

Lot 1080



Auction Decorative Art

Date 17.05.2023, ca. 11:54

Preview 11.05.2023 - 10:00:00 bis
14.05.2023 - 16:00:00

PLATE FROM THE "SERVICE WITH MYTHOLOGICAL EPISODES".

KPM. Berlin.

Date: 1783.

Technique: Porcelain, decorated with iron red and gold.

Description: Model Neuzierat. The rim with golden edge. Below, and in the dynamically designed rocaille pendants, decorated with gold mosaic. The C-shaped relief curves accentuated with gold and with connected flowers and festoons in gold and iron red. In the centre a painted scene in iron red camieu decor.

Measurement: Ø 25cm.

Mark: Sceptre mark, I3 impressed.

Literature:

- Braesel, Michaela: Ovid auf Porzellan, Speisen und Erzählen, in: *Keramos* 196/2007, pp. 3 - 13.
- Köllmann, Erich: *Berliner Porzellan*, Braunschweig 1966, vol. 1, p. 306.
- Lorenz, Angelika (ed.): *Berliner Porzellan 1763-1850, Glanz und Eleganz auf Tischen und Tafeln*, exhib. cat. Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte September 24, 2006 to January 7, 2007, Münster 2006. pp.158-163.

Frederick the Great was an art-conscious monarch whose porcelain orders from the Berlin manufactory were submitted with very specific wishes. This also applied to the service with "Mythological Episodes", which he commissioned on the 9th of January 1783.

The rather small service consisted of 24 dinner plates, 4 serving bowls and a plat de menage, and was intended for the "Marbled Dining Room" at Charlottenburg Palace. The gilded reliefs that adorned the walls of this room depicted scenes from the *Metamorphoses* by Ovid - which were among Frederick the Great's favourite readings. Time and again, he commissioned works of art that addressed the content of the ancient poet's tales.

Whereas in previous services there had often been an aesthetic connection between the room and the table décor, the scenes on this porcelain were now intended to take up the contents of the interior. How disappointed the king must have been when he received the finished service and found that the realisation of his carefully thought-out concept

had failed? As the manufactory's director Johann Georg Grieninger regretfully notes, he had not succeeded in conveying his wishes in a comprehensible way:

"The king had ordered a service to be made for his table, based on paintings from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and to this end had someone come to him to Potsdam, to whom he dictated what he wanted painted. Since this person was not a mythologist, what he had written down was so badly done that no one was able to deduce or guess anything from the king's thoughts."

Since they did not dare to bother the ruler anew, they resorted to the copperplate engravings "*Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide*" by Pierre Basan and "*Les Aventures de Télémaque*" by François Fénelons for the service's design. The porcelain painters, however, who were not familiar with the literary sources, found it difficult to reproduce the episodes correctly in terms of content. They adapted them to the space of the dishes, omitted details that were necessary for comprehension and added decorative but confusing additions.

Even if Frederick's longing for a sophisticated work of art was not fulfilled in the end, plates like the one offered here could have been the occasion for an intellectual guessing game at his festive table.

Estimate: 3.000 € - 3.500 €; Hammer: 2.000 €
