

La Pendulerie



Lepaute - Osmond

Important Architectural Gilt Bronze Antique Cartonnier Mantle Clock, Louis XVI period

Lepaute horloger du Roi à Paris

Case attributed to Robert Osmond

Paris, early Louis XVI period, circa 1770-1775

Height 39 cm; length 45.5 cm; depth 18.5 cm

The enamel dial, signed Lepaute horloger du roi à Paris, indicates the hours in Roman numerals, the minutes in Arabic numerals and the seconds; the remarkable rectangular architectural case is in finely chased gilt bronze. The bezel is decorated with a frieze of interlocking motifs, the arch by an egg and dart frieze, the dial is flanked by scrolling foliage and flower rosettes and scrolling, the sides feature Apollo masks with radiating sun rays, framed by ribbons and laurel branches. The base features a curved foliate moulding and the clock is surmounted by acanthus leaves and a flower.

Exhibitions

Rive Droite

HISTORICAL

This remarkable clock may be confidently attributed to Robert Osmond (1711-1789), one of the most renowned Parisian bronziers of the 18th century. A few rare clocks with cases by Osmond feature similar compositions, including an arched architectural borne, including: a clock formerly in the collection of the 6th Count of Rosebery in Mentmore (Sotheby's, 18-20 May 1977, lot 123); a second illustrated in Tardy, *La pendule française, 2ème partie: du Louis XVI à nos jours*, Paris, 1975, p.301. The lack of precision and recurring errors in the descriptions of the clock movements by the painter Pierre Rémy, expert of the Randon de Boisset sale, make it difficult to be certain, however the lot 833, described as follows: "Another clock, with quarters and seconds, made by le Paute, in a rectangular gilt bronze case, with rounded egg and dart decorated arch, the front with scrolling and flowers, the sides with sunrays, & the base with convex foliate moulding: length 17 pouces (44.5 cm) by 15 high (39 cm)", appears to be similar to the present clock.

Artist description:

Lepaute Horloger du Roi à Paris

This is the signature of the brothers Jean-André Lepaute (1720-1789) and Jean-Baptiste Lepaute (1727-1802), remarkable clockmakers born in Thonne-la-Long in Lorraine who were both horlogers du Roi.

Jean-André came to Paris as a young man and was joined by his brother in 1747. The Lepaute enterprise, founded informally in 1750, was formally incorporated in 1758. Jean-André, who was received as a maître by the corporation des horlogers in 1759, was lodged first in the Palais du Luxembourg and then, in 1756, in the Galeries du Louvre.

Jean-André Lepaute wrote a horological treatise (Traité d'Horlogerie), published in Paris in 1755. Another volume, entitled Description de plusieurs ouvrages d'horlogerie (A Description of several horological pieces) appeared in 1764.

In 1748 he married the mathematician and astronomer Nicole-Reine Etable de la Brière, who among other things predicted the return of Halley's Comet.

Jean-Baptiste Lepaute, received maître in December 1776, was known for the equation of time clock he constructed for the Paris Hôtel de Ville (1780, destroyed in the fire of 1871) and the clock of the Hôtel des Invalides.

The two brothers worked for the French Garde-Meuble de la Couronne; their clocks were appreciated by the most important connoisseurs of the time, both in France and abroad, such as the Prince Charles de Lorraine and the Queen Louise-Ulrika of Sweden.

Jean-Baptiste took over the workshop when Jean-André retired in 1775.