



Attributed to Claude Galle (1759 - 1815)

Pair of Empire Period Candelabra, attributed to Claude Galle

Circa: XIXe siècle

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Ormolu gilt and Patinated Bronze

Claude Galle (1759 - 1815)

These magnificent gilt and patinated bronze candelabra from the Empire period in the shape of winged figures of Victory, which carry candlesticks in the hands and on the head, probably derive from the famous drawing in an album of drawings by Percier and Fontaine at the Metropolitan New York Museum of Art.

The bronze stems take the form of women, who stand on tall plinths. These plinths are covered with a light brown patina and are decorated with gilt winged female figures, carrying baskets of fruit on their heads. Each woman strokes the heads of two dogs, who stand on their hind legs and lean against her. The sides and backs of the plinths are ornamented with gilt scrolled foliate motifs, topped by palmettes. The plinths are each set on four ormolu paw feet, placed on shaped, square gilt bronze bases.

Above, patinated winged bronze women serve as the stems for the candelabra. They adopt monumental poses, reminiscent of ancient Egyptian or archaic sculpture. The winged women wear sheer dresses, which cling to their bodies.

Each winged woman holds two gilt bronze lights in her outstretched hands and supports four more on her head. Those held in the women's hands are conical shaped and are decorated around their tops with palmettes. The lights carried on their heads are raised up on slim stems and are crescent shaped in their arrangement. Three of the lights have cornucopia-shaped arms, which extend from open-

mouthed dogs' heads, and terminate in urn-form palm leaf capitals. Stylised, curling leaves decorate the space above the dogs' heads. On each, a cylindrical central light directly tops the stem, ending in a simple leafy capital.

Claude Galle Bronzier (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. 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.