illustrate an astonishing sensitivity and dense brilliance that stands out from the rest, with an exceptionally well balanced colour scheme, using a warm palette in the portrait of Mrs Wilson whose extremely pale facial appearance contrasts harmoniously with the sombre mourning gown. Her pious and dignified character captured in her gentle eyes and smile. Her granddaughter, Mrs Gordon, describes how shrewd 'sense, wise economy, and well-ordered benevolence' marked all the actions of this 'stately figure of Mrs Wilson, in her elegantly fitting black satin dress'.¹¹² (Fig. 47)

Entirely different are the colder shades of sharper clarity seen in the fresh and vivacious portrait of Mrs Johnston, who almost radiates charm and youthful vitality. (Fig. 48) It is comparatively intense in character and much less formal than the Portrait of an Old Lady, where the artist instead conveys quiet dignity and serenity in the seated half-length of the elderly woman. (Fig. 49) Skirving has both signed and dated it, an unusual event which may signify his own contentment with it. The identity and nationality of the sitter is uncertain. A small miniature replica was painted by John Comberford (c. 1770-1832), generally considered one of Ireland's finest miniature painters.¹¹³ (Fig. 50) The authenticity of the miniature is disputed, some would like to attribute it to Skirving, but having examined other works by Comberford, it

¹¹² Gordon, Mrs. *'Christopher North' - A Memoir of John Wilson*. 1862, vol. I, p. 184.

¹¹³ Foskett, D. *Miniatures: Dictionary & Guide*, 1987, p. 243.

Another miniature by this artist has been recorded by Foskett, belonging to the family of John Harden, husband of Jessy Allan. It is also dated 1803 and clarifies the artist's identity of the above miniature of the unknown lady..Foskett, *John Harden of Brathay Hall*. 1974, pl. 4. (Mrs Jane Harden).



48) Mrs Johnston of Berwick Hall
(Scottish National Portrait Gallery)



47) Mrs John Wilson (Scottish National Portrait Gallery)



49) Portrait of an Old Lady (Private collection)



50) Portrait of an Old Lady,
by John Comberford
(Private collection)



51) Alexander Fraser-Tytler (Private collection)

is here agreed with Foskett that it stylistically belongs to the Irishman. Skirving's half-length is exceptionally detailed, showing the woman's hands veined and wrinkled, wearing a plain gold wedding ring. Very rarely does the artist attempt depicting hands and this is his most successful example and would probably have required preparatory studies. A pastel drawing on board of hands is recorded in the Studio contents of 1819,¹¹⁴ where the sitter is identified as **Lady Dundonalds**. (C.14, untraced) Unfortunately it seems the latter may have been too young to fit the age of the *Portrait of an Old Lady*, who appears to be in her seventies at least.

Other female portraits of this period are **Mrs John Carnegie** (1773-1853) (B.II.2, NG of S), a rather informal presentation of the artist's half-sister Jessy, in dark long hair; the seated **Mrs Susan Campbell Tait** (?-1814) (A.II.13, Present location unknown), dated 1803; and the formidable **Mrs Euphan Guthrie Wright** (1739-1831) (B.II.16, Present location unknown) of a later date. The few male portraits of this period are the three quarter-length of the seated **Robert Boswell** (1746-1804) (B.II.1), c. 1800, and the two standing half-lengths of **Lord William Craig** (1745-1813) (B.II.3), and **Alexander Fraser-Tytler** (1747-1813), **Lord Woodhouselee**.¹¹⁵ (Fig. 51) In tracing the latter, two other family pastels were found; of **Mrs Isabella Fraser-Tytler** and **Margaret Fraser-Tytler** (?-1862). (Fig.s 52-53) The location of the former had been lost since it was exhibited at

¹¹⁴ Studio contents of 1819, NLS, Acc. 10102.

¹¹⁵ This portrait was found in 1993 by writing to local families of the name of Fraser-Tytler in Fife.



53) Mrs Margaret Fraser-Tytler (Private collection)



52) Mrs Isabella Fraser-Tytler (Private collection)



54) Details of Mrs Isabella Fraser-Tytler

the Royal Scottish Academy in 1880, the latter is a new attribution and very similar in style and technique. These two differ from Skirving's previous format, although with a frontal view of head and shoulders, they are strangely placed on the lower right side, with excess background that is disturbingly unbalanced. Certain features in their depiction suggest another artist may have been involved. Distinct changes appears to have been made to the bonnet of Mrs Isabella, her brown strand of hair falling down her side could initially have been a head band from the bonnet. The eyes are not of Skirving's usual style, and in certain areas the general colouring is not of his palette. It is difficult to date either of the portraits, but they share distinctly similar features in dress and depiction, where certain areas are decidedly by Skirving. Close-ups of the portrait of Mrs Isabella Fraser-Tytler illustrate Skirving's technique. (Fig. 54 A & B)

14. Chalk Profiles

Skirving's surviving chalk drawings of profile portraits generally date from the 1790s and 1816. The sitters, male and female, are usually viewed sideways in left profile, informally dressed and highly finished in handling. Skirving's consistent use of red chalk continues the tradition of Ramsay who produced delicate studies, while Skirving would cover the entire paper. MacMillan describes his work here as 'beautiful

and often very informal'.¹¹⁶ Several examples have survived, possibly because Skirving himself had them framed, as noted in the studio contents. One of his earliest dated examples is a portrait of **An Unknown Man**, inscribed Rome, 1793 (Fig. 55), another, of the same title, is dated 1797 (Fig. 56).

This strict format suited Skirving well for he used it again on his London visit in 1816, exemplified by the portraits of **A. Handasyde** (Fig. 57), the two portraits of **A Profile Portrait of Unknown Lady** (B.IV.6) and **Portrait of an Old Lady** (A.III.8). The portraits of **Mrs Grizel Ainslie**, Skirving's sister, (Fig. 58), and the portrait of **An Unknown Boy** (Fig. 59) are fine examples of a successful combination of classical elements with a certain degree of informality. The drawings are meticulously even and finished, remarkably reminiscent in style of the profile portraits by John Brown (1752-1787), 'the Prince of Scottish delineators',¹¹⁷ who was frequently commissioned by the Earl of Buchan to portray members of the Society of Antiquaries in Edinburgh. One such example that resemble Skirving's style is Brown's pencil portrait of *Adam de Cardonnel* (NG of S, PGL 73), a surgeon and antiquary. (Fig. 60)

15. A General Assessment

A detailed stylistic progression is not so apparent since Skirving seldom experimented in different styles which also

¹¹⁶ MacMillan, D. *Scottish Art 1460-1990*, 1990, p. 150.

¹¹⁷ *The Bee*, 1793. vol. 15, p. 27.



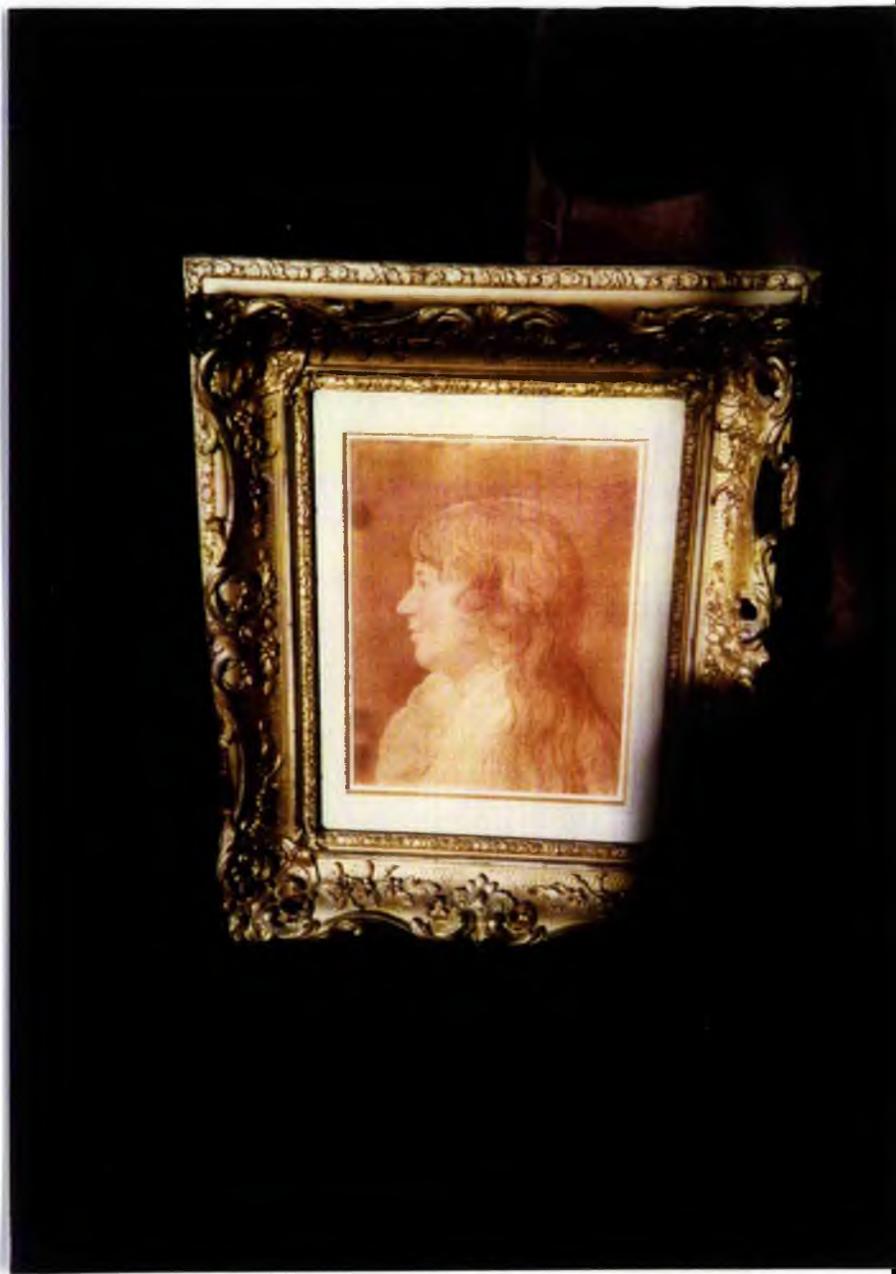
55) An Unknown Man, 1793. (Private collection)



56) Portrait of an Unknown Man, 1797. (Private collection)



57) A. Handasyde (Private collection)



59) An Unknown Boy (Private collection)



58) Mrs Grizel Ainslie (Private collection)



60) Adam de Chardonnel, by John Brown
(National Galleries of Scotland)

complicates any attribution of dates. He consistently maintained a strict format of bust length portraits, frontal or profile, generally omitting hands or detailed backgrounds, features which were common in pastel portraiture, and possibly one explanation for his preference for this medium if lacking artistic confidence with the other attributes. Skirving painted meticulously with precision and care, always striving to capture the likeness rather than illustrate any artistic flair and ingenuity, making his highly finished technique and style a hallmark. He used pastels evenly, crayon marks carefully smoothed out, creating a superb matt finish that perhaps sometimes took away the spontaneity of the portrayal. The sitters often look thoughtful and pensive, displayed in stillness and harmony. Similarly reflected in his rare portraits of children. His portraiture may convey little drama or passion in mood or expression, but share instead a photographic stillness, a subtle atmosphere of presence and gentle, but vivid realism. Although often accused by his contemporaries of being too honest in his depiction, the portraits are nevertheless drawn with compassion and understanding.

A notable feature in Skirving's art is the certain lack of a three-dimensional projection, visible in both his portraiture and architectural drawings. This could be attributed either to his lack of proper schooling, or, as Skinner suggests, to the artist's eye defect, which would certainly explain why the figures often appear rather flat. Pastel, however, is a medium that is unable to provide depth in darker colours and which would therefore enhance this aspect even more so. His large output of profile portraits in chalk

could also explain this avoidance of confronting pictorial depth, for even if Skirving was not generally hindered by his eyesight, there does appear to have been some difficulty in eye-adjustment.

Skirving's artistic improvements are best illustrated by comparing his early and late miniature and pastel work. The chalk drawings hardly vary in style, and the oil paintings are too limited in number to offer firm stylistic conclusions. While the miniatures of the 1780s may show inexperience in technique, they nevertheless display an appealing naivety in pale pastel colours, with a clear preference for sweetness and pretty detail. His examples of the late 1790s, on the other hand, reveal a dramatic change with a deeper understanding of both physiognomy and painting techniques. The colour palette is clearer and more sombre in tone than previously, and the individuals have matured in character.¹¹⁸ Skirving's formative years in Rome improved his artistic experience and style significantly, and this is similarly apparent in his pastel portraits. These eventually reveal a clear stylistic improvement when compared with the earlier Roman portraits of the early 1790s, then almost anonymous in character and less defined in form, while his later portraiture of the early nineteenth century display a much more superior technique and development, immediately noticeable when comparing the portraits of Lord Elcho or Hugh Cleghorn to the signed and dated Portrait of an Old Lady (See previous illustrations). The latter firmly places him among the true

¹¹⁸ The extremely limited number of miniatures that have surfaced since the 1970s are generally valued at around £250-300 each. His pastels vary considerably, valued between £500 and £20,000.

masters of portraiture, making him one of Britain's finest, and certainly worthy of more notice than merely as a Scottish pastelist.

16. A General Outline of the Works

In presenting an overall view of Skirving's oeuvre, the works are chronologically listed under medium, in alphabetical order of the sitter's surnames, and include stylistically attributed works and documented dates.

1) Edinburgh 1760s-1777

Miniature:

Unknown lady. (B.I.13)

Pastel:

Henry Dundas, early 1770s. (A.II.6)

Portrait of a young girl. (B.II.12)

Oil:

Self-portrait, 1769. (B.III.6)

Mr Adam Skirving, early 1770s. (B.III.4)

Mrs Adam Skirving c. 1768/9. (B.III.7)

Drawing:

Documented:

Mr Mackie, 1776. (C.33)

Members of the Dalrymple family, 1776. (C.13)

2) London & Edinburgh 1777-1786

Miniature:

Mary Ann Biddulph. (B.I.6)

Portrait of a lady, c. 1780. (B.I.4)

Portrait of a lady, c. 1780-85. (B.I.5)

Unknown lady, 1780. (A.I.1)

Pastel:

Mrs Johnston. 1784-86. (B.II.7)

Oil:

Drawing:

Documented:

Miss Hume of Ninewells. 1785. (C.27)

John Hume, 1785. (C. 28)

John Lockhart, 1785. (C.31)

Mrs Lockhart, 1785. (C.32)

Adam Skirving, min. 1785. (C.42)

3) Italy 1787-1794

Miniature:

Pastel:

Hugh Cleghorn, 1790. (A.II.3)

Lord Elcho, 1790. (A.II.7)

Gavin Hamilton. (A.II.9)

Self-Portrait. (B.II.8)

Francis Wemyss, c. 1790. (A.II.14)

Oil:

Drawing:

Father James MacCormick. (A.III.4)

Landscape with Three Stags, (A.III.11)

Entrance to a Park, (A.III.12)

A Roman Villa with the Dome of St Peters. (A.III.13)

Study of a Seated Man with Chair. (A.III.10)

Study of a Donkey and Foal. (B.IV.12)

A Tent-like Shelter. (B.IV.13)

The Gardens behind St Peters. (B.IV.14)

Ornamental Fountain with Sea Horses. (B.IV.15)

The Dome of St Peters. (B.IV.16)

St Paul's, Rome. (B.IV.17)

A Seated Woman. (B.IV.18)

British Tourists in Rome, 1792. (A.III.7)

Drawings from a Cast, 1793. (A.III.14)

Portrait of Unknown Man, 1793. (B.IV.7)

Documented:

Gordon, Mr. Cousin of Lord Elcho's cousin , c. 1790. (C.19)

Sir William Hamilton, 1789. (C.23)

Sir John Macpherson, c. 1790. (C.34)

Two portraits of unknown India gentleman. (C.60)

The Gamesters, after Correggio. (C.52)

The Gypsy, after Correggio. (C.56)

4) Edinburgh & London, 1795-1800

Miniature:

Portrait of an Officer. (B.I.8)

Portrait of an Unknown Officer. (B.I.9)

Portrait of a Gentleman. (B.I.10)

Portrait of an Officer. (A.I.2)

Portrait of a Gentleman, 1798. (A.I.3)

Pastel:

John Campbell.(A.II.1)

Lady Charlotte Campbell. (A.II.2)

John Clerk of Eldin. (A.II.4)

Henry Home Drummond. (A.II.5)

Mary Drummond Pringle. (A.II.10)

Mark Sprot. (A.II.11)

Mrs Sprot. (A.II.12)

Oil:

Dr Benjamin Bell. (B.III.1)

Rev. Alexander Carlyle. (B.III.2)

Drawing:

William Berry, 1797. (A.III.1)

Robert Burns. (B.III.2)

Professor James Robertson. (A.III.6)

Portrait of an Unknown Man, 1797. (A.III.9)

Documented:

Mr Brown of Boggs, 1796. (C.9)
Mrs Gray, 1798. Miniature. (C.21)
Highland Mary.(C.24)
John Rennie. (B.III.3)

5) Edinburgh, 1800-1819

Miniature:

Pastel:

Robert Boswell. (B.II.1)
Mrs John Carnegie. (B.II.2)
Lord Craig. (B.II.3)
Mary Cunningham. (B.II.4)
Alexander Fraser-Tytler. (A.II.8)
Mrs Isabella Fraser-Tytler. (B.II.5)
Mrs Mary Fraser-Tytler. (B.II.6)
Mrs Guthrie Wright. (A.II.16)
Mrs Campbell Tait, 1803. (A.II.13)
Benjamin Yule. (B.II.9)
Mrs Yule. (B.II.10)
Mrs John Wilson.(A.II.15)
Portrait of an Old Lady, 1803. (A.II.17)

Oil:

Drawing:

Mrs Ainslie. (B.IV.1)

A. Handasyde, 1816. (A.III.3)

Hon. Charles Napier, 1800. (A.III.5)

Portrait of Unknown Boy. (B.IV.9)

Portrait of an Old Lady, 1816. (A.III.8)

Profile Portrait of Unknown Lady. (B.IV.6)

Documented:

Robert Allan, 1802. (C.2)

Mary Ballingall, c. 1812. (C.6)

Mrs Cochrane, 1816. (C.11)

Professor Adam Ferguson, 1815. (C.16)

Lord Meadowbank. (C.36)

CHAPTER THREE - A STUDIO PRACTICE

Portraiture in eighteenth century Britain was dominated by the the large studios of Kneller, Van Loo, Hudson, Ramsay, Reynolds and Lawrence, who continued the Baroque studio tradition of keeping assistants and presenting their work in large show-rooms or galleries for public display. It was an excellent way of publicising their work and fame and it also pleased the clients who welcomed the status and attention. The popularity and constant demand for portraiture in Britain was unequalled in Europe, where historical, religious, mythological and allegorical images played a vital role in society. History painting was regarded by all theorists as the highest form of painting, while portraits were 'mere' copies of individuals - not an intellectual exercise that demanded creative thinking, knowledge or ideas. Portraiture lacked an independent aesthetic value of a higher order in the hierarchy of painting. It was thought the images were of value only to the sitter and his circle of family and friends, but gradually this view changed. William Combe wrote in 1777:

'Portraits ... have, from the insipid and uninteresting style in which they were generally painted, been considered as mere Trash and Lumber by all who were ignorant of the Originals. But, by the Genius of many modern Professors of Eminence, that Insipidity is vanished, and, by their Hands, a Portrait is now interesting even to the Stranger, and ... will be interesting to future Ages.'¹

¹ Shawe-Taylor, D. *The Georgians: Eighteenth Century Portraiture and Society*. 1990, p. 28. (Combe, 1777, Introduction).

The nobility, however, did not expect to be confronted with a pictorial replica, facial blemishes included, but rather an ideal representation. A noblewoman wished to be presented favourably, with elegance and charm, while her husband often expected dignity and presence in his portrait. In the 1750s a truthful depiction was not encouraged as can be seen in the failing business of the visiting Swiss pastellist, Liotard, in London at the time.² The 'sweetness' of the work by other pastellists such as John Russell, who often presented his female sitters with rosy cheeks, holding pets, and the inspiring style of Rosalba Carriera that was more of the vogue. The aim of portraiture was to flatter not so much the face as the 'general character' of the sitter, emphasizing prestigious advantages.³ This view made it easier for the portraitist who usually had to produce a likeness in three or four sessions of an hour each. There was no time for penetrating psychology, but by combining elevated poses and certain attributes of the rank of the sitter, the artist could produce a gratifying portrait of superficial accuracy.

Skirving's explicit honesty must have appeared rather curious to some of his contemporaries. Samuel Smiles noted that Skirving included a wart in a gentleman's portrait;⁴ there are two such examples, that of Lord Craig and Rev. Alexander Carlyle. Mackenzie writes that his portraits 'indeed were facsimilies, even of the blemished of the faces which he

² Liotard's first year in London was successful but in the second year his business failed due to the unpopular realism of his portraiture. Waterhouse, E. *Painting in Britain 1530 to 1790*. 1988, p. 335.

³ Shawe-Taylor, D. *The Georgians...* 1990, p. 30.

⁴ Smiles, S. *Lives of the Engineers*, vol. II, 1861, p. 278.

painted; he never spared a freckle or a smallpox mark'.⁵ While Allan Ramsay's scientific objectivity was softened by gentle courtesy,⁶ Skirving belonged to the 'warts and all' class of painters, something that was to become characteristic of Scottish portraiture as time progressed, shaped by the growing interest and passion for science and human studies but possibly also influenced by Calvinism.⁶ 'Idealisation, general ideas and individual character: this is a mixture which in the twentieth century would curdle. For us, character means something unique.'⁷ Perhaps Skirving would have agreed.

Skirving's directness appears not to have gone down well with some of his clients, who expected to be deferred to by the artist, however ill-informed they were as to what was fashionable or desirable - a frustrating habit to many artists who could not tolerate ignorant criticism. Vertue relates how one painter would storm into his assistant's room, 'vent his passion', then, 'return to the company, put on an obliging agreeable air, [and] with the countenance of satisfaction wait their pleasure & censures.' One artist even defaced his work and returned it with the fee, while Reynolds simply paid no heed.⁸ Another trying aspect was the accompanying companion of the sitter. It was common to bring these along for entertainment for longer sessions. 'These friends were the real tormentors, for their flattery of the sitter

⁵ Thompson, H.W. ed. The Anecdotes and Egostisms of Henry Mackenzie 1745-1831, 1927, p. 212.

⁶ Young, D. Edinburgh in the Age of Sir Walter Scott, 1965, p. 93.

⁷ Shawe-Taylor, D. The Georgians..., 1990, p. 31.

⁸ Shawe-Taylor, p. 17. The artist to deface his work was Henry Cooke.

usually took the form of contrasting the perfections of nature with the inadequacies of the rendering.⁹

1. Skirving's studio practice

Speed of execution was a quality much admired in portrait painters, for obvious reasons, as well as pleasing and entertaining manners. An 'affable and Obliging Temper, with a share of pleasant Wit' is an essential quality in a portrait painter, wrote Vertue.¹⁰ Indeed, a wealthy patron expected to be amused with polite conversation, for a sitting was deemed a genteel social occasion, and it was therefore favourable if the artist's lodgings were respectable and 'fit for a person of distinction'.¹¹ Unlike the majority of professional painters, Skirving did not see the need of a show-room or a gallery to promote his business. His private studio at home on Southside, St James's Square, or later on No. 12 Leith Terrace, in Edinburgh, was deemed sufficient, and indeed, his fame spread verbally by appreciative customers. Although not a complete recluse from society, he nonetheless preferred to avoid open exposure to personal criticisms and judgements. An open gallery would have been an unnatural environment for a sensitive artist who preferred the privacy of his studio where selected customers could visit him. He would also visit their homes. Various visits have been recorded, notably to Robert

⁹ Ibid. (Amelia Opie, 1809; Hoare, 1810).

¹⁰ Shawe-Taylor, p. 14. (Vertue, IV, p. 27).

¹¹ Shawe-Taylor, D. 1990, p. 14.

Allan's house in Edinburgh in 1802, and the families of John Welsh, the Earl of Wemyss, and John Dalrymple in East Lothian.¹²

Another reason for not wanting a show-room may have been the amount of pressure this would induce to produce more work. Skirving's working method was slow but meticulous. Henry Mackenzie relates how '[time], indeed, he did not well appreciate to himself or others; and being the most elaborate and minute of artists made his patients (as they might be called) who were sitting to him sometimes give him fifty or sixty sittings.'¹³ This was an astonishing amount considering less than a handful was the norm, but it is possible that it was due to Skirving's eye problem, which made it difficult for him to work for longer than half an hour or so at a time. It would therefore be more convenient to the sitter if the artist made the visit. The advantage of a prolonged process was that it enabled the detailed studies of impressive precision that characterise the work of Skirving.

Towards the end of his career he produced no more than two or three portraits a year though these were greatly admired and, in fact, he became one of the highest paid artists in Edinburgh; sometimes receiving as much as a hundred guineas for a single pastel head - a sum that four or five times exceeded the prices Raeburn was being paid.¹⁴ The £200 Skirving received for Sir William Hamilton's portrait in Naples

¹² Visit to Robert Allan, recorded by Foskett, D. John Harden of Brathay Hall, p. 15; John Welsh - Clubbe, J ed. Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle, p. 134; John Dalrymple by Skinner, Transactions, p. 47; and The Earl of Wemyss by Smiles, S. Lives of the Engineers, p. 278.

¹³ Thompson, H.W. ed. The Anecdotes and Egotisms of Henry Mackenzie, 1927, p. 212.

¹⁴ Caw, J. Scottish Painting: Past & Present, 1908, p. 46.

in 1789 would have sustained him for a considerable time. On his return to Scotland, 'he pursued his art in a somewhat desultory manner. He painted when, where, and whom he pleased; and sometimes pursued a very eccentric course with his sitters.'¹⁵ In a letter to his brother Robert, dated 1800, he writes that he has put up a sign in his room, stating that 'Mr Skirving has no show room and wishes to be private, and is satisfied with employment of his acquaintances.'¹⁶ Cleghorn writes:

'Anxious and fastidious in the extreme, he required a more than usual number of sittings. He had a great dislike to any interruption, or to a third party being present. When painting the portrait of Lady Charlotte Campbell, the daughter of the Duke of Argyle, one of the most beautiful women of her time, then in her height of her beauty, she was attended by her husband, Mr Campbell of Shawfield, and her lap-dog. Mr Skirving bore with this for a few sittings; at last, losing all patience, he said to her ladyship at the conclusion of the sitting, "Lady Charlotte, if you wish me to complete your portrait, I beg you will leave your husband and lap-dog at home." This, of course, gave offence, and Lady Charlotte never returned. After the lapse of many years, one of her family applied to Mr Skirving for the portrait, unfinished as it was, and offered to give any price he chose to ask. This, however, he positively refused, as he thought he had been ill treated.'¹⁷

This last statement is verified by the portrait's presence in the list of studio contents in 1819 which the artist must have

¹⁵ Smiles, S. *Lives of the Engineers*, 1861, p. 278.

¹⁶ Skinner, *Transactions*, 1970, p. 51.

¹⁷ Cleghorn, G. *Ancient and Modern Art*, 1848, p. 204.

approved of himself for he had it framed and glazed.¹⁸ It has since been sold twice by Sotheby's as the companion piece to her husband's completed life-size pastel. (Fig. 61-62)

Thomas Carlyle, at one time living in the vicinity of Skirving's studio in Edinburgh in the late 1810s, relates a variation of the same incident, making this the best recorded of his portrait. Cleghorn's may be more accurate since he knew the artist well but Carlyle's version is fascinating in its immediacy:

'Skirving would, *impromptu* now & then, do admirable Likenesses, with a burnt stick or a bit of chalk, on the board of a pair of bellows; but as to sitters, he had his inexorable whims; and many faces there were which no reward or penalty would so much as induce him to try: "No, no; can't be done!" - "And why, then?" He declined to tell why; no use pressing him to say why. One positive Lady, pressing him over much, got this: "The real reason, Madam, is I don't want to raise the price of yellow-ochre!" Sitters whom he did accept had to know that it was on strict terms and only as a favour. Lady Charlotte Campbell, famed beauty of Edinburgh and of the world, Duke of Argyll's Sister, and at that time in her meridian height, had got him persuaded; dress, headdress and details were all accurately settled, and the first sitting went off altogether well. At the second sitting, something in the headdress had been altered, Beauty, on second thoughts, discovering some improvement possible there. Skirving flew angry; remonstrated with emphasis, "Can't stand the like of this, Madam!" - was, however, flattered and persuaded into standing it; and again made a successful and hopeful stage, or sitting. Capricious Beauty, I suppose, was herself flattered at subduing & seducing the fiery creature; and tried it a second time; came for her third

¹⁸ William Bruce, Studio contents of 1819, NLS. Acc. 10102.



61) Col. John Campbell of Shawfield (Location unknown)



62) Lady Charlotte Campbell (Location unknown)

sitting, in headdress again slightly altered: but this time, Skirving threw down his brush; inexorable to apologies, persuasions, and entreaties; and no third sitting was or ever could be.¹⁹

This incident reveals Skirving's dependency on the presence of the object or sitter, and how much he valued accuracy in his work. Cleghorn explains how Skirving 'always painted his sitters on a level with the eye, without any attempt at idealisation, or bold effects of light and shadow. His object was resemblance, character, and a faithful imitation of nature. He never touched the picture, not even the drapery, except in the presence of the sitter. Though the details were scrupulously expressed, there was no hardness. He had a perfect knowledge of light and shade.'²⁰ This was in direct contrast to the working methods of Raeburn, seven years his junior, who worked swiftly with ease and had a most amiable temper and talent for conversation that attracted clients. However, not all approved of the younger artist's manner of painting. Henry Mackenzie noted;

'His heads were in general excellent, but their adjuncts, the hands for instance, were grossly defective in drawing and anatomical precision so as often to look like an unshaped piece of plaster of Paris. If he had, like some great painters, much employed as he was, procured the help of some assistant to paint the hands and still life of his portraits, they would have been of much greater value.'²¹

¹⁹ Clubbe, J. ed. *Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle*. 1974, p. 133.

²⁰ Cleghorn, G. *Ancient and Modern Art*, 1848, p. 204.

²¹ Thompson, H.W. ed. *The Anecdotes and Egotisms of Henry Mackenzie*. 1927, p. 214.

Raeburn was more of a professional in his approach to his work. He would paint every day, with three or four sitters in one day, working between one and a half to two hours on each session. He concentrated on painting the head and hands only and commenced directly with the paintbrush, not sketching in first.²² It would appear that James Byre's famous advice to Raeburn upon the latter's visit to Rome; 'never to copy any object from memory, but from the principle figure to the minutest accessory to have it placed before him',²³ was better heeded by Skirving.

Skirving's meticulous working method in portraiture posed no threat to Raeburn but both artists depicted the literati of Edinburgh and shared a similar artistic background: starting as miniaturists, visiting Reynolds in London and subsequently studying in Rome, however, had Skirving taken his art more seriously as a full time occupation on his return to Edinburgh, it seems reasonable to assume he would have rivalled Raeburn. In a letter to Robert of 17th June 1802, Skirving writes;

"I work a little every day but it does not make 12 hours per week, so in this you are right. What I meant of my sight was, that both eyes were equally strong, for you remember I complained of the right one, but small objects when near...".

The unfinished sentence is the last record of the only surviving sheet of Mrs Hoskins collection of Skirving's correspondence. It suggests the artist did have an eye problem, and that although

²² Brydall, R. *Art in Scotland*. 1889, p. 226.

²³ Irwin, D. & F. *Scottish Painters at Home and Abroad*. 1975, p. 151.

not a serious defect, it did prevent him from painting small miniatures.

2. Exhibitions

Art exhibitions were a new phenomenon in mid eighteenth century Britain, a concept that was first introduced by Hogarth and his colleagues when establishing a permanent display of their own paintings at Thomas Coram's Foundling Hospital in London in 1747. Thirteen years later the idea had evolved into temporary exhibitions, first set up by the Society for the Encouragements of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, which lasted until 1778. Parallel to this development, painters could become members of the Society of Artists who exhibited annually at Spring Gardens until 1791. Another alternative was the prestigious Royal Academy, whose exhibitions commenced in 1769. The number of contributors and attendancy soared dramatically in the 1760s and 1770s, and in 1779 it was noted that the 'rage to see these exhibitions is so great that sometimes one cannot pass through the streets where they are.'²⁴ Overcrowded show-rooms soon necessitated admission charges to limit the hordes. In 1780, the Royal Academy took in £500 in entrance fees in one day alone, selling some 20,000 catalogues for the season.²⁵

Skirving first exhibited at the Royal Academy around this time; in 1778 he entered three miniatures, set in a

²⁴ Shawe-Taylor, D. *The Georgians...* 1990, p. 25.

²⁵ *Ibid.* (Sandby, 1862).

single frame (no. 284) - what these looked like is not known but presumably they were portraits. Several years later, in 1799, Skirving submitted his pastel portrait of John Clerk of Eldin (no. 836). Exhibitions were also being held annually in Edinburgh, established by the Society of Artists in 1808. Some of their exhibitions were held in Raeburn's gallery, attached to his studio.²⁶ Skirving exhibited in one of these that opened in York Place on Monday 6th April 1812, entitled the 'Fifth Exhibition of Paintings'. A commentary was published in The Scots Magazine the same month, critically reflecting contemporary taste and attitudes towards the artists and their work. Skirving's two entries were not received favourably by the critics, to say the least. The article notes indignantly that even though the Society publicly advertised "No copies admitted", this was ignored by the very first entry in the catalogue. Skirving submitted a drawing of William Berry (no. 1), the seal engraver, executed fifteen years previously as a copy after William Delacour's original of 1765, which had been engraved by Robert Scott for The Bee in 1793. Entitled 'Testa per l'Incisore - A. Skirving'; the article observes:

'When we see other masters, on this occasion, summoning into action all the powers they are capable of, whilst this gentleman coolly transmits a sketch of a head in Scotch chalk, or a line describing a profile on chalk, however masterly; it indicates nothing, in our opinion, but a presumptuous confidence in his own talents, together with a want of deference, which is equally disgusting, as it is reprehensible.

²⁶ Young, D. Edinburgh in the Age of Sir Walter Scott. USA, 1965, p. 96.

This head ("Berry Intagliatore," as is written on the drawing) is laboriously chalked; but the eyes are out of drawing, and there is a general twist in the face, which, however, may be very correct to nature; but, not having the original by De la Cour before us, we know not how much of the merit belongs to the copyist. This drawing, we observe, is offered for sale; but, as if the artist was ashamed of plainly telling us so, drags forth a scrap of Italian to aid him in the task, and writes underneath, "Per vendere".²⁷

Skirving's other entry, a female portrait head in red chalk (no. 34), had the title: "Morceau pour les Critiques", both title entries thus displaying to the public his knowledge of both Italian and French. As the commentator sarcastically observes; 'or Mary Ballingall, as it is kindly done into English'. The portrait remains unknown, described here only as a 'homespun' subject and apparently not of any high artistic quality:

'When we reflect on the great powers of this eminent master, and call to our collection the many charming pictures which have come from his easel, we blush for his appearance in this exhibition. Before leaving Mr Skirving, we feel disposed to offer him a little parting advice. Let him curb, as much as possible, his vanity, for it is the sin which most easily besets him; and, when he appears again before the public, let him produce specimens of art more worthy of himself.

A man's friends will always feel disposed to overlook his foibles, in proportion to his amiable qualities; and to these Mr Skirving have large claims. But the case is totally different with the public; and, if he will take the trouble of standing beside his pictures any forenoon, and listen to the remarks of the visitors on them, he will there learn, that the man is a

²⁷ The Scots Magazine, 1812, p. 247.

more grateful *Morceau pour les Critiques*, than any of his works.²⁸

No further records of exhibited works by Skirving have been found so far, but the article reveals a familiarity that indicates an accessibility and public knowledge of the artist's production. Several works were exhibited posthumously at the Royal Scottish Academy in 1863 and 1880. The first exhibition included his self-portrait from Rome, John and Lady Charlotte Campbell, Mrs Cay, Mrs Tait, signed and dated 1803, Mrs Carnegie, Robert Burns, and the recently re attributed portrait of Prof. Dugald Stewart.²⁹ The second exhibition displayed the portraits of Lord Woodhouselee,³⁰ Isabelle Fraser-Tytler, the Rev. Dr. Carlyle, two crayon heads and, finally, 'The Humorist', medium unspecified.³¹

At the 1880 exhibition, George Watson's (1767-1837) portrait in oil of Archibald Skirving (No. 162, SNPG) and his painting of the *Skirving family* - heads - (No. 302), was appropriately displayed. Unfortunately the latter disappeared without trace. At the time it belonged to Edward Scot Skirving of Kilchoman estate, Cheltenham.³²

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Reattributed to John Henning by the SNPG in 1990.

³⁰ Incorrectly listed in the catalogue as by another artist: J. Skirving. (Source)

³¹ According to Algernon Graves the exhibition were in 1873 and 1884. Apparently the portrait of Mrs Welsh appeared in the 1884 exhibition. Graves, Algernon. A Century of Loan Exhibitions, 1813-1912.

³² Baile de Laperrier, C. ed. The Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors 1826-1990. vol. V. 1991, p. 385.

3. Contemporary and Modern Art Critic

Skirving was generally regarded as a talented but eccentric artist by his contemporaries, who, despite his many peculiarities, and 'laziness',³³ produced work of exceptional accuracy of character and expertise. Indeed, one of Skirving's first recorded patrons, John Dalrymple, compared his portrait of Mr Mackie to that of Rubens, while another patron, from Rome, William Forbes of Pitsligo, probably expressed the opinion of many in 1793: 'Skirving ... paints small portraits with considerable merit but he takes so much time and bestows so much labour in finishing his pieces that he can never do much, indeed can scarcely live by his art.'³⁴ Skirving's work, however, was never discussed in detail until much later, by Patrick Gibson (1782?-1829), a landscape-painter and Edinburgh art critic. The author had received a classical education in Edinburgh, and had at one time studied art under Nasmyth and in the Trustees' Academy under John Graham.³⁵ Gibson wrote of Skirving in his 'View of the Arts of Design in Britain', composed for the Edinburgh Annual Register of 1816 and published around 1826.³⁶ It is an interesting report as it appears to be the first critical assessment published of Skirving.

³³ Tonge, J. The Arts of Scotland. Scotland, 1938, p. 42.

³⁴ Forbes, W. Journal of a Continental Tour, 30th April 1793. NLS MS, unpublished.

³⁵ Stephen, L. ed. DNB, vol. XXI, London, 1890, p. 282. Patrick Gibson.

³⁶ Edinburgh Annual Register, 1816, pp. 479-80. Article published before 1826, but inserted in the 1816 volume.

Mr Archibald Skirving was long distinguished as a portrait painter in crayons who united correctness of resemblance to masterly execution. ... His portraits seldom consist of more than the head; but as far as they go, they exhibit great correctness of delineation, and the most laborious attention to the most minute particulars, and are consequently faithful, and often animated representations of the originals. In estimating the merits of this artist, we cannot deny that, with all his excellencies, they fall infinitely short of those of Rosalba of Venice or even Russell of London; and that the eccentricity of his character and lofty pretensions tended, in no small degree, to impose on the credulity of the good people of Scotland, and to invest him with the attributes of genius, to which, in our apprehension, he had no claim. By persevering attention to the study of drawing, he had acquired great accuracy of eye; and his opportunities of observation, during his residence abroad, had increased his knowledge in the art. With such acquirements, his works could not be but respectable. His pictures are, however, frequently dry and prosaic, destitute of force of chiar'oscuro, and all the higher attributes of genius or imagination. Nay, so servile was he in the imitation of nature, and apparently so helpless without the model, that every part of the picture, from the face to a button-hole, was equally the object of his pains-taking solicitude. In justice to his talents, it must, however, be allowed, that much of the trouble he bestowed on insignificant details, originated in the pleasure he seems to have taken in teasing his sitters, and exhausting their patience. And perhaps the same wayward feeling will excuse his bad taste, in placing in the most conspicuous point of view the personal deformities of his subjects, which he most carefully and accurately represented, without regard to the feelings of the individual.

It may here appear not a little surprising, that, in disregarding the first and great maxim of portrait painting, viz. to make every one well pleased with himself, he should have at all obtained the suffrages of the public in his favour. This might partly have arisen from the acknowledged fidelity with which he represented every thing he attempted, as well as from his address in impressing the public with the

idea, that he was conferring a favour on his sitters in accepting their employment.³⁷

Nineteenth century critics have described his work as 'dry, minute, and prosaic,'³⁸ frequently commenting on the limited production of his pastel and chalk portraits. None discussed his miniatures, except for Samuel Redgrave who wrote in 1878 that they were 'excellent for their drawing, colour and admirable expression'.³⁹ Skirving's oil paintings appear not to have been available until the twentieth century. Today, his work is appreciated within limited circles but to the general public he still remains unknown. Duncan MacMillan describes him as 'by far the most interesting portrait painter' of Raeburn's contemporaries, yet, no proper documentation of his life and work was undertaken until 1993.

4. The Studio contents of 1819

The studio contents of Skirving's two rooms at No. 12 Leith Terrace were duly catalogued for the executry upon the death of the artist in May 1819 by William Bruce, a professional appraiser in Edinburgh. With access to the studio, Bruce noted down various boxes, cases, portfolios of drawings and prints, but also the personal effects of the artist. Strangely, no

³⁷ Edinburgh Annual Register, 1816, Gibson, Patrick, p. 480.

³⁸ Brydall, R. Art in Scotland, vol. II, 1835, p. 169; Caw, J. Scottish Painting: Past & Present, 1908, p. 46.

³⁹ Redgrave, S. A Dictionary of Artists of the English School, 1878. Also quoted by B. Long in British Miniatures, 1520-1860, London, 1966, p. 403; and in E. Bénézit in Dictionnaire des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs et Graveurs, France, 1976, p. 639.

mention is made of the supposedly numerous busts and plaster casts that littered the place among the 'dust and confusion,'⁴⁰ however, he did list some of the furniture and sundries. These consisted of a mahogany cabinet, drawing table, and a small writing desk with two drawers containing drawing materials. In addition, one of the rooms had another desk, a fire screen, a small stand, German glass plates, three china bowls and five plates or saucers, and a plate of glass for grinding colours. Bruce includes a gold thimble, a Cornelian Seal, gold sleeve buttons, a small silver tea ladle, some hair pencils and a 'very small quantity of Gentleman's Wearing Apparel, & an old Silver Watch', and a 'Parcel of Bone Egg Spoons, Iron Screws, Nails, Egg Cups &c.'⁴¹ Amongst the artistic material recorded is Skirving's extensive collection of prints and drawings. A few paintings by other artists, such as a *Painting of a Horse*, by James Howe,⁴² and a full-length of an architect, presumed to be of Craig,⁴³ by David Allan, valued at £26, exemplifies Skirving's interest in contemporary art.

Of Skirving's own large production of drawings, Bruce divided them into eleven portfolios and boxes, mixed with prints of unknown quantity, with various drawing books, pamphlets and boxes of crayons. Some fifty-nine items are listed individually, the rest remain unknown. The entire contents of the studio were valued at £49.0.6. George Watson, a

⁴⁰ Cursiter, S. *Scottish Art*, p. 55.

⁴¹ Inventory of William Bruce, Studio contents of 1819, NLS, Acc. 10102.

⁴² James Howe (1780-1836), animal painter, patronised by the Earl of Buchan. Sent to London in 1806, on his return to Scotland he became frequently employed in portraying the prize cattle and favourite horses and pets of the aristocracy. Irwin, D. & F. *Scottish Painters at Home and Abroad*, p. 192.

⁴³ Presumably James Craig, the architect of the New Town of Edinburgh.

friend of Skirving, entirely disagreed with this estimate and a month or two later produced his own appraisal of at least £540. The flat had been cleared by then and the contents deposited with a Mr Charles Muirhead. Watson's version therefore does not include the furniture, but gives instead a slightly more detailed record of the portraits. The red chalk portrait of Robert Burns is here noted as framed and glazed, sold to Mr John Rennie for the sum of £31.10. A drawing of Gavin Hamilton, framed and glazed, is here valued at £105. It may be the same portrait mentioned in The Bee as being in the collection of Lord Gardenstone in 1793. The unfinished portrait of Lady Charlotte Campbell was also valued at the same amount, while the pastel of **Miss Cunningham** of Corehouse, also unfinished, was valued for £35.

The majority of his drawings were estimated between £8.8 and £21. The portrait of William Berry, the seal engraver, was valued at £21, while a drawing of a **Venus & Cupid** hoped to fetch £84. Skirving's profile drawings in chalk on board were offered from £10 to £30, with the portraits of John Rennie and **Captain Walker** as examples. Previously unknown subjects are revealed; an unknown self-portrait, now lost, **A Sleeping Child**, a **Girl's head** in red chalk, two landscape drawings with figures, a lady with a hat, in oils, a drawing of a **Hen and Chicken**, an oil painting of Haddington, or of a Lord Haddington, and sketches of hands and feet. Finally, Watson lists (1) a portfolio of twenty modern portrait prints; (2) pastel portraits, five of heads and a pair of hands; (3) forty-five portraits in black and red chalk; (4) sixty-three drawings and prints of mainly academy figures; (5) a portfolio

of 112 drawings and prints; (6) a set of nineteen Italian view prints; (7) 411 prints; (8) a book of sketches from Salvator Rosa, and (9) a book of old prints. Bruce included twelve drawing books, naming one as The Art of Painting, by Charles du Fresnoy,⁴⁴ and two miniature portraits of gentlemen.

The large quantity of prints, drawings and books in the studio, hitherto unknown until the recent acquisition by the National Library of Scotland, reveal an artist with a wide scope of interest in art, a collector of prints, and a greater variation of subjects than previously believed, exemplified by his drawings of classical statues, landscapes, children, and his own speciality - the chalk and pastel portraits on wooden boards. Chalmers & Son, a firm of frame makers on 118 High Street, Edinburgh, reveal the artist's habit of framing and glazing his portraits in brown and gold frames, either in mahogany or walnut. The firm also provided the artist with packing boxes, stretching frames and pasting and commissioned joiners to prepare boards for painting. Of the latter, as many as eight were prepared in March 1816. In William Chalmer's list of receipts covering the period of 17 June 1814 to 19th December 1818,⁴⁵ Skirving paid for their help with 'Carrying a Bust several times', so there were indeed busts in his studio at that time.

It is not known what happened to the studio contents. Some of the portraits were paid for and collected by

⁴⁴ The Art of Painting, originally written in Latin, was first published in an English translation by Dryden in London 1695, and again in 1754, 1769. In 1783 it was retranslated by William Mason, with annotations by Sir Joshua Reynolds. It is possible Skirving bought this version, however, it was also published in 1809, 1811, and finally in 1851.

⁴⁵ NLS, Acc. 10102.

the rightful owners, others went unclaimed which indicates that the portraits were usually paid for on collection. The remainder may have gone to Skirving's family, such as the Gavin Hamilton and Mrs Carnegie portraits that ended up in the families of Robert Skirving and his half-sister, Jessie. The majority are lost and will likely remain so since the artist rarely signed his drawings.

5. Contemporary Profiles of Skirving

In briefly discussing Skirving's professional life as an artist, his literary contemporaries have repeatedly described him as an extremely clever man but a great eccentric, who often aspired to wit but who appears to have equally resorted to sarcasm as a defence against suspected criticism or sympathy. Skirving grew up in a proud family,⁴⁶ where his father, a hard-working, honest farmer, nourished in his sons wit, a love of poetry, frugality and total self-sufficiency from an early age. In Archibald, this eventually led to an inability to accept help of any kind to avoid compromising himself. Some thought him exceedingly arrogant in behaviour and speech, impervious to the opinions and tastes of the public, and while it stirred anger in some and pity in others, Skirving appears to have resented both and finally abandoned a normal social life in the haven of a close family and friends in East Lothian.

⁴⁶ A common characteristic in East Lothian families according to *Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-1799*, vol. II, p. 281. "A considerable number of families in the common ranks of life can boast of an ancient although humbledecent and hence there exists a certain feeling of an aristocratic description, which in a more sequestered situation may have degenerated into conceit."

Thomas Carlyle's reminiscences of Adam and Archibald Skirving, written in London on 17 January 1868, is the only extensive literary portrayal known today, based on first hand familiarity. Published for the first time in 1974, the author reveals a complex, sensitive and rather unhappy man, who, following career misfortunes 'was left more and more to his solitudes and silent reflexions & indignations.'⁴⁷ Residing in his flat on Leith Terrace 'in complete Hermitage; an indignant but uncomplaining King, supreme sovereign there if nowhere else.'⁴⁸ The artist's eccentricity did not go unnoticed even by strangers, for he had taken to unusual dress habits, making his own clothes and shoes, and later in life took to wearing a white broad brimmed hat and no neckcloth.⁴⁹ Patrick Gibson wrote in the Edinburgh Annual Register, 1816: 'His works are not numerous, as his enthusiasm and genius were equally divided between painting, darning stockings, turning egg-cups, mending his old clothes, and other useful offices.'⁵⁰ Henry Mackenzie observed:

'Skirving was from nature an odd eccentric creature, and unluckily took singularity for genius (a very common mistake) which he indulged in himself, to his injury as a painter, as in the whim about crayon-painting, and greatly to his prejudice as a man. It was impossible to befriend him, because favours he often conceived to be affronts, and valued himself on a proud independence of the world. This he carried so far as to make his own shoes and part of his

⁴⁷ Crabbe, J. e.d The Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle, 1974, p. 133.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁴⁹ Smiles, S. Lives of the Engineers, 1861, p. 278.

⁵⁰ Edinburgh Annual Register, 1816, p. 480.

clothing, tho' the time bestowed on his bungled work might if employed in painting, have produced him ten times the value of the shoes or the coat.⁵¹

Skirving had deep sympathies towards national independence, democracy and total equality, and a direct consequence of his political views was illustrated by his apparent pride in dressing as a pauper. Although relatively well-off, he considered frugality a virtue, and his bizarre attire was intended rather as a political and social statement of indifference to class distinctions, and rebellion, than as a sign of meanness. Although the revolutionary idealism may still have appealed to him after his imprisonment, it was in fact a social attitude that he had been brought up with in East Lothian. His father instilled in his son a sense of Scottish pride and independence⁵² that he himself had in good-humoured abundance. Robert Skirving of Cobairdy wrote in a letter to Lieut-Col. David Scot Skirving, March 1907: "Two very marked characteristics of the family as far as I have heard and known, have been their proper pride and independence - I fear to a certain extent this has been against success."⁵³ Rev. Duncan of Athelstaneford relates an incident of Adam Skirving that betrays a similar democratic stand in the farmer's deliberately misleading appearance:

'[Adam's] garb of homespun was often the cause of a misjudgment concerning his financial resources as

⁵¹ Thompson, H.W. ed. *The Anecdotes and Egotisms of Henry Mackenzie*. 1927, p. 212,

⁵² Duncan, Rev. T. *Athelstaneford*, 1934, p. 109.

⁵³ Correspondence between Andrew Skirving and the author, letter dated 6.6.1993.

well as the source of many a caustic joke. On one occasion he went forth clad in hodden grey of homely cut and finish to rent a grass field at the King's Park, Edinburgh, where he was unknown. As he was the highest bidder the auctioneer had perforce to declare him the possessor, but as the eyed from his perch this shabbily dressed man, he asked who was his security. Skirving was ready and shouted: "King George the Second." This retort was greeted with loud laughter, while Adam proceeded to fumble in the long tails of his blue coat, and by and by pulled out a stocking-leg holding sovereigns more in number than was needed to pay the rent. As he handed over the shining gold he sardonically added: "There's jingling Georgie. He's my security."⁵⁴

An incident that directly illustrates the artist's class resentment is related by the same author. It also reveals Skirving's desire to appear totally confident in his position as a painter and thereby in his art. Skirving was residing in Edinburgh when the Duke of Buccleuch came to visit his studio one day, and without prior announcement, walked straight in. "The painter was engaged at his easel and paid no attention to the intrusion of the Duke. At length the visitor said: "I am the Duke of Buccleuch," whereat Skirving, without removing his eyes from the canvas, replied: "I am Archibald Skirving, the painter."⁵⁵ It appears to have been a rather typical reception for an unwanted intrusion. Carlyle writes that Skirving was 'living in a secluded, almost mythic condition; refusing all work except upon his own whims; and carelessly said by the public

⁵⁴ Duncan, Rev. T. 1934, p. 105.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 110.

to be "cracked" in brain. Which indeed, I suppose, he almost was.'⁵⁶ Extremely selective of his clientele and friends, Carlyle continues: 'Some few, the chosen of the world, he warmly loved; to the multitudinous vulgar, titled and untitled, rich or not rich, he had long since waved his stern *apage* [be gone], and was not concerned with them farther.'⁵⁷

If Skirving would not serve the general public, he was, on the other hand, the most loyal and affectionate of friends. He produced portraits, helped out with loans, such as the sum of £1000 to Sir John Pringle, and similarly to his sister Grizel,⁵⁸ whose family he took care of and possibly provided for upon the death of her husband. He also looked out for his brother's interests upon his return from India. The brothers had great respect for each other, Robert being a real 'yahoo' of a man as Skirving once described him,⁵⁹ and notable men both, according to Carlyle. Carlyle knew Robert slightly, their younger half-brother, David, received little attention in his Reminiscences;

'Some controversy about heritage had risen between the two Skirving families; and they lived silently estranged from one another. Proud enough all, I suppose; especially those two sons of family first, who were known as men of equity, veracity, and generosity, but of inflexible self-will; and were held in a higher tho' common regard, their half-brother standing only in a highish tho' common.'⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Clubbe, J. Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle. 1974, p. 132.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

⁵⁸ NLS, Acc. 10102, inventory of debts and loans of Archibald Skirving.

⁵⁹ Skinner, Scotland's Magazine, 1959, p. 44.

⁶⁰ Clubbe, J. Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle. 1974, p. 132.

Carlyle relates an incident when he went to visit Captain Skirving at nearby Croys on the morning of 13 August 1832, who, 'with much mystery and emotion, took me to a very private repository in the House, and opening various locks, and at last a casket within them all, graciously shewed me a Miniature of his late Father, by his Brother now also gone (both of whom he seemed to venerate with proud piety); by far the best Portrait I had then ever seen of any man.'⁶¹

Skirving, however lonely, appears to have been satisfied to have led a life of his own choosing, refusing to integrate into polite society. Some may not have appreciated his social contempt, for example, Mrs Jessie Harden, daughter of Robert Allan of Edinburgh, and wife of John Harden of Brathay Hall, invited him to dinner in October 1809, together with Alexander Nasmyth and a Captain Skene of the Navy. Her comment in her diary was brief and conclusive; 'an odd Fish & and not in my opinion over agreeable.'⁶² Again, Carlyle offers a more balanced picture:

'In the fine times of the year he went roving a good deal in miscellaneous sudden visits & excursions to his favourites, oftenest in native East-Lothian. For bad weather, I suppose he had some few select Books; and certainly he had a *Lathe*, and did much turning. On sight of a fine "*beefbone*" (thigh-bone in a "round of beef") in a friend's house, he would politely beg the Lady to save it for him; and would, by and by, work it into something (*egg-cups* oftenest) as a salutation gift in some other of his favourite houses.'⁶³

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Foskett, D. *John Harden of Brathay Hall*. Kendal, 1974, p. 37.

⁶³ Clubbe, J. *Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle*. 1974, p. 134.

Carlyle's wife, Jane Welsh, was the appreciative recipient of such a gift. Henry Mackenzie writes in his *Anecdotes* that egg-cups were a 'very useful modern invention' in his days.⁶⁴ Thomas Carlyle was to treasure them well: they 'kept your eggs warm as no crockery or metal will; and had long been favourites with me.'⁶⁵ Skirving would sometimes suddenly appear at their homes without warning and Carlyle recalls the words of his departed wife:

'In our house," said my Darling, "it was frequently at breakfast time; he would have in his hand, now and then, some small neat gift, a tiny basket with 4 or 5 fresh eggs (or the like, if they were scarce); something of his own handiwork, bit of turning from his lathe, was the most distinguished gift of all. He was well-liked and esteemed among us; and flowed out into cheerful and curious talk whenever he sat down.'⁶⁶

Of the extremely few primary sources that mention this artist, George Cleghorn's description presents an image that is often reflected in his art and surviving documentation:

'He inherited his father's talent for poetry and epigram, wit and repartee. Of proud and independent spirit, and rather sensitive and reserved, he was prone to take offence when, perhaps, none was intended, and was, consequently, not popular among his brother artists. But with all his eccentricities and foibles, he was an honest and upright man

⁶⁴ Thompson, H.W. ed. *The Anecdotes and Egotisms of Henry Mackenzie*. 1927, p. 14.

⁶⁵ Clubbe, J. 1974, p. 134.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

of warm feeling - an affectionate brother, and a sincere friend.⁶⁷

None, however, can beat Carlyle's description made after his brief encounter with him in the summer of 1818, as a young man of twenty. A vivid and astute portrayal of Skirving, his reflections present a literary likeness more alive than any portrait.

'I once saw this Skirving, once only: in Edinburgh, . . . Edward Irving and I must have crossed from Fife very early, in a summer morning; . . . what I vividly remember is that we were swiftly stepping southward, along South-Bridge Street, when just at the utmost corner of it, on the east side, ... there stept swiftly upon us an aged promenading gentleman, of notable appearance, whom Irving, fixing my attention by some whisper "This is Skirving," cordially accosted, with the ordinary salutations, getting response which was also cordial or kind, but had less of joy or eagerness in the manner of it. I said nothing, but watched, and have a "Picture" of it still which Skirving himself could not beat. The morning was balmy and beautiful, with a soft breeze blowing everywhere, sky as bright as diamonds, bright sunshine, but none of it yet reaching us in our street-path..., street still rather empty: one of the finest possible mornings for a long promenade, which I suppose Skirving had been upon, over the Arthur-Seat region, and was returning. An altogether striking man. Wiry, elastic, perpendicular, and of good inches, still brisk-looking, tho' perhaps 70 odd; spotlessly clean, his linen white as snow, no necktie but a loosish-fastened black ribbon; hair all grey, not white, nor over-long; face, neck, hands of a fine brown tint; one of the cleanest old men I ever saw; - and such a face as you would still more rarely see. Eagle-like; nose hooked like an eagle's bill, eyes still with something of the

⁶⁷ Cleghorn, G. Ancient and Modern Art, 1848, p. 205.

eagle's flash in them; squarish prominent brow, under-jaw ditto, cheeks & neck thin, sensitively wrinkled, - brow, cheek, jaws, chin all betokening impetuosity, rapidity, delicacy, and the stormy fire of genius not yet hidden under the ashes of old age. A face and figure never to be forgotten. His brother of Croys has something of the same physiognomy, less developed... Painter Skirving went on his way, and I saw him no more.⁶⁸

6. The Skirving Portraits

A comparatively large number of nineteenth century portraits have survived of Skirving, produced by prominent artist friends in Edinburgh, such as Henry Raeburn (1756-1823), George Watson (1767-1837), Andrew Geddes (1783-1844) and John Henning (1771-1851). Some ten portraits in oil, etching and paste, have been recorded so far. An unusual amount for such an 'obscure' artist as Skirving - a fact that in itself deserves some attention for it implies an activeness in the later years of Skirving's life, mingling with his fellow artists in Edinburgh, and speaks of their appreciation, their portrayals a public tribute. None of the paintings are dated, but judging from Skirving's appearance, they were executed between 1810 and 1819. Produced by professional portraitists, the sitter is clearly recognisable as the same one.

The first two recorded images were made by John Henning, the sculptor, who executed two portrait medallions in 1811, one in paste, the other in porcelain. These were

⁶⁸ Carlyle, dated 17th January 1868, Clubbe, J. ed. Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle, 1974, p. 136.

exhibited in Glasgow in 1911, but have not been traced since.⁶⁹ Henning and Skirving appears to have been good friends, as Lord Buchan noted in the early nineteenth century. The two artists met up in London in 1816, and upon Skirving's death, Henning probably completed the former's profile portrait of Prof. Dugald Stewart, now in the SNPG.

George Watson was also a close acquaintance of Skirving. He painted three oil paintings of him; one is presently in the collection of the SNPG,⁷⁰ bequeathed by the Royal Scottish Academy in 1910, where Watson had been first President.⁷¹ It show an aged man in half-length, turned slightly to the right, a composition remarkably resembling Skirving's own self-portrait from Rome. Skirving's hooked nose and heavy set eyes feature prominently. The other portrait he painted is smoother, less shadowed. The sitter looks frail and thin in the face, and may well be one of the last to have been made of him. It was donated by Mrs Hoskins in 1981 to the Lamp of the Lothians in Haddington.* The third portrait is a copy after one of Raeburn's portraits. A close-up in oil, it illustrates how Watson was greatly influenced by Raeburn's style and often exploited his lighting effects. (Fig. 63-65)

It seems the artist was an old friend of the Skirving family, for in 1880 a painting of portrait heads of the Skirvings was exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy.⁷² It has since

⁶⁹ Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art & Industry. Glasgow, 1911.

⁷⁰ Watson, G. SNPG PG 713, oil on canvas, 90.3 X 69.4 (35 1/2 X 27 1/4 in.)

⁷¹ George Watson, 1767-1837, practiced in the studio of Nasmyth and worked for two years with Reynolds in London. Returned to Edinburgh where he hoped to rival Raeburn in his portraiture. President of the Associated Artists 1808-1812, and elected president of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1826.

⁷² The Royal Scottish Academy, p. 410.

* The Lamp of Lothian Collegiate Centre, Haddington, East Lothian.
(Art & Community Centre).

then disappeared, but Watson did produce one or two other family portraits; one is entitled *Group of Heads*⁷³ and shows the detailed heads of eight children, arranged sporadically in three rows.

Andrew Geddes painted his portrait of Skirving in brilliant, translucent colours, with the sitter standing in frontal position, in half-length, wearing a deep red velvet coat. It is today in the SNPG, on loan from the National Gallery of Scotland.⁷⁴ Since the artist studied at the Royal Academy in London from 1807-1810, this definitely dates it to the 1810s. Geddes was mainly a portraitist but also produced landscapes and later became a prolific etcher, where he was greatly influenced by Rubens and Rembrandt.⁷⁵ He made two etchings of Skirving, based on his oil painting.⁷⁶ (Fig. 66-67)

Sir Henry Raeburn's oil painting of Skirving is today in the collection of the Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC, donated in 1919 by Ralph Cross Johnson. It was exhibited by the Raeburn family at the RSA in 1876 (No. 276). The portrait was removed from The Smithsonian Institution and put up for sale in New York between 1987-91, since the museum now specialises in American art only. Strangely, there was little interest shown and it still remains in

⁷³ The Watson File, the Witt Library. Canvas, 36 X 28 in. (B.0947, related to B.9026). Sitters possibly of the Maule family.

⁷⁴ Geddes, A. SNPG, PG 313, oil on canvas, 72.7 X 60 (28 5/8 X 23 5/8 in.)

⁷⁵ Andrew Geddes, 1783-1844, son of David Geddes, auditor of the Excise Office, Edinburgh. Persuaded to take up his father's profession, he turned to art professionally five years later upon the death of his father. Moved to London in 1806, studied painting at the Royal Academy Schools with Sir David Wilkie as fellow pupil. Travelled to Rome in 1828 and returned to London in 1831 where he remained for several years.

⁷⁶ Dodgson, C. The Etchings of Sir David Wilkie and Andrew Geddes: A Catalogue. London: 1936.

their collection.⁷⁷ Compared to the conventional portraits of Watson and Geddes, Raeburn's version differs dramatically with his bold brushwork and contrasting light and shade. The sitter is seen standing in half-length, facing the viewer in a dignified and forceful pose. A second portrait was recently attributed to Raeburn and is very similar. (Fig. 68-69)

Finally, Skinner makes a brief reference to two unknown portraits of Skirving; one is a miniature by Captain Wilkie of Greenhill Gardens, Edinburgh, previously in the collection of Mrs Hoskins; the other is a copy in oils (24 X 20 in.), of the pastel self-portrait, in 1963 in the collection of Mrs Cowan of Edinburgh.⁷⁸ Apparently Mrs Cowan's great grandfather on her mother's side was Captain Wilkie, very likely the same Captain Wilkie who owned the two Campbell pastels exhibited at the RSA in 1863.

Finally, another portrait of interest in connection with Skirving is the oil painting of his brother Robert of Croys, by Andrew Geddes. It was entered in David Laing's list of Geddes pictures of 1813 as 'Captain Skirvin (small whole-length)', donated by Mrs Hoskins in 1981 it is today in the collection of the SNPG.⁷⁹ Though badly damaged and over cleaned, it is a delicate picture of warm colouring. The peculiar implements hanging on the wall behind the standing man may refer to Robert's interest in hill-walking and rock-climbing, and arranged to form the artist's initials 'A.G.'⁸⁰ The oak frame

⁷⁷ Information courtesy of Mrs Betsy Anderson, Curatorial Assistant, The National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. June 1993.

⁷⁸ Basil Skinner's notebook of 1963.

⁷⁹ SNPG, PG 2473, panel, 66 X 45 (26 X 17 1/2 in.).

⁸⁰ The use of implements suggested by Andrew Skirving, letter to the author, 15.6.1993.

was previously thought to have been made by Skirving himself,⁸¹ but as with the majority of his framed work, it was produced by Chalmers & Son.⁸²

The Skirving portraits, produced by Edinburgh's most esteemed colleagues of the period, constitute an unusually large collection of an eighteenth century artist, the majority of which were largely unknown until now. In many ways, the visual presentations correlate with Thomas Carlyle's description, the artists have repeatedly captured the dominant characteristics in Skirving; his integrity and forceful presence.

⁸¹ Mrs Leila Hoskins, SNPG.

⁸² NLS, Acc. 10102.



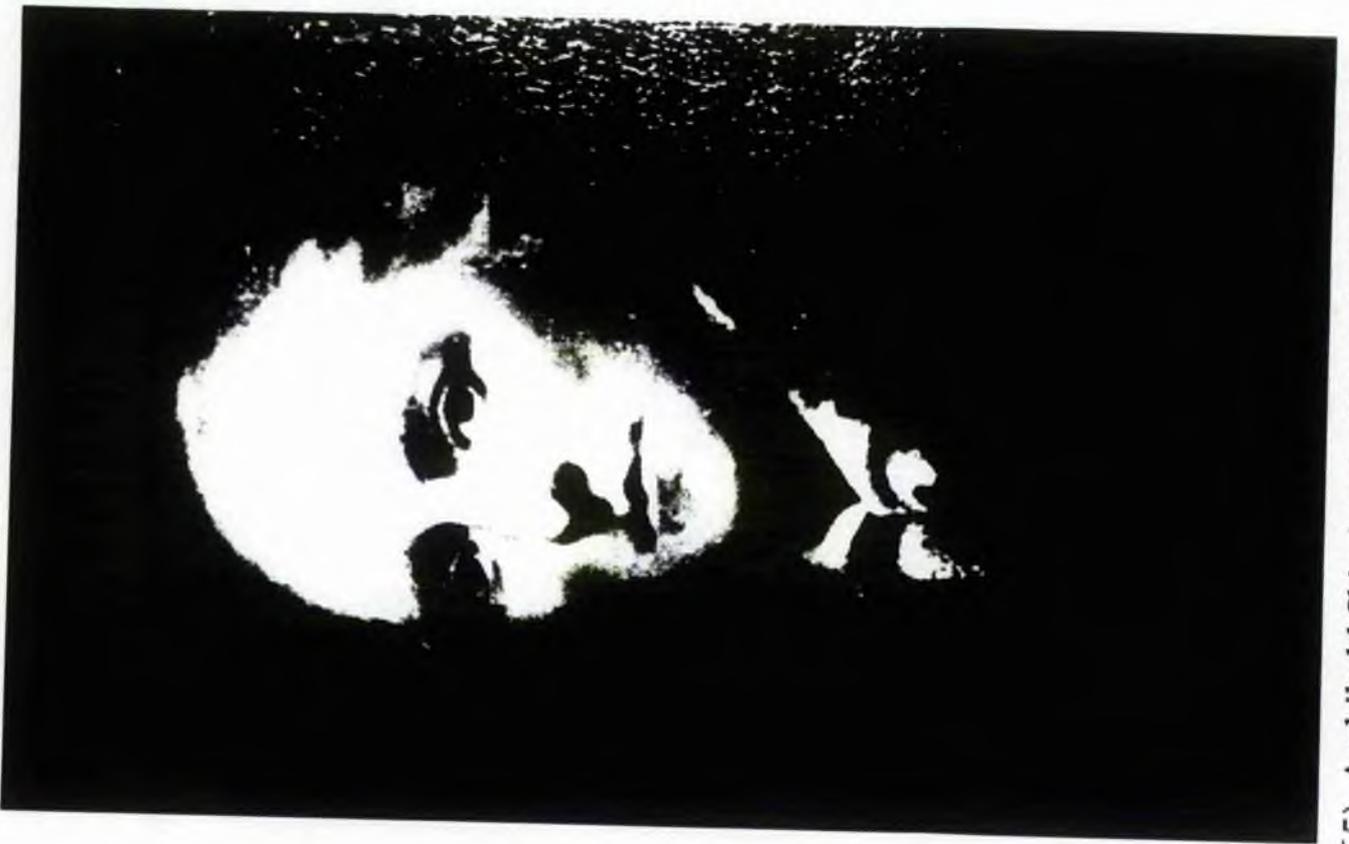
63) Archibald Skirving, by George Watson (East Lothian Antiquarian Field Naturalist Society)



64) Archibald Skirving, by George Watson (Private collection)



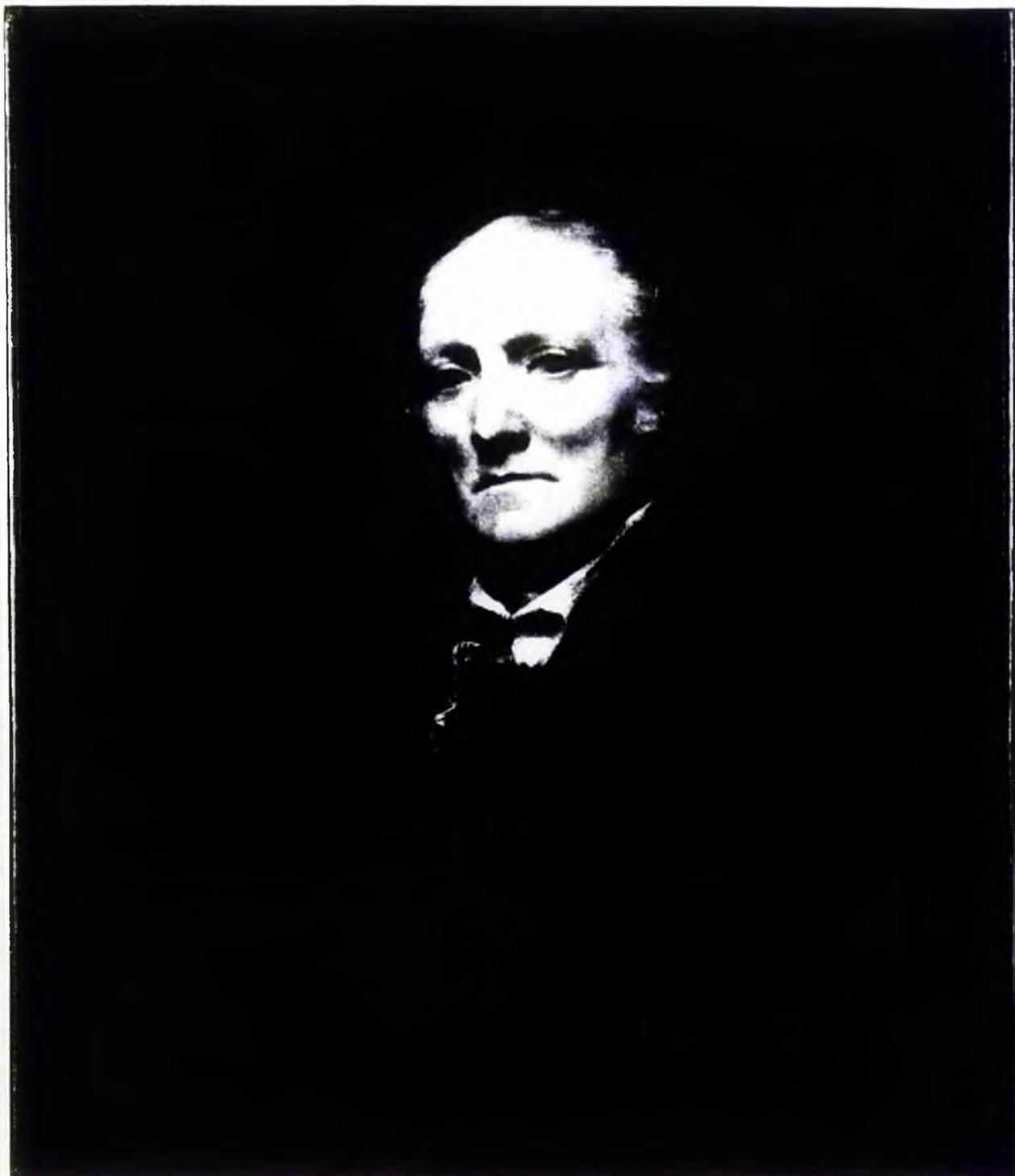
66) Archibald Skirving, by Andrew Geddes
(Scottish National Portrait Gallery)



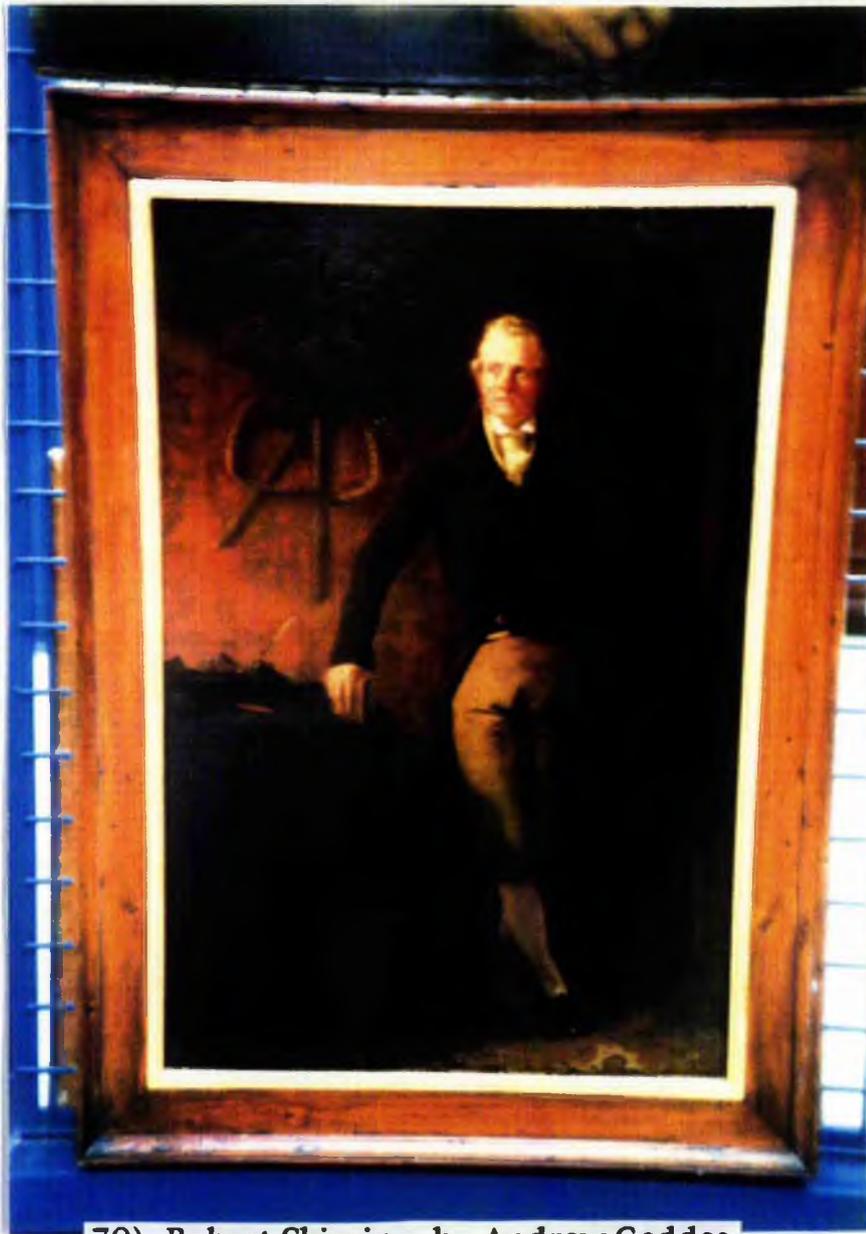
65) Archibald Skirving, by George Watson (Private collection)



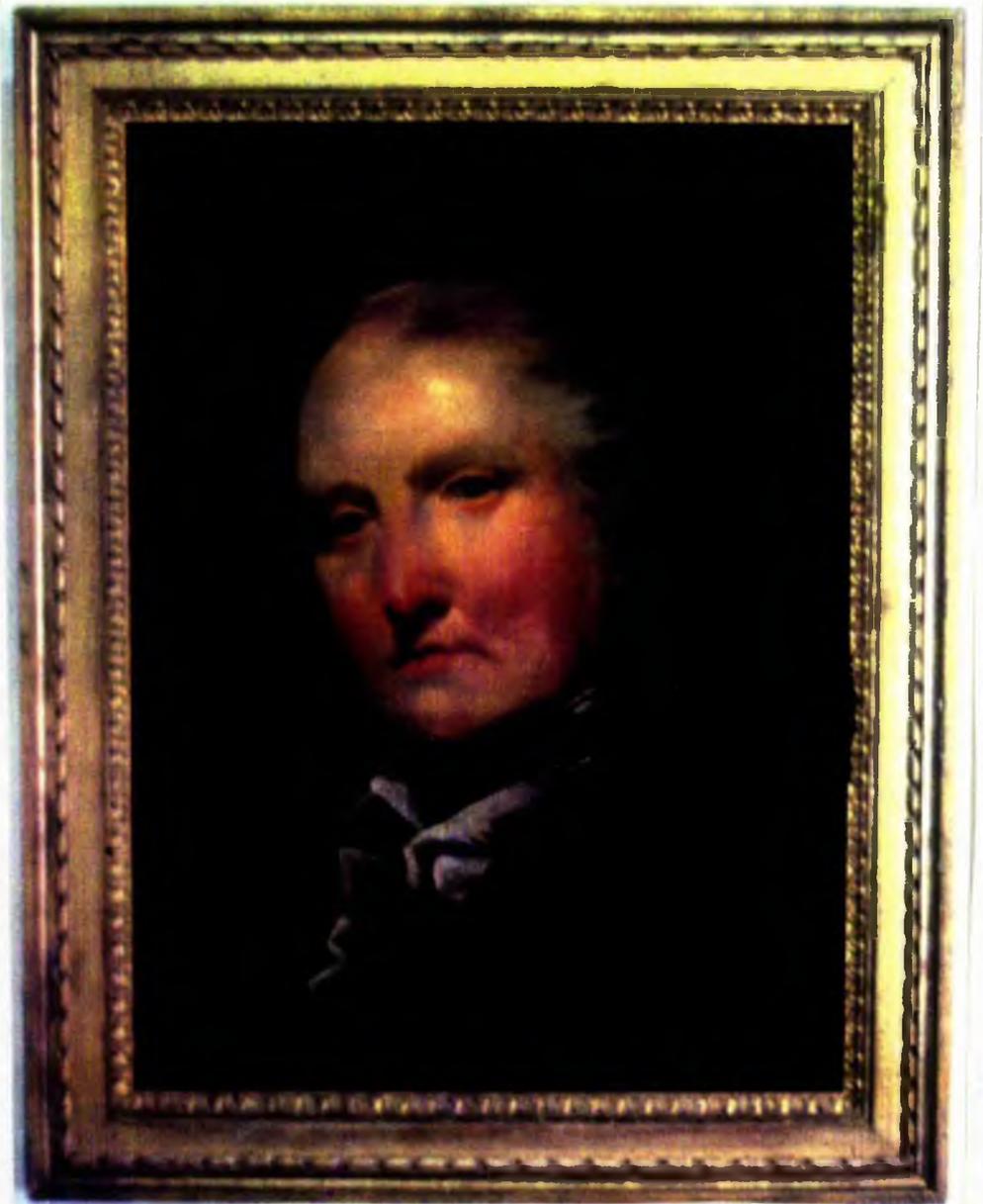
66) Archibald Skirving, by Andrew Geddes
(Scottish National Portrait Gallery)



68) Archibald Skirving, by Sir Henry Raeburn (The National Museum of American Art, The Smithsonian Institution)



70) Robert Skirving, by Andrew Geddes
(Scottish National Portrait Gallery)



69) Archibald Skirving, by Sir Henry Raeburn
(Private collection)

CONCLUSION

Throughout his career, Skirving enjoyed a high reputation both as an artist and as a man of intellect, even genius, but shortly after his death in 1819, his work fell into complete obscurity. Two contributing factors to this rapid decline of interest may have been Skirving's choice of medium and straightforward presentation in his portraiture. Pastel was a cheap material and although Skirving was well paid on the rare occasions he produced something, oil painting was still regarded a superior medium, despite the proficiency and obvious similarities in the painting techniques. Once laboriously completed, Skirving's commissions disappeared into stately homes where the majority still remain in family ownership of the sitter depicted. On the rare occasions collections were sold or changed hands, it was usually the ancestral portraits in oil that went first, the pastels were financially less valued, with the artist considered insignificant or unknown. The other drawback may have been Skirving's style of presentation, a realistic likeness of the head and shoulders that, although intimate in character, nevertheless was comparatively reserved and unimaginative in presentation, with his portraits at times primarily appreciated for their historical accuracy. With no real demand or market for pastels in nineteenth century Scotland, the Skirving portraits rarely circulated and were consequently soon forgotten.

From a personal point of view, the research into this topic has been a most rewarding and exciting experience, providing a introduction not only to the fascinating life and

times of an eccentric eighteenth century artist, residing in East Lothian, Edinburgh, London and Rome, but also to his contemporary colleagues, clients and the present descendants of the sitters and his own family. It has also offered a vivid insight into Georgian society, cultural life and social conditions - the contemporary tastes and inclinations in art revealing an image of the ideal artist that Skirving so stubbornly refused to conform to.

It is hoped that this dissertation will provoke a complete reassessment of Archibald Skirving - Scotland's supreme pastellist - for with the exception of Basil Skinner's article of 1970, no extensive research has ever been made until now. This situation may now hopefully be rectified for the interest in the work of Skirving appears widespread and a common reaction to the inquiries put to all levels of expertise, has invariably been one of surprised delight and curiosity.

CATALOGUE OF WORKS

This is the first attempt to establish a comprehensive survey of the documented and attributed works of Archibald Skirving. The works are classified by medium and evidence of attribution, with three additional sections containing lists of references to unlocated works, engravings and erroneous attributions. The illustrations in previous chapters will not always be repeated in the catalogue.

A. DOCUMENTED WORKS

- I. Miniatures
- II. Pastels
- III. Drawings

B. ATTRIBUTED WORKS

- I. Miniatures
- II. Pastels
- III. Oils
- IV. Drawings

C. UNTRACED WORKS BY, OR ATTRIBUTED TO, SKIRVING.

D. ENGRAVINGS AFTER SKIRVING'S WORK.

E. WORKS PREVIOUSLY ATTRIBUTED TO SKIRVING BUT NOT ACCEPTED BY THE AUTHOR.

A. DOCUMENTED WORKS

I. MINIATURES

1. Title: PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Medium: watercolour on ivory, 76 X 64 mm (3 X 2 1/2 in.)

Oval miniature in three-quarter length of a smiling lady, facing left, in white dress with black lace frills, white bandeau in powdered hair, wearing a pearl choker, blue sash at the waist, and holding a letter in her right hand. Gold locket frame with blue glass reverse and hair panel in S-shape, pinned together with three small seed pearls.

Signed: 'Skirving, 1780', signature on top of letter held by sitter.

Date: 1780 (see above)

Prov. & present location: property of Francis Chalmers in 1939; presented to the Victoria & Albert Museum (218) by the Allan Evans bequest. Print Room, Henry Cole Wing, V & A.

Exd:

- Scottish Print Club, Edinburgh, 1937. (32)
- Royal Academy, Exhibition of Scottish Art, London, 1939. (845)

Lent by Francis Chalmers, Esq. According to the exhibition catalogue the miniature is dated 1789.

Ref:

- Bonhams 6th July, 1992. Miniatures, p. 18.
- Foskett, D. Miniatures: Dictionary & Guide. 1987, p. 252, pl. 20 (E).
- Royal Academy of Arts, Exhibition Catalogue of Scottish Art, 1939, p. 244.
- Summary Catalogue of Miniatures in the Victoria & Albert Museum, 1981, p. 55.

Comment: the only fully signed example of Skirving's miniature work recorded so far.

Illustration courtesy of Victoria & Albert Museum.

2. Title: PORTRAIT OF AN OFFICER

Medium: watercolour on ivory, 69 mm (2 6/8 in.) high.

Oval miniature of an officer, facing right in scarlet uniform with yellow facings, silver epaulette, black stock. Neat stippling. Set in high rectangular black frame.

Signed: with cursive monogram, location not specified.

Date: not dated.

Prov. & present location: sold by Christie's 19th June 1973, Lot 95. Location unknown.

Exd: -

Ref: Foskett, D. Miniatures: Dictionary and Guide, 1972, p. 208.

Comment: suggested date c. 1797-98, based on similarities in style with the dated Grosvenor Paine portrait of a gentleman, see below.

Illustration courtesy of Christie's.

3. Title: PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN

Medium: water-colour on ivory, 66 mm (2 5/8 in.)

Oval miniature of a man facing left, wearing blue coat with black collar and gold buttons, white waistcoat and cravat. Set in a gilt frame.

Signed: on reverse with initials and date '1798'.

Date: 1798 (see above)

Prov. & present location: prior to sale in 1979, in collection of Grosvenor Paine, Mississippi, USA; sold by Christie's: 23rd October, 1979. Lot 161, p. 47. Present location unknown.

Exd: -

Ref: Foskett, D. Miniatures: Dictionary and Guide, 1972, vol. I, p. 511, vol. II, pl. 334, No. 833.

Comment: -

Illustration courtesy of Chrisitie's.



2) Portrait of an Officer



3) Portrait of a Gentleman

II. PASTELS

1. Title: **CAMPBELL, COL. JOHN of Shawfield 1772-1809**

Medium: pastel on paper, 67.5 X 54.5 cm (26 1/2 X 21 1/2 in.)

Portrait of a man, head and shoulders, body turned slightly to the right, face in right profile, unpowdered hair. Wearing an overcoat with large brass buttons, waistcoat, white neckcloth and jabot.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location:

- Property of Captain Wilkie in 1863.
- Anon. sale Sotheby's 22nd March 1979, Lot 137/i, p. 84. Sold as companion to his wife Lady Charlotte Campbell Bury.
- Anon. sale Sotheby's Gleneagles. 1st September 1981, Lot 584. Present location unknown.

Exh: Royal Scottish Academy, 1863 (331). Lent by Captain Wilkie.

Ref:

- Inventory of Skirving's effects, May 1819, by William Bruce, Edinburgh. (NLS, Acc. 10102).
- Baile de Laperriere, C. ed. The Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors 1826-1990, 1991, vol. IV, p. 174.

- Skinner, B. 'Archibald Skirving and His Work', Transactions of the East Lothian Antiquarian Field Naturalist Society, vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: documentation based on presence in Skirving's studio in 1819, and financial agreement between artist and sitter (Acc. 10102). Framed and glazed according to the inventory. Suggested dating c. 1795.

Sitter: John Campbell, eldest son of Walter Campbell, 3rd Shawfield Laird of Islay, and Eleonor, daughter of Robert Kerr of Newfield, married in 1789 Lady Charlotte Marie, daughter of the Duke of Argyll. He held a Commission in the 3rd Regiment of Guards, was appointed Colonel of the Argyll Militia in 1798 while an M.P. for the Argyll and Ayr. He predeceased his father in 1809. John's younger sister Margaret, born in 1774, married Francis Charteris, later 7th Earl of Wemyss, in 1794.

Litt: Ramsay, F. The Day Book of Daniel Campbell of Shawfield 1767. 1991, p. 61.

Illustration courtesy of The Paul Mellon Centre.

2. Title: CAMPBELL, LADY CHARLOTTE 1775-1861

Medium: pastel on paper, 67.5 X 54.5 cm (26 1/2 X 21 1/2 in.)

Portrait of detailed head of young woman wearing an elaborate turban, lower part of body unfinished and deliberately erased. Sitter's pale eyes and head inclined slightly to the left.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location:

- Property of Captain Wilkie in 1863.
- In 1974 noted in the collection of Mrs Leila Hoskins.
- Anon. sale Sotheby's 22nd March 1979, Lot 137/ii, p. 84.
- Anon. sale Sotheby's Gleneagles. 1st September 1981, Lot 584. Present location unknown.

Exh: Royal Scottish Academy, 1863 (352). Lent by Captain Wilkie.

Ref:

- Baile de Laperrier, C. ed. The Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors 1826-1990. vol. IV, 1991, p. 174.
- Inventory of Skirving's effects, May 1819, by William Bruce, Edinburgh. Listed as unfinished but framed. (NLS, Acc. 10102).

Comment: brush strokes of glue paste on reverse of paper visible on photocopy. Same format as Col. Campbell, their eyes meeting when placed together. Suggested dating c. 1795. Portrait valued for £2.2.0 by William Bruce in 1819, revalued the same year for £105 by George Watson. (NLS, Acc. 10102). Authentication based on reference in studio contents and in Thomas Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, ed. by John Clubbe, 1974, p. 133.

Sitter: Lady Charlotte Campbell, wife of Colonel John Campbell, second daughter of John, 5th Duke of Argyll and Elizabeth Gunning, widow of the Duke of Hamilton. Married Colonel John Campbell in 1796, after his death in 1809 was appointed lady-in-waiting to the Princess of Wales. Married a second time to the Reverend Edward Bury, rector of Lichfield. Lady Bury, author of light literature and a celebrated beauty, died in London 1861, at the age of eighty-seven.

Litt:

- Ramsay, F. ed. The Day Book of Daniel Campbell of Shawfield. 1991, p.61.
- Grieg, J. ed. The Farington Diary, vol. III, 1924, p. 295.

Illustration courtesy of The Paul Mellon Centre.

3. Title: CLEGHORN, HUGH, of St Andrews 1752-1837

Medium: pastel on paper, 61 X 45.7 cm (24 X 18 in.)

Head and shoulders of a man facing left, head turned towards the viewer. Dressed in black coat and white cravat, brown hair tied with bow at the rear. Flushed cheeks, prominent chin, eyes light brown/green. Lighting from top left. Facial shadowing pronounced. Plain background in light brown. Plain gilt frame, 8cm, and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the sitter, private collection, Scotland.

Exd: no

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: portrait discovered in early Spring 1993. Documented evidence provided by Basil Skinner; portrait mentioned in a letter dated Rome, 18th December 1790, from Archibald Skirving to his brother Robert. 'I told you I had painted Lord Elcho's portrait. I did afterwards his cousin called Gordon, a Mr Cleghorn from St Andrew's..' (Skinner, B. 1970, p. 48). Executed winter of 1789/90, when sitter and artist were present in Rome. Portrait in poor condition; severely attacked by mildew; c. 25 miniature holes and large amount of thunderflies covering the lower region of picture surface. Paper cut on left (2.5 cm) and right (1.5 cm) sides. Currently undergoing restoration.

Sitter: Hugh Cleghorn, born 1752, grew up in a middle-class family with background in trade and academic life. attended the University of Edinburgh in the late 1760s, became professor of civil history at the University of St Andrews. After fifteen years of teaching, he left his profession and became tutor to the young Earl of Home, accompanying Home on his Grand Tour of Europe in 1788-90. Visited Rome in the company of Lord Elcho and his family in 1790, then aged 38. On his return to Scotland, Cleghorn befriended Henry Dundas, the Lord Advocate, who sent him to India and later Ceylon as

Secretary of State to the new British government there, later ousted by the Governor General of Ceylon, Frederick North, on false charges of corruption. Returned to St Andrews in 1800 where he purchased the estate of Stravithie, residing there with his family until his death thirty seven years later.

Litt: Clark, A. ed. An Enlightened Scot - Hugh Cleghorn, 1752-1837, 1992.

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

4. Title: CLERK, JOHN of Eldin 1728-1812

Medium: pastel on paper, 58.7 X 49.2 cm (23 1/2 X 19 1/2 in.)

Head and shoulders of a seated gentleman, frontal view, dressed in black coat and vest, white neckcloth and shirt tinted in white, grey and yellow. Set in plain gilt frame and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the sitter, private collection, Scotland.

Exd:

- The Royal Academy, London, 1799.

- 'Exhibition to Celebrate the 250th Ann. of John Clerk of Eldin, 1728-1812,' by Steigal Fine Art Ltd. 6 North West Circus Place, Edinburgh, Aug. 19th - Sept. 9th 1978.

- 'Masterpieces of Scottish Portraiture,' October 1980. Talbot Rice Art Centre, University of Edinburgh.
- 'Painting in Scotland - The Golden Age,' 1707-1843. The Talbot Rice Art Centre, University of Edinburgh, Aug. 8th - 31st 1986.
- 'Painting in Scotland - The Golden Age.' Tate Gallery, London, Oct. 15th 1986 - Jan. 4th 1987.

Engraved in mezzotint by S.W. Reynolds, 1800. (Information courtesy of the Witt Library).

Ref:

- MacMillan, D. Painting in Scotland - the Golden Age. 1986.
- MacMillan, D. Scottish Art 1460-1990. 1990, p. 151.
- Masterpieces of Scottish Portrait Painting, Talbot Rice Art Centre, 1981, p. 14.
- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.
- Royal Academy Exhibitors, 1799. Dept. of Prints and Drawings, British Museum.

Comment: pastel in excellent condition with the exception of a slight pigment loss on sitter's right hand corner of mouth. Suggested date around 1798/9, authentication based on The Royal Academy Exhibition of 1799.

Sitter: John Clerk of Eldin (1728-1812), seventh son of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, an amateur etcher and author of 'Naval Tactics', a book that was influential in naval warfare but also indirectly the stimulus for Patrick Miller's steamship. Clerk married Susannah Adam, daughter of William Adam, the

architect, whose family he had befriended while a young merchant in the Luckenbooths, Edinburgh. He became a very close friend of Robert Adam whom he shared an interest in sketching, amongst other things.

Litt:

- Sanderson, M. Robert Adam and Scotland - Portrait of an Architect, 1992, p. 116.
- Stephen, L. ed. Dictionary of National Biography. 1887. vol. XI, p.41.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

5. Title: DRUMMOND, HENRY HOME 1783-1867

Medium: pastel on paper, 44 X 59 cm (23 1/2 X 17 1/2 in.)

Frontal view of young boy in half-length, dressed in blue coat, red collar and white shirt. Background landscape; lake with trees on the right and brown tree left side. Gilt frame, 7.5 cm, and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the sitter, private collection, Scotland.

Exd: -

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: suggested date c.1796/8. Authenticated by old paper label on reverse: 'Henry Home Drummond, 6th Laird of/ Blair Drummond, b. 28th July 1783./ In Crayon by Skirving.' Present condition: mildew on right hand side. Small insects on nose and throat, white smudges on the inside glass, covering right hand side and face.

Sitter: Henry Home Drummond, seventh Laird of Blair Drummond, later married to Christian Moray, is here portrayed as a young boy, standing in front of a subtly suggested landscape - similar to the pastel portrait of Mrs. John Carnegie in the National Gallery of Scotland.

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

6. Title: DUNDAS, HENRY

1742-1811

Medium: pastel on paper, 44.5 X 38.7 cm (17 1/2 X 15 1/4 in.) Round portrait head of figure in white wig, facing right, eyes turned to spectator, dark eyebrows and pink cheeks. Black gown with white shirt and necktie. Set in square gilt frame and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the sitter, private collection, Scotland. Presently on loan to The Georgian House, Charlotte Square.

Exd: -

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: authentication based on old label written in ink with artist's name and sitter on the reverse. According to the Witt Library, this is a copy of the head in the three-quarter-length portrait by David Martin (1770), formerly at Melville Castle. Simplicity of style and technique suggest it is an early copy by Skirving, c. early 1770s. Present condition good.

Sitter: Henry Dundas, 1st Viscount Melville, son of Lord Arniston. Lieutenant to William Pitt, the Younger, from 1782 'the uncrowned king of Scotland.' Appointed Solicitor-General for Scotland in 1766; MP for Midlothian, 1774-90, and for Edinburgh, 1790-1802. Lord Advocate, 1775-83; Privy Councillor and Treasurer to the Navy, 1782-3 and 1784-1800; Keeper of the Scottish Signet, 1782; Home Secretary, 1791-4; President of the Board of Control, 1793-1801; Secretary of War, 1794-1801; Keeper of the Privy Seal of Scotland, 1800; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1804-5; erased from the roll of the Privy Council, 1805, and impeached for professional misconduct, 1806; acquitted and restored to the Privy Council, 1807. Created Viscount Melville and Baron Dunira, 1802.

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

7. Title: ELCHO, FRANCIS, Lord, M.P.

1749-1808

Medium: pastel on paper, 58.5 X 47 cm (23 X 18 1/2 in.)

Head and shoulders, frontal view, of middle-aged man, his head turned 3/4 to the left. Wearing a green overcoat with large brass buttons and high, stiff collar, red waistcoat, white shirt and neckcloth. Powdered white hair, eyes looking to the left. Plain brown background. Set in gilt frame with pearl band border and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the sitter, private collection, England and Scotland.

Exd: no.

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: the head is virtually identical to Raeburn's full-length portrait in oil of Lord Elcho in the same collection. Skirving's portrait, executed in Rome 1790, is mentioned in a letter from Archibald to Robert Skirving, (Skinner, B. 1970, p. 48). Identical frame as the Skirving portrait of the 8th Earl of Wemyss, 1772-1853. Woodworm on both frames, Lord Elcho's severely attacked.

Sitter: Francis Charteris, Lord Elcho, son of the 7th Earl of Wemyss, married Susan Tracy in 1771. M.P. for Haddington Burghs from 1780 to 1787 when he lost his seat on his father

succeeding to the earldom of Wemyss, in accordance to the rule of the Scottish parliament, dissolved in 1707, whereby the eldest sons of peers were forbidden to be members of parliament. Lord Elcho expired in 1808 from overconsumption of punch.

Litt: Guide to Stanway Court, 1984, p. 6.

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

8. Title: FRASER-TYTLER, ALEXANDER,

Lord Woodhouselee

1747-1813

Medium: pastel on paper, 67.5 X 54.6 cm (26 1/2 X 21 1/2 in.) Frontal view of standing man, half-length, wearing powdered wig, black coat and vest, white shirt and neckcloth. Plain grey background with lighting from top left side. Set in its original heavy gilt frame and glass, 11 cm thick with accantus leaves in each corner.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: initially located at Woodhouselee; sold by Geoffrey Fraser-Tytler, date unknown; on loan to the S.N.P.G. in 1955 from the Skene Tytler Estate, Keith Marishal; property of Comm. Christopher Hallewell until purchase on 3.4.1957 for £100 by family descent of the sitter, private collection, Scotland, on terms agreed with the SNP G that if put on market again - first option goes to the Gallery.

Exd:

- Royal Scottish Academy, 1880 (412). Lent by G.M. Tytler, Edinburgh. (Attributed to a J. Skirving but by Archibald).
- Portrait Drawings by Scottish Artists 1750-1850. SNPG, 1955 (79).

Ref:

- Baile de Laperrier, C. ed. The Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors 1826-1990, 1991, p. 174.
- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 56.

Comment: in excellent condition. Authentication based on old paper label on reverse stating name of sitter and artist, handwritten in ink. Suggested date c. 1805.

Sitter: Alexander Fraser-Tytler - judge, historian, essayist. Professor of Universal History at Edinburgh University; Judge Advocate, 1790; Lord of Session, 1802; and of Justiciary, 1811. Contributed to the *Mirror and Lounger*, close friend of Henry Mackenzie. Translated Schiller's Die Räuber, 1792.

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

9. Title: HAMILTON, GAVIN

1721-1798

Medium: pastel on paper, 61 X 48.7 cm (24 X 19 3/16 in.)

Head and shoulders of seated man, facing forward, head turned to the left, almost profile view. Wearing turban-like headgear, hair not visible, and gown with fur collar, vest and white shirt.

Lips slightly parted, eyes turned to the left. Gilt frame and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: commissioned by Lord Gardenstone in Rome - according to The Bee in 1793, in Gardenstone's collection the same year. In the early 20th century owned by Edward Scot Skirving, descendant of the artist, inherited by his daughter, Mrs Leila Hoskins who bequeathed the portrait to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in 1981. (PG 2472)

Engraving of Skirving's pastel portrait by Robert Scott, published in The Bee, by James Anderson, vol. XVI, Edinburgh, July 1793, p. 1.

Exd:

- Painting in Scotland - The Golden Age, Talbot Rice Art Centre, University of Edinburgh, 1986.
- Painting in Scotland - The Golden Age, The Tate Gallery, London, 1986.
- The Line of Tradition, National Galleries of Scotland, held at the Royal Scottish Academy, Aug. 4th - Sept. 12th, 1993.

Ref:

- Lee, S. ed. D.N.B. vol. LII, 1897, p. 36.
- National Galleries of Scotland, Catalogue, 1946, No. 119, p. 135.

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JOURNAL

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Notes and Egotisms of Henry

Scotland - The Golden Age, 1986.

1460-1990. 1990, p. 151.

the 18th Century. 1966, p. 36.

vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

vol. XIV, p. 1.

condition, executed between 1788-

a well-known Scottish painter,
antiquities, born in Lanark in 1730
to Duncan Macmillan, born 1721).

Agostino Masucci; c. 1752 briefly
member of the artists' committee
y; in Rome around 1769, visited
ed Hadrian's villa below Tivoli in
nes Byres and Thomas Jenkins.
ownley; in 1783 inherited estate
scorted 'Emma Hart', the future
ed in Rome in 1797.

NPG.

RY DRUMMOND

1719-1804

r, 59.7 X 43.8 cm (23 1/2 X 17 1/4

gth, frontal view, seated in a pink
er left shoulder. Head turned 3/4 to
wl and a black bow on top. Right arm
of her left hand visible. Set in heavy
ass.

on: by family descent of the sitter,
id.

ons..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

the SNPG the portrait is a copy after
pale blue eyes, no eyelashes visible -
tter condition that her nephew, no
d date c. 1796/8. Old paper label on
d b. 17th December 1719/ 6th daug.
ir Drummond/ m. John Pringle W.S. of
Crayon by Skirving./ She died 9 April

, sixth daughter of James Drummond,
and wife of John Pringle of Stitchill;

possibly commissioned by her brother George Drummond of Blair Drummond, likewise the pastel of her nephew Henry Home Drummond, both portrayed by Skirving.

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

11. Title: **SPROT, MARK**

1743-1808

Medium: pastel (on paper)?, 24.1 X 20.3 cm (9 1/2 X 8 in.)

Oval portrait in bust length of elderly man facing front, dressed in a brown buttoned coat with stiff collar, his striped waistcoat partly visible around white necktie. White powdered hair, left eye brown, right blue.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: unknown, possibly in family ownership of a related branch of descendants of the sitter.

Engraved in mezzotint by William Ward, undated.

Exd: no

Ref: -

Comment: authenticated by the engraving by William Ward where the artist's name of the original is given as Skirving. Present location of the original remains unknown, however, a

close copy in oil on board, either by a follower of Skirving, or, more likely, his own copy, indicate the colouring of the original. The location of the copy is also unknown but illustrated in the text. Attempts were made with Christie's to further investigate the Sprot and Yule portraits but no response. Medium uncertain of Skirving's originals, here listed as pastels with reservation. Suggested date c. 1798.

Sitter: Mark Sprot, banker, the seventh son of John Sprot and Janet Espline, and brother to Mrs. Marion Yule, née Sprot. Mark Sprot went to sea in an East Indiaman in 1753, aged ten, in care of a relation, Mr Moffat, a surgeon of the East India Company. Returned to Scotland eight years later, left the navy in 1769, aged twenty-six, to become secretary to the Supervisor of three provinces of Bengal, then ruled by the British trading company. Settled in London a wealthy man, where he was elected a member of the Stock Exchange, and apparently became one of the greatest capitalists during the reign of George III. Married Joanna Hathorn Stewart of Physgill, Whithorn in 1781, no offspring. Mark died in 1808 and lies buried at Physgill with his wife who died in 1828. (Information courtesy of Major John Sprot of Riddell, a distant descendant of the Sprot family).

12. Title: SPROT, MRS. MARK

? -1828

Medium: pastel (on paper)?, 24.1 X 20.3 cm (9 1/2 X 8 in.)

Oval portrait, frontal bust length, of female sitter dressed in puff sleeve dress and turban on powdered hair.

Prov. & present location: anon. sale, Edinburgh, Lyon & Turnbull, 4th November 1950 (91). Attempts to locate the portrait via the auctionhouse proved unsuccessful. Present location unknown.

Exd: Royal Scottish Academy, 1863 (335). Lent by Mr. Sheriff Tait.

Ref:

- Baile de Laperriere, C. ed. The Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors 1826-1990. 1991, p. 174.
- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 56.

Comment: a copy was made in pencil after Skirving's portrait by James Archer (SNPG).

Sitter: Susan Tait, mother of the Archbishop of Canterbury - Archibald Campbell Tait (1811-1882). Susan married Crawford Tait in 1795, son of John Tait and writer to the Signet. Her husband inherited the estates of Harviestown in Clackmannanshire and Cambodden in Argyllshire, who later 'ruined himself by unremunerative agricultural experiments', and eventually had to sell his estates. The family had five sons and three daughters.

Litt: DNB, vol. LV, p. 292.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

14. Title: WEMYSS, FRANCIS, 8th Earl of 1772-1853

Medium: pastel on paper, 58.5 X 47 cm (23 X 18 1/2 in.)

Head and shoulders of young man facing left with head in 3/4 view looking towards spectator, wearing brown coat with high collar, white shirt and neckcloth with frills. Powdered hair tied back with black ribbon. Set in gilt frame and glass, identical to Lord Elcho's.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the sitter, private collection, England and Scotland.

Exd: no

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: present condition fair, glue visible from reverse of paper on canvas. Authenticated by consistent family provenance. Very likely executed in Rome, 1790, at the same time as his father's documented portrait in similar style.

Sitter: Francis, 8th Earl of Wemyss and 4th Earl of March, son of Lord Elcho and Susan Tracy, owner of Stanway court from 1817 to 1853. Age of sitter unknown, either commissioned in 1786 when aged 14, by the Charteris family (Wemyss) when residing at Amisfield House in East Lothian, or aged 19, when travelling with his parents on their tour to Italy in 1790.

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

15. Title: WILSON, MRS. JOHN

1753-1824

Medium: pastel on paper, 68.5 X 55.5 cm (27 X 22 in.)

Head and shoulders of a woman facing the viewer, dressed in black mourning dress with a white gauze scarf over her shoulders and on her head a white and black bonnet with a large white bow tied under her chin. Set in heavy gilt frame and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: first owned by Mrs. Wilson; then initially left to her son John ('Christopher North'), but a codicil altered this to the life-rent of it to her unmarried daughters. Eventually in possession of her daughter Elizabeth (Lady McNeil); returned to John Wilson, son of Christopher North, on the death of his aunt Elizabeth McNeil; after his death it was looked after by his widow. Ownership subsequently claimed for the descendants of Robert S. Wilson, "C.N.'s" brother. Later passed to his daughter and granddaughter of Mrs. Margaret Wilson, who left it to her nephew Captain R. S. Wilson, Seaforth Highlanders, who passed it to his son Lieut. Col. A.R. Wilson, Seaforth Highlanders, who in turn gave it to his sister Miss Marjorie A. Wilson. Bequeathed to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery by Miss Wilson in 1984. (PG 2613)

Exd: no

Ref:

- 'Recent Museum Acquisitions in Edinburgh.' The Burlington Magazine, vol. 127, August 1985. London. p. 571, No. 100.
- Scotland's Pictures- The National Collection of Scottish Art.
Edinburgh, 1990. p. 33 (29).

Comment: portrait in excellent condition. Authenticated by consistent family ownership of the sitter. Executed sometime between 1797 and the time of Mrs. Wilson's will in 1807, then in her early 50s. Preserved and refitted with new glass into old frame by the Conservation department, National Galleries of Scotland, 1987.

Sitter: Margaret Sym, wife of John Wilson, a prosperous gauze manufacturer in Paisley, became a widow in 1790. Her eldest son John, fourth child, inherited the family fortune at the age of 21 and eventually purchased an estate in Elleray, Westmoreland. In 1810 Mrs. Wilson and her ten children moved to 53 Queen Street in Edinburgh. Her son John later became professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University, better known as 'Christopher North'.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

16. Title: WRIGHT, MRS. EUPHAN GUTHRIE 1739-1831

Medium: pastel on paper, 58 X 46.7 cm (23 X 18 in.)

Frontal half-length of an elderly lady in white widows cap with black lace shawl thrown over her cap. White bow tied under chin with white shoulder length cape. Thick eyebrows, dark eyes, firm mouth, upper lip very thin.

Signed: not known.

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: unknown.

Exd: not recorded.

Ref:

- Art Prices Current, 1907-8. Record of Christie's sales, London, 1908, p. 205. Date of sale; 15th May, 1908 (97). Sold by Miss Guthrie Wright of Edinburgh to Agnew for £52.10.0, in aid of the funds of the Scottish Council of Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses.
- Graves, A. Art Sales. vol. III, London 1918, p. 155. Sold to Agnew for 52 10 0.
- Guthrie Wright, G.E. Gideon Guthrie - a monograph. 1900. p. 158 (courtesy of Basil Skinner, 1963 Notebook).
- Skinner, B. 1906 Will of Christina Guthrie.(1963 Notebook)
- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 56.

Comment: portrait executed c. 1815, authenticated by the biographer of the sitter's son, Gideon Guthrie. Description of how Skirving did not find the widow's plain cap of the day very appealing, so he simply lifted the black lace shawl from

her shoulders and arranged it over her cap - "hence her somewhat fantastic appearance". (Guthrie Wright, p.159)

Sitter: Euphan Guthrie, eldest daughter of Harie Guthrie and Rachel Milne, here portrayed in her mid-seventies, married in 1758 Mr. Charles Wright, junior, of Phallope, one time Dean of Guild in Edinburgh. They had six children. The sitter died at the age of 102.

Litt: Wright, C. G. Gideon Guthrie - a monograph. 1900, frontispiece: 'pastel by Skirving, photographed by R.S. Webster'.

Illustration courtesy of the SNP.G.

17. Title: PORTRAIT OF AN OLD LADY

Medium: pastel on vellum, 72.4 X 59.7 cm (28 1/2 X 23 1/2 in.) Half-length of an elderly woman, seated with hands in lap, wearing a dark dress, white blouse with a gold-threaded shawl draped over her shoulders and a white lawn cap tied with a bow under her chin. Seated frontally with hands resting in lap. Gold ring on her left middle finger. Plain Background. Set in gilt frame.

Signed: "A. Skirving, 1803", bottom right corner

Date: 1803 (See above)

Prov. & present location: Esmé Church, date unknown; sold by Auction Galleries, Sussex, to present owner in 1981. Private collection, England.

Exd: no

Ref: -

Comment: a portrait miniature of identical face illustrated in Foskett's Miniatures, 1987, p. 236, attributed to the Irish miniaturist John Comerford (c. 1770-1832).

Sitter: identity unknown, previously thought to be Henrietta, Countess of Hopetoun (National Gallery of Scotland).

Illustration courtesy of the owner.



5) Henry Home Drummond



6) Henry Dundas



10) Mary Drummond Pringle



13) Mrs Campbell Tait



15) Mrs John Wilson



14) Francis, 8th Earl of Wemyss



16) Mrs Euphan Guthrie Wright

III. DRAWINGS

1. Title: **BERRY, WILLIAM** 1730-1783

Medium: indian ink on paper, 15.2 X 12.1 cm (6 X 4 3/4 in.)

Oval bust portrait of frontal man, clean shaven, dark eyes and double chin.

Signed: "W. de la Cour Pinxt 1765. Skirving d. 1797. Berry Intagliatore, Per vendere."

Date: 1797 (See above)

Prov. & present location: bequeathed to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery (PG 114) by W. F. Watson, 1885.

Exd:

- York Place, Edinburgh, 1812.
- Portrait Drawings by Scottish Artists 1750-1850, SNPG, 1955 (77).

Ref:

- Brydall, R. Art in Scotland, 1889, p. 216.
- Bushnell, G. H. Scottish Engravers, 1949, p. 5
- Gray, J. Catalogue of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1892. No. 383.
- Long, B. British Miniaturists 1520-1860. 1966, p. 403.
(Referred to as 'Indian ink copy').
- Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Illustrated list. 1928. p. 35.
- Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Concise Catalogue, 1977.

- 'Exhibition of Paintings in Edinburgh.' The Scots Magazine, 1812, p. 247.
- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.
- Williamson, G. ed. Bryan's Dictionary of Painters & Engravers. vol. V, 1905, p. 88.

Comment: copy after William Delacour, executed in 1765. Preparatory drawing for an engraving, according to the SNPG.

Sitter: William Berry, born in 1730, early apprenticed to a seal engraver in Edinburgh where he later set up his own business, producing armorial work and imitations of antique intaglio, eg. heads of Queen Mary, Oliver Cromwell, Julius Ceasar and Hercules. His work was much appreciated by collectors. Married Janet Anderson in 1757, daughter of a surgeon. Died in Edinburgh 1783, aged 53.

Litt: Irving, J. The Book of Eminent Scotsmen. 1881, p. 28:

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

2. Title: BURNS, ROBERT

1759-1796

Medium: red chalk on tinted paper, 54.9 X 42.5 (21 5/8 X 16 3/4 in.) Male head in red chalk, life-size, facing 3/4 to the left. Set in large elaborate gilt frame.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: purchased from Skirving's studio in 1819 by John Rennie; inherited by his son George Rennie; sold to Theodore Martin in 1881; purchased by the National Galleries of Scotland in 1911 (PG 745).

Engraved numerous times from 1798 onwards, see Engravings.

Exd:

- Royal Scottish Academy, 1863 (392). Lent by G. Rennie Esq., CE.
- Edinburgh, Loan Exhibition, 1883.
- Glasgow Burns Memorial Exhibition, 1896.
- Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art & Industry, Glasgow, 1911.
- Portrait Drawings by Scottish Artists 1750-1850, SNPG, 1955 (92).

Ref:

- Armstrong, Sir W. Sir Henry Raeburn, 1901, p. 112.
- Baile de Lapperriere, C. ed. The Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors 1826-1990. vol. IV, 1991, p. 174.
- Bénézit, .E. Dictionnaire des Peintures, Sculptures, Dessinateurs et Graveurs. 1976, p.639.
- Bold, A. A Burns Companion. 1991. (35) Listed as by Alexander Skirving.
- Campsie, A. The Clarinda Conspiracy. (A Novel). 1989. (Frontcover).
- Caw, J. Scottish Painting - Past and Present. 1908.

- Clubbe, J. ed. Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle, 1974, p. 126.
- Cursiter, S. Scottish Art at the Close of the 19th Century. 1949, p. 55.
- Dent, A. Burns in his time. 1966. pp. 48-49.
- Douglas, H. Johnnie Walker's Burns Supper Companion. 1988. (reproduced on frontcover).
- Duncan, Rev. T. Athelstaneford, 1934, p. 110.
- The Glasgow Herald, Sept. 4th, 1890, p. 10. 'Portraits of Burns'.
- The Glasgow Herald, Sept. 6th, 1890. p. 10. 'Portraits of Burns'.
- The Glasgow Herald, Sept. 8th, 1890, p. 4.
- The Glasgow Herald, Oct. 30th, 1909, p. 11. 'Burns Portraits.'
- Grant, Col. M.H. A Dictionary of British Etchers. 1952. p. 187
- Grieg, J. ed. The Farington Diary. vol. III, p. 54 (Feb. 1805).
- Grieg, J. Sir Henry Raeburn. R.A. - His Life and Works. 1911, p. 56.
- Grierson, H.J.C. ed. The Letters of Sir Walter Scott. 1815-1817. 1933, p. 243.
- Haddington Courier, Sept. 3rd, 1948. 'Other Famous Families.'
- Harris, P. & Halsby, J. Dictionary of Scottish Painters 1600-1960. 1990, p. 204.
- Irwin, D. & F. Scottish Painters at Home and Abroad. 1975, p. 80.
- Kilmurry, E. Dictionary of British Portraiture, vol. II, 1979, p. 33.
- King, M. Athelstaneford. 1988. p. 16.
- Mackay, J. Burnsiana, 1988.

- Mackay, J. ed. The Complete Works of Robert Burns, 1986, p. 9.
- Mackintosh, A. ed. Memoirs of Dr. Robert Scot Skirving. 1988, p. 26.
- Muir, J. ed. Annual Burns Chronicle and Club Directory, 1892, p. 82.
- National Gallery of Scotland, Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture. 1957, p. 254.
- Scotland's Magazine, January, 1959, p.43.
- The Scotsman, Sept. 12th, 1933. 'The Skirving Sketch.' p. 11.
- The Scotsman, Sept. 14th, 1933. 'Burns Portrait.' p. 11.
- Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art & Industry. 1911.
- Scottish Field, January 1973, p. 32.
- Scottish National Portrait Gallery 1928, p. 10.
- Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Concise Catalogue, 1977.
- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.
- Stephen, L. & Lee, S. ed. D.N.B. vol. XVIII, 1973, p. 359.
- Thompson, H.W. ed. The Anecdotes and Egotisms of Henry Mackenzie, 1927, Biographical index.
- Vollmer, H. Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Kunstler. 1937, p. 114.
- Young, D. Edinburgh in the Age of Sir Walter Scott. 1965, p. 95.

Comment: based on Alexander Nasmyth's likeness of Burns since Skirving states in a letter that he never met the poet. Possible dating 1796/7. First engraved and published 1798. Authenticated by engraving naming Skirving as the artist, and

Sir Walter Scott's letter to Samuel Rogers in 1816. Drawing also noted in studio contents of 1819.

Sitter: Robert Burns, born 1759 at Alloway, near Ayr; educated at home and in Murdock's School, later worked on his father's farm at Mount Oliphant. In 1773 Burns moved with his family to Lochlee and four years later to Tarbolton. Wrote several songs, established a Bachelor's Club in 1780, and continued to write satires until the mid 1780s. In 1786 he visited Edinburgh, a year later moved to a farm in Ellisland and married Jean Armour in 1788. Employed at the Excise Office the same year. Wrote songs for Johnson and Thomson in 1792-5 and moved to Dumfries in 1796 where he died of rheumatic fever at the age of 37.

Litt: Irving, J. The Book of Eminent Scotsmen. 1881, p. 50-51.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

3. Title: HANDASYDE, A.

Medium: red chalk on paper, 45.7 X 33 cm (18 X 13 in.)

Young man in left profile, short natural hair, wearing coat with flat collar, and shirt. Lips slightly parted.

Signed: Inscription bottom right hand corner: 'La Sorella/ Di quello/ E bella/ A. Handasyde/ London 30th June 1816. A.S.'

Date: 1816 (See above)

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the artist, private collection, England.

Exd:

- Edinburgh, Loan Exhibition, 1883.

- Portrait Drawings by Scottish Artists 1750-1850. SNPG, 1955
(76).

Ref: -

Comment: -

Sitter: -

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

4. Title: MACCORMICK, FATHER JAMES

Medium: red chalk on paper, 36.8 X 26.7 cm (14 1/2 X 10 1/2 in.) Portrait of seated monk with hands resting in lap, looking straight at viewer, body turned slightly to the left.

Signed: inscribed 'Father James McCormick, Irish Franciscan Friar, professor of Divinity at the College of St. Isidore, Rome.'

No signature.

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: previously by family descent of the artist, sold in 1986 to another branch of the Skirving family; private collection, England.

Exd: Portrait Drawings by Scottish Artists (1750-1850). SNPG, 1955 (170). Lent by Mrs. Leila Hoskins.

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol.XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: the original backboard on the reverse of the picture contains the artist's signature and the word 'Croys'. Contained in identical frame as Andrew Geddes' portrait of Robert Skirving of Croys, made by Chalmers & Son, not by Archibald Skirving as stated by Mrs Hoskins (SNPG corr.).

Sitter: -

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

5. Title: NAPIER, CHARLES, of Merchiston 1731-1807

Medium: white chalk and wash on light mahogany wood,
56.2 X 47.6 cm (22 1/16 X 18 3/4 in.)

Light chalk sketch of profile of large man with double chin, facing left. Outline of profile head and clothes only. Framed and glazed.

Signed: incised on reverse in black ink with brush: 'Honble/
Charles Napier/ Merchiston Hall/ Archd Skirving/ 1800.'

Date: 1800 (See above)

Prov. & present location: purchased by Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, Kelvingrove, in 1924. Previous provenance unrecorded.

Exd: not recorded.

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: a much damaged portrait, chalk lines faintly visible.

Sitter: Charles Napier, son of Francis, 5th Lord Napier, and Henrietta, third daughter of Charles Hope, first Earl of Hopetoun. Born in Merchiston Hall, Co. Stirling, on 19th November 1731; became a Lieutenant R.N. in 1754, Captain in 1762. Married first wife in 1763, Grizel, daughter of Sir John Warrender of Lochend; second wife Christian, in 1777, daughter of Gabriel Hamilton of Westburn. They had eight children. Napier died at Esslemont House 1807.

Litt: Paul, J. The Scots Peerage, vol. VI, 1909, p. 432.

Illustration courtesy of Glasgow Art Gallery, Kelvingrove.

6. Title: ROBERTSON, PROF. JAMES 1714-1795

Medium: pencil on paper, 8.9 X 6.4 cm (3 1/2 X 2 1/2 in.)

Oval profile portrait of old man facing left, wearing a wig, gown with large flat collar with four small tassels in front. Framed and glazed.

Signed: 'Skirving f.' under oval, right side. According to the SNPG the drawing reproduces the signature 'Tassie f.'

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: Iain Murray Thomson in 1955.
Present location unknown.

Exh: Portrait Drawings by Scottish Artists (1750-1850). SNPG, 1955 (71). Lent by Iain Murray Thomson, Esq.

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: executed after James Tassie's (1735-1799) medallion of 1791 (SNPG). Valued for £21 by George Watson in 1819 (NLS, Acc. 10102).

Sitter: previously identified as 'Principal William Robertson, D.D.', now as James Robertson, orientalist, born 1714 in parish of Cromarty. Studied for many years at Leyden University under Schyltens, the celebrated Dutch orientalist. Graduated 1749, studied at Oxford. Elected 1751 to the chair of Hebrew at the University of Edinburgh. He died at Middlefield, Leith Walk, 1795.

Litt: Lee, S. ed. DNB, vol. XVI, 1909, p. 1295.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

7. Title: BRITISH TOURISTS IN ROME

Medium: pencil on paper, 34.8 X 23.9 cm (13 5/8 X 9 3/8 in.)

Drawing of man standing beside a seated woman with young boy standing in between. The husband, dressed in long coat, tall hat, is looking up at unknown object ahead while sketching,

the wife, wearing tall hat, full skirt, hands in lap, is looking towards her fairhaired son. The boy face the viewer.

Signed: 'Skirving, Rome, 1792' bottom left corner.

Date: 1792 (See above)

Prov. & present location: Edward Barrett; purchased by Paul Oppé from Sotheby's Nov. 23rd, 1920 (197); property of Miss Amide and Denys Oppé, London 1955; anon. sale, Phillips June 13th, 1983 (55). Present location unknown.

Exd:

- 'Winter Exhibition, 1923-24'. Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1923 (23)
- 'Some Neglected English Masters.' Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1932 (141)
- Selection of Drawings from the Collection of Mr. Paul Oppé, Sheffield, 1952 (55)
- Eighteenth-Century Italy and the Grand Tour, Norwich Castle Museum, 1958 (51);
- The Royal Academy, London, 1958, Lent by Mr. Oppé;
- Il Settecento a Roma. Rome, 1959 (581);
- Englishmen in Italy, Victoria & Albert Museum, 1968 (51), titled 'A British Family in Rome.'

Ref:

- Gazette des Beaux-Arts, November 1959.
- Hibbert, C. The Grand Tour. 1969. p. 143.
- Stainton, L. British Artists in Rome 1700-1800. 1974, no. 18.

Comment: Brinsely Ford measurements: 35.6 X 24.1 cm.
Exhibition information courtesy of the Sir Brinsley Ford
Archive and Dr. Lindsay Stainton.

Sitters: -

Illustration courtesy of The Paul Mellon Centre.

8. Title: PORTRAIT OF AN OLD LADY

Medium: red chalk on paper, 49 X 35.5 cm (19 1/2 X 14 in.)

Profile to the left, bust length of an old woman wearing a white
widow's cap with bow on front of forehead, white blouse.
Framed and glazed.

Signed: 'London July 1816, A.S.', bottom right hand corner.

Date: 1816 (See above)

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the artist's
brother, David Skirving, private collection, England.

Exd: no

Ref: -

Comment: resembles the red chalk drawing of Unknown Lady
(B.III.6). Patches of damp stains across upper region of the
picture, visible on the photograph.

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

9. Title: PORTRAIT OF AN UNKNOWN MAN

Medium: red chalk on paper, 15.2 X 12 cm (6 X 4 3/4 in.)

Oval portrait of a young man in left profile, with hair plait pinned up at back of head. Natural hair with fringe and long sideburns covering ears. Wearing white shirt and neckcloth, and a jacket or coat.

Signed: 'Skirving 1797' under oval, bottom right.

Date: 1797 (See above)

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the artist, private collection, England.

Exd: Portrait Drawings by Scottish Artists 1750-1850. SNPG, 1955 (172). Lent by Mrs Leila Hoskins.

Ref: -

Comment: -

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

**10. Title: STUDY OF A SEATED MAN WITH HAND
OVER BACK OF CHAIR**

Medium: red chalk on paper, 39 X 25.3 cm (15 3/8 X 10 in.)

Drawing of a man seated sideways on a plain wooden chair, knees crossed and facing towards the left, his arm around back

of chair with head resting on his hand. Wearing powdered wig with bow, coat and tails, breeches and shoes.

Signed: with monogram 'A.S.' on verso, bottom right in pencil.

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery of Scotland in 1938 by Miss. Bruce, Edinburgh. (D.3967)

Exd: -

Ref: Andrews, K. & Brotchie, J.R. Catalogue of Scottish Drawings, 1960.

Comment: sketches of seated male figure on both sides of paper. Paper with three cut edges, right side uneven. Inscribed bottom right by SNPG; Arch. Skirving 1749-1819; in ink RN 3967.

VERSO: STUDY OF SEATED MAN IN OFFICER'S UNIFORM.

Sketch of a seated officer, full-length, 3/4 to the right, not same sitter as as the other side. Rough outline, chair hinted with one leg.

Illustration courtesy of National Gallery of Scotland.

11. Title: LANDSCAPE WITH THREE STAGS

Medium: pencil on paper, 21.6 X 16.7 cm (8 1/2 X 6 5/8 in.)

Drawing of three stags resting on the grass, in the background buildings and trees.

Signed: with cursive monogram in pencil, bottom right hand corner.

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery of Scotland in 1938 by Miss. Bruce, Edinburgh. (D.3968)

Exd: no record.

Ref: Andrews, K. & Brotchie, J.R. Catalogue of Scottish Drawings, 1960.

Comment: paper with three-cut edges, torn edge top right hand corner.

Illustration courtesy of National Gallery of Scotland.

12. Title: ENTRANCE TO A PARK

Medium: pencil and chalk on paper, 27.6 X 20 cm (10 7/8 X 7 7/8 in.) Park landscape with tall trees surrounding an open field with two spinx monuments on high pedestals; a fountain in the background.

Signed: with cursive monogram in black pencil, bottom right corner.

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery of Scotland in 1938 by Miss. Bruce, Edinburgh. (D.3969)

Exd: no

Ref: Andrews, K. & Brotchie, J.R. Catalogue of Scottish Drawings, 1960.

Comment: smudge on top left hand corner, paper with all sides cut.

Illustration courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland.

**13. Title: A ROMAN VILLA WITH THE DOME OF
ST. PETER'S IN THE BACKGROUND**

Medium: red chalk on paper, 27.3 X 19.7 cm (10 3/4 X 7 3/4 in.) A Roman villa set in a lush landscape. Dome of St Peter's in the background.

Signed: with cursive monogram in black pencil, lower middle.

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery of Scotland in 1938 by Miss Bruce, Edinburgh. (D.3976)

Exd: 'Englishmen in Italy,' Victoria & Albert Museum, 1968 (50).

Ref: Andrews, K. & Brotchie, J.R. Catalogue of Scottish Drawings, 1960.

Comment: -

Illustration courtesy of National Gallery of Scotland.

14. Title: DRAWINGS FROM A CAST

Medium: pencil and chalk on paper, 24.3 X 35.6 cm (9 9/16 X 14 in.) Study of four views of the same cast of leg. Left to right; in red/brown, dark brown and red chalk; far right in pencil.

Signed: no, inscribed 'Rome, 5th April 1793' bottom right hand corner

Date: 1793 (See above)

Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery of Scotland in 1973 by Mrs Leila Hoskins (D.5008).

Exd: no

Ref: -

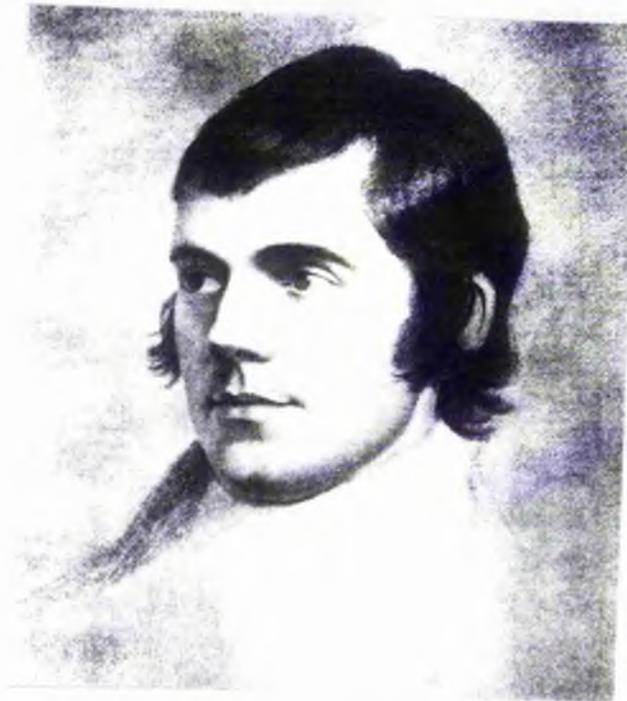
Comment: authentication based on identification of Skirving's handwriting of place and date.

Illustration courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland.

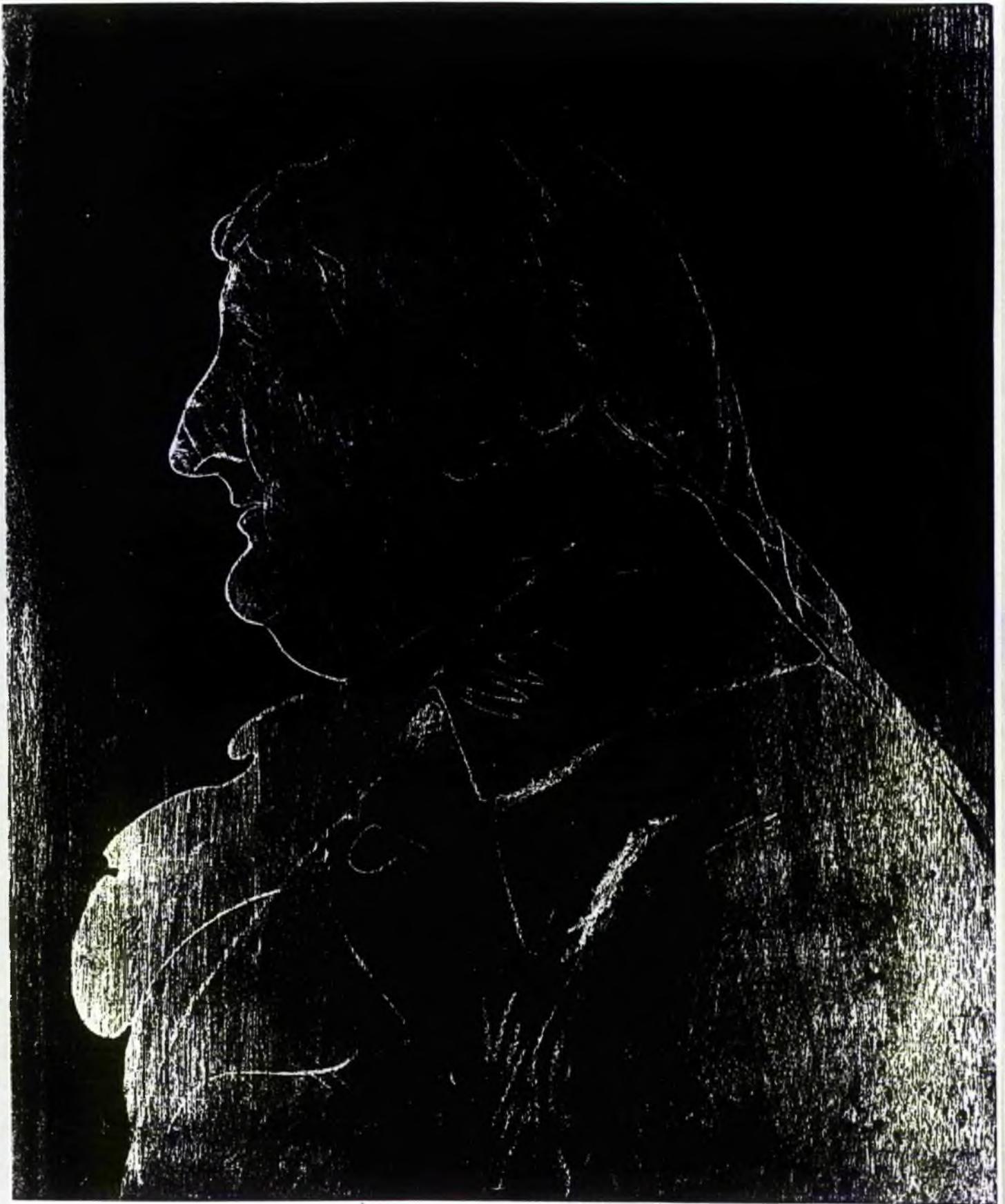




1) William Berry



2) Robert Burns



5) Hon. Charles Napier of Merchiston



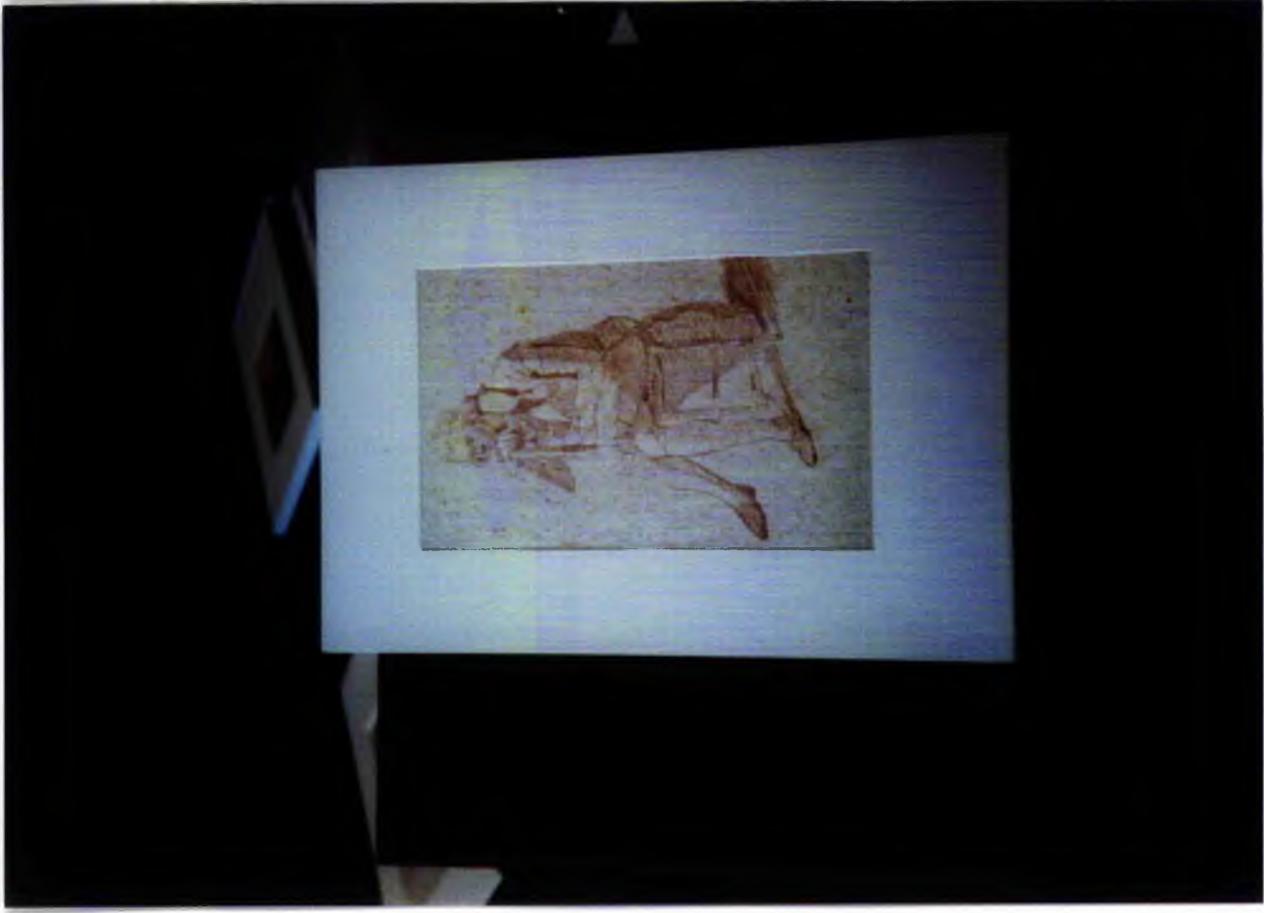
6) Professor James Robertson



8) Portrait of an Old Lady



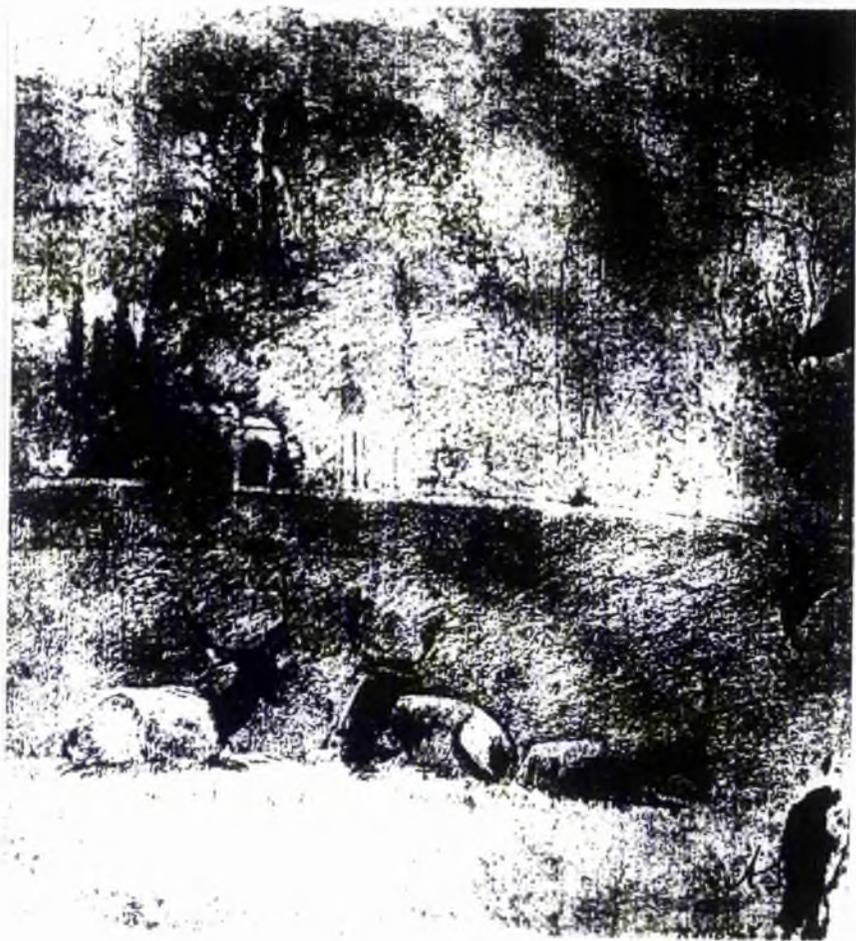
9) Portrait of an Unknown Man



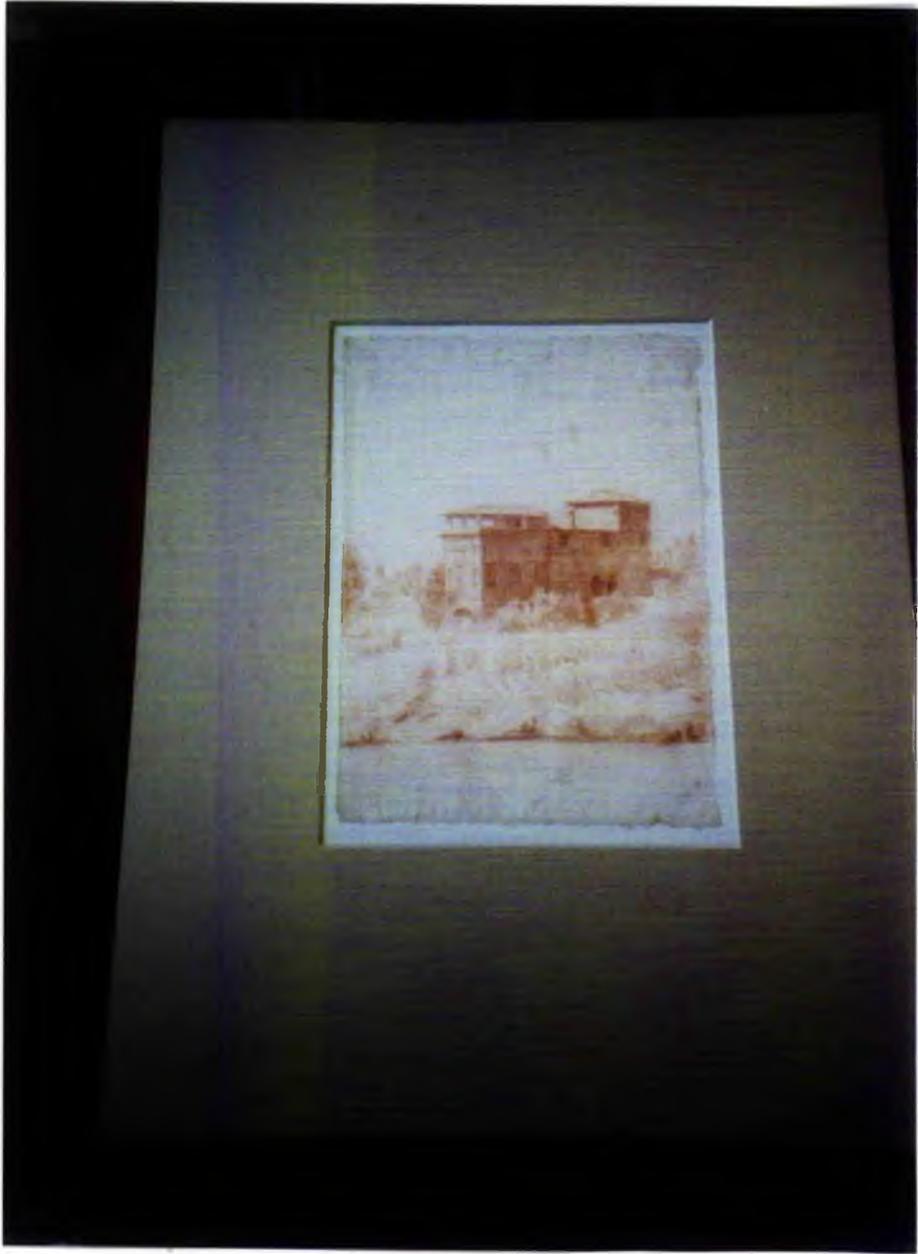
10) B: verso; Study of a Seated Man in Officer's Uniform 10) A: Study of a Seated Man with Hand over Back of Chair



12) Entrance to a Park



11) Landscape with Three Stags



13) A Roman Villa with the Dome of St Peter's in the Background

B. ATTRIBUTED WORKS

I. MINIATURES

1. Title: PORTRAIT OF A LADY IN WHITE

Medium: water-colour on ivory, 66 mm high (2 5/8 in.)

Oval miniature of a lady, facing left over her left shoulder, wearing a white dress draped in the classical style with blue cloak held by a pearl, white ribbon in powdered hair. Set in gold frame with bright-cut border.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location:

- Christie's 19th November 1968. (Courtesy of Bayne-Powell).
- Christie's 10th October 1978. Plate 12, p. 27, Lot 152. Present location unknown.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: stylistic attribution made by Christie's.

Illustration courtesy of Christie's.

2. Title: PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Medium: watercolour on ivory, measurements unspecified.

Head and shoulders of a lady in profile to the left, gaze directed at spectator. Long powdered hair and wearing a turban and decollete white dress. Gold frame with vacant glazed reverse.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: Sotheby's 26th March 1979, p. 42, No. 161. Not illustrated.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: similar description of above miniature of a lady in white dress (No. 1) suggests it may be the same one, however, Sotheby's does not mention a blue cloak, a notable feature, and is therefore here separated.

3. Title: CAMPBELL, LADY JOHN

Medium: water-colour on ivory, 70 mm (2 6/8 in.)

Oval miniature of lady in white dress facing left, resting her elbow on a table to the left. Rectangular gilt wooden frame.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: sold by Christie's; 8th December, 1982, p. 43, Lot 180. Location unknown. Not illustrated.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: -

Sitter: according to Christie's; the sitter is Elizabeth, eldest daughter of William Campbell of Fairfield, and wife of John, 7th Duke of Argyll. Lady Campbell married on 3rd August, 1802 and died 9th December 1818.

4. Title: PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Medium: water-colour on ivory, 72 mm (2 7/8 in.)

Oval miniature of a lady in three-quarter length, dressed in white with blue sash at waist, trimmed with blue ribbons and black lace frills at neck and elbows. Wearing a pearl choker, a broad white ribbon bandeau in powdered hair, and holding a black mask in her left hand. Light blue background. Set in gold locket frame, with delicate gold monogram CR on reverse within brown plaited hair, and blue glass border.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location:

- Sotheby's, 12th March, 1984, Lot 155.
- Christie's 23rd May, 1989, p. 53, Lot 178.
- Purchased from private dealer in London in 1989, private collection.

Exd: -

Ref: Foskett, D. Miniatures: Dictionary and Guide. 1972.

Comment: possibly executed shortly before the similar signed and dated version of 1780 in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Suggested date c. 1779/80. (Sotheby's dated the miniature in 1984: c. 1795).

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

5. Title: PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Medium: watercolour on ivory, 75 mm (3 in.)

Oval miniature, three-quarter length, of a young lady in white dress with pink sash and ribbons, wearing a white turban with large bow, brown curly hair falling over her puff sleeves, large blue eyes directed at spectator. Light blue sky background. Set in its original silver gilt frame.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location:

- Sotheby's 22nd April, 1968, Lot 58. In collection of Mrs Jane Purvis, dated c. 1780.
- Purchased from private dealer in London, November 1975, private collection. Stolen July 1986, present location unknown.

Comment: suggested date between 1780 and 1785. The style and technique is more advanced than the signed and dated miniature in the Victoria and Albert Museum and indicates a later date of c. 1785.

Illustration courtesy of former owner.

6. Title: BIDDULPH, MARY ANNE

Medium: watercolour on ivory, 64 mm (2 1/2 in.)

Oval miniature of young woman, half-length, turned three-quarters to the right. Wearing a white dress with puff sleeves and a white turban. Long curly hair, eyes directed at viewer. Set in plain silver gilt frame.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: private collection.

Exd: -

Ref: Foskett, D. Miniatures: Dictionary & Guide. 1988, Colour pl. 27 (A) p. 340.

Comment: -

Sitter: identified by Foskett as Mary Anne Biddulph, second daughter of Michael Biddulph of Ledbury.

Illustration courtesy of Daphne Foskett.

7. Title: PORTRAIT OF AN UNKNOWN LADY

Medium: watercolour on ivory, 89 mm (3 1/2 in.)

Oval miniature, half-length, of young lady in white dress with puff sleeves, blue trimmings and sash, white lace collar with blue bow. Large feathers in her hair, curly hair tied back, eyes looking to the left. Cloud background, set in plain frame.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: unknown.

Exd: -

Ref: Foskett, D. Miniatures: Dictionary & Guide. 1987, p. 212, pl. 49 (E)

Comment: -

Illustration courtesy of Daphne Foskett.

8. Title: PORTRAIT OF AN OFFICER

Medium: watercolour on ivory, 70 mm (2 6/8 in.)

Oval miniature, head and shoulders, of an officer facing right, wearing a scarlet uniform with green lapels and silver braid, hair *en queue*. Cloud and sky background. Mounted within a gilt frame, the reverse with coiled hair on blue glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location:

- Sotheby's, 27th November 1972, Sold as by George Place (noted by Mr. Bayne-Powell).
- Sotheby's 24th June, 1974, p. 21, pl. 55
- Sotheby's, 28th February 1977, Lot 166. Present location unknown.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: suggested date c. 1797/8.

Illustration courtesy of Sotheby's.

9. Title: PORTRAIT OF AN UNKNOWN OFFICER

Medium: watercolour on ivory, 64 mm (2 1/2 in.)

Oval miniature of an officer in the scarlet uniform with white facings and gold lace. Head and shoulders, facing slightly to the left, smiling and looking towards the spectator. Set in gold frame, the reverse with 'Souvenir' written within plaited hair border.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: Christie's, 19th March 1968,

Lot 351. Location unknown.

Ref: Foskett, D. Miniatures: Dictionary & Guide. 1987, p. 212, pl 49 (B).

Comment: suggested date c. 1797/8. The uniform has been identified by Christie's as that of the 27th Regiment.

Illustration courtesy of Christie's.

10. Title: PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN

Medium: watercolour on ivory, 70 mm (2 6/8 in.)

Oval miniature, head and shoulders of a gentleman, facing right. Powdered hair *en queue* and wearing a double-breasted blue jacket with gilt buttons over a white waistcoat and

knotted cravat. Cloud and sky background. Set in a broad gilt-metal mount.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: Sotheby's, 25th June 1979, p. 49,
Lot 153. Location unknown.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: suggested date c. 1798.

Illustration courtesy of Sotheby's.

11. Title: PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Medium: watercolour on ivory(?), measurements unknown.

Oval miniature, head and shoulders, of a young lady facing right with curly fair hair falling down her back. Large pearl drop earrings, chain necklace with drop, bandeau in powdered hair. Gaze directed at onlooker. Dress with puff sleeves. Set in plain frame.

Signed: unknown

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: unknown

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: attributed to Skirving by Christie's in London. No further information or date of sale.

Illustration courtesy of Christie's.

12. Title: PORTRAIT OF A NOBLEMAN

Medium: watercolour on ivory, 68 mm (2 11/16 in.)

Oval miniature, head and shoulders, of a nobleman wearing a blue jacket with a darker collar and lapels adorned with gold braid over a white waistcoat and frilled white jabot. Powdered hair *en queue* and tied with a black ribbon at the back. Sky background. Mounted on an ebonised wood plaque applied with a gilt-metal coronet and outer gilt-metal mount.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: Sotheby's, 29th October 1979.

p. 27, Lot 217. Location unknown.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: attributed to Skirving by Sotheby's. Illustrated in the sales catalogue but not available to the author.

Sitter: possibly William Lygon, 1st Earl of Beachamp (1747-1816); represented Worcestershire in Parliament for 30 years and was elevated to the peerage in 1806; married Catherine, only daughter of James Denne, in 1780.

13. Title: PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Medium: watercolour on ivory(?), 71 mm. (2 3/4 in.)

Oval miniature of a lady in half length, facing right, wearing a white dress with frilled border and white bandeau. Sky background. Gilt-metal frame with beaded and foliate border.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: Bonhams, 6th July 1992, p. 18, Lot 74. Location unknown.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: attribution by Bonhams, based on apparent resemblances to the female portrait in the Victoria and Albert Museum, dated 1780 (A.I.1) If attribution correct, possibly a much earlier miniature as technique and style not as developed, suggested date c. 1760s?

Illustration courtesy of Bonhams.

14. Title: PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN

Medium: watercolour on ivory(?), 71 mm (2 3/4 in.)

Miniature of gentleman facing right, wearing a blue coat and white stock. Gilt-metal frame with beaded and foliate border.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: Bonhams, 6th July 1992, Lot 74, sold together with two other Skirving miniatures. No illustration.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: -

15. Title: PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN

Medium: watercolour on ivory(?), 71 mm (2 3/4 in.)

Miniature of gentleman facing right, wearing a brown coat and white stocks. Gilt-metal frame with beaded and foliate border.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: Bonhams, 6th July 1992. Lot. 74, sold with the two above miniatures attributed to Skirving. No illustration.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: -

16. Title: PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN

Medium: watercolour on ivory, 68 mm (2 11/16 in.)

Oval miniature of a young man, head and shoulders slightly dexter, gaze directed at spectator, with short curly fair hair and wearing a dark jacket and white cravat, cloud and sky background. Framed, the reverse with woven hair.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: Sotheby's, 17th May, 1976. p. 9, Lot 43. Location unknown. No illustration.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: -



1) Portrait of a Lady in White



4) Portrait of a Lady



5) Portrait of a Lady



6) Mary Ann Biddulph



7) Portrait of an Unknown Lady



8) Portrait of an Officer 9) Portrait of an Unknown Officer



10) Portrait of a Gentleman

11) Portrait of a Lady

II. PASTELS

1. Title: **BOSWELL, ROBERT, W.S. of St. Boswell**

1746-1804

Medium: pastel on paper, 82.6 X 64.8 cm (32 1/2 X 25 1/2 in.) Three-quarter length of a seated man, balding, frontal view, resting hands in lap and leaning slightly to the right in armchair. Wearing a dark, buttoned coat and elaborate silk waistcoat. In top left corner, another portrait can be seen in which the sitter is apparently shown with tabard and crown.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the sitter, private collection, Scotland.

Lithograph by P. Ronan, undated. (Information courtesy of The Witt Library).

Exd: Royal Academy, 1956/57.

Ref:

- Simon, R. The Portrait in Britain and America, 1987, no. 195, p. 230.
- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: an oil version is also recorded by the SNPG - noted on reverse of Boswell photo. (Interim Lord Lyon King of Arms 1795/6). Suggested date c. 1800.

Sitter: Robert Boswell (1746-1804), a descendant of the Auchinleck family in Ayrshire, was a psalmist and writer to the signet in Edinburgh. Received a classical education; joined the religious followers of the 'Glassites,' or 'Sandemanians,' became one of their teaching elders in Edinburgh. He died in London, aged fifty-eight.

Litt: D.N.B., vol. V. 1886. p. 440.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

2. Title: **CARNEGIE, MRS JOHN of Edrom Newton,**
Berwickshire 1773-1853

Medium: pastel on paper, 60.3 X 45.1 cm (23 3/4 X 17 3/4)
Head and shoulders of a young woman wearing a high-waisted white dress with a yellow-patterned white shawl thrown loosely over her shoulders. Long dark brown fringe and hair draped over her shoulders with headband on top. Suggested landscape in the background.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the sitter. Bequeathed to the National Gallery of Scotland in 1899 in

accordance with the will of her son, James Carnegie, W.S., of Edrom-Newton, of 1883 (NG D.849).

Exd:

- Portrait Drawings by Scottish Artists (1750-1850). SNPG, 1955 (71).
- Royal Scottish Academy, 1863 (336). Lent by James Carnegie Esq.

Ref:

- Baile de Lapperriere, C. The Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors 1826-1990. vol. IV, 1991, p. 174.
- Bénézit, E. Dictionnaires des Peintures, Sculpteurs..., 1976, p. 639
- National Gallery of Scotland. Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture. 1957, p. 254.
- National Gallery of Scotland, Shorter Catalogue. 1978, p. 152.
- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.
- Vollmer, H. Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Kunstler. 1937, p.14.

Comment: portrait valued for Duty purposes at £52:10 in 1898.

Sitter: Jane Skirving, half-sister to the artist and wife of John Carnegie (1775-1843).

Illustration courtesy of National Gallery of Scotland.

3. Title: CRAIG, WILLIAM, Lord

1745-1813

Medium: pastel on paper, 68.8 X 55.9 cm (27 1/16 X 22 in.)

Head and shoulders of a gentleman in private dress, dark overcoat and white cravat. Powdered hair, body turned slightly to the left. Eyes gazing at viewer, smiling eyes and mouth.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: on loan to the SNPG from Sir Edward Playfair (PGL 279).

Engraving by George Dawe, undated. (British Museum)

Exd: not recorded.

Ref: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Concise Catalogue. 1977.

Comment: present condition good. Suggested date c. 1805?

Sitter: son of William Craig, minister of Glasgow. Craig studied at the University of Edinburgh and was admitted to the Scottish bar in 1768. Raised to the bench with the title of Lord Craig in 1792 and became a judge of the Justiciary in 1795, a post held until 1812. Known by his contemporaries as a man of upright conduct and ^ucourteous manners.

Litt: D.N.B., vol. XII, p. 451.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

**4. Title: CUNNINGHAM, MARY of Edmonstoun -
Cranstoun**

Medium: pastel on paper, 66 X 50.8 cm (26 X 20 in.)

Half-length portrait of a woman, frontal, her head turned to the left, face in 3/4 view and her eyes looking up towards the lighting from top left corner. Dressed in light grey empire-style tulle, with high belt under bust in the same material, her heavy dark hair arranged in a simple high chignon, attached to a long light grey tulle veil. Eyes brown with light reflections and pale skin with pink cheeks. No jewellery. Dark clouds and two trees visible on either side of the lady in the dark brownish-grey background.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the sitter, private collection, Scotland

Exd: no

Ref:

- Inventory of Skirving's studio contents, 1819
(NLS. Acc. 10102).

- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: apparently in good condition (Measurements differ slightly from the SNPG; 27 X 22 in.) Described in Studio contents as unfinished.

Sitter: The unmarried daughter of William Cuninghame of Lainshaw, who on inheriting the estate of her maternal uncle, Lord Corehouse, changed her name to Edmonstoune - Cranstoun.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

5. Title: FRASER-TYTLER, MRS ISABELLA

Medium: pastel on paper, 59 X 46 cm (23 1/4 X 18 1/8 in.)

Portrait of a young woman, bust length, facing three-quarters to the left. Wearing a black dress with mint green and white stripes, low neckline hemmed in plain white lace, and on her head a bonnet with lace in beige yellow. Brown hair in soft curls at nape, two long strands of hair on either side of her face. Plain grey background. Set in simple gilt frame, 7 cm, and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the sitter; at one time property of Christian Mary Marjorie Fraser-Tytler, wife of Henry Wade, Edinburgh surgeon, who purchased Pilmuir House in East Lothian in 1924. where it has hung in the Basement Dining Room ever since. With no heirs to the property, it was incorporated in a trust set up for the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, titled Sir Henry Wade's Pilmuir Trust.

Exd: Royal Scottish Academy, 1880 (427). Lent by J.S. Fraser-Tytler Esq., of Woodhouselee.

Ref:

- Baile de Laperriere, C. ed. The Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors 1826-1990, vol. IV, 1991, p. 174.
- Lee, S. ed. D.N.B., vol. LII, 1897, p. 359.
- Scottish Field, August 1949, p. 27. Illustrated.
- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: framed by Doig, Wilson & Wheatley, the same as for Skirving's Alexander Fraser-Tytler portrait. In poor condition, attacked by mildew.

Sitter: Wife of Alexander Fraser-Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee.

Illustration courtesy of the Henry Wade Trust.

6. Title: FRASER-TYTLER, MRS. MARGARET ?- 1862

Medium: pastel on paper, 62.7 X 52.5 cm (24 3/4 X 20 3/4 in.)

Head and shoulders of a young woman in grey striped dress with white frilled neckline and headscarf. Body turned slightly to the left, eyes directed at viewer, unpowdered, brown hair. Plain grey background. Set in thin, plain frame and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the sitter, private collection, Scotland.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: identical positioning of sitter as with Isabella Fraser-Tytler, not centred, placed right hand side of canvas. Present condition poor; hole in each corner, 4 cm from the side, hole in top left corner. Stains all around top of canvas. Grey stain on left side, lower middle, another large stain covering half of left side of face and veil: 16.5 X 20.3 cm.

Sitter: Mrs. Fraser-Tytler, née Margaret Cussans Grant, married 10th March 1801 William Fraser-Tytler, eldest son of Lord Woodhouselee, born 1777. Only daughter of George Grant of Burdponds, Margaret had five sons and five daughters. Information courtesy of the owner.

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

**7. Title: JOHNSTON, MRS. of Hutton Hall,
Berwickshire**

Medium: pastel on paper, 62.7 X 50.9 cm (24 1/4 X 19 1/4 in.)

Head and shoulders of a woman wearing a yellow straw hat with large white ostrich feathers, the brim lined with pale blue

silk and held up on the right by a white bow hanging down on the side. Pale gold bodice with white veiling forming a wide ruff around the neck, blue ribbons. Plain background. Set in a gilt frame and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the sitter; bequeathed to the National Gallery of Scotland in March 1939 by Miss Emma Katherine Harriet Scott in March 1939, artist unknown at the time. (D NG 1914)

Exd:

- 'Portrait Drawings by Scottish Artists (1750-1850).' SNPG, 1955 (105).
- 'The Line of Tradition,' held at the RSA, 1993.

Ref:

- National Gallery of Scotland, Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture. 1957, p. 254.
- National Gallery of Scotland, Shorter Catalogue. 1978, p. 152.
- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: in excellent condition, small pigment loss above mouth, right side. Suggested date c. 1810.

Sitter: Daughter of Hume of Ninewells.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

8. Title: SKIRVING, ARCHIBALD

1749-1819

Medium: pastel on paper, 57.8 X 45.7 cm (22 3/4 X 18 in.)

Self-portrait, head and shoulders, turned to the right, wearing a black broad brimmed hat shadowing the upper part of his face that is turned to the viewer, wearing a grey/green coat and white shirt with frills at neck and wrists. Unpowdered long black hair left untied, his left hand holding a yellow silk muffler around his neck. Plain background, lower half in different brown shades, above a mixture of colours grey/green and beige. Set in a rococo gilt frame.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the artist until 1901, when bequeathed to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery by Archibald Skirving's nephew David Ainslie, Esq., of Costerton. (PG 595)

Exd:

- Royal Scottish Academy, 1863 (321). Lent by Miss Ainslie.
- Portrait Drawings by Scottish Artists 1750-1850. SNPG, July 24th - Sept. 11th 1955 (75). Lent by Mrs. Leila Hoskins.
- The Line of Tradition, held at RSA, 1993.

Ref:

- Baile de Lapperriere, C. ed. The Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors. 1826-1990. 1991, p. 174.
- Catalogue of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. 1909,

- p. 181.
- Caw, J. Scottish Painting: Past and Present. 1808, p. 46.
 - Irwin, D. & F. Scottish Painters at Home and Abroad, 1975, p. 80.
 - Kilmurray, E. Dictionary of British Portraiture, vol. II, 1979, p. 195.
 - Long, B. British Miniaturists 1520-1860. 1966, p. 403.
 - Mackintosh, A. ed. Memoirs of Dr. Robert Scot Skirving. 1988, p. 26.
 - McKay, W.D. The Scottish School of Painting. 1906, p. 27.
 - Redgrave, S. A Dictionary of Artists of the English School. 1878.
 - Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Concise Catalogue, 1977, p. 131.
 - Skinner, B. 'Burn's "Keel" Head', Scotland's Magazine, January 1959, p.43.
 - Skinner, B. Scots in Italy in the 18th Century, Pl. X(a) 1966.
 - Skinner, B. Transactions... , vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: portrait executed in Rome, late 1780s or early 1790s.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

9. Title: YULE, BENJAMIN, of Wheatfield 1740- ?

Medium: pastel on board, 25.4 X 20.3 cm (10 X 8 in.)

Head and shoulders of a man dressed in brown coat, striped yellow waistcoat and white stock. Frontal view, head gently tipped forward, eyes looking down. Oval portrait set in flat rectangular gilt frame.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the sitter, private collection, Scotland.

Exd: no.

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 56.

Comment: one of a pair, date uncertain. Benjamin Yule and his wife Marion Sprot possibly depicted in their late fifties, suggesting a date in the early 1800s. Old labels on the reverse name Skirving as the artist, confirmed by Christie's in 1988. Suggested date c. 1800-5.

Sitter: son of Benjamin Yule, a Burgess of Edinburgh in 1749, the sitter possibly a royal Baker to George III in Scotland, royal warrant issued on 30th July 1781. Married Marion Sprot and had four daughters; Marion, Mary, Janet and Susan. The family lived at Wheatfield House, near Edinburgh. The house, 'a nice old square yellow-washed house', was pulled down in the early 1930s. Information courtesy of the owner.

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

10. Title: YULE, MRS. MARION

1750-1808

Medium: pastel on board, 25.4 X 20.3 cm (10 X 8 in.)

Half-length of elderly woman, frontal, wearing a white dress, black shawl, and blue ribboned white bonnet. Oval portrait set in flat rectangular gilt frame.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the sitter, private collection, Scotland.

Exd: no

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. Xii, 1970, p. 56.

Comment: suggested date c. 1800-5.

Sitter: Marion Sprot, daughter of John Sprot (1703-1779) and Janet Espline, and wife of Benjamin Yule, his death date unknown. She died either in 1808 or 1812. Both are buried in St Cuthberts, Edinburgh.

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

11. Title: PORTRAIT OF A MAN

Medium: pastel on paper, 57.1 X 42 cm (22 1/2 X 16 1/2 in.)

Head and shoulders of standing man, facing slightly to the right. Dressed in simple coat, white shirt, black scarf tied at neck, and black hat with broad brim. Head tilted slightly back to the side.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: private collection, Ireland. Attempts were made to trace the portrait via the Courtauld but no results.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: The Courtauld records does not specify medium, merely 'canvas'. The portrait is here classified as a pastel on paper, glued on canvas.

Illustration courtesy of the Courtauld Institute.

12. Title: PORTRAIT OF UNKNOWN GIRL

Medium: pastel on board or paper, 53.3 X 43.1 cm (21 X 17 in.) Half-length of young girl in a simple shift with cluster of flowers centred in a square neckline. Laced bonnet or comb with a feather on left side. Frontal view, eyes turned to spectator. Set in a painted oval, plain background.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the artist, private collection, England.

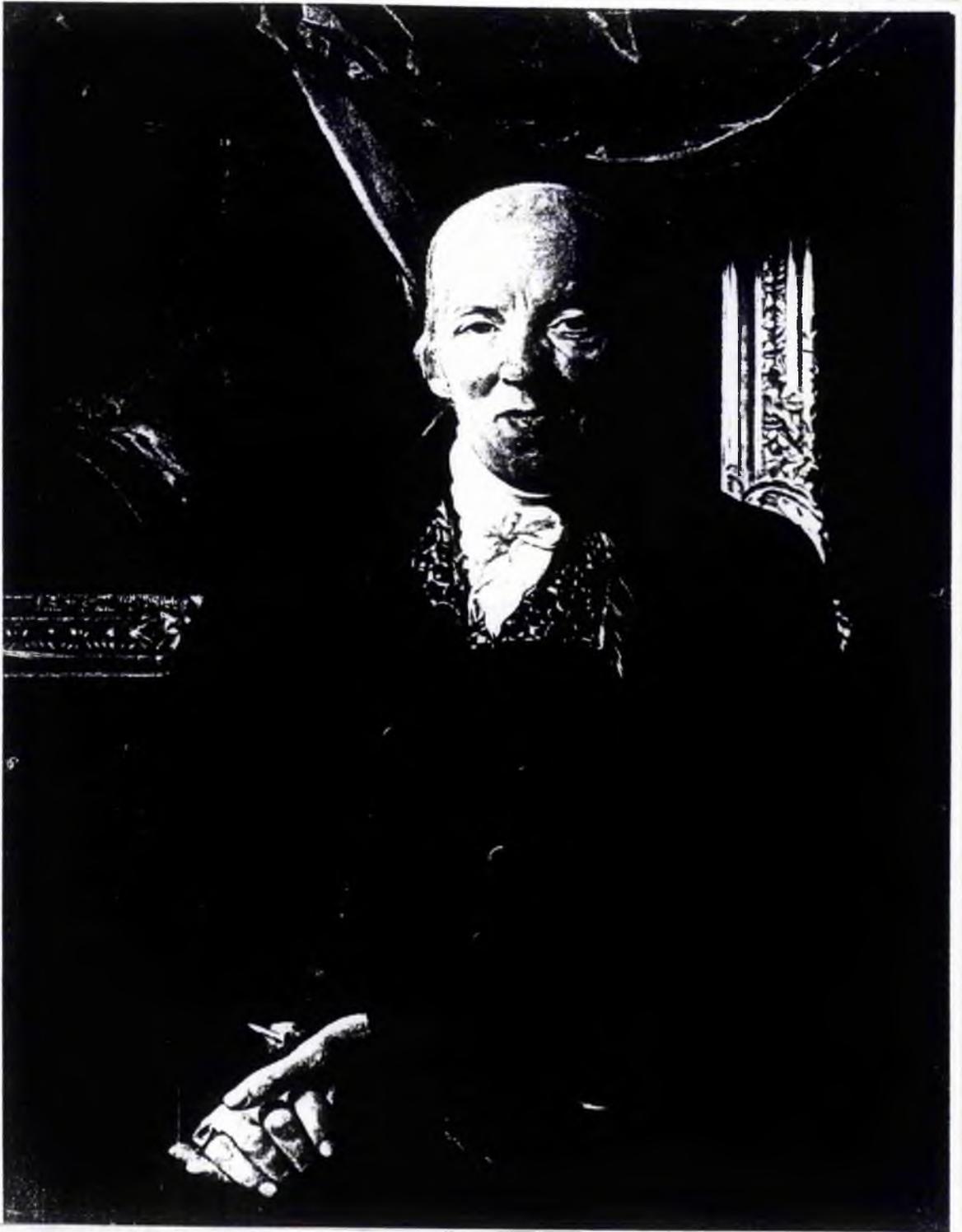
Exd: Portrait Drawings by Scottish Artists (1750-1850) SNPG, 1955 (87). Lent by Mrs. A. A. Scot Skirving.

Ref: -

Comment: attribution based primarily on consistent family ownership, confirmed by the portrait's facial features that resembles Skirving's early miniature work.

Sitter: possibly a family member or relative?

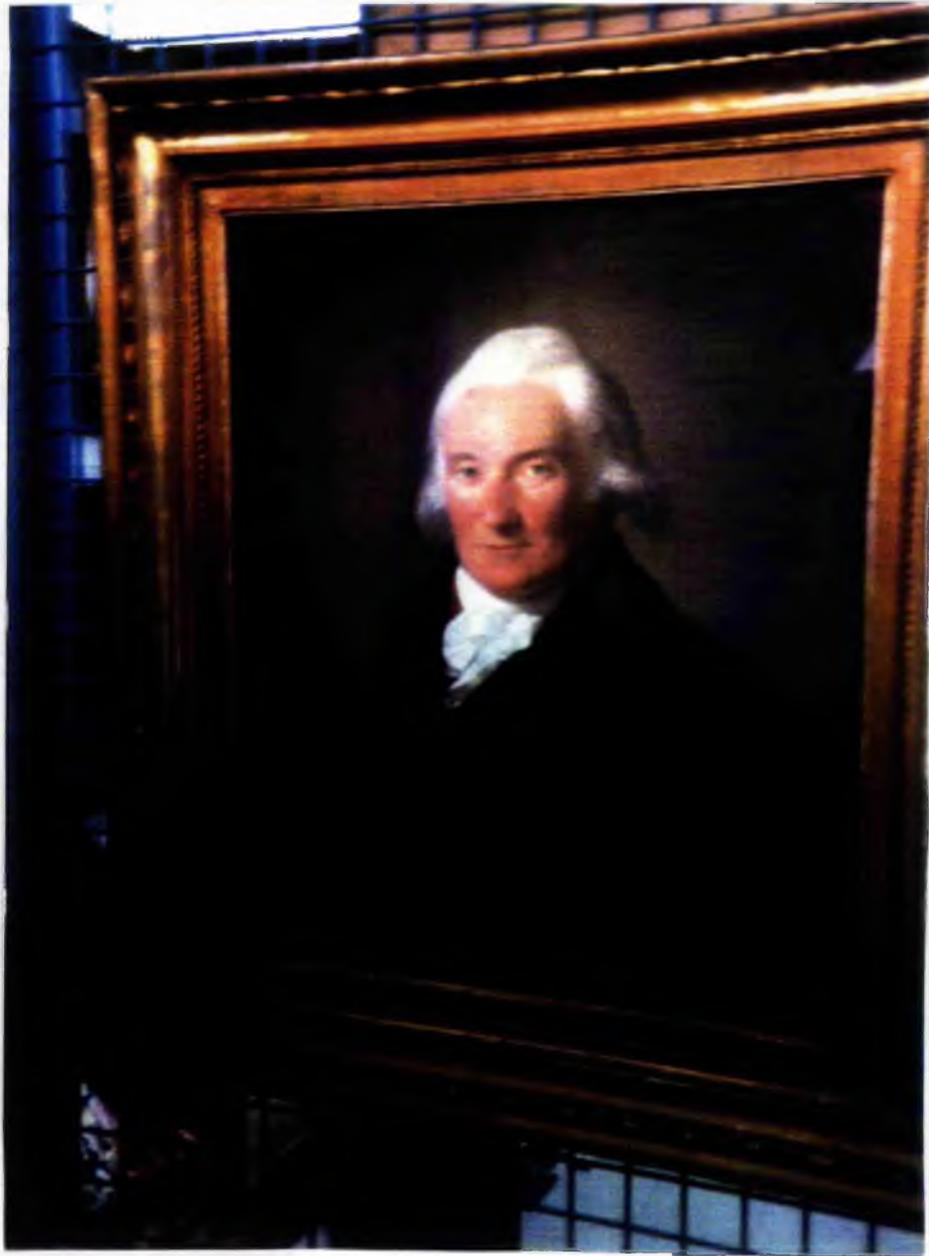
Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.



1) Robert Boswell of St Boswell



2) Mrs John Carnegie of Edrom Newton



3) Lord William Craig



4) Mary Cunningham of Edmonstoun-Cranstoun



7) Mrs Johnston of Hutton Hall



8) Archibald Skirving



11) Portrait of a Man



12) Portrait of Unknown Girl

III. OILS

1. Title: **BELL, BENJAMIN F.R.C.S. (E).** 1749-1806

Medium: oil on canvas. No measurements or colour description. Seated man in half-length, frontal view, wearing dark, possibly black, clothes with coloured vest, powdered white hair.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: property of William Hamilton Bell, W.S. of Edinburgh; to his daughter Mrs John Kelman (née Ellin Runcon Bell); to daughter Barbara, Mrs John D. Hayes. Remained in Scotland until 1916 when Mrs Hayes moved abroad. In her collection in 1957, Philadelphia, U.S.A; cleaned and sold to Mrs. W.W. Ambler, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. Photograph presented to the SNPG in 1969. Present location unknown. Attempts to trace the portrait through Art Museums in the States and Mrs. Ambler's address proved unsuccessful.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: reattributed from Raeburn to Skirving by Mr R.E. Hutchison, Keeper of the SNPG in 1957. A copy of Raeburn's portrait of the same sitter but shown from the side, sitting next

to a desk with books, ink pot and stand. Suggested date c. 1796/7.

Sitter: a prominent Scottish surgeon, Benjamin Bell was born in Dumfries in 1749 where he was later educated under Dr. Chapman. He became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh; visited Paris for instruction in surgery; he returned to Edinburgh in 1770 where he commenced his duties as an operator and consulting surgeon. In 1783-8 he wrote his most important work, A System of Surgery, where he advocated saving skin in every operation - a practice in little use at that time. He gained a large practice and became well to do and much respected. Died at Newington House in Edinburgh in 1806, aged fifty-seven.

Litt: Irving, J. The Book of Eminent Scotsmen. 1881, p. 26.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

2. Title: CARLYLE, REV. ALEXANDER 1722-1805

Medium: oil on canvas, 76.2 X 63.5cm (30 X 24 1/2 in.)

Frontal view of seated man, half-length, dressed in black and wearing white collar. His face in 3/4 view to the left, brightly lit, long white hair and eyebrows, blue eyes. Prominent feature a large mole on right cheek, near nose. Dark brown background. Set in heavy gilt frame and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: purchased in 1886 from the collection of Carlyle Bell, Esq., W.S., nephew of the Rev. Carlyle, D.D. for the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. (PG 155)

Engraving of Skirving's portrait, artist unknown.

Exd:

- Royal Scottish Academy, 1880 (428). Lent by the Lord Justice General.
- Scottish National Portraits, 1884 (363).
- 'The Words and the Stones - Glasgow's Glasgow.' Glasgow, Arches. 13 April - 5 November 1990.

Ref:

- Baile de Lapperriere, C. ed. The Royal Scottish Academy of Exhibitors 1826-1990. vol. IV, 1991, p. 174.
- Bénézit, E. Dictionnaires des Peintures. 1976, p. 639.
- Burton, J.H. ed. The Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805. 1910, p. 594.
- Caw, J. Scottish Painting - Past and Present. 1908, p. 46.
- The Glasgow Herald, 30 October 1909, p. 11.
- Haddington paper, 'Another 18th Century Memory.' Haddington Library.
- Harris, P. & Halsby, J. The Dictionary of Scottish Painters 1600 - 1900. 1990, p. 204.
- Irving, J. The Book of Eminent Scotsmen. 1881, p. 63.
- Lee, S. ed. Dictionary of National Biography, vol. LII, London 1897, p. 359.
- McKay, W. The Scottish School of Painting. 1906, p. 26-27.

- Ormond, R. & Rogers, M. Dictionary of British Portraiture, vol. II, p. 38.
- Scottish National Portrait Gallery. 1928, p. 11.
- Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Concise Catalogue. 1977.
- Scottish Literary Personalities of the 18th Century, 1951.
- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.
- Vollmer, H. Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Kunstler. 1937, p. 114.

Comment: replica in oil on canvas found in The Baird Flat, The Georgian House, Edinburgh. Here attributed to George Watson. Skirving's version in the SNPG conserved in 1966, revarnished and stretched on to a new stretcher. Original canvas perished.

Sitter: Alexander Carlyle was born at Prestonpans in 1722, educated at the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Leyden. In 1736 he witnessed the Porteous Mob when he joined troop of volunteers raised to defend Edinburgh against the Highland Army, in 1745 he watched the Battle of Prestonpans from top of the village steeple. Three years later he was chosen minister of the parish of Inveresk where he remained for the next fifty-seven years. A celebrated preacher, published political pamphlets 1758-64, moderator of the General Assembly in 1770, dean of the Chapel Royal 1789. Generally known as 'Jupiter Carlyle.' Died in 1805, his Autobiography edited by John Hill Burton in 1860.

Litt:

- Gray, J. Catalogue of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. 1892, p. 28.
- Irving, J. The Book of Eminent Scotsmen. 1881, p. 63.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

3. Title: RENNIE, JOHN

1761-1821

Medium: oil on canvas, 124 X 94 cm (49 X 37 in.)

Full-length of seated man on red velvet chair, facing three-quarters to the right with open book on lap, arms folded. White curly hair, broad nose. Set in gilt wooden frame.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: private collection, England.

Exd: not known.

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55. Listed as possibly a portrait of George Rennie.

Comment: portrait of one of the Rennie brothers, attributed to Archibald Skirving. According to SNPG, the sitter could be George Rennie (1749-1828), the agriculturalist; the cover of the open book on sitter's knee is the Farmers Magazine. However, George Rennie and Archibald Skirving were not good friends, unlike the artist's close friendship with John Rennie, and since the sitter resembles the engraving of John Rennie by the same artist - the sitter's identity is here attributed to John Rennie.

Sitter: John Rennie moved to England in 1784, where seven years later he set up as a mechanical engineer in London. Famous constructor of Southwark, London and Waterloo Bridges; the London docks, East and West India docks, including the harbours at Holyhead and Ramsgate. Two John Rennie portraits by Raeburn are recorded.

Litt:

- Irving, J. The Book of Eminent Scotsmen, 1881, p. 430.

- Grey, F.W. East Lothian Biographies, 1941, p. 108.

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

4. Title: SKIRVING, ADAM

1719-1803

Medium: oil on canvas, 75 X 62.2 cm (29 1/2 X 24 1/2 in.)

Half-length portrait, frontal, set in a painted dark oval. Dressed in grey overcoat, half-unbuttoned vest and white shirt with plain collar. Brown hair and eyes, his head in 3/4 profile facing right.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: once property of David Skirving, the artist's half-brother; continued by family descent; and bequeathed by David Ainslie to the National Galleries of Scotland in 1901. (PG 596)

Exd: not recorded.

Ref:

- Bénézit, E. Dictionnaires des Peintures..., 1976, p. 639.
- Clubbe, J. ed. Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle, 1974, p. 126.
- Caw, J. Scottish Painting - Past & Present, 1908, p. 46.
- 'Burns Portraits.' The Glasgow Herald, 30th October 1909, p. 11.
- Kilmurray, E. Dictionary of British Portraiture, vol. II, 1979, p. 195.
- Mackintosh, A. ed. Memoirs of Dr. Robert Scot Skirving, 1988, p. 26.
- McKay, W. Scottish School of Painting, 1906, p. 27.
- Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Illustrated list. 1928. p. 26, p. 35.
- Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Concise Catalogue. 1977, p. 131.
- Skinner, B. 'The "Keel" Head of Burns.' Scotland's Magazine, January 1959. p. 44.
- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.
- Thompson, H.W. ed. Anecdotes and Egotisms of Henry Mackenzie. 1927, p. 212.
- Vollmer, H. Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Kunstler, 1937, p. 114.

Comment: unpowdered wavy hair, serious face, same colouring and cleft in chin as his son in the Skirving oil self-portrait of c. 1769 in the Gallery of New South Wales.

Sitter: father of the artist.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

5. Title: SKIRVING, ADAM

1719-1803

Medium: oil on canvas, 75.7 X 62.7 cm (30 1/4 X 24 1/4 in.)

Portrait set within painted oval, sitter wearing blue/grey coat, body facing three-quarters to the right, head in right profile. Plain brown background.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: from Archibald Skirving to his great nephew Edward Scot Skirving; his daughter Mrs. Leila Hoskins; in 1954 to her uncle Dr. Robert Scot Skirving (1859-1956) of Sydney; his son R.C. Scot Skirving. Gift of Mr. R.C. Scot Skirving, Sydney, 29.9.1956, to the National Gallery of New South Wales, Australia.

Exd: not recorded.

Ref:

- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.
- Clubbe, J. ed. Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle, 1974, p. 126.

Comment: copy of the above portrait of Adam Skirving. According to the National Gallery of New South Wales; both pictures related in design to a miniature in the former

collection of Mrs. Hoskins, painted by Archibald Skirving before his departure for Italy in 1786. Suggested date c. 1785.
Sitter: -

Illustration courtesy of National Gallery of New South Wales.

6. Title: SKIRVING, ARCHIBALD 1749-1819

Medium: oil on canvas, 75.7 X 62.7 cm (29 11/16 X 24 11/16 in.) Half-length of young man, standing slightly turned to the right. Brown unpowdered hair, pink cheeks, wearing a deep grey coat, white shirt. His right hand tucked into vest - eyes at spectator. Olive green background.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: Archibald Skirving; his great nephew Edward Scot Skirving; his daughter Mrs. Leila Hoskins; in 1954 to her uncle Dr. Robert Scot Skirving (1859-1956) of Sydney; his son R.C. Scot Skirving. Portrait presented to the Gallery of New South Wales, Australia, from Mr. R.C. Scot Skirving, Sydney, 29.9.1956.

Exd: -

Ref:

- Mackintosh, A. ed. Memoirs of Dr. Robert Scot Skirving, 1988, p. 26.

- Scottish Paintings from the Collection Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1981.

- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: identity of the sitter and artist previously uncertain. According to family tradition, executed in 1769, painter's name given as Revillon, which may be a corruption of Charles Pavillon, Master in charge of the Trustees' Academy in Edinburgh from 1769 to 1772. Attribution based on similarities in style to the two oil paintings of the artist's father and stepmother. Here identified as a self-portrait by Archibald Skirving.

Sitter: -

Illustration courtesy of National Gallery of New South Wales.

7. Title: SKIRVING, MRS. ADAM

Medium: oil on canvas, 76.1 X 63.4 cm (30 X 25 in.)

Portrait in half-length of woman in frontal view, her face turned 3/4 to the right, powdered hair, wearing dress with low neckline. Similar colouring as that of her husband and stepson, no colours specified by the National Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: Archibald Skirving; his great nephew Edward Scot Skirving; his daughter Mrs. Leila Hoskins; in 1954 to her uncle Dr. Robert Scot Skirving (1859-1956) of Sydney; his son R.C. Scot Skirving. Portrait presented to the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia, present location, from Mr. R.C. Scot Skirving, Sydney, 29.9.1956. (9246)

Exd: no record.

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 56.

Comment: attribution based on similarites in style to the oil portraits of artist and his father (A.II.6 & A.II.4). Possibly a marriage portrait, as suggested by Mrs. Leila Hoskins to the SNPG, which would date it c. 1768-1770.

Sltter: Christian Carnegie, Adam's second wife.

Illustration courtesy of Naional Gallery of New South Wales.



2) Rev. Alexander Carlyle



3) John Rennie



5) Adam Skirving



6) Archibald Skirving

IV. DRAWINGS

1. Title: AINSLIE, MRS. GRIZEL

1760-1846

Medium: red chalk on paper, 56 X 43 cm (22 X 17 in.)

Head and shoulders of woman with long dark hair, wearing a white dress with frilled collar. Head turned to the left, wearing a turban. Set in gilt frame and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: previously by family descent until sale by Christie's, Edinburgh, c. 1984. Presently in private collection, Scotland.

Exd:

- The Royal Scottish Academy, 1863 (345). Lent by Miss Ainslie.
- 'Scottish Portrait Drawings,' SNPG, 1955 (102). Lent by Mrs A. A. Scot Skirving.
- 'Painting in Scotland - The Golden Age, 1707-1843.' The Talbot Rice Centre. 1968 (121).

Ref: Baile de Laperriere, C. ed. The Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors 1826-1990. vol. IV, 1991, p. 174.

Comment: the sitter identified by Mrs Leila Hoskins, family descendant of the artist, noted in correspondence with the

SNPG. Drawing in poor condition with cracks in paper, concentrated on the edges. Possibly framed at a later date. Set in a contemporary gilt frame in 1984.

Sitter: Sister to Archibald and Robert Skirving, wife of Robert Ainslie of Blanesburn.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

2. Title: CARLYLE, REV. ALEXANDER, D. D. 1722-1805

Medium: black chalk on brown paper, 53.3 X 42.2 (21 X 16 5/18 in.) Profile drawing of elderly man facing right, seated slightly slumped, balding, prominent nose. Wearing buttoned coat and white shirt with frilled neckcloth. Set in gilt frame and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: on loan to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery from the Kirk Session of Inveresk, Scotland. (PGL 154) (Presented by Alexander W. Inglis of Glencourse).

Exd: -

Ref:

- Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Concise Catalogue. 1977.

- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

- Ormond, R. & Rogers, M. Dictionary of British Portraiture,
1979,
p. 38.

Comment: face lightly sketched, lower background and sitter's coat firmly shaded. Present condition: rubbed off patches on left side cheekbone, repaired patch glued on left of ear; 2.5 X 2.5 cm (sight). Suggested date c. 1800-5.

Sitter: (see B.III.2)

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

3. Title: GILLESPIE, WILLIAM of Clearburn

Medium: black and white chalk on paper, 56.8 X 43.5 cm (22 3/8 X 17 1/8 in.) Head and shoulders of old man, frontal view, dressed in large travelling cape lightly sketched, face turned to the left somewhat, wearing a large black tricorn hat, white hair or wig.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: bequeathed to the SNPG by Sir John Douglas Don Wauchope, 1951. (PG 1579)

Exd: -

Ref:

- Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Concise Catalogue. 1977.
- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: chalk drawing on rough, chained paper.

Sitter: supposedly William Gillespie, brother of Rev. Thomas Gillespie, founder of the Presbytery of Relief. Sons of a farmer at Clearburn, Duddingston Parish, William's brother Thomas studied for ministry in Edinburgh and Northampton - later minister of a church in Dunfermline. No further information found on William, but lived around 1708 to 1774, his brother's birth and death dates.

Litt: The Book of Eminent Scotsmen, 1881, p. 163. Thomas Gillespie.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

4. Title: SHERIFF, PATRICK, of Mangowells

Medium: red chalk on paper, 35.5 X 28.8 cm (14 X 11 3/8 in.)

Full-length profile drawing of seated man with crossed knees, facing left, holding a riding whip in his right hand, wearing a hat, with long hair in plaited bun, wearing a simple coat with neckcloth, long riding boots with spurs.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: provenance unknown, presented by Miss Bruce in 1938 to the National Gallery of Scotland (NG D.3966).

Exd: 'The Line of Tradition.' Watercolours, Drawings and Prints by Scottish Artists, 1700-1990. National Galleries of Scotland, held at the R.S.A., 4th Aug. - 12th Sept. 1993.

Ref:

- Irwin, D. & F. Scottish Painters at Home and Abroad. 1975, p. 80.
- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: inscribed on reverse, in pencil, not by artist; 'portrait of Robt. Sheriff of/ Mungowells, East Lothian,/ drawing by Archd Skirving/ 1749-1819'. Inscribed in ink on front, top left corner, 'Mr. Sheriff', not in Skirving's handwriting.

Sitter: -

Illustration courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland.

5. Title: PROFILE PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Medium: black and red chalk on paper, 47 X 33.6 cm (18 1/2 X 13 1/4 in) Female portrait of head, facing left. Unfinished, profile and parts of hair in bun sketched in.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: Major Forbes, Falkirk, prior to sale October, 1963. Present location unknown.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: -

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

6. Title: PROFILE PORTRAIT OF UNKNOWN LADY

Medium: red chalk on paper, 39.4 X 29.2 cm (15 1/2 X 11 1/2 in.) Profile portrait to the left, young woman wearing a turban, neckcloth and gown. The latter hastily sketched, background filled in with chalk.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the artist, private collection, England.

Exd:

- Edinburgh, Loan Exhibition, 1883.

- 'Portrait Drawings by Scottish Artists, 1750-1850.' SNPG,

1955, (74). Lent by Mrs A. A. Scot Skirving.

Ref: -

Comment: -

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

7. Title: PORTRAIT OF UNKNOWN MAN

Medium: crayon on paper, 33.6 X 24.1 cm (13 1/4 X 9 1/2 in.)

Head and shoulders of man in wig and pigtail, wearing neckcloth and shirt under overcoat with high collar. Body turned slightly to the left, head in left profile.

Signed: no. Inscribed 'R, 7 April 1793' in crayon, bottom right hand corner.

Date: 1793 (See above)

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the artist, private collection, England, until recent date. Present location unknown.

Exd: Portrait Drawings by Scottish Artists 1750-1850. SNPG, 1955 (173). Lent by Mrs Routh, J.P.

Ref: -

Comment: possibly executed in red chalk.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

8. Title: PORTRAIT OF UNKNOWN MAN

Medium: red chalk on paper, 34.3 X 26.6 cm (13 1/2 X 10 1/2 in.) Profile portrait of young man with deeply set eyes, sharp nose and thin lips. Facing left, wearing coat with flat collar, simple neckcloth.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of the artist, private collection, England.

Exd: Portrait Drawings by Scottish Artists 1750-1850. SNPG, 1955, (89). Lent by Mrs A. A. Scot Skirving.

Ref: -

Comment: -

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

9. Title: PORTRAIT OF AN UNKNOWN BOY

Medium: red chalk on paper, 24.1 X 26.7 cm (9 1/2 X 10 1/2 in) Profile portrait of a young boy facing left, dressed in white

frilled gown and with long flowing hair. Set in elaborate, contemporary gilt frame, 8 cm, and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: earlier provenance unknown, purchased c. 1973 from furniture company in Edinburgh. Private collection, Scotland.

Exd: Painting in Scotland - The Golden Age, 1707-1843. The Talbot Rice Art Centre, University of Edinburgh. 1986, (20).

Ref: -

Comment: condition overall good except for three round patches situated on left side of the drawing. Background evenly shaded, face lightly sketched in delicate lines. Frame has suffered some gilt loss and cracks.

Illustration courtesy of the owner.

**10. Title: HEAD OF A WOMAN IN PROFILE TO THE
LEFT**

Medium: pen and wash on paper, 25.1 X 20.3 cm (9 7/8 X 8 in.) Profile head of woman facing left, profile, nostrils and lips accentuated. Hair pinned up in sweeping swirls, ear incomplete. Collar of high frill dress hinted.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery of Scotland in 1938 by Miss Bruce, Edinburgh. (D.3965)

Exd: -

Ref: Andrews, K. & Brotchie, J.R. Catalogue of Scottish Drawings, 1960.

Comment: Department of Conservation, Feb. 1992: Pen ink and wash on thin wove paper with three cut edge, left edge irregular. Piece missing bottom left corner, orange stains bottom right corner, light spotting across bottom half of drawing in lighter areas. Crease running down right side at 32 mm. Surface scrapes down reverse at left side, recto at right side.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

11. Title: PROFILE PORTRAIT OF A MAN

Medium: pencil on paper, 11.1 X 8.6 cm (4 3/8 X 3 3/8 in.)

Oval drawing of male profile to the left. Unfinished.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery of Scotland by Miss Bruce, Edinburgh, in 1938. (D.3972)

Exd: -

Ref: Andrew, K, Brotchie, J.R. Catalogue of Scottish Drawings. 1960.

Comment: paper cut on all edges in uneven shape.

Illustration courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland.

12. Title: STUDY OF A DONKEY AND ITS FOAL

Medium: red chalk on paper, 19.7 X 16.8 cm (7 3/4 X 6 5/8 in.) Study of a donkey, seen from the side, with a young foal suckling, its back towards the viewer. Grass area lightly sketched in, shading largely in diagonal lines.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery of Scotland in 1938 by Miss Bruce, Edinburgh. (D.3971)

Exd: -

Ref: Andrews, K. & Brotchie, J.R. Catalogue of Scottish Drawings, 1960

Comment: paper unevenly cut on all four sides. Drawing probably executed in Rome.

Illustration courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland.

**13. Title: A TENT-LIKE SHELTER, SUSPENDED
FROM A TREE**

Medium: brown chalk on paper, 28 X 19.3 cm (11 X 7 5/8 in.)
Sketch of a large tent, suspended on a branch of a tall, leafless tree behind. Seven chairs and small table placed within, in the far right corner, a seated man, legs crossed, wearing a hat and possibly playing an instrument. On the right hand side of the tent is a tall bush, proportions exaggerated.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery of Scotland in 1938 by Miss Bruce, Edinburgh. (D.3973)

Exd: -

Ref: Andrews, K. & Brotchie, J.R. Catalogue of Scottish Drawings, 1960

Comment: paper with four cut edges, left side uneven with a smudge at the bottom. Drawing probably executed in Rome.
Illustration courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland.

**14. Title: A GATE TO THE GARDENS AT
THE BACK OF ST. PETER'S, ROME**

Medium: red chalk on paper, 18.8 X 25.8 cm (7 3/8 X 10 1/8 in.) A view of a garden wall with shut gate and behind a large tower. Vegetation and earth mound on left side of drawing; part of a building on the right hand side.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery of Scotland 1938 by Miss Bruce, Edinburgh. (D.3974)

Exd: -

Ref: Andrews, K. & Brotchie, J.R. Catalogue of Scottish Drawings, 1960.

Comment: possibly two shades of red-brown chalk used. Inscribed at the bottom in pencil, not by Skirving; 'A gate of the Gardens, Back of St. Peters.'

Illustration courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland.

**15. Title: ORNAMENTAL FOUNTAIN WITH SEA
HORSES IN A GARDEN**

Medium: red chalk on paper, 27.4 X 19.7 cm (10 3/4 X 7 3/4 in.) Fountain with trees in the background. Detail from same fountain in 'Entrance to a Park' (A.III.12). Six horses with bent forelegs, arched necks thrown back and open mouths, seen rearing up from the fountain pool. Heads just underneath the lower fountain bowl, water spouting between their hooves. Three levels of water running down, fountain fenced in by chain and stone cannon balls.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery of Scotland in 1938 by Miss Bruce, Edinburgh. (D.3975)

Exd: -

Ref: Andrews, K. & Brotchie, J.R. Catalogue of Scottish Drawings, 1960.

Comment: uncut paper, inscription in ink by National Gallery; RN 3975.

Illustration courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland.

16. Title: THE DOME OF ST. PETER'S, ROME

Medium: red chalk on paper, 23.2 X 18.7 cm (9 1/8 X 7 3/8 in.) Architectural study of the dome of St. Peter's, the Vatican.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery of Scotland in 1938 by Miss Bruce, Edinburgh. (D.3970)

Exd: -

Ref: Andrews, K. & Brotchie, J.R. Catalogue of Scottish Drawings, 1960.

Comment: surrounding buildings lightly sketched, hardly visible on the original but apparent on the photocopy. Paper slightly uneven with three cut edges, bottom irregular. Inscription on reverse in pencil; 'drawing by Archibald Skirving, 1749-1819.'

Illustration courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland.

17. Title: ST. PAUL'S (OUTSIDE THE WALLS), ROME

Medium: red chalk on paper, 20.7 X 18.7 cm (10 1/8 X 7 3/8 in.) A view of St. Peter's dome seen over a wall. A background landscape with buildings.

Signed: no. Numbered '4' left bottom corner in red chalk;
bottom right 'St Pauls 6 R M.'

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery
of Scotland in 1938 by Miss. Bruce, Edinburgh. (D.3977)

Exd: -

Ref: Andrews, K. & Brotchie, J.R. Catalogue of Scottish
Drawings, 1960.

Comment: -

Illustration courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland.

18. Title: A SEATED WOMAN

Medium: pencil and black chalk on paper, 21 X 19.7 cm (8 1/4
X 7 3/4 in) Sketch of a woman seated to the left of a large
stove, seen in full-length, body in three-quarter view to the
left, face towards the spectator. Wearing white cap, dress with
short jacket and frilled elbow sleeves and apron.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

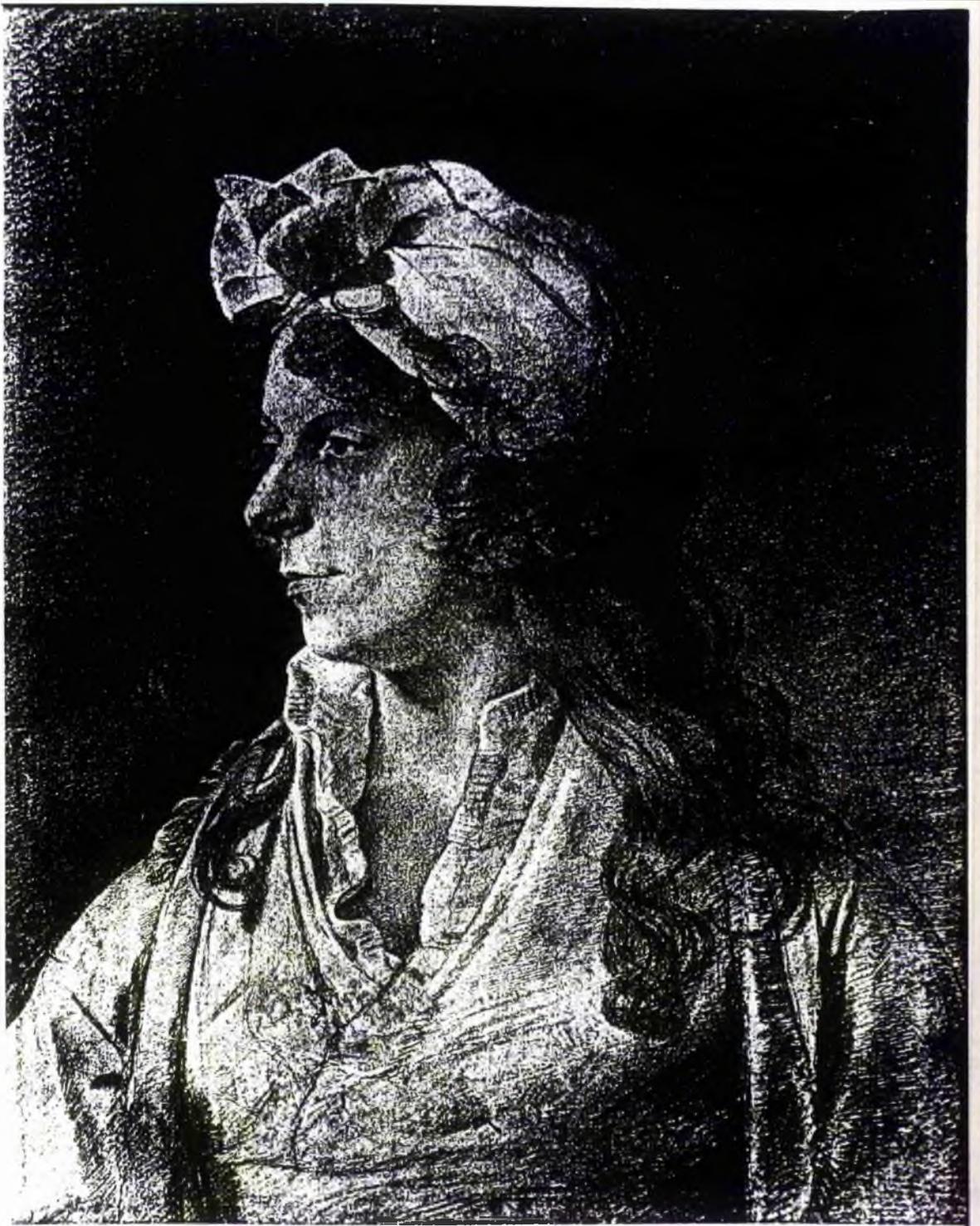
Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery
of Scotland in 1938 by Miss. Bruce, Edinburgh. (D.3978)

Exd: -

Ref: Andrews, K. & Brotchie, J.R. National Gallery of Scotland. Catalogue of Scottish Drawings, Edinburgh, 1960, p. 219.

Comment: pencil drawing with highlighting in chalk; outline of dress, bonnet, bow and right sleeve and eye.

Illustration courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland.



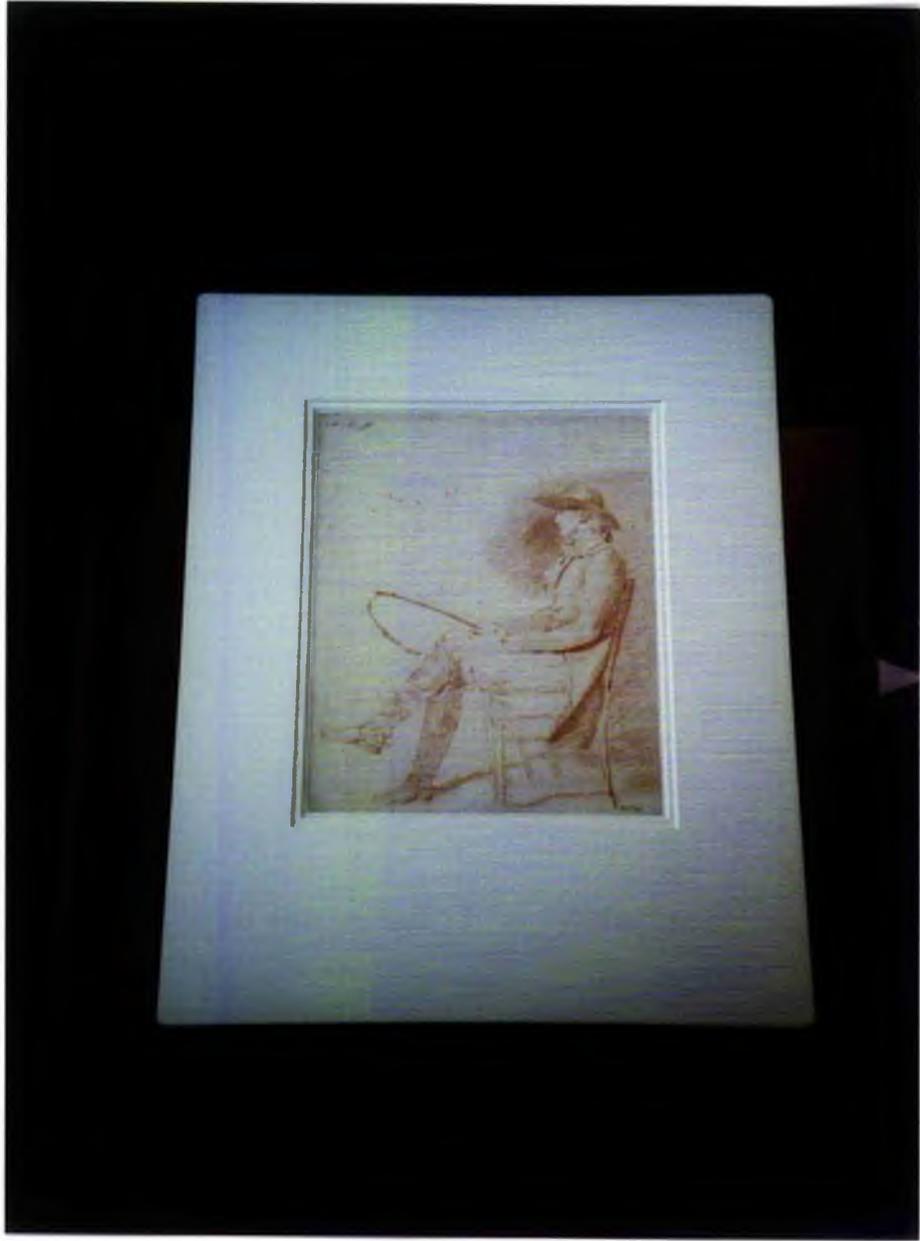
1) Mrs Grizel Ainslie



2) Rev. Alexander Carlyle



3) William Gillespie of Clearburn



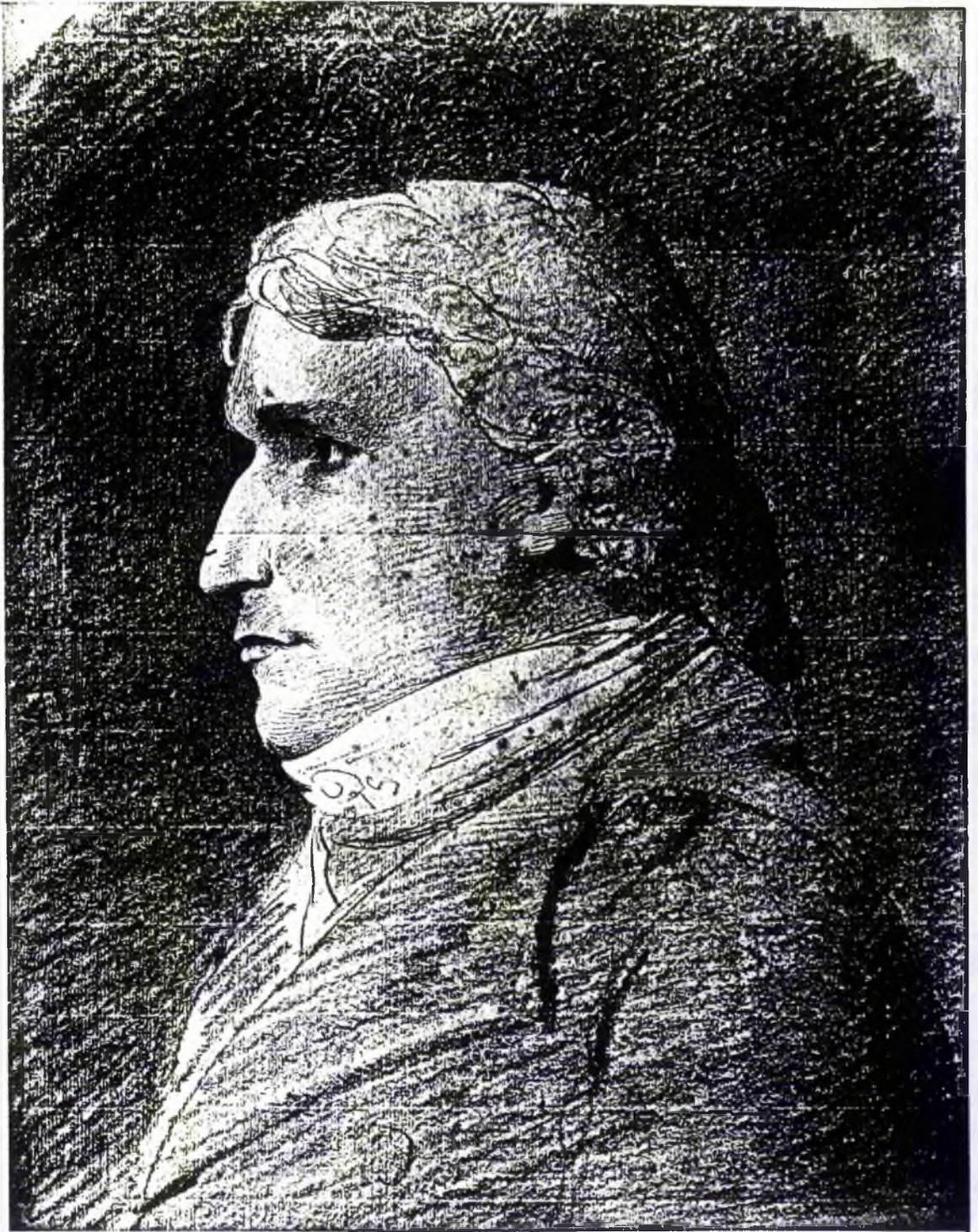
4) Patrick Sherriff of Mangowells



5) Profile Portrait of a Lady



6) Profile Portrait of Unknown Lady



8) Portrait of Unknown Man



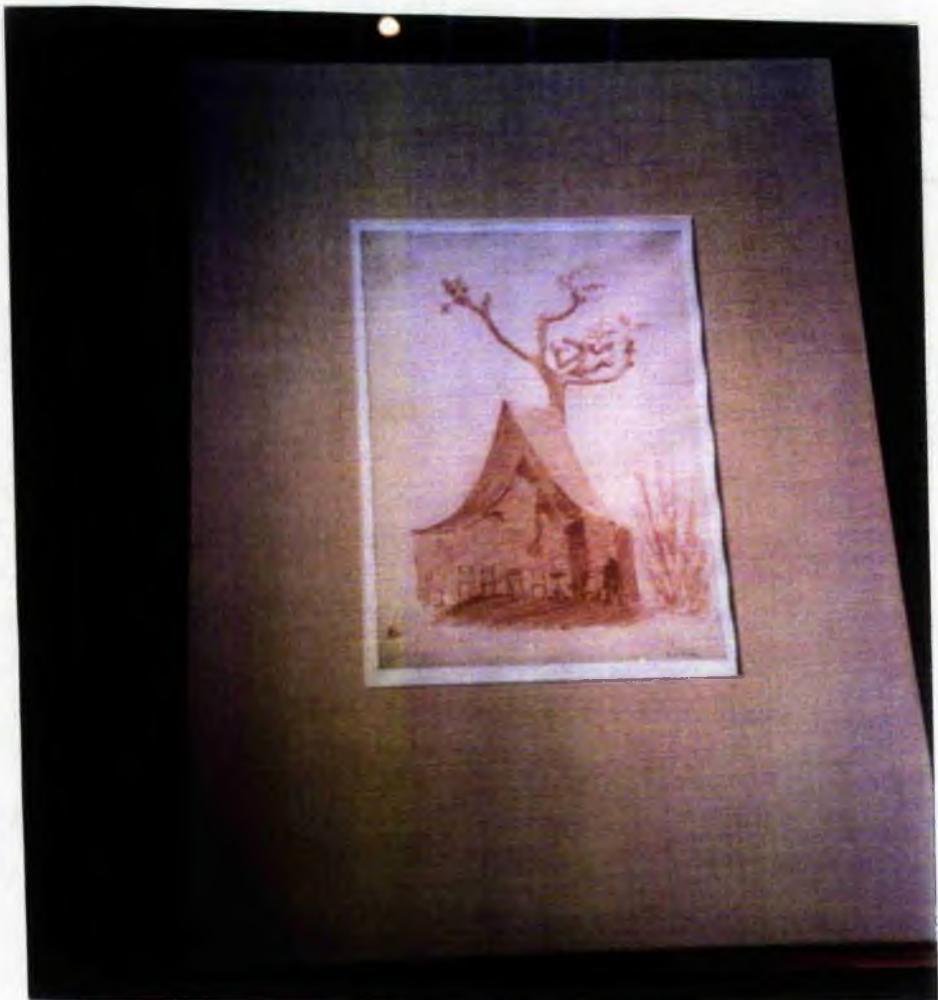
10) Head of a Woman in Profile to the Left



11) Profile Portrait of a Man



12) Study of a Donkey and its Foal

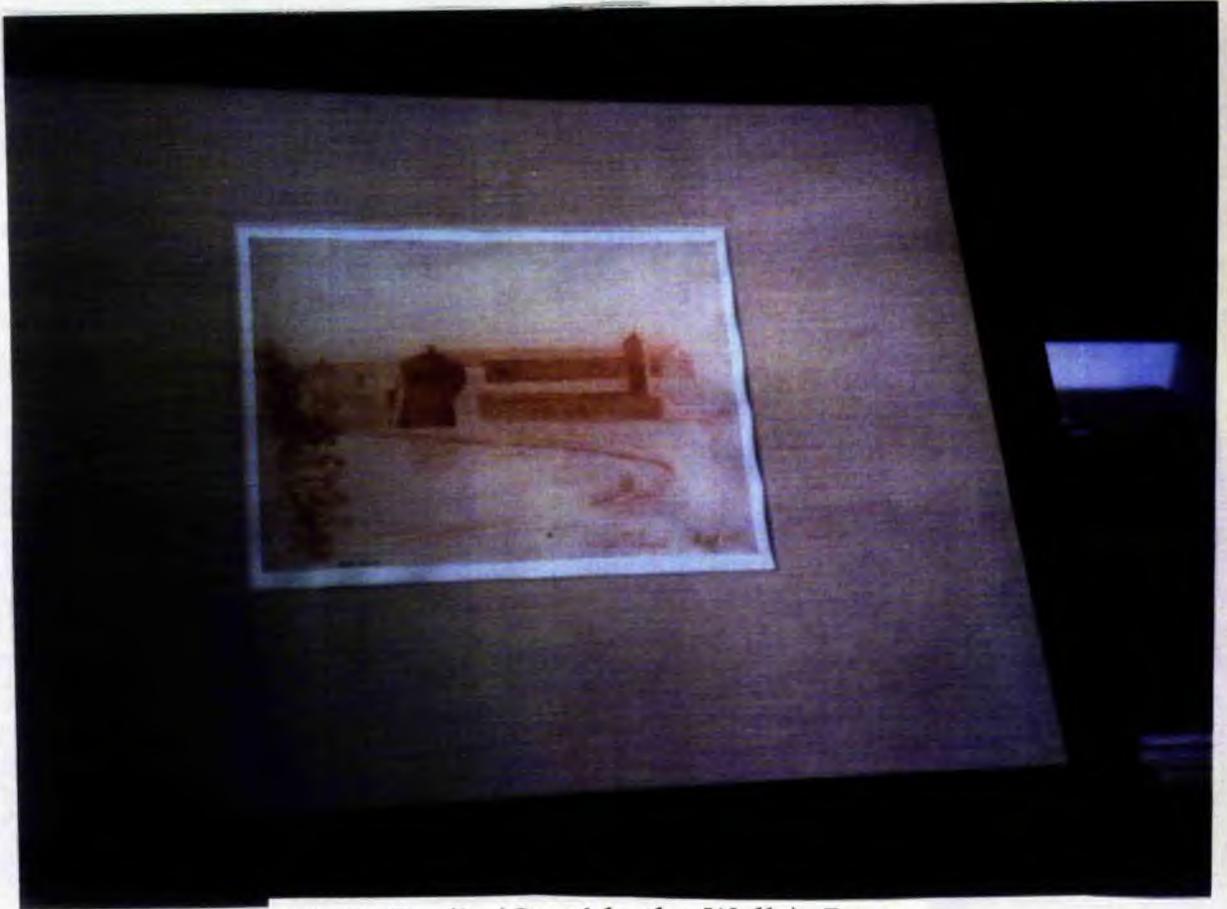


13) A Tent-like Shelter, Suspended From a Tree



16) The Dome of St Peter's, Rome

14) A Gate to the Gardens at the Back of St Peter's, Rome



17) St Paul's (Outside the Walls), Rome



18) A Seated Woman

C. UNTRACED WORKS BY, OR ATTRIBUTED
TO, SKIRVING.

1. Title: AINSLIE, ROBERT, of Begbie

Ref:

- inventory of studio contents, 1819. (National Library of Scotland: Acc. 10102) 'A Head of Mr. Ainslie, delivered to him.'
- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 56.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown. According to Skinner, mentioned in a letter dated March 10th 1796.

Sitter: -

2. Title: ALLAN, ROBERT & FAMILY

Ref: Foskett, D. John Harden of Brathay Hall, 1974, p. 15.

Comment: medium unknown of Robert Allan's portrait, dated 1803. Portraits in chalk on board of Robert Allan's children; Agnes (1774/5-1859), Janet (1776-1837), Thomas, F.R.S. (1777-1834), and Catherine (1786-1825). Executed at the Allan residence, No. 29 Queen Street, Edinburgh.

Sitter: -

3. Title: ARCHIBALD, MRS. ELIZABETH

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: medium unknown. Note by Basil Skinner: J.N. Adamson, Cedarbank, Broughty Ferry, 5 Feb. 1901. "I have a Skirving portrait of my great grandmother, Mrs Elizabeth Archibald, n. [not] much of a picture but said to have been an excellent likeness. Her husband John Archibald, Wine Merchant, Leith, was builder of Archibalds Vaults here ... Mrs. Archibald's portrait is interesting as showing the hair brought out under the widows coiff. She was the first widow in Edinburgh who ventured to show any."

(Skinner, B. 1963 Notebook).

Sitter: -

4. Title: BAILLIE, JAMES

Ref: inventory of studio contents, Watson, 1819 - Porfolio 2, a likeness of 'Jam.s Ballie'. (NLS, Acc. 10102)

Comment: medium and measurements unknown. Delivered to Mr D. Wilson in 1819, valued for £8.8.0.

Sitter: -

5 Title: BAILLIE, MRS.

Ref:

- inventory of studio contents, 1819. (NLS, Acc. 10102)

- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 56.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown.

Sitter: -

6. Title: BALLINGALL, MARY

Ref: The Scots Magazine, 1812, p. 247.

Comment: a portrait head in red chalk on paper, no measurements. Signed 'Mr S', titled 'Morceau pour les critiques.' Exhibited at York Place, Edinburgh, 1812.

Sitter: -

7. Title: BERRY, WILLIAM

1730-1783

Ref: inventory of studio contents 1819. (NLS, Acc. 10102).

Comment: black chalk drawing, measurements unknown.

Sitter: seal engraver, Edinburgh.

8. Title: BERRY, WILLIAM

Ref: studio contents of 1819. (NLS, Acc. 10102)

Comment: portrait drawing in red chalk, measurements unspecified. Purchased for £31 shillings,

Sitter: not the same sitter as above since it was delivered to a Mr Berry in 1819.

9. Title: BROWN, MR. of Boggs

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown. According to Skinner, portrait mentioned in a letter of March 10th, 1796.

Sitter: -

10. Title: CAY, MRS.

Ref:

- Baile de Lapperrier, C. ed. The Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors 1826-1990. vol. IV, 1991, p. 174.

- Skinner, B. Transactions ..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: medium and measurements not specified. Exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy, 1863 (332), lent by Mr. Sheriff Cay.

Sitter: -

11. Title: COCHRANE, MRS.

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown. According to Skinner, portrait mentioned in a letter of July 4th, 1816.

Sitter: possibly the wife of Thomas Cochrane, tenth Earl of Dundonald (1775-1860), a famous admiral. In 1812 he married Miss Katherine Corbett Barnes, a lady of good family, but not wealthy. His wife survived him a few years and died in 1865. They had two children.

Litt: Stephen, L. ed. DNB, vol. XI, 1887, p. 165.

12. Title: CUNNINGHAM, REV. CHARLES 1701-1793

Ref:

- Catalogue of the Special Exhibition of Portrait Miniatures.

June 1865, p.227, No. 2463 (Desk case II).

- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: miniature, watercolour on ivory, measurements unknown. Exhibited at the South Kensington Museum (V & A) in 1865, lent by Miss Cunningham.

Sitter: -

13. Title: DALRYMPLE FAMILY

Ref: Skinner, Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 47. Mentioned in Skirving's notebook of 1776.

Comment: no further information.

Sitters: East Lothian family.

14. Title: DUNDONALD, LADY

Ref: inventory of studio contents, 1819 (NLS, Acc. 10102).

Comment: pastel on board, a study of hands, measurements unknown.

Sitter: possibly Anne Gilchrist, the wife of Archibald Cochrane, ninth Earl of Dundonald (1749-1831), naval officer and chemical manufacturer. Resided at the family estate of Culross Abbey in 1782, they had six sons.

Litt: Stephen, L. ed. D.N.B., vol. XI. 1887, p. 160

15. Title: ELCHO, LORD

1749-1808

Ref: studio contents of 1819, (NLS, Acc. 10102), described as 'portrait of the late Lord Elcho'.

Comment: drawing in red chalk, framed and glazed.

Measurements unspecified.

Sitter: (See A.II.7)

16. Title: FERGUSON, PROF. ADAM

1723-1816

Ref:

- mentioned in account dated August 16th 1815.

(NLS, Acc. 10102)

- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown. Exhibited in 1868 Glasgow, lent by Mrs. Stark. Framed and glazed by Chalmers & Son, Edinburgh.

Sitter: philosopher and author.

17. Title: FORBES OF PISLIGO, WILLIAM 1739-

1806

Ref: recorded in engraving by Thomas Woolnoth, British Museum.

Comment:profile portrait, medium unspecified, measurements unknown.

Sitter: Scottish banker, 6th baronet.

18. Title: GILCHRIST, MR.

Ref: inventory of studio contents, 1819. (NLS, Acc. 10102)

Comment: medium and measurements unknown.

Sitter: -

19. Title: GORDON, MR

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions, vol. XII, 1970, p. 48. Letter of December 18th 1790, Rome.

Comment: possibly a pastel, measurements unknown.

Sitter: unidentified male cousin of Lord Elcho (1749-1808).

20. Title: GRAHAM, MRS, of Glasgow

Ref:

- inventory of studio contents, 1819. (NLS, Acc. 10102)

- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: drawing possibly in pastel or chalk on paper, set in frame and glass. 'A lady in black' deleted from the inventory entry and replaced with sitter's name.

Sitter: -

21 Title: GRAY, MRS.

Ref:

- Catalogue of the Special Exhibition of Portrait Miniatures.

1865. p. 27, No. 368 (case D).

- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54

Comment: miniature, watercolour on ivory, no measurements, dated 1798. Exhibited at the South Kensington Museum in 1865, lent by Mrs. Lawrence.

Sitter: -

22. Title: HAMILTON, GAVIN

1723- 1798

Ref:

- Garden, Francis. Travelling Memorandums..., vol. III, 1795,
p. 153.

- Skinner, B. Transactions..., 1970, p. 55.

Comment: miniature possibly similar in design to the pastel portrait of the same sitter, presently in the collection of the

S.N.P.G. Commissioned by Lord Gardenstone when in Rome in 1788, no further reference to it since.

Sitter: (See A. II.9)

23. Title: HAMILTON, SIR WILLIAM 1730-1803

Ref: Cleghorn, G. Ancient and Modern Art. 1848, vol. II, p. 203.

Comment: pastel portrait possibly executed in Naples, 1789. Sir William Hamilton commissioned the portrait which apparently presented him in a dressing-gown and night-cap. Skirving was paid two hundred guineas for it.

Sitter: Sir William Hamilton, British envoy, ambassador and archaeologist in Naples, born in Scotland, 13 Dec. 1730, fourth son of Lord Archibald Hamilton of Riccarton and Pardovan and Lady Jane Hamilton.

24. Title: 'HIGHLAND MARY'

Ref:

- Cleghorn, G. Ancient and Modern Art, vol. II, 1848, p. 204.
- Mrs Leila Hoskins, article in Scottish Field, March 1973.
- Skirving, Archibald. Letter to Robert Skirving, June 17th 1802. (Photocopy of letter sent by Mrs Hoskins to the SNPG).

Comment: medium and measurements unknown, an imaginary portrait.

Sitter: a former sweetheart of Robert Burns, the poet.

25. Title: HISLOP, MRS.

Ref:

- studio contents of 1819, Mr Watson (NLS, Acc. 10102).

- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: a head in black chalk on board, measurements unknown.

Sitter: possibly a portrait of Anne Hislop?, daughter of Francis Buchan Sydserff of Ruchlaw, and wife of Robert Hislop of Bunrig, a Free Church elder near Prestonpans (Grey, F. East Lothian Biographies 1941, p. 76).

26. Title: HORN, MISS.

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p.55.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown. Recorded in the collection of Mr. William Walker, Edinburgh, date unknown.

Sitter: -

27. Title: HUME, LADY ELEONOR, of Ninewells

Ref:

- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.
- Thompson, H.W. ed. The Anecdotes and Egotisms of Henry Mackenzie, 1745-1831. 1927, p. 212.

Comment: miniature mentioned in a letter of 1785 (Skinner, p. 55).

Sitter: possibly Lady Elizabeth Eleonor Hume, daughter of Alexander, 9th Earl of Home. Married General Thomas Dundas in 1784 and died in 1837.

28. Title: HUME, JOHN

Ref: Skinner, Transactions, vol. XII, 1970, p. 47.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown. Executed in Edinburgh, c. 1784. The portrait's existence confirmed by present family descendants of the Hume family, but no knowledge of its location.

Sitter: possibly John Hume of Ninewells (1709-1786), brother of David Hume.

29. Title: HUNTER, DR. JOHN

1747-1837

Ref:

- Lee, S. ed. DNB, vol. LII, London, 1897, p. 359.

- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown.

Sitter: classical scholar, Principal of St Andrews University and Professor of Humanity 1775-1826/7.

30. Title: KEAN, MISS. S.

Ref:

- Studio contents of 1819, George Watson (NLS, Acc. 10102)

- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: profile portrait on wood, measurements unknown.

Framed and glazed.

Sitter: -

31. Title: LOCKHART, JOHN

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown, mentioned in a letter 22nd August 1785 (Skinner, p. 55).

Sitter: -

32. Title: LOCKHART, MRS.

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p.55

Comment: medium and measurements unknown, mentioned in a letter dated August 22nd, 1785 (Skinner, p. 55).

Sitter: mother of above.

33. Title: MACKIE, MR.

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown, mentioned in a letter of 1776 (Skinner, p. 55).

Sitter: -

34. Title: MACPHERSON, SIR JOHN 1745-1821

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p.55.

Comment: possibly two pastel portraits, mentioned by Skirving in a letter dated Rome, December 18th, 1790. Listed together with the pastel portraits of Lord Elcho and Hugh Cleghorn. "I did afterwards ... Sir John Macpherson's for Mr McAuley, a copy whereof I have to make for poet Hume." (Skinner, B. p. 55)

Sitter: Sir John Macpherson - governor-general of India, born in 1745 at Sleat in the Isle of Skye. Educated at King's College, Aberdeen, and at the university of Edinburgh. Sailed to India in 1767; in 1770 entered the company's service as a writer, remained for six years in Madras. Dismissed from service, accused of intriguing with the nabob of Madras, returned to England in 1777. Remained until 1781, went to Calcutta; created a baronet in 1786 and returned to England. In 1789 he visited Florence, where he became financial and administrative advisor of Grand Duke Leopold. Described as a man of handsome stature and face, his courtly manners made him a favourite in society with wide knowledge and linguistic talents. Died unmarried 1821.

Litt: Lee, S. ed. DNB, vol. XXXV, 1893. p. 267.

35. Title: McRIE, MR

Ref: studio contents of 1819, Watson. Portfolio 3
(NLS, Acc. 10102)

Comment: two drawings of Mr McRie, delivered to his son.
Measurements unknown.

Sitter: -

36. Title: MEADOWBANK, LORD

1748-1816

Ref:

- Skirving, A. Letter to Robert, dated June 17th 1802.

(Copy in the SNPG).

- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown. Portraits of father and son, sold for 30 guineas each prior to June 1802.

Sitter: Allan Maconochie, 1st Lord Meadowbank, a Scottish judge. His son also depicted was Alexander Manochie-Welwood, 2nd Lord Meadowbank (1777-1861), a judge.

37. Title: MURRAY, MR.

Ref:

- Cursiter, S. list in the National Gallery of Scotland records.

- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown. Executed in Rome according to Stanely Cursiter.

Sitter: -

38. Title: NAIRN, COLL

Ref: studio contents of 1819, Watson. Portfolio No. 3.

(NLS, Acc. 10102).

Comment: medium and measurements unknown.

Sitter: -

39. Title: RENNIE, JOHN, F.R.S. 1761-1821

Ref:

- Cleghorn, G. Ancient and Modern Art, 1848, p. 204.
- Grey, F. East Lothian Biographies, 1941, p. 8
- Notes & Queries, letter dated 36th November 1881. See SNPG Skirving file on Burns.
- Smiles, S. Lives of the Engineers, vol. II, London, 1861-65.
p. 90.
- Stephen, L. ed. Dictionary of National Biography, vol. XLVIII,
p. 20
- Studio contents of 1819, Watson (NLS, Acc. 10102).
- The Works of Robert Burns, 1866, vol. I.

Comment: profile drawing facing left, medium and measurements unknown. Delivered to John Rennie for £31.10. Property of Rennie's family until London sale of 1881.

Sitter: (See B.III.3)

40. Title: ROBERTSON, REV. DANIEL

Ref:

- recorded by Stanley Cursiter in the National Gallery of Scotland.

- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown.

Sitter: Rev. Robertson was professor of Hebrew at St Andrews University. Portrait drawn in Rome while travelling tutor to Mr. Murray, also portrayed by Skirving.

41. Title: SANDILANDS, MR

Ref: studio contents of 1819, Portfolio No. 3 (NLS, Acc. 10102)

Comment: medium and measurements unknown, paid for on 28th June 1819.

Sitter: possibly Mr Robert Sandilands, whose wife was Isabella Byres of Tonley, b. 1737, sister to James Byres of Tonley, a banker in Rome, who may have made the acquaintance of Skirving there or in Scotland.

42. Title: SKIRVING, ADAM

1719-1803

Ref:

- Clubbe, J. ed. Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle, 1974, p. 132.
- Thompson, H.W. ed. The Anecdotes and Egotisms of Henry Mackenzie, 1745-1831, 1927, p. 212.
- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: oval miniature painted on china, measuring 5 X 3.8 cm (2 X 1 1/2 in.), mentioned in a letter of 1785 (Skinner, p. 55). Similar in design to the oil portraits of the same sitter, presently in the collections of SNPG and National Gallery of New South Wales. The miniature was badly damaged when removed from Edinburgh to Cheltenham in 1944 (Clubbe, J. p. 132). No longer in family property of sitter. Initially belonged to Captain Robert Skirving from 1785 to 1843; then handed down to family descendants of his half-brother David until 1980s. Present location unknown.

Sitter: -

43. **Title:** SKIRVING, ADAM

1719-1803

Ref:

- Johnson, J. & Stenhouse, W. The Scots Musical Museum, 1853, p. 192*.

- Scottish Field, March 1973.

Comment: portrait miniature of Adam Skirving set in a ring, the reverse inscribed with 'Adam Skirving, died 1803'. First belonged to Archibald's younger half-sister Elizabeth, on her death in 1825 bequeathed to her brother David Skirving. Present location unknown.

Sitter: father to the artist

44. Title: SKIRVING, ARCHIBALD

1749-1819

Ref: listed by William Chalmers for the firm of Chalmers & Son, Edinburgh. Inventory of receipts of May 28th 1816.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown. Set in a brown frame with white inside.

Sitter: self-portrait

**45. Title: WALKER, CAPTAIN FRANCIS, of
Tanderlane**

Ref: studio contents of 1819, George Watson (NLS, Acc. 10102)

Comment: red chalk on board, measurements unknown. Valued for £31.10. Recorded in an engraving in the collection of the SNPG, naming Skirving as the original artist.

Sitter: Captain in East Lothian Yeomanry.

46. Title: WALTE [RS] , MR. BEN

Ref:

- studio contents of 1819. (NLS, Acc 10102)

- Skirving billed for framing by Chalmers & Son, Edinburgh,
27th December 1816. (NLS, Acc. 10102)

Comment: medium and measurements unknown. Framed in brown and gold.

Sitter: -

47. Title: WELSH, MRS. JOHN of Haddington 1781-?

Ref:

- Graves, A. A Century of Loan Exhibitions, 1813-1912. vol. III, 1915, p. 1128.
- Lee, S. ed. DNB, vol. LII, 1897, p. 359.
- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 56.
- Clubbe, J. ed. Two Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle, 1974, p. 126.

Comment: medium unspecified, measures 4.5 X 3.5 in. Exhibited in 1884, then property of Mrs. A. Chrystal in 1884; later in the collection of Mrs. Carlyle, Surrey, date unknown.

Sitter: Grace Baillie Welsh, mother of Jane Welsh Carlyle (1801-1866).

48. Title: WILSON, MRS. ARCHIBALD

Ref:

- Catalogue of the Special Exhibition of Portrait Miniatures, 1865, p. 253, No. 2749 (Case A A).
- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 56

Comment: miniature painted on ivory, no description or measurements. Exhibited at the South Kensington Museum 1865. Lent by Mr. C. Heath Wilson.

Sitter: -

49. Title: A DOMESTIC SCENE

Ref: recorded in index file on Skirving in the SNPG.

Comment: medium and measurements unspecified.

50. Title: TWO DRAWINGS OF PORTRAIT HEADS

Ref: Baile de Laperriere, C. ed. The Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors 1826-1990. vol. IV, 1991, p. 174.

Comment: two separate drawings of heads in crayon, measurements unknown. Exhibited in the Royal Scottish Academy exhibition of 1880 (401 and 489), lent by James Carnegy, relative of the artist.

51. Title: GALATEA

Ref: according to Basil Skinner's Notebooks, 1963, sold in David Laing's auction sale of 22 & 23 December, 1879.

Comments: pen & ink drawing, measurements unknown.
Source not found in above reference but remain listed since
the drawing may have been sold at another date.

52. Title: THE GAMESTERS

Ref: Garden, Francis (Lord Gardenstone). Travelling
Memorandums, 1788. vol. III, 1795, p. 151.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown, executed in
1788 on commission by Lord Gardenstone, Rome. A copy after
the style of Correggio.

53. Title: A GIRL'S HEAD

Ref: Studio contents of 1819 (NLS, Acc. 10102)

Comment: red chalk drawing, measurements unknown.

54. Title: A GIRL & A PIGEON

Ref: Studio contents of 1819. (NLS, Acc 10102)

Comment: chalk drawing, measurements unknown.

55. Title: A GRECIAN STATUE

Ref: Studio contents of 1819 (NLS, Acc. 10102)

Comment: chalk drawing, measurements unknown.

56. Title: A GYPSY GIRL

Ref: Garden, Francis (Lord Gardenstone). Travelling Memorandums, 1788. vol. III, 1795, p. 151.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown, executed in 1788 on commission by Lord Gardenstone, Rome. A copy after the style of Correggio.

57. Title: HADDINGTON CHURCH

Ref: recorded in index file of Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

Comment: medium and measurements unspecified.

58. Title: HEN & CHICKEN

Ref: Studio contents of 1819 (NLS, Acc. 10102)

Comment: chalk drawing, measurements unknown.

59. Title: 'THE HUMORIST'

Ref: Baile de Laperriere, C. ed. The Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors 1826-1990. vol. IV, 1991, p. 174.

Comment: medium and measurements unknown, listed in the Royal Scottish Academy exhibition of 1880 (413). Lent by James T. Hay Esq.

60. Title: 'INDIA GENTLEMAN'

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions, vol. XII, 1970, p. 48. Letter from Skirving to Robert, Rome 1790.

Comment: medium and measurements unspecified. Two portraits of an unknown 'India gentleman', possibly an architect. Executed in Rome.

61. Title: A SLEEPING CHILD

Ref: Studio contents of 1819 (NLS, Acc. 10102)

Comment: chalk drawing, measurements unknown.

62. Title: VENUS & CUPID

Ref: Studio contents of 1819 (NLS, Acc. 10102)

Comment: medium and measurements unknown.

D. ENGRAVINGS AFTER SKIRVING

1. Title: BOSWELL, ROBERT, W.S. of St. Boswell

1746-1804

Medium: lithograph

Engraver: recorded to be P. Ronan

Date: -

Published: -

Ref: -

Comment: information courtesy of the SNPG, no further records.

2. Title: BURNS, ROBERT

1759-1796

A)

Medium: engraving

Engraver: Paton Thomson

Date: 1798

Published: Morning Chronicle, 1798.

Ref: -

Comment: oval engraving, engraved area measuring 8 1/2 X 6 1/2 in.

B)

Medium: engraving

Engraver: John Beugo

Date: 1801

Published: The Scots Magazine, October 1801.

Ref: Bushnell, G.H. Scottish Engravers, 1949, p. 3.

Comment:

C)

Medium: engraving

Engraver: John Beugo

Date: 1805

Published: Belfast edition of Burns Works, 1805.

Ref: -

Comment: -

D)

Medium: engraving in stipple, on india paper.

Engraver: Wiliam Holl, junior.

Date: -

Published: London 1854.

Ref: Scottish Literary Personalities of the Eighteenth Century.

SNPG, 12 July - 16 September 1951, p. 10.

Comment: illustration in catalogue by William Holl. Inherited from Robert Skirving of Cobairdy to his grandson, the present owner. Private collection, England.

E)

Medium: engraving

Engraver: H. Robinson

Date: -

Published:

- The Works of Robert Burns, 1866 edition.
- The Complete Illustrated Poems, Songs & Ballads of Robert Burns; 1905, 1990 & 1992. Frontispiece.

Ref: -

Comment: engraved in 1843 and 1859, no further details, information courtesy of the SNPG. Replica of Skirving's portrait of Burns by H.P. Riviere in Glasgow 1868 Exhibition, and engraved by T.M. Sandilands, post-1966. (Skinner, Burns Authentic Likenesses, 1990, p. 20).

Ref:

- Burns Exhibition Catalogue, 1896;
- Caledonian Musical Museum, 1809;
- Morning Chronicle, Oct. 1798;
- The Scots Magazine, Oct. 1801;
- Robert Burns, Works, Belfast edition, 1805;
- The Works of Robert Burns, vol. I, Blacke & Son, 1866.
- The Works of Robert Burns, 1843 and 1888 editions.

4. Title: CARLYLE, REV. ALEXANDER, D.D. 1722-1805

Medium: engraving, measurements unknown.

Engraver: unknown

Date: -

Published: -

Ref: Burton, J.H. ed. The Autobiography of Dr. Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805. 1910, p. 594.

Comment: the Autobiography refers to an engraving after Skirving's oil portrait of Carlyle, 'not of much merit ... in the hands of some collectors.' (p. 594). No illustration.

5. Title: CLERK, JOHN of Eldin 1728-1812

Medium: mezzotint, measurements unknown.

Engraver: S.W. Reynolds

Date: 1800

Published: -

Ref: -

Comment: information courtesy of the SNPG.

Samuel William Reynolds (1773-1835), famous mezzotint engraver and landscape painter.

4. Title: CRAIG, WILLIAM Lord

1745-1813

Medium: mezzotint, 44.2 X 35.3 cm (17 3/8 X 13 7/8 in.)

Engraver: George Dawe.

George Dawe (1781-1829), a London engraver who worked in mezzotint, specializing in history and portrait subjects. Trained as an engraver and entered the Royal Academy Schools in 1794.

Text beneath portrait: 'The Hon.ble William Craig/Engraved by G. Dawe./Published May 30 1801 by/ Alex.r Laurie, Bookseller, Edinburgh. One of the Senators of the College of Justice/and one of the Lord Comissioners of/Justiciary for Scotland./From an Original Painting by Skirving.'

Date: not dated

Published: Alexander Laurie, Bookseller, Edinburgh, 30th May 1901.

Ref:

- Index of Painters and Engravers, 1925, vol. VI, British Library, p. 549.
- O'Donoghue, F. Catalogue of Engraved British Portraits, vol. I, 1914. p. 511.
- Vollmer, H. Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Kunstler. vol. 31, 1937, p. 114.
- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: three-quarter length to the left, standing in private dress. Print in British Museum, Dept. of Prints and Drawings. (Cheylesmore Coll. 1902-10-11-583)

Illustration courtesy of Dept. of Prints and Drawings, BM.

6. Title: FORBES, SIR WILLIAM of Pitsligo 1739-1806

Medium: stipple, 20 X 16.8 cm (7 7/8 X 6 5/8 in.)

Engraver: Thomas Woolnoth

Thomas Woolnoth (1785-c. 1839), portrait and figure engraver. Famed for his theatrical portraits in stipple and line, as well as plates after Correggio and Van Dyck, eventually became Engraver in Ordinary to Queen Victoria.

Text beneath portrait: 'by T. Woolnoth from an Original Drawing by A. Skirving.'

Date: not dated

Published: -

Ref:

- Index of Painters and Engravers, 1925, vol. VI, British Library, p. 549.
- O'Donoghue, F. Catalogue of Engraved British Portraits. vol. IV, 1914. p. 69.
- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p.54.
- Vollmer, H. Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Kunstler, 1937, p. 114.

Comment: portrait in bust length, right profile, set in rectangular frame. Note in pencil under engraving: "Mr. Woolnoth informs me that the plate was destroyed after 50

impressions were taken." signed 'W.A.' Print presented to the British Library by Mr. Woolnoth. (Acc. No. 22-70, Class 3, Period IV).

Illustration courtesy of Dept. of Prints and Drawings, BM.

7. Title: HAMILTON, GAVIN 1721-1798

Medium: stipple, 10.8 X 8.5 cm (4 1/4 X 3 3/8 in.)

Engraver: R. Scott

Robert Scott (1771-1841), born at Lanark. A prominent Scottish engraver, father of David and William Bell Scot, the artists. Apprenticed with Alexander Robertson in 1787. Produced prints for the Scots Magazine for twenty years.

Text beneath portrait: 'R. Scott, Sculp., Skirving Pinx.'

Date: not dated

Published: frontispiece to vol. XVI of The Bee, published by J. Anderson, 10th July 1793.

Ref:

- The Bee, July 1793. p. 8.
- Index of Painters and Engravers, 1925, vol. VI, British Library, p. 549.
- O'Donoghue, F. Catalogue of Engraved British Portraits, vol. IV, 1914. p. 169.
- Vollmer, H. Allgemeines Lexikon..., 1937, p. 114.

Comment: portrait in bust length, looking to the left, wearing a cap. The Bee wrote in 1793, p. 8; 'The engraving that accompanies this is done from a very highly finished painting by Mr. Skirving, a native of East Lothian in Scotland, now at Rome, for Lord Gardenstone; and now in his Lordship's collection. It has been shown to many judges, who are well acquainted with Mr. Hamilton, who all admit that it is a most striking likeness. Our young artist has [R.Scott] with his usual accuracy, hit the likeness very exactly. This, it is believed, is the only print of that celebrated artist that has ever been given to the public.' Lord Gardenstone wrote his Travelling Memorandums in 1788, as Francis Garden. Print located in Case 74, Royal Academy Catalogue, (vol. 2, no. 12), Dept. of Prints and Drawings, British Museum.

Illustration courtesy of Dept. of Prints and Drawings, BM.

8. Title: RENNIE, JOHN 1761-1821

Medium: stipple, 17.7 X 13.6 cm (7 X 5 3/8 in.)

Engraver: William Holl

William Holl, the Younger (1807-1871), engraver in line, mezzotint, stipple and steel.

Text beneath portrait: 'John Rennie, F.R.S./ Engraved by W. Holl, after the/ portrait in Crayons/ by Archibald Skirving.'

Date: not dated

Published: by John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1861.

Ref:

- Haddington Courier, (Date unknown, Haddington Library).
- Lister, R. Print and Printmaking. 1984, p. 229.
- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.
- Smiles, S. Lives of the Engineers, vol. II, 1861, reproduced p. 90, ref. p. 278.
- Stephen, L. & Lee, S. ed. DNB, vol. XLVIII, p. 20.

Comment: seated man in left profile.

Illustration taken from Smiles's Lives of the Engineers.

9. Title: SPROT, MARK

1743- 1808

Medium: mezzotint, 33 X 27.8 cm (13 X 10 3/4 in.)

Engraver: W. Ward

William Ward (1766-1826), a London engraver in mezzotint and stipple. Married the sister of George Morland. Mezzotint engraver to the Prince Regent and the Duke of York.

Text beneath portrait: 'W.Ward Sculp.t., A. Scirven Pinxt.'

Title in pencil: 'A Gentleman.'

Date: not dated

Published: -

Ref:

- Index of Painters and Engravers, 1925, vol. VI, British Library, p. 549.

- O'Donaghue, F. Catalogue of Engraved British Portraits. vol. IV, 1914. p.169.
- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 56.
- Vollmer, H. Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler, 1965, p. 114.

Comment: half-length in oval frame, full face. Print in British Museum, Dept. of Prints and Drawings. (Cheylesmore Coll. 1902-10-11-6275)

Illustration courtesy of Major Sprot.

10. Title: **SPROT, MRS.**

? -1828

Medium: mezzotint, 33 X 27.8 cm (13 X 10 3/4 in.)

Engraver: W.Ward

Text beneath portrait: 'W.Ward Sculpt., A. Scirven Pinxt.'

Date: not dated

Published: -

Ref:

- Index of Painters and Engravers, 1925, vol. VI, British Library, p. 549.
- O'Donaghue, F. Catalogue of Engraved British Portraits. vol. IV, 1914. p. 169.
- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 56.

Comment: oval half-length to the right. Sitter wife of the preceeding. Print in the Dept. of Prints and Drawings, British Museum. (Cheylesmore Coll. 1902-10-11-6277)

Illustration courtesy of Major Sprot.

11. Title: WALKER, FRANCIS, of Tanderlane

Medium: mezzotint, 30.2 X 25.1 cm (11 7/8 X 9 7/8 in.)

Engraver: C. Turner

Text beneath portrait: 'Painted by Mr. Scriven./ Francis Walker, Esq. Captain of the 3rd Troop of East Lothian Yeomanry Cavalry.'

Date: not dated

Published: March 1st, 1821 by C. Turner, 50 Warren Str., Fitzroy Square, London.

Ref:

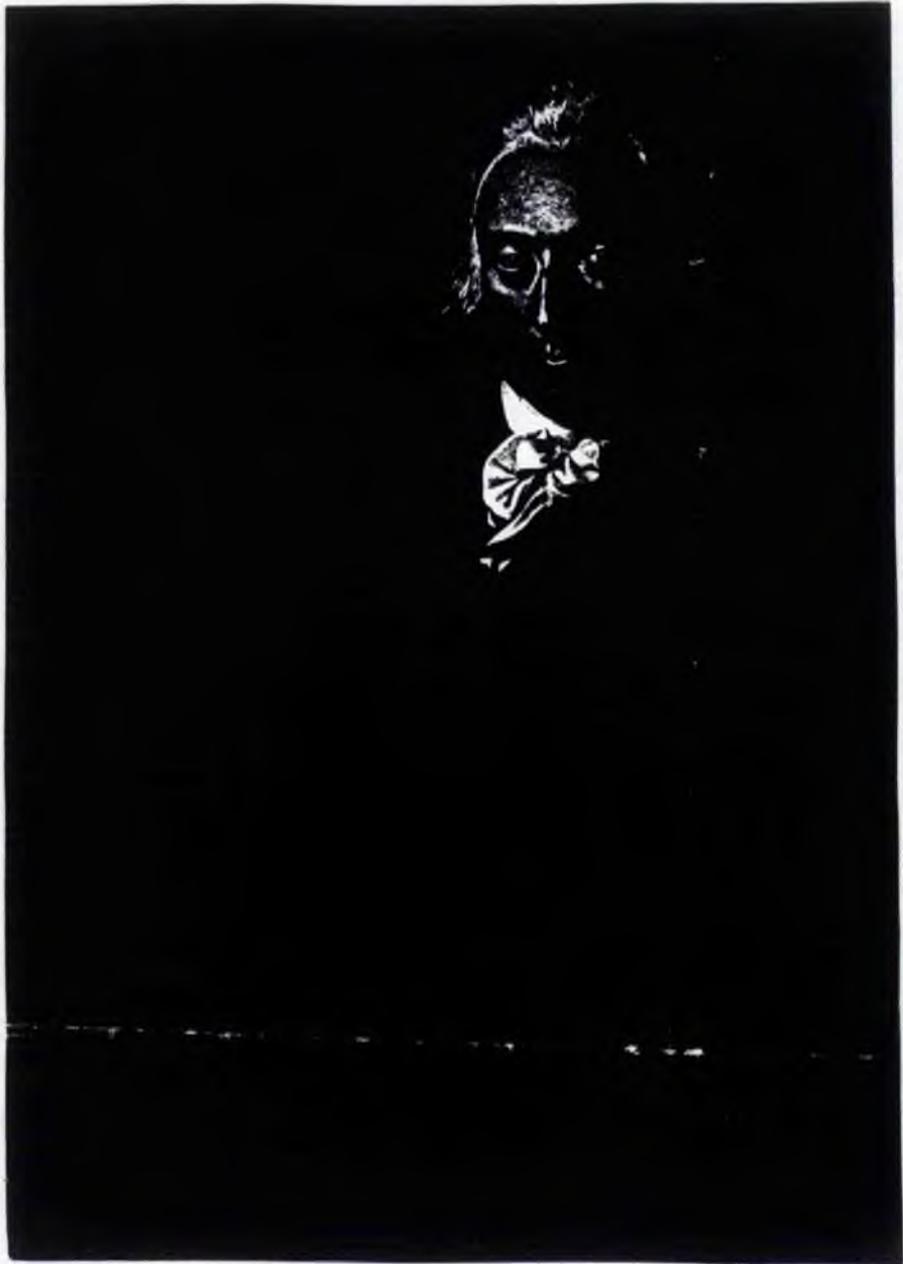
- Index of Painters and Engravers, 1925, p. 549.
- O'Donaghue, F. Catalogue of Engraved British Portraits, 1914, p. 169.
- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 56.

Comment: profile engraving of gentleman in half-length facing left. Coll: SNPG (S.Ph.V 590-1) From the estate of Scott Skirving, March 1962.

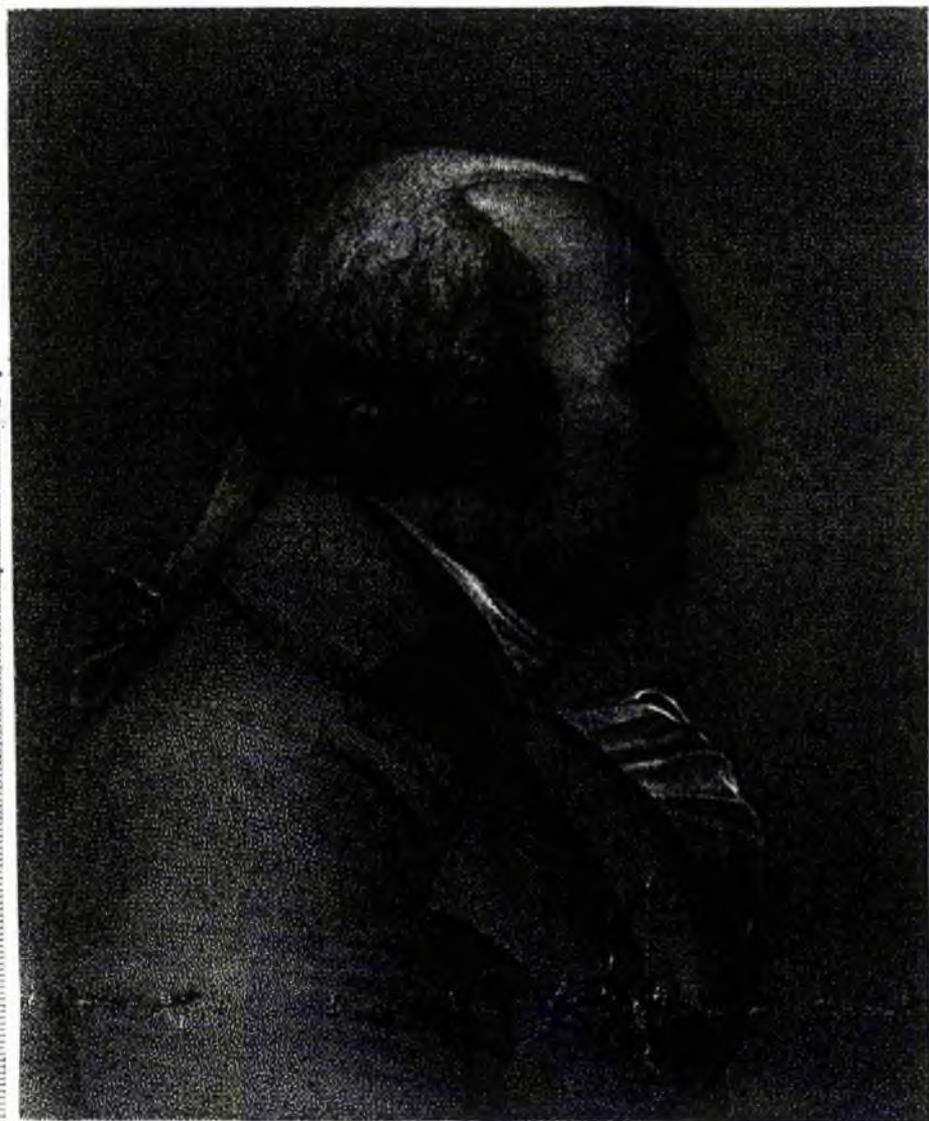
Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.



1) Robert Burns, by William Holl



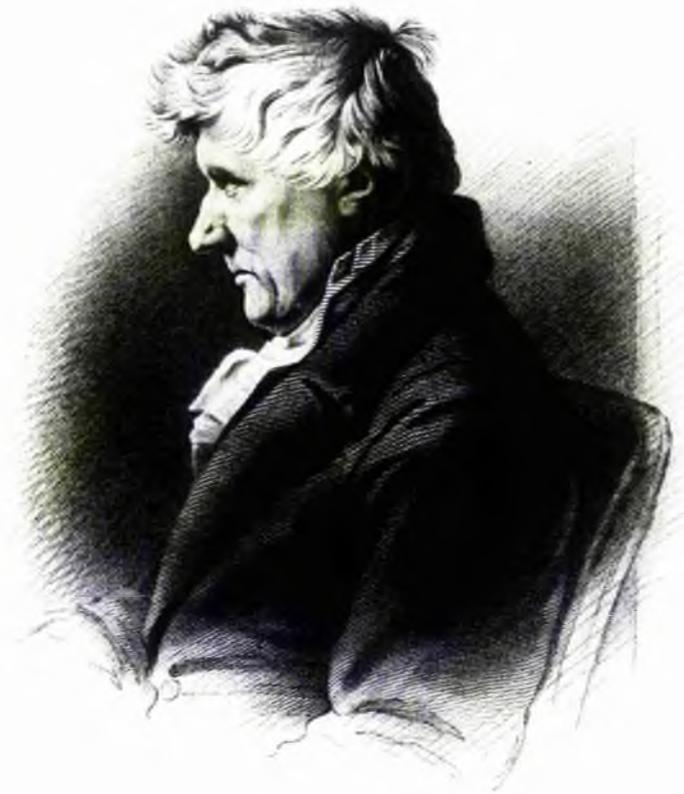
2) Lord William Craig, by George Dawe



Engraved by T. Woolnoth from an original drawing by J. Fleming.

SIR WILLIAM FORBES,
of
PITSLIGO.

3) Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, by Thomas Woolnoth



5) John Rennie, by William Holl



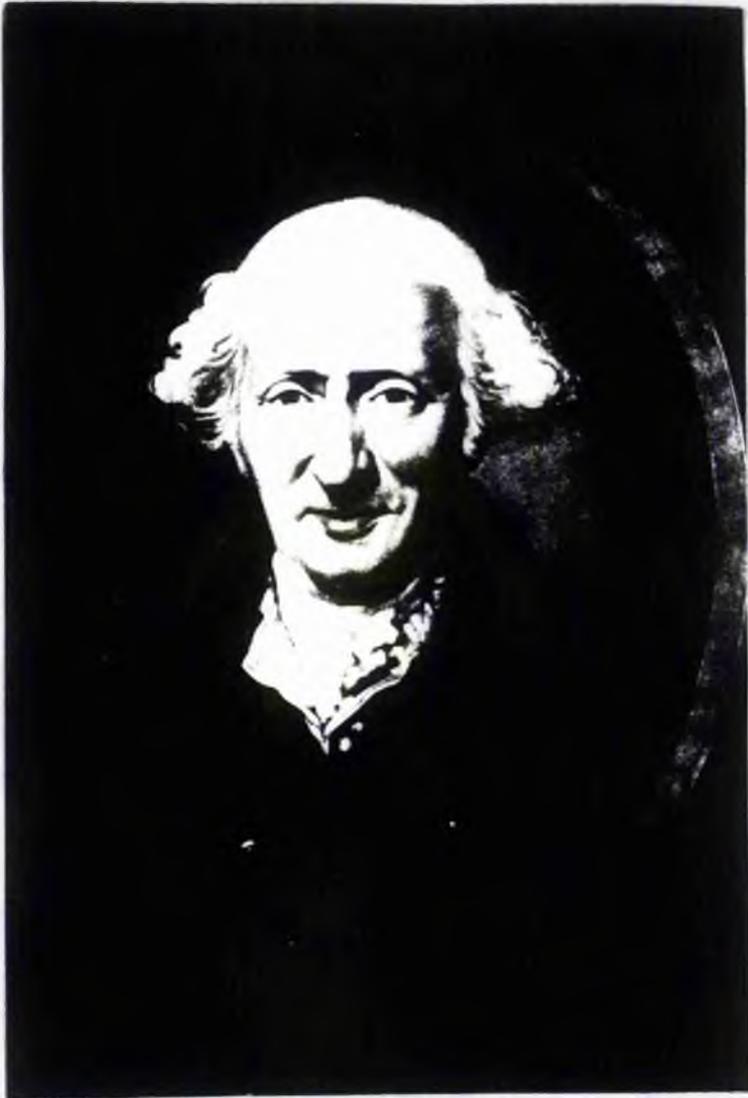
GAVIN HAMILTON.

Painter.

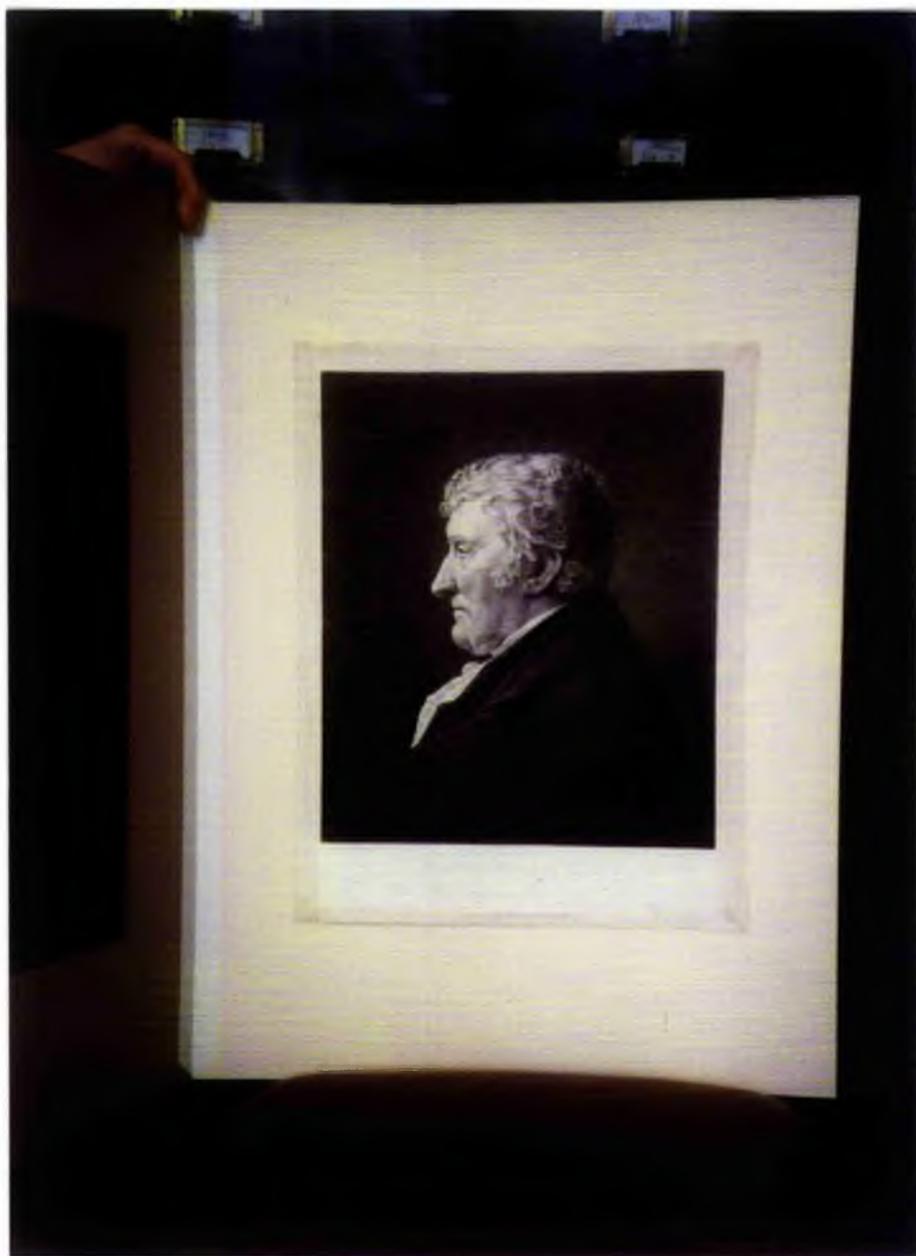
4) Gavin Hamilton, by Robert Scott



7) Mrs Mark Sprot, by William Ward



6) Mark Sprot, by William Ward



8) Francis Walker of Tanderlane, by C. Turner

**E. WORKS PREVIOUSLY ATTRIBUTED TO
SKIRVING BUT NOT ACCEPTED BY THE
AUTHOR**

1. Title: PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Medium: watercolour on ivory(?), 7.5 cm (2 15/16 in.)

Oval miniature of a lady with powdered hair and white turban, dressed in white with broad blue sash, cloud and sky background. Set in silver-gilt frame, the reverse with plaited hair, plush mount.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: sold by Sotheby's, 19th October 1981, p. 39, Lot 125.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: misattribution, stylistically resembles the work of George Engleheart (1750-1829). According to Sotheby's, the sitter is a lady of the Chleesmont-Severn family, dated circa 1790.

Illustration courtesy of Sotheby's.

2. Title: PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG GIRL

Medium: watercolour on ivory, 65 mm (2 1/2 in.) high.

Half-length of a young girl facing left, with fair hair falling to her shoulders, dressed in a white gown with pleated collar, wearing a pink sash at the waist. Set in gold frame, the reverse with a border of fae^{pearls}tted-gold studs surrounding a central hair compartment.

Signed: with initial 'N'

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location:

- Sotheby's, 22nd April, 1968

- Sotheby's, 26th June, 1978, p. 43, Lot 161.

Exd: -

Ref: Foskett, D. Miniatures: Dictionary & Guide. 1987, p. 310

Comment: misattribution. Foskett's illustration reveals a small 'N' on lower left side of the sitter. Miniature by James Nixon, A.R.A. (1741?-1812).

Illustration courtesy of Sotheby's.

3. Title: PORTRAIT OF A LADY

Medium: watercolour on ivory, 57 cm (2 1/4 in.) high.

Oval miniature of unknown lady, head and shoulders, shown in frontal view with head turned 3/4 to the left. Her face serious, with fine dark eyebrows and a prominent cleft in chin. Dressed in white empire-style gown with high sash, low frilled neckline. Adorned with a string of pearls in her powdered long, curled hair. Set in slender gilt frame, the sitter's hair woven in a 1 in. diamond pattern on the reverse.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: miniature taken to Canada in 1913, passed down in family of Letitia Turnbull of British Columbia to present date.

Exd: -

Ref: Country Life, January 28th, 1988. 'Collectors Questions', p. 82.

Comment: attributed to Archibald Skirving, described as a miniature of 'very high quality but not of the standard of London miniaturists'. Date suggested by Country Life c. 1785. Here stylistically attributed to John Donaldson (1737-1801), the Scottish miniaturist.

Illustration from Country Life.

4. Title: AINSLIE, MRS. MARTHA

1776-?

Medium: pastel on paper, 16.5 X 12 cm (6 1/2 X 4 3/4 in.)

Oval bust portrait of a young girl with dark hair and large eyes. Head inclined to the left and down. Wearing a pearl necklace and a dress with a low neckline and small bow in front.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: previously in family possession in 1973, present location unknown.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: date suggested by the SNPG c. 1810, however, so unlike Skirving's style and technique of this period, indicating another artist. Medium uncertain but possibly pastel rather than oil on panel, seemingly in poor condition. The sitter is said to be Martha Ainslie (née Skirving), a younger half-sister of the artist, as a married woman.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

5. Title: BURY, LADY CHARLOTTE (CAMPBELL)

1775-1861

Medium: pencil and watercolour on paper, 48 X 38 cm (19 X 15 in.) Drawing of a woman's head, wearing frilled head shawl over dark curly hair.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent until sale by Christie's & Edmiston's, 2nd July 1981, 'Important Scottish Paintings', Edinburgh, Lot 12, p. 8. Sold with Lot. 13; Mrs. Sheridan. Both incorrectly described in the sale catalogue as pastels. Present location unknown

Exd: -

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: misattribution. According to Mrs Leila Hoskins, former owner; the portraits of Lady Bury and Mrs Sheridan, although unsigned, are definitely by Archibald's brother, Captain Robert Skirving. A wedding present to Mrs Leila Hoskins in 1932, the two portraits originally hung in her grandfather's drawing room.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

6. Title: SHERIDAN, MRS. BRINSLEY

Medium: pen and wash on paper, 53 X 40.5 cm (20 3/4 X 16 in.) Head and upper part of shoulders of a young woman, turned to the dexter, her head looking over her left shoulder. Dark, curly hair on sides, set in a high bun.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: by family descent of artist prior to sale by Christie's & Edmiston's, 2nd July, 1981, Edinburgh. Lot 13.

Exd: -

Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 55.

Comment: -

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

7. Title: STEWART, PROF. DUGALD 1753-1828

Medium: chalk on paper, 49.5 X 42 cm (19 1/2 X 16 1/2 in.) Profile portrait of man facing left, balding, distinct features. Plain background.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: property of James Carnegy in 1863; on loan to the SNPG from R.K. Miller.

Exd: Royal Scottish Academy, 1863 (392). Lent by James Carnegy Esq.

Ref:

- Baile de Laperriere, C. ed. The Royal Scottish Academy Exhibitors 1826-1990. vol. IV, 1991, p. 174.
- The Concise Catalogue of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1990, p. 280. (PGL 36)
- The Glasgow Herald. October 30th 1909, p. 11.
- Irwin, D. & F. Scottish Painters at Home and Abroad. 1975, p. 80.
- Lee, S. ed. D.N.B., vol. LII, London 1897, p. 359.
- Scott and His Circle. SNPG (GMP.1)
- Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Illustrated list. 1928, p. 27.
- Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Concise Catalogue, 1972.
- Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 56.
- Williamson, G. Bryan's Dictionary of Painters and Engravers. vol. V. 1905, p. 88.

Comment: reattributed to John Henning by SNPG in 1990. It is possible the portrait was started by Skirving and completed by his colleague John Henning (1771-1851), the Scottish Sculptor.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.

8. Title: GLENDINNING, THOMAS

Medium: pastel on paper, 22 X 18.6 cm (8 5/8 X 7 5/16 in.)

Frontal view of seated man at table with book open in front, looking to the right. Arm resting on chair frame. Wearing a pale green vest with buttons in same material, brown coat. White necktie, roughly sketched, white powdered wig, double chin. Slate blue background. Ink pot with feather pen in oval painting's left hand corner. Back of chair in pale green with pink lines. Set in a plain oval gilt frame and glass.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: purchased in the early 1960s from Doig, Wilson and Wheatley, Art Dealers, Edinburgh for £15 each. In private collection, Scotland.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: one of a pair. Stylistically re-attributed to the Irish pastellist Hugh Douglas Hamilton (1734?-1806) who produced small oval pastels in this manner. This pair appear not to be by Skirving; weak draughtsmanship and posture, stippling clearly visible and the colouring unclean; characteristics typical of Hamilton.

9. Title: GLENDINNING, MRS.

Medium: pastel on paper, 22 X 18.6 cm (8 5/8 X 7 5/16 in.)

Seated lady next to table, frontal view. Elbow resting on table, right hand on cheek. Brown powdered hair. Darker blue background, white dress. Set in similar oval gilt frame and glass. Facial shading dark.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: same as above.

Exd: -

Ref: -

Comment: same attribution as her male companion.

10. Title: PORTRAIT OF A MAN

Medium: pastel and gouache on paper, 62.2 X 53.6 cm (24 1/2 X 21 1/8 in.) Portrait of a seated man, side view in three-quarter length. Wearing a greyish suit, white ruffles and stockings. The head turned to the right and lighted from the left; red-curtained background with an opening on right.

Signed: 'A. Skirving, pt.' right hand side

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: presented to the National Gallery of Scotland in 1879 by Mr. William Moir Bryce. (D 659)

Exd: -

Ref:

- Bénézit, E. Dictionnaires des Peintures, Sculpteurs 1976, p. 639.
- National Gallery of Scotland. Catalogue. 1946, p. 325.
- National Gallery of Scotland. Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture. 1957, p. 254.
- National Gallery of Scotland. Shorter Catalogue. 1978, p. 152.
- Vollmer, H. Allgemeines Lexikon..., 1937, p. 114.

Comment: stylistically reattributed in November 1992 to Daniel Gardner (1750?-1805). None of Skirving's work has been signed with 'pt'. (My thanks to Dr. Duncan Thomson of the SNPG for assistance in identifying the correct artist).

Illustration courtesy of the National Gallery of Scotland

11. Title: GORDON, LORD GEORGE 1752-1793

Medium: watercolour, measurements unknown.

Frontal view of young man seated with a dog in lap. Half-length, eyes towards the viewer. Set in woodland background.

Signed: no

Date: not dated

Prov. & present location: unknown.

Exd: the Scottish Exhibition, Glasgow, 1911, No. 200 A, lent by Mr. F.A. Newgate. (according to Skinner; Whitechapel exhibition, 1912).

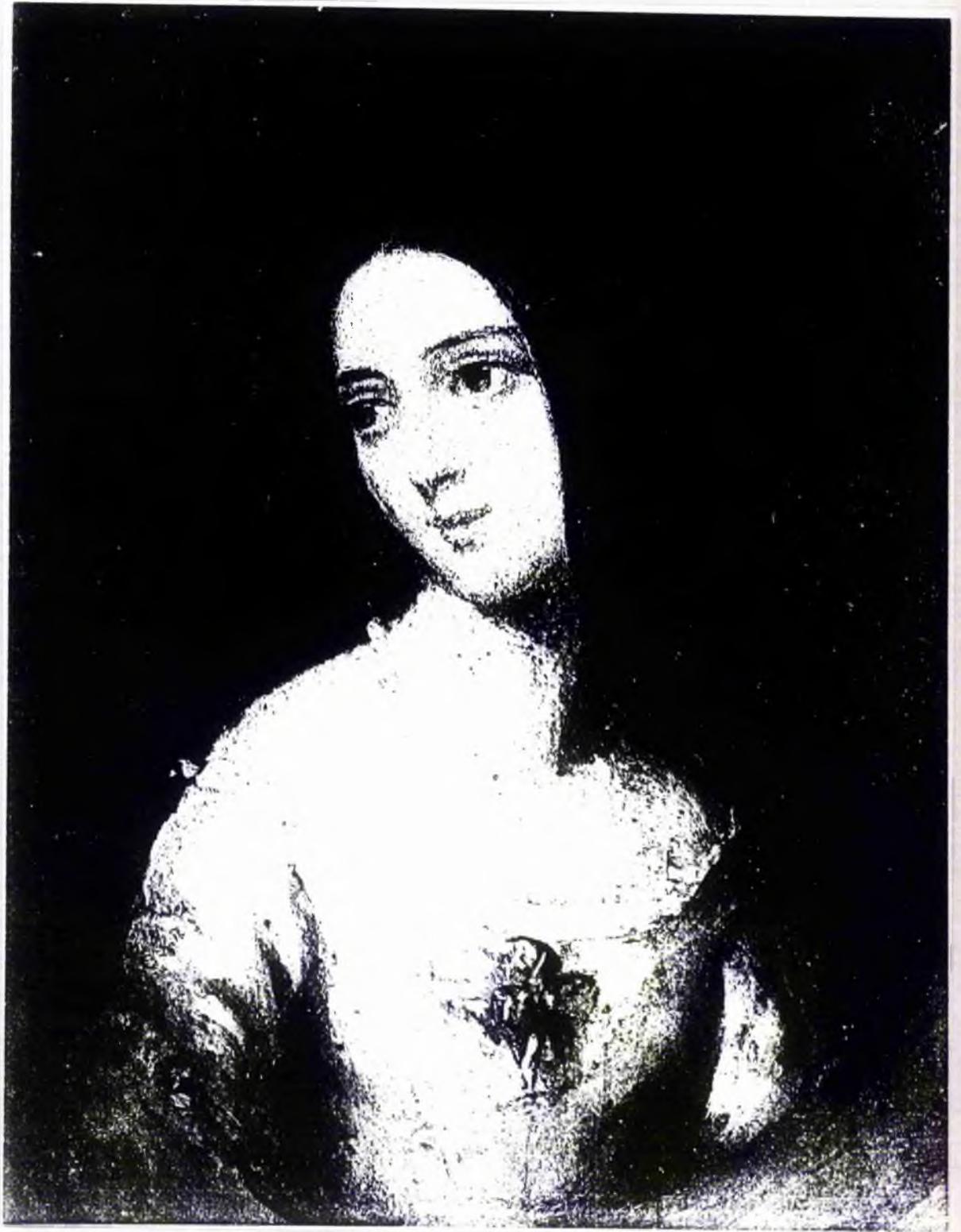
Ref: Skinner, B. Transactions..., vol. XII, 1970, p. 54.

Comment: here re-attributed to Daniel Gardner (November 1992), suggested dating by the SNPG c. 1782. (PG465). The sitter is Lord Gordon of the Gordon Riots, political agitator, son of Cosmo, 3rd Duke of Gordon.

Illustration courtesy of the SNPG.



1) Portrait of a Lady
(attr. George Engleheart)



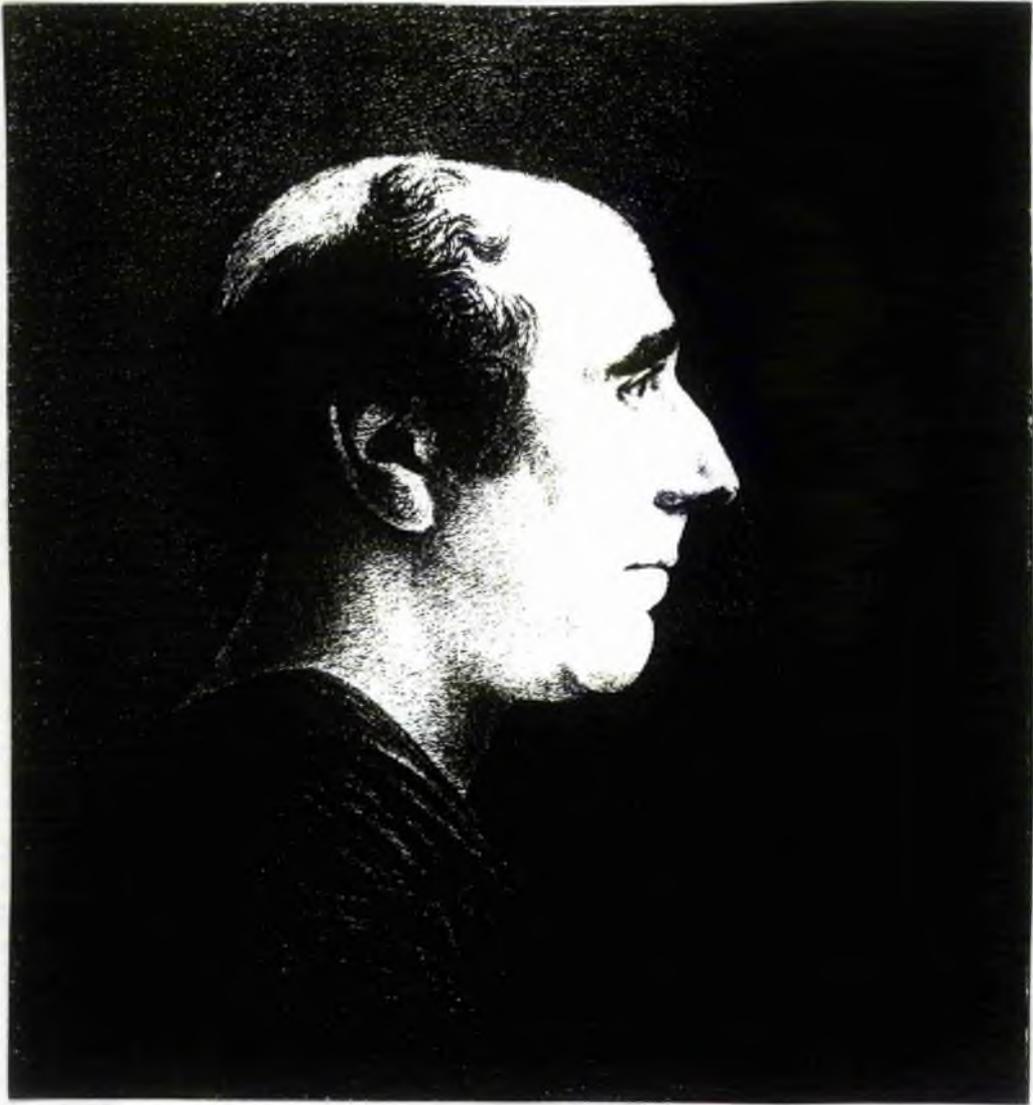
4) Mrs Martha Ainslie (unknown artist)



5) Lady Charlotte Bury (attr. Robert Skirving)



6) Mrs Brinsely Sheridan (attr. Robert Skirving)



7) Professor Dugald Stewart (attr. John Henning)



8) Portrait of a Man (attr. Daniel Gardner)



9) Lord George Gordon (attr. Daniel Gardner)

APPENDIX I

STUDIO CONTENTS OF 1819

A: Valued by William Bruce, Edinburgh May 1819.

Inventory and Appraisement of Sundry Effects which belonged to the late Mr Archibald Skirving, taken May 1819, by William Bruce Appraiser in Edinburgh.	
<p>Pictures presumed to be Mr Skirving's Private Property</p>	
a Head of 1100: Hours on Red chalk, framed & glazed	1 1 "
a Drawing of a Statue	" 10 "
a do of Gavin Hamilton, painter Framed and Glazed	" 10 6 "
a do Mr Carnegie, as sketch, ditto	1 1 "
a do of a French Painter by a lady	" 10 6 "
a do, in lead in black lead, unfinished	" 10 6 "
a do, Venus & Cupid	1 11 6 "
a do, in black chalk of a Gentleman Unknown	" 10 6 "
a do Girl and Pigeon	" 10 "
a do, in black chalk of Mr Perry Seal Engraver	" 5 "
a do, a Landscape & another	" 7 6 "
a do, Head of a Gentleman in Red Chalk	" 5 "
2 Sketches of Hands and Feet	" 5 "
1. a small Print	" 2 "
1. a Head of a Lady, unfinished	" 2 6 "
a Painting, Her & Children	" 2 6 "
a do 1. a Horse by Stone	" 2 6 "
a do, a Lady and Gentleman	" 2 6 "
a do, supposed in brass	" 7 6 "
Carried Forward	£ 8 17 0

Brought Forward	£8	17	6
a Painting, a Lady	"	7	6
a Box No 1, containing 17 Prints and 29 Drawings	1	5	"
a Portfolio No 2, containing Printed Drawings	1	10	"
a Print framed & glazed, an Edifice near Rome	"	2	6
a small Port, also No 3, containing Prints and Sketches	"	10	"
a Book No 4 of Prints, Figures	"	7	6
a Portfolio No 5, Prints & Drawings	1	5	"
a do No 6 containing a very few Prints, Drawings & some Paper	"	7	6
a do, No 7, ditto	"	10	"
a do No 8, ditto	"	12	"
a Box No 9 containing 3 Portraits Unclaimed Pictures and Sketched	1	1	"
an Unfinished Portrait of Lady Charlotte Campbell, in a frame & glazed	2	2	"
a Portrait, a Lady in Black, framed & glazed	2	2	"
a do, Mr Campbell of Shawfield, ditto	2	2	"
a do Miss Cunningham of Lennox	2	2	"
a do Outline with Chalk of a Lady framed and glazed	1	10	"
a Box, No 10, containing 1 Piece of Plate Glass 8 1/2 Large & 3 Small Pieces of German ditto	5	"	"
a Mahogany Cabinet	3	3	"
a do Drawing Table	2	2	"
a do Small Writing Desk and 2 Drawers containing Drawings, Memorials	"	15	"
a Small Portfolio No 11 containing Prints & Drawings	"	15	"
Carried Forward	£38	8	6

Brought Forward	£38	8	6				
The Art of Painting by Freeman	"	7	6				
a Desk	"	7	6				
2 Miniatures of Gentlemen	"	10	6				
3 China Bowls & 5 Plates or Saucers	"	12	6				
a Drawing, a Sleeping Cupid	"	5	"				
a Painter, a Gentleman	"	3	6				
a Drawing & a Print framed	"	5	"				
a Box containing a few Books & Pamphlets	"	10	"				
12 Drawing Books	"	5	"				
a Box containing 2 Portraits	"	10	"				
a Lady and Gentleman	"	10	"				
a Plate of Glass for grinding colours	"	5	"				
4 small imperfect plates	"	5	"				
3 Boxes containing Colours and Small Cases with Brushes	"	1	1				
a Firescreen	"	2	6				
a Small Stand	"	2	"	44	15	6	
Accessories							
a Gold Thimble, Cornelian Seal, with three Buttons, Small Silver Tea Tadle and some Hair Pencils	"	12	6				
a Parcel of Bone & Ivory Spoons, Iron Screws, Nails, Egg Cups &c	"	5	"				
a very small Quantity of Gentlemen's Hairing, Champagne & unclarified Brandy	"	3	7	6	4	5	"
				£49	"	6	
I do hereby declare that the prices attached to the articles in the above Inventory, consisting of this and the two foregoing Pages, and amounting to Forty Nine Pounds and Sixpence Sterling is a fair valuation, according to the best of my judgement							
Wm. Brown							

B: Valued by George Watson, Edinburgh 1819.

*List of Pictures belonging to the Representatives of the
late Archibald, Marquis of Eglinton, deposited
with Charles Muscatell, St. Andrew by Mr. Watson*

— Pictures under Glass —				
1	A Head of Robert Burns framed & glazed in Mr. Pringle's gallery	31	10	"
2	A Drawing of a Statue, D ^o D ^o	52	10	"
3	A D ^o of Gavin Hamilton, D ^o D ^o £105	52	10	"
x 4	A D ^o of Mr. Carrigie,			"
5	A D ^o of a French Painter - D ^o D ^o	8	8	"
x 6	A D ^o of himself.			"
7	A D ^o of a Roman Hero - D ^o D ^o	8	8	"
8	A D ^o of Professor Ferguson, D ^o D ^o £21	31	10	"
9	A D ^o of a subject - D ^o D ^o	8	8	"
10	A D ^o of Mr. Berry an engraver D ^o D ^o	25	10	"
108 11	A D ^o of Lady Chudleigh, Countess of (unpublished) the Countess of Chudleigh	100	7	"
12	A Portrait of a lady in Black - D ^o D ^o	55		"
x 13	A D ^o of Col. Campbell of the 42 nd Regt.			"
14	A D ^o of Miss Cameron's portrait (unpublished)	35		"
15	A Profile of a Head of a Man on a stand framed & glazed	10	10	"
16	A sleeping Child in a cradle, D ^o D ^o	25	2	"
17	A Head of a Man in a cradle, D ^o D ^o	25	8	"
18	A Portrait of a gentleman in a black coat - D ^o D ^o	25	15	"
19	A D ^o of a lady in a black dress - D ^o D ^o	5	5	"
20	A D ^o of a lady in a black dress - D ^o D ^o	3	3	"
21	Two landscape drawings with figures - D ^o D ^o	7	7	"
22	A landscape drawing of a scene with figures - D ^o D ^o	21	10	"
23	A small landscape drawing - D ^o D ^o	13	10	"
24	A D ^o of a lady in a black dress - D ^o D ^o	5	5	"
25	A D ^o of a lady in a black dress - D ^o D ^o	5	5	"
26	A drawing of a chicken - D ^o D ^o	5	5	"
27	A full length painting of an Anachorite in a landscape	26	5	"
28	A D ^o of an old lady	8	8	"
29	A D ^o of a gentleman and lady unfinished	5	5	"
30	A drawing of a chicken	5	5	"
31	An oil painting of one of the heads of a group			"
— Portraits in chalk on boards —				
32	Mr. Pringle in a coat, chalk on board	31	10	"
33	Captain Walker in a D ^o	31	10	"
34	A head of Miss Nicolson in a black D ^o	21		"
35	Portrait of a lady in a black dress	8	8	"
36	A lady in a black dress in a D ^o	5	5	"
37	A D ^o of a lady in a black dress	3	3	"
38	Portrait of a lady unfinished	2	2	"

Pictures in Book - Folios.

1	In Port. folio No 1 - 26 ^{modern} Portraits all prints @ 4/6	5 4 "
2	Portraits in coloured crayons 5 heads and a pair of hands	10 " "
3	Drawings 45 Portraits in black and red chalk @ 2/2 1/2	9 10 "
4	63 Drawings & prints chiefly Academy figures @ 5/6	15 15 "
5	42 Drawings containing 112 Drawings of various subjects @ 1/1	5 12 "
6	A set of prints Views in Italy 19 in Number @ 2/6	2 7 3
7	Contz 411 prints of various descriptions	10 " "
8	Book of Etchings from Calcutta Roma	3 3 "
9	Book of old prints For the profiles any of them that may be claimed 2/6 each	7 10 6

147/1/95

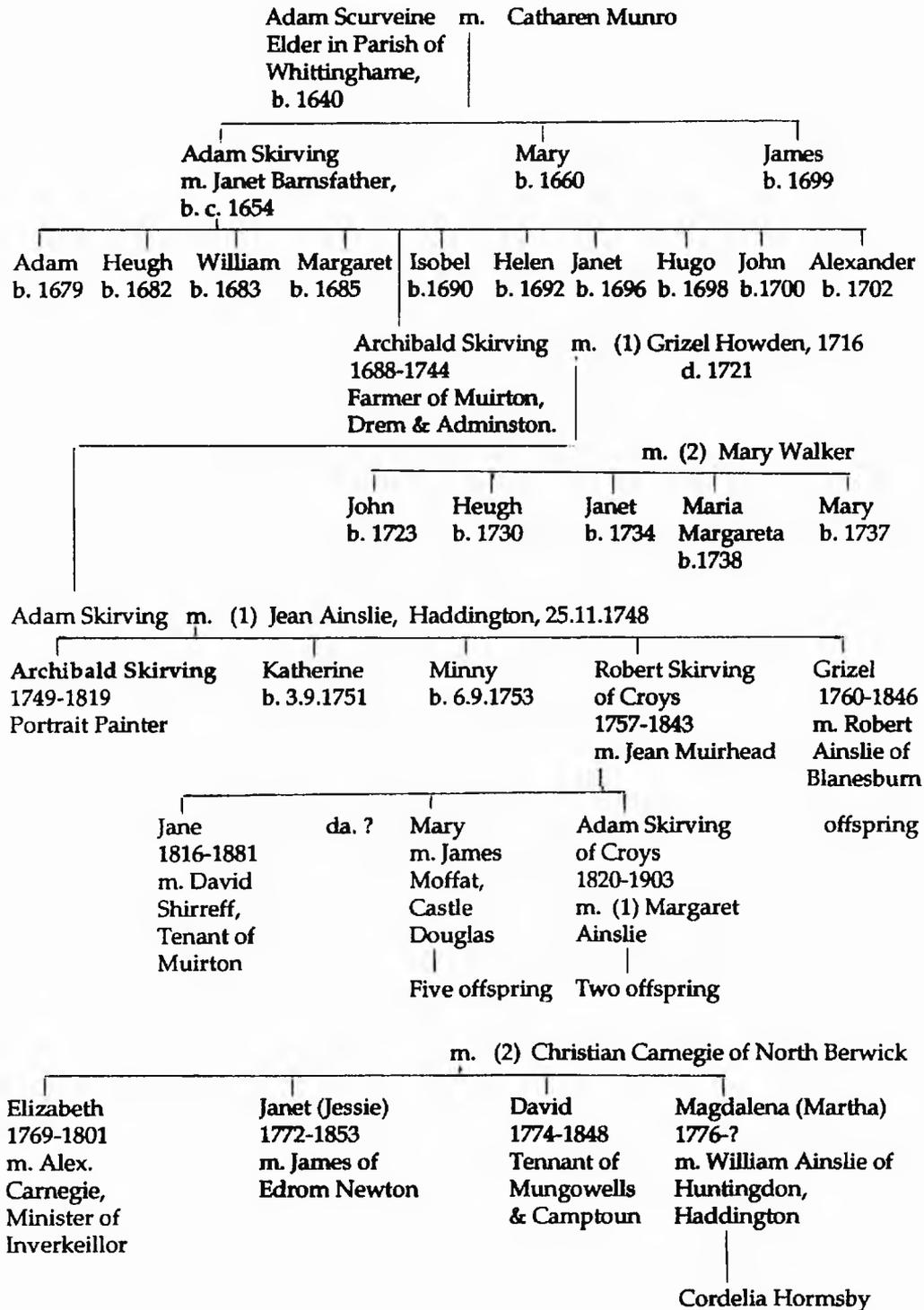
Portfolio No. 2. a likeness of Mr. Goldsmith \$8.80 -
Delivered to Mr. D. D. D. by J. B. D. 8.80 -

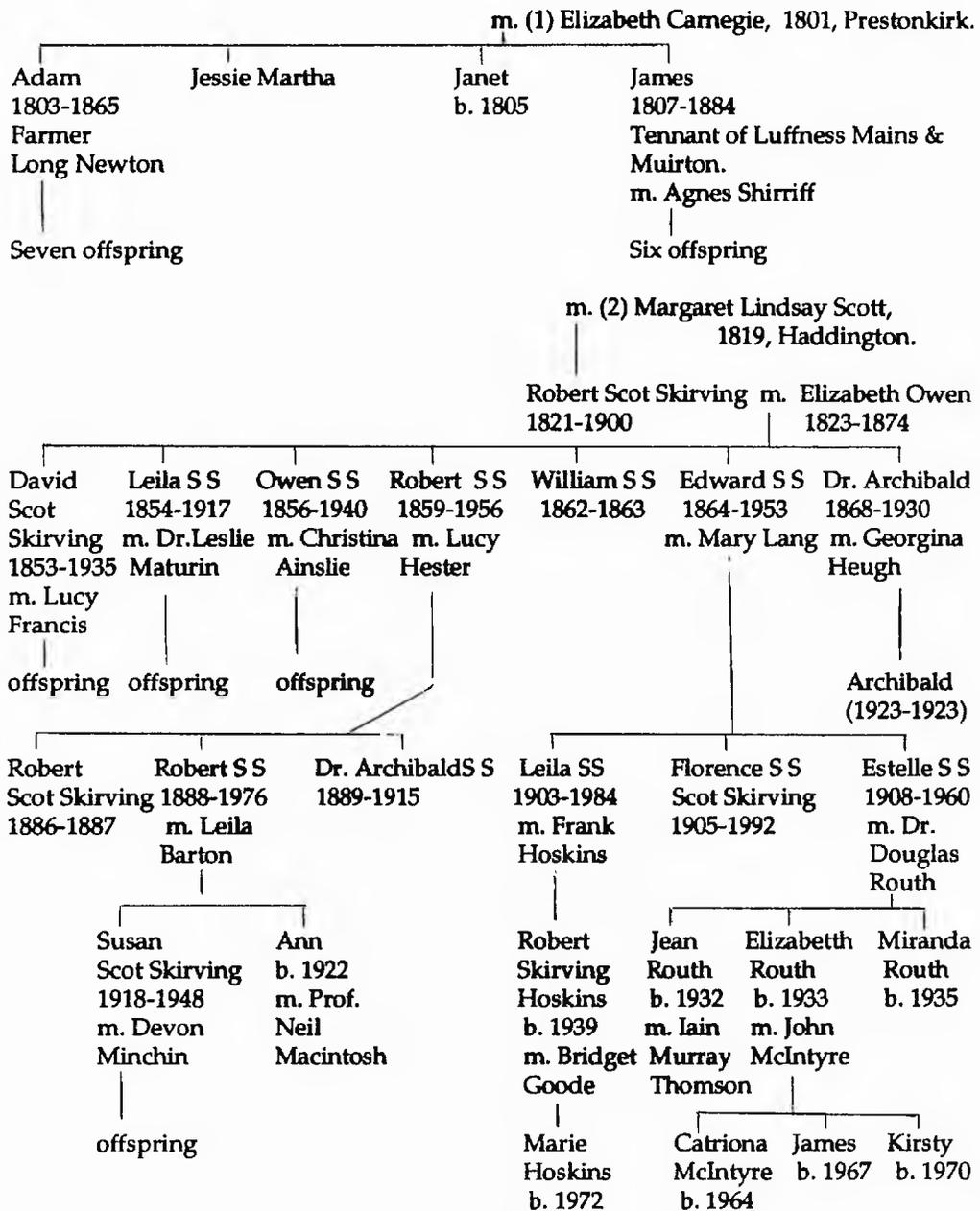
Portfolio No. 3. D. D. Mayer \$5.50 -
Matt Sanderson do 28 June, delivered to head, 3.30 -
Chicago families 4.40 -
Coll. Harris 3.30 -
Two Dollars of Mr. M. H. H. delivered to head, 2.00 -
of head, of J. B. D. D. delivered to head 1.30 -

28 June, 1819 Cash from Mr. Sanderson do for donation of \$3.30 -
of head -

APPENDIX II

THE SKIRVING FAMILY TREE





BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Manuscripts:

The British Library:

- List of Exhibitors with their Places of Abode, vol. II, 1776-1782. The Royal Academy.
- The Cumberland Papers, Letter from Archibald Skirving to G. Cumberland, dated Rome, March 5th 1794.
(BM Adv. MSS. 36497, f. 290)

General Register House, H.M.:

- Mitchell's List, 1966. List of Excise Officers, Edinburgh.

Haddington County Library:

- Notes on Skirving family members by Adam Skirving of Croys, 1901.
- The family trees of Skirving and related branches, until c. 1900.

National Library of Scotland, MS:

- 1) Transcript of the Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle.
(MS 1798, f. 29, 34-40)

- 2) Letter of the Earl of Buchan to Gilbert Elliot, Edinburgh, mentioning Skirving, 1819. (MS 11909, ff. 120-1)
- 3) Watson Autographs, 1532-1759. End of a poem and letter, undated. (MS 590, No. 1751)
- 4) Two factors letters, dated 1806. From Archibald Skirving to Henry Davidson, East Lothian. (MS 17284, fol. 166, 246)
- 5) Forbes, William Sir Journal of a Continental Tour. vol. VI, f. 183, April 1793; vol. VI, fol. 30v.

National Library of Scotland, Acc. 10102:

- 1) Receipt of £5 from Mr Archd Skirving to Adam Wilson, dated Edinburgh 22 May 1800, for 31 March and 8 April 1800.
- 2) Mr Archd Skirving, Portrait Painter Edinburgh. In accounts with Adam Wilson, writer. Edinburgh 21 March 1800.
- 3) Mr Archd Skirving, in accounts with Adam Wilson, 1801-1802.
- 4) Registered Deed of Settlement for Adam Skirving, dated 1 March 1798 with codicil 22 October 1799. Registered 28 April 1803 by Charles Gordon.
- 5) Inventory of the Title Deeds of the Dwelling House lying in the Town of Haddington belonging to the late Archibald Skirving sometime Portrait Painter in Edinburgh. Purchased by Adam Skirving, farmer in East Garleton, June 1782. Deed of Settlement upon his wife and children, dated 1 March 1798.
- 6) State of the Price of the House No. 3 on the South Side of St James' Square, Edinburgh, purchased by Adam Wilson,

- writer in Edinburgh, from Mr Archibald Skirving Portrait Painter in Edinburgh. Accounts of sale Whitsunday 1803.
- 7) Archibald Skirving's accounts to Francis Brodie, W.S., dated March 24 December 27, 1808.
 - 8) Receipt from Francis Brodie to Archibald Skirving, for the some of £9.13.10, dated Edinburgh 18 September 1810.
 - 9) Receipt from Mr Shirvin for Stone for Stop Cock, Edinburgh 8 April 1817.
 - 10) Receipt from Mr Skirven to David Wilson for part of roof repair at No. 12 Leith Terrace.
 - 11) Rent of £13 sterling for half years rent of two rooms to David, Edinburgh 21 November 1819.
 - 12) State of the Funeral expences & debts of the deceased Archibald Skirving Esq. 1819.
 - 13) List of Pictures belonging to the Representatives of the late Archibald Skirving Esq. Portrait Painter - deposited with Cha. Mc Muirhead, W.S. evaluated by Mr Watson. Edinburgh 1819.
 - 14) Inventory and Appraisement of Sundry Effects which belonged to the late Mr Archibald Skirving, taken May 1819, by William Bruce, Appraiser in Edinburgh.
 - 15) Accounts of Mr Archd Skirving to Chalmers & Son. 18 June 1814, dated 27th December 1819. For 17 June 1814 - 21 September 1818. Receipt to the above, £21.15 Shillings, Edinburgh 19th December 1818.
 - 16) State of the moveable Estate of Archd Skirving Esq. who died 19th May 1819, £4006.10.4.
 - 17) State of the Personal Estate of the late Archibald Skirving Esquire, £1,980.19.6.

The Paul Mellon Centre:

- The Brinsley Ford Archive: Notes on Archibald Skirving by Sir Brinsley Ford.

Scottish National Portrait Gallery:

- 1) Correspondence between Mrs Leila Hoskins and the SNPG.
- 2) Correspondence between Mrs John Hayes, USA, and Mr Hutchinson, Keeper of the SNPG. (See Benjamin Bell file)
- 3) Correspondence between Miss Marjorie Wilson and Mr Thompson, Keeper of the SNPG. (See Mrs John Wilson file)
- 4) Correspondence of Sir Theodore Martin.
(See Robert Burns file)
- 5) Correspondence of Sir James Caw, Keeper of the SNPG.
(See Robert Burns file)
- 6) Correspondence between the relatives of Mr James Carnegie and the SNPG. (See Mrs John Carnegie file)

University of Edinburgh:

- Note on The Arms of Skirving, June 15th, 1894, by Andrew Ross.
- David Laing Charters, Edinburgh University Library. Services of Heirs
- David Laing, Notes on Artists; Skirving.

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- Drummond Moray MSS, GD/24/1/346.
- The Will & Testament of Archibald Skirving, dated 20th July 1819. CC8/8/145. Edinburgh Testaments, vol. 145, p. 157 v.

Wemyss and March Estate Management:

- Rental ledger for Garleton farm, 1755.
- Rental ledger, April/June 1797.

The Lost Skirving Manuscripts of Mrs Leila Hoskins:

(As derived from Basil Skinner's articles in Transactions..., 1970, and Scotland's Magazine, January 1959).

- 1) Archibald Skirving's notebook of 1774, Edinburgh.
- 2) Archibald Skirving's notebook of 1776, Edinburgh.
- 3) Two letters of introduction for Skirving by unknown sender, dated December 1777. One was addressed to Sir John Hamilton Mortimer, London, the other recipient is not recorded.
- 4) Letter dated Edinburgh, August 22nd, 1785.
- 5) Letter dated Edinburgh, August 9th, 1786.
- 6) Archibald Skirving's manuscript notebook kept in Rome 1789.
- 7) Letter from Archibald to his brother Robert in India, dated Rome, December 18th, 1790.
- 8) Letter from Lord Elcho, Rome, to Robert Skirving, dated January 6th, 1790.

- 9) Letter dated March 10th, 1796.
- 10) Letter from Archibald to Robert Skirving, dated 1800.
- 11) Letter from Archibald to Robert in India, dated June 17th, 1802. (Copy of one sheet sent in by Mrs Hoskins to the SNPG)
- 12) Letter of introduction from Archibald Skirving, dated Rome 1793, to Tischbein, Naples, for William Forbes of Pisligo.
- 13) Three letters of introduction from Sir Walter Scott, Edinburgh, dated June 1816. (Probably two to Sir George Beaumont and the Marquis of Stafford in London).
- 14) Letter dated London, July 4th, 1816.
- 15) Letter dated May 1819, East Lothian, regarding Skirving's death of 19th May. Authorship unspecified.

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Apollo, The Magazine of the Arts. ed. by Denys Sutton. June 1974. vol. 99. 'Magick Land.' Editorial. pp. 392-408.

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Christie's & Edmestons, 2nd July 1981. 'Important Scottish Paintings.' Edinburgh. (Lot 12-13), p. 8.

Christie's, 8th December 1982. 'Fine Objects of Vertu and Portrait Miniatures Including a Collection of Scent-bottles.' (Lot. 180) p. 43.

Christie's, 23rd May 1989. 'Fine Portrait Miniatures.' (Lot. 178) p. 53.

Christie's, 14th October 1992. 'Fine Silver Objects of Vertu and Portrait Miniatures.' (Lot 63) Samuel Roch(e).

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p. 10.

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p. 10.

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