



Study and Philosophy - Directoire period clock

Circa: 18th century

18th century

Gilded bronze, white marble of Carrara

52 x 69 cm (20 1/2 x 27 1/8 inches)

Certainly realized under the supervision of Dominique Daguerre

The figures after the models of the sculptor Louis-Simon Boizot

The case attributed to the bronzier François Rémond

Important mantel clock, called "The Study and the Philosophy", in bronze very finely chiseled, gilded and patinated, and white marble of Carrara

The enamelled circular dial was made by "Mathieu l'Aine a Paris" for Claude-Mathieu dit l'Aîné (1722-c. 1815) Master in 1754, and indicates, by three polished steel or pierced copper hands, the hours in Arabic numerals, the minutes in increments of fifteen and the days of the month. The movement is enclosed in a circular case resting on a bas-relief terminal representing putti trying to light a fire and supporting a superb eagle with outstretched wings holding thunderbolts in its talons; on either side are seated two allegorical figures in gilded bronze "à l'antique" representing a young man writing with a stylus on a tablet and a young woman reading a book. The whole is surrounded by a frieze of stylized foliage and rests on a quadrangular base with rounded sides in statuary white marble richly decorated with chased and gilded bronze motifs such as a mascarons of a bearded man framed by winged lovers whose bodies are prolonged in leafy scrolls "in arabesque" and circular medallions centered on masks; finally, six feet underlined by friezes of ovals support the whole clock.

Often wrongly called "Les Arts et les Lettres", "L'Etude et la Philosophie", "aux Maréchaux" or "Les Liseuses", this clock model appears only under the name of "L'Etude" in the commercial correspondence between the chaser-gilder François Rémond and the merchant Dominique Daguerre, the most important dealer of luxury goods during the reign of Louis XVI; the preparatory drawing of the clock, annotated in Rémond's hand, was offered at auction in Paris in February 1981 (reproduced in H.

Ottomeyer and P. Pröschel, *Vergoldete Bronzen, Die Bronzearbeiten des Spätbarock und Klassizismus*, Band I, Munich, 1986, p.295, fig.4.17.5). Produced from 1784, the composition was a direct variation of two figures created in 1776 by the sculptor Louis-Simon Boizot (1743-1809) for the Royal Manufacture of Sèvres, representing a young girl reading and a young man writing under the names of "l'étude" and "la philosophie"; see a Sèvres cookie of this model that is preserved in the Jones collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London (illustrated in H. Ottomeyer and P. Pröschel, *op.cit.* in Band I, Munich, 1986, p.294, fig.4.17.2). These figures were used by Daguerre, who commissioned Rémond to place them against a terminal supporting a clock movement topped by an eagle, thus creating one of the most successful neoclassical clocks of the Parisian decorative arts of the late Louis XVI reign, which immediately met with great success among the great connoisseurs of the time.

As early as the end of the 18th century, some documents mention clocks of this model among the great collectors of the time.

Nowadays, among the clocks of this model, with variants, listed in the great international public and private collections, let us quote in particular: a first specimen, the dial signed "Dubuc jeune", which is exposed in the Quirinal Palace in Rome (published in A. Gonzales-Palacios, *Il patrimonio artistico del Quirinale, Gli Arredi francesi*, Milan, 1996, p.308, n°89); a second one is kept in the Salon des Aides de camp of the Palais de l'Elysée (see M. and Y. Gay, "Du Pont d'Iéna à l'Elysée", in *Bulletin de l'association nationale des collectionneurs et amateurs d'horlogerie ancienne (ANCAHA)*, summer 1993, n°67, p.12); a third one, the dial of "Mercier à Paris", belongs to the collections of the Banque de France in Paris (illustrated in M. et Y. Gay, "L'ANCAHA à la Banque de France", in *Bulletin ANCAHA*, summer 1995, n°73, p.76); and a fourth, probably coming from the former collections of King Louis XVI, which is reproduced in C. Baulez, "Les bronziers Gouthière, Thomire et Rémond", in the exhibition catalog *Louis-Simon Boizot 1743-1809, Sculpteur du roi et directeur de l'atelier de sculpture à la Manufacture de Sèvres*, Paris, 2001, p.287, fig.9. Finally, it is worth noting that three clocks of this type belong to the Spanish royal collections (see J. Ramon Colon de Carvajal, *Catalogo de relojes del Patrimonio nacional*, Madrid, 1987, p.62, 64 and 92), while three other examples are in the English royal collections (published in C. Jagger, *Royal Clocks, The British Monarchy and its Timekeepers 1300-1900*, London, 1983, p.211-212).

François Rémond (ca. 1747-1812) was one of the most important Parisian chisel-makers of the last third of the 18th century. He began his apprenticeship in 1763 and obtained his master's degree in 1774. Immediately his talent allowed him to build up a rich clientele among which were some personalities of the Court.

Claude Mathieu was born in Troyes and is known as "l'Ainé" to distinguish him from his younger brother Edme, known as Mathieu le Jeune (deceased after 1806) who also worked as a watchmaker. Mathieu the Elder, first worked as a journeyman in Paris in 1743. A little more than a decade later, on July 31, 1754, he was received as a Parisian master clockmaker by decree of June 25 of that year. In 1754 he was established on rue Neuve des Capucines, but by 1757 he was working on rue Saint-Honoré opposite the Hôtel de Noailles. His status was such that he was appointed member of the jury in charge of the new time system in 1793.