

La Pendulerie



Revel

Rare Gilt Bronze Mantel Regulator, Directoire period

Circa: circa 1795

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Paris, Directoire period, circa 1795

Height 42.5 cm; width 26.5 cm; depth 17.5 cm

The enamel dial, signed Revel, indicates the hours in Roman numerals, the minutes and date in Arabic numerals. The superb glazed architectural case is in finely chased gilt bronze. The arched pediment is ornamented with gadrooning and beading, with four pinecone finials; a pierced and fringed drapery hangs under the dial; the sides are composed of finely fluted pilasters with moulded bases and capitals. The stepped rectangular base is adorned with a pierced palmette and leaf frieze.

The elegant composition of this mantel regulator bears witness to the aesthetic explorations of Parisian bronziers and clockmakers of the last quarter of the 18th century. As of the mid-century a new artistic current, encouraged by artists and influential collectors, drew inspiration from recent events such as the discoveries of the ancient Roman cities of Pompey and Herculaneum. Enthusiastic collectors such as the Count of Caylus and Ange-Laurent Lalive de Jully gave a new impulse to the French decorative arts,

still marked by the rococo style in vogue during the Louis XV period. Influenced by the forms and decorative vocabulary of Greek and Roman antiquity, the new Neo-classical style favoured pure lines and classical motifs such as the antique borne or cippus that gives its form to the present clock. The new style showcased the skill of the period's remarkable artisans, as well as the mastery of many different materials.

Among the comparable examples known, two slightly later models feature chasing of lesser quality. The first, signed Carcel jeune, is illustrated in P. Kjellberg, *Encyclopédie de la pendule française du Moyen Age à nos jours*, Paris, 1997, p. 184; a second clock was delivered in September 1807 to the Fontainebleau Palace by Lepaute, uncle and nephew; it is still in the Fontainebleau collection. (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, RMN, Paris, 1989, p. 65, catalogue n° 26). An identical clock, also signed Revel, was formerly in the collection of Peter Zervudachi; another signed Lepaute is in a private collection (illustrated in P. Heuer and K. Maurice, *European Pendulum Clocks, Decorative Instruments of measuring Time*, Munich, 1988, p. 65, fig. 108).

Artist description:

Revel à Paris

Very little is known about this clockmaker, who was well known and respected throughout his career. Briefly mentioned in Tardy's *Dictionnaire des horlogers* with the first name of Joseph, he was in fact named Joseph-Marie and died in Paris in 1811. After having become master clockmaker, he opened a workshop in the Vieille rue du Temple, and is later recorded in the Palais Royal between 1787 and 1790, then in the Palais Egalité circa 1800, and lastly, in the Palais Tribunat between 1804 and 1806. Certain estate inventories from the early decades of the 19th century mention pieces made by him. In 1817 a clock made by Revel was listed in an inventory drawn up after the death of Adélaïde de Lespinasse-Langeac, the wife of the chevalier de Costalin; in 1821 a second one was recorded as having belonged to Anne-Charlotte-Dorothee, Countess de Médem and widow of the Duke de Courlande.