

La Pendulerie



Gouthière

Bronze and Turquin Blue Marble Candelabra in the form of Quivers, Louis XVI period

Attributed to Pierre Gouthière

Rare Pair of Gilt Bronze and Turquin Blue Marble Three-Light Candelabra in the form of Quivers

Paris, late Louis XVI period, circa 1790

Height 44 cm; length 27.5 cm

These candelabra have moulded turquin blue marble stems with finely chased gilt bronze mounts terminating in leaves and a pinecone finial, their chapters are decorated with a ring of acanthus leaves and burnished ring with a laurel leaf border from which issue feather arrows. The stems are accentuated by foliate sprays; a matte and burnished ring issues three sinuous candle branches with leaf-decorated candle nozzles; the branches are supported by three legs highlighted by Greek key motifs and flowerets. The round bases are adorned with chased friezes and burnished and matte bands. The unusual and perhaps unique design of this pair of candelabra places them among the finest martial-themed bronze furnishings produced at the time in Paris.

To the best of our knowledge, the quiver shape appeared in the second half of the 18th century; it was mainly used by Parisian bronziers for lighting accessories, but never for candelabra. Among the quiver-form wall lights of the period, one pair, made by Pierre Gouthière for the Duchess de Mazarin, is today in the Louvre Museum (illustrated in D. Alcouffe, A. Dion-Tenenbaum and G. Mabile, *Les bronzes d'ameublement du Louvre*, Dijon, 2004, p. 247-250); a model by Pierre-Philippe Thomire qui appartient aux collections du musée national du château de Compiègne (reproduit dans H. Ottomeyer et P. Pröschel, *Vergoldete Bronzen*, Band I, Munich, 1986, p. 292, fig. 4.16.18).

These unusual candelabra may be attributed to Parisian fondeur-doreur Pierre Gouthière (1732-1813), who made a similar pair of wall-lights for the Grand Salon of the duchesse de Mazarin's Paris mansion on the Quai Malaquais. The Duchess had acquired the property in 1767. In 1777 she commissioned Gouthière to furnish ornate decorations for a chimneypiece, a console (Frick Collection, New York) and two pedestals for the Grand Salon; these he supplied in 1781, along with the wall lights. Like the present candelabra, they feature a comparable quiver of arrows, but their bodies are of blue patinated bronze instead of turquin blue marble. The candle branches are wrapped in poppy sprays. It is interesting to note that the pedestals, console and chimneypiece all featured turquin blue marble in their design. This material was rarely used for candelabra, but is in harmony with the other pieces Gouthière made for the Duchess. Another element that supports the attribution to Gouthière is the use of matte gilding, here used on the stems, the base, and in the Greek key motifs. The master chaser Gouthière invented this new type of gilding, known as "dorure au matte", in which a subtly grained satin-finish

effectively contrasts with the polished areas, and later taught it to his pupil Pierre-Philippe Thomire.

Exhibitions

Rive Droite

Artist description:

Pierre Gouthière (1732-1813)

Was no doubt the most talented Parisian chaser of his time. He boasted, among his patrons, the Duke d'Aumont, one of the most important collectors of the second half of the 18th century. In 1767 Gouthière was named doreur ordinaire des Menus Plaisirs du Roi. The Menus Plaisirs was responsible for the commissions given by the King to various artists and artisans. The nomination greatly enhanced his reputation and won him a clientele of connoisseurs of rare and precious objects, including the royal family, the duc d'Aumont, important aristocrats such as the Marquis of Marigny, brother of the Marquise de Pompadour, Princess Kinsky, the King's mistress Countess du Barry, the Duchess of Mazarin, the Duke of Duras, the Duchess of Villeroy, and well-known financiers such as the wealthy treasurer of the Marine, Baudard de Saint-James, and the influential banker Thélusson.