Second issue. A set of 52 engraved playing cards, each with a cartouche surrounded by tools specific to a particular mathematical instrument, above a view of the tool as used in practice, and an explanation of the cards subject.

ONE OF THE EARLIEST ILLUSTRATED TRADE CATALOGUES AND A FASCINATING GLIMPSE INTO THE USE OF SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Mathematical Cards.

Author
[TUTTELL, Thomas]

Publication date
c.1700-1718].

Publisher
John Lenthall,

Publication place
[London,

Physical description
Second issue. A set of 52 engraved playing cards, each with a cartouche surrounded by tools specific to a particular mathematical instrument, above a view of the tool as used in practice, and an explanation of the cards subject.

Dimensions
90 by 58mm. (3.5 by 2.25 inches).

Notes
Tuttell based his cards on three educational sets of playing cards produced by Joseph and James Moxon during the latter years of the seventeenth century. James Moxon, recognizing Tuttell’s expertise in practical mathematics, asked him to help with the revisions of his father’s very popular book ‘Mathematics Made Easie’ which was republished in 1701.

The first issue of the present set included an advertisement engraved on the king of clubs but here in the second issue it has been re-engraved to form a card on ‘Building’. The ace of spades, however, still retains Tuttell’s name in a list ‘Bookes & Instrumts. for navigation’ in an almanac of 1701.

The cards are more detailed than similar examples from this period in that the mathematical instruments and their uses can be identified easily. The set thus constitutes a remarkable pictorial trade catalogue of the period.

According to Wilshire, Chatto, writing in 1848, states “the pack of mathematical cards by Thomas Tuttell… [was] designed by Boitard and engraved by J. Savage”.

Rare. of the first series, only one complete set, the Ortiz Patino set, is known. two sets (both incomplete) are held at the British Library (31 cards e177) and UCLA (44 cards); complete sets of the second series are held at the new York Public Library and British Library (e67) with five further cards at the British Library. We are also aware of a further complete set in a private collection in Edinburgh.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 1951

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