
Koopman Rare Art

Director's Choice – Timo Koopman
The Duke of Hamilton's Candlesticks
By Paul Storr



Four Magnificent Ducal George III Silver-Gilt Candlesticks

London, 1811-12, maker's mark of Paul Storr

Bearing the coronet, crest and royal garter for Alexander Hamilton, 10th Duke of Hamilton

These superb candlesticks commissioned by Alexander Hamilton, the 10th Duke of Hamilton glorify the prolific collecting of an extraordinary man driven by an intense desire to demonstrate his wealth, status and power. They capture the new rococo-revival style of the early 19th century perfectly and are exceptional in form, execution of finish, condition and gauge weighing an incredible 6,860g, 220 oz 11 dwt. Bearing the touch mark of the goldsmith Paul Storr when at his very best, they are my Director's Choice this week.

These magnificent cast rocaille candlesticks rest on shaped circular bases with cast and applied floral decoration with roses, rose-hips, grape and vine decoration together with sweeping rocaille swirls. The stems with acanthus capped top and bases the capitals in similar matching décor to the bases. The fluted sconces with scrolls and foliate rims

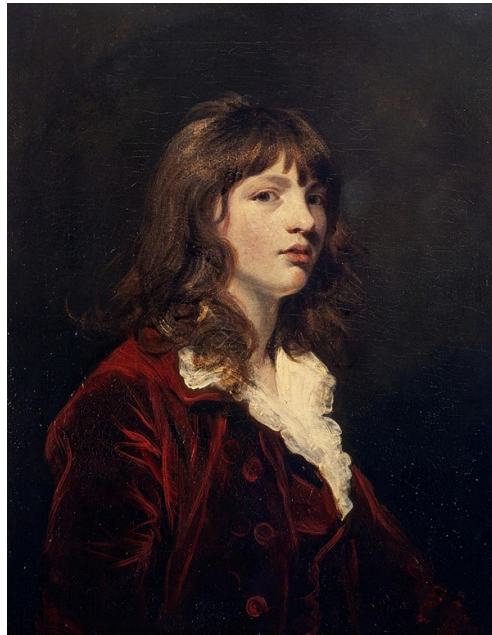
Alexander Hamilton

Alexander Hamilton, 10th Duke of Hamilton, 7th Duke of Brandon KG PC FRS FSA (3 October 1767 – 18 August 1852), styled as the Earl of Angus until 1799 and Marquess of Douglas and Clydesdale from 1799–1819, was a Scottish politician and art collector.

Born on 3 October 1767 at St. James's Square, London, the eldest son of Archibald Hamilton, 9th Duke of Hamilton, he was educated at Harrow School and at Christ Church, Oxford, where he matriculated on 4 March 1786. He received his MA on 18 February 1789.

Hamilton was a Whig, and his political career began in 1802, when he became MP for Lancaster. He remained in the House of Commons until 1806, when he was appointed to the Privy Council, and

Ambassador to the court of St. Petersburg until 1807; additionally, he was Lord Lieutenant of Lanarkshire from 1802 to 1852. He received the numerous titles at his father's death in 1819. He was Lord High Steward at King William IV's coronation in 1831 and Queen Victoria's coronation in 1838 and remains the last person to have undertaken this duty twice. He became a Knight of the Garter in 1836. He held the office of Grand Master Mason of the Freemasons of Scotland between 1820 and 1822. He held the office of President of the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland between 1827 and 1831. He held the office of Trustee of the British Museum between 1834 and 1852.



Alexander Hamilton at age 15, in a painting by Joshua Reynolds.

He married Susan Euphemia Beckford, daughter of William Thomas Beckford and Lady Margaret Gordon, daughter of Charles Gordon, 4th Earl of Aboyne, on 26 April 1810 in London, England.

Hamilton was a well-known dandy of his day. An obituary notice states that "timidity and variableness of temperament prevented his rendering much service to, or being much relied on by his party ... With a great predisposition to over-estimate the importance of ancient birth ... he well deserved to be considered the proudest man in England." He also supported Napoleon and commissioned the painting *The Emperor Napoleon in His Study at the Tuileries* by Jacques-Louis David.

Lord Lamington, in *The Days of the Dandies*, wrote of him that 'never was such a magnifico as the 10th Duke, the Ambassador to the Empress Catherine; when I knew him he was very old, but held himself straight as any grenadier. He was always dressed in a military laced undress coat, tights and Hessian boots, &c'. Lady Stafford in letters to her son mentioned 'his great Coat, long Queue, and Fingers cover'd with gold Rings', and his foreign appearance. According to another obituary, this time in *Gentleman's Magazine*, he had 'an intense family pride'.



The 10th Duke of Hamilton, by Henry Raeburn

Hamilton had a strong interest in Ancient Egyptian mummies and was so impressed with the work of mummy expert Thomas Pettigrew that he arranged for Pettigrew to mummify him after his death. He died on 18 August 1852 at age 84 at 12 Portman Square, London, England and was buried on 4 September 1852 at Hamilton Palace, Hamilton, Scotland. In accordance with his wishes, Hamilton's body was mummified after his death and placed in a sarcophagus of the Ptolemaic period that he had originally acquired in Paris in 1836 ostensibly for the British Museum. At the same time, he had acquired the sarcophagus of Pabasa, an important nobleman which is now in the Kelvingrove Museum. In 1842 Hamilton had begun construction of the Hamilton Mausoleum as repository for the overcrowded family vault at the Palace. He was interred there with other Dukes of Hamilton, from the 1858 completion of the Mausoleum until 1921 when subsidence and the subsequent demolition of the Palace forced removal of the bodies to the Bent cemetery in Hamilton, where he still lies buried in his sarcophagus.

His collection of paintings, objects, books and manuscripts was sold for £397,562 in July 1882. The manuscripts were purchased by the German government for £80,000. Some were repurchased by the British government and are now in the British Museum.



Hamilton Palace

The demolition of Hamilton Palace at Hamilton in South Lanarkshire in the 1920s and the dispersal of its treasures in two sales in 1882 and 1919 was a national tragedy.

It was the grandest country house in Scotland and was filled with outstanding furniture and art, thanks to Alexander, 10th Duke of Hamilton (1767-1852). The sales attracted worldwide interest; the 1882 sale raised nearly £400,000, a colossal sum at the time, and saw the 10th Duke's prized collection scattered across the globe.

Items from Hamilton Palace have been added to National Museums Scotland's collection over the last 40 years, including part of a silver-gilt tea service owned by the Emperor Napoleon to a section of a drawing room wall from the palace, they illustrate the prolific collecting of an extraordinary man driven by an intense desire to demonstrate his wealth, status and power.



The Marble Hall on the first floor, showing three of the five bronze statues associated with King Francis I of France

Alexander, 10th Duke of Hamilton, was immensely proud of his family's status. As a consequence of the marriage of the 1st Lord Hamilton to a daughter of King James II in the 15th century, the Duke's ancestor, the 2nd Earl of Arran, was heir presumptive to the throne of Scotland and Regent of Scotland during the minority of Mary, Queen of Scots. King Charles I awarded the dukedom of Hamilton to his relatives in 1643, and both the 1st Duke and his brother, the 2nd Duke, went on to die for the Stuart cause during the Civil War. In 1711, Queen Anne granted a second dukedom, that of Brandon, to the 4th Duke of Hamilton.

Alexander was 10th Duke of Hamilton, 7th Duke of Brandon and the premier peer of Scotland. He also claimed the French dukedom of Châtellherault, which had been awarded to the 2nd Earl of Arran by King Henry II of France in 1548-49, and viewed himself as the legitimate heir to the throne of Scotland, following the death of Cardinal Henry, Duke of York, the last of the male Stuart line, in 1807.

Between 1824 and 1831, the 10th Duke built a huge, north-facing addition onto the back of the small, south-facing baroque palace, which had been constructed in the 1690s. The Duke filled the palace with furniture and art, and created the Scottish equivalent of the British Royal Collection.

Many of these items were chosen to emphasise the Duke's own exalted status by associating him with emperors, kings and queens.

Thus, visitors to Hamilton Palace climbed a great ceremonial staircase watched by black basalt busts of emperors and ran the gauntlet past five life-size bronze copies of Classical statues, which were believed to have been made for King Francis I of France.

They then found themselves in a large room with a substantial marble bust of the Emperor Napoleon I and Italian Old Master paintings.



The Egyptian sarcophagus containing the 10th Duke of Hamilton

Later rooms contained dozens of examples of French 18th-century furniture, including some of British ambassador in St Petersburg, the Duke bought an exceptionally large Byzantine sardonyx bowl, in the belief that it was the holy water stoup of the Emperor Charlemagne, the founder of the Holy Roman Empire.

Back in London in 1812, he paid more than £240 for an enamelled gold stand from a gold monstrance that the Emperor Philip II of Spain had presented to the royal monastery of the Escorial, outside Madrid.

The 10th Duke united the two parts to form an astonishing imperial relic. It was the most highly valued object in his collection and an annotation in the 1852-53 palace inventory reveals that it was intended to serve as the baptismal font of the House of Hamilton.

The 10th Duke admired Napoleon as the saviour of the French Revolution and commissioned a portrait of him from his own official painter, Jacques-Louis David, in 1811. After the Emperor's final defeat, the Duke went to live in Rome and became a close friend of Napoleon's favourite sister, Princess Pauline Borghese.



The Hamilton Mausoleum, built by the 10th Duke of Hamilton, is all that visibly remains of the Hamilton Palace Estate

On her death in 1825, Princess Pauline bequeathed her travelling service – containing dozens of exquisite gold, silver-gilt, glass and ivory items – to the Duke. The gift inspired him to commission Napoleon's architect Charles Percier to design interiors for Hamilton Palace and to purchase the silver-gilt 'tea service' which had been supplied in connection with the Emperor's marriage to the Archduchess Marie-Louise of Austria in 1810 from King Charles X of France in 1830.

They reflect the character and interests of an extraordinary man, who, due to his belief in his own importance and his interest as a Freemason in ancient Egypt, would elect to be mummified and buried in an ancient Egyptian sarcophagus, inside a new mausoleum in the grounds of Hamilton Palace, in 1852 (now one of the town's most famous buildings).

For more information on the availability and price of any treasures we mention, please visit our website,
email or call us.



All works shown, unless otherwise indicated, are available to view and purchase
in our gallery located in 12 Dover Street, London, W1S 4LL

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