

# GALERIE LÉAGE

Furniture and objets d'art of the 18th century

## *The interlude of the Gallery*

### Why was a piece of furniture stamped?

This mark, cold-stamped on a piece of furniture or a seat by the craftsman who made it, served to guarantee the quality of his work to the corporation to which he belonged. In the 18th century, the trades were grouped into groups which laid down rules that each member had to respect. One of these guilds, the community of carpenters-cabinetmakers, which statutes date back to the 17th century, recalled in 1743 an obligation that was no longer respected, that of stamping the furniture produced in order to find the author in the event of faulty workmanship.

In order to check the quality of the pieces, the elected members of the corporation called jurors visited the workshops four times a year to check the work in progress and the quality of the finished furniture. If the piece of furniture was suitable, the jurors put the mark of the *Jurande* of the carpenters-cabinetmakers "JME", specific to Paris. If, on the other hand, it did not meet the required quality standards, it was confiscated and sold for the benefit of the community. Despite these practices, not all furniture created in the 18th century was marked for various reasons, such as the desire of the mercantile *marchands merciers* who resold it not to divulge the name of the cabinetmaker, in order to prevent their customers from approaching them directly.

Faced with such a restrictive system, the minister Anne Robert Jacques Turgot (1727-1781) tried in vain to abolish these corporations in 1776. However, it was not until 1791, under the Revolution, that they disappeared, bringing with them the end of the obligation to stamp.



Anonymous, *JME* hallmark and stamped iron by Jean Dumoulin "J.DUMOULIN"  
(1715-1798), active from 1749 to 1788,  
Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon (inv. 2005-7-1 and 2005-7-2)

Pierre Roussel (1723-1782), Stamp of Pierre Roussel "P.ROUSSEL" and mark JME on a piece of furniture, 18th century

See you next week for a new

**interlude!**

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