

# FRANK PARTRIDGE

## **A Louis XVI Ormolu Clock by Jean-Baptiste Baillon**

*Circa 1765*

11 ½ x 7 x 19 in high (29.5 x 18 x 48.5 cm)

*The white enamel dial is set within an ormolu drum-shaped case with a bead and reel border and signed Baillon/à Paris. The drum is raised on scrolls, above a shaped rectangular base with a pierced ormolu grill, with a lion's mask holding golden swags of fabric falling across and around the base with reeded sides and rosette corners which rests on four circular gadroon feet. The clock is surmounted by a fabric-draped sphere, with masks to the sides.*

### **Literature:**

*A very similar clock, but with different feet and signed on the face by Admyrauld à Paris, is illustrated in Encyclopedie de La Pendule Française by Pierre Kjellberg, p. 176 fig. C.*

### **Jean Baptiste Baillon:**

Jean-Baptiste Baillon was a very famous, and at that time the largest, watchmaker in Paris in the 18th Century, he became a master watchmaker in 1727, his business was first on the Place Dauphine later in the Rue Dauphine. A private factory was located in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, where different watchmakers worked for him, which was quite exceptional at that time. Baillon was a watchmaker to the Queen of France, Maria Leczinska in 1738, "Valet de Chambre de la Reine-Ordinaire Watchmaker" by 1748, "Premier Valet de Chambre de la Reine", and from about 1770 watchmaker at the court of Queen Marie Antoinette, "Premier Valet de Chambre and Valet de Chambre, Watchmaker Ordinaire de la Dauphine" to Marie-Antoinette. He died in 1772.

### **Provenance:**

Caroline Murat born Bonaparte (25 March 1782 – 18 May 1839). Caroline was the younger sister of Napoleon Bonaparte. In 1793, Caroline moved with her family to France during the French Revolution. There, she fell in love with Joachim Murat, one of her brother's generals, and they married on 20 January 1800. Caroline was seventeen years old. Initially, Napoleon did not wish to allow them to marry, however, his wife Joséphine de Beauharnais persuaded him to change his mind. Caroline had been a pupil at the school in St-Germain-en-Laye, founded by Madame Jeanne Campan. She attended the school at the same time as Hortense, Joséphine's daughter, and Caroline's brother Louis' wife. Ambitious, extravagant, and power-hungry she became Grand Duchess of Berg and Cleves on 15 March 1806 and Queen consort of Naples on 1 August 1808. She was intensely jealous of her sister-in-law, Joséphine and her children, as she felt Napoleon favoured them over his Bonaparte

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relatives. Caroline continuously plotted against Joséphine. It was Caroline who arranged for Napoleon to take a mistress, Éléonore Denuelle, who duly gave birth to his first illegitimate child. This had the desired effect of establishing that Joséphine was infertile, as Napoleon showed he was clearly capable of siring children. When Napoleon married his second Empress, Consort Marie Louise of Austria, Caroline was responsible for escorting her to France. After meeting her at the border of Austria and her duchy, Caroline forced Marie-Louise to leave all her luggage, servants, and even her pet dog, behind in Austria.

Consequently, she devoted herself to the interests of her husband Joachim Murat, the King of Naples. Her relations with Napoleon became increasingly strained in 1813–1814, as Joachim shifted allegiances. She supported his decision to make a separate peace with the anti-Napoleonic allies, keeping his throne, while Napoleon was deposed. Then, during the Hundred Days of 1815, Joachim, came out for Napoleon. He was defeated and executed, and Caroline fled to the Austrian Empire. Whilst in exile, she adopted the title 'Countess of Lipona'; 'Lipona' being an anagram of 'Napoli' (Naples).

In 1830, she married Francesco Macdonald (1777–1837), who had been Minister of War of the Kingdom of Naples in 1814 and 1815. She lived in Florence until her death in 1839. The couple had no children.