







ANDREW PLIMER (British, 1763–1837)

Portrait of a Young Man

c. 1805

Watercolor on ivory; oval, 7.9 x 6.5 cm (3 x 2½ in.)

Signature: none

Setting: original gold frame; opalescent glass on reverse, which contains a lock of hair clasped by a small pearl band

The Edward B. Greene Collection, 1942.1153

Provenance

By 1928

Leo Schidlof (1886–1966, Paris).

1928

Purchased by Edward B. Greene (1878–1957, Cleveland) from Leo Schidlof on August 6; gift to the Cleveland Museum of Art, December 31, 1942.

1942

The Cleveland Museum of Art.

Exhibitions

None.

Bibliography

Chong, Alan, ed. *European and American Painting in The Cleveland Museum of Art*, p. 300. Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1993.

Milliken, William M., and Harry B. Wehle. *Portrait Miniatures: The Edward B. Greene Collection*, p. 29, no. 27, pl. XXI. Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1951.

THIS MINIATURE IS AN extremely fine example of Andrew Plimer's mature work. Painted around 1805, the artist eschews the Richard Cosway-esque blue sky background he so often adopted for an elaborate network of crosshatching over a rich brown ground, into which the sitter almost dissolves. He has gray eyes and light brown hair and wears a grayish-brown coat and a white collar. His gaze firmly meets that of the viewer. The painting is housed in its original gold frame, the verso of which has a curl of light brown hair fastened with a band of pearls on white opalescent glass under clear glass. There is also a paper label of unknown origin at the top, on which is written "226." The sitter's hair is worn *à l'antique* (hair cut short and worn in curls, especially around the forehead), a style sported by men after the turn of the century that harks back to the coiffures of statesmen of ancient Rome.¹ In addition, this sitter's brown hair is completely unpowdered, as was fashionable among young men at

¹ Carol de Dobay Rifelj, *Coiffures: Hair in Nineteenth-Century French Literature and Culture* (Wilmington: University of Delaware Press, 2010), pp. 34–35.



the turn of the century. The hair is beautifully delineated by small, undulating parallel lines.

This sitter has been traditionally identified as a member of the famous Baring banking family.² There is a miniature portrait of Thomas Baring (1772–1848) painted by George Engleheart (1752–1829) in 1803 in the museum’s collection (fig. 1). His brother George Baring (1781–1854) was also painted by Engleheart around 1805 (fig. 2). The young man in this portrait by Plimer might also be one of the other three Baring brothers: Alexander, 1st Baron Ashburton (1774–1848), Henry (1776–1848), or William (1779–1820) (figs. 3, 4).³ Of the four brothers with extant portraits, the Plimer sitter bears the closest resemblance to Alexander because of his piercing, narrow eyes. Yet the c. 1810 portrait of Alexander by Thomas Lawrence is too dissimilar, having features that could not have been the product of an intervening period of only five years. Since it does not bear a striking likeness to any of these extant portraits, this miniature cannot be definitively identified as a member of the Baring family.

Both of the Baring family portrait miniatures in Cleveland’s collection were purchased by Edward Greene from the dealer Leo Schidlof on 6 August 1928, suggesting that they may have come from the same collection before entering into Schidlof’s hands.

CORY KORKOW



Figure 1. *Portrait of Sir Thomas Baring, 2nd Baronet*, 1803. George Engleheart (British, 1752–1829). Watercolor on ivory; 8.1 x 6.3 cm (3 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, The Edward B. Greene Collection 1942.1140.



Figure 2. *Portrait of George Baring*, c. 1804. George Engleheart (British, 1752–1829). From George Charles Williamson, *George Engleheart, 1750–1829, Miniature Painter to George III* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1902), p. viii.



Figure 3. *Portrait of Alexander Baring, 1st Lord Ashburton*, c. 1810. Thomas Lawrence (English, 1769–1830). Oil on canvas; 49.3 x 39.3 cm (19 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.). Baring Archive Art Collection, ref. no. PT015.



Figure 4. *Portrait of Henry Baring*, 1846. George Brown (British?). Print; 29.9 x 22.9 cm (11 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 9 in.). Baring Archive Art Collection, ref. no. PR046.001.

2 The sitter was identified as a member of the Baring family in 1929, when Edward Greene purchased the miniature from Leo Schidlof.

3 No portraits of William Baring (1779–1820) have been located. William may, however, be the most likely candidate, since the man depicted by Plimer is young; William would have been in his mid-twenties and unmarried when this portrait was painted.