

La Pendulerie



Important Nine-Light Chandelier in Gilt and Patinated Bronze and Cut and Faceted Crystal or Glass, Directoire period

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Paris, Directoire period, circa 1795-1800

Height 114 cm; diameter 72 cm

The upper tier is decorated with curved elements that terminate in star motifs; the stem, adorned with arabesque motifs terminating in scrolling, supports a magnificent patinated and gilt bronze vase after the antique; its mid-portion features a band to which are fixed three female masks wearing stylised headdresses; the nine curved branches that support the nozzles issue from them, three by three. The lower portion of the vase is adorned with a gadrooned motif and a stylised bunch of grapes emerging from a bouquet of leaves. The chandelier is richly adorned with cut and faceted crystal or glass elements that form garlands and pendants.

The unusual design of the present chandelier is typical of the Directory era during which it was created. During this brief period, the Parisian decorative arts, while still heavily marked by the neoclassical style of the reign of Louis XVI, began to show the influence of decorative motifs that would become extremely important during the Empire period. Indeed, the design differs from that of most other known models from the same period. The gilt and patinated central element and the rare cut crystal or glass elements are reminiscent of the luxurious creations of the second half of the 18th century. Only a few similar examples are known today. Among them are a pair of chandeliers that were delivered in 1804 to

the Empress's salon in Fontainebleau castle (see J-P. Samoyault, Musée national du château de Fontainebleau, Catalogue des collections de mobilier, 1. Pendules et bronze d'ameublement entrés sous le Premier Empire, Paris, RMN, p. 100, catalogue n° 64); and two similar models, the first of which was formerly in the Bickert collection (sold in Paris, Me Baudoin, December 3-4, 1934, lot 134) and the second of which appeared on the market at the sale of the collection of the Countess de Castellane and various other connoisseurs (sold Sotheby's, Monaco, December 9, 1995, lot 244). Another comparable yet larger chandelier is in the dining room of the Maisons château, formerly the property of Louis XVI's brother, the Comte d'Artois (illustrated in the exhibition La folie d'Artois à Bagatelle, 1988, p. 83).