

A PAIR OF EMPIRE ORMOLU AND PATINATED BRONZE FOUR-LIGHT CANDELABRA, CIRCA 1810, BY CLAUDE-FRANCOIS-RABIAT, PROBABLY FOR PIERRE-PHILIPPE-THOMIRE.

Height: 46in.(116cm).

Inside the acanthus sections, above the spheres, each stamped "Rabiat".

Provenance: Private collection, Switzerland

Each Candelabra with a winged figure of Victory standing on a sphere with stars and holding aloft a wreath laurel, above a high square base decorated with applications in front of War Trophies, and wreaths in both sides, on a rouge griotte marble basement.

Claude-François Rabiat (Paris 1756-1815) was apprenticed to Etienne Vignerelle in 1769 and established as maître in 1778. Rabiat factory's was established at 41, rue Beaubourg and is first mentioned in Almanac of Commerce in 1789. Little by little, Rabiat acquired the entire building, and when he died in 1815 he left a comfortable heritage for his wife and six children.

He regularly provided a variety of clocks and candelabra to other accomplished bronziers and horlogers including Thomire, Feuchère, Ravrio and Claude Galle, in the taken after Rabiat's death is mentioned a library that was complemented by that of the factory, which contained engravings of the different models offered to satisfy the clock-makers and other artisans, for this large business sold neither to a private clientel nor to important fabricators of bronze objects and merchants. The inventory also includes a list of Rabiat's clients, including Pierre-Philippe Thomire, "bronze fabricator", and the latter, according to the register of accounts, still owed payment at the time of Rabiat's death in 1815, for purchases that included a pair of corbelled candelabras (125frs), 6 liters of solder, and a pair of a large girandoles with crossed branches (280frs..). About Thomire on Rabiat's books it is mentioned that everything was paid until the 30th march 1813, but he was still awaiting for 48frs for a paire of candelabra.

An example of this practice is firmly established through a documented pair of similar candelabra delivered on 23 December 1809 by the bronzier Claude Galle for the Boudoir of the Petit Trianon at Versailles. The inventory states Une Paire de Candélabras figures aillées, bronzées, sur une demi boule à feuilles, quatre branches tete de zéphir dorés en or mat. Prix demandé 600F. Règalé 590F.. These Petit Trianon candelabra are illustrated in D. Ledoux-Lebard, *Le Grand Trianon*, p.35, and H. Ottomeyer, P. Pröschel et al., *Vergoldete Bronzen*, Munich, 1986, Band

II, p.705, fig.21. Further information on Rabiart can be found in D. Ledous-Lebard, 'Rabiart', *L'Estampille / L'Objet d'Art*, April 1991, pp.7; 86to92.

As desired by the Emperor, the artist created a style in keeping with the reign, grandeur, severity and ostentation of Napoleon. This Empire style owed much to antique art. The campaigns of General Bonaparte in Italy and Egypt were to popularise the decorative elements found there. At the request of the Emperor, furniture was to be as far as possible devoid of ornaments. Candelabra formed an important part of the furniture and had to obey the rules for it. Since the Revolution there had been no furniture in the castles, because the belongings of the aristocrats had been sold by the public auction. Consequently the Emperor had to place large orders. This unique pair described below is one of the most typical examples of this Empire period and dates from about 1810. There is strict symmetry and all the decorative elements are inspired by antique art.

(The 30th march 1813)

Inventaire du magasin dressé par André Coquille et Lucien-François Feuchère
N°1 Deux paires de grands candélabres, à figures ailées.