



Pierre-Philippe Thomire (Paris, France 1751 - Paris, France 1843)

A pair of Ormoulu, Empire period, swan candelabra, attributed to Thomire

Circa: Époque Restauration

Gilt bronze

A closely related pair sold at Sotheby's

Monaco on 24/06/2000. Lot 230.

Restoration period

H: 80 cm x Diameter: 35 cm

Superb pair of 10-light candelabra; swan-shaped arms, supported by a fluted column resting on a cylindrical base. Very beautiful matt and polished ormoulu gilding. End of the Empire Period around 1815-1820.

A closely related pair and was sold at Sotheby's Monaco on 06/24/2000. Lot 230.

Swans became an important motif within the decorative arts from the Consulate onward. The Empress Joséphine particularly admired these birds and ordered a number of black swans from the Bass Straits for the park at Malmaison while inside the palace, her bedroom suite included a gilded bed with cornucopias and swans at its feet. Swans also adorned a bed made for Madame Récamier which, designed by Louis-Martin Berthault, was made by Jacob-Desmalter circa 1799 (Musée du Louvre).

Swans were also incorporated into the decorative motifs at Hôtel de Beauharnais for Prince Eugène in 1803. Classical writers considered that the swan loved music and uttered a beautiful song at its death. It was perhaps for this reason that it became associated with Apollo and certain of the Muses, being occasionally an attribute of the Muses Erato and Clio. Furthermore, because of its beauty, swans were attributes of Venus and are sometimes portrayed pulling her chariot.

Born in Paris in 1751, son of a carver, Pierre-Philippe Thomire began studying sculpture at the Academy of St-Luc under the direction of Augustin Pajou and Jean-Antoine Houdon. He then joined the workshop of the bronzier Pierre Gouthière, who offered him a perfect knowledge of the trade, before opening his own factory in 1776. His know-how and his talent were quickly recognized at court and won over the royal couple. He will assist Jean-Louis Prieur in particular in making the bronze ornaments for the coach dedicated to the coronation of Louis XVI. Succeeding Thomas Duplessis as bronzier at the Sèvres manufactory in 1783, he became the King's official chaser and gilder. The delivery of the bronzes of a monumental vase from Sèvres now in the Louvre (inv. OA 9590) further increased his fame, which was great on the eve of the Revolution. It was, however, under the Empire that Thomire's career reached its peak. Associated with the Dutermes, in 1804 he acquired the important collection of the merchant-haberdasher and bronzer Martin-Eloy Lignereux. In 1806 in recognition of his merit he won a gold medal at the Industrial Products Exhibition. Its notoriety allows it to deliver to a prestigious clientele the most beautiful objects of the turn of the century and to receive orders for the redevelopment of imperial residences, such as Fontainebleau and the Grand Trianon. The City of Paris also uses its skills for gifts that it intends for sovereigns, such as a clock offered to Marie-Louise in 1810 on the occasion of her marriage to Napoleon I, today kept at the Louvre, (inv. OA 9511) or the birthplace of the King of Rome; works for which he collaborated with the greatest painters, cabinetmakers and goldsmiths such as Jean-Baptiste-Claude Odiot or Pierre-Paul Prud'hon.