Thomas Gibson (1680-1751) - Henry St. John And Horatio Walpole



78 000 EUR

Period : 18th century
Condition : Parfait état
Material : Oil painting
Width : 228 cm
Height : 157 cm
Depth : 4cm

Description

Portrait of the 1st Lord Bolingbroke and the 1st Lord Walpole, seated at a table, wearing wigs and light fawn and dark brown clothing, respectively.Oil on canvas, framed in a later Kentish-style frame. Canvas: 136.2 cm x 199.1 cm / Framed: 157 cm x 228 cm.Price: EUR65,000Provenance: Lady Milford, Thorpe Lee, Egham, England. Albemarle Gallery (1910) 1364 Collinson The Children's Society Sotheby's, London, "18th-Century and Modern Drawings and Paintings," February 27, 1957, lot 58 (titled "Henry, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke, and Horatio, 1st Baron Walpole" by Joseph Highmore) Appleby Bros., London (February 27, 1957), £12 David Pleydell-Bouverie Gift of Mr. David Pleydell-Bouverie to the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, N.B. Canada Acquired by

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Period PortraitsREVERSO White chalk, frame: stamped, frame: blue-bordered label "I364," frame: "Highmore" label, frame: "113 lll Bolingbroke and Walpole. Highmore" "Joseph Highmore--Portraits of Henry St. John, 1st Lord Bolingbroke, and Horatio, '1st Lord Walpole'THOMAS GIBSON (1680-1751) Gibson's studio specialized in sober and dignified bust portraits of statesmen, clergymen, and intellectuals seated against a backdrop of classical architectural pilasters and heavy drapery. The smooth modeling of the faces, the delicate rendering of velvets and wools, as well as the slightly rigid and formal posture of the hands resting on a table covered with green felt, upon which folded diplomatic or state documents are arranged, are all characteristic features of Gibson's work from approximately 1712 to 1720. The artist painted several prominent Tory and Whig figures during this decade (including the famous portraits of George I, Archbishop William Wake, and John Flamsteed), making him a natural choice to portray high-ranking government or diplomatic figures.The historical relationship between Henry St. John, 1st Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751), and Horatio Walpole, 1st Baron Walpole of Wolterton (1678-1757)--the younger brother of British Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole--was marked by a fierce political and intellectual rivalry that lasted their entire lives. A leading Tory strategist, Bolingbroke fought fiercely against the Whig government led by the Walpole brothers, which led to sharp diplomatic clashes and literary rebuttals published posthumously.As Secretary of State under Queen Anne, Bolingbroke was the principal architect of the Treaty of Utrecht, which withdrew Great Britain from the War of the Spanish Succession. Horatio Walpole and the Whigs fiercely opposed this treaty, viewing it as a betrayal of Britain's continental allies in favor of France.When the Whigs came to power under George I, Bolingbroke fled to France to escape charges of treason. Meanwhile, Horatio Walpole rose

through the diplomatic ranks, becoming ambassador to Paris and The Hague. He worked actively to forge alliances in order to isolate the Jacobite rebels whom Bolingbroke had briefly served.Even after his return from exile and his pardon, Bolingbroke launched relentless media attacks against Sir Robert Walpole's government, notably through his opposition newspaper, *The Craftsman*. Horatio Walpole remained a staunch defender of his brother's domestic and foreign policies.The feud between the two statesmen, depicted here, reached its peak in the press after their deaths. In 1752, Bolingbroke's *Letters on the Study and Use of History* were published posthumously. The final sections of the work contained a scathing critique of British foreign policy, explicitly attacking the Whig grand strategy and validating his own Tory framework. Horatio Walpole devoted his final years to drafting a detailed, point-by-point rebuttal. Published posthumously in 1762, "A Reply to the Last Part of Lord Bolingbroke's Letters on the Study of History" systematically deconstructs Bolingbroke's historical narrative, defending peace in Europe and the integrity of the Walpole government.Since they never commissioned a portrait together, this painting was likely commissioned by a wealthy, politically engaged patron.