



The "Seckendorff" Commode. IMPORTANT AND RARE BAROQUE COMMUNE BY FRANÇOIS LIEUTAUD (CA.1665-1748). AFTER A DESIGN BY JEAN BERAIN, OWNED BY THE COUNT PALATINE CHRISTOPH FRIEDRICH VON SECKENDORFF-ABERDAR (1679-1759), DIPLOMAT AND MINISTER OF BRANDENBURG-ANSBACH, France, Paris ca. 1728/30.

Oak body with amaranth in veneer and parquetry. Shaped top, edged in brass and with inlaid brass, and parquetry surface in veneer. The front, with 2 rows of drawers. The four upper drawers are rectangular, and the 2 lower drawers have a cut-out, framing the gilt bronze mask. Very fine handles and finely worked escutcheons. The sides and the legs, framed with brass fillets. Solid locks with gilt covers. The key features the coat-of-arms of the Count Palatine von Seckendorff-Aberdar.

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x 130 x 65 cm.

Provenance: - Probably acquired by Carl-Friedrich-Wilhelm, Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach (1712-1757), around 1730, from François Lieutaud in Paris, and later bestowed as a gift to his Minister: - Count Palatine Christoph Friedrich von Seckendorff-Aberdar (1679-1759), diplomat and Minister of Brandenburg-Ansbach. - By succession, in the same noble family until: - Sotheby's Auction Zurich, 1 December 1998, Lot No. 353. - Swiss private collection. The chest of drawers on offer is directly inspired by the central part of a chest of drawers for which the design was drawn by Jean Bérain around 1700 and engraved by Mathieu Daigremont. The chest of drawers on offer is thus very closely related to the chest of drawers dated around 1695, which can be found in the Wallace Collection in London (Inv. No. F 405) and which also corresponds to Bérain's design in that it has narrow sides and legs. The arrangement of six drawers in the manner like in the chest of drawers on offer, is reminiscent of the designs of André-Charles Boulle. The chest of drawers on offer corresponds to the mature aesthetic sensibilities of French furniture-making shortly after the reign of Louis XIV and can therefore be dated to the time around 1730, i.e. to the Régence. Although not signed, the Seckendorff chest of drawers can certainly be attributed to the ebenist, François Lieutaud (ca.1665-1748). The influence of André-Charles Boulle on Lieutaud's work is particularly evident in the Seckendorff chest of drawers. The question of the original provenance of the Seckendorff chest of drawers already came up when the chest of drawers was sold in 1998. At the time, it was assumed that the chest of drawers had always been in Seckendorff's possession. Dr. Christoph Graf von Pfeil, in his publication on the furniture of the Ansbach Residence, which appeared only one year after Sotheby's Zurich Auction, stated that Lieutaud's Seckendorff chest of drawers was probably acquired in the years 1728-30 by the Ansbach Court and its Regent Carl-Wilhelm-Friedrich (reigned 1723-1757), in Paris, for the Ansbach Residence, and was only later bestowed by the Margrave to his Minister, Count Palatine Christoph-Friedrich von Seckendorff-Aberdar, as a gift. Therefore, the gift of this piece of furniture by the Margrave

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to his Minister provides the key to the real provenance of the chest of drawers, which remained in the Seckendorff family's possession for at least 250 years. Our thanks go to Dominique Augarde, Thomas Boller and Jean Nérée Ronfort (†) for cataloguing and revising the catalogue text for the chest of drawers on offer. Cf. Dr. Christoph Graf von Pfeil, *Die Möbel der Residenz Ansbach*, Munich, 1999, page 27 with an illustration of the Seckendorff chest of drawers by François Lieutaud. Peter Hughes, *The Wallace Collection, Catalogue of Furniture II*, London, 1996, III. p. 637 for the chest of drawers after the design by Bérain. Brigitte Langer, *Die Möbel der Residenz München, The French furniture of the 18th century*, Munich, 1995

CHF 150 000 / 250 000

€ 154 640 / 257 730







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