Chest of drawers from the Grenoble region, circa 1740



France, Mid-18th century

Dimensions : H. 87 x L. 118 x D. 65 cm

This attractive chest of drawers shows the characteristics of work executed around 1730/1740 in the Grenoble region or a little further south. Unlike Parisian cabinetmaking, the use of pine is not confined to the drawer fronts and structural boards; the fonçures (or drawer interiors) are also made of pine. The marquetry consists of geometric veneers of indigenous woods, rather than exotic woods imported from south America as was the case for Parisian furniture. The wood top is also characteristic of the Dauphiné region, where marble-topped commodes were not produced at the time.

However, this piece is by no means rustic. The cabinetmaker, following in the footsteps of local specialist Thomas Hache, took care to build his structure in line with trends in the capital at the beginning of the Louis XV period: the generously swollen front continues with a generous rounding of the front jambs. This very arched line allows for shallower sides, and reduces the massive appearance of the chest; the three-quarter view is much more harmonious.

The proportions are well calculated, with consistent drawer and top overhangs; the position of the bronzes has been judiciously planned into the marquetry design, and their quality of chasing suggests that they were ordered from Paris, as Thomas Hache often did. The veneer is made of maple and ash burls, plum, olive and walnut burls. It is finely inlaid with geometrically decorated leaves edged with blackened wood fillets. The chest opens with five drawers in three rows, fitted with Regency-style drop handles and lock escutcheons in chased and gilded bronze. The rounded jambs feature simulated fluting.

This well-preserved piece retains almost all of its original veneer. Only the gilding of the original bronzes has been restored.

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