

Material and construction characteristics of a box with boule ornaments as identification criteria

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Abstract: *Material and Construction Characteristics of a Box with Boule Ornaments as Identification Criteria.*

The aim of the study consists in the characterisation and identification of a decorative box with Boule-style ornaments (private property). The material analysis focused on identifying the materials that were used to manufacture the item, in the context of the time when they were used. The construction analysis took into account the type of joints, ways of fixing the metal fittings, etc. The functional analysis based on the item's proportions and the lining used inside permitted to define the object's purpose. The style analysis provided data on the possible time when the object was made, on the basis of style characteristics, as well as the type and pattern of the ornaments. Due to the fact that the analyses revealed similarities with decorative boxes from the period of Napoleon III, chosen features of the box were compared with items from that period as to their dimensions, materials, shapes, forms and degree of ornamentation, metal fittings, inside and function.

Keywords: decorative box, Louis XIV style, Boule, Napoleon III style, historicism

INTRODUCTION

Storage is one of the basic functions of furniture, known since ancient times, and the oldest piece of furniture used to store documents and valuable objects, but also clothes, was a chest. Its most frequent shape was a cuboid. At first, chests had simple decorations, but later they flourished and became rich and diverse. Their large, usually flat surfaces provided a lot of space for rich ornaments. Chests were ornamented with reliefs, intarsia or inlays, were painted and covered with decorative metal fittings.

The chest was the point of departure for the creation of many other chest-based pieces of storage furniture such as the wardrobe or the commode. Moreover, many other small-sized variants of chests were created that differed mainly due to their purpose. Small items were kept in cases, whose shapes were often adjusted to the object kept inside them, such as, among others: glasses, toiletries, stationery, musical instruments, weapons or even cutlery. Boxes (with covers or lids) were equally popular and came in many different shapes and sizes. The most characteristic ones are the richly ornamented tea boxes and medallions that contained portrait miniatures. In turn, caskets (referred to as decorative boxes as well) shaped as a rectangular box with a lid and with numerous compartments, whose interior was covered with fabric, were dedicated for: items used in games, stationery, technical or painting utensils and jewellery. Jewellery boxes, apart from the usual compartments, could also contain drawers and various kinds of hidden, secret compartments. They became popular in the 17th century and very often were small masterpieces, much more valuable than the objects stored within. They were created by great artists such as A.Ch. Boulle, who paid extreme attention to the smallest details (*Grzeluk, 2000*).

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Furniture decorated in the style of André Charles Boulle (1642-1732), French ébéniste at the court of Louis XIV, and especially his richly ornamented decorative boxes, are among the most frequently copied and imitated objects ever. Sometimes, they were copied faithfully in every detail, and sometimes only their shape or some techniques or motifs were used as

inspiration by other craftsmen. In most cases, those objects cannot be treated as forgery, because no one ever claimed they were authentic. What is more, the forms of original antique furniture were often adjusted to contemporary needs, especially as far as their size was concerned, which permitted to distinguish them from the originals. Even in case when the copies were supposed to faithfully mimic the original not only in their external appearance, but also by using materials of similar quality and the same construction solutions, the copies still contained some characteristic elements that facilitated their attribution. Usually, those differences consisted in the metal joints or in a different thickness of the veneer (*Montenegro, 1998*).

The practice of imitating and copying furniture makes it impossible to attribute those objects only on the basis of style analysis, which often needs to be complemented with other methods. An analysis of construction characteristics can give us additional clues, useful at the moment of specifying the age of the object or the level of the carpenter's workshop - because the continuous technological development was reflected in, among others, manufacturing methods or in the geometry of the joints. Material characteristics might prove equally useful, because the copyists used mainly contemporary materials (other materials were either unavailable or too expensive).



Fig. 1 Overview of the decorative box and elements of brass decorations: profile (1), narrow vein (2), wide vein (3), narrow vein (4), marquetry (5), narrow vein (6), wide vein (7), narrow vein (8), escutcheon (9)

AIM OF STUDY

The aim of the study consists in the characterisation and identification of a decorative box with Boulle-style ornaments (private property – fig.1).

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of identification, material, construction, functional and style analysis was performed. The material analysis focused on identifying the materials that were used to

manufacture the item, in the context of the time when they were used. The construction analysis took into account the type of joints, ways of fixing the metal fittings, etc. The functional analysis based on the item's proportions and the lining used inside permitted to define the object's purpose. The style analysis provided data on the possible time when the object was made, on the basis of style characteristics, as well as the type and pattern of the ornaments. Due to the fact that the analyses revealed similarities with decorative boxes from the period of Napoleon III, chosen features of the box were compared with items from that period as to their dimensions, materials, shapes, forms and degree of ornamentation, metal fittings, inside and function.

ITEM CHARACTERISTICS

Description of the item

The item under analysis is a wooden decorative box with Boulle-style ornaments, cuboid in shape, with the following dimensions: width 278 × depth 195 × height 100 mm (Fig. 1). The item consists of a body and a lid on hinges.

The box is covered with veneer and inlaid with golden-coloured metal. The inlay in the form of veins appears on the lid, front, sides and back of the box. In the area of its central decoration, the box is also inlaid with tortoiseshell or its imitation. The ornaments are based on the contrast between black and gold, while the background of the pattern has red colour (Fig. 2a).

The external surfaces of the decorative box are covered with a finish layer with slight gloss.

The side and back walls are straight. The front wall of the decorative box has a convex-concave profile. The concave area of the front wall is about 8 mm deeper counting from a tangent plane. The corners are chamfered along the entire height of the box. The lid, 30 mm thick, has a slight convexity of up to 10 mm (in its highest, central point) counting from the top, narrow surfaces of the box's walls.

The lid is fixed to the body with two continuous (piano) hinges, with dimensions of 52-53 x 15 mm (measured flat). The hinges are fixed with 3 x 10 mm countersunk, slotted wood screws. The screws were produced mechanically.

The opening of the lid is limited by a metal fitting (opening limiter; fig. 2b) that enters the side wall vertically and is placed on the left side of the box. The decorative box has an external mortise cam lock, locked with a key. Currently the lock does not work, the key turns but the lock does not close. The silvered-coloured key was made of a different metal than the fittings.

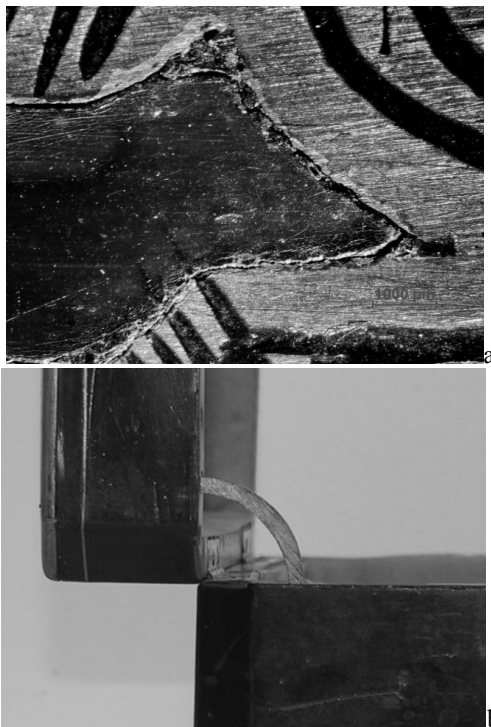


Fig. 1 Metal fittings: microscopic image of a part of the decoration (photo Andrzej Cichy - a) and the lid opening limiter (b)

In the central part of the front wall we can see the place where the missing 25×25 mm escutcheon was installed. The mark suggests that the escutcheon was positioned symmetrically in the vertical axis. The key hole is rounded.

On the bottom, the decorative box is covered with black dyed paper with embossed leather pattern.

The inside of the box has one single cuboid compartment, lined with blue fabric over a soft base (Fig. 1b). The corners of the inside are additionally finished with string in the same colour as the fabric; the string covers the joints between the material covering the side walls, the bottom and the internal side of the lid.

The box does not have a signature.

Material Characteristics

The box was made of poplar (*Populus* sp.) covered with a veneer of black wood of unknown species. The ornament was made of brass and tortoiseshell imitation - probably celluloid.

The box is covered with shellac solution on the outside (French polish), and with blue silk moire on the inside.

Construction Characteristics

The box is a piece of furniture in the shape of a chest, and the fact that the external surfaces are covered with veneer and the inside is covered with fabric makes it difficult to define the construction type.



Fig. 3 Overview of the item's layers

The entire body and the lid were made of solid wood covered with veneer. The side walls and the back wall are made of 9 mm thick battens. The front wall is made of a 12 mm thick batten and has a concave-convex profile on its external side. The thickness of the box's walls made it possible to chamfer their edges. The box's walls are connected on the corners with the use of finger joints. High stability of the structure suggests that dovetail joints might have been used. Due to the above-mentioned stability, we decided not to uncover the structure.

The top surface of the lid was made of one single element. The layout of fibres in the structural element of the lid is parallel to the shorter edges of the box. The convex profile was made probably by planing the top surface within the area of the box's walls. The convexity is present only in the central part and is bidirectional. On the inside, the element is flat.

The height of the decorative element surfaces is equal. The veneer that covers the box is about 0.5-0.6 mm thick. The decorative metal fittings are about 1 mm thick and are embedded in the structural wood components.

The decorative metal elements, that is: the veins and the central ornament, were fixed with the use of glutin glue. The only exception is the brass profile on the edges of the lid. The profile, on the side of the connection, has small, non-continuous tongues that are embedded in the structure in the places where the sides of the lid touch the element of the lid's top surface. The distance between the tongues on the longer profiles is ca. 5 cm (visible on the detached profile of the back wall).

The fittings connecting the body with the lid are fixed with metal elements, namely with wood screws.

The bottom of the box has been glued to the narrow surfaces of the box's walls.

The fabric that covers the box's inside was placed on paper that was subsequently glued to the internal surfaces of the walls, the bottom and the internal side of the lid.

The layout of materials used to make the box is shown on the figure no. 3.

Functional Characteristics

The inside of the box consists of one compartment. The box is not too flat, but the side walls are not too high either. The proportion of the side wall height to the box's width is ca. 3:1. The proportion between the side wall width and the front wall width is ca. 2:1.

The box could have been used to store small, valuable items, because its inside has soft lining. However, due to the fact that the box has only one big compartment and there is no mirror, one may suspect that it was not meant to hold jewellery. It might have been used to store items of sentimental value, such as letters. Boxes of this kind - with no division into smaller compartments and with lining - were also used as cases for technical devices such as

telescopes or compasses. Nonetheless, usually such cases were smaller and their shape was often adjusted to the object that they were dedicated for.

Decoration Characteristics

The decorative elements are made of black wood, brass and tortoiseshell imitation (celluloid). Decorative metal fittings are present both on the box's body and on the lid.

The main ornament is a marquetry (Fig. 1(5)) made in the technique called *première-partie*, that is: the brass motif on a background made of tortoiseshell imitation. The ornament is situated centrally on the lid. The pattern is biaxially symmetrical, with axes 90 mm and 140 mm long, and is inscribed in an ellipse. In the middle, there is a decorative plaque with concave corners, elongated in the horizontal axis. The plaque is ornamented with two engraved flowers surrounded by a wavy strip that repeats its shape. Around it, we have a floral pattern made of c-shaped and s-shaped ornaments. The entire ornament is enclosed in a rectangular bordure (frame) with concave corners. In the middle of its sides, the frame has the shape of semi-elliptical arches. Each of the shorter sides has one semi-elliptical arch curved outward, while the longer (semi-elliptical) ones are curved inward. On both sides of the ornament's external edges there is a floral motif surrounded by leaves, and the top and bottom edges are finished with the shapes of leaves. The entire ornament has been additionally highlighted with the technique of engraving. The grooves created in this way were dyed black in order to make the pattern more visible.

The marquetry is surrounded by brass veins - alternately narrow and wide. The vein that is the closest to the marquetry (Fig. 1(4)) is 1 mm wide and has the shape of a rectangle, whose side along the front wall is wavy and repeats the shape of the front wall. The next one (Fig. 1(3)) is placed 6 mm from the previous one and is 4 mm wide. Its shape repeats the shape of the previous one. The last vein (Fig. 1(2)) located on the top surface of the lid, is placed 10 mm from the previous one. Its shape closely follows the shape of the external edges of the lid.

The contour of the lid is covered with brass profiles (Fig. 1(1)), rounded on their edges.

The front wall of the box's body contains a brass inlay (Fig. 1(7)) with rectangular shape and overall dimensions 240 × 73 mm. The motif is made of 4 mm veins connected with one another at the corners at an angle of 45°. Its contour covers a part of the body and a part of the lid.

Moreover, the box is also decorated with two other veins that are 1 mm thick. One of them (Fig. 1(8)) is placed at a 5 mm distance from the bottom edge of the box's body, and the second one (Fig. 1(6)) covers a fragment of the lid, 5 mm from the edge of the brass profile. Both veins run horizontally through all the sides of the body and of the lid.

Celluloid is used only in the central decoration (Fig. 1(5)), but it's possible that originally it was also placed around the key hole. Right now, there is only a mark remaining in the place from which a decorative escutcheon fell off (Fig. 1(9)).

In the ornaments, there are no major gaps visible between the different materials that were used (Fig. 2a).

The metal elements have been additionally protected with a finish layer.

Style Characteristics

The box has a convex-concave front, characteristic of the furniture of late baroque and rococo (Kaes, 1990). In spite of the profiled front and chamfered edges, the box still looks quite sturdy. Its shape is definitely less sophisticated than what was typical at the time of Louis XIV, when decorative boxes received far more fancy shapes (Fig. 4, 6, 7).



Fig. 4 Louis XIV style decorative box, ca. 1750
(hygra.com)



Fig. 52 Decorative box, ca. 1720
(kollenburgantiquairs.com)



Fig. 6 Decorative box attributed to A.Ch. Boulle
(www.sothebys.com)



Fig. 7 Decorative box, Louis XIV style, ca. 1700
(www.sothebys.com)

The symmetrical decoration of the box made of a floral pattern is typical of Louis XIV baroque furniture, but it is also much less elaborate than the typical decorations from that period. Decorative boxes from the times of Louis XIV had very rich, often even overwhelming ornaments, and additionally they had decorative metal profiles made of gilded bronze on the edges, just like other furniture from that period (Fig. 4-7).

The box under examination copies and transforms some of the features of original Boulle-style boxes in a creative way, limiting the amount of decorative motifs and applying them to a simplified shape. The simplified forms and decorative motifs might indicate that the object was made in the 19th century.

Comparative Analysis

The style analysis revealed that the decorative box under examination was not manufactured during the reign of Louis XIV and was not made by A.Ch. Boulle (*post quem* dating).



Fig. 8 Decorative box number 1 (www.c13antic.com)



Fig. 9 Decorative box number 2 (www.regentantiques.com)



Fig. 10 Decorative box number 3 (<http://www.anticstore.com/>)



Fig. 11 Decorative box number 4 (<http://www.anticstore.com/>)

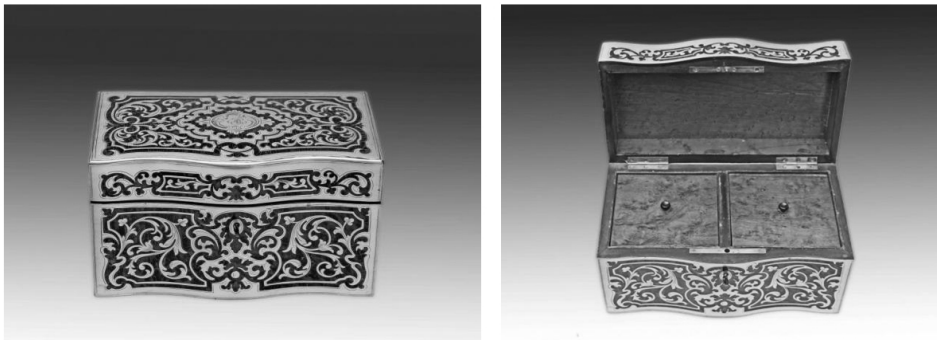


Fig. 12 Decorative box number 5 (<http://www.antiquites-en-france.com/>)



Fig. 13 Decorative box number 6 (<http://www.ivoire-france.com/>)



Fig. 14 Decorative box number 7 (<http://www.rubylane.com/>)

Considering its form, the materials used and the type of decoration, the box is similar to decorative boxes from the period of Napoleon III. Therefore, a comparative analysis was carried out for chosen characteristics of the item under examination and decorative boxes from the period of Napoleon III (Fig. 8-14) from various auction houses (mostly French ones). The analysis was carried out on the basis of photos presented herein, and its results are gathered in Table 1. The sign “+” indicates a feature similar to the box under analysis.

Tab. 1 The comparison of chosen characteristics of the box under examination and boxes from the period of Napoleon III

Box	Dimensions	Materials	Shape	Decoration	Metal fittings	Inside	Function
number 1	220x150x100	-	-	+	+/-	+/-	+
number 2	30x120x130	+	+	-	+/-	-	-
number 3	370x260x80	-	-	+/-	+	+	+
number 4	300x260x65	+	-	+/-	+/-	-	-
number 5	230x130x120	-	+/-	-	+/-	-	-
number 6	190x130x75	-	-	+	no data	no data	no data
number 7	200x90x50	-	-	+/-	+/-	-	-

Each box's dimensions are given in Table 1. The comparison of chosen characteristics of the box under examination and boxes from the period of Napoleon III, taking into account the dimensions, has revealed that the proportions of the box under examination are most similar to the box number 1 and 6 (Table 2).

Tab. 2 The comparison of the proportion of the box under examination and boxes from the period of Napoleon III

Box	The proportion of the wall height to the box's width	The proportion between the side wall width and box's width
under examination	3:1	2:1.
number 1	2:1	3:2
number 2	7:4	2:1
number 3	9:2	3:2
number 4	9:2	7:6
number 5	2:1	7:4
number 6	5:2	3:2
number 7	4:1	2:1

As a result of shape comparison, the decorative boxes were divided into two groups: cuboid boxes without wavy lines (boxes no. 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7) and boxes with straight side and back walls and a concave-convex front line (boxes no. 2 and 5). Out of all the Napoleon III decorative boxes included in the comparison, only the box no. 2 had chamfered corners, just like the box under study.

Moreover, the materials used to manufacture the boxes were also analysed: brass, dyed pearwood and palisander in case of box no. 1; brass, tortoiseshell and dark veneer in case of box no. 2; brass, ebony and tortoiseshell imitation in the box no. 3; brass, dark veneer and tortoiseshell imitation in the box no. 4; brass and tortoiseshell imitation in the box no. 5; brass, tortoiseshell imitation and dark veneer in case of box no. 6; and finally brass, tortoiseshell imitation and mahogany in the box no. 7. The comparison of materials between the box under examination and boxes from the period of Napoleon III has revealed that a set of materials analogous to the box under examination was used only for the boxes no. 2 and 4.

During the comparison of ornaments between the box under examination and boxes from the period of Napoleon III, it turned out that only box no. 2 had no similar elements, while box no. 5 had only one similarity, namely a decorative curly floral motif. The decorations that were the most similar to the box under study were found on boxes 1 and 6.

In case of box no. 1, the form of the decorations and the area where the ornaments are located are very similar to the item under research: the marquetry in the central area (ornament background filled with palisander, decoration biaxially symmetrical in the form of a plaque surrounded by a wavy strip and floral motifs) is surrounded by brass veins, the escutcheon at the lock is made of brass and the profiles on the lid's edges are rounded - just like in the item under study.

In box no. 6, the place and form of the ornaments are very similar, there is marquetry in the central part of the lid, its background is filled with tortoiseshell imitation, and the plaque ornament surrounded by a wavy strip is biaxially symmetrical. The central decorative

motif is also surrounded by brass veins, the lid's contour has rounded profiles and there is a brass vein on the front. There is no escutcheon, while the box under examination did have one, probably made of tortoiseshell imitation.

In case of box number 3, the *premiere-partie* ornament is placed only on the lid - just like in the box under study, and the centrally located plaque is also surrounded by floral motifs and wavy strips. However, the little vein running around the lid's edges is missing and the additional triangular floral ornaments on the corners also do not fit.

In box no. 4, the form and area where the ornaments are located are very similar: the marquetry is placed in the central area (the background of the ornament is filled with tortoiseshell imitation) and it is surrounded by brass veins. Another similarity consists in rounded profiles on the lid's edges, but the front has as much as two veins, the escutcheon is made of brass and the ornament is symmetrical only in one axis.

The differences between the box under study and box no. 7 consist in the fact that on box no. 7 the *premiere-partie* and *contre-partie* ornaments cover the entire surface of the lid and there is no escutcheon; on the other hand, it has a similar floral motif around a central plaque, rounded profiles on the lid's contour, two thin veins around the box: one on the frontal part of the lid and the second one on the front wall below it; we can also see a rounded key hole (but there is no escutcheon).

The decorative box no. 5 has *premiere-partie* and *contre-partie* floral ornaments (and this is the only similarity that was mentioned above) that cover its entire surface, and there is a medallion in the central part of the lid. Similarly, in box no. 2 the decoration is much bigger and covers the lid, the front and the side walls. The entire front and the entire lid are covered by curly floral motifs made in the techniques called *premiere-partie* and *contre-partie*, with the use of brass and tortoiseshell, and the veneer is visible only on the sides and on the back of the box. The profiles on the lid's edges are also rounded.

The comparison of metal fittings has revealed that the type of the lock and of the hinges connecting the lid to the body is the same in all the Napoleon III boxes, as well as in the item under study, and it was a normal practice to make the key of a different material than the fittings - just as it happened in the case of the box under research. Boxes no. 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 differ only because they do not have an opening limiter. An opening limiter similar to the object under study, in the shape of a quarter-circle, was included only in the box no. 3. In case of box no. 6 there is no data.

As to the inside, the box no. 3 is the most similar to the one-chamber inside of the box under research - it also has only one compartment and is lined with red moire (the moire in the box under study is blue); the inside of the box no. 1 also has only one compartment, but it was lined with paper painted with flowers. The boxes no. 2 and 5 have two compartments with separate lids and without lining. The box no. 7 has four compartments lined with some fabric (probably crimson velvet), while box no 4 has 10 compartments without any lining. In case of box no. 6 there is no data, so its function cannot be specified.

A functional comparison between the boxes from the period of Napoleon III with the box under study can prove that the similar box no. 1 that also has one single compartment and a lid was used for storing photos, letters, etc. The single compartment of box no. 3 lined with red moire could have been used for storing valuables, letters or some devices, e.g. a compass. The four compartments of box no. 7 could store stationery equipment, while the ten compartments of box no. 4 were used to store items used in games. Boxes number 2 and 5 that have two compartments each are tea boxes.

CONCLUSION

1. **Materials.** Distinguishing between tortoiseshell and its imitation can be very difficult or close to impossible. In the 19th century, tortoiseshell imitation was often used together

with dark veneer and brass, just as in the box under research. The only thing that is confusing is the use of poplar wood (*Populus* sp) as the structural material.

2. Construction. The structure of the object under analysis is typical for decorative boxes. There is no reference literature that would provide information on the construction of other Boulle-style decorative boxes.

3. Functionality. The box has a big internal space with lining. Brown coloured stains resembling corrosion can suggest that some metal objects were stored inside it, such as brooches, buttons, etc. It probably wasn't its primary function, which remains unknown.

4. Ornaments. The decorative box has an arabesque motif marquetry typical for the style of Boulle. However, the decoration is much less elaborate, which suggests it is akin to the historicism époque of the Second Empire. As to the form and degree of decoration, the box is most similar to boxes number 1 and 6.

5. Style. The box's form and decorations refer to the period of baroque. However, the simple cuboid form with a convex-concave front line and slightly convex lid is characteristic of the boxes from the period of Napoleon III. As to its shape, the box is most similar to the boxes number 2 and 4.

6. Technique of manufacture. The marquetry was made in accordance with the technique used by Boulle: the different materials were placed over one another, and then the motif was cut. The elements are combined with great precision, which is a sign of high quality similar to the original Boulle decorative boxes. Later copies were made by less capable artists and the elements did not fit so well together. Therefore, it is possible that the box under research was made with the use of more modern tools, which might be the reason why there are no visible gaps between the elements made of different materials. The visibly uneven parts of the ornament show that the decoration was made manually. Manual processing is also visible at the connections between metal and wood; the surface of brass was scraped in order to improve its adhesion at the moment of gluing the elements.

7. State of preservation. The box is definitely not a contemporary product. The material is visibly damaged, due to the wear of wood over a long time. Most of the damages appeared due to the difference of dimensional stability of the used materials.

8. Dating. There are no characteristic marks or ornaments that would allow an unequivocal attribution, which suggests that the item is eclectic. Some similarities to the boxes dating from the period of Napoleon III (2nd half of the 19th century) might suggest that the object was made at that time. However, it must be taken into account that the topic of decorative boxes has not been sufficiently studied and also that many different kinds of shapes and ornaments were used during that period. Therefore, it would be safe and reliable to claim that the item was made in the 19th century, probably during its second half.

The book by Tim Forrest *Antique Furniture* informs us that rounded escutcheons were introduced in the 1850s. This box lacks an escutcheon, but the keyhole is clearly rounded, which might also suggest that the item was made in the 2nd half of the 19th century.

Assuming that the joints are original, the fact that screws with sharp endings - like those used to fix the metal fittings in this box - were introduced after 1850 (*Swaczyna, 1992*) would confirm this preliminary dating.

Tortoiseshell imitation (celluloid) used in the central ornament was not invented until 1862, which might prove that the box was made after that year.

The above-mentioned elements confirm that the box dates from the 2nd half of the 19th century.

9. Artistic quality. The decorative box was made with great care for its durability and the aesthetics of the brass decorations, which is confirmed by the way in which the profiles were fixed with the use of tongues that are not visible on the outside. The lines were engraved with great accuracy, which suggests that the item was made by an experienced artist-

carpenter. The missing fragments of veneer were also replaced with great care. These repairs are extremely difficult to notice.

The above-mentioned qualities prove that it is a high-class item.

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Streszczenie: *Charakterystyka materiałowa i konstrukcyjna szkatułki z dekoracją Boule'owską jako kryterium identyfikacji.* Celem pracy jest charakterystyka oraz próba identyfikacji szkatułki z dekoracją boule'owską, stanowiącej własność prywatną. Analiza materiałowa dotyczyła identyfikacji materiałów użytych do wytworzenia obiektu, w kontekście czasu ich stosowania. Analiza konstrukcyjna rozpatrywała rodzaje połączeń, sposoby mocowania okuć itp. Analiza funkcjonalna w oparciu o proporcje szkatuły i rodzaj wybicia jej wnętrza określała możliwe przeznaczenie obiektu. Analiza stylistyczna wyznaczyła prawdopodobny czas powstania mebla na podstawie cech stylistycznych oraz rodzaju i wzoru dekoracji. Ponieważ wykonane analizy wykazały podobieństwa obiektu do szkatuł z okresu Napoleona III, wybrane cechy szkatuły porównano z obiektami z tego czasu pod względem wymiarów, użytych materiałów, kształtu obiektów, formy dekoracji i stopnia dekoracyjności, okuć, wnętrza oraz funkcji.

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