

La Pendulerie



Saint-Germain - Diodonou

Important Gilt Bronze and Green Horn-Veneered Wall Cartel and Bracket , Louis XV period

Diodonou à Paris

Case Stamped by Joseph de Saint-Germain (circa 1700-1760)

Important Gilt Bronze and Green Horn-Veneered Wall Cartel and Bracket

Paris, Louis XV period, circa 1750

Height 130 cm; width 48 cm; depth 25 cm

Stamp: St Germain; guild punch: JME

Bibliography:

- Pierre Kjellberg, *Encyclopédie de la pendule française du Moyen Age au XXe siècle*, Les éditions de l'Amateur, Paris, 1997, p. 79, figure C (illustration).

The round copper dial, signed "Diodonou à Paris", features twenty-five white enamel cartouches indicating the Roman numeral hours and the Arabic five-minute intervals by means of two blued steel hands. The movement is housed in a waisted case that is veneered overall in green-stained horn and is elaborately decorated with finely chased rococo gilt bronze mounts. The clock is surmounted by a winged motif made up of S-scrolls, leaves, and flowers. The sides are adorned with C and S-scrolls, foliage, seeds, and wave motifs. The curved feet are embellished with S-scrolls, foliage, and shells. The

door features a large rococo motif of flowering leafy branches. The bracket's decoration is composed of C and S-scrolls, acanthus leaves, flower bouquets, and seeded branches; its lower portion is adorned with a bouquet of curved leaves.

The spectacular design of this rare cartel is typical of the most elaborate pieces created by Parisian clockmakers during the mid-18th century. They tended to be of monumental proportions, and featured elaborate finely chased gilt bronze mounts, engraved copper dials with enamel plaques. The cases were veneered in rare and precious materials that were carefully selected to produce the best effect – in this case, green-stained horn. Today only a very few comparable clocks are known. Among them, one example is pictured in *Le Dix-huitième Siècle Français, Collection Connaissance des Arts*, Hachette, Paris, 1956, p. 118, fig. B. A second clock, signed “Sarton Hgr. de Son Altesse à Liège” and featuring an elaborate vernis Martin decor, is in the Musée Curtius in Liège (illustrated in R. Mühe and Horand M. Vogel, *Horloges anciennes, Manuel des horloges de table, des horloges murales et des pendules de parquet européennes*, Office du Livre, Fribourg, 1978, p. 197, fig. 373). A third example, whose dial is signed “Levacher à Fécamp”, was formerly offered on the Parisian art market (see P. Kjellberg, *Encyclopédie de la pendule française du Moyen Age au XXe siècle*, Paris, 1997, p. 79). One further such clock is today in a private collection (see G. Mabile, *Le style Louis XV*, Editions Baschet et Cie, Paris, 1978, p. 53).

Artist description:

Joseph de Saint-Germain (circa 1700-after 1759)

Is one of the most important mid 18th century Parisian artisans who specialised in the creation of clock cases. He became a master cabinetmaker rather late, in 1750, and to this day his work remains little known. He probably worked as an “ouvrier libre” for an extended period. The father of bronzier Jean-Joseph de Saint-Germain (1719-1791) with whom he likely often collaborated, he stood out from among his colleagues due to his modernisation of certain horological models created several decades previously by Charles Cressent; he also occasionally restored the metal marquetry furniture of the type called “Boulle”; his stamp appears on one of the “Mazarine” commodes in the Vaux-le-Vicomte castle near Paris.