

A Royal French Restoration bird-eye Maple veneered, Amaranth and Mahogany *commode a quatre tiroires* by Jean-Christophe Fischer, with its coeval rectangular "cipollino" elaborated moulded marble top on blind frieze drawer above three long drawers on a base plinth.



Paris, circa 1827.

The marble is signed in pencil 'Jean Christophe Fischer Maitre' and stamped in black with the Fontainebleau Royal Castle inventory number F 492. (Fig.1).

Although archive research in Fontainebleau has not yet identified the exact inventory, the number F 492 has no doubt to be identified with a 19th century inventory of the Castle.

The locks probably by Huret.

Height: 37,40 in. (95 cm)

Width: 53,1 in. (135 cm)

Depth: 23,6 in. (60 cm)

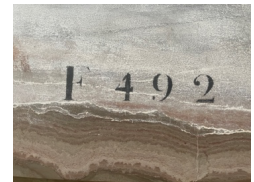


Fig.1

Literature:

- Marie-Noelle de Grandry, Odile Nouvel-Kammerer, Janine Leris-Laffargue, *Mobilier Directoire, Consulat, Empire, Restauration, Louis Philippe, Napoleon III, Années 1880*, Éditions Massin, 2010, p. 97.
- Denise Ledoux-Lebard, *Le Mobilier Français du XIX: 1795–1889*, Dictionnaire des ébenistes et menuisiers, Les éditions de l' amateur, 1984, p.198.
- Adriana Boidi Sassone, *Il Mobile dell'Ottocento: Francia*, ed. Istituto Geografico De Agostini, Novara, 1984, p.49.

Comparative examples:

Secrétaire à abattant and *Commode à l'Anglais*, signed «Fischer à Paris» vers 1827, Musée des Art Décoratifs, Paris.

The furniture of the Restoration is characterized by a fusion of styles, emphasized by the variety of furniture, arranged in a desired disorder that made interiors more alive, according to the romantic idea of movement and in opposition with the rigidity of Neoclassicism, of which 'Restoration style' is nonetheless the extreme extension. Light-colored woods prevail: sycamore, maple, ash, amboin and citronier take the place of rosewood, mahogany and ebony. As during the Empire, so also during the

Restoration it remained custom to design the furniture of an entire room sharing a homogeneous color. Such an eclectic taste is confirmed by the inventories of the apartments of the Prince of Condé in Chantilly (1822) and that of the Duchess of Berry in Saint-Cloud (1828).

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE FISCHER (1779–1854), born in the Grand Duchy of Berg, was a French cabinetmaker from the early nineteenth century. His furniture is distinguished as much by the perfection of the work as by the elegance of the forms. He established his business in Paris from 1820 until his death in 1854. From 1820 to 1827, he collaborated with Geoffroy Kopp under the company name FISCHER ET KOPP. He subsequently operated in autonomy, to be eventually joined by his son with whom he entered into a partnership around 1839 and to whom he left his business in 1848. An important cabinetmaker, he was also a manufacturer of bronzes, creating ornaments for furniture in the most modern style. During his association with Kopp, he probably employed one of the latter's sons, Jean Godefroy, a cabinetmaker until 1827. In the same year, on 13th of December 1827, he was appointed as the expert to compile the inventory of the workshop of Jean-Baptiste Lafitte, who had recently passed away.

From his workshop, he delivered commissions from French King Louis-Phillipe and made various masterpieces which were exhibited at the *Exposition de l'Industrie Française* in 1834, where he obtained a silver medal. A contemporary account of a visitor to the Exposition reads,

*His [Fisher's] pieces of furniture are distinguished by the perfection of work that paws the elegance of the forms; They are made in rosewood and are highlighted only on golden baguettes or white wood. A bureau à cylindre, a work table and two consoles, seemed to us the most remarkable of the Exhibition. The locks on his furniture were made by Huret. According to the report of the jury of the Exhibition of 1839, Fischer father and son occupy the same rank in manufacturing as Mr. Meynard; their company has long been known for its bold and successful attempts at cabinetmaking. No item leaves their workshops without being completed down to the smallest detail. This year they made perhaps immoderate use of dark tortoiseshell color, but their furniture is of such noble elegance that this slight excess, which is moreover an excess of richness, cannot in any way attenuate the distinguished merit of manufacture. The jury confirmed their silver medal. In 1844, they obtained a gold medal for their submission of cabinetwork and bronzes (Ledoux-Lebard, *Le Mobilier Français*, op. cit., p.198).*