

PIERRE GOUTHIÈRE, ATTRIBUTED TO

(BAR-SUR-AUBE, 1732 – PARIS, 1813)

PAIR OF VASES *A LA TÊTE DE CHEVRE*



GREEN GREEK PORPHYRY «SERPENTINE», ANTIC EGYPTIAN GRADIORITE,
GREEN EGYPTIAN GRANITE «DELLA SEDIA DI SAN LORENZO», GREEN EGYPTIAN GRANITE «PLASMATO»;
MAT GILT BRONZE

FRANCE, LOUIS XVI PERIOD

DIMENSIONS :

HEIGHT 36 CM – WIDTH 21 CM – (14¹/₈ IN – 8¹/₄ IN)

PROVENANCE :

FORMER LORD BYRON COLLECTION; THENCE BY DESCENT

27, Quai Voltaire, 75007 Paris

Our pair of vases is composed of four varieties of hard stones:

The upper part of a cassolette shape is made in *green porphyry from Greece known as Serpentine*. Its curved base rests on a column in *ancient Egyptian gradiorite* supported on both sides by a goat muzzle in gilded and chiseled bronze whose horns forming an elegant loop end on the cylinder and thus seems to support the cassolette. Between the horns, vine leaves and grapes reinforce the naturalism of the representation. The quality of the chasing particularly highlights the fur of the animal and thus gives goat's mittens a high quality of expression. On each side, garlands of flowers connect these heads. This column comes to rest on a round base molded in *green granite known as sedia di San Lorenzo*. The set rests on a square base in *Egyptian green Plasmato granite*. A beaded garland circles its base with an acanthus leaf at each corner.



Detail

The selection of the rare and prestigious hard stones coming for three of them from ancient quarries of ornamental stones from northern and central Egypt and for the "serpentine" from ancient Greece, shows a great taste and suggests the attribution to Pierre Gouthière.

In addition, the quality of the chiseled and matt gilded bronzes is typical of the work of the King's most talented chiseler and gilder, and the subject of goat heads, one of the most recurring among his work. There are many ram heads in Gouthière's work. Already in the 1760s, he gilded ram heads for the silversmith François-Thomas Germain for the mounts of vases and the engraver Jean-Nicolas Lebeau produced ram-headed handles for Gouthière. The same decor reappeared on two pieces from the Duke d'Aumont's collection, notably the famous cassolette (illustrated below) which can be found today at the Louvre museum. Or the fireplace ordered for Madame Du Barry's oval living room in Louveciennes around 1770, today in a private collection.



Cassolette à tête de bélier
Circa 1775-1780

Gilt bronzes by Pierre Gouthière
Green Greek porphyry

38 x 34 x 28 cm

Musée du Louvre, National furniture deposit, 1901(OA 5179)

Provenance: Duke d'Aumont collection; previous collection of Kings's apartments, Tuileries, Louis XVI

Exhibition: *Pierre Gouthière: Virtuoso Gilder at the French Court*, The Frick Collection, New-York, November-February 2017



(Detail) Chimney
Circa 1771-1773

Gilt bronzes by Pierre Gouthière after a model by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux
White marble, Turquin blue marble carved by Jacques Adan

117 x 183 x 68 cm

Private collection

Provenance: Ordered for Madame Du Barry's oval salon in Louveciennes around 1770; sold at the Georges V hotel in Paris on December 5, 1989, lot 60

Bibliography: *Pierre Gouthière: Virtuoso Gilder at the French Court* i, The Frick Collection, New-York, November-February 2017, p. 250

PIERRE GOUTHIERE – GILDER AND CHISELER OF THE KING

Pierre Gouthière is an 18th century French chiseler and gilder. He is one of the greatest French bronzers, his extremely sophisticated skill has given birth to great masterpieces of the decorative arts of the reign of Louis XVI.

Among the most sumptuous are the finely chiseled and gilded ornaments that enrich the precious objects designed by Pierre Gouthière's *marchands merciers*. The diversity of the materials used, marble, porphyry, jasper, Chinese porcelain, ivory offers striking contrasts likely to seduce the clients. Gouthière worked with the greatest ornamentalists, sculptors and architects such as François-Joseph Bélanger, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux or Pierre-Adrien Pâris. Some drawing, conserved at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris and in some other national or private collections testify to his immense artistic talent.



Pierre-Adrien Pâris

Preparatory drawing for the engraving representing a cassiolette belonging to the Duke d'Aumont

1782

Pencil, ink and watercolor on paper

20 x 13 cm

Private collection

National Library of France, Paris

(Res V 2586, pl.12)

Pierre Gouthière worked almost exclusively for a clientele of powerful and immensely wealthy men and women, starting with the court, who asked him to execute extravagant objects of luxury and exuberance. In 1770, the architect Ledoux chose him to make, according to his drawings, the ornamental gilt bronzes of the Louveciennes pavilion built for the Countess Du Barry. Between 1772 and 1777, he was called upon to take part in the decor of the Château de Fontainebleau for one of the favorite's salons (which has since disappeared) and worked on Marie-Antoinette's Turkish boudoir. During these same years, he supplied the Duchess of Mazarin with bronzes for the decor of her Parisian living room, including an extraordinary pair of sconces. By working under the supervision of the architect Bélanger, who directed the decoration of the Bagatelle pavilion, Gouthière also worked for the Count of Artois, brother of King Louis XVI.

Among these sponsors, a considerable role was played by the Duke d'Aumont - gentleman of the king's chamber and principal intendant of the Menus Plaisirs. The duke becomes his most famous sponsor.

PROVENANCE CAPTAIN BYRON

Born on November 30, 1758, Captain Byron is the second son of Vice-Admiral Hon. John Byron and his wife, Sophia Trevannion. He is the uncle of the famous poet Lord Byron and a cousin of Rear Admiral Richard Byron.

Captain George Anson Byron, the 7th Baron Byron was a nobleman, a naval officer, a British politician, and the seventh Baron Byron succeeded in 1824 to his cousin the poet George Gordon Byron, the 6th Baron Byron.

