

La Pendulerie



Revel

Rare Sphinx Antique Mantle Clock, Louis XVI period

Joseph-Marie Revel (d. Paris in 1811)

Paris, Louis XVI period, circa 1785

Height 52.5 cm; width 32.5 cm; depth 15 cm

The enamel dial, with Arabic hours and minutes, is contained within a drum-shaped gilt bronze case adorned with ormolu flower garlands and a ribbon bow; at its summit there is a finely chased ormolu plume. On either side of the dial, two winged sphinxes coiffed with nemes headdresses support entablatures decorated with enamel plaques, which are surmounted by topiary vases. The base, with rounded white marble sides that are finely painted with polychrome arabesque motifs, has a central paste-decorated verre églomisé plaque centred by a blue imitation Wedgwood bisque medallion with a low-relief depiction of the three Graces. Stylised gilt bronze friezes provide highlights; the base is of black marble.

HISTORICAL

This clock's elegant design places it among the most remarkable animal-themed clocks made during the last quarter of the 18th century in Paris. The rare known similar examples feature the same combination of rare and precious materials. One example was formerly in the collection of the Radziwill Princes, in the Château d'Ermenonville (sold in Paris by Me Ader on March 8, 1933, lot 31); a second piece, with dial signed Lechopié à Paris, was formerly in the collection of Mrs. Thelma Chrysler Foy

(Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York, May 15 and 16, 1959, lot 295); a third is illustrated in P. Kjellberg, *Encyclopédie de la pendule française du Moyen Age au XXe siècle*, Paris, 1997, p. 281; one last example, whose dial is signed F.L. Godon, is in the Spanish Royal Collections (illustrated in J. Ramon Colon de Carvajal, *Catalogo de Relojes del Patrimonio Nacional*, Madrid, 1987, p. 77, catalogue n° 61).

Artist description:

"Revel à Paris"

Very little is known about this clockmaker, who was well known and respected throughout his career. Briefly mentioned in Tardy's *Dictionnaire des horlogers* with the first name of Joseph, he was in fact named Joseph-Marie and died in Paris in 1811. After having become master clockmaker, he opened a workshop in the Vieille rue du Temple, and is later recorded in the Palais Royal between 1787 and 1790, then in the Palais Egalité circa 1800, and lastly, in the Palais Tribunat between 1804 and 1806. Certain estate inventories from the early decades of the 19th century mention pieces made by him. In 1817 a clock made by Revel was listed in an inventory drawn up after the death of Adélaïde de Lespinasse-Langeac, the wife of the chevalier de Costalin; in 1821 a second one was recorded as having belonged to Anne-Charlotte-Dorothée, Countess de Médem and widow of the Duke de Courlande.