



Rock Crystal And Fire-gilt Metal Chandelier Attributed To E. Baguès And G. B. Metellino



22 000 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Crystal de roche

Diameter : 65 cm

Height : 80 cm

Description

Six-light chandelier in gilt metal and rock crystal, attributed to Eugène Baguès or to L'Escalier de cristal, incorporating earlier elements attributed to Giovanni Battista Metellino.

Gilt metal, rock crystal.

Milan, France.

Late 19th century, incorporating elements from the early 18th century. 85 x 65 cm (31.5 × 25.6 in).

The structure of this six-light chandelier bears the imprint of two distinct periods of manufacture.

The six semi-circular arms, adorned with foliate volutes, appear to be the oldest components. The refinement of their ornamentation and certain technical features associate them with a group of Milanese works dating from the early years of the 18th century.

Dealer

Galerie Lamy Chabolle

Decorative art of the 18th and 19th centuries

Tel : 0142606671

Mobile : 06 11 68 53 90

14 rue de Beaune

Paris 75007

At least two known chandeliers present a comparable structure. The first, a twelve-arm chandelier housed in the Metropolitan Museum, was executed using a technique similar to that of the present piece: the arms, decorated with gilt metal foliage, emerge from a baluster-shaped shaft in rock crystal, projecting first perpendicularly before curving sharply into voluted semicircles. The second chandelier, located in the Konferenzzimmer of the Hofburg in Vienna, is even closer: in addition to a similar structure, it features identical six-pointed star motifs in gilt metal, executed in the same manner as the foliage.

Both chandeliers are attributed to Giovanni Battista Metellino, a Milanese stone-cutter active from the late 17th to the early 18th century, whose hand is recognisable -- in both style and execution -- in the crystal work of the Metropolitan Museum and Hofburg chandeliers.

It has thus been inferred that a Milanese workshop, specialising in lighting production and regularly collaborating with Metellino for crystal elements, was responsible for this very rare group of chandeliers distinguished by a shared ornamental language in gilt metal and rock crystal.

The Hofburg chandelier underwent significant modifications in the late 19th century, most likely carried out by the Viennese firm J. & L.

Lobmeyr, which at the time was overseeing the electrification of the Konferenzzimmer. The present chandelier appears to have undergone a similar intervention, probably during the same period, possibly by the firm of Eugène Baguès. Founded in 1840, the Baguès company had, by the late 19th century, developed a speciality in electrifying antique light fixtures, while also trading in both antique and modern objets d'art -- particularly chandeliers. In the firm's early advertisements, antique pieces are sometimes shown alongside Baguès' original creations, a juxtaposition likely intended to highlight the historical and technical precision that the firm

prided itself on, aspiring to produce decorative objects of a quality comparable to those of the 18th century. This interplay between old and new sometimes occurred within a single object, through the reuse of antique components -- occasionally irreplaceable -- within newly created works.

The present chandelier appears to have emerged from precisely this kind of practice: its structure was altered, its arms enlarged, new decorative elements added, and the entire piece adapted for electrification -- a domain in which the firm of Eugène Baguès played a leading role in the late 19th century.

L'Escalier de cristal, another firm renowned for producing high-quality objets d'art and furniture in 18th-century styles -- always in extremely limited numbers and for an elite clientele -- was also known for incorporating antique elements, sometimes of an inimitable nature. A drawing of a chandelier strikingly similar to the present example appears in one of L'Escalier de cristal's design books, making it plausible to attribute the reconfiguration of this piece to that firm.