



Louis XVI Style Table. First Half of the 19th Century, France

ROBERTAS ŠVELNIKAS

Lithuanian Art Museum
Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre
Didžioji Str. 4, LT-01128 Vilnius, Lithuania
E-mail: restcentras@muziejus.ldm.lt

Rosewood, mahogany, birch, pine timber; rosewood, oak, mahogany, thuja, maple, ebony husks; zinc alloy, brass, ivory, imitation malachite and lazurite created using the scagliola technique; turnery, carving, wood veneer, incrustation, engraving, varnishing; 91 x 156 x 77 cm. Lithuanian Art Museum, inv. no. TD-4332.

Condition before restoration: the table was partially deteriorated. The table coating was dirty with a great deal of debris stuck in the carved parts. The thick layer of varnish had darkened and cracked away in places. There was a crack on the right-hand-side of the table top. During amateur restoration work, the crack attempted to be fixed using four 7.5 cm long wood screws, and their heads had been partially filed away. The wood veneer table top had become wrinkled in places, and elsewhere timber, white and yellow metal fragments were missing. There were numerous traces of mechanical damage on the table top coating. The profiled borders surrounding the frame of the table were also missing, as were some carved elements. The bottom table leg join had also not survived.

Chemical research: before restoration of the table, a microchemical, FTIR and XRF spectrum analysis of the incrustation materials, glue and varnish was conducted. It was found that the white-coloured metal was a zinc alloy containing 1.5% lead; the yellow-coloured metal was brass, containing around 65% copper and 34% zinc. The imitation lazurite was produced using a synthetic glue containing ultramarine, white zinc and albuminous material. The incrustations were adhered using albuminous glue; in addition, various kinds of synthetic glues used in earlier restoration attempts were also discovered. The table top was covered in two layers of varnish; a natural resin

was used for the bottom layer, coloured with a synthetic alizarine pigment; shellac was identified in the top layer.

Restoration: the darkened varnish covering that had cracked away in many places was removed. The cracked table top was mended: the wood screws with deformed, partially filed down heads were removed, and a hardened and crumbled putty was removed from the space left by the crack. The inner side of the table top crack was glued and additionally reinforced using six "swallow-tail" joints. The table's construction joints were reglued. The frame winding around the table top was attached to the table top with wooden retainers. The missing carved fragments were reconstructed. The missing incrustation details were recreated using copper and zinc tin and copper wire; the required fragments were cut out, on which illustrations were engraved based on the surviving examples. The new metal fragments and any old ones that had come unstuck were adhered with hot fish glue. The pH value was taken into consideration as part of the preparation of the glue, as it had to be no lower than 6. This value was exceeded by dissolving 100 g of fish glue calcium hydro carbonate in alkaline water (200 ml) and adding a teaspoon of chalk. The bottom table leg join was made based on the existing analogues. It was attached to the table legs using wooden joints and fixed with large wood screws with decorative heads. The central decor element of the table leg join was turned and carved from mahogany. Its shape and carving motif was based on decor fragments of the table legs. The recreated details were given a water-based stain coating. The table top surface was recreated using a shellac varnish and pumice powder which was used to fill the timber pores that had opened in some places.



ill. 1.



ill. 3.



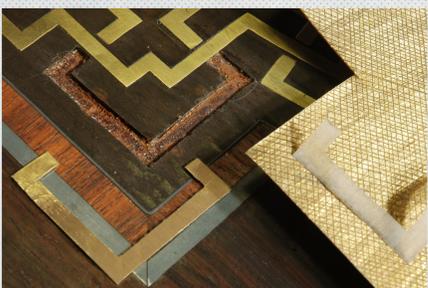
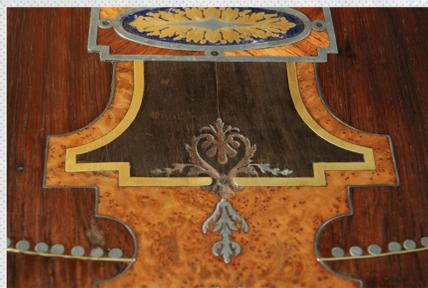
ill. 2.



ill. 4.



ill. 5.



ill. 6.



ill. 7.



ill. 8.