Koopman Rare Art

With the Autumn season truly underway, we will be soon exhibiting at both Frieze Masters 14th–19th October 2024 in The Regent's Park London and the LAPADA Fair 27th October – 1st November 2024 at Berkeley Square, Mayfair, London W1.

Among the pieces we will be showing at Frieze are two spectacular works, being exhibited for the first time, by the important master goldsmith Henri Auguste.

The Master Goldsmith
Henri Auguste 1798–1856

Famille de furniture Henri Auguste during auteur d'un taste, painted by Gérard François Pascal Simon, 1798

Henri Auguste (1798–1856) was one of the most important French goldsmiths and silversmiths of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Known for his elegant Neoclassical and Empire-style designs during a period of major political change in France.

Henri Auguste, son of the distinguished goldsmith and "brocolier-cloetier" Robert-Joseph Auguste, was born in 1798 and admitted a master on April 13, 1785, registering his mark, the following week. He was "Orfevre" to Louis XVI and in the late 1780s titled himself "Auguste Fils Orfevre du Roi". He was one of the most successful silversmiths in the years just prior to the Revolution and appears to have enjoyed a brief period of renewed prosperity immediately following the establishment of the Empire. Auguste lightened the heavy, ceremonial style of his father and successfully introduced lighter, more elegant forms. Auguste carried out commissions for the city of Paris including the Grand Vermeil, the famous service presented to the Emperor by the city, much of which is now at Malmaison. He was awarded a Gold Medal at the Industrial Exhibition in 1802 and made Napoleon's gold crown in 1804 in collaboration with the jeweller Auclert. Auguste was a restless researcher: in 1790 he sent a letter to the Journal de Paris announcing that he was searching for the best means to remove the tin found in copper kettle. As a medallist, too, he was celebrated, perhaps his best medal being the one struck to commemorate Napoleon's victory at Marengo.

By 1808, however, Auguste's debts amounted to some 1,370,000 Francs, due, it has been suggested, to the early death of his wife, who had been his business manager. His creditors gave Auguste eight years to put his affairs in order but in 1809 he was caught at Dieppe trying to ship all his stock and valuables to England under an assumed name. His accomplice, a surgeon, Imi Charles Deiz, was also caught. Auguste was declared fraudulently bankrupt and sentenced to six years in irons. He died in Port-au-Prince on September 2, 1818. His son, Jules-Robert, became well-known as a painter.

His collaboration with sculptor Jean-Guillaume Moitte helped establish him as one of the foremost designers of the emerging Empire style, alongside rivals such as Jean-Baptiste-Claude Odiot and Martin-Guillaume Biennais.

In 1810 his rival Odiot acquired a number of drawings from his workshop, including one for a wine cooler from the City of Paris banquet service, attributed to Auguste and bearing Odiot's collection mark, now at the *J. Paul Getty Museum*.

Amongst his many clients he enjoyed patronage from King Louis XVI, Napoleon Bonaparte, The City of Paris and wealthy collectors such as William Beckford. One of his most famous commissions was a massive 423-piece silver service ordered by the City of Paris in 1804 to celebrate Napoleon's coronation. A number of surviving pieces are now preserved at the Château de Malmaison.

We are incredibly fortunate to be custodians of two exceptional objects by this celebrated goldsmith. The first a pair of French late 18th - early 19th Century silver-gilt wine coolers made in Paris, 1798–1809 bearing the touch mark of Henri Auguste. They loosely follow the designs of the great sculptor Jean-Guillaume Moitte. In the 1770s, Moitte drafted numerous designs for the royal goldsmiths of the king, and goldsmith Robert-Joseph Auguste used then his own Henri Auguste, and participated in decorative works for monuments in the French capital. He was also famously commissioned to produce sculptures of generals who had died in battle such as one of Cuvière for the musée de Versailles, the tomb of Louis Desaix at Grand Saint-Bernard or that of Lecteur at the Panthéon de Paris. He also designed and sculpted the pediment for the Panthéon during the French Revolution, with the theme of the Fatherland crowning the civil and heroic virtues.

The urn-shaped vase wine coolers resting on round trumpet-shaped pedestal feet. The main bodies adorned with cast and applied grape and vine decoration. The handles formed as Bacchic rising to cornucopia with bifurcated tendrils terminating on the main body. The coolers with a frieze of grape and vine below the rim. The main bodies with cast and applied figures of Ariadne and Bacchus

Provenance:
Sotheby's Paris, December 1, 2011, lot 178

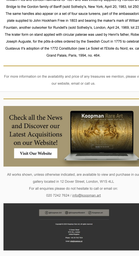
The second treasure by Henri Auguste is a pair of tureens commissioned by the Marchese Di Cirello. They are a true celebration of the glory of Henri Auguste as a goldsmith. These magnificent tureens represent perhaps the most important examples of this little-studied style which enjoyed a brief reign during the stormy years immediately following the fall of the Bastille and the Reign from Ideminee before the universal imposition of the more ponderous imperially prescribed style known as Empire appareil.

The tureens of oval form, on spreading feet chased with a band of laurel and ribbons. The main bodies with a frieze of Bruxian scrolls, laurel and beaded swags and bands, the hexagonal plaques cast with bantiga emblematic of courtly attributes. These comprise of the Roman fasces of good government, the serpent-entwined mirror of Prudence, Mercury's caduceus of Eloquence and Reason, and the knot and key of Love and Fidelity, all within an applied beaded border, with two angular bifurcated handles cast and chased with rosettes and scrapegs from which depend beaded and beflower swags.

The rim chased with acanthus, the removable domed cover chased with a band of alternating anthemion and beflowers on a scalloped matted ground, the centre applied with a beaded and twisted band enclosing an applied openwork calyx of acanthus, bean pods and arrows with foiled and stiff leaf finial.

The oval stand on four octagonal and paterae feet, with alternating oak leaf and laurel bed rim, chased with a band of circular medallions with stylized palmettes between, applied with alternating circular and square paterae, all on a matted ground. The palm oval liner with two scroll handles, applied on each side with a Baron's armorials of Lord Macdonald of their against drapery mantling.

The liner engraved with acoolé coats-of-arms under a coronet, matted under borders, on feet, covers, stands and liners, struck with the charge of Henri Claudi and the discharge mark for work exempt from duty 1798-1762.



Attributed to J.J. Boileau: Design for a tureen, pen on ink and wash. Victoria and Albert Museum E

Provenance:
Christie's New York, 11 April 1985, lot 155

Literature:
J. Frerjean, "Une terrine d'argent d'Henri Auguste", "Plaisir de France", March 1968, one of the pen illustrated and discussed p.p. 14-15

"Civella del 1793 a Napoli 1734-1799", Naples 1990, one ihust. p. 83

Anthony Phillips and Jeanne Sloane "Antiquity Revisited, English and French Silver-gilt from the collection of Audrey Love", London, 1997, pp 7

The coats-of-arms on the liners are those of the original owner, Don Tomaso di Somma, Marchese di Cirello, accole with those of his wife, Ide Raffo di Calatina, who was ancestor of the present Princess Paola of Belgium. Intriguingly, but perhaps not unsurprising given the fact that the tureens were engraved in Paris, the lictures depicted are wrong. The arms are shown enrobed by the Order of St. Jerusalus, the premier order of the old Kingdom of Naples and subsequently of the Two Sicilies.

Details of the Marchese di Cirello's coat of arms on the liners

The Marchese di Cirello's served as Neapolitan Ambassador to the Court of Vienna in the 1760s before in 1787 being sent to represent the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies at the Court of Louis XVI, and it is tempting to suggest that these tureens may have been a gift to him from the French king. Di Cirello's first-hand accounts of the events leading up to the storming of the Bastille in 1789 struck horror at Parliament Fi's Court of Naples, as the Neapolitan queen was Marie Antoinette's sister. In 1795 di Cirello was sent to London to represent Ferdinand at the Court of St. James's and, on his recall in 1800, he consigned his silver for sale at auction. The present pair of tureens were purchased by Rundell and Bridge together with a matching pair of circular waiters/dish. The four sold one pair to George III, having gilded them and applied them with the Royal Arms of Hanover.

The pair we are offering was sold to Lord Macdonald of Sleat and applied with the latter's arms. Interestingly, the engraved arms of the Marquesa di Cirello were left untouched on the liners of the tureens. The pair sold by George III remains in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle and is illustrated and discussed in E. Alfred Jones, The Gold and Silver of Windsor Castle, 1911, p. 94.

Tureen, stand and cover: 1787, *Henri Auguste, Silver gilt*
Royal Collection Trust

After his return to Naples, the Marquesa di Cirrello served as Foreign Minister and was one of the chief advisors to Ferdinand IV. He died in 1824.

The applied arms on the sides are those of Macdonald of Sleat, Isle of Skye, as borne by Alexander, 2nd Baron Macdonald of Slate, who was born in 1773, the son of Alexander, 1st Lord Macdonald and his wife Elizabeth Diana, daughter and eventual heiress to Godfrey Bosville. The 2nd Baron was, like his father, a soldier and served in the 10th Light Dragoons. In 1798, during the Napoleonic invasion scare, the many other landowners he raised a regiment, which was embodied June 4, 1798 at Inverness. It was ultimately disbanded at Fort George in 1802. Lord Macdonald was MP for Saltash 1796–1802. But it is perhaps as the builder of the family seat on the Isle of Skye, Armadale Castle, that he is best known. He died unmarried in 1824 and was succeeded by his brother Godfrey, the distinguished soldier who had served in the Peninsular campaign under Wellington. This Lord Macdonald married in 1815 Louisa Maria la Cuisin or Lacouisade by whom he had three children before marriage. Under Scots law, such children are legitimate and in 1810 a claim by a descendant of one of them, Alexander Wentworth Macdonald Bosville, was upheld and he succeeded to the title. Interestingly, the identity of this "Miss la Cossi" has been much discussed; she is described in the birth register as "the daughter of Fanny Edlen", who was elevated to the Duke of Gloucester and bengt of a dairy farm near Hampton Court. Or it is more likely that she was a natural daughter of the Duke, who was grandson of George II.

These dome-lidded tureens, which are of wine-krater vase form, have ribbon-fletted "Greek key" handles. Similar handles appear in the design for a tureen on stand of the same form, part of an album of drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. (see design above) which have been traditionally ascribed to J.J. Boileau, a French artist working in London in the 1760s. From the designs in the album, it is clear that their author was associated with the workshop of Rundell and Bridge and it is possible that the di Cirrello tureens, in stock at Rundell's in 1801, provided the inspiration for Boileau's tureen. The paterae and frosts the panels were combined with Egyptian motifs by Rundell's for a series of tureens or stands made in 1806/7 for the Duke of Cumberland (now in the Gilbert Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art) and for a set of four of 1803/5 in the Royal Collection.

A virtually identical copy of the present tureens, however, bears the maker's mark of William Pitts and London hallmarks for 1801 and was evidently supplied by Rundell and Bridge to the Gordon family of Banff (sold Sotheby's, New York, April 20, 1983, lot 250). The same handles also appear on a set of four sauce tureens, part of the embassadorial plate supplied to John Hookham Frere in 1803 and bearing the Bastille and Millenium Fountain, another subscriber for Rundell's (sold Sotheby's, London, April 24, 1968, lot 239). The knobe form on stand applied with circular paterae was used by Henri's father, Robert-Joseph Auguste, for the pilfe-à-crême ordered by the Swedish Court in 1775 to celebrate Gustavus III's adoption of the 1772 Constitution (see a Soleil et fEtoile du Nord, ex. cat., Grand Palais, Paris, 1994, no. 464.

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All works shown, unless otherwise indicated, are available to view and purchase in our gallery located in 12 Green Street, London, W1K 6LL.

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