

## Introduction

At the core of the present volume is the publication of two anthropoid stone sarcophagi, one dating to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, and one to the Ptolemaic Period. Both are highly interesting in their own rights, one as an archaizing piece owned by one of the most important individuals at Thebes, and the other as one of the most elaborately-decorated of its time, with some unique features. However, they are also tied together by their modern ownership by the fascinating figure of Alexander, 10th Duke of Hamilton. Great of ego and ambition, he was the premier nobleman of Scotland, and hugely wealthy, much of his wealth being devoted to his transformation of his principal seat into the largest non-royal palace in Great Britain, and to filling it with vast collections.

Among his myriad acquisitions were two Egyptian sarcophagi – seemingly the only *ægyptiaca* he ever owned. While the story of the acquisition of one is distinctly obscure, that of the second was a comedy of errors. This ultimately left the Duke in possession of a piece in which he subsequently resolved to be buried, to be housed in a huge new mausoleum, intended to shelter not only himself but his ancestors and successors.

Interestingly, Duke Alexander was not the only 19th century worthy to find rest in a genuine ancient Egyptian sarcophagus. Early in the 1840s, Anton Lavrin, Austrian consul-general in Alexandria, acquired the late Fourth/early Fifth Dynasty sarcophagi of the Vizier Iunmin and Rewer, from their tombs in the Central Field at Giza. These were brought back to what is now Vipava in Slovenia,

where they were used for the reinterment of Lavrin's parents and his young son, and lie in the open portico of the family tomb.<sup>1</sup>

The first two chapters outline the history of the Hamilton line, Duke Alexander's career, and the history of Hamilton Palace. Focus then switches to the story of the design and construction of the Mausoleum, and then to the acquisition of the two sarcophagi. The following pair of chapters publish these two items, including their archaeological context and their ownership, together with transcriptions of their texts, accompanied by translations and commentaries.

The book closes with an account of what happened after the death of Duke Alexander, beginning with his mummification, allegedly in Egyptian style, and lavish funeral, but then continuing with the slow decline of the Palace, culminating in its demolition in the early 1920s. The proximate cause of the latter was undermining by coal extraction (ironically one of the Hamiltons' principal sources of wealth), which also impacted the Mausoleum. Thus, in 1921 it was evacuated, and Alexander (still in his sarcophagus) and all but two of its other inhabitants reburied in a simple earthen grave a short distance away.

Appendices publish contemporary accounts of Duke Alexander's funeral and of his burial-sarcophagus shortly before it disappeared for ever from human view, ending one of the most curious of all modern histories of an ancient Egyptian monument.

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<sup>1</sup> Kajfež 2020; Baumgarten 2023.

