# Three Graces Annular Clock, by Lepaute et Fils & François Vion



An important and magnificent Louis XV-style clock. This Three Graces bronze clock sculpture was designed by François Vion (c. 1737 – c. 1790), a leading Paris bronze caster who became a master in 1764. This classical design is Vion's best known clock sculpture, and the case is signed VION on the plinth.

Pierre-Basile Lepaute  (1750-1843) was one of the most important Parisian clockmakers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In the mid 1760's he went to work with his uncles, who were also clockmakers, and began his training in the family workshop. In the early days he was in partnership with his uncle and cousin, in 1789 becoming sole owner of the workshop. Toward the end of the 18th century, he and his nephew Jean-Joseph Lepaute founded a new company that was active until 1811 and won a silver medal at the 1806 Exposition des Produits de l'Industrie. In 1811, his nephew opened his own workshop, while Pierre-Basile and his son Pierre-Michel (1785-1849) founded a new firm called *Lepaute et Fils*. For several decades they were the principal suppliers of clocks to the Imperial and Royal Garde-Meuble; they were named, successively, Horloger de l'Empereur and Horloger du Roi.

Lepaute first collaborated on this clock with Vion in c.1769. The design appeared in an album of horological pieces which is currently in the Paris Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art. The outward facing three graces are draped with garlands of flowers. They hold aloft the orb which contains the cercle tournant clock. The clock dial rings are set with white enamel Roman numeral cartouches, which rotate.  The time is indicated by a pointer formed by Cupid's arrow.

When Pierre-Michel Lepaute joined his father in business as Lepaute et Fils, they repeated this clock, retaining the sculptural design and updating the movement to incorporate Brocot's escapement designed in 1823. This clock therefore dates from the period 1823 to 1849.
The movement is discreeted in the base, accessed through the removable door. This clock movement is stamped 540 C 4.6 163 and the base bracket is signed Lepaute et Fils, serial number 540 C. It has an outside countwheel and is bell-striking on the hour and the passing of the half hour, with a short pendulum.
The clock has its original mercury gilding, other than the base on which the Graces stand, which has been newly regilded to conform.
The identical clock was delivered to Countess Du Barry in the Château de Versailles on October 4 1769.
Another, which belonged to General Moreau, who lived in the rue d'Anjou, is in the Musée national du Château de Fontainebleau. Napolean I decorated the Fontainebleu château with fine pieces when he invited the Pope to Paris to preside over his inauguration in 1804. Their clock was in the 2017 exhibition DANS LES RÊVES DE NAPOLÉON – LA PREMIÈRE CHAMBRE DE L'EMPEREUR À FONTAINEBLEAU.
Another is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York .
An excellent piece was written about this clock for Barnebys in 2017.
The movement is to be fully overhauled within our workshops, and the clock guaranteed for 3 years.
Height: 52cms (20 ½ inches)
Width and Depth: 20 cms (8 inches)