

Dihl et Guerhard (French, 1781–ca. 1824) (Manufacture de Monsieur Le Duc d'Angoulême, until 1789) porcelain factory, bust of Bonaparte, first Consul, about 1800, with its original base.

Paris 1800 Circa

Height: 15.74 in. (40 cm)



This extremely rare biscuit, with its original base, is probably the only representation of Bonaparte by Dihl et Guerhard manufactory to have been rendered in the form of a bust.

Dihl et Guerhard was without a doubt the most prestigious of all the Parisian porcelain manufactories.

Founded in 1781 under the Ancien Régime, the company reached its zenith under the Consulate and the Empire, before falling into decline and shutting down under the Restoration, in 1823.

It was renowned for its sophisticated decoration and the virtuosity of its craftsmen. From 1811 to 1813, they crafted a porcelain dinner service for the Empress Josephine that ranks among the most lavish ever made – and probably one of the most expensive, at the colossal price of 46,976 francs in total. The service is an absolute masterpiece of the Empire period, and several of its plates are in the collection.

The bust of Bonaparte was undoubtedly an imperial order, particularly since the only other copy that we know of is on display at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art (incomplete, without its base).

Under the protection and patronage of Louis-Antoine Duc d'Anguilleme, Guerhard and Dihl opened a hard past porcelain factory, in 1781, in Rue de Bondy. Dihl, a man of broad scientific attainments, is credited with being the first to establish a complete palette of colours that could be used for the decoration of hard paste porcelain. This factory successfully reproduced all the under glaze coloured grounds used at Sevres and all the colours for on-glaze painting. In addition to tableware, vases and ornaments of exquisite quality and enriched with the most elaborate decorations, there were made a great quantity of excellent biscuit pieces.

Dihl et Guerhard, (Manufacture duc D'Angouleme before) was, with Sévres, the most important porcelain company in France, during the neoclassical period. Christophe Dihl even before his association with Guerhard, manufactured busts and figures. He had come to produce parts with a high quality of execution and he was very proud for their significant sizes.

Christophe Dihl married in 1797 the Guerhard widow.

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In 1800 the old factory of the Duke of Angoulême, apparently, seems having not suffered for the revolutionary period, had already seized the supremacy over all France porcelain manufactures and even all over Europe.

The Imperial period marked his manufacture apogee when was still directed by Dihl and his wife, the Antoine Guerhard widow.

In spite the 1806 triumph in Paris for the international exhibition and the quantity of so important customers, behind this brilliant facade, the manufacture begins to decline. In 1812 Mrs. Dihl goes to London trying to sell several porcelain cases brought with her, probably the 184 lots put in auction by Christie's in 1813.

The factory managed to stay overnight, thanks to private loans, several mortgages or by prestigious orders like the service for Empress Joséphine (1811-1813).

In 1828 arrived the dissolution of the company Dihl et Guerhard, in difficult conditions.

Dihl died on 12 feb.1830 and M.Dihl on 10 July 1831, eighty years old, completely dilapidated. Two public sales were organized in 1830 and in 1831 to put in auction all works.