

JAIME EGUIGUREN

ART & ANTIQUES

Anonymous Artist

Circa 1780, Spanish Colonial

**A UNIQUE SILVER *ESTRADO*
TABLE**

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A Unique Silver Estrado Table

Cast, hammered and carved silver

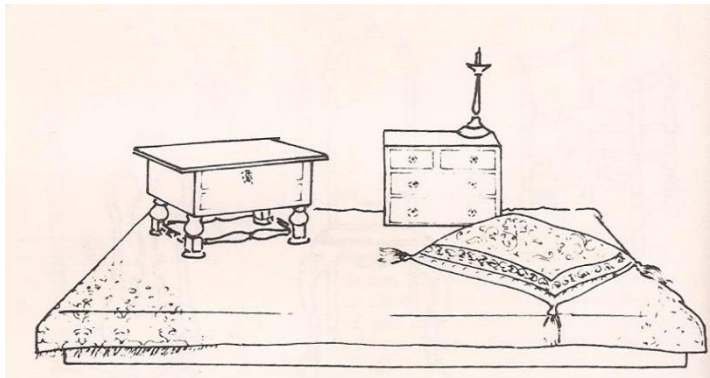
38 x 38 x 38 cm

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A very unusual silver table from an “Estrado”. The word “Estrado” comes from the Latin “stratum”, meaning raised platform, and originally implied a posture, that of squatting down with your legs crossed or leaning back. This form of repose was common throughout the Orient. A raised platform may also be an architectural feature, and not something that can be transported, a sort of broad bench. These raised platforms covered with carpets and cushions acted as couches.

The Dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy explains that the word “Estrado” can be used for the arrangement of a number of pieces of furniture used to decorate a space or room in which ladies received visits. What sets the Spanish “Estrado” apart, and this is a Moorish legacy, is that this became an



“Estrado” from the 17th century, Museu de Arte Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon.

exclusively feminine feature. Once Granada had been conquered, Spain shook off many Arab habits, but this one was preserved within the female sphere, with the “Estrado” being something that belonged solely to them, and where receiving guests while reclining on a raised surface would become a feature of Hispanic nobility, a custom the conquistadores would take to the New World.

The word “Estrado” was understood to mean the decorative ensemble made up of a raised platform, with or without legs, its cushions, adornments and complements, such as curtains and hanging drapes, as the idea was to turn the “Estrado” into the decorative highlight of the room, a scenario for exalted noblewomen, and the passing of the years saw this feminine raised area become further embellished with a greater number of complements; stools, low chairs and an extensive repertory of low pieces of furniture, called “Muebles ratones” (literally mouse furniture). Several reconstructions have been undertaken, such as the famous one at the House/Museum of the painter El Greco in Toledo, corresponding to the 16th century. It is also worth highlighting the one put together for the Museo de Arte Hispanoamericano Fernández Blanco in Buenos Aires, which is a reconstruction of an 18th-century “Estrado” including a set of small-scale furniture made of jacaranda in a Luso-Rioplatense style, arranged in what would become

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the habitual pattern, around a luxurious low table. This arrangement of low chairs gathered around a little table or stove corresponds to the end of the 18th century.



“Estrado”, Museo de El Greco, Toledo, Spain.

Due to their size and decorative function, many of these side tables and miniature central tables used to serve male or for female domestic labors have survived, and they were constructed and decorated in exactly the same way as the full-sized versions. Due to the French influence, the legs were bowed and often ended in a goat’s head, while others featured a symbolic claw.

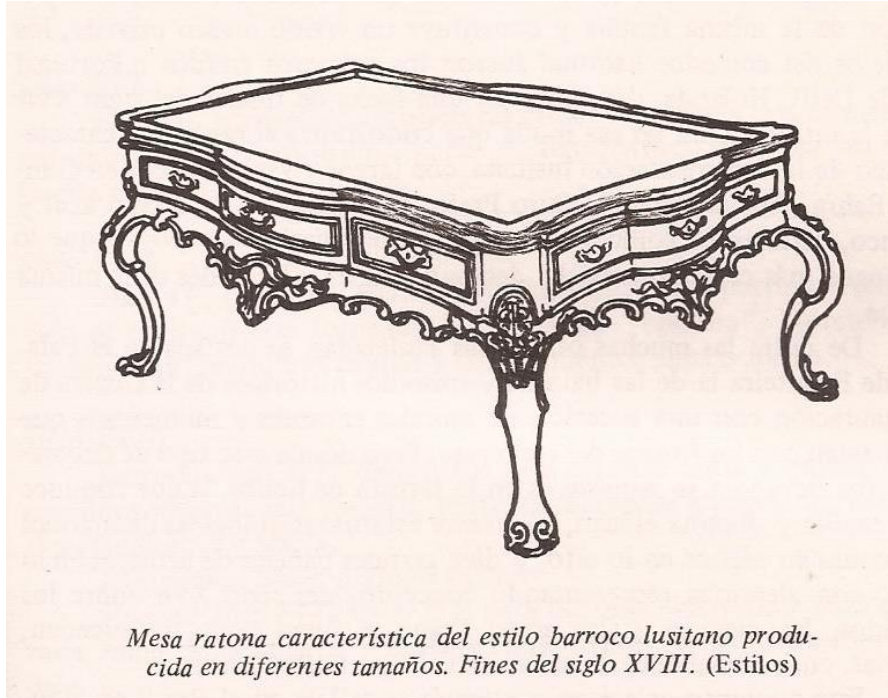
The unusual silver “Estrado” table we are dealing with here follows the traditional model in its use of jacaranda, but one striking feature is its profuse and fantastical rococo decoration. It is the only known silver “Estrado” table, as silverwork was far less widespread in civil society than it was in religious works, being more vulnerable to the passing years and changing fashions. The highly-varied and naturalistic decoration also presents a number of figurative elements reflecting the local indigenous features in their physiognomies, as well as the presence of feathered headdresses, the result of cultural



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crossover, as can be observed in the four mascarons decorating the cabriole table legs. The material, silver, tells us that it must have been part of the “Estrado” arrangement of an extremely high-ranking noblewomen.



Mesa ratona característica del estilo barroco lusitano producida en diferentes tamaños. Fines del siglo XVIII. (Estilos)

Taullard. *El mueble colonial sudamericano*. Ediciones Peuser S.A., Buenos Aires, 1947



189. — Mesita baja (o ratona) fabricada con madera dura del norte, Arte misionero del Alto Perú, correspondiente a la primera mitad del siglo XVIII. Procede de Potosí. Las combas patas de este pequeño mueble, están rematadas por la clásica garra, aprisionando la esfera (ball and claw). Mide 53 × 78 cm.

(Colecc. Santiago Maguire.)

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187. — Mesita ratona, en madera de nogal tallado, con un cajoncito, tirador y cerradura de bronce dorado y patas de cabra. Época colonial; fines del siglo XVIII. Mide 45 cm. de alto y 64 cm. de frente.

(Colecc. señora N. Fernández Blanco de Gowland.)

Bibliography

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