



# TRAVEL TABLE

Russia

Second half of the 18th century

*Mahogany wood, bronze, carpentry*

About the project

<https://tsaritsyno-museum.ru/events/special/p/lyudi-i-fondy-eng/>





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What does this object look like? A table? No, it is not that simple. Remember the line from the Soviet film 'The Diamond Arm': 'Trousers turn into elegant shorts...'? And what can a small table, made by a Russian artisan of the second half of the 18th century, turn into?

In the second third of the 18th century, Russian furniture changes significantly. Large and heavy oak tables are replaced by elegant dressing tables, chests of drawers, fireplace screens, floor lamps, tables for needlework and card games.

When I looked at the pieces of furniture in the museum's collection, it was the travelling table, a work of art, that stood out to me. It was art because I know for sure how difficult it is to make furniture.

My father has been restoring furniture for many years, and in the process, he has to restore some parts and pieces. Since I was a child, I have been familiar with modern craftsmen that work with redwood, the elite of the carpentry profession.

Following the revolution in France, Paul I banned the import of French goods, including interior items, the skill of Russian furnishers grew, and Russian brands were created. For example, in 1795, the well-known workshop of Heinrich Gambs opened in Saint Petersburg. At first, Gambs copied his teacher, the famous furniture maker David Roentgen, but then he began to create unique items. Madame Petukhova from the novel 'The Twelve Chairs' by I. Ilf and E. Petrov, the one who hid diamonds in a Gambs chair, had good taste.

Of course, a table made by Russian craftsmen could not but stir up feelings of admiration and awe. Its forms are harmonious, it can be transformed without the use of automatic mechanisms and special tools.

Transformable furniture occupies a special niche in Russian furniture art. Examples of it are extremely rare on the modern antique market, and this increases the effect.

But back to the question asked: What does the table turn into? It turns into... a chest, perhaps for the toiletries that a lady takes with her on a long journey, or for her gentleman's playing cards. In my imagination, however, it is a box with many functions, because being a creative person, I like to have all the tools of my trade neatly arranged. No matter what, everyone feels differently when they look at this object, but certainly among these feelings are joy and admiration for the skillful work of the artisan.