

COLNAGHI



FRANCIS HAYMAN, RA
(London 1708-1776)

THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH, RA
(Sudbury 1708-1788 London)

*ELIZABETH AND CHARLES BEDFORD
IN A LANDSCAPE
WITH A ST BERNARD DOG*

oil on canvas
76.2 x 63.5 cm; 30 x 25 in.

Provenance

Commissioned from the Artist by the sitters' father, Grosvenor Bedford (1708 – 1771);
Thence by descent;
Private Collection, UK.

Literature

B. Allen, *Francis Hayman*, New Haven, CT and London, 1987, pp. 92-93, no. 12 (illus. p. 8, pl. II).

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This portrait depicts two of the eleven children of Grosvenor Bedford, Horace Walpole's deputy as Usher of the Exchequer from 1755-71, and his wife Jane Fox: Elizabeth (1736 – 1776) and Charles (1743 – 1814). Charles, the Bedfords' eldest surviving son, was painted on various occasions by Hayman, including as an infant (*circa* 1744-45; Victoria & Albert Museum, London); with his parents (*circa* 1748); and with his mother and brother Richard Earle *circa* 1755). Nothing further is known about Elizabeth, but Charles followed his father to become a clerk in the office of the Usher of the Exchequer in 1762, and deputy Usher in 1774. Walpole bequeathed Charles a legacy of £2000.

As Brian Allen observed in his 1987 monograph on Hayman, this painting is documented in a letter sent by Hayman to Bedford, which proves conclusively that Gainsborough occasionally contributed the landscape backgrounds in Hayman's paintings. Hayman writes:

Saturday mo.

Dear Bedford,

Send me & Bearer the picture of your infant, I have an opportunity of getting the landscape done by Gainsborough whilst he is in Town: & methinks I would fain see it finish'd before I dye: Seriously I have had 2 or 3 such fitts of megrims that I have thought myself very near going out; what else by sickness or death think you could have hindred my meeting Mr Parsons, Mr Salter, & you, last Wednesday night, just as I was setting out my resolution was so stagger'd by one of those fitts that I did not recover it in two hours.

Dear Bedford whither sick or well I am most faithfully your friend & Servt.

F: Hayman

I hope the Family are all well

As Allen points out, although the letter itself is undated, the paper bears a watermark that reads 'Dettingen Culloden', a reference to battles that took place in 1743 and 1746 respectively – indicating a date for the picture of sometime after 1746. Charles, who is seated on the dog, was born on 20 March 1743 and appear to be around three or four years old, which corresponds to a date of *circa* 1746-47. That would make his sister Elizabeth ten or eleven. Regarding the landscape, the only confirmed instance of a collaboration between Hayman and Gainsborough, Allen writes: 'A close examination of the landscape confirms that Hayman did indeed "have an opportunity of getting the landscape done by Gainsborough" for it is quite clearly by the younger man's hand. The attention to botanical detail, the carefully wrought foliage is so much more particular than Hayman's more generalised treatment of natural phenomena and is entirely characteristic of Gainsborough's landscape style of the mid-to-late 1740s, confirming the comments of "T.B." in the press years later that "Mr Hayman's background have frequently been executed by a variety of hands".'