

N° 42

JACQUES NÈVE

Horloger d'Art

+ 32 (0)477 27 19 08 - jneve@horloger.net - www.horloger.net

VICTOR PAILLARD (1805-1886)

PATINATED AND GILT BRONZE 'RENAISSANCE' CLOCK

Former collection of the clock retailer:

Au Balancier de Cristal



Paris, circa 1845

Circular dial with enamelled Roman numerals on a white ground

H. 58 cm (22.8 in); W. 27 cm (10.6 in); D. 19 cm (7.5 in)

Signed *Victor PAILLARD Fabrct* on the base; monogrammed *V.P.* on the back

Signed *Roblin à Paris* on movement blank by *Pons, médaille d'or 1834*

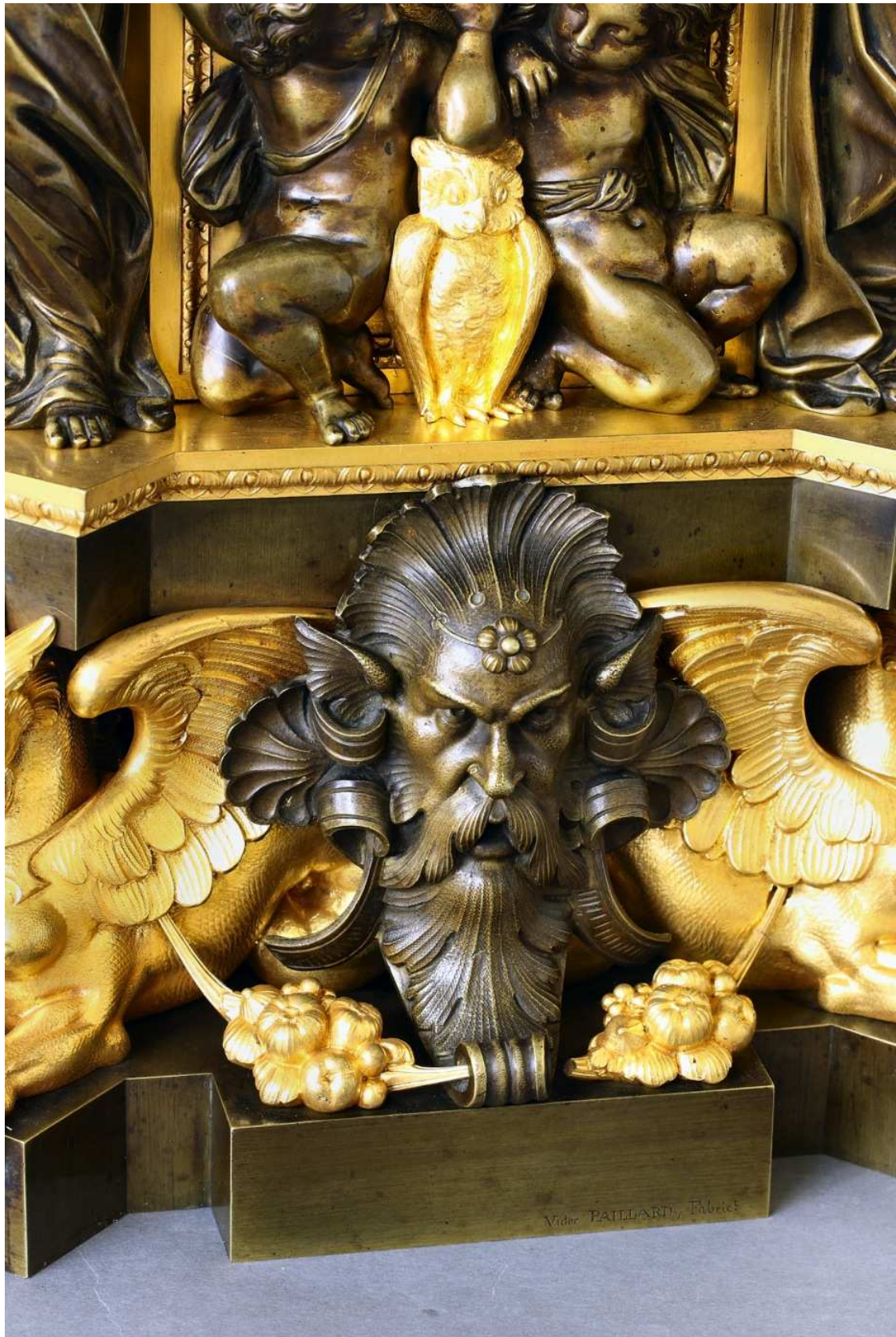
Model exhibited at *The Exhibition of Art Industry*, Dublin, 1853.

Illustrated in Tardy, *La pendule française des origines à nos jours, 2^{ème} partie: du Louis XVI à nos jours*, Paris, 1969, page 469.









Renaissance-inspired clock, in the form of a temple flanked by caryatids; the upper part surmounted with a winged putto holding an hourglass; the façade decorated in high-relief with a female mascaron framed by two facing serpents, two crouching putti and an owl; the lower part decorated with two chimeras protruding from the outer angles and framing the god Chronos.

Patinated and gilt bronze - H. 58 cm (22.8 in); W. 27 cm (10.6 in); D. 19 cm (7.5 in) - Signed *Victor PAILLARD Fabrct* on the base and monogrammed *V.P.* on the reverse.

The movement is signed *Roblin à Paris*, from a blank of the highest quality by *PONS*, awarded the Gold Medal in 1934. 15-days autonomy round movement, anchor recoil escapement, steel suspension with adjustment of the “rise and fall” type, which is exceedingly rare in this type of movements. Half-hourly strike in the French fashion, countwheel and silvered bell.

Pierre-César Honoré PONS (Paris 1773-1851): By 1798 Pons was already working as a clockmaker for the prestigious firm of Lepaute. In 1807 State authorities assigned him to revive the clockmaking industry at Saint-Nicolas-d'Alhiermont where he introduced machinery and production line methods for his so-called ‘de Paris’ movements. This round movement was employed in mantle clocks that were highly prized as decorative objects by the industrial bourgeoisie. His work, known for its indisputable quality, had a considerable impact on numerous well-known horologists. At the 1834 Exhibition Pons presented a large number of finely crafted movements and several remarkable precision timepieces.





An excellent example, not only stylistically but also on a visually dynamic level, this clock features all of Victor Paillard's principle aesthetic characteristics. His three favourite themes – children, chimeras and Renaissance-inspired female faces, often represented as mascarons surrounded with strapwork – are assembled here to form an eclectic décor based on the interplay of juxtaposed motifs. Paillard, whose unrivalled ability to combine surface treatments using three pairs of contrasting effects (patina/gilt, gilt/silvering, bronze/porcelain), beautifully demonstrates in this piece the harmonious rhythm of the bronze polychrome motifs.

Reference bibliography: *The Art journal illustrated catalogue: the industry of all nations*, 1851 George Virtue, pgs. 128 and 289; *The Art journal illustrated catalogue: Exhibition of Art Industry in Dublin*, 1853 Virtue & Co, pgs. 4, 7, and 14; *The Art journal illustrated catalogue*, 1855 George Virtue, pgs. 26 and 29; Dafforne James, *The illustrated catalogue of the Universal exhibition, published with the Art journal* □ (1867-1868), pg. 297. Tardy, *Dictionnaire des horlogers français*, Paris 1972; Pierre Kjellberg, *Les bronzes du XIXe siècle: dictionnaire des sculpteurs*, Paris: les Ed. de l'Amateur, 1987, pg. 662; Christiane Frain de la Gaulayrie, *Victor Paillard (1805-1886)*, dissertation, gift of the author to the Bibliothèque des Arts Décoratifs, Paris 1982; Sabine Lubliner-Mattatia, *Victor Paillard (1805-1886), le bronzier de Balzac*, Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français, Paris 2004.

**AN EXCEPTIONAL COLLABORATION:
PAILLARD AND JEAN-JACQUES FEUCHÈRE (1807-1852)**

Running an establishment of one hundred employees, Victor Paillard was highly selective in his choice of workers and artistic collaborators. Besides his workshop's full-time employees – mounters, chasers, figurine and ornament designers, modellers, designers and sculptors – Paillard had ties with the greatest sculptors of the period, soliciting their services to create ornament and furniture designs, or reproducing their sculptures. He was considered by his peers to be one of the best casters of small-scale bronze editions; working with the most important contemporary sculptors, he was not only the primary founder of James Pradier's small-scale bronzes, but he also worked with Barye, Carrier-Belleuse and Préault.

Jean Feuchère was the first – and only – collaborating sculptor mentioned from the time of Paillard's first participation at the Exposition des Produits de l'industrie et du Commerce in 1839. Their collaboration, which included mantle clocks and single-edition sculptural subjects, continued without interruption until the 1849 exhibition. It wasn't until 1855 that Paillard truly enlarged his network of sculptors to include Aizelin, Piat, Sauvageau, Willms, and Mathurin Moreau.

The 1879 Paillard-Romain public auction catalogue¹, which listed decorative bronzes and small-scale edition sculptures by author or artistic collaborator, shows Jean Feuchère as one of the major contributors, with fourteen entries listed in his name. Included are several Renaissance-inspired pieces: *La Vierge au Chardonneret* mantle clock from the 1839 exhibition, as well as a 'caryatid mantle clock with two female figures at the angles and an infant' (N°369). The catalogue description, which seems to correspond with the clock presented here, leads us to believe that Jean Feuchère was its probable author. This hypothesis is further reinforced by the clock's Renaissance-inspired design, the splendid and

¹ *Modèles de bronzes d'art et d'ameublement, modèles en plâtre non édités, mobilier industriel et outillage, le tout provenant des ateliers de M. Romain, successeur de M. Victor Paillard.* M° Ernest Girard commissaire-priseur, Paris, du 24 juillet au 29 août 1879, 63 p.

powerful chimera motifs and the central owl figure – all of which recall the sculptor’s stylistic repertoire.

At the 1853 Exhibition of Art Industry in Dublin, Paillard presented the model of our clock (fig. 1, with some variations), as well as a foliate-embellished *nécessaire à toilette* and a candelabrum decorated with two chimeras.



Fig. 1. Victor Paillard, Renaissance Clock

The Exhibition of Art Industry, Dublin, 1853

An identical model of this clock is illustrated in Tardy's dictionary of French clockmakers. The caption indicates that it was retailed by *Au balancier de Cristal* (fig.2) – probably the largest and most prestigious French clock retailer of the time. Famous for its precision timepieces, rich ornamentation and excellent taste, the firm grew steadily and became highly profitable supplying the city of Paris and Emperor Napoleon III.



Pendule en bronze ciselé et doré de forme architecturale. Des cariatides représentant les Heures soutiennent un fronton surmontant le mouvement.
Coll. « Au Balancier de Cristal ».

Fig. 2. Identical clock model – Collection of *Au Balancier de Cristal*

In addition to Detouche, Paillard worked with the cabinetmaker Alexandre-George Fourdinois and various important Russian families; he was also one of Honoré de Balzac's regular suppliers.

VICTOR PAILLARD, BALZAC'S BRONZIER



Fig. 3 Victor Dargaud, Balzac's residence, 12 rue Fortunée Paris (Paris, Maison Balzac)

When in 1846 Balzac wanted to furnish his residence on the rue Fortunée (fig.3) – the so-called ‘Hôtel Bilboquet’ – for his future bride Mme Hanska, he called on the best artists and artisans of his time: the cabinetmaker Grohé, the sculptor Jean-Jacques Feuchère, the lighting manufacturer Gagneau and Victor Paillard.

In his correspondence, the writer often made reference to his bronze supplier, giving him great reviews: ‘Victor Paillard, who is the Froment-Meurice of bronze, asks six months to put our pieces together; he will surely have a lot of things at his place, which will only be delivered piece by piece’² or further still ‘Anna’s platter is one of the most beautiful I’ve seen. The famous bronzier

² Balzac, Letters to Mme Hanska, 1967-1971, t. 3, p. 466. Letter dated Friday 6 November 1846.

Paillard has instructions to make it stand upright, supported by two lion figures.’³

Aside from the famous writer, Paillard’s clientele included prestigious patrons like Louis-Philippe and his son, the duc de Montpensier and most notably the Imperial couple, who purchased bronze editions of sculptures by Falconet and d’Allegrain at the 1855 Paris World’s Fair. For this same exhibition, Paillard also designed and produced for Empress Eugénie a Louis XVI style vanity decorated with bronze figures representing Geometry, Music and Painting (fig.4).



Fig. 4. Empress Eugénie’s Vanity, exhibited by Victor Paillard at the 1855 World’s Fair (location unknown)

The critics repeatedly praised the quality of Paillard’s craftsmanship, with Busquet remarking in 1855 that the distinguishing feature ‘between all of Paillard’s pieces, is the singularly remarkable harmony of each individual part which composes the whole. Besides the continually excellent selection and perfect taste, the models are very finely chased, entrusted as they are to artist

³ Balzac, op. cit., t. 3, p. 535. Letter to Georges and Anna Mnischech dated Wednesday 9 December 1846.

sculptors and chasers like MM. Hayet, Moreau, Fannière, Sauvageau, Combettes; the mounts are meticulous, the ornamentation is impeccable...He is clearly without rival in the production of gilt bronzes.’⁴

Paillard also executed numerous commissions for public buildings including the Hôtel de Ville and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Quai d’Orsay where he created the chimney-piece bronzes surrounding the statue, *France*, by Joseph Michel-Ange Pollet (1814-1870), and supplied the clock after which the room was named (fig.5).



**Fig. 5. View of the fireplace in the Salon de l’Horloge
Hôtel du ministre des Affaires étrangères, quai d’Orsay**

⁴ Alfred Busquet, ‘L’Industrie des Bronzes d’Art, Ve groupe, classe XVII, huitième section’, in *Travail Universel, Revue complète des œuvres de l’Art et de l’Industrie exposées à Paris en 1855*, t. 2, p. 202-225, Paris, 1855.

He was also put in charge of decorating the fireplace of the Hôtel Parent's Louis XVI Salon at 12 Place Vendôme – the present Maison Chaumet – the décor of which was modified under Napoleon III (fig. 6).



Fig. 6. Louis XVI Salon fireplace at 12 Place Vendôme - the present Maison Chaumet

Between 1842-1852, Paillard helped furnish the Hôtel de Lunas in Montpellier, also known as Hôtel Sabatier d'Espeyran; for this extraordinary décor Paillard offered the following pieces for sale: *entirely gilded Louis XV style mantle clock with infants and birds; entirely gilded pair of girandoles with infants and birds; 11-light girandoles with infant group by Claudion; pair of gilded candlesticks with 2 infants, height 33 cm.; large pair of gilded rocaille candlesticks with three-light candle bouquets that attach on top; porcelain vase decorated in gilded bronze with a 13-light candle bouquet; 2 other small porcelain vases decorated in gilded bronze with solar lamps; 42-light rocaille chandelier, entirely gilded; fireplace shovel stand and (gilded tongs); polished iron and*

blue-stained fireplace shovels and tongs; 1 hearth fender in the same style with gilded infant figures.⁵

AN EXEMPLARY CAREER



The nineteenth century was the golden age for the production of decorative bronzes; due to his training, Victor Paillard mastered all the different artistic trades and industrial techniques related to bronze manufacturing, making his pieces perfectly coherent from conception to completion. At once artist, worker and business manager, Paillard's wide range of abilities won him the admiration of his peers. As a young boy Paillard learned the art of chasing from the bronze maker Jean-François Denière, for whom he later became head workshop manager. In the 1830s Paillard founded his own decorative bronze firm at 105 boulevard Beaumarchais opening onto 6 rue Saint Claude, in the Marais district. He began by making small objects then adding candelabras, clocks, sculpture groups and statuettes. His talent as artist and company manager earned him swift recognition: In 1839 he exhibited for the first time at the Exposition des Produits de l'Industrie et du Commerce in the Carré Marigny, and was awarded a silver medal – a truly exceptional achievement for a first participation, equalled only by the goldsmith Froment-Meurice who was also awarded as of his first participation at the same fair in 1839. The jury report⁶ listed the following principal items exhibited by 'M. Victor Paillard, in Paris, 3 rue de la Perle: 1. Large candelabrum, which, in composition and execution, is M. Paillard's pre-

⁵ Bruno Saunier, 'L'hôtel de Lunas à Montpellier: ameublement et décor sous la Monarchie de Juillet', *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art français*, année 2001, 2002, pages 221-239.

⁶ Exposition des produits de l'industrie française en 1839, rapport du Jury central, tome troisième, Paris chez Bouchard-Huzard, 1839, pages 31-32.

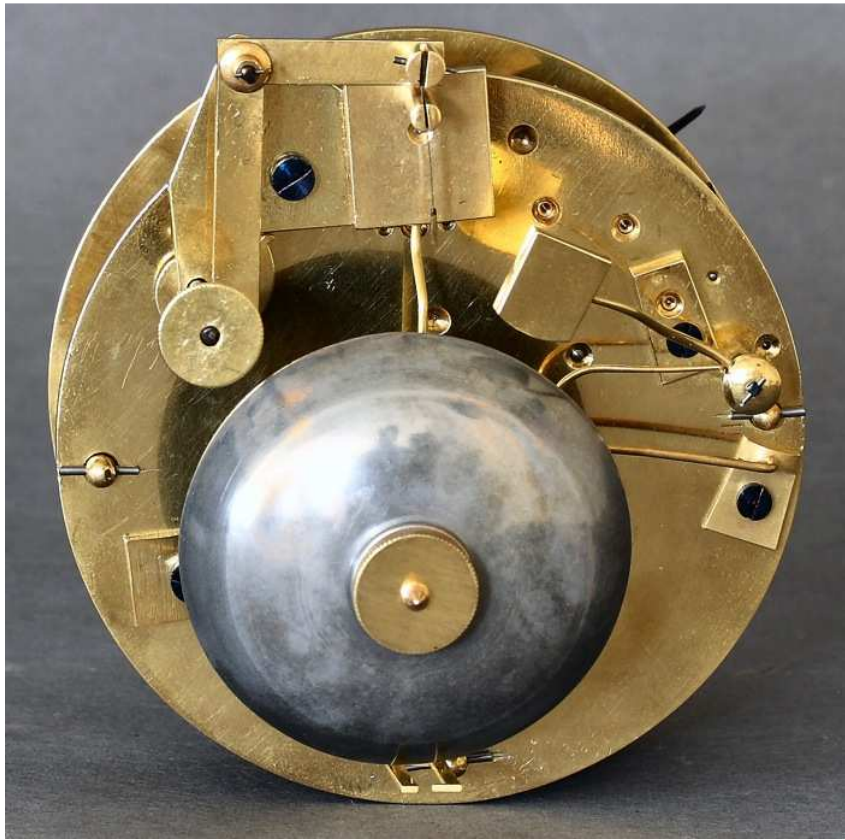
eminent exhibition piece; 2. Vierge au chardonneret mantle clock, the figure by M. Feuchère is finely sculpted; 3. Small, entirely gilded, caryatid mantle clock.' In 1850 Paillard supervised the casting of the colossal statue of a seated Queen Victoria, executed in zinc and bronze after Dantan the Younger, for the first World's Fair that took place in 1851 at the Crystal Palace in London. Paillard had a highly successful career, and the quality of his bronze work earned him numerous honours: At the exhibitions of the Produits de l'industrie française he received another Silver Medal in 1844 and a Gold Medal in 1849; at the World's Fairs he was awarded the Prize Medal at London in 1851, he was appointed Member of the Jury at the Paris exhibition in 1855 and 1862, and received the Gold Medal in 1867, the Merit Medal at Vienna in 1873, and was nominated President of the Jury for the Paris fair in 1878. Paillard joined the Réunion des Fabricants de Bronzes (Association of Bronze Manufacturers) in 1836, becoming its undersecretary in 1837, vice-president in 1846 and 1851, and finally president in 1862.

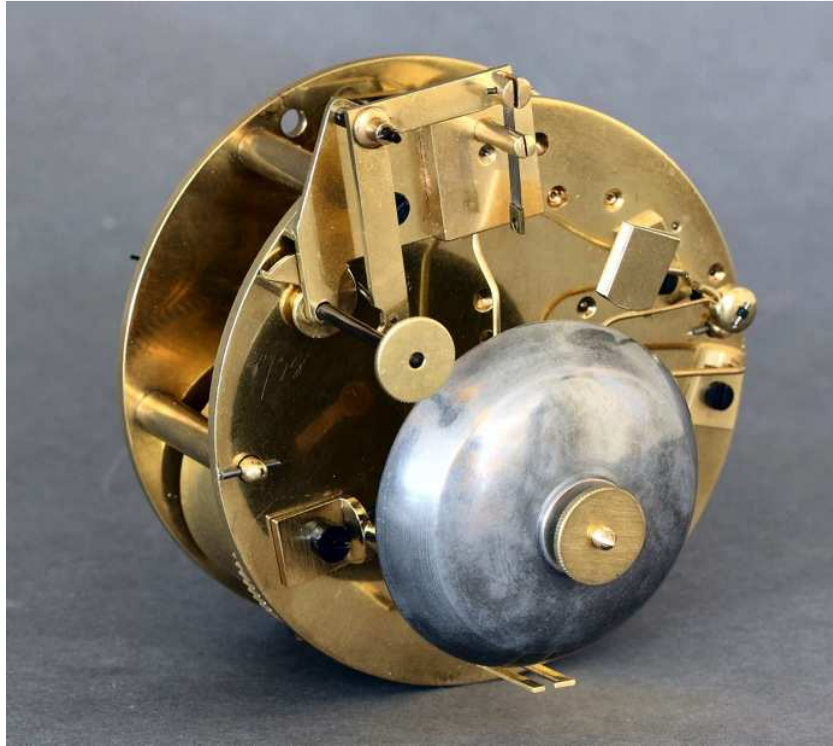
Paillard went into partnership with Louis Alexandre Adolphe Romain on 23 September 1868, forming a company with a share capital of 700,000 Francs. They exhibited under the name *Paillard et Romain* at the 1873 Vienna World's Fair; the worker's representatives noted in their report that Paillard 'was one of the last firms to properly execute mounting and turning.' The firm exported a large part of its production to Belgium, Austria, Brazil, and especially Russia, where Baron Stieglitz was one among many clients. After partnering with Romain, Paillard gradually retired from the industry to dedicate himself to politics, though he still remained active in the bronze milieu as his participation at the 1873 and 1878 World's Fairs attest. He was elected mayor of the 3rd arrondissement in Paris from 1875 to 1878.

Contrary to his peers, Paillard hardly showed an interest in the contemporary vogue for the Middle Ages and *japonism*, instead preferring to mix and match the styles of Louis XV and Louis XVI, as well as the Renaissance. His collection of work was very eclectic as demonstrated in Madame Paillard's inventory after death, which states that among the numerous chandeliers, candlesticks, mounted vases and bowls, etc. found in her home, there also figured the bronze group, *Three Graces*, after Germain Pilon; an ewer and matching platter after Cellini; and two silvered-bronze statuettes, *The Bathers*, after Falconet. Victor Paillard was successful throughout the duration of his career, managing to be active during the end of the July Monarchy and all of the

Second French Empire. Paillard's personal talent, combined with the calibre of his collaborators and the beauty of his bronzes, made him one of the greatest manufacturers of the period, brilliantly rivalling firms like Barbedienne, Matifat, Servant, and others. Cited by Emile Zola in *Les Rougon Macquard*, Paillard's artistic fame was such that he was rightly considered one of the best bronze makers of his time.







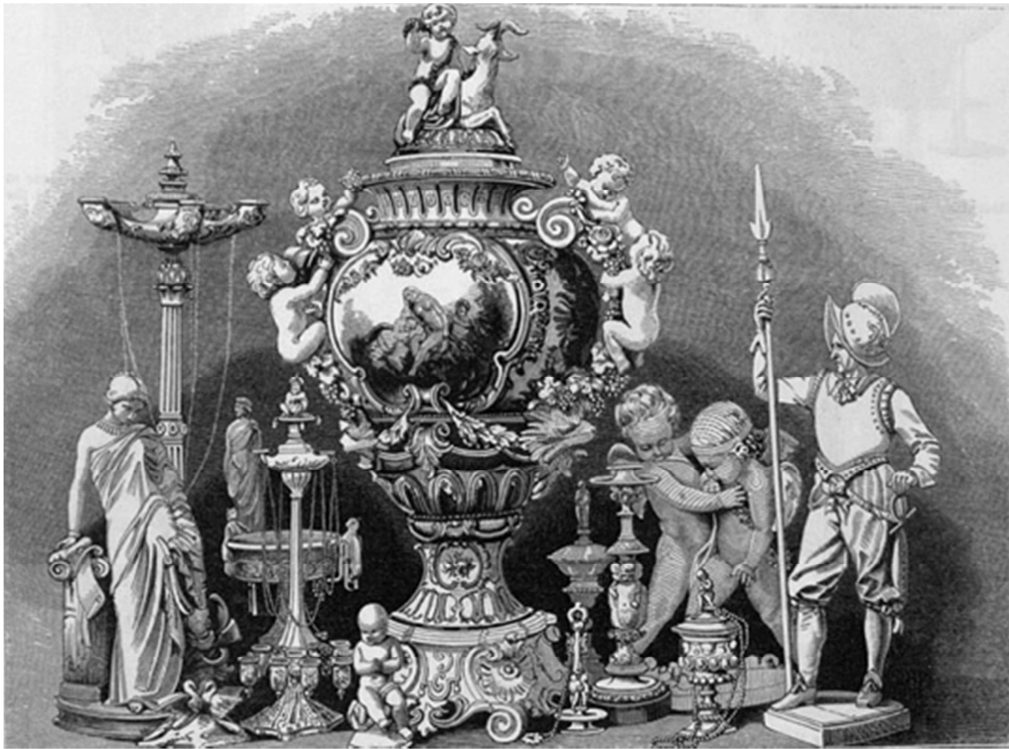
APPENDIX

**SELECTION OF WORKS BY VICTOR PAILLARD
EXHIBITED AT VARIOUS WORLD FAIRS**

LONDON, 1851 WORLD'S FAIR



Gilt-bronze mantle clock depicting winged putti playing with birds



A presentation by Paillard - centre, Louis XIV porcelain and gilt-bronze vase, the handles decorated with children harvesting grapes



Girandole

DUBLIN, 1853 EXHIBITION OF ART INDUSTRY

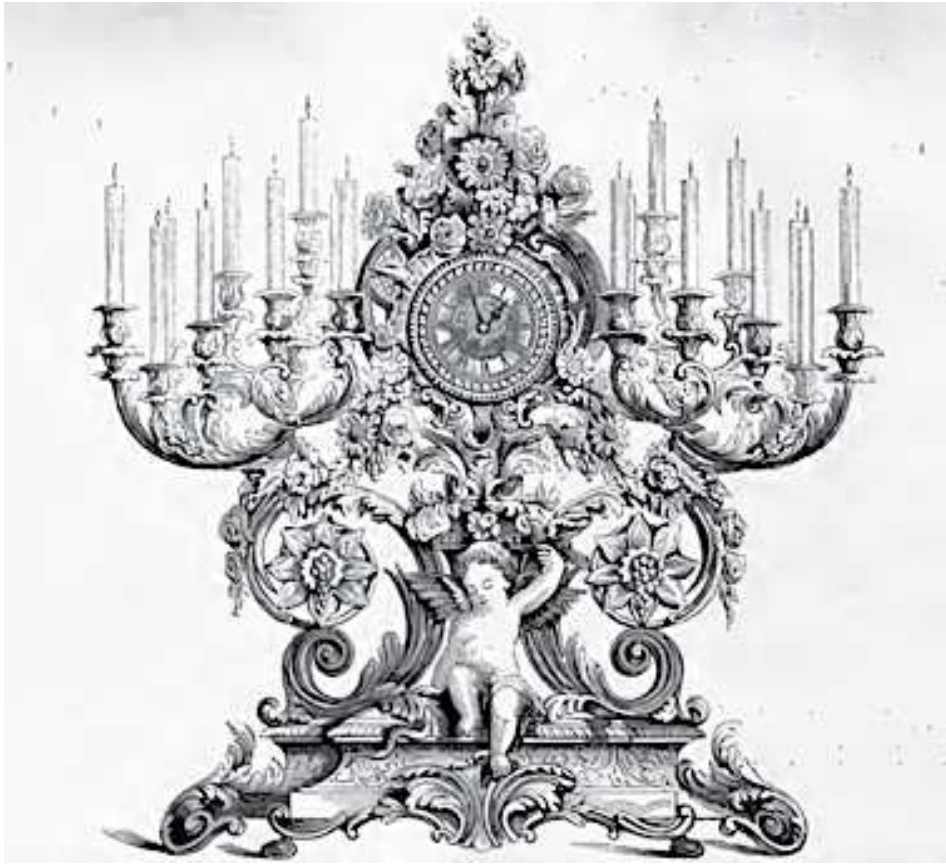


Renaissance-Style *nécessaire de toilette* or toiletry casket



Candelabrum

PARIS, 1855 WORLD'S FAIR

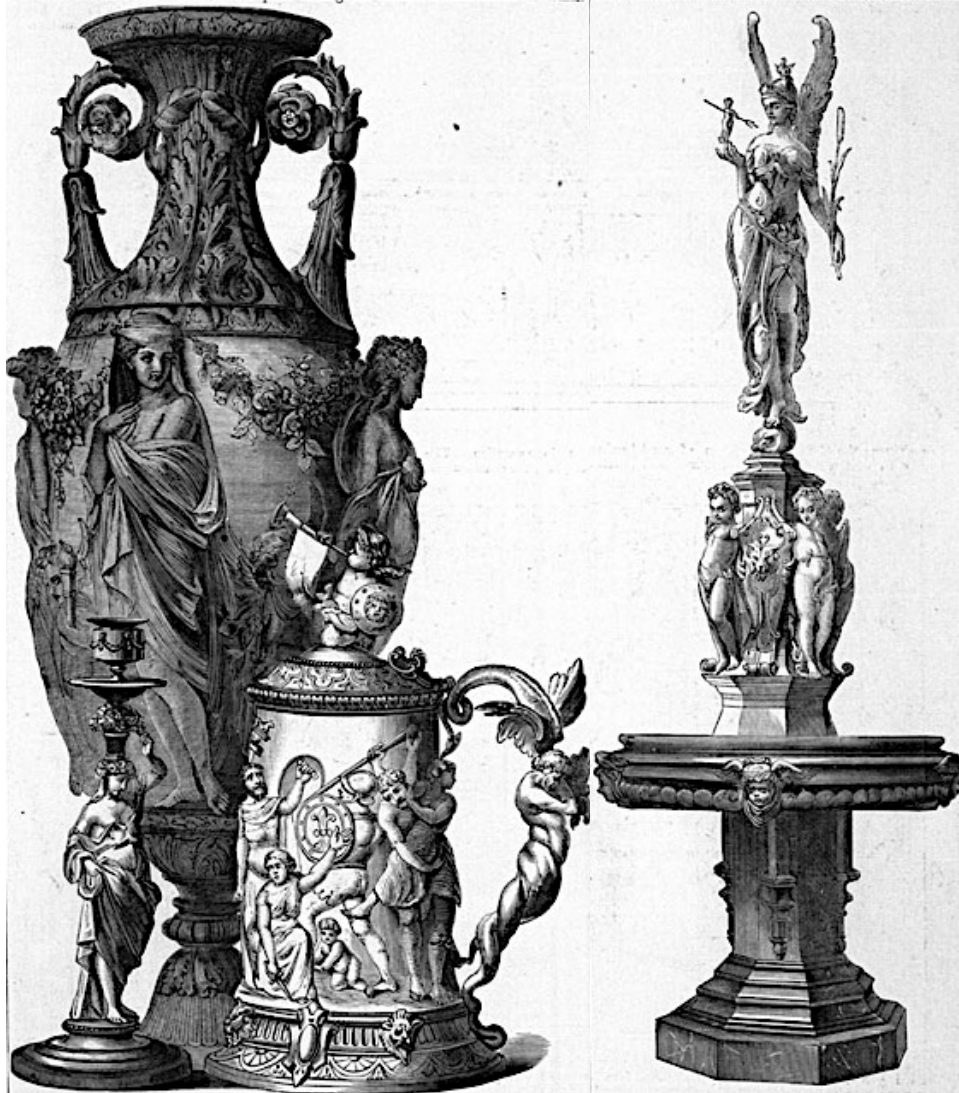


Mantle clock in the form of a candelabrum



Gilt-bronze mantle clock

PARIS, 1867 WORLD'S FAIR



Baluster Vase - Fountain