

La Pendulerie



Rémond - Coteau - Boizot

**Important Gilt and Patinated Bronze and White Carrara Marble Antique Mantel Clock
Representing “Study”, Directoire period**

Circa: circa 1795

Cardinaux à Paris

The dial by Joseph Coteau

Probably Made Under the Supervision of Dominique Daguerre

The Figures After Models by Louis-Simon Boizot

The Case Attributed to François Rémond

Paris, Directoire period, circa 1795

Height 52 cm; width 69 cm; depth 15 cm

The round enamel dial is signed “Cardinaux à Paris”. It indicates the Arabic numeral hours and fifteen-minute intervals, as well as the date, by means of three blued steel and pierced gilt bronze hands. The movement is housed in a drum case that rests upon a square plinth decorated with bas-reliefs representing putti lighting a fire. It is surmounted by a magnificent eagle spreading its wings and holding thunderbolts in its claws. On either side of the clock are seated two figures: a young man writing on a tablet with a stylus, and a young woman who is reading. The seated figures, which are surrounded by a frieze of stylised foliage, rest on a rectangular white marble base with rounded corners that is elaborately decorated with chased gilt bronze motifs, including a central bearded male mask flanked by winged Cupids whose bodies terminate in elaborate scrolling motifs, and round medallions centred by masks. The base is raised upon six chased feet.

HISTORICAL

This clock model, often erroneously called “Arts and Letters”, “Study and Philosophy”, “aux Maréchaux” or “Les Liseuses”, is cited in the commercial correspondence between the chaser-gilder François Rémond and the marchand-mercier Dominique Daguerre (the most important purveyor of luxury objects during the reign of Louis XVI) as “L’Etude”, or “Study”. The preparatory drawing for the clock, annotated

in Rémond's hand, was offered at auction in Paris in February 1981 (illustrated in H. Ottomeyer and P. Pröschel, *Vergoldete Bronzen, Die Bronzearbeiten des Spätbarock und Klassizismus, Band I*, Munich, 1986, p. 295, fig. 4.17.5). Produced as of 1784, the clock's design was inspired by two figures created in 1776 by sculptor Louis-Simon Boizot (1743-1809) for the Royal Sèvres Manufactory, representing a young girl reading and a young man writing, known respectively as "Study" and "Philosophy". One such *bisque porcelaine Sèvres* figure is part of the Jones collection in London's Victoria & Albert Museum (illustrated in H. Ottomeyer and P. Pröschel, *op.cit.*, Band I, Munich, 1986, p. 294, fig. 4.17.2). These figures were used by Daguerre, who requested that Rémond depict them leaning against the portion of the case containing the movement, with an eagle surmounting the composition. Thus was created one of the most successful Parisian neoclassical clocks of the latter portion of Louis XVI's reign. The clock was an immediate success among collectors and connoisseurs of the period.

Clocks of this model were cited in the 18th century as belonging to the influential collectors of the time. One example is the mention of "...a mantel clock bearing the name of Sotiau, with an enamel dial indicating the hours and minutes, in a case adorned with garlands and surmounted by an ormolu gilt copper eagle accompanied by two bronzed copper figures seated on a marble base decorated with bas-reliefs, bead ornaments and ormolu gilt copper feet, 350 livres", which was included in January 1790 in the probate inventory of Anne-Adélaïde de Mailly-Nesle, the wife of Prince Louis-Marie d'Arenberg. Another "mantel clock bearing the name of Sotiau à Paris, with date and two principal bronze figures based on the Fable, the clock standing on a pedestal and surmounted by an eagle, on a wide white marble base. The whole in chased and gilt copper, 2400 livres" was mentioned in an inventory as belonging to the Salm Princes in November 1790. One further similar clock was described in November 1787, when the collection of Joseph-Hyacinthe-François de-Paule de Rigaud, Count de Vaudreuil, was sold at auction: "N°382. A clock by Sotiau. It is composed of a cylinder surmounted by an eagle bearing thunderbolts in its claws, and two supporting figures representing, on one side, a young man writing on a tablet and, on the other, a woman who is reading. The cartel stands on a square pedestal that is decorated with a bas-relief depicting children, set upon a white marble plinth with sunken reserves and a frieze made up of male masks and children terminating in scrolling ornaments. Two sunken medallions feature Medusa's heads. This clock is both formally beautiful and extremely well finished. The excellence of its movement leaves nothing to be desired. The matt gilding has been executed with the greatest of care. Height 20 inches, width 26".

A few similar clocks, some featuring variations, are today in important public and private collections. Among them, one example, whose dial is signed "Dubuc jeune", is on display in the Quirinal Palace in Rome (illustrated in A. Gonzales-Palacios, *Il patrimonio artistico del Quirinale, Gli Arredi francesi*, Milan, 1996, p. 308, n° 89). A second example is in the Salon des Aides de camp of the Elysee Palace (see M. and Y. Gay, "Du Pont d'Iéna à l'Elysée", in the *Bulletin de l'association nationale des collectionneurs et amateurs d'horlogerie ancienne (ANCAHA)*, Summer 1993, n° 67, p. 12). A third clock, with a dial signed "Mercier à Paris", is in the collection of the Banque de France in Paris (illustrated in M. and Y. Gay, "L'ANCAHA à la Banque de France", in the *Bulletin ANCAHA*, Summer 1995, n° 73, p. 76). A fourth clock, probably once part of the collection of King Louis XVI, is pictured in C. Baulez, "Les bronziers Gouthière, Thomire et Rémond", in the exhibition catalogue *Louis-Simon Boizot 1743-1809, Sculpteur du roi et directeur de l'atelier de sculpture à la Manufacture de Sèvres*, Paris, 2001, p. 287, fig. 9. Three similar clocks are in the Spanish Royal Collections (see J. Ramon Colon de Carvajal, *Catalogo de Relojos del Patrimonio nacional*, Madrid, 1987, p. 62, 64 and 92); three further examples are in the Royal British Collection (illustrated in C. Jagger, *Royal Clocks, The British Monarchy and its Timekeepers 1300-1900*, London, 1983, p. 211-212).

Artist description:

François Rémond (circa 1747-1812)

Along with Pierre Gouthière, he was one of the most important Parisian chaser-gilders of the last third

of the 18th century. He began his apprenticeship in 1763 and became a master chaser-gilder in 1774. His great talent quickly won him a wealthy clientele, including certain members of the Court. Through the marchand-mercier Dominique Daguerre, François Rémond was involved in furnishing the homes of most of the important collectors of the late 18th century, supplying them with exceptional clock cases, firedogs, and candelabra. These elegant and innovative pieces greatly contributed to his fame.