



Pair of Chinese export porcelain famille rose Dinner Plates with European subject

Qianlong period circa 1745

European market

Diameter of each plate: 9 inches; 23cm

Priced in GB pounds sterling

£3,000

This item is located in the UK. Shipping from there is at the buyer's expense.

A fine pair of famille rose European subject dinner plates with an amorous couple, Acis and Galatea, the rim with puce panels reserved on a grisaille cell diaper.

Originally thought to be Cupid and Psyche it is now known that this represents Acis and Galatea, though it is also an excuse to depict an amorous, partially clad couple embracing.

The image is derived from a print by Edmé Jeaurat after a painting by Charles de la Fosse. The original image included Polyphemus who is omitted on the porcelain.

There is another version with the image reversed and a Dutch ship in the distance, reminiscent of the 'sailor's farewell'.

Another image of the same subject is also known on Chinese export porcelain, derived from a print by Georg Hertel after Edmé or Etienne Jeaurat.

Galatea was a sea-nymph, the daughter of Nereus and Doris. She was in love with Acis, son of Pan but was ardently pursued by the Cyclops Polyphemus whom Galatea rejected. When the Cyclops discovered the couple together he crushed Acis under a rock. According to Ovid Galatea changed Acis into a river that bore his name. She made up with Polyphemus and bore him a son Galas, ancestor of the Gauls (Galatians). So the harmonious scene portrayed here is the moment before an act of extreme violence and tragic loss.

References: Veiga 1989, p170, another dinner plate; Hervoüet & Bruneau, p321, No 13.103, a plate and 13.104 with the image reversed and ship; Lunsingh Scheurleer 1974, No 231, a plate; Jörg 1989, cat 85, a plate Mezin 2002, p139, a plate with reversed version & ship; Howard & Ayers 1978, p196, reversed version.