

A Restoration mahogany *gueridon* mounted with patinated bronze, with its original *lave emailée* tabletop, marked “Hachette et Compagnie / Rue Coquenard 40”, manufactured by *Hachette et Compagnie*, and probably designed by Jacob Ignaz Hittorff (1792–1867), Paris, ca. 1833–38.

Height: 29 1/8 in. (74 cm)

Width: 36 5/8 in. (93 cm)

Bibliography:

M. Keine and C. Checconi, *Jacques Ignace Hittorff*, 2011;

U. Leben, “Entre l’Empire et Hittorff, une cheminée de l’hôtel Beauharnais restaurée”, in *l’Estampille*, November 2007, pp. 66-71;

G. Brunel, *Laves émaillées. Un décor oublié du XIXe siècle*, exhibition catalogue, Paris, Musée de la vie Romantique, 1998;

M. Kiene, *Inventar der Zeichnungen von Jacob Ignaz Hittorff in der Universitäts- und Stadtbibliothek Köln*, 1996;

D.D. Schneider, *The works and doctrine of Jacob Ignaz Hittorff*, 1977;

K. Hammer, *Jacob Ignaz Hittorff: ein Pariser Baumeister 1792 – 1867*, 1968.



The present *gueridon* is a rare example of furniture decorated with the technique of *lave emailée*, or enamelled lava. The mahogany pedestal, resting onto a tripod with wheels, is decorated with *palmettes* in patinated bronze echoing the design of the tabletop. The lava tabletop is sumptuously painted, with a colourful decoration of fruit and flowers over a pink-dotted background. The top is set into a mahogany frame and support. The inscription on the underside reading “Hachette et Comp. / Rue Coquenard 40” proves not only that the table was manufactured by *Hachette et Cie.*, but also that it was probably designed by Jacob Ignaz Hittorff, who directed the company between 1733 and 1738 and had his Paris workshop on Rue Coquenard. The *Hachette* atelier was instead located at 124 Rue du Faubourg Saint Martin.

Such tables in enamelled lava were extremely expensive to produce, and were manufactured in a very limited number to be sold as unique pieces or, more commonly, to be exhibited and sent as gifts in order to promote the innovative technique throughout Europe. As a consequence very few of them are known. One of such tables manufactured by *Hachette et Cie* and designed by Hittorff is in the collection of the Chrysler Museum of Art, Virginia (**fig.1**), two are in the collection of the Manufacture et Musée Nationaux de Sèvres (**fig.2**), whilst another one, decorated with a portrait of Louis Philippe, was exhibited at TEFAF Maastricht in 2014.



Fig.1 J.I. Hittorff and *Hachette et Cie.*, centre table, enamelled lava with mahogany and ormolu base, 1833, Chrysler Museum of Art, Virginia, no. 2001.21

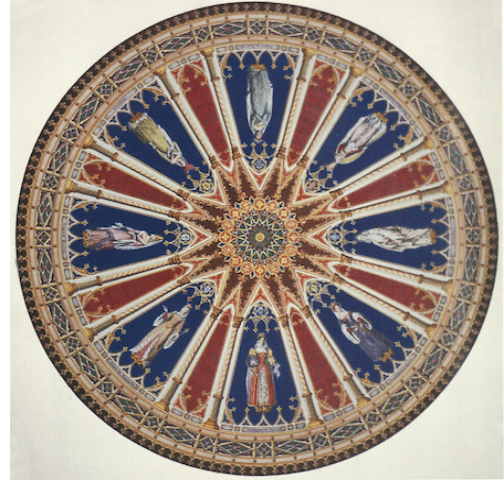


Fig.2 J.I. Hittorff, design for a centre table in the Gothic style, ink, watercolour and gouache over traces of graphite on paper, c. 1833–34, Cologne, Universitaats- und Stadtbibliothek.

The patent for enamel painting on lava was first deposited in France in 1791 by the ceramicist Louis-François Ollivier (1770–1820), often assumed to be the first to have attempted to glaze stones. Many more patents were filed between 1827 and 1828, but little innovations were introduced then at a technical level. The lava generally used for these works came from the Nugère volcano, close to Volvic, in central France.

In 1828, plaques of enamelled lava were first employed to decorate the streets of Paris, and the contract was awarded to *Hachette et Cie.* The manufactory *Hachette et Compagnie* took on both large institutional projects and the production of a range of everyday objects decorated with the then innovative technique, such as tables, chimney pieces, plaques, candelabra and column bases. These products received general admiration at the 1834 *Exposition des Produits de l'Industrie*, where the jury awarded a silver medal to the company. A panel of enamelled lava exhibited on that occasion was commented upon with the words, "the enamel painting leaves little to be desired in its perfection. It seems impossible to achieve a more colourful result, or to produce a stronger material, these two qualities deriving respectively from the vitrification of the enamels and the intense heat to which the support is exposed, being left in a state of incandescence for several days."

Hachette et Compagnie was founded by Pierre Hachette (d. 1848), the son-in-law of the painter Ferdinand Mortelet (1774–1844), one of the first to experiment with the technique of enamel painting on stone. The company's artistic production was

supervised between 1833 and 1838 by the architect and designer Jakob Ignaz Hittorff (1792–1867). Born in Cologne, Hittorff began his career working under the supervision of Charles Percier (1764–1838) and François-Joseph Belanger (1744–1818), two of the most renowned architects of the Empire. He soon rose to become a successful architect and designer in his own right, supervising the *Royal Fêtes* throughout the 1820s, being in charge of the decorations for the baptism of the Duc de Bordeaux in 1821 and the coronation of Charles X in 1825. Other than the decoration of Palais Beauharnais, seat of the Prussian Embassy in Paris, Hittorff's major project was the decoration of the interiors of the church of Saint Vincent de Paul, for which he largely employed enamelled lava.

In order to promote the new technique, Hittorff sent tables such as the present one to prominent politicians and monarchs both in France and abroad with the hope that, fascinated by the technique and convinced of its efficiency, they could commission large institutional projects to the company. Archival documents show for example that one table was sent to the Royal Institute of Art and Manufacture in Berlin in 1833, and another was sent to Leopold I of Belgium in 1836.

For the decoration of a tabletop like the present one, a drawing was traced directly onto the slab of lava. A first layer of enamel was then applied and the work was fired a first time in order to fix this. The decoration was then painted over this background, the work being fired after the application of each colour. With this technique it was possible to achieve extremely detailed designs and a particularly resistant final product.



Fig.3 Gueridon, August von Kloeber and Gottfried Wilhelm Voelker (designers), Royal Porcelain manufactory, Berlin, hard-paste porcelain, enamelled and gilded, mounted in gilded bronze and yellow metal, 1833–34, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 2000.189.



Fig.4 Gueridon, Moïse Jacobber (designer), Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory, hard-paste porcelain, mounted in ormolu and patinated bronze, 1821, Sotheby's, New York, 01 Feb. 2013, lot 3.

The production of such gueridons in enamelled lava can be considered in parallel with the rising popularity of gueridons with porcelain tops in the first half of the 19th century, such as those produced in the Royal Porcelain Manufactory in Berlin (**fig.3**) and the Imperial Manufactory at Sèvres (**fig.4**). One of the greatest promoters of such gueridons was Alexandre Brongniart (1770–1847), director of the Sèvres manufactory. It is remarkable to note that Brongniart asked *Hachette et Cie* for samples of enamelled lava when setting up the museum of ceramics. Pleased with the request, Hittorff sent him a table in the Gothic style. This suggests that there was a close exchange of ideas between the porcelain manufactory at Sèvres and *Hachette* in Paris, which would explain the affinities between the decoration of the present table and with Sèvres porcelain produced in the 1830s (**fig.5-6**). It is therefore possible that the design of the present table has to be attributed to an artist working for the Sèvres manufactory, such as Jean-Charles Develly (1783–1862), Moïse Jacobber (1786–1864), or the young Pierre-Joseph Guèrou (b. 1818), who may have been employed at *Hechette* under the direction of Hittorff.



Fig.5 Saucer, Sèvres porcelain manufactory, hard-paste porcelain, enamel and gold, 1833, London, Victoria & Albert Museum, no. 469A-1844.



Fig.6 Saucer, Sèvres porcelain manufactory, hard-paste porcelain, enamel and gold, 1834–6, London, Victoria & Albert Museum, no. 470&A-1844.