



Pierre-Etienne Romain (1756 - 1821)

Important Consulat Ormolu Mantel Clock, depicting The Fall Of Phaeton

Circa: vers 1800

Consulate period

Gilt bronze, enameled dial

H : 80 cm x W : 53 cm x D : 31 cm

The scene depicted by the clock is taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Phaeton, the son of Helios, the sun-god, has borrowed his father's chariot, and startled by the zodiac scorpion, he flies too close to the earth, scorching it. The clock shows the moment when Zeus sends a thunderbolt which destroys the chariot and causes Phaeton to fall to his death. The frieze shows Phaeton's sisters, the Heliads, turning into poplars and his friend Cygnus changing into a swan.

The model of this clock is attributed to the bronzier Pierre-Etienne Romain, who deposited a drawing of this model in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Other examples are in the Elysée Palace, Paris (J.-D. Augarde, *Les Ouvriers du Temps*, Geneva, 1996, p. 146, fig. 110., and in the Ecole d'Horlogerie de Dreux (Tardy, *French Clocks the World Over*, Part II, Paris 1987, p. 275), and in the collection of H.M. the Queen (H. Ottomeyer and P. Pröschelet al., *Vergoldete Bronzen*, Munich, 1986, Vol. II, p. 355, fig. 5.9.6).

This model has previously been attributed to Thomire on the basis of description of a clock of this model attributed to this bronzier in the 1829 Feuchère auction catalogue, lot 69.