



Claude Galle (1759 - 1815)

Empire Clock "The allegory of meditation and studies" signed Galle

Dial signed Galle, rue Vivienne

Period around 1815

Patinated bronze, gilded bronze, Red Griotte marble

Provenance: Robert Balkany Collection

H: 50 x W: 66 x D: 18.50 cm

In fire-gilded bronze, with figure allegory "vita passiva" and "vita activa". Imposing but equally elegant structure, using rouge Griotte marble in the longitudinal base. Occupied with two female seated figures that flank the movement case. The strong base base on large ball feet, above the red marble base, decorated with an olive leaf frieze with a central medallion. The round-arched movement casing on top is set with a lyre, with the dial above it. The fully sculpturally cast figures are burnished and complement the color contrast between marble and gold. These two female figures address a symbolism that has already been handed down from the Renaissance, understood here as "meditation" and "study". The figure on the left sits thoughtfully on a cushion, the one on the right on a tome, and holds another book on his lap. In addition, the education of women, which was widespread at the time, is also discussed here.

A clock by Galle of the same model, similarly signed, is shown in: Hans Ottomeyer, Peter Pröschel, Gilded Bronzes, The Bronze Works of Late Baroque and Classicism, Munich 1986, p. 709, Fig. 28.

Armature movement, locking plate striking mechanism with half-hour and hour strike on a bell. Pendulum on thread suspension. White enamel dial with Roman hours, the Breguet hands blued.

Claude Galle (1759-1815)

One of the most eminent bronze-makers and foundry-engravers of the end of the Louis XVI era and the Empire,

Claude Galle was born in Villepreux near Versailles. He apprenticed under the foundryman Pierre Foy, marrying in 1784 the daughter of Foy. In 1786 he became master foundryman. At the death of his father-in-law in 1788, Galle took charge of the workshop, which became one of the most important in Paris, employing, at the height of its activity, nearly 400 craftsmen. Galle moves the workshop first to Quai de la Monnaie (later Quai de l'Unité), then, in 1805, 60 Rue Vivienne.

The crown storage unit, under the direction of sculptor Jean

Hauré from 1786-88, honored him with several commissions. Gall

worked with many remarkable artisans, such as Pierre-Philippe

Thomire; he supplies the majority of the bronze furnishings to the Château of Fontainebleau during the Empire. He received numerous orders, 31 Imperial, for lights, pendulum boxes, and vases for palaces

of Saint-Cloud, the Trianons, the Tuileries, Compiègne, and Rambouillet. He supplies the Italian palaces of Monte Cavallo in Rome and Stupinigi near Turin.