

# *Dating French Clocks*

## *Using Physical Parts – Suspension, Striking, and Exposition Medaillions*

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### **FRENCH CLOCK & WATCH MOVEMENTS - naming**

**“EBAUCHE”** directly translates as ‘rough sketch’. In watchmaking, it is an “unfinished watch movement usually consisting of the plates, beridges, and cocks”. The finisher of the watch would often fit the mainspring and jewels and maybe produce the escapement (*Thorpe*)

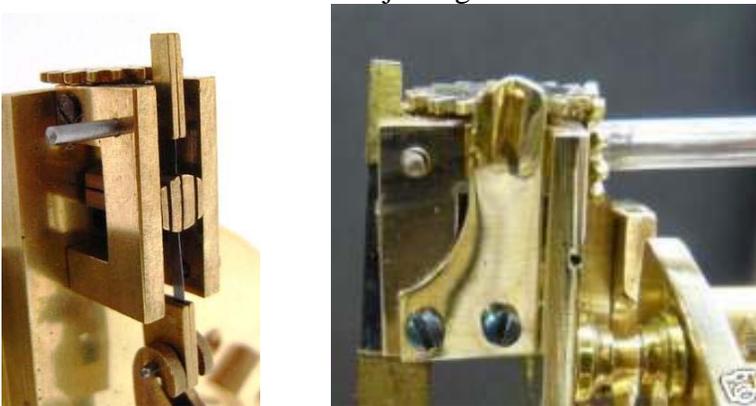
A **“PENDULE DE PARIS”** clock movement (literally “clock of Paris”) = the classic 4” round movement found in so many ‘marble’, figural, and lead crystal clocks from France. Largest quantities 1850 – 1914. Free Trade Treaty with England in 1860 meant that a great number were exported. (*Thorpe*)

Movements were either **“BLANCS”** (literally “white”) = the frame consisting of the plates, pillars and barrels, or as **“BLANC ROULANTS”** (literally “rolling white”) in which the pivoted train wheels were added. The finishers in Paris added the escapement and other moving parts. (*Thorpe*)

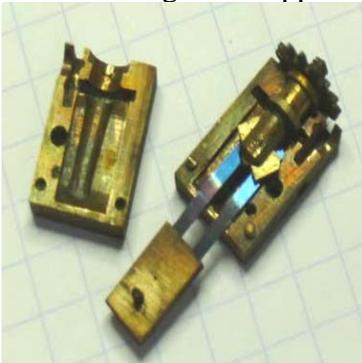
### **DATING CLOCK MOVEMENTS BY SUSPENSION MECHANISM STYLE** (*Thorpe*)

**Silk suspension** = until about 1850

**Brocot Suspension** = initial patent 1841; widely used starting 1850; 1865 additional patent for spring shoulders that offers the ‘click’ when adjusting.



**Vallet Suspension** = upper portion of the suspension spring is completely enclosed as two brass halves that slot and screw together. Appears mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.



**Thieble Suspension (pendulum bob)** = appears ~ 1870.



**Duvoye Suspension (uncommon)** = patented 1852, Thorpe had seen on one clock from 1880. Looks very similar to the Vallet Suspension, though the enclosure shoulders are not nearly as robust.

## Dating by use of a Count Wheel (or Locking Wheel) versus Rack & Snail

Prior to ~1880 a count wheel (readily seen outside the back plate) was typically used on French movements, though there are exceptions, and have seen a rack & snail used as early as 1865. After the ~1880, the French used a rack and snail strike mounted on the outside front of the movement, though again there are exceptions for the use of a count wheel much later.



## Dating by Logos and Award Medallions

Note: having the outside of the back plate stamped “MADE IN FRANCE” or simply “FRANCE” came into common usage in 1891 due to the requirements of the McKinley Tariff Act passed in the United States.

**BASCHET, Baullier**

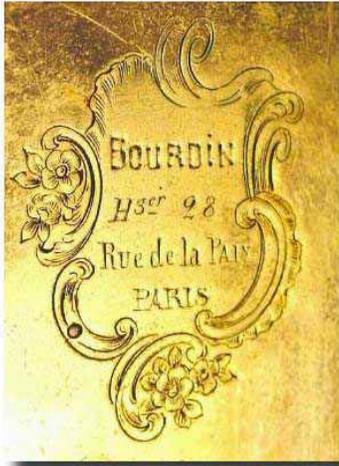
1855 – Honorable Mention, Paris (Allix)

**BOURDIN, A.E. (Rue de la Paix 1840 – 1860, post 1860 as?)**

1844 – Medaille de Bronze, Paris (Allix)

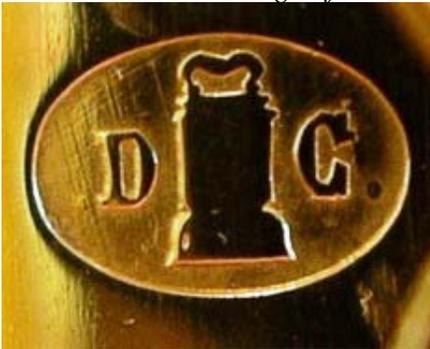
1855 – Medaille d'Argent, Paris (Allix)

1867 – Medaille de Bronze, Paris (Allix)



**DROCOURT - Pierre (father) and son Alfred. 1820 – 1900**

Trademark as an image of a carriage clock flanked by the letters “D” and “C”.



1860 – Medaille de Bronze, Besuncan Exhibit (Alliz)

1862 – Honorable Mention, London

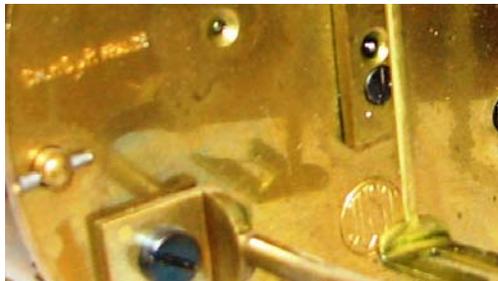
1867 – Medaille de Bronze, Paris (Allix)

1878 – Medaille d'Argent, Paris (Allix)

1889 – Medaille d'Or, Paris (Allix)

**HOUR, CHARLES (no medallion wins, but included here as a commonly found maker)**

CH HOUR “JUST” enclosed within a circle. Charles Hour, a carriage-clock maker in Paris, most active at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1890 – 1910). . Had been the firm ‘Diette Fils et Hour’, until 1927 when it became ‘Hour, Lavigne et Cie’ by associating with Maurice Lavigne, and establishing the brand name Hour Lavigne. This firm was still in production as of 1935.



**JACOT, HENRI** (trademark **HJ** on each side of a parrot on a weathervane 1<sup>st</sup> Henri died 31 July 1868, succeeded by nephew with same name)

1855– Medaille de Bronze, Paris (Allix)

1862– Medaille de Bronze, London (Allix)



(Oval used on the front of the movement to show the maker when the back plate was to be left blank)

1867– Medaille d'Argent, Paris (Allix) – footnote, originally listed as an "Honourable Mention"(net)

1878– Medaille d'Argent, Paris (Allix)

1889– Medaille d'Or, Paris (Allix)

1900– Medaille d'Or, Paris (Allix)

**JAPY FRERE** (trademark as a stylized left slant "J" on a right slant "F" over a central "C")

**George Frederic Japy (1749-1812) known as Frederic Japy. By 1810-1820, Five sons into the family business: Fido, Charles, Fritz {really Frederic-Guillaume}, Louis {Louis-Frederic}, and Jean-Pierre.**

1819 - Gold Medal, Louis XVII (*Thorpe*)

1823 - Gold Medal, Louis XVIII (*Thorpe*)

1827 - Gold Medal, Charles X (*Thorpe*)

1834 - Gold Medal, Louis Philippe (*Thorpe*) (*RAPPEL DE MEDAILLES D'OR...RAPPORT DU JURY CENTRAL sur les produits DE L'INDUSTRIE FRANCAISE EN 1834, p. 60*)

1839 - Gold Medal, Louis Philippe (*Thorpe*)

1844 – ~~Gold~~ SILVER (d'Argent) Medal, Louis Philippe (*Thorpe lists as Gold, image shows as silver*)

1849 - ~~Gold~~ SILVER (d'Argent) Medal, Louis Philippe (*Thorpe lists as Gold, image shows as silver*)



1851 - Grand Medal, Great Exhibition, London (*Thorpe*)

1853 - 1st Class Medal, New York Exhibition (*Thorpe*)

1855 - Grande Med d'Honneur, Expo Universelle Paris (*Thorpe*)



- 1867 - Grande Med d'Honneur, Expo Universelle Paris
- 1873 - Grd Diploma d' Merit, Expo Universelle Vienna
- 1879 - Grd Prix d'Honneur, Expo Universelle Paris
- 1879 - Grd Diplome d'Honneur, Expo Regionale Besancon
- 1880 - Grd Diplome d'Honneur, Expo speciale d'horlogerie de la Chaux-de-Fond



- 1812 - "Societe Japy Freres"
- 1837 - "Japy Fils" (Ls Japy Fils for Louis Japy {really Louis-Frederic})
- 1846 - "Japy Freres"
- 1854 - "Japy Freres et Cie"
- 1928 - "Societe Anonyme des Etablissements Japy Freres"

**LE ROY (later L. LEROY & Cie, then simply LEROY)**

*(Allix) Founded by Basile Charles Le Roy, circa 1785. After the Revolution, he occupied Galerie Montpensier, 13 & 15 Palais Royal. After death in 1828, son Charles-Louis carried on the business. Sold in 1845 to Desfontaines who kept the name "Le Roy & Fils". In 1889, Louis Leroy (son of Theodore Marie Leroy) became a partner, and the name became "Ancienne Maison Le Roy & Fils, L. Leroy & Cie Successeurs". Though, this long version of the name was soon dropped. In 1895 Leon Leroy, brother to Louis, entered the firm. In 1899 the business moved to 7 Boulevard de la Madeleine. In 1938 L. Leroy & Cie moved to 4 Faubourg Saint-Honore(antiqueclock.co.uk)*

- 1867- Medaille de Bronze, Paris
- 1878 - Medaille d'Argent, Paris
- 1889- Medaille d'Or, Paris





**MARGAINE, FRANCOIS-ARSENE** (trademark AM on each side of beehive, 1870 – 1914, purchased by Doffe, then sold to Sanselme in 1928). Sometimes inside of back plate is stamped “MARGAINE PARIS”, and also may find stamped simply as “Margaine” on outside of back plate.



1889– Medaille d’Argent, Paris (Allix)

1900– Medaille d’Or, Paris (Allix)

(addresses through Tardy volumes:)

Rue Turenne, Bronze 1870; Rue St.-Denis 1870 ; Rue du Faubourg Poissonnière 1873; Rue Béranger 1890; Rue Turenne 1900; Rue de Bondy 1904 -1914

**MARTI, FRITZ** { Fritz Marti Et Fils, working from premises in Vieux-charmont in 1867, exhibited in the Paris Exhibition of 1889 and was awarded a Medaille d’Or in 1900. }

1900 - Medaille d’Or, Paris



MEDAILLE  
F. Marti  
Vx CHARMONT  
EXPOSITION 1889





Year ?? Medaille de Bronze

{One claim for a Medaille d'Or in 1908, and this would have had to have been the "Franco-British Exposition of 1908" in London. No clock medal wins could be located in the current search.}

**MARTI, SAMUEL** (or any form of the Company, including "et Cie")

{THORPE states that they exhibited in Paris in 1841, 1851, and 1852. The following five dates have often been listed, but have not been able to independently verify: 1839 – Honorable Mention, Paris; 1841 – Medaille d'or, Paris; 1851 – Medaille d'or, Paris; 1852 – Medaille d'or, Paris; 1855 – Second Class Medal, Paris.}

1860 - Medaille de Bronze, Paris {noted at clockswatches.com as a Japy movement with the Marti name on it}



1889 - Medaille d'Argent, Paris {noted at clockswatches.com as a Japy movement with the Marti name on it}

1900 - Medaille d'Or, Paris {noted at clockswatches.com as a Japy movement with the Marti name on it}

1931 - Grand Prix, Paris {noted at clockswatches.com as a Japy movement with the Marti name on it}

**MOUGIN, AD**

*TWO MEDALS (deux medailles)(years?) From Allix – J. Tripplin's account of the Paris Exposition Universelle 1889: "...The production of both the Marti do not compare, as far as quantities are concerned, with that of the above mentioned firm (MM. Japy), but what they exhibited showed greater attention to rather superior work; so do the exhibits of MM. Megnin and A. Mougin, although in a lesser degree."* Estimated dates = 1880 to 1900.

Live Auctioneers: "the interior backplate touchmarked "A.D. Mougin/Medaille d'Or""



**PONS, HONORE**{Also known as **Pons de Paul**}(Pons also signed his pieces "PARIS". Most of the clocks signed by Pons were actually made by Delepine, who took over the Pons business in the 1840's (Roberts) --- (after 1844, before 1847 according to Allix)

1819 - Medaille d'Argent, Paris (Allix)

1823 - Medaille d'Argent, Paris (Allix & Thorpe)

1827 - Medaille d'Or, Paris (Thorpe)

1834 – Medaille d'Or, Paris (Allix) and/or 1839 – Medaille d'Or, Paris (Thorpe)



1900 - Medaille d'Or, Paris (net)

**RAINGO frères** (1813 founding, 1829 as **Rue de Touraine, no 8, au Marais** 1841 added bronze statues)

1834– Mentions Honorables, Paris (RAPPORT DU JURY CENTRAL sur les produits DE L'INDUSTRIE FRANCAISE EN 1834, p. 973)

1849 –Medaille de bronze, Paris (bronze statues – as described in the book "Exposition Universelle De 1862 A Lonres, Section Francaise, Catalogue Officiel Publie Par Ordre de la Commission Imperiale)

1855 – Medaille d'argent de 1<sup>st</sup> class, Paris (bronze statues – as described in the book "Exposition Universelle De 1862 A Lonres, Section Francaise, Catalogue Officiel Publie Par Ordre de la Commission Imperiale)

1862 – exhibited in London

1867 – exhibited a bronze fender

1878 –

1889 - Medaille d'Or, Paris (chadelaud.com La Maison Raingo Freres, 202 Rue Veille du Temple, Paris)



**RODANET, A.H.** (Auguste ? Initials show as A.H. – but Allix lists as Julien) **HILAIRE** (1810 – 1889, sometimes as 1884, founded clockmaking school 1839)

1878 - Medaille d'Argent, Paris(Allix)

1885 - \_\_\_\_\_, Paris (Kochmann)



So, for example, we have two similar firms, both in the Palais Royal in Paris:

**Le Roy (later Leroy) et Fils** in Avenue Opera and

**L. Leroy & Cie** of 4 Faubourg Saint-Honore

Research addresses and dates, we can find that Le Roy & Fils was at the 211 Regent street sometime after 1854 but before 1866 and then moved by 1885 to Bond Street. We know too (Terwilliger and Roberts) that by 1899 and at least through 1912, L. Leroy et Cie were at 7 Bd. De la Madeline in Paris.

Both Jacot and Drocourt supplied a number of the top retailers in the England, and were often asked to leave their trade mark off the backplate. Instead, they placed a stamp on the movement that could only be seen if it were removed from the case or the movement was disassembled. Jacot used an oval on the frontplate with the name in the middle and the medal winning years around the edge, whilst Drocourt used an oval inside the plates with the name within. The example below had the Drocourt stamp on the outside and the oval on the inside of the movement.



There can even be a stamp for the supplier of blanks:



The movements are often stamped 'H.L.' on the inside plates, being the mark of the maker Henri Lemaître, who supplied Drocourt with roulant blancs. A number of pieces have been seen with his stamp and no other mark and all the engraving and stamps are identical to those seen on a Drocourt. These movements are also known with the Leroy mark on them so it is safe to assume that Lemaître supplied a number of the top makers/vendors.

## **Sources:**

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