

From: Richard Kahn <[REDACTED]>
To: Jeffrey Epstein <[REDACTED]>
Subject: FW: Louis XIV bureau plat
Date: Tue, 13 Aug 2013 23:40:32 +0000

Should I bring Christies in to provide another valuation?
Please advise

From: "Clarke, Alistair" <[REDACTED]>
Date: Tue, 13 Aug 2013 22:48:08 +0000
To: Richard Kahn <[REDACTED]>
Cc: "Clarke, Alistair" <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Louis XIV bureau plat

The design for this bureau derives from a drawing circa 1710 in the Musee des Arts Decoratifs in Paris attributed to Andre – Charles Boulle. A number of other bureau plats of this model , all inlaid in bouille marquetry of brass and tortoiseshell , are known and are attributed to Andre – Charles Boulle. We examined the bureau plat in detail and it is our opinion that the bureau is early 18 th century but may originally have been inlaid in bouille marquetry and have been therefore later inlaid in ebony – this is frequently the case with bureaux whose marquetry has fallen into disrepair and a restoration was judged too expensive or the owner 's taste favored a plainer look. An examination of the ormolu mounts indicates that they most probably do not date from the 18 th century – this is based on their casting , chasing and the construction techniques used. Gilding itself is never a determining factor as ormolu mounts are often regilt – that said , the gilding does not appear to date from the 18 th century.

The bureau has a distinguished provenance, having belonged to the collector Georges Hoentschel, whose collection was sold en bloc to J.P. Morgan and given to the Metropolitan Museum (who deaccessioned it in 1986). It was sold Sotheby's , New York , 3 May 1986 , lot 158 for \$ 320,000 against an estimate of \$ 40 – 60,000. It was not attributed to Boulle at the time and was obviously the subject of much speculation , hence the price achieved being a multiple of the pre sale estimate. Since then , scholarly opinion has progressed and much work has been done on Boulle and his workshop as well as those of his sons as well as his imitators – it is a very complicated field particularly because such furniture underwent several revivals and perfectly genuine pieces have not always survived the ravages of time unscathed. It is very unlikely that this bureau plat , if offered at auction today , would generate the same level of bidding interest for the reasons I set out above. I would have thought that a suitable auction estimate would be in the region of \$ 150 – 250 ,000.
With best regards , Alistair Clarke.

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