36 engraved playing cards with fine original hand-colour, with one blank card with manuscript note in black ink, housed in marbled paper-covered slipcase, with pasted label.

FRANCO-GERMAN FASHION CARDS

Cartes antérieures a 1710

Author
[WIEGEL, Christoph]

Publication date
c1710].

Publisher

Publication place
[?Germany,

Physical description
36 engraved playing cards with fine original hand-colour, with one blank card with manuscript note in black ink, housed in marbled paper-covered slipcase, with pasted label.

Dimensions
96 by 54mm (3.75 by 2.25 inches).

Notes
The Maker

There is no imprint on the cards or slipcase to identify the maker of this deck. The manuscript note on the additional blank card, however, reads 'Alle 36 Stück gekauft um F.II. 2 a. den 3ten März

1804', providing an indication of when the cards were sold. This is at odds with the label on the slipcase, which suggests its contents are "cards earlier than 1710"; the garments worn by the figures on the cards certainly correspond to seventeenth century German dress.

The Cards

The cards in this interesting deck are divided equally between the standard French suits, but rather than the cards in each suit being labelled one to nine, as normal for a 36-card deck, they are consecutively numbered one to 36. While it would in theory be possible to play a game with such cards, with a higher number beating a lower one, there does not appear to be any widely-played game whose format corresponds to that of this deck. In fact, it is possible that they were ceremonial cards.

Each card shows a full length figure in a variety of garments, from the elaborate outfits of the nobility to the peasant's garb. Women outnumber men, and many are shown with ornate hats and head-dresses, or holding various objects including vases, flowers and, in two cases, children. The figures are captioned beneath the image in both German and French.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £15000

Inventory reference: 20695