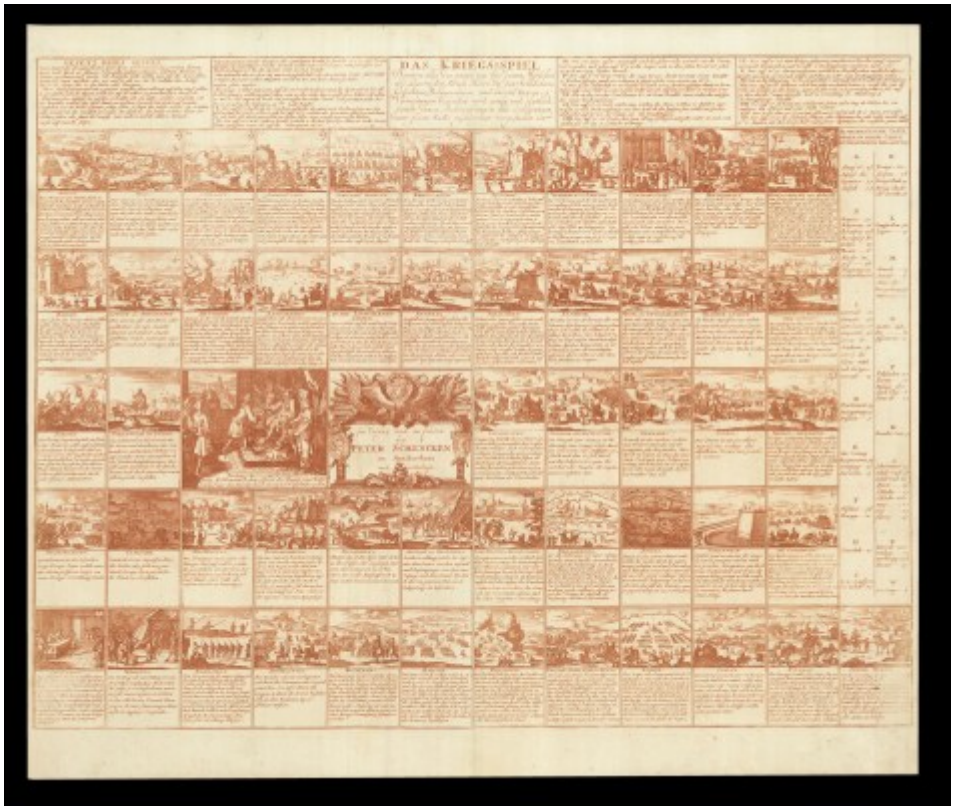


Engraving in sepia ink on laid paper depicting 52 playing cards.

AN EARLY MILITARY CARD GAME

Das Kriegs = Spiel

Author
SCHENK, Pieter

Publication date
[c. 1700]

Publisher
Peter Schenck,

Publication place
Amsterdam,

Physical description

Engraving in sepia ink on laid paper depicting 52 playing cards.

Dimensions
513 by 614mm. (20.25 by 24.25 inches).

Notes

The sheet comprises 53 engraved panels numbered sequentially. All but one is a playing card using the French suits, each bearing an illustration of a military maneuver or fortification element along

with a brief explanatory text. Along the top of the sheet additional panels list the game's rules, and a panel along the right edge contain an index of important terms. A central panel bear the Schenck imprint against an architectural backdrop adorned with military hardware.

The sheet could be dissected for use as a traditional deck of cards or left intact for use as a board game, using the rules printed at the top. These appear to be fairly straightforward, involving the rolling of dice to determine one's moves, the victor being the first to land on panel number 53. Additional rules add spice to the game; for example, anyone landing on panel number 7 (the "defile") must contribute a penny to a pot before being permitted to exit. By progressing through all the panels, players are exposed in sequence to the various elements of a typical military campaign, from enlistment and training through the final assault and conquest of a fortified town. The final panel "53" bears a vignette of a monarch rewarding a victorious general with a marshal's baton.

According to the British Museum, Amsterdam engraver Peter Schenck based this game on a French edition designed by Gilles de la Boissiere, published by J. Mariette in 1692, and bearing the title Jeu de la Guerre. Boissiere and Schenck each also issued versions of a "Fortification Game" (Jeu des Fortifications / Festung Baues Spiel), which employs a very similar graphic design and set of rules.

Games with a military-educational theme are rare, especially from this early date and in complete condition. Featuring Schenck's refined engraving and printed in sepia, this example is most attractive.

Bibliography

BM. 1896,0501.1337. Beinecke Library-Cary Playing Card Collection 780

Provenance

Price: £4500

Inventory reference: 20540

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