

La Pendulerie



Godon - Coteau

Exceptional Hard-Paste Paris Porcelain and Gilt Bronze Mantel Clock, Louis XVI period

Attributed to the Locré, Russinger and Pouyat Factory (1772 - circa 1810)

François-Louis Godon (circa 1740-1800)

The enamel dial by Joseph Coteau (1740-1801)

Exceptional Hard-Paste Paris Porcelain and Gilt Bronze Mantel Clock

Paris, Louis XVI period, circa 1785

Height 42.5 cm; width 19.5 cm; depth 12.8 cm

Provenance:

- Probably the clock “in porcelain with date and gilt bronze mounts...” that François-Louis Godon sold for 600 livres to the estranged wife of his fellow clockmaker Jean-Baptiste-André Furet in December 1786.

Bibliography:

- Giacomo and Aurélie Wannenes, *Les plus belles pendules françaises, De Louis XIV à l'Empire*, Editions Polistampa, Florence, 2013, p. 263 (illustration).

- Pierre Kjellberg, *Encyclopédie de la pendule française du Moyen Age au XXe siècle*, Les éditions de l'Amateur, Paris, 1997, p. 216, figure B (illustration).
- R. de Plinval de Guillebon, *Faïence et porcelaine de Paris XVIIIe-XIXe siècles*, Editions Faton, Dijon, 1995, p. 161-171.

The white enamel dial, signed “Godon Reloxero de Camara de S.M.C.” and Coteau, indicates the Arabic numeral hours, fifteen-minute intervals, and date by means of three hands, two made of pierced and gilt bronze and one blued steel pointer. The movement, whose plate is engraved “Godon Horloger du Roy et de la Cour d’Espagne 1786”, is housed in a hard-paste Paris porcelain vase with polychrome and gold decoration on a white ground. The motifs include ribbon-tied garlands, wreaths, bouquets of flowers and foliage, a medallion with a landscape featuring pheasants, and a crosshatch pattern centered by flowers. The shaped oval base is decorated with delicate flower swags within foliate frames. The lavish gilt mounts are finely chased and gilded; the bezel is adorned with chased friezes including beads and rope patterns. The clock is surmounted by a magnificent bouquet of roses. The sides are adorned with female terms forming handles, which are coiffed with laurels, wreaths and draperies and from which issue tasseled draperies and flower and leaf swags. The clock stands on four curved legs that are decorated with beadwork and flower garlands and terminate in goats’ hooves and a central quiver with feathered arrows that emerges from a bouquet of leaves; the legs are linked by two rings. The shaped oval plinth is raised on four toupie feet with engine-turned decoration.

Considered the height of French luxury at the end of the Louis XVI period, this exceptional mantel clock, which blends hard-paste Paris porcelain with chased and gilt bronze, is typical of the French luxury horological items that were produced for influential French and European collectors. To the best of our knowledge, only three other identical clocks – with decorative variations - are known. Among them, one example, whose porcelain fittings have been erroneously attributed to the Royal Sèvres Manufactory, is on display in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (illustrated in Tardy, *La pendule française dans le Monde*, Paris, 1994, p. 78). A second clock, bequeathed in 1928 by Ernest Cognacq, is today in the Musée Cognacq-Jay in Paris. A third example, which may formerly have been in the collection of the banker John Pierpont Morgan, appears in E. Niehüser, *Die französische Bronzeuhr, Eine Typologie der figürlichen Darstellungen*, Munich, 1997, p. 265, fig. 1330.

Joseph Coteau (1740-1801)

The most celebrated enameler of his time, he worked with most of the eminent clockmakers of the day. He was born in Geneva, where he became a master painter-enameler of the Académie de Saint Luc in 1766. Several years later, he moved to Paris. From 1772 to the end of his life, he worked in the rue Poupée. Coteau’s name is associated with a technique of relief enamel that he devised with Parpette. Intended for the decoration of important Sèvres porcelain pieces, he used the technique to decorate the frames and dials of the finest clocks. Among the pieces that make use of this characteristic technique, one covered bowl and tray is today in the Sèvres Musée National de la Céramique (Inv. SCC2011-4-2). Other pieces include a pair of vases with a “fluted garland” decoration, now in the Louvre Museum in Paris (see the exhibition catalogue *Un défi au goût, 50 ans de création à la manufacture royale de Sèvres (1740-1793)*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 1997, p. 108, catalogue n° 61), and a ewer and bowl known as the “toilette of the Comtesse du Nord”, which are on display in Pavlovsk Palace in Saint Petersburg (illustrated in M. Brunet and T. Préaud, *Sèvres, Des origines à nos jours*, Office du Livre, Fribourg, 1978, p. 207, fig. 250).

Artist description:

François-Louis Godon was received as a maître in Paris in February 1787, having begun working in horology several years previously. A partner of Furet as early as 1785, Godon is known to have had close ties to kings Charles III and Charles IV of Spain. In March 1786, named "Relojero de Camara", he became the regular Parisian supplier of porcelains, clocks and bronze-mounted furniture to the Spanish court. Today, many of his clocks are in the Madrid Museum of Decorative Arts; several are also in the Spanish Royal Collections.