

La Pendulerie



Galle - Chapuy

Important Green Marble and Gilt and Patinated Bronze Antique Mantel Clock with Matte and Burnished Finishing “The Reconciliation”, early Empire period

Chapuy

Case Attributed to Claude Galle

Paris, early Empire period, circa 1805

Height 59 cm; width 40 cm; depth 20 cm

The round white enamel dial, signed “Chapuy rue Vivienne n°4”, indicates the Roman numeral hours and the Arabic numeral fifteen-minute intervals by means of two blued steel Breguet hands. The architectural case is made of finely chased gilt and patinated bronze with matte and burnished finishing. The quadrangular green marble base, decorated with applied motifs depicting two crowns flanked by stylized palmettes and stems, supports a monument modeled as a fountain with pilasters that are decorated with torches, palmettes, quivers, and winged figures. It is surmounted by an arched pediment decorated with a flower and leaf frieze flanked by two swans with outstretched wings. On either side consoles with a scroll motif are adorned with stylized leaves. The entablature is supported by two feet with lion’s heads and claws. On the terrace in front of the fountain stand two magnificent figures - a young man wearing a short tunic and sandals, who is kissing a young woman in antique drapery. The base is raised on four ball feet with knurled bands.

HISTORICAL

Due to its rare iconography and the quality of its chasing, this clock may be considered one of the finest horological creations of the Imperial period. Called "The Reconciliation" (La Réconciliation or Le Racommodement), it was created during the early years of the 19th century by bronze caster Claude Galle, to form a pair with another contemporary model. That clock, made during the same period by the bronziers Denière and Mathelin, was known as "The Quarrel" (La Brouille); it depicted the same figures turning away from each other. Thus, the theme represented two phases of a romantic relationship.

One example of the clock called "The Quarrel" is on display in the Marmottan-Claude Monet Museum in Paris (illustrated in J-D. Augarde, "Une nouvelle vision du bronze and des bronziers sous le Directoire et l'Empire" in *L'Estampille/L'Objet d'art*, n° 398, January 2005, p. 71). Very few clocks that are identical to the present example are known today. Among them, one clock from the collection of the Hessian Princely House, whose dial is signed "Galle", is in the Fasanerie Palace in Fulda (illustrated in the exhibition catalogue *Gehäuse der Zeit*, 2002, p. 97, catalogue n° 37). A second example is in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence (see H. Ottomeyer and P. Pröschel, *Vergoldete Bronzen*, Band I, Munich, 1986, p. 369, fig. 5.13.11). A further comparable example in the Dutch Royal Collection is in the Het Loo Palace (illustrated in *Royal Clocks in Paleis Het Loo, A Catalogue*, 2003, p. 78, catalogue n° 13).

Artist description:

Claude Galle (1759 - 1815)

One of the foremost bronziers and fondeur-ciseleurs of the late Louis XVI and Empire periods, Claude Galle was born at Villepreux near Versailles. He served his apprenticeship in Paris under the fondeur Pierre Foy, and in 1784 married Foy's daughter. In 1786 he became a maitre-fondeur. After the death of his father-in-law in 1788, Galle took over his workshop, soon turning it into one of the finest, and employing approximately 400 craftsmen. Galle moved to Quai de la Monnaie (later Quai de l'Unité), and then in 1805 to 60 Rue Vivienne.

The Garde-Meuble de la Couronne, under the direction of sculptor Jean Hauré from 1786-88, entrusted him with many commissions. Galle collaborated with many excellent artisans, including Pierre-Philippe Thomire, and furnished the majority of the furnishing bronzes for the Château de Fontainebleau during the Empire. He received many other Imperial commissions, among them light fittings, figural clock cases, and vases for the palaces of Saint-Cloud, the Trianons, the Tuileries, Compiègne, and Rambouillet. He supplied several Italian palaces, such as Monte Cavallo, Rome and Stupinigi near Turin.

In spite of his success, and due in part to his generous and lavish lifestyle, as well as to the failure of certain of his clients (such as the Prince Joseph Bonaparte) to pay what they owed, Galle often found himself in financial difficulty. Galle's business was continued by his son after his death by his son, Gérard-Jean Galle (1788-1846). Today his work may be found in the world's most important museums and collections, those mentioned above, as well as the Musée National du Château de Malmaison, the Musée Marmottan in Paris, the Museo de Reloges at Jerez de la Frontera, the Residenz in Munich, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.