

La Pendulerie



Bourdier - Coteau - Schwerdfeger

Exceptional Regulator clock with Complications, Louis XVI period

Jean-Simon Bourdier

Case Attributed to Ferdinand Schwerdfeger

Dials by Joseph Coteau

Exceptional Regulator Clock with Complications

Paris, late Louis XVI period, circa 1785-1790

Height 201 cm; width 48 cm; depth 29 cm

The main dial indicates the hours in Roman numerals, the minutes in Arabic numerals, the date, the months, and the signs of the zodiac; it indicates the seconds by a central seconds hand. It surmounts four subsidiary dials which surround an enamel cartouche on which are inscribed the gilt initials of the clockmaker, JSB, on a blue ground; the upper dial indicates the diurnal and nocturnal hours in numerous European capitals and places around the world; the two lateral dials symbolising the Orient and the Occident - one bearing an enamel scene of a busy port, the other depicting a landscape with waterfalls - indicate respectively the times of sunrise and sunset and the phases and age of the moon. The lower dial indicates the date and the four-year leap year cycle. The hands are of pierced gilt brass and blued steel; the movement, with gridiron compensation pendulum, strikes the hours, half hours and quarters on

three bells. The magnificent mahogany case has fluted sides and a stepped and dentilled cornice.

In addition to its rare movement with complications and its very beautiful enamel dials, this regulator has a fine case that may be attributed to the cabinetmaker Ferdinand Schwerdfeger, who regularly collaborated with Bourdier, and therefore, with Coteau. This cabinetmaker appears to have made a speciality of architectural clock cases whose sober design required no decorative bronze mounts; he furnished them to the best Parisian clockmakers, including Robert Robin, Antide Janvier and Jean-Simon Bourdier. The present regulator, of exceptional quality and benefiting from the combined talents of Bourdier, Coteau, and Schwerdfeger, may be considered a masterpiece. It is superior in every way to the regulator Bourdier made for the King of Spain, which also indicates the time in several world capitals, and is today in the Royal Spanish Collection (see J. Ramon Colon de Carvajal, *Catalogo de Relojos del Patrimonio Nacional*, Madrid, 1987, p. 136, catalogue n° 116). The treatment of the upper portion of the case, in the form of an antique obelisk, is further proof of this regulator's rarity and perhaps even uniqueness.

Artist description:

Jean-Simon Bourdier (d. 1839)

Is one of the most important Parisian horologists of the late 18th century and first quarter of the 19th century. He became a master on September 22, 1787 and immediately became known for the perfection of his movements. In the early 19th century, he worked with the clockmaker Godon, the designer Dugourc and the sculptor Pierre Julien, producing several remarkable pieces destined for the Spanish king Charles IV. In parallel, he worked with the most influential merchants of the time, and particularly Daguerre and Julliot, carefully choosing the artisans who collaborated with him in the production of fine clocks. Among them, one should mention the chaser Rémond, the cabinetmaker Schwerdfeger and the enamellers Dubuisson and Coteau.