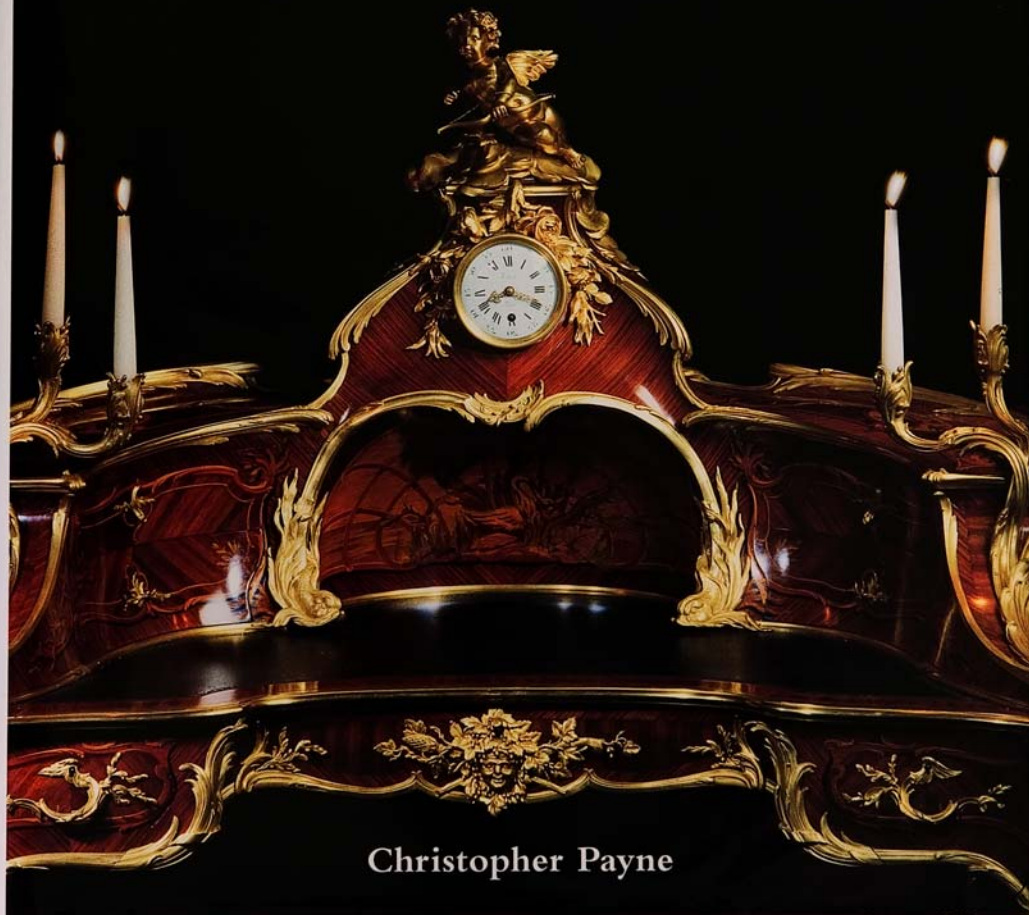


FRANÇOIS

François
Linke 1855-1946
The Belle Epoque of French Furniture



Christopher Payne

Other invoices are equally unspecific; Messagé, writing from his rue Sedaine address in September 1888, and again in March 1892, includes the name of H. Bonnard in the heading of his invoice, both calling themselves sculptors. Nothing is known of this partnership or of how long it lasted. However Linke did not take kindly to the second invoice, which had to be reduced from 142 to 125 francs. Rue Sedaine, running parallel with the rue de la Roquette in the 11th district, is given as the address for two other sculptors who worked for Linke – Rambaud and Henri Huppe. This may have been coincidental or their neighbour Messagé may have introduced them as suitable craftsmen.

Daybook 5, page 121, shows a writing desk that has become a hallmark of the Linke style, although his drawing only shows that it is a *bureau plat* in the rococo manner. The photograph, taken from an original glass negative, shows a piece of furniture that will always clearly be identified with Linke's output. Originally called a '*grand bureau a Casier*' (*sic*), the upper part was to have a small *cartonnier* or set of drawers for stationery. It appears from the records that only one was made with the set of drawers and in the 1901 *registre* the *casier* is not mentioned at all, having become a somewhat old-fashioned adornment and one that broke up the flowing lines with which Linke was so often identified. The first desk was made circa 1888; two others were completed by 1896. Messagé's reduced invoice in March 1892 is one of the few where there is a cross-reference to the Linke index number; he modelled '2 *crosses d'angle*' and 'une *Pomelle Louis XV*' for the writing desk number 132 illustrated (Plate 88). In November 1896 Linke bought thirteen lots from a sale of the effects of Roux et Brunet. Lot 155 is described in the catalogue as a '*Bureau Louis XV, rocaille à poignée coquille*'. It was most probably the first use of this device, which has become an accepted hallmark of Linke's repertoire – the 'Linke crab-like acanthus'.¹⁵ No photographs exist of the Roux model, so we do not know how close Linke's device was to the earlier one by Roux.¹⁶ The Linke desk number 132 shows the central acanthus whereas the Roux catalogue description may only refer to the handles. Possibly Linke can be credited with developing the Roux handle into a central

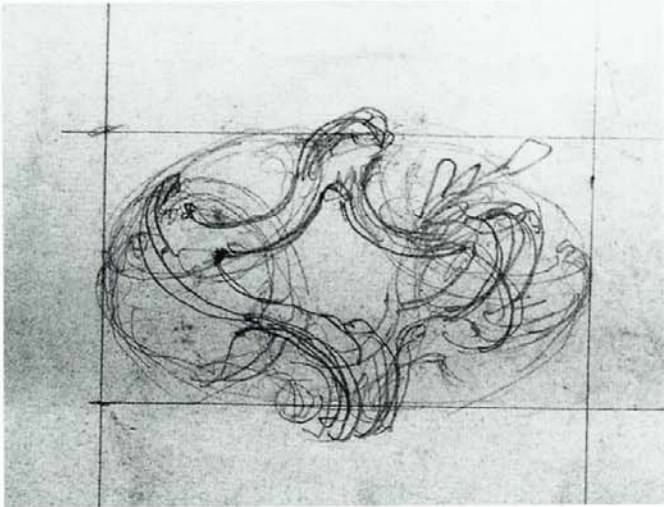


Plate 81. A drawing by Messagé of a winged cartouche, used by Linke both as a key bow and for an escutcheon.



Plate 82. A powerful charcoal drawing of a river god by Messagé, possibly an initial sketch for the mask on the *Bahut Marine*, no. 560.

CHAPTER III



Plate 88. This popular *bureau plat* has winged handles on the side drawers. The centre drawer is mounted with the Linke 'crab-like acanthus', called '2 crosses d'angle', initially modelled by Messagé for Roux et Brunet.

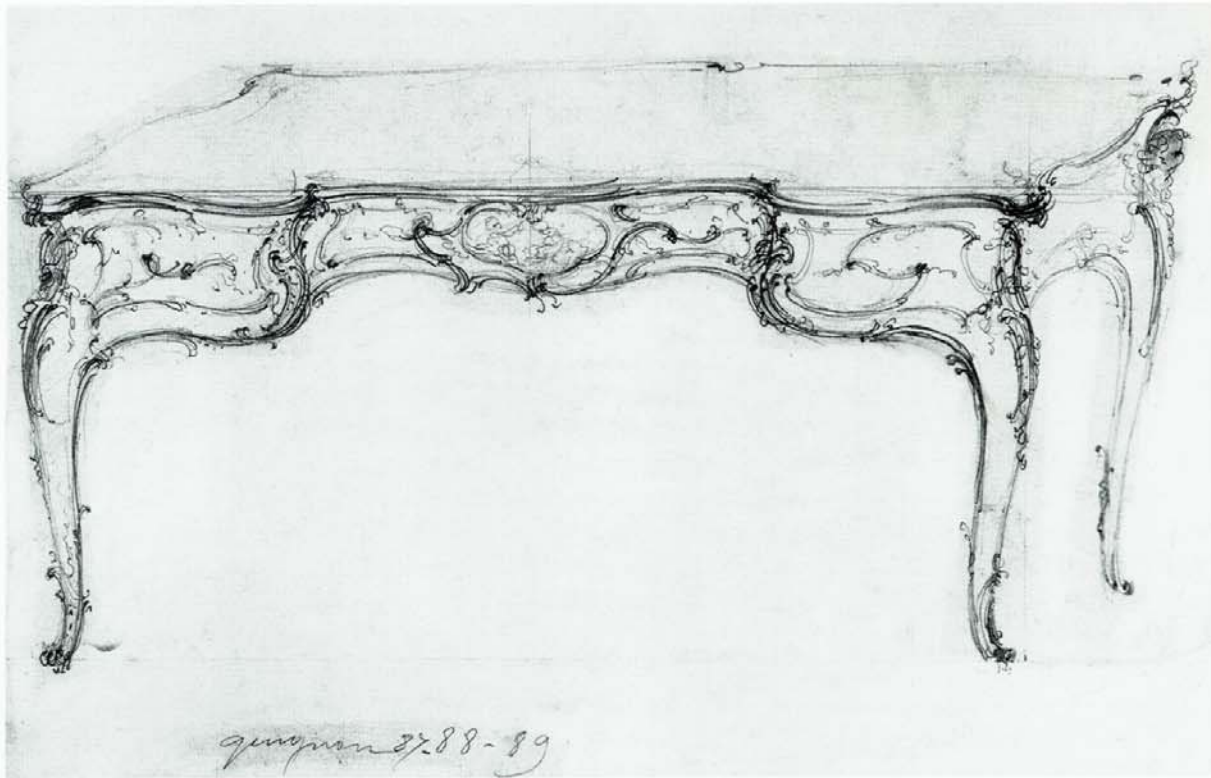


Plate 89. This pencil drawing by Messagé, curiously dated '87-88-89', of a *bureau plat* has been drawn somewhat heavily in the frieze for the light rococo foliage.

