

A full-length portrait of a young man, Edward, Duke of York, by Pompeo Batoni. He is depicted from the waist up, standing and facing slightly to the right but looking towards the viewer. He has light-colored, wavy hair and a fair complexion. He is wearing a dark blue military-style coat with elaborate gold embroidery on the lapels, cuffs, and front. The embroidery features a series of horizontal bands and buttons. A light blue sash is draped across his chest. He is also wearing a white cravat with lace detailing. The background consists of a large, draped red curtain on the left and a glimpse of a landscape with trees and a building on the right. The overall style is characteristic of 18th-century portraiture.

CARLO ORSI

Pompeo Batoni  
*The Portrait of a Edward, Duke of York*



**POMPEO GIROLAMO BATONI**

(Lucca 1708 – Rome 1787)

*Portrait of Prince Edward Augustus, Duke of York and Albany (1739–1767)*

Oil on canvas, 136.5 x 99.3 cm, 53¾ x 39 in

Signed and dated on the ledge, center right: *P<sup>a</sup> BATONI PINXIT ROMÆΔ 1764Δ*,  
stamped on the reverse of the canvas: H.S.B. / 121

**PROVENANCE**

Schloss Braunschweig, by 1911, inv. no. 121;  
Offered for sale, Christie's,  
London, 21st July 1944 or  
1946, lot 161, where it was  
likely bought in and returned  
to the collection of the  
House of Hanover;  
Prince Ernst August of  
Hanover (born 1954), Schloss  
Marienburg, Pattensen bei  
Hannover;  
His sale, ("Property from the  
Royal House of Hanover"),  
Schloss Marienburg,  
Sotheby's, 6 October 2005,  
lot 589;  
With Galleria Cesare  
Lampronti, Rome;  
Private collection, Rome;  
Sotheby's, New York, 28  
January 2016, lot 325.

<sup>1</sup> BOWRON 2016, under Literature,  
vol. I, pp. 340–344, cat. nos.  
281–284.

<sup>2</sup> J. MARTIN, "Grand Tour Journal,  
1763–5. MS," extracts published  
in E.P. Bowron, *op. cit.*, vol. I,  
p. 341.

<sup>3</sup> A.M. CLARK, *op. cit.*

Edward Augustus, Duke of York, the brother of King George III, was the first member of the English royal family to travel to Italy as a Grand Tourist. While in Rome between 15 and 28 April 1764, the Duke sat for Pompeo Batoni, Italy's finest portrait painter, who enjoyed the patronage of Rome's most distinguished foreign visitors. This portrait is one of several signed versions, each of magnificent quality, including two in the Royal Collection (figs. 1,2), which show minor variations in the outlines of the lace at the sitter's throat and wrists, and another formerly in the collection of Earl Howe at Penn House, Buckinghamshire, now in an American private collection (fig. 3)<sup>1</sup>. The number of autograph versions is testament to the portrait's contemporary popularity and many of the autograph replicas were commissioned by the sitter himself to be sent to friends. The Englishman James Martin (1738–1810), who kept a diary during the course of his own Grand Tour, visited Batoni's studio on various occasions. In an entry dated 20 July 1764 he mentions "Went to Pompeia Batoni's saw there several portraits. He has made a copy from that of the Duke of Yorke & rec'd orders for One or Two more."<sup>2</sup> The painting now at Windsor Castle, for example, was given by the Duke to James Duff, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Fife and the Penn House version was given directly to Richard, Earl Howe. The canvas generally considered to be the prime, now at Buckingham Palace (fig. 1), was given to Sir Horace Mann, who later presented it to the Duke's brother, King George III<sup>3</sup>.





## LITERATURE

E. EMMERLING, *Pompeo Batoni, sein Leben und Werke*, Cologne 1932, p. 108, cat. no. 60 (as dated 1759);  
 I. BELLÌ BARSALI, *Pompeo Girolamo Batoni*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. VII, Roma 1965, p. 200;  
 A. CLARK, E.P. BOWRON (ed.), *Pompeo Batoni, A Complete Catalogue of his Works with an Introductory Text*, London 1985, pp. 294-5, under cat. no. 273;  
 O. MILLAR, "Pompeo Batoni, A Complete Catalogue", (book review), in *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 129, 1987, pp. 604-605;  
 M. LEVEY, *The later Italian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, London 1991, p. 10;  
 E.P. BOWRON, P.B. KERBER, *Pompeo Batoni, Prince of Painters in Eighteenth Century Rome*, exhibition catalogue, New Haven and London 2007, pp. 42, 97, 113, 174, reproduced p. 43, fig. 39;  
 C.D. DICKERSON III, in R.R. Brettell and C.D. Dickerson (eds.), *From the Private Collections of Texas: European Art, Ancient to Modern*, exhibition catalogue, Fortworth 2010, p. 190, under cat. no. 32 and note 4;  
 F. PETRUCCI, *Pittura di ritratto a Roma: Il Settecento*, Rome 2010, vol. I, pp. 164-165, cat. no. 4, reproduced vol. II, p. 398, fig. 80;  
 E.P. BOWRON, *Pompeo Batoni: A Complete Catalogue of His Paintings*, New Haven and London 2016, vol. I, pp. 343-344, cat. no. 284, reproduced.

While the Duke's visit to Italy was not politically motivated, it came shortly after the end of the Seven Years War and elicited great interest. Many prominent members of Roman society were keen to ingratiate themselves with the new Hanoverian ruling family. In a vain attempt to elude attention, the Duke of York travelled to Italy *incognito* as the "Earl of Ulster", but from the time of his



**Fig. 1:** Pompeo Girolamo Batoni, *Portrait of Prince Edward, Duke of York*, signed and dated 1764, oil on canvas, 137.2 x 99.7 cm, The Royal Collection, Buckingham Palace, RCIN 400503

arrival in Genoa on 28 November 1763 to his departure on 17 August 1764, his trip was documented in regular newspaper accounts, both in Italy and at home. His sitting with Batoni may have been organized by Richard Dalton who was librarian to King George III. Dalton travelled regularly to Italy to purchase works of art on behalf of the King and, given his knowledge of the





<sup>4</sup>D.GOODREAU, in *Nathaniel Dance, 1735-1811*, (exhibition catalogue), London 1977 (no page numbers).

country, would have also played a key role in the coordination of the Duke's tour.<sup>4</sup> Edward Augustus, Duke of York, is shown in three-quarter-length, in the undress uniform of a flag officer, wearing the sash of the Order of the Garter. His right forearm rests on a chair and with his left hand he indicates the Colosseum, visible in the background. On the table behind him lie his



**Fig. 2:** Pompeo Girolamo Batoni, *Portrait of Prince Edward, Duke of York*, signed and dated 1764, oil on canvas, 137.9 x 100.2 cm, The Royal Collection, Windsor Castle, RCIN 405034

hat and sword. Batoni would have had a variety of backdrops for his sitters to choose from; the Duke opted to be depicted before one of Rome's most recognizable monuments, the Colosseum.

Cardinal Albani implored the Duke to visit Rome during his Italian sojourn and entertained him at the Villa Albani outside Porta Salaria. The Cardinal

also arranged for the British painter and antiquary Thomas Jenkins to act as the Duke's guide, or *cicerone*, for the duration of his trip while the art historian and archeologist Johann Joachim Winkelmann was tasked with advising him on the purchase of art.<sup>5</sup> The Duke's attention, however, appears to have been focused less on Italy's rich historical and artistic offerings and more on its promise of diversion. The Duke's reputation as a philanderer and libertine became fodder for the newspapers who relished in reporting each alleged conquest. Less than

<sup>5</sup>E.P. BOWRON, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 340.



**Fig. 3:** Pompeo Girolamo Batoni, *Portrait of Prince Edward, Duke of York*, signed and dated 1764, oil on canvas, 137.8 x 100.3 cm, American private collection

impressed by the Duke's exploits, Winkelmann described him as "the greatest princely beast that I know, [who] does no honour to his rank and nation."<sup>6</sup> Winkelmann was not alone in his contempt for the Duke, as Ilaria Bignamini writes, "no eighteenth-century Grand Tourist had a worst reputation than the Duke of York both at home and abroad."<sup>7</sup> Horace Walpole's account of him in a letter to Horace Mann was scathing to say the least: "a milk-white angel,



<sup>6</sup>J.J. WINKELMANN, *Briefe*, W. REHM and H. DIEPOLDER (ed.), Berlin 1952, vol. III, pp. 39-40.

<sup>7</sup>I. BIGNAMINI, in *Grand tour: The lure of Italy in the eighteenth century*, London 1996, p. 34.



**Fig. 4:** Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Portrait of Prince Edward, Duke of York*, pastel on vellum, 40.3 x 31.1 cm, The Royal Collection, RCIN 400901

<sup>8</sup> H. WALPOLE, *The Letters of Horace Walpole, Fourth Earl Orford*, P. CUNNINGHAM (ed.), Edinburgh 1906, vol. IV, p. 480.

white even to his eyes and eyelashes, very purblind and whose tongue runs like a fiddlestick. (...) York seems a title fated to sit on silly heads – or don't let us talk of him; he is not worth it.<sup>8</sup> It is worth noting, however, that Walpole's view of the Duke was likely tainted, as the royal is said to have “stolen a lady” from him.<sup>9</sup> Whether or not personal retribution was a factor, Walpole certainly did everything in his power to discredit the Duke of York, propagating the opinion

that his tour of Italy reflected the king's desire to distance his free-thinking brother from the British political arena.<sup>10</sup>

Despite his reputation, the Duke of York was well received in Rome and was showered with gifts from the Pope. The Duke resolved to return to Italy three years later, according to Walpole, “intending to visit a lady at Genoa, with whom he was in love.”<sup>11</sup> He stopped in the South of France where he was taken ill and died shortly after in Monaco, on 17 September 1767.



Among Italy's painters of the eighteenth century, Pompeo

Batoni was held in exceptionally high esteem during his lifetime. Although he is perhaps best remembered for his portraits of international travellers, especially the British, who visited Rome on the Grand Tour, he was much more than a “face-painter.” The roster of patrons who clamoured for his paintings of classical and mythological subjects and scenes from the Old and New Testaments is studded with emperors and kings, popes and princes.

However, a large part of Batoni's enormous artistic output did clearly consist in portraits. In 1744 he painted a portrait of *Joseph Leeson* (Dublin, National Gallery), the first portrait of an Irish nobleman passing through Rome. This was followed by a large number of portraits of English gentlemen, for whom Batoni developed a new style of portrait involving the sitter posing before ancient ruins or Classical statuary, or against the evocative backdrop of the Roman countryside, vying in terms of the lofty dignity of his pose with that of the Classical statuary itself, a fitting tribute to the fashion for archaeological

<sup>9</sup> I. BIGNAMINI, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>11</sup> H. WALPOLE, *op. cit.*, vol. V, p. 65.



excavation and at the same time an intellectually pleasing memento, for the sitter, of his grand tour to Rome.

The restfully pleasing side of Batoni's painting, however, conceals a dialogue with the learned, literary trend that closely mirrored the new cultural climate of the years immediately following the middle of the century. Alongside Winckelmann, Mengs, who visited Rome for the first time in 1741, wanted the imitation of Classical art to be matched by imitation of the art of Correggio

**Fig. 5:** George Knapton, *The Family of Frederick, Prince of Wales*, Signed and dated 1751, oil on canvas, 350.8 x 461.2 cm, The Royal Collection, RCIN 405741





**Fig. 6:** Marienburg Castle, Lower Saxony, Germany

and of Raphael. And finally, Jean-Louis David came to Rome in 1775 as a resident fellow of the Académie de France, and it was with him that Neoclassicism was defined in a thoroughly sculptural, proud depiction of the ancient Romans' civic virtues. Yet while Batoni was Mengs' friend, and despite his being attracted by the ancient

world, he cannot be termed a Neoclassical painter. Boni realised this when he wrote in his *Eulogy of Batoni*, by now an artist of renown, that he was made a painter "by nature", unlike Mengs who was "made a painter by philosophy", in other words through study. What Boni was attempting to convey was the idea that Batoni was a painter of instinct, a spontaneous assimilator. Though linked to the classicising tradition, his painting nevertheless adopts the most varied and independent individual nuances, at times imbued with the verve of the century, at others devoting greater attention to draughtsmanship and to the distribution of his composition.

Batoni died in Rome on 4 February 1787.





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