

## **Breakout Session Record**

**Amanuensis/Student name:** Paula Hung

**Date:** 14 July 2005

**Institution:** Victoria and Albert Museum

**Title of Breakout session:**

**The use of indigenous and exotic woods in French furniture**

**Name(s) of Breakout session leaders:**

**Dr. John Cross (London Metropolitan University)**

**Dr. Carolyn Sargentson (Head, Research Department, V&A)**

**General themes discussed at the Breakout session:**

The session discusses the business of luxury furniture making during the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and examines the mass supply of exotic and indigenous woods. It also provides objects that showed examples of the original colours of this furniture, and finally Dr. John Cross demonstrated the hand-sawn technique of cutting a pattern off a piece of wood.

## Object (A) information

**Object Title:** (see attached handout)

**Object Date:**

**Museum accession number of object:**

**Description of object (please attach any information received from breakout session leaders to this sheet):**

The surface of the drawers of the commode is a very complex design that could be reflected under candlelight. The different pieces of wood were cut off from different angles and were combined again to make this luxurious appearance. From the economic perspective, the wood was cut remarkably thin to save the cost of the precious material. The veneer of this commode is mainly pine whilst walnut is used for the inside of the drawers. The bottom of the commode does not touch the ground, which is unusual.

**What questions did the audience ask about this object?**

**Q:** Did the woodcutter make the patterns or did the furniture-makers put them in?

**A:** The main difference between the furniture makers in England and France (or London and Paris) in the 18<sup>th</sup> century or even earlier, was the degree of specialization. Paris was called the '*Venus specialized cross economy*' in the continental Europe. It developed a very clear programme of economic development. From the 1540s to the 1560s this programme led to the establishment of factories for the luxury production and market place. Paris thus had the tradition of being the center of the production and the international distribution of luxurious products. In Paris there was a huge amount of specialization; therefore, the tools one could use, the materials one could get involved with and the skills one could practice was very highly controlled. The persons who cut the veneer were the wood merchants whilst the veneer-licensed men worked for them in the factories cutting pieces of patterns in the shape of flowers or triangles. However, because every piece of the veneer is hand-sawn and interlocked together, when the product finished, the design can then finally be seen.

It would be interesting to see how a ground was marked down, how a pattern was found out and when is it being adopted by an institute.



Register No. 1083-1882.1

Negative No. 47115

COMMODE  
2 SLAB3 DRAWER 5 DRAWER  
4 DRAWER 6 DRAWER

7 Key

Date of Receipt

From whom Received

John Jones Esq.

How acquired

Bequest.

Registered papers

Condition

Measurements

H. 2'9 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", L. 4'10 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", W. 2'3".

## Description

## COMMODE

FRENCH (Paris); about 1710

Pine veneered with parquetry of kingwood; gilt bronze mounts.  
Slab of "Campan Melange".

This is an early example of the commode, a largely ornamental piece of furniture developed from the essentially practical chest "of drawers". The bold mounts are here not merely decorative but perform the function of protecting vulnerable points.

It has been suggested that this impressive piece of furniture came from the workshops of the royal cabinet-maker, André-Charles Boulle (d. 1732) since it is believed that drop-handles backed by circles of acorns and oakleaves may have been a feature exclusively used by him.

The marble slab appears to be original. Stone from the Campan Valley was exported on a large scale during the period of Louis XIV.

Jones Collection

Museum No. 1083-1882

Label 1971.

PKT 1971.

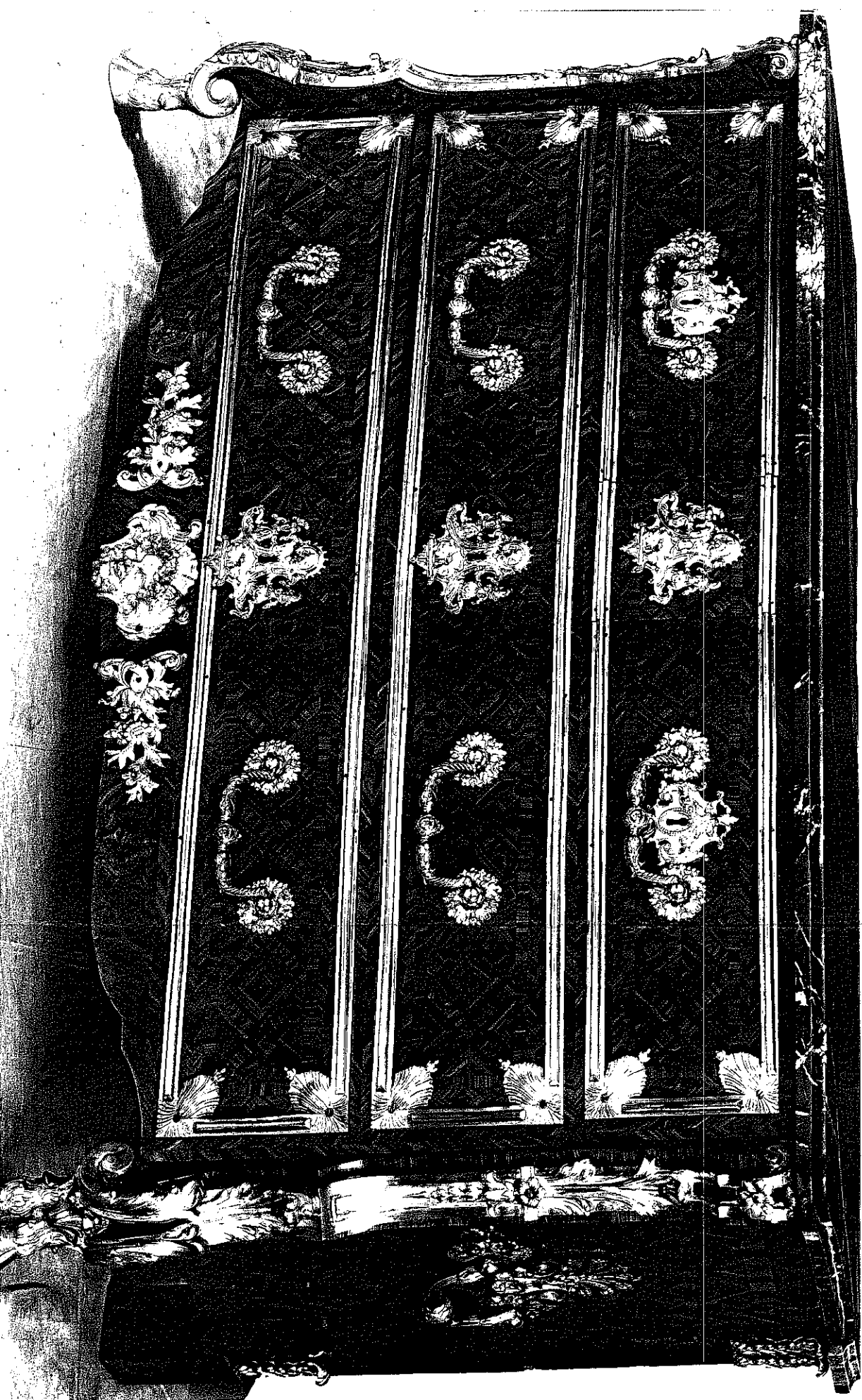
## 1922 Cat. of Jones Coll:

12. COMMUNE, fitted with two narrow and two long drawers, with cross-banded veneer of kingwood, mounted in ormolu with heavy angle pieces on rams' feet supports, drop-handles, escutcheons and a mask. On the top is a slab of variegated purple marble.

FRENCH. Period of Louis XIV; first half of the 18th century. PLATE 5.  
H. 2 ft. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  in., L. 4 ft. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  in., W. 2 ft. 3 in. 1083-1882.

## 1882 Inventory:

COMMODE. Marquetry of kingwood or rosewood, with four drawers, heavily mounted with chased ormolu. The top slab is of red variegated marble. French. Period of Louis XIV. H. 2 ft. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  in., L. 4 ft. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  in., W. 2 ft. 3 in. Jones Bequest. 1083-1882.



geological institute 1971

Commode 1083-1882 French, Early 18th Century

Mainly dark brown-red with alligned irregular white veins up to  $\frac{3}{4}$ ", some of which are broken. The veins cross the grain of the stone. A pale pink patch is present with grey green and large calcite blobs. Some fossils seen.

Match: Campan Mélange from Campan Valley, Haute Pyrenees, France.

This stone from Campan Valley was exploited on a large scale during the reign of Louis XIV. It probably originated from nodules of limestone which become cemented together. The spaces between the nodules have been cemented by a mainly greenish matrix. The brownish colour is due to later staining by iron rich compounds. It has been used for pillars at Versailles and in Westminster Cathedral.

## Supplement (B) Alphabetical Table

### Object Title:

This alphabetical table comes from:

*The Art of the Cabinetmaker* (III section of the III Part)

M. DCC. LXXIV

By M. Roubo son, Master Woodworker

### Description of object (please attach any information received from the breakout session leaders to this sheet):

Although there are errors (such as No.2 Mahogany does not come from Malabar — Malabar only produces Amber), the table reflects the need to supply exotic woods at that time. The reason exotic woods were needed for the veneer market was because they were hard, dense, stable and contained beautiful colours. Some of the indigenous woods stained very easily or changed colour when applied with glue, and therefore were seldom used by the veneer furniture workers. However, the supply of exotic wood was not readily available and was quite expensive. This table is a very useful guide as a snapshot of what was available to M. Rouboson, the Master Woodworker in the 1770s. Some of the wood supply diminished as years pass by, for example, sandalwoods were abundant in the 1780s (imported by the East India Company), yet the supply gradually diminished after 20 years. Not only sandalwoods, but other various timbers were disappearing. We can see the 'poverty of French luxury furniture makers' as the materials became restricted and were of limited availability to them.

A large element in the cost of the woods is that of shipping. Thus one of the factors of the French preference to the particular woods lies in whether they are easily to store in large quantity and does not cost much to ship. (Woods were cut into pieces and then jig-sawed together on the ships.) Mahogany was extremely limited in France, yet abundant in England. At that time the French was developing relations with such exotic oriental countries such as China and Japan (so they drank Chinese tea instead of English tea). After fighting the Seven-year war in 1763, the French who came to England were extremely preoccupied with the woods that originated in England, and suddenly furniture-makers were veneering Mahogany in the later 18<sup>th</sup> century. Since then, the English style tea tables started to appear in the French market. The veneering Mahogany reached its peak in the 1780s until the revolution, which disrupted the production and market and caused decline in the furniture market.

**ALPHABETICAL TABLE of foreign woods known under the name the Woods of the Indies, & which are appropriate to Cabinetmaking; their colours, their qualities, hard or soft, or aromatic, & the name of the country where they grow.**

NAME OF WOODS.	COUNTRY WHERE THE WOODS GROW.	COLOURS.	QUALITIES.	SMELL.
Nº. 1. Acaja.....	Ceylon Island. <i>East Indies</i> .....	Red.....	Soft.	
2. Mahogany.....	Malabar. <i>East Indies</i> .....	Reddish....	Soft & hard.	
Aloe or Agalochum	Cochin China. <i>East Indies</i> .....	Of many colours.	Soft	Aromatic.
Aloe or Eagle wood,				
3. or Savage Agalochum	Cochin China. Cambaya & Sumatra.			
	<i>East Indies</i> .....	Russet.....	Dense.....	Aromatic.
Aloe or Calambur or				
Calamburk.....	Solor & Timor Islands. <i>East Indies</i> .....	Greenish.....	Soft.....	Aromatic.
4. Amaranthe	Guyana. <i>West Indies</i> .....	Purple-brown	Hard.	
5. Amourette	Antilles. <i>West Indies</i> .....	Red-brown....	Hard.	
6. Aniseed or				
Anil à L'Etoile....	China, Philippines. <i>East Indies</i> .....	Grey.		
Asphalate or				
7. Rhode wood. V.				
Rhode.....	Rhode Island & Cypres. <i>Asia</i> .			
	Of Fernambouc, Lamon Islands & of			
8. Brasil or Sapan	St. Martha, Antilles, & Jamaica.	Red.....	Dense.	
wood	<i>West Indies</i> .			
9. Cinnamon or				
Sassafras.....	Ceylon. <i>East Indies</i> .....	White.....	Hard.	
10. Cayenne.....	Cayenne. <i>West Indies</i> .....	Yellow, red, veined	Dense.	
11. Cedar.....	Syria & America.....	Reddish, veined.	Dense, impervious.	Strong & sweet.
12. Cedar.....	Asia, America & Syberia in Europe.	White-russet.....	Soft.....	as above
	China, <i>East Indies</i> ; & from	Red-brown, with		
13. China or Letter wood	Guiane. <i>West Indies</i> .....	black spots.....	Hard.	
15 Citron or Candle Wood	American Islands.....	Yellow-russet.....	Firm.....	Lemon, nutmeg & cinnamon.
16. Copaïba.....	From Asia & Middle Europe.....	Veined-white.....	Firm & impervious.	
17. Coral wood.....	Wind Islands, America.....	Red, bright, veined.	Porous.	
18. Cyprus.....	From Asia.....	Yellowish figured	Hard, impervious.	
19. Ebony.....	Madagascar, Maurice Island. <i>Africa</i> .	Black.....	Very hard.	
20. Portuguese Ebony	East Indies.....	Black & white, spotted.....	Hard.	
21. Red Ebony		Reddish-brown, with black figure..	Hard.	
or Grenadille...	Madagascar. <i>Africa</i> .....			
	Madagascar, St. Maurice Island. <i>Africa</i> .			
22. Green Ebony.....	From Tabasco & American Islands.	Olive brown	Hard.	
	<i>America</i> .....	with green streaks		

23. White Ebony.....	Molucques Islands. <i>East Indies</i> .....	White.....	Hard.	
24. Epi de Bled.....	China. <i>East Indies</i> .....	Brown & reddish, figured	Porous.	
25. Fereol.....	Cayenne Island.....	White, figured with red.	Full.	
26. Fert.....	American Islands.....	Fawn, brown & black, somewhat streaked	Very hard.	
27. Fuset.....	Jamaica. <i>West Indies</i> .....	Veined yellow.....	Soft.	
28. Gayac or Saint-Wood	San Domingo Island & Port de Paix. <i>West Indies</i> .....	Green & black, streaked.....	Very hard.	
29. Gum wood.....	Guadeloupe. <i>West Indies</i> .....	White with black veining.	Hard.	
30. India or Campêche or	Campêche, St. Croix, Martinique & Grenadine Baytree. Aromatic. Islands. <i>West Indies</i> .	Red, with yellow glazing	Hard & very heavy.	Strong scent.
31. Jacaranda.....	East Indies.....	Marbled white & black	Hard.	Nice aroma.
32. Yellow, Fustoc & Clairembourg or Satin Yellow	Antilles & Tobago Island. <i>America</i> .....	Yellow, golden veined or wavy	Dense.	
33. Lapiré.....	West Indies.....	Red & bright yellow	Dense.	Very good smell.
34. Nutmeg wood...	East Indies.....	.....	Soft.	
35. Partridge Eye...	East Indies.....	Brown-grey.....	Very hard.	
36. Olive wood.....	Syria & Middle Europe.....	Brown-yellow, Figured.	Hard.	
37. Orange wood...	China, & Europe.....	Yellow & white	Dense.	Very good smell.
38. Plane wood.....	From Asia & America.....	White.....	Dense.	
39. Stink wood	Cape of Good Hope. <i>Africa</i> .....	Wavy.....	Dense.	Bad smell.
40. Rhode or Asphaltate	Jamaica. <i>America</i> .....	White.....	Dense.	Good smell & very penetrating.
41. Rose or Marble wood	Antilles Islands. <i>America</i> .....	Yellow & red, figured.....	Dense.	Rose smell.
42. Red or Blood	Near the Gulf of Nicaragua. <i>America</i> ..	Dark red.....	Hard.	
43. Citron Sandalwood	China, in the Kingdom of Siam & in the Islands of Solor & Timor. <i>East Indies</i> .....	Bright yellow.....	Hard.....	Good lemon smell.
44. White Sandalwood	<i>As above</i> .....	Russet-white.....	Dense.....	<i>as above</i> but less strong.
45. Red Sandalwood	On the Coromandel coast, & or Caliatour..... Tarassarin Island. <i>East Indies</i> .....	Red mixed with yellow & brown	Hard.	
46. Red Satinwood	Antilles Islands. <i>West Indies</i> .....	Red with yellow veining.....	Dense.	
47. Purplewood.....	<i>East Indies</i> .....	Wine-white & purple, figured.....	Dense.	Soft, violet smell.
48. Palissandre purple wood.....	St. Lucie Island or Alousia. <i>West Indies</i> .	Brown-grey, veined.	Porous.	Good smell, stronger than purplewood

## **Object (C) information** (no picture)

**Object Title:** JEWEL COFFER

**Object Date:** French (Paris) 1775-80

Veneered with marquetry of largely exotic woods – tulip wood  
Stamped J.H. Riesener

**Description of object (please attach any information received from breakout session leaders to this sheet):**

Riesener became a Master of the Parisian cabinet-makers' guild in 1763. This piece shows admirably his late style of the 1770s; it is noteworthy that he produced a table with similar marquetry for the use of Marie Antoinette in 1778. The upper section could be removed from its stand and carried by the handles on each side. The interior contains a series of compartments, some concealed, opened by various manipulations of the key. There is a drawer below with writing utensils. The whole piece is mounted on casters so it could be moved about.

## **Object (D) information** (no picture)

**Object Title:** Reading-stand with writing drawer

**Object Date:** 1785

Painted Jean-Javques Pierre bearing the date-letter 'z' for 1777 carcass stamped.

**Description of object (please attach any information received from breakout session leaders to this sheet):**

This type of work table was originally brightly coloured with blue and green; however, the UV natural light caused the rapid decaying of woods and now the colours have all faded.

## Object (E) information

**Object Title:** (see attached handout)

**Object Date:**

**Museum accession number of object:**

**Description of object (please attach any information received from breakout session leaders to this sheet):**

(see attached handout)

Tulip wood. The original colours were extremely bright: different colours were used for the flowers, vase and birds. Different types of wood were used for different colours. What is seen now is a completely different version.

## Object (F) information *(no picture)*

**Object Title:** Corner Cupboard

**Object Date:** 1773 – 1774 Veneered with King wood

**Description of object (please attach any information received from breakout session leaders to this sheet):**

The ground wood, Sycamore, was originally silver, but in 1782 there had been reports describing that the ground wood changed colour. Some merchants would even scrape off the top layer of the furniture surface to revive the colour. The leaves and flowers were coloured by dyes, and the bright red and purple colours came from the wood. The fading of colours might be the result of (1) UV light (2) stains or (3) fungus, which makes the timbers turn green.

11



TABLE

DESIGNED BY JOHN AND ANTHONY WOOD, NEW YORK, NY  
 EXHIBED BY JAMES WOOD, NEW YORK, NY, 1893  
 THE WOOD TABLE WAS ACHIEVED BY JOHN WOOD, NEW YORK, NY  
 AND ANTHONY WOOD, NEW YORK, NY, 1893  
 DESIGN: JOHN AND ANTHONY WOOD

1893

1095-1882

Register No. 1095-1882 :1 DESC  
:2 DRAWER  
:3 Key  
Date of Receipt  
From whom Received John Jones Esq.

Negative No. FG 627  
FG 628  
FG 629  
FG 630  
23529  
GA 4012

How acquired Bequest.

Registered papers

Condition

Measurements H. 2'3", W. 2'3½", D. 1'2½".

H. 68 cm W. 72 cm D. 34 cm (19/11/19)

## Description

Label 1971:

PKT 1971.

LADY'S WRITING DESK

FRENCH (Paris); about 1755.

Branded G.R. or C.R. with two V's conjoined, surmounted by a crown. An illegible inscription is also painted underneath.

Veneered with marquetry of various woods. Gilt bronze mounts. Furnished with a mechanism that caused the top to slide backwards as the drawer is pulled forward. Fitted with an adjustable reading-slope and two compartments with lids.

The double V mark is that of the Chateau de Versailles; the significance of the initials G.R. is uncertain but may refer to the Garde-Meuble de la Reine, the Depot of royal furnishings intended for the use of the Queen who, at this period, would have been Marie Leconska (d. 1768). The royal cabinet maker Jean-Francois Oeben (d. 1763) made a speciality of tables of this type although other craftsmen subsequently imitated the form. The double fillet of light and dark wood surrounding the panels is, however, a characteristic feature of his work that others rarely adopted.

Jones Collection

Museum No. 1095-1882

1922 Cat. of Jones Coll:

18. TABLE, shaped outline and curved legs, fitted with a drawer beneath the top, decorated in marquetry of harewood, tulipwood, sycamore and other wood with a bunch of flowers within a shaped panel on the top, and floral designs in panels on each side; mounted in ormolu with bands and scrollwork feet.

FRENCH. Period of Louis XV.

H. 2 ft. 3 in., W. 2 ft. 3½ in., D. 1 ft. 2½ in.

1095-1882.

Branded underneath with a coronet above the letters C R and W.

### 1882 Inventory:

TABLE. Marquetry of tulip and sycamore flowers in lighter woods, and ornate front pulls out, and contains a rising with folding doors. French. Per 3 in., W. 2 ft. 3½ in., depth 14½ in.

with inlay of feet. The compartments  
H. 2 ft.  
st.

1095-1882.

Register No. 1095-1882

Negative No. FG.627  
FG.628  
FG.629  
FG.630  
23529

Date of Receipt

From whom received

John Jones Esq.

How acquired

Bequest.

Registered papers

Condition

Measurements

H.2'3", W.2'3½", D.1'2½".

H: 68.3cm

W: 71.8cm

D: 34.9cm

## Description (P.T.O. for photographs.)

FRENCH: period of Louis XV  
Table with shaped outline and curved legs, fitted with a drawer beneath the top, decorated in marquetry of hawthorn, tulipwood, sycamore and other wood with a bunch of flowers within a shaped panel on the top, and floral designs in panels on each side. Mounted in ormolu with bands and scrollwork feet.

Branded underneath with a coronet above the letters C R and W.

The W of the branded mark should probably be read as two V's linked. This can perhaps be taken to stand for Versailles. It has been suggested that the CR over the two V's was the mark of Charles X 1824-30. There is another illegible French word painted on after the mark, of which a sketch is shown here:-  
Check if the two V's stand for Versailles by comparing them to Royal Marks on Lord Rosebery's commode by Roentgen (W.51-1948)

*Versailles*

Letter from P. Verlet:- 1963

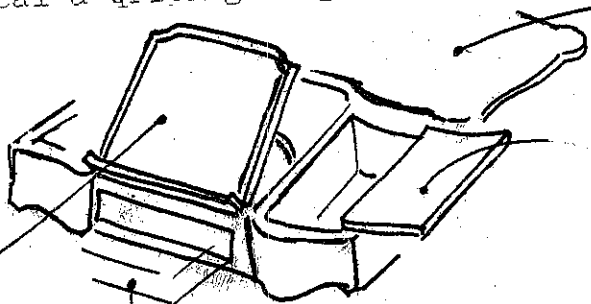
Comme vous le savez, W signifie Versailles. G.R. devrait indiquer, me semble-t-il, le Garde-Meuble de la Reine. Je connais cette marque, soit avec le W, soit avec le F de Fontainebleau sur des meubles Louis XV. J'ai pensé qu'il s'agissait de meubles considérés comme démodés et secondaires à l'époque de Marie-Antoinette sur lesquels on n'avait pas porté la marque circulaire du Garde-Meuble de la Reine.

Je me demande, toutefois, s'il ne faudrait pas voir là une marque du Garde-Meuble de la Reine Marie-Leczinska qui a eu un Garde-Meuble dont l'importance n'a rien à voir avec celui de Marie-Antoinette. Par le style des meubles qui portent cette marque, on arriverait peut-être à se former une idée plus nette de cette question.

Letter from P. Verlet (1965, November 18th):-

Nous ne nous étions pas compris sur la marque C (or G) R.W, que j'avais notée avant la guerre sur la table no.18 du catalogue Jones, qui signale d'ailleurs cette marque. Comme je relève cette marque, avec des initiales variées, sur des meubles ayant certainement fait partie du Garde-Meuble de Marie-Antoinette et comme la table en question est antérieure à 1770 (ainsi que le sont plusieurs des meubles ainsi marqués), je me demande si cette table ne pourrait pas remonter à Marie Leczinska, non seulement pour la date de fabrication, mais pour l'appartenance primitive. Mais que peut-on dire pour rapprocher des œuvres d'Oeben? A-t-elle les doubles filets jaune et noir? Je ne le crois pas, mais mon souvenir est très lointain et la photographie que j'ai ancienne.

When open the top of this table slides back as the drawer front comes forward with two legs to reveal a writing compartment, caissons and a reading stand:-



Top slides back as writing-unit is pulled forward.

Bar below drawers operates reading-desk (on ratchet supports)

Drawer operates on a key.

caissons each have hinged lids with floral marquetry.

There is one key. The first turn opens a small drawer, the second should push down a tongue which operates the spring catch of the writing-unit which then work on its own.

It has been suggested that this piece is most probably by Oeben. Nicolay, in L'art et la Maniere des Maitres Ebenistes français au XVIII siecle, p. 336, writes:-

Stamp J.F.OEBEN, Jean Francois, of German origin, master since 1764. Furniture is rarely signed. Of a rich but rather heavy style. The marquetry of cubes of the transition period specialized in mechanical furniture.

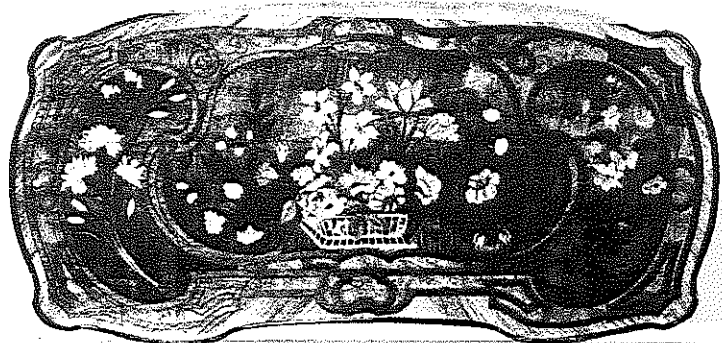
See Verlets French Furniture and Interior Decoration of the 18th century France

1967, which illustrates a mechanical table attributed to Oeben. Verlet writes -

'Jean-Francois Oeben was probably the inventor of these reading-tables which have a push-pull mechanism to repel an upper surface decorated with marquetry, the reading-slope (of marquetry, leather or lacquer) situated in the upper part of the interior coming forward like a drawer, and ornamented with veneers and inlays, enclosing the requisites for writing or for dressing the hair. Sometimes there is a small shelf only which comes forward to form the reading slope, for instance, in the centre of a piece taking the form of a bonheur-du-jour designed by Jean-Henri Reisener.'

In the Bowes Museum there is a dressing table of similar shape to the Museum's, with a mirror on a ratchet. Under the carcass is branded with initials of Marie Antoinette with a royal crown above encircled by 'Garde-Meuble de la Reine'. Attributed to J.H. Riesener. *cf. engraved.*

See the Catalogue Van Meublen, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1952, No. 492, Figs. 74 a & b where a table much like ours is illustrated (see below and overleaf). It is attributed to Oeben. Reference is there made to A. Feulner, J.F. Oeben, 1924, p. 23, where a similar table in the Munich Residenzmuseum is described.



underneath on each side of V & A table ~~are~~ <sup>is</sup> a large screw which can be tightened, to change the sliding mechanism of the top.



Table by J.F. Oeben, French, about 1760. Fig. 74 a & b. Catalogue Van Meublen, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1952.

This table in the Rijksmuseum is also illustrated in Les Ebenistes du XVIII siecle francais, Collection Grands Artisans d'Autrfois, p. 149 (See next page for photostat).

## **Object (G) information**

**Object Title:** (see attached handout)

**Object Date:**

**Museum accession number of object:**

**Description of object (please attach any information received from breakout session leaders to this sheet):**

**(see attached handout)**

A new dyeing technique was used in this commode. After painting the pictures on the cover, a small part of the wood in the picture (e.g. the man's calves) would be cut out and dyed, then put back into the picture. In so doing it not only prevented the wood from bleaching and staining one another, but it also made using indigenous woods in furniture possible, which saves much money. The covers of the drawers were made from walnut, and the inside was made from Mahogany.

When turning the key in the keyhole, the left front cover and drawers would automatically unfold (like the mechanism of a clock).

(9)



(ex: the leg)  
cut out small pieces → dye → put back in  
dye domestic wood

W.51-1948.

Register No. W.51-1948.

Negative No. G 1039 (whole)  
G 1040  
G 1041  
G 1042 (details)  
G 1043  
G 1044

Date of Receipt

From whom received

Sir Bernard Eckstein, Bart., Deceased,  
Kya Lami,  
25 South Street, W.1.,  
per Messrs Middleton, Lewis & Clarke,  
53/54, Leaden Hall Street, E.C.3.

How acquired

Bequest.

Registered papers

48/1860.

Condition

Measurements

H.2'10½", B.2'2½", W.4'5".

*NB when opening drawer  
C.P.T.O. for instructions, protect  
the rosette as you slide  
it to the left as it will  
jump forward.*

*Also, the drawer should  
be slightly lifted before  
unscrewing to open as it  
is 5/8/52.*

## Description



FRMAN (Neuwied- am- Rhein), about 1780-1790.

Commode, marquetry of walnut, box, sycamore and other woods, with gilt brass (ormolu) mounts. Rectangular top of grey-veined marble with chamfered corners. In the frieze a long drawer faced with gilt brass plates, with a concealed lock, beneath a rosette in the centre and two handles in the form of laurel swags bound with ribbon. Below the frieze, three cupboards separated by pilasters faced with gilt brass plates horizontally milled. The four corners canted and faced with similar pilasters. Below the pilasters are six short tapering legs, square in section, faced with gilt brass like the pilasters and terminating in square blocks. At the junction of each leg and the base of the commode, a pair of ~~xx~~ scrolled brackets in gilt brass. The side panels decorated with marquetry representations of musicians; the centre cupboard door with a scene from the Italian Comedia dell'Arte. In the centre of each flanking cupboard door an oval panel showing spectators watching the stage from boxes, all in marquetry. By David Roentgen. P.T.6.