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A Magnificent George III Period Marquetry Bombe Commode Attributed to the Workshop of Pierre Langlois

English, circa 1770

Height: 32 in (81.5 cm)

Width: 52 in (131.5 cm)

Depth: 21 ½ in (55 cm)

Provenance:

By repute, the Earls of Ilchester, Melbury House, Dorset

The serpentine top veneered with a marquetry trellis design of harewood with boxwood flowerhea. The broad crossbanding inlaid with marquetry of trailing foliage tied with ribbons. The bombe front with three drawers and brushing slide retaining the original handles and escutcheons and similarly decorated with marquetry of fiddleback sycamore centred with florets of boxwood and flanked with marquetry of husks tied with ribbons. The gilt brass mount to the corners of acanthus and foliage ending in elaborate sabot feet.

£ 85000

LITERATURE

MELBURY HOUSE, DORSET

The Melbury estate has been owned by sixteen generations of the Strageways family, since 1500 when Henry Strangeway bought the estate from the Brounings family. In 1758, Elizabeth Strangeways-Horner (1723-1792), who in 1736 had married Stephen Fox (1706-1776) of Redlynch, Somerset, inherited the Melbury estate. Fox had been created the Earl of Ilchester in 1756, and in the 1760's they acquired further land to expand Melbury. They started improvements to the gardens and Lower Park, which were continued by their son Henry Thomas, Second Earl of Ilchester (1747-1802) when he came to Melbury after his mother's death in 1792.

The Earl of Ilchester was a title created for Stephen Fox, 1st Baron Ilchester, who had previously represented Shaftesbury in Parliament. He had already been named Baron Ilchester, of Ilchester in the County of Somerset in 1741, and Baron Ilchester and Starvordale, of Redlynch, in the County of Somerset, in 1747.

ALNWICK CASTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND

This commode is almost identical in form to one in the collections of the Duke of Northumberland, which is illustrated in The Music Room at Alnwick Castle by Hugh Montgomery-Massingberd and Christopher Simon Sykes.

Pierre Langlois

(1754-1810)

Pierre Langlois was a leading exponent of the French style of cabinet making in London. Little is known of his early life and origins, but it is likely that he came from France and settled in London some time before the start of the Seven Years War in 1756. It is known that he began working from his Tottenham Court Road premises in 1759 where he continued to trade until 1781.

During this time in his career, Langlois established himself as one of the leading-cabinet makers in London. The high point of his career was during the 1760s and 1770s when his popularity reached its peak and it was during this time he produced his finest work and that he attracted the attention of some of England's foremost patrons, with his fashionable clientele including commissions from the Duke of Bedford, Lady Louise Conolly, the Earl of Coventry and Horace Walpole.

Langlois is specifically celebrated for his commodes of this time and developed a highly distinctive

style of workmanship and design, which was markedly French in character. His trade card tells us that 'he makes all sorts of fine cabinets and commodes, made and inlaid in the politest manner with brass and tortoiseshell.'