

La Pendulerie



Cronier

Important Matte and Burnished Gilt Bronze Neoclassical Antique Wall Cartel, Transition period

Circa: circa 1770

Cronier à Paris

Paris, Transition period Louis XV-Louis XVI, circa 1770

Height 88 cm; width 48 cm; depth 14 cm

The round white enamel dial, signed "Cronier à Paris", indicates the Roman numeral hours and Arabic numeral five-minute intervals by means of two pierced gilt bronze hands. The movement is housed in a finely chased matte and burnished gilt bronze neoclassical case. The clock is surmounted by a baluster vase whose lower portion is decorated with crosshatched reserves, with a lid that is adorned with acanthus leaves and is topped by a flame finial. Two laurel leaf swags pass through its handles; their extremities rest upon corner ornaments formed by volutes surmounting rams' heads. Behind them, two flaming braziers with draperies are set on cubic bases. The sides of the clock are formed by fluted pillars that are adorned with laurel leaf swags and terminate in pinecone finials. A shaped plate under the dial is decorated with rosettes and a row of stylized truncated pyramids. In the lower part of the clock a glazed window affords a view of the pendulum; it is surrounded by oak leaf and acorn swags flanked by roundels, which frame an oblong matted reserve. The base, decorated with wide fluting, terminates in an acanthus leaf and seed bouquet.

HISTORICAL

By the mid 18th century, the ornamental vocabulary that had prevailed for several decades was being called into question. This movement, led by scholars, artists and connoisseurs, had been instigated by the extraordinary archeological discoveries that had taken place in the ancient Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, near Naples. Over the years, a handful of collectors, artists, and artisans succeeded in imposing a new style, known as neoclassicism, which was directly inspired by Greek and Roman antiquity. The present cartel was created within this particular context. Its highly architectural design and unusual size are remarkable, as is its decorative vocabulary directly influenced by the classical idiom. While the identity of the bronze caster who created it is not known, the exceptional quality of the casting, chasing, and gilding prove that it was made by very fine artisans, under the supervision of a superb bronzier such as Saint-Germain, Osmond or Caffieri. Among the similar cartels known to exist, one example signed "Gide à Paris" is 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. 190, fig. 350. A few other identical cartels have been identified. One of these was offered at auction at the Palais Galliera in Paris by Me Ader on March 30, 1965, lot 75 (see Tardy, *La pendule française, 2^{ème} Partie: Du Louis XVI à nos jours*, Paris, 1975, p. 310, fig. 2). A second clock was formerly in the well-known collection of Alberto Bruni Tedeschi (1915-1996).

Artist description:

Antoine Cronier (1732 – after 1806)

Born in Paris on 13th January 1732, he was the son of Françoise née Boulard and Charles Crosnier, a maître-menuisier. In 1745 Antoine Crosnier began an apprenticeship under Nicolas Pierre Thuillier and by 1753 was working independently of a guild, i.e. as ouvrier libre ; he was received as a Parisian maître-horloger in 1763.

By 1759, Cronier, who was one of the principal clockmakers of the second half of the 18th century, opened a workshop in the rue Saint-Honoré, 140. For the cases and bronzes of his clocks, he called upon the best artisans of the time, including the renowned bronziers Robert and Jean-Baptiste Osmond, Edmé Roy, René François Morlay, Nicolas Bonnet and François Vion. He used cases made by the cabinetmakers Jean-Pierre Latz, Balthazar Lieutaud and François Goyer, and employed the gilder Honoré Noël and the tapissier Nicolas Leclerc.

During the 18th century, certain of his pieces were mentioned in the collections of the maréchal de Choiseul-Stainville, the Duke des Deux-Ponts, the marquis de Sainte-Amaranthe, and the Prince Belosselsky-Belozersky. Today his clocks are preserved in many prestigious private and public collections, including the Nissim de Camondo Museum in Paris, Waddesdon Manor in Buckinghamshire, the Residenzmuseum in Munich, the Residenz Bamberg, the Palazzo Reale in Turin, the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire in Brussels, the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Huntington Collection in San Marino, California, Dalmeny House in South Queensferry and the Pavlovsk Palace in Saint Petersburg.