

La Pendulerie



Lesieur - Thomire

Important Patinated and Gilt Bronze and Italian Red Griotte Marble Mantel Clock "Allegory of Dawn", Empire period

Lesieur à Paris

The Bronze Figures and Mounts attributed to Pierre-Philippe Thomire

Important Patinated and Gilt Bronze and Italian Red Griotte Marble Mantel Clock "Allegory of Dawn"

Paris, Empire period, circa 1805-1810

Height 76 cm; width 48.5 cm; depth 20.5cm

The enamel annular dial is centered by a gilt guilloche medallion; it indicates the Roman numeral hours and the outermost minute graduations by means of two blued steel Breguet hands. The back plate of the movement is signed "Lesieur". The drum case is framed by drapery that is held by a fine winged figure in patinated bronze, depicting a woman dressed in a classical tunic, who turns her head to the left. By her side stands a winged cherub who holds a flaming torch, with a quiver of arrows slung across his back. The two figures stand on a high quadrangular base of Italian red griotte marble that is elaborately decorated with finely chased matte gilt bronze mounts depicting motifs such as crowns and double ribbon-tied palmettes, as well as a scene within a frame, featuring a maritime allegory with a reclining woman within a seascape who is brandishing a ship, flanked by stylized decorated palmettes. The molded base is adorned with alternating acanthus leaf friezes and leafy branches. The clock is supported on four winged C-scroll decorated feet with claws.

This rare clock, which features a very unusual and successful design, is a fine example of the allegorically themed luxury Parisian horology of the early 19th century. The exceptional quality and the extremely fine and precise chasing allow it to be attributed to Pierre-Philippe Thomire, one of the most important Parisian artisans of the period. Among the rare similar contemporary clocks that are signed by or attributed to Thomire, one example is illustrated in H. Ottomeyer and P. Pröschel, *Vergoldete Bronzen*, Band I, Munich, 1986, p. 345, fig. 5.5.11. A second example, made entirely of gilt bronze, is illustrated in E. Niehüser, *Die französische Bronzeuhr, Eine Typologie der figürlichen Darstellungen*, Munich, 1997, p. 59. One further similar clock is pictured in P. Heuer and K. Maurice, *European Pendulum Clocks, Decorative Instruments of Measuring Time*, Munich, 1988, p. 90, fig. 155.

Artist description:

Pierre-Philippe Thomire (1757-1853) was the most important Parisian bronzier of the last quarter of the 18th century and the first decades of the following century. Early on in his career he worked for Pierre Gouthière, *ciseleur-fondeur du roi*, and toward the mid-1770's began working with Louis Prieur. He later became one of the bronziers attached to the Manufacture Royale de Sèvres, creating the bronze mounts for most of the important creations of the day. After the Revolution, he purchased the stock of Martin-Eloi Lignereux, thus becoming the most important suppliers of furniture bronzes for châteaux and Imperial Palaces. In addition, he worked for a wealthy private clientele, both French and foreign, including several of Napoleon's Marshals. Thomire retired in 1823.