



111. Auction

Lot No.

223

Estimate

8,000 – 12,000 €

Adolphus Nicolai a Cliuens

An oval, Puritan style, single-handed alarm verge pocket watch modernised in the late 17th century

CASE

Silver, oval, glazed front lid, open-worked caseband decorated with foliate and flowers scrolls, the back with shuttered winding hole, rear bell.
Very good, worn.

DIMENSIONS	58 x 47 mm
CIRCA	1640
ORIGIN	Netherlands
WEIGHT	198 g

DIAL

Silver, signed later (?) "Jan Jansz. Bockelts", oval, round dial with radial Roman hours, outer ring with twelve touch pieces for night reading, central alarm disc with Arabic numerals.
Very good, worn.

MOVEMENT

Oval full plate brass movement, signed "Adolphus Nicolai C'Liuens fe(cit)", firegilt, chain/fusee, openwork barrel for alarm with floral decoration, 1 hammer, applied blued iron click work, two-arm iron balance, later balance bridge.
Very good, to be restored, re-build.

The movement plate is signed by a maker who is not traceable in relevant horological literature: Adolphus Nicolai, whose identity and work leave many questions open. The latinized first name "Adolphus" is peculiar. It points to a French origin (Adelphus), as it

was very uncommon in the German speaking area in the 17th century. That development only began during the 2nd half of the 19th century. In this context, the name Nicolai is also remarkable, as it does not appear for any watchmaker in French or Dutch regions. The addendum after the name offers more cause for speculation. An onomatopoeic interpretation of the name could be "Lyon" or "Leeuwen". In the time period when the watch was made in the early 17th century, a craftsman named Nicolai (1573?1616), lived in Lyon, albeit with Gulielmus (Willem) as a first name. He was born in Antwerp and is known to have worked in Antwerp, Avignon and Lyon, possibly also in Leiden. He worked as a copperplate engraver and issued celestial globes.

The ornamentation of the movement plate's edge points to a French origin, i.e., Lyon, while the puritan outer case, however, points to the Dutch region.

It is possible that the maker Adolphus Nicolai was quite unremarkable and that it was later decided to engrave the name of reputed watchmaker Jan Jansz Bockelts as maker of the watch on the case for "marketing reasons".

Jan Jansz. Bockels is known to have worked as a watchmaker in Den Haag from 1610 to 1640. Today his watches are held by private collections and a number of museums such as the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the British Museum in London.

Source: G.H. Baillie "Watchmakers and Clockmakers of the World", Vol. I, Edinburgh/London, 1947, p. 31



