

**A German gilt-bronze mounted walnut and fruitwood bureau-cabinet. The parquetry-inlaid upper section enclosing a painted shelved interior over a conforming fall, and two banded drawers, with shaped apron, on angular cabriole legs.**

**Circle of Abraham Roetgen, Rhineland, possibly Coblenz, 1750 circa.**

Height: 82,67 in. (210 cm)

Width: 33,46 in. (85 cm)

Depth: 25,59 in. (65 cm)

**Provenance:**

For generation in the same German family near Coblenz, with an artistic lineage who moved to the UK during the Second World War.

**Comparative example:**

Joseph Maria Gerber, *Abraham Roetgen*, Vol.II, 1980, n.137. For a related following lower example with almost identical dimensions, 1751-53.

The present notes on our bureau-cabinet (Fig.1) are based on a comparison with a very similar piece in the collections of the Roentgen Museum, Neuwied (Fig.2).

Even if after a first look it seems very closer, there are many differences between our bureau-cabinet and the one of the Roentgen Museum. Already upon a quick comparison, it will be possible to notice a difference in the general harmony of the two pieces. Ours seems to be slenderer and more contained in its dimensions, with elegant proportions in each of the three parts of which it is composed.

Beginning with an analysis of the lower part of our piece, one can notice that the legs are taller and slenderer and, as a consequence, the two drawers are of more contained dimensions. Their scrolled profiles are more accentuated and, what is more, they terminate in carved feet with a double scroll motif (fig. A). The apron also seems more complex in our piece than in the one in Neuwied.

The four scrolls projecting from the lower body of the bureau-cabinet in the Roentgen Museum are two-dimensional and only outlined, whilst in ours they are three-dimensional and follow the camber of the sides of the body (fig. B). The way in which the drawers are framed also presents differences between the two exemplars.



Fig.A



Fig.B

Moving on to the fall, the one in the Museum presents a larger surface, a slightly more rigid design, with a scrolled profile less accentuated than in ours, and with a steeper inclination. On our piece, on the other hand, the fall is overhanging and is framed by the rest of the furniture piece in an airier way.

As for the upper part, in our bureau-cabinet it rests onto a base that follows very closely the curved shapes of the fall, fitting onto a double *dos d'âne*. This construction is absent in the piece in the Museum. It appears tighter and taller and, above all, it presents a pronounced frontal camber, which appears much reduced, almost absent, in the Museum counterpart.

The *ramage* of the marquetry on the door panel presents squares framed by an intentionally different motif than those on the fall: we suggest in order to give a further sense of depth, alternating inlays following the grain of the wood with inlays going against it.

In our piece, the walnut of the inlays as well as the other fruitwoods are warmer and juxtaposed so as to create more pronounced chromatic contrasts, whereas in the Roentgen Museum piece the overall effect is more flat and uniform, with tones verging towards a gilded / blonde palette.

The crest in our piece presents a more elaborated design in both the scrolls and the twisting curves that create a double hump, following the rhythm of the camber of the door.

The sides of the two pieces, however similar upon a first analysis, seem to be more elaborated in ours on closer inspection.

In addition to the woods already mentioned for the veneers and the inlay – walnut and fruitwood – the structure of our piece presents, other than walnut, linings in pine wood.

Based on these comparisons between the two pieces, it might be suggested that the ours has served as the model for the other. The inconsistencies in the design, the

different proportions, and the differences in execution would indicate that the two are not the product of the same workshop.

Recent studies by Abraham Roentgen scholars have come to the conclusion that the specimen in the museum of Neuwied is not the work of the great master.

**Conditions:**

The intervention the piece has been subjected to was exclusively of a conservative nature, in order not to intervene in any way onto the rare original patina, which has survived intact.

The four handles and escutcheons in bronze are antique, even though they have been re-gilt. They are not consistent with the piece, however, but slightly later.

Due to a past intervention, the hinges of the fall have been replaced. All the locks are the original ones.



Fig.1



Fig.2