

GALERIE LAMY
CHABOLLE



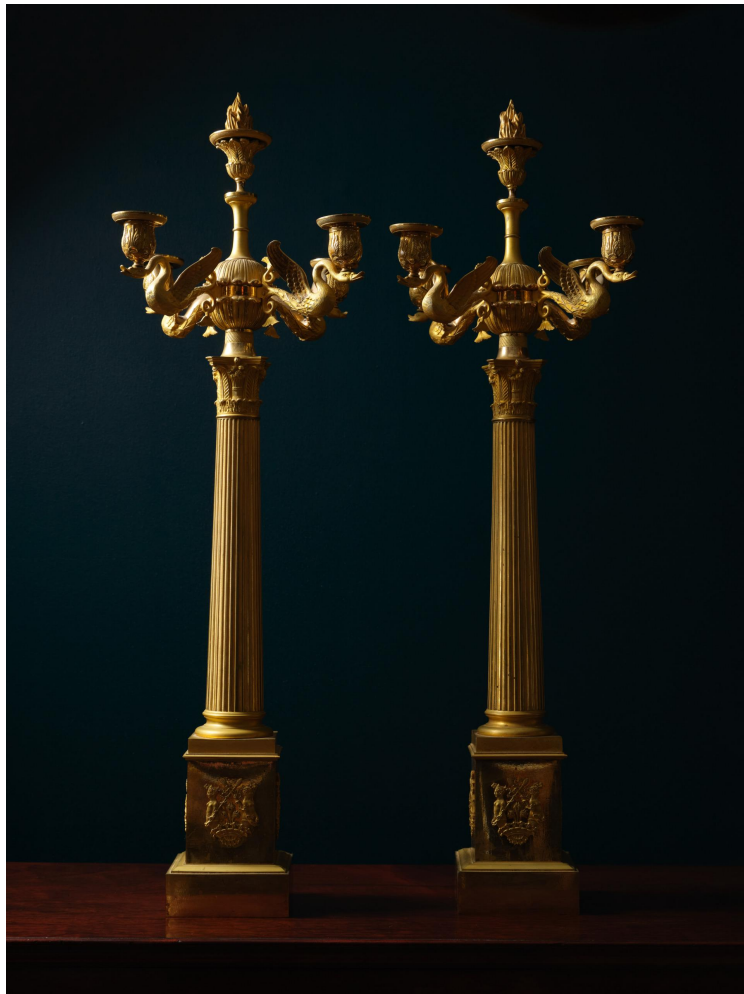
A Pair of Four-Light Russian Candelabra

Gilt bronze

St Petersburg

First third of the 19th century

h. 90 cm (35.5 in.)



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The four candle-branches of these *candelabra*, each a swan whose double fish-tail curls into flattened scrolls — a motif much used in the chandeliers of early nineteenth-century St Petersburg — appear to confirm the Russian origin of the pair. The form was likewise favoured by native bronziers of the first third of the century, craftsmen who, in Sychev's words, "knew and made magnificent use of the latest Parisian models" (Sychev 2003, p. 101), and who adapted with evident relish a formula in which Pierre-Philippe Thomire, their presumed point of reference, had particularly distinguished himself.

The execution here, moreover, is of unusual refinement. It is seen in the rare motif of confronted Bacchic hermaphrodite protomes applied to the quadrangular bases; in the horizontally striated grounds of the flutes; in the Corinthian capitals, where acanthus mingles with lotus leaves and overflowing baskets of fruit; and in the confronted water-leaves, their veins burnished, that adorn the ball from which the fish-tailed swan chimeras spring — beaks half open, knobs prominent, plumage suggested by tracer-work on the breast. All of this rivals what the Parisian bronziers were producing under the Empire. Only the use of the roulette — in the grounds of the flutes, on the small *scotia* with its pattern of beading and twisted striations characteristic of Russian bronzes, and on the nozzles — truly betrays the candelabra's native hand.

LITERATURE

Igor Sychev, *The Russian Chandeliers. 1760-1830*, Saint Petersburg, 2003.

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