

La Pendulerie



Ravrio - Dubuisson

Love Led by Fidelity, Empire period

Case Attributed to Antoine-André Ravrio

Dial Attributed to Etienne Gobin, known as Dubuisson

Rare Gilt Bronze and Enamel Chariot Clock

Paris, Empire period, circa 1805-1810

Height 52 cm; width 53 cm; depth 14 cm

The ring dial, enamelled in sky blue with white lozenge cartouches for the numerals, reveals the movement and indicates the hour in Arabic numerals; by means of a pair of pierced gilt brass hands. It forms the wheel of a finely chased gilt bronze antique chariot which terminates in a swan neck, driven by a standing winged Cupid with flowing draperies, who holds a flaming torch in one hand and the reins in the other. His attributes – the bow and quiver – are placed before him. The chariot is drawn by two spaniels, whose placid attitude contrasts with the dynamic pose of the god of love. The rectangular green marble base with rounded corners is lavishly decorated with gilt bronze mounts, including a low-relief frieze in the style of Clodion, and leaf wreaths. The base is raised on six gadrooned feet.

The chariot began to be used in Parisian clock cases during the Empire period. The watchmakers of the 18th century sought new ways to integrate their dials into these models. In the early 19th century, the dial was often fitted to the chariot wheel itself. The present example relates directly to the “Chariot of Fidelity” clock, in which a young Cupid’s chariot is drawn by a spaniel; the bronzier Ravrio delivered it to Empress Josephine’s silver boudoir in the Elysée Palace (see M-F. Dupuy-Baylet, *Pendules du Mobilier national 1800-1870*, Dijon, 2006, p. 53, catalogue n° 11). Ravrio made several variations of this model, including one in which two dogs are harnessed to the chariot driven by the god of love, who resembles a young Apollo. Though quite successful, the model was produced in limited quantities. Among the known examples, one whose dial is signed Ridet à Paris is pictured in H. Ottomeyer and P. Pröschel, *Vergoldete Bronzen*, Band I, Munich, 1986, p. 353, fig. 5.8.7; a second clock, in which the dogs are more bellicose, is illustrated in P. Kjellberg, *Encyclopédie de la pendule française du Moyen Age au XXe siècle*, Paris, 1997, p. 418, fig. D; a further example, in gilt bronze and green marble, from the collections of the Mobilier national in Paris, is in the Ministère de la Guerre (see Y. Gay and A. Lemaire, “Les pendules au char”, in *ANCAHA*, Spring 1993, n° 66, p. 36).

Dubuisson (1731-1815)

Étienne Gobin, known as Dubuisson, was one of the best enamellers working in Paris during the latter part of the 18th century and the early 19th century. During the mid 1750's he was employed at Sèvres, then opened his own workshop, being recorded in the 1790's in the rue de la Huchette and, circa 1812, in the rue de la Calandre. Specializing in enamelled watch cases and clock dials, he is known for his great skill and attention to detail.

Artist description:

Antoine-André Ravrio (1759-1814)

Made master bronzier in 1777, he is one of the most important Parisian bronze workers of the late 18th century and the early Empire period. Supplier of bronzes to the Imperial Garde-meuble, Ravrio helped furnish Napoleon's residences, along with Thomire and Galle; he also worked for some of the most influential figures of the time, including Marshals of the Empire. Today certain of his works are in the collections of the Mobilier national in Paris.