
Koopman Rare Art

Directors Choice – Timo Koopman The Earl of Grosvenor's Triton Salt Cellars

With the approach of TEFAF Maastricht 7th - 14th March, I wanted to showcase another one of the highlights we will be exhibiting this year.

The celebrated silversmith Paul Storr made this magnificent set of eight salt cellars for the Earl of Grosvenor while working for the Royal retail firm Rundell, Bridge & Rundell.



The Earl of Grosvenor's Triton Salt Cellars

A Highly Important Set of Eight George III Silver-gilt Salt Cellars

London, 1810

By Paul Storr

5 in. (12.8 cm.) long

166 oz. 9 dwt. (5,178 gr.)

The design of the vessels attributed to William Theed

Each on a rectangular plinth chased with Vitruvian scroll border on four ball

feet, supporting a triton holding a shell, marked under base and on shell.

Provenance:

Robert Grosvenor, 2nd Earl Grosvenor and 1st Marquess of Westminster K.G.
(1767-1845) of Eaton Hall, Cheshire, then by descent to,
Hugh Richard Arthur, 2nd Duke of Westminster (1879-1953) of Eaton Hall,
Cheshire.

The Most Noble Hugh Richard Arthur, Duke of Westminster (dec'd) G.C.V.O.,
D.S.O.; Sotheby's, London, 2 July 1959, lot 129.

Mrs Filomena 'Fay' Plohn (1924-2009) of New York,
The Fay Plohn Collection, Part 2; Sotheby's, London, 15 October 1970, lots 82
and 83.

Cornelius Ruxton Love Jr. (1904-1971) and Audrey B. Love (1903-2003) of
New York,
The C. Ruxton and Audrey B. Love Collection: Christie's, New York, 19 October
2004, lot 224.

Literature:

A. Phillips and J. Sloane, Exhibition catalogue, *Antiquity Revisited: English and
French Silver-Gilt*, London, 1997, p. 48, no. 7.

Exhibited:

New York, Christie's, *Antiquity Revisited: English and French Silver-Gilt* from
the Collection of Audrey Love, September 1997, San Marino, Huntington Art
Gallery, November 1998 - January 1999, no. 7.

Rundell, Bridge & Rundell

The success of the royal retail firm was in part due to their step away from the
tradition of a client and architect working together with their goldsmith to
achieve their desired commission. Having in house names of architects, artists,
and modellers such as James 'Athenian' Stuart, William Theed, Edward
Hodges Bailey and John Flaxman, to name but a few, meant that the firm
presented their clients with the choicest treasures that enticed the public even
more so with the King and Prince Regent driving the fashion forwards.

In this instance, a set of twenty-four silver-gilt salts, each cast in the form of a
nautilus shell supported by a triton, on an oval base cast with waves were
supplied to George IV, when Prince of Wales, by Rundell, Bridge & Rundell, for
£902 12s. They were invoiced on 4th June 1811. A drawing in the Victoria &
Albert Museum, London (E.114-1964) corresponds closely with these salts. The
drawing is held in an album entitled 'Designs for Plate etc. by John Flaxman'

(paper watermarked 1806). It seems that the drawing is by Edward Hodges Baily, one of the artists employed by Rundells to design plate. Baily not only designed his own works but also recorded the designs of others, in this case, William Theed the Elder who worked for Rundells from 1804 to 1817.



The Grand Service is the magnificent dining service of silver gilt commissioned by George IV, when Prince of Wales, from the Royal Goldsmiths Rundell, Bridge & Rundell. The initial commission was made in 1806 and the first delivery took place in 1811. Throughout the Regency (1811-20) and during George IV's reign (1820-30) he continued to add to the service with both dining plate and pieces for display on the buffet.

As a whole, the Grand Service comprises some 4,000 pieces and covers a vast range of objects and styles. The initial delivery included works in both white silver and silver gilt, but gradually the service was gilded throughout. This may have been a response to public comments that the silver plate seemed poor and cold by comparison with the gilded plate, but it was also in direct rivalry to the gilded collections of Napoleon I. Moreover, by gilding the entire service, it was provided with a homogeneity of appearance otherwise lacking in its variety of styles.

The Service is so large and so magnificent that it has never been replaced. It remains in use by the monarchy to this day and is placed on the table for State Banquets at Windsor Castle and Buckingham Palace and for other ceremonial events.



Neptune centrepiece in the Royal collection 1741-2

This magnificent set of eight salts cellars made for the Earl of Grosvenor in the very same year as those of the Prince Regent. The grand service and main aspects of the royal service such as the magnificent Neptune centrepiece mostly have a nautical theme in mind. With England being on island, the navy held great importance in the protection of the nation and this symbolism through the design of the object was clearly evident.



William Theed

The design for these superb salt-cellars is attributed to the painter and sculptor William Theed (1764-1817), on the basis of its close similarity to the artist's bronze 'Thetis returning from Vulcan with Arms for Achilles' in the Royal Collection (exhibited in the Royal Academy of Arts Bicentenary Exhibition, fig. 171, p. 50). Theed, a friend of fellow designer John Flaxman, was also connected with the firm Rundell, Bridge and Rundell, supplying designs and working as their chief modeler, commencing in 1803. Theed later became a partner in the firm and continued his association with Rundell's until his death in 1817. The attribution to Theed is further strengthened by the existence of a design drawing from an album of Rundell's entitled 'Designs for Plate by John Flaxman, etc.' in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



Charles Oman's study of the album concluded that the designs were the work of John Flaxman's pupil Edward Hodges Baily (1788-1867), who joined Rundell's in 1815. However, the silver salt-cellars predate Baily's tenure at Rundell's, and the close association to Theed's sculpture indicates that the original designer must have been Theed. There are at least three variations of this model, each with a differing base. A set of twenty-four salt-cellars with oval bases by Paul Storr of 1810 entered the Royal Collection in 1811, invoiced at a cost of £902 12s. One of these is illustrated in *Carlton House: The Past Glories of George IV's Palace*, 1991, cat. no. 95, p. 133. A set of three salt-cellars on an oval, wave-capped base by Paul Storr of 1811-12 is illustrated in J. Bliss, *The Jerome and Rita Gans Collection of English Silver*, n.d., cat. no. 37, pp. 112-13, and a set of four by William Pitts of 1813 were in the Love Collection, lot 232. A set of eight salt-cellars with heavier rockwork base by Paul Storr of 1822 is illustrated in *The Glory of the Goldsmith: Magnificent Gold and Silver from the Al-Tajir Collection*, London, 1989, cat no. 151, p. 198.



Robert Grosvenor, 1st Marquess of Westminster

Born in 1767 and initially known as Viscount Belgrave, he became a prominent figure in 19th century England, known for his political career, estate development, and contributions to art and horse racing. He was the son of Richard Grosvenor, 1st Earl Grosvenor, and Henrietta, Lady Grosvenor. He received his education at Westminster School, Harrow School, and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated with a Master of Arts degree in 1786.

Grosvenor's political career began in 1788 when he was elected as Member of Parliament for East Looe. He later served as MP for Chester from 1790 to 1802, during which time he was appointed a Lord of the Admiralty and served as a commissioner of the Board of Control. He also raised a regiment of volunteers from Westminster to fight against France during the French Revolution. In 1802, upon the death of his father, he succeeded as the 2nd Earl Grosvenor.

Grosvenor was known for changing his political allegiance from the Tories to the Whigs after the death of William Pitt the Younger in 1806. He supported various progressive causes, including Catholic Emancipation, the abolition of the Corn Laws, and the Reform Bill. He championed Queen Caroline and is said to have thrown a Bible or a Prayer Book at King George IV's head in protest. However, his relations with the King later improved, and he was created Marquess of Westminster in the coronation honours of King William IV in 1831. He participated in the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837 and was installed as a Knight of the Garter in 1841.

In addition to his political career, Grosvenor was known for his estate developments. He continued to develop the family's London estates, creating Belgravia and Pimlico. He also rebuilt Eaton Hall, the family's country seat in Cheshire, at a significant cost. The new house was designed by William Porden and included turrets, pinnacles, arched windows, towers, and buttresses. It was described as magnificent by a young Queen Victoria when she visited in 1832. Grosvenor was also interested in the arts and horse racing. He maintained and

extended the family's collection of works of art and was known for his patronage of artists. He was also involved in breeding racehorses, continuing the family's long-standing tradition in this field.

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