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# Koopman Rare Art

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## Directors Choice – Timo Koopman The Duke of Roxburghe's Candlesticks



### ***A Set of Four George III Candlesticks***

*London, 1776. Maker's mark of Thomas Heming*

*After a design by Robert Adam*

*Height: 34.9 cm, 13 ¾ in. Weight: 3,586 g, 115 oz. 6 dwt.*

This week's Director's Choice focuses on the brilliance of the Royal architect Robert Adam,

the Royal goldsmith Thomas Heming and the patron who commissioned these splendid columns for dining, John Ker, 3rd Duke of Roxburghe (1740-1804). The combination of these three individuals saw the fruition of this timeless form that graced the tables of Roxburghe House in Hanover Square.

Adam spent four years in Italy absorbing the fomenting ideas of neo-classicism, returning in 1758. These ideas, combined with his direct experience of ancient ruins themselves, gave him a confident and direct approach to the classical vocabulary that contrasts, for example, with the Francophile classicism of Chambers. Indeed, it may be said that there is very little French influence at all in Adam's work; it is in an entirely British vein, bringing together a miscellany of classical forms and decorative motifs.

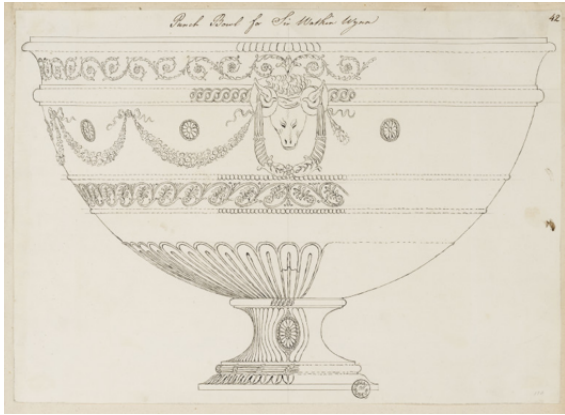
We have come to regard Robert Adam in a different light from his contemporaries. Some two hundred drawings now in the Soane Museum survive and offer us an unparalleled opportunity to look at his design process, and the way he experimented with new forms as well as with decoration. The survival of many of the objects themselves have provided a look into the development of his designs for silver, from paper to finished sculptural treasure. This is something we explored in our 2010 exhibition '[The Classical Ideal, English Silver, 1760-1840](#)' with using notable below examples.



*Candlestick for Sir Watkin Wynn, Ban., Adelphi, 18th January 1773, pen, pencil and wash, Robert Adam (1728-1792). A sketch, where the base has been simplified by substituting slender paw feet, has been added in pencil. Sir John Soane's Museum.*

Three-light candelabrum from the Williams-Wynn service, silver, London, 1774-5, maker's mark IC, probably for John Carter II, retailed by Joseph Creswell, designed by Robert Adam (1728-1792). The

simpler design was probably substituted on the recommendation of the silversmith. *Lloyds Corporation*.



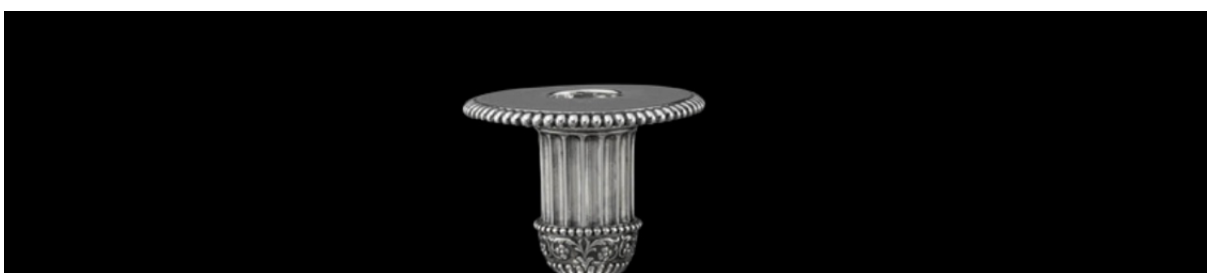
*Punch Bowl for Sir Watkin Wynn, pen and pencil, Robert Adam (1728-1792). The first of a series of some twenty silver designs carried out by the Adam studio for Sir Watkin Williams- Wynn. Sir John Soane's Museum.*

Punch-bowl, silver-gilt, London, 1771-2, maker's mark of Thomas Heming, designed by Robert Adam (1728-1792), Ordered to celebrate Sir Watkin Williams- Wynn's racehorse Fop, the bowl was invoiced to him on 21 September 1772 as "a Superbe punch Bowl, very highly finish'd in an Antique Taste". The National Museum and Gallery of Wales, Cardiff



*Sauce boat for Sir Watkin Wynn, Bart., Adelphi, 2 June 1773, pen, pencil and wash. Robert Adam (1728-1792). Sir John Soane's Museum*

*Sauce boat from the Williams-Wynn service, silver, London, 1774-5, maker's mark IC, probably for John Carter II, retailed by Joseph Creswell, designed by Robert Adam (1728-1792). The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.*





This mastery of the ancient world is seen in the circular bases cast with a band of acanthus below a beaded border. The candlesticks with fluted quadrangular column stems rising from square knops, cast with ribbon-tied swags below matching shoulders centered by paterae. The fluted sconces decorated with formal foliage and engraved with a crest on bases and detachable nozzles.

Each candlestick bears the touchmarks of Thomas Heming and are fully hallmarked on undersides, sconces with lion passant, nozzles with maker's mark and lion passant.

Provenance:

Almost certainly supplied to John Ker, 3rd Duke of Roxburghe (1740-1804).

Possibly sold with the contents of Roxburghe House, Hanover Square, to the Earl of Harewood in 1795, or more likely sold by James Innes-Ker, 5th Duke of Roxburghe (1736-1823), probably at the same time as the sale of the 3rd Duke's famous library in 1812.

Miss E. M. Gibbons; Sotheby's, London, 1 February 1973, lot 161.

With J. H. Bourdon-Smith Ltd., London.

A Private Collection, Florida; Sotheby's, New York, 21 October 1997, lot 224.

Literature:

V. Brett, *Sotheby's Directory of Silver 1600-1940*, London, 1986, no. 991, p. 223.

H. Clifford, *Silver in London, The Parker and Wakelin Partnership, 1760-1776*, London, 2004, pp. 155-156.

J. Culme and J. S. Strang, *Antique Silver and Silver Collecting*, illustrated on dust jacket.

M. Snodin, 'Adam Silver Reassessed', *The Burlington Magazine*, January 1997, pp. 17-25, fig. 41 and cover of magazine.

Exhibited:

London, Grosvenor House Antiques Fair, 13-23 June 1973, cat. p. 31 pl. 4, on the stand of J. H. Bourdon-Smith Ltd.



*Robert Adam (1728-1792)*

*Oil on canvas attributed to George Willison (1741-1787)*

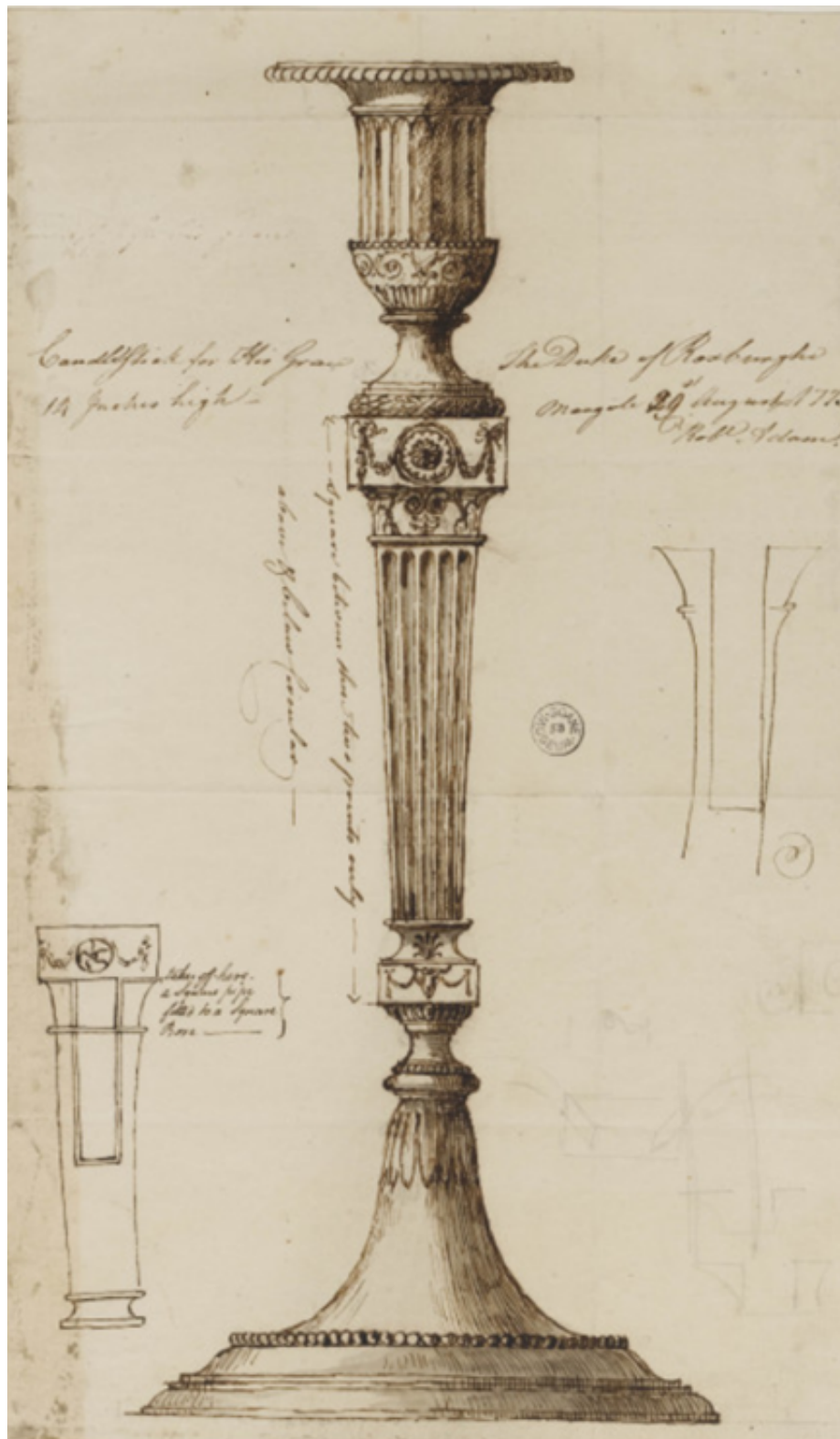
Robert broke free from the conservative style of his father and the strict proportions of

Palladianism and developed a lighter Neoclassical approach. He was influenced by the Picturesque style introduced to him by Paul and Thomas Sandby and by what he had seen and learned on his Grand Tour, such as the frescoes and wall paintings at Pompeii and Herculaneum.

One of his hallmarks was unity. Robert designed the whole room, creating furnishings that reflected the interior design of a room bringing a sense of harmony.

### **The Design:**

It is exceedingly rare for the original designs for 18th century English silver to survive, therefore it is particularly noteworthy that the highly detailed drawing for this model of candlestick, conceived by the architect Robert Adam, has been preserved in the collection of the Sir John Soane Museum in London. Illustrated here, it includes manuscript notes to assist the silversmith in translating the two-dimensional design into a three dimensional object. The sectional form of the stem is explained - 'square between these two points only' with the base and socket being 'above and below circular'. However, the silversmith, Thomas Heming, has not slavishly followed the design. The ox mask or bucrania on the bottom knob of the stem has been substituted by small floral garlands and the base has been enlivened with the addition of a band of acanthus foliage, only alluded to in the design with light hatching.



Preliminary design for a candlestick, 1775, executed with minor alterations

Elevation of a candlestick with a flared base ornamented with beading and laurel leaf tips, with a panel containing an ox skull flanked by swags above. The tapering fluted central support terminates in an anthemion flanked by arabesques and acanthus leaves. Above this there is a panel containing a rosette set within a foil roundel, flanked by festoons, and this is surmounted by a candle holder. The holder is ornamented with gadrooning, arabesques, beading and fluting

Inscribed:

Candlestick for His Grace (rubbed out) / Candlestick for His Grace The Duke of Roxburghe  
/ 14 Inches high- / - Square between these two points only- / above & below Circular- /  
taken off here / a Square pipe / fitted to a Square / Base- Signed and dated August 1775  
Margate 29 (rewritten) st August 1775 / Robt Adam



## **The Duke of Roxburghe**

The Duke was only 15 years of age when he inherited from his father. He completed his studies at Eton College and by 1761 was travelling in Italy on the Grand Tour, seeing firsthand the ancient classical buildings that had inspired Robert Adam during his studies there between 1755 and 1757. Whilst in Rome, Roxburghe was painted by the celebrated portrait painter Pompeo Batoni and had a short courtship with the eldest daughter of the Duke of Mecklenburg-Streliz. Unfortunately, Christiana of Mecklenburg-Streliz's younger daughter, Charlotte, was betrothed to King George III, thus creating a situation that would have required the elder sister to show deference to her younger sister. This complication is said to have ended the relationship and neither the duke nor princess ever married.

The Duke was a member of the Society of the Dilettanti but he is chiefly remembered as one of the greatest bibliophiles of the later part of the 18th century. The Roxburghe Club, composed of 40 eminent and mostly aristocratic bibliophiles, was founded in 1812 on the eve of the sale of the Duke's celebrated collection, which was initially housed in an Adam designed library in the family's London house in Hanover Square, which Adam redecorated and enlarged in the late 1770s. A payment of £1,500 is recorded in March 1778 for work carried out by contractors on behalf of Robert Adam.

Considering the Duke's passion and his high rank it is not surprising that he became a friend of King George III, with whom he shared the services of George Nicol, the King's bookseller. At court, Roxburghe was first made a lord of the bedchamber in 1767, becoming first lord of the bedchamber in 1796, the same year he was appointed as a Privy Councillor. He was made a Knight of the Thistle in 1768. Most unusually he retained this on his appointment to the Order of the Garter in 1801. On his death from an inflammation of the liver in March 1804, he was buried at Bowden, near Melrose. He was succeeded by a kinsman, Lord Bellenden, as his younger brother predeceased him. Bellenden only lived as the 5th Duke until 1805 and from then until 1812 the succession was disputed, with the 6th Duke being a descendent of Margaret Ker (d.1681), daughter of Henry Ker, Lord Ker (d1642/3), the younger son of the 1st Earl of Roxburghe (1570–1650).

### **Thomas Heming:**

The Duke shared not only a bookseller with his monarch but also his silversmith, Thomas Heming. The son of a Midlands merchant, Heming was apprenticed in 1738 to the goldsmith Edmund Bodington, but on the same day was turned over to Peter Archambo. A.

G. Grimwade in his *London Goldsmiths 1697-1837* (London, 1982, p. 543), describes his early work as showing 'a French delicacy of taste and refinement of execution which is unquestionably inherited from his master Archambo'. It is interesting to note that Christopher Hartop illustrates the Roxburghe Adam design for the present lot in his *The Classical Ideal, English Silver, 1760-1840* (Cambridge, 2010, p. 24, fig 30) and comments that 'the squareness of the stem and its vertical fluting are, unusually for Adam, French features'.



One of Heming's early clients was John, 3rd Earl of Bute, for whom he was to supply large quantities of plate. Bute was the Duke's predecessor as Groom of the Stole. Most importantly for Heming, it was Bute's relationship with George, Prince of Wales, later George III, that was to lead to Heming's appointment in 1760 as Principal Goldsmith to the King and thus a supplier to many of the members of the court, including Roxburghe. Heming held the post of Royal Goldsmith until 1782, when he was forced to resign after a malicious campaign to discredit him through accusations of excessive charges.

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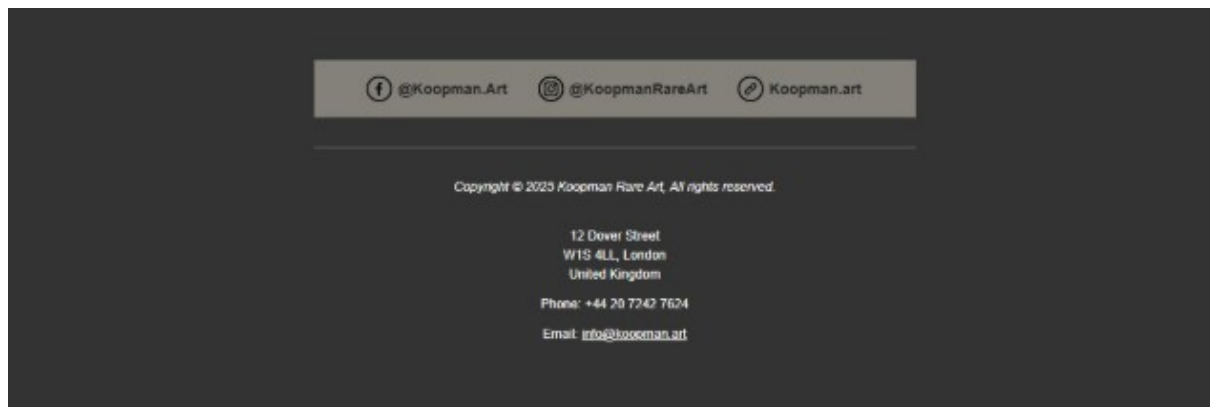
For more information on the availability and price of any treasures we mention, please visit our website, email or call us.



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

For all enquiries please do not hesitate to call or email on:

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