

N° 20

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**LEPAUTE HORLOGER DU ROI**  
**Jean-André LEPAUTE (1720-1789) and Jean-Baptiste LEPAUTE (1727-1802)**

**SMALL GILT-BRONZE CARTEL CLOCK**



Circa 1770

Signed on the dial: .. *LE PAUTRE Hr DU ROY* .. A PARIS..

H. 21 in.; W. 11 in.; D. 4 ½ in.

REFERENCE BIBLIOGRAPHY: Tardy, *Dictionnaire des horlogers français*, Paris, 1972; J.-D. Augarde, *Les Ouvriers du Temps, La Pendule à Paris de Louis XIV à Napoléon Ier*; Pierre Kjellberg, *Encyclopédie de la Pendule Française, du Moyen Age au XXè siècle*; Multiple authors, *Orologi negli arredi del Palazzo Reale di Torino e delle residenze sabaude*.









**LEPAUTE HORLOGER DU ROI (Clockmaker to the King)**  
**Jean-André LEPAUTE (1720-1789) and Jean-Baptiste LEPAUTE (1727-1802)**

**SMALL GILT-BRONZE CARTEL CLOCK**  
**TRANSITION PERIOD, CIRCA 1770**

Gilt-bronze case boldly cast with scrolls, foliage and flower heads, featuring shell motifs below and military armour on top (helmet, sword and quiver).

Single-piece enamel dial with Roman numerals for the hours and Arabic numerals for the 5 minutes; two finely cut, engraved and gilt hands, and a blued-steel third hand for the setting of the alarm.

Circular movement with verge escapement and silk-suspended pendulum; quarter-strike by two hammers on a single bell on demand by a pull-cord on the left; alarm setting by the hand in the dial, to be armed by a pull-cord on the right. Autonomy two weeks.

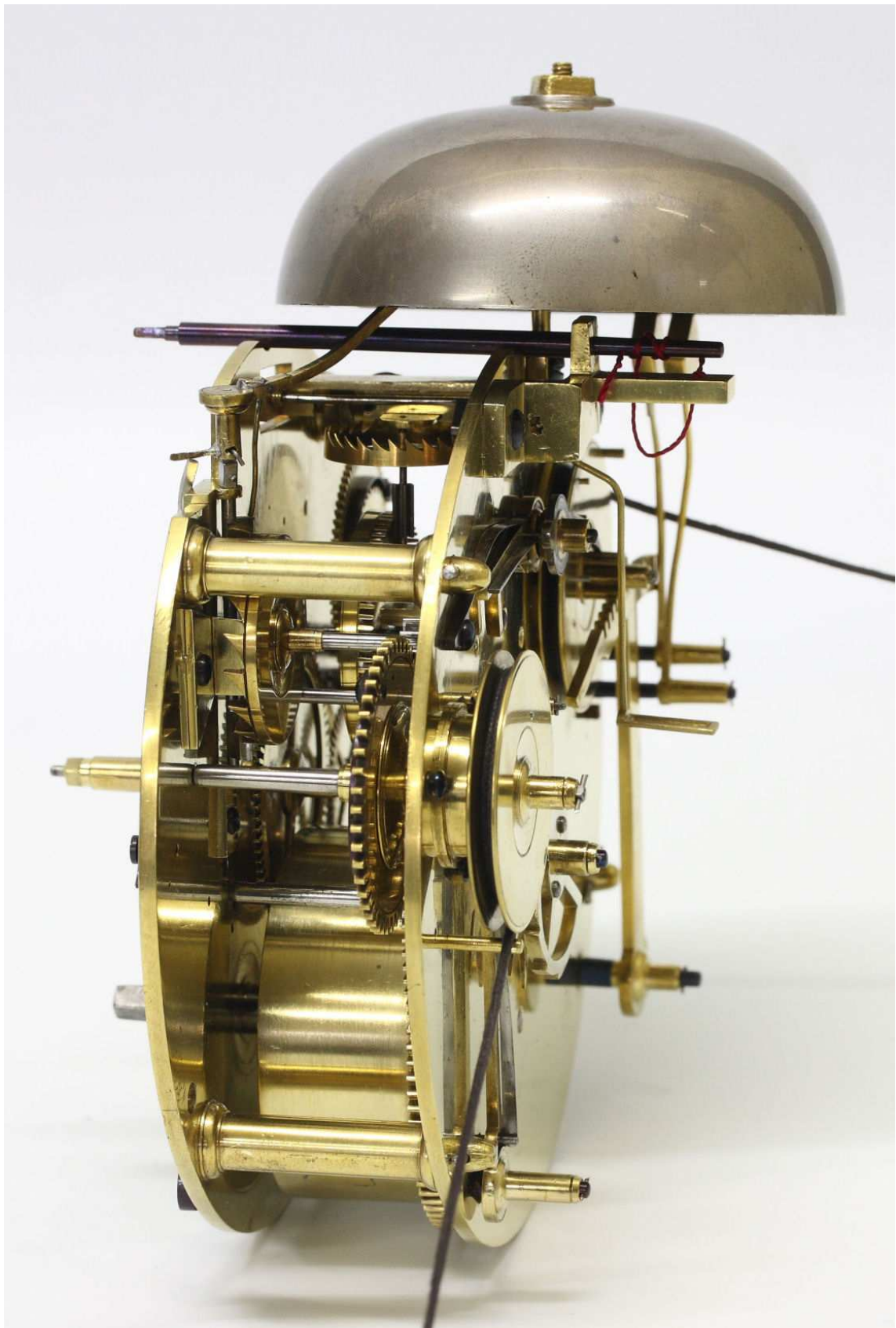
The dial signed: .. *LE PAUTRE Hr DU ROY .. A PARIS.*<sup>1</sup>. This signature refers to the company operated by Jean-André Lepaute (1720-1789) and his brother Jean-Baptiste Lepaute (1727-1802). It is impossible to precisely distinguish the individual contribution of each of the associates in the work produced by the company.

H. 21 in.; W. 11 in.; D. 4 ½ in.

Works by LEPAUTE can be found in many museums around the world: Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin; Palacio Real in Madrid; Musée du Louvre, Musée national des techniques, and Nissim de Camondo in Paris; Château de Versailles; Musée des arts décoratifs, Lyon; New York Metropolitan Museum of Art; Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg.

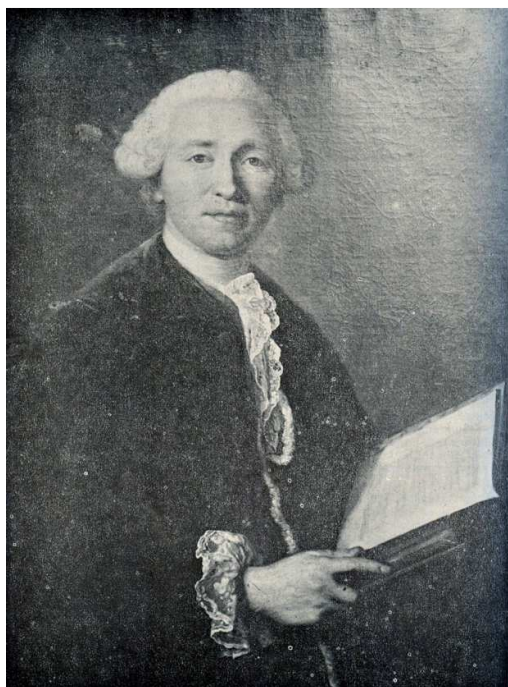
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<sup>1</sup> The spelling of the signature *LEPAUTE Horloger du Roi* varies with different clock models and periods. We noticed that on some models LEPAUTE is spelled LEPAUTRE, as on our clock and on another Empire-period clock (Anonymous sale, Paris, Hôtel Drouot, Aguttes, 18 June 2013, lot 308). It is probably a variation (of origin unknown to us) of the name LEPAUTE, or more simply a spelling mistake by the calligrapher employed by the dial enameller, this mistake was then perpetuated.



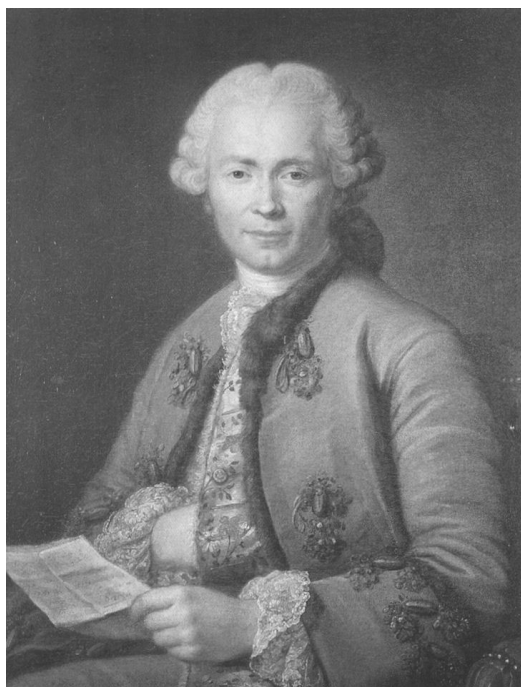
As indicated by Jean-Dominique Augarde (see reference above), the signature *LEPAUTE HORLOGER DU ROI* corresponds to the firm founded on 28 October 1758 by Jean-André Lepaute (1720-1789), known as *l'Aîné* or the Elder, and his brother Jean-Baptiste (1727-1802). This signature was used until 1792.

## LEPAUTE CLOCKMAKER TO THE KING



**Guillaume Voiriot (1713-1799)**

*Portrait of Jean-André Lepaute*  
Oil on canvas



**Guillaume Voiriot (1713-1799)**

*Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Lepaute*  
Oil on canvas (Private Collection)

Originally from the eastern part of France, Jean-André Lepaute was the eldest of nine children. Introduced by his father to the art of casting, locksmithing, and monumental clockmaking, he left home at 20 to train with a Parisian clockmaker. His younger brother Jean-Baptiste joined him in 1747. Together they founded *LEPAUTE HORLOGER DU ROI*, established at rue Saint-Honoré in 1766, and then at Palais Royal in 1772-73.

Designated *Horloger du roi*, Jean-André Lepaute devised a clock, which he presented to Louis XV in 1751, whose entire mechanism consisted of only one wheel. In 1752 he invented a clock that indicated the hours, minutes and seconds, striking the hours and the quarters. The following year he published the essay *Mémoire sur l'échappement à repos*, *Donné à l'Académie des Sciences par Lepaute Horloger du Roi au Luxembourg à Paris*, followed in 1755 by the remarkable horology treatise *Traité d'horlogerie*, on which he collaborated with the celebrated astronomer and academician Jérôme de Lalande (Fig.1). He completed his treatise work in 1760 with *Description d'une nouvelle pendule polycaméristique ; pour servir de Supplément au Traité d'Horlogerie*. Appointed *Maître*, or master clockmaker, in 1759, Jean-André Lepaute received official accommodation at the Louvre. He retired from the firm in 1775.



Fig.1 *Traité d'horlogerie* by Jean-André Lepaute

His brother, Jean-Baptiste Lepaute, also appointed *Horloger du Roi*, took over the family enterprise in 1774 along with his two nephews. He became master clockmaker in 1776, creating among other works, the monumental equation clock for the Paris city hall (destroyed in 1871). From 1778 to 1783, his establishment was located at Rue des Echelles Saint-Honoré. He retired in 1789.

The two Lepaute brothers were not only renowned for the technical feats and aesthetic value of their numerous horological inventions, but they were also the founding members of a great dynasty of clockmakers who distinguished themselves over the centuries for their excellence and prestige.

**LEPAUTE Clocks**  
(housed in various collections)



**Urn clock; movement with revolving dial**

**(Private Collection)**



**After a model by Pierre-Philippe Thomire**  
*Flora and Zephyrus*

(Palazzo Reale, Torino)



**Tall case regulator clock; case stamped Nicolas Petit**

**(Bernard Steinitz Collection, Paris)**