

La Pendulerie



Jacob-Desmalter - Thomire

Exceptional Mahogany Console with Ebony Veneering and Finely Chased and Gilt Bronze Mounts, Empire period

Jacob-Desmalter

Bronze Mounts Attributed to Pierre-Philippe Thomire

Paris, Empire period, circa 1810

Height 108 cm; width 179 cm; depth 49 cm

Marque au fer of the Château de Rosny: R15.

This exceptional and unusually large rectangular console table is one of the most elaborate ever produced by the famous Jacob-Desmalter workshop. Entirely veneered with fine mahogany panels, its architectural design comprises four straight pilasters, with gilt bronze bases and capitals chased with stylised leaves, linked by a solid recessed base, with a rectangular entablature. The façade, supports and sides of the entablature feature rectangular ebony panels juxtaposed with mahogany veneering, highlighted by finely chased gilt bronze mounts. The supports feature large low-relief depictions of putti crowning themselves amidst leaves, scrolling, palmettes and rosettes. The band is adorned with ribbon-tied wreaths and stylised motifs, as well as with alternating antique-style amphorae and scrolling, linked by ribbon-tied garlands and mille-fiori swags. Above them are medallions featuring the profiles of figures from classical mythology. The console is surmounted by a magnificent blue turquin marble top.

HISTORICAL

While it bears no stamp, the present console may confidently be attributed to Jacob-Desmalter; its finely chased gilt bronze mounts may be attributed to Pierre-Philippe Thomire, the most renowned Parisian bronze caster of the time. The design of the present console is remarkably similar to that of a stamped console pictured in Jean-Pierre Samoyault, *Mobilier français Consulat et Empire*, Editions Gourcuff, Paris, 2009, p. 211, fig. 360. Its gilt bronze mounts featuring antique-style motifs alternating with flower garlands, are reminiscent of those of other exceptional pieces whose bronze mounts are attributed to Thomire. Among them is a console sold circa 1805 to Prince Nicolas Esterhazy by the marchand-mercier Martin-Eloi Lignereux, and today in the Budapest Museum of Decorative Arts (illustrated in J-P. Samoyault, *op.cit.*, 2009, p. 107, fig. 182); a second console, consigned by Thomire in 1807, is in the Louvre Museum in Paris (illustrated in D. Alcouffe, A. Dion-Tenenbaum and A. Lefébure, *Le Mobilier du Musée du Louvre*, Tome 1, *Moyen-Age, Renaissance, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles (ébénisterie)*, XIXe siècle,

This spectacular console is typical of important commissions the Jacob-Desmalter workshop received from the most important figures of the day, often people in the imperial or royal circle. During the late 1810's and the early years of the following decade, the taste for luxury was particularly evident in the furnishings and objets d'art in the château de Rosny, when it belonged to the Duchesse de Berry. The castle's decoration and furnishings were admired by contemporaries, among them the Duchesse de Maillé (1787-1851), who noted: "Nothing compares to the furnishings of Rosny: each floor and every room is equally recherché and beautifully decorated. (The Duchesse of Berry) has gathered here everything she loves, everything the king gives her and everything she herself purchases. As a result, Rosny is filled with furniture, but one must admit that Madame has excellent taste. Everything in her home is wonderfully chosen. She recognises and appreciates beauty like an Italian." (Blanche-Joséphine Le Bascle d'Argenteuil, *Duchesse de Maillé, Souvenirs des deux Restaurations*, Paris, Perrin, 1984, p. 247).

While the console is known to have stood in the château de Rosny in the 1820's, since it bears the *marque au fer* of the château inventory, "R" followed by the number "15" which designated the room where it was located, the fact that it was made many years earlier suggests a former provenance that is not known today. The most likely hypothesis is that the present console was commissioned for Rosny circa 1810 by Edmond de Talleyrand-Périgord, and that it was sold with the château, thus entering the collection of the Duke and Duchesse de Berry. This is supported by the fact that a pair of similar, but smaller, consoles, is recorded; in a private collection, they also bears the mark "R15". This pair of small consoles, stamped Jacob-Desmalter, is mentioned in a memoir today in the Archives nationales, which mentions that the furniture maker delivered it in February 1821 for the Salon des Princes in the château de Rosny. It is likely that this pair of consoles completed an existing ensemble and that at that time the present console already stood in the Salon des Princes.

Artist description:

François-Honoré-Georges Jacob, known as Jacob Desmalter (1770-1841)

May be considered one of the most important Parisian cabinetmakers of the first quarter of the 19th century. The youngest son of famous cabinetmaker Georges Jacob (1739-1814), in 1798 he married Adélaïde-Anne Lignereux, the daughter of the marchand-mercier and bronzier Martin-Eloi Lignereux.

Early on his drawing talents were recognised, and in 1796 he went into partnership with his older brother Georges II Jacob (1768-1803). They took over their father's workshop in the rue Meslée, founding the Jacob Frères firm. After the death of his brother, he went into partnership with his father and changed his stamp. For over a decade, they furnished the Imperial Garde-Meuble and wealthy connoisseurs of the period. However, in 1813, the delays in payment by the Imperial Administration caused the Jacob firm to declare bankruptcy. In 1825, Jacob Desmalter sold the remaining stock to his son, in return for a comfortable annuity of 6000 francs per year. Freed from his professional responsibilities, he was able to travel. One of his journeys was to England, where George IV asked him to help furnish Windsor Castle. He died in the rue Cadet in Paris on August 15, 1841.